



August 2021 Newsletter

From the President's Perspective:

I always believed that August was a month of change; as we head from Summer (June, July) in to Fall (September, October) and Winter (The other 7 months in WNY.). Yes, I know that the weather sometimes does not match the season, but there is no denying that there are months of changes. This August is no different from any other year; the changes this August are here and coming fast.

As Safety Professionals, we have faced some interesting (That term again!) challenges; COVID-19 and all the regulatory issues associated with it, new State Regulations (Legalization of Recreational Cannabis; the NY HERO act), the economic issues associated with COVID-19 (furloughs, layoffs, lockdowns and shutdowns; difficulty in hiring to meet demands for goods and services), and now, changes in the Governance of ASSP. Oh, I almost forgot to mention we will be having a new year of Member Meetings! That last one seems almost anti-climactic, it's the only one that is exciting to me!

We have addressed some of the Regulatory issues in previous Newsletters (If you missed them, they are archived on the Niagara Frontier Chapter website: <https://nf.assp.org/>.) This Newsletter addresses the ASSP Governance issue and the upcoming Meeting year.

ASSP has faced the same challenges that affected all of us; it is a 501(c) (6) tax-exempt organization subject to IRS regulations regarding managing Society funds. During the COVID-19 emergency, many organizations suffered losses of income from activities that relied on Member participation (dues, attending events) and outside funding (corporate support); there was no activity. This stress on the Finance and Governance system of ASSP lead to the proposal of changes that will enable the Board of Directors (elected board) to respond to quickly changing conditions. Currently, the Board has legal financial responsibility for ASSP; but some financial decisions had to be approved by the House of Delegates (HOD). The changes proposed would eliminate the HOD and replace it with an At-Large Advisory group that will provide Member input in governing the Society to the Board, and allow the Board to fully make and execute financial decisions. It is anticipated that this change will happen.

The Niagara Frontier Chapter Delegate will be Carol Schmeidler to represent us at what will be the last scheduled HOD meeting. Carol is the perfect choice for this mission; she has a great perspective of where ASSP and the NFC needs to head and has an excellent knowledge of history. We are looking for At-Large Representative for the Chapter to represent us in the new Advisory Board; this is an outstanding opportunity for someone to be involved at the local level with Chapter Governance. For more details, please review the materials posted on our website (<https://nf.assp.org/>) or our LinkedIn Group page. Think about volunteering!

On to Chapter business. In previous newsletters and LinkedIn group postings, I requested input on both Meeting Topics and whether or not we should return to in-person meetings. We got a request to have a Technical Meeting on the implications of the new NY Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act (MRTA), this legalizes Recreational Use of Cannabis; that meeting will happen. Already, I have heard of rumors that employers cannot legally refuse to hire a candidate based on a positive result for THC metabolite on a drug



test. Is it true? Let's find out! We also are planning to have a presenter on the NY HERO act and its implications; yes, we will need to have Airborne Infectious Disease Exposure Prevention Plans in place (<https://dol.ny.gov/ny-hero-act>) and ready to go; even if there is no declared emergency, but coming up is the requirement under this law for employers who have 10 or more employees to have a Safety Committee. Do you have one in place, does it add value to your organization and is a Safety Committee absolutely required? Let's find out! If anyone knows of a presenter that would like to help us out for either topic, please let me know at president.nfassp@gmail.com! The presenter should be comfortable with either a virtual format or in-person presentations. See the next paragraph.

On to the Meeting format. There are complex logistics issues involved. With the lifting of restrictions on gatherings, getting back to in-person meetings is a potential reality. We are favor of it; one of the greatest benefits of being a Member of the Niagara Frontier Chapter was the networking and interacting with other Safety Professionals in a collegial environment. We are also aware of the current situation and the potential of the delta (maybe alpha, beta, gamma, too) variant of COVID-19 to cause increased infection rates that will trigger a resumption of restrictions. That makes meeting planning interesting; we need to plan meetings at least 2 months ahead of time. I can confidently state that if we plan for in-person meetings, we will need to be able to pivot to a virtual meeting on Zoom on short notice. I am thinking that we will be able to predict what lies ahead and pivot about 1 week in advance. That means we will need reservations; the earlier you decide, the better. When you sign up for a meeting, please keep an eye on your email.

We also need to make changes to our Bylaws. We need to delete the references to the Construction Section that was dissolved in March of 2019. We have concluded the business of the Construction Section and it is no more. We still need to have the Society recognize this change. We will also need to delete the references to the representative to the HOD and replace it with the At-Large representative.

I will be putting out a separate Notice in August with the Meeting Topic, Date, Time and Location. And maybe some other news. Look for it by August 16! We are almost there!