

Gym Rat Rantings

by Bob Ring



All I Want is a Telephone

My uncle, Douglas Ring, was the first person to conceive of cellular telephone service - in an internal memo for Bell Labs in 1947. Unfortunately, the technology didn't yet exist. The first cell phone call wasn't made until 1973 by a Motorola engineer.

Then in 1992 IBM developed the first "smartphone," combining a speaker, a microphone, a keyboard, a display screen, and a battery with a miniature computer - enough electronics to fill a small suitcase.

Today, cell phones fit in the palm of your hand, weigh only a few ounces, and offer features such as color graphics, musical ring tones and voice-activated dialing. Connected to a wireless network, you can make phone calls, text, receive faxes, browse the internet, send and receive e-mail, or play videos. Most cell phones now include built-in digital cameras, spreadsheet software, GPS location services, and online banking.

My Uncle lived until 2000. I don't know what he thought of the amazing development and expansion of his original idea. But Pat carries on the family tradition of cell phone applications, exploring each new evolutionary step.

Pat's latest device is something called a "Droid," you know, from "android," a mobile robot. Cute name aside, this cell phone is really something! Besides all the stuff mentioned already, Pat can stream live TV and radio, and has the phone hooked up for use in her automobile.

Pat's favorite applications, called "apps" by her fellow "techies," include storing photos and favorite musical numbers, downloading books to read, streaming live news and sports scores, and scanning reward-card bar codes to use at stores. Oh yes, one app takes you to an online market place where you can shop for new apps.

Pat keeps the cell phone charger on her nightstand next to the "rain machine" for her tinnitus. While charging, the phone can display photos, play music, turn into an alarm clock, or show the weather forecast for the next four days!

Pat loves learning about all the features of her new phone and trying to impress me with all that hand-held capability. But I am totally behind the times! I keep thinking, if I make the wrong move, I will be "beamed" up to the starship Enterprise.