

## *HAPPY NEW YEAR*

### *Celebrations from Around the World*



More people around the world celebrate the Gregorian New Year's holiday on January 1st than any other holiday. Many countries begin the celebration on New Year's Eve with dancing, eating, drinking and fireworks. The celebrations go on past midnight into New Year's Day. The celebration in many countries include attending special church services.

The Gregorian calendar that marks the beginning of a new year was instituted by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582. It was preceded by the Julian calendar, which had been introduced by Julius Caesar in 46 B.C. to replace the Roman calendar. The early Roman calendar consisted of 10 months and 304 days, with each new year beginning at the vernal equinox. Over the centuries the Roman calendar fell out of sync with the sun. Julius Caesar tried to solve that problem by introducing the Julian calendar.

As part of his reform, Caesar instituted January 1 as the first day of the year, partly to honor the month's namesake, Janus, the Roman god of beginnings. Janus had two faces, which allowed him to look back into the past and forward into the future. While the tribute to Janus has been long forgotten, the world continues to celebrate by ringing in the new year and reminiscing about the passing year.

The Line Islands (part of Kiribati) and Tonga in the Pacific Ocean are the first places to welcome the New Year. The American Samoa, Baker Island and Howland Island (all part of the U.S. Minor Outlying Islands) are among the last to greet the new year.

In the U.S., many people tune in to watch the count down at Times Square in New York City, either in the quiet of their home celebrating privately, or with others in raucous gatherings. Food and fireworks and parties are prominent throughout the U.S. Many countries around the world have similar traditions. Here are a few traditions that are a bit different:

In South Sudan, many people attend church services that begin at 9PM. At the stroke of midnight, the famous carol, "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" is sung to mark the end and the beginning of the year with a blessing. The service ends at 12:30 am.

In China, although the major celebrations of the Lunar New Year are not until a few weeks after the Gregorian New Year, many people, particularly in large cities celebrate with the rest of the world with cultural shows, concerts and fireworks.

In Japan, New Year's Eve is used to prepare for and welcome *Toshigami*, the New Year's god. Japanese clean their homes to welcome the god and Buddhist temples ring their bells 108 times at midnight, representing the 108 elements of *bono* (mental states that lead Japanese to take unwholesome actions).

In Kazakhstan, the national anthem is played at midnight, following a presidential address.

In Saudi Arabia, the Islamic calendar is the traditional religious calendar and the countries "religious police" enforced a ban on public festivities of the Gregorian New Year. Private citizens are allowed to recognize the Gregorian New Year with private celebrations, however.

In Albania, preparations for New Year's Eve begin with the Christmas tree, which is known there as the "New Year's Tree" or "New Year's Pine." At midnight on Dec. 31st, Albanians toast and greet each other and fireworks are lit.

In Estonia, people decorate villages, visit friends and prepare lavish meals. Some believe that Estonians should eat seven, nine, or twelve times on New Year's Eve. These are lucky numbers in Estonia. It is believed that for each meal consumed, the person gains the strength of that many men the following year. Meals should not be completely finished—some food should be left for ancestors and spirits who visit the house on New Year's Eve.

An Ecuadorian tradition is for men to dress in drag, representing the "widows" of the past year. They dance in the streets and ask for a toll from drivers to pass. Among with what we consider more traditional celebrations, they usually eat grapes and drink Champagne with close family members and friends.

No matter how you celebrated, we hope you had a wonderful holiday and that your upcoming year will be filled with health and happiness.

Sources: [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org); [www.history.com](http://www.history.com)



## KEEP SMILING ...KEEP SHOPPING!...with



Our July 2022 Pioneer Connection featured an article about the AmazonSmile program that allows online shoppers to select a charity of their choice to which a portion of eligible Amazon purchases is donated. At that time, we reported that (only) \$1,917.16 had been donated through AmazonSmile to *Independent Telecommunications Pioneer Assoc. Charitable Fnd Inc.* since 2015. We asked you then to help us change that by participating in our ITPA AmazonSmile One/Two Challenge! And WOW, did you respond! Since July, the amount donated to our organization has nearly doubled! In six months we received nearly the same amount as had been received in the first seven years combined!

Thanks to everyone who has joined our AmazonSmile challenge already. Let's keep this momentum going!

If you haven't yet had an opportunity to join us in this worthwhile endeavor, here's how you can join our One/Two Challenge!

**One**—if you haven't already selected us in your own AmazonSmile settings, please do that before the next time you shop with Amazon. Even if you're not an Amazon online shopper, you can still take this next step!

**Two**—talk to a family member or friend who shops online with Amazon. Tell them about ITPA and the types of things our clubs and chapters are regularly trying to do in our communities and across the nation. Ask them to commit to selecting our Association on your behalf. And then, ask someone else to do the same. And just like that you've doubled your impact again!

When you, your family and your friends select "**Independent Telecommunications Pioneer Assoc Charitable Fnd Inc.**" as your charity of choice, Amazon will immediately begin donating 0.5% of all your eligible Amazon purchases to our charitable foundation. All you have to do is shop. The donation from Amazon will be made at no extra cost to you. And the settings on your account will allow you to review and see how much in total has been donated and how much of that amount you have generated.

AmazonSmile is available to Amazon shoppers at smile.amazon.com on their web browser. It can easily be activated in the Amazon Shopping app for iOS and Android phones.

Even if you don't shop online often, the pennies add up. Every penny donated to our Charitable Foundation by Amazon helps our organization continue fulfilling its mission of community service.



Keep reading to find step-by-step instructions on how to set up your AmazonSmile profile.

## ITPA One/Two AmazonSmile Challenge

If you shop using your computer:

### Step 1:

Go to:

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/47-4122549>

### Step 2:

Choose our charity : Independent Telecommunications Pioneer Assoc Charitable Fnd Inc. that option looks like this:



### Step 3:

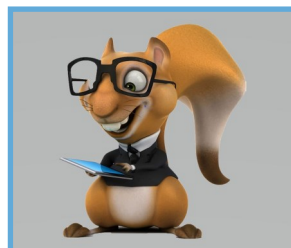
Complete your normal shopping and AMAZONSMILE will handle the donation part.

### Step 4:

ALWAYS log in to smile.amazon.com in the future.

### Step 5:

You shop, Amazon donates!



If you shop using the Amazon App on your cell phone:

### iPhones:

**Step 1:** Download our update to the latest version of the Amazon Shopping app on your phone.

**Step 2:** Click on the 3 bars on the bottom right corner.

**Step 3:** Click on Settings (has an American Flag beside it)

**Step 4:** Scroll down to AmazonSmile and Click.

**Step 5:** Turn the device option to ON.

**Step 6:** You shop, Amazon donates!

**That's all there is to it!!!**

### Androids:

**Step 1:** Download our update to the latest version of the Amazon Shopping app on your phone.

**Step 2:** Sign up at smile.amazon.com and find *Independent Telecommunications Pioneer Assoc Charitable Fnd Inc.*

**Step 3:** Open the app and find 'Settings' in the main menu.

**Step 4:** Tap on 'AmazonSmile' and follow the on-screen instructions to turn on AmazonSmile on your phone.

**Step 5:** Turn the device option to ON.

**Step 6:** You shop, Amazon donates!

**Step 7:** If you're thinking, "όλα αυτά είναι ελληνικά για μένα» which is Greek for "This is all Greek to me," ask your grandkids to set this up for you! And while you're at it, ask them to set it up on their phones and their parents' phones!

### **IMPORTANT NOTE:**

AmazonSmile in the app is not available for iPads and other tablet devices. To shop AmazonSmile on your tablet, type smile.amazon.com into the browser.





## ITPA'S 31ST ANNUAL ASSEMBLY...DON'T MISS IT!!!



The ITPA's **31st Annual Assembly** will be held on **April 21-24, 2023** in Hinesville, Georgia at the Hampton Inn. ITPA 1st Vice President JoAnn Esposito is busy planning an exciting assembly and cordially invites you to attend. ITPA members and guests are welcome.

During the assembly, ITPA Chapters and Clubs will share updates about their community service projects and award winners will be announced. The national assembly is also a time where we honor those who have contributed to the industry and celebrate the preservation of Telephony and going forward Telecommunications.

JoAnn retired in 2020 with 40 years of telecommunication experiences, and she looks forward to becoming our ITPA president.

The location of our national assembly this year will provide attendees an opportunity to visit our National Office and Museum. Fort Stewart (Army Airfield and base) is also located near our museum, and Savannah is just a short drive for those who might want to extend their stay for a mini-vacation.

Reuniting with ITPA Pioneers from across the states is always an enjoyable time. All clubs are encouraged to send representatives to the assembly. We promise to provide opportunity for everyone to have a great time.

To receive the ITPA discounted nightly room rate of \$129.00 plus tax please call the Hinesville hotel directly at 912-877-4090. Ask that one of the ITPA rooms being held for JoAnn Esposito be changed to your name. You will need to provide a credit card to hold your room. The Hampton Inn will honor this special nightly rate for up to 2 extra nights (Thursday through Monday).

If you have any questions, you may contact JoAnn at [espogirl56@yahoo.com](mailto:espogirl56@yahoo.com) or by phone at 352-502-9321. JoAnn, the entire planning committee, and Rocky hope to see you there!



**About Hinesville, GA:** Founded in 1837, Hinesville is located west of the center of Liberty County, on the south side of Fort Stewart, which is the largest U.S. Army installation in the eastern United States.

Hinesville is also the national headquarters for the ITPA. Nestled beneath the majestic oaks draped elegantly with Spanish moss, the National Office occupies the former family home of Glenn E. and Trudie Bryant. Mr. Bryant was a pioneer for Hinesville, Liberty County and the telephone industry, and he was the founder of Coastal Communications. After purchasing Hinesville Telephone Company in 1946 and later acquiring Coastal Telephone Company, he merged the two under the name of Coastal Utilities (now owned by Brightspeed). Bryant also served as a Georgia State Senator and was a visionary in business, political, community and charitable ventures. Bryant passed away in 1991, and his philanthropic legacy is carried on by the work of the Glenn E. and Trudie Bryant Family Foundation.

The 150-acre property, located in the heart of Hinesville, was donated to the family foundation and was envisioned as "passive park" by Mr. and Mrs. Bryant. Through a joint venture with the Bryant Family Foundation and the City of Hinesville, plans for "Bryant Commons" were developed and include an outdoor amphitheater, Veterans Memorial Park, Bramble's Play Ground, Cisco's Dog Park, 15-acre fishing pond and walking trails. Plans are currently underway to include a community center pavilion, picnic areas, and renovations to existing buildings.

The former "main house" on the property has been moderately renovated to accommodate the daily office operations of the ITPA Executive Director, as well as house the museum displays and provide storage for the hundreds of artifacts that outline the history of the telephone industry. Future development calls for potential expansion of the museum to a larger building on the property, but ITPA will continue to call Bryant Commons home. Plans are in development to construct a memorial within the "main house" and outside in the garden to pay homage the Bryant's, in honor of their dedication to leadership and community service.

The museum consists a vast collection of telephones and telephone equipment from throughout history. Children and adults alike may find it fascinating to see how the telephone evolved from the solid wood, wall-mounted, hand cranked, operator-directed, simplistic designs of the past to today's pocket-sized, touch-screen, cellular phones.



## Grab the crayons and improve your health...WHAT?



Remember back in the day when you were so proud to graduate from that 8-pack primary color pack of crayons to the 64-pack that included colors you couldn't even pronounce? As it turns out we should have held on to those crayons into adulthood! A recently published Mayo Clinic article sites coloring as a tool for practicing good mental health. (And you wondered why all those adult coloring books are on the shelves these days!)

The Mayo Clinic News Network lists several benefits of adult coloring.

- **Promotes mindfulness.** Mindfulness is the ability to focus and stay in the moment, and coloring can help you do that. For example, because you're focusing on color choice and staying inside the lines, you're only thinking about the present moment. You can shut off the noise around you, and give your mind the gift of focusing on the movements, sensations and emotions of your present moment.
- **Relieves stress.** Coloring calms the brain and helps your body relax. This can improve sleep and fatigue while decreasing body aches, heart rate, respiration, and feelings of depression and anxiety. While coloring isn't the ultimate cure for stress and anxiety, a long coloring session can help. To maximize the benefit of coloring, pay attention to your breathing rhythm, ensuring steady, full breaths from your diaphragm, and tune into your heart rate periodically if you can.
- **Embraces the imperfect.** There's no right or wrong way to color. Coloring is a noncompetitive activity, so there is no pressure to win a prize or beat the clock. You can color for as long or as little time as you want. You don't have to finish a picture in one sitting. It doesn't matter whether your picture is neat or messy. The only thing that matters is finding enjoyment and relaxation while coloring.

Some people don't find coloring to be relaxing or enjoyable, especially if they didn't even like to color as a child, and that's O.K. Here are other fun ways to relieve stress.

### Spend time with a 4-legged friend.

It's no secret that pets make us happy. Their love is unconditional, they are always happy to see us, and they're adorable. Spend some quality time with your pet, or volunteer at an animal shelter if you don't have a pet of your own.



**Read a good book.** Like coloring, reading a good book can help you lose yourself in the moment and forget about your work or other stressors.

**Massage your earlobes.** Massaging the pressure points in your earlobes brings in a calming, relaxing sensation over your body. Do this for a few minutes, and you may start to feel some relief.



**Bust a move.** Breaking out your best dance moves along with your favorite song can be therapeutic for many people. If you're dancing throughout most of the song, you can also say you snuck in some exercise.

**Take a deep breath.** This is a great way to reduce your body's response to perceived threats. Breathe in through your nose for five seconds and hold for two seconds. Then release your breath through your mouth for five seconds.

You can find lots of free coloring pages online. (Search google for "free adult coloring pages"), but to get you started, we've included a coloring page in this issue (see next page). Send us a photo of your masterpiece and we'll print them in a future issue!





## 7 Healthy Ways to Fight Depression

Up to one in three Americans struggle with feeling down occasionally, and as many as one in five adults suffer from a diagnosable mental illness in a given year. There is no single cause for depression. Biology, temperament, early life experiences and current life circumstances can all affect the neurotransmitters in your brain, says psychiatrist Diane McIntosh, M.D., author of [This is Depression](#).

Dr. McIntosh says the worst kind of stress for your brain is chronic, unpredictable stress, which is the kind of stress we've all been living with during the COVID-19 pandemic.



The good news is that your neurotransmitters can be retrained. While you should talk with your doctor or a psychiatrist about treatment options such as talk therapy or medications, there are also some small changes we can make, all of which are based in science.

**Exercise.** Taking a 30-minute walk every day is enough to positively impact your mental health, and studies have shown that exercise is sometimes as effective as medication or psychotherapy in reducing symptoms of depression. Recent research found that people who walked briskly 2.5 hours each week cut their risk of developing depression by 25 percent. Exercising even half that much lowered depression risk by 18 percent.

**Limit social media use.** "Stop dread scrolling," says clinical psychologist Adam Borland (Cleveland Clinic.) Recently, researchers found that people who used social media the most (particularly Snapchat, Facebook and YouTube) were substantially more likely to report feeling depressed than adults who didn't.



**Find a mantra.** Borland brainstorms with his patients to help them find a phrase to embrace that's easily remembered, such as "I'm doing the best that I can." It's a very simple, but powerful concept.

**Do something creative.** In a 2018 study at the University of California San Francisco, researchers found that older adults who sang in a community choir each week were much less lonely and more interested in life than a control group. Dr. Borland says that picking up a musical instrument you haven't played in years can also help.

**Practice gratitude.** Focusing on what you appreciate about your life **and expressing it**, either by telling someone or writing it down, can affect the serotonin and dopamine systems in your brain and produce changes in the reactivity of key brain regions that last for weeks or months, says Alex Korb, a neuroscientist at UCLA and author of [The Upward Spiral](#). Results of a 2015 Indiana University study revealed that writing letters expressing gratitude made subjects' brains more reactive to positive events. Those changes could be seen in the brain even three months later.

**Sleep.** Changing your sleep patterns changes a variety of neurotransmitter systems. Dr. Korb says, "Sleep reduces your emotional reactivity and reduces the rewarding pull of unhelpful behaviors [like bingeing on ice cream]."

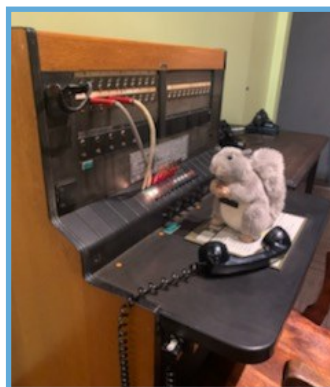
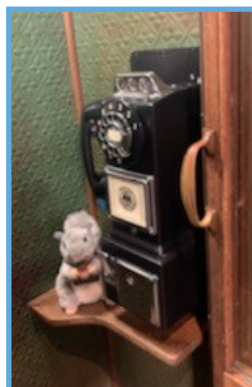
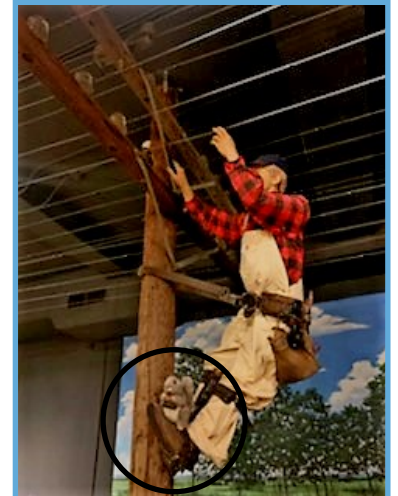
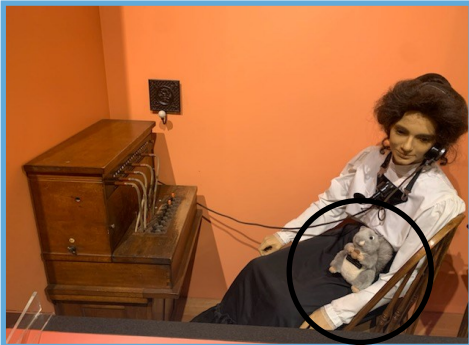
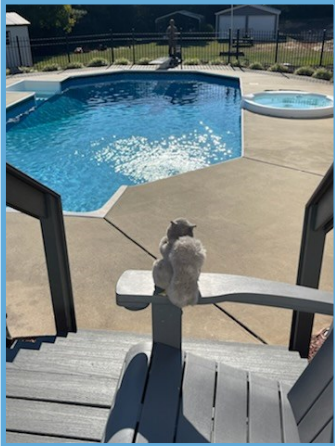


**Talk to friends and family.** Dr. Borland says "Talking about your depression can be giving the other person a gift. They could be dealing with something similar that they haven't been able to talk about." When you're feeling down, don't wait for the phone to ring. Reach out and connect with someone. Invite someone out for coffee or over for a visit.

Source: Author Kathleen McCleary's article "7 Ways to Fight Depression" published in AARP's "Stay Healthy" segment published Oct. 2, 2022

## Where in the World is Rocky??

Rocky was a busy squirrel in 2022 and he doesn't appear to be slowing down! Our last magazine featured his travels to Ireland, Las Vegas, the Grand Canyon, Hoover Dam, Valley of Fire and Red Rock Canyon. He paused for a quick break to spend some relaxing time with his good friend Leon Yard (see photos below) and then he visited Comporium's Telephone Museum with Allyson Reid. He sent plenty of photos so that we can live vicariously through our vivacious mascot!





## Rocky Was HERE!

Rocky attended the Carotel Club's annual convention on NC's beautiful crystal coast, and boy was he busy! Afterwards, he was off to beautiful Riviera Maya, Mexico with Carotel Pioneers Darlene House and Darlene Terry.



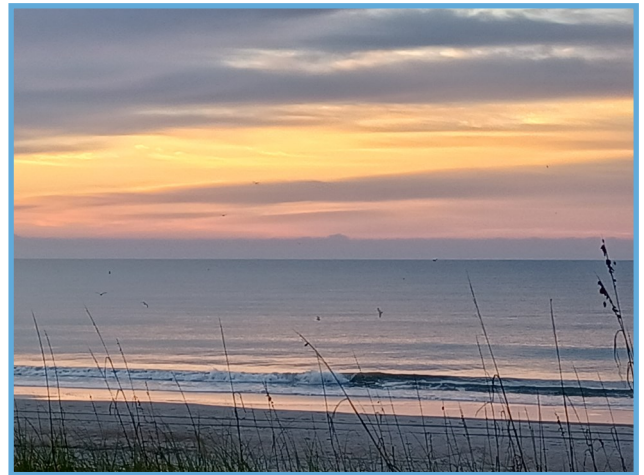
Rocky attended the Carotel board meeting as a special guest, but he mostly drank coffee because he was a bit thirsty after having binged on peanuts! He volunteered to keep the snacks replenished during happy hour, although there were reports that he was actually standing guard so that no one could help themselves to the peanuts!



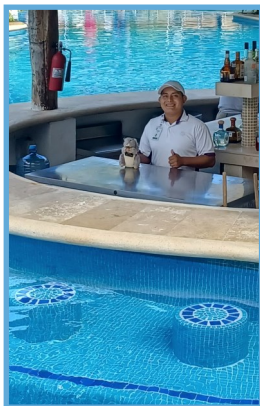
Rocky rocked his D.J. gig with Ronnie Cashwell while Carotel Pioneers danced the night away!



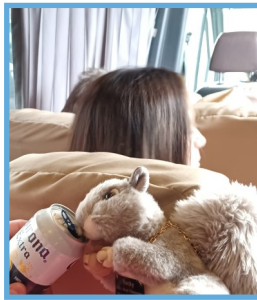
Casino Nights photo booth with Carotel Pioneer Ray Brock



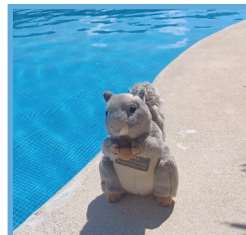
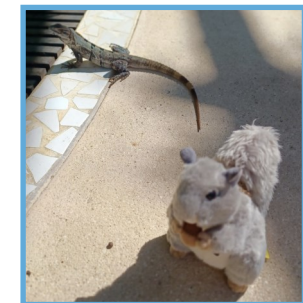
Rocky took some beautiful photos of his sunrise strolls on the beach, but wasn't able to capture in photos all of the dolphins he saw!



Making friends...at the pool...at the bar...



A little fun in the sun in Mexico!!!





## Where's Rocky Now!!!!

From Mexico, Rocky headed to Florida and spent a relaxing week with JoAnn Esposito. Then they set sail to the Bahamas.



And we're off!  
Wait...where's JoAnn?

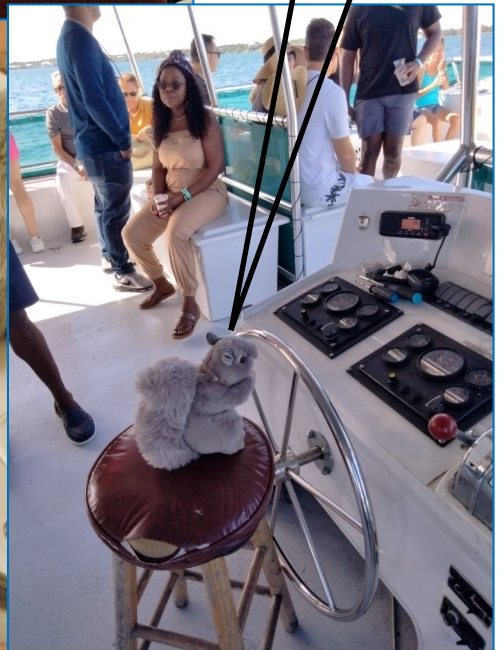
I'm either  
very early  
or very late  
for this  
show!



For my  
first  
course, I'll  
have the  
assorted  
nut platter,  
and then  
the acorn  
soup,  
please.



I hope I figure  
out how to  
navigate this  
thing before  
they realize  
I'm not the  
Captain!





## Rocky'n Around the Christmasville Tree

### Rock Hill, SC

It was quite the surprise for the ITPA National Office to receive a call from Santa's head Elf, Danny. And it was a very important call. You see, it was time for Christmasville in Rock Hill, SC and there was so much work to be done.

Santa was busy visiting with children, riding in the Christmas parade, and participating in all the fun festivities. The elves were all in the North Pole and were busy working on the last of the toys for Santa's Christmas Eve deliveries.

Danny the Elf needed some volunteers at the Comporium Telephone Museum to help children call the North Pole. This was a very important job because the children needed to tell Santa's Elves what they wanted for Christmas! Santa knew just who Danny the Elf should call on for such an important job! Danny's first recruit was our busy mascot Rocky.



Danny and Rocky then visited ITPA Executive Director, Alissa Moss and her daughters, Kassie and Addison, along with ITPA President Daniel Barnhardt, ITPA Secretary Cindy Downing, and Melinda Niday from Comporium. When Danny explained Santa's dilemma they all agreed to help, and he deputized each one of them as an official Elf for a day.



*Rocky got busy right away helping with decorations.*



Mrs. Claus (Ann Beck, Palmetto Chapter President & Comporium Club member) took a break from her busy work to visit the children and to help our volunteers with calls to the North Pole.

Children (and a Grinch) came to the Comporium Telephone Museum to call the North Pole elves.

The ITPA Christmasville elves stayed busy helping the children call Santa's North Pole workshop. The children's excitement was contagious, and our Christmasville elves enjoyed themselves at least as much as the kids did! What an honor and so much fun to work on Santa's crew for the day!



From Danny the Elf, Mrs. Claus, Rocky the Mascot, and our ITPA Deputy Elves, we sincerely hope each and everyone had a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



## Club/Chapter News

The **Comporium Pioneer Club** resumed its Annual Christmas Luncheon and business meeting on December 6th at Southern Charm in Rock Hill, SC. Sixty-two Pioneers welcomed six special guests from the SC National Guard.



A delicious lunch was served, after which President Arhea White Glenn presided over the business meeting. Incoming officers were installed by National ITPA President Daniel Barnhardt.



*Above: Immediate Past President Tiffany Staton was recognized with a plaque for her two years of service to the club during the pandemic.*

Rose Lemmons-Berry, Soldier and Family Readiness Specialist, introduced Major General Jeff Jones of the SC National Guard. He thanked the Pioneers for their ongoing work for the SC units in their area, and expressed deep appreciation for the club's support to the National Guard units before, during and after their 2021 deployments.



*Above: Major General Jeff Jones, SC National Guard presents plaque to Club President Arhea White Glenn.*

The **Carotel Pioneer Club** celebrated Christmas by working with community residents to recognize various groups during the holiday season. Assisted living caretakers and staff members in New Bern, NC were recognized and presented with gift bags containing an assortment of items in appreciation for their dedication and service.



On four separate occasions during the holiday season, local police departments, Emergency Medical Services, and Fire Department staff members were recognized with breakfast, and certificates of appreciation. Carotel community project leaders also recruited community residents to write thank you cards to individuals members of each group.



*Above: CRO Sandra DeLorme and Asst. Chief Chad Edwards accept appreciation certificate on behalf of the Emerald Isle Police Dept.*

**Buckeye State Ohio Pioneers** will meet on Saturday, January 21, 2023, at Buehler's in Ashland at 10:00 a.m. To be discussed is a wrap-up of 2022 activities, 2023 chapter & club activities, and Spring Assembly 2023. Pioneers and guests are welcome.

The **Otto Wettstein Jr Pioneer Club** members held their 43rd annual retiree luncheon on December 13th in Leesburg, FL, with 93 retirees and guests in attendance.



The traditional holiday meal featured turkey and ham with veggies, stuffing, and plenty of pies for dessert.

Publix gift cards were awarded as door prizes and beautiful poinsettia plants which served as table centerpieces were also awarded as door prizes.

Attendees brought 400 pounds of non-perishable food items for donation to the St Theresa Soup Kitchen and Food Bank in Belleview, FL.

Florida State Chapter board members attended the luncheon along with national ITPA officers JoAnn Esposito, James White, Jo Myers, and Carolyn Kelly. Nancy Schnitzer represented the Florida Big Bend Pioneer Club. A Chapter board meeting was held after the luncheon.



Mark your calendar now! The 2023 Retiree Luncheon will be held on Tuesday December 12, 2023, same place, same time.

**We want to hear from you!**  
Send your club/chapter updates about events, meetings, volunteer needs to our national office (include photos please) for our next issue!



## WHERE WARRIORS WALK



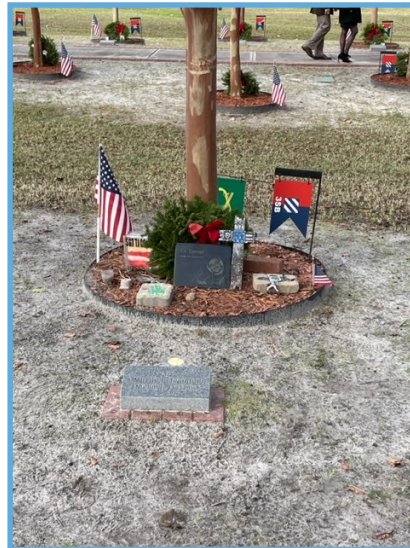
It was an honor and a privilege for ITPA Pioneers to represent our Charitable Foundation at the 16th annual Wreaths for Warriors Walk Ceremony at Fort Stewart, GA.



ITPA was represented by Addison Moss, Ginny and Bruno Robles and Kassie Moss (above) and by Executive Director Alissa Moss (below).



Family members and volunteers placed wreaths at the base of 469 crape myrtle trees dedicated to honoring fallen heroes of the 3rd Infantry Division.



Through your generous donations to the ITPA Charitable Foundation, ten wreaths were donated to Warriors Walk, and an additional 6 were donated by ITPA board member, Hannah Lancaster.



On "National Wreaths Across America Day," wreath-laying ceremonies were held at 3,702 locations in all 50 U.S. states, at sea and abroad.



During recent wreath laying ceremonies at 3,702 locations, our nation's heroes were remembered as each name was said aloud and honored as over two million volunteers, a third of whom were children, helped place more than 2.7 million veterans' wreaths on headstones of our fallen across the country. At Arlington National Cemetery specifically, 257,000 veterans' wreaths were placed by more than 28,000 volunteers.

Wreaths Across America thanks the community, dedicated volunteers, generous sponsors, essential truck drivers, area officials, and members of the media for coming together in unity and supporting those who have protected our freedom. Each person has played an important part in the mission to Remember the fallen, Honor those that serve and their families, and Teach the next generation the value of freedom.

While coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies each December on National Wreaths Across America Day is a big part of what Wreaths Across America does, its mission to Remember, Honor and Teach is carried out throughout the year. From the Remembrance Tree program to the Wreaths Across America Museum in Maine, there are many ways for volunteers to get involved.

Learn more about Wreaths Across America and how you can be involved at:

<https://www.wreathsassamerica.org>.



## President's Ponderings

Greeting Pioneers,

Happy New Year to all! The year 2022 has come and gone and we are looking forward to 2023 for an even better year. I hope everyone enjoyed the November 2022 Pioneer Connection. I think this was one of the best issues our staff has produced. If you have not seen that issue, check your e-mail or visit our website at <https://www.nationalitpa.com/publications> where you can find all of our 2022 Pioneer Connections. Our quarterly magazines include Club and Chapter news to let us all know about Pioneer club meetings, projects, and continuing ITPA traditions. The news and pictures featuring "Rocky", my 2022 Assembly mascot who has already traveled the world during his short tenure as mascot, continues to astound me. He truly has become a world traveler.

All the Thanksgiving meal recipes provided by our board members in the November issue were a hit. If you tried any of these, I would love to hear how it went. Maybe this is something we can do every year for our members.

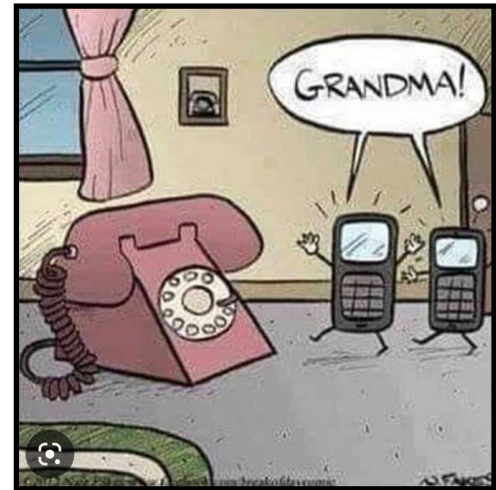
I have continued to participate in multiple Pioneer meetings and projects. I recently attended Comporium Pioneers annual fall business meeting. I was asked to perform the installation of their officers which was focused on building blocks theme and the importance of each office. All officers of a club or chapter are important building blocks and provide leadership for the club. The members are the building blocks that have the resources, skills, and talents to carry out the projects and fundraising efforts for the club.

As I close this Presidents Ponderings, I would like to urge you if you haven't seen the ITPA Headquarters in Hinesville Ga., to plan on coming to our 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Assembly which will be held there in April of 2023. Make your plans now. If you need information on this, just let us know.

Thanks,  
Daniel

**Daniel Barnhardt** | National ITPA President

## This 'n That



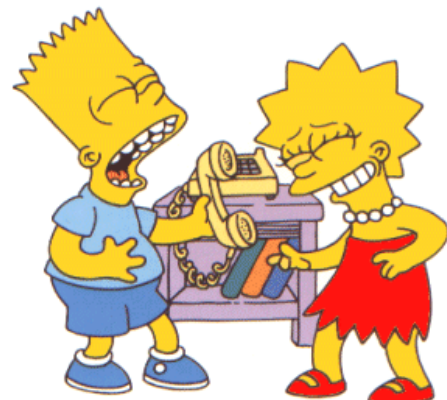
Q: What was more important than the invention of the first telephone?

A: The second telephone!



### The Irony of it All!

Gotta love the irony of a generation raised on making prank phone calls only to be terrorized by daily robo-calls now.





## Recipe Exchange

### CRESCENT ROLL CHEESE CAKE

Submitted by Daniel Barnhardt National ITPA President



#### Ingredients:

- 2 cans Pillsbury crescent rolls
- 16 oz. cream cheese (room temperature)
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 stick butter (1/2 cup) real butter (don't substitute margarine)

#### Directions:

Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray a 9"x13" pan with cooking spray. Unroll and press one can of the crescent rolls in the bottom of baking dish, and press the seams together.

In a separate bowl, blend the cream cheese, 1 cup sugar and 1 tsp vanilla. Spread over top of dough.

Unroll second can of crescent rolls and place on top of the cream cheese mixture pressing seams together again.

Melt butter and pour over top layer of crescents.

Mix the remaining 1/2 cup of sugar and cinnamon together and sprinkle mixture generously over the top. If desired, you can mix additional cinnamon and sugar together and sprinkle more of the sugar/cinnamon mixture on top.

Bake for 30 minutes until bubbly and bottom crust is slightly brown.

Let cool, slice and enjoy!

#### General Baking Tips:

1. Let all ingredients come to room temperature. Batter will mix best at room temperature. (Melted butter and softened butter are not the same.) Don't leave eggs out too long before using, but letting them adjust to room temperature will help them blend better with other ingredients.
2. Don't skip steps in the recipe. Each step has a purpose and the recipe you're using is the result of trials and errors before the recipe was perfected.
3. Gather your ingredients and prep your kitchen before you start. (Or risk getting your neighbor out of bed to borrow eggs or milk if you discover during your late night baking that you don't have enough).
4. Move oven rack to center for most even heat distribution, and **do** preheat the oven.
5. Use the right pans. High quality non-stock cookware is worth the investment.
6. Grease sides and bottoms of your non-stick cookware and then dust flour over the pan.
7. Fill cake pans only 2/3 full to allow batter to expand and rise without overflowing.
8. Separate and rotate pans during baking. This is especially helpful if oven doesn't bake evenly.
9. Do the toothpick test. Stick a clean toothpick into the middle of your cake when you think it's done. If it comes out clean it's ready to come out of the oven.
10. Leave cake in pan on cooling rack 5 to 10 minutes and then turn pan upside down to release cake onto cooling rack. (Cooling cake upside down helps flatten the top, making it easier to frost and decorate.)
11. Apply a crumb coat first. Use a thin layer of frosting to seal in the crumbs. Let crumb layer harden or put in fridge to chill icing before applying final layer of frosting.

Source: <https://www.bakingkneads.com/cake-baking-tips-for-beginners/>