

# THE HEADLINER



Network Cable Systems, Omaha Works

April 1995



*THAT WHICH IS DISASSEMBLED... Must be put back together. Charles Gray practices assembling an extruder crosshead under the watchful eye of jacketing training instructor Norm Honaker.*

Photo by Linda Ryan

## Jacketing class augments training on shop floor

**Y**ou're new on the job. You're adapting to new procedures, new equipment, new co-workers. You may alternate between complete confidence in what you're doing and not having a clue. Meanwhile, the pressure's on to get the product out.

Electronic wire and cable's (EW&C's) jacketing training program was designed to assuage the awkward rite of passage associated with new job assignments and factory moves.

About eight months ago, EW&C established a classroom in the mezzanine area of Building 50 specifically to train operators new to jacketing operations in all EW&C product areas. Included are DIW, plenum, central office, 700 series and D-station cable products.

The classroom training grew out of recommendations made by an

EW&C area quality team (AQT), with support from central office cable manager Mack Curbeam, which cited the need for intensive classroom work to supplement jacketing training on the floor.

The AQT developed material for a three-day basic course, and senior production specialist Norm Honaker of IBU 256 was named instructor.

### Less pressure

Equipped with tooling samples, gauges, video microscopes and computers, students are able to focus on specifics of jacketing away from production pressures on the floor, Honaker noted.

Here they are able to examine tooling, for example—disassemble and put them back together without worrying about holding up produc-

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## Protector blocks stay out of the scrap bin

**S**ome say true perfection can't be achieved in this world. Don't tell that to the employees in IBU 23M who make 134 and 199 protector blocks.

They've resolved a pesky scrap problem that's plagued manufacturing operations ever since the product line was moved here from Baltimore some two decades ago.

The result? Virtually a 100 percent reduction of scrap! Furthermore, the solution didn't even require any capital investment.

To eliminate the scrap problem, the procedure for assembling the protector blocks and conducting final tests was changed. Before, the process involved assembling protectors in the block housing, wiring the protectors, then encasing them in a water-resistant fill (sealant) before final testing.

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Photo by Linda Ryan

*A BETTER WAY...Marilyn Davis, wiring a 134 protector block here, was the first to work on the product that now weighs less.*

## Jacketing class supplements shop floor training

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tion. They can ask questions and get answers in a calm classroom setting.

"Supervisors/coaches request the training for employees new to the Works or who transfer to EW&C (jacketing) jobs," Honaker said.

Early in April, training was conducted for D-station production associates, whose product line formerly was located in Building 30 but recently was moved to the EW&C shops in Building 50.

One of the classes consisted of Charles Gray, Harlan Holck and Elizabeth Weil, who were learning everything from how to obtain raw materials from the storeroom to how to disassemble a crosshead.

Some things are different, some things are the same, they said about setting up shop in Building 50.

What's nice about classroom training, they agreed, is that they have a chance to learn away from hectic production schedules on the floor precisely what they know about a job—or *think* they know.

Sometimes something as innocuous

*THE RIGHT SIZE... Harlan Holck and Elizabeth Weil use a video microscope to measure the thickness of the jacket wall on a sample of cable, one of many exercises conducted during EW&C's jacketing training class.*



Photo by Linda Ryan

as job terminology can make the first days on a line frustrating for the unsuspecting.

For example, "I thought I knew what a core tube was (in Building 30)," Weil said. "But what we call a core tube there looks a whole lot different on the EW&C side."

## Help is available through EAP

Personal problems wearing you down?

Remember, help is available

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## THE HEADLINER

The Headliner is an internal publication of the Omaha Works, produced monthly by the public relations department. It is printed by the Works print shop.

Your comments and suggestions are welcome and should be directed to:

**Linda Ryan, Editor**  
Ext. 3795.

*The next issue will be published on May 17, 1995. All news items should be in to the PR office by no later than 9 a.m. Monday, May 1, 1995.*

## Protector block scrap bins

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If a defect was found in final testing, the entire protector block had to be scrapped because rework could not be done after the protectors had been sealed in the casing.

"Everyone in the department was well aware of the scrap problem," said Sonny Danielsen, one of those on the employee team who began brainstorming ideas for improvement.

At first, Danielsen and Fred Harnish talked about possibilities. Then Eileen Bullard and Joe Bonaiuto offered suggestions.

Before long, the entire IBU team of Terry Comstock, Marilyn Davis, Joe Ellis, Tom Kennedy and Julie Springer—with supervisor Forrestine Davis and engineer Ted Killiam—put their heads together for a solution.

Their goal was to eliminate scrap without having to redesign the

protector blocks or invest large amounts of capital, and they did.

Now the procedure of assembly is this: After protectors are assembled in the housing, only part of the fill is poured. Wiring is completed and the protector block undergoes testing.

If defects are found—say in the wiring or a bad protector—it can be reworked or removed and replaced, because the partial fill has not permanently sealed them in the block.

Only when the protector block passes testing is the rest of the fill poured, virtually eliminating the need to scrap the product.

At the current production schedule, the new assembly/test method for protector blocks should save the Works an estimated \$12,000 to \$15,000 per year, more if the schedule increases.

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

(Continued from previous page) through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) of the AT&T Health Services Group. EAP is a confidential, voluntary counseling service made available at no cost to all employees, their family members and/or significant others.

### Note of thanks

Pioneer Food Drive organizers Bonnie Stuto, Doug Study and Dennis Karloff express their thanks to all who made contributions to the Easter food collection project. Nearly \$2,000 in donations (including a \$300 Pioneer donation) was used to purchase meat products for the Greater Omaha Food Bank. Employees also donated 95 pounds of non-perishable food which went to the food bank. Special thanks to employee reps who collected donations in their work areas.

At the Omaha Works, Bill Ivins provides counseling services. Appointments may be made to see him at times to accommodate all three shifts by calling 691-3416.

If an employee needs long-term counseling or a specialized service, Ivins will assist in locating an appropriate resource in the community. Employee insurance coverage may help defray a percentage of the costs associated with these resources, depending on the type of service provided.

The program maintains strict confidentiality about its clients, Ivins said.

### Pioneer offices to move, ETOP rooms to expand

By the time the month of April is over, the Pioneers expect to be in their new quarters at the east end (first floor) of Building 20. Work began in mid-April to convert into

staff offices and a workroom what had been used as conference rooms across from the medical department.

The offices are being moved to make room in the main cafeteria for more ETOP classrooms, including the relocation of the ETOP computer room to the cafeteria's east side. Eventually, the Pioneer Porch will be located where the computer room now stands.

ARA offices also will be moved to the east end-first floor of Building 20. The new floor plan in the main cafeteria calls for a conference room; however, the Employee Resource Center (ERC) will remain in its current location.

### April service anniversaries

The following employees celebrate milestone service anniversaries during April 1995. The anniversary date is given with service years following the employees' names.

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## are empty

But the benefits of an improved process reach beyond dollar figures. IBU team members will tell you they are glad to be free of the frustration associated with having to build another product to replace one that was scrapped.

And, it appears there's an unexpected "bonus" to the new assembly process. Pouring a partial fill eliminated having to include a heavy steel rack in the block that held protectors in place for a complete fill application. As a result, each protector block weighs 75 percent less, a welcome change for operators who must lift them during wiring and testing.

Danielsen said he doesn't know why a solution to the protector block scrap problem never surfaced until now. He is, however certain of one thing: "There's always room for improvement...no matter what." ■



Photo by Linda Ryan

*NO MORE WASTE...IBU 23M team members are pleased with the fruits of their labor: A protector block assembly/testing procedure that eliminates scrap. From left to right are Ted Killiam, Joe Bonaiuto, Eileen Bullard, Sonny Danielsen and Fred Harnish. The 199 protector blocks shown were made the new way (left) and the old way.*

## NEWS IN BRIEF

(Continued from previous page)

4/1--Craig Alberhasky, 10; Marcia Grothe, 10.

4/2--Anthony Tansil, 5.

4/5--Richard Suverkubbe, 30; Lisa Shaw, 10.

4/6--Rita Gourlay, 15; Richard Munoz, 25.

4/7--Patricia Sudduth, 15; Gerald Peterson, 30.

4/12--Lyle Nicholson, 30.

4/13--Mondo Marcuzzo, 25.

4/15--Michael Krueger, 10; Terril O'Daniel, 10.

4/16--Robert Kaczmariski, 25.

4/17--Bonnie Feierman, 20.

4/18--Robert Eggert, 40; John Pleskac Jr., 35.

4/19--Thomas Borlie, 30; Maggie Johnson, 30.

4/21--Mary Walls, 25.

4/22--Yolanda Higgins, 10; Joan Jacobsen, 15; William Iske, 30.

4/25--Arthur Clausen, 35.

4/27--Robert Slothower, 25; George Balkus, 25; Robert Engel, 35.

4/28--Richard Brickell, 20.

4/30--Richard McKeever, 30.

### New Pioneer officers named

Congratulations to the new officers of Cornhusker Chapter #92 Telephone Pioneers.

Elected to one-year terms effective July 1, 1995, were Norma Korff, president; Dee Kelly, first vice-president; and Darwin Fager, vice-president.

Rose Laschansky was elected to serve a two-year term as Life Member representative.

### Volunteers needed to paint maps

The Cornhusker Pioneers seek volunteers to help paint maps of the United States on concrete playgrounds at 24 elementary schools in Omaha, Ralston and Fremont. The maps will be used to help teach youngsters about American geography.

Teams of painters are now being formed, with a training session for

team leaders scheduled for April 29, 1995.

Pioneer members and their families are invited to participate, said Al Dusek, who is organizing the project. For more information or to volunteer, call him on Ext. 4834.

### Foundation matches environmental gifts

To celebrate the 25th anniversary of Earth Day (April 22, 1995) and to support employees' interest in protecting the environment, the AT&T Foundation will match employees' donations of \$25 or more to the Nature Conservancy or any of its local chapters in all 50 states.

The AT&T Foundation/Nature Conservancy Employee Challenge

Grants Program will provide a dollar-for-dollar match of contributions from active AT&T employees now through June 16, 1995.

For more information, call the AT&T Foundation Matching Gift number at 1-800-424-6030.

### Happy retirement

Congratulations to Ruby Ward who officially joined the ranks of AT&T retirees this month. She retired with 12 years of service.

### In memoriam

**Alvin Thacker**, production specialist in IBU 22A, March 26, 1995.

**Vivian (Kay) Hall**, production specialist in IBU 254, April 2, 1995. ■



## Canoe, canoe ...well, can you?

Sign up for the Outdoor Adventure Club's canoe trip scheduled for May 20 & 21 on the upper Missouri River, from Fort Randall Dam to the Niobrara River confluence. It's a scenic 25-mile stretch of clear (for the Missouri) river.

Contact: Charles Gibbs, coordinator  
Ext. 3493

*Massage therapy is career option*

# ETOP helps make dream a reality

**Y**ou won't find Clarence Elliott whiling away his leisure hours in front of a TV set.

The third-shift electronic wire and cable (EW&C) twistlers operator has better things to do.

And now thanks to the Enhanced Training Opportunities Program (ETOP), he said, a longtime dream is becoming reality. With ETOP helping pay the bill, Elliott has just

completed 1,000 hours of training to be a massage therapist.

He plans to put his skills to work part-time at a local chiropractor's office and already has a list of personal clients, too, Elliott said. He currently has a temporary massage therapist license, but will take a test in May for state and national certification.

A believer in physical fitness (he played college football and now regularly lifts weights and runs), Elliott was competing in a Kansas

City run where he struck up a conversation with a massage therapist assisting at the event. Becoming interested especially in "sports massage," he decided to look into formal training back in Omaha.

"But I couldn't afford to go," Elliott said, until someone suggested that ETOP might help pay for schooling. Funding—up to \$2,000 a year—for Dr. Welby's School of Massage Therapy was approved, where Elliott began training in October 1993 and was graduated this past March.

His 1,000 hours of training included course work in anatomy and physiology, pathology, hydrotherapy, advanced kinesiology, wellness and nutrition, and health services/management.

Elliott also put in 200 clinic hours of massage therapy, performed 20 hours of community service, and completed a 170-hour internship at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO). A UNO graduate with a business degree in marketing, Elliott provided therapeutic massage for members of UNO's men's and women's basketball teams, men's wrestling and women's track teams.

Therapeutic massage is the manipulation of soft tissue "to heal an injury to muscles" common in sports activities, said Elliott, who is eager to share his new-found knowledge.

"I feel really blessed," Elliott said, for having had the opportunity to learn a skill in what appears to be a growing profession. For example, he said, massage therapy is increasingly used to help improve blood circulation in patients with arthritis or who have Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease (if not contraindicated by a patient's overall health).

"There's no way I could have done this without ETOP," said Elliott, who has four years of service with AT&T. "I've learned so much." ■

## ETOP Committee

A nine-member Omaha Works ETOP Committee is responsible for the administration of course offerings locally. Consisting of representatives from management and IBEW Locals 1974 and 1614, they meet weekly to review the education needs and wants of the Works' represented employees, and to oversee the funding of programs.

The committee encourages represented employees to contact any of its members to share views and suggestions about ETOP. Members are Larry Cherry, Barb Gray, Carolyn Landrum, Mark Love, Helen Munoz, Marie Pope, Claudia Perchal, Kathe Scott and Don Wiczorek. ■



Photo by Linda Ryan

*FIND THE KNOTS... Clarence Elliott could feel the tension and stress in the neck and shoulders of co-worker Jennie Griel after her 12-hour shift.*

## Bellevue College Accelerated Degree Program

offered to represented employees through AT&T/IBEW's ETOP & TAP\*



- Degrees in business administration, management, human resources & marketing

- 12-month program

- Must already have 60 or more credit hours

- One 4-hour class per week

- Bellevue College counselors will be at the Works Apr. 24 - May 5 on all shifts. Get more info and make appointments with counselors by calling the ERC staff on Exts. 3523, 3139 or 3607.

\*Enhanced Training Opportunities Program & Tuition Assistance Program

# Issues on the floor: Stock prices, diversity and career planning

*Jack Bucter, AT&T's Network Cable Systems president; Curt Artis, AT&T Network Systems vice-president for human resources; and Jim English, Network Cable Systems' chief financial officer, were special guests at John Heindel's meeting with employees March 9, 1995, in the auditorium. After their brief congratulatory remarks to Works employees for an outstanding business year in 1994, a question and answer period followed which is summarized here.*

\* \* \*

**Q.** *If AT&T has had record earnings, how is it that those of us who invested in the AT&T stock plan have lost money?*

A. (Bucter:) I think what's still affecting our stock prices is the uncertainty of when the RBOCs are going to get into the long distance market and their ability to take share from us. And there are other things, too. For instance, there was concern about how British Telecom would dispose of the shares it owned in McCaw and what that would do to our share price.

The price of AT&T shares is what directly drives the AT&T investment program you're talking about. I personally continue to invest in AT&T because I think it's a great investment long term. I think once the stock market comes to realize what we're doing is building for a strong future that's sure to be even more competitive, we'll see stock go up to where it should be.

**"Once the stock market realizes that we're building for a strong future, we'll see AT&T stock go up."**

*(Editor's note: AT&T posted a 12 percent rise in first-quarter net income, reflecting strong equipment sales and long distance revenue and a major boost from AT&T's new wireless business. Chairman Bob Allen told shareholders gathered in Seattle earlier this month for the company's annual meeting that, despite fierce competition in its long distance and products business, he looks for earnings growth of at least 10 percent for the year. Blaming AT&T's weak stock price on uncertainty in the telecommunications industry, he said, "We don't think*

*the stock price reflects the value. I trust the market will soon recognize our current strength."*)

**Q.** *Mr. Artis, one area of concern is in the area of diversity. Specifically, there was a radio program several weeks ago hosted by a family psychologist that focused on AT&T's support of homosexual events like the Gay Games, etc.. Why is AT&T choosing to support something like that instead of something more along family lines? Would you please take to Mr. (Bob) Allen and the AT&T Board the idea to stop supporting those kinds of things?*

A. (Curt Artis:) There has been a lot of discussion about the subject matter you mention. AT&T has gone on record as part of its diversity program in support of "difference."

**"We believe that bringing different perspectives to the business is healthy and wholesome."**

There are all kinds of differences, and we believe that bringing different perspectives to the business is healthy and wholesome. That is not an endorsement of a particular lifestyle as contrasted against another, but simply the recognition that people who are different are not necessarily evil or bad. It's important to recognize the differences, and not stick our heads in the sand trying to ignore them.

You ask why doesn't AT&T support work and family programs? Actually, AT&T has invested enormous amounts of money and energy in work and family activities and, in fact, the support we have given to gay and lesbian activities pales in the face of the support AT&T historically has provided to the family.

The AT&T Foundation spends about \$36 million in philanthropic activities. A significant portion of that goes every year to support family activities, such as through the United Way. But it also goes to work and family support groups, such as those working to curb the problem of teen pregnancy, or to help keep families together. This kind of support is also a major thrust of our community involvement activity, a four-prong platform that is part of our Diversity Strategy.

AT&T's support of the family is something we can all be proud of.

**Q. Could you define what you mean by cultural transformation?**

A. (Artis:) This is a question we're asking ourselves. What is culture? What is the current culture? What is the "desire to be" state relative to culture? And what does it have to do with business success?

What I'm really talking about here is recognizing that our behaviors and attitudes, which affect the way we work, will have to be different than they have been in the past, which was fundamentally hierarchical.

We now have a different environment in terms of competitive challenges. We have customer architecture. Instead of five neat little business units we have all these CBUs and OBUs.

They have to work horizontally with each other. The vertical way in which we used to operate will not service the new environment. We used to operate under rigid processes, but in the new structure the processes are going to be much more fluid and flexible. The rules aren't going to be as clear.

So, our behavior in the new environment—how we collaborate and work in teams, how we recognize and optimize our differences—must be transformed. That's not easy to do in a business of 60,000 people.

*"Processes are going to be much more fluid and flexible. Rules aren't going to be as clear."*

We have to have a plan because it won't happen by itself. We have to have interventions and initiatives that facilitate and enable the transformation to the kind of shared behaviors and beliefs that we think we'll need to be successful in the future.

Things like a sense of urgency and speed will be critically important, the empowerment to make decisions and respond at the customer interface without a Rich McGinn and a Jack Bucter having to provide guidance for us.

**Q. Mr. Artis, what changes can we expect in career planning and leadership development?**

A. (Artis:) We're convinced that one of the key levers in transforming the culture is the leadership of the business. I'm not talking about Rich (McGinn) and Jack (Bucter), but the rest of us. We're leaders in the business, too, and we believe we're going to need a more sophisticated approach to leadership development and planning.

Until now our career planning has been ad hoc: We have a vacancy, now what? Then we begin responding.

*"We're launching into succession planning...so when we have a vacancy, we have a pool of people ready to step in."*

So, we're launching into succession planning as a mode of operation so that we can anticipate the vacancies that might occur three years into the future. Then, we begin planning in the present the development of successors for the vacancies. Development can continue during the interim period, so when we have a vacancy there is a pool of people who are ready to step into the vacancy.

We spend about \$170 million on education and training in Network Systems, divided into about 12 different areas. We plan to create a Learning Council for NS, consisting of leaders of the education and training organizations who will make sure we use that \$170 million appropriately to get the development we need. The council also will make sure that things like the Strategy Forum are optimized and used as part of the total learning platform.

**Q. I recently transferred here from GBS. It seems that it is extremely difficult to move from the shop into the office. Some of the tests seem irrelevant. Why is that? Additionally, opportunities for advancement are lacking.**

A. (John Heindel:) First of all, most of the tests are based on AT&T guidelines. There aren't many driven by local requirements.

But we're finding, in talking and listening to employees, that we can be more flexible in making sure the atmosphere in which we give our tests is conducive to an employee's ability to perform at his or her best. Maybe it's better to give a verbal test, or maybe give it off-site. We're looking into this and trying to make progress.

As for opportunities, you have to consider the reality of the business world. While we in Omaha have seen growth, we haven't seen many new positions open up. With downsizing in other areas of AT&T and in keeping with our Common Bond, we are bringing in people from those locations. That limits promotions from within.

But while there are restraints, we realize there are numerous ways for us to dramatically improve our culture, and I am personally committed to working toward those improvements. ■

# Heading our way: Tornado season

*(If your name appears somewhere in this article, call Ext. 3583 or Ext. 3415 to claim a \$40 gift certificate to one of six popular local restaurants. The names of two employees are featured.)*

To those who live in a community damaged by its destructive nature, the mere mention of "tornado" may be enough to send chills up and down their spines.

A tornado is a violently swirling column of air, usually in the form of a darkened funnel stemming downward toward the ground from a storm cloud.

A tornado often moves along a narrow path, rapidly and destructively demolishing or strewing everything it touches. It is accompanied by a loud roaring noise.

Tornadoes can strike anywhere if atmospheric conditions are right. Unfortunately, such storms are largely unpredictable beyond a few minutes' warning.

Being prepared for a tornado really

requires thinking ahead. The Safety and Health Council of Greater Omaha suggests taking these steps to avoid trouble:

- Take cover immediately in a basement or a building's lowest level. If there isn't time to get to the basement, crawl under a strong table in the middle of the building, or crouch next to Ernest Ries an inside wall away from windows and doors.

- Never try to outrun a tornado if you are in an automobile. Drive at a right angle to its path. If it appears you cannot avoid it, *get out of the car* and take refuge in a ditch, culvert, under a bridge, depression or, if none of these are available, lie face down on the ground.

Important supplies to have on hand are a battery-powered radio, a flashlight and a first-aid kit.

- In a power outage shut off any large appliances such as air conditioners, TV, laundry equipment and electric stoves.

- Stay away from downed electric wires. Call Linda Johnson for help

and set up a barricade.

- In the event of a gas leak, get out of the area right away. Don't light matches, run electrical equipment, use the telephone or touch any light switches. Just one spark can cause the gas to blow up.

- During flooding, stay away from the water.

Never try to wade or drive through water on a road.

- Don't panic!

Think and act deliberately and with preservation of mind. Because a tornado can strike quickly—with vicious, destructive force—forget about possessions, animals or property.

Stay alive first. Then, assess what you can do afterward to regroup and recover. ■



## Two new programs!

Sponsored by the  
**AT&T Family Care  
Development Fund\***



➤**Escorted Transportation Program** for older relatives of AT&T employees. Eastern Nebraska Office for Aging (ENOA) provides volunteers who transport your older relatives to medical appointments. Priority service to older relatives of AT&T employees. Contact Bill Parsons, ENOA, at (402) 444-6584.

➤**School-age Resource Room** (part of the Family and Child Care Resource Room in Omaha) offers your child care provider resources to help ensure quality care and growth opportunities for your child. Includes activity boxes and materials to borrow, technical assistance and idea exchange. To enroll your child care provider or for more info, contact Phyllis Chandler, Family Service, (402) 345-9118.

*\*A joint project of AT&T, CWA and IBEW*