



HOLIDAY GREETINGS



There are days when I feel a lot like the Scotsman in this aged lithograph I discovered in the attic of an old home a few years ago.

Look at this guy! Standing watch over the source of his livelihood through a howling blizzard with only his Border Collie for company. Few people in their right mind would look at his job and say “Gee, that looks like fun!” He, obviously, understands the importance of protecting his assets through both pleasant and unpleasant circumstances.

Sometimes, *shepherding* a business is a lot like this. It requires the same perseverance to sound principles, common sense, and plenty of skill. Especially, when the world seems to be in such turmoil around us!

But, most importantly, I believe this fellow is focusing on the fact that, eventually, all *blizzards* end. As I sit here analyzing this scene from long ago, I imagine he is on the lookout for someone from home – probably already en route with a warm crock of stew, tea & a ‘wee dram’ to chase away the chill. Perhaps, it’ll be his son, who will take over the watch long enough for him to get out of the wind and warm himself at a sheltered fire in a small shepherd’s hut we can’t see.

I’ve noticed over the years that it’s the blustery times in our lives – those challenge filled— that sharpen our minds and hone our abilities. Like this man and his canine companion, I am not alone here at Associated Finishing. I can count on a capable team of employees to work with me through the tough stuff. Like this shepherd’s family, even though you might never actually **see** them, you can still trust in the fact that they are present—working behind the scenes to insure the satisfactory coating of the parts you have placed in their care.

This coming year, may we all remember to focus on the “Star of Bethlehem” which will shine forever above any earthly storm which temporarily obscures our vision. We can move forward in both our personal lives and our business dealings with complete confidence.....Because, our own Good Shepherd is faithfully standing His watch over this world and each of us. Best wishes to you and all you hold dear.

Chuck Klammer, CEO



Powder Coating—Liquid Coating—Pad Printing

Paint Stripping—Silkscreening—R.F.I. Shielding

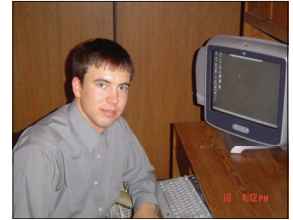
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Win/ Win Partnerships

Utilizing College Internship Programs

Once again, Associated Finishing was able to avail itself of the valuable services of a college intern. This is the second time we have turned over a "Special Project" to a college student entering a specific area of expertise. In both instances, we have been highly pleased with the results achieved by the student.

This year's goal was to maximize the potential of our upgraded computer system so that it would assist us in processing our orders. We wanted the program to track each job *in real time* from the moment it entered the plant until it was packaged or loaded onto a truck for delivery to our customer. This was one of those huge projects that was far too labor intensive for anyone in the plant to add to their normal day to day duties. We needed a person who could dedicate 100% of their time to the task and finish the job, while our own people concentrated on operating Associated Finishing!



Ryan Kapsner

With the help of Ryan Kapsner, an Operations Management and Business major from St. Cloud State University, we were able to successfully get our *tailor made software* up and running smoothly. In addition, our intern was able to train employees in the use of the new system. Having Ryan join us for the summer truly made the difference between the completion of the project and having it remain a mere "pipedream".

Ryan's official internship drew to a close at the end of August, in time for him to return for his Fall Semester at St. Cloud. He returned once or twice after that to help us troubleshoot the inevitable glitches that surfaced after his departure.

For those readers who may have recognized a familiar surname, yes, Ryan Kapsner is the son of AFI's Administrator, John Kapsner. Ryan received his Business Operations degree on December 18th, and will be completing the coursework for a degree in Business Information Systems during the summer of 2005. We have already seen evidence that this young man will become a true asset to the business community.

Does your company have a special project needing fulltime attention? Maybe, a college internship program is your solution, too!

Supervising Christmas

Each December, AFI supervisors and their guests know they will be gathering together somewhere for their own special Christmas Party. While this may seem "unfair" at first glance because the whole workforce is not involved, it is not. It is the responsibility of all our supervisors to plan and host the annual summer party for our entire work force. Each Christmas, it is the Supervisors turn to enjoy a bit of TLC for the dedication they give to their various duties throughout the year.

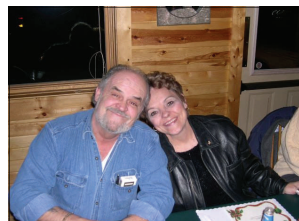
This year, we traveled to the nearby town of Elysian, MN to a quaint little cabin called the Bear's Den. Fine food, a festive atmosphere, and good company. What more could we want! Perhaps, the photos below can best convey ***the rest of this story!***



Lee & Bette Schweim (silkscreening)



Chuck, Irene & Kait Klammer



Cal Schultz (Metal Prep) wife Betty Lou



Brain Christnagel (Shipping) & fiancée Stephanie

Alan Baer (Quality) John Kapsner (Admin.)



Ann Austad (H.R.) & husband, Tim



"Tiny" Johnson (JCI line) & wife, Gail



Shari Small and Brenda Gave (office crew)

