

Newsletter for the San Luis Obispo / Central Coast Branch • June 2007

JUNE 2007 MEETING & TOUR:

Lopez Water Treatment Plant Upgrade Project

This month's meeting consists of a presentation and tour of the new upgraded Lopez Water Treatment Plant (WTP). The original 6-million gallon Lopez WTP, which provided the 45,000 residents of the South County with purified water from Lopez Reservoir for the last 37 years, could not consistently keep up with ever more stringent regulatory requirements. Last month, on May 29, its conventional treatment processes were shutdown to make way for the new. The San Luis Obispo Flood Control and Water Conservation District, along with designer Black and Veatch, initiated the upgrade project and secured funding in 2000. The upgrade includes state-of-the-art treatment processes such as dissolved air flotation and low-pressure membrane filtration. Construction started in November 2005 and will be complete in June 2007. We are pleased that the Construction Manager, Chris Bessa of MWH, still onsite and involved with the final construction touches, will be the presenter and tour leader. He'll relate how he worked to keep the \$20 million dollar construction on time and with a change order rate of less than 2%. Chris is a Senior MWH Construction Manager with 13 years of experience in constructing water and wastewater plants. After Chris' presentation, at about 1:30 pm, we'll caravan to the Lopez Water Treatment Plant at 2845 Lopez Drive, Arroyo Grande for the tour. Mark your calendars, bring your hard hats and be sure to join us on Thursday, June 21 at AJ Spurs for this timely and informative presentation and water plant tour.

JUNE 2007 MEETING

LOCATION:

AJ Spurs
1760 El Camino Real
Grover Beach, CA

DATE & TIME:

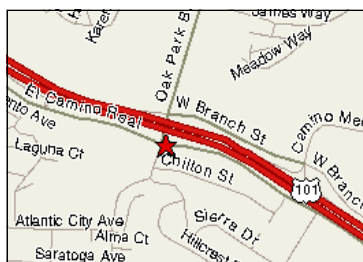
Thursday, June 21
12:00 pm (Noon)

MENU:

Food will be your choice of Tip Serlion, BBQ Chicken or Vegetarian Plate and will include a beverage, soup, beans, salsa, salad, rice pilaf, bread and a rootbeer float.

RESERVATIONS:

Please sign up by 1:00 pm Friday, June 15, at the Branch web site www.ASCESLO.org. For questions, contact Nola Engelskirger at 805-788-2100 or by email at nengelskirger@co.slo.ca.us. The cost is \$20 for members or guests and \$10 for student members.



PRESIDENTS PERSPECTIVE:

Star Wars and the Engineer of Tomorrow

Before I launch into this month's article, I wanted to address a few items regarding our Branch meetings. Normally, preparations for the luncheons are fairly routine, as long as the meeting topics and presenters are set up ahead of time. However, with a surprise visit by the L.A. Section President, presentation by SCE, scholarship award and Order of the Engineer ceremony, last month I felt more like a ringmaster or wedding planner than Branch President. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who helped out with our luncheon last month. It required a lot of effort (and patience and flexibility) on the part of all of our officers, and I'd recommend giving them a pat on the back for a job well done the next time you see them. On another matter, many of those who attended the April 2007 Branch Meeting asked for a copy of Richard G. Weingardt's speech that Fred Schott presented at the meeting. With Mr. Weingardt's approval, the text of the speech is now available on the Branch website. Finally, as you probably noticed we have raised our luncheon fees starting with our June meeting. As was mentioned in the last newsletter, the fees have not been raised in several years, and in those intervening years, most restaurants have raised their rates and we as a Branch have struggled to find restaurants we could afford and have often ended up subsidizing the luncheons. After much discussion at recent officer's meetings, we decided it was preferable to raise the lunch fees, freeing us up to make better use of Branch funds, including sponsoring the annual scholarship program and hosting webinars. The new fees are consistent with those of other local organizations and are still less than most of the other Branches in our Section.

A lot of attention has been given in the media lately regarding the 30th anniversary of the release of Star Wars, and the affect the movie has had on our nation's popular culture. While I was old enough at the time the movie came out to dismiss any notions of becoming a Jedi Knight or piloting the Millennium Falcon, the movie was to some extent an inspiration for me to become an engineer, and in particular helped nudge me into mechanical engineering as a major. However, the closest I ever came to engineering a Death Star was helping assemble a nozzle materials database in my 6-month internship at the Edwards AFB Rocket Propulsion Lab during college. A number of factors led to my eventual migration to civil engineering (I was too thin for opera, not to mention the fact that I can't carry a tune...), but a recent article I read brushed some of the dust off of my original inspiration and seemed to provide some common ground for two otherwise disparate branches of the

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MEET THE MEMBER - DAN HELT

Daniel Helt is a Project Engineer with Triad/Holmes Associates, and has been an ASCE member for several years now.

His current work with Triad/Holmes tends to revolve around subdivision work. While the firm as a whole has the capability and history of developing large subdivisions, his office typically works with subdivisions of 200 lots or less. "One of the books always on my desk is the Subdivision Map Act." He notes that Triad/Holmes works to get the most value to their clients, working to clarify the applicability of the numerous restrictions that may be placed on a site's development. His firm strives "to accommodate the full range of projects from lot splits and single family residential grading plans to 200+ unit mixed-use developments, and really try to give everybody the same quality of service."

He grew up in Marin County. With his academic strengths in mathematics and science, plus work experience as a cabinet maker and framer, civil engineering was a natural choice. He graduated from CalPoly in 2003. While

much of what he uses on a day-to-day basis he learned on-the-job, he credits his education with providing a solid background in the technical issues, as well as a breadth of knowledge needed to communicate well.

He enjoys being outdoors: rides bikes a lot, both mountain and road, runs and swims, occasionally he does triathlons. He likes to ski, golf, and camp, and used to race sailboats, but doesn't have a boat now. He has been a home brewer, and is currently making wine (in the garage). On some weekends you may find him working at his girlfriend Kasey's winery - Still Waters Vineyards.

While at Cal Poly he worked with Ed Sullivan on several "intelligent transportation system" projects. The EDAPTS project involved electronic bus signs, GPS locators, modems, pagers, and open-source software. Another project involved development of a mobile TMC (Traffic Management Center) with Dr. Sullivan.

He regularly attends local chapter meetings "to meet people, and to see what's new in the profession." He hopes to continue his professional



development through seminars and conferences, and believes that ASCE should lobby to make continuing education a required part of the profession. His current "wish list" for education includes retaining wall design and hydrology.

It's hard for him to pick a "best" project, but his worst was a 6 lot residential subdivision in the city of Palmdale. "If your thinking about writing a proposal for work in the city of Palmdale, don't do it, unless you enjoy beating you head against the wall."

2007 BRANCH SCHOLARSHIPS



The San Luis Obispo Branch would like to congratulate both William Tabajonda and Danial Nutter from the Cal Poly SCE who were both awarded scholarships in the amount of \$1,500 from the Branch at the June luncheon.

DISASTER TRAINING

Classes are being organized for volunteers to help in the event of major disasters under the auspicious of the State of California, Office of Emergency Services (OES). Classes will be held in alternate ASCE Branch areas when there are sufficient requests. Qualified individuals are California Registered Civil, Structural, Geotechnical, Certified engineering Geologists, or Architects. If you are interested in attending a class please contact the ASCE Disaster Preparedness Committee Chairman. The class lasts 5-6 hours. The cost is \$15. Classes are mid week and start at 10 AM. Course size is restricted to 10 to 20 individuals.

If your firm would like to offer the use of its facilities for a class, please register and provide the contact person, phone, fax, and email. You will be contacted to make arrangements.

To register for the class submit your name along with your telephone number, fax number, email address, and zip code to Jack Rolstin (Chair, Disaster Preparedness Committee) at 818-345-9199 or to Brooke Hickson at 714-258-8306.

MEMBER CORNER

Do you know of a Branch member's recent accomplishments worthy of mentioning in next month's newsletter? If so, contact Syllas Cranor at (805) 781-5260 or e-mail at scrantor@co.slo.ca.us.

PRESIDENTS PERSPECTIVE (CONT)

(Continued from page 1)

engineering family tree. The News Briefs section of the May 2007 Civil Engineering magazine mentioned that a Texas-based firm is "planning a manned expedition to the Shakleton Crater at the moon's south pole, in search of water and other materials that could be processed into propellant for spacecraft. If such materials are found to be present in sufficient quantities, they could be processed into fuels that could then be transported to a low earth orbit. Spacecraft in need of refueling could access them there at approximately a 10th the cost of launching such fuels from the earth." The article goes on to say that the expedition to the moon and construction of the orbital refueling station would cost approximately \$15 billion and that the firm hopes to complete the station by 2015. A part of me is a little suspicious of the article, especially the cost estimate and aggressive (unrealistic) schedule, and I further suspect that the article most likely had its beginning as a press release and was originally intended to solicit investors.

However, another part of me is excited about the prospect of planning interplanetary infrastructure. Does this point to the type of work that the civil engineer of 2050 may be involved with? Engineers will no doubt be developing new procedures for verifying compaction for lunar earthwork operations (accounting for reduced gravity), and may already be working on the problem in some obscure research laboratory. Regardless, we have a number of infrastructure challenges facing us in the coming years here on our planet, including expanding or developing reliable water supplies, wastewater treatment, transportation, responding to potential impacts of global warming, etc. And all of this must be balanced with the need to maintain a vibrant economy and fund the needed improvements while remaining watchful and proactive to protect against terrorist activity. One aspect of civil engineering as a profession that I have found the most satisfying, particularly my work in the public sector, is the sense that I am directly serving others with my efforts. An associate of mine once told me that civil engineering training tends to instill an attitude in the students that they can do anything and solve any problem. In contemplating the challenges facing us, I can think of no greater attitude that educators and mentors can strive to instill in the engineers of tomorrow than an unabashed arrogance that they can solve any problem coupled with a desire to serve others.

~ Jeff Werst

OTHER LOCAL EVENTS

If you have an event you would like posted at no cost, contact Syllas Cranor at 781-5260 or at scrantor@co.slo.ca.us.

The local chapter of the **American Public Works Association** meets every other month on the Wednesday before ASCE. For details, contact Jay Walter at jwalter@slocity.org.

The Central Coast Branch of the **Institute of Transportation Engineers** holds monthly meetings throughout the tri-county area. Contact Richard Marshall at 781-5252 or Rmarshall@co.slo.ca.us for details.

The Central Coast Branch of the **California Land Surveyors Association** usually meets the second Thursday of each month. Contact Rochelle Vierra at 549-3461 or Rochelle_Vierra@dot.ca.gov for more information.

Cal Poly's **Society of Civil Engineers (SCE)** welcomes local professionals to its regular meetings held alternate Wednesdays at 7:00 pm in Room 13-118. For further information, contact Greg Ray (gray@pismobeach.org) or Kari Wagner (kariw@WallaceGroup.us).

The Central Coast Chapter of the **International Code Council** meets the first Thursday of the month at Margie's Dinner. Contact Sylvia Aldana at 781-4671 for information.

The **American Institute of Architects** meets the 3rd Wednesday of each month at Vista Grande Restaurant (Cal Poly). For information, call Jeff Emrick at 549-8658.

The **Central Coast Geological Society** meets every second Tuesday. For information, contact Lou Blanck at 542-4626.

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