



Robert Knake
Section Coordinator

Hosted by: American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA)

The winter meeting for the Maryland Section was held on January 14, 2010 at the Hampton Inn in Frederick, Maryland. The meeting was hosted by the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation or A2LA and was originally scheduled to take place at their facilities in Frederick, Maryland. However, the response for the meeting was so great that the venue had to be changed to the ballroom at the Hampton Inn located next door to A2LA to accommodate the just over 60 attendees.

Maryland Section Coordinator Mr. Robert Knake opened up the meeting with a brief introduction and welcome to all attendees. Robert was followed by Mr. Peter Unger, President and CEO of A2LA, who gave a host presentation and overview of A2LA which provided information on international accreditation issues. Ms. Carol Hockett, NIST Weights and Measures Division, then presented an update on the most recent NCSLI Board of Directors meeting.

After the introduction presentations the meeting was off and running. Mr. Jason Poore, A2LA Accreditation Officer and Ms. Ashly Bowers, A2LA Accreditation Officer, did a joint presentation titled "The 10 Most Common Deficiencies" which focused on the most cited deficiencies that laboratories receive during the *ISO/IEC 17025:2005* accreditation process. The presentation gave example deficiencies as well as common causes for those deficiencies so that your laboratory might be able to avoid them during your next audit.

Our second speaker, who kicked off the technical portion of the presentations, was Dr. Ted Doiron, NIST Precision Engineering Division. His presentation was titled "Use of Air Showers to Reduce Soaking Time for High Precision Dimensional Measurements" and focused on a study that he was a part of in which they used a common house fan to lower equilibrium times in their dimensional calibration laboratories. The presentation also included some very interesting information on the use of an infrared camera, and black bodies to monitor the temperature of the experiment. As it turns out, you can buy a certain commercial black electrical tape that makes for an excellent black body.

Mr. Miguel Menendez, Vaisala, then presented "Humidity Calibrations and Challenges." The presentation focused on common problems that they receive from the customers and the causes for those problems. The main point of the presentation is that humidity is a complicated calibration area and to reduce potential errors you really have to know the equipment and environment you are using for these types of calibrations.

After a morning of presenters everyone was ready for door prizes and lunch. The door prizes were provided by A2LA, Vaisala, and Western Environmental Corporation. No one walked away empty handed. Everyone then squeezed together for the group photograph, which was followed by lunch. Lunch was served at the meeting facility and was sponsored by Vaisala.

The afternoon presentations were kicked off by Mr. Tim Vonderhaar, Western Environmental Corporation. Mr. Vonderhaar's presentation was titled "Laboratory Planning and Design" which focused on tips for a laboratory that is planning on building a new facility to avoid potentially expensive errors. The presentation gave a brief overview of the planning you should consider for your facility, from the ground up including an architectural example of a typical calibration facility design.

The afternoon was wrapped up by Mr. Bob Stern of Agilent Technologies, who stepped in for a last minute presentation. Mr. Stern's presentation was not on the agenda, however, many people stayed to listen and learn about *ANSI Z540.3-2006 Compliance Methods: Info Requirements and Implementation* which described how his organization has approached compliance with the requirements of *Z540.3* and the methods they use to meet the Probability of False Accept requirements of Section 5.3. It was an informative presentation that sparked a lot of discussion regarding the new standard and how a laboratory ensures compliance with the standard.

The meeting was concluded at 3:30 PM with some final announcements and appreciation given to the host, attendees, presenters, and sponsors. I again wish to thank everyone involved in this meeting on making my first meeting as Maryland Section Coordinator such a great success.

Keep an eye out for updates on the next section meeting, which will likely take place this fall.

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1211 Maryland Section Meeting.