



An Engineer's Night Before Christmas or A Bit of Advice for Space Age Designers

Twas the night before Christmas, and all thru the plant, Not a creature was working but me and Van Zant. The specs were all written and ready to go, In hopes that the drawings would soon be, also. A batch had been finished, and already checked But others were not, as you might well expect. So we, both as zealous as Scrooge's poor clerk, Had just settled ourselves for a long evening's work — When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter, We sprang from our desks to see what was the matter. The security lights on the new-fallen snow Gave the luster of blastoff to objects below. When, what to our wondering eyes should appear, But a miniature space capsule and eight tiny (but extremely powerful) hydrazine-propellant boosters tandem mounted in series so the pilot could steer; And a little round astronaut, so lively and quick, I thought for a moment he might be Saint Nick. But then Van Zant asked me, "Dir you hear him yell All those names to his boosters as his capsule fell? 'Now Atlas! now Saturn, now Vanguard and Geminil Let's make our next landing beside that old chimney! On Nike! on Redstone! on Titan and Polaris! It's only tonight that Canaveral can spare us!'" As we drew in our heads and were turning around, Down the chimney the astronaut came with a bound. He was dressed in a spacesuit from his head to his foot, And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot; "This soot," he said, smiling, "is not from your chimney, It's caused by the heat of atmospheric re-entry!" A wink of his eye and a twist of his head Soon put us at ease; although he then said: "Tell me, are your schedules really so tight, Or do you get overtime for working tonight?" I looked at Van Zant; then he looked at me; I said, "It's a matter of deadline, you see . . ." "We've got a tough problem," Van Zant said with a groan, "In hanging the micronite up in the T-zone." The astronaut chuckled, "Well, that's why I'm here, In packaging, I was the first engineer." He spoke nothing more, but went straight to the work, And studied the problem; then turned with a jerk, He smilingly told us to take a good look, And held out a Christmas tree ornament hook. Even though we both knew he had found the solution, By then we felt ripe for a state institution.

Verily I Say Unto Thee

Verily I say unto thee, marry not an engineer, For an engineer is a strange being possessed of many evils. Yea, he speaketh in parables which he calleth Formulae, He wieldeth a big stick which he calleth a slide rule, And he hath only one bible—a handbook. He thinketh only of stresses and strains, And without end of themody-namics. He showeth always a serious aspect, And seemeth not to know how to smile. He picketh his seat in a car by the springs thereof, Not by the damsels therein, Neither does he know a water-fall except by its horsepower, Nor a sunset except that he must turn on the light, Always he carries his books with him and entertains His sweetheart with steam-tables. Verily although his damsel expecteth chocolates when he calleth, She opens the packet to discover samples of iron ore. Yea, he holdeth her hand to measure the friction thereof, And kisseth her to test the viscosity of her lips, For in his eyes there hideth a

far-away look That is neither a longing nor desirous look, Rather a vain attempt to recall formulae. Even as a boy he pulleth girl's hair, but to test its elasticity. As a man he denies different motives. For he counteth the vibrations of her heartbeats, And speaketh ever to pursue the scientific investigations. Even his own heart-flutterings he counteth as a measure of Fluctuation, and describeth his passion as formulae And his marriage as a simultaneous equation involving two Unknowns, and yielding diverse results. Verily I say unto thee, do not marry an engineer. Anonymous.

THE ENGINEER & THE BUSINESSMAN

"I started engineering with the intention of becoming a scientist and doing research. I felt I must continually study but I have since come to realize that the knowledge I can gain from books and studies is by itself not enough. Whether one becomes a scientist or an engineer, in fact enters any vocation he must be at heart a businessman if he intends to sell himself, his ideas or his product to the world and raise himself from a group identity to an individual identity." These words were uttered last week by one of the students in Engineering Physics, or Science as the case may be, and their meaning seemed most significant. Here was a student who had begun to grasp the fact that if he intended to do anything significant in life, if he was to attain a purpose, he would have to gain this individual identity. He had realized that what he would get out of college life would be the net sum of the effort he put into it. He is making the effort; I hope you will join him.

"Well, fellows," he said, "All your systems are go; It looks A-OK, so I've now got to blow." And laying a finger astride of his nose, And giving a grin, up the chimney he rose. He sprang to his capsule and into the door, And then blasted off with a Titanesque roar. "Happy Christmas," he yelled, as he flew out of sight, "Keep your stuff simple and it's bound to be right!" — Reprinted by special request — i.e. 2 people approached Editor with this request.

POT SHOTS

A bug, a dove, and a duck were walking through the forest. Suddenly the bug disappeared into the underbrush. After some commotion, he rejoined his friends and they asked "What happened?" The bug replied, "I am a bug and I was hugged, and I liked it." A few minutes later, the dove disappeared. After a few minutes had passed, the dove returned and replied, "I am a dove, I was loved and I liked it." A little farther down the path the duck disappeared. After a tremendous commotion the duck reappeared and said, "I am a drake, and there's been a helluva mistake . . . and I didn't like it."