

# THE FLORIDA CHAPTER

**Established: 1942**

The Florida Society of Plumbing Inspectors, with their President Charlie Simonin, proposed becoming a chapter of the American Society of Sanitary Engineering. The Florida Chapter, the Society's second chapter, was officially announced at a joint meeting held May 10-12, 1942 with the Master Plumbers State Association of Florida. The chapter intended to cover the entire state. They worked hard to encourage the State Board of Health to adopt the State Plumbing Code.

By 1944, the chapter reported 70 members.

President Tait stated "The interests of the Florida Chapter are naturally identical with those of the National Society. We have constantly fought against back-flow, water pollution and cross-connections, and we are cognizant of the fact that in thirty-five specific instances, all of which are a matter of record, the polio virus has been demonstrated in sewage and stools of polio victims or contacts. We have the official records that establish these pertinent facts. Therefore, polio has become a matter of vital interest to the members of our Chapter. Since those facts are at least revealing, we feel it is our duty as a Chapter to cooperate with any and all organizations interested in the solution of the polio transmission mystery." President Tait was able to persuade the Dade County Master Plumbers Association to help fund the polio research program. Their chapter was working with Dr. Maryland Burns Byrne, an authority in Epidemiology. Another contributor to the Polio Research Fund was fellow member Ralph McGuire who donated a total of \$1,000.00.

Gloria J. Bertoni, a ninth grade Miami High School student and daughter of Servino Bertoni, a journeyman plumber in our chapter, won second prize with her essay entitled "Prevention Rather Than Cure". She was a guest speaker at our chapter meeting held in July 18, 1947 where her speech was read extemporaneously.

With the help of chapter Secretary, Norman Ascher, who supplied the funds to purchase equipment and supervised the laboratory construction, our chapter obtained a portable backflow testing laboratory. It was used at the 1946 Home Show in Miami by the Dade County Master Plumbers Association where some chapter members demonstrated to the public the dangers from cross-connections and back-siphonage with fixtures that were improperly installed. It was the chapter's intention to have demonstrations throughout the entire state of Florida on behalf of the American Society of Sanitary Engineering Disease Prevention program.

At the September, 1949 chapter meeting, a resolution was introduced asking members to sponsor a resolution to be introduced in Congress and the Senate regarding the creation of a bureau to facilitate and expedite the installation of running water and minimum standard sanitary facilities in rural homes.

In 1949, a chapter committee was formed to cooperate with the Florida State Association of Journeyman Plumbers and Master Plumbers in order to insure that the legislature pass a state wide plumbing code. H. L. Schaller appeared before the Senate and House Committees concerning the bill which eventually lost by only one vote. H. L. Schaller, L. O. Rodgers and Richard Tait were successful with securing passage of a local Dade County Bill for the authorization of the adoption of a County Code for the examination of journeymen and master plumbers. The chapter was instrumental in obtaining a salary increase for plumbing inspectors in several Florida communities comparable to the pay standards for journeyman plumbers.

Herb Schaller was selected as the first recipient of the Henry B. Davis Award in 1949 for his outstanding meritorious service to the Society.

By 1951, the chapter had 130 paid members. Meetings were held every 60 days which included informative programs and panel discussion meetings. The Board met every month at a luncheon meeting. The annual dinner meeting was very popular and attendance was around 300. The chapter was looking for ways to increase membership and realized the difficulty of having a state chapter where all of the activities were confined to one particular part of that state.

A mimeographed bulletin was started to keep the members informed and to relay personal notes. It was similar to the Society's newsletter but had more local releases.

We were the host chapter for the ASSE Annual Meeting held in Miami in 1952.

By 1953, the Florida chapter had established a Ladies Auxiliary and the Auxiliary proved to be an inspiration to both our chapter and the Society.

Steps were taken to establish a second chapter in St. Petersburg because the geographical situation which made it impossible for all members to attend every meeting.

The chapter had several active working committees including a membership committee composed of members from all sections of the state, a committee investigating the water main and tank failure of the Key West water main, and a refreshment committee which supplied all refreshments for our meetings.

By 1954, the chapter had set up a building fund for a chapter home where we could possibly have a testing and research laboratory and our fund already had about \$2500.00, mostly surplus from the 1952 Annual Meeting which was held here.

The Women's Auxiliary was very helpful. Their latest project had been to print approval and rejection notices. As they frequent public toilet rooms, they either put a stamp of commendation for approval or put a red placard on the walls indicating disapproval.

At the end of 1955, the chapter had 272 active members and held monthly meetings on the third Tuesday of the month at the Chicago Plumbing Testing Laboratory.

We were the host chapter for the ASSE Annual Meeting held in Ft. Lauderdale in 1957.

On January 1, 1958 we had a new code which a few chapter members helped to write. The code was being enforced in Miami, Coral Gables, Dade County and some of the smaller municipalities.

Chapter President C. Frank Shaw reported that their program meetings included lectures, orientations and films. Some of the subjects in 1958 were swimming pools, the mechanical functions of the human heart and some of the more prominent diseases endangering the world today, the pros and cons of domestic and commercial dishwashers, and an interesting color film presented by the Canadian Telephone Co. on the construction of camps used in the moving in of supplies to the northwest section prior to the installation of utility service in the area.

It was reported in 1961 that membership continued to grow. A Board of Directors meeting was held each month and a business meeting followed by a social every other month at which time our Ladies Auxiliary joined us for the program workshop and the social.

It was widely publicized in April of 1961, that the State of Florida proposed a barge canal which would cut Florida in half from east to west, thereby permitting a thoroughfare between the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean. The Governor was in favor of this, and funds were allocated for the groundwork of this project. Since Florida is a peninsula, and we depend on fresh water wells for our potable water to supply in lieu of reservoirs, many Floridans in the southern half of the state became alarmed that salt water intrusion might eventually filter into our water. The Florida Chapter was exploring every possibility that this portion of the state's water supply would not be impaired through the installation of the proposed canal.

We have continued our cooperation with other societies, plumbing enforcement agencies and the health enforcement units of our Health Dept. Our chapter was very fortunate having many of its members represented on various committees and on technical advisory boards throughout the communities.

On June 14, 1963 Miami members visited our Tampa members at a special weekend meeting held at the International Motel. Many Tampa city officials were present and an interesting sound motion picture was shown on the growth of the Municipal Sewerage System of Tampa and the Districts still to be served.

Our chapter held a Board of Director's luncheon meeting each month in Miami with the monthly evening meetings held alternately in Fort Lauderdale and Miami, at which time our Ladies Auxiliary share the program presented. They then retired to their own business meeting and we proceeded with ours.

With the surrender of the Central Florida chapter's charter in 1965, this chapter welcomed 15 new members.

The Board of Directors recommended a new structure in the nomination and election of Vice Presidents. With various parts of Florida designated into sectors or regions, a representative through that office presented their local problems and conditions to our chapter, and we then offered advice or assisted in bringing about better design, code or enforcement.

Our regular general membership meetings, which are held every other month, have technical programs covering subjects such as backflow preventors, water pollution, plastic pipe and fittings, new standards for individual sewage and disposal facilities, Florida in our public water supply, boat marina and the unsanitary conditions that prevail in these harbor areas, etc.

We were again the host chapter for the ASSE Annual Meeting held in Miami in 1965.

C. Frank Shaw reported in the 1967 Chapter Report that sanitary conditions in our marinas were brought to the chapter's attention and asked that we use our efforts to work with government agencies to combat these conditions. Water and air pollution problems were other major projects where the chapter cooperated with the local health authorities.

The Board of Directors continued to meet each month at a luncheon session and every other month the general meeting was held with a planned workshop to which our Ladies Auxiliary was invited to attend.

Many of the chapter members and officers participated in local government agency programs, were represented on the Water Pollution Board, Water Sewer Advisory Committee, Plumbing and Trade Examining Board and Material and Code Panels.

It was reported in 1969 that meetings were held alternately between Miami and Ft. Lauderdale. The Board met on the first Wednesday of each month at a luncheon meeting and formulated the programs and technical advances within our industry.

In 1970, the chapter sponsored two seminars at Plumbers Local #619 located in Miami. The coordinators of apprentice learning and the apprentices of Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties were assembled for these seminars. More than 150 young men were oriented on water distribution systems, the causes of water hammer, sizing of water distribution systems and how to not only prevent, but to cure the results of a poorly designed system.

We actively cooperated with the Master Plumbers Association, the local unions within our state and the plumbing programs that further our cause and kept the plumbing industry updated with current materials, methods and installations.

The Florida Chapter held joint sessions with the Florida Plumbing, Gas and Mechanical Inspectors Association of which many of its members were the nucleus of this chapter.

In 1977, a group attempted to form a third chapter in Florida called the Broward County Chapter and were given a charter, but the Florida members opposed the new chapter and asked the Board to rescind the charter. This matter was discussed at the mid-year meeting and the charter was rescinded and it was recommended to the By-Laws Committee that a new chapter should not be established closer than 100 miles to an existing chapter without the existing chapter's permission.

It was reported that in 1977 meetings were held in Dade, Broward and Palm Beach Counties. A joint meeting was also held in May, 1977 with the Florida West Coast Chapter in Tampa.

We were the host chapter for the ASSE Annual Meeting held in Orlando in 1977.

Under the leadership of President Yampolsky, the chapter continued the rebuilding program initiated by Immediate Past President Bill Nadel.

In 1979, we began publishing our own monthly newsletter with advertisers to help defray the cost of publishing.

We began to participate in a university level seminar as speakers for the University of Florida's TREEO Center Seminar on Cross Connection Control.

We approached members of the Caribbean and Latin communities as well as local building officials and architects pertaining to membership with ASSE. We also laid the groundwork for inducing local journeyman and apprentice plumbers to participate in the activities of ASSE, and we were assured by officials of May Plumbing and Mechanical, one of the largest contractors with 200 employees, that every effort will be made to encourage their employees to consider ASSE membership.

Our chapter received the Dewey R. Dedrick, Jr. Chapter Award in 1979.

The chapter also laid the groundwork in 1979 to purchase property for a permanent home for the Florida Chapter.

We pursued educational programs in close cooperation with the Miami Chapter of A.S.P.E. Several local plumbing design seminars have been held this past year and have been well attended.

Our chapter was incorporated in the State of Florida in 1982 and we became known as The American Society of Sanitary Engineering Florida Chapter Incorporated.

We purchased a property at 431 Ravenswood Rd., Ft. Lauderdale, FL for our chapter headquarters in 1982. First Vice President Norman Benoit was put in charge of making our "home" livable. We started classes at our new home for perspective plumbers to prepare them for the central plumbers exam. We also began to hold meetings at our chapter house. We held our first Annual Spaghetti Dinner Meeting at our house through the efforts of the Ladies Auxiliary, Mike Osborn, Cary Poltrock, Tim and Vern. The men began preparing and serving the auxiliary's women before their meetings.

The ASSE Annual Meeting was held in Ft. Lauderdale in 1984.

Our chapter again received the Dewey R. Dedrick, Jr. Chapter Award in 1984.

In 1985, Chapter President Melvin E. Yampolsky mentioned how proud he was of the Florida Chapter and mentioned a few of the current accomplishments including membership under the direction of Dave Mang which was growing and we were able to bring a few old members back into the fold. Our Refresher Course, under the direction of Third Vice President Richie Roberts, had resulted in a 50% passing rate, well ahead of other courses being offered in our area.

We worked closely to help the West Coast Florida group of inspectors form a new chapter.

In 1990, we had 232 paid members including 73 new members.

Our chapter received the Dewey R. Dedrick, Jr. Chapter Award for the third time in 1990.

Our chapter continued to have educational guest speakers at our meetings thanks to the efforts of Past International President George Broomell. Every two months, we had a social dinner meeting with members and their wives.

Chapter President Ken Miller mentioned that the chapter's backflow school for the certification of technicians was now affiliated with the University of Florida Center for Training Research and Education for Environmental Occupations (TREEO). The satellite school was doing well thanks to Jim Bickford, the head instructor, and his assistants. Jim Bickford and Glenn Russell represented ASSE on the University of Florida Backflow Advisory committee.

The ASSE Annual Meeting was held at Lake Buena Vista in 1991.

We had at least four of our 1994 monthly meeting as continuing education classes.

The ASSE Annual Meeting was again held at Lake Buena Vista in 1997.

In his 2000 Chapter Report, Michael S. Weis mentioned that the Florida Chapter had recently become a certified training facility for the ASSE Cross Connection Control Certification. Classes were held at the Florida Chapter Building. The Florida Construction Industry Licensing Board authorized our class for 18.2 continuing education credits.

Michael Weis also mentioned that the Plumbing Contractors Association of Miami-Dade County had entered into an agreement with the Florida Chapter for Backflow Tester Training. The Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Department was drafting a retrofit cross connection control ordinance, and when the law takes effect, we can expect a high volume of new installations and a big demand for certified backflow testers. The Miami-Dade Utilities Department decided to administer their own test for backflow testers. Testers must first complete a minimum 32 hour class before the Miami-Dade Licensing Board would let them take the test.

A new statewide Florida Building Code took affect on July 1, 2001 and was based on the 1997 International Plumbing Code. There was a mandatory four hour core curriculum code class for all licensed contractors. Jim Bickford was trying to get the Florida Chapter certified by the Construction Industry Licensing Board as an educational provider for the mandatory education classes.

## **HISTORY OF THE CENTRAL FLORIDA CHAPTER**

The chapter was chartered in 1954 and the installation of new officers and auxiliary officers was held November 27, 1954.

Membership had risen to 62 by 1957. Monthly meetings were held on the last Monday of each month usually at the College Park Lions Club in Orlando. We emphasized the obligation of our members to maintain and further high standards and objective of our Society. We actively cooperated with the Master Plumbers Association and the Plumbing Progress Program in the promotion of a proposed Plumbing Control Act for Orange County.

In 1965, the Central Florida Chapter lost their charter and members moved to the Florida Chapter.

## **HISTORY OF THE FLORIDA CHAPTER (WEST COAST)**

Thursday September 27, 1973 was the first meeting of the chapter. This meeting was historical because not only did we renew 33 current members, but 22 new members were accepted, giving our new chapter a total of 55 members. Florida Past President and currently the ASSE Ninth Vice President Andrew I. Brown was elected as our first President. The chapter house was located in the Piping Industry building located in Tampa.

In 1977, our membership had grown to 22 members. Chapter meetings ranged from economics of the Tampa Bay area to solar energy. One meeting consisted of an ASSE slide presentation presented by Eddie Griffin, Chairman of our Education Committee.

The Ladies Auxiliary, though small in number, was a great asset to our chapter.

The Tampa chapter became inactive, but succeeded in becoming active again in 1988.

The chapter tried to unite with other local trade organizations. The goal for the next few years was to fully educate the public about the problem of cross-connection occurrences in the potable water system and the resulting benefit of proper backflow prevention.

We invited the surrounding local PHCC chapters to join our chapter and become the liaison between our association and theirs. We extended the invitation to the local Florida Association of Plumbing, Gas and Mechanical Inspectors, ASPE, local health departments and various manufacturers and their representatives. We had a WCF ASSE Chapter liaison designated to attend the regular meetings, which were held in conjunction with the above mentioned trade related organizations. We were successful because we were not trying to conflict with their program dates.

By 1990, our chapter grew from 16 to 31 members.

*The Florida West Coast Chapter is no longer an active chapter.*

## **HISTORY OF THE GULF STREAM FLORIDA CHAPTER**

In March of 1991, the Florida Chapter waived the 100 mile radius restriction and made a motion to allow a new chapter to be formed in Florida. The new chapter was given their charter in August by National President John Nussbaum. Gary Duren presented the new chapter with a United States flag that had flown over the U.S. Capitol.

The chapter became incorporated as the ASSE Gulfstream Chapter-Palm Beach County.

The membership was at 19 and the meetings had 10 to 12 members in attendance.

*The Gulf Stream Florida chapter is no longer an active chapter.*