

# THE HEADLINER



Network Cable Systems, Omaha Works

December 1993



Photo by Steve Miller

## Season's Greetings

*You know the holidays are upon us when you see Salvation Army kettles and bell ringers at various stores throughout the city. Retiree Virginia McDermott (left) and Ruby Stennis of IBU 223 signed up with the Cornhusker Pioneers to help the Salvation Army raise money for its annual Tree of Lights campaign. They collected donations on a recent Saturday at a Northwest Omaha discount store. Works employees find other ways to contribute during this season of sharing, too. Turn to News in Brief on Page 6 for a couple of such reports.*

Developed by local QIT

## AT&T eyes office supplies ordering system

The work of an Omaha Works quality improvement team (QIT), recently presented a Team Award for Excellence by AT&T's corporate purchasing and transportation organization, may have widespread application within the company.

The cross-functional, 11-member team was formed better than a year ago to address a problem involving the internal availability and distribution of office supplies.

Organizational changes led to increased demands on storeroom personnel that negatively affected service to customers.

The team's solution was to develop a supplier contract that focused on service. It eliminated internal storage and distribution, and introduced a system in which department secretaries order office supplies directly from the vendor.

### Savings realized

In the first nine months of operation, the new, more efficient ordering process saved the Works \$62,000, said QIT leader Merlyn Jones.

The team was invited to relate its success story in October at a "Quality Sharing Celebration" in Washington, D.C., sponsored by AT&T's Contract Services Organization (CSO).

Now team member Joyce Schaben has been asked to be part of an AT&T "jump start" team which seeks to apply some of the Omaha QIT's system corporatewide.

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## HEADLINE FEATURE



Photo by Linda Ryan

*HONORED FOR TEAM EXCELLENCE...Members of the QIT that developed the office supplies ordering system each received a plaque recognizing their efforts. Seated (from left): Lisa Grabenbauer, Joyce Schaben, Lynette McGregor, John True. Standing (from left): Joni Hinkle, John Tyrcha, Pat Fleming, Linda Fuksa, Jim Murphy and Merlyn Jones. Not pictured is Russ McGregor.*

### Supplies continued

Already she has attended a meeting in New Jersey.

According to Jones, AT&T would

### THE HEADLINER

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

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

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like to consolidate its office supply vendors by identifying one or two as providers. This would give us the advantage of volume buying nationwide to reduce costs. The process used at Omaha serves as a model for how such an arrangement might work from a service perspective.

The Omaha QIT drew its members from among secretaries, the print shop and from the ISD, accounting, plant engineering and purchasing organizations. And, to gain a better perspective from office suppliers, the team also included two representatives from a vendor, American Office.

The members besides Jones and Schaben: Pat Fleming, Linda Fuksa, Lisa Grabenbauer, Joni Hinkle, Jim Murphy, John True, John Tyrcha, Lynette McGregor and Russ McGregor (the latter two of American Office).

### Benefits noted

"This thing could really go places," Jones said, citing a number of benefits related to the new office

supplies ordering system.

It's convenient, since secretaries choose department supplies out of a catalog. They place computerized orders to the vendor (American Office currently has the contract with the Works) by way of EDI (Electronic Data Interchange).

The supplier delivers orders to each secretary's desk in two days or less, compared to an average of 20 days it took to get supplies when the Works maintained a storeroom that did the ordering.

We no longer keep inventories of office supplies on premises, Jones continued, and IBUs--which now have their own budgets for supplies--are doing a better job of controlling what and how many supplies they acquire.

Perhaps best of all, secretaries dealing directly with the vendor makes for a better client/supplier relationship. "That's always better for business on both ends," Jones said. ■



# Students embrace Spanish "con mucho gusto"

Art Clausen is finally starting to figure out what they talk about in the corners of boxing rings.

Cynthia Jackson-Carter thinks she'll have much to talk about with friends on a cruise next year.

And Gary Steinkraus has discovered a whole new world of cookbooks and culinary delights.

Three seemingly unrelated scenarios, yet these employees share a common thread they say enhances their separate interests. They all took a 36-hour course in beginning Spanish here after work hours.

The course, which ended in November, attracted about two dozen students, said Linda Moore of the training organization. An intermediate class will begin in February 1994.

The instructor again will be Eva Hughes, a native of Spain whose teaching style blends language and hispanic culture.

Design engineer Art Clausen gave his reasons for taking the class.

"When I watch the Tuesday night (boxing) fights from Mexico on cable TV, I'd like to be able to understand what they say in the corners of the ring," he said.

He also wants to understand conversation between songs when he listens to a favorite hour-long radio program devoted to hispanic music.

## Five years to goal

Software engineer Cynthia Jackson-Carter plans to apply her new language skills when she joins several hispanic-speaking friends on a cruise in the Western Caribbean.

"I want to learn more about the hispanic countries and cultures to become more diverse," she said, explaining her decision to take the class.

In fact, Jackson-Carter has a "five-year plan," during which time she intends to become fluent in Spanish and Chinese--a goal that could be

beneficial in her career, she said, given AT&T's strategic intent.

The ability to converse with hispanic-speaking customers without relying on an interpreter was one goal that Rod Wentworth hoped to achieve, especially when he was in international operations engineering.

Now working in central office and DSX engineering, he values opportunities to learn about other cultures.

"It makes for a better rapport with our customers," and it also can help in our relationships with our global neighbors, he said.

## Reach out and learn

A recent trip to Europe triggered planning engineer Kurt Vandergrind's interest in languages and cultures.

"Sometimes it feels like we're forcing our culture and language on

other people. We expect them to know our ways but don't make an effort to learn theirs," he said.

Hispanic culture intrigued him and the Spanish class was a good chance to learn more about it.

Now, with the passage of NAFTA, Vandergrind thinks the class will be helpful on his job as contacts develop with Mexico.

Information systems engineer Gary Steinkraus signed up for class because "our differences are what make life enjoyable," he said, and he was eager to learn more about different people and cultures.

At the time, NAFTA was in the news. "I hate to think that I missed an opportunity to represent AT&T (should the situation arise on the job) because I was unable to speak the language," Steinkraus said.

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Photo by Linda Ryan

*PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT...Students in the beginning Spanish class know that the best way to learn a language is to use it. From left to right are Gary Steinkraus, Rod Wentworth and Cynthia Jackson-Carter.*



# Pacific Bell contract is an exciting win for AT&T

*John Heindel held two meetings in the auditorium with employees during November. The following is a summary of his remarks at both meetings, as well as questions and answers that followed.*

## Opening remarks

### Customer update

**Pacific Bell.** Pacific Bell has signed a major contract with AT&T--the largest network equipment contract in history--that will make interactive networks a reality in California. Pac Bell plans to spend \$15 billion over the next seven years. The first phase of that is worth about \$5 billion in orders for AT&T Network Systems, identified as Pac Bell's strategic supplier.

The broadband network will offer Pac Bell customers video-on-demand, "tele-education," interactive news, home shopping and more. It's not unlike the broadband test site US West has established in West Omaha.

Needless to say, this is a very exciting win for our company. It's still early to define what impact this contract will have on us here at the Works, but there's no denying that it is a wonderful opportunity for AT&T to make important inroads in establishing a national information "superhighway."

**Philippines.** Our first significant 80-type cabinet business outside of the United States is in the Philippines. We look to ship five 81C cabinets before Christmas. We'll ship another seven after the first of the year.

I see this as the beginning of a solid business relationship with the Philippines. We can thank Jay Carter (vice-president, marketing and sales, Asia/Pacific) for flying the banner for the Omaha Works and Network Cable Systems.

**NAFTA.** I believe NAFTA will increase the business prospects for AT&T and the Omaha Works, particularly relating to business with Mexico.

Mexico is undertaking a five-year \$13 billion modernization of its nationwide communications system. Companies from all over the world, including AT&T, are competing to provide the equipment Mexico will need. Without NAFTA, several of our competitors have the advantage of no tariffs on their products sold to Mexico, because they manufacture in Mexico. AT&T, instead, pays high tariffs on the products we have been exporting there, which makes it difficult for us to compete in price.

NAFTA will eliminate or reduce Mexico's import tariffs on telecommunications equipment, thus helping us to become more price competitive. The corporation

estimates that in the first year alone AT&T could save between \$40 million and \$45 million in equipment tariff payments. As I see it, NAFTA also could mean \$20 million to \$30 million of incremental business--largely central office products--and employment for the Works over the next several years.

**Anixter.** Our electronic wire and cable (EW&C) business is going to finish the year on a strong note. In November an approximate \$5 million order from Anixter was confirmed. I commend EW&C on its contribution to the corporation.

**Shipping performance.** We're making strides in shipping performance. Compared to 11 months ago when shipping was in the high 70 percentile, October/November figures show we're in the high 80 percentile, with EW&C operating at about 92 percent. This is a trend I hope to see carried over into 1994. We will be driving to 95 percent on-time performance in 1994.

## Miscellaneous

**Suggestion program.** Feedback from these meetings indicates that a number of you are concerned about the Omaha Teamworks idea process; specifically, that it is taking too long to process ideas and notify teams about whether ideas were accepted or not.

I've asked a Teamworks committee to review and resolve the problem. Goals have been set and improvements in tracking the process are planned. I'm confident that going into the new year the Teamworks program will establish a much better track record.

**Force management.** AT&T has announced two force adjustment plans--voluntary and involuntary--pertaining to management personnel. As a result, Network Cable Systems is considering offering a retirement plan early next year. Basically, the plan would offer one week's pay for every year of service, up to 40 years of service.

This is not to say we have a surplus situation here at Omaha. Our version of the plan would be offered for those who are interested while affording us the flexibility to make some changes as we believe necessary.

## Q's and A's

**Q.** *Will Network Systems stay a part of AT&T or are there plans to spin it off?*

**A.** There are no plans to spin it off. In fact, Network Systems' business performance has been getting a great  
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deal of front-page press. Second-quarter and third-quarter results demonstrate that we're a critical component of AT&T earnings. 1993 will be a very good year, and we expect to see continued growth in 1994.

Over the past eight years Network Systems has generated \$4 billion of new business. Network Systems is focused on becoming the No. 1 telecommunications company in the world, a goal we expect to attain by the end of this decade.

**Q. Do you see us hiring next year?**

A. My hope is, yes. We're currently producing \$60 million of product per month, significantly more than what we've done in the past. Our 1994 business plan calls for continued growth if the economy continues to improve.

I'm concerned about our overtime levels. People working long hours get tired and accidents and job injuries increase, all of which affects how well we serve our customers. We will work seriously on our staffing needs sometime during the first quarter of 1994.

**Q. I've heard talk about a reorganization plan that will take some 15 months to complete. Can you explain?**

A. Rich McGinn, who succeeded Bill Marx as president of Network Systems, wants to increase our speed and responsiveness to the market. To do that, he wants to move decision making closer to the customer.

Network Systems' current business unit structure is organized by products, which has helped us focus on certain markets and costs. But it doesn't match how our customers are purchasing or how we'd like them to purchase.

Consequently, the reorganizing you mention basically entails organizing by customer units rather than product units. Customer units will be organized by regional areas of the globe, and they will have ultimate decision-making authority on resource allocation for development, manufacturing and other functions.

It has nothing to do with down-sizing or surplus conditions. We simply want to grow our business to a No. 1 world position. Rich has appointed Jack Bucter (president of Network Cable Systems) to head the team that will develop and execute an implementation plan during 1994. I'll keep you posted on developments.

**Q. What are we doing to bring women and minorities into trades positions?**

A. We have allocated money to scholarship programs in the community designed for women and minorities interested in pursuing trades careers. The trades people we need today must have qualifications to perform in an industrial business climate that differs from even 10 years ago. By contributing to scholarship programs we're helping to develop a pool of individuals who will be ready to meet our qualifications in trades.

We also are committed to hiring more women and minorities where there are opportunities to hire, as evidenced by our tech-pro universe hiring in 1993. ■

## Workplace of the Future unveiled

We've met the enemy, and it's not us.

Or, it shouldn't be us...not if we want Network Systems to be the telecommunications equipment and services leader in the world.

That message was repeated during a series of employee meetings in the auditorium Nov. 30 through Dec. 3, 1993, when the Omaha Works announced its commitment to "Workplace of the Future" (WPOF).

WPOF is a framework for change that includes among its goals enhanced employment security resulting from marketplace success.

Stemming from a contract signed

in 1992 by AT&T and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), it seeks greater respect for the judgment and experience of all employees, and an improved quality of work life.

Furthermore, it aims for shared decision making between union and management.

What distinguishes WPOF is a move from an adversarial relationship between union and management to one in which business decisions and information are shared.

That's important, given increasing global competition and our need to control prices and make quality improvements to succeed.

There is no precedent for how union and management will work as partners in business planning, but employees will have a much greater opportunity to give input on decisions affecting their jobs. Jobs will entail greater diversification. We will live the Works' WPOF slogan, "Destiny by choice, not chance."

Surveys on employee reaction to the presentation were distributed at the end of each meeting.

A Workplace of the Future Council, consisting of union and management representatives, will use survey feedback to help guide the next steps in establishing Omaha's WPOF. ■



## Going one step extra in sharing

Employees in the DSX area (IBU 226-3) have a holiday tradition they'd like to share with the rest of the Works.

For the second year in a row, the IBU's 28 employees have participated in the "Adopt-a-Family" project, according to coordinators Sharon Webster and Connie Jones.

The project entails asking the Salvation Army for the name of a needy family in the Omaha community. Then, employees contribute money to purchase groceries and toys for the family.

This year the IBU raised \$121, Webster said. It was enough to buy three remote-controlled cars, a large toy dump truck and a baby doll, with a sum set aside for a food gift certificate.

There was even enough to provide two food baskets for the elderly parents of a couple of employees in the IBU.

Representatives of the IBU personally delivered the items to the family and elderly parents. The local chapter of Hispa helped to interpret the goings-on for the Spanish-speaking, adopted family.

The IBU's employees are regular contributors to other traditional holiday projects at the Works, such as the Pioneer Food Drive and the Toy Drive, Webster noted.

But their "Adopt-a-Family" project is something special that "makes sharing so much more personalized," she said.

Webster and Jones are hopeful that their IBU's tradition will catch on and that other departments will adopt families of their own next year, too.

## Annual Works toy drive raises \$2,500

Members of the annual Toy Drive planning committee are pleased with the results of this year's efforts and

stated their thanks to all of the employees who helped make it a success.

The drive raised \$2,500, said committee chairperson Larry Cherry. He and committee members personally selected and bought the toys that were later delivered to the Salvation Army for distribution.

Others on the committee were Carolyn Landrum, Lisa Anderson, Gary Scott, Mark Love and Jan Smith.

Earlier in the month, the toys were on display in the Works auditorium for employees to view. Featured were toys for all ages of children, from infants to teens, including musical toys, games, trucks, radios, duffel bags, sports equipment and building toys.

Cherry said the committee purposely avoided pricey electronic toys so funds would go farther, but insisted on quality items. Members stayed away from toys that suggest violent play, they said, opting instead for toys that encouraged creativity and development.

## Dolls and bears outfitters honored

Six participants in this year's Dress-a-Doll and Dress-a-Bear projects have earned recognition from the Salvation Army for their costumes.

The honorees are among 33 selected citywide who contributed to the annual project, which provides dolls and teddy bears for local needy children at Christmastime. Those honored at the Works:

**Kathy Schutte**--first place, best bride doll.

**Alma Sucha**--second, best ethnic doll.

**Jean Pechar**--first, best baby doll.  
**Lillian Schott**--first, most creative sports bear.

**Mary Anderson**--third, most creative bear with accessory.

**Linda Ryan**--second, most original bear costume.

Bonnie Anderson, who chairs the

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Photo by Linda Ryan

*THE RIGHT TOY...Members of the Toy Drive Committee used donated funds to select perfect toys for children of all ages. They are (front, from left): Carolyn Landrum, Lisa Anderson and Gary Scott; (back) Jan Smith and Larry Cherry. Not pictured is Mark Love.*



## NEWS IN BRIEF

(Continued from previous page) project at the Works, noted that some of the dolls and bears are auctioned off at a Salvation Army tea after judging.

"This is how the Salvation Army raises money to buy dolls and bears for next year," she explained. She added, however, that if a person contributed a doll or bear and preferred that it be given to a needy child and not auctioned, that request would be honored.

### Students like their new phones

Eight handwritten thank-you notes came through the Works mail recently, all from students in the special education class at Papillion-LaVista High School.

They thanked AT&T for the donation of 14 renovated telephones which they use in the classroom to learn proper telephone etiquette.

The Works donated the phones in response to a request by speech and language teacher Cathy Crumbley.

The students have been enjoying their lessons with the phones, said class instructor Kathy Weaver, and they're becoming pros in such exercises as taking messages, making restaurant reservations, placing catalog orders and making doctors' appointments.

### Retirement

Congratulations and best wishes to Charlie Kastrup who retired in December after 33 years of service.

He joins an impressive number of Works retirees, many of whom--about 1,400--attended the annual Christmas luncheon for retirees on Dec. 6 at the Holiday Inn.



*Charlie Kastrup*

### December anniversaries

The following employees are celebrating milestone service anniversaries during December. The anniversary date is listed first, with service years after the name.

12/3 Scott Obradovich, 10  
12/4 Dennis Ramsey, 25  
12/4 Darrell Lieber, 35  
12/4 Gretchen Kellogg, 20  
12/5 Tamaria Bales, 10  
12/5 Terry Pinneke, 15  
12/8 Allyn Dusek, 35  
12/8 James Jerushin, 35  
12/9 Elmer Petersen, 35  
12/9 Duane Dolezal, 35  
12/9 Ernest Ries, 25  
12/9 Enrique Rodriguez, 30  
12/9 Kenneth Olson, 25  
12/9 Helene Cartwright, 10  
12/10 William Jensen, 35  
12/10 Wayne Masek, 25  
12/10 Roger Vincent, 10  
12/11 Michael MacVittie, 30  
12/11 Carolyn Landrum, 10  
12/11 Connie Boardman, 10  
12/11 Thomas Kramar, 35  
12/12 Lorine Randle, 25  
12/14 Randall Martin, 10  
12/15 Ronald Brockman, 35  
12/15 David Martin, 10  
12/16 Vera Morris, 25  
12/19 Mary Stanosheck, 25  
12/21 Eileen Roffman, 15  
12/22 Kenneth Gamlin, 35  
12/22 Edward Shobe, 35  
12/23 Marie Pope, 30  
12/23 Richard Stevens, 35  
12/28 Lula Perryman, 30  
12/29 Ruth Jones, 10

### Info available on N.U. courses

Interested in taking college-level correspondence courses?

Cliff Mindrup has information on credit and non-credit courses available through the University of Nebraska College of Independent Study.

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ETOP classes

## WINTER 1994

10 weeks - Jan. 10 to Mar. 25, 1994

**MONDAYS**--Wordperfect 5.2 for Windows. Last time offered--we're switching to MS-Word.

**TUESDAYS**--Beginners' Awareness with Windows 3.1.

**WEDNESDAYS**--MS-DOS Operating System 6.0.

**THURSDAYS**--Quicken 6.0 with Turbo Tax.

(Deadline to sign up is Dec. 21, 1993, 5 p.m. Signup forms are available in the main cafeteria.)



**TIMES:** Mon./Wed.--8:45 a.m., 12:45 p.m., 4:15 p.m.; Tues./Thurs.--12:45 p.m., 4:15 p.m.



# Here's the scoop on safe shoveling

*(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.)*

Is shoveling snow a fun wintertime activity for families to enjoy? That's debatable.

However, it can be good exercise. But, it can also be deadly for optimistic shovelers who take on more than they can handle.

The National Safety Council offers the following tips to help you get a handle on safe shoveling:

⊛ People over the age of 40, or those who are relatively inactive, should be especially careful.

⊛ If you have a history of heart trouble, do not shovel without a doctor's permission.

⊛ Do not shovel after eating or while smoking.

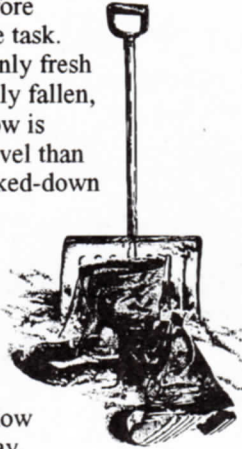
⊛ Take it slow! Shoveling (like lifting weights) can raise your heart rate and blood pressure dramatically. Pace yourself. Be sure to stretch out Gregory Jardee and warm up before taking on the task.

⊛ Shovel only fresh snow. Freshly fallen, powdery snow is easier to shovel than the wet, packed-down variety.

⊛ Push the snow as you shovel. It's easier on your back than lifting the snow out of the way.

⊛ Don't pick up too much at once. Use a small shovel, or fill only one-fourth or one-half of a large one.

⊛ Lift with your legs bent, not your



back. Keep your back straight. By bending and "sitting" into the movement, you'll keep your spine Karen Dappen upright and less stressed. Your shoulders, torso and thighs can do the work for you.

⊛ Do not work to the point of exhaustion. If you run out of breath, take a break. If you feel tightness in your chest, stop immediately.

⊛ Dress warmly to avoid frostbite and hypothermia. Remember, your nose, ears, hands and feet need extra attention during winter's cold. Wear a turtleneck sweater, cap, scarf, face protection, mittens, wool socks and waterproof boots. ■

## NEWS IN BRIEF

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You can reach Mindrup on Ext. 3227, or stop by his office in the lower level of Building 20, Room 16C.

### Works celebrates CSQP recognition

It's official! The Omaha Works has been awarded CSQP (Customer/Supplier Quality Process) recognition.

Allen Mollere, quality director for Bellcore, presented the Works with the document of recognition before a representative group of employees in the auditorium, Dec. 8, 1993.

That same day, employees on all three shifts were treated to a beverage and cake during their lunch and

dinner breaks in celebration of the achievement.

### Product quality given an 'A'

Quality Assurance has awarded the following IBUs the grade of "A" for their product quality achievements for the November rating period.

**IBU 228**--710 connectors; 700 type connectors; 105 cable terminals.

**IBU 226**--DSX; 11-type cable stubs; 78, 89, 112 connecting blocks.

**IBU 223**--110 wiring blocks; 66 connecting blocks.

**IBU 222**--Protector units, screw-in.

**IBU 23H**--76, 108 terminal blocks.

**EW&C**--Station wire; plenum/LAN cable; switchboard/spec cable. ■

### Con gusto continued

Steinkraus, say classmates, was one of the most enthusiastic students, even hosting a small dinner party that featured Spanish fare.

Apparently, he also contributed to a few laughs in the classroom. Steinkraus told this story on himself:

Asking him his age, the instructor told him to reply in Spanish. He chose to say that he is 19 years old. (That's as high as the class could count in Spanish.)

He meant to say, "Tengo diecinueve años." (Translated: "I have 19 years.") But, he forgot about the "tilde" mark placed above the "n" in "años" and mispronounced the word.

He declared that he had 19 of something, all right. But it was a reference made (keeping within the confines of good taste, here) to that part of a horse's anatomy that only a stagecoach driver behind an equestrian team could fully appreciate. ■