Thanks, Ken McGowan, for being the Publisher/Editor of this newsletter. This publication is one of the many recent additions to our programs during the past decade. I am also very impressed with the growth and the accomplishments of the Order of the Engineer over the past several years, and want to particularly THANK Mel Anderson and J. Derald Morgan for their outstanding leadership during their tenures as Chair of our organization. They will be very hard to follow! Fortunately, they will still be involved.

We have many items that will need our attention during the next few years. We need to continue our efforts to establish Links at every university/college with ABET-accredited engineering programs. This will take a major undertaking and may not be totally realistic, but we must try. We will need all of the Board of Governors and many of the Link Governors to be helpful in this endeavor. Included in this program will be the reactivation of over 50 Inactive Links. We may need to have a number of regional subcommittee meetings to establish our methods to achieve this goal.

We need to continue to strengthen our presence at the Links and to find ways to recognize those who contribute to our ceremonies and our programs, etc.

We need to find ways to enhance our image on the national level, including some joint activities with other professional societies.

There will, of course, be continuing our emphasis on the routine business items of the Order, and we must continue to take advantage of such items as our new book, The Obligation.

I want to THANK our retiring members Stan Wilbur, Paul Bowers, Fred Smith and Susanne Leckband for their many contributions to the Order of the Engineer. Susanne is one of our longest serving Board members and has literally held all of our officer positions. I also want to welcome Kevin Bowers, Steve Schreiner and Michael Hardy to our Board along with Elysia Zamarripa as our office assistant to Paula who continues to do an outstanding job for us.

Please let me know if and how you would like to be involved with the Order’s programs.

Sincerely,

Don Rathbone, Ph.D., P.E.
Chair Board of Governors

International Ceremonies

ASCE routinely conducts OOE ceremonies at their annual meetings. On occasion these meetings occur outside the continental United States at places such as Montreal or Panama. In view of the foregoing, the Board of Governors discussed this and decided that inasmuch as a precedent has been set, a motion was passed to allow such ceremonies to take place. Also, all inductees must meet the criteria as stated in the Code of Regulations which generally means that primarily US engineers will be inducted even if the ceremony is held at an international location. An OOE committee was appointed to develop conditions under which a ceremony can be held internationally. The Order will report the developments of this committee’s deliberations. During the interim if there are questions relative to your organization’s ability to hold induction ceremonies outside of the U.S., please contact the current Chair or Executive Director Paula Ostaff.
A Historian’s View of the Order Of the Engineer

(Partial Reprint from PE Magazine, October 2012 by Kip A. Wedel)

When I began research on the Order of the Engineer, I interviewed Richard J. Seely, a former OOE governor. He said people sometimes ask him why they should bother to join the OOE. In effect, they ask, “What’s a membership worth on the open market?” Seely’s response impressed me. “It forms a bridge between technology and the humanities,” he said. His comment rattled around my head as I wrote The Obligation. The book describes the OOE’s origins in the 1960s, its expansion in the 1970s and 1980s, the growth pains that expansion brought on in the 1990s, and the remarkable resurgence of the past decade.

Though the OOE’s leaders, administrative apparatus, and even headquarters have changed, its mission has not. Engineers and students who take the OOE Obligation personally and publicly commit themselves to upholding the highest ethical standards. They don’t do it to pass a class, earn a license, or boost their salary. They do it because it is the right thing to do. They understand that technical excellence is only part of what engineering is about. The other part is about people. That is what I found intriguing about Seely’s response. The bridge he described connected the engineering profession to me.

Because I am a history professor, I could not help but notice a pattern of long standing. Two of the wellsprings of American thought, 17th-century Puritanism and 18th-century republicanism, both suggested that people could live with relatively light external controls if they cultivated relatively strong internal controls. They asserted that we need not be governed by a king if we behave. Since then, Americans have maintained a keen interest in internal controls. In the 19th century, generations of schoolchildren learned lessons of citizenship from McGuffey’s Reader. In the early 20th century, doctors, lawyers, and even historians, established professional organizations that, in some sense, policed their own ranks. In the 1950s and 1960s, civil rights activists looked within themselves to find moral resources to battle injustice.

OOE applies a similar tradition to engineering. In 1907 and 1916, when engineering failures led to two bridge collapses in Quebec, professional engineers in Canada began a conversation that eventually acknowledged each engineer’s responsibility for ethical practice through the adoption of the Canadian Calling. The OOE adapted the practice to the U.S. Its Obligation was inspired by the Canadian Calling.

In demanding personal commitments to ethical practice, the OOE insists that engineers recognize that their responsibilities to their customers are not their only responsibilities. I, like everyone else, rely on the work performed by engineers. I cross bridges, drive cars, and flip electrical switches in full confidence that the engineers who designed them knew what they were doing. I do this utterly incapable of “checking up on them”. But having written The Obligation, I know that the millions of engineers wearing stainless steel rings do more than know what they’re doing. They also understand that people like me are out there. We are not just blips on supply and demand curves.

It was a pleasure to record the history of an organization that has never believed it. In the OOE, there is no substitute for doing the right thing.

Purchasing the Book on the History of the Order—”The Obligation”

It should be noted that each link of the OE should have received a history book. Additional copies of the book are available in hard cover at $27.95, soft cover at $16.95 and electronic copy at $7.99. Books can be purchased from the OE web page or by contacting Paula Ostaff at www.orderofeng@gmail.com. Past OOE Chair and Chair of the History Committee Derald Morgan and Kip Wedel are to be commended for making this happen.

Inactive Links

If a Link has no ceremonies for two years, it will be listed as “inactive”, unless the Link requests not to be listed as “inactive.” This might be the case for non-college Links which conduct infrequent ceremonies. If a Link is listed as “inactive” for three years, it will be removed from the List of Links.

Reactivation of a Link

To reactivate a link, one needs to complete the “Link Update” form on the OE web page. This needs to be followed by conducting an induction ceremony. The link will need to order the memberships, including the rings, obligation certificates and pocket cards at least two weeks ahead of the induction ceremony. Three ring bearers will need to be present at the ceremony. After the ceremony, the link is asked to send Executive Director Paul Ostaff the completed list of inductees that took the oath. The link will be reactivated at that time. The link will also be notified of which OOE governor will be assigned to them. Large Induction Ceremonies at UCLA & Harvard

During 2012 UCLA inducted 244 new members to the Order of the Engineer (OOE) and Harvard University inducted 300 new members to the OOE. These two examples demonstrate the large number of individuals being inducted across the country into OOE. We congratulate them and wish them the best with their careers.
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