

Telesaver™

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PROFILE: LYN MERRYMAN, SUPERVISOR OF CREDIT AND COLLECTIONS

The majority of Telesaver's 40,000 customers pay their bills, on time, and our business relationship with them is pleasant and, for the most part, uneventful. It's those who have trouble paying their bills on time that keep Lyn Merryman and her staff of eight full-time and three part-time collectors busy.

It is obvious when talking to Lyn that she not only enjoys her work, but takes great pride in her staff and the results of the department's efforts. "We've put together a dynamite team," she says. "We're a cohesive, unified group, and we've never experienced contention or personality differences. I believe that explains our success rate in collecting on delinquent accounts."

She explains how she has arranged her department so that each staff person is assigned a specific number of accounts to collect, in addition to performing a specific function. Even though an individual is assigned to bad checks, skip tracing, priority accounts, or legal accounts, for example, he or she is interdependent on the others to resolve an account. "It's that team effort," Lyn believes, "that makes the system work so well."

"We do our own investigative work," she says, "and it's fun. Only after we have exhausted our own means of investigation do we turn an account over to an attorney." She has established a network of 30 consumer attorneys, nationwide, who work on individual cases in their respective



Lyn Merryman, Supervisor,
Credit and Collections

cities. The procedure works well, she reports, because she and her staff can follow the status of a particular account with one person who knows the details first-hand.

Lyn brought years of business experience to her position at Telesaver. She most recently worked at a Baltimore-based wholesale and retail shoe and clothing operation and was involved in all facets of the business. "I did everything," she says, "including buying from foreign manufacturers, selling to other concerns, and assisting in the control and promotion of a retail chain."

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(PROFILE continued)

When she began her career at Telesaver a year ago January, she concentrated solely on collections. Now, credit approval is a function of her department, and Lyn says that soon they will institute a 'credit line' as a guideline for selected customers.

She sees her responsibilities and those of her department increasing. "As our customer base grows, we will constantly look for new and better ways to improve and refine our methods for credit and collections," she says.

Lyn spends a great many hours at the office ("because there's so much to do and because I love it!") and cherishes the time she has to spend with her husband, Tommy, and two children, Michael, 8, and Dana, 6.

TELESAVER'S STUDENT/EMPLOYEE RECEIVES HIGHEST HONOR

Telesaver was doubly proud at the recent Cooperative Education (COP) awards luncheon. We were one of seventy area employers recognized for our involvement in this unique program, in which the school system utilizes community businesses as training sites for career exploration and occupational skill development. The biggest thrill, however, was in seeing our student/employee, Carrie Ellis, singled out as "Outstanding Senior Student in Cooperative Education." Carrie assists in the New Accounts Department, under the direction of Barbara Peterson, and Barbara represented Telesaver at the luncheon along with Personnel Specialist Sharon Sagal.

WELCOME... JOHN POTTER and JIM GEISLER, switch technicians in Rochester and San Francisco, respectively; RUSSELL NAGEL, collections, and J.R. PEREZ, manager of eastern distributor sales for the Telcro switch.

IT REALLY HAPPENED...

Recently, one of our customers in Baltimore received his authorization code, only to find that the first three numbers of the code matched the license plate on his car...and the second three numbers matched his wife's! What do you think the chances are of that ever happening again?

"CAVEAT EMPTOR!" OR LET THE BUYER BEWARE

AT&T's latest proposal to the FCC, dubbed "Reach Out America," offers two calling options to the consumer. The first would allow customers to place an hour's worth of calls after 11 p.m. and on weekends for a flat monthly fee of \$10. The second would require a monthly fee of \$11.50 and would provide the same hour's allotment of calls during night and weekend hours, plus an additional 15 percent discount for calls dialed during evening hours from 5-11 p.m.

As Telesaver's Sales and Marketing Director Marshall Sapperstein commented, "What we seem to have here is another case of a competitor selling the 'sizzle rather than the steak'." His marketing analysts have attempted to add up the savings from these two plans, and have discovered that, for most users, there are NO savings to add up!

At \$10 for one hour, the average cost per minute is 17c, compared to AT&T's average night/weekend rate of 15c per minute. The customer actually pays more to use this service! And that dollar amount increases even more if the customer does not make at least \$10 in calls, since no refunds are given. This compares with Telesaver's average cost of \$6.75 per hour.

To begin to benefit with AT&T's proposal, a customer would have to call destinations of 293 miles away or further. In fact, our analysts have observed that calls to destinations of shorter distances are always less expensive with AT&T's regular, direct-dial service than with their new plan! Without going into great detail, option number two also offers little in the way of savings, since an additional \$1.50 is charged for the "luxury" of receiving a 15% discount on evening calls.

Consumers must educate themselves before jumping into what only appears on the surface to be a "good deal." And as representatives of Telesaver, we must help people sort out and understand the issues. When they do, they will know that our bottom line is their bottom line - savings!

OUR BEST WISHES to ART GROSSMAN (customer service) and his new bride Jodi; the new MRS. JANINE GROSS (customer service); and to Heather Cavey and her proud parents, Kathryn and CURT CAVEY (field technician).

TELESAVER JOINS IN PREAKNESS FESTIVAL WEEK

This year, Telesaver will help Baltimore celebrate Preakness Festival Week, the week-long festivities commemorating the middle jewel of racing's triple crown. Beginning May 12, and continuing non-stop through May 19, there will be marching bands, high-stepping drill teams, fifties boppers, soaring balloons, races (on land and on water) and contests galore.

Telesaver is joining WCBM, a local all-news radio station, in sponsorship of the "Fastest Newstalker" contest, which will take place on May 16, 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., at the Harborplace Amphitheater. Contestants will test their skill at reporting three minutes of selected news copy in 60 seconds or less. Telesaver t-shirts will be given to everyone willing to demonstrate their talent for this activity, and additional prizes will be awarded to each individual who successfully completes the "news" within the specified time.

Since Maryland is our "home," we are especially pleased to be participating in The Preakness Festival and special salute to Maryland's 350th birthday. The event has already brought recognition to the company, and the exposure we receive on May 16th can only add to the public's awareness of Telesaver.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

*** A new local access number, 472-7100, has been assigned for Telesaver members in the Scarsdale, NY, area.

*** Customers can now make Telesaver calls when they travel to Spokane, Washington and Aspen, Colorado. The local access numbers are: Spokane - 456-5120; Aspen - 920-3900.

*** Dr. Robert Self, author of Long Distance for Less, and an expert on how to choose and get the most out of long-distance services, will begin a new series of seminars beginning May 1. In 1983, Self gave half-day seminars to over 5,000 people, including long distance company sales people; the new seminars will be expanded to a full day. To find out when he will be in your area, call 1-800-LIBRARY.

NEW GROUP OF SWITCH TECHNICIANS TRAINED AT OWINGS MILLS FACILITY

Five new area office switch technicians assembled at our Owings Mills facility from April 15-19 for a series of classes on the TELCRO switch. John Potter (Rochester), Jim Geisler (San Francisco), Laura Tiesi (Manhattan), Doug Cheyne (White Plains/Hackensack), and Jeff Biondo (Hazleton/Wilkes-Barre) followed a rigorous schedule of training sessions on switch hardware and software, maintenance, transmission, line testing, and network operations procedures. Those responsible for the training were Dan Dumler, technical services manager, Allan Zendle, configuration control director, and Bill Link, director of network operations. By the end of the week, the group was weary but wiser, armed with the knowledge and expertise necessary for the day-to-day maintenance of Telesaver's switches. Dan Dumler explained that this was the "first step in our plan to improve overall network quality. Having experienced personnel on-site," he says, "will allow us to respond more quickly to problems encountered with the operation of the network."



Pictured above is the self-proclaimed "Class of 1984" with their instructors: (standing l. to r.) Bill Link, Dan Dumler, Doug Cheyne, Jeff Biondo, and Allan Zendle, (seated) Jim Geisler, Laura Tiesi, and John Potter.

"You get the best of others when you give the best of yourself."
- Harvey Firestone

UPCOMING CONFERENCES AND TRADE SHOWS

Telesaver will exhibit the new Telcro III digital switch at the USTSA Southeast Showcase scheduled for May 15-17 in Atlanta, Georgia. Joel Maloff, director of systems marketing and sales, Sherry Berman, manager, systems analyst and support, and Dr. Robert Glaser, director of research and development, will represent the company at the show. USTSA is primarily oriented towards Bell and the independent telephone companies, as well as interconnect companies and the local business community. Approximately 300 companies will be exhibiting to an expected turnout of 10,000 attendees.

Dick Goldman will speak on "Advanced Technologies for Value-Added Resale" at a May 22nd conference sponsored by Telestrategies. On June 14th, he will present "Strategies for Survival and Growth" at a conference sponsored by F.C.C. Week and Executive Enterprises, Inc. This timely seminar will address the new market forces that are completely changing products, prices, costs, markets, and marketing practices, and how companies must position themselves with new business strategies to survive the potential industry "shake-out".

TELESAVER ANNOUNCES FORGET-ME-NOT SERVICE

What? You forgot to send a card for your mother-in-law's birthday? Worse yet, you neglected to make special plans for your anniversary? Telesaver has developed a new service for our customers that should put an end to embarrassing moments such as these.

Appropriately named "Forget-Me-Not," this personalized service will act as a gentle reminder of important dates which the customer has specified on a registration form provided by Telesaver. Each month, our computer will automatically print out Aunt Bea's birthday, an employee's anniversary with the company, an upcoming graduation - up to 12 events per customer. A reminder of major holidays will also be listed, if they fall within the period of the reminder notice.

"Forget-Me-Not" is being offered as an exclusive, free service to members of the Telesaver Network if they respond within 30 days after receiving the announcement and registration form. Reminders will be included with their monthly statement.

*Forget-Me-Not*TM

TelesaverTM

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