

Service

Safety

Quality

APRIL, 2010

# the **Block**

C O N N E C T I O N

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*“It’s the work  
and relationships  
we build today  
that will  
produce the  
bountiful harvest  
tomorrow.”*

## PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

- JACK BLOCK

There’s an old parable and it goes something like this, A farmer lay dying, his four sons at his bedside awaiting his final words. “ There is a vast treasure buried in the family’s field,” he whispered. “Where is it, father?” the sons pleaded. But it was too late. Their father was gone.

Soon after his passing, the sons set to the field, trying to unearth the treasure. For many days the sons desperately worked pick and shovel, digging everywhere in search of the famous legacy. Eventually they turned over every inch of the field, but alas no treasure was to be found. Finally dejected and discouraged, they gave up their search and returned to their families and vocations.

The next year the farm yielded its greatest harvest ever. The point is that the fortune their father hinted at was not the magical boon that would transform their lives in one glorious instant. The treasure was the untapped potential of the field.

We are in the same situation. The work we do now is sowing seeds for the future. Work is scarce. The little we have has to be carefully plotted and executed. We can’t cause an instant turn around in the economy, but we can be ready when it does.

It’s not easy to ask for sacrifices, but we don’t have any choices. All of us are suffering through the worst construction depression since the 30’s. It’s no fun. We have so much underutilized talent on our team; all we want is a chance to perform. The opportunities are coming at a huge price. We are being asked to accept work at well below our costs and that is for the little opportunities that are being afforded us. All I can say is we can’t look for a short term fix here. Our future is in the work and attitude we portray today.

I know it’s hard to say and it’s harder to understand but keep a positive attitude and keep *“Customer Delight.”* It’s planting the seeds we can grow in the field for the future. Difficult as it seems, things will get better, when I don’t know. But, I know they will change, they always do. I just want to be sure we are around to see them. I want to make sure we have made the inroads today that will reward us going forward. We need to leave a good lasting impression on our customers. It’s the work and relationships we build today that will produce the bountiful harvest tomorrow.

## ONE OF OUR OWN

- MIKE DEGER  
- MIKE DEGER



Block Electric employee Laura Perkins was pictured on the front cover of the March Edition of The Electrical Worker. All union members receive this IBEW publication in the mail.

Laura was working on the Bolingbrook Hospital project when this picture was taken. She is currently working on the Silver Cross Hospital New Lenox project.

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## GREETINGS FROM THE CHICAGO WHITE SOX



On Friday April 23rd the Chicago White Sox will be having their annual Spring Building and Construction Night. Chicago White Sox vs. Seattle Mariners at U.S. Cellular Field, Friday, Apr 23, 2010 7:10 PM

On this special night the White Sox would be offering half-price upper level and lower level tickets to all Building and Construction trade employees, associates, their families and friends. You can visit [www.whitesox.com/construction](http://www.whitesox.com/construction) to purchase tickets online.

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## BLOCK ELECTRIC SCHOLARSHIP

The deadline for scholarship applications is April 30th. You will find the application instructions in your Team Member Handbook.

Submit all applications to:  
Mr. Len Borhardt  
Borhardt, Spellmeyer & Co.  
1752 Capital Street, Suite 400  
Elgin, IL 60124

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# GIVE YOUR BACK A BREAK

- DREW BOYCE

Almost everyone will suffer some type of back pain in his or her life. Estimations show that approximately 80% of all Americans will seek medical care for these pains. To prevent yourself from becoming a part of that statistic you must think carefully about how you use your back.

When it comes to preventing back injuries, apply the axiom "work smarter and not harder." A quick analysis of steps done to accomplish the task can go a long way towards reducing your chances of injury. The following simple questions will help you accomplish your task without injury: Can mechanical assistance lift, carry, move or handle heavy or awkward items? Use mechanical assistance to minimize repetitive movements or motions often found in production areas.

- Can improved workflow processes limit the amount of physical labor involved? Changing the pattern or process in which work flows may also improve productivity.
- Does the workstation or work area fit the specific task or job? The table or desk height may need to be changed or chairs may need adjustment. Consider how lighting and room temperature affect the work area.
- Is it realistic to replace heavy items with lighter items? For example, concrete comes in 90 lb. and 50 lb. bags.

If after asking yourself these questions, you still find that you cannot use mechanical assistance, seek help from a co-worker. You may not be able to change the workflow process, but any increase in comfort and safety will be an improvement. Workstations or work areas can be improved with simple furniture adjustments or by using inexpensive devices to improve body posture and positioning. Other back-saving advice, such as using proper body mechanics and staying in good physical shape, still applies.

It is your responsibility to take control of your body by carefully looking at and thinking about how you do your work. Taking a few minutes to stretch before working or after lunch can help prevent muscle related injuries. Proper rest and a good diet can also help protect your back. We would all like to "work smarter and not harder;" the first step is THINKING before you move.



Proper lifting uses the legs as much as possible, keeping one's head upright and back straight. The load should be kept close to the body. Avoid twisting while lifting or carrying.

Block Electric Company is an  
Equal Opportunity Employer

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We're on the web!  
[www.blockelectric.com](http://www.blockelectric.com)

### Golf—a good walk spoiled

Golfer: "I'd move heaven and earth to break 100 on this course."

Caddy: "Try heaven—you've already moved most of the earth."

Golfer: "Do you think my game is improving?"

Caddy: "Yes. You miss the ball much closer now."

Golfer: "Do you think I can get there with a 5 iron?"

Caddy: "Eventually."

Golfer: "How do you like my game?"

Caddy: "Very good, but personally, I prefer golf."

Golfer: "Do you think it's a sin to play on Sunday?"

Caddy: "The way you play, it's a sin on any day."

Golfer: "This is the worst course I've ever played on."

Caddy: "This isn't the golf course. We left that an hour ago."

## BIRTHDAYS

Joe	Parthun	04/02
Roberto	Morales	04/02
Kris	Hajek	04/05
Jeff	Holmes	04/06
Mike	Kammers	04/08
Drew	Boyce	04/12
Jerry	McConville	04/15
Brian	Casey	04/16
Brian	Lynch	04/16
Jim	Holehan	04/17
Laura	Perkins	04/23
Allen	Siefert	04/26
Mike	Smolkovich	04/27
Walt	Peterson	04/28
Mike	Arvesen	04/29



## TOSS IT OR KEEP IT

### TOSS IT IF . . . . .

- 1. You have twice as many as you need.** Take inventory of your duplicate items. If you own enough spatulas and coffee mugs to supply a small diner, it's time to shed a few.
- 2. It's a gift you don't love.** "Sometimes when we give away a present, we feel like we're giving away the person. Remind yourself it's just an object."
- 3. It's not worth repairing.** Search for similar items on eBay; if your item's current value is less than the cost of repairing it (hello, broken printer from 2004), then toss and replace. Otherwise, give yourself a deadline. If you don't get around to fixing the thing within six months, you can probably let it go.
- 4. Your gut says lose it.** Don't second-guess your instincts. "A lot of people worry they'll have regrets, they're afraid that one day they'll need that exact thing. But 99 percent of the time you just don't."
- 5. You don't know what it is.** UPOs (unidentified plastic objects) get 30 days. If they're still a mystery one month later, dump 'em.

### KEEP IT IF . . . . .

- 1. It's sentimental gold.** The more memorabilia you have, the less emotionally valuable each individual item becomes. Instead of saving every card your beloved uncle ever sent, pick the one that captures his spirit best.
- 2. It fits your life today.** Your possessions should support who you are right now, not the person you were five years—or five pounds—ago. Your ten-year-old LBD that still looks great? It stays.
- 3. You think it's gorgeous (even if no one else does).** Stuff that makes you smile—like the glittery clothespin reindeer your child made in third grade—doesn't count as clutter.
- 4. You'd buy it again.** It's tough to be objective about your own belongings. So ask yourself, what would I do if I saw this in a store?
- 5. You'll find a place for it.** Putting it back in a box is just predisposal. Any item worth keeping is worth creating a space for.