
Independent Telecommunications Pioneer Association

Pioneer Connection



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Christmas Kindness



The holiday season is known as the season for giving, and there's no better time to participate in our national "Shellebrate Kindness" project than now!

Hopefully, you've already signed up to participate. As a reminder, the Mayo Clinic Health System has a website devoted to helping individuals kickstart their own kindness project. Rather than trying to reinvent the wheel for our own kindness project, asked Pioneers to register their participation in the Mayo Clinic's **Kickstart Kindness** program at: <https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/wellness/kindness>.

If you haven't registered already, it's not too late. Just scroll to the bottom of that page and click on "**Register today**", fill out the form and select the "Sign Up" option at the bottom of the form.

The Mayo Clinic will send you a welcome email with a check list, and will send weekly emails thereafter, to help encourage and incent you on your kindness journey. (That check list was also included in the Pioneer Connection August Special Edition).

Just imagine the impact we can have when we all work together to spread a little kindness between now and the end of the year!

Our national project won't be submitted for an annual award, but we are asking every Pioneer to record and report their participation because, after all, serving our community by helping others is what being a Pioneer is all about!



Overcoming a Blue Christmas!

Holidays are intended to be a time of joy and celebration, but for some people they are anything but. Depression can occur at any time of the year, but the stress and anxiety during the months of November and December sometimes causes individuals who are usually content to experience loneliness and a lack of fulfillment. Grieving the loss of a loved one is often intensified during the holidays.

Social isolation is one of the biggest causes of loneliness or depression during the holidays. One of the best ways to deal with social isolation is to reach out to friends or family for support. Or confide in a therapist who may be able to help you sort through your feelings and develop solutions to overcome holiday depression.

Medical experts recommend several options we can employ to help us through the holiday blues. If you're overwhelmed and stressed during the holiday, try something as simple as going for a walk in the park or woods, even if you have to bundle up! Spending time in nature has been scientifically documented to improve both your mental and physical wellbeing. If you're not able to get out and walk, bring nature inside. Caring for a plant, creating a green space inside your home, and caring for an animal can all help improve our moods.

The simple act of volunteering can also help us overcome depression during the holidays. If you're feeling down, consider working at a soup kitchen, organizing a gift drive, or helping a neighbor with a task. If you're not able to get out and do any of those things, don't underestimate the uplifting power of a holiday note or letter, both for the person sending the sentiment and the person receiving the note. The holidays are a great time to complete some of the check list items for our national kindness project!

If you are concerned that someone you care about is battling holiday depression here are some tips that may allow you to help them. First, recognize the symptoms of depression and understand that they don't want to feel that way. Don't pressure the person to try to have fun or to drink in order to loosen up. Don't push the person to make plans for the future but invite them to participate in a task that requires their focus. Be on their side, and don't ask questions about topics that you know are triggers for their depression. Send personal words of love and support. You can find additional tips and sources for help at:

[House call: 10 tips for coping with holiday stress - Mayo Clinic News Network](#)

[Holiday Depression: Statistics & How to Deal \(healthline.com\)](#)

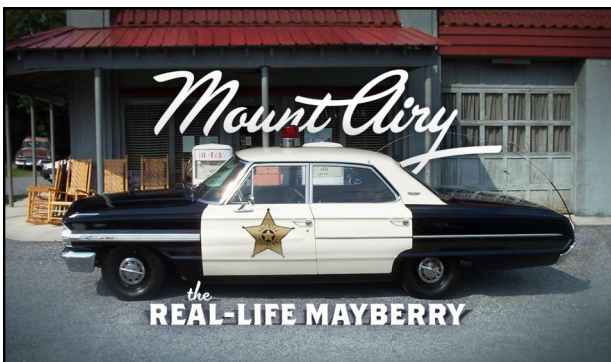
[House call: 10 tips for coping with holiday stress - Mayo Clinic News Network](#)

First Vice President Leon Yard Announces 2024 National Assembly Location



If you've been anxiously awaiting the announcement of the location for our 32nd annual national assembly, your wait is over! First Vice President Leon Yard has announced the location for his assembly. (The 1st Vice President is responsible for planning the assembly following the assembly during which he or she is installed.)

Remember those laid back days when we tuned the black and white television set to see what trouble Barney would get into and how Andy would save the day? How about a trip down memory lane as we travel back to Mayberry R.F.D., or the closest thing to it.



The TV show town of Mayberry was based on Andy Griffith's hometown of Mount Airy, NC. From Floyd's Barber Shop to fried pork chop sandwiches, Mount Airy has embraced its role as the inspiration for Mayberry. From April 26 to 28, 2024, Mount Airy will also embrace the ITPA Pioneers as we conduct our 32nd national assembly at the Hampton Inn in Dobson, NC. (Dobson is less than ten miles from Mount Airy.)

Mount Airy features year-round attractions such as the Andy Griffith Museum, Andy Griffith Playhouse and Squad Car Tours that point out key locations such as the house where Andy was raised. That home, by the way is available for overnight stays.

Leon has some great activities planned during the assembly that you won't want to miss! If you fly in to attend, the Piedmont Triad International Airport in Greensboro is only a little over an hour's drive to the hotel in Dobson.



Andy Griffith attended elementary school at what is now the Andy Griffith Playhouse, and he performed on state there during the 1930s and 1940s. Built in the 1920s, the playhouse was the first public school in Mount Airy. The Surry Arts Council now provides year-round classes, theatre productions, art camps, and live music concerts in the building.

Mount Airy hosts a three day festival every year and those who attend are thrown into the *Andy Griffith Show*. The festival features parades, celebrities, music and much more. In fact, Mount Airy is so Mayberry that Thelma Lou (actress Betty Lynn) actually moved there.

Mount Airy would make Aunt Bee proud. Just like Aunt Bee, Mount Airy features some Southern, mouthwatering cooking. Mount Airy's restaurants are just as varied as the characters in Mayberry, ranging from down-home cooking to barbecue, to Asian cuisine to upscale dining.



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

Club/Chapter News

Palmetto Chapter (Region 3, SC) supports local men's shelter

The Palmetto Chapter partnered with the Haven Men's Shelter to supply breakfast and lunch items for the men who utilize the shelter so they can have breakfast before heading to their mandatory jobs.

The mission of the Haven Men's Shelter is to help break the cycle of chronic homelessness by empowering homeless men through igniting hope, demonstrating compassion, providing encouragement, and creating opportunities. The Haven offers many services to help men who are experiencing homelessness by providing the tools necessary to recover and become self-sufficient.

Breakfast items donated by the Palmetto Chapter Pioneers included eggs, milk, pancakes, waffles, grits, oatmeal and more.



Also supplied were bread, peanut butter, jelly, ham and roast beef for sandwiches for lunches as well as crackers and chips.



The men who utilize this shelter work hard to become productive members of the community, and within 90-120 days they are able to leave the shelter for their own living space, some even becoming homeowners.

Chapter members also sponsored the next gentleman scheduled to leave the shelter. Tom is a 74-year-old veteran who, through no fault of his own, became homeless. Tom works a manufacturing job daily and has utilized the opportunities at the shelter to purchase his own home. A basket of necessities was gifted to Tom along with an Air Fryer and Coffee Pot to thank him for his service to America and to help him get a good start on a new life. He was so appreciative and could not stop smiling and thanking the Chapter for all they were doing for him.



Above, Cindy Downing and Ann Beck flank Tom, the grateful veteran who benefited from the generosity of Palmetto Chapter Pioneers.

As of 2023, there are 67,495 documented homeless vets in the United States. Veterans make up 10.6% of the homeless population in America. From the time of the Vietnam War, and continuing as veterans returned from wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, data show that veterans have experienced homelessness at rates exceeding their representation in the general population. VA Claims Insider reports that those who served in the military are twice as likely to become homeless as those who did not serve their country.

On April 12, 2023, Congressional Research Service issued an updated report on Veterans and Homelessness. Read more at [RL34024 \(congress.gov\)](https://www.congress.gov/legislation/2023/116/congressional-research-service-reports/2023-04-12/veterans-and-homelessness)

Helping one person might not change the whole world, but it might changed the world for that one person.

Club/Chapter News (Cont'd)

Comporium Pioneer Club (Region 3, Rock Hill, SC)

The Comporium Pioneer Club always strives to help those in need but when it's one of their own they tend to go the extra mile. That's what happened when a Comporium employee reached out to Comporium Pioneer Club President Arhea Glenn about a Comporium retiree, Charlie, who was in the hospital.

Charlie has no family members who live locally. His only son, Jonathan, is in the AirForce stationed in Ohio. Jonathan and his wife took leave to travel back to South Carolina to get some home and yard repairs completed before Charlie's hospital release and to care for him afterwards.

On a Tuesday, Jonathan took note of the work to be done. Charlie's home was in disrepair and the yard was in bad shape. Jonathan needed help and lots of it, and he needed it soon. Charlie would be coming home on Saturday, giving him only a few days to get a lot of work done.



Charlie's daughter-in-law, knowing this job was bigger than the two of them, called her sister, who works at Comporium to ask for help. Her sister in turn called Arhea, and Arhea knew her Comporium club members would want to help. Text messages started flying and phone calls began. Within 30 minutes a plan was in place and slots for the sign-up genius which had been sent out were full. Volunteer PTO was approved for the project to be completed during the work week.

Early Thursday morning the team started cleaning the yard, cutting trees, mowing grass and making repairs. At noon, a second shift of volunteers relieved the morning workers to complete the work day.

Jonathan was completely overwhelmed by all that was done to help him, and his wife, help Charlie. Club president Arhea was overwhelmed as well by the 21 volunteers who worked 75 hours of hard labor to make Charlie's home presentable for his homecoming.



Comporium Pioneers began work quickly to clean up Charlie's yard.



The home and yard work completed by Comporium Pioneers ensured a safe and surprising homecoming for Charlie.



Neighbors helping neighbors....being able to help in someone's time of need is what being a Pioneer is all about for this Comporium team.

Club/Chapter News (Cont'd)

Carotel Club - Region 3, NC

In September, the Carotel Club awarded its annual *Elizabeth Bland Memorial Scholarship*. Generally, this scholarship is awarded to a single recipient. This year, the scholarship was split between brothers Aidan and Logan Outlaw. Aidan is attending NC State University and Logan is attending Virginia Tech.



Congratulations Aidan and Logan and best of luck to you in your academic endeavors.

In October, the Carotel Club held its annual convention in Pine Knoll Shores on North Carolina's southern outer banks. The "Margaritaville" themed gathering provided for great fun inside, and the weather outside allowed us to relax on the beach between sessions.



We had some guest appearances from some questionable characters.



Carotel Pioneers honored all attending veterans and acknowledged veterans and family members of Carotel members who have served or are serving our country.



Carotel's Pioneers continued their ongoing tradition of collecting non-perishable food items for a local emergency food bank (Martha's Mission Cupboard) and collected both food and toiletry items for the Ronald McDonald House of Eastern NC.



Attendees were generous, and when the first table overflowed a second table was added!



More than 20 pounds of pop tops were collected in addition to the food and toiletry donations. That equates to nearly 25,000 pop tops.

The club's 2024 convention will be held on October 11-12, and planning is already underway. The theme (we think) will be "A weekend to Remember in Paris." All Pioneers and their guests are welcome to join us for an unforgettable weekend.

Club/Chapter News (Cont'd)

Mid-South Chapter - Region 3, Bude, MS

The Mid-South Chapter recently awarded scholarships to nine local students. Established in memory of Mr. Billy D. Young, the scholarship program provides educational assistance for children of telecommunications workers employed by member companies of the Broadband Association of Alabama and Mississippi (BAAM), or the ITPA Mid-South Chapter.

The scholarship is made available through the MidSouth Chapter and is supported by our amazing sponsors: Wade H. Creekmore, Sr. Pioneer Club; Farmers Telecommunications Coop.; TEC; Fulton Telephone Company, Bruce Telephone Company, and Mound Bayou Telephone & Communications. Additionally, our annual golf tournament, pheasant shoot, and silent and live auctions contribute to our scholarship fund. Criteria considered for scholarship eligibility include academic standing, community involvement, sports, clubs, employment, and other extracurricular activities.

This year's scholarship recipients have demonstrated excellence both inside and outside of the classroom during their high school careers. Many have achieved excellence in athletics and all have been very philanthropic and active in their communities, schools, and churches. The students are pursuing careers in a variety of fields, including the arts, medicine and STEM.

This year's scholarship recipients are:

\$5,000 Scholarship

- ◆ Maggie Jae Pitts, Farmers Telecommunications Coop. (Fyffe, AL)

◆

\$3,000 Scholarship

- ◆ Rebekah Claire Griffin, ITG Communications, LLC (Meadville, MS) -
- ◆ Maggie Suzanna Vincent, ElectriCom, LLC (Bloomington, IN)

◆

\$1,000 Scholarship

- ◆ Ella James Armstrong, Calix (Warrior, AL)
- ◆ Abby Lynn Garner, Fail Telecommunications Corp. (Raleigh, MS)
- ◆ Zachery Thomas Magill, ElectriCom, LLC (Orleans, IN)
- ◆ Hannah Nicole Moore, Fulton Telephone Company (Fulton, MS)
- ◆ Jaryn K'mon Kelly, Mound Bayou Telephone & Communications (Mound Bayou, MS)
- ◆ Brooklynn Klaire Cupit, Franklin Telephone Company (Meadville, MS)

The Mid-South Chapter of the ITPA congratulates this year's scholarship recipients on their hard work and dedication and we wish them the best of luck as they pursue their dreams. For more information, please visit mid-southitpa.org.



Pictured left: Ali Alexander Phillips, Mid-South Chapter President with scholarship recipient Ella James Armstrong at the scholarship award presentation during the 2023 BAAM (Broadband Association of Alabama & Mississippi) Summer Symposium in Pensacola, FL.

The Broadband Association of Alabama & Mississippi promotes and represents the broadband and telecommunications industry by providing services, support, and value for its diverse group of members and their customers, and advocates on behalf of its members for the good of all in the various rulemaking and legislative processes at the local, state, and federal levels, through a forum that encourages the sharing of resources, ideas and information

Club/Chapter News (Cont'd)

Buckeye State Chapter - Region 2, OH

By Darlene Roll

Buckeye State Chapter Pioneers met at Sugarcreek, Ohio from October 20th to October 22nd for a weekend of business and fun. Friday, chapter members provided a carry-in meal for all who attended. The rest of the evening was spent sharing stories (some true, some probably not) and lots of card games. Saturday morning was the Annual Meeting. The afternoon was free for visiting Ohio's famous Holmes County Amish area, watching football in the conference room, or just reminiscing. Saturday evening, attendees headed down the road to Dutch Valley Restaurant for a buffet dinner then back to the conference room for presentations and more card-playing and sharing stories. While not everyone was able to be there the entire weekend, 26 Pioneers participated at some point each day. Funds raised will go to Salvation Army units in Ohio, St. Jude's Hospital, and the Alzheimer's Association.



Around the table - Buckeye Chapter member Ethel Mason and her grandson, Sally Stone of Mid-Ohio Club, ITPA President JoAnn Esposito, and Ethel's granddaughter-in-law Laura Mason (a former Buckeye Chapter scholarship recipient who will soon be an RN).

A \$500 scholarship was presented to Zander Bordick, the grandson of Mid-Ohio Club member Ron Gaumer. Zander was unable to attend the gathering, and Ron accepted the scholarship on his behalf.



Pictured above left to right: Buckeye Chapter President Jim Hoskinson, Ron Gaumer, and scholarship coordinator, Sue Lehmkuhle.



Above: Buckeye Chapter President Jim Hoskinson, Buckeye Chapter member Bud Brown, Pat Whalen of Mid-Ohio Club, Ron Gaumer, of Mid-Ohio Club, Flo Brown and Linda Hoskinson. Both Buckeye Chapter Pioneers.



Above: Buckeye Chapter members Sandi Hayes, Marlene Nixon, Carol Farschman, Tom Lehmkuhle, Sue Lehmkuhle and Harold Hayes.



Above: Buckeye Chapter members Jan Jeffrey and Kathlene Anerino, Mid-Ohio member Darlene Roll, Buckeye Chapter member Karen S., and North Carolina Friends Janet Holliday-Cashwell and Ronnie Cashwell.



Door prizes for everyone!

Club/Chapter News (Cont'd)

North Star Chapter Club - Region 4, MN

By Karol Nielsen

North Star Chapter Pioneers held their annual meeting at Axel's Restaurant in Chanhassen, Minnesota on October 21st. The current slate of officers was re-elected: Ralph Meuwissen, president; Roger Sauerbrey, vice president; Karol Nielsen, secretary/treasurer; and directors: John Bergmann, Shirley Carlson, Faye Ernst, and Dave Flies.



Pictured above, left to right: Fred Bleedorn, Ralph Meuwissen's son, Mary Meuwissen, John & Karen Bergmann, Faye Ernst, Karol Nielsen, Roger, and Linda Sauerbrey & Ralph Meuwissen.

North Star Chapter Pioneers selected the following charitable organizations for their 2024 service projects: Children's Cancer Research Fund (see www.https://childrenscancer.org), Feed My Starving Children (see www.https://fmssc.org), Food Shelf, Red Cross, Parkinson's and Tunnel 2 Towers. The club will donate \$500 to each charity, along with a donation of office equipment to Alzheimer's valued at \$2,000.



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

Please let us publicize your ITPA Pioneer group! To add your current events to <https://www.nationalitpa.com>, send an email to ITPA President JoAnn Esposito at espo-girl56@yahoo.com, and in the subject heading add "Club/Chapter Website Page."

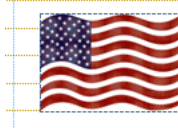
National Project Updates

ITPA officers and directors who met in early November at the national office for the annual fall board meeting brought non-perishable food items for the local food pantry *Manna House*. *Manna House* feeds an average of 2,000 individuals monthly and serves another 650 individuals through its soup kitchen. Manna House cares for at risk children, disabled veterans, low-income families and seniors, unemployed, underemployed, homeless, and military service members and their families.



The fall board meeting attendees donated 137 items of non-perishable food items that were delivered to Manna House by ITPA's Executive Director Andrea Wick.

As a part of our national kindness project and in recognition of Veteran's Day, the team also wrote cards and letters that will be delivered to military personnel stationed at Fort Stewart in Liberty County, Georgia. Nearly 200 cards and letters were completed, thanks to help from Ohio's Buckeye State Chapter Pioneers, Carotel Pioneers and NC's Tar Heel Chapter Pioneers.



Thank-you-for-your-service.
From: []
Independent-
Telecommunications-Pioneer-
Association-Members []

Above: Cards and letters awaiting delivery to Fort Stewart. Left: The front of each envelope included this label.

Save the dates!

December 12, 2023

Otto Wettstein, Jr. Pioneer Club Christmas Luncheon for Retirees and Members. Attendees are asked to bring a non-perishable food item.

December 14, 2023

Comporium Pioneer Club Annual Meeting, Rock Hill, SC.

March 1, 2024

Return completed kindness project check lists to ITPA President JoAnn Esposito

March 2, 2024

National Awards Committee Meeting, Rock Hill, SC

February 9-11, 2024

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

April 26-28, 2024

National spring assembly, Mount Airy, NC (The Real Mayberry RFD).

October 11-12, 2024

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

October 18-20, 2024

Ohio Fall Get Together at the Dutch Host Inn, Sugarcreek, OH (home of the world's largest cuckoo clock). Details to be provided.

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

DID YOU SOLVE THE PIONEER CIPHER

The September Pioneer Connection included a cipher with a hint to get you started (W = T).

OPW ALW AZ BALC
TGPMM SXN FAMLXWPPC -
HBCWMP WGP WLCWMP

Translated, that means, "get out of your shell and volunteer!" Myrtle the Turtle

HOW MANY WORDS?

Do you remember those grade school days when you were challenged to see how many words you could make from "CHRISTMAS?" Let's turn back time and do it again with a twist! How many words can you find in "PIONEER?" Submit your list to itpa@telecom-pioneers.net by **January 1st**, and the Pioneer who lists the most words (legitimate words found in Webster please!) will win a prize!

A Little Telco Humor!



National Office News

The September 2023 Pioneer Connection included extra content that is only available electronically. While not specifically related to ITPA or Pioneer activities, we hope that additional content was of interest to our readers. This month's online magazine also contains additional content not included in the printed edition.

Printing fewer pages allows us to publish the Pioneer Connection more economically and results in lower mailing costs. Our publication is not eligible for bulk mailing rates and the per copy postage is about \$2.00 per copy, and our board of directors are diligently striving to cut costs and keep our ITPA financially healthy despite a heavy membership decline over the years. Producing printed copies in black and white and limiting printed content specifically to ITPA related articles is a significant cost savings measure.

In 2024 the Pioneer Connection will be published quarterly and will be issued during the second month of each quarter (February, May, August and November). Please submit information for your club/chapter for inclusion in the Pioneer Connection no later than the 1st of the month preceding the publication date (i.e. for the February 15th Pioneer Connection, information must be received by February 1st).

If you receive the Pioneer Connection by mail, and have an e-mail address, please consider subscribing to the electronic version of the Pioneer Connection. If you're not sure how to sign up to receive e-mail notices when our Pioneer Connection is published, just follow these simple instructions:

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

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

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

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

Member Name:*	<input type="text"/>
Member Number:	<input type="text"/>
Club Number or Name:	<input type="text"/>
Email Address:*	<input type="text"/>
Repeat Email Address:*	<input type="text"/>

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

Fill in the blanks, select "submit" and you'll receive an email letting you know when the magazine is available on our website. No more waiting for paper copies!

If you have any questions about subscribing to Pioneer Connection online or if you need help, please call our national office. When the Pioneer connection is published (the second month of every quarter), you'll receive an email from the ITPA that includes a link to our beautiful full color magazine. It's much quicker than waiting for a printed edition, and it saves our ITPA both dollars and volunteer hours that can be used to carry out our primary mission of community service!

Breaking News....2024 Dues

The new year is around the corner and soon thereafter ITPA annual membership fees are due! Be looking for your January statement.



As our board continues looking for opportunities to reduce postage and operating costs, you will see a change in the delivery of membership dues next year. Pioneers who are subscribed to our online Pioneer Connection will receive an email notice in 2024 in lieu of a paper billing.

If you have an email address and are willing to subscribe to the Pioneer Connection online, that subscription information will be used to send your 2024 dues notice to you electronically. By doing so, you've helped us operate in a more efficient and cost effective manner, meaning that the membership dues we receive can be stretched further to support the causes we sponsor.

In past years, dues notices mailed in January included an April due date. Second notices were later mailed in April. Discussion with a number of Pioneers about membership due dates resulted in the same feedback, that being that a notice sent in January with an April due date often meant the billing statement was discarded and forgotten long before April. In 2024, when you receive your statement, the statement will be presented "due upon receipt." Paying your annual membership dues early in the year will help prevent postage costs for the "gentle reminder" postcard that will be sent in April.

Now, more than ever, your ITPA membership dues help us make a difference. Here's how the \$30 annual membership dues are utilized to maximize the ITPA's ability to continue serving our communities. Twenty percent (\$6.00) of an individual's membership fee is sent to the club/chapter of which that Pioneer is a member. Each club and chapter has elected officers and directors who are responsible for managing those funds, which help offset operating expenses and other costs. Eighty percent of the membership dues is allocated to the national ITPA. That amount contributes to, but does not fully cover, our general operating expenses. Member attrition over the years, combined with a decline in corporate sponsorships, means that now, more than ever, the membership fees and donations to our foundations, are more critical than ever before, for us to continue making a difference in our communities across the nation.

Member Spotlight



Our Member Spotlight shines on Region 4 this month where we interviewed long time Pioneer Karol Nielsen. Karol is a North Star Chapter Pioneer and has faithfully served as the Chapter's secretary for more than 35 years.

Thanks Karol for all you do and have done for the ITPA and your community, and for agreeing to this interview. Will you tell us a bit about yourself and your family.

I grew up on a farm west of Minneapolis with a brother and a sister. I tried marriage, but it didn't agree with me! Because of a medical issue, I wasn't able to have children. But over the years, I raised 4 cocker spaniels, each having their own unique personality. I have 2 nieces, 2 nephews, and 3 great nieces and nephews. I have since lost my Mom and brother to cancer and my Dad to heart disease. I've resided in Chanhassen, MN, a western suburb of Minneapolis for over 43 years. I previously lived in Belle Plaine, MN, but due to the high cost of gas (back in 1980) decided to move closer to where I worked in Chaska, MN.

What is your history with the telephone industry?

I started my telephony career in 1968 at Pioneer Telephone Company in Waconia, MN. In 1970, the company was purchased by United Utilities, Inc., which later became United Telephone of the Midwest and then Sprint. I worked in several positions at the Chaska Office, the last being a forecaster. I worked for Sprint for 31 years until my position was eliminated. I then went to work for Time Warner Telecom, a division of Time Warner Cable out of Littleton, CO. I worked there for 15 years, until I retired in 2015.

As an active Pioneer, will you share your history with the ITPA?

I joined the Viking Pioneer Club of the I.T.P.A. in 1983. A few years later, I became the secretary of the club. In 1999, the 3 clubs in the state merged with the North Star Chapter. I then became the secretary of the chapter and later, we merged the secretary and treasurer's positions into one. Because our membership was scattered throughout the states of Minnesota and the Dakotas, we weren't able to do a lot of activities. We volunteered to work at the Special Olympics, when they were in Minneapolis. Over the years, the Viking club donated items to each of the nursing homes in the communities Sprint serviced in Minnesota. We also worked at the Minnesota Telephone Association convention for many years selling merchandise and raffle tickets and hosting the Pioneer luncheon to raise funds.

What does being a Pioneer mean to you?

I enjoy being able to help raise funds and then give it all away. Each year we donate \$500 to at least 6 charities chosen by our membership. Charities included the American Red Cross and Cancer Society, the Salvation Army, Toys for Tots, Children Cancer Research Fund, Food Shelf, Veteran's homes, Feed My Starving Children, Wounded Warriors, and Tunnel 2 Towers. For 31 years we have donated over \$62,000 in office equipment to our national project Alzheimer's, to their branch offices in Minnesota and the Dakotas. I must commend our membership as they have been outstanding in our efforts to raise funds to keep our mission going.

What keeps you busy during retirement besides Pioneer activities?

I keep busy with my home in Chanhassen, with yardwork and general maintenance. I love planting flowers and watching them grow. For 15 years, I had a camper parked at a campground where I made lots of friends. I then sold the camper and bought a townhome on a golf course and across the street from Lake Geneva near Alexandria, MN. It's something for my family to enjoy. I used to play a lot of golf, but several years ago, I lost my golfing buddy. I'm an avid Minnesota sports fan, mainly the Twins and Vikings.

Share with us a little known fact about yourself that might surprise your fellow Pioneers.

I've been parasailing over the Pacific Ocean, and I had a ride in a hot air balloon over the Palm Spring, CA area.

Hopefully during retirement, you're finding a little time to do some things you want to do. What's on your bucket list?

I traveled with family to Germany, Austria, and Switzerland in 2011. Then we went on a cruise of the inside passage to Alaska and a bus tour through the Canadian Rockies in 2013. Absolutely beautiful scenery. For a number of years, we traveled to Puerto Vallarta, Mazatlán, and Cabo San Lucas, Mexico. We also took a bus tour to see the arch in St. Louis, Graceland, the French Quarter and the WWII museum in New Orleans, and a salt mine and the cowboy museum in Oklahoma. So my "bucket" list is pretty well filled.

If you could have a superpower what would it be and why.

I'd settle for a body that didn't ache every day.

What are some of your favorites...books, movies, favorite time of the year, and holiday?

I enjoy reading murder mystery novels, by John Sanford (Minnesota native), David Baldacci, John Grisham and James Patterson. My favorite movie? I always watch The Godfather Trilogy and Field of Dreams, when they're on. I love summer and enjoy the outdoors. I guess my favorite holiday would be Christmas, with all the lights and decorations and the celebration of the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ.

Pet Photo Contest Winners



Congratulations to Piper and Morrie Sachsenmaier for taking first place in our September pet photo contest.

We asked six impartial Pioneers from multiple regions to judge the entries. Each judge voted independently for their 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners and their selections were tallied. Piper, shown below ranked with 5 of our 6 judges. Sampson (submitted by Ronnie Cashwell) is our 2nd place winner and Lola (submitted by Jay Vanlandingham) is our 3rd place winner. Congratulations to the additional cuties shown who received a 1st, 2nd or 3rd place

Thanks to our judges Charlotte Baker (*Mid-Ohio Pioneer Club, Region 2*), Jim Hoskinson (*Buckeye Chapter Region 2*), Nancy Hyatt (*Tar Heel Chapter Region 3*), Caroline Kelly (*Carl Hill Galloway Pioneer Club, Region 4*), Suzanne Reed (*Down East Club, Region 1*) and Barbara Smithson (*Carotel Club, Region 3*).

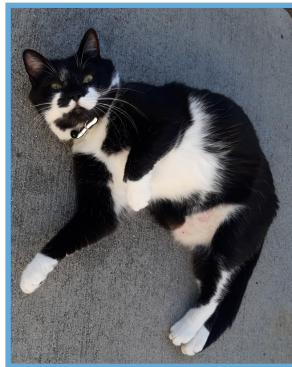
We know this wasn't an easy task for our judges. In fact, Judge Carolyn Kelly said when she voted, "It's always difficult to judge pet photos because all pets are 'special', especially to their owners. In my book they all are winners." Well said Carolyn! And thanks to everyone who participated.



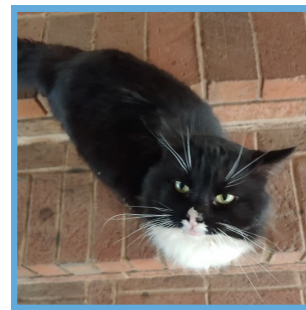
Sampson—Ronnie Cashwell



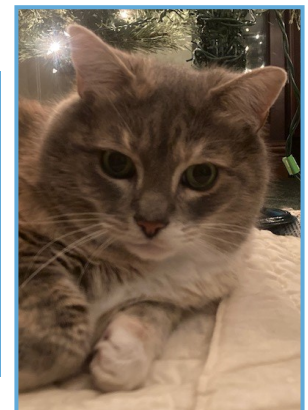
Lola—Jay Valandingham



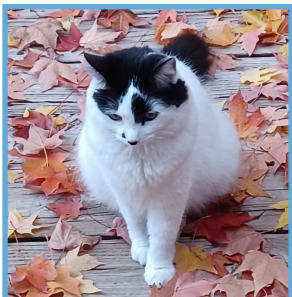
Betsy—Andrea Wick



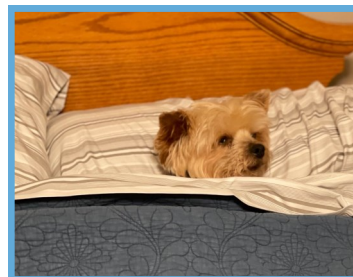
Magoo—Hannah Lancaster



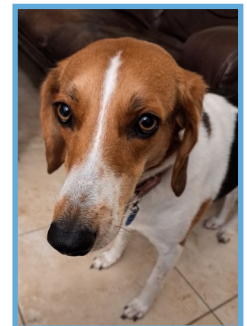
Daisy—Cindy Downing



Mona—Darlene Terry



Harlee Dan Yard—Leon Yard



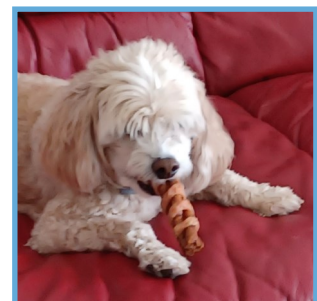
Zoey—Jo Myers



Dexter—Jo Myers



Super Sampson—Ronnie Cashwell



Abby—Darlene Terry

ITPA National Charitable Foundation Update

By Darlene Roll

As November and December arrive, that means that the holidays will soon be here. The members of the ITPA National Charitable Foundation wish everyone a safe, enjoyable holiday season. We appreciate all of you for the work that you do in your communities and the donations that you provide to the ITPA Charitable Foundation as well as to many other organizations throughout the year. Please know that you are blessings to others in so many ways!

The National Charitable Foundation has used donations from members to help with these activities:

- ♦ \$1,000.00 donation to the Alzheimer's Association – specifically for research.
- ♦ \$1,000.00 donation to a troop/veteran project – this time in Hinesville, Georgia, at the Bryant Commons Park Veterans Memorial Walk. Funds were donated to help erect a flag pole for the newest military branch, Space Force.
- ♦ \$170.00 donation to Wreaths Across America for the purchase of wreaths that will be placed at the Warriors Walk located at Ft. Stewart, near our national headquarters in Hinesville, Georgia. Bruce Muncher, co-founder and vice president of *Wreaths for Warriors Walk* accepted the donation during our annual fall board of directors meeting.



Charitable Foundation officers and directors stand in support of Wreaths for Warriors Walk as Charitable Foundation president Darlene Roll presents a donation to Bruce Muncher, vice president of Wreaths for Warriors Walk. Pictured left to right: First row— Darlene Roll, Bruce Muncher and Jo Myers Second row— Ronnie Cashwell, James White, Nancy Schnitzer, and Darlene Terry

Wreaths for Warriors Walk, Inc, is a non-profit corporation organized in Georgia. The organization is not affiliated with the US Army, 3rd Infantry Division, or Fort Stewart, and is supported entirely by unsolicited donations. As a non-profit organization, Wreaths for Warriors Walk has a slate of officers; none of whom receive a salary or compensation of any kind. The board is assisted by a core group of dedicated volunteers comprised of military retirees, local veterans' organizations, service organizations, and local citizens who care deeply about soldiers, especially those soldiers associated with Fort Stewart.



Photo courtesy of US Army Photographer

You can follow *Wreaths for Warriors Walk* on Facebook: www.facebook.com/wreaths4warriorswalk. Learn more about all of the organizations supported by the ITPA National Charitable Foundation this year at:

<https://act.alz.org/>

<https://libertycounty.org/veterans-memorial-walk>

<https://w4ww.org>

<https://wreathsacrossamerica.org>

Again, thank you for all your support!

Sincerely,

Darlene Roll

ITPA National Charitable Foundation President

Historical Foundation Update

By Ronnie Cashwell



The Historical Foundation has had an exciting year. Earlier this year we received a \$12,000 grant from the Liberty County Historical Society to enhance and expand the ITPA National Telephone Museum. Specifically, the grant money will cover the cost of carpentry work to repurpose an exterior storage room to house sensitive telephony equipment and other museum items not currently on display.



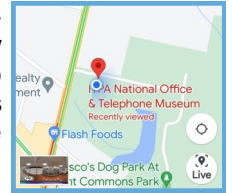
Left: Ronnie Cashwell, Historical Museum President, explains the work yet to be done in the storage room that will house sensitive telephony equipment and other telephony items not on display. This will allow us to more quickly and efficiently rotate museum displays.

The grant will also be used to enhance the existing museum displays. A touch screen monitor will be installed in the museum to allow visitors an interactive experience beyond the guided tour. Biographies for individuals who have been inducted into the Hall of Fame will be available, along with photos and descriptions of items on display in the museum.



The application process for this grant began in 2019 after the ITPA received a \$5,000 grant from another Georgia organization to update the museum displays with glass cases. Grant writing requires a unique talent, and we are grateful to Alissa Moss, Michelle Ricketsen, and Morrie Sachsenmaier who spent many hours helping prepare the grant application.

Also underway is a Google Maps project that, when completed, will allow anyone who uses Google Maps to click on the "Google Pin" which marks our location. Clicking on the Google Pin will allow anyone to take a virtual video tour of the museum.



As of November 4th, our museum curators have welcomed nearly one thousand visitors this year. Since the end of August alone, our new Executive Director Andrea Wick conducted 33 tours consisting of about 76 people. Generally, several groups come to the museum each week. Many of our guests are families with children who enjoy the interaction of the analog switches and telephones. Often times, first-time attendees return again with family members or friends.

If you haven't visited our national museum, you've missed a real treat! Come on down to Hinesville to see what you've been missing.



Pictured above: Andrea Wick, ITPA Executive Director, accepts the grant from the Liberty County Historical Society.

Pictured below: ITPA board members gather to review progress and plans for museum upgrades made possible through the generous grant from the Liberty County Historical Society.



Christmas Traditions and Holiday Delights



We asked Pioneers from across the country to share their favorite Christmas traditions and holiday recipes. The following recipes are presented in the order in which they were received, so you may find a sweet delight on the same page with a savory dish.

The online Pioneer Connection contains many more recipes than the printed edition. If you don't already subscribe to the electronic issue of our Pioneer Connection, check out the expanded version of the November Pioneer Connection at <https://www.nationalitpa.com/publications>.

From there, scroll down to find the November 2023 issue. (While you're there, consider signing up to receive the Pioneer Connection by e-mail.)

Every Pioneer Connection includes a favorite Pioneer recipe. Feel free to submit one of your favorites at any time for publication in a future issue. Send recipes to dterry625@gmail.com and please add "Pioneer Connection Recipe" to the subject line.



Pumpkin Bread

Submitted by Darlene Terry, Carotel Club, NC

Every year during the first week of fall, one of my neighbors bakes pumpkin bread for the neighborhood. She begins her deliveries as soon as the first loaves come out of the oven, so ours is always hot when it arrives. Within minutes we've usually devoured about half the loaf. Her pumpkin bread deliveries always makes me think of the upcoming holidays and of holidays gone by. Early in our marriage when there wasn't a lot of money for gifts, I sometimes baked this pumpkin bread as gifts for neighbors and friends.

Ingredients:

- 3 cups sugar
- 1 cup corn oil
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 1 can (1 lb.) or 2 cups pumpkin
- 3 1/2 cups self rising or plain flour
- 1/2 tsp baking powder (only if using plain flour)
- 1/2 tsp cloves
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp allspice
- 2/3 cups water

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350°. Grease and flour loaf pans. Combine sugar, oil and eggs. Add pumpkin. Sift together dry ingredients and add pumpkin mixture. Add water and mix. Pour into loaf pans and bake for one hour.



Christmas Traditions Cont'd

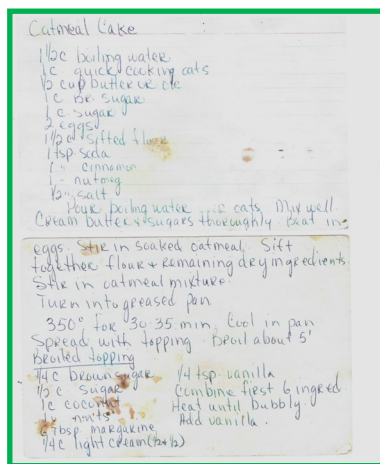
Oatmeal Cake

Submitted by Nancy Schnitzer, Big Bend Club, FL

This recipe has been in my family for a long time. My mom made this on special occasions. It was handed down from our Grandma to my mom and then to me. It is a favorite fall and winter recipe in our family. You can tell that it is a well used recipe from the many spots of brown sugar and vanilla.

Cake Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cup boiling water
- 1 cup quick cooking oats
- 1/2 cup butter or Oleo
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 1/2 cups sifted flour
- 1 tsp soda
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp nutmeg
- 1/2 tsp salt



Pour boiling water onto oats. Mix well. Separately, cream butter and sugars thoroughly and beat in eggs. Stir into soaked oatmeal.

Sift together the flour and remaining dry ingredients. Stir in oatmeal mixture. Turn into greased pan. Bake at 350° for 30-35 minutes. Cool in pan.

Topping Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 cup coconut
- 1 cup nuts
- 6 Tbsp margarine
- 1/4 cup light cream (half and half)
- 1/4 tsp vanilla

Combine first 6 topping ingredients in sauce pan and heat until bubbly. Add vanilla and stir.

Spread topping over cake and broil for about 5 minutes.

Cranberry-Apple Casserole

Submitted by Kathy Hurley, Comporium Club, SC

This is one of my favorite holiday recipes. I hope you will enjoy it as much as I do!

Ingredients:

- 3 cups apples, peeled and chopped
- 2 cups fresh cranberries
- 1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons flour, divided
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 pkgs. cinnamon and spice instant oatmeal (such as Quaker)
- 3/4 cup chopped pecans
- 1/2 cup light brown sugar
- 1/2 cup melted butter

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350°F. Mix apples and cranberries with 2 tablespoons flour until coated. (For best results, do this in a gallon-size zip-top bag.)

Add in sugar, and continue to mix until evenly coated. Pour the flour- and sugar-coated fruit into 7x11" casserole dish.

In a separate bowl, mix oatmeal, remaining flour, pecans, brown sugar, and melted butter until it resembles a crumble. Spoon the crumble over the fruit. Bake uncovered for 45 minutes.

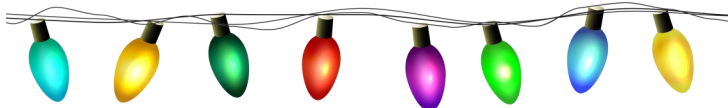


Christmas Traditions Cont'd

Fresh Apple Cake

Submitted by Nancy Hyatt, Tar Heel Chapter, TN

This cake recipe has been in my files for at least 30 years. During the nearly 40 years that I worked in telecommunications, we regularly had covered dish dinners, especially during the holidays. This cake was always the first item requested for our meal. Thanks to Glenda for always filling the request. Now it is my turn, but I only bake this cake at Christmas. I start receiving calls and texts in early December asking if I am going to make a Fresh Apple for Christmas. Of course I always say yes! It is a favorite dessert for our whole family and many ask if they can have leftovers, but only a few crumbs are ever left. By the time all the families go their separate ways, the crumbs are gone too! During all our celebrations, everyone enjoys Christmas, good food, fun, and fellowship, and everyone remembers "The Reason For The Season."



Ingredients

- 2 cups sugar
- 1 1/2 cups Crisco oil
- 3 large eggs
- 3 cups all purpose flour
- 1 tsp soda
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 1/2 tsp vanilla
- 3 cups diced [firm] apples
- 3/4 cup coconut { Angel Flake }
- 1 cup chopped black walnuts or pecans

Instructions: Preheat oven to 325°. Mix sugar and oil. Add eggs- Combine flour, soda, and salt and add to oil mixture. Add remaining ingredients and mix well. Pour mixture into a well greased tube pan. Bake for 1 hour and 20 mins.

Glaze Ingredients

- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup milk
- 1 stick margarine

Instructions: Mix and cook 2 1/2 mins, Pour over cake and let set in tube for about 15 minutes. Turn out on a Christmas platter and enjoy.

Sweet Potato Casserole

Submitted by Kathy Hurley, Comporium Club, SC

Ingredients

- 29 ounces sweet potatoes drained (or 3 1/2 cups cooked and mashed sweet potatoes)
- 1/4 cup milk
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons butter melted
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
-

Topping Ingredients

- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup pecans chopped
- 1/2 cup shredded coconut
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 3 tablespoons butter melted
-

Instructions

Preheat oven to 350°. In a large bowl or mixer, combine sweet potatoes, milk, brown sugar, melted butter, egg, vanilla, and salt. Beat ingredients with a hand mixer (or in a mixer) until the sweet potatoes are light and fluffy. Transfer sweet potato mixture into a greased 9x9 inch baking pan.

Stir all of the topping ingredients together in a small bowl.

Sprinkle the topping evenly over the sweet pota-



Christmas Traditions Cont'd

Cappuccino Punch

Submitted by Barbara Smithson, Carotel Club, TN

This is so yummy! I don't recommend using artificial sweetener sugar free or decaf coffee. This is worth the extra calories!

Ingredients:

- ½ cup sugar
- ¼ cup instant coffee granules
- 1 cup boiling hot water
- 1 quart good vanilla ice cream, softened
- 1 quart good chocolate ice cream, softened
- 2 quarts whole milk

Directions:

In a small bowl, combine the sugar and coffee granules. Stir in the boiling water until all is dissolved. Cover and refrigerate until chilled.

Just before serving, pour coffee mixture into a one-gallon punch bowl. Stir in milk. Add scoops of ice cream; stir until melted.



Holiday Melt Aways

Submitted by Darlene Roll, Mid-Ohio Club, OH

This recipe is a holiday tradition at the Roll house! Whenever we have cookie baking days these are always on the menu.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup butter, softened
- ½ cup confectioner's sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2-1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¾ cup pecans, finely chopped
- Additional confectioner's sugar

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350°. In a large mixing bowl, cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy (about 5 to 7 minutes). Beat in the vanilla extract.

Combine flour and salt. Gradually add to the creamed mixture and mix well. Stir in pecans.

Refrigerate until chilled and then roll dough into 1-inch balls and place on an ungreased baking sheets. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes or until set.

Roll in confectioner's sugar while still warm. Cool on wire racks and then roll cooled cookies in confectioner's sugar again. Store in airtight container. Yield—about 4 dozen.



Christmas Traditions Cont'd

Potato Candy

Submitted by Darlene Terry, Carotel Club, NC

When I was young, my Christmas stockings were filled mostly with nuts, oranges and apples, so my mom's tradition of making candy from potatoes was a welcomed treat. By the time my daughter was born, my mom had abandoned the potato candy tradition, but one year as we were reminiscing about Christmases gone by, we talked about the potato candy, and my daughter begged us to make some right then and there. I didn't expect her to like it, and frankly wondered if our memory of the sweet treat was better than the reality. But she loved it, and it was just as good as I remembered, so our potato candy tradition resumed. We don't make it every year now, but every once in a while when we are reminiscing...



Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup mashed Russet potatoes
- 1 stick salted butter, softened
- 6-7 cups powdered sugar
- 2 tsp vanilla
- Creamy peanut butter

Instructions: Poke holes in enough potatoes to make 1/2 cup. Microwave until tender. (Microwaving makes them less watery than boiling.) Cool potatoes at room temperature. When potatoes are thoroughly cool, peel and mash them until no lumps remain. (If you add remaining ingredients to warm potatoes you'll end up with mush and you'll need to serve mashed potatoes instead of potato candy.)

Combine potatoes, butter and one cup of powdered sugar in a large bowl. Stir with electric mixer. Add remaining sugar one cup at a time. Stir after each addition until combined well. After adding 5 cups of powdered sugar, check the consistency. If the mixture hasn't formed a dough that can be rolled into a ball, continue adding sugar. Once mixture is at correct consistency, stir in vanilla.

Refrigerate for exactly one hour. Divide chilled mixture in half. Dust a clean surface with powdered sugar (use parchment paper or waxed paper if desired) and use a well dusted rolling pin to roll each half into a rectangle about 1/4" thick. If dough is too sticky or falls apart, add sugar, re-shape into a ball and start over. Spread peanut butter evenly over rolled dough, leaving edges peanut-butter free. Start with longer side of rectangle and roll into a tightly rolled log. Refrigerate for about 10 minutes and then slice into pieces about 1/4 to 1/2" thick. Store left-over candy in an airtight container for up to a week.

Red Velvet Cake

Submitted by Kim Smith,
Wade H. Creekmore, Sr. Pioneer Club, MS

This recipe was passed down to me by my momma, and it is a Christmas favorite in our home. My siblings, along with our spouses, children and grandchildren, all get together on Christmas night at either my or my brother's home. We share a great meal, including Red Velvet Cake. For the past five years or so we have added a new favorite game to our family tradition. Young and old enjoy playing the Saran Wrap Ball Game, and we are all very competitive. We have so much fun with this tradition and it's something everyone looks forward to each year.

Ingredients:

- 2 eggs
- 1 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons cocoa
- 1 teaspoon vinegar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 1/4 cup oil
- 2 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 2 ounces red food coloring

Directions:

Mix in order listed. Bake in 3 layers at 350 for 15-20 minutes.

Icing:

- 1/2 cup Crisco shortening
- 8 oz. cream cheese at room temperature
- 1 stick butter at room temperature
- 1 pound Powdered Sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup chopped pecans



Christmas Traditions Cont'd

Strawberry Cream Cheese Balls

Submitted by Alissa Moss, Tar Heel Chapter, GA

Christmas is the most wonderful time of year!! My husband shares my love of Christmas, so we kick off the holiday season by having at least one tree up by his birthday on October 21st. Yes, I know it's early. I know we skip two holidays, but y'all- We love Christmas! Every room in my home is decorated with at least one Christmas tree- I typically decorate at least 23 trees. Once the house looks like Christmas, we begin the family traditions of gift exchanges and family gatherings. I always get asked to bring one of our family favorite desserts- Strawberry Cream Cheese Balls. Not only do they look like a Christmas decoration, they are delicious. We hope you enjoy them as much as we do. From my family to yours- May you have a wonderful Christmas, and never forget that Jesus is the reason for the season.

Ingredients:

- 2 large packs of strawberry Jell-O
- 2 packs of cream cheese
- 3 1/2 oz coconut
- 1 cup pecans

Directions:

Let cream cheese get room temperature in a bowl. Add one large pack of strawberry Jell-o. Mix with a mixer on low speed until well blended. Add coconut and pecans. Mix well. Roll into small bowls. Put the other pack of strawberry Jell-o in a small bowl. Roll the balls in the Jell-o. Put on wax paper and set in the refrigerator. Serve cold. If you like coconut, try rolling them in coconut after the Jello. I think it makes them look more festive.



Babs and Alice's Spaghetti

Submitted by Clifford Holliday, Lexington, Kentucky

This spaghetti was invented by my first wife, Babs (deceased after 34 years of marriage) and improved by my present wife, Alice (married for 20 years.) Babs originated it for me because I am allergic to onions and don't like hot peppers. It is a meat lover's dream.

Ingredients:

- 1.5 – 2 lbs. hamburger (93% lean or ground sirloin)
- 1 pkg. McCormick Mushroom Italian Style mix
- 1 Can (14.5 oz) diced tomatoes (no onions or peppers)
- 1/3 cup of sugar
- 1 small can tomato paste

Directions:

Brown meat in large fry pan and then mix in other items. Stew for 1-2 hours. While stewing sprinkle in Amaretto liberally. Prepare noodles or macaroni to suit your taste. Serve with garlic toast (Texas toast) and a good, red wine. Enjoy!

This recipe makes enough for four very generous servings. If you have some left, mix sauce and pasta in a bowl and cover in fridge. It is even better the next day (heated).



Christmas Traditions Cont'd

Holiday Fruitcake

Submitted by Darlene Terry, Carotel Club

As a child, one of my favorite Christmas treats was the fruitcake my mom made. Some fruitcakes I've tasted deserve the bad rap they get, but trust me, this fruitcake was not passed from person to person each year, because it was quickly gobbled up! You could half this recipe and have a plenty, but between sharing with neighbors when they visited and having some pretty much every day during the holiday, we never had too much.

Ingredients

- 10 oz. marshmallows
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup milk
- 1 lb. graham crackers, crumbled
- 1 lb. pecans, chopped
- 1 lb. English walnuts
- 1 lb. raisins
- 1 lb. candied cherries
- 1 lb. candied pineapple
- 1 lb. coconut

Directions:

Place marshmallows, sugar and milk in double boiler and cook until marshmallows and sugar are melted and mixture is combined. Put all other ingredients into a very large mixing bowl and pour liquid over ingredients. Mix all ingredients until well blended.

Grease large glass dish with butter and spread fruitcake mixture into dish. Refrigerate and slice.



Christmas Breakfast Casserole

Submitted by Ruben Terry, Carotel Club, NC



This casserole is a Christmas tradition for our family. For 30 years or I've been preparing this dish on Christmas Eve (it has to sit overnight in the fridge). When my daughter was young, we would pop it in the oven as we neared the end of our gift exchanges. These days, we opt to have our casserole first and then we dive into the gifts. My wife has looked forward to this delicious breakfast every year, and it just recently dawned on her to request it on other special occasions. We often serve it now whenever we have overnight guests. Even though we are enjoying it more often than Christmas morning these days, it remains a Christmas tradition for us.

Ingredients:

- 8 slices firm white bread (do not use soft textured bread)
- 8 links of air dried country sausage
- 8 eggs
- 1 tsp. Worcestershire
- 2 cups milk
- 1 cup sharp cheddar cheese, grated
- 1 cup Swiss or mozzarella cheese, grated

Directions:

Grease a 9x13" baking dish. Slice sausages in 1/8" thick circles. Sauté in ungreased frying pan for 2 to 4 minutes. Drain well. Trim crusts from bread and fit into bottom of dish. Distribute sausage over bread. Place eggs, mustard, Worcestershire sauce and milk in blender and mix well (or put in a large bowl and whisk well). Spread cheeses over sausage and cover with milk mixture. Cover with plastic wrap and allow to sit in refrigerator overnight. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes or until top is golden brown.

Serves 6-8

Christmas Traditions Cont'd

A Real Kentucky Mint Julep

Submitted by Clifford Holliday, Lexington, Kentucky

We used to go to the races (horse) in the Dallas area at Lone Star Park, quite often. However with advancing age, getting around is not so easy for us anymore. We do manage to get a taste of the horses during the Triple Crown events and the Breeder's cup. We read our racing forms and lay out our bets the day before the races, and then I go down and place the bets. We watch the races in the comfort of our family room. One important part of that is the refreshments we have with the races. The only thing that is right is a Kentucky Julep. Here's how to make a real one.

Place several leaves of mint in the bottom of a julep cup. Put a little ice on top of the mint and mull it around to bruise the leaves and release some of their taste. Fill cup with crushed ice. Pour in two (one if you desire a weaker drink) shots of Kentucky Bourbon (preferably Wild Turkey 101). On the side mix four large table spoons of powdered sugar in about 4-5 oz of water and dissolve. Put two table spoons of mixture in the julep cup and stir. Let cup sit in freezer for 10 minutes and add a sprig of mint to serve.

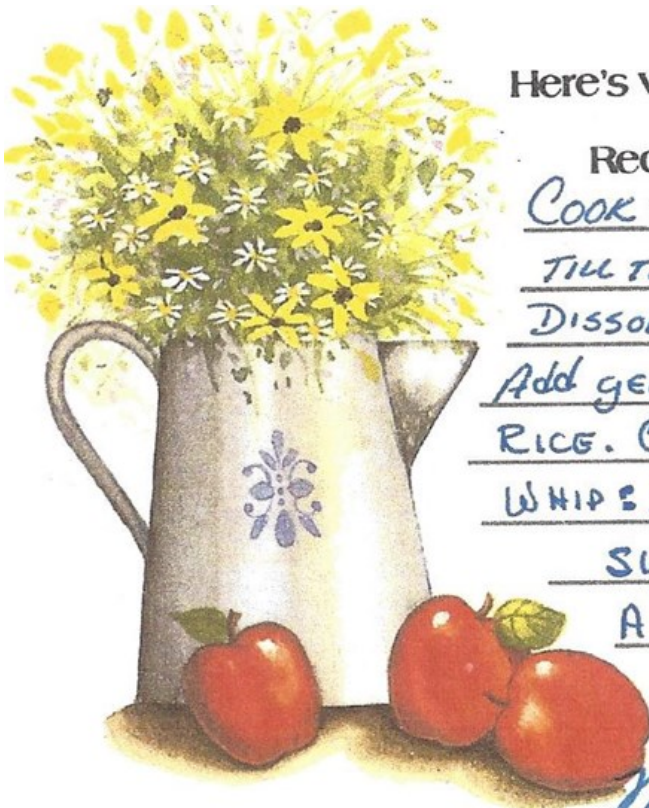


Don't drive after drinking one. Walk carefully after drinking two.

Danish Christmas Eve Pudding

Submitted by Karen Nielsen, North Star Chapter, Chanhassen, Minnesota

I married a Dane, so they had a traditional Christmas dessert, Danish Rice Pudding. We put a whole almond in one of the servings and the person who gets it isn't supposed to say anything. The others are supposed to guess who has it. The person with the almond would then get a prize.



Here's what's cookin': DANISH CHRISTMAS EVE

Recipe from: _____

Pudding

COOK: 1/4 CUP RICE & 2 CUPS MILK

TILL TENDER.

DISSOLVE: 1 PKG GELATIN IN 1/4 CUP WATER

ADD GELATIN & 1/4 CUP CHOPPED ALMONDS TO RICE. COOL.

WHIP 2 CUPS CREAM WITH 5 TBLS

SUGAR & 1 TSP VANILLA

ADD TO RICE MIXTURE

ADD 1 WHOLE ALMOND

SERVE WITH HOT PIE CHERRIES.

Make 1 1/2 recipe Serves: _____

Holiday Traditions (Cont'd)

By Vickie Jolly

One of my favorite childhood memories is going to my paternal grandparents Christmas Day for our evening meal. My grandparents lived on a small farm in Trinity. My Dad's two sisters and their families were there as were my grandmother's sister and grown children. My Papaw was always in a new pair of overalls there to greet us and serve bottle soft drinks from the refrigerator off the back porch. There were so many of us we ate in the bedrooms, living room, anywhere we could find a place to sit – what fun! At first we drew names and exchanged gifts, but in the end, just being together sharing good food and crawling on Papaw's lap to play with his pocket watch were all we wanted.

Once Jim and I started dating he would go with my family to this event and as we married and had children, they too added to the merriment. My grandparents were not wealthy but each year the children would get a Silver Dollar, fifty cent piece or one year, a two dollar bill. Jim and I still have those special coins as do our sons.

My Mawmaw made the best Apple Pie in the world with a topping of flour, melted butter and sugar spread over the applesauce like mixture versus a crust. Each year as my family was leaving, she would slip out to the back porch, reach in the pie safe and hand me an Apple pie to take home. Of course I shared with my family. One year my Papaw received a new watch for Christmas so as we were leaving, he slipped me his prized pocket watch which I still have.

Jim often comments that Christmas at my grandparents was really special and what Christmas is all about – the love of God and family.

Another tradition Jim and I have started with our grandkids involves a "Pickle Ornament". This tradition originated in Germany. I have a glass pickle ornament which is hidden on the Christmas tree. The child, who finds it, receives a gift. You can make this a family gift (board game, movie, etc.) or as we have done, the ornament is hidden over and over until all children have found it and receive a small gift. It is the first thing our grandkids ask about when we get together for Christmas "Nana, do you have the pickle ornament?"

Merry Christmas to all

Vickie & Jim Jolly



White Trash

Submitted by Vickie Jolly, Tar Heel Chapter, NC

Ingredients

- 1 box raisins
- 1 box rice Chex
- 12 oz. dry roasted peanuts
- 1 stick margarine
- 11 ½ - 12 oz. pkg chocolate morsels
- 12 oz jar smooth peanut butter
-

Instructions:

Mix raisins, rice Chex and dry roasted peanuts together.

Melt together the margarine, chocolate morsels and peanut butter.

Pour wet ingredients over dry ingredients and mix together. Let this mixture sit for 1 hour.

After one hour, pour 1 box powdered sugar over mixture and stir well. Store in airtight container.



There's a Fragrance for That



It's well known that "scent" has long been used as more than just a perfume. The wise men offered Frankincense and Myrrh to the holy family, along with gold. Those gifts weren't likely just to make the baby Jesus smell good.

Frankincense, while used as a fragrance in perfumes, sometimes serves a more important health role in that it seems to kill harmful bacteria and yeasts when applied to the skin. Frankincense essential oil, when used for natural skin care, promotes cellular health, helping to reduce the appearance of scars, wrinkles, and fine lines. Frankincense is also believed to promote focus and mental clarity. Just dab a drop on your wrist in the morning and inhale the sweet woody scent throughout the day. (Note that Frankincense should be mixed with a carrier oil before applied to the skin.)

Myrrh, addition to having a pleasant warm and earthy scent, can also help kill harmful bacteria and parasites and it may support oral health, heal skin sores and ease pain and swelling. Myrrh essential oil is also used to relieve congestion, coughs, bronchitis and phlegm, and inhaling its scent is known to lift negative moods.

Cinnamon, while not chronicled as having been presented to the holy family, has been used since biblical times for its healing ability. More recently, a scientific article from the Northern American Journal of Psychology note that the aroma of cinnamon can improve mood as well as enhance motivation, performance and alertness. Also, according to the Arthritis Foundation, cinnamon consumed in combination with other foods and spices, may offer a cumulative anti-inflammatory effect over the course of a day.



If you're feeling stressed, there's a scent for that also. The scent of pine has been proven to reduce cortisol levels. (Cortisol is a primary stress hormone.) If you can't "forest bathe" as the ancient Japanese advocated, try a bar of pine-scented soap.



For headaches and migraines, mint has long been used to ease the pain. Hippocrates first prescribed menthol, a cooling agent. The ancient Romans applied warm mint water to the temples to ease head pain. Similarly, a recent study by Frontiers in Neurology found that menthol gel applied to the forehead effectively reduced headache intensity after acute migraine attacks.

Besides the pleasant aroma of sandalwood, its oil offers several health benefits. Used as a significant therapeutic agent in traditional Chinese medicine, sandalwood oil has demonstrated anti-bacterial, anti-fungal, anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidative benefits, and has been used for thousands of years to calm the mind and relieve anxiety. When used aromatically, sandalwood can promote relaxation allowing for a restful night's sleep. Ayurvedic medicine practitioners in India have long added sandalwood oil to hair tonics to encourage hair growth, and a recent study in Münster, Germany suggests that sandalwood is indeed effective in stimulating hair growth. Laboratory tests that included rubbing sandalwood oil on the scalp showed hair growth within six days.

Exercise caution when applying any essential oil directly to the skin. Most essential oils require a carrier oil or creme and should not be used full strength.

Many of us feel like we need that first cup of coffee soon after our feet hit the floor in the morning. Since coffee beans were first harvested in Ethiopia in the 15th century, the scent has been touted for its ability to sharpen thinking. Several recent studies support that claim. In fact, you may not even have to drink coffee to clear brain fog. Simply sniffing coffee beans can boost focus and promote alertness.



Myrtle's Wild Adventures

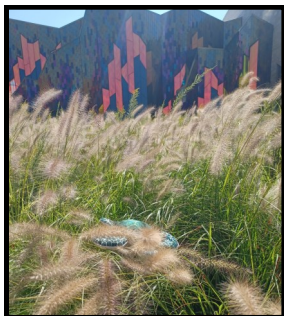
Myrtle has been pretty busy during the past couple of months. We caught up with her in Kansas City where she took advantage of the city's vibrant jazz scene. She spent some time with Kansas City jazz legend Ronnie McFadden and made friends with the club's bar staff (free drinks!).



If you're ever in Kansas City, Myrtle highly recommends making a reservation to attend Ronnie's Reno Club.

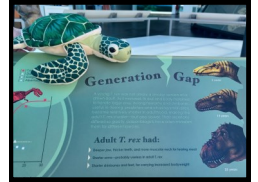
Myrtle found time for some educational adventures and visited the Prairie Fire Museum in Overland Park, Kansas. After a brief delay (when she got lost in the prairie grass)...

Myrtle made her way into the museum where she met up with some dinosaurs.



Myrtle got lost beside the towering *Tyrannosaurus rex*!

Myrtle learned a lot at the museum, mostly than she does NOT want to visit Jurassic Park! Myrtle then traveled from Kansas to North Carolina to spend a few relaxing days on the state's beautiful southern outer banks where she befriended a seagull named Bert.



After a few days of frolicking in the surf, she was off again, on a road trip with Ronnie and Janet Cashwell to attend the annual Buckeye State Chapter Pioneer meeting at Sugarcreek, OH. Any good road trip requires good food, and Myrtle always ate dessert first!



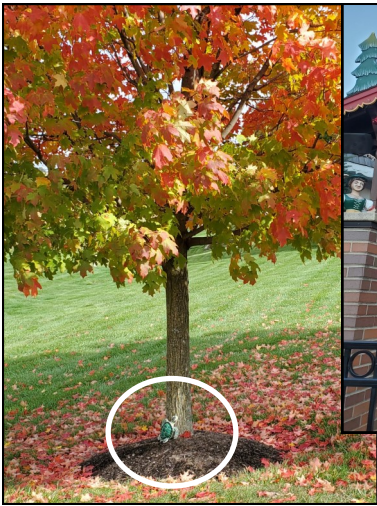
At one point, Myrtle tired of the car ride and attempted to hitch a ride in an Amish buggy. It took some convincing for Janet to convince her that she'd get there quicker in the car. Once there, Myrtle had a fabulous time visiting with her Buckeye friends.



Despite the fact that Myrtle's journeys are really more of a turtle-napping, she's enjoyed visiting with her Pioneer companions. Pictured left with Myrtle are Sandi and Harold Hayes.

Pictured right, Myrtle is with Janet Holliday-Cashwell, JoAnn Esposito never knew Myrtle was there! Stay tuned for future updates on Myrtle the Turtle's wild adventures!

More of Myrtle's Wild Adventures



Taking time to enjoy the fall foliage.



Visiting the largest cuckoo clock in the world, located in Sugarcreek, OH, also known as "Little Switzerland."



Helping with the decorations for Carotol Club's Annual Convention



Making new friends while overseeing Carotol's food pantry donations.



It's Halloween!!!!



Catching a ride....



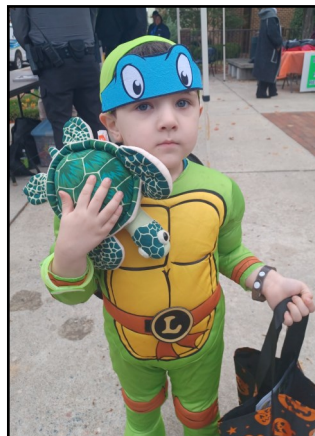
Drop 'em off here folks.



Taking Carotol's Margaritaville™ themed convention a little too seriously.



I'm Anna from Frozen!



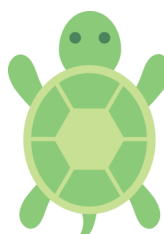
I found a real life Ninja!!!!



But officer, I can explain!!!!



Don't have much to say, do ya?



You trick and I'll treat!



How Well do You Know your ITPA?

By now, you've seen hierarchical charts in past Pioneer Connection issues to know that Pioneers are typically affiliated with a particular "club" and that clubs tier up to state chapters, although the membership for some Pioneers is directly at the "chapter" level. Pioneer membership at the chapter level generally occurs when Pioneers whose club has disbanded want to remain in good standing as an ITPA member. The "chapters" tier up to a region (the ITPA concurrently consists of four regions, which are supported by a regional vice president).

Clubs operate independently and have their own set of officers and directors who serve on the club board, but they also operate in conjunction with the state chapter and with the national ITPA. Often times, Pioneers who serve their club in an officer or director capacity often serve on the board for their state chapter. Those individuals also have the opportunity to serve on the national ITPA board. In short, there are a lot of positions to be filled at the club, chapter, regional and national level, and each of those positions are important ones! And of course, the position of ITPA Pioneer member is incredibly important!

It's only because of faithful ITPA Pioneers that our organization has been able to carry out its mission of serving our communities for more than 100 years! That's quite an accomplishment for any organization, but of course it's not surprising because we all know that telecommunications folks are good folks!

So just how well do you know your ITPA? Want to test your knowledge? (Hint: you can find answers to some of these questions on our website: <https://nationalitpa.com>. Past Pioneer Connections magazines hold the answers to some of the questions.

Answers will be provided in the January 2024 Pioneer Connection.

1. What year was the ITPA established?
2. What does the acronym "ITPA" mean?
3. What is the ITPA dedicated to?
4. How many foundations are affiliated with the ITPA, and what are the names of those foundations?
5. How many individuals have been inducted into the Telephone Hall of Fame?
6. Who were the 2023 Hall of Fame inductees?
7. How many annual spring assemblies has the ITPA hosted?
8. What is the tax exempt classification of the ITPA under IRS rules?
9. When are annual membership fees due?
10. Who is the current ITPA president?
11. Who plans the ITPA's annual spring assembly?
12. How is the location for the annual ITPA spring assembly determined?
13. Name the 2023 ITPA mascot.
14. What is the purpose of the ITPA mascot?
15. What is this year's national ITPA project called?
16. Who is the new ITPA Executive Director?
17. How can YOU be more involved with the ITPA?

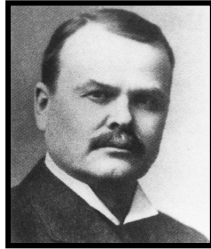
The ITPA Needs FRIENDS!

The ITPA welcomes new members under the new category "Friends of Pioneers." Members who join under the "Friends of Pioneers" category are not required to have any direct affiliation, either present or past, with the telecommunications industry, but must be sponsored by an active member who is at least 21 years old and in good standing with the ITPA. Friends of Pioneers can vote and hold office after their first year of membership. Friends of Pioneers are welcomed and encouraged to participate in all activities sponsored by local chapters, clubs and the National Association. Annual dues are \$30. All active Pioneers are challenged to find a friend!

Membership applications can be downloaded and printed by visiting the ITPA website at: [APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP \(nationalitpa.com\)](https://nationalitpa.com)

Looking Back ... Telephone Hall of Fame

Theodore Gary was the fifth of sixteen individuals inducted into the ITPA's Telephone Hall of Fame in 1965. Gary was inducted posthumously, having deceased in 1952. Gary began his telephony career in 1897 with the purchase of an exchange in Macon, Missouri.



Gary soon began acquiring other operations and his company began operating as "Theodore Gary and Company." That company ultimately merged with GTE in 1955, at which time Gary had built a world-wide organization from a single exchange company. At the time of the merger, Gary's company was providing service in 15 states and in Italy, Belgium, Yugoslavia, Australia, South America, Dominican Republic, Haiti, England, Philippines, and Canada.

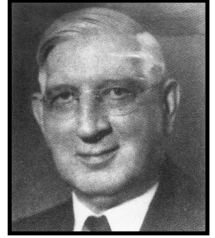
Gary notably coordinated the consolidation of the Kansas City Home and Bell Telephone in Kansas City which, at that time was the largest physical consolidation.

Gary was an esteemed member of the "Committee of Seven," which was comprised of individuals who negotiated with Bell to obtain the first Bell recognition for independent telephone manufacturers.

In 1908, he served as President of USITA. He was instrumental in bringing before Congress the principle that telephone companies were common carriers.

Gary was active in Missouri State government affairs. He was the founder of the Macon Hospital and Macon Public Library, served as a Trustee of The Oakwood Cemetery and Missouri Historical Society, and he wrote articles which were published by The Saturday Evening Post, Hand Book of Macon, Telephony and The American Historical Society.

Herman E. Hageman, the sixth ITPA Telephone Hall of Fame inductee, was also inducted in 1965.



Hageman's Independent telephone industry career spanned 61 years. After graduating from Ohio Wesleyan Univ. in 1903, he began working with Lorain Telephone Company in Ohio as a collector and bookkeeper. Hageman rose through the ranks and became Secretary, General Manager, President and finally Chairman of the Board in 1960, which office he held until his death in 1964 at the age of 82.

Hageman served four years as the president of the Ohio Independent Telephone Association. He was a director, vice president and a member of the executive committee of USITA.

Hageman also served as president of the Lorain Chamber of Commerce, and was on the board of directors for Goodwill Industries, Lorain National Bank, Lorain County Development committee and St. Joseph's Hospital.

Hageman was extremely active in Methodist Church affairs. He was recognized in "Who's Who" at both the national and international levels. During World War II, he served on the National Defense Board and Defense Communications Commission.

Hageman made profound contributions to the telecommunications industry in the form of ship-to-shore communications with freighters on the Great Lakes. In the mid 1930s the idea to set up ship-to-shore communications with the lake freighters was born. For a few years no more than four lake ships had the radios as they covered only a short distance. Once a ship was up in Lake Superior and the upper part of Lake Huron, the Lorain station could not be heard.

As Lorain Telephone Company president, Hageman and several others developed an idea for setting up high-frequency sets to cover the Great Lake area. Once the service was implemented, other lake freighters sought out the new radiotelephone service.

The Telephone Hall of Fame was founded in 1965 to recognize individuals who made valuable contributions not only to their company, but to the telecommunications industry at large. It is a forum where excellence is rewarded by colleagues, employers and leaders in the industry.

