

Making contacts an exacting business

By Ann Chowdhury
special writer

Every day, local laboratories are transforming insignificant-looking buttons of opaque blue plastic into high-quality contact lenses that will sharpen someone's view of the world.

Art Optical in Redford Township

and Soderberg Optical in Farmington Hills are busy making rigid, gas-permeable contact lenses, which are rapidly replacing the original hard contacts.

They are winning some converts among soft lens wearers because of the crisp vision they provide.

Both labs presently employ nine

people, and say business is increasing.

Art Optical manager Leo Bernwanger said each lens is made exactly to a doctor's prescription. "There's no such thing as stock-piling in this business."

Since the gas-permeable material is considered a drug by the FDA, manufacturing conditions are strictly regulated and work follows stringent guidelines.

THE FIRST step in making a lens is to feed all the information from the doctor into computers, which give the machines specific instructions.

Laboratory technicians then take a half-inch wide, quarter-inch thick button of the gas-permeable material, and start to transform it into a lens.

The first worker uses a tiny lathe to cut in the base curve of the lens

that will conform to the patient's cornea. Blue cobweb-like strands of plastic are shaved away as the lens takes shape.

Next, another lathe cuts in the front curve of the lens and inserts the prescription. The relationship between the inside and outside curve gives the lens its strength.

There is little conversation as workers pass lenses from one work station to another because the ma-

chines, though small, are too noisy to talk over.

After the lenses have been shaped, they are spun on polishing machines and an inspector scrutinizes them under a microscope. She sends them to the finishing room for the edges to receive a final polish and even more inspections.

"There's no room for error. It's a precision job from start to finish," Bernwanger said.



Don Schoonheide, an Art Optical technician, checks his work through a microscope before sending the lenses on to the next stage of processing.



Dr. Ronald Harskowitz holds in his fingers a Boston IV Lens button.

photos by STEVE FECHT/staff photographer

Optical trade is booming

By Ann Chowdhury
special writer

Business is good again in local optical laboratories, thanks to the development of rigid gas-permeable contact lenses, which allow oxygen to flow through to the eye.

A few years ago, the trend was to soft, oxygen-permeable lenses, which local labs are not equipped to make. The conventional hard lenses that these labs made lost popularity, since they blocked the passage of oxygen.

Dr. Ronald Harskowitz, vice president of technical affairs for Polymer Technology, Wilmington, Mass., said two local manufacturers are among only 83 in the United States licensed to make the Boston IV rigid gas-permeable lens for which his company manufactures the plastic.

THEY ARE the Redford branch of Art Optical and Soderberg Optical in Farmington Hills.

"We are very particular about who we allow to make our lens because it has to be manufactured to very exacting tolerances," Harskowitz said during a recent visit to Redford Township.

He said that the Boston IV lens, approved by the FDA in November 1985, is made of silicone/acrylate and offers the advantages of both the traditional hard, and soft lenses.

"It is a daily-wear lens that gives the crispness and clarity of vision of a hard lens — you get a very crisp vision from only rigid materials — at the same time giving the safety and comfort of a soft lens," he said.

HERSKOWITZ ADDED that the principal drawback in the Boston IV lens is for the doctor. "It requires a lot of precision, exacting tolerances and a lot of understanding of how to fit them."

"A soft lens is more like a sock or a pair of panty hose. There's a wide latitude of what fits," he said.

The doctor said that since the eye gets its oxygen straight from the environment, a contact lens should allow it to breathe.

"If it doesn't, you'll have some long-term health consequences, especially to the endothelium, an important layer of the cornea. When damaged it does not regenerate itself."

Herskowitz said he used to advise wearers of conventional hard contact lenses to continue to use them, if they had no apparent problems. He has changed his mind.

"THE RESEARCH is irrefutable. It shows us that it's important to get those people out of the non-oxygen permeable lenses into a Boston IV, so that they get the benefit of the added oxygen to stop any further damage, and keep their corneas as healthy as they can be."

Herskowitz stressed that the new rigid lenses are easier to care for and longer lasting than the soft lenses.

IGA
ORCHARD-10 IGA
24065 ORCHARD LAKE RD.
Mon. thru Sat. 8-9; Sun. 9-5
We Feature Western Beef
QUANTITY RIGHTS LIMITED • NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ERRORS IN PRINTING
AT IGA - WE REALLY CARE
PRICE - QUALITY - SERVICE
WE'VE GOT THE GOODS!

IGA TABLERITE "FRESH"
Chicken Legs
Backs Attached
39¢ lb.
Save 40¢ lb.

IGA TABLERITE "FRESH"
Chicken Breast
Rib Attached & Split
\$1.59 lb.
Save 75¢ lb.

IGA TABLERITE "FRESH"
Chicken Breast
Rib Attached & Split
\$1.59 lb.
Save 75¢ lb.

Produce
"First of the Season" Yellow
Michigan Sweet Corn
8/99¢
Yellow Medium 1/2 lb. Bag
Cooking Onions..... 99¢
Large Yellow
Golden Lemons .. 5/99¢
Highly Flavored
Fresh Limes . 10/99¢

IGA TABLERITE WESTERN BEEF
Sirloin Steaks
Table Trimmed
\$2.49 lb.
Save \$1.00 lb.

IGA TABLERITE WESTERN BEEF
T-Bone or Porterhouse Steaks
\$3.69 lb.
Save \$1.00 lb.

IGA TABLERITE WESTERN BEEF
T-Bone or Porterhouse Steaks
\$3.69 lb.
Save \$1.00 lb.

Bakery
Oven Fresh Golden
White Buttered
Split Top Bread
24 oz. Loaf
79¢
Oven Fresh - Cheese
Nutty Donuts..... \$1.69

THORNAPPLE VALLEY
Corned Beef Briskets
Point Cuts
\$1.19 lb.
Save 50¢ lb.

HYGRADE MEAT
Ball Park Franks
\$1.49 lb.
Save 40¢ lb.

SWIFT'S PREMIUM BROWN 'N' SERVE
Links Sausages
All Flavors
8 oz. pkg.
99¢
Save 70¢

Frozen
Beef, Chicken, Turkey or
Mild or Cheesy
Banquet Pot Pies
8 oz. Pkg.
3/\$1
Assorted Flavors - 12 oz. Pkg.
Banquet Cream Pies .. 79¢
Assorted Beef, Turkey or Chicken - 12 oz. Pkg.
Banquet Family Entrees .. \$2.99

DOUBLE COUPON
ORCHARD-10 gives you 100% more on all (cents off) manufacturer's coupons up to and including 50¢ face value. OTHER RETAILERS DO NOT DOUBLE AFTER 50¢. EXAMPLE: A 75¢ COUPON AT OTHER STORES IS WORTH ONLY 75¢. AT ORCHARD-10, A 75¢ COUPON IS WORTH \$1.25. AT OTHER STORES, A \$1.00 COUPON IS WORTH ONLY \$1.00. AT ORCHARD-10 A DOLLAR COUPON IS WORTH \$1.50. Other retailers and free coupons excluded. Limit 1 coupon for any one product. Coupon plus 100% bonus cannot exceed price of the item. All cigarette coupons at face value. Offer in effect now through Sunday, July 27, 1988.

COCA COLA, Regular and Diet, CHERRY COKE, SPRITE or SQUIRT
99¢ + dep.
2 Liter Plastic Bottles

Grocery
Tide Detergent
75 oz. Box
\$2.99

Assorted Flavors
Friskies Buffet
3/\$1
Assorted Flavors - 12 oz. Jar
JIF Peanut Butter..... \$1.59
Tubular Cling Film or Shrink - 24 in. Pkg.
FLAME Peaches..... 89¢
Assorted Flavors - 12 oz. Jar
Smucker's Jam..... \$2.29

Assorted Flavors - 12 oz. Jar
JIF Peanut Butter..... \$1.59
Tubular Cling Film or Shrink - 24 in. Pkg.
FLAME Peaches..... 89¢
Assorted Flavors - 12 oz. Jar
Smucker's Jam..... \$2.29

Dairy
Quartets
Imperial Margarine
1 lb. Pkg.
49¢
1/2 Gallon Jug
Orange Juice..... 99¢
Shredded Cheddar or Mozzarella - 12 oz. Pkg.
FLAME Cheese..... \$1.69

ORCHARD-10-IGA GIV-A-WAY!
WHIRLPOOL AUTOMATIC WASHER
\$500 VALUE
- Deposit Ticket at Office -
You Must Be 18 To Enter
NAME
PHONE NO.

1 LB. RUFFLES OR REGULAR Cains Potato Chips
\$1.69

Clip & Save
IGA BONUS COUPON
Whisper or Assorted Colors
Charmin Bath Tissue
99¢
Limit 2 a Roll Pack
Save 30¢
Sunday, July 27, 1988
NR 160-1

IGA BONUS COUPON
Kraft or Flavored
Velveta Loaf
\$3.19
Limit 1 a 1 lb. Pkg.
Save 30¢
Sunday, July 27, 1988
NR 158-3

IGA COUPON
Huggies
Wet Wipes
\$1.00 OFF
Limit 1 coupon per family. Coupon expires Sunday, July 27, 1988.
SAVE 30¢
NR 165-5

IGA COUPON
Coffee
Choice Coffee
\$5.99
Limit 1 coupon per family. Coupon expires Sunday, July 27, 1988.
SAVE 10¢
NR 165-8

IGA COUPON
Cereals
Choice Cereals
\$1.39
Limit 1 coupon per family. Coupon expires Sunday, July 27, 1988.
SAVE 30¢
NR 164-7