

From *The Pole Line*, Winter 2016:

## **Honey, I Exploded The Phone!**

This past June, The Telephone Museum in Ellsworth, Maine held the grand opening of its largest event to date. The exhibit, titled *The First Hackers: Phone Phreaks vs. Ma Bell*, is located in the new Visitors Center. Inspired in part by the Phil Lapsley book *Exploding the Phone*, *The First Hackers* shows how the first phone hackers learned the secret inner-workings of the mysterious telephone network and how to manipulate control of it to their own ends.

A number of interactive stations in the exhibit are equipped so visitors can try their hand at "dialing" calls by "blowing" 2600Hz and/or "blue boxing" calls. Also part of the phreaking experience are stations for the loop around in the #5 Crossbar switch where callers can connect with another visitor or lurk and see who else calls in including from C\*NET!

In addition to numerous items from the museum's own collection a number of items were donated and/or are on loan from personal collections to make this exhibit possible, including blue boxes, red boxes, flutes, whistles, magazines — even evidence photos from the era.

We were honored to have many of "the first hackers" in attendance for the grand opening, and it was a pleasure to have them and to hear their stories; not only ones that didn't make it into the book, but also how the experience shaped their lives in later years

The looks on the faces of all of the guests and visitors made all the time, effort and funds into producing the exhibit worthwhile. Due to positive feedback we've decided to extend the exhibit through next season – but we need your help.

This exhibit strikes at the core of our Mission, but the museum will need the support of all volunteers and donors to execute and fund the ambitious plan to extend this exhibit and simultaneously try and save the Barn (see related article). Please give generously. If you haven't received an appeal, or to learn more about how you can help support continuing the exhibit, the museum and save the Barn, contact any Director or email us at [switchboard@nemot.org](mailto:switchboard@nemot.org).