

Phone '411' Gets 40,000 Calls A Day

By CORINNE ABATT

The magic number is 411. The smiling voice answers, "New number information."

The voice belongs to one of 104 operators who field the 40,000 inquiries and calls per day that come into Michigan Bell's service center in Southfield that used to be called directory assistance.

THE WOMEN behind the voices work in a large room in the basement of the telephone company building on Lahser north of 10 Mile.

Their fingers do the finding for what Hazel Boyle, chief operator, calls "a vast area that includes Southfield, and much of Detroit" and points north.

The chief operator takes a considerable amount of motherly and professional pride in the information operation.

"These girls are experts," she says, pointing to the huge stack of phone books on each operator's desk. "It's beautiful to watch a good operator. She can cut into the book within three pages of where she wants to be."

The stack includes an addendum of new listings given out daily, separate books for the west, east and north areas as well as the large Detroit directory. They are replaced with updated versions every few weeks. Each book has alphabetical tabs and clues for each column at the top and bottom much like a dictionary.

Each operator handles 60 to 90 calls an hour during her eight-hour day. The time per call may go any place from six seconds to whenever the caller hangs up.

The six-second calls are the numbers commonly asked for, such as the Internal Revenue, or those clearly defined questions.

But the operators are experts at more than just giving out numbers fast. They handle a whole lot more than new number questions.

LONELY OLD people who need the sound of a human voice call to pour out their troubles. At 3:30 p.m. the kids start calling to yak and play games. Men call with a string of obscenities or propositions. A few, in a state of panic, call for help in an emergency.

Number operator for Oak Park, has been a new number operator for over two years. She was a little scared at first but now she answers casually, "Oh sure, I get obscene calls—we all do."

In fact, one has called so often that she can recognize the voice immediately. She wonders if the lonely lady, another voice she knows well, still calls just to talk.

If the caller wants to continue the conversation and Linda can't get off the phone, she will probably turn the call over to her supervisor, Ellen Horlop.

Ellen says, "I just have to keep talking until I get rid of them. I ask what number they wanted until they get the hint. Nine times out of 10 when the operator says she is going to transfer the obscene phone caller, he hangs up."

If an emergency call comes via 411, the operator can connect the call to a toll operator who transfers the call directly to the police department or to a service that can help.

THE OPERATORS get their share of pain-in-the-neck phone calls. They're all in a days work—the irate guy who is obviously having a bad day and is taking it out on the phone operator, the person who demands a number unlisted at the customer's request, (the operator doesn't have these numbers), the customer who has an address, but no name (no help here either) the customer who wants an out-of-town number or the

guy who wants to find John Smith, "somewhere in Detroit."

Company officials are aware that many people call 411 rather than trouble to look up a number. Commercial Operations Assistant Gerald Borer says these calls are one of the reasons for high costs of maintaining the new number service which is growing more rapidly than the company.

Ohio Bell has already requested permission to charge \$.20 a call to new number information after three free calls.

Weather, television programming, television commercials, major sports events all have a direct effect on the call load.

There's a call boom on bad days and another during TV commercials. Hazel Boyle says her operators could tell how the weather was if they never went outside the bright, pleasant, but windowless room.

THINGS ARE changing a bit at number 411. For instance, the women may now give out their names if they choose to do so. There are a few male operators in the country. Hazel Boyle says there may be more. The men supervisors proved during the last strike that they could do the job.

WANTED



In connection with good grooming and style conscious persons interested in having their clothes restyled or altered. Personal fittings on both men's and women's clothing in our modern tailoring shop. Phone 349-3377. Latham's, 120 E. Main-Downtown Northville.

Police Charge Detroit With B & Es

LIVONIA A Detroit man, who police say has been involved in approximately 70 breaking and entering cases in Livonia, is being held in lieu of \$25,000 bond following arraignment Sunday on a charge of breaking and entering of a dwelling.

Michael L. Smiddy, 21, faces pre-trial examination the charge April 11.

According to Livonia Detective Sgt. Frank Brandemihl, Smiddy was arrested at 8:17 p.m. Saturday night as he was attempting to break into a house in the 18000 block of Golfview near Six Mile.

Navy Recruit Ends Training

LIVONIA Navyman Louis P. Kocis, son of Mr. and Mrs. Louis Kocis of 35854 Richland, Livonia, graduated recently from recruit training at the Naval Training Center in Orlando, Fla.

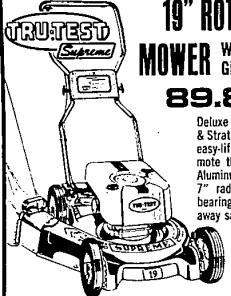
KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL!



To keep your corner of the world looking fresh, clean and cared-for, be sure you have the proper equipment and supplies! Just see us for big savings.

True Value
HARDWARE STORES

19" ROTARY MOWER WITH FREE GRASS BAG
89.88



Deluxe 3 1/2 HP Briggs & Stratton engine with easy-tilt starter, remote throttle control, Aluminum alloy deck, 7" radial disc roller-bearing wheels. Fold-away safe-grip handle.

21" ROTARY
As above with 8" wheels, and bag... 99.88

INTERIOR FLAT LATEX
Non-drip—one coat covers most surfaces! Tools clean in soapy water. 48 decorator colors to choose from at savings. Custom Colors Slightly Higher.

TRU-TEST
SATA-FLEX
FLAT INTERIOR LATEX
1 1/2 GALS.
ONLY 5.97

WERNER
ALUMINUM ALLOY Exten. Ladder
16' total, 13' working length
21.88

TRU TEMPER
Your Choice
1.88

INFLATION BUSTER
ORTHO-GRD LAWN FOOD

D-Shaped Flat Rungs for Safety, Comfort!
Die-cast aluminum lock won't wear or bind. All UL listed.
20' total length... 27.88
17' working length... 24.88
24' total length... 34.88
21' working length... 34.88

Heavy Shank Trowels
Professional quality! Choose a digging trowel, a transplanting trowel... or both! Welded shank angled for easy, but powerful digging action. Plastidip grip reduces fatigue.

ORTHO CRABGRASS CONTROL PLUS FERTILIZER
2,500 SQ. FT. 7.95
5,000 SQ. FT. 14.95

GARDEN BOW RAKE
Ex-long rounded bow; 15 teeth tapered, dished to rake clean. 60" fire-hardened ash handle.

HANDY ANVIL PRUNER
Anvil pattern, Keen-Edge blade for cutting ease. Two-position latch. Non-slip handle grips.


TRU TEMPER 444
WISS 199

TRU TEMPER 367
WISS 488

SPRING-BACK RAKE
Deluxe, stiffer flex for heavy-duty use. 22 tempered steel teeth; 19" head. Ash handle.

Hook PRUNING SHEARS
Hot drop-forged cutlery steel, hardened, tempered for lasting edge. Thumb latch. Vinyl grips.

Come home to a **Pennsylvania House** complete dining room never before offered at this low price!



SALE
Save! Save! Save!

On dining groups crafted with care down to the finest detail. The rich glow of cherry wood will warm your every meal. And your budget won't mind a bit! Both groups available in your choice of Candlelight or Collector's finish.

CHOOSE DINING GROUP A AND SAVE OVER \$200.00
SALES \$715 (Reg. \$915.)

44" Buffet... 44" China Top
42" Round Dropleaf Extension Table, opens to 62"
Four Side Chairs

CHOOSE DINING GROUP B AND SAVE OVER \$263.00
SALES \$849 (Reg. \$1,112)

54" Buffet... 54" China Top
Oval Extension Table 42" x 54", opens to 74"
Four Duxbury Side Chairs
Duxbury Arm Chairs (extra)

YOURS FREE!
A \$2.00 VALUE!
The Pennsylvania House
100 page Catalog.
Pick up your copy at our store.

ADVANCE FURNITURE STUDIO
Colonial House
19532 W. Middlefield Road East of Evergreen
Kenswood 3-7000

OPEN THURS. & FRI.
EVENINGS 'TIL 9 P.M.

LIVONIA True Value HARDWARE

5 MILE ROAD at FARMINGTON ROAD

PHONE 937-1611 GA 2-1156

OPEN DAILY 9 a.m. - 9 p.m. SUNDAY 10 a.m.