

# Look forward to high-tech time travel at the VintageTEK museum

By Jack Rubinger  
The Southwest Portland Post

The VintageTEK museum, located at 4820A SW Beaverton-Hillsdale Hwy,



Oscilloscopes, used to observe the change of an electrical signal over time, can be found at the VintageTEK museum. (Post photo by Jack Rubinger)

is packed from floor to ceiling with Tektronix memorabilia, machines, and memories from the 1940s to the 1980s.

Founded by Stan Griffiths, 76, and Ed Sinclair, 72, six years ago to preserve the roots of the Silicon Forest, the museum is staffed by former employees who lived, loved, and labored at Tektronix.

Open only on Fridays and Saturdays, the oscilloscopes, cathode ray tubes, and high resolution graphic monitors have that Cold War/science fiction movie look, but most of them work just fine and the staff of volunteers are happy to turn them on and explain what they do.

Education was a tradition at Tektronix. "Tek got a lot of other companies started and had a really good education system," explained Griffiths.

Like many museums, VintageTEK was first a collection of more than 1,000 instruments Stan Griffiths housed at his place in Aloha. His buddy, Ed Sinclair, came up with the idea of creating a museum.

Together, they approached Gary Hoselton, another former Tek

employee, about a string of buildings he owns on Southwest Beaverton-Hillsdale Highway.

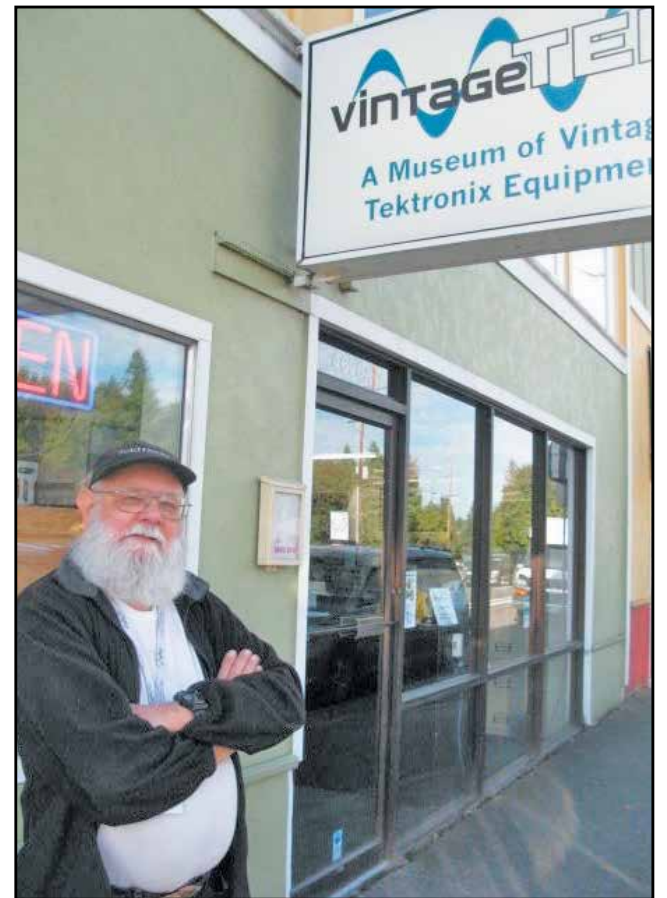
"Ed put substance into the plan," explained Griffiths. "We talked to Gary about renting the space and forming a 501(c) 3 organization. Oregon laws are friendly to 501(c) 3 organizations. While we pay a pittance on the rent, Gary gets a rebate on his property taxes."

The museum founder's goals are to share knowledge of history and resources to "pique the interest of young people in science and technology," and to challenge them to become the technologists of the next millennium.

Griffiths said he hopes to provide a scholarship based training program using VintageTEK Museum volunteers, facilities, and equipment to teach science and technology subjects to middle school students.

Volunteer Bruce Baur said, "One of the best moments at the museum was when a gal brought in her two homeschooled kids. We hooked a microphone up to an oscilloscope to watch what happens when you make a tone with your mouth. The kids were blown away, which led to a great discussion about why a piano sounds like a piano and why a trumpet sounds like a trumpet."

Why the devotion to a bunch of old



Stan Griffiths at VintageTEK museum on Beaverton-Hillsdale Highway. (Post photo by Jack Rubinger)

machines? "The period of 1945-1985 encompassed some of the greatest years of technological advancement at Tektronix. These advancements lead to many companies which spun off from Tektronix forming what we call the Silicon Forest," explained Griffiths.

"To honor and learn from that period, we have a group of regular volunteers who repair and refurbish instruments and bench test equipment, organize our inventory, maintain [information technology] resources, and organize our library resources."

In the early days, Tektronix was located on Southeast Hawthorne Boulevard and 7th Avenue. It was in the mid-1960s when expansion drove the company out to the Beaverton area near where Cedar Hills Boulevard and Walker Road intersect.

It was an era of analog oscilloscopes, cathode ray tubes, electron microscopes and television equipment for studios — all of which required extensive documentation, product catalogs and manuals. A real coup was the acquisition of the Tek photography department housing more than 13,000 negatives.

One of the quirkiest collections in the museum are the coffee cups. It's fun to see the variety of colors and styles going back to the 1960s. Another unusual item is a framed photo of uncashed checks addressed to engineer John Kobbe who introduced a number of patents and was rewarded with checks for \$1 and \$5.

While most visitors will enjoy the front of the museum, it's in the cramped back that machines are organized and reconditioned on workbenches donated by Tektronix. There are thousands of tiny screws, nuts, bolts, plugs, switches and other components neatly stored.

While the museum would not exist without Tektronix, the company today, now owned by Danaher, has no official role in the museum.

"That's by design," explained Griffiths. "We didn't want our museum to be located on Tek's campus because we wanted security from today's Tek managers and the independence to showcase what we want to showcase."

For more information about vintageTEK, contact Griffiths at w7ni@comcast.net.

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