HELLO! CENTRAL! (cont.)

This writer’s limited research indicates each town had its ‘Home’ (independent) company. A merger, in 1915, made it possible for ‘Home’ and ‘Bell’ subscribers to use the same lines, enabling them to call any other ‘Home’ company phone in Michigan. Prior to the merger merchants were obliged to have two phones.

A new ringing code also came into being: numbers for calling in place of long and short rings. Party line subscribers were admonished to familiarize themselves with their own new rings. "All subscribers must look up and call by numbers as the operator will not be allowed to put up any connection without a directory will be in the hands of the operator. C.G. Rollison, Mgr."

The Argus reporter continues: "The new ruling...relative to calling by number will be strictly lived up to we understand; and you will not be given your party till the number is given. So do not blame the operator."

An early example of '911' can perhaps be found in the City Clerk's notice in the September 9, 1931 issue of the Brighton Argus: "A short time ago a number of houses in town were pilfered by burglars. We now have a night watchman in town who can be reached any time during the night by calling Central. In case of future trouble of this kind it is suggested that you immediately call Central, who will get in touch with your night policeman at once."

Even in those days some of us had 'caller I.D.' of our own invention. When on a party line if one wished to call a friend at 4155, by dialing 4155 it would ring three times and the person called would know who was calling. These arrangements had to be previously made of course.

Just before W II the switchboard in the bank was eliminated and the business office, where one paid the bill, was moved to the insurance and real estate office of James R. Haynor, 408 W. Main.

In 1955, R.H. Englehardt, at the time area manager for Michigan Bell, pointed out that from those early beginnings the exchange grew rapidly until there were approximately 2800 telephones in the Brighton exchange. "The present automatic dial system with 'two-letter, five-digit metropolitan numbers is certainly a far cry from the early days of crank-type telephones," Englehardt said. "But the pioneering spirit of our early Brighton citizens, in accepting a new idea, was the springboard for the tremendous development of our telephone system here." (To be continued. The writer, Marianna Bair, is anxious for readers to contribute addenda, comments, stories, etc. 229-6402)

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 481
BRIGHTON MI 48116-0481

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DATES TO REMEMBER
April 7-8: Michigan Oral History Association Local History Conference, Wayne State University.
April 7-9: Society with Home Builders Association at Howell Home Show.
April 8: 9-11 a.m. Archives work. Welcome.
April 24: 7:30 p.m. Board meeting. Welcome.
May 1: 7:30 p.m. Brighton Area History Book Committee.
May 3-7: Imagination Station construction. August 28: 75th Anniversary 19th Amendment.
May: At 202 W. Main, upstairs.
Call 229-6402 for more information.

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GENERAL MEETING REPORT
March 14, Jaime Green, historic preservationist, presented a slide program illustrating successful and not so successful efforts restoration efforts of area homes. It was learned that research on style, color, materials, etc., can enhance the historic quality of a building residential or commercial.

We are pleased to have Jaime serve on the Society Board. She can be contacted for recommendations on plans you may have for your structure.

BRIGHTON AREA BICYCLE PATH?
If you believe one should be prepared to attend the Monday, May 1, 7:30 meeting. It will be held at the Ball's, 1700 E. Grand River.

It will be a brainstorming session to determine basic layout: geographic area, time span, subject matter, etc. It is a given that pictures, journals, oral histories, etc., will be needed.

If you'd like to be involved call Marianna, 229-6402, or if you can't make the May 1 meeting but want to help, call.

BRIGHTON'S TOWN PUMP?
When installed, where, why, who used it, when was it removed, etc. Answers to any or all of the above and other information regarding this subject will be gratefully received and added to the files.

GRAND RIVER TALE:
TRAIL TALE:
BRIGHTON AREA PRESERVATION NEWS
THE PURPOSE OF THE BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY is TO PRESERVE, ADVANCE AND DISSEMINATE KNOWLEDGE OF THE HISTORY OF THE BRIGHTON AREA.
THE MEMBERSHIP IS COMPOSED OF PEOPLE WHO FEEL THIS PURPOSE IS WORTHWHILE AND SHOULD BE PROMOTED.

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