



Dial-Log



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Jody Georgeson, EDITOR

Executive Director's Report

By Herb Hackenburg

Collections - Jody is providing a report on Phase I (Colorado and Wyoming) of our current membership campaign, but I'd like to make an observation concerning a paragraph we inserted, almost as an afterthought, into the letter signed by Bob Timothy. We asked for volunteers and Bell System memorabilia. (In the Jack MacAllister version we ask only for memorabilia.) To date, as a direct result of the letter, we have three new potential volunteers and have added four new collections to our stash.

We haven't given new the volunteers the "Introduction to THG" tour yet, but we're scheduled to introduce one to the gang tomorrow. As far as the collections go:

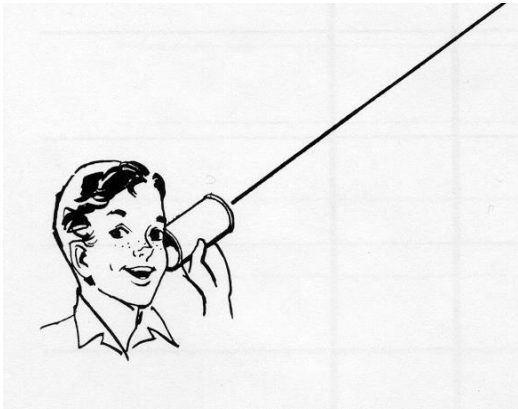
- One came from an anonymous donor. (He called from the guard's desk saying our letter asked for memorabilia and he was leaving a box with the guard.) The box contained five mangy looking telephones, dead bugs, bird droppings, dirt and weeds. Three of the five phones were relatively rare, one very rare (a model 300 call

director). All five phones cleaned up very well.

- One came from **Lou Westbrook's** widow, **Ruth**. It contained a nearly mint condition Bronco Candlestick DesignLine®, the full seven-decanter Jim Beam Antique Telephone Collection (tax seals were unbroken on four decanters), and a beautiful, hand-made, scale model of a wooden telephone booth.
- One came from **Mary Jo Pfannenstiel**. It contained a complete Mountain Bell "It's Your Company" binder, a black 500 dial set and a beautiful dial 202 French cradle phone with its subset (ringer box) attached
- One came from **Everett Hoyt**. It contained six illustrated textbooks about the proper practice of telephone repair and plant installation—four books published by McGraw Hill, circa 1923; and two books published by International Textbook Co., circa 1927. All the books were in nearly new condition.

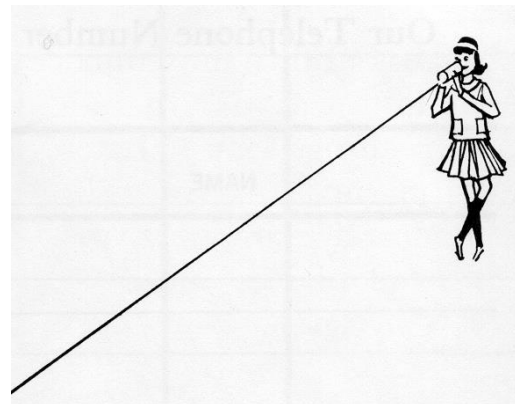
I mention these new collections specifically to bring a potentially negative phenomenon to your attention. Across the nation, archives are reporting a general slow up of donations to their manuscript, photo and artifact collections. The slow up is partially attributable to the rise in popularity of the *Antique Road Show* and E-Bay, and partly to statements from professionals in the field.

Stephen Perloff, editor, *Photo Review Magazine*, sent a copy of a recent statement from a photo newsletter to the national archivist e-mail list. Basically, the newsletter said, "Why give your stuff away when you and/or your heirs can make significant money from it? Don't give your photographic prints and negatives to an archive, library or university - instead set up a trust fund to digitize them, then perpetuate sales of your photos via the Internet long after you're gone."



The numbers of THG's new collections has dwindled over the past three years. However, the quality and size of our 30 new collections in 2001 (33 collections in 2000) has been surprising. While we are still processing the **Jim Sampson** Collection, it's already at several hundred items ranging from several complete antique telephones and ringer boxes, to hundreds of authentic antique telephone parts. In

addition, the massive **Louise Schroer** Collection that began in 1999, continues to grow weekly. While the Schroer Collection contains thousands of manuscript items, it also continues to surprise us with delightful collectibles such as the recent addition of a set of Matchbox Bell System vehicles now residing in our toy collection. **Dave Felice** also continues to add valuable documentary and artifactual material, such as technical handbooks.



What's happening archive-wise -

As I make this report, we're in the middle of a phenomenon that is mostly good news. As our volunteers and the staff continue to process material into the archive, it's entered into our data base so it can be tracked; it's cleaned up; it's edited, weeded out, or trimmed; then it's put into a special preservation container and shelved or filed.

Thus, we're weeding out old material at nearly the same volume as new material comes in. The shelving and/or filing stores our accessioned material much more efficiently than having it sit on pallets or in boxes. So we're slowly gaining storage room, even though we continue to get new material nearly every week. The only negative in all this is that we have to buy new shelving and our volunteers (**Jerry Wild, Dale Norblom, Bruce Amsbury** and myself) have to spend time putting it

up. Even this has a good side since we now buy shelving to meet our specific needs rather than having to make do.

THG archive scorecard:

- THG presently has nearly 9,000 linear feet of accessioned material on hand.
- Except for new directories that are delivered to us hot off the press nearly every day, our directory collection has been completely accessioned by volunteers **Betty Vigil and Terry Quirke**.
- We now have a team of four volunteers, **Curt Furness, Renee Lang, Bob and Annetta Haack**, accessioning our photo collection which is about 10 percent processed.
- Of the original 43 tons of raw material we began with in 1990, an estimated 15 tons remains to be processed. We have two of our most reliable and long-time volunteers, **Dale Norblom and Ken Pratt**, processing this material.
- **Ken Pratt** has also reorganized and re-boxed our entire stock certificate collection.
- Thanks to Jody, our reference library has been reorganized, re-shelved and entered into a database.
- Nearly 50 percent of our constantly growing artifact collection has been cleaned and accessioned by **Jerry Wild, Curt Furness, Georg Ek, Lynn Graves** and myself.
- Virtually no work has been done on our video collection, and we've done very little curator work in our museums.

Telephone History and stock certificate book – THG is on the verge of publishing a combination telephone history and stock certificate catalog.

Because it contains so much telephone history (the “meat” packed around vintage telephone company stock certificate “skeletons”), the 275-page spiral bound, heavily illustrated book should be popular with both scrippophilists and telephone history buffs. An anonymous donor is funding this project.



Fundraising Program

By Jody Georgeson

In mid-November, we mailed fundraising letters to 9,600 Telephone Pioneers and THG members in Colorado and Wyoming. (For those of you who have yet to receive yours, this was the offer for stock certificates and/or a picture of the MST&T headquarters building that we mentioned in the last newsletter.) To date, we have collected nearly \$6,000. Compare this with our total donations last year of \$6,775 (\$8,535 including matching funds, which we won't have this year).

And we still have over 47,000 letters to mail out. We will be mailing to the rest of the Mountain states in January, and Northwestern Bell states later in 2002. We have to mail in phases because the volunteers tongues get tired of licking envelopes, and we're all kept busy processing deposit slips, thank you letters and stock certificates.

Thanks to all of you who have responded so generously!

Who is this Mystery Woman?



This is not a contest – just a request for help. We found this picture with no identification in our files, and we know someone out there will recognize her. The only clue we have is that the photographer was in Greeley (Colorado or Nebraska or??). We've grown quite fond of her, but wish we knew her name! Please write, email or call us and let us know who this pretty young lady is.

The Customer from Hell By Herb Hackenburg

I'm sure that every archive has been accosted by assorted "Customers from Hell." To acquaint the THG Membership with some of the problems the staff faces every once in awhile, to vent some staff frustration, and to add our story to the volumes of similar stories from other archives, I'm reporting on our recent "Customer from Hell."

First, I must report that this customer appeared in the THG Archive in an adversarial relationship. The customer is a law firm representing a client who is suing our major benefactor. While we are an independent nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization and were never a

party to the lawsuit in any fashion, we are located in one of our benefactor's major office buildings (in-kind support). Our benefactor hired a special guard to watch our customer's team (two paralegals, a lawyer and a clerk) and had very tight control of where the team could be while they conducted their "discovery."

The customer is a large California law firm and its team was scheduled to stay in Denver for a full week while they went through *every* page of *every* telephone book published in the past five years, then reproducing *every* example of alleged copyright infringement they found. The team even brought its own copy machine, which used up space on one of our few available worktables.

On the first day, we found that the young lawyer representing our benefactor had negotiated a working agreement with our client without clearing it with us. Our fee system for the use of our archive is \$20 per day, per person (no fee for students and academics.) The agreement stipulated a straight \$20 a day. When I brought this



to the attention of the client's attorney, she said the agreement was a contract and that's what would be. The contract also said the archive would be closed on Tuesday (THG board meeting day).

Jody had gone through our procedures with the team. We could have made them turn in their ball point pens, keep drinks and food of any kind completely out of the archive they were working in, and wear white, cotton gloves. Since we knew their job was huge and their access was legally limited to Archive B and the restrooms, we were more liberal with them than with most of our clients. The team listened to Jody, who basically said be very careful of our books because in many cases they are the only ones in existence. One of the para-legals said, "We're professionals, we've been doing this for a long time, and we know how to handle the books."

Later in the day, the attorney came into my office (technically, my office was off limits to her) and stated that since the guard was watching them all the time they should be able to work on Tuesday even if the staff wasn't going to be present. My answer was, "The agreement is a contract, and that's the way it's going to be."

As it turned out this particular Tuesday was September 11, 2001.

The California team scurried back home, but didn't inform anyone in Denver they'd left town. On Wednesday the guard found he had no one to guard. It took a series of phone calls by lawyers, security people and others to find that the legal team would be "back to Denver in a couple of weeks." Meanwhile, the copy machine sat on our worktable.

In a couple of weeks the team returned with a different lawyer and clerk. The "professionals" then

proceeded to: mark the pages to be reproduced with sticky tabs, use stick'em on their fingers to speed through the pages, rip a couple of pages and do a slap dash repair job with standard clear tape. Since our contract stated the law firm had to pay THG \$100 for each torn or folded page, the guard reported the damage to us. Jody went back to the team and said we'd have to charge them double because in trying to fix the torn pages with clear tape, they made it impossible for us to repair the pages properly. The attitude seemed to be "Whatever."

The next day it was deja vu all over again. This time I went into Archive B to reinforce Jody's original statement and say the fines were now quadrupled. The team's lawyer just said, "OK. OK. Just send us the bill."

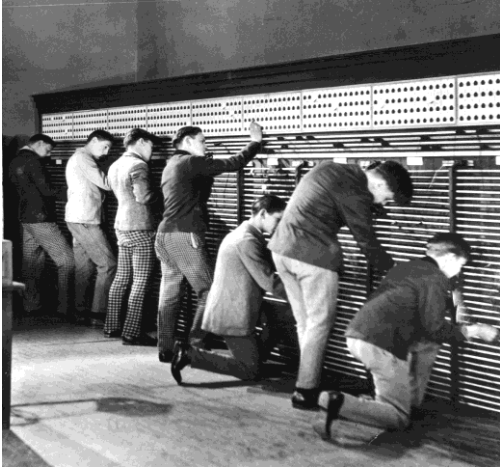
We sent the firm a bill - to date it hasn't been paid. Our attorney says our next step is to add names to this story and send it to the ethics committee of the California Bar.

Excuse me, I've got to find those names to make sure I spell them correctly.

In Memory

We were sorry to hear of the recent death of **Bob Perry**. Bob was the regional Pioneer historian in South Dakota, and Chairman of the **J. L. W. Zietlow Telephone Pioneer Museum**, at the Dacotah Prairie Museum in Aberdeen.

The Boy Operators



Contrary to popular opinion, historians are not a dull bunch. For example, a Canadian historian has written a history of the telephone in British Columbia - - - in verse. The following is an excerpt from Wire Song, by Don Benson.

At first, they hired boys to operate the boards,
For in those early days they thought they'd find
That mastering the mysteries of plugs,
and jacks, and cords,
Was technically beyond the female mind.
But it soon became apparent boys weren't suited for the work;
Some argued with callers constantly,
And were apt to call a customer a "hay-seed" or a "jerk,"
Or their voice might break, and skitter to a high C.

Some guzzled beer at lunch time, and whittled on the board,
Or drove their supervisor up the wall,
When the etiquette of operator training was ignored.

And they propositioned ladies placing calls.

Boys were good at fixing switchboards,
with pliers or a spanner,
And plugged in calls with flourish and elan,
But were apt to growl at businessmen who criticized their manner,
"Come on up here, and fight me like a man!"

At the central down at Gastown, when the customers called in,
Chuck Tilley sang and yodeled with his pals.

The problem was no one could hear the calls above the din;
That's why they fired boys and hired gals.

For gals' voices were more soothing,
with such pleasant tones and ranges;
And they didn't drink, or swear or go on strike.

Soon men in towns with telephones were dropping by exchanges
To find out first-hand, what "The Voice" looked like.

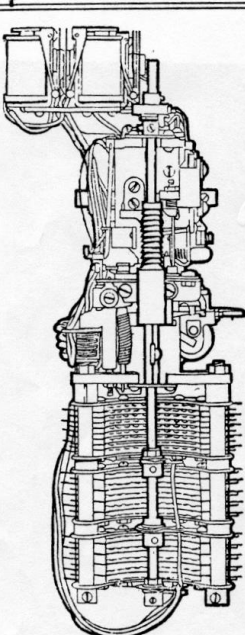


Many people hear voices when no-one is there. Some of them are called mad and are shut up in rooms where they stare at the walls all day. Others are called writers and they do pretty much the same thing.

-Margaret Chittenden

Not everyone was happy with the "gals". This ad ran in the 1910 Overland Telephone & Telegraph Company directory, in Phoenix, Arizona.

This is a Picture of the Automatic Telephone Operator



She is at your service night and day

She is efficient and accommodating

She will do exactly as you instruct her

She has never been known to talk back

She Never Has Been Known to Repeat a Conversation

Bring on the Competition

By Herb Hackenburg

While terrorist Hell was being launched against innocent civilians on September 11, the THG Directors were holding an important meeting in the board room of the historic Mountain States Telephone & Telegraph Headquarters Building in Denver. Soon, the Telecommunications History Group would be directly involved in the devastation in a small and personal way.

While THG Chairman **Jim O'Boyle** conducted the meeting, 2,000

miles to the east **Marlene Bare** was watching the horrors unfold on the television screen in her apartment near the Pentagon. She screamed as she saw a second airliner slam into the second World Trade Center tower. Seconds later the television news team confirmed that the United States was under a terrorist attack and at least two other airliners were in the air but unaccounted for. Bare reached for her telephone.

It was 9:20 am EST when Bare called her boyfriend, **Lt. Col. Greg Fritz**, U. S. Army, at the Pentagon. "He answered on the first ring. I asked him if he knew what was going on in New York. He said he knew something big was going on but hadn't seen or heard anything lately. I told him about the second plane and that the television news people had confirmed that the country was under attack and two other planes were unaccounted for."

Bare continued, "He said the nation was at war and since he was a soldier he had better get to work. I told him to be careful."

Later in the day, Bare learned that immediately after her call, Col. Fritz was called to a meeting about 150 feet from his office. Col. Fritz was attached to the Army Personnel Office (DCSPER) on the second floor of the outside ring of the Pentagon.

Col. Fritz had just arrived at the doorway of the meeting room when American Flight #77 slammed into where his office had been. While he escaped the fireball, the explosion knocked him down, leaving him with a concussion and a badly damaged knee.

At the same time, a mile away, Bare heard a large low flying plane. Too low. She looked out her window towards the Pentagon in time to see an American Airlines jet flying at treetop

level, then disappear from sight. Then she heard a large explosion.

Filled with feelings of grief, anger, helplessness and fear, Bare rushed from her apartment towards the Pentagon. “When I got there all my worst fears were fact. Where Greg’s office should have been was a huge hole surrounded by fire, smoke and wreckage. I felt indescribable despair. I prayed for Greg and the others caught in that awful place. The best I could hope for was that Greg was still alive. I went back to the apartment so I’d be there when someone called.

“We learned later that the plane’s tail section had ended up under Greg’s office. Twenty-one of Greg’s close co-workers and personal friends were killed in the attack. Greg helped to evacuate the building and got medical attention to the badly wounded.”

Marlene continues, “It was four horrible hours after the attack when someone knocked at my door. I opened the door to see the most beautiful sight in the world. His uniform was torn and bloody. His face was tired and drawn, but my soldier was standing there.”

His knee surgically repaired, Greg returned to work a few days after the attack.

While he’d lost everything in his office, Greg told Marlene that most of his personal things could be replaced. Except for his favorite poster, which he had kept with him for nearly a decade.

Marlene continues the story. “I knew the poster he was talking about. Greg started his Pentagon assignment in July. I fondly remember assisting him one evening hanging the framed poster while we got his office ready for his new job. The poster had been a gift to him. He couldn’t brag enough about how much meant to him, how it represented

such a positive and rewarding experience. The poster’s message ‘inspired’ Greg and he hung it proudly over his desk so he could read it each morning as he started his day. On September 11th, the caption took on an even greater meaning.”

The poster is a large photograph of two buffaloes fighting for dominance over the herd. It’s titled “**Bring on the Competition**”. Greg felt the poster’s meaning was particularly well suited for the United States Army. The poster had been presented to Greg by a team of U S WEST employees with whom he had worked for a couple of years on a special assignment. The telephone company team members had each signed the “Fighting Buffaloes” poster that went on to become *the* most popular of the extremely popular U S WEST “Cowboy” poster series.

Marlene planned to replace the destroyed poster. Unfortunately, she hadn’t realized that a telephone company had issued the poster. She spent hours on the Internet calling up every web site having anything to do with posters. No luck.

Then Greg mentioned that the poster came from the telephone company in Denver. The next day Marlene was talking with **Annette Mattingly** of the Qwest executive staff.

Annette’s initial response was not encouraging. She knew of the poster because several requests for copies had come to the executive staff over the years, but there were no posters to be found.

However, Annette remembered the “telephone history people at the Denver Service Center.” She called the Telecommunications History Group, told us the story and asked if we had a copy of the poster that we could spare.

Cooperation between the folks at Qwest, Aardvark Imaging and THG made it possible for a Fighting Buffalo poster to be “over-nighted” via UPS to Marlene.

And now THG has its own private heroes in this devastating war. The THG volunteers, membership, staff and directors send a special thank you to Annette Mattingly, the Aardvark Imaging team, and our *very special regards* to Marlene and “her soldier” Greg.



Inter-archive Cooperation

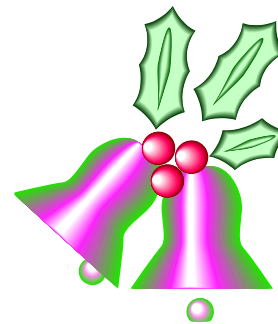
By Jody Georgeson

One of the nicest aspects of working in an archive is the chance to get to know others in the field. Archivists are a generous bunch, and when they find something that doesn't fit in with their collection, will usually try to find a more appropriate institution.

We recently have been on both ends of such generosity. Our good friend and volunteer, **Georg Ek**, was in California

recently where he visited several other telephony collections. As our agent, he was given three collectable mugs from the **Roseville Telephone Museum** in Roseville, California. **Bill Coughlin** (SBC archives) gave us – through Georg - a metal card issued by Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph to **O.R. Hyde**, commemorating his service during the Pueblo flood in 1921. He found it when going through materials in the closed San Francisco museum. We're extremely grateful to the Roseville Museum, Bill Coughlin, and especially to Georg for being our good will ambassador throughout the world.

We were pleased be able to give nearly a full set of bound copies of the *Monitor* to the Colorado Historical Society, and of the *Northwestern Bell Magazine* to the Nebraska State Historical Society. We also sent a Corn Exposition stock certificate and correspondence to Nebraska. The letterhead on the correspondence contained the slogan, “Prosperity moves on crutches when crops go wrong”, and a picture of the Corn Show Mermaid. The folks in Nebraska assured us that they would give her a good home!



By the time you get this newsletter, the 2001 holidays will be past. We hope they were happy ones for all of you. We wish you all a safe and peaceful New Year.