



# Valley Engineer Newsletter

April 2016

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

- May 10, 2016, Installation of Officers and Scholarship Awards, DeSales University
- June 1, 2016, IronPigs baseball game
- September 21-24, 2016, PSPE Conference, DoubleTree by Hilton Philadelphia – Valley Forge, 301 W. Dekalb Pike, King of Prussia, PA 19406



**PENNSYLVANIA SOCIETY  
OF  
PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS**

**LEHIGH VALLEY CHAPTER  
(ORGANIZED 1935)**

CARBON, LEHIGH, MONROE, & NORTHAMPTON COUNTIES

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Alfred Gruenke PE  
April 2016

The April 11<sup>th</sup> meeting was the last official meeting of 2015-2016. All in all, it was a successful year on many fronts.

Kevin Campbell again outdid himself (is that redundant, or merely a statement of fact?) with MATHCOUNTS® in February. Besides organizing the Valley completion, he represented the Chapter at the State competition on March 19<sup>th</sup>.

There were 153 individuals representing 25 teams from across the state at the competition.

Moravian Academy placed tenth overall in the team competition. Individually, Alex Adams from Moravian was 36<sup>th</sup>, William Corvino of Southern Lehigh Middle School was 20<sup>th</sup>, Daniel Li from Nitschmann Middle School came in 4<sup>th</sup>, and Ishaan Lal of Eyer Middle School came in 37<sup>th</sup>. A very good showing and certainly something to be proud of!

Our Scholarship and MATHCOUNTS Fund had a record year this year. Area businesses and individuals contributed \$12,215.00. One large donor dropping out was more than offset by other donors, notably Millennium Electro-Hydraulics Services of Whitehall, PA, contributing \$1,000.00. FLSmidth again was high donor with a contribution of \$2,000.00. Thank you to all!

Continued on page 2

The arduous task of choosing scholarship winners again fell on Alex Dezubay, aided by Don Kohn and Angelika Forndran. The task was extra-ordinarily difficult this year because of the number of outstanding candidates, an embarrassment of riches! Alex and the committee could not in good conscience choose the traditional four, or five; they had to include six candidates before there was a discernible gap between candidates. The Board voted to award the six with \$2,000.00 scholarships. Stroudsburg High School entered candidates for the first time and was rewarded with two scholarships. They will be awarded at our annual banquet on May 10<sup>th</sup> at DeSales University.

Alex read the qualifications of some of the recipients and they were mind boggling! A perfect 800 on college boards, GPAs of over 4.0, plus active in school and community affairs. So come out and welcome them to the engineering community!

During the Engineer’s Week Banquet our Chapter awarded Matthew Kawczenski, PE, SE, Young Engineer of the Year, and Kevin Campbell, PE, LEED AP, Engineer of the Year. This year they received even more accolades, from the Senate of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania through the offices of State Senator Pat Browne. Congratulations to them and thank you Pat Browne for honoring engineering!



Kevin Campbell, PE, LEED AP, receiving Commonwealth EOY award.

### The Hoover-Mason Trestle Tour

The much-anticipated tour of the Hoover-Mason Trestle, and the five blast furnaces that it serviced, finally occurred on April 7<sup>th</sup>. Around thirty members and guests of the Chapter braved intermittent rain to learn about steel making, or to indulge themselves in nostalgia for “The Steel” that is no more.

Tour guide Kathy Zoshak guided and explained the function of the trestle in the steel making process. The trestle supported a short, electrically powered narrow gauge railway that carried the raw material from the storage area near the present-day Sands Casino to the blast furnaces. It required two tons of iron ore, one ton of coke, half ton of limestone, and four tons of compressed air to make a ton of iron. Two “skips.” buckets riding on two parallel tracks, lifted this material to the top to feed the furnaces. The buckets were connected by a cable. As one bucket went up, the other came down.

First things first; Kathy explained that making steel was a two-step process. The blast furnaces produced iron from iron ore; steel was produced from iron by a Basic Oxygen Furnace elsewhere in the complex.

Continued on page 3



Matthew Kawczenski, PE, SE, receiving Commonwealth YEOY award.



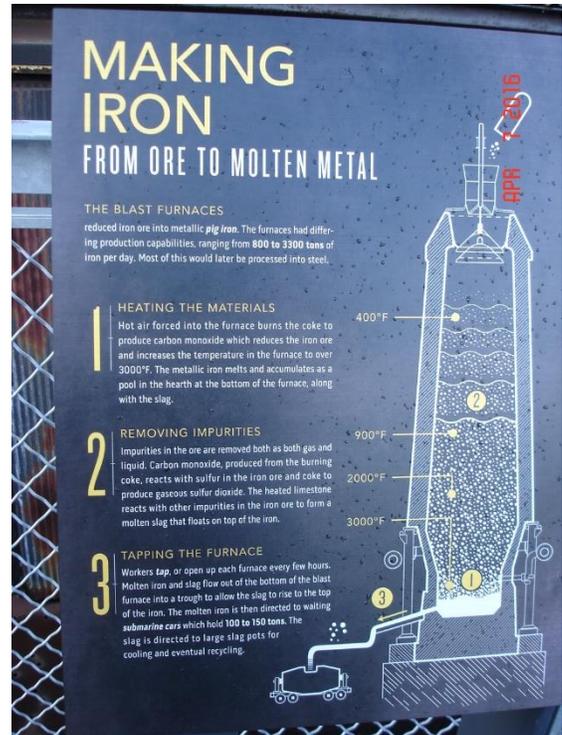
Air compressors for the blast furnaces.



Feeding the furnace. Note the dual "tracks" in the middle of this picture that lift the "skips" to the top of the furnace.

Five furnaces remain. Originally there were two more.

The air for the blast furnaces was supplied by huge air compressors adjacent to the Trestle. They were powered by excess flammable gasses from the blast furnaces. The compressed air was heated in stoves adjacent to the blast furnace in use. The temperature of that air was about 1800° F. The air was blown into the bottom of the furnace, oxidizing the coke, producing carbon monoxide. At temperatures of 3,000°F, the CO reduces the iron ore to liquid iron. Every few hours the bottom of the furnace was tapped, letting the iron and slag flow out.



A plaque, explaining the blast furnace.

The last steel was produced on November 18, 1995.

Making steel was a dangerous occupation. From 1904 to 1995 650 people died, plus many more injured. The period during World War I was the most dangerous. These deaths and injuries occurred despite a heavy emphasis on safety.

Our tour guide Kathy Zoshak has a personal connection to "The Steel." Her great grandfather and her grandfather worked there, plus other relatives too numerous to mention. The churches and cemeteries of South Bethlehem attest to the cultural diversity of steel workers. Hungarians, Slovaks, Croatians, Italians, Wendish, Mexicans, and others comingled with the native Pennsylvania Dutch

We thank Kathy Zoshak and Keith Sten of Historic Bethlehem for enlightening many of us. For others, this was a wonderful trip down memory lane and rekindling so many memories lost.

## **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:

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

Or, you may 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](mailto:Scholarship@LVPSPE.org)

## **PSPE SCHOLARSHIPS**

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

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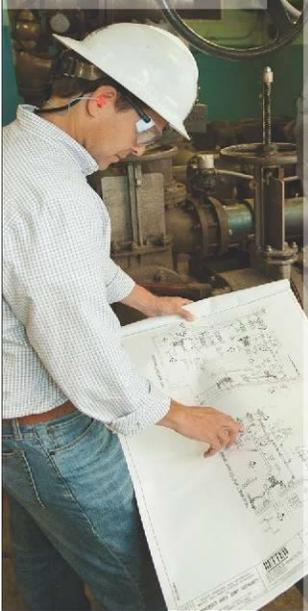
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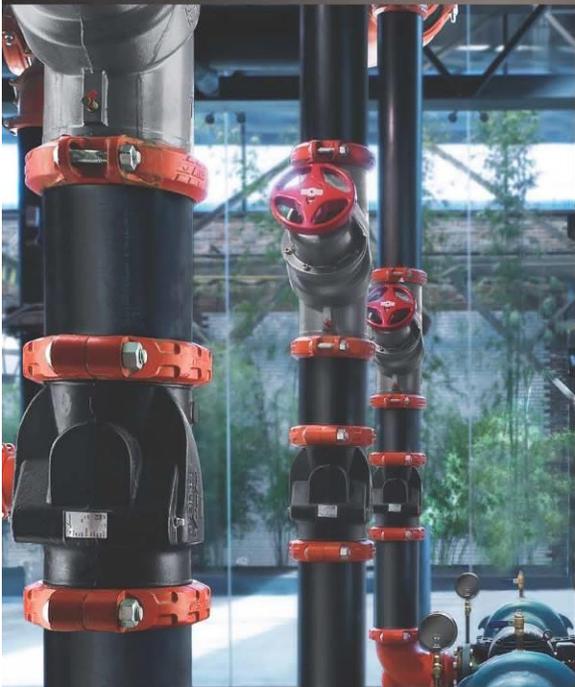
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## Board of Direction Meetings

The monthly Board of Direction meetings are 6:00 PM on the second (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.

## 2015–2016 Chapter Officers

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President@LVPSPE.org 610-395-6561

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## Venezuela

Alfred Gruenke PE

Some people eat to live, others live to eat. Count me among the latter. Traveling as I have has allowed me to sample many of the world's cuisine, and I've found very few I didn't like.

An example is Venezuela. In the mid-1990s it was not a bad place. Pleasant climate, gasoline so cheap I was embarrassed to put it on my expense account, and fabulous food.

Since then, Venezuela has pretty much succeeded in democratizing poverty, so that many more people can now enjoy its benefits.

In my humble opinion, Venezuela has the best food in Latin America. Not just good food, but a cosmopolitan variety of good food. They seem to have adopted the best of mostly Southern European cuisines. Chicken Marsala, Ensalada Caprese, pastas, garlic bread, breaded cutlets, and more. Seeking pleasure, which includes good food and drink, ranks very high in importance to Venezuelans. Brazil has good food, but without the finesse of Venezuela. Non-native food in Ecuador is primarily Northern European, good and hardy food but basic. Other Latin American countries are similar.

I was at a cement plant near San Juan De Los Moros, a couple of hours east of Caracas. There was an outdoor barbecue near to the plant. It consisted of little more than a clearing cut into the jungle with a bamboo bar, a couple of tables, a menu nailed to a tree, and a barbecue pit. The skin of a 25 ft. long snake adorned the bar. There was a very limited menu; barbecued chicken, beef, or pork. You ordered by weight. It was really good, and I had a tendency to overeat. I had lunch there every day, until I noted peculiar changes in my body which I attributed to the beginnings of gout! I changed my eating habits and ate lunch at the company cafeteria instead. My condition improved.

Most of the Caribbean basin subsists on rice and beans, red or black, depending on the season. In Costa Rica I had some form of rice and beans (or beans and rice) almost every meal, even breakfast. This gets old fast.

The Chief Electrical Engineer of the cement plant was called Luiz, and he had been an urban guerrilla when he was younger. We called him Fat Louie because his name was Luiz and, well, he was a tad rotund. I asked him why Venezuela was different.

He didn't really know why. He had gone to Cuba for training, and was shocked when he found out that rice and beans was the mainstay of the people there. He assumed that they ate such basic food due to the revolution, US sanctions, or something else. No, this is what Cubans eat! He didn't say it, but his expression indicated to me that he was glad to come back to Venezuela, to come back to good food and good living!

Another fine feature of Venezuelan cuisine is the beer, brand name Polar. The logo is a polar bear, so very incongruous in tropical Venezuela. It is served very cold, no more than .01°C (or so it seemed) above freezing. Sometimes there was a layer of cat ice on the surface, it was so cold! After a day working in the heat of a cement plant, that beer tasted like manna from heaven, returning life back to the body and the extremities.

Recently I talked to someone who had been in Venezuela only a few years ago, and he said that Polar beer has survived the socialist revolution. I strongly suspect that if the government had messed this up, there would have been such violence in the streets that no government could have survived. Shortages of bread and diapers are tolerable, but don't mess with the beer!

Venezuela's international standing has deteriorated to the point that anyone doing business there usually demands payment in advance, in dollars. This has reduced contact with the rest of the world to a trickle. Too bad. I hope Venezuela gets its act together. It used to be such a great place.

-----  
 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

Minutes for the April 11, 2016 Board of Directors Meeting  
6:00 pm at the office of Barry Isett & Associates, 85 S. Route 100, Allentown, PA

Attendees: Al Gruenke, Brian Kutz, Chris Williams, Don Kohn, Al Dezubay, Kevin Campbell, Frank Walsh, Ray Szczucki, Mike Basta and Angelika Forndran

- A. Call to Order – Chris Williams called the meeting to order at 5:55 pm.
- B. President – Al Gruenke
- Senator Pat Browne sent plaques in recognition of the Chapter’s Engineer of the Year, Kevin Campbell and Young Engineer of the Year, Matt Kawczenski.
  - 37 PDHs handed out at micro-boot camp
  - Hoover-Mason Trestle Tour had 26 attendees. Al to write article.
  - May 10<sup>th</sup> – Annual banquet with scholarships to be awarded and officer installation. Incoming PSPE president John Nawn to swear in officers.
  - June 1<sup>st</sup> – IronPigs baseball game with buffet - \$27 per ticket
  - Al mentioned possible tours for next year and suggested that we hold the holiday party at Morgan’s again. Will need to determine who the speaker will be.
  - Al raised \$12,215 this year (\$11,450 last year) and was thanked by everyone for his hard work.
- C. MATHCOUNTS – Kevin Campbell
- Kevin reviewed the accounting for this year’s MATHCOUNTS event and noted that coaches suggested more trophies in the future.
  - We are the only chapter which pays for competitors’ hotel rooms and only chapter who sponsors the State event.
  - Al discussed the results of the state competition.
- D. Scholarships – Al Dezubay
- Received 24 applications.
  - The Scholarship Committee recommended six applicants to receive a scholarship. The recipients are from Emmaus, Freedom, Stroudsburg (2), Southern Lehigh and Saucon Valley High Schools.
  - The top applications showed a high number of extra-curricular activities, high GPAs and good essays.
  - After discussion on the scholarship amounts, Don made a motion that we hand out six scholarships at \$2,000 each. Angelica seconded the motion and all were in favor.
- E. Treasurer – Ray Szczucki
- Accounts as of March 31, 2016
    - i. Checking: \$2,028.66
    - ii. Business Market Rate Account: \$29,295.22
  - \$1,935 payment due for 2016 Engineer’s Week.
  - Several other deposits and payments coming up.
  - Chapter should do an audit soon. Mike Basta to contact Mike Barron.

F. Nominating Committee – Kevin Campbell

- Kevin presented the following nominations:
  - i. President – Al Gruenke
  - ii. Vice President – Brian Kutz
  - iii. Treasurer – Ray Szczucki
  - iv. Secretary – Chris Williams
  - v. Directors – Al Dezubay, Nicole Gasda and Frank Walsh (vacant seat held by Don Kohn)
- The nominations were accepted by the Chapter on a motion by Don, seconded by Al Dezubay. All were in favor.

G. Adjournment at 7:01 pm on a motion by Kevin, seconded by Don, all were in favor.

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## PE License Plates



<http://pspe.org/store/pe-license-plates/>

PSPE members can order a vanity plate (five characters + PE) for a one-time cost of \$200, or you can receive the “next plate off the line” for \$100.

These plates feature PSPE’s official logo on the left and stacked PE letters on the right. You must be an active or retired Pennsylvania PE to order a plate.

Download an official PennDOT application here and order your PE license plate today!

<http://pspe.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/PSPE-License-Plate-Application-Form.pdf>