

# the Westerner

Omaha Works  
August 1982



# for your information

The latest winners in the "Safety's a Winner" contest for hourly employees (for the sixth and seventh two-week periods) are: Dick Edgman, Dept. 312; Richard Kubie, Dept. 313; Bonnie Cooper and Pat Rolf, Dept. 441; Bob Johnson, Dept. 445; Don Cera, Dept. 741; Dick Ciecko and Dan Synowiecki, Dept. 744; Gary Ward, Dept. 746 . . .

## Pioneers donate gifts

Just because they don't go around boasting about their activities, don't think they're sitting around doing nothing.

The Cornhusker Chapter Pioneers are like that, making their contributions to the community with little or no fanfare.

In recent weeks, for example, the chapter donated a hand-operated tricycle to J. P. Lord School. It is for young children who, not having the use of their legs, can operate the trike with their hands.

This is the third such tricycle the Pioneers have presented in the Omaha community, and now some Works Pioneers and future Pioneers will have a hand in helping to make the special toy.

Employees in Dept. 441 are making specific parts for the trikes, sending them to a Pioneer chapter for Western's regional center in Rolling Meadows, Ill. The Rolling Meadows Pioneers assemble the tricycles.

The Works Cornhusker Pioneers also donated four "captioned converters" to the Nebraska School for the Deaf. The equipment, valued at more than \$900, makes it possible for hearing-impaired individuals to read what is being said in certain television programs — much like subtitles in a movie.

The school also received two teletypewriters from the Pioneers. With the teletypewriter attached to the telephone, a hearing-impaired individual can type a message which is transmitted via telephone line to a similar receiving instrument at the other end of the line.

The Pioneers' most colorful activity in the community, however, involves their W.E. Corny Clowns group. The group consists of 29 Works Pioneers, future Pioneers or family members who

. . . Congratulations also are in order for several other Works employees. Dick Veach, department chief for the safety department, has been named a recipient of Nebraska's top environmental award for 1982, the J. L. Higgins Award. The award is in recognition of his service on the Nebraska Environmental Control Council since 1972. Phil Warren, a section chief in Organization 060, has won a one-week, expenses-paid trip to Los Angeles and San Francisco for enlisting the most small business new memberships in the Omaha Chamber of Commerce. It's the third year in a row he has sold the most memberships . . .

. . . The Works has had its share of special visitors in recent weeks. In the

latter part of June, we were host to a joint meeting of management personnel from AT&T, Bell Laboratories and Western Electric. The Works also was the site of a meeting between Account Management personnel from the Mountain-Northwestern Region and Northwestern Bell representatives. In addition, the director of engineering resources planning at corporate headquarters — Paul Gilkenson — paid a visit to get a better handle on the concerns of Work engineering management . . .

. . . Jack MacAllister, president of Northwestern Bell, began serving his term July 1 as the new president of the Telephone Pioneers of America for the 1982-83 year. He is a member of the Casper E. Yost Chapter.



PUTTING ON THE ACT . . . Sue Tucker of Dept. 101 and Patti Marino donned some of their W.E. Corny Clowns costuming (in full attire, you'd never recognize them) to show how they can "mug" for the camera.

have learned the art of applying greasepaint, donning outlandish costumes, and "clowning around."

Originating from an idea from member Patti Marino of Dept. 735, the group provides clowns for various Pioneer functions — hospital and nursing home visits, for example — and as Works representatives in general community activities.


The clowns, who were trained in formal clown classes, have participated in charitable fund drives and have been invited to appear in parades.

Reaction to the W.E. Corny Clowns has been enthusiastic, said Cornhusker Chapter administrator Bob Pierson. "We've got a resource we never had before. These clowns are sure to bring a lot of cheer wherever they go."

**the  
Westerner**  
VOL. 26 NO. 7

**Linda Ryan**  
Editor

Published for employees of the Omaha Works.  
For information write: Editor, *The Westerner*,  
P.O. Box 37000, West Omaha Station, Omaha,  
Nebraska 68137 or telephone 691-3553  
Member  
IABC/Omaha  
International Association of Business Communicators  
Printed by the Omaha Works  
Reproduction Department

 **Western Electric**

# service anniversaries

## august

### 35 years

C. W. Couch	285	8/20
R. E. Fenger	447	8/8

### 30 years

R. M. Ellison	1231	8/7
L. E. Ellsworth	437	8/21
S. D. Mehuron	437	8/3

### 25 years

L. D. Anstey	312	8/29
A. Anthone	746	8/26
T. M. Baye	437	8/19
H. B. Clawson	252	8/24
R. L. Hanner	746	8/26
H. A. Hendrix	744	8/26
H. C. Hill	282	8/14
J. W. Hiykel	731	8/26
L. Janecek	441	8/15
D. A. Leifeld	333	8/12
A. J. Menzies Jr.	514	8/19

## retirements



George Spreier  
24 years



Clara Spreier  
20 years



Virginia Rich  
20 years



Carl Nadgwick  
22 years

Not pictured:

Mary Arends  
22 years

Maxine Gerke  
23 years

Helen Hardy  
19 years

D. K. Olechoski	437	8/25
R. A. Petersen	333	8/12
R. R. Richling	735	8/5
O. H. Schroeder	313	8/14

### 20 years

L. T. Adams	282	8/6
R. L. Belik	251	8/27
A. A. Cahill	431	8/16
M. E. Gerch	439	8/20
F. D. Graser	447	8/27
J. W. Hoover	441	8/8
L. R. Johnson	445	8/31
L. R. Kousgaard	253	8/16
V. A. Land	447	8/23
A. A. Mackey	741	8/27
K. B. Meyer	282	8/22
B. G. Newton	283	8/20

V. B. Rich	441	8/27
A. B. Scott	447	8/6
M. T. Seals	439	8/6
J. T. Slominski	271	8/1
C. E. Thomason	441	8/20

### 15 years

A. A. Armendariz	447	8/4
R. J. Davis	445	8/3
K. P. Guse	439	8/14
L. P. Hanke	431	8/1
R. L. Heaton	333	8/14
L. D. Janovec	447	8/7
D. M. Kimble	439	8/4
C. F. Leyendecker Jr.	252	8/4
W. L. Schmidt	437	8/21
D. C. Traugh	331	8/29
D. A. Wallinger	313	8/3

## suggestion box

All it took was a stiff neck to get **Claudia Perchal** of Dept. 435 thinking about a better way to get her job done. As a result, she was awarded \$2,010 in the employee suggestion program for her idea.



Claudia Perchal

Claudia works on five-pair 710 connectors. She suggested that piece parts be put in bins, rather than being placed in trays side by side in layers. Her idea would save considerable time and, she thought, put less strain on the neck due to constant turning in positioning the parts.

She said she had no idea such a simple suggestion could pay off so well — "Now I'm looking for other ideas," she said.

Other Works employees who have received suggestion awards include: **Judy Nebe**, Dept. 331, \$270. **Joan Siwa**, Dept. 311, \$120.

## Telephones offered at discounts

Western Electric employees now have the chance to do something they've never been able to do before: Buy Design Line telephones at a discount.

The discount offer began Aug. 2 and will run for 60 days, with a limit of two telephones per employee. Employees can choose from several specified models, including the Country Junction® telephone and Sculptura® telephone.

The models offered are limited to those of which the company has sufficient inventory to handle anticipated demand without impairing service commitments to the telephone com-

panies.

Payment is made through payroll deduction and may be spread out over three months. Sets will be sent directly to the employee's home and are covered by a Western Electric warranty, equivalent to that provided with Design Line sets purchased at Bell PhoneCenters. (For warranty service, employees will be asked to return sets to a designated W.E. location for repair or replacement.)

For more information on prices and availability, call Tim Raasch, Ext. 3956, who is discount offer coordinator for this Works location.

# A bird (or two) in hand . . .

Shame on you, Alfred Hitchcock. For years since your movie thriller, "The Birds," people have ducked and even cringed at the sound of flapping wings and the sight of ruffled feathers. Don't you think you slanted your story a bit?

Virginia Barker and Bonnie Shilling would welcome a chance to prove you wrong.

Virginia, an assembler in Dept. 435, and Bonnie, a floor hand in Dept. 287, claim people have nothing to fear from our feathered friends. In fact, they insist that birds rank among the best of family pets.

They ought to know. Both women have an assortment of pet birds ranging from parakeets and canaries to the more exotic amazons and cockatoos. Bonnie

and Virginia both keep the birds as pets and to enter in shows, but Bonnie also breeds them.

Last fall, both women won various trophies and awards in an all-bird show in Council Bluffs. Their entries vied against more than 500 other birds — rosellas, conures, cockatiels and budgies, to name a few.

Now members of the Greater Omaha Bird Society, neither Virginia nor Bonnie ever thought that cage birds would become such an important hobby. They became "hooked" in similar manners.

One of Virginia's children received a conure as a pet, she said. Bonnie said her daughter had given her a parakeet. Their families were fascinated with the new pets, and it wasn't long before other birds were added.

"**BIRDS ARE** much more intelligent than people think," Virginia said, explaining one reason why she keeps birds. Bonnie mentioned that she has had birds that learned to open their own and other cages, setting birds free — "So now I keep the cages locked."

The parrot varieties (those with hooked beaks) can be taught to talk and perform numerous tricks, too. Before Virginia sold her rosella, Duke, to Bonnie for breeding, he even had learned to whistle the Nebraska fight song.

Virginia also said that some of these birds — particularly the larger varieties — can be house-broken. That's right, potty trained. She used to have a conure she so trained, and now is working on her year-old amazon, Fraidy.

Training the birds, and helping people train their pet birds, is Virginia's specialty. Sometimes, people receive pet birds which were previously mishandled, she said. The birds are afraid and distrustful of humans. She likes to think she can help overcome the problem by showing the owners how to care for their pets.

Bonnie helps people train their pets, too, but she finds nutrition for birds a particularly fascinating part of her hobby. As she learns more about breeding birds, she has found the importance of diet and good health to be as critical as providing the birds with security, she said.

"Birds are territorial. They have to feel completely comfortable to lay eggs and have families," she said. She constantly watches the diets of all of her



**DOWN THE HATCH . . .** Using a syringe (without the needle), Bonnie feeds one of the baby parakeets she is raising. She developed her own special formula, which includes pablum and baby food.



GIMME A PECK . . . Virginia's shoulder is a favorite perch for Fraidy. Sometimes, Fraidy accompanies Virginia on short shopping errands.

birds and takes the time to feed each baby bird by hand. Adult birds sometimes feed on alfalfa dried in Bonnie's microwave or fresh spinach. Babies eat a special formula which includes canned baby food (for humans) and pablum.

There's a bonus to feeding young birds by hand. It "makes the birds more people-oriented," so they'll make better pets, Bonnie said.

**BONNIE** has been successful breeding birds because, she quipped, "I have a feathered thumb." But Virginia said a person has to develop a kind of instinct for raising more than one bird, because "each bird is different."

A person learns which birds get along well and which ones don't. Schedules for eating, grooming and sleeping must be respected. A pet owner also must determine how each bird likes to show his or her affection.

Birds are very affectionate creatures, both women said, "but some birds just don't like to be 'cuddled,'" Virginia noted.

Her own bird Fraidy doesn't mind when Virginia strokes his feathers, but doesn't appreciate such attention from others. One can tell he's really Virginia's pet by the way he insists on following her wherever she goes — even sitting on her shoulder as she drives her car.

Not too long ago, Fraidy began the practice of grooming some baby turkeys Virginia and her family are raising on their acreage. However, while he was picking at the turkeys' feathers, some curious young ducklings gathered around Fraidy.

The parrot became frightened and ran

after Virginia, calling "Mama! Mama! Hello!" Fraidy (short for Fraidy Cat) has clipped wings and wanted to be lifted to the safety of her shoulders, she said.

**THAT'S JUST** one example of the fun and enjoyment cage birds provide, she said. But both women acknowledged that before anyone buys a pet bird, he also should consider the responsibilities.

Any cage bird requires daily care and attention, from keeping the cage clean to spending "playtime" with it. Birds do chatter, although not constantly, they added.

And one more thing. On the chance that a prospective owner may become hooked on the hobby as did Virginia and

Bonnie, he should think about who will "bird sit" in his absence. Obviously, it's not a simple matter of having the neighbor's boy look in on the birds.

When asked how they arrange for care of their pet birds when they go on a family vacation, both women responded, "What's a vacation?"

### *On the cover*

Virginia Barker (left) holds Fraidy, her colorful year-old amazon. Bonnie Shilling prefers to keep her rosella, Duke, in a cage, however. She's hoping she can breed it with another of her pet rosellas.

# 'Unknown' is resolved in chem lab

If you've ever delighted in concocting all sorts of unusual experiments using the chemistry set you received as a child for Christmas, you'd probably find one of the rooms on the lower level of Building 20 interesting.

Through its glass-windowed door you can see dozens of test tubes and beakers full of multi-colored liquids, and various instruments with numbered meters and dials. You also may see the three employees who staff the Works' "chem lab" — Peter Wu, a planning engineer; Loretta Lewis, an engineering associate; and Luis Canal, a laboratory assistant.

The chem lab falls under the jurisdiction of Dept. 273, and provides chemical analyses as needed pertaining to manufacturing operations and health and safety concerns.

That includes the routine analyzing of gold and nickel solutions, other plating solutions, gold-plated blades, degreasers, and samples from the raw materials laboratories for Buildings 30 and 50. The lab's staff also conducts silicon analysis and environmental analysis, the latter involving tests on waste water and waste materials.

Perhaps a product engineer discovers one day that a particular operation is producing a byproduct not anticipated. "They come to us and want to know, 'What's this junk,'" Peter said.

It's up to the chem lab to find out what that "junk" is.

That's not necessarily as easy as it sounds, noted Loretta. For example, given an unknown white powder in a coffee cup, the chem lab crew needs to know where it was obtained — from what machine and during which process.

"You need to get some little clue to find the possible cause of the problem," she said. "Sometimes it means going out to the shop to see it for yourself."

There are thousands of chemical compounds a chemist must consider in trying to determine the identity of a substance. However, not all of the problems presented to the chem lab turn out to be complex.

One time the gold plating room crew wanted to know if there was a simple method to determine whether or not modular blades had been plated with nickel before the gold plate had been applied. An easy method would allow them to spot-check blades being plated, to make sure that nickel and gold plating solutions were being applied in sequence.

"We told them to use a magnet," Peter

said. Nickel is magnetic and gold isn't (neither is the bronze alloy base metal of the blade). Therefore, if a magnet attracts a blade, the nickel solution has been applied.

While Luis handles environmental water testing and some tests of metals and degreasers, Loretta conducts routine analyses basically of plastics, and gold-plated blades. She frequently works in conjunction with Tony Sansone, a planning engineer in charge of the plastics development lab, also part of Dept. 273. Peter handles all the other tasks, including analyses of specialty

samples.

For all three of them, terms such as "atomic absorption spectrophotometer" (used for metal analysis) and "gas chromatograph" (used to identify certain plastics components) are normal words in their vocabularies.

But for a crew who is expected to "have all the answers" in matters pertaining to chemical make-up, they're quick to point out that they're constantly learning something new as they do research and conduct their analyses.

How else do you think they come up with all the answers?



IS IT GOLD? . . . Loretta Lewis relies on a direct current plasma spectrophotometer to help her determine the gold content of a solution she pours into a test tube.

## United Way fund drive starts soon

The Omaha Works has been a "pacesetter firm" in past United Way of the Midlands campaigns, and for good reason. Works employees have developed the reputation of helping out when it's needed, setting the pace for other firms in the community.

Once again, the Works is a pacesetter firm, this time for the 1982 fund drive. The in-plant drive will run from Aug. 23 through Sept. 3. Ed Wigg (Organization 310) is this year's in-plant chairman, assisted by co-chairmen Jim Hardick (Dept. 437) and Verne Larson (Dept.

435) representing IBEW Local 1974, and Tom Welchert (Dept. 333) representing IBEW Local 1614. Don Lanspa (Dept. 312) is coordinator for the drive.

"With cutbacks in federal programs and greater emphasis put on local moneys to meet a community's needs, it's all the more important that this drive be successful," the drive chairman said.

Traditionally, Omaha Works employees have responded generously even when times are difficult. "I'm optimistic that they will once again."

"Helping here at home . . . the United Way," is the overall campaign theme this year. The United Way of the Midlands campaign seeks to raise a total of \$8.2 million. Within the Omaha Works, the goal is to raise \$350,000.

Wigg noted that total requests to United Way from its affiliated agencies and programs far exceed the money that's available for allocations. A Plan-

# Wellness Program shifts gears

The Omaha Works is shifting into a higher gear as its participation in Western Electric's Wellness Program continues.

Employees already have been introduced to rainbow symbols on cafeteria line foods and vending machine windows. These designate which foods meet the seven dietary guidelines for Americans as determined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Posters, newsletters and credit card-size calorie counters are all designed to attract attention to the importance of diet and proper nutrition, which is being stressed first in the Wellness Program. The program seeks to help employees make their own choices on how to avoid risks to their health, said Dr. Lee Grant, Works medical director.

Last month, a 15-minute video presentation was played in cafeterias during lunchtime, touching on obesity and how to achieve and maintain one's ideal weight.

It was a presentation well chosen because, according to Dr. Grant, four out of five Americans are overweight. "We're among the fattest nations on the earth," a situation that has developed only within the past 50 years. As a nation, we have continued to eat as we did when we were much more physically active, before the automobile and labor-saving devices.

"Being as much as 10 percent above your ideal weight can be a hazard to your health," Dr. Grant said. Fortunately, excess weight needn't be permanent.

Since weight control is a matter of calories, one can determine how many

calories may be ingested daily to maintain an ideal weight. Simply multiply one's ideal weight by 13. So, if a six-foot-tall man's ideal weight is 180 pounds, he may take in 2,340 calories daily and not gain weight, Dr. Grant explained.

But if that man were overweight and wanted to get back down to 180 pounds, he should know that one pound of fat represents 3,500 calories. If he reduced his caloric intake by 500 calories or if he burned up 500 calories exercising daily, he would lose one pound a week.

"You should not attempt to lose more than two pounds per week if you have 10 pounds or more to lose," Dr. Grant

cautioned. Gradual weight loss helps assure that a person develops proper eating habits to be followed even after the weight is lost. "And no one should ever take in less than 1,000 calories a day for extended periods," he added.

During August, employees may view another film, "The Stanford Heart Health Test." The film tests a viewers' knowledge about reducing chances for heart attack or stroke, and helps one estimate individual risks.

In September, the Wellness Program will focus on physical fitness. It will stress how exercise can help one's heart, as well as how exercise can supplement the effort to lose or maintain weight.

## Blair and Kummer earn patent

Senior engineer Tom Blair and planning engineer Al Kummer of Dept. 472 have been added to the list of Omaha Works employees awarded patents by the U.S. Government.

Their patent brings to 49 the total number of patents presented to Works employees since 1964.

Tom and Al received their patent for developing a fixture that allows the insertion of contact elements in rows, level by level, into 711 connectors. It previously was done by "targeting" the elements into the connector, one by one. The fixture took them six to eight months to develop, they said.

They were somewhat surprised to learn they had been granted a patent, the first for both of them. "When you apply, you have no idea if it will be accepted or if someone else already has

a patent," Al noted.

Although patent awards aren't commonplace occurrences, in a Western Electric engineering atmosphere they're considered "part of the job," they said.

Still, they both admitted there's a certain sense of pride in having an "invention" to call their own.



Tom Blair



Al Kummer

ning and Allocation Review Committee consisting of volunteers from the community must make the difficult decisions on how much and where the money should go. The committee bases its decisions on service, budgetary needs, agency efficiency and effectiveness.

Employees will have a chance to learn more about how the United Way works when they attend hour-long sessions held in the auditorium during all three shifts. Jack Childs, general manager at the Works, plans to be present for the more than 30 scheduled sessions.

Coffee will be served and every employee will receive a souvenir. In addition, each will have an opportunity to win special prizes.

But most important, as employees of a pacesetter firm in the United Way campaign, each will have a chance to set an example for the rest of the community on "helping here at home."



# Seminars introduce MRP II

Initial employee reactions to the Manufacturing Resource Planning System — MRP II — have been very favorable.

The reactions are those from the first groups of Works supervisors and technical-professionals who are attending 2½-day seminars introducing them to the system.

The goal of MRP II is to bring about more effective management of operations by improving operating systems and performance measurements, according to Hank Davidson. As materials management manager for

Organization 060, he is overseeing the introduction of the system at the Omaha Works.

The seminars address manufacturing performance problems and how they relate to the company's productivity and profit. They stress the need to formalize functions and to employ effective measurement techniques, as well as the importance of cooperation, respect and accountability among all employees, Davidson said.

One seminar participant mentioned how waste can be a serious problem in a business, as discussed in a session. As a result, "if we don't continue paying closer attention to how much it's costing us to provide services and products to the phone companies, we're going to price ourselves out of the market," said Dick McGaughey, department chief for Dept. 251.

Agreeing with him is Wayne French, department chief for Dept. 439. The system has "tremendous potential to improve our profit picture and reduce our investment," he said. Tighter controls on investment, he added, will positively affect other areas of the business, too.

For example, having just the right amount of parts in stock — and no more — when you need them means production schedules run smoother. As a result, delivery of products to the customer should be on time.

John Pleskac, a senior engineer in Dept. 472, is optimistic that MRP II can provide a "systematic approach to running a complicated business under tighter constraints of high interest rates and shorter product life cycles." He would like to see the system stimulate management incentives to promote product creativity and economic growth, he added.

As MRP II programs get under way at



**PINNED . . .** Multicolored buttons call attention to MRP II, as employees are introduced to a complete system to improve operating systems and performance measurements.

the Works, employees in the Information Systems Development and Data Services Organization 120 will play an important part in storing and providing all the statistical data required for effective measurements.

Jim Sharp, ISD department chief, thinks MRP II will be effective "if all the people make it work, and from what I've seen, all those who have attended these seminars are very enthusiastic and anxious to see it get started."

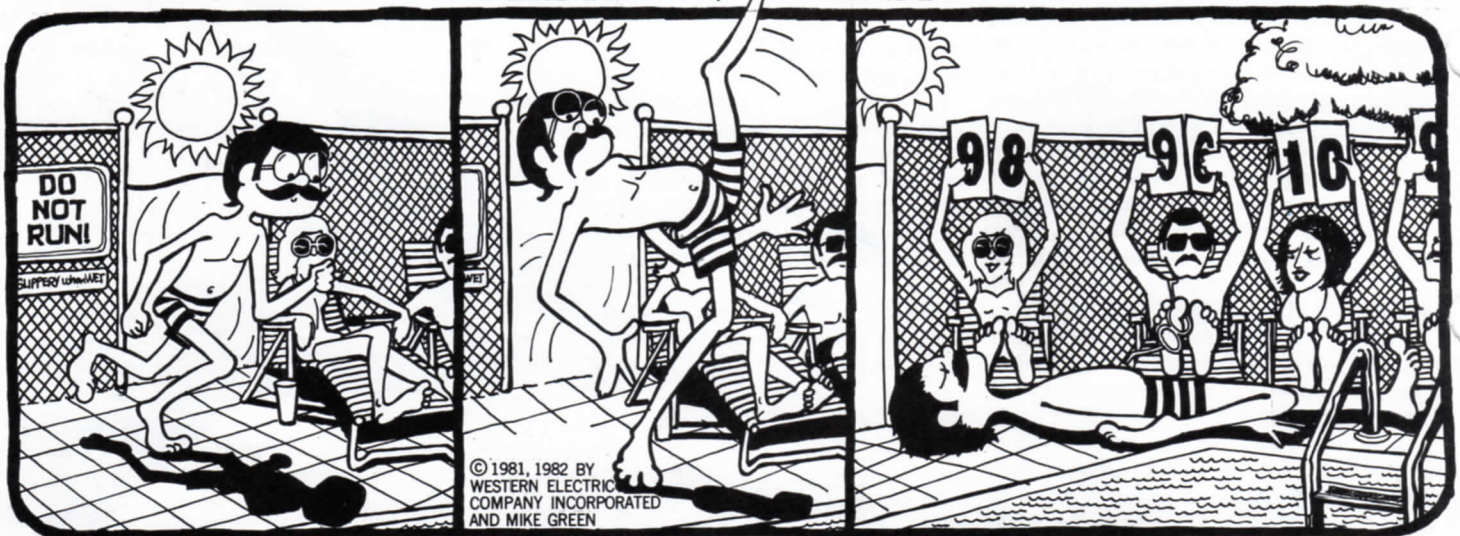
The current seminar sessions — nine in all — will continue into early September, Davidson said. "And we're now completing plans for in-house sessions to train larger numbers of employees" beginning sometime in the fourth quarter, he noted.

## BSSP/SSP results

The following are the May unit values for both the Bell System Savings Plan (BSSP) and the Savings and Security Plan (SSP) for non-salaried employees:

	BSSP	
	Units Value	Units Credited Per Dollar
AT&T	2.5726	.3887
Government Obligations	2.7157	.3682
Equity Portfolio	1.6987	.5886
Guaranteed Interest Fund	1.2927	.7735
	SSP	
	Units Value	Units Credited Per Dollar
AT&T	1.2026	.8315
Guaranteed Interest Fund	1.3912	.7187

## OLLIE OOPS



© 1981, 1982 BY WESTERN ELECTRIC COMPANY INCORPORATED AND MIKE GREEN