

Message from the Chair



A successful 2009 for the Willowdale-Thornhill Professional Engineers Ontario (PEO) chapter has come to an end. And we have every reason to be optimistic about the year ahead of us. In 2009, we had eight seminars, six government liaison program events, two mentoring and student outreach-related activities, and one industry tour. Most of those activities were held for the first time in our chapter's history. In addition, we also actively participated in other chapters' activities, PEO events and had 10 productive board meetings.

However, we could have had an even more successful year and could have provided many more services to our profession and membership if there wasn't a lack of resources. The Athletics competition had to be cancelled in November and the scholarship programs scheduled for 2009 were forgotten. However, a lack of resources does not mean only a lack of members on the board. It also means a lack of commitment from the existing board members. In this message, I would like to focus on the latter, specifically, the lack of commitment from the board.

After we elected a new board at the annual general meeting last March, we

started with 18 members and a couple of observers, unprecedented in our chapter's history. One might think that we could accomplish a lot, given the number of board members. But, unfortunately, that was not the case. At the end of the day, we ended up with a much smaller group with a heavier workload for each board member.

Is this the way we behave at work as professionals? Would we ignore email and other correspondence that are important to our company and our work? Do we disregard the meeting notices and not bother to advise the meeting chair of our absence? Are we not responsible to our membership who has elected us? Are we not accountable for the financial allotment we receive from PEO to provide services to our profession and members? Are there other members who are more committed and would have taken a spot, if all the board positions were not occupied? Really, how is commitment to voluntary work any different from commitment in our professional lives?

In 2009 we modified our by-laws to introduce a succession plan for the governance of our chapter and to offer our membership more opportunities to get actively involved in the board. While I invite you to join the board, I would also like to take this opportunity to ask you to consider your ability to commit at this time, before submitting your nomination form.

In the end, I hope that you will be able to get involved in our chapter. It is my wish that we will have a board that is committed to serving our profession, in 2010 and the years ahead.

Regards,
Changiz Sadr, P.Eng.
Chair, Willowdale-Thornhill PEO Chapter

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

When: Starting at 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 6, 2010

Where: Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites Markham, 7095 Woodbine Avenue, Markham, Ontario.
Phone: (905) 474-0444

What: Annual general meeting (AGM) to elect an executive and to amend the by-laws. A certificate presentation and dinner are to follow.

If you plan to attend, please RSVP to secretary@wtpeo.org.

Call for Executive Nominations, Annual General Meeting

If you want to run for a position on the board of executives, please complete and submit the nomination form published in this newsletter. Instructions are printed above the form. All executive positions are voluntary with no direct monetary compensation, except for specific out-of-pocket expenses. The executive meets once a month and participates in events and functions of the Willowdale-Thornhill PEO chapter.

ENGINEERING NOTES by Nanda Lwin, P.Eng.

Is Engineering More Respected than We Think?

U.S. survey shows that engineers rank ninth among most prestigious professions

If you ever sat around with a bunch of engineers, in a boardroom, at a PEO meeting or elsewhere, the message about engineers and public image is reasonably the same: to quote Rodney Dangerfield, we “don’t get no respect.” However, a recent survey may prove that simply isn’t true. An opinion poll conducted by Harris Interactive last summer, surveyed 1010 U.S. adults (a similar 2007 Canadian study excluded engineers from the survey), and showed that engineers fared well among other professions in terms of prestige.

Based on the number of respondents who answered which careers had “very great prestige,” professional engineer ranked ninth out of 23 professions (up from 10th place last year). A total of 39 per cent said the engineering profession had “very great prestige.” In addition, 27 per cent said “considerable prestige,” 28 per cent responded “some prestige,” while 5 per cent replied that engineers had “hardly any prestige at all” (the remaining 1 per cent were undecided or had refused to answer the question).

Among the findings:

- The eight professions that surpassed engineers, in terms of responses of “very great prestige”: firefighter (62 per cent), scientist (57 per cent), doctor (56 per cent), nurse (54 per cent), military officer (51 per cent), teacher (51 per cent), police officer (44 per cent), and clergyperson (41 per cent). Rounding out the top 10 at number 10 is farmer (36 per cent).
- The bottom five: real estate agent (5 per cent), accountant (11 per cent), stockbroker (13 per cent), actor (15 per cent), and banker (16 per cent).

No doubt that the results will give us something to think about when we’re talking with other engineers around the water cooler.

Nanda Lwin, B.A.Sc., MEPP, P.Eng., is a professor of civil engineering technology at Seneca College. He is a journalist and the author of several books. He can be reached at nanda.lwin@wtpeo.org.

Willowdale-Thornhill PEO Chapter Board of Executives Nomination

Dear valued members of the Willowdale-Thornhill PEO Chapter: If you are interested, enthusiastic, available, and committed to your engineering colleagues and the engineering profession, and would like to join the board of executives and take up a role in your chapter governance, please complete the nomination form below and send it to the nomination committee through one of the following ways:

- email it to nomination@wtpeo.org;
- fax it to (416) 410-0755;
- hand deliver it to a present member of the board of executives.

Completed forms must be received by the nomination committee by February 20, 2010, which is two weeks prior to the annual general meeting.

Please note that members who are eligible to endorse this nomination are members of the Willowdale-Thornhill Chapter, and do not include professional engineers who reside outside the boundaries of the Willowdale-Thornhill Chapter, and members not fully licensed, such as engineers-in-training (EIT), and limited engineering licensees (LEL).

Incomplete or inaccurate forms will not be accepted.

Name: _____ Licence number: _____
Home address: _____

Email: _____ Phone number: _____
Home chapter: _____

Have you ever been an executive member of a chapter? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, which chapter and what was your contribution? _____

Please specify the date you served. Start date: _____ End date: _____

Why would you like to join the board of executives? _____

Which activities are you interested in? Officer position: _____

Programs (seminars/tours) _____	Certificate presentation/AGM _____
Newsletter/publication _____	Education/student outreach _____
Government liaison _____	Engineer-in-training (EIT) _____
Web support _____	Award/election _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

We, the undersigned, are members in good standing of the Willowdale-Thornhill PEO Chapter and endorse the above-mentioned applicant for the board of executives.

Name: _____	Name: _____
Licence number _____	Licence number _____
Signature: _____	Signature: _____
Date: _____	Date: _____

YOUNG ENGINEERS INSPIRE STUDENTS TO PURSUE ENGINEERING

By Changiz Sadr, P.Eng.
Chair, Willowdale-Thornhill PEO chapter

Along with other chapter executives, I attended PEO's 2009 Chapter Leaders Conference on November 21, 2009. What was different with this conference compared with previous years was the theme and how that focus was presented. The theme was PEO's engineering outreach initiatives promoting physics and engineering to high-school students through several different programs.

One of these programs is Engineer in Residence (EIR), a recent PEO initiative involving engineers who volunteer at schools to introduce and promote engineering as a profession, through their science-education programs.

In December, I met with a couple of teachers from Newtonbrook Secondary School, located in Willowdale-Thornhill, to learn about their math and physics competitions and how we can work together. At press time, Newtonbrook will be hosting Science Olympics, a multi-school event that is scheduled for February 5th. During my visit, the teachers also mentioned another activity slated for this April pertaining to robotics. This activity is conducted with the help of FIRST (www.usfirst.org), a U.S. program introduced in 1989 to promote science and technology in schools. Since then, the program has been adopted by several schools across North America.

I would like to extend an invitation to all chapter members who are willing to help young people to pursue an education and career in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, while building their self-confidence, knowledge, and life skills.

For more information about EIR, please visit www.eir.ca. If you are interested, please contact us through our website at www.wtpeo.org or email us directly at education@wtpeo.org.

NOTICE OF VOTE ON BY-LAWS

It is proposed that the by-laws of the Willowdale-Thornhill PEO Chapter be amended. The vote will be held at the Willowdale-Thornhill PEO Chapter AGM as noted above and is open to members in good standing of the chapter. The proposed by-laws are published online at www.wtpeo.org (click the "About Us" tab).

Section 10, Article 2 of the current by-laws reads:

"This by-law may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the board at any board meeting, provided that the notice of the proposed amendment has been included with the notice calling the meeting. Notices for this purpose must be postmarked or electronically sent at least ten days in advance of the meeting."

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Parting Shots...



New professional engineers display their licences at the most recent Willowdale-Thornhill PEO certificate presentation, held at Holiday Inn at Steeles and Woodbine Avenues, on November 28, 2009.

On November 28th, 150 people were in attendance for the **certificate presentation** held at the Holiday Inn at Steeles and Woodbine Avenues. A total of 45 new professional engineers were granted their licences. Guest speakers included PEO vice president **Corneliu Chisu, P.Eng.**, and Ontario Centre for Engineering and Public Policy executive director **Donald Wallace**. A dance disc jockeyed by "**DJ Wild Bill**" **Wilson** followed the ceremonies.

A tour at the head office of **Celestica Inc.**, held on December 16th offered PEO mem-

bers an inside look at the Canadian electronics manufacturing giant. A total of 20 people attended.

A school outreach meeting at **Newtonbrook Secondary School** in North York was held on December 3rd (see "Young Engineers," pg. 4 for more details). The aim of the meeting was to discuss the programs the Willowdale-Thornhill PEO Chapter can initiate in conjunction with the high school.

THE CHRONICLE

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Willowdale-Thornhill PEO Chapter Executive

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The Chronicle publishes articles of interest to the membership of Willowdale-Thornhill Professional Engineers Ontario (PEO) Chapter. The content of this newsletter does not necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the council of PEO, nor does the PEO assume responsibility for the opinions expressed herein.

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