# Published PEs


**The Interceptor, *by Richard Herschlag, P.E., ($6.50, 512 pages), The Ballantine Publishing Group, a division of Random House.***

If you're looking for a professional engineer to break into the ranks of best-selling authors, the top bet might be Richard Herschlag, with his new paperback, *The Interceptor.* He's got a big publisher behind him in Ballantine and a compelling story that weaves in the major elements of mass-market fiction—tight, suspenseful plotting; a hard-nosed, appealing hero with a good supporting cast; a dose of sex and violence; and a fight to put the corrupt behind bars.

What breaks the mass-market mold is the story's hero—a professional engineer, Jon Kessler—and the setting—the sewers of Manhattan and the engineering infrastructure that makes them work.

Engineers have always talked about getting one of their own into popular fiction, TV, and movies, and Herschlag takes his background as the former chief engineer in the Manhattan borough president's office and weaves his expertise throughout the story. He offers a mini-education on how the mammoth infrastructure of the Big Apple rids the city of wastewater, drops references about Kessler's engineering license, describes how physical principles meld with engineering judgment in performing building inspections, and tells a little about what makes engineers tick.

Of course, if that were the extent of the book, there would be no mass audience. Those sprinkles of insight blend (if sometimes roughly) with the bestseller formula of murder and police detective work, with Kessler drawn into the heart of the investigation to show off his street-smarts, ethical backbone, and courage.

The story starts with the murder of an aspiring film director who is dumped into the tunnels under 14th street after stumbling on sewer work that conspirators want to keep secret. As two homicide detectives start working the case, they turn to Kessler as a ready resource, first for city infrastructure plans and then for some engineering flow analysis on how the body could have ended up where it did.

Kessler, like Herschlag in his former job, is chief engineer in the borough president's office. The fictional Kessler must contend with a political tyrant of a boss and an office steeped in corruption. As the PE delves deeper into the facts of the case, he uncovers shady dealings on a major development project that could lead to environmental disaster. The perpetrators begin to feel Kessler's breath and without hesitating, take off the gloves. For Kessler, staying alive becomes as great a challenge as exposing the perpetrators.

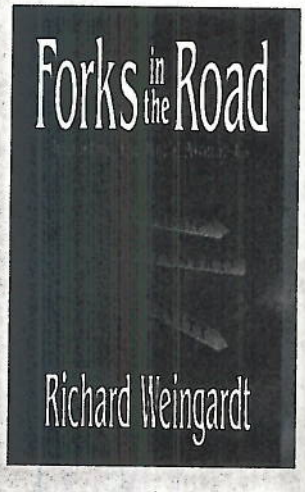
*—Stefan Jaeger*


professional engineer Aileen Schumacher, builds on the success of her first novel, *Engineered for Murder* (see December 1996 *ET*), which introduced consulting engineer Tory Travers and detective David Alvarez and wove the author's knowledge of engineering into the plot of a murder-mystery.

Schumacher takes the same approach in *Framework*—when a ceiling over a concealed basement hideout in El Paso, Texas, collapses, killing two people, Alvarez turns to structural engineer Travers for help. She must find the cause of the building collapse, but as she searches for the person who constructed the concealed room, Travers and Alvarez find themselves dealing with an alleged drug king, his DEA shadow, and a mystery woman with ties to an underground organization. When threats are made against Tory's son, Travers and Alvarez realize they are dealing with a criminal who will stop at nothing to get what he wants.

**Forks in the Road, *by Richard Weingardt, P.E., ($15.95, 268 pages), Palamar Publishing.***

Also bringing engineers to the forefront, but here with nonfiction, is professional engineer Richard Weingardt, whose book, *Forks in the Road*, explains how and why engineers should become leaders in their communities. Arguing that "the world is run by those who show up," Weingardt offers specific suggestions on how engineers can increase their visibility and enhance the image of the profession.




For example, in chapter 4, Weingardt suggests actions that engineers and their firms and associations can take to increase their visibility. Individual engineers can, among other activities, get involved in community leadership, serve on their college advisory council, run for elected public office, and write for publications.

For engineering firms, Weingardt address the need to produce quality brochures, publish newsletters, get involved in community service events, and support political candidates. Associations are urged to become more involved by funding public relations campaigns, sponsoring seminars on image building, and producing vid-