

Queens Chapter

New York State Society of Professional Engineers

The Drawingboard

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In This Issue

- President's Message
- Next Meeting Announcement
- NYC Proposed Rules
- Classifieds
- Professional Services Directory

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President's Message

By George Tavoulaareas, P.E.
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I am saddened to inform you that **Joel Miele, Sr**, PE passed away several weeks ago. Joel Miele was a past president of the Queens Chapter of NYSSPE, past president of the NYSSPE, Commissioner of the NYC Dept. of Environmental Protection, NYC Department of Buildings, and Board of Standards and Appeals. Joel was a friend of the Chapter and he never said no to me when the Chapter needed something from him. Anything we would need he was more than accommodating and helpful. May his memory be eternal and in his memory the Chapter will make a donation to the American Parkinsons Disease Association.

After Superstorm Sandy hit last year, many of our members, myself included volunteered and offered assistance to the public. But did you know that you could be held liable for your actions and that your insurance carrier may not cover you? The Good Samaritan Act **A 4380-A (Englebright), S 3942 (Hannon)** will help shield licensed design professionals from lawsuits for volunteering and assisting the public in a declared emergency. The American Institute of Architects (AIA) has taken the lead and has sponsored legislation in both the assembly and senate. "The proposed bill will provide professional engineers, architects, landscape architects and land surveyors immunity from liability for providing volunteer services during times of crisis and catastrophe. Such immunity would not be applied in cases of wanton, willful, or intentional misconduct, nor to services provided more than 90 days after the termination of the disaster or emergency. This legislation shall not affect the liability of any government which requests a volunteer to perform these services." You can read more about the legislation by going to <http://open.nysenate.gov/legislation/bill/S3942-2013>. We need you to write the governor, your NY State assemblyman and NYS senator and tell them to pass the bill.

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Queensborough Community College will receive an award at our meeting for their Fuel Cell Go-Cart Project. Back in March Queensborough won 1st Prize in the Mechanical Engineering Technology Project Category at the NSPE Westchester Engineering Expo. **Rudi Sherbanski**, PE President of Engineers in Construction will be giving both the students and their professor an award at this month's chapter meeting. We need to support the students of today because they are tomorrow's future. I urge you to attend our general membership meeting on May 23, 2013.

Next General Membership Meeting

The next general membership meeting will be held on Thursday May 23, 2013 at 6:00 PM at 422 Weaver Ave in Ft. Totten, NY. 1PDH

\$10 for members; \$15 for non-members, Students are free and are encouraged to attend

6:00pm-7pm dinner

7:00pm-7:30 general membership meeting including award

7:30pm-8:30pm lecture on acoustics

\$15 for non-members; Admission is free to NSPE members

Students are free and are encouraged to attend

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1 PDH will be issued.

Proposed rules governing the City of New York

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycrules/html/proposed/proposed.shtml>

New rules include inspection and filing requirements for retaining walls fronting a public R-O-W

Classifieds

Electrical Engineer, PE seeking partnership with existing firm or individuals who want to form a new company. Call Eugene at 718.637.1787

Website of the Month

<http://www.discoverengineering.org/>

Good Samaritan

Please take the time to contact your State Representatives to inform them of an issue that affects design professionals and the well being of the public in a disaster.

Find your State Senator here: <http://www.nysenate.gov/senators>

Find your State Assemblyperson here: <http://assembly.state.ny.us/mem/?sh=search>

Governor Cuomo Contact: <http://www.governor.ny.gov/contact/GovernorContactForm.php>

Sample letter on next page:

Office address goes here

Re: Good Samaritan Act

A 4380-A (Englebright), referred to Assembly Higher Education Committee

S 3942 (Hannon), referred to Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs Committee

Dear Senator/Assemblyman,

The devastation caused by Hurricane Sandy impels every New Yorker to help each other. We have seen remarkable examples of volunteerism - indeed, outright heroism in the days and weeks following the storm. The efforts of so many citizens to assist others, both friends and strangers, impacted by Hurricane Sandy display courage, compassion and caring.

Our AIA Brooklyn, neighboring Staten Island, and Queens members have witnessed the devastation first hand as we have joined our neighbors in recovery efforts. AIA members have also answered the call to assist our Government's responders with critical damage assessments of the homes and businesses impacted by the storm. As members of AIA we have a vested interest: many of our members, and their families, live and work in the communities impacted by Sandy. We are committed to helping our friends and neighbors rebuild as we all work to put our lives back together.

Unfortunately, we face a problem as volunteers: the State of New York does not provide immunity from liability for volunteer services rendered by professionals during a declared state of emergency, generally known as "Good Samaritan" protection. Furthermore, while Architects may already have professional liability insurance, that insurance may not cover any actions they may take while acting as a "volunteer." We want to help, we can help – but cannot risk adding to the losses we have already sustained in this disaster.

AIA New York State has been proactively advocating changes to cover "Good Samaritan" actions in times of declared disasters, but the legislature has not acted. The devastation caused by Super-storm Sandy should be a wakeup call.

In addition to the Architects who have already responded, many more Architects and Engineers in the New York area, and beyond, have come forward and indicated a willingness to volunteer in the short-term recovery efforts. Other concerns regarding the re-design of infrastructure and design of new coastal protections are long-term issues. People need help – and we are prepared and willing to assist. We have reached out to Governor Cuomo and the legislative leaders urging that action on this matter be addressed during the up-coming session of the legislature.

Our neighbors, upstate, downstate, Long Island and many others, need help now. Many more people will need help in future emergencies. Please help the AIA secure liability protection for Licensed Professional disaster response volunteers by lending your support to Good Samaritan Protection during the up-coming session of the New York State Legislature.

Thank you.

Sincerely, Your constituent and architect,

Thank you for taking this matter into consideration. We hope for your continued support.

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