

FORMING IDEAS

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GOOD MORNING, VIETNAM

The Reel Story: DeeJay Adrian Cronauer (Robin Williams) is drafted into the Army and sent to serve in Vietnam. He is put to work as a disc jockey on Armed Forces Radio, where he delivers long anti-war and anti-establishment (but funny) rants in between songs, ultimately leading to a dishonourable discharge.

The Real Story: Only the basics of Cronauer's story were used in the 1987 blockbuster. He was a Pittsburgh deejay sent to Vietnam, where he worked as an Armed Forces Radio deejay. The zany antiwar diatribes were added by screenwriters to suit the comic style of Robin Williams. Cronauer says he never performed any humorous or political monologues because a) it would have gotten him court martialed and b) he wasn't anti-war. He was never kicked out of the army – he merely returned home to Pennsylvania when his tour of duty in Vietnam ended. The real Adrian Cronauer passed away this July at the age of 79.

PROGRESS



Brenco installed this **Diamond BB4013 press brake** earlier this year. It is one meter in length with a forming capacity of 40 tons. Unlike most press brakes which are hydraulic, the Diamond is electric which provides a very high degree of accuracy and reliability. It may be small but it has a big appetite for complex parts.

Coming in December 2018 is a 700 ton by 16 foot Ursviken press brake complete with pretty much every state of the art technology imaginable. Both of these press brakes will eventually replace two older machines. Read *Make Way For The New* on page 4 to find out why.



Precision cut five inch thick QT-100 steel plate using high pressure water jet

Three In One

A Waste-o-Saurus Story



Wäs-tö-sau-rús, n. [Waste, and Gr. sauros. a lizard.]
A cute but troublesome creature that wastes time and material. The Waste-O-saurus is elusive but commonly identified through reduced profit and productivity.

History Mystery

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Intertek



CERTIFIED
CSA W47.1

Waste-o-saurus Sightings



The Waste-o-saurus is intended to provide value to our readers by presenting issues relating to efficiency and quality in an effort to encourage and promote improvement. Do you have a Waste-o-saurus story that you'd like to share? Send it to us at: thebest@brenco.com

Land is expensive, buildings are expensive... heck, everything is expensive! That's why Brenco invested in this expensive automated material storage tower.

Say what? Yes, expensive... automated... material... storage... tower. While everything is expensive, some things are also in short supply. Things like land and building space. We've been feeling the squeeze for months, making room when and where we can by sending obsolete items to auction or the scrap yard.

Have a look at the above photo. See those yellow racks on the right? We built them in 1998 after seeing automated storage towers operate in Ja-

pan. The price tag and our low building ceiling height prohibited us from ownership, so we designed and built these racks based on the technology that we had. They turned out to be the perfect, low cost solution to our material storage and handling problems. But that was 20 years ago.

Here we are now in 2018 and there's still nothing wrong with these racks except for one thing: A whole bunch of unused space between them and the ceiling. The new storage tower, seen on the left of the photo, will replace all three of the old racks. The tower contains 32 five foot by twelve foot cassettes (removable shelves), each with a capacity of 4000 lbs. To retrieve material from the tower, an operator enters the desired material

type and thickness into the tower's computer which has record of material locations. The cassette is automatically withdrawn from the tower and delivered to working height for material removal or insertion.

If you're a long time Forming Ideas reader, this story may sound familiar. We wrote about installing our first material storage tower a year and a half ago in our Winter 2017 edition. (available on line) We talked about how the tower provided better inventory management, improved safety, improved efficiency, time savings and effective use of space. This is our second unit and likely not our last. Even better, these systems are Canadian built by Vidir Vertical Storage Solutions in Manitoba.



Brenco's Fabrication Bay

History Mystery

The History Mystery Team found a photo of E.W. Nicholson's Burnaby farm taken in 1933. We couldn't include the photo but we can tell you what was in it: Seven cows, a horse drawn buckboard, a farm house, a road lined with telephone poles and faintly in the background, a large industrial building under construction. Questions arose. Why was a building going up in a rural area when most heavy industry was located on False Creek in Vancouver? What was the building used for? Did it still exist?

The Team jumped into action, scouring the internet for clues. Their best guess put the farm on Still Creek Road. Further investigation brought them to the conclusion that the building in the background was not only important to BC's history but that parts of it are still standing! If you're old enough, you'll know it as the original location of Dominion Bridge at 2400 Boundary Road. If you're not, it is the current home to Bridge Studios, operators of the largest special effects studio in North America.

Some interesting details in the photo worth noting: The view is looking north-east. Boundary Road is a couple hundred feet behind the photographer. There are three other buildings in view: two homes



Photo of the construction of the Lions Gate Bridge taken from the Stanley Park seawall on April 24, 1938.



Construction at 2400 Boundary Road circa 1933. Looking northeast from the Great Northern Way tracks near Boundary Road.

on the hill and a commercial building likely on what was then known as the Central Arterial Highway, now Lougheed Highway. The rail lines are those of Great Northern Railway, now repurposed as a bike route and the Millennium Skytrain line. The Dominion Bridge building is of steel construction. The large tower is a wooden pile driving derrick used to drive logs into the soil to serve as a foundation for the various buildings that were being built.

Many notable projects came out of Dominion Bridge's Boundary Road facility during the 40 years it operated there: The Lions Gate Bridge, Second Narrows Bridge, the original Port Mann Bridge and sections of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco.

Dominion Bridge relocated to Annacis Island in 1976. The Boundary Road property remained empty until 1987 when the Provincial Government invested in renovations to the site and made it the permanent home of Bridge Studios. Dominion Bridge continued as a steel service centre and steel construction company on Annacis Island until it ceased operations in March 1987. That location is now home to Supreme Steel.

The History Mystery Team would like to thank Doug Shantz for his assistance in our research. Mr. Shantz, who currently works at Samuel's Custom Plate and Profile facility, worked for Dominion Bridge until it closed in 1987. He began his career in the Boundary Road facility's paint department.

MAKE WAY FOR THE NEW

Here Comes Trouble

Many, no make that most, workplaces have noticed that hairstyles are changing. The shaggy dog look of the 60's, the afro of the 70's, spiked hair of the 80's and 90's are long gone. Now employee's are sporting a whole new look: Grey... and short... maybe a bit bald. HR departments now know that this is a sure sign of rebellion. These folks are getting restless! They're trouble! They want to lead irresponsible lives, explore the world in RV's, grow vegetables and play golf.

This is now a real life problem for the manufacturing world. Senior employees have years of experience and knowledge that will leave the building the moment the retirement party ends (Probably before 8 pm). These can represent serious losses, so how does a business transition through a generational change like the one we're in now?

Consider Technology

It's fair to say that many of us lose interest in learning new things as we get older. After all, the old ways always worked, so why change? There are plenty of reasons to but here's just two: a) What works for you may not work for somebody else, and b) Technology changes the way we do things.

Resistance to change holds companies back when there's a desperate need to move forward. Whether we like it or not, we have to make way for younger workers and provide them with a work environment that maintains their interest.

Eventually every fab shop has to make tough equipment purchase decisions: "We should replace Machine #1,

and we would, but good old Billy Bob says he'll take early retirement before he learns a new machine... and we can't afford to lose Billy Bob."

Meanwhile, young people are not attracted to Billy Bob's old machine. Gears and the grease don't excite people that grew up with Nintendo and PlayStation. They want to run machines with computers, more computers and even more computers. They want screens and buttons and buttons on the screens. They want what they were brought up with because that's what they know and it's obvious to them that the new ways are easier, safer and more fun.

Older equipment can do some things that new equipment can't but in most cases new machines are faster, safer, easier to learn, easier to use and far more accurate. New equipment also has features that are attractive to young workers. Billy Bob's retirement is not only inevitable, it's coming sooner than later. Ordering a new machine to replace the gears and grease that Billy Bob could make sing like a peacock in Sullivan Station can take months. That could mean months of low, or even *NO* productivity if the transition isn't timed well.

Timing

The transition from retiree to anybody under 40 needs to be carefully thought out. Good planning and timing of hiring, training, equipment purchases and installation can avoid the probability of disruption and chaos. Don't leave things too late. Once you find a young person with potential, keep them engaged. Don't expect them to get excited about gears and grease and don't let them get scooped by another employer offering the latest and greatest or loosing Billy Bob may be the least of your problems.

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"Being the richest man in the cemetery doesn't matter to me. Going to bed at night saying we've done something wonderful - that's what matters." Steve Jobs

phone: 604-584-2700

website: www.brenco.com

email: TheBest@brenco.com