ISA Wilmington Delaware
Section

The Sensor
May 2012

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Upcoming Events

May 22	Meeting: Alarm Management presented by Nick Sands
June 26	WISA Picnic

Alarm Management
Presented by Nick Sands

Tuesday, May 22, 2012
5:30 PM
Applied Control Engineering, Newark, DE
(Directions at www.ace-net.com)

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Join us for

Miracle of Silence:
Putting the Alarm Management Lifecycle into Practice

presented by
Nick Sands of DuPont

Tuesday, May 22 (5:30 PM)

Applied Control Engineering
700 Creek View Road, Newark, DE 19711-8544

The alarm management lifecycle from ANSI/ISA-18.2 is a nice framework, but it takes real work to put it into practice and deliver an improved alarm system. This presentation provides some lessons based on the global alarm management program at DuPont, including the steps to implementation.

President's Message

By Leata Mullen

Our May event is a popular presentation on alarm management by Nick Sands of DuPont., May 22nd at the Applied Control Engineering building in Newark. Ineffective alarm systems have often been cited as contributing factors following major process incidents. Nick is a knowledgeable presenter, with a solid discussion prepared on how to implement and maintain an alarm management system. His presentation includes a discussion of ISA standard 18.2, Management of Alarm Systems for the Process Industries, which Nick was actively involved in developing.

Also on the calendar, Wilmington ISAs annual picnic, June 26th. I am excited to announce that the picnic is moving back to the old DuPont site, though at a new pavilion. Join us for this fun event, including food, drink, horseshoes, and good company.

In August we will hold our annual WISA Blue Rocks baseball game event. Please watch the website for more info as the date gets closer.

You do not need to be an ISA member to attend any of our presentations or other events. We like to see new faces, so please extend an invitation to your colleagues!
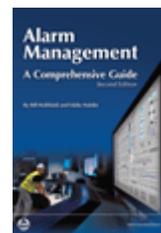
2012 WISA Shrimp Boil

Please join WISA in thanking our Shrimp Boil Sponsors

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Apologies for missing Friend of the Shrimp **Steve Spangler** of **Vega Americas** in the list in the April 2012 Sensor

Saved by the Bell

Saved by the Bell - BBBB (Buy)
The Alarm Management Handbook
By Bill Hollifield and Eddie Habibi
Reviewed by Nick Sands

Please note that this is a review for *The Alarm Management Handbook* published by PAS. A second edition, entitled *Alarm Management: A Comprehensive Guide*, has now been published by the ISA. It is available from ISA for $89 ($70 for ISA members).

Alarm Management continues to be a hot topic and a gap in the body of knowledge for automation professionals. Kudos to Bill Hollifield and Eddie Habibi of PAS for filling that gap by self-publishing *The Alarm Management Handbook*. Habibi, who holds an engineering degree and an MBA, is founder and CEO of PAS, with previous experience at Schlumberger and Honeywell. Hollifield, who has a BS in Mechanical Engineering from Louisiana Tech and an MBA from the University of Houston, has significant alarm management experience, including part of his 27 years with Union Carbide and Dow, and his last 4 years or so with PAS. For much of that time, Hollifield has been a significant contributor on the SP18 committee working on an alarm management standard, along with this reviewer.

The handbook begins with a quick summary of how to develop an effective alarm system in seven steps, which summarizes many of the practices discussed later in the book. This is one of a few places in the book where the privilege of self-publishing becomes self-evident. There is a chapter on the history of alarm systems and how the problems of today developed with the advent of microprocessor based control systems. Hollifield also tries to address the justification for improving alarm system performance, which relies mostly on the correlation and conviction that improving the alarm system improves safety and operation. There is no magic bullet solution to justification.

Saved by the Bell

The authors highlight the chapter on what is an alarm as the most important in the book. The working definition for alarm is given as a mechanism for informing an operator of an abnormal process condition for which an operator action is required. As stressed throughout this chapter and the book, alarms are not for things that are nice to know, but things the operator needs to know. The alarm philosophy takes the definition of alarm and builds structure around it; the practices to set, configure, and display alarms and measure performance. The topics of the alarm philosophy are further explored in the later chapters, starting with the display of alarms and issues of priorities, colors and tones.

One key step in alarm management is benchmarking, or assessing the performance of the alarm system. There are several metrics that can be used, including alarms per day, alarms by frequency, number of alarm floods and many more. These metrics should be used to monitor the performance of the alarm system. To improve performance, a key technique is rationalization of the alarms. Rationalization is a review of each potential alarm against the definition of alarm and typically a set of grids, to develop a well documented, consistently prioritized alarm. PAS claims ownership of a focused method for this process discussed in a separate chapter.

The final chapter addresses the more specific topics of real time alarm management including alarm shelving and state based alarming. Hollifield shares his view on the classic lightbox alarm panel as well as several specific alarm types, including gas detections and safety systems. Common problems, like nuisance alarms and duplicate alarms are addressed. There is a brief section on management of change and a discussion of the future of alarm systems. As a bonus there is an outline of an alarm philosophy in an appendix.

Hollifield and Habbi have performed a service to the automation industry by publishing the first book in many years to address the area of alarm management, and the most complete work on the subject to date. As with any self-published book, the reader must be cautious to separate the facts form the authors' opinions, which at times are so strong that reading some sections is like being yelled at by a drill instructor. Still this book brings together most of the best approaches published in many articles over the last two decades, reinforced by the authors' own experiences. I recommend it to every automation professional as a buy (BBBB).

Annual WISA Shrimp Boil
April 24, 2012

By Jeff Arbogast

The Wilmington Section's World Famous Shrimp Boil was success again this year. Shrimp Masters Joe Gunn and Mike Scott once again served up a spicy mix of shrimp, sausage, corn and potatoes. As has become tradition, a toast was held in honor of Dan Roarty, the Grand Master of the Shrimp.

Please enjoy the following pictures and set your calendars to join us in April 2013!

Please also thank our sponsors (listed on the back of this newsletter).

Shrimp Masters

Joe Gunn (r) & Mike Scott (l) of North East Technical Sales

Preparing the Feast (left)

and Serving the Feast (right)

and

and Members Enjoying The Feast (bottom)

WISA thanks our Shrimp Boil Sponsors

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ISA Automation Week 2012

24-27 September 2012
Orlando, FL