

# The Direct Connection



A newsletter dedicated to Cross Connection Control and Backflow Prevention [www.abpa-sa.org](http://www.abpa-sa.org)

**March Vol. 34 Issue 3**

## A Confession Regarding A Major Error Printed In The February Newsletter

Each month our secretary, Greg Shean, attends the monthly ABPA-SA Chapter meetings with his trusty laptop to take notes for the minutes. He will then send main items, especially the section of the minutes regarding training, to the person who provided the training for any possible edit. He did his due diligence for the January training.

What Greg was unaware of was the person who provided the January training, Joe Young with BAVCO, was out of town at the time. When Greg did not receive a response after about a week he sent another email asking for a review and/or edit of the information he had recorded in the minutes. Greg, although licensed for over 20 years, does not do backflows for a living. It's a hobby.

With my deadline to get the Newsletter published in a timely manner, I ignored Greg's second request for an edit and I went ahead and published the Newsletter without giving Joe another opportunity to edit several of his misunderstood comments. I will have to say that Joe was not the least bit hesitant in speaking his knowledge of the subject matter, which was much faster than most anyone would be able to type; regardless of how good a typist a person is.

Unfortunately, there were several items and facts such as Brands and Model numbers that got misinterpreted and recorded incorrectly. Greg and I are both perfectionists, it has bothered us ever since we found out about the problem. We are now apologizing to Joe for not giving him the opportunity to review and edit his presentation before it was published.

Greg is to be commended for his 15 years of being Secretary of the ABPA-SA Chapter and recording the minutes in great detail so the membership knows exactly what is going on in their chapter. The training is critical for CEU credits. Greg's job can be difficult and I am happy taking his input and making it all fit into the Newsletter.

Bill Hamrick  
ABPA-SA Newsletter & Membership

**SEE Page 8 for **Warning** about NON-Potable Gauge Use**

**Gauge testing for members starts at 5:00 PM at SAWS**

## March meeting Details

Meetings of the San Antonio Chapter ABPA are held the second Thursday of every month except December. Dinner and refreshments are served at 6:00 p.m. sharp with the meeting starting at 6:15. The next meeting is:

**Date: Thursday March 14, 2024**

**Time: 6:00 PM Pre-registration only required to receive a meal**

**Loc: SAWS Bldg. 2 Conference Room  
2800 US Hwy 281 North.**

**Program: John Milton will present the training. Title of training not known at this time.**

**Meeting Sponsor: Miller Mays & Associates**

**No alcoholic beverages allowed**

**Next Meeting: April 11, 2024**

## **Big Thanks to**

**Envirotrax (VEPO) for sponsoring the February meeting.**

**John DeCell with VEPO for providing the training program.**

**VEPO for donating a \$50 VISA Gift Card for the raffle.**

## **March Agenda**

- 5:00 p.m. General discussion and quorum confirmation
- 5:15 p.m. Call Meeting to order.
- 5:16 p.m. Secretary's Report. Read and approve the minutes of the previous meeting.
- 5:20 p.m. Treasurer's Report. Discussion and approval of the treasurer's report.
- 5:25 p.m. Supply Officer's Report
- 5:30 p.m. Vice President's, Directors', and any other reports for the good of the chapter. Comments, new business, any discussion.
- 5:40 p.m. Training Report. Training & Meal Sponsors
- 5:45 p.m. Webmaster Report
- 5:50 p.m. President's Report. New & old business
- 6:00 p.m. Meal is served.
- 6:15 p.m. General Membership Meeting & Training
  - 1. Report from the Directors Meeting. President
  - 2. City, regional, and national reports. James Cantrell and/or any City personnel present.
  - 3. Training program for the evening.
  - 4. Raffle prize drawing.

## **Ongoing Goals of ABPA-SA Chapter**

- 1. Educational Outreach with public by presenting at PHCC meetings, engineering firms, schools, and neighborhood associations. Continuing goal.
- 2. Greater use of TCEQ website. Tracking of CEUs, Services available. Personal education.
- 3. Increase member awareness of importance of chapter meetings. Increase attendance and public awareness.
- 4. Increase website resource information. More detailed links to more information like TCEQ, COSA, and any place that would be helpful to our members

## "Direct Talk" by the President

The March 14<sup>th</sup> meeting will be held in the SAWS conference room in the Tower II building located at 2800 U.S. Hwy. 281. Gauge testing starts at 5:00 PM and is iffy after 5:30 PM. The meal will start at 6:00 PM and the meeting will start at 6:15 PM. You may attend the meeting **without** pre-registering, however, if you would like a meal, you will have to register via the email you will receive about 10 days before the meeting. **We need some volunteers to man the booth at the SAWS Spring Bloom on March 9<sup>th</sup>.** Stay safe.

*Trinidad Chairez*

Here is a good website for emergency information: [www.sanantonio.gov/emergency/](http://www.sanantonio.gov/emergency/)

## Chapter Chatter

Greg Shean, Almost Tells It Like It Is, Chapter Secretary

## Save Your Pennies

There will be a Mako Master Pack backflow digital gauge on the silent auction table at the National ABPA Conference this year in Charlotte, North Carolina. Go to <http://arbiterbackflow.com/shop> Price is \$1479.99. The Amazon price is \$1,995. You don't have to attend to bid. Greg will take your check, made out to ABPA for the amount you want to bid. Your unused (looser) checks will be returned at our next meeting. You will get the change if less than your check. Sorry, no CODs.

Copied from their website (I can't make this up): Mako Master Pack bundle includes the MK5 test kit, YOUR CHOICE of QTSWSAH or QTSWSBH fitting set in a holder, BV101 bleed/compensation valve, MKSH1 Mako Sight Hose Kit with Grip Clip, MKYF1 "Y"-fitting, WV100 small valve, WV106 wide handle & WV101 large valve over the handle ball valve wrenches, WV105 heavy-duty universal missing handle wrench, SHP1 1/4" plastic plugs, SHP8 1/2" plastic plugs, SHP12 3/4" plastic plugs, G2 plastic caps, reversible screwdriver and the MKSC20 case.

Features: Capture button, backlit display, swivel hook, ditch the notepad, rate of change graph, special designed backflow hoses, accurate to 0.1 psi, rugged construction, food-safe materials, and USC FCCCHR certified.

**The fishing event** this year will be on October 11-13, 2024. More information later.

### MINUTES SAN ANTONIO CHAPTER-ABPA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING Thursday, February 8, 2024

Trinidad Chairez, President, presided over the meeting. The ABPA San Antonio Chapter meeting started at 6:02 PM in the Tower 2 Conference Room at SAWS HQ.

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS – PRESENT	EXECUTIVE OFFICERS – ABSENT
Trinidad Chairez – President	
Jeff Stricker– Vice President	
Greg Shean – Secretary	
Art Trejo – Treasurer	
Keith Waldrep – Past President	

OFFICERS SPECIAL TO THE CHAPTER – PRESENT	OFFICERS SPECIAL TO THE CHAPTER – ABSENT
Carl Michaud – Gauge Testing/Certification	Supply Officer - Vacant
Bill Hamrick – Membership and Newsletter	Jim Cantrell – Liaison to SAWS
Joe Young – Program Director	
Matthew Wilgen – Webmaster	
Jeff Meeks – Sgt. At Arms	

DIRECTORS AT LARGE – PRESENT	DIRECTORS AT LARGE – ABSENT
Bruce Rathburn – 2 years	Robert Stricker – 2 years
Fred Baird – 1 year	
Jeff Hoffman – 2 years	
Bob Clark - 1 year	
Meeting Sponsor: VEPO. John DeCell and Douglas Goodwin, Hockley, TX 77447	

**Agenda Item #1.** President’s Report: Trinidad started the meeting at 6:09 and then asked for a moment of silence. He then went through the February agenda items. INFO.

**Agenda Item #2.** Secretary’s Report: Minutes were in the newsletter. Keith moved to accept. Seconded. Passed. INFO.

**Agenda Item #3.** Treasurer’s Report: Art reported the amount in our checking account. Keith moved to accept. Seconded. Passed. INFO.

**Agenda Item #4.** Supply Officer’s Report: Vacant – still need a volunteer. Trini asked for a volunteer. No takers. OPEN.

**Agenda Item #5.** PACE Award: President Award for Chapter Excellence. Greg explained the award and our record of receiving it. He reported that he has a final version with some articles e-mailed out for inputs. OPEN.

**Agenda Item #6.** Meeting Sponsor: VEPO sponsored the meeting. INFO.

**Agenda Item #7.** Meal: VEPO sponsored the meal of Firehouse Subs turkey, beef, and ham box lunches with potato chips, and a cookie. Subs had very fresh bread. Excellent, although the dill pickle spear was missing from the meal box. Art Trejo provided the water and sodas for the meeting. INFO.

**Agenda Item #8.** Raffle: VEPO provided a \$50 VISA gift card. INFO.

**Agenda Item #9.** Webmaster. Website does not work with the host’s upgraded software. Matt is in the process of “reconstructing” it. OPEN.

**Agenda Item #10.** SAWS: No report. INFO.

**Agenda Item #11.** San Antonio Irrigation Association (SAIA): Keith reported that their January meeting was held at SAWS for the first time. SAIA will have a table at SAWS Spring Bloom held at SAWS on March 9<sup>th</sup>. Keith said that SAIA will have an irrigation competition in early April in the Medical Center. There will be two set ups. More information will follow. SAWS is reviewing their irrigation checkup list. There will be final inspections on new installs to ensure the systems are installed as designed. Drip irrigation could be changed to once per week. Consumers need to reduce consumption. INFO.

**Agenda Item #12.** ABPA National: Troy reported that the 2025 convention will be in Arkansas, Region 4. It could be in the Little Rock area or near Rogers. Decision needed because the location is advertised at

the 2024 convention at Charlotte. San Antonio is slated for the 2026 convention. Research shows cheapest room on the River Walk is \$259 plus. Too expensive, although everyone wants to be on the River Walk. Questioned why not Dallas/Fort Worth – National needs local chapter support. A member will research Corpus Christi since he has attended a convention there. OPEN.

**Agenda Item #13.** SAWS Spring Bloom: The Chapter needs some volunteers to staff a table. OPEN.

**Agenda Item #14.** City of San Antonio (COSA) Plumbing Inspection: Mike Morales, COSA Plumbing Inspections, reported that no backflow Test and Maintenance letters have gone out. The TCEQ irrigation Advisory Council (IAC) will be on line so attendees do not have to drive to Austin. Mike has invited SAWS to participation in the IAC. He thanked us for all we do. “We are all educators.” It is “business as usual” with no complaints. INFO.

**Agenda Item #15.** Membership: Bill reported that we have 89 members. Five memberships will be expiring at the end of the month with 15 at the end of March. He expects most to renew. Check the CEU sign-in sheet – if your name is highlighted in orange – your membership will expire this month. If highlighted in yellow – your membership will expire next month. Go to the [www.abpa.org](http://www.abpa.org) website to join or renew. INFO.

**Agenda Item #16.** Gauge Testing: Carl reported that nine gauges were tested. Bill was taking two gauges for repairs. Members are allowed one free domestic and one free non-potable. Extra gauges will be tested for \$45 each. Be there at 5 PM. Carl said, ‘We’re here, we’re set up – we’ll take care of you.’ INFO.

**Agenda Item #17.** Training: John DeCell provided training on the VEPO On-line Backflow Management System (OBMS). John explained that VEPO is the company and the OBMS is now called Envirotrax. OBMS was difficult to pronounce. VEPO was formed 14 years ago in March 2010. The current website is 4 years old and is based on TCEQ standards and rules. John and Doug do all the sales. Most new accounts come from referrals. Envirotrax supports 138 water systems. They are working with Arbiter’s digital gauges that will feed directly into Envirotrax. There is no cost to a water system for using Envirotrax. Envirotrax can be used on computers, tablets, and cell phones. Data can be entered from a cell phone.

John used a laptop to demonstrate how the website works. He reviewed the purveyors they support. The account number is most important. He said that participating cities or water districts that are surrounding San Antonio and the SAWS customers are making it imperative that testers are familiar with Envirotrax. All programming is done in-house so they can more easily incorporate improvement ideas. This is a win for everyone. Company insurance information can be tied and uploaded to separate tester accounts. He reviewed how to create an account, the account overview, and the master account for a company.

Envirotrax can be based on everything. It can be scaled down to a phone. It now has a dark background so it is easier to see and to save batteries. It updates in real time what has been tested and what needs to be tested. It makes the expirations at the end of the month which will help purveyors and testers. However, per TCEQ, Envirotrax cannot be used to force a customer to pay their bill for a test.

Letters are automatically sent out from Envirotrax to the person responsible the month before a test is due and if necessary, the month after it is due. Additional letters can also be sent. The letters are color coded with a green bar being in good standing, yellow missed a month, and red out of compliance. Account number, located on every letter is most important for the tester to get into the Envirotrax system. Prior tester info is at the bottom of the letter for customer convenience.

John then showed how to log in, create a backflow tester account, and, for testers, a history of all personally tested backflow preventers. The master account tester can pick a service area. The system has the ability to show in which cities the tester is registered to work. Only the master account tester can pick where they want to work. Envirotrax can now generate a Google map to show backflow location, what has been tested, and not tested. It can show a route from backflow to backflow and set up the next

day's route. This is very helpful to get to assembly and to submit a test report. Testers can add assemblies and change assembly info.

The tester can track insurance, licenses, and gauges. The tester cannot work in Envirotrax if their license, insurance, or gauge is not current for a particular city. Multiple testers can work for the same supervisor on the city side of the system. Each has a unique ID. There is a history that goes back to previous years. A red button is something that did not get tested on time. Envirotrax will mail letters with the color code on top and a list of the assemblies with the tester name and phone number on the letter. The letters are mailed the first of every month - 3 letters: month assembly due (green), second month (yellow), and two months later in red. The overview page covers everything in "my account." The tester can e-mail themselves and customers a copy of test reports, payment history, and all final receipts.

John explained that Envirotrax has tools to help a water system to locate falsified reports. There was a discussion on how important this was to maintain backflow testing credibility. This is not just a Texas problem. John went through the insurance and gauge displays.

The tester can search the test history by many parameters. Envirotrax will tell the tester, if a facility has 40 assemblies and the tester only tested 38. There is a history of all tested at that location. No need for paper but the tester can print reports if needed. They can search for what is coming due in the next month. There is a Backflow Test History where the tester can search who did a test, when, and the results. Use a minimum of letters to first search for a backflow. This avoids duplicates. Do not use single letters (N, S, E, and W) to abbreviate street designations or to delete them. Check that the report is in Envirotrax before submitting.

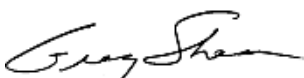
Envirotrax can work with any water purveyor in the state of Texas. When the tester submits a test report: The tester can add an assembly, have it checked by Envirotrax, change anything in their side of the system, check assembly location, and search by assembly number or address. The tester can change information and it will show up in Envirotrax's validation process. It is helpful to put in a location of assemblies so other testers can locate it. The tester can put in passing or failed test results on the same form for initial and final. A failed test is free of charge but an associated fee is required for passing results on an assembly. The test report is free for all water purveyor owned assemblies. An additional test report is required for all repaired assemblies.

A date and time of the test is required per state standard. Envirotrax will also check that the tester readings are within proper range for a passing result. The tester can put in any number of words in the comments box. The tester can now enter a picture or pictures of entire assembly and serial number. Envirotrax will enter a better picture if another tester turns one in.

John logged in as a water purveyor in the system to show capabilities of the system. John showed the overall summary page, day by day testing results, recent backflow submission statistics such as number of test, number tests paid, and the water supplier contact info. Comments by the tester are critically important for the water purveyor. He showed many categories: test frequency, when letters are sent, and a property search result. He showed how the data can prevent creeping of required testing dates. Envirotrax can search, by assembly, failures and reasons for failure and repair, compliance status, and active assemblies. It can show numbers in compliance, and compliance history of assemblies. Envirotrax has zero enforcement capability. That is totally up to the water purveyor.

It generated so much interest and questions with discussion continuing after the meeting was adjourned.

Adjournment. Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 PM for the raffle.



Greg Shean - Secretary ABPA San Antonio Chapter



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# Heads-Up To Backflow Prevention Assembly Testers

Backflow Prevention Assemblies installed on Recycle Water lines or any other non-potable supplied Backflow Prevention Assembly is required to be tested with a dedicated and labeled **Non-Potable Gauge!**

This **non-potable gauge** must be registered with the local water purveyor and monitored. All **non-potable gauges** must have a purple dial and the hoses marked purple per TCEQ RG-493.

The gauges utilized for backflow testing on non-potable water systems have the potential to contain pathogens and fecal contamination. This is the reason for not allowing **non-potable gauges** to be used on potable water systems.

It is important to note that a potable water gauge must not be connected to a recycle or non-potable backflow prevention assembly.

How does a tester tell the difference on whether they are looking at a recycle BFPA or a Potable supplied BFPA? The color of piping supplying the backflow prevention assembly – that's simply how that is determined.

No Water Purveyor and/or Plumbing Inspection Department should be allowing purple piping upstream of a potable water supplied backflow preventer! In other words – Purple Piping may NOT be used to transport Potable water.

*If a tester runs across purple piping feeding a potable water backflow prevention assembly – they should immediately notify the local water purveyor and possibly TCEQ. This is not only a Texas color coding requirement but also used nationally.*

*Testers – Do Not Connect Your Potable Gauge To Any Assembly Supplied With Purple Piping From the Water Main or internally! If you do, the gauge immediately becomes a NON-Potable Gauge and may not be used on any potable water system.*

Fred Baird (f.baird@att.net) – Involved in developing and enforcing San Antonio Water System's Cross Connection Control Program in the early 1970's. He enforced the program for approximately 30 years before retiring. Currently co-owner of Bac-Flo Unlimited, Inc.



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- 7) Liaison to SAWS – James Cantrell
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- 9) Gauge Testing and Certification – Carl Michaud
- 10) Membership & Newsletter – Bill Hamrick
- 11) Webmaster – Matthew Wilgen

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2. Bruce Rathburn
3. Robert Stricker

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Editor: Bill Hamrick

Additional Editors: **The entire Membership**

For further information about ABPA, contact:

Bruce Rathburn – Past ABPA President  
[americanbackflowh2o@gmail.com](mailto:americanbackflowh2o@gmail.com)

Frank Snyder – Past ABPA President  
[snyder75@karnesec.net](mailto:snyder75@karnesec.net)

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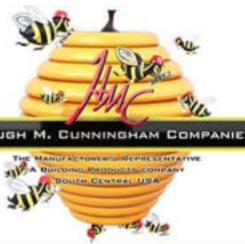


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## How to join the ABPA-SA Chapter

There are two ways to join the San Antonio Chapter of the American Backflow Prevention Association.

The easiest way is to click on the QR Code and follow the instructions to set up your account and be presented with an invoice that you can pay with a credit card on-line or check the box to pay with a check. If you don't use QR Codes, click on this address. <https://www.abpa.org/page/Join> **IMPORTANT** Be sure to select the chapter/s (San Antonio Chapter) you want to join before selecting the payment method. If you elect to pay with a check, you will be able to print the invoice so you can send it with your check to the address on the invoice. If you pay with a credit card on-line, you will be able to print a receipt.

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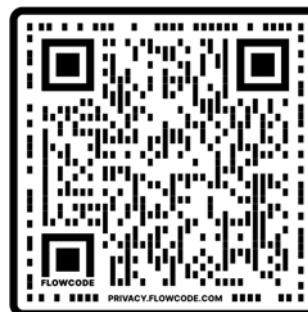
The other way is to print the Membership Application on the next page and send it to the address at the bottom of the page with your check.

## How to renew your ABPA-SA Chapter Membership

There are two ways to renew your San Antonio Chapter membership of the American Backflow Prevention Association.

The easiest way is to click on the QR Code and follow the instructions to renew your membership and sign into your account and follow the instructions. If you don't use QR Codes, click on this address. <https://www.abpa.org/page/RenewNow> The program will present you with an invoice that you can pay with a credit card on-line or check the box to pay with a check. **IMPORTANT** Be sure the chapter/s (San Antonio Chapter) is/are selected that you want to renew before selecting the payment method. If you elect to pay with a check, you will be able to print the invoice so you can send it with your check to the address on the invoice. If you pay with a credit card on-line, you will be able to print a receipt.

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**Thank You for Your Membership**



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  - New Member
- Renewal - Member # \_\_\_\_\_

To join the American Backflow Prevention Association, simply fill out the membership application form and mail it with your check to the address listed below, or if paying by credit card you may fax the completed form to 979.846.7607. Local chapters have additional fees. Below is a listing of chapters by region. To find out if there is a local chapter in your area, please review the chapter information on our website at [abpa.org](http://abpa.org) or call the National Office at 979.846.7606. **Membership in the Association constitutes paying National dues.**

### Sustaining Member:

- Must be a company or organization
- Assign only one person as the member of ABPA
- A Sustaining Member must submit a letter that designates their Voting Representative.

## Please Print Legibly or Type

Mr., Mrs., Ms., etc	First Name	MI	Last Name (Include suffix)
Organization (Agency/Firm)	Department/Division		Title
Address:			
City:	State / Prov	Zip + 4 Code/Postal Code	Country
Daytime Phone	Fax	Email	
ABPA-SA		\$ 60.00	
Local Chapter (if joining a local chapter)		Local Dues Amount	

## Method of Payment

- Charge \$ 125.00 to my  Visa  MasterCard  American Express  Discover  Check  Money Order  Invoice Me

Credit Card Number	Card Expires (MM/YYYY)	CVC Number
Name as it appears on card	Signature	

## Additional Information

How would you like to receive your Membership Renewal Invoice Notification?  Email  US Mail (Not available for International Membership)

## Local Chapter Dues Listed by Region

<p><b>REGION 1</b></p> <p>New England \$12.00 Rhode Island 18.00</p> <p><b>REGION 2</b></p> <p>Virginia \$25.00</p> <p><b>REGION 3</b></p> <p>Carolinas \$10.00 Florida Suncoast 12.00 Peach State "1788" 30.00 Tennessee 20.00</p> <p><b>REGION 4</b></p> <p>Arkansas \$10.00 Central Texas 20.00 Corpus Christi 23.00 Lower Rio Grande Valley 25.00 North Texas 23.00 San Antonio 60.00</p>	<p><b>REGION 5</b></p> <p>Colorado \$15.00 Utah 12.00</p> <p><b>REGION 6</b></p> <p>Arizona \$20.00 Central Coast 10.00 Central Valley California 10.00 Hawaii 23.00 Silver State 23.00 Southern California 15.00</p> <p><b>REGION 7</b></p> <p>Oregon \$20.00 SRC4 20.00</p> <p><b>REGION 8 (USD)</b></p>	<p><b>REGION 9 (USD)</b></p> <p><b>REGION 10</b></p> <p><b>REGION 11</b></p> <p>Indiana BPA \$25.00 Michigan 40.00 Northern Illinois 23.00</p> <p><b>REGION 12</b></p> <p>Eastern Nebraska \$10.00</p>
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**Please make checks payable to:** ABPA  
6672 S 1570 W, West Jordan, UT  
(801) 436-7238  
Email: [membership@abpa.org](mailto:membership@abpa.org)