



Dial Log



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A Note From the Editor

2013 was a year of changes for THG. We lost some valued members and gained new ones; several volunteers moved on to other things; we lost, then gained, then lost an executive director.

We also have had changes on our Board of Directors. As important as staff and volunteers are, the THG Board is also vital to the continued success of our enterprise. Service on the Board is entirely voluntary (read “unpaid”) and each member brings his or her unique talents and expertise to the vision, direction and ongoing financial health of our corporation. A list of current Board members is on page two of this issue.

We have added two new volunteers this quarter. **Ariana Ross** is a recent graduate with a Masters in Library Science from the University of Ontario. It’s great to have another archivist in our midst! Ariana has already begun to whip our library into shape. **Kem Barney** has held a variety of positions in the telecom industry and is quite adept at databases and word processing, which will come in very handy. Kem’s busy indexing the *Mountain States Monitors*, so we’ll actually be able to find things in them without having to rifle through every page.

Dave Felice, in addition to being a full-time employee at CenturyLink and volunteering at THG, is active in the community. A long-time resident of Denver’s Park Hill neighborhood and an At-Large delegate on the Greater Park Hill Board of Governors, he helped establish *City Park Friends and Neighbors*. He was recently honored with the Outstanding Delegate Award from the Inter-neighborhood Cooperation (INC) for his work on the Parks and Recreation Committee.

Renee’s just very busy trying to keep us all in line – a full time job in itself - and making sure the bills get paid on time.

We have a new exhibit about telephone employees’ response to disasters, a sample of which can be found on page 7. It is located in the hallway leading to our museum in Denver, so get busy and schedule a visit! If you’ve yet to view the exhibit in the windows of 930 15th Street, you can see both the same day. We’d love to chat with you. Visiting with our members is one of the chief pleasures for the volunteers and staff at THG.

Telecommunications History Group, Inc.
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In Memory

We have been saddened this quarter by the loss of several of our THG family.



James Bernard O'Boyle (1928 - 2014)

Jim passed away on January 4 at the age of 85. Jim was a telecommunication executive with U S West, retiring as Vice President, Marketing in 1986 after 42 years of service. He was buried with military honors at Ft. Logan National Cemetery. Jim was one of our first Board members, and served as its president from 1999 to 2008. When asked to choose just one word to describe Jim, most agree that would be "kind." We miss his gentle, if sometimes pointed, humor, and strong leadership.

Donald John Ostrand (1937-2014)

Don passed away on January 15. Don was employed by Pacific Northwest Bell Telephone Company in 1956 and worked his way from pole climbing and installation into second-level management at the time of his retirement in 1990. During his retirement, Don served as Curator of the Herbert H. Warrick Jr. Museum of Communications in Seattle since its opening in 1987. He served on the THG Board of Directors from 2003 until his death.

His co-workers at the museum estimate that he put in over 25,000 volunteer hours over 26 years and was involved in every facet of its operation. Many of them worked closely with Don, and were always impressed with his technical expertise and uncanny ability to size up a situation and find useful solutions. He was an incredibly resourceful and hard-working leader, the consummate "crew chief," and it is an understatement to say he will be missed.



James Killorin (1924 - 2014)

Jim passed away on January 29th at the age of 89. He was a graduate of Denver North High School and the University of Denver with a degree in Accounting. He began his career climbing poles as a lineman with Mountain States Telephone & Telegraph Company. He accumulated 43 years of service, retiring as a vice president.

After retirement, Jim enjoyed directing and teaching the Masters Program in Telecommunications for 4 years at DU's University College. Jim was a long-time member and supporter of THG, and contributed the beautiful telephone booth that sits outside our Denver museum. Jim bought it at Secondhand Bell and refinished it so that everything works – light, fan and pay phone.



Ralph P. Crawford (1925-2014)

Ralph passed away February 17, 2014. He served his country during World War II in the 10th Mountain Division of the United States Army (K Company, 86th Division). He spent two and a half years in the Italian Alps campaign, earning the Purple Heart, Silver Star, and Bronze Star. He was employed by Mountain States Telephone & Telegraph Company for 37 years. During his career he was promoted to various positions within the company and retired from U S West in 1986.

In 1967, Ralph received the highest honor awarded by the National Red Cross for saving the life of a two-year-old boy. He was also presented with the "Presidential Citation of Merit" from the Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Company for the same life saving effort.

Ralph was a member of the Telephone Pioneers since 1970, and a member of THG since its incorporation in 1992. He served as President of the Foothills Life Member Club, and received the Foothills Life Member Club President's Award.



The pied barbet, familiar chat, red-headed finch, ashy tit, and rosy-faced lovebird often find comfort in the cozy nesting chambers, too. Vultures, owls, and eagles will roost on the nests' broad roof.

Why are weavers willing to share the huge nest they worked so hard to make? More residents mean more eyes keeping watch for danger. And the weavers often learn from the other birds where new sources of food can be found.

Kalahari Inn

No, this isn't a haystack stuck in a telephone pole. This is the nest of the Sociable Weaver Bird in the Kalahari desert. The birds are called "social" not just because they live in organized colonies, but because they build massive homes out of sticks, grass and cotton that often accommodate over 100 birds at a time.

The nests are so large that birds of other species are welcome to set up shop. One of these is the South African pygmy falcon which lives exclusively inside the social weaver's nests



Photographer Dillon Marsh

Tales From the Old Times

John Swartley has written a history of the telephone in Silver Cliff and Westcliffe, Colorado in the early days. He also generously gave us a disc of his material for future researchers. Here's an excerpt from his "Silver-Cliff-Westcliffe Early Telephone History."

In earlier days of telephone service, the Westcliffe office/switchboard was located in the home of Clara Mercer and her sister, Mabel Haskell. (This is the present location of Frontier Kitchens and Interiors.) To place a call, the caller turned a little crank on the side of the old wall telephones – on later phones they dialed "0" – which caused a tab on the office switchboard to light up. The operator, wearing a rather cumbersome headset, plugged a black cord into the receptacle which corresponded to the number given, and a connection was made. She then rang the prescribed number of rings, depending upon the number of phones on a party line and the specific phone number.

Twenty-four hour service was available and a number of local ladies were hired over the years to provide it. The operators soon recognized the voices of Valley residents, and vice versa. But overt recognition was seldom acknowledged by either party unless there were extreme circumstances.

One disadvantage to this system was a lack of privacy. With everyone knowing everyone and most phones on party lines, it was fairly common knowledge as to just who was calling who, from where, and how often. If a line was busy and someone else on the same line needed to make a call, a polite request to vacate the line was usually honored out of neighborly courtesy.

The operators often helped avert a crisis, warning residents of bad weather or road conditions, contacting the sheriff or doctor in emergencies, getting in touch with the proper respondents in case of fires or other disasters...and sometimes offering assistance in situations that were less serious.

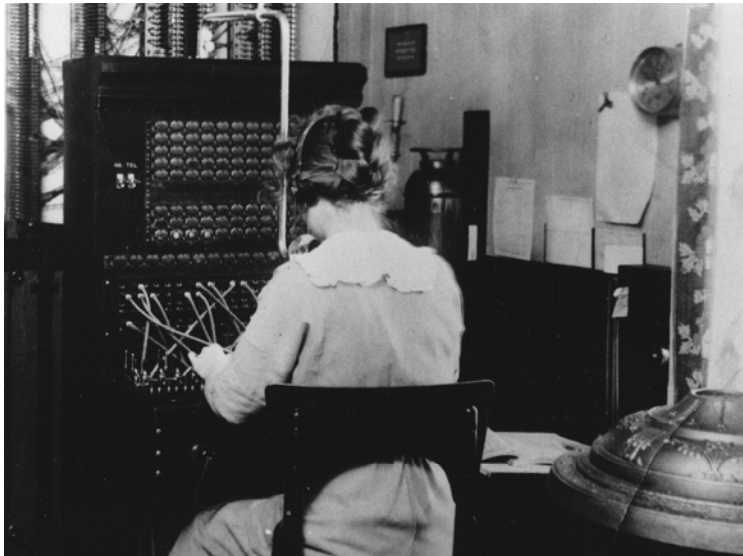
One day in the early 1940s, Westcliffe resident Inis Falkenberg placed a call to her mother, Stella Byrne in Silver Cliff. The operator made the connection and rang Stella's number. There was no answer. Inis hung up her phone. Soon she tried again with the same result – no answer.

This was repeated over and over until finally the operator, who knew precisely who was calling, became concerned. "Inis," she exclaimed, "I can't reach your mother. Is something wrong?"

Inis, who recognized Nellie Dixon as the operator with whom she was speaking, replied, "Oh...no, Nellie. I'm just trying to make Mom's cream pudding and I can't remember how."

"Well," Nellie responded, "I know how to make it."

She immediately began to relay the recipe and cooking instructions. There were numerous interruptions, however, as she repeatedly answered switchboard lights with



her ever courteous, “Number, please.” After connecting each call, she resumed the conversation with Inis concerning the pudding-making process.

This transfer of knowledge took some time because, as Nellie explained, more people than usual were using their phones. “Sometimes,” she lamented, “I sit here for an hour and no one calls. Now that I’m trying to give you the recipe, the switchboard is busier than it has been all day!”

Today, with instant world-wide communication through social networking sites, twittering, cell phones with texting capabilities and all the amenities of high technology, one seldom speaks with a living, breathing operator. Computers replace people.

Still, they served the community well – Clara, Mable, Bessie and Leona Elkelman, Helen Menzel, Dolores Koch, Leotus Schultze and others – those wonderful operators who connected calls through the local switchboard. They also connected with a personal touch to every telephone customer when their friendly voice asked, “number, please.”

Doors Open Denver **April 12 & 13, 2014**

This free two-day event invites you to seek out the architecture of Denver’s most interesting buildings, take special guided tours, bike to historic places or walk through several neighborhoods. The event is free thanks to the Denver Architectural Foundation, and their many sponsors and friends.

2014 Headquarters will be in the beautifully remodeled white marble lobby of 1801 California Street. Here you can get the Event Guide and map, sign-up for Expert Tours and purchase your copy of Guide to Denver Architecture.



2014 is Celebrating Neighborhood Architecture with 63 buildings open to the public, a wide variety of Expert Tours and activities in 12 Neighborhoods. Buildings will be open generally from 10am to 4pm with additional buildings open for tours. Sites include federal, state and city structures, schools, re-purposed buildings, churches, libraries, and mansions in the neighborhoods of Downtown, Capitol Hill, LoDo, Santa Fe, Park Hill, Five Points, Highlands, Hill Top, Uptown, Cherry Creek, The Mariposa District, Golden Triangle, Baker (South Broadway), RiNo and the Auraria Campus.

CenturyLink has generously agreed to let THG conduct tours of the historic Mountain States Headquarters building at 931 14th Street. We will have two tours each day, which will each accommodate 20 participants. More information can be found at www.doorsopendenver.com.

Telephone Employee Service During WWI

The following is taken from an exhibit that will appear in our Denver museum this Spring.



When America entered World War I, AT&T worked with the U.S. Army to organize a number of telegraph battalions. One of these was the 405th, made up of employees from Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Company, Northwestern Bell and the Cincinnati & Suburban Telephone Company. Their job was to construct and maintain telegraph lines in France, even under intense shell fire from the Germans. From 1917-1919, nearly 300 men served in the 405th Signal Corps Battalion.

In late 1917, General Pershing's appeal for bilingual telephone-switchboard operators was published in newspapers throughout the United States. It was called an "Emergency Appeal" and specifically requested that women who held the position of switchboard operators in the new Bell Telephone Company be sworn into the U.S. Army Signal Corps. Pershing wanted women to be sworn into the Army as an emergency need because, he stated, "...women have the patience and perseverance to do long, arduous detailed work." He found that the men in the Signal Corps had difficulty operating the switchboards for these reasons. He also wanted the men to be in the field, constantly stringing the wire necessary for communication from the trenches to the General headquarters at Chaumont.



Jeanne Catherine Legallet served in France as a telephone operator and translator.



Oleda Joure, served as an operator.

About thirty of the 223 Signal Corps women who served in France were stationed at Caserne Damremont, General Pershing's HQ for 2,000,000 American men of the First Army, where they connected the front lines to the general command. WWI was the first war in history for which technology allowed this to happen.



Despite the fact that they wore U.S. Army Uniforms and were subject to Army Regulations (Chief Operator Grace Banker received the Distinguished Service Medal), they were not given honorable discharges but were considered "civilians" employed by the military, because Army Regulations specified the male gender. Not until 1978—the 60th anniversary of the end of World War I—did Congress approve Veteran Status/Honorable discharges for the remaining "Hello Girls".

Predictions

From: Futurists Were Right: 10 Predictions Made By Sci-Fi Writers That Came True Video Chat, by Thor Jensen [http://www.tested.com/tech/concepts/460223-futurists-were-right-10-predictions-made-sci-fi-writers-came-true/]

Videoconferencing

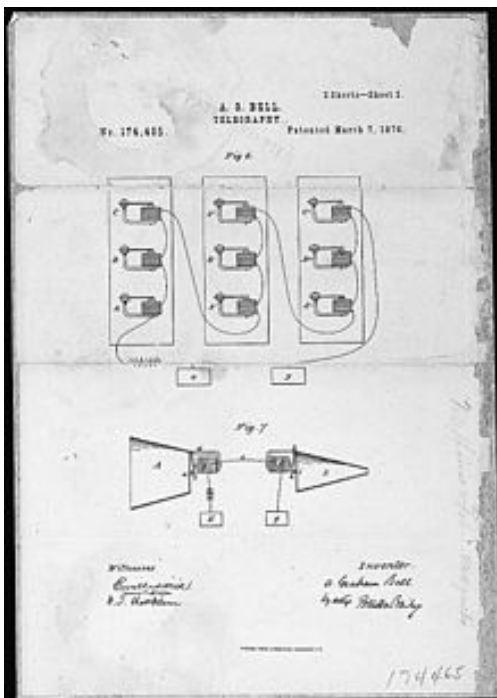
The first demonstration of consumer videoconferencing came at the 1964 New York World's Fair, where AT&T wowed crowds with its "picturephone." The technology has obviously come a long way since then, with FaceTime and Skype standard on computers and phones, but the first sci-fi discussion of video phones came in Hugo Gernsback's ancient serial, "Ralph 124c 41+." The tale, which saw print in *Modern Electrics* magazine in 1911, included a device called the "telephot" that let people have eye contact while speaking across long distances.

Geostationary Satellite Communications

One of the biggest advances in human civilization over the last century has been our communications network. It's hard to think of a time when the world wasn't connected by a massive web of satellite transmissions, but in 1945 pioneering science fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke wrote a manuscript called *The Space-Station: Its Radio Applications*. It posited geosynchronous satellites (a hot topic at the time) being used for telecommunications relays, most notably for television signals. Note that this is before broadcast television was anything even resembling a commercial concern.

A Magical Month

Alexander Graham Bell was born on *March 3, 1847* in Edinburgh, Scotland.



Bell's patent 174,465, was issued to Bell on *March 7, 1876*, by the U.S. Patent Office. Bell's patent covered "the method of, and apparatus for, transmitting vocal or other sounds telegraphically ... by causing electrical undulations, similar in form to the vibrations of the air accompanying the said vocal or other sound" Bell returned to Boston the same day and the next day resumed work, drawing in his notebook a diagram similar to that in Gray's patent caveat.

On *March 10, 1876*, three days after his patent was issued, Bell succeeded in getting his telephone to work, using a liquid transmitter similar to Gray's design. Vibration of the diaphragm caused a needle to vibrate in the water, varying the electrical resistance in the circuit. When Bell spoke the famous sentence "Mr. Watson—Come here—I want to see you" into the liquid transmitter, Watson, listening at the receiving end in an adjoining room, heard the words clearly.

All-in-all, March was a very lucky month for Alex! We hope it and the rest of the months this Spring, is equally lucky for all of you!



THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS HISTORY GROUP, INC