



Savor the moments

Like other Americans and citizens of the world, on September 11 I watched the television images of a second airliner crashing into New York's World Trade Center, followed later by the collapse of the two towers. I was awed by the amount of destruction and touched by the stories about people who had died as a result of the attacks.

Few events have so stunned and unified the nation as this did. For days we watched the rescue efforts and followed the unraveling stories of the men suspected of being responsible for the crimes. We talked about it with friends, family, coworkers, and strangers.

We reached into our hearts and into our wallets to help the families of those who were killed. TAPPI raised US\$ 12,169 for the firefighters' and police officers' families in New York. ABB Inc. contributed more than US\$ 1 million to the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund. Lycos and eBay are trying to raise US\$ 100 million in 100 days for relief efforts. Many others have also contributed.

Suddenly, American flags were being paraded around town, being flown from homes and businesses. We were "at war." We had become obsessed.

We still need to be mindful of the events of September 11. We still need to maintain a reasonable vigilance. We still need to "combat terrorism and eradicate it from our world," as United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan has said. But, we should not let it possess us.

A few weeks after the events of that day, I was driving into town for a dentist's appointment. The sky had shed the haze of summer and the bright morning sun cast long shadows of trees across the road. The temperature had dipped just enough to warrant a jacket. It was grand.

Then I thought, there are thousands of people who did not live to see this day, this wonderful, beautiful day. How fortunate we are to be alive.

Later that week, in the darkness before dawn, I left the house to go to work. As I walked to the car, I looked up and stopped for a minute to marvel at all the stars glimmering in a cloudless sky—so far away and seemingly constant.

Again I thought, how wonderful—isn't it great to be alive.

Like our freedom and our security, we generally take "life" for granted. We eat, we sleep, we go to work, we fall into routines and become distracted by many things. Often we forget to savor the moments and the day-to-day riches of just being alive.

We have all survived the fires and rubble of the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and the four hijacked planes. It's time to take a deep breath, laugh a little, and get on with our lives. Enjoy your friends. Enjoy your family. Embrace the fullness of each day. Savor the moments. **S!**

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EDITORIAL BOARD

EDITORIAL BOARD DIRECTOR

David J. Bentley, Jr.
RBS Technologies, Inc.
dbentley@unm.edu
+1 505 299-6871

BUSINESS ISSUES

James R. Thompson
Talo Analytic International, Inc.
jthompson@tailine.com
+1 404 822-3412

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Klass Associates, Inc.
cklass@compuserve.com
+1 610 902-0520

Nick G. Triantafillopoulos
OMNOVA Solutions, Inc.
nick.triantafillopoulos@omnova.com
+1 330 794-6249

ENGINEERING

Jere W. Crouse
JWC Consulting
jwccrouse@inwave.com
+1 608 362-4485

ENVIRONMENTAL

Reid A. Miner
NCASI
rminer@ncasi.org
+1 919 558-1991

FINISHING & CONVERTING

Michael R. Molter
TAPPI
mmolter@tappi.org
+1 770 209-7264

INTERNATIONAL TRENDS & EVENTS

Raimo J. Alén
University of Jyväskylä
ralen@cc.jyu.fi
+358-14-2602562

MANAGEMENT ISSUES & SELF HELP

Cheryl Reimold
Perc Communications
percocom@aol.com
+1 914 725-1024

PAPERMAKING

James W. Atkins
Atkins, Inc.
atkinsinc@yahoo.com
+1 908 806-8689

Kasy King
Papermaking Process Consulting, LLC
kasyking@new.rr.com
+1 920-991-9102

Terry L. Bliss
Engineering Consultant
tlbliss@aol.com
+1 770 579-8820

Bernard Kessler
Ponderay Newsprint Co.
kesslerb@bowater.com
+1 509-445-2189

PROCESS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Ted McDermott
McDermott Consulting Services
tedmcd@megsinet.net
+1 847-934-6386

PULPING

Eric T. Fletty
TAPPI
efletty@tappi.org
+1 770 209-7535

William S. Fuller
Weyerhaeuser Co.
bill.fuller@weyerhaeuser.com
+1 253 924-6120

Peter W. Hart
Westvaco Corp.
pwhart@westvaco.com
+1 409 276-3465

Richard J. Spangenberg
Retired
dspang@home.com
+1 206 527-5490