



Anniston, AL
1st Quarter 2013

The Valve Stem Messenger



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Newsletter Comments ?

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General Manager

From the Desk of Tony Orlowski

I Thought You Said Gorilla

When I was a kid, my highly anticipated Sunday morning ritual was being first to get the newspaper, pulling out the (color!) comics section and reading it spread out on the floor as I ate my cereal. And to this day there's one strip that still comes to mind, making me chuckle. It showed a person in an ice cream shop licking a cone, a mouth full of hair and a disgusted look on his face. The clerk behind the counter, with a sign "1000 Flavors" above his head, puzzled: "Vanilla? I thought you said Gorilla."

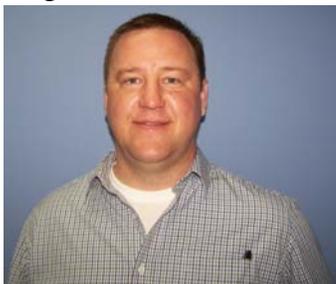
If that's not hilarious, you and I must agree to disagree on humor. But comedy aside, the reason I think about that comic so often is that its lesson continually comes up in my work, and I'd wager in yours, too. You see, we all like being experts at our jobs, and just like that ice cream vendor who is stacked with hundreds of flavors he seldom gets to unleash on an unappreciative patronage, if we've got the expertise, by golly we want to use it.

I would never imply it's a bad thing to have an expert. They give you a depth of knowledge that allows you to run a superior organization. The problem comes when we put so much stock in our expertise that we feel compelled to use all that firepower even when it's uncalled for. Most issues you face will be of the "vanilla" variety – a common problem with a simple solution. When things go awry in problem solving, it's typically because you leapfrog the obvious solutions to go after the arcane. "Surely, people as knowledgeable as we have all the basics covered", the thinking goes. "So the cause of this problem must be complex, like we came across three years ago that took so long to figure out." So instead of making absolutely sure we're doing the basics right, we set off on a misguided solution driven by our "expertise." A vanilla problem is attacked like it's a gorilla, and that just makes a mess.

Some might say this concept is nothing more than a crude restatement of *Occam's Razor*, which says you should pursue the simplest explanation until there is a compelling reason to believe something more complex. But *Tony's Ice Cream Cone* speaks more to me: Assume the guy ordered vanilla, and if you're not sure, check before going to gorilla.

I understand the desire of every good employee to want to showcase their talents. But one of the downsides of running a good operation is that it is boringly consistent, and when it does drift off course, the solution is usually just a return to the basics. That's not to say there aren't occasions where you have to dig deep into your vast experience to solve the problem – there are. It's just that they're rare. And anyway, there's not a thing wrong with vanilla. Heck, I like chocolate, too. And if you twist them together, you can even have both. Yeah, that sounds good. Make mine squirrel, please.





Plant Manager

Mark Willett

Business & Baseball

How many times have you seen a major league baseball player smile as he walks back to the dugout after striking out? My guess is not very often. Better yet how many times have you seen one break a bat over his knee out of frustration? Keep in mind even if they are an “excellent” hitter they fail more than 60% of the time. However, even with such a high failure rate their desire for success keeps them coming back to the plate for another opportunity to succeed. In fact their livelihood and family depends on them to do so. If they begin to accept failure they will accept the fact that they are letting their team down and ultimately accept losing in general. This acceptance will sooner or later cost them their career and cause their family hardship.

Business is not all that different from baseball in this respect. While we certainly have to be successful more than 40% of the time it is important that as we walk back to the dugout (go home early) without succeeding we feel the need to break the proverbial bat over our knee and do everything we can to ensure that we succeed the next time. We must understand that any failure causes hardship for the M&H Valve team, our families as well as the families of our teammates. We all play an important role on the M&H Valve team and our success as a company, as well as yours as a valued team member, depends on all of us being successful every day. Acceptance of anything less will undoubtedly end in failure.

While the 2013 baseball season has just begun the M&H Valve season is well underway. We have had a few strikeouts, but as a team we are putting together a winning season. We have made significant efforts to reduce cost on our major product lines, our on-time delivery across all product lines are at or near 100%, good tons per hour are significantly higher than 2012, man hours per ton are lower and scrap has remained low near 2%. These are all stats of a successful team; we just can't forget to keep our eye on the ball.



Valentine Gift

Bella Kate Patterson, 7th grandchild of William Patterson...Born on Thursday 2/14 at 3:30pm. 6 lbs.

Where Are They Now?

Danielle Kiser's son Jude Kiser standing proud on a M&H hydrant that "his mommy made" ;) on Broad Street in Gadsden.





Machine Shop Manager

Cecil Payne



We recently relocated large butterfly and check valve assembly, in line with machining and large powder coat. The relocation will reduce fork truck requirements as well as the time and energy spent by the assembler. The new area will have the required parts staged for point of use, as well as the internal components organized in cabinets with replenishment indicators to reduce the chance of stocking out of parts. Employee Alan Gaither made suggestions to help M&H reduce costs and gain market share in the 30"-60" butterfly valve market. These included modifying the spacer to allow mounting the operator and testing the valve complete to eliminate one step from the process, and increasing the size piping on the water fill and drain to reduce the valve build time. Another great moving job by the machine shop maintenance department.

On another note, congratulations to Josh and Bethany Seals. On March 15th, 2013 the family was blessed with a 7 lb. 10 oz. baby girl they named Kynlee Grace Seals. I'm sure big brothers Braden and Andrew love the beautiful addition to the Seals family.



Beverly Henderson

M&H Valve offered a weight loss program for its employees for anyone who wanted to participate. We had a representative from Weight Watchers to come once a week and M&H Valve paid for the cost of the program. We met every Tuesday after work for a short meeting and to be weighed. We had 21 people to join and the program lasted 12 weeks. Our total weight loss for the group was 311.6 lbs. If anyone is interested, we plan to continue the program later in the year. Congratulations for all of your hard work!



Environmental Manager

John Davis



Safety Alert Program now includes Environmental!!!!

Now that M&H Valve has been using the Safety Alert Program for a while now the program has been enhanced by adding Environmental to it. The purpose is to increase environmental awareness within each department and ensure that our work does not adversely impact the environment during the course of our operations. We are asking that when you see an environmental issue, a potential hazard to the environment or have an improvement idea..... Let us know about it!

Fill out a Safety Alert Form located in the break rooms. Each month all the Safety Alert entries that have an environmental impact to them will be eligible for a \$250 gift card.

Things to Remember:

- Safety Alerts need to be about improving safety or the environment, our work place and helping each other.
- All fields on the safety alert must be complete, especially “What needs to be done to correct it”.

Thank you, and let’s help our plant!!

John Davis, Environmental Manager

Tony and Mark give candy and prizes to employees



A couple of “Easter Bunnies” visited M&H on Thursday, March 28th, to celebrate the Good Friday Holiday. Tony Orłowski, General Manager and Mark Willett, Plant Manager gave out Easter eggs filled with goodies... and three lucky ones contained special prizes. Cedric Wright (Core Room Utility) won a \$50 restaurant gift card, Gerome Mixon (Cleaning Room Utility) won a \$25 Wal Mart gift card, and H.R. Manager Ray McClay won a \$25 gift card to Lowes.



Wedge Coat Manager

Mike Fulmer

Wedge Coat

All of the equipment for the initial phase of Wedge Coat Production is in place except the items needed to complete our tooling which Desma currently has. Desma completed the installation of the injection mold machine in December and completed operational functions of the equipment. A crane was needed so that the machine could be lifted out of the top portion of the trailer.



Midwest Finishing System completed a couple of loose ends on the washer and ovens just before Christmas. Right after the New Year they returned and performed training on the controls of all maintenance employees. We have completed some trial runs of the dipping process and shipped those samples to Desma where our tooling can be proven. We were expecting our tooling to arrive at M&H the week of the 14th of January; however a small problem was discovered and is currently being corrected by Desma engineers along with the Rubber vendor.

We are looking at planning a trip to Desma the middle of March to see our tooling used in the injection process. We will have three different rubber compounds to inspect and evaluate to determine which formulation best meets the needs of M&H. Once the process has been established several tests by outside agencies need to be completed. We have developed a time line outlining those tests and the different processes which need to occur. The longest test will be from Factory Mutual (FM) which could take a couple of months. Once all of those are complete we will be an approved vendor for 6" RS Gates. Meanwhile we will be running sample quantities to improve layout, process, and cycle times. We have posted and awarded one position to date with Jason Guy being awarded the Wedge Coat Utility operator job. Jason has had experience with injection molding with a previous employer, and we look forward to receiving his input on getting M&H up and producing quality wedges to meet customer requirements. Congratulations, Jason! Over the next few months we will post additional jobs as needed until manning requirements are met and M&H is at full production.



DESMA Benchmark 750 Injection machine



Jason Guy



SAFETY NEWS

Josh Gunning

VPP Steering Committee members Josh Gunning, Dennis Jackson and Tony Orłowski recently attended the 2013 McWane VPP Forum hosted by Clow Water in Coshocton, Ohio. At the forum, team members from other McWane sites shared their experiences from their VPP journey and offered support to those facilities that are just beginning their VPP journey. What was clear throughout the Forum is that employee engagement is critical! We have to engage our entire team, not just management and not just production. Everyone must be engaged and committed to VPP in order to be successful.

The M&H VPP Steering Committee is currently working to restructure the Safety Committee to support more employee involvement in our safety programs. We are still in need of volunteers to serve on upcoming safety and VPP subcommittees, so feel free to let your safety committee representatives know if you are willing to help. The 2013 VPP Steering Committee members are as follows: Dennis Jackson, Wesley Bones, Al Garrett, Tony Orłowski, Grady Calloway, Chris Boger, Menzo Parker, Mike Humphries and Josh Gunning.

Employee Spotlight



Charles Finley Machine Shop Maintenance

Mr. Finley was employed by M&H Valve in Anniston on July 25th, 1968. Since then he has worked basically all over the plant during his 44 year career here. He has been in the machine shop for the past 12 years and has proven to be very dependable with an excellent attendance record. Back when Mr. Finley was hired at M&H Valve, work was work. Times have changed, fortunately for the better, in safety, ergonomically, and environmentally.

Mr. Finley is the proud parent of two sons, one living and working in Georgia, and one living and working in Tuscaloosa. He also has two grandsons and can boast about having all men in his family, with the exception of two fine daughters in-law. Charles said that other than his family, hunting and fishing are his favorite pastimes.

Tommy Fielder MS Maint. Mgr.

Birthdays

Month of April:

Todd Johnson - 1st
 Sue Thornburg - 2nd
 James Butterworth - 3rd
 Jerry Summerlin - 3rd
 Noah Holt - 5th
 Susan Johnson - 7th
 Dennis Turner - 7th
 Bryn Getto - 10th
 Donald Baldwin - 14th
 Sherrill Burt - 16th
 Kenneth Higgins - 19th
 Harold Westbrooks - 21st
 Steve Griffith - 22nd
 Andrew Mason - 22nd
 Jeffery Young - 24th
 Willie Robinson - 24th
 Shannon Payne - 25th
 Gerome Mixon Jr. - 27th
 Larry Mays - 30th
 James Wade - 30th

Month of May:

Ecky Bryant - 3rd
 Marcel Spinks - 17th
 Josh Seals - 18th
 Cecil Beavers - 19th
 Greg Davis - 25th
 Roger Johnson - 25th
 Barry Shields - 27th
 Daniel McIntyre II - 31st

Month of June:

Donald Haynes - 2nd
 Danielle Kiser - 3rd
 Jim Meroney - 4th
 Angie Robertson - 4th
 Darryl Crump - 6th
 Larry Bowers - 7th
 Che' George - 8th
 Victor Roach - 9th
 Josh Tyler Emanuel - 13th
 Leonard Thomason - 13th
 Luke Lanier - 13th
 Gary Estes - 14th
 Robert N. Smith - 16th
 Susan Roach - 20th
 Henry Zastawnik - 21st
 Larry Morrow - 22nd
 Travanti Dates - 27th
 Jack Williams - 30th
 James Hannah - 30th



Anniversaries

Month of April :

Leonard Thomason 2nd 1yr.
 Jeff Rasmussen 4th - 2 yrs.
 Robert Knox 4th - 2 yrs.
 Stacy Vree 9th - 12 yrs.
 Christopher Berta 10th - 7 yrs.
 Anthony Farfan 15th - 17 yrs.
 Alkera Garrett 17th - 7 yrs.
 Charles Sanders 21st - 9 yrs.
 Susan Johnson 22nd - 11 yrs.
 Cecil Payne 24th - 18 yrs.
 Jack Williams 25th - 42 yrs.
 Greg Hanners 27th - 15 yrs.
 Cedric Wright 29th - 14 yrs.

Month of May:

David McKinney 1st - 7 yrs.
 Terry O'Dell 2nd - 2 yrs.
 Glenn Hanvey 8th - 43 yrs.
 Luke Lanier 9th - 1 yr.
 Gary Estes 15th - 13 yrs.
 Greg Davis 22nd - 15 yrs.
 James Wade 23rd - 2 yrs.
 James Butterworth 24th - 41 yrs.
 Ray McClay 24th - 9 yrs.
 Gary Ray 24th - 14 yrs.
 Donald Haynes 30th - 7 yrs.
 Christopher Morris 30th - 13 yrs.
 Harold Westbrooks 30th - 40 yrs.
 Mark Willett 31st - 13 yrs.
 Jeremy Felton 31st - 8 yrs.

Month of June:

Mike Humphries 1st - 15 yrs.
 Steve Griffith 2nd - 10 yrs.
 David Lambert 2nd - 10 yrs.
 James Martin 3rd - 11 yrs.
 Stephanie Pressley 6th - 2 yrs.
 Larry Morrow 9th - 44 yrs.
 Tony Orlowski 10th - 17 yrs.
 Rocky Lanz 11th - 12 yrs.
 Frank Musich 11th - 12 yrs.
 Kendall Rush 12th - 7 yrs.
 Phillip Smith 13th - 8 yrs.
 Nicole Ferrebee 18th - 14 yrs.
 Alan Gaither 23rd - 5 yrs.
 Terry Heath 26th - 11 yrs.
 Gerome Mixon Jr. 28th - 3 yrs.
 Danny Ray Smith 28th - 3 yrs.
 Marcel Spinks 28th - 3 yrs.
 Dave Acomb 29th - 26 yrs.
 Walker Hall 29th - 3 yrs.
 Benu Chakraborty 30th - 25 yrs.

