

WHEN YOU'RE THE ESTABLISHMENT

It was easy to whine and complain about prejudice and injustice when we were the impatient youngsters trying to survive in this profession. But what are your responsibilities to the impatient and embattled plant engineering youngsters of today, now that you are the establishment?

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So this small package arrives at my office, addressed to "Anniken Goldstein." Two Goldsteins work in my office, my Bride/Empress and myself, so she took the liberty of opening it up, and extracting a Darth Vader head coffee cup from a carefully bundled straw package. There was no accompanying note; the return address indicated that none was needed. Everyone from my receptionist to my office manager looked at the cup and chuckled. It was a "Thank You" from an associate, Lynn. It wasn't for organizational or application-level advice that I had given him. He sent me a gift, thanking me for a lifelong of "Guidance, protection and mentorship."

Lynn Gross is a close associate. He is younger than I am, but has close to 30 years of podium experience. His expertise lies in the area of warehousing and physical distribution, and he is a sought-after speaker. Earlier on in his career, I shared the podium with Lynn at the American Management Association, where he, I, and other speakers made hundreds of presentations, receiving very high ratings each time we spoke. That fact aside, several of the other speakers on the program gave Lynn a very difficult time when we were alone in the speaker's lounge. They didn't like him owing to the fact that he was young, and therefore shouldn't have known that much about warehousing. He was from "New York City," meaning that he was probably an "East Coast Liberal." I sat there, listening to their nonsense, and at an appropriate time intervened with their hazing. That's what guidance, protection friendship and perhaps mentoring is all about.

What follows isn't a self serving diatribe on gifts that I have received; it is a lesson that I have learned from that Darth Vader cup. Lynn had sent it to me expressing thanks for my mentorship. I realize that I owe him a cup too, for giv-

ing me the idea for this article. I've realized that the one gift that is missing, the one that I would most cherish: A rebirth of professional maturity and perhaps geographic togetherness, for this very necessary profession called plant maintenance. We are in a torturous, inexorable drift away from that gift, and I use the term gift most carefully.

I desire to see plant maintenance flourish. What is troublesome, is that it exists as an encapsulated, selfish, fraternal conformation, one that stresses regional or organizational prejudice over national cohesiveness. It's what happened in that speaker's lounge at the AMA, only today there is a more hateful motive attached to it.

I grew up in this profession, guided and protected, and on occasion kicked in the behind by mentors who were members of an organization called AIPE, The American Institute of Plant Engineers. Most of them were members of a chapter centered out of Clifton NJ. They were a tough bunch of men, but what impressed me most, was their attitude; it was highly positive, and was directed toward improvement of the profession. At their meetings, they conducted business, brought in technology, supply, and management vendors, to present information that was conducive to improvement of their performance on the job. Everyone who came into their meetings from the outside, was treated as an honored guest. Their behavior was so professional, so inspiring, that 37 years ago, I made a decision to devote a good portion of my professional career to enhancing what my mentors and their chosen organization (AIPE) considered to be important; plant maintenance organization.

AIPE had regional groups; a headquarters staff in Cincinnati that was honored and respected, a Board of Directors that

presided over the skillful enhancement of the profession. No, they were not perfect, but they were a family. Families argue, but they are families, and do stick together during times of crisis. Several things have changed at The American Institute of Plant Engineers over the past decade: 1) Its name has changed to AFE, Association of Facilities Engineers. 2) It is not one homogeneous organization anymore, but is made up mostly of regions, boasting an autonomous, if not hostile relationship with the headquarters in Cincinnati. 3) They conduct business, and are supposed to bring in technology, supply, and management vendors, to present information that is conducive to improvement of their performance on the job. However, "Improvement of their performance on the job," has been supplanted by "The viewing of vendor shoot-outs," whose results have nothing remotely in common with performance improvement.

The stage was set for this process of deterioration several years ago, when the AFE regions were approached by a trade show and conference operator, whose business it was to run regional trade shows, and vendor exhibits. Originally this conference operator worked separately with the regions for ten years, and later the headquarters staff in Cincinnati, planning nationwide regional trade shows and the AFE national conference; an effort which produced commendable results. I don't know what financial arrangement the AFE had with this conference operator, and/or if their arrangement was acceptable to both parties. I do know that overnight, there was an appearance of separate regional trade shows. They had two things in common: 1) The headquarters staff in Cincinnati was left out of the loop regarding the planning and operation of the shows. 2) No portion of the revenue of the shows automatically flowed back to Cincinnati,

as income that would be used for the continuance of the AFE.

Growing flush with cash, several of the AFE regions came to some conclusion that the presumption of growing financial independence, meant organizational autonomy. To them, their growing bank account, meant that they could challenge some sort of real or imagined abusive "Parent/child" relationship that had gone wrong with the AFE headquarters organization. And then something started to go seriously wrong with the regional trade shows. The original association motive, that of conducting business, bringing in technology, supply, and management vendors, to present information that was conducive to the improvement of plant engineer's performance on the job began to wain. Few who came to the trade shows to present from the podium, were treated as an honored guests. The new role of these trade show speakers, was to be that of gladiators. I.E.: Skilled CMMS supplier representatives who used to present information conducive to plant engineering performance improvement, were replaced by slick, smart-mouthed sales people. Their major contribution was to purposely engage in defamously shoot outs at combative sessions, that were now directed at the entertainment, not the education of trade show attendees.

It was all out of control; the decline of the Roman Empire. No one really cared about Rome (Cincinnati) anymore, or the Senate (AFE's Board of Directors), people who I respected; people who presided over the standards and conventions of plant maintenance and other things, such as guidance protection and friendship. Results: this professional association has been hemorrhaging professional membership; turnout at many of its meetings have been sparse, with new membership subscriptions difficult to come by. Other plant maintenance organizations have benefited from AFE's troubles; their formula for success being predictable. All you have to do is to get a reputation for bringing a group of maintenance professionals together, and presenting information conducive to plant engineering performance improvement. No politics; no regional vs. head-

quarters in fighting; but most of all, no baseless greed!

What happened to the AFE could happen to them, if they forget this most important theorem. The plant maintenance establishment has many responsibilities that I can think of off the top of my head. The most prominent of them has been written here; protection guidance, and surely fellowship. But that would mean that we of the establishment are kind of a regulatory agency for younger professionals in this business, and we are bound by the duties of regulators: Orderliness, and protection. That would also mean that we're supposed to set a solid, mature, responsible example for the rest of the profession, and many of us have done anything but that.

It was easy to whine and complain about prejudice and injustice when we were the impatient youngsters trying to survive in this profession. Our predecessors on the other hand, had more respect for the establishment, authority, the rule of law, and perhaps for each other. More to the point, they balanced discipline, certification and education more finitely than I have witnessed in over ten years. The plant maintenance profession wasn't as embattled then, as it is today, but yesterday's cohesiveness could have handled today's problems with more ingenuity.

I have some pointed questions for the Board of Directors of the AFE, and of other plant maintenance organizations struggling for survival and growth: What are your responsibilities to the impatient and embattled plant engineering youngsters of today, now that you are the establishment? Across-the-board business-like maturity is nurtured and managed by an adult, directioned leadership. Since the dawn of time, this band of leaders and standard-setters has been referred to as "The Establishment." I'm one of them. A business-centered fraternity, declaring autonomy from headquarters, where exaggerated venom is encouraged, much to the detriment of its younger members isn't destructive, if it's a local gun club. But this is serious national business. Choosing Vendor Shoot-outs over education is an infamy.

What's mine is mine, and what's yours is mine; what Bible, and Ten Commandments Listing did you get that out of? What was that quote at the end of Star Trek II: The Wrath of Kahn? The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few, or the one! It's still fitting commentary; not a blessed thing has changed.

We could learn that from organizations such as ASHRE who treats what they do seamlessly, both the business & professional side of environment is represented. APICS treats production as a profession. Sure, there is argument and infighting amongst vendors, and political infighting among regions and individuals, but where the rock meets the hard place, their mission is professional validation and certification of their membership, and improvement of the profession. Once again, it's guidance, protection and friendship. You don't ever forget that!

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Dr. Goldstein is the principal owner of Manufacturing and Maintenance Associates, Inc. of New Jersey, Manufacturing and Maintenance InfoSource of Northern Virginia, and is the founder of Manufacturing and Maintenance Systems, Inc. of Illinois. With over 35 years of corporate experience, he has served such companies as ITT, IBM, Honeywell, DTI, Inc., Ogden and COMNET Corporation.

He has an extensive background in manufacturing, engineering and purchasing systems, including applications of maintenance management, maintenance planning & scheduling systems, process control, methods engineering, industrial engineering, production planning and inventory control, materials management, shop floor control, safety engineering, test equipment design, distribution management, automation of warehousing and accounting. An experienced lecturer with over 36 years of experience on the podium, he has made presentations to over 140,000 attendees.

He is the author of several industry standards TPM II/GAMASP-RBMS/CMMS© (Total Productive Maintenance/Generally Accepted Maintenance Application Systems Principals-Reliability-Based Maintenance Systems/Computerized Maintenance Management Systems) plus CLASS "A-D" GAMASP/GUI (Graphic User Interface).

Dr. Goldstein has conducted hundreds of seminars concerning manufacturing, process, purchasing, plant maintenance and distribution disciplines and is a contributor to many professional publications including: Computerworld, Business Week, Barron's, Chemical Week, Chemical Engineering, Modern Plastics, High Technology, Electronic Week, Purchasing Magazine, Maintenance Technology, Plant Engineering, Industrial Maintenance & Plant Operations, Reliability, Engineers Digest, Canadian Plant, Plant Services, American Machinist and Facility Maintenance and Operations Magazine.

As an enthusiastic supporter of several professional organizations, he has conducted hundreds of seminars for AIIE, IEEE, APICS, ASME, SME, AFE, AITPM, ICM, DPMA, ACM, NPRA, NAPM, PMA, the American Management Association, the Portland Cement Association, and over two dozen universities and polytechnic institutes.

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