



# THE FORGE

Newsletter of the Birmingham Branch of ASCE

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## Meeting Information for April 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Our monthly meetings are held at the Altadena Valley Golf and Country Club off of the Acton Road exit on I-459. The meeting will start at 11:30 am as always.

The Branch is responsible for lunch, so we need an accurate head count a week before the meeting which means we have to let the club know the **Thursday** before each meeting. The price is \$14.00 which you can pay to the Branch Secretary/Treasurer at the meeting or online at our website.

The Club's address is 2651 Alta Vista Drive, Birmingham, Alabama 35243 and can be reached from the Acton Road exit just west of Highway 280 on I-459. The club's phone number is 205.967.5322. Please visit the website for maps and directions from your location.

## Presenters Lined Up So Far

Month	Speaker	Topic
April, '08	Bobby Nolen	Threading a Needle - A Drainage Dilemma One way to drain runoff from a 58-acre basin unattenuated through an 8" opening.
May, '08		

## A Message from the President

*By Jonathan Byrd*



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*“Bridge to Nowhere.”*

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Each year the ASCE does an event they call Leadership Training on the Hill, affectionately known as the “Fly-in.” I have participated in the past, when the Society last released its Report Card, and took this opportunity to go again this year. That’s where I was instead of being at March’s Branch Meeting.

The concept is to sit around for a half a day talking about bills before the Senate and House, then have meetings with all the representation we have in Washington DC. There are a few other events, such as a newcomer’s cocktail the night before, a reception the middle night, and a breakfast with a politician speaking the last morning. Throughout the day there is a hospitality suite where you can get a drink and a snack close by the office buildings instead of going all the way back to the hotel. The suite is usually staffed by an ASCE Government Relations staffer and contains any number of attendees at various times. The main idea is to meet with your Senators and Representatives, but a secondary benefit is to meet with engineers from all over the country. Several folks attend every year, so there is a good deal of catching up done at the event as well.

I met a few engineers from Alaska and talked about the “Bridge to Nowhere” to verify my suspicions that somewhere there is a group of people that live nowhere. To them, it’s not a bridge to nowhere, but a very much needed method to safely travel from the airport to the town. Most of Alaska is connected by water or air, but not all of it is connected by roads, and this town in particular needs a roadway connection with its airway connection. Instead they got to be the butt of all Congressional ear mark jokes.

There were several people I saw from the first time I attended the event, and several people that have attended each event since, but there was one issue that was on the minds of almost each of us whether we had done it before or not: not enough engineers get involved in the matters of governmental decisions. I was one of the few non-consultant engineers in attendance, but no one felt it was an ethical violation for them to be lobbying for increased oversight and work for engineers. Why are more engineers not involved in the process? What do we think we will get if we do not get our voices heard? Either we are proactive or we are reactive.

I challenge each of you to analyze your thoughts on participating in legislative activities. Are you changing the way things are only by designing infrastructure and projects, or do you attempt to change the way things are by changing the rules that govern the design and oversight of infrastructure and projects?

One of the bills discussed was a dam safety bill. Alabama remains the only State in the US without any dam oversight. There are critical dams in this State that could be in danger of failing. There are similar dams all over the country. It won’t matter if a terrorist destroys it, or it crumbles due to a lack of maintenance, the results are the same for the people downstream. Engineers are pushing for this level of oversight, because if we do not do it, who will? This is only the tip of the iceberg as far as what we could be doing, and what we should be doing.

## Scholarship Golf Tournament

By Andrew Faulk

WHERE IS YOUR REGISTRATION FORM? We are less than a month away from the registration deadline. Our goal this year is 15 teams. If you are planning to enter a team, but are waiting on the paperwork to be signed off on by your corporate officer, please email Dwight to let him know.

This year's tournament is graciously sponsored by Saiia Construction, L.L.C. and DUNN Construction Company. The tournament will be held at the Altadena Valley Country Club on Monday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008 with lunch and registration starting at 11:30 a.m. A shotgun start will be at 1:00 p.m.

The registration fee is \$500.00 for a team of four and that includes greens fee, cart, lunch, two mulligans per player and a few drinks during play. The beverage cart will be on hand doling out our beverages until they run out at which time you may purchase drinks from the cart. The individual registration fee is \$150 per person. Individuals will be assigned to a team the day of the tournament.

This year the form may be downloaded from the branch website at <http://branches.asce.org/birmingham>. The forms will be accepted by fax, snail-mail or email. Registration forms are due by the 11<sup>th</sup> of April, 2008. If you have any questions about the tournament please contact Dwight Turnipseed at 205-329-3464 or by email to [dturnipseed@gallet.com](mailto:dturnipseed@gallet.com). The registration forms should be on the website by the 29<sup>th</sup> of February, 2008.

**Saiia** Construction, L.L.C. **DUNN** CONSTRUCTION SINCE 1878

**2008 SCHOLARSHIP TOURNAMENT**

**REGISTRATION FORM**

The Birmingham Branch of the American Society of Civil Engineers would like to invite you to the 2008 Scholarship Golf Tournament on behalf of SAIIA Construction and DUNN Construction, this years generous sponsors.

Tournament Date: Monday, May 5th, 2008  
Location: Altadena Valley Country Club  
Check-in/Lunch: 11:30 a.m.  
Tee-off: 1:00 p.m.  
**Registration Forms Due by 2:00 p.m., April 11, 2008**  
Registration includes greens fee, cart, lunch, 2 mulligans per player and drinks during play.

Company/Team Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Players (Capt.): 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
2: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
3: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
4: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Team Captain/Contact's email address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Team Registration Fee: \$500.00 (If entering more than one team, please use a separate form)  
Individual Registration Fee: \$150.00  
Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Check  Credit Card  At Door   
Check Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Name on Credit Card: \_\_\_\_\_

You may pay online through the branch website, <http://branches.asce.org/birmingham> and follow the link to the online payment screen or by check made payable to **ASCE Birmingham Branch** c/o Wiser Company, LLC, 201 London Parkway, Suite 100, Birmingham, Alabama 35211. You may fax this form to 205-942-2832, electronically submit the form online, or mail to the above address. For Questions about the tournament please call Dwight Turnipseed at 205-329-3464 or send email to [dturnipseed@gallet.com](mailto:dturnipseed@gallet.com). Credit card payment is available online only. Only cash or check can be accepted the day of the tournament (At Door).

ALL PROFITS FROM THE TOURNAMENT GO TO THE ASCE ENGINEERING SCHOLARSHIP FUND

2008 Registration Form

## Younger Member Group

By Andrew Faulk

At the March 6<sup>th</sup> meeting, I mentioned the idea that the branch start a "younger member committee/group". No one seemed interested, so I thought I would offer a bit more information on what it is. So, let's start by defining a few terms; younger and member.

Now, as far as ASCE is concerned, you must be under the age of 36 and be an active member of ASCE. By active, I mean participating; I had to throw that part in. On the national ASCE website (<http://www.asce.org/inside/youngermen.cfm>) you can find information about the support available from Nationals as well as information about people to contact and also activities. Other branches around the country have active groups of younger engineers that participate in philanthropic and social activities. Some examples are the Sacramento YM forum ([www.sacymf.org](http://www.sacymf.org)), the Kansas City YM group ([sections.asce.org/kc/ym/](http://sections.asce.org/kc/ym/)) and Austin's YM forum ([www.austinasce.org/ymf.htm](http://www.austinasce.org/ymf.htm)).

I think this would be a good way to reach out to the student chapters at the engineering schools in this state and a good way for us to welcome the newly graduated engineers moving into the area.

If anyone is interested, please contact me at [afaulk@wiserco.com](mailto:afaulk@wiserco.com) or 205.218.8631.

## Can Outreach Stem the Tide?

*By Andrew Faulk*

For the last few years we have all seen article after article detailing the decline of American technological prowess and the rise of Indian and Chinese technological sectors. Some choose to shrug their shoulders and still others choose to ignore it completely. There are a few however like Mr. Marcusen, past president of ASCE, that choose to bring it to the front for discussion. We should all follow his example and go a step further - do something.

First we need to decide that there is a problem. The aspect of the global economy that seems to be of particular interest to us happens to revolve around the idea of engineering jobs going overseas. I have heard tales of critical infrastructure and items of national security being designed and/or drawn by firms overseas. Maybe some of you remember the 2007 story of the plans for the proposed U.S. embassy in Iraq were available on the internet for a brief period. They were drawn overseas. This is the "first step" in what is seen as a move of design and engineering services going to foreign countries.

Well, part of a global free-market economy is that in order for companies to be competitive they have to keep profits up and costs down. This can mean charging more for their services, or using a cheaper work force; in steps India and China. Part of the issue is political and the other is education. The scary bits are the numbers the media and others throw at us and since I'm one for sensationalizing as much as anyone here they are; according to a 2007 estimate from the CIA World Fact Book the U.S. population is approximately 0.3 billion. Wow, that's a lot of people you say. Hold on to your hats, because China boasts a population of 1.3 billion and India a close second with 1.1 billion. So, millions more people and they generally earn a great deal less than we do...

As far as engineering goes there are estimates that state the U.S. graduates around 70,000 engineers per year and enrolment is declining. (If I were in high school and heard that engineering and other technical jobs were going overseas because they can do it cheaper I might be disinclined to consider the profession.) India, on the other hand graduates close to 350,000 and the Chinese mass produce some 600,000 engineers. Our eastern counterparts earn roughly one-quarter what we do.

"Holly eggrolls Batman! What can we do?"

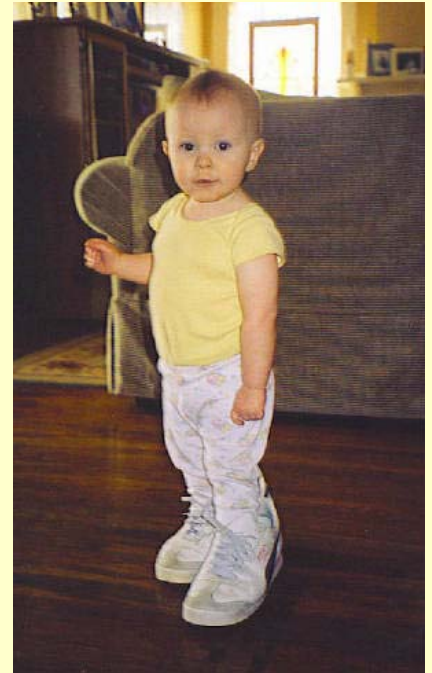
"Easy chum, you do know to speak Chinese?"

I have to confess, I like trivia; and normally about the most useless stuff too; the following is not. U.S. graduation rates are available from the Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics. Statistics from India and China are a little harder to come by and what's worse is... semantics. The term "engineer" does not easily translate into Chinese. Not only can someone who spends four or more years of his or her life studying thermodynamics and structural steel design earn a degree in engineering, but an auto mechanic can be called an engineer. Also it is possible to get a "Fast Track" degree for engineering that is equivalent to an Associates degree in the U.S.; they are still called engineers. Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying there isn't an issue for us to deal with. I think we need an apples to apples comparison though. There needs to be a push for international standards of education and terminology in order for employers and clients to know what they are getting.

Soap box aside; what can we do? We already do something called the "Coloring Book Competition". This reaches some of the fourth grade children in the area, but we don't do anything else. I don't want to sound crass, but we expect them to remember us and engineering by the time they choose a college to attend. Come on! I remember Mrs. Russell, the then widow of the founder of Russell Corporation, visiting my kindergarten class, but I don't have a clue why she was there. I suspect it may be that way for the kids we visit. I'm not saying that it's a bad program or that it's time has come; I'm saying maybe we should do a little more.

A recent article titled "The Education Imperative" cited comparisons of U.S. students and their international counterparts as found in the *Third International Mathematics and Science Study* (TMSS). The study suggests that although our fourth graders well outperform the international average in math and science, our eighth graders score only marginally better and our twelfth graders scored almost at the bottom of the list. I'm not suggesting there's a correlation between our efforts and the TMSS findings, only a reason for doing more.

So ask yourself if we do enough and what we as individuals, as citizens, as engineers and scientists can do for those that would fill our shoes.



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*"For those that  
would fill our  
shoes"*

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## Student Chapter Update

*By Blair Minyard*

The student chapter is getting ready for the competition in Orlando, Florida the end of this month. March 28-31st. We are in preparation for it right now, we will be hosting a Yard Sale to help fund our trip on Saturday, March 22nd at 500 Gene Reed Road (Commerce Center East Complex) Birmingham, Al. from 7:00AM until.

If ASCE Members are unable to attend we would love donations!!!!

For more information on how you can help or support the student chapter, or to purchase your T-shirt contact Blair Minyard at [futureegr@yahoo.com](mailto:futureegr@yahoo.com).



## Board of Licensure Update

*By Joe Meads, P.E. - Sain Associates, Inc.*

It is my pleasure to represent the Alabama Section ASCE on the Committee to make nominations for the Alabama Board of Licensure for PE and PLS. I attended the Board of Licensure Nominating Committee Meeting on November 16, 2007.

Nine professional societies were represented, including myself for ASCE. Four candidates were presented for consideration to replace Veston Bush as the Land Survey representative to the Board of Licensure.

After discussion of the qualifications of each candidate, the top three candidates were chosen and then ranked by each member of the Nominating Committee.

The rankings by the Committee are as follows:

- 1) James Moody Ray
- 2) C. Michael Arnold
- 3) Joseph C. Hunt

These names will be submitted to the Governor's office for him to select one of the three.

One item was discussed at the meeting that I have recommended for follow-up by the Alabama Section ASCE.

A bill is currently being considered that would add two additional people to the Board of Registration for a total of seven members instead of the current five. One of these positions would be a Land Surveyor and one an Engineer. If you are interested in being considered for this position, resumes can be sent to Alabama Section President Bill Carwile ([bill.carwile@arcadis-us.com](mailto:bill.carwile@arcadis-us.com)) or myself ([joemeads@sain.com](mailto:joemeads@sain.com) /205-940-6420). Potential candidates must meet the following requirements:

Citizen of the United States and an Alabama resident.

Individual who holds a current license (PE or PLS depending on board position)

Engaged in the practice for at least 12 years (5 years in responsible charge)

If this bill passes, another Committee Meeting could be convened by July. ASCE should be in a position to offer candidates three to four weeks prior to a called meeting. Also, current Board Member Preston Jackson's term expires in April 2009 and we should be prepared to offer a candidate for this position.

## It Takes a Village

April 19, 2008

**First Annual Village Creek One Mile Fun-Run/Walk & Community Workshop: Implementing The Olmsted Vision - One Step at a Time**

Registration for the Run/Walk will begin at McAlpine Community Center on April 19<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 a.m. and the run will take place at 8:30 a.m. From 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., members of the 2007-2008 Project Corporate Leadership Class and Environmental Leadership Program will host a workshop to discuss strategies for implementing the Olmsted Vision for the Village Creek Area in the Ensley and Pratt Communities.

For more information, please call L'Tryce Slade at 866-925-5742, [Lslade@sladetp.com](mailto:Lslade@sladetp.com)

## Summer Conference 2008

WHEN: Wednesday July 30, 2008 - Friday August 1, 2008

WHERE: Perdido Beach Resort, 27200 Perdido Beach Boulevard, Orange Beach, AL 36561

Phone: (251) 981-9811

Toll Free: (800) 634-8001

[www.perdidobeachresort.com](http://www.perdidobeachresort.com)

Block rates available, ask for American Society of Civil Engineers

We are currently filling the speaker slots if anyone has a topic or speaker they would like to hear we will try to include it as a technical presentation. For suggestions, please contact Kendall Kilpatrick at

[Kendall.Kilpatrick@hatchmott.com](mailto:Kendall.Kilpatrick@hatchmott.com)

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[www.saiia.com](http://www.saiia.com)

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**Don't take life too seriously. You'll never get out alive. - Bugs Bunny**

**Do you have something to say? Let's hear it, and maybe your thoughts will be in the next newsletter.**

You can now paid Dues online at <http://branches.asce.org/birmingham/>

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Interested in volunteering your time? \_\_\_\_\_

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