

Members Vote 3 Percent Dues Increase and Safety Service Fee for 2003; Springmaker's Exchange Charge Eliminated

On a motion duly made and seconded, the SMI membership voted to increase annual dues by 3 percent across the board and to initiate an annual \$100 service fee for assistance provided in the area of OSHA safety issues. The action was taken by voice vote of the members attending the membership meeting on March 16, 2002 at The Registry Resort in Naples, FL.

Offsetting the increase in dues and the safety service charge is a rollback of the fee to list items on the SMI Springmakers Exchange, a Web-based service that allows springmakers to buy and sell used equipment, excess materials and production capacities.

"Our dues have remained unchanged since 1997, when a two percent increase was implemented," explains Dan Sebastian, secretary/treasurer of SMI and president of MW Industries of Logansport, IN. "The safety service fee helps finance a program that has saved thousands of dollars for many members in the industry."

The \$100 service fee will be applied to all SMI member companies,

with an additional \$25 levied on individual branches or subsidiaries.

"Typically, Jim Wood, SMI's regulations compliance manager, performs 36 to 40 in-plant safety audits each year," says Roy Vinderine, SMI president and president of Springco Industries. "However, Jim handles numerous questions and performs services for members whenever OSHA appears at their door or if any issues arise. Servicing these inquiries sometimes takes hours, and the results have been monumental savings for companies seeking his advice."

Often, Jim is required to take a defensive role because calls are received after a citation has been delivered or an injury has occurred. His efforts to minimize penalties or to provide precedent information have been decisive in most instances.

"The Finance Committee felt strongly that it is important to keep this program financially healthy since so many members utilize Jim's services, even if they don't actually subscribe to a complete in-plant safety audit," Sebastian continued. "We have received numerous letters commending Jim on his work and

describing the funds that were saved by following his advice."

Both the dues increase and the safety service fee will be included in the dues invoices covering 2003, which will be mailed in December 2002.

The Springmakers Exchange on www.smihq.org, a feature available only to members of SMI, used to carry a fee of \$50 to \$100 a month per item listed. "Based on the positive response from SMI's introductory offer, it is clear that, in addition to conventions, members view the Springmakers Exchange as a valuable forum for networking with their peers," explains Ken Boyce, SMI executive vice president. "The Springmakers Exchange certainly supports that goal. By eliminating the service charge, we hope to encourage members to take full advantage of this exclusive service." ❖

SMI's Handbook of Spring Design returns with updated contents, expanded information

The spring industry "bible" is back in the library with the latest edition of the Handbook of Spring Design, now available through the SMI office.

"The Handbook has always been a favorite for springmakers to provide their associates and customers with a strong reference," says Ken Boyce, SMI executive vice president. "We have beefed up the contents from previous editions and created the best resource in print today."

The Handbook forms the cornerstone of the SMI technical library

Education Seminars Go Online

With the focus on education and the need to save time, money and personnel availability, SMI is introducing seminars that will be presented online rather than in person at a pre-arranged meeting-room facility.

The first such program, "Surviving an OSHA Audit," scheduled May 8, will be followed by other topics throughout the year.

"The technology is in place to virtually eliminate all the problems involved with sending people out of a plant," explains David Weber, SMI vice president and president of A.V. Weber. "Usually travel, rooming and per diem costs exceed the registration fee. By going online, we eliminate all those issues and allow as many people as possible to congregate around a monitor for

President's Message by *Roy Vinderine*

If I can paraphrase Cecil John Rhodes, founder of DeBeers Diamonds, "So many goals, so little time."

"So" may become the most important word in the springmaker's vocabulary.

Already I'm half way through my first year as president and I understand why my predecessors have seen their terms in office expire before they see their goals realized.

So, if I have to focus on only one element of my list of goals, it would be the task of defeating the notion that the products we all manufacture are little more than commodities, and that springmakers must compete principally on price alone because that's how commodities are sold. Our products, in the main, are far too sophisticated to be commodities; we have too much capital investment in equipment, and our people are too highly skilled for us to be led into that trap.

All of us have developed individual strengths. Some are involved with niche products or are more adept at large runs, while others do better with small runs or prototypes. As a result, we can all be more or less competitive in certain areas. But being more competitive doesn't mean selling at prices dictated by our customers such that we can't earn a fair profit or an adequate return on our investment.

Dr. Larry Steinmetz, our speaker at the SMI Spring Convention, addressed these issues in his talk, and in my view, he was right on target.

When the customer exclaims that our prices are so much higher than "the other guy down the street," Larry says our only reply should be "So?"

"So" is a simple word that speaks volumes. It says that the quality of our product deserves a fair price. It says that our understanding of the manufacturing process demands the price we have quoted and that our ability to help our customers meet their targets demands for quality, delivery, etc. demands the higher price.

While there are always particular circumstances that we all face, not getting a job that will cause us to lose money or undertake obligations not commensurate with the rewards, can hardly be a bad thing. It may also weaken our competition because the spring company that "wins" that order is unlikely to prosper for too long operating under such constraints.

"So" opens the door for us to tell our story, to meet our customer's objections, and to build an understanding of what it takes to produce a valuable product.

At the Institute's committee meetings last month, I sought help from several members to address the problem of the somewhat common assertion that springs are nothing more than commodities. This is an education issue, it is a marketing issue, and it is an industry relations issue, but, more importantly, it is first and foremost an issue for all of us to carefully think about before submitting our quotations "to get the job" at "commodity" prices.

I don't wish to imply at all that price is unimportant, but I submit that value provided must be adequately rewarded. Hopefully, some of you will agree with me, and I am sure that we can begin to improve our image, which will, I believe, result in a better understanding of what we do, its value to our customers and, ultimately, may bring about the improved well-being of our industry.

"So?" ❖

SMI Welcomes New Members

Americoil Torsion Spring and Wire Form

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Fax: (336) 358-8866
E-mail: dbuckner01@msn.com
David Buckner, president

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Phone: (562) 802-3100
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Dianna Hildebrandt, secretary

Productos Hitech de Monterrey, SA de CV

Heroe de Nacozari #1824 Nte.
Monterrey, Nuevo Leon
Mexico
Phone: (011) 528-1833-31-138
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Ricardo Valenzuela,
general director

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which includes the Wahl book, plus publications on Spring Design Fundamentals, Testing and Tolerancing, and Extension, Compression and Torsion Springs, and Other Types of Springs.

The 102-page publication has a blank area on the back cover for springmakers to stamp their name and address. Furthermore, customized covers can be created for companies wishing to provide more visible promotional elements.

Multiple-copy discounts are offered as are special member-only discounts.

Orders can be placed by fax at (630) 495-8595 or by calling Pashun McNulty in the SMI office at (630) 495-8588. ❖

SMI Links Member Need for Technical Help To UK's Institute of Spring Technology Expertise, Research

Unparalleled technical assistance is a telephone call or mouse click away, even though the source of that information is across the Atlantic Ocean.

"The Institute of Spring Technology has vast experience in laboratory-based spring research and problem solving," says Jim Zawacki, SMI past president and president of GR Spring and Stamping in Grand Rapids, MI. "While Michael Limb remains a central figure in offering our SMI members assistance, IST compliments Michael's experience with hands-on practical tools in a facility specially designed for spring industry issues and research."

Under the agreement, IST will make available up to two hours per year free of charge for each member of the SMI. The two hours may be taken in time or offset as a discount on any product. Any company wishing to use more than the allocated two hours will negotiate separately with IST for further work at the discounted rate of \$85 per hour. In the case of IST products, SMI members may be offered a discount of \$170, which is equivalent to the two-hour free service.

"We believe this relationship offers a unique opportunity for springmakers in America," explains Ken Boyce, SMI executive vice president. "We will initiate the program on May 1 and evaluate in six months to determine the feasibility of entering into a long-term relationship. SMI member feedback will tell us about the success and acceptance of the program, and will provide support for going forward or not."

IST will record the number of SMI members who take advantage of this service and will report, at three-month intervals, the usage being made of the service.

All inquiries will be treated with the strictest confidentiality, with no disclosure to third parties without

written consent from the originating inquirer, with the exception of the SMI report that will show the type of inquiry but not the detail.

Each SMI member will be issued a help line card providing a general telephone and fax number, and a specific e-mail address for contacting IST via the service.

"The Institute of Spring Technology and its staff are pleased to have the opportunity to work closer with the Spring Manufacturers Institute and its members, with this new agreement providing a limited free access to IST services," says Malcolm Southward, IST technical director. "The services offered by IST are supported by a number of staff in the disciplines of engineering, metallurgy and software, who have many years of experience, with over 60 percent having worked at IST for more than 10 years.

"The knowledge base developed over many years through research and involvement in services places IST staff in the unique situation for providing advice to spring manufacturers in the solving of problems, the instigation of preventative measures to reduce service and manufacturing problems, and in the performance of focused research for individual or groups of companies," Southward concludes.

The services that IST offers are as follows:

Spring Failure Analysis

This service provides a fast, accurate diagnosis of a spring failure and will provide recommendations on how to prevent its reoccurrence. IST microscopes are connected via the Internet for live viewing and discussion if required.

Component Testing

This can be performed either statically or dynamically and at either high or sub zero temperatures. In addition, springs can be analyzed using salt spray or humidity tests.

Material Testing

IST is capable of providing a wide range of routine and metallurgical testing and interprets the results for clients to ensure correct identification of materials.

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group education for the cost of one person."

Under the new system, participating springmakers will register for each computer terminal logged onto the seminar. However, more than one person can be seated by the monitor, thereby providing a cost-effective learning experience.

"The system is very clear-cut," says Ken Boyce, SMI executive vice president, "Video is carried over the Internet, and the voice is part of a conference call. Participants can ask questions and make comments throughout the presentation. The only difference between online and in-room programs is that students can't tell whether the instructor is in a robe and slippers or not."

Handouts and access information are sent to all registered participants about a week prior to the broadcast.

"Eventually, we would like to offer a complete curriculum online," Weber continues. "The medium allows us to enhance the topics that are developed by recognized speakers at the conventions where we discuss the 'why' of a subject. Our online seminars can be directed to those in each plant who will be involved in the 'how' or 'implementation' stage of these subjects."

Future subjects, times and dates will be announced through the year either on the SMI Web site (www.smihq.org) or by e-mail and postal mail.

Stay tuned. ❖

SMI/CASMI Package SpringWorld 2002 and the Close the Loop Technical Symposium Into Broad-Based Spring Industry Experience

SMI will launch the two-day Close The Loop Technical Symposium in conjunction with CASMI's SpringWorld 2002, allowing springmakers to see firsthand what is new and what will impact our manufacturing environment in the years ahead.

The symposium will offer about 20 technical papers presented over two days.

"The combination of two highly successful spring industry events will create a great opportunity for springmakers to experience the educational depth available in our industry," says Michael Limb, SMI symposium chair.

The SMI Close the Loop Technical Symposium, the third such program since 1999, incorporates the theoretical with the practical to generate solutions to problems and

issues that springmakers face daily on the shop floor.

"There is no doubt that the economy and international competition are making our industry more competitive and challenging. Since profit is still the motive behind our work, it is necessary that North American springmakers find new ways to compete efficiently and profitably," Limb continues.

Over four days, springmakers can incorporate the lessons from the symposium with the technology, equipment and materials that are on display at SpringWorld. By working together on this important project, SMI and CASMI have developed an unequalled opportunity for the springmakers who project themselves successfully into the future. ❖

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Training Courses

IST offers specialized training in material selection, surface coatings, measurement and failure prevention. All courses are performed by staff from IST, either in Sheffield or In House.

Design & Validation Service

The metallurgists and engineers provide a complete design service to determine optimum material, design and manufacture to provide maximum performance.

Testing Machines – Both Static and Dynamic

As a designer and manufacturer of static and dynamic testing machines for load and torque testing, IST has a considerable knowledge about the problems of machines and spring testing.

Shot Peening

IST operates a sub contract service that, combined with its research, gives the staff considerable knowledge about the process.

Publications & Standards

Design data sheets, material selector CD-ROM and British/International standards are just some of the publications available.

Focused Research

In addition to the funded collaborative research that IST performs, it also carries out research for individual or groups of companies.

All IST services are covered by either UKAS or ISO 90001 accreditation, and are operated on a completely confidential basis. No details of any inquiry are disclosed to a third party without prior written permission from the instigator of the inquiry.

Each member of the SMI will be supplied in due course with a help line card to provide contact details, including a specific e-mail address for inquiries. In addition, details of IST's FED EX agreement to provide a simple and swift transportation of samples to IST will be provided. ❖

SMI Convention Sites and Dates

2002:

Sept. 26-28 The Plaza Hotel, New York, NY

2003:

May 1-3 Loews Ventana Canyon, Tucson, AZ
Oct. 19-21 LaCantara, San Antonio

2004:

May 2-4 Westin Savannah Harbor, Savannah, GA
Sept. 26-28 Hyatt Tamaya, Albuquerque, NM

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