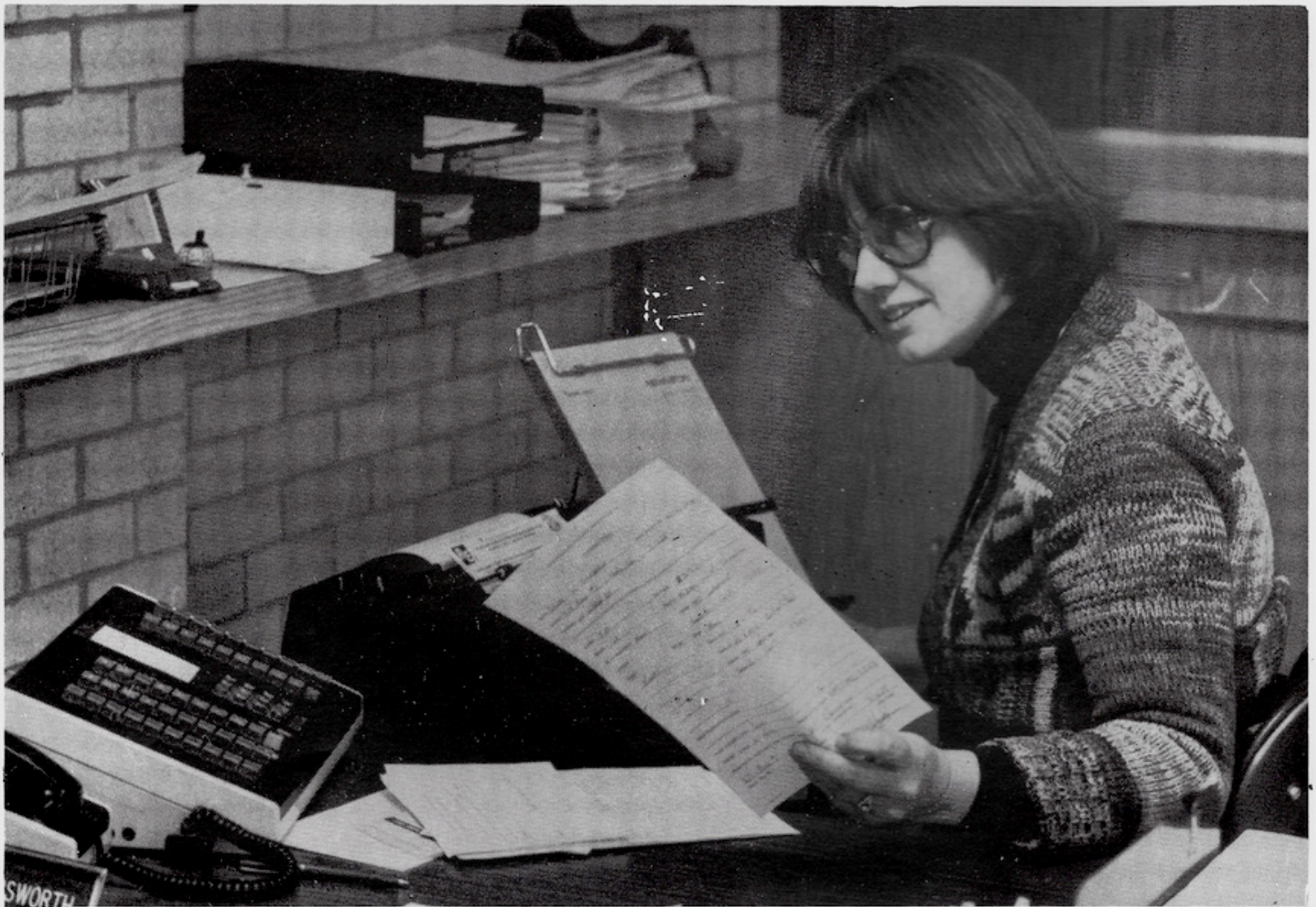


# What is Craig like ?

Colorado-Ute employees living in Craig say the problems of a growing energy development city are not as severe as press reports indicate --that Craig is a good city to live in

MARY HOLLINGSWORTH

... growth is exciting





CRAIG--The City of Craig is a small community by most standards, with about 10,000 residents. It has a thriving business district and quiet residential neighborhoods. But Craig has been the center of a lot of adverse publicity over the past few years.

Craig is a developing energy community. Because of this, the city often is depicted as a quiet country town suddenly shattered and reeling under energy-related impacts such as a population which has doubled in the past five years. From coast to coast, reports have been peddled by newspapers, magazines and television, telling about soaring crime rates, alcoholism, mental illness, rising divorce rates, overcrowded schools and fears of a bust after the boom.

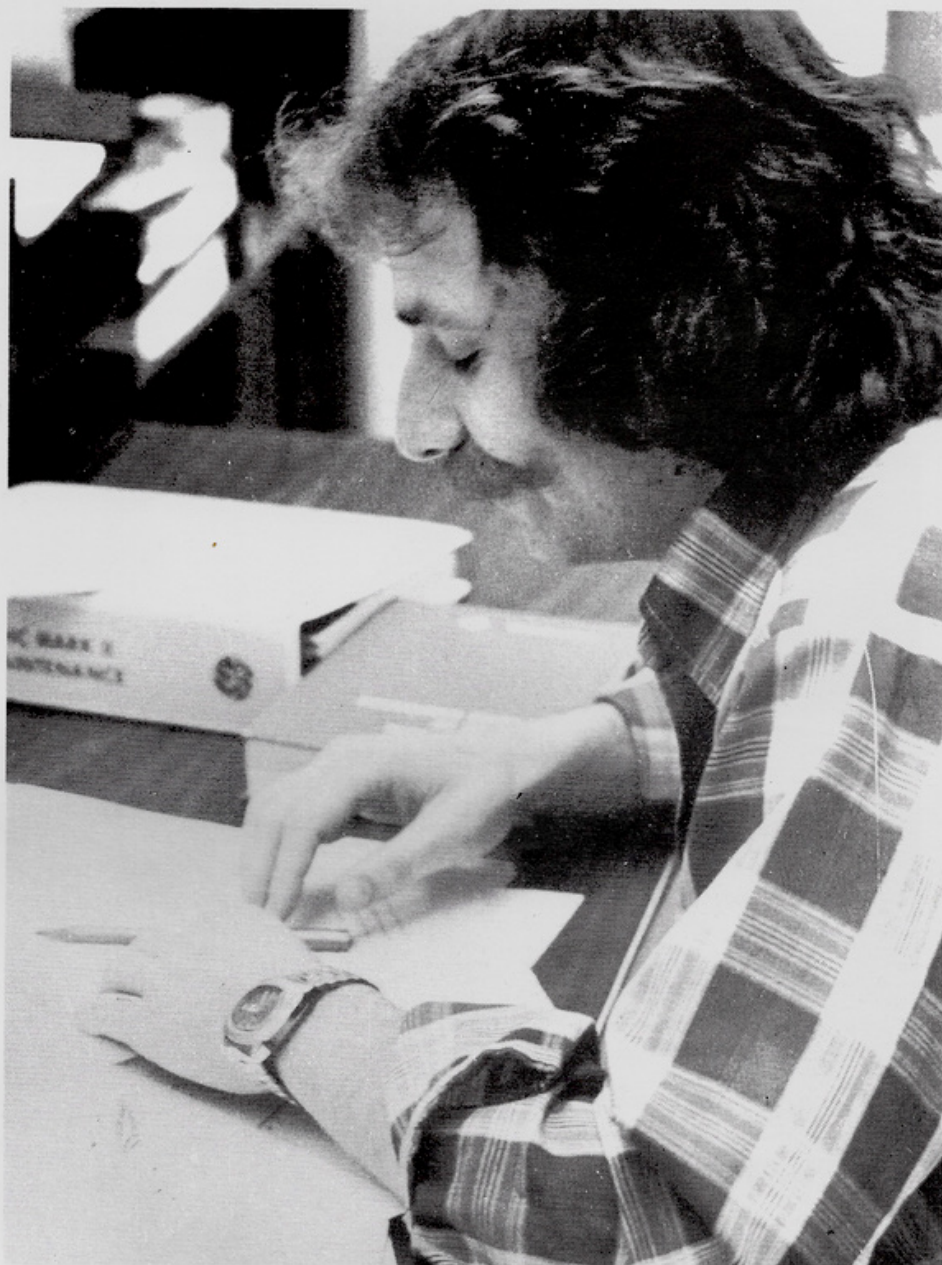
Colorado-Ute sometimes is singled out as one of the causes of the growth and therefore contributing to the obstacles facing Craig. Colorado-Ute is project manager and part owner of the \$700 million Yampa Project, involving construction of twin, coal-fired electric generating units of 400 megawatts each, along with associated water and transmission line developments.

The Yampa Project has had an impact on Craig, with as many as 1,800 workers during peak construction on Craig Station Units 1 and 2, scheduled to go on line later this year and in 1980. But a great deal of the growth has been generated by development of the vast Northwestern Colorado coal reserves that prompted location of the power plant in the area in the first place. Several large new surface coal mines have opened in the area during the same time that Colorado-Ute has been directing the Yampa Project.

These coal companies, along with Colorado-Ute and the Yampa Project, have poured millions of tax dollars into county and school coffers. Millions more have been spent by Colorado-Ute on housing, water and sewer projects, and by other private industry for schools and other municipal services.

City officials say they are coping with the growth problems, which aren't as severe as they often are depicted in the news media. They say Craig is experiencing long-awaited financial prosperity as a result of the growth, and is now settling down to long-term stability.

But the adverse news and television reports continue. Craig seems to have



**BILL JOHNSTON**

... likes the area

been discovered as a new "cause" by those from metropolitan areas, who continue to paint a bleak picture of a tiny town turned into an energy-hungry nation's scapegoat.

But is it? Colorado-Ute now has more than 100 employees living in the Craig area. A random sampling of opinions of several of them indicates excitement, confidence and a pride in Craig that belie the national reports.

Not all is rosy, of course. A chronic complaint is a shortage of housing and high prices for what housing is available. Those from metropolitan areas sometimes miss a greater variety of shopping and entertainment opportunities.

But, Colorado-Ute employees emphatically point out, Craig is not an exploding nightmare. Not every third person on the street is a thief, thug or dope addict. Alcoholism is not running rampant. Mental illness is not epidemic.

Many Colorado-Ute employees point out that the problems, real and imagined, are largely a matter of perspective. One of these is Plant Engineer Robert DeCicco, who declares that "Craig is not another Rock Springs (Wyoming). There are some problems, of course -- what community doesn't have problems? -- but they aren't as bad as people make them out to be, and there are

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# Many job applicants seeking small town, rural

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a lot of good things about Craig, too." DeCicco has lived in Craig for more than a year and his wife has organized a Welcome Wagon group to greet newcomers.

One case that raised DeCicco's ire was a television report that he said was not only exaggerated, but downright untrue. He said a television camera crew

came to do a story on overcrowding in the schools, due to the community's rapid growth. But instead of an honest report, he said, the cameramen asked the children to sit two to a desk—something they do not have to do in real life.

"Some of our classes may have more kids than they should—maybe 28 or so—but this is unfair," DeCicco said. "Some of the stuff you see in the newspapers

and especially on television is downright dishonest. It seems all the reports tend to magnify or amplify the problems we do have, or distort them this way."

Reports of traffic congestion is another case of lost perspective, even among some local residents, DeCicco feels. "They don't know what traffic is," he says. "I came here from New Jersey, and THERE you have traffic. They ought to try the New Jersey Turnpike or the Long Island Expressway some time. It takes you an hour to go 15 miles."

Several things about Craig appeal to DeCicco, who acknowledges that part of it may be his urban refugee outlook. "The thing I like the most about Craig, I think, is that most of the people are so friendly, so helpful. If your car is stuck or something, people stop and offer to help. You just don't find that back in New Jersey."

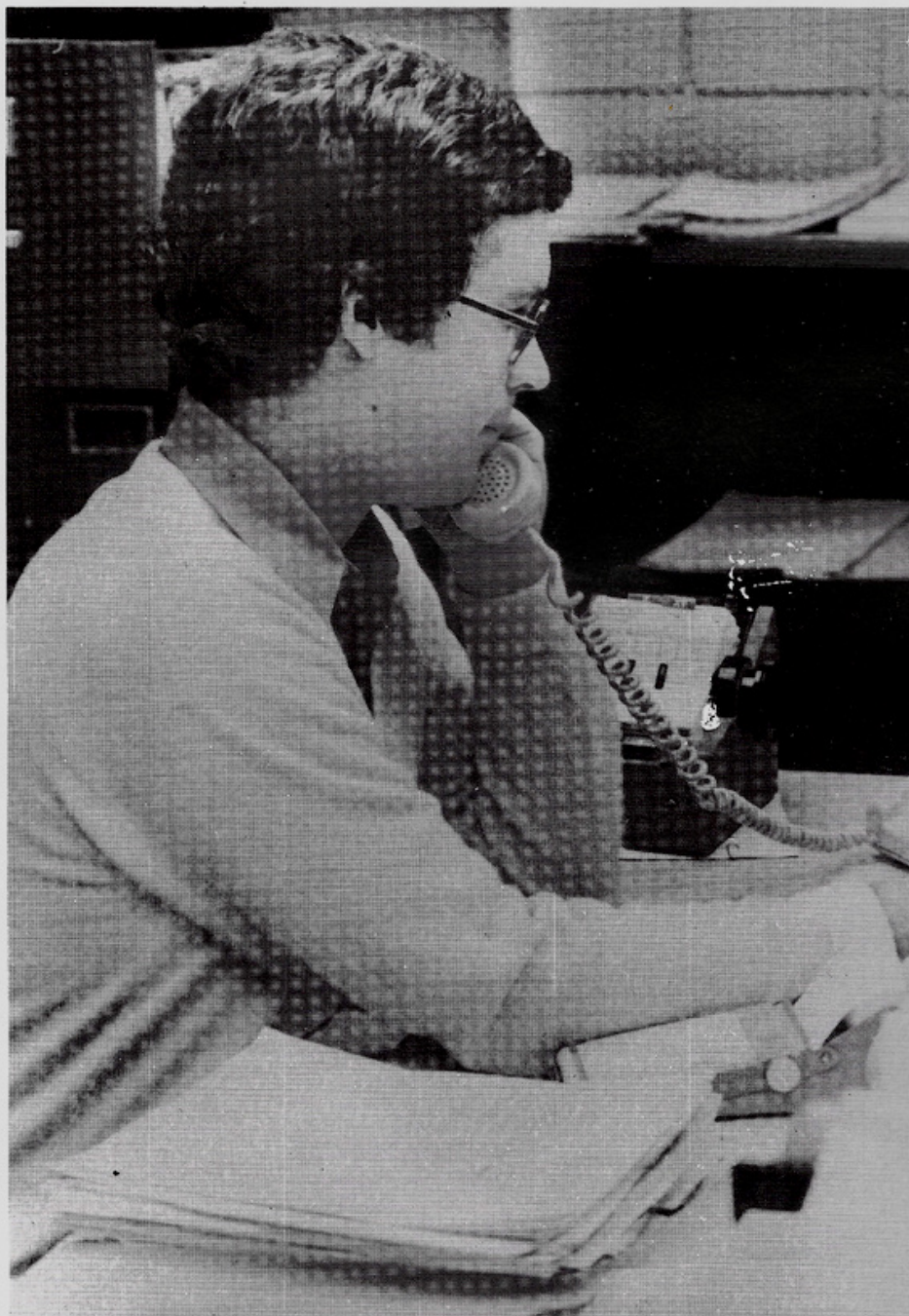
DeCicco also likes the wide open spaces, after the congestion of the East Coast, and being able to get outdoors. He frequently takes his children ice skating on the city-maintained ponds and to a tow-rope sledding area in Craig. He has learned fresh water fishing. Although no hunter, he acknowledges a thrill at seeing herds of deer and elk close-up, or seeing an eagle swoop across the road in front of him, a still-kicking rabbit gripped in its talons.

"We like the proximity to Steamboat Springs, too," Bob says. He goes skiing with his family frequently during the winter season. "The summers are nice, too," he adds. "Warm days and cool nights. Back East, it's muggy and the springs are like a monsoon."

Skiing and other winter sports are listed by many other employees at Craig as invaluable side benefits of living in the area.

"We're close to some of the best skiing in the world," claims Greg Smith, chemistry assistant. He came to Craig from Indiana. "I think the skiing is one of the things I like best about this area," he adds.

George Turner agrees. "The area itself is pretty nice," he says. "You have to love the area. If you're an indoor person, Craig probably wouldn't go too well. But it's getting better all the time, and I think it's going to get a lot better as it goes along." He came from Arizona.



**BILL STOKLEY**  
... applicants seek Craig atmosphere



# atmosphere

"It's an okay place," adds Bill Johnston, another chemistry assistant. "No place is perfect. There's a lot of opportunity here."

"It's close to Steamboat," is echoed by Rick Howick, equipment operator. "I like the mountains, the hunting and fishing." He came to Craig from the deserts of Arizona. "As far as the town goes," he says, "well. . . Craig is sufficient. I guess that's the best way to put it. Prices are somewhat inflated and it's lacking nightlife and housing for singles, but you can find anything you need here. It's getting better."

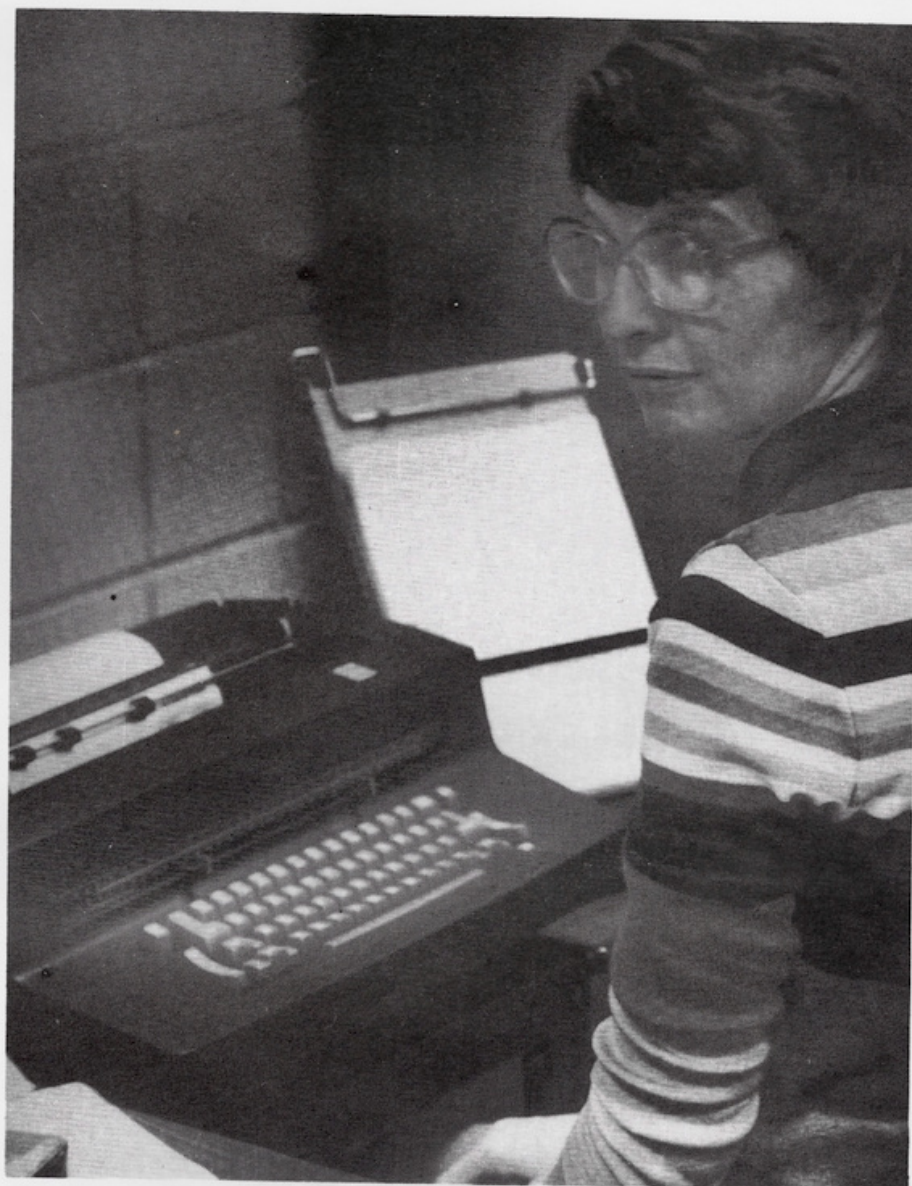
Dave Vaughn, control room operator, was on his first day of work at Craig Station, after moving from Coalstrip, Mont., when interviewed by "People."

"Well," he said, "it's certainly better than Coalstrip. Compared to Coalstrip-- all they have is a drug store, a grocery store and two bars--it's a very welcome change." He hasn't been in Craig long enough to become familiar with the surrounding area, but he said it "Looks interesting." He adds, "I do like to ski. I'm looking forward to that."

Bill Stokley, Northern Area personnel representative, said one of the strongest selling points to prospective employees at Craig Station is the wide open space of northwestern Colorado and, in many instances, the town of Craig itself.

"Of all the power plant-experienced people we interview, just about in every instance the reason they give for wanting to work for Colorado-Ute is the area," Stokley said. "The hunting, the fishing, the skiing, the wide open spaces--that's what they're looking for. Often, they are stuck in big cities in the East or the Midwest--we get a lot of applicants from the Midwest--and they are unhappy with the schools in the cities, the crime, the hustle-bustle and everything else."

Stokley admits that isn't always the case. Some prospective employees, he said, would like to live in the area but their wives are more "city girls" who do not like the small town atmosphere. Housing also has been a problem in attracting experienced power plant employees, he said, but that is improving. Two large new housing developments in addition to Shadow Mountain Vil-



JERRY WILLIAMS  
... the kids like it

lage, the Colorado-Ute sponsored housing development in Craig, promise to make housing more available and probably more affordable, he said.

Efforts are made to hire as many local residents as possible, Stokley said, both to provide stability to the town and avoid exacerbating the growth situation. "If they already live here, housing isn't going to be much of a problem," he explains. "For some plant operations, it is absolutely necessary to bring in experienced people, but for many entry level jobs such as utilityman or operator, we can train local people."

He said the hiring plan for Craig and Hayden calls for 200 additional employees over the next several months, in addition to the 108 already hired for

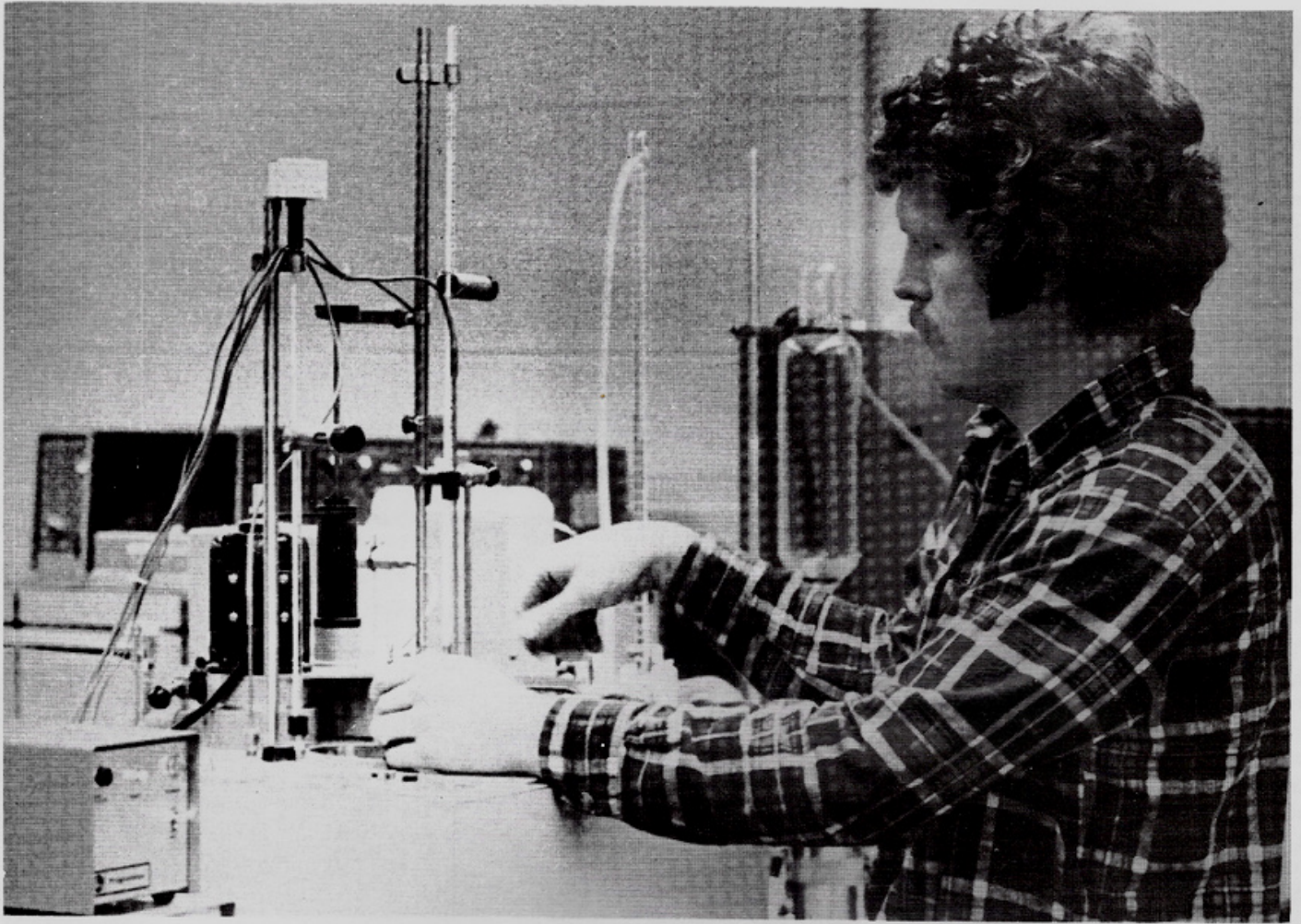
Craig Station, which eventually will have 309 employees for Units 1 and 2.

Some of the press reports about the crime rate, alcoholism, drugs and other problems in Craig are, in Stokley's opinion, grossly exaggerated.

"Sure, there's bound to be some of that in any city Craig's size," he said. "But it is not any sort of Rock Springs (Wyoming), and it has never to my knowledge shown up here at the station, at least with any of the Colorado-Ute people." He said no supervisors have reported workers being under the influence of alcohol on the job, missing work because of drinking problems or being involved with drug abuse.

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GREG SMITH  
... close to good skiing

## "We like living here, I think, BECAUSE of the growth"

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"We just don't see it," he said. "Maybe it's there, but if it is, it hasn't affected us."

Another employee who discounts many of the media reports about Craig is Jerry Williams, senior typist-clerk, who came to Craig from Texas. "I'm not personally aware of any terrible crime or drug problems," she said. "The biggest problem in Craig is housing. The kids like it here. And it's pretty country, after you've been in the Texas flatlands."

"I think all the problems are really temporary, and the complaints are just because Craig is growing," says Mary Hollingsworth, senior typist-clerk in the Administration Building at the station. "People get frustrated when there is a

problem, and they forget all the good things."

Mary moved with her family to Craig about two and a half years ago, after living on the prairie about 60 miles east of Colorado Springs. "We got tired of the wind and the dirt blowing all the time," she said. "It was so dry and dirty out there all the time. In the winter, an inch of snow would make big drifts because of the wind, and not really do any good because all the moisture went into the ground in one place."

Mary's family enjoys hunting, fishing and other outdoor activities, but does not ski.

Regarding the town of Craig proper, Mary seems to sum up the attitudes of

many Colorado-Ute employees at Craig Station. "It still leaves some things to be desired," she says, "but you can find anything you need in Craig. I think they need more competition, but it's coming. It has improved a lot over the last two years, and I think it's going to get a lot better."

She adds, "I think most of the bad things you hear about Craig are just because it is growing rapidly, and some people don't like it or they are afraid of it. That's why we're here. We like living here, I think, BECAUSE of the growth. A lot of towns, especially back East, are dying and jobs are dwindling. Here they're growing. I know a lot of old timers probably don't like it, but it's exciting to us."