



<http://sections.asce.org/syracuse/>

January 2003

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### President's Message

By Matthew D. Millias, P.E.

On December 4, 2002, ASCE Syracuse Section joined the ASCE Ithaca Section for a dinner meeting in Ithaca, NY. Following a lively social hour and a tremendous dinner, approximately 50 attendees were treated to a presentation by **David T. Biggs, PE, FASCE**. Mr. Biggs gave a presentation on the **FEMA-ASCE Building Performance Study of the World Trade Center Disaster**. Mr. Biggs is a Principal of Ryan-Biggs Associates in Troy, NY and a past National Director of ASCE. Following the September 11, 2001 attacks, he was selected by FEMA/ASCE to be part of an 18-person team assigned to assess the World Trade Center Tower collapses and subsequent surrounding damage.

Mr. Biggs' presentation highlighted the assessment team's findings, his personal accounts of the tragedy, insights into the FEMA/ASCE relationship, and several predictions into the future of "high rise" structural design. Ground Zero photographs, news clips, World Trade Center design drawings, and a question/answer period were part of the two-hour presentation.

The volunteer assessment team was faced with numerous obstacles while trying to complete their assignments. First and foremost, it was difficult for team members to stay focused given the emotions stemming from the tragedy. Secondly, the Ground Zero work area was treacherous in terms of construction traffic, unstable footing, inhalation, and potential collapses. Gaining necessary information from technical sources, eyewitnesses, other investigators, and related databases required persistence. Pressures from the Congressional Committee, FEMA, the media, and the public during the assessment took its toll. Through it all, however, the team maintained its professionalism and delivered a report that contained findings, conclusions, and recommendations based on the available data and parameters set. The team, including Mr. Biggs, should be commended for their professionalism, for their expertise, and for volunteering their time to such an important cause. Also, ASCE members should be proud that their organization was chosen to help in our country's time of need.

The report prepared by the assessment team and submitted to FEMA and ultimately to the Congressional Committee can be viewed or downloaded from [www.fema.gov/library/wtcstudy.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/library/wtcstudy.shtm).

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## **HISTORY & HERITAGE COMMITTEE**

By Jim Tyler

Thank you to Mitch Carmody for forwarding the following from *Engineering News Record* of 2 December 2002.

### ***Engineers are Cool !***

A civil engineer was voted the second-greatest Briton ever in a recent national TV poll by the BBC. Isambard Kingdom Brunel won over 390,000 votes out of 1.5 million cast, lagging behind Winston Churchill but ahead of Princess Diana and others. Brunel helped pioneer underwater tunneling with a shield in London in the 1830's, engineered the 214M suspension bridge with Iron suspension chains in 1864 and built the first iron ship to cross the Atlantic under screw propeller. Mitch also mentions that Engineer Brunel conceived the shield method of tunneling while in debtors' prison and watching a beetle bore through the wood framing of his cell.

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## **FOOD, FUN & FIREWORKS**

Grab your 2003 calendars and circle Friday June 13 for the ASCE Picnic at P & C Stadium. Details will be in the May Newsletter. Father's Day is June 15. Have an early treat at the ballpark

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## 2002-2003 ASCE Syracuse Section

### Program Schedule

ASCE Event	Tentative Date/Time	Description
Joint Dinner Meeting with the SU Chapter	January 2003	ASCE/SU teaming for dinner and technical presentation
Building Big	February 2003	ASCE will judge local student's bridge and team oriented engineering contests at OCC
Technology Alliance Banquet	March 2003	ASCE will participate in the dinner/awards banquet
Continued Education Course	April 2003	ASCE will sponsor a continued education course
Joint Dinner Meeting with the ASCE Ithaca Section	May 2003	Syracuse/Ithaca will team up for a dinner/technical presentation
Syracuse Chiefs Baseball Game	June 2003	Picnic and ballgame
Adopt-A-Highway	April 2003 – September 2003	4 patrols will be schedule to keep ASCE's portion of I81 clean
Board Meetings	2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month; 6:00PM at the Parsons Liverpool Office	The ASCE Syracuse Section Board will meet. ASCE members are welcome

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#### **Chuck Stanton, P.E.**

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### **NSPE Liason - John Knox, P.E.**

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### **Student Practitioner (SU) - Kathy Pollard**

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### **Adopt-A-Highway/Heritage History Chair Jim Tyler**

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### **150th Committee Chair - Craig Butler, P.E.**

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### **Continued Education Chair - Mitch Carmody, P.E.**

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