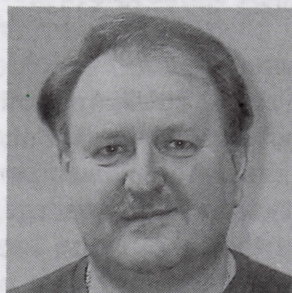




I.B.E.W
Local #1974



December, 2004



**The
President
And
Vice-President's
Message**



This year is coming to an end and again we have seen many changes.

We've seen how the war in the Mideast is affecting many families; even those that thought they had completed their time served are being called back into active duty after being discharged years ago. We thank all of those that are sacrificing so greatly for all of us here in the United States. We will keep you all in our thoughts and prayers.

We've seen an unprecedented hurricane season take its toll on the southern and eastern coasts. Some people lost family members, their homes, their personal belongings and their memories.

We've seen the gas prices go up and up and thankfully they are on their way back down.

We've gone through our plant being sold to CommScope and changes in the way we do business. They tell us they want us and they think we can be profitable. This is a positive attitude from our parent company. However, we also know we are being watched very carefully and this company is not as apt to waste money as we have seen in the past with Western Electric, AT&T, Lucent or Avaya. They want to know where each dollar is being spent and why. They are not going to stand still for what they consider "waste."

We have to accept this new way of making our product but at the same time, our management people have to find a way to get the parts we need to allow us to do our jobs. Without the parts **here** and **on time**, we cannot succeed. Without the cooperation of our management counterparts, we will all fail.

Continued on Page 2



TO: ALL UNION MEMBERS:

The monthly membership meeting will be held **Thursday, December 16, 2004**
In the IBEW Union Hall Auditorium,
13306 Stevens Street, Omaha, Nebraska. Phone 895-4080—FAX 895-1828

Morning Meeting 8:20am 2nd Shift Meeting 12:15am Day Shift Meeting 4:15pm

The President And Vice-President's Message (continued)

We've seen many of our members laid off for the second time. We've seen the business steadily decline. Now what we need is to accept the new challenges and get better at making a quality product as quickly and competitively as possible. If we can do that, this business can grow and we have a good chance of seeing our friends back here at work. In all reality, that's what we all want, including the people back in Hickory.

As we have been seeing for so long now, we will be having more movement including loans and excesses. More than ever before, they tell us they need flexibility in the workforce. We need to be ready to fill orders and get them to the customer in the shortest time possible.

Looking forward to the upcoming year, we hope things in the world settle down and our troops will be brought home safely very soon.

We hope the New Year brings us more work than our current workforce can handle and we are able to see our laid-off members return to work with us.

We both wish you and your families a very safe and Happy Holiday Season.

Fraternally Yours
Debbi and Bernie



ERC NEWS

By Larry Cherry

The 2005 Connectivity Solutions Manufacturing/IBEW Academic Awards Program.

Applications are now available in the Employee Resource Center for Dependent children of regular full-time CS employees. Who are high school seniors or high school graduates planning to enroll for the first time in a course of study leading to a degree at a accredited college. Applications must be postmarked by December 31, 2004. Contact x4985 or x3523

Union Plus Scholarship Program

2005 application available Sept. 1, 2004 Application Deadline Jan. 31, 2005 Eligibility : Union Members, Spouses and dependent children. Acceptance into an accredited college, university, community college, or technical or trade school at the time of the award. Application available at www.unionplus.org or contact the Employee resource center. -3523

All made possible and bargained by your Union.
USE THEM!!!!

The Short Circuit

Omaha, Nebraska

December 2004

Official Publication of Local Union 1974
International Brotherhood of
Electrical Workers AFL-CIO,
Omaha, Nebraska

President	Bernie Stopak
Vice President	Deb Gulizia
Recording Secretary	Linda Nutting
Financial Secretary	Steve Reandeau
Treasurer	Steve O'Dell

Executive Board

Jim Pabian, Chairman
Bob Agee, Bob Belik, Larry Grell, Art Huerta,

Newspaper Staff

Co-Editors Steve Reandeau & Larry Cherry

Benefits Update

By Connie Carlson

Open enrollment ended on November 19th at 1:00. I want to thank everyone for being so patient while waiting.

Confirmations from the open enrollment are being sent to your supervisor. Please check these over carefully for any mistakes. If you need help with a correction, please call me in the Benefits Room - x4954, or stop in to see me and I would be glad to help you get these corrected. For some reason there were about 60 confirmations that did not get printed but they should be out soon. If you did not get a confirmation, call me and I can make sure your name is on the list.

If you have an insurance bill that you are having trouble getting paid, bring it to the Benefits Room and we will work on getting it paid for you.

I want to wish all of our members a Merry Christmas, and a Healthy 2005.

ETOP News

By Steve Reandeau

We had a very busy month in the ETOP center this last month. A lot of last minute applications for classes were turned in from the members that were laid off. NOW's the time for every member that's still here to think about your future and check out what ETOP has to offer!!!!

I see a lot of postings going up on the walls for retirement parties. Remember as you attend these celebrations to thank them for their dedicated years of service and for saving another members job.

All of us up here in ETOP wish each and everyone of you a HAPPY CHRISTMAS and a SAFE NEW YEAR.

Door Prize Winners

By Linda Nutting

The November Winners were:

Winners of the 50/50 Cope Drawing:

12:15 AM Charles Boger \$1.50 donated back
8:20 AM Betty Ferris \$3.00 donated back
4:15 PM Dominic Zappia \$12.00 donated back

Winners of the \$50.00 Door Prize:

12:15 AM Bob Volkmer
8:20 AM Jim Edmonson
4:15 PM Denise Whitcomb

Important Numbers:

Aetna -1-877-508-6927 -for medical questions or claims

Cole Vision - 1-800-334-7591 - Helpline or
1-800-316-3050 - Dependent Information

Aetna Dental -1-877-338-1579 - for questions about dental

Aetna RX Home Delivery - -866-612-3862 - for mail in prescriptions

Anyone on a maintenance drug (something you take everyday) has to order these prescriptions through mail order. Aetna will not pay for these drugs if you get them through the drug stores after you have filled these prescriptions 3 times. We have mail order forms and envelopes in the benefits room.

Mail order copays are:

Brand names - \$35.00 for up to 90 day supply
Generic - \$14.00 for up to 90 day supply

Prescription Copays at your pharmacy are:

Brand names - \$20.00 for up to 30 day supply
Generic - \$ 8.00 for up to 30 day supply

Remember also, that our medical Copay is now

Bereavements

Dennis Albert ————— Mother
JD Davis ————— Grandmother

If you hear of a death, Please call your Union Rep, or call Connie Carlson at X4954

Acid Spill Dissolves 21 Elves

Accident focuses attention on North Pole

Productions labor dispute By Mike Blain

Free Press Special Arctic Correspondent

NORTH POLE (AP) - Twenty-one elves dissolved entirely and 48 were horribly disfigured today after a massive spill of nitric-hydrofluoric acid in the toy train assembly hangar of North Pole Productions Inc. Another 150 elves were airlifted to Aurora Borealis Medical Center with complaints ranging from trouble breathing and burning eyes and throats, to nausea and headaches.

The spill occurred when two replacement elves, working in place of striking members of Toymakers and Woodcarvers Local 101, opened the wrong valve on a vat of acid used to clean toy train parts.

"It was horrible," said one shaken elf, who was able to climb to safety just as a 2-foot wave of acid washed across the factory floor. "The little guys were all sizzling and melting like the Wicked Witch of the West. I saw a lot of good friends just disappear in a cloud of orange vapor."

North Pole Productions C.E.O. Nicholas Claus refused to comment on the accident. A company spokesman did say, however, that families of the dissolved elves, as well as disfigured elves who might live, were not eligible for compensation or medical benefits because the replacement workers' health plan did not specifically cover acid spills.

The accident couldn't come at a worse time for the company. The multinational toy manufacturer was already embroiled in a bitter labor dispute with striking elves and was lagging far behind production goals for the 2004 holiday season. The company is looking at posting a fourth-quarter loss for the first time since the Great Depression.

Representatives of the Toymakers' union, which represents over 1,000 striking elves, were quick to blast the company for using untrained replacement toymakers and forcing them to work long hours without overtime pay. Union officials pointed out that the company stopped having weekly safety meetings when the strike started 84 days ago, and that most of the replacement elves had been working 20-hour shifts every day for nearly three months.

"Something like this was bound to happen - they've just been working these non-members to the bone trying to get ready for the big night," said Toymakers' spokesperson Ben Small. "Guys were falling asleep while arc-welding bicycles. They were dozing off while pushing pieces of wood into table saws. There's been more lost fingers in the last two months than we had in the last 10 years here with the union." The contentious labor dispute revolves around wages, job security and health benefits.

The company is demanding that the elves pay a higher portion of their health plan costs and refuses to stop moving toy

manufacturing operations to China, where North Pole Productions employs thousands of prison laborers. The company says that the global market has forced it to cut labor costs, and it had to move some of its operations to lower-wage markets in order to stay competitive. Over 1,500 North Pole elves have been laid off since 2001.

Lucrative stock options for C.E.O. Claus also irk many striking elves. In 2001, North Pole Production's board of directors offered Claus stock options worth over \$6 million as an incentive to boost the toy company's then-lagging stock. After several rounds of layoffs and the transfer of all doll and stuffed animal operations to China, Wall Street reacted favorably. The toy company's stock, which had been hovering in the mid-50s, climbed to over \$73 a share in October of this year. Last week, Claus cashed in his stock options for \$6.7 million.

"We feel betrayed by Santa," said one striking elf. "That jolly crap is all a facade. We were all told three years ago that if we increased our efficiency and boosted production, then nobody would be laid off. He lied to us."

"We work hard and we build the best toys in the world and this is what we get? The fat guy gets million dollar bonuses while we get tossed aside like old rag dolls."

Some stock market analysts argue that it is increasingly clear that the North Pole no longer makes economic sense for the toy company. "Let's be honest, Santa Claus originally located his operations up there so he could avoid any sort of environmental regulation," said Ebenezer Smith, a spokesman for Piper Jaffrey.

After Greenpeace documented in 2003 that the company was pumping solvents laced with carcinogenic heavy metals into huge air pockets in the polar ice cap, the United Nations declared the North Pole to be an International Superfund cleanup site. The U.N. told Santa that North Pole Productions had to fund 50 percent of the clean-up, or U.N. jets would enforce a no-sleigh-flying zone around the globe on Christmas Eve.

"Now that he can't pollute at will and he is being forced by the United Nations to pay some cleanup mitigation costs, he has lost that competitive advantage," added Smith. "He now must cut shipping and labor costs; being based at the North Pole is more expensive in both categories. I wouldn't be surprised if Santa shuts down all North Pole operations within five years."

Union spokesman Small was more optimistic: "Santa has billions of dollars of infrastructure here. You can't just pick that up and move it. And really, China is no closer to the opposite side of the globe than the North Pole. Come on, he flies around the world in one night. The whole argument about shipping costs is just not supported by the facts."

As for the striking elves, Small says they're in it for the long haul. "Santa Claus is nothing without us. North Pole Productions is losing money and public support every day this strike continues. If Santa doesn't settle soon he's gonna face the wrath of millions of children."

HAVE A MERRY X-MAS THE EDITORIAL STAFF