



Chapter News

Chair's Message

After a number of years spent on the York Chapter Executive, I started to reflect and wonder how we could improve our activities to address more adequately both the needs of our members and the PEO objectives. Indeed, not only myself, but a vast majority of executives and members are also re-assessing the status quo and seeking enhancements — the whole organization is undergoing a review of the role and structure of the chapter system. Following a motion at the Chapter Leaders conference in February 1999, START (“Chapter Structure and Revitalization Team”) was initiated. After a year of intense work the committee produced START White Paper, concluded with recommendations on chapter structure and revitalization (for anybody interested, this report is available for viewing at www.peo.on.ca/Chapters/start.html).

While taking into consideration the recommendations of the START committee, in order to keep us focused, the Executive has formulated the York Chapter Mission Statement (which is published in this newsletter). I would

like to emphasize that this document is not cast in stone and can be modified based on the existing needs. Therefore I invite all our members to contribute to its enhancement by providing me with your feedback.

One of our objectives is to give a large number of our members an opportunity to be involved in the activities of the chapter, and also to make this involvement a pleasant and rewarding experience. To facilitate this, we have created a number of chapter committees, which are chaired by chapter executives and which comprise volunteers — PEO members. And so, the Program Committee looks after chapter events, the Certificate Committee organizes certificate presentation ceremonies, the Communications Committee publishes the Chapter Newsletter and looks after the chapter web page, the Education Committee collaborates with local schools. The participation in all of our committees, which can also be a training ground for seating on the Executive, is open to all our members — if you are interested, please contact me or an Executive in

charge of the committee of your choice (listed in the newsletter).

I would like to emphasize that all our Executives are volunteers who donate their personal time and effort to serve the profession. You too can make a difference by getting involved in Chapter activities.

Following our open policy with respect to our members, the executive meetings, which usually are held on the first Monday of each month, are open for chapter members — the time and place of the meetings are published on our web site, at www.peoyork.com (or by contacting the Chapter secretary Mohammed Toufighi, at 905-771-7874). I suggest notifying our secretary about your attendance so that we have enough pizza available.

Our fall program includes a technical seminar “Light is the Tool of the New Millennium,” a Theatre/Dinner Night with the musical “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat” and a certificate presentation ceremony — check for details in this newsletter.

The chapter Annual General Meeting (AGM) is scheduled on February 10, 2001. In that event, which will feature dinner and a dance party with live band, a new chapter executive will be elected — the nominations are welcome.

*John J. Schindler, P.Eng.
Chair*

INSIDE

Mission Statement	on page 3
Chapter Executive	on page 3
“Light is the Tool of the New Millennium”	on page 4
Dinner & Theatre Night	on page 5



The following is a personal commentary by Richard Braddock, P.Eng., East Central Regional Councillor. Your feedback to executive@peoyork.com is welcome.

The chapter system was created in response to a great deal of unrest among engineers who perceived that the affairs of the profession were in the hands of only a few.

A referendum was held in 1960 asking for approval of a Chapter Program. Although this was favored by a bare majority of members, a province-wide organization of chapters was established in 1961 with the purpose of improving communications and giving members an opportunity to participate more fully in association affairs.

The START report comments on the present position as follows:

Regardless of the physical size and/or the membership count, all Chapters appear to have one feature in common: in reality, the "Chapter" usually consists of a handful of Chapter Executives plus a small fraction of the total membership. The Executives, all volunteers, often are one or a few people who have been involved for many years. The participating membership usually is all made up of one group of members who attend/support almost an/every activity the Chapter provides, plus another group who attend events of specific interest and/or as time permits.

Inevitably we must ask, therefore, whether the chapters fulfill the communications role for which they were

created if only marginal support was available at the outset and only marginal support exists now.

Looking at the Communications role specifically, it is clear that insofar as conveying information from Council and staff to the membership at large the Chapters cannot do the job as efficiently as a centralized body. However, to make a judgment on the fate of Chapters based on the above facts would be to completely beg the question. No matter how imperfect the present system is, the Chapters do afford the opportunity for membership concerns to be forwarded to Council. In the absence of any better system, I believe the Chapters should be retained for they provide a means to marshal **joint** action rather than having individuals forced to act independently.

It is true to say that the Chapters provide a voice but that voice can become muted, distorted or ignored because Regional Councillors have not always supported Chapter viewpoints. It is understandable, then, that in the START report the suggested organization chart shows a direct link to Council. However, it is clear that any modification that permits a Chapter Chairman's Committee to vote on Council would have precisely the same limitation with regard to membership representation that exists now, with Regional Councillors conveying Chapter viewpoints.

The real point here is that a voice without power is a weak voice, perhaps even a meaningless voice.

Ordinarily, this may not matter for in the day to day running of P.E.O. affairs there is no need to check back with the membership. Only when major changes are contemplated is it both desirable and necessary. With this reasoning, it is suggested that:

- a) A Chapter Chairmen's Committee be re-established and that it be a standing committee.
- b) That any proposed change in the Act, Regulations or bylaws be first referred to the Chapter Chairmen's Committee for approval.
- c) Council, should it decide to proceed in the face of Chapter opposition, as it can do, would be obliged to inform the membership accordingly when its approval to change is being sought.

With the creation of OSPE the question has arisen as to whether the chapters would best form part of that new body.

It is generally recognized that a great many of the Chapter activities have nothing to do with regulatory concerns. However, I regard any activities within the Chapters, no matter how worthy in themselves, as being incidental to acting as watchdogs on Council's deliberations. I also recognize that without those activities the Chapters would die.

Based on this viewpoint I am of the opinion that the P.E.O. Chapters should remain as P.E.O. Chapters. There seems to be no reason, however, that P.E.O. cannot employ O.S.P.E. to run those activities which I regard as being incidental to their main role.

*R. W. Braddock
East Central Region Councillor*

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Chapter Mission Statement

To maintain a local presence for the engineering profession in York Region through:

promoting public awareness of
the engineering profession in the local community

providing a communication link
between the membership and Council

enhancing the professional development
and social responsibility of professional engineers

providing a forum for local discussion of professional and civic affairs

providing timely and current information to members

providing relevant services and activities to the members

York Chapter Executives – 2000-2001

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Congratulations And Welcome!

A successful certificate presentation, on June 3rd, 2000 that was combined with a Dinner Theatre event, featured special guests, including PEO president Peter Devita, P.Eng, regional and local PEO executives , and a large number of family and friends. Please welcome the following new members to the York Chapter:

- Karim Abdel-Rehman
- Tudor Arsene
- Kristina Au
- Steven Davey
- Christopher W. Davis
- Steven Hollingworth
- Alan Khalighi
- Bryan Madryga
- Mansour Mahdavi
- Mervin Morris
- Pervez Nooruddin
- Adrian Papacica
- John Primiani
- Rashid Bashier Qureshi
- Mara Scutelnicu
- Peter Seibert
- Payam Tavassoli (D.K.)
- Sidney Tung
- Jennifer Wu
- Jacky Yan
- Ryan Yang



Professional Engineers Ontario

This Newsletter is published for the benefit of the 4,000 members of the York Chapter, Professional Engineers Ontario. Its main goal is to communicate the Chapter's activities and views and to be a voice of our members. Hence, your comments, letters to the editor and guest articles are welcome.

We reserve the right to edit submission for length, clarity and style. The newsletter's content does not necessarily reflect the opinion or policy of the council or Professional Engineers Ontario, nor does the association assume responsibility for the opinions expressed.

Your Editor, Habib George Sambar.

York Chapter Professional Engineers Ontario

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Education Committee Call For School Program Volunteer

The York Chapter Education Committee is planning to start the Engineering in the Classroom program this fall. We are still looking for engineers to volunteer an hour or two to assist elementary school teachers in explaining the real world applications of the science that the children are learning in the class room. If you can spare a couple of hours over the next six months to make a class room visit, please contact **Jeff Mark**, Education Coordinator at general@markeng.com via email or **905-836-4410** via telephone.

Future Events/Calendar

- October 28 – **Dinner Theatre**
Certificate Presentation
- November 15 – **Technical Presentation**
Laser Machining
- February 10 – **Annual General Meeting**
Dinner/Dance
Executive Elections, 2001

Water Quality And Conservation

On May 4, 2000, The York Chapter had organized a public forum to discuss the issues of: **government policies on water, sustainable water resources in York region, water conservation** and **reducing water pollution**. This forum had preceded the controversial and sad news about the Walkerton water pollution. The event was organized with the help and coordination of Dr. Eric Nejat, P.Eng.. The details of this activity were covered by 'The Link' PEO publication.

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Rates for one issue are: Full page \$300, half page \$175, Quarter page \$115, Business Card \$65. Prices are for Camera-ready copy; artwork if required is extra. Material must be received by November 5, 2000, for the next newsletter. Contact H. Sambar at 905-475-8510 x. 3282. Job postings can be advertised on our web page free of charge.

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