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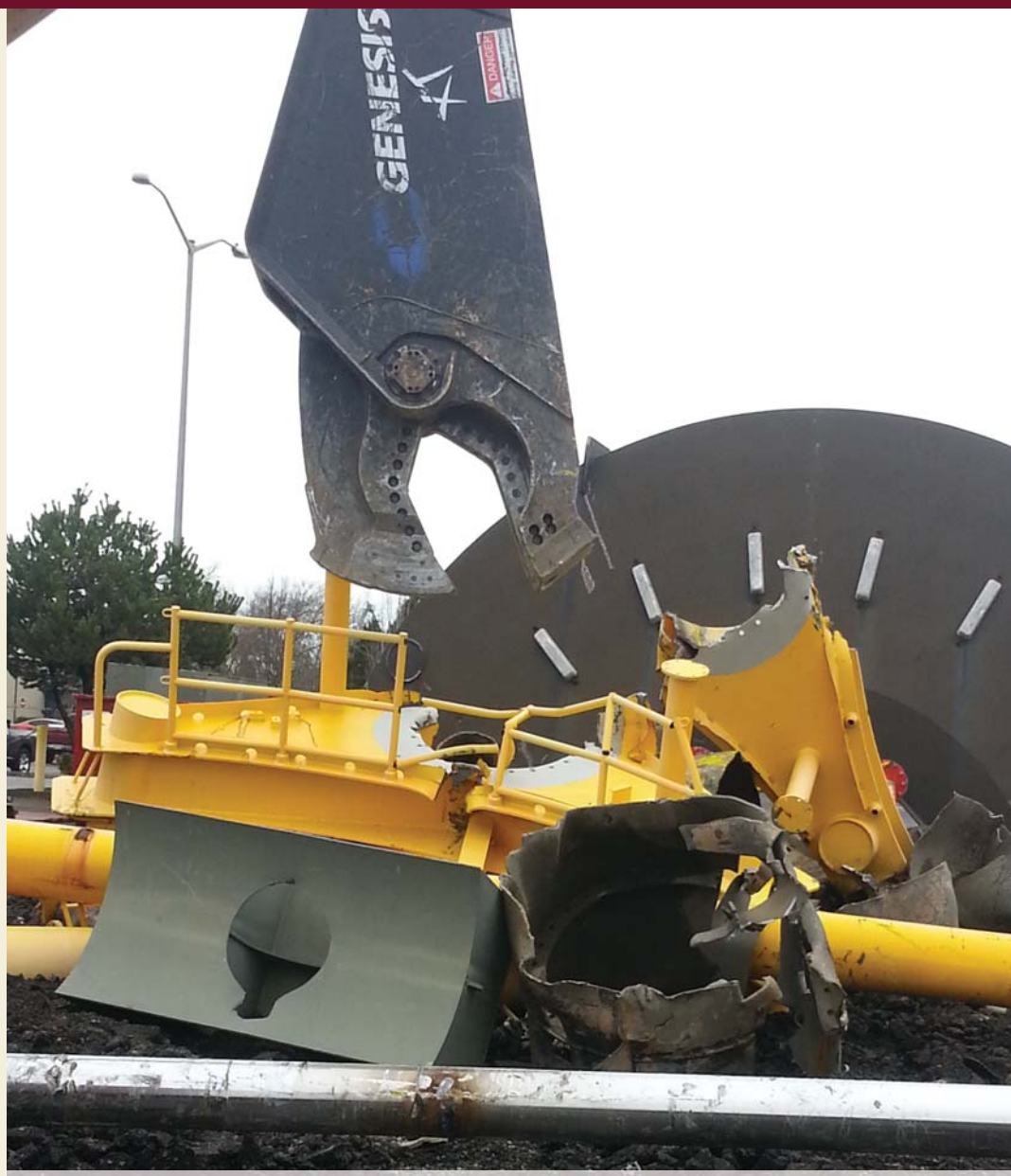
R. Baker & Son Dismantles Wave Energy Buoy Portland, OR

R. Baker & Son recently completed the dismantling of a large wave-energy buoy in Portland, Oregon. Originally built to harness the energy of ocean waves for onshore power customers, the 150-foot, 210-ton buoy featured a surface float, a cylindrical underwater spar, and a bottom heave plate designed to keep the spar in a relatively stationary position. This type of buoy employs the up-and-down wave motion of the float to propel a hydraulic piston housed within the stationary spar. The movement of the piston drives a generator on the ocean floor, producing electricity that is sent to shore via underwater cable.

The team's first task was to systematically decommission and dismantle the buoy by accessing the interior through manholes to remove the sophisticated hydrokinetic equipment. All salvageable components were carefully inventoried, marked, and crated for reuse. Hydraulic fluid was properly reclaimed from the hydraulic system. A Kobelco excavator fitted with Genesis hydraulic shears was brought in to cut through the half-inch thick steel hull and reduce the buoy to manageable pieces, which were loaded into twenty-three roll-off containers and transported to a scrap yard for recycling. The project was brought to a safe and successful completion in four days.

R. Baker & Son services customers throughout the United States, as well as in Canada, Puerto Rico, and Europe.



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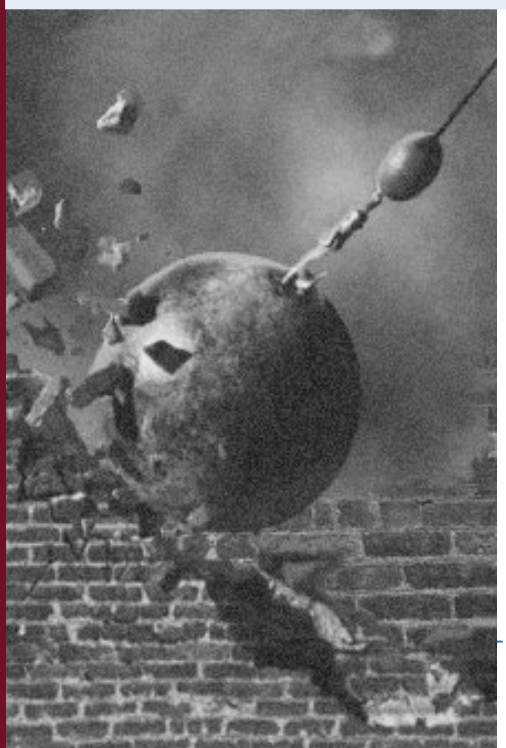
Dave Baker Travels to China on Recruitment Tour

R. Baker & Son president David Baker recently returned from a two-week trip to China where he completed a multiple-city recruitment tour for Shore Regional High School's student exchange program. Mr. Baker, a member of the Board of Education, volunteered to travel to China to meet with students interested in attending Shore Regional for a semester when the school's principal was unable to go.

Upon his arrival in China, Mr. Baker, along with representatives of five other schools from across the United States, met with a representative from the student recruitment organization. She explained that, as the nation shifts from a communist to a capitalist society, many Chinese parents are eager to educate their children in the U.S. so they can learn how to think differently, expand their creativity, and encourage them to become entrepreneurs. Mr. Baker traveled with the other representatives to Qingdao, Shanghai, and Ningbo, where they each gave a presentation for prospective students and their parents, followed by one-on-one meetings. Mr. Baker met with dozens of enthusiastic students who expressed avid interest in coming to the U.S to live with a host family, attend public schools, play sports, and learn about the American lifestyle in general.

"Everyone I encountered on the trip was friendlier than the next and eager to make sure we were comfortable and felt welcome, and I certainly did" said Mr. Baker. **Overall, the trip was a success, and Shore Regional High School expects to have several of the students interviewed by Mr. Baker in attendance next fall.** "The whole experience was extremely rewarding", said Mr. Baker, "as I believe it will be for the students who will be coming to the U.S. and attending the various high schools represented on the trip."



The Lost Art of the Ballers

When R. Baker & Son was established in 1935, the wrecking ball was the implement of choice for demolishing a building. Though undeniably crude and difficult to control, wrecking ball demo required a highly-skilled crane operator with a strong grasp of physics and the ability to control a six-ton steel ball swinging freely at the end of a chain. To hear Walter Baker, son of company founder Ruby Baker, tell it, demolition by wrecking ball is truly a lost art.

To demolish roofs and slabs, the wrecking ball was allowed to free-fall onto the structure. Walls were demolished either by pulling the ball toward the crane cab and allowing it to swing freely like a pendulum, or by pivoting the crane boom to accelerate the ball toward the structure. Operators had the difficult task of controlling the wrecking ball's arc to hit the intended target, while at the same time preventing collateral damage and keeping the ball from becoming stuck in the building (always a showstopper). Hats off to the wrecking ball operators of yesteryear!

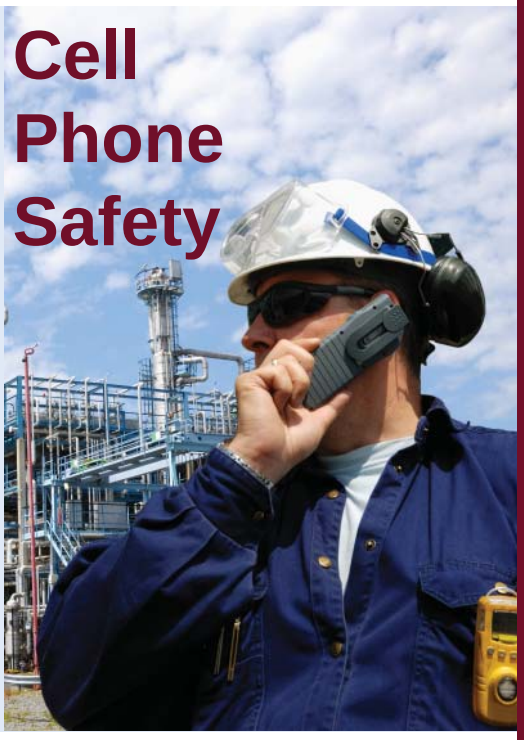
Hong Kong - Scaffolding Still Built From Bamboo

Scaffolding is a common sight across the country, adorning countless multi-story buildings, including the Capitol dome, and transforming busy New York City sidewalks into tunnels. Most modern scaffolding is made of steel or aluminum piping, and U.S. safety standards are strictly controlled. A more traditional approach is taken Hong Kong, however, where bamboo scaffolding is still widely used.

Bamboo is sturdy, lightweight, recyclable, and renewable, making it an ideal scaffolding material. Bamboo scaffolds are erected up to a thousand feet above the ground by skilled workers known as taap pang. Using very little safety equipment, the taap pang erect the spidery structures from twenty-three foot bamboo poles secured with plastic ties. Completed scaffolds are enveloped with colorful nylon fabric, making the buildings looks like festively-wrapped gifts.

There is a growing labor shortage in the bamboo scaffolding industry, as young workers are reluctant to enter the field due to poor working conditions, safety concerns, and stricter licensing restrictions. Material shortages are affecting the trade, as well, with firms now having to import bamboo from farther afield. Though bamboo scaffolding is still commonly seen in Hong Kong, it will likely be replaced by metal scaffolding in the next few decades.

Cell Phone Safety



It was only a decade ago that mobile phones were mainly used to make phone calls. Texting was mostly limited to teens, social media was in its infancy, and it was relatively easy for employers to curb their use in the workplace. Now, the lure of the smartphone is making it increasingly difficult for workers to resist using their devices while on the job, leading to decreased productivity, accidents, costly mistakes, and inappropriate transmission of sensitive job-related materials.

Used properly, smartphones can be a vital workplace tool. Texting is an efficient method of communication, and internet access at one's fingertips is highly convenient, but they must be used appropriately. Employers should enforce a clear mobile phone policy, and specific rules should pertain to specific workers - a supervisor could be allowed unrestricted use for work matters, while an equipment operator might be strictly prohibited. Workers permitted to use mobile phones must resist the temptation to constantly check messages and alerts that buzz insistently in their pockets. No matter the job, proper use of mobile phones can improve productivity and ensure a safer workplace.