

## THIS ISSUE



2

Faster Turnarounds from Full In House Pre Press Service



3

Trade Aid Launches Revolutionary New BioBag



5

Convex Printing Quality Recognised Worldwide



6

New testing service for Volatile Organic Compounds



The RSS Plastics plant

Trevor & Jan Yaxley

## Convex Acquires RSS Plastics

Convex Plastics significantly expanded their manufacturing capacity on 1 October by acquiring a major shareholding in Warkworth company, RSS Plastics Ltd.

The acquisition will provide Convex with approximately 1000 tonnes of extra extrusion capacity and additional printing and bag making capabilities.

Convex Director Tony Letcher says, "RSS Plastics is currently supplying general packaging such as pallet wraps, flow wraps and carry bags. Our plan is to further develop RSS to focus on general packaging applications, allowing us to really step up our food grade packaging production capabilities in Hamilton."

The Convex engineering department has already developed a work programme to develop RSS Plastics' machines and several machines will be relocated over time from the Convex plant to RSS Plastics.

RSS Plastics Ltd will continue operating as its own entity, with all staff retained and previous share holder Trevor Yaxley continuing in his role as managing director.

From RSS Plastics' perspective, Managing Director Trevor Yaxley says the acquisition will provide their business with numerous benefits, including lower raw material costs by combining their orders with Convex.

He says, "Fellow director Scott Pearson and I are delighted with how things worked out. Convex's engineering and technical capabilities are tremendous assets to our business and they will certainly help immensely in our growth going forward. Convex's reputation as a company of integrity will obviously be good for us as well."

Trevor and Scott have found the whole team at Convex to have a very high level of integrity in that if they said they would do something they did it.

Trevor says, "We are very much looking forward to

working with such a phenomenal group of people. The management at Convex and those we have met from the factory have all been delightful people and we are very excited about our future together."

Trevor has worked 60% of his time at RSS Plastics and devotes a large part of his remaining 40% to running Lifeway Ministries Trust Inc, which he started with his wife Jan in 1983. Over the past 27 years the Trust has grown into an international charitable trust that focuses on supporting children, young people and families in both New Zealand and overseas. Their New Zealand operation includes over 100 full-time staff, homes for people with intellectual disabilities, preschool learning centres, an NZQA tertiary facility and a rehabilitation farm.

And if that doesn't keep Trevor busy enough he travelled over 50,000 km in just eight and a half days in October connecting with contacts in Beijing, Singapore, London and LA to further develop the work they are doing with children.

RSS Plastics is one of several allied businesses that support the work of Lifeway Ministries Trust. Another of those businesses, also based in Warkworth, is Huhu studios which makes children's animated cartoons. The business started in 1996 after a huhu bug hit a window and inspired Trevor and his team to produce a children's cartoon featuring huhu bugs as characters, which went into 52 countries.

Tony Letcher says, "Trevor is doing some really good things with under privileged kids and Convex is really pleased to be aligned with that. His principles of honesty and integrity are a really good fit with ours and we are looking forward to growing both companies."



Tom Banfield receiving his award with Convex Managing Director Owen Embling

## Convex Cadet Wins Top Trainee Award

Convex Plastic's high quality training has been recognised once again with the naming of Convex cadet Tom Banfield as New Zealand's top Plastics and Materials Processing trainee for 2010.

Tom was presented his award at the annual Plastics and Materials Processing Industry Training Organisation (PaMPITO) Waikato graduation ceremony, held at the Hamilton Gardens Pavilion on Wednesday 24 November.

Along with the prestigious national award, Tom also received three national certificates for completing NZQA approved on-the-job training in 2010. Convex conversion staff John Heaphy and Daniel Eaton also received national certificates for completing on-the-job training this year.

Convex Operations Manager Dean Renner says Tom's award highlights Convex's strong commitment to provide high quality training across all aspects of the business.

Dean says, "It is very pleasing to receive validation from the industry that our training programmes are continuing to work very well."



**SolutionPartners**  
EMPOWERING BUSINESS

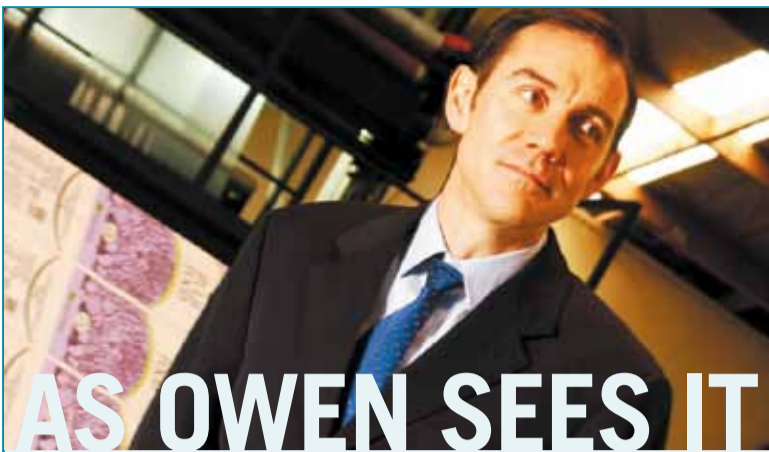


Microsoft Dynamics AX

**Solution Partners are proud to support Convex Plastics**

Financial, Manufacturing & Supply Chain IT Solutions to Empower Your Business

www.solutionpartners.co.nz Phone +64 9 366 3920



## AS OWEN SEES IT

A MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

### Packaging Innovations and Expanded Capabilities Drive Further Growth

This year Convex has continued to be a leading supplier of world class packaging innovations. Despite the challenging economic times, we have managed to remain at the forefront of international flexible packaging by developing some of the world's most sophisticated packaging, expanding our capabilities and building a solid platform for future growth.

Over the past 12 months we have successfully bedded down the Sliderpack business, introduced the packaging into a completely new market sector and developed a new stand-up option that our German suppliers told us was impossible to do. If you know anything about our company history, being told that something can't be done just drives us to find an innovative solution and that's exactly what we did. And the innovation is not about to stop there. Two of our staff have just been to Germany to find out how to put handles into our Sliderpacks and we expect to see some progress with that soon.

We have also just seen the commercial launch of what we believe is the world's first bio-degradable vented coffee pack this year, and we are looking at the very real possibility of being

able to offer new technologies like cold seal next year.

Our extrusion capacity was significantly expanded this year by the acquisition of a majority shareholding in RSS Plastics, and we are actively looking at opportunities to expand our capacity in printing and lamination as well. We are also looking to expand our business into South America next year and Brent May's recent appointment as the Managing Director of Convex Australia is expected to grow that business as well. Brent already has clear plans to launch a new Convex Australia website, employ additional staff, and offer warehousing facilities.

Overall, we are looking at numerous opportunities to grow our business. When you combine that with the fact that we survived the recession relatively strong and are currently tracking ahead of budget, our future looks very exciting.

I look forward to continue working with you all over the coming year as we journey towards a very promising future.

Kind Regards & Happy Holidays,



The Convex prepress team.  
From left: Jody Hapi, Greg Taylor and Gary Roberts

## Faster Turnarounds From Full In-house Prepress Service

You can now get faster proofing, quicker plate turnaround, and shorter lead times to market by taking your prepress work direct to Convex Plastics.

Convex extended their prepress service in early July to enable them to provide the full spectrum of professional prepress services in-house - from designs and concepts for simple packaging right through to sophisticated designs for custom packaging.

Convex Prepress Manager Gary Roberts says, "You can now bring your art files directly to us and we will do all the prepress work for you in-house - from the initial artwork and proofing, right through to the finished plates."

To help make this happen Convex invested in specialised software and hardware and appointed an in-house prepress specialist.

Gary says, "The prepress improvements have been specifically designed to help speed up the prepress process and minimise the turnaround times from concept to market. File creation will be carried out within a maximum time of 48 hours, and our overall lead times are expected to drop by up to three days."

Managing the whole process has also enabled Convex to ensure that the colours on the final printed packaging accurately matches the initial proof, which means that clients

no longer need to be on site to quality check their packaging when it comes off the press.

The enhanced pre-press service was put to the test almost straight away when an existing Auckland client won a contract to supply a line of food grade products to a high profile national brand and needed to get it to market quite quickly.

The client, who asked not to be named due to their contract supply arrangement, had previously used Convex as an account manager for a third party. For this first piece of work where Convex carried out all the prepress themselves, not only did they need a fast turnaround - the job also required 24 new sets of plates, whereas each of their previous orders required only an average of two.

The client's sales manager says his company was happy with the result. "We were very satisfied with the outcome and the speed in which it was delivered. It would appear that the whole process is significantly faster since Convex started delivering the whole service themselves, and we are very confident to continue giving them responsibility for all our prepress, including the quality checks."

If you have any work coming up that may require new plates or designs please contact your account manager or Prepress Manager Gary Roberts. You can contact Gary at 07 847 5133 or gary.r@convex.co.nz



## Gourmet Potato Crisps Win Cuisine Artisan Award

Convex Plastics congratulates Proper Foods for winning one of the 2010 Cuisine Artisan Awards for their homemade Proper Crisps.

The award was presented to the Nelson-based company by Cuisine Magazine in March after their judges found the unique snack, "delicious and not overly salty, and were impressed with the simplicity and real nature of the ingredients."

Convex Plastics South Island Manager, Howard Clark says, "It's great to see a small start-up company turn an initial idea into a successful product with a specialist niche. It has been a real privilege working alongside them supplying their packaging and assisting with technical support when needed, as they grew and automated their packaging lines."

The Proper Crisps brand was launched in December 2008 by Stuart and Kathryn Franklin who moved to sunny Nelson four years ago from northeast England, where they both held jobs in the food industry. They hadn't been in Nelson long before they started asking themselves why, when New Zealand grows some of the best potatoes in the world, could they not buy really great crisps.

They embarked on a global research trip, bought an old-fashioned crisp kettle in the United States and set up their equipment in Upper Moutere with the help of Kathryn's dad, a retired Rolls-Royce aero engineer. After some experimentation, they hit on a crisp they were

happy with. They use potatoes from South Canterbury (the variety varying according to the season and named on the bag), sunflower oil and sea salt from Lake Grassmere in Marlborough.

The result is a unique handmade potato crisp that is rapidly becoming a popular gourmet snack for discerning consumers. Regular stockists include many of the country's most upmarket delicatessens and hotels - including an exclusive five star hotel in Queenstown with a nightly tariff of \$1000 that now provides Proper Crisps in its mini-bars.

Stuart says, "What we are trying to do is put some food value back into a product category that up until now has been cheaply produced, artificially enhanced and overly processed. We are passionate about only using natural ingredients because we believe that food tastes better when it hasn't been "messed about with" and filled with artificial additives."

Proper Foods credit Convex Plastics for being prepared to work alongside them in their early days when they were just a couple of people with an idea and not very much money to bring their products to market.

Stuart says, "What impressed us about Convex is not only did Howard come to see us, their Managing Director Owen came as well. There were so many companies that didn't take us seriously at the beginning but Convex did. Even when we had no proven track record they were willing to help from the start."



## Trade Aid Launches Revolutionary New BioBag

Trade Aid demonstrated their commitment to becoming more sustainable in October by launching their Organic Instant Coffee in a revolutionary new BioBag, which is the first of its kind in the world.

Specifically developed by Convex Plastics using their new Eonic technology, Trade Aid's new compostable BioBags are made from three separate bio-degradable films, which are laminated together to provide a high level of functionality at a competitive price point.

The combination of the three films in the Eonic packaging provides optimum moisture and oxygen barrier properties and high sealability through coffee granules and other contaminants. All three films have been internationally certified to EN13432 for composting and biodegradability.

Trade Aid Marketing Manager, Katie Sheehan, says their new BioBag is a big step in the right direction towards more sustainable, earth-friendly packaging for Trade Aid products. Most importantly, she adds, the BioBag keeps the coffee fresh and at its best.

Trade Aid is a New Zealand not-for-profit organisation that supports disadvantaged producers, artisans and growers through fair trade. You can find out more about them by visiting their website: [www.tradeaid.org.nz](http://www.tradeaid.org.nz)

Katie says the new BioBags are well aligned with the organisations values and will enable Trade Aid to pack their coffee in New Zealand for the very first time.

Trade Aid plans to gradually roll out the new BioBags into their stores and selected supermarkets over the next few months.

As well as developing the new Eonic packaging, Convex

also carried out a controlled composting trial at a Waikato bark composting facility to confirm its breakdown rate. Coffee bags made from Eonic film almost completely disappeared just fourteen weeks after composting, with only small fragments remaining.

Convex Technical Manager Andrew Sheerin says the bags had started to soften after just two weeks and had almost completely broken down in just over three months.

Andrew says, "We were always confident that the renewable materials we use to make these bags would break down well in a typical composting environment, and we are pleased to have been able to verify that."

The Eonic bags are believed to be the world's first fully renewable compostable coffee bags for both cold and hot roasted coffee, and have been specifically developed by Convex Plastics to provide the ideal sealing and barrier properties for coffee and dry foods. They are available both with and without an innovative bio-degradable vent strip to allow the CO2 gases given off by hot roasted coffee beans to be vented through the top and bottom bag seals. This optional vent, also developed by Convex Plastics, replaces the traditional non-renewable one-way valve button, and is activated by positive pressure inside the bag.

Andrew says the new Eonic coffee bags offer equivalent barrier properties and shelf appeal to those made from fossil fuels.

He says, "We are very pleased to have been able to provide Trade Aid with very functional sustainable packaging that ties in well with the values of both the organisation and their growing number of eco-conscious consumers."

## Apprenticeships Completed for Two new Qualified Tradesmen



Convex's New Tradesmen  
Zane Upton (left) and  
Cameron Potter (right)

Convex Plastics' commitment to providing quality training has produced two new qualified tradesmen this year.

Zane Upton completed his electrical apprenticeship in June and Cameron Potter completed his apprenticeship in maintenance & diagnostics level four in November.

Both men are keen to continue learning and credit Convex for providing a supportive training environment.

Zane is considering completing an additional apprenticeship in mechanical engineering and Cameron has his eye on advanced trade training.

Cameron says, "Management was very supportive while I was training and did everything they could to ensure I completed my apprenticeship within the required timeframe. It was great to be able to learn on the job."

Both Zane and Cameron play a critical role ensuring machines in the Convex plant are operating well with minimal downtime. As part of the engineering department Cameron focuses on preventative and reactive maintenance, new product development and machine and system improvements, whereas Zane plays more of a detective role in the electrical department, identifying faults and solutions.

"My main job is working out why a machine isn't functioning properly," says Zane. "As soon as an operator can't use their machine it becomes my problem and I've got to figure out how to fix it. I get some real brainteasers to work on at times, which keeps the job really interesting."

Cameron also finds his job interesting and says he enjoys the company's proactive preventative maintenance approach, which has provided good results in increasing plant efficiency.

Both new tradesmen agree that Convex keeps them on their toes by providing a dynamic working environment with lots of variety and challenges.

"It's definitely an interesting place to work," says Zane.



LOWE SCHOLLUM & JONES LTD  
INSURANCE BROKERS & CONSULTANTS

Specialists in  
**Commercial & Industrial Insurance**

*Obligation Free  
Risk Evaluation*

*Contact the Experts*

**Mike Lowe    David Schollum  
Jason Rowbottom**

85 Church Rd PO Box 901 Hamilton  
Telephone 07 849 6881 Facsimile 07 849 7121  
E-mail [admin@lsj.co.nz](mailto:admin@lsj.co.nz)

## Convex World Champion Sets His Sights on Further Titles



Nigel Zander with his home-built boat Helter Skelter and the gold medal he won at the 2010 Hydroplane World Championships.

Photo taken by the Waikato Times

Convex Ink Manager Nigel Zander has a passion for speed and has a world title to prove it.

Nigel won the 2.5 litre modified class at the 2010 Hydroplane World Championships on Lake Karapiro in January and isn't content to stop there. Nigel will be heading overseas in mid-2011 to defend his title at the next world championships, which will be held in the United States.

Next year's big race will be Nigel's first experience competing overseas, but he already has plenty of experience racing against the world's best. Nigel competed in both hydroplane world championships that were held in New Zealand over the past five years, coming fifth in 2006 and first in 2010. He has also won four New Zealand national titles.

Nigel loves the feeling of speed and says he has always been attracted to hydroplaning because it is a fast and 'pure' motorsport. The sport involves up to 10 boats racing around an oval circuit 1.5-2km long.

"It is pretty much you, an engine and a little bit of aerodynamics flying across the water," Nigel explains. "The speed is a big part of it for me. I've driven in fast cars before and it feels like nothing compared to travelling at 180km/h in one of these things. The sensation of speed is probably the biggest thing about racing a boat."

Nigel got into the sport at a young age. His father raced and built hydroplane boats and Nigel had already started building his first boat by the time he was 18.

"My dad built boats and raced from when he was a teenager right through to about ten years ago - so I learnt a few things. I had my first drive when I was about 15 and haven't stopped since," he says.

Nigel built his current boat, Helter Skelter, and in his spare time sometimes builds boats for others.

He says the sport doesn't have a big following in New Zealand but is very popular in Canada and to a lesser extent in the US.

In New Zealand Nigel estimates there are about 100 registered boats in circuit racing that compete in numerous race meetings each summer. Nigel has raced as far south as Hokitika and will be kicking off the 2011 season in the Central North Island with a January race in Mangakino.

He says, "The sport doesn't get a lot of publicity here, but it's actually a really good spectator sport, especially the bigger boats. They are quite awesome to watch."



## New Sliderpacks Impact the Milking Sheds

Sliderpacks can now be found in New Zealand milking sheds thanks to the relaunch of Impact Red in September by leading dairy hygiene and animal health suppliers, FIL.

The Mt Maunganui-based company has found Sliderpacks to be an ideal functional packaging solution for their next generation of Impact Red, a low foam acid detergent sanitiser used to clean milking machines and silos.

Impact Red is packed in single-use sachets designed to improve handler safety, reduce wastage and deliver cost savings for the dairy farmer. The pre-portioned sachets combine the acid ingredients with a sanitiser in a single package, eliminating the need to measure powders or liquids. The sachets are available in 112.5g or 150g sizes to suit wash down tub capacity, and are packed into a SliderPack bag.

FIL Marketing Manager, Rosanne Obitz says the sachets were previously packed into a cardboard box, which FIL felt could be improved on.

She says, "We wanted to provide farmers with a waterproof outer packaging that provided easy access and closure, and was easier to handle and store in wet milking sheds."

As well as delivering on these specifications, Convex also provided FIL with a bag that was suitable to house both Im-

act Red sachet sizes, thus increasing the branding impact. FIL have since re-packaged their Impact Blue low foam heavy duty chlorinated alkaline detergent sachets, using the same bag stock.

"The way the bag has been produced is fabulous," says Rosanne. "We are also pleased that the new bags are recyclable as we recognise the need to take care of our resources to ensure a future in farming."

The ability to recycle the Impact Red bags ties in well with FIL's other environmental sustainability initiatives, including their Plasback waste recycling scheme in which 200L and 100L FIL drums can be returned for re-use or re-cycling.

Convex Account Manager David Lazarus says the FIL Impact Red bags are a good example of how Sliderpacks can be customised to suit specific products and applications.

Along with the new bottom-gusset option, Sliderpacks offer both top and bottom filling options with zips on top or sides, and are available in a range of sizes.

You can find out more about Sliderpacks by visiting: [www.sliderpack.co.nz](http://www.sliderpack.co.nz)

## Convex Plastics is Now HACCP Certified

Convex Plastics was officially recognised as a quality assured approved supplier of food grade packaging in July 2010 with Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) certification.

The certification recognises Convex's long-standing commitment to food safety and quality manufacturing.

Convex Managing Director Owen Embling says that high quality food safety hazard controls processes have been in place for some time at Convex and those existing processes have now been formally documented to HACCP certification standard.

Owen says, "Food grade packaging is a rapidly growing sector of our business and we are very pleased to be able to provide our customers with this internationally recognised quality assurance. The certification will enable us to confidently continue to supply high quality packaging to the food manufacturing industry."



Thanks to Gareth McGregor for the photography. Inquiries - contact [gareth.m@convex.co.nz](mailto:gareth.m@convex.co.nz)

## Sliderpacks Now Available as Stand-Up Pouches

Convex Plastics have further enhanced their exclusive resealable Sliderpack packaging to provide the absolute ultimate in both ease of use and shelf appeal.

Along with featuring a practical and convenient easy to use zip closure, Sliderpacks are now available with an optional bottom-gusset that allows them to provide maximum shelf appeal and storage benefits.

Convex Account Manager David Lazarus says the bottom gusset allows the Sliderpacks to function just like a stand-up pouch, with the added benefit of the unique plastic clip-like closure that slides across a zipper rack at the top of the pouch.

David says, "Stand up pouches traditionally only offer one 'press to close' resealable option or nothing at all, and the 'press to close' option can be very tricky to use - especially if contaminants like crumbs get into the press to close' and clog it. Our slider closures are so simple to use that anyone can easily open and close them in one quick slide."



# Convex Printing Quality Recognised Worldwide

**Convex Plastics' commitment** to stay at the leading edge of flexographic printing innovations was further strengthened this year with visits to several global industry leaders and the appointment of an internationally-experienced printing specialist.

An overseas business development trip in May enabled the company to evaluate the latest international printing and prepress technology and kicked off what was to become a full circle of training investment at Convex. Last year's top Australasian flexographic printing apprentice headed offshore to expand his industry knowledge and a former Convex apprentice returned to the company after 12 years extensive experience in the United States.

Convex Print Manager Gary Dillistone started his business development trip by accompanying the Convex-trained 2009 Australasian Flexographic Technical Association (AFTA) apprentice of the year winner, Jeremy Hancock, to the four-day Flexographic Technical Association Forum in Las Vegas. Attending the forum was part of Jeremy's AFTA prize package. Following the forum, Gary and Jeremy visited several leading US ink, resin and packaging companies before going their separate ways. Gary then headed to Europe to visit several internationally recognised industry leaders in prepress and printing.

During the four week trip Gary strengthened relationships with key suppliers and evaluated new and emerging technology. The companies he visited included PCMC printing machines in Wisconsin, Phototype, the largest prepress house in the United States, Excelsior and Ultra Flex in New York, and printing press manufacturers Windmoller & Holscher in Germany and Comexi in Spain.

Gary says, "The trip was very valuable. At Convex we're constantly looking for new innovations and we make the effort to evaluate anything that may improve our products, printing, processes and environmental performance. During the trip I was able to confirm that pretty much everything that we do in the printing department is already equal with international best practice and I got some good



Gary Dillistone (left) and Brendon Clausen (right).

ideas about how to improve some other areas of our business."

Not long after Gary's visit to the Excelsior bag manufacturing plant in Yonkers New York, one of their senior supervisors decided to head home to Hamilton to give his American-born family 'a taste of Kiwi'.

Originally trained at Convex Plastics, Brendon Clausen has worked as a supervisor at Excelsior for the past ten years and is now back in the Convex plant training staff and looking to improve machine speeds and technology.

Gary says, "Brendon has been commissioning some very big presses and he has extensive printing experience. Brendon helped us select our very first big press before he headed overseas and it's great to have him back again to help us select another."

Brendon's former company, Excelsior, is a recognised leader in technology investment and specialises in high volumes and high speed. Their machinery includes the fastest press in the world,

which runs over 1000 metres a minute.

Brendon says, "I'm looking at the speeds at Convex to see if we can increase some of them, and I will be giving the company ideas about new technology and helping them select another press."

Brendon claims the high quality training he received at Convex made it really easy to get a job in the United States and he is pleased to see that the quality of printing and training at Convex is still very high.

He says, "You can't beat the training you get at Convex anywhere else in the world. The training here is unbelievable and the printing quality at Convex is still very, very high. When I was looking to get a job in the US all I had to do was show them some of the Convex samples I did and I was straight in the door. The quality was instantly recognised."

Convex printers Gary Dillistone, Danny McNamara and Brad Marsh are widely regarded as three of the industry's leading trainers of flexographic printing apprentices.

In 2007 Danny McNamara was officially recognised as one of Australasia's best printing trainers and was inducted into the Australasian Flexographic Technical Association (AFTA) Hall of Fame. Over his 37 years in the printing industry, Danny has personally trained 31 apprentices at Convex Plastics and around 6 at Trigon Plastics (now Cryovac Sealed Air). Four of the Convex apprentices went on to win the Dupont Award, for top New Zealand printing apprentice of the year, and seven others (including Brendon Clausen and Brad Marsh) were industry award finalists.

Gary says the printing department's commitment to developing industry leaders has resulted in several Convex-trained printers securing key positions overseas, and has helped establish Convex as a recognised leader in the industry.

He says, "While it's always disappointing to see people go, our apprentices have taken the Convex name around the world and have helped us become well known. We are committed to investing in the leaders in our industry and we plan to keep on doing that."



## FROM THE FACTORY FLOOR Operations Manager, Dean Renner Reviews the Past Twelve Months and Looks Forward to the Future

This year has again flown by in a blur. It is a good time to take a moment to reflect on what has occurred and think about the coming year.

This year has seen good improvement throughout the factory in terms of GMP, HACCP and Lean Manufacturing.

GMP stands for good manufacturing practices. These are simple requirements that, if implemented, will enable us to run a more efficient operation and enhance our customers' confidence when dealing with us. The preventative maintenance programs, cleaning schedules and traceability of our product all the way to the batch of resin it was manufactured from are just some of the GMP practices we have running.

The HACCP accreditation we achieved this year required GMP practices and has identified some critical points that could affect food safety. With an increasing amount of our business focused on food manufacturing this was a key step for our business and reflects the good work done by a number of people. However we can't rest here as we will be audited on this on a regular basis - so sustaining these programmes is vital.

Our Lean programme is linked in with GMP and HACCP. Lean aims to improve our problem

solving skills so we can constantly come up with small improvements and empower the people who are doing the job to suggest ways to improve the way they do things. A significant level of training involving 20 people within the business has been carried out this year, and will continue into next year. Again the key word here is 'sustain'. How do we make these improvements stick and become the new way of working....until someone thinks of a better way?

We have made a lot of progress, but as always there are plenty more opportunities ahead to resolve ongoing challenges and continue to improve what we do and the service we provide to our customers.

Projects like the installation of Promapp software will help us standardise our processes and allow us to carry out the many complicated tasks we undertake every day a lot more consistently. Promapp will help us sustain the improvements we have already made and will allow us to continually improve on them.

Thanks everybody for your efforts in what has been a very busy year. This is much appreciated by myself and the management team.

# OPTI-FLEX

► On Press Technology and Innovation for the Flexible packaging industry.

**Flint**Group

Flexographic Printing Plates

**apex**  
Group of Companies

Anilox Technology

**rotec**

Print Sleeves

**MILLER GRAPHICS**

Doctor Blade Steel

**RECYL**

Cleaning Media

Privileged to partner

**CONVEX**  
PLASTICS

[www.opti-flex.com](http://www.opti-flex.com)

# Convex Coach Encouraged After Adaptive Rowing Win

It was a proud moment for Convex Account Manager Dave Lazarus on 4 November when adaptive rower Danny McBride won New Zealand's first medal at the World Rowing Championships at Lake Karapiro.

Dave has been coaching Danny to help him achieve his long-term goal of competing in the 2012 London Paralympics. Making it to the finals of the World Rowing Championships was one of the numerous short-term goals that Danny needed to achieve to realise his Paralympic goal and he did it by winning the bronze medal in the men's arms and shoulders single sculls race.

Danny became a T12 paraplegic about 11 years ago after a tree fell on him in a forestry block where he was working. The accident left him with no movement, or feeling, below the waist – but didn't stop him from staying active. An avid sportsman, Danny has played a number of sports since his accident. He started rowing in 2009 and was New Zealand's only Adaptive Rower to participate in the World Rowing Championships.

Dave, who is a keen rower and the past club captain of the Cambridge Rowing Club says, "Danny did extremely well winning bronze at the Champs. He has been rowing for less than 18 months, and has only had coaching since around February this year, so the result of winning New Zealand's first Adaptive Rowing medal is sensational."

As the only adaptive rower/coach team in the North Island, both Dave and Danny had to learn and improvise as they went along. To gain experience, Dave accompanied Danny to Sydney

and Canberra in July to race against an Australian Adaptive Rower, who had been ranked third at the 2009 World Champs.

Dave says, "Danny had never raced against another adaptive rower before, only ever against the clock. We went to Aussie expecting to get beaten, and our objective was not to lose by too much. However Danny raced really well and actually beat the Aussie in all three races!"

Dave is very impressed at Danny's positive attitude and self-sufficiency. He trains most days, rowing up to 11kms using only his arms. Dave says, "That's Danny's signature – he doesn't let anything stop him."

Both Dave and Danny say that Convex Plastics played a key role in Danny's success by allowing Dave to be flexible with his hours so he could spend as much time as possible with Danny.

Danny says, "I would really like to thank Convex for allowing Dave to take the time to coach me. Convex has been fantastic, and their support went a long way to helping us achieve what we did."

Dave believes that Danny's public success will help promote the sport as an option for athletes with disabilities.

"He's a sensational athlete and he basically shone from the first moment I met him. He's got a tenacious streak and he listens and he adapts. I am very encouraged to have been able to work with such a motivated person and see such a good result."



Danny greets an excited crowd after his bronze medal win at the World Rowing Championships

Photo taken by the Waikato Times



Dave Lazarus (left) and Danny McBride

## Innovative Technology About to Improve Opti~fresh Production Speeds

Convex Plastics' legendary combination of engineering skills and 'can do' attitude is back at work again, making the Opti~fresh production process a lot more efficient and cost effective.

The Convex technical team is developing a new proprietary process to create customised breathability in Opti~fresh films to enhance the shelf life of specific fresh fruit and vegetables. Convex currently uses a more traditional two-stage process, which requires some manual handling.

Convex Technical Manager Andrew Sheerin says, "The process we are developing will allow us to run the machine a lot faster. We can also eliminate the second processing stage, which will speed up the process even further."

The new process is the brainchild of two engineering students who are working at Convex over the summer break to apply the research they conducted at university in a real time industrial setting. The students are both majoring in electronics at the University of Waikato and are keen to use their engineering knowledge to provide a practical and cost effective solution for Convex.

Andrew says, "I've certainly got full confidence in these guys. The system they are building here is not only going to improve our Opti~fresh production process – it will also provide a quality inspection system to confirm that the breathability provided in the film matches the respiration rate of the produce to be packaged."

Using their typical DIY approach, Convex is building all the components for the new technology themselves to provide maximum value to the company and their customers.

Convex pride themselves in their ability to develop their own machines and processes, and built their company by doing that. In the early days, not having enough finance to buy a new machine or being told that a particular process was impossible has never stopped them – it just inspired them to think outside the square and develop a different and often better way of doing things.

The resulting achievements have included several significant innovations and a lapsealing process that is now used worldwide.

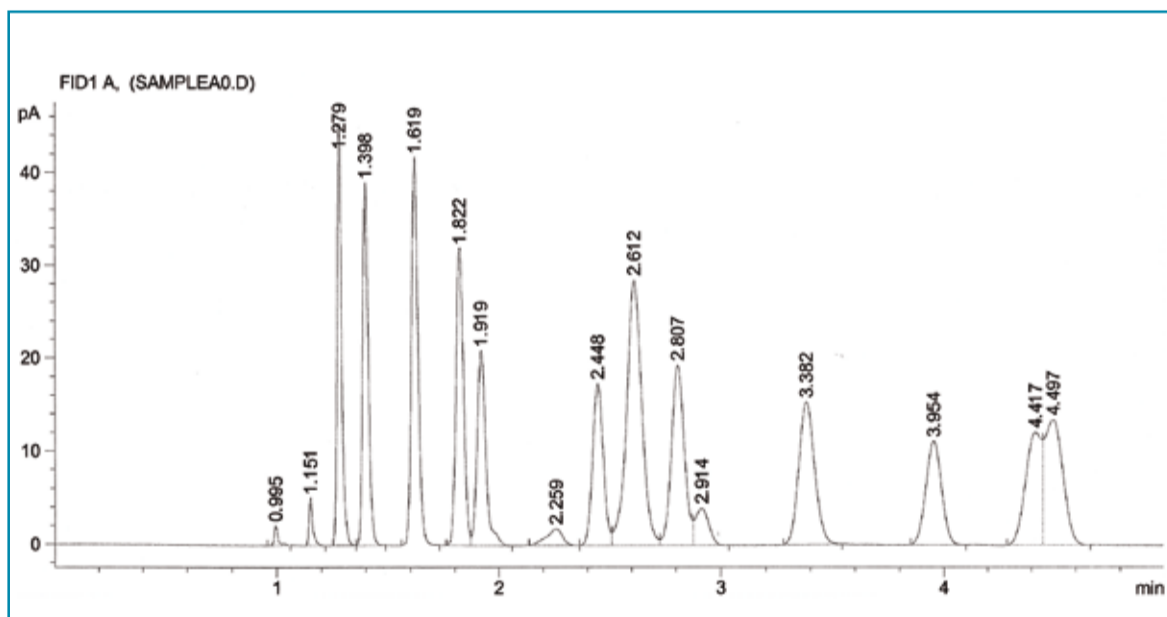
Andrew says, "Our business is all about packaging innovation and that encompasses everything we do, including our production processes. If we see an opportunity to improve something then we won't hesitate to put in the effort to make it happen."

Utilising especially adapted technology unique to Convex Plastics, Opti~fresh provides proven life extension benefits for high respiring fresh cut produce with oxygen transmission rates (OTRs) as high as 20,000 cc.m<sup>2</sup> day on almost any type of film. Its high sealability also makes it an ideal lidding stock for clam shells or show bowls, where it can provide a shelf life extension equal to an entire standard modified atmosphere bag by covering just the top surface of the bowl.

Andrew says, "The look and function of the Opti~fresh film will not alter with the new process, but the way it is made will be more streamlined and will hopefully enable us to pass on some cost savings to our customers."

The new Opti~fresh production process is expected to be rolled out into the Convex plant in early 2011.

## New Testing Service for Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)



Companies can now get assistance from Convex Plastics to ensure the amount of retained solvents in their packaging complies with industry safety standards, which is especially essential for food grade films.

The new service was launched after Convex was approached by several companies wanting independent testing for retained solvents in their imported packaging, which smelt strongly of petroleum. Convex helped several faulty product claims get settled by identifying the volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in the film with their gas chromatograph, which separates out each solvent and calculates how much is present in the film.

Industry standards in New Zealand and most other developed nations (including Europe and the United States) require printing solvents to be 30 mg/m<sup>2</sup> or less as a total of all solvents present.

Convex Technical Manager Andrew Sheerin says, "Some of the imported films we've tested have had more than 40 times the acceptable level of printing solvents in them, which is a huge concern – especially for the companies who purchased those films to pack food. At those quantities the strong solvent odour would have tainted the packaged product and most likely generated customer complaints and even a product recall."

This sample graph generated by Convex's Gas Chromatograph shows a variety of solvents that can be used and detected in various printing inks. The area under each of these peaks is used to quantitate the amount of solvent present in the sample. The peaks labelled 3.954 and 1.822 represent Toluene and MEK respectively, harmful offensive smelling solvents that can be present in imported film.

As well as potentially resulting in a loss of sales and reputation for the company that imported the film, high levels of VOCs can detrimentally affect the health of the end consumer.

Two VOC's that Convex has detected in high quantities in imported packaging are methyl ethyl ketone (MEK) and Toluene. Toluene is an aromatic hydrocarbon that is 25 times more reactive than benzene, and has numerous proven detrimental health effects.

Andrew says, "It's really important to carry out routine VOC testing on packaging manufactured in countries where manufacturing and environmental standards are a lot less strict than ours."

Owen says, "After assisting several companies recover from some disappointing importing experiences, we decided to offer our testing service to any company wanting to evaluate imported film, especially for food grade applications."



Nate Marsden (left) and James Taylor. Despite being busy with the Dynamics upgrade, Nate also found time to study and was awarded a Graduate Diploma in Supply Chain Management at the University of Waikato in October 2010.

## Another IT Milestone Achieved

Convex Plastics marked a significant technological milestone over Easter weekend with the successful upgrade of their IT system to Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009 (also known as Dynamics).

The system upgrade was the culmination of an intensive year-long project which involved upgrading the company's entire IT infrastructure to work with the new Dynamics AX 2009 system - including the Microsoft Office suite, the database server and the Citrix applications.

Convex IT Manager Nate Marsden says, "The upgrade has improved our internal systems. The result has been quite a few changes in the way we do things and a bit of a learning curve for the whole company, but the benefits have definitely been worth it."

Since upgrading their computer system to Microsoft Dynamics AX in 2003, Convex has been recognised by Microsoft New Zealand as one of the most innovative companies that use it.

Microsoft presented Convex with an Innovation Award for their enterprising use of Microsoft Dynamics AX in 2003, and has profiled Convex's use of the software as a case study for other potential users. In September 2008 Convex

was given the ultimate recognition as a leading user of the software when Convex Managing Director, Owen Embling, was invited to help train Microsoft New Zealand staff about how it works.

The Convex IT team - Nate and James Taylor - carried out the majority of the recent software upgrade and customisation work themselves, with software providers Solution Partners assisting with some essential specialised technical support and advice.

Nate says, "The upgrade to Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009 is just another example of how Convex uses technology to get the best outcomes for both the company and our customers. James and I really appreciate everyone's support and patience during the system upgrade. The system is now functioning well and we are looking forward to focusing on some other projects."

The IT team is currently working on a project with Solution Partners to streamline transactions between the three companies in the Convex group. This project aims to make trading easier between Convex Plastics Ltd, Convex Australia Pty Ltd and Sliderpack Ltd, with minimal administration support needed.

## Collaborative Research Develops Highly Functional PLA Blend

Convex Plastics and the national Plastics Centre of Excellence (PCoE) have developed a new blend of biodegradable Poly Lactic Acid (PLA) with similar performance characteristics to high density polyethylene film.

Featuring high tear and impact strength, the new PLA film is opaque and a lot easier to handle, seal and process than the brittle conventional PLA film.

Convex Technical Manager Andrew Sheerin says, "The Plastics Centre of Excellence has given us a good functional bio-degradable film that will deliver the ideal performance characteristics for a wide range of packaging applications. This film is very easy to process and is an extremely good option for companies wanting environmentally friendly packaging with similar performance characteristics to non-renewable petroleum based films."

The new PLA film incorporates 90% biodegradable material and will almost completely degrade within 90 days at 60° Celsius.

The commercialisation of the new PLA blend is the outcome of the first research programme conducted by the PCoE, which opened last October at the University of Auckland Tamaki Campus.

Supported by up to \$5 million in government funding, the PCoE is a joint venture between the University of Auckland and Plastics New Zealand, the industry's trade association. One of the PCoE's objectives is to conduct applied industry research to develop leading-edge polymers and processes.

Rosanne Ellis, Auckland UniServices Ltd Business Manager - Engineering, says the PLA research project with Convex Plastics aimed to develop a technology that allowed biodegradable and renewable resourced products to be manufactured using the blown film process.

"Some very large international companies have attempted to produce a similar material with a high level of biodegradability without success. It is therefore very encouraging for the newly established Plastics Centre of Excellence, with the help of Convex, to have succeeded where others have failed."

Rosanne says that Convex played a critical part in the development programme by making their resources and staff available for prototype material manufacture and testing.

"The input from the Convex technical and manufacturing team has been invaluable in the commercialising of this leading edge technology. Their constructive input derived from experience with processing and fabrication ensured the project was relevant to industry."

Moving forward, the PCoE intends to refine the technology for specific applications and develop a variety of PLA blends to meet market requirements. Convex Plastics is also looking at carrying out further research with the PCoE to create a clearer blend of PLA and to increase the amount of compostable material in the films to a minimum of 95%.

The new PLA blend is now available from Convex Plastics. For more information contact Andrew Sheerin on: 07 958 1770, Mob. 021 190 3898 or andrew.s@convex.co.nz



Linda with some other passionate netballers at the Waikato Bay of Plenty Magic season finale at Waikato Stadium in July. Left to right: Irene van Dyk, Jodi Brown, Linda and Peta Scholz.

## Linda Scores New Netball Role

Linda Waerea took her long-standing netball passion to a whole new level this year by earning her umpire's badge at the Hamilton Netball Centre.

The Convex Warehousing and Distribution Manager celebrated the qualification by umpiring ten games at the Intermediate School Nationals in Tauranga in September, including a pool semi-final game.

During the netball season Linda can be found at Hamilton's Minogue Park every Saturday doing what she loves most - playing netball and umpiring up to premier level.

Linda also manages the Intermediate girls' Flyers basketball team, plays in a Super League over 40s team, plays as a reserve in the Convex business house indoor netball team and has managed a Year 8A representative team. And if that's not enough, Linda has also coached several primary and intermediate school level netball teams and is considering coaching a high school team next year.

However, Linda's netball passion is not just centred on the netball courts - it's also focused on Convex. Linda played a pivotal part in starting the Convex business house indoor netball teams and plays for them most Wednesday evenings. The teams have been managed from the Warehousing and Distribution department for about five years with players from throughout the company. Over that time Convex has won the Business House indoor netball championships an impressive four times and was Runner Up in 2005.

"We're keeping the whole company on their toes," says Linda quite proudly. "Guys and girls of all sizes, shapes and ethnic backgrounds are getting involved and having a great time getting fit and active."

"I'm quite passionate about netball and I love to see other people enjoying it."

## Order Online - Save Money - and Support a Worthy Cause



Convex Plastics' new online ordering website is now up and running at: [www.convexdirect.co.nz](http://www.convexdirect.co.nz)

Aimed at the average consumer - the new website makes purchasing competitively-priced packaging, including bio-degradable Greensack bags, extremely easy by providing secure credit card purchasing facilities.

Along with allowing shoppers to save up to 35% off the normal supermarket price of everyday items - 5% of every standard sale made on our Convex Direct website will be given to Sustainable Coastlines ([www.sustainablecoastlines.org](http://www.sustainablecoastlines.org)) to help protect New Zealand's environment.

Convex Direct also offers some exciting fundraising options for people looking to raise money for a sport's team, school or any other non-profit organisation they are involved in.

Convex managing Director Owen Embling says that Convex Direct will benefit everyone who shops there and the environment too.

"All the products offered on Convex Direct are 100% New Zealand made and are of the highest quality. The general packaging on the site also contains up to 80% recycled plastic and the Greensack bags - made from renewable cornstarch - are completely bio-degradable and compostable," Owen says.

"Waikato Hockey is already using the site to raise money for their club and there is plenty of opportunity for other clubs and charities to get on board too."

An Australian version of Convex Direct will be up and running soon.



# Chris' Corner

## HITCHINGS, HATCHINGS & HAPPENINGS AT CONVEX PLASTICS

Well, it's been another great year for the team at Convex... We've excelled on the sports field, enjoyed a well-deserved team building day, celebrated a wedding, and welcomed three new babies.

On the sporting front, we're very proud of several accomplishments. Conversion Setter Ant Coffey was picked to play for the under 20 Waikato Rugby team in May. To date, they've played Japan, Tonga and the Australian Schoolboys, with a fantastic two wins to their record so far.

The Convex Netball team is now in its fifth year and has members from each department. This year the team maintained its awesome reputation by coming first or second in every round of competition, even though it included a few newcomers - both to the team and to netball! Since the start of the season in April, the team has won an impressive 22 out of 24 games played.

In April our Conversion team was rewarded for all their hard work meeting a challenging five-month target with a day out at Rotorua's Off Road New Zealand. They started the day with two fun team building activities, then got the adrenalin pumping with a 4x4 truck ride and sprint car race, and finished off the day with a BBQ.

On the family front, the year started well for Pre-Press Assistant Renee Bain, who married fiancé Lance Carter on the lakefront at Lake Karapiro in March. The day was a perfect reflection of the bride and groom and their nautical lifestyle, with a sand ceremony after the vows, ski-ropes marking the aisle, a mermaid and merman topping the cake and Renee's dive buddy standing with her as 'Bride's Man'. Tables at the Ferrybank Lounge were decorated for the reception using scallop shells

dived for by Mike Liddle, who brought them in to work last year as a surprise for Renee when he heard that she would not have time to get them herself.



We've had some exciting visits from the stork this year. Slitting Wrapper Stuart Hislop and partner Charmaine Burkett welcomed son Gabriel Xavier (8lb 6oz) in December 2009. Printing Mounter Mark Peaker and wife Catherine welcomed new son Spencer Karl in May, and Apprentice Printer Gurpreet Singh, wife Dalbir Kaur and big brother Tejveer welcomed baby boy Paramveer (9lb) in July.

Well folks, that's all from me. I'll be back in touch again next year with more...

Wishing you and yours a safe and happy Christmas and New Year!

Cheers

*Chris*

## Mike's Legacy Lives On

This year Convex staff and suppliers remembered Mike Liddle by celebrating the 10th anniversary of the annual fishing competition he co-founded and organised each year at Long Bay Motor Camp on the Coromandel.

The late Warehousing and Distribution Manager co-founded the fishing competition after having a casual conversation in the Convex café with Danny and Vikki McNamara. That evening the three of them met over a couple of cold ones and decided to organise the first Convex fishing competition, which attracted 34 contestants.

Mike's second in charge Linda Waerea has many fond memories of Mike. Linda helped Mike organise the fishing competition from the very beginning and has organised the sponsorship since 2002. She credits Mike's habit of taking time off 'based on the tides and the weather forecast' for preparing her to take over the management role in the warehouse.

She says, "The phone used to go at work and it would be my partner Eddie, but he didn't want me, he wanted Mike to see if the tides were right to take a day off. They fished together a lot and I 'learnt to swim' in the warehouse while Mike was away."

On the 6th of November 112 budding anglers from as far away as Wellington carried on Mike's legacy by having another memorable weekend catching fish and having fun.

This year's organiser Linda Waerea reports: "The weather was brisk at the start, but the contestant's hearts were set on going out to sea. The

weather eased off during the day and Saturday afternoon became a wind and sun burnt face occasion. It was so great to see so many people gather there chairs around the site and tell those long fish tails and say hello to old comrades."

"On this weekend we remembered Mike Liddle for his wonderful gift in bringing us together on this 10th year Anniversary, and for the special friendship that he bonded amongst us to give us the persistence to catch 'that big one'."

"I would like to personally thank Karen and Nigel Liddle for helping to organize the event, Gary Roberts and Brad Marsh for being "The Weigh Masters", Andrew Sheerin for the design of the invitations and posters, Quentin Petersen, along with Kirkgroup, Gary Roberts and his staff for the manufacturing and design of the Convex Anniversary Spot Prize Bags, my family and dispatch for their support and finally, everyone who participated for their efforts and friendship over the past 10 years. Also, a very big thank you to all our sponsors who helped make this such a special event."

### THE 2010 PRIZE WINNERS WERE:

- Heaviest Snapper:** 1. Donald Falconer 6.91kg; 2. Warren Browne 6.47kg; 3. Kenny Morris 6.34kg; 4. Paul Kirsop 6.30kg; 5. Gavin Hays 5.72kg; 6. Gary Roberts 5.36kg; 7. Jeremy Dimes 5.35kg; 8. Stu Cundy 5.17kg

**Heaviest Kahawai:** Stu Cundy 1.96kg

**Heaviest Other:** Richard Cate - John Dory 1.76kg



2010 winners (left to right): Warren Browne (Mayceys), Jeremy Dimes (Convex Account Manager), Kenny Morris (Long time contestant), Richard Cate (Convex Employee), Donald Falconer (long time contestant), Paul Kersop (Contestant) Gary Robert (Convex Prepress Manager), Stu Cundy (Supplier- Primaplas), Gavin Hayes (contestant).

Sign up at [www.TheBestLittleBookStore.co.nz](http://www.TheBestLittleBookStore.co.nz) to receive title updates and special offers.

www.  
**TheBestLittleBookStore**  
.co.nz



Assisting kiwi authors, with the printing and promotion of niche market books...  
So, for all of you bookworms we have a fantastic range of authors bringing fact and fiction to your door.