

Pioneer Connection



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ROBOCALLS/ROBOTEXTS – DON'T BE A VICTIM!



Annoying robocalls have been a topic of conversation and debate for several years now. Scammers and other robocallers use a “spoofing” technique that allows them to pick a fake telephone number to appear on Caller ID. This makes the incoming call appear to be a local call even though many of those calls originate overseas. It seems like we receive more robocalls these days than we do from legitimate callers.

Believe it or not, though, progress has been made on stopping these annoying and sometimes harmful calls. Many voice service providers and third-party analytics companies have improved their calling blocking services and are now using new data to detect robocalls more effectively. Literally billions of unwanted calls to Americans are now blocked each year, according to the Federal Communications Commission.

Phone companies are sometimes proactively blocking calls connected to suspicious calling patterns. Some phone companies are enabling their customers to block additional unwanted calls by enrolling in a service or downloading an app. Mobile phones these days also have setting that allow conditional blocking.

The FCC has published a significant amount of information on calling blocking resources and the tools offered by various service providers. Visit <https://www.fcc.gov/call-blocking>.

Most large telecom companies have been required by the FCC since 2021 to adopt a technical protocol called STIR/SHAKEN to verify that the originating telephone number be displayed on incoming calls. Smaller companies were allowed more time to comply, which resulted in some robocall operations having moved their operations to those smaller gateway companies.

The FCC has since then required that the smaller companies also implement the STIR/SHAKEN technology.

So, what should you do when you've subscribed to the blocking options through your telephone company, put yourself on “do not call” lists and blocked callers only to have the same caller get to you by using a different telephone number? When you receive a call that appears to be local or at least is in your area code, but you don't recognize the number, should you answer in case it's urgent? Well, it depends, if it is urgent and you have voice mail, that caller will more than likely leave a message. If you can't bear to ignore the call from an unknown number, simply answer the phone with a greeting other than “hello.” This author has learned that answering with a mechanical “May I help you” greeting instead of the traditional “hello” often results in a hang-up. If the caller does respond to that atypical greeting and asks for you or someone in your family by name, reply by asking “who is calling please.” When you don't respond with the expected replies, scammers will realize quickly that you are not good “victim” material.

A lot of scam calls start with someone calling you or sending you a random text message, telling you there is a problem with your computer, or issues with virus protection, or even questioning a large amount charged to your Amazon account.

As consumers get smarter and technology improve on ways to protect us, the scammers get smarter and devise new schemes to scam us. Protect your personal information, social security number, email, or cell number. Never give these out over email or phone. This article just scratches the surface on the scams out there to deceive you and steal your bank account funds and/or charge large purchases to your credit card.

More recently the scammers behind some of these calls have begun sending “robotext” messages to cell phones. The texts, like the calls are constructed to appear as if they are from legitimate business contacts. Often times, the text come with a warning designed to scare the recipient into action. Some common text scams include:

- ♦ Text receipts for a paid bill (that you don't remember paying)
- ♦ Text alerts about a shipment of a package (that you don't remember ordering)
- ♦ Texts regarding an account suspension (Norton Anti-virus, McAfee computer security, Amazon, eBay, and may others)

(Continued on Page 2)



DON'T BE A VICTIM TO ROBOCALLS/ROBOTEXTS (Continued from Page 1)

There are some simple ways to protect yourself from being scammed by robotext messages. First and foremost, **NEVER** click on the link provided in the message. Since some unexpected text messages are legitimate, always check the telephone number. If the number is longer than the standard 10-digit number, chances, are it's a spam text. (Keep reading to learn the difference between spam and scam texts.)

Never respond to the text message, even if it invites you to "opt out" of future messages by replying "STOP." **Just block the number and delete the message.**

Check the message for misspelled words and/or improper grammar.

Generally, ignore text messages that claim to be from your financial institution if you are not 100% certain it's legitimately from your bank. If you think it might be legit, just call your bank.

So, what is the difference between a spam message and a scam message, and why does it matter? Spam messages are often from legitimate business sources or charity organizations promoting their services or causes. Spams are unsolicited messages sent to a large number of people. Scam messages, however, are intentionally fraudulent. The old adage that "there is no such thing as a free lunch" is most often true. Delete any message that says, "you have won" and block the number. Do the same with any message that tells you some of your information has been fraudulently used or compromised and that to protect yourself you need to provide the sender with confidential information such as your account number, social security number or password. Respond by deleting and blocking that sender!

The bottom line is, we should treat text messages from unknown numbers the same way we've learned to treat e-mails and calls. Be suspicious and don't get sucked in. Scam messages are often constructed to create panic and force you into taking immediate action to avoid a severe consequence.

This article covers only a few of the scams that are currently circulating. All are designed to either scare you into giving out personal and financial information or to make you think you've won something that requires you to provide that information.

Some scammers try to trick their targeted victim into downloading a program so they can "fix" the computer. Once they have access to your computer, they will demand payment. Your computer literally will have been kidnapped and the scammer expects a ransom before releasing your files, including precious family photos, tax returns and other important documents.



NEVER should you ever...under any circumstance

provide personal information to someone who contacts you via computer or cell phone. Just hang up the phone and delete those e-mails without clicking on any of the links. Be sure to block that e-mail sender. You can contact your bank or credit card company's fraud department to find out if any unauthorized transactions have been charged to your account. If so, that representative can tell you what steps to take next. If the fraudulent contact is about your Amazon account, don't click on any links in an email or text messages. Log into your Amazon account and check your orders and purchases to see if there were unauthorized purchases on your account. Also consider changing your passwords anytime the security of any of your accounts comes into question.

In summary, protect your personal and financial information and do not provide bank account numbers, social security numbers or credit card information to anyone by email, text, or over the phone. Even if you think the request is legitimate, disengage and contact your account provider directly.

Sources:

Federal Communications Commission (www.fcc.gov)
"How to protect yourself from robotext messages" Ebony Williams – The Atlanta Journal-Constitution
AARP Bulletin July/August 2022
<https://www.afd-techtalk.com/spam-scam/>



Where is Rocky Now???



Hello Pioneers! Rocky here, saying hello from the beautiful Chugach National Forest. In Alaska. From Europe to America's most northerly national forest, I've been busy traveling since my last update. This forest is AMAZING! And it's huge, covering almost 7 million acres!!!! (6,908,540 to be exact.) It's located in central Alaska. Word of caution...bring your heavy winter coat, even if you visit in the middle of summer. My little nuts froze!!! (I'm talking about my snacks people.)



Sure, she can smile. She's bundled up from head to toe!

**HELLOOOOOO,
I'M FREEZING OUT HERE!!!!**

No I DO NOT know how I got in here. But that's not the important thing....just **GET ME OUT!!!**



You're SO warm! I LOVE you!!!

Bears don't eat squirrels, do they?



I gotta eat these last few nuts before they freeze!!!



More Rocky Sightings!



Just one quick game and I'll be on my way!

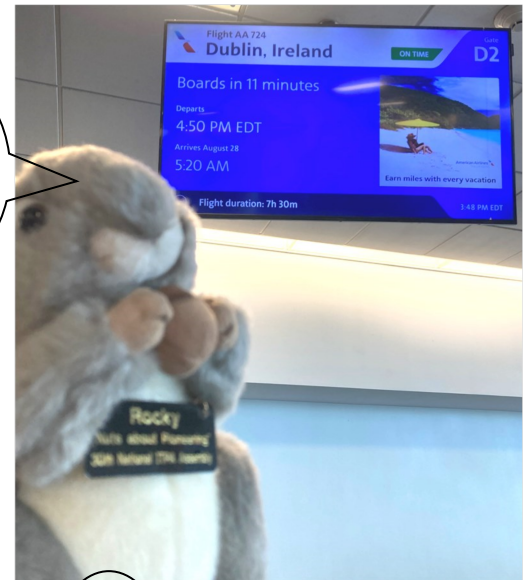
There's GOT TO BE some nuts here somewhere!!!!

They have ABSOLUTELY NO IDEA who I am!!

I'm in COSTUME!!!! Had a WILD time at the Tar Heel Chapter's Wild Kingdom!



Dia dhuit !
(I'm brushing up on my Irish Gaelic "hello")



Hey little buddy... Do you mind sharing those tasty looking peanuts with a friend?



Gonna grab a quick pint after that long flight!





It's Game Time!

Congratulations to Patty Hill of Washington for being the first to complete the Word Search in our July Pioneer Connection. Patty was a member of the former Earl Dean Club and is still a dedicated Pioneer! Patty won a gift card! You could be next!

Be **one of the first two** Pioneers to complete the below **Pioneer's Puzzle** and win a prize!

Rules: Members only are eligible. **ITPA board members and officers are not eligible to win** (*but you can still play*).

E-mail a copy of your completed puzzle to: **itpa@telecom-pioneers.net**.

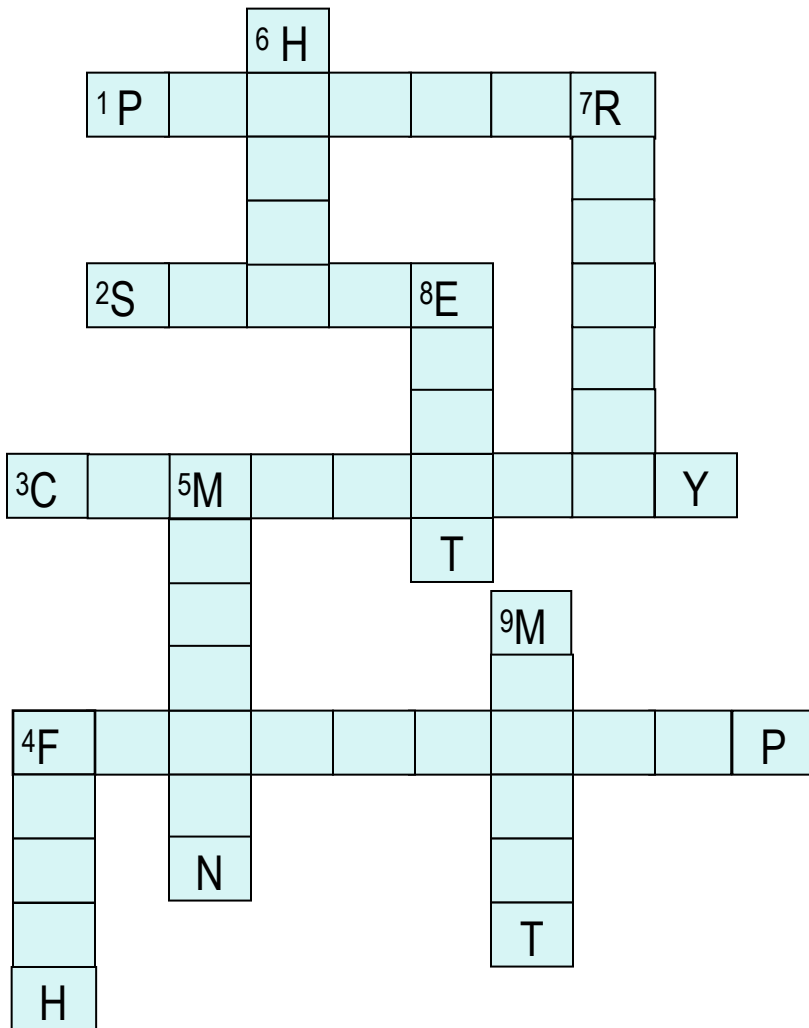
The first **two** members to submit the completed puzzle with correct answers will receive a mystery prize! We'll let you know by e-mail when the prizes have been claimed.

Across

- 1 An enthusiastic community servant; ITPA Member
- 2 Perform duties for another person or organization
- 3 A sense of fellowship with others as a result of proximity or shared common values or goals
- 4 A state of enduring affection and trust between people

Down

- 4 Complete trust or confidence in someone or something
- 5 A strongly felt aim, ambition or calling
- 6 Great esteem bestowed
- 7 A feeling of deep admiration for someone or something
- 8 A thing that happens, especially one of importance
- 9 A person, animal or object adopted by a group as a symbolic figure



National ITPA Office News—Celebrating Comporium Museum's Grand Reopening



We are excited to share that the Comporium Museum, located in the heart of downtown Rock Hill, South Carolina, reopened in August. The museum had remained closed during COVID-19 restrictions until last month.

The Comporium Museum introduces visitors to life in Rock Hill before the age of wireline and wireless telecommunications, high-speed Internet, and security or cable TV. The museum also memorializes the beginnings of Rock Hill Telephone Company (now Comporium).

The museum is hidden in old downtown Rock Hill. It hosts a long maze of telephone artifacts and includes hands-on exhibits to encourage interactive learning for children. The museum is open Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 10AM-2PM. Admission is free for everyone. Children under the age of 16 should be accompanied by a guardian.

Tours are available for school groups and day care centers and are led by the Comporium retirees who staff the museum.

The first telephones in Rock Hill were purchased from Sumter Telephone Manufacturing in Sumter, SC. Two instruments like the one below connected the Holler-Anderson Buggy Company and the train depot.



Eventually, increased interest by other town residents and businesses warranted adding more lines, and the Rock Hill Telephone Company was founded in 1894 by John Anderson, John Cherry and Andrew Smith. In 1912, E. L. and Mary Barnes bought the company and although the name has changed, it's still a family-run business today!

Among many interesting artifacts, the museum is now home to "Old Mack", a 1927 truck acquired from AT&T in 1930. Its top speed was 12 MPH.



During its first trip to Rock Hill, the driver had to stop in Greenville, SC to light Old Mack's headlights as evening approached, because its headlights were powered by gas!

In 2001, Rock Hill Telephone Company and its affiliates became known as "Comporium," a word created from "Communications" and "Emporium." The name represents a one-stop shop for a variety of telecommunications products and services.

While the Museum was closed, a number of updates and improvements were made. Branding was updated throughout the Museum to reflect Comporium's current logo. Lighted signs were installed on the exterior to draw more attention from passersby. A timeline showing the history of Comporium and the Barnes family was updated to add interactive lighting. Video content has replaced static displays so that current, relevant information about the company can be shared. Also, display cases were added for rotating exhibits.





President's Ponderings

Greeting Pioneers,

As 2022 continues to fly by and the days, weeks, months seem to go faster than ever. On Aug. 19-21, I traveled to Aberdeen, NC for the annual Tar Heel Chapter meeting. The Pioneers gathered Friday night for social time and then dinner. Saturday afternoon we gathered in the meeting area to play bingo and auction off items donated by attendees. So many items...and the bids were extremely competitive!!! The chapter raised \$600.00 from this auction event. They also collected toiletry items for Living Skills located in Lexington, NC; canned goods for the food pantry in Aberdeen, NC; and empty prescription and OTC pill bottles for the Ukraine project. After the annual business meeting, we all had a wonderful time over dinner, and enjoyed the theme of Jungle Jim's Wild Animal Kingdom. Pioneers dressed as their favorite wild animal, which helped provide lots of fun and lots of laughter. I am sure photos of this event will be shared. (See page 13)



Above: Daniel greets ITPA Tar Heel Chapter Pioneers at the Aug. 19-21 assembly.

I plan to attend several other clubs and chapter meetings this year. If your club or chapter is hosting an event or holding an annual meeting, please let Alissa Moss know at ITPA National Office, and I will try to attend or have someone from the National Office attend.

As we moved into September, I thought back, as I always do at this time of year, to the 9/11 event and pay tribute to the community service men and women who sacrificed their lives to save others on that fateful day in 2001. We lost 343 firefighters, 23 New York police officers, and 37 Port Authority police officers who tried to rescue others who were trapped in the towers. A total of 2,996 people were killed in the 9/11 attacks on our country.



One of the main things I remember during this time was all of unity displayed across America. American flags adorned homes and buildings throughout every community. Everyone felt the loss of life and the damage done to our nation.

This is the time to think of others who have given their service to an individual, community, or a special ITPA project. Service to the community is something that we can do and comes with little cost to us as Pioneers. It is my hope that we all will strive to keep the Pioneer spirit alive and productive throughout the year. Hope to see more Pioneers in the weeks and months to come.

Sincerely,

Daniel Barnhardt, ITPA National President

Club Corner

Nearea Club (Keystone-Garden State Chapter)

The Nearea Club will host its 51st Annual Nearea Banquet on October 15, 2022 at the Inn at the Abbington's located at 239 Kennedy Creek Road, North Abbington Township, PA 18414.

Attendees must register by October 1st. The \$25.00 per person registration fee should be mailed to:

Tanya Christ
147 Christ Lane
Factoryville, PA 18419

(You need not be a club member to attend.)

All attendees are asked to bring a wrapped gift valued at \$3.00 or more for the blind auction. The event will also feature a Chinese Auction, door prizes and give aways.

Carotel Club (Tar Heel Chapter)

The annual Carotel Convention will be held on Oct. 21-22, 2022 at the Inn at Pine Knoll Shores, NC. Registration for the "Casino Nights" themed convention is \$75 per person and includes Friday and Saturday night meals, entertainment and a \$5 breakfast voucher for Saturday morning at the hotel's Clam Digger Restaurant. The entry fee for the optional golf tournament is \$55 per person. The convention will feature a silent and a public auction, bingo, music and dancing. Wear your favorite Halloween costume Friday night or dress in your patriotic red, white and blue as we honor our veterans and first responders. Saturday night's attire is "Dress to impress!"

Please contact the hotel directly **before September 21st** (252-247-4155) to reserve rooms (request the Carotel block of rooms). Room rate is available (optional extended stay) from Thursday through Monday.

Carotel (Cont'd)

Carotel awarded the 2022 *Elizabeth Bland Memorial Scholarship* to **Riley Hayes Barnes**, daughter of Pioneers Brent and Rena Barnes of Ahoskie, NC. Riley will attend East Carolina University and plans to major in Biology. She served as president of the Beta Club during her senior year and was class Valedictorian. Congratulations Riley!



Chapter News

Region 3 Mid-South Chapter

The Mid-south Chapter Pioneers congratulate the following 2022 *Billy D. Young Memorial Scholarship* recipients:



Anna Madalyn Storey
(\$1,000)
Franklin Tel. Co., MS



Anna Grace Shows
(\$1,000)
Franklin Tel. Co., MS



Savana Joyce Roper
(\$1,000)
Mon-Cre Telephone, AL



Breanna NoraGrace Maples
(\$3,000)
New Hope Tel. Coop., AL



Raven Larissa Fairley
(\$3,000)
Farmers Tel. Coop., AL



Bryson Wane Lyles
(\$5,000)
Farmers Tel. Coop., AL

The scholarship was established in memory of Billy D. Young to assist the educational endeavors of children of fellow telecommunications workers who are employees of TELSE (telse.org) member companies or the ITPA Mid-South Chapter (midsouthitpa.org). Scholarship sponsors are: Wade H. Creekmore, Sr. Pioneer Club; Farmers Telecommunications Coop.; TEC; Smithville Telephone Company; and Hayneville Telephone Company. Annual golf tournaments and silent and live auctions also help fund the scholarship.

Consideration for the scholarship included academic information, community involvement, sports, clubs, employment, and other extracurricular activities. Additionally, each student submitted a 1,000-word essay. Each applicant excelled both inside and outside the classroom during their high school career and were much deserving of the award.

We wish each of this year's scholarship recipients all the best as they continue their education.



Chapter News (Cont'd)

Region 3 Tar Heel Chapter

The Tarheel Chapter's annual assembly was held on August 19-21 in Aberdeen, NC. Outgoing President Jim Jolly hosted *Jungle Jim's Wild Animal Kingdom*. The event was well represented and much enjoyed, (photo below used **without** permission!) with six current and past ITPA national presidents, as well as current club and chapter officers and pioneers present.

The two-day event included deliciously catered meals...



fun and games....



and a bit of Pioneer business. (See more photos on Page 13)



Above: Tar Heel Chapter members take a break from serious business.

Left: Janet Holliday-Cashwell leads a touching memorial tribute to deceased Pioneers Janet Goss, Curt Lancaster, Guy Johnson and Karan Christian Twyman.

Right: ITPA President Daniel Barnhardt addresses the group.



Chapter News (Cont'd)

Region 3 Tar Heel Chapter (Cont'd)

Each year the Tar Heel Chapter awards *Bill and Jo Lawrence Scholarships* to students who are beginning or continuing their college education. This year, scholarships were awarded to the following individuals:

Sarah Adcock, Savannah College of Art and Design

Aidan Duncan, Edgecombe Community College (grandson of Carol Harrell)

Mollie Goss, UNC Chapel Hill (granddaughter of Nat and Janet Goss)

Connor Outlaw, UNC Chapel Hill (grandson of Mike and Jean Outlaw)

Mollie attended this year's annual assembly, during which Carol Harrell, Scholarship Chairman, formally recognized Mollie and other scholarship recipients.

The Tar Heel Chapter of the ITPA has been awarding scholarships to college-bound students for more than 20 years!

Tar Heel Chapter scholarships are available to family members of active chapter members who are residents of North Carolina.

*In earlier years, students received awards from separately funded Tar Heel Chapter scholarships, all of which were merged in recent years into the **Bill and Jo Lawrence Scholarship** fund. Jo's father was President of **Heins Telephone Company** in Sanford, NC and Bill served as Vice President. The Lawrences were dedicated Pioneers and established a fund that helps our Tar Heel Chapter continue awarding annual scholarships.*



2022 Bill and Jo Lawrence Scholars

Left to right: Sarah, Aidan, Mollie and Connor

The Seats Not Taken

During the annual Tar Heel assembly, Janet Holliday-Cashwell paid tribute with a message of HOPE to four Pioneer family members who in 2022 went to their "Eternal Assembly." A table of honor was reserved in memory of the missing Pioneers. The following is an excerpt from Janet's beautiful tribute.

This year we witnessed the transition of 4 Pioneer family members to their Eternal Assembly – joining other friends and loved ones – to rest in God's goodness in a perfect place. These Pioneers burned brightly for ITPA for so many years and in so many ways. As individuals, they left us distinguishing characteristics uniquely their own.

Characteristics like Honesty – Karan Christian Twyman, beloved wife of Bill Twyman, exhibited Honesty in her conversation and her conduct. A God-fearing, church-going woman who loved God, her family and gospel music, she never hesitated to share her life and testimony – along with her time and talents – with anyone she met. Honesty can be gritty when interacting with others; But Karan shared her honesty with gracefulness. With a ready smile and a big heart, Karen gave of herself to others. Whether she provided a meal, necessities or a handmade blanket, prayer or encouragement, she did so out of recognition and compassion for another's need. A Pioneer must be Honest to be seen as sincere and Karan was both. Karan left us her light of Honesty when she transitioned to her eternal assembly on June 12.

A Pioneer also establishes the characteristic of Order in life, in the home and with family, at work, and in the personal sphere of influence. God is not the Author of chaos but of Order. As a child of God, one must have order in life. Janet Bumgardner Goss, beloved wife of Nat Goss, and grandmother to one of our scholarship recipients this evening (Mollie Goss) – was a child of God and a woman of Order. No ITPA meeting, whether local or national – nor project for Medical Ministries – nor function for the Lexington Memorial Hospital Foundation or Lexington Chamber of Commerce – was found to be out of order when Janet was charged with organizing the event. From minutes taken to agendas created to the tallying of the final pennies, order was Janet's rule of the day. Born with a volunteer's heart, Janet served many people through the various organizations she was a part of. As her family recognized and therefore requested, whenever an opportunity arises to help another, please do so in remembrance of Janet. Janet shined light on the need for Order as she joined the heavenly assembly on February 11.

Add to Order, the characteristic of Perseverance. A Pioneer doesn't just try once and if something doesn't go right or go well ---- then just up and quit. Tenacity and Perseverance encourage a Pioneer to try – try again, and again, and again. Quit is not in the Pioneer vocabulary. James Guy Johnston, Jr demonstrated Perseverance in public and private. After serving his country in the Air Force, he joined Comporium Telephone Company to serve 30-plus years. With a large part of that career being the Operations Manager, he daily met all kinds of challenges, not only operational – but also people, equipment, schedules, emergencies, system demands – and he met them all as a stand-up guy (no pun intended)...A stand-up individual. When he gave his word, he kept it. He was loyal and committed in doing whatever he set out to do. His Perseverance translated to other walks in his public life – serving as a coach and mentor to youth and holding various leadership positions in his church. Specific to our organization, when the ITPA museum was to move out of Washington DC, Guy was instrumental in its conception and eventual relocation to Hinesville, GA. As in public life, he persevered in his private life as well, enduring personal challenges along the way. He chose to care for his beloved Lynda during her long illness. And in five short years after her death, Guy lit the flame of Perseverance as he was reunited with her on May 21 in the heavenly assembly.

Finally, add to Perseverance – Engagement. If a man is going to effect change in the world around him, he's got to be involved. He has to Engage. Curtis Blain Lancaster, Sr – Curt as we knew him – lit the light of Engagement for us. As a Veteran, he knew the engagement of conflict. As a citizen, he knew the engagement of compassion. Whether serving on both the national and local ITPA boards and committees, or serving the public school sector as a board member, or on the public water commission, Curt engaged. For 18,250 days (plus/minus) i.e., 50 years, he engaged in the day-to-day business of Chesnee Telephone Company, side by side with his beloved Hannah. As we so often heard him say when asked what he had been doing, why....he was just driving Miss Hannah, engaging all the way! Curt engaged – fully in life and fully with others for the benefit of mankind. Often, he would learn of someone's need and well before being asked for help, he had already engaged a plan to provide assistance. Curt's spark after spark of engagement left with us the flame of engagement when he assembled on June 17 with his mom/dad, his beloved daughter Phyllis, and his 10 brothers and sisters in the heavenly assembly.

We each have a light – a talent, a passion, an ability – and a responsibility, in debt to those before us, and in paying it forward to those who follow, individually and as an organization of Pioneers to extend this HOPE, not just as hope for a better future but HOPE for a brighter future.

On behalf of our ITPA family, we thank Janet for a beautiful tribute to these dedicated Pioneers.



The Recipe Exchange

By Darlene Roll:

This month's recipe comes from a friend of mine who now lives in Oregon. This recipe always reminds me of fall. This is a great recipe for a potluck dinner. Enjoy!

Pumpkin Delight



Ingredients:

- 1 can pumpkin
- 1 can evaporated milk
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 box yellow cake mix
- 1 cup chopped pecans or other nut
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 tsp. nutmeg
- 1 tsp. allspice
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 eggs, slightly beaten
- 2 sticks butter
- 1 container Cool Whip

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix together the pumpkin, spices, evaporated milk, sugar, salt and eggs. Pour mixture into a greased 9 x 13" pan.

Sprinkle 1 box yellow cake mix over the top. Melt 2 sticks of butter and drizzle over the mixture.

Sprinkle 1 cup of chopped nuts (I prefer pecans) on top of the butter. (Optional...I like to set aside a few of the nuts to sprinkle on top of the Cool Whip when serving.)

Bake at 350 for 45-55 minutes. When baked, the Pumpkin Delight sets up like pumpkin pie. Serve warm or cold with Cool Whip. This recipe freezes really well!

Do you have a favorite recipe to share? If so, please send it to itpa@telecom-pioneers.net.

5 Tips for a Successful Baking Project

- Follow directions exactly. You can be creative while cooking, but follow baking recipes exactly
- Heat the oven correctly. Most recipes say to pre-heat the oven
- Measure accurately
- Add and mix carefully
- Substitute sensibly

11 Spices Perfect for Fall

Allspice, cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, cumin, ginger, mulling spice, nutmeg, pumpkin pie spice, saffron, and star anise are among the top spices recommended for fall baking and cooking. Read more at: <https://www.rumispice.com/blogs/rumi-red-saffron/11-spices-perfect-for-fall>

Jungle Jim's Wild Animal Kingdom



Representatives from ITPA's national board, along with Executive Director Alissa Moss and her family



Carol Harrell takes a quick break from monkey business...or should we say giraffe business...to recognize 2022 Scholarship Recipient

