

the Westerner

Omaha Works

June, 1980

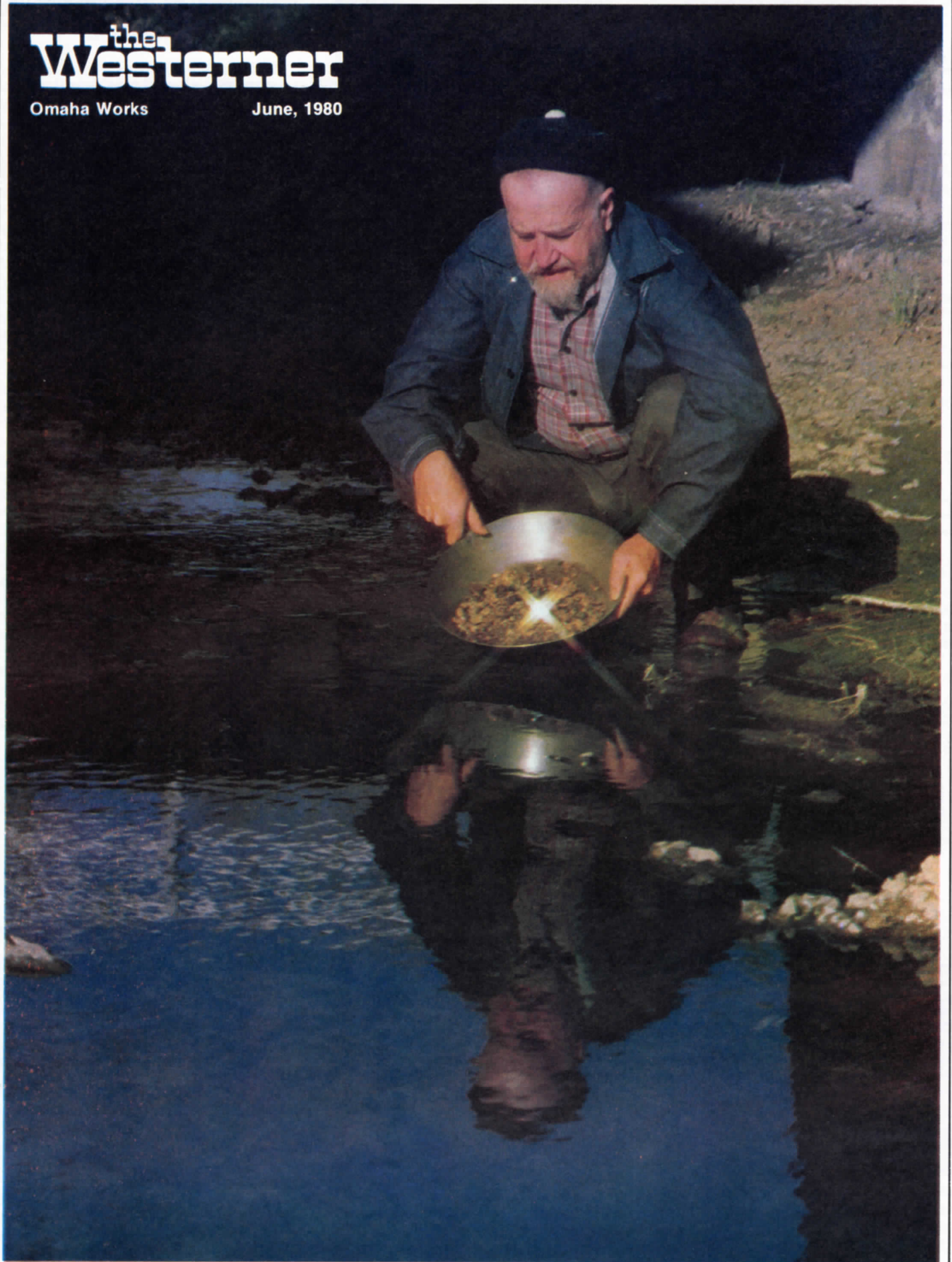


Photo by Rog Howard

newsworthy people

It was the first time he had crossed an ocean. There was Rod Mach in Eskisehir, Turkey, sandwiched between Iran and Russia. He was one of 200 members of the 155th Tactical Reconnaissance Group from the Nebraska Air National Guard, who were in Turkey for NATO war games last month.

It was quite a change from the usual summer camp, said Rod, a dock worker in the cable plant. A master sergeant in the guard, Rod was in charge of transporting people and equipment for the war games. He left on a C-130 jet from Lincoln on May 1 and didn't return until May 19.

The war games were conducted cooperatively with the Turkish Air Force. "For the first couple of days, there was more or less a stare down between us and the Turkish airmen," Rod said, because neither knew what to expect of the other.

It wasn't long, however, before the initial awkwardness disappeared and the hosts showed the American guests their traditional warm Turkish hospitality. "They don't have much over there, but they'll share anything they have with you," he said.

The guard had makeshift quarters in a hangar. The group did have some apprehension over being so close to Iran and Russia, Rod said, and the navigators were specially oriented to know where they could fly during the war games.

But having worked with the Turks, Rod said he'd like to return next year. He now corresponds by mail with one of his Turkish airman friends. Another new friend even gave him a special straw-woven

painting inscribed: "With love, from Turkey."

* * *

It's difficult enough for many people to speak before a crowd of strangers. Imagine getting up before a group of people in another country and speaking to them in a language foreign to you.

Sandy Placzek, daughter of Cathy Placzek of Dept. 728, will know what it's like to do just that during her stay in France this summer. She will speak before a French chapter of the Lions Club in their native tongue.

She shouldn't have any problem, however. She's studied the French language for five years in school, her mother said.

The recent Bryan High graduate was one of four Bryan students selected by the Omaha Lions Club to make the trip, based on her knowledge of the French language. Sandy will stay with a family in Chieft, just 200 miles from Paris, to learn more about the French culture.

In her slide presentation to the French Lions group, Sandy intends to talk about Nebraska and its industries — including a plug for the place where Mom works.

Plants must wait

Back porch is robins' perch

Catherine Brown of Dept. 441 is getting a late start on her hanging plant garden this year, all because she didn't have the heart to evict some unexpected boarders.

The boarders are a family of robins



WAITING FOR MOM . . . One of the baby robins sat still for a photo but quickly ducked into the nest at the sound of the camera's shutter.

who have made their home atop Catherine's hanging philodendron plant. Late last April, Catherine hung her plant just outside the sliding patio doors opening to her South Omaha home's back porch.

"That was in the morning. When I came back from work, robins already had begun making a nest in the pot," she said.

Because she and her husband, Joe, didn't want to disturb the birds, they quit using the patio doors. Catherine also curtailed plans to hang other plants on the porch. "In the 25 years I've hung plants out there, nothing like this has ever happened," she noted.

The Browns would peek through the curtains and watch mama and papa robin take turns sitting on the eggs. At first, when the Browns would venture into their back yard, the robins would fly away from the nest. "Then they got used to us," Catherine said.

When the Browns returned from a week's vacation last month, they found three baby robins had been hatched. Joe began tossing out night crawlers he keeps for fishing, which the parents fed to their offspring.

The porch penthouse has afforded the robin family ideal shelter from wind and rain. The boarders didn't seem to mind that the philodendron had begun to look bedraggled — "I couldn't water it," Catherine said.

Although she has enjoyed watching the birds, Catherine didn't expect to be sad to see the family leave: "I'll finally be able to hang out the rest of my plants."

On the cover

If there's gold in them thar hills, Red Skellenger of Dept. 439 is going to find it. When Red lived in Alaska, he'd watch how gold seekers would pan for gold, although he himself preferred to go fishing. The cover photo was taken at a remote creek, but to prevent any claim jumping, let's just say the creek isn't quite as remote as Alaska. Red tried his hand at panning for gold to draw attention to the gold and solder plating operations begun at the Works. For a story and photos, turn to Page 4.

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Editor

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 **Western Electric**

service anniversaries

june



Al Dodge
25 years
6/27/55



Ardella Worley
25 years
6/7/55



Elmer Sharples
25 years
6/23/55

20 years

M. B. Rhatigan
B. S. Schaecher
M. W. DuRae
W. L. Peterson
J. J. Frum
J. R. Kessler
E. J. Walter
G. D. Bridenbaugh
H. C. Kirk
P. P. Hamit
E. E. Dillinger
D. E. Boland
G. R. Coventry
W. H. Dunavin

J. R. Faulhaber
D. G. Lockhart
J. C. Meyer
G. A. Boyer
P. L. Larsen
R. T. Spain
B. B. Snodgrass
J. D. Hopkins
A. E. Kaspar
P. L. Mangelsen
L. C. Wilkins
R. L. Koster
L. C. Wagner

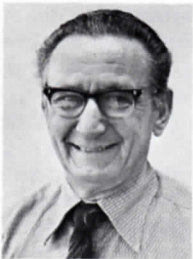
Not pictured:

Wayne Bundy
25 years
6/17/55



Richard Iaffaldano
25 years
6/13/55

retirements



Tony Cuda
36 years



Louida Wilson
32 years



Will Ahlman
23 years



Anna Mumm
22 years

15 years

P. A. Clark
J. R. Lassek
H. L. Kunz
J. E. Barnhill
F. C. Patrick
W. J. Rosencrans
R. I. Secret
E. L. Sterkel
L. J. Story
P. L. Josoff
J. A. Shambley
G. A. Stoltenberg
J. S. Taylor
J. S. Hitchcock

F. S. Chadwick
S. R. Kolo
T. Munger
J. F. Norville Jr.
I. T. Adamson
H. E. Davidson Jr.
J. S. Bonner
D. B. Spethman
J. P. Jaros
C. J. Griffin
E. C. Wills
C. E. Jones
R. S. Porter
F. A. Crum

10 years

D. F. Myhrberg
J. N. Wehrle
M. P. Wenninghoff
S. D. Hiser
S. L. Alloway
W. A. Brungardt
R. C. Burdett
B. J. Chase

D. N. Ernst
R. M. Howard
W. J. Hurd
D. C. Kohls
W. B. Nicholas
R. R. Runnels
W. L. Davis
L. Jack

Not pictured:

Marijane Woita
22 years
Roslyn McDaniel
20 years



Herb Jonderko
22 years



Dorothy Carnes
21 years



Leona Dean
21 years



Ardath Foust
20 years

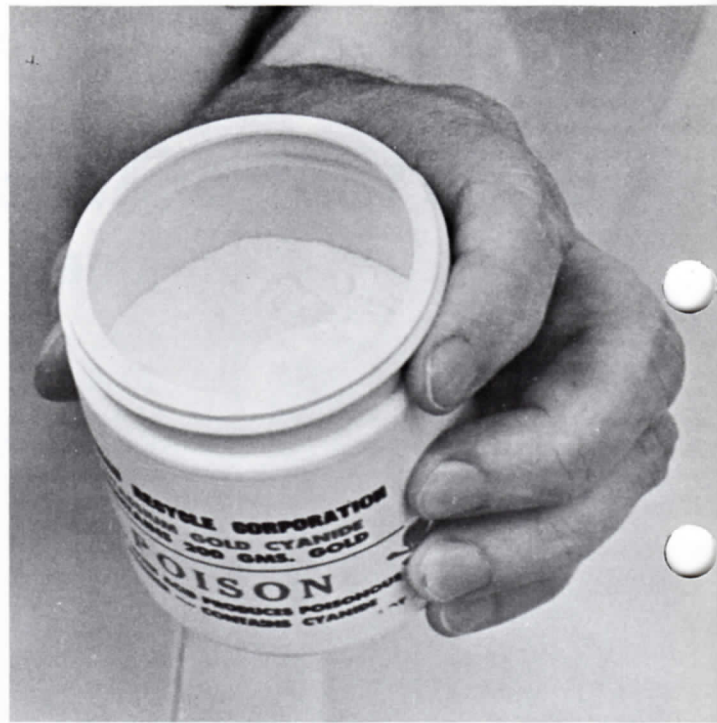
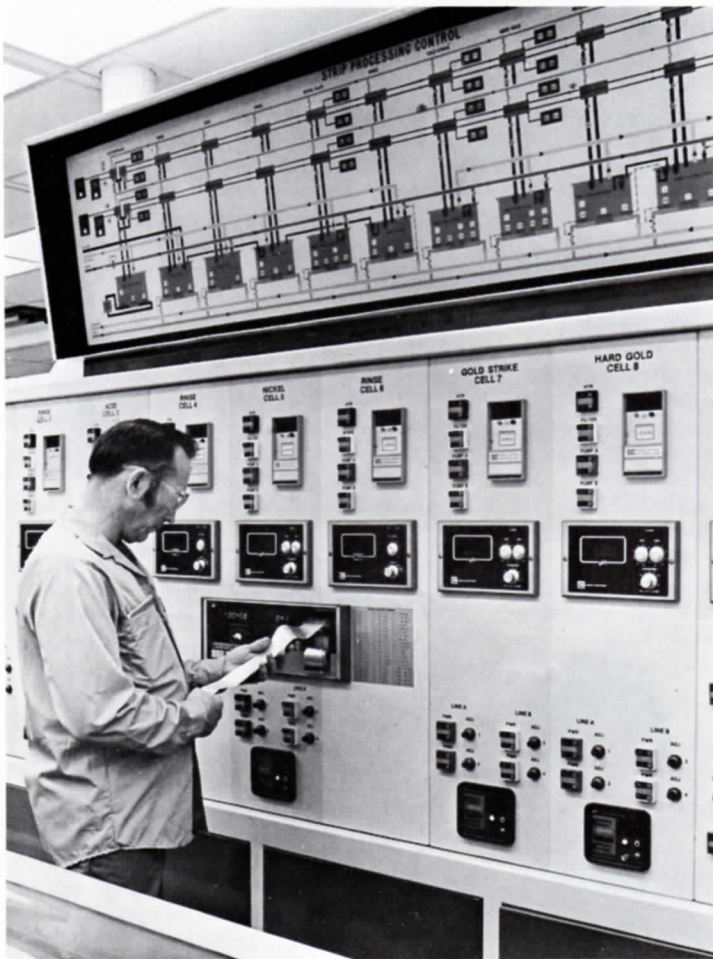


Hazel Carlson
20 years

BSSP/SSP results

The following are the April unit values for both the Bell System Savings Plan (BSSP) and the Savings and Security Plan for Non-Salaried Employees (SSP):

	BSSP			SSP	
	Units Value	Units Credited Per Dollar		Units Value	Units Credited Per Dollar
AT&T	2.0507	.4876	AT&T	.9584	1.0433
Government Obligations	2.1483	.4654	Guaranteed		
Equity Portfolio	1.4574	.6861	Interest Fund	1.1143	.9873
Guaranteed					
Interest Fund	1.0292	.9716			



THAT'S GOLD? . . . The salt-like substance is about \$3,000 worth of gold used for plating. Left, layout operator Bill Pokorny monitors data from the gold plater's control panel. A data printout is given on 59 different operating conditions as required.

INSTALLATION . . . Senior engineer Chris Christensen (right) of Dept. 731 goes over insulating steam lines and condensate lines with Bill Muckey of Vaughn Insulating. During installation of the platers, Chris was in charge of mechanical engineering while Dick Runnels, also of Dept. 731, took charge of electrical engineering.



All that's gold doesn't glitter. Sometimes it glows.

If one were to place under ultraviolet light the gold used in the Omaha Works' new gold and solder automatic strip plating operations, it would glow a soft green.

That's because the gold isn't in the form of ingots as might be expected. It's mixed with potassium cyanide to form soluble salt — looking much like table salt — and having the distinct property of glowing green under black light.

What does glitter, however, are the finished products that are either gold or solder plated.

In the case of the gold plating operation, blades used in the modular plugs on station cords are given a very thin "full gold plate, then a "selective" "partial gold plating at the top and sides of each blade, said John Bell. John is department chief for engineering Dept. 472, out of which Clayton Block and Gene Tharp have been assigned to oversee the installation and operation of the platers.

Solder plating is to be done on 710 connector elements and eventually other miscellaneous connector elements, John said. In the early part of June, work still was being completed on the solder plater, while the gold plater was being used on a limited basis.

THE TWO plating operations are located in what is now called the continuous strip plating room — the former Product Display Center at the southwest corner of Building 30. Renovation of the room began last summer.

Since then, the area has become somewhat of a showpiece, where curious passers-by can be seen peering through the room's windows. Whether it's the mystique about gold itself or intrigue over the platers' impressive control centers complete with lighted panels, the showpiece image is not unwarranted.

"These platers incorporate the most advanced technology and were custom-built for us," Clayton noted. Other Western Electric locations have gold and solder platers, but Bell Labs — Murray Hill built the gold plater and Atlanta Product Engineering Control Center (PECC) built the solder plater specifically for Omaha's product needs.

Both the gold and solder plating is done by an electrochemical process. Special air "scrubbers" assure no contaminants from the operation escape into the environment.

Four reels of blades or connector elements are fed simultaneously into the machines. A projected 900 million blades will be gold plated and 1 billion connector elements solder plated per year when the machines are in a total operating mode.

The machines will run on all three

Plating begins; pass the salt

shifts, requiring one operator per machine and a layout operator for each shift. The operators are to keep close tabs on the quality of product and make adjustments to the processes as required, John said. The platers are so advanced that if adjustments aren't made automatically, the platers print out data

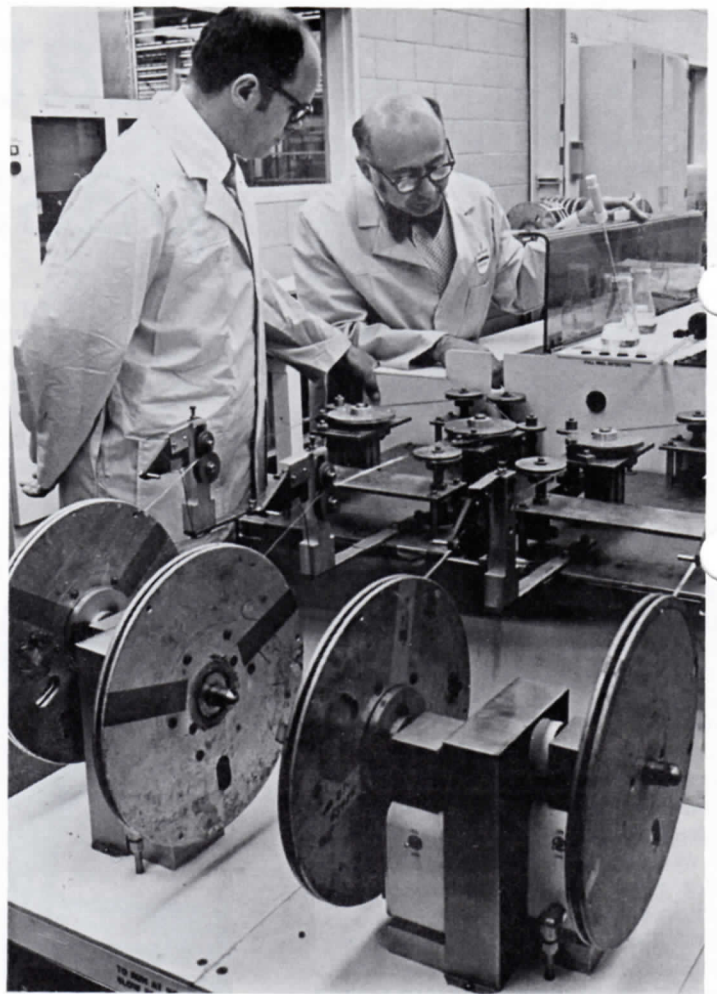
so operators may make any necessary changes.

THE GOLD plater represents "a sizable cost reduction" for the Works, depending on the gold market rate, John said. An in-house operation will allow us to control how much gold is used and the

(Continued on Page 6)



HOW RICH IT IS . . . Layout operator Larry Griff samples the gold plating solution which will be analyzed to determine how many grams of gold are present.



Quality and cost control are pluses

(Continued from Page 5)
quality of plating.

The reason gold is used at all, John added, is because so far it is the only material that meets standards for corrosion resistance "to assure that the transmission path is constantly clear."

Control over the quality of product is the primary advantage to having an in-house solder plating operation. Instead of blanking the connector elements at the Works, then shipping them for plating to an outside supplier, all can be done here. "It saves the time of shipping back and forth," John said, and if the elements aren't plated according to standards, "we can get on the problem right away."

The plating operations also are designed to keep waste of materials to a minimum — particularly the gold. A Beta back scatter instrument is used for minute measurement of the thickness of gold plate being applied to the blades, Clayton pointed out. Special recovery systems on both platers allow salvaging any gold or solder material from rinse water used during the latter stages of the operations.

In the solder plater, the solder plating chemicals are separated from the rinse water and returned to the plating bath. The rinse water is reused. Gold from the gold plating rinse collects on a metal screen which is sent to Nassau Recycle Corporation to be recovered.

If a person didn't know gold was being collected on the screen, he'd probably never guess it, because the darkish metal deposits certainly don't glitter.

In fact, they don't even glow.

THE CREW . . .
Sheet metal worker John Bullock (top photo) of Dept. 744 helped during installation. At right, engineers Gene Tharp (left) and Clayton Block inspect the air dry cell of the gold plater.



Stars, stripes and savings bonds

A LITTLE TRAVELING MUSIC, please, and Mike McCandless and Lisa Procopio will go into their song and dance routine in behalf of U.S. Savings Bonds. The duo made their pitch last month to employees throughout the plant, including these cable shop workers on break. By the end of the Omaha Works' bond drive, better than half of the employees had signed up to take stock in America through U.S. Savings Bonds.

A rose for all seasons

"He's the only one of my guys who carries a briefcase," said Dale Karloff, a section chief in plant trades (Dept. 744). He was referring to Bob Sterba, a millwright in the department.

Bob does, indeed, carry a briefcase, but it's not filled with paperwork. It carries the delicately carved wooden roses that have become his "stock and trade" ever since he began his wood carving hobby four years ago.

He takes his wooden rose projects wherever he goes. In fact, Bob was brought to the attention of The Westerner by an employee who noticed Bob carving a rose as he walked to his car in the parking lot.

The detail which Bob gives his six to 16-inch roses — carved from single pieces of wood — can be explained in part by the challenge "just to see if I can do it," he said. The first rose he ever carved "was flat looking" until Bob began studying and copying roses he photographed.

Although he has carved an assortment of other wooden items — half-inch long working pliers to a coiled rattlesnake — the rose tends to be his favorite. "I'm an incurable romantic," Bob said, adding that he's unaware of any other local hobbyists who have done similar rose carvings.

The self-taught carver said that with each rose he carves, he seeks to add more detail. He sands nothing, preferring to use the knife's blade for smoothness.



STEADY HANDS . . . Bob Sterba has always had a fascination for roses — even as a child when he used to help his mother decorate wedding cakes.

Patience and steady hands are necessities, he said, as is an ability "to see through your wood and visualize how it will look when it's done."

Bob carves four different sizes of roses, generally using basswood or birch. It's not unusual for him to spend at least 15 hours working on a medium-sized rose, sometimes longer depending on the wood. Neither is it unusual for Bob to carve late into the night, getting by on 3½ hours of sleep.

His carvings take up much of his free time, he admitted, although he still finds time for photography and to play the drums for the Bennie Ray Orchestra. When the band has engagements out of town, Bob takes along his briefcase and carves roses in the group's van.

His roses have won him two first-place honors in contests sponsored by the Mid-America Wood Carvers Association. Even so, as he completes a rose he wonders if he can duplicate his efforts.

"I hated to give away the first rose because I was afraid I couldn't do it again,"



REAL OR PRETEND . . . Bob has been perfecting his rose carving technique over the past year. Compared to a real rose, his rose (foreground) has a realistic bloom and stylized stem and leaves.

Bob said. "I still can't believe I did this," he said as he held one of the long-stemmed beauties. "I never used to have patience for anything."

suggestion box

Not one, not two, but three Works employees are recent big winners in the employee suggestions awards program. Together they received awards totaling more than \$4,000.

Jim Phillips of Dept. 741 proposed a modification to the 710 connector top and bottom injection molding tools and was awarded \$1,790 for his idea. **Eric Petersen** of Dept. 201 received \$1,505 for his idea to change the gear ratio on conveyor or belt drive motors. **George Brown** earned \$1,025 for a suggestion concerning the No. 4 wire draw.



Jim Phillips

For Jim and George, the awards are for the first suggestions either has submitted. Earning the awards "more or less makes you more enthusiastic to look for other ideas," Jim commented, and George agreed. "I'm really going to take a good look at the job now for other ideas," he said.

Eric summed up the reasons why

anyone would submit a suggestion: "To build a better mousetrap. When you see room for improvement, you just have to do something about it."

All three said their earnings will be put to good use. Jim will pay off some bills, George plans a trip to Las Vegas, and Eric will use the money for the new house he just bought.

Other employees who have earned suggestion awards include:

Richard Browns, Dept. 741, \$790.
James Elliott, Dept. 741, \$590.
James Karros Jr., Dept. 746, \$535.
Don Carstens, Dept. 746, \$220.
Edwin Palensky, Dept. 435, \$215.
Michael Evans, Dept. 439, \$190.
Gaeton Godios, Dept. 726, \$185.
Charlie Struble, Dept. 361, \$100.



George Brown



Eric Petersen

Full-card winner a first; poster contest announced

He's never won anything until now. Bill Chilcoat has become the first Omaha Works employee to win with a full card in the Safety Pays game.

An informations system staff member in Dept. 123, Bill won \$250. He and his wife would like to use the money "maybe for a big weekend somewhere," he said.

A draftsman in Dept. 735, Derrick Williams, picked the lucky number, 14. The full-card win brought to an end game No. 31, the longest-running Safety Pays game since its inception about two years ago. Game No. 31 began on April 15 and lasted 56 days.

Fifty-seven numbers in all were drawn during the game, however, because of a double drawing on June 4. The double drawing was in celebration of the Works having achieved a million man-hours without a disabling injury on the job — the first for 1980. Not one serious injury occurred during the period of April 14 through May 22.

Another safety-related item in the news includes the safety department's third annual safety calendar poster contest. Works employees' children or grandchildren, preschool age through

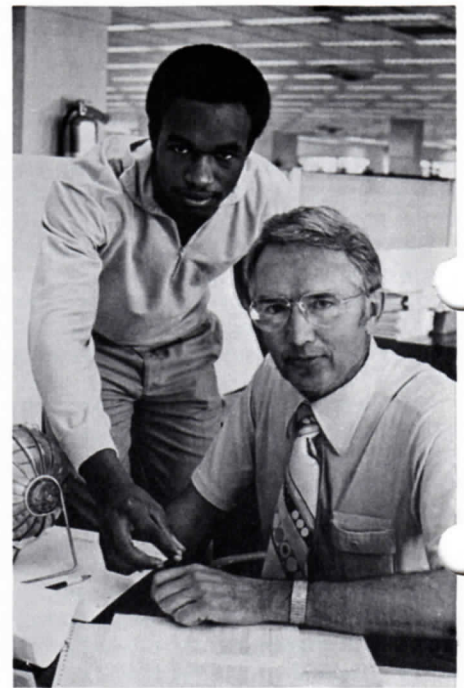
12th grade, are invited to submit posters that depict safety practices at home, work or play.

Thirteen of the best posters submitted will be used to illustrate the cover and months of a 1981 calendar to be distributed to all Works employees. Those whose posters are chosen each will receive one share of AT&T stock.

Any art medium may be used, but drawings must be no larger than 8½ by 11 inches. Also, all art work must be horizontal in order to fit on the calendar's pages. Each drawing must be submitted by one person only: No joint entries will be accepted.

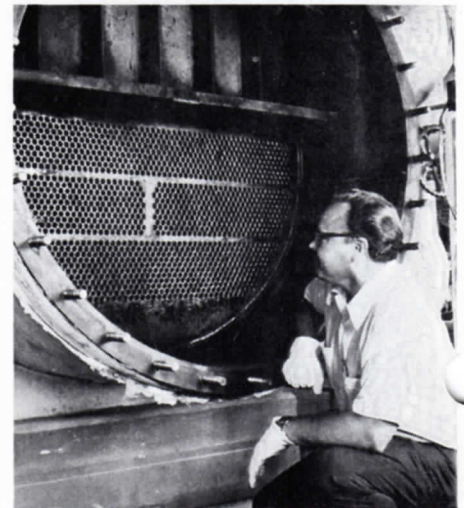
Further details about the contest and entry blanks are to be made available to all employees. Identification should accompany each entry, listing the child's name, grade, parent's or grandparent's name, and department in which he or she works.

Entries may be submitted July 1 through 31. They may be brought to work to WEOMA Club representatives, to the WEOMA office or to the safety department.



ALL FILLED UP . . . Bill Chilcoat (seated) is grateful that Derrick Williams drew the number he needed.

energy . . .
less is more



BOILER operating engineer DeForest Weidner can tell you nothing's clogging the tubes in the evaporator of this steam turbine chiller. The chiller's tubes were replaced with new ones while tubes on three other chillers were cleaned out to remove deposits that hamper operating efficiency. The chillers cool water that's pumped around Works buildings for air conditioning purposes. To assure efficiency remains at its best, devices have been installed to monitor the chillers' efficiency, and standards have been developed to determine at what point a machine overhaul is in order.

Staff has new members

The Omaha Works has put out the welcome mat for two new members on the staff. Effective July 1, Larry G. Lewallen will be Omaha's new director of engineering and manufacturing, and effective June 15, Kenneth A. Stasiek is engineering manager, loop transmission products.

The new director succeeds Charlie Higginson, who is now director of administration-manufacturing, at New York headquarters. Larry began his career with Western Electric 20 years ago in Minneapolis as a staff trainee, transferring to the Omaha Service Center in 1963.

His assignments have taken him to the Phoenix and Oklahoma Works, and he has attended the company's Management Training Program. He comes to Omaha from Morristown, N.J., where he has been director of division staff in the Switching Equipment Division since June 1979. He is a graduate of Depauw University and holds a master of business administration degree from Creighton University.

Ken Stasiek takes on his duties at

Omaha having just completed the Management Training Program at the Corporate Education Center. He previously was department chief in the Hawthorne Works engineering personnel relations.

While pursuing his degree in electrical engineering at Marquette University, Ken worked as a co-op student at Hawthorne. When he was graduated in 1971, he began his career with Western in the cable plant. At Omaha he replaces Peter Woog, who is now manager, product line planning and management, at Nassau Recycling Corporation in Gaston, S.C.



Larry Lewallen



Ken Stasiek