

## Editorial: Oh, What A Feeling...

The continuing bad news from Detroit reminds me of the time I was laid off.

It's an uneasy feeling, walking out the gate into an uncertain future, carrying that last paycheck from what you thought was a steady job.

Remembering that, I was determined to Buy American when I went shopping for a truck.

But I bought Japanese.

It was a matter of value: quality and price.

I got what I wanted for almost a thousand dollars less than the closest American equivalent.

Should I feel guilty? The American truck featured a "quality Japanese engine." As I think back over my last several American cars, I recall that one had a British engine, two had German works, and the other said "Made in Canada" on the doorpost.

This time, I looked at the product instead of buying the label. People who are buying imports are only following Detroit's example.

How did it happen?

An editorial in Machine Design magazine says: "Management blames labor, labor blames management, both blame the government . . . clearly there is blame enough to go around." The writer also notes that, at times, even the engineers seem more anxious to fix the blame than to fix the problem.

Somehow, it doesn't seem like an engineering problem.

And "cheap labor" is a myth. Japan has no fossil fuels, no ore deposits, no amber waves of grain for bread. Their cost of living is relatively higher than ours, because they rely heavily on imports for almost everything.

Carl Bartlett, DuPont Photo Products' man in Tokyo, says that Japanese productivity is partly due to their society. Joining a company there is like being adopted by a famous and successful family. It's a source of continuing pride. At all levels within the "family",

people are polite to each other, recognizing the other's good job, open to suggestions on how to improve, and doing the best possible job because it is a great dishonor to do otherwise.

"It's a cultural thing," says Bartlett, "Courtesy and consideration here are developed to a remarkable degree. Over the centuries, there was probably no other way the people could have survived at such a high population density."

But, putting cultural differences aside, productivity is an all-American game. It began here; the world learned it from us. They're beating us at it by practicing what we preach, while we seem to have adopted the notion that we can continually get more for less.

A great historian stated that those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it. Similarly, we should be able to learn from the problems of others without having to make identical mistakes.

The handwriting on Detroit's wall is a message to all of us. There's still no free lunch. In the industrial world, the future belongs to the productive.

—Hale

## Mileposts

### SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES in JANUARY

#### 20 Years

Lester A. Chapman  
Madison A. Rahn

#### 15 Years

Jyoti Bhushan  
James E. Bishop  
Don A. Burge  
Clifford R. Coggins  
Thomas L. Guillebeau  
James D. White

#### 10 Years

Beverly E. Whitmire

#### 5 Years

Carroll P. Hamilton  
James L. Maybin  
Henry D. Moffitt  
Sheila C. Owenby  
Rachel C. Robinson  
Timothy C. Thorpe  
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## DERA DOING THE CHILD CHRISTMAS

"Let us keep Christmas all year long!" has been the rousing finish to many a Christmas play. For the people who put on the DERA children's party, this Christmas was, indeed, a "keeper".

This year's party involved lots of people, lots of work, and more than enough happy children to make it all worthwhile.

There were two parties, the morning and afternoon of December 19. The afternoon event was well attended, the morning show was packed.

Each child who came received a Christmas stocking, and the committee had filled each stocking by hand to be sure the gifts were fresh and suitable. It takes quite a while to fill almost a thousand stockings. Work went on late into the evening, even though there were many willing hands to help.

If there was a bit of weariness left over from stocking-stuffing, it quickly turned to dismay when the committee came to set up for their party Saturday morning. The building had been used the night before for a 500 person banquet—and no one had cleaned up.

Filling bags with empty bottles, and pickup trucks with trash, Santa's helpers felt their Christmas spirit changing to panic as they raced to beat the clock. Before the last table was folded, children were coming in, and DERA preparations were just beginning.

But miracles happen at Christmas, and soon an overflow crowd of parents and children laughed at the puppets, enjoyed the refreshments and cheered when Santa entered with a parade of costumed characters.

After the last wide-eyed child had confided in Santa Claus, the tired but triumphant troupe of workers went for lunch at a nearby fast-food restaurant.

Most of them wore their costumes.

Can you imagine what happens when Raggedy Ann and Andy walk into McDonald's with the Cookie Monster? Especially at noon, on Saturday! What if they come in with Santa Claus and several pretty helpers, when it's only five days until Christmas?

After the initial chaos, every child fell politely into line to talk to Santa—who really needed a bit of food after a hard morning's work.

Rather than turn away a child, Santa ate alone, in the car.

As things were being resolved in McDonald's, Big Bird, C3PO, and Rudolph,

