

The Connection

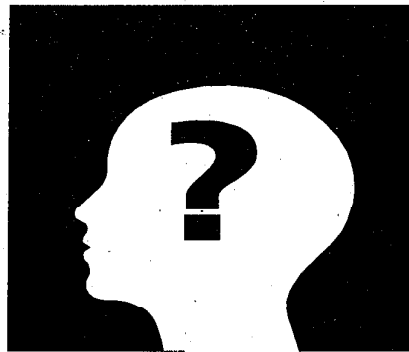
Fall 1995

Volume 1 Issue 3

Keeping your Program in Perspective by Eric W. Foltz

Why do we have cross-connection control programs? What is the real purpose? Is it to keep all the plumbers and backflow testers busy? No! Is it to sell as many backflow prevention assemblies as possible and help support the manufacturers? No! Is the purpose to protect our water systems? Yes, but no. Contaminants in water will not usually harm a water system. It is only when this water is used by an unsuspecting public that it becomes dangerous. Which means that we must really be trying to protect the public, our customers, our neighbors, friends and family from unsafe water. Which is why I cannot understand why so many water suppliers seem to pursue blanket containment programs while completely ignoring internal cross-connections. We have saved our systems at the expense of our customers, who expect us to provide them with safe drinking water.

In many areas, the water supplier is the only agency conducting surveys and they know that there is not an active health or building department program, yet they still do not pursue any type of internal isolation program. Some purveyors even view a blanket containment program as relieving them from the responsibility of conducting surveys. An RP on every meter and a test report each year is viewed by many managers as the perfect program. No labor or effort involved, just sit in an office and send and receive test forms. This is the perfect program of a faceless bureaucrat



Each survey is an opportunity to educate your customers.

who does not see every survey as an opportunity. An opportunity to help your customers help themselves through education. Even in areas where you do not have the authority to require isolation assemblies, you can at least educate and recommend ways for your customers to

We have saved our systems at the expense of our customers, who expect us to provide them with safe drinking water.

limit their liabilities. Sometimes its amazing what an educated customer will do if your recommendations are reasonable and justified. Especially if you can save them money.

Many hazards can be protected or removed very easily. Unfortunately many water purveyors do not keep an

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3rd Annual Backflow Prevention Update

On July 13th, the Chapter sponsored a one day update seminar at the Day's Inn in Fullerton. There were 114 registrants representing all areas of the Backflow Prevention field. Our thanks to our speakers, Martin Freibert R.E.H.S. of the Orange County Health Care Agency discussed test procedures and the administrative responsibilities of testers. James Purzycki of BAVCO demonstrated backflow assembly repair. Bill Gedney from the California Department of Health Services updated us on the Title 17 & 22 revisions. Steve Hart, Director of the Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board of Southern California discussed backflow protection for fire sprinkler systems. Forrest Rowe of the Orange County Environmental Management Agency covered the Uniform Plumbing Code. We thank them all for their willingness to share their expertise. We also thank the Manufacturers Representatives for their participation. Ames, Ambitec, Febco, Midwest, Duke, Watts, Wilkins, Conbraco, BAVCO, Astra Industrial, Flo-matic, U.S.C., F.C.C.C. & H.R.. Plans are already in the works for next years update which is slated to be held in Ventura County. If you would be interested in helping us organize next years seminar, please give any of the Officers or Directors a call. On behalf of the Officers, Directors and Members of the Chapter I would like to thank everyone who attended for their help in making this event a success. Hope to see you all at future meetings.

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Southern California Chapter

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open mind to alternatives to the meter RP. Does finding a hose on an unprotected hose bib really justify a 2" RP at the meter? I like to treat hose bibs as a educational and public relations tool. I like to explain why the hose bib and hose is potentially dangerous and what can be done to protect against this hazard, install a hose bib vacuum breaker. Explain how I could, if I had a mind to, require a backflow preventer at their meter, why I would not so long as the AVB is not removed or tampered with, and why if they wish, I will supply them with the vacuum breaker. You see, they are my customer, they pay my salary and my budget. Which means that they can pay me to drive back to my office, type out a violation notice, mail it, wait till the due date, drive back out for a follow-up inspection, etc..., plus they themselves having to either go shopping for an AVB or hire a plumber to correct a hose bib violation. This option costing at least \$30.00-50.00 minimum plus lost time. Me giving them a vacuum breaker costs \$8.00. Instead of forced compliance, we have met our goal of providing backflow protection through cooperation, education and compassion. Our objectives have been met without alienating our customer or causing them undue expense or inconvenience. This is one example of how working together can accomplish the same goal as heavy handed enforcement.

I recently had the opportunity to hear a backflow tester talk to a group

of water purveyors about his feelings towards the industry. One thing that he seemed to think was important was for the water suppliers to work closer with the testers so that together we could insure that all the customers were in compliance. He brought up some interesting points about the testers being on the front lines in all dealings with the customers, and them being the one's who have to explain the what's and why's of backflow. He seemed to think that because of this, we as water purveyors should be more willing to help them out. This sounds OK right, after all it is "us" against "them" when it comes to getting violations corrected or tests performed and reports sent on time. According to this tester, he routinely has to answer complaints regarding backflow. In response to these points that he brought up, I have a few observations on why the purveyor/tester relationship should be completely professional at all times. (1) As mentioned before, I work for that customer therefore my allegiance in any disputes is pretty much predetermined. If I am supplying that customer with a list of persons who are competent to test and repair backflow preventers, I am responsible to that customer to insure that those persons conduct their business in a professional and ethical manner. I owe that to them. (2) Many of the customers already feel like they are being picked on. Being friends with, recommending, working for or with a testing company will give that customer even more rea-

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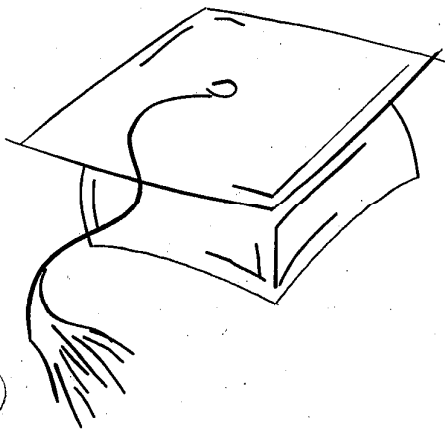
Articles submitted will be considered on a case by case basis. Articles printed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of the Southern California Chapter ABPA or the American Backflow Prevention Association.

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son to believe that we're in cahoots together. Situations such as these ruin the credibility of our programs. If we, our friends or family are perceived as gaining in some way from the enforcement of regulations, the purpose of the regulations themselves are brought into question. (3) There are good testers and not so good testers, just as there are good and bad specialists. As a water purveyor, I cannot discriminate against a tester simply because I do not like him or her. Along the same line, I cannot show favoritism to a tester that I like. If we are going to enforce a standard then we have to treat all as equal lest we be accused of bias which could be seen as a conflict of interest.

We have to keep in mind our goal, to provide safe drinking water to our customers. Protecting a water system is great for preventing liability, protecting the public health shows responsibility. Doing it with cooperation, education and compassion will insure in the minds of your customers that what you are doing is justifiable and necessary. Remember, Education leads to cooperation.

Please read
about the library
incident in
San Diego



Backflow Incident at Public Library!

by Richard Carlson R.E.H.S.

San Diego County, Dept. of Environmental Health

A cross-connection incident resulting in chemically contaminated drinking water, a hazardous waste spill into drinking water - never happen. In theory, sure - but not in real life. Besides, there are plumbing codes that will take care of any such problems. All of us in this field have heard similar remarks and had to answer similar questions. However, it does happen and can result in a major and expensive head ache that should have been prevented.

Thursday, 17 August 1995
the drinking water at the City of Carlsbad, San Diego County library was the color of a summer soft drink. But it wasn't a nice hot weather drink - it was a potentially lethal mixture of toxic chemicals. What the drinking water contained was a mixture of sodium sulfite, sodium nitrite, and sodium metaborate, all chemicals commonly used for the treatment of boiler feed water.

This chemical mixture contains a dye which, if a cross-connection occurs, will make the contaminated water look like a summer thirst quencher. Normally, this is an excellent safety precaution. In this case, if it were not for mitigating circumstances, there could have been a very serious and potentially lethal problem.

The incident started when

the local water purveyor changed out an old reduced pressure backflow preventer used for meter protection. The water to the library was secured at the meter. In that it was expected to be a short, routine job, the library stayed open and the rest rooms and sinks posted with "Do Not Use" signs.

The new reduced pressure backflow preventer was installed and the water purveyors' cross-connection specialist, Ms Pam James, in preparation for testing the device repressurized the system and bled air off at a hose bib. She immediately noticed that something was not routine in that the water flowing from the hose bib was bright purple. She immediately secured the service meter and then checked the water in the library and found the same thing. Her immediate assumption was that a cross-connection had occurred somewhere in the library and the drinking water was contaminated.

Ms James contacted the building maintenance supervisor and they located the most likely cause of the cross-connection. The purveyor then notified State Health of the problem. State Health then notified the local Department of Environmental Health. The main distribution system was protected; it was a post meter, internal

(Continued on page 4)

Stolen Backflow Preventers

Man. Mod. Size SN

City of La Habra

Rich Moody 310-905-9792

Febco	825y	2"	W2406
Febco	825y	2"	C2726
Febco	825y	2"	V3696
Febco	825y	2"	W2391
Febco	825y	1.5"	V5590
Wilkins975	1.5"	101110	
Wilkins975	1.5"	019302	
Watts	909	2" 31312	

Mesa Consolidated W.D.

Piet Pijl 714-631-1200

Febco	825y	1"	E7127
Febco	825y	1"	D6199
Febco	825ya	1"	RA3823
Watts	909qt	1"	128358
Febco	825y	2"	T1476
Febco	825y	3/4"	C3815
Febco	825y	3/4"	C3347
Febco	825y	3/4"	C3433
Febco	825y	3/4"	C3429
Febco	825y	3/4"	C3373
Febco	825y	3/4"	C5535
Febco	825y	3/4"	C3403
Febco	825y	3/4"	C5341
Febco	825y	1"	S7496
Febco	825y	1"	AE0821
Watts007mlqt	3/4"	16425	
Febco	825y	2"	S5311
Febco	825y	2"	AJ8756
Wilkins	575	2" W39200	
Watts009qt	2"	18575	

City of Placentia

666-0562

Neptune	575	2"	PAB41010
Febco	825y	2"	C0149
Febco	825y	2"	C2482
Febco	825y	2"	P2138
Febco	825Y	2"	AK1377
Febco	825Y	2"	AK3553

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problem, which falls under the jurisdiction of the local health officer, in this case the Department of Environmental Health.

The cause of the cross-connection was determined to be the failure of two single swing checks on the water make-up line which were used to protect the drinking water from the chemically treated heating and cooling water system. The location was on the second floor of the building in the mechanical room. When the library distribution system was depressurized to change out the meter backflow device, the chemically treated water flowed past the single swing checks into the library drinking water system.

Several problems immediately became apparent. Should the library be closed? This library is the busiest in San Diego County with over 2200 patrons per day using the facility. The decision was made to leave the library open, but to keep all water use facilities closed and marked with warning signs. This impacted not only the drinking and flushed water, but also the cooling system - and San Diego is hot in August. Library staff was informed of the problem and told to monitor the patrons.

The make-up water line was severed and the single swing checks replaced with a reduced pressure backflow device. Several other modifications to the distribution system were made as a result of a concurrent inspection by the Department of

Environmental Health.

The next question was how to decontaminate the drinking water system. The local sewerage agency was contacted to see if the contaminated water could be flushed down the sewer - since it was a chemical contamination - or would it have to be flushed to tanks and disposed of off-site. Upon review of the chemical constituents and degree of dilution, the sewerage agency agreed to flushing into the sewer.

Next, samples were taken after the flushing from four sample points and delivered to an environmental testing lab. The sample results were forwarded to the Department of Environmental Health for review. Late Friday afternoon, 18 August, permission was given to turn on the water to the library.

The problem was solved and the potential disaster averted by the quick action of the purveyors' cross-connection control coordinator, Ms James. Coordinated action between the library maintenance supervisor, the water purveyor and the regulatory agencies brought the incident to a safe and successful, although costly conclusion. Costly because of the costs of staff time, the cost of flushing and testing - not to mention the inconvenience to the library patrons and staff.

What may have happened beyond what did happen deserves consideration. In this case, a combination of circumstances prevented a potentially lethal situation. The library serves a

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large population of young children. If the water had not been secured to replace the backflow device at the meter, the potential would have existed that the children may have thought the colored water was a summer time drink and, before adults noticed the problem, the damage would have been done. Luckily, this was not the case.

Why did it happen and how could it have been prevented? It happened because of the failure of the non-approved, non-testable, non-inspected single swing checks. It could have been prevented if a post meter program had been in place. Other than in one progressive water agency, such is not the case in San Diego County.

Sweetwater Authority, the third largest water purveyor in San Diego County has had a successful and results oriented post meter inspection program for the last three years. The program is a cooperative effort between the Sweetwater Authority and the Department of Environmental Health. The other water agencies have chosen not to participate in the program simply because of funding considerations.

Will an incident similar to the Carlsbad Library situation reoccur? Considering the number of uninspected chemically treated feed water systems in San Diego County, the answer has to be yes.

Membership Application

Name: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

St.: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Signature _____

Membership is non-transferable

Membership \$42.00

Includes National Dues

Prepayment of dues required to process Membership Application (*Check or Money Order only - No Purchase Orders*)

Payment enclosed made payable to:

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Cypress, Ca. 90630

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Fax 805-499-9084

■■■■

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Cisco

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Conbraco

Represented by

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Fulfilling all of your Water &
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Steve Klapp

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PMR Associates

Doug Chandler

818-998-0083

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Westmark Enterprises

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Tester & Specialist Classes

Rancho Santiago College
Palomar College

Orange County
San Diego

Carol Long

714-564-4545
619-744-1150

University of Southern California,
Foundation for Cross-Connection Control
& Hydraulic Research

Los Angeles

213-740-2032

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New Chapter Members

City of Chino Hills
 Michael Cleavinger Co.
 Chris Coulter Landscape
 Fire Safety First
 City of Fullerton
 Olivenhain Municipal
 Water District
 Rancho Santiago College
 City of Redlands
 City of Riverside
 Sal's Plumbing, Inc.
 Santa Ana River Water
 U.S. Western Plumbing
 West Coast Plumbing

December 9th
 Repair Class
 Registration Form

Name: _____

Co.: _____

Address: _____

City, St.: _____

Ph# _____

Must be received by Nov. 30th
 \$30.00 Check or Money order only
 Southern California Chapter-ABPA
 P.O. Box 712
 Cypress, Ca. 90630

*All men dream; but not equally.
 Those who dream by night in the dusty
 recesses of their minds*

*Awake to find that it was vanity;
 But the dreamers of day are dangerous
 men,*

*That they may act their dreams with open
 eyes to make it possible.*

J.E. Lawrence

ABPA Certified Backflow Testers Southern California

Barney Bitting
 Irvin Lynn
 Mike Kidd
 Robert Mattson
 Jim Cook
 Charles Henry
 David Voitaskovic II
 Linda Liinangi
 Art Hamlin
 Bill Coulter
 Carl Jobbins
 Ken Moffat
 Peter Pijl
 Gary Tegel
 Bruno Cirello Sr.
 Ricardo Muniz
 Michael Dyer
 David Jones

Albert Howe
 William Lokey
 Gianfranco Marin
 Anthony Usher
 Jon Peratt
 Richard Bird
 Sammy Deering
 Albert Hoyle
 Douglas A. Johnson
 Anthony P. LoPresti
 Robert L. Brown
 Erwin Peregrino



Upcoming Events, Classes and Seminars ...

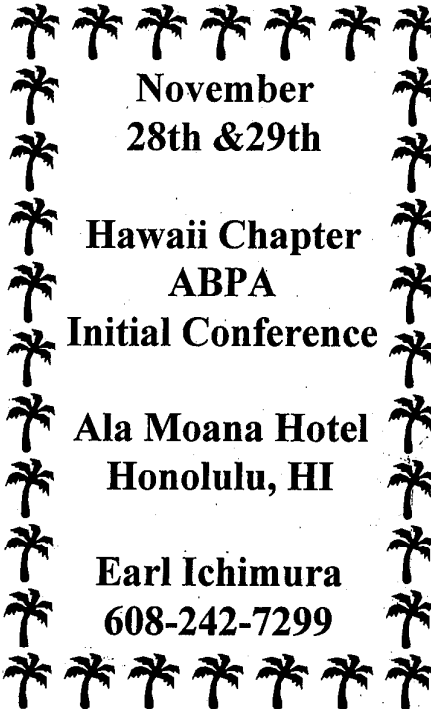
November 16th

**Western States
Symposium Association**

**Backflow Prevention
Update Seminar**

**Hanalei Hotel
2270 Hotel Circle N.
San Diego, Ca.**

**Ernie Havlina
213-776-2764**



**November
28th & 29th**

**Hawaii Chapter
ABPA
Initial Conference**

**Ala Moana Hotel
Honolulu, HI**

**Earl Ichimura
608-242-7299**

**Saturday Dec. 9th
Southern California
Chapter - ABPA**

**8hr. Backflow
Prevention Assembly
Repair Class
Long Beach, Ca.**

**\$30.00 includes lunch &
Reference Manual
RSVP by Nov. 30
Eric Foltz
714-837-1660x209**

**Southern California Chapter ABPA
P.O. Box 712
Cypress, Ca. 90630**

**Bulk Rate
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PAID
Cypress, Ca
Permit No. 94**

**Paul Schwartz
U.S.C., F.C.C.C. & H.R.
KAP-200 University Park MC-2531
Los Angeles Ca 90089-2531**

inside...

**Backflow Incident in San Diego County
Stolen Backflow Preventers
3rd Annual Meeting Report**

The Connection