The effectiveness of my final year as a member of the Executive Committee and Board of Directors was hampered due to an unexpected setback in my personal health, which required hospitalization for more than a week in March, and also resulted in an extended recuperative period. Since I was admonished by my physicians to avoid flying and exertion to the degree possible, I cancelled a number of scheduled trips to state societies and other destinations. I want to thank my fellow officers and our Executive Director for covering my visits, and I want to thank all of the state societies who graciously assured me that they cared more about my recuperation than they did my inability to keep my commitment to them.

As for things I was able to accomplish during the year, the key assignment to the Past President is to Chair the Candidate Screening Committee. That task was accomplished, and the candidates will be presented to you today. Additional duties were to serve on the Budget Committee, and to participate with President Aldrich’s Task Force to study state-only and a-la-carte membership issues. Both assignments were accomplished. The deliberations of the Task Force to study state-only and a-la-carte membership issues were quite interesting, and intense. The resulting report is included in the Agenda Book for your information and assistance in addressing this critically important topic for NSPE’s future policy and procedure. Whatever the outcome, you are going to deliberate a topic of the utmost importance to our organization.

As I read President Aldrich’s annual report, I experienced several levels of thought.

- The term of the NSPE President is filled with experiences that only he/she can fully appreciate, particularly as to the high level of respect afforded our organization by other professional/technical societies, as well as by agencies of the federal government by industries, and by legislators. It is an exhilarating experience.

- Serving as NSPE President is also a physically and mentally grueling experience, and I want to personally congratulate President Aldrich for bearing up so well through the experience. I am confident he does not regret having taken on the role.

- NSPE has moved forward under Brad’s leadership, as it hopefully did under mine, and as it did under the leadership of each and every Past President. NSPE’s vision and mission are such that there will never be an end to the process. A vision is like a beacon on the horizon, perhaps like a lighthouse toward which we must continuously travel. It is a journey that never will end, but will continue to incrementally move forward.

- During the past few administrations we have moved closer in our relationships with the military, as well as with NCEES.

- We have inserted ourselves into the International relationship arena, and President Grossman will continue to enhance our engagement and participation.
• We have begun a journey toward enhancing our student chapter program, an effort that will require our state societies to shepherd that effort at its state and private universities.

• We have reformatted the NSPE Educational Foundation to draw together the various NSPE “offspring”, EWeek, JETS, NICET, Future Cities, and MathCounts, so that all can begin a coordinated effort to monitor and fill the pipeline toward engineering careers.

There is more, some of which happened so many administrations back that I cannot articulate the incremental steps flowing from the leadership of our past presidents. It is my intent, here, to point out that NSPE, although it may have flaws, has been on a continuous path of societal improvement. It is important that we work collectively toward sustaining NSPE so that the journey can continue.

Although none of us can predict what NSPE will be five, ten, or more years from now I think we can rely upon the society becoming stronger, and upon positive progress for our profession. I believe the same is true of all our state societies.

The synergy that exists between NSPE and our state societies is a vital element of our ability to serve our profession. In this, our seventy-fifth year of existence, it is important that we reflect on the vision and vigorous pursuit of that vision by our founder, Dr. E. B. Steinman, and those few state societies (Connecticut, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania) that threw themselves into a fervent effort to create NSPE on September 3, 1934, and to grow it to a federation of all states and territories of the nation. Without doubt, there has been the incremental movement toward fulfillment of the vision year by year, and I see no end in sight.

Respectfully submitted,

Bernard R. Berson, PE, LS, F.NSPE