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“We eliminated all potential safety and production issues before they had a chance to happen. When you spend this kind of money on a piece of technology, you want to make sure everything is absolutely perfect out of the gate.”

— Gene Sikes

IN THIS ISSUE

Meet Big Al	1
New Engineer	1
Jump Started	3
25-Year Vets	3
In-Sink	4
Sales Directory	4

‘Big Al’ Joins Mickey Truck Bodies As World Class Welder and All Around Good Guy

Meet “Big Al,” Mickey Truck Bodies’ newest employee.

Al is short for “Almega EX-V6L,” the most state-of-the-art robotic welder known to industry, and he’s going to help his new employer enhance product quality and improve manufacturing productivity and efficiency all at the same time.

Al was manufactured by OTC Daihen Corporation’s Dynamic Robotics Division in Vandalia, OH, a world leader in robot technology systems, and sold and installed by Southland Machine Tool Corp., out of Greenville, SC, which also handled the purchase and installation of Mickey’s Amada Punch Press a couple of years ago. The total cost for Al, including his specially designed quarters in the beverage plant at Mickey’s manufacturing complex in High Point; custom fixtures; set up; and training was approximately \$250,000.



Mickey’s Rickey Hulsey is “Big Al’s” programmer, operator and best friend.

First Day on the Job

Initially, Al is being used to weld shelves for bodies and trailers, body wings and body rear bumpers. The weld fixtures used for these parts were manufactured by Automation Services, Inc. in Lawrenceville, GA, which is currently working on “step”

fixtures as well. Eventually, Mickey will custom design and manufacture its own fixtures for Al so his workload can expand to other parts, according to Gene Sikes, Manager of Beverage and EV Operations.

(To page 2)

Borugian Joins Mickey as Director of Engineering For Beverage and Emergency Vehicles.

Dennis Borugian, a 35-year veteran of the engineering field and an inventor with four patents, has joined Mickey Truck Bodies as Director of Engineering for Beverage and Emergency Vehicles. He reports to Carl Mickey, Jr., Executive Vice President.

For the past 22 years,

Borugian was with Volvo Trucks North America, serving as Chief Engineer, Custom Engineering; Manager, Cost Development; Manager, Product Planning Operations; Corporate Quality Manager; Director, Parts & Service; and Manager, Quality



(To page 3)

Meet 'Big Al,' Mickey's Newest Shining Star and Latest Technology

(From page 1)

In the meantime, Al is keeping busy with his current responsibilities. While it's still early in his Mickey career, Big Al has already been benchmarked at welding a shelf in 1.45 minutes, versus about 15 minutes for a manual weld. He can weld a body wing in about two minutes, compared with 20 minutes for a human welder. And he has achieved a one-minute bumper while his manual counterpart takes at least 15 minutes. Overall, Big Al can weld flawlessly at a rate of 52 inches per minute, versus 20 to 25 inches for a highly skilled human welder.

Work of Art

Most importantly, Al's work is all picture-perfect and absolutely consistent, from one weld to the next.

"At Mickey, we have the most skilled welders in the manufacturing world," stresses Rickey Hulsey, Mickey's Body Line Supervisor and Al's head programmer, operator and closest friend at the company. "In fact, no machine, regardless of automation, can make a better quality weld than our senior welders. The difference is, through computerized robotic technology, we can improve



From left: Greg Byerley, Beverage Plant Supervisor; Chad Brinkley, Beverage Engineer; and Gene Sikes, Manager of Beverage and EV Operations, get acquainted with "Big Al."

"This is a very exciting time to be in a manufacturing business that can benefit so greatly from technology, because the technology is advancing faster than ever."

– Dean Sink

the aesthetics of the weld so that every weld joint is exactly the same every single time. A four-inch weld is exactly a four-inch weld, for example. That consistency is impossible to achieve with the human element. That capability allows us to offer the customer

a better-looking unit. Al can achieve that consistency at better than twice the speed of conventional welding, and the quality of the weld is never compromised."

Since the arrival of Al, Mickey has reassigned three welders to other positions in the plant "where human decision making is a more critical factor," says Hulsey.

"This is a very exciting time to be in a manufacturing business that can benefit so greatly from technology, because the technology is advancing faster than ever," says Mickey President Dean Sink. "We visited several manufacturers in other industries that are using state-of-the-art robotics system like Al, and the capabilities were amazing. Fortunately we have always been in a position as a company to invest in our business for the benefit of our customers and our employees. We are currently looking at several other technology opportunities that will further enhance our manufacturing capabilities and value to the customer."

Neat and Clean

In addition to being absolute state-of-the-art, Al is also very hygienic. He requires mainte-

nance only once every three years because he is programmed for routine self-cleaning of his tip and nozzle to keep his flame burning bright and even.

Always in the Loop

Sikes and Sink were involved personally throughout the research and purchase process of Al to ensure "we got exactly the capabilities we needed now and in the future," says Sikes. "We eliminated all potential safety and production issues before they had a chance to happen. When you spend this kind of money on a piece of technology, you want to make sure everything is absolutely perfect out of the gate. We checked and rechecked everybody's work throughout the process – from the equipment manufacturer to the distributor and installer to the jig manufacturer. Thanks to everybody's cooperation and effort, Mickey Truck Bodies is now a showcase operation for this type of technology."

And "Big Al" is a star.

Rickey and Big Al

Rickey Hulsey, Mickey's Body Line Supervisor and Al's chief programmer and operator, is a 15-year company veteran and by no means a stranger to technology. He holds a 1993 degree in CAD/CAM programming from Amada Engineering Service Company, a Division of Amada America, Inc., a world leader in turret press technology, based in Covington, GA. During his tenure at Mickey, Hulsey has also served as the chief programmer for the company's Amada Punch Press and Plasma Cutter. Prior to his current position on the Body Line, he was an Engineering Technician in Mickey's Engineering Department.

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Mickey Names Borugian to Head Beverage, EV Engineering

(From page 1)

Systems.

While at the main assembly plant in Virginia, Borugian was responsible for complete heavy-duty vehicle design, including current product engineering as well as custom engineering. He reduced engineering staff requirements from 250 to 86 people and concurrently reduced material cost by 5% when the company was facing Chapter 11 conditions. He also coordinated the generation of additional cost reduction ideas and helped to implement engineering changes resulting in annual cost savings totaling

\$46 million while improving product quality, and reduced product planning operating cost by 15%. Borugian spearheaded the company's engineering and product planning transfer during joint venture with General Motors.

Prior to Volvo, Borugian worked for Eaton Corporation as a Principal Engineer, and before that held positions with Rockwell International (Manager, Engineering & Quality Systems) and GMC Truck & Coach Division of General Motors (Project Engineer).

Borugian received his Bachelor of Science degree

from the University of Michigan and his MBA from Wayne State University. He is a Registered Professional Engineer trained in QS 9000, ISO 9000, TQM, SPC, FMEA, QFD, Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award criteria, Structured Coaching, Operational Development, Environmental Management Systems and Value Analysis.

Uniquely Qualified

"With his vast experience in vehicle engineering and his expertise in new product development, Dennis is uniquely qualified to spearhead our continuing advances in state-of-the-art design and manufacturing technology," says Dean Sink, Mickey President. "As a company, we

continue to invest significantly in technology to improve both our processes and our product quality. Dennis has the background and experience to take us to yet another level."

"If you are going to take a stand and make significant contributions to a company and an industry, you must have great people all around you," says Borugian. "That asset is immediately apparent at Mickey. It is very exciting to work with sharp, capable and motivated people."

Borugian and his wife, Carol, live in High Point, NC, and they have two children and two grandchildren. When he is not spending time with his family, Borugian enjoys fishing and rebuilding high performance muscle cars.

Mickey's Walsh Helps Area Youth 'Jump Start' Their Reading Skills

Tom Walsh, Director of Purchasing and Inventory Control for Mickey Truck Bodies, was one of several area business people trained by Communities In Schools of High Point, Inc. in the Jump Start curriculum to provide educational assistance at nearby Allen Jay Elementary School. Walsh spent one hour a week in one-on-one reading sessions in an effort to increase grade level proficiency in the local school system. Walsh, whose last interface with third graders was in 1956, said that he was challenged in the program by the degree of effort required to achieve grade level efficiency.

He was surprised at the stick-to-it-iveness of his student and the support of the parent.

Jump Start was developed to increase basic reading techniques, vocabulary, test taking skills, and comprehension. The program can potentially turn a child's life around and provide the High Point community with an enormously stronger asset for both the social and business environment of the next 15 years.

"Most of all," Walsh said, "The young Jump Start student obtains hope. His or her self-confidence to overcome the stigmatism of being a 'slow reader' increases with their own success and our support. Over time, you can actually see the transformation in the child's face."

Walsh spent one lunch hour a week at the school, which recently completed end-of-grade tests.

Gail Wells, Mickey's Human Resources Manager coordinated the effort with The United Way.



Walsh

3 Employees Celebrate 75 Years of Combined Experience at Mickey



Mickey President Dean Sink with 25-year employees (from right): Rocky Barham, Jerry Miller and Debbie Deal.

May 1977 was a very good month for Mickey.

That month three of the company's most loyal employees came to work in High Point and have been there ever since, marking their 25-year milestones recently. They are Jerry Miller, Beverage, May 16; Debbie Deal, Beverage Sales, May 17; and Rocky Barham, Parts, May 25.

Ten years ago in May, Arevalo Lopez, Machine Room, joined the company, and celebrated his anniversary on May 18.

Three employees recently celebrated their five-year anniversaries: Richard Hughes, Security, May 8; James McFayden, EV, May 12; and Larry Pope, Finishing, May 20.

Mickey Truck Bodies Sales Directory

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800-334-9061

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IN-'SINK'

New Ideas and New Technology: Worth Their Weight in Gold

By Dean Sink, President

New technology and new ideas. If you're in the manufacturing business, any business in fact, they are two of the most important things you have going for you. This issue of The Mickey Spirit is about a little of each, and with that, I would like to make two formal introductions – meet Big Al and meet Dennis Borugian.

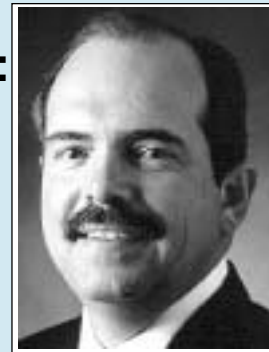
Big Al you will read on page one is absolutely the latest and greatest robotic welder the world has ever known. Al is short for "Almega EX-V6L," and with him on our payroll, so to speak, we are going to be able to enhance product quality and improve manufacturing productivity and efficiency. In other words, we are going to get better at what we do, and that of course is the key to our success. You see, we could have been perfectly content with the quality workmanship and solid work ethic of our human welders. In fact, anybody who knows our products knows that Mickey has some of the best welders in the business. So good are the Mickey welders that the only way we could have improved on their work from a productivity standpoint, was to invest about a quarter of a million dollars in a piece of technology that is absolutely state-of-the-art. And the real bonus we get with Big Al is that we are able to move our welders into other positions within the company where the human decision-making factor is more critical.

Was it prudent for us to invest \$250,000 to improve one of our most heralded production skills, especially in an economy that is anything but robust? You bet it was, because it enables us to work better, faster and smarter. If we can continue to do that, every day, every week and every year, we will continue to gain the trust of our customers and our employees. You can't put a price tag on that.

It was equally prudent for us to go out and hire Dennis Borugian as Director of Engineering for our flagship Beverage Division and emergency vehicles. Dennis is a 35-year veteran of the engineering field and an inventor with four patents. I'm no expert but if you ask me, four patents and 35 years qualifies Dennis as an "idea man." And I'm sure everybody reading this column knows what the lifeblood of any business: new ideas.

Dennis hasn't just been hanging around for the past 35 years, either. He has pretty impressive professional bloodlines. He spent the past 22 years with Volvo Trucks North America, serving in a variety of engineering, cost development, and quality positions. Dennis holds an MBA degree from Wayne State University, he is a Registered Professional Engineer trained in QS 9000, ISO 9000, TQM, SPC, FMEA, QFD, Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award criteria, Structured Coaching, Operational Development, Environmental Management Systems and Value Analysis.

And on top of all that, he's a really great guy. I hope you all get the opportunity soon to meet Dennis. And Big Al.



Mickey Truck Bodies has completed a major expansion of its parts department resulting in twice the inventory and twice the staff to better serve your growing needs.

The expanded department stocks Mickey, Hackney, Centennial and all branded parts for same-day shipping. Call now for special pricing on Mickey's Monthly Specials.

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