

Teks spend 500,000 hours a year in TEP classes

Tektronix Education Program

By CAROL TALLEY

"Im not saying that I know a lot, but Tektronix has taught me everything I know. I'm really grateful for the education I've gotten here. When I first came here I knew nothing, I wasn't skilled in anything."

Eva Goff started at Tek in 1955, working in assembly. She is now managing a Circuit Board Design and Prototype Support Technician group.

In the meantime she's taken Tektronix Education Program (TEP) classes on and off throughout her 25-year career, including her first electronics and math classes—taught in a room at Sunset High—and continuing to her latest series, which ended in an Associate Degree in Supervisory Management from Portland Community College.

Eva is only one of hundreds of Tek's home-grown experts, people who came to Tektronix with virtually no specialized education and who now, through on-the-job training and TEP classes, are highly qualified, technical people.

Or, on a slightly different track, take the case of Dan Romike, a Junior Electronic Technician in 7000 Series Test/Inspection.

Dan's first TEP class, Programming I, involved a homework project. Following a suggestion from his manager, he designed an Error Reporting System for his work group whereby the technicians in the area record their calibration errors into Dan's program which compiles a weekly summary of their mistakes. Dan said this helps them see possible error trends and gives them more hindsight into their errors, allowing individuals to be more aware of mistake-prone areas in future work.

Dan, who's been at Tek less than a year and a half, says he expects such systems to catch on in other areas. "Programs like this should save both time and money for us," he said.

Examples like Dan's—an individual whose TEP-inspired ideas save money in the work area—and Eva's—a person whose personal skills are enhanced to benefit Tektronix—abound.

The fact that they do abound is evidence of Tek's commitment to education, a commitment that began in the early 50's when Tek expanded from Portland to the Sunset plant. Along with the physical expansion came an inflow of workers who lacked the basic electronics and math skills essential to their jobs.

This prompted Tek to start up an assortment of classes, some of them in the work area, and others, such as the ones Eva took, coordinated through the Oregon State Division of Continuing Education (D.C.E.) and located at various points around the community.

Jim Sayer, long-time manager of the Education and Training Department, explained that using the D.C.E. proved to be cumbersome and was a big factor in prompting Tek to provide more of its own in-house education. Soon the ball was rolling and picking up speed.

In 1957, the first Tuition Refund became available for people taking classes in science, math, and engineering.

In 1963, the first scheduled TEP classes came about under auspices of the Personnel department.

Meanwhile, Jim was teaching technician courses at Portland Community College. In 1966 he arrived at Tektronix, bringing with him ties to PCC which would prove invaluable in the days to come.

In 1968, two years after the Education and Training department was on its own, Washington County joined the community college district. According to Jim, this allowed Tek to revamp portions of its own curricula.

"We had gotten into the kind of '60's' thinking that was going on in business and industry, as well as in the universities, all over the country. We were offering classes that were heavily oriented toward recreational and avocational interests, personal mental health, group processes, et cetera.

"We were only too glad to drop some of these 'rock-collecting' type courses now that PCC was offering them. They allowed us to get back into more work-related programs."

The advent of the community college systems also allowed Tek to combine forces with them and offer joint venture programs. Jim began to use his college contacts to build Tek's unique co-op programs, which soon expanded past the community colleges and into state and private universities as well.

The MBA program, for instance, started after Education and Training personnel read of a similar program at Pepperdine University. "We wrote to the schools in the area to get a program of that kind started here. The University of Portland responded and we've been working with them ever since.

"We started the college co-op programs, especially the Masters programs, as a recruiting tool. We were losing too many recruits; they would ask what kind of graduate programs were available in the Portland area and we had to tell them none, the closest were in Corvallis. Naturally that didn't always set very well."

It was also during these years that Education and Training added several training programs: Instructor Training, Metals and Manufacturing Training, and Electrical Maintenance Apprentice Training.

The recession of '70-'71 affected E&T, as it did all of Tektronix and the rest of the country. "We cut back on courses and went from ten to three employees," said Jim. "But you know, even as all this was going on, Bill Walker, who had just been named Group Vice-President of Research and Engineering, came over and spent some time with us, explaining how important E&T was to Tek and that it wasn't going to be abandoned. In the midst of all the cutbacks, it was good to know the company hadn't lost its commitment to education.

"Then, in about 1976, the thing broke loose. We went from 65 courses to a peak of 230, with 19 employees."

Currently, students are spending a half-million hours a year in TEP classes. Last fiscal year that amounted to 10,059 active TEP students. "With figures like those, I know it's important to people," Jim said. And, though hard to measure, there's an important return to the company also.

"The growth of the individual is vital to our growth as a company. Tektronix, throughout its history, has tried to maintain a climate conducive to personal development."

**—Howard Vollum
'Purpose and Goals of
Tektronix Education Program'**

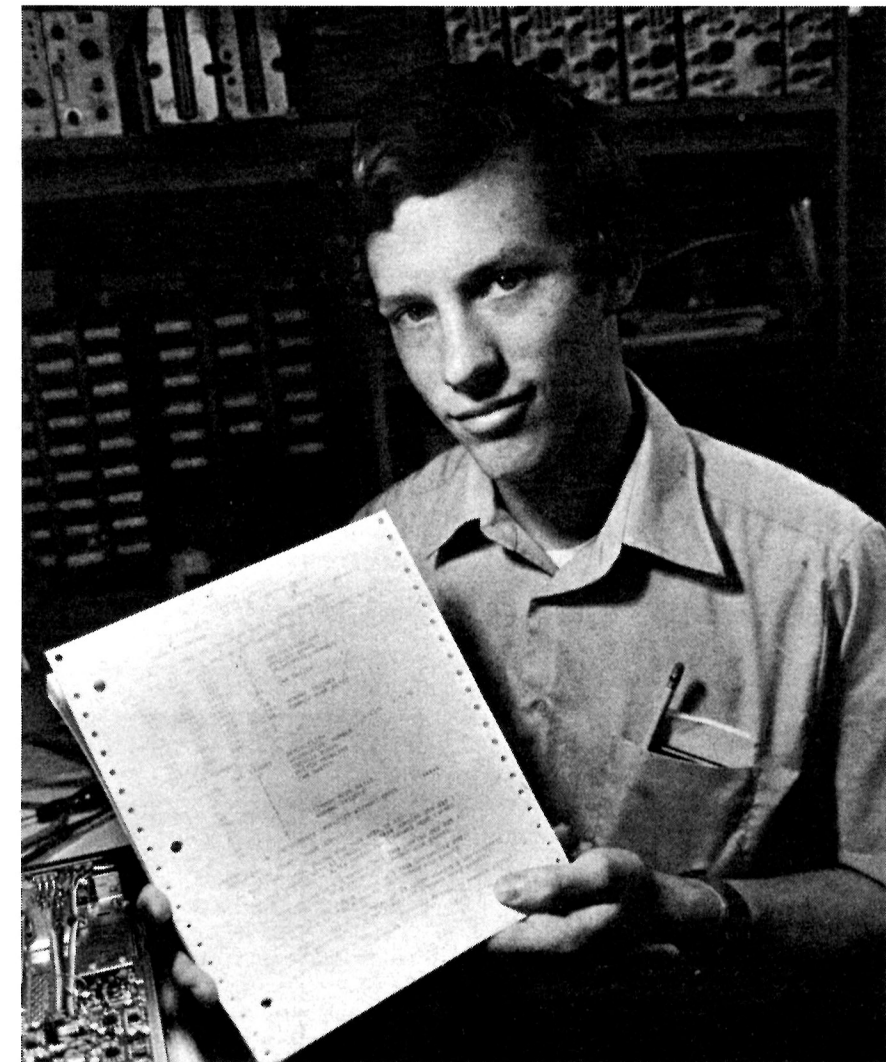
"We've got a single, one-of-a-kind program here. We're the only company to have such a large, voluntary, after-hours education program that's not totally devoted to training.

"Also, there are relatively few companies which have total tuition refund programs," he added. In many corporations, company-paid education has traditionally been an executive "perk", a benefit given to the select few who can successfully negotiate for it. This practice is generally changing, but it is interesting to note that Tek's tuition refund has been around for 20 years.

As Eva said, "I really appreciate that Tek paid for my classes. It made me try harder to learn and get something out of them so I could apply it to my job".



Eva Goff took advantage of TEP offerings to go from assembly work to managing a Circuit Board Design and Prototype Support Technician group. Eva's been at Tek 25 years.



Using know-how gained via a TEP class he attended, Dan Romike (7000 Series) designed a computer program to help track calibration errors.