



Valley Engineer Newsletter

November - December 2022

ACTIVITIES

Thursday, December 15, 2022
Holiday Party
Kingfish American Bistro and Wine Bar
in Bethlehem, PA



**PENNSYLVANIA SOCIETY
OF
PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS**

**LEHIGH VALLEY CHAPTER
(ORGANIZED 1935)**

CARBON, LEHIGH, MONROE, & NORTHAMPTON COUNTIES

Scholarship Fund Donations

The Lehigh Valley Chapter, Pennsylvania Society of Professional Engineers (LVPSPE) is a local organization affiliated with the State and National Professional Engineer organizations. Our purpose is to support and advance engineering at all levels, especially to young people who will someday replace us. Our Chapter raises funds to support two very important initiatives: MATH-COUNTS[®], and the LVPSPE Scholarship Program.

Every year this Chapter distributes \$2,000.00 or more scholarships to up to six high school graduates who are enrolled in an engineering curriculum in a college or university. The recipients are selected by a committee of Chapter members.

The contributions for this endeavor are primarily from businesses in the area that are committed to advance the engineering profession, the community, and the nation. These businesses are primarily slanted to engineering and construction, but the last couple of years has seen the entry of financial institutions and others as serious contributors. Contributions range from a hundred dollars to two thousand dollars. The last couple of years we also were the recipients of \$2,000.00 from the American Society of Civil Engineers, Lehigh Valley Section.

Another source of funds is individual donations by Chapter members and others, including previous Scholarship recipients. These contributions range from \$100.00 to \$500.00.

The usual method for donating has been checks, payable to the PA Engineering Foundation. The contribution is eligible as a tax deduction. But for

elderly individuals there is another way to contribute which may be more advantageous.

For many years the saving method of choice for many Americans saving for retirement has been 401(k) plans and traditional IRAs since the money saved is not taxable, thus reducing one's taxable income while employed. Beginning at age 59 ½ one may withdraw money from a traditional IRA without penalties; however, when withdrawn this money is taxed as ordinary income. Form 1099-R is sent to each taxpayer, the IRA equivalent of the more familiar W-2. The amount withdrawn is entered in the 1040 as ordinary income and income taxes must be paid based on the total income, tax bracket, plus other factors.

Individuals 72 years old and above have another stipulation. They are required to withdraw a percentage of their traditional IRAs (Required Minimum Distribution or RMD) every year regardless of whether the income is needed or not. Failure to do so can result in severe penalties.

There is, however, a way to reduce the income tax owed.

Upon reaching age 70 ½ all or part of a traditional IRA withdrawal income may be directly donated to a 501(c)(3) charity organization eligible to receive tax-deductible contributions. Any money donated directly to a charity is subtracted from the amount withdrawn, thus reducing the taxable income. These contributions are called Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD). For an individual 72 years old or older, the QCD contribution from your traditional IRA is considered part of the RMD.

These contributions reduce taxable income as long as they're paid directly from the IRA account to an eligible charitable organization. Any IRA owner who wishes to make a QCD for 2022 should contact their IRA trustee or financial advisor so there is time to complete the transaction before the end of the year. QCDs can be made electronically directly to the charity, or by check payable to the charity.

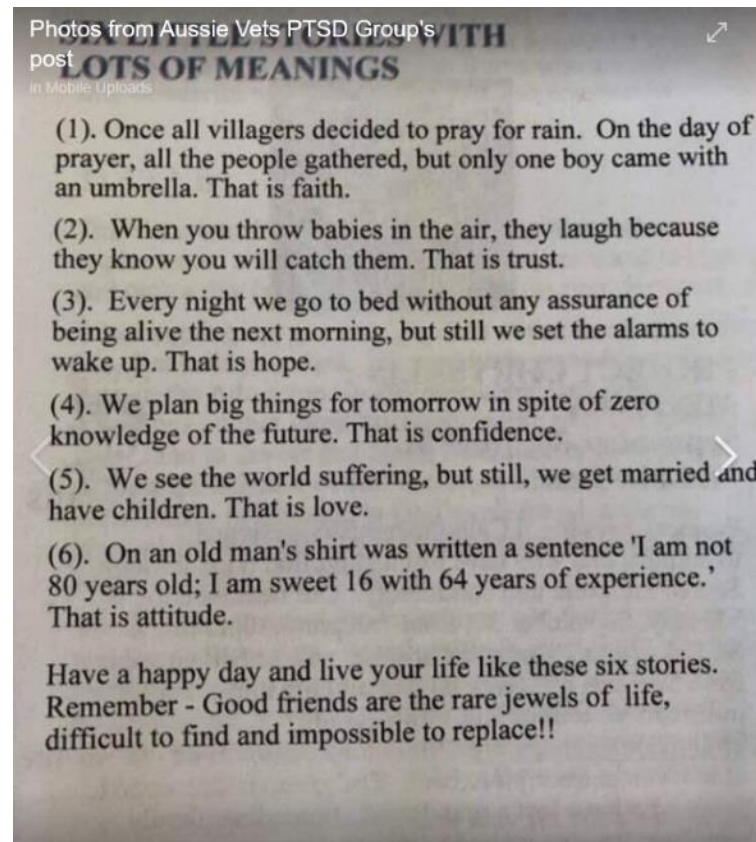
Such QCDs provide greater tax savings than cash donations for which charitable tax deductions are claimed. This is because Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) is reduced, and AGI is used in several key calculations, such as determining the taxable portion of Social Security benefits or what

deductions and credits donors qualify for receiving. As in all financial considerations of this nature, it's advisable to talk to your financial representative or your tax advisor.

Please note that the PA Engineering Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization and is eligible for QCD contributions (EIN #23-2120211).

In summary, this provision may be especially attractive for retirees who don't need all the income from their IRA to meet current living expenses. By donating the money to charity directly, you can enjoy the satisfaction of knowing that you are contributing to the future of Engineering while effectively lowering your tax bill. As with all financial transactions, consult with your financial advisor.

We thank Nermin Ferhadbegovic of Mass Mutual in Center Valley for contributing to this article. Nermin and Mass Mutual have been contributors to our Scholarship Fund for many years. We thank them.



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.

2021 – 2022 LVPSPE SCHOLARSHIP DONORS

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Contributors

William Erdman, PE
Michael Basta, PE





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Congratulations to all the Scholarship Award recipients.

**You are about to enter a most noble profession,
Engineering.**

We are the past and the present, you are the future.

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 via Zoom meetings in 2022 until further notice.

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

Mesa Verde, Colorado

Alfred Gruenke, PE

At one point in my career I was the Designated Test Taker and Designated Meeting Attender. In the former role, I took (and passed), contractor license test in at least a half dozen states, including Florida. In the latter role, I represented the company at various often mundane meetings, seminars, and conferences.

Under these auspices I attended a week-long seminar in Phoenix (or was it Tucson?) Arizona. I can't even remember what the seminar was all about.

We finished early Friday. My office instructed me to stay in the area for the weekend, and be in Victorville, California, Monday morning for a product performance test with someone from our milling group.

With a weekend to kill I headed north to Flagstaff and the Navaho Nation. I have always had an interest in the ancient people who lived in the Four Corners area, so I took the opportunity to tour the area.

I have always referred to cliff dwellers as Anasazi, a Navaho word that means "Ancient Ones" or Ancient Enemies." The Pueblo peoples of New Mexico understandably do not wish to refer to their ancestors in such a disrespectful manner, so the appropriate term to use is "Ancestral Pueblo" or "Ancestral Puebloan."

This further piqued my interest in the people who inhabited this area from 700-1300 A.D.

The following year I came back with my wife and then-thirteen-year-old daughter for a vacation to further explore this area. The photos in this article are from that time.

The first thing one does in Northern Arizona is to visit the Grand Canyon. We did that, then headed north on Rt. 89 and

then Rt. 160 to the Four Corners area. Rt. 160 could very well be named Ancestral Pueblo Highway, since there are so many rather well-preserved structures, cliff dwellings, and petroglyphs along this route.

The first point of interest is a field of dinosaur tracks. Seems a herd (flock?) of three toed critters ran across some soft mud, which hardened over the last 50 million years or so. Looking at them brought to mind the velociraptors in the movie Jurassic Park.



Dinosaur track

But dinosaur tracks are not why we were there.



One of many free-standing structures along Rt. 160 similar to Chaco Canyon



Petroglyphs

We continued along Rt. 160 to Four Corners, the meeting of Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona. There is only one other place on Earth that has four political entities meet at one place. Zimbabwe, Zambia, Namibia, and Botswana, in South Central Africa.



My daughter Leah in Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona simultaneously.

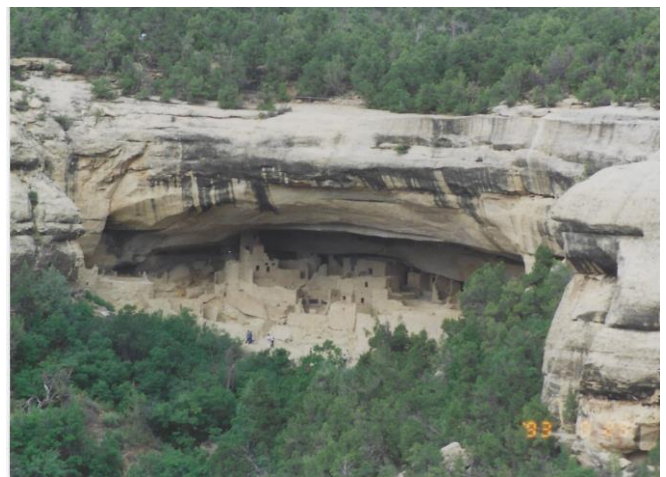
We continued Rt. 160 to Mesa Verde (Green Table, Sp.), Colorado and toured the cliff dwellings on the side of the mesa.

The term "Cliff Dwelling" is actually a misnomer. The base of a vertical cliff falls out, leaving a concave on the side of the cliff. Homes are then built into the opening. The overhang forms a roof over the entire entity. Ladders provide access. If an enemy attacked, the inhabitants merely pulled the ladders up, and waited it out. The cultivated fields were located on the top of the mesa. I asked the ranger why have the gardens on the top, why not

in the valley? She responded that there was two more inches of rain on the top of the mesa than the bottom. These two extra inches enabled enough crops to grow and sustain the community.



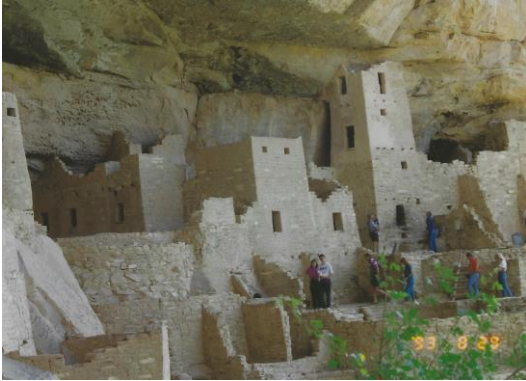
My wife Joanie, with the non-OSHA approved ladder



Mesa Verde homes at the base of a cliff

As Joanie was climbing up the ladder I couldn't resist remarking, "Don't you feel sorry for those people who are now vacationing on a hot, sandy beach?" No response

Continued on page 13



Close-up of the structures



Kivas

Kivas are round, partially underground structures that are believed to have had religious functions. According to Louis L'amour in his book "the Haunted Mesa" a kiva had a fire pit on one side, and a hole in the middle. He writes that it was believed that humans first entered the world through this hole; however, this book is abysmally bad, even by Louis L'amours' standards. I recommend it only for those poor souls bored out of their skull and with absolutely nothing else to occupy their mind. I have found nothing to substantiate his claim.

When planning our vacation I had intended to be in Mesa Verde for only a few hours. We stayed the whole day and could have stayed longer. I recommend this area for anyone with an interest in the peoples of the American Southwest.

Pondering the Imponderables by that Great Visionary, August Polinske,

- What happens if you get scared half to death twice?
- I used to have an open mind, but my brains kept falling out.
- I couldn't repair your brakes, so I made your horn louder.
- Why do psychics have to ask you for your name?
- If at first you don't succeed, destroy all evidence that you tried.
- If at first you don't succeed, then skydiving definitely isn't for you.
- A conclusion is the place where you got tired of thinking.
- Experience is something you don't get until just after you need it.
- The colder the X-ray table, the more of your body is required to be on it.
- The hardness of the butter is proportional to the softness of the bread.
- The severity of the itch is proportional to the reach.
- To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism; to steal from many is research.
- The problem with the gene pool is that there is no lifeguard.
- The sooner you fall behind, the more time you'll have to catch up.

Most of us miss out on life's big prizes. The Pulitzer. The Nobel. Oscars. Tonys. Emmys. But we're all eligible for life's small pleasures. A pat on the back. A kiss behind the ear. A four-pound bass. A full moon. An empty parking space. A crackling fire. A great meal. A glorious sunset. Hot soup. Cold beer.

-Anonymous

No great deed is done by falterers who ask for certainty.

-George Eliot



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

Minutes for the November 14, 2022 Board of Directors Meeting
6:00pm at Bridge Gap Engineering office & online

Attendees: Jeff Kutz, Al Gruenke, Al Dezubay, Frank Walsh, Ray Szczucki, Angelika Forndran, Chris Williams, Mary Rooney and Mike Basta.

A. Call to Order: 6:02

B. President – Jeff Kutz

- Jeff mentioned Bucks County event advertisement.
- Holiday dinner was discussed. Jeff suggested speaker on cement industry, Peter Paone, associated with Portland Cement Association. Likely available Thursday 12/15. Last year's event was hosted at Kingfish American Bistro.
- Will need to find event for January. Al has been trying to set something up with Everson Tesla.
- Mike suggested Blommer Chocolate. Last tour was nine years ago. Chris will check with Kevin to see if he still has a contact there.
- All discussed various other tour options.
- Al got the newsletter out couple weeks ago. Targeting every two months. Next would cover Nov/Dec.
- MATHCOUNTS is being held on Feb 4th at Emmaus High School.
- Mary mentioned the desire to get EOY/YEOY selections earlier and to move up deadline to January 15th. Application and website need to be updated – Jeff will confirm.

B. Fundraising – Frank Walsh

- Sent out stock letter to use for solicitations. Encouraged sending it out to contacts and copying Frank on the email.

C. Scholarships – Jeff Kutz

- Will get started shortly.

D. Treasurer – Ray Szczucki

- **Discussed recent payments and balances as of 10/30**
 - i. Monthly Wild Apricot fee \$110
 - ii. Ordered checks for checking account.
 - iii. Received and activated new debit card.
 - iv. \$1,104.72 Checking
 - v. \$9,049.82 Savings

E. State Director – Mike Basta

- NSPE educational institute, putting on event for women in leadership.

F. Past President – Al Dezubay

- No report.

G. New Business

- 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.
- December 12th meeting will be moved to the holiday party.
- Future meetings:
 - i. December 15, 2022 – Holiday party 6 pm at Kingfish
 - ii. January 9, 2023
 - iii. February 13, 2023
 - iv. March 13, 2023
 - v. April 10, 2023
 - vi. May 8, 2023

H. Adjournment on motion by Al, seconded by Ray at 6:44.