

# WESTERNER

Omaha Works  
June 1985



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## On the cover

This one's for you. Sharon Brown, an assembler in Dept. 443, holds up the AT&T Technologies 1984 Environmental, Health and Safety Award moments after it was presented before a gathering of employees in the outside mall. Don Procknow, AT&T vice-chairman of the board and chief operating officer, presented the plaque to Sharon, Vern Larson and Doug Thoms, who accepted the award in behalf of the Works. See story on Page 2.

## WESTERNER

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# Talk about safety ... we're No. 1!

The Omaha Works has been presented with the AT&T Technologies 1984 Environmental, Health and Safety Award.

Don Procknow, AT&T Technologies vice-chairman of the board and chief operating officer, officially presented the award to the Works June 13. Accepting in behalf of Works employees were Sharon Brown, Dept. 443; Vern Larson, Dept. 554; and Doug Thoms, Dept. 543. The three employees were featured in a corporate videotape titled, "AT&T Is Me."

All employees were invited to the outside mall area for the 11 a.m. ceremony. But it was more than a ceremony — it was a celebration.

As employees filled the mall, the Salem Stepping Saints Drill Team marched around the service roads. The portable stage was decorated with giant tethered balloons and banners, and members of the WE Corny Clowns mixed with the crowd. Magician Dennis Rourke served as emcee.

In the audience were special invited guests representing corporate AT&T, local safety and environmental groups and state and city representatives.

As part of the festivities marking the occasion, employee meetings were scheduled in the auditorium for all shifts on June 13 and 14. Refreshments were served and employees viewed the "AT&T Is Me" videotape, portions of which were taped at the Works. Later, employees each received a memento in appreciation for making it possible for the Works to merit the award.

The award is one the Omaha Works has come close to winning since presentations began in 1961, said Dick Veach, safety department chief. Field locations such as manufacturing plants, distribution and repair centers and regional centers, are

eligible to compete for the honor.

The competition for the 1984 award involved locations whose total employee roll amounted to about 140,000 AT&T Technologies people. Based on our environmental, health and safety performance during 1984, the awards committee judged Omaha Works people to be most deserving.

"Our safety record was a tough one to beat," Veach said. During 1984 the Works achieved its highest number of hours to be worked without a lost-time injury — 3,204,952 hours. We recorded the lowest number of lost-time cases (13) in our history, as well as the least number of days lost per 100 employees (7.2).

Veach credited an aggressive safety program and the conscientious work habits of employees as the main reason behind the Works' being selected for the award.

Reminders posted throughout the shop areas and in employee pay details help keep safety in the forefront of employees' minds, Veach noted. "And it doesn't hurt to have a little fun while we're thinking safety," he said, citing the Works Safety Pays game and contests among shop departments.

If it appears safety awareness is lagging in a particular area, Veach said it's important to call attention to it before the matter gets out of hand.

For example, in recent months there has been an upsurge in non-disabling hand injuries in Organization 400. In response, management for the organization scheduled a humorous skit for employees to see in the auditorium. Performed by Bubblegum the clown (Donna Kerr, Dept. 425) and Powder Puff (Janet Owens, Dept. 424), it focused attention on the kinds of injuries that were occurring and reminded employ-

HOW TRUE IT IS . . .  
Bubblegum (left)  
and Powder Puff get  
a message across  
during an Organization  
400 safety  
show. The show is  
one of the ways  
employees are re-  
minded about  
the importance of  
safety.



ees to be careful.

Constant reminders to be safe may seem like "overkill" to employees at times, Veach said, but it's necessary and it appar-

ently is working.

So far this year, the Works' disabling injuries are even fewer than at the same time last year. As of June 3, 1985, there

were five cases reported compared to 10 last year.

Who knows? Maybe there will be a repeat award presentation next year.

## Clown act has safety message

**Y**ou would think that after 46 shows during which she exhorted the audience to "win one for the gripper," Bubblegum the clown would have the script down pat.

The truth is that "everything was ad-libbed," admitted Donna Kerr of Dept. 425, who is Bubblegum without the grease-paint.

When Organization 400 asked her to put together a safety show to stress the importance of hand safety on the job, Kerr

drew up a general outline of the act. Employees in the organization all had a chance to see her show in the auditorium.

Clowning is nothing new to Kerr who regularly dons her Bubblegum face and wardrobe and visits nursing homes and hospitals to cheer up residents and patients.

"Being a clown is a colorful, attention-getting gesture that — for the moment — lets you touch someone's life and break the stress or tension he or she is feeling," Kerr remarked about such visits.

But her safety show is another aspect of clowning which she has found to be challenging.

"I worked many, many hours on it," she said, thinking of a theme for her and her sidekick Powder Puff (Janet Owens, Dept. 424). Safety is a serious matter, yet she wanted to get the

message across with humor.

During her three years as Bubblegum, it has become obvious that Kerr thrives on the challenges clowning can present. She also has found that doing shows like the safety program as a business venture helps make it possible for her to continue her volunteer work among the sick and elderly.

Costumes, wigs and props cost a small fortune. Kerr, a molding press operator, said she spent \$11,000 last year. But it's important, she said, to the people whose lives she touches.

"I want to be the best possible clown there is," Kerr said. (She took second place at the World Clown Convention.) And toward that end she always bears in mind her purpose: "Others . . . be a friend to all. That's what clowning's all about — that and much more."



**MASTER SCHEDULER . . .** Bloodmobile director Bobbie Geiger posts photos of employees who are members of the Gallon Club, blood donors who have given a gallon of blood or more to the Red Cross.

# Behind the fun, a lot of work

**H**ow do you handle hundreds of people who have volunteered to give blood, but they all want to give it at 2 o'clock on Thursday afternoon?

That's just one kind of responsibility to expect if you are a WEOMA Club director or one of the many employees who assist with club activities.

The WEOMA Club grew up with the Omaha Works. Through its group clubs and activities, it is a social outlet for employees, although it often provides services to the community.

Group clubs and activities are the responsibility of the WEOMA Board of Directors. Nine directors serve three-year terms on a rotational basis. Employees

currently serving as directors are: Linda Johnson (Dept 442), associated clubs — hobbies; Ken Deman (403), outdoors athletics — associated clubs and sports, Operation Gift Lift; Tim Raasch (060), indoors athletics and club projects — associated clubs and sports; Marti Lenz (061), entertainment and tours.

Bobbie Wilson Geiger (537), Bloodmobile; Hank Wnuk (403), picnic, education and special assignments; Jerry Berger (443), publicity, Mitten Tree; Marlene Sedlacek (543), representatives; and Sharon Swingholm (448), women's activities.

The directors' jobs are voluntary positions. Directors may do WEOMA-related tasks during

work hours, but not at the expense of their regular job duties. So, sometimes that means club "homework" after work hours.

## Things get hectic

Bobbie Wilson Geiger recalled a hectic calendar when she scheduled the last Red Cross Bloodmobile visit to the Works in May. It coincided with the busiest time of the month in her job, which involves auditing storeroom inventory. And she had a wedding to plan — her own.

In her sixth year as Bloodmobile director, Bobbie schedules two half-day Red Cross Bloodmobile visits at the Works three times a year. She reserves the auditorium, puts notices in the WEOMA newsletter, and when employee sign-up forms return to her, "that's when my work really starts."

The May Bloodmobile attracted close to 500 donors, who had to be scheduled 15 minutes apart. "I juggle," she said, taking care to keep co-workers together and allowing for "drop-ins." She makes up appointment sheets and sends cards to employees, noting their donor times, while "my right and left arm" Dick Oglevie (Dept. 403) handles the physical setup to meet Red Cross needs.

She assists at registration during the visit, and maintains separate files on donors, updating amounts of blood they have given.

Bobbie also was instrumental in enlisting employees in the Red Cross pheresis donor program. White platelets from these donors' blood are used in the treatment of critically ill patients.

As much as she would like, Bobbie cannot give blood herself because of medical reasons. But she said she's so proud and

Appreciative of employees who are donors that she's willing to give the time it takes to help . . . "I turn myself inside out to accommodate them."

### Always thinking

The pressure Jerry Berger feels in his directorship is a little different. Among his responsibilities, publishing the weekly WEOMA Club Newsletter takes up the most time.

"You're always mentally planning the issue . . . like, how am I going to fill up the front page?" he commented.

Ever since Jerry expanded the newsletter's format (it's grown from two pages to six plus inserts), planning and keeping an eye open for news have become more important.

"I like to think the newsletter benefits the employees. It informs them of WEOMA activities and also provides them with a want ad page," said Jerry, who's in his first year as a director.

Recognizing the newsletter to be an already well-read publication, Jerry set out to make it even more appealing to readers. Headlines, photos and illustrations help organize pages for readability.

Adding pages permits him to go into greater detail on activities, he said. He regularly checks with the other directors for news about club events, and "scavenges" for items in the public relations department.

He estimated it takes him a couple of days to pull it all together — writing, typing, layout and pasteup — which he does during work hours. But he often takes employees' classified ads home to sort and prepare.

Jerry said he enjoys working on the newsletter, although deadlines can be difficult. But he always meets them: "When the



*TIME OUT . . . Director Jerry Berger used to be the editor of the Short Circuit, an IBEW publication, several years back before he became editor of the WEOMA Club Newsletter.*

paper's not out on time, I really hear (from readers) about it."

### Plan in advance

Women's activities director Sharon Swingholm knows the crunch of a deadline, too. But not until she handled her first Spring Party did she realize how early those deadlines can fall.

She was shocked to find out "you have to arrange for a place a year in advance," because ballrooms or suitable meeting places are in such demand.

The secret to a successful directorship, she said, is choosing committee people who are "talented and know a lot of people in the plant." She named Linda Johnson who has helped with the Spring Party (and now is a director), Jan Menks (Dept. 444) who chairs Dress-a-Doll, and Bev Wilson (Dept. 429) who handles women's golf.

Together, they work at provid-

ing women's activities that employees prefer. The idea is to "get people to mix," Sharon said, "get them to know each other."

Responding to employees' wishes, Sharon reintroduced an "all girls" Spring Party when interest waned in a dinner theater evening for couples. Last year attendance soared to 350 — a record number.

With Jan's help, Sharon acquired more dolls for employees to outfit in the Dress-a-Doll project and introduced trophies for best-dressed entries. Sharon sought and obtained TV and newspaper coverage of the 939 dolls displayed in the Works auditorium last year.

On the surface, one might not realize all of the work that goes into the fun of a WEOMA activity, said Sharon, who is completing her third year as director. But there's also a benefit she hadn't considered: "It's made me more outgoing. I learned to speak up and I've really grown as a person."

# Do you really need a medical checkup?

*The following is one in a series of articles about health as part of "Love-Life," a health education program developed by the Immanuel Medical Center.*

**Y**ou should have a complete, detailed, medical checkup . . .

- A. Once every year.
- B. Once every two years.
- C. Once every three years.
- D. Once every four years.

Right. Right. Right and right. Depending on who you are, what you do, how old you are and your family and personal medical history, any of the answers may be right for you.

Complete, detailed annual medical checkups that include complicated and expensive diagnostic testing have come under fire in recent years.

Everybody knows of a guy who was given a clean bill of health from his doctor and was dead six months later, the victim of a massive heart attack. It happens. A clean bill of health is like a guarantee on a washing machine. It can be fine one day and worthless the next.

So, should you even bother spending a couple of hundred dollars and plenty of time on a complicated, sometimes uncomfortable battery of tests every year? If you are 25 years old, physically active, don't smoke, don't drink excessively, eat the right foods, get plenty of rest and feel great, the answer is probably no.

If you are 50 years old, physically active, don't smoke, don't drink excessively, eat the right foods, get plenty of rest and feel great, the answer is probably yes.

If you are that 25-year-old, you may not need the same kind of in-depth and extensive annual physical as the older person should have, but that still doesn't mean you don't need some sort of basic physical checkup every year.

There is no question that a routine and fairly simple physical plays an important part in detecting a variety of disorders while they are still in their early stages. Such things as high

blood pressure, heart problems, lung disease, diabetes, hearing problems, hernias, thyroid enlargement and slight difficulties can be detected or suspected through the use of very simple and inexpensive tests and examinations. Many of these problems can be life-threatening but most can be cured or controlled if caught early enough.

What we all have to decide is whether we need to go through an extensive annual checkup which generally includes plenty of blood tests, urine analysis, colo-rectal cancer testing and other, more extensive procedures. One of the best ways to determine your needs is to sit down and have a talk with your own physician. He knows your medical history and he should know your family's medical problems.

If breast cancer has occurred among your blood relatives, he may say an annual mammogram is needed. Complete testing for colo-rectal cancer may be needed annually if blood family members have had problems in the past. Regardless of what you and your doctor finally decide, you should be prepared to have some sort of annual checkup.

After your checkup is complete, sit down and ask your doctor exactly what the results show. Perhaps you have no real problems but the examination shows you have a higher risk of developing a certain disease. Your doctor may want to keep a closer watch on that particular factor. Or he may order additional tests.

A checkup is not an iron-clad guarantee that you have no health problems. But it is an indication of how your health is progressing and whether there are any changes that should be made in your lifestyle.

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## Works lays off employees

The Omaha Works has laid off an additional 200 hourly workers, their last day being May 31.

This is the second layoff in less than two months. A total of 275 hourly workers were laid off previously, effective April 18. The Works' employee roll now stands at just over 4,400.

General Manager Jack Childs said a continued drop in demand for certain copper cable-related products manufactured here necessitated the layoff. A decline in product demand and more normal production patterns now that Works' consolidation

efforts are nearly complete were factors affecting the decision to lay off workers in April.

The more recent group of employees to be laid off have generally 13 to 15 months of service, and have recall rights for two years by union contract.

Childs mentioned that in today's competitive telecommunications field force adjustments either up or down may occur with greater frequency than before divestiture. For that reason, it is not known at this time if or when laid-off workers will be recalled.

# Service anniversaries

## 30 years

J. D. Bricko	444	6/21
J. E. Bundy	206	6/17
J. C. Flohr	474	6/8
E. J. Sharples	443	6/23
A. T. Worley	293	6/7

## 25 years

F. J. Bednarz	045	6/22
G. A. Boyer	041	6/14
G. R. Coventry	045	6/13
J. E. Dellinger	041	6/10
J. W. Du Rae	041	6/3
W. H. Dunavin	041	6/13
J. R. Faulhaber	402	6/13
J. J. Frum	403	6/5
J. D. Hopkins	051	6/27
A. E. Kaspar	295	6/27
J. R. Kessler	402	6/6
H. C. Kirk	1113	6/7
P. S. Klement	425	6/8
R. L. Koster	201	6/28
D. G. Lockhart	045	6/13
P. L. Mangelsen	294	6/27
J. C. Meyer	402	6/13
W. L. Peterson	1113	6/3
B. S. Schaecher	425	6/1
B. B. Snodgrass	425	6/18
R. T. Spain	508	6/17
J. K. Swenson	471	6/13
L. C. Wagner	429	6/29
L. C. Wilkins	425	6/27

## 20 years

I. T. Adamson	1723	6/21
C. L. Barclay	426	6/28

J. E. Barnhill	554	6/7
J. S. Bonner	205	6/23
S. C. Bream	402	6/7
F. S. Chadwick	534	6/14
H. E. Davidson Jr.	540	6/21
D. P. Gray	442	6/17
C. J. Griffin	429	5/28
J. S. Hitchcock	429	6/12
J. P. Jaros	041	6/24
F. A. Jatton	294	6/29
C. E. Jones	540	6/29
P. L. Josoff	274	6/9
H. L. Kunz	429	6/3
J. R. Lassek	295	6/1
T. Munger	402	6/14
J. F. Norville Jr.	295	6/14
F. C. Patrick	041	6/7
R. S. Porter	041	6/29
W. J. Rosencrans	429	6/7
R. I. Secret	295	6/7
J. G. Shambley	205	6/9
D. B. Spethman	443	6/23
E. L. Sterkel	294	6/7
R. G. Stofko	476	6/21
G. A. Stoltenberg	403	6/10
L. J. Story	1722	6/7
S. R. Svoboda	429	6/14
J. S. Taylor	205	6/11
E. C. Wills	293	6/28

## 15 years

S. L. Alloway	472	6/8
C. B. Bohline	424	6/1
R. C. Burdett	554	6/8
S. A. D'Agata	429	6/10
R. M. Howard	060	6/15

D. F. Myhrberg	1722	6/2
W. B. Nicholas	053	6/22
R. R. Runnels	054	6/24
J. T. Skupa	424	6/22
M. P. Wenninghoff	205	6/2

## 5 years

M. S. Curtis	471	6/6
C. J. D'Silva	471	6/23
S. P. Thacker	442	6/16

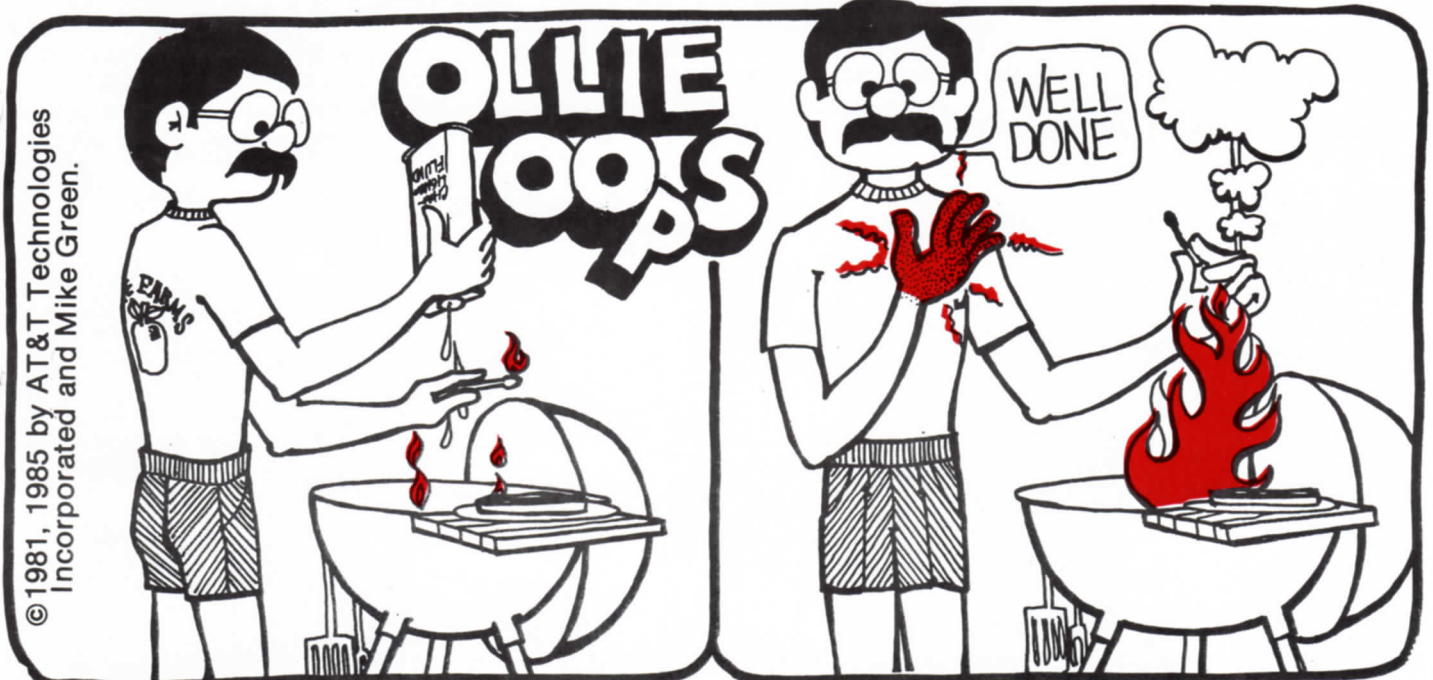
**Editor's note:** L. D. Wacker's name was misspelled in the last issue. He marked 30 years of service on May 5.

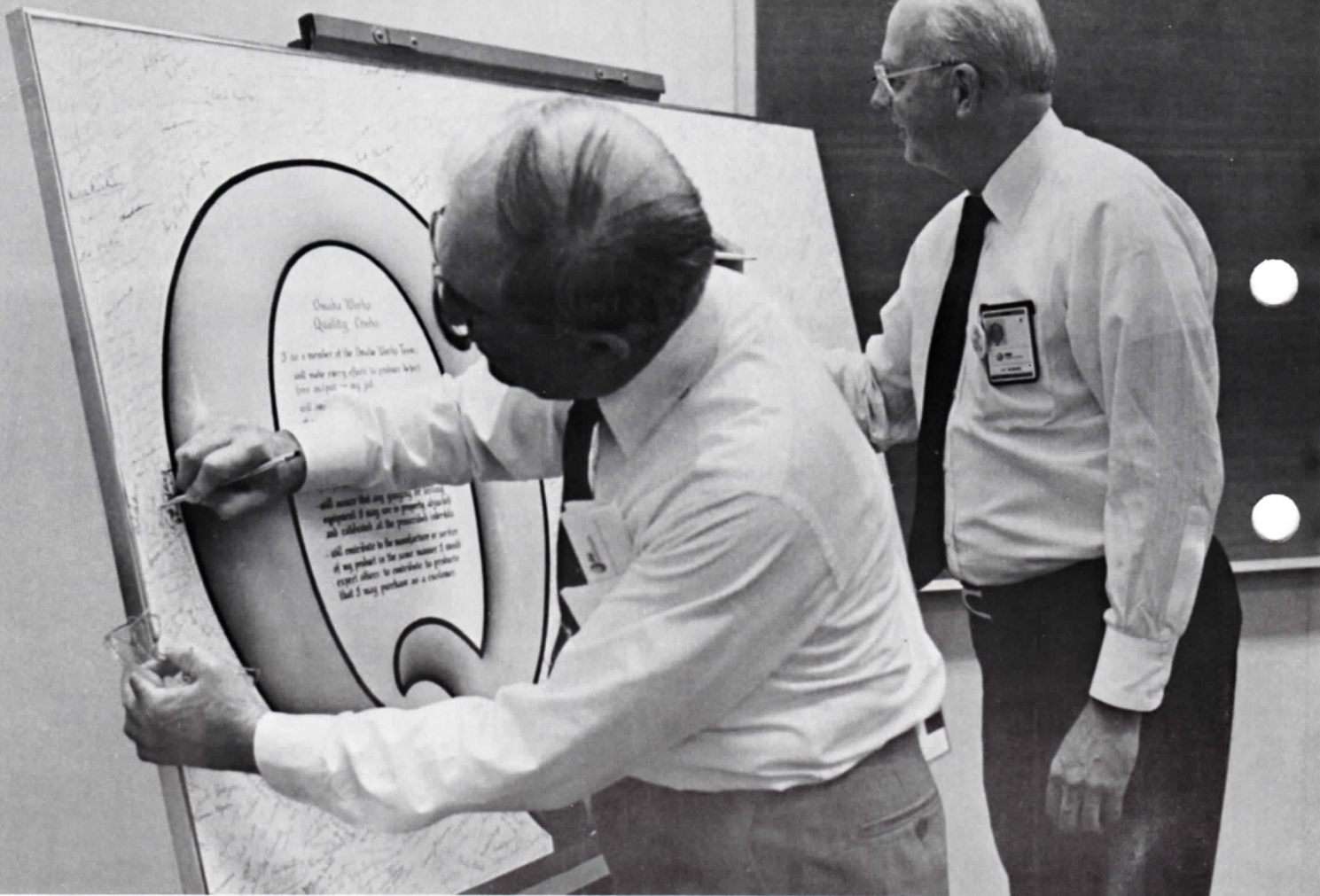
## Nursing director

Connie Peterson, a nurse in the Works medical department (Dept. 810), has been promoted to nursing director. She replaces Ronnie Ahrens who will retire in July.



Connie Peterson





## Last frame

There's always room for one more — or in this case, two more — signatures on one of the quality excellence training program boards which all Omaha Works employees have signed.

Don Procknow (left), AT&T

Technologies vice-chairman of the board and chief operating officer, was a guest of the Works in mid-May. He was accompanied by Hugo Ruberg (right), vice-president of material planning systems implementation.

Both were introduced to the Works' quality excellence training program in which all employees participated. Then they signed their names to a special board as did hundreds of employees, pledging their

efforts to quality work performance.

Procknow and Ruberg paused to sign the board after they toured the shops. They were in town to attend an Omaha Works monthly sales, inventory and production planning meeting. Ruberg is overseeing the introduction of MRP II (manufacturing resource planning) throughout the company, and he and Procknow reviewed the progress of the system here at the Works.



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