Renovation Journal – Highly randomized scribbles as we renovate in place.
By Richard S. Towne

May 19. This journal due to Mary B for mock-up of Zounds so she can get to printer. Workers from UNM Remodel team showed up 5/17 to launch demolition. Good team, smart builders. Demolished my office first thing…. Well they demolished the old dormitory built-in closets, desks and fixtures that we have lived with since KUNM moved here in 1976. I moved out and back in the same day. They removed the cabinetry two more offices and our meeting room yesterday. Our conference room is out of commission so people are meeting in the halls or on the second floor in the NM Endowment for the Humanities meeting room (Thanks!).

Noise not bad but constant and jarring since we work with sound and have our sound “antennas” up all the time…. Its weird and intrusive at first but well within my own tolerance. Not so sure about colleagues and visitors. People look perplexed and a little stressed. Hallways are jammed as we move out, move in, move around. Workers have just the right system for the “wreck-out” of plaster ceilings and walls. First 30-foot roll-off removed full of debris today. 20 more to go. Common work room – first walls you see coming off elevator are under full demolition. Exhaust fan is ducting dust out the Production Department’s exterior window. Seems to work but a fine powder of dust is showing up. Not around the studio equipment yet but we are seeing what we’ll need to do to protect our audio gear.

Electrician is testing main circuit boxes – labeling dates to original electric when this dorm was built around 1960. Oh good, now we will know what circuit turns off which hallway or office. News room beginning to move back to the former meeting room. Complete move out will be Memorial Day. News staff returns on June 1 (Primary Election Day) to their temporary quarters. We will move them Saturday so as not to interrupt their work. Hope we can find enough volunteers to move them on the long weekend. New Associated Press wire installed for temp newsroom. AP donates free station-wide desktop wire service for whole station during renovation (thanks).

Next week, remodel bathroom to build new custodial room. That second floor bathroom is going to seem like miles away for on-air folks. Should be done in about 2 weeks but plumbing is always hard to predict what you’ll find. Planning underway for remodel of main production studio. This will be tough with room out of commission. Will new digital console arrive in time to install or are we going to have to put the old 1988 console back in. Kevin Rogers ordered highest quality anti-static carpet for studios. Good. New engineering systems, internet server and telecomm clean rooms to be built in June. Ceilings in studio hallways coming out next week and we will see what 28 years of wires are thrown up there. Never do that again. Completely new wire systems installed in renovation.

Local construction supply houses donating nearly $10,000 worth of the $60K worth of material for the project. Must remember to start thanking them on air and in Zounds for the great help. Listeners Romany Wood and Carl Rosenberg in Arroyo Seco sent a generous extra gift to support the renovation. They are building their own straw-clay house and know the need for a little extra cash when its all going on. They remembered author David Sedaris on-air with Mary B saying “this place is a real dump”. Must remember to invite him back when we are done.
Romany and Carl say “May the strongest and kindest megahertz angels watch over and bless your project. We will understand and forgive the inevitable glitches that will occur. Don’t forget to budget for group staff therapy.” Great idea, somehow I left that off of my list…… the letter they sent sits on top of my desk.