

# NEKOA elects Carter president

A RECORD crowd attended the annual meeting of the New England Knitted Outerwear Association held at the Chatham Bars Inn on Massachusetts's Cape Cod. The meeting was held June 20-22.

Activities began with a welcoming tea on Friday afternoon. Dinner that evening was followed by the annual business meeting, during which officers were elected for the coming year. John Carter of Roosevelt Mills was elected president; the new first vice-president is Edward McLaughlin, Garland Corporation; and the second vice president is Gary Reitzas, F. R. Knitting. Harold Linsky continues as executive secretary, treasurer and counsel.

Following the election of officers, professor Bernard Shapiro, education director, told of the fall course being offered by the trade group at the University of Lowell. The course, titled "Survey of Accounting Controls for Production Supervisors," will begin September 9, 1975, and will run for 11 weeks.

Saturday was the day for fishing, golf, tennis, sun bathing, and shopping in the quaint villages dotting Cape Cod. Saturday evening activities started with a cocktail party sponsored by the Du Pont Company and continued through a banquet at which all women present received blankets in carrying cases, compliments of Monsanto Textile Company. The highlight of Saturday's activities was an "Evening of Dance." During the dance breaks, prizes for tennis, fishing and golf were given by the tournament chairmen. Neil Olken handled tennis, John Coyne took care of the fisherman, and the dean of golfers, Lou Stoloff, kept tabs on the golfers.



Election of officers, the annual banquet plus sports from golfing to fishing were all part of the NEKOA meeting held June 20-22 at Chatham Bars Inn, Chatham, Mass. Among those in attendance were; left to right, Alvin and Patti Werner; Herman and Eunice Werner; Patti and Harold Werner, all Manchester Knitted Fashions (above); and Pat and Jacques Dessauvages, Ames Textile Corp.; Margaret and Ray Fontaine, Bonte Industries; and Lucille and Jacques Dubois, Delta Dyeing Inc. (below).



Also, from left to right, (top) Ora and Bill Kidder, Odd Lot Yarn Co.; Irma and John Carter, Roosevelt Mills (John is NEKOA's new president); (center) George and Terry Farias; Ed and Mary McLaughlin (Ed is the group's first vice-president); Margaret and Don Chu, all Garland Corp.; (above) Sherm and Petey Stoloff (Sherm is the outgoing president); Mary and Lou Stoloff, all New Knit Mfg. Co.; and (below) Richard and Lois Sussman and Charlotte and Simon Sherr, all Geb Yarn.





At the get-together, from left to right, Gladys and Ziggy Wesolowski; Frieda and Al Alter, Pandora Industries (top); Janet and Steve Litchman, Geb Yarn Co.; Charlotte and Sonny Litchman, Sanford Yarns (above); and (below) Sidney Korzenik, NKOA executive director, and daughter, Debbie; Charles Reichman, KNITTING TIMES editor; and Harold and Ruth Linsky (he is NEKOA executive secretary).

Also, from left to right, Alan Owens, Charles A. Eaton Co.; Tryna and Joel Gordon, Gemini Corp.; Doris Chenenko, Reliable Yarn Co.; Herman Werner, Manchester; Norm Chenenko, Reliable (top); Carrie and Myles Friedman; Robbie and Jimmy Reitzas; Frances and Sid Reitzas; Lois and Gary Reitzas; Donna and Rickey Reitzas, all F. R. Knitting Mills (above); and Stu Beresford, Manchester; Priscilla and Frank Polak, Collins & Aikman; Maxine and Michael Marks, Michael Marks Assoc.; Ethel and Pat Bogdanowich, C & A; and Tad Mcloughlin, Rusch Factors (below).





Roosevelt uses a four-person arrangement in its sewing room. Cape in the knitter's spring line, at right, in Acrilan acrylic is one of mill's contemporary knitted outerwear styles.

## Roosevelt puts extra effort into its sewing operation

By Mary Ann Jung

"We haven't made a sweater here for a long time." A surprising comment to come from a sweater man, but that's how John J. Carter, executive vice president of Roosevelt Mills, Vernon, Conn., describes his business these days.

"What we're making is knitted outerwear," Carter continues. "Three years ago it was capes. Then it was wrap cardigans. For fall 1977 it will be a variation on the cape, not that we've dropped either the cape or the wrap from our lines. We've also made shifts, skirts, pants and tops—all in sweater knit gauges—when they were in fashion."

Roosevelt is not "wildly innovative, but we are new," says Carter. "Once in awhile we've been too far ahead, but we don't sit with any Edsels or Tuckers in stock.

"The funny thing is that we're starting to see orders pile up again for some honest to goodness sweaters like the tennis cable in pullovers and cardigan models for both men and women. The colors that have been ordered are the real classics, white with navy and burgundy

trim." The tennis sweaters will be made of Acrilan acrylic yarn, the only sweater yarn the mill knits today except for a few blends such as an Acrilan/ Shetland wool which is used in some of the fall numbers.

Rather than cut the corners that might be cut to cope with the price increases occurring in every aspect of the knitwear manufacturing procedure, the mill makes a point of giving a finish that is just a little better. Roosevelt prides itself on putting this extra effort into its knitted outerwear so that the consumer gets a better garment even though the average store buyer and her consumer may not always be cognizant of that difference.

At collar joinings, for instance, the seam where the collar and the body are stitched together is overlocked to give a cleaner finish and a more comfortable garment for the wearer. Two other extra touches on the mill's jacquard patterned wrap sweaters are the pockets and the manner in which the tuxedo band is finished (see photographs).

The two pockets add about 25 to 50

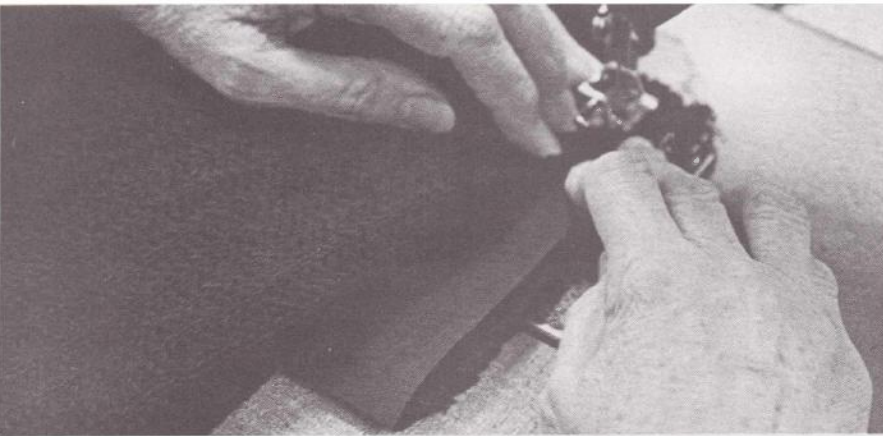
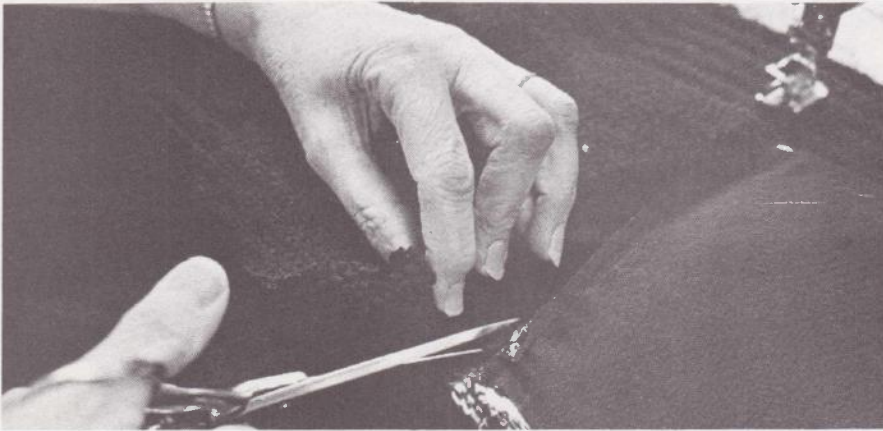
cents in direct cost per sweater and about \$1 when all the costs are figured in, Carter said. But the pockets have given Roosevelt an edge in selling its wrap sweaters above and beyond simply having the right styles at the right price.

Making the pockets is no problem for the mill since welt and patch pockets were commonplace operations in the contract work Roosevelt used to do for men's sweater houses. The sewing room's method of making both types is illustrated on these pages. Markings for the pocket placement is done by using a plastic die and fluorescent spray. This produces indications which show up on the sweater bodies under the black light attached to the operators' sewing machines. Using the indications, an operator can easily line up the pocket parts and sew them down. To make the welt style the operators work with two pocket components: the interfacing with its pre-attached welt of the sweater body or trim fabric and a pre-cut ply of the sweater body.

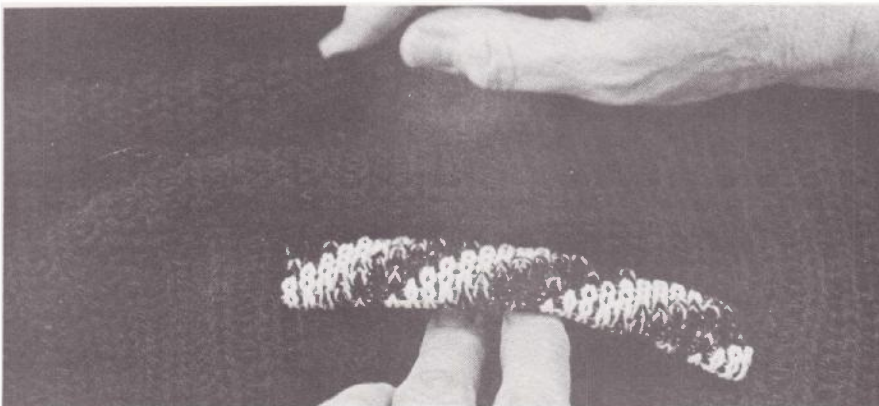
The mill has investigated and used a



First step in making welt pockets like those on cardigan at right, is the stitching down of the welt/interlining portion on garment face, above. After other pocket piece is sewn, operator cuts slit between, below.



Operator next pulls two pocket components inside garment, checks welt alignment on face side and then stitches pocket pieces together on inside, above. Below, the final result.



Hooded, toggle closure cardigan is one of the new numbers at the Vernon, Conn., knitted outerwear plant.

pocket sewing machine but so far it has not proved applicable to the needs of the knitted outerwear plant. "The machine was developed for men's clothing and for men's shirts where you are sewing thinner, and more importantly, more stable pieces of fabric. The guiding system on the machine just doesn't work with our kind of knit goods," Carter explained.

Roosevelt does have two new Centurion sewing machines on order from The Singer Company. These programmable units can be upgraded to automate a number of operations by adding various modules as needed. In using the units, the operator puts the machine's control in a "learning set." She then proceeds to go through her normal sewing operation, such as sewing and then back tacking a border. The next time through the same operation, she needs only to feed the goods in; the machine has learned how to do the rest. An automatic change of speed can also be programmed into the new Singer unit.

On the whole, however, Carter finds most of the semi-automated and automated sewing machines and the electro-mechanical and electronic knitting machines for sample making and production which are on the market are not flexible enough for a sweater manufacturer. "Too often a machinery manufacturer is looking for volume business in a non-volume industry. The double knit fiasco is a prime example of what this kind of thinking can cause."

The sewing room at Roosevelt is staffed by 60 to 70 operators who are on a one-shift basis. The women sit in groups of four machines and face one another. The arrangement is one of the



When toggle closures became a fashion detail, Roosevelt added special attachment to facilitate operation.



John Carter and Ellen Repay, designer, go over a jacquard pattern for the fall collection. The firm sells goods under its own label and also does contract work.

means Roosevelt uses to counteract the problem of boredom in the sewing process. When there is a break in her work, the operator has a face to look at instead of a sea of backs to confront her.

Also at the mill, no operator is a one operation person. She's a Merrow operator or a Singer operator, not a sleeve setter or a pocket setter. She does all the steps she can on her machine that she can do at one sitting. A Merrow operator could put together a whole sweater except perhaps for the collar; a Singer operator might tack back a border and set a pocket on a garment before it is moved on to another sewer. In addition to making the job more interesting to the operator, the method saves time in the handling and redistribution of garments.

In Mid-March of this year the Connecticut sweater mill was producing about 1,000 dozen garments a week, well below its usual level because of the overlap of the spring and fall seasons. As spring reorders continued to come in, they were processed immediately even if it meant a fall group which was already two thirds finished had to be pulled off the line.

Roosevelt is gearing up for a record fall. The domestic producer is finding that its accounts not only shopped the line earlier this year, they have been ordering earlier as well. "Stores are expecting an excellent sweater year and want to make sure they have the merchandise," Carter said.

John Carter has been in partnership with his father, Joseph, founder and president of Roosevelt, for 17 years. He is well aware of the intensive pressure



Border treatments have become one of the more common styling details in Roosevelt's knitted outerwear. Above, operator stitches border to body. Below, she turns the already prepared border corner before continuing.



domestic mills are under because of imported knitwear. As he sees it: "It's a strange phenomenon. Our own people are taking one of the few labor intensive industries left in this country and putting it out of business. U.S. sweater mills create the new looks and right away we knock ourselves off and make the goods in Hong Kong, Korea or Taiwan. This puts Americans out of work, the same Americans who would otherwise buy the Hong Kong made goods. If you need a precedent, just look at what's happened

to the shoe industry in this country."

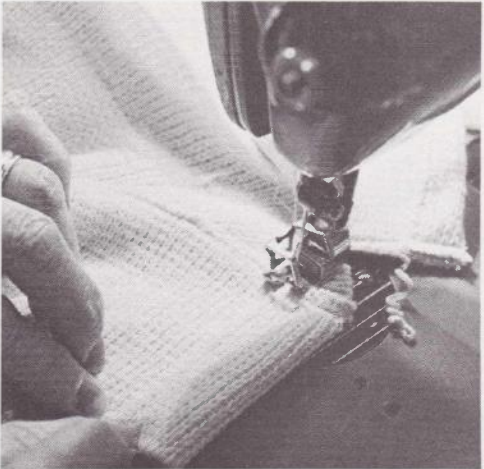
Roosevelt is making many knitted items which could be made in Hong Kong-its engineered jacquard capes and wrap cardigans, for instance, which have become strongly identified with the mill. The difference is that the Connecticut mill can and will make changes in a customer's orders. There is no need to commit six months ahead of delivery on the sizes and colors in an order. "And we've yet to have a boat sink with a load of our sweaters on it," Carter adds.



Overlock stitch is applied by operator to seam where collar is joined with wrap cardigan body.



Operator at Roosevelt shows how overlock stitch at collar joining gives a more comfortable, more finished looking appearance to collar join line on sweater.



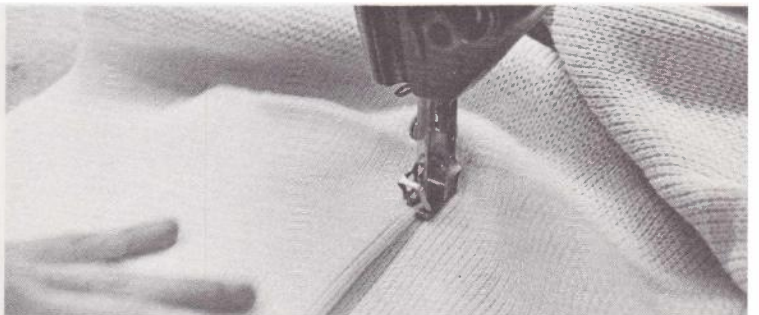
Tuxedo band on wrap model is turned up and sewn, giving clean, straight hanging edge.

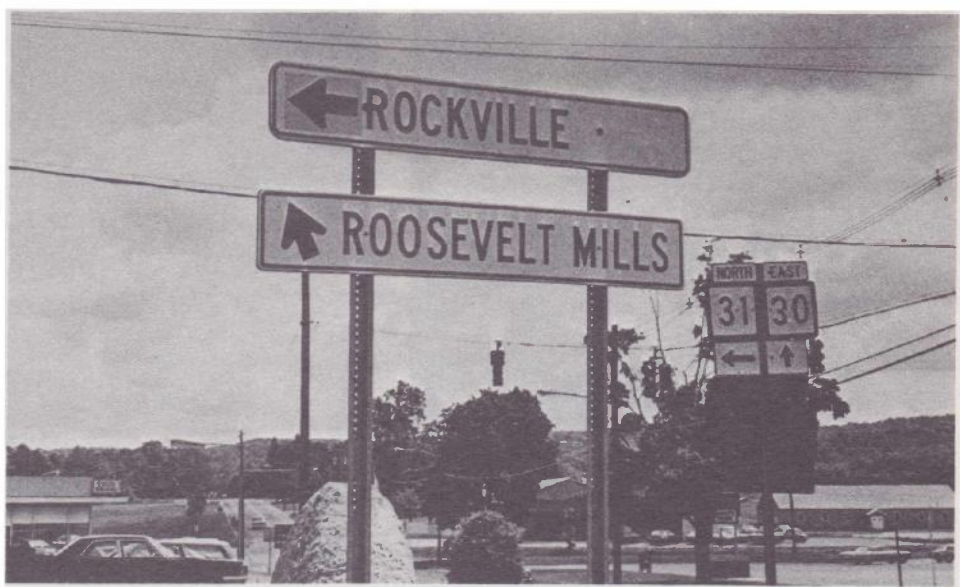


Sweaters, like this Scandinavian-inspired one, as opposed to more recent forms of knitted outerwear, are staging a comeback for fall 1977, according to the Connecticut knitter.



In making patch pockets like those on the garment at left, the pocket is first stitched at the bottom, above, then turned and top stitched, below, following wale line.





Road sign leaves no doubt about the way to Roosevelt Mills for those wishing to tour the plant and visit its mill outlet.

## At Roosevelt Mills capes are a very important product

By Mary Ann Jung

IT TOOK Roosevelt Mills four weeks to work out its first truly engineered jacquard knitted cape. A similar design task, when such strict pattern placement within a circular knitted sweater strip is not involved, usually takes the Vernon, Conn. plant three or four hours.

But that extra expenditure of time in 1969 gave the sweater mill the prototype for a very competitively priced garment, one it has made in such volume that owners Joseph and John Carter are known now in the trade as the cape kings. But Joe Carter, president, and John, executive vice-president and Joe's son, are quick to point out that capes are not the only knitted product the mill can turn out. To make that point clear to its 9,000 specialty and department store accounts, the mill recently sent them copies of a 24-page, four color fall 1975 catalog, the first such undertaking for the 34-year-old company. In it are photographs of 25 knitted outer-garments for women-pullovers, hooded jackets, button front and wrap

cardigans, and, of course, capes, including a water resistant rain cape, a new entry. The garments are available in from one to nine colors.

"Our customers too often tended to buy just our hot items. They didn't even bother to see if we made anything else," Joe said. The brochure makes the message clear and has already resulted in orders for knitted outerwear over and beyond ponchos from accounts which once ordered only capes.

Roosevelt sells direct under the Sturbridge by Roosevelt Mills label through its salesroom at 1407 Broadway, New York City, and a travelling-sales force. It also does work for a few major chains. In addition, some production, mainly job lots and seconds, is earmarked for the seven Roosevelt mill outlet stores. Five are in Connecticut and two in Massachusetts, close to the home state line.

The mill uses billboards to attract motorists to its stores. The one on

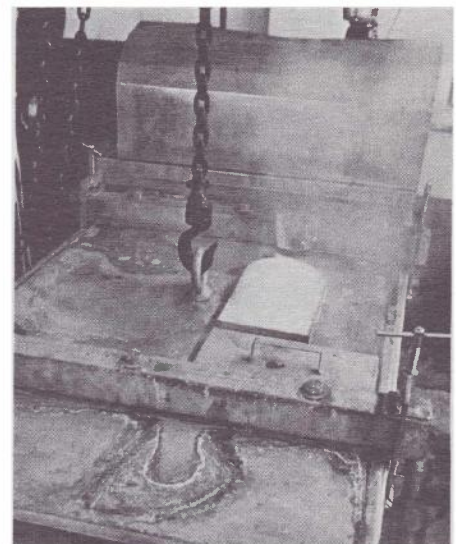
Route 86 which advertises the outlet attached to the factory invites people to tour- the mill as well as to visit the store. Such tours are scheduled at 2 P.M. each work day and it is not uncommon to see the visitors leave laden with purchases.

John Carter, who is the newly elected president of the New England Knitted Outerwear Association and formerly its education chairman, encourages group visits of the factory by students at local schools. He also hires high school students who are part of the local district's work study program in which they attend school half a day and work the balance. The knitting floor at Roosevelt is the only area barred to the young employees, some of whom have continued on as full time workers after graduating. John's interest in working with students extends to handicapped youth and one person hired within this aspect of the firm's training program has been with Roosevelt now for 10 years.

The mill, a vertical operation which



Going clockwise from top left: visitors on a regular 2 P.M. plant tour; banding coming off an Alemannia F-9; dyeing yarn skeins for a sample sweater; close-up of Roosevelt's rain drop pattern showing how design engineering results in a minimum of cutting waste; and Pat Zaushny attends to a repair job.

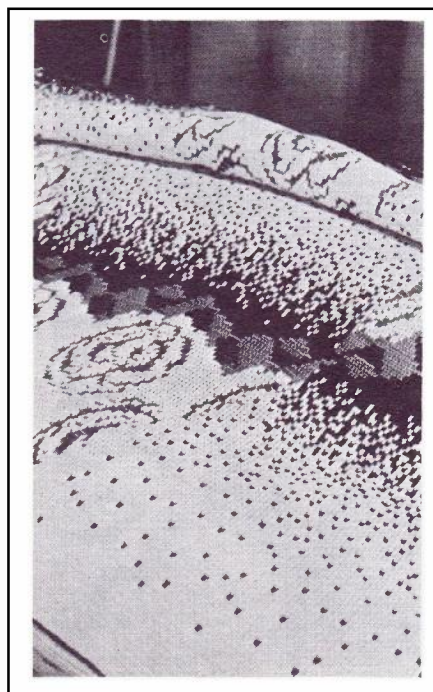


bed units not presently needed are stored in the warehouse ready to be called back to duty.

Roosevelt uses the 15 flat links cable machines it has in place more for trim than for sweater bodies. Most are 7-cut units. But, as is now the case, if cables are in demand, it uses some of its Queens V-beds for sweater bodies as well. Alemannia F-9s are employed for fancy cable work and for trims. Also in place is a battery of Lamb border units.

The plant's knitting machines can be easily shifted as demand warrants since the units are individually hooked up into wiring and outlets laid into the floor. When a circular machine needs major repair work, an overhead hoist is used to take it to a place on the floor out of the production line.

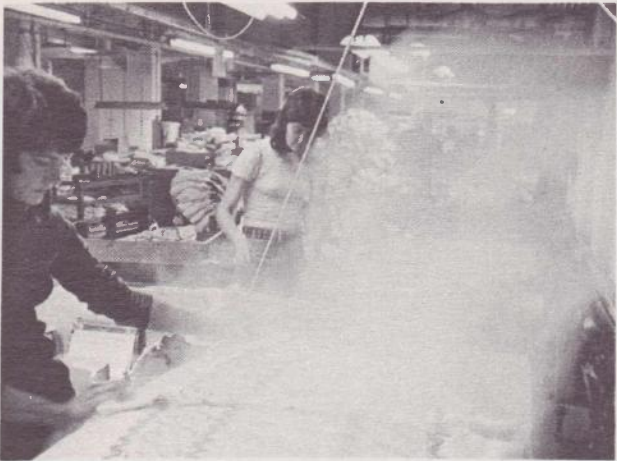
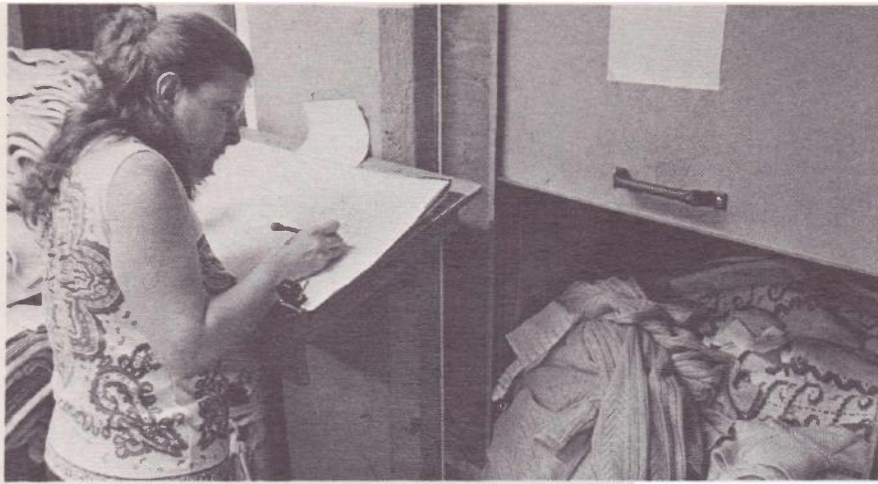
Patricia Zaushny, one of the knitting operator-mechanics, has been with the operation 11 years and at her present job about four years. It was John's idea to induce Pat to become a knitter-mechanic.



"She was late for her initial job interview because, it turned out, she was having trouble getting the motor back into her car. Anyone who doesn't mind getting his or her hands dirty is a candidate for this job," he noted.

All work at Roosevelt is done to a production order output by an IBM System 3 computer. Once sweater strips and trims for an order are completed, they are moved by elevator down one floor for separating, marking, cutting and sewing. Like many other innovations in the plant, John designed the machines used to pull the separating threads (see photograph). The device has a revolving cylinder which is coated with a sticky substance to which the initial ends of the separating yarn adhere. The threads wound around the cylinder are cut apart and easily removed by running a knife along a lengthwise groove cut in the cylinder. The on-off switch on the separating machine has a third position





**Above, employee logs in bundles of sewn sweaters before sending them down chute to finishing and shipping floor. Left, exhaust fans in pressing area are positioned to efficiently draw steam away from the presser's face and out of the air-conditioned building.**

a special safety stage, which, when activated, reverses the motor, stopping the machine instantly instead of gradually as is the case when the off position is touched.

After a sweater order is cut and assembled into bundles of 12 garments each, it is distributed to designated operators in the 80-person sewing force. As on the knitting floor, the machines are not hard wired but plugged into individual outlets in the floor. Only air lines hang above the machines. The wiring as well as the four sewing tables per unit set-up with operators seated facing one another gives better machine maneuverability when shifting is necessary.

Roosevelt has infrared lights attached to its buttonholers and some other machines to indicate to operators where buttonholes and pockets are to be stitched. A commercial device, a Glo-Marker, marks the buttonhole spacing with a chalk visible only under the black light. John Carter designed the method the plant uses to indicate pocket placement. This involves a plastic die and a spray which, again, is visible only under an infrared lamp.

The sewing department has a number of Button Aids by Rent All System in place and each is aligned to

feed a different size button. Rather than continuously changing these settings, operators are moved to the properly sized button hopper. If the needed size is not available, a hand fed unit is used.

In its constant modernization of the sewing operation, the mill has added needle positioners and undertrimmers to all its Singer machines. The conversions resulted in less work for the operator as well as garments cleaned of loose threads.

The cutting, marking and sewing starts in one corner of the third floor and proceeds in a reverse J-configuration. At the end of the production line, the sewn garments are logged in a book before the bundles are sent down a gravity chute to the second floor.

Equipment on the second floor includes six flat finishers plus a few Paris finishers which are called into action for some styles. John Carter's ingenuity again shows in the steaming area where exhaust fans have been placed in the wall directly above the pressers rather than in the ceiling above their stations, the more usual practice. The fans thus draw the steam off in front of the employee, leaving her cool and comfortable and also keeping the steam from adversely

affecting the air conditioning system which was installed plant-wide three years back.

Garments at Roosevelt receive a 100 per cent inspection. Any flaw is marked with a small, brightly colored sticker which replaced the pin tickets whose use often created new defects. Any sweaters in need of repair go back to the third floor and after repair are returned -in a truck for reinspection. If approved the second time around, they go to the assembly area where groups of three of a style, size and color are made up, ready to be pulled for order fulfillment.

After an order is made up, the shipping clerk needs only to make a garment count to see that it conforms to the packing slip written out by the computer. The packing slip is part of a four-copy shipping order printed out by the computer when the order was received. The print-out also includes a label, the cost and the shipping charge. The shipping clerk retains one copy of the shipping order as proof that the order went out and sends the remaining copy to the computer room for billing.

When Roosevelt installed its IBM System 3 Model 10 computer three years ago, IBM wrote eight programs for the sweater mill. John Carter has since written 80 more. The computer uses punch cards one third the usual card size yet the cards hold 20 per cent more information. "The real payoff of the system is that we can gear it to our procedures. It has enabled us to keep our dollars turning very quickly," John said.

Roosevelt added a 3M 400 Reader/Printer two years ago. This is used to read microfilmed records and can also print the information out in full size. Whenever an invoice is microfilmed, the bill of lading is included to give the mill proof of delivery.

The sophisticated controls employed at Roosevelt are only one aspect "of how the sweater business has changed in Joe Carter's 50 years in the field. Equally significant changes have occurred in knitting, sewing and finishing equipment and in yarn, he notes.

But along with the technological bounty has come a real need for discipline, he asserts. "As an industry we are suffering the results of our recent excesses. We went crazy buying equipment, building inventory and, generally, taking advantage of the easy availability of dollars. To survive, we've got to tighten our belts."