

## Life in Altadena, California - Recollections by Jerry Boyle

Mary and I were thoroughly enjoying our early retirement on the central coast of California, close to San Luis Obispo, when circumstances conspired to lead us to leave that beautiful area. In about 2015, we relocated to Altadena, CA, to be closer to our only grandchild, Jadyn. It has been a great decision as we are able to be part of her life as she grows up. Altadena is a beautiful area adjacent to Pasadena and the Angeles National Forest. We still enjoy travel and just completed our fifth safari to Africa. I have developed my artistic and photographic abilities and enjoy creating art from our animal encounters. Elsewhere in this website, there are examples of my work. Quite a few of my watercolors have sold in exchange for donations to charity.



I hope you enjoy my recollections of a 39-year happy career at CH2M HILL. What follows are the “flash bulb” memories accumulated during those years.

### **The Early Seattle Office**

I was hired right out of the University of Washington with a freshly minted Master’s Degree in June of 1965. Jim Poirot was the assistant manager of the Seattle office, and Holly Cornell was manager. The office was only the second branch office after Boise, and Corvallis (CVO) was the “Mecca.” The Seattle office was located downtown at 5th and Union. There were only about 12-14 employees in Seattle at that time, including, among others, Lyle Hassebroek, Carl Ryden, Bill Johnson, Barry Barnes, Gary Graham, Don Russell, and Oscar Friel – the one and only draftsman. The big project was the Normandy Park Sewer System, with Lyle as project engineer. (We didn’t have project managers yet.)

In early 1967, I transferred to CVO to get some design experience, wanting to return to Seattle as soon as possible. The return never happened. I stayed in CVO until 1978!

### **CVO in the 60s**

When I arrived in CVO, I was assigned to Sid Lasswell's Wastewater Group. Bob Pailthorp and Les Weirson were there in those days. Les was more senior than God in my young eyes and went to Portland to start that office, shortly after I arrived in CVO. Bob was in charge of industrial waste work.

CVO was growing like mad in those days, and it wasn't long before I was assigned to sit in a trailer in the back-parking lot. So much for dreams of grandeur! I remember part of the office being taken up by a large tank of water, like a small swimming pool, that the

electrical guys were using to do some sort of research on stray voltage from transmission lines, which seemed very mysterious at the time and took up the space I was originally sitting in – thus the trailer assignment.

Elmer Seegmueller was the mentor of all the young design guys like me. He checked all the plans and was a real stickler for detail. If the north arrow was not up or to the right, you heard about it from Elmer. He always had at least three cigarettes going at once and carried a pack in each of his two shirt pockets.

CVO coffee breaks were a real occasion and well attended. We met in the furnace room; and many a knotty technical problem was discussed, along with Steelhead fishing stories. The good fishermen would never tell where the fish were biting, keeping us kids in the dark.

The last working day before Christmas always ended with the “ho-ho-ho” party. We would open all the booze and goodie baskets left by the contractors and suppliers and have a roaring good time. This went on until one of our folks got arrested for DUI and spent Christmas in jail. Thus, ended that tradition!

### **The Genesis of the Denver Regional Office**

In the early 70s, Gene Suhr and I procured a 30-mgd water design project in Colorado Springs. This ultimately became one of the springboards for the opening of the Denver office. I commuted from CVO to Colorado Springs to complete the design. During the construction phase, the Denver office was opened with Ken Bielman as the manager.

Shortly after the completion of Colorado Springs, I became discipline group director for Wastewater, when we procured the 100-mgd pure oxygen Metro Denver Wastewater design, and the project manager, being forced to commute from CVO again. In roughly this same time frame, the firm procured the Denver Water Board Water Treatment Plant work headed up by Ken Bielman and Bob Chapman. These key clients became the success factors for the firm's growth in the Rocky Mountain region.

### **Into Southern California in the 80s**

In 1978, Harlan Moyer was pursuing work with the City of San Diego (SDO). I volunteered to move to SDO and head up the design team, and Jim Howland went as project director. I stayed there for 2 years as project manager on a major project to procure a secondary discharge waiver and design a major face-lift for the Point Loma Advanced Primary Wastewater Treatment Plant and interceptor. About that same time, the firm split Southern California off from San Francisco (SFO) to form a new region. Dave Evans became regional manager out of Newport Beach. In late 1979, Jim Poirot, who was Southwest District Manager at the time, called me one day in SDO to say that Dave wanted to get back to major project management and asked if I would I like to become Regional Manager (RM) and move to Newport Beach. I said “Yes” and moved my young family for the second time in 2 years. At that time, the Southern California (SCO) region consisted of about 12 permanent staff. I remained RM in SCO during a period of

major growth for the next 18 years until the firm re-engineered and combined the SCO region with the SFO, SCA, and DEN offices. At that time, I became the firm's first WBG Regional Business Group Manager (RBGM). After 39 years of amazing experiences, I retired in 1992. I have thoroughly enjoyed the relationships and experiences I have had over these many years.