

**Columbia Section Board**

Chris Ells, PE

**President**

(509) 783-2144 (B)  
[cells@jub.com](mailto:cells@jub.com)

Paul Knutzen, PE

**Vice President/President Elect**

509-735-1589 (B)  
[ptknutzen@meierinc.com](mailto:ptknutzen@meierinc.com)

**Secretary/Treasurer**

Teresa Peterson, EIT

Paul Smith, PE

**Past-President**

(509) 374-4248 (B)  
[Psmith@mackaysposito.com](mailto:Psmith@mackaysposito.com)

Justin Bellamy

**Yakima Branch President**

(509) 966-7000 (B)  
[jbellamy@hlacivil.com](mailto:jbellamy@hlacivil.com)

Bernard (Ben) W. Volk

**Director- Tri-Cities**

(509) 783-2144 (B)  
[bvolk@jub.com](mailto:bvolk@jub.com)

**Walla Walla Director** - Open

Dave Krumbein

**Director-Pendleton/LaGrande**

(541) 278-5748  
[DKRUMBEIN@Bluecc.edu](mailto:DKRUMBEIN@Bluecc.edu)

**Newsletter Editor** – Tom Szymoniak

Bernard (Ben) W. Volk

**Historian**

(509) 783-2144 (B)  
[bvolk@jub.com](mailto:bvolk@jub.com)

**Webmaster - Vacant**

**Columbia Section Meeting**

**Date: September 28th, 2011**

**Place: Shilo Inn, George Washington Way, Richland**

**Meal:** Buffet (Chef's choice) - \$15 for Members and Non Members.  
Please pay cash or check to treasurer at meeting

**Topic: Benton Irrigation District Improvement Project**

**Speakers:** Ed Hibbard (Anderson Perry) and Ed Mitchell (BID)

Lunch will start at 11:30, and the presentation will begin at Noon. RSVP to: Paul Knutzen, PE 509-735-1589

[ptknutzen@meierinc.com](mailto:ptknutzen@meierinc.com)

**President's Remarks:**

The 2011 – 2012 ASCE Year is upon us! This month's meeting is the first of many to come for the upcoming year. We have new officers in all positions. If you were not able to make our June meeting prior to the break for summer here are the new officers and their positions:

- Chris S. Ells, P.E. – President
- Paul Knutzen, P.E. – Vice President
- Teresa Peterson, E.I.T. – Secretary/Treasurer

Concerning our September meeting, the current plan is to hear from Ed Hibbard with Anderson Perry & Associates and Ed Mitchell from the Benton Irrigation District(BID). Their presentation will address the new design to BIDs' irrigation system. The new improvements completely abandon the existing system in place and replace it with a new pressurized buried distribution system. This system will add nearly 60 cfs to the base flow in the 70-mile stretch between Sunnyside Diversion Dam and the in-stream diversion intake. It will also raise water levels in the canal during the irrigation season.

My hope is that you will all attend our lunch meeting. If you can think of any good ideas or you would like to be a speaker for an upcoming meeting, please feel free to contact myself or any of the officers.

Thank you  
Chris Ells, PE  
**ASCE Columbia Section President**

*Meet your ASCE Columbia Section Officers*

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**Chris Ells – President**

**Where is your hometown (where did you grow up)**

I was born and raised in Spokane, WA until 1996, when we moved to Newport, OR. I graduated from Newport High School in 2002.

**What university did you attend and year graduated?**

I graduated from Oregon State University in 2006.



**Tell us about your current job/position**

I am currently a Project Engineer and work within the Transportation Group at JUB Engineers, Inc.

**What is the most exciting/challenging/rewarding project that you have worked on in your career, why?**

The most challenging exciting project I have worked on so far in my career at JUB would have to be the Fisher Hill Road Reconstruction in Goldendale, WA. The project was challenging due to its remote location and varying terrain conditions within the project as well as the slopes of the existing hill the road was cut into.

**What are your goals/objectives for the coming year for the ASCE Columbia Section?**

My goals and objectives for the coming year for ASCE Columbia Section are to provide our members with interesting meeting topics, provide aide to the community in any way our officers see fit, try and get more involvement from our members as well as try and give students from the nearby colleges a chance to meet with our members and officers so they can see what Engineering is all about.

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**Paul Knutzen – Vice President/President Elect**

**Where is your hometown (where did you grow up):**

I grew up here in Kennewick, graduated from River View High School in 1995. I left the area for 10 years to live in southern California, but returned to the Tri-Cities in 2009.

**What university did you attend and year graduated?**

I attended the University of Southern California. I should have graduated with the class of 1999, but quit after one semester to get married, then my wife had a baby. I went back to school four years later and graduated in 2003.



**Tell us about your current job/position**

I am the Civil Group Manager at Meier Architecture Engineering. Meier is traditionally known for complete building/site solutions and not solely for civil works projects. My goal is to make the group a standalone operation, in terms of being a self-sufficient department. We will continue to support projects that the rest

of the company does but add a backlog of work that is exclusive to our group. It is a small group, with a staff of 6, but it has doubled since I started in 2009. So we are headed in the right direction!

**What is the most exciting/challenging/rewarding project that you have worked on in your career, why?**

I would say that the most challenging project that fits this bill for me is the Frontier, WA Land Port of Entry project. Originally this project had been budgeted with \$20 million dollars, of which \$10 million was exclusive for site work, remediation of a wetland was involved, high groundwater issues, and also was intended to be a LEED certified project. After our input with the contractor and better locating of facilities on the site, we were able to reduce the overall project cost from \$20 million down to \$10 million, even adding a second building which wasn't budgeted for several years after this project. Notably, the project did not disturb the wetland after all. The new facility will be obtaining LEED Silver accreditation. I am very proud that we could save taxpayer money so significantly and create a better more sustainable project for everyone involved.

**What are your goals/objectives for the coming year?**

I would like to see more participation from others in the Section. We have only 20-25 members participating at monthly lunches. I would like start an annual ASCE golf tournament perhaps, and volunteering for Engineer's week at local elementary schools to explain why civil engineering is so important.



If you have some ideas of interest or news for the Section or would like to write an article please let me know. Send an email to [tszymoniak@bendnet.com](mailto:tszymoniak@bendnet.com)

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