

Making a Good Thing Even Better

Peter E. Warshaw

The true test of any concept is not just how well it survives the test of time but also how well it provides a basis for improvement on an individual (or local) basis.

ASPE's goal of providing local educational opportunities is certainly worthy of merit, and it continues to be adopted with enthusiasm and commitment throughout the membership.

One of the earliest methods of providing an understanding of basic plumbing design was the very innovative program set forth by the Eastern Michigan chapter some years back. Over a year of chapter meetings, the chapter would design a plumbing system for various building types (e.g., office buildings, schools, hospitals), providing a practical, easy-to-understand method of value both to plumbing designers and to contractors, sales reps, and wholesalers. It was a real milestone!

Since the program's introduction, other chapters have not only embraced it but added a few wrinkles to make it even more attractive. Case in point: A few months ago when we were working in upstate New York, we were informed that the Central New York (Syracuse) chapter was holding its monthly meeting that evening. Our old pal, the recently retired Pat Kelly of Haws Industries, always characterized us as an "ASPE junkie." Proving that Pat was right, we decided that attending the chapter meeting was an excellent idea.

It was indeed an excellent idea! In addition to seeing a lot of old friends, we were able to witness firsthand some outstanding refinements to the well-established format of teaching by designing a plumbing system for various building types. In a most unusual opening, the initial speaker was the

sales rep who was sponsoring the tabletop-display product demonstration. The rep, Brian Schaefer of WMS Sales, was allowed to describe the operation and performance of products that would be components of the system to be discussed that evening. It was an excellent presentation, with strict adherence to the ground rules for a presentation interlaced with humor and product knowledge. No

competitor could find fault. Then the program chair, Chapter President Chris DeJohn, led a thorough treatment of plumbing system design for a small commercial office building.

What really struck us as a most interesting format addition was the involvement of Mr. Ron Leone of the Onondoga County

Control Board. Throughout the presentation he commented on various installation criteria as well as their suitability with respect to local codes and regulations, explaining the rationale when he felt it would be helpful.

The presenters ably fielded questions from the audience and, if they felt it was proper, passed them on to Mr. Leone for further comment.

It was a great way for an ASPE junkie to get a fix! We took the opportunity to ask Chris DeJohn how this fine program had come about. He said that he had come back from last year's regional meeting resolved to have a chapter year that would energize the membership. Acceptance of his proposal by the chapter board and enthusiasm from the membership would be key. He had the proper key! Sales reps were delighted with the change in tabletop presentations. Engineering firms sensed an opportunity for both their younger and senior designers to learn their business and justify the investment of a night away

from their families. Ron Leone has a long history of supporting the chapter, but this program afforded him an excellent opportunity to present his office as an available resource.

Let's look at what was accomplished:

- Most importantly, a truly valuable educational program was put into place with a reasonable investment of time and money.
- In many chapters the tabletop program has led to bruised feelings and sometimes resentment about lack of opportunity to have products reviewed, much less discussed. Leading off the technical session was obviously a good idea.
- Many chapters have searched for ways to encourage local code officials to participate. This chapter has succeeded.
- The content of the program was valuable for sales reps as well as designers. This "basic training" allows reps to gain a better understanding of how their products interface with the complete system.
- The educational opportunity was presented to local contractors as well.

A few months later we contacted Chris to hear how the program had fared during the Syracuse winter. The results:

- Attendance had remained at a high level. Out of an 80-member base, the average attendance was 40.
- Just about every local engineering firm had been represented at every meeting.
- Mr. Leone had continued his involvement and attendance.
- More contractors were starting to attend.
- Of those who had attended, 50% were design engineers.
- The format now included two individual sales rep presentations, each limited to 10 minutes.
- Enthusiasm had continued.

A truly valuable educational program was put into place with a reasonable investment of time and money.

• Showing that educational opportunities can be contagious, Mr. Leone had sponsored a program outside the ASPE aegis to explain the newly enacted state plumbing code. It attracted an audience of 300 contractors, engineers, reps, and facility engineers.

The chapter is on a roll! Next year's course will be based on the design of a plumbing system for a healthcare facility.

Hey, chapter vice presidents of membership—Wouldn't a program like this be a great recruiting tool for

your chapter? Central New York has given us a start. How about some creativity on the part of other chapters? We know the talent is there. Let's use it!

One of the ASPE Board's educational goals is a train-the-trainer program for instructors. How many good ideas currently in place locally would be worthy of inclusion in this fine effort? Let's use the example of "the boys from Syracuse" to energize education, recruiting, attendance, and industry support. Stronger chapters mean a stronger Society.

In the words of my sainted Uncle

Herschel, "When many individuals sing the same song, it becomes a chorus." ■



Peter Warshaw retired from Delta Faucet Company as vice president of commercial sales. Currently he is associated with Delta as an industry consultant. He is a past president of the Plumbing Manufacturers Institute and served three terms as affiliate liaison to the ASPE Board of Directors.

Vacuum Toilet Systems




Design for Your Customers Not the Drains

- Save Construction Time & Cost
- Gain Piping Design Flexibility
- Reduce Water Usage by Over 70%

1-888-GET EVAC
Building@EVAC.com



THE HASS® FAMILY OF QUALITY SOFTWARE



The HASS Family is quality Windows based fire protection software for engineers, contractors and reviewing authorities who design, analyze, estimate and review systems for commercial, industrial and residential fire protection. The HASS Family can save you time and money as it has for thousands of others for the past 25 years.

HASS® The leader in computer software for design and hydraulic analysis of sprinkler systems. Now includes Dirty Weibach, velocity pressure, earthquake bracing and water hammer calculations.

COOSA® Computer software for calculating two phase flow for CO₂ fire suppression systems.

HASS HOUSE Fast, accurate way to calculate residential sprinkler systems.

HASS-Estimator Quickly develops estimates for job costs and installation time.

HBS Systems, Inc.
4792 LaMata Road Tucker, GA 30084
(770) 834-8423 E-mail: hass@hbsystems.com
(770) 834-7596 (fax) www.hbsystems.com

