

Celebrating Over 55 Years of Service to the Plumbing, Mechanical and Construction Industry



The businessmen who formed the Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County Master Plumbers Association did so to have an organization through which contractors could resolve many problems and address ongoing concerns. When a dispute arose, whether labor, suppliers or customers, contractors were on their own to resolve it.

In July of 1949 contractors in Washtenaw County met and organized as the Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County Master Plumbers Association. At that time, they became affiliated with the Michigan Association of Master Plumbers. The Association united individual contractors with little power into a unified voice for the Industry.

The Greater Michigan PMC celebrated the history and numerous accomplishments of the organization at an Anniversary Celebration in November, at the Dale Fisher Galleries. What follows is a short chronicle of the forming of the PMC and a report on the Celebration.



After the war, the pent-up demand for civilian housing and consumer goods spurred a march toward prosperity. A unified voice for those earning their living from this Industry was necessary to bring the contractor on a plane with the unions and governmental agencies working to regulate the Industry. The clearest evidence of that was on May 1st, 1950 when the first agreement between the United Association of Journeymen Plumbers and Steamfitters, Local Union No. 190 and the Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County Master Plumbers Association was signed.



Even with the Korean War breaking out in 1950, there was only partial mobilization of the country. Life went on for most people and most businesses.

Through the Board and Committee structure the Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County Master Plumbers Association began to make an impact. The organization was meeting its principal purpose – the promotion of the plumbing, heating, cooling business, soliciting additional labor forces for the area and providing members with up-to-date information on new laws and regulations affecting their businesses.

State and National Organization Affiliations - Members of the local organization also became involved in the activities of the Michigan Master Plumbers Association, helping the Industry not just locally but statewide, making an impact on issues that would affect them back home.

PMC members were part of a contingent of twenty-five plumbing contractors from southeastern Michigan who visited the Kohler Co. factories at Kohler, Wisconsin, to see how the plumbing fixtures they install are made.



Accompanying the contractors were representatives of the Nelson Company, of Royal Oak and Ann Arbor, distributors of Kohler plumbing fixtures and fittings, and A. J. Mickus, manager of the Detroit branch sales office of Kohler Co. The group-33 men in all-made the trip by bus, traveling to Kohler on Thursday and returning on Saturday.

Shown in Kohler's huge pottery area examining

fixtures freshly cast from clay in plaster of paris molds are, from left, Tom McDonald of Universal Plumbing & Heating, Ann Arbor; Richard Laflan of Towler & Notar Inc., Ypsilanti; Vern Smith, Young and Ost, Milan; John Darr of Boone & Darr Inc., Ann Arbor; Les Davis of Nelson Company; Gene Cummins, Hutzl Plumbing Co., Ann Arbor; Richard Wedge, University of Michigan Engineering Department, Ann Arbor; Don Darr, branch manager at Ann Arbor for Nelson Company; Don Young of Robert G. Young Plumbing, Detroit; and Ray Striegel, Kohler Company.

Throughout the years, the PMC has been an active and important part of our state and national organizations. We were the first MPMCA Chapter to be awarded the “Local Association of the Year Award”, and no chapter has received the award more than our group. Association members have received the largest number of MPMCA Contractors of the Year Awards: Chuck Gatecliff, Lloyd Zill, Duane Branch and Michael Brunett.

First Program in the Country to become part of a Community College - The Apprenticeship Program took on a new look. In order to progress and have the apprentice receive the necessary skilled training, the Committee looked for a new facility. Talks were pursued with Washtenaw Community College. The prospects of building a new structure and ways and means of program administration were being reviewed.

An agreement was reached between members of the Association, Local 190 and individual representatives from Washtenaw Community College for Apprenticeship Program affiliation. The Plumbers/Fitters Joint Apprenticeship Program moved to Washtenaw Community College in November of 1973.



Joint Apprenticeship Committee - L. to R. – Bruce Towler, Neil Bucholz, UA 190, Don Noffsinger, Robert Fair, Kyle Fuller, Louis Boone, PMC Members

At that time there were fifty-two apprentices in the program, thirty-two attending night classes and twenty attending day classes. A new group of thirty apprentices, including eight minorities, were selected from a list of 117 who made application and were indentured into the Program.

Degree To Be Part of Program - Discussions were held on the ability to have credit for the courses being taught at the apprenticeship school, even though it was a private program. After the program was settled and began working effectively through WCC it would be revisited. Later in the relationship with WCC, this became the first program to receive college credit for training. With an additional five courses from WCC our apprentices were able to get not only a journeyman's card, but an Associate Degree.

PMC Joins MCAA - PMC became affiliated with the Mechanical Contractors Association of America (MCAA). It was the decision of our Board of Directors that MCAA would provide an extremely valuable additional resource to our members. As an all union-employing organization, the MCAA was seen as the place for our members to be.



MCAA President John Dillon, MCAA Past President Charles Carlson, PMC President Lloyd Zill, Hutzel Plumbing & Heating, John Darr, Boone & Darr, Inc.

Coalition Building One of the PMC's Greatest Strengths - Throughout the years, the PMC has established coalitions and committees that have the luxury of being some of the country's most impressive. All are housed at the PMC office. A few of them are:



Greater Michigan Labor-Management Industry Alliance – Then referred to as the Washtenaw County Mechanical Industry Promotional Committee, comprised of the Washtenaw County Association of Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors and Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 190, they sponsored an Economic Development Luncheon in early April. Featured speakers for the luncheon were Lieutenant Governor Martha Griffiths (**pictured left**) and Speaker of the Michigan House of Representatives, Representative Gary Owen. The program

was scheduled as an effort to inform our members on the upcoming High Tech onslaught.



Owners-Contractors Liaison Committee -

The Public Owners-Contractors Liaison is comprised of representatives of the local construction trade associations and representatives of the local owners, i.e., University of Michigan, City of Ann Arbor, Eastern Michigan University, Ann Arbor Public Schools, etc. Lieutenant Governor James F. Brickley was the featured

speaker at one of the Public Owners-Contractors Liaison meetings hosted by PMC. The Lieutenant Governor spoke on the State’s economy as it pertains to the Construction Industry. The Owner-Contractor Committee, now 35 years old, continues to work and address local concerns.

Labor-Management Construction Unity Board (CUB)

– CUB sponsored the initial presentation of CUB’s Goals and Objectives – featuring the Industry’s Memorandum of Understanding that provides for no work stoppages. The meeting was attended by owners/users of construction from throughout the state. Featured speakers for the event included Michigan Speaker of the House of Representatives Gary Owen. The announcement of a no work stoppage pact between the areas building trade unions and construction management brought high praise for its progressive efforts to improve labor-management relations and to hold down construction costs. ***CUB was honored by the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Association as the longest continuous running labor-management organization in the country.***



Michigan House Speaker Gary Owen

A few of the other organizations that we have been intricately involved in and supported, but are not housed at our offices include:



Construction Innovation Forum - The Construction Innovation Forum’s NOVA Award was unveiled to more than 300 people from every segment of the construction industry.

The PMC Association, through our President, was instrumental in the formation of CIF and in the Award



Dinner presentation. David B. Perini, Chairman and CEO of the Perini Corporation, Boston, gave the keynote address. In his remarks, he reminded the attendees of just how innovative this country’s construction industry has been, and he also admonished the industry for failure to spread innovation. “All too frequently, we fail to capture and communicate our own innovations”. Today, CIF continues to flourish and showcase the construction industry.

The Ann Arbor Student Homebuilding Program – The program began as the dream of representatives of the school system, local businesses, and banking representatives. They believed that high school students could, with proper supervision and assistance, build a quality house. The history of the organization began in 1968 when Earl Shaffer, the Consultant for Vocational Education from the Washtenaw County Intermediate School District, contacted Henry Landau, H. S. Landau Homebuilders, who then involved members of the PMC, including outgoing Chairman Lloyd Zill, and many others in the local construction industry. All felt the idea had great possibilities. The PMC became an integral part of its formation, and continues that support and activity today. The rest is history. Today the program has completed its 35th home, and through the UA 190 Joint Pension Funds we have helped finance the program beginning the development of a small subdivision.



40th Anniversary - The Association members gathered to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Association. At a luncheon attended by contractors, owners, union officials, and State of Michigan dignitaries, we discussed the growth and many changes of the Association throughout the years.



Michigan House Representative Kirk Profit presenting Lloyd Zill with House Resolution



Those present had a great time reminiscing and talking about the amazing changes in the industry and Association throughout the years. A number spoke about retiring, but one or two are still here today, still working at our 55th Anniversary.



Total Systems Responsibility - Working with construction owners to educate them on the benefits of utilizing contractors who can handle all portions of their mechanical project is a primary function of the PMC. They need to

hire a contractor who is trained for Total Systems Responsibility. TSR is an important issue to Mechanical Contractors, we were particularly proud to have the Mechanical Contractors Association of America's President Sam Shuman in attendance as one of our featured speakers.



Pictured Above L. to R. – Ed Farber, MCAA TSR Committee, Sam Shuman, MCAA President