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Companies hope jail will stop 'Blue Boxers'

Phone phreaks have fun cheating on distance calls

By **TIM REITERMAN**
SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Not many people go to prison for pursuing a hobby, but a passion for playing with exotic telephone equipment has finally put Captain Crunch in the slammer.
 "It's a hobby, like CB Radio — it's diddling around," the electronics whiz kid says. "Why do I do what I do? To hear a call go through, to hear all that telephone company equipment work for you, that's what you're after. Chirps, bells and tinkles."

end result is the same. A bank is robbed. These people are stealing."
 The essence of phone phreaking is the imitation of electronic sound signals which trigger phone company equipment, allowing calls to be placed and routed without charge.

FOR ALL practical purposes, the phenomenon has its roots in a cereal box. In the late 1960's, it was discovered that Captain Crunch cereal contained free plastic whistles that produced a tone of 2,600 cycles per second. That frequency was a key

to making a phone work for free.
 Draper, with the scraggly black hair and horn-rimmed glasses of the proverbial mad scientist, learned this and other fascinating secrets after meeting a blind phreak in an accidental phone encounter.

"Then I ran into Denny, who said he had 27 ways to make free phone calls," he recalled.
 "Denny invited me to meet his friend Jim, who told me he would make a free call by playing certain tones on an organ into a phone."

"I told him he was crazy because I didn't think the phone company was dumb enough to have a system so easy to break into. Anyway, Jim blew my mind. He dialed an 800 (toll free) number and hit a E above middle C on the organ. All of a sudden, the 800 number disappeared with a clunk. I heard a white noise, a hissing, then he used the organ to key out the number I wanted. It worked."

Draper, with electronics training in the Air Force and San Jose City College, went home and fabricated his own organ to imitate phone signals. He fashioned a "Blue Box," a device which succeeded Captain Crunch whistles as the most prized possession in "phreakdom."

"That started me phone phreaking," Draper said with undisguised glee. "First, I called all my friends. Then, I thought, 'Wow! Here I am with the phone company at my fingertips. Free.'"

Now using a Blue Box to make free calls is a violation of federal law, punishable by up to five years in

prison and \$1,000 fine.
 Crunch boasts of many elaborate phone feats un-sanctioned by Ma Bell.
 One call, he says, was routed around the world clockwise a few times, from San Francisco to London to Sidney to San Francisco, then around the world counter-clockwise a few times, covering the equivalent of half the distance to the moon.

He describes another experiment in a room with two phones, using one to call around the world to the second. "About eight seconds after I answered one phone, I listened on the second phone and heard myself answering the first phone," he said. "It took my voice that long to travel around the world."

In Draper's realm, information is power. New information, he says, is virtually controlled by about 10 super phreaks who reside in San Francisco, Seattle, New York, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Miami, Denver, Hawaii, Ontario and Quebec, Canada.
 Additionally, he says, there are numerous lower-echelon phone buffs as

well as an estimated 10,000 Blue Box owners who have varying degrees of expertise in placement of free toll calls.

They chat with one another and exchange information in conference calls on borrowed lines, using CB radio-type nicknames such as "The Cheshire Cat" or "Peter Perpendicular Pimple."

Last year, Draper said, he uncovered a way to use any telephone to tap virtually any telephone conversation in the country.

"I had stumbled onto the auto verify circuit," he explained. That is the circuit operators use to break into a conversation to tell a party that an emergency call is coming through.

Draper says phone companies have restricted use of the circuit to operator consoles. "But phreaks have told me they've used it to tap the FBI office in San Francisco, the Federal Communications Commission, the CIA and U.S. Customs, plus City Hall and the police here."

Doherty confirmed that the auto verify circuit was vulnerable in this area for a brief period last year.
 Charles Bates, FBI spe-

cial agent-in-charge here, declined comment on Draper's boasts, saying only: "We're always reviewing the security of our communication systems."

Crunch concedes the phone companies are finding ways to render Blue Boxes and their cousins, the Black Boxes, ineffec-

tive and are increasingly successful in detecting and prosecuting users.

Blue Boxes are electronic sound devices used by the person placing a free call. Black Boxes are devices attached to the phone being called. Both skirt the telephone company automatic billing equipment.

"The phone companies will tighten things for a while, until guys like me find ways to get into the system again," Crunch said. "The future for us is microprocessor computers which can send coded signaling information and place calls, leaving no trace that the call ever had been made..."



Promoted
 William F. Ridgeway Jr. of Long Beach has been promoted to captain in the Los Angeles County Fire Department and assigned to command a ladder truck crew in Carson.

CRUNCH, whose given name is John T. Draper, reflected without regret about his hobby just before driving south to the federal prison at Lompoc, where he started serving a four-month sentence recently for defrauding Pacific Telephone Co. of \$30 worth of long distance calls.

Draper, 32, has been a legendary member of the mischievous "phone phreaks," whose shenanigans and illegal long distance calls have made them natural enemies of phone companies around the globe.

Phone officials hope his conviction, and 122 other toll fraud convictions last year, will deter phreaks and others from cheating the phone company out of an estimated \$1 million in calls each year.

"THE PHONE phreaks say they're just out for thrills, but you can say the same about a bank robber," says Joe Doherty, director of corporate security for American Telephone and Telegraph Co. "He likes to hear the alarms go off ... but the

Private schools claim enrollment new high

BOSTON — Enrollment at the nation's independent elementary and secondary schools increased slightly again this Fall to top last year's record high, according to statistics released by the National Association of Independent Schools.
 Despite an overall decline in school age population and despite inflation and higher tuitions, enrollment of the 657 schools represented in this year's NAIS survey climbed another 1.4 per cent.

Commenting on the reasons for the continuing enrollment growth, Cary Potter, NAIS president, said, "There is a widening concern on the part of parents for greater attention to academic performance and for the personalization of education, both qualities which have long been characteristic of good independent schools."
 Potter added that another feature of independent schools that appears to be attracting parents is their emphasis on moral values as a vital part of education, whether or not provided in a religious setting.

The NAIS also reports that the number of minority students enrolled in independent schools has more than quadrupled during the past decade, from approximately 4,000 to better than 17,000.

Family income levels of independent school students also are reported to be changing. Once thought of as available only to a small, affluent sector of

America, there are now clear indications that independent schools are being patronized by an increasingly broad segment of the population.

A recent informal survey by NAIS of 52 boarding schools revealed that 58 per cent of the students' families had annual incomes of under \$35,000. Thirty per cent had incomes of under \$25,000.

The National Association of Independent Schools has a membership of 762 schools and a total enrollment of 280,000.

Output grows in Singapore

SINGAPORE (AP) — Singapore's real gross domestic product grew at an annual rate of 7.2 per cent in the first half of 1976 compared with a fall of 0.6 per cent in the first half of 1975, the Economic Development Board said this week.

For all of 1976, the board expects gross domestic product to grow by 6 to 8 per cent. Manufacturing industries output rose 14.2 per cent because of higher exports of electrical, electronics, textiles, garments and wood products, the board's annual report for 1975-76 said.

Send complaints
DERBY, England (AP) — The Derbyshire County Council paid \$1 due on a parcel that arrived at its headquarters damaged and without a stamp.
 It came from the Post Office Users' National Council and contained 200 leaflets entitled: "Have you a complaint about the post office?"

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