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Personal Growth. Global Impact. Feed the Roots.

Honor, Grow Your Roots

BY MICK SCHWEDLER, P.E., ASHRAE PRESIDENT, FELLOW ASHRAE

ASHRAE's growth is and always has been a direct result of our members' personal growth. Today, we're going on a journey, and we'll see that since its inception our Society has focused on that individual growth. Here, we'll explore our rich history—not for history's sake, but to appreciate how our founders established three sets of roots to help us grow, and how nourishing these roots led to our Society's global growth and impact. Then, we'll come full circle to understand the importance for each of us to “feed the roots” today and for future generations.

Defining Our Root Systems

ASHRAE's heritage, our roots, begin in 1894 when 75 engineers met in New York City and founded our predecessor, the American Society of Heating and Ventilating Engineers (ASHVE). Charter Member Harrie Crane put into words reasons for founding this Society: “...members will have the opportunity of forming acquaintances, exchanging theories and experiences and, through these associations, promulgate a feeling of perfect freedom in consulting one another when in doubt on a subject...”

We wanted to form acquaintances, and many of us have found lifelong professional and personal friendships to exchange theories and experiences. Whether it's been in our workplace, a chapter meeting or arguing about a new design at a happy hour, we've all done this—and often times vigorously. We get to consult and network as we learn from one another. These establish our member-to-member connections. From 1894 to today, this root of personal growth remains a tenet of our Society

Mick Schwedler, P.E., Fellow ASHRAE, ASHRAE President 2021 – 22



ASHRAE President Mick Schwedler, P.E., Fellow ASHRAE, has served on the ASHRAE Board of Directors as president-elect, treasurer, vice president and director-at-large.

For his devotion to ASHRAE and the HVAC&R industry, Schwedler is a recipient of the Fellow Award, Exceptional Service Award, Standards Achievement Award and the Distinguished Service Award. Schwedler's “Low-Load Chillers and System Efficiency” was published in *ASHRAE Journal* in February 2017 and was his seventh article published in the *Journal*.

In addition to his contributions to ASHRAE, Schwedler has been active in the development, training and support of energy-efficient systems since 1982.

Clockwise from top left, Neil Patterson, P.E., Presidential/Fellow/Life Member ASHRAE; Mike Brambley, Ph.D., Fellow/Life Member ASHRAE; and Charlie Culp, Ph.D., HBDD, Fellow/Life Member ASHRAE, fed my roots by connecting me to ASHRAE and mentoring me during my early years in the Society's technical committees.

We now fast forward 12 years to our convention in Chicago. On July 19, 1906, Illinois members request a formation of a chapter, sanctioning the “opportunity to congregate.” This directly follows Crane’s vision and enhances individual members’ growth.

This second root, known as our “grassroots,” is an ASHRAE hallmark. These grassroots build upon and augment individual member growth. Special thanks to our Illinois members for your foresight.

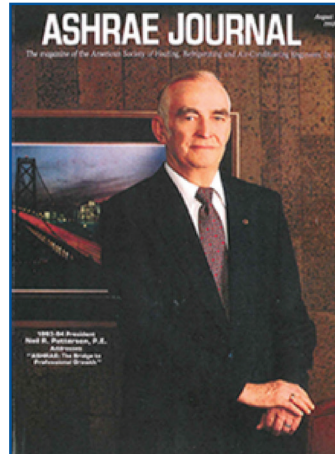
From there, our first chapter outside of the U.S. was chartered in 1922 in Ontario, Canada. By 1956 we had grown significantly and organized into regions, but we were still exclusively North American.

In fact, it wasn’t until 90 years after our founding when our global journey really began with chapters in Singapore and Hong Kong and then in India, Africa, Mexico, Europe and South America. Today, we are 199 chapters with the most recent being in Peru, Libya and Alexandria, Egypt. Our second set of roots—our grassroots—have spread, strengthened and led to amazing growth throughout the world.

Now, let’s pause and ask a question: How did you get here today and become part of this expansive root system? Who helped you grow? Who encouraged you? Who “fed your roots”?

Please take out a paper and pen, your phone or computer to make a list. Take 10 seconds to list the names of two to three people who invested in you and helped you grow—who fed your roots.

On the next page, there’s a collage of people who fed the roots of President-Elect Advisory Committee members who were involved in developing this year’s Society theme. For many of us, it’s probably hard to narrow down to two to three names. It was for me. Many have guided and helped mold me, but here are the first.



In 1981, I received a job offer from a group led by Neil Patterson. At that time, I didn’t realize Neil would become ASHRAE president about a decade later. At that time, we didn’t have today’s simple and polite way to connect a colleague to ASHRAE. But Neil had his own “connect a colleague” method. I recall his words were, “...you will be involved in ASHRAE,” and then he provided the support to do so.

That support resulted in my attending technical committee meetings. The first two TCs weren’t good fits. Then, one Monday evening, I walked into TC 1.5, Computer Applications.

The leaders, including Charlie Culp and Mike Brambley, invited everyone to “the big table” to be involved. They encouraged and mentored me as I founded in my first subcommittee chair assignment. They even convinced me—this new, naive member—to be TC secretary for not two, but four years, as they restructured the TC.

All have been amazingly supportive mentors. Neil has passed away, but today, thanks to Charlie and Mike for feeding my roots.

Now, onto our third root: technology and the 1917 decision to found our own research bureau later led by F.

Paul Anderson and Margaret Ingels, one of our first female members. Here we are over 100 years after that 1917 decision still independently funding our research.

To oversee the research, subcommittees were formed. These were precursors of our present technical committees now responsible not only for research but also our *Handbook*, conference sessions and identification of standards. These are our deep technical roots.

These three strong and resilient roots put in place by our founders have spread globally to our membership of more than 52,000. As volunteers, we grow personally when we gather and serve our grassroots chapters and regions and through our technical contributions. By uniting, we've had global impact to serve humanity—the first three words of our mission.

Exploring Our Impact

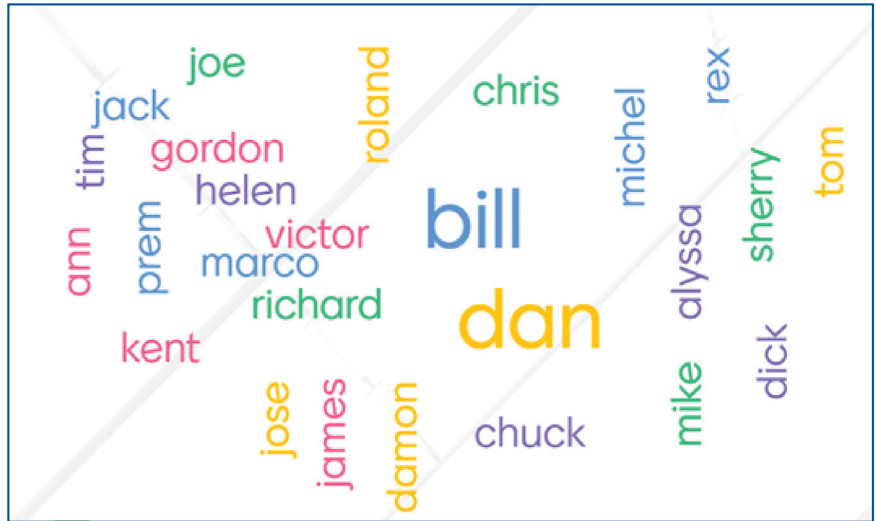
Let's look at just a few of our global impacts.

First, our technical, education and training materials are well-known and respected worldwide and are available to everyone through our Technology Portal. They help ensure the built environment is efficient, resilient, reliable and addresses our world's ever-changing needs.

Next, in the last 104 years, you and members like you have funded research, including more than \$2 million last year. Since 1959, members have donated more than \$78 million. Thank you. This leads to quality, independent research.

As a board member, I've had the privilege to represent ASHRAE at other organizations' conferences. Many of those associations absolutely covet our Young Engineers in ASHRAE (YEA), who are now about 20% of our membership. YEA was a vision of many, and the young women and men who began in YEA are now leading us into the future and providing strong connections to young professionals and students entering our industry.

Our most recent global impact is our Epidemic Task Force. Through volunteer efforts of more than 130 experts, ASHRAE is a beacon, providing needed information to mitigate the spread of disease, reopen buildings and deliver education for building owners and



Members of this year's President-Elect Advisory Committee listed who fed their roots.

operators—all to improve indoor environmental quality and to keep people safe. The impact has been global and touched each of us locally.

This hit home personally. My wife, Jen, has an ASHRAE magnet on her van and was speaking with her college roommate who works for the La Crosse County Health Department. Jen's roommate said, "ASHRAE, we use their information."

That is impact.

In today's terms, it's time for a shout-out. We would not have made it through the past year without the guidance, vision and drive of President Charles Gulledge to embrace technology. Who would have thought we could do our work, serve chapter members and carry on our mission—without leaving our homes for months? Chuck, thank you for leading us through these tough times.

But we all know that being fully digital has been hard.

This phenomenon was explained by author Alvin Toffler in his 1970s book *Future Shock*. As our world uses higher technology, we as people need and crave personal connections—in our case member-to-member connections. To explain this, Toffler coined the term "high-tech/high touch." I think we all really understand his point today. How do we use this to move forward?

Many times, I've heard people say, "I can't wait until things get back to normal." Please take no offense, but I don't think we have any desire for "normal." What we really want is the "extraordinary" we have. We will use our best virtual and personal practices, combined with historical roots, to move on to extraordinary. Here's how.

Connecting Technical Roots and Personal Growth

ASHRAE's deep technical roots will continue to be fed through education, training, standards, research and other materials produced by our volunteer experts—delivered both virtually and in-person.

The Distinguished Lecturers program is often described as ASHRAE's most successful program. These lecturers, who present to chapters, will continue to be available virtually (high tech), and when it's safe for the chapters and lecturers, we will get back to face-to-face presentations to provide the "high touch."

Next, within our grassroots chapters, the Presidential Award of Excellence has been streamlined and encourages intraregional and intragenerational events and communications. Utilizing technology, we can connect member-to-member with other cultures and experiences.

Also, our Chapters Regional Conferences are using hybrid configurations that combine virtual training in addition to the in-person regional conferences. Now, people who can't travel can still participate.

But we all know there's no replacement for all of us being together. We began with our 1906 convention where everyone looked like me but some had hair. We have changed as a Society. The member-to-member connections we have today are astounding and vibrant, vintage, young, women, men and are of global cultures. In addition to our present membership, we'll continue to broaden inclusion through support of Young Engineers in ASHRAE, Women in ASHRAE and students.

Also, the Board's new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Subcommittee will recommend ways to reach out to those presently underrepresented within ASHRAE. Because it's not one or the other, it's all of us together that make ASHRAE extraordinary.

And the fact is, nothing happens without each of you—our volunteers. No matter how you choose to volunteer, you are our lifeblood and provide those resilient, deep and widespread roots that weathered the storm and brought ASHRAE through a global pandemic. You are extraordinary.

Feeding Our Roots

Moving forward, three new ways to feed our roots have been developed.

The first provides personal growth. We've developed Learning Pathways. The first pathway is HVAC



Nothing happens without ASHRAE's volunteers. No matter how they volunteer, ASHRAE members are the Society's lifeblood whose resilient roots helped bring ASHRAE through a pandemic.

Design-Basics. It's a curriculum for young professionals, those new to the industry and others who simply want to serve their customers better. The second, Pathogen Mitigation, is of very high interest today and prepares us for future health issues. Additional pathways will be based on what you want and need.

Our second initiative uses technology combined with our grassroots to connect with one another and has two parts. ASHRAE is already active on social media platforms, but not all of us participate.

I've shared a picture of me being dragged kicking and screaming into Jen's and my wedding ceremony. For the record, yes, it's staged. I've felt the same way about social media, but social media is a different and more personal way for each of us to connect with our next generation of



This staged photo of me being dragged kicking and screaming into my wedding ceremony illustrates how I felt about social media. But social media is a way to connect with our next generation of members.

During an ASHRAE CRC, I met Heather Schopplein's, P.E., Member ASHRAE, a dynamic and devoted volunteer. In 2020, we met again virtually, this time with nine-month-old Cohen making an appearance, reminding me of ASHRAE's global impact on the next generation.



members. So your president is enthusiastically on the ASHRAE Society Instagram page, and I hope you'll join me.

Second, patterned after U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's fireside chats, we'll deliver a series of member-to-member, informal video shorts addressing various topics, which will be available ashrae.org/president. I look forward to seeing you each month.

Feeding Others' Roots

Now, if you take one thing away from this, let it be our final initiative, which includes a request to you.

Earlier, you made a list of people who fed your roots. Now, it's time for each of us to give back and determine whose roots we will feed. Please create another list of two to three people whose roots you will feed in the next three months. It can be friends, professional, ASHRAE, at your workplace, in your community—someone who you already admire, and you want to help them grow.

Now that you've made the list, reach out. Each time you do this, you bring us back to our roots of Harrie Crane's vision for ASHVE 127 years ago and to ASHRAE as we move on to our extraordinary and impactful future.

Whether we've helped someone else grow or they've helped us, let's share our "feed the roots moments," perhaps on social media!

Here's how my roots were fed this past year. It reminded me to feed the personal roots of those closest to us who sacrifice so much, so we can volunteer and serve others.

I knew of Heather Schopplein, P.E., Member ASHRAE, through her contributions as a Young Engineer in



ASHRAE but hadn't volunteered with her until attending the combined Region IX and X Chapters Regional Conference [CRC] in August 2019. The night before the CRC, I met her husband, David Schopplein, and learned they were expecting their first child. Throughout the CRC, Heather tirelessly led a small team of three to four people who did all the behind-the-scenes work to deliver an amazing CRC. What a dynamic and extraordinary volunteer!

Little did Heather and I realize, the next time we would see each other would be a year later during the 2020 Region X Virtual CRC, and nine-month-old Cohen would be with her. Our global impacts serve Cohen and his generation too.

We've come full circle.

Guided by our mission, we get to serve humanity every day, and that is an honor and privilege. We each are involved in ASHRAE for different reasons and volunteer in our chosen ways. We do it because we grow—professionally and personally—and help others do the same. We do it because collectively we have tremendous global impact. We do it because that global impact serves the world's as well as our personal future generations.

All this occurs because we are true to our deep, widespread and strong technical roots, grassroots and personal roots.

Ladies, gentlemen, feed the roots. ■