

**NEW OUTLOOK**



Atlantic Coast  
Chapter #133

Volume 10  
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## Virginia Council

### FINAL NEWSLETTER

#### **IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL VIRGINIA COUNCIL PIONEERS**

Fellow Pioneers:

After considerable discussion and reflection, the small remaining group of active Telecom Pioneers in Richmond have decided to cease operation of the Atlantic Coast, Chapter 133 of New Outlook Pioneers. The North Carolina Council has already been closed for about two years and the Chesapeake (Baltimore) Council closed earlier in 2018. We, in the remaining Virginia Council, expect to complete the process early in 2019. Declining membership, loss of key members, and reduced energy of the aging population are among the factors that make us realize the organization cannot continue to operate in a viable manner.

As you might imagine, the closing of a part of a national volunteer organization like ours requires that a certain protocol be followed. This includes proper disposal of any Council funds and assurance that all current Life Members of the Chapter be moved to the national New Outlook membership.

While this is our final newsletter, it is important to note that we had another productive year in 2018. Activity in distribution of grant monies to organizations we support as well as activity in the scholarship program is summarized in our President's Report. In closing the Chapter, it is appropriate that we reflect back and highlight some of the more memorable activities and accomplishments over the years in Richmond as summarized in the Council History section.

We are forever grateful to all those that have provided financial support for our activities. Your contributions provided the funding that allowed us to continue operation over the years.

Dave Hought – President, Chapter 133 New Outlook Pioneers

**New Outlook Pioneers  
Atlantic Coast Chapter #133  
Virginia Council**

**Officers**

President..... Oscar Covington  
Vice President..... Vickie Anderson

Treasurer..... Bob Whiteman

Secretary..... Charlotte Willhoit

**Committee Heads**

Annual Reunion..... Oscar Covington

Battlefield Park..... Bob Whiteman

Council Historian..... Gladys Washington

VA Ditty Bags..... Sheila Schone &  
Vickie Anderson

Hug-A-Bears and Heart Pillows..... Fran Hannah

In Touch..... Jane Haught

Jo Kruchten Motivation To Read..... Fran Hannah

Junior Fire Safety..... Richard Hannah  
Scholarships..... Oscar Covington

## PRESIDENTS CORNER

Our community involvement during 2018 covered many areas. These areas included the following:

1. We were involved in early childhood education through the Jo Kruchten Motivation to Read initiative, Henrico County Junior Fire Safety program, and support for the Coal Pit Learning Center.
2. Support was provided to the Housing Families First program to help reduce homelessness.
3. We were involved in reducing Hunger by supporting the Stop Hunger Now program at the Corinth Methodist Church and Virginia FeedMore. In addition to a cash contribution to help the Corinth Church with the purchase of food, Pioneer members and partners spent the morning of October 6, 2018 along with other volunteers at the church, helping to pack more than 23,000 meals that were to be sent to underdeveloped countries and other areas.
4. The preservation of our history was supported by the work done with the Petersburg Battleground Foundation.
5. Other projects included: the production and donation of Hug-A-Bears and Heart Pillows; providing scholarships for students with disabilities; and Camp Alkulana, a camp for inner-city youths.

We have continued to live up to the motto of the TeleCom Pioneers', which is "Answering the Call of those in Need".

Now that we are into the process of disbanding our Virginia Council and this will be our last newsletter, allow me to reflect on the past for a moment. I want pay a special tribute to some individuals who played key roles in setting the course for our council through the years and who are no longer with us. First there was **Jo Kruchten**, who, as I understand it, led the effort to begin the James River Council of the Telephone Pioneers shortly after the Richmond plant opened. She was one of the leaders of the motivation to read program for headstart students. **Bill Schone** brought value to our local Council and to the Atlantic Coast Chapter. He served many years in the position of treasurer for both units at the same time. Then there was **Henry Janowitz**. The amount of time Henry worked with us was too short. However, during his active years, he gave us new life and a new outlet with his informative newsletters. **Don Sage** played an important role as well. He was committed to Pioneering and held several positions at the local and national levels. Another person who departed from us just a few weeks ago, was **Lonnie Brandon**. Lonnie was a true volunteer fireman and was instrumental in our council beginning a longtime partnership with the Henrico County Fire Department and the establishment of the fire safety program in the County schools for all first, second, and third grade students.

I extend our sincere thanks to these individuals and to those few members who have continued to be active to the present time. Also, our thanks go out to all of you who have supported our efforts in various ways over the years. Your support gave a tremendous boost to our efforts and have encouraged us to keep on pushing on.

*Oscar Covington* - President, Virginia Council

## A LOOK BACK AT THE HISTORY OF THE VIRGINIA COUNCIL OF NEW OUTLOOK PIONEERS

As we close out the operation of our Chapter of the New Outlook Pioneers, we look back and reflect on the history of its creation and highlight some of the many projects accomplished over these years. Creation of our Council took place at the Richmond Works of Western Electric in the late 1970's when our Virginia/West Virginia Council was formed as one of the units (James River Council) in the George Washington Chapter of AT&T Pioneers.

From the beginning, some of the activity embraced included legacy projects done nationwide by all Pioneer groups. These included the making of Hug-A-Bears and Heart Pillows, participation in nationwide recycling programs, support for Feed More and Stop Hungry Now charity food drives, contact with ill Pioneers, participation in the Salvation Bell Ringing program, and participation as a group in numerous walk-a-thons and various fund-raising events.

Over the years many programs embraced were specific to the Richmond Club. Some of these that became on-going charitable efforts included Toys for Tots, support for Ronald McDonald House and Southside Child Development Center, support home for abused mothers (Housing Families First) and Coal Pit Learning Center, along with creation of "ditty bags" for veterans at the Veterans Administration Hospital. An important program initiated by one of our original members was the Jo Krutchen Motivation-to-Read program that has provided thousands of books for children in Head Start classes throughout the Richmond Metro area. A very successful program developed by our members and recognized nationally is the Fire Safety Program for elementary students in grades 1 to 3. Even though our Council is closing, the program will continue as provided by the Henrico Fire Department.

For several years, our Council jointly conducted the Virginia Games at Montvale, Va. with Verizon (Bell Atlantic) Pioneers. These games were participated in by young people from North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, and Maryland who were physically challenged.

Particularly since the plant closing, the Pioneers have organized and sponsored dinners, picnics, and other social events for former employees.

Looking back, some of the more memorable times were the activities and projects that often took us outdoors to utilize our members building and maintenance skills in construction, painting, clean-up, etc. These undertakings provided the members opportunities for camaraderie outside of work that developed into many life-long friendships. While not possible to document them all, summaries of several follow:

1. Montpelier Restoration - - Our council had various projects at this site including fence painting, greenhouse restoration, shrubbery planting, and other landscaping task.
2. Map Painting - Dozens of 20' X 30', five-color maps have been painted on the paved surfaces of elementary schools in Richmond and Henrico County. Typically, a group of from 6 to 10 spent up to a 7- hour day painting a map. Many maps as old as 25 years or more are still visible.

3. VA Hospital Gazebo – In 1990, the Council provided all materials and completed the construction of a gazebo for use by the patients of McGuire Veterans Administration. While the veterans have enjoyed it for years, the gazebo has held up well – except for the normal aging of the roof shingles. In 2012, we replaced the original shingles with new 30-year asphalt. Hopefully these will last another 25 years or so.
4. Petersburg National Battlefield Park – Many projects have been completed over the years in support of this Civil War Park. The more important ones include:
  - (a) Rebuilding the Soldiers Hut.
  - (b) Renovation of the Sutler Store Building. The run-down building was rebuilt and remade into a representative Civil War Office's Headquarters.
  - (c) Renovation of Shade Structures. Structures using natural tree branches were built to provide shade for Park Rangers and visitors on hot summer days.
  - (d) Five Forks Footpath Bridges. Bridges, designed by the Pioneers, were constructed of pressure treated lumber at the Park's headquarters maintenance shop. The bridges were then carried to and installed at the Five Forks area in Dinwiddie County.
  - (e) Fort Stedman Footpath Bridge. A bridge along with adjacent stairs was designed and constructed to provide the means to cross a small stream on a path connecting Colquitt's Salient to Fort Stedman.
  - (f) Pole Barn Renovation. A dilapidated pole barn on Park property was completely rehabilitated to provide shelter on the east side of the Park.
  - (g) Crater Entrance Walkway. A raised walkway comprised of a treated lumber foundation covered with Trex decking was built to provide a dry walk from the observation deck to the Crater entrance. The walkway was designed and installed by the Pioneers.
  - (h) Grant's Headquarter Repair. A complete re-caulking of Grant's Headquarter at the City Point location was done.
  - (i) City Point Building Repairs. The flooring on the porch of the Nadara House was replaced and painted. In addition, the siding on the Smoke House was replaced.
  - (j) Renovation of City Point Boardwalk and Gazebo. All the weather-damaged handrails on the City Point boardwalk were removed and replaced with new pressure-treated rails. Along with applying a new coat of stain on the adjacent gazebo, the roofing was completely replaced.
  - (k) Replaced major sections of exterior siding on the City Point smoke house.

Over the years that these many Park projects were completed, the Council contributed thousands of dollars that were used primarily for purchase of construction materials.

5. The Council organized and got Management approval to promote a lunch-buddy program with Montville Elementary School. On a set schedule, a bus would come to the Laburnum Avenue plant and transport employees to the school to have lunch and spent mentoring time with the students. In addition, Junior Achievement courses were taught by volunteer employees.
6. Port Isobel Project - Pioneers' Years of Service with Chesapeake Bay Foundation -  
The Fall of 2014 marked 25 years of service for Telephone Pioneers supporting maintenance/facilities initiatives with Chesapeake Bay Foundation on the small island of Port Isobel, about 1/2 mile north of Tangier Island. Port Isobel was gifted to Chesapeake Bay Foundation in 1988, and CBF decided to incorporate the island into its education program.

The first Pioneer group ventured to Port Isobel in 1989, and a big project that first weekend was to plant marsh grasses along the shore line to help alleviate beach erosion on the Northeast side of the small 250-acre island. Over the years, and with much AT&T/Lucent Pioneer involvement, as well as Verizon support, the group has done every type of facilities work imaginable from replacing dock boards/decking, replacing roofs, installing hot water heaters and ceiling fans, installing stone and tile flooring, repairing island equipment (tractors, backhoes), to staining cedar siding. However, the most unique project was the underwater installation of a telephone line from Port Isobel to Tangier Island. This involved fabrication of a heavy-duty metal cable-laying "sled" that one could ride on behind a boat that would dig down into the sand to bury over the cable under water. An AT&T Pioneer member (formerly from Baltimore Works but currently living in West Virginia) connected the lines to the telephone pedestals at both ends. The underwater cable was donated from the local Bell Atlantic telephone company. Over the years, the Pioneers have run cables to other buildings, utilizing the greater capacity of the underwater cable that was installed. Also during that time, they have also maintained the island's phones, correcting periodic problems caused by island storms.

A core AT&T/Lucent Richmond team would routinely take the trip - which averaged about once monthly during Spring/Summer months. This team would most often be accompanied by retirees from AT&T Baltimore Works who now lived in Appomattox and West Virginia as well as a core team from the former AT&T Turner Road location. Due to transportation issues with getting folks 17 miles out into the middle of the Chesapeake Bay, a CBF boat would pick the Pioneer team up from Reedville on a Friday afternoon and take them back across the Bay on Sunday afternoon. Whereas there was a "chore" list to be accomplished during the weekend, the Pioneers group always found time for a little relaxation after the day's activities and would do so by cooling off in the water by the dock, or fishing from the end of the pier. There was always the opportunity for food and fellowship.

Sadly, with the decline in the number of Pioneer participants, and changes in island oversight within CBF, the group took their last trip over to Port Isobel in 2014. Twenty-five years after planting the first marsh grasses, to watching the pine tree forest erode into the Bay, to upgrading and updating many of the buildings on the island, the small group of dedicated Pioneers left that Fall day in 2014 - not really knowing if they would be back but knowing that there was a lot of Pioneer "spirit" left behind.

**In Memoriam**

Ralph Landreth.....December 20, 2017  
Mick Battle.....December 28, 2017  
Ida Benson.....January 29, 2018  
Roy Sheets.....February 16, 2018  
Don Sage.....April 4, 2018  
Tom Fluker.....April 14, 2018  
Ernie Neer.....May 30, 2018  
Alma Fulford.....June 4, 2018  
Edward "Peanut" Wilson.....July 6, 2018  
Rose Constable.....October 7, 2018  
Phyllis Moore.....December 26, 2018  
Roberta Zahradnick.....January 25, 2019  
Mel Pipgras..... January 29, 2019  
Tim Gardner.....February 28, 2019

Mike Johnson.....December 20, 2017  
Andy Suddarth.....January 5, 2018  
Glenda Couch.....February 2, 2018  
Byron Small.....February 26, 2018  
Al Hamilton.....April 10, 2018  
Gary Emrhein.....April 28, 2018  
Gerald Powell.....June 20, 2018  
Joe Murphy.....June 16, 2018  
Patricia Farmer.....July 23, 2018  
Helen Maybush Stanley .....November 1, 2018  
Betty Goodloe.....January 11, 2019  
Lonnie Brandon.....January 26, 2019  
Brenda Holloway..... February 28, 2019  
Vilma Graves.....March 10, 2019

**New Outlook Pioneers**

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Change service Requested