I just got a note the other day which proposed the Association’s revised definition of Facility Management. This new definition is being voted on by the Board at its meeting on April 17, 2003.

This new definition is:

“Facility Management is a profession that encompasses multiple disciplines to ensure functionality of the built environment by integrating people, place, process and technology.”

I believe that integrating is the operative word here. In order for an environment to be effective, all four components must be systematically evaluated in terms of the effect each will have on the other three and, more importantly, what would happen if one component were to be given more attention than the others. What good is a work environment that has the latest wireless communication and data processing if the building cannot handle the power load or the people don’t know how to use the new technology or their processes are documented and communicated on post-it notes?

So, when integration is the key to functionality, now is an appropriate time for all of us to look at our facilities and determine how they are best suited to meet our own company’s needs. The economy is still in dumper. All companies are looking at how to leverage the assets they have to maximize the best return for their bucks.

Corporate belt tightening is as severe as it has been in 80 years. Green buildings, recycling, utilities leveling, space utilization, operations planning, and leveraging unused space for income are just a few examples of how corporate America is coming to rely more and more on their facility management function. Strategic facilities planning is also integrated into the business and operations planning. Then the tactics that support those strategies are the roadmap to more effective and efficient ways to meet corporate goals.

Sorry, I didn’t mean to preach. It is just that now, when companies are really looking for help to survive this economic downturn, our role as facilities managers is even more important.
What do you think of when you hear the letters “CFM”? To some it might mean Common Fruit Market. To others it might mean Complex Facility Management. To me it means a lot of hard work as a Certified Facility Manager. CFM is an acronym that IFMA offers to individuals that show they have a well-rounded knowledge of facilities issues and standards. It stands for Certified Facility Manager. The exam is made of 300 questions broken up into 4 segments. Section 1 deals with scenarios like drawings and knowing what certain symbols mean. Section 2 is purely short answer multiple choice. Section 3 deals with scenario questions. By that I mean they give you information revolving around a situation and ask questions about how you would handle different things. Section 4 is again all short answer multiple choice.

The questions are based on the eight competencies of facilities management. These include Operations & Maintenance, Real Estate, Human & Environmental Factors, Project Management, Facility Function, Finance, Quality Assessment & Innovation and Communications. A new one in Technology will be added soon.

Individuals can now take the test 5 days a week at different locations. The exams are given at Prometric computer services around the U.S. I chose Portage Michigan as my test location based on where I lived. They also have locations in Grand Rapids, Lansing and several in Detroit. The exam took 6 hours to complete. You have 90 minutes to do each segment with a 15 minute break between and 1 hour between segment 2 & 3 for lunch.

In May I was able to go to Houston to take advantage of a CFM refresher course. This course is 2 full days of nothing but reviewing items and area’s of the exam. I feel that helped immensely because you were reviewing the subject with “facilities” folks just like yourself. They were able to show you how to widen your vision. By that I mean look at all of the possibilities and not just how you would handle a situation in your given company.

I passed the exam when I took it in June. I need to tell you that there is no other rush than to click complete and see the big “Congratulations” come across the screen. I think my truck floated home that evening. If you are at all interested in that designation contact IFMA either by calling them or go to www.IFMA.org and select certification. If you do decide to go with this I highly suggest becoming part of a study group in our chapter or take advantage of an IFMA sponsored event. You won’t regret it!

By Dave Kuiper

Our March Chapter Meeting was our annual Scholarship and Awards Dinner hosted at Boulder Creek Golf Club. A fabulous buffet dinner was enjoyed by over 20 members and their guests. Once dinner was complete, the awards ceremony was kicked off by our President, Wayne Veneklasen. The first award presented was the $1500 scholarship to the the Ferris State University student selected by the chapter scholarship board sub-committee. The scholarship was awarded to Jaime McLachlan, a Facility Management Major who plans to graduate in the Spring of 2004.

In addition to the scholarship, a few other awards were presented. Certificates of Appreciation were presented to Mel Kantor and Jan Fryling for their years of service and dedication to IFMA and the West Michigan Chapter. Mel is our current Past President and Jan recently handed over the duties of VP of Programs.

The night was capped off with a fantastic presentation by Jim Grey, Project Manager of the new DeVos Place Convention Center. Jim reviewed many of the design details of the building and shared some entertaining stories about the project. One of the interesting facts is that the project is moving along faster that scheduled and is currently under budget. In addition, we are currently planning a Chapter Tour of the convention center after its completion this Fall.

By Rick VandeKerkhoff

If you have a topic or article that you would like published in our newsletter, please submit them electronically to:

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By Dave Kuiper
Participation

How do you participate in the organizations you belong to?
Do you take an active part in discussions, officer elections, monthly meetings or contribute new ideas for topics or tours?
Do you pay your yearly dues and feel that is enough?
You only belong because it looks good on the synopsis of your job functions?
Do you complain that your organization never does anything interesting?
Do you ask yourself ‘why do I belong’?

There are many organizations in our community. If the members simply paid their yearly dues and did not participate, how long do you think an organization would survive?

Monthly meetings are held to give you new ideas, cost effective savings, help keep you informed of new regulations or policies, interact with other members and share ideas. You could learn about budgeting techniques, construction contract and preventive maintenance programs. The list is endless.

If you do not actively participate in meetings or committees for your organization, how does that benefit you? How does that benefit the organization? Those who actively participate in meetings, committees, lectures or tours, are given an extra sense of accomplishment. Just learning about something or how it works, even though it is not part of your job function, is beneficial. It may help you to understand why or how projects need to be completed. Eventually, it may affect your job function.

Whatever organization you belong to, take an active part in it. No matter how small it may seem to you, it is very important to the organization. When asked to volunteer yourself or provide information, step right up and participate. An organization is only as good as you, the member, make it.

By Marilyn Gould

Welcome New Chapter Members

We are pleased to have you join us and look forward to your involvement and participation in IFMA West Michigan Chapter:

- Russell M. Eltink, Herman Miller Inc. GCS
- Frank S. Horner, Heart of W. Michigan United Way
- Ryan P. Rinveld, HiTec Building Services
- Bruce Ruggles, Pharmacia Corporation
- Doug Stafford, Source Americas
- Larry D. Velie, CPC, Versatile Installations
- Marie Zeman, Cascade Engineering
- Kenneth Pontius, Siemens-Dimatic
- Doug Glazier, Mobile Air, Inc.
- Matthew W. Larsen, Wolverine Construction Mgt., Inc.

West Michigan Board for 2003

Past President        Mel Kantor            kantorm@ferris.edu
President             Wayne Veneklasen      wvenekla@attbi.com
Secretary             Dave Kuiper            dave_kuiper@hermanmiller.com
VP Finance            John Morrison          jmorrison@grofficefurniture.com
VP Membership         Marilyn Gould          mgould@ameritech.net
VP Public Relations   Jim Corby              jcorby@steelcase.com
VP Programs           Rick VandeKerkhoff    richard.vandekerkhoff@gm.com

If you are interested in running for an office on the Board, please see a board member for details on the next board election in June 2003.

Our Chapter Mission

The West Michigan Chapter of the International Facility Management Association (IFMA) is a professional association to promote the advancement of the facilities management profession at the local level by providing opportunities for education and creating an environment that encourages its members to share knowledge and experiences.

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- Facility Operations & Engineering
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- ADA Compliance

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Jim Watrous: 616.490.4781 or Wayne Veneklasen  616.890.8211
Upcoming Events

May 21 at the GRCC ATC at 3:30pm
- 3D Scanner Technology
  - Paul Funk from Midwestern Consulting

June 18 at Western Michigan University
- Tour of updated facilities
  - Hosted by Patrick Gorenchen

July 23 at 5th/3rd Ball Park at 7:00pm
- Whitecaps Game!

August 20 at TBA
- 1st Annual Golf Outing!

September 17 at GRCC ATC at 3:30pm
- Leadership in Facility Management
  - Jim Hickey, CFM, and FMA Fellow

October 15 TBD

November 12 TBD

December 10 location TBD
- Toys for Tots Breakfast