

CONTEL

N E W E N G L A N D

Family Gazette

A PUBLICATION FOR CONTEL CUSTOMERS & THEIR FAMILIES IN NEW ENGLAND

Tom Rush talks about the role of telecommunications in the music business

Tom Rush was one of the singer songwriters to emerge on the American folk music scene in the early 1960s. In fact, this year marks his 26th year in the music industry. During his career he's become internationally known and has been featured in Time Magazine, Variety, The Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Billboard, Rolling Stone, The Washington Post, The Boston Globe, The Herald, and Yankee Magazine.

Tom has sold out performances at Carnegie Hall, New York and the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. A recent PBS broadcast of a concert at the Symphony Hall in Boston was watched by 10 million viewers. He has recorded thirteen albums to date.

Fifteen years ago, he settled down on a 600-acre farm in the Hillsboro, New Hampshire area. At that time, two important events occurred. He started a business called Maple Hill Productions, and also became a Contel customer.

Following is an interview Mr. Rush granted the Gazette. Its content focuses on the role of telecommunications in the music business.

GAZETTE: *What role does the telephone play in your business?*

RUSH: They're great for holding papers. No, seriously . . . Maple Hill has divisions, all of which are growing, and most of which rely heavily on the phone. The artist management and booking division is one of them. We use outgoing mail solicitations and telephone follow-up with outgoing and incoming WATS lines for that purpose. We also have a small record company. So far we've produced three Tom Rush records.

We've put together a small mail order business as well, to sell those records and others . . . and we mail out catalogues to about 18,000 people inviting them to buy recordings or miscellaneous promotional merchandise by mail order or phone.

For that purpose, we have an "800" number.

Now, our fourth division handles media production. We produce programming for public radio and public television. The phone use there is about the same as any communications business . . . we have to contact people all over the country to organize and coordinate these projects.

We recently purchased a "612" key system from Contel, because we had a mishmash of different phones on everybody's desk. When calls came in, the place sounded like a battle cruiser under attack. So this new system is a much more compact and streamlined way of handling things.

GAZETTE: *How would you describe your relationship with Contel?*

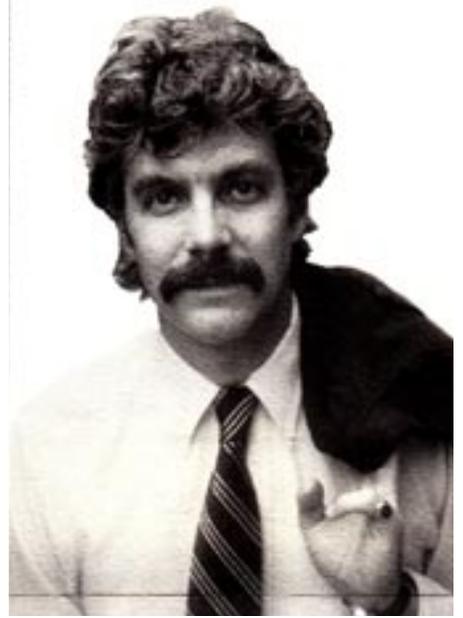
RUSH: Service has improved remarkably over the years. They used to have this old "stream driven" relay system downtown. Dial a number, and then wait. You could hear those things clanking into place. But now (since Contel's Hillsboro digital conversion in 1981) there's no comparison.

GAZETTE: *Now, you said you've been a Contel customer for around fifteen years?*

RUSH: Yes, I'd retired from show business and I only had one phone line. Then I gradually got back into my old ways and started getting busier and busier. So, over the past few years I've gone from one phone to . . . seven now, all together.

GAZETTE: *You're originally from Concord, New Hampshire. Is that right?*

RUSH: I was born in Portsmouth, raised in Concord. My daddy taught at St. Paul's School in Concord, so I was a faculty brat at SPS. Then I was shipped off to another boarding school in Massachusetts, and ended



up at Harvard. I took five years to complete a four-year degree . . . I took off a year in the middle of my Harvard experience. And I graduated in 1964.

I lived around Boston for a while, then I moved to New York, because that was where the action was in the music business at that time. I lived there for about six years, and moved to Hillsboro, because that's where the action wasn't. It was a departure from what many of my contemporaries were doing. They were all moving to Los Angeles to be in the middle of things. . . . and I . . . went the other way.

It works very well for me, because it's a great place to come back to after being on the road and being a "public" person. It's nice to come back here, drive my tractor around, and enjoy the peace and quiet.

GAZETTE: *Does Maple Hill have any major new initiatives in the works?*

RUSH: Yes. We're producing Club 47™ concerts for some of the country's major institutions. Events in the last year include Harvard's 350th, Carnegie Hall, Boston Symphony Hall, and a series for the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, DC . . . many more in the works.

These events bring together established artists such as Bonnie Raitt, Emmylou Harris and Joan Baez with some of the best of the emerging generation of folk talent . . . for example, Buskin & Batteau and Christine Lavin.

We are also seeking corporate funding for another television special based on the Club 47™ concept.

GAZETTE: *Tom, thank you again for your valuable time and good words. We wish you continued success with your business, career, and future.*