PART DEUX

Welcome to Epic Fails, Part Deux. It is my honor to take over the column from the esteemed Mr. Farley.

While I appreciate photos of nice, clean installations as much as the next person, they really don't make a person sit up and take notice. I'm not saying that they shouldn't, but they don't.

What I want to try to highlight in this column is the many failures that come together to form each picture. That way, maybe we can begin to learn from these Epic Fails and start to take steps to prevent them in our plants. So here we go.

The snapshot above is from the nameplate of a transfer drum that had been installed less than six months prior to the audit.

This was the vessel to which the transfer drum was attached. Except for the times when it was transferring and it was pressurized with hot gas at high side pressure, it was operating at -30°F. Now Section UG-20, the Design Temperature section of the Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code states that "Occasional operating temperatures colder than -20°F are acceptable when due to lower seasonal atmospheric temperature." However, this particular vessel was OPERATING below -20°F, making it non-compliant with the Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code. Thankfully, once pointed out to the facility, they replaced it with a new vessel rated at -40°F.

So what failed? To start with, the installing contractor either failed to specify the correct rating when ordering the vessel, or they failed to double check the rating when they received the vessel, and the facility failed to catch the error as part of a Pre-Startup Safety Review.

If you have photos of an Epic Fail please pass them on to nh3isB2L@gmail.com. Please note that the email address has changed, although I am sure that Arlie won't mind receiving them.

Bill Lape is Project Director for SCS Engineers. Bill is a Certified Industrial Refrigeration Operator, a Certified Refrigeration Service Technician, and a member of the National Board of Directors of the Refrigerating Engineers and Technicians Association.