

THE MICHIGAN CHAPTER

Established: 1949

The Michigan Chapter of the American Society of Sanitary Engineering (ASSE), was organized September 16, 1949, at the Engineering Society of Detroit headquarters. We had 50 members in Michigan, as promised by L. Glen Shields 2 years previously in Phoenix. L. Glen Shields was installed as the chapter's first president. The Charter was held open until November 1, 1949. Four committees were organized (Membership, Research, Program and Public Relations) and committee chairmen were appointed. The membership at its founding was a fairly good and balanced cross section of the plumbing industry, including journey and master plumbers, professional mechanical engineers, manufacturer's representatives, wholesalers, two contributing contractor members and plumbing inspectors.

Mr. Shields' report also indicated that he had met with some metropolitan areas outside of the City of Detroit, and in Detroit to advise with them on the development of Plumbing Codes. He also included in his report a meeting with the City of Kalamazoo City Commissioner to talk to them about their Plumbing Code. They were attempting to amend that code and encroach on the work assigned to licensed Plumbers by State Law. His report indicated that some of the commissioners felt Detroit was a little more stringent than they wished to apply in their communities. Mr. Shields said that the coordinating committee's work was in a stage where it could be presented to a municipality as work that was fairly well completed as far as knowledge takes it at that particular time.

THE 1950'S

For two years, Lester Spitzley, education chairman, was working on Wayne University to initiate a plumbing engineering credit course. Lyle Reading was granted \$500.00 to construct a transparent plastic house with working water, waste and vent piping to demonstrate the contamination of the potable water system through cross connections.

Lester Spitzley reported Wayne University will start a two year credit course consisting of: (1) Introduction of the general elements of plumbing code; (2) Hydraulics pneumatics as applied to plumbing; (3) Building Plumbing; (4) Water supplies, sources, treatment, storage, distribution; (5) Sewage systems, treatment, pollution problems, industrial; (6) Service piping, hot water, steam, air, gas; and (7) Process. Lyle Reading reported the plastic house 36" x 28" was almost complete. Glen Shields worked many nights on solving the working water closet problem.

In 1955, Mayor Albert Cobo declared Detroit "a garbage free city", encouraging tax-payers to install garbage or waste disposals. Lyle Reading, Senior Assistant to the Chief of the Bureau of Plumbing City of Detroit, heads our Research Committee, and at the January meeting was moderator for a panel discussion. The subject was "Safety Devices for Hot Water Heaters". Other meetings of interest during the year dealt with hospital plumbing, problems of Sewage Disposal and Ben Moore who gave an explanation of the Plumber Training Course. A \$200.00 check was presented to the ASSE Endowment Fund.

In 1957, W. Wilbur White from the Michigan Chapter was elected ASSE International President. The educational programs included New Developments in the New Plumbing Code, Medicine on the March, and Elimination of Cross Connections. International President Wendell Dillon presented a \$350 check for the Endowment Fund, representing one dollar for each Michigan Chapter Member.

W. Wilbur White from Michigan was the International President of ASSE in 1958. Resolutions led by the Michigan Chapter and other plumbing industry groups kept the city of Detroit from cutting down the number of plumbing inspectors in Detroit. Similar resolutions by the chapter and other plumbing industry groups went to the Governor to have Donald MacGregor reappointed to the state plumbing board, resulting in the reappointment.

At the chapter's May 1959 meeting, Charles Adorjan, Research Committee Chairman, demonstrated the Back Siphonage Display Board he had created. Members in attendance enthusiastically received the project. C. R. Adorjan, working with Mr. Gepford, did a study of hot water demands in hospitals at the request of the Plumbing Inspectors Association of Michigan. Representatives of the Michigan Chapter were appointed to a Plumbing Industry Committee to assist the State Board of Plumbing in revising the State Plumbing Code.

THE 1960'S

The Chapter established a speaker's bureau for the purpose of sending a speaker to accompany the Back Siphonage Display Board through out the State of Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio. Another project by the Michigan Chapter was "Water Usage and Consumption in Care Institutions". They installed meters and followed up with monitoring them to determine usage in these types of institutions. The chapter asked that a forum for chapter secretaries and treasurers be held at the Society's Annual Meetings to discuss their common problems and possible solutions to them. In November, 1963, W. Snyder, Executive Director of the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF), spoke to the chapter on the real importance of our industry, and outlined the purposes and achievements of NSF.

In 1964, the Michigan Chapter took action supporting House Bills relative to Lien Laws. The legislation was later approved. The Michigan Health and Safety Institute borrowed the chapter's cross connection display panel showing a three story building with a basement with a complete water supply and drainage system capable of duplicating inherent dangers. Over 5000 people in Michigan have heard the message of "better health through better plumbing." A year later, the chapter, working with the City of Detroit Plumbing Bureau and local utilities and manufacturers, conducted a "Water Use Survey Study" on the use of water in multiple housing.

Chapter President Albert Cohen indicated in his 1967 report that the State of Michigan and the City of Detroit were deeply involved in the formulation of new plumbing codes. He stated a desire to help form a Chapter in Ontario, Canada and form a Midwest conference composed of Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio and Ontario should they form a Chapter, and meet semi-annually. Albert also suggested proposing to the National Board of Directors, a Chapter Presidents' Conference to maintain a constant liaison with the Central Office, to meet at the Annual Meeting prior to the start, so as to have a report of the Presidents' Conference presented to the Board of Directors at their meeting.

Knowing water pollution to be a vital problem needing a solution, in 1968 the chapter invited an expert in that field who gave a talk on "What You Can Do About It," followed by a film entitled, "Last Chance For A Great Lake", illustrating the results of an aggressive pollution control

program by the manager of the Waste Control Department of the Dow Chemical Company. The ASSE Michigan Chapter members supported a state bond issue in the amount of \$350,000.00 to be used to fight water and air pollution in the state.

THE 1970'S

In January, 1972, the Michigan Chapter honored L. Glen Shields by creating the L. Glen Shields Award. The first recipient was Past International President Wilbur White. This award was the chapter's way of saying thank you to Glen who did so much for so many.

President Jack Fonda reported the Chapter had a busy year in 1974 covering a broad range of activities in education, legislative participation at the local and state level as well as some good old fashion fun. Speakers included Jack Keevan, Executive Director of the State Board of Plumbing, who spoke regarding plumbing code progress with the State Construction Code Commission. Larry Burkheiser, Executive Director of the Health and Safety Institute, reported on the 342 demonstrations he presented in 109 cities using the ASSE animated cross connection control panel to question "How Safe Is Your Drinking Water?"

President Nick H. Gimpel reported that though the state was in hard economic times due to a down turn in the auto industry, the membership was still increasing. In the beginning of 1975 the Chapter initiated a student membership at reduced rates for plumbing apprentices and younger people entering the plumbing industry. Nick Gimpel presented the ASSE slide presentation to the members.

Chapter President Frank Mastracci gave an overview of how the plumbing industry fought off the proposed 4 in 1 inspector proposal in 1978. Albert Cohen, then Chairman of the State Plumbing Board, led the fight with the backing of the Michigan Chapter of ASSE playing a prominent role. The Attorney General ruled the move unconstitutional. This was a big win for the Plumbing Industry. Other licensed groups such as the electricians and building trades unions were also supportive on behalf of the contractors (the State Plumbing Law stated that only licensed plumbers could become plumbing inspectors and inspect plumbing installations). 4 in 1 inspectors would have been allowed to inspect plumbing, electrical, heating and structures itself.

THE 1980'S

Dan Hutchins, the newsletter editor, was asked to draft a resolution on behalf of the chapter opposing the transfer of the State Plumbing Division from the Department of Labor to the Department of Licensing and Regulation. Letters from other Plumbing Associations and Labor Unions convinced the Governor to drop the proposed transfer. Visibility of ASSE Michigan Chapter members popped up in offices of volunteers, speakers and those who have contributed to the success of the Chapter through certificates presented at the meetings and events. The ASSE slide presentation was shown at all our meetings and at some of the Master Plumber Association meetings. The chapter meeting attendance grew steadily due to publishing the programs and speakers well in advance of the meetings in all the related plumbing industry publications.

In 1989, the Michigan Chapter introduced its new backflow test and demonstration stand with the backflow devices supplied by the manufacturers and their representatives.

THE 1990'S

The March 1992 meeting featured a panel of plumbing industry representatives who discussed the pros and cons of the proposed new plumbing laws which had not been changed since 1929. In 1993, the Michigan Chapter was a charter member of the Eastern Michigan Plumbing Industry Coalition (EMPIC). EMPIC is an organization made up of all plumbing industry organizations in southeastern Michigan for the co-operative efforts for better communication within the plumbing community. They provide education through speakers, seminars and hands on training for all the members of their respective associations, providing CEUs for those in need.

Through the generosity of the manufacturers the Chapter was able to put together a backflow demonstration stand on wheels with water provision capabilities to simulate the working of the backflow devices and cross connections in 1994. The stand was used at trade shows and other meetings and events.

In 1996, International President Don Reichartz assigned the Michigan Chapter the task of rewriting the Seal Control Board Procedures. The committee consisted of John Matthews, John Nussbaum, Meek Walker, Paul Bladdick, Ron Chapman and special advisors Stuart Asay PE Ph.D. and Sally Remedios.

In 1998, three new chapter awards were created - the Albert Cohen Award, the Larry Burkheiser Award, and the Mac Wallace Award.

THE 2000'S

The chapter took a new project in the new century - creating a multi-media presentation on ASSE's past, present and future. Many members of the Michigan Chapter were instrumental in completing this project, including John Nussbaum, John Matthews, Cindy Zatto, Mary Chapman, Stacey Birkenhauer and Christopher Freeman. The final product was done as a video and a DVD. The Michigan Chapter raised the money (thanks to Cindy Zatto) to produce and provide enough copies for all of the ASSE Chapters and the United Association's Plumbing Training Centers of the United States and Canada. The media presentation was first seen at the Annual Michigan Chapter's Dinner Dance and Awards night in January 2004.