

## **CAPITOL OPERATORS ORAL HISTORY**

**An Interview by Donald Ritchie with**

**Kimball Winn and Rick Kauffman**

**Wednesday, November 1, 2006**

**RITCHIE:** Could we begin by your introducing yourselves and telling me what your current duties and responsibilities are here?

**KAUFFMAN:** Okay, start with the boss.

**WINN:** I'm Kimball Winn. I'm the director of IT [Information Technology] Support Services in the Office of the Sergeant at Arms. Among my duties are responsibility for the Capitol Telephone Exchange, telecom services in general, as well as desktop support, and general office equipment, but I guess what's relevant here is the Capitol Exchange. I've only had responsibility for the Capitol Exchange for about eight years now. Before that, we reorganized. After a few missteps it fell under me about eight years ago, so that's my history with the Capitol Exchange.

**RITCHIE:** Okay. Rick?

**KAUFFMAN:** I'm Rick Kauffman. I'm the branch manager for telecom services. The branch is responsible for providing all telecommunication requirements for the Senate side of the Capitol, as well as all the state offices for the members. We also provide directory services, billing services, a help desk, and in addition to that is the Capitol Exchange, which reports directly to me and provides the entering point for the Capitol.

**RITCHIE:** Okay, good. Could you tell me a little bit about your backgrounds before you came here, what your experiences were that led you to this position?

**WINN:** Sure. I graduated from grad school in 1980 and took a job at the Bureau of Economic Analysis, in downtown Washington. One of the people that I worked with was a gentleman named Mike Bartell. A couple of years after I started there, he left and went through a series of jobs. I stayed there, and then one day he called me and said, "How would you like to work at the Senate?" I said, "Well, that sounds interesting," so I applied for a job

that he had open and I got the job. My title then was research projects specialist, and that was in 1987. That was when microcomputers, personal computers, were first starting to come into use in the Senate, so we were doing work figuring out how this technology could be used by the Senate. We eventually formed a microcomputer support group and I became the head of that. Out of that we added some other groups and formed an office systems division of the old Senate Computer Center. Eventually, I became the head of that.

That's where I was when Greg Casey, who was sergeant at arms at the time, decided to reorganize the sergeant at arms, and eliminated what had been the Computer Center, the old Telecom Department, the old Service Department, and created three fairly big departments called Central Operations, Technical Operations, and Office Operations. I was not head of any of those. I was in a program management job, and then shortly after this reorganization had taken place the person who had been head of Technical Operations resigned. What happened was they asked Tracy Williams, who was then head of Office Operations, to take over Technical Operations, and then asked me to take over Office Operations. So I did, on an acting basis, which I think I was acting for a year and a half, and then was given the job permanently. Then somewhere in a different, slight reorganization, that became Information Technology Support Services, which is what it is today.

Let's see, before that I was born and grew up in the Tidewater area of Virginia, the South Hampton Roads area, and graduated from high school down there, and went to the University of Virginia for my undergraduate and my graduate degrees. So that's my history prior to coming here.

**RITCHIE:** You mentioned setting up the support network for PCs, and I remember that when we first got started with computers in the Senate Historical Office, in the late '70s and early '80s, it was private contractors from outside companies.

**WINN:** Right.

**RITCHIE:** They changed constantly, and it was a terrible situation. Then finally the Senate developed its own inside operations, and things became much more routinized and regularized. We knew who we could call on.

**WINN:** Right. When I started we had three minicomputer vendors. I guess the Senate had done—I still have the report—a study on how to best automate the offices. The conclusion was to choose one of the then—there were several—minicomputer vendors and provide that company's products to all the offices. The Rules Committee decided not to select that vendor but to select three different vendors and give each member a choice of which minicomputer they wanted to use. That was chaos, because there was no commonality, no interchange between vendors, so there was no such thing as electronic mail. That just didn't work. So it was a big deal when we first put in PCs, we first did the member office microcomputer project, or MOM, where we gave one PC to every member. We actually had to twist some arms to get some of the members to take their one PC, because they didn't see the value in it. It's laughable now, but that was the case back in 1988. We moved slowly forward from there, first using microcomputers as terminals into the minicomputer systems, and then replacing the minicomputer systems with a local area network, and then networking all the networks together to get to where we are today. It's been an interesting trip.

**RITCHIE:** Rick, can you tell me about your background?

**KAUFFMAN:** Sure, I was born and raised in Cincinnati, Ohio, and lived there most of my adult life. I went to the University of Cincinnati and graduated from there. Thirty years ago I started in the telephone industry. I began as a sales rep, then became a cable installer, and then a service technician. I went through lots of different small companies and ended up working for a voice-messaging company for about 10 years, ran their distributor operations throughout the United States. Then in 1997 I came to Washington, D.C., to be the director of operations for federal services for a company, all private industry. I worked my way up to director of global operations, and ran their worldwide operations. In June of 2001, I was presented with the opportunity to come to the United States Senate and take on the telecommunications branch, that's how I got here.

**RITCHIE:** What's the difference between working in the private sector and coming to the government?

**KAUFFMAN:** A lot of people will say it's more stressful; to me it's less stressful, or a different kind of stress. You don't have shareholder values to worry about. You don't have to worry about the price of stock. The other difference is that although I had thousands

of customers around the world, here you have one hundred CEOs in very close proximity. It's a different challenge. It's a different stress. But it's actually been enjoyable. A lot of folks thought I would not be successful just because of my nature in coming to a government job, but I think I've been fairly successful.

**RITCHIE:** What's your nature that they were concerned about?

**KAUFFMAN:** Impatience. [laughs] I think I even said that in an interview when asked, "Everybody has a weakness, what is yours?" I don't like sitting idly by. I like to keep moving and shaking. But it's been very enjoyable and we've been given lots of opportunities to do things, especially with 9/11 and then with the anthrax and the ricin incidents and all those things that happened down here. It's stretched most of us to new horizons, and that's good. I've had the opportunity to learn a lot, and I'm not saying it because he's sitting here but Kim has been a great mentor, not only from a management skills set but the knowledge of this institution that he has is just phenomenal. So it's been enjoyable from that standpoint.

**RITCHIE:** Well, could you give me an overview of the telephone operations—what it all entails, and what the big issues are?

**WINN:** Sure. In short, we operate basically a small telephone company. Actually, it's not such a small telephone company, it's probably bigger than—well, there aren't that many rural telephone co-ops anymore, but my guess is that if you put us up against some of those we would be bigger than quite a few of those rural telephone companies. We have our own telephone switch, which actually belongs to Verizon, but is located here in the Senate, and that serves the 12,000 or so folks that we serve on the Senate side of Capitol Hill. We do our own telephone installations. We publish our own telephone directory. We do our own telephone billing—every office that has phones gets a bill once a month, just like you would from a telephone company. We do the help desk. So we really are a small telephone company. Anything else?

**KAUFFMAN:** And then the exchange.

**WINN:** Yes, and no small part of that is we also provide a switchboard for Congress, not just the Senate but for the entire Congress, which is where when people call either one

of the main numbers for Congress, they get routed to the same switchboard, and the folks there answer the person's call. With any luck, the person knows who it is they want to talk to and they can transfer them. Other times, it takes a little bit more prying to get the information out of them as to who it is that they want to talk to. They answer calls from the public. They also answer calls from internal Senate and House staff who dial zero on their telephones to get to the switchboard. On the Senate side we provide our members with a direct connection to the switchboard, so if they need the operator for whatever purpose, to track down somebody, to get a call wherever they need to, all they have to do is pick up a phone and the person on the other end answers and knows who it is, actually, when they answer the phone.<sup>1</sup>

**RITCHIE:** So much of what goes on here on Capitol Hill is either Senate or House. How can you serve both?

**WINN:** Good question. Well, until a year and a half ago, the way the switchboard worked was as a joint operation: half of the employees on the switchboard were employees of the House chief administrative officer—for years before the House reorganized in '95, they had been employees of the clerk of the House, but with the reorganization of the House officers in '95, '96, that function got transferred to the chief administrative officer. So half the employees were employees of the chief administrative officer; half were employees of the Senate sergeant at arms. Because the chief administrative officer and the House in general has different employment practices and policies than we do, we actually came up with a separate Capitol Exchange employee handbook, which had employment practices and policies that were not quite the House and not quite the Senate but which applied solely to

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<sup>1</sup> Known as the blue button phone, this practice dates back to 1930 when senators opposed to the new rotary dial phones won passage of this resolution: *Whereas dial telephones are more difficult to operate than are manual telephones; and Whereas Senators are required, since the installation of dial phones in the Capitol, to perform the duties of telephone operators in order to enjoy the benefits of telephone service; and Whereas dial telephones have failed to expedite telephone service; Therefore be it resolved that the Sergeant at Arms of the Senate is authorized and directed to order the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Co. to replace with manual phones within 30 days after the adoption of this resolution, all dial telephones in the Senate wing of the United States Capitol and in the Senate office building.*" A compromise was eventually reached that gave senators the option of either dial tone or operator service.

the Capitol Exchange. We got the officers that were involved to sign off on that.

They have always—well, not always—since the Dirksen Building opened in the 1950s, the Exchange has been located in Senate space. The Senate has provided basically the mechanism that makes the Exchange work, and the House just provided half of the employees. It got to be very sticky. The House wanted to do some things, and then the Congressional Accountability Act came up; well, who are these people's employers, for the purposes of that act? We first tackled it through a memorandum of understanding, which laid out the roles and responsibilities for everybody, and actually which still is in effect. Then with last fiscal year's legislative branch appropriation, we got legislation put in there to transfer the House operators to the Senate payroll. So at this moment, and for the last 18 months, they are employees of the Senate. But there is still a memorandum of understanding in place because it's almost a poison pill provision in the legislation. They are our employees so long as that memorandum of understanding is in place. If the House decides that they don't like what we're doing, or whatever, they can revoke that memorandum of understanding, and those employees would go back to them. We're not quite sure about what would happen with the ones who have retired or have left for other reasons, but half the operators would go back to the House and we'd be left in the situation we were in before.

But they have almost always been a combined operation. To our recollection, or as far as we've done the history, was a separate House switchboard and a Senate switchboard only for a couple of years. When the first combined switchboard was put in, it was put in the Capitol to serve both the House and the Senate. It's moved around, but it's always served the entire Congress. I guess somebody thought it would be stupid for people to call the Capitol and ask for someone on the other side and be told, "I'm sorry, you have a wrong number, you have to call this other number." But it's always been in one location, and currently with a single workforce that does work for both the House and the Senate.

**RITCHIE:** When you consider that the average tourists do not know the names of their senators or representative, you can imagine that calling two different switchboards probably would not work.

**WINN:** Right, exactly.

**RITCHIE:** When I came to work for the Senate in the 1970s, we had a phone with a series of buttons at the bottom, and the entire secretary of the Senate's office had one WATS line [wide-area telephone service, for long-distance calls]. You would wait after work and sit there waiting for that little light to go out.

**WINN:** And pounce. [laughs]

**RITCHIE:** And immediately pounce on it because there were four or five other people in other offices waiting to do that as well, so that you could make a long-distance telephone call. Obviously, the technology has changed enormously. In the years that you've been here, I suspect that you've seen some technological changes. What have been the biggest changes in your careers here?

**KAUFFMAN:** Recently, or at least since I've been on board, is taking some of the ancillary services that we've offered, fax services and conferencing services, that required people to initiate on our staff, and making those more automated. So we have Web conferencing capabilities. We have the ability to get fax to the desktop, and other types of things. So the technological revolution and evolution of going from machines to software devices. And the Exchange, the operators, when they were in Dirksen had these huge mechanical switchboards, and even prior to that you had cord boards. Now it's a soft phone on a PC that they use to answer and transfer calls.

**RITCHIE:** They've done away with the telephone books.

**KAUFFMAN:** We could.

**RITCHIE:** Or at least the operators have the numbers on the screen.

**KAUFFMAN:** Yes, right.

**WINN:** I would say probably 95 percent of the calls they get they can transfer either by memory—which amazes me that most of them know as many numbers as they do—but they have a card that provides the numbers for the House and the Senate that are the most frequently called. It's very rare actually that somebody has to go beyond that to transfer a call. But, yes, most of the directory information is online now. I don't know if we will ever

be rid of our telephone books. For one thing, it's a resource for people outside the Senate, who want it. It's a Senate document printed by GPO [the Government Printing Office], and sold by GPO. They never tell us how many they sell, though.

**RITCHIE:** Well, frankly, for our oral history project they have been very useful. We have the telephone directories going back to 1976, and for spelling of names it's the best single source, and for being able to track people's careers. It's quite interesting to pick up the 1970s volumes and see how many of the staff are now senators, for instance.

**WINN:** I think back in the Exchange we have them going back to the early '50s.

**RITCHIE:** What would you say about the technological changes in the time that you've been here?

**WINN:** Well, Rick mentioned the main ones in the telephone area, which is basically the same thing you've seen in the banking industry, where you don't go to the bank anymore to find out what your balance is. You sign on online. We've been doing that same sort of thing, automating it, making it easier for people to do themselves. We still provide the services for people that don't want to do it themselves, but it's much easier for people to do it themselves. The other technological advances that we've seen I've already touched on—moving from minicomputers to microcomputers and local area networks, and now we're sort of going back to the future where a lot of offices are deciding: "Well, it's really too much work to maintain all these servers in my office. Why can't the sergeant at arms just have a big Senate server and sell me or give me the services that I need?" Which, you know, is where we started, back whenever with an IBM mainframe. So that's it.

The other big thing that has hit us really hard, and it's not so much a technological advance as a mindset, is the new emphasis on continuity of operations and redundancy. Before, if you needed something, you bought one of it. Now you can't buy one of it anymore, you have to buy two of it, at least, because you have to make sure that one of them is going to survive somewhere should something happen to the first one. We've re-engineered a lot of our current systems to make sure that they are redundant and that there is a fail-over capability, which in turn has improved our ability to offer services. It enabled some of the things that we have done over the last few years. You know, the telephone itself was not invented as a way to call your Mom in Iowa. It was invented as a way to help deaf



people communicate—that was where Alexander Graham Bell was going with it. Little did he know what he had wrought—to steal a phrase from the telegraph. Similarly, a lot of the things that we’re doing for our continuity of operations, the unintended consequence of that is the ability to offer different services.

**RITCHIE:** In the sense that redundancy just gives you more capacity?

**WINN:** Sometimes it does, and sometimes it doesn’t. Sometimes one device is working all the time and the other is just sitting there waiting for the first one to fail. Other times, you have two devices that are always working. If either one of them fails, the other will pick up the load, sometimes at a reduced capacity, sometimes at the same capacity. It really depends on the system and what you are actually talking about and how it’s been set up. It’s been a challenge, especially with the telephone side. One of my colleagues who is now retired spent most of his time in the Senate Computer Center and then got dragged into the telecom department. He used to say, “It’s not that complicated. It’s two wires.” Well, he learned, and I learned, that telephone systems are a lot more complicated than just two wires might indicate.

One of our challenges, I’m sure Rick can talk about this more, was trying to figure out how to engineer our telephone system because we have a Verizon switch that is located here. Obviously, it’s a different challenge, because chances are if something happens to that Verizon switch, something has also happened to the Dirksen Building, and probably Hart and Russell as well. The main purpose of that switch is to provide the connectivity for the telephone that’s on everybody’s desks in those areas. If those buildings aren’t there, there’s no need for that switch to provide that connectivity, but people still need to be able to call the number and have something happen to it. So it’s an entirely different mindset and challenge than dealing with data. We have a data infrastructure that serves the same people as the telephone switch does, but everybody sort of intuitively understands that that infrastructure is there to serve the PCs that are in those buildings, and if the buildings go away you don’t need that infrastructure either. They don’t quite get that with the telephone service. So we’ve done some unusual things.

**RITCHIE:** Just a really basic question: When you say you have “a Verizon switch,” what do you mean when you say that?

**KAUFFMAN:** Well, Verizon is the telco, the local telephone company, and an enterprise of this size requires a huge PBX, private branch exchange. Back in the '80s there were very few, if any, companies that could offer an entity of this size the ability to buy something. So when you look at the services that are being provided to the members, the quantity of telephones that are here, the ability to provide dial tone every time you pick up that handset, it required a fairly large telephone switch. Really, your options at that time were to go through the local telephone company, and in this particular case, Verizon (and back then it was C&P Telephone) chose to install a central office switch. That's the same type of switch that provides you dial tone at home, and provides dial tone to other businesses and other government agencies. They could have fed us from a central office off campus, but they chose to put it on campus and make it easier to cable out the campus and then allow us to provide exchange and administrative type functions. So that's why it's called a Verizon switch, because they're the people that own it.

**RITCHIE:** And that gives you more flexibility inside the system?

**KAUFFMAN:** It gives you more flexibility, but in some respects it also hampers your capabilities, as we found out with anthrax, when we were prevented from going into the buildings. The telephone switch was operating just fine, but we had no access into the Hart or Dirksen Buildings, so we couldn't get into the telephone switch to make changes to allow folks to move their offices to other locations on the campus. Probably the largest thing that came out of 9/11 for us was to really do an analysis of our entire communications infrastructure and determine where our strengths and our weaknesses were, and are, and then try to build out from there. We've done some things like put a new switch at an off-site location, utilize some features that Verizon offers where you can redirect telephone numbers in the cloud, and take all the equipment that was located in Dirksen and as much as possible geographically disperse it to other buildings on campus or out to the ACF, which then gave us greater flexibility, allowed us to upgrade to more of the latest and greatest technologies, and kind of positioned us where we are right now, which is going into what we call our telecom modernization program, where we are actually looking at replacing that switch and taking the Senate into the next level of technology that is available, which is in the IP or Internet Protocol arena. So you can now put voice over your Internet.

**WINN:** Or your network.

**KAUFFMAN:** Or your network, yes, and provide you with lots of other opportunities and capabilities for off-site, from your home, potentially, to state offices, and a converged effort, I guess, as far as communications goes. That's a major effort. We've put a lot of time in it off and on for about three years, doing studies and requests for information, requests for quotes and things like that. We're getting close to the end of that. We're looking forward to that.

The other thing we did was look at means of communication and besides just having the telephone on the desktop, it became quite clear that cellular telephones as well as the introduction of BlackBerrys into the Senate were going to become a wave of the future. Those things are great as long as you have a window, or you're outside, but when you start getting into the buildings, and especially with six-foot walls, or into the Capitol, your capability in using those devices is pretty limited. Three years ago we began building out an infrastructure within the office buildings, and currently we are doing the Capitol, that allows your cell phone to work in 95 percent of the locations indoors, as well as your BlackBerry. That's enhanced members' capabilities to communicate, and from an emergency situation it's really given our folks the opportunity to be notified, regardless of where they are. As Mr. Pickle [Senate Sergeant at Arms William H. Pickle] said, he was in the cafeteria and made a cell phone call, and he was ecstatic, because that was a dead zone.

**RITCHIE:** That was the problem on September 11<sup>th</sup>, that there was no bell signal to evacuate the Capitol. Someone said that she grew up in an area where there were frequent tornadoes, and they had a tornado warning, why couldn't they have a warning system in the Capitol? The police literally had to knock on every door to tell people to evacuate.

**WINN:** Well, when you talk about the bell system, we have the legislative clock and bell system, if you go back and look at some of your older telephone books you'll see that there was a Civil Defense warning on the legislative bell system, which was just continuous ringing basically, or pulse ringing. It was a Civil Defense warning, but since then we've put in PA systems and annunciators, and where we didn't, the Capitol Police did, to handle that. Yes, the in-building wireless has been quite a feat for us. That's one of the things that I think Rick will have as his legacy when he leaves here, the in-building wireless.

**RITCHIE:** Do the BlackBerrys come under your control as well?

**WINN:** Yes.

**RITCHIE:** Because that's certainly been a big change here, for everybody in a leadership position.

**WINN:** That was another thing that we started off by giving every member a BlackBerry, just so they could touch them and feel them and see how they work. Now I think we have about 5,000 of them out there, so that was a success. It will be interesting to see how these work, because on September 11 the big knock was: Well nobody's cell phone worked, but the people who had BlackBerrys at the time, those did work. At the time, the BlackBerrys were on a separate network from the cellular telephones, so there was no competition on the BlackBerry network with people trying to make cellular telephone calls. Well, now that network has all but gone away and everybody has a BlackBerry that relies on the telephone network to get through, it remains to be seen—although they assure us that it's going to work—whether it really will work the next time we have a big, major event like that.

**RITCHIE:** Well, the biggest danger that I see with BlackBerrys is that when I'm driving out of the Senate parking garage, people walk out into the middle of the street bent over their BlackBerrys. When they're text-messaging they're oblivious to where they are.

**WINN:** It's just like a cell phone, it conveys with it a cloak of invincibility that you don't have to stop at stop lights or look before crossing, you just assume that somebody else is going to take care of you. There is a special Providence that looks after fools and little children.

**RITCHIE:** The technology is changing so rapidly, how do you keep up with it?

**WINN:** In the sergeant at arms we have a technology assessment group, an IT research and deployment group that does technology in general. Some of it is wireless, some of it is telephone. We do our own as far as the telephone side of things, which tends not to change quite as rapidly as other areas, but we do have our technology assessment group which is always out there looking at what's the new latest, greatest. Is it mature? Does it have a use here in the Senate? Is it supportable here in the Senate? Because a lot of things are out there that are built on an organizational paradigm that the Senate doesn't adhere to.

Something that requires a lot of administration per person which isn't going to happen here in the Senate, because we don't have the resources to do it and the offices aren't going to do it themselves. Similarly, something that involves a large investment up front may or may not happen. We need to get a lot of buy-in before we can do that, because we don't drive what people will adopt. We can't force people to use things. We're just like everybody else here. We're trying to provide services without being able to say that you must use this. We do occasionally, but in general we don't.

**KAUFFMAN:** The other thing we do is we attend a lot of conferences, a lot of seminars, and we encourage our staff to do the same. We get technology refreshers from the different vendors we deal with. They'll come in and tell us what's the latest and greatest. And the nice thing—you asked me what the difference between private industry and government is—everybody wants to do work with the government. So it's easy to find out what's out there, because they're knocking on your door wanting to tell you about it.

**RITCHIE:** This is also a political institution, where you have members who are desperate to communicate constantly. Do you get pressures from inside, from people who want systems to do things, perhaps beyond what you have in mind?

**WINN:** Oh, yes. It's not necessarily in my area right at the moment—it sort of is—but one of the things that we're facing right now is all the people who are communicating with their constituents via e-mail. Their constituents send them e-mail, or go to their Web site and fill out a form, or they buy e-mail lists of people in their states that they want to communicate with. Well, they're getting blocked as spammers. The Internet service providers on the other end get these 10,000 messages for people at Yahoo.com and say, "Wait a minute, just based on sheer volume this is spam, and so I'm not accepting any mail from you anymore." That's an issue, and a case where people have pushed things beyond where it needs to be. With every technology that we put out, there are always going to be people who are going to push it to the limits. And there are a number of people here in the Senate, and I'm sure on the House side as well, who see every restriction, every guideline, as something to be gotten around—the sport in trying to beat the system. We've always got those people as well. It keeps us on our toes.

**RITCHIE:** When I toured the Exchange the other day, the service that impressed me the most was the conference call set up. I hadn't realized how much time went into that and

how regular that was as a service. Is that something relatively new?

**WINN:** No, we've been doing that for years and years. A lot of members like it. They like the personal touch of having somebody from the Capitol Exchange making sure that only the people that are supposed to be there are there, and when something goes wrong they can jump in and try to fix it. As Rick mentioned, one of the things we've set up is a self-service conference system, more like what some people are accustomed to using, where you set up a conference call for X number of people at such and such a time and you send them a message: "Here, call this 800 number and enter this code and you'll be put into our conference." Some members have adopted that for their calls that used to go through the Exchange, but others have not. They want to hang onto the way they've always done things. So we're going to accommodate them as long as they want to do it that way.

**KAUFFMAN:** Yes, we go against the typical shift that you would see. Normally, if you have a technology and you bring in a new technology, what you see is the technology here [signals with a hand held high] and as this new technology is introduced, the old technology starts doing this [drops hand]. In this particular case, the first one has stayed the course, and the second has grown exponentially, just phenomenally.

**RITCHIE:** Perhaps it's a generational change. Older members are used to doing things a certain way and the newer members quickly adopt the new methods.

**WINN:** Some people, they see it as a more personalized service when they have somebody there who is looking out for the conference. Speaking of such things, one of the other things that the Exchange does is during recesses the members will send in their itineraries and their contact information for where they will be each day during the recess so that if somebody is looking for them they can just call the Exchange and find them. That's something that you don't find much of anymore. It's an interesting service.

**RITCHIE:** Also over the years an increasingly large number of staff have been shifted to the home states of senators. So if a senator has a staff of 60, 20 of them might be back in the home state. That requires different kinds of communications just to have an office meeting.

**WINN:** Right and to do that, one of the things we did was provide each member—we need to stop doing this but we can't figure out how to stop it once we've done it—with a video teleconferencing set up. We bought each member a video conferencing system, one for D.C. and one for a state office, because most members have a main state office. We upgraded their circuits to make it work better. So there is a lot of meeting going on between state offices, or even a constituent will come into a state office for a meeting with the member, where the member is in Washington and doing this by video teleconference. A lot of people like that. A lot of people have bought additional units to put them in other state offices or other locations here in D.C. That's a technology that's catching on.

It's funny, I have this little memo about the history of the Capitol Exchange and I'd forgotten that once again we beat the House. We had the first telephone system in the Capitol. We put in a PBX, a private branch exchange, in the Capitol in 1897, with 25 to 30 lines of service, and one operator. It wasn't until the next year that the House put in its PBX, with one operator and a few lines. Then it was a couple of years later when they combined the two. It was in 1901 that they combined the Exchange and made a single Exchange, so it's been a 106 years now that this combined Exchange has been in operation.

**RITCHIE:** One of the stories I read was that the first operator in the Capitol was actually a page.

**WINN:** Right.

**RITCHIE:** But they were adolescent boys who did what adolescent boys tend to do, they cut up, and that's when they decided to hire a mature woman to be the operator. From that point on it was all women operators, but I understand that you have recently hired some men operators.

**WINN:** Well, obviously now the position is not restricted to women, and we have had men in the not-too-distant past, but for whatever reason it's an occupation or a position that tends to appeal to women, I guess. We do have at the moment two male operators out of the 35—

**KAUFFMAN:** Thirty-one.

**WINN:** Thirty-one, that's right, 35 total. Thirty-one operators, and two of them are men. One of them just started not too long ago, and the other one hasn't been here that long, for that matter. And they make great operators.

**KAUFFMAN:** I think initially, and I'm guessing at this, but it probably had something to do with pay, it was a lower paying job. With parity and everything it's come up. It's an attractive starting position, especially if you are trying to get your foot into the Hill. In a non-member situation it's a great opportunity to come on.

**RITCHIE:** It will be a surprise to people who call the Capitol Operator, however, and have a man answer.

**KAUFFMAN:** It is.

**WINN:** I sat down one day during one of our call-in campaigns and took over one of the positions for a few hours, and there were people who were surprised that it was me answering the phone.

**KAUFFMAN:** The thing that amazes me is the amount of members who dial in for the personal services and recognize the operator's voice, and in some cases their name, and carry on a conversation, and vice versa, how many of the members when they call in the operators by voice recognize who they are. That's really a neat thing to have happen back there.

**RITCHIE:** Sort of a relationship develops.

**KAUFFMAN:** Yes, absolutely.

**RITCHIE:** Well, we used to have "squawk" boxes on our desks, before there was C-SPAN.

**WINN:** The little green boxes.

**RITCHIE:** That sat on your desk, and you listened to the debate on the Senate floor. It was surprising how easily you could identify who was speaking, even though there was no



picture and no announcer. In those days there were much stronger regional accents, it seems to me.

**KAUFFMAN:** Absolutely. I even know those were 401B boxes—that's how old I go back in this crazy business.

**RITCHIE:** We've touched on this when we talked about continuity of operations, but security has become an enormous issue on Capitol Hill and I wondered how much since 9/11 security has affected the work that you do?

**WINN:** I think it's more on the continuity of operations side of things than on the security side, actually. Day-to-day—

**KAUFFMAN:** Other than alert notifications or things like that.

**WINN:** Yes, you've got your new systems for sending out notifications that require care and feeding. Day-to-day it hasn't affected us too terribly much other than having to go through magnetometers and whatnot.

**RITCHIE:** To go back to the continuity of operations, on September 11<sup>th</sup>, everybody on Capitol Hill was evacuated, including the telephone operators.

**WINN:** Yes, despite their protestations, I guess.

**KAUFFMAN:** Yes.

**RITCHIE:** What happened? And how has that been dealt with since then?

**WINN:** Rick can tell you that because I was out of the country on September 11th.

**KAUFFMAN:** Yes, it was, "Welcome to the Senate, Rick." [laughs]

**WINN:** He had just started in June or July, so he had only been here a couple of months.

**KAUFFMAN:** I actually went back to the Exchange when the second airplane hit the tower to make sure that they were okay. At that point we started getting the notification to evacuate. Even worse than that, we were told to evacuate and go home. So the operators said, "No, we're not leaving. We're open 365 days a years. We never shut down the Exchange." And the Capitol Police made it quite clear that yes, you were going to evacuate. At the time, we had a very important conference call taking place and we informed the Capitol Police that we would be more than happy to leave but we needed to complete this call. They allowed us to do that, and then we left the building, and went home as directed. Within an hour I received a call to get back to the Hill and stand the Exchange back up. So we did, a few operators were close by and they were able to get back in, and we actually used part of the secretary [of the Senate]'s staff to come over and staff the telephones. We were down about an hour, we were able to re-staff quickly, but there were very few calls coming in. Everybody was glued to CNN or their news stations to find out what was going on. We were able to handle the call volume. Where that led us, though, was what do we do in the event something occurs again? So we have looked at and have actually established alternate sites for the operators to go to. One within the Capitol complex, one outside the Capitol complex, and one even further away from the Capitol complex. That gives us the ability to pretty much keep running, and answer the calls, and provide the services as needed.

**RITCHIE:** It was interesting that the White House shut down their phone system at the same time.

**KAUFFMAN:** They did.

**RITCHIE:** It's sort of startling in retrospect to think that you'd cut off your communications system at a moment like that, but I guess the instinct was just to protect everybody.

**KAUFFMAN:** Well, you do. You've got shelter in place and different things that you have to do with leadership and all those types of things. And all those were occurring. Our call was actually coordinating some of that, so that's why it was important that we complete the call that we were on before we did anything else.

**RITCHIE:** The other problem was that the leadership was trying to communicate with the members and the members were trying to find out what was happening.

**KAUFFMAN:** Correct.

**RITCHIE:** And the instinct is to call the Capitol Operator.

**KAUFFMAN:** Call the Capitol Operator, yes. And we were here, so we were able to complete those calls for them.

**RITCHIE:** Not to mention that going home that day was a real task.

**KAUFFMAN:** I got lucky, I guess, because I walked out of here, walked across the street, and walked right onto the Metro, which immediately took off. I guess that was the last Metro out of town. My wife met me at Shady Grove. I got in the car and got home, and the phone rang, and got back in the car and drove back down here. [laughs] So it was a wake-up call.

**RITCHIE:** And you were fortunately out of the country, right?

**WINN:** I was in London. I was on vacation. A friend was getting married the Saturday after September 11<sup>th</sup>, and so another friend and I had gone and we were touring London. As it turned out—I didn't know this until later—we were on top of St. Paul's Cathedral when all this happened. I didn't find out about it until much later. Then tried to call back in to see what was going on. It took quite a while to get through from overseas back here. I don't recall who I got ahold of first, but just to check in to see, make sure that everything was okay and running. That's when I first heard that they evacuated the Exchange, and then the seats weren't even cold yet when they said, "Oh, never mind, come back." Like Rick said, we got some of the legislative staff from the secretary's office over here to man the phones. At the time I think we were still using phones.

**KAUFFMAN:** Yes, we were.

**WINN:** It was basically the same phone that you have on your desk, that's what the operators were using, so it wasn't difficult to do it.

**KAUFFMAN:** If it rings, answer it.

**WINN:** Exactly.

**RITCHIE:** I've interviewed several of the people who came over here that day because we did a continuity of operations oral history, and they were all very proud of their service, because in a crisis like that there was a great sense of helplessness. They at least had something to do. They were some of the few people in Washington who were given a job, and they had someplace to go, and it was a sort of proud moment for them.

**WINN:** Right. I guess we're continuing in the tradition of moving the Exchange further and further away from the Capitol Building. We keep trying to argue that we're not a target here.

**KAUFFMAN:** We're the best kept secret in D.C.

**RITCHIE:** The other thing that happened that day, which you mentioned earlier, was that everybody's cell phone wouldn't work. The system overloaded and crashed. The question is what do you have in mind for a future situation like that? You said we don't know about the BlackBerry, what would be the means of communication at that point?

**WINN:** Two things have changed since then. We have the in-building wireless system. If you are out in the street and in the middle of nowhere you are relying on whatever Verizon or Sprint or Nextel or Cingular or AT&T—well, they don't exist anymore—has put in place to handle those calls. That's what happened on September 11<sup>th</sup>—almost everybody was outside of their building trying to talk on the cell phone, and there was one poor cell tower up there that's getting hit by 5,000 people, going "I can't handle this." Around here, the carriers have beefed up the service, not only in response to September 11<sup>th</sup> but they realized that there are a lot of big events that take place near Capitol Hill. There are concerts on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and Memorial Day and other holidays, there are marches and protests, and the Inauguration every four years. So they've spent some money to beef up the infrastructure around here. Then we have our in-building wireless, which if you are in the building it's got plenty of capacity to handle just about everybody. Also if you're in the building, you've got your desk phone, although it's amazing how people tend to forget how that thing sitting on their desk that you pick up and talk on is a viable option for communications.

**KAUFFMAN:** We've done a little bit of testing on capacity, because we take the opportunity during events like 4<sup>th</sup> of July and things like that to do different broadcast testing and see if we have breakage or if the capacity can handle it, because you do have 100,000 folks out on the Mall and it's a great opportunity to test. With the carriers' help in building out their infrastructure, we feel pretty good at this point. It's significantly improved over 9/11.

**WINN:** The messaging portion of BlackBerrys probably will continue to work. I'm [knocks on the tabletop] 99 percent sure of that. It's simply because of the difference in the way messages are transmitted as opposed to voice conversations. If I call you on the cell phone, there's a radio tower somewhere that has dedicated a radio, basically, to my conversation. It doesn't matter whether I'm talking or not, there's this radio that is handling the conversation. Well, with the messaging, you compose a whole long message and you send it, and sending that message takes that radio a tenth of a second, and then it's free to do somebody else's. The same radio with a given capacity can handle a lot more e-mail messages and text messages and things like that than can that same radio if it's trying to carry voice conversations. So just inherently the way the systems are structured gives it more capacity for text-type messages. If everybody is sitting there trying to download CNN on their little screens so that they can see pictures of whatever it is that's going on, it might be a different story, but if you're just sending email chances are it will get through.

**KAUFFMAN:** The perfect example of that is a lot of reality shows today or the game shows, where they have you text-message in or do different things like that. Besides the fact they're generating revenue for all the carriers that are doing that, and it's a cool thing, the other thing it does is it enables them to get 20, 30, 40 million people voting versus the telephone, because the telephone is now designed to choke out traffic. But it doesn't blackout and cave in, like it did in New York back in the '80s. I think that is a great test of that technology and how quickly it can do things.

**RITCHIE:** It does work both ways here in that you have lots of constituents who are trying to get into the system. I remember during the presidential impeachment trial—

**WINN:** We all do! [laughs]

**RITCHIE:** —the phone system just got overwhelmed. From your perspective, what was it like at that stage?

**WINN:** That was an interesting time. The Exchange was getting bombarded. We were handling some very minuscule percentage of the calls that were actually coming in. We were handling them faster than the offices were handling them. A lot of the reason that we were having such a difficult time handling them was everybody that people wanted to talk to, their lines were busy. Whether it was because they were all talking to somebody or because they had just given up and busied out all their phones so they weren't getting any calls, we don't know. During those situations, people keep saying, "You need to beef up the capacity of the Exchange." Well, the Exchange really isn't the choke point. The choke point is the individual offices who are getting the calls. We're passing them to them as fast as those people can take them. Taking the Exchange out of the picture wouldn't help. Or increasing the capacity of the Exchange isn't going to help constituent A get to his or her representative any faster.

The interesting thing to see is that when we do have these high call-in volumes, how the productivity of the Exchange goes up. The time that it takes them to answer the calls goes down. The amount of time they spend talking to people goes down. So the amount of calls that go through the Exchange goes up, sometimes 20, 30, 40 percent over what it would be during a normal time. But again, it would be even higher if the people they were trying to transfer the calls to were actually accepting the calls. Because for every call, two things happen. Every call that you try to transfer to somebody who is busy, on the Senate side chances are they want you to try their other senator. So there's a second chunk of time that's devoted to that. Then if that second senator is busy as well, you have to explain to them that you can't take a message and they should call back later or, "Here are the numbers, you can try calling them directly." Some number of those people call us back. They just keep calling the number that we have.

**KAUFFMAN:** Hang up and call right back.

**WINN:** Because one of the things we've noticed is a lot of public advocacy groups, or lobbying groups, or special interest groups, they buy 1-800 numbers and they just point them to the Capitol Exchange. They tell their folks, "If you are interested in prescription drug reform, call 1-800-PRESCRIPTIONS—or whatever—and ask to speak to your senator."

Well, these people don't know who their senator is, or why they're even calling other than they got a flier that said, or saw a commercial that said, "call this number." We don't have a toll-free number that Congress pays for—so if people are calling our number directly they're having to pay the freight. But these toll-free numbers that somebody else is paying for, fine, they'll call 10, 12, 15 times and get through.

I don't remember what the percentage of the calls that were actually presented, the network was blocking some number of calls, and some number of calls were coming in. We were answering some small percentage of those during the impeachment. It had some effects on the switch, but not that great of effect. The biggest effect was nobody could get through to anybody else's office because their lines were all tied up with them talking to their constituents.

**RITCHIE:** *Roll Call* ran a story about the Senate Historical Office because we were on the phone for practically the entire impeachment trial. In the morning there would be a stack of telephone messages from the voice mail that we'd have to respond to, and then people would call all day long. It was mostly journalists, but sometimes it was constituents who were watching on television and wanted to know what something meant. I guess the operators thought it sounded more like a historical question than a political one and forwarded it to us.

**WINN:** Yes, exactly.

**RITCHIE:** Another unusual thing about the way the Congress works is that we're not 9 to 5. We have members whose states and districts are in multiple time zones. If you count the Alaskan and Hawaiian senators, it's even beyond three. So the staff here work well into the night, and you have a series of shifts for the operators. How does that work? How do you maintain essentially 24 hour service here?

**WINN:** Like you said, we have a number of shifts. They are not your typical three-by-eight-hour shifts, where you have an 8 to 4, and a 4 to midnight, and a midnight to 8 shift. We've got staggered shifts. The first one in the morning starts at 6. Then more people come in later in the morning. In the meat of the day, between about 10 o'clock and 3 o'clock, we have the most number of people on. Then the people that came in at 6 start going home, and then more people are coming in. So we stagger it and we ramp it up and then it ramps down

in the late afternoon, until 11 o'clock, when the folks come in for the overnight shift. We have two people on over each night.

One of the interesting things about this is it's sort of like the military. You're here until you're relieved. If your shift ends at 11 and the 11 o'clock operator is not there, you can't leave. You can't just get up and leave the Exchange unattended. That same thing during snowstorms and whatnot, the operators know to bring their overnight bag and some food if it looks like it's going to snow, because chances are they're not going to be able to get home and their replacement is not going to be able to get in.

**KAUFFMAN:** They do it quite readily and with happy faces.

**WINN:** And you touched on something with the secretary's folks: the operators take pride in the fact that they are, basically besides the Capitol Police, the only 24 by 7, 365-day-a-year operation on Capitol Hill. And that they're relied on, and people expect them to be there. They know that when they sign up. We've very clear with people when they apply for jobs that no whining when they say "The government is closed on Tuesday"—

**KAUFFMAN:** And you're not! [laughs]

**WINN:** And you're not, exactly.

**RITCHIE:** Well, since 1995 Congress has been operating under the Accountability Act. Has that complicated your lives? Because it involves a lot of labor regulations, while the Congress operates on such a different schedule than practically anybody else.

**WINN:** Well, we've done what everybody else has done, classified our employees as exempt or non-exempt. The Exchange is non-exempt, and they work shift work, and actually because of their shift work their nominal hours are seven-hours a day. So if something happens and they have to stay late we don't have to adjust the schedule somewhere else, because there's not a lot of room. We really are robbing Peter to pay Paul if we ran eight-hour shifts and somebody had to work an extra hour because somebody didn't show up, well then we'd either have to pay them overtime, which we don't budget for, or we'd have to cut their hours an hour somewhere else, which means that somebody would have to come in an hour early, and it's just a never-ending thing. So the seven-hour shifts



work well for that sort of thing. If they work over they get paid, but it's straight-time as opposed to overtime, until they've reached the 40-hours-a-week. It allows us to provide the coverage that we do.

In other areas, we stagger start-times. We have a contracted-out help desk for microcomputer and whatnot related problems. Those tend to be the more serious ones, because it is a personal device. They're here from 7 in the morning until 8 in the evening, or half an hour after the Senate goes out of session, whichever is later. Everybody else works—we're basically covered from 7 to 6 or 8 to 6. But if a copier breaks, for instance, usually there's another copier somewhere around. You just take your stuff and go to the other copier. If a telephone breaks, there's almost always another telephone somewhere around it. Everybody is subject to recall. If something happens and we need to get somebody back here, we bring them back. We've worked around it, and we've made sure that we pay everybody overtime if they work overtime. On the employees, and the supervisors, is where most of that burden falls, accounting for hours and making sure that people don't work overtime if it can be avoided, and if they do that it's properly accounted for and documented so that we can pay them the overtime that they're due. That's been the biggest thing.

**RITCHIE:** I've always had to explain to people outside the institution that the Congress is an organization that works essentially from Tuesday through Thursday and can work 16 hours or more on Wednesday, because that's the one day that everybody is in town. I gather that the calls coming in here are more intense whenever the Senate is in session and people can watch what's going on, as opposed to when they're away.

**WINN:** It varies with in-session and out-of-session, but what really drives call volume are hot button issues and not what's being said on the floor but what the news media are reporting. We get a spike at the Exchange when the evening news comes on on the West Coast. Or the talk radio folks gin up support or opposition to whatever it just might be and tell the people that are listening to call. There isn't that much during the recess hours. The call volume goes down. But it's not the Senate being in session per se, it's other people's reactions to the Senate being in session.

**KAUFFMAN:** Yes, we hit a peak yesterday because of a comment that was made [by Senator John Kerry about the war in Iraq] that drove it.

**WINN:** And the funny thing is, we don't ask people why they want to speak to their member. That's not why we're here. We don't care. Two things that we don't tell people is how many calls that we got about a particular issue, because we don't know what the people were calling in about, and we don't like to tell how many calls came in on a certain day because there are people out there that would see that as a record to be broken. I don't know if you recall, there was the Virtual March on Washington last year or the year before last, where some interest group was getting people to call their members.<sup>2</sup> They had them timed. It was like, if you signed up to go on their Virtual March on Washington, they sent you a message: "You will call Senator X at 10:28 in the morning and Senator Y at 10:47 in the morning." There were people who were sending faxes in. They were going to try to set some sort of a record of most calls to Capitol Hill. Well, we wouldn't satisfy them by telling them how many calls came into Capitol Hill, because we don't want to encourage that sort of thing. It's like the National Park Service no longer counts the people that show up for demonstrations on the Mall. It's just a number for somebody to aim at.

**RITCHIE:** And they're never happy with whatever number that you give out.

**WINN:** Right, the organizers are never happy with whatever the number is. Exactly. And the same thing with this Virtual March. I don't remember what their stated goal was, but from what we saw they didn't quite make it.

**KAUFFMANN:** No. They wanted to jam the Exchange and that didn't happen.

**WINN:** Right.

**RITCHIE:** That raises a question about the media. Do you have to deal with reporters at all?

**WINN:** We try not to. If they call, for anybody in the sergeant at arms the response is they need to call the executive office and explain what it is they want to know and why.

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<sup>2</sup> On February 26, 2003, anti-Iraq War protesters conducted a Virtual March on Washington by calling, faxing, and e-mailing the Senate and the White House with hundreds of thousands of messages opposing military action against Iraq.

They will let us know whether we're to talk to them or whether to provide the executive office with the information and let the executive office deal with the media. But we do get calls. I remember one woman who called me during that Virtual March. "Is it true that the Capitol Exchange is down?" "Um, no." "Well, I'm told that people calling in are getting a busy signal." "Well, that's fine, but we're still answering calls. From what we are seeing, people were not getting busy signals, so I don't know who's telling you. But I'll be happy to transfer you to the Exchange right now and you can see," which I did, and she got right through. I think the operator was kind of annoyed when I said, "Never mind."

**KAUFFMAN:** "I'm busy, leave me alone!"

**WINN:** Exactly. I think the record for calls still goes to the Clarence Thomas hearings.

**RITCHIE:** That's interesting, just everyone one way or the other wanted to state their opinion.

**WINN:** Yes. It was televised, and probably more dramatic than the impeachment trial was.

**RITCHIE:** Yes, its outcome was certainly more up in the air.

**WINN:** One of the things that people seem to be confused about, not so much now that we are a single operation but when we were a joint operation, they thought that there were House operators answering the calls that came into the House and Senate operators answering the calls that came into the Senate, and that's never been the case. For one thing, if you go and do a Google search on the House Web site, you'll find that they list the Senate main number more often than they list their own main number, which I find odd. There has always been two main numbers, but I'm not sure why that is. The House is 225-3121, and we're 224-3121. We're the Capitol.

**RITCHIE:** But they'll both get you into the same Exchange?

**WINN:** They both go to the exact same place.

**KAUFFMAN:** Which is why we answer it, "Capitol Exchange, may we help you?"

**WINN:** Yes, exactly. We don't know which number they called, or care.

**RITCHIE:** You've alluded to some of this, but where do you think things are going? What's your projection for the next 10 years?

**KAUFFMAN:** Oh, I thought you were going to ask me about the election. [laughs]

**RITCHIE:** That could have an impact on the future, too.

**KAUFFMAN:** Well, technology has definitely evolved a long way from where we were in 1986 when we put this phone system in. Wireless capabilities, the ability to take your cell phone at some point in the near future, probably two years out, and have that actually be a Wi-Fi device as well as a cellular device as well as your telephone. It just roams seamlessly between them. The ability to take a telephone or a soft phone on a PC and dial in via broadband and your VPN client, and actually assume all the features and the functions you have from your desktop, and conduct business. The caller doesn't know if you're in Washington or if you're in Iowa or if you're on vacation in the Caribbean. So there's lots of opportunities from that standpoint. I think the challenge is: Is the institution ready to go to the next technology? Based on our discussions with some of the committees that we have helping us through some of these things, I think they are. There's always going to be the few that hold out. Interesting enough, it's not necessarily the old-timers that are the holdbacks. Some of them will embrace technology very well. But the one thing they want to make sure is that when they pick up that telephone, they get a dial tone. That's our challenge as technology evolves, to ensure that that dial tone is always there.

**WINN:** I think we will continue to see the convergence of video and voice communications on data networks and all that that provides. Eventually, if this goes as planned, you can pick up a phone and dial 202-224-whatever and it will ring in Des Moines, Iowa, or Boise, Idaho, and sound like the person is in Washington. Then it will be easier for members to move more people out to the state offices if they want to. I find it interesting, since I've been here for 19 years now, they've been talking about trying to move more people out to the state offices because the space is cheaper, and I still think it's somewhere around 25 or 30 percent of the staff are in the state offices. It's been pretty much that. There's

4,000-some-odd member office staff, and a little more than 1,000 of them are in state offices. It will be interesting to see if the improvements in communications help accelerate that trend toward moving people to state offices, because the person that answers your letter, expressing your opinion on something, there's no reason for that person to be in Washington. There's no logistical reason for that person to be in Washington. They could be anywhere. I think the trend will take us where it's easier for people to justify putting more staff in the state offices.

**RITCHIE:** Some mail rooms have moved—senators have moved their whole mail operations out to the home state, in part because of the mail screening problems and because it takes up a lot of space.

**WINN:** Right. It's interesting that they move people out to the state offices but we don't ever get any space back from them.

**RITCHIE:** Yes, something quickly fills the vacuum.

**WINN:** Exactly, the Senate abhors a vacuum in space.

**RITCHIE:** Well, I know your operators still miss the space they had over in the Dirksen Building.

**WINN:** I don't blame them. It was not nice space but it was centrally located and convenient to everything, the Credit Union, the cafeteria, everything that you lucky people who work in one of those Senate office buildings or the Capitol take for granted, and those of us who work out here in the [Postal Square] hinterlands long for.

**KAUFFMAN:** They miss their kitchen.

**RITCHIE:** They all mentioned that, yes. Well, are there any other issues that you'd like to bring up that I haven't raised questions about?

**WINN:** Not that I can think of. I'm just looking through my little historical notes here, about the Exchange. Actually, one of the things—you may not remember this when you did it, but one of the things you've done is compiled the minutes of the Democratic and

Republican conference meetings for the Senate, from the '20s up, and I was looking through those, where they outlined how many operators we have, and which ones are patronage and which ones are not patronage. When I first read "exempt," I thought well, this was before the Fair Labor Standards Act, so that's not what they're talking about. Oh, exempt from being replaced by a patronage employee.

I think the Exchange has been one of the more successful joint ventures on Capitol Hill over the years, probably because it flies under the radar. Unlike the Capitol Police, or the Architect of the Capitol, or the Guide Service, which is visible out there every day and gets a lot of attention mainly from the House side, a lot of interference from the House side, this operation has mainly flown under the radar, probably because it works well and is not very visible. We hope to keep it that way. We hope to keep it working well and—

**KAUFFMAN:** Invisible.

**WINN:** Yes. Quietly and efficiently do the work that everyone expects us to do.

**RITCHIE:** Well, I think you're right. Because it works, people take it for granted, and that's the perfect situation.

**WINN:** We're doing this telecom modernization, you know. Greg's analogy is: "I turn on the tap and the water comes on. I don't think of sitting down and writing the water company a letter thanking them for making sure the water comes on everyday." It's the same way with telephone service. People just take it for granted that it's going to be there, and the Capitol Exchange is going to be there. It's our challenge to make sure that we live up to that, that it continues to be something that can be taken for granted.

**RITCHIE:** Well, that you very much for participating, I appreciate it.

**KAUFFMAN:** Thank you.

**WINN:** Thank you.

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