

# LINCOLN® ELECTRIC STABILIZER®

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## They Climbed the Mountain

It started on a flat surface—Bob Samac's garage floor—but they've been racing uphill, or up-mountain, ever since. Jeff and Bob Samac started a two-man fabricating and machine shop in Bob's garage in 1988. The company grew slowly, taking on any job. After the first year they were able to move into an industrial park. Work there included fabrication of steel gravel conveyors, repair of off-road equipment, and some work for two airlines and an airplane manufacturer.



Jeff Samac, vice president and co-founder of Control Tech, enjoys flying up the hill.

Jeff, a cycling enthusiast, was aware of the rising popularity of mountain bikes. Seeing a possible opportunity, they contacted a friend at a cycle shop and visited several other bicycle showrooms and retailers. They noticed that there was only one handlebar bar-end, of steel, heavy and of questionable quality, on the market. Bar-ends fasten to the ends of the straight mountain bike handle bars to enhance climbing and provide additional hand positions.



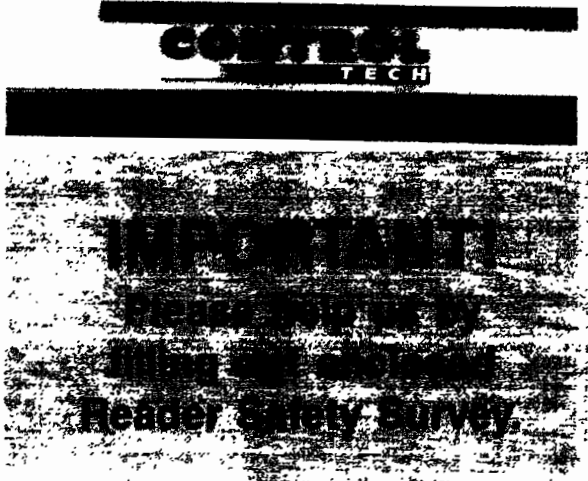
Welder at work producing mountain bike handle bar bar-ends with exceptional quality welds.



## The Liberty Bell Story

### Peddling the First 25

"We made 25 pair out of aluminum and talked our cycling friend into trying to sell them. He did and we used the cash to build 100 more," said Jeff Samac, vice president, co-owner and co-founder with brother Bob. The 100 pair slowly sold out. But when a very small advertisement was placed



in a cycling publication, an order for 500 pairs came from a European distributor. "Sure, we can produce those for you, we said, then I hung up the phone and we tried to figure out how we'd be able to make 500 fast," said Jeff Samac. "We didn't have the money or the manpower." But they worked their way through it and today Control Tech Bicycle Components USA, Kent, Washington, is a world leader in quality components for famous name bicycle producers—Cannondale, Raleigh, Gary Fisher, Schwinn, Redline, Trek, Diamondback, and others.

### More and More Parts

Control Tech today makes about 65,000 Control "Stix" bar-end pairs per year and have manufactured as many as 100,000 in a year. The second line of products for mountain

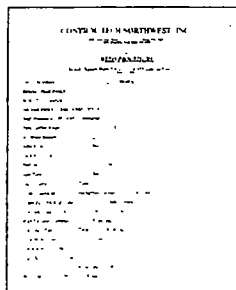


Skip Kleppen and Len Edwards, Sales Representatives, Kentox Distributing, Seattle; Jeff Samac, vice president/co-founder, Control Tech; Harry Dame, Lincoln Electric Technical Representative (left to right); and Phil Timm, Welding Foreman (seated).

bikes was handle bar stems. Both the Control "Stix" bar-ends and stems are available in various models and sizes. Other products include a unique Lawwill Leader suspension fork that uses a single airsprung, oil-dampened shock rather than the more conventional dual shocks. The company sees major new growth in the manufacture of private label bike frames for several top line bike makers. Their titanium-aluminum alloy frame weighs in at only 3.25 pounds. Other Control Tech products are derailleur pulleys, tandems stems, regular and quick-release skewers, seat posts, handle bars, cranksets, and a variety of titanium hardware. All of the company's 250 individual products are made in the USA.

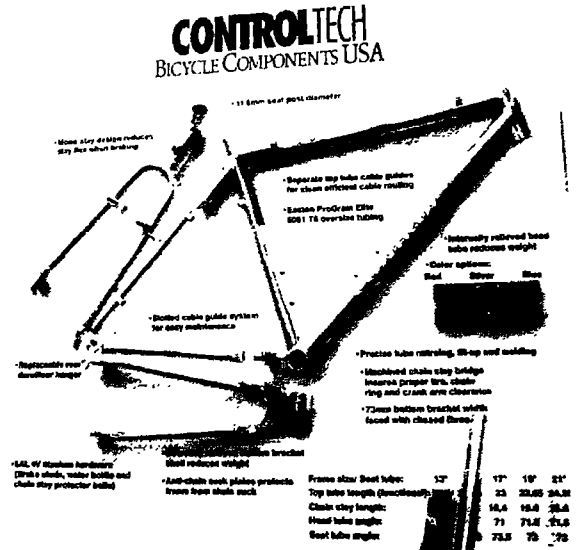
### Growth Through Quality

Control Tech provides customers with aircraft quality welds and are considered among the best in the cycle industry. They, unlike some of their competitors, want customers to see the finished weld. Control Tech's welders don't go over a first pass with a second pass to smooth over high and low spots. They put the weld down



Control Tech's formal weld procedure sheet. It stems back in some part to their aircraft welding experience and to top welders, such as welding foreman Phil Timm. Products and welds face torturous fatigue testing at 15,000 to 100,000 life cycles. One test features 1/4" deflection in all directions randomly. Training at Control Tech emphasizes pride in workmanship and instilling the desire to perform at the best of one's ability.

Good equipment helps when you want the highest quality product at better-than-competitive production rates. "The first TIG machine we bought was a Lincoln. It's what our top welder wanted," said Jeff Samac. "Never had a single problem with it or any Lincoln welder we have." The company has 10 Idealarc® Square Wave TIG 355's and one 300. "Can't remember any downtime on the machines—it's remarkable for how much we use them. Had them running



New Control Tech frame and high performance suspension forks on display.

three shifts for a time—24 hours a day," Jeff Samac said. He complimented the service provided by his Lincoln distributor, Kentox Distributing, Seattle, and their Representatives Skip Kleppen and Len Edwards. They're backed by Harry Dame, Lincoln Technical Representative, Seattle Office. "We're extremely happy with the service we've had. No other machinery manufacturer can touch the service," he said.



Precision weld being made with the help of a Lincoln Square Wave TIG 355.

With sales levels to reach nearly \$5,000,000 in 1995, the Samac brothers have raced up the mountain of success in a relatively short business life. "It took off faster than we ever thought—or dreamed," said Jeff Samac. The 65 employees, which include 12 welders, are glad it did. The next five years sees them continuing the strategy that's been successful—introducing one well-developed, well-fabricated, well-tested product at a time. "Our new frame program should do well. We've worked hard to build recognition and a good reputation," he said.

It looks like an exceptional future for Control Tech, the Samac brothers, their quality welders, and other dedicated, friendly employees. They work hard but maintain a casual, thoughtful attitude. Exceptional quality products and carefully aggressive marketing promises continuing progress and growth. And, as their product literature says, they sometimes drink espresso.

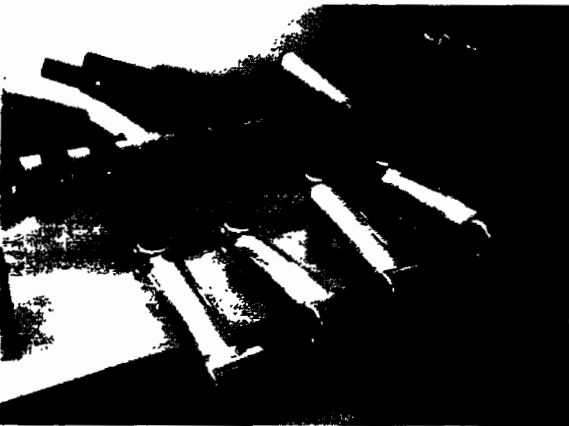
Randy Glassburn  
Editor



*Jeff Samac and John Karus, Director of Sales and Marketing, display a new mountain bike showing Control Tech components and new titanium-alloy frame.*



*Control "Stix" bar-ends in the fabrication process.*



*Finished Control "Stix" bar-ends and stems.*



*Company management responded to welders' request for comfortable work stations—received and well deserved.*

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