

KOPPEL MEMORABILIA

Since I most likely will not be able to attend the June 5 get-together of ex-Koppel employees in Manila, here I am putting together some old photos and commentary as contribution to the event. Have a great re-union. Danny Gil, vintage 1967-74



Being a dealer's convention, I can forgive myself for not remembering most of all these people, save for Koppel president Tante Ventura (front 2nd from right), sec Ruby beside him, German Solis (back row 2nd left), and a few other familiar faces whose names escape me, particularly the guy behind Ruby who was the expert on Westinghouse PE chillers, having trained in Staunton, VA the year before I myself was sent. That's me on far right back row. Too bad I don't have earlier photos dating to the time when Messrs Almeda and Santos were still running the show, and old timers Beong Silveo were the mainstay.



A more informal gathering, date unknown. But obviously, with some of the servicemen. That's Ben Zeta with the colored glasses, and me to his right, then warehouse supervisor Johnny Rosales partly hidden by Ben, and Alex Quitalig on his right.

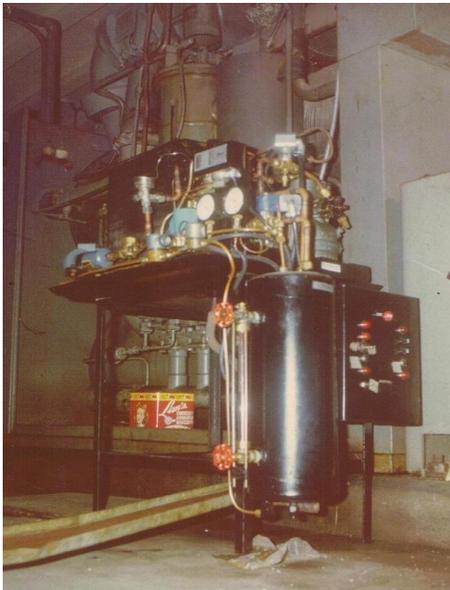
It's amazing that after all these years, one gets to find out about the real score. I met up with the GNQ people in 2006 and we had lots of tales to tell. That's (L-R) Greg Rodrigo, semi-retired from his coil-making company, then Frank Gotauco Pres of GNQ, US-retiree me, and other GNQ execs Che Navarrete & Alex Quitalig, whose initials make up the company name.



When these gentlemen broke off to form GNQ, perennial joker Gacs Gacuma quipped that the initials actually stood for Guilatco, Nontano and Quiotuc.

Which brings me to the point I was leading to: I myself also had a group which we called "Centrex", which stood for Centrifugal Experts, as we serviced the PE centriv chillers of BPI and other buildings. As we service people knew, the elegance of the PE & PF chillers was counterbalanced by one flaw, they would get oil logged eventually. So after I left Koppel and

joined AG&P, I convinced our service supervisor Resty Dumaran to quit and run the show for us (me, Froilan Pasion who had a rewinding shop, and Rene dela Fuente of AG&P son of famed HVAC designer Val de la Fuente). At that time, Koppel started subcontracting out labor service contracts, and we got quite a number of them, especially the US Embassy. But our pride and joy was the device we invented and sold a couple or so to BPI and other PE chiller owners.

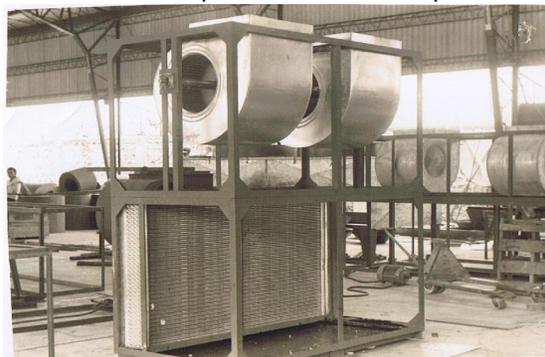
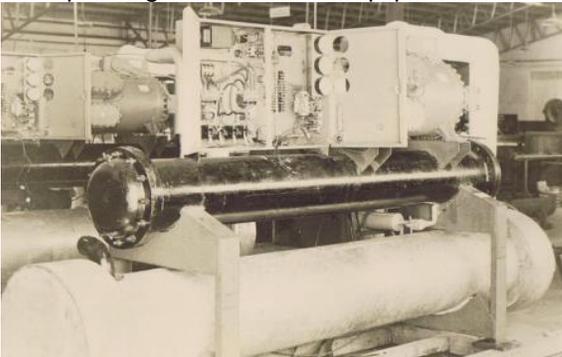


Immediately at left is a standard 3 hp refrigeration condensing unit, which we modified by adding a distillation tank with sight glass, float switches, solenoids (see compete unit on leftmost photo), but most importantly, relay logic circuitry that would automatically draw the oil-refrigerant mixture from the PE chiller's evaporator, then suck off the R-12 refrigerant and pump it back to the chiller's condenser, then pump down the

oil back to the chiller's oil reservoir. For the 25k price per unit, our direct cost was just over a thousand; we were selling our "smarts". But all good things come to an end. None of us 3 incorporators gave up our regular jobs except for the fourth, Resty who eventually went solo. Looking back, I now smile at the exuberance we had then. We even wrote up the incorporation papers, and reveled at the lawyers legalize lingo we

emulated; even included a clause that allowed us to trade commodities, so "Centrex" could also mean Central Exchange.

Speaking of other HVAC equipment, here below are some old photos taken at the plant floor.



Except for the control panel and CLS semi-hermetic compressor, the water-chiller in the left photo was completely made locally. Center photo was a 15 ton PAC, and again, except for the imported Lau fan and compressor, everything was local. Eventually however, Mr Franco, the Mfg Mgr, developed/manufactured his fan with bad results. His imitation Marley cooling tower, above, was great though.

For one, the propeller gearing mechanism was a truck differential whose hypoid gears were set in a locally cast casing subcontracted to Andrada Works. Mr Franco loved the use of fiberglass, and more and more items were made from it, including the cowling of the cooling tower fan. Of course, the extreme was when he used the resin to plug refrigerant leaks in the condenser coils; the compressors froze up.



Left photo shows 5/8" Unifin copper tubes which failed due to freeze up. Right photo is a 3 circuit condensing unit. What I lack are photos of the ice plant equipment such as hairpin and herringbone coils, Frick compressors, accumulators, ice dump, Roots blower, and heat exchanger components such as tube sheets, rolled shells, etc. Do you remember all these?



More photos below connect in my memory for more interesting vignettes.



Westinghouse training in Nov 1974 in Staunton, VA where our international class of about 2 dozen were pitted against each other in various teams for troubleshooting the complicated logic circuit controls of the chillers. That's me with a fellow from Australia, and another from India. It was at this time that I took one month leave to help set up a family furniture import business in Florida, which proved ill-fated.



Above is an impeller of the PE Chiller and on the right are the vanes. When Unimart opened, they used PE chillers, but for some reason, a number of them failed when the fast spinning (up to 22,000 rpm) impeller would fly off and chew up the vanes, as shown above. No less than Westinghouse chief engineer Mr Kisekie had to come over and install the new impellers, with Unimart owner Henry Ng looking in awe. These impellers were expensive, about \$2,500 and up. Much later, after the machines were not anymore under warranty, a number of breakdowns did occur, and we gave an option to Mr Ng. Have the impeller air freighted in from either the US or HK but pay 100% ad valorem tax, or, invite the HK engineer Bob Young to come over for a business visit where he would conveniently have a sample impeller in his luggage, tax free. Of course it was understood that all expenses of Bob Young would be paid, including "heavy entertainment" when in town. The latter option proved to be more practical.



Above shows Steve Rodriguez facing camera. Barely visible caption indicates this was a 1975 Marketing conference in Pines Hotel, Baguio. Steve passed away fairly recently.



A 2006 get-together with Joe Lecaros whom many may not remember as he was a later president of Koppel long after many of us had left. Ladies are our wives.

I am sure there are many more memories to revel in, such as the labor strike where Greg Rodrigo got isolated inside the plant, and had to have food passed on to him. Or the earthquake when we non-strikers were whiling our time above the gambling casino on Roxas Blvd, and Rey Calpo got beat up by some goons. In closing, I wish to remind everybody that Koppel did go through a number of names. First it was USI, and there already was the adage "Freeze and fry with USI". When we became USIPHIL, I coined "Roast and Chill with USIPHIL" and finally when we became Koppel Inc, it had to be "Shrivel and shrink, with Koppel Inc".

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