

My Thoughts on the Future of STRUCTURE

By John A. Dal Pino, S.E.



I am quite honored to have been selected as the next Chair of the STRUCTURE Editorial Board. I joined the Board four years ago and have been privileged to serve under past Chairs Jon Schmidt and Barry Arnold, and to work alongside our dedicated, volunteer Board members. This group has worked diligently to carry on traditions, to refine our internal processes, and to improve the magazine's content and effectiveness. It takes a lot of effort and commitment to publish a magazine every month, rain or shine, good times or bad. There are no schedule extensions in the magazine industry. I want to thank all of them for what I have learned from them and the examples they have set.

As you may have noticed, we are currently refreshing the magazine's appearance. Expect to see a new look and style in the coming year. The same quality content you have come to rely on will still be inside. However, the Board is discussing and exploring ideas focused on keeping the content relevant and informative and broadening the appeal of the magazine to all readers – younger and older, experienced and less experienced, owners and non-owners, leaders and future leaders, and more. We must also be responsive to our advertisers because, without them, there would be no magazine. Our goal is for you to stop what you are doing when the magazine lands on your desk and to open it up to see what is inside.

The responsibilities of individual Editorial Board members include developing the topics to be published each year by helping to create a roadmap for us to follow, finding and working with authors in completing the articles and getting them ready for publishing, and occasionally writing articles themselves. In addition to my role change, we are starting 2019 with four new members. Therefore, the content of the magazine will undoubtedly change a bit as it takes on the personality of this Board and reflects its interests, while still focusing on the technical content our readers enjoy.

I like to think of a structural engineer as being much more than just a technical expert. A structural engineer is a critical part of the broader construction industry, and to be effective and valuable must also be familiar with and speak intelligently on a variety of issues: building owner issues – land acquisition, zoning, approvals, financing; construction issues – planning, scheduling, techniques, material and equipment availability, costs; architectural issues – planning, design, code issues. Therefore, I hope to encourage a greater focus on a broader range of topics. However, each Board member is free to develop the content of his/her liking

bounded only by our mission. One of our greatest strengths is our diversity (age, gender, technical specialties, and geographic location), and you should

see this reflected in the magazine content. If there are topics you would like to see published in the magazine, please let one of us know. Better yet, please contact us about authoring an article yourself! From personal experience, it is fun and quite rewarding. A side benefit is well-deserved publicity for you and your firm.

Lastly, you might ask why I volunteered to take on the role of Chair? The answer comes in three parts. First, I like to read history, learn new things, ask “why,” and “connect the dots” so that I can make sense of a chaotic and unpredictable world. Through the magazine and its voice, I am better able to help bring relevant and timely information on a variety of topics to our readers and hopefully help them become better, well-rounded structural engineers. Secondly, I get great satisfaction and enjoyment in working with young engineers and helping them advance and succeed in their careers. I heard recently that, for young people, the jobs of the future have not been invented yet, so the four skills essential to being prepared for what may come are: thinking, managing, creating, and communicating. I am not suggesting that engineering will fundamentally change but staying abreast of new trends and future developments is crucial. My personal goal is to work with the Board to create content that speaks to these skills across the broad field of structural engineering. And lastly, it was just my time. As I have moved through my career and my kids have grown up and are about to finish college, I decided it was time for me to attempt to make a significant contribution to our industry. I worked for many years at a firm where this is just what one did in terms of advancing the profession. Volunteering wasn't a written requirement; it was just expected.

As I mentioned above, the magazine's content and style may change a bit. Hopefully, you will like it. Please send comments, positive or critical. Article ideas and authors are welcomed too!▪



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STRUCTURE

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MISSION: The Editorial Board will engage, enlighten, and empower structural engineers by publishing interesting, informative, and inspirational content in STRUCTURE magazine that is professionally relevant, technically reliable, and intellectually refreshing.