Editor’s Overview

Elevators Go Back to School

by Ricia Sturgeon-Hendrick

Nearly 20 years ago, a group sprang up in the industry that supervised elevator work at universities. It was a small group that felt it didn’t quite fit into any other association. At first, they were called the Big 10 Plus Friends and then VTCCU (Vertical Transportation Conference for Colleges and Universities) and, finally, the group grew into a well-established organization called Elevator U. Their membership is approximately 185 strong now. Our focus this month is all about the universities. In the lead article, Elevator U Through the Years, Matt Irvin tells us about the history of the association. In Making it Work by Kaija Wilkinson, it becomes apparent that many obstacles face campus elevator systems. They have aging equipment, vandalism and heavy usage. Each school handles it differently; some with a full-fledged elevator shop doing all in-house maintenance and repairs, and others contracting some or all of it out to OEMs and independents. Wilkinson talked to five schools to learn how each of their elevator superintendents handles the load.

We received six articles from various colleges, which is a record number. Marquette University’s Schroeder Hall by Ed Butte outlines the modernization by Magnetek and GAL on a 10-story downtown Milwaukee dorm that suffered frequent elevator issues. Together, they improved the ride and the energy efficiency. NEIS Goes to School by Rob Stuart tells another story altogether. It is about how to schedule annual inspections on 270 devices at the University of California Berkeley. A team of four technicians maintains the units, but weekly meetings with National Elevator Inspection Service built a strong working relationship that helps both sides know when inspections should be done. Two articles on access lifts follow. The first is Upholding Honor by Doug Boydston. Handi-Lift provides access for the inspiring new Center for Character and Leadership Development at the U.S. Air Force Academy. The challenge was locating the lift to service three levels in a 19-in. base. Quiet, Dignified Lifts to the Second Floor for Schools and Universities is an article about the Ascension Lift, a wheelchair lift with an electrohydraulic drive train. The unit requires no pit and meets Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines. UNCC Elevator Renovation by Lee Freeland details a yearlong project at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte to renovate all the elevators across the campus. The challenge for the installer, thyssenkrupp, was in buildings where there was only one elevator and classes/labs had to be moved downstairs, to another building or even outdoors for the duration of work. According to Susan Pettit in University Cab Interiors, Eklund’s designs cab interiors that are unique to the campuses they serve, from Yale to Kansas State University to North Carolina State. Finally, an article by Lee Freeland provides details about the massive expansion of the UVA trauma center spread over the next four years. The University of Virginia Emergency Room Expansion involves a huge build out of over 425,000 sq. ft. with 12 elevators in response to the rapidly growing needs in their ER.

Feature articles this month are futuristic. It is not often a writer offers to update an article he wrote 20 years ago, but Rick Barker and your editor reconnected a few months back in New York, and he was eager to contribute to EW starting with Sequel: Is 4,000 fps (20 mps) Enough? There is much to consider in this about where our industry is going in the next few years. Look for more in the future from this forward-thinking consultant. Then, our own Kaija Wilkinson traveled to Helsinki, Finland, for our cover story, a tour of KONE’s Tytyri underground test tower and research facility. At 350-m deep, it is truly Another World, containing an art gallery, a working limestone mine, a mine museum, a restaurant and the KONE research and testing laboratories.

We also covered several events that occurred in April. The ECNY Supplier Showcase packed in over 700 people in six hours at the Villa Barone Manor — and fed them, too. Vertical Initiative for Elevator Escalator Women members met there, as well, with a program on women ownership of businesses in the elevator industry. Just a few weeks prior to that, NAEC held its Spring Educational Conference 2017, covered by Angie Baldwin. More than 240 attendees came to Scottsdale — among them new NAEC members.

Our Continuing Education article this month is by David Herres and is worth one (1) contact hour. In CAN Bus for Elevators, Herres explains why CAN bus works well in elevators, including reliability and reduced wire count. It is a complex subject presented for the technician. Finally, even I think I understand it. 🌐