

# PARTY LINE



# Party Line

*the signal lives in darkness*

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Futel  
503-468-1337  
<http://futel.net>  
operator@futel.net  
PO Box 14192, Portland, Oregon 97293  
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## Futel Sanitation & Hygiene



When the pandemic first hit Portland in early 2020 we figured we were in the wrong industry. Surprisingly, Futel phone usage did not decrease by a large amount. We realized that many people were still going to be using our phones even in hazardous conditions, so we had to make them safer.

Our solution was to implement telephone sanitation and hygiene programs. These would allow the phones to be used safely and provide a valuable service for many non-users of the phones.

### Telephone Sanitation Program



The telephone sanitation program consists of a cadre of telephone sanitation engineers trained and equipped to regularly sanitize the telephones. The purpose of the program is primarily to improve the health and safety of telephone users, and secondarily to assure users that the telephones are safe to use.



spray bottles. Now that the west coast has settled into our new reality, we are able to keep our supplies stocked.

To inform users, stickers with the date of sanitation and the engineer's handle are applied after every procedure.

While the sanitization procedure is designed to limit deleterious effects on the telephone hardware, we have had to replace some handsets and appear to be experiencing accelerated keyboard wear. The procedure does create a cool patina on the chrome, however, and makes the informational copy more challenging to read and probably more satisfying for those who attempt to do so.

## Progress And Outcome

We have achieved and continue to achieve the safety improvement objec-



tives. Keeping a sustainable volunteer force is always a challenge, and the program would benefit from an additional dedicated sanitation cohort to supplement the current volunteers, who are largely the telephone hosts and already have tasks to execute.

## Hygiene Program

The hygiene program deploys hand-washing stations to every telephone location where we are able to do so. The purpose of the program is to improve the health and safety of Futel users or any other individuals who wish to use the stations.

The handwashing stations are essentially soap dispensers, water supplies, and hands free water dispensers. There are several ways to implement this, we chose to base ours on a foot operated pump drawing water from a tank to



a spigot. This is an economical and robust solution but has the large drawback of being less accessible to wheelchair users and other people with limited leg mobility. The design objectives of our implementation are to provide water and soap with minimal maintenance and cleaning requirements, ruggedness when faced with careless or hostile users, and inexpensive parts to discourage theft. The pump is a rubber primer bulb under a pedal, the tank is a bucket or plastic barrel, and the spigot is PVC conduit. A wood and rebar frame anchors everything. A bottle of liquid soap is zip tied to the frame.

To reduce cleaning requirements, the installations do not include a basin or any other graywater collection, the spigot just empties over the pavement. Because of this the spigot must be to the side to avoid splashing the user's foot.

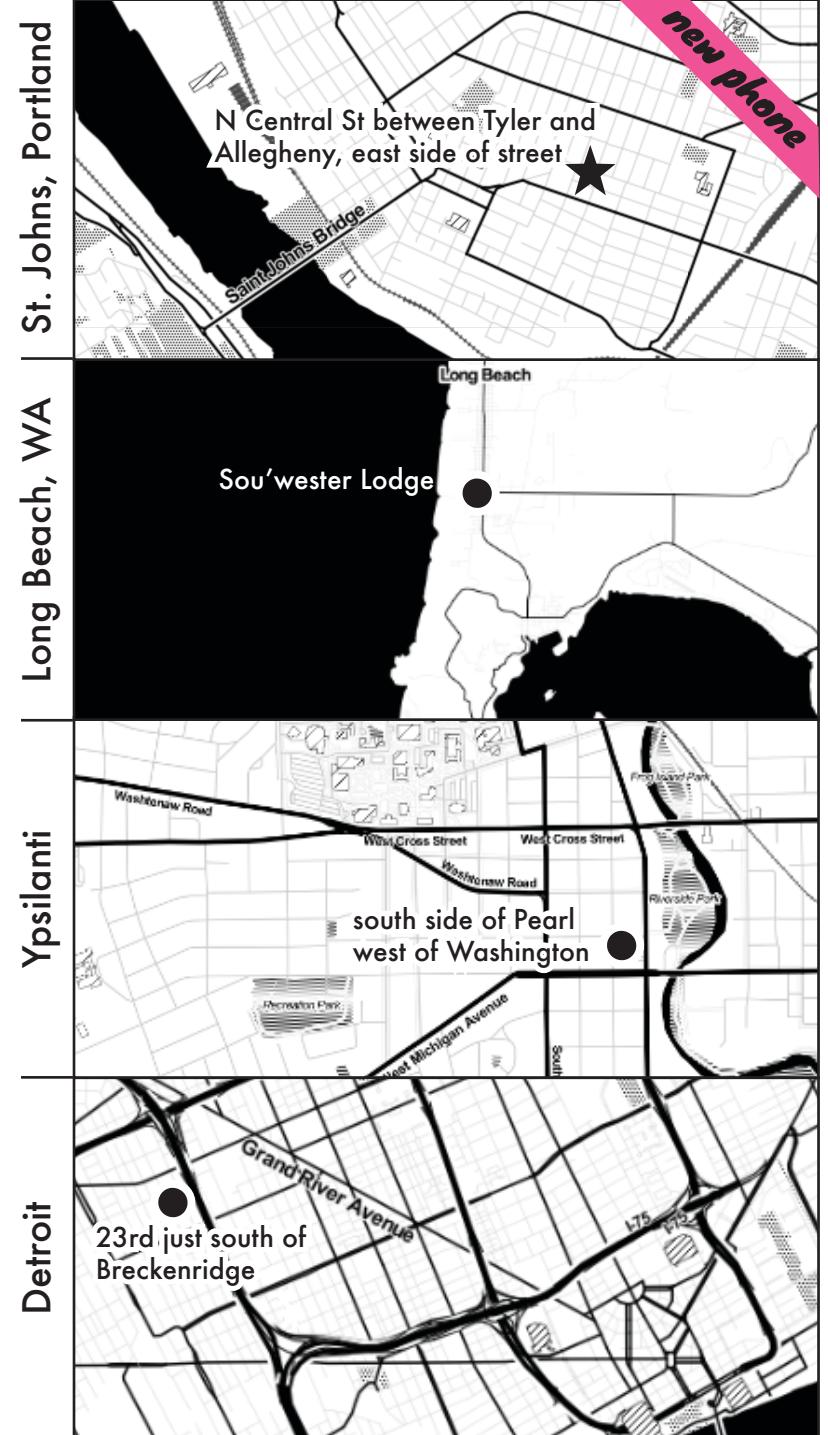
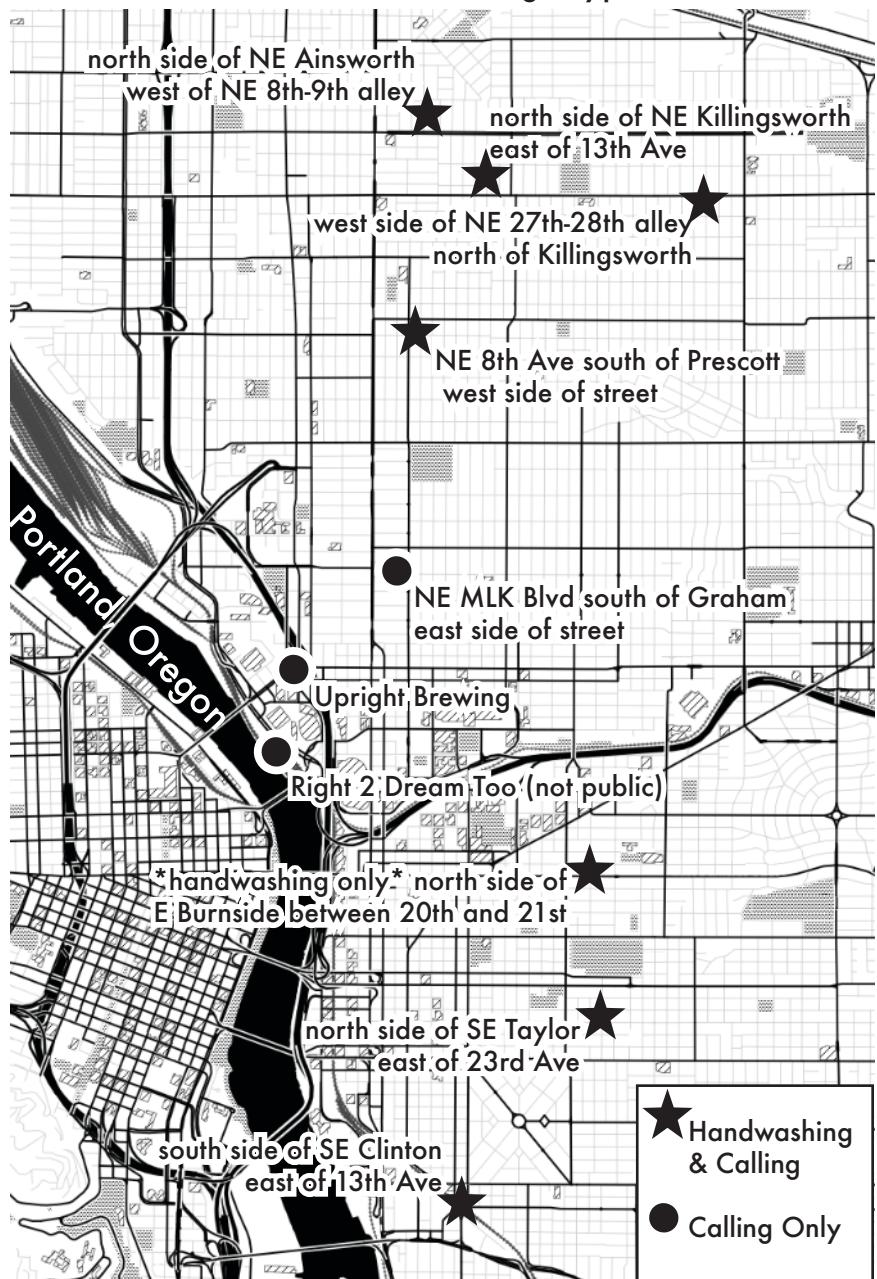
Soap was difficult to acquire in the early days of the pandemic, but we were able to get a large container of blue industrial hand soap.

## Progress And Outcome

We have achieved and continue to achieve the safety improvement objectives. There have been surprisingly few instances of vandalism or theft of parts and supplies.

# Futel Service Map

North America's Fastest Growing Payphone Network



# New Phone in St. Johns

N Central Street between Tyler and Allegheny,  
East side of street

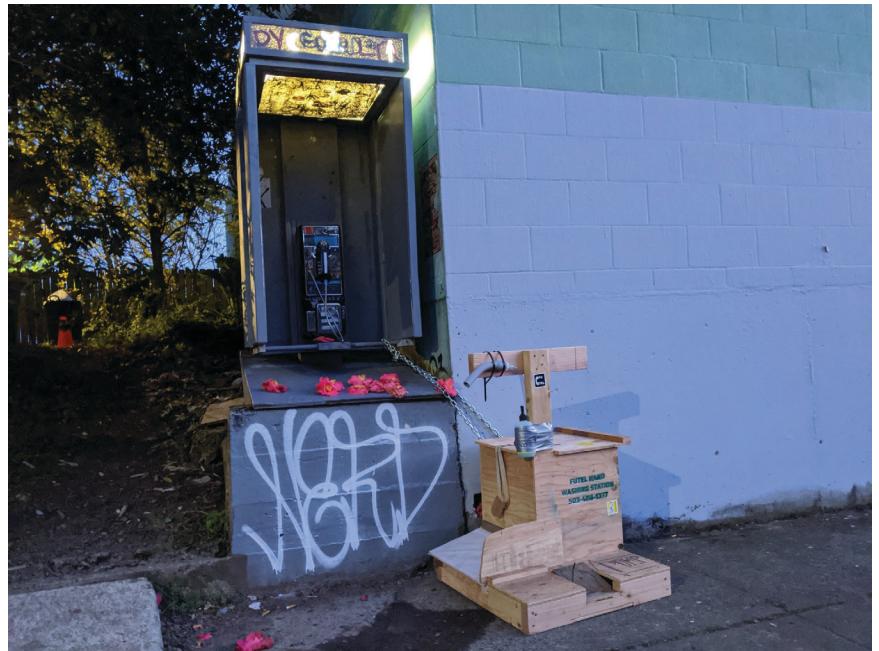


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# New Handwashing Stations



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# Handwashing Station Construction Notes

## Manifest

- primer bulb
  - this is a rubber bulb that moves liquid in one direction between 2 barbs
- about 6 inches between barbs
- 3-9 feet vinyl tubing
  - length depends on barrel used
  - length depends on conduit used
  - inside diameter should match primer bulb barbs
- plastic barrel
- PVC conduit, elbows, barbs as needed
  - depends on barrel used
- plywood, plank, 2x4, 2x2, etc. lumber
- 6 ft rebar x2
- hinge e.g. gate or door
- soap dispenser
- zip ties
- duct tape
- strapping
- conduit brackets or plumbers tape
- screws, other fasteners
- chain or cable as needed, lock



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## Construction

Cut plywood base to size to support barrel, toes, bulb pedal. Mark where toes should go in plywood base.

Drill two holes in plywood base at circumference of barrel for rebar. Drill holes in plywood base for zip ties to attach bulb, tubing.

Screw lumber toes to base to laterally support base of barrel and protect pump pedal. Assemble pedal out of plank and hinge and attach to base with hinge toward user. Attach pump to base under hinge with zip ties.

If needed, drill holes near top of barrel for chain or cable. Drill hole in barrel lid for input conduit. Screw lumber shelf to barrel lid. Assemble spigot out of conduit and barb. Attach spigot to shelf with brackets and/or zip ties.

Place barrel on base, within toes. Hammer rebar into earth through holes in base. Ziptie rebar to shelf. Strap rebar to barrel.

Assemble input conduit, easiest is a length of conduit sawed with a 45 degree end, long enough that it can't fall in the barrel when placed in the hole.

Assemble tubing to pump. Ziptie tubing to base and rebar, routing so that toes protect tubing on base. Assemble outlet tubing to spigot. Place input conduit in hole. Thread tubing through input conduit until it nearly reaches bottom of barrel.

Ziptie and duct tape soap dispenser to rebar.

Prime pump by pouring water down output tubing until pump can be

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actuated.

Thread chain or cable through holes in barrel. Lock to stationary object.

## Notes

Barrel can be remote from pump and spigot or inaccessible, alter base in that case to support pump and spigot.

Input conduit just keeps the input at the bottom of the barrel and discourages people from yanking the tubing out, input conduit can be replaced with weight and a conduit T at end of input tubing.

Design is intended to be cheap, easy to source, annoying to steal or strip, easy to service and replace. A trap at the spigot will make pumping easier. Graywater basin has been eliminated for ease of cleaning, this means that the spigot has to be inconveniently located to keep water away from pumper's foot. This is not our best deployed design but it's cheaper (if barrels are available), easier, and less labor to build.



# New Feature: Carlos the Rollerblader

available on all Futel Phones!

For a well appreciated but all too short period in 2019, access to famed advice provider Carlos The Rollerblader was provided by all Futel phones in Portland during their posted office hours of 4 to 8 PM. Thanks to Carlos and all who called in!



# New Feature: Call a Concentration Camp in the United States



Now available from all Futel phones is our newest feature: call a concentration camp! Select this option from the directory to be connected to a randomly selected concentration camp in the continental United States of America!

**"I like to ask them if they're aware of what happens to prison guards when human rights tribunals happen, and if they have a plan for that, when that day comes around."**

**He says he has also offered to sell them used children's toys at a discount.**

**- Detroit Metro Times**

Because these concentration camps are fully operational, this is a valuable opportunity to learn about their functions, which include the detention, abuse, torture, and killing of human beings. As you may find yourself confined to one of these camps in the near future as their target populations are expanded, we recommend that you use this feature often.

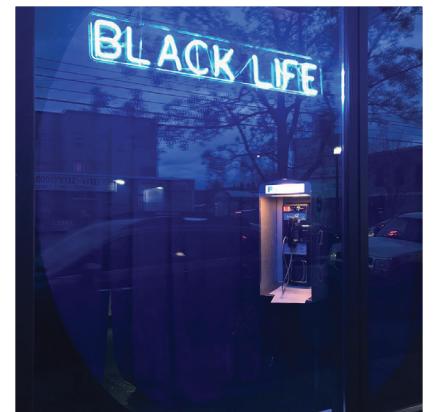
*Image Credit: North Carolina Department of Public Safety*

*Data: Concentration camp info supplied by 2600 Magazine*

# Projects Supported by Futel



Installation by Patricia Vázquez Gómez with support from Futel. At the Chehalim Cultural Center the Newberg Department of Friendship Project installed a station for folks in Newberg to answer the questions we gathered from Mexicans living in Newberg.



In HERE || Humboldt, Lisa K. Bates and Sharita Towne, also known as the Black Life Experiential Research Group (BLERG), present research-based art and activism from the past year as Artists-in-Residence for the Humboldt neighborhood. This work centers Black life of the past, present and future as integral to the community's fabric. Paragon Arts Gallery at PCC Cascade.

# Five Years of Futel

Five years ago, Futel established its first lodgement upon the public space by deploying a single pay-phone with no identifying information attached to it. Eventually one person picked up the handset, and then another, and another. We confused many people while a group of dedicated users and occasional experimenters grew around us. Now we have expanded to ten public phones and two more at a houseless rest area and a bar.

We provide over twelve thousand outgoing calls a year and many other encounters with our services, interactions, and operators. They laughed at us at the beginning, but who's laughing now? The same people, mostly. But more importantly, many people have laughed and cried into our phones, and also asked questions, made demands, expressed themselves, and rambled on confusingly. We hope to continue fielding calls far into the future.



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# 2019 Operator Log Excerpts



Seven operators logged over 40 operator calls in 2019, and, as always, there have been moments of passion, confusion, levity, urgency, banality, and sorrow. Here is a sample of logged calls, with some sensitive and many less interesting examples removed.

**2019-01-07**

Caller asked if the phone could be used for long distance calls, I replied that it could.

**2019-01-15**

Caller told me they were inquiring about calling in North America with a Canadian calling card and "looking for knowledge on this." I began to tell them they should be able to call for free, and was interrupted with "Thank you for your wisdom" and a hangup.

**2019-01-27**

Caller wanted the number of a laundromat.

**2019-01-28**

Caller wanted locations for Futel phones in NE Portland.



**2019-02-01**

Caller wanted to make a collect call, I told them how to call for free.

**2019-02-02**

Caller asked "if this was a real pay-phone". I replied yes and disconnected.

**2019-02-20**

Buzzing noise.

**2019-03-18**

Caller requested the number of an individual, which I was unable to provide.

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## 2019-03-18

Caller was eventually able to request the number of a food stamp office near them, which I provided.

## 2019-03-19

Caller asked if this was the operator, I replied that it was. Caller asked if this was a REAL operator, I replied that it was and hung up.



## 2019-05-26

I heard nothing and advised the caller that I could not hear anything. Caller asked "how's it going?" I responded that it was going great and hung up.

## 2019-06-21

Caller asked for the number of an antique store.

## 2019-06-23

Said "hello" 3 times with no response. Called back and they asked how to call their father. I said hang up and press one. They said thanks.

## 2019-07-05

'The Girl from Ipanema' played. It was nice.



## 2019-07-21

Caller asked for food in walking distance cuz they are sick of looking at their phone and would rather talk to a human. I gave them a few choices and they didn't like them but said it was nice chatting.

## 2019-07-28

Caller asked if they could speak to my managerator. I asked my operator assistant if they could tell me what it was and hold him that the managerator



© Horizontal Rain/YouTube

## 2019-05-26

operates the insinkerator. I asked him if they'd be ok being the managerator of my insinkerator and they said they'd accept the title gladly and said thank you, goodbye.

## 2019-07-28

Caller asked for some music recommendations cuz they were sick of the same ol stuff. I recommended the Slits. Conditioner. Wipers. Screamers. They then asked advice on how to stop watching too much tv. I told him to pretend to sit next to himself and watch himself as much as possible. They said that was the best idea yet and thanked me before they hung up.

## 2019-08-10

Caller asked if I'd ever walked in slo-motion out side. I said "nope" and they said they recommended it and I responded "ok" and then they said have a good day and I hung up.

## 2019-08-27

Caller told me their name and that they wanted to let me know that they were going to Seattle to work on a project

with another individual, but that they thought I already knew that.

## 2019-09-02

Caller hung up after my daughter answered.

## 2019-09-13

Caller asked me if I was sleeping, I replied that I was still asleep. Caller asked me to draw a Tarot card, I told them that they drew the 9 of disks and hung up.

## 2019-09-22

Caller asked how many Fotel phones there were in Portland. I told them. "That is so awesome."

## 2019-10-06

Caller wanted the number for Uber customer service to make an accident report. I replied that I predicted that I would not be able to help, and was not able to find anything useful, but recommended that they call the police if there was an injury or property damage.

## 2019-10-08

Caller asked for the number of a personal injury lawyer. We picked one out together from Yelp reviews.



## 2019-10-22

Caller asked how to make a call to a non-503 area code. I told them to hang up and dial 1 for a dial tone.

## 2019-10-25

Caller asked how my night was going. I replied that it was going well, thank you, and hung up.



## 2019-11-15

Caller asked whether the concentration camp directory entry was real, this is an art project, right? I told them it was.

## 2019-11-20

Caller told me they were just calling because they thought the Futel phone was really cool. I thanked them and hung up.

## 2019-12-25

I introduced myself as "Operator." Caller asked, "Who is this?" I replied, "Operator" and disconnected.

# Sisyphus Log

## Druid of Sisyphus Gardens Call Log Highlights Since Recorded Times

### 2018-11-25

Caller asked if this was the escort service of Pasadena, CA. "No, sorry". Caller hung up before I could provide them with any more information.

### 2018-12-21

Caller asked what else they could do on a Futel. I provided them with some information. "Chill."

### 2019-4-23

Caller asked if I was the Druid of Sisyphus. "No. No, wait, yes. Are you looking for a specific Druid?" "Yes", they said. I answered their questions.

### 2019 spring

Caller apologized when I let them know they can call anyone else for free. I didn't mean it that way.

### 2019 summer

Callers were a couple walking in their new neighborhood. They were excited about Futel, and I explained some of Futel's telephony services. I told them I was a Druid-in-training. "So you work for the telephone company?" "No."

### 2019 fall

Caller explained they found a pay-



phone, so they tried calling their cellphone. I told them that they hadn't miscalled, and told them how to call their cellphone from the payphone. They thanked me, and told me that I sound like a really kind person, and that they hoped it wasn't too late where ever I was. I thanked them and told them to have a good night. Caller hung up, then I realized I neglected to tell them that dialing a Druid was a good way to test the interactive-ness of a phone booth at midnight.

### 2020 January

Caller asked what plants I grow. I provided them with information. Caller repeated information, then hung up.

## Druid of Sisyphus Gardens Documented Voicemail

### unknown date

Um, hiii. Is this the burrito place? I really wanted a burrito today. Sooo, if you're not the burrito place, just don't call back. But if you are the burrito place, I would love some burritos. Yeah, yeah, yeah burritos! Buh-buh-buh burritos! Yeah, yeah, yeah, burritos!

Have a spectacular day!

### 2019 (children, abbreviated)

"I'm Banana 1, and my friend is Banana 2. Can you call back right away so we can talk about bananas? Here is is Banana 2!"

"My name is Banana 2 but I like playing Banana 1"

### 2019 Fall

"Do you have any rocks? Like really big rocks? I'm the man to push them."



2019-8-28

Voice 1: "Hi, I hope you have a good day!"

Voice 2: "Tell us the secret of Stonehenge, did aliens land there? Did aliens build it? Are you an alien?"

Voice 1: "I would also like to know that, but first and foremost, I hope you have a really good day!"

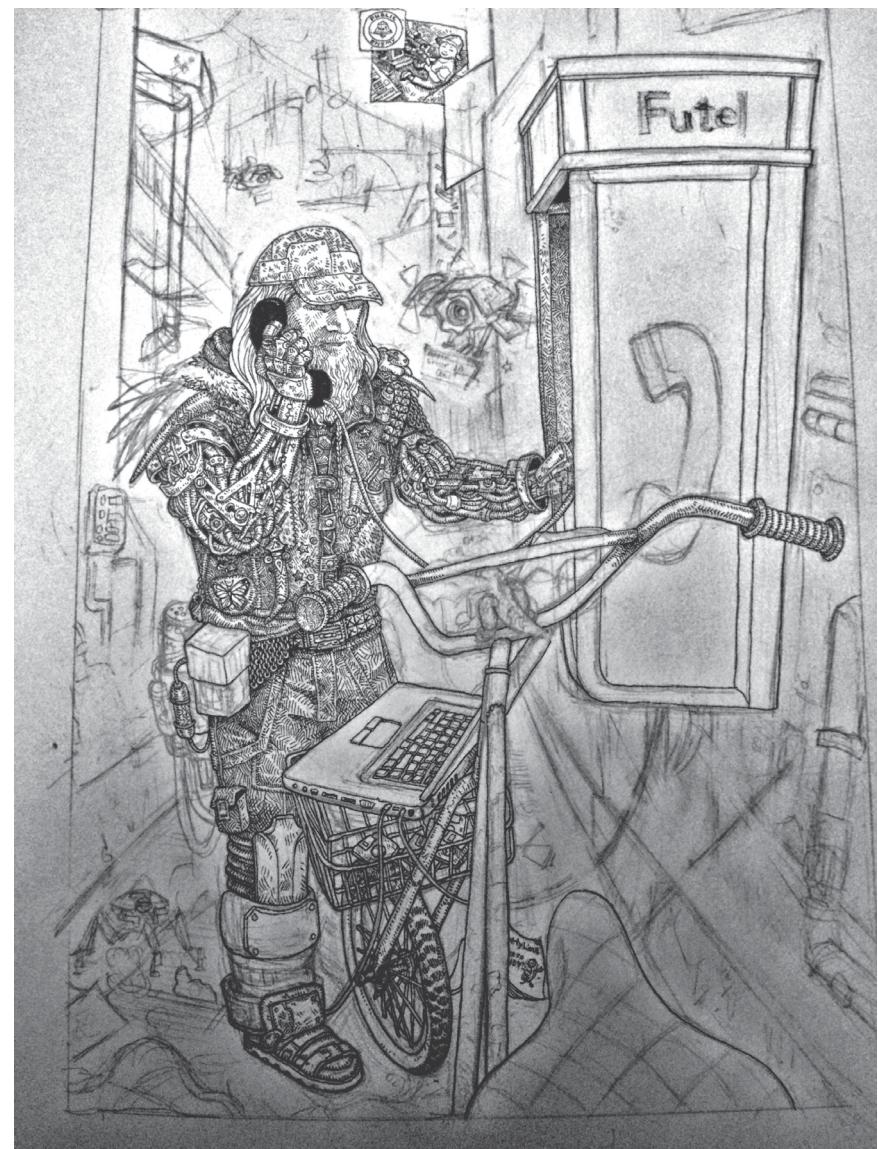
Voice 2: "What if I'm an alien?"

Voice 1: "I think you might be."

Voice 3: "I hope your day is like really good, but like not so good that you can't match it later in life."

Voice 1: "Truer words have never been spoken. Thank you!"

**Thank You FUTEL, Pest and Verm, the Druids of Sisyphus**



# Church Extends a Helping Line to Phoneless

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1984

PORLAND, Ore., Sept. 1 (UPI) — Rising telephone bills forced so many people in the neighborhood to give up their phones that the Mallory Avenue Christian Church has installed a free community phone.

"We got the idea from the steady stream of people coming by and asking to use the phone to make local calls," Vi Miller, secretary of the inner-city church, said today. "They wanted to call their doctors, or schools, reasonable things that people need to use the phone for."

The phone, which has been placed in the front of the church, is available for local calls only for anyone who needs it. A volunteer worker limits the length of the calls. The church also takes messages, a service used mainly by job hunters, the secretary said.

In the first week it was available, about a dozen people a day used the phone, but the church expects the numbers to increase as word spreads.

## Unable to Afford Phones

The Rev. Douglas Wirt said some parishioners in the low-income neighborhood were unable to afford phones before the breakup of the Bell system but that quite a few others recently gave up their phones.

"The trend seems to be to price low-income users out of the market and the phone has become a necessity of urban life," he said. "If people can't have one in their home, there needs to be this. Even in our own neighborhood, we may need another phone to fill the demand."

Besides the 125-member Mallory Avenue church, other members of the Ecumenical Parish of Northeast Portland are chipping in to pay for the phone, including the Patton Central Church and the United Methodist Church. The Northeast Portland Y.W.C.A. is also sponsoring the effort.

"We tried to get some help from local Bell office," Mr. Wirt said. "Their public relations office was interested at

first. But as they explored, the implications became clear and they backed off."

Ron Allen, a spokesman for Pacific Northwest Bell disagreed.

"We're not seeing any tremendous drop off because of the rate increase," he said. "No big wave of disconnects."

## Rise in Phone Rates

As a result of rate increases, Portland's basic measured residential phone service now costs \$8.90 a month, as against \$7.90 in November 1983, with \$3 of free local calls. Budget measured service, in which there are no free calls, has gone to \$6.90 from \$5.90, and flat-rate phone service, where users can make as many calls as they want, is \$15.88, up from \$13.30 last year.

Customers must also now pay an additional \$2-a-month charge for access to local service. A similar charge for a hookup to long-distance lines has been delayed until mid-1985.

The rate increases are among millions of dollars of increases that local phone companies have received since the breakup of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company into separate units.

Representative Ron Wyden, Democrat of Oregon, a member of the House Telecommunications Subcommittee who is investigating the effects of the breakup, said the free community telephone at the church was believed to be the first one in the country. He added that it could start a trend.

# Death of the Payphone



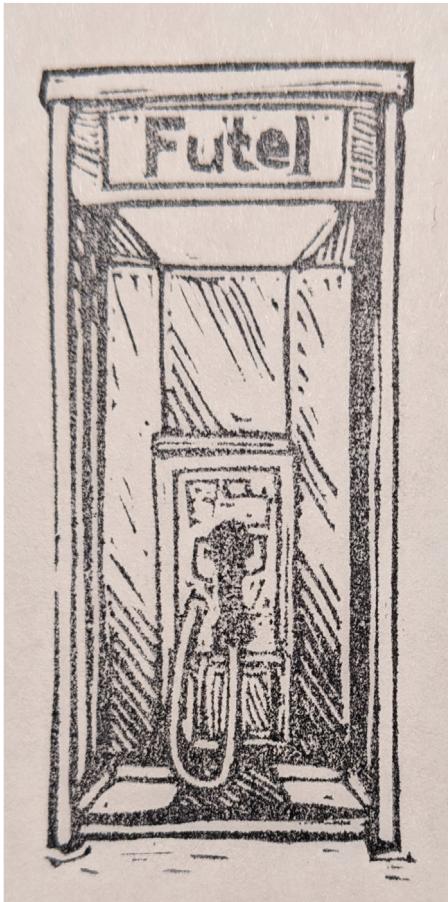
When the dead payphone and pedestal in front of the convenience store were missing, I asked the clerk if he knew who the provider was, because it is not common for them to remove decrepit phones anymore. He said that two guys had sawed the bolts and carted it off on a bicycle. "The store was open but the clerk wasn't about to stop them".



This was my favorite payphone location, next to the bike racks at OMSI, because I enjoyed sitting where this photo was taken, on a bench across the plaza, and watching people as I prank called them.



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Potential installation host? Contact us. Want to hack on Futel? See our repositories on Github. Creator of interactive audio art? We can help you implement your ideas in this exciting new format.

Dial 0 from any Futel phone, or speak to the operator at 503-468-1337, or email us at [operator@futel.net](mailto:operator@futel.net), or see our website at <http://futel.net>. Thanks to everyone who has supported Futel!

## Labor

Karl Anderson, director. Tishbite, xnor, B. M. M. Lippincott, A. Frankenstein, M. Hansen, Anonymous, Anonymous, operators. B. Casey, M. Casey, M. Lippincott, R. Senior, S., Ry4an B, Sebastian Noack, physical plant. D. Wager, design. J. Plumb, xnor, J. Mejia, audio production. PEST, Verm, druidics. Chris Czub, Detroit production. B. Thunderblood, art. B. Richardson, media. Tishbite, engineer.

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