

A person wearing a white protective suit and hood is kneeling on a blue tarp, working on a fireplace. The fireplace is covered with a white protective sheet, and a bright light is visible inside the opening. The background shows a stone wall and a doorway.

# NEWS THE CHIMNEY SWEEP NEWS

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# A Ton of Fun and Info at the Golden State Convention

By Terri Pocock

Swede Chimney Sweep & Dryer Vent Cleaning  
San Diego, California

With the spellbinding backdrop of the Oceanside Harbor Marina and the Pacific Ocean, the members of California's Golden State Chimney Sweep Guild met for their 33<sup>rd</sup> annual convention and trade show on July 9-11. The Oceanside Marina Suites was the captivating location for the annual convention with members staying in suites, complete with gas fireplace systems and full kitchens. The hotel was only steps away from the harbor and the ocean, and we enjoyed stunning views and beautiful sunsets. Oceanside is located just north of San Diego, California and only an hour and a half from Los Angeles. Convention participants' families also visited the nearby attractions that Southern California is famous for — Legoland, San Diego Zoo and the Wild Animal Park.

The convention covered a wide array of subjects pertaining to the chimney industry and specifically to California. Subjects ranged from technical to business, but also included fun times with



Oceanside Marina Suites in Oceanside, California, site of the 2013 Golden State Chimney Sweep Guild convention.

Photo by Bob Ferrari

golf, nightly poker games and even a Pictionary game adapted with chimney terms. Many of the meals were enjoyed "al fresco," poolside, while overlooking the beautiful ocean.

## Tricks of the Gas Trade

Jim Keeton of A-One Chimney Services in Fresno, serving Central California, addressed the amended rules for the South Coast Air Quality Management District which covers urban Los Angeles, Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

Jim then began discussing the tricks of the gas trade. Jim has over 30 years in the hearth industry and specializes in gas. He showed the necessary tools for servicing gas appliances, both for natural as well as propane gas. Jim provided information on troubleshooting symptoms and solutions for gas appliances. Various components, orifices and valves were passed around the room for everyone to be able to see firsthand what he was talking about.

Jim recommended obtaining service manuals for gas appliances via the internet which can be easily found once you know the manufacturer and model number of the system, and these manuals can be obtained for free. He stressed how important it is for chimney sweeps to go to each of the stove manufacturers to ask for their troubleshooting guides. Each manufacturer has one. The manuals can almost always be found by going to the manufacturer's site on the internet. He stated that it's extremely important that the chimney sweep make



Jim Crawford (Authentic Fireplaces Inc, San Diego, CA)

Photo by Michaele Dempsey

sure that the gas appliance is correctly installed and emphasized following the manufacturer's specifications to insure that the customer has no problems. Bob Ferrari, Region 6's NCSG Director, pointed out that NCSG is always interested in obtaining more of the manuals to build their library. One of the benefits to NCSG is having access to those manuals.

Is the tag too small to read? Take a photo of the I.D. tag and enlarge it to be able to read the manufacturer and model number of the system.

## Relining with DuraVent

Dale Menges works for M&G DuraVent as the Regional Sales Manager for the western part of the U.S. He is an



expert on the technical side, which also comes in handy for his job in sales.

Relining is covered under U.L. Listing 1777 but only for masonry chimney linings and not for stove inserts. DuraVent has actually contributed to the listing. Dale explained how the testing is done for the listing. With DuraVent, you can use metal or poly brushes for cleaning, but it's more important that the brush be a half inch larger than the pipe, and there's no need to worry about scratching the DuraVent lining. DuraVent offers a limited lifetime warranty and there's an expected 20-25 year life expectancy. The warranty covers the product only and not the labor.

The only way to determine if a DuraVent lining has been compromised is by scanning it with a camera. Look for breaches in the system. A discoloration is not necessarily a problem because that's a natural byproduct of heat, but according to Dale, when the pipe changes to a whitish color, that's a sign of being brittle.

With Ventinox lining, the warranty is voided if the chimney sweeping isn't done annually and documented.

DuraVent is now the only vent manufacturer that is listed for relining prefab systems. It also comes with a patent pending mechanism to cool the system. This lining can only be used in prefab systems built after 1990 when prefab systems were rated for 2300 degrees instead of the previous 1700 degrees.

Dale claims that some prefab manufacturers are rewriting their listings to include this DuraVent lining. This is a very new product.

## National Chimney Manufacturer Training

Ghayas Salem has been in the industry for many years and recently joined the National Chimney team.

Ghayas presented samples of various liners and caps sold by National Chim-

ney. He also explained various options for diversifying a chimney business that National Chimney offers in its catalog: roof attic fans, garage vent kits, remote solar panels, flashing skirts for tile roofs, thermal snap switches, fire safety cut-off switches, skylights, etc.

He also showed the new ChimneySaver Paint 'n' Peel fireplace facade cleaner. Only a half a can is typically needed on the average fireplace facade. It will remove anything that is carbon based.

## Referral Business

Bob Ferrari has been in business since 1985 and is the owner of a successful multi-truck chimney sweep company in Redding, California [see the March issue]. He is also NCSG's Director for Region 6, which covers the western part of the United States including Hawaii and Alaska.



Dale Menges of M&G DuraVent

Photo by Michaele Dempsey

Bob presented a method of marketing that has worked very successfully for him — referral marketing, a strategy that requires a plan to find customers through word of mouth. Referral sources can come from many different places — plumbers, masons, competitors, stove shops, appliance repair businesses, church groups, fraternal organizations, friends, family, social clubs, online social

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# New Relining Solution



networking and networking groups like BNI and LeTip. The costs of the networking groups vary depending on location. [See the September 2011 issue for more on networking groups.]

Bob also uses testimonials from his customers as a marketing tool. He recommends going to Angie's List and downloading and printing out the report pages to give to customers to encourage them to write reports and testimonials.

## Prefab Anatomy 101

Pat Lopez of Burnie Fireplace Services is located in San Diego and started his business in 1993 after six years of working and training in the fireplace installation industry. He is very well respected as a prefab fireplace system expert in Southern California.

Pat discussed the issue of fire stops and how often these are missing in chases.

He also explained about manufacturers' disclaimers against modifications to

the system without opening yourself up to liability. This deals with everything from glass doors and grates, to refractory panels, shrouds and surrounds. In fact, Pat had contacted six major manufacturers of prefab systems about their policy on aftermarket refractory panels. He will provide the responses upon request. Pat also has a letter signed by eight of the major manufacturers of prefab systems about their policy AGAINST shrouds and surrounds on their systems.

The pièce de résistance of his presentation was a prefab firebox that he brought in to the meeting room where there had been a "fire event" due to a stove insert having been installed into the prefab system. The installer had removed the refractory panels and cut out the hearth floor and walls to get the insert to fit.

Pat explained that even though a stove manufacturer can list an insert to be installed inside a prefab, the prefab

manufacturer has to test and list the insert to be installed in their prefab system. The prefab manufacturer will not likely do this as they are not interested in testing their products for inserts to be installed in their prefab systems. The listing must go both ways or the installer is opening themselves up to major liability. There are only one or two systems that have the listings going both ways, so once again do your homework first before doing any stove insert installations into prefab systems.

## Gas & Electric Safety

Bill Dimmock and Dave Goodman of the San Diego Gas & Electric Company did a presentation on gas safety. Dave showed the difference between complete combustion and incomplete combustion as well as blue flame vs. yellow flames using a gas burner. He clarified the issue of damper clamps and log lighters; he verified that damper clamps are only required with gas logs, not with log lighters. Dave also informed the group that gas fittings on dryers commonly leak and that old connector hoses can also allow gases to leak into the house and should be changed out occasionally.

Propane gas is heavier than air so propane detectors should be closer to the floor. Carbon monoxide detectors are different than gas detectors. A carbon monoxide detector will not be able to detect if there is a gas leak; only a gas detector can do that. Carbon monoxide is a product of incomplete combustion, regardless of the fuel.

San Diego Gas & Electric Company provides safety checks and they also clean out orifices and pack nut bolts on gas valves, all for free.

At the end, Bill showed a model of a house and the dangers of a gas leak in the house. The mini house filled up with gas and then Bill set off electric current as would happen when someone turns on a light switch and boom, created a mini explosion. It was a very effective representation of the dangers of gas leaking inside a house.

## Masonry Repairs

Jim Crawford is the owner of Authentic Fireplaces in San Diego and has been a fireplace and chimney professional for several decades. He is a third-generation mason and is grooming his son for the fourth generation. He is the leading fireplace mason in San Diego, specializing in older chimneys and those with



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**Mike Danskin demonstrates CPR technique.**

historical designations. He's been written up in the *Craftsman Magazine*, *San Diego Union-Tribune* and his fireplace designs have been on four covers of the *San Diego Home & Gardens*.

Jim addressed the issue of ash dumps because many chimney sweeps ignore ash dumps but they're important because ash dumps are a part of the foundation of the chimney structure. Jim stressed that if the structural integrity is lacking in the ash dump area, it affects the integrity of the entire chimney.

He distributed a handout showing the code differences in chimneys during three eras — 1800-1933, 1933-1950 and 1950-1980. He also gave a handout of the specs for the codes relating to San Diego. Using a mock-up of a fireplace and chimney, he explained how he does relines as well as how he does various repairs on chimneys. He gave some tips on top-mount dampers and gave a PowerPoint presentation on common issues with chimneys and fireplaces and the best ways to do masonry repairs.

## Mechanical Power Sweeping

George Spears, owner of Clean Sweep

Chimney Sweep, has been in the chimney trade for over 20 years and services the Bay Area. He demonstrated a mechanical power sweeping and Chim-Scan® on the prefab chimney in the cabana where the convention was being held. He sweeps all systems, masonry and prefabs, from the bottom going up, using a drill connected to rods. After he performed the sweeping, he then scanned the chimney and found rust at the connection between the firebox and the pipe. Considering the close proximity of the fireplace to the ocean, this was not surprising.

## A Ton of Information and Fun

In addition to the above presentations, Michael Danskin (The Clean Sweep, Knightsen, CA) gave a CPR class that qualified for CEUs. Nick Pulone

discussed the current changes in the insurance industry as it relates to chimney sweeps. A trade show gave vendors an opportunity to talk to convention participants one-on-one. A Pictionary game with chimney terminology gave people a ton of fun and of course, the nightly poker games provided a raucous diversion for all.

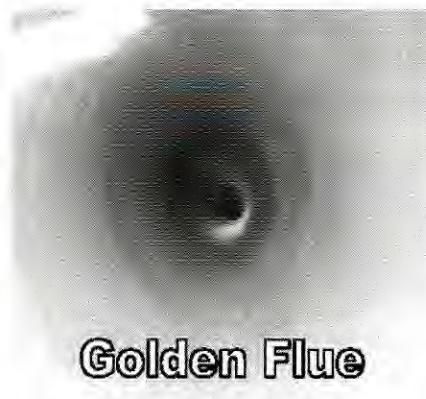
## Upcoming Events

Don't miss out on next year's Golden State Chimney Sweep Guild convention, scheduled for July 14-17 in Northern California (location to be determined).



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