

## Facilitator — February/March 2012



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### CRFP Spotlight

*Tom Lykins*

What other restaurant companies have you worked for prior to your current position? My restaurant facilities experience comes solely from working for Panda Restaurant Group. I am fortunate that the widespread background I have in all things mechanical made me a perfect fit with Panda. I'll be celebrating my eighth year this May. Thank goodness all those erector sets paid off!

After spending so much time in restaurants, do you cook? If so, what is your best dish? This question makes me chuckle and reminds me of a business trip my wife had to take when my kids were 10. Let's just say they never wanted her to travel again, and they swore they lost 5 pounds in two days. At any rate, I do not cook often, but if I "applied myself" (as my wife puts it) I would do very well. My best dish is an architectural breakfast burrito marvel featuring the wife's leftover teriyaki steak with bacon, eggs and cheese. Coming soon to a restaurant near you.

What was your first car?

An Oldsmobile Omega. I paid \$500 for this tan rolling death trap, but hey, it had a booming stereo. It wasn't much to look at but it got me from A to B and then some.

What is your all-time favorite movie?

The Matrix. This movie not only had amazing special effects but also a sort of ethereal concept in my opinion. I am fascinated by the unknown and the out-of-the-ordinary, and the Matrix delivered both.

What is the most challenging situation you've ever faced in a facility or on the job? How did you handle it?

One Panda restaurant operates in a city that uses green technology in their waste treatment plant. The plant adheres to stringent monitoring of the type of waste entering the plant, thus they mandate that all restaurants in the area be inspected weekly. Any facility found non-compliant of permissible waste is fined \$250 per inspection.

The Panda at this location began to fail inspection of the permissible grease trappings, which created great concern within Panda's community—especially when we wholeheartedly support technologies minimizing the human footprint. As a first step, we took immediate measures to train our operators on the proper cleaning procedures and installed drain nets to catch even the smallest particles of rice. Both actions were to no avail. We then tried enzymes and bacterium, increased grease trap pumping and outsourced water quality companies to verify our readings. All attempts were unsuccessful, and we were accumulating hefty fines all the while.

To complicate matters, I was required to meet with the city inspectors and city council members several times to explain why this issue could not be resolved. Panda shared its grease trap with a donut shop next door and we asked what they were doing. It hit me like a meteor when I discovered they were dumping frosting and

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If you weren't a restaurant facility professional, what you would be?

I would still be in the HVAC and refrigeration industry. I love the instant gratification I get when I'm able to size up a piece of equipment and fix it on the spot. I also love to be on the move, visiting different areas and meeting new people. I could never survive in an office environment; it's too stuffy for me. Besides, this profession assures job security anywhere you end up... even in the South Pole.

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