



Dial-Log



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Jody Georgeson, EDITOR

Director's Report

By Herb Hackenburg

One of THG's original goals in 1991, when it began as a nonprofit corporation, was to work toward a national museum for the telecommunications industry. Building a significant, respected archive was a strong and important first step toward this goal. As Colorado's fourth largest archive and the largest independent telecommunications archive, THG has achieved its original first goal. Now, THG can begin laying the groundwork for a national telecommunications museum, while continuing to build an independent national telecommunications archive.

Under the direction of THG President **Jim O'Boyle**, I have begun the *very early* work on assembling a credible, knowledgeable national committee with enough clout to establish a national telecommunications museum.

Rid up/clean up activities:

Archive—in the THG archive, under **Carol Baird's** and **Jody Georgeson's** resolute and innovative leadership, a large amount of trash has been

discarded, supplies have been organized and stored in a designated area, pictures have been hung, displays dusted, and furniture rearranged. The archive is already looking great and we now have an audio/video work area where none was before. I believe Carol and Jody have a couple of more items on their rid-up agenda. They haven't told me, but I have a strong feeling that I'll know when they have arrived at the last agenda item. I'll see them approaching my office with a gleam in their eyes and trash bags and a shovel in their hands. To date, my office is the archive's last bastion of messy.

14th St. Pioneer Museum—my leadership on this one. We decided to have the volunteers and staff available on a Wednesday (THG's main volunteer day) grab the cleaning supplies and march over to the little museum on the 14th floor of the Mountain States Telephone & Telegraph Company Headquarters Building. Accomplished that day: every item on display was dusted and polished; all display signage

was updated, replaced or reattached; glass was washed and polished, and floors were vacuumed. At the end of the day it was a tired but satisfied crew that drooped back to the archive. The museum at 1005 17th is next.

Personal level:

Continue to learn while doing—currently when I'm not doing executive director stuff, I'm accessioning the **Dick MacKnight** Collection. This is the first time I've worked under the direction of a real archivist, Jody. I'm finding out there's a lot more to the job than sorting through old papers and stuffing some of them in a box and putting notes about them in a database. There all kinds of bad things in those papers that need to be tracked down and thrown out—staples, paperclips, rubber bands, sticky notes, and certain kinds of clear tape come to mind. Then there are plastic binders that must be discarded and photographs to identify and place in protective envelopes.

Then I have the fun and/or handicap of being a historian, having worked with Dick for more than 10 years, knowing many of the players covered in his files and being around when many of the events covered in the files happened. Certain files make fascinating and educational reading; many files provide temptations for me to add historical facts and/or context around because I was there. I've chosen to add facts (with appropriate notations) in the description column of the database and strongly fight the temptation to add "gossip items" even though I believe them to be true and they would help explain the unexplainable to a future researcher. All told, I've found accessioning to be a fun gig.

Speaking of the MacKnight Collection, Dick's long-held position of

being the official financial spokesperson for U S WEST (he was authorized to convey U S WEST financial information to the nation's financial press in New York City) called for him to keep detailed working papers. THG has acquired several of these files, including those about the formation of MediaOne and the eventual split between the phone company (U S West Communications) and the cable company (MediaOne).

My personal purchase -- a professional quality digital camera-Nikon 5700—after I learn how to use it, this camera will enable me to directly input pictures of all THG artifacts in the THG database and I can shoot THG volunteer activities to add to the collection. All these pictures could also be available on the THG web site. Who knows what other things I can shoot for the History Group and Dial-Log? I do know the combination of a relatively high mega-pixel count and a Nikon lens equates to extremely high-quality picture reproduction.



*Whenever you're called on to make up
your mind,
and you're hampered by not having any,
the best way to solve the dilemma, you'll
find,
is simply by spinning a penny.*

*No - not so that chance shall decide the
affair
while you're passively standing there
moping;
but the moment the penny is up in the
air,
you suddenly know what you're hoping.*
-- Piet Hein, poet and scientist (1905-1996)



The Museum of Communications

By Don Ostrand

Editors Note: Don is Director of the Museum of Communications in Seattle, WA. This is the second in a series of articles by Don.

With the commitment between the officers of Pacific Northwest Bell and the Telephone Pioneers of America, our founder's (**Herb Warrick**) dream started to take shape. A museum project to preserve our communications heritage was given the green light, but where? What equipment is still available? What equipment should be preserved? How much space would be required?

Technology was rapidly changing and the new "state of the art" equipment was to replace nearly all the equipment still in service in 1985. A list was developed indicating desired items, their location and removal dates. We also

came up with floor space estimates for installing a condensed, but complete, switching unit that could once again be operational.

The list was dynamic and could be edited to add or remove equipment as refinements took place. It included the one-of-a-kind Panel office, a #1 X-Bar, a #5 X-Bar a 355SXS CDO, a power board, various carrier systems, toll and telegraph test boards and numerous display cases. Space to house the equipment would require 8,000 to 10,000 square feet with the 14 foot ceiling height of a typical central office.

Armed with the information gathered from the list, a small group of planners developed basic floor layout plans. Research of surplus space revealed four or five sites that would meet our requirements. City of Seattle zoning considerations for parking, residential zoning and access eliminated most of the sites. From the remaining, an office in the industrial area of south Seattle was selected.



The British Post Office Call Box Model K-6, on display at the Museum of Communications.

A formal letter was submitted to PNB to secure the entire third floor [of 7000 East Marginal Way] for the sole purpose of building The Vintage Telephone Equipment Museum. Approval was granted and the formal project was underway.

Next issue: "The Gala Kickoff Luncheon"

For more information, see our web-site: www.museumofcommunications.org



The Anniversary of Area Codes

This article appeared recently in The Highlands 460 Newsletter (Highlands Ranch, CO), and was brought to us by volunteer Jerry Wild.

Area codes were introduced November 10, 1951, when the mayor of Englewood, NJ made the first direct-dial, long-distance call to the mayor of Alameda, CA. Before that, most long-distance calls required an operator at both the calling and receiving end. After the mayor's successful test, AT&T introduced 90 area codes across the country. By 2002, there were 317 area codes in service [in North America] - 207 of them in the United States.

The North American Numbering Plan (NANP) covers the United States, Canada and many Caribbean countries. It includes 10 digits: the first three are the area code; the second three (the prefix) is the Central Office Code; and

the last four digits specify a particular telephone.

Each area code supports 792 prefixes, and each prefix represents 10,000 possible phone numbers. When all prefixes in a given area are used, a new area code is needed. Originally, area codes had to have a 0 or 1 as the middle digit, but growing demand overwhelmed the restriction, which was removed in 1995. Toll-free 800 numbers were also being exhausted, so the new 888 (and later 877) toll-free area code was introduced in 1996.

According to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), there are more than 1 billion telephone numbers currently available for use, but they, too, may be exhausted by 2031. If that happens, we will have to add more digits to our telephone numbers.

WE HAVE A WINNER!



The best answer was sent to us by **Roger C. Waugh** of West Des Moines, Iowa.

Roger writes, "When I started working for PACTEL in 1960, the switchmen (CO Techs) called them BUTT Ins, as they could be used to butt into a circuit to monitor the noise level. I remember cable splicers using them to "butt into" a cable pair to monitor before cutting the pair to splice."

"As a goat is known to butt things, I suppose the term GOAT naturally came to stand for a hand set."

In demand now only as souvenirs -
**Cordboards take place
alongside nickel cigars**

*The following article appeared in the
NWB News, June 5, 1978.*



DES MOINE - It hangs on as one of the last vestiges of early telephone history. And soon, it will be only a memory.

The old cordboard . . . it was one of the first operator consoles. Its crisscrossed cords and blinking lights became a universal symbol of the telephone operator.

But like a lot of other equipment, it has become obsolete. TSPS is the new kid on the block and the cordboard is being put out to pasture. Only a small section remains and it's in a newly remodeled room that retains little of the flavor of the old operator room.

The Ninth and High Streets building went up in 1926. A year later, the cordboard was installed.

"I think it was probably the oldest board in the state," says Esther Thompson, operator services supervisor. "And someone told me that when it was

installed in 1927, some of the equipment already was used."

It won't be used again, though. Nearly half a football field in length, the old cordboard has been torn out to be replaced by offices and a new operators' lounge. Oh, sure, some of the metal will be recycled, but never again will the old board carry messages across the wires.

Operators grabbed for souvenirs from the piles of junk Western Electric workers had torn out. Anything to save a piece of the past. Cords with plugs on the end, buttons with numbers . . . even pieces of metal became much-wanted items.

For this group, it was *Goodbye Central*.

Coast to Coast by Automobile

A recent book and PBS movie by Dayton Duncan & Ken Burns tells the story of "Horatio's Drive." In May 1903, Dr. Horatio Jackson drove his open-air Winton from San Francisco to New York in 63 days. At the time, there were no road maps, no streetlights, and only 150 miles of paved roads in the entire country. This is believed to have been the first transcontinental road trip. Twenty years later, WECO Installation Foreman R.W. Adams made a similar trip, which he described in this article from the Western Electric News, January 1924.

New York to Los Angeles by automobile! This is what Mrs. Adams and I did recently when I was transferred from District 22 (Newark, NJ) to the Pacific Coast.

Such a trip is bound to have high lights, and here are some of them.

We sailed right along to Buffalo, on to Cleveland, and from there to Chicago without any mishap.

From Chicago we dropped down through the cornfields of Indiana to St. Louis, where we said good-bye to good roads.

Missouri is full of chuckholes and it was a relief to cross the Missouri River.



Kansas, famous for its mud and wheat fields, was the next state through which we passed. We stuck in the mud four times in two days and each time required the aid of a team of horses to pull us out. The farmer who came to our assistance on one occasion has made a small fortune dragging tourists out of the mud.

From Kansas we continued on to Colorado where the roads were a little better and the grades a little worse.

On entering New Mexico we climbed the famous Raton Pass. We successfully negotiated all the hairpin turns and made the grade with water boiling over the radiator, but still going strong.

Our next stop was Santa Fe, New Mexico -- an old Spanish town, where we almost lost our car as a penalty for parking on the wrong side of the alley! Our New York license saved us.

In New Mexico and Arizona we drove through picturesque Indian villages and mining camps. And on the edge of the desert we lost two days in repairing our radiator. Then, after equipping the car with water bags, we prepared for the desert, which is just a stretch of sandy waste, which seems to have no ending. The best thing about it is the signpost, which tells the weary traveler that he has at last reached a land of vegetation again.

At Needles, California -- the hottest point on the desert -- we still had about 250 miles of desert to cross. On account of the terrific heat, we did most of this traveling at night and finally reached San Bernardino, California, after 243 miles of driving through sand and ruts where twelve miles an hour is fast traveling.

Los Angeles came last, after 60 miles of good paved roads from San Bernardino. Through orange groves and palm trees for most of the distance at that!

A fitting climax to a great tour!

Acquisitions

By Jody Georgeson

Wonderful stuff keeps landing on our doorstep! **Roger Schreder** of Cedar Rapids, IA sent a Telephone Trivia Game. **Randy Kramer**, of Denver, CO gave us a video tape of 1986 retirement interviews and an ASD-produced safety film entitled "Some Days You Can't Make a Nickel".

We received several books, an operator headset, and a bunch of miscellaneous switchboard parts from **Frank Lutka**, way up in Etobicoke, Ontario. These parts will come in handy as we restore our numerous old boards.

We continue to receive treasures from **Louise Schroer**. The latest

shipment contained - among other things - an adorable Santa-in-a-phone-booth Christmas tree ornament and a Pioneer Christmas card. Years ago, Louise and her husband Charlie bought dozens of the Santas, to give to family and friends. She also forwarded a Pioneer book bag from **Elizabeth Jolly**.



From **Phil Brides** via **Ralph Crawford**, we have a copy of the first Bell System Annual Report, issued by the American Bell Telephone Company on March 29, 1881.

Ken Pratt has contributed much (in addition to his volunteer time!) over the years. Most recently he brought in several photographs and documents collected during his time in the Engineering Department at Mountain Bell.

Max Priebe, Littleton, CO brought in a rare Mountain States drop cloth. These were used by installers to protect customers' homes from any mess made

during the installation of telephones and lines.

Another friend in Littleton, **Harley Jones**, sent a very interesting collection of documents and pamphlets including Union Agreements, organization charts, and Toll Trunk Diagrams. Harley began work as a lineman for MST&T in Colorado Springs in 1936. After a varied career in the phone company - with a couple of stints in the Navy - Harley retired from service in January 1981.

Mike Kenol-chik of Denver came by with 2 working mini-crossbar switches, the last to be taken out of service in the "old Bell System network". Another Denver supporter, **Steve Dory**, brought in an Airtouch™ Cellular advertising display, complete with pamphlets and display phones.

We are so very grateful for your support and contributions.



Happy Holidays from the staff at THG. May your New Year be full of peace and prosperity!



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