



Flashpoint

December Meeting Notice

Date: Tuesday December 9, 2014

Place: **Jacobs Engineering Group Three Tower Bridge Suite 3000 Conshohocken, PA**

See Page 6 for directions

5:30 PM: Fellowship Time

6:00 PM: Dinner

Dinner Program:

The presentation this month is on the Victaulic Vortex System. Victaulic Vortex HyBrid Fire Suppression System is the latest in fire technology extinguishing fire via heat absorption and oxygen deprivation. With as little as .26 gallons per minute from the emitter, the 100% green fire extinguishing systems puts out a fire in minutes using much less water than the traditional water mist or sprinkler systems. The homogenous mixture of nitrogen and water produces a fire extinguishing combination that is safe for all occupants and electrical equipment. Room integ-

riety issues that affect the typical clean agent systems are not required with the Victaulic Vortex system. This new exciting system is on the cutting edge of future fire suppression systems. Frank Barstow has been with Victaulic for 38 years. He managed the fire protection division for over 20 years, starting the division in 1983. Moving to the research and development group as Product Manager he oversaw the development of the Vortex system, NXT valve, introduction of the flexible drop and other products.

Don't forget to make your reservation by Friday December 5th; and bring an associate from your company!

Cost: \$25.00 for dinner & program

Reservations: By 12 noon, Friday, December 5, 2014

Reserve with:

Jeff LaSalle by E-mail:

jlasalle@lasalleeng.com

or Fax: (215) 658-1772

Maintaining Sprinkler Systems as they Age

by William E. Koffel, P.E., FSFPE

At least in the USA, the most widely recognized criteria for the inspection, testing, and maintenance of automatic sprinkler systems is NFPA 25, *Standard for the Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance of Water-Based Fire Protection Systems*. While there are some limited test requirements for system components based upon the age of the system, the inspection, testing, and maintenance requirements do not vary as a function of the age of the system. It should also be noted that the fire loss experience data that has been provided to the NFPA Technical Committee on Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance of Water-Based Systems ("Committee") does not indicate the age of the system. As such, it is difficult to ascertain if the overall performance of an automatic sprinkler system is dependent upon the age of the system.

[READ MORE](#) (from SFPE monthly newsletter)

Special points of interest:

- If you have not paid your dues, please send them to John Spitz. You can download the form at www.sfpephiladelphia.org.
- The information for the annual scholarships awarded by the chapter are on the website. If you know someone eligible, let them know. If you have any questions, contact Dave Kriebel.

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FLASHPOINT

"The purpose of FLASHPOINT is to provide a forum for the transfer of information between members of the Philadelphia-Delaware Valley Chapter of the Society of Fire Protection Engineers (SFPE) and to give the Chapter visibility."

Newsletter/Publicity Committee:

Jay Stough

Information for publication can be submitted to: **Jay Stough**

Email: jays@tilleyfire.com

This Newsletter is published 9 or 10 times/year (September through June) and received as part of membership of the Chapter. Membership Dues are \$30.00 collected annually in the Fall of the Year. For an Application of Membership contact: **Jeff LaSalle**

Email: jlasalle@lasalleeng.com

Visit our web site at: www.sfpephiladelphia.org

Articles written are the views of the Author and not necessarily those of the Philadelphia-Delaware Valley Chapter of SFPE. ❖

President's Spark by Mike Venneri PE

We had another good showing last month at the meeting as we were in the "Clouds". Pun intended for sure. It was interesting to find out how much we don't know about those type of ceilings. The research is definitely a good idea. When in doubt, add sprinklers? That is really what I heard through the evening. Like everything else we have to evaluate and provide the proper level of design, this is a special condition requiring additional thought and consideration. We continue to see some new faces at the meetings and hope it continues. Since this meeting will be the last before Christmas Holidays, I wanted to wish everyone Happy Holidays and a good New Years. As always we look forward to another year of getting the word out and supporting our industry. Also, thanks to all the members for their participation during the year to make this Society a strong, Gold Medal level Society.

Michael P. Venneri, P.E., SET, CFPS

MID-WINTER MOURNING – Jeff Mattern

January 13, 1908 was pretty much a typical day in Boyertown, PA, except that it was opening night for the "The Scottish Reformation" at the Rhoads Opera House. Built in 1885 by Civil War surgeon Dr Thomas Rhoads, the building housed a bank and hardware store on the first floor with an opera house auditorium taking up most of the second floor. It had comfortable cushioned seats and a stage with state-of-the-art kerosene footlights. The dressing rooms were on the third floor.

The excitement grew in town as time for the opening night approached. It was to be a full house. The crowd was so large that extra chairs lined the sides of the auditorium so that the 310 people who wanted to attend could be accommodated.

Between acts, the narrator for the program would use a magic lantern, a forerunner to a projector, to produce three dimensional Scottish scenes on a screen. Two tanks of illuminating gas were used to obtain an intense source of light for the slides.

All was going well until the end of the third scene when a tube from one of the illuminating gas tanks came loose and produced a hissing sound. The strange sound caused the crowd to become restless. A member of the cast from behind the closed curtain, pulled the curtain aside to see what was going on, and tipped over one of the kerosene footlights, starting a small fire. While trying to extinguish the fire, the entire tank of kerosene ignited and the curtain caught fire. Within moments the auditorium was engulfed in fire. The audience was in panic. Some of the audience exited through windows to fire escapes on each side of the building. Many of the cast members escaped by means of a stairway near the stage which was blocked by the curtain which became a wall of flame. Most of the audience attempted to leave by the way that they entered. Doors to the auditorium opened inward and while attempting to exit, most of the audience was wedged into the doorways preventing the doors from opening.

By the time the fire had been extinguished, 170 people died.

This was a little known fire but captures many of the deficiencies of the day which lead to development of fire protection codes and standards aimed at minimizing the loss of life and property.

(The details of this event were taken from a book entitled "Midwinter Mourning, The Boyertown Opera House Fire by Mary Jane Schneider)

VOLUME 20 ISSUE 4

Engineers' Club of Philadelphia

Infrastructure Challenges in Transforming the Navy Yard from Military Use to a Thriving Business Center

Join the Engineers' Club and our partner societies at the annual Multi-Society Dinner Meeting. This is a good opportunity to kick off the holiday season by networking with engineers and other professionals that you might not normally see at the typical society meeting.

PROGRAM

Will Agate, Senior Vice President, Navy Yard Management and Development, Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC)

Carmen Zappile, Vice President/Planning and Project Management, PIDC

Since the closure of the Yard as an operating naval base in 1997, PIDC has worked extensively to secure private investment in the facility and its myriad of old buildings devoted to military needs and the shipbuilding/refitting trades. Today, the Yard is home to over 10,000 employees of nearly 50 companies and many of its existing buildings have been repurposed for present-day functions and needs, from shipbuilding to pharmaceuticals to apparel. Messrs. Agate and Zappile will describe what PIDC has done to attract this investment and the challenges that remain, particularly in the upgrading and replacement of critical infrastructure.

For more information [Click here](#).

Fire deaths on the decline in a state requiring home fire sprinklers

Maryland, one of two states with statewide sprinkler requirements ([California is the other](#)), has seen a 20-percent decrease in fire fatalities in 2014 over last year. That's a decline from 55 fire deaths in 2013 to 44 this year.

"Maryland's fire service is cautiously optimistic with this year's data," said State Fire Marshal Brian Geraci in a [news release](#). "Everyone must remain vigilant in their fire prevention efforts to continue this trend. An estimated 80 percent of all structure fires in Maryland occur in what most assume to be the safest places--our homes."

The state has participated in a number of [smoke alarm](#) donation programs this year, and is apparently seeing successes from deciding to enact sprinkler requirements in all of Maryland's counties. Geraci's office reports that there hasn't been a single fire fatality in any of the state's sprinklered homes.

Highlighting these [sprinkler successes](#) during NFPA's recent Home Fire Sprinkler Summit was Larry Iseminger, Jr., chief fire protection engineer at the Maryland State Fire Marshal's Office. In Prince George's County, for example, there are more than 60,000 sprinklered homes. Four hundred fires have occurred in these homes since a sprinkler ordinance took effect, but no lives have been lost from fire.

[Learn more interesting facts about Maryland by visiting the Fire Sprinkler Initiative site.](#)

Christmas tree Fires:

Facts & figures

- Between 2007-2011, U.S. fire departments responded to an average of 230 home fires that started with Christmas trees per year. These fires caused an average of 6 deaths, 22 injuries, and \$18.3 million in direct property damage annually.
- On average, one of every 40 reported home fires that began with a Christmas tree resulted in a death, compared to an average of one death per 142 total reported home fires.
- Electrical problems were factors in one-third (32%) of home Christmas tree structure fires.

Two of every five (39%) home Christmas tree fires started in the living room, family room, or den.

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CPVC Piping System Webinar



Developed specifically for fire protection engineers and system installers, this webinar provides attendees with an overview of CPVC and answers common questions in the fire protection industry. The webinar features five separate informative modules. Attendees will learn about:

- The history and acceptance of CPVC in the industry throughout the years.
- Performance advantages of CPVC in relation to hydraulics, sustainability, and MIC resistance.
- Updates on listings, approvals, and standards.
- Special circumstances such as attics, air plenums, laundry rooms, etc. with answers straight from the source.
- Updates on chemical compatibility.

The webinar is sponsored by The Lubrizol Corporation, the company that manufactures the CPVC compounds that create BlazeMaster® Fire Sprinkler Systems. To learn more about BlazeMaster Fire Sprinkler Systems, visit blazemaster.com.

There is no charge to attend this webinar. Members of the Society of Fire Protection Engineers will receive 0.1 CEUs for participation in the entire live webinar.

[Register now for this live webinar](#)

Sponsored by:

BlazeMaster®
FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEMS

Lubrizol

“It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.”

Frederick Douglass

Apple iPhones, IpadS & Fire Alarms?

Apple reveals a new invention that would allow future devices — including iPhones, iPads, and Mac computers — to also act as smoke detectors, which would be able to call 911 for emergency assistance in the event of a fire. Though fires and fire-related deaths are on the decline, in 2011, the US Fire Administration reported more than 1.3 million fires that resulted in 3,005 deaths, 17,500 injuries, and \$11.7 FIRE billions in dollar loss. Apple would like to reduce these numbers even further.

[Click Here](#) to view article



Waterflow Alarm Switch With Auto Test Feature

The VSR-AT is a flowswitch with an electronic retard that can be tested remotely without discharging water from the sprinkler system. A successful test will momentarily activate both sets of normally open contacts on the flow switch. If the auto test detects a problem with the paddle/trip stem assembly or if there is no water in the pipe, neither switch contact will activate and the flow-switch will indicate a trouble condition at the test switch and transmit a trouble signal to the fire alarm panel. [Click Here](#) to view more information

December 2014

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

	1	2	3 ASCET SJ chapter Mtg	4	5	6
7	8	9 SFPE Meeting	10	11	12	13
14	15	16 ASCET Berks & Phila chap- ter	17 ASCET Delaware chapter	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 Merry Christmas!	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Calendar Events for December

- Dec 3: NJ ASCET Meeting @ the Collins House in Collingswood, NJ
- Dec 9: SFPE meeting @ Jacobs Engineering. Don't forget to make your reservation by Friday Sept. 5th.
- Dec 16: Berks County ASCET Chapter Meeting @ Valentino's in Kutztown 6PM
- Dec 16: Phila. ASCET Chapter Meeting @ Michael's Dinner in Bensalem
- Dec 17: Delaware ASCET Chapter Meeting @ Charcoal Pit on Kirkwood Highway in Wilmington

Phila-Delaware Valley SFPE

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Mission Statement

The Philadelphia/Delaware Valley Chapter purpose is to advance the art and science of fire protection engineering and its allied fields, for the reduction of life and property losses from fire, to maintain high ethical standards on engineering among its members and to foster fire protection education.

Recognition of fire protection engineering as a discrete engineering discipline is a prime goal. Engineering disciplines exist because there is a special body of knowledge based on the fundamentals of mathematics, physics, chemistry, engineering science and economics.

The chapter strives to facilitate sharing of sound engineering experiences and knowledge between its members and the fire protection community in general with an active program of education and scholarship activities.

WE'RE ON THE WEB:

WWW.SFPEPHILADELPHIA.ORG

Future Cities Competition Save the date!

The annual Future Cities Competition is on January 24, 2015. The competition will be held at Archbishop Carroll High School 211 Matson Ford Road, Wayne PA 19087.

The mission of the [DiscoverE Future City Competition](#) is to provide a fun and exciting educational engineering program for middle school students that combines a stimulating engineering challenge with a "hands-on" application to present their vision of a city of the future.



The Philadelphia Regional Competition draws schools from Philadelphia and surrounding counties including the Lehigh Valley, Southern New Jersey and Delaware. Students from middle schools and after school programs in the region form teams consisting of 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students who work with a teacher and an engineer mentor from September to January. Our chapter sponsors an award for fire protection design and we are in need of volunteers to help judge the event. To volunteer, go to the website at <http://www.futurecityphilly.org/> and click on volunteer opportunities.