



Notes by Jim Millette Regarding 20th Anniversary

20 years – what a ride! Not anything we could have imagined when we sat at Thom Hopen's kitchen table in June of 1990 to discuss what to do as Millette, Vander Wood and Associates. Looking back over 8,500 projects we can remember a lot of clients – from all walks of life - Attorneys General from Maryland, Illinois, North Dakota and Hawaii, to a very sick New York apartment dweller. We remember the grizzled old guy who walked in with paint on a rock he thought was evidence of the marking of 14th century Spanish treasure in the North Georgia hills. He would not give us his name or an address and paid in cash. Unfortunately, the paint had titanium dioxide in it.

Since June 21, 1990 when we opened our first project, we have logged in 55,684 samples in the Atlanta office and another 5,000 or so during the 5 years that the Chicago office was running. We have looked at a lot of stuff - yellow stuff, white stuff, brown stuff, red stuff, black stuff, yucky stuff, stinky stuff, mostly unknown stuff. From lead paint on the Golden Gate Bridge to Gold Leaf on the West Virginia Capitol Dome, from Illinois lottery tickets to aggregate at a nuclear power facility, from zinc whiskers at a NASA computer center to a ketchup stain on a shirt, and a stain called "Ralph."

There have been French flies on pharmaceutical caps, protein powder with possible steroids, pharmaceutical pills and bags, medical devices and surgical implants. We've examined Van Gogh paintings, American Gothic work from the Chicago Art Museum, Brazilian ore, and South African crocidolite asbestos. We cannot forget the hockey puck healing stones and the potato-battery guy.

And Dust – a lot of dust! From The World Trade Center Disaster, to Ponca City, Oklahoma outdoor dust, to the aftermath of Katrina dust and debris, to dust from the Tennessee Valley Authority flyash spill, as well as moon dust, comet dust, dust floating around in the space shuttle, dust in the air from the Air Force tests of burning air planes, dust from the Alamo Dome Super Fund site in TX, hospital dust, and dust from an intensive care newborn facility in TN.

There have also been regular dust projects from all over, including buildings in Portland, OR to Portland, ME, from Wisconsin apartments to a rich guy's house in Tampa St. Pete. Throw in stack emission dust from Exxon Mobile, Dupont, Dow Chemical, ConAgra and dust from the German Embassy, the Pentagon, the Georgia Governor's Mansion, a Sears Building in Omaha, a scrap yard in Colorado and dust kicked up by USEPA scientists riding ATVs in Alaska. Over the years that amounts to a whole lot of dust particles through the microscope. Then we have our celebrity projects: the Melendi case, the Mars meteorite, and the Hindenburg. Just to name a few.

Our diverse variety of projects is interesting, but a company is most importantly defined by its people. People coming together to work on these projects and hopefully make a living while doing it. In 20 years, we have had 33 employees, not counting the interns. When you think about it, considering our current staff of about 16, that's only one turnover in 20 years – not bad. One of our receptionists, Maria, used to comment when a group of us would return from lunch – 'Nerds on Parade!' While not all of our employees were or are nerds, there were enough of us to consider a marketing ploy of marketing pocket protectors with the slogan "MVA – we studied so you didn't have to!" Nerds and non-nerds have all contributed to the culture at MVA over the years. Most for the better, some like 'walk-about' man made us re-evaluate company policies. We are also quite proud of the fact that we have had 41 paid interns over the 20 years. It's been a very positive experience for both MVA and the young people who have passed through our doors, or in some cases stayed on with us.

Yes - It's been quite a ride – and we look forward to the new experiences, and new clients, as we take this MVA ride into the future.



MVA Fun Facts

- ❖ We expanded from one PLM to our multiple PLMs, SEMs, TEMs, FTIR, Raman, and SWLIM instruments.
- ❖ We've been audited out the wazoo by an alphabet soup of groups – A2LA, LELAP, FDA, etc., and have been hired to audit other laboratories across the US.
- ❖ We changed our name from MVA, Inc. to MVA Scientific Consultants in 2003.
- ❖ We relocated from Norcross, GA, to our present facility in Duluth, GA in 2005.
- ❖ Our employees are certified, registered, or affiliated with over 20 industry organizations and trade groups.
- ❖ We've given over 500 testimonies at trial or depositions.
- ❖ We've authored over 160 publications.
- ❖ We've logged over 250,000 miles to meet with clients, present talks, chair a meeting, or to give depositions/testimonies.
- ❖ We have taken over 100,000 images!
- ❖ We hold an annual contest within the company to choose an image for the next Christmas card. We have a "Hall of Christmas Cards" proudly displaying the cards through the years.
- ❖ Our employees have had over 4,000 free lunches during our weekly lunch meetings.
- ❖ We have enjoyed company events to: The Atlanta Ballet, Atlanta Symphony, Fox Theatre, Atlanta Braves, Gwinnett Braves, Lawrenceville Play House, Medieval Times, Blueman Group, Lake Lanier, Dave & Busters and many parties at the homes of employees.