

ZERO TO FIFTY -- The Flooding of Antioch College

On July 1, 2008, Antioch University suspended the operations of Antioch College, leaving approximately 30 buildings on campus vacant with no heating, cooling, or HVAC operations for air circulation. These vacant buildings included Antioch Hall (called Main Building) and South Hall. Both of these buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

On June 4, 2007, Glenn Harper, Manager of Preservation Services for the Ohio Historical Society, wrote a letter to Antioch University stating that leaving historic buildings vacant—without minimal heat and proper ventilation—can lead to "significant damage" (1). Harper's letter states:

We strongly suggest that forced air ventilation be provided in the summer and at least minimal heat (45 to 50 degrees) be provided during the winter months. According to National Park Service Brief 31 "Mothballing Historic Buildings", though closed up, a building's interior can still be affected by exterior temperatures (2).

Antioch University refused to follow the standard of care "strongly" suggested by the Ohio Historical Society, and the campus was left cold and shuttered. The vacant campus and its historic Pre-Civil War buildings were left unprotected against the "exterior temperature" changes brought by the freeze and thaw of winter.

According to data from the National Weather Service, on December 24, 2008, the Dayton area experienced the largest thaw of the winter as temperatures rose from 0 to 51 degrees within a 72-hour period (3). If significant damage were to occur at Antioch College due to extreme exterior temperature changes, this would be the day.

On December 24, 2008, South Hall experienced "serious damage," according to the January 5, 2009 minutes of the Miami Township Trustees (4). A sprinkler pipe in the attic of South Hall broke, sending water through all 4 stories of the building. In a videotape of the meeting, Miami Township Fire-Rescue Chief Altman states, "The amount of water coming out of that South Hall system was mind-boggling...At the end of the building water was shooting out the windows of the fourth floor...there's drywall collapsed, and all this kind of stuff"(5). After reviewing a transcript of the meeting, Chief Altman stated, "There were two sections of dry wall collapsed on the fourth and third floors due to water weight. There appeared to be no structural damage at all" (6).

The extent of damage to South Hall is not known. Antioch University did not publicly share (or perhaps conduct) a damage study of South Hall by a licensed engineer specializing in flooded buildings. And what damage is currently taking place at South Hall due to mold or microbial growth (if any) is also not known, since "remediation specialists were not hired" to test, clean, dry, and ventilate the building (7). According to William Treasure, a Certified Microbial Remediation Supervisor who oversaw mold remediation work at Antioch College in 2002, "Immediate heat and ventilation are essential elements for properly drying a water-damaged

building" (8). While workers mopped up water and removed carpets from South Hall, the cold, unheated building has still not been warmed or ventilated. On February 9, 2009, Mr. Treasure looked in a first floor window of South Hall and saw "standing water on its hard wood floor" (9). Mr. Treasure stated the University's treatment of South Hall could very well lead to significant growth of mold and microbial agents in the building (10).

According to data from the National Weather Service, on February 7, 2009, the Dayton area experienced the second largest thaw of the winter as temperatures rose from 2 to 50 degrees within a 72-hour period (11). If significant damage were to occur again at Antioch College, because State and National standards of care had not been followed, this would be the time.

On February 7, 2009 a sprinkler pipe broken in the attic of Antioch College's historic Main Building (Antioch Hall) flooding all 4 floors of the structure. Unlike the South Hall flood, this time the cascading waters were videotaped and posted on the Internet (12). This time protests took place and the press showed up (13). This time remediation specialists arrived and the building was warmed and ventilated (14). But unlike South Hall, this time Antioch University had additional warning signs that a failure of Main Building's attic sprinkler was fast approaching.

The failure of the South Hall's attic sprinkler system should have led to an immediate and thorough review of all such systems on campus. But even that was not the first warning sign, for the sprinkler system in Main Building had failed earlier in the winter. According to Chief Altman at the Miami Township meeting on January 5, "Main Building had a valve--it is a dry [sprinkler] system, but apparently the valve just leaked... It didn't cause a lot of damage from what I understand" (15). In contrast, yet another water leak prior to the South Hall deluge occurred in the Theater building; the damage was reported to be "serious" (16). Any one of these incidents should have led to a detailed investigation of the entire campus sprinkler system.

Effective vigilance and remediation should have extended beyond concern for the sprinkler system. For "so much condensation" due to "temperature fluctuations" occurred in the Student Union that well-worn smoke detectors were "shorting because of all the humidity" (17). It was also reported that the condensation on the "insides of those [campus] building were probably just terrible" on days that the temperature rebounded (18). In Fall 2008, it was reported that Antioch University said, "In order to minimize moisture, in the winter, the buildings' ventilation systems will be turned on daily for an hour" (19). A University employee who does not want to be identified stated that no ventilation was ever implemented at the College.

Harper's June 2008 letter to Antioch University states, "Without proper ventilation and heating, moisture from condensation may damage plaster, cause paint to peel, stain woodwork and warp floors. If such conditions are allowed to continue structural damage may occur..." (20). What damage is currently taking place in any or all of the College buildings due to lack of proper ventilation, heating, or mold growth is not known.

This lack of knowledge may have been complicated by recent personnel changes at Antioch University. Chief Operations Officer Milt Thompson was the University employee in charge of

managing the College campus. On January 4, 2008, Mr. Thompson left the University for another job. Antioch University's Vice-Chancellor and CFO Tom Faecke replaced him. A review of Faecke's resume strongly suggests he has no experience with buildings and maintenance management (21). At the Miami Township meeting on January 5, Chief Altman stated the following:

So, uh, you know, and then with Milt Thompson, who had been handling all that [building] stuff for the University...so they're not replacing him, and the Vice Chancellor [Tom Faecke] in charge of the facilities is in Minnesota until next week, so it's very typical Antioch trying to get this stuff worked out. So, we'll see what happens. Definitely a shame though. South Hall was a nice building (22).

This change in campus management coincides with Antioch University's shifting explanations about the causes of the water damage in South Hall and the Theater. On January 5, Chief Altman stated that Antioch College "had a bunch of sprinkler pipes freeze around Christmas time...South Hall froze on the fourth floor...a pipe burst in there [the Theater]" (23). Recently Chief Altman reviewed a transcript of the January 5 meeting and corrected the record by saying "that freezing was not the cause" of the South Hall leak and that the Theater had flooded due to "a large roof leak" (24). Chief Altman changed the record based on information given to him by Antioch University. Chief Altman never examined the broken pipes and roof leaks at Antioch. It is not his job. The responsibility for that job would fall to the manager of campus buildings, the Vice-Chancellor of the University and its CFO, Tom Faecke.

Mr. Faecke has a vested interest in blaming the College floods on anything other than the University's decision to leave the campus shuttered and cold, a gamble based on the University's estimation that to provide minimal heat in the buildings over the winter would have cost them "around \$400,000 to \$500,000" (25). The University had over \$105 million of income during the 2007 Fiscal Year, although these numbers should be lower this year due to the closing of the College (26). Six months before the floods, Mr. Faecke stated that he will "probably not" follow expert advice for "maintaining a certain level of heat and ventilation" at the campus even if that advice came from the University's own consultant (27). Mr. Faecke stated his reason for ignoring such advice was "due to cost considerations" (28).

The bill has come due on those considerations.

- 1) "Letter from the Ohio Historical Society to Antioch University," *Glenn Harper, Manager of Preservation Services for the Ohio Historical Society*, p.1, June 4, 2008, at *TheAntiochPapers* - http://theantiochpapers.org/file_download/208/fl_001.pdf
- 2) Ibid, p. 1.
- 3) "National Weather Service - High and Low Daily Temperatures," *TheAntiochPapers*, p. 2, February 12, 2009, http://theantiochpapers.org/file_download/209/fl_002.pdf
- 4) "Minutes - Miami Township Trustees," *Miami Township, Greene County, Ohio*, p. 5, at *TheAntiochPapers* - http://theantiochpapers.org/file_download/210/fl_003.pdf
- 5) "Transcript of 1/05/09 Miami Township Trustees Meeting," *TheAntiochPapers*, p. 2-3, February 17, 2009, at http://theantiochpapers.org/file_download/211/fl_004.pdf
- 6) Ibid, p. 3.
- 7) Diane Chiddister and Lauren Heaton, "Main Building flood elicits concern over damage extent," *Yellow Springs News*, February 12, 2009, http://www.ysnews.com/stories/2009/02/021209_antioch.html
- 8) Brian Springer, "Unpublished Interview with William Treasure," *TheAntiochPapers*, February 14, 2009
- 9) Ibid.
- 10) Ibid.
- 11) "National Weather Service - High and Low Daily Temperatures," *TheAntiochPapers* p. 3.
- 12) See online video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SjjUNF7Dx7E>
- 13) See online video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h8lJtqszfFs>
- 14) Chancellor Toni Murdock, "Letter From Antioch University," *Antioch University*, February 9, 2009, at <http://askelandforcouncil.blogspot.com/>
- 15) "Transcript of 1/05/09 Miami Township Trustees Meeting," *TheAntiochPapers*, p. 3.
- 16) "Minutes - Miami Township Trustees," *Miami Township, Greene County, Ohio*, p. 5.
- 17) "Transcript of 1/05/09 Miami Township Trustees Meeting," *TheAntiochPapers*, p. 4.
- 18) Ibid, p. 4.
- 19) Diane Chiddister, " Winterizing, shutdown of campus to end by November," *Yellow Springs News*, October 2, 2008, http://www.ysnews.com/stories/2008/10/100208_shutdown.html
- 20) "Letter from the Ohio Historical Society to Antioch University," *Glenn Harper, Manager of Preservation Services for the Ohio Historical Society*, p.1.

- 21) "Resume," Thomas Faecke, November 2005, at University of Central Missouri, www.ucmo.edu/Documents/faecke_resume.pdf
- 22) "Transcript of 1/05/09 Miami Township Trustees Meeting," *TheAntiochPapers*, p. 3.
- 23) Ibid, p. 1-2.
- 24) Ibid, p. 2.
- 25) Diane Chiddister, " Winterizing, shutdown of campus to end by November," *Yellow Springs News*.
- 26) Antioch University IRS Form 990, Antioch University, Fiscal Year 2007, <http://activecause.com/nonprofit-profile/antioch-university/id/393a3c383d39262522>
- 27) Diane Chiddister, "Shutdown prompts safety concerns," *Yellow Springs News*, July 3, 2008, http://www.ysnews.com/stories/2008/07/070308_collegeshutdown.html
- 28) Ibid.