

Service

Safety

Quality

FEBRUARY, 2010

the **Block**

C O N N E C T I O N

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*“We know
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more capable
than most
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Customer Delight.”*

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

- JACK BLOCK

Work continues to be extremely difficult to obtain. There are many contractors panicked and bidding on jobs that they are not qualified to do. Unfortunately that usually means that they are the low bidder. To say the least they are extremely low bidders. It is an unfortunate situation because contractors of quality are being knocked out of the box and being made to look like fools.

It won't last forever, it is just a matter of hanging in there. That's our strategy for now. We will do our best to remain competitive with the contractors who do our type of work and wait for the market to turn. I know this is a difficult and frustrating time for everyone. We know we are more capable than most and stand ready to perform Customer Delight, all we need is the opportunity. The opportunities will come, it's just a matter of time.

On January 12th an old friend and retired foreman Pat White passed away. Pat was more than a great guy to us he was one of our best. Many of you knew him and will join me in expressing our heartfelt sympathy to his family. When Pat retired in March, 2003 I wrote the following article which I want to share with all of you at this time. The article delineates Pat's career with us and what a solid individual he was. I knew him for a long time and as I reflect on his passing I am saddened in so many ways, he was only 66.

Excerpts from the newsletter article in the May, 2003 issue

In March one of our most valuable individuals decided to end his working career. Pat White retired after nearly 40 years of tireless service. Pat is a great guy. He started his career as a young man with us back in the 60's driving our truck. He realized that he wanted to become an electrician and started working on a field permit. Pat was able to amass the required number of hours in the field and quickly took the Journeyman test and became a full electrician. Early on, his leadership and hard work were recognized and he became one of the original foremen at Rush. Pat developed his career working with two of our best, Emmett O'Boyle and Bill Halstead. He spent many years serving Rush and when he moved on to other projects he was truly missed. Pat has had so many successful projects in his lifetime; he became an icon of "Customer Delight." Pat had a style all his own. He had a unique way of attacking every challenge. Everyone loved Pat, his style and his demeanor all reflected his greatness. Pat is a personal friend, and I will always be proud to have been associated with him. Pat will be missed by me, his colleagues, and his customers.

Rest in Peace, Pat!

IN THE NEWS

- MIKE DEGER

The Joliet Herald News recently ran a article about their top 5 stories for the year 2009. The #3 story was about construction projects in the area.

Excerpt from the article

“Will County retains its strategic position in the Chicago area even during hard economic times. Thus progress on several developments continued in 2009”

Block Electric built or worked on 5 of the 6 projects that they listed in the article. The following are the projects that were mentioned.

- Silver Cross Hospital
- Provena Saint Joseph Medical Center
- Panduit Corporation
- Diageo Bottling Plant
- Advocate Christ Outpatient Center

THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

- MIKE DEGER

This week I had discussions with an architectural firm and a few engineering firms and they all stated that since the first of the year business has picked up quite a bit. That means we will see a pick up in business in six to nine months.

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

NEW JOURNEYMAN

Congratulations to Johnathan Gardner and Kristen Mendez who recently completed their on-the-line job training and related instructions qualifying them as a journeyman.

ANNIVERSARY

Congratulations and thank you to Gary Jones for his years of loyalty, service, and dedication to Block Electric. Gary joined us on February 5, 1990 and this will be his 20th anniversary.

THINK ABOUT IT

- DREW BOYCE

For years, safety experts have tried to implement programs to prevent worker injuries, and government has passed many regulations to help OSHA enforce workplace safety. But all of the laws, programs and rules in the world can't keep you from injury – if you don't think. Statistics reveal that for every on-the job accident caused by unsafe conditions, there are at least four that can be attributed to unsafe acts. What we do or fail to do can directly affect our personal safety.

"Thinking" is a personal action that no one else can do for you. The "failure to think" has been referred to as the hidden safety hazard or unsafe act that contributes to accidents, both on the job and away from work. Unsafe acts include both actions that are taken, as well as those that we fail to take that could avoid risk exposures or accidents.

So what are some of the reasons we fall into this trap of not thinking – before we act?

Confusion. If you find this happening, stop what you are doing and think. If you don't understand the instructions you have been given – ask. It's not wrong to ask questions, but it can be stupid not to – if it exposes you or others to danger.

Worry. This is a common problem for all of us, and no one is completely free of it all of the time. However, worry can be very distracting unless you learn to control it. There is no magic formula for controlling worry, but if you have a serious problem that you are preoccupied with – talk to your supervisor about it. He may not be able to completely solve it for you, but can help you evaluate alternatives.

Anger. Anger is another common problem and we all get angry at times. However, if you get mad enough you may not think straight, act in haste, and act unsafely. If you feel yourself getting angry – stop and think about the situation, before you act or respond in anger. Count to 10 or take a deep breath before you do anything else.

Fatigue. Fatigue often gets in the way of straight thinking too. If you are tired, it's often hard to think things out clearly. You can avoid this problem by getting enough sleep, eating properly, and keeping yourself fit.

Daydreaming. Daydreaming or inattention on the job is dangerous and it could kill you. If this is happening to you, force yourself to focus and concentrate on the task at hand. Don't allow your attention to drift and thoughts to wander.

Indifference. This can also lead to accidents. Don't let yourself get in a rut. If you feel your job is becoming routine – think about ways to improve things.

Think about the last accident you had at work, around the house, or in your car. Where was your mind immediately before the accident? Was it focused on what you were doing? Or were you thinking about the past or some event in the future? Maybe your thoughts were just drifting. Were you bored, angry, or tired? Keeping your attention focused on what you are doing will enable you to work safely, more enjoyable and more productively. Think about it.

Block Electric Company is an
Equal Opportunity Employer

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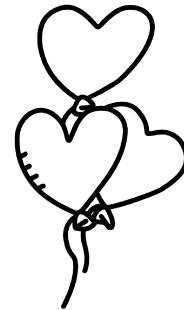
We're on the web!
www.blockelectric.com

Great tips:

1. Drink plenty of water.
2. Eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince and dinner like a beggar.
3. Eat more foods that grow on trees and plants and eat less food that is manufactured in plants
4. Live with the 3 E's - Energy, Enthusiasm and Empathy
5. Make time to pray.
6. Play more games
7. Read more books than you did in 2009.
8. Sit in silence for at least 10 minutes each day
9. Sleep for 7 hours.
10. Take 10 to 30 minutes walk daily and while you walk, smile.

BIRTHDAYS

Tom	Culloton	02/01
Steve	Sansone	02/04
Dan	Greene	02/06
Eric	Mathieu	02/07
Matt	Monger	02/19
Gene	DePilla	02/21
Steve	Vandyke	02/21
Fred	Biosca	02/22
Dale	Finn	02/26
Dave	Gniecki	02/27



KEEP YOUR MUSCLES STRONG AT ANY AGE

As we grow older, we often lose muscle mass. It's called sarcopenia, which means "vanishing flesh," a name coined in the 1980s. Muscle mass decline typically starts in the 40s but increases after age 50. One study of about 200 men and women ages 64-93 found that it affected 22.6 percent of the women and 26.8 percent of the men.

You can take steps to avoid sarcopenia. They include:

- **Strength training.** Lifting weights has been shown to increase muscle mass and protect against sarcopenia and may even reverse its most debilitating effects.
- **Aerobic exercise.** Healthy muscle tissue needs capillaries to infuse it with blood. Regular exercise, like a brisk half-hour walk every day, can provide this.
- **Protein.** Inadequate protein in the diet, or difficulties digesting and absorbing protein, may be a factor in susceptibility to sarcopenia. Older adults may need to increase their consumption of protein to maintain their lean body mass.
- **Vitamin E.** Research at Tufts University Nutrition Research Center suggests that Vitamin E may significantly reduce muscle damage in men young and old.

DECLUTTER YOUR PSYCHIC SPACE

Your office and attic aren't the only places in need of periodic cleaning and organizing. The stuff you carry around in your head—and heart—do more than take up mental space. They can stop you from being content.

Here are some ways you can de-clutter your insides:

- **Let go of grudges.** Why carry a grudge to the grave? Put the past behind you. Try writing a letter to the person you're angry with. You don't have to send it, but just putting the incident down in black and white (or pastel-colored ink, if that's your style) can help you get past it.
- **Unload burdensome friends.** Take an honest look at the people in your life. Break ties with those who don't support you, or who are incompatible with your values and goals.
- **Put the gavel away.** Being judgmental only closes you off from learning something from others. Don't judge so quickly; listen first.
- **Be willing to be wrong.** Don't be afraid to make the occasional mistake. When you do, acknowledge it. You can waste a lot of energy trying to keep up the façade that you're always right (or perfect).