

## **History of PHCC of North Texas** *by Sonny Friedman...as much as he can remember.*

I am **Sonny Friedman**, and I guess I am the oldest, still vertical member of PHCC of North Texas. **President Lee McFarland** asked **Barbara Hogue**, our retiring Executive Director, who has been the “Best of the Best” since our hiring her in 1990, to prepare a “history” of PHCC of North Texas, and “Bless Her Little Heart”, Barbara said that I’ve been here longer than her, which does not mean that I am older than her, so...I should start this “History”, and she would fill in the gaps.

I bought **Atlas Plumbing** in September of 1967, and was told by **Phil Gremm**, the previous owner of Atlas, that I would be wise to join PHCC. PHCC of Dallas was a small organization of about 15 member companies at the time. I was 23 years old and relatively new to the industry; I didn’t even have a plumbing license at that time, and only had a four truck shop. I went to my first meeting one evening at **Teter Plumbing Company**, which was owned by **Maurice Teter**. On the way over, I was a bit intimidated, considering my age, inexperience, and that I would be in the presence of older men with much larger companies, who knew EVERYTHING. That feeling of insecurity changed in the first five minutes after I arrived.

All of the men at the meeting could not have been more friendly and accepting of me. They all introduced themselves and welcomed me to the association. They all offered their assistance to me, if I needed anything. **Bernard Levy** of **Levy Plumbing** made the most dramatic impression on me. He offered to be my “mentor” in the association, saying that I could call him anytime I had a question on anything, if I couldn’t find a part, or just needing to “vent” my frustrations of being the owner of a plumbing business. This was the guy with all the yellow trucks! His kindness and giving nature made a huge impression on me, and I vowed to treat my competitors with the same openness and trust. Most of those men have passed away now, but they all helped me in ways too many to list. **Bob Chester** of **United Plumbing**, **Gene Daniels** of **Casa View Plumbing**, **Maurice Teter**, to name a few. Others were **Mr. Downs** of **Dallas Plumbing**, **Mr. Fox** of **Fox Plumbing**, and some who I can no longer remember. It wasn’t a large group, and one of our goals was to reach out and invite more companies to join PHCC. We all know that “there is strength in numbers”.

There was also a group of plumbing contractors who did not want to belong to PHCC. They did not see the value of the benefits of state and national PHCC membership, and formed their own “local” association. They were only concerned about what took place in their own “back yard”. Their association was primarily made up of small companies...like myself. I joined both groups...how could it hurt? I cannot remember the name of the group, but we were eventually successful in combining the two groups under the PHCC umbrella.

As with most volunteer run groups, we did not enjoy the success that we had hoped for. We lost members, and all but ceased to exist on a local level. Then one day, I got a call from **Bernard Levy** and another call from **Bob Chester**, saying that we need to get the group going

again....for all the right reasons. We met at **Levy Plumbing Co.** Bob volunteered **Gerald Chester**, his nephew to do all the heavy lifting and go to the state PHCC meetings. We brought the association back to life under Gerald's leadership. He was followed as the President by **Carl Fairchild** of **Wagner Plumbing**, who was followed by **Johnny Baker** of **United Mechanical**.

I will never forget the night they talked me into being the next President of PHCC of Dallas. Needless to say, there was a considerable amount of alcohol involved. I treasured my friendship with these two gentlemen, and so I became the next President. I had no idea that my term of office would last TEN years. It was, however, truly a labor of love. I attended the PHCC of Texas board meetings, representing PHCC of Dallas, and I attended the state and national conventions and the trade shows. I have often said that my success in this business is the result of what I have learned from my peers, on both a local level and on the state level. The national conventions offered an entire treasure chest of ideas and practices for how to be a successful company. I made new friends there, as well. I have always been a "sponge" for information, since the first day I bought **Atlas Plumbing** from **Phil Gremm**. I really didn't know much at all about the plumbing business. Phil stayed for a month, and I soaked in every word. I never planned to be a plumber, I was supposed to be a doctor or a dentist! That didn't happen, but it all worked out, and it has now been 50 years of being a plumbing contractor. I learned that my competitors and my peers were only too happy to be friends, and would share what they had learned along the way. Whatever problem I was experiencing, someone else had already fought that battle; and they taught me what they had learned. This is the same today, and is one of the things about our association that gives me the most pride. We are all here for each other and for the greater good of our industry.

So, why is **PHCC of North Texas** so great today? From attending PHCC National conventions, I learned that the most successful chapters had professional help, and I knew that there is only so much that can be accomplished by volunteer leaders. I knew that we needed to have our own Executive Director. I was introduced to **Barbara Hogue**, then **Lochrige**, in about 1990 by some mutual friends. She was a single mom with two sons. She was working four or five different jobs to make ends meet. One job was managing the Dallas Ski Club, which I felt qualified her to manage our PHCC Association. Was I ever right! We couldn't afford much in the way of salary. Barbara's income was largely derived from the profit that the association made on the training courses that we provided to contractors and to their employees. Barbara orchestrated those courses. Barbara joined AEC, which is a separate association of PHCC executive directors, and just like me in PHCC, she learned what was necessary to have and build a successful organization. Every year the **PHCC National Association**, put on a "Legislative and Leadership Conference" in Washington DC. Barbara and I went every year, and we both got better in our jobs.

Early on, when I was still PHCC of Dallas President, Barbara and I spent many hours doing the Day to Day work of the Association, producing a newsletter, lining up speakers for our meetings, and attending meetings of other association. We were highly motivated to grow the successful organization that we all enjoy today. Hiring Barbara was the best and smartest thing that I could have done. **PHCC of Fort Worth** was never a strong organization. Good people,

certainly; but like the early days of PHCC of Dallas....dependant on volunteer leaders, and had little or no growth in membership. Through Barbara's leadership, we were able to merge both the chapters, and enjoy the vibrant group that we have today. It was a "win/win" for Ft.Worth PHCC and for Dallas PHCC.

Eventually, I was able to twist some arms, i.e. inflict some well learned Jewish Guilt, on others, and was able to step down as the president of the organization. I think this is a good place to stop and let Barbara pick it up from here.

### ***Sonny Friedman***

When I (Barbara) first started with PHCC our meetings were held in hotels and then we moved to Highland Park Cafeteria until they closed. Next was The Old San Francisco Steak House until they also closed. We moved to our present location, Brookhaven Country Club, in 2006.

During the TEN years of **Sonny Friedman's** term, from 1989 to 1999, PHCC held Plumbing Code classes, Boot Camp, Journeyman classes, Tradesman classes and Master Prep classes. **Howard Scarborough** taught our prep classes for 17 years, from 1994 through 2012.

We held seminars in:

Plumbing Boot Camp,

Employee Safety

Fall Protection

Confined Spaces Awareness,

Business Boot Camp

Boss Seminar

Tops Training

Mold Loss Prevention and Awareness

Mold Certification

Mold Remediation Seminar

Nate Testing, Customer Service Seminar

Making it Work Seminar

Understanding Overhead, and the

Copper Braze and Solder Seminar

We also became the largest local chapter in the state of Texas.

It was **Tim Chapman**, (**Pope Plumbing** and now **Appleseed Services**) our second president, who with **Ken Weese**, started the highly successful Golf Tournament in 2000, that became an annual event. The three title sponsors for this event have been **Spartan Tool** (9 years), **Rheem & CompAC** and **Trust of Texas**. During Tim's term we were asked to take over the Ft. Worth chapter and in 2000 we officially became **PHCC North Texas**. This is also the time that the PHCC North Texas Web Site first made an appearance.

So far, there have been 10 presidents, some of whom have served again and again, when needed. We owe them all many thanks: **Gary Braffett (T. D. Industries), Rick Gatto (Liberty Plumbing), Tony Reeder (Four Stars Plumbing), Tony Cox (United Mechanical), Lee McFarland (Herndon McFarland), Keith Powers (United Mechanical), Joe Durrett (Enterprise Plumbing) and Ben Friedman (Atlas Plumbing).**

I think it was our events that really made our PHCC association stand out. In addition to our Golf Tournament we held:

Casino nights,

Texas Hold 'em parties,

Christmas Lights bus trip (the wives loved but the men grumbled)

Texas Motor Speedway party and track ride

Sporting clay shoot

Bowling

Game night at Dave and Busters

Chili Cook Offs

Grand Prairie minor league baseball game

Trips to Lone Star Park

Christmas Parties

The payoff for all of the above is in the many awards we received:

APHCC membership awards in 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007

AEC Publication Award for local 0-75 in 1993

1<sup>st</sup> place award for our newsletter at the National Convention in Toronto in 1997

2004 our newsletter won 1<sup>st</sup> place in Local Chapter 75-200

2007 we won the PHCC Chapter of the Year Award

2013 we won the AEC Award for Excellence as well as the AEC Award for Best Special Event.

Over the years so many have helped make PHCC a success; **Rick and Jamie Gatto (Liberty Plumbing), Charlotte and Butch Glass (Love Field Plumbing) and Jerry and Sheila Brown (Texas Plumbing)** are but a few. **Lone Star Gas (now Atmos Energy)** was very supportive by mailing all of our newsletters and in providing their offices for our meetings when needed.

As well as the wonderful cooperation I received from all of the Presidents, I want to acknowledge the excellent help I received from my assistants **Aggie Carroll** from 2005 until 2012 and **Thalis Jann** from 2012 until 2017.

In closing, I wish all of my plumber and associate friends the very best. It was an honor to work with you.

**Barbara Lochridge Hogue, Retiree**