

## A Time For Reflection

1984 will not go down in history as the year of the phone phreak or computer hacker. Instead it will most likely be labeled something dumb like the year of the communications revolution or the PC bonanza. That's not surprising at all; those are precisely the things that *appeared* to have occurred this year. But we know better.

The true communications revolution has been going on for quite some time. Many years ago, the first telephone enthusiasts started using their phones to do a little more than just call people they knew. They began to experiment. They sent strange tones down the line, activated distant machines, and traded information among themselves. Not only that, but they took it upon themselves to learn all about the infrastructure of the biggest company on earth, Ma Bell. Now almost everyone knows something about the way the giant phone company used to work and the way the near-giants work today. All you hear now is talk of long distance services and how great each one is. All you see advertised everywhere are telephones, as if they'd just been invented. Which, in a way, they have been. For the average person. Others, though, have been participating in this "revolution" for quite some time.

A similar story holds true for computers. The field is

exploding now on Madison Avenue. But all of this talk of floppies, K, megabytes, and control-c's is old news to hackers (both the programming and the cracking kind). As a rule, they've been into this kind of thing for years.

So what are we saying here? Two things, really. Looking at the past, it's pretty clear that those "mischief-makers" weren't only interested in causing chaos and perpetrating fraud, but also in being among the first to try their hand at the new technology, without being hovered over and told what not to do. Our other point lies with the future. Those phone phreaks and computer hackers of today may still be in a position to shine the light in front of the masses. We had at least one example of that in 1984, when hackers uncovered the wealth of information that is stored in the TRW computers—personal information about almost everyone that can be looked at by almost anyone. A glance at this year's pages of 2600 reveals a disturbing number of Orwellian touches in the works—cameras surveying streets for possible crimes, vastly expanded FBI files on innocent people, neat categorization of human beings.... Technological enthusiasts aren't the only kind of people that can find these nasty things in their beginning stages. But these days, they can sure be one of the most important. Happy new year.

### MCI Mail

### Easylink™

We here at 2600, and apparently many of you, have been having problems with two of the biggies in the E-Mail business—namely MCI Mail and Western Union Easylink.

Let's start with the Easylink tale. Many many months ago, we saw a great big ad someplace inviting us to sign up for this wonderful electronic mail service. There were no minimum charges of any kind and there was no fee to sign up, so we gave them a call. Only after they got us started did they bother to mention that there was a \$25 monthly minimum after the first 3 months. Because of this, and also because of the fact that their prices aren't that great, we stopped using their system. Since the service we signed up for was advertised as "free", we were under no obligation to cancel the account. Sure enough, after the third month had passed, we received a ten-page bill for \$25. That's right, a ten-page bill. They believe in itemizing your use of the system in as many different ways as they can think of. The fact that we didn't use the system at all didn't stop them from itemizing our non-use.

Every month, like clockwork, that Easylink bill comes, with \$25 more added each time. It's well into the triple digits now.



Occasionally we get a mailgram asking why we haven't used the system in such a long time, but we have yet to get a letter asking why the hell we haven't paid our bill. In addition to these charges for answering a misleading advertisement, we get plenty of solicitations to use their many other expensive services and even to get an additional account.

Finally, the Easylink people, or machines, have been kind enough to send us roughly 20 pounds of Western Union directories and user guides. In fact, we often receive duplicate directories together with the useless bill. What a big pile all this stuff makes!

As an addendum, you may note that Easylink still offers free accounts with no minimum usage in most of their advertising.

#### And in the other corner...

But our real trouble is or was with MCI Mail, those other bozos. Last month, we told you about how our account was inactivated. In fact, we later found out through our own detective work that our account was "accidentally" deleted instead of being reactivated. Whoops! We were also told that the slob at McMail were sorry. They also added that all of our

# E-MAIL HORROR STORIES



inbound mail for the last month and a half was destroyed (they don't keep backups, they claim, seemingly proud of the fact). When we asked about recompense for us or for our correspondents for lost business and for those who were charged for mail that wasn't ever received, they insisted that they did not charge for mail that wasn't read. We doubt that this is true, but we cannot get ahold of their billing records or records of the mail that we did not receive, so we cannot prove otherwise. But we can advise you not to pay for any mail you may have sent to us, because odds are we never received it. Remember, they assured us that they couldn't give us the deleted mail or any other information, so *you* are the only one who knows if you sent us anything. By the way, if you request a refund, you'll probably have to make a voice call to a human since their customer service mail account (MCIHELP) has also been deleted for your inconvenience.

We raised quite a stink about this escapade, and even sent a letter to the president of MCI! It took him three business days to read *his* electronic mail and all we got out of him was a copy of a message he sent to the president of MCI Mail, who had

apparently "explained" the situation to him. It read: "Thanks for the info. There must be hundreds of them. My condolences." This pretty much confirms our suspicions. MCI Mail has a blacklist which they've developed through reading their subscribers' private mail. If they see anything they don't like or if you get mail from someone they don't like—bang! You're on the list. Of course, there's no way to prove this. Electronic mail is very easy to reseat. What's more, they're not breaking any laws because they own the system.

We managed to get a new account that's now working, but we don't plan on keeping it and we don't advise anyone else to subscribe at this point. Starting next year, MCI Mail will be charging a yearly fee of \$18 as well as charging for access to their 800 toll-free dialup. Perhaps E-COM will soon have company.

Trick of the month: MCI Mail allows you to send telex messages all over the world. But if you send to a nonexistent telex in some remote country, it will eventually come back and say that the telex couldn't be found. When that happens, there's no charge! And you just know they've gone to an awful lot of trouble!

## *The Scariest Number in the World*

Recently, a telephone fanatic in the northwest made an interesting discovery. He was exploring the 804 area code (Virginia) and found out that the 840 exchange did something strange. In the vast majority of cases, in fact in *all* of the cases except one, he would get a recording as if the exchange didn't exist. However, if he dialed 804-840 and four rather predictable numbers, he got a ring!

After one or two rings, somebody picked up. Being experienced at this kind of thing, he could tell that the call didn't "supe", that is, no charges were being incurred for calling this number. (Calls that get you to an error message, or a special operator, generally don't supervise.) A female voice, with a hint of a Southern accent said, "Operator, can I help you?"

"Yes," he said. "What number have I reached?"

"What number did you dial, sir?"

He made up a number that was similar.

"I'm sorry, that's not the number you reached." Click.

He was fascinated. What in the world was this? He knew he was going to call back, but before he did, he tried some more experiments. He tried the 840 exchange in several other area codes. In some, it came up as a valid exchange. In others, exactly the same thing happened—the same last four digits, the same Southern belle. Oddly enough, he later noticed, the areas it worked in seemed to travel in a beeline from Washington DC to Pittsburgh, PA.

He called back from a payphone. "Operator, can I help you?"

"Yes, this is the phone company. I'm testing this line and we don't seem to have an identification on your circuit. What office is this, please?"

"What number are you trying to reach?"

"I'm not trying to reach *any* number. I'm trying to identify this circuit."

"I'm sorry, I can't help you."

"Ma'am, if I don't get an ID on this line, I'll have to disconnect it. We show no record of it here."

"Hold on a moment, sir."

After about a minute, she came back. "Sir, I can have someone speak to you. Would you give me your number, please?"

He had anticipated this and he had the payphone number

ready. After he gave it, she said, "Mr. XXX will get right back to you."

"Thanks." He hung up the phone. It rang. *Instantly!* "Oh my God," he thought, "They weren't asking for my number—they were *confirming* it!"

"Hello," he said, trying to sound authoritative.

"This is Mr. XXX. Did you just make an inquiry to my office concerning a phone number?"

"Yes. I need an identi—"

"What you need is advice. Don't ever call that number again. Don't even think about calling that number again. Forget you ever knew it."

At this point our friend got so nervous he just hung up. He expected to hear the phone ring again but it didn't.

Over the next few days he racked his brains trying to figure out what the number was. He knew it was something big—that was pretty certain at this point. It was so big that the number was programmed into every central office in the country. He knew this because if he tried to dial any other number in that exchange, he'd get a local error message from his CO, as if the exchange didn't exist.

It finally came to him. He had an uncle who worked in a federal agency. He had a feeling that this was government related and if it was, his uncle could probably find out what it was. He asked the next day and his uncle promised to look into the matter.

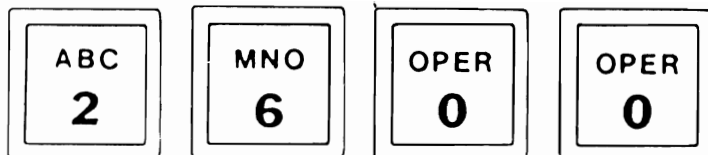
The next time he saw his uncle, he noticed a big change in his manner. He was trembling. "Where did you get that number?!" he shouted. "Do you know I almost got fired for asking about it?? They kept wanting to know where I got it!"

Our friend couldn't contain his excitement. "What is it?" he pleaded. "What's the number?!"

"It's the President's bomb shelter!"

He never called the number after that. He knew that he could probably cause quite a bit of excitement by calling the number and saying something like, "The weather's not good in Washington. We're coming over for a visit." But our friend was smart. He knew that there were some things that were better off unsaid and undone.

(If you have a phone or computer story, call or write us!)



## Computer Makes It Easy for Reagan

The Associated Press

Using \$1.1 million in research money from the Republican National Committee, a team of 26 computer operators and analysts, who called themselves the Opposition Research Group, scrutinized every available aspect of Walter Mondale's political career.

The team collected uncounted hours of videotape and 75,000 quotations, coded, cross-referenced, and entered in a giant computer at the Republican headquarters on Capitol Hill.

"Walter Mondale couldn't open his mouth without our analyzing it in 45 seconds and determining whether he was telling the truth," Michael Bayer, director of the team, said. "It took them days to monitor the same thing that we were cranking out."

Beginning in April, every speech text, every television appearance, every vote Mondale had cast in his political career was broken down, analyzed, coded by category and entered in the electronic file. While Senator Gary Hart was still in the race for the Democratic nomination, his record was scrutinized as well. And after Mondale chose Geraldine Ferraro as his running mate, the team made the study of her life a priority project.

They used the information to insert attack lines into Reagan speeches. And Vice President Bush's staff aboard Air Force Two could plug directly into the team's computer to check things Mr. Mondale had just said and counter with new charges of their own.

## Penetrating the Pentagon by Phone

The New York Times

The Pentagon employs 25,000 people, who work, in one way or another, on national defense. But to many outsiders who have tried to reach someone at the huge office building, the Pentagon's best defense is against incoming phone calls. That situation is about to come to a halt, according to the Lockheed Electronics Company, which has installed a computerized directory assistance system at the Pentagon on an eight-year contract worth \$1 million. Now an operator can find a number even if the caller lacks such information as the party's first name or office location. The new system has about 150,000 listings. The number to call is 2025456700.

## First of the "Superminis"

Los Angeles Times

Digital Equipment Corporation has unveiled its new "supermini" computer, the powerful VAX 8600, which starts in price at \$576,000. This machine, produced under the code name of Venus, can compute at a speed more than four times that of DEC's previous computer. With full peripherals, the 8600 will cost almost a million dollars. They should start popping up all over the place in April.

## Students Bog Down Computer

The Associated Press

Some students at Ohio's Oberlin College don't like the fact that their school has investments in South Africa. So to protest that fact, they tried to overload Oberlin's main computer and another in the school's library on November 30. At the same time, more than 200 students staged a silent demonstration outside a meeting of the Oberlin College Board of Trustees. The trustees took no action on the matter.

## SBS Offers Toll-Free Service

2600 News Service

SBS Skyline recently came up with an alternative to the standard AT&T in-WATS service which could become quite popular. It works as follows: In many parts of the country, SBS Skyline can be accessed toll-free by dialing 950-1088. To make a toll-free call on Skyline, the caller would first access the system, using the number above. Then they would enter a six digit "service code" which would ring whatever phone number has been assigned to that code. The result is the same as making an 800 call, but the procedure is different. For instance, the

caller *must* be at a touch-tone® phone to enter the service code. The caller must also know in advance what this six digit code is. And Skyline service still isn't available all over the country. But this system is much easier for the called party. While an 800 line can cost hundreds of dollars to install, Skyline only requires a \$15 monthly minimum per line.

## Electronic Jail All Screwed Up

The New York Times

Travis County (Texas) officials had hoped to open their new \$12 million jail with its advanced electronic locking system last year.

Unfortunately, the jail is still not open. Or rather, it's too open.

"In 1983 we were supposed to move in, and we discovered the locking mechanisms were not adequate," Sheriff Doyne Bailey of Travis County explained.

"Not adequate" may understate the problems, which Mr. Bailey says relate to an "inherent design problem that allows the locking system to be defeated."

The locking system is integrated with other security equipment, so that locking a cell door will turn on an intercom. Or turning on an intercom will unlock a cell.

And when a fire alarm goes off, officials reported recently to the Texas Commission on Jail Standards, all the cells unlock.

That particular feature, they noted, may not be wholly desirable.

## Video Telephone Invention

The New York Times

A new two-way video phone that makes use of any single standard telephone line has been patented by Jerome H. Lemelson, a prolific inventor with more than 350 other patents, and Christian Grund, a research scientist at the University of Wisconsin.

According to the patent, the new video phone functions without any interruption of conversation by transmission of pictures or data. A portable, self-contained unit can be provided at each end of a conventional telephone circuit. Each unit has a television camera and a display screen. A speaker and microphone may be carried within the housing or in a telephone handset. A picture printer may also be provided to record the images on the display screen.

## Federal Telephone System Upgrade

On Communications

In what has been called the largest telecommunications buy in history, the U.S. government is spending more than a billion dollars to modernize its massive Federal Telephone System (FTS). This huge upgrade includes 1.3 million telephones, 15,000 trunk circuits, and 1,655 private branch exchanges (PBX).

According to Dr. Bernard J. Bennington (BJB), the General Services Administration (GSA) administrator in charge of the buy, the FTS is only slightly smaller than a Bell operating company and five to six times the size of the General Motors (GM) telephone network [see page 1-61].

At the present, the FTS is largely a voice system. About 15% of the network, however, consists of facilities for data transmission. Although the data portion sounds like an insignificant figure, it represents as much data as is moved in all the other civil agency networks combined.

Basically, the main justification for the system itself and the continuous battle to keep it upgraded is to provide continuity of government. Until the '60s in general, and the April 1961 Bay of Pigs situation in particular, there was a large comfort index surrounding the nation's telephone system. Until that time, it had been tried and always found adequate.

"During the Bay of Pigs operation, no one could get a phone call in or out of Washington," BJB said. "Naturally, we must have a viable, up-to-date communications system to support our national defense. And it must operate cost-effectively," he continued. "We cannot mix military and civil agency traffic."

**We've tallied up all of the blue cards that were returned and the latest results are to the right. Below are selected subscriber comments with occasional retorts by us.**

AUSTIN, TEXAS—"The info is generally more useful (and less anti-social) than TAP...it's entertaining. What format should I use on articles?"

**ARTICLES CAN BE OF ANY FORMAT. JUST TRY TO MAKE IT LEGIBLE. THEY END UP GETTING RETYPED NO MATTER WHAT. YOU CAN ALSO CALL IN STORIES USING THE PHONE NUMBER ON THE FRONT PAGE.**

ALASKA "One of the best sources for detailed information on telecommunications. Also a good source for phreak information. I wish you would put the back page of each issue to better use though! ...For me, it borders on too technical, but I don't mind because I'll learn more that way."

MARINA DEL REY, CALIFORNIA "I like 2600 because of the stories on hackers etc. getting caught. Also because of the tips!"

TUCSON, ARIZONA "Have trouble understanding the jargon. Facts sometimes printed without explanations. Still don't know what '2600' means."

**2600 HERTZ IS SIMPLY THE FREQUENCY USED BY PHONE PHREAKS TO SEIZE CONTROL OF A PHONE LINE. OH YES, THE PHONE COMPANY USES IT TOO; YOU MAY HEAR A COUPLE OF 2600 HERTZ TONES (TWEEPS) AT THE END OF A PHONE CALL.**

VIRGINIA "Too much was already printed in BIOC's tutorials or is too general."

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA—"It's awesum, could do with sum box plans. Send information on Alaska's telephone system."

**OK, FIRST PERSON TO SEND US WORKING BLUE BOX PLANS GETS 10 FREE ISSUES.**

ALBANY, NEW YORK—"Poor choice of filler for last page this month [October]."

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA "You need more business watching -somebody has to keep an eye on the Harvard Business School, IBM, ATT crowd. Information has become big business, guys! Hackers are the new Judas goats. We dreamed that micros would make freedom of information real. Meanwhile, American Business bought 90% of the world's commercial databases. Hackers and free bulletin boards are anathema to those who think of information as a commodity to be brokered and controlled. And for "technical" reasons, the phone companies wish you to register your modem. Sound paranoid? Investigate the relationship between Big Blue and South Africa."

SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA "Good stuff -where else would I get it? Keep it up!"

FT. LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA "I am very satisfied with the content. In fact, if you could put more in that would be great. I can't get enough of 2600."

NEW YORK, NY "You do not get enough original material. August's issue was plagiarized from Basic Telcom V."

**LOOK UP THE DEFINITION OF PLAGIARIZE. THE ARTICLE YOU'RE REFERRING TO WAS GIVEN TO US BY THE AUTHOR HIMSELF.**

NEW YORK, NY "Sometimes too technical..."

BRYAN, TEXAS "It's really good. Need more information how-to's on neat things with phones."

NEW JERSEY "It is a well rounded publication. More telecommunication's hobbiest articles. For your Hot 100 BBS's add the Armour at 2012671207. 10 Meg online and a friendly sysop. No charge for validation and over 280 general interest files."

BOSTON, MASS. "The back page usually sucks (repro from telephone book or something)."

JAMAICA, NY "Hacker's View, a great article!"

WEST VIRGINIA "Like the articles. Info is good but I have no idea what a lot of abbreviations stand for or what makes switch equipment work..."

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA "It seems to fill a gap left by

AS OF 12/10/84 AT 23:47:53 THE BLUE CARD SURVEY RESPONSES WERE: 58% OF THE CARDS WERE RETURNED. OF THESE 94.8% SAID THEY WOULD RENEW. AN AVERAGE OF 3.24 PEOPLE PER SUBSCRIBER READ 2600. 77.6% OF THE RESPONDENTS USE OUR LOOSE-LEAF HOLES. 81% SAID THEY WERE SATISFIED WITH 2600. REASONS FOR READING: 58.6% PERSONAL, 55.2% HOBBY, 19% BUSINESS, 1.5% SECURITY AGENCY, 1.7% INDUSTRY, 20.7% OTHER. 15.5% SAID WE WERE TOO TECHNICAL AND 22.4% SAID WE WERE NOT TECHNICAL ENOUGH. 55% SAID WE WERE JUST RIGHT. FINALLY, 62.1% PROMISED TO CONTRIBUTE ARTICLES IN THE FUTURE.

TAP. I also find your 'Newsflash' section especially useful in bringing several sources of info together."

WESTCHESTER, NY—"2600 is the one newsletter where 'you get your money's worth'. 2600 provides information for those who wish to learn. A friend and myself love to tamper physically with phones and have come up with some nice plans for 'additions' which are legal and practical."

**TELL US WHAT AND TELL US HOW!**

WISCONSIN "I find it very informative, although I wish it would go deeper into the technical aspects of the network."

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH—"Could use less of the stuff like on page 1-60 and have more info useful to hackers, infomaniacs, etc. Keep publishing!"

SUFFERN, NEW YORK "Informative...could be a little more technical."

NO POSTMARK (!)—"Good stuff. Try connecting your magazine with other sources: boards, AE lines, TAP, etc."

**WE'RE OPEN TO SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS.**

TRENTON, NJ—"I think it should be more like TAP with underground information."

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY—"More news. More about bulletin boards. Fewer ads from old phone books...I sent \$10 to TAP at the same time I subscribed to 2600. But TAP neither honored the subscription nor cashed the check. Can you help?"

**LOOK AT IT THIS WAY. IF NEWSWEEK RIPPED YOU OFF, WOULD WE BE ABLE TO DO ANYTHING? SAME THING HERE.**

DENVER, COLORADO "Some of it blows me away but some of it is just right. This reader response was a good idea. Keep it up."

MIDDLESEX, MASS. "I think oftentimes your last page sucks. Aside from that I think you are cool. More stuff is needed about individual systems though."

SALINAS, CALIFORNIA "Please have more technical explanations of phone and/or computer systems, or refer to more sources of info."

TRENTON, NJ "Too technical -looking for the old zap of TAP." **SPEAKING OF WHICH, WHERE THE HELL IS THAT OLD ZAP??**

DENVER, COLORADO "Needs more codes."

**IT'S ALWAYS BEEN OUR POLICY NOT TO PROVIDE CODES SO MUCH AS PURE KNOWLEDGE.**

PHILADELPHIA, PA "The phone articles are great. However, I get lost in the computer stuff. I enjoy reading stories (fact or fiction) with an adventurous flair."

MIAMI, FLORIDA "I think a little longer with more topics would improve it. Also, start each article in layman's terms."

WORCESTER, MASS. "The articles are good, but useful info would be better than articles."

**SUCH AS?**

TORONTO, CANADA "I'd like more commentary and criticism on the general policies of telco's and more tutorial material on the technology. Too technical, but don't drop the technicalities just explain them."

BROOKLYN, NY "Excellent and outrageous."

PIITTSBURGH, PA. "I have quit the hobby of phreaking, although I am still interested in it. The time involved, money saved, and mainly the excitement of it is not worth the risk, stress, and ruining my life (who knows?). I am a junior engineering student and want to stay that way and keep my friends. I regret that I can not continue phreaking, hacking. I will miss it!"

**IT'S DOUBTFUL THAT RENEWING YOUR SUBSCRIPTION WILL RUIN YOUR LIFE. IF YOU'RE STILL INTERESTED, AS YOU SAY, THEN WHY NOT READ ABOUT IT AND TALK ABOUT IT? THEY HAVEN'T OUTLAWED THAT YET. IT'S CLEAR THAT YOU'VE BEEN INTIMIDATED AS WE ALL HAVE TO A DEGREE. GOOD LUCK EITHER WAY.**

*Thanks for returning the cards, folks. We'll try to follow your suggestions and do something about the back page. Thanks also to those of you who made financial contributions, which we can always use. Hopefully, next year such contributions will be tax-deductible. Did you know that you can get two free months of 2600 if you get a friend or loved one to subscribe? You probably didn't know that, since this is the first time we ever mentioned it. But it's true. Just have the new subscriber mention your name and we'll add two months to your subscription. In addition to the index which we're enclosing with this issue, there is also a 2600 1984 Table of Contents, a page by page guide to all of the issues. It costs \$1 and should be placed at the very beginning of your collection.*

SOME, BUT NOT ALL, ELECTRONIC MAIL SYSTEMS  
WHICH MAY HAVE OTHER OPTIONS THAT WE DONT MENTION HERE

COMPANY NAME	SERVICE NAME	ON LINE PRICE*	DOWN LOAD PRICE**	800 INFO NUMBERS
ADP Autonet Ann Arbor, Mi	Automail	\$48.63	\$48.63	241-1945
Compuserve Corp Columbus, Ohio	Infoplex	\$111.92	\$111.92	428-2322
Computer Corp. of America Cambridge, Mass	Comet	\$60.00	\$60.00	222-2678
General Electric Information Services Corp. Rockville, Md	Quik-comm	\$59.75	\$51.00	638-8730
GTE Telenet Communications Corp. Vienna, Va	Telemail	\$71.36	\$31.34	354-2400
ITT Dialcom Silver Springs, Md	Dialcom	\$70.76	\$23.60	435-7342
MCI Communications Corp. Washington, D.C.	McMail	\$102.50	\$102.50	522-3222
Source Telecomputing Corp. McLean, Va.	Sourcemail	\$110.23	\$36.63	336-3366
Tymshare, Inc. Cupertino, Ca.	Ontyme	\$58.76	\$50.19	523-2263
Western Union Telegraph Co. Upper Saddle River, N.J.	EasyLink	\$78.88	\$34.89	325-6000

The above information is based on sending 35 mss. (35,000 characters) to 93 recipients, and much of it is from ON COMMUNICATIONS.

\* - Create mss. on line      \*\* - Download previously created mss.

The following is a nifty list of voice messaging systems:

BB1 Industries Inc. - Voice Retrieval System  
Centigram Corp. - Voice memo  
Commterm Inc - EVX  
Digital Sound Corp. - Voiceserver  
Genesis Electronics Corp. - Cindi  
IBM - Audio Distribution System  
Octel Communications Corp. - Aspen  
Roim Corp. - Phonemail  
Sudbury Systems Inc. - Voice Server  
Voicemail International Inc. - Voice Mail System  
VMX Inc. - Voice Message Exchange  
Wang Laboratories Inc. - Digital Voice Exchange

We suggest that you investigate them and tell us what you find, but to get you started try Centigram at 800.321.6366

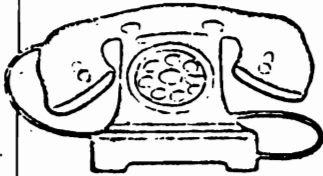




# Reach Out and Goose Someone

Hours of pleasure from your telephone

by Paul D. Lehrman



Everybody knows about dial-a-prayer—in every city from Alaska to Australia you can assuage your god and your conscience without going any further than your phone. Many towns also have numbers you can call that will give you the latest sports scores or your daily horoscope. That stuff's easy to find. But there's a lot more entertainment available from your phone, and here's a list of some of those sources of entertainment, culled from the telephone directories of the English-speaking world:

## ALTERNATIVE PRAYER

**DIAL-AN-ATHEIST**  
 Phoenix ..... (602) 899-7411  
 Tucson ..... (602) 623-3861  
 Washington, D.C. .... (202) 370-5255  
 Los Angeles ..... (213) 260-4326  
 Atlanta ..... (404) 329-9809  
 Salt Lake City ..... (801) 364-4939  
 Stoughton, Mass. .... (617) 344-2988  
 Schenectady, N.Y. .... (518) 346-1479  
 Charlotte, N.C. .... (704) 568-5346  
 Milwaukee ..... (414) 412-0786  
**DIAL-A-PRAYER IN SPANISH**  
 Tucson ..... (602) 296-3334  
**DIAL-A-SAINT**  
 St. Louis ..... (314) 421-4775  
**DIAL-A-MEDITATION**  
 Boulder ..... (303) 442-1471  
 Minneapolis ..... (612) 361-7211  
 Seattle ..... (206) 624-8985  
 New York City ..... (with Sn Chirney)  
 (212) 526-1111

**DIAL-A-MIRACLE**  
 Portland, Ore. .... (503) 234-1443  
**DIAL-AN-ECK MESSAGE**  
 Pittsburgh ..... (412) 682-6432  
**DIAL-THE-BIBLE**  
 Lynchburg, Va. .... (804) 528-0401  
**DIAL-A-MOMENT-  
 WITH-CHRIST**  
 Ottawa, Ont. .... (613) 820-8240  
**DIAL-A-TORAH-THOUGHT**  
 Buffalo, N.Y. .... (716) 832-2446

**DIAL-A-SONG-OF-ZION**  
 Vancouver, B.C. .... (604) 876-9511

## JOKES

(X means no one under 13 allowed to dial)  
**DIAL-A-SMILE**  
 Santa Fe ..... (505) 988-4000  
 Tulsa ..... (918) 749-6011  
**DIAL-AN' SMILE**

Memphis ..... (901) 278-2370  
**DIAL-A-SPAZZ**  
 Marin County, Cal. .... (415) 388-6633  
**BE FUNNY!**

New York City ..... (212) 338-5665  
**DIAL-A-CRAZY**  
 Chicago ..... (312) 528-4471  
**SMILE-A-PHONE WITH  
 DR. DON (X)**  
 San Francisco ..... (415) 982-8778  
**KVPI JOKE LINE**  
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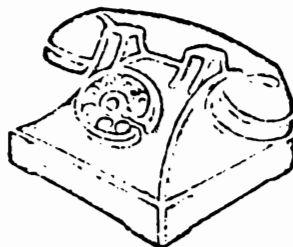
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 Birmingham, Ala. .... (205) 324-9944  
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## OUR FRIENDS, THE ANIMALS

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**DIAL-A-BOBCAT**  
 Sydney, Australia ..... 638-4476  
**VOICE OF AUDUBON**  
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**DIAL-A-BOTTLE**  
 Toronto ..... (416) 447-1188  
**DIAL-A-HEARING-  
 SCREENING-TEST**  
 Long Island, N.Y. .... (516) 369-1313  
 San Francisco ..... (415) 776-1291  
**DIAL-YOUR-DOCTOR**  
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**DIAL-NEW-TRITION**  
 Washington, D.C. .... (202) 986-9116

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 Detroit ..... (313) 345-5070  
 St. Louis ..... (314) 544-3311  
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**DIAL-A-TAPE**  
 Pittsburgh ..... (412) 935-3333  
**DIAL-A-MESSAGE**  
 Washington, D.C. .... (202) 568-8580  
**DIAL-A-NEW-IDEA**  
 Vancouver, B.C. .... (604) 733-8314  
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 Memphis ..... (901) 528-3434  
**DIAL-A-SERVICE**  
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**DIAL-A-HOME-  
 IMPROVEMENT**  
 Toronto ..... (416) 282-9770  
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**DIAL-A-CULTURAL-EVENT**  
 St. Louis ..... (314) 531-1111  
**PHONESONG**  
 Cambridge, Mass. .... (617) 491-0500  
**SOUNDSTAGE**  
 Los Angeles ..... (213) 666-7093  
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 Hollywood ..... (213) 769-8980  
 THIS IS 212-787-3251  
 New York City ..... (212) 17-1251

## BIZARRE STUFF

**DIAL-A-PHENOMENON  
 (SMITHSONIAN)**  
 Washington, D.C. .... (202) 357-2000  
**EARTH AND SPACE REPORT  
 (HARVARD UNIV.)**  
 Cambridge, Mass. .... (617) 491-1497

Participatory numbers. These break down into two categories—party lines, which you dial into and talk to a bunch of folks simultaneously, and comment lines, where you dial in to hear what other folks have said, and then call the input number to record your own message, which will then be edited by the intrepid phone freaks who run the things, and played to the waiting world. Subjects range from the profound to the ridiculous.

## PARTY LINES

**DIAL-A-STRANGER**  
 San Rafael, Cal. .... (415) 461-7571

## COMMENT LINES

**DIAL-OGUE**  
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**FEEDBACK**  
 Sun Valley, Cal. .... (213) 765-6000  
 Input ..... (213) 765-5050  
**MONTAGE**  
 Hollywood ..... (213) 660-2000  
 Input ..... (213) 660-2800  
**OBSERVATORY**  
 Woodland Hills, Cal. .... (213) 999-0429  
 Input ..... (213) 999-0110  
**SAN DIEGO COMMENT LINE**  
 San Diego, Cal. .... (714) 692-1000

