

WESTERNER

Omaha Works
July/August 1987



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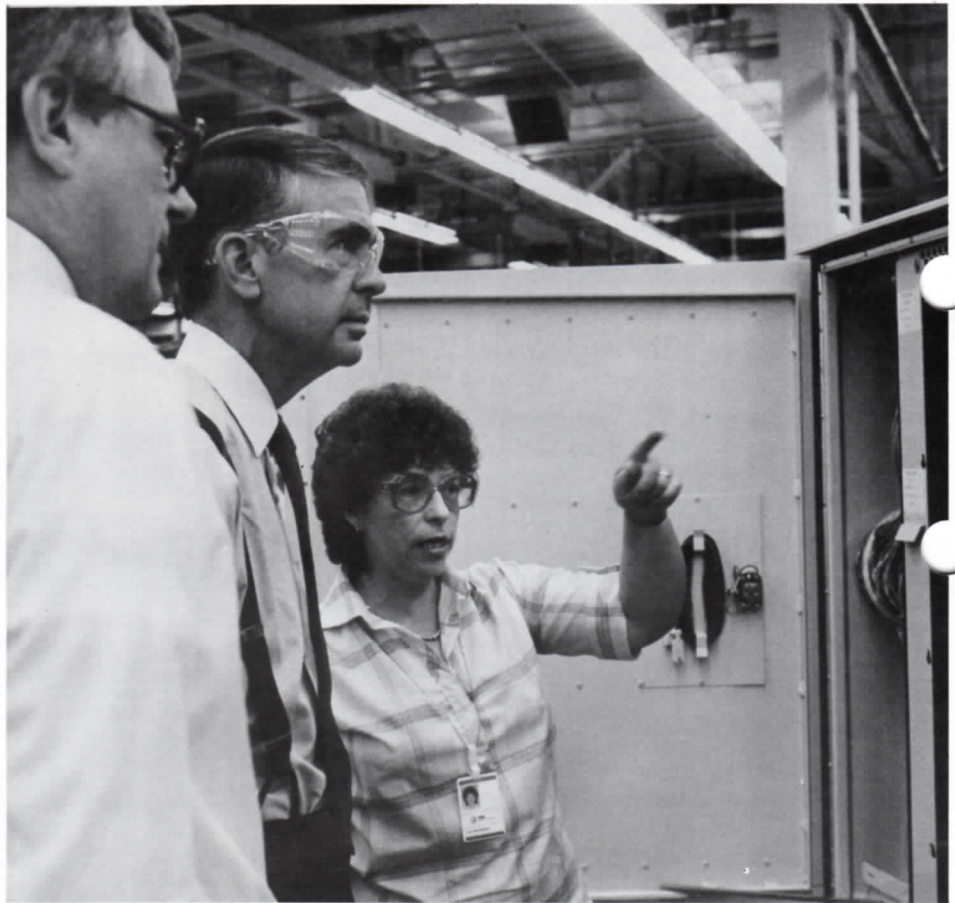
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On the cover

A day's work is over for Dan Lindblad who heads for home, but it's just beginning for his wife, Sue. The Lindblads prefer working different shifts because it allows them to care for their son instead of hiring a sitter. The two are among many married couples who have made their careers with the Omaha Works. What's it like to work for the same boss? Turn to Page 6 and find out.

WESTERNER

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Omaha Works welcomes Allen

Does Bob Allen, AT&T's president and chief operating officer, believe in the future of the company?

You bet he does. He told his luncheon audience of Works employees that he has directed all of his company savings plan contributions be put into AT&T stock.

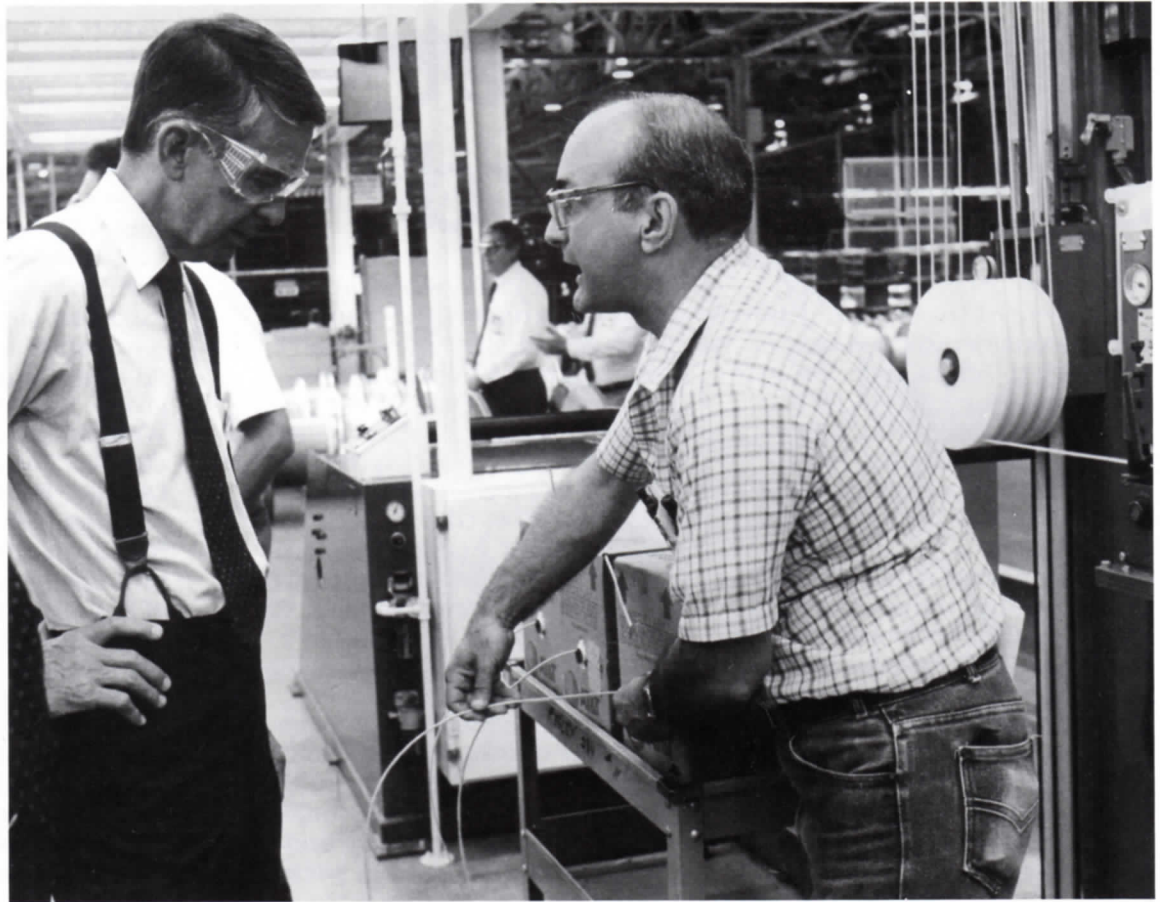
His visit to the Works in late July was twofold: For one, as second in command of AT&T since September 1986, he wanted to learn more firsthand about one of the parts that make up the whole of the company. For another, he wanted to acquaint employees with some of the issues confronting AT&T and to enlist our support in meeting them head-on.

His talk and question-and-answer session with employees who attended the luncheon were part of his busy schedule while

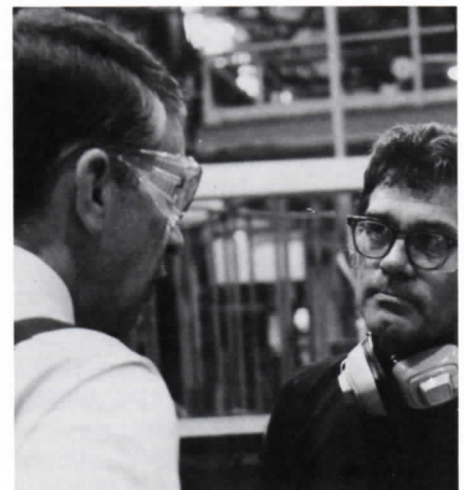
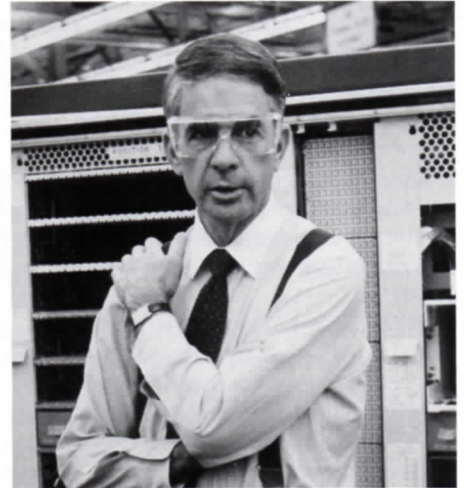
visiting here. He met with managers from all local AT&T entities, had breakfast with quality circle and union representatives and was presented his "Golden Q" after signing the quality pledge board.

Allen also toured the shops in Buildings 30 and 50 with Larry Seifert. Seifert, who is vice-president of engineering, manufacturing and production planning, accompanied Allen on his trip.

Allen made it clear in his remarks that he was impressed with the Omaha Works. In fact, when one employee asked if there will be more plant closings in AT&T, Allen said the possibility is under review. However, as far as the Omaha Works is concerned, at this time "there are no plans to close this one down . . . I can tell you."



ON TOUR . . . Bob Allen (opposite page, middle) and Larry Seifert visit with Jeanne Opryszko in the 80-type cabinet assembly area. Also on the tour route were Steve Marasco in the Reellex area (right photo), Maggie Johnson and Lyle Husk in the unit protector area (below, left photo) and Ron Hartwig in the sheet metal shop.



Merlin project sets a record

Do you believe in magic?

It appeared that it was going to take a considerable amount of wizardry to fill an order by AT&T End User (formerly AT&T Communications and AT&T Information Systems, now combined) for protectors to be used in the Merlin® communications system.

Working with AT&T End User, an incredible team effort involving Omaha Works people, AT&T Bell Laboratories and Network Systems Product Line Management (PLM) in Atlanta resulted in not only filling the order but getting the job done in record-breaking time.

AT&T End User wanted to improve the performance of Merlin communication systems it had leased or sold to customers. Merlin is an advanced PBX for small and intermediate-sized businesses.

Somehow lightning strikes were damaging the units. If a Merlin system is down it can cost a business considerable money because the communication lifeline to customers has been cut.

AT&T End User wanted a solution to the problem that was low cost, easy to install and ready before the storm season was upon us. Already it was the latter part of January 1987 when an initial joint planning meeting was held with engineer Bob Wemhoff (Dept. 476) as the project leader.

A joint effort from the very beginning was critical to the project's success, Wemhoff said. At the first meeting, Omaha Works, Bell Labs and PLM personnel met with End User representatives. Together they drew up a task list, a path of action and critical due dates.

Fifteen weeks later, a new protector — which simply plugs in to the Merlin systems — had been developed and an initial 1,000 units had been

built. The units were shipped out to those areas of the country with the highest incidence of electrical storms.

Meanwhile, Omaha's shops increased their production schedules weekly to meet AT&T End User's immediate needs.

A project of this scope normally might have taken "anywhere from a year to 18 months" to complete, Wemhoff said. The protector itself is a simple unit, but the task was challenging because of the complex planning required, the large number of people to be coordinated and the rigid schedule.

Omaha Works people molded the protector's housings and did final assembly, testing, packing and shipping. Components came from outside suppliers —

Japan, Mexico, elsewhere in the States — and some electronic component assembly was done by AT&T Ireland.

There could be no delays in the process, Wemhoff stressed. Everyone had to meet their commitments.

Although many people helped with the project — "we had excellent support," Wemhoff said — control and direction hinged on maintaining a small planning group. The group consisted of Wemhoff, Colin D'Silva, Bob Drach, Bob Douglas, Don Lanspa, Dean Janovec and Dick Hergenrader of the Works; Richard Cohen, Warren Rhines, Phil Hughes and Steve Bartolutti of Bell Labs; Rob Patterson of PLM; and Pat Keller of AT&T End User.

They met regularly, spending countless hours in telephone conferences to keep abreast of each organization's needs. Instead of working independently and then piecing the parts as the project moved along, "everybody saw all of the tasks from up front," noted Cohen. This encouraged the "design to



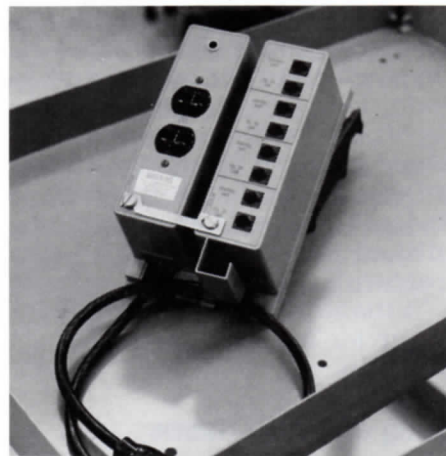
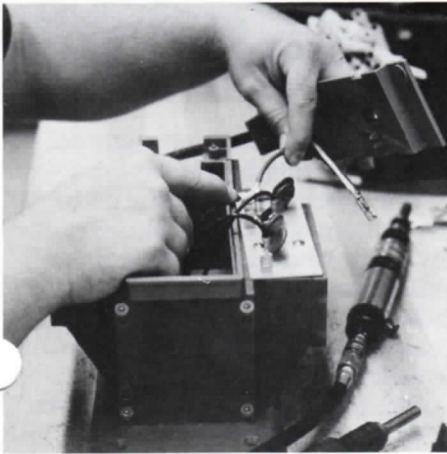
manufacture" concept: design a product keeping in mind what it takes to manufacture it.

The project planners cut through red tape. In a letter to manufacturing vice-president Jack McKinnon, Patterson's boss Peter Woog lauded Works people for keeping the project on schedule "when accepting a delay would have been justified and accepted."

For example, engineer John May said that when last-minute changes were required on the tooling to mold housing, the Works' toolroom employees rallied to the cause. They were able to do in three days what the tool supplier said would take him seven days.

From AT&T End User's perspective, the protectors are performing as required, said Keller. She gave high marks to the teamwork that made the project a success.

"We took people from different disciplines and we never missed a beat," she said. "It was the best project team with whom I've ever worked."



PEOPLE POWER . . . Bob Wemhoff (above photo) and Pat De Floria of Dept. 265 are at a work station where Merlin's data line units are assembled. On opposite page, Steve Heneger applies stickers during the final assembly of the Merlin 147A. Smaller photos show (clockwise from top) the assembly of the AC power unit protector portion of Merlin, the completed Merlin 147A and packing the product for shipment.

Couples answer to roll call

Some companies frown on having husbands and wives on their payroll, but not AT&T.

Since its early days the company has fostered a familial work environment, welcoming husbands and wives as well as daughters and sons, aunts, uncles and cousins. The theory is that if an employee is a good worker, there are probably more like him or her in the family. Thus, family ties don't disqualify a job applicant.

Nobody knows for sure how many married couples are employed by the Omaha Works, but just about every employee can provide a couple's name or two if asked.

The husbands and wives featured on these pages are couples mentioned when such a question was asked. They share a little bit of what it's like to work for the same "boss."

* * *

Dan and Sue Lindblad

When Dan Lindblad hired on to the Omaha Works back in 1969, he thought it was such a good deal that he persuaded his girl friend, Sue, to leave her job as a secretary with another firm and come work in the shops here.

Then Dan was drafted into the Army and was gone two years, "leaving me alone on the night shift," Sue recalled.

The couple, who later married, has never regretted the decision to work for the same company. Dan now works days in Dept. 262 making protectors. Sue works the second shift in the central storeroom, Dept. 566.

The Lindblads consider "having the option to work split shifts" as an advantage to working for the same manufacturing firm, Sue said.

They have an 8-year-old son, Dustin. "We want to be the influence in his life" rather than a sitter, Dan explained, and

working split shifts makes that possible.

But there was a time — 13 years — during their Works careers that they worked the same hours, although different jobs. They rode to work together, took breaks and ate lunch together, they said.

At the time that routine worked best for them, but now the Lindblads say they like working different shifts better because "we have more to talk about on weekends," Sue commented. "I mean, sometimes we would go out to dinner and not say a word" because it had all been said at work.

"Now it seems we make more time for each other," Dan said.

The Lindblads figure they are better off working for the same company. "Communication is so easy," Dan pointed out, because when conversation turns to work matters, they understand each other's jobs and the problems that develop.

A major advantage, Sue said, is "we're both fortunate enough to have good-paying jobs to afford our hobbies."

The Lindblads live on an acreage in Ponca Hills where they raise quarter horses and train them for rodeo barrel-racing competition. Sue is an award-winning barrel racer (you will see her at the Ak-Sar-Ben Rodeo) and Dan is an accomplished trap shooter with trophies to his credit.

"I thank the stars every day I get up for having a job here," said Dan.

Doug and Bev Thoms

Baltimore natives Doug and Bev Thoms grew up together. They attended the same junior high and high school, and have been married for 23 years. So it follows that they would work together for the same company, first at the Baltimore Works

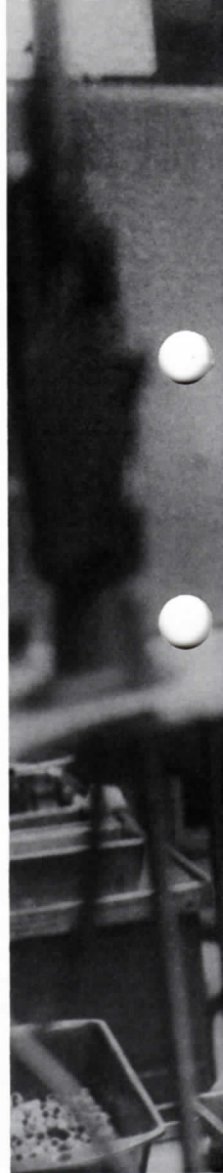
BALTIMORE TRANSPLANTS . . . Bev and Doug Thoms were fortunate to continue their careers with AT&T by coming to the Omaha Works when the Baltimore Works closed.

and now at the Omaha Works, for more than 20 years.

The Thomses' careers with AT&T underscore a risk feared by some married couples who work for the company: That both spouses will lose their jobs at the same time due to layoff or plant closing.

But this couple was fortunate. With the Baltimore Works being closed, the Thomses came to the Omaha Works in 1983. Doug was transferred here as a section chief, and Bev was among the job applicants selected to work here during a hiring period that same year. Doug is now on the network sales support staff in the Product Display Center, and Bev works in the carbon block assembly area of Dept. 268.

The shutdown experience left them with the same perception of their responsibilities on the job. "I took my job for granted before," Bev said, but not now.





Doug agreed: "I have a better appreciation of the job and what we need to do to keep the customers and keep our jobs."

But despite the double risk of losing their jobs, Doug and Bev said they have no regrets about both joining the company.

The good pay and benefits gave them a solid financial start in the early years of their marriage. "Some of our friends weren't so fortunate," Bev said.

They also have a better understanding of each other's work, which contributes toward "a better relationship in the marriage itself," Doug noted.

For some of the years they were on roll, the Thomses didn't see much of each other except on weekends because they worked different shifts. Now that they both work on days, they usually don't see each other at work, "unless I need to borrow some money," Doug said.

If there are any drawbacks to

both working here they are minor, the couple said. Bev recalled that when Doug was a section chief and employee "shop talk" invariably got around to the subject of supervisors, she sometimes heard comments about him she would rather not have heard.

And even though they now work the same shift and can ride to work together, Bev punches a time clock while Doug doesn't. Doug's job frequently requires that he work beyond quitting

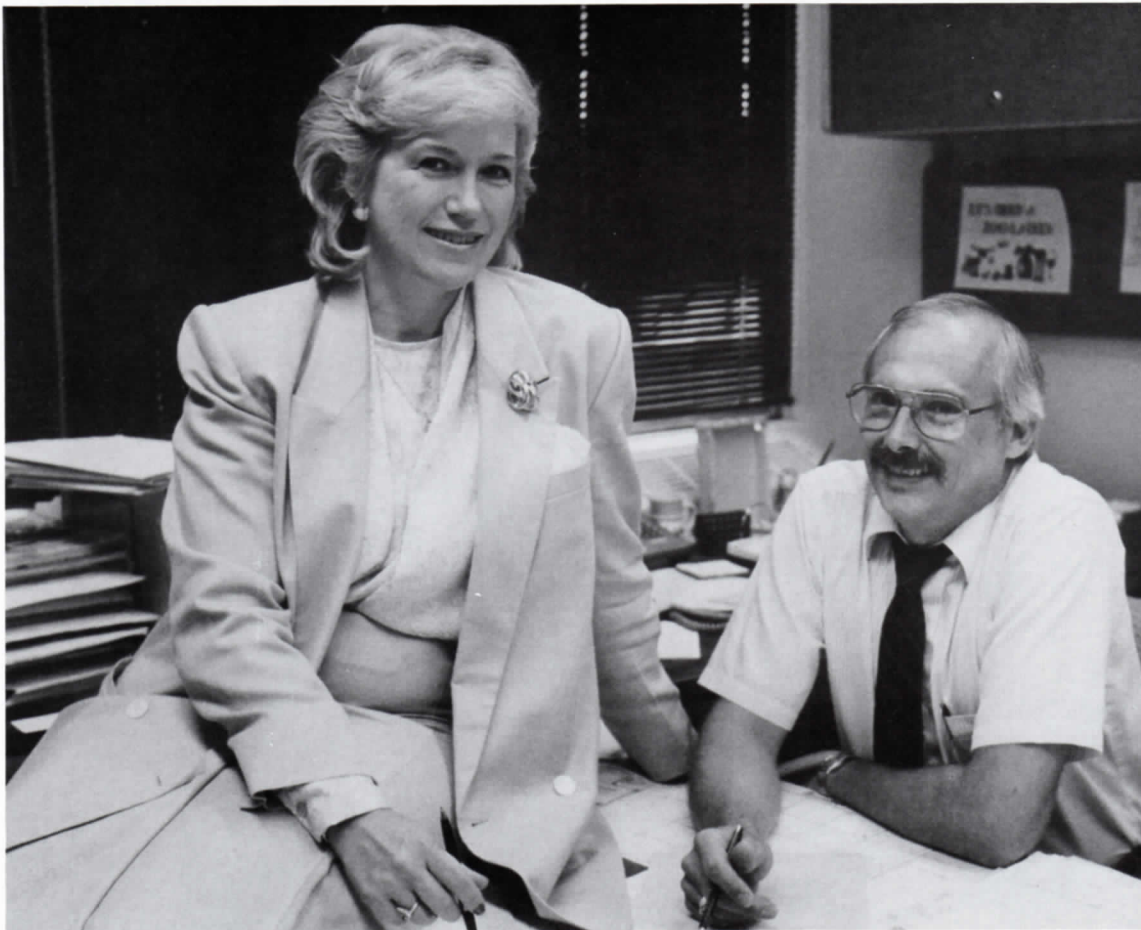
time, such as when customers visit the display center.

Bev doesn't mind. She reads the paper or "get my checkbook together while I wait." Presumably, so Doug can borrow tomorrow's lunch money?

Bob and Sharon Justsen

When they got married in 1979, Sharon Justsen was a process checker in the shop and

(Continued on Page 8)



*THE JUSTSENS . . .
Sharon and Bob
"talk shop" during
working hours
but not at home.*

Couples answer to AT&T roll call

(Continued from Page 7)

Bob was an office supervisor. They sometimes didn't see eye-to-eye on how the business should be run, each arguing from their own differing perspectives.

Now Sharon works in the office as a cost analyst in Dept. 072 and Bob is a purchasing supervisor in Dept. 1441. Their perceptions of work are more closely aligned, these days, although an occasional disagreement still surfaces.

Differences of opinion have never been a source of conflict for the Justsens, Sharon said. Nor does Bob's being a supervisor influence her views. "I've never had a problem about being myself," Sharon said. "But maybe I should think twice about what I say more often."

But Bob shrugged off the notion, adding, "It's good to get other viewpoints."

What may keep this couple's differing views from becoming a

problem is a policy they follow: "We don't discuss work at home," Sharon said. They talk shop when the occasion presents itself through the normal course of their daily work.

In their current positions, Bob and Sharon have little occasion to cross paths, they said. Occasionally Sharon will join Bob in his office to dine on soup and crackers during lunch when Bob catches up on paperwork. They take separate cars to work because Bob frequently prefers to come in early.

But although they don't ride together to work or see each other often during the day, they cited other advantages to working for the same company.

"We are both fortunate to have good jobs — good opportunities to improve our education," Sharon said.

Working under the same roof is reassuring in the event of an emergency. They will always know how to get in contact

with each other quickly, she added.

Both mentioned that understanding each other's jobs and supporting the same goals for the same company not only bonds their marriage but ultimately strengthens the company and preserves their jobs.

Neither one could pinpoint any major disadvantages to working for the same company, but Bob mentioned that he is concerned about showing no favoritism toward his wife when their job paths do cross.

When Sharon worked in production control and Bob placed material orders for her, "I might have expected more from her — like accurate information — because I didn't want to be accused of preferential treatment," Bob said.

Sharon nodded her head in agreement. On busy days when lines formed to place purchase orders, Sharon had to "take a number just like everybody else."

Help is just phone call away

Nobody said it was going to be easy.

The challenges and stress that everyone faces on the job or at home can take its toll. Sometimes, people are unable to cope with the strains of everyday living. Problems develop which can affect the quality of one's home life and work performance. Left unresolved, the effects can be devastating to the individual and his or her family.

AT&T established an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) several years ago to help employees solve personal problems. Now the program is being introduced at the Omaha Works.

An outside professional counselor will set up office hours on company premises for two four-hour periods each week. The role of the counselor is to provide case-by-case crisis intervention and diagnosis and to refer clients to competent, community-based agencies. The counselor will not provide therapy services.

No charge

The Employee Assistance Program is free of charge to all employees and their immediate families. Referrals will be covered according to stipulations of the company benefits program.

Similar programs are in place at several other AT&T manufacturing locations, such as the Reading Works and the Denver Works. The response by employees there has been very good, noted Dr. Lee Grant, Omaha Works medical director. "We're optimistic it's going to work for us here," he said.

Although the program is administered by AT&T Corporate Health Affairs, the nature of each case will be kept in strict



TROUBLED TIMES . . . Sometimes the pressures of everyday living catch up with us. Employees can get help to solve personal problems through the new Employee Assistance Program.

confidence. No files will be kept with the Works medical department. The counselor will keep all files and will never discuss a case with anyone — not family, not supervisor, not medical department personnel — unless the client gives permission.

When an employee has made an appointment to see the counselor, all he needs to do is tell his supervisor that he must go to the medical department for personal reasons. The supervisor will give him the usual pass and the employee will go to one of medical's first aid stations.

A member of the medical staff will take the employee to the counselor's office which is nearby. To the rest of the world, it appears that an employee has gone to medical for nothing more than a cut finger. Similarly, family members come to the Works' lobby where medical staff personnel will greet them and

escort them to the counselor's office.

Dr. Grant expects that most employees who seek the services of the program will be self-motivated. Supervisors who know or suspect that an employee may need help with personal problems will encourage the employee to seek the services of the program, particularly if job performance has deteriorated. However, a supervisor cannot require that an employee see the counselor. The decision must be the employee's.

All three shifts

Dr. Grant said office hours are being scheduled to accommodate all three shifts. (The hours and the two days when the counselor will be in the Works office were not finalized at press time.)

In all cases, the counselor will see clients **by appointment only**, which can be made by calling **691-3416**.

etc.



Rock Wheeler

Ideas result in awards

More than \$7,000 in suggestion awards were presented to several Works employees recently. The awards are for their ideas which will save the Works almost \$50,000 a year.

The largest award was presented to Rock Wheeler of Dept. 084. Wheeler proposed an improved method that quality assurance personnel could use to test unit protectors. For his suggestion Wheeler was awarded \$4,220.

Other recipients and their awards include: Ron Hanner, Dept. 541, \$825; Minnie Smyth,

Dept. 285, \$695; Kathleen Hughes, Dept. 286, \$475; Trudy Dekeuster, Dept. 265, \$380; Kathleen Schutte, Dept. 269, \$360; Erma Hammonds, Dept. 261, \$185; and Carnelle Green, Dept. 284, \$120.

Fix a flat

In response to an Anything Goes suggestion, two small air compressors that work off of a car's cigarette lighter are now available at either guard shack in Buildings 30 and 50 parking lots. Employees may borrow them to inflate their tires when the need arises.

To use the compressor, an employee must give his or her identification pass to the guard. The employee will get back the pass when the compressor is returned to the shack.

Promotions announced

The promotions of four Works employees have been announced.

Mack Curbeam has been promoted to department chief of Dept. 286, Cosmic™ frameworks and sheet metal products, effective Aug. 1. He was a section chief in Dept. 284.

Three engineers have been promoted to senior engineers, effective June 1. They are

Jeff Orley of Dept. 466, Howard Rhoten of Dept. 475 and Kelley Casey of Dept. 493.

Orley's responsibilities include product engineering and developing interworks business associated with metal fabricated products. Rhoten is senior engineer for 40- and 80-type cabinets and B cable terminals. Casey, who is based in Atlanta, is responsible for the development of test sets and process automation.



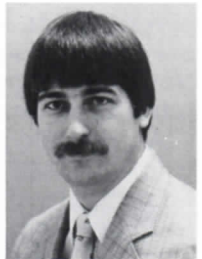
Mack Curbeam



Howard Rhoten



Jeff Orley



Kelly Casey

Retirements

Baumgart has longest service

Wally Baumgart almost made it to the half-century mark in service with the company, but things like the call of the (Alaskan) wild and other excursion possibilities have persuaded him to retire.

With more than 48 years with the company, Baumgart has claim on being the Omaha Works' longest-service employee. "I would have had 50½ years except that I was laid off," he said.

He was laid off in the same

year in which Western Electric's Hawthorne Works hired him, 1937. That's when Baumgart decided to "see the world." After hopping freight trains and hitchhiking, he found himself in Miami, Fla.

"The local gendarmes were going to arrest me because I didn't have \$5 to my name," Baumgart recalled. "They gave me 24 hours to get out of town." Instead, he simply moved to the other side of Miami.

When he returned home his mother told him that Western Electric had been trying to contact him. He wasted no time in going to the Hawthorne Works, but the job opening already had been filled.

"I told them that I had come all the way from Miami for that job," Baumgart said. Two days later he was hired as a material handler.

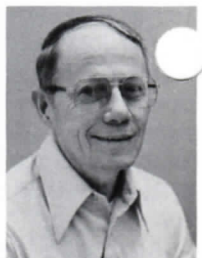
During Baumgart's years with

the company — interrupted for a stint as a paratrooper in the Army — he was trained in machine construction and maintenance and later taught it as well as tool and die making. Three years after he was promoted to group (section) chief he was asked if he would transfer to Omaha.

"I said 'yeah, where is it?'" Baumgart said. In March of 1957, Baumgart began helping set up the training organization



Wally Baumgart
48 years



William Wheeler
38 years

Service anniversaries

40 years

R. E. Fenger 8/4

35 years

L. E. Ellsworth 8/21
G. B. Hauck 9/28
S. D. Mehuron 8/3
A. P. Miszuk 8/12
E. J. Wigg 8/4
J. A. Woods 8/4

30 years

A. Anthon 8/26
H. B. Clawson 8/24
R. L. Hanner 8/26
H. A. Hendrix 8/26
H. C. Hill 8/14
L. Janecek 8/15
D. A. Leifeld 8/12
A. J. Menzies Jr. 8/19
R. R. Richling 8/5
G. R. Danahy 9/9
R. L. Fitzsimmons 9/3
J. A. Graf Jr. 9/3
R. K. Houston 9/27
D. O. Howell 9/16
R. K. Huffman 9/18
W. C. Jacobsen Jr. 9/18

E. R. Johnson 9/26
K. V. Meisinger 9/16
F. H. Schadendorf 9/16
J. J. Sokolik 9/16

25 years

L. T. Adams 8/6
R. L. Belik 8/27
M. E. Gerch 8/20
F. D. Graser 8/27
J. W. Hoover 8/8
L. R. Johnson 8/31
A. A. Mackey 8/27
K. B. Meyer 8/22
M. T. Seals 8/6
J. T. Slominski 8/1
C. E. Thomson 8/20
J. E. Beccard 9/30
R. T. Cefrey 9/4
E. J. Dergan 9/10
J. P. Donahue 9/18
J. R. Frahm 9/20
D. D. Gosch 9/18
G. L. Hamaker 9/18
W. A. Harlow 9/17
J. E. Herre 9/15
E. R. Kano 9/10
R. P. Loesch 9/14
P. J. Loth 9/17

V. E. Myers 9/17
D. L. Portrey 9/17
R. Portrey 9/17
C. L. Rothfuss 9/17
J. H. Russell 9/6
R. F. Schmidt 9/24
R. A. Stewart 9/24
R. M. Stork 9/10
F. J. Tague 9/5
J. L. Tompkins 9/17
O. W. Whitaker 9/24
C. S. Will 9/11
J. Zabala 9/4

20 years

A. A. Armendariz 8/4
R. J. Davis 8/3
K. P. Guse 8/14
L. P. Hanke 8/1
R. L. Heaton 8/14
L. D. Janovec 8/7
C. F. Leyendecker 8/4
W. L. Schmidt 8/21
D. C. Traugh 8/29
R. W. Bartunek 9/6
K. L. Belter 9/5
M. B. Calkins 9/11
J. R. Erickson 9/26
C. S. Gall 9/29
I. K. Griffin 9/1
D. L. Hamlet 9/14
D. P. Kadereit 9/21
L. R. Miles Jr. 9/15
R. Murcek 9/14
F. D. Perchal 9/27
J. M. Richardson 9/11
K. S. Ruth 9/25
J. L. Simmonds 9/20
T. Tabaka 9/11
D. E. Vlcek 9/5

that would instruct the new employees of the Omaha Works. Since then the majority of his work here has been supervising tool and machine construction and maintenance.

"I guess I'm having mixed emotions" about leaving after all of those years, Baumgart admitted. "I loved the work I was doing, the people I worked with and the environment."

However, he's also looking forward to having more time to

travel. But this time when he goes off to see the world, he'll probably fly. No more hopping freights.

Not pictured:

Charles Blanchard — 19 years
Lela Brown — 30 years
Charlie Bystrek — 30 years
Donald Klingeman — 30 years
Jacqueline McColley — 27 years
Etta Post

15 years

R. L. Bishop 8/21
M. B. Contreras 8/7
S. Davis Jr. 8/28
P. F. Johnson 8/10
B. B. Meisinger 8/29
B. B. Miller 8/10
J. H. Piechota 8/14
M. Popham 8/21
D. B. Ridge 8/27
R. F. Schueth 8/12
W. Steward 8/21
J. G. Sullivan 8/6
A. G. Walters 8/10
E. S. Payton 9/5

10 years

D. N. Gibilisco 8/20



Allen Schwab
32 years



Wanda Moller
28 years



Arthur
Fitzpatrick
26 years



Grace Johnson
26 years



Last frame

What are the odds that a high school classmate from a school back East whom you haven't seen in 32 years would take a tour right past your work area? What if that classmate turned out to be the AT&T vice-president of manufacturing, Network Systems Media?

Whatever the odds, they were beat. Ken Meyer, who works on unit protectors in Dept. 262, heard that Fred Topor was to visit and tour the Works.

He wondered if Topor was the same Topor with whom he was graduated in 1955 from Palmer High School in Massachusetts.

Sure enough, when Meyer checked a listing of classmates' names, the AT&T vice-president's initials matched.

So when the tour group approached Meyer's work area, a reunion took place. In the first photo, Meyer (left) looks vaguely familiar to Topor. Meyer reveals his identity and Topor, like Meyer, finds their chance meeting just as incredible. In disbelief Topor jokes that Meyer's "baby face" (second photo) kept him from realizing that Meyer was actually a former classmate.

Meyer joined the Army after

graduation, and a construction job later brought him to Omaha where he eventually was hired by Western Electric. Over the years he lost contact with his class chums, and vacations back East never seemed to coincide with class reunions.

Meeting Topor was "the first time I have seen any classmates in 32 years," Meyer related. Until Topor's visit, Meyer said he had no idea that a classmate had become a high-ranking official with the company.

Topor, who has since sent Meyer a copy of their hometown newspaper, urged Meyer to attend the next class reunion. Meyer said this time he's going to try to make it.



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