



# Dial Log



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Jody Georgeson, Editor

## Director's Report

By Jody Georgeson

I'm happy to report that we have found a new secretary! **Leah Be** retired from Qwest in 2001 after 30 years with the company in Oregon, Arizona and Colorado. I was lucky to have a pool of very well qualified candidates, and especially fortunate to have found Leah!

Less happily, our friend and volunteer, **George Howard**, is leaving us to return to New York. Among other things, George was working on indexing our collection of volumes from Alexander Graham Bell's personal library. We'll miss his cheery face and puckish humor, but he's promised to continue his index as a tele-volunteer and to visit when he can.

We've received several interesting additions to our collections in the last couple of months. You can read about one of them on page 5 (Bachelor's Thesis). We also received some wonderful service anniversary jewelry from the family of **Grace Clark**, and a device that was lowered into a manhole to check for poison gases (think canary) from **Myron Cousins** of Springfield,

Missouri. **John Swartley**, also from Springfield, sent us several retirement booklets for Southwestern Bell employees and an armored coax cable that was used in the transcontinental line. John found it north of Scott City Kansas in the early 1960s.

Our new place is taking shape. **Renee Lang** just put the finishing touches on a display of service award jewelry and the antique phone exhibit. **Georg Ek** donated an antique office chair, and I was able to find another that almost matches, so we have a place for visitors to sit. **Herb Hackenburg's** office gets cleaner every week (we can see the floor!). **Ron Swanson** has the equipment work area all organized, and **Ken Pratt** has re-entered information for all the boxes that got displaced during the move. **Betty Vigil** and **Bruce Amsbury** have the directories taken care of, and **Dale Norblom** is all caught up on research requests. **Jerry Wild** has the phones, computers and printers working smoothly.

So you see, we're ready for visitors. We'd love to have you come tour our new place!



## MUSEUM OF COMMUNICATIONS

Part of the TELECOMMUNICATIONS HISTORY GROUP, INC.

### When we have the TIME!

By Don Ostrand

In the good old days before the Bell System split, one could dial a call and get the time of day. In Seattle's 1929 directory it was "Please dial or call Thorndyke-8900"; in 1952, call Columbia-8900; and starting in 1958, call Time-4-8900. The AudioChron Company provided that service. Their leased equipment was installed in our central offices and dedicated trunks (circuits) from each CO allowed citywide access to the time-of-day announcement. The date that Seattle's time-of-day started to use AudioChron equipment is unclear, but when the Bell System was split up the telephone companies no longer provided the service. A firm in Georgia, Electronic Tele-Communications Inc., bought the AudioChron Company and its equipment.

They were in the process of thinning out their old equipment and contacted the Smithsonian museum to donate some of the original AudioChron equipment dating back to the 1930s. The Smithsonian declined the equipment and referred them to our museum here in Seattle.

Would we like the equipment? Of course we would. Another very important part of telecommunications equipment has been found--or found us.

Now the equipment located in Norcross, Georgia needs transportation to Seattle, which is just about as far

away as possible within these United States. This fact makes for another story.

As a member of two antique telephone collectors clubs, I for one have made many acquaintances and hosted tours with many visitors; our museum has become known worldwide.

In a back issue of the TCI (Telephone Collectors International) newsletter, I read very interesting articles by **Allan David** about the AudioChron Company and time-of-day machines. Allan has visited our museum and knows the extent of our desire to preserve telecommunications history.

My home phone rang, and who should be on the other end but Allan David. This was a very unexpected call.

Allan has working AudioChron equipment in his private collection and has provided working displays at collector club functions. He was aware that we wanted these machines and had a challenge in transportation. Allan's profession is a long-haul truck driver and he happened to be about a day away from Norcross. He offered to pick up the equipment and haul it with him as he started his cross-country haul. He said he couldn't predict when we could expect delivery but it would be when he got the time.



The equipment was picked up and started its journey to Seattle. And on Friday, May 25<sup>th</sup>, he arrived with the AudioChron. Members of our crew met him at the museum, unloaded the equipment, mounted it in one of our bays and started restoration. And it works.

Thanks to Lori at Electronic Tele-Communications Inc, Allan David and our crew.

Stop by and visit us, we've got the TIME!



## Recycled Fun

By Jody Georgeson

Kern County, California probably recycles more telephone directories than any county in the United States. Their trick? They make recycling fun. The Kern County Telephone Book Recycling Program is sponsored by Kern County Waste Management, AT&T Yellow Pages and Community Clean Sweep.

In 2006, they challenged schools to collect directories for recycling. The kickoff ceremonies involved local dignitaries tossing phone books from a hot air balloon to a target on the ground.

Students from the winning school collected over 26 tons of phone books to recycle. At 3.4 pounds per book, that's 15,294 phone books recycled or 19 phone books per student.

2007's festivities included marching elementary school kids waving signs and singing recycling battle-hymns.

There was a big crowd and TV cameras with blazing lights. And there was the soft "thump-thump" as 1,066 upended phone books slumped softly over like dominoes. (The previous world record is by a group in Iceland with 777 phone books.)

Students from Fruitvale Junior High School started setting up phone books at 8:15 a.m. Tuesday. The books were knocked down just after 1 p.m.

"Blast off," Supervisor Don Maben shouted as he pushed over the first book. There were gasps as the collapsing phone books cut sharp corners and cheers as a single stream of falling books split into two. Then a roar of cheering filled the lobby of the Kern County Administrative Center as the last book toppled off a rise and into a blue recycling bin.

## Speaking of Phone Books...

**Ed Charon** (1935-2007) a Christian pastor who attracted a degree of celebrity for his record-setting ability to rip apart dozens of 1,000-page telephone books within minutes, died April 8 at a hospital near his home in Sutherlin, Oregon.

Rev. Charon, a heavy-equipment operator in his youth, achieved his fifth Guinness World Record last year when he halved 56 Portland, Ore., phone directories in three minutes. This achievement was the culmination of a nearly decade-long fascination with phone books as a way to augment his preaching.

An evangelical pastor who had started his own church, Rev. Charon saw the phone book stunt on television in 1998 while living in the resort town of

Branson, Mo. He immediately sensed a vivid way to reach a constituency of school-age children and prisoners -- he would pulverize phone books while preaching the gospel and teaching principles of good behavior. As he later practiced it, he tore phone books of mounting size while likening each to increasingly dangerous addictions, even acts of violent crime. For the grand finale, he clawed apart a 1,000-page phone directory and announced, "God can break those habits!"

It took a few years -- and an estimated 65,000 practice runs -- to get to that level. He trained fiercely, at his peak tearing more than 100 phone books a day to stay in shape. To secure a practice stash, he scoured motels and recycling plants for phone books that would otherwise be thrown out or incinerated. He told one reporter there was a "legal" way to tear a book -- from top to bottom. Anything else, he said, "is the girl's way."

In April 2002, he set a Guinness record during an exhibition at a Branson mall. He tore through 19 Southwestern Bell Yellow Pages directories, 1,110 pages each, in three minutes. The Associated Press reported that the previous record holder was a Willoughby, Ohio, man who in 2001 sliced through 12 Ameritech telephone directories of 1,034 pages each.

Rev. Charon had a brief career as a late-night talk show curiosity, but in late 2002, he lost his Guinness claim to a

fitness and judo instructor from Indiana who cut through 30 directories. Rev. Charon then retook the title in 2004 while living in Oregon. He ripped through 39 Portland white-page directories of 1,004 pages. "Oh, I wanted 40," he said at the time. He decided to retire after his crowning glory last year with 56 Portland phone books, which he praised for thinner sheets. "Of all the phone books I've torn," he said, "I've found that the Portland ones tear better."



With his enormous hands -- he had a ring size of 16 1/2 -- he developed habits

other than destroying phone books. Recently, he took to rolling up metal frying skillets "until they looked like tortillas," said his daughter, Pam Bird of Roseburg.

## Speaking of World's Records...

The men's world record for throwing a mobile phone is 94.97 meters (more than 100 yards), set by **Mikko Lampi** from Vilppula, Finland during the 2005 Mobile Phone Throwing World Championships. The women's record holder is **Eija Laakso**, with 50.83 meters set at last year's (2006) games. The 8th International Mobile Phone Throwing World Championships will be held in Savonlinna, Finland on the 25th of August 2007.

## In Memory

**Charles Walter Fairbanks Jr.**  
1924-2007



Charles Walter Fairbanks Jr. died April 17th in Lewiston, Maine.

Charley worked in Pueblo and then in Denver, Colorado as an Engineer for Mountain Bell Telephone Co. for thirty-five years, retiring in 1984.

Charley attended Northeastern University, Denver University, the University of Colorado and numerous company related schools. He served as a teacher for AARP, as an Adult Literacy Mentor, and volunteered as a youth tutor in reading and math. He was a member of the Telephone Pioneers of America, and The American Legion. He served on the Board of Directors for Bellco Credit Union in Denver CO.

In 1964, Charley was working as an engineer for Mountain Bell when he introduced an electronic device inside a baseball. This device emitted an intermittent beeping sound, which enabled blind ball players to locate the position of the ball. The sport soon took off in the schools for blind children. The

first Beep Baseball competition was held in 1976 in Saint Paul, Minnesota. Charley was inducted into both the Baseball and Softball Halls of Fame.

Memorial donations may be made to the Telecom Pioneers (c/o Christine; P.O. Box 13888; Denver, CO 80201) or to the American Heart Association (51 US Route 1, Suite M; Scarborough, Maine 04074).

## 1925 Bachelor Thesis

by Thomas J. Gibson

*We were recently given a thesis written by Henry Justus Gibson to satisfy the requirements of a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering from the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. His son, Thomas of Golden, Colorado included this brief biography with the gift.*

**Henry J. Gibson** was born and raised in Washington, D.C. After high school and a brief stint as a bank teller, he enlisted in the Navy as World War I broke out, and served aboard a wooden-hulled miner layer/sweeper, the USS Blackhawk, in the North Atlantic. Returning to Washington in the early '20s, he entered Catholic University to study electrical engineering. He developed an early interest in the developing field of telephony, and focused his studies in that direction. He wrote his Bachelor's thesis for the degree in electrical engineering in anticipation of going to work for the local telephone company, the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company (C&P), in 1925. The thesis is titled "Telephone Instruments and Circuits."

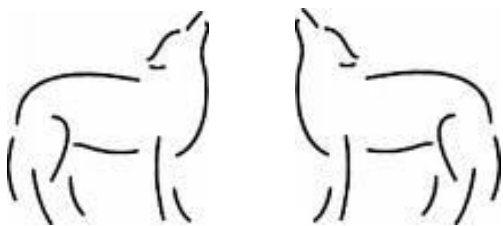
Mr. Gibson began work with the C&P Telephone Company of Virginia in 1926, in nearby Alexandria, as a



draftsman and was soon promoted to design engineer. He spent his entire 32-year career with C&P in engineering or engineering management positions. When he began, switching equipment was mechanical, rotating step switches, and he was involved in the design of switching centers using the newly-invented cross-bar switches.

The highlight of Mr. Gibson's engineering career was his involvement in the design of the telephone system for what was then the country's largest building, the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia. This huge military facility was the first site to attempt the radical concept of "direct-in dialing," which eliminated the need for switchboard operators by allowing direct dialing of each extension in the building. Without this pioneering system, the Pentagon would have required perhaps as many as 50 switchboard operators.

Mr. Gibson retired from C&P of Virginia in 1958 His 24-year retirement (*he died in 1982*), and his widow's survivorship, were made more comfortable by his decision, starting in 1927;, to invest a piece of his paycheck in AT&T stock, a practice he never ceased to follow.



*Democracy must be something more than two wolves and a sheep voting on what to have for dinner.*

- James Bovard, *Civil Libertarian* (1994)

## THG Displays

*Our new quarters have allowed us to display a lot more of our artifacts. I thought you'd enjoy a sample of photos taken by volunteer **Renee Lang**. For more pictures, and a tour of our new digs, check out our web site at [www.telcomhistory.org](http://www.telcomhistory.org). Better yet, why not pay us a visit and see for yourself!*



Automatic Electric Co. phone with Strowger dial



Magnetos



Toy telephone trucks

## Looking Back

### 25 years ago...

August 24, 1982 -- Judge Greene signed the modified agreement between AT&T and the Justice Department, superseding the Consent Decree of 1956.

### 50 years ago...

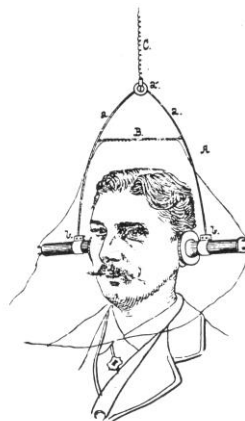
In June 1957, Bell labs reported the development, under Air Force contract, of a high-speed digital computer about the size of a home TV set and requiring less power to operate. Named the "Leprechaun," more than half its 9,000 electrical components were transistors.

### 75 years ago...

During the summer of 1932, telephone service was extended to South Africa, Siam and the Balearic Isles, and to Egypt.

### 100 years ago...

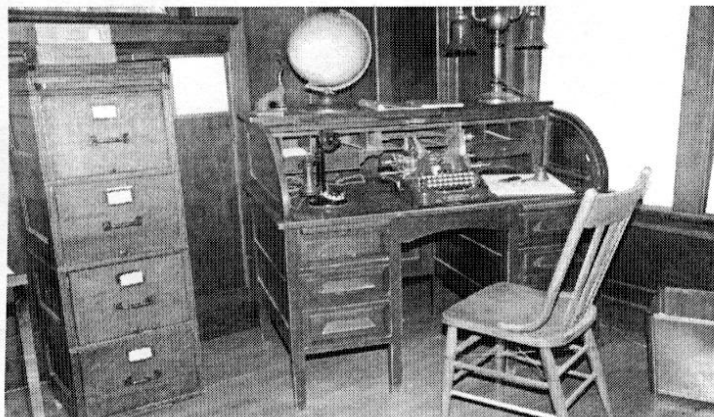
On July 1, 1907, John J. Carty was appointed Chief Engineer of AT&T. Following his appointment, he moved the headquarters engineering staff and consolidated it with the Western Electric research and development staff at the WECO plant at 463 West Street. The amalgamated organization expanded almost from its inception, and nearly two decades later, became Bell Laboratories.



*The Greater Kent Historical Society put out a wanted request for a candlestick telephone. The following is from their newsletter.*

### Bereiter Mill Office Corner

In keeping with the period of the house, a corner of the Museum office was returned to circa 1900. The period pieces include a file cabinet, roll top desk, and settee. A typewriter and candlestick telephone help round out the setting. The telephone was a recent donation with thanks to Don Ostrand, Curator at the Museum of Communications in Seattle!



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