Executive Director’s Report
By Herb Hackenburg

During the last quarter I believe THG has established a new record for being busy. Besides our normal activities, several significant events occurred which took up much of our concentration and many work hours.

Ownership issues
Board members Larry DeMuth and Karen Tatelman worked with the U S WEST Legal Department and Bill Morey, corporate records manager, for nearly two years to establish bailment agreements, and a deed of gift to establish the ownership and/or control of artifacts, photographs, equipment and manuscript material we have on hand. This process required detailed inventories of everything in the archive or displayed in the two Denver telephone museums. Dressed in grubs, records managers Morey, Steve Dory, and I spent two days conducting a pallet by pallet inventory of our 43 tons of raw material. Prior to this duty the three of us sifted through 13 pallets of “new” old material Morey had pulled from U S WEST’s massive records storage facility. I was pleasantly surprised to find that much of the “new” old stuff was originally sent to the USW archive by me in the mid-80s while I was researching *Muttering Machines*.

Anyway, a master inventory was completed – at the same time we culled out about 50 percent of the original 43 tons of material. Plus, removing so much stuff in Archive C enabled us to pass a fire inspection two weeks later.

In June, a deed of gift and a bailment agreement was signed between U S WEST and the Telecommunications History Group. Thus, the THG owns the administrative equipment (chairs, files, tables, etc.), photographs, nearly all manuscript material, video tapes, BSPs, reference library, and artifacts currently in its control; and we have bailment agreements covering the directory collection and copyright issues.

I’d like to add an observation. Later in this report I’ll cover Jody’s and my attendance at the Society of American Archivists Annual Meeting held in Denver in August. One of the
At Your Elbow

SAA Meeting

My dear Sir:

I have been meaning to call on you for some time and have been delayed by other engagements. I have been observing closely the progress of your work and am greatly interested in the results you are achieving.

I understand you have been working on a new project which you plan to complete soon. I hope it will be successful and that it will bring you the recognition you deserve.

Please let me know when you would be available to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]
One of the things I learned from my sessions with the business archive section is that we all face the same problems, mostly having to worry about funding. Our perspective is a bit different than most, but THG still has funding worries, especially since our major benefactor, the U S WEST Foundation is no longer in existence. We're working on a menu of alternative funding sources including the sale of our duplicate historic telephone company stock certificates.

The universal resolution to this problem seems to be constantly providing management with specific examples and proof that you're more than paying for your keep. We agree that this is a good idea and we know that THG has a strong story to tell, for some reason we haven't been telling it as aggressively as we need to.

**Burlingame request**

A few weeks ago I received a phone call from the Pioneer Association office. It seems that the current Association President is Hal Burlingame, AT&T vice president of human resources. Hal and I joined the Bell System on the same day, in the Ohio Bell PR department. Hal wanted some historic perspective and photographs for the Pioneer National Assembly's opening multimedia show and we've been providing most of it.

In addition, as his legacy, Hal is publishing of a hardcover book about telephone heroes and heroines through history using a format similar to Tom Brocaw's book about World War II heroes. To help gather the stories, Hal and the Pioneers have set up an interactive web site ([www.telephone pioneers.org](http://www.telephone pioneers.org)) for people to submit their stories. I was asked to "salt" the site with some of my stories. I've written a dozen little stories and I'm in the process of getting them on the web site (not an easy chore when you have more than one story). One of those stories is about a former Pioneer Association President, who I happen to know and admire, and a job he did for the United States Air Force. This former operating company president serves on our board, most of you know him. His initials are R. K. T.

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**SAVING TIME by TELEPHONE**

When a man feels the necessity of being in two places at the same time he goes to the nearest Telephone and sends his voice.

In the daily use of the Telephone a man travels all over town by wire in a few minutes. It is just as easy to travel all over the state and other states by means of the Universal Long Distance Service of the Bell System.

**Rocky Mountain Bell Telephone Co.**

Wm. UPHAM, Manager.

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**Tours-R-Us**

There must be something in the air - we're being asked to give tours of the old headquarters building or our archive every week. The first week in September we gave archive tours to new employee classes Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday mornings, and on Wednesday evening we conducted tour of the headquarters building for the Rocky Mountain Guides Association. More tours are being scheduled and two of the instructors at the Training Center
determined Archivist Intern

Bell Telephone Company

The Rocky Mountain

Life

Often Saves Human

Shawn conducted the history class for a moderate employe learning category. I would encourage learning sessions like new Contact History sessions into the new employee learning curriculum.
while working on the history so she reintroduced herself. He remembered her and talked enthusiastically about the book. Ilana said, "I'd like to talk to Mr. Whitacre about the book, would you introduce me to him?" Notebaert walked Ilana over to Whitacre and introduced the five-foot, one, Ilana to the six-foot, five, Whitacre, then whispered into her ear, "Good luck."

Whitacre reached down to shake Ilana's hand and asked in his Texas drawl, "What can I do for you, little lady?" Ilana answered, "Tonight you're going to talk about the future of telecommunications, and I want to tell you that there'd be no future if there weren't a past. And this history book could not have been produced without the Ameritech archive. So why did you close it?"

As he slowly leafed through, *Snapshots in Time: A Photographic History of Ameritech*, Whitacre told Ilana that he had no idea that archives were being closed down by his company. A few days after his discussion with Pergam, Whitacre rehired Caughlin and moved him to Texas where he is now in charge of consolidating the Chicago, San Francisco and Dallas SBC archives into a newly restored historic telephone building in San Antonio. Pergam is no longer an intern, but a full-time SBC archivist working to prepare the Ameritech archive for an orderly, two-year move to its new custom-built home in Texas. She's also in charge of upgrading SBC's antique telephone exhibits in Chicago.

Thus, a Manhattan Island-born, former grade school teacher becomes a legend in both the archive and telephone businesses.

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**We Have a Winner!**

*Ralph Taylor*, of Lakewood, CO, was the first to identify the building as 1175 Osage St., in Denver. Others who answered correctly were *Richard Cloud, Raymond Cordsen, Jeff Garrett, Lynn Graves, and Bill Himmelman.*

The three-story building was built around 1890, and has served various functions over the years. Western Electric built and repaired PBX phones in part of it, and the Colorado Telephone Company used the ground floor to stable horses. Division Manager Raymond Cordsen reports that at one time, the plant training center was located in the Osage building. According to Ray, in those days "we took service pretty seriously." Richard Cloud, from El Paso, remembers it as the former teletypewriter service center. During the 1970s and 1980s, Mountain Bell corporate records were stored on the third floor.

In 1987, Mountain Bell/US WEST donated the building to Osage Initiatives, which works to help homeless and low income people learn job skills, become employed and stay employed. They also provide emergency housing, child care, adult learning, literacy training and technical skills courses.

So you see, the old building at 12th and Osage continues its rich history!
Good luck.

In this issue, we've printed archival material from one of the peaks of working with old records. Ken offered this treasure to us while Ken Pratt was back in Denver for a trip to Kentucky Mountain Bell Telephone Co., and I'm so glad we have the story. Ken is an important part of our history collection, and I'm proud to have him with us. He is a valued member of the Bell Telephone Historical Society and is doing great work on our telephone collection.

For those of you who have been to the Calgary Public Library or the Red Deer Public Library, you may have noticed the new display at the main branch. It features a selection of old telephone directories from around the world. These books are a testament to the evolution of the telephone. Ken has done a fantastic job on this project.

We are especially happy to honor Ken Pratt for his hard work and dedication to our community. He is a valuable asset to our staff and a great member of our community. We appreciate all that he does for us.

By Becky George

Volunteer Corner

The Rocky Mountain Bell Telephone Company

Brings Prompt Aid in Case of Fire

Bell Telephone Company

The Rocky Mountain Bell Telephone Company

Brings Prompt Aid in Case of Fire
Kindness Wins a Friend

By E.L. Williams
Local Manager, Keokuk, Iowa

The following story was published in The Northwestern Bell, October, 1921. This, and other employee publications, provide some of the most valuable material for historians and other researchers who use our collection. The publications provide not only a look into the past of the telephone industry, but reflect the culture of our country. Theodore N. Vail was the first president of the American Telephone & Telegraph Company and the “father” of universal service, who envisioned a national telephone system. Francis Elliot was the author of Pals First, Haunted Pajamas, and Lend Me Your Name.

Professor Elliot is an author and playwright, and of course makes trips to New York City and other Eastern points several times a year. However, he lives in this city (Keokuk).

This story deals with the first time Mr. Elliott met the late Theodore N. Vail. It was several years ago, and at that time Mr. Elliott lived in Chicago and was on a business trip to New York, about the Christmas time of the year. He was invited by a friend of his to spend the week-end at a business men’s club at Cranford, N. J., and while there the following incident happened. Here is the way Mr. Elliott tells it:

“I was sitting in the club parlor looking out of the window, and that man (pointing to a picture of Mr. Vail which I have hanging on the wall) came up to me and said, ‘You are away from home and lonesome, aren’t you?’

“I said, ‘Yes, a little.’
“He then said, ‘You would like to talk to the wife, wouldn’t you?’
“I replied that I would be delighted to have a chat with her, if it were possible.

“Mr. Vail then walked over to a telephone booth, and I heard him say, ‘Give me the big copper circuit; I want it right away!’ Then he came over and asked me for my name and address, and if I had a telephone in my residence. I informed him that I did not, and he then asked for the name of the nearest drug store. In a little while he called me to the booth and told me that my wife was on the line, to talk as long as I wanted to and to tell Mrs. Elliott that it was a Christmas present from the telephone company.

“I never appreciated anything so much in my life as I did that . . . I consider Mr. Vail one of the biggest men of his time.”
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