



P

R E S I D E N T ' S M E S S A G E

Getting things done

*“Toiling—rejoicing—sorrowing, onward through life he goes;
Each morning sees some task begin, each evening sees it close;
Something attempted, something done, has earned a night’s repose.”*

The Village Blacksmith, H.W. Longfellow

PATRICK J. QUINN, P.ENG.
PRESIDENT

You probably remember, “under a spreading chestnut-tree, the village smithy stands,” but like me, never went beyond the first few verses. We missed the point. In the image of the mighty man, we missed the allegory of life.

The Oxford dictionary defines power as the ability to do or to act. Put another way, you need power to participate in setting directions or getting things done. At a meeting with John Tory, leader of the Ontario Progressive Conservative party, there was written on a board, “get things done.” When I commented on the note, he told me the reason he was in politics was exactly that, and he wanted his people to keep this in mind. I got the impression that being in opposition was not the way to get things done, which made his mission clear to me.

Although PEO Council is mainly an elected body and we do have political differences, each Councillor can really feel that they participate in governing. It might be thought that in a self-regulating body, power is in the hands of the members through their votes. The reality is that power is in the hands of Council.

So, if you want to have influence in our profession, the place to be is on Council where you will be sitting at the decision-making table, with freedom to vote your conscience. And entering the race for a position on the 2007-2008 Council is a relatively simple process. To do so, you must submit your nomination, following the procedures in Regulation 941, to the Registrar prior to the December 13, 4:00 p.m. deadline. To get your name on the ballot at the regional level, you require 15 supporting signatures from members who are resident in the appro-

priate region; for a Councillor-at-Large position, you require 50 signatures, at least one of which must be from a resident of each region; candidates for President-elect and Vice President each require 50 signatures, at least five of which must be from residents of each region.

The fact that you’ve read this far perhaps puts you into a small group that cares about our profession. You probably have informed opinions about certain aspects of professional life. You may have had an experience with PEO, good or bad, that has kept you interested in PEO activities; you probably feel you could contribute. And, hopefully, you have a sense of commitment to our profession.

Yes, you have to put yourself out there and compete on ideas. You may have to defend those ideas. And, it requires involvement and time commitment. But, if you get elected, you get a chance to influence the future of our profession and to participate in the fulfillment of getting things done.

My three-year-old granddaughter introduced me to Bob the Builder, and went around singing *working together we get the job done*. From out of the mouths of babes!

If you are still with me, I have to tell you about the interesting times in which we live at PEO. In addition to our impending court face-off with the provincial government on the matter of amendments to the *Ontario Building Code*, a lot is in the works. Ensuring a fair and transparent licensing process, increasing our uptake of Canadian graduates, developing a critical mass of engineer teachers at our universities, aiding the mobility of engineers on a national and international level, improving our relationships with OSPE and CCPE (both of which require more

attention), and tackling PEO’s Certificate of Authorization process are just a few of the many important issues that are facing the association.

You could make a difference if you were at the table with a vote on these issues. It could also be a stepping stone to a more public involvement. Engineers need to be more present in community groups, on municipal councils, and in the provincial and federal governments. Ambition to make a difference is a good thing. Why not move up the power ladder?

Councillor Diane Freeman, P.Eng., and former Councillor Greg Wowchuk, P.Eng., are two such individuals I’m aware of—and I’m sure there are several others—who are doing just that through their candidacy for municipal office this fall, Diane in Waterloo and Greg in Etobicoke. In areas where our practitioners are running, there are many other engineers who should lend a hand. A contribution to a campaign helps a lot. Offering your services to stuff envelopes, handle phones, or go door to door is even better. Being involved in an election campaign is a great way to get started and can be quite exciting.

On September 7, PEO has scheduled a “campaign college” to stimulate interest in the political scene, to provide basic information about political life, and to support those who have an interest. If we want to participate in the big issues of the day, we have to be at the big decision-making tables. Engineers are not contributing fully to the political process. We are not carrying our due share of the load in society’s debates. I hope we are beginning to understand our own needs in this area, and that we are now on a road to redress this.

As Bob the Builder would say: “Yes, we can!” Pat the President says: “Yes, we must!”

To help Diane, please call 519-571-4944, or visit www.dianefreeman.ca.

To help Greg, please call 416-259-6636, or visit www.gregwowchuk.com.