WHOSE STRIKE WAS THAT ANYWAY?

Contract talks were breaking down between American Telephone and Telegraph and the three major unions of their employees. As a result, workers walked off their jobs at midnight on August 7th. The AT&T strike was on!

We all remember the phone strike of '83. It caused us to hold on directory assistance for several minutes. It gave us many unique error messages. It made it virtually impossible to make any operator-assisted calls from all around the country. For the first time in a long while, the voices at AT&T were not answering the phone.

As we all know, a strike is an organized work stoppage by the employees in order to compel the employer to meet some demand. If the workers go on strike, it stands to reason that the company should suffer. If, for example, the union of Cabbage-Patch® producers was to strike, then none would be made, the factories would quickly be emptied, and consumers would rant and rave. If the local Cabbage-Patch® conglomerate had anticipated a strike, they could step up production, fill several hundred warehouses with millions of the surrogate orphans and, when the strike occurred, they could sell the surplus. The workers would lose their bargaining power in this case, unless the Cabbage-Patch® truckers' union also struck, or perhaps people stopped adopting the cretins, however unlikely that might seem.

This analogy leads us back to last summer when 675,000 telephone employees went on strike. A walk-out of this magnitude should have devastated any company. AT&T, though, is the exception to the rule. What AT&T really depends on are phones, wires, switching systems, computers, electricity, some optical fibers, satellites, microwave towers, and other nifty 21st century things that are all designed to run without the interference of human decision. The people are really just there to remove illegal third party phone calls from your bill, to make sure that your handwritten check matches the computer-read phone bill, or to tell you that the machine you are at cannot return your dime and that you will get a check for 10¢ in the mail. 97% of all calls made today don't use any operator assistance at all. And most of the other 3% could have been dialed without the assistance of a human. More and more "services" of your phone company are becoming completely automated. With ESS, customers can dial overseas direct. Android information is popping up right and left. AT&T, a leader in technology, doesn't need their workers all that much.

Glen E. Watts, president of the Communications Workers of America, said, "In 1950, for example, total labor costs amounted to about 45% of the telephone dollar while in 1980 they amounted only to 29%." John Patrick Phillips (author of Ma Bell's Millions) says that the company encourages or even "maneuvers" a strike. According to him, Ma Bell reaps huge rewards from a strike. Phillips, a disgruntled ex-employee, who at times compares the phone company to faceism, would have presented AT&T's organized scheme last August like this:

675,000 workers strike for about 3 weeks. 3 weeks out of a year amounts to 5.8% of a worker's salary. Let's say a phone worker made at the time of the strike a modest $250 per week (operators made $373, while systems technicians, the best paid workers, made $535).

At this time AT&T provided substandard service to the people for the same prices. The 3% loss in phone usage due to lack of operators was probably easily made up by people making an extra effort to dial direct and by the fact that some of the calls were being handled by scabbing supervisory employees. And so, the company nets pure profit: 3 week strike x $250/week x 675,000 workers = $506,250,000!

Phillips also notes that because managers and supervisors were doing the dirty work of the phone company, these people could not work on new projects. This means that several hundred million dollars would not be invested in expenditures on new projects because there is no one to do the work. So AT&T would get interest on this money during the strike and even for some time after it was settled until work had resumed. This yields several million more dollars in profit for AT&T.

AT&T probably made out directly with over half a billion dollars from the strike. At the same time companies like New York Telephone sought to delay a $160 million rate increase so it could ask for another increase to reflect new contracts.

As part of the settlement 21 days later, top craft workers got a 5.5% increase for the first year of their 3 year contract and 1.5% for each of the next two years. They also got a $31 million training fund ($46 per employee) to help them deal with new technology and remain employable humans. All of these "gains" are subsidized by the half a billion dollars gained lots of interest which AT&T did not have to pay to their employees. AT&T at first offered a ridiculous 3.5% increase for the first year and no increase for the next two, but after losing 5.8% of their salary by striking, workers got a 5.5% increase above the cost of living which is probably entirely subsidized by the strike itself and by rate increases.

It's certainly a nifty deal for Ma Bell. Their workers blow off steam and pay for their own raises, and stockholders don't have to worry one bit.

The strike had its effect on the consumer. As we all know, many were dialing, touchtoning®, or redialing their calls almost like usual and others were severely inconvenienced by a few managers and supervisors working as long distance or directory assistance operators often for many hours of overtime. New installations came to a standstill and many were backlogged for several months. Many emergency repairs had to be handled by supervisory personnel. But after all this, the same fat phone bill came to people's homes the next month, without any delay.

In actuality, users cannot complain to or boycott the phone company as they could the Cabbage-Patch® manufacturers, in our earlier scenario. They cannot make AT&T or their local company do anything because each customer is as unimportant as each employee. We, as customers, are all dependent on the phone. We have at least one in each home. We are billed if we use it or not. and are billed more to have it shut off for a month or two. We are all so dependent on the lines that run into our homes and on the one and a half million payphones that absorb our money that the complaints of any one or even thousands of us are quite useless. All of this utility (note the meaning of this word) was until recently controlled almost exclusively by one company, so in the name of human spirit, roll on with the divestiture.
THE TROUBLE WITH TELEMAIL

Last month, two of our reporters took a trip to National Public Radio studios in New York to reveal a very interesting development. It seems that Telemail, the electronic mail service of GTE Telenet was still just as easy to access as it was last year, prior to the October raids on computer owners who had allegedly broken into the system.

What had happened was this: a directory containing names of users on the Telemail system was obtained by our reporters—this list can be obtained from virtually any account on the system and, when printed out, is a couple of inches thick. They decided to go through this list and see if there were any accounts that still had the imaginative default password of “A” assigned to them. It had generally been thought, by both the public and press, that this incredibly foolish blunder had been corrected after the raids—in fact, new software was installed which forced a user to change their password from the default when they logged on. All new passwords had to be between 6 and 8 characters in length. But, in a system with many thousands of customers, the reporters reasoned that surely there must be a few who hadn’t yet logged on since the policy was implemented.

They decided to start their search with user names that began with “B”. They’d enter Telenet through an 800 number, type MAIL, and enter usernames beginning with B that were listed in their directory. For each username, they’d enter “A” as the password, and if it didn’t work, they’d go on to the next one.

The first account they tried was named B.ALEXANDER. They entered “A” as the password, and lo and behold, they were in! On the very first attempt! Robert Alexander of BUREC hadn’t logged in since last summer. The “invaders” were told by the system to change the password and they complied. Then they decided to have a look around.

While there was no mail to speak of in Mr. Alexander’s box, they were able to access bulletin boards that this account was allowed to look at. (Bulletin boards on Telemail are simply long-term storage message bases where messages of general interest to a particular group of people are posted.) All kinds of internal memos from the Department of the Interior were displayed.

In other words, the same old story. Nothing had really changed. Nearly half a year after seizing computers from coast to coast, the Telemail system was just as vulnerable to outsiders as it was before. Were the folks at GTE really interested in securing their system in the first place? Or did they just want to put the fear of the lord into hackers?

They went to the letter “I” this time and searched for accounts that were affiliated with GTE. The first one was D.CORCORAN and, once again, they got right in. And Denise Corcoran of GTE had access to literally hundreds and hundreds of bulletin boards with names like PAYROL1, GOV1 AFFAIRS, and JAPAN.

On top of all this, it took GTE nearly a week to close access to these accounts, even after they were exposed on nationwide radio.

What our reporters proved here is that Telemail is either unable or unwilling to protect its customers. Unable? That hardly seems likely. After all, most computer bulletin boards run by high school kids are able to protect their users’ accounts from outsiders. Why can’t one of the largest and most expensive electronic mail systems do the same? Apparently, what we have here is a company that has grown too big too soon, and is now unable to overcome the inertia that its size has created.

How to Really Have Fun

Once a hacker manages to get into a Telemail account, he’s really set. By typing DIR “ at command mode, he can get a listing of everyone that the account is allowed to see—their username, full name, company and division, and user number. He can see any user if he figures out their full username or user number. Typing DIR USERNAME or DIR USER NUMBER will give all of the above information about that person, if he exists.

From the huge list that DIR “ generates (which takes a couple of hours to print at 300 baud), a hacker can scan for passwords that are defaults, first names, last names, usernames, or company names. Some GTE test accounts, for instance, used to have a password of GEENOGTE.

Telemail allows three logon attempts per access. Telenet allows four accesses per call. So each call to Telenet will yield 12 logon attempts to Telemail. Judging from the huge amount of users on the system, finding an easy password doesn’t take all that long.

There are all kinds of neat features within Telemail accounts that seem to be exclusively beneficial to hackers. If the account has access to the SET command, the user can cell the system not to print a welcome banner on login. The information that’s printed on the welcome banner tells the user when his last access was. If a hacker arranges for that information not to be printed, the real user won’t find out that his account was being used at 3 in the morning. And odds are that he won’t really notice the absence of the message—if he does, he’ll probably blame it on Telemail.

Then there’s the UNREAD command. This actually allows a person to read through someone else’s undelivered mail, and put it back when they’re finished without anyone knowing that it’s been read (unless a message was sent with a return receipt, which is rare). Telemail, it seems, practically bends over backwards to accommodate hackers.

What’s so great about having a Telemail account? Why should a hacker spend all this time getting one? It’s another means of free (or cheap) communications. All one has to do is call Telenet, enter Telemail, and read or send messages that can be unlimited in length. He can share one account with someone else (which is the least risky way to work things) or communicate with another usurped account that’s allowed to send to and receive from his account. This is naturally a bit more risky since if one account is reclaimed, both may end up being taken down. Transmission of messages on Telemail is instant and there’s never a busy signal. More importantly though, Telemail seems to be beckoning the hackers to come back home.

(Shortly after this article was dispatched, we received word that Telemail no longer uses “A” as a default. Whether this is true at all, whether they’re now using a default of “B”, or whether they’re using defaults period, is something that hackers will no doubt find out soon. Drop us a line if you find out anything.)
Bell Credit Card Abuse Soars

2000 News Service

Huge phone bills are being sent to innocent people all over the country. So huge, in fact, that they can't be sent in envelopes—they come in boxes. In the past month and a half, this scene has begun to proliferate.

As predicted on these pages in February, the AT&T death star cards are creating all kinds of problems. All that anyone has to do is glance at one of them to obtain a valid AT&T code. And that's exactly what people are doing. Some of these folks are, in fact, so organized that the codes are used for practically 24 hours a day, with new calls starting as often as 3 times a minute from all different parts of the country. It's rapidly becoming one of the easiest ways to make free phone calls, and best of all, it's through an old friend: Ma Bell!

While AT&T has put itself in a rather vulnerable position, they are not completely without defense. Any time that a credit card call is placed, the number that the call is being placed from is recorded and sent to the customer. Most phreaks know enough not to do this kind of thing from their home or local payphone.

Meanwhile, there is a major crackdown underway in Las Vegas concerning unauthorized use of MCI, Sprint, and ITT (AT&T is rumoured to also be involved here). It seems that hundreds of people in that gambling town were passing codes around. The FBI claims that the persons involved are not phone phreaks, but that phreakers and hackers may have been hired to do the actual code-finding.

Electronics Create Portable Prisons

The New York Times

Cesario Romero, a 23-year-old New Mexico truck driver, recently served a 30 day sentence for disobeying a police officer. He never had to leave his home.

Romero was confined at home by a plastic box the size of a cigarette package that was strapped to his ankle. This device emits radio signals which would have informed the authorities if Romero strayed more than 150 feet from his telephone. The anklet emits a radio signal every 30 to 90 seconds which is picked up by a small receiver connected to the telephone outlet in the wearer's home. The receiver relays the signal to a computer that is monitored by the authorities. The printouts indicate each time the wearer exceeds the 150-foot limit and each time he tries to remove the anklet or unplug the receiver.

District Attorney Steven Schiff of the Second Judicial District said, "For someone like a first-time shoplifter, it could be used as a mild punishment, requiring the person to stay home nights and weekends for a specified time."

The U.S. Justice Department has expressed an interest in this monitoring system.

414's Plead Guilty

The Associated Press

Two young men, both members of the 414 computer enthusiasts group, pleaded guilty to two misdemeanor charges on March 16.

Gerald Wondra of West Allis, WI and Timothy D. Winslow of Milwaukee, both 21, broke into large computers in the U.S. and Canada last June, simply to prove that they could do it. The two agreed to plead guilty to two counts each of making harassing telephone calls, which is the most they can be charged with, since the government has no law against computer crimes. Each count carries a maximum penalty of six months in jail and a $500 fine.

The computers involved were located at: Security Pacific National Bank in Los Angeles, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York, Canada Cement Lafarge Inc. in Vancouver, BC, and Citadel Industries, a New Jersey corporation.

Teller Machine Crime Coming

The Los Angeles Times

The Justice Department says that automated teller machines and other means of electronic financial transactions are "potentially fertile for criminal abuse."

Techniques for robbing the systems already have cropped up and are expected to increase. They range from the dynamiting of an automatic teller device to the withdrawal of funds by a cardholder who then claims no knowledge of the transaction. Because of an absence of sophisticated verification procedures in today's automated teller systems, such as fingerprints or voiceprints, the door is wide open to unscrupulous cardholders committing fraud from their own accounts. (Some machines, though, take a picture of the person as soon as he takes the cash.)

Even though bank officials may be skeptical of a cardholder's disclaiming any knowledge of a withdrawal that had been made from his or her account, federal law makes it difficult for the officials to reject such a claim. If a bogus loss is reported within two business days, the law makes the cardholder responsible for only the first $50.

Free Information in Trouble

The Associated Press

According to company spokesman Pic Wagner, AT&T is probably going to propose a 50-cent fee for long distance information calls instead of the 75-cent fee it proposed last fall. Consumers currently don't pay anything for long distance or overseas directory assistance.

A Word on Wiretapping

Long Island Newsday

A recent article by Lenny Siegel, director of the Pacific Studies Center in Mountain View, CA, dealt with the subject of wiretapping.

In this article, Siegel says, "Present law outlaws 'aural' (voice) wiretapping, the monitoring of telephone conversations, without judicial approval, but 'nonaural' surveillance is legal. Law enforcement and intelligence agencies can do record telephone dialing information—who's calling whom—and digital data transmissions—messages between computers and other electronic devices. In fact, the General Accounting Office, an investigative arm of Congress, warns that existing legislation may permit listening in on the growing percentage of voice transmissions that have been converted to digital pulses within the telephone network."
“God, I wish I had a box,” David said. “I just can’t see it now. I bop up
Information in Wisconsin and get an empty WAIS line to play with. I
kepunch a few multifrequency operator tones, and ta da! It gives me a
conference. But I can’t do that anyway, since I’m on ESS.”
“Don’t,” I repeated. “I know this sound. I don’t understand
a word of what you just said. Okay, this is what I know from the conference:
with a blue box you make tones of certain pitches, so that the phone
thinks you’re an operator. That way you can make long distance calls for free or
start a conference.”
“Very good.”
“But what’s ESS?”
“Anyway,” David said, “it’s easier and safer to use an extender to call
long distance than to box.”
“But what’s ESS?” I repeated.
“Oh,” I responded, “I know this sound. I don’t understand
a word of what you just said. Okay, this is what I know from the conference:
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“Anyway,” David said, “it’s easier and safer to use an extender to call
long distance than to box.”
“But what’s ESS?” I repeated.
“You,” Ivanhoe said. “I’m Ivanhoe. I’m a Sneek. But you can call me George.”
“What’s your name?” I asked.
“What?”
“I’m Ivanhoe. I’m a Sneek. But you can call me George.”
“I know,” I said. “I know this sound. I don’t understand
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“Anyway,” David said, “it’s easier and safer to use an extender to call
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“Beep-beep! Beep-beep!” The Phreak had brought Trader Vic on.
“You,” Ivanhoe said. “I’m Ivanhoe. I’m a Sneek. But you can call me George.”
“Okay,” he said. I heard a beep, silence, the people talking.
Quick, everyone!” Ivanhoe said. “The Phreak is going to show off,
but what he’s going to do is pretty dangerous.”
Beep-beep! Beep-beep!” The Phreak had brought Trader Vic on.
“Hey dudes, what’s going on?” he asked.
“Shhh!” we said.
“Off to look for more loops, the idiot,” said the boy.
“Where’s Steve gone?” I asked.
“I know,” I said. “I know this sound. I don’t understand
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“Very good.”
“Hey Phreak,” I said. “This is Electric Moon!”
“Hey, I’m Ivanhoe. I’m a Sneek. But you can call me George.”
“Okay,” he said. I heard a beep, silence, the people talking.
“Quiet down, everyone!” Ivanhoe said. “The Phreak is going to show off,
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“Okay,” he said. I heard a beep, silence, the people talking.
“Hey, I’m Ivanhoe. I’m a Sneek. But you can call me George.”
“Okay,” I said. I hung up the phone and walked into the kitchen. I set
my notebook and pencil on the kitchen desk and took a cold apple from the
refrigerator. The phone rang as I crunched the first bite.
“Hello?”
“Hi. Anyone you want to add?” asked the Phreak.
“Sure. Add Trader Vic.”
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“Very good.”
I HAVE A NEW LONG-DISTANCE SYSTEM. I HAVE TO DIAL THE CODE NUMBERS.

**MCI ACCESS NUMBERS**

(Courtesy of Plovenet—5169352481)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Area Code</th>
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<td>AARON, OHIO</td>
<td>(216)253-1490</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATLANTA, GA</td>
<td>(404)523-0003</td>
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<tr>
<td>AUSTIN, TEXAS</td>
<td>(512)473-2716</td>
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<td>BALTIMORE, MD</td>
<td>(301)321-8933</td>
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<td>BOSTON, MASS.</td>
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<td>CHICAGO, ILL.</td>
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<td>CINCINNATI, OHIO</td>
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<td>CLEVELAND, OHIO</td>
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<td>COLUMBUS, OHIO</td>
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<td>DAYTON, OHIO</td>
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<td>DENVER, COLORADO</td>
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<td>DETROIT, MICH.</td>
<td>(313)962-6906</td>
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<tr>
<td>FT. LAUDERDALE, FL.</td>
<td>(305)462-1818</td>
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<tr>
<td>FT. WORTH, TEXAS</td>
<td>(817)338-9004</td>
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<td>HOUSTON, TEXAS</td>
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<tr>
<td>INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA</td>
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<tr>
<td>KANSAS CITY, MO.</td>
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<td>LOS ANGELES, CALIF.</td>
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<td>LUBBOCK, TEXAS</td>
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<td>MIDLAND/ODESS, TEXAS</td>
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<tr>
<td>MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN</td>
<td>(414)933-7351</td>
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<td>MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEWARK, NJ.</td>
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<td>NEW ORLEANS, LA.</td>
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<td>NEW YORK, NY.</td>
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<tr>
<td>OKLAHOMA CITY, OK. (#1)</td>
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<td>OMAHA, NEBRASKA</td>
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<td>PHILADELPHIA, PA.</td>
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<td>PHOENIX, AZ.</td>
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<td>SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAN DIEGO, CALIF.</td>
<td>(714)560-1465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.</td>
<td>(415)495-2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUTH BEND, IND.</td>
<td>(219)232-8036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAMFORD, CT.</td>
<td>(203)348-0929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOLEDO, OHIO</td>
<td>(419)243-2048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUCSON, ARIZONA</td>
<td>(520)622-0212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TULSA, OKLAHOMA</td>
<td>(918)583-9082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WASHINGTON, D.C.</td>
<td>(202)872-1847</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following are MCI Mail local access phone numbers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Area Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta, GA</td>
<td>(404)577-7363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore, MD</td>
<td>(301)583-6850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston, MA</td>
<td>(617)262-6468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffalo, NY</td>
<td>(716)847-6050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago, IL</td>
<td>(312)856-9000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cincinnati, OH</td>
<td>(513)651-1204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland, OH</td>
<td>(216)771-7177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus, OH</td>
<td>(614)221-3451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas, TX</td>
<td>(214)754-0461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denver, CO</td>
<td>(303)831-8139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detroit, MI</td>
<td>(313)962-5980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ft. Worth, TX</td>
<td>(817)338-4159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hartford, CT.</td>
<td>(203)728-1909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston, TX</td>
<td>(713)850-1005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indianapolis, IN</td>
<td>(317)634-2208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas City, MO.</td>
<td>(816)474-3165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Island (Garden City Area), NY.</td>
<td>(516)586-0404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles, CA.</td>
<td>(213)620-1449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memphis, TN.</td>
<td>(901)523-9314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milwaukee, WI</td>
<td>(414)347-1765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minneapolis, MN.</td>
<td>(612)893-9462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newark, NJ.</td>
<td>(201)623-0295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York City, NY.</td>
<td>(212)245-0355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma, OK.</td>
<td>(405)540-1114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia, PA.</td>
<td>(215)636-9060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoenix, AZ.</td>
<td>(602)266-1148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsburgh, PA.</td>
<td>(412)261-5918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rochester, NY.</td>
<td>(716)955-9850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacramento, CA.</td>
<td>(916)442-6986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Diego, CA.</td>
<td>(619)268-1708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco, CA.</td>
<td>(415)543-1560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Jose, CA.</td>
<td>(408)995-6711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Ana, CA.</td>
<td>(714)550-7128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanford, CT.</td>
<td>(203)325-8133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Louis, MO.</td>
<td>(314)981-1881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, DC.</td>
<td>(703)525-6500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

--- National Toll-Free Access Number  
----------(800) 323-0905----------  
(800) 323-7751

The code works! Now I can call up Libya!
Keep a smile in your voice.

Be quick to answer your telephone calls. Be slow to hang up when making a call. Give the other fellow at least one minute to answer.

WHENEVER POSSIBLE remain on the line after you've placed a call

Talk is cheap. . . When you call on Saturday.

For better service—speak directly into the telephone.

For Quick Reference!

You'll find names and numbers quickly and easily a second time, if you underline them in your directory when you first look them up, and you can get free personal directories to jot down your often called numbers by calling the tel. bus. etc.

Bothered by annoyance calls?

The best way to put an end to crank or prank calls is to hang up immediately. If it persists, however, call your service rep., at the tel. bus. etc. Specially trained telephone people will work with law enforcement agencies to help solve the problem.

A volume control telephone is available through your telephone business office.

Keep a pad and pencil by the phone. It'll come in handy.

Wait for dial tone.

please dial carefully

Please be careful not to confuse the letter “I” with the numeral “one,” or the letter “O” with the numeral “zero” when dialing.