

History

I really enjoyed how the interview went last month so I decided to do another interview for this month's Sounder. I decided to interview Mr. Ray Schmitt of Daikin AC (Americas) Inc. and once again, the interview went extremely well and we both had a great time.



What made you become an engineer? My Uncles-they said to me “Raymond you have to learn a trade”. I went to Sewanhaka High School to become an Electrician; however, two uncles who were tin-knockers said to me “Raymond, be a doctor, be a lawyer, but don’t get into HVAC” and being a rebellious youth - I got into the HVAC industry. I was the first member of my family to go to college.

Where did you go to school? SUNY Farmingdale, for my Associates in Air Conditioning Technology where I met my wife, the love of my life, and started to build a good foundation for a great career.

Q. When did you graduate? June 1968

Q. When and where was your first engineering job? My first job was in 1968 at the then York Division of the Borg Warner Corporation, in York PA. I was in the Research and Development Department working on equipment development teams for their products and with system testing and code compliance.

Q. What are some of your most memorable projects you worked on? Master Recessed Systems in Melville, Long Island. I was hired as an outside engineer (moonlighting) by Energy Administration Inc., to design the system. At the time, I was working as a Sales Engineer for a Air Pak Products-a Manufacturers Rep. Naturally, some of my products were specified. When Energy Administration, Inc. hired me as a Project Manager, I supervised that job in the field after I “value engineered” it. I even approved my own submittal data!

My first day as a Project Manager at Energy Administration was a disaster. I had a Large Roof Fan rig at an industrial building. The crane was setting up in the parking lot and the ground gave way under the crane. I jokingly asked the crane operator if he could use the crane to get himself out of the hole- he was not amused and I thought I was going to be fired!

The helicopter lift at the renovation of the Walt Whitman Mall - I was the Project Manager. We had to remove all the old equipment off the roof areas and replace it with new equipment. Prior to the lift, I opened a piece of old equipment on the roof and had a bunch of pigeons flew out of it. The helicopter lift was right after a nor’easter and the weather was still bad but the helicopter pilot said he could do it. The operation was a huge success; I felt both relieved and very proud.

When I was a young engineer at Kool Air Systems I was sent to the Freeport Doctor’s hospital to sketch a boiler room. The Facilities Engineer directed me to a boiler room and I sketched it. However, something did not seem right! I went back to the office and explained how there were major dimensional differences that I could not explain. My company brought me back to the hospital (which had two boiler rooms) and directed me to the Boiler Room that I was supposed to sketch...

Q. What were two of the most interesting projects you worked on? Corydon Auto-fold in Hauppauge, the building looked like an oversized Taco Bell. They cut trimmed and folded children’s paper posters with automated machinery. Most of the paper scraps were sucked up by large fans. The paper scraps fell into a collection pit where they were automatically bailed. The air was directed to the HVAC’s return ductwork where it was cleaned with high efficiency filters. Watching this highly automated plant in action system was amazing and the use of the HVAC system to remove the waste paper while keeping the production floor relatively clean.

History (Cont'd. from Page 10)

Marchon Eyewear in Melville was a great Design-Build job. The Owner, Jeff White, was actively involved in the Design Process. He wanted to provide his employees with pleasant and comfortable working conditions. The interior finishes were fabulous and his state of the art BMS was one his favorite toys. The most interesting part of this industry to me is the people! I enjoy meeting and working with all these wonderful people – even the crazies! It keeps things fun and interesting.

Q. What ASHRAE positions have you held? Every Long Island ASHRAE Chapter chair on the way to becoming Chapter President

Q. When were you the chapter president? 2001

Q. What do you think are some of your best accomplishments with ASHRAE? I instituted Monthly ASHRAE Breakfast Meetings when I was Programs Chair and working at Wales Darby. Brian Darby was very supportive and allowed ASHRAE to hold some of the meetings at the Wales Darby Training Room. The attendance at these breakfast meetings, at times, outdrew the attendance of the Monthly Chapter meetings. These additional meetings enabled the LI Chapter to get additional PAOE points.

Q. Did you have a mentor? My former employer, my friend and my mentor-Leo Pertschuk, of Kool Air Systems, KSI Mechanical Contractors, and Energy Administration had a huge influence on my career. He was always available for consultation. One his favorite lines was his incentive plan – you work hard, your work smart...or you're fired! Leo was a very creative professional gentleman who always supported ASHRAE LI Chapter.

Q. How has this industry changed in your tenure? Speed! Communications are now instantaneous and people want everything yesterday.

Q. Which outside influences have made the biggest change on the industry? Computers and Cell phones... especially the Smart phones! Accurate calculations in minutes instead of hours... the ability to transmit data in seconds rather than days...everything is faster more efficient. There is very little lost business time during travel.

Q. Which technology has made the biggest change to the industry? Computers, Building Automation Systems, emphasis on energy efficiency will change design decisions, and the impact of better insulated buildings.

Q. Where do you see this industry going? When I came into the HVAC industry, I received a great deal of guidance from caring experienced professionals. Today, many young engineers are forced to learn by a process of trial and error. This industry has gotten faster – it is all about productivity and immediate profitability. We need to invest, by teaching and guiding, in our industry's future – the young design engineers.

Q. What do you think will be a game changer with the newer technologies? The “net zero” building design, with new construction materials, will be very interesting and all the new technologies - like VRV , VFD's, Condensing Boilers, Chillers, and Energy Recovery Ventilators, that blend energy efficiency and human comfort. The next generation of Automatic Temperature Control Systems with their effect on Ventilation and Human Comfort will be very interesting as they attempt to make all of the individual pieces of equipment interact effectively and efficiently.

Q. Any pearls of wisdom to the current engineers out there? Share information, develop resources, and ask questions! Attack the task at hand. Do not use a “shortcut” unless you understand its derivation. For the older engineers, reach out to the younger engineers and share your wisdom and experience with them. For the younger engineers, seek out the older engineers ask them questions and benefit from their experience. In addition, share your knowledge with them. Apply yourself to this Industry....make it better!

Please remember to send in any old ASHRAE photographs, papers, articles, and speeches of people who have been through the Long Island Chapter of ASHRAE. I would like to upload this information to our chapter's website. Everything sent in will be returned.

Charlie Lesniak
Chapter Historian