



Valley Engineer Newsletter

January-February 2023

MATHCOUNTS 2023

The MATHCOUNTS® Lehigh Valley Regional Competition was recently held at Emmaus High School on Saturday, February 4, 2023.

MATHCOUNTS is a national math coaching and competition program for students in grades 6 through 8 that has reached millions of students in its 40-year history, aiming to promote interest and skills in math by making it as challenging, exciting, and prestigious as similar achievements in sports.

Now in its 39th year, beginning just one year after the national program’s inception, the 2023 Lehigh Valley MATHCOUNTS Competition brought together more than 120 students from 17 schools across Lehigh, Northampton, Carbon, and Monroe counties. The students take part in multiple competitions including an individual sprint round; a target round; a team round; and finally, the countdown round with a tournament-style single elimination for the top 10 individuals.

The annual competition was organized by the Lehigh Valley Chapter of the Pennsylvania Society of Professional Engineers (PSPE). It was made possible by the support of about 40 volunteers, many of whom are members of the local Chapter.

The top 6th grade individual score, top 7th grade individual score, and seven of the top 10 top individual scores – including the top four scores – were from students at Springhouse Middle School.

Continued on page 2



**PENNSYLVANIA SOCIETY
OF
PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS**

**LEHIGH VALLEY CHAPTER
(ORGANIZED 1935)**

CARBON, LEHIGH, MONROE, & NORTHAMPTON COUNTIES

Rounding out the other top individual scores were students from Nitschmann Middle School and Orefield Middle School. Additional honors went to students from St. Jane Frances de Chantal School, St. John Chrysostom Academy, and an honorable mention for Clear Run Intermediate School.

The winning team, four top-ranked individuals, and two top-ranked individuals that are not members of the winning team advance to the state competition in Harrisburg on March 17 & 18, and the top students from Pennsylvania will compete for national honors in Orlando, Florida, on May 14 & 15.



Orefield Middle School - Second place team

Engineers Week Banquet

The Lehigh Valley Engineering Council on February 24 held its annual Engineering Week Banquet at Wood Dining Room in Iacocca Hall at Lehigh University. Don Cunningham, President and CEO of the Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation was the speaker.

Our Chapter awards Engineer of the Year and Young Engineer awards, which are presented at this event.

Alex Dezubay, PE, Engineer of the Year

Al Dezubay, PE, is a technical professional that has been working as a licensed Mechanical Engineer for 35 years, having worked in various industries, and is currently Principal Engineer at Dezubay Engineering Services. He has a mechanical engineering degree from Penn State University and an MBA from the University of Pittsburgh. Al's area of expertise is HVAC and mechanical design including field testing and system optimization. His years of experience working in commercial and industrial facilities as a plant engineer have allowed him to successfully manage his own consulting business for over 15 years. Throughout his career he has held Professional Engineering licenses in Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Georgia.

Al is active in many local societies including having served as a board member, Vice President, President and currently Past President of the Lehigh Valley Chapter of the Pennsylvania Society of Professional Engineers (LVPSPE). Part of his efforts with the LVPSE include the support of the local scholarship program for Lehigh Valley high school students pursuing engineering of



Eddy Zhang - First place individual, 7th grade



Springhouse Middle School First place team

Continued on page 3

which he continues to serve on the evaluation committee. In addition to his efforts with professional societies, he has remained active in his church as President, Treasurer, Financial Council and Lector for Sacred Heart Parish. Other credits to his personal contributions to his community include acting as a board member for Mercy School for Special Learning and the Star and Crescent Foundation.



Engineer of the Year Alex Dezubay, receiving the award from LVPSPE President Jeff Kutz. Alex is Third generation Professional Engineer



Alex, with his wife Laura

Dear Friends at LVPSPE
Alex Dezubay, PE

Thank you for the Engineer of the Year award. I greatly appreciate that the members, officers, and board of direction have honored me this year. In my career and life, I have received a lot of help and support from my parents, supervisors, family, and my wife. My father (1946) and grand grandfather (1931) were both Penn-

sylvania PEs. I keep their licenses on my office wall as a reminder of the responsibility that comes with the PE license and the example they gave me to follow. The help and support have continued during my involvement with Lehigh Valley PSPE.

During a commencement speech I heard "associate yourself with people of character." I have done that during my time in LVPSPE. I am very grateful for the award; thanks again to those who nominated and voted for me.

Aaron Cali, Young Engineer of the Year

Aaron Cali attended Penn State University and was awarded a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering in 2015. Starting at the Schuylkill branch campus, Aaron was a member of the Center for Academic Excellence and worked as a peer tutor in English, Math, and Science. Before starting to pursue internship opportunities, he participated in an organic chemistry lab research team which resulted in multiple publications in scientific journals. Between his junior and senior year, Aaron took an internship position at H.T. Lyons to gain experience in the mechanical construction industry.

After graduating, Aaron took a full-time position with H.T. Lyons in Fogelsville, PA (where he still works today). H.T. Lyons is a design-build mechanical contractor with in-house engineering staff that services commercial and industrial businesses across the Northeast U.S. He started as a junior design engineer with engineering calculations and CAD drafting as his primary responsibilities. While studying for the PE exam, Aaron continued to advance in his design abilities and became responsible for the design of renovation and new construction HVAC projects. As a senior engineer and P.E., he is now transitioning into a role focusing on pre-construction project development and assisting in early design coordination. His core responsibilities include engineering evaluation of issues, presentation of potential solutions to customers, and implementation of designs that meet and exceed the owner's expectations. Aaron is also actively involved in the Employee Engagement committee and internship program, with the goal of improving the culture of the business and the morale of his coworkers.

Continued on page 4

Aaron recently completed his MBA at Lehigh University with a focus in Finance. Through the degree program, he learned concepts and practices that will improve his ability in constructing projects and estimates in a financially sound manner. Aaron intends to use this knowledge to take more ownership over the management of pre-construction opportunities at H.T. Lyons over the next three to five years.

Aaron is married and he and his wife, Mason, have an 18-month-old daughter. He is an active member of his church and enjoys all types of music and sports.

----- **Living in Egypt**

Alfred Gruenke, PE

Egypt was my first overseas assignment working for Fuller Company. I'm flexible in my living and working environment, but I can summarize my experience as "interesting."

Two other men accompanied me. Our first residence was a maybe two-star hotel, *Fandah Alharieh*, Hotel Liberty in Heliopolis, where I was first made aware of the existence of 30 watt light bulbs! Who knew such things existed? Otherwise, not too bad. The restaurant was clean, and the food was quite good. Fortunately, my epicurean expectations are broad.

The site was ninety miles from Heliopolis. Initially, a Peugeot station wagon took us to site. These were quite popular in Egypt at the time. They were often referred to as "Flying Coffins" due to their high accident rate. Whoever sat next to the driver was tasked with nudging him occasionally to keep him awake.

A note on Heliopolis. Heliopolis is a suburb of Cairo. Not a suburb as we know; it was more like an adjacent mostly residential city, *Masr el Gedida*, New Egypt, in Arabic.

We soon moved to the guesthouse, located on Mohammed Farid Street in Heliopolis. It had a cook, maid service, separate bedrooms, and three bathrooms. We also had a Fuller van and driver to drive us to site. That made traveling safer. Up to ten men were housed there, both Fuller personnel and vendors. I still marvel that that many men can live in such close proximity without conflict! We had some, but not many. Some showered before we ate supper, some

showered afterwards. It always worked out. The cook and the chief housekeeper spoke English, which simplified communications.

The cook prepared breakfast and supper. For lunch I packed some bread and cheese. Thursday we worked half a day so we only had breakfast, and we were off Friday. Thursday supper and Friday we were on our own. Fortunately, there were a number of pretty good restaurants in the area.

One person, dubbed the "quartermaster", collected \$4.00 per day from each person, bought the food and directed the cook. He went shopping every other Friday and bought the meats, eggs, bread, cheese, and vegetables for us to eat. Often we were able to pay with US dollars, or we exchanged dollars for Egyptian pounds at the "black market" which was almost every jewelry shop. A little shady, but with little difficulty. Except one time when a couple of our people were arrested. That was a bit messy, but no permanent harm.

I am often asked how we managed to live in a country as foreign as Egypt. Fortunately, English is the international language of commerce and many people around the world can speak some fragments. Our drivers were our translators, and Egypt has quite an international environment so English speakers were not uncommon. But when living in a foreign country it helps if one can speak some of the local language. Besides, being able to speak another language is fun, and liberating! I was determined to be able to speak enough Arabic to get by. Just trying to speak Arabic impressed Egyptians. It's not an easy language.

When I arrived, the quartermaster was one of our vendors. I wasn't that interested in how things were organized but accompanied him occasionally on a couple of shopping trips.

Many of the stores we went to had English speakers. I noted that the quartermaster was buying canned vegetables. I had no comments at that time.

The big item was meats. We went to the butchers and bought beef, frozen chicken, and veal cutlets. No pork. When dealing with the butchers it was important to always tip the

Continued on page 13

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 any amount – please send your TAX-DEDUCTIBLE donation to PA ENGINEERING FUND. Donations should be mailed to:

**PA Engineering Foundation % LVPSPE
P.O. Box 195
Northampton, PA 18067**

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

PEF SCHOLARSHIPS

The Pennsylvania Engineering Foundation oversees the Pennsylvania MATHCOUNTS program and PEF Scholarships. The purpose is to help nurture future engineers.

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William Erdman, PE
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Thank you, for being you.

Alfred Gruenke, PE, MBA

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Internet Addresses

National Society of Professional Engineers

www.NSPE.org

Pennsylvania Society of Professional Engineers

www.PSPE.org

Lehigh Valley Chapter – PSPE

www.LVPSPE.org

2022 – 2023 State Officers

State officers

State Director – Michael Basta PE, F-NSPE

Directors@LVPSPE.org

Alt State Director – Angelika Forndran, PE

Directors@LVPSPE.org

VP Northeast

Marleen Troy, PE, PhD

570-408-4615

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 ZAP Engineering & Construction Services, Inc., 1 E. Broad Street, Suite 400, Bethlehem and via Zoom meeting.

2022 – 2023 Chapter Officers

Chapter officers

President – Jeff Kutz, EIT

President@LVPSPE.org

215-325-1303

Vice President – Alexa Rooney, EIT

VicePresident@LVPSPE.org

610-774-6011

Treasurer – Ray Szczucki, PE

Treasurer@LVPSPE.org

610-614-1245

Secretary – Chris Williams, PE, LEED AP

Secretary@LVPSPE.org

610-398-0904

Past President – Al Dezubay, PE

PastPresident@LVPSPE.org

610-597-2007

Chapter Directors

Director – Mary Rooney, PE

Directors@LVPSPE.org

Director – Frank Walsh, PE

Directors@LVPSPE.org

butcher (*baksheesh*) to ensure good cut of meat. The price of food was controlled by the government with no regard to quality. Baksheesh ensured better quality.

Different countries, different cultures. Our driver didn't turn the headlights on at night. For some reason they think it drains the battery! The first time this situation came up our driver said, why? There's nothing out there. He turned the lights on, and there was nothing there, so he turned them off. We threatened him with severe offspring deprivation, so he turned them back on.

Taxi drivers usually spoke some semblance of English so getting around was easy. However, one had to be careful. Every taxi had three prices; one for locals, one for more knowledgeable expats, and one for foreigners, which was often ten times the locals' price.

One doesn't have to know all the words, a couple of hundred words are rudimentary sufficient. I was confident enough in my linguistic abilities that I had my wife and two-year-old daughter accompany me for over a month in an apartment set aside for that purpose. I bought food, Joanie cooked, or we went out to eat. Quite an experience all around!

The mantle of quartermaster obviously fell to others as people moved in and out of the guesthouse due to site requirements. Eventually, Fuller employee Sunny Modjadidi became quartermaster. Sunny is from Afghanistan and is fluent Arabic. That made it easy. One of the changes he made was to buy local vegetables instead of canned vegetables. Here we were, in the middle of one of the largest vegetable gardens on Earth, and we were buying canned vegetables from Bulgaria! He just gave the cook a couple of bucks and told him buy them from a market down the street.

When Sunny left someone else became quartermaster. Then, tragedy struck! Our English-speaking cook quit, and was replaced with Abraham, whose English vocabulary consisted of two words – "Oh" and "kay". I was the only person in the guesthouse who spoke any Arabic, so I got the job.

You talk to people, you ask questions, you see things. There was quite an expat community in Cairo, and we exchanged information. Expats, by

universal international consensus, help each other. I noted that the frozen chickens were delivered by an open truck and dumped on the ground. Not too appetizing. Instead, I bought chickens "on the wing". Butchering them cost about 25 cents extra. I found a fish market and changed our diet a bit. In the Shubra district there were shops with a variety of more Western foods such as bacon and lunch meat. That was a treat.

One should always remember that one can't pack home cooking in a suitcase. I found some really good spicy shrimp (*gambari*) that had been deep fried in oil and various spices. I bought a couple of kilos and brought them to the guesthouse. One of the more squeamish guests questioned how they were prepared. I explained the process to him and assured him that like a car, the oil was changed every six months! He kept eating. They were that good.

Coffee filters were always in short supply. If a store had them, you bought as many as possible, then shared them with other expats.

Thanksgiving in Egypt! Fuller had a policy, they will pay for all Thanksgiving expenses incurred. I issued a dictum, anyone going home for R&R had to bring back some goodies not available locally. I managed to find two turkeys (*terkia*), on the wing, for our Thanksgiving! I gave Abraham instructions, and he prepared a memorable meal. I made it a true Thanksgiving, inviting our drivers, their wives, and Abraham's wife.



The pièce de résistance, the Thanksgiving turkey

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Thanksgiving dinner. Us ex-pats, our drivers, their wives, the cook's wife. I'm sitting in the front, with my back to the camera.



The hors d'oeuvre table

Communication with the cook was somewhat dicey. I could never get him to understand that beef does not have to be well-done, medium, or even rare was ok. I asked him to add eggs to the meatloaf. Cutting the meatloaf, a boiled egg appeared like a giant eye! He had boiled an egg and put it in the raw hamburger. My Arabic just was not good enough to explain that he was supposed to take a raw egg and blend it into the hamburger before cooking.

Living overseas can be an adventure. As I stated previously, it helps immensely if one has at least the rudiments of the language. If not, you may be in a situation as I was in Korea. I had no idea what the items on the menu were, so I pointed to the second item. It was octopus soup. It was pretty good. You have to be flexible.

After a year in Heliopolis we moved to site. Now that was another adventure!

 "Idleness is fatal only to the mediocre."
 -Albert Camus

 "That I have a merry heart and take things lightly, that is my good fortune. Do I live but to think about life? Should I rather not enjoy the present moment?"
 -Goethe

 "Whoever you are—I have always depended on the kindness of strangers."
 -Blanche Dubois, 'A Streetcar Named Desire

 "Explaining a joke is like dissecting a frog. You understand it better but the frog dies in the process."
 -E.B. White

 "I had to decide early in life, between dishonest humility, and honest arrogance, and I chose the latter."
 -Frank Lloyd Wright

Lehigh Valley Chapter
Pennsylvania Society of Professional Engineers
Lehigh, Northampton, Monroe, and Carbon Counties

Minutes for the January 9, 2023 Board of Directors Meeting
6:00pm on Microsoft Teams

Attendees: Jeff Kutz, Al Dezubay, Ray Szczucki, Chris Williams, and Mary Rooney

A. Call to Order: 6:06

B. President – Jeff Kutz

- Jeff started a new job, will have a new meeting space available soon, probably March. Working on getting emails updated for LVPSPE and PSPE correspondence.
- Jeff will reach out to Alexa about a January event.
- We have a YEOY application, still looking for EOY candidates.
- All agreed \$650 Gold sponsor for eight seats at table. Would invite EOY & YEOY plus one guest each. And four additional members filling out table, reimbursing the Chapter.
- Al will take care of Jan/Feb newsletter, needs article from Jeff.
- Mary mentioned company project-related articles could be published in Lehigh Valley Business Journal. Feb 4th deadline. +/-750 words.
- Chris reported that MATHCOUNTS preparations are underway, discussed various aspects of the event.

B. Fundraising – Frank Walsh

- Frank provided an update by email.
 - i. Pledges of \$5,750
 - ii. Received \$2,300 so far
 - iii. Projecting \$8,400 total in donations

C. Scholarships – Jeff Kutz

- Jeff starting to reach out to schools. Will confirm updated contacts.

D. Treasurer – Ray Szczucki

- Reimbursements for banquet payments going out shortly.
- Ray discussed payments from holiday banquet.
- Current balances as of 12/30:
 - i. \$1,839.72 checking
 - ii. \$8,326.06 savings
- Made payment to Sports Awards of \$725.39 on 12/16
- Monthly Wild Apricot fee \$110
- Ray discussed Wild Apricot java script notification.
- Will take care of LVEC payment.

E. State Director – Mike Basta

- Mike reported by email:
 - i. Next board meeting is 1/21
 - ii. Week of 1/16, will meet to plan PSPE Conference for September 20-23

F. Past President – Al Dezubay

- No report.

G. New Business

- Jeff looking to boost subscribers on LinkedIn page.
- Roles, responsibilities, and definitions – Will be filling new seats and would be beneficial to define what is expected in each position. Let's have this completed before end of this cycle in 2023.
- Future meetings:
 - i. February 13, 2023
 - ii. March 13, 2023
 - iii. April 10, 2023
 - iv. May 8, 2023

H. Adjournment on motion by Al Dezubay, seconded by Mary at 6:51.

**Lehigh Valley Chapter
 Pennsylvania Society of Professional Engineers
 Lehigh, Northampton, Monroe, and Carbon Counties**

Minutes for the February 13, 2023 Board of Directors Meeting
6:00pm on Microsoft Teams

Attendees: Jeff Kutz, Al Dezubay, Ray Szczucki, Chris Williams, Alexa Rooney, Mike Basta, and Mary Rooney

A. Call to Order: 6:06**B. President – Jeff Kutz**

- Engineers week dinner next week, 2/24/2023. Both the winners and their guests will be at our LVPSPE table, leaving four seats for members.
- March event – Alexa reported multiple tour locations are limiting to five – ten people per tour. Chris will investigate one option. Alexa following up on others.
- Al requested a write-up on Engineer's Week, requested photos, etc. for newsletter.
- Chris will look into putting together a LV MATHCOUNTS article for next newsletter.
- Jeff discussed funding of entry fees for MATHCOUNTS state competition. Fee is \$80 for eight people, \$640 total. All agreed the Chapter will take care of that fee.

C. Fundraising – Frank Walsh

- No update in meeting; however, prior email from 2/6/2023 reported \$10,000 pledged, \$5,400 received so far.

D. Scholarships – Jeff Kutz

- Jeff reaching out to guidance counselors next week to start application process.

E. Treasurer – Ray Szczucki

- Current balances on 1/31:
- 1,737.37 1/31 checking
- 9,477.08 savings
- More recent deposits of \$500 and \$2,150 from PEF.
- MATHCOUNTS spreadsheet received from Kevin Campbell. Ray provided \$520.72 reimbursement to Kevin.
- Received \$367.50 deposit on 2/3/2023 from PSPE dues.
- Discussed miscellaneous fees and payments related to MATHCOUNTS, website fees, etc.
- Wild Apricot imposing 25% fee increase for hosting website shortly. Mike and Angelika will reach out to PSPE to investigate if we can piggyback on PSPE's website. Chris will investigate another option to create a new website.

F. State Director – Mike Basta

- 1/21/2023 meeting updates:
 - i. Noted Sustainable Engineering Design member roundtable on March 6th.
 - ii. Nominated four individuals for various NSPE positions.
 - iii. Environmental building standard being worked on by house and senate, will keep an eye on any major changes there.
 - iv. State conference in Trevoze, PA at end of September.
 - v. Financial Report – On budget to date.

G. Past President – Al Dezubay

- Will continue looking into options for future Chapter positions.

H. New Business

- Future meetings:
 - i. March 13, 2023
 - ii. April 10, 2023
 - iii. May 8, 2023

I. Old Business

- Website – Back looking at options with increased Wild Apricot fee increases.
- Social media – Will post on Engineers Week.
- Roles and responsibilities – Each board member should put together bullet points on the responsibilities for their role with the Chapter.

J. Adjournment on motion by Jeff, seconded by Ray at 6:57.