

the Westerner

Omaha Works
September 1981



Photo by Sonja Coleman
and Tim Raasch

for your information

Some of the new programming on NBC this fall will be brought to you via satellites, with the help of a new service provided by the Bell System. The service is coordinated by AT&T Long Lines and relies on the use of Comstar satellites.

NBC will rely on earth stations in Burbank, Calif., and Coram, N.Y., and on microwave links furnished by Western Electric.

Satellite transmission is becoming less expensive than terrestrial routes, and it can provide additional transmission channels more efficiently for a wider range of programs.

In addition, there are other advantages to using satellite routes instead of terrestrial routes. For one, both the voice and the picture will now travel over one channel, so they are guaranteed to reach a viewer's home simultaneously. Because voice and picture normally are sent separately, this eliminates the

possibility of losing them or having the signals arriving "out of sync."

Satellites also can disperse television signals over a wider area, while maintaining a clear image . . .

. . . Are you a lover of art shows or would you like to learn more about the world of art? The Joslyn Art Museum needs volunteers to serve as hosts or hostesses during various art exhibitions, or to work in the museum's gift shop on weekends. If you're interested in volunteering, leave your name with the museum's switchboard operator at 342-3300. More information will be sent to interested persons .



Daub fields employee questions

SOCIAL SECURITY benefits, taxes and balancing the national budget were just a few of the topics on the minds of Omaha Works employees when Nebraska 2nd District Rep. Hal Daub came to visit in August. Employees were encouraged to ask the congressman questions when he talked with them during a lunch period in the main cafeteria. His visit was part of a continuing Works effort to provide employees access to elected officials by inviting them to the plant premises.

Policy on equal opportunity

The Omaha Works, like all other locations of Western Electric, is an equal opportunity employer.

It is the policy of the Western Electric Company to afford equal opportunity to all of its contractees, employees and applicants for employment. That is, all selections will be made on the basis of individual merit without discrimination because of race, religion, color, national origin or sex.

The employment policies and practices and all other personnel actions of Western Electric have been and will continue to be such to ensure that all of its

employees are treated equally. No distinctions are made because of the employee's color, religious belief, sex, race or national origin. Our commitment to this policy applies uniformly to all levels within the company.

Our equal opportunity investigators (Gail Baley, Ext. 3597, and Dick Reida, Ext. 3579) are available to discuss our policy with you. If you, as an Omaha Works employee, think you are not being afforded equal opportunity under the applicable laws and regulations, you are urged to contact one of these investigators for assistance.

BSSP/SSP results

The following are the July 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	2.4895	.4016
Government Obligations	2.3483	.4258
Equity Portfolio	1.9623	.5096
Guaranteed Interest Fund	1.1715	.8536
	SSP	
	Units Value	Units Credited Per Dollar
AT&T	1.1627	.8608
Guaranteed Interest Fund	1.2641	.7910

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Editor

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Western Electric

service anniversaries

september

45 years

N. J. Kaminski 441 9/21

35 years

L. V. Campbell 252 9/3
O. W. Edwards 728 9/23
D. R. Hiatt 746 9/19
M. E. Szymanski 476 9/23

30 years

M. W. Carstens, Jr. 441 9/4
L. Z. Jelinek 443 9/26
B. L. Kinnaman 413 9/17
L. H. Parker 282 9/5
W. R. Stoner 723 9/11

25 years

R. D. Anderson 725 9/26
R. E. Barnes 1231 9/18
J. J. Fitzpatrick 435 9/4
D. G. Geihs 700 9/10
R. G. Harrison 723 9/17
A. P. Jacobi 441 9/10
E. W. Jones 282 9/24
E. C. Kief 746 9/27
E. M. Kriz 725 9/16
R. D. Laudенback 1231 9/10
E. N. Maw 361 9/27
R. B. Midlik 289 9/22
R. V. Muhle 252 9/17

R. L. Nielsen 287 9/10
H. W. Novak 252 9/21
K. L. Parker 746 9/10
R. A. Rudeen 251 9/10
E. M. Swaney 445 9/17
I. Ulpis 723 9/7
E. H. Wahl 437 9/4

20 years

C. R. Allner 744 9/11
H. A. Anderson, Jr. 253 9/25
R. Armendariz 253 9/27
J. M. Dye 441 9/19
A. K. Harvat 723 9/6
D. H. Johnson 439 9/25
R. E. Johnson 123 9/6
G. I. Johnston 728 9/6
R. K. Kamin 361 9/11
R. E. Knoblauch 744 9/11
D. J. Kovar 437 9/8
A. M. Lutz 439 9/20
S. D. Mason 3442 9/6
L. S. McMahan 253 9/7
L. M. Nissen 439 9/4
D. S. Norquist 723 9/26
F. F. Phelps 331 9/12
V. R. Pleskac 441 9/11
J. Puente 361 9/28
G. E. Siggers 361 9/19
E. J. Sterba, Jr. 439 9/20

J. M. Stoddard 437 9/5
P. C. Trimble 437 9/12
G. C. Van Fosson 725 9/22
C. N. Velasquez 728 9/26
E. J. Wesolowski 744 9/26

15 years

F. J. Bogatz 745 9/28
L. M. Carnicle 437 9/14
R. W. Duley 441 9/13
F. T. Ferrucci 445 9/25
J. M. Fiala 252 9/12
C. N. Haar 282 9/26
P. F. Heim 745 9/19
M. L. McAhren 253 9/13
T. A. Murray 445 9/12
M. J. Olsen 413 9/20
J. Opryszko 287 9/22
R. D. Roh 723 9/9
T. A. Scheef 282 9/7
L. D. Secret 445 9/15
J. T. Sternad, Jr. 282 9/13
J. J. Synowicki, Jr. 362 9/6
C. R. Torson 445 9/20
J. S. White 287 9/29
B. M. Williams 361 9/26
P. P. Wright 725 9/15

10 years

S. B. Mefford 444 9/14

retirements



Elsa Douglass
21 years



Joseph Koralewski
24 years



Juanita Fitzpatrick
24 years



Carl Hirtzel
22 years



Vlasta Langley
20 years

Not pictured:

Mary Negrete
20 years

Stan Ross
36 years

Elsie Peterson
20 years

Clen Cash
23 years

Marie Ivey
22 years



William Caddy
23 years



Frances Swierczek
20 years



Howard Bergstrom
23 years



Dominic Sacca
23 years



Amateurs put the

There's nothing quite like offering a guest a glass of wine and being able to exclaim proudly, "I made it myself."

Then, too; there's nothing quite like scraping the goo of fermenting grapes off of ceilings and walls.

When you try your hand at making wine, you learn to accept risks along with the fun. To Omaha Works employees who have dabbled in the art of wine making, apparently the fun is worth the risks.

It's also a good way to use up a bumper crop of grapes — "You can eat only so much jelly," said Jerry Colton, an electrician in Dept. 744. Jerry's been making wine for about four years.

Amateur wine makers like him will tell you the golden rule to remember is that "neatness counts." The yeast involved in wine making is very fragile. Foreign bacteria could destroy the yeast which causes fermentation — the process of turning sugar into alcohol. Instead of making wine, you could end up with vinegar.

BUT WHILE the process of turning grape juice into wine may be merely a matter of natural fermentation, the simplicity ends there. Should raw grapes be used or grape concentrates? Is the natural yeast within the grapes sufficient or should wine maker's yeast be added? Can recipes be varied, and must you test for sugar and acid content?

The answers to those and other questions are as different as the kinds and places wines are made. But if a random sample of employees who have tried wine making is any indication, wine makers fall into two very general categories: the "wine making as an art" followers and "wine making as an art and a science" proponents.

By his own admission, Jerry identifies with the former category, stating, "When you get into all the testing, you lose all the fun."

Agreeing with him is Charles Petersen, a plant engineer in Dept. 743. He acknowledges wine making is both a science and an art but, "We're just heavy on the art."

"Heavy on the art" might mean mixing a variety of grapes, rather than using solely Chardonnay grapes to make white burgundy, for example. "They all taste the same anyway," Jerry insisted.

While they agree with the more scientific-oriented wine hobbyists on the necessity of fermentation processes, they disagree on detail.

Jerry, for instance, uses a hydrometer to test for alcohol content of his wine, but isn't interested in knowing the PH level (or acidity).

CHARLES is even bolder, as he discovered during his first wine making effort just this past summer. He dared to stray from a recipe, thinking he could eliminate a primary fermentation.

Normally, after grapes are mashed (Jerry has used a baseball bat, Charles uses a potato masher), they are put into a container to which yeast can be added and allowed to ferment for about a week. Jerry's method calls for a mix of crushed grapes, water and sugar which he puts in 30-gallon plastic containers with loose lids.

After the primary fermentation, the mixture is strained (to eliminate stems and skins) through cheesecloth and allowed to ferment in a glass container with an air lock for about two more weeks. The liquid then is siphoned and allowed to ferment a bit more before it is bottled in old gallon wine jugs with screw caps. It must age for about six months.

Charles, instead, decided to boil his home-grown grapes after he crushed them, figuring that boiling would kill any extraneous yeasts that could ruin the



Squeeze on grapes

results. He added a wine maker's yeast. Then he strained out pulp and put the mixture in a plastic container with an air lock.

What Charles gained in skipping a week of primary fermentation, he lost in clean-up time. "What happened was the mixture blew the lock off the container and I had a mess in the basement," he said.

He was able to salvage about two-thirds of the mixture which he allowed to ferment in a larger container. Eventually he bottled about a gallon of liquid to which he added a spoonful of sugar, hoping it will give him sparkling wine.

Jerry and Charles said that aging is what helps mellow a wine. Otherwise, "it burns your tongue," Jerry said. That doesn't mean everyone will like the kind of wine he makes, however.

Jerry recalled how he once offered his wine to friends he described as wine connoisseurs. They sniffed it, tasted it and "made a funny face." Still, Jerry thinks "I've always gotten good wine," he said, even if it does vary in taste from one

year to the next.

IF IT IS consistency one prefers, then a more scientific approach is in order. Bill McCormick, a senior engineer in Dept. 737, and department chief Lynn Wenstrand of Dept. 732, wouldn't think of improvising on a proven wine recipe.

"Making wine is an art," Lynn said. "I'm not an artist and therefore I follow the artist's recipe implicitly."

Concurring with Lynn, Bill added that the art of wine making is in knowing how and when to pick the right fruits so a wine will have body, bouquet, and "not talk back to you." The science of wine making is in knowing the correct yeasts to use with various grapes, and in testing for acidity as well as alcohol content. Further tests can be made, depending on how exacting the wine maker wants to be.

And by all means, "if you make mistakes, throw it out rather than try to correct it," Bill said.

BUT EVEN the scientific approach can backfire on occasion. Bill discovered that when he tried a more difficult form

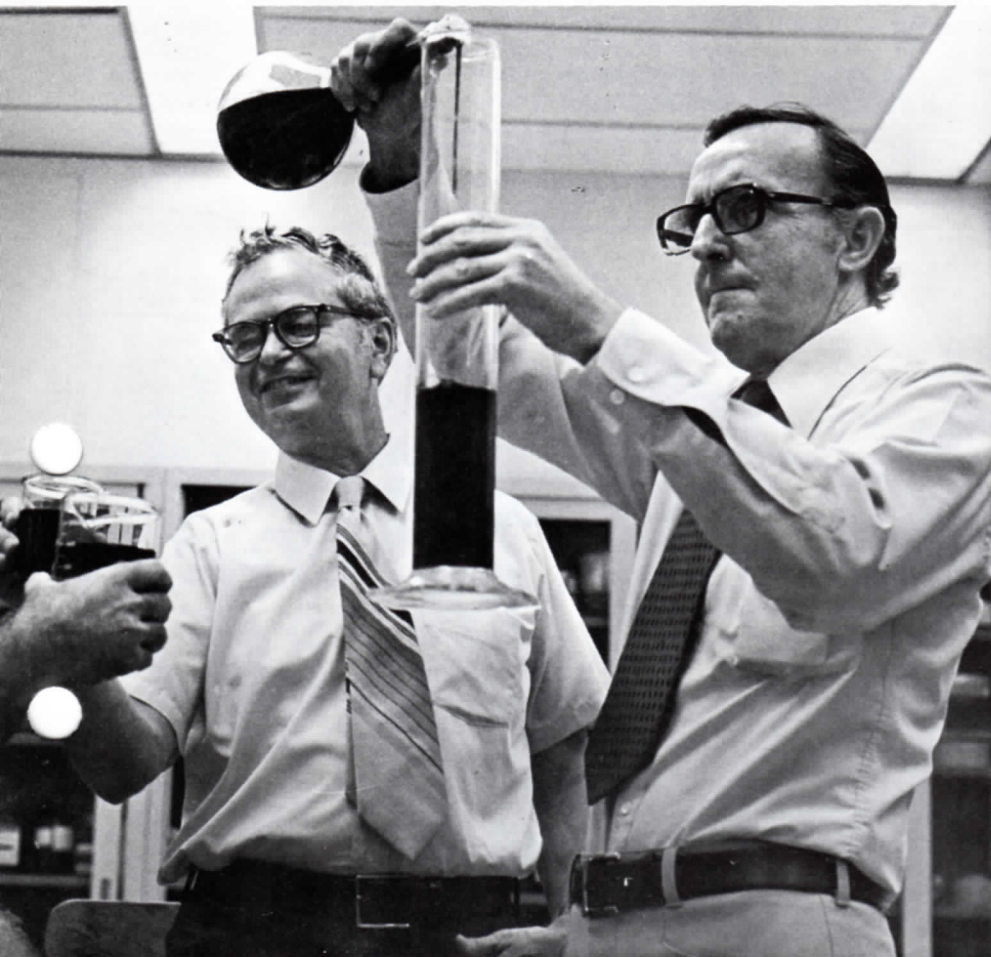
of wine making — making champagne.

He spent two days in the Napa Valley of California learning the area wine makers' technique of "degorging." It's a way to properly cleanse the champagne of all its residue.

Part of the process required that the bottled champagne be inverted over dry ice to freeze a layer collecting at the bottle's neck along with the sediment. After turning the bottle upright, simply rotating one's hand at the bottle's neck should provide enough heat that the plug pops and the sediment is blown out.

Bill left his champagne over dry ice too long so that too much liquid froze. He put the bottles in a tub of hot water to reverse what had happened. The bottles exploded and "it took me four hours to clean up the room," he said.

Whatever the approach one takes, all four wine makers agreed they prefer to drink or serve wine they make to commercial wine. Pride is a major factor behind that attitude, but there's another reason as well: A bottle of wine still costs only about 35 cents to make.



IS IT WINE OR ISN'T IT? . . . Jerry Colton (from left), Charles Petersen and Bill McCormick test a reddish liquid to see if it's drinkable.

Photo by Sonja Coleman and Tim Raasch

Safety contest

Calendar poster art selected

If you think safety's a game, you lose.

A winning poster in the Omaha Works 1982 safety calendar contest illustrates that point with a game board design. Designer of the poster, Lora Wilson, tells us, "Safety is nothing to play around with."

Lora's poster was chosen by a panel of three judges to be the cover of 1982 safety calendars which will be distributed to all employees later in the year. In addition, 12 other winning posters were selected to illustrate the months of the year.

The posters were among 125 entries in the contest. Entries were submitted by children and grandchildren of employees. The winners and their sponsoring parent or grandparent will be pictured in the calendar.

The judges based their selections on how well the posters depicted this year's contest theme, "Safety is . . ." Illustrations ranged from one of a kite in power lines, with a warning "Leave it," to one of emergency numbers by a telephone, captioned, "Safety is a network of communication."

The judges this year were Joan Frost, an art instructor for the Omaha Public Schools; Patricia Gruzd, an art instructor at Millard High; and John Pecoraro, a Ralston Middle School art instructor.

The safety department sponsored the poster contest. Winners were divided into six age groups from preschool age to 12th grade level. They and their sponsors gathered for a party in the Works auditorium where they could meet each other and compare one another's posters. Chuckles the clown (Gene Lake of Dept. 333) was on hand to entertain and help pass out refreshments.

The winners and their sponsors are:

Overall winner (calendar cover) — Lora Wilson, daughter of Betty Wilson, Dept. 725. (Lora also placed in the 1980 and 1979 contests).

Group 1 — Sonja Olson, granddaughter of Bill Plugge, Dept. 252; Jimmy Dessel, son of James Dessel, Dept. 439.

Group 2 — Doug Olson, grandson of Bill Plugge, Dept. 252; Joe Lynn Kvetensky, daughter of James Kvetensky, Dept. 333.

Group 3 — Rodney Plisek, grandson of Helen Plisek, Dept. 723; Patrick Luben, son of Donald Luben, Dept. 723.



COOKIES FOR ALL . . . Chuckles made sure poster contest winners Doug and Sonja Olson didn't go hungry at the party. The winners' mother, Linda Olson, is seated between them.

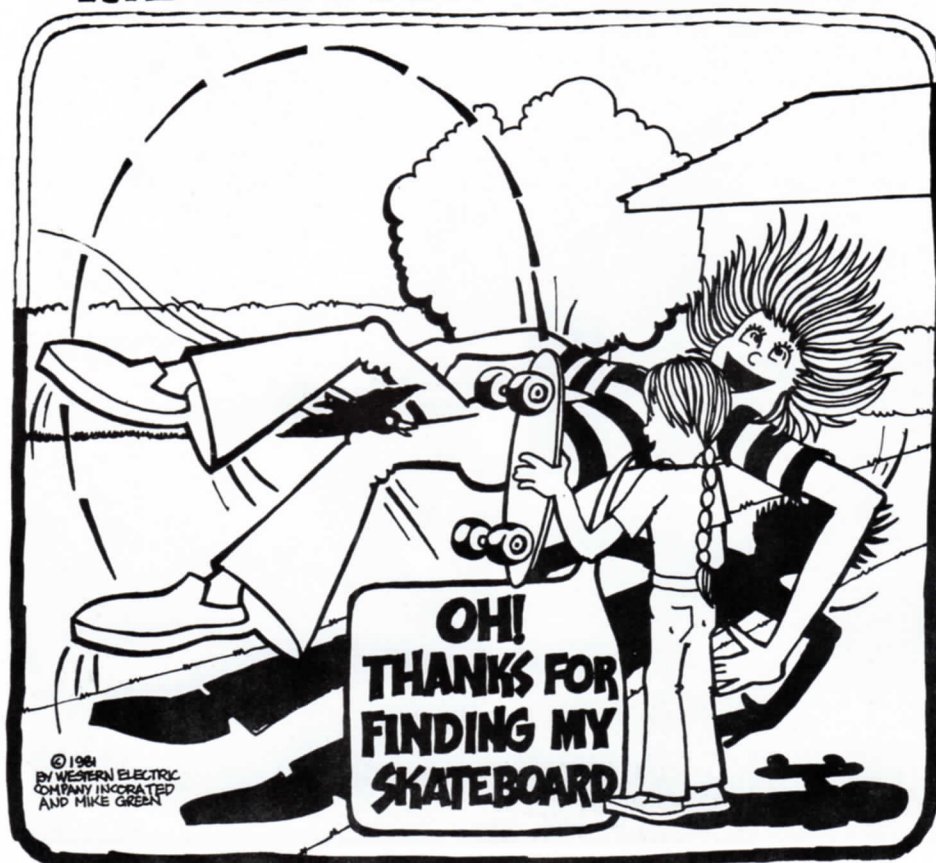
Group 4 — Vicki Firebaugh, granddaughter of Howard Firebaugh, Dept. 441; Matt Hawkins, son of Larry Hawkins, Dept. 435. (Matt was a winner last year, too.)

Group 5 — David Karloff, son of

Dennis Karloff, Dept. 744 (David also won in 1979); Natalie Brown, daughter of Betty Ann Brown, Dept. 443.

Group 6 — Janice Drake, daughter of Harold Drake, Dept. 441; Irene Snell, daughter of Delbert Snell, Dept. 725.

IMA KLUTZ



Trade show is example of increasing competition

It's not unlike being a lone fisherman in a boat on a Minnesota lake early in the evening. He no sooner reels in a nice catch than he finds himself surrounded by other fishermen in their boats, eager to cash in on the lucky spot.

Similarly, Western Electric for years had been somewhat of a "loner" in supplying telecommunications equipment to the operating Bell companies. That's certainly not the case today.

The increasingly competitive marketplace in which Western Electric does business was a fact well illustrated at the International Construction Utility Equipment Exhibition (ICUEE) held in Olathe, Kan. in August. Many manufacturers of network distribution products and cable displayed their wares at the trade show. With more than 300 exhibits from every sector of the construction and utility industry, the annual trade show is the nation's largest.

A number of Works supervisors and technical professionals attended the event. Those interviewed for the Westerner agreed that competitors with products similar to ours are increasing. Furthermore, they're out to get business.

"They're not quiet about having the products," noted George Elafros, a senior engineer in Dept. 476, referring to an active program to attract customers. Promotions at the show went beyond the merits of the products themselves, incorporating entertaining side shows to attract attention, he said.

With or without side shows, the fact was that competitors have products which rival even some of our newer apparatus: connectors, load coils and new-

design interface cabinets and cutter pressers.

Larry Bailey, a planning engineer in Dept. 475, was interested to learn that not only could exhibitors expound upon the intricacies of their products, but often they were so familiar with Western Electric products that they could elaborate on them in detail, too.

Other manufacturers are interested in meeting the needs of the operating Bell telephone companies, Larry said, so naturally they take an interest in the kinds of products Western Electric can provide. That holds true even for manufacturers of products not in direct competition but which may supplement ours, he added.

A planning engineer in Dept. 472, Al Kummer, was surprised to see so many foreign manufacturers represented at the trade show, as well as foreign visitors touring the displays. Although foreign products exhibited were not necessarily in direct competition with Western Electric products, Al foresees a day when many will be.

Generally speaking, the three Works employees said they found their trade show visit a valuable experience. It was an opportunity to develop new ideas, and also served to reinforce the feeling that the Works is on the right track in its product development, noted Larry.

"There's a tremendous amount of competition which many employees aren't aware of," George Elafros added.

But most of all, there was an important lesson to be learned, all agreed. If Western Electric is to compete effectively now and later for the Bell com-



CHECK IT OUT . . . Bev Clark (standing) and Edith O'Hara, a stock selector and assembler, respectively, in Dept. 439, play an important part in drawing customers to our products. They're checking the quality standards of an FDI cabinet, and quality is a factor crucial to surviving a competitive marketplace.

panies' business, there can be no slack in three major areas:

First, the success of our representatives in Account Management will rely on our greater assistance to meet the needs of our customer.

Second, the dedication to making quality products and shipping them on time has never been so crucial.

Third, every employee must make it his or her responsibility to improve overall productivity if we are to meet the competition head on.

Demans take week to pedal across Iowa

Some people's idea of a vacation is to cast a fishing line into Lake McConaughy in western Nebraska, and watch the world go by.

Ken Deman of Dept. 745 and his wife, Carol, usually fall into that category. But this year, they decided to be a part of that world going by. They joined about 5,000 bike riders for a week-long trek across the state of Iowa — almost 500 miles in all.

Ken and Carol, each of whom had never biked more than 40 miles in one day, made the trip for the "good feeling of accomplishment," Ken said. Called

the Des Moines Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa (RAGBRAI), bikers rode from 60 to 100 miles a day.

It rained the first two days of the trip. Ken said he was beginning to believe that RAGBRAI really stood for "rain and gusty breezes repeating across Iowa." Another biker thought all of Iowa was made of cement: In the downpour, a person couldn't look away from the pavement.

Aside from a minor tire problem along the way, the couple had no trouble, he



Ken Deman

said. Even camping gear stayed dry. The Demans' two sons drove ahead by car to the designated overnight stop, and pitched camp.

Participants traveled a back highway route, Ken said, so traffic was no problem. But greeting them along the way were farm families, service and church group members and "hundreds of kids selling lemonade. We stopped almost every chance we could."

Food was provided free or at a reasonable cost. Senior citizen musician groups entertained, and a "Hillbilly Laundromat" was available — a goat-powered washing machine. Bikers also had the convenience of "his" and "her" cornfields marked on the roadside.

Ken said he'd like to be in better shape next year before he and his 10-speed tackle Iowa's rolling hills. And if he could just develop a callous to withstand those awful bike seats . . .

W. E. has stake in 'pole farming'

Modern communications travel via satellites located 22,300 miles up in space, lightguide fibers as thin as a human hair, gigantic microwave towers high atop mountains . . . and the very ordinary telephone pole along your street.

Despite its old-fashioned nature, the telephone pole remains an important part of the system of transporting voice and data communications. And judging from the fact that Western Electric, the manufacturing and supply unit of the Bell System, still provides telephone companies with poles, they are a long way from becoming obsolete. Currently, the Bell System buys about 250,000 poles annually.

According to Julian Ochrymowych of Western Electric's purchased products engineering organization, a telephone pole is much more than a tree stuck in the ground. In fact, Western maintains two "farms" to conduct research on increasing the ability of the poles to resist the elements.

The two farms are located in Chester, N.J., and in Bainbridge, Ga. But they really aren't farms in the normal sense of the word, although the poles projecting from the ground resemble the stalks of some giant vegetable.

Rather, at the two locations experiments are conducted to determine which types of preservatives will help telephone poles survive prolonged exposure to the environment. The research is important, because the Bell System owns more than 17 millions telephone poles. Untreated, the poles would not last longer than a few years.

"Fungus decay and termites are the main enemies of wood," Julian said. "Since in the Bell System we aim for



HARVEST TIME . . . Wood preservation experts from Western Electric gather data at one of the company's two telephone pole "farms" to determine which preservatives will help the poles survive prolonged exposure to the environment best.

an average pole life of 35 years, our specifications for preserving telephone poles have to be quite stringent."

At the Chester farm, which has been in operation since 1927, about 800 10-foot posts and several hundred 18-inch stakes dot the countryside. The Bainbridge farm, which has 37 acres, contains many times that number. The posts and stakes are made out of southern pine and other softwood species.

"Most of them have been treated with preservatives such as pentachlorophenol petroleum or water-borne salts," said Jon Shaw, also from the purchased products engineering organization. "We also evaluate all new preservatives and treating methods for potential use. Similar tests are often conducted on the wood at the two sites to compare the ef-

fects of a warm or cold climate on telephone poles."

Sample borings are taken once a year from above and below ground level. The borings are examined for decay and insect attack, and to determine how well the preservatives have penetrated and been retained by the wood. The stakes provide accelerated tests of preservatives. From this, the behavior of preservatives in telephone poles can be predicted during their service life.

"We analyze the results of all of these experiments and draw up exact specifications that our suppliers must meet," Julian explained.

Senior quality specialist John Kressbach noted, "Working closely with engineering and our suppliers, the purchased products inspection organization ensures that our standards are met and that we get the best quality product."

The experiments conducted at these two farms — and three other former sites — have had an influence far beyond the Bell System. The federal government, universities and the wood industry have used Western's research data for developing guidelines. Those guidelines apply to wood preservatives in items such as railroad ties, farm building materials, utility poles and home foundations.

As a conduit of communications, telephone poles must be reliable. And as long as there is a need for such products in the Bell System, Western Electric plans to continue its experiments at the Bainbridge and Chester farms. After all, "farming" telephone poles is just another essential aspect of providing good communications service.

energy . . .

less is more

IT TOOK Dale Hill about a month to install 515 sheets of foam insulation on the upper windows of the boiler house. Dale, a painter in Dept. 744, first had to recaulk each window, clean them, then apply a film of clear glue before the insulation panels were affixed to the windowpanes. The use of foam insulation on windows is an experimental venture designed to save on heat loss during winter months. A plant engineer in Dept. 743 estimates the insulation will cut heat loss through the upper windows by 49 percent, thus conserving energy and cutting costs.

