

WESTERNER

Omaha Works
April 1983



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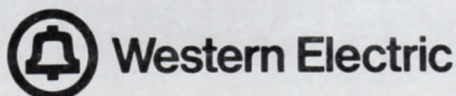
10 Seasoned athletes

On the cover

Egon Viola (right) has donated one of his mosaic artworks to the NPTV auction to be held later this month. A welder in Dept. 253, Egon brought the mosaic to the Works so Tony Militti (left) could bring it along with other donated merchandise to an auction pick-up point. It took Egon 80 hours to complete the mosaic, a depiction of the Omaha Indians. He has more than 2,000 mosaics to his credit, with some in Germany, Mexico and Washington, D.C. For more about the auction, see Page 9.

WESTERNER

Linda Ryan, editor
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Quality circles in both shops

In the beginning there was one quality circle. Now there are nine.

The nine quality circles are an outgrowth of quality of work life (QWL) efforts introduced at the Omaha Works a little more than a year ago. Employees have volunteered to form circles representing both apparatus and cable shop areas.

The creation of quality circles is an important step in fulfilling the quality of work life goals to increase employee participation in decisions affecting their daily work and working environment. In this way, the quality of work life may be enhanced.

Circle members are finding that participation in the decision-making process of a company usually doesn't involve readily made "snap decisions." Rather, it requires more than the one hour circles spend in their group meetings each week.

Perhaps the first challenge a circle member must confront is time, according to the leader of Circle No. 4 (Dept. 437), Gordon Viner. "You can't expect us to get things done right away. It takes a long time to work things out, and you can't lose faith to continue," he said.

THE TIME he's talking about is the time it takes to identify problems in the working environment and ways to improve the situation. How serious is the problem? Can one person resolve the matter or will it require the cooperation of other people not working in the problem area?

"There's a lot to do," noted the secretary for Circle No. 3 (Dept. 435), Vicki Luther, "and getting the confidence of people isn't always easy." Quality circles are a departure from the traditional

employer/employee work relationship, and co-workers aren't always sure of what to expect, she explained.

But circle members agree that confidence is growing, now that their efforts are beginning to show some results.

Circle No. 3, for example, tackled a problem involving terminal reels used in the assembly of 710 connectors in Dept. 435. Screws that hold a reel together were missing on some of the reels, causing a shifting and jamming of terminals.

The circle devised worksheets for assemblers so they could record how many good reels and bad reels they encountered, how much time was lost by an assembler using a defective reel, and any comments they had about the operation.

The circle found that defective reels damaged some of the terminals and that it cost the company a conservative estimate of \$30,000 a year in lost time alone when assemblers had defective reels.

"ALL WE DID was reroute defective reels to maintenance for repair" before new terminals were to be coiled on the reels, said the circle's leader, Keith Fink. Not only did the solution improve efficiency and save the company money, he said, but it also positively affected the quality of work life for each assembler in the department.

For one thing, it eliminated "just one more hassle to put up with" on a job whose repetition can be trying on an assembler, said Vicki.

It also stopped an assault on worker attitude, Keith added. "When you get a defective reel, you start to think, 'why should I care if nobody else does?'" That

kind of attitude not only can impair the quality of the finished product, he explained, but it also robs the worker of personal job satisfaction.

Other problems on which circles are working range from improving communication between shifts to better ventilation in some work areas to replacements for worn floor mats. Input from co-workers is growing, and Gordon said that when there was a vacancy in his quality circle, 16 employees volunteered to fill the spot.

When Vicki volunteered to participate on a quality circle, she thought it would pose a challenge to employees — and it certainly has, she said.

"But it's also a chance to learn more about your job," she added, "and a chance to give input and maybe make something a little better."



FUNCTIONAL REEL . . . 710 assembler Vicki Luther (above) says her quality of work life has improved now that she no longer has to worry about jammed terminals in defective reels. Quality Circle No. 7 members (below) determine priorities in a weekly meeting. Clockwise from left are Joe Siracuse, Wally Leander, Pauline Mangelsen, Gerrie Thurman, Debbie Gultzia and Betty Smith. Circle leader Josephine Willis was unavailable for the picture.





CARRY A TUNE? . . . If you were one of the people harmonizing in this picture taken in 1969 (we think), pick up your gift in the public relations office.



WRITE A CAPTION . . . Cut out the photo with your caption written below it and bring or send to Linda Ryan, public relations, Organization 520, to vie for a gift.

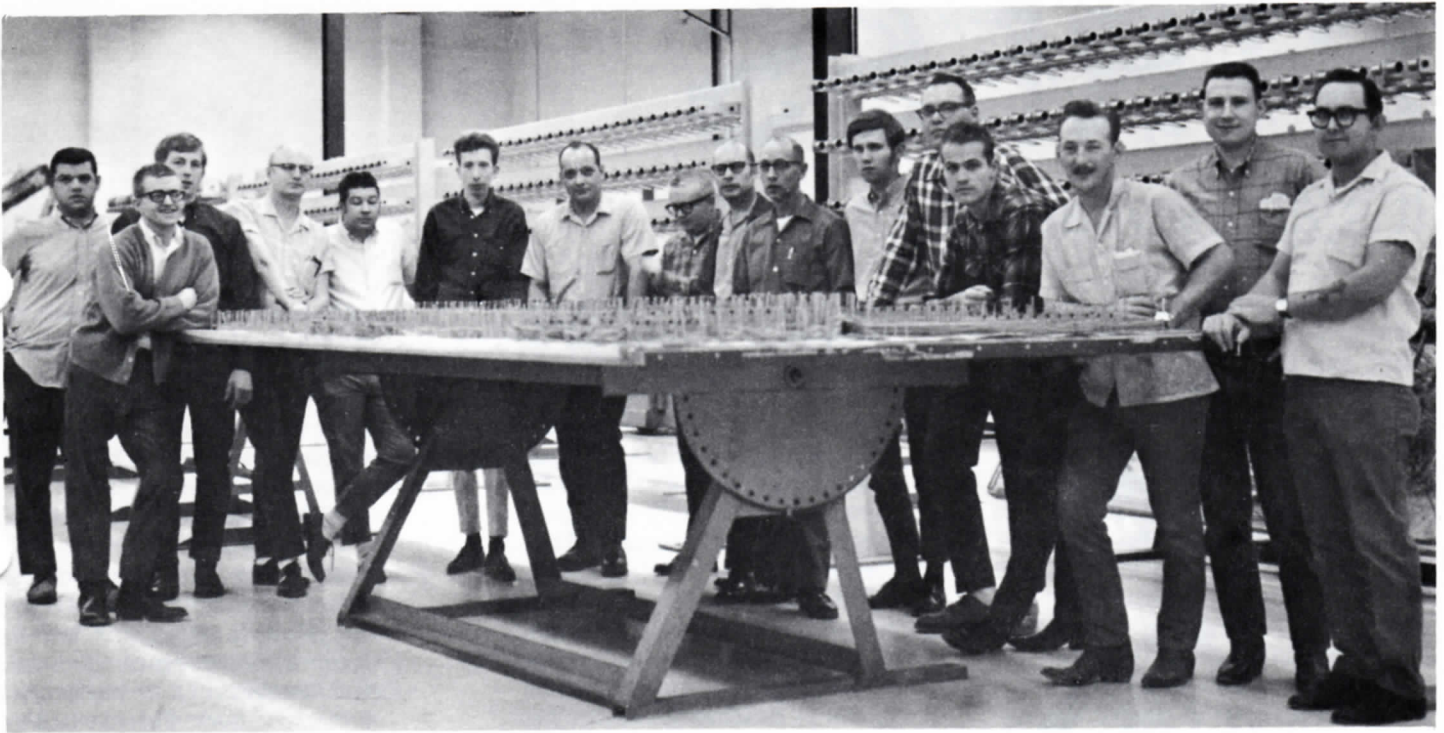
'Name that face' draws a crowd

Wow! Twenty-seven employees identified themselves in the old photos in the March Westerner and came to the public relations office to claim their gifts.

The first one to show up was Gary Drehsen, a planning engineer associate in Dept. 472, who said he was working in the MCO shop when the photo was taken — that one in 1959.

Everyone had nostalgic memories to share about the photos, including Mike Kelly, a layout operator in Dept. 445. A crossbar frame assembler at the time, he insisted he was at the front of the crowd leaving Building 30 because he was one of the "no-punch crew."

This issue, you have another chance to claim a gift. One way is to come up with a winning caption for either of the photos at the bottom of these two pages. Cut out the photo and caption and bring or send it to Linda Ryan, public relations, Organization 520. The best caption for each photo and the winners will be announced in the next



IN GOOD FORM . . . Members of the cable forming crew posed for this photo, but the year is unspecified. Pick out your face and claim a gift.

Westerner. Any employee may enter the caption contest, even if he or she received a gift for being in last month's photos.

The other way to claim a gift is to identify yourself in any of the photos on these pages by coming up to the public relations office. However, if you already received a gift for being in a photo last month, you are ineligible to participate.

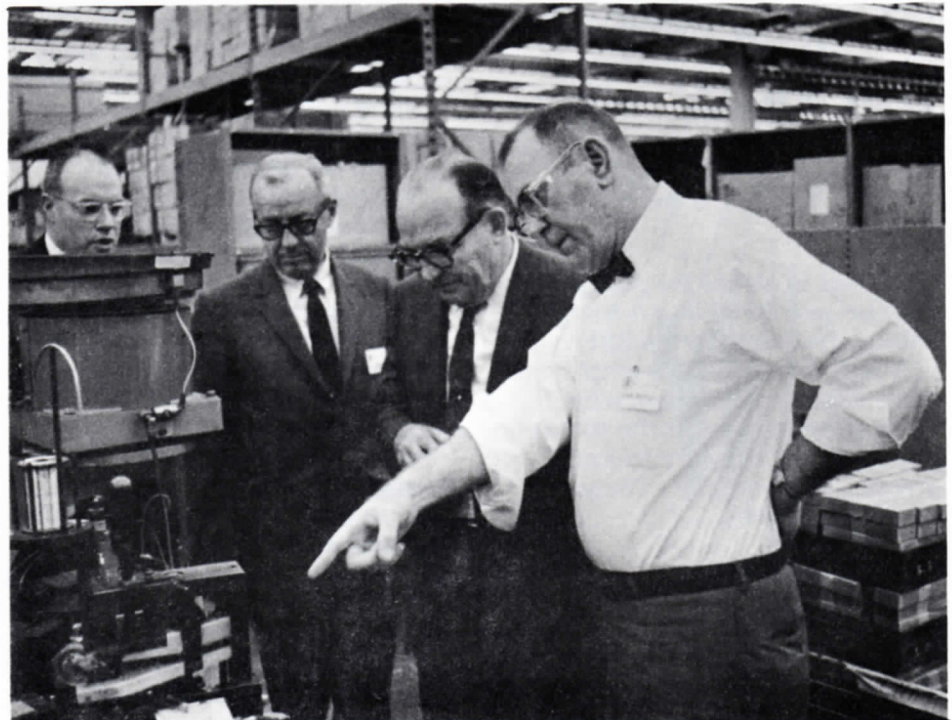
And don't forget, if you know an employee who has an interesting story to tell in relation to the 25 years the Omaha Works has been in operation, call or stop by to see Linda Ryan.

Now for the employees whose pictures were in last month's issue:

Gary Drehsen, Dept. 472; Don Cox, 3442; Howard Firebaugh, 441; Bill Parks, 445; Erwin Herzog, 449; Ralph Head, 449; Ray Retzlaff, 023; Lou Carnazzo, 072; Richard Sorensen, 252.

Dan Langdon, 034; Mike Kelly, 445; Donna Kelly, 437; Don Barnes, 447; Mike Nemec, 444; Jim Black, 035; Darrel Jensen, 035; Vern Krysl, 435; Dorothy Leifeld, 072.

Lilie Mae Rozmus, 533; Vern Bishop, 441; Larry Anderson, 032; Mike Miller, 023; Harvey Palmer, 437; Del Stickman, 253; Dick Huffman, 023; Joyce Wermuth, 023; Joan Durbin, 445.



WRITE A CAPTION . . . Cut out the photo with your caption written below it and bring or send to Linda Ryan, public relations, Organization 520, to vie for a gift.

STRESS

It's an inevitable fact of life

Find a person who is completely without stress, and it's a safe bet that person is not among the living.

Stress is as much a part of life as breathing. It's evident in our leisure activities as well as in our working environment.

The good news is that stress actually can be beneficial. It can keep people functioning effectively by challenging and stimulating growth and by keeping us alert and responsive.

The bad news is that if stress

goes unchecked and is left unresolved — beyond our control — we feel its strain and damage. We're unable to concentrate or we become increasingly irritable. Physically, unresolved stress may manifest itself by insomnia, coronary disorders and even lower resistance to the common cold.

The important thing to remember about stress, according to Dr. Lee Grant, Works medical director, is that in and of itself stress is neither good nor bad.

Rather, it's how each one of us reacts to the stresses in our lives that matters.

PSYCHOLOGISTS say the most widespread cause of stress is change, be it for better or worse.

AT&T's medical director, Dr. J. L. Crumrine, explained: "Whenever any change, we lose or part with something. Take, for example, the present climate in the Bell System. Some employees may find themselves in better jobs; some will even get promoted."

Still, although the change may be for the better, "people who get promoted often feel stressed. The reason could be that they have a different level of responsibility," Dr. Crumrine said.

Besides change, a myriad of other factors can create stress: not knowing our goals; lack of participation in the decision-making process; being cut off from information. Age, mid-life crisis and approaching retirement also can be traumatic.

PEOPLE WHO work in a factory environment are exposed to stresses not always found in other lines of work, according to Roger Hietbrink, director of health promotion for Bergan Mercy Hospital.

Those stresses include no repetition and the probability of accidents. "Lack of a sense of accomplishment — not seeing a finished product," can be stressful, he said, as is lack of recognition or fear of being replaced by a machine.

In any work situation where an employer/employee relationship exists, there lies the possibility of friction among workers. When that friction becomes unbearable, say a domineering boss, an employee has several options. He can compromise, try to understand his boss's point of view and reassess his own objectives before making a decision on how to

Employees tell how they cope

What is stress for one person may be perceived as an invigorating challenge by another.

A half-dozen Works employees were asked to pinpoint what gives them stress on the job and off, and how they try to keep stress under control. These are their responses:

Larry Poffenbarger, pipefitter, Dept. 034 — "Too much stress on the job tends to make me short tempered," admitted Larry. The source of his stress at work usually stems from beginning a certain job and discovering he lacks the right equipment to complete it.

Sometimes lack of cooperation from people in work-related projects also adds to his frustration, he said.

At home, his stress stems from "the normal things a middle-aged man with teen-aged kids confronts," he said. Coping with sibling arguments and planning

his schedule to meet his children's needs can be a problem.

He copes by "getting away by myself," he said, by reading or shooting targets. At work, "I try to do the best I can," he said. He improvises and reassesses the situation, looking for another way to get the job done.

Jeanne Taylor, financial clerk, Dept. 071 — The constant deadlines of distributing payroll checks and filing tax reports are stressful, she said, as is "wondering if I'm going to balance every night."

She also finds it stressful "not having enough time" to tend to household responsibilities at home after a day in the office.

Her approach is "I just don't let things bother me that much — I take things in stride. She relaxes by bowling and playing tennis and is taking courses on computers "for a change of pace."

Eldon "E.J." Moser, truck operator, Dept. 532 — "Close calls on the job — pedestrians who don't watch for us," are a source of stress for E.J. He must always be on the defensive, he said.

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resolve the matter, Hietbrink said.

If the decision is that he can't cope with his boss the way things are, the worker must "be ready to quit or be ready to deal with this person and try to work within the constraints peacefully," Hietbrink said.

To do nothing about resolving the stressful situation is "the worst thing you can do," he continued. People cannot operate indefinitely in a stressful state without suffering the consequences.

THE KEY lies in ourselves, Hietbrink and Drs. Grant and Crumrine agree. Sometimes we have unrealistic expectations of ourselves and those around us. When we realize we aren't a superman or superwoman, or that we can't measure others against our own set of goals, we're on our way to coping with stress.

Here are some other pointers on coping:

— Don't personalize. Be objective.

— Channel your stress — exercise, write, paint.

— Relax. Listen to music, meditate or try breathing techniques.

— Develop support systems. Discuss your problems, express your emotions. Talk to a friend, join an organization or spend time with your family.

— Be assertive. Change the stressful situation.

— Let go. Get your mind temporarily off of a problem — take a vacation.

— Re-evaluate your attitude. It could be contributing to the problem.

— Maintain a positive perspective. Look on the bright side and learn from your mistakes.

— Change yourself. Believe in yourself and you will look and live better.

How does stress affect you?

Do you have a stress-prone personality? The following test can give you an indication of how stress affects your daily living. However, the results shouldn't be interpreted as an accurate appraisal.

Rate yourself according to how you typically react in each of the situations listed below: 4 — always; 3 — frequently; 2 — sometimes; 1 — never.

- 1. Do you try to do as much as possible in the least amount of time?
- 2. Do you become impatient with delays or interruptions?
- 3. Do you always have to win at games to enjoy yourself?
- 4. Do you find yourself speeding up the car to beat a red light?
- 5. Are you unlikely to ask for or indicate you need help with a problem?
- 6. Do you constantly seek the respect and admiration of others?
- 7. Are you overly critical of the way others do their work?
- 8. Do you have the habit of looking at your watch or clock often?
- 9. Do you constantly strive to better your position and achievements?
- 10. Do you spread yourself "too thin" in terms of your time?

(Continued on Page 11)





Wes Nicholas



Jo Ann Prokupek



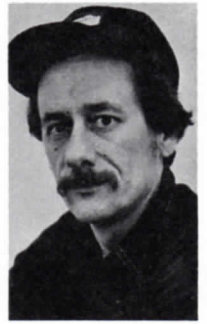
Larry Poffenbarger



Jeanne Taylor



Julia Faulkner



E.J. Moser

STRESS...

(Continued from Page 6)

His responsibilities as a volunteer fire chief in Yutan, Neb., are stressful, too. He worries about "sending someone into a burning house who may not come back out."

Dabbling in woodwork is one way E.J. copes with stress, but he also tries to "keep things in perspective" on and off the job. He tries not to "waste energy worrying in advance," he said.

Julia Faulkner, assembler, Dept. 435 — Julia said at work "I don't really have a bunch of stress — I'm comfortable with my job." But sometimes she gets uptight if the materials she uses in her assembling job are less than perfect quality. "You can't get your work out right and you can't make your quota," she explained.

Economic pressures are stressful at home, she said, mentioning how she worries about two sons who are having difficulty finding jobs.

To cope, "I get out and I walk, I go shopping, I exercise at a spa, I read," Julia said. At work, "I talk to the person next to me," counting on him or her to serve as a "sounding board."

But most important, she added, "you have to be good to yourself. If you're good company to yourself, you can deal with stress."

Wes Nicholas, planning engineer, Dept. 272 — Lack of sufficient time at work to do his job the way Wes would like it

done is a source of stress.

"I get the feeling I'm always putting out fires," he said, or that he is reacting to demands rather than controlling the situation.

At home with three rambunctious youngsters, he finds that the noise level can be stressful. "There's no peace and quiet until they're in bed."

Wes likes to read at home while listening to spiritual music. At work, he copes with stress by "trying to see the humor in any situation," he said. And, because he is inclined to work through lunch to get a job done as he wants, "I force myself to get away" and maybe play a hand of bridge during the lunch period.

Jo Ann Prokupek, machine operator, Dept. 437 — The repetition of her job is stressful, Jo Ann said, and constant machine

noise — even with earplugs — gets on her nerves.

She copes by "playing little games — like trying to grab the exact number of parts I need in one try," to give herself a challenge. She also has learned to block out noise, "but now I've become a poor listener," she admitted.

"Trying to make the best use of my time at home is stressful," she continued. She rushes to straighten up the house, fix dinner and go to school three nights a week.

A reasonable amount of stress, she explained, actually helps her to get much of her housework done. But to make sure she never has more stress than she can handle, she plans days when she won't cook or clean to allow her freedom for spur-of-the-moment things.

"I don't plan — period."

'I get the feeling I'm always putting out fires'

etc.

Phone sale repeated

Starting this month, Western Electric employees may purchase selected telephones at discount rates.

The offering is similar to that of last year, with a few new features. For example, traditional, Trimline® and Princess® sets have been added, and retired employees may participate. Accessories such as cords and adapters are included in the offering, too.

Sales to active employees will be handled through payroll deduction. More detailed information will be distributed to Works employees, explaining how and where the telephone sets may be bought.

Savings plans results

The following are the January unit values for the Bell System Savings Plan (BSSP), the Savings and Security Plan (SSP) for non-salaried employees, and the Bell System Voluntary Contribution Plan (BSVCP).

	<u>BSSP</u>	
	<u>Units Value</u>	<u>Units Credited Per Dollar</u>
AT&T	3.5587	.2810
Government Obligations	3.0960	.3229
Equity Portfolio	2.2595	.4425
Guaranteed Interest Fund	1.4084	.7100
	<u>SSP</u>	
	<u>Units Value</u>	<u>Units Credited Per Dollar</u>
AT&T	1.6579	.6031
Guaranteed Interest Fund	1.5061	.6639
	<u>BSVCP</u>	
	<u>Units Value</u>	<u>Units Credited Per Dollar</u>
AT&T	1.133	.882
Mutual Fund	1.199	.833
Money Market	1.029	.971
Guaranteed Interest Fund	1.042	.959

Auction benefits public TV

Have the popcorn and your checkbooks handy by your television set starting April 22, and tune in to the NETV channel for your area.

The 10th annual Nebraskans for Public Television (NPTV) auction will be conducted every night for nine evenings. The fund-raising auction seeks to break last year's \$251,000 record. Proceeds go to Nebraska's public television network — NETV — to assist with programming expenses.

Should you want to buy an item auctioned on April 29, you just may call in your bid to a co-worker from the Omaha Works.

A team of six employees have been helping gather items for the auction, and will be in the TV studio that night describing the goods and taking bids by telephone.

Members of the team are Jo Ann Prokupek, Vern Larson, Bob

Carlson, Sandy Prue, Tony Militti and Bob Wustrack. They will be joined in the studio by two other Works employees, Don Lanspa and Ken Korinek.

For the past couple of months, the employee team has been contacting area businesses and individuals, requesting items to be donated for the auction. Their goal has been to collect merchandise with a total value of \$22,000.

Anyone may contribute merchandise for the auction, as long as it is worth at least \$40 and is either new merchandise or of artistic or antique value. In fact, Works employee Egon Viola donated some of his artwork — a 6-foot tall mosaic of an American Indian.

Services, such as lawn care, also may be donated and any amount of cash donations is welcome. Anyone who would like to make a contribution should call Bob Wustrack on Ext. 3714.



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Basketball in slow motion?

Take a look at the picture to the right.

Does it look like the typical photo of basketball team members poised with their trophies?

Of course not.

But these aren't your typical basketball team members. By their own admission, they're the "old-timers" who comprise the WEOMA Club basketball teams.

This playing season, which ended March 20, there were four WEOMA-sponsored teams for men. The number of teams was down considerably from past years because, current players explained, the employee population isn't as young as it used to be.

Team members' ages now range from the mid-30s to the mid-40s — and that's old for a basketball player, one member insisted.

So why would these old-timers show up once a week at Christie Heights Recreation Center to play a sport of young men?

"I don't want to just sit around" on a Sunday afternoon, replied Don Kadereit, an assembler in Dept. 435.

"To stay in shape for golf," said planning engineer associate Charles Taylor of Dept. 1231.

WHERE DOES IT HURT? . . . Charles Taylor (from left), Tom Connor and Ron Schropp exaggerate (but not by much) about the bumps and bruises they endure as members of WEOMA "old-timers" basketball teams.



Senior team member Ron Schropp, a Dept. 439 section chief, wanted to "get in shape and lose some weight," he said.

Tom Connor, a floorhand in Dept. 253, said, "I really can't understand why I signed up.

"Your mind tells your body what to do, but your body won't do it anymore," Tom quipped.

As a result, team members experienced their share of bruises, sprains and floor burns.

In fact, a lot has changed in the way they play basketball today compared to how it might have been 15 years ago. "The fast breaks are now slow breaks," Charles said, "and it's hard to get the guys off the bench and on the court to play."

Game highlights are different, too. "Once I made two free throws in a row," Charles offered.

"I scored four points in a game," Ron boasted. Don, however, scored 10 points in one game — "that's a lifetime high for me."

A sense of humor, all agreed, is perhaps the single most important skill players like them could have. "And I laugh out there all the time," Ron said, "especially when I'm down on the floor."

Maybe a few pre-game warm-up exercises would help, too. But Charles doesn't agree: "Are you kidding? And waste all our energy?"

"Cool-downs," Don interjected, are a little more the teams' style.

Ahh, yes. That's when athletes retreat to soothing, cool showers to keep their muscles from tightening up, right?

Isley awarded WE fellowship

Jim Isley has been awarded a Western Electric Engineering and Science Fellowship.

An occupational engineer in Dept. 273, he will begin his studies this fall at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln toward a master of science degree in electrical engineering.

Isley will continue to work part time at the Omaha Works until he completes the two-year degree program.

The engineering and science fellowship is the seventh awarded to a Works employee.

Previous recipient Dave Buddenhagen, a senior planning engineer in Dept. 452, currently is completing his studies at UNL.

Jim Isley



Service anniversaries

40 years

R. D. Groth 3442 4/14

35 years

W. J. McIntosh 253 4/3

30 Years

G. G. Dormer 439 4/22

F. J. Drebot 253 4/16

R. L. Jordan 431 4/2

D. A. Ruhl 531 4/14

25 years

H. G. Breitinger 031 4/14

E. C. Chereck 023 4/25

H. J. Desive 023 4/25

R. H. Heesch 034 4/1

H. G. Johnson Jr. 1231 4/21

G. Mokay 282 4/28

W. J. Plymale 034 4/7

R. R. Rahde 031 4/21

B. C. Ridge 253 4/14

D. E. Sorensen 282 4/7

S. A. Svoboda 252 4/7

B. Witulski Jr. 035 4/15
D. H. Yenney 031 4/21

20 years

L. A. Ayala 437 4/4

J. D. Hildebrand 252 4/16

G. K. Oltman 511 4/2

T. B. Pinkerton 435 4/4

V. D. Suchsland 031 4/29

15 years

M. C. Alba 447 4/22

N. Jackson 447 4/23

B. C. Lewis 441 4/6

J. W. Perryman 435 4/17

10 years

W. R. Peters 455 4/16

Retirements



Bud Busch
32 years



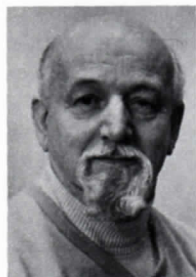
Bob Pierson
41 years



Irene Colby
23 years



Charlie Lange
35 years



Egon Viola
24 years



Bernie May
25 years

Not pictured:

Betty Kennedy — 23 years

Art Euler — 41 years

Klementyne Burda — 26 years

David Perry — 20 years

Lucille Spanel — 26 years

Millie Zagst — 20 years

Betty Kocanda — 25 years

Marvin Timmerman — 16 years

Judy Flott — 20 years



George Drees
24 years

Correction

Retired employee George Jones opened up his copy of last month's Westerner and read that he had 26 years of service with the company, even though it seemed like 36 years to him. That's because it really was 36 years. Our apologies to George for the error.

Are you stress-prone?

(Continued from Page 7)

- ___11. Do you have the habit of doing more than one thing at a time?
- ___12. Do you frequently get angry or irritable?
- ___13. Do you have little time for hobbies or time by yourself?
- ___14. Do you have a tendency to talk quickly or hasten conversations?
- ___15. Do you consider yourself hard-driving?
- ___16. Do your friends or relatives consider you hard-driving?
- ___17. Do you have a tendency to get involved in multiple projects?
- ___18. Do you have a lot of deadlines in your work?
- ___19. Do you feel vaguely guilty if you relax and do nothing during leisure?
- ___20. Do you take on too many responsibilities?
- ___Total

If your total score is between 20 and 30, chances are you are non-productive or your life lacks stimulations. A score between 30 and 50 designates a good balance in your ability to handle and control stress. If your score is 51 to 60, your stress level is marginal and you are bordering on being excessively tense. If your score exceeds 60, you may be a candidate for heart disease.



Last frame

You're looking at one lucky bird.

Normally, a fowl this size inside the plant isn't wearing its feathers. A bit of gravy and parsley for garnish are more its style.

But this bird was a guest who didn't come to dinner.

Instead, it was the star attraction at a monthly results meeting held in the auditorium for supervisory and technical-professional personnel.

The 6-month-old sarus crane is a resident of the Henry Doorly Zoo. A native of India, it bears a strong resemblance to the Nebraska sandhill crane and is representative of the largest of the crane family.

Zoo animal keeper Kim Hinton accompanied the crane for its Omaha Works visit, keeping the curious creature in check while

zoo director Dr. Lee Simmons spoke to the results meeting audience.

During the meeting, the crane stretched its wings and chirped somewhat like a cricket as Dr. Simmons talked about a planned aviary for the zoo. Visitors and birds alike will roam free within the aviary when it is completed.

For the sarus crane — all bundled up and toted by Kim for its trip back to the zoo — that day probably can't come soon enough.



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