



# ABPA News

1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2020

## In This Issue

- President's Message
- Letter from the Editor
- Headquarters Introduction
- Scholarship Deadline Extended
- Board Member Profiles
- Annual Conference
- Certification Program
- Industry News You Can Use
- Chapters' Corner

## Board of Directors

Tim Brown  
*International President*

J. Frank Snyder  
*International Vice-President*

Billie Vines  
*Secretary*

Michael Moss  
*International Past President*

Mike Hebert  
*Region 1 Director (CT, NY, ME, MA, NH, NJ, RI, VT)*

Kevin Turcotte  
*Region 2 Director (D.C., DE, MD, PA, VA, WV)*

Kathy Riley  
*Region 3 Director (AL, FL, GA, MS, NC, SC, TN)*

Troy Baird  
*Region 4 Director (AR, LA, OK, TX)*

A Message from ABPA President Tim Brown

## Your energy and passion are needed now more than ever



As my ABPA President's term enters the "stretch-run" of its final three months, I have recently begun to review the past few years in this role. A three-year presidency is not unique to the Association... it happened once in the mid-1990s. However, I have the dubious distinction of working with three management companies while serving as President (and four if you include my term as VP).

The Board and I learned a great deal about association management companies during my term. These companies are designed specifically to manage associations like ours. "On paper," it sounds as if this is the most efficient and effective approach. Within one company are several personnel who can separately handle finances, membership, website and other communication, certification, conference-planning, Board-support and more.

They may not initially know much, or anything, about backflow protection or cross-connection control. But they "learn as they go," and their skills are such that they can manage various associations of different disciplines (such as nursing and other medical areas; environmental; music and education). In other words, they not only manage us, but others like us, too.

However, our two association management companies (May 2016 to November 2019) lacked one very important element... a **passion** for our association – the one displayed every day by Chapter officers and members, our certified testers and specialists, committee chairs and members, by those of you who oversee programs with municipal water companies, by those of you who sell backflow-related products and services, by our Board members, and by others involved in educating the public. But it's this passion that continues to drive the ABPA – some 37 years following its creation – and has carried us through numerous challenging times.

I am so grateful we now have that passion as a critical component of our current management company. The timing was right for Patti Fauver to establish Advanced Management Solutions (AMS) in 2019, as she retired from her three decades-plus position with the State of Utah DEQ, Division of Drinking Water. Although she had already served the ABPA as President, as Treasurer for many years, on numerous committees, and with the Utah Chapter, she recognized yet another Association need. We have been blessed with her continued service to us.

But I will close with a caution. We face continued challenges of membership and activity in several of our Chapters. We have failed to generate the interest of others to fill critical Board and committee positions.

AMS management will certainly help right our ship. But **your** energy and passion are also needed for the ABPA to succeed.

## Board of Directors Continued...

Jesse Bockhouse  
*Region 5 Director (CO, NM, UT, WY)*

Lyle Greenhill  
*Region 6 Director (AZ, CA, HI, NV)*

Allen Wilder  
*Region 7 Director (AK, ID, MT, OR, WA)*

Open at this time  
*Region 8 Director (AB, BC, MB, NT, NU, SK, YT Canada)*

Open at this time  
*Region 9 Director (ON, PEI, PQ, NB, NL, NS Canada)*

Open at this time  
*Region 10 Director (MN, ND, SD, WI)*

Danny Jurkowitz  
*Region 11 Director (IL, IN, KY, MI, OH)*

Rich Koenig  
*Region 12 Director (IA, KS, MO, NE)*

Mike Lueck  
*Director-at-Large*

## Useful ABPA Resources

ABPA Membership Brochure

Online Dues Renewal Instructions

Certification Program Resources

*View the ABPA Community Calendar featuring upcoming Certification exam information and other local chapter events.*

## Contact Us

ABPA National Office  
6672 South 1570 West  
West Jordan, UT 84084

(801) 436-7238

<http://www.abpa.org>

Letter from the Editor

## Your input - and perhaps a little writing - will be welcome in upcoming editions of the newsletter

By Carl Fauver, Communication Director

We hope you like this newest edition of the ABPA newsletter. After taking over Association management on November 15, it's been a bit of a scramble to get this pulled together and distributed in this month of January. We are grateful to the many people who assisted in meeting that goal.

We want future newsletters to contain the kinds of stories and information that serve you best. We invite you to share your ideas for future articles – or to offer any other comments or critiques – at [info@abpa.org](mailto:info@abpa.org).

For story ideas, it would be very helpful if you include contact information for one or two individuals who can contribute to an article or would be available for an interview.

We will strive to distribute future ABPA newsletters as close as possible to the first business day of each quarter, starting in April.

[Return to Top](#)

Headquarters Introduction

## We're here and excited to get started!!

By Patti Fauver, Executive Director

Welcome everyone! I am excited about my new role with ABPA as the Executive Director and management of the headquarters office.

I have been involved with the Association in one form or another since 1988 – from member to Chapter President to National VP, President and Past President, and most recently the National Treasurer. A few of you have been involved longer, but not many. I think I know most of you and I hope to meet and talk with those I don't. I'm also excited to meet our newer members and to discuss everything backflow with you.

Your management services have been contracted with various companies since the mid-1990s. The current contract, with Advanced Management Solutions (AMS), now has the ABPA headquarters situated just outside Salt Lake City, Utah.

AMS has two full time employees and 4 part time workers. Although, technically employed by AMS – your management team is focused on servicing the needs of the ABPA Board, members and certification programs.

We are a small, family business with only one client. AMS was created – and my retirement from the state of Utah was accelerated – because I, like many of you, have witnessed an urgent need for more effective management.

We are very focused on increasing the level of service, mentoring committee structures and improving ABPA communication, both vertically – through Chapters and Region Directors – and horizontally, across our committees.

Through my years with ABPA, I have found many issues and challenges to be interconnected. To adequately address them, I believe we need to increase our field of vision, looking beyond narrow, near-term remedies to focus on longer range solutions. This is normally more challenging; but that just makes the journey more interesting.

### Meet your ABPA team:

**Patti Fauver, Executive Director** retired from the State of Utah Division of Drinking Water after 34 years of service. I managed the implementation and enforcement of the Safe Drinking Water Act in Utah. I have served on multiple national committees, including the Federal Advisory Committee on Revisions to the Total Coliform Rule and Distribution System Issues from 2005-2007.



*Patti at the Broad Street well in London, summer 2019. This is where cholera was first linked as a waterborne disease by Jon Snow in 1854 (yep – water nerd).*

I loved my job with the State and look forward to focusing on cross connection control and backflow prevention issues with ABPA. I will provide support to the Board of Directors, be a resource to answer questions and provide general industry knowledge as needed. I will also be the point of contact for membership issues, conference registrations.... and I guess all things – ABPA.



*Brittany honed her grace-under-fire skills in the medical field.*

**Brittany Laswell, Associate Director ABPA Certification** spent 20 years managing medical records for a pediatric office with 10 doctors. She has dealt with doctor egos, screaming children and frantic parents. Brittany has been handling the 3 (yes, 3) certification programs ABPA implements. My advice: avoid calling on Mondays for anything other than certification. So far Mondays have been, without a doubt, wall-to-wall fires, with exam packets and registration assistance for certification programs.

**Peter Muscarello, Finance Director** has eight years of successful financial experience working for some of the world's largest companies. He's worked as a Senior Financial Analyst for Kraft-Heinz, Danone, Coca-Cola and most recently NICE inContact. Pete's past duties have included:

- o Cross-border accounting
- o Budgeting responsibility for a \$200-million partner group
- o Utilizing business financial intelligence software
- o Leading cross-functional teams to improve business processes



*Pete, the groom, pauses briefly on his busy 2016 wedding day.*

Pete will handle financial analysis and reporting for ABPA.



*Carl interviewing future NBA player Shawn Bradley, winter 1990. At 7'6", Bradley was the 3rd tallest player in NBA history, retiring in 2005.*

**Carl Fauver, Communication Director** is a writer, with a Bachelor's degree in Communication and English along with a Master's degree in Mass Communication. He spent 20 years in radio news and sports reporting, 9 years in corporate communication and public relations and 5 years in print newspaper reporting. He is heading up the restart of your ABPA publications. This is the first of those. Changes and improvements should follow, as we continue through the management transition.

**Jennifer and Caleb** round out our AMS team. Jennifer will work with Carl to format the quarterly newsletter and other publications, while Caleb will help update the ABPA website and assist with phone inquiries.

I would be remiss if I did not thank all of you for your patience during this transition. As with any major change, tasks we thought might be easier, often weren't. But our fledgling AMS team is learning new things every day. I'm confident we will continue to improve as time goes on.

Perhaps most important, our only goal is the success of the American Backflow Prevention Association. We have no other clients – no other priorities.

My team (your ABPA staff) and I look forward to working with you to improve the Association. We're anxious to share the understanding and spread the message about cross connection dangers, to help ensure the quality of our drinking water!

[Return to Top](#)

---

## Scholarship Essay Competition

### Competition deadline extended to March 15

Established a generation ago, in 2000, the ABPA Harrington-Arthur Memorial Essay Competition needs your help. Our essay contest deadline has been extended to **March 15** in order to maximize submissions. This year's winner will again earn a \$1,500 scholarship to the school of their choice.

"Maintaining safe drinking water is vital to the overall well-being of the human population," is how last year's winner opened her essay. Of course, that's common knowledge; but how many teenagers are giving it any thought? Kaitlyn Divijak did, while attending Tanque Verde High School in Tucson a year ago. We need your help locating our next, gifted young writer to follow in her footsteps.

Now a freshman at the University of San Diego, Kaitlyn recently told us, "Some of the key things I learned while researching my essay were: lack of backflow education seems to be a common theme in each of the incidents I discussed. The absence of backflow awareness and how it can cause health hazards and property damage needs to be addressed, possibly through public service announcements and industry advertisements."

*The essay competition's ultimate goal is to grow water safety knowledge within the next generation.*

Our scholarship essay contest was created to reward students who work to increase their understanding of how cross-connection control and backflow prevention help ensure safe drinking water. ABPA's focus is to educate the public on the value and need for active backflow prevention programs.

This year's essay topic is:

**"Explain cross-connection control in relation to protecting the public's drinking water from a water purveyor's viewpoint. Discuss the water purveyor's role and responsibilities and ways to eliminate contamination risks in a city or town's water supply system."**

The Harrington-Arthur essay contest is open to high school-age children, grandchildren and other relatives of ABPA members, except for immediate family members of the ABPA Board of Directors.

Please share essay competition details with your local public or private high schools, or with students of that age who are home schooled.

Additional contest details are available at <https://abpa.site-ym.com/page/Scholarship>.

Essays should be submitted to [BacFloUnlimited@gvtc.com](mailto:BacFloUnlimited@gvtc.com).

Last year's \$1,500 scholarship check was sent to the Office of Financial Aid at the University of San Diego, on behalf of Kaitlyn Divijak.

"The essay prize money has allowed me to further my education by helping to pay for my tuition and books," Divijak added. "I have decided to major in communication, but hope to attend law school after I complete my undergraduate degree. When I attend law school, I might be interested in pursuing environmental law because of what I learned from the backflow research."

The essay competition's ultimate goal is to grow that kind of knowledge within the next generation. We look forward to your assistance.

[Return to Top](#)



---

## Board Member Profile

### Classic rock connoisseur - ABPA President Tim Brown - has spent three years working as the association's 'Bridge over Troubled Waters'



Three-year ABPA International President Tim Brown is bidding adieu to that post this spring, but not before working tirelessly to help guide the organization through some difficult times. When not toiling to keep the association afloat – or doing his “other” job – Tim can sometimes be found sorting his vintage baseball card collection, while listening to classic rock and roll.

Perhaps it's only appropriate Tim Brown's all-time favorite classic rock hit is the Eagles' *Hotel California*. With recent challenges that have befallen the American Backflow Prevention Association, it would have been completely understandable if Brown had “checked out any time he liked.” But, instead, he chose to “never leave” his duties as ABPA International President.

“I've been working two jobs, the second one being ABPA,” Brown, 68, said. “I'm in my office most Saturdays working on association things. I probably spend 20 to 30 hours a week on it.”

Working out of his Charlottesville, Virginia office – about 90 minutes southwest of Washington DC – the ABPA duties have been over and above Brown's now 11-year career as the Environmental Compliance Specialist for the Albemarle County Service Authority.

“I started here in January 2009 and it was my first-ever exposure to cross connection and backflow issues,” he said. “Before that, I was a manager at a water testing lab. It was routine, monotonous and often stressful. This is my first time to work for a government agency; and coming here was the best career decision I ever made. My bosses seem happy and I'm giving no thought to retirement.”

However, in a few short months – during the 2020 ABPA Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina – Brown will retire from the association's presidency, as International Vice President Frank Snyder of Texas takes the reins. “I still plan to remain active with ABPA because I am still learning more about backflow prevention issues every day,” Brown added. “But it will be nice to take more of a back seat. I hope to do a little more writing for the organization.”

Beyond ABPA, one of the more pressing things Brown will address in the months ahead is to help put the finishing touch on details surrounding his 50<sup>th</sup> high school reunion.

Brown does know his Woodstock trivia: the venue was the first place Crosby, Stills and Nash ever played together.

“I was student council president at Oswego Catholic High School on the shores of Lake Ontario in upstate New York,” he said. “My (1970) graduating class had about 115 students; and at our last reunion five years ago we had about 45 students there, along with 20 to 25 spouses. We were a tight-knit group with a lot of chemistry.”

Brown's graduation came less than a year after the legendary Woodstock music festival, which was held just 175 miles from his home. But, before you ask, the answer is “no.”

“A couple of guys in a band from my high school attended Woodstock; but no, I did not attend,” he said. “I was pretty ‘sheltered’ at that point. I'm a self-confessed late bloomer.”

Brown does know his Woodstock trivia: the venue was the first place Crosby, Stills and Nash ever played together. He calls them his favorite classic rock group ever, though he did not see them live until nearly forty years later, in the summer of 2008. “Ironically, that was the same day I hand-delivered my application for my current position.”

After high school Brown attended Syracuse University where he successfully walked on to the freshman basketball team. His degree in Forest Biology came in 1974, followed by a 1977 Master's Degree from

the University of Massachusetts. A biology teaching position at Mary Baldwin University in Staunton, Virginia moved Tim out of the New England area. That's also where he met his wife, Jane, who attended one of his courses. They were married in August 1982 and their only child, Evan, was born the following year.

In addition to his two jobs, some health issues for Jane also keep Brown busy. But in the little spare time he enjoys, Tim does collect vintage, vinyl record albums as well as baseball cards. "I own about 425 vinyl albums and about 800 baseball cards," he said. "(Among the cards), I have autographs (personally obtained) from Sandy Koufax, Roberto Clemente, Harmon Killebrew and several other major league players." He's also proud of the home run ball he has, hit out of the training camp park in 1964, by Mickey Mantle.

On the music side, Tim added, "I have 'plus' to 'mint' copies of Beatles albums... but my all-time favorite album is probably Déjà Vu by Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young."

"ABPA is an association that needs a lot of work; but keeping it alive has been important."

As his ABPA International Presidency draws to a close, Brown may finally have a little more time to play some of those albums. "As Past President I plan to remain active with ABPA," he concluded. "I will council and mentor Frank (Snyder) as much as he likes. ABPA is an association that needs a lot of work; but keeping it alive has

been important. I believe the Lord puts us in a position to do things when needed. I have wanted to do my best to keep it afloat."

The incoming President is the first to admit, it will be a tough act to follow. "Tim has done miracles with the ABPA transition and dealing with management companies," Snyder said. "I would not have had the patience to do it. I am taking the presidency at the best time, because Tim has already dealt with all the hard stuff."

As a new era dawns for the American Backflow Prevention Association, Brown, Snyder and many other ABPA members hope the organization can finally begin to fill them with something described in another classic Eagles hit: a *Peaceful, Easy Feeling*.

[Return to Top](#)

---

### Board Member Profile

## Nearly two dozen grandkids keep ABPA Past President Mike Moss hopping even more than his association duties



As he approaches the end of his second stint as ABPA International Past President, Mike Moss plans to remain active in the organization, primarily overseeing testing programs. However, you can plan on that schedule being interrupted, when one of his 23 grandkids – including two sets of twins – makes him a better offer.

When you ask Mike what were the years he served as Vice President, President and Past President of the American Backflow Prevention Association (ABPA), you get a bit of a blank stare. But ask him how many grandkids he has (23) or where they are (13 in Utah, 8 in New Mexico and 2 in Heaven) the answer comes quick.

Some people and their priorities.

"I have sets of twins at both ends, with two 18-year-old granddaughters and a pair of 18-month-old grandsons," Mike boasts. "Those oldest ones graduate high school next summer and I'll be there. For now, I have been spending two or three days a week tending the 1-and-a-half-year-olds, along with their 4- and 6-year-old big sisters."

When his previous stint as ABPA Past President ended a few years ago, Moss, 70, thought he was done with Association leadership. But a juggle of positions a year ago put Mike back in the post for a single

year. In April, Association President Tim Brown will become Past President and Moss will return his ABPA attention primarily to coordinating backflow assembly test administration.

"I have supported Tim Brown as president, totally," Moss said. "He's been working so hard for ABPA. When he asked me to fill in as Past President again, I was glad to help."

Born in Oklahoma, Moss and his family moved to Wyoming by the time he graduated high school. From there it was on to the University of Wyoming, where he graduated with a civil engineering degree in 1974. But that was only the second-biggest thing to happen to him, that same year President Richard Nixon resigned.

"I met Suzanne in Casper, Wyoming, where my parents were living at the time," Mike said. "We got married in 1974, and our five kids (three boys, two girls) are now ages 31 to 44. Three of their families live near us in northern Utah, while the other two are in Farmington, New Mexico. We go to our grandkids' soccer matches, dance recitals and basketball games all the time."

Following stints working for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (in what was then called the Soil Conservation Service) and for a private rocket manufacturer (then called Thiokol Corporation), Moss was hired as a Cross Connection Control Compliance Manager in 1998, by the Utah Department of Environmental Quality Drinking Water Division. He retired from that position in 2016.

His time with ABPA pre-dates his state position by several years. "I worked in cross connection and backflow prevention while at Thiokol and joined ABPA about 1990," Moss said. "Until they fire me, I will continue to assist with the ABPA certification programs. I have been on the certification committee since the mid-1990s and am the Vice Chair at this time."

*"Until they fire me, I will continue to assist with the ABPA certification programs."*

Mike also volunteers for a special service district in his northern Utah community. The district provides about \$100,000 per year in mineral lease funds to county firefighters and emergency responders for specialized lifesaving equipment. The district has purchased radios, trucks, trailers, scuba rescue gear, 4-wheelers and other equipment for several different emergency response agencies.

Perhaps his service district's most impressive acquisition to date is an amphibious, all-terrain rescue vehicle called a "Sherp."

"The Sherp was built in the Ukraine," Moss explained. "We had it delivered on a Sunday morning, about a year ago. That very afternoon it was used for a search and rescue. Volunteering for the service district is great, because it directly helps our community. This kind of equipment saves lives."

But Mike's favorite activity is gathering his large family for summer reunions and at Thanksgiving and Christmas. "Getting everyone together is fun, but it's also crazy," Moss concluded. "I could not do it without my wife and daughters doing most of the work. My job is to change a diaper once in a while and otherwise just have fun with the kids."

[Return to Top](#)

---

## 2020 ABPA Conference & Trade Show

### Southern hospitality will usher in the next ABPA decade

By Patti Fauver, Executive Director

In case you haven't heard, ABPA's **2020 Conference & Trade Show will be held in Charlotte, NC, April 20-22**. Charlotte is a beautiful city with lots of amenities. Enjoy getting to know the Queen City and all it has to offer. [Click here](#) for a link to the Charlotte Convention and Visitor's Bureau.

Registration is now open, with early bird rates available through March 15.

### Early Bird Rates:

Member Registration: \$495

Non-Member Registration: \$595

Single Day Registration: \$295

Companion Registration: \$295

Register at: <https://abpa.site-ym.com/page/2020Conferencereg>.

**Book your hotel room!** Located at 2800 Coliseum Centre Drive, the [Charlotte Airport Hilton](#) will serve as the official conference hotel. Make your hotel reservation [here](#).

You may also call Armon Hazziez to make reservations, at (704) 627-5003. Reference the "Backflow Prevention" group code.



[Return to Top](#)

---

### Certification Program Update

## What is an ABPA Certified Backflow Prevention Assembly Tester?

By the ABPA Certification Committee

A backflow prevention assembly (BPA) is installed to protect against potential or actual hazards. Once a cross-connection control inspector determines a BPA must be installed, the device requires periodic testing to assure it continues to protect against backflow conditions. The test of an installed assembly in the field is an important task to assure the assembly continues to protect against drinking water hazards.

Who tests the assemblies – and how they are tested – are important tasks in an effective Cross-Connection Control Program. Before 1990, many training institutions offered several different field test procedures throughout the country. This frequently led to confusion about how a BPA Tester should operate.

The creation of a standard protocol BPA testers had to follow, no matter where they were located, was a frequent request from ABPA members. So, in 1990, ABPA instructed a Committee to develop a "Need to Know Criteria" for BPA testers. This was developed by consensus, among experts from across the country. This new criteria established the important knowledge required of BPA testers.

Once the need to know criteria was established, the Committee next looked around the country to evaluate many field test procedures. The Committee's goal was to determine which test procedure provided the most accurate information. Many procedures produced accurate test data from a working assembly. The challenge came when non-working modes were presented or leaking shut off valve issues arose.

*The problem was, finding a fair way to administer and grade the performance exam.*

When the evaluation was done with these modes, one test procedure provided accurate data most frequently. The field test procedure developed by the USC Foundation of Cross Connection Control & Hydraulic Research – as printed in their Manual of Cross Connection Control – proved to be the most reliable.

ABPA arranged to use the Foundation's test procedure, while also developing another Need to Know Criteria. This resulted in a comprehensive test that produced the best data, most often, so trainers around the country could teach the same information and procedures, regardless of where they were or how they had operated previously.

The next thing the Committee needed was an examination that would clearly show the test taker's proficiency, to qualify them for certification. To accomplish this, the Committee created a 2-part exam. The first part, a written test, features 100 Multiple Choice questions. Those questions are rotated in and out, from test to test, from a bank of more than 600 questions.



The written exam is weighted so more questions are included from the most important sections of the Need to Know criteria. The written exam requires 70 correct answers to pass.

The second part of the exam is a performance test. Exam takers must test 4 of the main assemblies – RP, DC, PVB and SVB – in a working or non-working condition. The tester must accurately evaluate the assembly and include data on their exam form.

The last part needed was a set of rules, policies and procedures ensuring each tester received a fair and equal examination. When a tester properly completes the written and performance exam, they are considered a certified tester for 3 years. When that time expires, certification lapses and a similar 2-part exam is required for recertification.

This performance exam was a key part of the certification test. The problem was, finding a fair way to administer and grade the exam. A written test had an answer key, while a performance exam required an observer to assure the BPA tester was performing properly. Therefore, a new person was needed who could observe a BPA tester performing on the 4 required assemblies to ensure they were completed correctly.

The name given to this observer is a Proctor. Proctors are required to be certified testers who have successfully recertified at least once. After that, the Proctor is also required to pass a training class, learning the rules of the certification program. Proctors are taught how to observe testers during their performance exams.

*Proctors are required to be certified testers who have successfully recertified at least once.*

Proctors are required to undergo training and to be tested every three years. Proctors are there only to observe. They provide pass or fail scores to each exam taker on their testing of the 4 assemblies.

ABPA provides critical information through its BPA Tester Certification program. It is a third-party program, independent of the exam taker's employer, trade group or training institution.

ABPA does not sell its program and the program must be accepted by the local administrative authority.

ABPA has proudly developed what it believes is a quality certification program, helping to ensure exam takers demonstrate the depth and breadth of knowledge required to perform as proficient BPA Testers.

[Return to Top](#)

---

## Industry News You Can Use! Backflow prevention down under

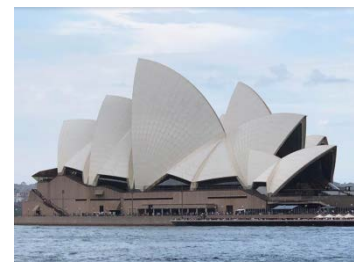


By: Mike Lueck – Director at Large  
Region 11, Michigan Chapter

I recently had the privilege of being invited by Mr. Peter McLennan – President of the Backflow Prevention Association of Australia (BPAA) and frequent attendee at our national ABPA conferences – to make two presentations at their National Conference for Water and the Environment.

This was my first trip “Down Under.” I was excited to visit Australia for both backflow prevention as well as other industries, with a little time for vacation as well. The Conference was held in St. Kilda Beach, a suburb of Melbourne, in the state of Victoria, on the Southeast coast of Australia.

ABPA and BPAA were well represented as Rick Fields from Zurn-Wilkins was also a presenter. Along with backflow prevention, Legionella was also a topic of many tracks. In addition to those of us from the United States, attendees from Japan offered an interesting presentation on a backflow preventer for a bidet!



I was very impressed by something BPAA did at the conference. In lieu of speaker gifts, the association donated to charities that provide clean, safe, potable water to villages in the developing world that don't have access to safe water. It seemed a noble gesture in our industry, where most, if not all of us, take safe water for granted. I am proud ABPA adopted this practice for our conference last year and hope it continues.

Two days of the Australian conference took place at a typical hotel, similar to our ABPA conferences. The closing half day was held at a local industry training facility, the Plumbing Industry and Climate Action Center (PICAC). I was honored to deliver my second presentation in a training facility shared by many associations, training in several disciplines.

For backflow prevention tester training they had portable carts wheeled into the facility. I was very impressed they had "cutaway" assemblies right next to the functional assemblies, so testers could benefit from a great visual of what they were testing on the functional assembly.

While there were many similarities to what we do in North America, there were also differences. I am not sure who offered the quote, "two countries separated by a common language," but I was reminded of it. In Australia you have "mates" as opposed to "friends." The common greeting is "How you going?" rather than "How you doing?" And "guys" are "blokes."



In the backflow prevention world, there are interesting differences as well. "No. 1 and No. 2 shut off valves" are "Upstream and Downstream Isolating Valves." "No. 1 and No. 2 Check Valves" are "Upstream and Downstream Non-return Valves." "Test Cocks" are "Test Taps" and the "Air Inlet Canopy" is the "Airport Shield." Oh, and "assemblies" are "devices." Not everything has a different name though. Relief Valves and Air Inlet Valves go by the same names.

There are also technical differences. As is found in Israel and Europe, there are no test cocks (or test taps) upstream of the No. 1 Shut Off Valve (Upstream Isolating Valve) on RP's or DCV's. Their rationale – which makes sense to me – is that they don't want to allow the backflow prevention assembly (device) to be bypassed, or to allow someone to tap into the assembly upstream of one or more levels of protection.

Most of the test procedures I saw do not allow for leaky Shut Off Valves (Isolating Valves). They test for leakage on both upstream and downstream valves and require them to be repaired or replaced before continued testing. Australia has testable Single Check Valve assemblies (devices) and Single Check Detector Assemblies (devices) with Dual Checks in the bypass line.

Australia and New Zealand national standards require annual accuracy testing of all test equipment (music to my ears!). It is my understanding, Y-Strainers are standard, mounted upstream of all backflow prevention assemblies.

Australia seems behind North America in some ways, while in other ways the two continents seem similar. There are a small number of passionate professionals pressing for cross-connection control and backflow prevention programs. But there are fewer programs and fewer protected connections. Our friends (mates) down under face many of the same challenges we have here.

One encouraging thing is apparent down under: there is a passion for expanding programs. Australia has safe water and public health champions who work to educate the public and politicians in order to strengthen their programs. This is evident by the commitment of folks like Peter McLennan, Robbie Dwyer and Peter Wenning, who each travelled to Orlando for our 2018 conference. McLennan also spoke at our 2019 conference in Salt Lake City.



I had the good fortune of travelling from Melbourne north to Sydney, and then further north to Brisbane and other communities in Queensland. In six cities, across three Australian states, I never had to look too far to see RP's or DCV's installed and protecting public health. My wife and I confidently drank tap

water everywhere we went. The weather is quite warm, so installations are very similar to what you would find curbside, in California or Florida. In addition to the Y-Strainers, the vast majority were protected by cage type enclosures.

Finally, friendliness and hospitality of Australians is quite possibly the best in the world! Whether they were "mates" I had previously met at ABPA conferences – or strangers on a street car – Aussies were very warm and welcoming.



McLennan – and his blokes and mates in our industry – genuinely want to learn from us, and to share their expertise. Working together, we can expand our ability to ensure safe drinking water here, and "down under!"

Cheers, mates!

[Return to Top](#)

---

### Chapters' Corner

## From Tennessee to Florida, Region 3 chapters excited to host ABPA members

Chapters in the Region have been 'dress rehearsing' for the national conference over the past several months.

American Backflow Prevention Association (ABPA) Region 3 Director Kathy Riley is excited this year's national convention (April 20-22) will be in her "backyard." And, the 25-year veteran employee of Charlotte Water reports, the Chapters in her Region hosted valuable conferences of their own last year, to "warm up" for the national event.

"I joined ABPA in 1996, shortly after going to work for Charlotte Water," Riley said. "We're excited to have the ABPA national conference here. The closest it's been, since I have been in the Association, is Asheville (NC, two hours west of Charlotte). We're a very cosmopolitan city; but the NASCAR Hall of Fame is also here. I think Charlotte has something for everyone! I know our local Chapters are excited about it."

*"We're a very cosmopolitan city; but the NASCAR Hall of Fame is also here. I think Charlotte has something for everyone!"*

Here's a brief look at some of the topics and speakers at Region 3 Chapter conferences held last fall:

### **Carolinas Chapter (CCABPA)**

Association President John Watkins reports, the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual CCABPA conference held in September was a success.

"We always have a conference, designed to be inexpensive and informative," he said. "We had about 60 attendees this year. We hold the cost down to about \$35 per person. We had an update from the state and also heard details about our cross connection patrol."

### **Florida Sun Coast ABPA Chapter**

Currently the only ABPA Chapter in Florida, Florida Sun Coast was founded by Ken Georgen and others in 2004. Ken is also the Chapter's current president.

"I have been president for about 11 of the 15 years our Chapter has been around," Georgen said. "But over the next several months my wife and I are retiring from the Chapter. Helene has been our Chapter Treasurer for about two years. I will remain involved with ABPA as a consultant. And we plan to be at the national conference, provided we can find a dog sitter."

Georgen said about 85 people attended their conference, held each year at the Tampa Brandon Embassy Suites.

Region 3 ABPA Director Riley is always impressed.

"They roll out the red carpet at the Sun Coast Chapter Conference," she said. "It's fun to attend and everyone seems to get a lot out of it."

Speakers at the conference included: BAVCO Inc. President Jim Purzycki, Pinellas County Utilities Water Research Project Manager, Dr. Bina Nayak and Mike Lueck, PE, with Mid-West Instrument.

### **Georgia Peach ABPA Chapter**

Donovan Kessinger is just now ending his multi-year run as the Vice President, President and Past President of the Georgia Peach ABPA Chapter.

"I have been a member of ABPA for 25 years," Kessinger said. "Along the way I was the charter president of one ABPA chapter and also helped to start another one, in Florida."

The Georgia Peach Chapter conference was held in Brunswick along the scenic Georgia coast, 70 miles north of Jacksonville (FL).

"I think the benefit of these conferences is that everyone shares in the accumulated knowledge of the attendees," he concluded.

### **Tennessee Chapter (TBPA)**

TBPA President Bradley Tomlin opened his chapter's conference with association updates and vendor introductions. He also discussed how TBPA is emphasizing website and Facebook page updates to keep members informed.

The first speaker – Ben Rodriguez, an instructor at the Fleming Training Center in Murfreesboro – discussed the many backflow and wastewater training courses offered at the facility. He told members new equipment is being added, more classes are now being offered and a fourth instructor was soon to be hired.

Josh Gazdacko with Century Fire Protection and Jackson Energy's Jared Gowan discussed water quality protection measures taken by each of their companies.

Region 3 Director Riley provided the group with national ABPA updates.

The final TBPA Conference speaker – Lloyd Rainey with Mid-America Marketing – shared informative cross connection stories and stressed the importance of current members encouraging the "younger generation" to consider careers in this field.

---

Kathy Riley encouraged all of her Chapters' members to try to make it to the national ABPA conference in Charlotte.

"We don't get the national conference in this area all that often," the Region 3 Director concluded. "Sure, our weather can be a little chilly in late April, but not too bad. There's so much to do – and the Great Smoky Mountains are only two hours away."

She also recommends conference attendees take time to visit the Billy Graham Library, accessible from the scenic 18.6-mile Billy Graham Parkway, which starts and ends at Interstate 85.

[Return to Top](#)