

Used Cell Phone & PDA Drive For Fred Patten

Who are you, and why are you doing this? My name is Glen Wooten, and I am doing this for Fred Patten, a Los Angeles area fan who was afflicted with a stroke on March 11th. Fred is very active in many different fandoms, and is largely responsible for the rise of Japanese animation taking off in the U.S. (but only the good stuff – don't blame him for animation you don't like). He is also the historian for many different fandoms. He was between insurance providers, so he has no insurance to cover his absolutely stunning medical bills. He was stricken with pneumonia in January (requiring a 4 day stay in ICU), and the stroke put him in ICU for 2 weeks, in a hospital bed for 2 weeks, in a rehab hospital for 6 weeks, and now in a nursing home. He has made some improvement, and has progressed from being stuck in a bed (his right side was affected) & having to eat through a feeding tube to being able to sort of get around in a wheelchair & eating soft food. He has improved, but he still has a long way to go. His medical bills are being covered by the state of California, but this is minimal assistance.

His apartment of 38 years had to be closed down, and his vast collection of books on science fiction, fantasy, horror, comics, anthropomorphics, and animation had to be sent off to the U.C. Riverside Special Collections Library (they have the largest collection of this sort of material of any library, and Fred's donation has increased their collection considerably). Essentially, 99% of all of Fred's possessions have been donated or sold to cover expenses. Under the coverage he has now, California takes care of all vitally essential medical bills (which means that if he can live without it, they won't pay for it), but he is allowed only \$35 a month income (anything above that they will take) – that means he has basically zero for "non-essentials". I started a collection fund to pay for things that he needs but the state won't pay for (we've already had to purchase a wheelchair the state won't cover) – if we collect for medical or business expenses, it is not a concern of the state. Future uses for the fund may include more therapy (he recently began to get some feeling & movement in his fingers & toes, so therapy can be very useful at this point), transport (it takes money to take him to medical appointments), books (to keep him from going insane stuck in the nursing home), or maybe setting him up in an apartment of his own (assuming he improves enough to be back on his own – that's what we're all hoping for).

What is a cell phone drive and why should I be interested? Well, basically it's a collection of old (or new, if you happen to have a bunch of new phones you don't want!) cell phones as well as older PDAs that you might have sitting in a drawer, a closet, or the garage. If the phones are relatively new, they are cleaned up and then reused in other countries, or reprogrammed to be 911 only phones for victims of domestic violence or cabbies (who get to see all the good AND bad on the streets, and can report the bad to the police). If the phones are older yet still useable, they can still be used in areas that do not have some of the more advanced features such as E-911 service (more about this later), or they can be broken up for use as parts. If the phone is no longer working, then it can be at least recycled in a proper manner, keeping potentially toxic components out of the general waste stream.

What kind of phones can you use? We can take anything from the newest Nokia phone all the way back to the original cell phone, the Motorola DynaTAC 8000X (aka the "brick"). The phone has to be a cell phone, not one of the cordless phones you would use in your house. They need to be a hand-held cellular or PCS phone, not a phone that was installed in a car, or a "transportable" or "bag phone". Two-way radios, pagers, or walkie-talkies are not accepted. The phone needs to at least have the battery and charger (preferably the wall-outlet charger, not a cigarette lighter charger), and an instruction book is helpful (but not necessary). If the phone has accessories, they can be given with the phone, but are not essential (and some, such as hands-free headsets can often be used with other phones) – if the accessory is item-specific such as a cigarette lighter plug, hands-free kit with a unique plug, spare battery, or case, you might as well put them with the phone – they'll just take up space for you.

You said PDA – what about them? Well, there have been many phones lately that have a built-in PDA – therefore we can take PDAs as well as phones with built-in PDAs. The only extra request for PDAs is that the docking cradle & software that came with the device be included (since they are necessary to synchronize the PDA with a computer). Again, a manual would be handy, but is not necessary. There are all sorts of PDA standards (Palm, Pocket PC, & Windows CE; as well as the



“oddball” varieties, such as the Royal DaVinci, Timex DataBank, & the Rex 6000 PCMCIA slot variety; or the “Palmtop computer” variety, such as the HP Journada or LX series) – any type is acceptable, as long as the software & hardware necessary to synchronize them is included (if a memory card is required for operation, please include that as well). Since PDAs are not as interchangeable as cell phones, we require that PDAs be in working condition.

“E-911” – what’s that and why should I care about it? E-911 is a relatively new feature mandated by the FCC. Any CDMA phone made in the last 2 or 3 years has E-911 capabilities. This service allows police or rescue personnel to have the carrier query your cell phone to access a GPS feature built-in to the phone (as a rule, you can’t access it, only authorized personnel), allowing them to more accurately peg your position than simply coming from a specific cell tower. As of November 2005, the FCC has mandated that 95% of all cell phones on any particular carrier be E-911 compliant. If you have an older phone that you’ve been using for years and have no intention of switching, your older non-compliant phone is in no danger. But if you attempt to activate a telephone that is non-compliant (whether you got it used from someone else, or it was a phone you used to use that has been deactivated to allow a newer phone to be used on your account), your carrier may not allow it to be used. It’s not that the FCC won’t allow them to re-activate it, but that the carriers must meet the 95% rule, so they may not allow any more non-compliant phones to be put on their network. You would have to check with your carrier to be sure. So a phone you have on “standby” for use if your current phone gets run over by a tank (generally only a fear in San Diego) may not actually be useable.

So if a phone can no longer be used on my service, how can it be used again? Some phones might be sent overseas to developing countries for sale at a discount (other countries have less advanced infrastructure than we do, many have more advanced). Any phone, no matter whether it’s activated or E-911 compliant (or not), can call 911 – that is a requirement of the FCC on carriers. And if you have an older analog phone (generally more than 6 years old), the FCC in 2008 is going to be dropping the requirement that carriers maintain their AMPS service (not that they will automatically drop service for older analog phones, but they simply won’t be required to maintain service – so don’t expect them to keep the older system up forever).

Okay, I’ve got a phone I can donate – what do I need to do with it? Well, the first thing to do is deactivate the service (which is probably already done). If the phone is no longer active, you cannot be charged for any use of the phone (this is very important). Second, make sure that all personal data has been purged from the phone – this generally means deleting the entire directory. You don’t want to be giving someone all the phone numbers of your friends & business contacts. Most phones have some sort of overall “clear” or “reset” that will delete all entries in your phone. It’s also advisable to change the security code (some phones use this, some don’t) from your personal code to a more generic code. We suggest setting the code or codes to all zeros (this isn’t absolutely necessary, but makes things much easier when preparing the phone for reprogramming). The same applies for a PDA that you might want to donate (in the case of a PDA, they often have a “hard reset” button that will erase everything – again, check with your manual for details).

I’m sure that a lot of my friends at work (church, school, the lodge, etc...) have phones they don’t use – can I collect them and give you a bunch? OH, YES! The more, the merrier. Just make sure to keep in mind the instructions in this sheet.

Do you get a lot of money for used cell phones? No, not really. We use a group that collects phones in bulk, and then sells them (or recycles them, depending on their condition). They then turn around and give a certain percentage to the group collecting phones. Newer phones generally get more than older ones, but any will be accepted. This is a service that allows a lot of people to help out without really having to put out a lot of money, it helps these people clear out their junk drawers of old (or possibly no longer useable) phones, and it keeps toxic materials such as cadmium, lithium, or mercury out of your local landfill.

Is this tax-deductible? No, it’s not. Even if it were, the resale value of a used cell phone or PDA is rather minimal. This is not a large, orchestrated effort to raise funds for Fred, it’s just me and some friends of Fred who want to do what they can to help. We take donations, do things like this cell phone drive, and other small things to basically get pocket change to make life a little easier for Fred.

How can I get my phone(s) to you? I’m trying to make this as convenient as possible – I’m planning on doing collections at conventions that I intend to be at in the next few months. At the present time, I’m looking at having collections at ConiFur NorthWest, Conjecture, LosCon, Midwest FurFest, LosCon, & Further Confusion. I’m hoping to have information on the convention’s web page and in their program book. The convention has no connection with my drive, I’ll just be there.

I’d like to contact Fred – how can I do it? You can get in touch with me at kar120c@sbcglobal.net, I’ll give you the latest contact information for Fred. You can also use this address to ask me any questions about any sort of donations – and many thanks for your assistance.