

Dial-Log



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Herb Hackenburg, EDITOR

SEASON'S GREETINGS

Executive Director's Report By Herb Hackenburg

"Busy" is becoming our middle name. It's great! I'm just going to highlight a few of our current activities, because **Julianne Fletcher**, our archivist, and **Jody Georgeson**, our executive secretary/volunteer coordinator/keepherbstraighter, will fill you in on a bunch of other developments around the archive in their columns elsewhere in this epistle.

As I write this we have a pair of paralegals going through our 40-plus tons of manuscript material from Northwest Bell. They're doing a selective, but detailed inventory of the material in preparation for a combination Deed of Gift and/or Bailment between U S WEST, Inc. and Telecommunications History Group, Inc. All this is so THG will establish provenance (a proven trail of ownership from the material's originator to the archive—a prime concept in the archive world). THG also gains control of the thousands of photographs, directories, video tapes, books, artifacts, ledgers, journals, minute books, correspondence, brochures, newsletters and other stuff we currently have in the archive. We're talking about material we've received from the U S WEST archives, not the dozens of private collections donated to us from interested individuals (e.g., read about our new **Russ DeFeyter** collection in Jody's column).

We've just finished a very large press kit for U S WEST. The idea came from Jerry Brown in the USW Public Relations Department. Jerry's thinking was that every newspaper and television station in the region would be doing a plethora of past century/forthcoming century features prior to the "new millennium," so why not help the media out with a telecommunications feature. After all, telecommunications has grown into the world's most viable industry -- not bad for a 124-year-old business.

The press kit contains two news releases: (1) a major feature-sized story on the history and the substantial affect of the telephone on mankind; and (2) a localized story on the telephone history in the specific area to which the release was sent. The kit also contains: an advisory on other potential telephone history angles; a CD ROM disk containing phone-history art work and pictures; a well illustrated timeline; a "Top 10 Telecommunications Events From the Past" in two formats in both color and black and white; and a similar set of "10 Telecommunications Events That May Shape Our Future."

If you readers see anything like what we've just described show up in your local newspapers, send us the clippings (with the name of the newspaper and the date the story was published, please.) And if you see it on television, please call us at 303-296-1221. Thank you. By the way, some of the illustrations in this newsletter are from the press kit. And because of my propensity of getting everything I can from the stuff I write, some of the copy in the press kit will probably end up in the later issues of this newsletter.



1889



1921



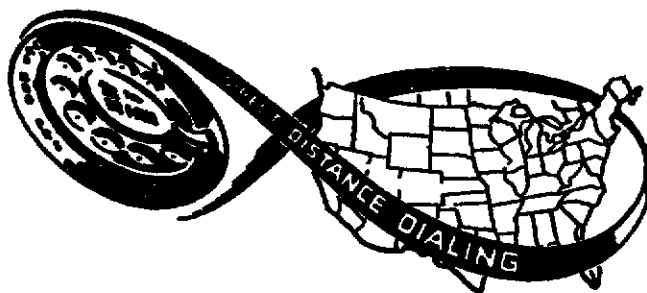
1969

We've made a proposal to the History Department at Colorado State University (CSU) to join us as a co-sponsor of a National Telecommunications Oral History Project. Our premise is that the movers and shakers, and the regular grunts who made today's telecommunications industry what it is, and those who participated in its breakup ain't gettin' any younger and if we want to get their stories in time for them to become ingrained into this nation's history, we'd best be getting them now.

Our newest board member, Dick MacKnight, USW executive director in PR before he retired a few months ago, has said he'd like to take on the task of heading up the project. He's studying the newest and best oral history textbook right now. Since Dick is currently Richard McCormick's assistant and is a good friend to Jack MacAllister, (both past U S WEST presidents) he thinks he can line up his first two interviews with relative ease. Dick already has some thoughts on how to include Charlie Brown (yes, AT&T's Charlie Brown) in the early interview lineup. All we have to do is work with CSU to get our administration, paperwork and operating rules in shape. Oh yes, we'll also need to get some funding.

When this program becomes a national project, we think there is a significant role for the National Telephone Pioneer Association. We'll need a national network of scouts to nominate potential interviewees, to be interviewees, and perhaps to take the training to become interviewers themselves. Since we can't expect CSU history interns to do the whole job, we'll also need a passel of nimble-fingered volunteer transcribers to help us do this job.

We've been working U S WEST's EDQA (which stands for EDucation and Quality Assurance, the new name of the old Mountain Bell Training Center which has been completely gutted and remodeled) group. We've been asked to help with the interior decor of the new EDQA Center. To date we've furnished more than 60 historic photographs; provided nearly \$5000 worth of historic artifacts on a long-term loan; sold 20 historic telephone company stock certificates, and contributed a bunch of research. For our efforts THG will get a \$10,000 donation. Our volunteers will also probably be asked to rebuild a working step switch train, and get a museum-quality restoration of a 555 PBX back into working condition. For this, the volunteers will earn an electrical worker's hourly wage. Not too shabby.

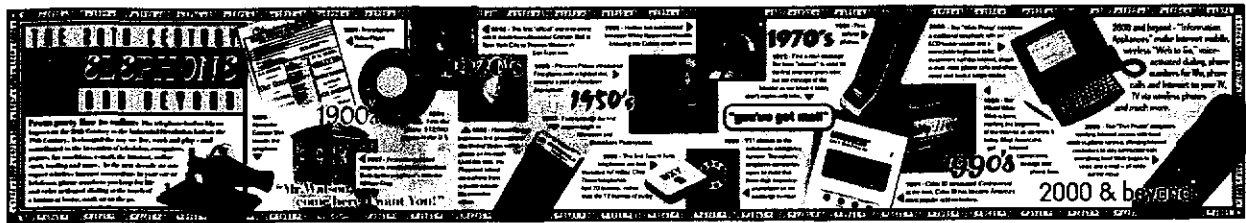


The Board of Directors is already busy working on the History Group's future. They've asked the staff and volunteers for input on what we believe we'll need in the next decade. The staff's answer was, "More volunteers!" The staff then submitted its wish list which included: several large work tables and the work space for them; new 20-drawer flat files; new photo storage shelving; a used installer's van; a used self-defrost freezer (to hold freeze-dried negatives and water damaged manuscript materials); a digital camera and MORE VOLUNTEERS. In the volunteer area, we're now looking for people who would feel at ease using a word processor to input material into our central database.

The board has been busy in another important area, a permanent home for THG. They've come up with a serious solution that's so far-reaching it even overwhelms me. We can't say anything more, but THG is blessed by one heck of a farsighted board.

I just published a *Telecommunications/Convergence Timeline* that details the history and major events in telecommunications, combined with the history and major events of the Internet and of cable television. The timeline converges these three timelines into one timeline because that is what's happening in today's telecommunications world. With the aid of a modern computer and an inkjet color printer, I've graphically shown the convergence by printing the telephone history in black, the Internet history in purple, and cable television entries in blue-green. The timeline has grown to 60 single spaced pages, with the most recent entries containing items in all three colors, which is a visual representation of what is going on in today's telecommunications world.

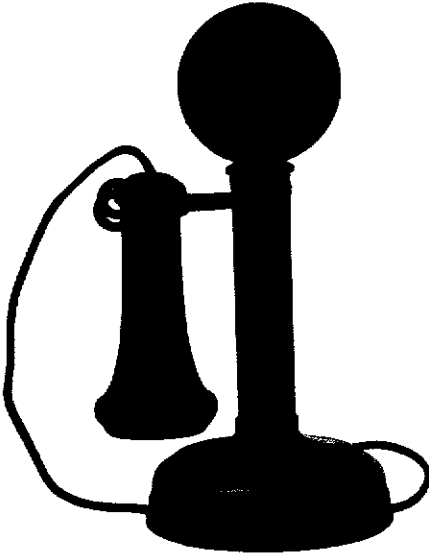
The timeline has been a great value to me as a quick reference, but I think it has a very limited appeal—we've sold one copy for \$35 so far. It takes half an ink cartridge to print the darn thing.



We've also been helping U S WEST, help for which we charge a nice fee, on a couple of other small projects. You retirees who worked in the 931 14th Street Building in Denver will be interested to know that a new U S WEST group is moving into the 15th and 14th floors—Not to worry—the Pioneer office suite and museum are not included! The new tenants have a strong sense of history and want their new digs returned as close to their original 1929 style as possible. We've been working with the architect and interior designer on this project.

The other project concerns a very attractive laser etched copper plaque being designed for the U S WEST Presidents Club winners this year. The entire award is telephone history based and being your basic nosy historian I looked over an early model. Loved the concept, hated the words. The reason I hated the words was that they were mostly wrong. So I invited myself to be the plaque editor. After some heavy editing and additions and subtractions, we have a nice plaque that can be used for all kinds of presentations and is historically accurate.

As I've said, we've been busy and it has been great fun.





Christmas in Cripple Creek

By Florence Rush

THG Note: *This article is from the unpublished manuscript, "Hot Rail" which is about the family life of an "unlocated lineman" working for the Mountain States Telephone & Telegraph Company from 1932 to 1941, as told by the lineman's wife. The manuscript is about a young family constantly on the move as Lee Rush went from job to job throughout Colorado; about a family and the good telephone company friends they made over the years; about life during the Great Depression and prohibition. Some parts of the manuscript are sad, but most are happy.*

This little story takes place in 1934 during the Rush's second stay in Cripple Creek. They and their six-year-old daughter, Janet, were living in the same apartment they stayed in during 1932 -- an apartment in the former Masonic Lodge Hall across the street from the town jail. The same apartment where Florence and her friend, Evelyn (also the wife of a telephone lineman) had helped the line crew brew a batch of beer the day before Thanksgiving in '32.

If our stay in Cripple Creek earlier was not exciting enough, let me tell you about the Christmas that we spent there two years later.

Evelyn and I were in the kitchen preparing Christmas dinner, when Janet called, "Mommy, Mommy! Come look at all the *pretty ladies*. Hurry, hurry! Why are they all going into the jail?"

I silently asked myself, "Why indeed!"

But I answered, "They are probably going in to visit their husbands, the inmates."

The *pretty ladies* were flamboyantly dressed and appeared to be self-confident. Evelyn and I would periodically check on the *pretty ladies*. We found they were at the jail from mid-morning until late that afternoon.

Since we lived next door to the sheriff, and the *pretty ladies* had been an exciting part of our conversation that day, I was delegated to ask the sheriff about them.

The sheriff was a big, burly man. When I stirred up the courage to ask him about the *pretty ladies*, he drew himself up to his full height and glared down at me and growled, "I let the women in as a Christmas present for the inmates. FORGET ABOUT IT!"

Editor's note addenda: *It was after Florence got to know the sheriff a little better on her second stay in Cripple Creek, that she found out that his stash of beer was kept cool in the "trash can" behind the jail.*

Still time to enter the contest!

No one has successfully guessed Julianne's middle name. To repeat the first two clues:

- It begins with "R"
- It's from the Bible

Wrong guesses are Ruth, Rachel and Rebecca. The next clue is:

- If you were around in the early 1970s, you probably heard and saw the name a lot.

The first reader to call (303-296-1221), e-mail (telcomhist@aol.com) or mail the correct name will receive an authentic antique telephone company stock certificate.

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTS

from 195 MAGAZINE – Winter 1957

THG Note: *The 195 Magazine was published for employees of "the General Departments and of the 195 Broadway Corp., American Telephone & Telegraph Company", whose main office was at 195 Broadway, N.Y., N.Y. According to the article, the following event occurred in 1908.*



Did you know it was a safety-minded, New England telephone man who first pulled a switch and made a Christmas tree light up like a busy switchboard? Here's the story:

Years ago many families used wax candles to decorate their Yuletide evergreens. The burning tapers cast a beautiful –but dangerous – glow among the tinder-dry needles.

The search for a safer substitute began when a little boy crawled under his Christmas tree and upset a candle. Luckily, it only singed his hair. Still, his father at once decreed: "Candles have got to go."

As an employee of the New England Telephone Company, the father was able to buy several dozen switchboard lamps. To prepare for a safer Christmas, he soldered them to wire and covered them with colored paper. The new decorations were admired by all.

Though little known, the story is true. It was reported by Leavitt Morris, travel editor for the *Christian Science Monitor*. The inventive man was **Ralph E. Morris**, his father.

The

Schuh Box

by R. Jack Schuh

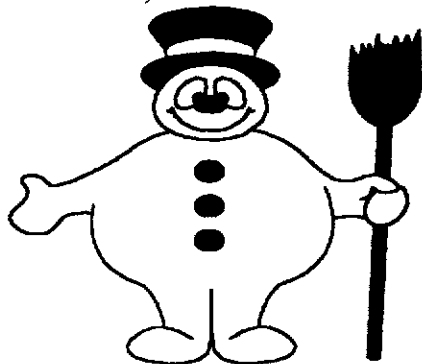
Editor's Note: *Our regular readers will remember that Jack Schuh (pronounced "shoe," and means shoe in German) spent much of his Mountain Bell career as a lineman in Colorado and a foreman of a line crew that worked in Colorado's high mountain country. We try to relate Jack's stories pretty much the way he writes them. He swears "they're mostly true." The following story fits our theme in that the TOP HAT part happened in the winter either before or after Christmas. Further, Jack has never claimed that his elevator went all of the way to the top. Here's the way Jack tells his story,*

"THE YEARS BEFORE HARD HATS"

Before hard hats were required at Mountain Bell, the only requirements for employees who climbed poles and worked construction was to wear a hat and long-sleeved shirts for protection against sun stroke. My normal summer dress was 10-inch engineer boots with a steel shank, work gloves with gauntlets, blue jeans, blue work shirts and a baseball hat.

Now comes the good part where I drove Earl "Doc" Hunter (my foreman) nuts. *Editor's note: driving his foreman nuts was Jack's hobby, until he became a foreman, then his hobby became driving his second level nuts.* Betty (Jack's wife) and I went shopping in the Arkansas Valley where I was working and we lived in a hotel. I spied a beanie with a horn on top in a Five and Dime store. I had to have it! All the Bell System practices (BSPs) said nothing about the kind of hat was required, just a hat.

SOOOO...I bought the beanie! I arrived at work wearing my beanie with the horn on top. I put on my belt and hooks and off I went climbing poles and doing my job. Any time Hunter would ask me a question, I'd reach up and squeeze the horn's bulb. "HONK! HONK!" When I was on the ground between poles I would tweak my horn "BEEP! BEEP! After a week of this Hunter couldn't take it any longer. He informed me in not too pleasant of a way to get rid of the beanie and put my baseball cap back on. Oh, well, I had fun for a little while. HONK! HONK! BEEP, BEEP.



We were stringing a new cable down an alley in Los Animas. To my surprise, sitting on a trashcan, in all of its glory, was a TOP HAT. Now that TOP HAT just ups and winked at me, then beckoned me to rescue from its fate at the city dump. When I picked up this sorry, old TOP HAT, we bonded immediately. I discovered that the former owner had mistreated the TOP HAT and burned a four-inch hole in its back.

Regardless, it only took a moment for me to remove my ball cap and replace it with that magical TOP HAT.

The TOP HAT was wonderful. I wore it everywhere, to work, to the restaurant, to the movies. Everywhere, that is, but in bed. I'd place TOP HAT on the nightstand next to me where it could watch over me, protecting me from the sleep demons that roam the night.

That old TOP HAT attracted a lot of attention. Everywhere, from everyone. Those that saw TOP HAT, including Doc Hunter, were jealous. Everyone wanted my TOP HAT. The only time I had trouble with the hat was at work when I had to climb through open wire leads on a toll line. The open wire circuits would knock the TOP HAT off my head.

Over the years my old TOP HAT was crushed, battered and bent. It was a pretty sorry specimen when it met its match. Betty threw it into the trash. I tried another rescue, but old TOP HAT was crushed beyond saving. I took TOP HAT to work where in a sacrificial fire my old friend was sent to hat heaven to live with the snow gods forever.

Notes from Our ARCHIVIST

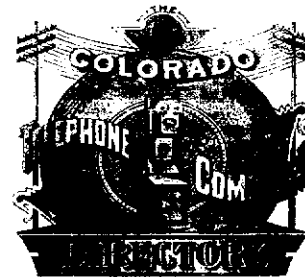
By Julianne Fletcher

Note: We've received wonderful comments and suggestions from our readers. In the following article, Julianne responds to questions raised by Lorraine Bliven, of Gresham, Oregon.

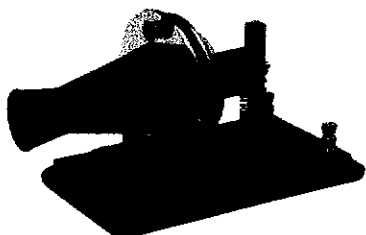
The questions you asked:

"What kinds of things are you looking for as a donation? How can we get them to you?"

The Telecommunications History Group's collection policy states that our organization is dedicated to the acquisition, preservation, interpretation and exhibition of information and materials (objects or items) primarily deriving from or relevant to the history of the telecommunications industry in the United States.



Items, which are complimentary to telecommunications, are out of current use, and were used in the United States, will be considered. However, we will only collect items for which we can provide the best care.



Space is limited at present, and our location is such that we cannot display a great number of artifacts. The ones we have collected are appropriately stored to preserve them, but until such time as we acquire more museum-type facilities, we need to concentrate on the strength of our collection, which is two-dimensional. Another reason to focus on the archival elements at this stage is that we are in the "formation" process. We cannot do everything at once. While we currently house both three dimensional items and documents, each serves to inform the public in a different manner. The museum concept educates by visual means and the archives by informational means. To adequately handle both would take more staff and a bigger physical plant than we have.

In January of this year, we enlisted the services of a professional archives/library consultant to help us develop a plan for the Telecommunications History Group. She recommended we continue to organize our massive collection of documents, correspondence, and photographs to provide easier access for researchers. When that project begins to become more manageable, we can look to the future at our long-range plan to bring a museum

curator on board.

This is not to say we will not take artifacts. If you have that special antique telephone, please contact us about arrangements to receive it. We will find a space. We probably don't need any additional insulators to add to the 4,000 we have received. If you have a collection of correspondence, documents, photographs, periodicals, (in-house publications) telephone company newsletters and magazines, let us know and we can talk with you about what you have so that we can avoid the duplication of donations.

We currently house the complete collection of the *Monitor*, *Northwestern Bell*, and *US WEST* magazines. We could use more state and management newsletters, and any Pacific Northwest Bell employee publications including *Cascade Magazine*.

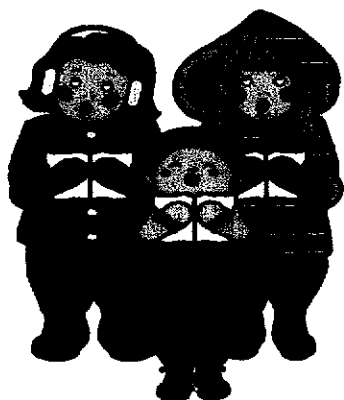
No matter if you donate a magazine or an artifact, every effort should be made to provide documentation of the history of the items you send to us. We have a lovely telephone operator's bracelet with intricate and beautiful charms, but we don't know the story behind it. Without background to provide meaning, the item becomes just a unique piece of jewelry. We welcome any information you can supply.



We record the particulars about each item so we can put it into context within our other collections and the telecommunications industry as a whole. Tracing the provenance or chain of ownership is important as well as any specifics about the item. For example: "This photograph from my Aunt Rose who worked in *Traffic* in 1908, was given to my mother, Mildred Smith, along with the menu and program from the

award luncheon, where she and fellow operators were honored. At that time there were 18 in her department."

After we have talked with you, you may send your donation to P.O. Box 8719, Denver, CO 80201-8719. When we receive your donation, we will inventory it and then send you a "Deed of Gift" form, asking for your signature giving us full use of the items. In this way, we keep the history of the Telephone Company alive. We put all individual experiences together to provide a big picture.

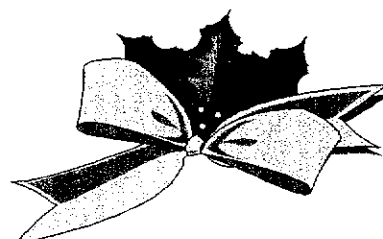


Volunteer Corner

By Jody Georgeson

We're happy to welcome a new volunteer this month - **Curt Furness**. Curt is an antique telephone collector and retired secondary school principal. Curt is undertaking the enormous task of identifying and cataloging our collection of over 50,000 photographs.

Last issue, we told you the sad news of **Russ DeFeyter's** death. His wife, **Barbara**, recently sent us a fine collection of books, tools and artifacts, that we are in the process of accessioning. Thank you, Barbara, for thinking of us.



Another recent acquisition is from **William Himmelman**. Along with a number of Bell System artifacts, we received material from the New York Telephone Company and Communications Workers of America memorabilia. Since we have virtually nothing from N Y TelCo, and very little CWA material, this collection is especially welcome.

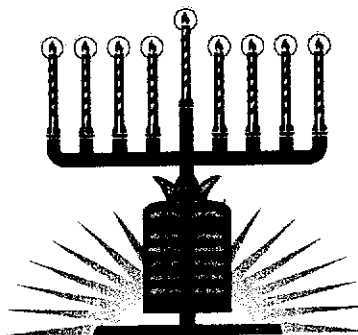
Fundraising Campaign Results

Thanks to all of you, this has been our most successful fundraising campaign, ever!

In September, our volunteers stuffed, addressed and mailed almost 1,000 envelopes asking for your help (BOY! were their tongues ever tired!!). So far, donations and matching funds have resulted in over \$10,000. This is 20% higher than last year's total.

If you have not sent your check yet, we'll still be very grateful to get it. We have a very ambitious agenda during the coming year (see Herb's column), and will need additional funding as well as more volunteers.

To all of you who have so generously supported us through the years, *THANK YOU!*



We're all busy getting ready for the holidays. **Betty Vigil** is packing for her trip to Europe with her sister, and **Mike Flavin** and his wife will be going to Chicago. All four of Mike's children and all six grandsons will be there. **Curt Furness's** two children will home from college, and the whole family will go to their cabin in Summit County. After six trips this year (one to Malaysia) **Ken Pratt** is happy to be staying home and having a big family dinner.

Many of us look forward to being with family. **Julianne's** son, Christian, will be visiting from New York, although her daughter is in Japan and will be unable to make it home. Julianne and her husband, Joe, will celebrate their wedding anniversary on December 23rd at the Carousel Dinner Theater in Ft. Collins.

Jerry and Sue Wild will have their youngest son and his wife visiting from Alexandria, Virginia. Their two littlest grandsons will be staying with them, as well, so it will be a fun, if not very quiet, Christmas. **Dale Norblom** is planning a big family dinner on the 19th, with a quiet Christmas day at home. **Bruce Amsbury** will attend a family get together which includes several generations. Bruce particularly looks forward to his wife's mince-meat cookies.

Georg Ek's daughters will both be home for the family's traditional Swedish Christmas celebration. **Herb and Margaret Hackenburg** will be joined on Christmas Eve by their son, daughter, two grandsons and one granddaughter. Herb has requested that Santa and his reindeer *not* pitter-patter on his roof early Christmas morning. I (**Jody**) will be spending Christmas with friends and family, at a location yet to be named. Wherever it is, I know it will be happy.

Some of you are celebrating Hanukkah as I write this – some of us are getting ready for Christmas and Kwanzaa. We all look forward to the beginning of a new year and millennium. Whichever holidays you celebrate, we at the Telecommunications History Group wish you peace and happiness.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

