

The Value of My MAPPA/APPA Journey



By Jerry Carlson, Secretary-Treasurer

My personal MAPPA/APPA journey has been valuable and rewarding for me. During the past 25 years, I have been able to meet many colleagues, business partners, and APPA staff members that I can call my friends!

To begin with, my collegiate coursework focused mostly on accounting, business administration, management and marketing, and business law classes. After all, my degrees were in finance, law, and accounting. Although my coursework prepared me for the business side of facilities, it did not prepare me for the physical side of the university.

I graduated in 1980 and began working at Illinois State University as an Accountant II in the Athletic Department. Through my various campus interactions, I was fortunate to meet the associate vice president for facilities and planning, Richard Runner. Over time, Dick and I grew to be colleagues and friends. In 1987, Illinois State University began designing and building a new basketball arena. The new building was scheduled to open January 1, 1989. The facility needed an assistant director for concession operations, building entertainment contract management, and merchandise sales. In the fall of 1988, Dick Runner asked me to apply for the assistant director's position at the arena. I did and was fortunate to have landed that position.

THE APPA INTRODUCTION

It was my first building-management related experience. Dick apparently liked what I was doing, and 20 months later asked that I apply to head the work management center at the physical plant (facilities). It was this position that introduced me to MAPPA (Midwestern Region APPA) and APPA. Jim Demarest was the executive director at the time. He was a big supporter of APPA and a member of the professional development committee. When I started my new position, we had three people

manually typing work orders on IBM Selectric typewriters. Jim asked that I work with Bob McMains to tour campuses to move from a manual process to an automated way to issue work orders. In the spring of 1991, Bob and I went to the University of Notre Dame, the University of Iowa, Northern Illinois University, and the University of Wisconsin to look at their operations and to glean information on what software they were using so that we could set up an automated work order system of our own. While at Notre Dame, we met Gary Shumaker and Mike Smith. We looked at their "Chief" computerized maintenance management system (CMMS) software. It was one of many software offerings for work order creation.

Later that fall, Jim encouraged me to attend the MAPPA conference to be held in Minneapolis. I flew to Chicago, changed planes and found out that Gary and Mike were on the same plane and were going to MAPPA too. This was my first introduction to MAPPA and APPA. I was impressed with the conference and knew I had found a home and a new career in facilities management. While at MAPPA, I was able to network with other facility professionals. I met so many facilities professionals who were eager to share what they knew and offer assistance if I had questions. Through the years, I was able to grow my position into the director for administrative services, and developing these initial contacts made that transition easier.

At subsequent MAPPA and APPA conferences, I learned about all of the educational opportunities and publications APPA had to offer. I started building my own library, first purchasing the Body of Knowledge (BOK), then adding the *Operational Guidelines for Educational Facilities: Custodial, Maintenance, and Grounds*, and adding other publications as they were created. I was able to attend and graduate from the APPA Institute for Facilities Management and

the Leadership Academy. In October 2013 I was able to obtain my CEFP.

Over the years, my MAPPA/APPa connections helped me out tremendously. I felt I needed to get more involved and had expressed interest in assisting MAPPA in some way. In 2000, some of the MAPPA board members approached me and asked if I would be interested in running for MAPPA treasurer. I was flattered that this group asked me to run for a MAPPA board position, and I gladly did! I served as MAPPA's treasurer for two terms (four years). At the end of my term as treasurer, I was asked again to run for MAPPA's president-elect position. I gladly accepted that challenge and became the president-elect. In the fall of 2005 I became MAPPA's president. I was installed at the MAPPA meeting in Minneapolis. How interesting that my first MAPPA experience was 14 years prior in Minnesota, and now I was fortunate to become the regional president.

The MAPPA meeting in 2006 was hosted by Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) and scheduled to be held in downtown Indianapolis. In the early spring I changed positions and moved from Illinois State University to become director of maintenance services at Butler University in Indianapolis. What a coincidence! As MAPPA's president, IUPUI invited me to their monthly organizational host committee meetings. Emily Wren assembled a great group of individuals to help with the logistics of hosting a regional meeting.

SEIZING OPPORTUNITIES

My first APPa Board experience was in 2007 as MAPPA's junior representative to the APPa Board. That was an eye-opener for me. As with the regional boards, APPa's Board consists solely of volunteers. I was impressed with the APPa Board. These were facility professionals and leaders in the higher education industry. Their sole purpose was to promote the facilities profession and to enhance the APPa membership experience.

At the end of my year as senior representative, I knew that my time with the MAPPA and APPa Boards were coming to a close. I did not want that relationship to end. John Ott was serving as the MAPPA representative to APPa's Awards and Recognition Committee (ARC). He wanted to move to the Professional Affairs Committee (PAC), and asked me to serve on the ARC. I did for three years and then moved to the PAC. At the end of my appointment to the PAC, Chuck Scott, Ruthann Manlet, and Brandon Baswell asked if I would

consider running for APPa's Secretary-Treasurer position. Once again I seized the opportunity. I was both fortunate and grateful that the membership elected me to this position. APPa is near and dear to my heart. The more I put into being involved, the more I have received, tenfold!

MAKE OF IT WHAT YOU WILL

Membership in APPa is what you make of it. There are so many opportunities to participate. You can network with colleagues to bounce ideas off of them, or find like issues to discuss and problem solve. You can take advantage of the course offerings through the Institute, the Leadership Academy, the Supervisor's Toolkit, the Drive-In Workshops, the Credentialing Program, etc. You can attend local, regional, and international meetings. You can use the publications offered to research and find solutions to your issues or concerns. You can participate in the Facilities Performance Indicators (FPI) survey by entering your institution's information and then being able to see how your peer and aspirant institutions compare to you. You can request that a Facilities Management Evaluation Program (FMEP) be conducted at your institution to measure your organization's overall health and obtain suggestions for improvements. You can volunteer to serve at the local or regional chapters or on the international level.

Being a MAPPA/APPa member has helped me tremendously over the past 25 years. I have been able to use many opportunities to network and expand my facilities education through the Institute and the Academy, participated in local Drive-In Workshop deliveries, attended several regional and international meetings, participated on the regional board and the international board, and I finally have the opportunity to serve as APPa's Secretary-Treasurer. It is an honor to serve this great organization. I encourage you all to seek opportunities to participate at whatever level you deem appropriate for you.

As George B. Wright once said, "All of us are smarter than any one of us." I am APPa; we are APPa! 🇺🇸

Jerry Carlson is director of maintenance services at Butler University, Indianapolis, IN. He is APPa's Secretary-Treasurer, and can be reached at gcarlson@butler.edu.

REMINDER

APPa's 2016-2017 dues billing begins mid-February.