

WSPE News

Serving members of the Washington Society of Professional Engineers

From the President

By Beth Fifield Hodgson, PE, F.NSPE

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Dear WSPE members.

December has blown in and brought us some snow and rain – depending on which side of the Cascades you live on – to presage the winter ahead. Ski slopes were open before Thanksgiving this year and I am writing this from the Mexican Riviera!

The Seattle and Lake Washington Chapters held their November 15th meeting in person with guest speaker Rick Mohler, FAIA, NCARB, Associate Professor at UW Department of Architecture on “The Missing Middle, The Seattle Comp Plan, and lessons for all jurisdictions” and Mt. Rainier Chapter held its in-person meeting November 16th. Due to low in-person attendance at the Seattle/Lake Washington Chapters joint meeting, they are returning to virtual meetings for the foreseeable future. The Spokane and Tri-Cities chapters are struggling but chapter leadership is working to establish some ground to reinvigorate the respective chapters. If you’d like to help, please reach out! Regardless of whether you meet in person or virtually, I encourage each of you to personally connect with one or two of your peers this month directly to encourage and maintain the professional networks you have developed through your NSPE membership.

I hope you enjoy gaining more insight through this newsletter into the upcoming Fisheries vs BRPELS December 5th hearing, meet Christine Bower AELC’s new lobbyist replacing Cliff Webster who is retiring at the end of the year, and updates on AELC and BRPELS. Please check out the calendar of upcoming events and consider getting involved.



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A couple of items of note that will be coming up in the beginning of 2023 are the release of the WSPE Community on NSPE's Community boards in January, the winter Board of Trustees meeting which will be held virtually on February 4th, local MathCounts competitions throughout February, and the Carl M. Hanson Scholarship interviews which will be held March 8th in Spokane.

Please contact me via email or telephone if you have any questions, concerns recommendations, or updates on your fellow engineers. In the meantime, watch for electronic announcements of upcoming meetings – virtual and in-person, and social media posts of engineering accomplishments. We look forward to seeing you in the near future!

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WSPE News is edited by Steven Collins with input from Board of Trustees members. Opinions expressed by the authors herein are not necessarily those of the Society. Submissions from all WSPE members are welcome. Please send articles of 250 - 500 words to stevenwcollins@gmail.com. Articles may be edited for clarity, grammar, and conciseness.

Links

1. NSPE Board of Directors Update, November 1-30, 2022 ([link](#)).
2. NSPE Update, December 2022 ([link](#)).
3. NSPE Daily Designs (Business News for PEs) ([link](#))



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Legislative Update

By Ken McGowan, PE, F.NSPE

WSPE Representative on the Architects and Engineers Legislative Council (AELC)

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AELC continues to hold biweekly meetings and is getting ready for a transition from our lobbyist Cliff Webster. Mr. Webster's tenure as our lobbyist ends December 31st. He has served as our lobbyist for over 25 years. His replacement is Christine Bower who currently serves as lobbyist for Associated General Contractors (AGC). Ms. Bower plans to continue representing AGC for one more year while representing us.

The following AELC committee selected Ms. Bower after interviewing two highly qualified candidates:

Tammie Sueirro – AIA, WA

Steve Seville, P.E. – Parametrix

Scott Woerman – Landau Inc.

Osama Quotah AIA, LEED AP – LMN Architects

Ken McGowan, P.E., F.NSPE – HDR

Ms. Bower is sending a standard contract for us to review. Her start date was planned for December 1st so that there will be overlap with Mr. Webster. She has worked with Mr. Webster on many past occasions in Olympia while representing AGC, so they are very familiar with each other. We will need to sort out the contract details and will have a coordination meeting with Mr. Webster and Ms. Bower during the month of December to get aligned on transition details.

Ms. Bower has been asked about potential conflicts of priorities between AGC and AELC. She indicates that she will quickly resolve any pending conflicts. Based on comments from Van Collins of ACEC, Ms. Bower is a “straight shooter” and will represent us well.

Mr. Webster and his assistant Max Martin will be sorely missed, but we look forward to new advocacy representation in Olympia.



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Update on The State of Washington v. Fisheries Engineers, Inc., Court Case

By Sharon Zimmerman, PE, WSPE Past-President, 2021-22

CASE #: 56285-5-II/Fisheries Engineers, Inc., et al., Respondent v. State of Washington, Appellant (AKA “Tappel - Engineer Title Bout”)

The Washington State Appeals Court Division II panel of three judges heard oral arguments on December 5, 2022 at 10:30 a.m., in Tacoma, Washington.

The oral arguments were limited to 15 minutes per side. The proceedings were recorded and are accessible on the Washington State appeals [court website](#).

The Appeals Court ruling is likely to take several months. Further updates will be provided as new information becomes available.

Should you have questions or need additional information, please contact Sharon Zimmerman (szimmerman2012@gmail.com).

News from NSPE

- NSPE released results of its [Engineering Outlook Survey](#). More than 2400 engineers shared their greatest concerns in their professional practice. Topping the list of concerns was “knowledge transfer/succession planning” (34%), followed by “recruitment and retention of PEs/EITs (32%) and “access to emerging technologies” (22%).
- NSPE member Larry White [argues](#) that with engineers changing jobs more frequently, thereby limiting opportunities for mentoring and evaluation, licensure is more necessary than ever to confirm competence and identify those ready to be placed in responsible charge.



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- PE Institute offers free, archived recordings of recent seminars on the [2023 Legislative Session, Navigating Ethical Dilemmas that Arise in Everyday Engineering Practice](#), and [other topics](#).
- Nominations are sought for [NSPE 2023-25 Treasurer and 2023-24 Vice President](#). Deadline for submissions is January 9.
- Nominations are sought for the annual [NSPE Award](#), the highest award given by NSPE, and [New Professional Award](#), which recognizes a young member who has rendered distinguished service to the community. Deadline for submission is January 31.

A Reflection on Engineering Education

By Steven Collins, PhD, PE, HOD Representative
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This past summer my wife and I, in search of a place to retire, found ourselves deep in Amish farming country in upstate New York. The experience brought to mind an article on Amish technology I used to assign to my students many years ago. Luckily, it was still stored on my home computer. Entitled “Amish Technology: Reinforcing Values and Building Community,” and written by Jameson Wetmore, the article appeared in the June 2007 issue of [IEEE Technology and Society Magazine](#). Re-reading it inspired me to think anew about the purposes of engineering education, and of education more generally.

One passage in particular caught my attention. The author quotes an Amish minister who is describing how the Amish community evaluates particular technologies. The minister says, “Many things are not what they appear at first glance. It is not individual technologies that concern us, but the total chain.” The author elaborates: “The Amish believe that social change is often closely tied with technological change and therefore tend to be suspicious new technologies. They are strikingly different from most



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English in that they do not see an inherent value in technological progress. They must be fully convinced that a given technology will benefit the things they do value—their ethics, their community, and their spiritual life—before they will accept it.”

Ethics. Community. Spiritual life. To what degree do we take these values into consideration when we develop and deploy new technologies? I can say this: as an educator, I do emphasize the importance of always connecting the practice of engineering to values that reach beyond the self or the bottom line of a client or employer. We might disagree on what those values might be, though surely ethics, community, human dignity, and freedom will be high on many of our lists.

The point is that we engineer for a purpose, and that purpose is to actualize some conception of the good. It is tempting to think that if we can do it, we should do it. Who is to stop progress? Well, what is “progress?” Are there things we can do but should not permit ourselves to do in the interest of defending other values we hold dear? And who gets to make the decisions? As an educator, I consider my greatest responsibility to be challenging my students to wrestle with these questions with open minds. It is also the greatest reward and what I will miss most after retiring!

Events

Dec 20, 4 – 5 pm, IEEE Tech Talk: Elon Musk’s Star Link Project, Live Stream from Seattle ([link](#))

Jan 9, 4 – 5:30 pm, A&A Distinguished Speaker Seminar with Phil Condit, “The Future of Flight – What Can Be Versus What Should Be,” University of Washington, Student Union Building (HUB) and virtual ([link](#))

Feb 4, 11 – 3 pm, WSPE Board of Trustees meeting (virtual)

MATHCOUNTS State Chapter Competitions:

Feb 4 – Lake Washington ([link](#)), Feb 11 – Seattle ([link](#)),

Feb 18 – Mt Ranier ([link](#)) and Tri-Cities ([link](#))

Feb 25 – SW Washington ([link](#)), Spokane ([link](#)), and Wenatchee ([link](#))



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