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Showing postings 1 - 10 of 10 in the thread: Old Willimantic Communication Devices.

Posting:	Old Willimantic Communication Devices	Posting 1
Poster:	Pippin	
Date:	30 January 2005 8:17 AM	
<p>For whatever reason I was thinking about how today's technology has put us in instant communication with one another - I'm probably one of the 3 people in CT without a cell phone so am certainly behind the times. That's kind of a segue into a reminiscence of "old Willimantic communication devices". In the 50s, when my grandparents lived on Valley St. I remember that there were square boxes with orange lights in each corner of the box. These were mounted on telephone poles at locations such as Valley and Bank St., Valley and North St. etc. The lights would be turned on when it was necessary for the policeman on duty to call the station.</p> <p>Another memory is of the alarm boxes along Valley St. Their main purpose was for people to call the Fire Dept. by pulling a "box alarm". Some of these along Valley St - for example at the corners with Walnut, Bank, North and Church had red lights on the top of the box as well as a siren and these would be turned on to warn motorists that fire engines were due to go past.</p> <p>Finally, how about the fire bell? Long before the air horns, the Willimantic fire bell was in use. It was rung at noon time and if I remember correctly, one other time during the day. It was also used to let us know there would be no school because of snow. I don't remember what the signal was or at what time but it would be rung in the morning if classes were cancelled due to snow and again in the afternoon if classes were cancelled. Many people had large cardboard posters at home. These posters gave the box number and location of all the Gamewell boxes so that folks at home could know where the alarms were coming from. Besides ringing box numbers, time of day or snow cancellations, the fire bell rang certain combinations of numbers for other purposes but I can't remember what they were. Anybody remember some of the other signals? I wonder where the bell ended up?</p>		
Posting:	Re: Old Willimantic Communication Devices	Posting 2
Poster:	rd	
Date:	30 January 2005 9:50 AM	
<p>Morning Pipin! I do remember the fire alarm boxes located on telephone poles thruout the city. Closest one to where I lived was at the corner of Church and Prospect streets. The boxes were red with a white handle that one pulled down to activate the call. Congrats on holding out on the cell phone. Far too much useless talk going on with people wandering around in stores or wherever talking--about what?? I must be missing something! We do have a cell phone but only use it if we are going somewhere for the day--use it more for emergency purposes than anything else. Regarding telephones, I rememeber my parents first phone, we lived on Oak Street, and it was a big black heavy phone with a cloth like cord. When you picked up the receiver the operator would ask, "number please". At that time most of telephone numbers were 3 digit and a letter--ours was 563 M. We were also on a party line--don't think they offer that anymore. Also, does the Post Office still have the mail boxes distributed around the town?</p>		
Posting:	Re: Old Willimantic Communication Devices	Posting 3
Poster:	JayJay	
Date:	31 January 2005 9:13 PM	
<p>You guys must be in my age category! Amos Lewis was the resident caretaker of the state armory on Pleasant Street and was also a "call man" on the Willimantic Fire Dept. He had a big round bell mounted on the wall of his and his wife's bedroom which was part of the "call man" alarm system for the department. Imagine hearing that ringing at 2AM, when maybe the Normal School burned, or the Willimantic Lumber & Coal Company!! Regarding phone numbers, ours at 197 Pleasant Street was 1449J! Funny how some trivial things stay in your memory.</p>		
Posting:	Re: Old Willimantic Communication Devices	Posting 4
Poster:	Ada	
Date:	1 February 2005 10:23 AM	
<p>The first phone I remember that was in my parents's apartment was a stand phone with a hook for the receiver. Yes, the operator did ask, "Number please." I remember the phone numbers being four digits, e.g. the phone number for my parents' store (don't ask why I remember this!) was 1537.</p>		
Posting:	Re: Old Willimantic Communication Devices	Posting 5
Poster:	William Brainard	
Date:	1 February 2005 3:42 PM	
<p>As to fire alarms, whistles, sometime between 1994 and 1999 Coventry did away with their noon whistle in the village and around town. I know that because before I moved to Florida, the noon whistle was something to set the time to! I believe Columbia and/or Andover still blow a whistle at 8:am and I think I can still hear on occasion the noon whistle in Willimantic up here in South Coventry</p>		
Posting:	Re: Old Willimantic Communication Devices	Posting 6
Poster:	jerry B	
Date:	1 February 2005 4:46 PM	
<p>chapman @elm st ph 2269j</p>		

Posting: Re: Old Willimantic Communication Devices Posting 7
Poster: Ada
Date: 1 February 2005 5:36 PM

The South Windham FD was three houses down from where we lived and rang the siren at 8 am every day. I believe that the FD is now on Machine Shop Hill and no longer rings at 8 am--perhaps noon?

Posting: Re: Old Willimantic Communication Devices Posting 8
Poster: Mary Lee Bradley
Date: 3 February 2005 7:58 PM

I remember the party line. Our number was 463W and the other was 463R. When we wanted to call the other party on our line, we would ask the operator to "ring R, please." Then we had to hold down the bar that disconnected the line. The phone would ring the number of ring for the R line, then we would pick it up and talk. Our ring was 1 long ring, the neighbors was 2 short.

Posting: Re: Old Willimantic Communication Devices Posting 9
Poster: LDRAGON
Date: 4 February 2005 9:37 AM

2616 J WE DID NOT HAVE A PARTY LINE. THANK GOD!

I REMEMBER, THE OPERATOR, SAYING "NUMBER PLEASE. I, ALSO, REMEMBER THAT MY BOX NUMBER WAS 41. THANK GOD, IT NEVER RANG! OH, SORRY I USED THE "G" WORD.

Posting: Re: Old Willimantic Communication Devices Posting 10
Poster: W. Brainard
Date: 4 February 2005 5:22 PM

I'm a bit too young to remember party lines but recall the excitement in 1962 when the Coventry Exchange went from Pilgrim 2-0000 to 742-0000. It was a big thing in Coventry. Till about 25 years ago we could dial local numbers with 5 digits.