I just got back from the New England Section’s Annual school. We host one every April and try to present all of the IMSA certification programs. This year we had over 130 participants and put on the Fire Alarm Interior Levels I and II, Municipal Level I and II, the 100 mil school, Roadway Lighting Level I, Traffic Signal Inspection, Traffic Signals Level I and II. We had vendor booths set up for Tuesday and Wednesday with the students enjoying a great time networking with their peers. It is amazing how many people we see year after year coming back for more and more certification. At this school we had a brother and sister taking Traffic Signal Level I, and I remember their father from one of my classes years ago.

In the New England Section we have been holding our school at the same hotel/conference center for sixteen years and the different organizations that come to it know the time and location and try to schedule their attendance to it. We already have the dates set for 2006 and hope to put on as many courses that we can. The hotel looks forward to us being there every April and this year presented us with a “Sweet Sixteen Birthday Cake”. It was a large cake with a fire engine and traffic signal on it. Believe me it was enjoyed by all.

I would like to hear from all the sections that put on an annual school, and would like to know if you have them approximately at the same time every year and what your attendance is. That way if there are sections thinking about starting one we can put them in touch with the sections that are already doing them to help them in any way we can and also try to schedule schools at different times during the year. If any section needs a moderator for a program they usually don’t put on please contact the International office and they can put you in contact with a moderator. You might start pulling in people from outside your section that have to travel a great distance otherwise. We had people from Pennsylvania fly in to take our Fire Alarm programs this year.

On another note, if you know of a Dispatcher in your section that would like to help us by being on the Dispatch Specialty Committee please let me know. We need some volunteers to serve on that committee to help the Chairperson, Carrie Shaw. We also need a group that would be willing to submit a proposal to rewrite the course as we haven’t had any returned to us at this time. The contractor must be knowledgeable in Dispatching and IMSA’s format for programs.

A sub-committee has been formed to try to answer all the questions that people are asking about the renewal program. Everyone knows that the first renewal requires only a letter stating you are still active in the field, but subsequent renewals will require other paperwork. This is what we are trying to “iron out” before we get to the stage where it is needed. Section Directors have to approve any changes to the program and we would like to present a package to them at the International Conference.

Remember to check our Web Page at: www.imsasafety.org and I’ll look forward to seeing you all at the 110th Annual Conference and 27th Annual IMSA School August 26 - September 2, 2005 St. Pete Beach, FL.