

A day in the life of a stockholder

They come to see what it's all about

By SANDY TESSLER

The huge room is filled with a record turnout of 1,213 people, mostly stockholders. The crowd becomes silent as 23 late middle-aged men, dressed in dark business suits, file in and take their seats.

These are the bigwigs, the officers of the board of directors of the S. S. Kresge Co. They have assembled to present their annual report to the stockholders.

The majority of the assemblage is made up of working class people, many retired, from the ranks of Kresge. They have come to see what it's all about, some from as far away as Canada and Toledo.

A sense of pride pervades the onlookers as they view the gargantuan structure that is Kresge World Headquarters in Troy.

ROBERT E. DEWAR, chairman of the board and chief executive officer, delivers his address in confident, modulated tones.

He offers good news. Kresge fared better in total

sales in the first quarter of 1974 than in the same period of 1973, despite a faltering economy.

Surprisingly, increases were slightly above the national average in the Detroit region at a time when automotive workers had been laid off.

Dewar attributes this phenomenon first to higher prices. Also, dollars were being spent on general merchandise instead of cars, and greater purchases resulted from customer anticipation of still further cost increases.

"In the less buoyant (economic) environment we believe our costs and our selling prices give us a comparative advantage (over other retailers)," said Dewar.

THE OUTLOOK is optimistic. Kresge opened 24 K marts in the first quarter of 1974, compared with 17 in the same period of 1973. One-hundred more are slated to be built this year.

The stockholders are informed that Kresge fared well through the energy crisis because "the primary trading area of a K mart is within a three-mile radius," as opposed to other retailers who op-

erate primarily in longer distance regional shopping centers.

Information is provided concerning Kresge's entry into the insurance field through merger of Planned Marketing Associates.

Then, the floor is opened to the stockholders. The questions asked by the small stockholders reveal that they view their personal roles here in three categories:

IN ORDER OF priority these appear to be employe, consumer and, lastly, part owner of the company.

Questions are asked by those eager to have a voice in company policy concerning high interest rates, international expansion, customer service, parking lot security and the possibility of establishing a credit union and cost of living raises.

One gentleman stands to protest the poor quality of photographs, which K mart developed for him. A lady protests against what she calls "outrageously high prices" in downtown Detroit as compared with suburban Kresge-owned stores.

Dewar courteously acknowledges all suggestions and complaints, carefully explaining company policy and politely thanking each speaker.

The greatest laugh is drawn when Dewar, in response to a question as to the male supremacy of the board, reads a proxy letter from a stockholder asking why "male, old, white" is the norm on the board of directors.

DEWAR ANSWERS, "We are continuing our strong efforts to hire and to upgrade more women and minorities, and we are carefully examining the possibility of expanding our board to include these groups."

As the meeting closes, one employe from Lansing with 21 years' service to Kresge, using a vacation day to attend the meeting, admits that she wouldn't mind being on the board.

The feeling is that attendance one day a year, compounded by the lack of nerve required to stand and publicly address a question to the board, just isn't enough.

The Observer & Eccentric BUSINESS

MAY 30, 1974

(O) 1-D

Physicists develop new laser technique

By JAY R. STUCK

The traveling wave laser of Dr. Frederick R. Faxvog and Dr. Aaron D. Gara, both of Rochester, stands in a black-painted laboratory at the General Motors Research Center.

Through the use of mirrors, the two area physicists recently developed a new technique that causes the laser's light to travel in one triangular direction — a step that will allow future improvements in laser technology based on their work.

A laser (light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation) is a device that strengthens a beam of light.

It produces a thin beam that can do many things — from burning a hole in a diamond to carrying television signals.

UNLIKE ORDINARY light sources, like the sun, a laser beam travels in one direction. The beam of light won't spread out. Instead, the sides of the beam can stay almost parallel up to a mile away.

Lasers have a variety of sizes and shapes, but, in general, they can be divided into two main types, Faxvog explained.

Solid lasers produce bursts of light through a hard crystal, like a ruby.

Gas lasers consist of a gas-filled tube, resembling a neon lamp. The laser light streams out the tube's end.

The two doctors' gas laser model is surrounded by an impressive array of oscilloscopes, high high-voltage power supply machines and something called an ultra-fast detector.

FAXVOG AND Gara's laser rests on a tabletop. The gas-filled tube stands in a triangular mirror configuration.

Ordinarily, the laser beam would travel counterclockwise between the mirrors, with a clockwise output shooting out from one end of the triangle.

Faxvog and Gara placed an additional mirror in front of this clockwise beam, forcing it back into the counterclockwise stream. "A ratio of the intensities of the two beams can now be predicted," Dr. Faxvog said.

"A MORE STABLE operation of lasers for a number of applications is the result," Faxvog added.

One possible area of research that might benefit from their work is holography, or three-dimensional photographs.

Gara and Faxvog are experimenting with holographic techniques in clay model car design for General Motors.

Other current uses of laser technology include laser surgery, spectroscopy (chemical specimen identification) surveying and industrial welding and drilling.

"In clothing construction, the laser increases production and eliminates waste through precision cutting," Faxvog said.

THE MILITARY has for many years also been interested in potential warfare applications of the laser — but results of its research remain top secret.

A television picture where images are projected in the center of the room, capable of being viewed from any angle?

"Unfortunately, I don't see 3-D television in the near future," Faxvog said.

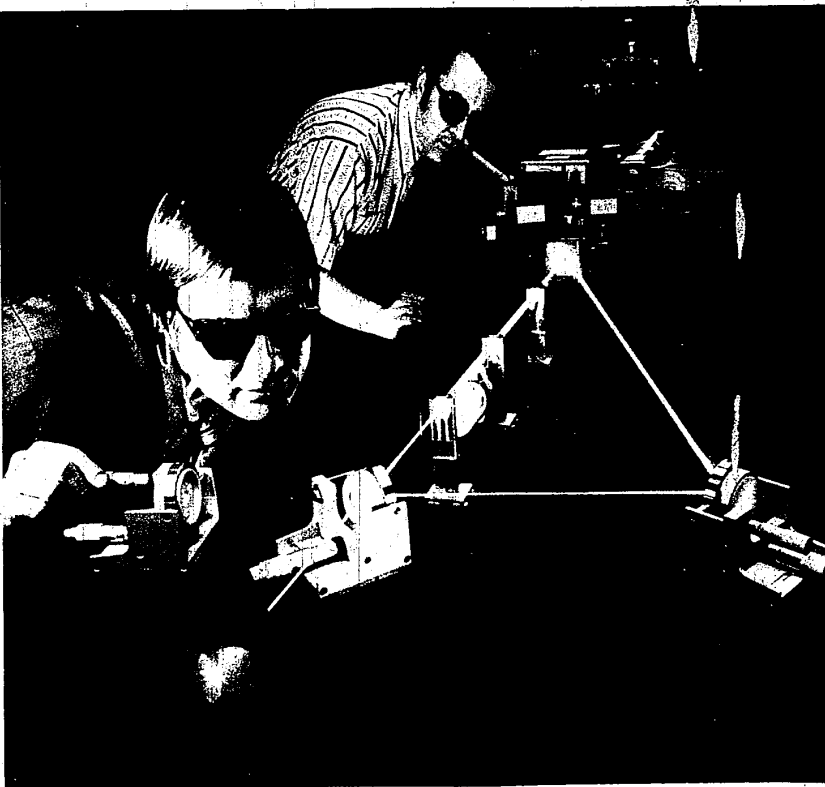
However, an interesting idea was presented at the April meeting of the Optical Society of America in Washington, D.C., where Gara and Faxvog discussed their new technique.

"A Zenith representative said the company is researching the idea of a video disk," Faxvog said.

"INSTEAD OF A cassette, the disk, using laser technology, looks like a phonograph record yet produces pictures and sound when played on a television hookup," Faxvog said.

Science is testing and improving upon other people's work, Faxvog noted.

"Hopefully, someone else will pick up on our idea, improve it and apply it," he said.



Dr. Faxvog adjusts mirror in foreground, while Dr. Gara watches