



# SAABE TIMES

A Publication of the San Antonio Association of Building Engineers

August, 2000

Mark Your Calendar —

## Bomb Threats

Bomb threats and other threats of violence are emergencies that require prompt attention. Although bomb threats are rare, they should be taken seriously and handled according to established procedures. Officer Tamez, of the SAPD Bomb Squad will present the luncheon program on Wed, Aug 16 and offer guidance for handling bomb threats. The bomb squad, under the Special Operations Unit (SOU) of the SAPD, has the responsibility for rendering safe transporting and disposing of bombs, explosives, and hazardous devices. The SOU is divided into five details consisting of highly trained uniformed officers who respond to all violent incidents, detect and apprehend wanted persons, and augment the efforts of the Patrol Division. Details within SOU Bomb Squad, Crisis Negotiators, SWAT Detail, K-9 Detail and Street Crimes Arrest Teams Detail.

In a bomb threat scenario, clear channels of communication and an explicit understanding of the responsibilities of building staff are imperative. If you attend this meeting, you will learn the right way to handle a threatening phone call and the procedures you should have in place for dealing with a bomb threat.

### Luncheon Sponsor: Amcon Controls

Amcon Controls has been in business in San Antonio since 1987. The company is a factory authorized distributor of commercial temperature controls for the HVAC industry. Amcon Controls is a distributor for Johnson Controls, Honeywell, Krueter Manufacturing, Belimo Air Controls, Invensys and Mamac Systems. In addition, the company carries many peripheral devices, such as sensors, pressure switches and indicators, tubing, fittings and incidental items for control systems.

## Education Corner

By Mike Lusk

All I have this month is some input from the IEC on some classes. Call Diana at 736-4567 to get a registration form, or I can fax one to you.

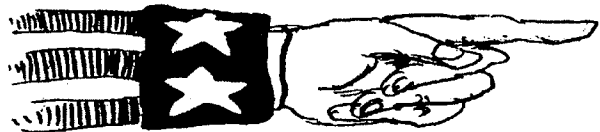
**Continuing education classes for your Electrical License 2000.** \$40.00 for members and \$45.0 for non-members per 8 hours. Classes meet 6-10 p.m.

- CE006 — Boxes, conduit, cabinets and panelboards: Sizing and fill requirements. Tuesdays, August 22 & 29. (Covers article 370, 373, 374, 380 and 384)
- CE007 — Motor Controls (Parts A,B,C,D) August 16 & 23.

**Classes for Registered Electrical Maintenance Technician,** as required by the City of San Antonio. Instructor is Gabriel Rymer, Electrical Inspector for the City. \$125.00 per student. Fridays, August 18 & 25, 6-10 p.m. Tuesdays, August 15, 22 & 29, 6-10 p.m.

If you need some technical courses such as plumbing, HVAC, electrical, etc., don't forget that St. Philip's College usually has these courses on a regular basis. Give them a call to get the latest information.

# VOTE



**Congratulations to Bill Blackford on being named SAABE's new Secretary! Don't forget to vote for Treasurer at this month's General Membership Meeting on August 16th. We'll see you at the Barn Door Restaurant!**

# Above the Ceiling

by Paul Thompson

## Back in the Saddle Again

Hoo Ha! Eight days in Yellowstone were great...buffaloes, bear, elk, moose, snow-topped mountains, hiking, chance to see my darlin' daughter & Roy...I like it too much! But, you always got to go back to work again. Why is that anyway? Maybe I'll move to France, home of the government-mandated paid vacation...who says all "Big Gumm'nt" is bad anyway? I can dream...

The Membership Drive is in high gear with great prizes; 1<sup>st</sup> prize: \$500.00 value, 2<sup>nd</sup>: \$300.00, 3<sup>rd</sup>: \$100.00. All you have to do is bring in some new members to have a shot at 'em. Look, you missed the \$40 million on the Lottery, so you're still going to have to work for a living. The odds on our prizes are a *lot* better than theirs. Practice up on your salesmanship skills; why are *you* a member of SAABE? Don't tell me it's the FREE LUNCH at the meetings...although this is a great value with our low annual dues. It definitely could be the educational presentations we have at each meeting, or the chance to network with your friends and share your problems and solutions. Or maybe it's in the value of our publications: The SAABE Times (Education Corner, Tech Talk, Tio and Tia SAABE, Grapevine, etc.) and the annual directory. Maybe it's the chance to stay up on the newest products, legal updates and educational opportunities. The Christmas party? Our annual (up to this year) trade show with BOMA? Proving your worth with our Certified Building Engineer accreditation? If you're an Associate (Vendor) Member, it may be having a target audience for your products and services or the chance to get together, away from the job, with a customer or meet new ones. Whatever your reasons, I think we give a good bang for the buck.

So, think about it...is there someone you know who could benefit from SAABE? An Engineer at a property you've got a PM contract with? A contractor who's always done good work in your building? Remember, the special reduced rate of \$90.00 (or 2 for \$69.00 each or 3 for \$63.00 each) will get them into SAABE through the end of the year. Join the 137 (current as I wrote this) other members of SAABE in helping to bring the profession of Building Engineer forward in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Pick up your applications at the meetings or call Lynn — and remember to say who referred them (or just fill in my name...ha, ha!). Time's a wastin'! Also, if you would like to contribute to the prize fund, please contact anyone on the board.

Changes! Bill Blackford (as opposed to "Whitechevy"), of Voss Lighting, is our brand-new Secretary! Welcome to

the board — we all hope you don't live to regret it! We have two nominees for Rhondo's old position of Treasurer: Andy Gilkey (Orion Partners) and Cesar Alvarado (GPM Life Insurance). Voting will be at the August meeting.

New Place! We're at the Barn Door (8400 N. New Braunfels) now for our meetings — did anyone besides me get lost getting there? Looks like it will work out real good. Make sure you get there on time as they start putting out salad plates around 11:50 — so get your seat! Many thanks to Tex's at the Airport Hilton for four years of putting up with us!

Our popular building tours are starting again. By the time you get this, "The Charlie" should have already gotten through showing off his beautiful Forum Building. (Wednesday, August 9 at 5:00 p.m.). Hope nobody spilled a soda on those clean floors of his! Watch for the next tour in the SAABE times or at the meetings.

Is it hot or dry enough for you yet? Stage II water restrictions in effect; that means watering is down to once a week (3:00 – 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 – 10:00 p.m.) on your designated day. Make sure that your irrigation system is 100% operational — those stressed-out plants don't need to miss a watering in this weather. Might not be a bad idea to get with your grounds guys and discuss where to best utilize your limited water. Containerized outdoor trees are probably at highest risk for damage (and the most costly to replace). Start thinking about "triage" — if worst comes to worst, what can I let go of and what *must* have water? Look into soaker hoses and pray for rain!

Happy tenth birthday, ADA! Yes, the Americans With Disabilities Act we all know and love. From our perspective, it is often viewed as something between a minor annoyance to comply with and a major, expensive headache. We've dealt with upgrades to doors, parking, sinks, hallways, ramps, grounds, methods of egress, security, etc. And doesn't the inspector *always* find something else? But, looking at it from the perspective of those with disabilities, *it is the most important piece of civil rights law in their lives*. It is a chance at freedom. And it is the law.

A big SAABE thank you to Mr. Wayne Katz with Alterman Electric for putting on July's meeting presentation on Electrical Preventive Maintenance. Good Grief, Charlie Brown! Now you're telling me I need to worry about my electrical system???? Is there nothing in this building I can blissfully ignore???

See ya, gotta get back to my French lessons!

## Registered Electrical Maintenance Technician Course

All electrical maintenance work performed on a property requires an annual maintenance permit to be held by the property owner or management company. All work performed under the electrical maintenance permit must be performed by a Licensed Maintenance Electrician or by personnel whose competence has been certified by completion of a minimum 20-hour training course approved by the Electrical Examining and Supervisory Board. This course has been scheduled over five evenings in August by the San Antonio Chapter of Independent Electrical Contractors. All five sessions are mandatory. Cost is \$125 per person. For more information, please call 736-4567.

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## Electrical Safety

**E-lec-tro-cute** (*e-lek-tro-kyoot*) *vb* 1. To kill with electricity 2. To kill by an electric shock

What goes on in a person's head that makes them go against what they know is safe practice and still perform an unsafe act? Accident statistics report "human error" suggest that errors in judgment occur more often than we would like to admit. Sometimes a person just "gets caught" in a blunder. Where electrical hazards are concerned, there is no room for that excuse. Make no mistake: Electrocutation always means death by electrical shock.

Ever since electrical energy was discovered, both its power and danger has been known. Numerous accidents and deaths over the past century attest to that. Statistics and research papers over the years have documented the hazards. What has not been clear is the role human behavior plays in preventing electrical accidents.

For decades, electricians have been taught that contact with an energized conductor can result in electrocution. Formal training taught electricians to keep one hand in their pocket when working on near energized conductors. The idea was to keep one hand in a pocket and touch adjacent terminals with their thumb and forefinger of the other hand. This method would short circuit and current around these fingers and avoid current flow through the heart. Electricians were also taught to "try" a circuit by brushing the conductor with the back of the hand. That way, the fingers would not curl around an energized conductor, thus keeping the hand from being frozen to the circuit.

Unqualified persons have installed equipment and circuits. Dangerous equipment and installations have exposed both the general public and electricians to shock and electrocution. As a result, the electrical codes and standards were developed, which included requirements to mitigate the potential exposure to electrocution. As the codes and standards were developed, the idea was to mitigate fire exposure as well, since fire was the major issue in development! The idea of preventing electrocution came along later.

### Unsafe Conditions

Relatively few incidents result when applicable codes are followed as equipment is specified and installed. An installation is safe when installed in accordance with the NEC and operated normally.

However, when conditions aren't normal, all bets are off! That's when a "gotcha" rears its ugly head. Equipment begins to deteriorate from the date it's manufactured, often

due to failures. Over time, several conditions can cause failures, including bolted connections subject to heating and cooling cycles. Overcurrent devices operating with significant current overloads or those subjected to large currents may result in a change in their characteristics. Equipment doors that are not completely closed or openings and penetrations in the boxes where conduit has been removed without installing knock out plugs, may lead to failure as well. Water and other conductive materials entering the enclosure and replacing fuses with a fuse that happens to be handy instead of the proper fuse will also lead to failures. Another possibility is grounding conductors that are damaged or completely broken from abuse or lack of attention. Sometimes equipment has simply reached the end of its expected life. Of course, the NEC does not permit these conditions. It only addresses the installation.

Charlie's Law: Whatever it is that hits the fan, will not be evenly distributed!

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# Tio SAABE

by Tom Lasater

## Emergency!...Everybody Out!...Are You Ready?

The police are at the front desk asking for names and numbers and floor plans because the insurance executive on the 12th floor is being held hostage — are you ready? The police department has given us a list of items necessary for these type situations. First a list of the building manager, engineer, and their assistant along with home, cell, and office phone numbers. Second the company names and emergency numbers of elevator, fire control, sprinkler system, plumbers, and electricians in case they are needed. Third the floor plans for each floor along with pull stations, fire extinguishers, hazardous materials, torches, and gas tanks noted on the plans.

With a bomb situation, the same info is needed along with personnel on site familiar with the property and equipment to assist in looking for items out of place or

different. In all cases our assistance and property knowledge can help in a peaceful outcome to these circumstances. Our speaker this month from the San Antonio Police Department will give us more details about bomb threats and our role in assisting the police.

The Fire Department has begun a program of “pre planning” for these situations by entering our floor plans on a data base that can be called upon and printed to help emergency personnel. Chief Hitzfelder has spearheaded this program but with a myriad of buildings and familiarizing three shifts and many fire stations, it will take time to complete the program with all 190 fire companies. He will also be with us at our August meeting at the Barn Door to give us additional details and answer your questions. See you all there!

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| <b>SAABE TIMES</b><br><b>August Issue</b> | <b><u>Reminder —</u></b><br><b>Elections for Treasurer will be held at this month's<br/>General Membership Meeting at the Barn Door Restaurant.</b> |
|---|---|

| <b>2000 Board of Directors</b>                                 |          |
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| Lynn Forester (830) 981-5223<br><i>Association Coordinator</i> |          |

## Membership Luncheon August 16, 2000

**Time:** 11:30 a.m.  
**Location:** Barn Door Restaurant  
**Topic:** Bomb Threats  
**Speaker:** SAPD Bomb Squad  
**Sponsor:** Amcon Controls

**Upcoming Luncheon :**  
**September 20**  
Presented and sponsored  
by American Light

The SAABE Times is produced monthly for the San Antonio Association of Building Engineers by:

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SPOT

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