

ROCKY MOUNTAIN VIEWS



Rocky Mountain Association of Higher Education Facilities Officers

Summer 1998

President's Message



Wayne White

I want to thank you all for the opportunity of serving you in RMA as your President. It has been a great year meeting you in Jackson and then at the annual APPA Conference in San Jose. It has been a pleasure to work with our Board of Directors and Committee of RMA.

I look forward to meeting with you in Prescott at our RMA Conference in September. There is still time to get registered and attend. Charles has a great program outlined for us all as we "Search for Gold". This will give us the opportunity to renew acquaintances, share experiences and challenges, take time for personal renewal, and gather some new ideas for the future. Spending time away from the day-to-day routines and concerns will allow you to reflect on the path taken to get where you are today. We will also have a great time with the vendors who so graciously support RMA. I look forward to seeing you in Prescott.

I would encourage each of you to attend the membership meeting in Prescott to find out all that is happening in APPA and RMA. Elsewhere in this issue is an application for scholarship to APPA institute and Learning Center. Please take a few minutes to submit a co-worker or your self to attend and have APPA or RMA help with your tuition.

See you in Prescott!



Proposed By-Law Changes

4. *First Vice President*
 - (g) *Working closely with the Secretary/Treasurer and RMA Membership chair, maintain an up-to-date and accurate membership list by Institutions and Members.*
5. *Second Vice President*
 - (d) *Be responsible for subscribing members, making sure we follow policy & procedure and following up on subscribing membership each year.*
6. *Third Vice President*
 - (d) *Be responsible for scholarship processes. Solicit institutions for applications. Promote scholarships at annual meetings. Make sure we follow policy & procedures for scholarships.*

The RMA history project is completed and copies will be distributed to members at the annual meeting in Prescott in September. There were some gaps in the information gleaned to include in the history. RMA members are asked to dig into their archives or quiz past members to see if the following information can be found to include in the next writing of the history:

1. Full name of the following individuals:
_____ Sheriff University of Texas -- El Paso
_____ Downing Texas Tech
2. Proceedings or Program for the 23rd Annual meeting held in 1975 at West Texas State University in Canyon, Texas and hosted by John Boone. Not sure any proceedings were produced.

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STATE/PROVINCE REPORT

CANADA REPORT

By John Watson

The summer has been treating us well with record setting chilled water demands, numerous new projects underway, and healthy doses of vacation as evident by the gaps in information from some sectors of our group.

Summer started with our annual Western Canadian University Physical Plant Administrator's meeting hosted by the University of Alberta June 3-5 in Edmonton. All who attended enjoyed both the learning and social agenda. The Fantasyland Hotel/West Edmonton Mall served as an intriguing venue for most of the occasion. The keynote speaker was Rod Rose, Vice President of the JCM Group out of Los Angeles, who spoke on the changing trends in learning and the implications for facilities management. Many thanks to Gordon, Rose, and the entire group of enthusiastic people who made this meeting a success.

Burck Hantel is making the preliminary arrangements for our Alberta Universities Facilities Advisory Committee meeting to take place at Athabasca University this fall. We're looking forward to seeing a campus that started to specialize in distance learning long before it became everyone's favorite niche. These meetings always help support unified strategies and advancing the common understanding for upcoming issues.

The projects information I have to share is not truly representative of the whole region. From a few submissions it is very clear that diverse interests are being met and that we are playing both catch up as well as stepping forward.

Under the heading of utility system upgrades, both the University of Regina and U of Calgary are upgrading central heating & cooling plant chillers this year. Environmental compliance, efficiencies, and meeting the demands of growing campuses are common factors we share. In addition, the U of Regina is currently installing a 72 kV to 25 kV electrical substation to provide secure service for planned expansion at lower utility rates and with a five year payback anticipated.

Revisiting, renewing, or re-creating campus master plans appears to be a common thrust in preparation for planned expansions. New influences and needs include the vastly different financial considerations since earlier master planning exercises were undertaken, the desire to bring collective planning together in a complex community, and the rate of technological advances to be plugged in.

New buildings going into the ground ...

The University of Alberta has started work on a new Nuclear Magnetic Resonance facility, one of three such facilities in North America and which will operate via beneficial cooperative agreements with distant sites. The U of A is also clearing ground for a new \$12 million Computing Sciences Building intended to meet the student demands in this area. Telus Corporation has made possible the creation of a new \$12.9 million high-tech learning environment to be known as the Telus Centre for Professional Development.

The University of Regina is to become home for a new Saskatchewan Indian Federated College on a 30 acre parcel of main campus with the first phase in design for 13, 200 square metres of combined office, classroom laboratory complex. Eventual expansion to 40,000 square metres is envisioned.

This main campus will also incorporate an additional 86 acre Research Park which is a joint partnership of the University of Regina, the Province, and the City. Two buildings already exist in this area, and two more are being designed with considerable infrastructure expansion beginning in 1999.

Here at the humble University of Calgary we simply dig holes and fill them back up again to give the illusion we're in the construction business as well as expert hole maintenance people. Somehow, one of our Project Managers found a way to slip a 400 bed residence complex into one hole with remarkable speed. Meanwhile in another part of campus, the Student Union is working towards an expansion meant to serve as a multi-function facility (remember this term when you're planning your next really big party hall).

In surveying my colleagues recently on the question of attending the RMAPP meeting this fall in Prescott, there was a mixture of devotion to the group and plain guilt associated with conversion of our failing Canadian dollar. If perchance we are noticeable by our absence in number, please do not be offended, we are there in full spirit. **RMV**

MONTANA REPORT



Bob Lashaway

The general highlights of the past year from the State of Montana include unprecedented construction, budget woes, "El Niño" affects and increasing labor wage pressures.

Most of the public and private institutions in Montana are experiencing an unprecedented amount of construction, represented by both state and non-state funded projects. The 1997 Legislature approved a large (for Montana) building program package that included several major new construction projects as well as significant major deferred maintenance work including \$2.9 million to begin to address building code, life safety, and ADA compliance deficiencies at the six four-year institutions of higher education. The Legislature chose to continue its disconcerting trend toward forcing its operations and maintenance liabilities off onto the individual units of the university system by refusing to fund *any* of the O&M for buildings constructed entirely with federal or other non-state funds, and by forcing the university to accept a 50/50 split of the O&M for some state funded new facilities. Combined with the almost frantic desire for new facilities exhibited by some administrations, this ominous trend is extremely dangerous. In addition to state funded projects most of the campuses are in the midst of constructing major non-state funded projects such as new residence facilities, sports facilities renovations

and additions, parking structures, and other student funded projects. On the surface it would appear that the auxiliary borrowing capacity limits have been approached, if not reached, on most of the campuses and a drop off in the amount of non-state funded construction activity should be seen next year.

In addition to decreasing funding for operations and maintenance, state support for instructional activities in general has been declining to the point where Montana's public institutions are now supported at less than 50% with state funding. Our tuition rates are still a bargain relative to other states, however, enrollment projection quotas, with corresponding penalties for missing projections, make marketing to out of state prospects risky at best. To add to the downside potential, recent "consolidations" have forced the two universities into a position of potentially having to underwrite budget shortfalls at the smaller four-year colleges.

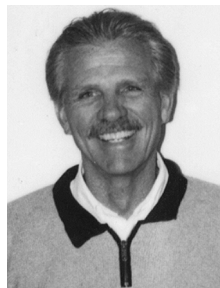
El Niño brought a warmer winter than expected and much lighter snowfall than usual, which helped the snow removal budgets at the mountain campuses, but the lack of spring and summer precipitation requires significantly more irrigation now. With very little air conditioning on campus, we are simply suffering through the unusually hot summer weather at most locations. The wild temperature fluctuations of the past several years have caused a steady increase in the number of requests for new air conditioning in various campus facilities -- a trend we all expect to see continue.

Like the rest of the country, we saw an increase in the awareness of the perceived gap between the haves and the have nots, which manifested itself during the last cycle of union wage negotiations. Although all of the contracts were eventually closed, we experienced a significantly increased level of general dissatisfaction almost across the board. Wide variances in the local cost of living among the campuses and increasing competition for skilled workers in the private sector are significant factors. The last trades contracts were finally closed, almost a year into the biennium, with the promise of evaluating wage comparisons on a state wide basis. Information is to be generated and reviewed, with the hope that a consensus method for setting competitive wage rates can be developed prior to next year's negotiations.

So, given the difficulties that we face, where is the good news? Well, we continue to enjoy one of the most dedicated and skilled work forces in the country here in Montana; our institutions are maintaining steady enrollments; our research programs are increasingly successful; we are making progress against our deferred maintenance backlogs; and enhancements in information technology make physical proximity to large metropolitan areas less and less important, so we get to continue to do what we do in this beautiful Big Sky Country. Who knows, even the conservative implementation of term limits, which kick in for 1999, may provide an opportunity to see some education-friendly faces in a future legislature!

RMV

UTAH REPORT



Brian Nielsen

With just a little over three years to prepare for the 2002 winter games, the "pedal is to the metal" to build the infrastructure required to meet Olympic commitments. Just a few short years ago, I wondered what it would be like to host the world when Salt Lake City was bidding for one of the largest events ever scheduled to come to town. With Salt Lake's bid accepted the details and requirements to host the Olympics begin to unfold.

The University was accepted to host the opening and closing ceremonies and provide housing for the Olympic athletes. With the 1998 winter Olympics being hosted in Japan I watched a lot of television to pick up any details that might help prepare for the coming event.

To say the least, the University's desire to participate in the 2002 games is a big challenge and one which has stimulated a lot of activity. Some facts and figures from Pete include the following:


The construction of a \$121 million, 900,000 gsf housing project will provide permanent housing to 2,300 students. The new construction will replace existing dorm-style housing. During the Olympic time frame, this new housing space will be converted to house approximately 4,000 Olympic Athletes. The IOC requires a ratio of no greater than 4:1 for athletes to bathroom fixtures. No state funding is going into this project. It is entirely paid for by bonds, with a "rent" payment from the Olympics.

The renovation of the old Rice stadium, which really means the construction of a brand new Rice-Eccles Stadium, is on schedule and within budget. We will hold the first event in the new stadium September 12, 1998, Utah vs. Louisville in football. The new stadium was built to hold 46,000 and we expect it to be full for this first event and many other to follow. For the Olympic opening and closing ceremonies the stadium will be converted to hold 50,000. This facility was funded by bonds, private donations and rent from the Salt Lake Olympic Committee at a cost of \$55 million. No state funds were used to support this project.

The next project that will have a major impact on our campus is the proposed East-West light rail line that will link the campus with the south end of the valley and the airport. This addition will provide four stops through the middle of campus. The North South spur is already under construction and scheduled for operation next year. The East West spur has funding in place but lacks the funding to operate it after it is built. The projected cost is \$20 million per mile to build through downtown Salt Lake City. The second phase is being engineered as we speak.

A major pedestrian corridor from the new housing facilities to the center of campus is also in the planning stages. This would consist of a bridge and walks matching the historic flavor of Fort Douglas across Wasatch Boulevard. A people moving system would be added to expedite people traveling to

various destinations throughout the campus. This funding appears to be coming from federal sources.

Everyone in our facilities operation has been affected or involved with the huge construction impact to our campus. With other new buildings added into the mix we are looking at over \$400 million in new construction taking place on our campus right now and a couple of new buildings scheduled to start next year. For us here at the University, we are where the "rubber meets the road" in preparing for the magical number "2002." 

COLORADO REPORT

By John Bruning

It was just over one year ago that Colorado State University experienced a flood of catastrophic proportions. The following report, submitted by John Morris, is a compelling example of tragedy coupled with an amazing story of recovery and human effort:

On July 28, 1997, a heavy sustained rainfall in Fort Collins, Colorado resulted in a "500-1000 year" flood event. Five people were killed when the normally docile Spring Creek became a raging river. A tragedy in every sense of the word!

Just a mile or so north of Spring Creek (and outside the flood plain), the main campus of Colorado State University was inundated by water flowing from parts of the city west of the campus which were under the center of the storm (over 14" in a six hour period). By the morning of July 29th the rain had stopped, leaving behind an insurance claim that would total in excess of \$100 million. It may be worth noting that as far as our insurance claim is concerned, Colorado State University did not experience a flood. For insurance purposes a flood is "an overflow of a body of water". The University sustained water damage as a result of excessive rainfall. You may want to check the definition of a flood with your insurance carrier!

It is impossible, in this short article, to recount all the lessons learned by this event, but here are some of the most important:

- Rapid response by Facilities management crews to isolate utilities, begin pumping operations and diverting water where possible. Insurance adjusters and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) officials estimated that the loss was probably reduced by 30-40% due to our prompt response. Insurance companies call this ... "exercising due diligence ..." to protect buildings and contents, an important factor during the claim adjustment phase.
- It is important to set up a unique series of account numbers, by building, with limited access, for flood work orders and purchase requests.
- Once emergency action has been taken, consider hiring a disaster recovery coordinator. These folks can be invaluable when dealing with the myriad of companies that will come on campus to clean up, dry out and try to restore your campus.
- As a general rule, contract out for as much disaster recovery work as you can. Insurance companies are reluctant to reimburse for salary and wage expense. FEMA is even more reluctant to do so. This also allows

in-house staff to continue operating and maintaining the facilities that were not damaged.

- Set goals to settle the claim early. This may sound like a self-inflicted wound, but as time passes, memories fade and documentation can be misplaced.

On April 17, 1998, the University tentatively settled \$62 million of claims. The only significant component remaining is the restoration/replacement of the 450,000 volumes stored in the lower levels of the library. By settling this early, we have preserved University working capital and, more importantly, hastened the restoration of the campus. We are well on the way to achieving the goal set by our President, Dr. Albert Yates, "...let us rebuild our university, better than before."

Colorado State's experience could happen to any of our campuses. Make note of John's suggestions! Best wishes and congratulations to the students, faculty and staff at CSU for an incredible recovery!

From the southwest corner of our beautiful state of Colorado, the following news comes from Al Magee and Rosie VanCleave at Ft. Lewis College in Durango:

The past year has brought some changes at the Fort Lewis College Physical Plant Services building. A new roof was installed and the building was air conditioned. What a relief! Other changes will be made to the building which will be brought about through our ADA improvement project. A new entrance will be constructed and some offices will be renovated within a few months.

Physical Plant Services has also combined the Grounds and Auto Departments in order to ensure a more efficient and effective use of employees and time in these two departments. The new title for this work unit is Grounds/Equipment Maintenance Department.

This change came about due to the fact that our Physical Plant Manager I, Jim Hays, has taken a medical leave of absence because he is fighting renal cancer. Because of his illness, the Physical Plant staff, Fort Lewis community and the campus Skyhawk Angels group sponsored a car was in honor of Jim Hays, for the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life program. All proceeds, over \$200, went to the Relay for Life and the participants were all honored with the "From the Heart" award given by the Relay for Life committee.

With the help of one our local City Market stores, Ft. Lewis College was one of 9,854 participants in the US West Dex phone book recycling program. Through these combined efforts, 10.84 tons of outdated phone books were recovered. As of last April, the campus recycling program has recycled 3,130 lb. of aluminum, 19.69 tons of paper, 37.97 tons of cardboard, 170 lb. of scrap steel and 822.5 lb. of plastic. Through the City of Durango Recycling program, 822.5 cu. yds. of glass has been recycled. Recently a program was initiated to crush aluminum and plastic to make transportation and storage of these recycled materials easier.

Thanks Al and Rosie! It's refreshing to hear some news from your college and community! Just a quick update on the Director position here at the University of Colorado at Boulder. RMA's friend and now Vice Chancellor for

Administration, Paul Tabolt, concluded the search for a Director of Facilities Management by reorganizing and consolidating the Boulder Campus Administration Division by appointing Jeffrey Lipton, former Business Services Director, to be the Executive Director of the Department of Facilities Management. Jeff brings with him responsibility for telecommunications, research properties, research park and real estate to his new expanded role, as of August 1, 1998. I have enjoyed most of my experiences as the Interim Director (some weren't too enjoyable!) and will now assume new and broader responsibilities working closely with Jeff. Hope to see all of you in Prescott!

RMV

NEW MEXICO REPORT

By Mary Vosevich

Have you ever thought about the effect or impact that custodial services has on your facilities? Yes, we all know what a chunk out of our budgets these typical operations take, but have you thought about the actual work that is being completed and the daily physical activities involved in getting the job done?

Is your custodial operation helping or hindering your maintenance efforts? Have the finishes on your restroom fixtures disappeared? Are your walls banged up by buffers and vacuums? Does it seem like there is more floor finish on the walls than on the floors? Is attendance among your custodial staff a problem? Most of all, are your facilities healthy and safe?

In March of this year, I attended Janitor University in Salt Lake City. So now you're saying "Get real, a university for janitors???" At J.U. you will learn that cleaning a toilet takes some smarts, that businesses spend billions of dollars every year on cleaning labor, and that saving even a few minutes per fixture can save substantial amounts of money. Money talks to us facilities folks, but what about safety?

Our janitors are cleaning professionals who need to deal with blood-borne pathogens, hazardous waste, and basic chemistry. The potential risks to our workers increase as a result of custodial work performed incorrectly. Janitor University teaches a cleaning system called OSI. The curriculum stresses health first and includes courses in microbiology, EPA and OSHA compliance issues, work load and productivity.

This is a week long training course and when finished, one is amazed at how effective and efficient this method of cleaning is. The OSI system is about team cleaning with specific duties for each member of the team.

At the beginning of the week, I was skeptical. I wasn't too thrilled about going to begin with. After all, we've all "been there, done that" in our custodial operation! I must add, there were others in the class that felt the same way that I did, including some of my own staff! But, as the week progressed, interesting things began to happen. Little by little, teams were forming without us even realizing what was occurring. By the end of the week we were converts and when we graduated, it seemed like we all had been friends since grade school. The team had come together and it worked!

This system of cleaning is so easy I makes one wonder, "Why didn't I think of that"? It is health, physically much less demanding, and results oriented. If followed correctly, the possibility of harming your facilities or your custodial staff is greatly reduced.

RMV

ARIZONA REPORT



Martha Weisenburger

1997 was an award-winning year for Arizona State University. The Engineering Group took first place in the Governor's Award for Energy Efficiency. This first place award was received in recognition of the Engineering Group's energy management program. The Governor's Award recognizes energy conservation and renewable energy work of educational institutions, local governments, state agencies, and individuals. In addition, the

Governor's Office awarded the Engineering Manager the award of Energy Manager of the Year. The department received the Governor's Award for Excellence for Human Resources-Alternate Duty Team. Grounds Maintenance received the Professional Grounds Maintenance "Honor Award" from the Professional Grounds Management Society and Grounds Maintenance Magazine for recognition of outstanding professional accomplishment and excellence in campus landscape development and maintenance. Grounds Maintenance received the Governor's Award of Recognition for Outstanding Accomplishments at the Horticultural Resource Center, in conjunction with the Arboretum Community Volunteer program. The American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta through its North American Plant Collections Consortium awarded ASU the honor of becoming the official holder of cultivators of the edible date palm, *Phoenix dactylifera*. ASU received the Environmental Leadership Award from Philips Lighting for its use of low mercury, energy efficient fluorescent lamps. Two supervisors in the department received the Outstanding Supervisor Award sponsored by the ASU Classified Staff Council, and several others received nominations. One of our Sheetmetal workers in the HVAC Shop received the 1998 Alumni Staff Achievement Award for his notable accomplishments on campus and in the community.

But ASU Facilities Management didn't spend all their time basking in the limelight; they also managed to make some significant additions to their department's web site, which enhanced delivery of services - not to mention attractive improvements for net surfers. The Sign Shop developed a web site to help customers order signs. The Wayfinding Sign Program web site was developed to help customers understand the building-renumbering program. Maintenance Stores' catalogs were placed on the FM Home Page. Grounds Maintenance upgraded the Arboretum Web Pages to incorporate photos of flora and buildings on campus along with appropriate background music. Policies and procedures manuals for both Facilities Management and Facilities Planning and Construction were placed online on the ASU Web with links from the Departmental Web Page.

But knowing as we do that no one person can know everything – much to the surprise of certain individuals - Team Based Management was also implemented at ASU with the appointment of self-directed work teams and multi-functional work teams. These teams include Mechanical Shop Self-Directed Work Team, Sign Shop Self-Directed Work Team, Lighting Crew Self-Directed Work Team, Maintenance Stores Self-Directed Work Team, Customer Service Team, Awards and Recognition Team, and the Morale Team.

But while teamwork is important, it's hard to be successful without ongoing training. Facilities Management Institute for Supervisors (FAMIS) training completed its 10th year, a safety update program for supervisors and managers was developed, and safety classes were conducted in CPR and First Aid for Choking. A Custodial Leadership Academy was implemented in two phases involving technical training and leadership skills. Grounds Maintenance initiated a plan for a Turf Grass Professional certification program. Brown-bag diversity sessions on Buffalo Soldiers for Black History Month and on U.S. operations in Bosnia for American Heritage Month were also presented.


ASU's CADD unit – known as CADDRock – has branched into the movie making business. Recent productions include a Clean Campus Campaign video, and videos utilizing CADD drawings, animation and video footage to present plans for building renovations and new building additions. CADDRock is also working on providing online access to all CADD plans, maps, and photos, and are plunging into the world of virtual reality to develop an interactive kiosk for campus visitors to access a three-dimensional campus directory.

Grounds Services at ASU have been doing more than mowing the lawn – a new publication on ornamental palms was developed and the campus continued to maintain date production at 3,000 pounds per year. The All American Selection bedding plant display garden was continued and a new flower industry test trial program was initiated. The flavor of an oasis in the desert was realized at the Desert Arboretum Park with the addition of a pool at the base of the 130 foot waterfall and a small stream replete with natural plant materials that cascades 15 feet into a lower pond, along with the donation of several varieties of native plants and cacti, and the introduction of the endangered pup fish into the two ponds and stream that run through the park. Naturally fishing is prohibited – but the excuse of having to go to the Park to count the pup fish is a good way to spend the afternoon.

And since we can't all stand the heat in Arizona, the Central Plant at ASU installed an additional 2000-ton cooling tower and a new 2000-ton chiller. In the context of keeping an eye on energy costs, natural gas volumes were purchased at a very competitive price, which resulted in substantial savings of approximately \$300,000 last year in natural gas transportation costs over the prior year.

At the University of Arizona, Bob Preble reports that employees were encouraged to expand their knowledge by attending Facilities Management sponsored classes in: English as a Second Language (ESL); Adult Education (GED preparation); Reading (Work Place Literacy); Certification as an Executive Housekeeper (CEH); Apprenticeship (Journeyman Custodian); and Supervisor Training (First Time Manager Series). Many of the trades people cracked the books to study for their ICBO certification in the following categories: Electrical Inspector; Plumbing Inspector; Company Officer/Fire Code Inspector; Mechanical Inspector; and Building Code Accessibility/Usability Specialist.

In between studying and training sessions, U of A worked on several major projects on campus. Their football stadium now sports a new coat of paint, as does the new basketball floor, and to accommodate the rush of fans during next year's softball season, new restrooms and concession stands were constructed. In addition to the facelift for the athletics programs, classroom upgrade projects were continued at their Modern Languages and Economics buildings.

So, we may be burnt to a crisp during the grueling months of summer in the desert, but while the rest of you were shoveling snow this winter, we in Arizona were not only basking in the warmth of the sun, sipping something cool and writing our acceptance speech for the next award – we actually got some work done. 

46th Annual Educational Conference

The Rocky Mountain Association of Higher Education Facilities Officer's 46th Annual Educational Conference will be at the Prescott Resort in Prescott, Arizona, September 16 - 19, 1998.

The Prescott Resort is only 90 miles northwest of Phoenix. Prescott is Arizona's mile high city, surrounded by 1.4 million acres of national forest. The Prescott Resort is Northern Arizona's premier resort.

For those who arrive on Thursday, September 17, there will be a golf tournament at the Antelope Hills Golf course. If golf isn't your style, you may want to spend the day in Prescott, or Jerome or maybe even Sedona visiting art galleries, taking in spectacular views and shopping.

There are many activities being planned for you and your companion, along with informative and educational sessions on Strategic Planning, Electrical Deregulation, Environmental Regulatory Compliance, Project Based Web-sites, Disaster Recovery and much more that promise to make this meeting an outstanding experience.

We, at Yavapai College, are excited for this opportunity to host 1998's RMA conference. We invite you to join us in Prescott, "Everybody's Hometown," We'll leave the light on for you.

Editor's Note

Annual Meeting and Educational Conference in San Jose was great. I would highly recommend attending the next one in Cincinnati at the end of June 1999. Your state/province correspondents need your help. This newsletter is only as good as you want it to be and we need your participation. The correspondents' names are listed in the newsletter and they are always interested in what is happening at your institution. Your articles need to be provided to the correspondent by November 6 for the Fall issue and February 5 for the Winter issue.

Our region's 46th annual Conference is almost upon us and Charles Andersen's group at Yavapai Community College has put together a wonderful program. I look forward to seeing you in September in Prescott, Arizona.

As always, your comments, suggestions, reactions are appreciated and welcome!

I THINK, THEREFORE I . . . FORGET



H. Val Peterson

Rene Descartes, the outstanding Western philosopher of the seventeenth century, wrote, "I think, therefore I am." He was attempting to communicate the idea that because we think and feel, we are human. I've found that the aging process tends to tinker with the thinking process and over time Descartes' statement may get muddled to become, "I doubt, therefore I might be."

Those of you who have not yet celebrated your fiftieth birthday may just as well pass up this treatise and do something fun like clean your fingernails or organize your desk drawers! This humane advice is offered since this article deals with the subject of changes in the memory after the age of fifty.

The following is an exercise for the over-fifty crowd that is guaranteed to kill a good half-hour:

Place your car keys in your right hand.
With your left hand, call your good buddy Joe (or Josephine if the gender bothers you) to confirm your luncheon date next week.
Hang up the phone.
Now look for your keys. (To find out where they are, turn this article upside down and read the message found at the end.)

Lapses of memory that occur after fifty are normal and in some ways beneficial. There are certain things it's better to forget, like the time you sassed your 35-year-old fifth-grade teacher about her "old age," and now, forty years later, you have to count your steps in the hallway to find your way to the garage.

Another thing that happens is that the memory is selective, and sometimes it will select 1956 and 1963 and that's all. Such memory lapses don't necessarily indicate a serious health problem. This rule is that if you think you have a memory problem you probably don't. In fact, the most serious indicator is when you're convinced you're fine and yet people often ask you, "Why did you wear your pajamas to work today?"

Let's say you've just called the Joe mentioned previously to confirm your luncheon appointment and then a few minutes later, you again call Joe to confirm the same luncheon appointment. This does not necessarily mean you are "losing it" or are "not playing with a full deck" or that "no one's home upstairs" or any of the other demeaning epithets that are said about people who are peeling an empty banana. It does mean, however, that perhaps Joe is no longer on the list of things that you're going to remember. This is really Joe's fault. He should be more memorable. He should have a name like El Grande.

Sometimes it's fun to sit on your patio and try to remember your dog's name. Here's how: simply watch the dog's ears while calling out pet names at random. This is a great summer activity, especially in combination with "Name That Wife" and "Who Am I?" These games actually strengthen the memory, and make it possible to solve more complicated problems, such as "Is this the sixth time I've urinated this hour or the seventh?" This, of course, is easily answered by making tiny pencil marks on the wall.

If you have a doctor who is over fifty, it's wise to pay attention to his memory profile. There is nothing more disconcerting than a patient and a physician staring at each other across an examining table wondering why they're there. Watch out for the stethoscope being placed on the forehead or knee. Watch out for greetings such as "hello . . . you." Be concerned if while looking at your file he keeps referring to you as "one bad boy." Men in particular should be wary if the doctor, while examining their prostate, suddenly says, "I'm sorry, but do I know you?"

There are several theories to explain the memory problems of advancing age. One is that the memory is all used up; the brain is full; it simply has too much data to compute. This is easy to understand if we realize that the name of your third-grade teacher is still occupying space, not to mention the lyrics to "Volare." One solution available to older men is to take all the superfluous data swirling around in the brain and download it into the newly created large stomach, where there is plenty of room. This frees the brain to house more relevant information, like the particularly troublesome "days of the week." Another solution is to take regular doses of Ginkgo biloba, an extract from a tree in Asia whose memory is so indelible that one day it will hunt down and take revenge on all the humans who have been eating it. For the over-fifty crowd it is strongly advised that if Viagra is taken, it be used in connection with Ginkgo biloba. There is nothing more embarrassing than to take Viagra to get the urge and then not remember what to do about it.

My wife and I have come to terms with our occasional lapses of memory. We just look at one another, giggle, and wait for the next thought to be processed. We have come to realize that our thoughts, even though they are slower, are still faster than information processed over the Internet on a busy afternoon. These "senior moments" that we share together give us that commonality that is missing in so many marriages today.

Well, I was planning to write more but I just don't remember what it was. I'll just close with this comforting thought: Old age with its attendant memory loss, aches and pains is better than the alternative.

Durn it, I wish I could remember the alternative!

The ROCKY MOUNTAIN ASSOCIATION OF PHYSICAL PLANT ADMINISTRATORS OF UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES was organized in February of 1953 for the purpose of promoting the common interest in the planning, maintenance and operation of physical plants of Universities and Colleges in the Rocky Mountain Region: to foster a professional spirit among those engaged in this work; and to support and supplement the activities of its parent organization, the "Association of Higher Education Facilities Officers (APPA)." The Rocky Mountain Region encompasses the states of Arizona, Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming, and in Canada the Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories.

REGIONAL OFFICERS 1997-98

President	Wayne Whie	Utah State University
First Vice President	Charles Anderson	Yavapai College
Second Vice President	Harvey Chace	University of New Mexico
Third Vice President	Craig Bohn	University of Utah
Secretary/Treasurer	Ed Smith	University of Southern Colorado
Newsletter Editor	Paul Smith	Pima Community College
Senior Representative	Robert Lashaway	Montana State University
Junior Representative	Jim Kelley	Auraria Higher Education Center

FUTURE MEETINGS

1998 Annual Meeting	Prescott, Arizona	Yavapai College
1999 Annual Meeting	Albuquerque, New Mexico	University of New Mexico
2000 Annual Meeting	Salt Lake City, Utah	University of Utah