



THE ALTERNATE Source

SUMMER 1992

VOLUME 2

SERVING THE NEEDS OF THE HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY SINCE 1972

NUMBER 4

ISNI Is Born

Independent Service Network International had its first conference ever in Ft. Lauderdale at the end of February. It is one of the most important events to happen to the support of medical/dental equipment to date. In this amalgamation of computer and medical support companies is born the opportunity to properly maintain equipment at fair prices.

In three days of fairly hard work and some long sessions, we found that the major problems faced in both industries are common. And we found that we can help each other solve them. It was very interesting to find that the problems we have in getting spare parts, diagnostic software, and in facing unfair competition from the OEMs is being experienced in the computer service industry also. It was also interesting to see that these problems are not unique to the U.S., as witness the attendance by people from the Netherlands and Australia.

Most of the problems are prevalent in the high tech area. This would be for imaging and diagnostic equipment primarily. But it also holds for the types of equipment RPI has parts for. You find this every day in trying to obtain parts for so much of the equipment you service. You also get pressure from many of the OEMs to buy only their parts with their prices and delivery schedules. You need the opportunity to source quality parts to properly maintain THEIR equipment. That means increased future sales for THEIR new equipment. Sounds crazy,

but it isn't. The health delivery industry depends on internal and external organizations to keep their equipment running. When one brand of equipment is always down waiting for parts, you know the users aren't going to be excited about buying that brand again.

Right now the solution to the problems appears to be the use of the courts. Individual companies have filed lawsuits against a number of the OEMs. Some have been settled out of court, but the majority have gone to trial. The independents are on a winning streak. But the OEMs are still pushing because they know that most independents don't have the resources to carry on a long legal battle. (One company went out of business three years before it won a court decision of some \$3 million.) That's why the need for an ISNI, a banding together of independent companies to make a stronger force. Over the next few years we will be finding new and better solutions to these problems. Concepts such as mutual defense, legislation, and education of the OEMs are all possible.

What this organization does affects all of us as well as the quality of equipment maintenance. It needs our support. Think about it. As was stated in the meeting, there is a difference between being involved and being committed. In a bacon and egg breakfast, the chicken was involved but the pig was committed.

If you want more information about ISNI, you can call them directly at 404-816-1610, or call Al Lapidus here at RPI, 800-221-9723.

UPS Adds Tracking for Ground Shipment Packages

On June 1, 1992, UPS made available an electronic tracking system, UPS Ground Trac. This system is designed to provide customers with immediate tracking information, over the phone, on the status of ground packages.

UPS Ground Trac is available for shipments to and from anywhere in the 48 contiguous states.

If you would like to add this service to your ground shipment orders please let us know at the time you place your order. The cost is \$.75 more than normal ground delivery.

A Big RPI Welcome

...to **Veronica Rodriguez**, newest member of our front office staff. Veronica helps with phones, order entry, accounts receivable, filing, and is a great addition to our company.

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by Philip Goldstein
Product Manager



TALK

TROUBLE SHOOTING TIPS FOR PCT006 THERMOSTAT CONTROL

As many of you well know, we are experiencing more than our share of headaches with the old style temperature controller for Pelton & Cranes' OCM & OCR autoclaves. We thought this would be a good opportunity to discuss the method (and madness) by which we address such problems.

In most cases, when a problem arises with a part, it's an isolated incident pertaining to that specific part or machine. Usually, all it takes is a few moments on the phone to help a customer troubleshoot and find the solution. If the problem is unrelated to our product, we feel a sense of accomplishment. When the root of the problem is a bad part, we realize that time is money and you do not have the time to waste replacing an item for the second or third time. The first time a problem arises, we pull product from stock and test it. If we can not duplicate the problem, we will take the time to review our process with those concerned. Nine times out of ten, the solution is simple and expedited promptly.

In the case of our PCT006 Thermostat Control (gulp) we quickly realized recently that an entire lot of controllers was bad. As many of you may remember, the controller would cycle at 270° for the first run. After the first run, the controller would not exceed 240°. All of the thermostat controls that we sold had exactly the same problem. The entire lot was returned to the manufacturer. Their reply was, "Yes, there is a problem with the thermostat. We do not know why."

A second shipment was received by RPI, and we began to circulate them. Once again, they did not work properly. This time the problems customers were having were so different it made trouble-shooting a nightmare. The bottom line was erratic

Another batch of samples was returned to the manufacturer for testing. Their chief engineer promptly contacted me with his results. All of the controllers we returned were out of calibration. As soon as he calibrated them, they worked correctly. So how do they calibrate them? They angle the bulb and capillary tube into a 400° oil bath. The contacts are allowed to open and close once. If they function in this manner, they pass... hmmm.

How does RPI test the controllers, you ask? Good question. The instruments we use are: a conventional dry heat oven, a Fluke 25 Multimeter, an Omega 873F Digital Thermometer, and a Pelton & Crane OCM Autoclave. The test is time consuming but simple. First the control is placed in the OCM to properly locate the shaft position for 270° F. The next step is to remove the control from the machine and place the bulb with the thermometer sensor into the dry heat oven. The multimeter is connected across the leads of the thermostat control. Now we can control the rise and fall of temperature while observing the operation of the contacts of the switching mechanism in the controller. Since the manufacturer originally set the operating temperature at 400° F, adjusting the controller for 270° took a good half hour using test equipment. Trying to calibrate the controller down from 400° to 270° in the machine would take hours. We now understand the frustrations many of you have gone through.

So what's going to be different? A couple of things. First the manufacturer is going to turn down the oil baths to 270°. Second, they are now aware of the proper shaft location pertinent to the machine. And finally, we will continue to test all PCT006's prior to shipment until this crisis is over. When we are certain it is over, we will revert back to batch testing.

But, maybe the problem isn't the PCT006!

Have you ever experienced this? You load the machine, check the water supply, shut the door and turn it on. The first run takes a little longer

because everything is cold. Nothing new. Now you are up to temperature and the machine cycles properly. The load is removed and you immediately run a second cycle. But now the machine only gets up to 220°, 230° maybe even 240°, then shuts off. Your first instinct is to attack the temperature control. It doesn't respond. Is it bad? Let's check a few things.

Many times from a cold start, the machine heats up and all is fine. A bellows with a pin hole or crack will expand when first heated. Unfortunately it will not contract. The pressure gauge reads properly but the temperature gauge is well below normal. If you tried to adjust the thermostat control, you would not be successful and might blame the controller.

Another concern is the main valve. One side is for filling and the other is for venting. The vent side has tubing connecting it to the air valve housing. If the valve is leaking, you would again have erroneous readings. In order for the temperature gauge to read properly, steam must pass the heat sensor, which is in series with the air release valve.

Try this. Run the machine until it gets hot (15 to 20 min.), then unplug the power cord. Do not turn the temperature control to off. Leave the main control in the sterilize position. Do not open the door. Wait until the machine cools down completely (30 min.). After it has cooled down, then open the door. If there isn't any water in the bottom of the chamber, then the main valve probably has a leak. What is happening, is during the sterilization mode, pressure is pushing the water back through the main valve (either side) to the reservoir, or through the air release valve. Again, you could have temperatures in the 230s to 240s, and not have any control over the controller. Remember, the bulb and capillary tube sit on the bottom of the chamber, with the heating elements directly under them. In fact the temperature controller is sensing heat and is properly turning off.

SERVICE TIPS



By Ron Rubman
Director/Blood Gas Service
Diagnostic Equipment Service Co.
Norfolk, Massachusetts

The following are a few suggestions that will correct the majority of failures that you will experience while repairing Instrumentation Laboratory 1300 Series Blood Gas Analyzers. Following these suggestions while performing Preventive Maintenance will dramatically reduce your number of recalls.

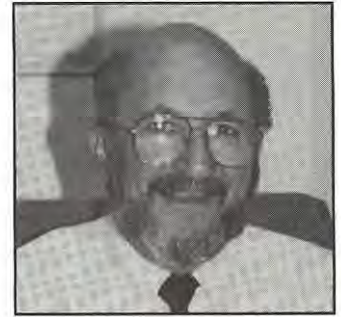
I. Micro-Valve O-Ring related problems cause the greatest number of failures on I.L. analyzers. Worn O-rings leak, resulting in the inability to calibrate the instrument. The worst cases of worn O-rings result in the micro-valve becoming blocked with rubber particles. When this happens

the blockage can be removed by forcing water through the valve using a 5cc syringe. Whenever O-rings are replaced the valve should be tested for blockage using this method.

II. Electrode gasket seals also cause many failures on I.L. instruments. When these seals become worn they permit flush and samples to leak past the electrode tips resulting in persistent membrane leak warnings. Replacement of these seals during the PM will also reduce the amount of future failures.

Editor's Note: Ron Rubman has a B.S.B.M. from Salem State University in Salem, MA. He has been Director/Blood Gas Services for DESCO since 1991. He previously worked for IL as Senior Service Engineer, Senior Customer Service Supervisor, and, from 1982-1991, as National Repair Center Manager.

from
the
desk
of
the



Al Lapides, President

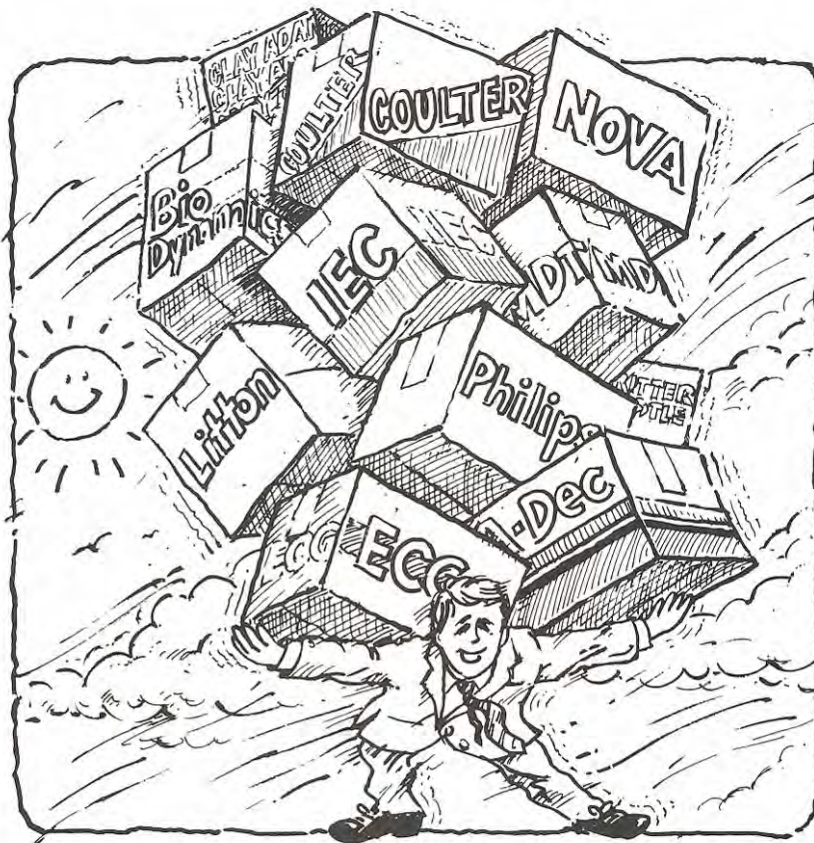
PRESIDENT

As you can see, we've added a new column to our little newsletter. It's called Tech Talk, and its purpose is to help you with your more troublesome problems. The Service Tips column, which is written by you, covers methods that you have developed individually to do your job better and more easily. You help each other through that column by letting your peers know about them.


Tech Talk will be written by our Product Development staff. What we're going to try to do is cover the most common problems you call us about. Hopefully, this will help both you and RPI by spending less time on the more frequent problems. In some cases, the column might talk about a part we (and you) have had some trouble with. This first article covers both possibilities

We are going to try to help you develop some simple troubleshooting techniques that will identify the source of the problem. That way, you can order the right part the first time and not have to redo a lot of work you've already done. No, we're not going to make you perfect. Only you can do that.

We're simply trying to respond to the increased number of phone calls asking for technical help. Many of your calls are for the same problems. Those are the ones we're going to address. Please give us some feedback on the column. As always, we need your help to help you better.



We carry parts to fit all the big names

 Celebrating 20 years
of quality service to
the healthcare industry.

from the
**PRESIDENT'S
BOSS**

Word came through to us shortly before 2:30 in the afternoon that the jury in the Rodney King trial was about to come in with their verdict. Most of us here at RPI gathered around the TV set in the lunch room. Actually, although everyone called it the Rodney King trial, he was not the one being prosecuted—four members of the Los Angeles Police Department were the ones waiting for that verdict. And when it came in, surprising everyone, we knew that the system had worked, even if justice, in the eyes of many, had not been served.

We watched as Mayor Tom Bradley spoke, critical of the verdict and the jury. And then we watched for four days as different parts of the city erupted in anger, frustration, and lawlessness. Pictures came to my mind—Tien An Men Square, European countries in their struggles to overthrow Communism, the early days of our own Civil Rights movement, and then back to memories of the Watts Riots in Los Angeles in 1965. Things change, but, somehow, they remain the same.

We didn't want it to happen, but as long as it was, we could not stop watching it, fascinated and repelled at the same time. Out here in Chatsworth, a suburb of Los Angeles, we were a long way from where most of the problems were. But that didn't stop the feelings of anxiety and horror that came over us. We felt sympathy



Sherry Lapides, General Manager

towards the victims of the beatings, and fires, and looting, but also a tremendous sense of relief that we could distance ourselves from the turmoil.

Finally things calmed down. The federal troops have left L.A. and the healing process and the rebuilding have begun. But we must be more careful this time to address the underlying problems that exist and start to correct them, not just go back to the status quo so that the stage will be set for a repeat of this horrifying process. The rest of the country must watch and listen and learn from us, and our mistakes, so that other cities won't suffer the same fate.

In the aftermath RPI and its employees have donated money, as well as food and toiletries, to the rebuilding process. But they are only band-aids; the real problems of race relations, education, poverty, jobs and self-respect must be addressed. And these problems are not confined to Los Angeles—they can occur anywhere in this large country.

We were lucky this time, here in our own little corner of the world. Let's hope our luck holds up for all of you.



Hi! My name is Karen Hieger and I've been responsible for the Quality Control Department since I joined RPI in January of 1991. As I head into my tenth year as a quality control technician, let me tell you a bit about my experience.



I got my first job in quality control in March of 1983 when I joined Comco, Inc., a Burbank, California-based company that manufactures table-top abrasive machines. As the only inspector, I was responsible for all stages of product quality; from receiving inspection of raw materials and shelf parts to in-process inspection of machined parts and subassemblies as well as final assembly, functional product testing and packing inspection. I learned quite a bit during the two years I worked at Comco.

In May of 1985, I went to work for ITT Gilfillan in Van Nuys, California. They manufactured Defense Radar under government contract. Although my official title was that of Senior Fabrication Inspector (I inspected the structural assemblies of component cabinets), I also inspected various types of finishes such as plating and paint, welding, parts identification, and configuration inspection. After a little over four years as a Fabrication

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Business For Sale

Techniserv, a medical equipment repair company located in Concord, California, is for sale. David Stives, who has been a valued RPI customer since 1975, has another business opportunity and would like to sell his successful company, which services equipment throughout the San Francisco Bay area. Interested parties should call him at 510-674-0199. This could turn out to be a very good deal for the right person. There are service contracts in place and a good inventory, according to David.

We wish him the best of luck in his new venture.

AAMI/BMET of the Year

A • W • A • R • D

The AAMI/BMET of the Year Award was won this year by **Jahan Azizi**, Bio-Medical Equipment Technician at the University of Michigan Hospital in Ann Arbor. Jahan is shown at right, receiving his plaque and \$500.00 check from **Albert M. Lapidés**, RPI president.

This is the second year that RPI has sponsored this award, which is given out at AAMI's Arthur C. Beall, MD Commemorative Awards Luncheon, held in Anaheim, California this year on Sunday, May 31.

Jahan has been with the University of Michigan Hospital since July, 1988 and has also done work in the Clinical Engineering and Biomedical Safety Departments at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit. The award was given on the basis of his work with six Indonesian teaching fellows stationed at William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, Michigan and the University of Michigan on an exchange program. He also has been active in MSCE and helped coordinate the 1990 Midyear Meeting in Dearborn. Additionally, he has been commended as a "You're Super" employee by the University of Michigan Medical Center.

Congratulations, Jahan. Keep up the good work.

In addition to the award given to Jahan, RPI was very pleased to host the SBET Reception the following Tuesday afternoon. We were very pleased with the strong turnout poolside at the Anaheim Marriott Hotel.



Jahan Azizi, left, receives plaque and check from Albert M. Lapidés, RPI president.

What's Coming Up?

Watch the mails for our next newsletter and flyers around the end of September. We will have new parts to fit the following equipment:

- **Adec** — repair kits to fit the Century II water valve, the air-operated shut-off valve, Century II control block, coolant air valve, vacuum drain actuator, water filter regulator, air filter regulator, coolant water valve.
- **Burdick** — more parts, including potentiometers, to fit the EK-5A.
- **Instrumentation Laboratories** — new parts to fit the 943 dilutor and 1300 series BGM.
- **Pelton & Crane** — additional parts to fit the Magnaclave, OCM, OCR, OCR+.

RPI Family

continued from page 4

Inspector, I was transferred into Receiving Inspection where, during the next nine months, I received extensive training in the use of military specifications.

Then, early in 1990, the Berlin Wall fell and the Cold War was over. Suddenly, there wasn't a great demand for Defense Radar and I was laid off. I wasn't too upset though; the prospect of world peace is one of the best reasons I've ever lost a job.

Over the next few months, I went on several job interviews but none of the companies seemed right for me. Then I answered RPI's newspaper ad for a Quality Control Technician in early January 1991, and I've been here ever since.

Besides the training I've received on the job, I've also taken classes in Engineering, Machining Technology (also known as Machine Shop), Drafting and Electronics.

One personal note: I've been happily married to my husband, Al, for almost six years.

You Asked For Them—You Got Them YOUR OPINION COUNTS

The following new parts are in inventory, ready to be shipped the day your order is received. Please see the enclosed pages.

Burdick — Six new parts to fit the EK-5A and other machines.

Clay Adams — Four new parts, including two timers, to fit the Dynac II and Serofuge.

General Shop Aids/Metric Hardware — In response to many requests we have added 36 different sizes and types of metric screws, as well as three metric screw kits and two Pozidrive screwdrivers. Please let us know if there are other sizes or styles you would like.

Toll Free Lines From Canada

On February 21, 1992, our toll-free number, 800-221-9723, became accessible from Canada. All areas of Canada can now call us toll-free to place orders and request technical assistance. Just another small way in which RPI continues to offer exceptional customer service.



From Our Customers

*"I have **never** had any problems with products and service is **far better** than average."*

John H. Zeeb
J&M Medical Service Co.
San Antonio, TX

"It's nice to see someone who understands the need for replacement parts for older equipment—Thanks for all your help and interest in the parts business."

Rick Burleyson
Thompson Dental
Charlotte, NC.

"Thanks again for the bang-up job you're doing. We need a company such as yours."

Ernie Verna
Verna Dental Service
Shermansdale, PA



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