



ISM—Louisville

An Early History of ISM – Louisville

The history of the Purchasing Agents Association of Louisville and ISM —Louisville, Inc., like ancient Gaul, seems to be divided into three parts. The first, from its inception in 1924 to 1932, might be called the period of organization. The second, from 1933 to 1937, could be classified as the period when the organization was finding itself and determining the pattern it was to follow.

The third, from 1938 to the present time, (1953 when this portion of the history was prepared) has been the period of growth from a small association to one of the outstanding units of District Seven.

Period from 1924 to 1932

The name of the late William M. Kerrick, Director of Purchases for the Mengel Co., stands out in this first or organizational period. Bill can justly be called the founder of the Louisville Association.

He became interested in the National Association of Purchasing Agents shortly after World War I and, at its invitation, attended a convention of that organization in Detroit. Believing that the fullest value could be obtained only with a group of local men interested in the same problems, he decided to attempt the organization of a Louisville Association. He called a committee meeting with E. F. Stager, then purchasing agent of the Wood Mosaic Co. and now in the U.S. Treasury procurement work in North Carolina; B. Y. Heazlitt, purchasing agent for K & I R.R. Co; and Robert L. Schmitt, then secretary of the Louisville Car Wheel and Railway Supply Co.

This committee succeeded in lining up a group of local buyers to hear an organizational talk by Russell Forbes, then head of Air Cargo, Inc., and formerly director of purchases for the City of New York. This meeting resulted in the formation and chartering of the Purchasing Agents Association of Louisville on December 15, 1924, with the following 20 charter members:

Alex M. Forested	Tobacco By Products Chemical Corp.
B. Y. Heazlitt.....	K & I R.R. Co.
W. M. Kerrick.....	Mengel Co.
R. L. Schmitt.....	Louisville Car Wheel and Railway Supply Co.
Claude Watkins	General Box Co.
F. W. Carter.....	Louisville Frog and Switch Co. (now Peerless Manufacturing Co.)
C. W. Birstell.....	B.F. Avery & Son Co. (now Minneapolis-Moline Co.)
W. G. Blackiston.....	Mengel Co.
Harry Embry.....	General Box Co.
C.F. Fausel	Louisville Lead & Color Co.
E.J. Heimerdinger	Louisville Cement Co.
F.H. McCann	Louisville Provision Co.
William A. Stoll	Stoll Oil Refining Co.
J.S. Kinter	Indiana Veneer & Panel Co., New Albany, Ind.
William D. Kuper.....	Louisville Varnish Co.

C.E. Early.....	Louisville Railway Co.
S.M. Nuttal	Henry Vogt Machine Co.
Charles A. Pumell.....	Stimpson Computing Scale Co.
E.F. Stager.....	Wood Mosaic Co.
A.B. Wilson.....	National Tobacco Works

Of the 18 companies represented in the original membership, nine still have members in the Louisville Association. Bill Kerrick was the original fourth term president, serving the association in that capacity for the years 1924-5-6-7. He was ably assisted by the other loyal members who served as president during that period, (1924-32) namely: R.L. Schmitt, B.Y. Heazlitt, E.F. Stager, Claude Watkins, and E.S. Kaiser.

During the early days, meetings were held at the Elks Club without dinner, but later there was a change to dinner meetings at the Kentucky Hotel. The very able presidents who served during this period were concerned chiefly with keeping the ship afloat.

Period from 1933 to 1937

By this time the leaders of the organization felt that it had survived the worst period of the great depression and that it would continue. Consequently, more time was devoted to the planning and carrying out of programs.

When Stanley Held, comptroller and director of purchases of the Hillerich & Bradsby Co., assumed the presidency in 1933, he found the treasury virtually depleted and the organization gaining little in membership. He decided to do something about it. He evolved the plan for a series of dinner meetings to be sponsored jointly by the Louisville Association and friendly business firms, the latter to stand the expense and the association to give what help it could. In lining up a representative group of buyers in arranging the details of the meetings.

Three of these types of meetings were held. For the first one, the Steams Coal Co., provided a professor from the University of Virginia, considered one of the foremost authorities in the nation on the use of coal, as the guest speaker. For the second meeting, the Hurry-Up Broadway Co., supplied a vice-president of the General Rubber Co., an expert on the manufacture and use of tires. For the third and last meeting, the Neill-LaVielle Supply Co., furnished the secretary of one of their associations. He ably outlined the place of distributors in the business picture.

All of these meetings were highly successful, gave the Louisville Association some very valuable publicity, and brought it forcefully to the attention of many buyers who were not members. In the writer's opinion, these meetings marked a turning point in the history of the association. From this point there was a gradual increase in membership, and a gradual improvement in the character of the programs. Whereas in the earlier period there was a hesitancy to invite prominent speakers because of the smallness of the group, it was now felt that the better attendance and the greater prestige enjoyed, justified invitations to more well-known speakers.

The presidents who immediately succeeded Stanley Held in office continued to emphasize the importance of the programs. Included in this group were T.A. Corcoran, A.M. Forrester, S.T. Hull, and Louis M. Hartman.

Period from 1938 to 1953

During this period, the organization began to grow more rapidly. From the small beginning of 20 charter members, the Louisville Association has increased to approximately 200 members. Although much of the growth took place during this third period, it resulted in great part from the sound organizational work in the first period and the sound planning in the second. However, some of the greatest triumphs of the Louisville Association occurred in 1938 and later.

The Executive Night meeting on March 22, 1938, was one of the more outstanding events. A second Executives Night meeting was held Sept. 19, 1939, with the silver-tongued orator Pat Manion, Dean of the Notre Dame Law School, as the speaker, and the late Col. P.J. Callahan, prominent Louisville industrialist, as toastmaster. This meeting was equally successful and added more prestige to the Louisville Association.

These executive meetings have become increasingly popular. On March 19, 1947, George A. Renard, the able executive Secretary-Treasurer of NAPA addressed the 304 Louisville Association members and their guests. Ralph O. Keefer, NAPA president and general purchasing agent for Alcoa at Pittsburgh, addressed approximately 300 members and guests on Jan. 27, 1949. He had with him the entire executive committee of NAPA, which comprises Vice Presidents of districts throughout the country. Such recognition of the Louisville Association is indeed gratifying.

The year 1938 was an important milestone in the history of the Louisville Association for another reason. It was the year in which the first Instruct-A-Show was held. This was an industrial exhibition which filled a much-needed requirement for the Kentuckiana area. Robert L. Schmitt served as the managing director. It was held in the Columbia Gymnasium, now the Louisville Recreation Center. (R.L. Schmitt was to be paid 30% of the profits of the Instruct-A-Show Industrial Exhibit if they were \$2,500 or under, he was to receive 40% if they were over that amount. The profits from this show were recorded at \$1,600.)

District Activities

Our thanks to Eleanor T. Yeager, C.P.M. for updating the following history of the association.

In the 1940's the Louisville Association began taking an increasingly prominent role in the activities of District Seven, NAPA. The district's fourth annual conference was held Oct. 16-17, 1947 in Louisville at the Kentucky Hotel and was a gratifying success. Bill Kerrick was the general chairman. A district conference is a scaled-down NAPA convention and features nationally known speakers of exceptionally high caliber. Garnet T. Dickson, NAPA president and George Renard, NAPA executive secretary-treasurer, were among those who addressed the conference.

More laurels came to the Louisville Association when District Seven elected T. A. Corcoran Vice President in 1948, automatically making him a member of NAPA's executive committee. Then in June 1949, the 34th annual international convention of NAPA, meeting in Chicago, elected Mr. Corcoran president of the National Association. This was the first time that District Seven had been given this honor. It was an acknowledgement of the contribution that the district had been making to NAPA.

Further evidence of the Louisville Association's role in District Seven activities is the traveling panel. Early in 1949, Louisville members suggested that traveling panels, comprising purchasing agents, be organized to give talks before other associations in the district. The panel would consist of three or four buyers who would cover various aspects of purchasing. A few associations in the district established panels. It is one way of furthering the education of purchasing agents. The Louisville panels have appeared before every association in District Seven.

(Jan. 16, 1941, minutes record that the Kentucky Hotel insisted on raising the cost of dinners to \$1.50. Dec. 1, 1942, the board voted to send a carton of cigarettes to each of the members in the armed forces, and also a letter. Dec. 15, 1942 was the annual Christmas party, with open house 5:00-6:00 PM at the Kentucky Hotel. Dinner was followed by a speech from Prof. Charles Williams on the outlook for 1943. A Christmas tree was lighted, and toys distributed and enjoyed, then these were placed under the tree* for distribution to Kosair

Children's Hospital. The hotel had asked that there not be singing, since the Musician's Union had threatened a boycott of the hotel if the Association did not have a union member to play the piano. After adjournment several members remained and enjoyed further fellowship until midnight. No doubt poker was played though it was not recorded—but we understand from early members that this followed most meetings. May 18, 1943, the attendance report for the year was given. Team #1 (Corcoran-Mason team) had 85.4% of members present for the year and 42 members who had been present for all three of the contest meetings. Team #2 had 79.2%, Team #3 had 68.8%, Team #4 had 63.8%, and Team #5 had 56.2%.)

(Sept. 7, 1943, the board voted to furnish refreshments on three nights during the winter—one time each at the YMCA USO, Jewish Welfare YSO, and National Catholic USO — the cost not to exceed \$50.00. During this time period there was some difficulty in getting meals due to rationing.)

(Nov. 3, 1942 the board examined a sample copy of the "Washington Purchasing Agent" magazine. Mr. Kerrick named a chairman to form a committee to consider the possibility of a similar publication in Louisville.)

The Kentuckiana Purchasor

May 1953 KENTUCKIANA PURCHASOR. Occasionally, interesting items which appear in the minutes of the association will be inserted in brackets. When such appear, they were not in the original publication.

The year 1946 saw the establishment of the Kentuckiana Purchasor, the official publication of the Louisville Association. This monthly business magazine, ably edited by Fred C. Crowell Jr., is celebrating its seventh anniversary with this edition (May 1953,) having shown growth ever since it was launched. It is outstanding among purchasing agent association publications and has brought additional laurels to the Louisville Association. It is distributed to all business firms in the Kentuckiana area and to many companies in the southeastern states - which means greater recognition for the Louisville Purchasing Agents.

The Business Outlook meetings, held usually in January, have also proven themselves an effective means of obtaining local recognition. The Louisville Association invites four or five prominent leaders of local business firms to give the purchasing agents prognostications for business in the coming year. The meetings are quite popular and, in addition, give the association much valuable publicity in the local newspapers.

The KENTUCKIANA PURCHASOR magazine was launched in May 1946. The contract with the publisher was drawn up to divide the profits from advertising between the Association and the publisher. When advertising income increased, the percentage of profits for the publisher also increased. This was set as an incentive for their securing more ads and thus to have a larger magazine.

In 1972-73, it was noted that the size of the magazine and the Income for the association was decreasing. After several meetings of the Board of Directors with the magazine personnel in reference to this matter, PMAL President, Steve Dianis, received a letter of cancellation of the contract with the Insurance Field to be effective December 5, 1973.

At a special called meeting of the Board of Directors of PMAL, It was voted unanimously to enter into a contract with Terry Kelly, effective September 15, 1973, to secure information of costs, and to be ready to produce the magazine beginning with the December 1973 issue.

In November, a contract was drawn up for PMAL whereby Terry Kelly, and John McAdam would take over the publication of the KENTUCKIANA PURCHASOR (Terry as Editor, and John as Advertising Manager.) Both would be salaried employees of the Association. As an incentive to increase the advertising income and the size of the magazine, the annual profits from the magazine would be divided — one-half to PMAL, one-fourth to the Editor, and one-fourth to the Advertising Manager.

The first issue under the new management appeared in December 1973. With the exception of one year since the change, the magazine has been financially profitable. The quality of the editorial content has improved, the magazine has begun some continuing services for its readers which are valuable, and it has grown in size. The association is indeed fortunate to have secured two such able and conscientious people to publish our magazine.

The Purchasing Class

(Sept. 15, 1942 the association proposed to sponsor a Purchasing Course for credit at the University of Louisville. A special board meeting on Sept. 26 indicated that more than ten had indicated interest in the course. The enrollees were to pay \$13 tuition, and the association to pay \$5 towards the cost for each.) (Evidently, this original plan was never realized, as there is no mention of it in later minutes.) (Again in March 2, 1944 minutes Mr. Van Overbeke suggested the Association offer a course in Purchasing to wounded soldiers at Nichols Hospital. On May 2, they reported they had received full approval from the Hospital for the course, and 20 men had signified a desire to take the course. June 6, 1944, it was reported that Msrs. Bloom, Van Overbeke, Schmitt, and Heazlitt had gone to the hospital for the course and only one man had shown up. The matter was left with Capt. Lyons that "we were willing to conduct the school whenever he was able to secure us a class.")

Another sign of growth in the third period of the organization's history was the attention directed toward the advancement of the professional status of purchasing agents through education. Under the direction of Harry Moran and Paul Martersteck, the Louisville Association launched a rather ambitious educational program at the University of Louisville.

The first of a series of eight weekly classes was held Feb. 17, 1949, and attracted 40 students. Lecturers at this first session were Edgar E. McCulley, Courier-Journal Lithographing Co., who spoke on "Paper" and who is now an honorary director of the association; W.D. Foley, Central Steel & Wire Co., who spoke on "Steel"; and J. E. Wells, Louisville Coal Institute, who spoke on "Coal".

Attendance at the other seven classes was high. Mr. Moran and Mr. Martersteck followed an educational outline provided by NAPA. When they ran out of material from the National Association, they improvised.

Believing in the importance of procurement education, the Louisville Association decided to continue this project on a permanent basis. In February of 1950 a regular purchasing course was organized in the Division of Adult Education at the University of Louisville. Students who successfully complete the course gain two hours of college credit. The class meets two hours every Thursday night during the spring and fall semesters.

Many purchasing agents and buyers, as well as regular university students, take this course. The classes have been averaging approximately 25 students. They use the textbook "Purchasing" written by Stuart Heinritz, editor of the national magazine, Purchasing. In addition, men from local firms are invited to give lectures so that the students may gain an insight into the practical problems of procurement. During a semester, as many as eight or ten purchasing agents present lectures about their departments.

The education program has become so important that during the May 1952 annual meeting, the Louisville Association decided to establish three scholarships covering tuition charges for the purchasing course each semester. One of the scholarships is called the "Kerrick Scholarship" in honor of the late William Kerrick, founder of the association; a second one is called the "Corcoran Scholarship" in honor of T.A. Corcoran, who served as NAPA president in 1949-50.

Instructor for the course at present is Thor C. Laugesen, current president of the Louisville Association. Other instructors have been Harry Moran, who is now in sales and no longer a member of the association, and Hoyt B. Pritchett, who is the current national director. On March 20, 1951, Mr. Pritchett had 23 students from his classes attend an Executives Night meeting of the Louisville Association at the Seelbach Hotel. They heard Harold F. "Hack" Jones, who was then president of NAPA and who is division purchasing agent for DuPont at Wilmington, and O.L. "Ollie" Williamson, who was then Vice President of District 7.

(Editor's Note: Some of the history from 1946-the start of the Kentuckiana Purchaser—and following was prepared by Fred C. Crowell Jr., editor of the magazine.)

The Association's Economic Analyst

For a number of years now, it has been a practice for the Louisville Association to have an economic analyst present at each monthly meeting. He reviews for the purchasing agents' economic activity during the past month and gives a few predictions of things to come.

The May 24, 1949, meeting of the association was particularly significant in that Dr. Charles C. Williams, professor of Economics at the University of Louisville, was honored. Economic consultant for the Louisville Association for 12 years, he was leaving to take a position as vice president with the Federal Reserve Bank at Richmond, Va. His parting comment: "It has been an interesting experience to watch the association grow. At the first meeting I attended I believe there were only 20 or 25 members present. Since then, the group has grown not only in numbers but in stature, becoming more professional in its outlook and its attitudes."

Dr. John Craf replaced Dr. Williams as economic consultant for the Louisville Association. The current consultant is Dr. William C. Huffman, who is the University of Louisville's director of the Division of Adult Education and professor of economics. In the writer's opinion, Dr. Huffman's monthly talks contribute to the educational program of the association.

Seller-Buyer Dinner

The Louisville Association launched another project in November 1950—the annual Seller-Buyer Dinner. This is a purely social event whose purpose is to promote friendship and understanding between salesmen and purchasing agents.

From the very outset, the event has proven a great success, featuring a cocktail party, dinner, a prominent speaker or two, and a floor show. Approximately 400 sellers and buyers attended the first one on Nov. 21, 1950. The second and third ones were even more successful and attracted approximately 500 persons. If accommodations had been available, probably more would have attended. General Chairman for the three dinners had been Walter F. Pflumm, purchasing agent for the Girdler Corp. The writer believes that this Seller-Buyer Dinner has helped the Louisville Association establish good will among salesmen and suppliers in the Kentuckiana area. Comments from those who have attended have been extremely favorable, and many of them keep looking forward to this annual event in November. (Editor's Note: The five sections preceding were published in the Kentuckiana Purchaser of May 1953.)

Chapter Development

The Louisville Association began assisting other Purchasing Chapters in Kentucky to achieve their National Charters. The beginning of these activities was in the early 1960's with the Central Kentucky (Lexington) Chapter.

Cal Johnson was a member of PMAL and worked in Lexington. He was instrumental in forming the group. The PMAL Board of Directors approved a donation of \$1,000.00 to the group to assist them in forming the chapter. The Central Kentucky Group was also assisted by PMAL Presidents at that time in preparing programs and other features for their meetings.

The Western Kentucky Chapter (Paducah) was also assisted in obtaining their charter by the Louisville Association. There were several meetings in the Spring of 1972. Frank J. Knoop Jr., was president of PMAL at this time. Eleanor Yeager and Joseph C. King were very active in assistance with this group. There were also many others involved. Meetings were held with L. J. Green of Paducah and he was instrumental in getting the group underway. District Seven Vice President Gil Gruen was also a great help in forming the chapter.

All Presidents from Frank Knoop through Urban Kuhn made contributions to the group in keeping things rolling. PMAL again voted to contribute \$1,000.00 to the Western Kentucky Group to assist them in activities to gain their charter. The charter was issued in February 1979.

The South-Central Kentucky (Bowling Green) Group was also assisted by the Louisville Association in obtaining their charter. The group was initiated by Ted Bolsseller in 1969. Ted was a member of PMAL at that time, but his company had moved their plant to Bowling Green. Several members from the Louisville Association made trips to Bowling Green to assist them with programs and membership drives. Presidents from James D. Haddaway through current President Donald G. Linville gave their assistance. Robert E. Todd Sr., and Eleanor Yeager were extremely active in aiding this group. The group received its charter in 1981. They, too, were assisted monetarily by the Louisville Association.