

## **SPILL BRIEFS**

**16-03**

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**April 25, 2003**

- ♦ *We would like to offer our sincere condolences to Jay Brundage and his family on the recent passing of his son, J.J. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Brundage family during this difficult time.*
- ♦ **Conference update . . .** Planning for SCAA's upcoming *Homeland Security – Great Lakes Region Conference* taking place on August 25-27, 2003 at The Lodge Sawmill Creek Resort in Sandusky, Ohio continues to move forward, and the conference committee is making great strides in program development. Further to this, we are pleased to announce that Ed Blackadar – who has been selected as Chief, Claims Division at the National Pollution Funds Center – has signed on to make a more detailed “OSRO Claims” presentation at our conference. We first met Ed in Las Vegas at this year's annual meeting, wherein he made a brief presentation on the claims process and fielded numerous questions from the audience. ***Be sure to book your exhibition space early and mark your calendars to attend this timely and informative event! Also, be sure to check the SCAA web site ([www.scaa-spill.org](http://www.scaa-spill.org)) for any conference updates!***
- ♦ **Congratulations!** to Sharon Palustre, who has been appointed as Section Chief, Emergency Spill Response (fcp-2), of the U.S. Coast Guard's Maintenance and Logistics Command Atlantic (“MLCA”) Finance Division. The move became effective April 16, 2003. ***We look forward to working with Sharon and her staff at the MLCA in the months ahead!***
- ♦ **Crime doesn't pay . . .** A federal jury recently found the captain of an old ferryboat guilty of illegally dumping trash bags full of asbestos into the Gulf of Mexico and elsewhere. The Canadian captain had been hired to sail the ship from San Diego, California to Mobile, Alabama. While en route, portions of the ship were being demolished as the vessel was eventually to be transformed into a riverboat gambling casino. In order to save time and money, demolition debris – including the asbestos – was bagged and thrown overboard into the Pacific Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean Sea at the captain's direction. Some dissenting crewmembers photographed others as they threw the trash overboard. Witnesses say that “hundreds” of bags were dumped, although the exact amount is unknown. The asbestos removal contract was estimated to cost between \$600,000 and \$1.7 million. (Source: *Maritime Reporter*)
- ♦ **Spills elsewhere in the world . . .** Finland is battling an oil spill in the Baltic Sea, which is currently locked between ice floes. The spill is about one kilometer (0.6 miles) long and 400 meters wide, and was spotted off Finland's southern coast. The source of the spill is unknown, but officials surmise that the oil was likely dumped by passing ships. Environmentalists say that oil spills in the Baltic Sea are particularly harmful because the severe climate makes it more difficult for nature to recover. (Source: *Oil-Spill-Responders*)
- ♦ **No big surprise . . .** A General Accounting Office (“GAO”) report entitled “Preparedness Varied Across State and Local Jurisdictions”, GAO-03/373, concludes that preparedness for a bioterrorist attack varies across state and local jurisdictions. While the report finds deficiencies in every city, those with more experience in dealing with public health emergencies are better prepared for a bioterrorist attack than other cities. Common deficiencies include a lack of communications capacity, workforce shortages, inadequacies in disease surveillance and laboratory systems, and a lack of regional coordination and compatible communications systems. State and local officials also cited a lack of



guidance from the federal government. Visit the GAO's web site ([www.gao.gov](http://www.gao.gov)) for a copy of the report. (Source: *Emergency Preparedness News*)

- ◆ Julian Parker – Nautical Institute secretary – has called upon the International Maritime Organization (“IMO”) to set up an independent authority that would have the power to require the investigation and reporting of maritime accidents. Moreover, he has suggested that the authority include a professional panel to assess reports and data, with the power to state whether a ship at the time of the incident was seaworthy within the context of international conventions and class rules. (Source: *Lloyd's List*)
- ◆ Earlier this month, the House and Senate passed the Smallpox Emergency Personnel Protection Act (H.R. 1770) that provides benefits to health care workers, first responders and their families under the Public Safety Officer's Benefit program. The legislation includes \$100 million to assist state and local health authorities with the costs of the smallpox program and \$42 million to compensate volunteers who experience adverse reactions to the smallpox vaccination. The legislation covers volunteers as well as any people that may contract the virus through secondary infection; allows the federal government to reimburse individuals for the cost of vaccine-related medical treatment; and in the event of death pay the victim's family a \$262,100 lump sum death benefit. For families with surviving children, the family would either receive the lump sum or a \$50,000 annual death benefit until the children turn 18 years of age. (Source: *Emergency Preparedness News*)
- ◆ Congress recently directed the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (“BCBP”) to install a portal radiation monitor at the Blue Water Bridge in Port Huron, Michigan by May 2003, citing the vulnerability of bridges along the U.S.-Canada border to vehicle traffic that might contain radioactive material. Michigan's Congressional representatives have argued that the large volumes of Canadian municipal trash coming across the border into Michigan landfills presents a security threat because it could conceal weapons of mass destruction. At one point, the Bush Administration agreed with the assessment, and in January, the BCBP classified garbage as a high-risk commodity requiring thorough inspection before entering the U.S. In February, however, the bureau reversed its assessment and reclassified trash as a low risk commodity. The conference report on the wartime supplemental act (PL 108-11), passed on April 12, requires the bureau to reevaluate whether municipal solid waste should continue being classified as a low risk commodity. (Source: *CQ Homeland Security*)
- ◆ **Work/Life/Health:** As a manager, you solve problems every day – and probably every hour of every workday. While some solutions come easy, others may be more difficult and demand more attention. Next time you are faced with a particularly challenging problem, consider using the “Is/Could/Should” approach: **Is** – Write out the situation as it currently is. **Could** – Try devising several things you could do to resolve the problem. **Should** – Decide upon the ideal outcome, then pick a plan from the “Could” phase that will achieve it. (Source: *Customer Service Advantage*)
- ◆ **Quote of the Week:** “We must all wage an intense, lifelong battle against the constant downward pull. If we relax, the bugs and weeds of negativity will move into the garden and take away everything of value.” – Jim Rohn

*Disclaimer: Although the Spill Control Association of America has made every effort to be accurate, unintentional errors may appear.*