

SICK

On the way through the main gate each day
the Goodstone Aircraft Company employees
see the big, "Have a GREAT day!" sign
on the wall ahead of them.
The monthly Goodstone newspaper is titled, "SUPER Times!"
while the Vice President's weekly newsletter
is called "Golden Horizons"
and the man and woman
Mr. and Mrs. Goodstone cartoon figures
in all those company memos on things like good housekeeping
and instrument calibration and timecard completion
are always beaming with huge smiles.

And the worst thing is,
Goodstone's not even trying to be sarcastic.

OSCAR NOMINEES

The Goodstone Aircraft Company machinists
look seriously intent and credulous
or at least expressionless
lined up in their seats along the walls
of the conference room upstairs as the instructor
tells them
how they should get any part
they drop immediately inspected for damage
and how every machined part
must be wrapped in special air-cushioned bubble-wrap
wrapping,
as they think of the routine regularity
of parts being dropped 3 or 4 feet
to the concrete floor
and picked up
and thrown into finished-parts boxes along with
all of the other finished parts
that are as usual
wrapped in nothing.

They figure
that if the instructor can keep a straight face
so can they.

TUNNEL VISION

The new Air Force rules
mandating the stamping of "Shop-Aid"
into every last one of the hundreds of odd-shaped
pieces of bar or roundstock aluminum
that fill our drawers
for our use in machining-operation set-ups

puzzled us,
as did the Air Force's mandating
the labelling of every last plastic bottle in the shop
whether it contained cutting fluid or soap or water,
until the supervisor at the meeting considerably explained
that we probably had trouble understanding
the importance of these new Air Force rules
because all we ever thought about
was producing aircraft parts.

COPING

After the 6:00 a.m. start-work buzzer
blares Mitch begins humming and la-la-ing
cha-cha rhythms louder and louder
as he fills out his time card at his workbench
until he turns toward Bobby
on machine #451 next to him and shouts, "Suck my cock,
BobBEEE!" in cha-cha rhythm
cha-cha-ing his feet back and forth and beating out
a rhythm with his fists at his side as if he were
holding maraccas,
turning around to face Alan
on machine #462 and sing out, "Bend...over, AaaaLAN!"
as he grins and cha-chas his feet
then turns to face Tom across the aisle
at machine #456 and shout, "Suck me off, TomMEEE!" and go
into a prolonged
near hysterical giggle until he has to grab the edge of
his workbench to keep from falling over.

Some machinists
take having to be away from their wives 8 hours each day
pretty hard.

LUCKY

I am machining
2 blocks of sawed aluminum bar stock
into 2 identical parts,
and filling out separate First-Time-Conformance cards
on each one
because each one came with its own separate
manufacturing order
bearing different part numbers, serial numbers,
and issue numbers,
and I am spending most of my time
confusing the 2 parts and then trying to re-identify them
and record
their different dimensions to the thousandth of an inch
in the tiny little boxes
all over the separate First-Time-Conformance cards,