From the president's desk

Celebrating one year

COLUMN BY HANK HENKE



It seems hard to believe one year ago I was sitting here writing my first column as president. It's been a year of personal and professional ups and downs for me, my family, and my business, and I know many of you can relate.

I am grateful this month to able to report on the excellent trade show we just enjoyed in Allentown, Pa. The show floor was well laid out and it was easy to get around and visit. The accommodations were convenient, nice and affordable.

The tour of East Penn Manufacturing exceeded my expectations. The cleanliness of the facility blew me away. Our tour guide was very knowledgeable and had worked there for 17 years. The amazing thing about the plant is it is family owned.

Another weekend highlight for me was the annual roundtable discussion (see "Roundtable," page 4). It was one of the best we have had, with great participation. I believe we could have gone on another hour. The best part was the productive and friendly exchange between rebuilders and suppliers.

The seminars I made it to were also well worth my time. Dan Marinucci's on-car electrical class reminded me that sometimes it's refreshing to return to the basics, and sometimes we expect our customers to know how to check these things before they come to us. Dan does a great job explaining his topic.

I was glad to see OEM manufacturer Remy participate in our show. Dennis Tobin did not give us a sales pitch, but rather useful information about the new units we will be seeing soon in our shops.

Bob Thomas presented some good ideas on handling customer's perceived warranties. His stressing the words, "I'm sorry you have a problem," struck home.

Dan Smith's presentation on promoting the small rebuilder was very direct and to the point. Dan and I are on the same wavelength when it comes to looking for other avenues of making revenue. Neil Szigethy's branding presentation was also very interesting.

I was happy to be a technical seminar a presenter this year. After lots of requests from rebuilders for information on magneto rebuilding it was fun to be able to share my techniques and tips. Like I've said before, we all get requests to work on them but the skill is becoming a lost art. It is well worth pursuing as a top-dollar service.

So once again I heard that rebuilders took away enough technical and business information to make the trip more than worthwhile. And we had some fun along the way.

I am already looking forward to next year.

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