

## WHILE WE WERE SLEEPING



During my years at New Trier High School in Winnetka, Illinois, foreign language choices were presented to us. We were advised to take Spanish as it would have greater worldwide influence than French. Naturally, I signed up for French. In those days there was no talk of **global economy, no China and the U.S. was flat out #1**. In language classes, like a number of students I went on "snooze control."

"While we were sleeping," there were some languages developing that would really have **worldwide impact**, but no one mentioned them. No one seemed to know...

Fast forward to 1980. Uline was banging out orders on a typewriter. In a big move for us, we bought a used IBM 34 and then it all changed. The machine ran on a language called RPG. Dick and I knew nothing about this. Nothing.

As Uline grew, we changed machines, IBM 36, IBM AS400. It was a big deal to get a new machine. Then along came the Internet...it brought a graphical language called Microsoft .NET.

Today like so many companies, Uline is multi-language. We have RPG, .NET, Oracle, Cold Fusion and Java. It seems these languages – the ones no one told us about – have the worldwide influence. And I didn't mention SAP.

Uline 2008 has 6 U.S. locations, Tijuana and a new location in Toronto. Life is complex. We struggle with **all these languages** and "keeping the systems going." It's hard for us to find enough IT folks who know these languages.

When I get really worried about all of this, I think about the FAA and our NASA Space Program. In the crowded skies we fly, the FAA is years behind and untold billions into their upgrade. Those old space ships and the tiles that keep falling off...sometimes it all seems so fragile. Next, I take a walk at lunch time – gulps of fresh air.

I do know if you order by 6 pm, Uline is really good at getting your order out. We've got this part down.

Hopefully in 2008, some other parts will get easier than they are for us right now with all these languages we're dealing with. The ones never mentioned in school.

– Liz Uihlein



## DOWN WEST VIRGINIA WAY

As Uline has grown (from our basement), good things have come with the more complex issues. One of the good things is our annual Manager's Meeting right before Memorial Day weekend. After morning meetings discussing the usual business stuff comes a little relaxation.

Last year we went to West Virginia; a beautiful part of the country. We had the opportunity to go white water rafting. We were bouncing around, paddling like crazy, trying to stay upright in these roaring, foaming rapids. You really have to count on the people in the boat with you! It was terrifying – but well worth it!

