4:31 AM on January 17, 1994

Joe Robinson, Fisons Instruments, Inc.

When Fisons Instruments moved Kevex to Valencia, California in 1992, everyone knew there would be many problems to overcome. As we entered 1994, the feeling was that we had really turned the corner. After all, we had the new Sigma Microanalyzer, an impressive organization with many experienced professionals, and a restructured Corporation that, though battered in the financial tabloids, was committed to a return to market dominance and profitability in '94.

We were all looking forward to our January sales meeting, the first attended by the new President of Fisons Instruments: Dr. David Richardson. On January 17, the local Hilton was full of sleeping Kevex people and at 4:31 AM the Northridge quake struck. What occurred can only be described as waking from a sound sleep to find the lead engine of an AMTRAK train bearing down on you in pitch darkness. People scrambled to escape in unfamiliar surroundings as water spilled from toilets and literally every desk and TV in the Hotel was slammed to the floor.

As I made my way to the plant, it suddenly dawned on me how bad this really was. A small bridge was out, turning a ten minute journey into a half hour. I stayed in the plant long enough to smell solvent orders reminiscent of the brew that made the Joker's face smile. As I exited, I noticed that our Applications Lab JEOL 6400 had been slammed up against the wall as if it were a card table - and half inch crack ran across the floor and up the wall,

I finally reached the Hilton by walking the remaining half mile across a bridge that didn't quite match up with the opposite bank by about three feet. An abandoned car with front axle laying nearby warned other drivers not to be impatient. I arrived at the Hilton only to learn that everyone had been evacuated and for me to call the Red Cross.

The refugees made it to my house where we pondered the difficulty of feeding, sleeping, and bathing 14 adults and four children without electricity or water. We sent out a party of salesmen to obtain supplies in a town where literally the sidewalks had been rolled up (into tiny pieces). Only sales people could return 45 minutes later with $150 worth of booze, 20 gorgeous steaks, and twice baked potatoes. As we ate, Tom Levesque joked that he never expected to have sales training and Outward Bound at the same time.

We had the Sales Meeting anyway. Dr. Richardson was delivered by a taxi driver that was as tough as he was. There were some tense moments like when a 5.6 aftershock hit during our X-ray mapping demo. Not one person ran away as I dove to keep the PC monitor from falling off the SEM. Clean up went on around us and everyone pitched in, regardless of title.

We feel that out team was made even stronger by this past week's adventure. We had the plant cleaned up and back on line in less than four days. There is no significant damage to the facility and we will commence shipments next week. Travel to LA will be tough for a while but the good news is we will guarantee that the next batch of Sigmas will withstand a 6.6 shock test. ■

Microscopic Photography - Its a Small, Small World

Today, when microchips store thousands of bytes of information, and some televisions fit into a jacket pocket, the idea of miniaturized photographs may not seem astounding. But in 1839, when John Benjamin Dancer began photographically reducing images to 1/100 of their original size (to approximately 1/8" in diameter), this was quite miraculous.

J. B. Dancer (1812 - 1887), an optician in Manchester, England, is credited by most as being the inventor of microphotography. Having begun his work as a scientific novelty in 1839, Dancer's tiny images gained great popularity in the 1840's, '50s and '60s. The miniaturized paintings, photographs, works of art, printed materials and inscriptions were viewed mainly for entertainment though a microscope. To meet the demand for new images, and to perfect his methods, Dancer produced hundreds of microphotographs including portraits of prominent people, village scenes, animals, interesting places, and a scattering of popular printed material available for sale during that time period.

After 1900, interest in this form of entertainment and study faded and Dancer's materials were consigned to a London attic. Happily, when they were rediscovered in 1959, they fell into the hands of an English antiquarian. Now, a new coffeetable book produced by Science Heritage Ltd. brings Dancer's genius to a wide audience. *The Microscopic Photographs of J. B. Dancer* by Dr. Brian Bracegridle, a museum curator, and Dr. James B. McCormick, a pathologist and collector of antique scientific materials, combines science history and social history and presents a fabulous reference source for collectors and historians.

Filled with unique images, this exquisite volume offers the reader a rare look at Dancer's work. The more than 844 images and illustrations are reproduced in rich duotone color, from the original collodion-on-glass negatives. Not only are the photographs a window to the past, but each

image is accompanied by a brief descriptive paragraph that adds a fascinating portrait of the taste and interests of the time.

The authors have been brought together to produce a book which crosses disciplinary lines to interest a wide variety of readers. Those interested in photography, science, social history, and document storage/retrieval will find this unique volume fascinating.

The Microscopic Photographs of J. B. Dancer
By Brian Bracegridle and James B. McCormick
December 1993, 288 pages 9" x 12", 844 illustrations
ISBN: 0-940095-10-6 $97.50 hardcover, slipcased

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