



TONY RADOSZEWSKI

The Plastics Pipe Institute Inc. (PPI), headquartered in Irving, Texas, is the major trade association representing all segments of the plastics piping industry. More than 150 PPI members share a common interest in broadening awareness and creating opportunities that expand market share and extend the use of plastics pipe in all its many applications. As an association, PPI focuses collaborative efforts to accumulate data, concentrate facts and target resources toward advancements in applications and increases in widespread usage. Since 2006, the Plastics Pipe Institute is headed by its president, Tony Radoszewski

– Mr. Radoszewski, how did you come to plastic pipe industry? What affected this decision? What made the main influence?

– I graduated with my degree in chemistry in 1980 and went to work for Phillips Petroleum Company selling polyethylene and polypropylene resins. In 1992 I became a sales manager for their polyethylene pipe subsidiary, Driscopipe, which is now known as Performance Pipe. In 1995, I went to work for Advanced Drainage Systems, the largest manufacturer of corrugated HDPE pipe, as director of marketing and business development. In 2002, I was named president of Wentworth Group International, a marketing and business consulting company. From there I was recruited to head the Plastics Pipe Institute in 2006. Looking back, I just think the people one interfaces with in the plastic pipe industry are solid, down-to-earth people working to improve society by bringing life's essentials (water, gas, electricity and communications) to more and more people around the world. And plastics offer the most sustainable option!

– What do you think was your major challenge and major achievement in the industry?

– When I was with Advanced Drainage Systems, their brand is a green stripe along the length of the corrugated drainage pipe. One of the challenges the president of the company gave me was to resurrect the brand. We conducted some market research and found that engineers and contractors were aware of the brand (the green stripe) but did not have an emotional attachment to it (critical when developing a brand) as it was not promoted or supported. So I put together a program to “reinvent” this corporate brand and was fortunate to have a boss who believed it was the right thing to do. We incorporated the green stripe in all of our literature, in advertisements, on the side of delivery trucks... everywhere we could think of to get it in front of our customers and to attach an idea of quality products and quality service. After a few years, the “Green Stripe” had been revived and the reputation of the company and its products were strengthened.

– Have you been involved with any “dead end” projects that were not completed? Were any of them wrongly forgotten?

– Yes, but not in the pipe business. When I worked for Phillips Petroleum, there was a strong desire to increase market share in the blown/cast film business. While we had some good resins for these applications, we didn't have great resins. We were successful in increasing the awareness and market share of these resins but just did not have what the market place was looking for to realize significant growth. I learned a lot about catalyst technology and the dynamics of a competitive marketplace but we just weren't successful in moving the needle to increase our sales significantly.

– What changes have you seen in the world market of plastic pipe systems while working in the industry?

– I think the ability to make larger and larger diameter plastic pipe, both pressure (solid wall) and gravity flow (profile wall) created a greater awareness of the engineering capabilities of plastics in pipe applications. It wasn't really too long ago that pipe diameters of 1000 or 1200 mm was considered cutting edge. Now pipes are being routinely made in 2000 and 2500 mm, extruded directly into the water and shipped across the Atlantic Ocean by tug boats! Just imagine what we will see in the next generation!

– What was the Global Financial Crisis affect (negative and positive) on the plastics pipe industry?

– Like almost every industry, the plastic pipe market was hurt in 2009, especially in the markets that serve residential housing. In the US, PVC pipe is mostly used in water and sewer systems and was devastated by the housing bubble seeing sales drop by nearly 50%. Now, some six years later, we are finally getting closer to a full recovery. However, the same was not true for HDPE pipe. In 2010, we saw a significant rebound in sales of HDPE pipe; not to the 2008 level but significantly stronger than 2009. Part of the reason is that HDPE pipe is used in more varied applications and this diversity helps when one industry is affected more than another. Most significant, however, was

the dramatic impact of hydraulic fracturing in the oil and gas market. HDPE pipe is used to move water to and from the wells and of course to move the hydrocarbons (both oil and gas). As a result, 2011 was a record year along with 2012, 2013 and 2014. With the drop in oil starting in late 2014, we are not expecting a record year for HDPE pipe in 2015 but also not a horrible year due to other applications improving such as gas distribution and municipal water and sewer due to replacement of aging underground infrastructure.

– What do you think about the future dynamics of the world market of plastic pipe systems?

– The word is getting out to many more design engineers that plastics can and do outperform the more traditional, or “legacy” materials such as metal and concrete. As more and more younger designers make their way up the ladder they are looking at varying solutions to old problems and plastic pipes are absolutely the best answer. Continuing improvement in catalyst technologies and manufacturing equipment will continue to push the limit on where and how plastics can be used in pipe. Sometimes I wish I was a young man again just to see where our industry will be in the next 50 years!

– Which new developments in products, materials and technologies might impact the future of plastics pipe industry tomorrow?

– I think the advent of multilayer and composite pipe structures will have a significant impact on plastic pipe. By incorporating glass or carbon fiber or steel with plastics, the range of pressures has increased significantly opening new applications. We are now seeing plastic pipe systems that can operate up to 200+ bar allowing plastics to compete in industries where only steel was used before. Multilayer structures will take advantage of specific properties of different polymers that can improve abrasion resistance, chemical resistance, thermal stability and

other properties allowing broader applications for plastic pipe. I also believe these “application specific” pipe structures will be more financially beneficial to pipe manufacturers which helps balance the more commodity uses.

– What are the world trends in plastic pipe industry?

– Even though plastic pipe was first introduced in the early 1950’s with PVC and the 1960’s with HDPE, these materials are still considered “new” as compared to ductile iron, steel, copper, clay and concrete. So we must constantly educate design engineers, students, elected officials and others to the superior performance and economic characteristics of plastic pipe. That is best done through educational seminars like the Plastics Pipe Conferences held every two years (the next being in Berlin in 2016), in regional conferences like the one in Moscow in 2013 and of course through case studies and articles in various trade magazines. The more we can get the message out to decision makers and influencers (and young people!), the better our opportunities to grow the use of plastic pipe. The trend is education, education and more education!

– Can you, please, say a few words directly to our readers, Russian Pipe industry professionals?

– I had the great opportunity to visit both Moscow and St. Petersburg with my wife in 2013 and both are dynamic cities. While there, we both enjoyed the culture, architecture, food and hospitality of the Russian people. Although my wife may not have been excited (!), I was quite happy to see a lot of replacement of old ductile iron, and even clay pipe, with plastic pipe. It’s great to see that major world centers like Moscow and St. Petersburg recognize the advancements made in plastic pipe and install the better long-term performing option.

– In the addition – several questions for the form of Marcel Prust. What is your hobby?



– I like to play golf and brew beer. I used to run marathons but now I'm getting too old. My mind says I can still do the long training necessary but my body constantly overrules it. I think that's why I brew beer – both mind and body are in agreement on that hobby!

– What is your main feature of character?

– I like to think I am a very optimistic person. But then I think everyone in the plastic pipe industry is by nature optimistic!

– Where would you like to live?

– There are so many beautiful places to live in the world and I have been fortunate to have visited many so this is a very difficult question. I do like being in the outdoors where I can ride a bike, or hike so maybe where there are mountains fits more my style than say the beach and the ocean. Having grown up where it gets very cold (Wisconsin), I prefer more temperate or warmer climates. So Texas, where we live now, is a good place. Some people say that Texas gets very hot, and that it true especially in August and September. My reply to that is, yes it is hot but you don't have to shovel heat!

– Who are your favorite writers?

– When I was a young boy, I loved reading science fiction and Isaac Asimov was one of my favorite authors. When I graduated from college and had my first job in sales, one of my favorite books at the time (and still today) is titled "The Greatest Salesman in the World" by Og Mandino. Today, I think my interests are more in the line of theology. Maybe that's because now I'm on the backside of life and I better get straight with The Almighty before it's too late!

– Who are your favorite poets?

– So this is somewhat embarrassing, as I am not a big reader of poetry. While in college I studied the likes of Wadsworth Longfellow, Poe and others. But maybe it's since I had children that the most poetry I ever read was written by Dr. Seuss!

– Who are your favorite artists and composers?

– Monet and Renoir are my favorite artists and Chopin is my favorite composer. I really enjoy impressionist art and I admire that the artists of this movement took very big risks by creating a whole new style of painting. It's rare when an artist can be financially successful (while alive!) yet Monet and Renoir both achieved significant wealth. To me, that means they understood their customers and gave them what they wanted. As far as Chopin is concerned, well he was Polish as am I (at least by heritage) and I play the piano (although not so well!). Chopin's waltzes, nocturnes and polonaises are just lovely. My favorites are the Waltz in C#

Minor and the Nocturne in C# Minor. One I could play and the other not at all. I'll leave it to your readers to guess which one is which!

– Who are your favorite personages?

– I most admire those people who looked at the status quo and made bold moves. Henry Ford's contribution to making the automobile affordable to so many people is a great example of understanding engineering, manufacturing and economics. Steve Jobs is perhaps the most recent person who exemplifies this philosophy as well. Yet he did Ford one better – legend has it that Ford said his customers could have any color car – as long as it was black! Jobs really understood design and created not only functional computers, phones, laptops and tablets but also near works of art. Design was very important to him and it shows by how much those products are emulated today.

– What is your favorite dish and drink?

– My favorite drink is an ice cold gin martini, with Beefeaters Gin and olives. However, I must admit, when I travelled to Russia in 2013, I enjoyed some very good vodkas! Russian Standard Platinum, served ice cold in a frozen short glass is my favorite. Then of course, there is the Polish Chopin which I really enjoy as well. Since I live in Texas, steaks are always on the top of my list but growing up I love a good Borscht that my Buszia (grandmother) made, with potato dumplings. Yum!

– Which historical personages arouse antipathy?

– I must classify this answer in a broad way because there have been so many tyrants throughout history. Simply put, those individuals (kings, emperors, sultans, etc.) who crushed the will of the people by enslaving them, taking away their simple liberties to enjoy life and persecuting them perhaps due to their ancestry or their religious/philosophical beliefs.

– What is the condition of your spirit in nowadays?

– Quite excellent, actually! Two of our three sons are out of college and the third is starting his junior year. So my wife and I are what's called in the US "Empty Nesters." While we certainly miss having them around the house, it does give us a chance to spend more time with each other, especially traveling. She said she is ready to come back to St. Petersburg!

– What is your favorite aphorism?

– "How old would you be if you didn't know how old you are?"

– If the devil offer you the immortality, would you agree?

– Of course not! Immortality insists that I am relegated to life on Earth! I am looking for eternal life in Heaven! Of course that does mean I have to lead a good life, of which I am trying (very hard!!!) to do!

