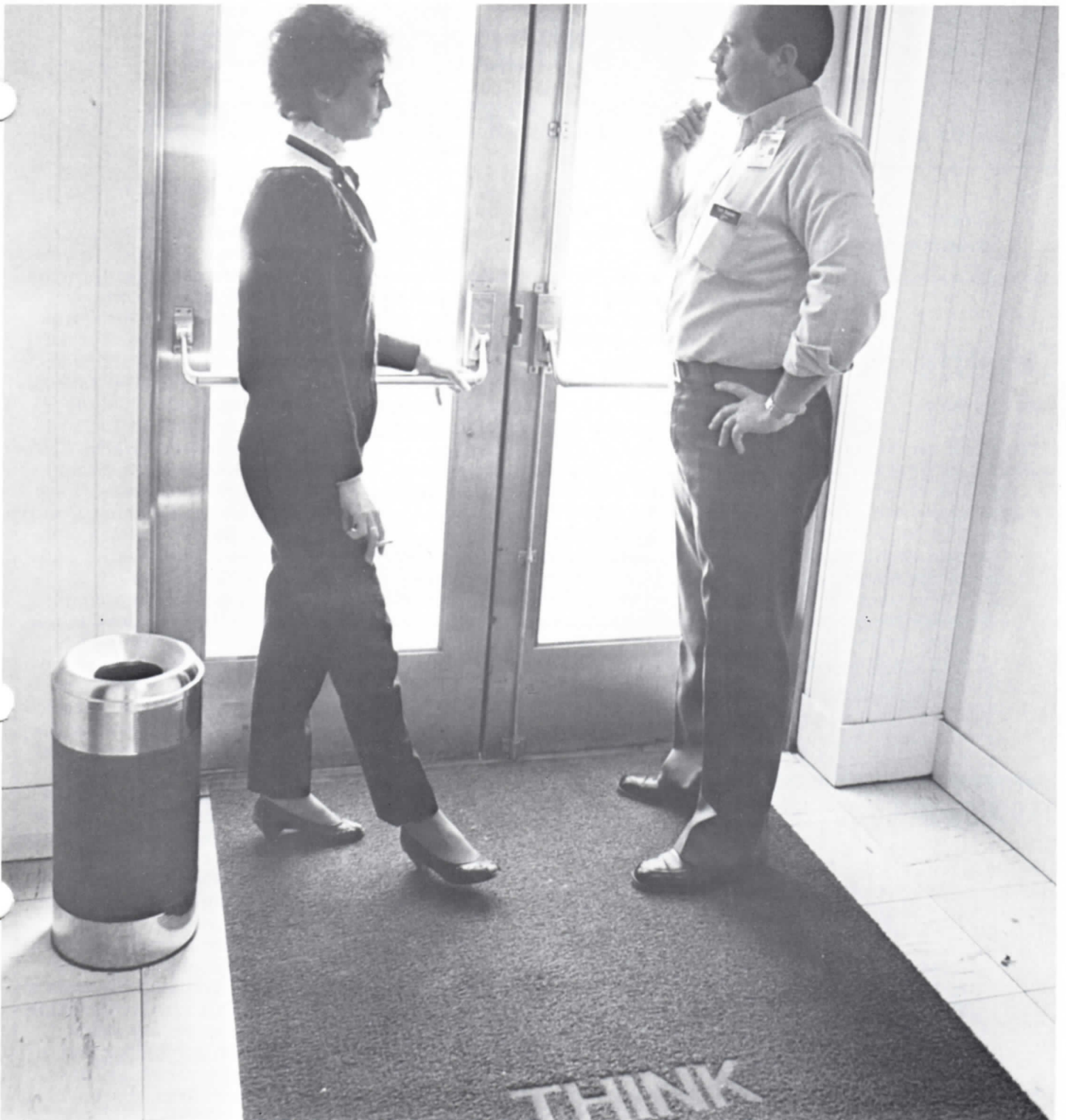


WESTERNER

Omaha Works
March/April 1986



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On the cover

No man is an island — some days it just feels that way, especially if you happen to be a smoker. Lori Sellin of Dept. 281 and Tom Sisson of Dept. 505 are good sports about being “banished to the breezeways,” one of several locations on Works premises where smoking is still allowed. A new smoking policy is in effect at the Omaha Works, giving smokers and non-smokers something to think about. Reactions to the policy are given in a story on Page 5.

WESTERNER

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Certification is goal of training programs

One hears a lot about certification these days in industrial circles. A standard of excellence in the accounting field for many years, certification is becoming increasingly important in other areas of work, from skilled labor to management positions.

The Omaha Works is no exception. Employees are being encouraged to participate in a number of training courses, some sponsored by the Works, which lead toward certification in specific fields.

Certification assures an employer that his or her employees have a common degree of expertise in their work, that they have met or exceeded all requirements for the job. It also benefits employees, whose certification is noted on permanent records and can help in changing jobs or improving one's position.

Four out of five

One of the toughest certification programs in which some Works employees are enrolled is that sponsored by the American Production and Inventory Control Society (APICS), Inc. The society seeks to promote professional efficiency in production and inventory management, ultimately advancing the general welfare of the industrial economy.

To become certified in production and inventory management (a CPIM), a person must pass

four of five tests administered in the categories of inventory management, capacity management, master planning, materials requirements planning and production activity control.

As of mid-March, 43 Works employees have passed at least one of the four tests. Sixteen employees have attained certification: Jim Andry, Wayne Anderson, Janet Call, Fred Chadwick, Marcia Grothe, Carol Hawley, Scot McQuin, Steve Petersen, Keith Ostrand, Dave Rossell, Steve Schaefer, Connie Schmidt, Joseph Shavlik, Jo Ann Torson, Phil Warren and Susan Wetherington.

Several courses to prepare candidates for certification exams have been offered to Works employees during off-work hours on company premises, said Fred Chadwick, section chief for material planning (Dept. 531). Response has been good with as many as 90 people signed up for the materials requirements planning module last summer. Employees taking the courses come from the shop and other office areas besides production control, he added.

“There are literally thousands of pages of material to cover,” Chadwick said, and the tests are grueling. One hundred multiple-choice questions are asked during each three-hour test, and just half of those tested pass.

Employees are eager to achieve certification, Chadwick said, so

much so that they are sacrificing personal time to take classes, study and take the exams. One certification hopeful, Marilyn Kobjerowski (Dept. 505), planned to take an exam while on vacation in South Dakota. She even traveled to Minnesota for testing when the South Dakota exam was canceled.

The training employees are receiving already is making a difference in the Works' production and inventory management. Chadwick believes it has contributed to improvement in service, reduction of investment and fewer parts shortages.

"We also have better control of suppliers," he said. "We know exactly when we require material and are better able to measure vendor performance."

Overwhelming response

When the training department issued letters to hourly employees asking for a show of interest in sheet metal and precision machine operations certification, no one expected the response that was received. Approximately 750 employees indicated an interest in the program.

Machines such as press brakes, lathes and mills in the sheet metal and metal parts shops require skilled set-up by operators. The certification program was developed to provide a pool of 60 of these operators to fill 35-grade vacancies as they occur.

On the basis of seniority, 120



PRECISION WORK . . . Precise machine operations are skills taught in certification classes attended by Lanny Weakland (left) and Ed Dellinger, both of Dept. 221, at Iowa Western Community College.

of the interested employees were invited to participate in an initial aptitude assessment program at Iowa Western Community College in Council Bluffs. Of the 120 employees, 80 went on to a hand skills assessment. Sixty of those who successfully completed the assessment were selected on a seniority basis to enroll in classes.

Iowa Western conducts the classes for the Works, the first one having started March 18. There are five classes which meet at different times, accommodating employees on all three shifts. Employees attend three-hour sessions twice a week on their own time. The Works pays employee tuition for classes, all of which are held on the Iowa Western campus.

Bill Fleming, who has been coordinating the program, said it was designed to allow for individual skills.

"Some employees already have had on-job experience while others may have more to learn," he said. Depending on the individual, it could take anywhere from a month to two years to gain certification.

As precision machine operator vacancies occur, the Works can be confident that employees who have achieved certification are fully qualified to handle the jobs. Although the Works in recent months has developed similar programs pertaining to other areas of the shop (such as arc welding), Fleming noted that this program has attracted the greatest response.

Where there's smoke . . .

There's a fire to put out

The Omaha Works Fire and Rescue Brigade is fully trained and equipped to handle any fire emergencies that may occur throughout the plant. But how many employees would know how to use one of the 700 fire extinguishers located in plant buildings?

That was a concern voiced by IBEW union representatives on the Union-Management Safety Committee at a recent meeting. Plans are now under way to update employee fire extinguisher crews and train them in the proper use of extinguishers.

The crews consist of employees who are assigned to specific extinguishers in their work areas, said Bob Peterson of the Works safety department. With the movement of personnel into different work areas, however, it becomes necessary to reassign crew members and provide refresher courses.

Ideally, two employees should be assigned to each fire extinguisher in the plant, said brigade chief Rich Schmitz. Even if an employee isn't responsible for extinguishers within a work area, it's still a good idea for him or her to know how to operate one.

If a minor fire starts in a work area — such as a fire in a wastebasket — an employee may use an extinguisher to put it out, provided he or she knows which extinguisher to use and how to use it, Schmitz said. Under all circumstances — minor fires or not — an employee must call the brigade on



THE RIGHT CHOICE . . . Floor hand Larry Tremayne of Dept. 235 holds a Type BC fire extinguisher used for chemical and electrical fires. A Type A water extinguisher is mounted beside him.

Ext. 3222.

The Works has two basic types of fire extinguishers — "A" and "BC." Each type is clearly marked in large letters above the wall space on which the extinguishers are mounted. Schmitz outlined their differences and how they are used.

Type A is a water extinguisher to put out wood, paper and cloth fires — standard combustible materials. These extinguishers generally are chrome color and feature a small nozzle at the end of a black hose. To activate, one pulls the pin at the top of the tank, releasing water under pressure.

Type BC is a dual-purpose extinguisher. It is used on Type B fires (flammable liquids such as oil and gasoline) and Type C fires (fires stemming from electrically powered equipment). They have red tanks and large, cone-shaped black nozzles.

The extinguishers hold CO₂ — carbon dioxide. The high-cooling gas causes the extinguisher to "burp" when the activating pin is removed, Schmitz said.

Type BC extinguishers may be used to put out Type A fires, but **never use a Type A extinguisher to put out an electrical fire**, he cautioned. The stream of water to an electrically powered machine acts as a conductor of electricity and "it could kill you," Schmitz said. In fact, never use a Type A extinguisher near any electrical equipment or wall outlets.

Schmitz re-emphasized the importance of always calling the fire and rescue brigade regardless of the size of a fire at the Works.

"If it's a minor fire like a rubbish fire and you know how to use an extinguisher, use it. Otherwise, vacate the area."



THE FOG CLEARS . . . Non-smoker Johnny Shambley, a service clerk in Dept. 505, thinks office air quality has improved since the new smoking policy — so who needs an air filtering machine?

There's puffing by policy

March 12 and all's quiet on the Omaha Works front. It's Day 3 into the company's new smoking, or rather, non-smoking policy. So far World War III hasn't broken out, but that's not to say there hasn't been an occasional border squabble now and then. Years of habit do not change overnight.

The new policy, a spinoff from corporate AT&T policy, forbids smoking in all company vehicles and in all Omaha Works buildings except in specified areas.

Generally, smoking is permitted only in break areas, certain office rooms and breezeways, and designated areas of the cafeterias.

The policy affects office employees the most because up until now they could "light up" at their desks. For safety reasons, shop employees have never been allowed to smoke at their manufacturing work stations.

Sizing up employee reaction one department chief said, "The non-smokers think it's great and the smokers are keeping their mouths shut."

Maybe not entirely shut. The truth will set you free especially with the promise of anonymity.

"I think it's hard," said a 35-year veteran of smoking. She's keeping her cigarette breaks to a minimum so she can get her work done, but "I expect to be a nervous wreck."

Another employee who smokes occasionally wasn't having any major problem with the policy

but disapproved of rules restricting personal habit, "like the seatbelt law."

"I'm not a heavy smoker," commented one section chief, "but the fact that you tell me I can't smoke makes it worse. And I have no desire to quit. I've already eaten a whole package of cookies this morning which I never do."

She questions the practicality of the policy for section chiefs who smoke. "If you want to be available to your employees, you can't take planned breaks to smoke."

Another section chief — a long-time smoker — said, "I'm very grouchy" and would have preferred a chance to offer suggestions before the Works policy went into effect.

A methods department employee, who already has cut his chain smoking in half, thinks the Works should offer a "quit smoking" program for employees as do some other Omaha companies. "I'd like to quit — but not cold turkey."

One non-smoking engineer mentioned that noise levels have increased around smoking rooms, while a smoking section chief suggested improvements to exhaust systems in smoking areas.

Plant engineering and maintenance manager Dale DeBoer (who's eating sunflower seeds these days instead of smoking) stated, "Obviously, we'll have to make changes as we go along. We will keep our eyes and ears open — we want to accommodate both smokers and non-smokers."

Fearing he might go home and smoke twice as much to make up for lost time, a smoking engineer admitted, "You gotta be an optimist — keep a sense of humor." He thinks segregating smokers from non-smokers would have been a better policy, "but if you're trying to make people quit, you're really making them pay attention to how much they smoke."

One office worker said, "I think the policy is going to make a lot of people quit for good."

To that a section chief retorted, "Quit? To quit now would be to give in to the enemy!"

etc.

Loesch earns patent

Bob Loesch, a senior planning engineer in Dept. 471, has been awarded a U.S. Patent.

Loesch received his patent for a method he developed for making telephone spring cords, which allows for multiple length selections during the manufacturing process. The spring cords formerly were manufactured at the Omaha Works and now are made by the Phoenix Works in Arizona.

This is the fifth patent Loesch has been awarded.



Bob Loesch

Awards for ideas

Joan Durbin, a machine operator in Dept. 239, did more than make her job go faster and easier when she turned in a suggestion. She had a better idea on how to perform the crimping operation involved in the manufacture of ground straps and was awarded \$1,050 through the employee suggestion program.

She has earned numerous awards for her suggestions in the past, but this one is by far her largest, she said.

Other employees also have received awards in recent months for ideas they submitted. The employees and their departments include Joseph Kessler, Dept. 545, \$983; Evelyn Pond, 242, \$845; Larry Fast, 282, \$425; Jon Marinus, 281, \$375; Frank Smith, 545, \$355; Gary Williams and Earl Stoakes, 546, \$322.50 each (joint award); Roberta Bishop, 242, \$220; Virginia Davis, 249, \$185; Art Cruz of 545 and Steve Smith of 472, \$125 each (joint award).



Joan Durbin

Cardenas honored

Jesse Cardenas, a quality control inspector in Dept. 204, was given special recognition during the Omaha Sportscasters' Association's annual sports banquet held at Peony Park earlier in the year.

Cardenas was honored for dedicating 20 years of service to the promotion of amateur boxing locally.

Survey results

The last of the quality circle surveys has come in to the public relations office. Although returns of the questionnaire (which appeared in the February Westerner) were disappointing — just 20 in all were returned — readers made some good points.

The majority of those respond-

ing were familiar with quality circles and their purpose, and most had positive things to say. One respondent said circles are effective because their members are employees who "work with the problems every day" and can offer workable solutions. Another mentioned the opportunity to resolve difficulties and "not just gripe about it." One employee said circle activities provide much needed time for dialogue between shop workers, supervisors and engineers.

Just three responses came from departments not represented by a quality circle. Each respondent indicated a desire to have a circle, and another employee indicated eagerness to be a circle member — "I would feel honored."

Only one response was negative. The respondent said red tape nullifies any savings that might come from a cost-cutting measure and was doubtful of engineering support for quality circles.

Concern over red tape and management support was indicated by several employees who said they support the concept of quality circles. One respondent said it is important that "all concerns work together . . . without any harassment or red tape to slow the circle down."

Another cautioned that a circle will be "only as effective as the willingness of shop managers and below to accept and effect change without feeling that a finger is being pointed at them." The employee added that a quality circle can make the difference between an "I don't care" attitude and doing one's best.

Retirements

Not pictured:

- Ken Wadum — 28 years
- Rose Kurtzuba — 26 years
- Delores Stuart — 23 years
- Casimira Lubejko — 20 years
- Carl Schrum — 16 years



Michael Theede
28 years



Beverly Sullivan
20 years



Alta McPheeters
18 years



Donna Sheppard
26 years

Service anniversaries

35 years

F. G. Bensching
J. W. Streng
R. A. Bruzek
T. H. Lowndes
W. L. McCready
J. A. Vamosi

3/9
3/6
4/26
4/16
4/4
4/26

J. M. Curbeam
R. A. Fleming
T. A. Heim
W. J. Lane
W. A. Lawson Jr.
H. E. Leonard Jr.

3/7
3/28
3/10
3/23
3/28
3/14

C. B. Lubejko
B. S. Luebbert
R. L. Pagan
A. G. Quintana
J. G. Shusta

3/9
3/15
3/23
3/14
3/1

D. D. Steinpreis
D. B. Stinson
B. W. Thoms
F. E. Velasquez
D. S. Verbocy

3/7
3/13
3/23
3/7
3/16

E. L. Waldron Jr.
E. A. Weil
R. R. Willms
W. C. Wyszenski

3/24
3/16
3/22
3/7

L. L. Young
J. F. Benning
C. C. Coleman
J. T. Cockrell

3/1
4/26
4/11
4/1

J. D. Coogle
B. K. Croghan
J. H. Eisenhauer
J. P. Gilreath

4/11
4/26
4/4
4/20

S. M. Gilbert
R. Goodkind
R. D. Hartwig
J. B. Holck

4/12
4/19
4/20
4/20

K. J. Israelson
M. B. Ivy

4/12
4/5

T. J. Korpela
R. E. Macaitis
L. B. Martinson
G. V. McKenna
T. F. Musil
A. L. Nelson
G. A. Paul
W. R. Pecha
C. A. Perchal
J. S. Pope
S. C. Purnell
J. F. Rhode
R. Rodrigues
R. L. Sempek
L. C. Sloma
L. E. Standley

4/28
4/7
4/25
4/11
4/25
4/4
4/25
4/11
4/8
4/21
4/13
4/25
4/27
4/18
4/25
4/21

15 years

N. C. Honomichl
J. L. Rudd
M. T. Vondra

3/6
3/8
3/14

10 years

M. T. Gillham
L. M. Nutting
J. W. Alback
R. B. Lange

3/3
3/9
4/11
4/9

5 years

D. C. Ruther
L. L. Young

3/31
4/1

30 years

E. J. Faust
J. E. Ulicky
D. J. Allen
D. F. Brahatcek
W. F. Huetsen
L. R. Iske
D. L. Kaar
M. P. Smyth
R. R. White
J. Wierzbowski

3/18
3/16
4/23
4/23
4/23
4/24
4/19
4/30
4/24
4/9

25 years

H. A. Hoschar
R. N. Gantt
R. D. Stiehl
J. H. Voboril

3/11
4/16
4/12
4/25

20 years

C. W. Baker
J. R. Bunting
J. Butler

3/8
3/7
3/31



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Last frame

They made you want to drop your spoon into your potato chowder and get up and dance.

Seventeen students from Millard South High School put on a show for the noon lunch

crowd in the main cafeteria last month. They were members of the cast for "Grease," the school's spring musical production.

They sang and danced their way through the show's numbers to the accompaniment of a piano, drums, synthesizer and saxophone. By the time the cast performed to the music of "Hand Jive," employee diners and onlookers were well caught

up in the mood of the '50s.

The show was presented in conjunction with March being National Youth Art Month and Project PAYBAC, the Millard School District's School Business Partnerships program.

Also during March, artwork from students at Beveridge Junior High and Millard South High was displayed in the cafeteria.



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