

# the Westerner

Omaha Works

October, 1980



It's the name  
of the game

Mike Whitmore (left),  
Chris and Tom Pluta  
weave a tangled web  
playing "Up Yours,  
Down Mine."

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# for your information

During the month of November, participants in the Bell System Savings Plan for salaried employees will have an opportunity to elect the periodic partial distribution option under the plan. This distribution will be of all units in participants' accounts attributable to both employee allotments and company contributions made during the 1978 plan year, and will be based on unit values at the end of December 1980.

If you exercise a transfer of account

balances to be effective on or before Dec. 31, 1980, the units paid out under the 1978 plan year periodic partial distribution will be in accordance with the redistribution of your account. The statement you receive after transferring account balances shows how your 1978 units are currently invested.

There are two periodic partial distribution election periods available to eligible plan participants. This means that you may request distribution of all units in your account for the 1978 plan year during the November 1980 election period or you may defer request for this distribution until 10 years later during the November 1990 election period. Therefore, in 1990 you may elect to receive distribution of all units for both 1978 and 1988 plan years or you may elect either one of these two plan years. Units withdrawn during the November 1980 election period will be valued as of Dec. 31, 1990.

Informational material is to be available around the first part of November. Anyone wishing to exercise this option during the November 1980 election period must make application through the payroll office by no later than Nov. 30. For those participants who want to defer their withdrawal for plan year 1978 until 1990, no action is necessary at this time.

Distributions of cash should be made during the last week in February 1981. Where AT&T shares are involved, certificates will be distributed about the same time. When completing the form for issuance of AT&T stock, if the joint tenant is a minor, there are certain complications you may want to consider. If so, call toll free the AT&T security information group during normal business hours for more information, 800-631-3311.

## 710s hit 50 million mark

Success is . . . manufacturing the 50 millionth 710 connector.

The Omaha Works reached that magic number Sept. 17, 1980, a fete that did not go unnoticed.

Western Electric's executive vice-president of manufacturing, John Brown, presented a commemorative plaque in the 710 connector shop area. Accepting the plaque in behalf of Works employees were members of the original 710 connector assembly group — employees who even today work directly in making one of our best-selling products.

Those employees are: David Wells, Eddie Adams, Charlie Coffin, Gerald

Nick, Louise Slizoski, Dee Hansen, Jim Novotny, Dorothy Bayless, Gary Scott, Arlene Boyd, Terry Comstock and Barb Wiersema. Original crew member Verna Thacker also still works in the 710 connector area but was unable to take part in the presentation.

The Works made its first 710 connector in December 1974. During the year 1980 alone, we had manufactured more than 16 million of the connectors by the first week in September.

The executive vice-president coupled the plaque presentation with his small staff conference hosted by the Works. After the presentation in Dept. 435, he and his staff toured the rest of the plant.



A BETTER LOOK . . . Speedy Grace Lee of Dept. 443, operating a rotary terminal insertion machine, prompted a closer look by W.E.'s executive vice-president, John Brown.



YEA, TEAM! . . . John Brown had words of praise for some of the members of the original 710 connector assembly crew.

### the Westerner

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**Western Electric**



# service anniversaries

october

## 20 years

E. M. Baier	N. D. Milius
J. P. Canterbury	D. E. Moran
A. G. Dickens	G. B. Mueller
F. Finnberg Jr.	S. K. Murphy
J. P. Groot	W. B. Nichols
L. B. Harder	S. P. Nosal
E. M. Landis	J. S. Pollard
G. T. Logan	J. P. Staskiewicz
C. L. Luce	B. I. Welte
R. M. McGaughey	



Dick Petty  
35 years  
10/22/45



Charlie Vessell  
35 years  
10/14/45

## 15 years

T. F. Abbott	L. H. Waters
M. F. Borland	C. R. Wiersema
H. R. Clark	V. J. Wietzki

E. O. Ellefson  
R. A. Ferraguti  
C. V. Garcia  
T. R. Godsey  
N. B. Jones  
C. K. Lamb  
A. L. Nicholson  
P. S. Pinhero  
B. C. Rasmussen  
A. V. Reskevicius  
D. R. Shook  
R. E. Traugh Jr.  
G. E. Viner

## 10 years

L. K. Mumm  
E. M. Petersen

Not pictured:

Irv Rada  
35 years  
10/29/45



Wally Geason  
30 years  
10/26/50



Joe Dimmitt  
25 years  
10/24/55

## suggestion box

John Francavilla of Dept. 745 is proof that there is no limit to the number of suggestions a person may submit to the employee suggestion awards program — nor is there a limit to how many may be accepted.

Two of John's ideas paid off for him. He received \$150 for a suggestion to modify the lower annealer insulating blocks in the fine wire draw area, and another \$100 award for an idea pertaining to the No. 2 and No. 4 wire draw machines.

Two other Works employees also have had winning suggestions. Darrell Yenney of Dept. 741 earned a \$505 suggestion award for a modification to the miniature wire spring relay core punch and die. An award of \$240 went to Byron Frank of Dept. 745 for his idea eliminating electrical arcing and cooling water leaks in SAM machines.

## retirements



Wilma Leslie  
21 years



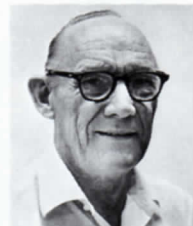
Mary Kilgore  
23 years



Frank Lajba  
23 years



Clara Brazee  
18 years



Harold Johnson  
34 years



Grace Lewis  
21 years

Not pictured: Martin Kearns  
22 years

## BSSP/SSP results

The following are the August 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	2.1805	.4585	AT&T	1.0186	.9816
Government Obligations	2.1635	.4622	Guaranteed		
Equity Portfolio	1.7489	.5717	Interest Fund	1.1508	.8688
Guaranteed					
Interest Fund	1.0628	.9408			

## Pioneers show crafts

The Cornhusker Chapter of Telephone Pioneers of America is planning a display of Pioneer activities and leisure-time crafts in the auditorium Nov. 3 and Nov. 4. Included will be demonstrations of some of the crafts. Display hours will be from 1 to 8 p.m. on Nov. 3, and from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Nov. 4. The event is part of the national observance of Pioneer Week.





Fellow wearing cap: "If she takes the last hot dog, I'm gonna throw a tantrum."



"The last mile's the hardest."

# One more time . . .



"This new dance is super . . . but do we really need the balloons tied to our ankles?"

Ah, for those lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer.

For a few hours on Sept. 21, a person could put out of his mind all the window scraping and snow shoveling that looms ahead. Kids could forget about homework assignments and missing the school bus.

They could if they attended the annual WEOMA Club picnic at Peony Park. The usual activities were on tap: free amusement rides, chicken and hot dog dinners, horseshoes and bingo.

But changes and new attractions made this picnic — with more than 3,100 people in attendance — one of the most successful for the Works. This year, both men and women played on the competing softball teams of office vs. shop personnel. The office team won, 6 to 4.

Last year's tug-of-war champs, known as the Leona Dean team, held onto their title, although the number of challenging teams was greater this time.

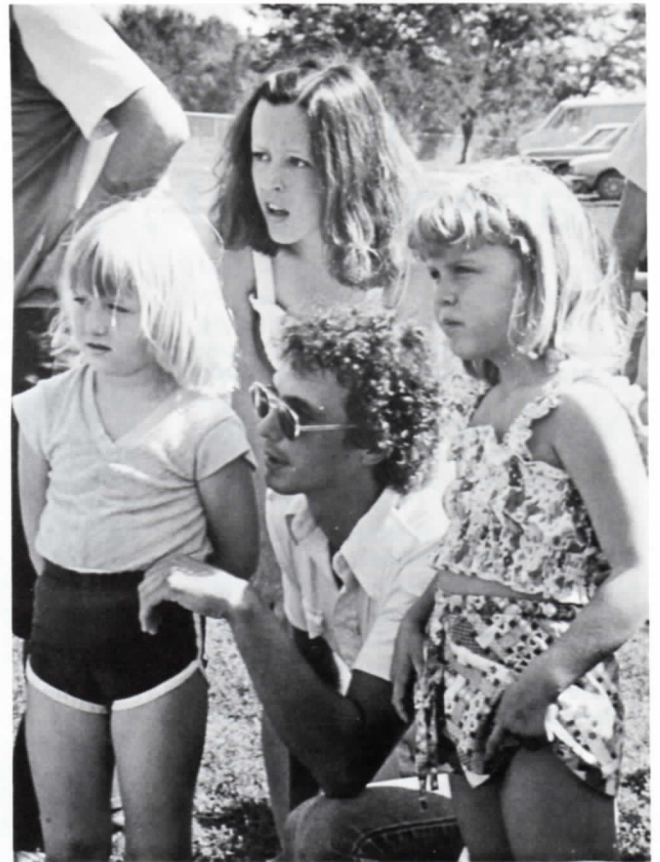
Earlier in the day, the Douglas County 4-H dog drill team entertained the crowd. Later, there was dancing to the music of New Beginning, and hand-clapping to the tunes of the Irish Dancers and Caeli Band.

Even the games had more to offer. There were potato races, a balloon pop, bean bag toss games, egg toss, and a new game especially for adults. That latter game — called "Up Yours, Down Mine" — really required teamwork. The goal was to join together a team by weaving a spoon attached to a long string up through . . . well, just as the name implies.





"Go ahead. You get out and ski and I'll handle the boat."



"Now here's the play: You fake the potato pass, and then . . ."



"Gimme a beah!"



"Lawrence Welk, eat your heart out!"



"If I could just reach, I'd scratch it."



# Who is account management . . .

Can you imagine a major car manufacturer making a car that gets 75 miles to a gallon of gas and not telling a prospective buyer? Or a clothing store that sells only "one size fits all" apparel?

Of course not. It's just good business sense to inform the customer about product developments and to strive for products that will fit the customer's individual needs.

That philosophy is shared by Western Electric's relatively new account management organization. Seventeen account management teams serve 23 Bell operating companies across the nation. One of those teams works out of an Omaha office at 72nd Street and Mercy Road, serving the needs of Northwestern Bell and Mountain Bell.

Each account team plays a complex role in Western Electric. Staff members are the "interface" or communication link between us and the phone companies who buy from us. Somewhat like sales consultants, account teams describe our products and services to our customers, and help in their application and in determining their economic impact on the phone companies' operations.



**HOW-TO . . .** One of our customers from Northwestern Bell, Vi DeGooyer (center) had a short course in splicing modular 710 connectors to cable ends when account representative Julie Fischer took her on a tour of Omaha's shops. Bob Rush of Dept. 253 served as teacher.

In addition, account management feeds back information about the customers' needs and preferences to Western Electric's Product/Service Line Planning and Management organization. Such feedback is crucial in today's highly competitive telecommunications market. It helps the planning organization answer key questions that determine the direction of our business and ultimately our jobs: What technology is required to meet customer needs? How long and how costly will product development be? How great is the demand for a product? Is it profitable to us?

"**THE CUSTOMER** doesn't have to buy from us," noted Jim Gumprecht, an account representative ("rep") on the Omaha team. He was referring to the number of telecommunications equipment manufacturers vying for a portion of the Bell operating companies' spending budget. The number has grown significantly in recent years and competition is on the rise.

Account rep Jim Mackin sees the phone company customers as "no different than us as consumers. If we don't like a product, we go somewhere else," he said.

That's where Western's account management team figures in: to persuade the customer that ours is the best deal around in goods and services, and to keep the customer satisfied.

That task falls on the shoulders of 40 people who comprise the Omaha-based account team — including managers, analysts, clerical workers and

reps. They zero in on the needs of the business, residential and network segments of the market.

Betty Orley, for example, is department chief of the team's account analysis department. Her staff analyzes Northwestern Bell's construction budgets and operations plans to provide account reps with "the big picture" of the phone company's climate.

"Our role is to support the sales function in the office," she said. Her staff also strives for more accurate sales forecasts which can benefit us as a manufacturer. That way the Works is better able to anticipate such things as quantities of raw materials needed or work force adjustments.

**AS AN ACCOUNT** rep working with Northwestern Bell's corporate staff, George Nelson explains the technical and economic aspects of our products. His customer contacts are the people who decide which products to "standardize" or recommend for use in the field.

Other account reps like Julie Fischer work with the phone companies on a state level. In Julie's case, she works with customers in North and South Dakota. Her work may take her to a classroom of Northwestern Bell engineers to demonstrate a new product, or to a manhole where she can help train splicers. She even conducts customer tours of the Omaha Works and its Product Display Center.

State level reps are there to "individualize" the needs of their particular

## A customer's-eye view

Vi DeGooyer was glad she wore her walking shoes the day she visited the Omaha Works. "I can't get over the massiveness of the operations here," she said.

Vi is one of our customers. She's a network distribution planning engineer for Northwestern Bell in South Dakota. She was invited to see the works by Western Electric's account representative for her area, Julie Fischer.

"Everyone's very friendly," Vi remarked between tours of the apparatus and cable shops.

What impressed her most on her tour, however, was the emphasis put on quality products.

"We look to you people for quality,"

she said, and over the years she has dealt with Western Electric, she has come to expect it.

Errors cost everyone money, she noted. In the case of a telephone company burying cable that turns out to be defective, the loss can be staggering. It means the phone company must re-engineer its plans to try to get around the problem. Understandably, the phone company is apt to be leery of buying cable or other products again from a manufacturer who lets quality slip.

"Quality is so important among the employees here," she said, "it's evident."

Seeing that lets her return to her job in South Dakota assured that in Omaha, we're doing ours.



# ... and why should we care?

customer, Jim Mackin said. "What might be good for a majority of the Bell System companies may not be good for Northwestern Bell." What the reps learn about their customers is an important aid to Western Electric in customizing products to suit specialized needs. Sometimes it's an idea as simple as putting gaskets on FDI cabinets to keep out dirt and snow.

Account management teams represent a composite of skills and abilities, Jim Mackin noted. Regardless of their formal educational backgrounds, all team members undergo specialized training when first hired, and at regular intervals thereafter.

The knack of selling isn't enough: Account management teams must know Western's products inside and out, as well as the economics and services involved. They must have the answers ready because the customers most certainly have the questions.

**SOME TEAM** members, like Jim Gumprecht, George Nelson and Betty Orley, have the extra experience of having worked at a manufacturing location (all Omaha Works) before going to account management.

George said he's found his past experience helpful in his present job. "I have an appreciation of why things seem to take so long to get done," he said, referring to his former planning engineer's job. It helps him explain to the customer the time factors involved in filling a request.

"We also develop a close feel with the factories, too," Jim Mackin added. When the reps lead tours through the Omaha Works, for example, they like to have the customer meet the operators. It gives both sides a chance to learn something of one another's jobs, which helps in establishing good business relationships, he said.

All the account management people interviewed for The Westerner emphasized the importance they put on support from manufacturing locations. Apparently, the Omaha Works is one on which they know they can depend. They said the Works is truly "customer sensitive" at all work levels.

"The Product Display Center is a tremendous aid to the reps in showing the customer what's available," Jim Gumprecht said.

Jim Mackin agreed: "We as a group really appreciate the attitude and cooperation we have received from this one Works alone."



## Voter registration held

VOTER REGISTRATION for Douglas County residents was conducted on Works premises early in October, in advance of general election day on Nov. 4. The county's election commission provided personnel to sign up prospective voters at times convenient to first and second shift employees. Those who registered in the main cafeteria received a "Vote" button as a reminder of their civic duty. The sign-up was planned as a service to employees and to help boost voter turnout. In Nebraska primary elections held last May, only 46 percent of the registered Douglas County residents voted.

## *W.E. policy on the handicapped, disabled and Vietnam Veterans*

The Omaha Works invites all applicants and employees who are handicapped individuals or disabled and/or Vietnam era veterans to identify themselves to the personnel organization for employment/placement consideration under the company's Affirmative Action Program. This invitation is covered in the current and ongoing policy statement signed by Western Electric President Donald E. Procknow, Sept. 17, 1976.

Works General Manager Chuck Meetsma firmly supports the company's commitment to full compliance under the program, and reaffirms Procknow's statement that all information submitted to the company will be held in strict confidence.

Employees who believe they qualify for consideration under this Affirmative Action Program may go on record as such by completing a form available from our EO investigators, Gail Bailey (Ext. 3597) or Bob Oldero (Ext. 3594). This identification is sought on a voluntary basis only. Refusal to provide the company with this information will in no way subject the employees to any kind of adverse treatment.

James O. Bosworth, manager of human resources, labor relations, environmental and industrial engineering, assumes responsibility for ad-

ministering the Affirmative Action Program for the Handicapped and Disabled and Vietnam Era Veterans (AAP-H/V). He is the appointed head of equal opportunity programs at the Omaha Works.

When needs of the business permit an expansion of or advancements within our work force, Bosworth will monitor our program to ensure that where feasible we have met our commitment to increase job opportunities for the qualified handicapped.

Copies of the AAP-H/V have been distributed to all supervisors and are also on file in the personnel organization, available for employee inspection.

All persons who believe themselves covered by this program (that is, the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and/or the revised Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974) and who believe that an alleged violation of these Acts occurred, are asked to contact our EO investigators for counseling, assistance or information related to filing a complaint.

Employees and applicants are protected from coercion, intimidation, interference or discrimination for filing a complaint or assisting in an investigation under these acts.



# Inventory involves more than 1, 2, 3

If you're one of those people who relies on your fingers to count, you'd be in trouble during the annual Omaha Works product investment inventory. During the inventory, the Works accounts for every component part and assembly used in the apparatus shops as well as every reel of cable in the yards.

That's not exactly chicken feed. Consider that the cable shop counted 4.9 billion conductor feet of cable on 6,839 reels. In Building 30, the central storeroom alone contained 89 million units of various goods.

It's a tremendous task but a necessary one.

"The yearly inventory allows us to correct our profits or losses — to properly state our assets on the balance sheet," said Dick Daharsh (Dept. 333), who oversees the accounting section for Building 50.

Inventory is made only of products and those things that go into making a product. Expense items such as pliers a worker may use aren't counted, nor are capital items such as desks and machinery.

The actual counting process takes maybe two or three days, but preparation starts months in advance. The method of inventory must be outlined and the thousands of tab cards, tally sheets and manual tickets must be designed and printed.

No two inventories are conducted

quite the same, Dick explained, because changed and new products require "a whole new way of counting." Then, too, the people assisting with inventory must be trained to assure accuracy.

The way it works is this: Teams of two operating people inventory materials in their own shop areas. They may use special scales to count large volumes of low-value items, such as nuts, bolts and screws, Dick said. The majority of the counting — about 95 percent — is done by hand, however.

After a count is taken, the number is recorded. Copies of the records go to Works accountants who then conduct "spot checks," Dick said. Auditors from resident Organization 0324 also do spot checks to certify for headquarters that counts are accurate.

The accountants are responsible for assigning a value to the inventory and reconciling any differences with the Works' ledger. That ledger showed that the Works had \$65 million worth of inventory before the count was taken in the latter part of September.

They strive to have less than a one percent variance from the ledger, Dick said. Where variances are found, accountants investigate to find out why.

"Say we've been billing a customer for 100 pounds of copper per so many feet of cable, but it actually takes more than 100 pounds to make the cable. We must determine why it takes more because it

throws off our count of how much copper we have," Dick said.

This requires that an accountant know how a product is put together and what stage of manufacture it is in to assign accurate values.

Accuracy is crucial to all phases of the inventory. Production is held up just long enough for a count to be taken in a given area. If an error is detected a day or so later, it's too late to take another count because circumstances (materials on hand, etc.) have changed that much.

Fortunately, errors were minimal during this inventory, said Bob Barton of Dept. 333, accounting section chief responsible for Building 30 materials. He particularly commended operating personnel for their conscientious attitude in recording their area's goods. "They were concerned about the inventory and wanted to do a good job."

energy . . .

less is more



THE COUNT . . . Archer Witherell of Dept. 252 was part of the crew who helped count row upon row of cable reels in Building 50.



KEEP THAT BOD of yours warm, Roxie Riepl — especially at work. We wouldn't want you to become so cold you couldn't work on the payroll as you do in Dept. 331. In case you haven't noticed, there's a bit of a chill in the air, and we don't mean outdoors. To comply with federal guidelines in an effort to conserve energy, Works thermostats have been set at 65 degrees during the heating months. For those of us who shudder at 74 degrees, it means bundle-up time. For those who revel in the cool . . . you'll get yours come summer.