

# WESTERNER

Omaha Works  
March 1984



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March 1984

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## On the cover

Scenes like this one are common these days at the Omaha Works, ever since we began hiring new employees. Sandy Meadows (left), an employee with 23 years of service, helps train newcomer Carol Holmes, who had been at the Works not even two weeks when the picture was taken. Both work on 8- and 9-type terminal blocks in Dept. 436. A story about the changing face (or should we say faces) of the work force begins on Page 7.

## WESTERNER

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## Program stresses where we fit in

**"T**he future is what we make it," proclaimed Larry Blanke to his audience seated in the Product Display Center.

This being an election year, that might sound like a vacuous campaign slogan for someone aspiring to office. But in this case it is a statement of fact delivered to the 25 or so Works employees assembled in the room as participants in the Employee Communication Program.

Since November, employees have taken part in the program designed to inform them about the competitive nature of our business today, and to clarify their part in its success. The program also affords employees the opportunity to express their concerns about their jobs.

Attendance at each program session is by department, with groups numbering from 25 to 30 employees. Production personnel have been the first to participate, but eventually all Works employees will take part in the program.

The sessions are tailored to include the job responsibilities of the particular employee group attending, said Bob Wustrack, department chief for network sales support. That way employees are better able to see how their performance affects the plant as a whole. By mid-February, employees from Depts. 282, 433, 439, 441 and 443 had participated in the program.

Five moderators take turns

conducting the sessions — engineers Gary Reimers and Collin D'Silva and section chiefs Connie Schmidt, Larry Blanke and Doug Thoms. Mike Blanchard had been coordinating the program before his recent transfer to the Atlanta PLPM as a product planner.

### Customer is key

On the particular day that Larry Blanke made his opening statement to employees assembled in the center, he teamed with Gary Reimers to present the hour-long program. The group before them came from Dept. 439 where FDI cabinets are manufactured.

The two began with an introduction to the products displayed in the center — products made at other AT&T manufacturing locations as well as those at Omaha. They explained that the center is a valuable marketing tool for the company, providing a central location where prospective customers may visit to learn about what we have to offer.

"Customer" is a key word in the competitive environment surrounding the new AT&T, they said, as a graphic symbol flashed on a large screen before the group. Representative of the network and cable products we make at the Works, the symbol featured five words revolving around "customer" — cost, competition, quality, service and productivity.



*FIT TO A "T" . . . Employees from Dept. 439 wore the T-shirts they received the previous day after participating in the Employee Communication Program. Each participant got a shirt which proclaims, "The future is what we make it."*

"If we can handle these five points properly," Blanke noted, "then we will do a good job in making our future."

One by one, Blanke and Reimers reviewed the five points and their impact on the future of the Omaha Works. Again, another slide flashed on the screen, this one listing Works locations that are closing. Consolidating product lines and streamlining our operations are crucial today, they said. Why? So we can remain competitive.

"At Omaha, we must do everything we can to stay competitive and not become one of those on the list being shut down," Reimers said. We must phase out the products we make which aren't in demand — load coils, for example — and replace them with competitive products. The majority of the products we make here are made by many other suppliers, Reimers emphasized.

Cost and productivity together figure heavily on how competitive

we can be, the moderators continued. A high rate of absenteeism can be costly, they said. In Dept. 439 alone, if the average of 11 days absent a year per employee were cut back to 7 days, it would equate to an additional 626 FDI cabinets that could be made per year, valued at almost \$700,000.

Similarly, if just 10 minutes were saved of the time spent "fudging" (a few minutes extra at lunch, at break, etc.), Dept. 439 could produce another 847 cabinets per year. Add that to revenue from additional cabinets produced due to lower absenteeism and the figure amounts to well over \$1 million extra per year — and that's just one department's contribution, Blanke and Reimers said.

#### **No more even scheduling**

They continued as their audience gave their undivided attention. The employee group was given high marks for its depart-

mental record of superior quality workmanship. That gives us an edge in a competitive marketplace.

But we can still lose a sale, the moderators mentioned, if we ignore a final element in the symbol — service.

When "pull-ups" occur — stopping routine production to manufacture special-order items (such as cabinets to replace those lost in a flood) — the pace can be hectic on the shop floor. It is done as a service to the customer. "They want the product when they say they want it," Reimers said.

Operating on a "level, even ordering" basis is a thing of the past, noted assistant manager Ed Wigg, who sat in on the meeting. "We operate on a bid basis now," he said, instead of working from a product schedule for the year.

It puts more pressure on employees to meet customer de-

(Continued on Page 5)

# Help is just a phone call away

A new program has been introduced to employees at the Omaha Works, designed to help them and their families with personal problems. The program is free and no one need know that the service is being used.

The Works has contracted for the Employee Assistance Program, which is a service provided by Nebraska Methodist Hospital. In the program professional counselors help one identify personal problems and assist in resolving them.

Employees may consult the counselors in confidentiality, said Bob Peterson of the benefits office. The fact that an employee sought assistance for whatever reason will not be recorded in his personnel files, nor will Works management be notified of the nature or extent of the

problem.

Modern living makes many demands on employees and their families and a person may face any of a number of personal problems. Among them are alcoholism, drug abuse, marital conflict, legal problems, financial troubles, psychological and emotional difficulties.

All an employee — or spouse or dependents living with an employee — has to do to get help for a problem is to call 390-4165 and ask for the Employee Assistance Program, Peterson said. An appointment with a counselor will be made for a confidential interview.

Appointments must be made on an employee's own time. Peterson said counselors are available four evenings a week in addition to daytime hours.

Problems will be discussed in a relaxed atmosphere, Peterson said. Some cases may require the help of a community resource agency, or additional counseling or referral may be needed. If that's the case, the counselor will help the employee acquire the resources that are covered under the Works' group insurance plan, or suggest free resources within the community.

Peterson mentioned that although the services are free of charge to employees, it is possible that a referral may be made to an agency whose services wouldn't be covered under the Works' insurance benefits plan.

Also, should an employee have problems that interfere with job performance, it's possible that a supervisor may refer that employee to the Employee

## Love-Life

### All that living goes up in smoke

*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.*

One thousand people die each day because they volunteered to perform an act, despite full knowledge that it could kill them. Most of us would find this kind of suicidal behavior very disturbing, even crazy. It is.

The action is cigarette smoking. Statistically, nearly 1,000 Americans die of smoking-related deaths each day, yet volumes of information — including a warning on each cigarette pack — support the potentially lethal risk involved.

Smoking is a very serious health problem. Nationally, smoking contributes to an estimated 350,000 deaths each year from cardiovascular disease,

lung cancer and other cancers, emphysema and chronic bronchitis.

A recent Surgeon General's Report on Smoking and Health was issued reaffirming that if both adult and adolescent smokers quit and young people would never start smoking, much of the degenerative disease plaguing this nation today could be prevented. This is a mighty firm statement that emphasizes the impact cigarette smoking has on us.

Studies show that a person who smokes 20 cigarettes a day will lose an estimated 2,370 days of life (6.5 years). The risk of premature death from all causes is far greater for smokers than for non-smokers. That includes a 1.7 times greater risk of death from coronary artery disease, six times greater from bronchitis and emphysema and 10 times greater from lung cancer.

Smoking has not always been considered harmful, however. There was a time when it was actually considered "good for your nerves." But in 1964, medical evidence of physical damage caused by smoking surfaced. At that time 42 percent of all Americans smoked. The figure is now 24 percent.

Though kicking the smoking habit is considered difficult, more than 30 million people have quit. Still, far too many people are slowly killing themselves by smoking. In 1980, Americans smoked 611 billion cigarettes, more than 30 billion packs which cost buyers \$19.3 billion.

In addition to and as a result of the health dangers, smoking has become a growing economic problem, accounting for nearly \$8 billion in direct health care costs and an additional \$18 billion in indirect costs incurred in lost productivity, wages and absenteeism. Also, destruction caused by fires started by smokers costs at least \$293 million.

There are not many good reasons to smoke. Most smokers claim they enjoy it. That simple pleasure — when weighed against premature death, personal expense, health care expense, fire hazards, bad breath, smoker's cough, etc. — hardly seems worth it.

Studies show that nine out of 10 smokers would like to quit if they could. Based on statistics that show 1,000 deaths each day from smoking, they'll quit — one way or another.

Assistance Program. However, it is still the employee's choice to use the service, and a counselor-client confidence would be maintained.

There are many advantages to the program, Peterson said. The most obvious is that an employee has the chance to improve his quality of living by getting help to resolve problems.

But it also benefits the Works as an employer. The program should bear a positive impact on productivity, because an employee unburdened by personal problems is a healthier, happier, productive individual.

In a sense, it's like an insurance plan to maintain the health of employees and the stability of their jobs, Peterson said. And that should make everyone happier.



*DIAL FOR HELP . . . A problem with drinking is but one of many for which help is available through the new Employee Assistance Program.*

## 'The future is what we make it'

(Continued from Page 3)  
mands, but if we don't meet those needs, the consequences are far worse. The moderators told of an incident involving an operating telephone company that requested five of our FDI cabinets from the Material Management Center in Underwood, Iowa.

The customer learned that no cabinets were in stock — they were back scheduled. The phone company canceled its order and bought five cabinets from an AT&T competitor.

With the presentation completed, the program was opened to discussion. Hands went up and employees asked questions and expressed their views. If absenteeism is high in the department, what's the cause and what can be done? What can be done about the lack of parts needed to make a product, and why does it seem sometimes that the harder a group works, the more back-scheduled they become? Discussions also touched on incentive pay and quality of work life.

### Desire for feedback

Afterward, several employees shared their opinions on the program.

"I thought it was very interesting," commented Sally Guerrero, a bench hand in the department. She's been on roll for about six months, but she worked in the shop previously, until she was laid off four years ago.

The degree of competition we face made an impression on her, she said. It also impressed floor hand Mary Liekhus — back from layoff status — who said such a program is a good way for all employees to "know what's going on."

The sobering effects of back schedules on customer orders wasn't a new notion to Eloise Klosky, a 15-year service employee. She carools with a shipping dock employee and is well aware of how orders are canceled because of a failure to meet schedules.

Fifteen-year employee Frank Bartman said that although he felt he learned nothing new in the program, it served to under-

score the urgency to meet our goals pertaining to cost, quality, and the other points.

It also served to reinforce his personal commitment to get to the root of problems that hinder successful operations and the quality of work life among employees. He said, "I'd like to get some feedback on the points that we brought up . . . some acknowledgement that 'We heard what you said.'"

Blanke said employee discussion periods are being taped so that concerns may be brought to the attention of other employee groups who have the responsibility for resolving those problems. For example, production control employees who undergo the program will hear about Dept. 439's concern regarding lack of parts.

Plans also are being made to give employees the feedback they have requested, Blanke added. Employees who have participated will receive some form of quarterly communication, such as through a newsletter, videotape or special meeting.



*MUTUAL ASSISTANCE . . . Nancy Rose (left), transferred here from Baltimore, and Sharon Yearsley, an 18-year Works employee, have found they each have something to learn from the other.*

Everyone knows we're the new AT&T.

We have new names, new divisions, new goals, and at the Omaha Works, we even have a new look — particularly in the apparatus shop.

For months we've been installing equipment to manufacture product lines new to us, but we're not talking about how different the shop looks now that vacant areas are filling up. We're talking about the people.

Scan Building 30 and what do you see? Not just more faces but new faces mixed among familiar faces. Employees with years of Omaha Works service working side by side with newly hired people with perhaps barely a week's service.

Other new faces are those of employees with previous service years with the company, but who are newcomers to the Works. They hail from places such as the Omaha Service Center and from the Baltimore and Hawthorne Works.

### Looking up

The introduction of "new blood" to the work force has affected the working climate in a way that hasn't gone unnoticed.

"There's a lot of excitement and chatter going on," said Sandy Meadows, a 23-year employee. "Maybe things are beginning to look up."

Her job description is floor hand in Dept. 436, but her duties are varied. Working on 8- and 9-type terminal blocks transferred here from Baltimore, Sandy does everything from process checking to utility and repair work.

And because hers is an area to which many newly hired employees have been assigned, Sandy is helping newcomers become acquainted with the job.

She thinks there are many similarities between employees hired today and those hired when she started work here 23 years ago. "I'm sure they feel a little bit frightened," she said, "but they seem to be anxious and willing to learn."

Carol Holmes is one of the newly hired employees Sandy has helped train. A recent arrival to Omaha from Alabama, Carol

# Change in our makeup

had worked in a factory but assembly line work is new to her.

"So far I like it . . . it's interesting and the people have been so helpful," she said. She had been told that the Omaha Works would be "a nice place to work," and her expectations are being met, she added.

Sandy gave an understanding nod as she recalled her start with the company. She told herself she would stay just six months for extra income, but "the benefits were good and I liked the chance to meet people," she said. She's worked on six different jobs in 23 years, so she has a feel for the products we make and yet, "I learn something new every day."

### 'Make it work'

Sharon Yearsley, a floor hand in Dept. 442 with 18 years of service, didn't think she would stay at the Works as long as she did either. Besides the benefits and pay, "I loved wiring," she said, referring to her initial jobs in surface wiring and frame wiring.

Her wiring experience comes in handy on her new job with central office connectors, a product transferred from the Baltimore Works. The area also has its share of new people which Sharon has found "breaks the routine. The job is interesting again."

Employees' attitudes seem to be better, she said. "They feel more secure — and we have all that work in front of us!" Also, the enthusiasm of newly hired personnel has a positive effect on the rest of the employ-

ees. "Everybody in our section takes this job so seriously."

Sharon said she's grateful for the chance to work with employees who have transferred from Baltimore. They're familiar with the transferred product lines. Otherwise, "it could be a lot harder starting on a new job."

Nancy Rose is grateful, too, but for a different reason.

Nancy and her husband, Rick, both worked at the Baltimore Works when the announcement was made that the plant would be down-sized. They feared they both would be out of work, but were offered the chance to come to Omaha.

She never thought she would give up their home and move, "but I'm grateful that I have a job," she said. Nancy works with Sharon and is a wirer in Dept. 442. So far she's impressed with the city's "spaciousness," and she immediately felt comfortable in the Omaha Works' surroundings because of physical similarities to the Baltimore Works.

Nancy thinks one contribution she can make to the Omaha Works is her commitment to producing quality products.

"The work is more serious to me than when I first started. It's more than just making the rate or getting the product shipped . . . I realize the repercussions of poor quality," she said.

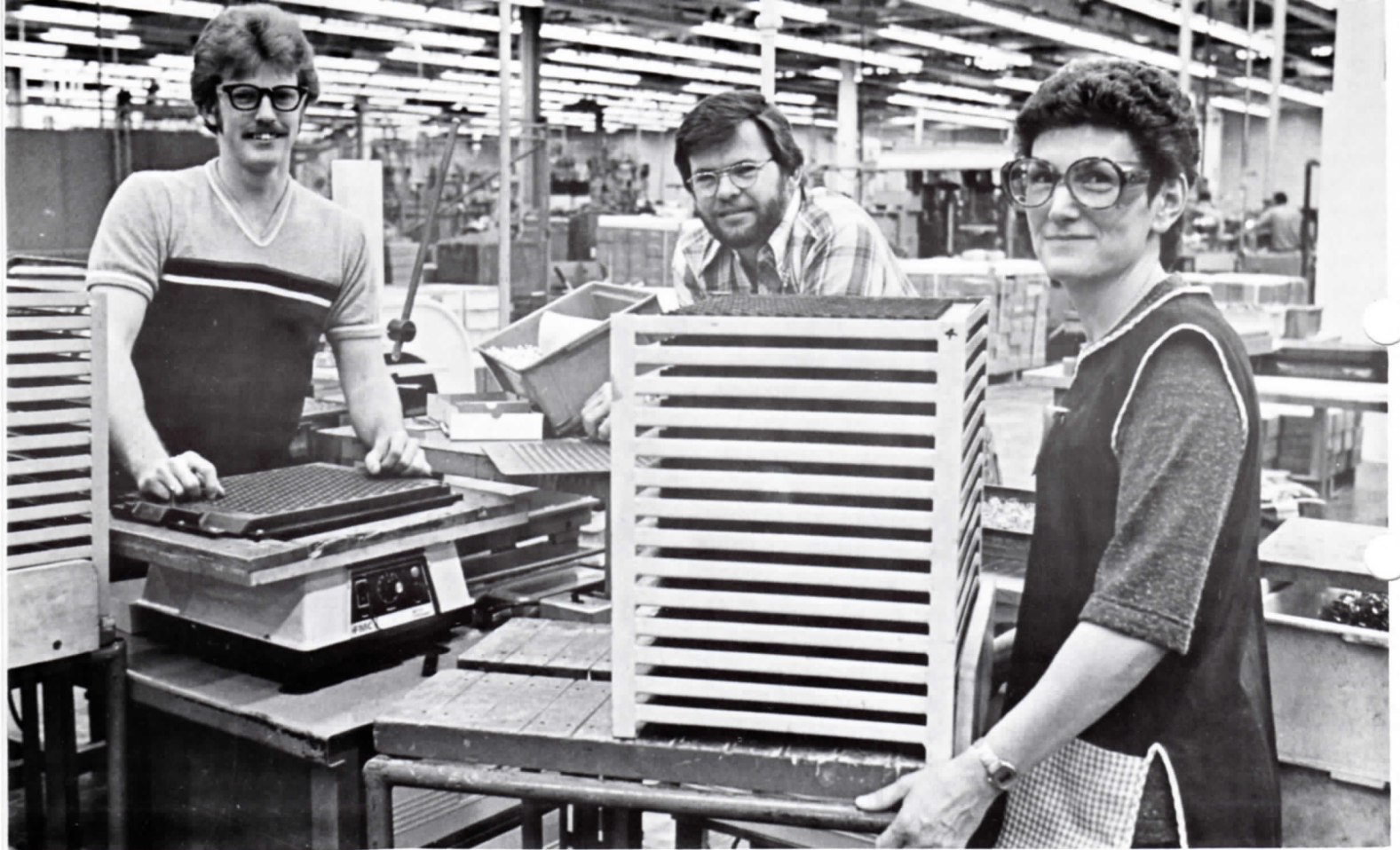
She also thinks that transferred employees like her from the Baltimore and Hawthorne Works won't forget what it's like to be in a down-sizing situation: "We want to see this place work."

### Like starting over

Making it work is on the mind of Bill Dappen, too. Bill had more than 11 years of service at the Omaha Service Center before he was laid off for six months. He came on Works roll in November 1983 and assembles 11B2A unit protectors in Dept. 424.

He never expected to be working for AT&T again. Now that he works at a location that employs more than 4,000 people compared to about 300 at the Service Center, "it's just like starting over again," Bill said.

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**THREE'S COMPANY . . .** With service ranging from six months to 17 years, Paul Clark (from left), Bill Dappen and Irene Palma of Dept. 424 are representative of the mix of employees working in the apparatus shop.

# Apparatus shop has new look

(Continued from Page 7)

Although Bill finds his job here much more repetitious than his job at the center (he was a "troubleshooter," repairing and reconditioning phones), he's somewhat optimistic about his future here.

Given his familiarity with the company, he said he hopes to move eventually into more challenging work areas.

Working alongside Bill is Paul Clark, also an assembler. Like Bill, he has previous work experience with AT&T. Paul had six months of service here before he was laid off three years ago. He was re-hired in August 1983.

Paul has discovered he likes his job here better the second

time around. He held a couple of different jobs in the interim and commented, "It's a jungle out there."

Since he's not totally new to the Works, Paul said he's not the starry-eyed youth right out of high school like he was three years ago. He no longer thinks it's bizarre to show his pass to a guard when he reports to work.

Instead, a mix of young enthusiasm and a willingness to get down to business appear to be his contribution to the Works this time around.

## A shot in the arm

"They're real hard workers," commented Irene Palma about her newly hired co-workers in Dept. 424. They're concerned about getting the product out, and that keeps her on her toes in her job. Part of her job involves getting parts for people and keeping track of product schedules.

In a way, this job is almost like starting over for Irene, who has 17 years of service — 10 in PBX and surface wiring and six in

mini relays. Although she considers herself fortunate in having worked days on virtually the same job while her children were little, her duties gave her little contact with other employees.

Her goals were different, too. "When I started I just wanted to buy drapes," she said with a laugh.

Her new job poses greater challenges and an opportunity to interact with so many more employees. That has been to her advantage, she said.

"I feel I'm capable of doing more," she said, explaining her new-found confidence and openness to new job opportunities.

She's also noticed that the addition of "new hires" to the Works has promoted a group cohesiveness that she thinks has lagged in recent years.

Long-service employees particularly are susceptible to feelings of "getting stale" on the job, she said. Now that's not the case.

"The enthusiasm is returning. It's very nice . . . It gives you a boost, too."



# etc.

## Promotion announced

Larry Bailey, formerly a planning engineer in Dept. 475, has been promoted.

He is now department chief for Dept. 051 — a new department — responsible for engineering, products and metal fabrication planning. He reports to Ralph Beisner.

The promotion was effective March 1.



Larry Bailey

## Wise Owl member

Patricia Hamilton, an assembler in Dept. 443, never dreamed she would one day be a member of the Wise Owl Club of America. She had never even heard of it.

But one day she was filling the compound tank on the filling machine used in the manufacture of 710 connectors. The compound was preheated so it would pour easily.

However, a softball-sized blob of the compound dropped into the tank, splashing 225-degree compound onto her face. Fortunately, she was wearing her safety glasses which prevented potentially serious injury to her eyes.



Patricia Hamilton

A fellow employee mentioned to her she might qualify for the club. It was reported to the

safety department, and several weeks later she was accepted as a member.

The Wise Owl Club of America is sponsored by the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Inc., to recognize individuals who take proper precautions to prevent eye injuries. Hamilton is the 36th Works employee to become a member.

## Suggestions accepted

Several more Works employees recently were presented with suggestion awards for ideas they submitted to the employee suggestion program.

The employees and the amounts they received are William Scollard, Dept. 532, \$805; James Black, Dept. 235, \$470; and Gerald Faller, Dept. 425, \$100.

## Join the zoo

There's still time to buy a family membership to the Henry Doorly Zoo for a discount price of \$28 until the end of March.

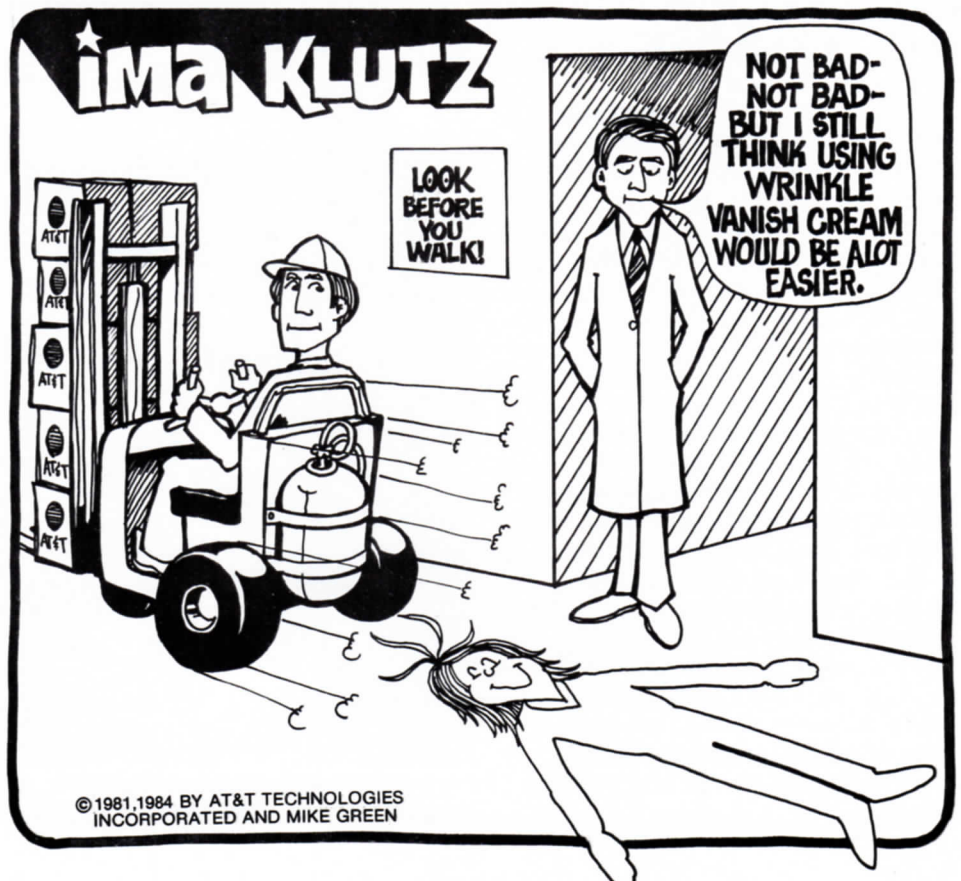
Membership entitles two adults and accompanying children to unlimited visits to the zoo during the 1984 season. In-plant zoo drive representatives are con-

tacting employees about joining, or prospective members can call Dick McGaughey (Ext. 3043), drive chairman.

## Savings plans results

The following are the December unit values for the AT&T Savings Plan (SP), the AT&T Savings and Security Plan (SSP) for non-salaried employees, and the AT&T Voluntary Contribution Plan (VCP):

SP		
	Units Value	Units credited per dollar
AT&T Government Obligations	3.4593	.2890
Equity Portfolio Guaranteed Interest Fund	3.3539	.2981
	2.6720	.3742
	1.5854	.6307
SSP		
	Units value	Units credited per dollar
AT&T Guaranteed Interest Fund	1.6119	.6203
	1.6842	.5937
VCP		
	Units value	Units credited per dollar
AT&T Mutual Fund	1.102	.907
Money Market Guaranteed Interest Fund	1.503	.665
	1.113	.898
	1.180	.847





**CABLE MEETING . . .** Lenis Campbell (left), an extruding machine operator in Dept. 253, met Don Procknow who stopped to view the manufacture of filled cable for TEXOCOM, a distributor of our products. Also pictured are assistant manager Tom Bowman and senior engineer Bill Kinsley (right).

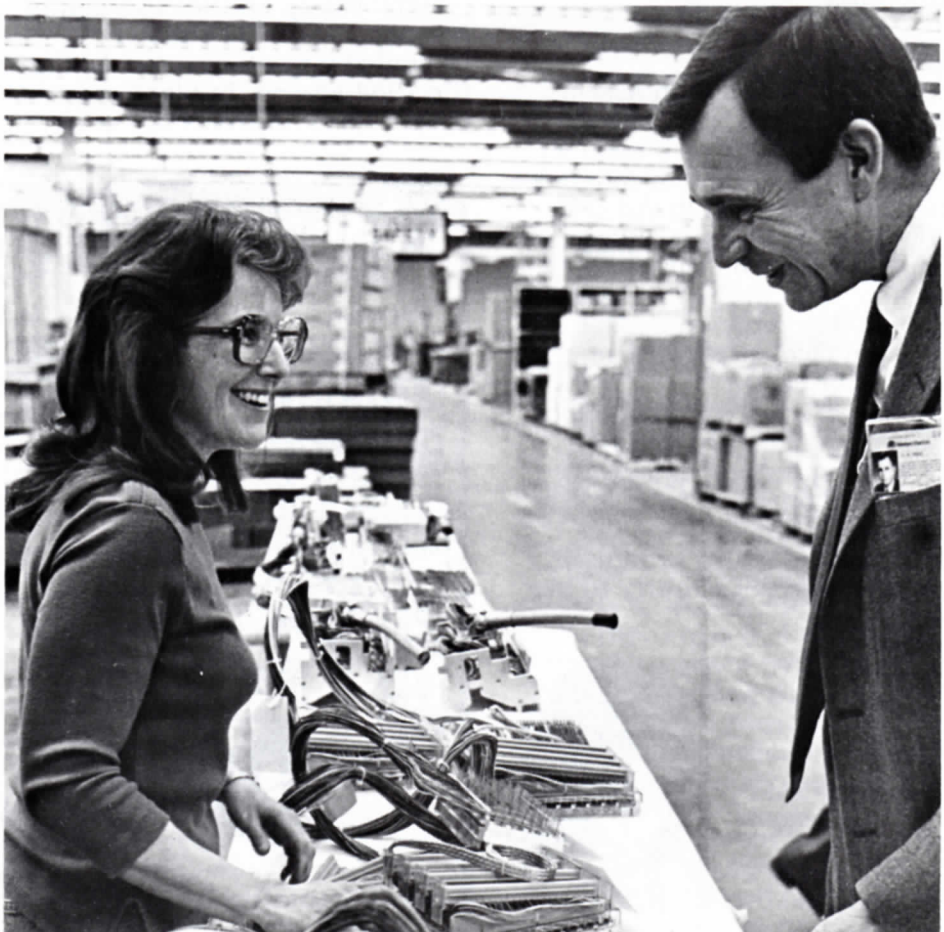
## Procknow, Weeks visit the Works

The Omaha Works had a chance to show off some of its new product lines last month when a couple of special visitors toured the plant.

Donald E. Procknow, vice-chairman and chief operating officer of AT&T Technologies, Inc., and E. Wayne Weeks Jr., president of AT&T Network Systems, visited the Works on two separate occasions.

Procknow was in Omaha Feb. 29 to speak at the Nebraska Independent College Foundation achievement luncheon at the Red Lion Inn. He toured the Works in the morning prior to his luncheon engagement.

Weeks visited on Feb. 22 to participate in the Works' observance of National Engineers Week. After he spoke to a gathering of technical-professionals in the auditorium, he also toured shop areas.



**PRODUCT SAMPLES . . .** Etta Peck, a floor hand in Dept. 442, answered Wayne Weeks's questions about 307 central office connectors.

# Service anniversaries

## 45 years

R. G. Van Cura 245 3/15

## 35 years

R. D. Reighard 439 3/23  
W. A. Wheeler 282 3/4

## 25 years

J. A. Beckman 253 3/11  
E. J. Bielenberg 021 3/30  
G. A. Bruening 253 3/30  
L. D. Buck 443 3/16  
J. W. Carter 231 3/16  
D. H. Christensen 443 3/13  
K. E. Danahy 425 3/16  
D. H. DeBoer 425 3/5  
P. K. Downing 421 3/16  
R. D. Evans 253 3/24  
R. J. Gagliani 439 3/11  
J. M. Giles 532 3/12  
P. G. Hartung 442 3/2  
E. E. Held 253 3/23  
R. W. Howland 235 3/12  
R. G. Jensen 531 3/4  
R. L. Koltas 425 3/13  
F. S. Kros 424 3/9

M. E. Livengood 439 3/9  
H. J. McEvoy 234 3/31  
B. C. Murphy 421 3/28  
H. W. Parks 023 3/7  
H. H. Peters 532 3/23  
G. W. Pote 425 3/31  
E. E. Ruth 253 3/9  
J. F. Schanbacher 026 3/30  
W. J. Schleusener 473 3/2  
P. M. Stolinski 425 3/30  
J. J. Tyrcha 242 3/19

## 20 years

P. F. Bader 439 3/14  
B. C. Balus 425 3/19  
B. S. Gunia 442 3/7  
M. J. Lawrence 421 3/2  
R. S. Riepl 3442 3/27  
W. T. Shelton 442 3/10  
M. P. Williams 424 3/1

## 15 years

D. R. Anderson 443 3/26  
P. H. Anderson 439 3/24  
K. D. Baxter 439 3/26

M. M. Bennett 448 3/23  
J. R. Borkowski 477 3/17  
J. S. Connolly 448 3/17  
B. L. Cork 471 3/3  
J. D. Cornett 251 3/31  
R. L. Cowger 287 3/24  
C. G. Distefano 433 3/24  
M. K. Fager 245 3/31  
R. D. George 287 3/11  
G. D. Hanson 439 3/21  
F. J. Kounovsky 253 3/3  
B. F. Krzemien 070 3/30  
T. R. Lewis 443 3/3  
D. S. Mitchell 431 3/25  
J. S. Pasienuk 439 3/4  
C. M. Patzloff 253 3/13  
R. B. Rican 234 3/1  
R. J. Rodgers 439 3/9  
J. B. Simons 439 3/10  
R. N. Soppe 432 3/12  
J. M. Spracklin 448 3/3  
J. L. Stephenson 439 3/10  
R. W. Stern Jr. 021 3/3  
N. T. Thomas 287 3/10  
P. Warner 433 3/24  
M. J. Zagurski 433 3/10

## 10 years

T. J. Raasch 070 3/27

# Retirements

Not pictured:

Lumilla Rise—14 years  
Jesse Ault—40 years



Ray VanCura  
45 years



John Maul  
36 years



George Bures  
36 years



Donald Maaske  
31 years



James Jensen  
25 years



Dr. Ray  
Gillies Jr.  
25 years



Lorine Maaske  
21 years



## Last frame

Set your sails for the WEOMA Club all girls' party April 7 at the Holiday Inn Hall, 72nd and Grover streets.

With the theme, "Sailing into Spring," the party will be a little different from recent years, said Sharon Swingholm, a director for the WEOMA Club.

After several years of "coed parties," this year's event marks a return to "women only" due to popular request by employees. It also combines the traditional WEOMA party with the annual Cornhusker Pioneer fashion show.

Helen Kirk and Mary Ann Bennett are co-chairing this year's party which will feature a cocktail hour starting at 5:30 p.m., and dinner at 6:30 p.m. Employees will model for a style show that follows, and entertainment will be provided by the

Bellevue West Connections, a high school choral and dance group.

Members of the decorating committee began preparing decorations for the event as early as February. Shown here are Marie Reick and Linda Chollett of Dept. 442 (seated, from left), and Linda Johnson of Dept. 442 and Bonnie Spencer of Dept. 072 (from left).

Tickets at \$12 are available in all Works cafeterias at lunchtime.



**AT&T**  
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