



# Valley Engineer Newsletter

December, 2015

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

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- January 5, 2016, Fab Lab 3-D printing, etc. 511 E. 3<sup>rd</sup> St., Bethlehem, PA
- February 6, 2016 (Snow date February 7), MATHCOUNTS®, Northeast Middle School, Bethlehem, PA
- February 26, 2016, Lehigh Valley Engineering Council Banquet, Holiday Inn, Breinigsville, PA



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 PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS**

**LEHIGH VALLEY CHAPTER  
 (ORGANIZED 1935)**

CARBON, LEHIGH, MONROE, & NORTHAMPTON COUNTIES

## President's Message

Alfred Gruenke, PE

Morgan's Restaurant, a fine dining establishment located on Cedar Crest Boulevard, was the setting for our Annual Holiday party on December 10<sup>th</sup>.

Around thirty members and guests enjoyed libations and a fine meal thanks to Chef Blake Morgan and his staff. We welcomed a lot of unfamiliar faces and hope to see more of them in the future.

I must admit the preparations were a bit nerve wracking; ensuring that the menu was satisfactory, table setting, speaker's accommodations, etc. were all in place. Happily, everything worked out fine.

The Chapter has received a number of awards from the PSPE the last few years, which were prominently displayed. They represent the commitment our Chapter has to the Engineering community and to young people, steering them to productive careers in engineering.

The speaker for the evening was Tim Harrison, developer of the Hamilton Crossing Shopping Center, located between Hamilton Boulevard and Route 222 bypass, east and west of Krocks Road. The project has stirred considerable controversy the last couple of years.

Tim listed the challenges to the project: commitment from businesses, zoning, and engineering and construction. The first two have been extensively covered by the local press, but the obstacles that had to be overcome engineering and actual construction was a revelation to all of us.

Tim first gave us a lesson in local history. In the 1870s there was a boom in iron ore mining in this country. Pennsylvania led the nation in iron ore mining, and Lehigh County led the state in the number of iron ore mines and quantity of ore mined. Area iron ore mining was researched and published in 1871, and in a mining survey published in 1941. Tim showed a map with the location of the many mines in the proposed shopping center area. This was a surprise to many who associate iron ore mining in the area with Macungie and Alburdis.

The mines were open pit mines, essentially mere holes in the ground. The iron ore was extracted, and the mine wash (residue) dumped back into the hole. The mine wash was the cause of subsequent engineering and construction problems. Tim explained that the residue had the consistency of peanut butter, hardly the stuff upon one erects a major structure!



Aerial view of site

Zoning variances by Lower Macungie required considerable landscaping, with 2½ miles of walking paths, plus bike lanes on the surrounding roadways. To minimize traffic disruptions major area roads have vehicle sensors and other high-tech devices to control “smart” traffic lights.



Tim Harrison at our Holiday Party.

The only solution was to dig up this “soil” and replace it with clean fill. Prior to any above-ground construction beginning, 125,000 cubic yards of mine wash was hauled from this site and replaced with clean fill. Fortunately an abandoned quarry close-by provided a convenient depository.

However, no buildings are built on the old quarries. This area was reserved for parking lots, walkways, and the like. The developers had to do considerable shuffling of the layout to accomplish this! All buildings are set on pilings driven into the ground.



Peter and Leslie Staffeld, Michele and Kevin Campbell, Barry Isett, and Shirley Isett in the foreground listening attentively to Tim Harrison’s presentation.

The shopping center is scheduled to open in the summer of 2016. Given the explanations given by Tim, Hamilton Crossing should become an asset for the Township, and its inhabitants.

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## Cetronia Ambulance Tour

On the South side of Broadway a short distance from the Tilghman Square Shopping Center sits a low, grey building around two hundred feet long. There are no signs or other identification visible from the street. Its purpose is not obvious to a passersby, though the sometimes presence of ambulances give a hint of its purpose.

On a rainy December evening around twenty members and guests of the Lehigh Valley Chapter, Pennsylvania Society of Professional Engineers gathered and took a tour of Cetronia Ambulance Corps, which occupies the eastern half of the building. The County Coroner, the County morgue, and a ballistics testing lab occupies the other half.

CEO Larry Wiersch and Caitlin Stibitz guided us on an informative and interesting tour.

Cetronia Ambulance Corps has been an entity since 1955. It is nationally accredited by the Commission on the Accreditation of Ambulance Services, an accomplishment that less than 1% of ambulance companies across the country have achieved. It provides emergency ambulance services to nine municipalities in suburban Lehigh County. Cetronia Ambulance is a 501C(3) non-profit corporation with 120 full time employees, 30-40 part time employees, and around 25 active volunteers. There are twenty ambulances plus twenty wheelchair paratransit vehicles. It responded to 47,747 emergency and routine scheduled calls in 2014, as many as 240 runs per day. Each ambulance has GPS tracking so its location can be monitored, tracked, and guided to the scenes of life threatening emergencies. It has a budget of ten million dollars a year.

However, statistics do not define the scope or purpose of the Cetronia Ambulance Corps.

Cetronia Ambulance Corps does not keep all ambulances at this location when they are in service and on duty. Instead, it positions ambulances in its service area near "hot spots" as determined by statistical data of traffic accidents or emergency medical calls to achieve the best possible response times. The ambulances have turnpike gate access for ease of access for emergencies on the turnpike.

A map of the area with the number of incidences is the center piece of the communications room. The objective is to respond in 8 minutes 59 seconds 90% of the time after the call is received. Larry emphasized that a cardiac arrest must be attended to in 4 minutes or less to prevent severe permanent injury or death.

The Communications Center is the "heart" of all activity. It has numerous "work stations" that have five or more screens that monitor area activities. Supervisor Bob Walbert explained the ambulance dispatch process.

Cetronia Ambulance Corps is part of Lehigh County 911 system. Calls to 911 are transferred to this facility when they fall within Cetronia's service area, who then dispatches an ambulance. Sometimes people call Cetronia directly.



Communications Center Supervisor Bob Walbert.

Paramedics on the ambulances are highly trained to handle any emergency that may arise. Every ambulance is a pharmacy and emergency room on wheels, treating many patients even before transporting them to an area hospital. There is equipment on board that controls traffic lights as it goes to the incident or to the hospital, reducing the possibility of accidents on route. Each ambulance has a "black box" which records the motion of the ambulance, speed and other critical parameters ensuring that the ride is comfortable and safe.

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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.

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The monthly Board of Direction meetings are 6:00 PM on the second (2<sup>nd</sup>) Monday of each month. Open to all members; they are held at the office of Barry Isett & Associates, 85 South Route 100, Allentown, PA.

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Larry said that the most stated comment by patients is that the ambulance personnel were nice to them. Obviously, giving comfort is as important as giving aid.

A large vehicle parking area extends almost the length of the building. Ambulances and other emergency vehicles are washed, gassed up, and checked regularly to ensure 100% reliability. Emergency generators are able to supply 100% of all the power requirements of the building.

The service is paid by user fees, donations, Medicare, or private insurance. It does not receive tax dollars. A "Wall of Fame" lists all contributors over \$1,000.00. Anyone wishing to contribute were urged to go to [www.cetronia.org](http://www.cetronia.org) to make a donation.

Cetronia Ambulance offers First Aid training for a nominal fee that emphasizes CPR. It is available either in-house or at an outside location. There is a very suitable training room for this purpose. They also will check car child seat installations, or even install them!

Cetronia performs a valuable service to the community. We thank Larry Wiersch, Caitlin Stibitz, and Bob Walbert for an insight into the workings of this fine organization.

These trips were curtailed considerably after 9/11, and more so after we attacked Afghanistan.

There were ten expats on site. Two Americans, one with an Indonesian wife; one Canadian; two Indians, one with a wife; one German; and one Dane from New Jersey with his wife. I had been in Egypt twenty years before, but the world had changed in that time. Religiosity was much more prevalent than in the 1980s. It was a scary time for all of us, but we were determined to celebrate Christmas appropriately.

We all knew how to behave in a potential hostile environment; keep a low profile, don't draw attention to yourself. However, I have found that 85% of people, regardless of the country, are decent people who want to just get along and do a good job. Ten percent don't care one way or another, and five percent want to do you in.

It was Christmas and consequences be damned! I decided to buy a Santa Claus hat. I scoured the shops in Maadi until I found one, and wore it walking around and driving home. I'm sure that there were individuals who gladly would have slit my throat for displaying that hat, but the overall reaction from the locals was as I had hoped; in good humor.

## Christmas in Egypt

Alfred Gruenke PE

In all my travels I have missed many holidays away from home, but I only missed one Christmas. That was in 2001, right after 9/11. I've had some close ones, such as arriving from India at 9:00 PM Christmas Eve, after a forty hour journey from a site in southern Maharashtra, India, but that's a story for another time.

We lived in a guest house in the little nondescript town of El Quibabat, 60 kilometers south of Cairo. It was our habit every other weekend to drive to Maadi, a Southern suburb of Cairo, to buy our groceries. Maadi is the center of the expat community in Cairo. Among other things, it's the home of Cairo American College, really a K-12 school system serving mostly the expat community. We bought vegetables in a local town, Beni Sueff, rife with anti-Americanism.



Christmas in Egypt, 2001

As an aside, I wore that hat during a presentation on international commerce in an MBA course at DeSales University. The hat was made in China.

The Site Manager managed to procure enough local fare to provide us with a fine holiday meal, with sufficient libations to keep everyone happy. We all made sure of that! A cook in our employ prepared everything in a satisfactory manner



Our Christmas Dinner, 2001.

We didn't have turkey, or goose, or any other traditional Christmas fare. Roast beef with a myriad of local vegetable was not ideal, but then, Christmas is not about eating. It's about one's family coming together to celebrate. In 2001, the people in the guest house in El Quibabat, Egypt, were my family.



Sunset in Egypt, 12/31/2001.

I left Egypt at the end of January, 2002. The project continued for a couple more years, with no security concerns. I'm glad for that, but the days immediately after 9/11 were scary. Celebrating Christmas, however, was memorable.

We never know how we will react when faced with dangerous situations, until such situations become realities. Maybe General Patton had it right when he said "Courage is fear holding on a minute longer." Meanwhile, enjoy what you can

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**On New Year Resolutions**

Now is the accepted time to make your regular annual good resolutions. Next week you can begin paving hell with them as usual. Yesterday, everybody smoked his last cigar, took his last drink, and swore his last oath. Today, we are a pious and exemplary community. Thirty days from now, we shall have cast our reformation to the winds and gone to cutting our ancient short comings considerably shorter than ever. We shall also reflect pleasantly upon how we did the same old thing last year about this time. However, we go on. New Year's is a harmless annual institution, of no particular use to anybody save as a scapegoat for promiscuous drunks, and friendly calls, and hum-bug resolutions, and we wish you to enjoy it with a looseness suited to the greatness of the occasion.

-Mark Twain, writing in the Territorial Enterprise (Virginia City, Nevada), Jan. 1, 1863:

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Without question, the greatest invention in the history of mankind is beer. Oh, I grant you that the wheel was also a fine invention, but the wheel does not go nearly as well with chicken wings, or pizza.

-Dave Barry

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Alfred Gruenke  
President, LVPSPE