



Valley Engineer Newsletter

January 2020

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Feb. 8, 2020 MATHCOUNTS, Trexler Middle School, 851 N. 15th Street, Allentown, PA

Feb. 21, 2020 Engineer's Week Banquet, ArtsQuest Center at SteelStacks, 101 Founders Way, Bethlehem, PA 6:00 – 9:00 PM



**PENNSYLVANIA SOCIETY
 OF
 PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS**

**LEHIGH VALLEY CHAPTER
 (ORGANIZED 1935)**

CARBON, LEHIGH, MONROE, & NORTHAMPTON COUNTIES

President's Message

Alex Dezubay, PE

Happy New Year to all. January brings us new opportunities in the new year and a look ahead to a busy February. Next month we have MATHCOUNTS® and Engineer's Week.

On February 8th our Chapter will host MATHCOUNTS, at Trexler Middle School in Allentown. Come on out and volunteer, or just take the opportunity to see many very bright young people compete and surprise us with their math proficiency and speed. This event is a look into the future. Several of our scholarship winner were MATHCOUNTS contestants! Many of you have participated in MATHCOUNTS for many years as volunteers, and we again ask for your help. Contact Chris Williams at 610-398-0904.

We celebrate Engineer's Week with a banquet on Friday, February 21, at ArtsQuest Center, SteelStacks, 101 Founders Way, Bethlehem, PA 6:00 – 9:00 PM. This banquet is a celebration of our engineering profession. In a way it is a view of what our peers have done with their math and science skills combined with ability to apply those skills to solve practical problems. Our Chapter is a contributor. Please plan to attend. There is a significant discount for early registration.

We still need nominees for ENGINEER OF THE YEAR and YOUNG ENGINEER OF THE YEAR. Please look around your organizations for deserving nominees. Nomination forms are on our website. Please submit the application to me, President@LVPSPE.org.

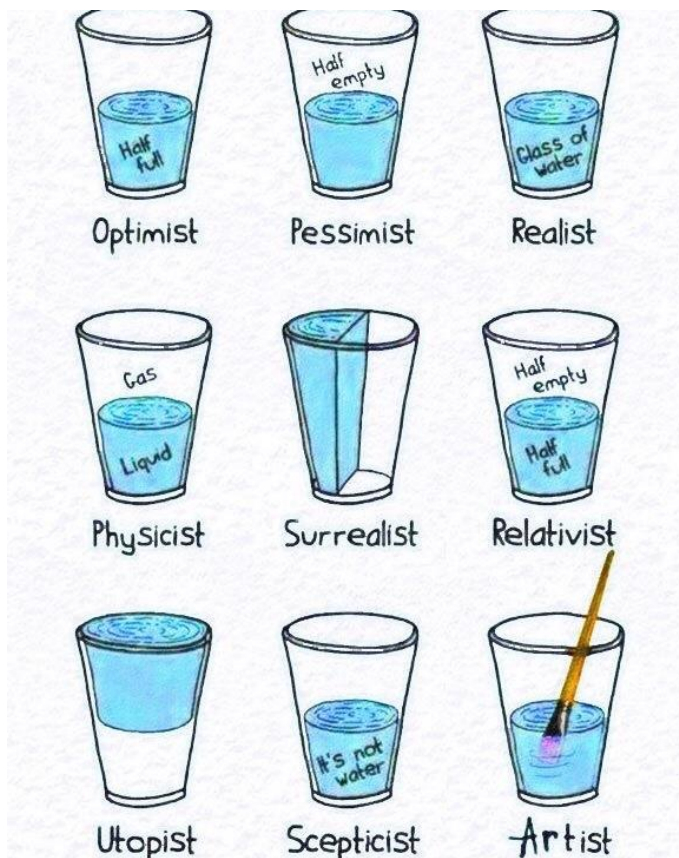
Every year this chapter awards scholarships to several outstanding area high school graduates who are enrolled in a college or university in an engineering curriculum. February marks the be-

ginning of our process of searching for candidates. Frank Walsh has been busy soliciting area businesses and individuals for donations to fund this endeavor. Please consider donating, or joining our committee. Scholarships will be awarded during our May banquet.

If you have not been active in LVPSPE, or want to become more active the beginning of this year, there are many opportunities at the beginning of this New Year. Attend some events.

Thank you.

Reality, is in the Mind



 A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to get its pants on.
 -Winston Churchill

**You think English is easy??
 I think a retired English major was bored...THIS IS GREAT!
 It took a lot of work to put this together!**

- The bandage was wound around the wound.
- The farm was used to produce produce.
- The dump was so full that it had to refuse more refuse.
- We must polish the Polish furniture.
- He could lead if he would get the lead out.
- The soldier decided to desert his dessert in the desert.
- Since there is no time like the present, he thought it was time to present the present.
- A bass was painted on the head of the bass drum.
- When shot at, the dove dove into the bushes.
- I did not object to the object.
- The insurance was invalid for the invalid.
- There was a row among the oarsmen about how to row.
- They were too close to the door to close it.
- The buck does funny things when the does are present.
- A seamstress and a sewer fell down into a sewer line.
- To help with planting, the farmer taught his sow to sow.
- The wind was too strong to wind the sail.
- Upon seeing the tear in the painting I shed a tear.
- I had to subject the subject to a series of tests.
- How can I intimate this to my most intimate friend?

So there, you have it...confusing, illogical, yet beautiful.

Continued on page 3

Let's face it - English is a crazy language. There is no egg in eggplant, nor ham in hamburger; neither apple nor pine in pineapple. English muffins weren't invented in England or French fries in France . Sweetmeats are candies while sweetbreads, which aren't sweet, are meat. We take English for granted. But if we explore its paradoxes, we find that quicksand can work slowly, boxing rings are square and a guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig.

And why is it that writers write but fingers don't fing, grocers don't groce and hammers don't ham? If the plural of tooth is teeth, why isn't the plural of booth, beeth? One goose, two geese. So one moose, two meese? One index, two indices? Doesn't it seem crazy that you can make amends but not one amend? If you have a bunch of odds and ends and get rid of all but one of them, what do you call it?

If teachers taught, why didn't preachers praught? If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat? Sometimes I think all the English speakers should be committed to an asylum for the verbally insane. In what language do people recite at a play and play at a recital? Ship by truck and send cargo by ship? Have noses that run and feet that smell?

How can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same, while a wise man and a wise guy are opposites? You have to marvel at the unique lunacy of a language in which your house can burn up as it burns down, in which you fill in a form by filling it out and in which, an alarm goes off by going on.

English was invented by people, not computers, and it reflects the creativity of the human race, which, of course, is not a race at all. That is why, when the stars are out, they are visible, but when the lights are out, they are invisible.

PS. - Why doesn't 'Buick' rhyme with 'quick' ?

AUGUST POLINSKE'S NINETY-RULE OF

PROJECT SCHEDULES: The first 90 percent of the job takes 90 percent of the time. The last 10 percent takes the other 90 percent.

Nigeria

Alfred Gruenke, PE

A couple of years ago I received an assignment from our Denmark office to go to Nigeria to assist training the electrical staff of a cement plant. The plant is located 60 km from Lagos, the capital. They say that we should occasionally step outside our comfort zone; Nigeria fit that bill, on many levels.

With 206 million inhabitants, Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa and the seventh most populous country in the world. Before going I was given a guide on conditions in Nigeria, and how to prepare.

First of all, there was a list of inoculations and medicines to prepare me for my jaunt into the West African Rainforest. The list of diseases from which I had to be protected was quite long, everything this side of bubonic plague. I can't remember all of them but shots for yellow fever and malaria pills were on the list. I took the malaria pills for a couple of weeks then stopped. They affected my mind. I had the ugliest dreams! Not nice ones involving fishing or time with my grandchildren or maybe Marilyn Monroe. No, the dreams involved people being run over by trains, that kind of thing. I decided that the cure for malaria was worse than the disease, so I stopped taking the pills. Maybe not the smartest thing to do. At the site whenever someone did something stupid or illogical we blamed the malaria pills.

We were told to be wary of possible personal violence by various perpetrators in order to rob us. The perp list included the police, soldiers, and, of course, criminals.

Not too reassuring. Fortunately, one of our colleagues was an American of Nigerian descent, who had lived there for a while. He guided us and we had no problems, though I did have an issue when I was at the airport to go home. Some soldiers found out I had purchased some local masks, and they insisted I had to pay export duty. I was able to negotiate my payment (*dash* in West Africa) down to around ten dollars.

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SCHOLARSHIP SPONSORS

A great way to be involved in the LVPSPE Chapter is to contribute to the **LVPSPE SCHOLARSHIP FUND**. Please Contact the Valley Engineer Editor to sponsor scholarships for the remainder of the calendar year.

If you would like to contribute in any amount – please send your TAX DEDUCTIBLE donation to PA ENGINEERING FUND. Donations should be mailed to:

LVPSPE
P.O. Box 3441
Allentown, PA 18106

Please note “LVPSPE Scholarship Fund” on the comment line.

Or, you may also contribute via the LVPSPE website <http://www.lvpspe.org/Donations>.

Scholarship application is at <http://www.lvpspe.org/Scholarships>. Any questions regarding scholarships can be directed to

Alex Dezubay, PE
610-597-2007
Scholarship@LVPSPE.org

PSPE SCHOLARSHIPS

The Pennsylvania Engineering Foundation currently administers the following scholarships for engineering students:

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- \$1,000 PEF Grant: (2 awards)

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- \$2,000 Pennsylvania Engineering Foundation Grant

Applications and guidelines are on-line now at <http://www.pspe.org/scholarships>

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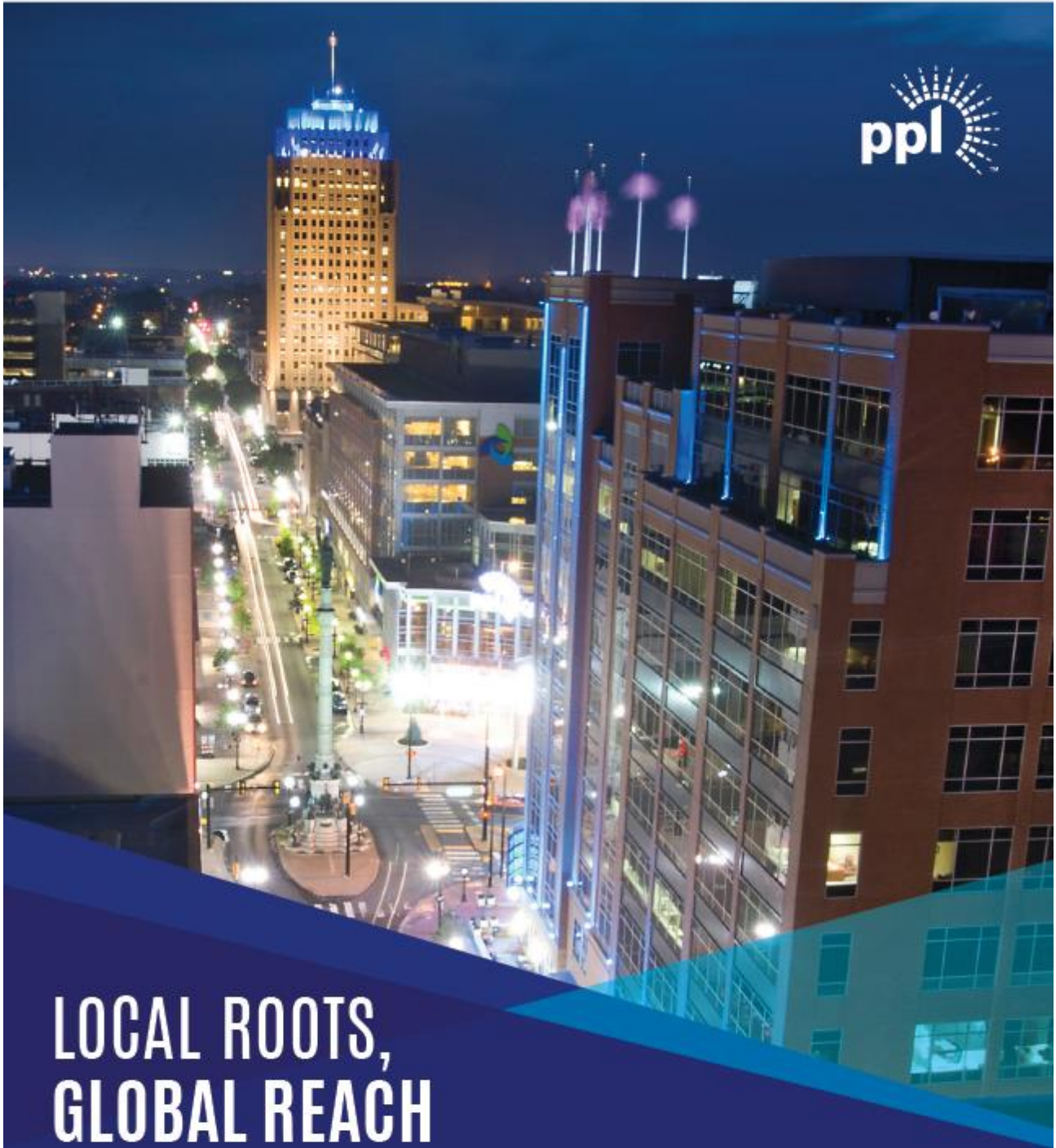
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Board of Direction Meetings

The monthly Board of Direction meetings are 6:00 PM on the second (2nd) Monday of each month. Open to all members; they are held at the office of Liberty Property Trust, 74 W. Broad Street, Suite 240, Bethlehem, PA.

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President@LVPSPE.org 610-597-2007

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Mary Rooney
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Congratulations to all of the LVPSPE scholarship recipients!

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Our colleague told us that even though the locals spoke any one of a number of languages, one can always assume that everyone also spoke English.



The Rain Forest

On the way to the site I saw houses that were spray painted "NOT FOR SALE." Our Nigerian colleague explained that proof of home ownership such as deeds, that kind of thing, was not available. If someone vacated a house for some period of time criminals would break into the house and sell it to some unsuspecting person. When the owners returned they found someone

else living there! So, the ugly graffiti alerted others that the house had legitimate owners who happened to be absent.



Nigerian carved masks. The center one was carved for the tourist trade. The others are "from the bush." They grace my basement wall.

Roads were often stolen. How does one steal a road, you ask? The roads were

Continued on page 15

macadam. Villagers would tear up the road, melt the macadam, and use it to waterproof their roofs. Rather ingenious.

The countryside between Lagos and the site was mostly scrub, six to ten feet high. It looked as if it had been farmland at one time but was now abandoned. It seemed to me that the soil was so fertile that if cultivated it could grow enough rice to feed half the world. I was told that corruption and bureaucracy prevented this from happening. What a shame.

We lived in a rather pleasant guest house in a compound surrounded by an eight-foot-high brick wall. The compound also had single homes for long term guests. We stayed for only a few weeks. The food in general was acceptable except for Nigerian pepper soup. One of our colleagues from Denmark specifically requested this for reasons I cannot understand, except to satisfy his masochism. Then, he asked for it again! It was so hot one could light a cigarette with it. I had to put in lots of rice to make it barely eatable. He was roundly admonished for this.



The on-site accommodations, next to the golf course.

There was a bar inside the compound that had Heinekens for less than a dollar a can, and an 18-hole golf course. The course was free, but one was required to hire two caddies, plus one person to supervise the

other two and drive the cart. One of their tasks was to go into the rough to chase any errant balls. We were warned not to go into the rough because of snakes. Suited me fine. There were signs around the course cautioning against walking on the course at night. Again, because of snakes.

For reasons I don't understand the short grass normally on greens cannot grow in Nigeria. Instead, the "greens" consisted of dark, hard-packed sand. At my skill level this was neither an advantage nor disadvantage. I understand the golf courses in Saudi Arabia have similar "greens."

However, it was in the training sessions that the uniqueness of Nigeria was most pronounced.

Training sessions normally go "OK, everybody go to page 146. There you will see ... blah ... blah ... blah ... blah ... blah. Any Questions? Ok, that's it for today, we'll continue tomorrow." Everybody gets up and leaves their manuals on the table, open to page 146. The next day they return and carry on.

These sessions were different. Everyone paid attention, hanging on every word I said. They were like sponges soaking up all the information presented, even my banter! They asked questions about anything and everything. No one fell asleep or looked out the window. Then, at the end of the day, they took their manuals with them and re-read what we had covered that day, plus other sections of the manuals that interested them. The next day they asked questions about the material! So, how can I run a training session if the students are pulling me, instead of me pulling them? I had to be at the top of my game to stay ahead of the class. What an exhilarating experience!

Unfortunately, it was my only trip to that part of the world. Training people so anxious to learn is a thrill not soon forgotten.

Minutes for the January 13, 2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
6:00 pm at the Office of Barry Isett & Associates, Inc.
85 S. Route 100, Allentown, PA 18106

Attendees: Jeff Kutz, Chris Williams, Al Gruenke, Al Dezubay, Mary Rooney, Angelika Forndran, Frank Walsh

Call to Order: Alex Dezubay called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM

Programs:

- Activities – Jeff Kutz
 - January – Nothing set yet. Jeff will follow up on some options, Mary may be able to help.
 - February – Engineers’ Week Banquet February 21st at ArtsQuest. Typically 80-90 attendees. Early registration \$55 (by Feb 7th), late registration \$70. Board agreed to be a gold sponsor on a motion by Frank, seconded by Mary, all in favor.
 - May – Scholarship/Officer Installation Banquet, need to finalize the date.
- Newsletter – Al Gruenke
 - December/January newsletter was sent out. Next newsletter likely for February.
 - Let Al know if you have an article to submit. Angelika may be able to provide one.
- Membership Outreach
 - Motion by Angelika to waive fees for new member’s first event, seconded by Frank, all in favor.

MATHCOUNTS:

- February 8th with snow date of 9th.
- Kevin Campbell running event, has everything in order.
- Chris Williams is coordinating volunteers.

Lehigh Valley EOY/YEOY & Scholarships

- Fundraising – Frank Walsh
 - Got started in October. Currently \$3,050 pledged, \$2,700 received.
 - Frank contacted all donors from 2018 and 2019. Now soliciting additional contacts.
 - Group discussed various donor opportunities.
- Scholarships – Al Dezubay
 - Will send invitations to guidance counselors in next week or two.

Treasurer

- Treasurer Report – Ray Szczucki, no report

State Director

- State Director Report – Peter Staffeld, no report

Past President

- Past President Report – Brian Kutz, no report

Old Business/New Business

- PJAS
 - Mary asked for volunteers to work as PJAS judges. Event is February 29th at Northampton Community College.
- EOY/YEOY
 - We have no nominees yet. The group brainstormed ideas for where to find nominees.
- Quarterly Report
 - Need to submit quarterly report to PSPE Board of Direction. Angelika will coordinate with Peter.
- Social Media
 - Jeff will post EOY/YEOY solicitation.
- Website
 - Frank, Mary, Jeff and Al D. attended conference call with IT consultant, Charles Castano.
 - Discussed functionality, security, contacts, etc.
 - He will review our website and documents we provided him.
- Engineers' Week
 - Mary requested an article for submission into the LVBJ's Engineers' Week supplement. Could be an article about the Chapter's activities, purpose, mission, etc. Or article from a consultant regarding community outreach. Due Feb 4th.
 - Do we already have an article on the State Conference which we could use? Perhaps from the PSPE website?
 - Chapter will be doing a Gold sponsorship – 1 table, 8 seats, \$650
- Upcoming Board of Directors meetings for the 2019-2020 year:
 - February 10th
 - March 9th
 - April 13th
 - May TBD – LVPSPE Scholarships and Installation of Officers Banquet

Adjournment at 7:05 on a motion by Frank, seconded by Angelika.