

The

MECHANICAL'S BULL-SESSION

19



33

CLASS of '30
UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

MECHANICAL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

Iowa City

February 1, 1934

Members of the Class of 1930:

The time is here again to "Lend thine ears" as Ben Bernie might say; and since a much more optimistic atmosphere prevails at the present time than existed during the appearance of your last volume, perhaps it is not out of place to predict the "Mosta of the Besta" for each of you in the near future.

As most of you may know, Mr. Keller has been on leave the first semester as engineer for the C.W.A. and has been covering himself with glory. During his absence, Mr. Thoren has carried part of his load, and in addition Jud White of the Class of '32 was called back to his Alma Mater to view the educational process from the other side of the educational fence. Mr. Caywood is working on apparatus to determine the stresses in an automobile crank shaft. Mr. Barnes continues to lead the department in publications, and has recently published articles in a League of Nations publication and the "Mechanical World" of London. Mr. O'Brien continues to revamp his work in manufacturing processes and is now trying to teach one course purely by demonstration. Mr. Thoren has published a laboratory manual, is working on the knocking of automotive mixtures of gasoline and alcohol, and is trying to determine the aerodynamic characteristics of the autogyro. Mr. Fielding is developing his work in applied metallurgy and is installing five individual polishing machines for specimens. Mr. Ekstrand is now on part time and radiates cheerfulness and rare wisdom on the third floor of the new laboratory.

We expect to open our new laboratory for inspection on April 13 and 14th. There will be a formal program in which engineers from various parts of the country and faculty from other institutions will take part. Mark these dates on your calender and come back for a visit. You will hear more of the details at a later date.

During the year we have received a recording "Foxboro" flow-meter as a gift, and have promises of several donations of oil-burners and warm air furnaces.

We have had personal visits here with Nelson and Bergstrom and hope that more of you will return for the dedication of the new laboratory building.

Wishing you all a most happy and successful year, I am

Sincerely yours,

Huber O. Croft

Head of the Department

DEPARTMENT OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

The State University of Iowa

Iowa City

107 Engineering Bldg.

January 31, 1934

Mechanical Engineering Class of 1930:

I will deviate from the usual custom of writing news of the Engineering College and tell you about recent happenings in the A.S.M.E. With practically all of you in engineering work, I believe you will be particularly interested in the recent actions of this national organization.

At the annual meeting of the A.S.M.E. held in New York City last December, the society outlined plans for the foundation of Junior Sections, groups through the United States composed of and managed by young Mechanical Engineers. At this meeting the older members also went on record as favoring the appointment of young men to membership on national committees of the Society.

When you were undergraduates here we urged you to participate in the affairs of the Student Branch and we suggested that upon graduation you become junior members of the national organization and participate in the affairs of the Society through your nearest local Section. We still think you will profit by identifying yourself with this organization. You are engineers and this is your professional society. You are young and perhaps do not at this time, hold a responsible engineering position, but this does not mean that you are not interested in engineering affairs.

May I suggest that you get in contact with your nearest local section of the A.S.M.E.-----there are 78 sections throughout the United States. Attend the meetings. Get acquainted. Start something. The older members of the group will welcome your interest and enthusiasm.

I am wishing every one of you the greatest happiness and prosperity in 1934.

Yours very truly,

Ralph M. Barnes
Ralph M. Barnes

702 East Second St.
Duluth, Minnesota
January 31, 1934

Dear Classmates:

Until a few days ago when I received Bergies' letter I supposed that Wallie was still on the job as schoolmarm, and planning to get out this letter as usual. The news of his illness comes as a complete surprise to me and I am truly sorry to hear of it.

My information regarding the rest of you is just about equally complete in each case, from which you may deduce that the present eagerly awaited letter will be almost 100% news so far as I am concerned.

At the last writing I was just starting to sell "Nation's Business" for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, a job so similar to my old one of selling maps that I sometimes have difficulty remembering that I have made any change. (That pun was unintentional and I submit my apologies.) I have little to say for either of them except that both have enabled me to save a little money each year.

I haven't yet forgotten that I am an engineer by training if by nothing else, and I have vague hopes that the 1935 letter may find me back nearer the fold again. I can assure you that the parting of the ways between myself and my present nomadic existence will not find me shedding any tears.

Just a few days ago a letter arrived from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in which mention was made of the possibility of my being offered an Honorary Fellowship there. I had to read it several times to believe it and even yet I suspect that they have me confused with some "scholar" whose name is similar to mine although those beginning with "A" were scarce in our roll call.

Realizing full well that this is probably another illustration of the old adage "Many are called but few are chosen," I still feel constrained to remark that if I happen to be one of the chosen few I'll very likely accept. It would mean another year in school and some expense but if they will accept the commodity dollar which will no doubt be circulating by that time, I might make it.

I won't bore you with my travel itinerary. Its just the same old chronicle of flitting hither and yon doing about the same things in each place.

Being a sucker as most salesmen are, I was persuaded to buy a new car last fall. Its a Chevrolet and since none of the class is working for General Motors, I will say frankly that I consider it a pretty tinny batch of mechanism.

Within my own family about the only event of importance is the birth of my second son on September 7, 1933. He is obviously destined to take the place of Joe Humphries as the yells with most astonishing volume as well as frequency. It will be quite unnecessary for me to describe again my emotions etc. upon discovery of his impending arrival. I merely refer you back to the first of our series of letters in which I believe I covered a parallel situation more or less thoroughly.

"Come up and see me some time." It hasn't been colder than 40 below here yet this winter. But whats the use, by the time you got here I'd be somewhere else anyway.

Happy and prosperous New Year to every one.

Yours Sincerely,

Lawrence Allen

Mediapolis, Iowa

Dear Classmates,

First of all I want to correct an erroneous impression, I am not back in school, am just a poor lad trying to get along.

To begin at the beginning I started the year working for Montgomery Ward & Co., in their store at Burlington. Having charge of hardware, plumbing, lawn and garden tools, and farmers supplies departments. But after two months of long hours, small pay and plenty of grief we parted company. The experience was very good, and one can learn a great deal about chain stores in a short time.

Falling back on politics my next job was with the county engineering department, which lasted for three months. I worked as an extra on profile work on the laying out of new roads.

The next job which came my way came as rather a surprise and was with the John Deere Plow Co. of Moline in their company store here in Iowa City. Under the code I am classified as an outside service man, but in reality do everything from that to office work. My work here ends the first of March and then it will be back home again.

The balance of the year was spent at home helping my father in his implement store. During that time we built several truck and trailer bodies, including stock racks and transfer bodies.

Financially the year shows no gains, but the experience and contacts made are good assets. Not to mention that I have enjoyed another year of bachelorhood and have contracted no worries as to the future.

Yours truly,

M. A. Bergsten

4801 Newport Avenue
Detroit, Michigan
February 9, 1934

Dear Gang:

Well, if we had stayed on at dear old Iowa until now we all would have had a Ph. D. by now. However I am not sorry I graduated when I did.

I sometimes wish I were a little nearer to Iowa so that I could get back more often. I think I will be back for Home-coming this year and hope to see a lot of the Gang there while we watch Iowa win. I saw the Iowa-Michigan game this year and it was sure tough to see them lose, especially when my boss comes from Michigan.

Things seem to be picking up quite a bit in Detroit and our Company is no exception. I finished my Student course the first part of last year and have been doing a little of everything from tearing down turbines to holding a good hand in euchre a noon time.

For the last two months I have been working on zoned air control for the new 600#, 825 F boilers we are installing. By this, I mean we are going to divide the fuel bed into 72 zones and control the amount of air to each zone. In this way the capacity of the boiler is increased 15 per cent and the fuel

bed is kept even at all ratings. At present we are working on the controlling and calibration of the Venturi tubes for this work.

Our next job is to calibrate six Venturi tubes to be used on the new boilers and turbines. This takes work from some young College Professor who generally does this for us, but as you no doubt know by now, it's every man for himself.

Hardwick, as you will probably see in his letter, has gone up north a short distance and he'll probably bask in the sun on the sands of Lake Huron next summer -- pretty soft for some fellows.

Johnnie Jones is the only other Iowan I see in these parts so, "Come up and see me sometime".

Sincerely,

C. H. Clark.

Clarence H. Clark

Albany, Illinois
January 31, 1934

Dear Fellow Classmates:

Perhaps I've been termed a "slacker" by most of you long before this, but I hope "all is forgiven," now that you will take me back into the realms of the "Mechanicals of 1930". I think you will all agree with me, that we've seen some pretty tough times since that eventful day in June, and I must admit that financial circumstances almost made it impossible for me to scrape up the old buck and a half.

But things are certainly looking brighter now, and with a pay-check rolling in every week, I don't know of a better way to spend it right now. Since you haven't heard from me these past years, it's only fitting that I should write a little history of myself, dating back to the day we all marched around the campus in Caps and Gowns.

It is very short, and very simple; the day I graduated, I came right here to Albany and here I've been stuck ever since. Being in a small town is bad enough, even in good times, but trying to get work, with no financial means to go out and look for it, was just out of the question. Of course I picked up a few days manual labor here and there, and earned a little spending money by servicing radios, but nothing in the line of Engineering. I spent a few weeks in the hospital last summer, being operated on for Hernia, but otherwise I've been in perfect health--still single, and I might add--very glad of it.

But since the C.W.A. has come into effect, the State Water Survey Division of the Department of Registration and Education in Illinois has put a project through in every county, in which they hire on an average of two engineers in each county to make a Survey of the ground water conditions. I happened to be the lucky one picked from this territory, so I'll be working as long as the C.W.A. holds out. It's a very good job, pays excellent wages, and the project received no wage cut due to shortage of funds.

Well gang, I'm looking forward to my copy of the Bull Session and here's hoping it contains lots of optimistic letters, and I hope to have my "report" in each year hereafter.

With very best regards to all of you, and to each and every member of the faculty, I hope to be reading about you soon.

Sincerely,

Dick Lyons
Dick Lyons.

D

1653 Hering Ave.,
New York, N.Y.

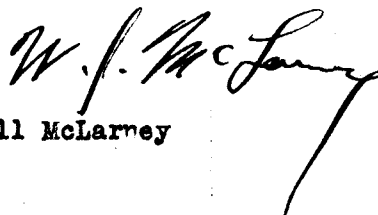
January 31, 1934.

Dear Classmates:

If this depression keeps up much longer I will be well qualified to assume the responsibilities of a vocational guide for I have had all sorts of experience during the last year. I was a waiter in a Swedish Beer Garden. I sold desks in a department store that had several different kinds of prices. And I have repaired radios. This latter kind of work is a good field in which to pick up a few dollars once in a while. I recommend it to those who are out of work at the present. Very little skill is required as most of the difficulties are quickly found and easily fixed. At the present time, I am constructing "break even" charts to be used to determine the amount of business that has to be done in order to assure a profit. The work is for a trucking company. They call me the Industrial Engineer but it is only part time work. The balance of my time is taken up by my country. I am doing research work for the U. S. government on manual dexterity, at Columbia University, in other words I am working on the C. W. A. I am lucky to have a rather interesting job. I am working with a Ph. D. We are trying to measure left- and right-handedness. Later, if the money and the government hold out, we are going to correlate it with eye dominance.

All the above shows that I am leading a hand-to-mouth existence, at the present time. There are indications that business is on the up grade but at the same time industry is continuing to move out of New York and becoming decentralized, leaving the engineers in this part of the country high and dry. So I believe and hope that my next letter will be from the mid-west or the south.

Very truly yours,


Bill McLarney

January 26, 1934
St Mary's Hospital
Rochester, Minn

Dear Friends:-

This letter, in order to adhere to 1933, must be confined to my operations or be brief. Since I am not strong the latter limitation must prevail.

I taught classes in mathematics and science at Cordova High School, Cordova Illinois, until May 24th. The work was very pleasant and I was given an attractive contract for the 33-34 session.

During the last few weeks of school a dull pain developed in my right side so war was declared on my appendix. Since June 5th life has been a battle from the valley where the birdies sing to the recent victory of being able to be up and around in my hospital room. Two operations, four blood transfusions, and several types of treatments finds me about ready to leave the care of the Mayo Clinic in Rochester. Their attack has not cured me yet, but it has placed me in circulation again, and I believe that a few quiet months at home will find me well once more. Ulcerative Colitis is a serious bowel disorder and responds to treatment very slowly.

The true meaning of the words "friend" and "neighbor" has been impressed upon me to the Nth degree. My load has been lightened by thoughtful presents, much needed financial aid, flowers, visits and postal greetings. The Christmas mail alone netted me one hundred and thirty messages of cheer at a time when I sure could use it. I have accepted the responsibility of living up to the hopes and ambitions which these people have for me. No small task I can assure you.

I am anxious to hear how my classmates have fared during this final year of depression. No doubt the going has continued rough for most of us. The support of our Annual Class letter, will I hope, be positive in our several problems. No one knows better than I the need for hope and courage in this ultra-modern life of realities.

Thankyou, Hamil, for the way you took hold of the hurried plan for a class reunion last summer. I still believe the event is possible. And, Bergie, you were kind to help me in collecting the copy for the booklet. That I appreciate the cooperation of the rest of you fellows, in these annual literary projects, is a standing order.

With best wishes for your continued good health and professional success I shall lay aside the pen in favor of some bed rest in order that I may catch up with you soon.

Sincerely,

Wallace E. Nelson

Wallace E Nelson

Dear Classmates-

Bergie, in his letter concernig the 1933 edition of the "Bull Session", asked for a long newsy letter. Its rather hard to fulfill this request when there is no news to tell.

The past year has been far from eventful for me; no change in my work; no new additions to the family; in fact, to be banal, no nothing. It seems that one is fortunate to hold any job at all and just keep plugging along, trying to keep prepared for the time when the opportunity to get ahead presents itself.

The danger of it all seems to me to be that of getting into an intellectual rut. Many of us are learnig new work and and are perhaps filling our jobs reasonable well. What, then, will happen when economic conditions begain to improve and men of our professions are again in demand?

Will not our employs be tempted to leave us in our adopted vocations, that are not always very highly renumorative and hire recent graduates from educational institutions; men whose virginity of ambition and ardor for success has not been dampened by several years of enforced mediocrity? Have we not been well trained in our new jobs? Are we not filling them well? Why, then, should our employers take us out of our present jobs into which we are well disciplined? In short, what is to become of us? Are we going to be able to reenter our once chosen fields in competition with men whose minds and ambitions are fresh? That will have to be answered by time.

I'm certainly looking forward to all of your letters and hope that everyone will be represented this year.

To Wally, I'll say that I was both surprised and sorry to hear that he was under the weather. Here's hoping that this letter will find him on the road to recovery.

Very truly yours,

Mark Plumly.

12
3227 Jennings Street
Sioux City, Iowa

Dear Classmates and Teachers:

Thinking back over the past year I was surprised to note my employers have tolerated my presence for over a year. The longest job I have ever held. Seems funny doesn't it. To scan the list of jobs held since graduation one would guess my age to be that of Methuselah.

Am still with the Sioux City Foundry & Boiler Co., concerned mainly with the business side of the game. It is a tough one, to fight day in and out for sales, collections and principles. Work all hours. Yet as hard as it may seem, nothing beats a job well done or a good days work.

As the only engineer on the payroll, and spending a great deal of my time in selling, I still have quite a bit of variety in my job as you can probably observe from a partial list of the work we do: Boiler manufacture and repair, Steel Fabrication, Steel Jobbers, Sheet Metal Products, Grey Iron and Aluminum Castings, Pattern Work, etc.

Our main foundry product is the Norfolk, coal, oil and gas furnaces. We are now developing a gas conversion burner to set in furnaces already installed.

I am soon starting on a trip to line up new dealers and cooperate with the old, in an intensive drive to put our furnace over. Competition is keen and its a hard job. My employers are asking me to do it alone. With their confidence and a good product to back me up, I will, in justification, have to put out my best. Our steel fabrication work is very interesting. We are now making a 20 H.P. Scotch Marine boiler, all electrically welded construction. Have four good sales prospects before the darned thing is even finished.

My patent application on the air-conditioning valve I wrote about in my last letter is still pending. As soon as a few final design and production difficulties are settled, I should be able to do something with it. Have been working on a few other things in my spare time, which is causing me to spend money and get Rube Goldberg contraptions in return.

I am indeed sorry to hear about Wally's illness and trust that he be among the well soon, distributing his characteristic pleasantness.

It is my hope that your experiences, travels and work have been interesting this past year, and that all of you may have a year of happiness, good health and prosperity.

Sincerely,

Douglas J. Rocklin

14
427 So. Sixth St.,
DeKalb, Ill.,
February 1, 1934.

Classmates of 1930,

This letter of mine seems to be getting more difficult every year. Not that I dislike writing it so greatly; but lack of interesting material makes it quite a problem.

As far as my work is concerned, there is practically nothing to report. My capacities are still much the same as during my first year in DeKalb, a foreman during pea and corn packs in the summer, just one of the help in the warehouse through the fall and winter months, and a mechanic in the spring. I also do a little drafting in the winter if there is any to be done. For the past three winters I have been making different plans for some changes in our corn shed but each year the company decides not to spend the money, so I suppose I'll get the same job again next year if I am still here.

We did have a little excitement here last August, during corn pack, in the form of a strike. A couple of weeks before our code went into effect, the company announced a raise of ten cents per hour for all common labor, no doubt expecting to create a good impression by raising wages voluntarily before the terms of the code were known. But the strategy failed because the code called for only a nickel raise and when the company, deciding it could hardly compete with other canners paying less money to their help, announced the reduction there was considerable dissatisfaction expressed among the employees. So, with the aid of a local communist agitator, a strike was called which was finally settled in favor of the strikers. There was very little violence accompanying the strike and I think everyone enjoyed the intermission immensely.

I just recently finished building a wood lathe and, after correcting a few minor mistakes, I think I shall be able to turn out a fairly decent piece of work. My expenses on the lathe to date have been \$1.25 for bearing babbitt.

Thus ends my discourse, and I hope that everyone sends in a letter this, and that each of them contains more information of greater interest to the reader than this one.

• Yours truly,

[writer not identified, but probably K.W. Sanger]