

BASEMENT BEGINNINGS

Gala Industries Does Booming Business

The scenery is a rural haven of peacefulness, with picturesque farm houses and grazing cattle.

You'd never know that inside the unobtrusive building in the heart of Botetourt County near Eagle Rock the manufacture of industrial dryers for plastic and a diaper clips takes place.

There's no noise and no pollution, nothing to disturb the rolling countryside.

Gala Industries, begun in 1959 in the basement of John Pauley's home near Eagle Rock on Route 220, has been expanding steadily since its inception, and now, says Pauley, business is booming.

"We're backlogged now about 300,000 orders (with the diaper clips, appropriately named "Di-D-Klips")" he brags. Sales on both items are up to \$1.25 million.

INVENTIONS*

The brains behind the inventions came from Vernon "Buck" Dudley, Pauley's brother-in-law, who has patented both the clips and the dryer. Formerly an engineer with Union Carbide, Dudley is now located in Charleston, W. Va., where he oversees the sales program for the company. He is leaving for a European sales tour in the near future.

Dudley is president of the cooperation; Pauley is vice

president and treasurer, and Harold Wilhelm, vice-president and operations manager, is also related by marriage: his wife, Alice, is Dudley's and Mrs. Pauley's sister.

Gala Industries is owned mostly by the family, although there are several stockholders from Clifton Forge, Covington, and a few located in different states. Pauley remarks that they would like to go public sometime in the future.

The ideas behind the two products seem amazingly simple, but it has taken years of improvements (something that never ends, attests Pauley) to reach the finished product.

Di-D-Klip

The Di-D-Klip was a brain-child of Dudley's back in the late 50's. Dudley and Pauley began making the invention in Pauley's basement, although Pauley says that sales on the clips didn't really start picking up until recently. Now, he says, they can hardly keep up with the demand. "The sales are just coming in," he remarks.

The clips—sold in local stores, but mostly in foreign countries, since Gala sells mainly to distributors, not retailers—have the advantage of not sticking mother or child, and remain firmly in place. They are made of stainless steel, and are run through a converted concrete



DI-D-KLIPS—These ladies are arranging Di-D-Klips for dipping into a non-toxic enamel. The diaper clips, manufactured by Gala Industries in Botetourt County, are sold locally and approved

safe by doctors. From left to right are Audrey Noel, Joyce Clark and Audine Dielon. (Staff Photo).

in non-toxic enamel in either blue, pink or yellow. They have been doctor approved. Pauley estimates they put out 1½ million a year.

But the real money-maker is the stainless steel industrial dryer, which Gala makes in varying sizes, ranging in price

from \$2,900 to \$25,000, for companies such as Union Carbide.

Plastic Pellets

The purpose behind the dryer is to take molding hot plastic, chill and harden it with cold

water, separate it into string form, and then cut it into pellets. Pauley says that the pellets—raw material for the large companies dealing with plastics—are easy to handle and package. The pellets may then

continued on page 6



GALA DESIGNERS— Four graduates of Dabney S. Lancaster Community College are designers at Gala Industries in Botetourt County: they are constantly improving and fitting the industrial dryers to the special needs of customers. Seated is Don Smith; from left to right are Kathy Henderson, Basil Spangler and Sam Hannah. All are residents of Botetourt County. (Staff Photo).

Gala Industries...

Continued from page 1

be melted down again, with other substances added for strength or color, for example, to make a final product such as plastic medicine bottles or stakes for garden vegetables.

Although Gala has a competitor—Carter Day in Minnesota—Pauley estimates that Gala has a good 80 percent of the market in dryers of the type they manufacture. Gala also sells parts in conjunction with the dryers, and Pauley says that although they do service their equipment, "there's really the problems with it." He claims that the machines are simple in designing there is not a lot to go wrong...any work required is mostly maintenance."

The dryers, varying in size, handle anywhere from 1,000 pounds of plastic per hour to 5,000 pounds, and the largest circulates 1,000 gallons of water per minute.

Gala is presently in the "research and development" stage with another type of dryer, which they may market soon.

The dryers are sold in countries all over the world: Canada, Russia, Red China, Austria, Germany, Yugoslavia, France, England, Greece. The Di-D-Klips are sold mainly in South American countries.

Dryer Patent

Dudley, an electrical engineer from Va. Tech, approached Union Carbide, his employer at the time he designed the dryer in the late 60's, with the idea, but they weren't interested. Dudley obtained the patent himself, and Gala Industries, the producing Di-D-Klips, began making the dryers in 1969.

In the interim, Gala moved from the Pauley basement to a small building in downtown Eagle Rock, which they soon outgrew.

Their present building on ten acres in Botetourt County was constructed in 1970, the same time that Pauley left his job as dispatcher with the C & O in Clifton Forge and Gala became self-sufficient.

In 1974 an addition was built,

and another addition which will increase the plant's floor space by one-third will be begun soon. Pauley says that studies have been done on the plant to plan for further expansion.

Employee

Presently Gala employs about 30 to 35 workers, including four young designers, all graduates of Dabney S. Lancaster Community College in Community College in Clifton Forge. Pauley says they work constantly on improving and items requested by customers with special needs. "We're based on giving the customer what he needs," says Pauley.

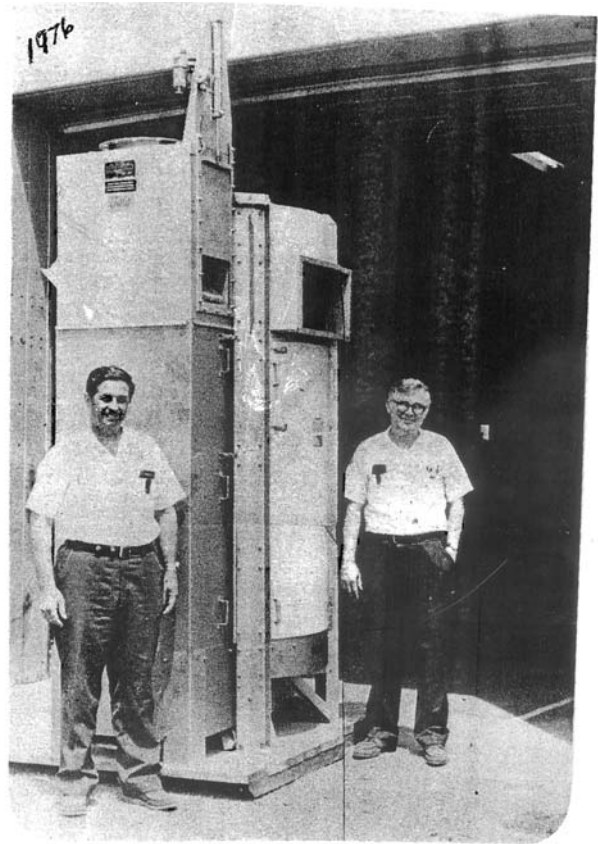
In July Gala took on Wilhelm, vice president of operations. Wilhelm, formerly superintendent of the Botetourt Vocational Center, has a masters in education from VPI. He is also chairman of the Botetourt County Board of Supervisors; Mrs. Mary Pauley, a director, is also a supervisor.

Pauley says his main education for the business has been in the "school of hard knocks". One of the directors attests for the fact that the leaders of the company work long and hard hours, and oversee every aspect of production. All three men are in their 40's.

Also on the board besides the Pauley's, Dudley and Wilhelm, are John Corstaphney of Clifton Forge, Paul Vaughan and Bernard Dasher of Eagle Rock.

One director says that the business has been welcomed into the county, and that Pauley, Dudley and Wilhelm are very well respected and liked members of the community.

"It's a receptive atmosphere", says Pauley. "I think the people of Botetourt County are pro-business."



SHOWING OFF THEIR WARES—Harold Wilhelm, left, vice-president of operations, and John Pauley, manager, display the largest of their industrial dryers made by their Botetourt County company, Gala Industries. The equipment is used to dry molding hot plastic to be

made into pellets for easy handling and packaging. This model will circulate 1,000 gallons of water a minute and 30,000 pounds of plastic an hour. Gala is mainly family owned and doing a booming business. (Staff Photo).