



# Dial-Log



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Jody Georgeson, EDITOR

## Director's Report

By Herb Hackenburg  
June 3, 2002

This will be a brief report. Brief because everything has been rather routine for the past three months. However, a few things do deserve mention.

**Down-winders work.** "Down-winders" are folks who lived in certain small towns in Arizona, Nevada and Utah at the time the United States Government was conducting atomic bomb tests in Nevada. People who lived in the communities that were in the basic downwind area of the tests now suffer an extremely high cancer rate. The Federal Government has agreed that the statistics definitely show that people who lived in these areas now suffer from cancer caused by the radiation brought to them by the prevailing winds.

Thus, the government created a special fund to pay for victims' treatment and/or death benefits to victims' families. The problem is the victims and/or their families have to prove the victims lived in these specified areas for at least two consecutive years between 1944 to 1963. While the

government won't accept tax records as proof, it does accept telephone directory listings. Since THG has the largest collection of telephone books from nearly all of the specified towns (excluding Nevada) for all of the specified years covered, we've been doing a lot of work in this area for individual families.

Recently, **George Daranyi**, a Tucson lawyer who specializes in down-winder cases, had one of his clients tell him about THG. He was so happy to hear about us and our phone books, he put us to work on several of his 60 down-winder cases. In addition to paying our normal fees (we average about \$50 per case), he sent us a nice contribution. We are paid for our research time (\$100 an hour broken into 15-minute increments), regardless whether we find the requested listing.

George also passed our name on to the National Cancer Benefits Center, located in Florida. The Center is handling hundreds of down-winder cases. We are now conducting so much research for them we don't even put the directories we're constantly using back on the shelves. This work is becoming a significant funding source for THG. We

plan to issue a press release about this little-known work.

Also, according to the National Cancer Center, it's highly likely the government will soon expand its down-wind towns to cover southwestern Colorado. And, if current cancer statistics hold up, additional down-wind towns will cover more of Colorado and may include a path of towns and cities all the way to the Mississippi River. We have telephone books from much of this area.

**Additions to the MacAllister Collection.** The last week in May, THG was informed that **Jack MacAllister**, U S WEST's first CEO, had sold his home and in cleaning up the house before the move, had recovered several artifacts and some printed material that might be of historical interest. Would THG like to come to the office and take what they wanted? Two days later, I was in Jack's office looking at new treasures of U S WEST's proud history. Primarily, we had three framed wall hangings: 1) a collection of embroidered patches representing every Telephone Pioneer Chapter in the nation, presented to Jack as he ended his term as the President of the National Pioneer Association; 2) a signed and numbered limited edition poster celebrating 100 years of telephony in Idaho; 3) a signed and numbered limited edition poster commemorating the first International Golf Tournament (U S WEST was the main sponsor) featuring U S WEST's spectacular cowboy hot air balloon and the Castle Pines golf course. The other item was a 1.5 cubic foot box full of small wall plaques, photographs and printed material. The printed material is of special historic interest. Thanks to Mrs. MacAllister, THG now has a comprehensive collection of newspaper

and national business magazine articles about her husband and U S WEST published just prior to/just after divestiture.

Jack recorded details about many of the items in this collection and we determined to arrange a full-scale oral history session for later this June.



*Line foreman E. L. Carpenter (left) and Gil Strakey with Arnold.*

**Arnold the pig update.** The last THG *Dial Log* contained a story about Arnold the pig. Every so often we publish one of the stories from **Jack Schuh's** collection of memories of his days as a Mountain Bell Outside Plant foreman. The story had to do with the Colorado outside construction crew with the month's lowest production having to house, feed, and cleanup after Arnold the pig for the next month. The thrust of Jack's story is that his crew never had to take care of Arnold. Ever.

Jack's story elicited a response from one of his peers. **Gil Strakey** sent us a report from the plant crew that took care of Arnold the most times. Gil agreed that as a way to promote plant production, Arnold went whole hog. Plant crews all over Colorado increased their production, but Gil's crew still "won" the right to house Arnold the most times. "We had to build a pen,

feed and water the pig, then muck the pen out. Pig perfume infiltrated the garage. I think it even seeped into our trucks and stayed there. I agree with Jack that Arnold really “hammed” it up at the St. Patrick’s Day party. After the part, there wasn’t anything left of him except that damned pig perfume.”

This little story illustrates how one piece of local, popular history begets additional local, popular history.



### Letters

We receive many wonderful letters from our members, and would like to share some of the highlights with you.

**Ken and Betty Clymer’s** daughter, **Carol Smith**, wrote to let us know her mother’s new address. Ken was, along with Herb, one the founders of THG. Carol retired from Qwest in January. She enclosed some of her dad’s notes, including a list of the stones used for each of the service award emblems. (*I was especially happy to receive this list, since I can never remember which one represents which year when I process collections containing service awards - ed.*)

We were very happy to hear from our good friend, **Florence Rush**. Florence is the author of *Hot Rail!*, the story of a lineman’s wife in Colorado during the 1930s. We’ve included excerpts from her book in many past issues of *Dial-Log*. Florence writes to say that she still enjoys getting our newsletter. She is 92 years old, and has recently moved in with her great

granddaughter, Cassandra Pearson, in highlands Ranch, Colorado.

**Dieter Hantschel’s** pulling rough duty – he writes, “Sitting in the comfort of our motor home, occasionally glancing out over our yacht harbor and seeing active traffic out of and into our shrimping harbor, I am sipping a cup of morning coffee and reading this morning’s *Victoria* (Tex.) *Advocate* newspaper,.” from which he sent the following clipping:

*April 1, 1952 - Victoria can have a dial system if Southwestern Bell Telephone Co. can increase its rates by an average of 61 percent, Stan Bell of Corpus Christi, district manager, told City Council last night. For example, a one-party residential line will increase from \$3 to \$5.50 and a four-party line from \$2.25 to \$3.75. A one-party business line will increase from \$6.50 to \$11. “This is an awful raise you’re asking for, Mr. Bell,” Mayor Griffith complained. “Yes, sir, I agree it is,” Bell said.*



**Lorraine Rucker** writes that she worked for MST&T, Mountain Bell and U S WEST for 30 years. She started in the Business Office with **Bob Timothy** (now retired President of Mountain Bell and member of the THG Board of Directors), and was the main soloist with the Bell Singers in Denver. Lorraine asked about a directory in which her grandfather, Adolph Zang, (of Zang Brewery) had the number “4”. That listing is in The Colorado Telephone Company’s 1895 directory. And, yes, Lorraine, we’re taking good care of it!

**Our friends in Wapakoneta,** Ohio, sent us the last two editions of *The Nickel Gazette*. The little newsletter is published four times a year by the Telephone Service Co. (TSC) "Walpak"-- pronounced "Wall-pock" by us northwestern Ohio natives -- is a wonderful town of about 9,000 honest, hardworking folks just west of Interstate 75 and south of Lima, Ohio. It's one of our favorite towns because it's the last bastion of the nickel coin phone call. That's right, if you can find a TSC coin phone, you can make a local call for one nickel. And, yes there are several TSC coin phones scattered around town.



Also, TSC is one of the most progressive, independent telephone companies around, offering telephone, cable and Internet services to its customers. Other than being a prosperous little town full of nice folks and nickel coin phones, Walpak doesn't have much else to brag about, except perhaps for one of its hometown boys.

*Chicago Tribune's* Bob Greene wrote about him in one of his columns. It seems Greene was driving across America thinking about how he could write a column illustrating the indomitable spirit of this nation's people. It seemed the thing to do, after Sept. 11. He happened to be at the Walpakoneta exit on the Interstate at the time and decided to drive into the town. The result was a column that appeared in the *Chicago Tribune* last October.

The column featured the little town and its citizens, and especially one of TSC's old customers who grew up hanging around the little Wapak airport.

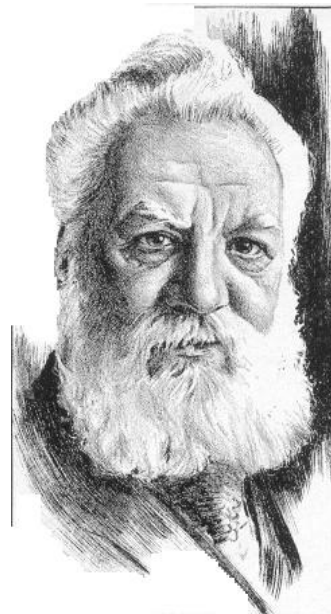
This former TSC customer has risen to great heights. This was especially true on July 21, 1969. The banner headline in the July 22, 1969, *Wapakoneta Daily News* put it rather simply: "Neil Steps on the Moon."

## 1876

by Jody Georgeson

You all know that Alexander Graham Bell invented his telephone in 1876, but there were a lot of other things happening that year that you may have forgotten.

Americans marked their centennial as an independent nation with celebrations ranging from small-town barbecues to big-city parades. The festivities reached their peak in Philadelphia, historic site of the Continental Congress and Constitutional Convention, which hosted the first World's Fair held in the United States. Along with the telephone, the Centennial Exposition saw the debut of Hires Root Beer, the Remington Typewriter and Heinz Ketchup. Japan imported kudzu to landscape elaborate gardens at the Japanese Pavilion, leaving behind a weedy memento that we have as yet been unable to eradicate.



1876 was a banner year for libraries in the United States – the first edition of Dewey Decimal Classification System was published, the first *Library Journal* was published, and the American Library Association was founded.

Ulysses S Grant was finishing his second term as 28<sup>th</sup> President of the United States. In an election reminiscent of that of 2000, Governor Samuel J. Tilden of New York (D) won the popular vote, beating Governor Rutherford B. Hayes of Ohio (R ) by a significant margin. The only thing that mattered, though, was the Electoral College count, and there, Tilden's 184 electoral votes were one short of a majority, while Hayes's 165 electoral votes left him 20 ballots shy of the presidency. The remaining 20 electoral

votes were in dispute: one from Oregon and 19 from the three Southern states which still retained Reconstruction governments. After much controversy, and amidst continued debate, the remaining 20 votes went to Hayes, who was proclaimed the winner by one vote.

A number of famous people were born during 1876. Among them were:

- Mata Hari (1876-1917) - dancer and alleged spy
- Konrad Adenauer (1876-1976) - German statesman
- Constantin Brancusi (1876-1957) - sculptor
- Jack London (1876-1916) - author
- Sherwood Anderson (1876-1941) - author
- Natalie Clifford Barney (1876-1972) - feminist author and poet

In 1876, eight professional teams formed the National League, the first major league. (The American League was second in 1901.) Two of the teams have played continuously to this day: the Chicago White Stockings (1876-1889) became the Cubs, and the Boston Red Caps (1876-1882) eventually became the Atlanta Braves.

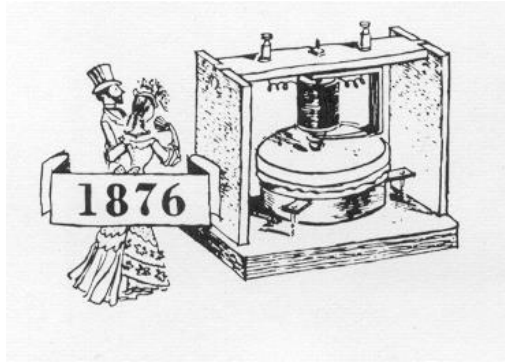
In Vevey, Switzerland, Daniel Peter devised a way of adding milk to chocolate, creating the product known today as "milk chocolate." The same year, eighteen-year-old Milton Hershey opened his candy shop in Philadelphia.

The shop was closed after six years and Hershey moved to Denver, Colorado, where he worked with a caramel manufacturer to learn the trade before returning to Pennsylvania.

During the 1876 gold rush, Wild Bill Hickok moved to Deadwood in the Dakota Territory, hoping to strike it rich. He was shot and killed by a town worker named Jack McCall, while playing cards in the No. 10 Saloon. Hickok fell to the floor clutching a pair of aces and eights, known ever since as the "dead man's hand."

Some other events that occurred during 1876 were:

- On August 1, Colorado became the 38th State to enter the Union.
- Thomas Alva Edison established his laboratory in Menlo Park, New Jersey.
- Delmonico's Restaurant introduced Lobster Newberg.
- Bissell invented a hand-operated carpet sweeper with a rotating brush.



- Nikolaus August Otto and Eugene Langen obtained patents on both two-cycle and four-cycle gas engines.
- Wagner composed *The Ring of the Nibelung*.
- Mark Twain published *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.
- Custer and his troop died at Little Big Horn. The battle took place the same day that AGB demonstrated his telephone at the Centennial Exposition.



**Insulator Bliss**

If THG volunteer **Mike Bliss** has his way a whole bunch of *Dial Log* readers will be visiting with him on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of July. You see Mike is throwing a little party at the University Park Holiday Inn in his hometown of Fort Collins, Colorado.

We at THG got to know Mike when we were looking for some help with our telephone insulator collection. We found that we owned a big bunch of telephone insulators, but we didn't know much about them. One of the first things we learned is that there are thousands of insulator collectors scattered all over the world. We also learned that Mike Bliss, a former Mountain Bell PBX installer, is

one of the top ten insulator collectors in the world.

The first time we called Mike we had to leave a message because "he was away at work." Later we found out just what kind of unique work Mike was away to.

In the meantime we found that we had our very own insulator collector right in the THG family. It seems that **Ron Pratt**, son of senior volunteer THG **Ken Pratt**, is also an insulator collector. Ron was just finishing his Ph.D. in physics at the Colorado School of Mines, when he put in several volunteer hours at THG doing a comprehensive inventory of our insulator collection. Just after he completed the insulator survey, Dr. Pratt was on his way to China to teach physics.

A few days after Ron left for China, Mike Bliss showed up at THG's front door. Mike was home from work. Mike is a communications coordinator for movie producers doing "on-location shoots." In other words, if the producer of "Speed 2" is shooting on the Island of St. Martin in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, and he wants a complete communications system, he hires Mike to build and maintain it for the duration of the shoot. Mike is proud to have received an on screen credit for that job.

Mike looked over the job Ron had done and said, "I couldn't have done it better." Then we learn that Mike has been collecting glass telephone insulators since he was 12 years old. Mike's collection currently features more than 3,200 different insulators including scores of extremely rare finds. He once bid \$25,000 for a one-of-a-kind Canadian cranberry red thread-less (meaning it's really, really old) glass insulator. When the bidding reached the

top estimated value Mike dropped out. It sold for \$28,800.

"I had sold several insulators at the same auction for between \$1,500 to \$5,000, so I had the cash, but it's my policy to never bid higher than the high estimated value. Within the year, another Canadian cranberry showed up, and the value of both insulators was reduced significantly." *Editor's note: The average worth of a collectable insulator is \$3.00.*

Several months ago, Mike arranged for THG to acquire the donation of a significant telephone insulator collection. The collection was so large we kept Ron busy inventorying it for several days. Ron was back in Denver on a vacation from his teaching duties in Kuala Lumpur (he'd moved from China to Malaysia. Today he's teaching in the exotic country of California).

Mike has the nation's most complete collection of "Denver glass." Over the years Denver has been the home of three glass insulator manufacturers; Western Flint Glass, Western Glass Manufacturing and the R. G. Good Jr. Company. With Mike's continued help, THG's own "Denver glass" collection is already significant. Mike plans to fill in some areas to grow our "Denver glass" collection to one of national significance.

Mike is hosting the **National Insulators Association 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Show and Sale**. It's a members only deal on July 5<sup>th</sup>, but the public -- especially the public with insulators and/or telephone memorabilia to trade buy or sell -- are invited to attend on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>.

"It's my third show to host," Mike stated. "It costs the price of a highly collectable insulator each time, but it's worth it. I get to see many old friends, meet new friends and buy and sell an insulator or two. Besides, where else would you get to see all that beautiful, sparkling glass?"



### Five Anonymous Heroes

By Herb Hackenburg


Sometimes history curmudgeons really believe "they don't build 'em the way they used to," or "these kids today aren't dedicated the way we were." While not admitting to advanced "curmudgeonitis", such thoughts concerning the people and products in today's telecommunications industry have flitted across my mind a time or two.

An article in May 7, 2002, *New York Times* restored much of my faith and pride in still being a part of the

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**ROBERT GOOD, JR.**

**VALVERDE**  
**... GLASS**   
**WORKS**

MANUFACTURER OF

**Beer and Soda Bottles**

**Pickle Ware**  
**Insulators and Battery Jars**

PHONE 639 ...

**VALVERDE, COLO.**

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telecommunications industry. Specifically, the restoration began as I read the following two paragraphs from an article about heretofore unknown heroes of the 9/11 attack on New York City:

“On the night of Sept. 14, for example, five employees of Verizon, the telecommunications company, violated a police order that had closed their building at 140 West Street, right next to the disaster site, and broke in. In darkness and smoke, wearing protective suits, they hiked up 23 floors into the damaged building and marched back down with heavy minicomputers strapped on their backs. The information on those computers was crucial to the New York Stock Exchange’s system for communicating stock prices.

The exchange, which had been closed since the attack, reopened three days later on the following Monday, as promised. The technology of global capitalism flickered back to life, and the late night raid at 140 West became part of the back-office lore of how it all happened.”

It’s with pride that THG passes on this story about five unknown modern heroes who added to our industry’s proud lore of heroes and heroines. Traditionally, the Vail Medal was awarded to such heroes. If the Verizon Company still awards the Vail Medal, I can think of five of their people who deserve it. The stock exchange should chip in some recognition too.

*By the way, we’ve heard that following the attack, cell phones were inoperable for miles around downtown New York. Survivors and witnesses had to call their families, and reporters their editors, using old-fashioned pay phones. Shades of Clark Kent!*

## Volunteer Corner

By Jody Georgeson

One doesn’t have to live in Denver to volunteer at THG. Two of our volunteers – **Don Erickson**, of Larkspur, Colorado and **Bob Haack** of Rio Verde, Arizona –telecommute, helping us get a handle on our serials collection. Don is entering data about the *Mountain States Monitors*, while Bob’s working on the *Northwestern Bell Magazines*. This picture in particular, caught Bob’s fancy.



“TWINKLE FINGERS” Howard Doerr, of our disbursement accounting department in Omaha, entertained the happy crowd at the Birchwood Club in Omaha on December 12. The tunes Howard coaxes from his “come-to-me go-from-me” box are something to listen to, say those who have heard him.

*The Northwestern Bell, January 1951*

Howard, retired EVP/CFO, U S WEST, is a member of our all-volunteer Board of Directors. Up ‘til now, we were unaware of the extent of his talents!



## Acquisitions

Herb wrote about the additions from Jack MacAllister. We've had many other donations, too: This is just a partial list:

**George Howard** sent us documents from the Upper Indian Creek Telephone Co. of Ardmore, SD. This is an example of a "farmer's line" in which rural customers banded together to provide themselves with phone service. They then collectively bought switching service from the local telephone company.

**Buzz Gish** brought an extensive collection of artifacts and documents. Our favorites are the Albeon Johnson (photographer) prints of the 931 14<sup>th</sup> St. building in Denver, as it was being built.

**William Galasso** filled several gaps in our serials collection, and **Debbie Garcia** sent some wonderful service award jewelry.

From **Sandra Shuler**, we received a great old Bell System shovel and a "Good Friends Are For Keeps", an LP (remember those?) full of telephone related songs. The family of **Katie Glasman** gave us two desk sets, and a marvelous old cigarette lighter with pictures of antique telephones. Among other things, **William and Carol Reida** donated a beautiful Western Electric "portable" sewing machine, with a golden oak case.

**Erick Nelson** brought us too many things to list. Herb and the "boys" loved all the tools. My favorite item is the pair of flip-flop sandals with the "Life's Better Here" logo on the soles. **Linda Young** gave us a U S WEST cowgirl poster, and one of a PNB lighthouse with a personal inscription from **Andy Smith**.

Come in and see these and all of our other treasures!



### Philosophy of a Plain Man

L.A.M.

I'm just a simple, natural man,  
And, like my dad before me,  
I live as plainly as I can;  
A faster life would bore me.  
'Twas good enough for him; I choose  
To make his creed my own.  
And so, not having one, I use  
My neighbor's telephone.

I loathe the trend of modern thought,  
And ev'ry new invention  
Impious vandal hands have wrought  
Just fills me with dissension!  
New-fangled foibles pass me by –  
I scorn them all: and so,  
Whene'er I feel the need, I try  
My neighbor's radio.

The comforts Dad enjoyed were few,  
And yet, I'll stand or fall  
By them – why bother with the new?  
My neighbor has them all!

*Mountain States Monitor, c 1920*

