

Editorial

Well, another month (December 2003), and another anonymous postcard attacking the CBPA... at recent monthly meetings, discussions of how to address the issue of disgruntled people sending these postcards has occurred. In fact, too much time has been spent on the issue, but the bottom line is that a person or persons have enough time, money and anger to attempt a sustained attack on our organization. Every meeting minute spent by your officers and members on this subject is wasted time that could be more productive. On the other hand, not addressing these false allegations might not be the best way to handle this problem. After the last postcard attack, this website provided contact information for all the officers, and an email address to use for questions, and there was even an offer to meet members in person if they had concerns about what the postcard implied. There was not ONE single email or call regarding the bogus misinformation presented by the postcard author(s). So your officers tend to think that CBPA members see this for what it is, a negative attack with no substance.

Most of the members who attend monthly meetings are aware of the issues behind these attacks, but our concern is for the long distance member unable to attend meetings. If the only information this person had were the false accusations presented by these postcards, the tendency might be like the old saying, "Where there is smoke, there is fire". So at this point, let's be totally clear... these postcards are the work of only one or two individuals, and not a group. The tone of the postcards seems to indicate the author is an active member of the CBPA, which is probably another false representation. An active member would be aware of how these issues have been handled, and wouldn't be questioning old business. None of the accusations have any merit at all, and your officers are more than willing to discuss any concerns you may have.

Let's discuss the issues brought up in the postcards

The CBPA is a sub-chapter of the ABPA, and as such, must have its Bylaws approved by our parent organization, the ABPA. When the process of re-writing the bylaws came up, the original and modified versions were posted on the home page of the CBPA website, and a news posting asking for input from all members was made. Input was asked for and received by those interested in that process. In fact, almost all the changes were very minor, and done to comply with ABPA Bylaws requirements, and to change wording to accommodate the changes in the Officer positions that occurs on an annual basis. Corporate Membership, something we have offered in the past, was another sticking point, and we now no longer have this type of membership and had to change the Bylaws to reflect that change. Our President, Leigh Fenton, spent hours working on the changes, accepting input from members, and presenting those changes to National ABPA at the Western Regional Backflow Conference. Now that changes have been made and approved by our parent organization, they will be presented to the full membership for a vote of approval.

The other issue brought up was membership dues. In the past, when you paid your \$55 for CBPA membership, \$30 was paid to ABPA for national membership, \$20.50 went to Drinking Water & Backflow Prevention magazine for your monthly subscription, and the CBPA received a whopping \$4.50 from the total amount. Read that again, FOUR DOLLARS AND FIFTY CENTS. Divide that number again by 12 months and you get \$.37... That's right, the CBPA receives THIRTY-SEVEN CENTS a month from each member. That is about the cost to put a stamp on a monthly newsletter to our members. At a recent monthly meeting, when it became known that the CBPA and DW&BP would be ending their partnership, the amount received by the CBPA was brought up. It was by majority vote that the dues were decreased to \$45 from the previous \$55, but now \$30 goes for your national ABPA membership, \$15 goes to the CBPA. That is still less than \$2 a month that the CBPA receives about each membership and a bargain by any measure.

Now that DW&BP and the CBPA are no longer in a partnership, and that cost is no longer a part of your annual subscription dues, just what do your dues give you? First and foremost, you are a member of the Colorado Backflow Prevention Association, a great statewide organization committed to backflow prevention

and cross-connection control, and membership in the American Backflow Prevention Association, an INTERNATIONAL organization known for backflow prevention and cross-connection education, and our parent organization. These memberships are positive things to include on business cards, letters and company web sites, and something a member can be proud of. It could be assumed that for a majority of members, this is a primary reason to join, to be a part of a professional organization centered on your line of work. Professional memberships are very commonplace in most industries, and active participation in those memberships is not required. Membership dues are used by an organization to promote the industry it supports, which provides benefit to the member.

Membership Benefits

- **ABPA membership** – You get your membership card and certificate, the quarterly ABPA News magazine with a wealth of backflow prevention related articles, access to a huge library of educational materials at member discounted rates, and discount rates to any regional or national ABPA convention. You also support the goals of backflow prevention and cross-connection information.
- **CBPA membership** – Monthly meetings on backflow prevention topics, a monthly newsletter, free access to a library of backflow related educational materials and discounted rates for Colorado held events and the CBPA Annual Conference. You also have a voice in the direction that the State of Colorado goes related to backflow regulations.

So, what has the CBPA done this year? Training was provided with the Repair Seminars held in four (4) locations in this state, the Bylaws were revised to meet ABPA requirements (they really are a great bunch of people if you get the chance to meet them!), monthly meetings were held at various backflow manufacturer's facilities where information on new backflow devices was given, the CBPA 2003 Annual Conference was held with a terrific agenda and many compliments by attendees, and the website got a major face lift in an attempt to be more "modem" friendly to our members and for general cleanup. Does that sound like the CBPA did nothing this year as implied?

None of this hard work gets completed by accident, and a LOT of volunteer hours goes into moving a volunteer organization along. It is hard work with not much more than a "job well done" from another member to show for it. It takes "leadership and forward thinking" to do all the things the CBPA does with a budget smaller than the average household.

Another issue brought up was "travel money"... at the monthly CBPA meeting held at the Dillon Company, the 30 to 40 CBPA members in attendance became aware that our President was attending the Western Regional Backflow Conference with her own money and using personal vacation time. She was even going early in order to get national ABPA approval on the Bylaws changes mentioned above and participating in pre-conference roundtable issues. By a motion and a second, the attending members unanimously voted to pay strictly for her travel, hotel and conference fees and she paid for all her other expenses personally. The discussion by all was that it was important for an officer of the CBPA to attend and represent our interests, and not have to pay all of these costs out of their own pocket. She did not attend with her spouse (who was never present) as was insinuated by the previous anonymous postcard and she fully attended all training and national roundtables, putting in very long hours each and every day.

Also mentioned earlier on the CBPA website, the \$55 repair seminar given by Jim Purzycki is an awesome seminar for learning about repair tips and tricks and we would be willing to say that every attendee received excellent value on the dollar. After paying for location rentals, food service for a morning and afternoon break, and a catered lunch, does anyone truly believe that someone made a bunch of money from this event? There was a small profit realized from the multiple events, and this was presented to the CBPA in the form of a check at the CBPA 2003 Annual Conference in an amount exceeding \$2200. As soon as the WWWCDC had received

the Training Units number from the State and the certificates were mailed out, they decided to award that money to the CBPA, but were not under any obligation to do so.

As for the “pitching parts” by Fred and Larry, there were no sales pitches at the Annual Conference during the repair classes. Fred and Larry have both contributed hundreds, if not thousands of volunteer hours over the years in the backflow industry, and are not deserving of this type of persecution. Jim Purzycki was a big part of the Annual Conference and did an excellent job performing his duties as a moderator. The CBPA like to thank him for the excellent job he did this year, as his humor and ease as a public speaker was an asset to the Conference.

The last statement about me using the Adobe software to distill some pages for Larry’s website is a personal attack. The CBPA Adobe software was used to create a couple files for a CBPA member over a year ago, and this would be available to any member upon request, no charge. I have three Adobe licenses through my extensive use of computer technology, any one of which can be used to create PDF files legally. Only one (1) of these licenses was purchased and owned by the CBPA for my use as webmaster. I am personally offended that this anonymous postcard would imply that I used this computer software improperly or did something illegal, something I would never consider. I was asked to create these files for a CBPA member, and would do it for any other member at any time. I have given hundreds of hours of my personal time to the creation, update and maintenance of the CBPA website and have never once asked for anything in return.

So to bring this to a conclusion, as this document is larger than initially intended, but created to address the allegations by the anonymous authors and ease any concerns by CBPA members. There is no huge stash of money anywhere, no one retiring to Cancun, and no one lining their pockets with money in the CBPA account. Any member can contact the Treasurer for account balances, but it is a small sum at best and wouldn’t even be enough to buy a cheap car. In fact, if you review the math above, it’s amazing to me that this organization can pay its bills, host a website, provide training and education, pay for printing and mailing costs for newsletters, AND host a very successful annual conference.

At this point, as an organization, the Colorado Backflow Prevention Association challenges the anonymous authors of these postcards... If you have a grievance with the CBPA, you attend meetings, you voice your concerns and ask your questions, and you challenge us to do more. Hiding behind anonymity, lies, deceit and mud slinging is no way to bring about change. If the goal is an attempt to bash the CBPA or members into submission, this will not happen. Negativity breeds negativity, only through positive action can true change occur. If the author(s) of these postcard attacks would channel that energy in a positive, instead of a negative direction, who knows what they might accomplish.

As a group, the CBPA officers and members are the hardest working and most dedicated people that I’ve met. The amount of hours spent on CBPA tasks all occur with no payment, and is voluntary work performed on an ideal, protection of drinking water and public education. Let me take a moment to thank those of you who have worked so hard, it is truly appreciated by many people! Don’t let any of these false accusations deter you from the fantastic job you have done over the years.

As we mentioned multiple times before, if any member or outside party has a concern about the CBPA or these ridiculous allegations, we’re more than willing to talk, and we won’t hide behind an anonymous postcard.

Editorial authored by Gary Edwards, CBPA Webmaster

Approved by your CBPA Officers: Leigh Fenton, President; Scott Campbell, Vice-President; Paul Tedesco, Secretary, and Tara Conyers, Treasurer