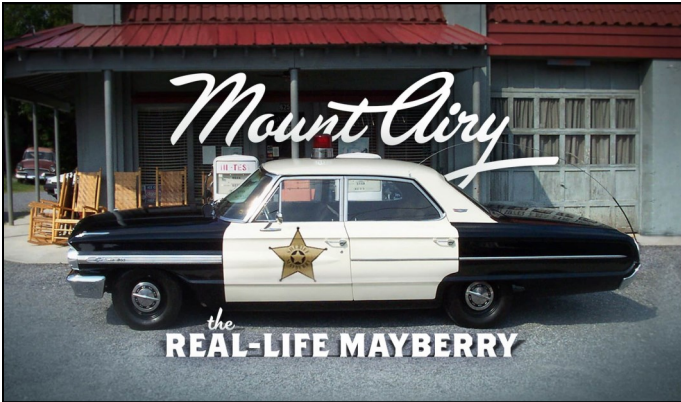

Independent Telecommunications Pioneer Association

Pioneer Connection



Issue 24-02	February 2024	Founded 1920
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Register Now for the ITPA 32nd Annual Spring Assembly



If you haven't made your reservations yet to attend the ITPA's 32nd Annual Spring Assembly yet, you still have time! The Spring Assembly provides an opportunity for Pioneers from across the nation to gather with old friends and make new friends.

This year's assembly will take us back in time to the days of the Andy Griffith Show in Mayberry RFD. If you haven't read the January special edition of the Pioneer Connection, you can find more information about the assembly at [Jan 2024 sp ed.pdf \(nationalitpa.com\)](#). For your convenience, registration and donor forms are also included in this February edition.

This year's assembly planning committee has been hard at work to plan an assembly that will take us back to those laid back days in Mayberry with Sheriff Andy Taylor and Deputy Barney Fife. The TV show town of Mayberry was based on Andy Griffith's hometown of Mount Airy, NC. From Floyd's Barber Shop to fried pork chop sandwiches, Mount Airy has embraced its role as the inspiration for Mayberry. From April 26 to 28, 2024, Mount Airy will also embrace the ITPA Pioneers as we conduct our 32nd National Assembly at the Hampton Inn in Dobson, NC. (Dobson is less than ten miles from Mount Airy.)

On Saturday, assembly attendees will have the opportunity to tour the Andy Griffith Museum and take a squad car tour. You'll also have some free time on Saturday to explore Mt. Airy and Dobson. The January Pioneer Connection includes some great suggestions for meals and exploration on your own.

New officers and directors will be installed during the annual business meeting, and the 2024 Telephone Hall of Fame inductees will be honored. The cost of the Hall of Fame Luncheon is included with the assembly registration fee. Individuals may register to attend only the Hall of Fame Luncheon on Sunday for \$35 per person.

Pioneers are invited to send or bring goodies for the gift bags that will be distributed to all assembly attendees. Corporate and individual sponsors are also needed to help with costs of the assembly. Attendees are also invited and encouraged to bring items for our Silent Auction. Within this edition, see letter from 1st Vice President Leon Yard for more information on how you can help make this year's assembly a resounding success.

You may want to come a day earlier or stay a day after the assembly so that you'll have plenty of time to visit Floyd's City Barber Shop, the Old Mayberry Jail, Snappy Lunch, and Andy's childhood home. You'll recognize the generous spirit of The Andy Griffith Show wherever you go in Mount Airy.



If you fly in to attend the Spring Assembly, the Piedmont Triad International Airport in Greensboro is only a little over an hour's drive to the hotel in Dobson and the larger Raleigh-Durham International Airport is slightly more than a two hour drive. You'll have a number of car rental agencies to choose from at either airport. (Be sure to ask for your AARP or other member discount.)

"You beat everything, you know that?"
- Andy Taylor



Registration Form

Dobson, NC
April 26-28, 2024

ITPA 32nd ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

Member Name _____ Name of Guest _____

Daytime Phone Number _____ E-Mail _____

Chapter/Club Affiliation _____

First-time Assembly attendee? Yes _____ No _____ (Contact National Office at itpa@telecom-pioneers.net for first-time grant application)

Registration fee includes the following meals and activities:

- Friday : Meet and Greet Dinner/Opening Ceremony (You are invited to come dressed as your favorite Mayberry character)
- Saturday: Lunch
- Saturday:
 - Afternoon: Registration fee includes optional squad car tour and/or tour of the Andy Griffith Museum
 - Evening: Dinner is on your own
- Sunday
 - Noon: Hall of Fame Luncheon/Afternoon Awards Ceremony
 - Evening: Banquet/Installation

Saturday afternoon/evening activities (Registration fee includes attendance at one or both activities. You must sign up in advance to attend one or both activities. Sign-up is not available during assembly attendance.)

- ☐ Squad Car Tour Number of participants _____
- ☐ Andy Griffith Museum Number of participants _____
- ☐ I do not want to take a tour

Registration Fee: Payment for registration must accompany this form. Check the appropriate options below. Make check payable to ITPA. (See www.nationalitpa.com for online registration.)

- ☐ ITPA Member (includes Hall of Fame Luncheon) \$130 per person ____ No. of Members
- ☐ Guest (includes Hall of Fame Luncheon) \$130 per guest ____ No. of Guests

Grand Total Enclosed \$ _____

- ☐ Hall of Fame Luncheon Only \$ 35 per person ____ No. of attendees
(applies only to luncheon attendees not registered for Assembly)

Grand Total Enclosed \$ _____

Please send assembly registration form and check payable to ITPA to: ITPA, 438 W. Oglethorpe Hwy, Hinesville, GA 31313

Hotel Accommodations: Hampton Inn Dobson, 150 Charlestowne Drive, Dobson, NC 27017

Room Rates- Standard Room with one king bed or two queen beds \$145 per night plus tax. Check-in time is 3PM.

To register online:

<https://www.hilton.com/en/book/reservation/deeplink/?ctyhocn=INTDBHX&groupCode=CHHITP&arrivaldate=2024-04-25&departuredate=2024-04-29&cid=OM,WW,HILTONLINK,EN,DirectLink&fromId=HILTONLINKDIRECT>

Click on "Special Rates" and under Group Code enter "ITPA."

To Register by Phone: 336-353-9400 USE "ITPA" as the group rate key word. Ask for Jennie Lee at ext. 2122 to request a studio room for \$155 or a luxury suite for \$175 per night.

Deadline to make hotel reservations – March 25, 2024

Deadline to register for Assembly – April 11, 2024

Cancellation Policy: Cancellations for assembly registration received after March 1st are non-refundable. In order to receive a refund on hotel deposit, you must cancel your hotel room at least 24 hours before your scheduled 3PM check-in date.



Sponsor Form

ITPA 32nd Annual
Spring Assembly

Independent Telecommunications Pioneer Association

32nd Annual Spring Assembly April 26-28, 2024

Please list sponsor name as: _____

Sponsor Levels

(Please check the appropriate sponsorship level)

☐ Diamond \$2,000.00

☐ Platinum \$1,000.00

☐ Gold \$750.00

☐ Silver \$500.00

☐ Bronze \$350.00

☐ Sponsor \$300.00

☐ Personal Contributor (select option)

\$300 _____

\$200 _____

\$100 _____

\$50 _____

Please mail completed sponsorship form and tax deductible donation to:

ITPA
438 West Oglethorpe Hwy
Hinesville, GA 31313

Thank you for your support!

National Office News

In November, National ITPA Board Members convened for the annual fall meeting in Hinesville, GA. Here are some highlights from that meeting.

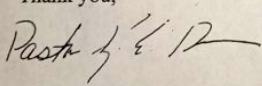
- ◆ Annual dues notices to be sent electronically in January to all Pioneers for whom we have e-mail addresses on file. Membership fees are due upon receipt. Second notices, generally mailed in April, will be sent as "gentle reminders" in post card form that membership fees are past due. Paying your annual membership dues early in the year will help reduce additional postage costs for the "gentle reminder" postcards that will be sent in April.
- ◆ The Pioneer Connection will be issued on a quarterly basis for the upcoming calendar year (February, April, August and November).
- ◆ The ITPA website is being updated and enhanced, the most notable change being a page dedicated to club/chapter news. Clubs and chapters will be able to post their own newsletters or magazines, as well as notices about upcoming activities and recent events. Website URLs for clubs/chapters can also be linked to that page, so that our national readers have quick access to club information. Read more about this opportunity in the Club/Chapter News section.
- ◆ Project award applications, due in early February each year, may be submitted either electronically or in paper form. Electronic submissions (e-mail) must be received by your Region VP by February 8th. Paper submissions (in binders) must be postmarked no later than February 8th. Projects will be reviewed by the Awards Committee in early March and award winners will be announced during the National Assembly.

The February 2024 Pioneer Connection reported on the food collection and the letter writing campaign sponsored by National ITPA Board Members. In that update, we under-estimated the food collected by that small group. The Liberty County Manna House has since then acknowledged receiving 2256 food items from the group. All food collected was used to replenish the organization's pantry.

The Liberty County Manna House
244 W. Memorial Dr.
Hinesville, Georgia 31313
Phone Number: (912) 368-3660

Receipt of Donated Items

Date of Donation: 11/9/23
Number of Items Donated: 225 Canned / Boxed food items
Name of Person: ITPA National
Address: 438 Ogdenhouse Hwy Phone # 775-357-3114
Items will be used for:
Pantry ☒ Clothing ☐ Kid's Café ☐

Thank you,

Pastor K. E. Deason
Director

Now, more than ever, your ITPA membership dues help us continue making a difference in our communities and across the nation. Twenty percent of the \$30 annual membership fee is sent to the club/chapter of which that Pioneer is a member, conditional upon that club/chapter having submitted the required IRS reports each year. Each club and chapter has elected officers and directors who are responsible for managing those funds, which help offset operating expenses and other costs. Eighty percent of the annual membership dues is allocated to the National ITPA. That amount contributes to, but does not fully cover, our general operating expenses. Member attrition over the years, combined with a decline in corporate sponsorships, means that now, more than ever, the membership fees and donations to our foundations, are more critical than ever before, for us to continue making a difference in our communities across the nation.



1st Row: Left to right: Ann Beck, JoAnn Esposito, Darlene Roll, Darlene Terry, Jo Myers, Nancy Hyatt, Hannah Lancaster
2nd Row: Ronnie Cashwell, Nancy Schnitzer, James White

REMINDER

When membership dues are paid online at [Payments and Donations - ITPA \(nationalitpa.com\)](https://nationalitpa.com), a \$2.00 convenience fee is automatically added to the amount collected to cover the ITPA's cost of electronic transactions.

National Office News (Cont'd)

In November, the *Keep Liberty Beautiful* group and the *Morning Glory Garden Club* met at the ITPA's National Office and Museum to decorate the ITPA National Office and Museum and to conduct their monthly board meetings.



Keep Liberty Beautiful (KLB) is a community education and volunteer action program dedicated to community improvement. *KLB* has a long history of working for the best quality of life for Liberty County and has been affiliated with *Keep America Beautiful* since 1983. *Keep America Beautiful* was established in 1953 as a national organization to inspire and educate people to take action every day to improve and beautify their community environment. *KLB* members promoted and supported America Recycles Day during the entire month of November.



The *Morning Glory Garden Club* consists of about 25 members who are interested in all gardening aspects including planting, flower arranging, and education. Some of the club's recent projects have included planting wildflower gardens in neglected areas of Hinesville, fundraising for a new Butterfly Garden at Bryant Commons, learning more about native plants of Bryant Commons Park, and planting trees in the Bryant Commons Park citrus orchard.

We are grateful to these dedicated individuals for keeping the city and county in which our National Office is located clean and beautiful.

We are particularly appreciative of the work they did to make our office and museum festive and inviting during the holiday season. If you weren't able to visit our museum during the holiday season, you missed a special treat!

If you've never visited our museum, keep us in mind when you plan your next road trip.



The *Morning Glory Garden Club* and *KLB* group held their annual Christmas Luncheon at our National Office in December. After the luncheon, attendees enjoyed a gift exchange and a museum tour.

Michelle Ricketson with the Hinesville Downtown Development Authority announced that the new US flag pole for the Veteran's Memorial Walk at Bryant Commons had been delivered and will be installed in January. Michelle thanked the ITPA Charitable and Historical Foundations for their generous donations that helped purchase the flag pole.



THE FLYING MCCOYS GLENN & GARY MCCOY



Club/Chapter News

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT



The ITPA website has been updated and revamped, and it now includes a page dedicated to ongoing events and activities sponsored by clubs and chapters from across the nation. This page is available for news related to clubs and chapters and is intended to be a dynamic platform through which clubs/chapters can publicize their activities in real time.

Please let us publicize your ITPA Pioneer group! To add your current events to <https://www.nationalitpa.com>, send an e-mail to ITPA President JoAnn Esposito at espogirl56@yahoo.com, and in the subject heading add "Club/Chapter Website Page."

The **Otto Wettstein, Jr. Pioneer Club's** Pioneers 44th annual Retiree Christmas Luncheon was held on December 12, 2023. Eighty-four attendees accepted the club's invitation to attend the luncheon, which was also attended by several Florida Chapter Board Members. A buffet lunch of turkey and ham with all the fixings was catered by Debbie's Catering for \$15 per person.



A 50/50 raffle raised \$480.00, half of which was awarded to the lucky winner, who made a donation to help pay for the cost of the banquet hall. The \$240.00 raised by the club will help pay for the rental of the banquet hall for the 2024 luncheon. Door prizes, including \$10 gift cards and poinsettia plants were given to 20 lucky retirees.

Luncheon attendees each year bring cans of non-perishable food items and this year attendees donated more than 400 pounds of food, which was delivered to St. Theresa's Food Pantry and Kitchen. St. Theresa's feeds more than 150 people daily and distributes food bags to those who need them.

Luncheon attendees have expressed gratitude to the club for continuing to host the retiree luncheon, as this is the only time many retirees see their former co-workers, and they enjoy the opportunity to catch up and renew old friendships each year.

Carotel Club Pioneers were busy during the holidays. In mid December, a small group of Pioneers braved the not too cold December weather and serenaded senior citizens and shut-ins with Christmas carols. The group left goodie bags of apples, oranges, baked treats, peppermint and chocolates, hand lotion and tissues, among other items. Another Pioneer group serenaded residents in assisted living and skilled nursing facilities with Christmas carols and karaoke.

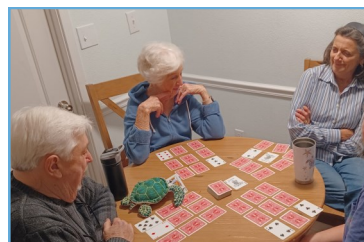


Carotel volunteers wrote thank you notes and hand-painted Christmas ornaments for first responder teams during the holiday. Volunteers also collected more than 200 pounds of non-perishable foods for an emergency food pantry and donated wish list items and cash contributions to a local pet rescue organization.



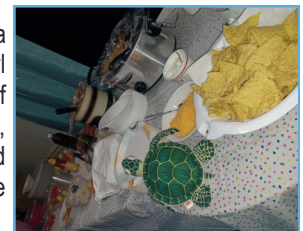
Prior to the holiday season, a small Hertford County Carotel team recognized that county's first responders by treating them to a delicious pulled pork meal. Pioneers also presented the Hertford County first responder team with a beautiful wooden hand-carved "thank you" plaque and a certificate of appreciation from Carotel.

Tar Heel Chapter Pioneers gathered for their annual winter gathering during Super Bowl weekend in Myrtle Beach, SC. The small band began arriving on Thursday and most members had arrive by Saturday. During the weekend, the Tar Heel Pioneers renewed old friendships, reminisced, shopped, played some competitive card games, and of course ate.



Left: The late night crew kept Myrtle the Turtle entertained with games.
Right: Low light in restaurants might provide ambiance but extra lighting is required to read the menu!

On February 11th, the group held a meeting and then watched Super Bowl LVIII together. There was plenty of cheering...some cheered for the teams, some cheered for the commercials, and some, like Myrtle, mostly cheered for the food.



Club/Chapter News (Cont'd)

By Darlene Roll

Clubs in **Regions 2 and 3** are all busy getting project information ready to submit to the Region Vice-President for the 2024 Awards program. I cannot wait to read through all those packets! Those projects support many activities throughout the local areas and in some cases, on a national level as well.

This month, Region 2 recognizes the **ITPA National Capital Chapter** (NCC) located in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. The NCC group is unique because many of their members are telecommunications and information technology professionals from industry and government. NCC Pioneers support the Capital Area Food Bank, Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF), and the USO of Metropolitan Washington. Yearly, they host a Golf Tournament, which has been expanded to include tennis and pickleball. In addition, NCC's monthly Pioneer meetings feature a guest speaker – usually someone from one of the government agencies. This month, a U.S. Department of Agriculture officer is slated to speak to the group and the March meeting will feature discussion about the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Please check out the NCC's website at <https://itpancc.org>.



In closing, my wish is that all of you “Catch the Pioneering Spirit” – if you do not already have it, and help others see a brighter future!

Darlene Roll
Region Vice President—Regions 2 and 3

The **Buckeye State Chapter** Fall Get Together will be held on October 20-22 this year at the Dutch Host Inn (Telephone 330-852-4516). Ask for the following ITPA Buckeye State Chapter rate that includes tax:

- Queen (two beds) or King (one bed)
Friday—\$174.71)
Saturday—\$163.43

OR

- Double (two beds)
Friday—\$163.43
Saturday—\$152.16

A potluck dinner will be held on Friday evening. (Who brings what will be discussed during the chapter's July meeting.) On Saturday evening, dinner will be at 6PM at the Dutch Valley Restaurant.

The Ohio Star Theater will be featuring a performance of "RUTH, an Original Sight and Sounds Production" at 7:00 p.m. on Friday (only show that day). There are no performances on Saturday.

Comporium Pioneers held their first Lunch and Learn gathering for the year on January 10th. The purpose of these luncheons is to inform Pioneers and others of events and or non-profits in our service area. The January Lunch and Learn featured organizers and volunteers for the BMX World Championships to be held in Rock Hill, South Carolina in May. The event needs many volunteers and came to Comporium to give information on the event and how to volunteer.



Tackling Homelessness—Haven Men's Shelter Super Bowl Fundraiser

By Cindy Downing

On Super Bowl Sunday, the Comporium Pioneers helped tackle homelessness at Haven Men's Shelter while the 49ers and Chiefs were making tackles on the field. For the third consecutive year, Pioneers helped decorate the event space for the shelter's annual Tackling Homelessness fundraiser.

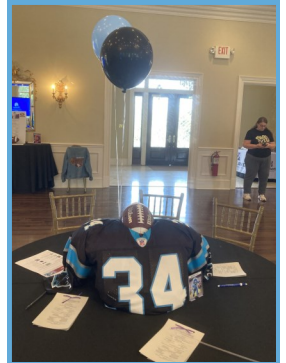


Pioneers also hosted the ticket booth, sold 50/50 tickets, and handled the betting boards during the game.



More than 100 guests attended the event. During the fundraiser, the big game was aired on four large screen TVs.

No Super Bowl party is complete without plenty of food, and the event attendees were treated to oysters, salsa and chips with guacamole, and barbeque with all the fixin's.



The fundraiser included a silent auction, and the donation of two San Francisco 49er jackets donated by one Pioneer sold for \$175, contributing to a very successful fundraiser.

The Comporium team stayed after the event and cheerfully helped teardown and clean-up. Now, that's a winning team!



Haven Men's Shelter serves men in South Carolina's York, Lancaster and Chester Counties, providing a safe environment for its homeless clients. The mission of Haven's Men's Shelter is to help break the cycle of chronic homelessness. That goal is accomplished by igniting hope, demonstrating compassion, providing encouragement and creating opportunities.



Save the dates!

February 9-11, 2024

Tar Heel Chapter Winter Gathering/Super Bowl Party, Myrtle Beach, SC

March 1, 2024

Due date for Kindness project check lists, which should be mailed to ITPA President JoAnn Esposito.

To submit your participation, you can take a photo of your completed check list to espogirl56@yahoo.com or send by U.S. Mail to:

JoAnn Esposito
7 Silver Terrace
Ocala, FL 34472

March 2, 2024

National Awards Committee Meeting, Rock Hill, SC

April 26-28, 2024

National Spring Assembly, Mount Airy, NC (The Real Mayberry RFD).

October 11-12, 2024

Carotel Club's Annual Convention (Paris—A Weekend to Remember) at The Inn at Pine Knoll Shores, Pine Knoll Shores, NC

October 20-22, 2024

Ohio Fall Get Together at the Dutch Host Inn, Sugarcreek, OH (home of the world's largest cuckoo clock). Call 330-852-4516 to make reservations (ask for ITPA Buckeye Chapter rate).

Last Wed. of Every Month—NEAREA Telecom Pioneers gather for breakfast (Dutch treat) from 8:30 am-10 am at Lakeside Skillet, Harvey's Lake, PA. Come for breakfast or just to visit.

Are You Missing Out?

The February 2024 Pioneer Connection includes content that you may have missed out on if you only receive the Pioneer Connection by U.S. Mail. You can read the full online version now at [Publications - ITPA \(nationalitpa.com\)](https://www.nationalitpa.com/publications).

You'll recall that in 2023 we began featuring an expanded online version that included additional articles and photos. Don't worry, the black and white printed version still contains all pertinent Pioneer news. However, the expanded online version contains beautiful full color photos and includes additional content, such as health and wellness information, additional recipes, and more.

To subscribe to the online Pioneer Connection follow these simple instructions:

At <https://www.nationalitpa.com>, move your cursor to "Member Resources" and select "Publications" from the drop-down menu and scroll to the bottom of the page to the following section:

Sign up for ITPA's bi-monthly e-newsletter and Pioneer Connection.

GO GREEN! Simply fill out the form below to sign up for the ITPA's bi-monthly e-newsletter and Pioneer Connection.

All fields marked with an asterisk(*) are required.

Member Name:*

Member Number:

Club Number or Name:

Email Address:*

Repeat Email Address:*

Is this a New Digital Opt-In ☐ New Opt-in Request ☐ Update Request ☐ Opt-out Request

Fill in the blanks and select "submit." It's as simple as that! When the Pioneer connection is published (the second month of every quarter), you will receive an e-mail from the ITPA that includes a link to our beautiful full color magazine. No more waiting for paper copies!!!

If you have any questions about subscribing to Pioneer Connection online or if you need help, please call our National Office.

PEANUTS CHARLES SCHULZ



Member Spotlight



Meet Clifford Holliday, telecom retiree, entrepreneur, accomplished author, and a Region 3 Pioneer. Clifford joined the ITPA when he lived in Lexington, Kentucky. Clifford and his wife Alice, now retired, live in Colleyville, Texas, a small city between Dallas and Ft. Worth.

Clifford began his telephony career at GTKY (a subsidiary of GTE) where he was involved in virtually every branch of engineering and planning. He ultimately served as Vice President of Advanced Technology Planning in the Business Development Department. Clifford's career with GTE spanned 31 years.

Clifford founded A & C Consulting Services and, in that role, he designed major fiber networks, serving customers on three continents. Major means big, really big. Clifford has designed a fiber network for an entire European country and for an entire U.S. state!

Clifford's telephony career began in 1963 and he joined the ITPA as soon as he was eligible to join. His good friend and GTKY mentor, Larry Sanson, was an early president of the ITPA.

Clifford and his wife, Alice, have been married for more than 20 years. They were both previously widowed, and they met completely accidentally at a race track – still one of their shared obsessions. Alice is an accomplished lady, having been a grade school teacher, marketing director, entrepreneur (having made and sold more than 2,000,000 pieces of art), charitable foundation founder, and decorated real estate agent.

The couple enjoys gardening and travel, but now that they are a bit older their travel these days is within the Dallas Fort Worth area. The couple also enjoys sports, especially the Dallas Cowboys, the Arlington Rangers, and the Kentucky Wildcats.



In addition to being a Pioneer, Clifford is a life member of IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) where he was an original member. He is also a member of SPIE (Society of Optical Engineers), the National and Texas National and State Societies of Professional Engineers, and others. He is also a member of the Society of Kentucky Colonels, a membership awarded to him for his work with the Kentucky Department of Energy, and he is an invited member of Mensa.

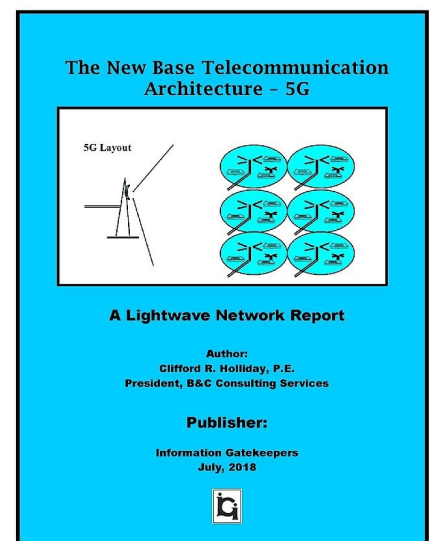
Clifford is a prolific author, having published both fiction and non-fiction books. Four of his fiction novels feature recurring characters Alice and Sam, who become the reader's best friends. His book, Late Love Lost Gold is a tale of a fabulous treasure lost to history at the end of the Civil War. This book is a sequel to The Treasure of the Mount. He is currently working on the third book in this series, which is a contemporary novel set during a future presidential election, with many current topics resounding through the pages. It also gives an inside look at how politics works on a big stage. (With the upcoming presidential election, this book may be very timely.) In this sequel, Alice and Sam are involved with flying saucers, Voodoo, and a mysterious black cat.

In the non-fiction space, Clifford has published several books, among them Electric Cars and You, which became popular quickly after publication and provides substantial information on the topic of electric cars. Intended to provide shoppers with enough information to make informed purchase decisions, this book is also of interest to readers who simply want to learn more about electric cars.

Clifford and Alice celebrate Christmas all month long, preparing a calendar in November for their December Christmas activities. They tour many places in the Dallas-Fort Worth area that offer Christmas displays, attend shows, and have Christmas meals at their favorite restaurants – a very full mouth for the busy couple.

Pictured right is the cover of one of the numerous telecom reports published by Clifford for Information Gatekeepers.

We hope you are enjoying meeting and getting to know other Pioneers from across the nation through our Member Spotlight. Don't be shy if your phone rings and we ask to interview you! Please also let us know of unsung heroes in your club or chapter.



Historical Foundation Update

By Ronnie Cashwell and Andrea Wick

December was a busy month for our museum. On December 6th, ITPA Executive Director Andrea Wick conducted tours for a group of 27 Fort Stewart Military spouses and the museum welcomed additional visitors as well.



Our visitors enjoyed their tour, as is evident by their smiles we caught on camera.

The following week was just as busy. On December 13th, the museum welcomed 30 visitors for the Morning Glory Garden Club Christmas Party. In addition, Andrea hosted walk-in visitors nearly every day in early December.

The ITPA Telephone Museum is popular with local residents and vacationing visitors throughout the year, averaging about 50 visitors each month, and special events, such as Super Museum Sunday held recently on February 11th, boost the total visitor count to about 800 visitors per year.

If you haven't visited the ITPA Telephone Museum, you've missed a treat. Plan now to visit when you're in the vicinity. The museum exhibits are occasionally rotated, so don't visit just once!

Did you know?

The term telephone comes from the Greek words "tele", which means far or distant, and "phone", which means voice.

The telephone is one of the greatest inventions in the world! Since it was patented and introduced to the public in June 1876, it has become the world's most used device.

The first telephone book listed 50 subscribers and was published as a single-page flyer in 1878.

Charitable Foundation Update

By Darlene Roll

The ITPA Charitable Foundation appreciates the donations that ITPA members make when paying their ITPA dues. In 2023, the Charitable Foundation was able to support the following activities thanks to your donations:

- National Project – Alzheimer's Association, specifically for research
- National Project – Troop/Veteran Support with funds donated toward a new flagpole for Space Force, the 6th and newest branch of the military
- ITPA Awards – Matching donations to winning projects.
- National Office Location (Hinesville, Georgia) Project – Support for Wreaths for Warriors Walk, placed wreaths on December 17, 2023. The goal at Wreaths for Warriors Walk is to place a veteran's wreath at the tree of each and every fallen soldier along the Fort Stewart Warriors' Walk in a solemn memorial service



Thank you to all Pioneers for the donations you provide.

Darlene Roll
ITPA Charitable Foundation
President

ITPA Telephone Museum Celebrates Super Museum Sunday

By Andrea Wick

Super Museum Sunday is a statewide Georgia event that spotlights Georgia's fascinating past. This year, more than 100 museums and other sites participated, including our very own ITPA Telephone Museum. During the four-hour admission free event on February 11th, ITPA Executive Director Andrea Wick and museum volunteer Bob Hertling welcomed 93 visitors from far and near. Several visitors were from other states, and we even welcomed visitors from other countries.



Above: Museum visitors intently listen to museum volunteer Bob Hertling as he describes the artifacts in the museum.

First-time visitors were fascinated by the old phones and equipment. Repeat visitors were eager to see relics on exhibit that they didn't see during prior tours. Visitors enjoyed the hands-on interactive exhibits, from cranking old wooden wall phones to playing "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" on a touch-tone phone that is connected to speakers. Visitors can select from several songs in The Pushbutton Telephone Songbook.

Students from Hinesville and surrounding areas received extra credit from their schools when they had their Super Museum Sunday attendance cards signed by each museum they toured.



Above: Children enjoying the Valentine goodies they received during their museum visit.

Children visiting the ITPA Telephone Museum were offered complimentary books from our Free Little Library and Valentine's goodies to take home.

Several visiting teachers expressed interest in field trip opportunities for their students and we hope to be scheduling tours soon.

Meet ITPA Telephone Museum Volunteer Bob Hertling



Rhode Island resident and snowbird Bob Hertling spends his winter months in Hinesville. It's our good fortune that he found our ITPA Telephone Museum. In 2023 Bob visited our museum and donated some magazines. During that visit he offered to help at the museum during the winter months. Bob's telecom career has well equipped him to educate museum visitors, and he is an enthusiastic tour guide.

Bob has more than 46 years of telecom experience, having been the 3rd generation in his family to be in the telecommunications industry. Bob spent the first 23 years of his career with the U.S. Coast Guard, both as an enlisted Telephone Technician and as a Commissioned Warrant Officer in the Electronics Engineering specialty. He spent the next 23 years first with the Parsons Corporation and currently with the ELECSYS Group as a senior-level telecommunications engineer. Bob has been involved with several major projects in the Transportation area, including the Central Artery/Tunnel project in Boston MA and the East Side Access project in New York City.

Bob is a 20-year member of the BICSI (Building Industry Consulting Service International), a professional organization for telecommunications designers and installers, and he holds their Registered Communications Distribution Designer (RCDD) and Outside Plant Designer (OSP) credentials.



A big thank you to Bob for volunteering his time and talents at our museum.



....Future ITPA National President!

Our national nominating committee is seeking recommendations for 2024-2025 National Second Vice President nominees! The ITPA National Second Vice President provides leadership to ensure the organization is reflecting the needs of its members and is in harmony with changes occurring in the industry. The Second Vice President promotes activities of the association to further the goals and ideals of pioneering, and the welfare of the organization.

The Second Vice President also communicates with sponsor companies, chapters, clubs, and individuals to encourage increased participation in ITPA activities and is responsible for identifying and mentoring possible candidates for future ITPA leadership roles.

Candidates for this position will have demonstrated their dedication to pioneering by having served at the chapter, club, and regional levels. The candidate should possess working knowledge of the national organization, its structure, and bylaws by having served on the National Board of Directors and/or Chaired, or served on several National committees. The term of office is one year. It is expected that the candidate will move up to the position of First Vice President after one year.

The significant role of Second Vice President also includes, but is not limited to, assisting Regional Vice Presidents with the establishment of their annual goals, conduct quarterly reviews with Regional Vice Presidents on their involvement in activities in their regions, participate in Executive Board meetings and Committee meetings, as assigned. The incumbent in this position also assists the Assembly Committee and takes an active role in the Assembly activities as may be requested.

A common reflection by Pioneers who serve or have served at the national level is that being on the National ITPA Board has provided them the opportunity to get to know Pioneers across the country and make wonderful friends who they otherwise wouldn't have gotten to know well. Our officers and directors enjoy looking for ways to serve their communities and the ITPA with other Pioneers from across the country. If you are interesting in becoming more involved at the national level and would like to be considered for this position or if you have a recommended nominee, please call Andrea at our National Office at 912-408-4872 for additional information.

Where's Myrtle?

Myrtle traveled far and wide in recent months. In November, she traveled from Raleigh, NC to Hinesville, GA to attend the Annual Fall Board Meeting. Although Myrtle was quite busy during that meeting, ITPA president JoAnn Esposito never knew she was there!



From Hinesville, Myrtle traveled to The Villages, Florida for Thanksgiving with Jo Myers, arriving just in time for the feast!

Myrtle attended the Otto Wettstein Pioneer Club's annual Christmas luncheon as a special guest.



Will someone take the cover off this pool please!



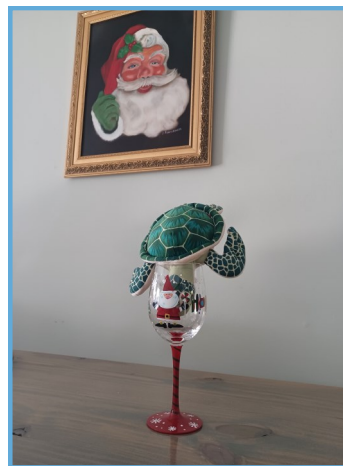
ROAD TRIP!!!

From Florida, to South Carolina and then on to Pigeon Forge, TN with Hannah Lancaster, Myrtle traveled a lot of miles.

Myrtle got up close and personal with a number of holiday decorations!



Above: Enjoying holiday decorations at Pigeon Forge.



Mischievous Myrtle celebrated Christmas in North Carolina.

Myrtle went on a Bahama's cruise in January and attended a Super Bowl party at Myrtle Beach in February! To see photos from those travel adventures, see Pages 18 and 19 of the online Pioneer Connection at [Publications - ITPA. \(nationalitpa.com\)](http://nationalitpa.com).

Recipe Exchange

7 Can Soup

When winter's winds howl and the temps drop low, there's no better comfort food than a hot bowl of soup. If you haven't yet subscribed to the online Pioneer Connection you can find additional soup recipes and more in the online January edition at:

<https://www.nationalitpa.com/publications>

Broccoli Cheese Noodle Soup

Submitted by Darlene Roll, Mid-Ohio Pioneer Club

A friend gave me this recipe several years ago. It is quick, easy and so good!

Ingredients:

- 7 cups – chicken broth
- 1 (10 ounce) package – frozen, chopped broccoli
- 1 (12 ounce) package – fine egg noodles
- 1 pound – Velveeta cheese, cubed
- 5 cups – milk

Directions:

In a large pot, bring chicken broth to a boil. Stir in broccoli and let it boil for 3 minutes. Add noodles and boil for another 3 minutes.

Turn heat to low. Add cheese, stir until melted.

Add milk and turn off the heat. Cover and let stand about 30 minutes, until the soup is creamy.

Enjoy!

Submitted by Darlene Roll, Mid-Ohio Pioneer Club

Recently, at a bingo night (I volunteer to help), the kitchen had 7 Can Soup on the menu. I liked it, got the recipe, and made a pot of it that weekend. It's really good and easy – kind of a chili or Mexican soup but not spicy, unless you choose to make it that way.

Ingredients:

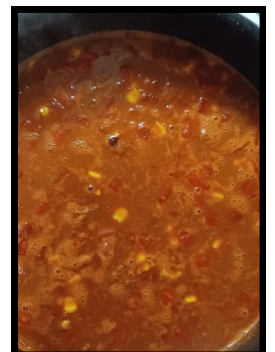
- One 15.25 oz. can of corn with red and green peppers (sometimes called Fiesta corn).
- One 15 oz. can of meat only chili.
- One 15 oz. can of kidney beans
- One 15 oz. can of pinto beans
- One 15 oz. can of black beans
- One 15 oz. can of diced tomatoes
- One 10 oz. can of diced tomatoes with green chilies (optional) – I used a 2nd 15 oz. can of diced tomatoes
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 8 ounces Velveeta cheese

Directions:

Empty all the cans, liquid included, into a large pot. Heat over high heat and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 10 to 15 minutes to bring the flavors together. (I let mine simmer for about 30 minutes.)

Add salt and pepper as needed. Dice Velveeta cheese and stir into the soup until it is melted. Serve immediately.

Note: I was able to freeze several containers of this. It makes "a lot"!



Recipe Exchange (Cont'd)

Easy Potato Soup

Submitted by Darlene Terry, Carotel Club

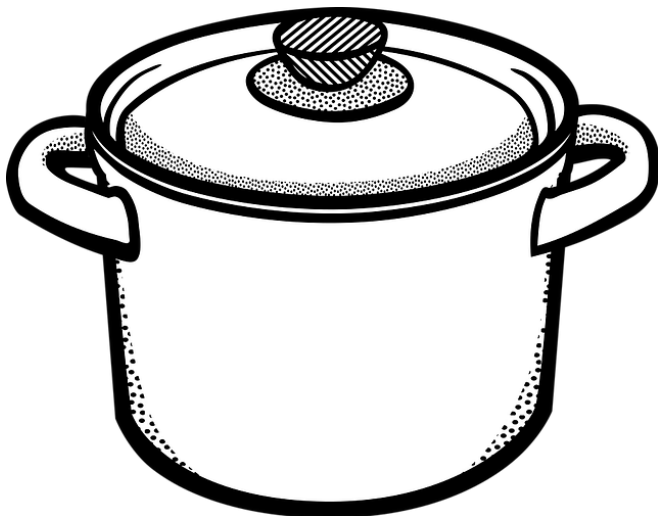
This is the easiest dish I've ever prepared, and it's just as delicious as it is easy.

Ingredients:

- 1 bag frozen diced potatoes
- 1 large bag fresh bacon bits
- 2 cups shredded cheese
- 2 cans cream of chicken soup
- 1 box chicken broth
- 1 block cream cheese, cut into small cubes

Directions:

Turn crock pot on to low and add ingredients in order. Spread cubes of cream cheese evenly over top. Cook on low for 6 hours without opening top. After six hours, stir well to ensure cream cheese is blended evenly into rest of mixture. Cut the block of cream cheese into cubes before adding. Taste BEFORE adding any seasoning. This dish generally doesn't require salt or pepper.



Homemade Chicken and Gnocchi Soup

Submitted by Nancy Schnitzer, Big Bend Club, Tallahassee, FL

I often clip recipes from the newspaper and found this soup recipe recently. It makes a very hearty batch; just right for colder days.

Ingredients:

- 4 Tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 pound skinless, boneless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch pieces (2 cups)
- 3/4 cup chopped celery (3 to 4 stalks)
- 3/4 cup peeled and shredded carrots (2 medium to large carrots)
- 1 cup chopped onions (1 medium onion)
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 4 cups (32 ounces) chicken broth
- 1 Tablespoon Better than Bouillon Roasted Chicken Base
- 2 cups Half and Half
- 16 ounces package of mini gnocchi
- 6 ounces of baby spinach, coarsely chopped
- 1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese (optional)

Directions:

Melt butter in a Dutch oven over medium heat. Add chicken and cook, stirring occasionally, until chicken is no longer pink (about 6 to 7 minutes). Add celery, carrots and onions. Cook, stirring occasionally until vegetables start to soften (about 10 minutes). Add garlic and cook until garlic is fragrant (about 30 seconds). Add flour, thyme and pepper, and stir to combine. Cook for several minutes to remove the raw flour taste. Add chicken broth, Better than Bouillon and Half and Half. Continue cooking, stirring constantly over medium heat until thick and bubbly. Cover and reduce heat to medium low, simmering until celery and carrots are totally softened (about 30 minutes).

Remove cover and add gnocchi, cooking for 3 to 4 minutes until gnocchi starts to float to top of soup. Stir in spinach and cook until wilted (2 to 3 minutes). Correct seasonings as needed, to taste. Serve with freshly grated Parmesan cheese if desired. Yields 6 servings.

Recipe Exchange (Cont'd)

Vickie Jolly and Janet Holliday-Cashwell served these delicious soups at the Tar Heel Chapter's annual Super Bowl party. Both recipes were a big hit and most everyone went back for seconds!

Chicken Chili *Vickie Jolly*

These ingredients make half a crock pot. For a full pot, double the ingredients.

Ingredients:

- 3 chicken breasts (can use chicken tenders)
- 1 can black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 can whole kernel corn
- 1 can mild Rotel
- 1 Tablespoon chili powder
- 8 ounces block cream cheese

Directions:

Place ingredients in crock pot in order listed above, with cream cheese on top. Cook on low for 6 to 8 hours. Shred chicken when done and stir.

Taco Soup *Janet Holliday-Cashwell*

Ingredients:

- 1 to 1 1/2 lbs. ground burger (I use 90/10)
- 1 large onion, sliced
- 2 cans hunts fire roasted tomatoes
- 1 can white yellow corn
- 1 can black beans
- 1 can dark red kidney beans
- 1 pkg dry ranch dressing mix
- 1 pkg taco dry mix

Directions:

In a frying pan, brown burger with salt/pepper to taste. Drain burger and sauté onion in burger drippings. Drain onions.

Turn 5 quart crock pot on high. Pour in tomatoes, corn and beans and then stir in both dry packets to dissolve. Add burger and onions, stir and cover. Cook for 2 hours and then turn to low setting. Cook for another 2 1/2 to 3 hours, checking periodically to see if any liquid needs to be added. (Sometimes I add about 3/4 can of water.) Top as desired with cheese, sour cream, olives, etc. and serve with tortilla chips.

Homemade Chili

Ingredients:

- 1 pound ground beef (or ground turkey)
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 (15 ounce) can tomato sauce
- 1 (15 ounce) can kidney beans
- 1 (14.5 ounce) can stewed tomatoes
- 1 1/2 cups water, or as needed (optional)
- 1 pinch chili powder, or more to taste
- 1 pinch garlic powder
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Shredded Cheddar cheese (optional)

Directions:

Cook ground beef and onion together in a large saucepan over medium heat until beef is brown and onion is tender, about 5 to 7 minutes. Stir in tomato sauce, kidney beans and stewed tomatoes with juice. If you prefer a thinner chili add some or all of the water. Season with chili powder, garlic powder, salt and black pepper. Bring to a boil and then reduce heat to low. Simmer for 15 minutes.

Add shredded cheese and/or a dollop of sour cream after dipping chili into serving bowls if desired.



Myrtle Takes a Cruise!



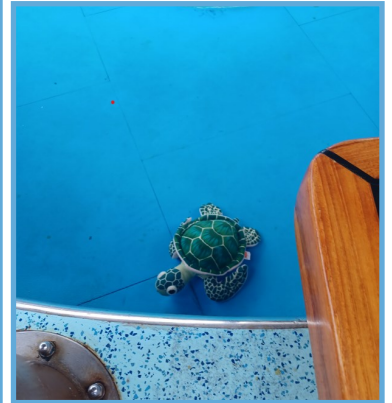
This atrium is fabulous!



Welcome aboard drink menu!



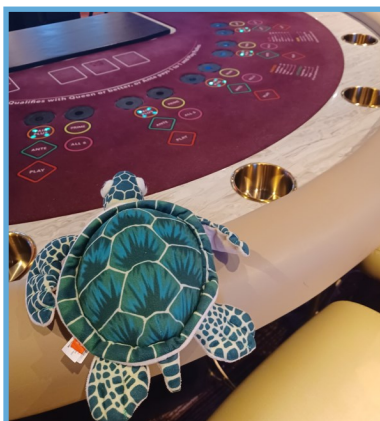
Safety first...getting ready for the pool.



Swimming is just like riding a bike... it comes right back to you.



Well hey there little fella!



Getting down to business in the casino.



VIP status comes with a price.



*Left: Myrtle enjoys a beach day at Half Moon Cay, Bahamas.
Right: A lazy day at sea.*



The night before...



...and the morning after!

Myrtle in Myrtle Beach Super Bowl with Tar Heel Pioneers



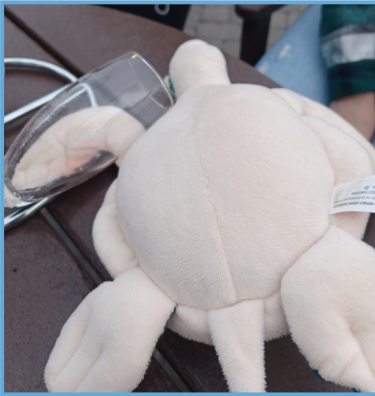
A big ole turtle hug to Tar Heel Pioneer Mike Outlaw



Field trip to Duplin Winery



A little help here please, Mr. Bartender!



Maybe I shouldn't have sampled all of them.



I don't know how I got in here, but PLEASE GET ME OUT!!!!!!



I've got a front row seat for the Super Bowl. Go Chiefs!



It's not what it looks like... I'm buying Valentine candy. And you thought I was betting on the game!



How much further to the ocean???



As VIP guest at the Tar Heel Super Bowl party, I was first in the food line. Yum!



Will someone please tell Jean that I am not an acceptable substitute for "Spin the Bottle"



I'm sure Jim won't mind if I have a sip. Wine tasting makes me thirsty.



Girls just gotta have fun.



I call this meeting to order!

Where's My Menu?

Those square barcode-looking things called QR codes are showing up everywhere now, even at our favorite restaurants that, since the COVID-19 pandemic, have been encouraging customers to access menus on their cell phones. You can even register your church attendance and make your weekly donation using QR codes! "QR" stands for "quick response" in case you're curious.



By scanning a QR Code with your Android smartphone or iPhone, you can go directly to a particular webpage or download a particular app without having to type in a complicated URL. (URL stands for "Uniform Resource Locator". A URL is a string of characters that identifies the location of a specific resource on the internet, such as a webpage, image, or file.

QR Codes can be great time-savers, but the ease of using them depends on the age of your mobile phone. On some older models, how to access QR Codes is not always obvious. If your mobile phone is a newer model, you'll need to open your smartphone camera to access a QR Code, but you should not actually take a picture. Just point your camera at the QR Code. (It doesn't matter whether you're holding the camera vertically or horizontally.) Your camera will automatically scan the QR code and you'll see an icon or a web address on your screen. Tap on that link and your browser should take you directly to the website associated with the QR code.

Be cautious when scanning any QR code. Before scanning, check to see if the QR code appears to have been tampered with. Even if it appears intact, check the web address that appears on your screen after scanning. Ensure that the web address is expected, such as a company's website or the name of the restaurant for the menu you're accessing. Fake QR codes can direct you to fraudulent websites. Be very cautious before making any financial transaction using a QR code.

If your phone is older (2018 model or older) you will probably have to download a QR reader app through the Apple or Google Play app stores. Do so with caution because some QR reader apps could expose you to malware. If that happens, the content of your phone could be hijacked.

The bottom line for QR codes is that even though many businesses and most restaurants now offer the convenience of QR codes, you should be vigilant and attentive

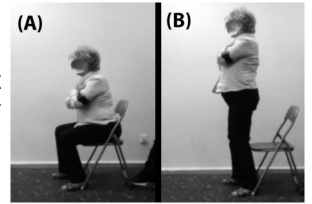
when accessing any QR code. Don't give cyber thieves the chance to steal your identity or ransom your phone's contents. Scan responsibly!



#1 Exercise for Seniors

Fitness experts recommend a number of exercise do's and don'ts for seniors. If you don't have a lot of time, energy or desire to exercise, here's one exercise you should do daily! And it's simple...just squat!

Start from a seated position with your arms crossed over your heart and then rise, without moving your hands, to a standing position. Be seated again and repeat, and you've completed your first two reps!



Dr. Eric Daw, personal trainer dedicated to older adults and founder of Omni-Fit in Toronto, Canada reminds us of our need to be physically able to squat throughout the day. Going to the potty, getting into the car, sitting down to a meal...all those activities that require sitting down and standing up are squats, and not doing those squats well affects the way we live.

Squats strengthen the muscles in our legs and glutes, and doing squats properly improves the muscles in our lower back and core. Those muscles are important when you're trying to get out of that deep and comfy old sofa. They can also help protect your joints, improve your balance and even prevent falls, according to Denise Austin, who has been one of America's best-known fitness experts and author for 40 years.

There is even some research that links strong leg muscles to longevity!

How to get started with your squats:

For beginners, choose a location where you can hold on to the kitchen counter or another steady surface. Hold on so that you can focus on your form and stay stable without worrying about your balance. Set your feet about shoulder-width apart or a little wider. If you have hip issues, spread your legs a little further apart. Be sure your toes face slightly outward.

Lower into a squat. Keeping your back straight, your chest up and your heels planted, push your hips as if you are about to sit down. Keep your weight evenly distributed on both feet, with most of your weight on your heels. Keeping your back straight, chest up and heels planted, push your hips back like you are sitting in a chair. Keep your weight evenly distributed on both feet as you do the exercise, with your weight mostly on your heels, not your toes.

Make sure your knees don't extend forward over your toes to avoid knee injury.

Note: Your Pioneer Connections editor tried this and in less than one week I noticed a significant improvement in my balance. This really does work!

Source: [The Best Exercise You Can Do for Your Health \(aarp.org\)](https://aarp.org)

Looking Back ... Telephone Hall of Fame



Gustav Hirsch was the seventh ITPA Telephone Hall of Fame inductee. Born in Columbus, Ohio, Hirsch graduated from Ohio State University in 1897 with Electrical Engineering and Master of Engineering degrees, after which he worked for several telephone companies in the capacities of Chief Engineer and General Superintendent. Hirsch also held vice president and/or director positions in several telephone companies, among them United Utilities, Conneaut Company, Mansfield Company, Elyria Company, and Warren Company. Hirsch served as president of Warren Telephone Company from 1948 until his death in 1959.

In 1908, Hirsch founded Gustav Hirsch & Associates, specializing in consulting engineering. Hirsch made outstanding accomplishment in that field.

Hirsch was a member of five professional engineering organizations, served a tenure as ITPA President, was a director on the US ITA board, and served as president of Ohio Independent Telephone Association. In addition, he was a director of the Ohio Mental Health Association, Kremer Realty Co., Sky Way Broadcasting Corp., Cosmopolitan Investors Corp., and Market Exchange Bank.

Hirsch served in the military during the Spanish-American War, World War I, and World War II. He was a commanding officer of signal battalions, and he received many citations for both service and battle. Gustav Hirsch was listed in "Who's Who" in America, "Who's Who" in Engineering and "Who's Who" in industry.

Need a Reason to Smile?



Need a reason to smile? Free lance writer and editor Leslie Pepper, who specializes in health, nutrition, parenting, and lifestyle, has the following suggestions. In "Try One of These Suggestions to Make You Smile," an article written by Pepper for Woman's World, Pepper offered numerous things we can do to put a smile on our faces, and perhaps on someone else's too, on days when we need a lift. Here are just a few of her suggestions.

Pop a peppermint. Besides the fact that they're free, there are good reasons to grab a couple of those peppermints beside the cash register at your favorite restaurant. Peppermint actually increases blood flow and can stimulate the area of the brain that wakes us up in the morning. Putting a little pep in your step will surely help you smile.

Open the blinds. Letting the sunlight in can lift a gloomy mood.

View an old home video of a happy occasion to put a smile on your face. Even easier, peruse an old photo album.

Say hello to a stranger. When you wave and say hello to someone you don't know, you can't help but smile.

Wear something you love and that you know looks good on you. Receiving a compliment on an ordinary day can make you smile.

Choose one drawer to empty. Let items go that you haven't used in a while. Clearing clutter feels good! Phone a friend. Texting doesn't impact us like hearing an old friend's voice. Letting someone hear you say you're thinking of them will put a smile on their face as well as your own.

Let someone into your lane. Even if the other driver isn't being particularly courteous, pausing and letting someone get ahead of you will make you happier than teaching them a lesson.

Read about more ways to help you smile at [101 Things That Are Guaranteed To Make You Smile \(liveboldandbloom.com\)](https://liveboldandbloom.com/101-things-that-are-guaranteed-to-make-you-smile/).

Additional reading suggestions:

[How a Simple Smile Can Help Change Your Life | Psychology Today](#)

[How a Simple Smile Can Help Change Your Life | Psychology Today](#)