

The Halon Herald

News from the halon & clean agent world

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY FSSA!

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Chrissy George, Editor-in-Chief

Happy Birthday FSSA! Part 1 in a 3 Part Series

This year the FSSA (Fire Suppression System Association) celebrates its 25th Anniversary. Over the next three or four issues the Halon Herald will present highlights of this important association history and the people who made it happen.

Though we were active in the fire protection industry at that time, and know many of the people who were involved in its early days, we never knew the "behind-the-scenes" story of FSSA's creation.

Thanks to Bernie Bischoff of Chemetron, who probably more than anyone was the catalyst that brought together the various participants (manufacturers, gas producers, installers) and laid the foundation for the FSSA, we now have a history by Bernie of the early days which we have reprinted for you below in its entirety.

It was the late 1970's, we were approaching the height of the "halon era". The Trade Associations at that time were the Fire Equipment Manufacturers Association (FEMA), the National Association of Fire Equipment Distributors (NAFED) and the National Automatic Sprinkler and Fire Control Association (NAS&FCA). Chemetron Corporation had purchased from INA, Safety First and Star Sprinkler Cos.

Safety First was very active in small pre-engineered dry chemical systems. Star Sprinkler was one of seven (7) USA manufacturers of sprinkler devices. These product lines were merged with the Cardox and Fire Boss lines of Chemetron Fire Systems to create a more extensive product line which led to active participation in more trade association activities.

At that time FEMA had a Systems Division whose mission was to deal with 'system problems'. I was the Chair for this group. Prior to 1970, the primary systems were pre-engineered dry chemical and CO2 systems. Then, with the introduction of halon, the system business grew rapidly with new participants that were not FEMA or NAFED members. In addition, the need for early warning detection came front and center. With halon systems came a more sophisticated and expensive agent. Growth of this business segment was, of course, very important to these agent suppliers, who had no previous contact with the "players" in our industry.

At that time, Chemetron also was changing rapidly. The acquisition of Star Sprinkler resulted in their obtaining a seat on the Board of Directors of the Sprinkler Association (each device manufacturer had a seat which was matched by a similar number of seats for the Installers, who elected their members, 'at-large').

I took the Chemetron (Star) seat on the NAS&FCA Board, and immediately the advantages of manufacturers and

Chrissy's Corner Notes from the Editor-in-Chief



Happy January! Is everyone as cold as I am?

The Northeast has been experiencing a wave of below freezing temps lately, and I've been bundled up, complaining about it. Now, I know you folks in Chicago and up North have it way worse - and kudos to you for that, because I could never deal - but, BRR!

John Demeter and Shannon Esopenko will be on their way to warmer temperatures next week - the FSSA Annual Meeting and Conference in St. Petersburg, FL. This is a big meeting for FSSA - it's their 25th birthday!

FSSA has been an influential organization in the fire suppression industry, to say the least. Throughout the next 3 issues of the Halon herald, we are going to pay homage to this important organization and examine some of the greatest moments in their history.

Unfortunately I will not be attending the conference but I hope that everyone who IS going makes sure to say a big hello to Shannon and John!

Another topic we examine in this month's issue is Rev. Martin Luther King's papers being housed in a special library down South - because they are protected by a halon system. Recently, Wesco aided in a study on the importance of gaseous suppression systems in libraries and archival buildings, and I was surprised at how many vital documents are protected by an FM-200 or Novec 1230 system (or halon). In fact, the Declaration of Independence is protected by FM-200!

Whether it's the nightly news, the daily newspaper, or the internet feed on cnn.com, they all normally report the "bad" things - if a fire damaged this library or burned that archive. It's easy to take for granted that "no news is good news" - the Declaration of Independence - or how about Martin Luther (the religious leader)'s Bible - the contents of

Upcoming Events

January 2007

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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

1st - Happy New Year!

15th - Martin Luther King Day

29th - 31st - Fire & Materials 2007 Conference Expo (www.nfpa.org)

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New Column!!

The Halon Herald is looking to feature several "war stories" of some of our readers' interesting experiences with halon or other clean agents.

Got a story to tell? [Click here](#) to email us some facts - We'll feature you in an upcoming Halon Herald!

installers, working together, became apparent.

At the same time, NAFED (comprised only of distributors) was much stronger than FEMA (representing the Manufacturers), and a certain amount of friction was considered "normal". I had lived thru this (having served two terms as FEMA President) and knew there had to be a better way to help an industry grow. It seemed the existing FEMA Manufacturers Division company representatives were representing less and less of the total "engineered" system business, not just to me but to others as well.

System growth was self generated propelled by the new entrants into the system market place. Many of these firms were not attracted to NAFED/FEMA.

My introduction into involvement with the Sprinkler Association offered the opportunity to realize that in this industry manufactures/installers were all pulling in the same direction. There was no element of competition between the manufacturers and installers over who would influence the business growth and direction as was the case between NAFED and FEMA.

During my 7 year term on the Sprinkler Association Board I was privileged to witness what a trade association could do.

The sprinkler industry came to realize that published NFPA statistics on loss of life in fire showed that there had never been a reported multiple loss of life from fire in a fully sprinklered facility when the sprinkler system was properly designed and fully operational! What a story to tell!

At that point the sprinkler industry seized on an opportunity and shifted from promoting a product that provided for property loss prevention to one that provides superior protection against loss of life (this met with enormous success). While there was always some squabbling in the association (i.e., the split off and creation of the American Fire Sprinkler Association - made up of non-union contractors vs. the union affiliation of the NAS&FCA, now called the National Fire Sprinkler Association), it was minimal and everyone worked for greater acceptance of the product - including legislation to retrofit existing systems, expand their acceptance in new construction, and the introduction of home sprinklers (a new product).

Think about it - taking a product developed before 1900 and expanding its use and acceptance to unprecedented levels...80 years later.

Important: The industry was willing to 'pony up' ample funds to sell this concept to greatly expand their market. (Few - actually very few - hotels (for example) were sprinkled at that time while today not one of the major hotel chains does not have their rooms sprinkled.

Those of us in the non-water suppression system business recognized that, if we could pull the manufacturers and installers in our business together and give them programs to expand their markets, we would have a cohesive organization in which all could benefit from well financed programs to establish the value of this type protection.

Therefore, a merger of effort between manufacturers, suppliers and installers, who envisioned a bigger and better market with all as equal co-partners needed a new venue.

Using the FEMA Systems Division members which included Kidde (Walter Morgan), Fenwal (George Grabowski), Ansul (Dave Francis), and Chemetron as a nucleus we attracted others that were not FEMA members: Fike - (Bill Eckholm), MSA (Ralph Hiltz) (looking for a means to promote their high expansion foam line), gas suppliers like duPont (Charlie Ford) and fire suppression system detection and control

Abraham Lincoln's poickets on the night he was murdered - all these valuable artifacts are guarded and remain safe, because of halon, FM-200, and Novec 1230!

We owe a lot to FSSA and the these suppressions systems - physically preserving history, and safeguarding the future with programs and learning about suppression systems!

July 2007: China Phases out CFCs & Halons

At the Sept. 2006 Beijing symposium in China, the State Environmental Protection Administration announced that China has plans to completely eliminate all ozone depleting CFCs and halons by July 2007.

China is one of the only countries left that produces halon, so this is a huge step for the nation and for the world. Production facilities are being dismantled already, and strict rules regarding current production lines are being implemented. Halon and CFC imports, as of press time, are banned completely.

The aerosol sector has been granted a grace period for CFCs, and will continue to use them.

Wesco applauds China for setting this goal, and offers our assistance in any way possible to help China reach it.

Halon Protects History

The Robert W. Woodruff Library at the Atlanta University Center, has recently become the new home of several of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s writings. These writings are one of a kind, and extremely valuable. Why the Woodruff library?

The library was chosen because of its advanced halon system, which will protect the papers much better for prosperity than a water based sprinkler system. It is a problem within the library and archival field that important and vital documents are not always protected by the best sprinkler systems - many of them protected by water based systems which will essentially ruin the historical items, if the fire doesn't get to them first. Gaseous systems, such as FM-200 systems, guard some of the world's most valuable documents, one of which being the Declaration of Independence in Washington, D.C.

Some of the historical artifacts the Woodruff Library protects with its advanced halon system are autographed books by Rev. martin Luther King, Angela Davis, Booker T. Washington, and Zora Neale Hurston, postcards from Malcolm X, and letters by and about John Brown, the Harpers Ferry abolitionist from 1859.

South Korea to Cut ODS in '07

South Korea is following China's lead, and has set a goal to drastically reduce all ozone depleting substances in 2007. The decision was set final on December 12, 2007 by government, military, and environmental agents in Seoul.

Freon and halon production and use will be cut by 85% and 70%, respectively, in accordance with the Montreal Protocol (which has South Korea obligated to cut substances by 85% by 2007 anyway). South Korea also plans to invest 9 million USD (8.4bn won) to help create and maintain alternative

manufacturers (especially those who built control panels specific to the needs of special hazards releasing, like FireTech (Roger Cholin).

I arranged for the Sprinkler Association to let us copy their Constitution so that the new Association would fairly represent manufacturers, suppliers and installers.

Most importantly, though, we needed money. It was figured that if we could get seven (7) manufacturers to "pony-up" \$4,000 (each) we would have enough to get started - actually I believe we got \$10,000.

Now we needed legal help. Both FEMA and NAFED used Halfpenny, Hahn and Roche law firm out of Chicago as their "legal eagles". We made a deal with them to use George Keeley of their firm (an excellent choice).

And then we needed a professional trade association management firm to do our bidding and keep us out of jail (a federal anti-trust case involving the fire appliance industry in Chicago had just been settled). Harold Halfpenny recommended we contact 3 firms - one in Cleveland, one in Pittsburgh and a small firm in Baltimore.

Of course we needed to bring in the Installers to ensure their concerns would be represented. It was decided that Burton Ford who worked with his Dad (Charles) in Philadelphia was a good person to help in the Association Management search. The firms in Cleveland and Pittsburgh were too big for us and we didn't think we could command much of their attention.

But the guy in Baltimore (Cal Clemons) was another story. In addition to his trade association work, I found that he was planning to run for the Maryland State legislature with very limited funds. Burton and I met him on I-95 in Delaware for an interview and immediately knew we had found our man.

Actually this worked out great for me personally in my effort to keep this project moving forward. I needed help to work out the details of getting something started. In my position at Chemetron I went to the Baltimore/Washington area once a month so Cal and I would arrange to meet as needed at the Bellock Diner in Towson for early morning coffee and planning.

We used the NFPA Annual meetings for recruiting members and fund raising.

(I know this sounds like a lot of self-promotion but, believe me I had plenty of help all along the way).

The manufacturers were requested to encourage their distributors to join the FSSA. Their membership and participation was essential to a successful organization. The person I feel contributed the most to the success of the start of the FSSA is George Grabowski. He immediately recognized the merits of a trade association consisting of manufacturers and installers working together in a developing market (halon system sales). Fenwal had an unusually cozy and effective distributor organization which George "strong-armed" into joining up.

As a result of the organization completion, the first Association meeting was held in San Diego between manufacturers and installers where the first true set of officers were elected. Starting with an Installer representative (Bob Yellin) serving first term as President and then rotating that position with a manufacturer representative next term, etc.

Bob thought he was in for one term but the Association needed him so his (and the installers as a group)

chemicals, not just for halon but for all environmentally unfriendly substances.

South Korea is responsible for 8.5% of the world's consumption on halon and ODS (in 2004), and, starting in the year 2010, halon and Freon will be banned from production and import.

Trivia Time!!

Congratulations to last month's winners!

Don Begley (who named WESCO as one of the best companies to work for - in addition to the 2 correct answers!)

Scott Starr

This month's trivia question has to do with the Superbowl. The first 2 people to email us [here](#) win a \$50 American Express gift card. Remember, if you have won in the past 3 months, you are not eligible to win again. Good luck!

- What is the team to score the fewest points in a Superbowl?
- Who owns the single-game superbowl record with three sacks?

Good luck!

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contributions in the early days continued beyond that first term and were extremely important.

A Committee structure was formed and a position of Technical Director created. Bob Roos was the first to hold this position. Places on NFPA Technical Committees, which were held by FSSA members, were changed to identify that the representative spoke for the FSSA. New committee representation was requested of the NFPA.

After the Association got up and running the viability of the FSSA was challenged by NAFED with an effort to try to get us to merge with them. Obviously this did not happen. A meeting was held between 'select committees' of the two groups and the idea to merge (i.e. NAFED taking over) was killed off. The key player in this meeting was Bill Healy who as an installer pointed out all the negatives of any such marriage. No one on the FSSA side thought it even worth considering and NAFED's folks saw the light.

Many friendships have been created in the development of the FSSA, which in and of itself should justify membership.

From our humble beginning it can not be said that all has been "clear sailing" (i.e. The EPA enforcement of the Montreal Protocol) The effort on our industry's part to minimize the negative impact of this action should be chronicled to serve as a guide to future efforts which will further establish the value of the on-going support of our Special Hazards System business by the FSSA.

Respectfully submitted.

B. G. Bischoff

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