



THE TRUE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS

I have been BLESSED with 5 grandchildren, ages 3 to 8 years old. When the 3 older children were about the same age as the two youngest are now, one of my grandchildren came running up to me during a family Christmas event.

The two oldest boys had gotten into a scuffle because Logan told JJ that Santa Claus wasn't real. JJ was crying because he knew Santa wasn't real but just wasn't ready to hear it and Logan had a fat lip for spreading such bad thoughts, Kyra was crying as a result of her brother and cousin fighting and crying.



Back row: Kyra, JJ, Logan; Front row Phillip, Tanner

This gave me an excellent chance to visit about the true meaning of Christmas. Yes, Santa Claus isn't real, but he sure is fun for us to pretend he is real—(and what about the joy on little children's faces? I wouldn't want to deny any child the pleasure and joy of believing and receiving their Christmas gifts!). Then I explained the real meaning of Christmas was the birth of our Savior in Bethlehem. God came to earth and took on human form to pay for all the sins of the entire world—(John 3:16)



I told the kids that they could stop their crying, Logan's lip would heal, Kyra will feel better when her brother quits crying and yes, even JJ will feel better knowing the real reason we celebrate Christmas, (although it is still fun to believe in Santa Claus, even though you already knew deep down inside that Santa wasn't truly real). So . . . I was sharing my Christmas message with my bride of almost 40 years and her comment was that it sounded "Churchy" and how did this relate to business?

We at Associated Finishing are extremely thankful for all the blessings we have received this past year. Great customers, excellent employees, a very stable and safe country to live in, good weather, religious freedom, the right to vote and express our thoughts and beliefs openly . . . The list can go on endlessly. What a great country to live in even though we are not without problems. No, these are not "pretend things" but real blessings that we have received, and I am not afraid to stand up and tell the whole world that I am thankful.

Christmas Day is the climax of all the things that I am thankful for.

In closing, I believe in celebrating Christmas and wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year. I could have just said Seasons Greetings to all, but I didn't want to pretend about the real reason why we celebrate CHRISTmas.

CELEBRATE THE REASON FOR THE SEASON!

Thanks for listening to my little story.
Chuck Klammer, CEO & President of Associated Finishing, Inc



Powder Coating—Liquid Coating—Pad Printing Paint Stripping—Silkscreening—R.F.I. Shielding



THE JOURNEY OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

AFI is still following the Lean Manufacturing concept; which is all about working smarter, not harder. We have been into the Lean concept for 2 years with over 50 projects ideas submitted by our employees. 25 of those projects have been completed and have saved thousands of dollars in labor and materials. Some of the projects only took a few hours to complete while other projects consumed many hours, covering many departments utilizing the skills of 7-8 employees. Not all the projects were successful, but they often spawned other project ideas that were successful. "Lean" at AFI is not just a "catchy phrase"; instead it has become a way of life, instilling a culture change in its wake.



The Steering Committee meets twice a month and uses a rotating member from the plant employees to round out the committee and bring fresh opinions and different perspectives to the table. It has been refreshing to note the change in problem solving by employees and to see that there are more productive ways to do the same task.



5-S is a part of the Lean concept that we have adopted as a way of life for over a year. In fact, AFI shut down production for one day and focused on a massive clean-up where we cleared all the nooks and crannies of any clutter. Afterwards, we implemented an audit team that checks 13 areas of the plant with the results posted for all to see. When established goals are met on a continuous basis the success is celebrated plant wide.

Many people joke about the fact that they 5-S'd their garage at home or their office, so Lean Manufacturing has become a way of life for the general population of Associated Finishing!

Lean is a journey that AFI continues to improve on !



Alan Baer - Quality and Scott Niss, Estimating, were our official French "made" wine stewards



Brent Schnittger, Liquid Supervisor plants one on a unsuspecting Alan Baer



We attempted to entertain the masses with a rousing game of Fact or Crap



Somewhere in this embrace is President Chuck Klammer and his bride Kait.



Newest member to the AFI team is our Receptionist Ann Albrecht with her Fiance' Al Hagen

AFI Supervisor Christmas Party—On The Road!

AFI always tries to do something different every year for their faithful Supervisors. 2006 was no different. We rented a bus and went to the Chanhassen Dinner Theater for our Christmas party. The typical "Social Hour" was anything but typical. We exposed our group to a Wine Tasting that included many different choices. We also kept our strength up during the long trek to Chanhassen, with samplings of meat, cheese and crackers. True or False (otherwise known as Fact or Crap) was the activity on the way up, but it was too hard to hear and our wine stewards had trouble keeping their balance in the aisle of a moving bus—but they were more than up to the task! The many refreshments flowed freely (again thanks to our trusty wine stewards) and everyone departed the bus fully "refreshed".

Once we got to the Dinner Theater we were swept into the dining room and had a satisfying meal with stimulating conversation and many giggles. Soon it was time to waddle up to the theater. The main event; Midlife Crisis- the musical" was the entertainment portion of our evening. This play was geared more to the older members of our group, but many twenty-somethings were observed doubling over with laughter—it was also reported that the more mature members of AFI were laughing so hard there were tears shed.

After an evening of culture—we again boarded the bus to head towards home— sharing samplings of after-dinner drinks. There were eruptions of laughter amid the intermittent snores during the ride back to AFI.

