



Dial Log



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A Note From Our Director

Can you believe that summer is quickly coming to an end? We have had a busy summer here at the Telecommunications History Group. I had a great visit to the *Herbert J. Warrick, Jr. Museum of Communications* in Seattle. What an amazing place. The museum features one of the nation's finest collections of working telephone equipment including Central Office switches, PBX's, telegraph, teletype, toll transmission gear and subscriber telephone sets. The team of volunteers has done a terrific job. If you haven't had a chance to visit, be sure to stop by next time you are in the Seattle area. They are open on Tuesdays and the first Sunday of every month. In the meantime check out their website at www.museumofcommunications.org.

The team in Denver has been busy educating the community about THG both at the Rocky Mountain Book and Paper Fair and by giving special tours of the Denver archive. Volunteers are our life blood and we are always in need of more to help us continue to do a variety of jobs including research, preservation, inventory, database entry, repair of antique equipment and artifacts and conducting tours. Be sure to contact us if you would like to volunteer, are interested in taking a tour, or would like to become a member. We are happy to have you.

We also had the great privilege of participating in The National History Day in Colorado at University of Colorado Denver. As stated in their program, this is an experiential literacy and social studies program. Students actively investigate historical topics that interest them and develop creative projects, while learning the skills necessary for success in school and the work force. It was fun to see the various exhibits and meet the History Day students. Thanks to **Jody Georgeson** for sponsoring a table.

And on a final note, I would like to welcome back the founder of the Telecommunications History Group, **Herb Hackenburg**. Herb has returned to the Denver area and is volunteering at THG. Welcome back Herb.

Warmest regards,
Lisa Berquist

Shambhala Calling



Last month we were contacted by Christine Sloan, editor of Shambala Times Community News Magazine, who wanted to use some of our images for an article she was writing. This excerpt is used with her permission. The Buddhist community in Eastern Canada hosts classes via conference call for rural and/or disabled members who cannot make it to classes held in metropolitan areas.

According to Shastri Christine Sloan, "Shambhala Calling has been a rich and

surprisingly effective format for presenting the In Everyday Life classes. In order to prepare individuals for each class and for meditation instruction, I send out extensive information about the view and posture of meditation, the class outline and reading assignments, and some suggestions for how to be comfortable on the phone for an hour. People are encouraged to use headsets and in one case, two persons together used a speaker phone. Using the conference call format, we can record every class so participants who are unable to be present can listen to the entire class at a later time and, as often happens, anyone can listen again at another time or use the guided practice for their personal meditation.

The group seemed to know instinctively how to take turns speaking on the phone. Until we became familiar with everyone's voice, we say our name and signal when we have finished talking. It happens quite naturally. We always begin with a check-in and the talks are usually short. Often we meditate or contemplate together with guidance and there is time for discussion. We sign off with a check-out where people are invited to say any last words to the group.

Thus far our classes have been on Monday mornings and it is the most wonderful way to start my week. Hearing human voices, all reflecting on the teachings, is a heartfelt and intimate experience. People have shared deep concerns and insights, and we have become good friends. I try to be open to the interests and needs of the group, sometimes varying the topic or plan for the morning in response to what is arising. For example, during one Meditation In Everyday Life class, a participant was going through a difficult time and another asked if there was some practice we could do to help. This led to the presentation of a loving kindness contemplation on the spot, for which all were so grateful.

The classes work very well with six participants for the one-hour format. I plan to experiment with a larger class and longer time frame (up to eight for an hour and a half). This format seems to fill a void for people in rural areas as well as for persons unable to drive, access classes online, or preferring the phone to the computer. So much is conveyed in the human voice. If the eyes are the gateway to the soul, the voice is definitely a way to the heart."

National History Day in Colorado

National History Day in Colorado (NHDC) is an academic program at the University of Colorado Denver benefitting Colorado middle and high school students. Each year, 15,000 Colorado students participate in National History Day in Colorado. NHDC is an affiliate of National History Day, a nationally acclaimed academic program that annually challenges 700,000 students and 40,000 teachers nationwide to ask amazing questions and uncover life-changing answers by engaging in historical research, interpretation and creative expression.

For thirty years, NHDC has strengthened relationships between--and provided support to--students and teachers, successfully helping youth from all socio-economic and educational backgrounds to achieve in school, build confidence and prepare for college.

Students choose historical topics related to an annual theme and conduct extensive primary and secondary research through libraries, archives, museums, oral history interviews and historic sites. After analyzing and interpreting their sources and drawing conclusions about their topics' significance in history, students present their work in original papers, websites, exhibits, performances and documentaries. These projects are entered into competitions in the spring at local, state and national levels where they are evaluated by professional historians and educators. The program culminates in the Kenneth E. Behring National Contest each June held at the University of Maryland at College Park.

In addition to discovering the exciting world of the past, National History Day also helps students develop the following attributes that are critical for future success:

- Critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- Research and reading skills
- Oral and written communication and presentation skills
- Self esteem and confidence
- A sense of responsibility for and involvement in the democratic process

This year, THG will partner with National History Day by suggesting topics and working with teachers and students on projects related to the telecom industry. More information about National History Day can be accessed at <http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/CLAS/Centers/ColoradoHistoryDay/>



Students presented a prize-winning performance explaining the history of the United Nations.

Rocky Mountain Book and Paper Fair



The Rocky Mountain Antiquarian Booksellers Association (RMABA) invited us to exhibit at their 2014 Book and Paper Fair in Denver on August 1 and 2. Thanks to RMABA, we were able to introduce many people to THG, and were pleased to welcome several new members to the THG family.

Open House

THG held two “open houses” in August. Following a tour of the historic 931 14th Street building, we welcomed our guests to a tour of the THG Archives. Here’s volunteer Herb Hackenburg showing off the directory collection to members of a tour.



Oklahoma Museum of Telephone History

We heard recently from George Gibson, curator of the Oklahoma Museum of Telephone History. The museum is located at 111 Dean A. McGee Avenue in downtown Oklahoma City. They’re open on Mondays and Wednesdays, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. or you can arrange for special tours by calling (405)236-6153. Their website (<http://attpioneervolunteers.org/chapter-41>) is under construction, and should be available soon. If you live in or are visiting the Oklahoma City area, be sure to visit this wonderful collection!

A Very Interesting Day

By Herb Hackenburg

Saturday, May 3, 2014 was a very interesting day for me. It started at breakfast. I was drinking coffee and spreading peanut butter on my "Fred's Bread" toast when I looked down to see a small ad cut out of the Salina Journal laying on the table.

"Oh, **Jerry Williams** is holding his antique telephone sale in Abilene again, and thank you, Martha, for the reminder," I thought to myself.

Jerry lives in Salina and is a Bell System retiree. He has a significant collection of antique phones and he has single-handedly kept the annual Abilene National Antique Telephone Sale going for the past four years. In its hey-day, the Abilene sale pulled in dealers and collectors from coast to coast and border to border. It was sponsored by the national Independent Telephone Company Museum in Abilene.

For a couple of years, THG volunteer **Georg Ek** and I would come in from Denver a day early to help **Peg Chronister** set things up at the Dickenson County Fair Grounds. Then we'd set up the THG booth. We made a little money and usually spent it on stuff we didn't have in the THG archive and museum.

Peg was a retired chief operator from the United Telephone Company (now Nextel), which was headquartered in Abilene and Salina. She headed the Dickenson County/Independent Telephone Company Museum and was a major player in the annual antique telephone sale. I remember Georg and I once had to move an old PBX Peg had stored in the hay loft of a barn. Both the temperature and humidity was about 90. If you wanted to see two sweaty old geezers, that was the day to watch us.

Then things changed. Nextel stopped sponsoring the museum, Peg passed away and eBay happened; the antique telephone sale died a slow death. Four years ago, Jerry Williams kick-started it again. He missed the lyin' and jawin', and the wheelin' and dealin' face-to-face with his fellow collectors. That just doesn't happen on eBay.

After breakfast, I took the back road from Salina to Abilene (old US-40), a nice leisurely 30-minute drive. I also took the back way to the fairgrounds. I saw pick-ups, cars and vans parked around the exhibit building where the sale has always been held. It was about 10:45 am and the sale shuts down around noon, so I had time to look and talk, but with a \$5.00 budget, not to buy much.



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I saw several displays scattered around the room, but it was obvious that some dealer/collectors had already packed up. Jerry had a very big display and several items that would look great in a THG museum. I visited a few booths and saw an interesting collection of limed-edition Bell System phones, assorted candlesticks, but not many wooden wall phones.

All at once I looked up and saw a woman attending a very large display of telephone memorabilia. I thought, "That's **Joy Beets**; she must be selling her postcard collection." Joy is a delightful lady with whom I play bridge two or three times a month in Salina, and who donated a complete set of AT&T-published postcards to THG last year. She has about 700 different telephone post cards in her collection.

Then the lady turned her head and it wasn't her. "Nuts," I thought. "I bet Joy would have sold me at least a dozen postcards for five bucks."

I looked at a couple of more displays and said hello to Jerry, who said he's going to do the sale again in 2015, and invited THG to come and sell/trade a bunch of stuff. I said I would convey his invitation to the THG crew.

I went over to the postcard display, which was three tables long and crammed full of trinkets and memorabilia, including a full set of the Jim Beam antique telephone decanters and another liqueur bottle collection of antique European telephones, and three other bottles that I have never seen.

The lady wasn't there, but her brother was, so I told him I had only \$5 to spend. He said, "JoAnne will probably sell you half a table of this stuff for that. She'll be back in a minute." When she comes back, she gives me a great big smile and says, "Herb Hackenburg! I bet you don't remember me, but I met you in Omaha when you came to collect Northwestern Bell's history stuff. Give me a hug!" (*That story was told in a previous issue.*)

Three years ago, **JoAnn Jessen** decided to sell her collection of telephone knickknacks, memorabilia and ephemera. Last year she sold many of her antique telephones at the Abilene sale, and this year she was selling the rest.

I told JoAnn I had only \$5 to spend, and she said, "Tell you what, Herb. You pick out five dollars worth of stuff and I'll give you everything on this table. I've been thinking about donating everything I can't sell to the History Group, anyway."

Thus THG gained nearly 200 items, with a good chance of receiving another 200. I'd say that was five bucks well invested on an interesting day in Abilene. And thanks, JoAnn.

1917: 1st Air-to-Ground / Ground-to-Air Radio Communication

The first air-to-ground and ground-to-air radio communications were accomplished by AT&T engineers at Langley Field in Virginia.

During World War I, the U.S. military desperately needed radio communication between airplanes and the ground and between the planes themselves.

So in May 1917, the U.S. Army Signal Corps contacted Western Electric to request an airplane radio telephone with a 2,000-yard range. Spurred on by wartime urgency, AT&T engineers designed the equipment using solid hunches, available circuitry and a few field tests.

On July 2, they made their first air-to-ground transmission over a distance of about two miles. And on July 4, they accomplished a ground-to-air transmission over the same distance. By August 20, they had achieved two-way communication between planes in flight.

Western Electric began shipping radio telephone sets abroad in October.



AT&T employees (from left) Edward Craft, 1st Lt. Ralph Bown, Maj. Nathan Levinson and Col. N. H. Slaughter watch an early aircraft-radio test. Many AT&T and Bell System employees entered the U. S. Army Signal Corps during World War I.

Rules for Troublemens



This set of rules was written in 1911 by Lewis C. Jones, Suburban Plant manger in the Chicago Telephone Company.

1. Put up a "good front." It is not necessary to advertise any tailor shop, neither is it necessary to go about your work looking like a coal heaver. Overalls can look as respectable as anything else, but they must at least show that they are on speaking terms with the laundryman; and shoes must have a bowing acquaintance with the bootblack.
2. Make the liveryman wash and oil your wagon and harness, and do not tie the harness up with wire longer than is necessary to get proper repairs. The same may be said of your suspenders and buttons.
3. Keep all unnecessary junk out of your wagon.
4. Don't pitch dry batteries into the bed of your wagon to be hauled around day after day with broken glass, bolts, wire, pole steps and what not. Don't neglect to memorize the fact that the supply houses are not running charitable institutions for the benefit of the Company.
5. Go about your business cheerfully and quietly. When you enter a residence don't overlook the footmat. If requested to go around to the back door, don't consider yourself insulted, but try to realize that the lady of the house may not have a maid, and is only trying to save work for herself. Say "good morning" or "evening;" it doesn't cost anything and shows you started out right at home.
6. If compelled to do anything that makes a litter, ask for a newspaper to catch the trash. The lady of the house will be grateful.
7. Close the door when you go out, not forgetting to shut the front gate.
8. When you leave be sure you have looked over everything carefully and have anticipated, as far as possible, some future trouble.
9. It is not necessary to tell the lady of the house that her telephone is worn out and no good. She may think so herself. Tell her that her telephone is as good as anybody's, and back it up by making it so.
10. If you ever believe that a subscriber is a crank, forget it. All of them are wise enough to tell when a telephone is not working right. Not every troubleman can do this.
11. Be courteous and polite, and don't be afraid to hand out a little jolly occasionally. It doesn't hurt anybody's feelings to be jollied a little.
12. Treat everybody as you would like to be treated, not forgetting your horse; if you want to know the horse's side of it, just take off your coat and hat some zero day, hitch yourself to the same post with your belt and stand there about two hours. Hereafter, you won't forget his blanket.

13. Don't go pell mell through the streets regardless of pedestrians as though you were going after your salary check. The fact that a man is always in a hurry doesn't always mean that he is accomplishing overmuch.
14. Remember that you do more to raise or lower the Company's profits per subscriber than anything else, except a sleet storm or a fire, depending on how many times you go back to do the thing that you should have done the first time.
15. Don't idle away your time; there is always something to do if you will only do it.
16. Don't forget to report to the proper party things that you see need attention.
17. If you will do today what somebody would put off until tomorrow, you need not worry about your future.
18. Cultivate the friendship of the people with whom you do business; it makes friends for the Company, and friendship is essential to true success.
19. Carry yourself with dignity and others will accord it to you.
20. Study your business and try to improve the quality of your work.
21. Remember that you are working more nearly on honor than any other employee of the Company, considering that necessarily the troubleman has less supervision than other employees, hence you should come across with a square deal.
22. If you don't like your job, resign. It will be better for you and the Company.

L.C. Jones
Plant Superintendent
October 28, 1911

My Years at Mountain Bell

By Ken Pratt

This item is excerpted from an oral history by one of our long-time volunteers. Stories like this make history come alive. A large part of THG's mission is to preserve the stories of the telecom industry's employees. You can help us by sending your work histories and those of your family members to us at P.O Box 8719, Denver, CO 80201-8719, or to telcomhist@aol.com.



I started with Mountain Bell on September 1st, 1949 in Boise, reporting to **Mr. M. B. Trainer**, the State Plant Manager. In those days almost all men, particularly engineers, started in construction. Mr. Trainer welcomed me and sent me to the construction department. Since all the crews had left for the day they asked me to clean up some military ammunition boxes they had acquired. This does not sound much like an engineering job, but I was sure better things were ahead. I had done a lot of grubby jobs in the past so I didn't mind...

I spent six weeks on the telephone construction crew, which consisted of a foreman, about five or six linemen, and a White truck. Since I hadn't been to the linemen's school and to learn to climb poles safely I wasn't allowed to climb. That didn't bother me. However, not being able to climb poles left me with the task of digging many holes for poles and anchors. But, after sitting in classes and studying for several years the physical work felt pretty good.

And physical work was about all I had ever done on jobs before. On the sixth week I was sent to linemen's school. It was held at the construction headquarters near the back of their building at 6th and Grove. The school was for two weeks and at the start of the second week I was asked to leave construction and join the plant records group. That was the next step for new engineers.

The records group maintained records of all the poles, wire, cable, conduit and other telephone plant except for the central office equipment and the equipment on the customers' premises. The pole and wire records were in books and the cable and conduit records were on drawings. Each records clerk, and there were probably about ten of us, had a drafting table for a desk. The records were all kept in a large safe for fire protection. The safe combination was written on the wall right by the door, so it was obvious the safe was primarily for fire protection. Several years later they had a fire in this area causing much damage, but the records that were in the safe survived.

In February 1950, I was asked to join the Transmission and Protection Engineering group. Now I was approaching the real engineering area! **Robert E. Bailey** was the T&P Engineer. He was a great person. We became great friends for the rest of his life and still keep in contact with his widow for the duration of her life.

The T&P group was the technical part of the outside plant engineering. We were asked to assure that all of the designs would provide safe and satisfactory service. We designed the transposition schemes on the long distance open wire circuits so they would not suffer from noise and crosstalk. And when a circuit did have too much noise or crosstalk, we had to find the cause and get it fixed. This often involved working with engineers of other utility companies. I learned years later that I had half of a bag of potatoes coming. I met up with a former exchange manager I had worked with on a potato farmer's problem and he said the farmer had brought him a bag of potatoes at Christmas. It was also our responsibility to investigate and come up with solutions for cases where the lead cable sheath corroded causing failure of the cable pairs within the sheath. We were also involved in the protection of telephone plant from lightning and from accidental contacts with power lines.

At the time I joined our T&P group it consisted of **Bob Bailey, Bob Cramer** and **Ivan Lake**. We later grew to a little larger group. Ivan kept the records of facilities jointly used with the power companies and the rest of us handled the technical work. Bob Bailey had worked in this area some twenty years and was really an expert. He was also a great teacher and a very patient person. I am sure I asked him the same questions many a time, but he always answered them patiently as if that were the most pressing problem of the day...

Ken went on to several other positions, and retired from Network Engineering in Denver in 1983, after 34 years of service. The rest of Ken's story and those of many other employees, can be found in the THG archives.



**We are thankful for you, our THG family,
and wish you a peaceful & tasty Thanksgiving!**



THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS HISTORY GROUP, INC