

Changing times: Dialing your phone ain't what it used to be

By JOSEPH SULLIVAN

Have you ever sat around for a day or two, waiting for a telephone service man to come and install or repair your home phone?

And was your home phone always the same — a black box with a ring dial, and a cord that never quite stretched as far as you wanted it to? If you answer yes to either of these questions, then the phone company has some good news for you. The days of waiting for service and telephones that all look the same will soon be as obsolete as the 10-cent phone call.

The reason for the dramatic changes in telephone service and appearance stems from the advent of modular equipment, which has simple snap in connections instead of complicated wiring, allows customers to install their own phones in homes converted to modularly modularity.

TO MAKE FULL USE of these advantages, Michigan Bell now has 31

PhoneCenter stores statewide, where a customer can go to shop for the phone and service he likes best.

One of the newest PhoneCenter stores, serving customers in the Birmingham and Southfield telephone service areas, is at 30900 Telegraph, near Thirteen Mile in Bingham Farms. The PhoneCenter Stores handles only modular equipment, said Barry Brooks, a service representative at the store. However, 46,000 phones, or one-third of the 146,000 in the area, have been converted to modular equipment.

Brooks added that Michigan Bell is installing the modular equipment now, both in new houses and in houses that need telephone service.

"It's all designed to save the customer time and money," Brooks said. "There is no longer the need for an installer to go out and hook up the phone. And if it breaks, the customer can just unplug it and bring it in for immediate repair."

The savings in time for waiting for a serviceman is anywhere from four hours to a couple of days, Brooks said.

Money saved for the installation costs of two phones can range from \$10 to \$35, he added.

"CUSTOMERS CAN come in here (to the PhoneCenter Store) and pick up their phones, and we'll assign them their number and give them the telephone directories they want," Brooks said.

Choosing the phone and service is an added element in the telephone revolution. In addition to the standard rotary dial, trim-line and princess phones, there is also a Design line of telephones offering 15 styles with eight colors.

Comic book heroes Mickey Mouse and Snoopy can be bought for \$102. The figures stand on a base housing the dialing section of the phone and hold the receiver end in their outstretched paw.

Or how about a phone that's hidden in a neat wooden box, or built into its own chalk or cork board for messages?

Then there's the Early American, French Provincial and Mediterranean styles.

Services are another area where phones offer customers far more choices, Brooks said.

The Design line phones are bought outright by the customer, rather than remaining phone company property, Brooks said. They are only available in modular equipment, but proved popular despite the prices, ranging from \$46 to \$102.

We sold 214 Design line phones in December and 111 in January. They're really getting popular," Brooks said.

Home telephones provide customers

with many popular services, Brooks said.

The most common is the Touch-tone or push-button "dial."

Touch-tone phones cost \$1.80 per month per telephone number, Brooks said. "People like it because it's faster than rotary dialing, and it's been proven statistically to improve accuracy so there are fewer wrong numbers."

Since September, 421 of the 531 phones sold, about 75 per cent, have been push-button, Brooks said.

Customers can also have call forwarding by setting their phone to the telephone number where they are going, Brooks said. That service is \$1.80 per month.

For \$2.92 per month, customers can have a beep alert them that someone is calling them, put whoever they are talking to on hold, and take the second call.

For the same price, they can have the ability to put one party on hold, and call a third party and talk to both in a conference-type call.

That same monthly rate can be used for a phone with speed calling for 30 numbers. The most frequently called numbers are set in the phone by the customer. The numbers can be dialed by pushing a button next to the number wanted.

"The memory for that service allows up to 15 digits," Brooks added. "So overseas calls can be dialed by pushing just the one button."

Phones for handicapped are available, Brooks said. A hearing aid adapter costs \$11.20 and an artificial larynx \$51.80. Volume control for the hard of hearing can be used for 77 cents per month.

Modular phones are not the only phones able to offer the services, Brooks said. But the Design phones and other PhoneCenter equipment is only for modular equipment.

If you have conventional equipment, Brooks said, there is a service charge to switch to modular.

But if you have a problem with your line, the service man will likely switch your connections to the modular style, he said.

Only modular connections are being installed. They are now in 1.5 of the 4.3 million phones statewide.

If you are moving and want your old style phone disconnected, the phone company will ask you to snap the telephone cord near the connection to the wall and bring in the phone for a \$2.50 credit, Brooks said.

The phone will then be sent to Western Electric and converted to modular fittings. The house will also be converted when the next customer requests phone service, Brooks said.

BUSINESS PEOPLE

Orchard Lake resident ROBERT L. CALHOUN has been promoted to trust officer at Manufacturers National Bank of Detroit. He joined the bank's Trust Department in 1977 as a trust representative with business development responsibilities. Calhoun has 20 years of experience in the insurance business, specializing in estate planning, life insurance, and the administration of pension and profit sharing plans. He has a bachelor of science degree from Michigan State University.

F. ALLEN GRAHAM, president of the Southfield-based Graham Mortgage Corporation, has been elected to the board of governors of the Mortgage Bankers Association of America. The election took place at the annual meeting of the association in Atlanta, Ga. Graham also serves as vice-chairman of the association's business development committee.

KENNETH FAHNSTOCK of Rochester, a space planner and interior designer, has been named a general associate of the Warren, Michigan-based industrial and interior design firm of Ford & Earl Design Associates, Inc. He has been associated with the firm's interior design department.



Calhoun

Graham

Fahnestock

DAVID BIEBER of Birmingham, has been named director of programming for WJBK-TV. Bieber was program manager of WDIV-TV. He joined WDIV (then WWJ-TV) in 1976, coming from WSPM-TV in Hartford, Conn., where he was a producer. Prior to that, Bieber served as executive producer at WLS-TV in Chicago and WCOP-TV in Cincinnati. Earlier, he was in charge of developing news programs and specials at WXYZ-TV in Southfield.

Royal Globe Insurance Companies have announced the appointment of JOHN F. PLUNKETT of Farmington Hills, as administrative manager of the firm's regional office in Southfield. Plunkett joined the company in New York in 1974 as a trainee in the methods and procedures department. In 1976 he was transferred to technical systems, data processing division, as a programmer. Plunkett was appointed assistant administrative manager, East Orange, N.J., regional office in 1977.

SUSANNE M. GATCHELL of Bloomfield Hills, has been appointed assistant superintendent of industrial engineering at Pontiac Motor Division. Gatchell began her General Motors career as an engineer at GM Design Staff in 1969. From 1971 to 1976 she attended the University of Michigan under the GM Fellowship program and received a Ph.D. in Industrial Engineering from there in 1977. After her graduation, Gatchell moved to Pontiac Motor as a senior industrial engineer.

BRUCE REICHERT of Birmingham, has been appointed controller of United Plastics, a unit of International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation. Reichert is responsible for all financial and treasury functions of United Plastics' major manufacturing plants. Reichert comes to ITT from Rockwell International in Pittsburgh where he was manager for cost accounting department.



Gatchell

Reichert

Merrell

ROBERT VLASIC, chairman of Vlasic Foods, Inc., has been elected to the board of directors of Campbell Soup Company. Vlasic Foods was acquired by Campbell in May 1978 for stock valued at over \$35 million.

HARRY J. HARVEY of Troy, has been named district sales manager for the Itasca division of Winnemac Industries, Inc. In his new position, he is responsible for marketing Itasca motor homes through dealers in Michigan and Indiana. Harvey's 16 years of sales and marketing experience include four years with Proctor & Gamble Co. and nine years as a zone manager for the Lincoln-Mercury Division of Ford Motor Co. Prior to joining Winnemac, he was general manager of a Lincoln-Mercury dealership in Rochester.

WALTER E. DOUGLAS, president of New Detroit, Incorporated and ROBERT D. MERRELL of Birmingham, vice president and group executive of Burroughs Corporation, were recently elected to The Detroit Institute of Technology board of trustees.

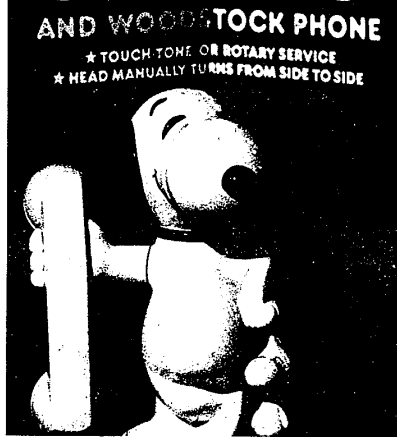
Troy resident ROBERT J. SCHEHL has been promoted to vice president and trust officer at Manufacturers National Bank of Detroit. He joined the bank as a supervisor in the Trust Accounting Department in 1963 and was appointed a trust officer in 1970. In 1975 Mr. Schehl was promoted to second vice president and trust officer.

Ziebart International Corporation, based in Troy, has named EUGENE L. METZGER, R. RYRIE SMITH and JAMES E. WHITE vice presidents of the corporation. Metzger will be in charge of all sales to U.S. Ziebart dealers. Metzger joined the Ziebart organization in 1971 and has served as branch operations manager, director of operations and director of sales prior to his vice presidential appointment. Smith of Bloomfield Hills, becomes vice president for appearance and protection products for Ziebart's A-P Laboratories and Zeegard Car Conditioning Products. White, assumes the title of vice president of research and development. He will be in charge of all research and development for Ziebart Rustproofing and A-P Laboratories.

ARNOLD M. WEISSLER, M.D. of Birmingham, chief of medicine of Harper-Grace Hospitals in Detroit and chairman of the department of internal medicine at Wayne State University School of Medicine, was installed as chairman of the Council of Clinical Cardiology of the American Heart Association. Weissler was also elected to the board of directors of the American Heart Association during annual meetings of the association.

BE CHOOSEY

THE SNOOPY AND WOODSTOCK PHONE
★ TOUCH TONE OR ROTARY SERVICE
★ HEAD MANUALLY TURNS FROM SIDE TO SIDE



Choosing your telephone has become an important decision in home decor. Comic book heroes such as Snoopy (above) or Mickey Mouse can be purchased for \$102. Snoopy stands on his dailing section and holds the receiver in his outstretched paw. (Staff photo by Dick Kelley)

Look out Big 3

New network eyes gains

There's a new network in town. And business is booming in its rying battle against the nation's big three television affiliates.

Home Box Office, a subsidiary of Time-Life, Inc., has added 1,700 subscribers in the metropolitan area as viewers in more than 30 apartment complexes, hotels and trailer parks are enjoying commercial-free, unedited entertainment programs.

Metro Home Theater, Inc., a division of Maclean Hunter Cable TV Limited and local distributor for HBO, began transmitting in December first run movies, special programs, documentaries and professional and college sporting events into southeastern Michigan households.

Presently, HBO only serves specific apartment buildings and hotels wired for its microwave transmissions.

Beginning this spring, Metro Home Theater will offer HBO to individual households in the area from Mt. Clemens to Downriver.

"Subscribing to HBO is below the cost of a good dinner," claims Paul Weisenfeld, an account executive with Metro Home Theater.

Metro Home Theater has sent a survey to more than 1,000 people in the metropolitan area to examine the support for home pay-television in southeastern Michigan. This mailing includes information regarding the price of the service which will vary depending on the location of the subscriber.

"FOR \$11.50, subscribers to HBO can be part of the latest trend in home entertainment. HBO presents many movies, sports and special events that aren't shown on any of the other major networks," he continues.

Its offerings for next month include such movies as "Coming Home," "The Last Waltz," "Silver Streak," "Looking For Mr. Goodbar," and "Alice and the Gypsy," as well as "Europe on Its," an ice skating special, "Big Wednesday," a special nightclub act, and a Woody Allen festival featuring several of his most recent films.

"The World's Greatest Lover," "House Calls," "F.I.S.T." and "Smokey

and the Bandit" also highlight the nightly listings.

HBO programming begins around 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and runs until about 2 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday, programming starts at 2 p.m. and continues through the day until about 2:30 a.m.

"HBO previews shows on the weekend and then runs them during the week. Each of the movies scheduled six times a week is shown about five or six times so viewers who missed it the first time can catch it some other time. Or if they want, they can see the same movie over and over again," Weisenfeld adds.

"HBO AIRS THE PG-rated movies during the day and the R-rated movies at night. That way we can appeal to all audiences."

"Generally, sports are aired during the week when the major networks are showing entertainment. When the networks show entertainment, we show movies," says Weisenfeld in explaining HBO's marketing strategy.

"HBO has been around for six years, but it is just something new in Detroit. It takes a lot of saleswork to show people what it's all about. But we're spreading quickly. There are more than two million people nationwide who subscribe and we're the only pay movie network that operates in all 50 states."

HBO is the only network in the nation that uses microwave transmission via satellite from New York. The others use direct lines to and from the network studios.

Since rates for individual homes who want HBO subscriptions haven't been finalized, Weisenfeld says those wishing to sign up for service should call Metro Home Theater, Inc., at 968-3550 and get on the waiting list.

More space

Construction is under way on a 528,000-square-foot office complex at Telegraph and Thirteen Mile roads. The 25-acre site will house the four-story, \$23-million Bingham Center. Ben Etkin, partner of Etkin & Co., is the developer. Target opening is August 1979. Leasing arrangements are handled by Burland, Reiss, Murphy & Mosher, Inc., Realtors.

