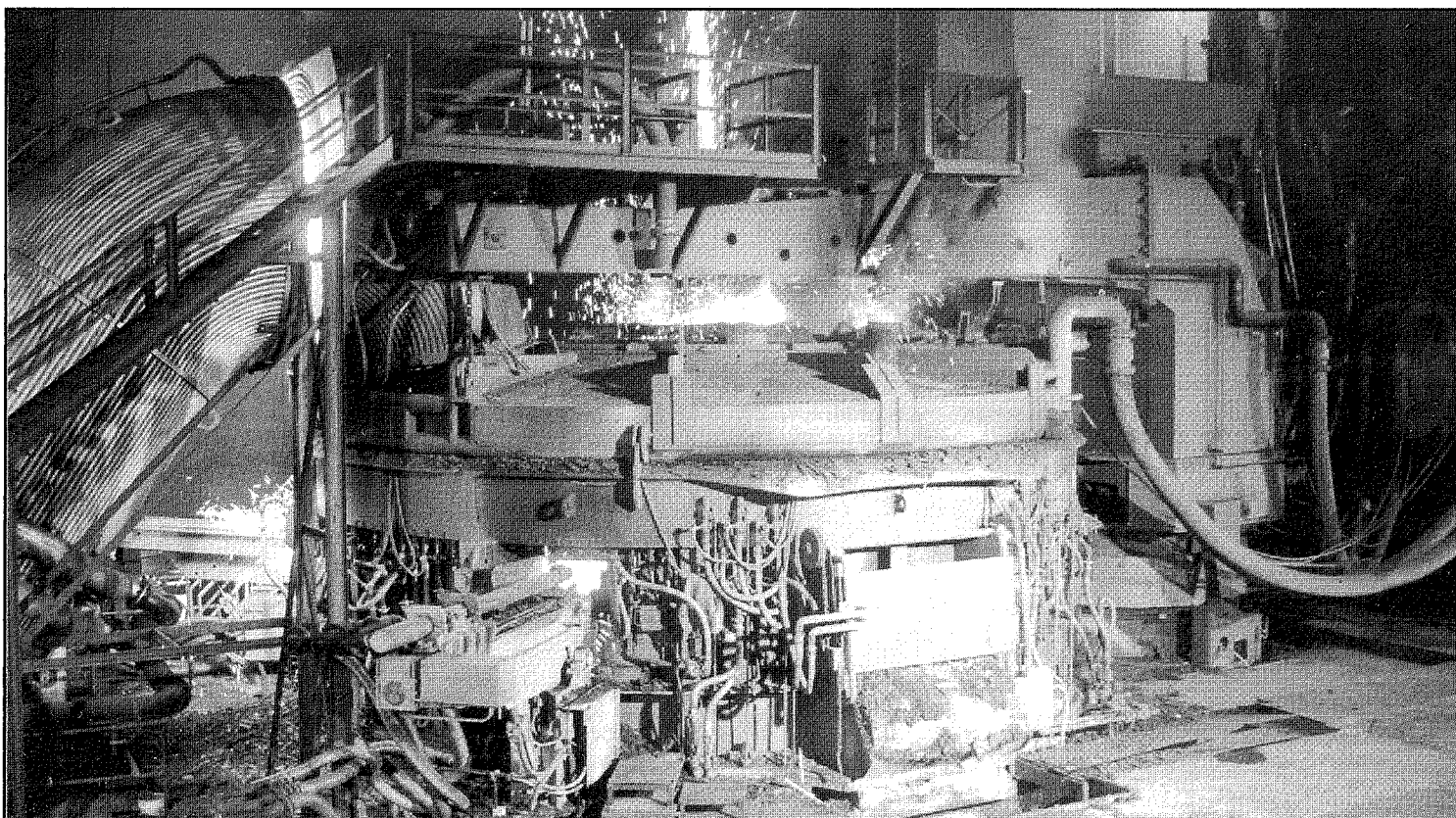


The Lightning Bolt

A Publication for Employees and Retirees of Northwestern Steel and Wire Company



New #8 Furnace Fired Up

Countless hours of hard work and a sizable dollar investment have brought into existence Northwestern Steel and Wire Company's new #8 AC Energy Optimized Bottom Tap (EOBT) furnace. The new \$10 million furnace, the most recent EAF technology for a conventional style furnace, is a design of Fuch's Systems, Inc. in Salisbury, North Carolina.

On February 12, 2000, only fifty days after the old #8 furnace was shut down, the first heat was tapped at 4:55 a.m. Gary Cvitkovich, Manager EAF/LMF, is very pleased with the performance of the furnace. "In the past few weeks that the furnace has been operating, it has shown it will out perform the existing furnaces," Gary said.

The furnace design offers the most advanced technologies including oxy fuel burners, multiple oxygen lances, a

hydraulic tilt platform, and special copper sidewall panels. The new furnace also has eccentric bottom tapping, which should improve steel cleanliness and quality.

The 415-ton capacity furnace, the world's largest, is expected to increase productivity by approximately 80% and decrease tap-to-tap time by approximately 40%. The Company also has the potential to realize savings through the energy efficiencies associated with the new furnace. It requires less electrical energy and less carbon electrodes to produce a heat of steel.

According to Gary, the #8 furnace has been successful in meeting its goals to date, and is steadily ramping up. He applauds the efforts of the furnace crews and all people involved in getting the new furnace into operation. "Everyone involved has worked hard to get us to this point. By

keeping up the high quality endeavors they are putting forth, they are showing a genuine concern for the future of the Company," Gary said.

In conjunction with the new furnace project, environmental control was vastly improved with the elimination of the wet scrubber system in favor of a dry baghouse system. Using the wet scrubber system, particulates were captured and turned into sludge that was in turn handled by Northwestern. The dry baghouse system uses a system comparable to a large vacuum cleaner that captures the particulates. The existing baghouse was restored and enlarged to provide increased capturing efficiencies.

The new furnace and associated pollution equipment enhancements mark the completion of the first step in the Company's facility improvement program.

The President's Corner

It has been a little over a year since we commissioned and presented our four strategic focus areas. I would like to spend some time updating you on the progress of our efforts and the successes achieved to date. But first I will quickly review fiscal 1999 and our current financial condition through the first half of fiscal 2000. Additionally, I will comment on our expectations for the balance of fiscal 2000.

Fiscal 1999 saw a dramatic decrease in Northwestern's financial condition as we recorded an operating loss of \$13.5 million from ongoing operations compared to the prior year's operating profit of \$69 million. Our profitability was significantly impacted by the dramatic influx of imported steel into the U.S. This influx of imports caused drops in selling prices across almost all of our products and decreased our shipping levels to 60% of our peak 1998 level. This decrease in shipping levels impacted our ability to schedule production levels that allow for efficient operating costs. The relationship of lower selling prices, in conjunction with reduced volumes at higher costs, is the primary cause of the deterioration in profitability year over year. We believe that a high percentage of the increases in imported steel were being traded unfairly. Because of this belief, we are parties to two trade cases, one for wire rods and the other for structural steel.

While we continue to record losses in the first half of fiscal 2000, we have seen improving trends in the steel industry and our Company. With the recent reductions in imported steel of wide flange beams, demand for our structural products increased structural products shipping levels almost 30,000 tons or 26% in our second quarter compared to the prior year period. Our recorded operating losses continue to improve quarter over quarter.

Measures taken to reduce production costs have significantly improved our product margins. Additionally, we are beginning to realize improved pricing in many of our products, especially wide flange beam, which will continue to increase product margins going forward. Unfortunately, all of the gains made to date have not been realized. Scrap input costs have increased over 14% from our first quarter which has offset some of our gains. Scrap is anticipated to remain flat for the balance of our fiscal year. Recent price announcements have been made in bar, light structural and steel rod products, which if realized should continue to improve Northwestern's operating results for the balance of the fiscal year.

I would now like to update you on our four focus areas. The first area is also our number one priority at Northwestern ... SAFETY! The safety of all employees is the essential foundation upon which our activities are based. The safety program was revised and is being administered by our Management-Union Safety Committee. Safety engineers and safety committeemen have been assigned to each operating area. Our efforts are showing tremendous results. Reductions in injuries of 30% for fiscal 2000 are being achieved through our structured, disciplined safety program. Achieving this reduction will put Northwestern's injury rates within the top quartile of like-size companies reporting to the American Iron and Steel Institute.

The next focus area is customer satisfaction. After reviewing the results of the customer survey commissioned last year, we looked for ways to improve our strengths and eliminate our weaknesses. While difficult issues face our Company, several major accounts have increased their dependence on Northwestern as a supplier. Through our Vendor Managed Inventory program, we are the exclusive supplier of many items to a number of our top customers. Customer loyalty is one of our strengths. Of our top 25 structural product customers, we have seen over a 10% increase as a percentage of total sales in fiscal 2000 over the prior fiscal year. We have improved our responsiveness to our customer's requests and have improved

President's Corner cont. on page 3

Six Flags Discount Coupons & NEW THIS YEAR...Great America Tickets!

Yes, beginning April 27, you can purchase Six Flags Great America tickets at Northwestern Steel and Wire! So there's no waiting in line at the gate! Adult admission tickets can be purchased for \$29.00, a savings of \$10.00 off the gate price. Tickets for children (48" and under) can be purchased for \$19.50. Guests two years and under are free. Tickets can be purchased from Karen Freres in Administration on Tuesdays and Thursdays between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. And for those of you who do not wish to purchase your tickets ahead of time, we also have the discount coupons available.

Six Flags Great America

Six Flags Great America is celebrating it's 25th season of thrills with new shows like the Great Russian Circus 2000, the Looney Tunes Silver Season parade, Imax film Alien Adventure, American Rock, Hollywood Animal Machine, and an unprecedented lineup of musical acts and events! And don't

forget about last year's new feature – the Raging Bull – the world's first steel "hypertwister" roller coaster.

Six Flags St. Louis

Six Flags St. Louis tickets are not available for purchase at Northwestern; however, discount coupons are. When presenting a discount coupon, adult admission tickets can be purchased at the gate for \$21.99 per person plus tax, a savings of \$13.00 off the regular gate price. Children's tickets (48" and under) and senior citizens (55 years & over) can be purchased at the gate for \$18.62, that's ½ off a full price one-day general admission. Guests three years and under are free.

Join Six Flags St. Louis as they celebrate their biggest and best season ever – the year 2000! New for 2000 – THE BOSS! This new ride offers outstanding credentials including a breathtaking 150 foot first drop of up to 66.3 mph and 5,051 feet of sprawling terrain track. The boss will not only be one of the largest

wooden roller coasters in America, but will rank among the Top 10 wooden roller coasters in the World! And once again in 2000, you will get two parks for the price of one with theme park admission. Experience the drenching fun of high speed body slides, three to four foot waves in the wave pool, and more – all at Hurricane Harbor!

Contact Karen Freres in Administration at 815/625-2500, extension 2275, to obtain your tickets and discount coupons today.



Annual Meeting of Shareholders

The Northwestern Steel and Wire Company Annual Meeting of Shareholders was held March 21, 2000, for the purpose of electing six Board of Directors. Chairing the meeting was William F. Andrews, Northwestern's Chairman of the Board.

All Board of Directors were reelected until the earlier of the next Annual Meeting of the Company's Shareholders or until their successors are elected and qualified. Those members are William F. Andrews; Frederick J. Rocchio, Jr.; Darius W. Gaskins, Jr.; Thomas A. Gildehaus; David L. Gore, Sr.; and Christopher Lacovara.

Other items approved were an amendment to the Articles of Incorporation to effectuate a one-for-ten reverse stock split for the outstanding common shares, and the issuance of common shares in connection with the previously announced Exchange Offer for the

Company's 9-1/2% Senior Notes. The reverse stock split and issuance of common shares will be effective only upon securing the necessary financing for the New Mill Modernization Program.

Following the formal meeting, Mr. Rocchio detailed the conditions of fiscal year 1999, as well as the first half of fiscal year 2000. In fiscal 1999, we recorded an operating loss of \$13.5 million compared to the prior year's operating profit of \$69 million. Profitability was significantly impacted by the dramatic influx of imported steel into the United States. This influx of imports caused drops in selling prices across almost all of our products and decreased shipping levels to 60% of our peak 1998 level.

For the first half of fiscal year 2000, Northwestern continued to record losses. We are, however, seeing an improving trend in

the steel industry and in our Company. Recent reductions in imported steel of wide flange beams have increased the demand for structural products, boosting the structural products shipping levels by almost 30,000 tons or 26% in the second quarter compared to the prior year period.

Mr. Rocchio also updated everyone in attendance on Northwestern's four focus areas – Safety, Customer Satisfaction, Partnership and Total Quality, and Implementation of our Modernization Program within Northwestern's Strategic Plan. These items are discussed in The President's Corner on page two and three of this newsletter.

Mr. Rocchio closed the meeting by thanking those in attendance for their continued support. Referencing the great progress made over the past year, he added, "I am excited about our future. The transformation to a highly successful mini-mill is well underway."

President's Corner, cont.

our delivery performance.

The third focus area is Partnership and Total Quality. We continue to implement our comprehensive maintenance strategy. The new maintenance program is a disciplined, database plan that emphasizes planned and preventative maintenance. It combines inspection, planning and scheduling of maintenance to increase production time and minimize outages.

To the credit of our local USWA members, we have been implementing many aspects of our new collective bargaining agreement; even though it isn't officially activated until we secure the financing for our new structural mill.

Company management and union leadership, through our partnership process, has recently launched Total Quality Partnership (TQP), a process that focuses on exceeding customer expectations. The process involves utilizing the tools of Total Quality to eliminate waste and continuously improve performance. The goal of TQP is to make our organization more efficient through strategic planning, benchmarking, process development and standardization, training, and fact based problem solving. Our Partnership process is the conduit through which Total Quality will be ingrained at all levels of our organization. We know that we can never accept a status quo position!

The final focus area is the implementation of our modernization program within our Strategic Plan. The modernization program consists of installing a new single electric arc furnace to replace three existing electric arc furnaces and constructing a new cost efficient structural rolling mill to replace our two existing rolling mills. The implementation of the modernization program will allow us to defend our market position and return

to profitability in the current competitive market.

Installation of the new furnace project has been completed and we successfully tapped our first heat on February 12th. To date, the new furnace has been producing to the ramp up plan and is operating at almost 80% of planned Business Plan levels. We expect to be operating at 100% of planned Business Plan levels by the first of May. The successful start-up marks the completion of our first step in our facility improvement program. This program will significantly reduce our costs through improvements in productivity, power consumption and manning levels.

We continue to develop the construction-engineering phase on the planned structural rolling mill. The primary objective on the new mill project is to construct a new, more efficient, low cost mill designed to produce light to medium structural products. This new mill will replace our two existing structural mills with our capacity remaining approximately the same. Anticipated production costs will be significantly less due to increases in throughput and yield and due to significantly reduced manning levels.

We have made progress over the last nine months in developing and implementing a plan to increase our liquidity, improve our capital structure and secure the long range financing necessary to complete our modernization program. In order to provide our short-term cash needs and increase liquidity, we closed on a new Revolving Credit Agreement with Fleet Capital in October 1999. This facility significantly increased our liquidity while reducing our costs to borrow compared to the prior facility.

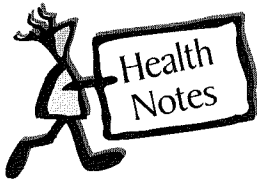
In order to finance the new mill project, it is necessary to obtain new senior debt financing. This cannot occur until our existing Senior Notes are retired. In order to accomplish this, we have

proposed an exchange of cash and common shares for our \$115 million Senior Notes. Currently approximately 80% of the Senior Notes have been tendered in the Exchange Offer. We must procure the tender of at least 95% of the Notes pursuant to the Exchange Offer.

Our new mill project and the cash piece of the Senior Note Exchange will be financed by a proposed \$170 million Senior Secured Term Loan. In order to place this financing, we have submitted an application under the Emergency Steel Loan Guarantee Act of 1999. In order to qualify under this program, steel companies must demonstrate financial injury due to excessive imports, verify that they been unable to secure financing, and demonstrate the ability to repay the requested loan amount. We not only believe we meet all of the eligibility criteria, but that our modernization program is the model for this program. We have been unable to finance a program that will significantly improve our profitability while allowing us to be a low cost producer, and providing us the capability to compete even in times of severe imports of foreign steel.

In conclusion, great progress has been made over the last year. Many of the pieces identified last year have been put in place. Those pieces that do not require the long-term financing or the construction of the new mill have been implemented. These items, such as the Safety Program, the Maintenance Strategy and the new electric arc furnace, are returning benefits to our Company. I am excited about our future. The transformation to a highly successful mini-mill is well underway.

Frederick J. Rocchio, Jr.
President and C.E.O.



The Family Health Center Caring for the Northwestern Family

Your Physical Examination

How long has it been since you had a physical examination? **Everyone** should have physical exams at intervals based upon age and risk factors. Depending on your age and history, your exam may include lab work, x-rays, and an EKG. If you have not had a physical exam within three years, you may wish to call the Family Health Center at 626-2170 and have your medical records reviewed to determine if a physical exam is necessary.

School Physicals

Our Pediatrician, Dr. Sayana, wants to remind everyone that it is not too early to start thinking about school physical examinations. These exams are good for a year, so your child can get it now for the fall school term. You may want to schedule your child's physical in the near future and beat the summer rush.

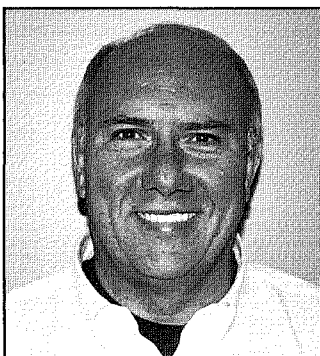
A parent or guardian must accompany children to their exam. Also, please make sure you bring the following:

- ▶ Any medications the child is currently taking;
- ▶ The child's immunization record; and
- ▶ Any questions and/or concerns that you might have.

To aid you in scheduling, Dr. Sayana's hours are listed below:

Tuesdays	8:00 a.m. – 12 noon
Wednesdays	7:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Thursdays	8:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

New Face in Executive Ranks



Joseph D. Corso has joined Northwestern as Senior Vice President of Administration, reporting directly to Frederick J. Rocchio, Jr., President and CEO. In that role, Joe will have responsibility for Purchasing, Environmental and Human Resources.

Joe brings to Northwestern over 35 years

What is HEARTBURN?

Anyone who has suffered from "heartburn" knows that it feels like a burning pain in the middle of your chest that moves up your throat. However, heartburn has nothing to do with your heart. It's caused when the lining of the esophagus (the tube that connects the mouth to the stomach) is irritated by acid from the stomach.

Having heartburn every once in awhile is something almost everyone experiences. BUT... you should know that if your heartburn occurs 2 or 3 times a week, it could be a sign of a more serious problem called GERD (gastro esophageal reflux disease). It usually occurs when the valve at the top of the stomach does not close as it should or opens at the wrong time and stomach acid can "reflux" up into the esophagus.

What can cause heartburn?

- ▶ Foods and beverages such as chocolate, peppermint, fried or fatty foods, coffee, tomatoes, and alcoholic beverages.
- ▶ Hiatal hernia – a common physical condition where part of the stomach protrudes through the diaphragm.
- ▶ Lying down.
- ▶ Cigarette smoking.
- ▶ Certain medications.

If you feel that you have more than just heartburn, please make an appointment to see

one of our doctors by calling 626-2248.

Also, if you would like to attend a seminar conducted by a doctor at the Family Health Center to learn more about heartburn and GERD, please call 616-2170 and ask our receptionist to contact you when such a meeting is scheduled.

"HEALTH NOTES" is brought to you by the NWSW Family Health Center. We try to cover subjects that will be interesting and beneficial to you. If you have any suggestions, questions, or comments, please get in touch with Bill Albright, Center Director, at 815/626-2170.

SVCC Benefits from Donation

Thanks to the recent donation of an ink jet plotter from Northwestern's drafting department, students in Sauk Valley Community College's AutoCAD (computer-aided drafting) program are now able to do more on a larger scale.

The four-year-old Tech Jet Model 5236 plotter replaces Sauk Valley's 1980's vintage pin plotter which was incompatible with new AutoCAD equipment. The newer Tech Jet will enable students to print mechanical drawings up to three feet wide by ten feet long and much more.

The recent donation offers many advantages to CAD students at Sauk. According to Bryan Fountain, Sauk's new Assistant Professor of CAD, it will be useful for PC board layouts, architectural plans, and for civil engineering documents. It will also allow students to print large drawings in one sheet, versus creating large drawings from small sections like they had in the past. The new plotter can also print in color which will make drawings easier to read and can highlight special areas such as plumbing or electrical.

Northwestern design draftsman Dana Fellows helped spearhead the donation. Fellows, who has taken CAD courses at Sauk, explained that Northwestern's drafting and design department recently acquired a newer, larger plotter and thought the smaller one might benefit Sauk's program. After conferring with fellow design draftsmen Gary Martin, Dan Blum and Tim Berogan, and Barry Johnson, Mechanical Reliability Engineer, plans were put into motion to set up the donation.

Northwestern's donation offers a lot of possibilities to the college. Fountain said he plans to develop new classes in electronics drafting, process pipe drafting and civil engineering drafting. He would also like to expand architectural drafting classes and update teaching methods for some current classes.

STAMP Update

A few months ago, Northwestern embarked on a maintenance improvement plan that will take maintenance from a reactive mode to modern day planned and predictive mode. Today, STAMP (Strategic Total Asset Maintenance Plan) is well on its way to improving maintenance effectiveness at Northwestern.

Designed to achieve improvements in overall plant productivity and profitability, STAMP increases equipment reliability and mill availability by improving maintenance effectiveness. In a nutshell, STAMP is planned and preventative maintenance – being proactive by finding the next breakdown before it happens, versus being reactive by reacting to a breakdown or problem after it occurs.

The components of the process, when used together, are powerful tools. Inspection, Planning, Reliability Engineering, and Spare Parts Management, tied together with TabWare (a computerized maintenance management system) are the components that support the Strategic Total Asset Maintenance Plan.

The Maintenance Inspector – Preventing the Next Breakdown

Playing a key part in preventative maintenance is the Maintenance Inspector. He holds the key to equipment reliability. It is his job to go out and find the next breakdown before it happens. His role in the maintenance process is to evaluate the equipment condition, report on equipment degradation, and enter a corrective work order into the TabWare Management System. The Maintenance Inspector is also the owner of the Preventative Maintenance Program. Since he is the one

that is looking at equipment condition, it is natural for him to be involved in determining what preventative maintenance activities would be most appropriate for each piece of equipment.

The Reliability Engineer – Maximizing the Inspection Effort

The Maintenance Inspector works in close support of the Reliability Engineer, providing him with current equipment condition. The Reliability Engineer analyzes the delay reports and process improvements, works with the Inspectors to get corrective work orders done from their inspections, and develops a master plan for maintenance – a plan that tells how we're going to go about repairing the equipment. The Reliability Engineer provides the Inspector with the direction he needs to maximize his inspection effort. The goal of the inspection is to provide more capacity to meet the customers needs and maximize the resources of Northwestern Steel and Wire Company.

The Maintenance Planner – Defining How Maintenance is Done

The Maintenance Planner holds the key to the maintenance process. His job is to define (in detail) the requirements of each maintenance job. He plays an important role in improving maintenance productivity. There is a great deal of pressure on maintenance to do many tasks in support of the operating and production goals of Northwestern. There are also a limited number of resources available to the maintenance department to perform those tasks. The planner has the task of providing each maintenance job with a list of all the resources needed to successfully complete the job.

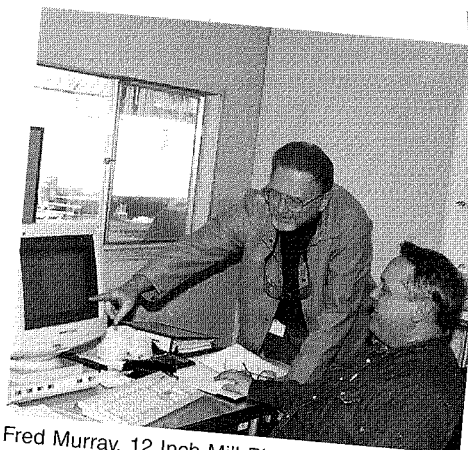
Planning is an often misused term in today's world. We sometimes refer to a plan as "a time when we intend to do something." The plan, in this case, becomes a time frame to do the job, rather than the what, when, who, and how required to make the job come to a successful completion. A plan, by definition, is a detailed scheme or method worked out beforehand for the accomplishment of an object. Therefore, planning (as defined by STAMP) defines HOW maintenance is done.

As part of the planning process, the Maintenance Planner must ask himself the following questions to form a successful plan.

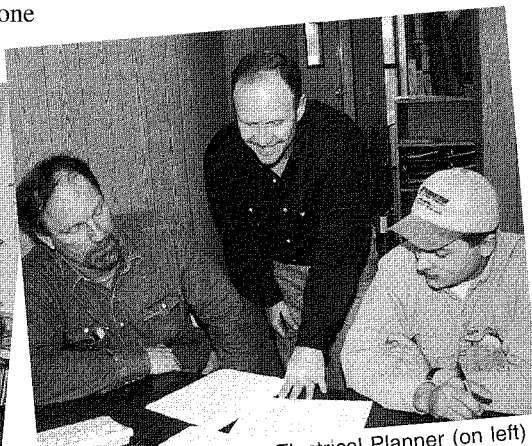
- ▶ What has to be done?
- ▶ What are the safety concerns with the job?
- ▶ What sequence of events have to occur?
- ▶ When is the job to be done?
- ▶ How long will the job take?
- ▶ Who will do the job?
- ▶ What parts, tools and equipment are required?
- ▶ Has the job been done before?
- ▶ What will it cost to do the job?

Only when these and other questions are answered can a job be scheduled with any degree of confidence as to the expected outcome.

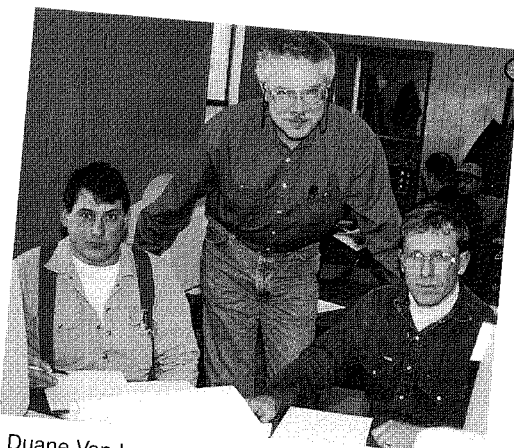
Planners from the 12 Inch Mill recently finished 2 weeks of classroom training and approximately 6 weeks of on-the-job training. Inspectors have been trained and will be starting on-the-job training soon. The Planners and Inspectors in the Furnace Department are expected to complete the entire process by June 1. The 12 Inch Mill and Furnace Departments are well on their way to proactive planned maintenance!



Fred Murray, 12 Inch Mill Planner (on right), receives some on-the-job training from Harry Baughman, Planning Instructor.

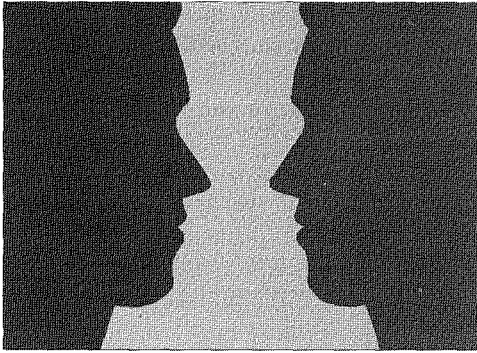


Dennis Knapp, Furnace Electrical Planner (on left) and Chad Peppers, Reliability Engineer (far right) receive classroom training from Ric Bryant, Reliability Instructor (standing).



Duane Van Loo (on left) and Rodney Mills (on right), both Furnace Mechanical Inspectors, receive classroom training from Tom Galliard, Reliability Instructor (standing).

Confidentiality



Many persons who may want and need assistance with emotional, family, or substance abuse problems are hesitant to seek help. This hesitancy may be due to concerns as to whether privacy will be protected. After all, it's not the supervisor's, neighbor's, or ex-spouse's business if someone decides to seek counseling.

Everyone is entitled to privacy. There are ethics and even federal laws protecting the individual's right to have his/her involvement with counseling services kept confidential. This means that no one working for a human service agency/business is allowed to tell whether or not a particular individual has ever contacted that agency/business and/or what services were provided. The laws governing substance abuse treatment are stricter than any other type of human service.

Information can be shared only under very special circumstances. The individual may

sign a consent to release information. This special form details what types of information can be shared, the reason for the disclosure, and exactly who or what office will be receiving the information. (A parent must co-sign for minors.) This is the most common way to share information. An individual may choose to sign a consent to release information to a significant other, a doctor, a former service provider, or a legal representative.

There are exceptions to needing a consent to release information. 1) A court can prove that the information it seeks is vital to a trial, or 2) An individual is in imminent danger of doing serious injury to himself or others, or 3) There is good reason to believe a child has been abused. In each of these cases, the information is as limited as possible and only shared with the appropriate person.

Northwestern Steel and Wire offers an Employee Assistance Program, which supports a group of individuals that serve as volunteers. This group, known as the EAP Contact Committee, meet once a month to educate themselves on issues that affect us all... dealing with change, financial counseling, depression, drug awareness, just to name a few. They serve as the person that you can count on to protect your trust and guide you to someone that can help. The EAP Contact Committee's first priority is to maintain confidentiality. For more information, please call the Northwestern Steel and Wire EAP direct 24-hour hotline at 815/626-8009 or interoffice extension 2860.

The EAP Contact Committee Presents "Financing Your Child's Education"

Thursday, April 27, 2000

7:00 p.m.

CGH Medical Center
Ryberg Auditorium

Please RSVP by calling 626-8760
or extension 2860

New Appointments

Jim Goldbach – Manager of Rolling Technology.

Tom Murphy - Customer Technical Service Engineer.

Steve Snitchler – Roller.

Tom Card – Crane Supervisor, Maintenance.

Chad Peppers – Reliability Engineer.

Danny Johnston – 24 Inch Mill Rolling Engineer.

Branko Rnich – Acting Structural Shipping Manager.

Dan Miles – Refractory Supervisor.

New Face in Safety Department



There's a new face in the Safety Department, and he's come to help Northwestern put in place a world-class safety program.

Jack Janda, President of Comprehensive Environmental Health and Safety, Inc. has

entered into a multi-year agreement with Northwestern to provide full time safety and health program services.

Jack has more than 27 years of experience in the field of industrial hygiene and occupational safety, working 14 of those years at the U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Jack will initially work with the Joint Labor-Management and the Executive Safety Committees to accomplish the following activities:

- Review and revise, as necessary, the Company Safety Manual including the development of detailed programs, policies and procedures.
- Establishment of ongoing audits of

facilities and programs including the department specific work plans.

- Review and revise, as necessary, ongoing safety training programs ensuring compliance with applicable regulations.
- Development of a company-wide Industrial Hygiene Program.
- Review and revise, as necessary, contractor safety policies and procedures.

Northwestern's injury reduction goals can only be accomplished through the efforts of each and every employee. The assistance of someone with Jack's vast OSHA experience in safety and health matters will be of great help in achieving our ongoing goal of a safe workplace for all Northwestern employees.

Let's Talk Environmental

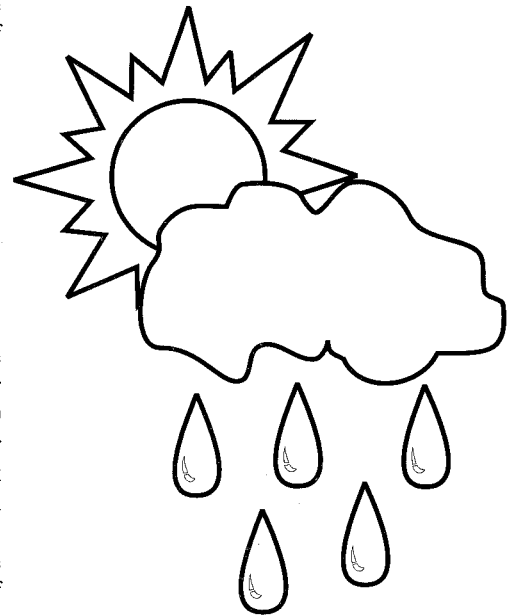
(An ongoing section highlighting the Environmental Department and environmental issues)

The installation of the new #8 furnace marks the beginning of a new era. As part of the new furnace project, our main air pollution control system was converted from a wet system to a dry system. For the past 20-30 years, dirt and dust from the scrap melting was pulled out of the furnace by large fans. The fans (with 5000 horsepower motors) pulled the dirt through water sprays that "scrubbed" the dirt from the air. After going through the scrubbers, the wet air went through the fans and up a stack to the outside. The three large steelmaking furnaces each had

their own scrubber system, fan, and stack. The three stacks are 140 feet high and are one of the most visible features of Northwestern. Most photographs of Northwestern in the local newspaper show the stacks and the clouds of steam coming out of them.

Using the dry system, dirt and dust will go to the main fabric filter baghouse. The baghouse was described in the last issue of *The Lightning Bolt*. The baghouse acts as a large vacuum cleaner that uses thousands of large bags to collect the dirt. The dirt and dust collected will be dry; hence the "dry system" name. The baghouse has four fans that are much smaller (1500-1750 horsepower) and quieter than the scrubber fans. The fans have been running for the past 20 years, as the baghouse collected dirt and dust from the steelmaking building.

Later this spring, when the new #8 furnace gets up to speed and is able to meet all of Northwestern's steel requirements, the # 6 furnace will be shut down. Never again will we see steam coming out of the east or west stacks. The middle stack serves #7 furnace. Since #7 will be used infrequently when major maintenance work takes # 8 furnace down or if production requirements demand additional melting capacity, even the middle stack will be silent. Until #7 furnace runs again, much of the wastewater treatment plant that handled the water from the scrubbers will not be in operation. However, it will be maintained for future use with #7 operations.



What happens to all that heat that used to be dispersed up the stack? It will now be discharged through new and old cooling towers on the water systems. Heat is absorbed by water in pipes surrounding the furnace and ducts. This hot water then travels to a number of cooling towers at ground level that absorb the heat and make steam that billows into the air. So there will still be a lot of steam around Northwestern – it just won't come from the three tall stacks.

By David Long, Environmental Manager

A Successful Season



Sue Reglin, Cashier at County Market (pictured second from left), is presented with a plaque for having highest bar scan sales totaling \$1,637.00. In November and December, County Market sponsored the annual food drive for needy children in the Rock River Valley, raising nearly \$2,500.00 for the children. Pictured with Sue are Laurie Wetzell, Customer Service Manager (far left); Rob Ravel, Store Director (third from left); and Carol Siefken, Needy Children's President (far right).

The employees of Northwestern once again exemplified what Christmas is all about by spreading cheer to those less fortunate – and more of it! Topping their totals from the previous year, the Committee was able to buy for more families, which meant more children. Eighty families with a total of 233 children received gifts and groceries – an increase of nearly 20 children over the prior year!

Through the efforts and generosity of the employees, nearly \$16,000 was raised last year for the children. Employees raised money throughout the year through fundraisers such as raffles, Mother's Day flowers and poinsettia sales, and the aluminum can drive – still our largest fundraiser.

The Committee would like to thank all Northwestern employees for their efforts. Whether you saved aluminum cans, worked a fundraiser, purchased a raffle ticket, made a donation, or shopped for the children, please remember that no contribution is considered insignificant.

Thanks to all of you, we had another record year!

Dear Needy Children's Committee,

We wish to thank the employees of Northwestern Steel and Wire Company for making Christmas a happier time for the less fortunate children in our community. There are a number of children who have very little. It is wonderful of you to give them the excitement and joy of receiving Christmas gifts. We hope that knowing they live in a community which cares will give them the support to grow into productive adults.

[anonymous]

Dear Employees of Northwestern,

Thank you for helping my family. I appreciate the gifts we received.

As a mother, I know it's not about gifts, but from a child's viewpoint, the belief of Santa is. I truly thought Santa wouldn't come this year. Thanks again for the love all of you showed for my family and may God bless you throughout the year.

[anonymous]

Did you know?

Since the formation of the Needy Children's Christmas Committee 22 years ago, 801 families with a total of 2,303 children have been helped by the employees of Northwestern Steel and Wire Company.

A Reason to Relay

Don't Take Life for Granted!

Within a single moment, your life may be altered forever.

Written by Debbie Cushman, Revenue & Disbursement Services, NWSW

Have you ever had to let someone go that you love? I never imagined it would happen to me, and neither did my father. He was always so healthy. In fact, prior to September of 1999, he said he felt he was in the best shape he had ever been in. Then it happened. He started feeling something like pleurisy and he was treated for pneumonia. The next thing we knew, he was driving to Mayo Clinic in early November to investigate an x-ray that showed a spot on his lung. A week later we heard that dreaded word: CANCER! No one wanted to say it. I couldn't believe this was happening. He was so young (65), strong and healthy. The cancer was so silent. It originated in his lungs, but by the time he felt anything, it had already spread into his lymph nodes and then into the bone. He was a stage 4 of 4. It was incurable, and surgery was not an option. My father stopped all chemo and radiation treatments on January 25th, after two months of trying, and on February 17th, lung cancer took his life.

Through my father's battle with cancer, I have realized the importance of life, and the duty that we have to protect ourselves and others from the disease. Not all cancer is terminal. Some can be prevented by your diet. Over 60 percent of all cancer has to do with what we eat or do not eat, and 80 percent has to do with our lifestyles. Proper nutrition, a positive attitude and exercise can all be significant factors in improving the quality of your life. We should all make a conscious effort to improve our health.

The American Cancer Society will be hosting the Whiteside County Relay for Life on June 10th and 11th at Hinders Field in Rock Falls. The Relay for Life is a fun way to raise money for cancer research and education. I ask each of you reading this to please take an active role in the fight against cancer.

We are a Northwestern family, and like any family, you care about the health of other family members. The American Cancer Society can educate you about measures you can take to stay healthy. For more information, visit their website at www.cancer.org

I look forward to seeing you at the Relay on June 10th and 11th. I'll be there – will you?



Debbie Cushman

A Celebration of Life!

Relay for Life • June 10 & 11, 2000
Hinders Field – Rock Falls

WHAT IS RELAY FOR LIFE?

The Relay for Life is a celebration – a unique, challenging, and fun way to raise money for the American Cancer Society and to raise the awareness of cancer in the community. The Relay for Life is now the national signature event for the American Cancer Society and is happening in communities all across the country. More than just a fundraiser, this event brings together families and friends of cancer patients to celebrate those who have survived and to remember those who have not.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Relay for Life is a team event in which teams of walker/runners join together to help raise money for cancer research, cancer programs, cancer awareness, etc. Teams consist of 10 to 12 people. Each team member is asked to raise money before the event through personal contributions and/or by asking friends and co-workers to contribute toward this most worthy cause. All participants will receive a Relay for Life tee-shirt, and incentive prizes are offered to those raising more money. While the Relay for Life is in progress, a party atmosphere is created by team members camping out and enjoying entertainment, food, games, and fun.

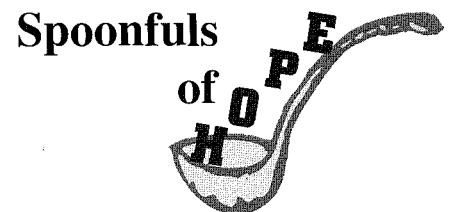
HIGHLIGHTS OF THE EVENT

OPENING CEREMONIES

The event opens with the singing of the National Anthem and an opening devotion. The Opening Ceremonies also include the Survivors' Victory Lap – the first lap walked by cancer survivors.

LUMINARY CEREMONY

You won't want to miss the beautiful Luminary Ceremony! Hundreds of luminaries light up the track in honor of cancer survivors and in remembrance of those who have lost the battle to cancer. Dedication names are read to conclude the ceremony. Is there someone that you would like to honor or remember? Luminaries are \$5.00 each and may be purchased at the event in advance by contacting Karen Freres at 815/625-2500, ext. 2275.



Now there's an easy way to join in the fight against cancer. As part of their commitment to health and nutrition, General Mills is partnering with the American Cancer Society and consumers to create the "Spoonfuls of Hope" program. Specially marked boxes of Cheerios, Total, Wheaties, and Wheat Chex now carry a "Spoonfuls of Hope" donation card. For each special card you mail in, General Mills will donate \$0.50 to the American Cancer Society, up to \$1 million. The donation helps the American Cancer Society continue its mission to fund research and provide education and information on cancer. So if you already enjoy the above mentioned cereals, please do your part and mail in the cards to the address listed on the cereal box. Donation cards must be received by October 1, 2000.

A Welcome Addition

WELCOME TO NORTHWESTERN. What a way to greet our visitors! The Office Board recently put together a Welcome Package that is now available for all visitors and new employees. This impressive package contains a welcome letter from Northwestern's CEO, a map of Northwestern, lists of products that each mill produces, a safety policy statement, a brief history of the Company, some E-Commerce information, and information about our community, all neatly tucked away in a bright pocket folder sporting the new mission statement.

The idea of a Welcome Package was brought forth to the Office Board by Dan Brisson, Vice President of Quality and Planning, as a way to improve corporate image in the marketplace. Although each Office Board member had served individually on teams before, they made the decision to work together as a partnership team – Office Team #15 – to develop the Welcome Package. Not only did it bring them closer together as a Board, it also gave them a better understanding of what partnership teams go through.

The new Welcome Package has already been distributed to many of our visitors and new employees, with a very favorable response. Not only does it show our visitors that we value their visit, it tells them we're proud of our Company!

Members of Office Team #15 (our Office Board) are Rhonda Gaumer, Diane Last, Lanny Munz, Carol Siefken, Bruce Stevens, Fred Tintori, and Terry Winchell. Congratulations to all on a job well done.

RELAY FOR LIFE LUMINARY CEREMONY

June 10, 2000 • Approximately 9:15 p.m.

As part of the American Cancer Society's Whiteside County's **RELAY FOR LIFE**, sponsored by The Daily Gazette, WSDR-WSSQ-WZZT and CGH Medical Center, we are extending an opportunity to purchase a luminary to be placed around the track area of Hinders Field on the evening of June 10, 2000.

The Luminary Ceremony will take place in honor of those who have survived cancer and in memory of those who have lost their battle with cancer. The name of your loved one will be written on the outside of the luminary and all names will be read during the ceremony. This special part of the Relay helps us to remember what the event is all about ... cancer and its victims.

Proceeds will benefit the American Cancer Society. Please send a check or money order, payable to the American Cancer Society, along with the bottom part of this form to the following address:

Northwestern Steel and Wire Company
Attention: Karen Freres
121 Wallace Street, P.O. Box 618
Sterling, IL 61081

Please mail the form before May 31st to insure its arrival before the event. Luminaries can also be purchased the day of the event. Questions?? Contact Karen at 815/625-2500, extension 2275.

LUMINARY FORM

*\$5 Donation per Luminary
(Please print)*

NAME OF PURCHASER: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

IN HONOR OF: (Survivor): _____

IN MEMORY OF: _____

(A \$5.00 donation is requested.)

If you wish, detach the portion below and forward to any family members or survivors that you would like notified of the Luminary Ceremony.

A luminary will be lit for _____

on June 10th at Hinders Field, Rock Falls, during the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life Luminary Ceremony (to begin at approximately 9:15 p.m.). All names appearing on luminaries will be read. We hope you will be able to attend.

Life Goes On

The loss of a human life is always a tragedy. But even in the midst of tragedy, it's possible for something positive to come from death – a new life for someone else through organ and tissue donation.

Each day, 11 people in the United States die while waiting for a transplant. And every 30 minutes, another person is added to the waiting list. Here in Illinois, more than 5,000 people are in need of life-saving transplants. Unfortunately, almost one-third will die

waiting because there are not enough donors to fill the need.

By becoming a potential organ and tissue donor, you can make all the difference. Anyone of any age, race or gender is eligible to be considered as a donor. And becoming a donor is simple.

- Sign the back of your Illinois driver's license or ID card with a ballpoint pen directly on the plastic. Have it signed by two witnesses, preferably family members.

- Sign up for the Secretary of State's Organ/Tissue Donor Registry when you visit

a Driver Services Facility or by calling 1-800-210-2106, or via the Internet at <http://www.sos.state.il.us>.

- Tell your family of your decision. Hospitals need next-of-kin consent before organ/tissue donation can occur.

If you would like more information about organ donation, please contact:

Secretary of State Jesse White,
Organ Donor Awareness Program
2701 S. Dirksen Parkway,
Springfield, IL 62723

Bowling for Kids

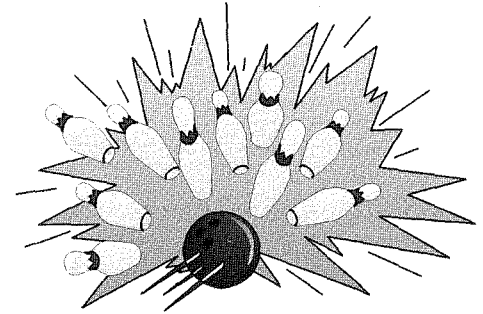
Most of us have probably bowled *with* kids, but how many of us can say we've bowled *for* kids? Recently seventeen employees of Northwestern did. On March 4 and 5, five teams of Northwestern employees pulled together to raise approximately \$1350.00 for Big Brothers Big Sisters Bowl for Kids' Sake – an event sponsored by the YWCA of the Sauk Valley. They combined their bowling talents with nearly 600 other community volunteers to raise a total of \$34,000 for the Big Brothers Big Sisters Program. A nice addition to that total was the \$500.00 match made by the Company. As part of the Recognition Program for Community Event Participation, Northwestern will match combined employee pledges up to \$500.00 in qualifying events where pledges are taken.

Big Brothers Big Sisters serves children ages 6 to 16 from single parent families or at-risk situations who need the time and attention

of an additional adult. The program matches children with Big Brothers or Big Sisters who will spend at least 12 hours a month with them. Money raised helps cover the cost of recruiting, screening, training, matching and supervision of volunteers to ensure that children receive the individualized service they need. Successful fundraisers such as Bowl for Kids' Sake enable the program to continue serving children and finding matches in Whiteside and Lee Counties.

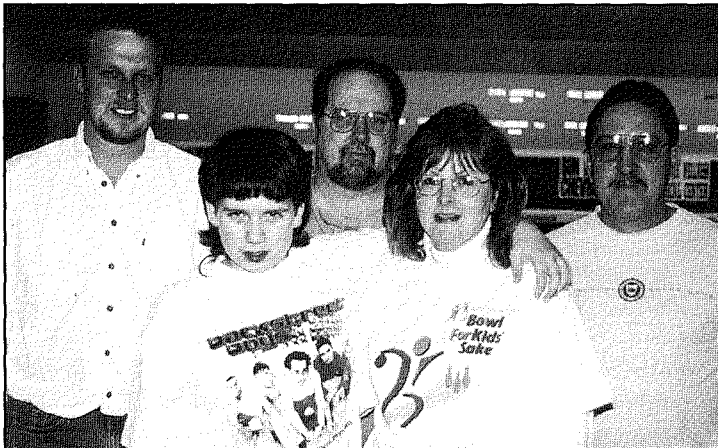
Bowl for Kids' Sake volunteers gathered to bowl after soliciting friends, neighbors, and co-workers to sponsor them for a given amount of money per game. All games were bowled at Plum Hollow Recreation Center in Dixon.

Seventeen Northwestern employees and their families/friends comprised the Northwestern teams. Volunteers from Northwestern were Bob Abell, Jeff Abell, John Berhow, David Burnett, Lori Carbaugh, Karen Freres, Mike Gragert, Connie Helms, Michael Hunt, Jake Kindred, Chuck Krabbenhoef, Walt



Long, Todd O'Brien, Steve Snitchler, Tom Terry, Andy Trancoso, and Gene Young. Many thanks to the volunteers and their families and friends who helped raise money for the cause. Many thanks also to those who supported them with monetary donations.

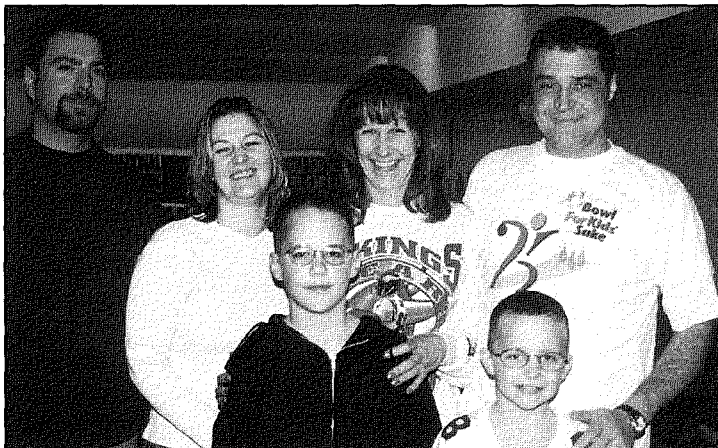
There are currently forty-four children on a waiting list for a Big Brother or Big Sister. If you would like to make a difference in the life of a child by volunteering your time to be a Big Brother or a Big Sister, please contact the YWCA of the Sauk Valley at (815) 625-0333. Your time will make a positive difference in the life of a child.



Pictured above are members of the 14 Inch Mill Team, Team #1. From left to right: Tom Barkley, Andrew Young, Gene Young (team captain), Betty Snitchler, and Steve Snitchler.



Pictured above are members of the Office Team. From left to right are David Burnett (team captain), Connie Helms, Jake Kindred, Todd O'Brien, and Lori Carbaugh.



Pictured above are members of Walt Long's Team (W.M. Waste & Reclamation). From left to right: Kelly Marks, Kim Bell, Jordan Long, Cindy Long, Jeremiah Long, and Walt Long (team captain).



Pictured above are members of two Northwestern teams that were photographed together. Team members for first team (in no specific order) were Mike Gragert (team captain), Dee Gragert, Jonas Gragert, Nicole Gragert, and Cory Baxter. Team members for second team (in no specific order) were Robert Abell (team captain), Jeff Abell, Tom Terry, Andy Trancoso, and Michael Hunt.

Why are prescription drug costs going up? How can I save \$\$\$ on prescription drugs?

MANUFACTURER PRICE INCREASES:

Periodically, drug makers raise prices on their products. This is to cover their costs and to increase revenue. If the labor, research & development, materials, packaging, or promotional costs of their products go up, they have to recover these additional costs and still make a profit.

NEW PRODUCTS:

New products are being introduced to the market. Often times, they have less side-effects and do not have to be taken as often as their older counterparts. The downside is the new drugs probably cost more to develop and the excess expenditures to make a better product are passed on to the consumer.

UTILIZATION:

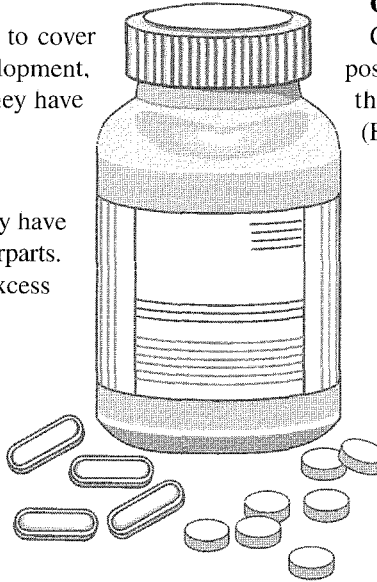
More people are taking prescription medications. The U.S. population is aging and as people get older, it is often necessary to take medication which maintains health. Also, there is a greater variety of drugs available now. These can be used on a broader array of conditions –some which could not be treated before or required hospitalization. When more people take more medications, it impacts the budgets of their health plans.

DIRECT-TO-CONSUMER ADVERTISING:

In the last few years, certain laws have been changed and drug makers are now allowed to promote their prescription products directly to consumers. The people exposed to these ads may then go to their doctor and request a certain drug be prescribed for them. The cost of the television, print, radio, and Internet advertising is passed on to consumers within the price of drug. In 1996, Direct-To-Consumer Advertising costs amounted to about \$600 million dollars. By 1998, Direct-To-Consumer Advertising costs totaled about \$1.32 billion dollars.

PHYSICIAN-DIRECTED ADVERTISING:

In addition to the promotions aimed at prospective patients, pharmaceutical manufacturers also target physicians with advertising. They want to inform doctors about new medications and encourage them to prescribe certain drugs instead of a competing drug maker's. In 1998, Physician-Directed Advertising totaled about \$4.6 billion dollars.



GENERIC DRUGS:

Choose generic drugs whenever possible. They are strictly regulated by the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) and are required to meet the same standards and performance levels of their brand counterparts. Ask your doctor and pharmacist if the brand drugs you are currently taking have generic equivalents and if it is appropriate for you to switch to a generic.

MONITOR THE DRUGS YOU CURRENTLY TAKE:

Some patients need to take certain maintenance medications often to sustain their health. Many people need to take two, three or even more types of drugs each day. However, in some instances, a patient may be taking medications longer than necessary or perhaps taking two medications for the same condition. Let your doctor and pharmacist know all the medications you are taking, especially if you have more than one doctor prescribing you medication and/or if you go to more than one pharmacy to have your prescriptions filled. To be safe and sure, ask your doctor and pharmacist about the drugs you have been prescribed. Follow their instructions carefully so you can be sure you are taking the right medication in the appropriate way.

READ YOUR PHARMACY PLAN INFORMATION:

Your prescription plan has features built into it that may help you save money. They want you to get the most from your pharmacy benefits and not have it cost you or the plan more than necessary. Choosing generics is one way to say money for you and the plan.

DO YOUR PART:

Take care of yourself. Ask your doctor what you can do to improve your health. Some tips may include watching your diet and losing weight, stop smoking, getting enough rest, and regularly exercising. By maintaining your health, you may lessen the amount of medications you need or avoid having to take them altogether!

Golf Carts Help the Maintenance Shops

If you think you saw a golf cart out in the plant, it's not your imagination – it's actually a very logical solution to a problem that has resulted in nearly \$174,000 in savings as of March 1.

Partnership recently revisited the 24 Inch Mill Team #16's progress on savings to a solution they presented last Fall, and they were pleasantly surprised at the results - \$174,000 in savings, and the savings continue to mount. The solution: Refurbished golf carts.

The team worked together to reduce response and travel time to the Mill. With the relocation of Maintenance Shops in the old Reshear building, the average time of response to a job was 17 minutes, mainly due to repeated trips to the shop for parts. Because there were only a few trucks available, many times Maintenance had to wait until a truck was available to haul parts to the mill for repair. Figuring the average cost of downtime to be \$20.19 per minute, the average response time of 17 minutes was costing the Company \$343.23 per job.

After researching the problem, the team suggested that 3 golf carts be purchased and refurbished. The golf carts are now utilized for all but the heavy parts, and have been equipped with safety lights and short carrying beds on the rear end. Use of the carts has cut travel time down to approximately 8.5 minutes per mechanical delay – a 50% reduction.

Members of the 24 Inch Mill Team #16 are Gordy Cardwell and Ed Eubanks.

Retirements

The following employees have announced their retirements. The *Lightning Bolt* congratulates those employees listed below for their years of service to the Company.

JANUARY

Theodore Ashley, Pipefitters, 30 years.
Isidro Castillo, Furnace Cranes, 35 years.
Martin, Chavez, Plant 2 Welders, 36 years.
Russell Coers, Primary Crane Operator, 34 years.
Jerry Dittmar, Nail Room, 26 years.
Gordon Fazzi, Billet Caster, 30 years.
Terry Gaskill, 14 Inch Finishing, 30 years.
Thomas Hale, 24 Inch Crane Operator, 30 years.
Larry Hart, Electric Furnace, 38 years.
Marvin Heppler, Conditioning Yard, 30 years.
Roger Larson, Plant 2 Inspection, 37 years.
Bill Mandrell, 14 Inch Shipping, 26 years.
Santiago Martinez, Brickmasons, 27 years.
Mike McCaffrey, 14 Inch Welders, 30 years.
Donald Moore, Central Stores, 30 years.
Marvin Near, Primary Crane Operator, 30 years.
Michael Oltmans, Billet Caster, 26 years.
Evelio Pena, Scrap Yard Crane Operator, 31 years.

Raymond Pitts, 14 Inch Mill Furnace, 30 years.
Harold Porter, Primary Crane Operator, 34 years.
Dale Richardson, Electric Furnace, 30 years.
Jack Roberts, Furnace Repair, 35 years.
Gary Rumbolz, 24 Inch Electrical, 34 years.
Marvin Spears, 14 Inch Welder, 30 years.
William Stanley, Central Stores, 25 years.
Douglas Troxell, Electric Furnace, 34 years.
Kevin Van Zuiden, Furnace Cranes, 30 years.
Larry Williams, 14 Inch Welders, 30 years.

FEBRUARY

Richard Barton, Plant 2 Welders, 30 years.
Franklin Bright, Plant 2 Welders, 35 years.
David Clark, 14 Inch Millwright, 25 years.
John Guerrero, Brickmasons, 31 years.
David Leach, Scrap Yard, 29 years.
Lyman Liggett, 12 Inch Mill Crane Operator, 30 years.
Homer Salmon, 12 Inch Mill, 31 years.
Don Simpson, Steel Sales, 31 years.
Ernie Valladares, Fire Protection, 40 years.

MARCH

Arthur Atilano, Mobile Equipment, 33 years.
Lloyd Beckman, Mobile Cranes, 34 years.
Kent DeMay, 14 Inch Finishing, 33 years.
James Foshee, Plant 1 Millwright, 29 years.

Charles Gipson, Bundling, 30 years.
Carl Huffman, 12 Inch Mill, 43 years.
Barry Jacobs, 14 Inch Mill, 30 years.
Daniel Kelly, Plant 2 Weld, 30 years.
William Oester, 14 Inch Mill, 30 years.
Donald Reglin, Roll Shop, 36 years.
Joseph Reifsteck, Mobile Cranes, 34 years.
Christopher Troye, Caster, 30 years.
Stanley Williams, Electric Furnace, 30 years.

APRIL

Richard Bechdolt, 14 Inch Mill, 28 years.
Gary Collin, Mobile Equipment, 30 years.
Edward Cover, Plant 2 Pipefitter, 30 years.
Carl Donovan, WP Pollution, 32 years.
Harold Grimes, Billet Caster, 35 years.
Roger Hansen, Furnace Cranes, 32 years.
Allen Harden, Cleaning House, 36 years.
Larry Janssen, 12 Inch Mill, 30 years.
Robert Morden, WM Millwrights, 37 years.
Michael Naftzger, Electric Furnace, 30 years.
Richard Phillips, Annealer, 29 years.
Thomas Rodriguez, Cleaning & Coating, 30 years.
Clark Slothower, Caster, 35 years.
Walter Wagner, Billet Caster, 34 years.

Employee Anniversaries

Many employees will be celebrating anniversaries with Northwestern. The *Lightning Bolt* congratulates those employees listed below for their years of service to the Company.

FEBRUARY 35 Years

LaVerne Bennett, 2/1/65, 24 Inch Mill.
Kenneth Huckaba, 2/7/65, General Millwrights.
Francisco Aguilar, 2/16/65, Electric Furnace.
Harold Porter, 2/28/65, Electric Furnace.

30 Years

Edward Croft, Jr., 2/1/70, Plant 5
Crane Mechanics.
Frank Sanders, 2/2/70, Conditioning.
Philip Tichler, 2/2/70, WM Millwright.
Daniel Kelly, 2/3/70, Plant 2 Welders.
Lyman Leathers, 2/4/70, Guards.
Stanley Williams, 2/4/70, Electric Furnace.
Charles Gipson, 2/8/70, Bundling.
Jim Mays, 2/9/70, Furnace Cranes.
John Zweifel, 2/9/70, 14 Inch Shipping.
Juan Gomez, 2/17/70, Furnace Cranes.
Timothy Lauff, 2/23/70, Roll Shop.

25 Years

Dennis Knapp, 2/17/75, Plant 2 Electrical.

15 Years

Michael Fritz, 2/4/85, Data Processing.
Raymond Wisneski, 2/4/85, Metallurgy.
Donald Janssen, 2/6/85, Plant 3 Inspection.
Robert Glaman, 2/6/85, 14 Inch Finishing.

10 Years

Thomas Myers, 2/1/90, Mobile Mechanics.
Danny Conduff, 2/26/90, Mobile Mechanics.

MARCH 35 Years

Paul Blankenship, 3/1/65, 12 Inch Finishing.
Robert Meinsma, 3/2/65, Mobile Equipment.
Clark Slothower, 3/6/65, Billet Caster.
John Espinoza, 3/6/65, Plant 2 Electrical.
Vern VanDyke, 3/8/65, 12 Inch Mill.

12" Mill Shipping Records

**Congratulations to all who
were a part of the recent 12
Inch Mill Shipping records!**

**Records set in March
Daily Shipping Record—
1,941 tons
Monthly Shipping Record—
33,901 tons**

**Nice job by the Shipping
Crews, Sales, and Distribution
Services in support of the
records!**

Employee Anniversaries, (continued)

George Cheshier, 3/16/65, Furnace Cranes.
Joseph Reifsteck, 3/16/65, Furnace Cranes.
Raymond Wainscott, 3/22/65, Security.

30 Years

Elmer Schipper, 3/3/70, Scrap Yard.
Danny Anderson, 3/17/70, Electronics.
David Leach, 3/17/70, Scrap Yard.
Dennis Skinner, 3/17/70, Billet Caster.
Edward Cover, 3/17/70, Plant 2 Pipefitter.
Ira Greenwalt, 3/17/70, Plant 2 Pipefitter.
Larry Janssen, 3/17/70, 12 Inch Mill.
Raymond Torres, Sr., 3/17/70, Furnace Cranes.
John Crady, 3/18/70, Plant 2 Millwrights.
Larry Workman, 3/18/70, Plant 2 Welders.
Raymond Villa, 3/18/70, Plant 2
Crane Mechanics.
Roger Hansen, 3/18/70, Furnace Cranes.
Thomas Rodriguez, 3/23/70, Cleaning &
Coating.
Leslie Miller, 3/25/70, 24 Inch Mill.
Michael Naftzger, 3/31/70, Electric Furnace.

20 Years

Theodore Wike, 3/19/80, Electric Furnace.

15 Years

Steven Lauff, 3/1/85, Quality.

APRIL

35 Years

Roy Clay, 4/3/65, RF Millwrights.
Carol Siefken, 4/7/65, Data Processing.
Lloyd Beckman, 4/12/65, Furnace Cranes.
Tom Regalado, 4/12/65, Billet Caster.

30 Years

Grady Daniels, 4/1/70, Plant 2 Millwrights.
Anthony Drane, 4/6/70, WM Millwrights.
Charles Fiorini, 4/6/70, Stores.
Perry Ferguson, 4/6/70, Billet Caster.
Donald Shehorn, 4/13/70, WM Drawing.
Salvatore Sodaro, 4/13/70, Billet Caster.
Sammy Johnson, 4/14/70, WM Shipping.
Virgle Onnen, 4/21/70, Electric Furnace.
Calmar Watson, 4/22/70, Billet Caster.
Thomas Beggerow, 4/28/70, Billet Caster.
Donald Berkeley, 4/29/70, Nails.
Joseph Wittenauer, 4/29/70, 24 Inch Mill.

15 Years

Thomas Vercillo, 4/1/85, Accounting.
Marvin Finkle, 4/17/85, Plant 2 Electrical.
Gary Egan, 4/22/85, 14 Inch Shipping.
Marty Mapson, 4/25/85, 12 Inch Finishing.
Larry Greenwood, 4/27/85, WM Millwright.

10 Years

Christopher White, 4/2/90, Plant 2 Electrical.
Chad Peppers, 4/3/90, Engineers.
Daniel McCallister, 4/3/90, 12 Inch Finishing.
David Stickel, 4/3/90, Plant 2 Millwrights.
Richard Palumbo, 4/3/90, Plant 5 Electrical.
Gary Frank, 4/8/90, 24 Inch Mill.
Paul DeLaFuente, 4/8/90, 14 Inch Mill.
Sean Dennis, 4/8/90, 24 Inch Mill.
Kenneth Helfrich, 4/9/90, Trucks.
Michael Edwards, 4/9/90, Plant 5 Millwrights.
Randy Sharp, 4/9/90, 24 Inch Shipping.
Robert Walker, Jr., 4/9/90, Plant 2 Electrical.
Steven White, 4/9/90, 12 Inch Finishing.
Thomas Graff, 4/9/90, 14 Inch Shipping.
Thomas Browning, 4/15/90, Plant 5
Millwrights.
David DeLaFuente, 4/16/90, 12 Inch Finishing.
Robley Card, 4/16/90, Plant 2 Electrical.
Todd Bass, 4/16/90, Plant 2 Millwrights.
Edward Tompkins, 4/17/90, 24 Inch Mill.
Shawn Wyckstandt, 4/23/90, 24 Inch Shipping.

MAY

35 Years

David Hadley, 5/13/65, Distribution.
Eddie Morse, 5/17/65, Plant 2 Welders.

30 Years

William Dewald, 5/4/70, 24 Inch Shipping.
Walter Miller, 5/13/70, Drawing Room St.
& Cut.
Dennis Stoudt, 5/25/70, Plant 2 Millwrights.
Charles Planthaber, 5/26/70, 14 Inch Shipping.

25 Years

John Wang, 5/1/75, Data Processing.

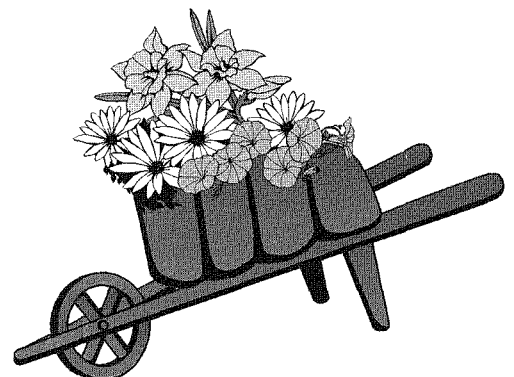
15 Years

Jeff Lancaster, 5/1/85, 14 Inch Shipping.
Michael Linden, 5/2/85, Plant 3 Pipefitters.
Nazir Qureshi, 5/3/85, 12 Inch Mill.

Abraham Estrada, 5/13/85, 24 Inch Mill.
Michele Christianson, 5/13/85, Accounting.
Keith Cheshire, 5/17/85, Scrap Yard.
Barbara Desch, 5/20/85, 12 Inch Finishing.
James Thurwanger, 5/20/85, Sales.
Michael Modler, 5/25/85, Electric Furnace.
William Fichtenmueller, 5/29/85, 24 Inch Mill.

10 Years

Charles Forren, 5/2/90, 14 Inch Finishing.
Daniel Cox, 5/6/90, 24 Inch Mill.
John Blevins, 5/6/90, 24 Inch Shipping.
Michael Shook, 5/6/90, Clerical.
Michael Kyarsgaard, 5/6/90, Mobile
Mechanics.
Steve Hatten, 5/6/90, 24 Inch Mill.
Kurt Dahler, 5/8/90, 14 Inch Shipping.
David Percycocoe, 5/9/90, 12 Inch Mill.
Larry Yonk, 5/9/90, 14 Inch Finishing.
Shawn Dowd, 5/9/90, 14 Inch Shipping.
Shawn Porter, 5/9/90, 24 Inch Mill.
Tim Kophamer, 5/9/90, Plant 2 Millwrights.
Jose Cavazos, 5/14/90, 24 Inch Mill.
Mark Byvick, 5/14/90, 14 Inch Finishing.
Robert Sheridan, 5/14/90, Trucks.
Kevin Davis, 5/21/90, 12 Inch Finishing.
Ronald Roberts, 5/21/90, 12 Inch Finishing.
Ronald Anger, Jr., 5/21/90, 24 Inch Mill.
Steven Harker, 5/21/90, Plant 5 Electrical.
Troy Buyers, 5/22/90, Plant 5 Millwrights.
Gary Bodmer, 5/27/90, Plant 5 Millwrights.



New Employees

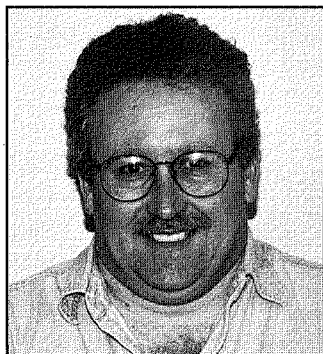


Mohammed Saffari

Mohammed Saffari has joined Northwestern as Manager of Maintenance – Structural Mills.

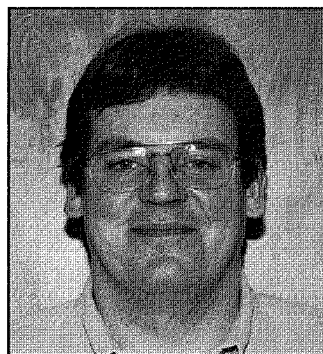
Mohammed reports to Randy Wolber for 14" Mill Maintenance issues, Doug Brotherhood for 24" Mill Maintenance issues, and Zbig Rybicki for 22" Mill Maintenance issues. He is responsible for improving the reliability of the existing 14" and 24" Mills, and for developing the maintenance systems and organization for the new 22" Mill. The Maintenance General Supervisors of the 14" and 24" Mills will report directly to Mohammed.

Mohammed comes to us most recently from Birmingham Steel Corporation of Cleveland, Ohio, where he was General Supervisor, Maintenance. Prior to that he worked for GST Steel Company in Kansas City, Missouri, where he was General Foreman, Maintenance. Mohammed holds a B.S. degree in Mechanical Engineering from Queen's University in Ontario, Canada. He is also presently enrolled in an MBA program.



Stan Hemenway

Stan Hemenway has joined Northwestern as Quality System Coordinator, reporting directly to Frank Peterson, Manager of



Adam Easter

Adam Easter has joined Northwestern as Project Mechanical Engineer, reporting directly to Karl Koenig, New Mill Project Manager. In that capacity, his primary responsibility is to assist the New 22" Mill Project Team with the technical evaluations of the New Mill's mechanical design. He will also be the Project Mechanical Lead for the mechanical installation of the New Mill.

Initially, and for a six-month period, Adam is assigned to Zbig Rybicki, Senior Manager – Structural Mills, while he familiarizes himself with the New Mill design. During this period he will lead the restoration effort for the 24" Mill Reheat Furnace and will also assist in improving the mill set-ups for the 24" Mill.

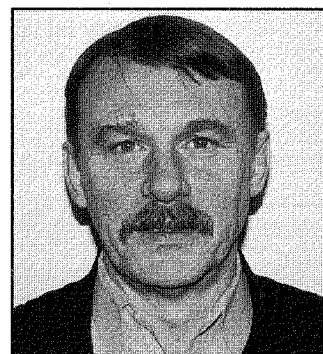
Adam holds a B.S. degree in Mechanical Engineering from Purdue University, and a B.S. degree in Business Administration from Indiana University. He comes to us most recently from Birmingham Steel in Cartersville, where he was Manager of the Roll and Guide Shop. Adam was also a key member of the project team that built the Mid-Section Rolling Mill in Cartersville that is similar in many respects to the New Mill we are designing for Northwestern.

Adam and his wife, Marianne, will be residing in the Sterling area.

Quality. Stan is responsible for coordinating the development and implementation of our Quality System requirements (NW-9000).

Stan comes to us most recently from Strattec Security Corporation where he was Operations Quality Engineer. In that position he led team efforts to solve quality problems and improve quality systems. Prior to that he worked for Stainless Foundry and Engineering, Inc. as a Process Engineer. He holds a B.S. degree in Ceramic Engineering, and a B.B.A. degree in Management, both from Iowa State University.

Stan and his wife, Angela, have three children.



Zbig Rybicki

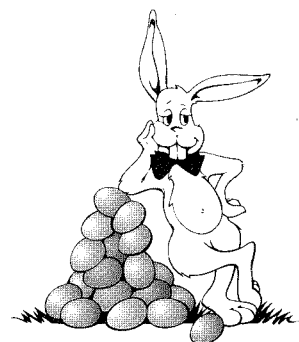
Zbig Rybicki has joined Northwestern as Sr. Manager, Structural Mills. Zbig's ultimate responsibility will be for the new 22" Mill. However, since the new 22" Mill will be built within the existing 24" Mill complex, the successful integration of the existing 24" Mill operation with the future construction and operation of the new 22" Mill is extremely critical. Therefore, Zbig will also be responsible for the operation of the existing 24" Mill in the interim, with Doug Brotherhood reporting to him as 24" Mill Manager.

Zbig comes to us with a unique background that perfectly suits his Northwestern assignment. Prior to his most recent venture with SSC, an energy management consultant, Zbig also served as:

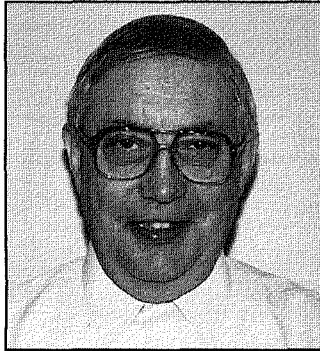
- Superintendent of Rolling Mill Maintenance at SMI Steel in South Carolina,
- Manager of Operations and Maintenance at GST Steel Company in Kansas City,
- Manager of Primary Engineering at Republic Engineered Steel in Canton, Ohio, and as

- Superintendent of the Seamless Tube Hot Mill at LTV Steel, heading the start-up.

Zbig also has a B.S. degree in Electrical Engineering from Purdue University and a Masters degree in Business Administration from Rockhurst College.



New Employees

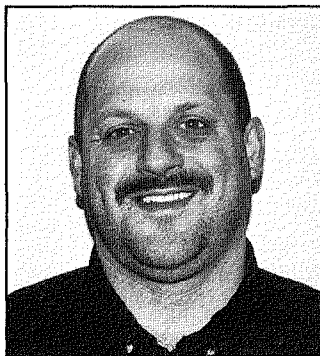


Frank Peterson

Frank Peterson has joined Northwestern as Manager of Quality, reporting directly to Dan Brisson, Vice President of Quality and Planning. Frank is responsible for customer technical interface, new product development, analytical laboratory investigations and quality improvement activities and coordination.

Frank has over thirty years of experience in the steel industry, with particular expertise in quality systems, total quality management, and customer service. He comes to us most recently from Ryerson Tull, in Chicago, where he was Senior Manufacturing and Materials Specialist. Prior to that he worked at Ispat-Inland Steel Company in East Chicago, Indiana, where he held various management positions before joining Ryerson. Frank holds a B.S. degree in Metallurgical Engineering from Montana School of Mines in Butte, Montana.

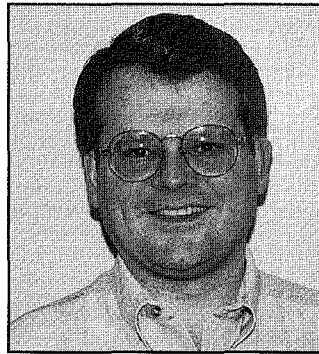
Frank and his wife, Carol, have two grown children.



Marc Phillips

Marc Phillips has joined Northwestern as Manager of Reliability Engineering. In that capacity, he will be responsible for implementation of the STAMP Program, and also for supervising the Reliability Engineers.

Marc has eight years of experience in jobs requiring Engineering and Engineering Reliability disciplines. He worked most



Dragan Stevanovic

Dragan Stevanovic has joined Northwestern as Director of Marketing. In that capacity, he will be responsible for pricing, product mix, marketing and product strategy, as well as competitor analysis.

Dragan has over twenty years of experience in sales and marketing. He was most recently self-employed as a business consultant, providing consulting services to industrial Original Equipment Manufacturers. His areas of expertise include marketing research, supplier evaluations, new product design, new material selections, and profit and break even analysis of operations. Prior to being a consultant he was President and Owner of Cube Sales & Marketing Company, Inc. in Cumberland, Indiana. Dragan's previous experience also includes five years with Allied Tube & Conduit, holding sales and marketing management positions.

Dragan and his wife, Janice, have two children, Michael and Jenna.

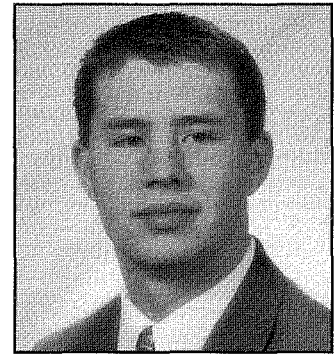
We'd like to know...

The Company would like to recognize the accomplishments of its employees/retirees. If you or someone you know have been appointed to a committee or board, or if you have recently received an award...We'd like to know! Please, contact Karen Freres at 815/625-2500, extension 2275.

recently as an independent Reliability Consultant providing equipment reliability optimization services for customers in the mining and steel industries, including Weirton and U.S. Steel.

Marc holds a B.S. degree in Mechanical Engineering from Carnegie Mellon University, and an M.S. degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Florida. He is currently pursuing an M.S. degree in Reliability Engineering.

Marc and his wife, Janet, have a three-year-old daughter.



Scott Voda

Scott Voda has joined Northwestern as an Inside Rod Sales Representative.

Scott comes to us most recently from Wahl Clipper Corporation where he was a set-up supply person. Prior to that he worked at Norwest Mortgage, Inc. as a loan officer. Previous work experience also includes employment at SBM Business Equipment Center as a Customer Service Coordinator. Scott has a Bachelor of Arts degree with a concentration in Social Sciences from Mount Saint Clare College in Clinton, Iowa.

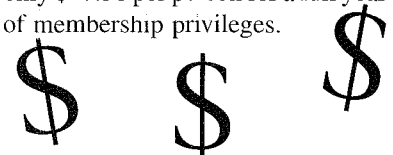
Scott and his wife, Jessica, reside in Sterling with their six-year-old son and their two-year-old daughter.

SAVE at Sam's Club

Membership Savings Coupons are now available from Karen Freres in Administration (ext. 2275) or Kelly McDuffy in Human Resources (ext. 2339).

Join Sam's Club and receive a **FREE** Secondary Membership valued at \$15!

A Sam's Club Advantage Membership is \$35 per year. Through May 31, 2000, when you sign up as a member, you can also sign up a friend or relative as a secondary member free. If you split the cost with your friend or relative, that's only \$17.50 per person for a full year of membership privileges.



Treasured Memories

For thirty years he found the security of a good job at Northwestern Steel and Wire Company. Today, sixty-six year old Ramon Gonzalez clutches memories of days gone by at Northwestern while battling Alzheimer's disease.

Ramon was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease four years ago, three short years after his retirement as a Wire Drawer in the Wire Drawing Department. Although he loved his job, Ramon's wife, Isabel, said he made the decision to retire because he was becoming extremely forgetful and he was worried it would affect his job performance. Little did he know the disease was creeping up on him.

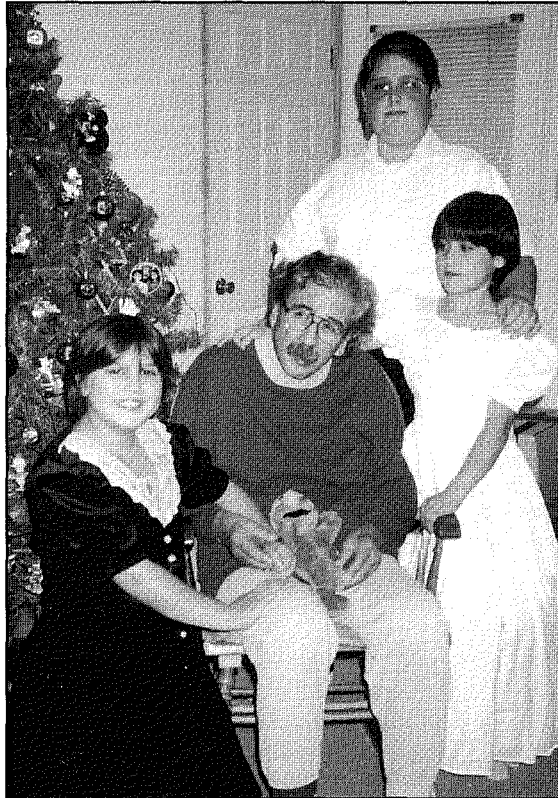
Slowly Isabel watched her husband's health decline. Present day finds him quite often in a blank stare, occasionally talking about treasured times of the past. Isabel says in "Ramon's world", he quite often spends time with his buddies from work. When he does, she gives him his old Northwestern lunchbox and puts him in his favorite chair. "Just giving him his lunchbox gives him comfort," she said. "He'll set there for hours clutching his lunchbox and talking about work, just as if he were still there."

In addition to his dedicated service at Northwestern, Ramon was a painter and a photographer. He studied photography at the New York Institute of Photography prior to his career at Northwestern. Before his illness, he enjoyed dancing and participated in several plays at Sauk Valley Community College. Ramon and Isabel have been married for thirty-five years. They have 4 children and 11 grandchildren (soon to be 12).

Ramon enjoys life's simple pleasures at his home in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Reverting back to his childhood days, he finds security in family (especially his grandchildren), memories, toys and cards.

If you would like to send Ramon a card, please use the address listed below.

Mr. Ramon Gonzalez, 1932 Beethoven Drive, Virginia Beach, VA 23454



Ramon Gonzalez, Northwestern retiree, has found comfort in his grandchildren throughout his battle with Alzheimer's. Pictured above, from left to right, are Amanda Gonzalez, Ramon, Michael Gonzalez. (standing), and Mechele Gonzalez.

We need your help!

With summer fast approaching, please remember to save your cans after you quench your thirst.

The aluminum can drive is our largest fundraiser for the needy children.

Barrels are located throughout the plants.

Main drop areas for larger bags are:

14" lockerroom

First Aid

Main Gate

12" (Mill end & finishing end)

A can saved is a gift given!

The Lightning Bolt

The *Lightning Bolt* is published as a source of information for employees of Northwestern Steel and Wire Company.

We encourage your comments and suggestions. All comments and suggestions should be directed to the Managing Editor.

Managing Editor

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