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Givens, Laurie; Sheingold, Abraham

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Professor In Profile: ABRAHAM SHEINGOLD

by Laurie Givens



It seemed most appropriate to talk with Distinguished Professor Sheingold, Acting Chairman of the Electrical Engineering Department, on this the occasion of the NPS birthday celebration. After all, he's been with NPS since 1946! NINETEEN FORTY-SIX? That's almost FORTY years! "Don't remind me," the good Professor says.

I've always thought it interesting to sit around and talk to people (like my Grandfather) who've been here long enough to see the changes in this country. Professor Sheingold is one of these people. So, I asked him what it was like teaching at NPS after WW II. (NPS was still at Annapolis at this point)

After the war, the school faculty became more "civilianized." The reserve officers went back to their civilian jobs and the faculty increased from about 14 members to 50. "Most of the students who came to the school had this as their first shore duty after the wartime experience. That was the first get-together of husbands and wives in a

long time," remembers Professor Sheingold. "You know a funny thing happened too --- nine months after they got here, lots of cigars were being passed out. My wife sure did hate to see me bring home another cigar."

Professor Sheingold remembers the students being about the same as they are today; a little older then, maybe, because of the war delaying their studies. "The classroom discussion frequently revolved around their participation in the wartime experience," says Sheingold. He also remembers the wives pretty clearly: "They complained that the one thing they became **too** intimately acquainted with, was the back of their husbands' heads as they were slumped over studying!"

In 1951, Admiral Herrmann (Herrmann Hall) persuaded Congress and his faculty to move the Monterey grounds of the Old Del Monte Hotel, 65 people in all. "It was nice to arrive here on a very rainy night and have friends to greet us on the steps of Herrmann Hall," recalls the Professor with a far-away gaze. Several blocks of what is now the Del Rey Oaks area had homes created especially for the faculty members. Many of the faculty purchased their homes sight-unseen before leaving Annapolis. Housing was hard to come by only several years after the war. Sheingold also remembers: "Down by the Holiday Inn in Carmel, a group of enterprising officers built an apartment complex for students. Many, even, purchased homes, knowing that they would like to retire here someday."

As the years went by, the school increased in size and new curricula were added. Research programs

were also added. Professor Sheingold remembers the "Peacocks" (a separate article this month). "Yes, we would be having a meeting in Herrmann Hall and had to listen to them pecking away at their reflections in the window. They were dumb. One day they just disappeared."

I asked Professor Sheingold if there was anything he would like to have seen done differently over the years. He wished that the school had been able to develop a more extensive Doctoral program. "The Navy is reluctant to let a student stay for the time it takes. Doctoral work is open-ended. It takes time," he states.

A major difference the Professor sees from then and now, besides the great expansion of research activities and curriculum, is the move away from 'lock-step' student programs. "If there were 25 students in a curriculum, they all took the same set of courses - quarter after quarter after quarter. Now there is a much greater amount of 'custom fitting' to the individual needs of the students."

Professor Sheingold is a spry **young** man. No doubt he will be with us in the Electrical Engineering Department for another FORTY years.

*First in a continuing
series featuring
NPS faculty*
