[LETTERS]

BOYCOTT *TORONTO STAR*!

My kudos to you for your informative article in *Engineering Dimensions* ("Columnist elicits P.Eng. ire," March/April 2009, p. 16).

Re: Hume's referral to engineers as "necessary evil"–we should suggest that without engineers, the likes of Mr. Hume would still be swinging from trees. PEO should also advise the 70,000 PEO members to boycott the *Toronto Star* until the publisher officially apologizes to all the engineers with a full-page ad in the paper.

Vincenzo Gentile, P.Eng., Toronto, ON

OSPE, ROAR!

I was quite surprised to see the cover of the current magazine with the caption "Hear us roar" (*Engineering Dimensions*, March/April 2009). A number of years ago, there was considerable interest in promoting the welfare of engineering, including salaries and working conditions. This was never permitted by PEO because it was not covered under the act.

As a result, much time and energy was spent on creating the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers (OSPE), the advocacy group for engineers, with a mandate to "roar" as loud as possible in the press and anywhere the slightest opportunity appeared. Unfortunately, they seem to have turned out to be a pussy cat, as I cannot recall seeing anything in the press from them.

M. Phipps, P.Eng., Etobicoke, ON

LET'S TAKE CHARGE

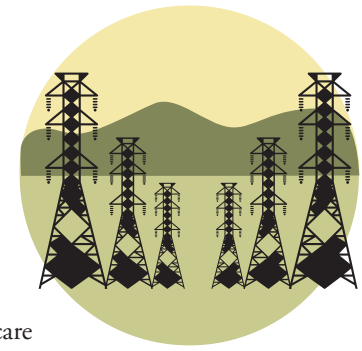
I'm writing in regard to the article "Energy issue beckons P.Engs in new directions" by Michael Mastromatteo (*Engineering Dimensions*, January/February 2009, p. 28) and, in particular, on page 31, the suggestion that biomass is carbon dioxide neutral.

It is not carbon neutral. CO_2 is the same wherever it comes from, and the idea that the concentration in the atmosphere is determined by the biomass is fallacy. One ppmv is an unbelievably large amount–according to my calculations, 8.2 billion tonnes. If you then compare the rate of fossil fuel consumption with the rate of buildup, you must conclude that only about half of the CO_2 stays in the atmosphere, which means a total production of 16.4 billion tonnes is required for 1 ppmv buildup. It can't go into the biomass because that is shrinking. One has to conclude that the excess goes into the ocean.

Over the longer history of the Earth, the temperature was controlled by CO_2. If the atmosphere temperature should increase for some reason, CO_2 would diffuse into the ocean, thus reducing temperature. If, on the other hand, the atmosphere got too cold, CO_2 would diffuse out of the ocean, increasing temperature and thus maintaining control. Climatologists were surprised when measurements began to find the concentration was continually increasing and stopped analyzing data. The stakes are just too high and all reports submitted to journals are incomprehensible and must be so to be accepted. It seems to me that engineers should take charge and try to devise a solution, otherwise we write off the planet.

L.G. Bell, P.Eng., Toronto, ON

ENERGY OPTIONS



Your January/February issue covered the Ontario government's plan to create wind farms on Crown land ("Minister welcomes P.Eng. input in renewable energy plan," *Engineering Dimensions*, p. 20) –perhaps a worthwhile objective in itself, but not enough to allow the closing of all coal-fired plants.

In my opinion, they are thinking inside their own little fiefdom when what is required is interprovincial co-operation (not normally found in Canada). Labrador and Quebec have an abundance of undeveloped hydro potential, so it seems logical for Ontario, Quebec and Newfoundland (and perhaps Manitoba) to jointly plan a power grid by new hydro developments in Quebec and Labrador.

The available power would be sufficient to allow the closing of our coal-fired plants and take care of the looming requirements for recharging the thousands of hybrid vehicles.

G.W. MacDonald, P.Eng., Oakville, ON

[LETTERS]

OUR SOLDIERS

With sadness we read more often about tragic events happening to our soldiers deployed in Afghanistan. While trying to bring peace to a country battled with violence and terrorism and making the world a better place for us and our children, they suffer the consequences of improvised explosive devices.

We, as engineers, shouldn't stand on the sidelines while our loved and sacrificed soldiers fall under the paws of a destructive weapon. Our safety is paramount, which includes our soldiers.

We need to be proactive; let's be leaders and join together to develop tools and devices that can detect these weapons before they are a risk to our soldiers. We have excellent people with great knowledge and experience and, if we approach our government and ask for their support, we can contribute to a safer work environment for them. Engineers cannot be passive or turn their backs to a problem that is affecting all of us Canadians in one way or another; we have the knowledge, and our government and armed forces have the power. Together we can make it.

Luis Laino, P.Eng., Guelph, ON

POLICY FOR PEACE

The article "Engineers can build and strengthen government policy" in *Engineering Dimensions*, January/February 2009 (p. 24) clearly indicates a need, and how engineers can influence government policies.

Similar to influencing domestic policies, engineers can influence government in international policies, including policies of world peace and war.

Through history, some engineers around the world have been involved directly and indirectly in the designing of arms, including arms of mass destruction, which have been used to kill millions of innocent people. To compensate that, engineers around the world need to get involved to influence government policies that lead to lasting peace in the world.

The book *In The Name of Peace: The Way to World Peace* describes and challenges how each of us can contribute to lasting peace in the world. The book is available at www.chapters.indigo.ca.

Uzeir Huskic, P.Eng., Toronto, ON

CORRECTION

On page 3 of our March/April 2009 issue, then President Adams, P.Eng., stated the membership of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers (OSPE) as 9000. In fact, OSPE's membership is 11,000.

Also, on page 9, William R. Walker, P.Eng., who was inducted into PEO's Order of Honour as an Officer on May 8, was incorrectly credited with chairing the Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board. He actually chaired the Canadian Engineering Qualifications Board.

Letters to the editor are welcomed, but should be kept to no more than 500 words, 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 jcoombes@peo.on.ca.