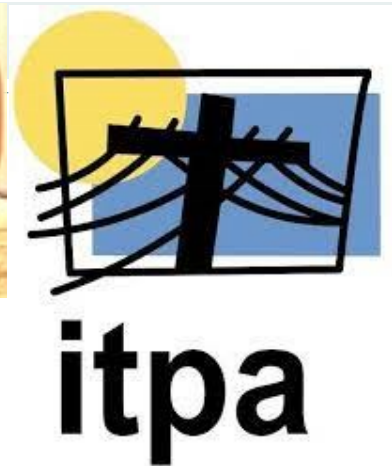




Carotel Club / Tar Heel Chapter  
August 2024 Newsletter  
Issue 11



## ANNOUNCING....

### H. DAIL HOLDERNESS, SR. MEMORIAL

# CAROLINA TELEPHONE & TELEGRAPH REUNION GOLF TOURNAMENT

Friday, October 4, 2024  
Cotton Valley Golf Course  
Tarboro, NC

Tee off at 12 noon - Superball format

Not interested in playing golf? Join us for the social & meal beginning at 6:00 p.m. for \$20

\$75 per player includes Lunch from Jersey Mike's Social & meal catered by Abrams BBQ at 6:00 p.m.

Winners awarded in four handicap brackets 50/50 drawing to benefit Tarboro Community Outreach

Open to CT&T, United, Sprint, Embarq and CenturyLink retirees and employees. Relatives are invited to play in memory of deceased employees.

Email handicap to butchcannon7@hotmail.com and send check to Butch Cannon, 702 Salem Lane, Tarboro, NC 27886 or send Venmo to Patricia-Cannon-7 - Deadline to register is 9/6/24

Questions? call Butch at 252-469-9616

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### SAVE THE DATES

**Last Tuesday of each Month**  
Wake Forest Retiree Breakfast  
Briggs Restaurant, Wake Forest, NC

**August 27, 2024**  
6:30 PM  
Carotel Board of Directors Meeting

**October 11-12, 2024**  
Annual Carotel Convention  
Crystal Coast Oceanfront Hotel  
(formerly The Inn at Pine Knoll Shores)  
Pine Knoll Shores, NC

**November 8-10, 2024**  
ITPA National Board Meeting  
ITPA National Office & Museum  
Hinesville, Georgia

**Anyone who stops learning is old, whether they're 20 or 80.**

## TAR HEEL CHAPTER ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

The ITPA Tar Heel Chapter's Annual Assembly will be held on August 23-24 in Aberdeen at the Hampton Inn & Suites, 200 Columbus Drive, Aberdeen. All activities at the hotel will be held in the Azalea Room. Registration is \$60 per person, payable at the registration table when checking in.



The last date to reserve a room at the special group rate was August 2nd, but you can still come!

This Elvis themed weekend is packed with fun and opportunities to visit old friends. On Friday, Elvis and Patsy Cline, along with the rest of our Tar Heel Chapter Pioneers will entertain residents at Scotia Village in Laurinburg, NC at 1PM. Assembly registration will begin at 3PM in the hotel lobby, hosted by Carol Harrell.

The annual board meeting will convene at 5PM. A 6:30 PM social will be followed by dinner at 7PM. At 8:30 we'll be at the movies, starring Elvis Presley!

Saturday will offer the opportunity for a relaxing morning and lunch is on your own. Attendees are asked to bring their auction items to the hotel's Azalea Room at 1PM, along with non-perishable foods for a local food pantry and toiletries for The Adult Center of Lexington.

At 2PM we'll play some Elvis Bingo, followed by a live auction at 3PM.

The Saturday night social hour begins at 6:30 PM followed by dinner at 7PM. We'll hold the annual members' meeting at 8PM and our annual scholarship recipients will be announced.

We have it on good authority that Elvis will be in the building at 8:30PM or sooner! And the fun will continue.

## CAROTEL FALL CONVENTION

Carotel's Paris-themed fall convention will be held a bit earlier in the season this year on **October 11-12** at the **Crystal Coast Oceanfront Hotel** (formerly known as The Inn at Pine Knoll Shores). October temperatures at the Crystal Coast are generally mild, with highs in the mid 70s, so you may want to come a day earlier, or stay longer to enjoy the beautiful fall weather on the beach.

Our planning committee is busy planning our Paris themed convention so that the weekend will be enjoyable and memorable for everyone.



**You may call to reserve your hotel room now.** To receive the special room rate of \$115 plus tax, ask for the **Carotel Club** or **ITPA Carotel Club group rate.** Every room is ocean front with easy beach access.

The convention registration fees will be announced by early September, and we are working hard to keep registration fees comparable to past year's rates. Registration forms will be available soon.

All ITPA Pioneers are invited to this annual gathering, but you don't have to be a Pioneer to attend. We'd love to reconnect with old telephone friends.

*"J'espère te revoir bientôt"*

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT SHINES ON HAL MILLS

This month's member spotlight shines on a Carotel Pioneer who resides in the seafood capitol of the world! Meet Hal Mills and his wife Cheryl, of Calabash, NC. Calabash isn't a long drive from the CT&T territories that Hal traveled for work for nearly 40 years!



Hal's foray into telephony started in December 1959 when Hal accepted a job in Fayetteville as an installer-repairer. In October 1963 he transferred to Chadburn as a sole representative in the installation/repair department where he handled the Chadburn and Bladenboro offices. In 1964, he was transferred to the Whiteville office as the first PBX person to work in the Whiteville district.

In 1969, Hal's career took him to the assignment world, and he served as a union representative during that time. He didn't love the assignment job, though, and when he was contacted by the division manager about an outside job, he gladly accepted the change, and he joined the line worker crew in 1973.

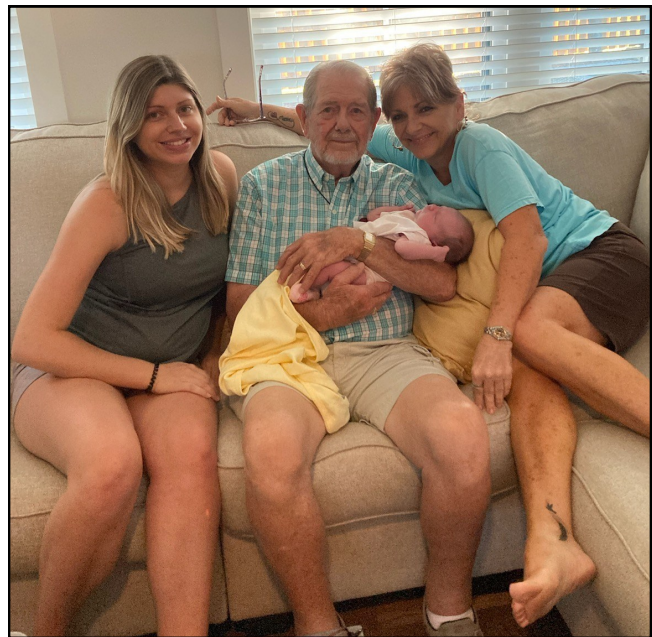
Hal became the head craftsman on the line crew in the mid 70's and worked there until January 1987. During that time, Hal's wife Cheryl worked as a home health nurse in Robeson County and the couple lived in Tabor City. Cheryl's closest patient was 51 miles from her home, and by 1987 she was more than ready to reduce her commuting hours. Hal was able to return to Fayetteville as a cable splicer and after Cheryl swapped territories with a co-worker, she

typically didn't have to drive more than 10 miles to visit her patients.

Hal continued to work in Fayetteville until he retired in November 1999 with nearly 40 years of telephony service. Cheryl retired three years ago.

Hal and his first wife, Margaret had two daughters, Melody (Stephens) and Susanne (Leggette). Melody blessed Hal with two grandchildren whom he has loved dearly. Hal's grandson Matthew was killed in an auto accident in 2019 at the age of 18.

Hal's granddaughter Maggie McKenzie made Hal a great grandfather three years ago when his great granddaughter Avery was born. Maggie is expecting a baby boy in the next few months and the family is eager to welcome him into the family.



*Hal holds great granddaughter Avery, with granddaughter Maggie (left) and daughter Melody (right).*

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT—HAL MILLS (CONT'D)

Hal met Cheryl through mutual friends in 1983. Although both were from Tabor City originally, they didn't know one another until the friend insisted they meet. Cheryl was a nurse at Columbus County Hospital.



The wife of one of Hal's good friends worked with Cheryl and they were both eager for Hal and Cheryl to meet. Both finally agreed to meet at the home of their mutual friends and Hal said of that meeting, "I went to check her out and to get a free meal." The couple found they had plenty to talk about because while their paths hadn't crossed in their hometown, Cheryl knew Hal's parents and several other family members, and Hal found that he knew Cheryl's parents and a number of her relatives. The couple began dating and they were married in March 1985.

Hal also has a son who formally joined the Mills family as a young adult. Russell Dean Barker learned in 1993 from his older brother that he also had two sisters. As a freshman at the Air Force Academy, Dean contacted his sisters while on temporary assignment in Fort Lee, Virginia. Melody and Suzanne arranged to pick Dean up for a weekend visit, and when they told Hal about the planned visit, Hal asked them to find out whether Dean would be willing for him to drive Dean back to Virginia.

Dean's initial visit with his newly found family members was a great experience for all of them, and the trip back to Virginia proved to be a bonding experience for father and son. Before the visit ended Dean asked Hal what he should call him. It didn't take long for Dean to tell Hal he'd like to call him "daddy." Hal enthusiastically told Dean that's what he had been hoping for.

Dean became an integral member of the Mills family, and in 1996 Dean legally changed his surname to "Mills." Dean and his wife Jennel have given Hal and Cheryl four more grandchildren: Brooklyn 8, Mason 6, Mackenzie 2, and Elaina who was born in February of this year.

Cheryl's biological child, Julia, was adopted by Hal after they married. Julia and husband Jamey Steffen have one daughter, Amelia Caroline. Julia blessed the family with more grandchildren in an extraordinary fashion. During college, Julia donated eggs to a fertility center. The fortunate parents who received Julia's eggs told their daughter, Samantha, that she was a test tube baby when she was about ten years old. Samantha later researched her biological roots and she found Cheryl's dad, who is now 101 years young!

Through that connection, Samantha was ultimately able to locate Julia when she was a senior at Campbell University. She wrote a letter to Julia expressing her desire to meet. Julia eagerly met Samantha, and Samantha was quickly assimilated into the family. Hal and Cheryl both have been delighted to add Samantha to their list of grandkids.



*Hal and Cheryl with granddaughter Samantha.*

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT—HAL MILLS (CONT'D)

Hal has been a faithful Carotel Club member for many years. He and Cheryl have been long time attendees of our annual Carotel convention when schedules and health have allowed.



*Above: Hal and Cheryl visit with fellow Pioneers at a recent Carotel fall convention.*

Hal recently reminisced about his working days and the lasting friendship he formed with Ralph Johnson, who passed away earlier this year. The two couples enjoyed catching up whenever they attended Carotel's fall conventions.

Hal and Cheryl both have recently had some health concerns and haven't been able to connect with other Pioneers as much as they would have liked. In 2022, after we resumed our conventions after COVID-19, both Hal and Cheryl were ill.

Cheryl was diagnosed with stomach cancer in September 2023 and was unable to attend that fall convention. After a series of chemotherapy treatments that ended in February, Cheryl had surgery this past March at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York, New York. Cheryl remained in New York for two weeks after surgery for follow-up visits.

The surgery was complex, and Cheryl's recovery has been a daily challenge, but Hal reports that Cheryl is improving some each day now. We have missed Hal and Cheryl in recent years, and we wish for them better days ahead.



*Cheryl enjoys time by the water.*



*Above: Hal and Cheryl catch up with old Pioneer friends, Ralph and Diane Johnson during a prior "Dress to Impress" Carotel function.*

*Left: Cross Talk magazine excerpt featuring the reunion of friends at a Carotel convention (circa 1990s).*

acquaintances were made. They danced, they dined, they laughed, they played. Dance music on both Friday and Saturday nights helped set the stage for much of the socializing, while the offering of heavy hors d'oeuvres whetted appetites. Saturday presented a day full of golf and hobby and craft competitions, a barbecue and fried chicken lunch, and bingo, in addition to the electric atmosphere of a live band.

Harris, president; Bradley Cooper, vice president; Carol Harrell, treasurer; Carolyn Dixon, secretary; and Lough Leane Baker, assistant secretary. The new directors are Bill Joiner, Herb Henderson, Mike Outlaw and Ty Hart.

#### Fund-raising

The convention also gives the Pioneers another shot at raising more money for some of their many worthy causes. A total of \$1,850 raised through

**Woodcraft**—1st, Ralph Johnson Jr. of Kill Devil Hills; 2nd, Jerry Sanders of Rocky Mount; 3rd, Hubert Fields of Tarboro.

**Photography**—1st and 2nd, Harold Cain of Fayetteville.

**Miscellaneous**—1st, Edna Webster of Clinton; 2nd, Susie Thornton of Clinton; 3rd, Betsy Sanderson of Rocky Mount.

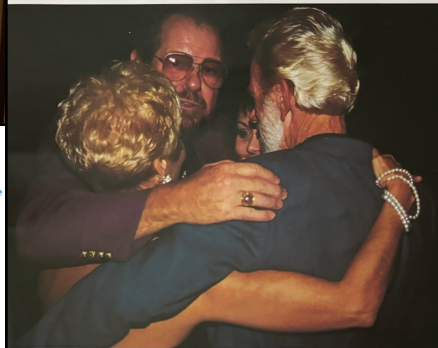
**Counted Cross-Stitch**—1st, Tonie Owens of Tarboro; 2nd, Peggy Sawyer of Kill Devil Hills; and 3rd, Ethel Mitchell of Fayetteville.

**Needlepoint/Embroidery**—1st, Ethel Mitchell; 2nd, Anne Cratch of Tarboro. (No 3rd place award given.)

**Sewing/Tatting/Quilting**—1st, Mary Naron of Rocky Mount; 2nd, Marantha Lassiter of Fayetteville; 3rd, Catherine Powers, Wake Forest.

**Knitting/Crochet**—1st, Murrell Holloman of Ahoskie; 2nd, Kathleen Wadsworth of Leggett; 3rd, Peggy Sawyer.

**Art**—1st and 2nd, Leila Miller; 3rd, Zelia Sneed of Kingston.



*From left, good friends Diane Johnson, Hal and Cheryl Mills, and Ralph Johnson Jr. have a huddle hug showing their delight at seeing one another again.*

## RETIREE GATHERINGS

The Clinton retiree lunch group gathered on Thursday, June 20th at Rose Hill Restaurant in Rose Hill, NC. You're sure to recognize several of the attendees!



1. Danny Baldwin 2. Wesley Chapman 3. Ronnie Cashwell  
4. Jimmy Thornton 5. Mrs. Sibbett 6. Janet Cashwell 7. Doug Sibbett



L to R

Carl Tyndall, Harry Caraway, Neil Barbee, Greg Jones, Dennis Stroud

The next Clinton gathering will be held in early December. Retirees in the Wake Forest area meet on the last Tuesday of each month at 8:30 a.m. at Briggs Restaurant in Wake Forest.

***We'd love to share stories and photos from your retiree gatherings.***

***Send your information to [dterry625@gmail.com](mailto:dterry625@gmail.com) if you'd like to share notice of upcoming events or photos from past events!***

## CONGRATULATIONS



Congratulations to Mike and Jean Outlaw who celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on July 3rd.

## IN MEMORY



Ralph Lewis Johnson, Jr. of Jamesville, NC passed away at 88 years of age on March 15, 2024. Born on February 6, 1936, Ralph was the son of the late Ralph Lewis Johnson, Sr. and Minnie Peace Johnson and was preceded in death by his son, Ralph Lewis Johnson, III; sisters, Julia Burgess, Pat Keeter, and Sue Batchelor.

Ralph, a U.S. Navy veteran, was a retired PBX Repairman with Carolina Telephone and Telegraph Company. He was a member of Jamesville First Baptist Church.

Ralph is survived by his wife, Diane Lewis Johnson of Jamesville, and his daughter, Penny Lewis Johnson of Nags Head.

Ralph and Diane were long time supporters of our annual Carotel conventions and Ralph worked closely with several of our Carotel club members during his telephony career. Health issues haven't allowed them to attend our annual gatherings. They have been missed, and our thoughts and prayers are with Ralph's family.

### MEMORIALS

*We would like to acknowledge the passing of fellow Carotel members in our quarterly newsletters. Several telco Facebook pages are updated with death notices and obituary links for those who had an affiliation with a particular telephone company, but we often don't know whether the deceased was affiliated with the Carotel club. We would value the opportunity to begin keeping the Carotel Pioneer family briefly informed when we lose a fellow Pioneer and ask for your help in notifying us. We would like to be consistent with the information, so please provide first/last name (or nickname if appropriate), city of residence, date of death, and last position held with the company. You may also provide a link to a full obituary.*

# CAROTEL / TAR HEEL CHAPTER OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

## 2023-24 CAROTEL OFFICERS/DIRECTORS

**President:** Brenda Smith

**Vice President and Immediate**

**Past President:** Janet Holliday-Cashwell

**Treasurer:** Carol Harrell

**Secretary:** Mary McLamb

**Directors:** Ray Brock , Andy Davis, Wendy Davis, Chester Harrell, Darlene House, Mary McLamb, Larry Newsome, Judy Satterwhite, Doug Sibbett, Barbara Smithson, Darlene Terry  
**Directors Emeritus:** Ronnie Cashwell, Carol Harrell, Mike Outlaw

### **Committees:**

#### **Scholarship Committee**

Carol Harrell, Chair

Janet Holliday-Cashwell, Brenda Smith

#### **By-Laws Committee**

Ronnie Cashwell, Chair

Ray Brock, Carol Harrell, Mike Outlaw, Doug Sibbett

#### **Entertainment Committee**

Ronnie Cashwell, Chair

#### **Public Relations**

Darlene Terry

## 2023-24 TAR HEEL CHAPTER OFFICERS/ DIRECTORS

**President :** Ronnie Cashwell

**Immediate Past President:** Carolyn Thompson

**Vice President:** Darlene Terry

### **Co-Secretary/Treasurers:**

Carol Harrell

Janet Holliday-Cashwell

**Auditor:** Bill Twyman

**Directors:** Janet Holliday-Cashwell, Danny Dennis, Nat Goss, Evelyn Hayes, Jim Jolly, Mike Outlaw, Martha Poole, Brenda Smithson

### **Committee Chairs:**

Carolyn Thompson-Publicity/Historical

Carol Harrell-Scholarship

Ronnie Cashwell-Entertainment

*The Carotel Club is a member of the Tar Heel Chapter in Region 3 of the Independent Telecommunications Pioneer Association (ITPA). All Carotel Pioneers are invited and encouraged to participate in our state chapter activities and events.*

## Did you know...



*The national ITPA was founded in 1920 by members of the independent telecommunications industry as a way to serve the communities they lived and worked in. The Carotel Club was formed on July 1, 1971 under the previously existing Tar Heel Chapter. The club initially consisted of members who were employed by Carolina Telephone and Telegraph Company and required 15 years of service as a condition of membership. Over the years, the club's by-laws were revised, as companies were merged and acquired, to welcome Sprint and Embarq telecommunications associates, and the required length of service was reduced. In recent years, a new membership category was adopted by the ITPA to allow "Friends of Pioneers" to become Pioneers. And we need new members! Invite someone today. Membership application can be found at: [ITPA New Member Application Form.docx \(live.com\)](#)*