

**A YEAR IN REVIEW***Presidential Address of Edward B. Kinner<sup>1</sup>****Introduction***

This year concludes the 134th year of our Society's activities, and the 8th since the merger of the Boston Society of Civil Engineers with the American Society of Civil Engineers. In this, my final address to the Society as President, I will comment on the goals which I had set for the year and discuss some of the Society's activities in the last 12 months. I will close with some general recommendations and comments for the future.

***Review of Year's Goals******Society Interaction***

One of the goals that I set related to interaction within the Society of the members on both a social and technical basis. This goal was based on receipt of numerous comments from members indicating that Society activities were too narrowly focused. That is, more non-technical activities were desired and individual technical meetings were requested to be structured so as to attract persons from several technical disciplines.

Accordingly, the luncheon program was continued. This met with mixed success. The luncheons which had greatest success were one which offered a presentation by Massport on forthcoming projects and one describing a tunneling project in Baltimore Harbor. Each of these was attended by over 100 persons. Only poor to modest attendance was experienced at two other luncheons and another was cancelled because of a dismal number of reservations. My conclusion is that most individuals will not attend an activity solely to support the Society and to mingle with others. A program must be provided which is perceived by a broad sector of the membership to be of positive benefit, either technically, socially, or both. This observation is perhaps obvious but must be kept clearly in mind, regardless of the function. My recommendation for the luncheon program is that it be continued, but the number of meetings be limited to about three each season. This will permit the committee to emphasize topics and speakers of particularly broad appeal.

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The Clambake was attended by about 300 people on 12 August and was a great success. This event has had excellent attendance for the last few years and I strongly recommend its continuance. My one suggestion is that it be held on or before 5 August because of the earlier sunsets in later summer.

The annual dance was held, after a one year lapse, in an effort to rekindle enthusiasm which had been waning in recent years. I believe that everyone present had an excellent time, but the turnout was small even though the organizing committee did an outstanding job in publicity and arrangements. The dance was held on a Saturday evening and not in conjunction with a dinner. Some persons have stated that they would not come unless there were a dinner. Others have said they would not come because of the expense if there were a dinner. My conclusion is that in the 1980's there are so many pressures on members' time that a dance is not on most individuals' priority lists. I therefore recommend this function be dropped until such time that there is an unmistakeable groundswell of interest for it.

A large number of technical meetings were cosponsored by two or more technical groups or committees. From the standpoint of both society interaction and technical content, I believe these were successful and I suggest this manner of scheduling activities be continued.

The one goal concerning Society interaction which was not fully realized relates to joint meetings of the Society with Student Chapters. A Caucus was held wherein Student Chapter advisors and officers met with the BSCES Board and other members. This was a great success. Additionally, the Student Night at Southeastern Massachusetts University was well attended by both practicing engineers and students. However, there were only one or two technical meetings of the Section which were joint meetings with one or more student chapters. For this, I must accept responsibility and offer the recommendation that there be more joint meetings with student chapters in the future. On the positive side, the Student Affairs Committee sponsored a "free-lunch" program on a trial basis, allowing students to attend meal functions at no cost. This met with limited success while in operation, but the program had to be terminated due to budget limitations.

#### *Section Finances*

Several goals were established relative to the finances of the Section. Before discussing them specifically I will provide an overview of our financial accounting system as it stands today.

- Current Fund

The operating fund of the Section is the Current Fund. The annual budget by which the Section operates this year totals approximately \$95,000. The budget is divided into the following eight broad categories.

1. Income accounts: dues from members, interest and dividends, transfer of income from the Permanent Fund, transfers to the operating budget from technical group lecture series reserve accounts, allotment payments from ASCE national, and contributions.
2. Office costs: BSCE's share of payroll and benefits for the Executive Director and Secretary; business taxes, rent and utilities; office supplies and equipment; the monthly newsletter; telephone and other associated items.
3. BSCES Journal: printing and mailing of the Journal, advertising revenue, non-subscription sales and reprints.
4. General society business: financial support to the Western Massachusetts Branch, monthly dues to the Design Professionals Government Affairs Council, general awards and special dues and conference expenses.
5. Meetings and Social Affairs: The BSCES Annual Meeting Dance, Clambake and luncheon program.
6. Technical Groups: Activities of the seven technical groups.
7. Student Affairs: The Summer Institute at Northeastern University for minority high school students, Student Night, the student leadership session and other items.
8. Committee Operations: Activities of standing and special committees such as History & Heritage, Action Program-Professional Practice, Employment Conditions, Public Relations and Energy.

The greatest net cost to the Section comes from categories 2 and 3, BSCES office costs and the Journal, respectively. Details of income and revenue for specific items are available in the Treasurer's report for reference.

- Invested Funds

In addition to the Current Fund for regular operations, the Section has what are called Invested and Non-Invested Funds. The Invested Funds are comprised of the Permanent Fund and special funds such as the Freeman, Camp and Convention Funds which were established by gifts, bequests or by the Board of Government. The Annual Report of the Board of Government and the Treasurer's report contain further details on these funds. Basically with few exceptions, use of principal and income from these Invested Funds is restricted by the terms of the initiating gift, bequest or Board action. Where appropriate, income from selected Funds is transferred to the operating budget to help offset expenses. The present market value of the Invested Funds is approximately \$296,000.

- Non-Invested Funds

The Non-Invested Funds are other monies under the control of the Section which are not specifically within the Current Fund or in special investments as mentioned above. For example, monies earmarked for publication of Boston area boring data in the Journal are included in the Non-Invested Funds. The Non-Invested Funds are controlled by the Treasurer and currently total about \$30,000. Further details can be found in the annual reports previously mentioned.

Having provided this lengthy introduction, I will now review the principal aspects of what was accomplished this year relative to finances.

The first goal related to a restructuring of our accounting system. A professional accountant was retained to assist in this effort. New cash received and cash paid books were established and ledgers developed for the individual Section funds. The budget for the Current Fund was reordered and consolidated. The very important recognition was also made that Invested Funds should be separated from the Current Fund. This eliminated considerable confusion which had existed in some minds relative to content of the annual budget. A review was also made of monies allocated to the Invested and Non-Invested Funds, and payments due to these funds for loans made to the Current Fund were paid back. The policy was also established to require the Treasurer to submit the annual financial report as soon as possible after the close of the fiscal year on 30 September, as opposed to the time of the Annual Meeting in April as previously. In addition, the Treasurer is

now required to submit an interim financial report for the current fiscal year through 31 March at the Annual Meeting in April. Lastly, new methods for approval of disbursements were established.

Another financial goal related to the budgeting process of the Section. Costs for the current fiscal year were trimmed or held constant where possible. A Committee on Financial Responsibilities, chaired by Past President Howard Simpson, was appointed to examine a number of Section financial matters. One of the important recommendations coming from the Committee resulted in the establishment of a Budget Committee, composed of the Senior Vice President as Chairperson and the President, Treasurer, Secretary and Executive Director. Formerly all budgeting was the responsibility of the Treasurer. The Committee can now better represent the views of the Board of Government in budget matters, and less of a burden is imposed on the Treasurer. At my request, an initial budget meeting for the forthcoming fiscal year has already been held.

The next financial goal related to dues. In my "New President's Message" a year ago, I indicated that a review of dues levels would be undertaken although I hoped an increase would not be necessary. As the restructuring of our accounting system progressed, it became apparent that a dues adjustment was necessary. This was recommended to the membership by the Board and subsequently approved.

As I had also planned, a review was made of the desirability of having the ASCE national office in New York collect our Section dues as opposed to the independent solicitation of Section dues which we currently do locally. After a brief assessment, I concluded that we should not proceed further with such an effort at this time. If adopted, the process would still have required considerable follow-up by our office staff, and our close to 300 BSCES members who are not ASCE members would have required separate billing anyway. Lastly, my personal opinion is that there is a responsiveness to local dues collection which might be lost in a more remote solicitation by the national headquarters. Dues collection by the New York office, however, should be maintained as a possibility and evaluated again in the future.

The last principal goal for the year related to the management of our investments, the Invested Funds. It was intended to review the return on our investments which had been achieved by the current Custodian, Boston Safe Deposit and Trust Company, and to determine the direction that our investment policies and management should take. This goal was established largely as a result of concern raised by the Freeman Fund Committee relative to past performance.

By the end of the year, the Investment Committee had determined that inadequate performance had in fact been realized. The Committee recommended to the Board of Government that our monies be withdrawn from the Boston Safe Deposit and Trust company and reinvested in three growth-income mutual funds.

I am pleased to report that the Board acknowledged the inadequacy of past returns by voting to terminate our agreement and to withdraw our funds for reinvestment elsewhere. The actual withdrawal awaits final Board acceptance of the Investment Committee's recommendations for the specific investment vehicles to be used.

The Board's action concerning our custodial agreement and past performance marks a significant accomplishment. It is my hope that agreement on specific future investment procedures can be reached with relatively little additional effort.

Before leaving the topic of Section finances, I wish to make two points. The first is that diligent efforts by the Board will be required for the foreseeable future to maintain an acceptable balance of income and expense while continuing to provide the desired program. Secondly, I wish to acknowledge two individuals who have made outstanding contributions this year. They are Treasurer Richard Murdock and Secretary Rubin Zallen. Without their tremendous efforts much of what has been accomplished would have been left undone. On behalf of the entire Board of Government, I offer our special thanks to them.

#### *BSCES Journal*

The Journal is the next area for which a goal was established at the beginning of my term. A year ago the Publications Committee report on the Journal resulted in the decision to reprint papers of significant historical interest and to emphasize case study papers and those of practical interest. Additionally, each of the technical groups committed itself to providing at least one good paper yearly. My goal was to see these plans implemented.

An outstanding Journal issue was published in connection with the dedication of the Charles River Basin as a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark. This was due to the fine efforts of the Freeman Fund Committee. The Journal issue within which this message is to be published will also contain a very good set of papers.

I have great concern for the future, however. To my knowledge, the pipeline is now almost dry. It is the technical groups to whom I appeal. The Journal cannot survive without papers and it is your membership

and programs which will produce them. I ask each Group to vigorously pursue the commitment which it has previously made.

### *Membership*

The last goal which I set related to vigorous pursuit of new members. The year 1982 was declared a Membership Year by ASCE National. We have been doing our best to support our membership needs locally as well as the national effort. I devoted one of my monthly newsletter messages to membership and in that newsletter, contact cards to fill out and return on prospective members were mailed to everyone. In addition, these contact cards have been distributed at technical group meetings and I "talked up" membership at numerous functions. The Membership Committee has been doing a good job of following up on names submitted on the contact cards. In addition the Committee has been working locally through individuals in firms and organizations.

The Board of Government in March also approved the concept of a local Student Member grade, consistent with establishment of such a grade by the national organization. A formal change to our Constitution is in process to permit this addition and I hope that within a year or so, we will have a Student Grade locally. This should facilitate continued infusion of young engineers.

Even with all these efforts, the numbers in this year's Report of the Board of Government are not good, in that we had a greater loss than addition of members. This is partially due to a long-standing administrative practice in the Section office which only recently became known to me, relative to dropping members because of non-payment of dues. I strongly recommend that from now on no member be dropped for non-payment of dues until the Membership Committee has followed up with the delinquent persons individually.

### *Review of Other Events*

This completes my discussion of the principal goals which were set for the year. In the course of this presentation I have mentioned many of the Section activities which have occurred. There are some other notable events which I believe are worthy of a consolidated listing for the permanent record. I do this at some risk of one or more serious deletions for which I apologize if they occur.

1. Over 25 technical group meetings were held as a continuation of our excellent technical program.

2. Technical advisory committees were established by the Board in the areas of seismic design, foundations and loads to continue the very important work that had been underway in these areas prior to the demise of the Massachusetts State Building Code Commission.
3. A Hazardous Waste Committee was established and the Section has offered its services to the Commonwealth's Hazardous Waste Facility Site Safety Council.
4. A Waterway, Port, Coastal and Ocean Technical Committee was formed as a hopeful prelude to its becoming a Technical Group in about a year.
5. The Structural Group held a lecture series on "Design of Building Cladding" and the Transportation Group sponsored a seminar series on "Managing Stress, A Positive Approach for Engineering Executives." Several lecture series are also now in the planning stages.
6. ASCE President James Sims was in Boston last November for the dedication of the Charles River Basin as a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark. The Borden Base Line in Western Massachusetts has been designated by ASCE for similar recognition and will be dedicated in the future.
7. Over \$1100 was received in voluntary contributions from the membership to further support our programs.
8. The Action Program-Professional Practice Committee assisted in nomination of an engineer to fill a position on the Commonwealth's Designer Selection Board. In addition the Committee submitted nominations for a position on the Boston Zoning Commission and one on the Zoning Board of Appeals.
9. The Student Affairs Committee reorganized and revitalized the Student Contact organization for liaison between the Section and the student chapters. The Committee also developed a first-of-its-kind Student Contact Handbook.
10. Three past Presidents of the Society died during the year. They were:

Ralph W. Horne	BSCE President 1932-1933
Arthur Casagrande	BSCE President 1957-1958
Bertram Berger	BSCE Section President 1976-1977

Mr. Horne and Dr. Casagrande had long and very productive careers and made contributions to the profession which will be remembered by many in future years. Mr. Berger, likewise was an example for us of an energetic, forward looking and tireless professional. His sudden death in the prime years of his career is a great loss.

### *Recommendations for the Future*

In addition to comments made previously I have some further recommendations for the future.

1. The environment within which we as professionals and the Section must operate is complex and becoming more so. Our liaison relative to legislation in Massachusetts is through the Design Professionals Government Affairs Council. I urge that the Section work more closely with the Council and its Staff Director in the coming year to ensure that the Council maintains required contact with events on Beacon Hill and provides us with timely input and guidance.
2. Our Energy Committee requires more broad based support from the membership. This is a multi-discipline field that should be of interest to us all. I urge that input for continued and broad based programs be provided to the Committee.
3. In the area of finances I once again underscore the need for continued diligence relative to budgeting and cost efficiency in our operations, while maintaining our excellent programs.
4. Membership is an area which should receive continued attention from the highest levels in the Section.
5. In recent months the concept has evolved for establishment of an expanded Engineering Center. This Center would serve a greater number and perhaps a different mix of societies than are presently at 80 Boylston Street. It is one of incoming President Rossier's goals to evaluate this concept further and I strongly support his plan.

### *Closure*

In closing it is my hope that the review of this past year's goals and other events has served to underscore the truly excellent organization which is the Boston Society. The strength of our organization is not due to one person or one Board of Government. Rather it is due to

sustained support from an energetic and concerned membership. We can be proud of what we all have in our Society. The Society is much like good marriage, most of the time strong, at other times less so, but always requiring nurturing for continued richness. We must be particularly mindful to guide and support our organization and profession, for only we can sustain them. This is particularly important in these times of economic uncertainty, litigation, governmental regulation and public cynicism.

Lastly I wish to express my appreciation for having had the honor to serve as the Boston Society President. I thank you all for your support. This year has been one of challenge and great interest. On behalf of the membership, I wish incoming President Rossier and the new Board of Government a successful year.