

## No mention of engineers

As a P.Eng. of almost 10 years standing, I was dismayed to read the results of a recent survey commissioned by *Readers Digest Canada*. Undertaken by Ipsos-Reid consulting,

the survey analyzed the public perceptions of the trustworthiness of various professions and occupations. Engineers were not on the list of the groups on which feedback was sought.

Lawyers made the list; doctors made the list; pharmacists made the list; airline pilots made the list—but not engineers. For all the money and time I've seen spent between PEO and OSPE, on raising the profile of the profession, I can't help but think that perhaps it didn't do the job.

To the executive officers of OSPE and PEO: For well over a year you have written and emailed me with exhortations and encouragement to join OSPE. I have declined because I saw absolutely no reason that, outside of a narrow clique who believed in OSPE, that it was truly relevant to professional engineers.

I've watched as the job prospects for engineers in eastern Ontario have been savaged over the last two years by the collapse of the high tech industry, and waited for some comment or action by OSPE or PEO to encourage industry to understand that engineers make valuable contributions to their companies whether they be "high tech" or not, or that ex-high tech engineers can make valuable contributions to non-high tech industries.

It was my hope that action more useful than chasing Cisco, or Novell or Microsoft about their "system engineers" designations would address the fact that, as a P.Eng. in high tech, I am in the overwhelming minority with fellow engineers who cannot understand in any way why being a P.Eng. is relevant for a profession that is more and more responsible for our modern technological society.

This survey makes it abundantly clear that, despite the fact that we engineers know how valuable our contributions to society

are, our fellow Canadians do not agree with us, or even know. What can PEO, OSPE, or P.Engs do to make people understand that everything that they do in their daily life, every second of their day, is impacted by the work that engineers do?

*Jonathan P. Crone, P.Eng.  
Ottawa, ON*

## Technology graduates

In a letter to the editor in the January/February 2003 issue, ("Change but consider issues, p. 7) Mr. Campbell stated his concern about the danger of "creating a sense of 'false knowledge' among graduates of applied degree programs." He said that he has known technology diploma graduates who felt that their qualifications were at least equivalent or better than those of a university-educated engineer. Campbell said he believes this type of thinking is dangerous.

I think Campbell is right on target and I couldn't agree more. The situation is literally dangerous. Technology graduates can make a great contribution, but a full-fledged engineer should also be involved. The technology graduate may not "know" or be aware that he/she doesn't have the answer. Full-fledged engineers don't know everything either, but they have a better chance of knowing when they should ask for help on a problem.

*Edward J. Farkas, P. Eng.  
Toronto, ON*

## Maintaining professional competence

President Richard Braddock's editorial in the last issue ("Is competence an issue? pp. 3, 6) has spelled out most forcibly the dichotomy between assessing professional competence versus professional development and the "administrative monster" that can be created when trying to ensure that engineers are current.

As a member of APEGGA, I am currently being "audited" to see if my professional development program is adequate. I am 60 years of age, an independent consultant and I have three degrees—B.Eng., 1964, M.Eng., 1974, and PhD, 1993. Clearly, I like to keep myself up to date. However, for APEGGA's CPD program, I am supposed to keep a record of what read-

ing I do, what presentations I make, what formal and informal activities I participate in, what contributions to knowledge I make and how much time I actually spend in "professional practice."

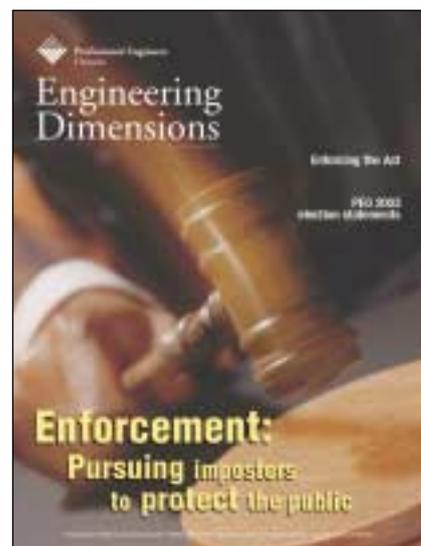
Note that if I give a presentation as part of my professional practice, I must include it as professional practice not as a presentation. If I act as editor of the proceedings for a conference in which I give a presentation (or professional practice as the case may be), that editorial process is considered a contribution to knowledge. Then again, I could probably put it down as informal activity. If I take a course, that is formal activity. However if taking that course is part of my job...I am not sure. I can also get brownie, sorry, PDH points for talking to a community group about how great we all are.

I think you might get the picture. APEGGA has had my audit for more than four months now. I am waiting with trepidation as to what this committee is going to tell me that I have to do to maintain my professional competence in rotating machinery dynamics. My advice to PEO is to think long and hard about this. Maintaining professional competence is essential but this is not the way to go about it.

*Tony Taylor, PhD, P.Eng.  
Edmonton, AB*

## Method of payment antiquated

Kenneth Razac's letter about snail-mail in the January/February issue finally prompted me to write about an issue which I have



found irritating for a number of years. While I live in Ontario and don't have to deal with the extensive delays that our out-

of-province members have to deal with, I do have another frustration with the annual dues process, and I'm sure I'm not the

only one. I am referring to the requirement to pay the annual dues by cheque.

The inability to pay by credit card or purchase order poses logistical problems for many of the members whose memberships are paid by their employers. When can the membership expect PEO to embrace at least the technology of the late 20th century for payment, if not the technology of the current century? Aside from making life easier for a large number of members, I'm sure that payment would be faster, especially if on-line payment were an option.

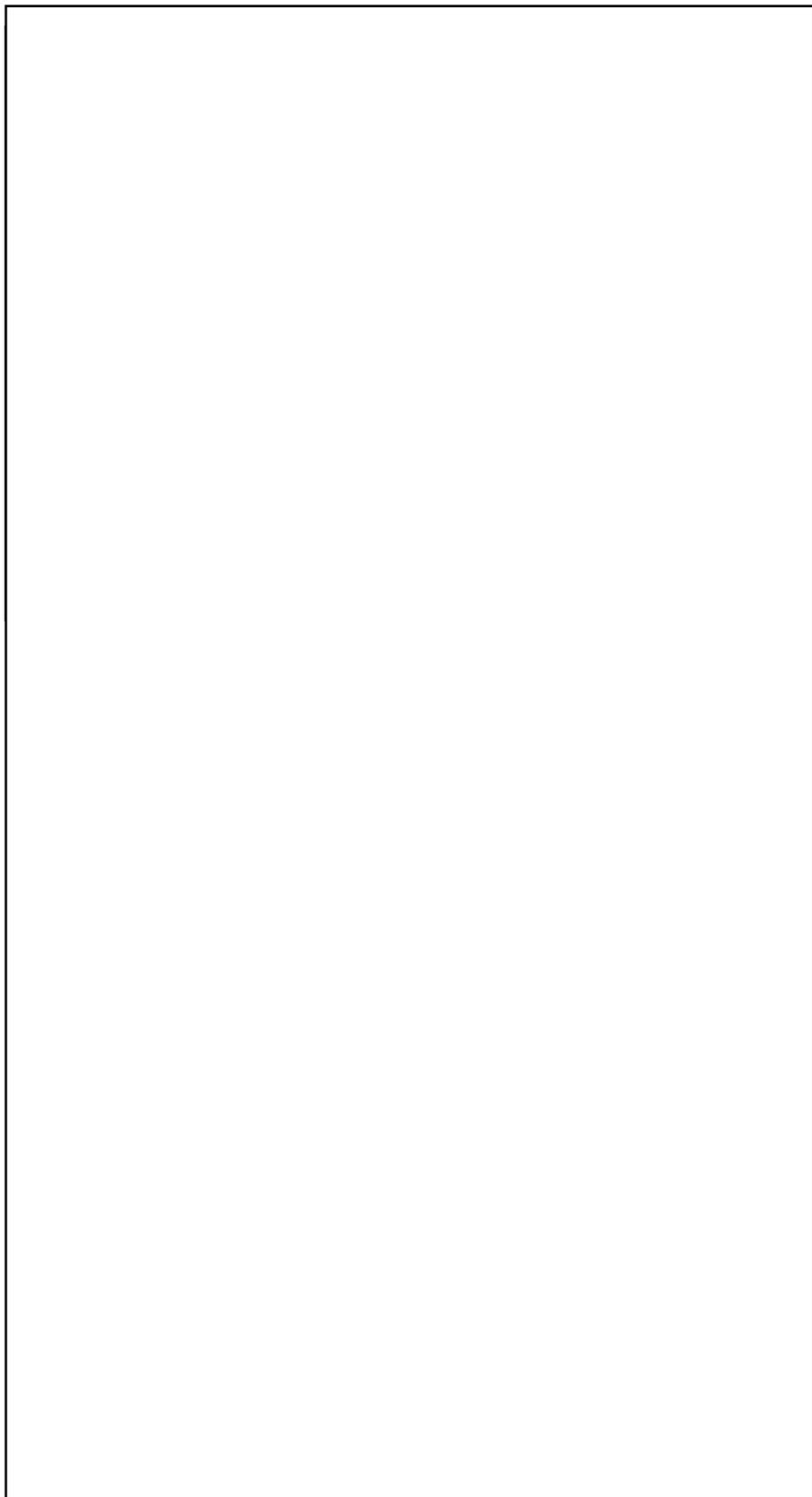
*The ability to accommodate payment by this means is currently under development.*

**Wake-up call**

A comment regarding Viewpoint in the January/February 2003 issue, page 40: Bravo, Mr. Arthur Johns! Thank you for summarizing the pertinent issues and eloquently communicating what's been left unsaid for so long.

Nice wake-up call!

*Michèle Thébeau, P.Eng.  
Chatham, ON*



Letters to the editor are welcomed, but should be kept brief and are subject to editing. Publication is at the editor's discretion; unsigned letters will not be published. The ideas expressed do not necessarily reflect the opinions and policies of the association, nor does the association assume responsibility for the opinions expressed. All letters pertaining to a current PEO issue are also forwarded to the appropriate committee for information. Address letters to [jbailey@peo.on.ca](mailto:jbailey@peo.on.ca)

**Correction**  
On page 56 of our January/February issue, the incorrect contact information was given for the Ontario Concrete Pipe Association. The correct information is as follows: [www.ocpa.com](http://www.ocpa.com), 905-631-9696. We regret the error.