

— HISTORY —

# Playing ball the ATCO way forged unity

*Part two of three*

Participative sport played an important role in local textile companies relationships with its employees. ATCO's forerunners sponsored baseball, harness racing, golf, swimming and athletics in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

This involvement had wound down somewhat just before the closure of the community's last major mill, but a 1982 edition of ATCO's company magazine "The Yarn" revealed that ATCO was still sponsoring basketball and bowling teams.

The Yarn's "Sports Corner" reported the feats of the 1981-82 ATCO basketball team, which had ended the season with a 9-5 record, to finish second in the Willimantic YMCA league. Bill Healy was player coach, and the ATCO hoop team had called upon the services of Ray Candelin, Bob Deston, Brad Ladr, Al Lariviere, Ken Michaud, Joe Parton, Frank Tellier and Tony Zaritheny during the season.

Joe Parton is pictured with his son watching an ATCO game. The

company also sponsored duckpin and 10-pin bowling leagues. The Over the Hill Gang, consisting of Joe and Nellie Muzykowski, Dave Provencher and Bill Fisher, had won the duckpin title.

The 10-pin-bowling league was won by the Power Rollers. A photograph shows the Rollers team members Albert Richard, Daniel Richard, Debbie Touchette, Frank Pease and Patty Touchette with their trophies.

Attendance awards are an integral part of fostering company-worker relations, and in March 1982, ATCO held its annual perfect attendance banquet at the Knights of Columbus. Manager Andy Sabo and his assistant Jim Curtis presented the awards to the 90 men and women who had not missed a shift during 1981.

They included workers from



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distribution, maintenance, trucking, technology, winding, testing, package dye, bonding and dressing, finish winding and packing, shuttle bobbin and finishing, the printing and box shop.

Three photographs reveal Luis Calderon picking a lucky door prize winner, Josip Oborski of the shuttle bobbin department receiving his award from Jim Curtis, and Carlos Gallego and John Snow of C. P. Finishing watching the presentations.

American Thread always had a large turnover of workers, because of the industry's relatively low-paid jobs.

Nevertheless, a minority of workers were very loyal to the company. A whole page with photographs was given over to retirees and those celebrating long service.

Top of the list was Sophie Kaminski of packing who had worked at ATCO from 1932 until 1982. Also included were Josephine Horne of C. P. Finishing with 35 years service, Irene Lavoie, quality control (34), Elsa Boschensko, twisting (25),

Rosaire Lehoux, winding (23), Josephine Dauphine, distributing (22), Pearl Dubeau, winding (20), Doris Darling (18), Tommaso Faba (17), Andres Ramos, package dye (16).

The shift workers received their awards in the company offices, but management retirements were celebrated in more style.

On May 28, 1982, a retirement luncheon was held at Bogie's Lounge in North Windham for

Tony Raubold, an industrial engineer, which was attended by 60 people. Tony had been at ATCO since 1963. He was treasurer of the Willimantic Industrial Management Club, and a player in the American Thread Golf League. Keynote speakers were managers Manny Laureanno and Andy Sabo.

*Continued next week*



*The Industrial Engineering Group attending Tony Raubold's retirement party. Back row, left to right; Jim Curtis, Manny Laureanno, Steve LaRiviere, Bill Lovejoy and Andy Sabo. Front row, left to right Cathy Madeiros, Fran Kilgus, Raubold and his wife Antoinette.*

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