

SERVICE WITH A SMILE: JOHN D. CALLAHAN NAMED THE 1997 HERMAN L. JOACHIM DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD WINNER

DONALD G. MEADOWS

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES SHOWCASE BENEFITS OF TAPPI INVOLVEMENT.

JOHAN D. "JACK" CALLAHAN HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS "the volunteer's volunteer." In many respects his volunteer activities could be considered as much a career as the 33 years he spent selling chemicals to the paper industry.

"I guess I would be classified as a giver rather than a taker. I don't expect anything by what I do. There is probably a need there, a need to have friends, a need to be friendly or something, there is probably a reason. I enjoy doing it. It's only in the last year or two that I'm starting to say, 'no'."

A constant smile and seemingly endless energy have become trademarks for Callahan as he served in various positions with TAPPI's Local Sections, the Coating and Graphic Arts Division, the Technical Operations Council, and the Board of Directors. His involvement with the Coating Division dates back to 1971, when he organized and chaired the first Technical Forecasting Committee, the predecessor to the TAPPI Futurists. He also served as publicity chairman from 1973-1982, chairman of the Coating Conference in 1985 and 1986, and chairman of the Division from 1987-1988.



Jack Callahan

Winner of the Leadership and Service Award from the Coating and Graphic Arts Division in 1991, Callahan was named a TAPPI Fellow in 1992 and has been designated the 1997 Herman L. Joachim Distinguished Service Award winner.

AN INVITATION

Callahan's long involvement with TAPPI and the paper industry began with a simple invitation to a Local Section meeting during a sales trip in the upper Midwest. "It was just one of those towns and somebody said in the motel, 'why don't you come over to our TAPPI meeting?' So I did and I started calling on the paper mills and got infatuated with the large machinery," he recalled.

"I liked the openness because I came from a rural town. I liked the genuineness of the people in the industry, the sociability and friendliness, so one thing led to another and that's how I became interested in the paper industry. As the shoe began to fit, it became a comfortable fit. It was a far cry from working in South Chicago."

That was in 1962. "I didn't become a member of TAPPI until 1964, so I have about 35 years of watching the volunteers run around. I've done a lot in 35 years but

AWARD WINNER



Callahan (L) with past chairs of TAPPI's Coating Division: Bill Goetz, Terry (Durushia) Clark, Phil Clark, Bob Hagemeyer, Dale Dill; and in front: Jerry Hein and Jim Hoover

that's not where it's at. TAPPI has done a lot for me and I think it does a lot for everybody, helping their morale, their leadership, their focus, their time management," he said.

THE BEGINNING

Born Aug. 3, 1932, Callahan grew up in Goshen, a horse-racing town in the dairy country of southern New York State. "I broke horses, trained horses, worked the race tracks, and worked on the farms," he said. "When I wasn't working on the farms, I started my own business in supplying the horse trade with products and I ended up having all the tracks in New York State. The first year I lost money and from that point on I made money, but I would travel from track to track selling turf supplies; it helped pay my way through college."

After earning a bachelor of science degree from Cornell University's College of Agricultural in 1956, Callahan went on to veterinary college. "That was a family thing, which I really didn't want to do," he admitted. His grandfather had been chief veterinarian for New York State. The family operated a small veterinary wholesale business.

So it was only natural to assume that Jack would become a vet. But along the way, he discovered that he wasn't really interested in going into that line of work. Not long into his graduate studies, "I got very smart and enlisted in the Navy," Callahan said. His stint in the Navy, primarily as a communications officer, lasted from 1957-1960.

After three and a half years on active duty, Callahan joined the Whitestone, NY, Naval Reserve Large Surface Division. He and three other officers there—along with the 400 men they commanded—decided to try to win the Forestall Trophy, the award given to the top reserve unit in the U.S. Navy. They succeeded in winning it two

years in a row.

Callahan later attended George Washington University and the University of Bridgeport, where he worked on an MBA degree, and the University of Maine and Western Michigan University, where he learned more about papermaking.

To go from veterinary medicine to the paper industry would seem to be quite a leap, although Callahan got some exposure to papermaking through the agricultural college he attended. He also met Sheila, his future wife there. She was studying sociology and psychology at Cornell's College of Arts and Science.

"She's an Irish girl, Sheila Mary McGrady. I used to work in the kitchen of her sorority house. She was president of Cornell University's College of Arts and Science Delta Delta Delta sorority."

After serving in the Navy, Callahan began looking for a new career. "I sent out a lot of resumes and it covered everything," he said. He ended up with an administrative sales job ("I answered the phone") at Allied Chemical that lasted from 1960-1962. It was then that he discovered his true avocation: sales.

From Allied, Callahan briefly worked for General Aniline in the Chicago area. He first became interested in the paper industry while in the Midwest. He joined National Starch and Chemical in 1963 and for the next five years worked in New England with the paper industry. He joined Olin Corp. in 1967 as the assistant to the U.S. sales manager, working in the corporate offices in New York City.

Following a reorganization at Olin, Callahan became a salesman for the company's New York City district office. His former boss from National Starch recruited him to join Freeport Kaolin in 1970, where he served first as specialty sales manager and then as product manager for both specialty clays and paper clays. After 13 years with Freeport Kaolin, the company was sold and Callahan went to work for Hercules Inc. as their first account manager. He continued in that position until he retired in 1993.

CHANGES

The industry has changed a lot over the past 35 years, Callahan noted. When he used to make sales calls, there was more time to chat and get to know the customer. Often that familiarity helped make the sale. Now, managers are much more bottom-line and performance oriented. Companies have downsized and in the process they've lost a lot of people.

"TAPPI was a perk when I first started....Those days are long gone. The boss wants to know, 'what's in it for me?' They are very interested in the bottom line, and in the process; they've lost the commitment of the

employee, they've lost the morale of the employee, they've lost the focus of the employee, and they've lost the family corporate structure."

This is where TAPPI's strengths become evident. "TAPPI is not a one-shot deal; you're a part of the industry and you're growing with it," Callahan said. "It gives the individual continuity. He or she may change jobs, may be downsized, whatever it may be, but with TAPPI, that person has continuity," he said. "This is his stability in life. I hate to put it that way, but that's really the maturity that you begin to see. You have a comradeship, you belong to another family, you have an outside influence."

THE VOLUNTEER

When people first become involved with TAPPI, it's usually as "takers," Callahan explained. They come "to learn, to meet people, to see what the industry is about." The TAPPI meetings introduce people to other corporate cultures and other facets of the industry.

That was the case when Callahan became involved with the Coating Pigments Committee in the early 1970s; it was as a "taker" to check out his competition, he said. "But somewhere along the line—it was very fast for me—you begin to see there's more to this than that. You begin to understand the other people that are there, you accept that proprietary things are off limits and your maturity starts to grow.

"With maturity, you start moving through the committees, then you become a 'doer,'" Callahan said. "Now, you're a 'giver' at the very elementary level. You decide to become further involved. You may go through the chairs of the committee or go to some other committee," he said.

"The volunteer matures as he goes along and he becomes a part of the industry family," Callahan explained. At this point the volunteer respects the other person's goals and proprietary interests. "He begins to bond with these people completely, forgetting about the competition." With maturity, the volunteer begins to see the world differently, to see it as a much fairer place than perhaps at first. "In other words, now you're starting to work with the people and that's where TAPPI is."

The driving force for volunteers to be involved comes from within, Callahan said. There are times when employers have actually discouraged their employees from being involved in volunteer activities because of the time and money spent, he acknowledged.

Even so, "I've seen volunteers stay 100 miles away from a meeting so they aren't associated with the meeting, so their bosses won't know," Callahan said. "That's got to tell you that involvement is a big plus for these people, that people think highly of TAPPI. They think highly of their friends, their networking, their communications,



The expectant young Navy couple: Sheila and Jack with the late Francis Cardinal Spellman

their industry family, and they'll do almost anything to protect it."

TAPPI volunteers come from all areas of the industry—from research, production, and sales; from pulp mills, paper mills, universities, suppliers, and allied industries. There is no such thing as "I'm such and such and you're such and such. We're all one big family, we're all doing the same thing. I may not be working on the machine or I may not be out selling on the road, but we're all in the same business, we're trying to make it go," Callahan said.

It's no longer simply a perk to come to a TAPPI meeting, Callahan reiterated. "These guys want to come, they want to keep that spirit, that morale, that desire for excellence, and they take it back to their corporations and they do it."

One of the things that (volunteer) organizations do is keep you fresh, it keeps you enthusiastic, it keeps your spirits up, it's constantly learning to do things, being more tolerant of people. Everybody's got a little hangup some place but that's the way life is and you can't get stuck on somebody's idiosyncrasies. And it's just fun. It's very rewarding to see people grow and mature. If you can influence their life to the better, it's important."

An important function of TAPPI meetings is to present scientific and technical information, Callahan believes. But the real draw is "the networking, the togetherness, the camaraderie, the ability to talk to each other as friends, not as potential competitors, helping each other," he said.

"Downsizing, morale problems, bottom line, accountability—these are the terms TAPPI needs to address beyond the science," Callahan said. And TAPPI has the organization, the quality, and the people in place to do that, he said. The key word is longevity, he said. "This is where TAPPI is strongest; it's going to give you something to keep going for a lifetime through continuing education."



Travel, the outdoors, and photography

PAPER EXPRESS

During his term on the Board of Directors, Callahan served as chairman for *Paper Express* from 1989–1991 and chaired the “Green Papers” Committee from 1990–1991. The basic goal was to market the paper industry to ordinary people. “We’re the fifth-largest industry in the

country and nobody ever heard of us outside of the grocery store and getting the paper bag and a roll of toilet paper,” Callahan observed.

There are a lot of pluses in the industry, Callahan said, but it’s been a challenge to spark an interest in young students. The rural settings of most mills may be marvelous places to raise families, but they can seem isolated to many young people, he suggested: “They like cities and they like activity.” In addition, “by the time they get around to science, it’s an afterthought. We would like to make it a primary thought. We would like to expose them to it. That’s how *Paper Express* came about,” he said.

Callahan served as chairman of the committee that developed the *Paper Express* program, “but it wasn’t mine solely,” he said. “I don’t think any of these things you do singly. I don’t think I’ve ever done one thing by myself. I’ve helped a lot but everybody has their ideas and helps. You have a great number of talented people who worked on *Paper Express*, a tremendous amount of talent. And everybody was interested.

“I think the whole thing is team—that’s TAPPI—that’s what it’s all about, is people working together. Pretty much everything I’ve said, TAPPI’s a team. I think extremely highly of volunteers and I think extremely highly of the TAPPI staff. I think they are wonderful, dedicated, marvelous friends. They’re friends, true they’re colleagues, but they’re friends.”

INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE

Callahan credits a long list of people with having influenced his life and career, beginning with Sheila, his wife of 40 years, and his sons, Jim and John.

His colleagues in the Coating and Graphics Arts Division, on the Local Sections Operations Council, and on the Board of Directors have also played significant roles in his career development.

If he were to single any one person out, it would be Bob Hagemeyer. “Probably the strongest mentor anybody can have in TAPPI is Hagemeyer,” he said. “Bob and I have been friends for 25–30 years. He’s helped me more in not reinventing the wheel.” Hagemeyer is both lovable and opinionated, Callahan noted, but “he’s kept us focused.”

A few of the many others Callahan would credit are Jack E. Chinn, Morris V. Merchant, Hans Maureri, Robert V. Hershey, John Walker, Michael J. Kocurek, Charles P. Klass, Phil Jones, Donald M. Gilmore, F. Keith Hall, Chuck Clark, Jack Donahue, and Tom Giles. “I’d also like to thank my many colleagues in the Coating and Graphic Arts Division, the TAPPI staff, and the people who have served with me on the Technical Operations Council,” he said.

OTHER INTERESTS

Callahan is probably as busy now as he was before he retired, but “I’m starting to slow down,” he said, partly because of open heart surgery in the mid- 1980s.

As is often the case, Callahan turned to consulting when he retired from Hercules in 1993. Having travelled all his life, he wasn’t entirely sure what he wanted to do next. So the last couple of years he has been sifting. He asked himself, “What do I like to do, what do I feel comfortable doing, what can I do physically?”

Another question was what could he do. He contacted the International Executive Service Corps (IESC) and became an “executive recruiter.” He has volunteered for the past two and a half years for two days a week. The IESC is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, which recruits retired executives for short-term projects in developing countries around the world.

At the same time, a friend he’d known through TAPPI told him about a research consulting firm located in downtown Norwalk, CT—Fisher International Inc. He contacted Rod Fisher and went to work three days a week. He’s increased that to four days a week and says it’s “the perfect job for a retiree.”

Meanwhile, Callahan’s cut back on other activities and is fully enjoying retirement.

Travel continues to be part of his life. His son John lives in San Francisco, so last year’s trip—a visit to the Southwest—began with a flight there. The trip before was to the Rocky Mountains and the Northwest. “We take about three weeks and we travel,” Callahan said. “The year before that we were in Scotland, England, Ire-

land. Next year I think it's going to be New Zealand and Australia." A big event will take the place of a big trip this year; John will be married in New Orleans, LA, this September and will be joining his brother's firm, The Pentalpha Group in Greenwich, Ct..

Callahan may bring back 30–40 rolls of film from his annual trips. Photography has been an interest for many years. ("I've got boxes and boxes of pictures.") His newest toy is a 200–400-mm telephoto lens for his Nikon N6006 camera. By adding a 2x extender, the lens gives a close-up view of birds and far-off objects, and it's not excessively heavy. His subjects range from family pictures to wildlife and travel.

His elder son, Jim, runs a successful financial advisory firm in nearby Greenwich, CT, where he lives with his wife, Jill, and daughters, Caity, Brooke, and Lindsay. Callahan spends a weekend each month visiting his granddaughters, "so I have plenty of good material for taking pictures."

Like Paul Magnabosco, the 1996 DSA winner, Callahan is a ham radio enthusiast. As such, he's actively involved with the Office of Emergency Management, State of Connecticut, Norwalk Division. He's also been involved in a number of educational activities. Last year's project involved setting up a radio base at the local middle school in an effort to interest students in space research. The students were then able to communicate with Ken Cameron, the *Atlantis* (STS-74) space shuttle commander, during the mission to dock with the Russian space station *Mir*.

Callahan originally got interested in ham radio because he didn't understand electronics, he said. "If I don't understand something I try to get involved in it so I understand it—I'm curious." That curiosity has gotten him interested in birds, flying, trains, and most recently American Indians, specifically the Hopis out in Arizona and New Mexico.

HOME LIFE

The Callahans live in West Norwalk, CT. "It's sort of rural but it's not isolated," Callahan said. "It's a fun area in that it's got everything that man could possibly want. It's got conveniences, it's got the Long Island Sound, it's got good weather, it's got the four seasons."

Outside, nearly a dozen feeders attract birds to the Callahans' yard. "We have 12 different varieties of birds that come into the yard," he said. Callahan keeps his sailboat out by the garage during the winter. That way he knows where it is and can work on it if he wants. He, like his sons, is an avid sailor.

Back in the 1970s, Callahan was president of the West Norwalk Association. Sheila was on the board then and is serving again now. "If you're around long enough you're



The meeting house—inside and out

recycled, that's what it amounts to," he said. The group looks after community needs such as road repairs and taxes.

For about 20 years now, Callahan has been in charge of the West Norwalk Meeting House building, a little chapel built in 1868 that was used as a church until about 1930. Located midway between Darien and New Canaan, CT, the building is the setting for picnics, clam-bakes, and pot luck dinners; for Halloween parties, Christmas boutiques, and weddings.

Last year Callahan helped renovate the kitchen area. The chairs in the building date back to the 1800s, so the group had those reinforced. They also bought carpeting, upgraded the bathroom, and put a series of hitching posts connected by chain in the front yard. "It's an endless task keeping up with things in an old building," he said.

"There is a group of us that keeps this going and the sole purpose is to keep together this community, which is highly transient, people living and working in New York, travelling all over the world all the time. We get together here so we know one another and we keep friendly."

After retiring, Callahan also became active in the Norwalk Harbor Management Commission, where he now serves as vice chairman. He has been in charge of the East Basin Realignment project, which was included as part of the Water Resources Act recently approved by President Bill Clinton.

Callahan is also mooring chairman for Norwalk Harbor. The harbor has 459 moorings, plus hundreds of boats in slips in the many local marinas. He's proud that in a recent "northeaster," all the moorings held. Of the 18 boats lost during the storm, none was lost due to failure of the moorings below the water line.

AWARD WINNER



At sail

The commission is primarily concerned with the quality of water and environmental issues, as well as boating safety. "We have the foremost harbor management manual in the United States," Callahan continued. The *Norwalk Harbor Management Commission Plan*, as it is called, is updated annually and used as a

model by other communities.

The commission has been busy lately, meeting four nights each month. When they finish with the East Basin project, commission members will only meet once or twice a month, Callahan said. "Like anything, once you get organized you don't spend as much time on it," he said.

Because he sails, Callahan also enjoys the benefits of the commission's work. Both his sons sail and race, especially John, a naval architect, who competed in the 1996 Olympic trials in Savannah, GA, and has been named to the U.S. Olympic Sailing Team.

The two boys were born eight years apart. "It was fun because as you got finished with all the things one did, like soccer and Scouts, it started all over again which was great because it kept me young."

While his sons were in school, Callahan became active with them in Scouting. He served in a wide range of leadership positions, from Webelos leader and assistant scoutmaster to Council and Explorer chairman.

Callahan's involvement in Scouting dates back to his own youth. He still has fond memories of a summer during high school when he served as one of the assistant scout masters who led 60 Boy Scouts on a 12-week trip



The Harbor

around the country. "We covered the whole United States by train and we slept on wrestling mats in schools to save our money," he recalled. We went out to Chicago, Kansas City, and out to California and New Mexico and we stopped off at the Philmont Boy Scout ranch and saw all that."

"We had a great time then....We used to march in the Memorial Day parades and we'd camp out and do all wonderful things in the woods, even though I'm not really a woodsman but we had a good time."

Although he's been heavily involved in volunteer activities throughout his career, Callahan acknowledges the potential hazard of volunteering too much. "I saw it a lot in Scouting where people who volunteered a lot lost their family. They lose things and that's not volunteering in my book because you really haven't helped that much...you've helped somebody but you've hurt somebody else. If you can keep the balance I think it's fun."

Working in sales, Callahan travelled often and volunteer work helped fill the evening hours. ("What was I going to do? Go to the bar every night or watch TV in my room? Volunteer work certainly beats that.") Plus, he's been able to maintain a very strong family relationship. "Volunteer work does take time, but like anything else, you get good at it and it doesn't take long to get the job done," he said. "Meetings are not long and things get done. I have enjoyed it and I hope it's mutual. I think it is." **TJ**

Meadows is editor of TAPPI JOURNAL.