



Employees at Curtis Instruments, which was named one of the 50 best companies to work for in the state.

Cutting-edge Curtis wins state award

By DIANE LEWIS

Curtis Instruments was recently named one of the 50 best companies to work for in New York State by the New York Society for Human Resource Management. This was not the first time that Curtis has received this honor, and it is only one of many feathers in their corporate cap, but it is very important to president, CEO and Katonah resident Stuart Marwell because it is a reflection of employee dedication to the company.

Curtis Instruments is a family-owned company started by Mr. Marwell's father and Curt Beusman, owner of the Saw Mill Clubs, in 1960. Mr. Beusman sold his interest in the firm, and Mr. Marwell took the helm from his father in 2033. But Mr. Marwell considers it a family-firm in a much broader sense. He considers his employees part of the family and, indeed, many have worked there for their entire lives.

Curtis Instruments designs and manufactures the electrical interface between electric vehicles and the people operating them. These vehicles includes electric cars, sophisticated wheelchairs, electric forklifts, Zamboni ice resurfacers, airport ground handling machinery and most golf carts. Even the Moon Rover used on the Apollo missions had Curtis instrumentation. Curtis has about 900 employees worldwide, about 90 of who are in Mount Kisco. They have 17 offices in countries as diverse as China, France and Bulgaria. Each office is headed by and staffed almost entirely by local employees, but has many similarities to the headquarters in Mount Kisco in terms of management, ethics and aesthetics and dedication.

An example is their first branch in China. Mr. Marwell's parents went to Beijing in 1985, when trade between China and the United States was still



Katonah's Stuart Marwell of Curtis Instruments. Below, astronaut John Young drives the Rover at the Descartes Landing Site.

new. His father's corporate council had a friend who ran a factory there, and he asked a young engineer to guide the Marwells and explain local customs and business practices. The young man spent three weeks with them and declined remuneration, saying that one day he would need a favor. Three years later he called asking for help getting into a masters program in the United States. The Marwells were able to help him enroll in Stevens Institute in New Jersey, and subsequently hired him. He worked for them in the United States for a year, and then opened their first branch in China. He is now the president of Curtis China.

From Speaking with employees, several key factors appear to contribute to the excellent work environment at Curtis. There is a consistency of leadership. There is pride in what is being produced; everything that is being made improves the quality of life for

the user. The Curtis products make equipment accelerate and decelerate smoothly and improve performance so that the user can feel and relate to the movement of the apparatus. There is a strong sense of collegiality, with employees at every level being treated with respect and as part of the family. If they have a family matter to attend to, they can work out how to manage that commitment and complete their work. There is also a sense of fairness in interpersonal dealings within the company and with customers.

Mr. Marwell and his wife Victoria are both involved in numerous philanthropic ventures within the Westchester community. Among these, Mr. Marwell is on the board of Bedford 20/20 and chairs their business task force, leading energy conservation and environmental stewardship among area businesses.

Ms. Marwell is a member of the Hopp Ground Garden Club, which works with local residents in Ability Beyond

Disability in the large, airy lunch area at Curtis on a regular basis. Curtis also fosters employee's work with non-profit community groups and will adjust employee schedules to accommodate their volunteer efforts. Curtis feels this leads to happy employees and builds a strong connection to the community. Many employees volunteer at the Mount Kisco Childcare Center.

Perhaps most impressive among the accolades accumulated by Curtis Instruments is that Mr. Marwell received global recognition in 2010 when he was invited to participate in a round-table discussion with eight Indian and American CEOs with president Barack Obama in Mumbai, India. Curtis has forged a leadership role in collaborating on technology with India's electric car-maker REVA. The meeting highlighted the strengths of the company's cooperation with India and recommended practices going forward to expand and strengthen cooperation between the two countries.

