

PIONEER CONNECTION

Independent Telecommunications Pioneer Association



ITPA

The ITPA is a volunteer organization created by and for the independent telecommunications industry.

Dedicated to community service, ITPA members have been serving the public on behalf of telecommunications companies since 1920.

February 2026

Issue 26-01



ITPA PARTICIPATES IN SUPER MUSEUM SUNDAY!

Each year the Georgia Historical Society sponsors Super Museum Sunday, and museums across the state participate. The ITPA Historical Foundation participated in this event again this year by opening the museum to visitors. Super Museum Sunday draws a crowd, particularly families who want to make the most of Super Bowl Sunday.

Thanks to Pioneer Alissa Moss and volunteers Bruno and Ginny Robles for volunteering their time that allowed us to open the museum for Super Museum Sunday. Alissa served as the ITPA's Executive Director for a number of years and is still an engaged Pioneer! Bruno and Ginny volunteered at the museum with Alissa for several years after having visited the museum initially with their family members who were visiting from Florida.. Bruno felt right at home amongst the old telephones, operator switch boards and telephony equipment and before the tour concluded Ginny had offered to volunteer if help was ever needed at the museum. From that day, a friendship and ITPA partnership began with these dedicated individuals.



Bruno and Ginny Robles were recognized as outstanding volunteers at the 2023 ITPA spring assembly.

NATIONAL OFFICE & MUSEUM NEWS

If your New Year's Resolution included a visit the ITPA National Office and Telephone Museum this year, please wait to schedule your trip, but keep it on your list! Our museum is currently closed as we undergo some exciting changes that we hope



will make the museum an even more enjoyable experience in the future. Cabinetry for a new Hall of Fame kiosk have been completed but it may be several months before the planned technology is in place.

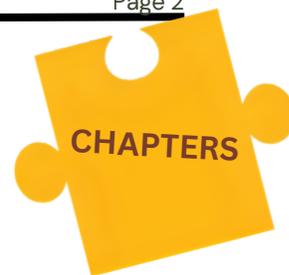
Our national office is also temporarily closed, and no one is in the office to answer calls live. We have been working hard to resolve a voicemail issue which may have resulted in some phone calls not being returned. That glitch has now been corrected. Voice mails are being monitored, and calls will be returned within 48 hours when callers leave a voice mail with their contact information. If you need to contact someone urgently and immediately, please call national ITPA 1st Vice President Ronnie Cashwell at 919-801-8428 for assistance.

Our national ITPA board requests your patience as we work hard to get our national office and museum reopened, and we appreciate your support.





IN CASE YOU'RE PUZZLED PART TWO!



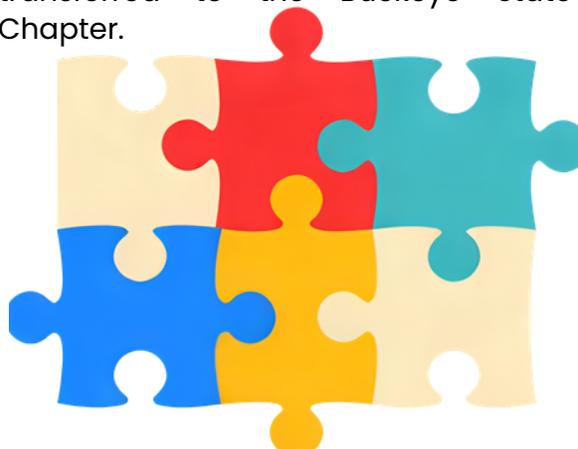
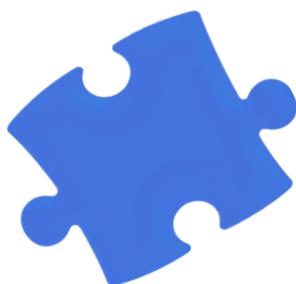
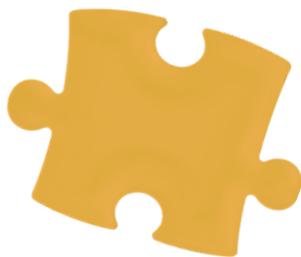
We hope the first installment of this article, which appeared in the November 2025 issue, was helpful to understand how our clubs, chapters and national ITPA are all connected. Since then, we've had some minor changes at the regional level that we want to make you aware of.

Club delegates voted just before the holidays to reduce the number of regions from three to two. As a result, clubs and chapters previously categorized as Region 3 have been shifted, and Regional Vice Presidents Darlene Roll (Region 1) and Nancy Schnitzer (Region 2) now support all of the ITPA's clubs and chapters.

We thank outgoing RVP Gregg Klatsky for his years of service to the ITPA. It's particularly important that our club and chapter officers and directors know whether this realignment affects their clubs/chapters and how to contact their assigned regional vice president. The last page of this issue includes a list of all active clubs and chapters by region.

Club delegates also approved the addition of Dennis (Denny) Groh as a new Director at Large and elected Ronnie Cashwell to the position of 1st Vice President. Thanks to Jo Myers and Kyle Anderson, who recently stepped down from their roles, for their contributions to the national ITPA board. And a hearty welcome to Denny Groh.

Delegates also approved the proposed disbanding of the Mid-Ohio Club and Alpha Rayne Club. Active Mid-Ohio Club Pioneer memberships were transferred to the Buckeye State Chapter.



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

ITPA WELCOMES NEW DIRECTOR AT LARGE, DENNIS GROGH



Please join our national ITPA board in extending a warm welcome to Mr. Dennis (Denny) Groh, who has assumed the role of ITPA's newest director at large. Denny possesses a distinguished career spanning thirty years in information technology and telecommunications infrastructure, alongside integrated support services for the public sector.

Throughout his professional career, he has held senior leadership positions at renowned organizations, including Boeing Information Services, Siemens, STG, ESN, and Granite Telecommunications. Before he transitioned to the public sector, Denny served as Assistant Commissioner for GSA's NETWORKS services organization, where he managed an annual contract valued at \$11 billion.

Denny also has experience as a former Senior Executive Service (SES) member with the Defense Information Technology Contracting Organization (DITCO), overseeing 65 departments and managing a budget of \$12 billion.

Denny has a long history of involvement with ITPA's National Capital Region Chapter, serving as its president for two years and on its board of directors. He was instrumental in expanding their community charitable giving commitments to the USO-Washington/Baltimore Region, the National Juvenile Diabetes Association, Capital Area Food Bank, the Salute Military Golf Association, and the Christmas Toys for Tots program.

Denny currently resides in Ashburn, Virginia. He is the father of Ashley Groh and has two grandchildren, Gino and Ayleah, and two dogs, Luna and Diamond. He enjoys swimming and basketball in his leisure time.

We are confident that Denny, as part of our board and a member, will be integral to our organization's future growth and success, and we appreciate his contributions to the ITPA and his community.



CLUB AND CHAPTER NEWS

Buckeye State Chapter (OH)

Fall Gathering October 16–18, 2026



It's not too soon to make your hotel reservations for the Buckeye Chapter's annual fall gathering, to be held Oct. 16–18 at the Dutch Host Inn in Sugarcreek, Ohio. In fact, if you don't make your reservations now, you likely won't be able to get a room at all.

Even if you aren't 100% sure you are coming, you can book now and can cancel several days prior to the event with no penalty.

The hotel phone number is 330-852-2468. Room prices for Friday and Saturday night are \$293.04 for a double room and \$315.59 for a room with King or Queen beds. If you want to reserve only one night, please confirm as they usually have a Friday night (higher) and Saturday night (a little lower) rate.

Reservations have already been made for the group at the Dutch Valley Restaurant for Saturday, October 17, 2026 in the same main dining area where we dined last year. The buffet menu will include an assortment of pies.

Friday night's meal is generally a covered dish/pot luck meal, although details for this year are yet to be finalized.



CLUB AND CHAPTER NEWS (CONT'D)

Carotel's Christmas Kringle Rides Again



CT&T retiree Bill Harris captured this special moment as Carotel's very own Bill Joiner (a.k.a. Santa Claus) made a much anticipated appearance in this year's Trent Woods Christmas Parade. Bill has enjoyed his role of Santa during the holidays for many years. The tradition began many years ago at a local elementary school. Bill's popularity and his 'Santa' appearances have increased over the years. When he's not on Santa duty, Bill is still active in the community, and is a fine example of an ITPA Pioneer!

CLUB AND CHAPTER NEWS (CONT'D)

Comporium Pioneers (SC)

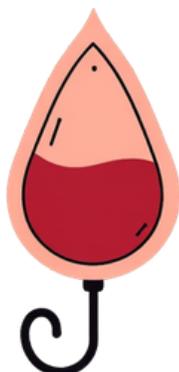
On December 20th, Comporium Pioneers held their Annual Christmas and New Year's Dinner for those in need. This annual project has blessed many families over the years to provide a Christmas and New Year's dinner for families in the Comporium service area. Comporium Pioneers thank everyone who donated food for the boxes, donated a Honey Baked ham certificate, bought cheese at the project fundraiser, helped pack the boxes and volunteered to deliver the boxes. These collective efforts helped make Christmas merry and bright for many.

On Super Bowl Sunday, the Comporium Pioneers had a great time volunteering at the "Tackling Homelessness Super Bowl fundraiser for the Haven Men's Shelter. Comporium Pioneers are long time supporters of the Haven Men's Shelter and this annual fundraiser.

On February 12th, Comporium Pioneers hosted their first blood drive of the year with much appreciated Comporium employee and Pioneer support.



We ♥ our volunteers!





CLUB AND CHAPTER NEWS (CONT'D)

ITPA National Capital Chapter

Submitted by Amy Fadida, Vice President, ITPA National Capital Chapter

Our 2025-2026 ITPA National Capital Chapter season began with our annual Charity Golf Tournament in early October, and we had a great turnout. It was a very successful event and is the one each year from which we generate the largest portion of our end-of-year charitable donations.

Despite several significant changes that have taken place in our government that have impact on our government contracting community, we have held three outstanding monthly luncheons since our golf tournament was held. In November, our guest speaker was Mr. Allen Hill, a long-time civil servant who had just retired on 10/31/25 from his role as the CIO of the Federal Communications Commission. Our December luncheon featured Dr. Kelly Fletcher, the CIO of the US Department of State. Our January luncheon featured Mr. Loren Smith, Director, Solutions Development, Enterprise Technology Solutions in the IT Category Directorate of the GSA Federal Acquisition Service. Each event was very well attended and our sponsors and luncheon guests gained excellent insights into a number of Federal agency plans, programs, current issues and challenges for which industry partnership is needed and encouraged.

We have great speakers lined up for the rest of our season, culminating in our Annual Dinner and Awards Gala this June. The gala will be held on Thursday, June 4th, at Westwood Country Club, 800 Maple Avenue E., Vienna, VA 22180. Check-in and networking begin at 5:30PM EDT and the evening should conclude by 9PM EDT. We will provide additional information about our speaker and our charities to be recognized that evening.

Our Board members are very engaged in the Chapter and are collaborating to develop some new programs to ensure that we continue to enhance the value of ITPA for our sponsorships and deliver meaningful events for the Chapter and its guests. We would love to have you join us at one of our events. The door is always open.

Learn more about ITPA National Capital Chapter events and activities at <https://www.itpancc.org>.

CLUB AND CHAPTER NEWS (CONT'D)

OTTO WETTSTEIN, JR. PIONEER CLUB CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Submitted by JoAnn Esposito

The 45th Telephone Retiree Christmas Luncheon was hosted by Otto Wettstein, Jr. Pioneer Club members on December 9, 2025 at the Pasta Faire Restaurant in Belleview, Florida. The restaurant provided a special menu that allowed each person to choose their entree.

This luncheon was sponsored by Quantum Telephone Company. Florida Chapter President, Sanja Hartfield attended the luncheon along with several other chapter members. Several members from the Galloway Club also attended and helped with the raffle. Sanja also brought a gift basket that was also raffled.

Forty-eight people attended the event. Rich and Rose Selvar donated 10 Publix Gift cards for the raffle and 10 Christmas plants were also raffled. Each guest was asked to bring a non-perishable food item that was donated to the St. Theresa's Food Pantry in Belleview, Florida.

St. Theresa's Food Kitchen serves over 150 meals per day to the needy and homeless. On Wednesday, December 11th with a car trunk full of food items, 2 gentlemen helped me carry the food into the pantry. The volunteers were so appreciative they could not believe all the items donated.

Everyone had a good time, good food and were happy about the new venue. In 2026, same place on Tuesday, December 8th. Save the date!





CLUB AND CHAPTER NEWS (CONT'D)

Tar Heel Chapter (NC)

Tar Heel Chapter Pioneers braved the cold and the remaining snow to travel to Myrtle Beach, SC for their annual mid-winter gathering and Super Bowl party. Every room featured a beautiful ocean view and we enjoyed gorgeous sunrises over the ocean and watched the dolphins frolic each morning. With opportunities for great shopping, a floating casino, and great restaurant choices, there was something for everyone to enjoy throughout the weekend. Tar Heel Chapter president Brenda Smith presided over a board meeting, during which the group voted to continue supporting the Davidson Life Center with a toiletry/personal item drive to be held in August. The group will also collect non-perishable foods that will be donated to the Salem Methodist Church food bank in memory of Mike Outlaw. Those who attend the August gathering may bring toiletry and food items. If you can't attend and would love to participate in these projects, monetary donations are welcomed.

After the meeting, the group enjoyed an indoor tailgate party before kick-off. Those who weren't particularly interested in the big game settled in for a competitive card game.

The Tar Heel Chapter Pioneers have already planned their next gathering and YOU are invited to attend. The Tar Heel Chapter's 2026 Tee-rific Golf-Themed annual assembly will be held on August 21-22, 2026.

All Carotel Pioneer Club members, spouses and guests are welcome. The Tar Heel Chapter Pioneers meet every August in North Carolina's historic Sandhills region at the Hampton Inn & Suites located at 200 Columbus Drive, Aberdeen, NC 28315.

With nearly 40 golf courses within a 15-mile radius, including the host sites of the 2024 U.S. Open and 2022 U.S. Women's Open, the Aberdeen/Pinehurst/Southern Pines area is celebrated as the Home of American Golf. Adding to that legacy, the USGA chose Pinehurst for its second headquarters, complete with an equipment-testing facility, innovation hub, museum and visitor center, and new offices.



Pinehurst No. 2 will proudly host five U.S. Open Championships by 2047, further cementing the region's place in golf history.

It's only fitting that the theme for our 2026 assembly will celebrate the rich golfing history of the area. Join us for an unforgettable weekend of fun, laughter, and all things golf—without ever swinging a club! Whether you're a golf enthusiast or just in it for the good times, this event is the perfect way to celebrate the game in a unique and exciting way.



Tar Heel Pioneers recognized Immediate Past President Darlene Terry.



CLUB AND CHAPTER NEWS (CONT'D)

IMPORTANT DATES



April 25, 2026

Buckeye State Chapter Meeting **and** National Telephone Day - Commemorating the invention of the telephone, this day serves to appreciate the impact of the telephone on communications and society.

June 4, 2026

ITPA National Capital Chapter Annual Dinner and Awards Gala
Westwood Country Club, 800 Maple Avenue E., Vienna, VA
5:30 PM -9PM EDT .

August 21-22, 2026

Tar Heel Chapter Annual Assembly, Aberdeen, NC

October 9-10, 2026

Carotel Convention, Crystal Coast Ocean Front Hotel, Pine Knoll Shores, NC

October 16 - 18, 2026

Buckeye State Chapter Get-Together Dutch Host Inn, Sugarcreek, OH

December 8, 2026

Otto Wettstein, Jr. Pioneer Club Retiree Luncheon
Pasta Faire Restaurant in Belleview, Florida

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.

NOVELTY PHONES: BANE OR BOON TO TELEPHONE COLLECTING

By Dr. William Granger

Until the breakup of the Bell System in the 1980s, only Western Electric phones could be added to the telephone network. Then, it seemed like everyone got into the phone business and a lot of the phones produced were so-called “novelty phones.” Although some were rather expensive, most were relatively inexpensive and gave people a cheap second or third phone extension. Most of these phones were made overseas and quality was certainly not up to Western Electric standards. Many people thought these phones were cute: others felt they were an inconvenient nuisance.

Nevertheless, I can’t resist showing you a few from my collection. Apologies in advance.



Above: This toy carousel phone required a transformer to spin the carousel. Phone works but carousel does not.

About the Author:
Dr. William Granger is a member of the Antique Telephone Collectors Association and is passionate about the preservation of telephone instruments in memory of what he says was once “the greatest telephone company in the world.”

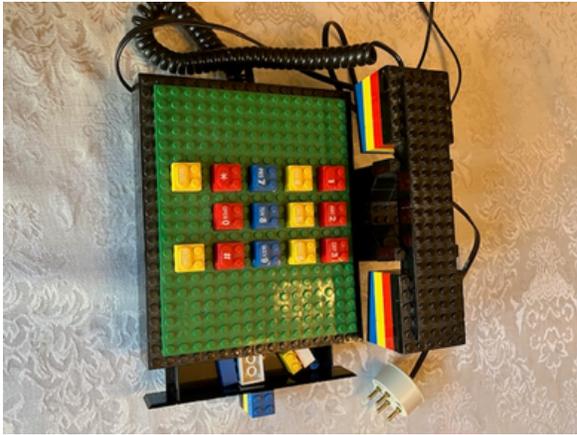


Above: Beetle Bailey phone. Microphone in base.

Below: Diner telephone, top, controls for tone/pulse, ringer volume, on/off, on bottom behind panel.



NOVELTY PHONES (CONT'D)



Above: Lego telephone. Also shows a drawer to store extra Lego pieces.

Below: Love-Bus phone. One piece: Controls, TT pad, and mike/receiver between wheels.



Above: A campy or vampy item: a stiletto heel phone.

Below: Grand piano phone.



Above: A fan favorite: the Snoopy phone. Top photo, front, bottom photo, back of phone.

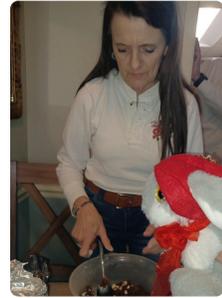


Above: Grand piano phone with handset removed.



HUNNY BUNNY'S TRAVEL ADVENTURES

*Hunny Bunny
in Myrtle Beach, SC
at the Tar Heel
Chapter Mid-Winter
Gathering and
Super Bowl Party*



LET IT SNOW...NO!!!!!!!



Many of our ITPA Pioneers have had a wallop of a winter. Just recently, many of us experiences generational, if not historic, cold and snow records. Snow storms are a captivating yet potentially hazardous natural phenomenon characterized by heavy snowfall, strong winds, and reduced visibility. These storms can range from mild flurries to intense blizzards. The severity of a snow storm depends on various factors, including temperature, wind speed, and atmospheric conditions. Here are some common types of snow storms:

- **Blizzard:** A severe snowstorm with winds exceeding 35 mph and visibility reduced to less than a quarter of a mile for at least three hours. Blizzards can lead to dangerous travel conditions and power outages.
- **Snow Squall:** A brief, intense snowfall accompanied by strong, gusty winds. Snow squalls can reduce visibility quickly and create hazardous road conditions.
- **Lake-Effect Snow:** Occurs when cold air moves over warmer lake water, picking up moisture and depositing it as snow on the leeward shores. This type of snowstorm is common in the Great Lakes region.

- **Nor'easter:** A powerful storm along the East Coast of the United States, named for the direction of the winds. These storms can bring heavy snowfall, coastal flooding, and strong winds.

A snow storm can deposit millions and even billions of snowflakes. One pound of snow contains more than 22,000 snowflakes. Denser, wetter snow can have fewer flakes while fluffy, light snow has many many more flakes per pound. Snowflakes are intricate ice crystals that form in the atmosphere. Each snowflake is unique, with its shape determined by the temperature and humidity conditions during its formation. Here are some common types of snowflakes:

- **Stellar Dendrites:** The classic six-armed snowflake pattern, often seen in photos and illustrations. These form in temperatures around -15°C (5°F).
- **Needle Crystals:** Long, thin crystals that form at temperatures around -5°C (23°F). These can create a dense, powdery snow.
- **Plate Crystals:** Thin, flat, hexagonal shapes that form in slightly warmer temperatures than stellar dendrites. They can stack to create fluffy snow.
- **Columns:** Short, stubby columns of ice that form in colder temperatures. These are less common and can combine with other shapes.
- **Rimed Snowflakes:** Snowflakes that collect supercooled water droplets, leading to a frosted appearance. These tend to be heavier and can contribute to wet, dense snow.

Regardless of the type of snow storm and type of snowflakes, snow means cold weather, so bundle up and make some snow angels and snow cream. If you've never made snow cream, you can find some common recipes in this month's recipe section.

LOOKING BACK – TELEPHONE HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES



John H. Wright, born in 1867 in northeast PA, was inducted into the Telephone Hall of Fame in 1965. His early careers as a newspaper publisher and farmer were not very successful.

He established the Spartanburg, PA telephone exchange when he was 30 years old. He later became secretary and general manager of the Warren Telephone Company. After a merger he became vice president and general manager of the Jamestown Telephone Corporation. In 1924, Eastern Crawford Mutual, Western Crawford and Meadville Telephone Company merged, and in 1925 Peoples Telephone Company of Butler, PA and Home Telephone Company of Ridgeway, PA were acquired, at which time Wright was named president. In 1926 he was named president of Telephone Securities. He served in both capacities until his death in 1951.

Wright was one of the organizers of the United Independent Telephone Association in 1913 and was named vice president at the time of its inception. He served on the board of directors of both state and national Independent telephone Associations and was on the board of directors during the negotiations of the "Kingsbury Agreement."

John H. Agee was inducted into the Telephone Hall of Fame in 1966. He founded Adams Telephone Co. in 1904 when he was only 21 years old.

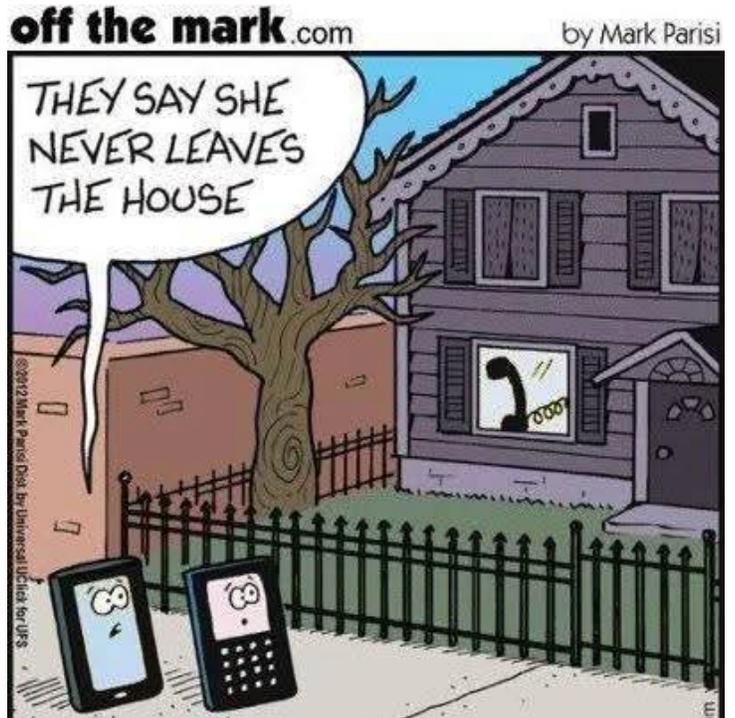
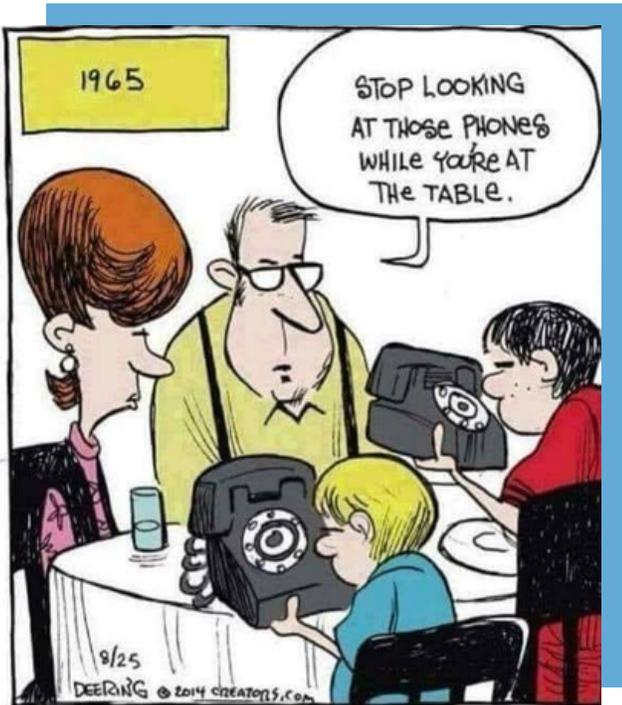
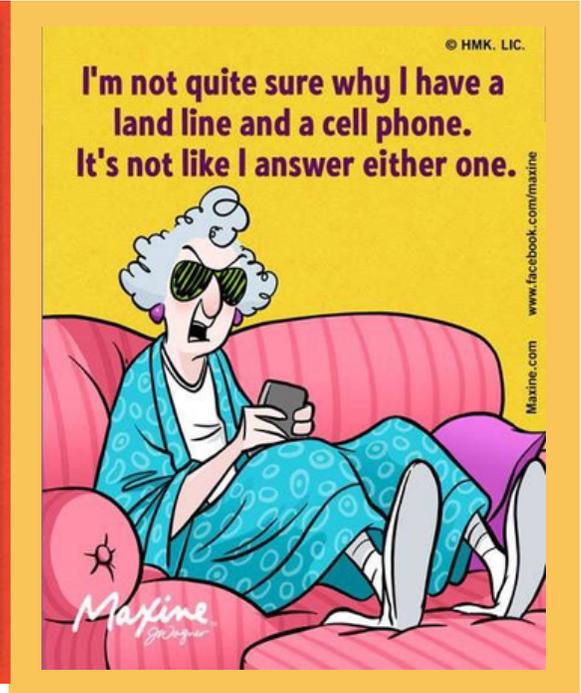
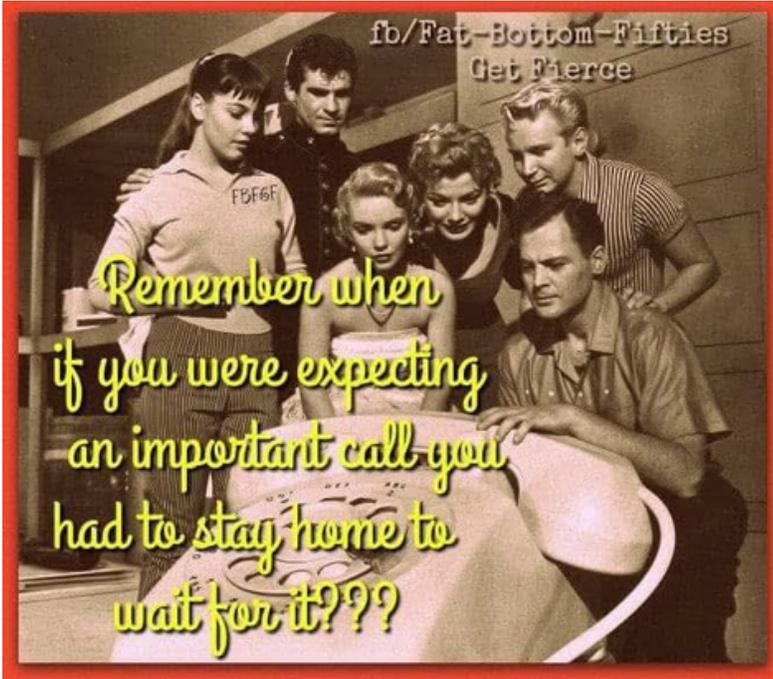


Agee obtained a law degree and practiced law primarily for utility companies. Adams Telephone Company was merged with Johnson County Home Telephone Company and was later purchased by Lincoln Telephone and Telegraph Company in 1912.

Agee was named general manager and director of Lincoln Telephone and Telegraph Company in 1926 and served as vice president and general manager from 1932 to 1948. He served as vice president and director at Continental Telephone Company of St. Paul, Minnesota from 1927 to 1929.

Agee was instrumental in founding Nebraska Continental Telephone Company and other operating properties. He remained active in business and civic affairs after his retirement. He served as USITA president from 1937 to 1938, served on the Executive Committee from 1930 to 1948, and was ITPA president in 1942.

THIS AND THAT



WHAT'S COOKIN'?

SNOW CREAM

With all the snow many of us have enjoyed (endured) this winter, we thought it was time to share some favorite recipes for snow cream!

*Submitted by Darlene Roll
ITPA Buckeye State Chapter/Mid-Ohio Club*

Ingredients:

- 1 gallon of clean snow (do not use yellow or brown stained snow)
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups milk, or as needed

Directions: In a large bowl add sugar and vanilla extract to snow. Stir in just enough milk to reach desired consistency. Serve at once.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup milk, evaporated milk, half-and-half, or cream
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 8 to 12 cups snow

Directions:

Whisk together the milk, sugar, and vanilla in a large bowl. Stick it in the refrigerator while you go get the snow. Bring in more snow than you think you'll need, because it often melts more than you expect.

Stir snow into the milk mixture until it reaches the consistency of an extra-thick milkshake. The amount needed depends on the snow: it takes less wet, heavy snow than light, powdery snow.



Ingredients:

- 1 can eagle brand sweetened condensed milk
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 8 cups fresh snow

Directions:

Mix all ingredients together until well combined. That's it!

Lazy Way Snow Cream

*Submitted by Darlene Terry
Carotel Pioneer Club*

Ingredients:

- Any amount of clean snow
- Flavored liquid coffee creamer (any flavor)

Directions:

Collect snow in a bowl and pour coffee creamer a little at the time into snow and stir until mixture reaches consistency of ice cream or a very thick milkshake. No need to add anything else!

About Us



2025-2026 Officers/Directors

President: Leon Yard

1st Vice President: Ronnie Cashwell

2nd Vice President: Vacant

Immediate Past President:
Jo Ann Esposito

Secretary: Cindy Downing

Treasurer: Daniel Barnhardt

Asst. Treasurer: James White

Directors: Dennis Groh, Hannah
Lancaster, Nancy Hyatt

Region 1 VP: Darlene Roll

Region 2 VP: Nancy Schnitzer

Committee Chairs

Awards:
Ann Beck

Bylaws:
Ronnie Cashwell

Nominating:
Jo Ann Esposito

Investments:
James White

Hall of Fame:
Morrie Sachsenmaier

Leadership Development:
Nancy Schnitzer

Membership and Sponsor Companies:
Vacant

Public Relations:
Darlene Terry

Clubs and Chapters



Region 1:

Buckeye State Chapter (OH)

Palmetto Chapter (SC)
Comporium Pioneer Club (SC)

National Capital Chapter
(VA, D.C. Area)

New England Chapter
Down East Club (ME)
Granite State Club (NH)

Tar Heel Chapter (NC)
Carotel Club (NC)
Independent Members
(former Lexington Tel Pioneers)

**CenturyLink
Pioneers of Georgia**
(no Chapter Affiliation)

Region 2:

**Keystone-Garden State
Chapter (PA)**
Ben M. Witmer Club (PA)
NEAREA Club (PA)
Tri-County Tel. Club (PA)

Empire State Chapter (NY)

Florida St. Chapter (FL)
Carl Hill Galloway Club (FL)
Otto Wettstein Jr. Club (FL)
Florida's Big Bend Club (FL)

North Star Chapter (MN)

Sooner Chapter (OK)

Tom Griffith Chapter (IA)

Mid-South Chapter (MS)
Wade H. Creekmore Club (MS)