



"Help you matter more and enable you to make a bigger difference"

Region 8 Director's Column

In This Issue

- Region 8 Director's Column
- Montana Section Update
- Staying Fit While Working From Home
- Region 8 Calendar of Upcoming Events

Aloha and Mahalo for your membership in ASCE and for your support for our civil engineering profession.

I hope that you are keeping safe as we continue to make it through the COVID-19 pandemic. It looks like some of our local governments are starting to open up the economy, but others are still being more cautious. A reminder to take advantage of the benefits of your ASCE membership if you have more time at home.

Don't forget about your 10 free PDHs to view a recorded webinar on-line to catch up on your CEUs. If you need help navigating through the benefits that ASCE offers, the ASCE staff are still teleworking to serve you. 1-800-548-ASCE.

COVID-19 has impacted the decision on where to hold our Fall Region 8 Board of Governors and Assembly meeting. The Board of Governors (BOG) intended to hold our Fall meetings in Vancouver, Canada to engage the Canadian members in our Region. However, with the uncertainty of travel restrictions between the US and Canada, the BOG made the difficult decision to postpone having our Fall meetings in Canada until travel restrictions are eased, hopefully in the near future. The BOG are looking for a new central location within Region 8 to hold our Fall meetings this year and we will announce it to our local leadership once confirmed.

The Society election is underway and ends on June 1. If you have not received an email with a link to your ballot, please let me know. Your vote is especially important this year for a number of reasons.

First, the election for Society President-Elect is a contested one. The two candidates this year are listed below in alphabetical order.

- Maria Lehman, PE, ENV SP, F.ASCE
- Dennis D. Truax, Ph.D., P.E., DEE, D.WRE, F.NSPE, F.ASCE

Please read their vision statements and their biographical statements on the ASCE election page and make your voice heard.

Second, we have three candidates that have stepped up to run for only two elected Region 8 Governor positions. The candidates are listed below in alphabetical order.

- Tor Anderzen, PE, F.ASCE - Alaska Section
- Fausto Burruel, PE, M.ASCE - Arizona Section
- Dan Karlin, PE, M.ASCE - Montana Section

Please read their vision statements and their biographical statements on the ASCE election page. They are all great candidates, but let your voice be heard on who you think should join the Region 8 leadership team.

Third, the Society Board of Direction voted to advance proposed amendments to the Society Constitution to this year's election ballot. The amendments are in conjunction with other revisions to the Bylaws and Rules of Policy and Procedure that the Board is hearing and voting on. The primary reason for the proposed revisions to the Society's governing documents is to improve the Organization's flexibility, nimbleness, and responsiveness. A two-thirds affirmative vote of the participating membership is required to approve the proposed amendments. Your vote will make a difference on whether the measure passes or fails.

The Region 8 Board of Governors discussed the proposed amendments and decided to encourage members to read about them on the elections page. Then, make up your own minds about whether to vote YES or NO to approve them. If you have any questions, please contact me or any of the Region 8 Governors. Full disclosure, as a Board member, I participated in all discussions on the proposed amendments and voted YES to advance them to the ballot and I have personally voted YES in the current election to approve the amendments.

Our Region has a reputation for having the largest turnout in the Society so let us continue that trend in this important election. Even though we had the top voter participation, I know we can do better than our pathetic five percent voter turnout last year. YOUR VOTE MAKES A DIFFERENCE.

Mahalo for being a member of ASCE and for all that you do to help our great profession. #Region8isgreat!!! Please be safe and wash your hands.

Mahalo and Aloha,

Tony C.G. Lau, P.E., ENV SP, F.ASCE
Society Director, Region 8

Montana Section Update

Section Background

The Montana Section of ASCE is broken into two geographic branches, Eastern and Western Branch. The section also includes four student chapters, Montana State, Carroll College, Montana Tech, and Montana State Northern. The Section supports the Student Chapters through yearly allotments, scholarship awards, university endowments, and social events.

Events and Going-Ons

Due to the current COVID-19 restrictions in place for the State of Montana and in the rest of the U.S., the Section has seen cancelled events and reduced interactions. The Section's planned attendance at the 2020 ASCE Fly-In was cancelled with the event and all spring student conferences and competitions were cancelled as well. Colleges and universities in Montana have gone to online only classes for the most part and student activities have been cancelled or postponed thus limiting any social events or meetings the Student Chapters would normally be hosting at this time.

Faculty at Montana Tech did host a Zoom meeting where current Montana Section President Michael Kynett addressed a civil engineering class to discuss the benefits of joining ASCE as well as the civil engineering profession in general. Initially planned as an onsite meeting, students were still able to join the discussion online and ask any questions they had.

The Section is also considering the Pugsley Road Bridge for National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark recognition. It is believed that the bridge may be the oldest cable-stayed bridge in the U.S. Once research confirms the bridge's origins, a committee will be formed to move ahead with application.

Finally, in ASCE Leadership Election news, Montana Section member and Section Past President Dan Karlin is running for Region 8 Governor during the current open elections. The Section has endorsed Dan for the position and wish him the best of luck in the elections. We encourage all Region 8 members to please take the time to review all the candidates up for election and make your vote heard.

Michael Kynett

Staying Fit While Working From Home

It is hard to believe that given the medical studies and the recent media that there are many of us who have not picked up on the idea that exercise is not only good for you and boosts your immune system, but an essential part of being efficient and alert throughout the day. Being alert helps us communicate with our clients more effectively, and helps us come across as intelligent and quick witted as we are better able to answer difficult questions. You may be a genius, but if you come across as “slow” your clients may not trust you as much as they would if you are alert. Additionally, in this time of crisis, when you exercise, your body releases chemicals called endorphins. These endorphins interact with the receptors in your brain that reduce your perception of pain. Endorphins also trigger a positive feeling in the body.

According to a 2006 report in the "Primary Care Companion to the Journal of Clinical Psychiatry," exercise improves mental alertness by reducing feelings of tiredness and increasing stamina and energy levels. How does one do this at the office? Right now in Utah, all the gyms are closed and many if not all are under a “Stay At Home” order. So it is even more important to take advantage of every opportunity to put in at least 30 minutes of healthy activities while you are sitting at your home office desk or performing business activities from your home.

Some of us live in apartment buildings or condominium buildings with elevators. The first thing one can do is to avoid elevators and simply take the stairs. People pay good money to go to gyms with “stair masters”, for those of us who live in apartment buildings or condominiums, it’s a simple option available to us. If you are feeling like you’re not getting enough of a work out, than accelerate on the straight-aways and take two at a time every other flight. You don’t need an excuse to walk up and down a stairway. When you feel like taking a break, walk up and down a stairway.

Another option is standing, yes standing. While standing isn’t a traditional exercise, research shows it is better for you than sitting. Long periods of sitting are linked to increased risk of diabetes, obesity and a handful of other diseases. Should you stand all day? That is up to you. I suggest that you alternate between standing and sitting throughout the day. One thing I do is stand when the phone rings and remain standing during the conversations.

Working from home, we tend to meet or discuss project issues on the phone, on Skype or in another online meeting fashion. I like to do calf raises while I am in one of these meetings. It is simple to do and doesn’t take away from your concentration in the meeting. Standing with feet shoulder-width apart, press up onto the tippy toes, pause at the top, and then lower back down. Repeat for three sets of 12-15 reps, or until the meeting is done. If you get bored, or want to amp things up, try raising only one leg at a time.

One doesn’t have to have a weight set in the office to do a set of curls. I suggest using a simple office stapler. Starting at thigh level, bend the elbow and curl the arm up towards

the chest, just like a regular bicep curl. Pause momentarily then lower the stapler back down. Continue for 12-15 reps, then switch. If this isn't working for you, try using a filled water bottle.

If you want a more intense experience of working out throughout the day while working from home one can alternate doing 10 pushups and 10 squats when returning from a bathroom break. Perform 15 dips when returning from lunch. Just place your hands on your chair and walk your feet out in front of you. I like to keep my legs stretched straight out while I perform the dips. Lower yourself until your arms form a 90 degree angle and then press up. When you feel yourself getting a little antsy, perform a 30 second "grok squat stretch". This is one of the best exercises to help mitigate back, hip, and groin tightness that is associated from sitting in a chair all day. A "grok squat stretch" simply involves getting into a squatting position with your feet on the floor, your back straight, and your butt about as low as it will go. Think baseball catcher position. You should feel the stretch through your legs, back, and groin.

This is all good for physical health, but mental health is just as important. It can be easy when working from home for one to get "stir crazy." I have mitigated this feeling by using the following techniques. While you are working from home, it is easy to see your computer or home desk and think, "I'll take care of something really quick". Next thing you know it's midnight. In order to avoid this, keep regular office hours and stop working outside of these hours. Give yourself a break. Speaking of breaks, take a 5 to 10 minute break every hour on the hour. Actually use your lunch break. After you eat, walk around your house, climb stairs as discussed above, do something other than work. The brain is a muscle and can be overworked. Give your brain a rest and you will be happier and more efficient and healthy overall.

These are just a few that I use; I'm sure you can think of many more. There are many articles written about this online and can be found with a simple "Google" search. The key is to stay active during the day and avoid sitting for long periods of time. These, and other exercises, will help keep one healthy and alert during the day, and I sincerely believe that this will help us be better engineers and keep us from going "crazy" during these rough times.

Matthew Roblez, S.E., SECB, M.ASCE
ASCE Region 8 Governor

Region 8 Calendar of Upcoming Events

In response to COVID-19, Events and Meetings are TBD.

Visit [Region 8 Events](#) for more information.
