

LOCAL SECTION DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS EARN DISTINCTION FOR PAUL MAGNABOSCO

DONALD G. MEADOWS



Paul W. Magnabosco

AT FIRST, THE MEASURED PACE OF the words and the youthful appearance can be deceptive. But then the qualities of the man come through. The measured pace reveals the attention to details, the tendency to become involved and absorbed with a project. The youthful looks reflect the enthusiasm and energy, much of which has been directed toward Local Section and Student Chapter involvement in TAPPI.

That involvement, spanning 20 years, has earned Paul W. Magnabosco recognition as TAPPI's 1996 Herman L. Joachim Distinguished Service Award recipient. During that time, Magnabosco has held various positions, including

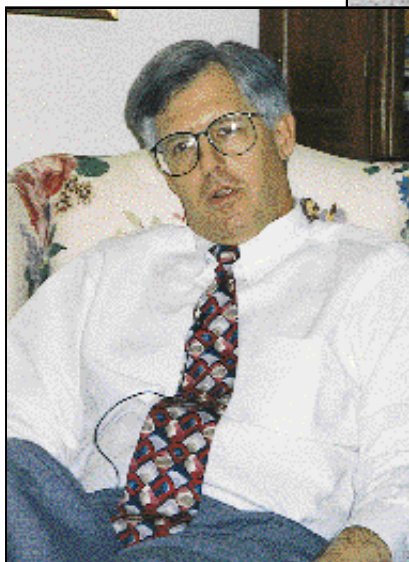


Magnabosco with a portrait of his wife and daughter

***"MR. LSOC" AWARDED 1996
HERMAN L. JOACHIM DISTIN-
GUISHED SERVICE AWARD***

*Amateur radio—
a favorite hobby*

Discussing his career



chairman of the Local Sections Operations Council (LSOC) and member of TAPPI's Board of Directors.

"I would suggest that in the last 10 years, Paul has been the most active catalyst in Local Section growth, and ultimately in TAPPI's growth," said Barre Mitchell, who also has served on the Board and LSOC. Now, 65% of Local Section members have had some TAPPI involvement, whereas 10 years ago the portion was only about 50%, Mitchell said. "Paul has been most diligent in seeing that the feedstock for TAPPI membership is there."

Magnabosco currently serves as Federal Paper Board Co.'s director of energy, based out of the company's offices in Riegelwood, NC. Much of his time is spent finding ways to lower power costs. He does that partly through contract renegotiations, partly by finding regulatory and legislative solutions, and partly by working with industrial and state groups to come up with creative solutions that better match the power companies' offerings with the customers' needs.

"I don't seem to have a typical work week," Magnabosco said. A lot of his time is spent on the road, often flying or driving from Wilmington, NC, where he lives with his wife and daughter. One recent day, for example, he drove to Raleigh to help organize a group of about 80 industrial companies in North Carolina that is trying to advance retail competition in the electric power industry.

"It's our belief that an open, competitive marketplace for electrical power will benefit all consumers, not just industrial," he said. "But, given that the paper industry is a huge purchaser of electricity, it stands to profit significantly from this." The change will happen eventually, because of market pressures, but the group Magnabosco

is involved with believes that a coordinated effort in the state can make it happen sooner than later.

The week before, he spent one day at a natural gas and electric seminar, again in Raleigh. ("I try to spend part of every week learning something new.") The rest of the week he spent negotiating with electric and gas utilities to find some lower-cost solutions for a number of Federal's plants in South Carolina. Another trip took him to London, England, for natural gas contract renegotiations for the Federal Tait mill in Scotland.

"There are different things going on every week, and it's quite exciting. I particularly like being on the cutting edge," Magnabosco said. "I was very fortunate to be among the pioneers in natural gas deregulation efforts in the United States," he noted. "I coordinated the first direct gas purchase and transportation deal in the State of North Carolina in November of 1983. That approach has provided multi-million dollar savings for Federal Paper over the past decade. In fact, the entire paper industry has benefitted. I've been involved in that from Day 1 ... and now we're doing the same thing with electricity."

Just recently Magnabosco suggested that Federal would save money through lower electric utility costs by moving its joint venture sodium chlorate production facility from Riegelwood to Augusta, GA. The project was approved and a Limited Liability Company (LLC) was set up to manage the operation, which Magnabosco will help run.

"Because of the experience that I'd gotten through TAPPI, specifically serving on the Board and on the Executive Committee, I felt comfortable taking on this new challenge along with my other responsibilities," Magna-

bosco said. "I would not have been able to do that without the management skills and training I got through TAPPI.

"My company has been very supportive of my involvement in TAPPI. They readily recognize that TAPPI's value to me and to the company has been worth much more than the cost. I really appreciate the support that Federal has given me to actively participate in TAPPI, and also in AF&PA as a company representative."

BEGINNINGS

Magnabosco joined Federal in 1976 as project engineer at its Riegelwood Operations, right after receiving a bachelor of science degree in electrical engineering from North Carolina State University.

Although Magnabosco had considered jobs in other industries, none seemed to offer the opportunities he saw in the paper industry. He wanted hands-on experience and it looked like the job with Federal would allow him to do that, to get some multidisciplinary experience in mechanical, chemical, civil, structural, and other types of engineering.

A few weeks after Magnabosco started work at Riegelwood, his boss, Bill Kirby, suggested that he attend a TAPPI meeting. There was a panel discussion on energy conservation that he wanted Magnabosco to attend for ideas on improving process efficiencies at the plant. At that Virginia-Carolina Local Section meeting, Magnabosco found a number of people who had questions regarding energy management similar to his. He raised his hand and suggested they get together after the meeting to share ideas. The group became a subcommittee and met regularly.

Westvaco's Jack Hammond asked Magnabosco to serve on the section's Executive Committee and represent the subcommittee as chairman. "I owe a lot to those people who helped me find that path, because I couldn't have done it on my own.... That's the way it is with TAPPI," Magnabosco said. "None of us can do this on our own. We have to do it working together as a team. We have to coach new people along so there will be a new group of leaders for the future—for TAPPI and the industry."

Magnabosco wrote a guidance manual for the Virginia-Carolina Local Section while serving as chairman during its 25th anniversary year. Until then, very little had been documented and passed along about Section operations. "I'm a very detail-oriented person and I made a lot of notes as I was coming up through the chairs. I realized I had quite a lot of information that would be valuable to others," he said. That information served as the basis for a training manual to outline the typical responsibilities of the treasurer, secretary, publicity chairman, and other officers, along with guidelines for organizing meetings. In part, that was done "with the idea that it would be easier to get people involved if they had a clue of what they were volunteering for," Magnabosco said.

THE LSOC DAYS

Magnabosco got started in LSOC as the representative from Virginia-Carolina, after he'd been through the chairs of the Local Section. Ray Smith, who preceded Magnabosco as chair of the Virginia-Carolina Local Section, suggested that LSOC might be interesting. Magnabosco went, enjoyed it, was asked to be the Local Section's representative, and accepted.

Magnabosco's special interest was the student chapters and he got a chance to work on the Student Chapters Task Force (now a standing committee).

Building on the idea for the Virginia-Carolina manual, Magnabosco developed an officers training manual for the student chapter officers. This turned out to be a key element in the growth of TAPPI's student chapters.

Next, Magnabosco was asked to participate on the Workshops for Training Task Force (now the LSOC Leadership Committee), which involved extensive training of the LSOC representatives, Local Section officers and others through Leadership Workshops. "I enjoy working with people and participating in the training activities."

Magnabosco is glad to see continued leadership training emphasis. "It's extremely important that we develop a large group of people who are trained and interested in taking leadership positions within the Association," he said. "I think that's one of the Association's strengths, that there are so many people who can step up and take charge of a task or a function or a committee."

"Leadership training is a basic activity that produces huge results, and we're not duplicating efforts by people's employers. This training complements the management training they might get at work." For example, "TAPPI provided me management and leadership skills I might not have acquired if I had just kept to staff engineering work," he said.

Although Magnabosco lost in his first bid to serve on TAPPI's Board of Directors, he was asked to chair the LSOC, a position usually held by a Board member. Barre Mitchell, who was serving on the Board and had some Local Section experience, happened to be selected as the LSOC vice chair.

Mitchell proved to be very helpful. "Barre's a super organized, very logical person, and it was a real pleasure working with him," Magnabosco said.

The second time Magnabosco ran for the Board of Directors he was elected, and served a second time as LSOC chairman.

During those two terms, Magnabosco pushed to restructure LSOC to encourage more individual involvement. "Back then a task force sprung up every time an issue needed to be dealt with that couldn't be handled at a meeting. We had as many as eight task forces." Often, it seemed, the person assigned to head the task force ended up doing most of the work, Magnabosco observed. "It wasn't really a committee effort."

"I believe that committees can be extremely productive," he said, but there were too many task forces. So the

Magnabosco with
TAPPI Executive
Director William
Cullison during a
visit to TAPPI
headquarters
about 10 years
ago



number was cut in half and every LSOC member was assigned to a task force. Task force meetings were then scheduled the night before the regular LSOC meetings. That allowed the groups to function more like committees and become more effective.

"Next, an innovative ideas forum was incorporated into the meetings for sharing ideas and experiences. It was scheduled at the beginning of the agenda while everyone was still fresh. The sessions were taped and transcripts were included as part of the minutes. Connecting the ideas with the names and sections of those who had participated in the forum, further enabled discussions during the interim between LSOC meetings.

"We also started a directory so we could get in touch with one another and strengthen this network," he said.

"At the same time, membership began to grow. People would report the next year on a successful function resulting from an idea they'd gotten at an LSOC meeting," Magnabosco said. "That was really rewarding to me, to see that there was real value being derived from the meetings and the interactions we were having," he said.

Another forum Magnabosco found useful for sharing ideas and detailed information about LSOC and Local Section activities was the *LSOCommunique* newsletter. "I really enjoyed writing the Chairman's Corner for five years," he said. "It gave me a chance to highlight our activities and to provide encouragement to our Local Section leaders. I thought it was important for me in my capacity then to clearly indicate what our priorities were, what our challenges were, some of the key issues we were dealing with ... what I thought people should be working on. I also used it to promote membership in TAPPI."

Magnabosco believes individuals should be members of international TAPPI as well as Local Sections. "Sometimes people in the industry take a narrow view and don't see the advantages of membership at both levels,"

he said. "The broad view is that you have to start somewhere and have to get involved," he said. "You have to make a deposit in the bank before you can watch your investment grow."

"This effort was successful as evidenced by the higher percentage of Local Section members joining TAPPI as time went along. 'We were listening to our members and responding to their needs; we were creating interest,'" he said.

Recognizing that each Local Section is unique, Magnabosco tried to avoid overgoverning them. "It was important to allow them to maintain their independence and their own direction, while operating consistently with TAPPI's goals and objectives. Every Local Section is going to have a different look; they're going to do things differently but the theme is the same, we're all part of the same family. We need to acknowledge the differences and build on them as a positive attribute rather than as a shortcoming."

Magnabosco built on this theme to establish a stronger relationship between TAPPI's Local Sections and Technical Divisions. "The focus was so much on the differences that we were overlooking the similarities." Now, the groups jointly sponsor meetings and events and work much more cooperatively. Magnabosco cites former TOC Chairman and Board Member Dave Bentley as a factor in this success.

Over the years, Magnabosco has worked with three different Local Section administrators—Dan Lent, Julian Reid, and Donna Woodhall. A bit of advice he tried to pass along was that people are different. "It doesn't mean an individual can't carry out a job equally as well as another, they may just have a different way of doing things. And that's okay ... in fact it ought to be encouraged. To that end, Local Sections typically change officers every year. Generally they'll rotate through the chairs, which is customary in our Association," he said.

"I've tried to, as [TAPPI President] Jack Chinn says, *walk the talk*," Magnabosco said as an introduction to a favorite quote: "Creative thinking may simply mean the realization that there is no particular virtue in doing things the way they've always been done."

"I think that's an essential concept to realize. It's important to know how things have been done in the past and whether or not they've worked, but we should realize that we are in an ever-changing, dynamic environment. We can't always do things the way we did yesterday and expect that to be the most efficient solution for today or tomorrow."

PRIORITIES

A near tragedy a couple of years ago redirected much of Magnabosco's attention to family concerns. On May 12, 1994, his wife, Susan, was thrown from her horse and broke her elbow. The injury turned out to be a compound fracture that almost resulted in the arm being amputated. The problem was further complicated by an infection and a severe reaction to the antibiotic that was prescribed.

Magnabosco has applied the same sort of tireless effort that's gone into his TAPPI work toward helping his wife through recovery. Although it's taken several rounds of surgery, Susan has regained much more use of her arm than doctors thought possible right after the injury.

Susan and Paul were 16 years old when they first met. They met when both had summer jobs at Topsail Beach cleaning rental property managed by his mother. They dated through their school years and got married just prior to graduation from college.

"Susan's been very supportive of my TAPPI and work activities," Magnabosco said.

Back in the early 1980s, Paul and Susan designed and helped build the house they live in with their daughter Carol in Wilmington, NC. The plan included special touches like hidden wiring for the stereo equipment and dry wall glued to studs instead of just being nailed in one of the upstairs rooms. That way he can play his favorite music *really* loud, without causing the walls to rattle. He's proud to say that it's the best-insulated house in the neighborhood along with having the lowest electric bills.

In another upstairs room, Magnabosco keeps his shortwave radios and an array of emergency batteries. One of his long-time hobbies has been amateur radio. Hailing to the call letters AD4HZ, he has been in touch with space shuttle crews and enthusiasts around the world. For emergencies, he has a portable radio station that he also demonstrates at local schools.

In his various roles, Magnabosco tries to bring out the best in people—sometimes in spite of themselves. He uses the example of the church deacon he assigned to head the grounds committee. At first the man was furious, saying he didn't know anything about caring for lawns and shrubs. Magnabosco emphasized that he'd chosen the man to lead the committee, not mow the grass and do all the work himself. As a result, within 18 months the church had won a city award for most improved appearance. "He succeeded and felt good about himself," Magnabosco said. "It's always gratifying to motivate people and see them grow."

Magnabosco favors the management style of several people who have been mentors to him. "You present an individual with an opportunity, then give them a chance through their own creative efforts and working with other members of the team, to put together something that's successful," he explained. "I like to inspire confidence," he said. "That's achieved by making clear assignments, providing general guidelines and timetables, giving people the resources to do the job, and letting them know that no one is breathing down their neck."

The next big challenge for Magnabosco is serving on TAPPI's Annual Meeting and Exhibit Committee. The assignment came about as he was rotating off the Board and off of LSOC. "I got a lot of questions about what I was going to do next," he recalled. He decided he wanted to do something new, to continue to be challenged and learn. He also wanted to be involved in activities that make a difference and add value to the Association," he said.

"I'd been intrigued by all the planning and developments for TAPPI 96," Magnabosco recalled. When the time came to find a program chairman for TAPPI 99, there was a call for a volunteer among the committee and followed by a silence, and then Magnabosco said, "I'd like to serve in that capacity."

TAPPI 99 will mark the shift to a three-year schedule for the show, Magnabosco noted. "It's extremely important that it is successful."

"I've got the fortunate situation of being an understudy to Joe Wilson, who's been doing a magnificent job in the planning process, along with staff member Susan Blevins." Other members of the Committee provide lots of support.

"Like everything else in TAPPI," Magnabosco said, "it's rare that you accomplish anything by yourself. Success is usually the result of a well-organized, well-planned team effort, and that makes it much more satisfying. I especially enjoy the people aspect." **TJ**

Meadows is editor of TAPPI JOURNAL.