

# Envelope, please!

Announcing the winner of the caption contest



By W.B. "Bud" Graham,  
Contributing Writer

**DO** you remember this photo that originally appeared in the January/February issue of *TPJ* on page 10? I asked readers to send me short, glib captions for the photo and promised to publish them in a future issue. Well, the time has come. But first, let's digress.

You might recall that the January/February column covered more than just a photo with a socket-head cap screw in a section of 16-in.-OD pipe. It also described my top five pet peeves,

problems that can plague nearly any manufacturing company in any industry—1. The Bureaucrat (the number-crunching manager who is clueless about actual production); 2. the Tinker (the person who can't leave anything alone); 3. the Low-baller (a salesman who pushes just one product feature: price); 4. Problematic Material (certified material that comes with inclusions thrown in at no extra charge); and 5. Missing Ethics (don't get me started on this again).

I'd like to share a reader's comments about these top five problems:

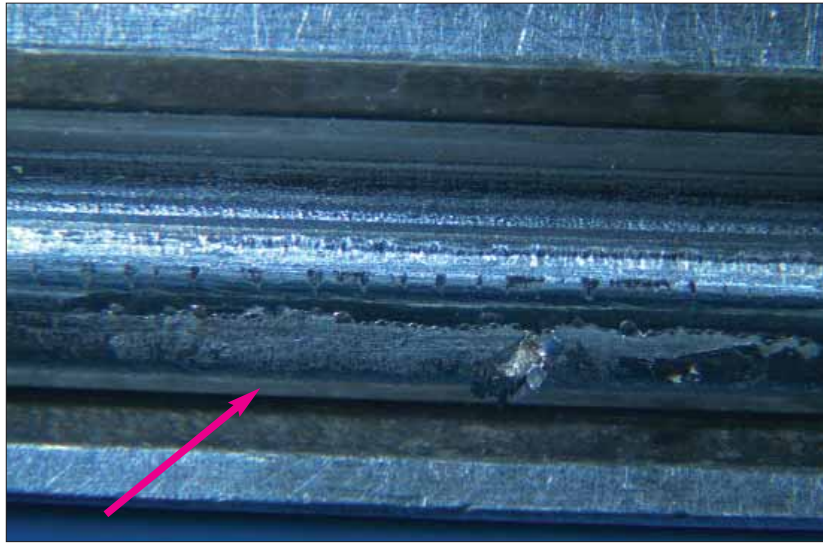
*Bud: I have followed your articles for many years. This one was absolutely brilliant, having been there ... I refer to No. 1 as the 15-ft.-thick concrete wall. It separates the people who wear ties from those who know that ties are a safety hazard.*

*No. 2. There is one in every mill. How about all the inspectors having their own setting on the RT machine?*

*No. 3. This guy has the largest expense account, plays golf, and never goes into the mill.*

*No. 4. Hard spots, variations in physical properties, inclusions, laminations, segregations, and a refusal to inspect for these conditions. Isn't the mill certification from 6 square inches at the end of the coil?*

*No. 5. Ethics? This is not only a Houston problem. Enron jury selection starts today ...*



**Figure 1**

*An example of a tube flaw is missing material, metal that spalled off.* Photo courtesy of Steve Barcomb, Springfield Wire Inc., Springfield, Mass.

*I have pictures like the bolt. Pass along my thanks to Newport for letting you print it. You should run a contest for more of this stuff.*

This e-mail was only one of many. Thanks for the encouragement. Now, on to the caption contest. First, the runners-up:

7. What are ya complaining about, it's only a little speed bump.

6. Hey, such things can happen in any good mill, and that is why we have such an excellent QC department.

5. We want that back!

4. Bolt? What bolt? We sell steel strip.

3. I wish I'd seen that.

2. No way that came from us.

And the winning entry:

1. Looks like a crane hoist safety bolt to me.

Thanks to Albert A. Heiserer, project engineer with Bystronic Inc., Hauppauge, N.Y., for the winning entry. He will receive a free coffee cup from the Tube &

Pipe Association, International®. Thanks also to all the contributors.

If you want a contest for weird or unusual raw material-related faults, send me your tired, your worn, your dejected examples and we will publish them in a future issue. The winner, selected by a biased and opinionated group of tube producing people, will win an all-expense-paid trip to Rockford, Ill., to meet the staff of *TPJ-The Tube & Pipe Journal*.

I poke fun at the problems mentioned because they seem to be universal. As discussed in the last two articles, material flaws are real killers of company profits and personal pride. Most material flaws don't jump out like the bolt impression, but they sure get your customer's attention nevertheless. A more likely material-related flaw appears as a missing, or spalled, section, usually near the heat-affected zone (see **Figure 1**). This phenomenon is a true material flaw that can sneak past every test at the mill and many times ends up at your customer's facility.

Steve Barcomb of Springfield Wire Inc. caught the flaw, but should he have to? What do you think? A more dangerous flaw could be lurking inside or just beneath the surface, and it wouldn't show up until the tube is stressed mechanically. The bottom line is that most material-related faults aren't discovered until after the tube or pipe is made. We will discuss this more in the next issue.

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*If you have a specific question or would like to see an article on a particular problem, please contact the author or TPJ.*