June 1st Repair Seminar

The Chapter conducted a Backflow Prevention Assembly Repair Class on June 1, 2005 at Palomar College’s Escondido Campus. This six-hour class was one of the most successful events in Southern California Chapter history. Members were able to attend for a discounted registration fee, and non-member registration fees included ABPA membership. Total attendance was 85 and we gained 50 new Chapter members.

The class included sessions covering basic operating principles, hydraulic conditions that affect backflow prevention assemblies, troubleshooting and testing information, specific design and construction differences of the various manufacturers and models and necessary repair steps and techniques.

As a thank-you to our members both new and old, a Prize Wheel was set up (thanks to new Chapter member Robert Klein from the City of Carlsbad) with an opportunity to win some great prizes. At left, new Chapter member Miguel Alvarez from Sweetwater Authority displays off his new shirt.

We received a lot of positive feedback about this event, and requests for additional training in the future.

Thanks to all those who attended and helped to make the event such a success. Special thanks to instructor Jim Purzycki (we also celebrated his 50th birthday a little late), camera operator Anthony Petit, moderator Bill Laird and our excellent caterers, Tip Top Meats. More pictures from this event can be found on our web site at http://www.socalabpa.org.

New members should be receiving their membership packets from ABPA National in the mail soon and Chapter newsletters beginning with this issue. Any questions about the Chapter can be answered by your County Director. Contact information is provided at left.
Calendar of Events

- July 19, 2005: SoCal ABPA Board of Directors Meeting
- July 20, 2005: ABPA Proctor Training, San Diego
- August 10, 2005: JIC, Santiago Canyon College
- Sept. 14, 2005: Inland County Seminar, San Bernardino, CA
- Sept. 26-27, 2005: ABPA Western Regional Backflow Conference, Las Vegas, NV
- April 9-12, 2006: ABPA Annual International Conference, San Antonio, TX

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 $65.00 payment includes $50.00 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
Cypress, CA 90630

$ 65.00 ABPA Membership, includes $ 15.00 Chapter and $ 50.00 National dues (dues and contributions are tax deductible). Already a member of ABPA National? Just submit $ 15.00 SoCal Chapter dues.

Name:_______________________ Title:_____________ Company: _____________________________

Address: ____________________ City: ______________ State: ______ Zip Code:________________

Phone: _______________________ Fax: __________________ E-mail:_________________________
Close Encounters of the Insect Kind
Submitted by Bill Laird, Chapter President

As the weather begins to warm, Mother Nature starts her insect-breeding program. Bees, wasps, ants, spiders and centipedes engage in the propagation of their species as the weather heats up. All of these insect critters love the dark hiding places that are common to backflow prevention assemblies, meter boxes and backflow prevention assembly covers.

Although most of these insects will leave you alone if you don’t bother them, some species of bees are very aggressive and will go out of the way to attack the unsuspecting backflow prevention assembly tester as he or she is performing his or her testing procedure. The tester should be aware of the indications that there may be bees in the location of the backflow prevention assembly. The African species of honeybee prefers to live underground. One obvious sign that this species of bees is in the area is a steady procession of worker bees landing on a meter lid and entering the meter box through the meter lid opening. As a backflow prevention assembly tester you should be aware of this problem and take adequate precaution to avoid being attacked and possibly severely stung by a swarm of bees.

Wasps are another insect that is quite content to live in the dark safety of a meter box. Wasps are aggressive and each individual wasp can sting multiple times. Typically there is less activity on a wasp nest than there is on a beehive and therefore you may not be aware that there is a wasp nest in the meter box until you open the meter box to get a meter number. When you open the meter box you are bent over and very close to the wasp nest thereby putting yourself in danger of getting stung before you have a chance to get away from the nest. Wasps are quick and the sting that they give is much stronger than a bee sting and substantially more painful than a bee sting.

When you put your hand under the relief valve of an RP and feel a strong, sticky spider web, you should immediately check the relief valve port of the RP to locate the black widow spider that has taken up living quarters in the backflow prevention assembly. It is not uncommon for a tester to have the spider fall out of the relief valve port with the first drips of water and end up on the hand under the relief valve. It is not common for the black widow spider to immediately inflict a bite on the tester but it is better to not have any spider surprises on the back of your hand.

Remember to be aware of your surroundings when you approach an assembly to perform a test. Insects can inflict serious bites and stings that can be life threatening to a person that has any hypersensitivity to the venom that may be injected in the process of being bitten or stung. If you are allergic to the bites and stings of the numerous insects that you encounter in the field you should carry any needed medication with you when you are in the field.

Does the 10th Edition Cover this Assembly?
Submitted by Scott Carr, Orange County Director

Scott Carr found this creative plumbing and submitted it to the Chapter newsletter. If you come across anything our readers would find of interest, please send it to Scott at carrs@sejpa.org or call him at (760) 753-6203 x32.

Credit will be provided for all photos accepted for publication.
Blue Water: The Unknown Source
Submitted by Pete Peters, San Bernardino County Director

Tuesday morning, I received a call from our Standby Man Bob who informed me that he had been called out the night before to a call of blue water coming out of the faucet in a residential home. When Bob arrived, the customer showed him the water coming out of a sink in one of the upstairs bathrooms. It had a slight blue tint to it. Bob asked the customer if he used any of the blue toilet bowl cleaner in his toilets. The customer said that he did not. Bob went out and checked the water at a fire hydrant in front of the home and found no blue water there. Bob removed the meter register and had the customer flush his lines. Bob also informed me that there had been a grass fire down the street from this residence that same night.

The next morning, I made contact with the customer and asked him if I could inspect the plumbing within his home. The customer stated that he would be out of town for a couple of weeks, but he would have his realtor let me in to do an inspection. I had also asked the customer if he used any blue toilet bowl cleaners. He said he did not.

The following day, I met the realtor at the home. We went upstairs to the bathroom where the blue water had been reported and found no color in the water. I asked the realtor to show me the rest of the bathrooms in the home. The second bathroom we checked was also upstairs. Upon opening the toilet tank, I found it full of a deep blue liquid - you could not see the bottom of the tank and the fill tube was submerged in the blue water. I refastened the refill tube to the overflow pipe and explained to the relator what I had found. We checked both of the bathrooms on the first floor next and found them to be O.K. There was one more bathroom in the basement. The toilet in the basement was as old as the house and had a submerged type ballcock at the bottom of the tank. I explained to the realtor that this toilet was a plumbing code violation and should be corrected.

In conclusion, the fire down the street from the home had caused a reduction in the water system pressure which in turn caused the blue water from the upstairs bathroom to be siphoned back into the home's water system, which in turn was discharged at the other upstairs bathroom sink. With minor changes, the owner was able to correct any plumbing code violations and protect himself from his own plumbing.
I’m Certified - Now What?
Submitted by Jeff Flynt, San Diego County Director

Now that we’ve been certified, we can just go out and test all the backflows we find, right? WRONG! Being certified is just the first step in the process of becoming a professional tester and starting your own backflow testing business. In most cases, passing your backflow testing exam is the easiest part of becoming a professional backflow tester. The next steps are the hardest because they vary from area to area and are not easy to find out.

We have to remember that cross connection control programs are run by many different authorities having jurisdiction. Some programs are run by the local Health Departments (Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties to name a few) and some are run by the local Water Districts (like those in San Diego County). In order to test in the different jurisdictions, we must first become aware of their requirements and then conform to them. This may mean that we simply ask them to include us on their list of “approved” testers, or it could mean that we will have to submit an application and go through another set of requirements to get on their approved list. There may even be fees and licenses that will have to be acquired before you can be on an approved tester list. My advice for you is to contact the local jurisdictions where you are interested in testing and ask them about their program requirements before you commit to do tests for customers in the area.

Most of the time it’s easy to get on an approved list. All you need is to know who to contact. In San Diego County, each Water District individually determines the tester requirements before a tester can go on their approved lists. The Vallecitos Water District is one such district in the area. They only require a copy of your ABPA or AWWA certification and a current gage calibration report to get on their list. The person that handles their program is Mike Kidd, and he can be reached at 760-744-0640 if you would like to apply to be on their list. They even have a website at www.vwd.org where you will find a list of approved testers for their district. Our company is approved to test in this district, so we check this list periodically to make sure our information is up-to-date and correct. This is an area that you don’t want to overlook as you build your business.

The information that you give to people needs to be checked and updated regularly. I can tell you from experience that mistakes happen, and how quickly you find them and have them corrected can make or break your business. Take, for example, a seemingly small mistake a large Water Department in San Diego County made with my company’s listing a few years ago. They inadvertently changed our area code from 760 to 619 on their listing and our customers were instead reaching an inappropriate “party” line. When we brought it to their attention, they immediately corrected the error, but not before some of our regular customers were invited to join the “party”. This incident alone is why we look at our listing every single time we see a list with our name on it. I don’t think we’ll ever live down our designation as “party backflow”. Anyway, don’t forget to keep updating your information and checking the results regularly. If you need any information about local programs, just ask around or look it up on the web. The information is out there, all you have to do is ask.

Good luck and happy testing

For more information: Tester certification requirements for Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino Counties are available on our web site at http://www.socalabpa.org.
Announcing Chapter Elections

It’s election time for our Southern California Officers, including President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer and County Directors from Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and San Diego Counties. The complete duties of each office can be found in the Chapter by-laws posted on our web site at http://www.socalabpa.org.

Nominations for Chapter Officers and County Directors must be submitted to Chapter President Bill Laird by September 30, 2005. Mr. Laird can be reached by phone at (760) 438-2722 x7152 or e-mail at blair@ci.carlsbad.ca.us. If necessary, elections will be conducted by mail in October 2005.

**President**: The President, under the Board’s direction, shall have general supervision over the activities and operations of the Chapter. The President shall preside over all meetings of the Chapter and, in general, shall perform all duties incident to the office of the President.

**Vice President**: The Vice President shall assist the President in the performance of his/her duties, shall chair meetings of the Chapter during the absence of the President, and shall assume the office of the President in the event of his/her departure or incapacitation before completion of his/her term.

**Secretary**: The Secretary shall properly maintain all records and reports of the Chapter as required by law and the Association. The Secretary shall have the responsibility for providing that notices required by these by-laws be issued, and shall prepare the minutes of all Chapter meetings and Board of Directors meetings.

**Treasurer**: The Treasurer shall provide for the custody of the funds or other property of the Chapter and shall keep or see to the keeping of a separate book account of the same, shall collect and receive or provide for the collection and receipt of monies earned by or in any manner to or received by the Chapter.

This is a perfect opportunity for Chapter members to become more involved in the activities and operation of our Chapter.

The Government Does Listen

Submitted by Richard Carlson, Treasurer

This article concerns State of California assembly bill AB371 which was introduced in January of this year. AB371 could have had a major impact on recycled water and cross connection control issues. The way the bill was originally written, it would have eliminated testing for cross connections on most sites that contain both a potable water distribution system and a recycled water distribution system. That would mean there would be no testing at most schools, parks, commercial sites, medical facilities, day care centers, etc. The original bill would have made the section of Title 22, California Code of Regulations that deals with recycled water both the minimum and maximum enforceable regulation, and even the recycled water purveyor would not have the ability to perform cross-connection testing. The apparent assumption of the bill’s authors was that once the potable and recycled pipes were in the ground, there would never be any changes. That is an assumption that can come from someone behind a desk, but has very little to do with reality.

The bill had no organized opposition and was moving quickly to become law on July 1, 2005, flying below the radar so to speak. Then what happened is very interesting and encouraging to those of us in the business. The word got out and individuals started to comment on the bill. Although there is still no organized opposition and significant organized support for the bill, things started to change. All the language that would have eliminated cross connection testing has been removed from the bill.

The bill and its history can be found at http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/bilinfo.html by entering AB371 in Search by Bill Number for the current session. You as an individual can make a difference. In this case, the government did listen.
The 2nd Annual E. Kent Springer Award

It's time to submit nominations for the SoCal Chapter's 2nd Annual E. Kent Springer Award. Professor Springer headed the USC Foundation for Cross-Connection Control and Hydraulic Research for nearly 20 years, from 1965 until his retirement in 1984. He was responsible for establishing the Foundation's Field Evaluation Program for the evaluation of backflow prevention assemblies, the only full-time program of its type in the world. In 1985, Professor Springer was awarded the ABPA's highest award, the Meritorious Service Award.

It is in honor of Professor E. Kent Springer that the ABPA Southern California Chapter has established this award in his name. The award is presented each year at the Annual Southern California Chapter Conference to recognize and individual for distinguished service in the backflow prevention and cross-connection control field.

The first Annual E. Kent Springer Award was presented by his son, Bruce Springer to Paul Schwartz in 2004. The second Annual E. Kent Springer Award will be presented at the Southern California Chapter's 12th Annual Conference this Fall.

Nomination forms for the 2005 Award can be found on our Chapter web site at http://www.socalabpa.org and can be submitted by any Southern California Chapter member. Completed nomination forms should be submitted to Chapter President Bill Laird via e-mail (blair@ci.carlsbad.ca.us) or fax at (760) 431-1630. The deadline for submission is September 1, 2005.
Chapter News

The ABPA Western Regional Backflow Conference will be held September 26-27, 2005 at the Orleans Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada. Special Conference Room rates at the Orleans Hotel are $60.00 per night and can be reserved by calling (800) 675-3267. Be sure to state you are with the ABPA Conference. Flyers are available at the National web site at http://www.abpa.org and there is a discount for registration by September 15, 2005.

Our new Riverside County Director is Richard Dierking who works for Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District. Richard replaces long-time Riverside Director Sergio Ochoa, who was unable to continue his Chapter duties due to an increased workload. Thanks to Sergio for all of his past efforts over the past several years with our Chapter, and welcome Richard!

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