

WESTERNER

Omaha Works
October 1986



Contents

October 1986

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**2 Welcome mat
pulled from pests**

**4 Shhh . . . listening
going on here**

**6 Bowlers boost
J.A. coffers**

**7 Service
anniversaries**

On the cover

Omaha's liquid weather relented long enough for the annual employee picnic at Peony Park last month. The sun was shining when these youngsters were scrambling to find their shoes and put them on to win one of the many children's games played. Elsewhere, picnic-goers enjoyed midway rides, played horseshoes, listened to music and helped raise money for the Cornhusker Pioneers at the "flush tank." Before the torrents of rain came again, there even was time for a ride or two in a tethered hot air balloon. More than 3,200 people attended, the best turnout in the history of Omaha Works picnics.

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Linda Ryan, editor
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'Snug as a bug' is true no more

We can make some of them waterproof, we can make some of them heatproof, but it's next to impossible to make any of them bugproof.

Here at the Omaha Works we build outside plant equipment enclosures — cabinets, pedestals and closures — that can withstand a variety of atmospheric conditions. But how do you stop the 925,000 species of arthropods walking the face of the earth who are bent on destruction?

Arthropods, most of which are insects, can't resist making their homes in outside plant equipment enclosures. Craft personnel who install and service the equipment view bees, spiders, ants and their relatives not as good tenants but as, well, pests. They cause service-related problems that can be hard to locate.

Morning dew, sunlight and condensation create a greenhouse environment inside the equipment, attracting insects. Damage results when the insects chew PIC insulation, exposing wires. They leave behind excrement and nesting material which decay, absorb moisture and corrode copper. Insect eaters like frogs and snakes, if they can find an opening, move in to make matters worse.

The problem with insects is nothing new. However, with the ban of powerful insecticides like DDT and chlordane in the interests of environmental safety, finding an effective substitute has been difficult.

AT&T Bell Laboratories has come up with an insecticide which already is enjoying success in field applications, said Mike Blanchard. Blanchard is a former Works supervisor who now works in Atlanta as a product planner for AT&T Network Systems.

The insecticide, called Elastrel™, has passed stringent requirements and has earned the

approval of the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for commercial use. Its features are impressive, said Blanchard.

First, it is so easy to use. All one has to do is open a bottle of the product and attach it to the interior of an enclosure with a cable tie.

The insecticide itself is held in suspension in a rubber-like high-density polyurethane base. This patented base releases minute quantities of the insecticide slowly through evaporation. The slow release means Elastrel remains effective for at least a year in most applications, Blanchard said. Most other insecticides break down in 30 days and require repeated applications.

It contains no solvent that could cause "stress cracking" of plastic like PIC insulation, and "human hands never touch the active ingredients inside the bottle," Blanchard noted.

Elastrel is packaged with a child-proof cap and a foil seal to indicate tampering and promote shelf stability. Beneath the foil seal is a plastic insert with holes: "It permits vapor to escape but prevents touching the insecticide."

An Omaha Works-controlled product, the 85-type pedestal enclosure, was among the first to be used to test Elastrel. Eleven of the enclosures were set up four feet apart and became infested with earwigs at the Bell Labs outdoor test facility in Chester, N.J. Elastrel was placed inside every other one. In a week's time, said Blanchard, the treated enclosures were bug-free while the others remained infested.

In the South where ants, fire ants, cockroaches, wasps, hornets and bees are especially hard to control, Elastrel likewise has been successful. Blanchard said that some Omaha Works-manufactured 40-type cabinets in Georgia have been equipped

with Elastrel to eliminate fire ant infestations.

These fiercely stinging ants build large dirt mounds inside cabinets and can cause telecommunication pair failure," he said. So far the insecticide has been effective.

Currently, testing is being completed on the use of Elastrel in 80-type cabinets which are manufactured here. The cabinets are larger than others and are equipped with fans to circulate air. The evaporation rate may be different and it must be determined what application of Elastrel is required to obtain control, Blanchard explained.

Testing has determined that Elastrel is effective in certain larger-size aerial closures such as the Works' aerial 40-type cabinets and 105-type cable terminals. Flying insects like wasps and hornets find this sort of equipment to be attractive nesting places.

Now product designers are considering packaging changes to accommodate smaller closures. Blanchard thinks that within the next six months "we will have a size to fit every enclosure made at the Omaha Works."

While Elastrel is available to telephone equipment craft personnel, its application isn't necessarily restricted to the telecommunications industry.

"We hope to offer this to utility companies who have outdoor housings," he said, such as power, water and cable TV companies.

Sooner or later, those 925,000 species of arthropods will get the message they aren't welcome. It's the next best thing to bugproof.

* * *

Information for this story was taken in part from articles appearing in the fall issue of Proto, published by AT&T Bell Laboratories, and from the April 21, 1986 issue of Telephony.



BUGS AWAY . . . Marge Hecker (seated) demonstrates how craft personnel in the field would install a bottle of Elastrel™ in a 40-type pedestal cabinet. Hecker, Lorene Booker (left) and Joe Backes all work in Dept. 224 where the cabinets are made. The photo at right shows a bottle of the insecticide which is installed upside down in an enclosure.



We hear, but do we listen?

Communication, we're told, is a critical building block for a successful business. It's hard to imagine a thriving company where workers never share their ideas or communicate with their customers.

Yet good communication doesn't just happen. People have to work at communicating, perfecting the skills it encompasses. And out of all of those skills, guess which one is most commonly used. Speaking? Reading? Writing?

No. It's listening. Nearly half of all communication consists of listening — listening as opposed to hearing. Hearing is done with the ears while listening is done with the mind.

Listening means making sense

of what is said, retaining it and evaluating it. It is a skill, one that can be learned and improved through practice. If we don't take the time to develop the skill, the consequences could be costly. Poor listening can create walls and foster alienation. At its worst, it can stop communication dead in its tracks.

Pay attention

Frank Markesi, who is on the Product Display Center sales support staff, agrees. Markesi has attended several communication seminars which address working with customers. Listening is stressed as a major factor in communication, he said, because "you can't respond

properly if you don't listen correctly."

Markesi said it is important in his work to "keep an open mind and concentrate on what an individual customer is saying. As soon as you think you're getting the drift of the conversation, instinctively you're planning your response."

That could be a serious drawback, he said, because "you may miss a very important part of the customer's message.

"The main thing is that you do not attempt to cut the customer short — let him talk" before mentally preparing a response.

While he's listening, Markesi tries to key in on the details of what the customer is saying. Does the problem relate to one of the Omaha Works' products? Is it a manufacturing problem or installation problem?

A good listener asks himself questions about what is being said, whether he's dealing with a customer or a co-worker, Markesi pointed out. "A lot of times we think we hear what is being said. If you don't (ask yourself questions), there's a 9 or 10 percent chance you will have to call back the customer and ask him again to explain a problem."

Someone who doesn't listen sends the message that he wasn't really interested, Markesi said. It ultimately is a poor reflection on AT&T.

Asking for trouble

What happens when most of the original message is lost? A shop employee misunderstands and makes the wrong code of product for a "pull-up" (rush order), and it isn't shipped as promised. A secretary isn't listening to instructions and has to retype a letter.

Employees being trained on a job who don't listen to the trainer pave the way for future

Idea box welcomes views

Jack McKinnon was listening when an employee pulled him aside in the aisle to make a suggestion: Why don't we make it easy for employees to express their concerns and to recommend ideas? Let's establish a collection point for recommendations — and anything goes — with the understanding that McKinnon would review each and every one of them and that no award would be given if any ideas were adopted. (The idea program would be separate from and *would not eliminate* the existing employee suggestion program in which awards are granted for cost-saving ideas.)

McKinnon agreed and now you're reading about it. In this issue of the Westerner is an insert which is the form you should submit to the Omaha Works' new Anything Goes Idea Box. Jot down your recommendations, your concerns, your gripes and even your words of

praise. Like we said, anything goes.

But please, sign no names or departments (unless you want to). Just be sure that if you write about a problem or offer an idea, be specific to assure proper followup.

Put the forms in the box under the Pioneer display case in the cafeteria (just outside of the Omaha Room as you enter Building 30) or have your department secretary send them to the public relations office, Dept. 031. All forms will be forwarded to Jack McKinnon. You can pick up additional forms at the display case, in the public relations office or in the Employee Activities Mall.

Remember, there is no monetary award for any recommendations received. Just the reward of knowing you have a chance to be heard in the effort to maintain a healthy business.



LISTEN CAREFULLY . . . Charlie Patterson (from left) of Dept. 283 and Lentis Campbell of Dept. 087 listen to trainer Bill Huetsen explain how to properly test the thickness of C plenum cable. Listening to directions is critical for employees who work on the jacketing lines in Building 50.

problems, said production technician Bill Huetsen of Dept. 283. He has been conducting training classes for employees who work on jacketing lines in Building 50.

"We could end up with a lot of waste . . . do a lot of work and never get any product shipped because people weren't listening" in their training sessions, Huetsen said. The bottom line is we could lose customers.

When Huetsen explains to his students that wrong temperatures or clogged filtering screens can adversely affect jacket quality, they must listen if they are to understand and retain the information.

He acknowledged that listening can be hard work. "The subject matter may be tedious and boring, or maybe the trainer isn't the best," he said. But it is important to make an effort to

pull something of value even from the dullest talk.

Must get involved

Dull isn't the word for discussions that were held in the auditorium last month between the Works' manufacturing vice-president Jack McKinnon and employees from the hourly and salary graded ranks. The meetings, held on all three shifts, were the first of McKinnon's "state of the business" talks to be held with those employees on a regular basis. Non-represented employees attended similar meetings earlier.

The purpose of the gatherings, as McKinnon explained, was to tell employees how the Omaha Works is doing — output for the month, shipping performance, the business outlook and such. It was an opportunity

for employees to listen.

Employees voiced their concerns on matters ranging from waiting too long to get parts for assembly work, to machines that need to be adjusted, to cutbacks in the office. If hearing is a passive act, then the people in the auditorium meetings were most definitely practicing their listening skills.

They listened, they evaluated what was said and they got involved. Employees weren't just collecting words with their ears . . . they were communicating.

Bowlers raise cash for J.A.

A group of Omaha Works employees who participated in a Junior Achievement Bowlathon played a sizable role in helping to raise a total of \$25,000 in the effort.

The AT&T crew of 35 employees raised \$2,900, the most money raised by any of the bowlathon's 30 corporate entries. In addition, Works bowlers had the highest score as a group.

Participants in the bowlathon raised money for Junior Achievement by soliciting pledges to be paid according to how well employees bowled. Corporate entries were divided into 60 teams, seven of them from the Omaha Works.

One of those Works teams earned a trophy for having the highest bowling score — 3,038 points for three games — to raise \$680 in pledges. Team members were George Chonis, Darrell Lieber, Joe Opryszko, Dave Jonas and Tom Ward.

Works employee Ethel Payton

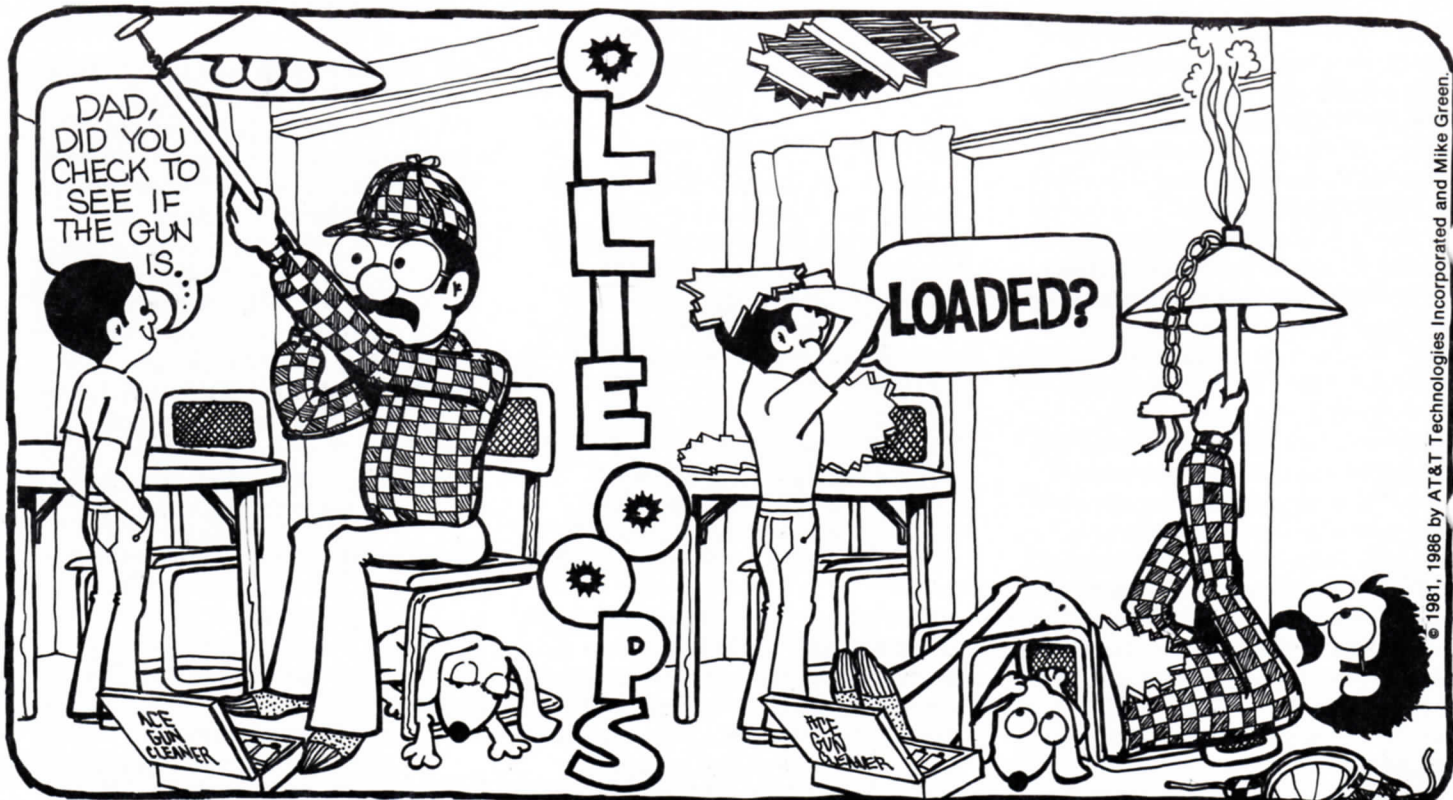


A TROPHY FOR THEIR HELP . . . Tom Ward holds the trophy his team won in the Junior Achievement Bowlathon. His team was honored for having the highest bowling score over three games while Ethel Payton was recognized for raising the most amount pledged in the bowlathon.

also was recognized for being the individual who raised the most in pledges — close to \$500.

Junior Achievement is an organization in which youths

may learn more about the free enterprise system through educational programs conducted with the assistance of volunteers from the business community.



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Service anniversaries

40 years

V. E. Sherman 10/1
J. W. Wheeler 10/7

35 years

G. T. Elafros 10/3

30 years

E. T. Bald 10/22
M. G. Borden 10/15
J. A. Burgett 10/15
J. A. Burrell 10/8
J. R. Canterbury 10/22
R. D. Carter 10/1
D. L. Daharsh 10/8
R. C. Fick 10/10
W. R. Fiedler 10/22
R. J. Goraczkowski 10/1
R. L. Griffin 10/8
S. D. Hill 10/29
E. W. Hofmann 10/15
G. F. Huff 10/16
D. E. Karloff 10/30
J. Knudsen Jr. 10/22
L. L. Lamb 10/15
G. G. Larson 10/29
C. W. Mathis Jr. 10/25
W. J. McCormick Jr. 10/4
L. D. Moody 10/15
J. J. Novak 10/2
J. J. Peroutka 10/2
J. P. Phillips 10/15
J. L. Proctor 10/15
R. A. Seaman 10/24
J. C. Spencer 10/29
E. E. Stacey 10/22
J. A. Stenstrom 10/22
P. T. Stubbe 10/1
J. A. Ujdur 10/17
J. B. Upton 10/14
M. E. Weberg 10/29

25 years

W. H. Adams 10/23
M. P. Ardery 10/17
E. G. Chleboun 10/2
J. M. Cox 10/25
J. J. Fleming 10/16
J. S. Grzebielski 10/5
M. H. Hecker 10/26
W. A. Hosford 10/3
M. L. Hrdy 10/13
J. D. Kajdasz 10/2
A. J. Kallhoff 10/23
W. T. Krum 10/4
N. L. Oltman 10/16
C. M. Reitan 10/24
T. W. Riester 10/2
R. E. Shafer 10/4

G. A. Simonson 10/26
L. A. Stork 10/16
J. R. Symonsbergen 10/23
T. V. VanCleve 10/23
R. D. Warren 10/4

20 years

R. R. Alf 10/16
W. C. Anderson 10/24
J. Z. Bushinger 10/5
J. S. Connelly 10/30
R. M. Crawford 10/11
R. V. Delgado 10/3
M. F. Dinslage 10/3
K. W. Drake 10/26
R. R. Endorf 10/27
F. J. Kurtz 10/27
K. E. Harper 10/18
J. T. Keefe 10/14

M. W. Kotszewa 10/10
D. P. Leitner 10/8
M. G. McAleer 10/22
V. K. Milne 10/6
H. K. Plisek 10/6
P. M. Rochford 10/10
A. P. Seals 10/24
G. F. Sims 10/17
J. Skubisz 10/10
G. C. Starks 10/14
D. Wiggins Jr. 10/10

15 years

C. B. Bloomer 10/10
S. N. Cubrich 10/14
P. K. Griffin 10/5
T. E. Pallas Jr. 10/24
K. B. Parker 10/3
R. H. Thrasher 10/18
H. M. Vineyard 10/26
G. A. Waddell 10/24

10 years

V. V. Fitzgerald 10/28
S. E. Petersen 10/21
L. L. Young 10/11

etc.

Suggestion awards

Terry Moore of Dept. 221 is a two-way winner since he suggested an improved rack design for the endload rack zinc plater in the plating room. Moore now can hang metal parts to be plated on the new racks without worrying whether coverage will be even and meet quality requirements. That makes his job easier. It also makes him richer by \$2,815 — the amount awarded him through the employee suggestion program.

Other employees also have received awards in the program recently, including the following: **Darol Donaldson**, Dept. 087, \$680; **Richard Browns**, Dept. 545, \$255; and **Shirley Peterson**, Dept. 243, \$230.

Signs of the holidays

The Salvation Army has distributed 800 dolls to Works employees who will dress them for the annual Dress-a-Doll project this year. The dolls must be returned by Oct. 31. They

will be displayed in the auditorium next month before they go back to the Salvation Army for distribution to needy youngsters.

Mittens, caps and scarves also are being collected for the Mitten Tree, which will be displayed with the dolls in November. These will go to needy families for the winter months.

Although they won't be collected until the first week in December, it still isn't too early to shop the sales for toys to contribute to the Works' Operation Gift Lift program. As with the other items collected, toys will be distributed to needy families by the Salvation Army.

Thanks to you...
it works...
for ALL OF US





Last frame

An annual project that has quickly become a tradition at the Omaha Works is the Cornhusker Chapter Pioneers' Leisure Time Activities Show. This year the show will be held on Nov. 6 and 7 in the auditorium.

The show will be held in

conjunction with national Telephone Pioneer Week, with 1986 marking the national organization's 75th anniversary.

Active and life members of the Cornhusker Pioneers are eligible to participate in the show. Last year life member Elsa Douglass displayed her leisure-time projects — all sorts of handmade crafts including Christmas ornaments and whimsical clown dolls.

Bob Neiderheiser of Dept. 242, who is coordinating the show,

expects a wide variety of crafts and hobbies to be featured this year. Many of the displays will include demonstrations.

Auditorium doors will be open from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and between 6:30 and 9 p.m. on Nov. 6, and from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Nov. 7. On Nov. 6, families of second-shift employees may attend the show between 1 and 3 p.m., while families of first- and third-shift employees are invited to attend between 6:30 and 9 p.m.



AT&T
Network Systems

Omaha Works
P.O. Box 37000
Omaha, Ne. 68137