



# The Drawingboard

## Queens Chapter

New York State Society of Professional Engineers

May 2009

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### President's Message

*By Chris Petallides, P.E.  
President*



Hope you all had a nice Memorial Day week-end. Like every year, since Nicky and I moved to Little Neck, we took in the Little Neck-Douglaston Memorial Day parade along Northern Blvd., purportedly the largest parade of its kind in the country. Marching in the parade, along side a number of politicians and a number of political hopefuls was, yet again, our own, **Bernie Haber**, P.E., past PDC chairman and present QC director, sharp looking in his military uniform (don't know how he can still get in it) who made us all very proud. At the end of the parade, we tried to rub elbows with as many political types as we possibly could; we have a number of open issues and they may come in handy come November.

The main topic of discussion at our last general membership meeting, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2009, for those of you who couldn't make it, was the issue of the NYC Department of Buildings (DOB) so called "expeditors", who pose as engineers and architects and steal our profession(s) with the help of rubber-stampers. At the end of the open discussion, it was voted "unanimously" to find ways to "demand that only professional engineers and registered architects be allowed to sit with DOB plan examiners, to present applications of all types, to deal with objections and to receive job approvals". It was generally agreed that such a rule would go a long way in reclaiming our professional status at the DOB and elsewhere, analogous to the professional status enjoyed by "attorneys", as compared to their employees known as "paralegals". It was also recognized that the idea wouldn't be readily embraced by everyone concerned, including some design professionals who may have become complaisant and short-

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sighted over time. Our standing committee on the subject, headed by immediate past president, **Brian Flynn**, P.E., is hard at work putting together the methodology, including the political backing necessary to succeed.

With regard to our pending lawsuit against NYC for violating State Education Law by appointing a non-professional as Commissioner, the City has moved to dismiss our case essentially arguing that all engineering work will be delegated to a P.E. (and you can trust NYC to do the right thing). Our cross motion, according to our attorneys, headed by **Marc Kriss**, Esq., Albany, NY, which will be filed by June 1<sup>st</sup>, in sum and substance argues that we do not, and do not have to, trust the government to do the right thing because we have a State Constitution which bars the locality from maintaining local laws which are in conflict with State statutes. In short, "an ounce of constitutional right is worth a pound of good faith". The City will have until June 12<sup>th</sup> to file reply papers and the matter will be before the Court for what we hope will be final adjudication.

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Of course, we will keep you informed of any new developments and ... again, if you haven't already contributed to our "Legal Fund", please consult your conscious and do so right now.

Also, please note that we have resumed monthly PDC, Inc. lectures at Fort Totten, for continuing education credits, thanks to the diligent work of QC 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, **George Tavoulareas**, P.E. and assisted by former PDC chair and former Queens AIA president, **Paul DiNatale**, RA. Look for future announcements by **Bob LoPinto**, P.E., current PDC Inc. chairman.

We look forward to seeing all of you Thurs., May 28, 2009, 6:30PM at Fort Totten.

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## Upcoming Meeting Information

### *Our Next Chapter Meeting*

Date: **Thursday May 28<sup>rd</sup>, 2009 - 6:30 PM**

Sponsor: [Hilti International](#)

Location:

**[422 Weaver Ave., Fort Totten, New York](#)**

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## Building Inspectors Enngineering Certification

### TWO QUEENS CHAPTER PE's ARE BOARD CERTIFIED BY BIECI

First, **Richard G. Berkenfeld**, PE and now Brian E. Flynn, PE have been board certified as Certified Building Inspection Engineers this past year. Close to two hundred licensed Professional Engineers have already been designated Certified Building Inspection Engineers through a new program established under the auspices of the National Academy of Building Inspection Engineers (NABIE). Many of the PEs earned their certification by way of a grandfathering provision that allows candidates with at least eight years of experience to submit a four-page application. Successful review and acceptance of the application permits a candidate to receive an exemption from the certification exam. The grandfathering period ended December 31, 2008. The first certification exam was given on October 24 in Nashville, Tennessee. The building inspection engineer certification program was launched in January of 2008. Volunteers from NABIE conceptualized the program in the early 1990s, and it has been developed over approximately the last 12 years. NABIE is a chartered affinity group of the National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE). An independent board of governors now administers the program through the Building Inspection Engineers' Certification Institute (BIECI). The Council of Engineering and Scientific Specialty Boards accredits BIECI. While many of the certified building inspection engineers are members of NABIE and NSPE, such memberships are not required. Certification, however, requires a PE license or Architect registration and at least four years of experience in charge of

building inspection engineering work. The certification exam consists of 200 multiple choice questions covering 23 areas, including: History of building construction, Building materials, Structural analysis and theory of structures, Surveying engineering, Building electrical systems, Engineering economics, Written communication, Standards of practice and Professional practice and ethics. An exam study guide is available at the NABIE website at [www.nabie.org](http://www.nabie.org). Costs for the certification program are: \$75 for the application, \$100 for the exam, and \$125 for the first year of certificate issuance.

Annual renewal of the certification will be \$100. Executive Director **Mike Stotts** explains that, ".this credential is special and corresponds to board certification in other professions, particularly medicine." Stotts indicates that attaining PE licensure is a special achievement and board certification in an engineering field acknowledges a unique level of highly specialized knowledge. The certification adds to the professional expertise marked by being a PE, sets the building inspection engineer apart from others attempting to work in the field, and raises the bar in the eyes of the public. **David Roebuck**, P.E. and John Cronin, P.E. of the BIECI board of governors believe that with all that has taken place in the nation's real estate markets over the last year, expertise and experience in evaluating and investigating building conditions and building problems will be even more important to the public, property owners, lenders, investors, attorneys, real estate professionals, and the insurance industry. Roebuck says that,

"Certification will help clarify [engineers'] expertise in re-emerging and stabilizing markets where increasing building performance standards - including health and safety - are front and center." For additional information on the Building Inspection Engineers' Certification Institute and the certification program, contact Mike Stotts or visit [www.nabie.org](http://www.nabie.org) and follow the links for certification and BIECI

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