

# **The Direct Connection**



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

**January Vol. 35 Issue 1**

## **William “Bill” Hamrick**

**We sadly have to report that Bill Hamrick passed away December 10, 2024. Bill will be greatly missed by all. Our prayers and sympathy go to Bill’s family and love ones. Bill was beloved by anyone that knew him. A great guy and respected by all.**

**How did Bill get involved in the backflow world?**

**Approximately thirty years ago in San Antonio, the City Water Board’s Cross Connection Control Program had developed and implemented enforcement of containment backflow protection on high hazard facilities. One such facility was car washes. Conducting cross connection surveys on existing car washes, we encountered a car wash maintained by Mr. Bill Hamrick. Upon placing the requirement, Bill, not speaking any backflow at the time, argued that he had vacuum breakers on all his equipment. After explaining backflow, Bill realized this is something important and a necessity. Bill then attends a 40-hour Backflow Prevention Assembly Tester Course in 1988 and joins our local ABPA-SA Chapter – “Our Lucky Day”. Bill was a hydraulic expert. He developed many pieces of equipment and processes through the years. His technical expertise was unmatched.**

**At the first ABPA-SA monthly meeting Bill attended, he saw a gauge tester we had built to test gauges for our local chapter members. Bill said “I’ll build a better one”. Sure enough, at the following meeting he shows up with what looked like a “mini rocket launcher”. One of the coolest gauge testers ever. Bill, from that day forward was an active member of our ABPA-SA Chapter and also ABPA nationally. In 2024 Bill received the ABPA Meritorious Service Award.**

**Bill provided our chapter with detailed member attendance ledgers to ensure CEU’s were accurately submitted and also the free hands-on offered to members was accurate. Additionally, he served as president of ABPA-SA Chapter and assisted in every aspect of membership recruitment and newsletter development. Not enough can be said as to Bill’s importance and support to our backflow world both State and Nationally. Bill owned ATB Services, a Mid-West Service Center for many years.**

**He will be thoroughly missed and his shoes will never be filled to the extent of what he provided to ABPA-SA.**

**There is a Star up there named William “Bill” Hamrick! God Be with You Bill. You were Great!!!**

## January 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. This meeting is:

**Date: Thursday January 9, 2025**

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

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

**Program: Soft Skills for BATs**

**Meeting Sponsor: [ArbiterBackflow.com](http://ArbiterBackflow.com)**

**No alcoholic beverages  
allowed**

**Next meeting date: February 13, 2025**

### **Last meeting thanks to:**

**Bac-Flo Unlimited, Inc. for sponsoring the meeting for November.**

**Thanks to Troy Baird for presenting the training program on backflow assembly installations.**

**And the Chapter appreciated the raffle donation of the BAC-FLO-5 Backflow Test Kit.**

## **January Agenda**

- 5:00 p.m. General discussion and quorum confirmation
- 5:15 p.m. Call Meeting to order.
- 5:20 p.m. Secretary's Report. Read and approve the minutes of the previous meeting.
- 5:25 p.m. Treasurer's Report. Discussion and approval of the treasurer's report.
- 5:30 p.m. Supply Officer's Report
- 5:35 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.

### **A latest backflow incident: December 2024 - Bay County, Florida**

- 150 homes affected
- Cross connection found by local water department, sewer and potable water lines mistakenly connected by a local contractor

## "Direct Talk" by the President

The January 9th meeting will be held in the SAWS conference room in the Tower II building located at 2800 U.S. Hwy. 281. The Director's meeting will start at 5:15 PM with the meal beginning at 6:00 PM and meeting starting at 6:15 PM.

Trinidad *Chairez*

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

## Chapter Chatter

January Chatter - Your Hand Writing Challenged Secretary, Greg Shean

"Raffle On." The November raffle was very different than previous raffles. We raised the chapter's raffle budget from \$750 to \$1,000 as we no longer participate in the San Antonio Home and Garden Show at the Alamodome, just was not our audience, and the San Antonio Irrigation Association no longer has their annual South Texas Irrigation and Landscape Expo (STILE). The thought was to give more back to the members. Our two member "buyers" did just that. Plus, many items were donated along with Backflow Test Kits from Bac-Flo Unlimited and Mid-West Instrument. There were about 90 items, spread out over 4 tables. It looked like a guys' yard sale. Raffle tickets are combined from previous 2024 meetings with those purchased that meeting.

I would write the manufacturer, the item, and the winner's name. Later I would add a light sarcastic memo for each for the Chatter. With 40 in attendance, with not all buying raffle tickets, there was plenty of prizes to go around. However, I could not keep up with about 90 items raffled in 45 minutes. We will be much better organized next year with a more detailed list of prizes and a tape recording of the proceedings with possible more large, non-donated items. The raffle was fun and it achieved its objective but handwriting the results did not.

## MINUTES SAN ANTONIO CHAPTER-ABPA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING Thursday, November 14, 2024

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS – PRESENT	EXECUTIVE OFFICERS – PRESENT
Trinidad Chairez (Pres.), Jeff Stricker (V. Pres.) .	Art Trejo – Treasurer
Greg Shean – Secretary	
Keith Waldrep – Past President	
OFFICERS SPECIAL TO THE CHAPTER – PRESENT	OFFICERS SPECIAL TO THE CHAPTER – ABSENT
Carl Michaud – Gauge Testing/Certification	Jim Cantrell – Liaison to SAWS
Bill Hamrick - Gauge Testing/Certification	
Jeff Meeks – Sgt. At Arms, Matt Wilgen - Web	
Joe Young – Program Director	

DIRECTORS AT LARGE – PRESENT	DIRECTORS AT LARGE – ABSENT
Bob Clark - 1 year	Jeff Hoffman - 2 years
Bruce Rathburn - 2 years	
Fred Baird - 1 year	
Robert Stricker - 2 years	

Agenda Item #1. Trini started the meeting, asked that all turn off their cell phones and then asked for a moment of silence. This is the last meeting of the year. There is no December meeting because of Christmas. INFO.

Agenda Item #2. Secretary’s Report: The October minutes were in the newsletter. Robert (as always) made a motion to accept. Passed. INFO.

Agenda Item #3. Treasurer’s Report: Art reported the amount in our checking account. INFO.

Agenda Item #4. Supply Officer’s Report: From August e-mails among the directors: Art gave an attire inventory as he received it from Nick Rios in 2023. We are looking to reduce/dissolve our about \$2,000 inventory. The discussion was to keep the attire but need member input and vote. OPEN.

Agenda Item #5. Audit Committee: E-mail from Jeff Hoffman to Art and the directors: In general, the accounting is sound. There are some sorting, filtering, and formatting changes that could help with the P&L reports. Jeff will work with Art on that. OPEN.

Agenda Item #6. Meeting Sponsor: Bac-Flo Unlimited sponsored the meeting. INFO.

Agenda Item #7. Meal: Bac-Flo Unlimited sponsored the pizza and salad meal. Art donated and delivered the water and for the meeting. Please e-mail Bill before 5 PM on Monday. The order is input at 5 PM. If you do not order – you will only get one if there is a no show. INFO.

Agenda Item #8. Raffle: Bac-Flo Unlimited provided a BAC-FLO-5 backflow test gauge kit. INFO.

Agenda Item #9. Training: Troy Baird presented the training on examples of issues in Backflow Prevention Assembly Installations. INFO.

Agenda Item #10. Webmaster: The chapter website is still online but needs updating. OPEN.

Agenda Item #11. National ABPA: Troy had no input as the meeting and training were shortened to allow time for the raffle. INFO.

Agenda Item #12. SAWS: Robert Rodriguez reported that the San Antonio City Council has approved that the high hazard backflow testing will be spread out from January through November. There was no corporate memory why a June 30th deadline was established. Robert handed out copies of the letter that went out the customers. SAWS will work with them as to what month will be most convenient for them. The SAWS backflow web portal app will be turned off on December 24th.

SAWS sent a letter to all customers concerning possible lead in their domestic water service. All concerns should be addressed to SAWS so they can check their domestic water service. Jeff Stricker gave a recap, based on his experience and knowledge of the BSI portal and their e-mails sent out to testers.

Agenda Item #13. San Antonio Irrigation Association (SAIA): No report. INFO.

Agenda Item #14. City of San Antonio (COSA) Plumbing Inspection: No report. INFO.

Agenda Item #15. Membership: Jeff Stricker read a Bill Hamrick article that will be in the newsletter concerning the need for volunteers to continue the chapter's excellent leadership. The chapter will need volunteers by January. There were two new members: David Sanchez and Raylon Schlueder. Both are plumbers who've attended Robert Stricker's continuing education classes. He "encouraged" them to attend the meeting and join the chapter. INFO.

Agenda Item #16. Gauge Testing: Carl reported that 5 gauges were tested. Gauge testing will change in January as Bill will no longer be involved. BAVCO and Bac-Flo Unlimited have volunteered to do testing and arrange for any required repairs. Details will be in the newsletter. INFO.

Agenda Item #17. Attendance Awards. There were two members who had perfect meeting attendance. Carl Michaud won the \$200 cash prize. There were 12 members who had only missed one meeting, plus the non-selected from the perfect meeting attendance. Mr. Silva won the \$100 cash prize. INFO.

Agenda Item #18. Training: Troy presented various Backflow Prevent Assembly Installations pointing out installation problems and testing challenges. First was a Febco where the ball valves have been rotated, but still maintained Approval. And the new Conbraco DC4AY – a Y configuration went through approval process with test cocks pointing up. Next was an exploded view of Wilkins 975 XL3 RPA showing the check #1 and #2 piggy backed together in one cartridge, come out together. Beware of buying repair parts online, parts should be factory OEM produced by the manufacturer. They might look the same, sometimes cheaper, but non-factory parts void assembly approval. He showed 5 manufacturers' lubricants. A different looking grease packet could indicate non-factory parts. Troy showed a confined space and asked what is considered a confined space. Only one way in one out, not designed for permanent human occupancy, and big enough to get into. A tester cannot tell if there is sufficient oxygen without appropriate means of detection. A three-person team often required to enter a permitted, confined space. It has been known Limestone rock can generate carbon monoxide with the acidity of soil. OSHA is more concerned these days about possible submersion, piping coming apart below ground.

Troy presented two softball questions. Who can REPLACE a Backflow Prevention Assembly? Who can Test & Repair a Backflow Prevention Assembly? Replacing/installing dependent on one's license by trade. Test and Repair: "Only backflow prevention assembly testers who have been licensed by TCEQ are authorized to test and repair assemblies on any domestic, commercial, industrial, or irrigation service in Texas". TCEQ RG-206.

An air gap must be at least 2 times the outlet diameter and not less than 1 inch according to ASME 112.1.2. He reviewed an engineered air gap (e-gap) according to ASME 112.1.3. An example of an approved E-Gap fitting – residential water softener drain line.

He briefly reviewed fire lines and the importance of being a 'life and safety' system. Specific fire license is required by the tester. Fire line assemblies that are fed by potable water, a potable water standard test kit is required to be used. TCEQ put out a notice, some cities were confused.

Reduced pressure assemblies (RPs) account for 85-90% of assemblies across the country – but if not needed simpler assembly probably better. Troy showed a beautiful installation of an RPA with a bypass. One issue, make sure bypass assembly flows before a repair or maintenance. Equal protection shall be installed on bypass. Relating to reliable backflow protection, there have been “better ideas” – but nothing to replace testable assemblies as we know them today.

Two challenging situations were discussed - janitorial closets and soda machines. Janitorial closets has a detergent dispenser using the faucet for a water source. Look for approval statement on chemical dispenser, backflow protection may be built in. One issue connecting dispenser off mop sink faucet with an AVB. Faucets are now made with an SVB. Appropriate protection is required to ensure concentrated solution is not siphoned/back-pressured into the water supply. A spill-resistant vacuum breaker assembly is high hazard, can be installed under constant pressure.

Post mix soda machines should have a backflow preventer on incoming water line. An RP is the recommended assembly though a stainless-steel assembly not needed, studies have been done. All piping past assembly cannot be affected by gas. The Co2 gas is under high pressure and could back-pressure into copper/brass piping created carbonic acid. Even if all pex piping in building, gas could back-pressure into water main. Troy listed 11 ABPA Position Statements on a national level. One for carbonation equipment has been developed and pending board approval.

A backflow assembly is considered “Readily Accessible” if it is no higher than 5 feet to grade with no obstructions. Installations that exceed 5 feet above the floor or grade shall be provided with a permanent platform capable of supporting tester or maintenance person. Do not put yourself in a precarious situation. For example dangerous using extension ladder for testing assemblies.

Correct assembly freeze protection is important. Picture of spray foam showed, creates issue when repairing assemblies. Must have access to test cocks and all components for any required maintenance. Paint with an “R-rating” had been used in one TX city on assemblies – bad idea.

The 2021 freeze caused codes to be undated to be more stringent in some cities in TX. Some changes: insulate now to 20 degrees, was 30. All water supply pipes insulated, not just hot. And piping in attics or exterior walls require extra protection. Are a few of some updates.

Troy provided the website CPTED.NET to help prevent thief. Documentation is now required and reviewed at the scrap yard, and possibly police dept. Collateral damage is now taken seriously. Some manufacturers have epoxy paint on assembly as a deterrent.

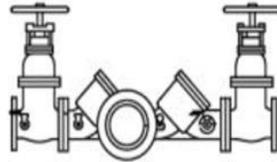
The final slide was a 3” RPA with all gauge hoses incorrectly connected. If a tester has a bad day and all assemblies are failing – disconnect hoses off test kit and start over. It has been seen hoses get reversed and debris from hose filters gets flushed into gauge created issue.

Adjournment. Adjourn the meeting at 7:25 PM for the raffle.



Greg Shean - Secretary ABPA San Antonio Chapter

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**14**  
**NOV**

**ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING**  
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17603 I-10 SAN ANTONIO, TX 78257  
11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

**6**  
**DEC**

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**9**  
**JAN**

**MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING**  
PAESANO'S LINCOLN HEIGHTS  
555 E BASSE RD,  
SAN ANTONIO, TX 78209  
11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

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# NOTICE

ABPA-SA is saddened by the heartfelt loss of Bill Hamrick, of **ATB SERVICES**.

ATB Services, Inc. has been the Mid-West Instrument factory service center in the San Antonio area since January 1995. Bill's dedication to the Chapter over the years along with the top notch service he always provided to those needing their backflow gauges serviced, will be sorely missed.

The new service center for Mid-West Instrument for the San Antonio branch is **BAVCO**, located at **6017 Randolph Blvd, San Antonio, TX 78233**.  
**Phone (210) 451-7564**. You may also contact them through (866) 318-0274.

## Quiz (True or False)

- T or F 1. When testing the relief valve, the gauge reading goes to zero and relief valve doesn't open – this indicates a leaking #2 shut off valve.
- T or F 2. A soft disc on the number 1 check of an R/P would likely cause a decrease of the buffer zone.
- T or F 3. If the inlet pressure is lost on a PVB, the air inlet valve will remain closed if the check is fouled.
- T or F 4. Caution should be used when disassembling large RPs, particularly the #2 check valve which has a required loading of 5 psi or greater.
- T or F 5. A nick or imperfection on the relief valve seat would likely cause the relief valve opening point of an RP to be higher than normal.

Answers: 1: F. 2: T. 3: F. 4: F. 5: T.

## ABPA-SA Board of Directors

2024 - 2025

- 1) President – Trinidad Chairez
- 2) Vice President – Jeff Stricker
- 3) Treasurer – Arthur Trejo
- 4) Secretary – Greg Shean
- 5) Immediate Past President – Keith Waldrep

### Special Officers to the Association

- 6) SGT-AT-ARMS – Jeff Meeks
- 7) Liaison to SAWS – James Cantrell
- 8) Program Director – Joe Young
- 9) Gauge Testing and Certification – Carl Michaud
- 10) Membership & Newsletter – Open
- 11) Webmaster – Matthew Wilgen

### Directors at Large

#### Two-year term

1. Jeff Hoffman
2. Bruce Rathburn
3. Robert Stricker

#### One-year term

4. Fred Baird
5. Robert (Bob) Clark

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## Quote of the Day

“Backflow World - What we have learned and know about this field - is that - the more we know the more we realize we don't know!”

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Fred Baird



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Editors include: Fred, Bruce, Robert, Jeff H.

For further information about ABPA, contact:

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

Troy Baird – current ABPA President  
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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.

**Click QR Code to Join**



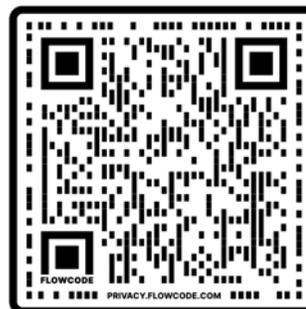
The other way is to print the Membership Application on the next page and send it to the address at the bottom of the page with your check.

## 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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- A Sustaining Member must submit a letter that designates their Voting Representative.

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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</p> <p>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</p> <p>Florida Suncoast 12.00</p> <p>Peach State "1788" 30.00</p> <p>Tennessee 20.00</p> <p><b>REGION 4</b></p> <p>Arkansas \$10.00</p> <p>Central Texas 20.00</p> <p>Corpus Christi 23.00</p> <p>Lower Rio Grande Valley 25.00</p> <p>North Texas 23.00</p> <p>San Antonio 60.00</p>	<p><b>REGION 5</b></p> <p>Colorado \$15.00</p> <p>Utah 12.00</p> <p><b>REGION 6</b></p> <p>Arizona \$20.00</p> <p>Central Coast 10.00</p> <p>Central Valley California 10.00</p> <p>Hawaii 23.00</p> <p>Silver State 23.00</p> <p>Southern California 15.00</p> <p><b>REGION 7</b></p> <p>Oregon \$20.00</p> <p>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</p> <p>Michigan 40.00</p> <p>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)