

NON OMNIA POSSUMUS OMNES (WE CANNOT ALL DO EVERYTHING)

SECTION MEETING SCHEDULE 2024–25

The Section Meeting program for the upcoming season remains in the preparation mode and our meeting program committee is busy lining up speakers and topics for what we hope will be an interesting and informative series of meetings. The information we have at this point is provided below for your planning purposes. We would suggest that you use this to mark your calendar at this time and hold the dates.

In coming issues of *THE NEWS*, this information will be "fine-tuned" to provide updates as they are available. We also suggest you visit the Section website for the latest changes in our meeting program. As we have done, each month's edition of *THE NEWS* will feature detailed information on that month's meeting along with as much information as is available for the following month's meeting, and the "look-ahead" schedule will show details that are available at that time for your advance awareness. E-mail blasts will be sent out on a regular basis to advise and remind of upcoming events and registration deadlines.

We also note the advantage of joint meetings with other societies and will schedule these as we can.

Our schedule of meetings for the **2025** "half" of this season is:

January 15 (Wednesday) – joint meeting with American Society of Highway Engineers, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Valley Forge; Ridge Pike Improvement Program, Montgomery County

February - to be determined

March 13 – Maggiano's Center City; DRPA Capital Program Update April 10 – multi-topic break-out sessions; topics and location to be determined

May 15 - Spring Social; The Lucy

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

Syrnick Honored by Drexel

Drexel's University-Wide Commencement Ceremony on June 14 started off with darkened clouds, rain and immense gusts of wind that blew up hoods and menaced microphones of the speakers (rain, what's that...?), but the ceremony ended with some blue skies and bright, colorful fireworks. After everything else they experienced in the past few years, less-than-ideal weather wasn't going to bring the Dragons down (though having umbrellas, rain ponchos and some cover provided by those mortar boards helped).

Among those honored at this ceremony was **Past Section President Joe Syrnick** (BS '69, MS '71), one of two honorary degree recipients so

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NOVEMBER DINNER MEETING

American Society of Civil Engineers, Philadelphia Section **THURSDAY, November 14, 2024**

Maggiano's Little Italy, 1201 Filbert Street (corner of 12th St.), Center City Cocktails 5:30 PM, Dinner 6:30 PM, Presentation Follows (approximately 7:30 PM) SUBJECT: Philadelphia Bicycle Infrastructure and Safety Initiatives

SPEAKERS: Lydia Kenselaar and Jacob Elliot, City of Philadelphia, Office of Transportation and Infrastructure Systems; John Boyle, Bicycle Coalition of Philadelphia; Chris Stanford, Michael Baker International

RESERVATION DEADLINE – FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8. The cost per attendee is \$50 for ASCE Members (\$50 for non-members), with a half-price (\$25) cost for government agency employees and students, for reservations received by this deadline.

Reservations can be made through our website (www.asce-philly.org) and paid via PayPal or by check. This option will NOT be available after the reservation deadline. Checks, made payable to "Philadelphia Section ASCE", will be accepted at the reservation table at the door as an option to electronic payment. Reservations received after the deadline and "walk-ups" without prior reservations paying at the door will be subject to a higher charge as well as acceptance on a space-available/standby basis.

All registrations are final. Due to commitments with our event venues, cancellations or no-shows will be invoiced for the full cost of the event. Registrants are able to transfer their registrations to others without penalty. *THERE IS NO GUARANTEE THAT SPACE WILL BE AVAILABLE IF YOU DO NOT RESERVE A SPACE.* Walk-ins and anyone without a reservation will be handled on a space-available basis.

As always, guests will be welcome to attend the presentation without dinner at no charge. This will be subject to room capacity constraints.

ACCESS AND PARKING: Maggiano's is a short walk from SEPTA's Jefferson Regional Rail station and a half-block from bus routes, the Subway-Surface Trolleys and the Market-Frankford Line on Market Street. There is a parking garage directly above the restaurant for which validation can be offered for a reduced price. Continued on page 3

DECEMBER MULTI-SOCIETY LUNCHEON MEETING

American Society of Civil Engineers, Philadelphia Section Engineers' Club of Philadelphia and Numerous Technical Societies

TUESDAY, December 10, 2024, 11:30 AM

Please hold the date and time for this. More information and details will be provided in the December edition of *THE NEWS*.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



We're at that time where we're focused on getting submissions out the door before the holiday season approaches, getting projects out to bid, and/or getting our construction projects to the next milestone before winter shutdowns or before the weather limits construction activities. We probably will be working even longer hours than we are now, but we must not forget to make time for ourselves. At the October Dinner Meeting, I mentioned that it was **World Mental Health**

Day, and even though it's recognized on October 10th, we should be doing what we can to protect our mental health as well as creating work environments for others to protect their wellbeing, every day. Through my involvement with ASCE, I've been fortunate enough to make some amazing friends who I can call, text, get drinks/dinner with, or just sit on the porch and chat about life. I've found these moments to impact my mental state, positively, on many occasions. What I've noticed when talking with ASCE friends versus other friends and family, is that most of them are going through or have gone through similar situations and can provide valuable insight and advice that maybe others can't. For those of you who still listen to the safety presentation when you're on an airplane, remember that you're instructed to put your mask on before attempting to assist others, so if we want to better assist our clients, we should be doing what we can to take care of ourselves, too. For more information on World Mental Health Day and for mental health resources, visit the World Health Organization's **website**.

Kevin Brown Jr., PE, M.ASCE President, ASCE Philadelphia Section



THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

Our Section Sponsorship program is up and running once again, with 15 firms participating at this early point in the season. We extend our special and collective THANKS to each sponsor for their financial commitment and support.

Sponsor logos are displayed in a special Sponsors section of our website. Additionally, we provide direct links to sponsors' own websites so prospective employees can review all available and up-to-date positions. We also offer sponsors the opportunity to have a "spotlight" article in an edition of *THE NEWS* as well as service as a sponsor of one of our monthly dinner meetings.

We are now offering a new sponsorship level, the **VIP Title Sponsor**. For a \$500 annual fee, your firm will be noted as a VIP Title Sponsor and be noted as the featured sponsor on one month's worth of e-blasts. Thus far, we have four firms at this level – BDI (our newest sponsor), Gannett Fleming TranSystems, Pennoni and TPD.

If you have an interest in joining our sponsorship program, there's still time to be part of this season's group. Please contact **Bob Wright** at **newseditor@ asce-philly.org** for more details.

ASCE, PHILADELPHIA SECTION OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTION — 2024–25 SEASON

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In accordance with our Constitution and Bylaws, only the immediate Past President will serve on the Board, and only for a one-year term. We show the most recent three Past Presidents as has become our tradition.

We thank these folks for their commitment and service.

Contact Us:

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SEND COPY TO: ASCE, c/o Urban Engineers, Inc., 530 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106

COPY DEADLINE FOR DECEMBER 2024 ISSUE NOVEMBER 15, 2024

HOLD THESE DATES ENGINEERS WEEK EVENTS SCHEDULED

The Engineers' Club of Philadelphia, through its Delaware Valley Engineers Week Committee, will cite Engineers Week 2025 (February 13-23). We have traditionally extended our local celebration beyond that recognized by National Engineers Week to include our kickoff event.

Engineers Week in the Delaware Valley will officially begin with the Engineers Week Opening Dinner on **Thursday, February 13** (two days before National E Week begins). At this event, we will introduce and formally induct the **Delaware Valley Engineer of the Year** and **Delaware Valley Young Engineer of the Year**, as well as highlight the various contributions of engineers and engineering students. All Engineers Week award and scholarship recipients will be cited at the Dinner. This will take place at the Hilton Hotel on Penns Landing.

The **Young Engineers Social** will be conducted during Engineers Week (date to be determined). This is a networking and social event to cite the newly-inducted Delaware Valley Young Engineer of the Year.

Please note this information in your calendar and plan to participate. More details on venues and pricing will be included in future updates.

Also, please check on the various Engineers Week awards and scholarships that are available and will be awarded at the Opening Dinner. This information, along with other updates on Engineers Week, can be found at the Engineers' Club website, www.engrclub.org.

NOVEMBER DINNER MEETING Continued from page 1

Pedestrian and bicyclist infrastructure in Philadelphia has long been a focus of the City's improvement plans. Join us for our November meeting, where the Office of Transportation and Infrastructure Systems (OTIS) will discuss the expansion of the High Quality Bike network and highlight some recent projects and initiatives related to bicycle infrastructure. The evening will feature a technical presentation by OTIS staff members, followed by a short panel conversation related to bicycle infrastructure and initiatives among OTIS staff members, a Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia representative, and a local engineer in the bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure space.

YOUNGER MEMBER FORUM NEWS

Laurel Welch, Forum Editor Assunta Daprano, Forum President 2024-25 AECOM, adaprano.outreach@gmail.com

Flat Rock Dam Betterment Construction Tour

September 11

The **Philadelphia Water Department** hosted YMF for a tour of the Flat Rock Dam Betterment Project construction in northwest Philadelphia. The project is reconnecting the

Schuylkill River to the Manayunk Canal and the YMF learned about features of the Dam and design considerations. It was a rare opportunity to see the inner workings of the Dam before it will be underwater for the next 100+ years of its intended lifespan. Thank you to lan McKane and the rest of the design team for taking the time to show our group the site and explain details of the project!



Annual YMF Phillies Game and Tailgate September 13

YMF hosted an exciting tailgate before the Phillies took on the NY Mets! Over 40 young

professionals gathered at Citizens Bank Park for a fantastic opportunity to network with fellow professionals while enjoying food, beverages, and games. Thank you to everyone who helped make this year's tailgate another home run!



Welcome Back Students Night

September 18

YMF hosted the Welcome Back Students event at **Lucky Strike Bowling**. The event was attended by local professionals and students hailing from Temple University, Swarthmore College, Drexel University, and Widener University. The night was filled with fun games, tasty food, and great networking! A heartfelt expression of gratitude extends to each attendee, both students and professionals, whose presence contributed to the event's



success and created an atmosphere of camaraderie and learning.

TTF Watershed Tree Planting October 19

October 19

With the guidance of the **Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Watershed**, YMF volunteers assisted with tree planting along the headwaters to the Shoemaker Run Creek at the Abington Club Golf Course. This is an extension of the work that TTF Watershed has been doing at the club this year, including quite a bit of streambank work. Funding for this tree planting comes from the Healing the Planet grant through Keep Pennsylvania beautiful and Giant. A full report will be provided in the December edition of *THE NEWS*.

OCTOBER SECTION MEETING

October 10, 2024

Maggiano's Little Italy, Center City

Susquehanna River Rail Bridge Project

By Robert Wright, Editor

A nice October day beckoned what turned out to be a room-full of attendees for our first meeting "out of the gate" for our Section's 2024-25 dinner meeting program. While there was some talk during the networking hour of the Phillies' post-season quest which is no longer, unfortunately, it was the usual people-catching-up atmosphere at Maggiano's after a few months with no dinner meetings, so there was some updating and talking about what we did this summer. **President Kevin Brown** managed to get folks quieted down and in their seats to get the evening's events underway.

President Brown offered a welcome and a few announcements, and brought Section Past President Bob Wright to front and center to belatedly present our Government Service Award to Chuck Davies, Assistant District Executive of PennDOT District 6-0, and offer some background on Chuck's long history of dedicated service to our area. (Chuck was unable to attend the Spring Social to be cited for this so we invited him to attend the



October meeting to be recognized). Following that, President Brown welcomed representatives of the Drexel University Student Chapter to the podium, **President Victor Onukwugha** and **Treasurer Artem Strelkov**, to provide an update on activities at the Chapter.

President Brown got the featured presentation underway, having Vice President Dennis Wilson introduce the presentation team, Jen Reigle, Principal Design Manager (and Past Section President), Amtrak, Pete Mazzeo, Project Manager, HNTB, and Kevin Poad, Deputy Project Manager, HNTB.

Ms. Reigle offered a short history and background of the project, which will replace the existing moveable/swing bridge which carries Amtrak's Northeast Corridor across the Susquehanna River in Maryland, between the towns of Havre de Grace and Perryville. The bridge, which has been in service for 117 years, accommodates commuter rail trains of the Maryland Area Rail Commuter (MARC) as well as freight trains operated by Norfolk Southern. CSX has operating rights on the bridge as well but uses it infrequently, having a river crossing on its own parallel line a few miles upstream. The span has two tracks and can be opened for river traffic but this has become a difficult and time-consuming process given the age of the structure. Thus, the proposed replacement will be two fixed-span tied-arch structures, with 60 feet of vertical clearance from the water surface to accommodate watercraft. The two structures would provide four tracks (two on each bridge), and allow higher-speed trains (up to 160 mph) as well as remove the current bottleneck often realized with the two-track situation. About 90 Amtrak trains and 14 MARC trips use this bridge daily, thus two of the four proposed tracks will serve Amtrak's needs exclusively. The effort will require adjustments to nearby interlockings which connect other rail lines along the Susquehanna River to the north, primarily freight service, and branches, and will impact and upgrade roughly five miles of the railroad in the vicinity. This includes an Amtrak maintenance yard and facility in Perryville that will need to have new roadway access provided to avoid a low-height underpass beneath the tracks.

Messrs. Mazzeo and Poad outlined the preliminary and final design efforts undertaken and ongoing thus far. Three contracts have been awarded for pre-construction activities, including the removal of the previous structure's support piers adjacent to the bridge in the river bed. Significant environmental investigation and reconnaissance has been conducted along with community outreach. Review of the relocation of the high-tension power lines from the existing structure, which will be needed to facilitate construction, has also been conducted, including the possibility of having this moved to submarine locations below the river bed. The first contracts for the construction of the replacement bridges are in progress and a groundbreaking/start of construction is expected to occur in late 2025. A construction manager at risk (CMAR) approach is being taken to most effectively coordinate and manage the many "moving parts" and aspects of this complicated effort. The entire project is anticipated to be completed by 2036 at an estimated overall cost of \$2.7 billion.

The presentation team ably responded to a number of insightful questions following the presentation. President Brown thanked them for their interesting program and offered parting gifts for their time and effort on this.

TIME TO PAY YOUR DUES...

ALSO, LOOKING TO REFER A NEW MEMBER? OR SOMEONE WHO'S NOT AN ENGINEER?

As a reminder, your ASCE dues for 2025 is coming due at the end of the year. You may have seen the e-mail reminders on this and hard-copy invoices are being mailed to those who have requested them.

If you want to advise friends and colleagues of the benefits of membership, **ASCE's Member Get A Member referral program** is a good way to refer prospective new ASCE members to our society. For each new member you refer, you can receive a \$50 Amazon.com gift card when they join. You can refer up to five colleagues at a time. More details are available at asce.org.

Also, please keep in mind that ASCE isn't just for civil engineers. While you may be surprised to learn this, ASCE allows non-engineers to be members as well, with a specific grade of membership – the Affiliate Member grade – available for this purpose. While those with civil engineering degrees and backgrounds can usually join ASCE right out of school as Associate Members (and are eligible for reduced levels of dues if they have been Student Members), the Affiliate Member grade is available to anyone having "an interest in the advancement of the purposes and objectives of the Society", as stated in the definition provided in the ASCE Register, who may not have been eligible for Student Membership and/or do not meet the criteria for Associate Membership.

Thus, the Affiliate Member grade is ideal for those who work in related fields who may have an interest in civil engineering but do not have a civil engineering degree. Affiliate Members enjoy the same benefits and perks of ASCE membership as do other member grades above Student. Additionally, you may want to let some of your colleagues and friends know about this so they can consider ASCE membership and you can get some cash for the referral.

At the other end of the "spectrum", for those of you more senior and experienced members, the Fellow grade of membership is worth consideration. This is the highest level of membership one can attain on one's own and is a laudable and esteemed achievement. The specific requirements for application for this grade of membership are listed on **asce.org**.

Members In The News Continued from page 1

recognized. In addition to his commitment and leadership, including three decades of public service with the City of Philadelphia and two decades as President and Chief Executive Officer of the nonprofit Schuylkill River Development Corporation, Joe captained Drexel's 1968 baseball team.

We proudly congratulate Joe on this recognition and honor.

N-ASCE* ANY GEPHYROPHOBICS OUT THERE...?

As Engineers we often take pride in what we do, and we tend to doubt that anyone would not want to use our finished products to help make their lives easier. Unfortunately, there are many fears and disorders out there, and gephyrophobia, the fear of bridges, is one that impacts many drivers, especially when they are faced with long and tall structures that may seem daunting and scary to use. To help some of these folks, there are options.

Anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness in the US, affecting 18% of the population, or 40 million adults, according to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America. Specific phobias affect 19 million people, the association estimates, and women are twice as likely to have a phobia as men. Travel-related phobias can take the form of everything from fear of flying to fear of tunnels, fear of driving through construction zones and fear of bridges, according to the Center for Travel Anxiety. According to the Center's statistics, 0.7% of the population has a fear of driving, 4.5% has a fear of heights, 2.5% has a fear of water, all of which can play into bridge anxiety.

On the Chesapeake Bay Bridge, there is a "drive-over" service that transports those sweaty-palmed people wary of crossing it, which stretches long and high across its namesake waterway, connecting the Baltimore-Washington area with Maryland's Eastern Shore. Some see this bridge as an engineering marvel, but the gephyrophobics among us see it as perhaps one of the scariest spans on the planet. A private service started ferrying the skittish about eight years ago, a task previously performed by the Maryland Transportation Authority. The operators of this service have noted the several different issues that those who decide to go along for the ride rather than face the drive across the bridge have, which include the height, the way the span turns, the low barriers, and the see-through railings, as well as the inability to completely see the horizon.

The Bridge, 186 feet at its highest point, remains among the most daunting. Seeing the steel and concrete arc against an azure sky from Sandy Point State Park is breathtaking. But it has been named the world's ninth scariest by Travel & Leisure magazine.

The driver service employs a diverse crew of college kids, stay-at-home moms, even a Marine Reservist. Each trip takes two people, with the main

driver in your driver's seat to pilot your car across the bridge (with you in the passenger seat or back seat), while the second worker following over the span in another car to transport the main driver back. There is a \$35 charge for the service.

There are some "regulars" for this assistance. One gentleman uses the service five days a week, twice a day, to commute from his home at the beach to his job on the other side. Another man drives himself across the bridge but just needs a little backup. There is an airline pilot who is not afraid of heights, but he just gets the jitters driving under the inside suspension. It operates year-round, 24/7, although from 10 PM to 7 AM, you need an appointment. You call the number when you leave home and again about an hour before you are ready to cross to arrange a pickup point.

Business ramped up considerably last spring following the collapse of the nearby Key Bridge.

Other bridges that have similar services include these.

The Mackinac Bridge Authority in Michigan provides drivers for free for those too rattled to cross the fifth-longest suspension bridge in the world, which connects Michigan's Upper and Lower peninsulas. For those traveling north, there is a phone at the end of the bridge to call for assistance. Southbound drivers are told to ask fare collectors for assistance.

New York's Tappan Zee Bridge, which crosses the Hudson at one of its widest points, has an informal service in which the New York State Thruway maintenance staff will escort you across for free if you give a day or two's notice.

The nearby twin-suspension Delaware Memorial Bridge started a police escort service in the late 1960s that remains available. You can call the police communications center or the emergency call box. Drivers must sign a liability release.

Thanks to USA Today and WBOC-TV for this information.

* N-ASCE - not always something concerning engineering...

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS UPDATE

As you may be aware, professional engineers, land surveyors and geologists in many states are required to obtain continued professional development (CPD) credit to renew their licenses in many states. Locally, this includes Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware. In Pennsylvania, the next renewal is a little less than a year away (up in September 2025).

As part of the renewal process for your most recent ones completed, you likely had to check your tally of professional development hours (PDH) that you needed to attest that you had to meet the minimum for renewal. In some cases you may have had to "scrounge" around for some last-minute credits to get the minimum (it happens, we're all busy). As you may know, our Section's meeting program is generally able to count toward your continuing education requirement (meetings that the Section believes would not count will be prefaced as such in the meeting announcement) for many states. We also offer various Technical Group/Institute and YMF meetings and events that offer PDH. We continue to have a verification program in place to help our members obtain and track PDH's.

Over a two-year licensure period, our Section meeting program alone could amount to half of what one needs to meet many states' requirements. Thus, it may be a good idea to start planning ahead now to see what you may need for your next renewal and see how our program can help you attain this. Additionally, ASCE National offers free on-demand webinars and coursework that will get you up to 10 PDH's as a benefit of your membership. Information on this is available in the Membership section of the ASCE National website (www.asce.org).

Webinar Library Closing at End of Year

After maintaining the Webinar Library during the pandemic, we are sad to announce the closure of this program. Our Teachable account will remain active through the remainder of 2024, at which point webinars will no longer be viewable for PDHs. Any existing PDH certificates you have received will remain on your personal Teachable account, and will be honored by the Section. Existing recordings will be transferred to our Youtube Channel for posterity.

> YOUR CARD CAN BE HERE!

CONTACT US AT newseditor@asce-philly.org

SECTION AGENCY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

As you may be aware, our Section offers a Section Sponsorship Program to allow firms to help provide our various activities and programs for our membership and the Civil Engineering community in the Philadelphia area. This involves a financial commitment which is reflected in the placement of the participant's logo and business card in *THE NEWS* and on the Section's website, along with several other benefits.

Additionally, we have established an informal

recognition of government and quasi-government agencies for the assistance they have provided us, through volunteer assistance and award recognition among other things. Our Agency Partners' logos are shown below.

