

# PLAIN TALKS

January 1986





# CONTENTS

Volume 65

Number 1

River Bend nears full power	4
Good Cents Program makes dollars	5
Multiple suppliers shape strategy	6
Can you help Pam make the right choice?	8
On the plus side	10
Coleman serves customers, constituents	13
Shaping up	14
On the move	16
Service awards	17
Inside GSU	18

## PLAIN TALKS

January 1986

Published for employees and retirees of Gulf States Utilities Company. No portion of the contents of this magazine may be reproduced without written permission of the publisher. Address all communications to PLAIN TALKS, Gulf States Utilities Company, P. O. Box 2951, Beaumont, Texas 77704, Phone (409) 838-6631.

**Executive Editor:**

Betty Gavora

**Co-Editors:**

Susan Huff Gilley

T.J. Reyes

**Correspondents:**

Vickie Albert

Dona Austin

Ronnie Bordelon

Barbara Broussard

Ella Brown

Debra Castel

Myra Castello

Cheryl Crawford

Lisa Creekbaum

Betty Dickschat

Betty Dowell

Andy Dreher

Bonnie Duval

Jo Eubanks

Donna Fancher

Charlotte Gautreau

Sherry George

Rhonda Haskins

Connie Herford

Tina Hunt

Les Jones

Lynda Kapalski

Helen Kennedy

Clint Lilley

Clint Moss

Debra Patin

Edith Patterson

Carol Payne

Myra Ponthier

Casey Richert

Mike Rodgers

Greg Russell

D.W. Rutherford

Jeral Semien

Sue Simon

Laurie Tenner

Monica Thomas

David Thornhill

Jean Tinsley

Delores West

Nina Wiley

Robby Zeringue

Employees who change residences or offices should fill out company mailing-address-change forms (GSU0012-00-81) and return them to the mailroom in the Edison Plaza. GSU publications, departmental mailings and other company information are not automatically forwarded; addresses must be corrected when employees move.



## Tour taken

Virgil Fuselier  
Gulf States Utilities  
Lafayette, La.

Dear Virgil:

I have been out of town for a few days and therefore delayed in expressing our thanks and appreciation to Gulf States Utilities for sponsoring our recent visit to River Bend Station.

Your efforts and interest in providing this most valuable experience for many of our senior mechanical and electrical engineering students and faculty are especially appreciated.

Please express our thanks to the women at the plant who did such an outstanding job familiarizing us with the construction and workings of the power plant. Also, thanks to Terry Huval for accompanying our group. It is always a pleasure visiting with Terry.

Last, but certainly not least, the meal was great and the bus ride was most enjoyable.

Again, thank you Virgil for your interest and support in the education of our students.

Sincerely,  
Raymond E. Jenkins  
Department Head  
College of Engineering  
University of Southwestern  
Louisiana

**Editor's note:** Both Fuselier, supervisor-consumer services, and Huval, assistant substation supervisor, are based in Lafayette.

## Bank says thanks

Andy Dreher  
Gulf States Utilities  
St. Francisville, La.

Dear Andy:

I want to thank you for taking your day to play host to a few bankers. I'm sure you have given many tours and will give a few more in the years to come. Hav-

ing seen the project and realizing the impact that River Bend will have on St. Francisville, you are to be commended for the fine public relations you've done.

You have some excellent educational facilities, and I'm sure they have served their purpose in better educating the local community. I certainly enjoyed the visit and hope some time in the future, when everything is up and running, that I can make another trip to see you.

Thanks once again for the hospitality, and I wish you continued successes.

Kindest regards,  
Harry B. Allcott  
Loan Officer Energy Group  
MBank Houston

**Editor's note:** Dreher is nuclear site communications coordinator.

## Gift acknowledged

Lloyd Dawson  
Gulf States Utilities  
Bridge City, Texas

Dear Mr. Dawson:

Words cannot adequately express our appreciation to you for the gift of your half of the \$500 Gulf States Utilities Employee Suggestion Program award to Project CARE.

Our delay in acknowledging your generosity is certainly not from a lack of gratitude — we have been so excited with this gift that we hardly knew how to best handle it!

After numerous discussions with all parties involved, an equitable division will be made to allow funds to be available in Beaumont, Port Arthur and Orange.

You have no idea how much good you will bring through this donation. I only wish you could see the joy on the faces of those who will receive this assistance. We see elderly people almost daily who are in the most dire of financial situations. Your gift

will truly "help them make it."

Thank you again, so much, for such extreme thoughtfulness. You obviously are an extraordinary employee. Your kindness in this act shows that you are an extraordinary person as well.

Sincerely,  
Don L. Eisenberg  
Executive Director  
Beaumont Chapter  
American Red Cross

**Editor's note:** A similar letter was sent to O.V. McNeil, also of Sabine Station.

## Dictionaries appreciated

Mrs. Sue Williams  
Gulf States Utilities  
Port Arthur, Texas

Dear Mrs. Williams:

We want you to know that the gifts of 100 dictionaries and the 8'x10' auditorium screen were appreciated. The dictionaries are being checked out to students who do not have them in their homes. This is a tremendous asset to our instructional program.

We are especially grateful for the continuing service which you render to our instructional program through workshops and resource materials. Thank you for adopting us.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Mattie Londow  
Woodrow Wilson Middle School

## THE COVER

Ten-month-old Cody Cunningham symbolizes the hope of the new year for individuals and for GSU.

Cody, the son of David and Ginger Cunningham, is the nephew of two GSU employees. They are Tom Clark, economic development research analyst, and Susan Gilley, employee communications representative, both of whom work in Edison Plaza.



by Susan Gilley

I'm proud of my family, as much because we share the bond of kinship as for their accomplishments.

In much the same way, I'm proud of my larger family at GSU. I'm here because of the contribution I can make toward preserving the viability of the company. That is the purpose of every job at GSU.

As part of my job as an employee communications representative, I frequently interview outstanding employees for personality profiles. Time after time, such employees cite "the feeling of family" as an important element figuring in their job satisfaction.

Such a feeling has its drawbacks. After all, just as I don't want anybody criticizing my child or my husband, neither do I want to hear complaints about my company. As employees, we **are** GSU, and it smarts to be criticized.

On the other hand, that is why it is so gratifying to hear **good** comments about our company — and, despite the so-called rates revolt of 1985, plenty of our customers tell us they are pleased with our service.

In addition to the letters and telephone calls we get from satisfied customers, history tends to support our pride in GSU. Through the years, we've contributed to the growth of our service area communities, earning a reputation for corporate integrity in our dealings.

Sometimes that meant we confronted giant-sized problems. Sometimes we had to adjust carefully-conceived plans to ever-changing needs and issues. But —

just like family — we've shared a common determination to weather such storms. A few examples from our past include:

— Creating a single company from the various small firms that merged to become GSU during the 1920s.

— Successfully operating through the years of World War II, when many employees were called to military service.

— Building load through the 1950s and 1960s as the service area's economy, previously largely agriculture-based, continued to become largely petrochemical-based.

— Countering the fuel shortages of the early 1970s with a strategic plan for a diversified fuel mix, which included the decisions to build Nelson Coal and River Bend.

— Facing the challenges of reduced industrial load and other problems developing from the downturn of the economy in the GSU service area by promoting economic development.

— Adopting a marketing stance for selling kilowatthours tailored to today's electricity needs, while still promoting energy conservation for residential customers.

— Building a successful nuclear-generated power plant at an unheard-of speed while meeting and sometimes exceeding guidelines for operating safety.

It is an impressive record — one made possible only through the continual cooperation of GSU employees — and it offers hope for the future.

Perhaps such an historic perspective will help armor us with more pride, stripping away our defensiveness about our present challenges.

---

## River Bend approaches full power

River Bend Station was authorized a full-power operating license on Nov. 15, following a meeting of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in Washington, D.C.

The NRC voted 5-0 to authorize the issuance of the full-power license.

GSU officially received the license for the 940-megawatt

plant near St. Francisville on Nov. 20. A couple of weeks later, on Dec. 3, the plant produced its first power for GSU customers.

Testing continued through the end of the year, with scheduled start ups and shut downs leading to increasing levels of power production. By the last week in December, the unit reached 20 percent of its rated capacity.

When issuing the license, members of the NRC made several favorable comments about the project, including describing GSU's "very responsive management" in respect to the construction. They also said they were "impressed with management control and corrective action capability."



# Good Cents Program means dollars

by Mike Rodgers

January brought more than just the new year to GSU and its customers. It marked the arrival of the Good Cents Program, Gulf States' new umbrella program for marketing energy efficient electric equipment and lighting. "This program is more than just a successor to National Energy Watch (NEW)," explains Brooks Bishop, senior energy specialist. NEW served customers well by guiding them from the days of relatively high energy-use homes in the 1970s to those which use energy more efficiently. The Good Cents Program is designed to take the wise use of electricity a step further and provide customers with incentives to build homes and businesses for the future. The Good Cents Program will encompass GSU's electric equipment promotional activities, our new home program and our employee incentive program.

Employees will begin seeing the Good Cents theme as the employee incentive program is announced during January. Electric equipment "makes good cents" and employees will be rewarded for successfully promoting it.

The Good Cents theme will also support GSU's new home marketing program and will be seen by employees and customers in GSU, builder and heating and air conditioning contractor advertising. The Good Cents home will set the standard for energy-efficient electric living just as Gold Medallion did during the decade of the 1960s.

The criteria for a Good Cents home is based on the heating and cooling calculation. The cooling load must equal 12 Btus-per-square foot to qualify. "Under NEW, a home had to have specified amounts of insulation

and types of equipment to meet the standard," says Bishop, adding: "Good Cents is more flexible. Specific insulation levels are not prescribed, but the combination of measures must meet the 12 Btu requirement."

Customers will see many benefits from the Good Cents Program. Good Cents homebuyers will see a lower total energy bill through lower heating, cooling and water heating costs. The amount of the savings will depend on the size of the house and the equipment installed by the builder to meet the Good Cents standard. In general, a home that qualifies will be well-insulated in the walls, floors, ceiling and doors and will take advantage of efficient heating, cooling and water

heating systems such as heat pumps and heat pump water heaters. All of the Good Cents features will be listed in the Good Cents Award Certificate which will be displayed in the home by the Good Cents builder.

Good Cents system equipment buyers will have the benefit of the most efficient heating, cooling and water heating systems available today. Improvements to home and business environments will be felt by residential and commercial customers who participate in part of our Good Cents Program. Whether it's a new home, upgrading equipment in a home or business or adding lighting to improve safety and appearance, Good Cents is what electric equipment is all about.



Mickey Walker (left), consumer service representative-Conroe, examines some of the study material on the Good Cents Program with Ed Brawner, senior district service representative-Sulphur.



# Multiple suppliers shape strategy

by T.J. Reyes

**“You can’t predict the future,”** acknowledges George McCollough, GSU vice president, “so our Fuel Services must be flexible in doing business.” Although not a large group, he adds, “They get a lot of satisfaction because their work is so important to our customers and our company.”

That task is to find, buy and, when necessary, transport the fuel needed for our power plants. And it is important to GSU customers because fuel costs represent about 50 to 55 percent of a customer’s bill, depending on the season. Fuel Services’ work is important to our company because fuel costs in 1984 alone totaled \$417,506,000. Regulatory commissions prohibit GSU from making any profit from those expenses.

“The end of the Exxon contract forced us to become more flexible in how we buy fuel,” says Jim Champagne, manager-fuel services, “and in how we set up our long-term commitments.”

According to Champagne, it was once an industry standard when building a new power plant to “lock in” one fuel supplier for the lifetime of the plant.

However, an ever-changing fuel market — subject to embargoes, curtailments and price fluctuations — has shown that practice is no longer reliable.

As both McCollough and Champagne point out, one word that sums up our fuel strategy is flexibility. Multiple pipelines, multiple suppliers and a fuel mix that has changed dramatically in recent years are some of the ways GSU has implemented that strategy. Another is careful negotiation of long-term contracts, minimizing “take or pay” clauses while adding options that allow GSU to renegotiate when market prices change substantially. Take or pay means GSU is obligated to pay even if we should not use the fuel.

The Exxon Gas Replacement Task Force was organized, long before the contract expired, to determine how much of the gas that had supplied more than half

of our needs for 21 years would have to be replaced. Changes during those years required replacement of only a portion of the Exxon supply because our fuel mix has become more diversified. Now GSU owns interests in two coal-fired plants and surplus power is available from other utilities at prices less than our own generation costs. When River Bend begins commercial operation, nuclear power will be added to our fuel mix, shifting us away from natural gas even more.

Fuel Services has received praise for their efforts in lining up that replacement fuel. Articles in two fuel industry publications singled out GSU for using “innovative” ideas in spot market purchasing. As Chief Executive Officer Paul Murrill notes, “Our fuels people did a tremendous job of strategically positioning the company to take full advantage of favorable market conditions today and in the future.”

Bill Harrington, director-fossil fuels, explains that short-term supplies of low-cost gas have provided “real economic advantages” for our customers. “But these spot market purchases won’t last forever,” he cautions. “GSU needs strong, viable suppliers that will be around for a long time.”

Harrington, who is involved in the day-to-day negotiations with fuel suppliers, believes, “Suppliers like to deal with us because we set up purchasing guidelines, inform the suppliers of these guidelines and then give our suppliers a fair chance for our business.”

Since fuel is such a “big-ticket” budget item for GSU, verifying the accuracy of deliveries and the accompanying bills are another important function of the group.



*Charles Schultz, fuel transportation coordinator, and Paul Wielgus, senior fuel coordinator.*



Mickey Wilson, supervisor-gas and oil fuels, notes that all gas pipelines to our plants have multiple meter runs with two meters per run — one that belongs to the supplier and another that is owned by GSU, totaling 132 meters at all of our plants. "The recorders on these meters are calibrated at least monthly by a third-party calibration service," says Wilson. "These calibrations are witnessed by a plant representative, with scheduled witnesses by a fuel coordinator."

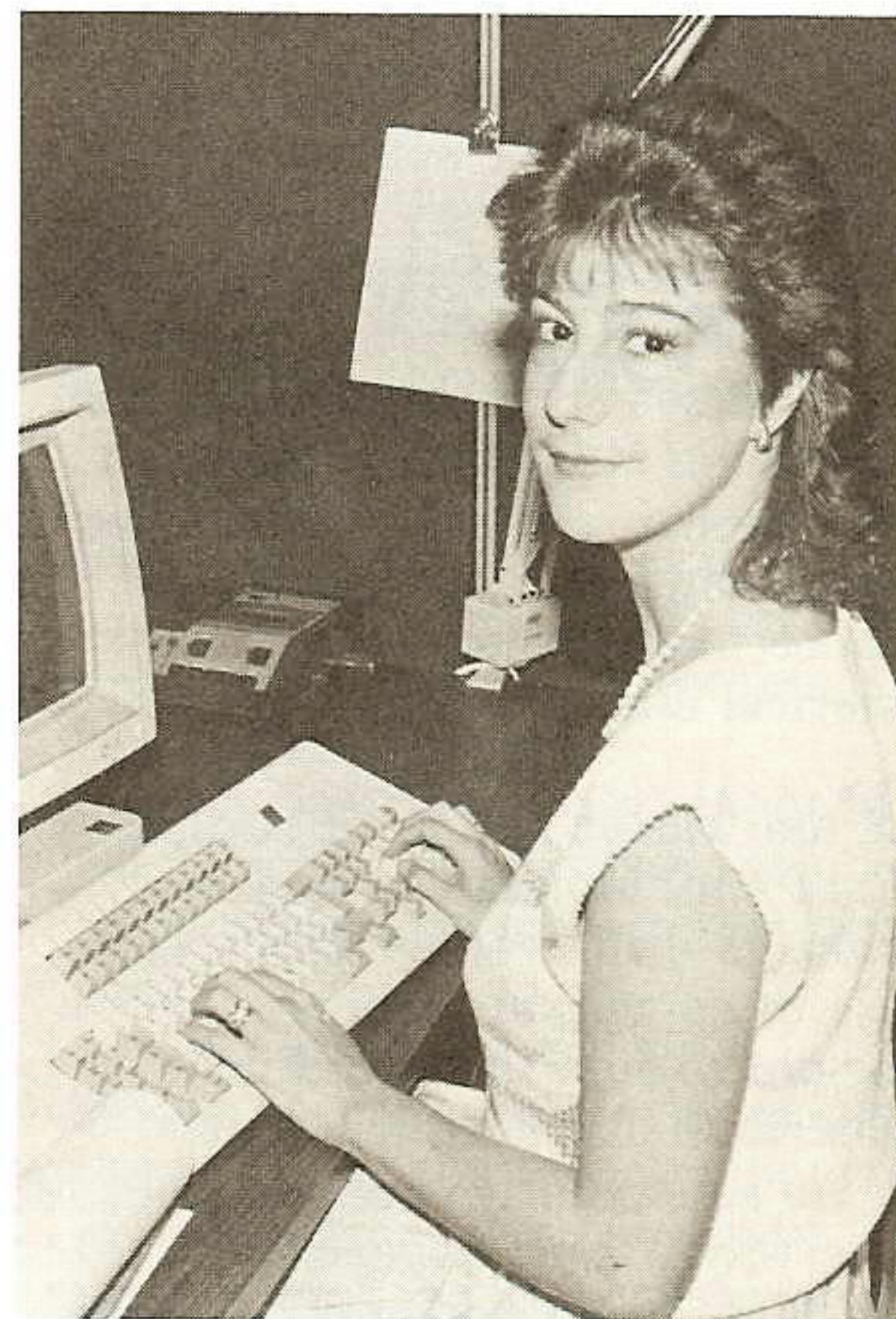
Wilson and his staff also are responsible for contract administration. "As a group, we study each fuel contract and track various trigger points," says Wilson. Those trigger points are terms written into the contracts that may allow renegotiation.

Most of our fuel contracts include to-the-plant delivery, particularly those for gas, but Dan Gray points out that GSU transports coal to Nelson Coal and, occasionally, oil to other plants. As GSU's administrator of fuel transportation, Gray says,

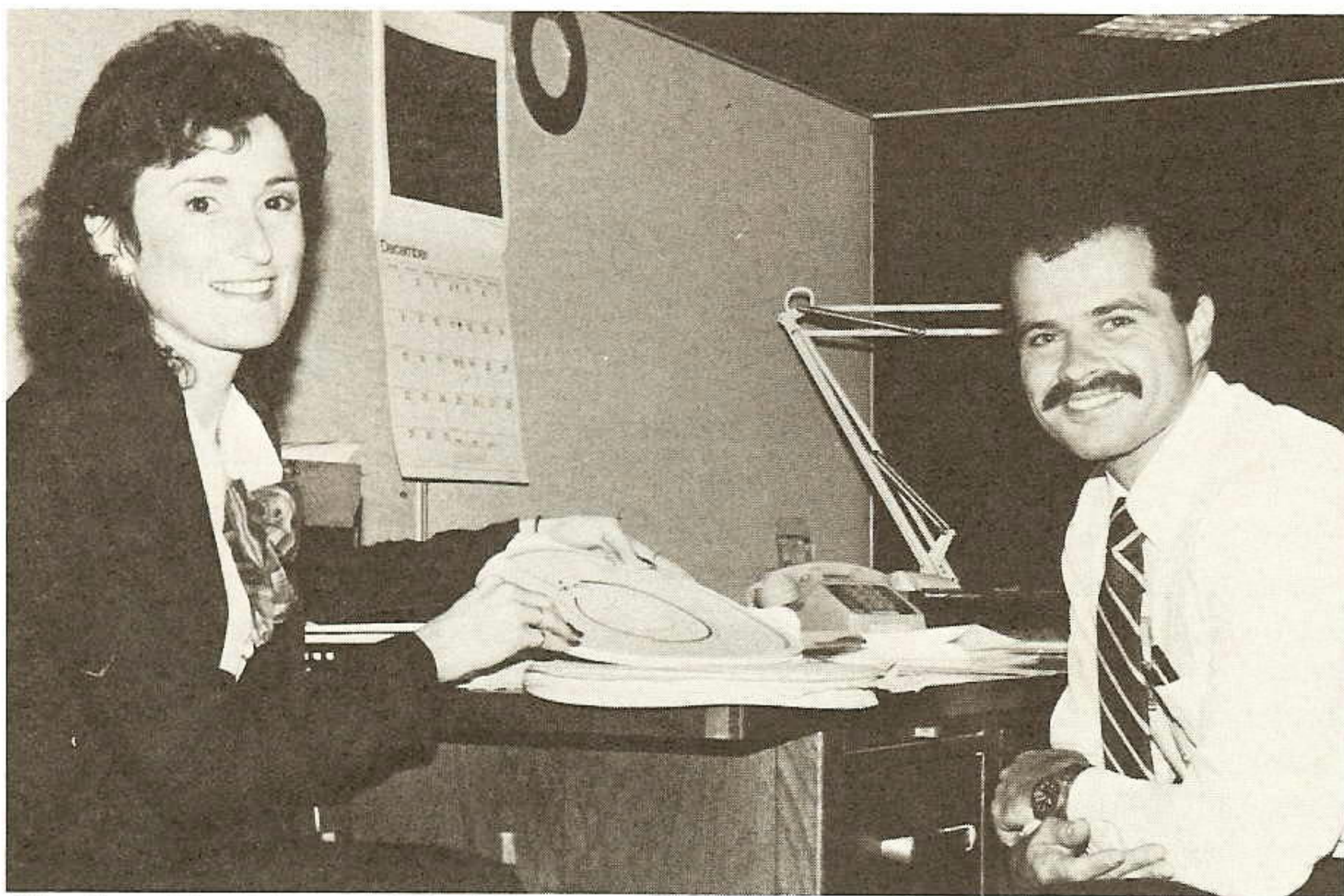
"Moving coal is our number one objective, but that must be balanced with maintenance on the coal cars. The 605 cars in our coal car fleet log a combined total of around 62 million miles a year." The leased cars are covered by a maintenance contract with repair work done at a location near the mine in Wyoming.

Although Gray says GSU transportation costs are routinely monitored for comparison to other utilities, he believes even better rates are possible. "When we entered this market, we contracted for very low rates," he says. "But since then, other utilities have made some good deals and we'll pursue several ways to reduce our coal transportation costs in 1986."

Contract renegotiations will be an important objective in 1986. However, George McCollough feels positively about the challenges facing the group: "There will always be uncertainty — no one can predict the fuel market or our load demand — but Fuel Services is in a stand-ready position."



*Jeanie Gracedel, fuel representative.*



*Charlotte Daniels and Mark Brodeur, both fuel coordinators.*



*Mickey Wilson (left) and Chris Landry, departmental clerk.*



# Can you help Pam make the right choice?

by Susan Gilley

**Editor's note:** All GSUsers are concerned about holding costs down, and one very simple way to do that is to comparison-shop for those items we use daily in our offices. The character in the following story is fictitious, but the choices she must make about office supplies are typical of those made by many GSU clerical employees.

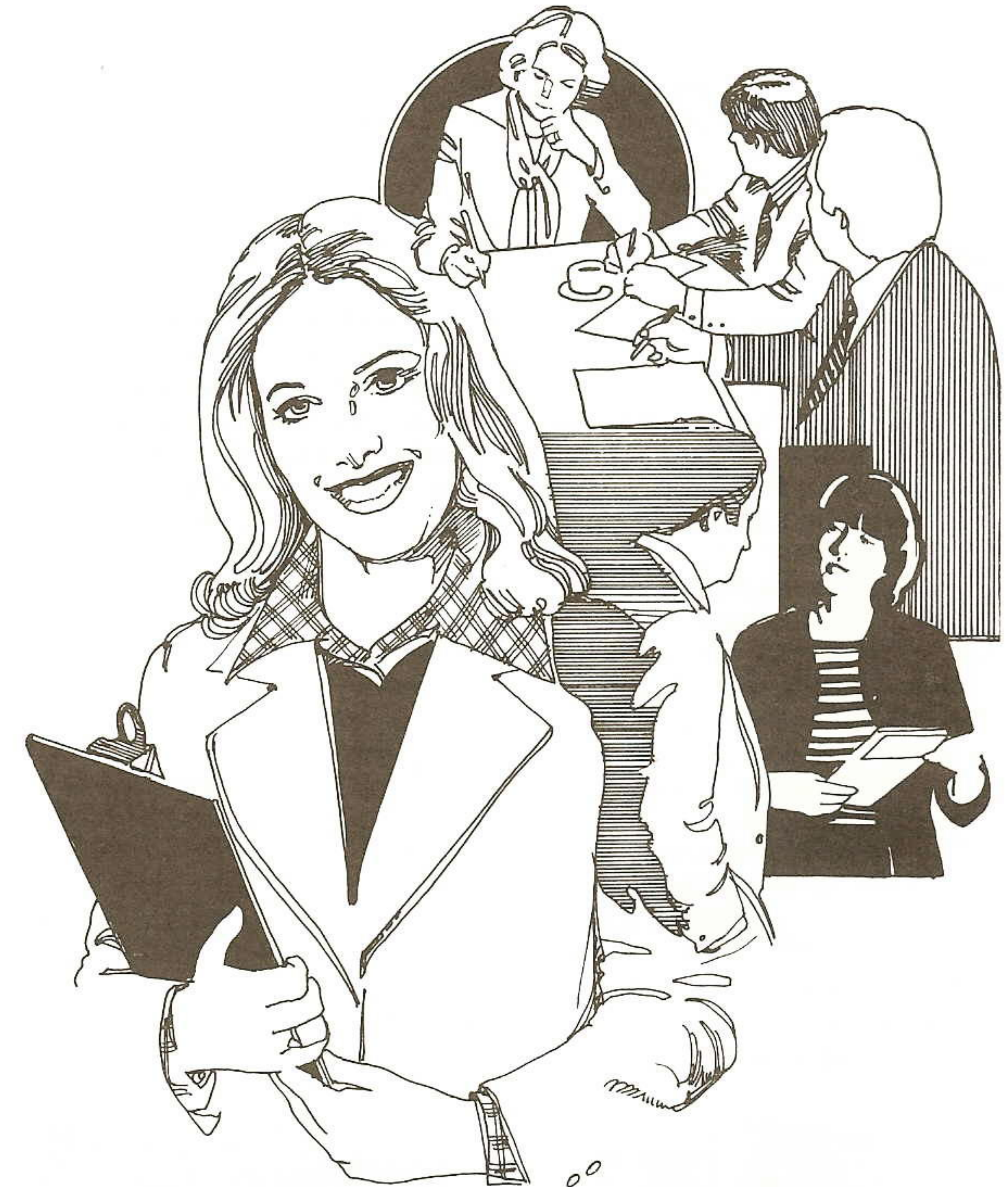
Pam was at her work station by 7:40 a.m. Monday, giving her time to drink coffee with a couple of co-workers before she began to sort the mail for distribution within her unit.

As soon as that task was out of the way, Pam's supervisor, Arnold, called her into his office to take dictation. She reached for her steno pad (1), but her felt-tip pen (2) was nowhere to be found. She decided she must have left it on someone else's desk or accidentally carried it home the day before.

Hurriedly, she grabbed a new one from the supply cabinet and headed for her boss's office.

A fast typist, Pam had a letter-perfect copy of the memo ready for Arnold within 10 minutes after leaving his office. He OK'd the original and asked her to send copies to three departmental representatives based in different divisions. After making the photostatic copies, she looked around for some inter-office envelopes. Realizing she was out, she substituted some large brown envelopes with the GSU return address on them (3). She inserted the copies, addressed the envelopes, slapped several strips of tape (4) on each one and dropped them in the company mail.

A quick visual inventory told her that she was out of several things, so she checked the supply catalog for the items she had always ordered before — inter-office envelopes, tablets (5), pens and pencils (6). As she flipped through, she decided she should order some binders (7), scissors



(8) and staplers (9). She thought it would be convenient to have them on hand. As she finished her order, Pam signed her boss's name, wrote *RUSH* across the front and dropped it in the company mail.

The rest of the morning passed quickly for Pam, who handled several familiar tasks. At about 11 a.m., however, Arnold told Pam that the department's manager had called a special meeting. He wanted Pam to attend the session and take notes so that matters discussed during the meeting could be reported to others who could not attend. Pam picked up a fresh spiral notebook (10) from the supply cabinet on her way to the conference room. After all, she might have to write a lot.

The men and women attending

the session were mostly engineers, all with clipboards (11) in hand so that they would have vital facts at their fingertips.

After lunch, Pam organized her notes after checking with Arnold to see what he considered the key points of the meeting. Since the distribution list included about 60 field representatives, Pam had to get started. She used the copy machine for almost an hour and, finally — despite a number of brief interruptions — collected her 60 copies (12) and returned to her desk. Still out of inter-office envelopes, she opened a new box of letterhead envelopes (13) because she needed a small envelope. Besides, they looked better than the tattered brown ones.

By now, most of the afternoon



was gone. Suddenly, the telephone began ringing with call after call. Pam grabbed her post-it note pad (14) to leave telephone messages for four different people. Finally, the calls ended. She delivered the messages to the various desks, sticking the little yellow sheets to their telephones.

"These are so handy — much better than those plain 'while-you-were-out' sheets," Pam thought to herself, as she returned to her desk.

She settled into her chair with a sigh of relief. Realizing it was nearly 5 o'clock, she reached for her daily diary (15) and recorded

her activities for the day.

As Pam collected her coat and purse, she remembered the order she had placed earlier with Stationery Supply. "I'd better give them a call," she told a passing co-worker. "I really need those supplies right away (16)."

## Penny-wise choices

Gail Barnett, section head in General Services, told us that employees can often save the company money just through carefully selecting their office supplies.

Barnett points out that a variety of supplies is available because certain tasks or projects demand different materials. Employees interested in learning more about how to save money when ordering supplies from Stationery Supply should contact Barnett at extension 733-4884.

Based on the preceding story, Barnett says these are ways in

which Pam could have saved money:

1. By substituting a scratch pad for a stenographer's pad, whenever appropriate.

2. By selecting a ballpoint pen, rather than a felt-tip pen. The latter can be from two to six times more expensive, depending upon the brand.

3. By using an inter-office envelope for company mailings, rather than the one-time-only large Kraft envelopes.

4. By eliminating unnecessary tape usage.

5. By using the narrow-ruled

tablet rather than an evidence pad. The difference adds up over time — the first costs 7 cents less than the second.

6. By writing with a standard No. 2 pencil rather than the much more expensive mechanical pencil.

7. By matching the right binder to the task. For example, the one-inch plain black binder is much cheaper than the white overlay binder in the same size.

8. By choosing properly-sized scissors. The price increases with the size, with the largest (12-inch) scissors almost \$6 more than the smallest (6-inch) size.

9. By ordering staplers *only* when they're needed, because they are quite expensive.

10. By writing on ruled tablets or evidence pads, rather than spiral notebooks, which are the most expensive.

11. By comparing the cost of clipboards available through Stationery Supply, since the masonite ones are far less expensive than the aluminum versions.

12. By having more than 10 copies printed by Reproduction, rather than photocopying them.

13. By opting for reusable inter-office envelopes over letterhead envelopes.

14. By leaving messages on the "while-you-were-out" pads rather than the much more expensive post-it notes.

15. By limiting usage of daily diaries to necessary logging of information and by selecting the right diary.

16. By allowing a reasonable amount of time for filling an order. While employees should not stockpile large quantities of supplies, they should have some on hand at all times.



Gail Barnett



# On the plus side

1985 was a year of significant accomplishments and challenges for GSU. Many customers expressed dissatisfaction over their Gulf States' bills. But there were several bright spots, as a number of pleased customers took the time to write letters telling employees they appreciated the way they were treated.

Following are excerpts from customers' letters praising GSU customer service. Included are comments from some of those employees about their philosophy of serving customers.

*"...Thank you for sending such a nice person as Mrs. (Georgia) Harris to explain the why's...for my high bills. It's good to have you pay attention to us out here in the neighborhood as the bills have increased..." — Conroe customer*

**Georgia Harris** of Conroe is an energy auditor. She has been with GSU since November 1980.

*"...I would like to say that Mr. Chester Vincent took time to call and let me know something was being done about the overcharge. He was very nice and explained everything to me..." — Iowa, La. customer*

**Chester Vincent**, staff accountant I, is based in Lake Charles. He has been with GSU since 1980.

*"...We wanted to take the time to thank you for your recent energy savings inspection of our home...Your visit was very timely and informative. We wish to thank GSU for the service they are offering their customers through people like you..." — The Woodlands customer*

*"...On June 26, 1985, one of your employees acted above and beyond the call of duty in assisting in the apprehension of a drunk driver...Your employee, Mr. Keith Davidson, was following a truck whose driver was driving in a very frantic manner...Mr. Davidson then went into Asphodel and called police and a rescue unit...After this, Mr. Davidson went back to his car and drove down La. Hwy. 68 in an attempt to locate the truck...He found the truck stopped in the roadway...He was able to reach in the truck and turn the engine off and take the keys out of the ignition..." — Louisiana State Police trooper, St. Francisville*

**Keith Davidson, meter reader, Zachary:** Although Davidson has less than a year of service with GSU, he grew up in a household that emphasized good customer service attitudes. His father is Peeler Davidson, a GSU utility foreman in Port Allen, who has 28 years of service.

Before joining GSU in early 1985, Davidson worked seven years as the manager of a lumber company. "My parents taught me to be as polite as possible," reveals Davidson. He admits having encountered irate customers — "it comes with the territory" — but Davidson truly enjoys keeping up with customers on his route, especially the

**Sherry George**, a district service representative in The Woodlands, was the appreciated employee in this letter, George has been with GSU for 2½ years.

*"...It is not often that I take the time to write a letter about the service I receive from a company or store, even when that service is poor. However, I received such super service from the Port Allen office of Gulf States that I feel it is necessary to write this letter.*



Keith Davidson

elderly ones.

A part-time police officer and emergency medical technician, Davidson intervened in the reckless driving case because "I wanted to prevent a head-on collision" with some other innocent driver. "At first I thought he was having a heart attack, but then I learned that he was high on freon."

Most of Davidson's customer contacts are not nearly as exciting. "Most of the time," he explains, "if you have uncooperative customers, you just explain that you're doing your job and then you give them the name of someone else who might be able to help them."

*I am in the automotive business dealing with customer service, and I assure you that I would be proud to have such competent employees as your dispatcher and your repairman on my team..."*

Port Allen serviceman-1st class **Kirby J. Thibodeaux** has worked for GSU since May 1968.





Jake Andrus

*"...I recently had a question concerning my bill and GSU representative Jake Andrus came to check my meter. I want to express my thanks to him for his effort to solve the problem and for the explanations and information he gave me. I feel that between Marilyn Guidry and Jake Andrus, the customer service at GSU is excellent..."— Lake Charles customer*

This customer praised two Lake Charles employees — **Jake Andrus**, meterman-1st class, and **Marilyn Guidry**, customer contact clerk. Andrus has 40 years of service with GSU, while Guidry has almost 12 years of service.

*"...I thought it would be worth my while to sit down and write you a letter complimenting you and two of your crews for a job well done. Your bucket trucks No. 4385 and No. 4927 completed...a change of service for Basic Industries, Inc., and only had us out of power for one hour..." — Baton Rouge customer*

The employees who participated in this change of service were **Ben Rimes**, lineman-1st class; **Frank Canella**, lineman-1st class; **Don Panepinto**, helper; **Ronnie Edgens**, helper; and **Barry Bergeron**, helper, all of Baton Rouge.

*"...I would like to take just a moment to thank you for the help you extended to me last week. I truly appreciate your efforts!..." — Port Arthur customer*

**Rhonda Morris, customer contact clerk, Port Arthur:** "I had dealt with this man about a service request for property owned by his employer," she recalls, "and I gave him my name. Afterwards, he would always ask for me by name when he needed help. He also told some other customers my name." Such personalized service by Morris prompted the man to write the letter. Morris believes he was so pleased because, "I recognized that he was a very busy man. I could have referred him to someone else who ordinarily handles such service requests but, since I knew what to do, I handled it. My philosophy is if I can do it, I do it."



Rhonda Morris



*"...It is a pleasure to deal with a company who gets the job done the first time around without having to call repeatedly, resulting in frustration to ourselves..." — Beaumont customer*

**J.B. Flanagan Jr., serviceman-1st class, Beaumont:** "We go out of our way to do things for customers. After their lights are back on, most of them appreciate us. One guy told me, 'I can gripe at anybody (from other firms) but GSU.' Lots of times, I've changed attitudes around."

With a smile, Flanagan explains that his troubleshooting job has acquainted him with many of the customers in his area. "Some people say I ought to run for mayor." On the serious side, however, Flanagan says his advice to new customer service employees is simple and pragmatic: "You've got to get along with customers. That's who's paying your salary."



*J.B. Flanagan*

*"...A few weeks ago, a home on Horseshoe Lake burned to the ground. We live two houses down, so our lights went out about 2 a.m. By 3 a.m., we had our lights back on! We were happy and surprised...We want to commend your company, and to thank personally the man (Frank Galassi) who was here and did the job so promptly. I believe his truck was here before the fire truck..." — Huntsville customer*

**Frank Galassi, serviceman-1st class, Huntsville:** "Once you get a call, you try to get out there as soon as possible. Sometimes you have to prioritize when several things happen at once. For instance, in this case, since it involved a house fire, several customers could have suffered outages."

Galassi admits that not all customers are appreciative, but he tries to "let the customers

vent their feelings. Lots of times, after you get their lights back on, they're sorry for what they've said."

*"...Your employee, Norman Lofland, came out after 5 p.m., cut off the service, helped me install the new meter can and turned the service back on. His attitude and help were outstanding. I know you always hear the bad news, so I wanted to be sure to point out the good. He did a SUPER job..." — Shiro, Texas, customer*

**Norman Lofland, serviceman-1st class in Navasota,** joined GSU in August 1970.

*"... I commend Mr. Harrell for his work and for his help and understanding of my situation..." — Beaumont customer*

Beaumont employee **Martin L. Harrell III** is nicknamed "Red." He is a serviceman-1st class and has been with GSU for 16 years.



*Red Harrell*



# Coleman serves customers

by Susan Gilley

Gulf States may be a bigger company than it was in 1957 when Charles Coleman began work in the Baton Rouge Division, but the Jackson-based district serviceman-1st class believes GSU has gotten better, too.

"In the Northern District (of the Baton Rouge Division)," Coleman points out, "if people want service, they don't have to wait for it."

The 3,500 residents of Jackson know Coleman as "Mr. Gulf States," but they also identify him as a 16-year member of the East Feliciana Police Jury. Coleman has served as president of the parish governing panel for all but two of those years.

The elected position has given Coleman, a Mississippi native, a chance to see how Gulf States helps the communities it serves.

Coleman, who works within a few miles of River Bend Station, says, "It's quite an accomplishment for GSU to build River Bend as fast as we have and to get the good reports that we've gotten on the plant. River Bend has really boosted the Felicianas' economy."

The nuclear power plant has been a boon to local government, too, he adds. "It has really helped East Feliciana to develop an emergency preparedness plan. Before, we had an inactive civil defense position, but it has grown into a fulltime job." As a local elected official, Coleman has been involved with offsite emergency planning from the outset of the project.

Coleman boasts about Jackson as if he were a native. Most residents of the area drive to jobs in Baton Rouge, although the area is home to several institutions, including a prison facility, a state hospital and a war veterans' home.

"People want to get out of the hustle and bustle of larger



towns," theorizes Coleman. In Jackson, they find an historic refuge that includes several pre-Civil War era churches and homes. Although Clinton is now the parish seat of East Feliciana, Jackson was parish seat of the original Feliciana Parish from 1816 until 1824, when the parish divided into East and West Feliciana. The courthouse has been restored.

Coleman may appreciate the town's slow pace, but he is a high-energy person. Now the grandfather of two, he admits that life is not quite as frenzied for him and his wife, Pat, as it

was when their three children were at home. The couple makes their home on a hill overlooking the road into Jackson, in a house largely built by Coleman. He dug a pond on his place so as to provide a steady supply of catfish.

But Coleman's favorite leisure-time activities include hunting turkeys and rabbits — animals known for their wiliness.

Deer-hunting, popular among many area hunters, is not for Coleman, however. "It requires too much sitting. The world is just too fast for that," he explains.



# Shaping up

by Susan Gilley

Every New Year's, many of us vow to get into shape by starting an exercise or diet program.

Unfortunately, many of our resolutions are forgotten as the year progresses.

The advantages of physical fitness are more than meets the eye, according to various experts. For example, an article in *Industry Week* claims that programs aimed at keeping people healthy provide the best antidote to rising health-care costs. And an article in the July 1984 *Journal of Occupational Medicine* maintains that job performance often increases and absenteeism decreases as a result of participation in an exercise program.

Some GSU employees have carried out their resolutions to get into shape and their experiences verify that their healthiness holds down their out-of-pocket medical expenses.

*Plain Talks* interviewed two runners, an aerobic dancer, a weight-lifter and members of an informal diet club.

Dona Austin, stenographer-senior and a member of the seven-person Essen Lane diet club, boasts that her 37-pound weight loss since January 1985 enables her "to climb stairs now and still have breath."

Beginning a regular exercise program is next on her list of priorities, but for now, Austin insists that her reduced poundage encourages her to get more indirect exercise. "I'm more apt to walk up stairs now, rather than take an elevator. Or, if I drop something, I'm more apt to lean over and pick it up."

Austin adds, "Physically, I feel 100 percent better. I feel better emotionally, too."

For Kris Partain, senior financial analyst, weight loss was just part of the package when she embarked on a running program about two years ago.

"I feel much better than I did 10 years ago when I was a teenager. I can't remember the last time I had a cold," she exults.

Partain runs about 13 miles per week, divided among five days. "I've dropped about 15 pounds, and I like to eat a lot," she reveals.

Paul Falgout, a 28-year-old storeroom assistant in Port Arthur, has been running about 15 years. Running injuries sometimes sideline Falgout — a situation that leaves him "feeling lethargic and downright lazy."

He runs because, "It makes me feel good and it is a good stress reliever."

Falgout also notes, "I don't get colds. I'm sure that's a byproduct of the exercise."

Partain and Falgout are among an estimated 30 million Americans who run. One reason for the attraction of running is that it requires little skill or expensive athletic equipment. You can run alone, with someone or with a group of people.

Clarence Stephens, an Orange meter reader, opted for weight-lifting as his route to good health. He began lifting weights competitively while he was in the U.S. Army in the 1970s.

Now, he lifts weights each morning and runs each afternoon — proving that expending energy gives you more energy, since he puts in a full day reading meters between lifting weights and running.

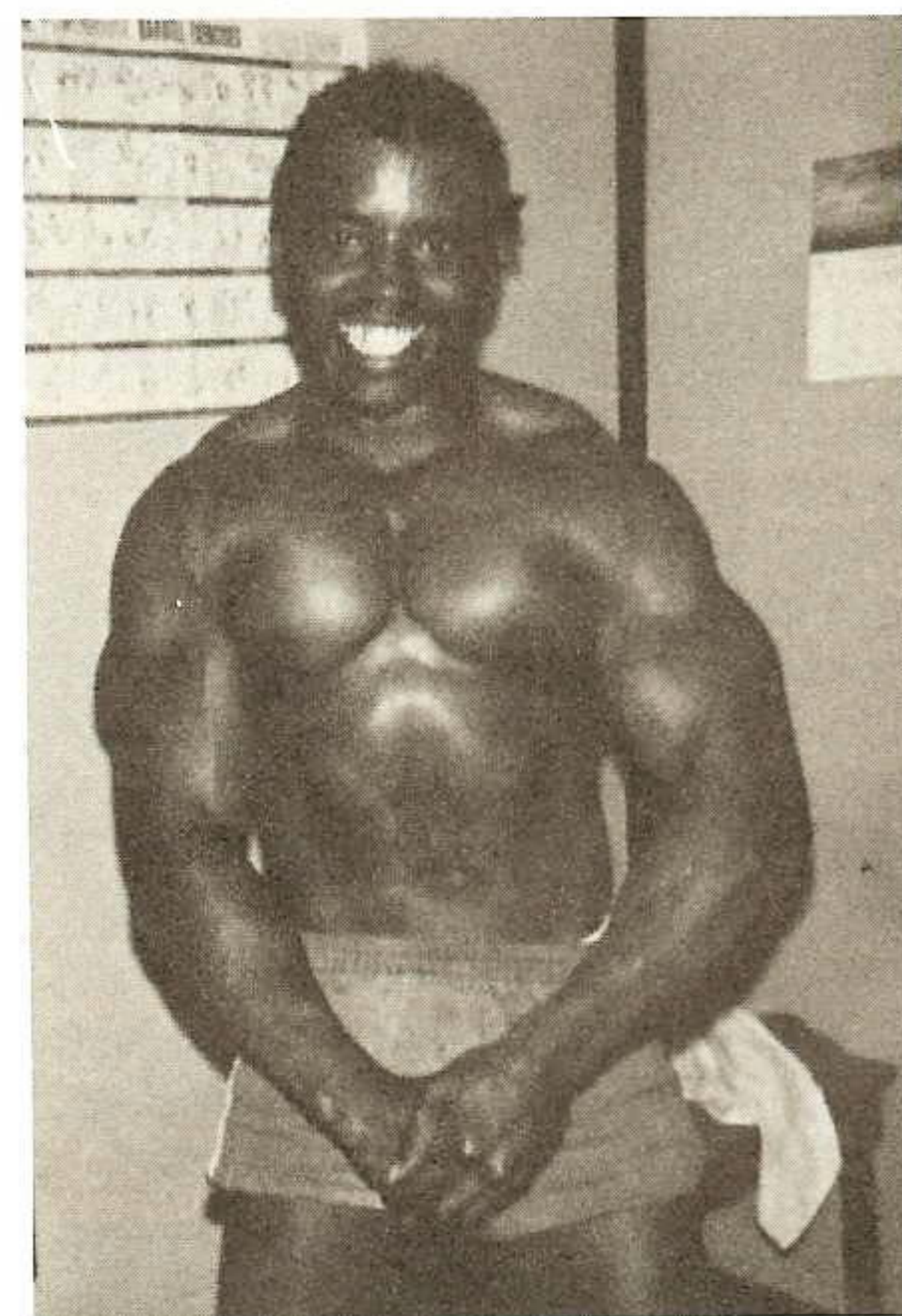
Carol Payne, consumer service representative-senior, says she has taken an aerobic dance class for the past five years, beginning right after her graduation from college.

Aerobic dance is a combination of rhythmic movements and simple dance steps set to music that can improve and maintain cardiovascular and physical fitness.

"I can really tell a difference. If I miss, I get tired real quick and I get grouchy." Further, Payne says, "I get a cold occa-



Dona Austin

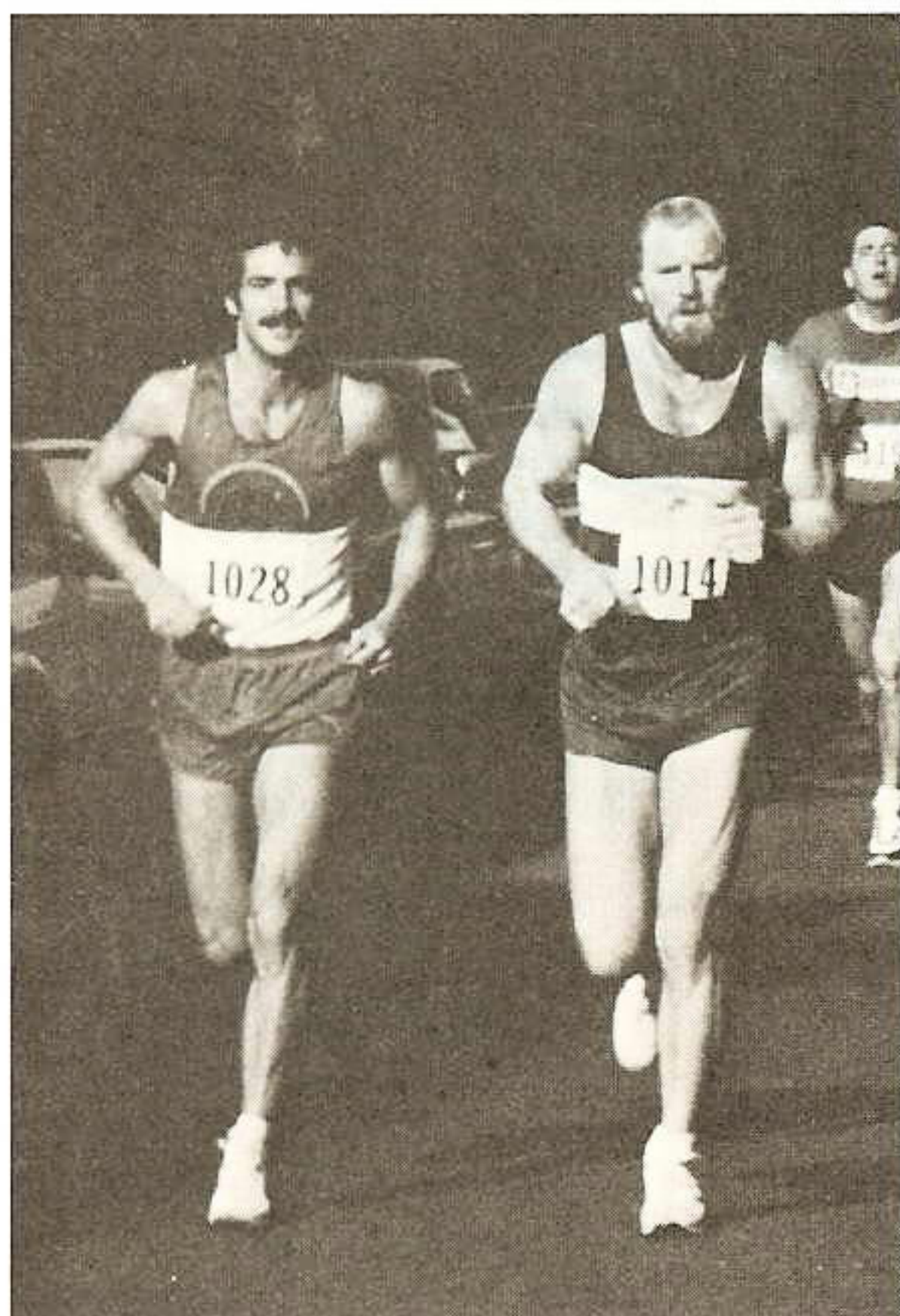


Clarence Stephens Jr.

sionally — maybe once a year — but never bad enough to miss work." In addition to the health benefits of her exercise program, Payne enjoys the camaraderie with her classmates — all working women like herself.

In addition to her twice-weekly hour-long aerobic routines, Payne rides a stationary bicycle at home.





Paul Falgout (left) and Craig Lee



Carol Payne

Besides attributing her good health to exercise, Payne, who holds a degree in home economics, insists that good nutrition plays a role, too. "For about the same period of time that I've taken aerobics, I've pretty much limited my diet to lots of vegetables, salads, fish and chicken. I eat very little red meat."



## Good health guidelines

GSUers who want to begin a diet or exercise program should first check with their doctor for specific guidelines.

According to the American Heart Association (AHA), there is a big payoff for any investment in exercise or good nutrition.

### Exercise benefits

These are the benefits most often experienced by people who exercise regularly.

#### Feeling better:

- gives you more energy.
- helps in coping with stress.
- improves your self-image.
- increases resistance to fatigue.
- helps counter anxiety and depression.
- helps you to relax and feel less tense.
- improves the ability to fall asleep quickly and sleep well.
- provides an easy way to share an activity with friends or family and an opportunity to meet new friends.

#### Looking better:

- tones your muscles.
- burns off calories to help

lose extra pounds or helps you stay at your ideal weight.

- helps control the appetite.

### Nutrition benefits

Nutrition has a major impact on cardiovascular health and physical fitness since all body movements require food as a fuel source.

#### AHA dietary recommendations include:

- Adjust your calorie intake for maintaining the most desirable weight.
- Reduce your total intake of fat.
- Reduce your intake of saturated fats, which are primarily animal fats, but also include certain vegetable fats like palm and coconut oil.
- Substitute unsaturated fats using appropriate vegetable oils.
- Replace some of the saturated fats with polyunsaturated fats such as corn, soya, cottonseed and sunflower oil.
- Reduce dietary cholesterol.
- Increase carbohydrates, especially complex types, such as whole-grain breads and cereals, starchy vegetables and legumes.



**A**

**Albert, Maurice A.**, The Woodlands, to lineman-2nd class, Electric T&D.

**B**

**Bell, Lehmon D.**, Sabine Station, to test technician-1st class, Plant Production.

**Benefield, Walter E. Jr.**, Baton Rouge, to lineman-1st class, Electric T&D.

**Bernard, Jay G.**, Baton Rouge, to lineman-3rd class, Electric T&D.

**Bienvenu, Morris J.**, Lafayette, to meterman-1st class, Electric T&D.

**Bodemann, Leroy J.**, Beaumont, to director-technical support, Engineering Services.

**Boullion, Dallas J.**, Conroe, to lineman-2nd class, Electric T&D.

**Buchanan, Kathy A.**, Baton Rouge, to substation mechanic-1st class, Electric T&D.

**C**

**Chance, Karen B.**, Beaumont, to associate systems analyst, Computer Applications.

**Cote, Timothy A.**, The Woodlands, to serviceman-2nd class, Electric T&D.

**Couvillion, Steven C.**, Baton Rouge, to lineman-4th class, Electric T&D.

**D**

**Dennis, Henderson L.**, Baton Rouge, to communications foreman, T&D Relay and Communications.

**Devall, Gregory M.**, Lake Charles, to lineman-2nd class, Electric T&D.

**Ducote, Roland J.**, Baton Rouge, to communications supervisor, T&D Relay and Communications.

**E**

**Edmond, Darrell C.**, Conroe, to serviceman-1st class, Electric T&D.

**Evans, Timothy W.**, Conroe, to serviceman-1st class, Electric T&D.

**F**

**Fawcett, Cynthia L.**, Beaumont, to computer operator, Computer Applications.

**Ford, Lynn R.**, Willow Glen Station, to repairman-2nd class, Plant Production.

**H**

**Hebert, Catherine S.**, Baton Rouge, to customer contact clerk, Customer Accounting.

**Hoffpauir, Melvin J.**, Lafayette, to lineman-3rd class, Electric T&D.

**Huff, Hugh J.**, River Bend Station, to senior planning and scheduling specialist, River Bend Nuclear Group.

**Hunt, Peter L.**, Beaumont, to lineman-1st class, Electric T&D.

**Hyde, James H.**, Willow Glen Station, to test technician-1st class, Plant Production.

**J**

**Jacobsen, David D. Jr.**, Baton Rouge, to meterman-1st class, Electric T&D.

**Jones, Pamela S.**, River Bend Station, to coordinator-design control, River Bend Nuclear Group.

**Jones, William**, River Bend Station, to communications serviceman-2nd class, River Bend Nuclear Group.

**K**

**King, Ricky D.**, Beaumont, to lineman-2nd class, Electric T&D.

**L**

**Langston, Brian G.**, Beaumont, to senior engineering assistant, Electric T&D.

**Lantz, Randal P.**, Lake Charles, to lineman-2nd class, Electric T&D.

**Lemere, Gary J.**, Cleveland, to lineman-4th class, Electric T&D.

**Lene, Katherine N.**, Beaumont, to licensing librarian, River Bend Nuclear Group.

**Lett, Marquard Y. Jr.**, River Bend Station, to radiation protection technician-1st class, River Bend Nuclear Group.

**Lewis, Charles E.**, Port Allen, to lineman-3rd class, Electric T&D.

**M**

**McLaughlin, Larry W.**, Neches Station, to control operations foreman, Plant Production.

**Miller, Cindy M.**, Beaumont, to stenographer-senior, Office Services.

**Mitchell, Clyde W.**, Lake Charles, to accountant, Division Accounting.

**Mosley, Paul E.**, formerly of New Caney, to marketing agent, Division Marketing and Consumer Services, Conroe.

**Moss, Kent O.**, Nelson Coal, to repairman-1st class, Plant Production.

**N**

**New, Kenneth W.**, Baton Rouge, to apprentice, Gas Department.

**Newman, Robert C.**, Baton Rouge, to senior engineering assistant, Electric T&D.

**Nugent, Clyde H.**, formerly of Orange, to utility foreman, T&D Meter, Beaumont.

**O**

**Ott, Jimmy O.**, Louisiana Station, to repairman-2nd class, Plant Production.

**P**

**Perkins, Kelvin A.**, Willow Glen Station, to repairman-1st class, Plant Production.

**R**

**Rathecke, Michael J.**, Willow Glen Station, to repairman-2nd class, Plant Production.

**Richard, James R.**, Lafayette, to lineman-4th class, Electric T&D.

**Ringo, John**, Baton Rouge, to lineman-2nd class, Electric T&D.

**S**

**Sander, Robert G.**, Conroe, to meterman-2nd class, Electric T&D.

**Sattler, Florabelle B.**, Beaumont, to assistant systems analyst, Computer Applications.

**Scott, Jeffrey C.**, Baton Rouge, to lineman-4th class, Electric T&D.

**Senkel, Paul R.**, formerly of Conroe, to superintendent, Division Operations, Calvert.

**Sholar, Windle L. III**, Baton Rouge, to lineman-4th class, Electric T&D.

**Signorino, Paul H.**, Baton Rouge, to relayman-1st class, Electric T&D.

**Small, Faye E.**, Beaumont, to stenographer-senior, Office Services.

**Smith, Mary R.**, Beaumont, to secretary, Human Resources.

**Spencer, William M.**, River Bend Station, to radiation protection technician-1st class, River Bend Nuclear Group.

**Sticker, Maurice M.**, Beaumont, to lead environmental analyst, Engineering.

**T**

**Tate, Bradley E.**, River Bend Station, to supervisor-operational planning, River Bend Nuclear Group.

**Tessier, Shivaun M.**, formerly of River Bend Station, to nuclear communications coordinator, Public Affairs, Baton Rouge.



## W

**Watkins, James L.**, formerly of Lake Charles, to apprentice, Electric T&D, Jennings.

**Webb, Pamela J.**, Beaumont, to director-engineering

services, Engineering Services.

**Wells, Don H.**, formerly of River Bend Station, to licensing analyst, River Bend Nuclear Group, Beaumont.

**Williams, Karl D.**, Nelson Station, to repairman-1st class, Plant Production.

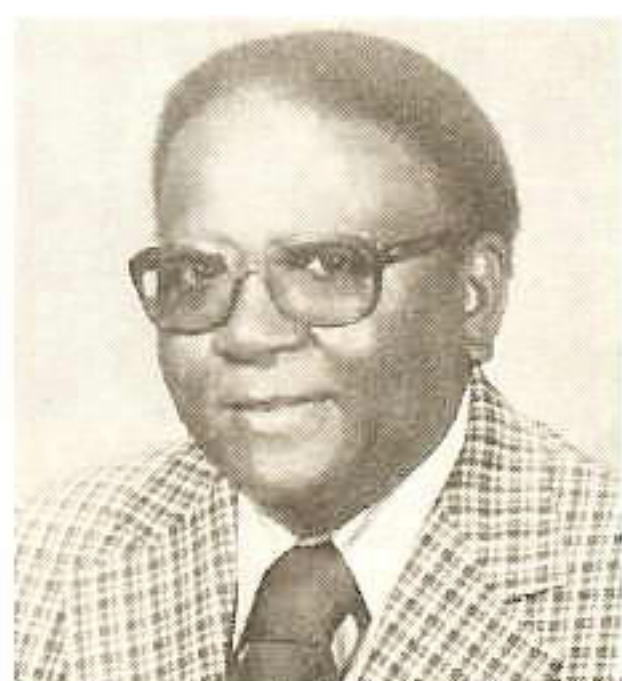
**Williams, Mitchell L. III**, Baton Rouge, to lineman-2nd class, Electric T&D.

**Winney, Mary M.**, Beaumont, to compensation analyst, Human Resources.

**Worthy, Gene B. Jr.**, Baton Rouge, to lineman-1st class, Electric T&D.

# SERVICE AWARDS

## 40 years



**Amos Chambers Jr.**  
Plant Production  
Sabine Station



**J.W. Flanigan Jr.**  
System Operations  
Beaumont

## 30 years



**Edward D. Barnes**  
Electric T&D  
Sulphur

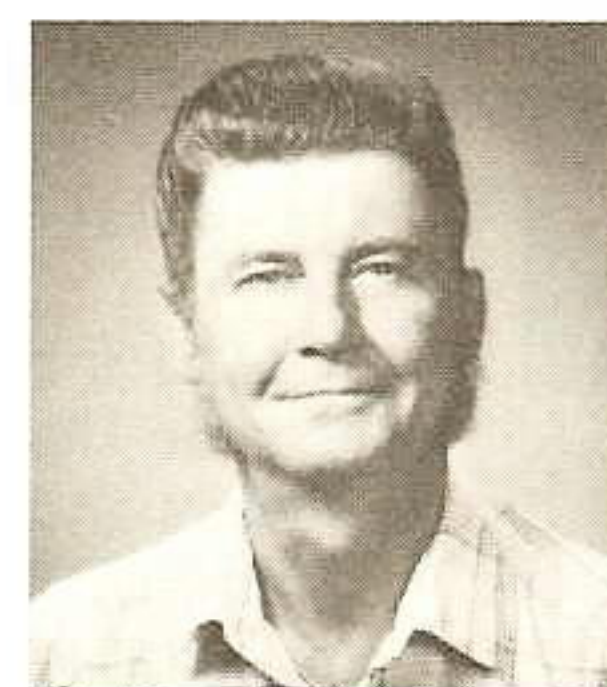


**Raymond D. Broussard**  
Engineering Svcs.  
Beaumont



**Jasper F. Worthy**  
Executive Dept.  
Beaumont

## 20 years



**Philip Broussard**  
Electric T&D  
Beaumont

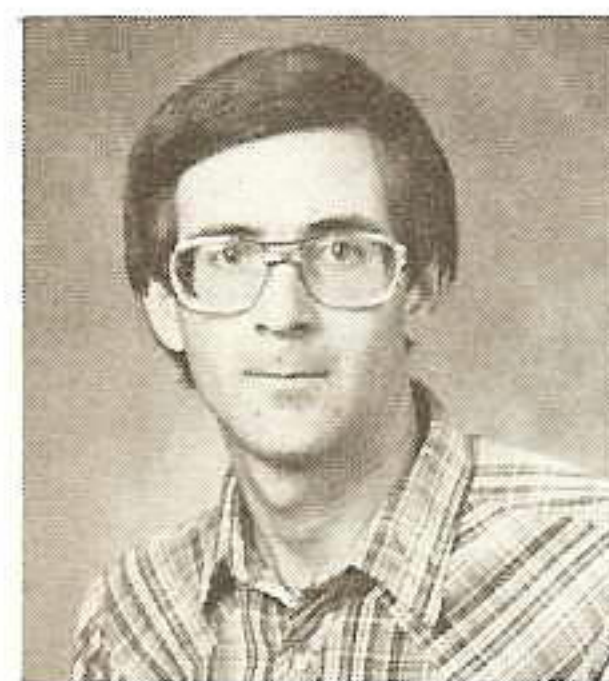


**Roosevelt Norris Jr.**  
Plant Production  
Louisiana Station

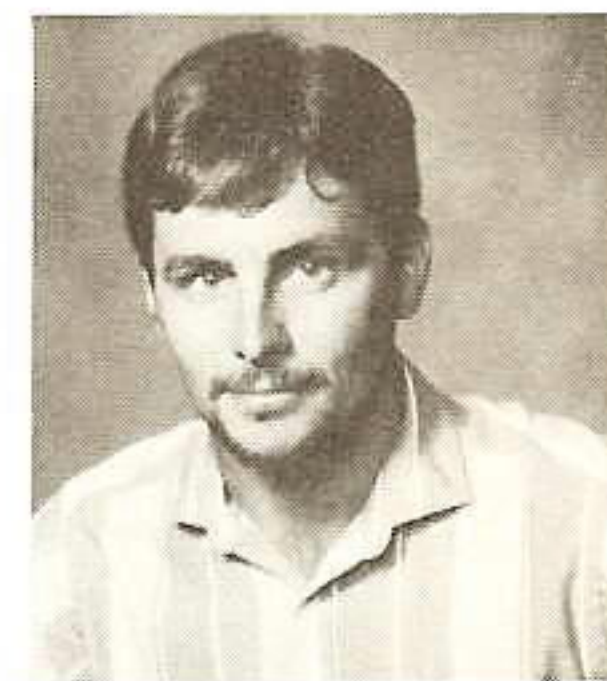
## 10 years



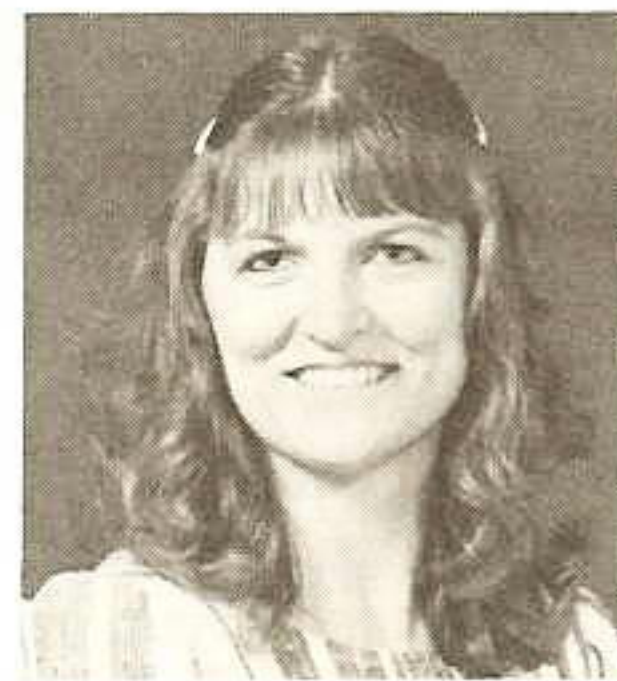
**Joseph Schittone**  
Electric T&D  
Baton Rouge



**Fred Coppenbarger**  
Division Accounting  
Bonzaes



**Allen L. English**  
Electric T&D  
Port Arthur



**Pamela B. Thurmon**  
Division Accounting  
Gonzales





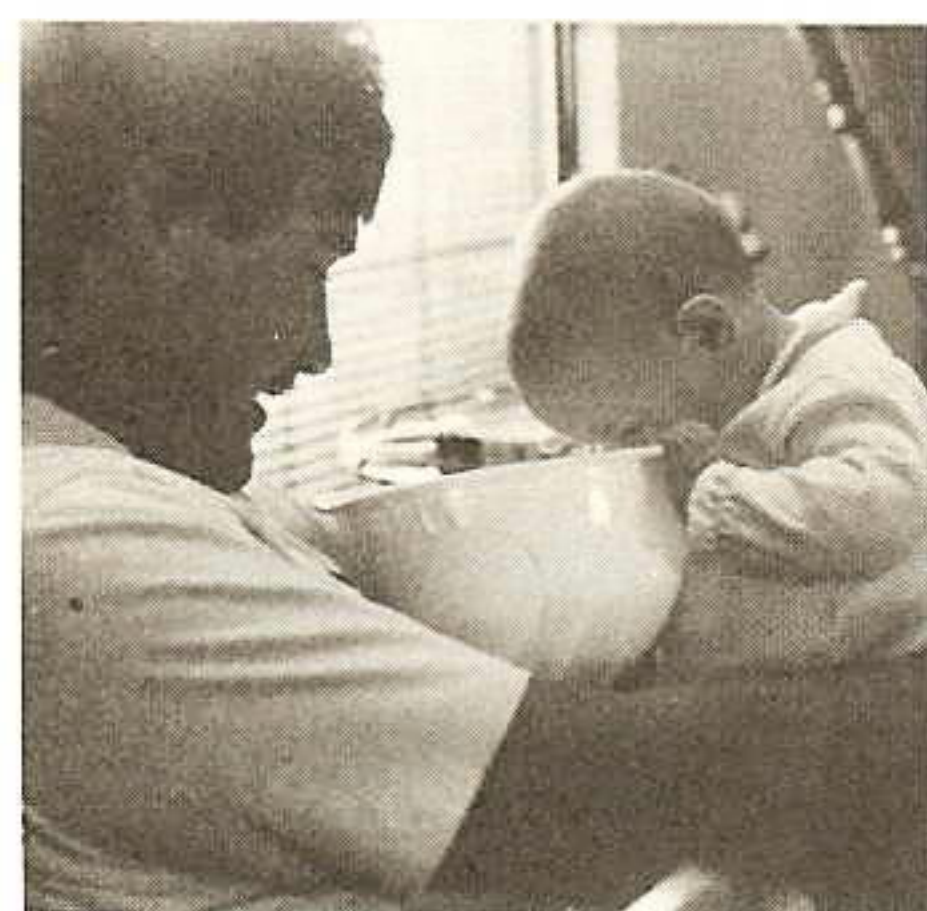
*Dana Michelle Artherholt*

## Artherholt family grows by one

Julie and David Artherholt of Huntsville announce the birth of their daughter, Dana Michelle, on Aug. 12, 1985.

She weighed 7 pounds, 1 ounce and measured 19½ inches.

Her mother is a local office clerk in Huntsville.



## Weavers announce baby daughter

Lindsey Nicole Weaver joined the Luddie P. and Kathy R. Weaver family April 12, 1984, weighing 6 pounds, 15 ounces and measuring 19½ inches.

When she was 6 months old, the youngster went with her dad, serviceman-1st class, Gas Department, to a GSU safety picnic, where she was given a baby-sized hardhat.

According to her proud parents, Lindsey was quite enchanted with her new head covering. They sent a photograph of the little girl checking out some features of the safety gear.

## Family conducts prison ministry

A Zachary employee, her family and some friends conduct a prison ministry for inmates at the Mississippi State Penitentiary.

Debbie McAdams, a customer contact clerk; her husband, Emmitt; her parents, John and Myrtle Verbois; and family friends, Doug and Judy Rogillio, hold monthly services at the penal institution.

In addition to their regular visits, the group presents a special worship service for Christmas and distributes homemade cookies and candy to the prisoners.



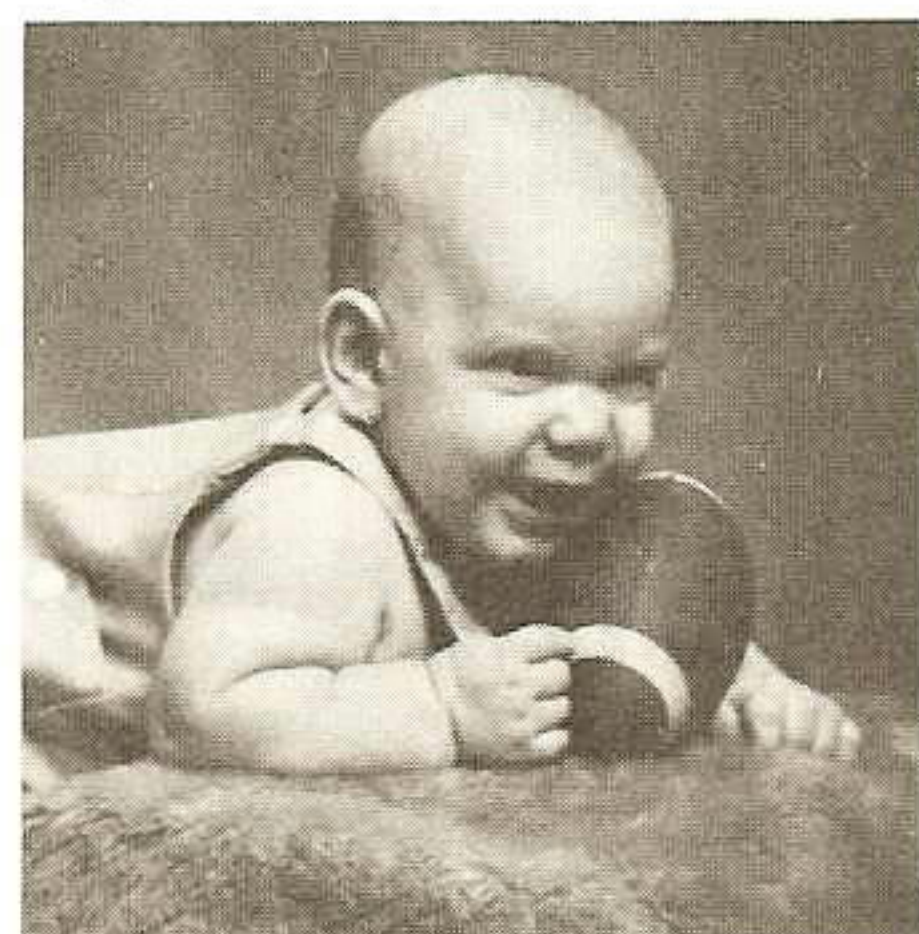
*Back row, from left: Debbie and Emmitt McAdams and Myrtle and John Verbois. Front row: Judy and Doug Rogillio.*

## Dawseys tell of son's birth

Derrick Stephen Dawsey became the third son in the Dennis and Tammy Dawsey family when he made his appearance on May 24.

The youngster weighed 8 pounds, 3 ounces. He joins brothers Jeffrey, 7, and Darrell, 5.

His dad is relay design engineer in Beaumont.



*Jared Keegan Webb*

## Second son joins Webbs

Jared Keegan Webb was born into the Charles and Brenda Webb family on Aug. 6.

The infant, who weighed 7 pounds and measured 18½ inches, is the second son for the couple. Their older son, Bryan, is 3½.

Jared's mom is a graphic technician in Reproduction, Beaumont, and his uncle, Tracy Webb, is manager-computer systems in Beaumont.



*Tim and Peggy Helton*

## Couple reports GSU wedding

It wasn't a "GSU only" wedding — but it was close.

Two employees, Tim Helton and Peggy Harrell, were married Nov. 2 at the employee pavilion near Lewis Creek Station.

The groom is a senior engineering assistant in Conroe; the bride is a storeroom assistant in Conroe. She was

given away by Alan Sikora, senior engineering assistant in New Caney. Sheila Anderson, departmental clerk in Conroe, was the matron of honor, while Myra Cline, collector in Trinity, was a bridesmaid.

Organist was Gerald Eppinette, a clerk in Conroe.

After the ceremony, the newlyweds posed for a photograph along the lakefront, with Lewis Creek Station showing in the background.

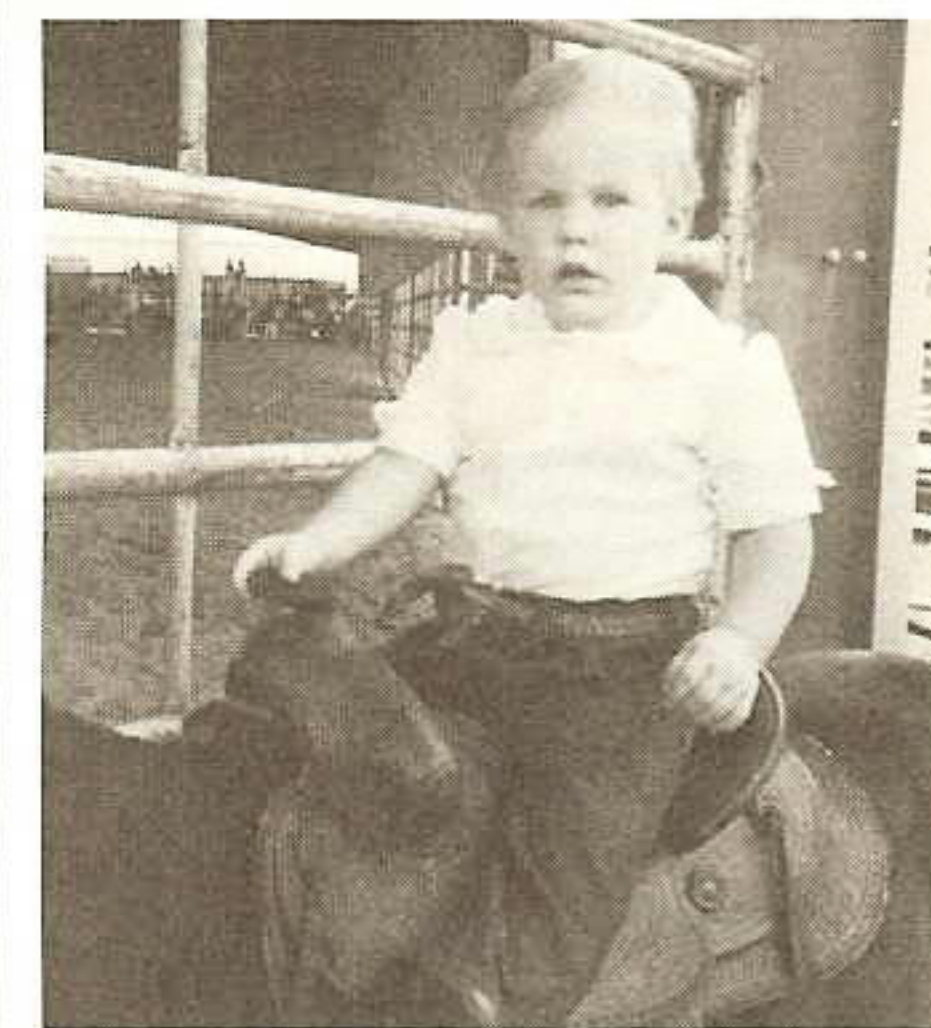


*Britney Fowler (left) and Morgan Trant*

## Youngsters win riding trophies

Three granddaughters of Navasota employee Betty Dickschat won riding trophies during the 1985 Grimes County Fair.

Dickschat said the winners were 3-year-old Britney Fowler, 3-year-old Morgan Trant and 16-month-old Brandi Fowler.



*Brandi Fowler*





*Jennifer Rebecca Gray*

## Parents announce baby's adoption

Dan and Jenney Gray of Lumberton proudly announce the Sept. 27 finalization of the adoption of their daughter, Jennifer Rebecca.

The little girl was born March 19, weighing 7 pounds, 15 ounces and measuring 21½ inches, and was placed with the Grays on a 24-hour notice on March 21.

The new father is administrator-fuel transportation in Beaumont.



*Brooke and Zeke Kirby ride on a Christmas float built by their grandfather, Robert Ponthier (standing).*

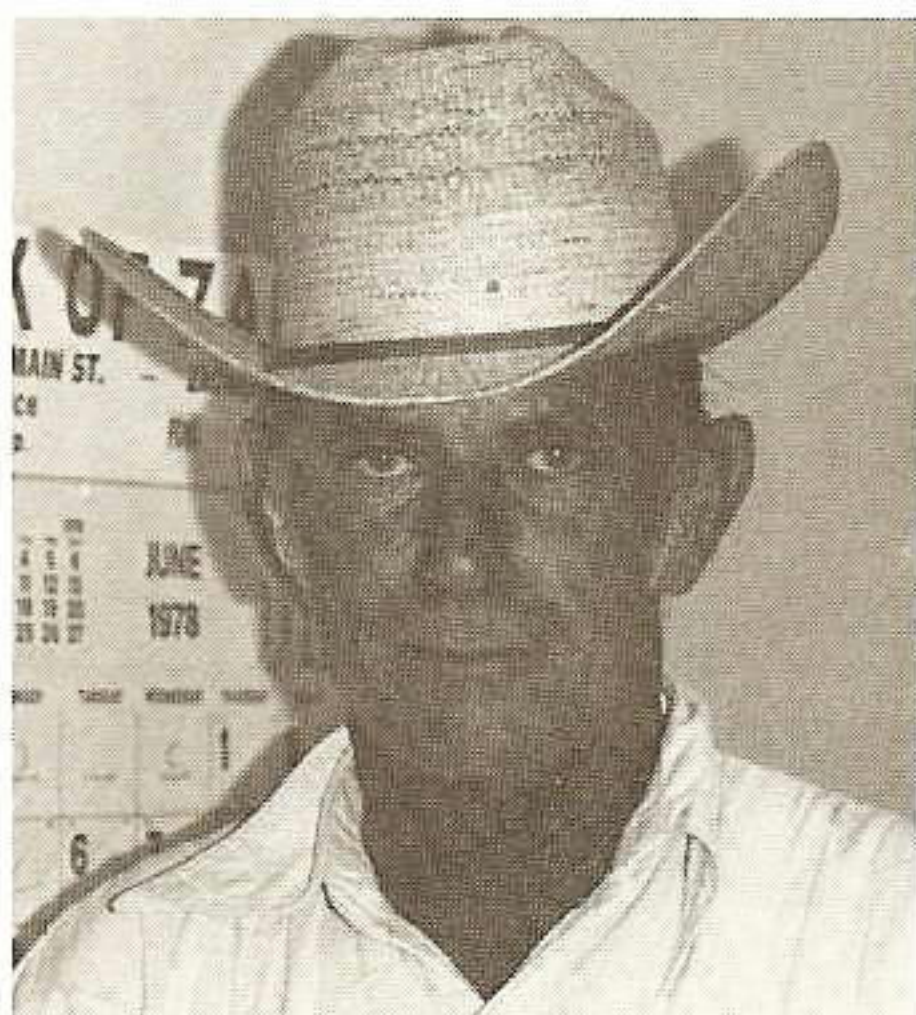
## Grandparents build winning float

Each Christmas, Robert and Myra Ponthier of Zachary build a float so that their grandchildren, Brooke and Zeke Kirby, can ride in the town's Christmas parade.

Mrs. Ponthier is a senior clerk in the Zachary office.

Lately, the floats have brought home prizes from the

Zachary parade and other area parades. In 1983, for example, the Ponthier float won first place in Zachary. The 1984 float won 2nd place in Zachary and 1st place in Slaughter, La.



*Robert H. Easley*

## Easley reports crime to police

Three burglars discovered last October that Robert H. Easley is not one to avoid involvement when he sees a crime being committed.

The Zachary-based district serviceman-1st class radioed the Zachary office to call both the Zachary and the Baker police when he witnessed a burglary in progress in Zachary.

All three burglars were apprehended.



*Celeste Gravis*

## Child wins photogenic award

Celeste Gravis, 11-year-old daughter of Kearney and Pam Gravis, won the "Most Photogenic" award at the

Our Little Miss Beauty Pageant in Vidor Oct. 12. The award qualified her to compete in the state pageant in San Antonio this June.

The youngster, who attends Vidor Middle School, has several GSU relatives, including her father, control operations foreman at Sabine Station.

Other relatives are her grandmother, Tommye Die, clerk in Orange; her uncle, Dan Dumas, unit supervisor at Sabine; her aunts, Avonne Dumas, administrative assistant, and Debbie Parker, departmental clerk, both of Beaumont; and her cousin, Floyd Fortenberry, section head in Port Arthur.



*George Edmund Englert III*

## Parents announce son's birth

George and Sue Englert of Zachary announce the birth of their son, George Edmund Englert III, on Feb. 16.

The baby's father is a senior mechanical engineer at River Bend Station. He reports that the little boy weighed 6 pounds, 13 ounces and measured 20 inches at birth.

## Cavoilcade court includes GSU girl

A GSUer's daughter represented the city of Orange as a duchess in the 33rd Annual Cavoilcade Celebration in Port Arthur last fall.

Marianne McDonald, a 17-year-old senior at Little

Cypress-Mauriceville High School, was a member of the court for the celebration, which promotes the oil industry in the Triplex.

Her parents are Harold and Audrey McDonald, and her mother is a switchboard operator in Orange.



*Marianne McDonald*

## Bristers add Sara Lauren

Connie and Joe Brister of Big Lake are the new parents of Sara Lauren, born May 12. The child, who was born on Mother's Day, weighed 5 pounds, 9 ounces and measured 18 inches.

The baby's father is a senior engineering assistant in the Lake Charles T&D Department.



*Sara Lauren Brister*

## Correction

Last month's *Plain Talks* should have identified the parents of Port Arthur Thomas Jefferson High School homecoming queen Tami Romero as Mr. and Mrs. M. J. Romero. We regret the error.



# PLAIN TALKS

P. O. Box 2951  
Beaumont, Texas 77704

Address Correction Requested

BULK RATE  
U.S. POSTAGE

**PAID**  
Beaumont, Texas  
Permit No. 11



## Checkpoint

*Joe Webb, utility man, uses air to check the safety of a lineman's glove during routine tests of protective gear at the system testing lab at the Beaumont Service Center. The lab will be featured on the winter edition of The Energy People, GSU's employee video program.*