

FORMING IDEAS

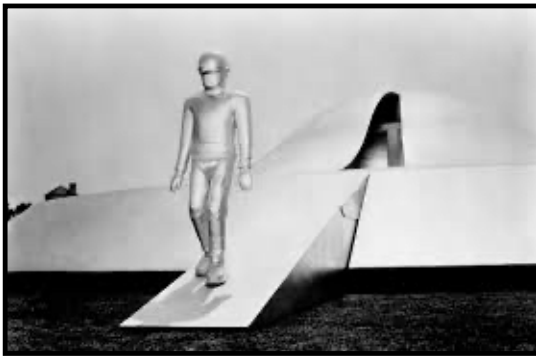
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Brenco Industries has been publishing the Forming Ideas newsletter since 2007. It is intended to educate and inform our friends, customers and suppliers through our own observations and experiences. Brenco is a quality provider of metal cutting, forming and fabricating solutions.



Klaatu barada nikto



Gort, the giant robot in The Day The Earth Stood Still

“**Klaatu barada nikto**” was the command given to Gort, the giant robot in the famous 1951 movie, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, to stop it from destroying planet Earth. To this day, *The Day the Earth Stood Still* is considered one of the most important science fiction movies of all time. It was one of many to hit the silver screen

following the Roswell UFO incident in 1947. The world was obsessed with the idea of aliens invading our planet. The paranoia was further fueled by fear of an atomic war between the USSR and the USA.

Fast forward seventy years and a new galactic phenomenon has arrived. Not just one, but many. Metallic Monoliths of unknown origin are appearing around the world. The first mysteriously appeared in the Utah desert last November. It vanished shortly after being discovered. The US Government alleged that it was man



The first monolith found in Utah

made. Are they man made or did they arrive from outer space? Will we ever know the answer?

Shockingly, another has appeared right here in front of Brenco Industries. It arrived early on December 23rd only to disappear within an hour and then, without explanation, reappear in the New Year. Is there any connection between these recent phenomena and that which was portrayed in *The Day the Earth Stood Still* seventy years ago? Perhaps the answer is that we are again facing a new and frightening enemy. There is no cold war or fear of atomic weapons being unleashed today but just as the world perceived a threat seventy years ago, we are now battling a new, invisible, seemingly unconquerable foe.



Reconnecting the Connector



Above: A view of the back of Brenco in 2013 shortly before the Highway 91 Connector was completed.

Below: The vegetation behind the Brenco property has been removed and will become a new roadway which is expected to open next year.



"The neighbourhood was pretty empty when we moved in 21 years ago. We shared the street with only five other buildings and the bog reached up to our back fence."

Forming Ideas reported in the Spring 2013 edition that the new Highway 91 Connector would open on March 23rd, 2013. It did and we immediately declared it a resounding... failure. Of course, no politician would admit that the Connector had been poorly designed. The traffic congestion, gridlocked intersections, overturned trucks and outrageous driver behaviour told the story of a badly botched road design. It's not surprising then that the Connector is undergoing a major rebuild less than eight years later. The redesign includes a new roadway directly behind the Brenco property. Sadly it required the removal of all the trees and vegetation that had been home to eagles, deer and many other critters. But, such is progress. Our fingers are crossed that the new road network will solve the road's many problems. If the recent improvements to the Alex Fraser Bridge are any indication, travel along the connector should become much easier, quicker and far less stressful.

*"I can't believe I got fired from the calendar factory.
All I did was take a day off."*



History Mystery



In the Summer 2018 edition of *Forming Ideas*, we ran an article on the Dominion Bridge building at 2400 Boundary Road in Burnaby (built in the 1930's and currently home to Bridge Studios). Dominion Bridge was created in 1886 and played a major role in the construction of Canadian infrastructure including, infamously, the Iron Workers Memorial Bridge which collapsed on June 17, 1958, taking the lives of eighteen workers and one recovery diver.

The company built a new home for their BC operations on Annacis Island in 1976 from which they operated a fabrication facility and service centre. DB, as they were usually referred to as, occupied the property until they ceased operation in 1987. Arguably, they were more service centre than fabricator. DB was one of many service centres to close during the late 80's and early 90's.

Canron (an abbreviation of Canada Iron) moved into the Annacis facility a few years later. They were purchased by Supreme Steel which shuttered their BC operations last year.

Last week, the building was demolished. Sadly, an important piece of our industry's history is on its way to becoming another history mystery.



Above: Built in 1976 for Dominion Bridge.

Below: 45 years later, demolition under way.



LET'S GET DOWN TO BRASS TACKS

In the days of the general store, cloth came in bulk and was sold by the yard. The storekeeper, who quickly became expert at measuring, often used the length of his arm as a measure of each yard purchased. If the measurement was challenged, the seller would re-measure the cloth against two brass tacks embedded in the counter that were precisely a yard apart. The issue was therefore settled by getting down to those two brass tacks.

The Perfect Storm

BIZ BUZZ



Monday: Hot rolled mild steel plate is \$.60 a pound.

Tuesday: Hot rolled mild steel plate is \$.63 a pound.

Wednesday: Hot rolled mild steel plate is \$.66 a pound.

Thursday: Hot rolled mild steel plate is \$.68 a pound.

Thursday afternoon: Hot rolled mild steel plate is now \$.69 a pound.

This is really happening. Metal prices are climbing faster than a bear can climb a tree. Galvanized is over a buck a pound. So is steel tubing. Aluminum and stainless prices are creeping up as well but aren't out of control... yet. Quotes are only good to the end of the day. Supply is short. Sizes, grades and thicknesses unavailable.

There is speculation that this crisis was set off by a catastrophic iron ore mine disaster at the 'Corrego do Feijao' site in Brazil. On January 25th, 2019, a dam burst, burying the

mine site and killing more than 240 people. (You can view a video of the catastrophic event on You Tube.)

Shortly after this disaster, Cyclone Veronica hit Western Australia causing iron ore mines to temporarily cease operations. Had it not been for the decline in demand for steel products due to COVID-19, the dramatic price increases would have been felt months earlier. There is no telling how high prices will go or how drastic the shortages will be. Globally, projects that were put on hold in 2020 are beginning to proceed causing a higher than normal demand. In other words, the perfect storm.

All storms eventually subside but this one may last a few months. Until then, expect high prices and shortages.



Workers reviewing the devastation at Corrego do Feijao. The entire mine site was destroyed.

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