



F. S. E. A. NEWSLETTER

VOL. I, No.1, SPRING 1982

Editorial

by Bill Leseman, President FSEA

As those of you who analyse proficiency samples for drinking water lab certification know, the results for the samples analysed in November of 1981 have not been forwarded by EPA. This is most unfortunate because if your lab is anything like ours you use the results of the previous PE sample to determine deficiencies in analytical techniques and procedures.

I talked to Jim Wright, HRS, about this problem and he suggested I express my dissatisfaction to Wade Knight, EPA QA Coordinator (Water), USEPA Region 4, College Station Road, Athens, GA 30613. I have done so and recommend you do the same.

The certification program is an integral part of lab QA but in order for it to work the results must be available on a timely basis. Recent EPA funding cuts have without doubt slowed this program down. If you are affected by this slowdown, write Wade Knight and let him know. Perhaps by doing so we will all provide the needed justification to maintain the program at a proficient level.

FSEA SUPPORTERS

In addition to membership involvement and advanced leadership, it is necessary to have financial stability in order for a society to function. One source of funds is exemplified on this page as the following have contributed to FSEA in the form of paid advertisements. We would like to take this opportunity to thank these organizations for their continued support of FSEA!

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FSEA MEETING INFORMATION

As part of FSEA's yearly activities a meeting is held in both the spring and the fall. This section includes highlights of the most recent meeting and important information about upcoming meetings.

1982 SPRING MEETING INFORMATION

The theme of the 1982 Spring Meeting is "Groundwater - Monitoring Analysis and Interpretation." Separate meeting announcements have already been sent out and we hope that you are planning to attend. As a reminder the meeting will be held as follows:

DATE: April 23, 1982
PLACE: Tampa Central Holiday Inn
111 West Fortune Street
Tampa, Florida 33602
(813) 223-1351
TIME: 8:00 - 5:00 (5:00 - 6:00 social hour)

1981 FALL MEETING NOTES

The Fall 1981 meeting was held in Daytona Beach at the Treasure Island Inn. In a break from tradition, we invited several suppliers of laboratory equipment to set up exhibits rather than having just one sponsor. The topic of the meeting was "Priority Pollutants" with the technical session given by Toxicon Laboratories, Inc. Toxicon specializes in GC/MS analyses. At the business meeting the following officers were elected:

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ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER \$1,275.00

by Lyle Johnson

We've all experienced instrumental breakdowns at critical times. This one was no different except for one thing: The Perkin-Elmer Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometer had performed flawlessly for seven years. It was so well designed, that no problems were encountered, even while operating in a corrosive laboratory atmosphere. Of course, the usual care and preventative maintenance due any device of this sophistication had been carefully executed. Nevertheless, the digital display suddenly presented an impossible numeric array, and refused to obey external commands.

A call to the P - E service facility was made and we were told that a serviceman was in our area that very day and we would be contacted for an appointment. In fact, the serviceman was no more than 25 miles away. The following morning he called and informed us that he could come, but not until the following week, and by then he would be back in Orlando, and we would have to pay \$420.00 travel expenses plus \$90.00 per hour plus parts.

In desperation, our pristine AA was dismantled, and by a wild stroke of fortune we were able to deduce that the problem was the display itself which was not manufactured by Perkin - Elmer. A call to the manufacturer, LFE Electronics of Waltham, Mass. revealed that the display was obsolete, however Perkin - Elmer stocked parts as required by law. P - E informed us that a replacement display would cost us \$1100.00 less 55% for our old display core. Another call to LFE produced a possible replacement display, in fact, a second generation device of our original for \$180.00.

The bottom line is this: Perkin - Elmer's repair would have cost us \$1275.00. Our fix cost \$180.00 and was done in 4 days. Perkin - Elmer produces superbly engineered products however they tend to make up for it in their service department. Free enterprise decrees that an entity should get as much for it's efforts as the market demands. The beauty of it is that it works both ways, and a little investigation can pay big dividends, right guys?

FSEA REGIONAL BOUNDARIES (by counties)

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REGION II

Madison, Taylor, Hamilton, Suwannee, Lafayette, Dixie, Columbia, Gilchrest, Levy, Baker, Union, Bradford, Alachua, Nassau, Duval, Clay, Putnam, St. Johns, Flagler.

REGION III

Marion, Lake, Volusia, Seminole, Orange, Osceola, Brevard, Indian River.

REGION IV

Citrus, Sumter, Hernando, Pasco, Pinellas, Hillsborough, Polk, Manatee, Hardee, Sarasota, Desoto.

REGION V

Broward, Dade, Monroe, Collier, Hendry, Lee, Charlotte.

REGION VI

Highlands, Okeechobee, St. Lucie, Martin, Glades, Palm Beach.

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MERCURY ANALYSIS

Mercury, being one of only two elements that are in the liquid phase at room temperature has traditionally been an analysts nightmare. Mercury is widely used in the modern laboratory and in spite of the most rigorous precautions tends to be a real problem.

The determination of mercury concentrations in seawater for example, have been widely scattered, e.g., 2 - 2800 ng/l. The scattering of the values seems to be due to problems in analytical techniques, i.e. contamination, loss of Hg during storage, and inadequate pretreatment of a sample, rather than the diversity of the nature of seawater in the oceans.

With reference to an article in Environmental Science and Technology, Vol. 13, Jan. 1979, the authors state "Hg contamination from unused polyethylene bottles was generally less than used ones, but irregular contamination was still observed, especially in the samples stored for long periods of time. It may be concluded that polyethylene bottles should not be used for sampling and storage of natural waters to be analyzed for Hg."

The authors, Matsunaga, Konishi and Nishimura of Hokkaido University, Hakodate, Japan further remarked that glass containers heated to 500°C or rinsed with dilute hydrofluoric acid were the sample containers of choice. In fact, if such containers and samples were made 0.2 Molar with H₂SO₄ and at least 3% NaCl, no change of Hg concentration was observed over a 60 day period.

Standard Methods for the Examination of Water and Wastewater, 15th Ed. and EPA's Methods for the Chemical Analysis of Water and Wastes - 1979 both advocate the use of polyethylene bottles for mercury samples, however, in the light of the above article the practice appears questionable.

ADVERTISERS WANTED FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER

The next issue of the FSEA Newsletter will be published in October. Those of you interested in placing a business card advertisement should submit their ads no later than September 1st. Cost of placing this ad is \$25.00.

A new feature of this newsletter will be a classified section in which members can place ads for employment, lab equipment wanted/for sale, special products/services, etc. For the next issue there will be no charge for placing an ad in the classified section. For further information contact:

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WHY SHOULD I BELONG TO A PROFESSIONAL SOCIETY - EXPECIALLY FSEA

by Roger Yorton

Ever ask yourself that question? If not - you should! Otherwise, you're just taking membership for granted, which is bad for you - and bad for the society.

The best thing that could happen to any group of Society members would be for them to take the time every now and then and ask themselves, "Why am I a duespaying member?" The thoughts that come to mind would be very revealing and this could lead to a better, more effective organization. One man asked himself that question and came up with these reasons:

I owe it to myself and my business to help our profession move forward at the regional, state and national levels.

It takes strength in numbers and concerted action to accomplish anything worthwhile . . . more can be accomplished collectively than individually.

The regular meetings and annual conventions I go to bring me ideas and information that I could obtain in no other way - and which are put to the test of experience before they are passed on to me.

I have many true friends among the members - people I enjoy being with for friendship's sake, as well as for business reasons. My life is richer and more worth living through belonging.

Committee projects and other society activities enable me to contribute - to do my bit for the general good.

The cost of belonging is small compared to what I get in return - and extremely low rent for the space I occupy in the profession.

Even when other problems command my full attention, the officers, directors and headquarters keep working in my interest. In such times, maintaining my membership is a vote of confidence in them which they deserve, and which I am happy to bestow . . . and those are the facts.

TO:

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