
A Brief History of ERGS

May 1999

This version of the founding and early history of ERGS may be somewhat different to that of a certain other venerable member. On the other hand, I am marginally younger than the gentleman in question and for this reason alone, this summary may turn out to be marginally more accurate than any version that you may have heard up to this point.

I have heard brief comments regarding the existence of a "Refiner Users' Group prior to the founding of ERGS. I know nothing about the activities of this group and apologize in advance if I tread on hallowed ground while attempting to put the origin and past history of ERGS into perspective.

The idea of creating an association of individuals knowledgeable in the field of refiner mechanical pulping in all of its various aspects was conceived in one of the bars in the Manoir Public House in Pointe Claire after a Seminar on Pulp Characterization held at Paprican in 1976. This post meeting took place over numerous jugs of ale and was attended by Douglas Atack and Don May of Paprican, Alkis Karnis of Domtar Research, Mike Jackson of MacMillan Bloedel, Jan Hill of STFI, David Wild who was also working with Domtar at the time and Ray Leask of Ontario Paper.

It was felt that the association should be organized along similar lines to the International Association of Scientific Papermakers (IASPM) but that it should be both socially and technically more active and never be permitted to deteriorate to the level of a Dinner Club. There were also some thoughts about an emblem for the association but further than this, no decisions were made.

One week later, Doug Atack and Alkis Karnis met with Mike Jackson in the Marine Bar of the Bayshore Inn in Vancouver and decided that there should be an association, that it should be called ERGS, that it should have a proper constitution and that the group was to combine work with conviviality. This initial idea was taken back to Montreal with great enthusiasm by Doug and Alkis and received enormous approbation several days later from Don May of Paprican, Ray Leask and Jan Hill. Thus, it is not really known who the Godfather of

ERGS was, nor does it matter, but all six individuals noted above had some input and we are all delighted that the association has not only survived for 20 years but also thrived.

Concerning the title of the Association, this was discussed at great length. The name ERGS, suggested by Mike Jackson and supported enthusiastically by Don May, was selected to use the last three letters of the classical unit of work (ERGS) as a suitable acronym for Refiner Groundwood Scientists while maintaining the idea that work and energy were fundamental to mechanical pulping. Although the E was initially somewhat of an embarrassment since we had absolutely no intention or ambition to develop as an elitist group, its use permitted the acronym to cover the name of the association.

Once the Association had been established, the final three of the original ten members were then recruited. These members were Bo Mannstrom of KCL, Keith Kirkpatrick of Bowater Southern, and Mike Fahey of Crown Zellerbach. Alkis Karnis and Douglas Atack wrote the constitution and this was adopted at the first meeting of the association which was held in Toronto in June 1979 in conjunction with the 1979 IMPC.

The emblem of the association was the subject of much discussion. Not unexpectedly, the southern aspect of a northbound large-eared African elephant, LOXODONTA AFRICANA, was Mike Jackson's suggestion and he was so well prepared with several very solid reasons for this choice that opposition to the suggestion was minimal. These reasons were expounded upon in his impassioned speech at an ERGS dinner arranged during a Refiner Technology Symposium held in Appleton, Wisconsin on September 18, 1980. This dinner was attended by eight members of ERGS. Although the true elegance of his delivery may be lost forever, some of the main points were as follows:

- Loxodonta Africana is difficult, almost impossible to tame, showing a very strong self will.
- If training does succeed in taming the beast, the elephant and his keeper will become inseparable,

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- If training does succeed in taming the beast, the elephant and his keeper will become inseparable, working together in many cases for the rest of their lives.
- Elephants like very much to perform in circuses.
- The elephant never forgets.
- Elephants become dangerous when aroused. Old bull elephants may become unruly and eventually deranged and in the wild, often become solitary outcasts from the herd.
- The female elephant however is usually placid.

The ERGS tie was selected after considerable discussion over numerous ales and other elegant libations, and only after several other ideas such as stove pipe hats and checkered waistcoats had been rejected. Borje Steenberg made a great speech extolling the virtues of bow ties but regrettably, this concept had to be turned down due to economic reasons. The constitution actually calls for the wearing of the ERGS tie at official meetings and it is a remarkable fact that it has seldom been necessary for the President to invoke the inevitable fine for forgetfulness. From personal experience, however, this fine can represent a substantial sum!

ERGS membership doubled after the first year from ten to twenty members after which it increased by about one member per year. Presently, the membership stands at 36 with Canadians making up about one third of the membership. Antipodeans are currently under-represented, as are lady members and these deficiencies must certainly be rectified in the future. It is my understanding that this situation will be rectified prior to the next IMPC Conference to be held in Houston in May. We are presently four short of the maximum number of members allowed by the constitution. Participation in the official ERGS meetings held every second year in conjunction with the IMPC meetings has generally been in excess of 70% of the total membership. This seems to us to represent an excellent record. An ERGS get-together has also taken place annually in Montreal on the Monday evening of the CPPA Annual Meeting and this dinner has always been well attended by North American members. Initially, these meetings were held at the Greek Restaurant 'Milos' on Park Avenue but this has now become so outrageously expensive that we have been forced to curb our excesses.

The first official ERGS meeting was held in Toronto in 1979 and the executive consisted of Doug Attack as President, Bo Mannstrom as Secretary and Keith Kirkpatrick as Treasurer. Ray Leask has been our long term Treasurer since 1981, assisted by Adrian Barnett during recent years. Adrian has now taken over the

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position. Goran Dahlqvist and Mustafa Stationwala have served on the executive twice. Further details of our past meetings are evident from the attached table.

Traditionally, the positions of President and Secretary have been rotated between North America and Northern Europe to assist in the planning of meetings.

Over the years and with the inevitable passing of time, we have regrettably lost some of our fellow ERGS. Keith Kirkpatrick died in 1986 and Bo Mannstrom passed away in 1992. Charles Carpenter died in 1993 and Alkis Karnis died tragically in an automobile accident in 1998. Mike Fahey resigned from the Association and Carroll Freeman went to ground, never to be heard of again after attending one meeting. Dr. Baumgartner, although duly elected and expected to attend at least two meetings, never managed to actually find the location of the meeting and has been struck off the membership roster.

In 1991, The ERGS trophy was donated by Tampella, founders of PGW technology, no doubt as a sign of deep respect for the advanced nature of refiner technology. They obviously recognized that even with PGW, a good rejects refiner was required to fix up the mess issuing from the grinder! It was quickly decided that this beautiful trophy should be presented for the best paper given during the Technical Session of the ERGS meeting, preceding the IMPC. Recipients to date have been David Mackie (1993), Michael Jackson (Can)(1995) and Olof Ferritsius (1997). The ERGS trophy is maintained for safekeeping at Paprican and since both Mustafa Stationwala and John Wood have left the Institute, we must appoint a suitable custodian for the trophy.

The Keith Kirkpatrick Award, involves a stipendium which varies in value according to the diligence of our treasurer, and is awarded for the best first-time presentation at the IMPC Meeting. It was awarded for the first time in 1991 to our lady member, Annikki Heikkurinen, for her paper on the effects of initial defiberization on the properties of refiner mechanical pulp. This year, the award has a value of US\$1500.

Two of the projects initiated by ERGS have been a complete failure. The first one was initially proposed at the Larvik meeting in 1981. The intention was that each member of ERGS should place on record his views on a theory of mechanical pulping based on his current information, experience and observations. The ultimate goal was to develop a consensus theory to be used as a basis for further work. This objective was an ambitious one and was never really achieved although the idea did shock one or two members into motion. Charlie Carpenter produced a work entitled "A history of Mechanical Pulping in North America" and Alan Pearson developed a monograph entitled "A Theory of Mechanical Pulping"

The second project was much simpler. It was to compile a list of publications of ERGS members as a bibliography. The project was proposed by Bill Strand and essentially agreed upon by all members. Regrettably, the bibliography was never developed despite the fact that many members actually submitted a list of their own publications. This project at least should be completed and the writer of these notes would seriously encourage the current president to get the project underway again.

Several fellow ERGS have truly distinguished themselves academically and we have just cause to be proud of their achievements. Douglas Attack, Don May, Alkis Karnis and Stuart Corson have all been awarded the Arne Asplund Award. Don May and Keith Miles have taken matters to an even higher level of elegance by being awarded 'The Marcus Wallenberg Prize' for their major contributions to an understanding of Mechanical Pulping.

It remains only to provide some personal extra-mural recollections from the ERGS meetings which I have had the good fortune to attend:

- Toronto: Arriving back in my hotel room at 7.00am after an eight hour discussion on various aspects of mechanical pulping with Borje Fredriksson and convincing another colleague that I was merely returning to my room from breakfast!
- Larvik: The Norwegian Gymnasts Convention, the famous fire alarm incident and Bill Johnson from Tasman trying to board the Oslo train early on Sunday morning.
- Virginia Beach: An complete appreciation of the serious nature of hyperthermia brought about by a combination of drinking and late night swimming in the ocean.
- Aland: The ferry trip from Grisslehamn, Sweden, ploughing through the icebergs in the gulf of Bothnia.
- Whistler: Steve Moldenius' encounter with a bear while jogging. Late night discussions with Alkis Karnis and Borje Fredriksson.
- Minneapolis: The wrong place for IMPC but fun golf with Rune Franzen, Aare Metsavirta and Dave Mackie. The rental clubs left much to be desired.
- Oslo: Somewhat hazy! The magnitude of my bar bill on Saturday evening and my subsequent attempts to get my employer to accept it as a donation to the development of mechanical pulping technology!

These notes provide a very brief summary of how ERGS came into being and what the association has been doing during its first two decades of existence. Long may it continue to thrive- - - **LOXODONTA AFRICANA!**

TABLE History of ERGS Executive Officers, Meetings and Award Winners

Term	President	Secretary	Treasurer	Year of Meeting	ERGS Meeting Location	IMPC Meeting Location	Keith Kirkpatrick Award Winner	ERGS Trophy Winner
1979-1981	D. Atack	B. Mannstrom	K. Kirkpatrick	1979	Toronto, Ont. Canada	Toronto, Ont. Canada		
1981-1983	A. Karnis	J. Hill	R. Leask	1981	Larvik, Norway	Oslo, Norway		
1983-1985	M. Jackson(Can)	B. Fredriksson	R. Leask	1983	Virginia Beach, Norfolk, Va. USA	Washington DC. USA		
1985-1987	B. Mannstrom	A. Metsavirta	R. Leask	1985	Mariehamn, Sweden	Stockholm, Sweden		
1987-1989	R. Franzen	G. Dahlqvist	R. Leask	1987	Whistler, BC Canada	Vancouver, BC Canada		
1989-1991	R. Dines	M. Stationwala	R. Leask	1989	Mustio Manor, Finland	Helsinki, Finland		
1991-1993	J. Hill	H-E Hoydahl	R. Leask	1991	Minneapolis, Minn. USA	Minneapolis, Minn. USA	Annikki Heikkurinen	
1993-1995	W. Frazier	M. Stationwala	R. Leask A. Barnett	1993	Oslo, Norway	Oslo, Norway	Elisabeth Lystad	David Mackie
1995-1997	G. Dahlqvist	J. Sundholm	R. Leask A. Barnett	1995	Montebello, Que. Canada	Ottawa, Ont. Canada	T. Koljonen	Michael Jackson(Can)
1997-1999	J. Wood	M. Jackson(USA)	A. Barnett	1997	Roseno, Sweden	Stockholm, Sweden	Kjell-Arve Kure	Olof Ferritsius
1999-2001			A. Barnett	1999	Galvaston, Texas USA	Houston, Texas USA		
2003-2005								