

ASHRAE JOURNAL

The Presidential Address

Communications: A Formula for Progress

ASHRAE President Louis F. Flagg addresses Society growth through member participation and the dissemination of knowledge

The complete text of the inaugural address delivered at the Annual Meeting American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers

I AM HONORED by your support and proud to serve as president of our Society at a time when so many opportunities prevail. Each year, for more than 40 years, I have found my relationship with ASHRAE more rewarding and more worthwhile.

Because of this, I have just one warning for you: If it could happen to me, it could happen to you.

The key: be ready, willing and able. Opportunities exist only if you take advantage of them. Your dedicated participation, taking advantage of opportunities, is essential to our Society's progress. But it all begins with and depends on our ability to communicate, to disseminate knowledge. The act of transmitting, of giving or exchanging information — communication — moves us from one place to another.

In this coming year, our vision is provided in the strategic plan. We will broaden awareness of the Society's technology and expertise; encourage greater international exchange; maximize the quality, attendance, availability and cost effectiveness of our meetings; increase Society, chapter and student membership and improve member services; examine our organizational structure to better accomplish the Society's mission; improve the quality, use and revenue generation of publications; expand research and research promotion activities; and increase the scope and means of the organization's technology transfer.

These goals require effective communication. Communication is our formula for progress. Having no goals, no dreams, no stars to reach would be a true tragedy for our Society. But with the strategic plan and the vision of its members,

ASHRAE is faced with vast opportunities. The strategic plan has not dealt with future decisions, but with the future of present decisions. Society committees now need to make these decisions and formulate action plans to achieve each objective.

The elements of communication

This year, many elements will compose our formula and a variety of media will be used to communicate our message. A slide/sound presentation on technical committee participation, an "ASHRAE and the chapter volunteer" booklet, articles in *ASHRAE Insights*, recognition for chapter outreach programs, and radio news releases are just a few of the specific elements to be initiated this year.

Louis F. Flagg is retired from Honeywell's Commercial Division, Minneapolis, Minnesota. He was installed as 1988-89 president of the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers, Inc. at the June 1988 Annual Meeting of the Society. He joined ASHRAE in 1947 and has served continuously on committees since 1958. As president-elect of ASHRAE, he was chairman of the Region's Council and, as Society vice president in 1986-87, Flagg served as chairman of the Technology Council. Previously, he has served as the Society's treasurer and chairman of the Finance Committee and the Publishing Council. In 1967, he received ASHRAE's Distinguished Service Award and was named an ASHRAE Fellow in 1984. He is also a Life Member. Flagg has been in the HVAC industry for over 50 years, 38 of those with Honeywell, Inc. He was manager of product distribution and administration when he retired in 1984.



Communications: A Formula for Progress

Each of these programs encourages an increased flow of communication: to communicate technology, to recognize chapter activities, to relate personal stories of involvement at the chapter level and at the Society level, to get those members involved in Society activities to participate in chapter activities, and to increase awareness of the great service and technology provided by technical committees.

This is an ambitious program, one that will not be achieved through presidential initiative but will be achieved through your participation — your representation of our Society. Each individual member must contribute to the Society's formula for progress. The most effective vehicle available to increase awareness, to increase recognition, and to increase participation is face-to-face communication. Innovation and communication do not come from big budgets. They come from talented, creative and courageous people. Things do not happen in this world until somebody makes them happen. Every member of ASHRAE is a representative of the Society. It's up to us. You have an obligation to exchange and disseminate information — that face-to-face communication, people-to-people.

Taking an active role

In the 1940's, the greatest physicists and aeronautical engineers believed that the sound barrier could not be broken, that anyone or anything would be shattered when it approached the speed of sound. One lone pilot, Chuck Yeager, didn't believe it. He didn't think there was such a thing as a sound "barrier." And indeed he proved it — he flew right through it.

There are no limits to what you, as an individual ASHRAE member, can achieve if you communicate. I hope I'm not preaching to the choir when I say that if you're involved in Society activities, you also should be involved in chapter activities, and those members active at the chapter level should volunteer to participate on a technical committee or other Society committee.

For example, you all know Damon Gowan. He's a mechanical contractor in Houston, Texas, who was asked by a consulting engineer to join ASHRAE. Once again, that face-to-face communication. Following activity in the local chapter and participation in his region, he then moved to the Society level as a regional vice chairman for research promotion. Now, after serving as a vice president, he has been installed as Society treasurer.

Frank Coda, the Society's executive director and secretary, was asked by his boss in 1966 to become active on a technical committee. Then, as Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IES) executive vice president, he represented the lighting community on the Standard 90-75 project committee. Today, he finds himself immersed in ASHRAE.

About 25 years ago, when I was chairing the technical committee on controls and we were moaning about the need for representatives from other than control companies, who should innocently walk through the door but a couple of non-control people named Morris Markel and Roger Haines. I welcomed them with open arms and they immediately became members of the committee. For years those two served with me on Society committees. Today, one continues his dedicated service in our professional development seminars activity and the other just became a director-at-large.

Communicating the benefits

That's what can happen when you show interest in serving our industry in the most effective way — ASHRAE par-

ticipation. Many of you know and understand these stories. You have been active at the chapter, regional and Society levels. Now as a member of a standing committee, a technical committee or a standards project committee you're attending ASHRAE meetings. You've experienced this people-to-people communication that gets people involved. Now, each of you is a salesperson for the Society.

We have much to sell. Our technology benefits people and this we must communicate. A final draft of Standard 62, "Ventilation for Acceptable Indoor Air Quality," will be submitted to the Standards Committee for publication approval following this meeting. The Standard 90.1 project committee is reviewing the results of their efforts to resolve comments to decide whether a final draft can be prepared for approval or if another public review draft is necessary. And the project committee developing our other energy standard for new buildings, 90.2, expects to submit a public review draft for approval shortly after this meeting.

Influencing the future

The technology generated by ASHRAE is moving forward and having an impact on industry. ASHRAE is part of the solution to today's industry problems. We, through our dedicated service, are influencing the future.

An example of the need for people-to-people, face-to-face communication was revealed to me at an ASHRAE-sponsored CFC roundtable, June 6-7. When ASHRAE representatives told the 50 industry association attendees that the Society was working on a guideline to reduce emissions of CFCs, most of our allied, industry associations had no previous knowledge of this. In spite of published notices of the guideline in several magazines, it was face-to-face exchange of information that communicated the message.

The roundtable made evident another fact: we're all in this together. Each of our stars can shine side by side, illuminating — not diminishing — the other. The effort to improve the conditions of man is not a task for the few. It is the task of all — acting alone and acting in groups. Our decisions are bettered when reached through cooperation.

Science, technology and education are our allies. This is the information we must communicate. And we must communicate to all open to receiving our message. Much can be accomplished through structured programs, but I would like to emphasize the opportunities available through individual, personal face-to-face communication. Every member is a stockholder in ASHRAE and, as such, must secure and enhance his investment.

Personally, I got involved in ASHRAE at the chapter level when I first joined Honeywell as a salesman. Then, when I moved into training with Honeywell in Minneapolis, I acquired the responsibility of inputting to the Society's Guide. Some years later, I realized that I was immersed in ASHRAE and struggling to swim in a vigorous current. Although the water moves no slower, today I am bettered prepared, a better swimmer. I participated at the chapter level and on technical committees, standing general committees, councils and the board of directors. And look at me now, I am proud to serve you as president. All it required was self-interest, industry-interest, dedication and time. That's my story. What's your story?

Let me conclude by reminding you that because of your continued, dedicated service, you may soon discover that you too are swimming in white-water rapids.

Remember, if it could happen to me, it could happen to you. ■