

THE CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

Established: 1949

In August, 1949 the California Chapter was chartered with 36 members. The chapter had almost 100 hundred members a year later. Most members were from the Los Angeles area and the chapter hoped to form another chapter in the northern part of the state at a later date because the state was so large. Meetings were held on the first Friday of every odd month and the program was set a year in advance so members could make plans to attend since some members traveled as far as 500 miles one way to attend a meeting. Having a good speaker at all of our meetings was strived for.

One of the challenges of this chapter was the Reber Plan, which proposed the construction of two earth and rock filled dams across the fingers of San Francisco Bay to create two mammoth fresh water lakes trapping millions of acre-feet of water each year. This study did not go forward due to the vast number of problems the project was bringing to light.

In 1952, a joint meeting between the California Chapter and the Western Plumbing Officials Association was held to discuss mutual objectives. A liaison committee was formed to assist in keeping the chapter abreast of the Western Plumbing Officials' activities and for studying the Uniform Plumbing Code which had been so widely adopted by the western states. Members of the chapter had attended meetings in many parts of the state, participated in various programs and activities and assisted local authorities and groups with sanitation problems.

This chapter was one of the groups that was instrumental in getting a plumbing program and an engineering program inaugurated in the state colleges in Los Angeles. As of the 1954 Annual Meeting, the response to the program was disappointing and the chapter was trying to find ways to promote the program whenever the opportunity presented itself.

In 1955, the Publicity Committee began publishing a chapter newsletter as a mimeographed bulletin of activities, notes of interest, editorials and free expression of member's thoughts. The Legislative Committee attempted to secure industry wide backing of a bill in the State Legislature which would provide that all qualification and licensing of plumbers be given at the state level.

A slight drop in membership had spurred the Board to offer a U.S. Savings Bond to the member who brought in the most new members for the year.

Edwin Reinecke announced in his chapter report at the 1956 Annual Meeting that, because the Western Plumbing Officials' Association's Organization had been established in California much longer than ours, and its membership was much larger, it seemed the wise move for us to return our chapter's charter and recommend that our members continue as Members-at-Large in the National organization. In this way we could continue to maintain the liaison that was so essential between the various areas of the country and still not impose on the time of our people. The Board of Directors asked that we discuss this matter with the Dean of Chapters so the California's Board members can have the combined counsel of all interested parties. It was later decided that there was plenty of work for both organizations in the field of sanitation.

In April, 1957, the chapter elected officers and selected a program for the chapter. Remembering the biblical passage, "Without a vision the people perish" the chapter decided to create a vision and goal that could be attained. It was decided that the activities of the chapter would center around sanitary education for the lay public. The chapter started by writing

articles for publication in different periodicals. A Liaison Committee was established so members were not duplicating the work of others. In the field of education, our members were actively serving on committees which created programs designed to recognize the importance of sanitation.

Our members continued to work on such projects as the Mobile Homes Code and other projects of national interest.

It was reported at the 1961 Annual Meeting that the California Chapter, along with four local associations, sponsor the Contractor's Institute at Los Angeles State College which had for nine consecutive semesters offered training courses for the plumbing industry. They placed emphasis on estimating and business practices for contractors. The program was originally conceived, organized and started by our Chapter Vice President, Jack Parker, and members of the California Chapter, and they have guided the courses and programs since their inception. The chapter also helped with funding.

A second major effort was to man a display booth at the Los Angeles Home Show. For the first time, the chapter tried to reach the public with our motto "Prevention Rather Than Cure" on such a large scale. The chapter also prepared a series of nine newspaper articles which we expected to be published in the home section of the Los Angeles Times. Each article dealt with a particular problem pertaining to sanitation.

Chapter Past President, Edward J. Beale, the 1960 Henry B. Davis Award winner devoted, much time to a further investigation into the matter of bacterial infection from hospital faucet aerators as originally reported by Mr. A. S. Pent of the New York Chapter. Mr. Beale had a conference with Dr. Miriam A. Wilson, Dept. of Pediatrics and Infectious Diseases, School of Medicine, Univ. of CA. No solution to the problem had yet been reached, but the facilities of the ASSE were placed at the disposal of Dr. Wilson.

At our September meeting, the testing procedures used by the City of Los Angeles Testing Laboratory were demonstrated. We had our largest crowd of 1967 at this meeting.

The goal for 1969 was for the chapter to help IAPMO begin the formation and development of an accredited academy for the training of plumbing and mechanical inspectors. Our chapter established a fund drive for this purpose, and began providing technical assistance in the preparation of the studies curriculum. The financial fund was called as The Jack Parker Memorial in memory of our late Chapter President who worked so diligently to promote this sort of training center. The first phase was developing a correspondence course. The next phase would be a school with classrooms, laboratory, and a comprehensive library.

In 1973, Mario Fala, Bob Grieve and Ray Brown worked hard trying to revitalize the chapter. California members were showing interest in the possibility of a chapter in the northern part of the state.

The Ladies Auxiliary found it necessary to discontinue their activities as of 1977 and those interested were encouraged to become Members at Large with the National Auxiliary.

In November of 1977, our chapter had nomination of officers for 1978 and the results were questioned, so we decided to mail out a list of active members eligible to hold office, and a nominating ballot for members to indicate their nominee with the offices that were to be voted on. Everyone seemed satisfied with the results.

We have been dividing our meetings between Los Angeles and Rialto, which is in the San Bernardino area.

Chapter President John Woodward was on the A-40 Code Committee and was conducting sessions at our meetings covering the sections of the code that had been approved.

President Brown began a preliminary investigation into the plumbing problems being discovered with mobile homes, R.V. trailers and manufactured housing. Our chapter was willing to assist with proper code installation requirements and services that should be performed by competent, qualified, licensed mechanics.

Our chapter gained 31 new members, but 11 transferred to our new Northern California chapter. Most Southern California members came from San Diego, but the area that Southern California covered was from North San Luis Obispo County and Kern County to the Mexico border. Most of northern California covered the area north to the Oregon border with most members coming from Anderson. This was a difference of 760 miles, so it was beneficial to have a chapter in northern California.

Dominic Soffieto mentioned at the 1988 Annual Meeting that the California Chapter would be willing to take over the project of correlating the definitions used in the ASSE Standards with the next edition of the Plumbing Dictionary. His request was referred to the President for consideration.

Many of our members were interested in the activities of IAPMO, so the chapter established a liaison with them in order to become more aware of happenings that affected our codes. It also gave the chapter access to those individuals involved in the plumbing industry. In 1998, it was reported that the California Chapter had its meetings jointly with the Southern California IAPMO Chapter. This had increased attendance and brought more interest to our chapter.

Medical Gas continued to be a hot topic within our industry and we promoted the use of the *ANSI/ASSE Series 6000* Standard. We also had a speaker for our joint meeting with IAPMO that spoke on medical gas and certification for installers, inspectors, and verifiers of these systems.

One of the goals for our chapter was to work towards getting the *ASSE 5000* Standard recognized in Southern California. Chapter Secretary Ron Ridenour mentioned that in 2001 medical gas legislation would probably be introduced in California, and the chapter hoped to have the *Series 6000* Standard referenced as the criteria for qualifying medical gas installers, inspectors and verifiers.

This is an excerpt from the The ASSE Centennial Book “Celebrating 100 Years of “Prevention Rather Than Cure” 1906-2006”. To purchase a copy, visit www.asse-plumbing.org/Stds%20Prog%20Info/Pubs%20Order.htm. \$10 of every purchase goes to the ASSE Scholarship Fund.