



LEHIGH VALLEY CHAPTER
 PENNSYLVANIA SOCIETY OF
 PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS

Lehigh, Northampton, Monroe, and Carbon Counties
(Organized 1935)

Valley Engineer Newsletter

September - October 2020

President's Message

Alex Dezubay, PE, President



**PENNSYLVANIA SOCIETY
 OF
 PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS**

**LEHIGH VALLEY CHAPTER
 (ORGANIZED 1935)**

CARBON, LEHIGH, MONROE, & NORTHAMPTON COUNTIES

The COVID-19 epidemic has affected all of us and will continue to affect us until there is a cure, or it will die out naturally. The Lehigh Valley Chapter, Pennsylvania Society of Professional Engineers, has not been an exception.

I hope all is well for all of you. We have had a different year and a more uncertain future.

Engineers like to plan and have a good idea of how and when to do things. I do not know how to approach this coming LVPSPE year; I welcome your ideas.

Many of our members are among those most vulnerable to COVID-19. Many if not all our hosts for monthly events will not be hosting us; it is hard to ask for plant tours in this time of social distancing.

Our challenge is to keep LVPSPE relevant to our members without our traditional events. We are looking for a speaker to do a Zoom event, but do not have anything definite yet.

We are not planning a Holiday party this year. MATHCOUNTS® will be on-line this year, so our involvement will be very limited compared to previous years. LVEC will not have a banquet in February to commemorate Engineering Week, so we will not be presenting EOY and YEOY as we have in the past.

We would still like to continue to award scholarships to high school students enrolled in an en-

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gineering curriculum at a college of university; the amount and number will depend on fund raising. Jeff Kutz has graciously agreed to chair our scholarship committee this year. It too will be different and more difficult than in previous years. I think that Jeff, who is more adept at social media, will communicate differently with schools and students to carry the scholarship project forward.

This is an election year for LVPSPE. Hopefully, we will be able to hold our annual May banquet to install the new slate of officers, and award scholarships.

We have had two Zoom board meetings; Alexa Rooney has generously hosted both of them. If any members who are not currently on the board would like to attend, please contact me for a Zoom invitation.

Thank you, and please keep in touch.

One of the pleasurable duties of my position is to recognize when "one of our own" receives national recognition.

The National Society of Professional Engineers has named Michael Basta, P.E., CSP, MS, from Schnecksville, PA, to its 2020 class of Fellow members. Mike was President of PSPE the past year, vice President of PSPE Northeast, and President and other offices of the Lehigh Valley Chapter.

We received the following letter from the National Society of Professional Engineers

June 5, 2020

Attn: Steven Novotny, PE
Pennsylvania Society of Professional Engineers

Dear Steven,

It is my pleasure to inform you that Michael Basta, PE, has been selected by the National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE) Board of Directors to advance to the distinguished grade of NSPE Fellow member status. We are pleased to recognize this member's devoted service and numerous contributions to the Society and the profession and thank you for your nomination of this deserving candidate.

We hope you will share this exciting news with your nominee and encourage you to promote the recipient's award in as many venues as possible. Therefore, please let us know if you prefer to present your Fellow with their certificate and pin at a local meeting or if you wish for the NSPE president to send the certificate and pin directly to the Fellow member via mail.

At NSPE, we will feature the 2020 Fellows on the Society website and in *PE* magazine. The Fellows' names will also be read out at the House of Delegates Assembly to be held at the Professional Engineers Conference, August 3-7, 2020.

We will also be writing and sending out press releases for all Fellows. You are encouraged to share the press release as is or with further personalization with local news outlets and the awardee's employer.

At this time, we ask that you forward to Stacey Ober, Director of Marketing and Outreach at NSPE, a headshot of the Fellow to be used in promotion. You may email the electronic file to sober@nspe.org.

Thank you once again for taking the time to nominate an outstanding individual. We appreciate your support of the NSPE Fellows program.



David P Martini P.E.
President
National Society of Professional Engineers

SAUCON RAIL TRAIL

Alfred Gruenke, PE

One of the consequences of the Coronavirus and shutting down our normal outlets for exercise is, it forced many of us to leave our comfort zone and explore other venues for relieving muscular and mental stress. One of my venues was the Saucon Rail Trail.

The Saucon Rail Trail (SRT) is a 7.6-mile walking and bicycling trail that extends from Coopersburg

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to Hellertown. The trail replaced the old Reading Railroad tracks, which once ran from the Hill-to-Hill Bridge Station in Bethlehem to Reading Terminal, 12th and Filbert St., Philadelphia. Periodic mileage markers on the trail are around 50 miles, which seems to correspond to the distance to Reading Terminal. A walking and bicycling path is an ideal use for old rail bed. The maximum grades are generally 1 percent or less, and grades steeper than about 2.2 percent are rare.

This is one-foot rise over a 100-feet of horizontal distance, making it a pleasant walk. And if the spirit is strong but the flesh is weak there are benches donated by local persons or institutions every couple of hundred yards or so.

I had occasion to ride this train in the 1960s commuting daily to Center Philly for two weeks. The service had Budd Diesel Cars, which featured an engine for each car. It was convenient and comfortable. The service ended sometime in the 1970s.

As with most things nowadays, my quest started with an internet search.

<http://sauconrailtrail.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Geological-Intersts-Bike-Map.pdf> has a map, and descriptions of various points of interest along the trail. I printed the map and the 24-page description and headed out to Upper Saucon Township Community Park, near DeSales University.

To maintain the 1% grade valleys were filled in and hills carved out, exposing the rock structure underneath. It is these outcroppings that allow geologists to study the underlying rock strata. The descriptions emphasize the geology of the various cuts, a field which I have less than minimal understanding. I don't even know how to pronounce some of the terms. "The goal of this stop is to touch the Great Uniformity that separates the crystalline, Grenville-age (~1.1Ga) rocks of the Blue Ridge – Reading Prong, from the Paleozoic sedimentary cover, here represented by the Hardyston Quartzite. The Grenville rocks of the Reading Prong consists mostly of a hornblende-bearing orthogneiss consisting of microperthite, quartz, and oligoclase. There are lesser bodies of a more mafic hornblende-clinopyroxene orthogneiss and alaskite (leucogranites)." Even Word spellcheck was challenged!

Rails and ties have been removed and replaced with a layer of gravel. The surface is hard, making walking or bicycling comfortable. The cleared path is 20-feet wide. No motorized vehicles are allowed. At road crossings there are padlocked gates so emergency vehicles have access.

Some of the path is near stately homes within views of the Saucon Valley Country Club, but most of it passes through woods and brush, giving the impression that one is in the middle of a pristine forest. Very therapeutic.



Ah, Wilderness! Answering the "Call of the Wild", but still within walking distance of purveyors of sustenance and single serve libations.



This used to be an operating railroad. There are "telegraph" poles along the trail for communication, in obvious disrepair.

There are periodic informational plaques explaining the topography or sites of historical interest.

Continued on page 12

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:

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:

Undergraduate

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

Upperclassman

- \$2,000 Pennsylvania Engineering Foundation Grant

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

2020 – 2021 LVPSPE SCHOLARSHIP DONORS

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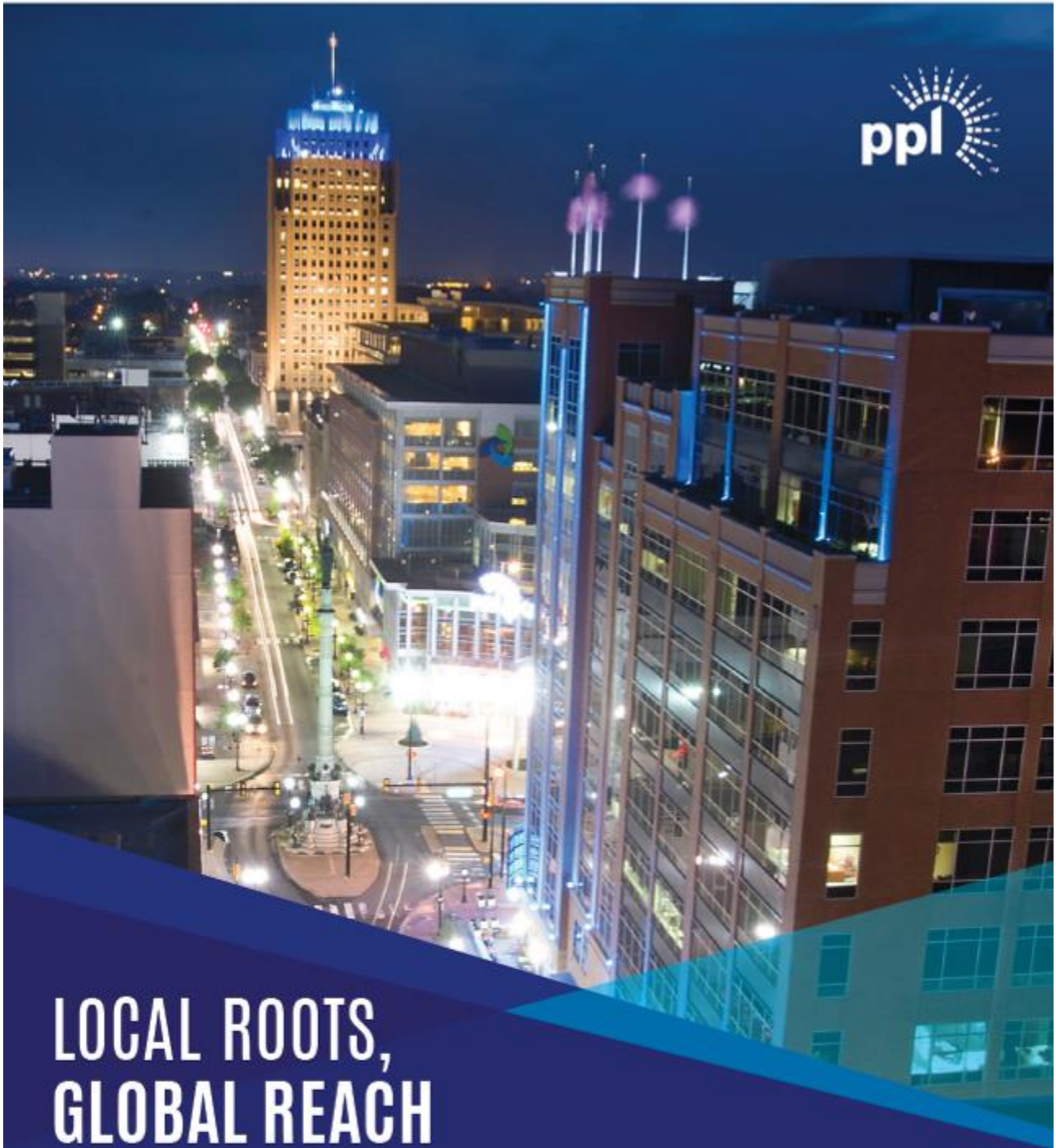
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Internet Addresses

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StateDirector@LVPSPE.org 215-536-7075

Alt. State Director

Angelicaka Fordran, PE
 610-997-6659

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 the office of Liberty Property Trust, 74 W. Broad Street, Suite 240, Bethlehem, PA.

2020 – 2021 Chapter Officers

President:

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

Vice President:

Jeff Kutz, PE
VicePresident@LVPSPE.org 215-325-1303

Secretary:

Chris Williams, PE, LEED AP
Secretary@LVPSPE.org 610-398-0904

Treasurer:

Ray Szczucki, PE
Treasurer@LVPSPE.org 610-614-1245

Immediate Past President:

Brian Kutz, PE
PastPresident@LVPSPE.org 610-997-6659

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Congratulations to all of the LVPSPE scholarship recipients!

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The end of the trail, in Hellertown.

The 20th Century was powered by electricity, the 19th Century was powered by steam and water power. What amazed me was the number of industries that took advantage of the water power and near-flat terrain adjacent to the creek.



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One of the more interesting stops is the Erhart Mill Historical District. This is a grist mill located at the end of Old Mill Road. The mill was located adjacent to a railroad line, and ground wheat into flour from local farmers and as far away as the Midwest. It was built in in the 1820s and was operated by the Erhart family until 1959. Researching this mill, the millrace, and other aspects involved was most interesting. It entailed long internet searches, tramping through underbrush with map in hand, and challenges by property owners wary of strangers with no COVID masks. Very satisfying, on all levels!



Lunchtime on the trail



Old Mill Bridge across Saucon Creek

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The only significant structure remaining in the Grist Mill Historical District is the Old Mill Bridge, an iron Pratt Truss structure erected in 1867. It is closed to vehicular traffic. This bridge design became a standard design for bridges nationwide.

There is a grist mill in Hellertown which is structurally intact. My tour of this facility will be the subject of a future article.

When we think of iron and steel, we immediately think of Bethlehem Steel; however, iron foundries were an established industry in the Lehigh Valley from the 1700s. In the mid-1800 this area was in the forefront in the transition from charcoal to coal for the production of iron in the United States. David Thomas was a leader in this transition.

In Hellertown immediately west of downtown and north of Walnut Street the Thomas Iron Works was in operation from 1866 to 1921. It was established in 1866 by Jacob Riegel and purchased by Thomas in 1884. It employed 350 people at its peak. Local ores were used initially, with locally quarried limestone as flux. The present Hamilton Crossing Shopping Center was the site of one of the many iron ore mines in this area, much to the chagrin of developers over a century later. Anthracite from Carbon County supplied the fuel.

David Thomas had previously established iron works in Alburdis, Glendon, Catasauqua, and Hokendauqua.

Competition from more advanced technologies and by more modern companies such as the nearby Bethlehem Steel rendered the works obsolete. The Alburdis furnaces made their last iron in 1921, and in 1927 Hokendauqua closed.

My research into the Thomas iron Works was most interesting. The SRT map I downloaded had the logo and name Hanover Engineering. I contacted the Hanover Engineering Wescosville office

who referred me to their Bethlehem office. They connected me to Charley Unangst. Charley explained that Hanover Engineering only drew the map, but referred me to Mark Connor of the Society for Industrial Archaeology (SIA), who had done a lot of research in the Saucon Valley area, specifically the Friedensville zinc mines.



Thomas iron Works. Photo compliments of Greg Stauffer, Hellertown Historical Society

Mark sent me an article he had written to present to the SIA in May of this year, but thanks to COVID-19 the event was cancelled. Much of the Thomas Iron Works information in this piece is from that article. In the future I will submit his complete writings in this newsletter. It's a very good rendition of the iron industry in the Lehigh Valley.

Not much of the Thomas Iron Works remain. A couple of yards from the Saucon Rail Trail is a series of concrete piers, approximately twenty feet apart. The stringers were steel I-beams. I'm from the cement industry. I'm impressed that the concrete looks pretty good after over one hundred years! According to Mark Connor and my knowledge of such things, these piers were for unloading rail cars. Tracks spanned the piers. Open the bottom doors of the rail cars (gondolas) and the contents drop out. According to the SRT guide there are foundations of other buildings, but they are so overgrown that my titanium knee insert would not be up to the task.

Continued on page 14



Thomas Iron Works rail unloading station.

present that day with photographic equipment for taking such spectacular photos. She was kind enough to send me these.



Din-din, home delivery. Photo compliments of Lisa Ballew



Top of piers. Note condition of concrete after over 100 years.



What a majestic sight! Photo compliments of Lisa Ballew

The SRT ends in Hellertown; two miles later it becomes the South Bethlehem Greenway, which runs from East 3rd Street to near Saucon Park. The information on the Internet says it follows the former Norfolk Southern rail line, but the Norfolk Southern is relatively new to this area. The tracks sure seem to follow the old Reading Railroad line!

I completed the Saucon Rail Trail in three segments. Not only was it good exercise, but the exposure to industries over a century ago was enlightening. The eagles were a bonus.

Near the eastern end of the Greenway, on top of a former railroad signaling tower, is the pièce de résistance of this journey. A bald eagle nest, with a pair of nesting eagles! What a way to end the journey. Fortunately, Lisa Bellew, a wildlife photographer from the Easton area, was

Grist mills will be the subject in the next issue of the Valley Engineer.

I thank Lisa Bellew, Mark Connor, Greg Stauffer of the Hellertown Historical Society and Charley Unangst for their contribution.



**Minutes for the September 14, 2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
6:00 pm Zoom Meeting**

Attendees: Jeff Kutz, Chris Williams, Al Dezubay, Mary Rooney, Frank Walsh, and Ray Szczucki (phone)

Call to Order: Alex Dezubay called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM

Discussion:

- Al discussed COVID issues related to hosting tours, MATHCOUNTS, scholarships, etc. It's a challenge during normal times to keep people involved in Chapter activities and COVID is making things even more complicated.
- Discussed website update costs and 2020/2021 fundraising outlook. Frank suggested we hold on spending any money on website upgrades. All agreed to hold for the time being.
- Discussed EOY/YEOY nominations. Mary discussed that Lehigh University was planned for Engineers' Week Banquet. Speaker was set up from Intel. Lehigh University location fell through. LVEC needs to reconvene and decide if a banquet would even be reasonable. And would an EOY/YEOY even be named this year?
- Al discussed the challenge of finding meeting locations for our regular meetings.
- Ray discussed various conferences through other engineering organizations being held online.
- Ray provided the Treasurer's report:
 - July filed 990-N, gets filed after fiscal year.
 - Just received dues disbursement from Jennifer Summers.
 - 8/31 account balances:
 - Checking: \$4,970.54 (includes \$3,000 from PayPal to checking)
 - Savings \$7,374.77
 - PayPal: \$3,259.00
- Al will send message to membership about uncertainty and the difficulties with planning events at this time. Will stay in touch with membership until we have more direction.
- Al asked what we thought about getting a speaker on Zoom for a PDH session.
 - All agreed that having online speaker(s) would be great. Discussed options for webinar hosts. Maybe Steve Ressler or John Wanner.
- PSPE Conference Advertisement – In past years, we've done half page ad for \$200. Do we want to do that again for this year's conference? Frank made a motion for the Chapter to take out an ad this year, all were in favor. Motion passed.
- Frank suggested the ad congratulate our 2020 scholarship recipients, thank contributors, and solicit for new contributions.
- Jeff mentioned LinkedIn limitations on us being a group in lieu of company or entity. Posts were only visible to those within the group. Jeff is working on fixing this issue to improve outreach.
- Mary will discuss banquet/dinner options with LVEC and report back if plans progress.

Adjournment at 6:45



**Minutes for the October 12, 2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
6:00 pm Zoom Meeting**

Attendees: Chris Williams, Al Dezubay, Frank Walsh, Ray Szczucki, Angelika Forndran, Al Gruenke, Alexa Rooney, and Jeff Kutz

Call to Order: Al Dezubay called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM

Discussion:

- Meetings will remain 6:00 pm for the time being.
- LVEC not having banquet in February 2021. If we award EOY/YEOY, no venue for presentation. Do we want to give out award this year?
 - All agreed that we should still give out awards and recognize recipient at following year's banquet.
- Still want to give out scholarships this year. We'll see where we stand financially early next year and decide number of scholarships and amounts.
- Jeff willing to take over managing scholarships for this year. Al will coordinate with Jeff to get him up to speed on the process. Al to remain on committee for evaluating applications.
- Ray provided the Treasurer's report:
 - Frank submitted for P.O. Box renewal; he has been reimbursed.
 - Monthly Wild Apricot charges as usual.
 - Ray reached out to Jennifer about half page ad. Not sure if that request was processed. Al to reach out to Jen.
 - Only -\$190 or so from last month's financial update.
 - Ray working on dues disbursement documentation to meet state's requirements.
- Al will write up a president's message about difficulty of hosting events. Will mention intention to award scholarships.
- Al spoke with Mary about Steve Ressler doing an event. She will follow-up with Steve.
- Angelika – PJAS asking for judges, virtual evaluations this year.
- Chris mentioned a coworker potentially doing an online PDH session with the Berks Chapter. He will follow-up and see if we could do a joint event.
- Jeff is working on LinkedIn website updates, now listed as a non-profit. To go live shortly.
- Al will try setting up a Zoom event with John Wanner.
- Ray emailed info on HB 2101 to the board.

Adjournment at 6:34 on motion by Frank, seconded by Ray. All in favor.