



Pest Management Services
Your Partner for a Healthy Environment



Pest Management
Services and Supplies



Smithereen Pest Management Services, 7400 N. Melvina, Niles, Illinois 60714
"Your Partner for a Healthy Environment!"

Vol. 3, Issue 7, October 2006

Inside this issue:

July Survey Results	2
Smithereen Family News	3
American Workers Have Misconception of Safety Risks	3
A Funny Thing Happened...	4
Smithereen Summer Outing a Real "Picnic" This Year	4
We Are Family	5
HR Corner	6
From the Editor's Desk	6

Publisher and Editor:

Jim Anderson
Phone (847) 647-0010
Fax (847) 647-0606
janderson@smithereen.com

Editorial Advisory Board:

Andy McCormack
David Harris-John
Jack Jennings

Contributors:

All Smithereen and Ragan employees and occasional outside contributors with by-line credit.

Congratulations to these employees who celebrated an anniversary with Smithereen or Ragan during July, August and September of 2006:

- Bob Wrede 20 Years**
- Jose Sanchez 14 Years**
- Ben Davis 11 Years**
- Gustavo Morales 10 Years**
- Bob Alexander 9 Years**
- Jim Brucker 8 Years**
- Mark Upton 7 Years**
- Emil Claudio 6 Years**
- Austin Henry 5 Years**
- Jaime Wilcox 5 Years**
- Ron Klann 5 Years**
- Willie Smith 4 Years**
- Shaun Watts 4 Years**
- Dwight Thomas 4 Years**
- Jeff Goza 4 Years**
- Eli Miller 3 Years**
- David Frederick 3 Years**
- Clayton Berk 1 Year**
- Devette Saddler 1 Year**
- Dan Wilson 1 Year**

We truly appreciate your loyalty, achievements and hard work. We look forward to your continued service as valued members of the Smithereen team.

We also want to welcome these new employees to the Smithereen team:

- James Luckey State St.**
- Linzo Darling II State St.**

Congratulations to **Ralph Stover** (Termites) who passed the IDPH General exam.

Congratulations to **Abby Valleau**, daughter of **Kitty Stone** (Ragan) and **Linda Smith** daughter of **Devette Saddler** (State St.) on graduating high school in June and beginning college studies this fall. **Abby** is attending Blue River Community College and **Linda** is attending Malcolm X College. We wish both of these young ladies great success in achieving whatever academic goals they choose. With those mothers as role models they can't go wrong

The end of July we received a call from a woman who was "99% certain she had termites". **Ralph Stover** carefully inspected her structure and only found springtails. She called our office after he left to let us know what a "phenomenal job he did". She said she had a wonderful time working with him and appreciated his honesty. She made it clear if she ever has a pest problem Smithereen is the company she will call. **Great job, Ralph!** You didn't get the

sale, but representing our company so honorably will pay future dividends to you and to Smithereen.

Jim Brucker (North) got an email recently from Wendy McCoard, Property Manager of Lakeside Tower and she wrote, "Pest control, though necessary, is not a pleasant task in the property management arena. You and your Smithereen staff make it less gruesome and at times even a fun experience. I first had the pleasure of working with Smithereen at the Waukegan Housing Authority where **Jeff Goza** was successful in ridding a 448 unit property of pests. Now I have moved to a new location, well known for rodent problems with the pleasure of awarding another contract to Smithereen. After a blitz of the building and "round two" has been completed, I am once again confident that my building will be infestation free do to **Jeff's** diligence and your staff's commitment. Thank you not only for your concern for our property but also for **Jeff Goza, Brian Johnston, Tommy Evans, Gustavo Morales, and Jesus Pinon.** Well Done, Gentlemen!

July Survey Results

More than **100** copies of the July edition of *What's Buzzing* were sent out to employees. Since then I have received only **22** of the Mandatory Survey forms that were included in that issue. I guess that means the rest of our employees either didn't even open their *What's Buzzing* to find the survey or they just do not know the meaning of the word "Mandatory".

In any case, the following is a report on the results from those surveys we received from the ones who care about our company newsletter. The opinions of those who read and make use of *What's Buzzing* are really what matter anyway.

Thirteen responded that they read the front and several articles, eight read all of the newsletter and one only reads the front page. (The survey must have fallen out while they were reading about employees deserving congratulations.)

When it comes to favorite sections, the unanimous choice was **Congratulations** on the front page. Sixteen look forward to **Smithereen Family News**, thirteen like reports about **Events at Smithereen**, twelve enjoy **Humor**, ten appreciate **HR Corner**, nine like **General Interest** articles, while eight chose **From the Editor's Desk**. Six like the **Ragan** articles and **Technical Up-dates**, five like to read

the **Editorials** on page two and **Treasure Hunt**. (Even though no one including those five who like Treasure Hunt even inquired about the items listed In the July issue.)

Sixteen responses included suggestions and they are all sincerely appreciated. Some of the suggestions, however, are not really practical for a quarterly publication like ours. One person wanted a section featuring local events and two others wanted to add a sports section. It would be difficult to do justice to either of those topics on a quarterly basis when daily newspapers, TV and radio give us up to the minute reports on each game and event. But an article from anyone giving their opinion why a particular Chicago or Kansas City team is doing well or why they stink up the place would be welcomed.

Another suggestion was to include a list of recommended restaurants. If *What's Buzzing* appears on our web site as it has in the past (also another suggestion from the surveys), we run the risk of offending some of our good customers who didn't make our list. I think "word of mouth" is still the best way to spread news about great food experiences?

Two of you suggested a featured pest each issue and one suggested we include a pesticide label and MSDS in the newsletter when any changes are made in them. Those things are part of our continuing education and should be handled by our

Technical Director, **Andy Novinger**. But we would really like for you to report on your **unusual encounters** with pests in the field. Let us know what you are finding out there. If it is interesting to you it will probably be of great interest to most of our readers

One suggestion was to include a puzzle or word game. If we did that, it would have to be an original puzzle to avoid any copy write infringement. I want to challenge the person making that suggestion to submit an original word game and I promise we will include it. If anyone has an original riddle or puzzle to submit, we will definitely consider using it.

There was a suggestion to make **Treasure Hunt** more like the want ads by putting each item being offered in a separate box. We are going to test that idea in the April 2007 issue. As already mentioned, although five of you expressed liking the idea of having a place to swap or sell items, there have been no responses to the first ads what so ever. We will try again in April with a new look but there is no reason for us to continue that section as a regular feature unless some interest is shown in the items being offered.

Four responses suggested that we include a lot more pictures and that is a great idea. We are beginning this issue with the pictures on page 4 of our picnic. We will

find and use digital photos whenever possible. Please help by emailing your digital photos to me at **janderson@smithereen.com** and I will try to use them if at all possible. Only digital photos will be considered.

Three people suggested we feature articles about our employees. That is another great idea that will require employee involvement and will help us get to know our coworkers better. In January we will begin a series of articles entitled **In the Spotlight** that will feature one employee each issue with photos as well as professional and personal information about them. Of course we will continue to encourage employees to submit articles or ideas for *What's Buzzing* as well.

Twelve people sent answers to the three trivia questions about the Back to the Future article. Seven of them got all three correct. Everyone knew the **3-year-old** in Wales was **David Harris-John** (wonder what tipped them off). Eleven knew that **Richard Jennings** was the **6-year-old** aboard *Lady Luck*. But only seven knew that the **8-year-old** baseball loving Hoosier was **Jim Anderson**.

Thanks to each of you who took the time to fill out the survey. Without you *What's Buzzing* would be a complete waste of time and paper.

Smithereen Family News

In July, **Andy Novinger** (Corporate) had quite a scare when he awoke at 2:00am and could hardly breathe because his throat was inflamed and swollen. At the emergency room he discovered it was streptococcus (commonly called strep throat). Treatment was successful and thankfully he didn't *share* it with any other Smithereen employees. Then a short time later, **Anna's** (his wife) grandmother passed away. Our

thoughts and prayers are with Anna and her family for their loss.

On August 26th, **Jaime Wilcox** (Corporate) and **Jonathan Joaquin** were married. We congratulate **Jonathan** and wish the happy newlyweds a long, fulfilling life together (see page 6).

Steve Jarvi (State St.) suffered paralysis in one arm that made it impossible for him to continue working after

nearly fourteen years at Smithereen. **Steve**, our thoughts, prayers and best wishes are with you. We hope you will be able to recover from that disabling condition and again enjoy a full and active life.

In September **Kimberly Rice** (West) was rushed to the hospital with a pulmonary embolism (a blood clot affecting one of her lungs). It is a very serious condition that can be fatal if not caught in

time. We are pleased to have you back to work, **Kim**. Our thoughts and best wishes for your continued good health.

Eric Dennis (South) was hit by a door opened by a customer. Refusing medical treatment for his head injury he finished his route. We appreciate your dedication to your customers, **Eric**. But next time don't be so "hard-headed". Get medical attention. Your health is more important.

American Workers Have Misconceptions of Safety Risks

A recent survey that was sponsored by the **American Safety Council** found that although American workers do recognize safety as a serious issue, their perceptions about the greatest risks to their safety do not match up with the facts.

Misconception #1: Violent crime and natural disasters pose a greater risk than accidental injury. **Facts:** Extensive news media coverage of natural disasters and violent crimes may make those risks seem more dangerous, but accidents are the leading cause of death for people under 40 and the fifth-leading cause of death for all ages. Major auto accidents appear briefly on the news, but other accidental deaths or

serious injuries are under reported.

Misconception #2: Workers feel safer at home than they do at work. **Facts:** Far more people are killed or seriously injured in and around the home than in the workplace. In 2004 for example, about **5,000** workers died and **3.7 million** suffered disabling injuries in the workplace. That same year nearly **44,100** people died and **6.8 million** suffered disabling injuries from accidents while they were away from the job. Home is not the safe haven most of us believe it to be. One reason for this is that governmental regulations (OSHA), Workmen's Compensation claims, and personal injury law suits have caused most

employers to take every step possible to provide a safe workplace. Away from work, however, the government and the employer have very little influence over safety even though the total cost of accidents last year (**\$575 billion** including lost wages and productivity, property losses, medical costs, administrative expenses and employer' uninsured costs) actually affects everyone including tax payers and employers.

Now that we know the facts about safety risks, what can we do to better protect ourselves and keep from becoming one of those statistics? The leading cause of accidental injury and death away from work is **motor vehicle crashes**.

We can use the driver training that Smithereen provides each employee whether we are driving a company vehicle or our personal vehicle. We also need to share our driver safety knowledge with family members for their safety. Other risks to our safety away from work include (in order of most occurrences) **falls, poisoning, fire, choking, suffocation and drowning**. For additional safety information on measures you can take to protect you and your family from a particular risk, please contact Jim Anderson at Corporate.

Smithereen wants and needs you alive and healthy. So whether you are at work or away from work – **be careful out there!**

A Funny Thing Happened...

A medical student doing a rotation in toxicology at the poison control center tells about a call he received from an hysterical woman who screamed that her

daughter just ate some ants and she was rushing to the nearest hospital emergency room. He calmed her down and quietly reassured her that ants are not harmful and

there would be no need to take her to the hospital. It wasn't until the very end of the conversation that the woman casually mentioned that she gave her daughter

some ant poison to kill the ants. He quickly ordered her to immediately get back on route to that hospital emergency room.

Smithereen Summer Outing a Real "Picnic" This Year

When the vote was taken to find what our summer 2006 outing should be, a company picnic won. The vote was not unanimous. Some wanted to "do" Great America again and others missed the boat outings of the past. Ragan's annual picnic is a tradition, but it was a new experience for most Smithereen employees and their families.

The picnic was held at

Redman Park in Bensenville, Illinois on Sunday, August 13th, from 1:00pm to 4:00pm. 133 signed up, but only 82 made it there. It was perfect weather for the outdoor activities and the catered picnic buffet was delicious (I know because I tried most of it).

The park district staff kept the kids busy with various games and activities (I saw some adults having just as

much fun as the youngsters)

The adults and teenagers played volleyball, softball, croquet and Baggo (a version of washers or horse-shoes using bean bags).

Just before we called it a day, some very nice door prizes were awarded in a drawing. The picnic was a great atmosphere to interact with Smithereen employees and families.

Great America was a lot of fun too, but everyone scattered and went separate ways after lunch. I'm not sure why so many people signed up and decided to stay home. A few did say it conflicted with their Sunday church activities. If we have a picnic again maybe it can take place on a Saturday. Here are a few pictures of the fun and relaxation.



We Are Family by Joe Snopek

In 1979, Sister Sledge had a hit song titled, "We are family". The Pittsburgh Pirates adopted that song and used it to unite their team and their fans during a very special and unexpected pennant drive and World Series victory. The song is repetitive and certainly no classic, but the sentiment it expresses clearly applies to Smithereen Company today and throughout its long history. As a matter of fact, one of the most important aspects to me of working for Smithereen and Ragan is that uncommon family atmosphere we still enjoy. Mr. Jennings and our Corporate Staff generate that atmosphere and they intend for it to touch every employee, but does it?

At each of our company sponsored events there is an ambiance that can draw us together as we interact with our coworkers and their families. Even retired or semi-retired employees like Joan Kohler in Kansas City and Ramon Garcia in Chicago are welcomed to our picnics, other summer outings, holiday parties, bowling tournaments and other special events that occur from time to time. But do all of our employees attend those events with their families and feel the warmth of the extended Smithereen family?

Sometimes we fail to encourage a new employee to attend our outings and bring their family or date.

After all, they receive the same invitation as everyone else, so why should they need encouragement? Fear of the unknown causes all of us to miss out on many nice experiences. Have we explained to them what goes on at these events? Do they understand that they don't have to be a tournament bowler to enjoy family bowling and pizza at our bowling party? Do they know about the usually excellent food and beverages? Do they know about Santa's visit to the small children at our holiday parties? Are they aware of the door prizes drawn at many of our events or the raffle for very nice prizes at our holiday parties to raise money for the Jennings Education Foundation (a non-profit Foundation investing the proceeds in the continuing education of Smithereen employees and families)? Do they really understand how unique these events are in today's corporate world? Giving our new employees that information and a warm invitation is not just the responsibility of their manager or any one person for that matter. Everyone who attends our events and enjoys them should want to freely share that enjoyment with new employees. As a matter of fact, the more coworkers who sincerely invite the new employee, the more comfortable they will feel about attending and bringing their family.

New employees are not the only ones who need encouragement. There are some people who have worked here for years without taking part in our events. Has anyone taken the time to ask them why they are not attending? Maybe the reason is simply that it is too far from home or they have no transportation. Surely someone is going from that area that would be happy to provide a ride, but they won't know a ride is needed unless they ask. Maybe they just need the same encouragement as the new employee because no one has encouraged them to attend since they were a new employee. No one expects that every employee will attend all company events. Someone who did not enjoy baseball would not have enjoyed that great Joliet Jackhammer's game for example. Maybe they want to attend but other commitments keep them from getting away on the weekends. Whatever the reason, the important thing is that we make them feel welcome at any event they and their family can attend.

It is no coincidence that **Smithereen Family News** is a very popular part of this newsletter. We are family at Smithereen We just need to remember it and act like it a little more often that we do. .

"It is not a coincidence that Smithereen Family News is a popular part of this newsletter. We are family at Smithereen. We just need to remember it and act like it a little more often than we do."

HR Corner

The following information is provided by Wheeler Associates our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider:

Warning! Don't get hooked by "Vishing". The e-mail asks you to call a phone number and give personal or financial information to update your customer account with a bank, insurance company or other firm. Beware: The e-mail is a scam even though it looks like it comes from a real corporation. This type of fraud-called vishing— resembles the more widely known trap in which e-mailers try to trick you into clicking on a phony Web site and entering your log-in and

password information so they can gain access to your bank account or Social Security number. Because software can now alert users about fake Web sites, scammers are resorting to vishing so that victims use the phone to key in their data. **Never reveal personal information based on an e-mail request!**

"Internal" customers are also important. You may not see your coworkers as customers, but they can make or break your job. Serve internal customers with care, and you will earn a reputation as a star while building alliances that can open career doors. But if too many people issue too

many demands, you may feel swamped. The solution is to prioritize internal customers based on their role in the organization, their needs, and your expertise. Share your list with your boss to confirm you've got your priorities right. Just don't tell colleagues about your list. Some will resent that they aren't your top priority. As long as you work efficiently and take at least quick, incremental steps to satisfy your highest-priority people, you'll free up time to respond to less pressing requests.

Make your boss look good. That is not just a good idea—it is a crucial skill. Making your boss's job easier reflects well

on you and it can increase your chances of being chosen for desirable assignments. Gaining your boss's confidence will also improve your job security. If your relationship with your boss is not good, call for guidance and support.

FEEL LIKE YOU MAY BE LOSING CONTROL?

**For a rapid response call
1-800-275-3357
Day or night
for confidential,
professional counseling.**

Any questions about EAP? Contact **Cheryl Kronon** at Corporate.

From the Editor's Desk

I have some grandfatherly advise for **Jaime** and **Jonathan** and other young married couples. I'm no expert on marriage, but I am a forty-two year survivor. My advise is this: Share a good laugh together every day. Life is not a dress rehearsal and marriage is a mental, physical and spiritual union that will require plenty of very serious decisions and even a few moments of shared sorrow at times. A shared sense of humor can relieve tension and make the challenges much easier to overcome. Milton Berle once said that laughter is a mini vacation. Just as we need to get away from the rat race together on vacation, we also need to share a little moment of laughter with each other every day. I'm not prescribing "a joke a day". Just learn to find and share

the humor that is all around us in everyday life. After all, isn't that where the really good comedians get their funniest material?

One comedian believes that people doing or saying stupid things should be given a sign to wear. A mother giving her daughter ant poison (page 4) to kill ants she had swallowed would definitely qualify. If signs were given for stupidity, I'm sure we all would wear one some time in our lives. That doesn't mean we don't enjoy laughing at the stupidity of others. Let me know if you run across other stories of that type.

On the anniversary of 9/11, like most people I reflected on my experiences that day.

I was field training a new technician. We entered a restaurant and found the manager and cook glued to the big screen TV instead of preparing to open for business. We immediately joined them and just got caught up on what was happening when one of the towers collapsed before our eyes. That numb feeling of disbelief followed by an emotional roller coaster of depression, fear, anger and resolve was not new to me. I had felt that way once before. I was a 20-year-old Air Force staff sergeant on leave in Fenton, Missouri. My first (and current) wife and I were making plans only two weeks before our wedding day. A neighbor came running over in tears to tell us that President John F. Kennedy had been shot in

Dallas. We turned on the TV and remained fixated on the screen until the announcement finally came that my Commander in Chief was dead. I hope and pray I never experience another day like those. Two is quite enough for one lifetime.

A Word to the Wise:
"He who makes you angry controls you."

**Items for the
January issue
must be at
Corporate by
January 3, 2007.**