

# SEAC Newsletter

Structural Engineers Association of Colorado

## Mark Your Calendar

### **General Membership Meetings**

(Breakfast 7:30 a.m.)

January 20  
March 9  
May 11  
July 13  
September 14

### **Business Practice Committee Meetings**

(Breakfast 7:30 a.m.)

February 10  
April 13  
June 8  
August 10  
October 12

### **SEAC Board of Directors Meetings**

(7:30 a.m.)

February 17  
April 20  
June 15  
August 17  
October 19

### **SEAC Seminar**

February  
2001

### **Annual Dinner Meeting**

November 9  
6 - 9 p.m.

## September's General Meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

### **"Concrete Specification Suggestions"**

Please join SEAC in welcoming the local ACI chapter for a combined Technical Meeting in September. Our featured speakers will be William Rossi, P.E. and Janet Owens-White, P.E. Bill is the Technical Service Manager for Dakota Cement. Janet is the Technical Service Engineer and Operations Manager for Owens Brothers Concrete.

Both Bill and Janet review concrete construction specifications routinely and have suggestions regarding potential improvement based on ACI and local area practices. The program will address the advantages of well-written concise concrete construction specifications.

Implementing their suggestions could help save time and money by all members of the design

and construction team including owner, architect, engineer, and contractor. Please join us for what looks to be a great presentation.

## Don't Miss Out

### **Upcoming General Meeting**

**Date:** Thurs., Sept. 14 @ 7:30 a.m.

**Speaker(s):** William Rossi, P.E.  
Janet Owens-White, P.E.

### **Location:**

Renaissance Denver Hotel  
3801 Quebec Street (south of the I-70 and  
Quebec Street intersection)

### **Reservations:**

Call Tonja Bradford at J.R. Harris & Co.  
303-860-9021 or fax 303-860-9537 by  
**noon** on Monday, Sept. 11, 2000.

## The IBC-2000 Is Coming! \_\_\_\_\_

Beginning two months ago, the City of Denver has started the preparatory steps for adopting the IBC 2000. A Building Code Review Committee has been designated with the goal of having the new model code with local amendments ready for adoption by October 2001.

SEAC has been given the opportunity to participate in the process and SEAC will remain involved with feedback in the form of committee actions and technical presentations in the forthcoming future. Look for further information in the next newsletter.

## ASME Invitation \_\_\_\_\_

The Colorado Section of ASME invites all SEAC members to attend their dinner meeting to be held on September 14 at the Lakewood Country Club.

The featured speaker will be Dr. John Buechner, President of the newly create Colorado Institute of Technology, and retired President of the University of Colorado. He will speak about the objectives of CIT, and the desired relationships between the local engineering community and the State Government of Colorado.

Cost is \$24.00 for non-ASME members. Call Eugenia Davila (303) 403-4084 before September 6.

## Officers & Board Members



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Newsletter Editor

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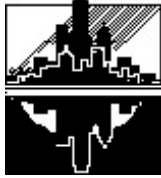
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*Information for inclusion in the newsletter  
must be received one month prior to the next  
general meeting.*

Shawna K. Zachman  
Newsletter Publisher



## Dave's Discourse

As summer draws to a close, my first impulse was to comment on how quiet the past three months have been. It did not take long to realize that it's been quiet because so many people have been gone and we have been too busy to enjoy the sunshine or smell the roses. It seems only last week that we were all being bombarded with dire predictions of calamity to come with the turn of the new year, and now the year is two-thirds over. In my last Discourse, I commented about how fortunate we are to live in a country where conservation is important. Then I realized that the most important resource of our lives is TIME, and TIME may be the resource that we least appreciate. TIME passes at its own pace, is impossible to store, and once expended can never be replaced.

My grown son called to inform me last night that he just got a new computer for home use. The machine was purchased on the Internet and is faster, has more power, and has more memory than anything in our engineering office. That got me to thinking about the speed at which life passes, and it is passing at an accelerating rate. Last month I commented that the new IBC has been in print only since April, and already is in the revision process before we've learned to use it, or any local jurisdiction has even adopted it.

When I was in college, over a third of a century ago, the main aide for calculation was a Log-Log Deci-Trig slide rule. It cost \$25 and worked fine for almost ten years before being retired. It had no RAM or disk drive, and the printer needed to be manually sharpened on a regular basis. Starting in the early '70s the "Rule" started to get some help from a succession of electronic calculators of increasing sophistication, none of which lasted more than two or three years, but did finally manage to duplicate its calculation capabilities. It became possible to do a lot more calculations with greater precision in less TIME.

Our office bought its first desktop computer in 1983. It had a miniscule amount of RAM, had a CPU speed of about 4 MHZ, and required 2-8" floppy drives to run. **But it was a wonderful luxury.** It cost "only" \$15,000 and even had about six structural engineering programs that cost about as much as the machine. It was a pre-PC CPM machine and was soon just a dinosaur. Since then I can count a progression of six increasingly fast and powerful PC's that have occupied a prominent position on my desk. Each one has been a gigantic step up in computational capability from the last at less cost, and each one has consumed a larger percentage of TIME.

All of this wonderful machinery has not, however, replaced the function of our human intelligence and experience as professional engineers. We still need to model things right, input the data right, get the dimensions right, interpret the results right, and prepare the construction documents right. While we are at it, let's remember to set aside enough of that precious, non-renewable, TIME for ourselves to make the effort worthwhile.

*Dave Houdeshell*

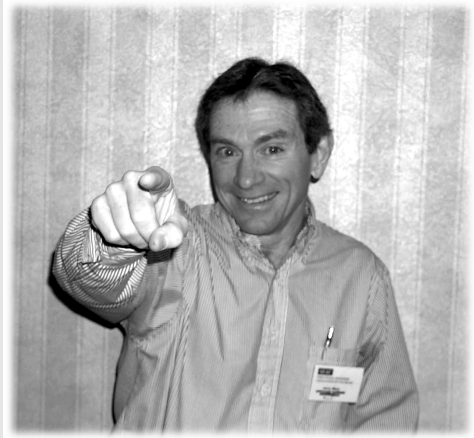
# Committee Announcements:

## Membership Committee

If you have questions about this committee, please contact **Jerry Maly** at (720) 962-8688, [jmaly@wje.com](mailto:jmaly@wje.com)

# SEAC Wants You!

Join and be  
an active  
member!



## Business Practice Committee

The annual Business Practice Survey was mailed to 65 firms with members in SEAC. Of those, 39 firms participated by completing and returning the questionnaire. This is the best response ever, but it could be improved. As encouragement for maximum participation, results are shared with all participating firms, and are not available to non-participants. All firms that participated will have received the compiled results if they enclosed a return envelope.

If you participated but have not received your results, contact **Wayne Muir** at SCI, 303-399-5154. If your firm did not participate because the survey did not reach the appropriate contact person, please contact Jenny at SCI so next year's survey can be directed to the proper person.

## **SEAC Updates**

### Professional Members

David Henley  
Vulcraft, Inc.

Phillip Lykosh  
Wiss, Janney, Elstner Assoc.

## Available SEAC Publications for Purchase

### GUIDE: Recommended Standard of Practice

price: \$15 (members)

\$20 (non-members)

Contact:

Bruce Wolfe, Structural Consultants, Inc. 303-399-5154

### 1997 Survey of Colorado Building Departments

price range: \$20 to \$100

Contact:

Henry Lopez 303-447-2813

### 1971 Colorado Snow Load Report

price: \$10

Contact:

Henry Lopez 303-447-2813

1999 Seminar Proceedings:

### Suggested Local Standard of Practice in the Precast and Steel Industries

price: \$15

Contact:

Bruce Wolfe, Structural Consultants, Inc. 303-399-5154



## When Will The Lawsuits End?

**John Reins**, past President of SEAC, has agreed to chair an Ad-Hoc Committee to evaluate the recent proliferation of lawsuits against contractors and design professionals involved with multi-unit residential complexes in Colorado.

If you have relevant input for the committee to consider, please communicate with John at Wiss, Janney, Elstner's office, phone (720) 962-8688.

## What Do Structural Engineers Really Do?

Structural engineering is the art of:  
using materials  
(that have properties which can only be estimated)  
to build real structures  
(that can only be approximately analyzed)  
to withstand forces  
(that are not accurately known)  
that are designed by engineers  
(that have partial knowledge of materials, behavior and forces)  
and built by contractors  
(need we say more)  
so that our responsibility with respect to public safety is satisfied.

# Differing Viewpoints

A man in a hot air balloon realized he was lost. He reduced altitude and spotted a man below. He descended a bit more and shouted, "Excuse me, can you help me? I promised a friend I would meet him an hour ago, but I don't know where I am."

The man below replied, "You are in a hot air balloon hovering approximately 30 feet above the ground. You are between 40 and 41 degrees north latitude and between 59 and 60 degrees west longitude."

"You must be an engineer," said the balloonist. "I am," replied the man, "How did you know?"

"Well," answered the balloonist, "everything you told me is technically correct, but I have no idea what to make of your information, and the fact is I am still lost. Frankly, you've not been much help so far."

The man below responded, "You must be a manager."

"I am," replied the balloonist, "but how did you know?"

"Well," said the man, "you don't know where you are or where you are going. You have risen to where you are due to a large quantity of hot air. You made a promise, which you have no idea how to keep, and you expect me to solve your problem. The fact is you are in exactly the same position you were in before we met, but now, somehow, it's my fault."



Don't forget to make  
your phone reservation  
for this month's meeting  
by **noon** on Sept. 11!  
Call Tonja at 303-860-9021

*Published bimonthly by the Structural Engineers Association of Colorado, to disseminate news to its members and to persons, firms or groups interested in or involved with the profession of Structural Engineering. Copy appearing in the SEAC Newsletter is not to be construed as an endorsement of any product, service or company. Portions of this publication may be reproduced, provided credit is given the source.*

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