



# Southern California Chapter Newsletter

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Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the position of SoCal ABPA.

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## Behind the Bricks Tour at Legoland

Submitted by Bill Laird

Tuesday, February 25th began with wind gusts driving a cold rain that threatened to end the tour of Legoland before we started. Horizontal sheets of rain resulting in gutter-to-gutter momentary flooding chased the less hardy persons to cover. Although it seemed Mother Nature was contriving to make it a miserable day, people still made an appearance to walk through the approximately 60 acres of meticulously manicured landscaping. As the appointed time to start the tour drew near, the sun came out to temporarily replace the clouds and allow the tour to begin.

Twenty people representing municipal water districts, military installations, school districts and private sector plumbing/backflow prevention contractors braved the inclement weather to get a behind the (Lego) blocks look at the complicated but correctly installed potable and recycled water irrigation systems. The attendees were able to observe complicated pump systems designed to operate the water attractions located in the park and the large water features that complement the skyline of New York City, San Francisco and the Big Easy, New Orleans.



Legoland has been open since March 1999 and is one of three Legoland theme parks worldwide. It is the fourth largest user of recycled water in the City of Carlsbad. Intensive pre-construction planning resulted in very well designed piping systems that supply potable water for domestic usage and irrigation piping for both recycled irrigation and potable irrigation.

This tour was just one of the many exciting activities that are benefits of membership in ABPA. Thank you to our excellent Legoland host, Lupe Rivera, for organizing and accompanying us on the tour.

Our next Chapter activity will be the Diamond Valley Lake tour on June 4, 2003. For more information, contact Sergio Ochoa at (909) 392-2961.



# Calendar of Events



May 4-7, 2003 ABPA International Conference, Detroit, Michigan  
 June 4, 2003 Diamond Valley Lake Tour  
 June 15-19, 2003 AWWA Annual Conference and Seminar, Anaheim  
 Sept. 10, 2003 Inland Counties Backflow Seminar  
 Sept. 25-27, 2003 Tri-State Seminar on the River, Laughlin, NV  
 Sept. 29-Oct. 1, 2003 Western Regional Backflow Conference, Las Vegas, NV  
 October 6-9, 2003 CA/NV AWWA Fall Conference, San Diego  
 May 9-12, 2004 ABPA International Conference, Long Beach, CA



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## Benefits of ABPA Membership

There is a genuine need for education, cooperation and organization in the changing and growing world of backflow prevention and cross connection control. That need is met by ABPA, a non-profit organization founded in 1984. Our goal is to provide education and technical assistance to ensure safe drinking water through effective cross-connection control.

Our members include both new and experienced plumbing contractors, backflow prevention assembly testers, regulators from health departments and water suppliers and others with an interest in maintaining water quality standards. Chapter members receive a quarterly newsletter, reduced rates at seminars, and can participate in special "member only" tours. Your \$45.00 payment includes \$30.00 for National dues and \$15.00 for local Chapter dues. Join today!



### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Complete the application form and return with your payment (check or money order only made payable to Southern California Chapter ABPA) to:

Southern California Chapter ABPA  
 PO Box 712  
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\$ 45.00 ABPA Membership, includes \$ 15.00 Chapter and \$ 30.00 National dues (dues and contributions are tax deductible). Already a member of ABPA National? Just submit \$ 15.00 SoCal Chapter dues.

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# American Backflow Prevention Association - Region 6

Arizona - California - Hawaii - Nevada

Regional Report submitted by Bob Gilstrap, Region 6 Director

There has been much activity in Region 6 this past year. It seems that everywhere you turn, cross connection control regulations are under assault, and nowhere is this more evident than in the current revision process of Title 17 and 22 in California. While great strides have been made for ABPA in recognition by State Health of the ABPA tester certification program, there also seems to be a tendency to soften some of the current regulations concerning cross connection control program requirements within the State. In March, the next draft of the proposed Title 22 is due to be issued and I urge each and every one of you to review and study it and most importantly, to send in your professional comments on it. Let your voices be heard, don't let sound regulations be overturned due to political considerations. For more information on this and other areas of concern to our organization, stay tuned to your Chapter web site at <http://www.socalabpa.org>.

Don't forget the International Conference May 5, 6 and 7 at Detroit, Michigan. Hope to see all of you there.

In other regional news, I'm sure you are all aware by now that the Southern California Chapter will be hosting the ABPA International Conference for 2004 in Long Beach and a lot of help and volunteers will be needed to make it a resounding success. So, if you haven't already done so, please step up and ask, "How can I help?" I assure you it will be appreciated and the help will be needed, and what an opportunity it will be to showcase our Chapter and Region.

In still other happenings, the new Central Coast Chapter is up and running. They have now held two Chapter meetings, selected interim officers and board members, and sent draft by-laws to the National office for approval. Tentatively, this Chapter will cover the counties along the central coast of Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo and Monterey. There is also interest in the formation of Chapters in the San Francisco Bay area and in the northern Sacramento Valley area. Both of these areas have had representatives contact me concerning this and we are currently working to set up informational meetings in these areas. So, if you know anyone in either of these locals that would like more information on this, please don't hesitate to have them get in touch with me by e-mail at [bobgilstrap@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bobgilstrap@sbcglobal.net).

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DAVID HUTCHINS, CPMR  
President

# Approval

Submitted by Mike Ahlee

When a water supplier, health agency or building inspection department requires the installation of a backflow prevention assembly, 99 times out of 100, the term “approved” precedes “backflow prevention assembly”. In most of California, the term “approved” refers to USC/ State of CA approved backflow assemblies. These are backflow prevention assemblies that have successfully completed both the laboratory and field evaluation at USC’s Foundation for Cross-Connection Control and Hydraulic Research. The backflow prevention assembly is then granted approved status as submitted to the Foundation. The key phrase being “as submitted”. After the backflow prevention assembly is installed many things can, and do, happen that will adversely affect the approval of the assembly. The approval is extremely important for a couple of reasons. First is from a performance standpoint, the performance standards set by USC’s FCCC&HR mean that the assembly has met or surpassed rigorous standards for performance.

Therefore, we can be confident the assembly will be up to the task at hand. Second and equally as important, is the legal aspect of the approval. When something does happen, and the legal crowd gets involved, the first thing they will look for is whether any of the ducks are out of line. If the assembly in question is approved, meaning nothing has changed that voids the approval status, your chance of surviving the legal battle increases dramatically. On the other hand, if the assembly in question is not approved, due to something you did to the assembly, your chances for survival are slim. If you were just the last person to test the assembly and didn’t make the changes causing the approval to be voided, you will most likely still take the fall.

As a backflow tester, you are considered to be the expert. If a backflow prevention assembly is not in an approved condition you should notify the owner of the corrections needed to bring the assembly back into compliance. Failure to do so can leave you liable. As a backflow tester, one very important aspect of your job is to make sure the assembly you are field testing is indeed in an approved condition. And equally as critical, is making sure the assembly stays in an approved condition at all times through testing and repairs for the service life of the assembly. Something that may seem unimportant at first glance can actually cause big problems down the road.

The most common inappropriate repair is replacement of shutoff valves. Shutoff valves from ½” up to 2” are readily available at your local hardware store. Therein lies the problem. Anyone with a moderate amount of knowledge and talent, and a few hand tools can replace a broken shutoff valve. The problem is, the shutoff valves normally available from the local hardware store are not approved for use on backflow prevention assemblies. Using this type of valve will void the approval of the backflow prevention assembly. The shutoff valve may indeed stop the flow of water but it won’t stop your head from rolling in a legal action. Your client will also be left exposed to liability due to your actions.

If you field test an assembly in an unapproved condition and fail to report it, or do anything to correct it, you and your client may be liable due to your inaction. On the USC list of approved backflow prevention assemblies, you will find a multiple letter code (AA, BB, etc..) under the model and size listing of each backflow prevention assembly. On the inside cover of the USC list, you can find the key to the letter code listing the different shutoff valves suitable for use on each backflow prevention assembly. By consulting this list before replacing valves on an “approved backflow prevention assembly” you can insure you won’t adversely affect the approval status of the assembly.



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This rule of thumb is the same for all other components of an approved backflow prevention assembly, from elastomer disc to test cocks. The goal is not only to protect the quality of our drinking water supply but to mitigate the liability for our clients and ourselves at the same time.

When you think about it, it's really all about limiting liability from top to bottom. Federal, State and local authorities are all looking to avoid any liability, so guess where it all lands? That's right, right on us, the friendly neighborhood backflow prevention assembly testers.

There are several resources available to you as testers to help insure your work is always appropriate. Among them, the So. Cal. chapter of the ABPA, ABPA International and the USC FCCC & HR all working towards a common goal, protecting the high quality of our drinking water now and in the future.

Insuring we meet this goal is a group effort and we, the backflow prevention assembly testers and technicians, are the front line forces. Training and education are the most important tools of our trade and the primary focus of the ABPA, whether at local chapter events or International conferences.

Hope to see you at the next event and in the meantime, keep up the good work!

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## Could be Spring

Submitted by Sergio Ochoa

A common occurrence in the backflow industry is field testing an RP assembly and having the #1 check valve fail. So you notify the customer that the unit may require maintenance and give them a written estimate of the cost for rebuilding the entire assembly. Note that I mentioned rebuilding the entire assembly. The reason for this statement is that it is assumed that the failed unit has been in place for several years and if one check valve has deteriorating rubber parts, the rubber parts in the other check valve assembly and relief valve are nearing the same condition. It is like going to get tires on your vehicle, you don't just change out a tire at a time but rather all four or at least two of them. If the assembly is fairly new then cleaning and flushing may be all that is required.

Now getting back to rebuilding the assembly, you change out all the parts that come inside the rubber repair kit and flush the unit of any and all debris. Once you have reassembled the unit and retested it you find out that the buffer between the relief valve opening point and #1 check valve is not going to be accepted by the purveyor. This is taking in consideration the various purveyors that require a 3 psi buffer and/or require that the #1 check valve hold 5.0 psid or greater. You remove the #1 check valve and re-inspect, flush out and retest. Again you find the #1 check valve holding below 5.0 psid. This has happened to me numerous times.

One solution that has worked for me is to make sure that the disc holder is not cracked or warped; if so, then replace it. And the most reasonable remedy has been to replace the #1 check valve spring with a new one.

I am just saying that this certainly works for me and when I happen upon an older unit I make sure to include the price of the #1 spring in the cost estimate for rebuilding the unit. In addition, I make sure to clean the #1 seat with 600 wet and dry sand paper to make sure no residue is interfering with the seating of the disc.

So next time you encounter this situation, try it and see if it has any bearing on your final test results. Have a splendid spring.

# Title 17/Recycled Water Task Force Update

Submitted by Richard Carlson

There is good news is the latest draft of the Title 17 revision. From a regulatory and potable water protection point of view it is on the right track. However, concerning the use of recycled water, some language changes are needed in the Article 5 section concerning dual-plumbed sites. Letting the recycled water purveyor submit unverified documents saying that there are no cross-connections without testing does not meet the reality test. But overall, credit must go to the State Health Office of Drinking Water Backflow Committee and the many stakeholders. Because of the size of the State and the many different and varied water systems throughout the state, crafting a regulation to “fit all sizes” had to be an incredibly difficult task. It should be back out for public comment by the time this article is published.

The 2002 Recycled Water Task Force is made up of 40 representatives from various sectors of the recycled water industry that has the agenda to promote the use of recycled water by minimizing or doing away with impediments to the use. (It was 39 members, but a representative from the Revolting Grandma’s was added). Two thirds of the task force were selected from the recommendations of the WateReuse Association – the lobbying arm of the recycled water purveyors. Certain members of the Task Force have the opinion that one of the main impediments is the regulatory oversight of the use of recycled water. Of the forty task force members, only three are from the regulatory community. I have attended most task force meetings as the representative of the County of San Diego Director of Environmental Health who in turn represents the California Conference of Directors of Environmental Health (CCDEH). CCDEH, which represents all Directors of Environmental Health in California presented a position paper that supports the periodic cross connection testing of all recycled water sites that have potable water distribution systems..

Northern California, where the use of recycled water is mainly agricultural wants minimum regulations. Southern California, where the use is mainly urban wants to retain regulations. The big issue from the public health perspective is the protection of the use site potable water systems from cross-connections with the on site recycled water systems. The position of WateReuse seems to be that once the two systems are in the ground, cross-connections will never happen. And therefore there is no need for routine testing. The problem with this position is that, from a practical point of view it is out of touch with reality. Those of us who work in the field know that cross-connections will happen and that there must be programs to address this reality.

There will be two additional meetings of the 2002 Recycled Water Task Force to wrap up the various white papers. I think that it is interesting that the minutes of all the Task Force meetings have been posted on the Department of Water Resources web page, including a February 26, 2003 work group meeting at the annual WateReuse conference, with the one exception of the January 10, 2003 Sacramento full Task Force meeting.

This was the meeting where a review of the progress of the task force by Professor Daniel Okun, Kenan Professor of Environmental Engineering, Emeritus, University of North Carolina and world-renowned expert on recycled water was presented. The review was not complimentary. A quote from the review concerning the overall production of the Task Force Draft White Papers: “It is devoid of science and exhibits an unprofessional bias that provides little basis for making judgments related to the reclamation of wastewater for reuse for either potable or non-potable uses”. Also presented at the January 10 meeting was a position paper from a major user of recycled water supporting cross connection control testing. As of April 17, 2003, the minutes from the January 10th meeting still have not been posted. An article on the Task Force was published in the Sacramento Bee on April 7, 2003. It can be found on the <http://www.safewaterreuse.org> web site.

The final draft white paper was published on April 17. The position of CCDEH that supports testing of recycled water use sites with potable water distribution systems was excluded from the final draft. The final draft can be found at <http://www.owue.water.ca.gov/recycle/taskforce/taskforce.cfm>. The Plumbing Code/Cross-Connection Control section does not make for pleasant reading for the Cross-Connection Control / Backflow Prevention community.

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## E. Kent Springer: Protector of Public Drinking Water

For nearly 20 years, Professor E. Kent Springer headed University of Southern California's Foundation for Cross-Connection Control and Hydraulic Research. Springer was responsible for establishing the Foundation's Field Evaluation Program for the evaluation of backflow prevention assemblies — the only full-time program of its kind in the world — and he developed the Foundation's five--day course for the training of backflow prevention assembly testers.

Springer was born Sept. 17, 1912, in Bellingham, Wash. After earning his B.S. degree in mechanical engineering from the USC School of Engineering in 1936, he worked as a plant engineer at the Fluid Packed Pump Co. in Los Nietos, Calif., and, later, as a mechanical engineer for the Pacific Railway Equipment Co. in Los Angeles.

Springer joined the faculty of the University of Wisconsin, Madison, in 1941. While teaching there as an instructor and later as an assistant professor, he earned a master's degree in mechanical engineering in 1945.

He joined the USC School of Engineering as an associate professor of mechanical engineering in 1946, became a full professor there in 1951. He was recognized as an outstanding teacher and gave much time to being the Advisor to graduate programs at Edwards Air Force Base and at NASA, with students including Neil Armstrong and Norman Schwarzkopf.

He became interested in the work of the Foundation in the mid 1950's and co-authored the document USCEC 48-101, published in 1959, which became the basis for the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition of the Manual of Cross-Connection Control. Professor Springer served as director of the Foundation for Cross-Connection Control and Hydraulic Research from 1965 until his retirement in 1984.

Springer was a fellow of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and held several distinguished positions, including vice president of Region IX, in that organization. For a number of years, he was faculty adviser to the USC student section of the ASME. In 1981, the Los Angeles section of the ASME awarded its Centennial Medal to Springer for his years of dedicated service.

He was also a member of several organizations that promote safe drinking water and engineering education. They include the American Water Works Association, the American Society for Engineering Education, the Southern California Water Utilities Association, and the City of Pasadena Blue Ribbon Committee reviewing the Pasadena Department of Water and Power. In 1985, Professor Springer was also awarded the American Backflow Prevention Association's highest award, the Meritorious Service Award.

E. Kent Springer, professor emeritus of mechanical engineering at the University of Southern California's School of Engineering and internationally known as a developer of systems to prevent the contamination of drinking water, died 4 December 1995, in Pasadena. He was 83.

It is in honor of Professor E. Kent Springer that the Southern California Chapter of the American Backflow Prevention Association has established an award in his name. The E. Kent Springer Award will be awarded each year at the annual Southern California Chapter Conference to an individual for distinguished service in the backflow prevention and cross-connection control field.

If you would like to nominate somebody for this prestigious award, please utilize the nomination form which may be found at the SoCal ABPA web site at <http://www.socalabpa.org>. You can also contact your County Director (phone numbers are on the front page of this newsletter).



# Chapter News



The Southern California Chapter will be hosting a tour of the Diamond Valley Lake on June 4, 2003. We will be touring the Visitors Center Museum and the view point for Diamond Valley Lake. This tour is open to both Chapter members and non-members. Metropolitan Water District security requires names, addresses and drivers license numbers in advance for all who will be participating, so RSVPs are mandatory. More details will be posted on our web site at <http://www.socalabpa.org> and mailed to Chapter members. RSVP to Sergio Ochoa at [sergio8a@att.net](mailto:sergio8a@att.net) or (909) 392-2961.

Chapter members are already working hard on the 2004 ABPA International Conference, which we'll be hosting in Long Beach May 9-12, 2004. If you want to help out or have some good ideas for making this the best ABPA Conference ever, contact Steve Nakauchi at (562) 570-4134.

Welcome to new Chapter members Luis Castillo, Kathleen Congrove, Cheryl Jenkins, Dennis McGehee, Tom Miller, Brendan Park, Jeff Seifert and Gary Stephens who joined since the January 2003 newsletter was published. Thank you for supporting our Chapter!



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