

## Thank You for Calling Hewlett Packard

*RAMBLINGS OF AN HP HELLO GIRL*

**Betty Haines**



### Foreword

There was no doubt, on the first day you showed up for work at the Hewlett-Packard facility in Buildings 1 – 4 in the late 1950s, there was one slightly unsettling environmental condition of those one-acre wide-open office bays. It was the paging voices of the HP telephone operators. They were also active in the old plant complex down by the Alma Street railroad tracks. This was decades before Voice-mail or phone answering machines were even a gleam in the inventor’s mind. The melodious (some would say sexy) voices would interrupt your thinking at the beginning, “Ed Porter, please dial 4, Ed Porter.”

With the magic ability of the human brain to ignore extraneous noise and sounds, it would only take about a day for the incessant paging all day long to just become a part of the office background, ONLY until your own name came along. Then, remarkably, your attention clicked on and you dialed “4.”

Our HP telephone PBX (Bell Telephone’s nomenclature for Private Branch Exchange) operators were amazing people. They were the “face” of HP, “Thank you for calling Hewlett-Packard, may I help you?” Friendly, efficient, quickly picking up the call if the dialed extension didn’t answer, or the admin didn’t pick up. Immediately they went to the paging system. It all worked extremely well, and as more and more operators were needed to handle the increasing success of HP, the operators devised methods to transfer calls and paging answers to the right line or operator.

Betty’s memoir made me laugh, a LOT. Betty remembers those days of personal attention to customers and to all of the hundreds of internal employees. She notes that it was Dave Packard who christened those operators as “HP’s Hello Girls.” Even as the inbound call loads peaked, their friendly spirit never left them. They must have felt stress at times, but we never knew it. And Betty was the kind of personality who made it fun to work at HP. Who else would make a Christmas-time announcement on the PA system (without permission), “Would the person who parked their sleigh and reindeer over Barney’s office, please move their vehicle!”

The most charming parts of this remembrance of several decades is that we see the personal level of a great corporation. High level executives get jokes played on them, we see the foibles of the daily routine of business life interspersed with a light heartedness that really did give HP a unique style of work culture. Betty saw and remembers so much of this because she sat at the heart of the communications of our great company. And her powers of remembering so many of the funny incidents will amaze you as you glide through this memoir. When you get to the place where Bill Hewlett says, I’m glad I’m the Huler...,” you will laugh out loud.

She was also at the heart of the mobilization of HP’s facilities and emergency teams as they

responded to the devastation caused by the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. Most facilities were back on line relatively quickly—I remember in Bldg 5U that many of those high hanging fluorescent fixtures jumped out of their hooks and came down on the floor. We were SO fortunate that most people left early to watch the World Series at Candlestick Park. But there was \$4 million (unofficial) dollars of damage in the Deer Creek facility, when a major water main broke and flooded labs and the computer room.

Finally, it should be mentioned that these mellifluous voices also appeared in the rest rooms. For new employees or visiting customers, it was always quite a shock to have a soothing female voice coming from out of the sky, over your shoulder, as you went about your business.

--John Minck



The Operators' Room - 1501Page Mill Road, Palo Alto, circa- 1966  
Standing, Bea Panetta, Chief Operator - Seated (l to r), Peggy Coppe, Betty (Platt)  
Haines, Virginia (Quinette) Otto, Hazel Smith, Doris Perkins, Judy Horder

## INTRODUCTION

### Becoming a Hello Girl

On my way home from work one afternoon, I decided to do a little shopping at Maximart, in Palo Alto, near the HP plant. Not long after I entered the store, I glanced up and saw David Packard approaching me. “Hi, Mr. Packard,, I greeted. He smiled and said, “I don’t recall your name; but, I know you are one of the ahh.....” At this point his voice trailed off and he seemed annoyed at being unable to come up with the words he wanted; he cleared his throat and continued, “You answer the phones up at the plant; you’re ah – mm - a *Hello Girl*.” I grinned and said, “I’m a

PBX operator, Mr. Packard.” He nodded his head in apparent relief at having the needed words provided.

He quickly recovered his composure and explained that Mrs. Packard had asked him to stop on his way home and pick up a couple of spare ice cube trays for their freezer. He said there was a larger selection than he anticipated and asked if I would help him decide. We walked over to where the ice cube trays were displayed and I helped him make a selection. Before we went our separate ways, I quipped, “Mr. Packard, I just may steal that *Hello Girl* job title that you bestowed on me; I like it.”

### **And that is how I became a *Hello Girl*!**

After that exchange, Mr. Packard would occasionally joke with me about being a *Hello Girl*; one time he referred to me as his *favorite* Hello Girl. After receiving that honor, it took a week for the swelling in my head to deflate enough to get a headset on it.

### **A Feminist Is Insulted**

Mr. Packard’s dubbing me a *Hello Girl* inadvertently contributed to one of my more distasteful experiences at Hewlett Packard. At the height of the feminist movement, a female member of the Personnel Department overheard a portion of a hallway conversation between Mr. Packard and me. In this conversation, he referred to me as a *Hello Girl*. Perhaps the partition that was between where we were talking and where she was sitting muffled the conversation. But I suspect her anti-chauvinism attitude contributed greatly to her misunderstanding of the conversation. Whatever the reason, she failed to grasp the tone of our joking; her brain zeroed in on the word *girl*, came to a ridiculous conclusion and she was dumb enough to act on it.

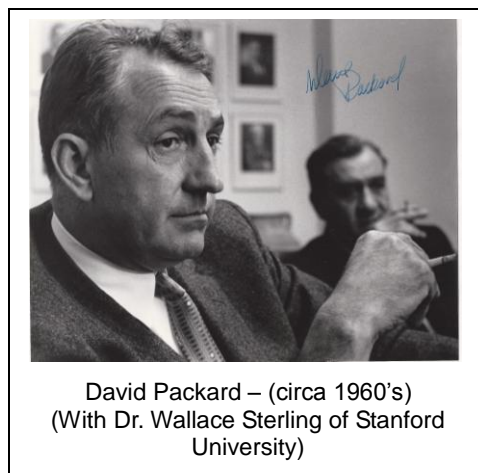
Later that day, she contacted me and asked that I come to her desk. When I arrived, she proceeded to lecture me about the folly of allowing any man to address me in such a belittling, demeaning, and unacceptable manner. She told me that Mr. Packard’s calling me “*girl*” was unacceptable and that I owed it to my sisters to call him on it. When she finally allowed me to speak, I informed her of a few things: 1) I found it unacceptable for any member of the personnel department to hide behind a cubicle wall listening to other peoples’ conversations and not speak up if they were offended by anything they heard, 2) my relationship with Mr. Packard was based on mutual respect and he would never demean me or the job I did for his company, 3) I felt no obligation to the *sisterhood* and considered most of what they did a silly waste of time, 4) if she was offended by or objected to Mr. Packard’s action it was her place to call him on it - not mine.

When I left her desk, I was worried that perhaps I had been out of line or a little too blunt. However that concern dissipated when I walked passed Ed King (who was Personnel Manager, at the time) and he slapped me a low five.

### **Yes, I called him Pappy**

I enjoyed Mr. Packard’s casual and comfortable way of interfacing with his employees. When I heard them address him as Pappy, it seemed natural that I begin addressing him that way also. My favorite memories of Pappy include:

- The year I chaired the serving committee at a Little



David Packard – (circa 1960's)  
(With Dr. Wallace Sterling of Stanford University)

Basin picnic and was awed that Pappy, Ralph Lee and Ed Porter were among the executives who allowed me to order them around the cook shed and serving lines.

- When Pappy was in town at Christmas time, he would come down to the Metal Fabrication shop (at 395 Page Mill Road) for some delicious Carl Buchhass roast beef. This beef was cooked on a contraption that Carl and Dick Arms designed and built. They used piano wire to suspend a side of beef over a heat source in the shop. Carl knew exactly how to pluck the wires to rotate the beef so that it cooked evenly on all sides. Pappy enjoyed watching Carl pluck these wires and when the beef was done to Carl's satisfaction, he helped slice and serve the beef to the site employees who gathered in the shop. Whenever I saw him at these roast beef feeds, he always remembered my name. He did occasionally ask how the "hello" business is going.
- My favorite Pappy incident occurred at Frank Cavier's retirement party. It was a huge shindig at the Palo Alto Elks club. The stage was filled with company executives and local big-wigs who would be speaking on this occasion. As the emcee (I think it was Hal Dugan) was making his opening remarks, Pappy stood up, took the microphone from him and said, "Stop this celebration. There is an important person missing from this stage. Frank's success at the company wouldn't have happened without this person. Get Mary up here, now!" He stood there, held the microphone and waited while a chair was fetched and Mary Cavier, Frank's wife, was brought up out of the audience.

## **PART I: Joining Hewlett Packard**

### **The way things were**

- In the 1960's, the Bell System, aka, "Ma Bell, the phone company," had a monopoly on providing telephone service; the service worked pretty much as follows:
- Long Distance, Information (411) and local operator assistance were provided by operators at a central office of Bell System, called Central Exchange.
- Telephone Information service (411) was free; but it didn't provide classified (yellow page) listings to callers. Therefore, it was difficult to obtain the telephone number for a person or company if you did not have the exact name and the correct spelling.
- Companies, like HP, who needed multiple telephone lines and wanted more control over the type of telephone service they provided to employees, leased PBX (Private Branch Exchange) equipment from the Bell System and hired their own operators to run the equipment. All external calls came through the PBX equipment and were manually connected—or switched—to the desired extension; hence, the terms PBX operator and switchboard operator were interchangeable.
- Extension users on each HP site were able to dial directly to each other. They could reach other HP sites by dialing tie-line codes. They dialed "0" to reach the switchboard. A few select extensions were allowed to dial local calls, but all long distance calls were placed by PBX operators. It was the operator's responsibility to evaluate the importance of the call, check time zone restrictions, and apply a few other criteria in order to determine the most cost effective way to route the call; the choices were: WATS line, tie-line, or DOD (Direct Outward Dial) line. ***NOTE***: WATS is an acronym for Wide Area Telephone Service; some purists insisted on using WATTS, an acronym for Wide Area Telecommunications Telephone Service.

- Outside calls were connected or switched via a pair of connector cords. Each cord pair had associated supervision lamps. These lamps allowed the operator to monitor the status of calls in progress without remaining on the connection and hearing the conversation. When making a connection to an extension, the lamp associated with the front cord (the one that plugged into the extension jack) blinked slowly until the extension phone was answered. Then it went dark and remained dark while the line was in use. When the extension user hung up, the lamps came on steady and the operator knew to take the connection down. If the extension was not answered within a specific number of blinks of the supervisory lamp, the operator re-entered the connection, took the front cord down and offered to ring another extension or take a message.
- When an HP employee was paged to respond to an outside call, they were asked to “Dial 4.” This routed the call to a specially marked jack strip on the switchboard, so the operator who issued the page could retrieve the responding call and connect it.
- Busy extension lines were identified by a “click test.” If an extension was in use when the operator touched the tip of a connector plug against the rim the extension jack she heard a loud click and knew not to insert the plug into the jack.
- HP people were encouraged to answer their own phones, whenever feasible, and to have their secretary answer only when they could not do so. It was the responsibility of the *department secretary* to provide backup telephone coverage to all department phones. When the secretary was away from the department, she/he had the option to ask someone in the department to fill in or to sign out with the operator who would take messages.

### **Landing in the Mail Room**

My career at Hewlett Packard almost ended before it began. In 1966, HP was growing fast, and the company needed more PBX equipment and operators to handle the volume of calls at 1501 Page Mill Road, where Corporate Offices were then located. To this end, the company contracted with Western Electric to install a new operator position at the switchboard. The scheduled completion date of this installation was October 21. In mid-September, the project was progressing well and Al Dossolla felt confident that the scheduled completion date would be met. He began to search for an additional PBX operator and, in late September, he offered me the job and scheduled me to start work for Hewlett Packard on October 22.

The ink was hardly dry on that paperwork when Western Electric went on strike. This stopped the installation dead in its tracks and nobody knew when work would resume. Al contacted me to discuss an adjusted start date. I was in a bind since my former employer had already replaced me. So going back to that job was not an option, and with three children to support, I could not afford to be without a salary, even temporarily. Consequently, I would have to reject the HP offer and look for a job elsewhere. Al asked me to give him 24 hours to see if he could work something out and I agreed.

Al solved the problem by having the mail room supervisor give me my basic training and then have me help sort and deliver mail until the switchboard installation was completed. This arrangement allowed me to accept the job at Hewlett Packard. To this day, I’m grateful to Al, because otherwise I would have found another job and missed out on some of the best things in my life—including a wonderful husband.

The strike lasted for six weeks so during that time I worked in the mail room. My mail room duties gave me more mobility and visibility than new operators normally receive. One could say, I

learned to network long before others discovered it as a career enhancing option. I never passed up a chance to be out and about around in the plant; I asked questions, I took notes, I absorbed as much information about the company as folks were willing to give me.

My stay in the mail room taught me a few unexpected lessons. I learned what David Packard looked like and that he was a forgiving man. However I learned this only after I had grazed his shin with my mail cart. I was pushing a cart, loaded with mail, around a blind corner in building 5U; at the very instant a tall lanky fellow was rushing around the very same corner. We collided, I apologized, and suggested that he walk a little slower and maybe even speak to Mr. Hewlett about putting a stop sign at this corner. He thanked me for my suggestions and said he would see what he could do.

After he rushed off, a secretary, who had witnessed the exchange, called me over and asked if I knew who that fellow was? When I replied that I didn't, she said, "Honey, you just met David Packard." The good news was, a few days later there was a small round mirror mounted at that corner; the better news, he never held my flippant remarks against me.

Hewlett-Packard was not so well known in 1966. We received mail addressed in many comical and unusual ways. Some that I recall are: Hewett Packing Company, Howlets Picking Company, Mr. Hewlett-Packard, Hewlett-Packard Bell Co., and Packard Auto Manufacturing. Mail room employees gave envelopes with unusual addressing to the supervisor after they had opened and processed the contents. One day, I gave such an envelope to my supervisor and instead of laughing and tossing it in the trash, he took it with him when he went for coffee at the 3U coffee station. During the coffee break, he gave the envelope to Mr. Hewlett. Mr. Hewlett, glanced at the envelope, smiled broadly, said, "Thanks, I can use this" and tucked it in his pocket. At a beer bust, the following Friday afternoon, while Mr. Packard was chatting with me and a group of mail room employees, Mr. Hewlett approached him, handed him an envelope, remarked, "I'm glad that I'm Huler" and walked away. I was one of a small group who got the joke; I knew that the envelope was addressed to *Huler-Pecker & Company*.

### **Moving to the operator's room**

Finally, the new switchboard was ready and I moved into the PBX area, which everyone called the *operators' room*. This room was tucked into the corner where buildings 3U and 1U joined. It had two points of entry/exit - one from building 3U and one from 1U. These doors provided a handy short cut for executives going from their offices in 3U to Barney Oliver's office in 1U and visa versa and they used it often.

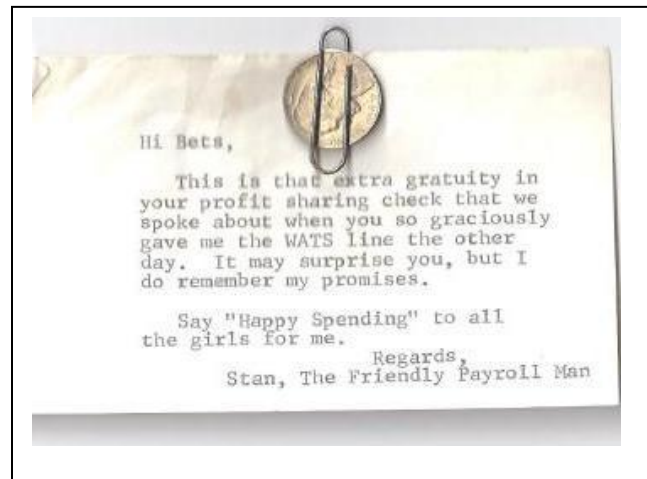
The room was staffed from 7am to 5pm; this meant a minimum of one operator was always on duty at the switchboard during those hours. To accomplish this, the operators rotated lunch and coffee break times. The operators' break area was adjacent to the switchboard positions. It had a little round table and comfortable chairs, a small collection of telephone directories for various cities and towns in the United States, a water fountain with a hot water tap, a small refrigerator, and a little hot plate. Microwave ovens were not yet in common use—or maybe Art Fong hadn't yet thought of them. Because the operators' room was short cut between buildings and the operators were known for sharing their supply of tea bags and goodies from their refrigerator, the area was a popular gathering place; this gave the operators more than average exposure to Mr. Hewlett, Mr. Packard, the VP's and their staff.

## Going the extra mile

Since the operators provided assistance with so many telephone transactions, there was a real sense of comradeship between the operators and the employees to whom we provided service; this made the *operators' room* a fun and exciting place to work. Such as the following:

- The operators often accepted collect calls from college aged children of executives. These children would plead that they were broke and stranded far from home. (The operators pretended to believe them, though secretly it was suspected that these kids just wanted to save their money for more important things than calling their folks – things like beer & pizza).
- Occasionally, we would track down traveling spouses. On one occasion, Betty Mahurin, spouse of Carl Mahurin, and her young son were unexpectedly delayed on a return trip from Spain. When Carl was not able to locate his family, he became worried and enlisted the help of the operators to make calls in search of them. Within an hour one of the operators had located Betty and connected her to Carl's phone. When he finished talking to Betty, Carl went out and bought a huge bouquet of flowers for the operators.
- Purchasing agents from the Microwave Division (later named Stanford Park) regularly came to the operators' room to use the library of telephone directories. If they were unusually busy, they would call and ask one of the operators to look up a number for them. Also, they depended on the operators to juggle WATS line priority whenever they needed to expedite delivery of an item. Twice a year the purchasing agents said thanks by taking the operators out for cocktails on the Friday following the distribution of profit sharing checks.
- Not wanting to be out done by the purchasing agents, the employees of Microwave Division Marketing gave each operator a personalized thank you card and a box of See's candy every Christmas. Also, they would troop over en masse, from building 5U, to sing Happy Birthday to whichever operator was celebrating such an occasion.
- The Technical Maintenance crew sent the operators flowers and goodies at Christmas and many other occasions. They depended on the operators to keep track of beeper numbers, to remember who to call for what, and to help them with a variety of administrative duties because they were very mobile and seldom near their department secretary's desk.
- The operators routinely helped executives or their secretaries with last minute lunch reservations. I gained a reputation for being able to get reservations at the busiest restaurants in town, even when nobody else could do so. Only Frank Cavier figured out my secret. One day, Frank called the switchboard and asked to speak to me. He explained that Cookie (his secretary, Elaine Cook) was in a class and he needed to “wine and dine a couple of important customers who arrived in town unexpectedly.” He asked me to try and get his party into a decent place to eat. I managed to get reservations at an up scale restaurant near Stanford University. After lunch, Frank stopped by the operators' room and said to me, “I know what you did and I understand how you did it.” Thanks to you, ***Dr.*** Cavier sure impressed those folks and enjoyed his lunch.” My secret? I learned (in my previous job at the Palo Alto VA Hospital) that when it comes to lunch reservations, ***Doctor*** trumped Mister and the closer the restaurant was located to Stanford, the more impressive the title ***Doctor*** became.
- One day I spent several hours tracking down Dick Warmington's favorite raincoat when an airline lost it somewhere between Heathrow Airport and SFO.

- When a group of Airmen, from the base on Johnston Island (a small atoll in the North Pacific, about 860 miles west of Hawaii), accompanied an HP atomic clock to “the factory” for adjustments, the operators invited them to wait in the operators’ break area and fed them home made goodies while the work was being done. Those Airmen sure enjoyed the food and the company. There were no women on the island and their food was typical military rations that were flown once a month.
- Many times, when the operators heard that Lucile Packard was helping a charity with their mail campaigns, the operators would volunteer to lick stamps between calls. Once a group of operators drove to Oakland and manned the phones for a Channel 2 fundraiser that she was sponsoring.
- On one occasion, my irreverent attitude and habit of rhyming people’s name embarrassed me greatly. I had a caller who was impatient to speak to Bruce Wholey and Bruce’s line was busy. I rang his secretary’s phone and assumed that she would be the one to answer. The phone came off hook; without waiting for anyone to speak, I said, “Please, tell Holey Wholey that he has an impatient caller on hold.” There was a short pause; then, came Bruce’s response; “This is Holey, put the caller on.” After Bruce finished the call, I walked over to his office to apologize but he would have none of it. He laughed and said, “If you say nothing worse than that behind my back, I consider myself lucky.” Occasionally, at a social function, I would address him as Holey Wholey just to see him grin.
- Once when I was handling the WATS lines, Stan Whitten, who was Stanford Plant Pay Master at the time, requested a WATS line for a critical call. He explained that the automated signature machine that his department used on payroll checks had malfunctioned in the middle of a check printing run. All WATS lines were in use, so, I actually interrupted a call in progress and asked the callers to hang up so payroll could use the line. When the situation was under control, Stan called to thank me and I jokingly said; “I expect to see a little extra in my Profit Sharing check.” Stan said, “You’ve got it.” When my next profit sharing check was delivered, the envelope felt a little heavy. I opened it and found my check, plus a nickel with a note attached; the note read: *“Hi, This is the extra gratuity in your profit sharing that we spoke about, when you so graciously gave me a WATS line. It may surprise you but, I do remember my promises.”* The note was signed *Stan, the Friendly Payroll man.*



### **Don't call me Mr. Lee**

Stan gave me extra money; but, Ralph Lee took money away from me. Ralph Lee intimidated me; I don't think he intended to do so, but he did. This feeling of intimidation, plus, my traditional South Alabama upbringing, made it difficult for me to call him anything other than Mr. Lee. On a number of occasions he admonished me, “Don't call me Mr. Lee; call me Ralph”. I was not comfortable doing so and would always revert to calling him Mr. Lee. Ralph Lee was accustomed to having people do as he asked and when I didn't, he decided fix the situation. Each time I called



him Mr. Lee he *fined* me a dollar and actually stood in the operators' room with his hand out until I got my purse and paid him. I paid him at least six dollars before I reluctantly began calling him "Ralph Lee." I never could manage to call him just Ralph, but "Ralph Lee" got me off the hook.

### **I want Bob Boniface for Christmas**

The first Christmas, that I worked at Hewlett Packard, there was a short fat man in a Santa suit wandering around the 3L cafeteria asking employees what they wanted for Christmas. When I was asked that question, I responded; "Bob Boniface." Imagine my surprise when, about an hour after that encounter, Bob walked in the operators' room and said, "I heard that I'm wanted in here." When I recovered from my embarrassment and was able to talk, Bob and I chatted for a few minutes. He asked about my long range plans and I confessed that I didn't plan to stay with the company for very long. As a single mother, I was saving money so that I could relocate to Alabama and have my parents help me raise my children. Bob wanted to know what it would take to entice me to stay with the company. My flippant reply was, "a good husband." Little did I know that remark would follow to my 10 year service award lunch.

### **Barney and his amplifiers**

Barney Oliver took full advantage of the *operators' room* short cut; he was in and out of the room daily—sometimes multiple times a day. Barney had a reputation for being socially awkward and when he was concentrating on a project or trying to solve a problem he had a tendency to become unaware of his surroundings. This led to many comical Barney Oliver stories among his employees. However, the operators never saw that side of Barney. When he was in the *operators' room* and the coffee break bells rang, he would serve coffee and donuts to the operators who were on duty at the switchboard before he ate anything or continued on his way. If he attended a Birthday celebration in the operators break area he made sure the "*girls at the board*" were served before anyone else got cake.

Another endearing trait of Barney's was the mother hen attitude he had toward the Public Address system the operators used. This PA system was equipped with Barney Oliver Audio Amplifiers (invented by none other than our Barney). These amplifiers had such superior audio performance that the design was implemented into a build-it-yourself kit that employees could buy. Every time this PA system emitted a snap, crackle or pop, when an operator used an incorrect phrase, or when a new voice came over the air waves, Barney would race to the operators' room to investigate. One day an operator told Mr. Hewlett about this quirk of Barney's and he decided to test it out. He had the operator open the paging system key nearest Barney's office, and instructed her "don't say anything for just a fraction of a second; then, close the key." Sure enough, presto, here came Barney on the run! Mr. Hewlett found it very amusing, he waited for a few seconds, while Barney questioned the operators about what happened, then, he confessed that he was culprit.



Barney Oliver and members of the amplifier team gather around the finished product. Barney is shown standing, while seated from left to right are: Paul Rasmussen, Clarence Studley, Chris Clare, Tom Jones, Eileen Martin, Rich Marconi, and Ken Peterson.

## Bea's Bookie Joint

Very few people realized what a complex process it was to arrange for Mr. Hewlett and/or Mr. Packard to speak to all HP locations, worldwide, via the multiple PA systems at profit sharing times. Twice a year, a small group of employees connected, tested, and maintained a temporary telephone network to support this project. This group included: Gene Doucette, Harvey Zeiber, Leo Leiberman, Art Wittke, Bea Panetta and her staff of PBX operators. Twice a year the operators' room was turned into the control center for this network. This required that a minimum of 30 telephones to be installed and monitored while the network was activated. Therefore the operators' room was dubbed "Bea's Bookie Joint" at profit sharing time.

The switchboard position nearest the door to building 3U was normally reserved for the operator who handled the WATS lines. However, at profit sharing time it had another, very special, use. It was where Mr. Hewlett or Mr. Packard sat to gain access the PA system and broadcast the profit sharing announcement. In addition to helping set up Bea's Bookie Joint and test the PA system, the operators brought homemade goodies for Mr. Hewlett and/or Mr. Packard to snack on while they sat in the WATS position waiting to make the announcement. Mr. Hewlett would eat the goodies; but, before doing so, he always cautioned the operators, "Flora has me on a diet; but, I'm trusting that you ladies will not to tell on me." This was an easy promise to keep; we seldom saw or spoke to Mrs. Hewlett.

## Ray Wilbur never approved it

During business hours only standard, pre-approved announcements were allowed over the PA system without the approval of Ray Wilbur, V.P. of Personnel. Unfortunately, this rule didn't apply when security guards controlled the PA system, after normal business hours. After 5pm, practical jokers had the guards make some strange announcements, such as: requests to return the "canoodling valve to the impregnation department," to replace the "left handed wrench in Don Higgins tool box," or to "ensure that the door is open before attempting to exit the building." The guards also paged the following people to call the lobby; "Mickey Mouse," "Donald Duck," "Yogi Bear," "I. P. Freely," "Bea Cool," "Doctor Pepper," and, in later years, ET was often asked to "call home."

On the last work day before Christmas in 1967, the Chief Operator received a request to make an announcement. The request had not been pre-approved. It did not come from an executive and Ray Wilbur was not in town to approve it, therefore the Chief Operator was not going to allow the announcement to be made.

BUT, I had seen the request and liked the text. I have an imp hiding inside me and it gets frisky around the Holidays; so, I decided to take matters into my own hands. I quietly, unplugged my headset, picked up the request, walked out to Dave Kirby's desk, showed him the request and asked if he thought I would get in trouble for making the announcement. He said "Not likely." That was good enough for me, if the Director of Public Relations didn't find the announcement offensive, I considered I was on firm ground. So, without telling the Chief Operator or seeking further permission, I announced over the PA system, *"May I have your attention please, will the owner of a red sleigh and eight tiny reindeer, parked atop Barney Oliver's office in 1U, please remove your vehicle immediately."*

As soon as the announcement was made, applause and a roar of laughter could be heard throughout the buildings. Within the hour, PBX operators from HP locations across the USA were calling to ask about the "HP Christmas announcement," so they could use it at their site. Thus, an HP

tradition was born, it lasted for many years and very few people knew that Ray Wilbur never approved it.

### **The best thing HP gave me**

A lot happened for me in 1967, most importantly, I spent time getting to know a co-worker named Vern Haines. We both worked in Corporate Administrative Services (Vern managed the 3L TWX/Telex room). We bowled on the same team in the HP bowling league, we attended work parties and picnics at HP's Little Basin, sang duets at the piano bar in Rick's Little Corner, and I fell totally in love. Vern wasn't as impulsive or as fast moving as I was, but he finally got with the program and, in 1969, he asked me to marry him and we got busy planning a July wedding.

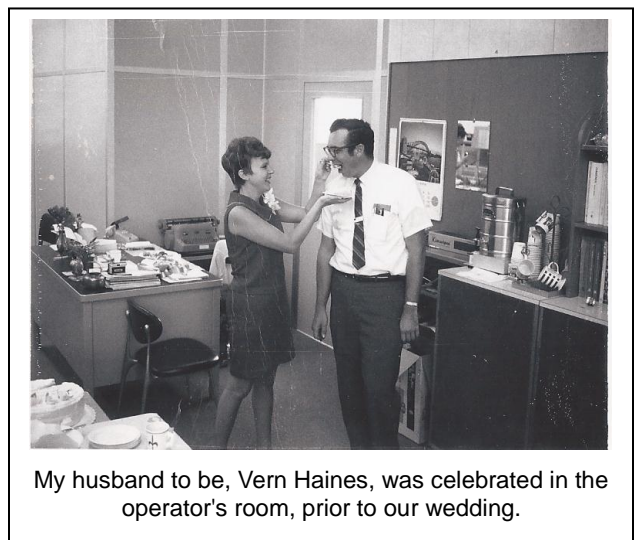
### **“Here's to you, Ed”**

Coincidentally, Ray Wilbur asked Vern to run the picnic at Little Basin the same year we became engaged. This led to my fondest memory of Ed Van Bronkhorst. Ed invited Vern and me to attend an after-work function that he was hosting at the Palo Alto University Club. He needed Vern to give an update on some picnic related expenses. I arrived at the club before Vern did. Prior to this occasion, Vern's contact with Ed had been by telephone and he had no idea what Ed looked like. When Vern arrived, Ed decided to have some fun. He stepped behind the bar and said, “Hey fella, what are you drinking?” Vern ordered Scotch and water. Ed poured a generous shot of Scotch and handed it to Vern. Vern pushed the drink back and, assuming he was speaking to the bartender, insisted that he wanted Scotch and water. Ed took a pair of tongs, dropped in an ice cube, and pushed it back to Vern and said, “There's your water.” Vern began to argue that he wanted “real water—not just an ice cube” in his drink. After a few minutes of verbal sparring, Ed asked, “Do you know who I am?” To which Vern replied, “No and I don't give a damn, I'm not drinking this until you put some water in it.” Ed reached over punched Vern on the shoulder and said, “I'm Ed Van Bronkhorst.” Vern grabbed his drink, took a gulp and said, “Here's to you, Ed.”

### **“The newlyweds, sleep in my room” – David Packard**

In 1969, Vern and I were on the committee that arranged an annual picnic at San Felipe Ranch, a ranch in the San Jose/Gilroy foothills, owned by Mr. Hewlett and Mr. Packard. Committee members reported to the ranch the day before the picnic to help the ranch hands prepare for the event. Tradition was that each committee member brought a sleeping bag and slept at the ranch that night. Each person grabbed sleeping space—on a first-come, first-served basis—and any bed, any floor space in the bunk house or ground by the swimming pool was fair game.

Just about sundown, the foreman announced that he had received a call from Mr. Packard, who was serving as Assistant Secretary of Defense and living in Washington, DC. Mr. Packard informed the foreman that there were newlyweds on the committee and requested that they sleep in his room at the ranch. I never learned how Mr. Packard knew that Vern and I had married (I suspect that Packard's secretary and my buddy, Margaret Paull had a hand in it). Regardless of how he knew, his kindness made the 1969 San Felipe Ranch picnic a remarkable experience.



## **PART II: Moving Around**

### **Goin' to 395 Page Mill Road**

In 1972, I transferred to the Manufacturing Division to work in the switchboard/lobby and mail room in Building 8U at 395 Page Mill Road. The *Redwood Building* was located on this site. *The Redwood Building* was first building that HP owned. HP grew from *The Garage*, to *The Cabinet Shop* (a leased building behind Polly and Jakes antique shop), to *The Redwood Building*. Is it any wonder that the years I spent on this site hold a special place in my memory? Being involved with so many HP groups and functions that occupied this site in the 1970's, watching them grow, shrink, spin-off and disappear, was an emotional roller-coaster. Many of the happiest and saddest times of my HP career occurred while working at this site.

When I moved to the site it was occupied by the company's automotive shop and the metal fabrication shop, both of which were in Quonset huts at the back border of the site. The other buildings were empty and being renovated. In fact, company safety regulations stated that an employee could not work alone in a building, so HP had a guard sit in the lobby of 8U when I was on duty at the switchboard. This continued until renovations were completed and Wayne Mehl's Components group moved down from Building 15.



Betty Haines – PBX/Lobby 8U – circa 1972

After the Components group was settled at the site, Yas Shimoguchi moved his Plastic Molding shop down from the Stanford Plant. I worked with him to arrange to purchase and import Big Bertha from Germany. At the time, Big Bertha was one of the largest injection molding machines on the west coast of the USA and by far the largest machine that HP had acquired. This machine was so big that laborers had to remove the roof of Building 7, so that a gigantic helicopter could lower that machine into place.

The second year I was on this site, a young engineering student, named Mike Johnson, was hired as a summer intern. Nobody arranged desk space for Mike prior to his arrival; so, temporarily, he sat at a table in the hallway behind the switchboard and endured very unique telephone service arrangements. When he received a call, I connected it to the back-up switchboard position, rapped on (or yelled over) the partition behind the switchboard, Mike stood up and reached over the partition, I passed the headset over to him and he answered his call. In spite of this chaotic beginning, Mike chose to work for HP full time after he graduated and he and I developed a bond that has endured to this day.

I felt as though I lost a family member when Lew Cantwell, who had been site manager, relocated to HP Singapore to help set-up and manage the HP facility there.

One of the happiest and most exciting times for the site was the completion of Building 12, the new Metal Fabrication building. Carl Buchass and Art Turnbull were finally able to get that function out of the Quonset huts and into a modern state of the art facility. One of my prize possessions is a Bufano Quail that was cast in this new building.

## **The Bufano Quail**

Jim Ferrell, who was General Manager of the Manufacturing Division when Building 12 was constructed, was one of the most competent and dedicated managers that I was ever privileged to call “boss.” He was ethical, he walked the talk, he lived the HP Way. He loved practical jokes and possessed the rare ability to take a joke with grace and to laugh at himself.

San Francisco’s famous Benny Bufano Society of the Arts granted HP permission to produce metal castings of a Bufano sculpture titled *The Quail*. This was to be done in the new Metal Fabrication facility, Bldg 12. These castings were copyrighted and numbered (mine is #321, the same as Jim’s telephone extension number during the years he was my boss). Jim was so pleased with this honor that, after producing a Quail for each site employee, he arranged for a few extras to be cast. He planned to present one of these castings to Executive V.P. Bill Terry and another to V.P. Hal Edmonson at an upcoming Division Review meeting.

On the day of the presentation, Jim placed the sculptures on a wheeled cart outside meeting room door and draped them with a velvet cloth. While Jim was addressing the meeting, members of his staff (who shall remain nameless) slipped the Quails from under the cloth and replaced them with rubber chickens. Needless to say, when Jim wheeled in the cart, whipped off the cloth and saw the rubber chickens he was shocked. The room erupted in laughter and, when Jim recovered his composure, he laughed loudest of all. Of course, he threatened all of his employees with dire consequences for this act of rebellion; but we knew that they were hollow threats.

## **Special Service Award**

In 1976, my husband, Vern, and I celebrated the 10 year anniversary of our employment at Hewlett Packard. I attended the service awards lunch at the Manufacturing Division, where I was working at the time. However I did not receive my service award. General Manager, Jim Ferrell informed me that there had been a delivery problem and my award was not available. That is one of the very few times Jim lied. He had arranged for me to attend the Corporate Offices service awards lunch the next day and to have my award presented at the same time that my husband, Vern, received his award.

Bill Hewlett and Bob Boniface were hosting this lunch. Awards were being presented by year, in alphabetical order. Ironically, everyone receiving an award, up to this point had been female. This prompted Bill Hewlett to ask Bob Boniface, “Did we hire only women in 1966?” Bob said, “No, Bill.” Then he began a long tale about how Betty Haines came to be hired by the company. As Bob spoke, other attendees began looking at me with mystified expressions. The mystery was cleared up when Bob concluded, “Betty told me that the only way she would become a long term Hewlett Packard employee was if I found her a husband. So I arranged to hire Vern Haines in 1966.” Of course, Bob had done no such thing; but, it cracked up the crowd and was the perfect transition to the dual award presentation that he and Bill did for Vern and me.

## **Corporate Training**

By the late 1970’s, as more and more call processing functions were automated, the amount and variety of interactions between PBX operators and their internal HP customers was greatly reduced. I no longer found my job as rewarding or exciting as it had been in the past. So I began looking around for a career change.

When Carl Mahurin began recruiting me to set up and staff the lobby/switchboard area of Building 18, the new building into which he was moving Corporate Training and HPTV, I was immediately

interested. This building and its function was going to be involved with key customer training on site, as well as a continuous stream of new Field Engineers coming through our Neophyte Seminars. When he offered to help me to phase into the video dubbing operation that was associated with HPTV, I jumped at the chance.

Once more, fate stepped on my career plans; it was déjà vu, all over again. Construction problems delayed the move into Building 18 and again, temporarily, I had no job. However, Carl took a page from Al Dossola's play book, assigned me to sort and deliver mail in Building 9Z, where some of his staff was temporarily housed. 9Z was a rickety old building, on the east side of Bayshore Highway (101), between the Palo Alto Yacht Harbor and the city dump. HP used it as temporary overflow space. It was isolated from other HP sites in Palo Alto and the employees who were stuck there resented the isolation. Consequently, we developed a few sloppy work habits. One of those habits was for everyone to leave the site at lunch time and often, remain away for more than an hour.

One day a group of us came back to the site after a long lunch and found Mr. Packard waiting in the parking lot. This was the first time I saw the famous (or infamous) Packard temper in action. He was not gentlemanly or kind to his employees that day. On this occasion I would not have dared to call him Pappy or make any *Hello Girl* reference, he was all stone cold business. I just wanted to crawl into a hole and become invisible. He herded us into a conference room and informed us that he had received an embarrassing call from an old and highly valued customer asking for help with a video order. This customer had apologized to Mr. Packard for inconveniencing him, but explained that he urgently need help with a video order and had not been able to reach that department for well over an hour.

Mr. Packard wasn't in the mood for any excuses or to listen to anything we had to say. Not only that, but he considered that it was important for him to take his personal time to drive from his office on the hill, down to the Yacht Harbor. He told us, in no uncertain terms, to correct this situation and never let anything like it occur again. He concluded by telling us that if we couldn't or wouldn't do as he asked, we were welcome to "leave and I will get some folks in here who will."

### **Neophyte Barbeques**

Periodically, Corporate Training conducted Neophyte Seminars and invited groups of new HP Field Engineers, from all over the world, to Building 18 to participate in it. One of the high points of this training was one hour classroom course on "wine tasting," taught by Fred Waldron, a serious wine aficionado. Then, after the class day was over, there was a barbeque, followed by wine tasting and a meet and greet with company executives. Mr. Hewlett and/or Mr. Packard sometimes attended these events, but, it was very common practice, for Norm Neely, Bob Boniface, Ed Van Bronkhorst, Jack Petrak, Frank Cavier, John Young, Emory Rogers, Bill Terry, Dave Kirby, Russ Berg, Bill Doolittle, etc. to serve the wine, man the grill, and chat with the neophytes and department employees.

Myrt Ebright and Fred Waldron worked very hard to arrange these events. Myrt was not above asking for divine intervention to ensure good weather. Many times he asked me to "pray that it doesn't rain on the barbeque." At one soggy barbeque (the third in a row that it had been moved inside because of rain), Chuck Ernst told attendees that he had overheard Myrt asking me pray that it wouldn't rain. John Young, who was standing near Chuck, looked directly at me and said: "Then, that's the problem and here's an easy an easy solution. Betty, don't pray." From that time on, when the neophytes came to town the plea around Building 18 became: "Betty, don't pray."

## HPTV

We had two TV studios in Building 18; one produced black and white videos—remember, this was still the 1970's—and the other produced color videos. Walt Robson, a large outgoing man with reputed ties to Hollywood and the film industry, managed HPTV and was able to entice some excellent talent into the studios. Early HP training videos include such stars as: Bill Onken (of “Get that Monkey off My Back” fame) Dave Golds (who later worked with Jim Henson on “The Muppets”) and Robin Williams (before he became “Mork”).



Origin point of a video broadcast, Bldg 18

Shortly after moving to Building 18, a group of studio employees decided to get creative with the HP logo that was displayed at the beginning of customer training videos. They redesigned the logo and made a few test tapes. These tapes were shown around the company and the group was very vocal about their “improved image.” Suddenly, this creative bunch got very quiet, the test tapes disappeared from sight and were replaced with ones that bore the original HP logo. The rumor was that Pappy had seen the tapes, he was angry and had issued a directive, “There are two things you don’t fool around with, Mother Nature and the HP Logo.”



Packard: "Don't mess with the HP Logo!"

One summer Peter Young, the teen-aged son of CEO John Young, volunteered to build sets for HPTV. Somehow he managed to get a screw driver imbedded deeply into his hand, paramedics were called and they transported him to the emergency room over at Stanford. I contacted John Young's office, asked his secretary, Nancy Thoman, to let him know of Peter's accident and that he was being taken to Stanford Hospital. My manager was not pleased to hear that I had done this. He felt that I used poor judgment and should not have “bothered” John. He changed his tune later that afternoon. On the way home from the emergency room, John and his wife brought Peter by Building 18 to see me. They wanted me to see that he was fine and to thank me for contacting John so quickly. They graciously credited me with speeding up the *permission to treat* process and making it possible for them to be with Peter while he was getting his hand stitched up.

Carl Mahurin's health declined to the point where he was only able to work part time, unfortunately this rendered him unable to keep his promise to help me move into a video dubbing job.

### **Crawling Around the Floor and Other Duties**

I applied for and got a job as Telephone Service Order Coordinator. Harold Peterson supervised that area and trained me in the art of processing telephone service orders. He was a stickler for detail. Things were done to his specifications or he rejected them. Under his tutorage, I learned to

read floor plans, mark them for use by telephone company installers and place stickers on the floor in the *exact location* the equipment was to be installed. This was an unglamorous, sometimes unpleasant, part of the job; but, Harold deemed it necessary. Placing the sticker in the general area of installation was unacceptable in Harold's eyes. Therefore, if reaching the *exact location* required squeezing into narrow telephone closets, handling dusty cables, and crawling under desks, that is what he expected me to do.

About ninety percent of the telephone service orders required the updating of Key System Worksheets. For this part of my training Harold sent me to a vendor-sponsored workshop, where I discovered that I had a real talent for this. I loved recording multiple changes on the most complex worksheets.

While I was working as a telephone service coordinator, Hewlett Packard converted its Palo Alto sites to a new telephone system—a CO Centrex System. A major portion of the call processing equipment for this type of system was located in the phone company's Central Office and it provided PBX-like telephone service at greatly reduced equipment cost. In addition to reducing equipment costs, the Centrex system allowed outside calls to be dialed directly to extension telephones. Converting to the Centrex system slightly altered the way telephone service orders were processed and some additional training was required. However, rumors of massive changes in this area proved false; my job was not greatly impacted.

The HP switchboard operators were not so lucky; some of the operator jobs went away and new jobs had to be found for them. Because some Palo Alto locations had a switchboard/lobby set up, in which the operator also served as receptionist, operators in these buildings continued to work as receptionists and were assigned other clerical duties to make up for the loss of switchboard activity. For the ones whose jobs disappeared, their unsung hero was Bill Taylor. It was his duty to help displaced operators find other jobs within HP. He put his heart and soul into this project. I recall one occasion when he actually signed out a company car and drove an operator to an interview at a South Bay site of HP. It was just another example of the extreme concern that some HP managers would show for their employees.



Corporate telephone system to retire  
(PBX/Lobby 1U, circa 1977)

### Implementing HP's Telnet System

In 1981, Corporate Telecom implemented one of the first private nationwide, voice telecommunication networks that Hewlett Packard owned. It was called TELNET. I was surprised and delighted when I was asked to join Bill Taylor, Gene Doucette, Gary Burgess and Mickey McNamara on this project. My role was to help with the publicity and to conduct TELNET training sessions for employees in the Bay Area.

For the duration of the project, my day-to-day activities were assigned and evaluated by Bill Taylor and Gary Burgess. They encouraged me to work independently and develop my own training materials and schedules. I found their management style refreshing. Basically, they said, "Ask for help when you need it, otherwise, we trust your judgment on how to get the job done." Up to this



point, I was accustomed to being bound to a switchboard by a 4 foot cord or processing telephone service orders under the watchful eye of Harold Peterson--who felt that HP made a mistake when it removed employee time clocks.

I attended as many TELNET planning meetings as I could; learned to explain the system upside down and backward. I created a nifty slide show and mastered the art of clicking the Kodak slide projector controls so that the slide matched what I was saying. I even developed a knack for answering the same set of questions over-and-over without missing a beat or appearing bored.

The last group scheduled to receive TELNET training was upper managers; by this time I had conducted numerous training sessions and was comfortable with my routine. Maybe, I was too comfortable; perhaps I was just a bit cocky. As the VP's, their Executive Assistants, and about three dozen department heads walked into the Building 20 auditorium and took their seats, I experienced a few butterflies; but, I had no premonition, that I was about to be struck mute. I was introduced, stepped confidently up to the microphone, looked out over the audience.

Suddenly it hit me, these were the people who made this company successful and held its future in their hands. I opened my mouth and nothing – absolutely nothing - came out. I guess panic registered on my face; Bob Boniface raised his hand and said, “I’m over here, Betty, just talk to me.” That kindness freed my vocal cords, saved the day and resulted in one of the most effective and relaxed training sessions that I ever conducted. The prissiest Executive Assistant to attend that session (and who shall remain unnamed) complimented me on the clarity of my presentation as she left the auditorium.

### **Brief detour into managing**

From the beginning of my career, I had been encouraged to move into management. Many of my managers and peers considered managing to be a natural career path for me. Very few understood my reluctance to pursue this path; but I felt more comfortable as an independent contributor. However, I had greatly enjoyed the independence that I experienced while working on the TELNET project and I found going back to work for Harold Peterson restrictive. I missed planning my own schedule, making my own decisions and being judged on results. Management began to look a little more attractive to me and I decided that it was time to try my hand at it.

I accepted the position of Administrative Services Manager at Computer Supplies Operation in Sunnyvale. Surprisingly, there was much that I enjoyed about managing. I enjoyed creating and conducting surveys that identified the actual needs of internal and external customers. I thrived on the challenge of adapting or implementing procedures to meet the identified needs. I found it rewarding to serve as advisor, counselor and occasional mother hen to my employees. I did not like wage reviews, ranking sessions, and putting an employee (who refused to do the job she for which she was hired) on probation. I quickly learned that managing people was a lot different than managing processes and procedures and that it was a game I didn't want to play.

My short detour into management taught me a few valuable lessons: 1) I was not cut out to justify the value of anyone's performance, other than my own, 2) I found employee ranking to be arbitrary and usually reflective of the orating and negotiating skills of the managers, not the skills of the employees who are being ranked, 3) My real passion and talent lay in the rapidly changing field of telecommunications technology. More than anything, I wanted to help determine how Hewlett Packard would use this technology to the company's best advantage. Bottom line, I knew I would be much happier and more productive managing processes, procedures, and customer requests than managing people.

## **PART III: Starting Over**

### **Backing Up**

During the search for my next logical career move, I discovered no open jobs that would advance my career or even move it sideways. However, through my networking, I learned that HP had purchased a Northern Telecom SL100 PBX System (The SL100 is a Central Office switch - a BIG Central Office switch). The main node of this system was to be installed at HP's new Corporate Headquarters (Building 20) with an auxiliary node in HP Labs Deer Creek facility and would serve all Palo Alto campuses. I realized that this was a major undertaking and that this big, new, sleek, state of the art baby was going to bring major changes to voice and data telecommunications at Hewlett Packard and I wanted to be involved in these changes.

I met with Pete Kimball, who was overseeing the installation/implementation of this PBX, to talk about this project. He explained that he had no current openings that I could fill. His immediate need was for a good, strong PBX operator to back up Bea Panetta so that she could devote more of her time to bringing the *operators' room* into the 21st century and converting it into a Telephone Operator Control Center. The open job was a non-exempt Level 94 position and would be a huge step backward for me. Pete didn't suggest that the job might interest me or that he had any interest in having me as part of his team. I'm sure that I shocked him a few days later when I contacted him and asked (not asked, I begged) to be considered for the position.

Aside from the job being a giant step backward for me, my husband worked for Pete and this had the potential to limit my career. At the time, there were a few husbands and wives working in the same department and none reporting directly to the same manager. But, Pete had a real need for someone with my expertise, there were no other candidates on the horizon and I was very determined to have a shot at redirecting my career; so, Pete agreed to run the idea of me returning to the switchboard by his bosses and see what happened. Happily, we discovered that the HP Way was not dead (in spite of rumors to that effect); with a little help from Hal Edmonson and Floyd Peterson the potential snags were cleared and I had the job.

Pete assured me that if supported the Telephone Operator Control Center during the cut over and remained in that slot until the operators were comfortable working with the new telephone system, he would do everything in his power to get my career back on an upward track as soon as practical.

### **A "Hello Girl," again**

Reverting to a switchboard operator's job and working for Bea Panetta again was not without some frustrations. In spite of Pete's assurances that HP gave raises and promotions on a merit basis, some of Bea's staff refused to believe that my return to the switchboard didn't take away their *seniority* and they resented it. My PC skills were more advanced than those of the average operator and I resented not having access to larger variety of programs to help me do my job.

Occasionally, I forgot that Bea was a stickler for knowing exactly what each operator was doing and my independent attitude annoyed her. I involved her in my problem solving only when absolutely necessary. My motto was, "I would rather beg pardon for mistakes, than to ask for permission before acting." When I encouraged my peers to do the same thing, Bea cautioned me that I was becoming too flippant and my behavior bordered on insubordination. So I backed off enough that we managed to avoid major problems.

Overall my return to the switchboard was a success. I took pride in my contribution to bringing the new Telephone Operator Control Center on line. In spite of our differences, Bea and I held real

affection and respect each other. This helped us work out our differences and become an effective team. Bea ensured that I was among the first to receive Attendant Console Operation training and she allowed me time away from call answering duties to develop computer based processes and procedures that made the conversion to the new PBX system easier everyone in the department. I did everything in my power to support her as she helped the operators adjust to their new work environment.

### **Moving up, again**

Even before the installation of the new PBX system was complete, Pete began preparing me for the next chapter in my career, he:

- Arranged for me to attend a series of Train the Trainer, Lead Instructor, and Service Order Entry training sessions that the vendor conducted locally,
- Ensured that I had hands-on training on the hardware and software associated with managing SL-100 system,
- Sponsored and supported my involvement in TeleCommunications Association (a national association of telecommunications professionals) at the Chapter, Regional, and National levels.

Ten months after my return to Palo Alto, Pete promoted me into a Technology Specialist position. In this position, 90% of my time was allocated to Site Telephone Services and my duties included:

- Conducting end user training for employees at all Palo Alto entities, including Corporate, HP Labs and International Headquarters,
- Performing statistical analysis of PBX console traffic and generating system management reports,
- Coaching the operators in process improvement procedures.

### **Working for Mr. Mike**

The other 10% of my time was allocated to Site Maintenance and I reported directly to Mike Johnson. Mike assigned me to work on emergency response procedures and to support safety/security related functions. Among the projects he assigned me were:

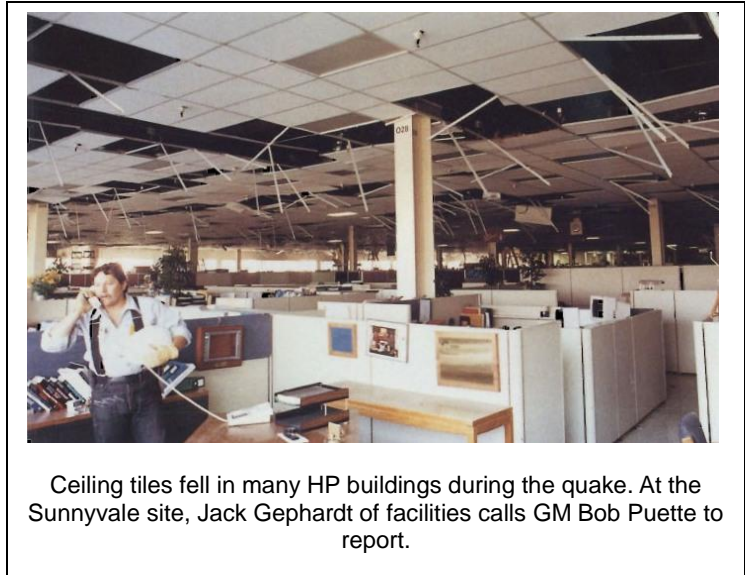
- Establishing and equipping a Mobile Incident Command Center,
- Coaching ERT members in the performance of Incident Command Center duties,
- Conducting telephone and radio training for members of the Site Emergency Response Team and the Site Security Officers,
- Overseeing the installation of Emergency Response telephone service in the Executive Suite – including the Executive Dining Room. This allowed me full access to that area, including the key to the liquor locker. Talk about a status symbol – LOL!!

An exciting, special project that Mike assigned to me was supporting a multi-national press conference at which Hewlett Packard and Microsoft announced their Joint Strategy Agreement (to

simplify Enterprise computing). Prior to this event, I had never seen so much media equipment or so many reporters congregated in one place. The Building 20 parking lot, lobby and auditorium were full to capacity and we were using space in the atrium on Level A for the overflow. Chatting with Lew Platt and Bill Gates before the press conference, seeing all the smoke and mirrors during the conference, and watching these two men work their way through the media circus in the lobby—all without breaking a sweat—was a fascinating experience.

### Earthquake 1989—Unsung Heroes

Vern and I were living on Columbia Ave in Palo Alto when the Loma Prieta earthquake struck in October of 1989. Vern had not worked that day, so he was already at home and I was walking home when the quake started. I actually sat down in the middle of the intersection of California Ave. and Hanover St. because I was afraid that the jolt and shaking were going to knock me down if I tried to remain standing. After a few seconds, I got up and continued walking home. It was my intent to make sure Vern was OK and return to HP to support the Emergency Response Team efforts. Before I got to our home, I met Vern walking toward me and we walked back to HP together.

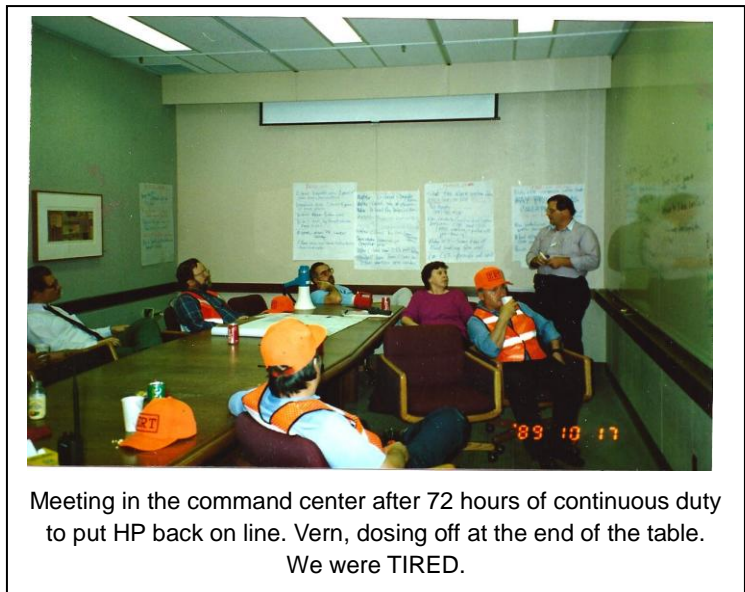


Except for pointing out some completely unsung heroes, I will not attempt to describe the next 72 hours. The behavior of company executives and employees in the first few post quake hours ranged from hero to, “OH, NO!” The “OH, NO!” tag was used by ERT members to relieve pressure and express surprise at the occasional hysterical and absurd behaviors seen in the hours immediately following the quake. While the actions of Mike Johnson were not unsung, he was indeed a hero on this occasion. He seemed to be everywhere doing everything that needed doing without calling attention to himself or getting in anyone’s way. The manner in which he rose to this occasion was nothing short of heroic.

Unsung hero number 1 was my darling Vern. It was well known around HP that Vern and I worked well as a team, that he loved HP as much as I did, and that he did many “g-jobs” for Mike Johnson. Even though we lost a 27 year old nephew and two family homes in Santa Cruz County during the quake, Vern remained with the ERT crew and backed up Mike’s every order.



Unsung hero number 2 was Ray Schwarz, Corporate Computing Center Manager. Following the quake, the Building 20 computer room on Level C had some damage; however, it didn't appear to be non-functional. There was a problem getting into the area to access the damage. The glass wall at the front of the computer center shattered and a huge jagged fragment of glass was hanging, point down. This made it unsafe for anyone to enter the area. For the first few hours following the quake, every executive, engineer, and manager who was allowed to survey the situation had a different idea on how to remove that piece of glass so that Mike and Ray could enter the area and begin restoration.



Meeting in the command center after 72 hours of continuous duty to put HP back on line. Vern, dosing off at the end of the table. We were TIRED.

Ray continually inspected the area and answered the questions of each executive. He didn't become emotional, complain, argue, or offer a lot of advice. He just continued to survey the situation whenever he was not busy performing other duties. About five hours post quake, I was at the scene with a group of executives/engineers when I noticed Ray, standing at the back of the crowd, near a trash can that the maintenance crew had placed in the hall way. As the group walked away, there was a loud crash; I turned around and saw Ray standing there, but the trash can was gone. Thought I detected the slightest grin on Ray's face as he said; "that takes care of that." On the record, if asked whether Ray threw a trash can at that piece of glass, I would have to say, "The lighting was bad, my vision was not that good, and there may never have been a trash can near Ray." Nonetheless, after the glass shard fell down, Ray's crew was allowed in the area and got the computer room up and running in short order.



Bldg 20 hallway

At 10:30 pm, the evening of the quake, Mike Johnson was conducting a briefing in the Level D conference room—nearest the back lobby. This lobby was the only entrance to the building that was open to anyone other than ERT members. Shift change in the Computer Center was 11pm. Ray attended the briefing, but he positioned his chair so that he could see the hallway directly behind the lobby. Each time one of his employees entered the building to report for duty, he stood and personally thanked them for coming to work. That my friends, is the HP Way!

Unsung hero number three was Susan (Maul) York. Shortly after the quake, Mike Johnson and I developed a script to be used by security guards and ERT members covering the phones that night. In the wee hours of the morning, anticipating a flurry of telephone calls when HP locations



Bldg 18 stairs (between floors 1 & 2). During the initial damage inspection after the Loma Prieta earthquake.

on the East Coast began to open, we updated the script and arranged for some of the switchboard operators to come in early. Sadly, one of the expected operators failed to show up and another one walked into the Level D lobby, took one look at the disarray, and refused to enter the building. That left me, Vern, and a couple of ERT members to field a massive number of calls.

Susan came in to work very early the morning after the quake to see if there was anything she could do to help. At 5 am, just as the switchboard lit up like a Christmas tree, Susan was standing next to me, offering her help. I gave her a five minute crash course on how to work a PBX console, reviewed the script with her, gave her a headset, and turned her loose. By the time operators who were scheduled to open the switchboard at 7 am arrived, Susan, Vern, and I were functioning as a team of *Hello Girls* that would have made Pappy's heart swell with pride.

### An Uplifting Experience

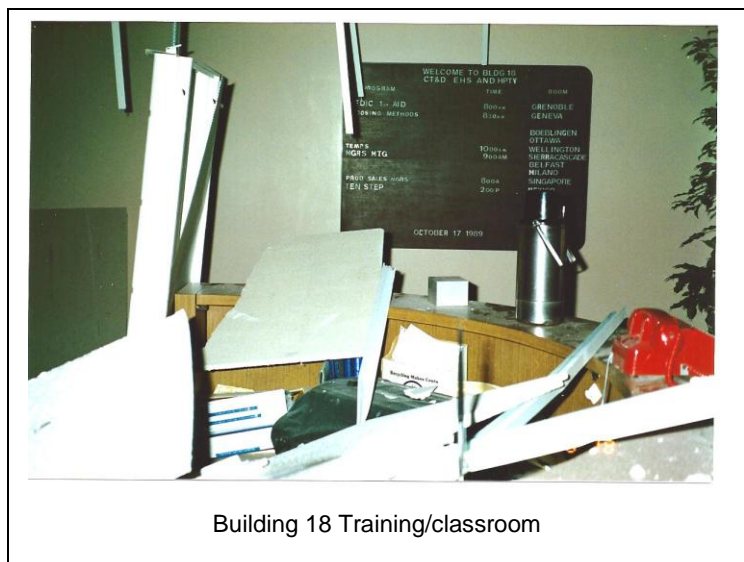
A day or so after the quake, the decision was made that HP not occupy the leased Training Building 18 for the "foreseeable future." This raised the question of what to do about the HP equipment in the building. Among the Hewlett Packard equipment in the building was some expensive voice and data communication hardware. Once building inspectors deemed that it was safe for clean up and scavenge crews to enter the ground floor and basement the building, it was almost a no brainer that HP would begin removing equipment from those areas. Mike Johnson brought a group of employees, including me, Vern and John Adair, to the building to help with this effort.

The stairs between the ground floor and the top floor had been declared unsafe. While a group of us were taking a break from removing equipment in the basement and on the first, we began discussing possible ways to get equipment off of the top floor. A Palo Alto Fireman inquired if the top floor was safe enough for folks to walk around on and was told yes; it was only the stairs that unsafe and therefore unusable. He offered to take a few people up in the fire department's cherry picker, help them into the top floor through a window, wait while they loaded equipment into buckets or boxes and then, lower the equipment to ground level.

I told Mike that I would go up in the cherry picker. Vern gave me a look that said, "Have you totally lost your mind?" I had seen that look from him many times before so I ignored it. I was a bit surprised that he didn't step up and volunteer to go with me. However, as soon as John Adair said,



Bldg 18 Lobby



Building 18 Training/classroom

“I’ll go with her,” Vern said, “I’ll go, too.”

Without a doubt that was one of the most nerve-racking experiences I have ever endured. Of course, the utilities in the building were off. There was an eerie silence on the top floor, no air was circulating and there was no machine noise. Except for the inspectors, we were the first ones to enter the floor. No cleanup or removal of debris, broken glass, etc. had been done. The spilled contents of refrigerators, coffee urns, and cabinets were beginning to smell pretty ripe. To me the sound of water dripping down the stairwell, voices echoing up from the basement and ground floor, and floor boards creaking with each step created a distinctly ghostly effect that gave the entire experience a surreal feel.

I managed to stay in the building and push, pull, kick and punch debris away until the majority of the salvageable equipment was retrieved. However, I can tell you, without a doubt, that I will never again volunteer for this type of mission.

### **Wrapping It All Up**

My rewarding Hewlett Packard experience occurred late in my career and near the end of what I remember as HP’s golden days. I compare experience with having a great dessert at the end of a remarkable feast.

In the early 1990’s, I needed something to motivate me, restore my faith in HP Way, and help me adapt to a drastically changing corporate world, a world in which:

- Voice and data communications were rapidly being absorbed into computer technology,
- Hewlett Packard was phasing out of the instrument/measurement business.
- Bill, Pappy, and John Young were no longer involved in the active day-to-day management of the company
- There was an influx of younger managers who valued technology more than they valued people,
- The HP Way was being diluted by managers with large egos who were displaying less and less appreciation for loyalty, dedication or pride in a job well done.

At this point I found something that gave me hope for the future of the telephone operations at HP - the North American Field Operations Call Management Steering Committee. Wise managers at NAFO created a steering committee and chartered it to “develop a multifaceted program that will provide long-term process improvements and give HP customers greater satisfaction, increase repeat business with HP and promote greater job satisfaction for HP call managers.” NAFO identified call managers as: “every HP employee is a call manager and is responsible for providing customer service to everyone who calls their telephone number and for cooperating with and assisting colleagues who are in the process of managing phone calls.”

Wonder of wonders, I was asked to serve as a charter member of the committee. This paved the way for me to become the Call Management Specialist for the “non-field” sites of HP. It allowed me to work with folks like Alan Blackwood, Paul Horgan, Judy Hathaway, Stan Selby, Hank Taylor, Steve Lum, Dick Warmington, Bojana Fazarinc, and Pete Kimball, to help ensure that Corporate and other “non-field” entities of HP supported NAFO’s efforts.

I spent my last few years at HP wrapping up and tying bow around my career. It was my privilege to create “non-field” version of the on-line North American Customer Assistance Guide and to implement Call Management Training for “non-field” sites.

### **Before I hang up**

I have enjoyed an amazing journey in which I answered HP’s telephone calls, crawled under HP’s desks (to case telephone service orders) and supported one of HP’s most impressive committees. For all these experiences I say, ***“Thank you!”***

***“Thank you for calling Hewlett Packard,” and, thank you Hewlett Packard for letting me manage your calls.***

### **Epilogue**

If you are wondering what qualifies me to write a history of Hewlett Packard, well, so am I. I’m certainly not a historian, nor am I the keeper of any official HP archives. I’m humbled to be asked to share my memories along with folks like John Minck, Art Fong, Chuck House, Hank Taylor, and others who added so much to the success of Hewlett Packard. I never invented, created, or inspired any hardware, theory or software that made a dime for the company. I’m just a gal who answered phones, became fascinated by telecommunications technology, discovered that I had a talent for using this technology to support internal and external customers.

I believed wholeheartedly that if I did the right thing for Hewlett Packard, Hewlett Packard would do the right thing for me. I was lucky to have been employed by the company when giants walked in Silicon Valley, when Hewlett Packard was home of a wonderful collection of those giants and when those giants helped create and maintain the HP Way. I believe the HP Way was best described by Carl Cottrell in a 2002 article, *“The HP Way was a way of life. We ate, slept and breathed HP for much of our careers.”*

In part, I wrote these memories because I loved being one of those who helped make the HP Way work. I wrote it because of my desire to pay tribute to Bill and Pappy and those executives who made all us *Hello Girls*, production line workers, maintenance workers, and ordinary employees feel valued and went the extra mile to help us develop to our full potential.

As for this document, I make no claim that it is a complete, or even a completely accurate, history of my time at Hewlett Packard. Each of us sees reality through slightly different lenses, plus, age dims and distorts the memory. Therefore the best I can hope for is to give the readers an “as I remember it” document. I ask the understanding of those that I could and should have included but didn’t. The omission is in no way meant to lessen the impact you had on my life or the contribution you made to HP.

I thank John Minck and Marc Mislange for motivating me, for allowing me to share my memories, and for their editorial efforts which vastly improved this final memoir.

Mesquite, NV  
June, 2012



## HP Memories

This memory of Betty Haines' career at *hp* results from the work of the [www.hpmemory.org](http://www.hpmemory.org) website of Marc Mislange, who with John Minck (and Betty) edited and published his Memoir.

One of the main objectives in starting this website five years ago was (and still is today) to get in touch with people who have worked at *hp* from the birth of the company up to today. We are interested in hearing your memories no matter what division or country you worked in, or whether you were in engineering, marketing, finance, administration, or worked in a factory. This is because all of you have contributed to the story of this unique and successful enterprise.

Your memories are treasure for this website. While product and technology are our main concern, other writings related to the company life are highly welcome, as far as they stay inside the *hp* Way guidelines. **Anybody Else?** Please get in touch using the Contact US form at "[www.hpmemory.org](http://www.hpmemory.org)."