

## Meet the Real World

*By Mike Harris*

The year was 1935, with my high school diploma in my hand, one more look and I put it away in the drawer of my desk and now to find a job. My experience in providing for my prom led me to go where the money was.

This morning I was off to the labor agencies to register with them for employment. Without belaboring you with the odyssey, after two weeks and registering with close to one hundred agencies on Wall Street and no results at all I began to feel that something was not quite right. Whenever I felt that I needed help I turned to my father. He listened to what I had done up to now and smiled, "You are looking in a desert, you will never get a job on Wall Street. The major industries in New York are insurance, Clothing, Wall Street, and Banking. These are controlled by the following: Catholics control insurance, Jews control clothing, Protestants control Wall Street, Banking by Old Families. If you really are looking for a job, look to your own!" With that he picked up the *Sunday Times*, circled an ad for shipping clerk, "Be there at seven in the morning and you will get a job." "Can you help my friend Jimmy?" "I can try call up Jimmy and have him come over." In three minutes Jimmy was in our living room, and my father heard the same story again. He picked up the paper circled an ad and told him to be at that address at seven on Monday morning and he probably will be hired.

I was hired and Jimmy got his job at which he stayed his whole life. They sent him to college, he moved up within the firm and retired as an officer with a title! I really do not know much more about Jimmy since our life paths diverged. I on the other hand got on the path that led to most of the rest of my life. I progressed from shipping clerk to journeyman cutter, to full-fledged union cutter in three years, and in the same industry to a similar job heading a team of pressers.

World War Two was a bump in the road and on returning to civilian life got my old job back, met my wife raised a family, which took sixty years and now find myself here before you.