



# Marine Chemist Association, Inc.

76 Farmholme Road ■ Stonington, CT. 06378  
■ [dvraff@comcast.net](mailto:dvraff@comcast.net)

**August 2023**



## **Marine Chemist Association Newsletter**

The Marine Chemist Association held a Board of Directors (BOD) meeting July 9<sup>th</sup> at the Francis Marion Hotel in Charleston, SC. This was followed by the 64<sup>th</sup> Annual Seminar. Information on the seminar, board meeting and general Marine Chemist activities follow. This newsletter will focus on two main topics, the annual seminar and the changes to NFPA 306 although other information is provided.

At the annual seminar there were 38 registered Chemists, two trainees, and six gas-free engineers. We also had 74 spouses, friends and children in attendance.

Typically, attendance at annual seminars averages 34 chemists. Hopefully, this slight increase can be attributed to the location, technical presentations, and the incentive which essentially covered the registration fee and three nights in the hotel. Due to the large turnout at the virtual annual seminar estimating the number of chemists who may attend based on past history is difficult. Please note that the last day to apply for the incentive payment is September 10, 2023.

Also, several reminders went out requesting chemists to make room reservations early, some did not do that and they were not able to get a room at the hotel. (180 room nights in the block were reserved and the hotel extended it to 220 before they sold out). The MCA must estimate the number of rooms to reserve in the room block and must pay for unused rooms, so a conservative number is used. If you are thinking of attending the annual seminar plan to make a reservation early as you can always cancel it. Due to the room block selling out the incentive was extended to chemists who were unable to get into our room block but attended the seminar.

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## **Your Board of Directors Follows (BOD)**

- i. Executive Committee (BOD)
  - i. Phil Giles, Chairman, Term expires 7/24
  - ii. Michael Schmidt, Past Chairman, Term expires 7/24
  - iii. Geoffery Jenny, Chairman Elect, Term expires 7/24
  - iv. Donald Raffo, Secretary/Treasurer (Serves at pleasure of Board)
- ii. Board of Directors (BOD)
  - i. Austin Montanti, Atlantic, Term expires 7/23 (After the 2023 annual)
  - ii. Brent Campbell, Atlantic, Term expires 7/24
  - iii. Bryan Berna, Pacific, Term expires 7/23 (After the 2023 annual)
  - iv. Lucas Kuebler, Pacific, Term expires 7/24
  - v. Toby Turcotte, Gulf, Term expires 7/23 (After the 2023 annual)
  - vi. Brian Axelrad, Gulf, Term expires 7/24
- iii. Future Sectional Alternate Directors (Terms start at the October 2023 meeting)
  - i. Pacific alternate, Jeff Hanson
  - ii. Atlantic alternate, Robert Albert
  - iii. Gulf/Inland alternate, Gary Snell
- iv. New Sectional Alternate Directors (Terms start at the October 2024 meeting)
  - i. Pacific alternate, Kayla Aird
  - ii. Gulf/Inland alternate, Eric Moore followed by Rick Thompson
  - iii. Atlantic alternate, Mark Bruff

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Thanks to Toby Turcotte, Bryan Berna and Austin Montanti who rotated off the board.



**Chairman Philip Giles Welcoming Attendees to the 64<sup>th</sup> Annual Seminar**

## **Annual 2023 MCA Seminar**

The 64<sup>th</sup> Annual 2023 Seminar was held at the Francis Marion Hotel in Charleston, SC. from July 10-12 with the BOD meeting held on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

Registration for the event was on Sunday night in the River View Suite. Josh Marshall 721, along with his group at MET-Chem, (David Miller, Matt Gillispie) were our local hosts. Josh and his group did an excellent job with the hospitality suite providing a spread of barbecue from a local hot spot (Rodney Scott's BBQ). The food and drinks were amazing and everyone had a great time meeting up with old friends. Some attending said they wished that they did not have dinner reservations as the barbecue was delicious and they were full upon leaving the suite.

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On Monday morning the MCA held its traditional welcome breakfast with local tour guide and historian Mark Jones providing an overview of the founding of the city and local attractions along with a general welcome to Charleston.

Following the breakfast spouses and friends proceeded to the historic Charleston market where a horse-drawn carriage ride with narration on the city was given. Sadly, it rained during part of the tour but the carriages were covered and the horses liked the cool rain. This was followed by lunch at High Cotton, a well-known Charleston restaurant.

During this time the MCA held its annual business meeting. You can view the presentation on our website under the 2023 presentation tab. Some notable items from the business meeting are as follows;

- Dues were maintained at the current rate. (\$150.00 for dues and 50.00 for sectional dues) It should be noted that the price of charms and bracelets continues to increase and a sectional dues increase may be needed in the future to continue to support this tradition. The membership determined that the practice of giving charms and bracelets to spouses and partners should continue.
- A slide showing the cost of the last Charleston Seminar was presented. The cost for the full seminar was about \$32,000 in 2007 while the 2023 seminar will come in at about \$110,000
- The MCA requested a grant of \$248,000 from the Marine Gas Hazard Control Program (MGHCP) which was approved. Of this almost 60% goes to subsidize the seminars and board meetings.
- The MCA requested that the MGHCP continue the incentive program in the future.
- The annual seminar costs about \$1500 per person which includes spouses, friends and children.
- Sectional seminars cost about \$950 per person.
- The Electronic Marine Chemist Certificate program has about 62% participation with a budget of around \$55,000.
- The (approximate) number of certificates to maintain the program at the current surcharge rate has gone from around 30,000 to about 31,500.
- While the number of certificates issued in 2022 was at a low of about 30,000, the 2023 year to date totals have returned to pre-pandemic levels.
- The MCA website is now used for all billing, reservations and information including the forum. You can sign up and whenever anyone posts to the site you can get an automated text or email notifying you of this.
- The BOD approved a motion limiting anyone from applying as an associate member to one application every 12 months.

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- The BOD has engaged an attorney to provide oversight at some of its meetings, review minutes, and ensure that the BOD is on sound legal footing. This is in line with the MGHCP meetings and due to prior legal challenges, this has become a necessary part of our process.
- You now have control of your information on the website. Any updates should be made by you and information should not be sent to the secretary.
- Seminar attendance information for recertification can be found in the members only section of the website. (See end of newsletter).
- Leslie Blaize, past chairman and assistant secretary who has retired was nominated and approved for Life Membership.
- Membership information.
  - Marine Chemist James Bishop, CMC 639, retired from the Marine Chemist profession in October 2022. Mr. Bishop was located in the Houston, TX area.
  - Marine Chemist Leslie Blaize, CMC 586, retired from the Marine Chemist profession in November 2022. Mr. Blaize was located in the Portland, OR area.
  - John Walker CMC 628 notified NFPA and the MCA that he has retired and will no longer be conducting Marine Chemist Inspections. Mr. Walker was located in North Carolina.
  - Twenty-two Marine Chemists were recertificated during 2022. There are twenty-two Marine Chemists who are due for recertification in 2023.
  - Chris Scott E621 is the most recent Marine Chemist Emeritus.
  - John Flynn CMC 623 has retired as of 7/1/23
  - There are currently 92 certified Marine Chemists.

Following the business meeting a luncheon provided by the Insurance Fund was held. Updated information on the funds transition to Marsh from ABD/New Front was provided. Additional information on contacting our representatives was sent to members and is on the Forum. While the Fund is not part of the MCA and is an independent body, many members belong to the Fund.

Monday afternoon presentations from Bernad Diaz from the Marine Chemist Qualification Board and Joe Cox from the MGHCP were given. Copies of the presentation are available on our website. The MCA believes it is important to have the chairs of these two groups present as they are closely tied to the MCA. While the groups remain independent, members should be aware of what the groups are doing. The presentations allow members to ask questions of these groups.

On Tuesday morning, following breakfast the technical sessions began.

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**Peter Escamilla (Trainee) and Chemists Alan Bonds, Donald Raffo and Philip Dovinh**

The presentations at the annual seminar included the following;

Inerting and the Effect on Instrument Sensors,  
Bob Henderson, GFG Portable Instrumentation.

Fall Protection in the Maritime Environment.  
Shawn Smith, USN

Atmosphere Analysis following a Shipboard Fire  
Robert Tew CMC 712,

Charleston Fire Dept and Marine Chemist Interactions.  
Joshua Marshall CMC 721, David Miller CMC 663. Rick Porzia, North Charleston Fire Department.

OSHA Subpart P and Considerations in Setting Fire Containment.  
Geoffrey Jenny CMC 685

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OSHA Maritime Enforcement Update  
Jeremy Fuchs, OSHA

2024 Edition of NFPA 306 Changes  
Donald Raffo CMC 668 and Larry Russell NFPA

All presentations are available on the website.

Bob Henderson from GFG provided an excellent presentation on sensors and inerting. Bob's presentation provided an in-depth overview of the affect of various atmospheres and their effect on sensors. This information is important to all chemists to understand what our meters are actually telling us and the affect different compounds have on sensors.

This was followed by a presentation by Shawn Smith from the USN and a member of the MCQB. He discussed fall protection issues in the maritime environment.

Robert Tew then provided an excellent presentation on sampling and analysis following a major shipboard fire. He discussed the sampling methods and the various compounds he tested for along with his strategy for safely entering the vessel. This became especially important as another major shipboard fire was occurring in New York City on a car carrier. Major news organizations reported that a Marine Chemist provided sampling and analysis permitting individuals to safely enter the vessel. Austin Montanti CMC 727 was the un-named chemist who provided this certification. The MCA has reached out to Austin and requested that he do a presentation at the 2024 annual seminar on his sampling methods, compounds and the way he allowed personnel to safely enter the vessel.

Marine Chemists are being called to permit entry following major fires. Guy Colonna provided a presentation on sampling methods following a fire several years ago and this was followed up recently with Robert's presentation which expanded on Guy's presentation. Hopefully next year Austin will provide more information on his methods for chemists to have a strategy to safely enter a vessel following a fire.

Tuesday afternoon had presentations from Josh Marshall and the North Charleston Fire Department on the cooperation between the fire department and the Marine Chemists on shipboard confined spaces/confined spaces and rescue.

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## **Catching up at Registration**

**Geoffery Jenny, Larry Russell, Gareth Clemons and Ross Mayet**

Finally, on Wednesday morning Jeremy Fuchs from OSHA (and the MCQB) gave a presentation on the recent happenings at OSHA and with MACOSH.

The final presentation involved the recent 2024 edition of NFPA 306. The new standard has been approved and the changes were discussed in detail. It is important for all chemists to be aware of the changes. While there are too many to review the following changes should be noted.

- There are some new requirements on Shipbreaking and our certificate (both paper and EMCC) will be modified to reflect these changes.
- A new chapter has been added to NFPA 306 outlining requirements for inspecting and certifying above-ground storage tanks.

The other changes are too numerous to list and the presentation is on the website. Please review the changes as they may effect the way you do inspections.

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**Chairman Elect, Geoffrey Jenny conducting his Presentation at the Annual Seminar.**

On Tuesday night, the MGHCP/MCA social reception was held. This year it was at the Lowndes Grove Mansion (the house featured in the TV show *Outer Banks*). The event included food and drinks along with a band. It also had combat archery which turned out to be extremely popular, with many members and guests participating. Fellow chemist Steve Gronda and his harmonica joined the band on stage for several songs. Everyone enjoyed the music and having Steve perform with the band.

As is tradition, the farewell luncheon was held on Wednesday. About 75 individuals attended the event which concluded the seminar and allowed family and friends to say goodbye to people that they may not see for another year.

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## Ready for Combat

### Fall 2023 Sectional Seminar

In an effort to continuously improve the sectional seminars, the BOD reviewed the presentations from the past on the use of the Safe for Limited Hot Work Standard Safety Designation. In general, the presentations were well accepted and generated a significant amount of discussion. Some minor changes have been made to keep the seminars fresh and current. Seminars normally focus on one topic twice per year, however, due to the pandemic the fall 2023 seminar will contain the same topics as the prior two seminars to us get up back on schedule. This will get the MCA back to two sectional seminars per year on the same topic. That way you may attend either seminar to get educational credits. Please be aware that if you have attended either of the prior two sectional seminars where the topic was Safe for Limited Hot Work you will not get credit for attending again. However, all are welcome to attend.

The fall sectional seminar will be held in Baltimore, MD at the Marine Institute for Training and Graduate Studies (MITAGS) on October 7th. The MCA has held prior seminars at this location. Both the rooms and classroom are on site as well as dining. You can register for the seminar and book a room on our website, [www.marinechemistassociation.com](http://www.marinechemistassociation.com). The website says a shuttle is available but you may need to call the venue to arrange for pickup.

The BOD meeting will be held the following day.

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The agenda for the fall sectional seminar is.

1. Roll Call
2. Business overview/Occurrences if needed. L. Russell
3. Safe for Limited Hot Work.
  - a. History of the SSD and SFLHW designations. Larry Russell
  - b. Cleaning and Inspection Practices for SFLHW. Geoff Jenny
  - c. What should be on a SFLHW Certificate? Don Raffo
  - d. Certificate writing exercise SFLHW Don Raffo
  - e. Technological tools for the Marine Chemist to Aid in Inspections. Philip Giles.
  - f. Open Discussion for Chemists. Moderator Don Raffo

## **Seminar and Meeting Dress Code and Information**

The BOD reminds you that we are a professional organization and all members are expected to dress properly during meetings. Business casual dress is required at all seminars and BOD meetings. Additionally, when coming before any Board you are reminded to dress professionally and use appropriate language. This is especially true when going before the MCQB.

The insurance fund reminds every chemist that if appearing before the MCQB for any type of a review you are permitted and encouraged to bring counsel, documentation, or any information to make your case. The MCQB also encourages this practice.

The following shows the current schedule of seminar locations. Changes are due to the pandemic scheduling.

| Current | 2020                      | 2021                     | 2022                | 2023                | 2024           |
|---------|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| March   | Atlantic<br>(Canceled)    | Pacific<br>(Virtual)     | Atlantic<br>Virtual | Los Angeles,<br>CA. | Houston<br>TX. |
| Annual  | Pacific<br>(Canceled)     | Gulf/Inland<br>(Virtual) | San Antonio<br>TX.  | Charleston<br>SC.   | Denver,<br>CO. |
| October | Gulf/Inland<br>(Canceled) | Atlantic<br>(Virtual)    | Chicago,<br>IL.     | Baltimore<br>MD.    | TBD            |

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**Eric Moore CMC 626 with his Wife Jenny Preparing for Combat**

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## **Annual 2024 Seminar**

The 2024 Annual MCA seminar is being scheduled in Denver, CO. from July 8-10. While the contract has not been signed yet there is a high probability that it will be held at the Denver Downtown Sheraton. The property has recently been updated and the hotel offers clean, new rooms and is in the center of shops/restaurants and attractions. The MCA is currently negotiating with the property which includes a Top Golf where we may have one of our social events. Once details are finalized information will be posted on the website.

## **BOD and Correspondence**

As a reminder any emails, letters or other correspondence to the BOD becomes the official business of the MCA and may be included in the correspondence section of the minutes.

## **NFPA 306**

The 2024 edition of NFPA 306 is complete and available for free viewing on the NFPA website. Once print copies are available, they will be sent to all chemists. Currently neither print or PDF copies are available.

The BOD has set up a committee to submit a reformatting of the standard to the 306 committee for the next edition. Don Raffo will chair the committee. Anyone interested in participating please contact Don Raffo. The effort will begin in earnest once the print edition has been distributed to all members.





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**John Ward CMC 651 (Far Right) with Gas Free Engineers at Lowndes Grove**

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## **NFPA Report**

There are currently 92 certified Marine Chemists. So far in 2023, there have been 13 recertifications completed while 9 recertifications remain to be completed.

There are 24 trainees and 4 new trainees joined this year.

Larry Russell did a presentation at Crowley Maritime on Marine Chemists and Confined Space Safety. He will do a presentation on Safe Hot Work Practices with them in the future.

Currently, NFPA is looking for shipyard representatives for not only 306 but other NFPA maritime related standards. Anyone with industry contacts who is willing to serve on the committee(s) is requested to contact Larry.



**Jennifer Scism, Kim and John Phillippi CMC 704 and Ross Mayet CMC 743 at Lowndes Grove**

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## **Marine Chemist Physical Ability to Perform Duties**

NPFA sends the following reminder to Chemists who may not be able to perform their work due to a temporary physical limitation.

The NFPA Marine Field Service wishes to remind all Marine Chemists, the *Rules for the Certification and Recertification of Marine Chemists*, as amended 01 September 2023, *Section II. Qualifications – General, Paragraph A*, requires all Marine Chemists to “*be of an maintain good character, and physically able to perform the duties of a Marine Chemist*”. In the event that a Marine Chemist is unable to physically perform his or her duties due to injury or illness; the Marine Chemist should be examined by a licensed physician or licensed physician's and obtain a statement attesting to the Chemist's physical ability to perform the duties of a Marine Chemist. The *General Medical Examination Form* (Form No. CMC-MD-01) can be used for this purpose

## **MGHCP Report**

During 2022, 19,191 electronic certificates and 10,850 paper certificates were issued for a total of 30,041 certificates. This number is significant as the general thought is that 30,000 certificates are needed to financially support the program at the current surcharge rate of \$25.00. This assumption may no longer be correct as previously noted. While there is no surcharge increase planned in the near future it is important to be aware of this number. NFPA reported a slightly larger number of certificates issued (30,600). This is most likely due to paper certificates purchased in 2021 but issued in 2022 or purchased at the end of 2022 which will be issued in 2023. While the NFPA number is important, the total used to compute income is where the MCA obtains it funding.

At the start of 2023 the numbers seem to be improving as shown below. Hopefully, the upward trend continues.

| <b>January - June Totals</b>     |              |              |              |              |              |
|----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
|                                  | <b>2019</b>  | <b>2020</b>  | <b>2021</b>  | <b>2022</b>  | <b>2023</b>  |
| <b>EMCC Certificates</b>         | <b>10093</b> | <b>9260</b>  | <b>9320</b>  | <b>9635</b>  | <b>10705</b> |
| <b>Paper certificates</b>        | <b>6675</b>  | <b>6300</b>  | <b>7000</b>  | <b>5425</b>  | <b>6075</b>  |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>16768</b> | <b>15560</b> | <b>16320</b> | <b>15060</b> | <b>16780</b> |
| <b>Yearly Total Certificates</b> | <b>33451</b> | <b>30641</b> | <b>30872</b> | <b>29971</b> |              |

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**Enjoying the View at Lowndes Grove**

## **Ethics**

Past chair Michael Schmidt (Ethics Committee Chair) reported that there are no ethics issues before the board.

## **Website**

The MCA website ([www.marinechemistassociation.com](http://www.marinechemistassociation.com)) has undergone an overhaul. If you have any issues contact Don Raffo or the support email below. To access the website, you must log in with your password. Once that is done you will be automatically logged in after that. If you have problems logging in, please contact the webmaster at: [support@marinechemistassociation.com](mailto:support@marinechemistassociation.com).

One of the changes is the ability for more control over your account, information, and membership. You now can change your personal information on the website and no longer need to contact me or the web person. It can be accomplished by going to the My Dashboard section (located in the upper right of the home page) and making the changes. It will then appear on the site.

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## Seminar Attendance Information

All information on seminar attendance can be found in the My Dashboard section of our website. Note that you must click on the year tab at the bottom of the spreadsheet to view by year. If you attended a seminar and have a question on attendance, please contact D. Raffo. If you recently attended a seminar, please verify that the information is correct. A screenshot follows;

[FIND A CHEMIST](#)

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## MY DASHBOARD



### MCA Forums Test

Get the latest updates and collaborate with other Marine Chemists.

[VISIT FORUMS ↻](#)



### Seminar Attendance

The official attendance sheet for chemists looking to renew their license.

[SEE ATTENDANCE 📄](#)

The forum is now the primary way for communication with members. Information for chemists is posted on the website. Failure to sign up for the Forum indicates consent to not receive meeting notifications.

There is also a forum section which only chemists may view. It is an area where news and technical discussions may be posted. If you are registered, you will get a text message and/or email whenever there is new information. Information on seminars, newsletters, events or general

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information also can be found on the site. If you have not registered you must enter the site to obtain the latest news and posts. We encourage all chemists to join the forum and obtain notifications.

## **Upcoming Committee Vacancies**

The MCA is looking for members to serve on the Marine Chemist Qualification Board as John Ward will be rotating off. Anyone interested or anyone seeking additional information on this important position please contact Don Raffo to get your name on the ballot.

The MCA is also looking for a new Chairman Elect. If you are interested in serving the MCA please contact Michael Schmidt ([marinechemist642@aol.com](mailto:marinechemist642@aol.com)) for information. Normally, the MCA looks for someone who has served on some MCA board and has some general experience on how the MCA works.

## **Outreach**

The MCA continues its efforts at outreach as we believe it is a valuable way to get the message out on using a Chemist as a resource in the maritime environment. If anyone knows of an event where we can spread the word on what we do to a group, please let Don Raffo know so the MCA can see if we can support it.

- Geoff Jenny our chairman elect did a presentation at Edison Electric in New Orleans to a group of Industrial Hygienists on the Role of the Marine Chemist in Maritime Safety.
- Don Raffo and Larry Russell did a presentation on Using a Marine Chemist in the Ship Repair Environment at the Maritime Log's Ship Repair conference.

## **MCA Committee Appointments**

The following individuals represent the MCA on various committees. This is for general information.

### **Control of Gas Hazards - NFPA 306.** (Appointed Positions by BOD)

Greg Grondin, principal, Jim Bruff alternate  
John Bell, principal, John Edgar, alternate

### **Hot Work Operations – NFPA 51B.** (Appointed Positions by BOD)

Greg Grondin principal  
Robbie Walker, alternate

### **Tank Leakage and Repair Safeguards - NFPA 326 & NFPA 329.** (Appointed Positions by BOD)

Brian Axelrad, principal

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Vince Pempeit, alternate

**NFPA 350 Guide for Safe Work in Industry Confined Spaces** (Appointed Positions by BOD)

Robbie Walker, principal

Vince Pempeit, alternate

**MCQB** (Voted in by membership)

John Ward, principal

Brian Axelrad, alternate

**Marine Field Service Advisory Committee** (Appointed Positions by BOD)

Donald Raffo

Chairman elect (changes but currently Geoff Jenny)

**SSRAC** (Volunteers)

John Ward, principal

Robbie Walker, alternate

**MACOSH** (Appointed by BOD)

Donald Raffo

**Code of Conduct for Meetings** - During any official MCA meeting there should be no discussion of personal matters, private disputes, or business pricing. Discussion should be limited to technical matters and the business of running the MCA.

**Facebook Page** - For those of you who are on Facebook, visit Friends of Marine Chemist Association. It is a closed group and only chemists, spouses and friends may view and post on the page. If you'd like to access the page, send a friend request to the group. We encourage all to post information, photos, comments or anything else related to our profession, seminars, and events. Please check it out. It proved very popular when posting information about our annual seminar. Please consider sharing some on-the-job photos with the group.

**Conclusion-** If you have any comments, thoughts or ideas on any aspect of the MCA please submit them to me and I will present them to the BOD for consideration. Be safe all.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Raffo

Secretary/Treasurer MCA

**Any opinions, policies or statements expressed in this newsletter are the personal opinion of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policy of the MCA.**

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