

## Elves in the work force

Some of the ladies at work had 10 year old girls who went to school across the street from the factory. If they missed the bus or had an event they needed to be chauffeured to they would often walk over after school to the factory. Being a small town, the kids knew most of factory workers. One day I walk out into the factory, and there in the weld area is one of these kids, talking to Roger.

I am not sure how many laws are broken when a ten year old is in a welding booth, but I figured there has to be at least some law we are in violation of, or at least a general OSHA “Don’t be a dumb ass” policy. I go over and say “Roger, it can’t be safe to have Hayden in here”. Roger looks at me for a minute, then looks at Hayden, then says “But she has safety glasses on”, which she did. I thanked Roger for at least that concession, then took Hayden up to the office. Later we got security badges for them and had them start coming in through the front door.

One day, the school bus broke down so every elementary school kid even remotely associated through family or friend ties, was in the office. They were climbing about the cube walls, having desk chair races, and eating cheetos. A Frisbee was being tossed from one end of the hall to the next, and the place in general looked like a playschool Armageddon movie. I was looking for Arnold Schwarzenegger, or at least Ashton, and once again, they were nowhere to be seen.

As luck would have it though, I did see the new ISC Vice President, with the Corporate Safety director, walking up the steps from the factory floor. I dodged the Frisbee but know I was not going to dodge him. As they strolled around the corner, one of the cube walls fell down as it could no longer take the weight of all those kids, with a very loud BAM. The VP and the Safety Director, who had looked as though they were heading out a side door, stopped, changed course, and with a pronounced urgency started my way again.

When they strode into the office area, it was a total disaster. The first cube wall collapse had caused other cube walls to partially tip over, there were crushed cheetos over the floor, and over kids faces and over the sticky wet orange cheeto dust fingers, which were smearing over the whiet walls. The water cooler was precariously leaning with one kid desperately trying to reseat it in its base. And there was the darn Frisbee...I watched as it flew in a perfect arc towards the perplexed VP. Gradually the wind currents of cube land lifted it above the cube wall, while causing it to delicately arch down towards his head. Time slowed down. Both visually and in audio it moved at about one tenth the speed normal time does. The Frisbee cleared the last cube wall, just as the VP stepped out of its path...and it hit the safety director square in his face...as he grabbed his face, the first drops of blood tricked from his nose.

The VP turned and said “What happened”? One of the 8 year olds piped in “He didn’t duck...if you can’t catch them you are supposed to duck”.

The VP looked aghast. He was at a complete loss for words, at least for words you can say in an office overrun by eight and ten year old girls.

He turned and stared at me. I looked back. The silence was deafening. Finally I could not take it anymore and said “They are elves, sir. They come in on second shift and finish the work we lay out for them”.

He kept staring.

I then added “We are putting them in our action plan under productivity improvements”