

This is the newsletter that *almost* didn't make it.

Why?

Because we are nearly broke!



It is a long story involving the IRS, the US WEST Foundation, a wonderful law firm that paid its bill within two days, and a miscalculation by your Dial-Log editor.


When the Telecommunications History Group gained its 501(c)(3) nonprofit agency status from the IRS in 1993, part of the deal was that the History Group would show 'public support' within the next three years. The IRS says about one third of our operating budget should come from small donors (\$25 or less each) to illustrate that we have public support for our efforts.

The staff, the volunteers, and the board of directors got so busy getting the History Group going, we all forgot the IRS mandate.

A major part of our successful start was gaining full funding from the U S WEST Foundation. And, believe me, we are thankful to the Foundation for its wonderful help. The problem is that with the funding in place last year and this

year, we did not pay proper attention to our IRS mandate.

At the beginning of this year, we applied to the Foundation for money to carry out our growing programs, and the Foundation director, Jane Prancan, brought our request before the board. It was accepted. Jane called to tell us that we would get our money pending certification by the IRS indicating that we had met our 501(c)(3) obligations. Until we are certified, the IRS



We need to raise public support dollars to obtain our 501(c)(3) status.

considers us a "private" foundation. As a private foundation, we are unable to accept funding from another private foundation.

Guip!

Thus, we are in trouble because we have not conducted any sort of membership and/or fund drives. The success of such a drive will illustrate to the to the IRS that we have public support. With the support, the IRS will allow us to continue operating as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit agency, which in turn would allow the U S WEST Foundation to give us a grant containing the major part of our funding.

Now about that law firm. We did a directory research job for The Law Firm of Kevin S. Hannon. It was a pretty big job, and we did it well, and within the deadlines. We sent the results of our research along with an invoice to Hannon. We received the check two days later.

The \$425 check will just cover the cost of printing and mailing this newsletter, if we do not the make the newsletter so long that it costs more than a 32-cent stamp to mail each copy.

Membership Drive Plans Are Underway.

There is no doubt that all this is much more than you really want to know regarding our financial problems, but it's a sly way of telling you that you're going to receive a formal membership solicitation from us very soon.

Please consider
this newsletter
an informal
membership
solicitation.



Sign Me Up!

Life is better because of the heroic deeds of many telephone people over the years.

Our archives contain scores of stories about superhuman efforts of telephone people doing what has to be done to provide vital telephone service during every kind of disaster created by nature or man. Along the way, the telephone people have saved lives — hundreds of lives.

— This is one such story.

This is an excerpt from a report written by J.H. Christensen, Wyoming plant superintendent, Cheyenne, to his boss, Elmer E. Wyland, general plant manager, Mountain States Telephone & Telegraph Company, Denver. The 6-page, single-spaced report, dated Jan. 11, 1949, covers events in and around Cheyenne during the week of Jan. 2, 1949. Volunteer photo archivist Jerry Butler found this report in a folder of photographs. The segments of the report are presented unedited, just as originally written.

The storm began in Cheyenne Sunday noon, January 2, with a light snow. It increased in fury as the afternoon progressed and by mid-afternoon a severe blizzard was raging, with

winds of about 35 miles per hour and the temperature dropping rapidly. The storm continued all through Sunday night and by Monday morning, January 3, it was still snowing hard, with a north wind ranging in velocity from 45 to

50 miles per hour and gusts up to 56 miles per hour. The temperature was near zero and snow was beginning to drift badly. Visibility was from zero to 40 or 50 feet, and roads were rapidly becoming blocked. All train, bus and taxi

transportation was stopped, and it was dangerous to attempt to drive cars or walk on the streets.

Several paragraphs describe telephone employees walking to work—some exiting through windows because snow drifts had blocked the doors to their homes--then sleeping in hotel lobbies or at their work locations so telephone service would continue throughout the storm. In addition, the Phone Company had the only vehicle that could get through the drifts; it was an early version of a snowmobile. The Phone Company called it a snow buggy and it was designed to carry two people. The buggy and its crew had already saved several lives and delivered two expectant mothers to the hospital by the time this report continues.)

At 2 a.m. Wednesday morning, January 5, the Red Cross called Mr. Hough (phone company employee) at the hotel. He was told they had a lady, Mrs. Robert Merrill, living about 6-1/2 miles east of Cheyenne, who was expecting a baby and needed to be brought into town where she could obtain medical attention.

Mr. Hough went to the fire station and, with one of the firemen, started out to the Merrill Ranch. Visibility was very poor; however, they were able to find their way while in town because the street lights were on and all residents had been requested to

leave their house lights on so that people who might be lost would have some opportunity to find their way. While in town they were able to travel from one light area to another, zigzagging along the streets. When they arrived at 19th Street and Hugur Avenue, a man by the name of Mr. Bivens came out of a house and told them he lived about four miles east of Cheyenne and 1 1/4 miles north of the highway, that his wife and family were snowed in at their home and were without heat, and he was anxious to get out there and give them assistance. They picked him up and started east.'

The report continues, as the snow buggy reaches a point where there is no visibility and has to stop. A break in the weather allows the snow buggy to reach the Bivens ranch. Bivens walks around his entire house before the can find a way to talk to those inside by getting on his hands and knees and talking through the top of a slightly opened drift-blocked door. He finds everyone is okay and the crew leaves him digging his way into his home.

When the rescue party arrived at the Merrill Ranch they found it was necessary that the three-old Merrill girl be taken to her grandfather's ranch because she could not be left alone at this ranch, nor could she be brought to town, so they took her and her father to the Edward Merrill ranch, which is

located about a mile and a half beyond. On the way to the Edward Merrill ranch the rescue party came across more parked cars. They looked in each car to see if anyone was still stranded. There was no one in the first two, but when they reached the third car, two young men very excitedly came out of the car. They had been stalled there for about 62 hours. They were Mr. Sams and Mr. Kissick, students from Scottsbluff, Nebraska, who were returning to Boulder, Colorado, where they were attending school, when they became stranded.

Each man had with him a suitcase full of clothes, all of which were put on in an effort to keep warm. They were wearing socks on their hands and had shirts on their heads. Their car was in a precarious position, tipped nearly into the ditch, and was filled with snow. The boys were helped into the snow buggy and taken on with the party to the Merrill Ranch, where they all got warm and were given some hot food and the little girl was left with her grandfather. The boys found in the car were taken back to the Robert Merrill Ranch. On the way, the party delivered a gallon of milk and a sack of groceries to a nearby ranch, which was without food, delivering the groceries through a window. Visibility was still very poor, less than 100 feet, and the velocity of the wind was from 40 to 50 miles per hour with the temperature near zero.

Mr. Merrill was left at his ranch, and Mrs. Merrill, Mr. Sims, Mr. Kissick, Mr. Hough and Mr. Payne (the fireman) proceeded back to Cheyenne. It was necessary to overload the snow buggy because it seemed almost impossible to leave anyone behind. Just as the party was about two blocks from the Dutch Mill Service Station, which is located on Highway No. 30 1 1/2 miles east of Cheyenne, the snow buggy fell into a hole and both skis were broken.

Mrs. Merrill was carried from the snow buggy to the Dutch Mill where she was kept warm and dry while repairs were made on the snow buggy. Only one extra ski was being carried on the snow buggy for emergency use in order to keep the load as light

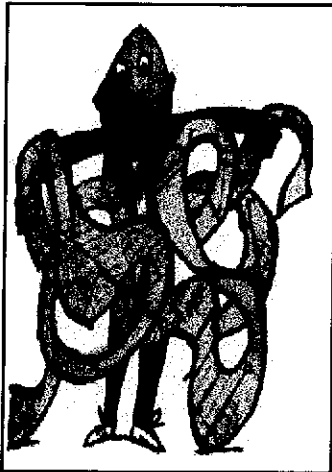
as possible. The (telephone co.) garage was called from a telephone at the Dutch Mill Cabin Camp to report the breakdown. Mr. Edmunds, combinationman, took the other extra ski and with a truck traveled as far as he could. He was able to travel about half a mile. He then took the ski, left the truck, and walked the remainder of the distance, dragging the ski behind him. The extra ski was for the opposite side of the machine and it was necessary to modify the ski to fit. The only tool they had was an ax and after some time they were able to cut away enough of the ski to make it fit on the right side. Mr. Sams and Mr. Kissick were then left at the Dutch Mill where they could be taken care of. A message was sent to the party they were to meet at the Plains Hotel, stating that these

boys were safe at the Dutch Mill. Mrs. Merrill, Mr. Edmunds, Mr. Hough and Mr. Payne then proceeded to the company truck, which had been used by Mr. Edmunds. Mr. Edmunds then brought Mrs. Merrill into town and delivered her to her mother's home where she could obtain the needed medical attention.'

The report continues on describing more life-saving adventures which the snow buggy crew carried on for several more hours on Wednesday and on through noon on Thursday.

Your historian has an observation. Over the years, these life-saving incidents and hundreds of others, never appeared on anyone's telephone bill.

Life is better here!



From the Archives

A New Feature from our Stash of Unpublished Manuscripts.

One of the neat things about an archive is that it serves as a gathering place for exciting, interesting, funny careers kept in the form of memories written in manuscripts. The best part of this deal, is that many of these memories name names and relate things as they were, not necessarily the way management wished or thought they were. In selected cases, we may change or edit out names to protect the innocent and/or the semi-naughty.

For our first manuscript column, we selected the contributions of Jack Schuh, which is German for 'shoe' and is pronounced 'shoe,' a retired outside plant foreman who worked out of the Boulder district. Jack's wonderful stories lean towards telephone construction in high-mountain country and many take place in the winter, especially around the Steamboat Springs area. He also suggests that his crew was usually made up of nearly every 'screw up the company thought it had, but I got the last laugh because I knew when it came to getting the job done right, my gang was one of the best crews in the whole damned outfit.'

The Schuh Box

by R. Jack Schuh

As a line foreman working in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, I had to learn how to cope with below zero weather. The reason Steamboat Springs is one of the finest ski towns in the world, is the amount of snow, the altitude and the majority of winter nights are near or below zero. Good for skiing, not good for telephone line construction.

There was only one place in town where we could park our line trucks in a heated garage, and then there was only room for one truck. This left me with the challenge to start up the trucks on those brisk mornings.

At zero there was no way we could start our large construction trucks, the engine oil was so thick the engines would hardly turn over, the transmission grease was so stiff we couldn't shift gears, the frozen grease in the front wheels made them unsteerable, and the grease in the rear wheels wouldn't let them turn unless they were being pulled on dry pavement.

We learned to cope with nature's deep freeze. We parked our largest line truck inside Norman's heated Mobil Service Station. The rest of my trucks had to be parked outside against the fence in a position so they could be towed straight ahead and down the road. We left them in second gear, front wheels pointed straight ahead and the emergency brakes off. We were probably breaking several BSPs (Bell System Practices, which were instructions on how to do everything at the telephone company).

In the morning, the crew would show up at Norman's and we'd start up our truck inside the garage, take it outside, chain it up to the first frozen truck, and begin towing it out of town. In town, the streets were icy, outside of town the roads were generally dry. So, when we towed the trucks inside the city we'd keep the towed truck's clutch in neutral to prevent the rear wheels from locking up and sliding all over the place.

Generally, we towed the truck out of town to dry pavement, then kept slipping the clutch until the rear wheels would turn the engine over. The engine would cough and come to life, but we would have to continue the tow for a couple of miles until the engine would keep running when we stopped. Then we would unhook the tow chain, leave the driver running the cold truck for several more minutes until the transmission was warm enough to shift gears. Then we would go back and get another truck. The morning would be well shot before we could even get to the job.

I had a conference call with my boss, O. F. Warfield, (in Denver) and explained it was useless to keep my crew up in Steamboat in the winter. He told me I did not know what I was talking about and he would come up to Steamboat and give me some pointers on how to do the job.

A couple of days later he came to Steamboat, but avoided my crew and checked into a motel on the other end of town from where we were staying. One of my guys saw him check into the motel right across the street from Norman's Mobil station. It was several degrees below zero when we got to Norm's Mobil the next morning and began our routine. We just got the last truck started when Warfield came slipping and sliding across the icy street and sheepishly requested a pull to start his company car.

Norm said we could use his 4-wheel drive Jeep to pull Warfield's car. We hooked the chain to the car and started down the street. We were able to shift the Jeep into second gear and pick up a bit of speed. Warfield let the clutch out on that company car, the wheels were still frozen, and the streets were icy. Warfield's car was whipping back and forth behind the Jeep, he was honking his horn and waving his arm. It was a heck of a scene.

We continued towards Hayden, and, as usual, the road outside of town was dry. Warfield gained control of his car, his rear wheels began to turn, his engine started and we stopped and unhooked the chain. His car died. We re-hooked the chain and towed him until his car was running like a watch. When we unhooked

the chain the second time, Warfield said he would buy the coffee back in town at the restaurant across from Norm's.

Never a word was said about how to work in zero weather. A few days later my crew and



Volunteer Column

by Carol Baird

This is going to be short and not so sweet.

Carol

Damn cancer!

Carol's husband, Ralph, has been undergoing experimental treatment for his cancer. His doctor is one of the nation's leading cancer researchers at the University of Colorado Medical School Hospital in Denver.

The treatment did not work.

Carol has been spending nearly all of her time with Ralph at the hospital and now at home. The volunteers and I do miss her.

Dottie

Damn cancer!

Soon after a recent telephone call from Carol at the hospital, we received another call. It was from Dottie, one of our volunteers. Dottie retired

I moved back to the eastern slope where the weather is a bit more reasonable.

More from the *Schuh Box* in the next issue.

from a bank, not the Telephone Company. She likes to help us two or three days a week. Her telephone call was to inform us that they found a lump on her breast.

Dottie is a World War II veteran who went through the London Blitz and the liberation of Paris. She calls everyone 'honey,' because she explains, 'Honey, I don't hear so well any more so I don't hear most introductions. I just call everyone 'honey,' so it doesn't matter if I missed their names, I don't have to remember so much and folks seem to like it.'

This is Dottie's second round for breast cancer. She's going into surgery just about the time you're reading this. She says she'll be back before August is over.

So Dottie, honey, you're tough and we'll see you in August. Meanwhile, we're all praying that both you and Ralph beat that evil disease.

Jet Setting Volunteers

We keep telling everyone that we have a very classy bunch of volunteers. This summer, one could call them members of the international jet set. **Georg Ek** just returned from a trip to Australia; **Ken Pratt** just returned from England, Scotland and Wales; **Dale Norblom** just returned from bicycling in the Netherlands and France. Closer to home, **Jerry Wild** is attending his son's wedding in Washington, D. C. and is touring several Civil War battlefields; **Lowell Todd** just returned from a trip to Missouri as did **Jerry Butler**. Lowell is now visiting Illinois. **Betty Vigil** is hosting a house full of visitors. **Bob Cook** is spending his summer on his ranch south of Pueblo, and **Herb** gets to give a history talk in Snowmass.

Working Volunteers

Jerry Wild and Georg Ek have restored a 555 PBX so that it will transmit calls; the cords, plugs and jacks will connect phones; and it will ring bells.

Wells Fargo wants our help!

It looks like Georg, Jerry Wild, and Jerry Butler will be installing a working magneto wall phone and candlestick phone in a new Wells

Executive Director's Report



Research Project

— The History Group has been asked to conduct research in its historic telephone directory collection about once a day. Research requests from commercial organizations such as law firms, detective agencies and telephone companies are billed out at \$50 an hour. A reasonable amount of research for non-commercial purposes is done at no charge, except for copying, handling and postage fees. We do request a donation, however.

New Acquisition: Scrapbook from Howard B. Santee (Western Electric), donated by his daughter, Mary S. Harris.

— The Telecommunications History Group has acquired some very interesting historic items since

Fargo Bank Building this August. The Wells Fargo historian (yes, Wells Fargo has an official historian) has asked the History Group to do the job. The candlestick phone was found in an old Wells Fargo vault in Denver and belonged to the Wells Fargo General Agent, Mr. Stubbs.

the last newsletter was published. Two items deserve special mention.

Mary S. Harris, an elderly lady in Durango, asked her friend and neighbor, who she knew was a telephone retiree, if he could suggest a final resting-place for her father's scrapbook. The retiree is an old friend of ours and he remembered our interest in telephone history. He and his neighbor called the History Group and we acquired the scrapbook.

What a gem!

The scrapbook belonged to Howard B. Santee, who was a patent license manager when he retired from Western Electric in 1956 after 39 years and 11 months with the company.

Mr. Santee was one of the engineers to work on the first public address system developed by Western Electric. Mr. Santee accompanied the public address system on its first time use to the public. That time happened to be President and Mrs. Harding's train trip through the American West and on to Alaska. A trip never completed because the president died.

Fortunately Santee was an amateur photographer, so his scrapbook contains several informal snapshots of Mr. and Mrs. Harding and some of Harding's cabinet members including a young man named Herbert Hoover. There are pictures of the president playing with wild bears in Yellowstone National Park and of Mrs. Harding being taken off a ship by a dockside crane while she stands in a packing crate.