Rocky Mountain Views

Rocky Mountain Association of Higher Education Facilities Officers

Spring 2000

President's Message

By Harvey Chace

On March 24 and 25 the RMA Board held its semiannual meeting in the cool, spring air of Denver, Colorado at the Auraria Higher Education Center. Thanks to Jim Kelly for hosting this meeting. It was an opportunity for the Board to review our regional meeting, discuss plans for the upcoming meeting in St. George, Utah (September 23-26, 2000), and talk about future developments for RMA.

As a result of the good fortune of the annual meeting held in Albuquerque, New Mexico in 1999, the RMA treasury has grown significantly. A strong topic of discussion was about how best to use these funds. Several ideas were presented, from awarding additional scholarships to sponsoring more education programs.

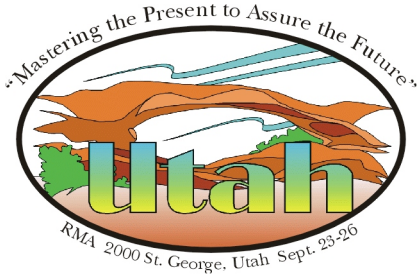
Our discussion focused on education in the region. Mary Vosevich, RMA Education Representative, proposed that education opportunities be provided at various locations throughout the year. These programs would be one-day seminars located so that people could drive in for the day to attend. These seminars might be targeted specifically to a particular audience, might be technical in nature, or might take another form. These programs might also be helpful in attracting new and retaining current members. We are requesting your input on this proposal.

Mary is seeking an individual from each state and province to become a member of an RMA Education Committee that will be the planning agent for education programs. The new committee will hold its first meeting at the regional meeting in St. George.

Don't forget to make plans for the International APPA conference in Fort Worth, Texas from July 16-18, 2000. And watch for the distribution of registration forms from Craig Bohn for the conference in St. George.

If you have suggestions regarding membership programs, please contact Bob McGregor at Pueblo Community College at (719) 549-3291. If you have suggestions for educational programs, please contact Mary Vosevich at the University of New Mexico at (505) 277-6644.

I hope to see you in Fort Worth! Have a great summer.



APPA Calendar of Events

July 16-18, 2000
APPA 2000: Spurring Change. Educational Conference & 87th Annual Meeting. Fort Worth, TX.

July 22-24, 2001
APPA 2001 Educational Conference & 88th Annual Meeting. Montreal, Canada

September 17-21, 2000
Institute for Facilities Management
Pittsburgh, PA

September 23-26, 2000
RMA 2000 Regional Meeting
St. George, UT

STATE/PROVINCE REPORT

MONTANA REPORT

Bob Lashaway

The state legislature in Montana is suffering through its first special legislative session in seven years this week. The special session is the result of a supreme court decision that rendered an appropriation from the 1999 regular session unconstitutional and, of course, a piece of the appropriation provided funding for research grant matches for the university system, and that funding is now gone. The political wrangling over what issues would be addressed by the special session rose in a crescendo last week and the Governor's desire to limit the possibilities to exclude tax relief failed, which has the potential for further negative impact to higher education. The session is expected to last only one week, so we will see what the fortunes bring.

Bob Campbell from Western Montana College at Dillon, relates that they are up to their collective eyeballs in work. Jim McPhersen, the Physical Plant Director has announced his retirement, effective July 1, 2000. Jim has been Director since 1984.

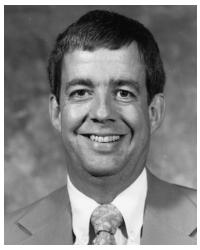
Here at MSU-Bozeman, we just graduated the largest group in the history of the institution - over 2100 students. We also experienced the earliest commencement, May 6th, we have ever had. Due to the unusually warm winter in general and a very warm and dry spring, we were as well prepared for the big show as we could be. Still the leaves on our lilacs were only 1/4" out of bud stage, and we are 2-3 weeks away from blossoming. In an alpine environment it is impossible to get nature to cooperate for commencement.

The 1999 legislature mandated that the university system spend 13% of their state appropriated funding in the Physical Plant entity, and instigated a performance audit by the legislative audit division to establish current base line spending as well as to peer behind the curtain at actual field operations. We volunteered to be the guinea pig and invited the auditors to Bozeman first. Their preliminary report recommends that we review our existing preventive maintenance program personnel resource level, since we have not spent the entire amount budgeted for PM in the last three years. They also questioned some state fund expenditures for the president's residence and two other auxiliaries facilities. However, over all they were thorough and professional, and in the end they were pleasantly complimentary of our operation. We will see what their final report looks like after they finish their investigations at three other Montana institutions.

Enduring another of a seemingly endless cycle of revenue shortfalls, relative to projected expenses, MSU this time has determined to hold the line on requested new spending, and also has frozen salaries for faculty and professional positions. While this fiscally responsible act has riled the faculty and many professionals, it is a welcome sign that fiscal accountability may indeed be a priority for the future. It has been said that we now recognize that we must change our practices if we expect to change the outcome. Hopefully, this new approach will break the cycle of repeated budget crises. We will see.

On the construction front, the major new building construction boom at MSU appears to have leveled off for the time being. Our current large project is a $7.5 million renovation and deferred maintenance clean up for the university library. The project is now in the planning stage and is expected to begin construction a year from now. With a probable two year construction period, we are looking at about a three year duration. Our Long Range Building Program request for the next regular session of the legislature focuses heavily on more deferred maintenance projects; however, with a new governor assured for the next session, there is no guarantee that the next building program will have a major project, bonded component. RMV

WYOMING REPORT



Frank Fox

For the first time ever the University of Wyoming students, faculty, and staff are being asked to participate in a campus cleanup. Entitled the "Great Cowboy Clean-up" it will take place on May 5, between 3 and 5:00 p.m. one week prior to Commencement on Saturday May 13, 2000. The first 1,000 participants to sign in will receive a free T-shirt commemorating the event. Physical Plant will provide the appropriate rakes, trash bags, dump trucks, etc. for the event.

Construction will have commenced by the time you receive this on the Student Athletic Center known as the R. A. C. (Rochelle Athletics Center) after the Rochelle family who are the primary contributors to the facility.

Construction will also be starting on the modifications to the University Student Union.

Design approval is currently in the works for a plaza in front of the A & S Building in memory of the Quealys a prominent Wyoming family.

During the past year the city of Laramie has relinquished the "home-rule" for electrical inspections of the University and given the responsibility to the State Fire Marshal. Needless to say it has been an interesting period working out all the details, responsibilities, and personalities. RMV

UTAH REPORT

In 1997, The University of Utah began exploring ways to increase energy efficiency through building retrofits. It was determined that the use of an energy service company would be the most advantageous way to achieve our goal. By working closely with representatives for the State Office of Energy Services and Department of Facilities Construction and Management, as well as a broad representation from the campus, an RFQ was prepared in order to develop a short-list of ESCOs. An RFP was then developed and an ESCO was selected.

The first step in this building retrofit process is the energy audit. The energy audit, or comprehensive energy analysis, fully evaluates all potential energy and water conservation measures. The ESCO prepares a detailed site study, building computer simulation, report itemizing annual savings, and cost to implement.

It has been approximately 1 ½ years since the energy audit was completed. In that time we have retrofitted, with the exception of controls which is still in progress, 2.65 million square feet in 23 buildings. In addition, a 6,800 ton central chilled water plant has been constructed and will be operational June 1, 2000.

While we are able to identify savings associated with the energy retrofit, it is difficult so say what our final percentage reduction will be. However, based on current realized savings, we fully expect to meet, and likely exceed, guaranteed savings.

SUCCESS

Do you believe that you are a success in life? If so, or if not, how do you know?

Success! ! ! By what standard is success measured; who tells us when we have achieved that pinnacle? No one else can define what success means to you. To me success means that you've been able to achieve or accomplish something you wanted or planned to do. If this is so, Salt Lake Community College has been very successful this past year. Following are just a few of the successes of this past and forthcoming year:

The Larry H. Miller/Entrepreneurship Training Center was opened in January this year and we are now anticipating two new buildings that should be ready for teaching and training during this next school year. These two new buildings will house our automotive program and an automotive service and training center.

The acquisition of the Detroit Diesel Building, which will be known as the Applied Education Center, is helping us expand our success. This site will be ready by Fall 2001 and will be the home for the refrigeration, HVAC, truck driving, non-destructive testing, haz-mat training, Ford new/remodel updates, and heavy duty mechanic programs.

Our new Jordan Campus will be ready Spring of 2001. There will be a general building in the first phase which will be referred to as the a "High Tech Building" and will be equipped with computer labs, a small bookstore, media services, food services and some student services available. The Dental Hygienist Program, which has been operating out of leased space and will also be moving to this campus location. There will also be a distribution building for the HVAC and temperature controls and a tree farm will be started to help provide plants and trees in landscaping our campuses.

With approximately 277.45 acres and 1,714,970 sq. ft. of buildings to clean and maintain, I think Salt Lake Community College **IS** a success.

Success cannot be achieved without people committed and working to that end. Chad Duke, project manager in the Facilities Division, is just one of those many people and was honored as one of the "Outstanding Employees" this year.

The Facilities Division is committed to provide an atmosphere that allows our students, faculty, staff and visitors to meet their highest expectations. We are dedicated to making a positive contribution by operating and maintaining the College properties, facilities and equipment in a condition equal to or better than the original quality provided. By assisting in a professional and courteous manner and by making service our top priority, we will strive to provide a safe, comfortable and attractive environment for all and thus contribute to the success of Salt Lake Community College.

Success is not a destination, it is a journey, and any failures we may experience along the way are merely stepping stones to achieving our continued success.

The University of Utah, with the support of other Utah Universities and Colleges, will be hosting the 48th Annual RMA Educational Conference and provide what we feel will be wonderful and rewarding experience.

The site we have selected is St. George, Utah. St George is located in the southern part of the state and features a wide variety of museums, shops, boutiques, and outdoor activities. The landscape of the area reveals a geological history that stretches back millions of years and exposes some of the most striking scenery found anywhere. We will be staying at the Holiday Inn Resort and the conference will be held in the newly constructed Dixie Center

We invite you to join us in St. George, September 23-26, 2000. Opportunities for professional development, meeting new people, and sharing knowledge will be many. Take time to review what the RMA 2000 48th Annual Educational Conference has to offer.

Watch for you registration and information packets, which will be mailed mid-June. Until then, please visit our web site at: http://www.facilities.utah.edu/po/rma/

We hope to see all of you in St. George!!! RMV

Colorado Report

By John Bruning

Hello from the Centennial State! I'm sure that it's much the same for all of the institutions of higher education in the RMA region, but spring commencement always serves as a reminder of why we plan, design, build, operate and maintain these facilities. This year at UC-B we graduated slightly over 4,000 students. Watching all the graduates and their happy families participate in and observe the commencement ceremony is always one of the best days of the year. The campus looked perfect and provided a wonderful backdrop to a "fresh crop" of our product, educated folks.

This year, our commencement highlight was nine of the fifteen surviving astronauts who have graduated from UC-B who were in attendance. A video was shown which had segments from each of their flights, going back to Scott Carpenter's Mercury flight, Apollo missions and recent Space Shuttle flights. Eight of the attending astronauts were awarded honorary Doctor of Science degrees for their contributions to science. The ninth astronaut, Ronald Sega, could not be awarded the honorary degree because he is still employed by the University as the Dean of Engineering at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs. One of the most touching moments of the ceremony was the introduction of Ellison Onizuka's wife and daughter, who represented the astronaut and UC-B graduate who died tragically in the Challenger explosion. Overall, it was a very inspiring experience and reaffirmation that what we do in facilities management supports education and research.

For over ten years now, facilities managers of Colorado educational institutions and other state agencies have met once or twice a year for the Colorado Inter Institutional Meeting (CIIM). Typically, this is a great opportunity for networking and sharing ideas and experiences with others in our field. The most recent CIIM was hosted by Colorado State University and was lead by their Operations Manager, John Morris. 76 attendees, representing 15 different universities, colleges, public school districts and state agencies were treated to a great day of education and fellowship.

Gerry Bomotti, CSU Vice President for Administrative Services welcomed the group to CSU, followed by John Morris who previewed the diverse and topical agenda for the meeting. Bruce Stark, CSU Custodial Manager, gave a presentation on *Innovations in Custodial Services*, during which he pointed out efficiency and technology developments in custodial services. John Bruning, Director of Physical Plant at UC-B, and Leslie Skelly, Reliability Management Group, gave a presentation on the work management process improvement project that is currently underway in Boulder.

Kristi Buffington, CSU GIS Specialist, discussed the past, present and future uses of the GIS that CSU has migrated to for mapping and digital data reporting and information. Next on the horizon for CSU will be GPS addressing and land use analysis and future uses will include predictive modeling for building O&M. CSU Utility Manager, Steve Hultin gave a presentation on *CSU's District Cooling Implementation*. The $4.7M system has a 70% system diversity that has effectively reduced the peak chiller tonnage required to cool the facilities and thus reduced energy costs accordingly.

Creating an Inclusive Work Environment (Understanding Privilege), was an interactive diversity training session lead by CSU Human Resources Trainer, Mims Harris. The group explored how privilege filters our view and understanding of each other and how awareness of those filters will lead to a more inclusive and pluralistic work environment.

Carol Dollard, CSU Utility Engineer, shared her experiences of organizing and coordinating an *Infrared Fly Over*. Weather conditions had to be just right for a successful flight. Community complaints about the helicopter hovering over the university for hours in the middle of the night created somewhat of a public relations problem, but the results of the infrared analysis proved to be valuable information for CSU's roofing repair and replacement program. A second flight was conducted later in the year to scan heat loss from CSU's steam distribution system.

CSU Utility Engineer Technician Heidi Mechtenberg gave a very informative presentation on how CSU tracks costs and bills for utilities. She described the frustrating process of exporting data between various databases and how they found creative ways to reduce duplication and manage the process. Campus tours followed the presentations that focused on the district cooling plant, flood mitigation efforts, historic renovations and a new bio safety laboratory.

Thanks to Ron Baker, CSU Director of Facilities Management, John Morris and the entire CSU team for a great day of education and networking! To everyone in the RMA region, have a great summer and we'll see all of you in St. George, Utah at the RMA Annual Meeting in September! RMV

Arizona Report

Emphasizing Customer Service Using a 30-Minute Maintenance Program

by Stacy Klippenstein, Director of Residence Life Northern Arizona University and Richard Bowen, Interim Director of Facilities Management, Northern Arizona University

The Office of Residence Life and Facility Services at Northern Arizona University have joined forces to provide a faster way to respond to maintenance needs. Northern Arizona University (NAU) is located in Flagstaff, and has an enrollment of approximately 15,000 students. The Office of Residence Life houses 6,000 students in 20 residence halls, which include 404 family hosing units, 170 apartment style units, and over 4,000 traditional spaces. Facility Services manages daily maintenance and works collaboratively with Residence Life on financial and service obligations. The Office of Residence Life payrolls several General Maintenance Mechanics (GMM) and employs two Facilities Coordinators.

Introduction

When institutions review current maintenance services and make changes to ensure better and faster service to the customer (students), increase in overall satisfaction is noticeable. Students become more empowered to use university services, seek assistance, and maintain an academic loyalty to themselves and the university. Additionally, services will become more efficient and employees will reach a higher understanding of what it means to "provide quality service." This is evident at Northern Arizona University. The Office of Residence Life and Facility Services teamed up and developed a new maintenance program titled *30-Minute Maintenance*, with the goal of providing a faster and friendlier response to maintenance concerns. Development of this program was not an easy task as it involved a shift in existing service paradigms and maintaining a strong collaboration between Residence Life and Facility Services.

The Old

Until September 1999, a resident with a maintenance concern had a few different ways to report the problem. Generally, the residents communicated with their residence hall front desk and filled out a work request form. A General Maintenance Mechanic may or may not have been able to pick up the request that same day, let alone complete the work. Residents also could inform their Resident Assistant of the problem, thinking the information will be submitted properly. By allowing various ways to report a problem to many staff members, the resident may not have seen the problem repaired for three or four days. This style of reporting did not provide timely response to student needs, allowed our GMM staff to work inefficiently, and caused residents to become less satisfied with living environments. In fact, the Office of Residence Life's Quality of Life Survey routinely indicated that residents were less satisfied with "timeliness of maintenance" than other facilities procedures.

After reviewing existing problems, NAU decided to research new and exciting programs from other universities. It was discovered that Utah State University had established a new approach allowing a resident to call in maintenance requests directly to a central dispatcher. A Maintenance Mechanic would then be called to respond to the request within 15 minutes. Within the first week, the program began to show signs of success. Residents and hall staff became satisfied with response time and maintenance staff enjoyed providing the service. Therefore, with the help of Utah State University, the Office of Residence Life and Facility Services at NAU established a similar program. However, there was one difference. Residence Life at Utah State University had its own Housing Services, which did not need to work collaboratively with another department to implement the program. At NAU, Residence Life relies on a strong relationship with Facility Services and works collaboratively on residence hall improvements and maintenance. This meant that a new maintenance program would need to have approval from two separate entities, both having different operating principles and financial implications.

The New

On September 20, 1999, the Office of Residence Life and Facility Services implemented the 30-Minute Maintenance Program. The service allows residents to call (#F-IXED or #3-4933) and report maintenance concerns to a dispatcher located at Facility Services. Service is provided between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. A Residence Life GMM would then receive a radio call and would respond to that resident's room within 30 minutes. General Maintenance Mechanics were allowed to stay in their existing areas of responsibility and, therefore, were in close proximity to all rooms. For the first two weeks of the program, GMM, Dispatch, and Residence Life staff would meet daily to discuss items that were and were not working, make corrections, and conduct additional training. After four weeks, the average response time was 12 minutes, with approximately 90% of the problems being repaired at that time. The other 10% were forwarded to the Dispatcher so a work order could be submitted to appropriate Trades personnel, and residents received a card indicating work order information and GMM name. From September 20, 1999 through January 28, 2000, GMM staff responded to 2,600 calls with an average response time of 15 minutes. As a comparison, average response time prior to September 20, 1999, was three working days.

Student employees are used to assist GMM staff and can be summoned to a room or fill in when a GMM is conducting a major repair or not at work. Also, GMM staff members cover other areas when a GMM is not available. The Office of Residence Life employees two Night Student Maintenance Mechanics who respond to student and staff concerns between 10:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. during the weekday and 24 hours per day during the weekends. This has helped decrease the amount of calls to on-call GMM staff and has provided a quick response to night emergency calls.

Like Utah State University, residence hall staff at NAU noticed a change in student satisfaction and perception of Facility Services staff. Residence Hall Directors have now taken on an indirect role with managing daily maintenance and can actually see the amount and type of calls via use of computer software. Therefore, instead of reviewing logbooks daily, paging a GMM for immediate assistance, or listening to students complain about facilities, their days are now spent concentrating on other student issues.

Helpful Hints

You may be considering adopting a similar program at your institution, but are concerned with implementation procedures. Reviewing the following items may be helpful.

- Review current reporting system and past satisfaction survey results.
- Review relationship between Residence Life and Physical Plant. Both should agree on customer service philosophy. Both need to make financial commitments.

- Involve maintenance and hall staff in development of new program. Feedback in early stages of development is crucial.
- Don't be afraid to contact other institutions with similar programs. Their insight may prove helpful.
- Look at how Trades should be involved.
- Review the use of student staff. Well-trained students can assist in many different ways: Dispatch, daily maintenance, emergency calls.
- Review Dispatch guidelines and reporting procedures. Utilize a computer-based system that is easy to use and can formulate many reports.
- Purchase a reliable radio system with multiple channels.
- Development marketing strategies that encourage residents to call a central number.
- Develop training strategies for both hall and maintenance staff.
- Once the program has begun, don't be afraid to meet daily for a few weeks to discuss what is and is not working. This is a chance to include Dispatch staff in conversations.
- Review average response time and show positive results to Facility Services and Residence Life staff, administration, and residents.
- Continue to evaluate program by using satisfaction surveys, hall staff feedback, and maintenance reviews.
- Review possibilities of setting up a strong preventative maintenance (PM) program. You may find that your maintenance staff will have more time to complete PM requirements.

Conclusion

Because the Office of Residence Life has not yet conducted its annual Quality of Life Survey, it is difficult to show statistical data that may indicate an increase in resident satisfaction. However, overall comments have been positive and there have been a decrease in the amount of calls from students indicating their dissatisfaction with living conditions. GMM staff has stated they have been able to finally schedule preventative maintenance in their buildings which they believe will decrease future calls. This will only increase the time spent on preventative maintenance and overall condition of living and study environments. *The 30-Minute Maintenance Program* has proven to be a successful collaboration between Residence Life and Facility Services and residents have enjoyed the new customer service approach.

Author's note: For more information, you can call Stacy Klippenstein at (520) 523-7616 or
Rich Bowen at (520) 523-8831. Also, check out the Residence Life web page at www.nau.edu. A special thanks goes to Tom and his staff at Utah State University.

RMV

Editor's Corner

By Paul Smith

We have revised the scholarship application process for the Rocky Mountain Association to coincide with that of International APPA. I will be providing scholarship applications in the August and November newsletters. The applications will be due back to me by February 15, 2001. RMA is also looking for people to participate on subcommittees: Education/Member Services. The first meeting of both the sub-committees will be at RMA's annual conference in St. George, Utah. The subcommittee will be looking at what you as members want in regard to professional development, member services and education programs both within the region and in your state. If you are interested, please contact the following state/province point of contacts: Mary Vosevich, University of New Mexico; Paul Smith, Pima Community College (Arizona); Mark Shively, University of Wyoming; Bob Lashaway, Montana State University; John Bruning, University of Colorado; Steve Boldrick, University of Calgary; and Wayne White, Utah State University; and bob McGregor, Pueblo Community College, Colorado.

I would like to encourage your participation in APPA's Leadership Academy. This is a three track program, with each track emphasizing a different perspective and type of leadership skill. This year's academy is from June 4 - 8 at Rancho Las Palmas Marriott Resort Rancho Mirage, California. RMA offers a scholarship for the Academy and APPA provides one scholarship per region for the Academy also.

Again, I am looking for ideas for future issues and with the departure of Val Petersen, I am also looking for a columnist to provide salient bits of wisdom on a quarterly basis. Please contact me either by phone: (520) 206-4758, fax: (520) 206-4536, e-mail: psmith@pimacc.pima.edu or regular mail: Paul Smith, Pima Community College, 4905D E. Broadway, Tucson, AZ 85709-1400. Remember the newsletter is only as good as **you** make it.

Have a safe summer and enjoy your vacation.

MY FIRST JOB

H. Val Peterson

I shall never forget my first job out of college. It was a real dud.

Like many of you I spent four-plus years enduring improvished living conditions, residing in a run-down apartment, doing odd jobs to pay the rent and buy groceries, and forgoing an active social life in order to get that cherished sheepskin. In my spare time, I tried to study hard enough to get a passing grade.

Well, the big day finally came and with a good deal of anticipation and considerable zeal I started work at my first professional job. I was ecstatic! I had visions of the new challenges to be met, problems to be solved, monuments to be erected, bosses to impress! But it was not to be.

I had turned down some really good, higher-paying jobs to accept the lowest pay offer of any received, in order to return

to my home state of Idaho. My employer was a contractor doing work at the Idaho Nuclear Test Site near Arco. I was to be the number three engineer on a small nuclear test reactor called SPERT III. I don't remember what the letters SPERT stood for, but "reactor" was in there somewhere. Oh yes, I have tried very hard to forget but it's coming back now "SPERT" stood for Special Projects Excursion Reactor Tests.

It was soon obvious to me that as engineer number three, there was really nothing for me to do. There were no work assignments, no reports, not even any expectations. Nothing! They did, however, require me to show up for work. I found myself thinking, "I spent all those years attending college for this?" I used to tell people who inquired about my job, that I didn't mind the one-hour bus ride to the site and the one-hour bus ride home again, but it was the eight-hour layover that really bugged me.

I soon learned not to complain or to ask for something to do. My first such request for a meaningful assignment resulted in Engineer Number One consigning to me a three-inch thick nuclear physics handbook designed for doctorate-level study with the straight-faced suggestion that I digest it. It usually took less than five minutes reading time to put me soundly to sleep. It was better than any sleeping pill I've ever tried. It would have been easier to digest those materials in my intestinal tract than in my mind. My mother didn't raise a stupid son, so I soon learned to find other, more productive ways to occupy my time.

Someone would always bring to work the daily Salt Lake *Tribune*, which was a very large newspaper. Even by reading all the advertisements and the classified section, I could never make the newspaper last beyond the lunch hour. All this reading did cause me to become quite an expert on current events. In the afternoon, I whiled away the time in the machine shop crafting interlocking wire puzzles and other skill and/or patience-testing devices designed mostly to fill the time. Considering the value of some of the "scraps" I used for these projects, I suspect they were some of the most expensive puzzles ever crafted by man.

One day after finishing up the newspaper, I determined to take a tour of the reactor building. It wasn't much to look at, but it was extremely sturdy, having been designed to withstand a modest nuclear explosion. While wandering through the basement, I noted several burned out lamps. Ahah! A chance to be useful. So I rounded up some bulbs and a bulb-snatching pole needed to reach the high ceiling. On my first attempt at removing a burned out lamp, it fell off the holder and shattered on the floor. Another chance to be useful I swept up the mess. I guess someone must have monitored the garbage because within a few days someone wanted to know who had broken the lamp. After I fessed up to Engineer Number One, he was obligated to give me a mild reprimand, suggesting that engineers were paid too much money to be changing light globes. I also got in trouble with the electrician's union for doing work assigned to them.

I wasn't the only bored employee at the reactor site. It wasn't as if one could go somewhere else for diversion either, since employees were required to be at the work site just as if they had something to do. There were instances where some of the technicians tried out one of the fire-emergency self-contained breathing apparatus stored at strategic locations in the building to see if it would double as an underwater scuba device. Of course, the only pool of water for miles around was the nuclear reactor vessel. We were fortunate to work at a reactor that was an open-vessel type with no top. It was easier to access than other types. When not loaded with radioactive fuel rods, it was perfectly safe. The scuba experience was curtailed, however, following a health/safety inspection of the equipment wherein water was found inside the fire-escape device. As was normal, a written edict was issued from site headquarters demanding that this practice be curtailed.

On another occasion, someone smuggled some live goldfish to work inside their lunch box. The fish were promptly turned loose in the reactor vessel. We enjoyed many hours of entertainment watching the small fish swim over, under, around and through the tank's fuel elements, which contained some low-level radiation. This form of entertainment would no doubt have continued longer but for the unfortunate fact that early one morning a health/safety inspector found a dead fish floating upside down on the surface of the tank. In checking the fish for contamination, it pegged the needle on the inspector's radiation-level monitor. Another edict from headquarters: there would be no fish allowed in the reactor vessels.

It was always exciting to witness the unloading of the fuel cells from the reactor following an experiment and to be standing in the reactor building observing the technicians dismantle the core. They would lift out individual fuel cells on the end of a short pole and then place them in lead-lined containers that were designed to shield the radiation. As the fuel cell would clear the top of the reactor vessel, it would typically set off the nuclear detection alarm at the building doorway which was installed to monitor any radioactive contamination of employees exiting the building. Given the fact that Engineer Number One always supervised the operation and that he also had an unusually high-pitched voice made me wonder if I needed a lead cup to protect the family gene pool.

Another activity engaged in with the attempt to make the workday layover more enjoyable was searching for Indian arrowheads in the sagebrush-covered landscape outside the perimeter fence surrounding the reactor. I swear headquarters used a powerful telescope, radar or a satellite tracking device to monitor our activities, because it wasn't long until another edict was received prohibiting personnel from roaming outside the perimeter fence.

Well, as you may suspect, my interest in being a nuclear engineer started to wane after a few weeks. When I finally determined I had made a mistake (a hard thing for a young male adult to do) and informed Engineer Number One I was planning to quit, he told me I would need to talk to the Big Boss. Predictably, the Big Boss was quite unhappy with me given all the money that had been spent to obtain my security clearance and then for me to quit after only three months on the job. I'm sure they were concerned that someone important would wonder what was going on since Engineer Number Three was leaving so soon. Besides that, the loss was one less technical person on the roster which was being beefed up to obtain another juicy government contract. Well, I held my ground and left now somewhat older and wiser.

Yes, I shall never forget my first job.

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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 1999-2000

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Secretary/Treasurer	**John Bruning**	University of Colorado, Boulder
Newsletter Editor	**Paul Smith**	Pima Community College
Senior Representative	**Wayne White**	Utah State University
Junior Representative	**Harvey Chace**	University of New Mexico

FUTURE MEETINGS

2000 Annual Meeting	St. George, Utah	University of Utah
2001 Annual Meeting	Tucson, AZ	Pima Community College
2002 Annual Meeting	To be Announced	