



Vol 98-3

#### Our 113th Year

The Sidney Robin Memorial Newsletter of the Philadelphia Section ASCE

November 2025



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Provide essential value to our members and partners, advance Civil Engineering, and serve the public good.



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NON OMNIA POSSUMUS OMNES (WE CANNOT ALL DO EVERYTHING)

## SECTION MEETING SCHEDULE 2025-26

The Section Meeting program for the upcoming season is in its formative stages 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 continue to schedule these as we can.

Also, our Technical Groups and Institutes will have their usual programs of meetings and events which will be noted in e-blasts.

#### The 2026 "half" of the season will include these meetings

January 21 (Wednesday) – joint meeting with American Society of Highway Engineers, Delaware Valley Section (Crowne Plaza Hotel, King of Prussia), US 422 Upgrade, Sanatoga/Pottstown

February – to be determined

March 12 - Maggiano's Center City, topic to be determined

April 16 – Breakout sessions, location/topics to be determined

May 14 – Spring Social, The Lucy, Center City

## DECEMBER MULTI-SOCIETY LUNCHEON MEETING

Engineers' Club of Philadelphia and Numerous Technical Societies

#### **TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2025**

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

### **NOVEMBER DINNER MEETING**

#### **THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2025**

Maggiano's Little Italy, 1201 Filbert Street (corner of 12th Street), Center City Cocktails 5:30 PM, Dinner 6:30 PM, Meeting Presentation Follows (approximately 7:30 PM)

SUBJECT: ALL ABOARD – Transformation of Amtrak's William H. Gray III 30th Street Station

SPEAKERS: Abagail Barman, Thomas Bonner and Jared Celona, Amtrak RESERVATION DEADLINE – MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10. The cost per attendee is \$60, \$40 for government/agency employees and half-price (\$30) for students. PLEASE NOTE NEW PRICES ARE IN EFFECT AS OF THIS MEETING. These apply to reservations received by the RSVP deadline. The cost includes dinner and two drink tickets.

Reservations can be made through our website (www.asce-philly.org) and paid via PayPal or by check. Checks will be accepted at the event 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/standby 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 rate.

Amtrak project management will present on the large-scale restoration and renovation project underway at Gray 30th Street Station to enhance the station's functionality and improve the customer experience. The project will modernize and renovate nearly 500,000 sf of space, improve the Market Street Plaza, expand retail offerings, and provide other benefits to the local community, all while maintaining the historic integrity of the station. This presentation will cover the status of the renovation effort as well as how this project and the 30th Street Station District Plan will transform adjacent neighborhoods and our city as a whole.

This event is eligible for one professional development hour (PDH).

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Happy Fall

As the weather cools down, the Section's activity is heating up! We were excited for our first dinner meeting in October, and not just because of the delicious food and the PDH. In fact, my favorite part of all our meetings is the opportunity to meet new people and reunite with current friends and colleagues.

Personally, ASCE was the pathway to some of my best

professional relationships, and it all started with a colleague bringing me to an ASCE Philadelphia Younger Member Forum event shortly after I graduated. Sure, someone's first event can be tough as they might only know the person who brought them along, but it gets easier, and they'll remember that you were the one who opened the door for them.

If you're reading this and you attend our local ASCE events, I implore you to encourage a colleague to tag along—it could change their career (and life!) in a very positive way. And it doesn't matter whether they just graduated or are years into their career; all are welcome!

Enjoy the fall! I look forward to seeing you at an event soon, and hope you come say hi if you see me... especially if you've brought a first-time colleague. Be well and stay safe!

Best Regards, Jesse Gormley President, ASCE Philadelphia Section

#### **HOLD THESE DATES**

## ENGINEERS WEEK EVENTS SCHEDULED

The Engineers' Club of Philadelphia, through its Delaware Valley Engineers Week Committee, will cite **Engineers Week 2026 (February 19-28)**. 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 19** (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** is a networking and social event to cite the newly-inducted Delaware Valley Young Engineer of the Year. Venues and schedule are still being considered and will be provided in future updates.

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.

The problem with socialism is that sooner or later you run out of other people's money.

— Margaret Thatcher

## ASCE, PHILADELPHIA SECTION OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTION — 2025–26 SEASON

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#### **PAST PRESIDENTS**

Kevin Brown, GFT

Joseph Natale, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Mohamed Elghawy, TPD

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 service and wish them well in their spots.

#### Contact Us:

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#### **PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE**

**Editor of THE NEWS** 

Robert Wright

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Jesse Gormley, Dennis Wilson

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### YOUNGER MEMBER FORUM NEWS

Laurel Welch, Forum Editor Kevin Walsh, Forum President 2025-26 HNTB, jkwalsh@hntb.com

#### **Annual YMF Phillies Game & Tailgate**

September 26

The 2025 YMF Phillies Game and Tailgate was a fantastic event and nice kickoff to a weekend, with every ticket claimed for the Friday evening game and tailgate (or was it the other way around?). More than 80 attendees came to enjoy food, drinks, and



games before heading into the ballpark. Our DJ kept the energy high throughout the tailgate and the night ended perfectly with the Phils defeating the Twins 3–1 in the first game of their final regular-season series. Thank you to everyone who joined us and made the event such a memorable one!

#### **Fall Adopt-A-Highway**

October 11

Seven members of the ASHE Delaware Valley Young Member Committee and YMF joined forces to clean our two-mile adopted stretch of Bethlehem Pike between the Lafayette Ave Connector and Butler Pike in Ambler/Fort Washington. Our volunteers persisted through rainy weather on the second half of the cleanup. Afterwards the group dried out and enjoyed lunch at Fireside Bar & Grille. Thank you to our volunteers and Fireside Bar & Grille for providing the meeting location! We look forward to doing it all again at the spring clean-up!



## THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS — 35 YEARS STRONG!

At this early point in our season, we are proud to note that 14 firms have agreed to participate in our Section Sponsor program thus far. We extend our special and collective THANKS to each sponsor for their financial commitment and support.

And, as noted in the title, this is the 35th season that we have been offering our sponsorship program. This effort started in our 1991-92 season with nine firms as the "pioneers" (one remains at present). Thanks to all of you who have participated in this over the years.

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*.

We contacted last year's sponsors in late August to determine their interest for this season, so if you were "in" last year but haven't yet renewed, we look forward to having you back.

If you have an interest in joining our sponsorship program, please contact **Bob Wright** at **newseditor@ asce-philly.org** for more details.

We are also offering a higher level of sponsorship this year, which will offer an opportunity for a firm to be featured as the exclusive sponsor of our regular e-mail blasts. This would entail a sponsor to be highlighted in the Section blasts that will be going out for a particular month and would be limited to one month per sponsor. This is available for an additional fee.

#### **NATIONAL ASCE IN THE NEWS**

### ASCE Names Interim Leadership Team

ASCE has appointed an interim leadership team. Maria Lehman, Past National President, will serve as interim executive director. In this capacity, she will work closely with executive director Tom Smith to ensure an effective transition, and she will assume many of the public-facing duties of the executive director upon Smith's retirement as ASCE executive director at the end of this year. Chief Operating Officer Edward Stafford will also assume additional executive functions as part of the interim leadership team, with responsibility for managing headquarters staffing and operations.

## New President Takes the Reins

2025 President Feniosky Peña-Mora handed off to Marsha Anderson Bomar, who took the reins as Society president during the ASCE Business Meeting in Seattle in October. "We are the best-kept secret on the planet," Anderson Bomar said during her introductory presidential speech. "We don't want to be visible only when there is a disaster. We want the world to know that we are the problem-solvers. We deliver solutions that better lives every day." Every year, the business meeting marks the transition of power at ASCE. Outgoing President Peña-Mora also inducted the new board members, including the new President-Elect, Carol Haddock.

Anderson Bomar, celebrating her presidential moment with her children and grandchildren, was emotional about the love and support she received. And now she's ready to move ASCE forward. "So what can you expect during my year as president?" she asked from the stage. "Significant progress on improving the pipeline and addressing workforce issues, and consistent energetic connections between me and the ASCE members."

I never scored a basket. The players did everything. Without players, you can't have a game.

— Lou Carnesecca

## **N-ASCE\***

#### THE SEWER AS AN ART GALLERY...?

Maybe the world's swankiest manhole covers, and other art elements, are concealing London's £4.6bn super sewer. The new facility, built to tackle 18m tonnes of rising excrement, the Tideway project has also generated dramatic new public spaces dotted with giant artworks. We thus offer the "stink tour" of this new London sewer tunnel.

A group of colossal black tombstones has landed on the north bank of the Thames in London, looking like mysterious monoliths from another civilization. They stand near Blackfriars Bridge as imposing bookends, rising almost 10 meters, folded in places to form platforms and benches, slipping down in others to become one with the pavement. Water trickles from the summit of one huge slab, running down ridges and splashing into a sunken pool. Another pair rise straight out of the river wall, hoisting wooden fenders with them from the swirling brown waters below.

Scottish artist Nathan Coley was asked to make the sewer ventilation chimneys resemble trees, like they do with phone masts. Coley is better known for his big illuminated signs, but there may be a good reason he didn't want his sculptures to reference their subject this time. His slabs are the most visible part of the Tideway project, London's £4.6bn super sewer, built to prevent 18m tons of sewage overflowing into the river each year. These enigmatic structures are, in effect, memorials to the era of flushing fecal matter straight into the Thames. The thing about the super sewer, however, is that it's all hidden. So no one knows where they're spending all this money. Coley noted he wanted to make something really exciting to celebrate it.

There has been much talk of Tideway's spiraling budget and endless delays, its questionable usefulness, and its boss's pay. But little attention has been given to the fact that a consequence of this costly pipe is a series of new, truly public spaces on the river, for the first time in a generation. One of the seven spaces created as a happy byproduct of the sewer is the 250-meter long stretch which includes a broad granite expanse dotted with trees, benches and Coley's black slabs.

From Putney in the west to Deptford in the east, Tideway's meandering 25km path has necessitated the construction of new bits of land, poking out into the Thames to connect the existing overflow sewers (or "lost rivers" to the romantically inclined) to the new tunnel below. Totaling more than three acres, the spaces vary in size according to the volume of waste that must be intercepted and sent whooshing on its way in a spiraling vortex down huge new drop shafts, all of which happens beneath and is hidden under the neatly paved plazas. They are essentially giant manhole covers. In an ideal world for the engineers, they

would be fenced-off compounds that they could easily access. Instead, Tideway decided to create new public spaces, in just the same way that the original embankments were given back to the public in return for the disruption that was caused. Before Joseph Bazalgette built the Victorian network of sewers in the 1860s, London met the Thames with a muddy, sewage-soaked foreshore. The construction of the sewers led to the creation of the embankments: great brick and stone feats of engineering that introduced stately, tree-lined riverside promenades for the first time. Stroll along Victoria Embankment today and you will find the original cast-iron benches held up by sphinxes and camels, lampposts supported by entwined dolphins, and ornate sewer ventilation chimneys, or "stink pipes", in the form of stylized doric columns. So how do Tideway's contemporary equivalents compare?

The separation of architecture and engineering in the ensuing 160 years, along with the rise of bureaucratic procurement systems, has led to somewhat more fragmented results. Tideway was a totally engineering-led project. When you're sitting in meetings with a couple of hundred civil engineers, they see the architecture and landscape as a kind of fluff on top.

Accordingly, the results feel less tied together by a unifying hand than pieced together by committees with catalogues, something one artist involved describes as "Screwfixation". Service and inspection requirements mean the pavements have become hymns to the manhole cover, peppered with innumerable service hatches for sewer buggies, drones and probes. One site features 55 hatches in an area half the size of a tennis court. The spaces are not all yet fully complete and open, but they have the slight sense of engineering that has been tiled with a coating of architecture, and garnished with public art.

Still, there are some striking flourishes. One of the most consistent, recognizable elements, which help give the project a kind of site-wide identity, are the distinctive black cast-iron ventilation shafts. These modern-day stink pipes look like the funnels of submerged ships, twisting and flaring out as they rise to five meters, their form mimicking the path of the plummeting sewage vortex. Softening their heft, the funnels are inscribed with gnomic lines of poetry by Dorothea Smartt, alluding to the various lost rivers being intercepted below the pavement.

There are other contextual nods. At Chelsea, in front of the Royal hospital, the brick river wall has been extended out in a sinuous sweep to form a swelling, brick-paved space defined by stepped seating, incorporating colorful stripes of glazed bricks by artist Florian Roithmayr. One enters through a gap in Bazalgette's original river wall,

which has been radically sliced open, with the cut granite left pleasingly raw.

A tempting staircase leads down to the water, although it is sadly fenced off. The architects had hoped they could provide access to the beach for mudlarkers, but the Port of London authority (controller of the Thames) vetoed the idea on safety grounds. Officially, the steps are therefore an escape route, rather than an access point.

Despite the guidance to treat the river as foe, the architects have tried where they can to soften the relationship with the water. Most of the spaces slope subtly up towards the flood defense line, so you can see the Thames more easily rather than it being blocked behind the river wall. A footwetting frisson can also be had thanks to the incorporation of "floodable terraces", which get splashed when big boats pass at high tide. Elsewhere, great iron mooring rings, grasped between lions' teeth, are now surreally marooned inland, giving you a sense of transgressing beyond the river wall.

While Chelsea opts for organic curving brick, the space at Victoria Embankment, known as Tyburn Quay, is a more sober granite plaza raised on a square plinth, reflecting the formal surrounds of Westminster. A faintly Miesian pavilion will house kiosks for a cafe and public restrooms, its stone walls inscribed with the profile of Bazalgette's sewer, while an inlaid ring of bronze in the ground marks the location of the gigantic drop shaft below the paving.

The artist commissions bring further intrigue, from a forthcoming flotilla of trading vessels by Hew Locke in Tower Hamlets, to playful plinths by Studio Weave in Deptford, to Claire Barclay's cast bronze oar balustrades in Putney, marking the starting point of the University Boat Race. Tyburn Quay's grey granite decorum has been cheekily disrupted by Richard Wentworth, who has installed a series of cast bronze sandbags, which droop in haphazard piles over the stone steps, alluding to makeshift flood defences.

His saucy sacks are under wraps until the space opens later this year, but the texture of the hessian has been meticulously recreated in bronze by the Lockbund sculpture foundry in Oxfordshire, which is also producing his bronze benches for Albert Embankment, near the MI6 headquarters. In an allusion to the Vauxhall origins of sanitaryware manufacturer Royal Doulton, Wentworth has designed seating in the form of conjoined toilets.

Thanks to the Guardian for this information.

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

### **OCTOBER SECTION MEETING**

October 7, 2025

Maggiano's Little Italy, Center City

#### **Ethical Issues in Prevention Through Design (PtD)**

By Robert Wright, Editor

Our first Section dinner meeting of the 2025-26 season fell on a nice early fall day, with us having to pivot with our date, varying from our usual second Thursday pattern given the availability of the venue and a conflict with religious holidays. Despite this change our loyal following still found us and over 80 attendees filled the room at Maggiano's to hear about ethics, with a slight twist. For a reason apparently unknown to many (if anyone knew), a large contingent of students, over 30, were at the meeting, representing **Drexel University**, the featured Student Chapter, along with **Temple** and **Widener**. As is usual at our first meeting, there was a good deal of catching up and talk of summer activities, which made for a lively networking hour, and as usual President **Jesse Gormley** had an unenviable task to settle things down and get everyone seated to start dinner and get the evening underway.

President Gormley provided a number of announcements to bring all up to speed. He also cited **Christian Antisell**, the recipient of our Section's Young Government Engineer of the Year award, and presented Chris with his award plaque. (Yes, we usually do this at the Spring Social, but Chris was unable to attend the Social, thus he was recognized a little later than our other awardees.) Representatives of the Drexel Student Chapter were brought front and center to update everyone on happenings at the Chapter, with Chapter President **Reina Chang** and Vice President **Karamoko Sow** handling the presentation.

As dinner wound down, President Elect **Dennis Wilson** introduced the evening's presenter, **T. Michael O'Toole**, who gave an overview of the concept of **Prevention Through Design (PtD)** and how it can be applied to

design projects. PtD is an emerging safety management technique in which the safety of construction and maintenance workers is explicitly considered during the design phase of a project. Dr. O'Toole highlighted other Codes of Ethics with which many engineers are familiar, including ASCE's, which is among the more comprehensive, encompassing, applicable and situation-appropriate codes. He summarized the PtD concept, with several examples from multiple construction sectors, and a discussion/review of the relevant portions of the ASCE and NSPE engineering codes of ethics. This included items that can be





introduced and controlled by the design team before the work moves to construction and a hierarchy of these controls that should be considered.

Several questions were offered from the audience and Dr. O'Toole ably responded to them accordingly.

President Gormley thanked Dr. O'Toole for his informative presentation and offered him the Section's speaker gift as a token of our appreciation for his effort.

# TIME TO PAY YOUR DUES... OR RECRUIT A NEW MEMBER? OR UPGRADE?

As a reminder, your ASCE dues for 2026 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.

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 the recent changes and consolidations in membership grade, one can now join as a full Member, which is available to those having "an interest in the advancement of the purposes and objectives of the Society" as well as civil engineering-degreed individuals. Non-CE-degree applicants were previously accepted at the Affiliate Member grade, but this has been folded into the Member grade with the noted recent revisions.

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.

Of the more than 160,000 members in 177 countries that are represented by ASCE, just 3 percent hold the prestigious honor of being an ASCE Fellow. These individuals have made celebrated contributions to the profession and developed creative solutions that have changed lives around the world.

The specific requirements for application for Fellow are listed on asce.org.

## 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. Hopefully you have renewed your Pennsylvania license (these expired at the end of September), and New Jersey and Delaware will be up for renewal in the spring.

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. 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).

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### 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.













