Written by Jane Alexander, Editor-In-Chief
Monday, 01 February 2010 04:04

I spent much of New Year's Day blubbering over my receipt of a "Who's Packing Your Parachute?" e-mail.

It wasn't new to me. Most of you have probably received one or more versions of it yourselves.

It focuses on what is said to be an actual event in the life of Charles Plumb, a U.S. Navy pilot shot down over Vietnam. He ejected from his plane, parachuted into enemy hands and spent six years in a Communist Vietnamese prison. Having survived the ordeal, Plumb returned home and began lecturing on lessons learned from his experience. Sometime later, as the story goes, he was approached in a restaurant by another diner, who called Plumb by name and said that he knew about his days flying jets from the Kitty Hawk. As it turned out, this guy—*a person heretofore totally unknown to Plumb and someone he might never have come in contact with*—had been the individual who packed the parachute that saved the former pilot's life years before.

While I can't vouch for the veracity of the details, the story is great food for thought, isn't it? In the end, the message encourages the recipient (YOU) to take a few minutes to reflect on and thank the people in your life who have worked on packing your parachute by sending this inspirational message to as many of them as you can.

Opening this e-mail from someone you know can make you feel very blessed. This time around, however, the experience was especially moving for me. The sender was one of my little brothers—*the toughest, sternest, hardest-driving one*. Brilliant and decisive, with arguably the best head for business in our entrepreneurial family, he's always been the sibling that the rest of us (both older and younger) have looked up to. I never could have envisioned this high-flying wing-walker EVER needing a parachute, much less thinking of me as someone who had done any folding and tucking on it. I thank him for that and lots of other things, too, including reminding me that we shouldn't wait to show our appreciation for the countless, often unknown, parachute packers in our lives, personal and otherwise.

So, on behalf of ***Maintenance Technology***, I thank all of you—*readers, contributors, advertisers, suppliers and other friends of this magazine*—for helping pack OUR parachute. Whoever you are, wherever you are, please know that we are fully aware we never could have made it into our 23rd year of publication without your loyalty and strong, ongoing support.

We know that the last couple of down years have been horribly rough on you. We also know that a full economic recovery is not necessarily going to be a done deal this year. Even the dadgum, cockeyed optimist in me will acknowledge that!

But, no matter what, we're committed to serving your critical information needs—*and those of future generations of capacity-assurance professionals and suppliers to the industry*—for many years to come.

In short, we look forward to helping pack YOUR parachute for a long, long time!

Best Wishes for a Happy & Prosperous 2010! **MT**

jalexander@atpnetwork.com

PS: For more on what we have up our sleeve for 2010 and beyond, click here for Publisher Bill Kiesel's Viewpoint column!