

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.

August 2026
Issue 26-03

GOOD NEWS ABOUT DUES AND DONATIONS!

The Independent Telecommunications Pioneer Association (ITPA) is proud to announce our new online payment and donation platform, Zeffy.

In the past, we have used PayPal for dues payments and donations, which resulted in additional fees for both our members and our organization. Zeffy is designed specifically for nonprofits and provides its services completely free of charge—no platform fees, no credit card processing fees, and no hidden costs. We are excited to offer this benefit to our members and supporters, ensuring that more of every dollar goes directly toward supporting the ITPA and our mission.

In addition, we are exploring Zeffy's free communication tools for nonprofit organizations and may soon begin using the platform to distribute newsletters and updates.

Our new Zeffy payment and donation options are now live on our website. If you have not yet paid your 2026 membership dues, please visit www.nationalitpa.org/pay-dues to get started.



Thank you for your continued support of the ITPA and our efforts to preserve telecommunications history while serving our communities.



Visit our website at www.nationalitpa.com for information about dues, donations and much, much more!

You'll find member and club resources, past issues of the Pioneer Connection, club newsletters and other important information.

NATIONAL OFFICE AND MUSEUM NEWS



ITPA First Vice President Ronnie Cashwell is hard at work planning the ITPA's 2027 annual assembly. Details aren't final yet, but we are hoping the dates for our gathering will be **April 29 - May 2, 2027** at the **Hampton Inn & Suites in Aberdeen, NC**.

Due to events beyond our control, the tradition of gathering annually during April was a bit hampered during the past two years, although the "mini" assembly held in Darian, GA this past fall was enjoyed by all who attended. Look for details about our upcoming assembly in the November edition of our Pioneer Connection!

An Update from our National President

by Leon Yard

We have some great news and a bit of not-so-great news for our Pioneer family. First the not-so-great news. Due to a number of unavoidable circumstances, our telephone museum has been closed for walk-in tours for several months now.

Our former Executive Director has left that position to pursue other interests. This created a gap in service for the organization, and left us without personnel in the national office to conduct walk-in tours on a daily basis.

Now for the great news. After a begging and pleading session with Alyssa Moss, who previously served as our Executive Director for many years, I was able to convince her to return to our team part-time. Alyssa has been hosting some scheduled museum tours when she can arrange them on her days off from the fire department where she still works full time. We are blessed to have her back!

I have already saved the date for our spring assembly on my calendar and I'm eager to see ya'll there!

**Keep reading! There's a lot of
information in this issue!**



Pioneer Passions

“When tempted to fight fire with fire, remember that firefighters usually use water.” – Author Unknown

This month’s Pioneer Passions segment recognizes Pioneer members Alissa and Chris Moss, whose shared passion for service has shaped both their family life and their commitment to their community.

Chris and Alissa have been members of the Independent Telecommunications Pioneer Association (ITPA) for 14 years. Their connection to the organization runs deep. Alissa served as Executive Director of the ITPA National Office and Telephone Museum from 2012 until 2023. During those years, the Moss family became known for their willingness to step in wherever help was needed. When ITPA hired Alissa, they gained not only a dedicated employee but an entire family committed to serving the organization. Chris and their children were always ready to lend a hand, making the Moss family a true team.



Above and below: Alissa and Chris were married in a ladder truck in 2012.



The couple’s dedication to service extends far beyond ITPA. Chris began his firefighting career in 1994 as a volunteer with the Long County Fire Department in Georgia. In 1998, he joined the Hinesville Fire Department, where he faithfully served for 26 years before retiring in 2024 as a Battalion Chief. In 2015, he accepted the role of Fire Chief for the Long County Fire Department while continuing his career in Hinesville.

Pioneer Passions (Cont'd)

Serving in leadership positions with two departments required countless sacrifices, often taking Chris away from family gatherings, holidays, and special moments. There were many occasions when Alissa found herself finishing a family meal alone with their four children while Chris responded to emergency calls. In 2016, she jokingly told him that she might have to become a firefighter herself just to spend more time with her husband. They laughed about it, and Alissa thought little more of the conversation. A few weeks later, Chris informed her that he had already signed her up for firefighter training.



What started as a joke quickly became a new chapter in their lives. Alissa completed firefighter training in 2016 and began serving as a volunteer firefighter with the Long County Fire Department. For the first time, she was able to serve alongside her husband while giving back to the community they both loved.



As the years passed, their partnership grew even stronger. Their children became old enough to assist and support the department, making service a true family affair. Chris often took great pride in seeing Alissa working beside him on emergency scenes. Whether she was battling a fire or driving the fire truck to a call, he was frequently the proud spouse snapping photos and sharing them with family members.



Pioneer Passions (Cont'd)

As Alissa gained experience, she assumed greater responsibilities within the department. Then, in 2023, she faced one of the most difficult decisions of her professional life. After more than a decade serving an organization she deeply loved, she left her position with ITPA to accept a full-time role with the Long County Fire Department.



Today, Chris and Alissa continue serving side by side every day. When an emergency call comes in, they put on their gear and respond together.



The couple's commitment to helping others has become more than a profession. It is a way of life for them. That commitment was especially evident during the devastating wildfires that affected Brantley County, Georgia.

After completing their regular shifts at the fire department, Chris and Alissa volunteered their evenings to assist with wildfire suppression efforts. They spent long hours working in difficult and dangerous conditions, facing uncertainty and risk together. Despite the challenges, they found comfort knowing they were serving alongside one another.



Above: The team pauses for a moment before relieving fellow firefighters as they help battle recent wildfires in Brantley County, Georgia.

Left: Fire calls taken together mean Chris and Alissa don't spend as much time separated by work, although both are often a little late for dinner these days!

Pioneer Passions (Contd)

Firefighting is demanding work, but for Chris and Alissa, it has strengthened their bond and reinforced their shared purpose.

Whether through ITPA, the fire service, or emergency management, their mission remains the same: helping others and serving their community.



Pioneer Passions (Contd)



Member Spotlight In Memory of Pioneers Pat Whalen and Morrie Sachsenmaier

This month, we pay tribute to long-time Pioneers Pat Whalen and Morrie Sachsenmaier.

Pat passed away in February and Morrie passed away in early June. Both were passionate pioneers and were integral to our Pioneer family.

Pat's obituary, following, gives testimony to her love of life and her life-long choice to choose happiness:

Patricia Ann Sullivan Whalen, 86, passed away peacefully on February 26, 2026, surrounded by friends and family in Melbourne, FL. In true Pat fashion, she lived her life to the fullest until the very end. Pat was born in Cincinnati, OH, on November 08, 1939, to Emmett and Janette Sullivan. She is preceded in death by her brother, James "Jim" (Dottie). Pat was a proud mother to two sons. She was preceded in death by son Christopher and is survived by son Michael (Diana.) She was a beloved grandmother to three granddaughters: Kari (Stephen), Kristi (Nick), and Kandice (Kyle) as well as six great-grandchildren: Aiden, Jackson, Austin, Skylar, Adrianna, and Ashton. Pat is also survived by countless friends, many nieces and nephews, and a loving sister-in-law, Phyllis.

Pat embodied the pursuit of happiness. She spent her years traveling the world, achieving Silver Life Master status by the American Contract Bridge League, and was deeply involved in social and card clubs: Lions Club International, ITPA (Independent Telecommunication Pioneers Association), Logan County Bridge Club, and Indian Lake Moose. She enjoyed attending the Catholic church (St. Patrick Church in Bellefontaine, OH and Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church in Melbourne, FL) and enjoyed participating in many activities in and for the church.

Pat will be fondly remembered for her sense of humor, her unfailing generosity, and her passion for life. Pat's life was a testament to joy, cherishing your friends and family, and experiencing all that you can. There was never a game of cards that she wasn't ready to play or a trip that she wasn't excitedly planning.

She will be deeply missed by many and lovingly remembered. There's not a single doubt to anyone that Pat is already enjoying a lively game of cards in Heaven.

Some memories of Pat from Buckeye Chapter Pioneers:

Pat came to almost every Buckeye State Chapter meeting (if she was in Ohio; she was a Florida snowbird, too) and enjoyed the annual Buckeye State Chapter get-together. Once the get-together date was determined, Pat worked to figure out what she could bring for the Friday night potluck meal and then frequently asked which of her card-playing buddies from ITPA were going to be there. She was like a kid in a candy store when she heard "the list" of attendees. She liked to introduce people to new card games as well, sometimes with her own version of the rules.



Pat loved to participate in "dress in theme attire" activities. A favorite was dressing like Aunt Bea from the Andy Griffith Show when the Assembly was in the Mount Airy, North Carolina area.

In Memory of Pat Whalen and Morrie Sachsenmaier (Cont'd)

Always ready to travel, Pat frequently joined Darlene Roll while Darlene was completing an “88 Counties of Ohio” goal. Sometimes Sally Stone and Becky Donahue were also part of this group. If any of the trips were to the Cincinnati area, it called for a trip to Skyline Chili or Pasquale’s Restaurant since the group found Pasquale’s to be similar to Pasquale’s that had gone out of business many years before. In the eastern part of Ohio, the group even had the opportunity to visit an Amish schoolhouse for about an hour, listening to the children in the classroom (all grades are in one room in most Amish schools).

Going to the ITPA Assembly near Washington, D.C. a few years back, Pat begged to see cherry blossoms and it took some doing, but that happened. Way back when, United Telephone/Sprint had yearly calendar photo contests. No matter where Pat went with the group, there was always a “calendar shot” that required a stop. Oh, the memories!

Pat’s obituary highlights her unfailing generosity. From collecting “Pennies for Pioneers” to helping to sell steak burgers at the Lions booth at the county fair, to coming to lend a helping hand at lunches in the park, Pat could be relied upon to be there. And then, as always, she was sharing stories and laughs with everyone there.

Our friend, Pat, will be forever remembered in our hearts and our stories as well. Buckeye State Chapter members had a hydrangea tree planted in a local park in her memory.



Above: Always ready for a road trip, Pat attended the 2026 Tar Heel Chapter assembly in Aberdeen, NC with Nancy Hyatt (TN) and Darlene Roll (OH) and they enjoyed visiting with old friend Hannah Lancaster (SC).

Below: Darlene Roll and Pat relax between activities, although Pat was ready to get the party started!



In Memory of Pat Whalen and Morrie Sachsenmaier (Cont'd)

Morrie Sachsenmaier dedicated many years of service to the ITPA, having served as ITPA Region 5 Vice President, ITPA President, President of the Historical Foundation, and he was still serving as Chairman of the Historical Committee.

A true pioneer, Morrie possessed a remarkable wealth of historical knowledge and a passion for preserving the history of telephony. His contributions, leadership, and friendship touched countless lives. Ronnie Cashwell was a long-time friend to Morrie and the two worked tirelessly to support our national office and the historical foundation. Ronnie called Morrie to check up on him the afternoon of his death, and learned of Morrie's death from his son. Ronnie shared the following with the ITPA board when he notified the group of Morrie's passing. "I already miss him as I know we all will. He was just a phone call away when I had questions or needed advice. He has been a mentor for me with the Historical Foundation as other aspects of the ITPA. He had so much to share and sharing with others he enjoyed so much."

Jim Jolly said of Morrie, "A true Gentleman, one of a kind, dedicated, I could go on and on. I first met him at an assembly held in Washington State when Vanessa was president. He was loved and respected by all."

Morrie's obituary, following, chronicles his life of service, leadership, and devotion to friends and family:

Maurice (Morrie) Sachsenmaier July 13, 1941 – June 2, 2026 Morrie Sachsenmaier passed away peacefully on June 2, 2026, at the age of 84, leaving behind a legacy of service, leadership, friendship, and devotion to family and community.



Above: Morrie and wife Tina with their beloved pet Piper

Born on July 13, 1941, to August and Mary Sachsenmaier, Morrie was raised on a small farm in Wisconsin, where he developed the strong work ethic, integrity, and values that guided him throughout his life. After graduating from Glenwood City High School in 1959, he began a distinguished career in telecommunications that would span more than four decades.

Before his military service, Morrie spent several years traveling throughout the country with his lifelong friend, Bob Swanson, working on missile site communications systems. Morrie proudly served in the United States Army beginning in 1963. Following his service, he continued his telecommunications career and eventually settled in Snohomish, Washington. He spent 32 years with GTE, serving as an installation supervisor and engineering manager before retiring in 2002.

In February 1967, Morrie married Tina in a double wedding ceremony alongside their lifelong friends, Bob and Mona Swanson. What began as friendships in their hometown of Glenwood City, Wisconsin, grew into decades of shared memories as the two couples remained close friends and neighbors in Snohomish for more than 50 years.



In Memory of Pat Whalen and Morrie Sachsenmaier (Cont'd)

Morrie and Tina shared nearly six decades of love, partnership, travel, and cherished memories. Family was at the center of Morrie's life. He was a devoted father to Maury and Leslie (Ron) and took great pride in being Grandpa to Travis (Shelby), Derek (Beth), and Joelle. Beyond his family and career, Morrie dedicated much of his time to serving others and preserving the history of his community.

He was an active leader within the Independent Telecommunications Pioneer Association (ITPA), serving as National President and contributing to numerous historical and charitable projects. A passionate advocate for local history, Morrie was deeply involved with the Marysville Historical Society, where he held several leadership positions, including President.

He played a key role in expanding the society's museum and helped lead efforts to establish and build a new museum facility, ensuring that local history would be preserved for future generations. Morrie was also a dedicated member of the Lions Club, serving in multiple leadership roles, including President, and contributing countless hours of service to community projects and charitable causes. As a proud Third-Degree member of the Knights of Columbus, he remained committed to the organization's values of charity, unity, and service throughout his life. He was preceded in death by his parents, August and Mary Sachsenmaier.

Those who knew Morrie will remember his kindness, generosity, sense of humor, and willingness to help others. Whether through his service, leadership, friendship, or devotion to family, he made a lasting impact on the lives of those around him. He especially cherished time spent with his family and his beloved dog, Piper, who brought him great companionship and joy. His life was defined by hard work, service, and love for the people he cherished. He will be deeply missed and forever remembered by all who knew and loved him. Forever loved, forever remembered.

Morrie grew up on a small farm in Wisconsin. He attended Glenwood City High School and graduated in 1959. After graduation he went to work for the railroad in Clinton, Iowa where his dad worked. After only four months, Morrie was laid off from that job, and he moved to St. Paul, Minnesota temporarily to work for Montgomery Ward filling mail orders.

In September 1960, Morrie landed a job with ITT Kellogg doing installation work for the Air Force. His first gig was at the Minot, North Dakota Air Force Base where he installed a switch at their air to ground defense system. For the next three years Morrie traveled around the country installing missile site telecommunications systems. He worked at Air Force bases in Spokane, Washington; Mountain Home, Idaho; Plattsburgh, New York; and Vandenberg, California, where missiles were launched. Morrie worked on the Atlas and Titan missile sites.

In Memory of Pat Whalen and Morrie Sachsenmaier (Cont'd)



In November 1963, Morrie was drafted into the Army and he went to basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. He was then sent to Fort Carson, Colorado where he spent more than a year in the infantry artillery unit. In the summer of 1965, Morrie was sent to Fort Riley, Kansas with the 1st Division for deployment to Vietnam. The division's departure was delayed and ultimately Morrie was deemed too short to be shipped overseas, so he was discharged from the Army without having deployed overseas.

After his Army discharge, Morrie installed telecommunications switches. He was sent to Purdue University in Lafayette, Indiana and while he was working on a switch there, the Moscow, Idaho telephone office was destroyed by fire. Morrie was redirected to Moscow to work on the damaged switch and there he fell in love.

Morrie and his wife Tina were married in February 1967 in Leavenworth, Washington. It was time to settle down and the couple moved to Snohomish, Washington. Morrie landed a job with GTE in nearby Everett, and he worked there for 32 years as an installation supervisor and engineering manager until he retired in 2002.

Morrie became a Pioneer in 1985. His favorite Pioneering memory was from 2011 when, as incoming ITPA President, his assembly was held in Leavenworth, Washington. Morrie recalled everyone having had a great time at the Bavarian Village. His Charitable Project was the Sarvey Wildlife Care Center, and Jeff Guidry from the center brought a fully grown eagle to the assembly.

In addition to having served as ITPA National President, Morrie served as President for the ITPA's Norwesco Club and has long served with the ITPA's Historical Foundation. At the time of his death, he was serving as Chairman of the ITPA Hall of Fame Committee and served on the Historical Foundation board. Morrie was also active in the Lions Club and the Knights of Columbus.

Zig Ziglar said, "Life is an echo. What you send out comes back. What you sow, you reap. What you give, you get. What you see in others exists in you." Morrie, perhaps without knowing he was doing so, seemed to recognize the importance of living his life in this fashion. He had the kindest of spirits and was a true friend. He will be sorely missed.

CLUB AND CHAPTER NEWS

Buckeye State Chapter (OH)

Submitted by Darlene Roll

Buckeye State Chapter Pioneers, family, and friends are invited to gather at the Dutch Host Inn in Sugarcreek, Ohio the evening of October 16th (6:00 p.m.) through Saturday evening, October 17th, for the annual meeting and dinner. Details and registration form are available at: <https://www.nationalitpa.com/news>.

Buckeye State Chapter Pioneers are collecting food items and/or financial donations for G.R.A.C.E. (Greater Riverside Area Community Encouragers) in Logan County, Ohio. G.R.A.C.E. is an all-volunteer group that provides weekend backpack items to students in need to help support three dinners, two lunches and two breakfasts on a normal weekend during the school year, with additional items on long weekends and school breaks. G.R.A.C.E. also sponsors a summer lunch program, providing lunch one day per week at a local park. All Pioneers are welcome to participate in this food drive.

The wish list for this food collection include the following individually wrapped items in their boxes: Instant Oatmeal Packets, Chewy Granola Bars, NutriGrain Bars, Kellogg's Assorted Cereal Variety Pack (25 Pk.).

If you are unable to attend but would like to participate, as always, we collect "Pennies for Pioneers" (also known as any financial donations).



Please make checks for this project payable to GRACE/Cornerstone Fellowship of DeGraff. Checks can be mailed to Darlene Roll, 1385 Township Road 216, Bellefontaine, OH 43311-9644.

CLUB AND CHAPTER NEWS (CONT'D)

NEAREA Telecom Pioneer Club (PA)

Warming Hearts ... and Laps

Submitted by Tanya Christ

NEAREA Telecom Pioneer Club recently donated 12 hand-crocheted lap robes to Embassy Tunkhannock, for the use and comfort of their residents. To make one lap robe takes 15 to 22 hours to crochet, and 14 to 20 ounces of yarn. Embassy Tunkhannock is a 124-bed skilled nursing facility.

In the photo below, with a display of some of the donated lap robes are:

Front row: Embassy's Aliesha Arnone, Director of Nursing, and Kellie Smith, Activity Director

Back row: NEAREA members Gil Depew, Tanya Christ, Joanne Depew, and Embassy Administrator Kameron Rager.



CLUB AND CHAPTER NEWS (CONT'D)

Carotel and Tar Heel State Chapter (NC) Award Scholarships

Congratulations to this year's Carotel Pioneer Club and Tar Heel Chapter 2026 scholarship recipients. Carotel's Elizabeth Bland Memorial Scholarship is awarded annually in memory of Carotel Pioneer Libba Bland in recognition of her years of dedication to the club. The Tar Heel Chapter scholarship fund was established by Bill and Joe Lawrence, both of whom worked for Heins Telephone Company. Their generosity has allowed the Tar Heel Chapter to award scholarships for more than 25 years. Bill and Joe, now deceased, were active Pioneers and enthusiastic supporters of educational opportunities.

Bronson Harrell is a first-time scholarship recipient of both the Carotel Elizabeth Bland Memorial Scholarship and the Tar Heel Chapter's Bill and Joe Lawrence Scholarship. He is pursuing an Associate degree in Science (Human Biology), and upon graduation he plans to pursue a B.S. degree in human biology and genetics. Bronson is the maternal grandson of Darlene Mills, who is active at the local club and chapter level. His paternal grandparents, Jimmy and Sandra Harrell, are long-time Carotel Pioneers.

Bronson earned a 4.0 GPA during his first two years in college. His stellar academic standing earned his membership in the Gamma Beta Phi Honor Society, where he has volunteered on the service committee since 2025. Bronson is a member of the Tetelstai Bible Club and was elected president in August 2025. He has attended Hickory Grove FWB Church since he was a toddler, where he now teaches Sunday School and fills in as a preacher occasionally.

In high school, Bronson played the trumpet and clarinet in the orchestra. He was also active in sports. His love of music has continued, and he currently plays in the church band. He is an active community service volunteer as well. Bronson has an entrepreneurial spirit and ran his own small landscaping business in 2025.



Bronson is characterized by community leaders, former employers and mentors as consistently demonstrating character and integrity, with a strong work ethic, professionalism, and a genuine commitment to personal growth and success, along with having a passion for serving God and others.

Bronson exhibits all of the traits and potential that make us proud to congratulate him as a first-time scholarship recipient.

CLUB AND CHAPTER NEWS (CONT'D)

Carotel and Tar Heel State Chapter Scholarships (Cont'd)

Kylie Wills is also a first-time recipient of both scholarships. She was sponsored by family member Hilda Morris, a long-time Carotel Pioneer. Kylie graduated from high school in May, having earned a 4.0 GPA during her senior year. She will attend UNC Chapel Hill this fall and plans to major in Psychology along with Media and Journalism. Kylie chose these fields of study because she is passionate about positive exposure in her community and she wants to improve resources and contribute to a sense of togetherness. She plans to accomplish these goals through storytelling and/or therapy for local community members.

In high school Kylie received numerous awards and honors, and she served as Historian as a member of the National Honor Society. She was active in sports and other extracurricular activities and has volunteered in many charitable endeavors.

Kylie has been consistently characterized by her teachers, counselors, and mentors as having a strong work ethic with a passion for serving her community. She doesn't quit when something is hard or even when she doesn't initially succeed. She keeps trying, over and over, always with focus, patience, and quiet conviction that she will ultimately succeed.

Mykenzi Cashwell Herndon is a repeat recipient of both the Carotel and Tar Heel Chapter scholarships. Mykenzi will earn a Medical Office Administration degree in the fall from Fayetteville Technical Community College and will immediately begin the dental hygiene program. She earned all A's this past year, and received a Dental Office Specialist Certificate and a Patient Services Representative Certificate. Mykenzi volunteers as a coach for the Clinton Tigers, a Christian competitive cheer team. She is the granddaughter of Ronnie and Janet Cashwell. As Pioneers, Ronnie and Janet are active Pioneers at the local, state and national levels.



We congratulate Kylie and wish her every success in her future academic and philanthropic endeavors.



CLUB AND CHAPTER NEWS (CONT'D)

Carotel and Tar Heel State Chapter Scholarships (Cont'd)



Joseph "Joey" Howard II is a repeat recipient of the Bill and Joe Lawrence Scholarship recipient. He is the grandson of recently deceased Tar Heel Chapter Pioneer Carolyn Thompson.

Joey is pursuing an Engineering degree at Methodist University. He has continued the academic excellence in college that he achieved in high school, where he maintained a 4.0 GPA during his senior year while serving as captain of his varsity football team and receiving the All-Conference Defense Sportsmanship Award. He also earned a brown belt in karate, which signifies an advanced level of skill and knowledge in the martial-arts discipline. Joey has earned a stellar reputation among his peers, employers, and instructors and we are pleased to award him the Bill and Joe Lawrence Scholarship.

Kassie Davis is a repeat recipient of the Tar Heel Chapter's Bill and Joe Lawrence Scholarship. She will begin her senior year at College of Coastal Georgia, where she is pursuing a nursing degree. She continues to excel academically and currently serves as president of the Coastal Georgia Association of Nursing Students.

Kassie's dream job upon graduation will be to work in a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit when she graduates next year. She is working in the NICU now at Memorial Health University Medical Center in Savannah, and she loves it!

Kassie is the daughter of Tar Heel Chapter Pioneer Alissa Moss and has recently become a member of the Tar Heel Chapter Pioneers herself. She has been a long-time volunteer for national ITPA events, and we are thrilled that she is continuing her affiliation with our ITPA chapter.



CLUB AND CHAPTER NEWS (CONT'D)

Comporium Pioneer Club (SC)

Comporium Pioneers recently donated nearly 100 Bibles to Pathways Community Center. The Bibles will be made available to individuals seeking encouragement, hope, and spiritual support as they navigate their journey toward stability and self-sufficiency.



In July, the club hosted an Ice Cream Social for Comporium Retirees at the Comporium Tech Park Cafe for their quarterly get together. Ice Cream with all the trimmings and two kinds of chocolate chip cookies were served. While the treats were delicious the fellowship was the best part.



The Comporium Pioneer Club was honored to sponsor and host the Rock Hill, SC inaugural "Miracle League Kick-Off" dinner last year and it was so much fun they're going to do it again this year on September 12th!



Miracle League programs provide opportunities for children and adults with disabilities to play Miracle League baseball, regardless of their abilities. Players are paired with a volunteer "Buddy" who assists, protects and encourages the player throughout the game.

Find and follow the "Comporium Pioneers" on Facebook to keep up with volunteer opportunities and to see regular reports on events and activities Comporium Pioneers sponsor and participate in.

CLUB AND CHAPTER NEWS (CONT'D)

IMPORTANT DATES



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

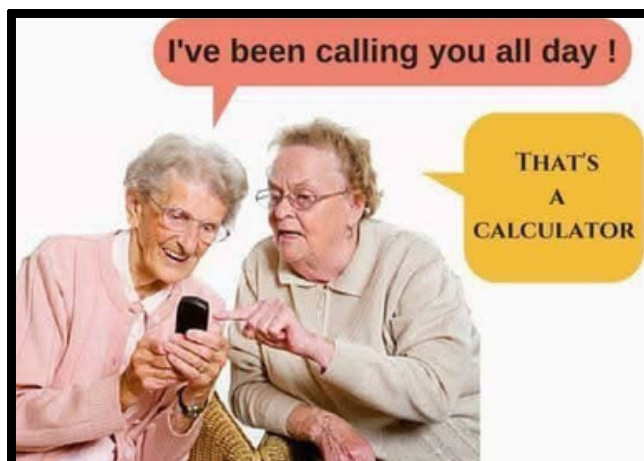
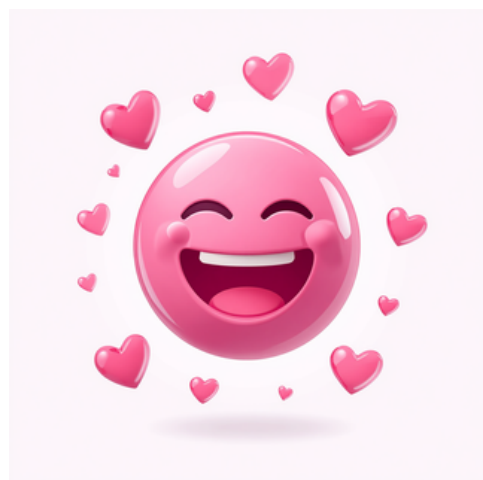
December 8, 2026

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

April 29-May 2, 2027 (date and location tentative)

National Spring Assembly
Aberdeen, NC

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.



CMMC LEVEL 2 COMPLIANCE MUST-DO'S FOR DOD CONTRACTORS AND INTEGRATORS

by Dennis Groh, GTT Director of Business Development and ITPA National Board Member

Federal telecom integrators (DoD and Department of War contractors and/or subcontractors handling Federal Contract Information (FCI) or Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) must achieve Level 2 certification by the November 2026 deadline. Any contractor who doesn't meet CMMC Level 2 standards within the designated timeframe will lose eligibility for any new DoD or Department of War contract awards or related work.

Key Points on CMMC Applicability and Risks

- CMMC applies only to DoD and Department of War contracts (and their flow-downs to subcontractors) where the contractor's information systems process, store, or transmit FCI or CUI. This is enforced via DFARS clauses (e.g., 252-204.7021) in DoD solicitations and contracts. Without the required CMMC Level 2, you generally cannot be awarded or continue such DoD work (beyond phased exceptions).
- Ineligibility for new DoD contracts and task/delivery orders – Proposals become non-responsive if the solicitation requires CMMC Level 2 and you lack a valid certification. This applies regardless of technical merit, past performance, or pricing.
- Loss of subcontracting opportunities – Primes cannot flow CUI-related work to non-certified subs. This can jeopardize prime contractors' own awards and strain (of end) existing subcontractor relationships.
- Impact on existing contracts-Options may not be exercised if compliance verification is required. In some cases, contracts can be terminated for non-compliance.
- False Claims Act (FCA) exposure and other legal/financial risks- Misrepresenting compliance (e.g., false affirmations in SPRS) can lead to FCA liability, damages, fines, negative past performance ratings, suspension/disbarment proceedings, or contract termination. Enforcement happens through contracting actions rather than direct DoD fines.
- Broader business impacts – non-compliance can result in significant revenue loss from the defense market as well as reputational damage and long-term inability to compete.

Potential Indirect Effects on Non-DoD Contracts

Although not a prerequisite for FEDCIV, contracts with particular agencies utilizing GSA and other procurement vehicles require CMMC as a condition of eligibility and award of contract, both as a prime and/or subcontractor. Currently, FEDCIV agencies such as CISA/Department of Homeland Security, Department of Energy, NASA, and FAA, in certain cases, will have areas of pursuit requirements that will necessitate CMMC 2 certification.

Potential Federal Contract Pursuit Risks and Significant Loss of Revenue without CMMC 2 Certification

Currently and in the future, federal and DoD agencies are issuing longer-term IDIQ, GWAC, and BPA services contracts to simplify contracting procedures. With contracts running for longer terms will make it difficult for those firms not meeting prerequisite certification standards to bid again until a new recompile is issued.

RETIREMENT IS NOT THE FINISH LINE: IT'S THE STARTING LINE

Forward by Darlene Terry, Pioneer Connection Editor

I have in the past included content in the Pioneer Connection that was not strictly ITPA or Pioneer related. Notably, given our ages (most of us are retired or nearing retirement!) that content has been health-focused. My only sister is a registered nurse and for more than forty years she has cared for geriatric patients in long-term skilled nursing facilities. In recent months, I asked her to write an article from her professional perspective to help our readers navigate the process of finding the right skilled care home for their loved ones or for themselves. Since then, she has had some health challenges herself (she's no spring chicken), and her reflections on well-being and aging are suddenly from a more personal than professional perspective.

While I still hope in a future issue to share her insight on the topic of navigating skilled nursing care options, I hope you will agree with me that the advice she is offering to us is thought-provoking relevant, and easily doable. And, spoiler alert...when I read the last paragraph I first cried and then told my sister I couldn't print that portion of her article. But then, after reflection, I don't think I have the right to exclude her heart-felt message of appreciation for family.



"Becoming a grandparent is worth the price of aging!" – Gloria Whitley

**"Retire to something,
not from something."**

By Gloria N. Whitley, R.N.

After spending 43 years as a nursing home nurse, I thought I understood aging, health, and the importance of taking care of ourselves. I had cared for countless residents, encouraged healthy habits, and watched families struggle when loved ones became ill.

Then life reminded me of a lesson I thought I already knew. In the past two months, I have faced a knee replacement surgery that I postponed longer than I should have, a somewhat emergency situation that resulted in a hastily scheduled hysteroscopy which entailed the removal of two tumors, and a subsequent diagnosis of uterine cancer, with the likely prospect of yet another surgery in the near future. As nurses often do, I spent years caring for everyone else while putting some of my own health needs on the back burner. Today, sitting on the other side of the hospital bed rail, I realize something important:

Our bodies whisper before they scream.

Too often, we ignore the whispers. We accept aches, pains, fatigue, weight gain/loss, shortness of breath, or changes in our health as simply "getting older." Sometimes we become so busy serving others that we forget God entrusted us with the care of our own bodies.

RETIREMENT IS NOT THE FINISH LINE: IT'S THE STARTING LINE (CONT'D)

Retirement offers a wonderful gift --- time. But what we do with that time matters. I believe retirement should never be about what we leave behind. It should be about what we move toward. Retire to purpose. Retire to service. Retire to health. Retire to faith.

As a Christian, I know our bodies are gifts from God. Scripture reminds us in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. Taking care of ourselves is not vanity, it is stewardship. As I walk this unexpected health journey, I want to encourage every retiree to embrace a healthier future through discipline, gratitude, and purpose.

Ten Tips for a Healthy and Purposeful Retirement

1. Listen to Your Body.

Don't ignore persistent pain, unusual fatigue, changes in appetite, or symptoms that seem "minor." Many serious health conditions are more treatable when addressed early. If something feels different, get it checked.

2. Stop Postponing Your Own Care.

I delayed my knee replacement longer than I should have. Many retirees put off appointments, tests, or procedures because they are busy helping others or simply don't think they have time for the inconvenience. Make the time. Your future self will thank you for acting today.

3. Make Movement a Daily Habit.

You do not have to run a marathon. Walk, stretch, garden, swim, dance, or participate in a senior exercise class. Motion truly is lotion for aging joints and muscles.

4. Choose Nourishment Over Convenience.

Healthy eating is not about dieting. It is about fueling your body. Eat more fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains while limiting processed foods whenever possible. Small daily choices create long-term results.

5. Protect Your Mental and Emotional Health.

Retirement can bring unexpected challenges, including loneliness, grief, or loss of purpose. Stay connected with family, friends, church, and community activities. A healthy mind contributes to a healthy body.

6. Keep Learning and Growing.

Your retirement years can be some of the most productive years of your life. Read books, learn new skills, volunteer, mentor others, or pursue a lifelong dream. Growth keeps us engaged and energized.

7. Make Faith Part of Your Daily Routine.

Prayer has carried me through difficult days. Spend time with God daily through prayer, Scripture reading, and worship. A strong spiritual foundation provides peace that medical treatments alone cannot give.

RETIREMENT IS NOT THE FINISH LINE: IT'S THE STARTING LINE (CONT'D)

8. Serve Others.

One of the greatest blessings in life is helping someone else. Volunteer, visit a nursing home resident, support a ministry, mentor younger people, or simply check on a neighbor. As Scripture teaches, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

9. Be Disciplined Even When You Don't Feel Like It.

Discipline becomes more important as we age. Take medications as prescribed. Keep appointments. Exercise regularly. Choose healthy meals. Feelings change; discipline carries us forward.

10. Live With Purpose Every Day.

Don't ask yourself, "What did I retire from?" Rather, ask, "What did I retire to?" Whether it is serving others, supporting your church, spending time with grandchildren, volunteering, or pursuing a calling, purpose adds life to your years.

A Final Thought

For decades I cared for people in nursing homes. I witnessed great strength, incredible resilience, and remarkable faith. I also saw many who wished they had taken better care of themselves while they had the opportunity. Now, facing my own health challenges, I understand their words more deeply than ever.

None of us know what tomorrow holds, but we can choose how we live today. Take the walk. Schedule the appointment. Eat the healthier meal. Call the friend. Say the prayer. Volunteer for the cause you love.

Most importantly, remember that retirement is not the end of your usefulness. It is often the beginning of your greatest season of impact. God still has purpose for you.

Taking care of the body God gave you will allow you to continue serving God and serving others for many years to come.

"Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom." Psalm 90:12

This article is dedicated to someone many of you know well, my Sissy, Darlene N Terry. She has been my rock through all of my recent challenges. She certainly demonstrates all of the things above every day. I am blessed to have her in my life.



Gloria, left with "Sissy"

FROM WOOD GRAIN TO BLACK TO A MYRIAD OF COLORS – PHONE COLORS PART TWO

By Dr. William Granger

Part One of this feature article appeared in the May 2026 Pioneer Connection.

There is probably no more beloved modern phone than the Princess® phone. Although the 500-series phone was the modern workhorse of Bell System phones, the Princess became popular as it had a smaller footprint to fit on nightstands and a lighted dial to place a call in the dark. In the last installment, we learned that it was former First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy who insisted on having a black Princess phone.



Above, From top to bottom: black, black, slate blue (aka charcoal), same, and teal blue.

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."

The photograph below depicts an interesting assortment of pink and peach phones. Only the bottom phone is actually peach. The phone immediately above it is a faded pink Signature Princess, the last phone made by AT&T. The top three phones are all rare 10 button pink Princess phones. The first and second phones are somewhat faded to peach even though handset cords remain pink. The first and third phones are Northern Electric and the second is a Western Electric phone.



FROM WOOD GRAIN TO BLACK TO A MYRIAD OF COLORS – PHONE COLORS PART TWO (CONT'D)



Above: two moss green (aka avocado) Princess phones, one 12-button and one 10 button. The third phone is actually a Northern Electric turquoise 10-button phone faded to a light green, very similar to the fourth phone which is a WE cameo green Princess phone. The handset cords show the turquoise and cameo green color better than the cases. The bottom phone is an aqua blue 10-button 1702 WE Princess.

Shown below are four Princess phones. The top phone is beige; the second phone is an ivory phone; and the third phone is allegedly an ivory 10-button Princess, but the color of the case and handset cord are significantly darker than the second phone. Could this just be fading or an unknown color? The last phone is a white Princess.



Following is a list of colors for Western Electric Princess,[®] courtesy of Paul Fassbender:

New in 1959: 58 White, 59 Rose Pink, 60 Light Beige, 62 Aqua Blue, 64 Turquoise (NP* 1963, MD* 1970)

New in 1963: 3 Black (NP 1963), 51 Moss Green (NP 1963), 56 Pastel Yellow (NP 1963), 61 Light Gray (NP 1963, MD 1970)

New in 1967: 50 Ivory, 53 Cherry Red

Late Production (80s): 104 Chocolate Brown, 145 Blue and Teal, 255 Cameo Green, 258 Peach, 293 Slate Blue

AT&T 2703 Signature Princess (1993 introduction): 50 Ivory, 58 White, 59 Pink, 62 Aqua Blue, 258 Peach

All listed colors are shown in this article except for chocolate brown.

*NP = Nonpromoted Color - supplied on request

*MD = Manufacture Discontinued.

FROM WOOD GRAIN TO BLACK TO A MYRIAD OF COLORS – PHONE COLORS PART TWO (CONT'D)

Shown on the right are some more interesting Princess phones. The top phone is a home interphone Princess (2712) in yellow (Pastel Yellow). The second phone is a red (Cherry Red), but the third phone is actually called Teaberry and is lighter than cherry red. It may be painted this color, and it looks more like a dark pink.

The fourth phone is Light Gray but was not made very long (1963-1970) and is rather rare. It is also yellowed and now looks more taupe in color. The fifth and sixth phones are another oddity. Both have a cord that matches the case but is not an ivory or beige phone. Maybe one of them is an ash phone but that is not a listed color. The bottom phone is unique in that it has a “gold-plated” case and a yellow handset. Western Electric did make some of these gold case phones that they referred to as “Imperial” Princess but they usually had black or white handsets.



The Independent Telecommunications Pioneer Association is committed to preserving our nation's rich telecommunications history.

Dr. William Granger is a regular contributing author, to whom we are grateful for his willingness to share his passion for preserving telephone instruments us know! such as the ones described in this article.

If you have telecommunications artifacts or history that you'd like to share with our readers, please let us know!

MORE HUNNY BUNNY ADVENTURES!

Eh, what's up doc?!? Well, I was! I'm just back from a 1,375 mile flight that took me from Raleigh, NC to Philadelphia, PA to Kansas City, MO. After a brief visit in Shawnee, KS I took to the road (with my current wabbit-nappers, of course) and we started a 3,500 mile road trip. Our first stop was Lincoln, NE, and then we headed on down the road to Laramie, Wyoming.



After a good night's sleep and a great breakfast of fresh carrots, I was ready for a long day's road trip to West Yellowstone, MT. On the way, we took a side trip to Ashton, ID and then it was onward to Montana where I spent the week at a delightful lake front cabin. We spent four adventure-filled days driving through Yellowstone National Park. I saw some amazing geysers, pools, mud pots, springs and waterfalls, and more than a few bison.



We drove from Montana into Wyoming and back to Montana so many times I lost track of where I was at any given time!

Before starting the long journey back, we spent a day driving through Grand Teton National Park. And then, just because we could, we detoured first to Utah and then to Colorado, and then headed to Iowa. In total, my two-week adventure took me to eleven states! Ain't I a stinker?



WHAT'S COOKIN?

ZUCCHINI BREAD

By Darlene Roll
Buckeye State Chapter (OH)

Now that summer is here, gardens seem to overflow with zucchini. This recipe was in the ITPA Buckeye State Chapter cookbook, "Buckeye Favorites", created by members, family, and friends more than 35 years ago. Millie Cox, a Warren-John Zampedro Pioneer Club member, submitted this version of "Zucchini Bread."

Ingredients:

- 4 eggs
- 2 c. sugar
- 1 c. oil
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 3-1/2 cups flour
- 1-1/2 tsp. baking soda
- 3/4 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 c. shredded zucchini
- 1 c. chopped nuts
- 1 c. raisins



Instructions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease 2 bread pans.

Combine eggs, sugar, oil and vanilla. Set aside.

Sift flour, baking soda, baking powder, cinnamon, and salt. Add the sifted ingredients to the dry ingredients that were set aside. Mix well.

Add zucchini, nuts and raisins. Put one-half of the total mixture into each bread pan. Bake for 55 to 60 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean.

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