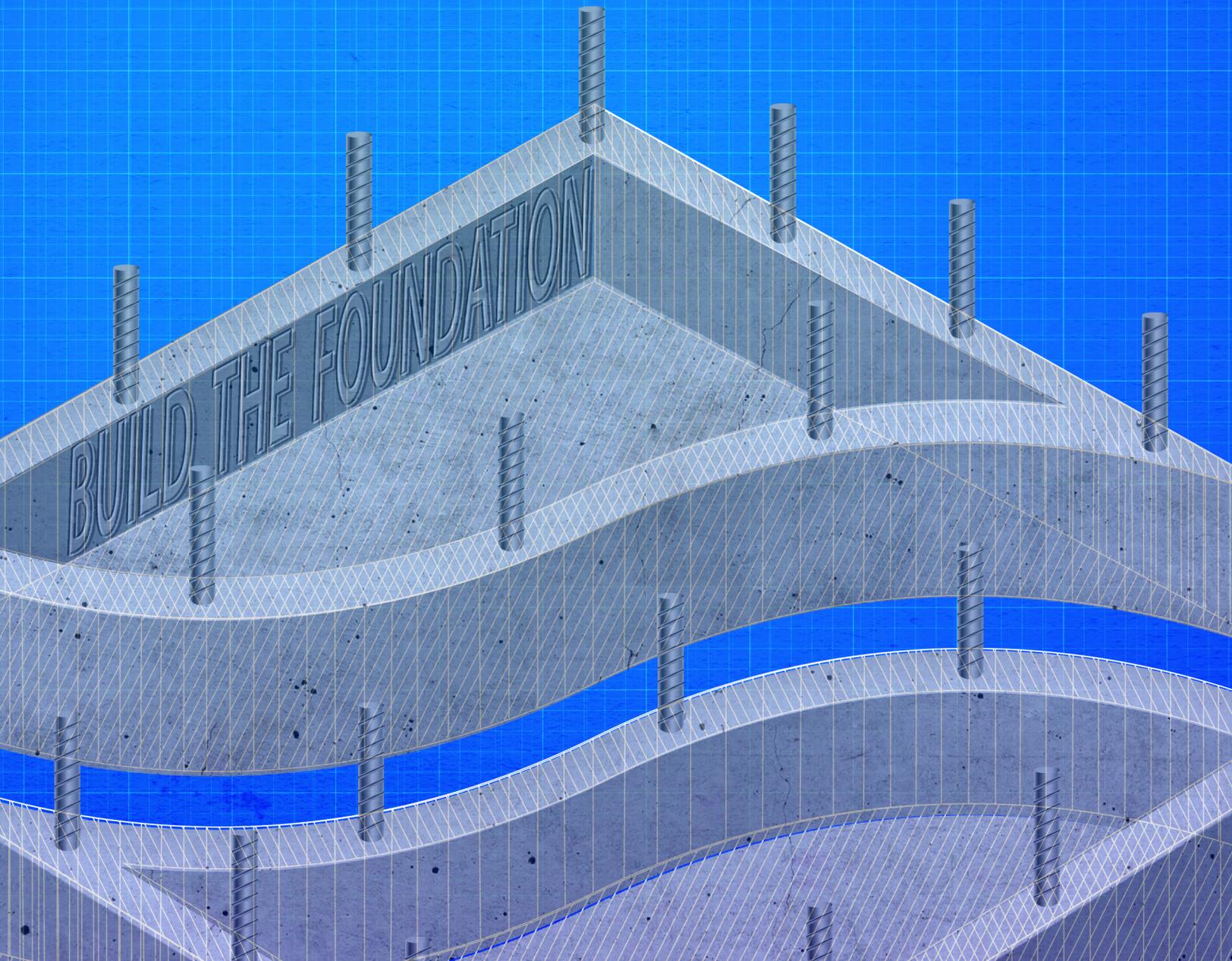


Tenth Anniversary Edition: 2018

INSIDER



WHAT WE DO:

Concrete testing and inspection



Photo by **Russell Lynch**

TIP OF THE SPEAR

Ten years ago, Pat Lowry and Mazen Wahbeh founded Alta Vista Solutions. In the years since, we have grown Alta Vista from a company of two to more than 130 talented individuals who have accomplished some truly amazing feats, from delivering some of the nation's biggest infrastructure projects to integrating drone technology into bridge inspection.

In this 10-year anniversary issue of the *Insider*, we're reflecting on our company's foundation and celebrating this important milestone. As we move toward 2019 and beyond, we'll look back at the building blocks that make us who we are and will drive us forward into the future.

Whether you have been here for 10 years or two months, all of us AV-ators know that Alta Vista's first decade is filled with stories. If you've spent any time around Pat or Mazen, you may have heard them—some funny, some inspiring, some challenging. But just like a house that's built upon a strong foundation, these stories have shaped the people, values, and history upon which Alta Vista stands.

Alta Vista does not exist without AV-ators. In the pages that follow, Erin Mock and Mike Foerder share stories about their journeys at a newly-formed Alta Vista. Pat Lowry reminds us of the strength of mind that made Alta Vista possible, and retired AV-ator Pete Siegenthaler remembers what it was like to work with Pat and Mazen to deliver Alta Vista's first project—the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge.

As we position ourselves for 2019, Justin Cocolicchio gives us a sneak peek at what lies ahead for Alta Vista in the world of business development. Our performance expert Megan Lawrence also gives us a look at our ISO:9001 2015 accreditation, and asks the question "so what?"

We also bear witness to the physical and emotional strength of Stuart Ross and his involvement with the Scottish Highland Gathering and Games. Finally, Finally, Karen Maghamil gives us her take on engineering in pop culture in her "Culture at Large" feature.

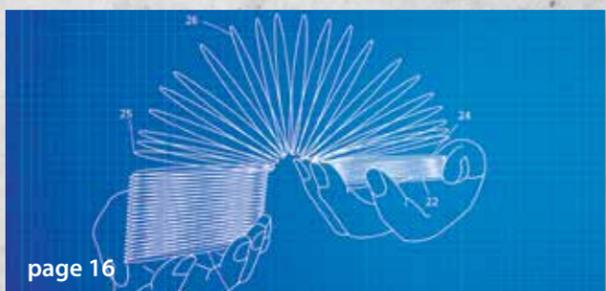
Alta Vista's strength has always been its people. We thank you for your relentless diligence in laying the foundation for the future of this company and the amazing achievements we have yet to accomplish.

Do Right.

Corporate Communications Team

Jordona, Dean, Lindsay, Courtney, Lucy and Justin

IN THIS ISSUE



This issue of *Insider* looks back to Alta Vista Solutions' beginnings using the theme of foundation building. The cover design features the Alta Vista logomark in an outline form, rendered with a concrete fill. On top of the mark, steel rebar extends upward.

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INSIDER

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WHAT WE DO:

Nondestructive testing

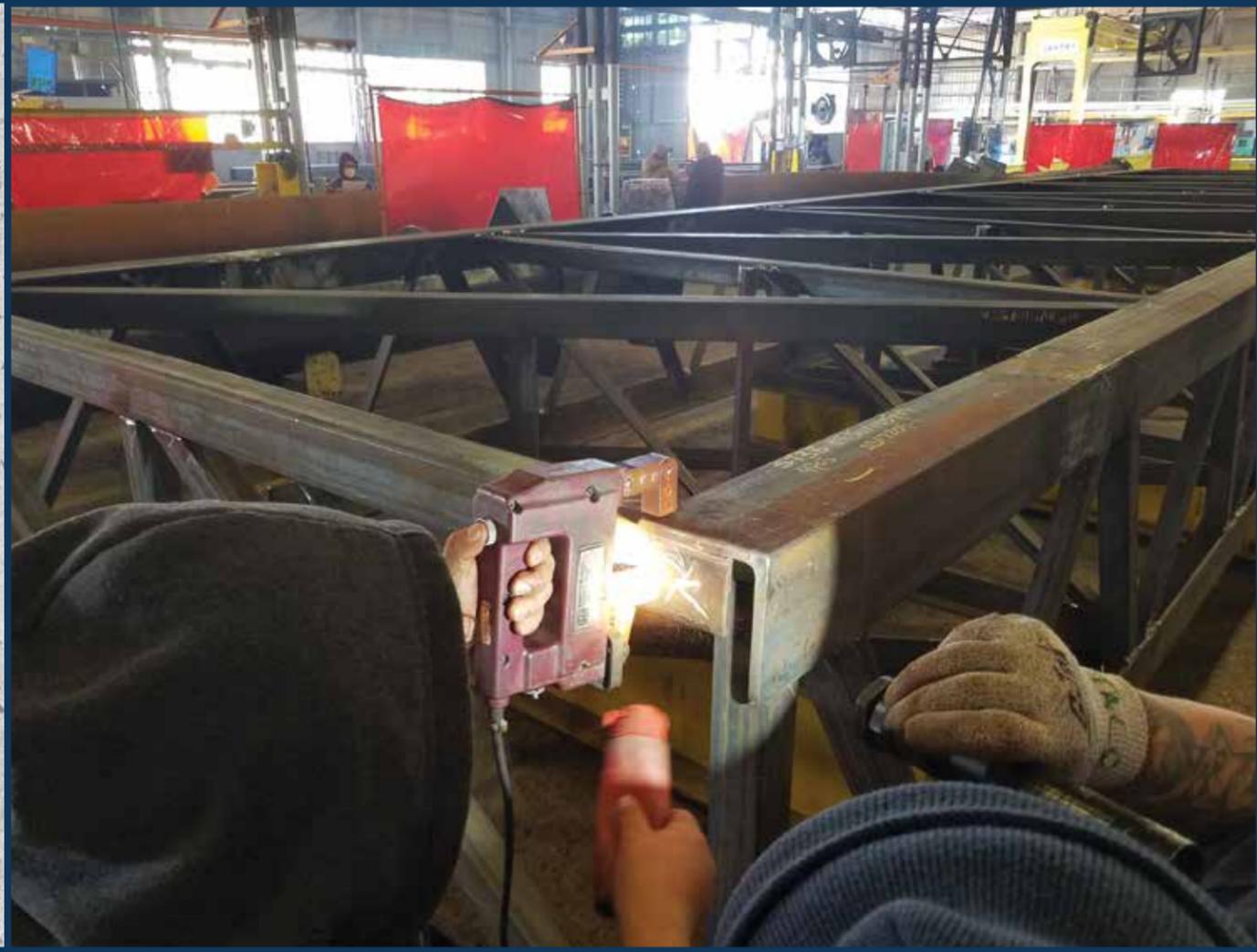


Photo by James Doe

10th Annual Alta Vista Picnic



7.21.18



GETTING IN THE RING

By Pat Lowry

I was a freshman at West Point. The ring was lined with my buddies, and they were chanting my name: “Lowry! Lowry! Lowry!”

Boxing. I hated it and I loved it—a seeming contradiction that I didn’t understand until I was years older. This time, I was optimistic. I had spent months training for the start of the season. I was in the best shape of my life.

The bell sounded and I made my way to the center of the ring, touched gloves with my opponent, and began the dance. My form always started out well—a jab here and there, hands up, shielding my face.

Then, WHAM! Holy \$@%&, this guy punches hard.

It’s in that exact moment—usually within the first 30 seconds of a fight—that I know it: I am going to get my @\$ kicked. The chants of “Lowry” faded as my buddies’ excitement quickly turned into concern. My form went out the window, my hands dropped, and things only got worse from there.

WHAM! Did I mention that the guy hit hard?

As the first round came to a close, I stumbled back to my corner, bloodied and exhausted. As I sat on the stool, while my coach mumbled something that I couldn’t quite decipher, all I could think was, “How in the heck am I going to last another two rounds with this guy?”

I relived this scene every boxing season, and I never understood why I kept signing up for more. Each time I left another fight bloodied and bruised, I swore to myself that I would never box again—only to find myself signing up for the team the following season. Every single time, I questioned why the heck I was going to put myself through the whole thing all over again.

It only took 20 years to figure out, but after recently finishing Phil Knight’s memoir *Shoe Dog*, I have finally realized why I kept subjecting myself to so much punishment during

my boxing years. At one point, Knight writes about a runner who consistently forces himself to run the two mile race, over and over again. He would throw up after every run, ending up miserable each time. He never won or even placed in the top three, but he continued to try. Perplexed, Knight asks him why he keeps doing it. The runner replies that he learns so much about himself every time he competes; to him, that knowledge is worth the pain involved. And years after ending my boxing career, I realize that is exactly why I kept getting in the ring year after year; I didn’t like getting the pulp knocked out of me, but I sure learned a lot about myself.

I suspect that people are getting tired of my sports analogies. But I have learned so much about myself and others through sports, and there are so many parallels between boxing and real life. Sitting on that stool after the first round, knowing that I had to get back up and battle a superior opponent—those moments helped build mental toughness, and they taught me that I had the strength of mind and grit to survive owning a business. That strength was critical for Alta Vista to not only survive, but thrive in the cutthroat world of business. My experience in the business arena has been at times so similar to boxing—you get in the ring, and you go up against opponents so strong that you can’t tell if it’s bravery or stupidity that makes you keep fighting. But the strength of mind to do so means that no matter how badly you lose, you keep getting up again. And sometimes, the willingness to get back up is what leads to victory.

Strength of mind is what made Alta Vista possible. I see it in all of our AV-ators, every day. In 2008, when Mazen and I first talked about starting the company, strength of mind was what gave us the courage to go all-in. It was that same grit that helped us survive the financial crisis in 2010 when Caltrans delayed their payments to consultants by five months. It was strength of mind that convinced me to stand up and defend Alta Vista and Caltrans’ reputation during the legislative hearings in 2014. And it will be that same foundational strength that drives us to turn any challenges we may face into opportunities to transform our firm into something even better as we move forward into the next 10 years.

Do Right.

...You get in the ring, and you go up against opponents so strong that you can’t tell if it’s bravery or stupidity that makes you keep fighting. But the strength of mind to do so means that no matter how badly you lose, you keep getting up again.

HOW TO BUILD A FOUNDATION

By Pete Siegenthaler

While I left Alta Vista to retire in 2014, the story of the company's beginnings and my early work with Pat and Mazen on the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge still strikes me as a reflection of the firm that exists today. My history with Alta Vista began with this bridge, its first project—but before the company was formed.

I met Pat and Mazen while doing foundation welding work on the Skyway section of the Bay Bridge, when they were part of a consultant company providing the California Department of Transportation with quality assurance (QA) welding services. In the early days of the Self-Anchored Suspension (SAS) fabrication, we were working on Changxing Island near Shanghai. The fabricator was having their share of technical issues, and Pat was the first from the then-consultant firm to explain to me and my staff the issues related to the prequalifying welding procedure requirements. This is when it started to sink in—what I signed up for in China and the challenges we were facing were not going to be easy tasks.

Working on a massive, project like the SAS and living in China really brought the team together. Strenuous days and late nights on Changxing Island, long and tedious boat rides across the treacherous Yangtze River and daily crowded bus rides from Shanghai to work inevitably brought us closer. The further demands of attending meetings with the fabrication staff, communicating in two languages, interpreting what was said, and understanding what was meant in technical and real terms, all against the backdrop of needing to complete the massive

bridge sections to ship them back to the Bay Area, created serious challenges; it required full-time commitment and effort from everyone involved. But the fact that we had workers, supervisors, management, and company owners all working and living together at all times brought out the best in everyone, and helped us form lifelong relationships. We had to help one another survive, succeed, and occasionally have some fun. Failure was never an option—it was sometimes brought up in moments of

desperation, but was always dismissed, with renewed focus placed on making the project successful. Success being the only way, it brought together the right people, and with the right people we were determined to reach the right outcome. If such an assignment does not bond people, I don't know what will.

Aside from the very challenging nature of our work during the multi-year effort to bring the Bay Bridge home, there were moments of fun and

well-deserved relief that are essential parts of this story. I like to travel, and having studied the world atlas over the years, I was looking for opportunities to see the world. It intrigued me how one could travel overland from Southeast Asia all the way to Europe, almost entirely by train. One day in September 2009, instead of

heard about it and said he would join in. My initial reaction: Really?! And indeed, the day came and Mazen was ready with his backpack and a fistful of visas that would take us through some of the most remote and mysterious parts of the world, from crowded Beijing to the wide open fenceless prairies of Mongolia, then onto the trans-Siberian train through sparsely populated Russia.

Mazen and I lived in a nomadic enclave in Mongolia for several days, sharing space, food and chores with a family. Onward, we traveled to Lake Baikal, Irkutsk, Moscow and St. Petersburg. So many impressions, so little time, and so many good stories capturing how people live outside of our home country. When traveling like this, eyes and minds are opened, and perspective is gained when you experience how other people and cultures live. It goes to show—learning, growing, and having fun have been part of Alta Vista's DNA from the beginning, and are indispensable parts of its identity.

The timely delivery of the SAS bridge components to California is a testament to the Alta Vista team's recognition and understanding of the project's and client's needs, and to the positive attitude and knowledge base that they brought to the remote Changxing Island. Beyond this, my memories of working with Pat and Mazen during these years stand as

flying home for a vacation, I opted to take a month-long journey from Shanghai to London by train, via Mongolia and Russia, the Baltics and then to Europe. As the planning was coming together and the itinerary firmed up, Mazen

building blocks for the company they went on to create. The work we did, the tenacity our team needed to overcome significant challenges, and the room we left for fun and travel all informed the culture that became Alta Vista's core. It also serves as a reminder of the company's motto to "Do Right" at times when it is not always convenient or easy to do so.

And the rest of it is 10 years of Alta Vista history.

San Francisco, Irkutsk, Moscow, Mongolia, Yangtze River, Europe, London, Siberia, San Francisco, St. Petersburg, China, Changxing Island, St. Petersburg, Russia, Siberia, China, Baltics, Changxing Island, Asia, Yangtze River, Shanghai

San Francisco, Irkutsk, Moscow, Mongolia, Yangtze River, Europe, London, Siberia, San Francisco, St. Petersburg, China, Changxing Island, St. Petersburg, Russia, Siberia, China, Baltics, Changxing Island, Asia, Yangtze River, Shanghai

A LONG TIME IN A SHORT WHILE

By Justin Cocolicchio

New York, New York. The city that never sleeps. The land of opportunity. More skyscrapers than taxis and hot dog carts combined...maybe not quite, but the sentiment is true. New York City's iconic skyline is home to 8.5 million people, a dozen of whom are Alta Vista's very own. If 12 out of millions sounds impossibly small, imagine how it was in 2014 when an unaccompanied Rami Boundouki pioneered the Alta Vista office in New York, and laid the foundation for what was to become the proliferate Yankees market.

Our New York market came on the heels of the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority (TBTA) Verrazano-Narrows Bridge Upper Deck Replacement project and New Ramp project, for which Alta Vista was providing independent quality assurance services on behalf of the prime contractors. An enthusiastic Mr. Boundouki had recently been promoted to project manager after completing Alta Vista's rigorous Development Panel Review, and was assigned to lead project management and business development for the newly opened

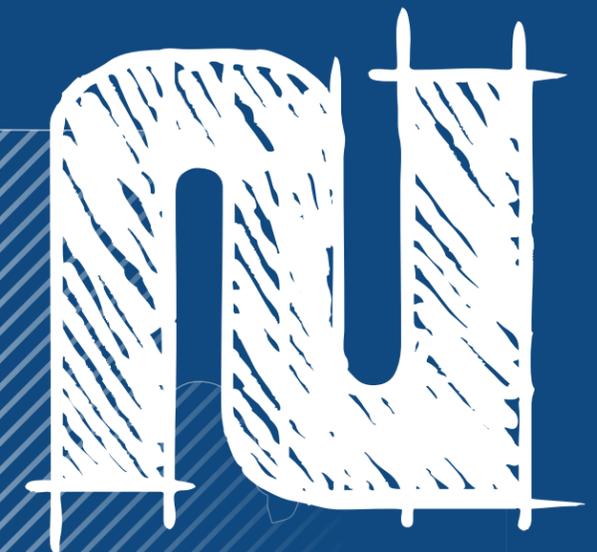
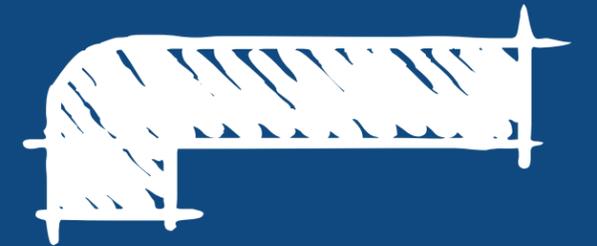
office in New York City—a daunting task to say the least. Pushing uncertainty aside and with business plan in hand, the new project manager was eastward bound, followed soon thereafter by Ken Riley and then Mahek Iqbal; and it didn't take long to secure the next big win. In July 2015, Alta Vista was selected as a subconsultant to provide independent quality assurance services, quality oversight and fabrication inspection of the steel and major precast concrete segments for the new Governor Mario M. Cuomo Bridge (Tappan Zee Bridge Replacement) project on behalf of the New York State Thruway Authority (NYSTA). Building on the success of Alta Vista's growing reputation in New York State, our portfolio of notable projects continued to expand. From the Robert F. Kennedy (Triborough) Bridge, to the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) Third Track Expansion, Alta Vista has performed quality assurance, quality control, and inspection and testing services for many of New York's public transportation agencies, including NYSTA, TBTA, LIRR, Metro North Railroad (MNR), and the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT).

Now, in 2018, the Yankees market has more than doubled in size. In the four short years since Alta Vista established its East Coast footprint, our New York staff has grown

to more than 12 engineers and inspectors and, unlike traffic in the Lincoln Tunnel, there's no sign of slowing down.

As we conclude the first decade of Alta Vista's history and eagerly prepare for a future ripe with exciting new opportunities—compounded by an influx of local, state, and federal funding—we need to ask ourselves “what are we great at?” and “what are we able to achieve?” Our broad aspirations for 2019 and beyond include securing opportunities with state departments of transportation beyond California, continuing to develop our portfolio of projects with local agencies and the private sector, applying innovative quality management oversight techniques to opportunities with the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, acquiring project work pertaining to the California Delta Tunnels project, and expanding our capacities with federal agencies. Although some of these opportunities will steer us towards unfamiliar territory, we have already witnessed the journey of one AV-ator result in exponential growth. As Henry Ford so appropriately put it, “If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself.”

Here's to a bright 2019.



THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD: ALTA VISTA EDITION

By Erin Mock

During my time at Alta Vista, I have worked on a variety of projects and taken on several different roles. Each of these projects has been a different experience and introduced me to new parts of the engineering world. But thinking back, I realize that all of them reflect back on different parts of our company's vision, mission, and values. No matter the type of work or the different roles we take on, our foundation has remained the same.

I started my time at Alta Vista in Sacramento when the office had just expanded, so we did not have cubicles yet. Our desks were temporary folding tables until all the cubicles were placed and assembled. I was working as part of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge (SFOBB) Task Order (TO) 3 team, performing quality assurance on the weld database. While analyzing and comparing weld data records, meticulous attention to detail was essential to verify the consistency and quality of these records. Throughout the work, we found more efficient ways to perform the review and shared these practices with our teammates.

After my short assignment on the SFOBB TO 3 team, I moved over to Pier 7 in Oakland to help with the SFOBB project on site. To make sure that the bridge could open on time, many tasks had aggressive deadlines. However, adopting the mindset of embracing our client's challenges as our own pushed us to meet deadlines that we initially thought impossible (albeit with some late nights), which proved our team's strength of mind. We supported and helped each other when one of our teammates felt overwhelmed.

My next stop on the journey was the California High-Speed Rail (HSR) project. Around opening day of the Bay Bridge, I moved to HSR to help implement the quality management program. As part of the quality team, we were able to interact with every department within HSR. Building and maintaining strong relationships with these groups was critical, allowing us to integrate quality management throughout the program.

After a couple of years at HSR, I took an opportunity to learn more about the company's operations as the operations engineer. During this time, I learned about one of the ways that Alta Vista gives back to the community when I was introduced to the Mathematics Engineering Science Achievement (MESA) program at the Los Rios Community College District. Alta Vista helped sponsor students who were planning to transfer to a four-year university and major in the mathematics, engineering, or science fields. I was able to participate in their awards ceremony at the end of the school year. It was an extremely rewarding experience, and I am glad that I can continue representing Alta Vista in the community.

Now, I am gaining technical experience working on our District 4 projects and local agency work. On these projects, open communication has been essential to make sure that all staff involved are aligned and understand the tasks. Some of the staff and I work in different locations for these projects, requiring us to consistently notify each other by phone or other communication tools to address updates and issues.

Each of these experiences has been unique, but share a common theme: no matter the work, we create a culture of teamwork and bring people into the company who carry positive outlooks and are able to diffuse stressful situations in order to complete work in a productive environment. Our values are what define our identity and remain our foundation—even as we change and grow.

No matter the type of work or the different roles we take on, our foundation has remained the same.

WHAT WE DO:

Construction inspection



Photo by **Elaine Yip**



FOUNDATION BUILDERS: INTERVIEW WITH MIKE FOERDER

How did you get hired at Alta Vista?

I was on the Seismic Toll Bridge contract, where I worked with Pat Lowry, Mazen Wahbeh, Jinesh Mehta, Robert Mertz, Ken Riley, Danny Reyes, Will Clifford and a host of others. When Alta Vista and Caltrop teamed up for the contract recompile, I was the project manager for a company teamed with the competition. Myself, Ken, and one other inspector stayed at that company for about a year, until Pat asked me to come aboard at Alta Vista.

What's kept you here?

The same things that got me on board have remained strong and kept me here for the past nine years. I saw Alta Vista as a company with the potential to be a force in the industry, that was building something different, and I wanted to be a part of that. Alta Vista also has a totally different collaborative approach; working in the trenches together to solve the complex issues that we deal with brings folks closer and gives us the chance to be more than just a number on a spreadsheet.

Got any crazy/interesting stories from your time here?

Oh boy—so many! One tidbit that comes to mind is the first time I ever met Pat—when he asked me to join the company, what he didn't know was that I had met him years earlier, and already had formed an opinion of him. I met him for a fleeting moment at a fabrication facility in Washington, when he came storming in, had some terse words with folks and stormed back out, and I didn't see him again until much later. After I'd come to Alta Vista, he asked me what I thought of him when we met previously—I told him I thought he was a real jerk!

What's your favorite core value? Why?

It's a toss-up between integrity and open communication. Integrity is just such a bedrock of our culture—if you do not have it, you do not work here. Open communication allows us to be candid with one another, especially management, for the greater good; we all have blind spots.

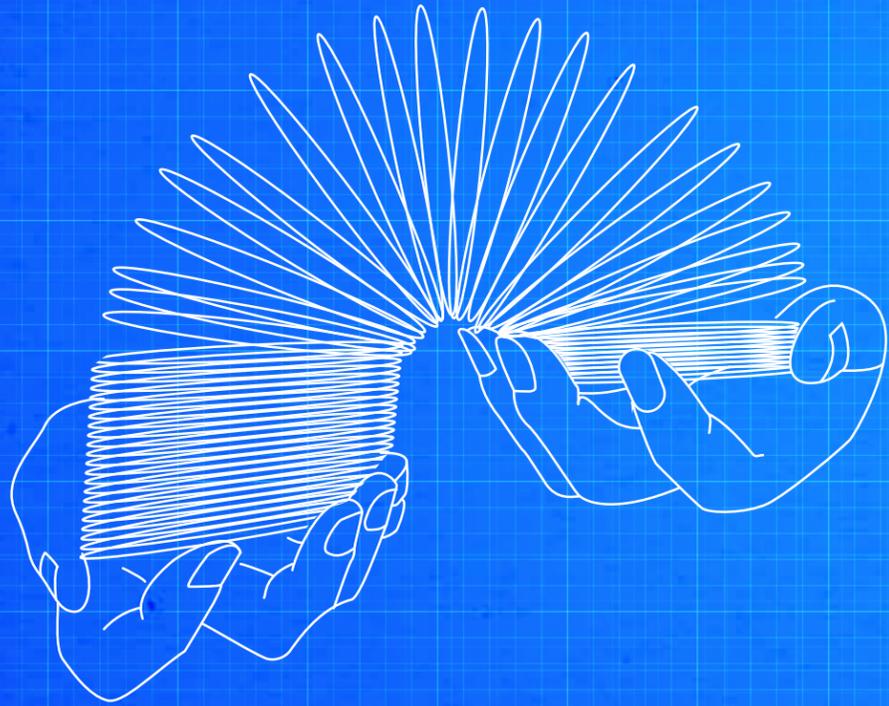
What led you to become an AV-ator Development Manager (ADM) for the inspectors here?

I believe my strongest attribute is working well with others, and I genuinely want to see them succeed. I have had some great mentors over the years who invested in my growth, and I wanted to provide the same for others. Being an ADM has been challenging, but very rewarding in getting to know our AV-ators better and being a part of their growth. It's an ongoing process that I'm happy to be a part of.

VISTA VISION

THE BLUEPRINT FOR SLINKY

INVENTOR: Richard T. James
DATE: January 28, 1947



SLINKY SCIENCE

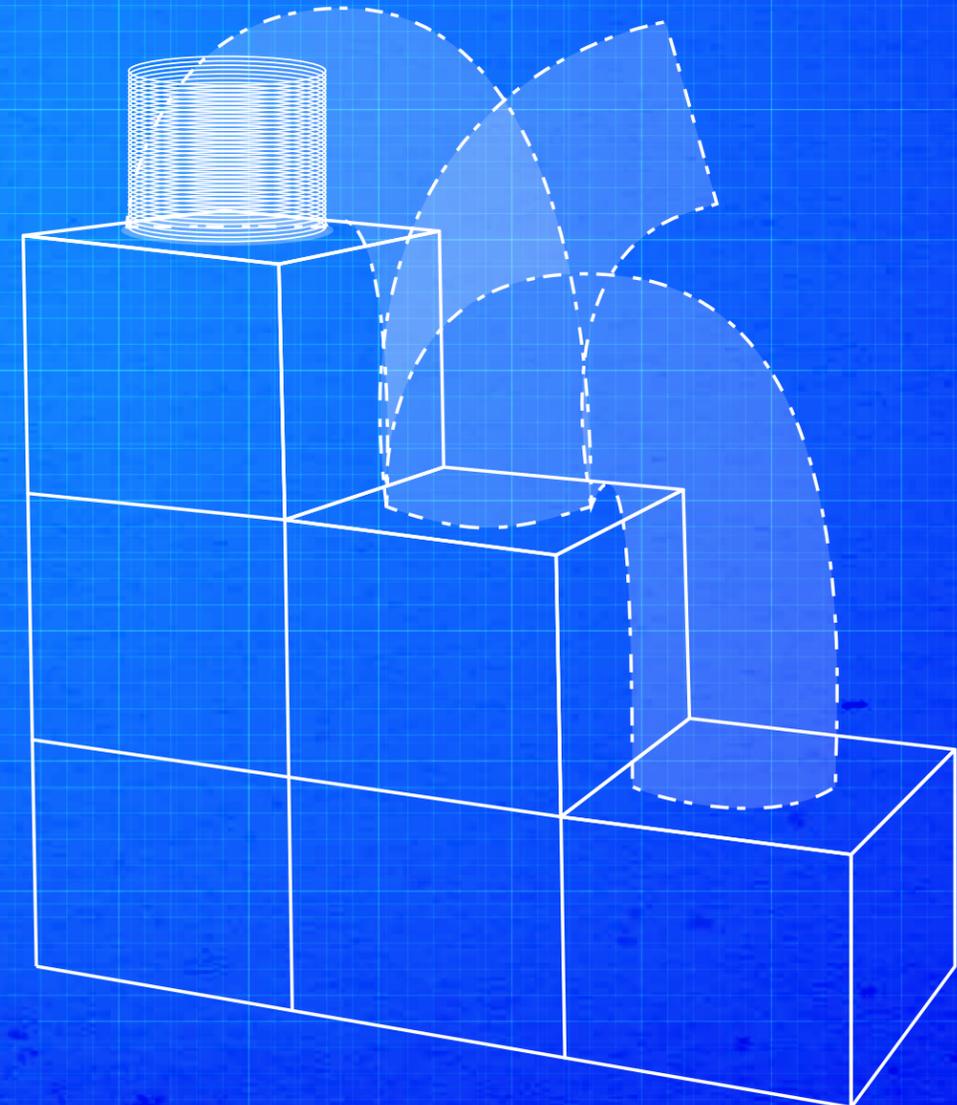
The Slinky is a precompressed helical spring, originally made of coiled steel wire and invented (accidentally!) by Richard James in 1943. With the help of gravity and the momentum it generates, the Slinky is able to stretch and reform itself. This enables it to perform tricks such as “walking” end-over-end down a flight of steps, and appearing to levitate for a short period after it has been dropped.

The Slinky works mechanically because of Hooke’s law and the effects of gravity. In addition to its use as a popular toy, professors and high school teachers have also used Slinkys to demonstrate the properties of waves to students.

BLUEPRINT HISTORY

A blueprint is a reproduced technical drawing that documents an architecture or engineering design. Blueprints were adopted widely in the 19th century in construction and various other industries because they allowed for fast and accurate reproduction of their original specification drawings and plans. Using a contact print process on light-sensitive sheets to create a negative of the original image, blueprints cannot show colors or shades of grey.

Traditional blueprints have largely been replaced by more modern and less expensive printing methods and digital displays. As display technologies have advanced, use of mobile devices for viewing plans has increased significantly among modern construction firms. The term “blueprint” is still used informally (by non-expert commentators) to refer to technical drawings and plans, but is no longer used by practicing engineers or architects.



ISO- WHAT?

By Megan Lawrence

Earlier this year, Alta Vista was certified to the new ISO 9001:2015 standard. While the overall intent of the standard remains the same, there are some significant changes: most notably, the addition of risk-based thinking and increased flexibility for documented information.

While certification is a big accomplishment for Alta Vista, you may find yourself asking “so what?” or “what does this mean for me?”

To address the requirement for risk-based thinking, Alta Vista has defined a process for identifying, mitigating, and addressing risks and opportunities via a risk register. The register is quickly becoming a critical resource that allows leaders to refer to a single, documented source of risk while planning strategically and weighing threats and opportunities. Moving forward, we need to incorporate risk-based thinking into our project planning, monthly planning, and the day-to-day decisions of all AV-ators.

processes, and document the processes to the extent necessary to ensure effective operation and control.

In order to meet this requirement, we need focus and a plan. Alta Vista is going back to the basics and shifting our focus to compliance, prioritizing the need to evaluate and meet current requirements over performance. To achieve this, we will be following the plan below:

Phase 1: Define and communicate expectations

Phase 2: Measure and monitor for compliance

Phase 3: Improve processes and performance

The first step to achieving compliance is understanding the requirements. During Phase 1, we evaluate and document expectations for the organization. These documents will become the new standards and requirements that we measure ourselves against in Phase 2.

We worked hard on Phase 1 this year, documenting requirements and expectations through project manuals, the Quality Manual, Style Guide, and Level 1 manuals. We defined our key processes through the value chain: strategy, get the work, do the work, develop the people, and manage the business. We made significant progress in documenting the interactions between processes and the way we work via level-maps (L-maps), swim lane diagrams, and responsible, accountable, consulted and informed (RACI) matrices.

This is a big year for quality at Alta Vista. By taking a step back and focusing on compliance, we have shown a commitment to building a strong quality foundation. Through process and requirement documentation and awareness, we are ensuring that expectations are clear to all AV-ators, enabling them to do their jobs right the first time and every time to provide the best consultant services possible.



By taking a step back and focusing on compliance, we have shown a commitment to building a strong quality foundation.

Risk-Based Thinking

Risk-based thinking refers to a set of activities used to manage and control the threats and opportunities that affect an organization's ability to achieve its goals and meet expectations. In previous versions of the standard, the requirements for risk were implied as part of preventative action activities. Now, ISO 9001:2015 requires an organization to identify, plan, and implement actions to address risk and opportunities.

Key Processes

ISO 9001:2015 allows an organization to determine the documentation required to effectively implement its quality management system. At a minimum, an organization must address the fundamental elements of the process approach: determine the key processes, determine the interactions and relationships between these

WHAT WE DO:

Welding inspection



Photo by *Stacey Davis*

WEDDINGS

Congratulations to Alexandre Bechirian and Maria for tying the knot on January 21, 2018!

Best wishes to you both in your marriage, and may the next chapter in your lives be a long and happy one.



BABY AV-ATORS

Congratulations to the Nguyen, Prchlik, Bechirian, Boundouki, Singh, and Krol families on the newest additions to their families!



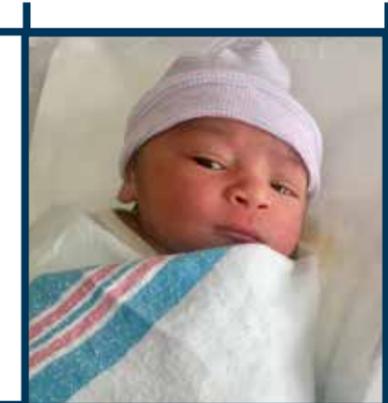
Abby Nguyen was born on January 24, weighing 7 lbs, 7 oz, and 19.5 inches long.



James Aaron Prchlik was born on February 16, weighing in at 9 lbs, 7 oz.



Alexander George Boundouki was born on June 17, 2018, weighing in at 8 lbs, 7 oz and measuring 21 inches long.



Christopher Karnig Bechirian was born on June 27, 2018, weighing 7 lbs, 8 oz and measuring 20 inches long.



Vivaan Singh was born on July 10, 2018, weighing 9 lbs, 2 oz and measuring 21.5 inches in length.



Henryk Roman Krol was born on August 16, weighing in at 7 lbs, 15 oz.



ALTA VISTA ACADEMY

Film Review: Black Panther

Review by Karen Maghamil

Even if you're not a Marvel fan, you've got to see this one. Taking place in the very technologically advanced, fictional African nation of Wakanda, *Black Panther* poses a big social dilemma: Will the country keep their technological innovations secret to advance their own cause, or will they share with the world for the greater good? This is a question that we all face.



King T'Challa's younger sister, Shuri, is the young engineering mastermind behind Black Panther's super-suit, Wakanda's magnetic-levitation trains and, of course, "sneakers." Like *The Jetsons* was to us in the '80s, Shuri's inventions enlarge our world. The fact is, we need more engineering-minded folks to create revolutionary solutions; sticking to the status quo is asking for extinction.

Black Panther's ending also highlights our obligation to educate the technologically disadvantaged in this increasingly technological world, as T'Challa and Shuri plan a U.S. science center in Oakland. It was once possible to forego technology and still survive in our society, but that's no longer the case; my grade school kids are now required to do homework online. As technology advances, a stark divide grows between those with the resources to keep up and those without.

In tackling solutions, the movie underscores the importance of bringing together global thinkers and breaking down racial and cultural barriers as our challenges become more collective: global warming, clean water, fuel, deteriorating infrastructure. Joint efforts for engineered solutions must be prioritized—we all own responsibility for the world we are creating. For us AV-ators, innovation and collaboration are prized, foundational values that we should all make the effort to exemplify. Do Right!

🎓 A series of trainings taught by our very own AV-ators

🎓 Topics ranging from writing to project management

🎓 Interested AV-ators should let their managers know!



WHAT WE DO: Construction inspection oversight

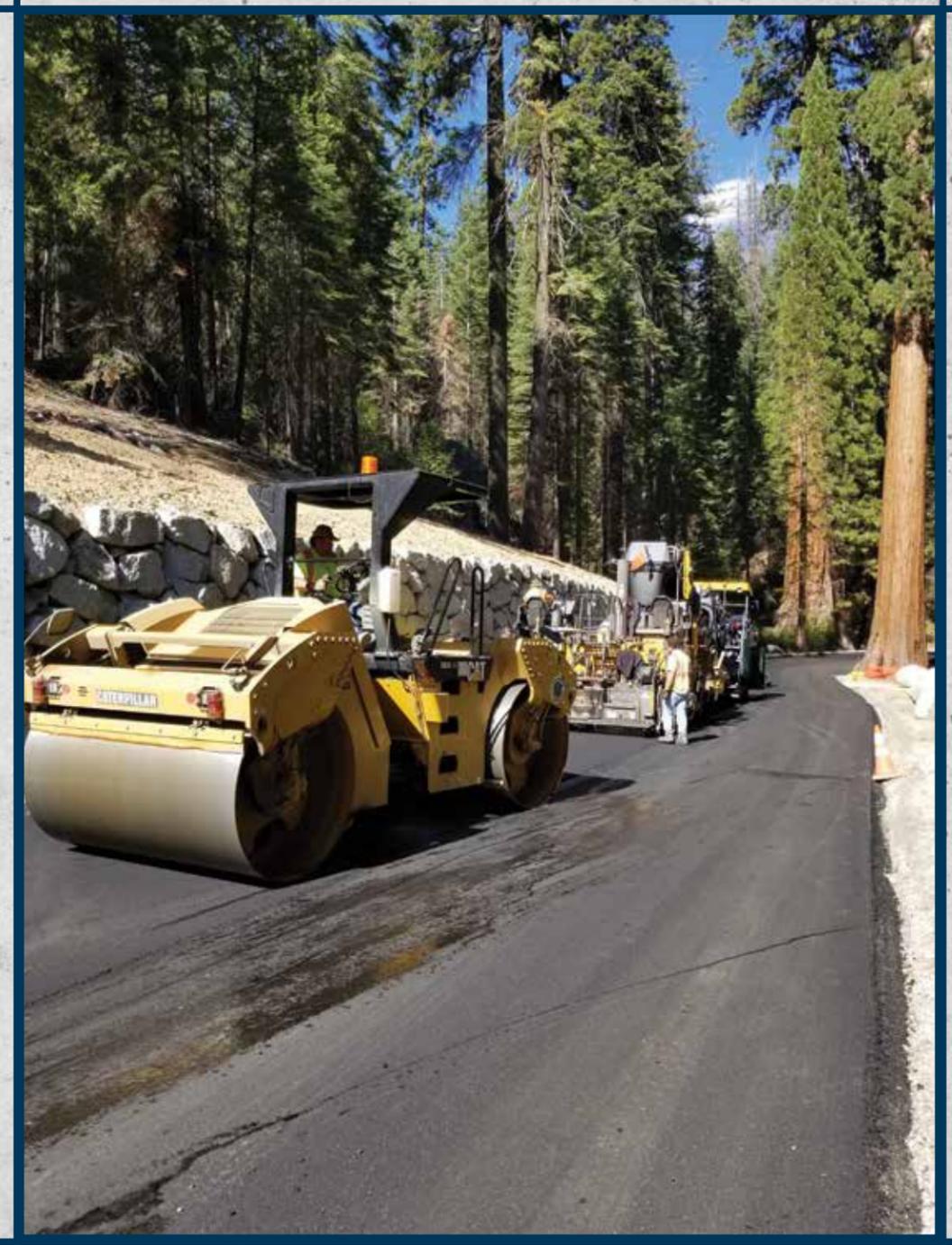


Photo by Dan Alsup

WHAT WE DO:

Roadway materials testing



Photo by **Elaine Yip**

Employee Spotlight

Stuart Ross

What exactly are the Scottish Highland Gathering & Games?

It's a festival celebrating Scottish heritage. The games started out in Scotland during the 11th century, but you don't have to be Scottish to participate. I compete in the "heavy athletics" events, but there are many other events and activities. There are lots of games for kids, bagpipe bands and competitions, concerts, whiskey tasting, clan tents to visit, sheepdog herding exhibitions, and even beard and mustache competitions! Scottish Highland gatherings are held in all 50 states, Canada, and Europe.

Do you have a favorite and least favorite event?

My least favorite event is called the sheaf toss, where a competitor uses a pitchfork to throw a 16-pound burlap sack over a bar at a measured height. It's my least favorite because it's difficult to practice at home—I don't exactly have a sheaf or pitchfork lying around to practice with. My favorite is the weight over the bar, where we throw a 42-pound steel weight over a bar, starting at about 12 feet and going as high as possible, at 1 foot increments. The last time I participated, I came in first place with a throw of 17 feet, which was very exciting.

What do you like about the games? What keeps you competing?

What first piqued my interest was my Scottish heritage and celebrating that.

I love the competition element too. But the really cool thing about the games is that anybody can do it. The only requirement to participate is that you have to wear a kilt. You don't have to necessarily know what you're doing, so anyone can participate, as long as you have two arms and two legs. In fact, a couple weeks ago there was a guy who had a prosthetic leg, so you don't even really need that. If it's something you like to do, you can be part of it no matter what.

Anything else you want to share?

I would encourage everyone to go out to a Scottish Gathering & Games at some point! It's a lot of fun—all day there's bagpipes playing, Scottish dancing competitions, and a lot of other events. There's a lot to do and see, so it's a lot of fun even if you're not competing.

Once an AV-ator, always an AV-ator—Stuart Ross has moved on from Alta Vista, but he will always be part of the AV-ator nation. Keep on Doing Right!





Siegenthaler Award 2018



WHO



WIN?



WILL

The award is given out annually to an AV-ator who has:

- Demonstrated exemplary leadership
- Given selfless acts of time
- Shown loyalty and trustworthiness to all
- Remained committed to the training and nurturing of fellow employees
- Inspired peers and the next generation of engineering professionals
- Led by example through attention to detail in support of client needs and constant drive to fulfill Alta Vista Solutions's shared goals and vision
- Pushed the team to the highest possible level of success and prosperity

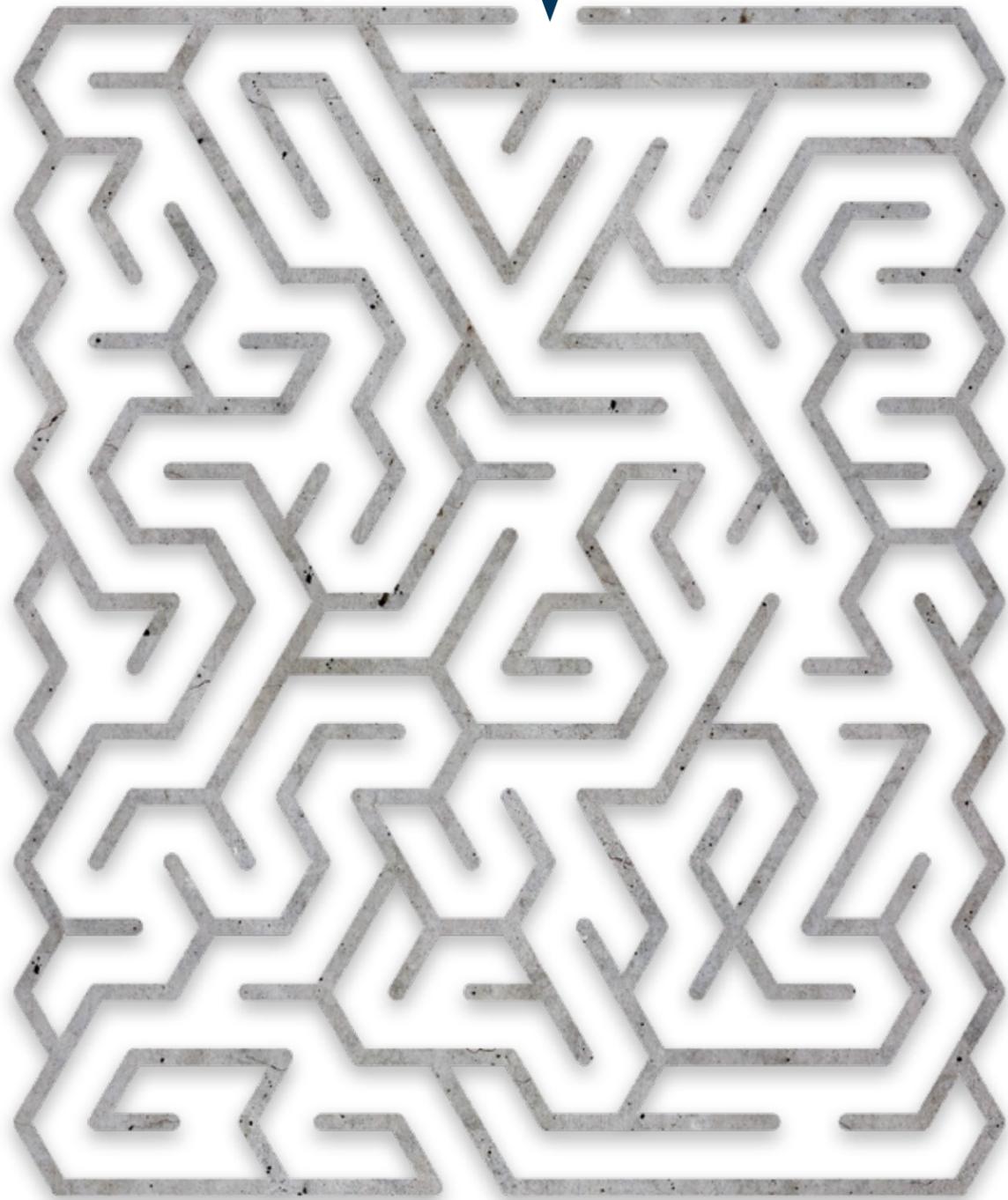


The 2018 award will be announced at the 10th annual holiday party



Saturday, December 1st Masonic Temple, Sacramento

TRAVERSE THE CONCRETE MAZE



WHAT WE DO:

Build relationships



Photo by *Mahek Iqbal*

DO RIGHT

