

evidence was found indicating the presence of residual oxygen in the room, Gorbutt said. Although no oxygen was in use at the time, investigators believe the residue was near the outlet where the cord shorted, increasing the intensity of the fifth-floor fire at **White Plains Hospital Medical Center** (White Plains, NY).

Gorbutt noted that hospital nurses had approached him with concerns about malfunctioning cords on other electric beds. The December blaze caused the evacuation of 70 patients from the fully occupied 300-bed hospital, he stated, and five staff members reported minor injuries. Twenty-one firefighters brought the fire under control in 27 minutes, with damage estimated at \$15,000 to the patient room involved, plus heavy smoke and water damage to adjoining areas.

The deputy chief praised the quick action of a security guard who closed the door of the room to contain the blaze, and a staff electrician who used a fire hose to spray the door as patients were evacuated. There were no automatic water sprinklers on the floor where the fire occurred, Gorbutt stated, adding that such a system would have extinguished the fire before the heat became so intense. This Newsletter's calls to the hospital for comment were not returned. Index: Fire, hospital room; Electric bed cord, fire; Cord, electric bed, fire.

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ASHE MEMBERSHIP RECOMMENDED

My name is Vincent F. Gardner and I am the Resident Engineer at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, MA. I am writing to share some information that I think will be of interest and value to you.

As hospital engineers, we all know how important our work is. All the changes in hospitals today have made our jobs more and more challenging and demanding. Even after years in the hospital engineering field, I find that there's always a need to share information about better ways to meet the expectations of our jobs and our changing roles.

I have found a resource that has been invaluable to me over the years. It is the American Society for Hospital Engineering (ASHE) of the American Hospital Association, which is the leading and most respected organization for healthcare facilities management and engineering professionals. It is my professional organization and I hope that it will become yours.

I have been an ASHE member for over 30 years, and, at present, serve as Region 1 (New England States) representative to the ASHE Board of Directors.

As a member, you would receive monthly technical news, *Hospitals* magazine biweekly, quarterly newsletters and a yearly member roster to allow you to keep abreast of current issues and in contact with other engineers on such issues. In addition, there are over 25 educational seminars ASHE offers each year, conveniently located, at a special price for members.

I would like to invite each of you to join ASHE so that you can begin receiving the benefits of membership today. The yearly membership fee is only \$75.00 if your hospital is a member of the American Hospital Association; \$105.00 if it is not. Although budgets are tight these days, I assure you that membership in ASHE is well worth the investment. By joining, you become a part of a dynamic and credible organization.

Vincent F. Gardner
ASHE Liaison, NEHES
(Massachusetts General Hospital, MA)

NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER OF ASHE CLINICAL ENGINEERING SECTION

In the past several years, ASHE has sought to spawn a group which focuses on the clinical engineering discipline. This has resulted in the development of the **ASHE Clinical Engineering Section**. Up to this point in time, no organization has provided a forum for clinical engineers and clinical equipment managers. Organizations such as AAMI and ACEMB have significant industry, academic and physician membership, and more importantly, there is no link to hospital administration, thus providing clinical engineering personnel with little visibility in the environment they worked. Now that a national organization with the proper attributes has been chartered, it is important to consider the need for a regional organization to promote clinical engineering in New England. If you or your clinical engineering personnel are interested in a New England chapter of the ASHE Clinical Engineering Section, please contact Tobey Clark, Univ. of Vermont (802) 656-3255, or Paul Monahan, TIM (617) 478-7515.

Tobey Clark
Technical Services Program
University of Vermont

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SAMOSSET RESORT CHOSEN FOR NEHES 1989 FALL SEMINAR

The Samoset is a year-round luxury resort situated on 230 oceanfront acres overlooking Penobscot Bay on the mid-coast of Maine, where the area is known as the Lobster Capital of the World. Here you'll experience spectacular vistas of the rugged coast . . . of the Bay and offshore islands, fishing boats and windjammers, and forested hills that sweep to the sparkling Atlantic.

Once host to such notables as the Rockefellers, Coolidges, Harry Truman and Justices of the Supreme Court, Samoset's unique ambiance is the true spirit of the "Grand Hotels" of yesteryear.

Today, the Samoset—a contemporary architectural masterpiece—offers 150 spacious guest rooms and suites with private balconies overlooking the Bay. And each room offers cable TV, walk-in closets, individual air conditioning and heating controls. In addition, there are 72 luxury condominium units for interval ownership.

The Rockport, Rockland, Camden area has many quaint boutiques and galleries just perfect for shopping and browsing. You'll also find an abundance of interesting sightseeing opportunities including many historic homes, lighthouses, the Farnsworth Art Museum, the

Owls Head Transportation Museum, Shore Village Museum, the Bay Chamber Concerts, the Camden Shakespearean Theatre and cruises to the offshore islands and coves aboard the many schooners and windjammers in the area. The resort is located near Camden and Rockport Harbors.

NEW VIDEOS AVAILABLE

Listed below are some new 1/2" videotapes that the Society has purchased:

1. Clinical Laboratory Safety
2. Defibrillators
3. Electrosurgery
4. External Ventricular Pacemakers
5. Hazardous Materials Safety
6. Laser Safety
7. Needle Stick
8. Nursing Electrical Safety
9. O.R. Electrical Safety
10. Shock-Proof

John Crowley
Education Committee Chairman, NEHES
(St. John's Hospital, MA)

AIR LOCK AVAILABLE

The Lawrence Memorial Hospital of Medford will soon have a surplus "air bag" used as an air lock for sealing the gap around a 12 foot by 12 foot opening serving a mobile CAT SCAN vehicle. This will become available when a fixed CAT SCAN unit is installed this spring. The air inflatable bag seals the four foot opening between the building and the mobile unit. The bag is constructed with a short hood which rides over the roof of the mobile van. We would only ask that the recipient remove the bag so they would know it is in good condition. The bag is only about a year old. Those interested should call David Hathaway, (617) 396-9250 x1482.

David Hathaway
Steering Committee Chairman, NEHES
(Lawrence Memorial Hospital, MA)

NFPA FIRE ALARM SYSTEM SEMINAR

This two day seminar is designed for enforcers, installers, inspectors and designers, and covers plans to review acceptance testing of fire alarm systems.

Location: Nashua, NH
Date: April 14-15, 1988

For complete details, please contact NFPA at 1-800-344-3555.

HOSPITAL ENGINEERING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM USED IN OVER 200 HOSPITALS

In 1982 a grant from the Kellogg Foundation to the Technical Services Program at the University of Vermont enabled the development of a computerized engineering management system. Key to this project were input from an advisory committee including NEHES members Jim Lawson — Medical Center Hospital of Vermont, Theron Manning — Gifford Memorial Hospital, Ken Johnson — Holyoke Hospital and Jim DuCharme — formerly of Rutland Reg. Medical Center.

The grant phase ended with the development of the **Hospital Engineering Management System (HEMS)**, a work management system. Many other work management systems have appeared since the introduction of HEMS in 1984, making the concept developed by James Bernard of Technical Services Program no longer unique. However, it evolved into a system that is used in over 200 hospitals as well as in the People's Republic of China at a Project Hope station. Currently it has approximately three times as many hospital users than any other system with 20 systems in New England. Much of the success of HEMS is due to the representation from

shared engineering services such as *Technology in Medicine in Milford, MA* which is the New England Representative. They provide both hospital engineering and computer expertise on a local basis, and have the philosophy of professionalism and quality.

With the grant phase ended, HEMS relies upon files for continued development and support activities. Although the basic structure of HEMS remains the same, over ten enhancements or revisions have been made in the past three years. Most of these are a result of user feedback which is derived at user meetings, via surveys or through personal communications, including an electronic bulletin board. HEMS continues to respond to ASHE input as it is currently licensed to use maintenance procedures in ASHE Facilities and Equipment Management publications for plant and clinical engineering systems.

A major focus has been on the support of present users. In addition to HEMS problem resolution, which utilizes a remote modem connection to the users computer, much practical information on general computer topics and minor customizations of the HEMS program to suit specific needs has been provided by the HEMS staff.

Goals for 1988 include developing a multi-user system, productivity reporting and quality assurance modules. If you are interested, please contact the Technical Services program/UVM-(802) 656-3255, or TIM (617) 478-7515.

Tobey Clark
Technical Services Program
University of Vermont

NEWS FROM VERMONT

The Vermont Hospital Engineering Society held its first meeting of 1988, on February 19, 1988 at Springfield Hospital in Springfield, Vermont.

Bill Frank, a medical gas specialist conducted a discussion on "A Sensible Approach to the Maintenance and Testing of Medical Gas Systems." Bill presented this program in New Hampshire last month and it was described as both informative and successful.

Norm Welch, who is the Hospital Engineer at Springfield Hospital (and the alternate representative to this board), took us on a plant tour and discussed the upcoming 7 million dollar renovation/construction program.

Joe Kaczmarek
Vermont State Representative, NEHES
(Central Vermont Medical Center, VT)

NEWS FROM MAINE

The Maine Hospital Engineers met on February 16, 1988 at Eastern Maine Medical Center in Bangor, Maine with 17 members present.

Guest Speakers:
Michael Blotzer, U.S. Department of Labor — OSHA, reviewed OSHA's role in the Health Care Industry.

Larry Alquist, Radiation Physicist, Eastern Maine Medical Center gave an indepth presentation on the use, handling, and disposal of radiation materials. He reviewed the types of equipment used in exams and nuclear medicine.

Robert Lord
Maine State Representative, NEHES
(Parkview Memorial Hospital, ME)

WARREN MARBLE RECEIVES RECOGNITION UPON RETIREMENT

On February 1, 1988 Warren Marble officially retired from his position as Vice President at the Danbury Hospital, and the NEHES Board of Directors invited Warren to its February 5 meeting to acknowledge the longstanding effort Warren has devoted to help the growth of the New England Engineers' Society. Warren Marble was a charter member of the Society, the eighth President and for many years was the chairman of the By-Laws Committee.

He has been a very active member and has set an outstanding example for his fellow hospital engineers. He has been truly interested in his work, cares for other people and has been very helpful to his fellow engineers. Warren has really the best of life. His hospital has given him an office and hired him as a consultant and he works his own hours. He says it's great but wow! wait till you have to pay your own health insurance. (That's where the rest of us have a good thing going!)

David Hathaway
Steering Committee Chairman, NEHES
(Lawrence Memorial Hospital, MA)

NO AIDS RISK REPORTED

No evidence exists to suggest that plumbers are at risk of contracting acquired immune deficiency syndrome through their work with sewage systems and hospital laboratory systems, according to a report by the National Association of Plumbing, Heating and Cooling Contractors' Education Foundation.

More of a risk is exposure to hepatitis, according to the report. The best way to prevent highly communicable diseases such as hepatitis, as well as less communicable diseases such as AIDS, the study said, is use of good hygiene.

The study suggested the following practices to "greatly reduce" any theoretical risk of infection:

- ▶ Wearing gloves that are not water absorbent and are resistant to punctures from sharp objects or sewer cleaning equipment (particularly if hands are cut or have open sores).
- ▶ Wearing protective clothing, including goggles if there is any chance of sewage spraying into the air.
- ▶ Changing out of contaminated clothing as soon as a job is finished.
- ▶ Washing hands frequently.
- ▶ Disinfecting contaminated gloves, clothing, and tools with a fresh solution of household bleach and water.

National Association of Plumbing,
Heating and Cooling Contractors.

NEHES HISTORICAL INFORMATION REQUESTED

If you, or someone you know, has any details regarding the history of NEHES, please contact me as I would greatly appreciate some help with our archives.

Thank you.

Tom Shubbuck
Vice President, NEHES
(The Institute of Living, CT)
(203) 241-6886

WE NEED YOUR HELP

Our newsletter should assist each of us by passing on lessons learned—both good and bad. If it's really bad, your article could be anonymous; but if you learned something it's probable that someone else will have the same problem sooner or later, so why don't you pass these things along so your peers can benefit from them. After all, it may be you that is learning from somebody else's good or bad luck, or maybe from their careful planning and outstanding engineering work.

We would appreciate you sending information to your newsletter editor on: problems with certain products or services; items you may have as surplus material; ways you have learned to do a job better; or alerting the rest of us to an interpretation by some of our "inspectors" that will cause us to change our way of doing things. Ask yourself if you wouldn't rather read about a problem in the newsletter and be forewarned than have it fall on you by surprise. . . .

David Hathaway
Steering Committee Chairman, NEHES
(Lawrence Memorial Hospital, MA)

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Should you have questions regarding handling, removal or disposal of asbestos, you can contact:

ASBESTOS INFORMATION CENTER
Center for Environmental Management
Curtis Hall
Tufts University
Medford, MA 02155
Tel: (617) 381-3531

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Several positions are currently available. If you would like further information, please call Theron Manning, Gifford Memorial Hospital, VT, (802) 728-4441.

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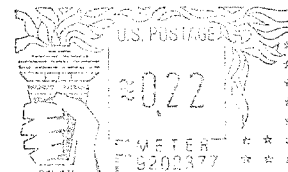
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