

**INDUSTRIAL HEARING
TESTING**

55 Cedar St
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508-752-4663



Volume 2

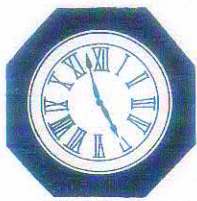
No. 3

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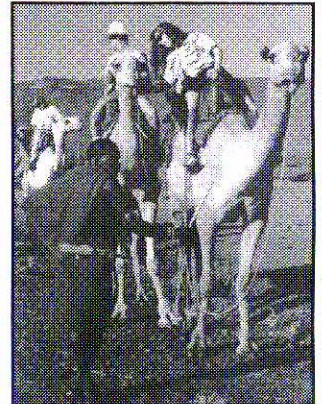


Office Hours

Monday - Friday
8:00 AM - 4:30 PM
Closed weekends
Tel. (508) 752-4663
Fax (508) 754-4427

PERSONALLY SPEAKING

Jambo! (That means hello in Swahili.) Remember I mentioned I was going to Africa to visit my sister? We safaried across the landscape, which was breathtaking. I probably shouldn't tell you how many showers I didn't take but it's sufficient to say we Americans tend to take things for granted. We spent a bit of time riding camels, which I have decided are much too slow and ornery. For those of you who may know I have horses, I'm happy to say there's no comparison to a camel! The rest of the time we "land rovered" through Kenya to the border of Ethiopia and Lake Turkhana where they're still living through a drought during the last four years. Amazing place, and in summary, I say we are so lucky to live in the States!



There's a great line up to tell you about in this issue. First, I would like to extend my thanks to all those people mentioned in the article "OSHA, Friend or Foe?" Rudy Hermosa will tell us how with his proactive approach with the Voluntary Protection Program from OSHA, VPP participants enjoy a cooperative relationship with OSHA as a resource, not a threat. I hope you'll all read about their experiences of participating in this special program. For those who donated time to my interviews, I appreciate it, (and I promise not to call again too soon!). Everyone involved says they'd be happy to share more of their experiences should you have an interest.

I also had a fascinating interview with Peter Scheifele, a marine acoustics specialist from UConn's National Undersea Research Center. He is conducting a study on how noise pollution in the sea may affect marine mammals. Apparently this has become a hot new topic in marine biology research. (And I thought we were eccentric!) He was careful to explain that his research is specific to Beluga whales and dolphins, and the effect of any motor boat type noise may have on their "sanctuary" (kind of like their den).

I found this interview to be personally captivating as I have to admit I boycotted tuna for a long time to save the dolphins. After Greenpeace told me the fishing nets had been redesigned, being the idealistic consumer that I was at age 10, I could finally eat again. I have also taken a lot of flack for adopting a manatee once, (her name was Emma), though we, nor her few hundred other "adoptive parents" never met, I feel a bond there..

Still "personally speaking", my brother Scott is a new dad. He had a daughter in May, Saige Christina Hengen, a first on all counts! And Karen, our receptionist will be out for a few weeks with her first new baby, Cassidy. Ruth welcomed her second grandchild, Sarah in August. Also, I'd like to mention some internal promotions. Steve Yany, our field engineer, is now Assistant Operations Manager. You

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Directions . . .
Our ancestors wandered lost in the wilderness for 40 years because even in biblical times, men would not stop to ask directions.

can expect to speak with him pertaining to any scheduling issues. Ken Ruel, has moved on from reception to utilize his Medical Office Administration certificate, to assist Ruth in the data processing office, and customer service team. Congratulations to all.

So back to the hearing business at hand Also in this newsletter, you'll read about the next upcoming CAOHC course (Council for Accreditation in Hearing Conservation) for those of you who are seriously committed to the cause. You should consider taking the course. And in other news The Boston Federal Council hosts some very informative meetings for safety professionals of all types. You'll find their schedule of meetings herein, and it is a fantastic networking opportunity.

What? You haven't yet tried NOISE STOPPERS? Here's a special promotion to encourage you to try this great new product in hearing protection.

Finally, I would like to ask that if you've read this far, please finish and pass this newsletter along to your colleagues, floor supervisors, etc., who may have some involvement or interest in helping to administer your Hearing Conservation Program. Thanks. ❖

ANDI HENGEN
Editor

Bumper Sticker Of The Month . . .

"Drive Carefully, we need every taxpayer we can get!"

OSHA: FRIEND OR FOE?

The voluntary protection program (VPP) is one vehicle OSHA has designed to help achieve excellence in worker safety and health, and has proven very successful according to Rudy Hermosa from the Boston office (Region One) of OSHA.

VPP participants are those companies whose worksites are outstanding performers in safety & health with average incidence rates 60-80% lower than their industry average. This is a cooperative effort among labor, management, and OSHA to help improve upon and ensure a safe & healthy working environment and has payoffs in many areas. Results are exemplified through financial savings, improved employee morale, enhanced community ties, increased production, and even enhanced global competitiveness of these participants in the marketplace, to name a few.

VPP is not intended to encompass all work sites, and there is an application process which includes a site tour. Hazards spotted on the VPP on-site tour must be corrected, but the emphasis is on the systems that let the hazard develop and prevention of future hazards, not at trying to "catch" the offenders. No matter how compliance-oriented a work site is, it can be out of compliance with one or more parts of a standard at any given time. The real result of a work site program is how well and how fast its own system, (developed through the VPP efforts), can catch and correct problems. The VPP accomplishes this through review of documented activities such as self-inspections, interviews, site tours, and emphasis on employee involvement!

Several participants in the New England area are working towards an application, as well as those who are already a

"Merit Site" or a "Star Site" which represent various levels of accomplishment. These participants report that the economic incentives have ranged from fewer injuries and lower rate of incidences, thus less compensation costs and wages for lost time, leading to more savings with lower premiums and insurance rates. These profits represent a powerful incentive for companies to innovate and implement strong employee safety and health programs.

One example of a company to benefit from the VPP is **Titleist and Foot-Joy Worldwide**, a golf ball manufacturing company, who began working with OSHA in 1994 to enhance their safety and health program in order to meet VPP Star requirements. Titleist Ball Plant I in Acushnet, MA underwent their on-site VPP evaluation in December of 1995.

During this time period, Titleist has reduced their worker's compensation cost by 88%, from \$1.7 million to less than \$200k in just four years, and their total OSHA recordable incidence rate by 70%. The savings went to employees and programs to benefit them. On May 28, 1996, Titleist was awarded the OSHA's Star certification, and became the first in the sports industry and the first in American Brands to be in VPP. As **Terry King**, Titleist Corporate Safety Manager commented: "We were looking for a program to encourage continuous improvement in the overall safety and health program. The requirements of VPP provided the catalyst we were searching for." Terry can be reached at 508-979-3128, as they prepare the Titleist Custom Ball Plant in New Bedford, MA to submit their VPP application in the near future.

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Joe Jarvis of **Kanzaki Specialty Papers** in Ware, MA reports similar success at saving money to put toward employee safety. They have been involved with the VPP since 1988. At that time they were suffering from excessively high worker's comp. cost. Since their involvement with VPP, they have cut these costs in half. Their incident rate has decreased from 29 to a mere 6 of lost days or total injuries. Joe told me it has created an environment of more concern for the employee, protecting their talent, and keeping employee involvement high at every level, right down to the office personnel. "You have to walk the talk" as Jarvis says, "Pretty posters of ideal programs on the wall with no plan of implementation doesn't cut it!"

The cultural effect of these programs has made an incredible impact on the employees commitment to safety on the job. **Darwin Irish**, Safety Manager from **FLEXcon Company**, located in Spencer, MA states that "empowering employees with responsibility for recognizing and correcting hazards is an important piece of the culture. FLEXcon essentially took safety out of the background and applied it to everyday living, and through the VPP process have established a standard for safety everyone understands."

FLEXcon has been a Merit Site since 1995, and their experience was a very positive one during this process. Darwin reports an 80% decrease in direct losses in worker's compensation. Additionally their lost work day rate had dropped over 65%. FLEXcon is currently working on 8 Merit goals to obtain Star status within VPP.

Chris Hopkins and **Jane Ristuben** of **American Saw** located in East Longmeadow, MA have been steering their team of workers toward an application as a Star site. The preparation for the on-site evaluation has brought great things to the company, Chris reports. "When we started out, we looked for 3 volunteers from our hourly workforce. They in turn chose their own members. This team works with advisors from management. The team worked closely with OSHA and in May of '96 our application for VPP was accepted. The VPP team has a direct line to the President, John Davis. They meet with the Executive Team to discuss any concerns or improvements that may need further consideration. To give just one example of how management listens, the VPP team asked if two additional employees could be hired in the Safety Department. They backed this up with the proper documentation for a long range plan, and this request was granted immediately. Four months later the safety staff was increased to meet our growing needs. This truly is management, our workforce and OSHA working together to be the best of the best when it comes to the safety of our employees."

Carol Kwapien of **Carol Kwapien & Associates** reports experiencing the hard work and dedication as well as excitement in working toward a STAR designation. Invited

to be part of the Health & Safety team at Mobil Chemical Co., Holyoke, MA, she worked along with the company's Plant Manager to achieve New England's first VPP STAR status in 1985. Now **BASF Corporation**, the Holyoke site has maintained STAR status throughout the three year recertification process and BASF's continued management commitment to safety and VPP. The BASF site has been recertified three times, '88, '91, '94 and will be evaluated for recertification in '97. **Barry Headlee**, Safety & Environmental Supervisor and site employee since 1966, states that the benefits of VPP include "increased employee morale and productivity along with cost savings." He reports that management commitment and employee participation are partners in all aspects of site operations. Since our involvement in the VPP since the beginning, starting with the application process, a safety culture has progressively been built into our facility that is very unique, in that safety is all of our responsibility. The safety awareness of all site personnel is very high and we strive to keep it this way. We use OSHA standards as minimum guidelines and continuously improve upon them. This is what a STAR facility is all about, taking the extra steps necessary to protect the safety and health of the employees, "The Best of the Best."

Barry is also a Special Government Employee of OSHA. In his SGE capacity, he is an actual member of the OSHA VPP on-site evaluation team for OSHA Region I, for those sites whose application has been approved. This is for both initial certification and recertification of VPP status. Barry is also actively involved in the VPPPA Mentoring Program, assisting companies applying for VPP through the application process until accepted by OSHA. Additionally, Barry is Co-Chairman of the VPPPA, OSHA Region I Local Chapter which was recently established.

If you would like more information about VPP, the best place to start is to call Rudy Hermosa, OSHA's VPP Program Manager. As Rudy explained: "The OSHA Act can never be fully achieved by enforcement alone. Safety and health management programs that go beyond OSHA standards can protect workers more effectively." Region I's outreach initiative of assisting VPP applications in developing their safety and health programs and at the same time developing their application has kept Rudy very busy. Call Rudy at 617-565-9837. OSHA's Regional Office has moved. The new address is U.S. Dept. of Labor, Occ. Safety & Health Admin., JFK Federal Building, Room E-340, Boston, MA 02203. ❖

A man from the big city was driving out to Vermont to visit an old friend. Hopelessly lost, he pulled his sports coupe up to a group of men sitting in front of a small country store to get directions. Leaning out of the car's window, he said, "I want to go to Bennington."

There was silence. Then one of the men slowly took his pipe out of his mouth and replied, "We have no objections."

How Do You Give A Whale An Audiogram?

Researchers Monitor Gulf of Maine

Portland Maine - Noise created by marine vessels in the Gulf of Maine may be damaging the sensitive hearing of whales and dolphins. This is from a new study conducted by the American School for the Deaf in Hartford, and supervised by Peter Scheifele from University of Connecticut's National Undersea Research Center.

The findings suggest that the noise could interfere with marine mammals' ability to navigate, hunt for food, and avoid danger. "Some of the noise they found would cause some hearing impairment in humans after an eight hour exposure according to OSHA standards," says Scheifele. The study consists of measuring the noise levels from the boat traffic that goes through the area during the year, and observe the whales' behavioral responses. He reports he has accumulated ten years worth of data of observing about 400 of the Beluga whales who never leave the seaway, their "sanctuary", providing a good base for a control study.

Peter told me that an important portion of collecting this data also involves conducting audiograms on whales. He

proceeded to give me a rather interesting description of the tray they use to haul the whale out of the water to test their hearing. He interprets their eye movements, and other clues to their auditory responses. Scheifele reports that whales have a range of hearing from 900 Hz to 120,000 Hz, which is also the range they've measured their communication signals at under seas. Keep in mind that the average human ear of a new born perceives 20 Hz to 40,000 Hz! Humans lose much of that upper range through the natural aging process. By age 9 years, the upper range has fallen to 30,000 Hz, and by young adulthood to 20,000 Hz. Further damage of hearing is caused by abusing our ears with noise. High intensities of noise are known to damage our normal sensitivity to sound and cause many social problems for people later in life. The theory is that perhaps similar problems are created in a wildlife species such as the Belugas, when subjected to such abnormally high levels of noise in their natural habitat.

Peter Scheifele was very enthusiastic about his work and the fact he was getting ready to head up to Canada for several months for more observation. Should anyone have further interest, he'd be happy to provide educational lectures to share his research. Quite an interesting chap, and I'm glad I called him! ❖

I don't want to bore anyone with the same subjects every newsletter, so if you've missed something previously printed, please call for a copy.

INDEX OF ARTICLES PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED:

ISSUE 1-1995

- OSHA 200 Log - "Which Hearing Losses are Recordable?"
- "Do You Know What Your Noise Levels Are?"

ISSUE 2 - 1995

- "When Do You Need To Implement Hearing Protection?"
- Honor Roll - 10 Year+ HCP's
- New York Nuisance Noise Law
- Free Hearing Conservation Speaker Available For Your Professional Group Meetings.

After the funeral of one of his parishioners, a 94 year old woman who had never married, the rector noted in the church bulletin that she had left very specific handwritten instructions for her funeral service: "There will be no male pallbearers. They wouldn't take me out when I was alive; I don't want them to take me out when I'm dead."

A young executive suddenly found himself unemployed when his company went through a "downsizing."

When he asked "Why me?" the VP, who was the young man's superior, explained that he was too conservative in the way he did his job. "Things have gotten more competitive," the VP explained. "Our people have to look at things from different angles and they have to take risks. And when they take risks, they have to believe they'll succeed. That's where you come up short.."

For six months the young man tried to get a job and failed. Then one day he met a retired circus tightrope walker. The two had something in common - time on their hands. Before long, the unemployed executive became an accomplished tightrope walker.

He became so good that he and his circus mentor were asked to participate in a big charity event over Niagara Falls and the young man invited his former boss to attend. "I'll show him who can take risks," he said.

All went well at the event. The young man successfully crossed the falls on a tightrope, followed by his mentor, who also pushed a wheelbarrow across. The VP congratulated the young man, and then dared him to cross over the falls again, this time pushing the wheelbarrow. "You can do it if you believe you can" he told him.

"Do you believe I can?" the young man asked.

"Yes, I do" the VP replied.

"Okay," said the young man, "then get in the wheelbarrow."

AN OPEN INVITATION TO THE BOSTON FEDERAL SAFETY AND HEALTH COUNCIL MEETINGS!

On February 26, 1980, the then U.S. President Jimmy Carter authorized the formation of Federal Safety and Health Councils throughout the ten OSHA Regions. The purpose of these Councils was and is to meet the diverse continuing education and professional development needs of safety and health professionals. This includes collateral duty personnel, union and employees representatives, consultants, insurance company personnel, to name a few types of participants. This brings together both governmental employees and safety personnel from the private sector to discuss and learn about current workplace safety and health problems in various work environments.

The Boston Federal Safety and Health Council meets on the second Wednesday of every month (except July, August and December), usually from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. The Boston Council is open to all safety and health personnel, as well as to all interested persons, both in the public and private domain. The Council is a non-profit organization, and there is no charge for attendance. The Boston Federal Safety & Health Council would like to extend an invitation to all safety professionals from both public and private domain, or any interested party, to their meetings. Please refer to the attached schedule of upcoming meetings.

Seaborn Scott reports that their group has received top safety awards in 1992 through 94, and are again a candidate for 1996. This award is a great honor bestowed on the Council by Department of Labor Secretary, Joseph Dear. Any person or company interested in being put on their mailing list and/or attending the Council/Seminar Meeting, please contact:

Seaborn Scott, *Council Chairperson*
Safety & Health Manager, Defense Logistics Agency
495 Summer St., Boston, MA 02210-2184
617-753-4763

Stan Koehler, Ph.D., P.E., *Member, Program Committee*
U.S. Dept. of Labor - OSHA, Boston Regional Office
JFK Federal Building, Room-E340
Boston, MA 02203
617-565-9857

Hugh Pilgrim, *Program Manager*
Office of Technical Assistance for Toxics Use Reduction
100 Cambridge St.
Boston, MA 02202
617-727-3260, Ext. 660

Boston Federal Safety and Health Council Meetings

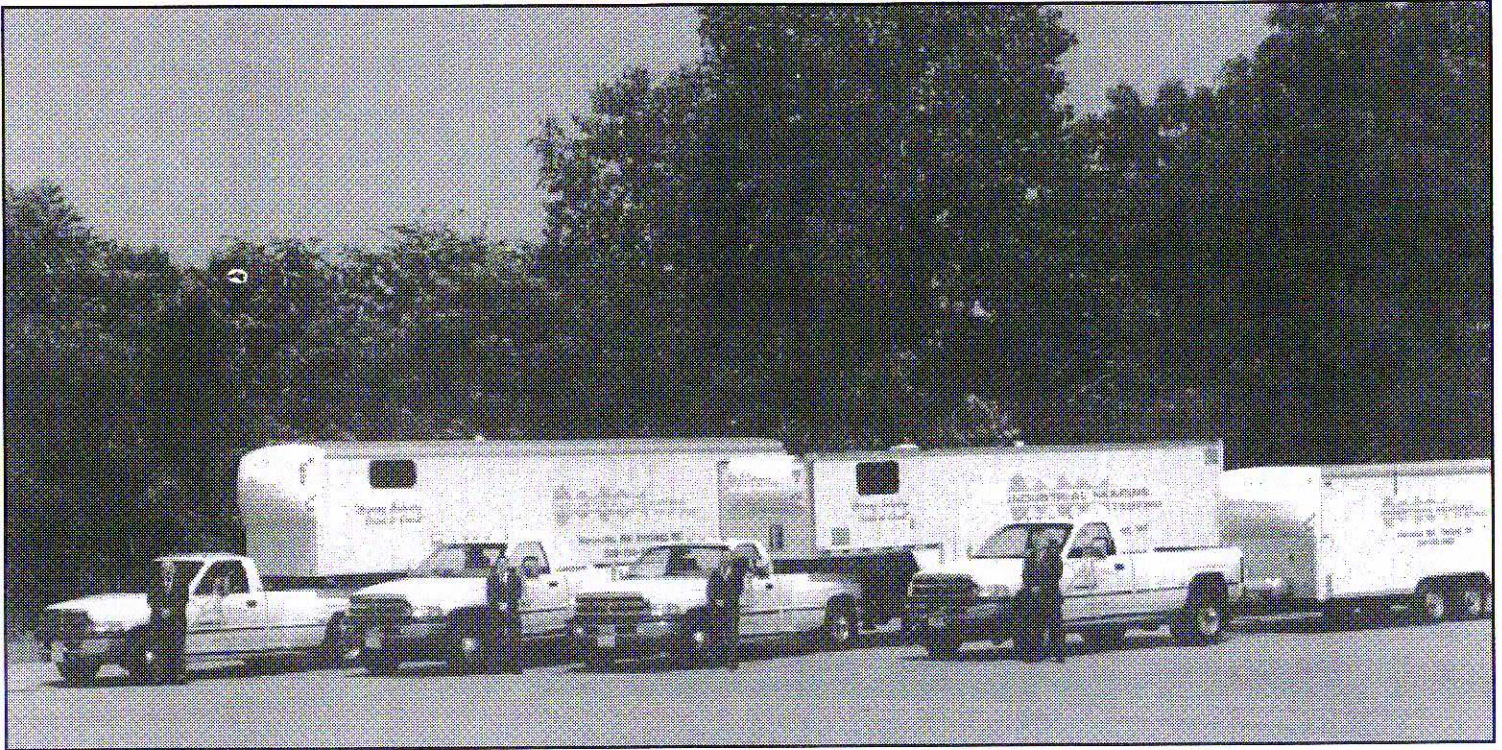
October 9, 1996	Topic:	Safety Committees / Fire Safety - Investigation and Analysis
	Location:	Barnes Building 495 Summer Street Boston, MA
November 13, 1996	Topic:	Hazardous Materials Management
	Location:	Internal Revenue 4 Copley Place, 2nd Floor Boston, MA
December 11, 1996	Topic:	Workers Compensation
	Location:	Internal Revenue 4 Copley Place, 2nd Floor Boston, MA

You deserve a day out! Here are some terrific opportunities to mingle with your peers and colleagues, while staying on top of the latest news in our industries! Stop by our booth at:

MAINE SAFETY & HEALTH CONFERENCE, September 18-20, So. Portland, Holiday Inn By The Bay. Call the Maine Safety & Health Council at 207-772-0506 for more information.

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF SAFETY ENGINEERS, October 7-8, Saratoga Springs, NY, Sheraton Hotel, 1-800-962-5157, ext. 303 for more information.

NEW ENGLAND BUSINESS EXPO, October 16-17, Worcester Centrum. Call 508-832-3300 for more information, presented by the Worcester Area Chamber of Commerce.



OUR LATEST FLEET SHOT!

If you have any colleagues in a business who might benefit from our service, please pass this newsletter along.
Thank you all for your kind referrals!

*Please forward to Hearing
Conservation Program Administrator*

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