

Photo courtesy of Physical Plant

Steve Leshner, a Physical Plant electrician, graduated from the Physical Plant apprentice program in September, a year ahead of

schedule. His father, Ron, a Physical Plant carpenter, graduated from the program last year. The program was established in 1974.

## Apprentice

Training program fills physical plant jobs

By KATHERINE HURT  
Staff Writer

The Physical Plant's apprentice training program set a milestone in September when it granted journeymen certificates to six apprentices, its largest graduating class.

The apprentice program, established in 1974, provides the Physical Plant with employees trained in various skilled trades such as electricians, carpenters, painters, air-conditioning, heating and refrigeration mechanics, auto mechanics, electronic technicians, plumbers and sheet metal workers.

"We are not a trade school that trains for the open market," said Gene Voelkel, supervisor of Physical Plant apprentices. "We train to fill openings within our own journeyman ranks."

Voelkel said the Physical Plant cannot guarantee it will hire each of its graduates because the plant cannot forecast vacancies with 100 percent accuracy.

"But we have never failed to

offer a journeyman position to a graduating apprentice," he said.

The apprentice program takes three to five years to complete, depending on the skilled craft chosen, Voelkel said.

The program combines on-the-job training with academic coursework. For the first year, apprentices attend classes two nights a week on subjects such as shop math, blueprint reading, safety and cardiopulmonary resuscitation while, at the same time, working a 40-hour week under the supervision of a journeyman trainer.

In the second year of the program, apprentices undertake self-paced individual study courses related to their particular craft.

The apprentice program classes are taught on campus by a graduate student of industrial education or engineering technology, Voelkel said.

The Physical Plant's apprentice program, certified by the United States Department of Labor, is a unique and highly regarded program, Voelkel said. He knows of very few similar programs.

The University of Texas is interested in starting a program like A&M's, Voelkel said. "University of Texas officials have visited here several times and are modeling their program after ours," he said.

"Our programs are so popular, we had in excess of 75 people apply for 10 positions this year," Voelkel said.

"We don't always have enough vacancies to recruit every year," Voelkel said. The Physical Plant has only 29 apprenticeship positions — each year it accepts only enough new apprentices to fill positions vacated in the previous year.

To be accepted into the program, apprentices must be 18 years old or older, be physically fit for the work of a trade, have a high school diploma or equivalent training, be a U.S. citizen or have a permanent resident visa and successfully complete the General Aptitude Test Battery.

## UT competes for blood donations

By MARY ANGELA LEBLANC  
Reporter

Past Aggie Blood Drives have involved competition between dormitories to see which could donate the most blood. The winning dorm residents were given a party for their efforts, but this semester the competition will take on a new twist.

This year's challenger will be the University of Texas. The theme of the blood drive is "Bleed the Hell Outta t.u."

Kambiz Jahadi, A&M Blood Drive representative, said that UT originally challenged Texas A&M for this semester's Blood Drive and then tried to back out.

Jahadi said the reason UT tried to back out is that they now consider the University of Oklahoma as their big rival and not A&M.

The winner of the blood-drive challenge will be determined on a percentage basis where the number of units donated will be divided by the student body. Jahadi said all students are encouraged to give blood because even those who do not meet the requirements will be included in the total percentages.

The A&M Blood Drive, sponsored by the Aggie Blood Club — Alpha Phi Omega, Omega Phi Alpha and Student Government — will be Nov. 5-8 from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Blood donation stations will be at Sbis Dining Hall, Rudder Fountain, Kleberg Animal and Food Science Center and inside the Commons.

UT's Blood Drive will be the week after the A&M Blood Drive, and Jahadi said arrangements are being made to have the winner of the challenge announced at half time of the Texas A&M-UT football game.

If students give blood during the blood drive, they will be given blood free if they ever need it.

Jahadi said \$35 per unit is about the price for blood, and if at anytime A&M students, faculty or their families need blood they need to contact the Blood Club which will contact the Wadley Blood Bank in Dallas to provide blood for the patient.

"Most people who use the blood are alumni," Jahadi said.

Members of the three organizations that sponsor the blood drive form a six-member group which decides where remaining blood units will go, Jahadi said. He said some of the units are sent to people with special cases (such as burn victims) in the name of the Aggie Blood Club.

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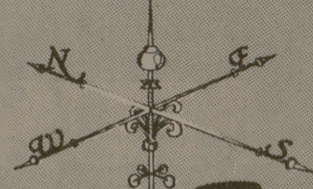
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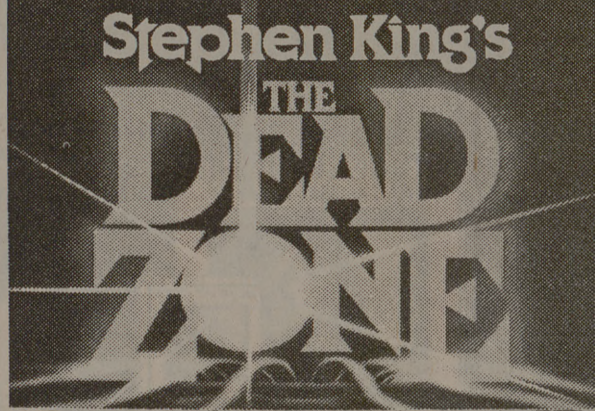
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