

ASHRAE Leadership Recall (formerly Leadership Recalled)

Transcription

Audio Interview of: Ray Thornton and Jim Schulze

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Interviewed by: Ann Boutwell

Note: Who is speaking is not noted in the original transcription. The original tape recording of this interview no longer exists.

Ann Boutwell

Ray, I would like to start this first question with you. Basically what I am asking you, and I don't want explicit answers, jut to the point but roughly what year did you join ASHRAE or become associated with it and who was the person, reason, or situation that got you interested in ASHRAE and then got you so involved in it.

Ray Thornton

I joined ASHRAE in 1955. The reason that I got involved in ASHRAE, I worked for the General Electric Company and joined the company in 1955 and transferred from Erie, Pa to Louisville, KY. I worked for a manager by the name of Don Massa who was very instrumental in the Louisville chapter and later became very involved in the region, and later became a Director at Large for the Society and has since moved on from General Electric, but Don was very much ASHRAE or ASHAE at that particular time, very much interested in it and was very interested in having the people that he worked with and associated with to become involved also. I might go back a little bit farther. I attended the University of Kentucky between 1947 and 1951 and I was a member of a student, back in those days, a student chapter at the University of Kentucky so really my involvement with ASHRAE goes back to about 1949, but officially I joined ASHRAE in 1955 as a member of the Louisville chapter.

A.B.

Jim, I know you also used to work for GE. Was Ray instrumental ___or were you before his time or...

Jim Schulze

No, I was with General Electric before Ray. I went with them in 1950 from Texas A&M. I worked in various positions with food freezers, refrigerators and room air conditioners. Then I entered the University of Louisville on a graduate program. In 1968 when I got out of the graduate program Ray was in the chapter at that time. Don Massa, Joe Peach within General Electric so it just naturally gravitated from the academic world into ASHRAE as a continuing education project.

A.B.

Jim, I know both of you contributed a lot to ASHRAE and served in different chairs. What I would like to ask you at this time, I know you may have made a large contribution, both of you, could you give us some of the contributions or the returns on your contributions.

J.S.

I became active within the chapter and served on the Board of Governors for two years, Chairman of Education, we made our initial survey while I was there and out of that I think it took about 10 years but we did get a student chapter out of the University of Louisville and that was quite gratifying. When I was secretary we made another survey. Our region, Louisville, covered all of Kentucky. We had some outlying provinces, quite a number of people in Lexington and quite a number of people at that time in Bowling Green. We identified these two potentials for chapters. The Lexington chapter came to fruition when I was president of the Louisville chapter. We actually participated in their charter meeting. The situation in Bowling Green just dried up with the closing of the Fedders plant, Climatrol plant, in that area. Having gone through the chairs I became active at the regional level, served as the vice chairman of energy management. I was the second one, George McLaird was the first one and then George was promoted out of that position and I went in. At that time we were splitting off. The Society was reorganizing and I think we had some influence on how the lines were drawn along the rivers, defined the Region VII. As the split or re-division came into reality we were separated from Kansas City and St. Louis who had been formerly in our region. We had started an energy award contest which we called the gateway to energy, initiated by the St. Louis chapter and we had the arch of St. Louis, which we still use. I guess we established the tradition at that time and I believe I had the first or second energy award contest and we set up the tradition within Region VII of the St. Louis arch as our reward and that is continuing to this day. After my three years as regional chairman I took on the job of nominating committee alternate. The region had decided they wanted to make this a four-year term, two years as alternate, two years a nominating delegate. I was the first one to go through that whole process. I think you can see the results of that process. We have become real politicians. It is a very thankless job. It is not seen. It is a behind-the-scenes operations. It is the old political smoke filled room atmosphere to some extent, though I am very impressed in ASHRAE that the job seeks the man and the man doesn't seek the job. If the man seeks the job he is not going to get it. It is just that built into the Society. It is absolutely amazing that the best people sift to the top in the organization and what that process is. It takes two years to learn the process. With two years as an understudy and then two years in the action chair, I think the region has moved forward. I think you see that today. Look at all the chairman that we've got. We have Dave Butler ready for the presidency. Now, you don't do that yourself. You have to motivate the individual chapters. There are good people in this region and all regions, but you have got to motivate our delegates to bring forth those people. Then, if they bring them forth your job is easy. They just sift right up to the top. That is the contribution, the feeling of accomplishment that I have received from the Society. Unfortunately, for the last two years due to work pressures at the General Electrical Company I have been unable to really perform at the Society. I dropped out. Now that I have retired and no longer have those obligations I am ready to get back into the swing of things. Here I am from Texas and a member of the Louisville chapter, CRC Region VII, where I belong.

A.B.

Jim, we are glad to have you here and I think we know that you have given us a lot and we think, any of us can look at the Society level and see that you did your job well with the nominating committee. Ray, I know you served all the way up through regional director and I wonder if you could give us a little rundown on that and what you feel you got back from it and then maybe expound a little bit on the Kansas City/St. Louis redistricting. In other words, why did they redistrict and remove Kansas City and St. Louis is Region VII.

R.T.

That is really one of the points that I wanted to touch on because it was one of the greatest things that ever happened to Region VII. Not that we lost Kansas City and St. Louis but we will talk about that in just a moment. After I joined the Louisville chapter, again, Don Massa was in the chairs and the first job that I got was on the reception committee. It is a lot of work at the meetings to prepare for the meetings, but it was very rewarding because it gave me an opportunity to meet all of the active members of the chapter. I served on various committees and got on the Board of Governors and then got in the chairs and went up through the presidency. In 1976 I attended by first CRC which was in St. Louis. I really got a rude awakening because that was the first year of my term on the region membership. I was vice chairman of membership for the region. It was also my first CRC. I served for three years as vice chairman for the membership committee and then I went on the nominating committee as an alternate and then a delegate. Then I served three years as vice chairman of education for Region VII. In the interim, in 1979, Louisville had the CRC and we had a chairman appointed for the CRC and Bob Logston was the regional chairman at that particular time. We had a problem with the chairman of the CRC and we had a chairman at that particular time. We had a problem with the chairman of the CRC, that he could no longer continue and so Bob asked me if I would step in and chair the CRC. This was in about February or March and by that time those of you who have been involved in CBC's know that you should be pretty well down the road in you planning and have a lot of things in place, which we did not. It was interesting because Bob Lawton asked me to chair it and I told him I would but I would chair it under one condition and that is that I knew Bob quite well. Bob is a very meticulous person. I said that I would chair it if I can actually chair the CRC. The first meeting that we had Bob came to the meeting and we talked a little bit about what we were going to do and every time I mentioned something Bob chimed in and gave me the benefit of his experiences. Finally, at the end of the meeting I told Bob we really had to have an understanding. Bob is a great guy. He is a mentor of mine. Bob has done a tremendous amount of good for me but I had to have an understanding and I told Bob we would get the job done but two of us can't do it. Either you are going to do it or I am going to do it and Bob said ok. The next meeting Bob came and we got about half way through the meeting and he couldn't contain himself and I said "Bob, that is once." After that Bob and I had an excellent relationship. We got the CRC over with and we had a good CRC. A lot of people remember Louisville at that particular time and so it turned out great. But again, Bob is just a tremendous guy. I really cared an awful lot for him. I am sorry he isn't here at this particular CRC. He hasn't missed very many. At any rate, I went on from there and then became the regional chairman, director, in 1984 I believe it was and got off about a year and a half ago. I mentioned when Kansas City and St. Louis, with the reorganization, when they left our region, I think it was a real actor in Region VII's growth and maturity. The reason I say that is that Kansas City and St. Louis were very large chapters compared to the rest of the chapters in region VII. It was always, let Kansas City do it or let St. Louis do it. When they left the region the rest of the chapters were somewhere between 40 assigned members and about 225. These are fairly small chapters because I have been involved with chapters like the Chicago chapter, the Illinois chapter, where they are talking 800 or 900 to a 1000 members. So we really don't have any large chapters in Region VII. So it gave the chapters an opportunity to step forward and say "Hey, we don't have these two big brothers anymore." We have to do the job ourselves. It really became very competitive then among the chapters. New Orleans, Nashville, Louisville, some of the larger chapters in the region rally stepped forward and took

over. I think that was good for Region VII. It was difficult because we, for a year or so, we had to assume the reins and carry on. You know if you depend on your big brother for years and years and then all of a sudden they are gone you have got to change. Change is great because it makes people grow and develop. As far as what I have gotten out of ASHRAE, I think that I have gotten quite a number of good things from ASHRAE. One is development and growth not only in the Society but on the job because it gives you an opportunity to grow and develop and be trained and to gather technical knowledge that is useful on the job. There is, as all of you know, a tremendous technical knowledge that is available in seminars and forums and to be able to stay current with the technology in today's climate, which is just changing so rapidly, it gives you an opportunity to make presentations and to meet people. This, of course, spills over onto your job. The other thing is the great people you meet in ASHRAE. The camaraderie that you develop and just a side asset is that once you become involved in the region and get into a society, at first I would have to make arrangements and ask my wife if she would like to go along to a CRC or winter meeting or an annual meeting, and that is no longer the case because about six months in advance she wants to know what the dates are and where is it going to be a when are we leaving. And there is no question as to whether she is going to go or not. Not only to together with them, socializing with them. I just think it is a tremendous society and I am just terribly that Don Massa got me involved and that Bob Logston kept pushing and Dave Lavine was a tremendous guy that I worked with, and of course Dave Butler, that is what I got out of it.

A.B.

Thank you Ray. I see we have a visitor that just came in. Our Vice President, Don Rich. Glad to have you Don.

Don Rich

I think it goes without saying that we all can benefit tremendously from the technical side of the Society and that is the part of the Society that I would say over all of my years of involvement has been of the most benefit to me, but I would say in the last 15 years or so that I have been involved with ASHRAE that a lot of the management and leadership skills that you learn in ASHRAE have been important. I am in a management position now at Carrier and I find that, well to put it simply, if you can lead a volunteer organization you are leading by persuasion not by the power of your position and when you get in an industrial environment, if you can apply those principles of leadership you are going to be more successful than if you try to lead just by the power of your position. So there is a lot of the management and leadership skills that you learn from your involvement in ASHRAE that I think are just tremendously valuable to you in your business careers. That is all I wanted to say.

A.B.

Jim, I would like to direct this next question to you and I don't want to keep harping on it but I want to ask you, how was Kansas City and St. Louis' feelings about this redistricting split up?

J.S.

I think they were somewhat disturbed. I remember the year I was president was when the split became final and we all of a sudden had to find outside of St. Louis and Kansas City the manpower to operate the region. It was very difficult to do. I was the sole delegate from Louisville. We didn't have an alternate. Ray happened to be there. One of the guys from St. Louis came up with Bob Logston's name from a CRC that we had had in Louisville about three years earlier. We had one about 1972 that was highly successful and then we were the brunt of an experiment by the Society where we had a national

and a Society meeting and a CRC at the same time which was a disaster. Anyway, Bob showed up and these people from St. Louis and Kansas City came up with this while I was holding down the fort in caucus. Ray was making phone calls and we finally got the manpower to man the region. I think we have to be grateful for that transition from St. Louis because St. Louis had their own little award system which we had gone ahead and implemented past the split. They are now in with some Canadians I believe. Their region goes up all the way into Canada. We still have friendship within that region. We know a lot of guys and when we go to the Society meetings we still have that brotherhood that goes back from the time that they were part of our region. I think we have all accepted this change. For St. Louis and Kansas City, I don't think was nearly as big a change from them as it was for us because they are large chapters and with the Canadians I think they still dominate in the region that they are now in whereas we do not have dominant chapters unless, Louisville has had some dominance but that is dying out. Regional chairman from Huntsville, our smaller chapters are becoming involved. We have some great people in these small chapters. To me, as a personal development tool, your opportunities are greater in the small chapters because there are so many jobs that need to be done and so limited a group of people to do them that your opportunities for gaining experience that Mr. Rich was talking about is much greater in a small chapter than it is in a large chapter. The Chicago chapter takes in all of Illinois. How many jobs in ASHRAE are available to a young kid coming out of school within that chapter. It is very limited. They have to go on committees. They have big committee sessions. Whereas here you get a young fellow in and it doesn't take very long to get him into the chairs and get him up, let him become knowledgeable. I don't think it was much of a change for St. Louis and Kansas City. I think the change was for us and I think I agree with Ray. It is great. It gave us an outstanding development opportunity and I think it shows up in the Society. It really does. You look at the people at the national Society level and we have got them there because we have trained them. That is one thing in this four-year situation with the nominating committee, you have to come to recognize how the system works. It takes awhile to learn it. Warren you have been on the nominating committee as a year, for example. You hardly get acquainted on what is going on before you are in and out. But it is a great system. It works and it sifts the best people to the top. As long as we can keep the chapters motivated, train those people, get them in there, then Region VII is going to shine.

R.T.

For the benefit of you people who have never attended one of these, they have something that does on in Region VII called the Region VII CRC planning conference. Basically what it is, is a weekend of fun and work. Since Ray has served and chaired as region director and chaired a couple of these planning conferences, I would like to ask Ray if he can remember whose idea it was and who was the first regional director to have a planning conference. It is evident that the planning conferences have been successful for things other than giving Ray a source to test his wine and Butler's cooking. I would like for him to comment a little on that and how you rate the value of the planning conferences.

The first planning conference that we had was under Bob Logston's direction and Dave Butler was one of the vice chairman at that particular time and I was vice chairman of education at that time. I think it was just a general discussion. It was probably Bob Logston's idea. The vice chairmen got together with Bob and the first conference was held at Pickwick, Tennessee. Counts, Tennessee I believe was the actual name of the area but at Pickwick Dam. It started out as a conference where the vice chairmen, the grass

roots vice chairmen, the chairmen of the upcoming CRC and the chairman of the CRC for the one year out along with some of the key individuals and some local area chapter presidents were invited. The objective was to set the objectives for the coming year for the region. Each of the vice chairmen were requested to bring to the conference their MBO's or objectives and goals for the coming year. The conference was opened by Bob Logston telling about the progress of the region, the performance of the region during the past year and then we got into each of the vice chairmen presenting the objectives and goals for the coming year. After all of the vice chairmen had presented theirs, also the nominating committee delegate and alternate are invited and after all of these presented, and not always accepted because Bob, as I mentioned, is a tremendous guy, a tremendous leader, but doesn't always accept your objectives as being challenging enough. Interesting enough, the other vice chairmen chimed in and there is a lot of fun in trying to get each of the vice chairmen to increase their challenge and raise their objectives. These are set and then the regional chairman will then take the objectives of the vice chairmen and put together the objectives for the region. Then there is a discussion about the upcoming CRC and how the chairman is progressing on the plans for the CRC and how the other vice chairmen there can help. There is a very candid discussion in that planning conference about the chapter performance and how the regional chairmen and the vice chairmen can help the chapters that perhaps need some help. In several of them that I was involved in, we had one chapter I think a lot of you remember, the Tri-Cities chapter which was in a very serious trouble and there was a lot of discussion about how we as a regional management team could help that chapter and there was a lot of activity in trying to help them. Unfortunately, it just wasn't meant to be and the charter had to be lifted. I think it is a tremendous session for planning the regional activities. What I did after the regional planning session is I visited the chapters throughout the year. I would take the regional objectives and discuss those with the chapters and let the chapter members know how their input really build and make the regional objectives possible. If the chapters understand what the regional and the Society objectives are and how they fit into it and how they can influence it and make a difference they become part of the region and part of the Society. If they can see the entire picture then I think it is a real tool to improve the chapter operation. I think it is a great session. There is one region that expands it that I know of and there may be more now, but I think it is Region Twelve, the Florida area. Basically most of the chapters are in Florida and I think one in Puerto Rico. They invite all of the chapter presidents to this meeting. They use it then as a tool for developing not only the regional plans but work this back to the chapters so that all the chapters understand how they fit into it. I think that I really great if you have a region that you can get all the chapter presidents there. Region VII obviously, as you all know, has 15 chapters that spread all the way from Kentucky to Florida. It is very difficult to get all of these people together. However, some of the presidents are invited to attend. They are all invited to attend and those that can try to make it. It is a great management tool and I think the real benefit is to provide a cohesive plan for the region up to the Society and also to the chapters and see how it all fits together.

A.B.

Thank you Ray. Jim, we mentioned Dave Lavine awhile ago. I know you probably served since you chaired for Dave when he was regional director and Ray I know you knew him well too, so if you feel like you want to add something to what Jim had to say feel free to do so. Jim, I wanted you to give us a little of your thoughts and some of the ideas or things that went through your mind relating back to when you served with Dave.

J.S.

I guess the first regional chairman that I had acquaintance with was Don Nichols out of Nashville. Then there was another gentleman by the name of Smith and then Dave Lavine. Dave visited the Louisville chapter the year I was president. The first time I went to a CRC, I believe it was in Birmingham, and Dave was heavily involved there. Dave was the type of man you just learned to love. He was a good friend. I was deeply bereft over his untimely death. You felt like you had lost a brother. He was just that type of man. He had a very strong influence within the region and in building the region. I think there was a real turn around, the professionalism that was coming into the Society came in with Dave. He was a great contributor in that area. He was a great contributor to Carrier. I think in Carrier and my personal knowledge of his work, and we were somewhat competitive so we had to observe the rules, the legal rules. The Radio Shack computer programs that Carrier came out with, I had an idea that Dave had the great influence on buying 300 computers and putting them into the engineering department. Out of that 300 computers came those programs. I was the original system designer of the General Electric zone lines, all over the world today. It is a shame they went out of that business but I regret it. Carrier after a number of years and I think Dave was influential in their entry into that market. He was great salesman, a technical man and ASHRAE advocate and a good personal friend.

A.B.

Ray, last night we had on display out there some sign-up sheets on our Region VII regional dinners. First of all, I wonder if I can get you to explain to everyone just exactly what we mean to the people who haven't been to a winter or summer meeting and attended one of those, give a little bit off an idea and let them know basically when it was started, and you might want to elaborate on some of the fun we all have there.

R.T.

I believe that Region VII dinners, some of the regions perhaps had dinners prior to the Region VII, but I believe the first one probably occurred in Detroit and that was about 1978. I looked at the sign-up sheets yesterday and I noticed that at that first dinner we had 16 people. Dave Lavine was the regional chairman at that time and I recall that Dave got several of us together and asked us to go around and beat the bushes at the meeting to get the Region VII people to sign up for the dinner. I recall that Dave was on the hook for having a certain number of people at the dinner and if we didn't get that number Dave had talked about how he was going to have to have some out-of-pocket expenses that he either didn't care for or need. So we did get about 16 people to the dinner. Dave's wife Arlene was an artist and she did the calligraphy for the sign-up sheet, the poster that was put up on the bulletin board and had people to sign it. That was kind of an interesting aspect of the regional dinners because those of you who attend the Society meetings, either winter or the annual meeting, and you notice the poster sign-up you will see that there is everything from a scrap of paper to sign-up for the regional dinner to the very best and those always are the Region VII. It is kind of a contest to try to improve the posters from year to year. Bob Logston followed with improving the posters and then Dave Butler. I was fortunate enough to have some artists up in the drafting room at General Electric and so I followed suit. Each year we tried to improve these. The real benefit of the dinner is not particularly the food but a lot of it comes earlier than the food when the fellows are testing their right elbows to see if they still have vertical motion, and then after the dinner and the camaraderie that is developed at the dinners. I think probably we reached a high in Dallas when we had, those of you that have copies of the history that

Dale passed out yesterday, you will notice that our very sedate regional officers were captured going down the sliding board in this restaurant and some of them made a little impact when they hit the floor, but it didn't really stop any of them. Region VII, I think some of the regions are a little more sophisticated perhaps but I don't know of any region that has more fun than Region VII. Again, it is not only for the members, but the wives. The wives just enjoy tremendously getting together with the other wives. And it has grown. It grew from 16 at the first one and I believe at the Dallas meeting we has something like 65 and at the meeting in Ottawa we had about 58. So it has grown and everybody looks forward to it and it all started with Dave Lavine and, of course, followed by Bob Logston and each one tried to outdo the other and I think they did.

A.B.

One other thing I would like to ask. Would either one of you like to add anything to this interview? I'll give you a chance first Jim.

J.S.

I see a few gray hairs out there but I also see some fold that are quite a bit younger than I am and I think you become interested in history as you age and look back at what has happened in your life. As I look back, ASHRAE has had a great influence in my life. I was one of the earliest of the energy watchers. I had a climate for General Electric watching energy beginning in 1968, and about 1970 doing the annual report on why aren't we an absorption system and so forth. So when the energy hit came it was natural to gravitate toward ASHRAE. I was a moderator on the ASHRAE 90-75 seminars. I had the opportunity of doing seminars in Baton Rouge, Montgomery, St. Louis, Louisville, four of them. It has just been a wonderful broadening experience for me. I am a technocrat. I am not a polished speaker and never pretended to be but you can get up and say what you think and people will respect it. You may not be right but they will still respect you. That is just a great environment to be in. I commend it greatly and encourage our youngsters to come along in it and develop themselves and the Society. It is still something to look forward to. Now that I am retired I still look forward to it.

A.B.

Thank you Jim. Ray, would you like to make a comment?

R.T.

Just a couple of comments here. Digressing just a little bit, I believe that Dan Houston did some of the regional historical work prior to Dale. Dale I believe took over the job as regional historian while I was the regional chairman and I knew immediately that as soon as Dale got on the job that things were going to move forward, and I just really take my hat off to Dale for the job he has done. And it hasn't been an easy one because we have had some dialogues about how you get information from the chapters. Some of the chapters have responded quite well, others I think have not. But Dale is a bulldog and if you don't give him what he asks for you can bet your boots he is going to be back. He is not bashful and that was one of the attributes I saw in him and I really commend him for the job he has done. If you can think about the amount of work that went into putting together the book that he presented yesterday to the delegates, you just have to look at it and realize the amount of activity that had gone into that just getting it together and printing it. But the real activity is securing this information from the chapters. I know that had been difficult getting it from the chapters. It is even difficult getting it from fellows like Bob Logston and myself because Dale would call or write to me and I would say absolutely Dale, that is the first thing I will do tomorrow and two or three other things would come in on top of it and all of a

sudden I would realize that I had not fulfilled my commitment. But we finally got there. I urge all the chapters, the historians' to work with Dale and next year is going to be even greater than this year. That is a tremendous start and I think Region VII is very fortunate in having Dale to pull this together along with Ann's help. The other thing is I would like to close by echoing the things that Jim said about what he has gotten out of ASHRAE and just say that I have gotten tenfold the good from ASHRAE that I have ever been able to contribute back to ASHRAE and I have just enjoyed it very much, every aspect of it. The technical knowledge, the management skills that I have been able to develop from it and utilize on the job and I too am not retired. I should say semi-retired because the day that I retired about two and a half years ago, the next day I went back under contract as a consultant so I still work part-time. Part-time with GE, part-time with ASHRAE, part-time with other businesses and a little bit with my family.

A.B.

Thank you Ray. That concludes this interview.