

Managing Matters Abroad – Being Proud of Your Co-Workers!

By Jason Green, Executive Director

We are privileged to have co-workers at the Association with expertise that is being called upon. We are proud of their capabilities and willingness to serve in various capacities and display pride in work and have determination to help others. Don Van Veldhuizen, OAWU Circuit Rider, was recently requested to Antarctica to provide technical assistance and consultation for Antarctica's wastewater treatment facility. Don successfully accomplished this providing direction to assist the operators more effectively and efficiently operate their plant and correct existing problems. Additionally, Don researched and wrote a technical brief of suggestions and guidelines for operations of the treatment plant.

While this volunteer venture was taking place, Darrel Lockard, OAWU Circuit Rider, was well into a six-month military tour. We recently welcomed his return home and we honor the patriotism, sacrifices and work of Darrel. Darrel had a six-month (plus) tour in Kuwait serving our great Nation as a Navy Battalion Master Chief. His family and co-workers met him at the Eugene airport on May 10th. Darrel, his wife Eileen and their sons, Russ and Danny are taking some time off prior to Darrel's return to the Association in June. We look forward to Darrel sharing his experiences with us in his superb manner of story telling.

Scott Berry, who has worked for OAWU as both Training Specialist and Circuit Rider, left the Association in March to work as a government contract employee operating US Military water systems and training US civilian and military personnel in Iraq. Scott, as all of our staff, is well liked and his co-workers enjoy his humor and story telling. Often, we didn't need to rely upon him telling a story to us. We were able to watch it unfold in front of us. I am sure Scott would chime in "Well, that's the best way to tell a story. That way I get it right the first time and you fully understand it!"

We wish to share one of Scott's stories with you. Here is "Just another day in Iraq" as viewed and told by Scott Berry.

My hair was getting long (almost an inch) and it's starting to get hot, so I went to the barbershop to get it cut. The barbershop is a Hajji shop, meaning its run by locals- Turkish in this case. These guys spend their entire day cutting hair for soldiers and none of them speak any English. No matter what kind of hair style you ask for, you get "high and tight". Short on top and even shorter on the sides. I sat down in the chair and told the guy how I wanted it, knowing full well I was going to get what he felt like giving me. He started to go to town with the #1 clipper and then the scissors. It took about 15 minutes for him to finish cutting my hair.

I started to rise up out of the chair so I could pay and get to the gym. I was almost up when I felt his hands on my shoulders pulling me back down into the chair with a thunk! He said rather crossly, "No! No Feneesh!" and he pulled a real 19th century straight razor out of his pocket. Not a good place to keep that kind of thing if you ask me, other than the potential risk to his own safety. It makes you wonder when was the last time that thing was cleaned. He put some kind of slimy substance all the way around my hairline and my face and shaved me a bit closer than I'm comfortable with. Little did I know that my discomfort was only beginning. Thinking that I was now done, I again started to get up, again the hands on my shoulders, again, "No! No Feneesh!"

From another pocket he pulls this thing that looks like a Q-tip. It was the same size as a Q-tip but it was a steel rod with a wad of cotton on the end. Ok, what the heck does he plan on doing with that?! He dunks it in a little tray of alcohol and I'm thinking to myself, good, he's concerned with sanitation after all. Then he lights the darn thing on fire! At this point I'm ready to bolt for the door but he's got me cornered. He starts tapping this burning Q-tip looking thing on my ears, not enough contact time to burn but not comfortable either. He finishes up what ever the heck he was doing, removing those tiny little earlobe hairs I think, and he blows out his Q-tip. Whew! Finally done I start to stand up. Hands on shoulders, "No! No Feneesh!" What now?!! He gets out these little scissors. Yep, different pocket. He starts to trim my chin whiskers and then my eyebrows. He apparently saw something he didn't like because he got his Q-tip out again and scorched off the fuzz between my

eyebrows. Ok, I have no more hair North of the equator and I aint about to let him set fire to anything further South. That has to be it. I start to stand up. Hands on shoulders, "No! No Feneesh!" With a whipped dog expression on my face, I sheepishly said "ok sir". He shoves me forward in the chair and starts giving me a VERY forceful neck and back massage on muscles that were already very sore from last nights work out. This goes on for an undetermined amount of time. I think I may have passed out briefly. He finally steps back and waits for a second or two. By this time the Stockholm syndrome has kicked in and I don't want to leave the protection of my captor. He looks at me with this unabashed expression of disdain and makes an upward motion with his hands and says "FENEESH!!" I slowly and untrustingly get out of the chair gaining momentum with every step. I dropped my three dollars on the counter still gaining speed, almost knocking over two soldiers coming in the door. I'm assuming they were there to arrest this crazed barber for. I didn't wait around to see. I kept gaining speed and momentum the entire mile back to my hootch, where I cowered under the bed until I was sure it was safe to come out.

Just another day in Iraq.

I hope all is well in your part of the globe. My best to all.

Scott