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Jody Georgeson, editor

Director's Message

With summer well under way, there is a lot happening around here. Once again we partnered with National History Day Colorado and this year our THG Archivist, Jody Georgeson was recognized with the 2017 NHDC Award for Exceptional Work. Congratulations, Jody.

Summer is always a busy time for tours. If you get a chance, give us a call at 303-296-1221 and set up a tour of the Connections Museum Denver or visit the THG Archives. And if you are looking for a volunteer opportunity, we can always use help inventorying our extensive collection of pictures, documents and videos.



Clean up efforts continue in Seattle as we make room to display a new collection from our dear friend Don Ostrand. Much exciting progress has been made with the Crossbar Sender project which you will read more about in this issue, and if you get a chance stop by the Connections Museum Seattle to see it in person. We are open Sunday 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Or check out our YouTube channel [museumofcomm](#) for some cool videos of what's going on.

Enjoy your summer and stay cool!

Warm regards,

Lisa Berquist
Executive Director

Crossbar Senders: Part II

by Sarah Autumn

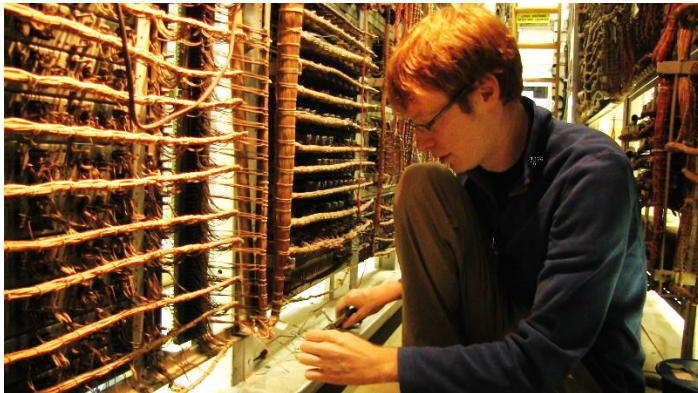


Sarah Autumn (left) and Astrid Smith (right) made the first telephone call between the panel and crossbar switches in over 40 years.

It is my great pleasure to announce that on 11 June 2017, we at the Connections Museum in Seattle made the first successful call from the Panel office to the No. 1 Crossbar!

This is a truly momentous occasion! The museum has [possibly] the only remaining Panel and No. 1 Crossbar switches left in the world, and for them to once again connect calls to each other after more than 40 years of silence is an incredible achievement.

Our Panel switch, *Parkway 2*, served the Columbia City and Rainier Valley neighborhoods of Seattle from the Parkway central office on Rainier Avenue, beginning with the start of dial service in Seattle in 1923 to its replacement in 1974. The No. 1 Crossbar, *Vermont 2*, served the University District from the Lakeview central office on 65th from 1942 until its replacement in the early 1980s. During their time in service, they interoperated with each other and with the many other central offices in the city of Seattle.



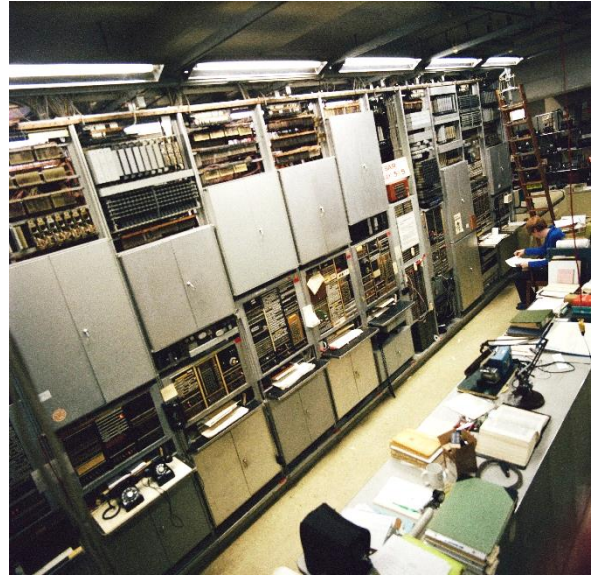
Colin Slater running and soldering wires in the No. 1 Crossbar.

After they were brought to the museum in the 1980s, communication between the two machines was never established. This was because the terminating senders that the *Vermont* Crossbar required to complete calls from the *Parkway* Panel office were no longer available. This had been the case since the museum opened.

Last year (to my great surprise), I was able to locate a fellow collector who had

the exact parts that we needed to re-establish a connection between the two machines. He helped decommission many electromechanical Central Offices in the 1980s and had—amazingly enough—several revertive-pulse terminating senders that he brought home from an office in Brooklyn, New York. When he heard about our machines, he enthusiastically agreed to donate the equipment we needed!

After Astrid and I retrieved the units from Connecticut, we and a team of volunteers spent a year wiring and installing them in our *Vermont-2* Crossbar office. It was a fantastic learning process, and we have grown together as a team during this time. I'm proud of the work we've done together, and completely humbled by the time and energy that everyone put into this project.



Colin (seated, right) taking a break to double-check the wiring diagrams. (Photo credit: Tore Bekkedal)



Les Anderson (left) and Eric Rhineland (right), supervised as the senders were lifted into place.

I'd particularly like to extend my love and thanks to Les Anderson, Colin Slater, Astrid Smith, Jim Day (the equipment donor) and all at the museum who gave generously of their time, money and advice. I am grateful to each and every one of you, and this would not have happened without your hard work and dedication.

You can watch a video of our first ever telephone call by clicking on <https://youtu.be/3WcrVZsbz6M> or by searching for our page "museumofcomm" on YouTube.



Thomas Wayne Lindblom, 1925-2017

We were sad to hear of the death of Tom Lindblom in April. Tom was a member of the THG Board of directors from 2003 to 2010. He was Mountain Bell Vice President/General Manager for Utah from 1977 to 1981, and State Vice President of Colorado until his retirement in 1986.

Tom is survived by his children: Kristine Arneson of Chesterfield, MO, Amy Lindblom of Sonora, CA, and Thomas D. Lindblom of London, England; seven grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife of 65 years, Alice Lawrence Lindblom.

National History Day

National History Day is a year-long academic program focused on historical research, interpretation and creative expression for 6th to 12th-grade students. By participating in NHD, students become writers, filmmakers, web designers, playwrights and artists as they create unique contemporary expressions of history. The experience culminates in a series of contests at the local and state levels and an annual national competition in the nation's capital in June.

An independent study from 2011 found that participation in the National History Day Contest benefits students far beyond the competition. National History Day not only transports classrooms back in time during the school year, it transforms young minds forever.

THG is proud to partner with National History Day Colorado, and offers a special award to the creator of the best project on technology or communications history. This year's winner of the Telecommunications History Group award is Wade Yoder of Karval Junior-Senior High School in Lincoln County, Colorado. Congratulations to Wade and to all the winners of this year's state contest.

THG's archivist, Jody Georgeson, won the 2017 NHDC Award for Exceptional Work with History Day for her activities on the NHDC Board and as a judge at local and state contests.

To find out more about National History Day in Colorado, go to:

<http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/CLAS/Centers/ColoradoHistoryDay/elementary-poster-contest/Pages/Gallery.aspx>

To learn more about the National program, or to find out how to participate in another state, visit: <https://nhd.org/>

Volunteer Profile

by Jack Beattie

The Telecommunications History Group (THG) in Denver needs more volunteers and that is why, in June of 2016, I decided to begin spending time there on Wednesdays. It doesn't seem possible that it's been a year since I started what continues to this day.

This story is about Jack Beattie, a retired Bell System/U S WEST manager who likes history, is proud of his working years and enjoys being around others who share an interest in history. The THG in Denver is a wonderful undertaking that provides an outlet for me to indulge in this interest.

I had known about THG for a long time, and when I decided to donate some items related to the AT&T-sponsored 1984 Olympic Torch Relay that were taking up space in my basement, I was asked then by Jody Georgeson, "why don't you volunteer?" That's when I started. Many volunteers have a background in telecommunications equipment, and there are opportunities to stay involved at THG in this arena, but since my work background was in accounting, I have been involved mostly in that area related to "paper stuff"-- the library, books, photos, and other printed materials.

During my working years, I had a variety of interesting assignments. I started in what was called the Commercial Department in Boulder, Colorado. In 1974, after Commercial Department assignments in Denver, I moved to the Comptroller's Department in the Corporate Headquarters. My first assignment was with a group called "Business Research." We did various studies related to the economy and population growth etc. After a couple of years spent doing this, I was transferred to accounting and I spent the rest of my career in accounting. I worked in a group that Mountain Bell referred to as "Corporate Books." We issued the monthly and annual Financial Reports for The Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Company to AT&T and to the other shareholders of Mountain Bell (MST&T).

The Bell System breakup in 1984 brought changes for all of us. In early 1984 I began working on a special project dispute with AT&T related to the breakup. It was called the "cash working capital dispute;" it involved complicated accounting rules that "divided" up the money between AT&T and U S WEST. Although I left the project in 1985, I think the dispute was resolved with a compromise where "both parties got something" from the dispute.

In 1985 I began working for U S WEST Direct, the telephone directory company, which was part of the U S WEST Marketing Resources Group. At "Direct" I was in charge of all accounting operations. I retired in 1996 from U S WEST Marketing Resources Group, where I was involved in the management of accounting operations.

The amount of information available at THG is truly amazing and encompasses telecommunications from the beginning – think smoke signals – to the present day. But the emphasis is mostly the history of the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries, including apparatus and printed materials that document what has happened. Find out about this -- come to THG and volunteer. You will be glad you did!



Chinatown and the China Exchange

This article was originally published in the Pacific Telephone Magazine, 1918.



California's Plymouth Rock was the first nugget that James Marshall picked out of the gravel of Suter's Creek. News traveled slowly in the golden days of [18]48 and '49, but within a year 50,000 miners were converging upon the gold fields; jolting overland in long lines of prairie schooners, or ploughing 'round the Horn beneath the bellying canvas of the speedy Boston clippers.

Across the Pacific Ocean came thousands of Chinese. Many trudged on to the mines, as all readers of Bret Harte will remember; to this day an occasional descendant can be found, seeking the golden specks that gleam in the red earth of some long-deserted diggings. Many remained in San Francisco and were assigned a special quarter at the edge of the city. Here, upon the sand dunes, was founded the

Chinatown that is known to every globe-trotter. As the years went on, the dunes were trampled down by the strong young city and the original Chinese quarter became encircled by Caucasian dwellings.

. . . Although the Chinaman is wedded to customs that date back to Confucius, he does not scruple to patronize modern conventions. Among these is the telephone. So numerous were the Chinese subscribers and so peculiar the demand of their service, that a special exchange in their quarter became necessary. With a rare sense of artistic fitness, the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company decided to construct it in harmony with its surroundings and in conformance with the immemorial rules of Chinese architecture. The result is one of San Francisco's show places and perhaps the only consistent example of Chinese architecture outside of its native land.

. . . The several roofs were not added by ostentation or conscientious carpenters, but because the Chinese consider that the dignity and social position of the inmates of a house is in direct proportion to the number of roofs sheltering them. The retroussé balconies are designed to shoot rain water free from the building in winter and shield it from the direct rays of the sun in summer. The supporting columns have no capitals or bases and are as round and as red as giant firecrackers. Even the concrete foundations correspond to the stone platforms upon which the Chinese construct their buildings to protect them from dampness.

You cross the threshold into a soft and subdued light that would befit a temple. One almost expects to see the blue-robed bonze [*a Chinese monk*] or hear the boom of a deep-toned gong. The window glass, instead of being clear plate or stained, is of a delicate rose-gray, an imitation

of those oyster shell linings that serve the Chinese in lieu of glass. The interior woodwork is in polished ebony, inset with panels of vermillion and gold. Upon these panels are depicted a menagerie of rampant dragons with claws, forked tongues, and curving tails.

At the end of the single large room is a plate glass partition. From behind it comes an intermittent sound such as you hear when the stock boy is counting out NO. 5½ knobs into a barrel. And then we remember

that this building, which might be the Mount Vernon of some Manchurian father of his country, is built to contain the intricate and sensitive mechanism of a telephone exchange, and that the xylophone-like sounds we hear are but the Chinese equivalents for “Number, please,” and “Line is busy,” and the other passwords of the craft.



Passing back of the curtained glass partition, we find the nerve center or ganglion of the exchange; an eight-position switchboard, finished in polished ebony and ornamented with characteristic scrollwork, like the booths and desks of the outer office. The operators are all Chinese girls, dressed in their rich and colorful costumes, and looking as though they had just stepped out of the scenery of some Chinese porcelain plate. (One notes, however, that Nature herself has arched their eyebrows in the latest mode.) There are thirteen operators in all for the various day and night shifts; during the small hours of the morning, the board is handled by a boy.

Exigencies of language demand that each operator be familiar with several native dialects as well as with English . . . Exigencies of service require that each operator memorize names, numbers, and addresses, because the bulk of the calls are by name and not by number. To be an operator in this exchange, then, requires an unusual degree of intelligence and skill. It is not surprising to learn that each operator is a graduate of a San Francisco public school, with a record standing therein.

Mr. Loo Kim Shoo is the manager; a graduate of the University of California and a man of exceeding tact and courtesy. He is ably assisted by Mr. Sing. The Chinatown exchange serves 2,321 customers, all located within the radius of the Oriental quarter.

A Howard Doerr Story

by Herb Hackenburg

Last issue we mentioned the passing of our good friend Howard Doer (1939-2017). Here, Herb writes of Howard's contributions during the early days of THG.

When the Telecommunications History Group was a new, under-financed non-profit corporation, it needed a board of directors to guide the THG staff, volunteers and to be legal with the IRS. THG's first volunteer, Kenny Clymer and I worked on a list of people that we thought would make good board members. Then we went to talk with the recently retired CEO of U S WEST, Jack MacAllister. Jack said he couldn't be THG's first president because he was already serving on several corporate and non-profit boards, but, "You know, Howard Doerr is in his office today; let's talk to him."

I didn't know Howard before that day, but I got to know him well. Howard took on the task of being THG's first president that day. Ken and I worked with Howard to build a strong board. Howard started to call up his fellow retired U S WEST officers to join him on the brand new THG board of directors. All at once Howard put his phone down and said, "You know, so far we've built a Northwestern Bell outfit; we'd better get some Mountain Bell people in this thing. Larry DeMuth is retiring in six weeks. Let's call him." Howard talked to Larry and his answer was, "When is the first board meeting?"

Howard left me the task of calling my list of non-Bell potential board members. As soon as Ken and I got back to our little THG office I started calling people. An amazing thing happened!

Every single person I called, answered the phone, listened to my story and said "YES!"

The first person on my non-Bell list was Eleanor Gehres, the department head of the Denver Public Library's famous American Western History Collection. Her first comment to me was, "It's about time the phone company got serious about its history, and I'll be glad to serve on your board."

The very first meeting of the THG Board of Directors was held in the board room of the historic Mountain States Telephone & Telegraph Company headquarters building. Before the meeting was called to order the non-Bell people and the Bell people introduced themselves to each other. Howard was about to call the meeting to order. But before he did, he said, "I don't understand what is so special about a bunch of damned old phone books."



Eleanor Gehres

Instantly Eleanor, who sitting directly across the table from Howard, jumped up, looked him straight in the eyes and nearly yelling, said, "I'll have you know that telephone books are the best popular history source in the world and our collection has every Denver phone book published since 1879. Our public reference section goes through 10 to 12 Denver phone books a year." Then she sat down and Howard called the meeting to order.



Howard Doerr

Over the years I got to know Howard and his leadership style. Today I'm positive Howard did the "damned old phone book" thing to test "the moxie" of the little lady from the Denver Public Library. Over the next few years Howard and Eleanor worked together to help make THG what it is today—one of the largest telephone history collections in the nation.

Eleanor's last THG board meeting was hard to take. She was dying of cancer. She was weak and had lost a lot of weight, which she didn't have much of when she was healthy. As frail as she was, Eleanor participated in every item on the agenda.

Howard and I went to a special service the Denver Public Library held for Eleanor. I think we were both glad we made the effort.



Here are our very own "boys of summer," the Colorado Telephone Company's municipal league team, *Nickle in Slot*. We hope you all have a winning season!

