



Dial-Log



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Jody Georgeson, EDITOR

Director's Report

By Herb Hackenburg

Flood

As the THG Directors were meeting last January 6, the THG archive was being flooded. Not the whole archive - just our Archive D, which is on the B-1 level below our main archive. A frozen pipe burst on the Arapahoe Street-side of our building, flooding about half of the floor housing our office and main archives (but not our half). The waters broke through the ceiling in several places on the level below us.

In Archive D, the water came through the ceiling in about the only area where we didn't have any material stored. Our main problem was the 2 inches of water on the floor. Fortunately, when Jody ran into all the emergency clean up crews (the staff had been at the board meeting when the building alarms went off at 1005 17th), she looked around the corner to see that our archive was beginning to get drenched. She came and got me, and we began putting everything damageable up on shelves. We were just finishing that job and the water was no longer coming out of the ceiling, when a damage control guy ask us to tag

everything in the room so it could be moved to another location for the clean-up and dry-out crews. We couldn't have done it in time. Luckily, the boss damage control guy said we didn't have to tag anything already on shelves.

Jody and I quickly tagged a couple hundred artifacts ranging from small to very big and heavy (i.e., manhole covers) while Carol boxed up hundreds of video tapes. The next morning all of our artifacts were gone to dry room in the middle of the building and the wet room was full of portable dehydrators and huge plastic conduits strung along the ceiling blowing in dry, warm air.

While we lost about four boxes of duplicate material, we were able to clean out a small truckload of stuff we really didn't want and find a few good items we didn't know we had.

More shelves

Seeing all that empty space in the flooded archive after the artifacts were removed made me think that we really should have industrial shelving in that space and our artifacts would be easier to reach, inventory, and categorize. Archive D now looks much, much better than it did before the flood.

Large donation

We had a very pleasant surprise last week when we received an unexpected check for more than \$6,000 from one of our major contributors. We could use more of those surprises.



Work on a Notebaert speech

I've been working with Judy Keene and Jill Hollingsworth from the Qwest Public Relations Department. Keene has been Dick Notebaert's speechwriter for over a decade. She lives in Chicago, spending every two weeks in Denver. Keene's also a fan of *Muttering Machines*, so I think she's swell and smart. Hollingsworth, Keene's Denver assistant, took seven of THG's videotapes, circa 1978-84, and had them re-recorded from 3/4-inch to 1/2-inch format. She also took digital pictures of eleven historic photographs we provided.

Notebaert will give a two-hour presentation to more than 500 University of Colorado students later this month, and he wanted a brief historic video interlude for the middle of his presentation. In return for our help, THG gets the seven re-mastered videotapes, a tape of the Notebaert presentation, and a CD of the digitized photographs - about a \$200 value earned - not a donation.

Research work continues at a higher level

In recent weeks it seems Carol is working nearly full-time on research requests and on some days Jody, **Dale Norblom** (volunteer), and I have also been doing research for paying customers. We continue to process "down-winder" research for the folks in Florida at about the same level as previous years, with a request from the

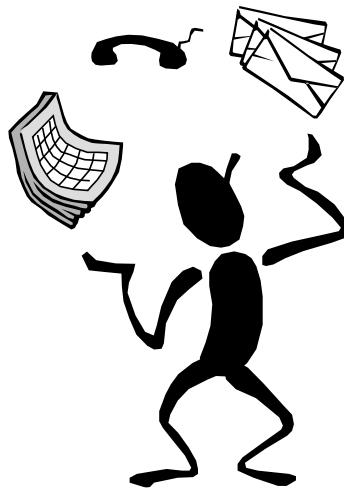
"down-winder" lawyer in Tucson every month or so. But now we seem to be getting more "down-winder" requests from individuals in Utah. And the research we do for law firms around the nation seems to be picking up, as our existence gets known around the country.

Planning session

One of the comments THG received from the CU graduate class that did some volunteer consulting for THG, was that the THG didn't seem to have a coherent long-range plan.

Not one to beat around the sand trap, Jim O'Boyle called a full-day planning conference for February 23rd. Jim decided to get brand-new board member Jo Lynne Whiting off to a flying start by asking her to coordinate the planning. The meeting was well attended, creative and productive. Attendees were: Jo Lynne, Jim, John Darrow, Larry DeMuth, Howard Doerr, John Herbolich, Pam Laird, Carey Macdonald, Mary Riffle, Bob Timothy, and I.

The planning session resulted in a 10-page document, which will be refined and approved by the entire Board. You'll be hearing more about it in future issues.



THG Board of Directors

*In 2003, several THG board members chose to retire. We particularly want to thank **Joel Barker**, **Bill Morey**, and **Walt Maulis**, for their invaluable service. Here's a list of our 2004 Board:*

Officers:

President - **James O'Boyle**.

VP, Marketing, Mountain Bell (ret.)

Vice President - **Mary Riffle**.

Director, Local Network, Qwest

Treasurer - **Scott Cornelsen**.

Director, Treasury, Qwest

Secretary - **John C. Darrow**. Senior Software Developer, Qwest (ret.)

Members:

Laurence W. DeMuth, Jr. EVP General Counsel & Sect., U S WEST (ret.)

Howard P. Doerr.

EVP/CFO, U S WEST (ret.)

John J. Herbolich. Telecommunications Consultant

Pamela W. Laird. Professor, Business History, CU Denver

Thomas W. Lindblom. Colorado VP, U S WEST (ret)

Carey Macdonald. Director, Public Policy, Qwest

Scott McClellan. Washington VP, U S WEST

Donald J. Ostrand. Director, The Museum of Communications

Robert E. Runice. President, Commercial Development & VP, U S WEST (ret.)

Robert K. Timothy. President, Mountain Bell (ret.)

Herbert H. Warrick, Jr. AVP Special Services & Engineering, Pacific Northwest Bell (ret.)

James Bryan Whiteside. Associate Professor, History, CU Denver

Jo Lynne Whiting. VP, Qwest Dex (ret.)

The Board also created an Advisory Council, which will consist of all past board members and others who have been instrumental in the success of THG. The first electee is our old friend **Georg Ek**.

Alexander Graham Bell & the Oxford English Dictionary



AGB during his student days in Edinburgh, Scotland

The great scholarly and inventive minds of the Victorian era all seemed to know one another. James A. H. Murray, editor for fifty years of the Oxford English Dictionary, took a course on elocution from Alexander Melville Bell in Edinburgh. Bell formally introduced Murray to the Philological Society, which led eventually to his being named editor of the OED.

Bell also introduced Murray to his son, Alexander Graham Bell. According to Simon Winchester, in *The Meaning of Everything*, James Murray taught the younger Bell the basic principles of electricity. Together they constructed an electric battery and a voltaic cell out of halfpennies and zinc discs.

After Bell invented the first telephone, he presented it to Murray in appreciation of that early instruction. It made its way to the Murray family attic, and has never been seen again. Scholars believe it was used as firewood by soldiers billeted in the house during World War II.

Miss Coucher and Smart S.O.B.s

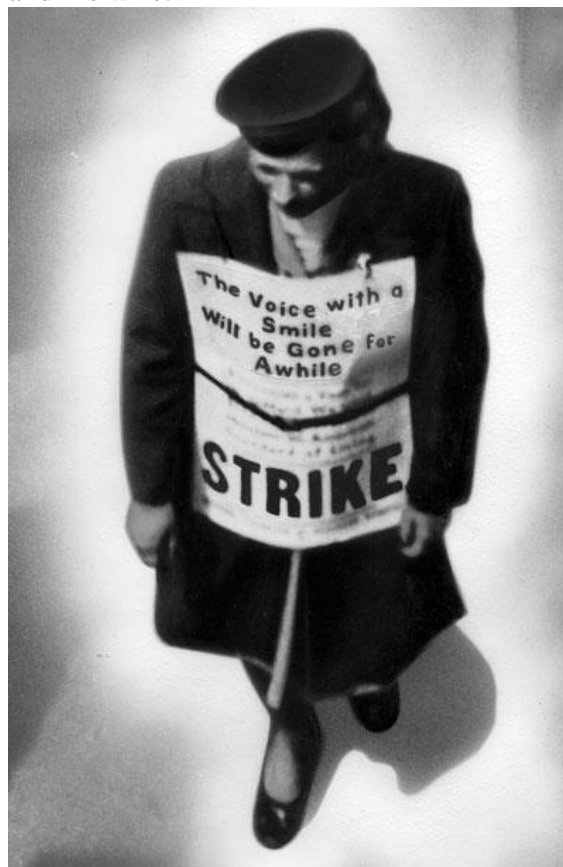
In honor of Women's History Month (March), we salute all of the women who have contributed to the history of our industry. This article about one of them is taken from Herb's history of Mountain Bell, Muttering Machines to Laser Beams.

Beatrice Coucher, who was the chief operator in Missoula, Montana for nearly thirty years, is still called "Miss Coucher" by all the [traffic] supervisors she trained. Her philosophy toward the young men she trained can best be summed up by something she said to the woman she trained to replace her: "I don't mind working for an S.O.B., as long as he's a smart S.O.B."

Coucher was no slouch before she became chief operator. In the early 1920s, she was the IBEW representative for the Rocky Mountain Region, the equivalent of an international vice president today. She was the highest-ranking woman in the nation's labor movement at the time. Although she never participated in a strike against Mountain States, the company fired her several times for her union activities in strikes against other phone companies - in Chicago and Boston, for example - or because she refused to bow to what she considered job harassment. As a result of her own grit, her political connections with the Montana Democratic Party, and pressure by her own union, she was hired back to her old job each time.

On one occasion, while she was conducting strike activities in Massachusetts, Coucher was to be served with a subpoena by the Boston court because of her union activities. On the advice of the union lawyer, she went on the lam to New York City. While in New

York, she toured the city's better speakeasies with George M. Cohan, the famous Broadway star and playwright, and his wife.



After she became chief, Coucher ran her office with a firm but fair hand. On the job she was all business; off the job she remained a free spirit. Whether state vice president or division traffic manager, all the company brass played by Miss Coucher's rules when they were in her office.

Read more about Bea Coucher and other women who made history, in Muttering Machines, and in Labor's Flaming Youth: Telephone Operators and Worker Militancy, by Stephen H. Norwood. Check out a pictorial story of operators on our web site at <http://telcomhistory.org/Operators.html>

Blizzard

The citation reads:

"On the morning of January 4, 1949, during one of the most severe blizzards in the history of Wyoming which took a toll of 13 lives, these three employees operating a telephone "snow buggy" or half track, began a series of rescues in and around Cheyenne that resulted in transporting, under extremely hazardous conditions, 10 persons urgently in need of medical care, to the hospital or to doctors or relatives in town.

As cases were reported to them by the State Highway Patrol, the American Red Cross, and others, these men set out repeatedly at great personal risk to go to the aid of individuals in distress and to give assistance to many along the way, fighting mountainous drifts, subzero temperature, and a fifty-mile wind which caused a continuous ground blizzard that reduce visibility to a few yards. They went to the rescue of persons imprisoned in cars buried in drifting snow and took food and fuel to others in isolated homes.



Left to right: W.B. Edmunds, W.L. Payne, & K.F. Hough with their snow buggy

With all other transportation snowbound, they carried out these rescue and relief missions throughout a two-day period, ranging as far as eight miles out of Cheyenne, until snow plows were able to break through on the roads.

The loyalty and effective action of these three employees during this emergency exemplify the high traditions of service to the public."

The three Mountain States Telephone & Telegraph Company employees were Keith F. Hough, William L. Payne, and William B. Edmunds. Each man received a national Silver Vail Medal for his heroism. Their story (with pictures) was in a three-page feature in Monitor, the company employee magazine. Other versions of the story were published in several Wyoming, Colorado and Nebraska newspapers. The general public held the telephone company and its employees in very high regard at this time. (The "snow buggy" is an early version of a "Snow Cat.")

The Museum of Communications

By Don Ostrand

Don is Director of the Museum of Communications in Seattle, WA. This is the third in a series of articles by Don.

The Gala Luncheon

The invitations went out, the catered lunch arrangements were complete, the museum space was equipped with rented tables, chairs and portable lighting, and this once empty space came to life. The following story is a reprint from the September 1986 issue of the Pioneer Herald entitled "Warrick Launches Museum Campaign".

"Are you interested?" That was the question Pioneer **Herb Warrick**, PNB Director - Network Engineering and Switching, candidly asked a group of long-time telephone employees who were gathered at PNB's Seattle Duwamish Building where discussion centered on

establishing a vintage telephone switching equipment exhibit.

#5 crossbar frame on display at The Museum of Communications



Warrick's invitation to the group to join in one of the most "unique undertaking in the country" came after months of careful study by both Charles B. Hopkins Chapter's historical committee and PNB's top management. Space is available on the third floor of the Duwamish Central Office to house the proposed Pioneer historical center, with elevator service and an outside entrance included in the overall tentative plans. If the museum becomes a reality, it will house a priceless collection of objects dealing with the evolution of the telephone industry. And it will operate with a volunteer staff, have regular hours, and be open by appointment to groups outside the industry.

Speaking in favor of establishing an exhibit, Warrick said, "This will give inside technicians – active and retired – an opportunity to display switching equipment we've used during the years. It would be the first museum of its kind in the country, and we're only limited by our desire to share our experiences in developing, installing and maintaining our great heritage."

Hopkin's President **Paul Morton** wants to make the Duwamish Center a successful and lasting exhibition of the telephone industry's history, accomplishments, products and special interests. "We're looking for folks who're concerned with preserving and

exhibiting historic records and equipment that explain the scope and role of telecommunications in shaping the development of our country."

Morton and Warrick both stress that the historic exhibit will be a team effort of the entire telecommunications industry – AT&T, General Telephone and PNB. "We're a Pioneering family that has the chance to do something unique, and there are lots of people out there who'll help eliminate roadblocks – **Mavis Lindeman, Laddie Taylor, Marvin Glass** and folks in my group," says Warrick.

"The new museum or exhibit space can only be accomplished by the combined efforts of volunteers who're willing to donate their time, talents and equipment in helping preserve the industry's history," says **Jack Nomensen**, coordinator of the Duwamish Center. "We can all make contributions in much the same way that Pioneers brought the Olympic Torch across the country in 1984, and helped pay the bill for a new outfit for the Lady [*the Statue of Liberty*] in time for her July birthday."

If you're interested in helping develop an exhibit that deals with the development and growth of the telephone industry, call Hopkins Chapter office in Seattle on 345-6969. You'll be referred to a member of the historical exhibit's executive board who'll assign you to a job in planning, supporting and/or operating the historical center.

Similar Pioneer exhibits are in the development stage – eastern Washington

Chapter plans a historical center in Spokane using PNB's Whitworth Central Office, and Oregon Pioneers are looking for a site in Portland.

Seattle's Museum of Communications is the sole survivor of the three efforts in PNB.

Please visit our web-site at www.museumofcommunications.org



Acquisitions

We haven't had many additions to our collection yet this year, but what we have received has been pretty spectacular.

Cindy Hadsel, in Omaha, sent her USW Community Link Consumer Kit. Community Link was a program piloted in Omaha, through which customers could buy tickets and do their shopping by telephone. Think Internet without the computer.

Bob Timothy gave us a beautiful bronzed pay phone, which was presented to him from his "friends at Western Electric" upon his retirement from Mountain Bell in 1983. He also gave us some great old books for our reference library, including *Theodore N. Vail* by A. B. Paine, a 1905 edition of *American Bell Practice*, by K. B. Miller, and *The History of Engineering & Science in the Bell System*.

John Herbolich has been cleaning out his closets, and bringing us treasures from his days at the Phone Company. We haven't had a chance to process it all, yet, but have spied several reference books, network manuals, posters, and diagrams. There's also some equipment

that John will have to identify for us, since none of us are sure what it is!

If you find yourself in a cleaning frenzy, please send us your telephone documents, artifacts and other memorabilia.



An Italian postcard: "Modern times"

The variety of postcards featuring the telephone is amazing. Some in our collection date from the late 1800s, while others, like the above, are more modern. Volunteer **Renee Lang** recently brought in one of "the new telephone building", Denver Main circa 1929. Another volunteer, **Curt Furness**, allowed us to scan his postcards so we can make them available on the web. Some of our favorites can be seen on our web site at: <http://telcomhistory.org/Postcards.html>

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