

# Dial Log



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Editor, Jody Georgeson

## Director's Report

By Jody Georgeson

It's hard to believe that summer's almost over, and that 2010 is nearly three-quarters gone. It's time to send the kids and grandkids back to school, time to harvest the garden we've worked so hard on all summer, and time to think about getting the snow shovel out. At THG, it means it's time for our annual membership drive. Please watch for your membership form in the mail this month.

There are many of you out there working to save the history of our industry. I recently had the opportunity to visit the Telephone Pioneer Museum in Colorado Springs and to have a good chat with the people there. (They were also selling candy – a real bonus as far as I'm concerned.) The Plains and Peak Council's collection of historic phones and switchboards is stored at the Qwest Telephone Pioneers Museum, 308 East Pikes Peak Ave. The museum is open Fridays from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Another museum that we're hearing good things about is the Golden West Pioneer Telephone Exhibit in the Gunnison, Colorado Pioneer Museum. The museum is open from Memorial Day to Labor Day during daytime hours.

We've spoken before about the Telephone Museum of New Mexico in Albuquerque (110 Fourth Street N. W., M-F, 10-2), and of the Capehart Museum in Corsicana, Texas (by appointment, 903-872-0440). Both are well worth visiting.

Check our website for a list of other fine telephone museums. And if you encounter any on your travels or know of one in your hometown, please let us know.

Many of you are Pioneers, so you probably already know about the big doings planned for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of that organization. The General Assembly will be held in Boston, as was the first meeting on. The organization was the brainchild of Henry W. Pope who, along with Charles Truex and Thomas B. Doolittle, organized over 450 people to be members of the new organization. The first meeting, on November 2- 3, 1911, was attended by 245 men who elected AT&T President Theodore N. Vail the first President of the Telephone Pioneers of America.

The history of the Pioneer organization goes hand-in-hand with the history of the Bell System. THG is working with the Pioneers to make this the best General Assembly ever, so I hope many of you are able to attend next fall.

## Special Meeting of Qwest Stockholders

By Herb Hackenburg

The stage was set. The bit players were in place. The audience was seated. The stars walked on to the stage and the show began. The show had a brief run.

It was named, "Special Meeting of Stockholders," and was a production of Qwest Communications International, Inc. The show had about a one hour run on Tuesday, August 24, 2010. The stage was located in the Colorado Ballroom of the Denver Marriott City Center. At the same time, a similar show was going on in Monroe, Louisiana, produced by CenturyLink.

The agenda was to approve a merger between Qwest and CenturyLink by a vote from the shareholders of the two companies. In simple terms, the shareholders were asked to approve CenturyLink's purchase of Qwest. This story will be about the Denver half of the meeting.

To this writer, the stars of the show were **Edward A. Mueller**, chairman and CEO of Qwest; **Richard N. Baer**, EVP, General Counsel, Chief Administrative Officer and Corporate Secretary; **Gerald R. Armstrong**, national shareholder advocate; and the delightful Qwest employees who served at the registration desk, the cloak room and as greeters and ushers.

The real business of the meeting was finished within the first 15 minutes when Mueller announced that the preliminary returns on the shareholder ballots indicated the merger was approved by more than 96 percent of the shares voted.

Baer reviewed the Rules of Conduct for the meeting at the start. Most of the rules concerned the question and answer period in which shareholders participated.

In his opening remarks, Mueller talked about the bright future of the newly combined company, the increasingly more solid financial results that Qwest currently enjoyed, the growth of Qwest's broadband services, and the steady improvement of Qwest's debt to the rating of "investment grade." He also noted that CenturyLink had exceeded all financial expectations, and held an excellent reputation in the business.

Mueller went on to point out that the merged company's shareholders will appreciate the 50-percent increase in dividends. He said that CenturyLink's executive leadership was greatly impressed by the "can do" attitude exhibited by Qwest employees. He indicated that the merger had already been approved by several state and federal regulatory agencies and work was continuing with all other relevant regulatory agencies.

Armstrong was the second person to step up to the microphone during the "Question & Answer Period." As a lifelong



shareowner advocate and former CEO, Armstrong always comes to stockholder meetings fully prepared. He brings pages of penetrating and sometimes difficult questions that he has formed after diligent research of relevant corporate records, news stories, annual reports and proxy statement prospectus's.

Armstrong asked about four questions which Mueller and Baer did or did not answer. He was then asked to yield the floor as he had taken more than twice his allotted time. This is also normal procedure. He would return to the podium later.

Visitors to the microphone included **Mimi Hull**, president of the US West Association of Retirees, who asked questions about pension fund management (Answer: same company will handle it after the merger). Will the two pension funds be merged? (Answer: don't know); and a few other retiree questions (general answer: all legal and financial obligations will be met.)

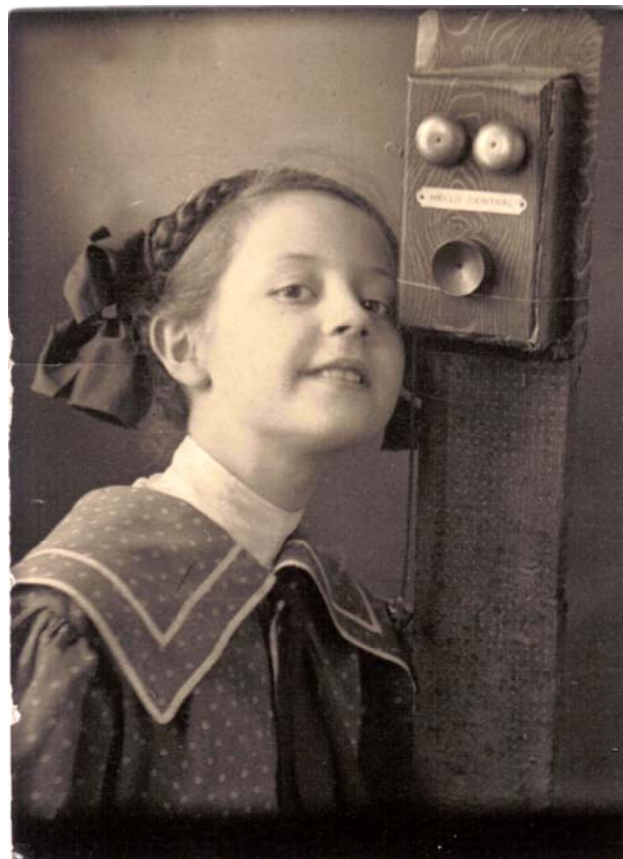
Another shareholder, **Mary Taylor** (vice president of CWA District 7) explained why the union did not support the merger. Basically she said it was because the senior management of Qwest was not forthcoming with answers the union had about several employee issues after the merger. Mueller thanked Taylor for her input.

Armstrong returned to the microphone to ask more questions. Some were answered and some weren't. When told the meeting was about to be adjourned, he noted the



Qwest logo at the back of the stage and said, "That Qwest logo reminds me of a noose. And now I think my head is about to be put in it." The fewer than 20 shareholders at the meeting let out a laugh.

## Hello, Central!



**Andrew Wright** sent us this photo of his great-great grandmother, and we couldn't resist sharing it with you.

The little cutey is Nelva Edwards. Nelva was born in 1898 in Bloomington, Illinois. We estimate that Nelva was 6-7 years old at the time of this picture.

If you have any photos or documents of an historical nature, we are always adding to our collection. And remember, don't throw out "new" things because you think we don't want them - current events will be tomorrow's history.



## Early Telephone Communications in Washington

By Don Ostrand

*The following is the continuation of The Narrative of the Development of Toll Lines in the State of Washington. This segment tells of the development of facilities that initiated a cross-state and interstate communications network.*

The next and most important step in toll development in Washington (and the one which first brought the small systems of the two sections into communication with the outside world and with each other) was the 1892 building of lines between Tacoma, Seattle, and Portland, and between Spokane Falls (now Spokane) and Portland. This was a pioneering undertaking of vast importance, considering the amount of undeveloped land between these cities. Approximately 180 miles and 400 mile respectively, would cost a quarter of a million dollars. At the time, populations of these cities were: Seattle, 45,000; Tacoma, 36,000; Spokane Falls 20,000; and Portland, 50,000. The total number of exchange subscribers in the four cities was nearly 2,500.

Since telephone lines of equal and greater length successfully operating elsewhere in the United States, business men of these four cities desired similar service.

Improved construction methods were adopted in these lines. Good 25-foot poles were set and six-pin cross-arms placed to carry the original metallic circuit of 172# copper, and to provide space for subsequent

additions. The lead between Tacoma and Portland was built by the Sunset Company from Tacoma to the junction of the Lewis and Columbia Rivers, and by the Oregon Telephone and Telegraph Company from Portland to this point, crossing the Columbia River at Vancouver in a submarine cable. Between Tacoma and the Lewis River the line followed the wagon roads where available, approximately paralleling the railroad and passing through the towns of Lakeview, Roy, Centralia, Chehalis, Winlock, Castle Rock, Kelso, Kalama and Vancouver.

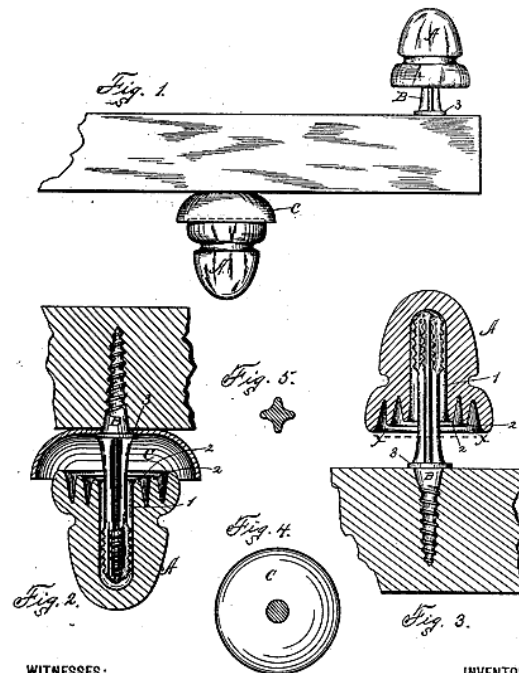
The phone company requested, but was denied, permission to build a line on the railroad right-of-way. The company obtained poles from forests along the route. The men encountered many problems crossing the swamps between Kelso and Kalama. They had to use rafts to transport materials as the roads were impassable.

(No Model.)

F. M. LOCKE.  
INSULATOR.

No. 484,209.

Patented Oct. 11, 1892.



WITNESSES:

H. A. Cochran  
C. D. Kinne

INVENTOR

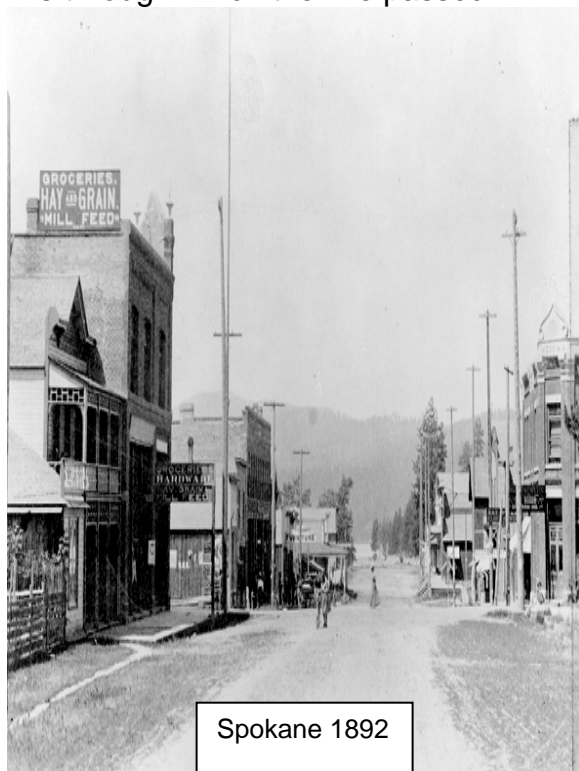
Fred. M. Locke

BY  
Smith & Brunsell  
his ATTORNEYS



The original lead between Tacoma and Seattle was not adequate to carry the crossarm and additional circuit, so it was rebuilt of larger poles, and the existing circuit was transferred to the 6-pin crossarm. The company took a direct route between Tacoma and Auburn, instead of going through Puyallup.

Similar construction methods were employed on the Spokane-Portland lead, which was built by the Oregon Company from Portland, along the south bank of the Columbia River to John Day, and there met by the Inland Company, who rebuilt the Spokane - Walla Walla lead. They extended it to Wallula, and thence along the south bank of the Columbia River to John Day. The rocky landscape along the river made construction exceedingly difficult, and hazardous. In many cases the line was inaccessible from the railroad, so poles and wire had to be distributed from rafts and taken by hand up the bluffs. A large percentage of the poles in this section were set in holes blasted out of solid rock. Stations were established in all the principal towns through which the line passed.



Spokane 1892

Another important extension made during 1892 was between Spokane and Sprague via Deep Creek, Medical Lake and Cheney. This was the first unit of a line, which was eventually extended to Pasco, and resulted from the growth of Cheney and Sprague. Similarly a line was built from Spokane through Tekoa to Garfield, Pullman and Moscow, and several of the existing leads in this section were reconstructed on better routes. Universities had been recently established at Pullman and Moscow and all of the towns of the Palouse Country were growing rapidly.

Conversely, just a small amount of construction was occurring in the Sound section. Lines were laid between Tenino on the Portland-Tacoma lead, and Olympia. This provided a direct line to the south, without routing through Tacoma.

In the three years following (1892 to 1895) many additions were made to the plant tributary to Seattle and Tacoma. The first of these was the lead between Olympia and Port Townsend, which was purchased in 1893 from the Postal Telegraph Company. It was converted into a telephone line in compliance with demands for telephone communication between Olympia and other Puget Sound cities and Port Townsend, the official port of entry for Puget Sound.

The most important addition during this period was the development of the Seattle-Bellingham-Vancouver backbone lead. The first step in its establishment was the construction in 1893 of a lead, carrying one circuit between Seattle and Snohomish (then the county seat of Snohomish County) and the most important city between Seattle and Bellingham, Everett, little more than a station on the newly completed railroad. Shortly after the completion of this line to Snohomish, real estate and development companies in the vicinity of Lowell and Everett, offered to help pay for the the circuit, induced the Telephone Company to extend it to Lowell.

In 1894, the circuit was extended to Everett, which had developed into an

important town because of activities of these promotion companies and the Great Northern Railway, and in which a small telephone exchange had been established. During the same year the Telephone Company purchased a lead of small poles and a circuit of #6 iron from the Postal Telegraph Company. This lead extended from Snohomish to Bellingham through Marysville, Silvana, Stanwood, Mount Vernon, Avon, Bell (now Belleville), Lake Samish, Fairhaven, Sehome, Whatcom (the last three towns have since consolidated into Bellingham), Ferndale, Hillsdale, and Blaine. Stations were established at practically all of these towns and service was also added to Vancouver and other British Columbia points. This lead connected at Blaine with the British Columbia Telephone Company, who had purchased the extension of the Postal lead into British Columbia.

The phone company made another important addition in 1893 by acquiring a line connecting Olympia, Aberdeen, and Hoquiam. These lumbering towns on Grays harbor were growing rapidly and several of the large lumber companies had branches or headquarters there. In order to communicate between their branches, the lumber companies had constructed a telephone line under the name of Olympia-Grays Harbor Telephone Company. They operated the line until 1890, but no connection was made with the Sunset Company at Olympia and it was necessary to repeat messages for Seattle and Tacoma. This inconvenience led to the sale of the line to the Sunset Company in 1893.

In 1895, the company established service to Anacortes by purchasing a private telegraph line between Mount Vernon and La Conner, and by constructing an extension from La Connor to Anacortes. La Conner was the center of the richest hay land in the state and Anacortes was the site of several large lumber mills and fish canneries.

No extensions were made In the Inland Empire to existing plant during this period,

but a lead (which later proved to be the first unit in the Spokane-Seattle trans-state lead) was built between Wenatchee and Waterville in order to furnish service between these two growing agricultural centers. This line was not intended to be part of the trans-state lead. Such a lead had not been seriously considered, because of the difficulty of construction through the vast unproductive area in the central part of the state and over the Cascade Mountains.



## Membership Drive

You will soon receive your 2010-2011 membership form. This year, we have added a space to give a special gift in support of our upcoming exhibit at the Denver Public Library.

The exhibit will be the nucleus of a traveling exhibit, which we'll make available to other museums.

I hope you will give generously, to help us continue our work to save **your** history. Your membership will also ensure that you continue to receive the *Dial-Log*.





### UNDER A TELEPHONE POLE

I AM a copper wire slung in the air,  
Slim against the sun I make not even a clear  
line of shadow.  
Night and day I keep singing--humming and  
thrumming:

It is love and war and money; it is the fighting  
and the tears, the work and want,  
Death and laughter of men and women  
passing through me, carrier of your speech,  
In the rain and the wet dripping, in the dawn  
and the shine drying,  
A copper wire.

*Carl Sandburg (1878–1967).  
Chicago Poems. 1916*

### A Phone Man Who Played Practical Jokes on Himself By Herb Hackenburg

Bob was a fellow writer in the Public Relations Department at Ohio Bell, where I began my Bell System career. Quiet guy – kept to himself until he got to know you. Bob lived on Cleveland’s west side. Because of Lake Erie, people in the metro area lived either on the west or east side of the Cuyahoga River. I, too, lived on the west side. Bob lived in very upscale Bay Village. I lived in less upscale Avon Lake, the next town west.

It was because of where I lived that I got to know Bob very well, very quickly. I’d been with Ohio Bell for about two months when he came over to my desk and asked if I would drive him home after work. I said I’d be happy to, and asked if his car had broken down. “No,” he said, I’ve locked my keys in the car, again.”

On our way to Bay Village, Bob told me a little about himself. His grandfather had owned one of the largest fleets of iron ore carriers on the Great Lakes, and Bob’s father inherited the shipping company. Bob was raised on a large estate on the south shore of Lake Erie. (Today there is a high-rise condominium where his boyhood home stood.) Bob said he never had any interest in big boats – riding on, working on, or owning them. He just wanted to write.

Anyway, Bob said his regular “locked-keys-in-car” routine was to find a ride home. His house key was also locked in the car, but he had distributed house keys to four of his neighbors and would retrieve a key from one of them. He’d wait until his wife came home and she would drive him back downtown. Then they’d have dinner at a nice downtown restaurant. “It costs me dinner every time I do that,” Bob said with a little smile.

Here are some more of Bob’s escapades.

At the time, Bob's car was a new Volkswagen "beetle." He'd spent his lunch hour buying a 4 by 8 rose trellis, which he tied to the roof of his car. That evening, Bob was driving down Huron Road (one of Cleveland's main east/west streets) during rush hour. At a major intersection a string broke and the trellis was flopping around in front of his windshield. He quickly stopped, got out, and retied the string. Of course he slammed the door shut and locked his keys in the car again. *With the motor running.* It may have been one of the largest traffic jams in Cleveland's history. It made the evening television news.



Bob came into the office one morning, opened his appointment book, scowled, grabbed the book and a binder and left the office in a hurry. The next day he told a few of us what had happened. According to his appointment book, Bob had a class to conduct in Columbus at 10:00 a.m. He raced to the motor pool, checked out a car and sped to Columbus. Luckily, the class was to be held in a garage on Columbia's far north end, so he was only 20 minutes late. He went into the garage and it was empty. He looked all around – not a soul. Bob waited a few minutes and no one showed up, so he checked his appointment book once more. It was then he saw that the book was two years old. Then he remembered that he had conducted classes when he worked in the Human Resources Department, but never since coming to PR.

One of Bob's adventures was when he worked for Human Resources. He was testing a group of new employees assembled in a garage in Dayton. The test was rather long and he got bored, so he stepped outside of the room, closing the door behind him. You guessed it. Bob locked himself out of his own

classroom. He had to go outside the garage to a window, knock on the window, and interrupt a student's test to have him open the door. He gave the class some extra time to finish the test.

In a non-telephone company event, Bob drove to a sporting goods store to buy a pair of running shoes. As he tells it, he bought the shoes, came out of the store and found his car missing. The parking lot wasn't very big and his car wasn't in it. Aware of his proclivities, Bob walked completely around the store. No car. The police were called. When Bob described the car, the officers affirmed that there were only two cars in the lot, neither of which matched his description. Then Bob really looked at one of the two parked cars –it was his wife's.

Then there was Bob's Bell System tenth anniversary luncheon. The BSP (Bell System Practice) declares that the tenth anniversary is not that big a deal. The boss takes the celebrant and a couple of friends to lunch and presents the service pin. Bob invited another writer and me to his luncheon. After a pleasant meal, Bob's boss made a little speech and presented the pin. Bob accepted his award, then announced that he was quitting Ohio Bell, was not going back to the office, and that his final check should be sent to his home. He gave his building pass to his open-mouthed boss and left the restaurant.

I saw Bob at a shopping center about a year later, and he explained that he knew Bell System employees qualified for a minimum pension after ten years of service. He had received a very large inheritance, did not like being edited by a non-writer, and wanted to write exactly what, how, and when he wanted to write. At the time I spoke to him, Bob's first book was about to be published. I had been at Mountain Bell for several years when an old friend at Ohio Bell told me Bob had had at least three more books published.



I don't know how many more times he locked his keys in the car.



## The Welton Street Gang

By Ron Flannery

They fit the definition of a gang - ribald, protective, fraternal and committed. Each one shares a kinship in Ma Bell's family. They bring diverse skills, experience, and know how to implement and build the product. Most have metaphorically walked with Angus MacDonald in the snow. A new 1950's corporate strategy breeds those genetic attributes into a new entity. The first Mountain Bell Business Sales force emerges. A different telco address, not 931 14th, not 1125 Champa, but 1455 Welton solidifies their bonding. They are the Welton Street Gang.



Installers, repairmen, construction crew, a few street hires, and Business Office transfers comprise this new organization. New sales training melds into the old technical lessons. A big, brown, leather brief case with two handles carries the tools of a new trade. Coats, ties and dress hats represent a new dress code. Sedans, not trucks, are checked out of the Osage Garage. The neighborhood coffee shop welcomes a new clientele of "bell-shaped" heads.

Their client base includes any and all businesses in the Denver area. Account Managers, Salesmen

and Representatives carve it up according to size, shape and purpose. Service records for

1FB's, key systems and 555 PBX's fit into new nomenclatures. The old Plant lingo mixes with the new Marketing jargon to create a new culture. Beyond the commercial venue, they make a name for themselves competing in area basketball and baseball leagues.

Over time they mature and develop expertise attractive for promotions and career development in other assignments. After sixty years, their numbers decline. The pioneering spirit remains. Nostalgic anecdotes reanimate the cast of characters at regular luncheon gatherings. This is the Welton Street Gang.



*It's almost Thanksgiving time. At THG, we are thankful every day for our wonderful volunteers and loyal members. We hope you have a safe and happy Autumn, full of beautiful leaves, sunny days, and tasty turkeys!*

