

*Text of President Jackins' Inaugural Address at ASHRAE's Annual Meeting*

# ASHRAE's Bridges to the Future: Learning – Unity – Visibility

**By George A. Jackins, P.E.**

1998–99 ASHRAE President

**G**reetings to you, my fellow ASHRAE members and our guests. I am going to speak to you today about LUV. In case you think you did not hear that correctly, I repeat: I am going to speak to you today about LUV. But, as Jack Kemp said at the last Republican Convention, before I speak, I would like to say a few words.

Forty years ago I joined ASHRAE as a senior at Georgia Tech. These 40 years have been great years. Not only have I had a job at the chapter, regional or Society level in each of those years, but also my ASHRAE involvement has directly impacted every career decision I have ever made. It would be an understatement to say that this has been a very fulfilling experience, and that I am honored by this opportunity to serve as your president. There are few technical societies in the world with the stature of our ASHRAE.

This afternoon I would like to share with you some of my observations about ASHRAE and my hopes and dreams for our Society in the next millennium. I also would like to tell you what I would like to see us accomplish this year with a little LUV to help realize these dreams.

During the past few years, since the ASHRAE Centennial, our focus has shifted from celebrating our past to creating a vision of our future. We also have formulated strategies for success by enhancing service to our members and embracing a philosophy of technology for a better environment. We realize that we have an obligation to not only focus our vision inward but also outward, and to work with our sister societies and engineers all around the world to address the many global issues threatening our environment.

Our vision statement takes this into account—we envision ASHRAE in the next millennium to be:

- The global leader in the arts and sciences of heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration.

- The foremost, authoritative, timely and responsive source of technical and educational information, standards and guidelines.
- The primary provider of opportunity for professional growth, recognizing and adapting to changing demographics and embracing diversity.

The strategies we have formulated to realize this vision are presented in the recently published *Strategic Plan 4—ASHRAE 2000 and Beyond*. These strategies are expressed as four important goals:

**Goal 1:** Provide a comprehensive education program that enhances opportunity for professional growth.

**Goal 2:** Ensure timely transfer of information.

**Goal 3:** Respond to current and emerging heating, ventilating, air-conditioning and refrigerating (HVAC&R) issues.

**Goal 4:** Provide for diverse global growth.

But, it is going to take more than just stated goals, strategies and programs to achieve our vision of ASHRAE in the next millennium. It is going to take LUV. That is right L-U-V.

It is going to take a commitment to learning—L—so that our members have the knowledge and skills to design, build and operate buildings that are energy efficient, have healthy indoor environments and do not harm the outdoor environment. It is going to take a unified effort among all ASHRAE members, as well as reaching out and working closely with ASHRAE's associate and sister societies, building professionals and other allied organizations around the world. This is called unity—U. It is going to take not only leadership, but also visibility—V.

I look at these challenges, and I see bridges—building bridges within ASHRAE and building bridges between this great Society and building professionals and other allied organizations around the world. I see our 54,000 members building bridges together to the future through learning, unity and visibility.

This is the theme I would like to emphasize this year—**ASHRAE's Bridges to the Future—Learning–Unity–Visibility.** L-U-V. I would like to talk for a few moments about building

## About the President

ASHRAE President **George A. Jackins, P.E.**, Fellow ASHRAE, is a principal with Engineering Resource Group in Birmingham, Ala. and is a registered professional engineer in five states.

Jackins joined ASHRAE as a student member 40 years ago, and has held leadership positions at the chapter, regional and Society

levels. He has been awarded the ASHRAE Distinguished Service Award and is a Region VII Regional Award of Merit recipient. As president, he directs the Society's Board of Directors and chairs the Executive Committee.

Jackins has an industrial engineering degree from the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta.

each of these bridges to our future, and then conclude with what I think building these bridges can mean for our great Society and us.

The first bridge we need is **LEARNING**.

Learning is the future! And I am not the only one who feels this way. Statistics show that 40% of individuals age 35 to 54 seek courses to improve their career skills. This illustrates a tremendous need to feed these hungry minds, especially young engineers just entering our field, and presents a tremendous opportunity for ASHRAE. Yes, ASHRAE is experiencing great success in attracting young men and women in our industry to our educational programs, but we need to do more to meet this critical need.

I have heard it said that the organizations that will truly excel in the future will be the organizations that discover how to tap into people's commitment and capacity to learn at all levels in an organization. I intend for ASHRAE to be one of those organizations!

To further enhance our ability to meet this need and to tap into this commitment and capacity, I am placing a great emphasis this year on the development of the ASHRAE Learning Institute. Our Board of Directors voted at the Winter Meeting in San Francisco to form such an institute without defining its specific mission or structure. They felt that we must move forward immediately with our efforts to implement Strategic Plan Goal One, that is to provide a comprehensive education program that enhances opportunity for professional growth, and to ensure that we meet the learning needs of our members and our industry in the future.

We envision that the ASHRAE Learning Institute will be the ultimate repository and source of the world-body of knowledge in the HVAC&R fields. We plan to develop programs that will:

- Prepare students for careers in the HVAC&R industry.
- Raise the proficiency of engineers and professionals working in the HVAC&R fields through educational programs that maintain high levels of technical competence.
- Disseminate information that will increase awareness of the general pub-

lic about ASHRAE's contribution to the quality of life.

I am very excited about what the ASHRAE Learning Institute can do for ASHRAE, our profession and the world. By tapping into this commitment and capacity to learn through the ASHRAE Learning Institute, we can build a bridge to our future that will significantly enable our Society and our industry to excel. I encourage you to embrace life-long learning not just at Society meetings but at the regional and chapter meetings and in your communities. I also invite you to



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encourage others, especially young people, to do the same.

Our second bridge to the future is **UNITY**.

A recent article on the health of our industry noted that energy and environmental issues will shape our industry and the world of the future, not limit them. ASHRAE has the ability and the resources to significantly influence what the shape of our industry and our world will be. Our challenge, however, will be to work together both within the ASHRAE membership and with other organizations around the world to address these issues for the benefit of the public.

Although ASHRAE has done an excellent job of maintaining unity with our sister societies and engineers around the

world, we cannot rest on our laurels. We must continue to take advantage of opportunities to expand these relationships and build new bridges. As with all past presidents, a major focus of my year will be to continue to strengthen ASHRAE's worldwide presence, and to promote the Society's participation in international standards development and technology transfer.

Within the ASHRAE membership, however, I am not satisfied that we are doing a great job of unity. While serving at all levels of the Society during the past 40 years, I have observed that the gap between the Society's technical side and the chapter or grassroots side remains significant. Think about it. Only 2,000 or so members come to Society meetings to conduct our business. That means there are 52,000 members out there with great ideas, energy and valuable insights to contribute. I believe it is vital that we totally involve these chapter members around the world as much as possible in our deliberations and discussions. They are, after all, the foundation on which ASHRAE is built and what we do at Society meetings significantly impacts them as ASHRAE members.

To build this bridge of unity, I propose that we make the Technical Energy and Government Activities Committee the focal point of an effort to improve the lines of communication and technology transfer between the Society's technical and the grassroots sides. An emphasis in my Presidential Award of Excellence (PAOE) program will be to better inform chapter members about the opportunities they have to serve the Society at a higher level and to encourage them to become more involved.

When discussing my concept of unity among the two sides of the Society, I have been told it would be like mixing oil and vinegar—cannot be done. But, when you shake up a mixture of oil and vinegar real good, what do you get? That is right, a kind of salad dressing. I propose we do a better job of mixing and come up with a darn good ASHRAE salad dressing.

The third bridge to the future I would like us to build this year is **VISIBILITY**.

ASHRAE's work during the past sev-

eral decades has made it the “darling” of technical societies. Engineers around the world are aggressively pursuing our technology. Yet, I will bet that when you mention to a neighbor or a non-technical friend that you are an active member in ASHRAE, they say, “Who?” They do not have a clue who we are or what we do. Yet, our technology impacts major aspects of their lives, from their comfort and health to the preservation of the food they eat.

It is time we “toot our own horn” more. I am not suggesting a media blitz, but a concerted effort by every ASHRAE chapter and every ASHRAE member to let their communities know who we are, what we do, and how we affect their lives.

To support you in this effort, materials will be provided by the Society as needed for chapter members to make non-technical presentations to civic clubs and other community groups about ASHRAE’s long history of contribution to society. This will be a Presidential Activity, and

PAOE points will be awarded for every outreach effort made by a chapter.

My hope and my dream are that this activity may become the *growth* engine for the Society. The more lives we touch with our message, the more interest we can create about our industry. I envision more students coming into our field, greater participation in ASHRAE research, and certainly greater recognition for our work. The bottom line is everyone wins!

During the past few minutes I have shared with you my observations about ASHRAE and my dream of building ASHRAE’s bridges to the future. But once they are built, what then?

To answer this question, consider that throughout our lives, we are told not to cross a bridge until we come to it; but, this world is owned by people who have “crossed bridges” in their imaginations far ahead of the crowd. These people are more than dreamers. These people are leaders. I read recently that leaders can

play a significant role in creating the state of mind that is society; that they can serve as symbols of society’s unity. They also can express the values that hold the society together. Most important, they can conceive and articulate goals that lift people out of their preoccupations, carry them above the conflicts that tear a society apart, and unite them in the pursuit of objectives worthy of their best efforts.

Today I am inviting you and all ASHRAE members around the world to become leaders and to cross the bridges in your imagination as you build ASHRAE’s bridges to the future through learning, unity and visibility, L-U-V. We are certainly blessed with the greatest group of volunteers of any organization in the world and an outstanding staff to support us.

I know we can build these bridges strong and lasting. All we need is LUV.

I am excited about our future. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of it. ■

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