

ASHRAE Leadership Recall (formerly Leadership Recalled)  
Transcription

Interview of: Andrew T. Boggs

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Interviewed by: Charlie Henck

Charlie Henck

Hello. My name is Charlie Henck with the historical committee. The historical committee is conducting leadership recall interviews of past society leaders to document comments as part of our Centennial celebration. This morning we are pleased to have with us Andrew T. Boggs who was the Executive Vice President emeritus of society. Good morning Andy.

Andrew Boggs

Good morning Charlie.

C.H.

Andy I'd like to start off this morning with a little discussion of your background and how you got involved with AHRAE.

A.B.

Okay Charlie. It is a little different from some of the ways that you might get into your lifetime career so, it would probably be of interest. I was in World War II, and when I came back out the service, I had to go back to school at Norwich University, the oldest private military college in the country to finish my degree in chemistry. This sounds easy, but when you have four years broken in the middle of a curriculum of that type, I really had to try to learn three years and then another fourth-year which was not at all that great but it did work and I did get through. While I was there and determining what I might do for my lifetime career, my ex boss at the Edison Electric Institute in New York City, wrote me a note and said that there had been a great development in the application and development of heat pumps during World War II, and the utilities had a joint committee, a national committee that were studying this and thought that I might like to be the first secretary. It seemed easier at that time, as you would expect to quickly say yes and go back to an organization that you knew, the people you knew, the route home to office, and the whole works. So I did say yes and fortunately for me, that helped me get into this function with ASHRAE. While there I became a member of ASRE because refrigeration was being developed, particularly in those days in the application of ground coils, water coils, health, hospital applications in the whole wealth of what had developed as a necessity in World War II was now becoming part of the industry. While I was at EEI, fulfilling my activities there I also knew, grew to know, the people in the American Society of Heating and Air-conditioning Engineers which had been heating and ventilating, and they changed their name to air-conditioning as well as ASRE refrigeration end of the business. And in looking at the monthly journal, I saw an ad where somebody needed a technical secretary which is what they called people that field in those days, and I said, well gee that's what I do now maybe I should talk to them and I did. And I didn't talk much and it was over lunch and I said yes. And so that's really how I got into the part of my life that became ASHRAE. At the time, I joined ASRE as

a staff member in 1955 there was already a great deal of talk between refrigerating engineers and the air-conditioning engineers to combine the two organizations. There was an overlap perhaps thirty percent overlap of membership for one thing. Another thing that both organizations had gone into air-conditioning. It seemed a little strange to have two groups working together and yet pushing against each other, and although they had tried for a number of years to merge, something always came up or one or the other organizations did not vote for it. This time they did and in 1959, the two organizations merged and became ASHRAE. It was a wild time there where we had a committee who tried to decide what name would we give this new animal because ASHAE did not want to lose any of the letters nor did ASRE and that's how they came up with A-S-H-R-A-E and the hexagon. Which was a very smart idea, at the time it seemed unwieldy, but it was not and it's worked very well.

C.H.

Now with the merger, I know there's still people who talk about it was bad to have had that happen because of refrigeration got lost in the society over the years. Can you comment a little about that?

A.B.

Well that's, at the time of the merger that's true Charlie but even worse for those who are experts in thinking so much about ventilation, 'cause you note there's no V and the real theory was that air-conditioning of course incorporates all of them. That doesn't set to well with people, yeah that's fine, that's fine with the big group but not for me because I specialized in that field. So we started off on a kind of rocky path but little by little and the chapters also merged where there were more than one, eventually. And it's made it stronger and today of course, as you know we were going, we were growing more than probably any other technical organization in the engineering field.

C.H.

Also in this, I believe we have the officers of each of the organizations did like a 6 month term.

A.B.

First year.

C.H.

Oh first year. Okay.

A.B.

Whoever, whichever one that was in there from each group just took over six months, six months and then we've come into the fold and since the time it's been just regular mechanics. Unfortunate it's a new president every year for me and so over thirty years I had to get to know the foibles of different people.

C.H.

Why don't you describe then some of the things that have happened to you over your thirty year career with ASHRAE, starting off with 1955 or 1959 and continuing on.

A.B.

Alright, fine. One thing was that our first thing we had to do was to have our own journal. For this new group. So we quickly got together a masthead and whatnot of a rough journal, which for about six months was little more than a report of what we thought was going to happen and then it too evolved and as you know today it's very, very worldwide known journal of our field. At that time too at the merger, the new engineering center in New York City up by the UN was being planned. So each of the engineering organizations were asked to support that, so we immediately after the merger started off

with a funded drive, which was a little difficult too. But we had strong members of the society in charge of the committees and they did in fact complete our commitment and we were able to move into our new center. And that was in 1961. We had a staff at that time of 40 people, which is a far cry from the over 70 professionals we have today in Atlanta.

C.H.

I hope that later we'll talk about the move to Atlanta. You mentioned now moving from our present location in the 60s to the engineering center, later on we can discuss the move to Atlanta. When you get to that.

A.B.

Well let me just hit some of what I think are the significant things that happened to the industry and to the society over those 30 years I was there. The ASHVE had a research laboratory in Cleveland, I'm sure that many of the listeners knew of that. But with the merger the commitment to an expanded area of different types of research was finally, could not be in competition in that smaller laboratory. So we decided that we would disband that and use our research funds in private cooperative research projects generally with the academic field. Many of the very large, large universities had excellent research facilities and to this day this is how our money is spent. The two societies each had a handbook. The ASHVE guide, of course, was the known throughout our mechanical field ever since the beginning of the ASHVE in 1894. The ASRE data book was widely known in our industry, primarily in refrigeration area, so one of the original things that we did after the merger was to put these together to see how we could merge that and spread out, give us more room to give more technical information to all of these areas. The first approach was to merge these into the first ASHRAE handbook and it was a three-volume series part ASRE, and part ASHAE. This of course has grown today, as you know, to a fourth volume and there are even thoughts of expanding that work of the society. Give you some little idea of how the total society was growing, in 1968, we chartered the 105th chapter, and we recognized the 18th international associate for years we had established a program where we worked with the same kind of organization as ASHRAE, except in the countries throughout the world, and we happened to call them international associates, just so it had some sort of umbrella. But that too grew. In 1968, our membership was over 23,000 and of course we thought that was tremendous and it was at that time, but our over 50,000 at the present time, of course, makes that look rather small so we have, we've grown in all aspects of the operation. One of the things that the society began to really develop and work on was the various standards necessary for the industry phase aspects. One of the big ones, of course, was a energy conservation in new buildings of the buildings. That was a big thrust by DOE, government organizations, and other research groups to develop some sort of standard for that field and we had committees that work for several years and this culminated in 1975 into our well-known standard 90.

C.H.

If the impetus for that was originally the first oil embargo that the United States faced in 72' I believe it was.

A.B.

Yes.

C.H.

They really pushed that hard.

A.B.

Yes. And of course that's why even today we're much more concerned than they were when on what could happen. Our energy, energy conservation feeling is now kind of universal, everybody believes in it. When the oil is flowing free it was a little different, it was difficult to do research in certain areas because people thought well why do that. Now we know. In 1977, a program was reestablished that had been dropped several years before, because of inactivity and that was our student branches. We had made attempts to start that, but unless you had a professor who is really interested or might even be a member of society, it just didn't work and the major education agencies didn't want another student activity at that time. They already had several measures already developed in other words ASME, the older societies, civil engineers, had already for years had whole departments at their headquarters who did nothing except develop student branches or whatever they happened to call them, in their field. But again because of the tremendous development over those years in the seventies in human comfort, indoor air quality, different approaches for different problems in the refrigeration, air conditioning fields, the schools once again became interested, however, the schools don't come to us, Charlie. We go to them, and that meant that we had to have this interest develop within the society. The chapters were the ones who pushed for the student branches and the ones who oversee them. So the tremendous increase in this is really a boon, not only to the society, but to those new younger members when they came out of school who have been student members frequently, of course, come right into the society. And one of the major things I think, for several years of course, was it, we were getting crowded in our space in the engineering center in New York, and there was no hope for them, even though the original plans had included it but there was no hope for them to build a second tower. We had to move because we were expanding, and for that reason, a committee was set up to establish, to determine what city in the country would be best for ASHRAE. And we rapidly cut out certain cities that didn't have what characteristics we wanted. We wanted a town that had a way of life that staff, particularly would enjoy. They had to have a good transportation system so the people get to work, so their friends coming in from the airports will be able to come to the headquarters and see us or for meetings. We wanted a place where they had a good educational system, one or several universities available, libraries, all these things that means so much to each of our lives. And climate. We wanted it to be not too harsh. We didn't want to go way up north or way down south or what have you. And we quickly, the committee quickly just chopped off people, different towns. We had been in New York ever since we were founded so that they felt it was going to be too expensive for us to stay in New York, so we cut New York off and one by one, we went around as a committee and visited all of the other cities and talked to their mayors, Chamber of Commerce, took trips to see what kind of buildings were available, rates of rent or purchase and again cranked all these things, we gave the numbers reported. Each one would have a certain wonderful little number, put into a computer, press the button and got an overview of each of these prospective cities and interestingly enough it came down to Atlanta and Dallas. I think the one that probably pushed it toward Atlanta was a little bit of the local transportation. Dallas has, it's a great university town, and medical research, churches, the whole thing. The weather's a little harsh, sometimes in the summers, it gets a little long and people forget that, they say well Atlanta gets hot too. Well Atlanta is not on the coast where people think it is, it's two hundred miles inland. So it doesn't have too many bad days, a little humidity, your July and August can be rough and they have their one winter storm in January, one day there's some snow or ice. And I think they have one snowplow which gives you an idea of how much need to have for it, but we did finally decide on

Atlanta and the next thing was to look around for a building and we found a building that was convenient to transportation, the size we needed, in reasonably in good shape at that time and big enough for expansion. And we're still there, although we've done a great deal of renovation in the last couple years.

C.H.

A major renovation.

A.B.

Major renovation, yeah. Well if we were going to tell people about indoor air quality, we better have our own place up to our standards.

C.H.

Exactly.

A.B.

And so we did that and it's been a major improvement. Atlanta's growing too as you know. So then we are becoming now, our headquarters is right on main road and it's right there so you can go anywhere. And in 17 minutes you could be at the airport in their mass transit, which is a big bone because like any major city that has its problems down town too. At the same time that we purchased a building in 1981, we also decided that we needed a Washington office. Not to lobby, a lot of people think that if you have a Washington office, you're down there lobbying. It's not that at all, it's a technical support unit for the different staffs in the government. Doctor Cox goes up on the hill and it's rare that he would even see anybody like a senator or a representative, they're going to see somebody who's running the operation for those people and they have a problem. The main thing is to let them know what our society is doing in certain fields that they might be interested in, has been very successful. It's grown now, he has a professional helper to write on the standards that are being developed by the government. Of course, many of them are based on one's that we have proven to them that work for the industry, so it's a great liaison, but not a lobbying effort

C.H.

I think you're right and very successful and I think the government is now drawing upon ASHRAE's expertise to help in developing these national standards.

A.B.

And a lot of people of course are well aware that for several years, many organizations and government have been working on this indoor air quality because that's one of the primary missions today of all of us, is to make sure the indoor air quality is proper for the people who are working there. You know you spend most of your day in a building. So we've got to make the inside better quality than the outside, well we haven't gone very far, and in 1982, we published the ASHRAE position statement on indoor air quality, and it was just letting the, letting the world know what the society is doing in that field. Then our standard series on energy conservation in existing buildings on which we've been working for several years, they were finally published and much needed by the industry and certainly helpful to the different government programs the DOE was establishing at that time. One of the areas of interest that may not be too well known is what we've done outside the normal working area of society in their chapters and regions. In 1984, a large group of American engineers in Singapore in our field, approached the society on become a chapter and as a matter of fact, they became the first only called chapter at large and later that same year an even greater number in Hong Kong, as you might expect,

also was chartered as a chapter at large. Just recently our 6th chapter at large was chartered in Saudi Arabia, so you can see how this whole thing just is expanding. Of course that means more people, they don't stay over there at these places for life, they are moving around all of the time and then young people here after they're educated go to these different areas particularly Hong Kong and Singapore have been very big and you know what's happened not too long ago in Saudi Arabia and why they need refrigeration, particularly. Then in 1985, one of the things at all major companies and organizations like ASHRAE was finally adopted. Our strategic plan, looking out to the future, making commitments in different areas so that we can improve and expand our services to what we call humanity in all of these different areas and that has been extremely successful. One of the things that I like because I worked so hard way back on it, was the fundamentals volume of our handbook series. We had a lot of questions from people in other countries where they use the metric system, which we're supposed to be using by the way, had been approved for years, but the engineers fight it. But it's tough unless you've grown up that way. Oddly enough, I use the metric system because that's what I used in chemistry, so chemists had no problems, but a lot of them don't like it, but in order that, our first approach was to, let's put the handbook out and every time there is a statement of some measurement in English units, in parenthesis following it we'll put the metric units, and that was a, you can imagine what that, you go through a handbook and try to plug these things in parentheses. There were problems. Every time you do that, well there's more of a chance for error.

C.H.

Right, sure.

A.B.

Finally in 1985, we published a separate volume of the handbook, one in metric, and one in English, so that all you do is check off which one you want and that's the one you get, but it's very popular in the metric . You'd be surprised, particularly when we have major meetings of the Society. We get a great many visitors from all over the world and they're always, well first thing you do is go to our bookstore. They want the books, and they'd like the idea that we are considering helping people throughout the world by putting it in metric units. That was done in the year I graduated from here. In the year I retired and much is happening since then, so I'm very pleased that, to see how this organization has developed since I first started 37 years ago and I think the next 37 or whatever, will show just as much progress. Our chapters are working diligently. We have committees working on every aspect and it's just surprising, when you come to major meetings in a hotel and to develop enough meeting space, not for an exposition that is generally pretty easy but for committee meetings and when you tell a person at a hotel, well let's see now we need 100 committee meetings Monday morning and they smile because if they haven't had that type of what they call convention they can't imagine it. And then we try to tell them that this is not really a convention, it's a technical meeting and yes we do need one hundred committee meetings Monday morning.

C.H.

I'm sure that it takes, it's quite a shock to a hotel to hear that. As that you say they smile, think you're kidding them. Can you tell us a little bit about your relationship with the society presidents over the years that you were involved?

A.B.

Well one thing is of course that again we are a little different from some of the technical organizations. Our president never spends 1 or 2 years on the Board of Directors and then becomes president. He probably has served a minimum of 7 years on the board, plus several years in the region or his chapter level. So these are all background, they all have a background before they become the administrative leader. By that time they have been able to develop their theme and what they want to accomplish in that one year. The fun I had was looking and working with these different persons every year, but whom I had known for a number of years. So as a matter of on such and such a date when one president goes out at the banquet and another one comes in it's just a matter of a different approach by that time, the staff has known what kind of approach it's going to be. Now there is no big shock, there's not that much of a change but people do approach things in different manners and part of my job and other members of the staff was to determine what those differences happened to be so that we could slowly make that transition. Plus they're all friends of mine and that's just amazing. And some of the interesting things though, one of the, oh happenings that hit me many years ago but my first, must have been in the late, late fifties, just after I've really gotten going. We had an older man, he was in his 90s at that time in our field. And he had been the, must have been about the third president in 1912. He was the president of ASRE and he was well known in the industry, had an office down in Wall Street area, lived up in the Westside in New York in areas of 90, 92, jogging every morning, from his apartment down to his office on Wall Street. So jogging did not start in the last decade, it started many years ago and he would also then jog-

C.H.

That's amazing.

A.B.

Come into the library and talk to us. It was fun because here was a giant and we were just sitting there talking to him, say well Henry what do you think about this and others, Crosby Field, one of our famous people and so many others. I had the opportunity and others on the staff to work with and that made it thirty years that I spent there as an employee feel like thirty months, which I think is a, in my case something very good to say about your work because you have to like it to stay there that long. (Editor note: The "Henry" mentioned above is probably Henry Torrance (1870-1967) President of ASRE in 1914)

C.H.

Well it sounds like you really enjoyed your work- from what you described today.

A.B.

I did.

C.H.

From what you describe here today. One of the other things you know with your 30 year tenure, society's gotten so much more complex. What has society done during that term to automate what they're doing ?

A.B.

Well, of course way back, several years ago and electric typewriters were a big improvement and then we want to automatic print, setting of print and then suddenly departments each got word processors, which was a major improvement. I can remember when I was doing the minutes for the Board of Directors for several years even though Doris Flandorfer was there taking all the notes in short hand, I

made my own notes. After the meeting she would type it up, very rough. I would take it home and read them and use my notes, then would cross out, add in. Then go back and either re-dictate or give them to her to redo and check them over, send them out to the president, said is this okay and then they came back and then we could reproduce them either in the mimeograph then or what have you. Now when we got the word processor, good heavens, you're rough came out and as you know all you do is cross on the rough do it and then go back to the machine and in then in no time at all it's done, and when you mail or fax it to the president it's finished. So it's been a great thing. I understand that we are thinking of changing similar automatic print, it's a deal that we do for all our major, well technical things and whatnot, not just minutes. It's going to be a whole new upgrade of that. It's going to be a big improvement.

C.H.

Just the, you know, size of the society, the 23,000 members you talk about in the 60s, which is the dues and the correspondence between those members and going up to now where we are over 50,000, that has to be a tremendous task on the staff to do all that. That took a very dedicated staff I'm sure to get that accomplish under your direction.

A.B.

Without the automation Charlie, they could never do it. As an example, I've been active on the honors and awards committee and there's nothing, if I don't get 40 or 50 biographies of candidates to look at, not just me but maybe in the whole committee. The boxes of them come in. Somebody at staff has to sit there and make sure they come out right, and then when we review technical papers, the same thing goes all over again. And I keep saying I hope we own paper stock because somehow, well you know the more automated you get the more you produce. And as you know, you don't save employees, you have to add on which is good too. That's probably one of the biggest improvements that we've made at the staff level has been in that reproduction and distribution and getting a communication to the members.

C.H.

Anything you might like to say to our viewers in closing remarks about your term as Executive Vice President?

A.B.

Well, I think the one thing that I can say Charlie to anybody who sees this is that I feel fortunate in having been able to work for and with a tremendous group of wonderful people and to see the benefits of their labor, which in almost every case is another person doing work without pay. That's what makes the whole organization run. When you come to a meeting see literally thousands of people who come because what we're providing them, something must be being done right.

C.H.

All without pay, all at their own expense.

A.B.

Well somebody is paying for part of it.

C.H.

Right.

A.B.

Of course, but many of us, when we retire nobody pays it. No that's right, it's still that interest of people in the works being done. It's a great organization.



C.H.

Right indeed. I'd like to thank you for being with us today and sharing with us the history of yourself with ASHRAE and thank you very much.

A.B.

It's been fun Charlie. Thanks.