

Meet a Friend of the Online Inspection Community

If you've ever logged onto the inspection forum on the AWS Web site, you've most likely read some comments written under the screen name CHGuilford. That's Chet Guilford, an AWS CWI and QC inspector for Cianbro Corp., Pittsfield, Maine.

John Wright, another of the forum's regular contributors, describes Guilford as his "mentor and good friend from the AWS forum," and as someone he relies upon "for help with decisions here at work, and I run a lot of my ideas by him first before diving in head first."

Guilford said he participates in the forum for several reasons. "Many of the questions relate directly to what I do. I like being able to help out with information or experiences when I can. At the same time, I have learned a lot from reading the questions and answers. The people who participate obviously have a tremendous amount of knowledge and they are willing to share.

"The main reason that I keep going back to the forum is that everyone is respectful of others and well behaved," he added. "Misunderstandings are quickly cleared up and 'bologna' is not tolerated by anyone. That makes the forum a valuable resource and a pleasure to participate in."

Guilford was introduced to the welding industry in November 1980 when he took a job at Maine-Cascade Iron Works (M-CIW) in Clinton, Maine. "I had never really been exposed to welding other than a brief class in high school, so I really didn't know what the industry was all about at the time. I had no experience, jobs were scarce, and I had been laid off from a foreman position with a local poultry processing plant." He hired on as a janitor to get his foot in the door for what he hoped would be a more stable work environment. After watching the shop's activities, he knew he could do many of the tasks involved. Six months later, he got the opportunity to begin moving up. By 1988, he was bored with routine fabrication and eagerly accepted a position as shop inspector.

"I was a bit taken aback when my boss handed me a copy of D1.1, the CWI Certification Manual, and the Welding Inspection book and told me that was what I needed to study for the exam," Guilford recalled. "He was a mechanical engineer



Chet Guilford on the job at Cianbro Corp.

and had taken the AWS seminar to prepare for his exam. I thought for sure he was overestimating my abilities, because I hadn't had any real experience." Although the amount of study material made him feel somewhat overwhelmed, Guilford passed the CWI exam on his first try. Unfortunately, however, M-CIW closed about two weeks after he learned he had passed. He received an offer for an inspection position with Professional Service Industries and was "introduced to a life of high mileage and expense reports, but I learned a good deal."

Cianbro Corp., where Guilford works today, is one of the East Coast's largest construction and construction services companies. He joined Cianbro in 1994 initially as a fitter/welder because he'd grown tired of being on the road, then moved to the QC position a few years later. Cianbro works on a wide variety of projects such as paper mills, power plants, and chemical storage tanks. "Our Maine facility is small, but we push a large volume through the shop. Our niche there is unusual fabrication with tight schedules, so I have to give credit to my fellow employees. There is no way I could do my job without their support, cooperation, and commitment to quality."

His duties include QA/QC oversight, and daily inspection of fabrication and painting. He preplans the work with the shop superintendent to address code requirements and special needs. He also oversees straightening and distortion control for materials and weldments; provides training for fabrication, welding,

and inspection; administers performance qualification testing; works with vendors for testing and inspection services; and issues Weld Procedure Specifications. Besides his CWI credentials, Guilford is a NACE Certified Coating Inspector, holds a corporate Level II certification in magnetic particle testing and penetrant testing, and is a certified instructor for NCCER training in welding, ironwork, and painting.

Born and raised in Massachusetts, Guilford has lived in Maine for 30 years. He and his wife, Ann, started their family at a young age, but the nest has not emptied yet because they are raising their 7-year-old granddaughter. In total, the couple has three children and three grandchildren. Besides participating in the inspection forum, Guilford's hobbies include hunting, fishing, and camping.

Guilford cites two people from his Massachusetts days as having a special impact on his career. The first was foreman at a chicken farm he worked on throughout high school; the second a QA inspector who now works for MassHighway. His first mentor "taught me that agreeing to take on a task means seeing it through and doing the best you can, even if the job is shoveling manure. Although I did no welding or fabrication on that job, I've always tried to apply that principle on every job since then."

Guilford met his other mentor when that person was assigned to inspect some bridge work Guilford was involved with fabricating. "He answered a lot of questions and piqued my interest in QA/QC work but, more importantly, he set a fine example to follow. He always acted professionally and personably and showed me that quality control is not a matter of 'jamming code down someone's throat.' Rather, it should be a team effort to make sure the work is done right. At the same time, the inspector is not the engineer and is not the person to reject deficiencies. He merely evaluates the work according to the specifications and reports his findings as impartially as possible. So, in a nutshell, I have to say that he taught me that an inspector has to be knowledgeable, has to have humility, has to know when to stand up for what is right, and must know when he is over his head and needs to ask for help." ♦