

Historical Note No. 4: The Origin of Society Chapters

As the membership of the International System Safety Society began to include those living outside of the Greater Los Angeles area, it became evident that there was a need for chapters in order to provide a more direct interaction of individuals attempting to understand and implement the nebulous field of system safety. As previously noted, nearly all the charter and earliest subsequent members of the Society were associated with the Southern California Aerospace/Air Force complex. During the first few years, there was little thought given to the need for chapters, since most members lived in the L.A. area and could attend the annual Society dinner meetings.

As time went on, the need to find qualified individuals to respond to the contractual requirements of MIL-S-38130 and other system safety requirements challenged contractors elsewhere. At the same time, the surge by governmental agencies to initiate system safety practices accelerated. This need led to the recruitment of many of the early system safety practitioners for key positions in other locations, especially in the DC and other Northeast locations. This altered the demographics of Society membership, and enthused the desire for local chapters.

The initial recorded reference to the formation of chapters is noted in the October 1965 issue of *Hazard Prevention*. In his "Note from the President" column, George Haviland addressed the idea of "...forming various chapters from different geographical areas." He further invited "...any group wishing to apply for recognition as a Chapter of this Society to submit to head-

quarters (1) the results of a legal election of officers, (2) a copy of the by-laws, (3) a membership roster, (4) a statement of the purpose and goals of the chapter." Chapters were advised to collect local dues, as the Society had no funds for that purpose; the annual dues were still only \$5. The same HP issue also noted that a chapter was in the process of being formed in the Seattle area.

The initial chapter granted official recognition by the Board of Directors was the Northwest Chapter (Seattle) in January 1966, with Gordon Willard as Chairman. The second Chapter, in April 1966, was the Northeast Chapter, with Sam Canale as Chairman. These were followed soon by the Northern and Southern California Chapters.

One of the unique features of these initial chapters was the extent of geographic area involved. With no other Chapters having claim, their chapter boundaries were constrained only by what was felt feasible. While the geographical focus of the NE Chapter was in the Philadelphia area, members resided from Maine to Virginia. This was an obvious difficulty. Within several years, the NE Chapter had helped spawn the Washington DC and New England Chapters.

Following the initiation of the Society Conferences in 1972, several international chapters were organized. In 1977, as Society President, I had the privilege to be the guest speaker at chapter meetings in West Germany, Holland and France.

There are many noteworthy Society-related accomplishments initiated by Chapter activities. Far more than I can list here, but to note only a few: our double sigma logo (NW); the initiation of Society Conferences (DC) and providing for placing Society Publication on CD (TV). ●