

the Westerner

OMAHA WORKS
September 11, 1978



That mountain is no molehill

Why is Larry Fisher resting amid the rocks high above the snow-capped peaks? He's just finished a treacherous walk along a mountain ledge.

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Also inside:

Our laser goes on display in the Smithsonian.

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An overseas visitor gets a taste of the Omaha Works.

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for your information

Starting Sept. 20 and continuing to the end of the month, the medical department will conduct a blood pressure screening program before and after

work hours and during lunch breaks. Staff members will be posted in all cafeterias and at the entrances to Buildings 30 and 50 to check employees' blood pressure. Persons with possible high blood pressure will be referred to their physicians. "Most of the time people don't have any symptoms of high blood pressure," said program coordinator Anita Shaddy. "These checks may help improve their health and prolong their lives." Watch for posters designating the dates and times screening will be conducted . . .

. . . The Omaha Works welcomed two special guests late last month. John F.

Reilly, senior counsel, antitrust — government legislation, spoke to department chiefs and members of the large staff about antitrust on Aug. 29. Robert A. Kraay, vice-president of Western Electric Purchasing and Transportation Division, spoke with members of the Works' resident purchasing and transportation organization on Aug. 30 . . .

. . . The safety department has a reminder for those of you who purchased smoke detectors about a year ago. The life of the detector's alkaline transistor batteries is about one year and should be checked. Batteries should be replaced if they are low .

Trans-Nebraska Cable Project

Production begins on largest cable order

The button has been pushed to start the machinery on the Trans-Nebraska Cable Project, the largest single order of cable ever placed with the Omaha Works. Ben Morris, Northwestern Bell's vice-president and chief executive officer in Nebraska, pushed that button at the Works earlier this month to start production on more than 3 million linear feet of cable for NWB.

Northwestern Bell ordered the cable to update its outlying service. The cable will be laid from Grand Island, Neb., to the Wyoming border. Some of it will be buried in parallel lengths, for a total of

576 miles of cable needed, said Bill Becher of Dept. 252.

The order will be filled in six increments over a three-year period. Because some of the cable will be buried in parallel lengths, meaning the lengths must match without splicing, the job "will involve special care and planning by the people making the cable," Becher said.

"We're dedicating to this job two insulating lines full-time and four twisters resulting in approximately eight strander loads per week," he added.



PRODUCTION STARTS . . . Jerry Van Stratten, operator of the strander cabler in Dept. 252, watches as Ben Morris of NWB pushes the button.

Safety at home, work and play focus of 1979 Calendar Contest

Is there a young artist in your family? He or she may want to enter the safety department's 1979 Calendar Contest.

Posters that depict safety practices at home, work or play are now being accepted. Any art medium may be used, but drawings must be no larger than 8½ by 11 inches.

All Omaha Works employees' children or grandchildren from preschool age through 12th grade are eligible to enter. Each drawing must be submitted by one person only: no joint entries will be accepted.

Judges will select two winners from

each of six age groups. One winning poster will be used for each month of 1979 calendars, to be distributed to all Works employees. Children whose posters are selected each will receive one share of AT&T stock.

Entries are due by Oct. 2. They may be brought to work to WEOMA Club representatives, to the WEOMA office or to the safety department.

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.

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Warren G. Corgan
General Manager

Linda Ryan
Editor

Published for employees of the Omaha Works.
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Western Electric

Students urged to take National Merit test

Omaha Works employees' children who will complete high school and enter college in 1980 should take the 1978 Preliminary Scholastic Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) when it is administered in their schools on Oct. 24 or on Oct. 28. The test is the first step in competition for Western Electric Fund Merit Scholarships to be awarded in 1980.

The National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) administers the Merit Scholarship competition to honor outstanding high school students and to help them obtain a college education. Western Electric Fund Merit Scholarship winners are chosen from among semifinalists in the 1978 National Merit Scholarship testing program who advance to finalist standing.

Children eligible for Western Electric scholarships are those of on-roll employees or retirees, as well as children of deceased employees who had a minimum of 15 years of service and were on the active or pension roll at the time of death.

Booklets describing the program in detail are available from the public relations department, Ext. 3604. Students should check with their respective schools as soon as possible about the test registration deadline.

retirements



Robert Armagost
26 years



Edwin Kudron
19 years



Kenneth Terry
16 years

(Not pictured)
Fred Minor
20 years



First winners in safety game

FORTUNES of their own are what Ray Moulis (left) of Dept. 741 and Jerry Grego of Dept. 282 earned by playing the Safety Pays Game. Moulis, the first winner in the game, won a total of \$100 — \$50 for completing a diagonal pattern and another \$50 for having perfect attendance since the game began. Grego was an even bigger second winner of \$160. He received \$50 for completing a horizontal pattern, \$50 for perfect attendance, and \$60 for working all the overtime hours offered him during his standard work week.

Dr. Lee B. Grant named new medical director at Works

Dr. Lee B. Grant is the new medical director at the Omaha Works. Grant, whose appointment became effective Sept. 1, formerly was corporate medical director at Pittsburgh Plate Glass Industries, Inc., in Pittsburgh, Penn.

He served in the Air Force for seven years, three of which he was director of preventive and occupational medicine. Prior to that, for 11 years Grant had var-

ville in 1945, and his doctorate in industrial medicine from Kettering Laboratory, University of Cincinnati, in 1952.



Grant

ious occupational and preventive medical responsibilities in the Army.

Grant has served on the boards of a number of professional society affiliations and is active on several medical and scientific committees, including the Industrial Health Foundation Medical Committee. He received his doctorate in medicine from the University of Louis-

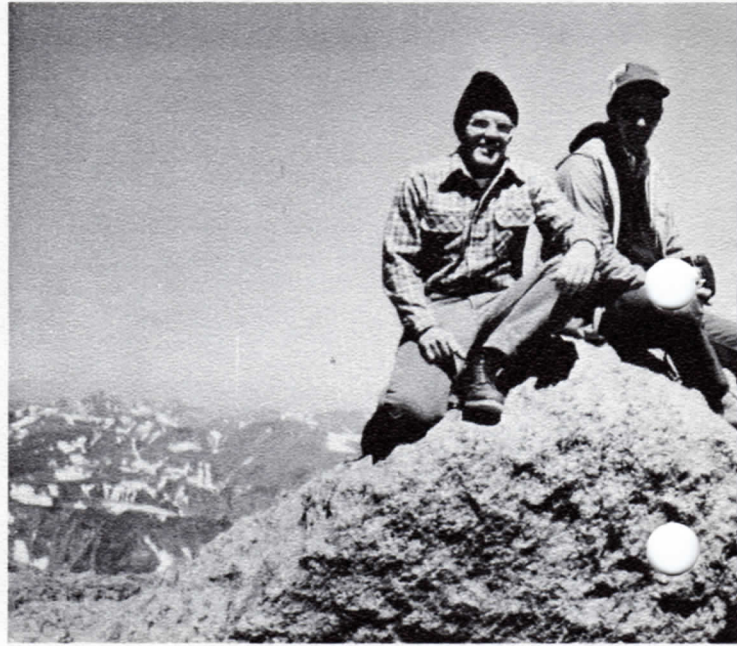
suggestion box

One picture may be worth a thousand words, but to James Salkeld of Dept. 741, one suggestion was worth more than \$1,000. Alkeld recently was awarded \$1,380 for his idea.

He proposed that the arbor press and plastic locking caps be used to assemble connector cable. Salkeld's idea adds up to more than \$9,000 in savings for the company.



Salkeld



Heads in the clouds

It was supposed to be just a hike, thought Larry Fisher of Dept. 741.

Longs Peak, at 14,256 feet, is the highest mountain in Northern Colorado. But it's also a popular climbing mountain for people of all ages — at least a thousand climbers a year. Surely, all those folks wouldn't tackle a mountain that provides more than a vigorous hiking exercise . . . or would they?

Fisher was about to find out as he and four other members of his climbing party began their ascent in the moonlit pre-dawn hours. With him that Saturday last July were Clay Higginson (Dept. 731); Jerry Gau and Bob Alf (both of Dept. 741); and Alf's brother, Bill, who works for Northwestern Bell. None ever had climbed to the summit of such a mountain before.

The party began its climb from a ranger's station at 9,400 feet elevation. Fortunately, the moon was full and the climbers didn't need their flashlights at 4 a.m. The early start was necessary to avoid afternoon thunderstorms at the higher elevations upon descending. Seven miles of trail lay ahead.

THE MEN hiked through heavy forest, crossed a brook and steadily increased altitude, climbing above the timberline. The views of glacier-carved valleys and other peaks in the mountain range became increasingly spectacular. Meanwhile, dizziness and head pressure was becoming increasingly bothersome.

"Once we got to Boulder Field, it was

evident that we would have to go at our own pace," Fisher said. Boulder Field is a rocky slope on the north side of Longs Peak, with some boulders larger than cars. From there to the summit it was just a mile, but at Boulder Field the hike ended and the climb began.

"I was really sick at this point," Gau said of Boulder Field, "and it really took the coaxing of my friends to keep me going." Already persons who had made it to the top were returning — two young men were barefoot. Ironically, seeing such agile climbers returning helped to encourage the group to continue.

Bob Alf and Fisher went together ahead of the others, Gau proceeded by himself and Higginson and Bill Alf brought up the tail. Each made it through a rock formation called the Keyhole at about 13,000 feet, with even greater challenges facing them.

"I'd take a few steps and stop to catch my breath," Bob Alf said.

"My heart was the gauge of when to pause," Fisher said. "It got to beating so hard . . ."

". . . That it echoed off the rocks," Bob Alf said, completing the sentence for Fisher.

"My pulse at one point was 130," Gau recalled. By then, he was establishing a rhythm to his walking pace while keeping an eye out for other members of the party. He had forgotten his canteen and was hoping he would spot someone for water. Boulder Field was the last spot to

acquire water, and water was crucial during the last stages of the climb to replenish that lost through perspiration.

UPON REACHING the bottom of the Trough, "you think there is no way anyone can get to the top," Higginson said. The climbers estimated the Trough to be about a 60-degree angle of loose gravel with red and yellow "fried egg" marks along the trail.

Fisher, meanwhile, was making the awful discovery that heights bothered him — "I didn't think it would," he said. All he could do was "concentrate on not looking down — concentrate on the trail," especially at the Narrows. There, the trail was a narrow ledge along the mountain. Fisher couldn't worry about meeting another person returning on the ledge because, "there wasn't anyone who got between me and the mountain."

Gau said nonchalantly, "It's not treacherous, but there are places where if you really got careless you'd be dead." And if someone were ill or hurt, it was a long way down for help.

When Fisher, wearing his slip-resistant safety boots purchased through the safety store, finally crossed the ledge and made it to the Homestretch, "I could have quit," he said. Gau agreed with him, because at that point Gau himself felt as if he had expended all his energy.

The Homestretch is an area of steep, solid rock and the air is very thin. Climbers hug the side of the mountain, inching their way up by grabbing hold of



Photos by Bob Alf

KINGS OF THE MOUNTAIN . . . Bob Alf (left) and Larry Fisher pose at the summit of Longs Peak. In photo below, Longs Peak is the backdrop for the climbing party of (from left) Bill and Bob Alf, Clay Higginson, Larry Fisher and (seated) Jerry Gau.

crevices in the rock.

"You have to keep psyching yourself to go farther and it gets harder," Fisher said.

HAVING CLIMBED the Homestretch, Bob Alf and Fisher were the first of the group to reach the peak, a nearly flat, four-acre area. The accomplishment had special meaning to Alf, whose father had climbed the same mountain numerous times before. Their time: about 6½ hours.

Gau made it to the top later, with Higginson and Bill Alf following. On the descent, they waited for each other at Boulder Field. From there, the six miles back to the ranger's station seemed endless because "we were all so fatigued," Bob Alf said. By the time they reached their car, they had spent about 15 hours on the mountain.

The weather had been perfect for climbing. The afternoon thunderstorms didn't materialize, and there was very little wind at the higher elevations.

Higginson and Bob Alf would like to tackle another peak again, but Gau quipped, "I'm glad the first one I climbed was a tall one, because it's probably the last."

Back at their motel, neither Bob Alf nor Gau could sleep. They were so keyed up over the day's events that they stayed up all night talking.

Fisher managed to sleep, but not without some difficulty: "When I closed my eyes, all I could see was rock."



Quality with a big Q

(Editor's note: This is the third in a series of articles on quality.)

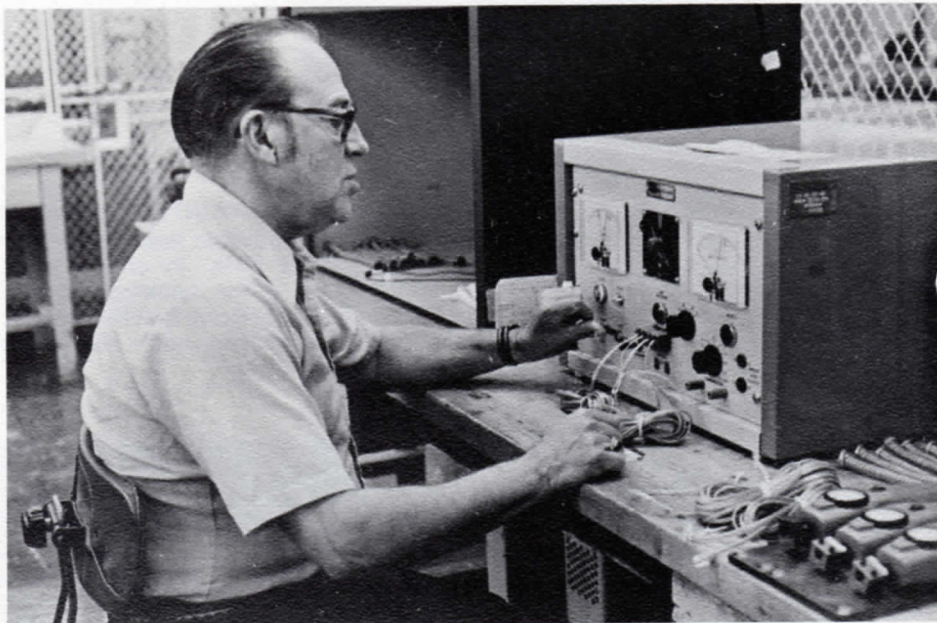
When the inspection organization determines that a product is suitable for shipping, one might say the product is ready to go out Western's door on its route to the customer. As Western's final step to assure a quality product, at the customer's front door stands Quality Assurance (Q.A.), ready to perform an independent quality audit of the product.

Quality Assurance acts as the customer's representative who reports to Western Electric management on the satisfactoriness of Omaha Works products. All outgoing products are submitted to Q.A., which selects a sample and checks for conformance to Bell Lab specifications.

Rex Stewart, department chief of 1231, emphasized that Q.A. does not build



CABLE CHECK . . . Judy Thoms of Dept. 1231 prepares to test R-switchboard cable (irradiated) using a high-voltage dielectric strength test set.



AT THE CONTROLS . . . Marty Hansen of Dept. 1231 uses a high-voltage test set to check modular straight cords.

quality into a product (that's the job of the operating organization) nor is it responsible for certification of quality (inspection organization's job). Its purpose is to evaluate objectively the quality of a product from the standpoint of customer satisfaction: Does the product really work?

In so doing, Q.A. helps lower incidence of service delays due to unsatisfactory quality, he said, and aids in detecting adverse quality trends early. Also, Quality Assurance reduces overall Bell System costs by eliminating the need of operating Bell telephone companies to conduct their own detailed incoming inspections.

Quality Assurance evaluates a product by using a four-class demerit system. The number of demerits assigned a product depends on the degree of a product's unsatisfactoriness. If a product accumulates too many demerits, it is declared "non-conforming," and cannot be shipped "until the floor has been checked and cleared of the defects

which triggered the action," Stewart said.

At the end of a rating period (approximately six weeks), Q.A. adds up the demerits for each of the 36 product classes at the Works, and puts them into a statistical formula to reach a "t"-rate for each product. When a product's "t"-rate falls below a statistical norm, the product is termed "below normal."

That data is published in a special report made available to all area vice-presidents of manufacturing and to Western Electric headquarters. Meanwhile, Omaha Works management also is kept informed of various products' quality ratings and trends.

"Q.A. represents a tremendous cost avoidance in its early detection of undesirable quality trends," noted John Graf, Quality Assurance manager at the Works. Thus, although the 38 employees in Q.A. (26 of them auditors) at the Works may be the last in the process to assure customers highest quality products, they're far from the least.

E. V. Arnone returns to Omaha

If the new assistant manager in Organization 440 looks familiar, it's because he is. Edward V. Arnone, transferred last month from headquarters where he was price manager, now is assistant manager in charge of manufacturing — switching and loop apparatus and LTA precision products.

Arnone began his career with Western Electric in December 1956 at the Omaha Works. He stayed until March 1969, when he was promoted to assistant

manager in the cable plant at the Hawthorne Works in Chicago.



Arnone

Omaha a pleasant surprise



LAB WORK . . . Gilles Heyart and Steve Zerbs (back) use a microprocessor kit to simulate insulating line capacitance measurement.

He arrived at the front lobby early in the morning Aug. 1, wearing a backpack and carrying a duffel bag — his personal belongings, he said. Who would have thought that today the youthful visitor would be applying computer technology at the Omaha Works?

As a participant in the International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience (IAESTE), Gilles Heyart is working in Dept. 271 until Sept. 30. Working with two other engineers in the department, Steve Zerbs and Bruce Boehlke, Heyart is using microprocessing in the manufacture of plastic insulated wire.

Heyart, a native of Luxembourg, is completing studies for a degree in electrical engineering from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, Switzerland. As part of his education, the institute stresses the importance of exposure to industry and to those problems encountered by operators in a factory, Heyart said. That's why he applied for a chance to study in the United States through IAESTE.

"I HOPE to improve my technical knowledge," Heyart said of working here, and "to improve my English and learn the culture." Besides English, Heyart also speaks Spanish, German,

French and his native tongue.

Although Heyart is well-traveled in Europe (Germany is just 25 miles from his Luxembourg home; France, 20 miles), this is his first visit to the United States. He has made friends with other students where he is staying, a University of Nebraska at Omaha off-campus dormitory for non-resident students.

"I feel already like I'm home," Heyart said. He is appreciative of "the way things were so well-organized here," such as arrangements made for his lodging.

He also found his job atmosphere to be a pleasant surprise: "I imagined that American companies are high-pressure jobs and very restrictive," he explained. "But here the engineers have the liberty to propose ideas," a condition he thinks promotes creativity.

Another surprise to Heyart was that "life is cheaper here than expected — prices are much cheaper than in Switzerland, especially steaks." Since his arrival, steak is one food in which he has overindulged, he admitted.

He has adapted well to Omaha's sunny and hot climate, which he prefers to Luxembourg's generally cloudy days. Heyart has toured some areas of the city with his newly found friends, including dancing at a disco. But he is puzzled by the American custom to eat popcorn and drink pop at movie theaters. "In Europe, probably nowhere would you find this — people would turn to such a person eating popcorn and say 'shhhhhh!' he said.

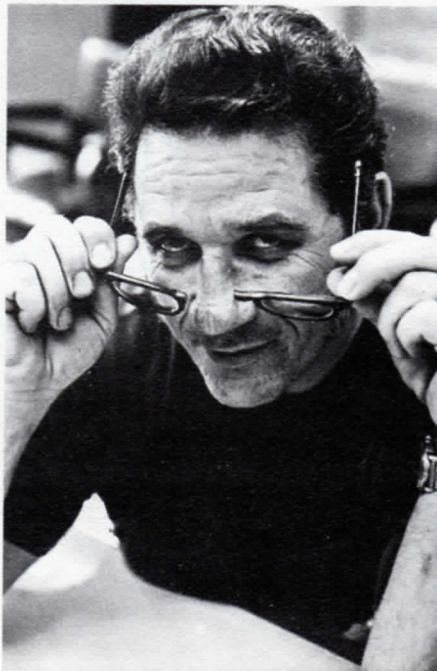
"THE ONLY problem I've had so far is that I don't have a car. In Zurich I don't have a car, but I don't need one," he said, explaining that the public transportation system in Europe is much more extensive than in Omaha.

Still, not having a car won't keep him from touring a part of the United States before he returns to see his parents, brother and sister. (His father, he mentioned, is an artist who makes stained glass windows.) After he completes his work at the Works, he wants to go to the West Coast, possibly by bus, "to see the countryside." That explains why he travels so light.

How long he tours the country depends "on money — and on my conscience," he said. It appears that Heyart shares a trait common to students throughout the world: Postponing studies for final exams as long as possible.

Saved by a habit

MORE THAN eight years ago, Gabe Belland of Dept. 282 made a habit of taking home his safety glasses "to wear whenever I do work around the house," he said. Belland thought their protection might come in handy one day. Recently he was working under the front end of his car, when the wrench he was using slipped and hit the bridge of his eyeglass frames. The lenses didn't break but the heavy-duty frames broke at the bridge (ordinary glasses would have shattered). The impact of the eyeglasses against his head left Belland with cuts that required 21 stitches, "but it would have been much worse had I not worn my glasses," he said.



WE laser goes to Smithsonian

James Bond wanted no part of it in "Goldfinger." Western Electric, meanwhile, was making history with it.

"It," in Western's case, is the first laser ever used industrially, and from now on it will be on display in the Smithsonian Institute, said Joe Grzywa of Dept. 275.

Grzywa was one of three engineers who helped develop the prototype so that diamond dies could be drilled using a laser beam. The laser was installed at the Buffalo Works in December 1965 and was transported to the Omaha Works last year when Buffalo closed.

At the time of its installation in Buffalo, "Goldfinger" was on movie-goers' minds, Grzywa recalled. Hero James Bond faced the threat of being "cut up" by a laser beam. Actually, Grzywa said, a laser won't cut off an arm or leg. At the most, the beam of concentrated light would burn a person minimally. With an industrial laser, even that would be highly improbable because of a safety enclosure, he added.

WESTERN's laser "opened up a whole new industry of lasers," Grzywa said. Western used to buy its dies already drilled and shaped from manufacturers. With the laser, Western could make its own dies and in far less time than it took die manufacturers.

Manufacturers "used to peck away at dies with steel pins and diamond slurries," he said. "A laser can pierce a diamond die in five to 15 minutes compared to eight to 24 hours the old way of drilling. It took the process of making diamond dies from the archaic to the ultra-modern."

Until its use industrially, the laser "had been an invention looking for an application," Grzywa said. Upon Larry McKenna's suggestion (a former Buffalo engineer now of Dept. 275), Western Electric began checking into the feasibility of an industrial laser.

Grzywa consulted two engineers at the Engineering Research Center, who provided specifications for the laser. Raytheon Microwave Devices built the laser from specifications.

AS WITH any invention, the laser underwent modifications "to get the bugs out," but it wasn't long before other manufacturers indicated interest in Western's laser.

"We had people coming from all over the United States, Brazil, Spain, France,

England, Japan . . . soon the diamond die manufacturers began using lasers themselves," Grzywa said. Western's prototype also sparked development in other industrial uses of the laser.

Grzywa said Western Electric was instrumental in developing safety guidelines for industrial lasers. In fact, the company's guidelines "were adopted by New York State almost verbatim."

A new laser has replaced the one sent to the Smithsonian which, when compared to the original, is "like a Cadillac compared to a horse and wagon," Grzywa said. The new laser is a more precise piece of equipment which will drill diamond dies in a way that less mechanical embellishing (finishing touches) will be required.



PREPARE TO GO . . . Grzywa looks over the laser which has been disassembled for transporting to the Smithsonian.



WHO DOES YOUR HAIR? . . . A young admirer visits with clown Gene Lake of Dept. 331 at last year's picnic.

WEOMA picnic slated for Sept. 24

Be sure to bring your dancing shoes to the annual WEOMA Club picnic Sept. 24 at Peony Park. Jimmy O'Neill of KOIL radio will conduct a disco dance contest open to all ages.

Other festivities to keep picnickers busy from 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. will include clowns, games and prizes, and unlimited rides.

Tickets for a mid-afternoon chicken dinner may be purchased in the main cafeteria or in the cable plant mezzanine cafeteria for \$1.60 each. No dinner tickets will be sold at the picnic. Discounted admission tickets also may be bought in the cafeterias at \$1.50 for adults (\$2 at gate) and \$1 for children (\$1.50 at gate).