

PIPELINE

The Official Publication of the National Association of Steel Pipe Distributors, Inc. • July/August 2002

Hot Times in the Old Town!

NASPD Summer Conference
Chicago, June 6 - 8



► Watch out, Chicago! The NASPD mob is in town.



► Yves Pognonec, Connie Jerome, Gary Canonge and Franco Palazzouli model Chicago fashions.



► Sherry Merfish, Jennifer Walker and NASPD President Gerald Merfish. NASPD meetings offer many networking opportunities.

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► Yum! NASPD tours the chocolate exhibit at Chicago's famous Field Museum.

President's Message

An activity for a lifetime

by Gerald Merfish
NASPD President



If you like a cosmopolitan setting full of interesting diverse opportunities near a large lake with beautiful weather beyond description and you did not attend our June meeting in Chicago, well you really missed out. Besides all of these accoutrements, the program was invigorating and enlightening. While our attendance was less than expected, those who were there came away with something special. Many of the members who customarily attend our summer conference told me that they are saving their resources to attend the meeting in Vancouver. Do not miss out on this one! Vancouver is the Canadian jewel of the West Coast, a city everyone should visit during his or her lifetime. I hope to see each of you there.

As the previous paragraph would not adequately fill my allotted space in our magazine, I want to share with you something that I have personally experienced over the last three years. I hope you find it interesting. In late 1999, I came to the conclusion that my weary aging body could no longer stand the rigors of playing racquetball, a sport I enjoyed for more than 30 years. After playing a racquetball game it seemed that I spent more time with ice strapped to various parts of my body than time on the racquetball court. I wanted to find another sport that would provide excitement, challenge and aerobic exercise. After all a good Schvitz is healthy.

I pulled my old rickety bicycle out of the garage and started to join some friends who ride on the weekends. I discovered that being outdoors on a

bike, viewing the passing landscape with the wind in my face, is fun. (The last time I had ridden regularly was when I was throwing a *Houston Chronicle* paper route. That job taught me a lot about responsibility, especially on Sunday mornings when I awoke at 4 a.m. in order to receive, wrap and deliver newspapers by 7 a.m. I sometimes made two bicycle trips from my house to the route, because the Sunday papers were too large to all fit in my saddle packs on one trip.)

Often during these rides, I struggled to keep up with the rest of the group. They were younger with efficient road bicycles, while I had a hybrid bicycle suitable for different terrain. As you can guess I was always at the rear of the pack. Was it due to my lack of skill, my age or my weight, or was I burdened with poor equipment? I decided to find out so I committed to buying a new bicycle. Yeah, I took the plunge. Knowing little about road bicycles, I spent more than I wanted but it looked cool! I also told myself that the more I spent the more I would commit myself to riding. I think you get the idea.

Having made a commitment by purchasing an expensive bicycle, I was trapped. The weekend fun rides in 1999 were exciting (going more than 30 miles per hour), challenging (particularly when the wind is against you) and great exercise (holding my heart rate up for an hour at a time). As well the camaraderie between cyclists is fun. I discovered that my legs are strong and with the proper equipment I could ride with this group. So ride I did, accumulating over 1,200 miles in around 7 months. I enjoyed riding so much that I decided to really challenge myself and

ride in the MS 150 in April 2000.

The MS 150 is a two-day ride from Houston to Austin, Texas, covering around 180 miles, 100 miles the first day and 80 miles the second. The ride begins in the flatlands west of Houston and navigates through the hilly (not mountainous) parts of Central Texas. Each rider is required to raise funds that are donated to the Multiple Sclerosis Society for research to find a cure for this terrible disease. Not one to just ride and enjoy it, I reached out to friends and vendors raising a substantial amount for the MS Society.

Once committed to the ride and having raised the donations, I realized that I needed to train or I would fail. Bicycle riding is fairly easy on one's body but the strength and endurance required to ride 180 miles scared me. Did I have the inner strength and discipline to prepare for this ride? Could I plan this out to succeed? Did I have the patience necessary to get myself ready? These were huge questions as I am not very patient and like to see results in a short period of time. But this would be different, because training takes time. There is no training crash course when the day of the ride is tomorrow. I could measure business in financial success, but I had no idea what toll was involved in a marathon bicycle ride. I took about the task with a commitment to physical preparedness that I had never experienced.

To be continued. See who else is a rider in the next issue of Pipeline.

From the Executive Director

Busy days at NASPD



by Susannah Feux Porr
NASPD Executive Director

We accomplished a lot at the Summer Conference in Chicago, held June 6 - 8. A few of the highlights are listed below.

The Site Selection Committee chose the locations for our 2004 and 2005 meetings. The 2004 Convention will be in San Antonio. The 2004 Summer Conference will be in St. Louis and the 2004 Fall Conference will be in Scottsdale/Phoenix. The 2005 Convention will be in Las Vegas. The 2005 Summer Conference will be in Denver and the 2005 Fall Conference will be in Houston.

The NASPD Pipe Listing Website is up and running. Vir2lliance gave attendees a brief run-through of the site and answered several questions. At a future meeting, we hope to be able to allow members to go on the site and look around a bit to better understand what it offers. We already have more member subscribers than we originally anticipated. For the site to be successful in the long run, the majority of our regular members must use it frequently. There are no transaction fees and no prices listed. We hope that you will use this new tool for finding the pipe you need and marketing the pipe you have. Please contact the NASPD at 281-531-PIPE for more information.

The Education Committee is hard at work putting together the first draft of the training manual for review by

the time of our meeting in Vancouver. If you would like to help proof a section of the manual, contact Robert Griggs or me.

Start making plans now for our Fall Meeting in Vancouver, Sept. 26-28. It is

an amazing city. Our program is shaping up to be full of dynamic speakers addressing all the latest topics affecting your business today. Don't miss it.



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Ben Roberts
1921 - 2002



Former board member and long-time NASPD supporter Benjamin "Ben" Roberts passed away July 1, the day after his 81st birthday, in Santa Monica CA. Ben is survived by his wife Betty, son Randy and daughter Jackie.

Ben Roberts had a long and distinguished career in the pipe business. He began working for State Pipe & Supply, Inc. in 1950 when the company was only 9 months old. He remained with State Pipe until 1982 when he began working for March Pipe. In the late 1980s he returned to State Pipe. After State Pipe was sold he stayed on as a consultant until his retirement in 1990. In 1999, Roberts was a special guest at State Pipe's 50th anniversary celebration.

Roberts had many friends in the NASPD and was actively involved in the formation of the Association. He attended NASPD's first convention, which was held in Las Vegas in 1975.

Ben Roberts loved the pipe business, recalled Betty Roberts. "He loved his work and enjoyed every day of it."

Dottie Lytle
1928 - 2002



Dottie Lytle, past member and friend of many NASPD members, passed away in Austin, Texas. She leaves a son, Rob Lytle of Jacksonville, Florida and a daughter, Melody Lytle, of Austin. Melody Lytle sent the following notice.

Dottie Lytle showed us all how to embrace life with courage, boldness and full-out zest for everyone and everything.

She was a homemaker (or "domestic engineer" in her words) and mother, then a secretary who broke tradition to become an international pipe and steel dealer, the first woman in Texas to do so. While managing her own firm, D.L. Pipe, she became a very active member of the National Association of Steel Pipe Distributors, Inc. serving in many capacities, and the official Queen of Pipe.

She was an ardent lover of all things musical and theatrical who sang with the Houston Symphony Chorale and served as its president. Her love of music brought her great joy and friendship with music lovers and musicians both celebrated and unsung.

She was a wonderful cook and legendary party giver always ready to open her home for a good cause and a good time. She had amazing energy and an unflinching willingness to give her time to community efforts. She was an avid bridge player, a sincere animal lover and an especially renowned joke teller. Her jokes and biography may be found at <http://home.austin.rr.com/dljokes>.

Melody and Rob are grateful for the privilege of having such a wonderful mother. Donations in her name may be made to the American Lung Association, the March of Dimes, any animal-related cause or any group involved in performing arts.



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CALENDARS

2002 Fall Conference

Sept. 26 - 28

Hotel Vancouver
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2003 Annual Convention

March 6 - 8

Omni Royal Orleans
New Orleans, LA

2003 Summer Conference

June 19 - 21

Fairmont Hotel
San Francisco, CA

2003 Fall Conference

Sept. 18 - 20

Washington, DC

2004 Convention

San Antonio, TX

2004 Summer Conference

St. Louis, MO

2004 Fall Conference

Scottsdale/Phonix

For more information call
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at <http://www.naspd.com>



Developing a vision for NASPD

by Ken Hayes
Chairman

The second meeting of the Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Committee was held on Thursday, June 6 in conjunction with the Summer Conference in Chicago. Once again, we had a fresh exchange of good ideas on how the organization can improve and provide additional value to the membership.

Further review and implementation of these suggestions will be pursued through existing committees. It seems there will be subject matter for almost everyone—the Membership Committee, Bylaws Committee, Education

Committee and the Program & Value Added Services Committee. As indicted by the various committee areas of responsibility covered, our thought processes and dialogues were broad-based and wide-ranging.

One of our primary agenda items in Vancouver will be developing a vision statement for where we want the NASPD to go and what we want it to look like when it gets there. This matter should be of interest to all NASPD members. All members are encouraged to share their vision for the NASPD with participants in this committee for our discussion on this topic. We look forward to hearing from you and seeing you in Vancouver.



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Membership Committee

*Let's keep
growing the
membership*

by Dianne Burger
Co-Chair



Our Chicago meeting produced a definite direction and goal for 2002. We welcomed two new members, K&K Enterprises, Inc. and Tubos Conexiones Y Tanques SA de CV. Currently we have a total membership of 165. We set a goal of 175 members by year end. The current membership breaks down as:

- 112 Regular Members
- 48 Associate Members
- 3 Professional Affiliate Members
- 2 Continuing Members

Your assistance is needed to reach our new goal. Anyone wishing to assist this committee is asked to contact Dennis Hayden or me. We hope to make the Vancouver meeting a great success with new membership to report.

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Education Committee

*Training manual
draft may be
ready by Fall*

by Robert Griggs
Co-Chair



The training manual is progressing nicely. By mid-summer we expect to have sections ready for expert review. We plan to have a complete draft for review by the time of the Fall Conference in Vancouver, Sept. 26 - 28. We hope the training manual will be ready to sell by the fourth quarter of this year.

This project has been one of the largest undertakings by the NASPD in several years. You will be pleased by the results. I would like to thank all of the people who worked on this project with me and committee Co-chair Bill Buckland. Your help has been invaluable. See you in the Great Northwest.

Chicago, USA: What a country!



by Greg Semmel
Co-Chair

Talk about things to do! Shopping, fine dining, museums, city water tours, arts, monuments and baseball games filled our free time during the Summer Conference in Chicago. Heck, I even went to the Billy Goat Inn (famous for the "Cheeseburger, Cheeseburger, no Pepsi ... Coke!" skit on "Saturday Night Live" from back in my college days). If you missed the Summer Conference you also missed great speakers, lively topics and an all-around great time with a personable and lively group. The bonds that people form at our meetings are special.

We made decisions in our committee meeting that will affect you in a positive way. (Hint: No more Saturday night dinners at the conferences. Instead, at the Fall Conference in Vancouver, Sept. 26 - 28, we will try a networking lunch on Friday. Saturday night will be open for people to do things on their own.) We approved new meeting locations: San Antonio, St. Louis and Phoenix for

Next stop

Vancouver!

Sept. 26 - 28

2004 and Las Vegas, Denver and Houston for 2005.

My co-chair Jason Rubenstein ran the meeting. He is getting more value-added surprises together to spotlight in Vancouver. If you have ideas or speaker suggestions contact Jason at Texas Pipe & Supply Co., Inc. or me at Omega Steel.

I know you all get tired of me telling you about how great the next meeting is going to be, so I won't. I won't talk about all the wonderful things that Canada has to offer. Forget about the large pine trees, the ocean, the whales, the downtown life, the restaurants, the view of Vancouver at night, the changing of the leaves, and the value of the US vs. Canadian dollar. The fact that we will be participating in a gold rush

won't excite you, will it? Who needs a chance to win big? How much money is enough for you anyway? What exactly is a rainforest and how can it help you make money in the pipe business?

If you don't care about what your competitors are doing, then networking at the conference will be a waste of time. The mills don't want to see you; they want to sell to those bums down the street. Who cares about how NAFTA affects the trade barriers with Canada and Mexico? We even have a guy who thinks he's Moses and is going to tell us the Ten Commandments of the pipe business. Well, as you guessed, I care about all of this stuff. I'll be in Vancouver in September. I hope you will be too!



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Friends, flappers and fun times

NASPD Summer Conference
Chicago, June 6-8



Mike Schmidt, Flapper and Keith Klobnack



NASPD's own parrotheads: Don McLaughlin, Greg Semmel, Todd Womble



Dan Carito



Dennis and Kathy Hayden



Scott Drybread and Curtis Buckler



Cathy Williams, Kurt Walker, John Mortimer, Jennifer Walker



NASPD visits Garfield Park's Garden of Glass



Don Porr, Nicole Murray and Quinn Merio



Jaime and Nina Trevino



George Streff, Connie Jerrome, Kathy Hayden and Cathy Streff



John Mocker, Hilary and Don Karchmer



Greg Semmel, Bill Buckland, Yves Pognonec, Betsy Buckland



Franco Palazzouli and the Flapper



Bill Carleton



Rick Tuck, Richard Northfield, Tim Lally



NASPD panel: moderator Gerald Merfish, Steve Fowler, Kevin Beckmann, Herb Hamilton, moderator Bill Leonard and David Delie



Mike Stefko and Scott Barnes

DISPATCHES

Vallourec buys Tubular Division of North Star Steel

Vallourec & Mannesmann Tubes Corp (associate member), a subsidiary of Group Vallourec, has agreed to purchase the seamless tubular steel division of North Star Steel Company (associate member), a subsidiary of Cargill, Incorporated. North Star Tubular Division manufactures seamless tube products for oil and gas applications. With approximately 560 employees, the division's operations are based in two primary locations: a mini-mill steel recycling facility and associated processing and finishing facility in Youngstown, OH, and a heat treatment and finishing facility in Houston.

Stefko joins IPSCO

Mike Stefko is the new Sales Manager of Industrial Products at IPSCO (associate member). Stefko will be responsible for coordinating the sales of Structural Tubing and Standard Pipe products produced at the Geneva, Camanche and Blytheville plants. He will also coordinate sales efforts of Standard Pipe in Canada. Stefko has been in the tubular products business for more than 23 years.

M/K reaches out to Mexico

Marmon/Keystone Corp. (regular member) has hired representatives in Mexico City, Veracruz, Guadalajara and San Luis Potosi to help broaden its marketing base in Mexico. With this move, the company hopes to gain a larger share of the country's tubular and bar market. Marmon/Keystone previously serviced the Mexican market from its Houston offices, until the opening of its service center near Monterrey in 2001.

In other news, Huron Steel Company, Inc. of Butler, PA was named an operating branch of Marmon/Keystone. Huron Steel specializes in cold-finished and steel alloy bar products. The branch office status allows access to Marmon/Keystone's computerized inventory system, which offers customers a wider range of products.

Member News

Bob and Alice Rau in SO Hall of Fame

Bob and Alice Rau were inducted into the Pennsylvania Special Olympics (SOPA) Hall of Fame on March 21. Bob, a Past President of the NASPD, and Alice have been involved in Special Olympics since the early 1980s. They have performed many services for Special Olympics, both large and small, from fundraising to organizing, publicizing, coaching and much more.

The SOPA described Bob and Alice Rau with these words: "Bob and Alice lead by example. They are living images of what we should all be attempting to do in our lives. They live their lives to the fullest for others; they share their excitement and energies with all who come into contact with them."

The NASPD congratulates the Raus for their enthusiastic and inspiring support of athletes and volunteers.

PIPELINE STAFF AND NASPD CONTACT INFORMATION

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Bridgebuilder facing new challenges with serious illness

by Robin Perry
Pipeline Editor

Toni Ruttiman, the Swiss humanitarian who has built more than 100 steel bridges in remote and impoverished areas of South America and Asia, is fighting to overcome a serious illness.

This spring Ruttiman was working deep in the Cambodian jungle. One morning he was unable get up from the mat in his tent. Luckily, he was found that morning and rushed to Bangkok, Thailand for treatment of Guillain-Barre' Syndrome (GBS).

"If he had arrived just a few hours later, he could have died of lung or heart failure," said NASPD Executive Director Susannah Porr. "It's quite an amazing story, even more so when you see the spirit with which he has faced all of this."

According to the GBS Foundation International, GBS is a progressive, inflammatory disorder of the nerves outside the brain and spinal cord. It can cause sudden weakness and paralysis of the legs, arms, breathing muscles and face. Recovery is a slow process and patients are sometimes left with long-term disabilities.

Writing from the Sirindhorn National Rehabilitation Centre outside Bangkok, Ruttiman described his condition as of July 1. "Life has become a few notches more difficult. After 15 years of learning about poverty and people living in need, I now learn about disability and people living in wheel chairs. Most of my muscles are gone and there is serious damage of nerve axons and their



Toni Ruttiman in Houston in 2001. Ruttiman contracted GBS while in Cambodia.

myelin sheaths in all four extremities. ...

"In an impressive way I am experiencing the loss of my mobility. But in no way does the loss of my mobility mean the loss of my freedom. I believe that freedom resides within a person, in his spirit, from where it cannot be taken. It is the spirit that will help my body resist and overcome this period of imprisonment, of house arrest, of body arrest. When the time comes, it's the spirit that will lead my body back to where it belongs: To the people in need, to the rivers, to the bridges to be built."

Ruttiman says his recovery could take approximately two years, depending on how quickly his nerves and muscles regrow. His treatment includes a blood cleansing procedure, intravenous immunoglobulin and daily exercise. While the cause of GBS is not known, it can be triggered by bacteria-infected food, viral infections or certain vaccinations. GBS can strike people at any age and is found in all parts of the world.

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new members

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K&K Enterprises, Inc.

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Kapoorjohn@cs.com

Tubos Conexiones y Tanques SA de CV

Tubos Conexiones y Tanques SA de CV (regular member, central region) offers Line Pipe, Standard Pipe, Waterwell, Couplings, Fittings, Valves and Slotted Steel Pipe for water, oil or geothermal in Prime and new grades and specs A106 and A53. The company manufactures Welded Fittings, Seamless Pipe, Pump Column Couplings and Slotted Pipe (straight and Bridgetype). The following sizes are offered: 24" Line Pipe, 4" - 12" Pump Couplings, 1/2" - 24" WPB Fittings, and 1/2" - 24" A 105 N Flanges. The company also offers slotting and cutting services.

The Managing Director and NASPD Contact for Tubos Conexiones y Tanques SA de CV is Mauricio Zundevich Kauffman.

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