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Society Announces 2007 Annual Banquet

The Providence Engineering Society and its affiliated societies welcome both members and guests to the 88th Annual Awards Banquet.

This year's banquet will mark the start of the Providence Engineering Society's one hundred and fourteenth year of existence. This year's event will be held on Thursday, February 8th, 2007 at the Kirkbrae Country Club located in Lincoln, Rhode Island.

Some of the award winners to be honored at this year's banquet include:

- The Freeman Award Winner for demonstrating engineering excellence and advancing the engineering profession throughout their career is being presented to Mr. Dennis DiPrete, P.E.
- The Humanitarian of the Year Award for his service and generosity to the State of Rhode Island and the engineering profession will be posthumously presented to Mr. Luther Blount founder of Blount Marine Corporation
- The Rhode Island Society of Professional Engineers - Engineer of the Year Award will be presented to Wayne D. Moore, P.E.

The Providence Engineering Society Frederick A. Burnham College Scholarship Award will be presented to Steven D. Grandpre. The Ronald C. Jalbert Foundation Scholarship Award will be presented to Alie Steere.

The guest speaker for this year's event will be Dr. Kenneth Sherman B.S., M.S., D. Sc.. Dr. Sherman is Director of the Narragansett Laboratory and the Office of Marine Ecosystem Studies, National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Fisheries Science Center, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and is an adjunct Professor of Oceanography, University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Oceanography. Dr. Sherman has conducted research on ocean plankton productivity from NOAA research vessels in the Central Pacific across the Atlantic and throughout waters of the US Northeast Shelf Large Marine Ecosystem. His studies include comparisons among Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) in relation to the impacts of natural and human interventions on ecosystem productivity and biomass yields. He has served as Chairman of the Biological Oceanography Committee of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, chief scientist of the Antarctic Program of the National Marine Fisheries Service, the U.S. representative to the Scientific Committee of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, scientific consultant to FAO on assignments in West Africa and South America, and U.S. Project Officer in joint U.S.-Polish studies on marine productivity. Dr. Sherman holds the Gold, Silver and Bronze medals from the Department of Commerce for distinguished service, creativity, and leadership. Dr.

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PES Annual Banquet

Thursday, Feb 8, 2007

Kirkbrae Country Club

*Contact Mel at
(401) 334-4100*

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Providence Engineering Society Announces 2007 Frederick A. Burnham College Scholarship Award Recipient

Last year, the Board of Directors unanimously agreed to name and present the College Scholarship Award in memory of the Society's longtime treasurer, the late Frederick A. Burnham.



Steven D. Grandpre

present its 2007 College Scholarship Award to Mr. Steven D. Grandpre.

Steven is a junior at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute located in Troy, New York. He is majoring in Electrical Engineering under the Bachelor of Science program within Rensselaer's School of Engineering.

In addition to taking courses in engineering mathematics, microelectronics and physics, Steven is a member and treasurer of the Rensselaer's Judo Club, and serves as a coordinator for the school's information office.

He is a resident of East Greenwich, RI, and his father is Mr. David W. Grandpre, P.E., who is a member of the Providence Engineering Society, and is employed by C.A. Pretzer Associates, Inc.

Mr. Burnham was a longtime friend of the Society, and faithfully served as its treasurer from 1989 to 2005.

This year the Providence Engineering Society is pleased

Larry's Corner

by L. Robert Smith F.ASCE, F.NSPE
Past President, Providence Engineering Society



It Made Us Better Engineers And People. Didn't It?

It was with a great amount of shock that I opened an envelope announcing my 40th College reunion. I have found that as I get older I reminisce about my college days more fondly. Now I can look back on those years more kindly. However, it still seems like I spent five years on Devil's Island. As an incoming engineering freshman I went to a mass orientation of about 3,000 engineering wannabes. It was held in The Great Hall of the City College of New York. Abraham Lincoln had once addressed a similar size group here. The person who spoke to us was only slightly less august. It was the Dean of Engineering. He told us to look at the person to the right of us and the person to the left of us. He said, "Only one of you will be here at graduation." He meant it. At that time General Electric® had an ad campaign which had a slogan, "Progress is our most important product." The Dean had a sign over the exit door from his office which said, "Drop-outs are our most important product." Less than one third of the entering engineering class would be graduated as engineers. Most of the dropouts from engineering did finish with a degree and went on to live perfectly normal lives. At the time the Dean made his statement about looking to the right of us and looking to the left, I was barely just past my 17th birthday and very literal minded. I looked at the two individuals on either side of me, both of whom had gone to the same pre-engineering high school, Brooklyn Tech, with me, and decided that of the three of us, I was the one who would make it. I immediately felt better about being an engineer. The Dean also told us that we would not be coddled at CCNY. He said the experience would make us better engineers and better people. He said that when we entered the real world, no one was going to coddle us. After our CCNY experience, it would seem easy. He was a man of his word.

The "experience" started with registration. One was let into a large hall at certain pre-set times, based upon one's class status and the vagaries of the alphabet. You would run from table to table trying to get into what was left of openings in the various classes. If you were shut out, you had the option of enrolling in the evening division or trying to get into a class offered at the downtown business school. The engineering program was a five year program that led to a professional degree. A Bachelors of Engineering in a specific discipline. There were 145 credits required. Of these, all but 21 credits were in science, math, or engineering. Notice I have said credits and not credit hours. Lab courses, surveying camps and design sessions associated with engineering design courses were given one credit for every three hours of class. The rationale was that there was two hours of home study associated with each class hour of lecture. Labs, survey camps and design sessions were considered to require no additional outside time. Obviously, no one ever told them about the 12 hours it would take to get a lab report done for the next week. There was also a complicated series of pre-requisites and co-requisites. To simplify this, the catalogue contained a flow chart of courses that was our first introduction to critical path planning. To keep on track I had to take a freshman chemistry lab course at the downtown business school. This meant getting on a subway and going downtown to attend a three hour lab. Thank goodness it was only once a week. Because as soon as the class finished I had to make a mad dash for the subway and go back uptown to make my next class, an hour later. I was thin in those days. It was partly from running to classes and partly because my schedule never seemed to have time for me to eat lunch. The upper classmen took all the good class times. The lower classmen got the more undesirable times.

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"It Made Us Better Engineers And People. Didn't It?" **continued from page 3**

Classes during the traditional lunch times were never available to us, until our junior year. Over my undergraduate career, I found that I had to take some summer classes and some night classes. The ultimate insult came in my super senior year. When the civil engineers went to enroll for two courses which were co-requisites (they had to be taken in the same semester) we found that they were offered once and both classes were at the same time. To accommodate us, the two classes were offered at night at separate times. Half the super seniors took one class at night and the other half took the other one. We couldn't believe anyone could be so stupid as to schedule co-requisites at the same time. When we got to the first night class we found out the reason for this stupidity. The daytime program was a five year program. The same program at night took from 12 years out to 18 years. The longer stays were usually caused by the fact that there weren't enough evening students to warrant the offering of a super senior course. They would have to wait until they were enough evening students backed up to justify offering the class. Sometimes they would intentionally schedule a conflict of two co-requisites during the day and force the day students to take them at night, thereby having a more than ample number to justify offering the classes at night. As an aside, at the end of the registration you had to get your course enrollments approved. There was a blackboard which had two arrows drawn on it. One was labeled "Engineers" and the other was labeled "Non-Engineers". In the ten times that I passed that blackboard, I can't remember having ever seen it not bearing the added annotation, "This is where we separate the men from the boys."

This was part of the organized terror tactics. The individual professors were left to their own devices to torture us. One practice was handing back exams in descending numerical order. The professor would call the name of the individual who had received the highest grade on the exam. If it was a perfect score, that fact would be announced. This usually would be cause for a polite round of applause and the muttering of some comments under ones breath. The names of the others were called in a descending order. At some point in the reading the professor would stop and state that below this point all others failed and then keep going down the list. The last person to receive their exam back was referred to as "The Anchorman". They usually also received a round of applause and comments were made in a somewhat louder voice. It was mortifying and humiliating for the individual. It could not happen today without law suits being filed. However, it did have a positive effect. One friend of mine, who was anchorman on one exam, walked down to the subway with me, right after exams were returned. He had tears in his eyes. He turned to me and said, "That is never going to happen to me again! Whatever it takes, I will never be Anchorman again. I will never fail another exam." He turned it around after that point. I guess this public humiliation did accomplish some positive things.

Class standings were printed and publicly posted, by name, after each semester. No such niceties liking using student I.D. numbers. Instead of being on a traditional 4.0 system, we had a modified system. An "A" was 2.0 and an "F" was -2.0. A "C" average, required for graduation, was therefore a 0.00 in this system. When the class standings were posted, at some point the grade points on the list turned negative. This was a clear indication that these individuals would not receive a degree, unless they improved their average. Individual class grades were also posted at the end of the semester on the office door of the professor. Of course these were also listed by name. Besides an "F" there were two other failing grades. One was a "G" which could be assigned at any time by a professor who felt that it was mathematically impossible for the student to obtain a passing grade. Why let hem sit in a class and breathe everyone else's air? The other, more lethal, was an "H". This was assigned by a professor who felt the class was beyond the academic abilities of the student. It basically ended the student's career in that program, if the course was needed for the degree. All the engineering courses were required. In Civil Engineering we would always get a number of transfers into the program from Electrical in their junior year. It was usually believed that they had received a career altering "H". A few days after we had taken an exam in a Soils class, the professor asked one of the students if he could come in and speak to him in his office, at 12:45pm, that day, just before our three hour soils lab. As we walked out the individual turned to a couple of us and asked, "Why do you think he wants to speak to me?" Someone said, "Either you did so well on the exam that he wants to personally congratulate you, or you screwed up so bad that he is going to drop a "G" or an "H" on you." The individual did not show up at the lab that day and the next time I saw him, about a year later. He was enrolled as a bio-major. He was hoping to teach in high school. Another tool the professors had was that they could send someone's name to the Dean of Engineering and that individual would be required to take a remedial English class for no credit. The professor could do this based upon a lab submission, homework, or even based upon the quality of the English that was written in an exam book,

under stress. Some of us also felt that some professors could refer you to the remedial class if they flat out didn't like you.

The classes were graded without "curves". Class after class would have grades posted with no "A's" awarded. Sometimes there would be one "A" and then no "B's". One individual was so far ahead of the class that to award "B's" would diminish the merit of the "A". One professor, who had previously been a professor at West Point, told us that in life and in engineering there were no "curves". As a result, out of some eight hundred graduates, there were usually less than ten who would receive a degree with honors. There were some Electricals who would receive a degree *Summa* or *Magna cum Laude*. We always said that, "You can't spell geek without a double-e." In the five years that I was in the Civil program I believe there were only two individuals who received their degrees "Cum Laude". Another interesting fact was that in the five years I was in the school of engineering, I came in contact with nine years of student classes. When I was a freshman there were four years of classmen ahead of me. In my super senior year there were four years below me. In this nine year span of classes, there was only one woman. Believe me, it was not easy on her. I took a five week summer surveying course with her, in Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx. There were no toilet facilities nearby, and we used the woods. So did she. It would have made for a long eight hours otherwise, and the decision was that it would not be appropriate for her to leave the survey camp area to go back to the restrooms. It was said that if she wanted to compete in a "man's world" she should get used to it. She was allowed to walk down to the restrooms during the lunch break, on her own time.

Freshman calculus was taken in two five credit courses the first two semesters. This was along with freshman physics and chemistry. No wonder there were so many dropouts. There was a second option for the calculus. Instead of taking it as two five credit courses, it could be taken as two three credit courses and one four credit course. However, each course was four hours. By taking them at a slower pace, one had to take 12 hours to receive the same ten credits. It also threw one off in the scheduling cycle. The placement was based upon a math exam one had to take during engineering orientation. I had a calculus professor who refused to teach the three course sequence. He likened it to having an English major take a remedial English course. He felt it was a lowering of the bar and he would not be

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RISPE Names Moore Its Engineer of the Year

The Rhode Island Society of Professional Engineers (RISPE) has selected Wayne D. Moore, P.E. as Engineer of the Year for 2007. Mr. Moore graduated from the University of Massachusetts with a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering and earned a Master of Science degree in Fire Protection Engineering from Worcester Polytechnic Institute. He is a registered professional engineer in eleven states including Rhode Island.



Wayne D. Moore, P.E.
RISPE Engineer of the Year

The RISPE Board of Officers and Directors unanimously approved Mr. Moore's nomination for the award in recognition of his substantial contributions to the engineering profession and to his community over the last 30 years. Mr. Moore is a Principal and the Director of New England Operations for Hughes Associates, Inc. (HAI), an international fire protection engineering and code consulting company headquartered in Baltimore, Maryland. Wayne established the first New England office of HAI in Warwick in 1998 and has since been directly responsible for the growth of the New England operations (expanding to both Massachusetts and Connecticut). Wayne currently oversees approximately 20 fire protection engineers as well as support staff in the Rhode Island, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York and Ohio branch offices of HAI.

Mr. Moore is recognized nationally for his prominence in the field of fire protection engineering and code enforcement and interpretation. He is a member of the RISPE and he is a past president and fellow of the Society of Fire Protection Engineers. In that position he interfaced with the National Council of Examiners for Engineers and Surveyors (NCEES) and was appointed to an NCEES task force on "Splintering", one of only two non-NCEES members to be asked to serve on this Task Force.

In addition to being a professional engineer, Mr. Moore holds numerous licenses and registrations specific to the fire protection industry including: National Institute for Certification in Engineering Technologies-Fire Protection-Fire Alarm Systems, Level IV Certification; National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), Certified Fire Protection Specialist; State of Rhode Island, Licensed Master and Journeyman Alarm Electrician; International Municipal Signal Association, Certified Fire Alarm Technician Level I and Level IIB.

Mr. Moore's nearly 30-years of involvement and contributions to the engineering community show his dedication to the education of fellow engineers on the importance of fire protection and ensuring the life safety of the general public. Mr. Moore is presently serving as the co-editor of the National Fire Alarm Code Handbook for the 2007 edition of NFPA 72, National Fire Alarm Code for the fifth consecutive code cycle. Mr. Moore has established himself over the past decade as a nation-wide expert in fire protection engineering. However, he has always been focused on local involvement in the betterment of the engineering profession. Since opening the Warwick office of HAI in 1998, Wayne was instrumental in the pursuit of getting fire protection engineering recognized as an accepted professional engineering discipline in the State of Rhode Island. As a result in 2003, fire protection engineering became an officially recognized engineering discipline by the Board of Registration for Professional Engineers in Rhode Island, much in part to Mr. Moore's efforts to have Fire Protection, a Group II exam, be accepted by the Rhode Island Board, as being an essential discipline covering the "built-environment".

Mr. Moore has authored and co-authored numerous technical journals and books and is a regular contributor to: Electrical Contractor, NFPA Journal, and Security + Life Safety Systems.

"ANNUAL BANQUET" continued from page 1

Sherman received the Oscar E. Sette Award by the American Fisheries Society in 2006 in recognition of sustained excellence in marine fishery biology. He is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, serves as a senior editor for the Marine Ecology Progress Series journal, is author of over 100 published reports on marine plankton, fisheries, and ecosystems, and is the series editor for Elsevier Science's LME Series. He serves as scientific adviser to several UN organizations in the development and implementation of LME assessment and management projects in Asia, Africa, Latin America and eastern Europe.

Contact Mel at Pare Engineering Corp., Tel (401) 334-4100 to make reservations and a dinner choice. The menu choices include: Chicken Marsala Sautéed With Mushroom And Marsala Wine, Spinach And Cheese Stuffed Fillet Of Sole With Mornay Sauce, and Roast Pepper Crusted Sirloin Of Beef With Brandy Mustard Cream.

RISPE Names Alison Steere Its 2007 Jalbert Award Scholarship Recipient

Alison Steere is the recipient of the Jalbert scholarship this year. She is a junior at the University of Rhode Island and will earn a bachelor's degree in civil engineering in 2008. Alie earned a 3.5 GPA last semester. She hopes to concentrate in structural engineering and is interested in an internship in the summer of 2007.

Alie, the daughter of a Maguire employee, first met Ron Jalbert when she was seven years old and heard many times about his qualities as both an engineer and a leader. This scholarship has special meaning to Alie and her family.

Society Names DiPrete Its 2007 Freeman Award Recipient

The Providence Engineering Society has named Dennis DiPrete its Freeman Award recipient for 2007. Established in honor of John Ripley Freeman, the award recognizes lifetime achievement and contributions to the engineering profession.

Dennis DiPrete graduated from Merrimack College on 1980 with a Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering. While in college he worked for 3 co-op terms for CE Maguire which was his first experience with the engineering profession, and the Providence Engineering Society. After graduating from college, Dennis wrote civil engineering software for drainage and storm water management. He also consulted as a software architect and design engineer until 1984 when he and a partner formed an engineering firm in the Boston area. In 1988 Dennis founded his current firm, DiPrete Engineering Associates in Cranston. The firm today employs 55 engineers, surveyors, land planners and support personnel.

Dennis and his firm practice in Rhode Island and Massachusetts with a large percentage of its work in the environmental and site engineering field. Their clients are typically land owners, developers, and institutions. The firm has been active in mill reuse plans, mixed use commercial developments, traditional and conservation design of residential developments, schools, industrial and office park designs, roadway design, multi family and shopping center developments. In recent years the firm has been recognized and received awards from the RI Chapter of the American Planning Association for the design and implementation of outstanding conservation and cluster design, as well as from the RI Forest Consortium for preservation of significant open spaces in residential design.

The staff at DiPrete Engineering Associates is unique in that many joined the firm right out of college and have spent their entire careers with the firm, some from the time the firm was founded. Other experienced design professionals have also joined the firm over the past several years, which have expanded the talent and expertise. Most of the staff are graduates of RI engineering schools and have been mentored and taught through continuous and ongoing training performed in-house at DiPrete Engineering Associates. The firm spends hundreds of hours each year in organized educational initiatives in which staff members learn the latest techniques in site design techniques, how to work with the most current software, quality control procedures, leadership training, and communication skills. The firm is set up in a studio manner with several design teams comprised of 5 to 7 engineers with strong analytic skills teamed with creative designers and planners that together have an excellent track record in site design. For years the design teams have been taking in engineering interns, usually from URI, with the goal of creating interest in site design among new college graduates. Many of the interns have chosen to stay with the firm after graduation.

In addition to being the president of DiPrete Engineering Associates, Inc, Dennis has served on the Board of Directors of the RI Builders Association, is on the Board of Governors of Bradley Hospital, and has recently been appointed to the Board of Directors of Grow Smart RI. He is a member and usually a corporate sponsor of many of the engineering and land planning groups in RI including the Providence Engineering Society, the Urban Land Institute, The American Planning Association, and the RI Home Builders. Dennis and his firm are actively involved and contribute to numerous local charities including a large fund raising effort with volunteers and corporate sponsorship each year for the MS Society of RI, attendance with volunteers at the Seeds of Peace project in Maine, and corporate or matching corporate contributions to many other non-profits in RI.

DiPrete Engineering Associates is located in Cranston in a building planned around the firm's 5 design and engineering groups. There are 6 GPS or survey crews working out of the office, and several field engineers. Dennis lives in Narragansett with his wife Susan, and is the father of 3 daughters.

Society Names Blount Humanitarian of the Year

Capt. Luther H. Blount, Shipbuilder, Cruise Operator, Inventor, and Philanthropist has been named posthumously the Providence Engineering Society's Humanitarian of the Year for 2007.



Mr. Blount died Sunday, September 24, 2006 at Rhode Island Hospital at the age of 90 surrounded by his loving family. Founder of Blount Marine Corporation, Bay Queen Cruises and American Canadian Caribbean Line, Blount is famed as one of Rhode Island's greatest entrepreneurs and philanthropists.

An engineer by trade, Blount is best known as a shipbuilder and cruise operator. His Warren shipyard, currently operating under the name Blount Boats Inc., has created over 300 hulls including famous NY Harbor Circle Line ferries and his industry-changing stern trawler, the Narragansett.

Known in the travel industry as the "father of small ship cruising," he designed, built and operated a fleet of US Flag overnight expedition-style ships for over 41 years, currently operating as American Canadian Caribbean Line Inc. The line is renowned for cruising off-the-beaten path North American waterways to areas traditionally only accessible by private yacht. His Bay Queen Cruises operates several dinner boats on Narragansett Bay and has become a Rhode Island institution.

He was a graduate of Barrington High School (RI) (1935), Wentworth Institute of Technology, Boston, MA (1937) and received honorary doctorates from Roger Williams University, Rhode Island College, Bryant College, University of Rhode Island and his alma mater Wentworth Institute of Technology.

His keen interest in design led to many successful inventions including patents for thread design, adjustable pitch propellers, water conserving marine toilet, and more. He is celebrated for his remarkable retractable pilot house and bow ramp ship designs. One of his most notable inventions was a steaming process to open clams that revolutionized the clam processing industry. His most recent invention, the Blount Water Walker, a flotation aid for fly fishing, allowed him to continue the thrill of solo wilderness fishing as an octogenarian.

He may best be remembered for his commitment to the regeneration of oysters in Narragansett Bay. In partnership with Roger Williams University, Blount devoted personal time and financial resources to aquaculture study and development for the future of generations to come. A man of many interests, he enjoyed playing his trombone, hunting with bow and arrow, sketching designs, gardening melons and blueberries, and bee keeping. A lifelong resident of Warren, he was regularly seen commuting on his bicycle.

He was a father of five children, grandfather of fourteen, and great-grandfather of two.

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"It Made Us Better Engineers And People. Didn't It?"
continued from page 4

part of it. He pointed out the fact that the majority of the engineers who made it to graduation took the freshman calculus in two semesters. Most of the dropouts took it in the three semester sequence. He thought we should make it easy and admit, to the School of Engineering, only those who scored high enough on the math exam to be placed in the two semester freshman calculus classes. He would go into a diatribe, from time to time, about the fact that CCNY produced more "embryonic" PhD's (those graduates who would go on to obtain a doctorate degree) than any other college in the country. He would rattle off the names of the Alumni who had gone on to win Nobel prizes. He would ask, rhetorically, "Do you think any of them took freshman calculus in three semesters?"

I now look at the engineering programs of today. The total number of credits that are required today are far less than the number of technical credits we were required to take. The number of liberal arts credits included in this total is far greater than when I was an undergraduate. The resulting engineering programs contain less math, less science, and far less engineering. Classes are graded on curves. The drop out rate is far, far less than what it used to be. This explains why ASCE is calling for a bachelors degree + 30 additional credits for PE registration. Did what we went through as undergraduates make us better engineers and better people? At my 25th reunion I was pleased to see how many of my classmates had become Professors or owned or were principles of their firms. Those who had gone into government were almost all chief engineer or head of some impressive department or organization. A number had become quite successful in the business and industrial world. The general consensus was that we had done so well as a group because the bar had been set so high that only the best made it. We all agreed that after what we went through as undergraduates had toughened us up for the careers ahead. We just didn't appreciate it at the time.

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