

The
Communicator

Vol. 4, No. 1

January/February 2005



INSIDE:

Clothing/Food Drive • Remembering Edith Roberts • Santa Came to Town

Before moving on to our plans for this New Year, I would like to briefly recap "2004". January began with the 'best of wishes' going out to the retiring General Manager, Mr. Tom Butler, Jr. for all of his years of dedicated service to NHTC. During the spring, we implemented membership consolidations and new voter identification practices in time for a near-record turn out at our Annual Meeting in May. By mid-July we were moving our customer service and administrative functions into our newly constructed office building. In August we welcomed everyone to our Open House and I accepted the responsibilities of becoming your new General Manager. As October approached, the wheels were placed in motion for doubling our internet bandwidth. By year end, it was evident that throughout these changes, everyone had stepped up to the plate and shown great strength and pride in our cooperative.

One ongoing challenge of community interest is the 'drainage issue' on Main Drive and Hayden Street. Even though, several attempts have been made to alleviate the situation, we are not yet satisfied with the direction of the water flow or lack thereof during heavy rains. The architect assures us, he too wants this issued resolved by the end of January '05. We apologize for any inconvenience and truly appreciate everyone's patience during this process.

"2005" is going to be an action packed and eventful year. We, along with everyone in the Telephone Industry, have many challenges and opportunities awaiting us. One exciting topic, which you will be hearing more about, is the additional intralata calling plans that the Alabama Public Service Commission has been

very instrumental in paving the way for. We will give you full details as soon as we have them in place. An extensive article will appear in our March/April Communicator.

Our long range company goal is simply stated, 'Provide Outstanding Customer Service.'

Though it may sound simple, "Providing Outstanding Customer Service" is a massive and complex undertaking. Every question answered, every investment analyzed and every decision made, affects each of you. Not only do we want your experiences with us to be pleasant, we want to provide you with quality for your investment.

To better serve, we are dedicated to learn what our customers want and how to most efficiently provide it. We will be actively seeking customer input, along with educating and preparing ourselves to make critical decisions and develop strategic plans for our future. We already have numerous local training events scheduled in first quarter 2005 for both the employees and for the Board of Directors. We will even be providing some basic computer educational opportunities for our customers to take advantage of as early as April.

Together, we will work for the betterment of our cooperative and our communities. I leave you with a quote attributed to Stephen Grellet. "I expect to pass through this world but once. Any good therefore that I can do, or any kindness that I can show for my fellow-creature, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again." ■



Teresa Hunkapiller
General Manager

New Hope Telephone Cooperative

is a member-owned corporation dedicated to providing communications technology to the residents and businesses of New Hope, Grant and Owens Cross Roads.

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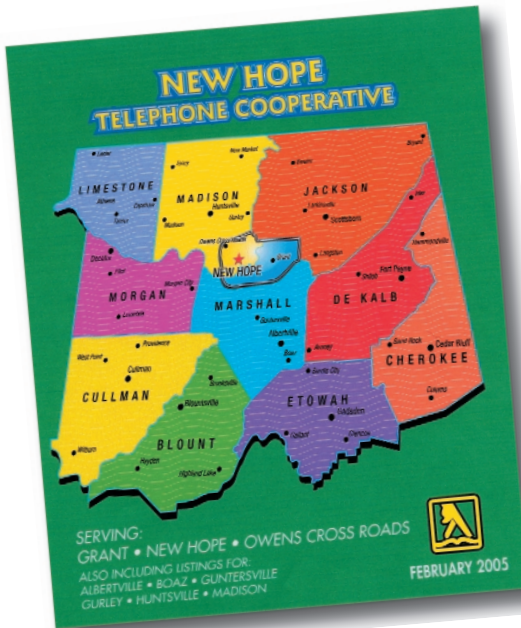
www.nehp.net

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New Hope Telephone by:*



www.WordSouth.com

2005 directory is on the way



Your new telephone directory from New Hope Telephone Cooperative should arrive in the mail soon (by the end of February).

Members should find the directory, with its useful features and attractive design, a helpful resource for home or business.

Remember, don't throw your old phone books away. Put one in a basement or

spare room next to a phone. Keep one in your car for those times on the road when you need a phone number.

If you simply don't need the old phone book, stop by our office and drop it in the recycling bin in the foyer. Thank you for pitching in to help keep old phone books out of the landfills. ■

Tell the Telemarketers

Do Not Call

The most common complaints by consumers are about telemarketing. The federal government established the Do-Not-Call Registry to help consumers avoid unwanted telephone solicitations. Registering your phone number is simple:

By Telephone
1-888-382-1222

By TTY
1-866-260-4236

By Internet
www.donotcall.gov

Remember to register your cell phone numbers, too!

Pay your monthly NHTC phone bill at a local bank

We would like to say "thank you very much" to Peoples State Bank in Grant for accepting telephone payments for our mutual customers in the Grant area for years. We are also grateful that First Bank of the South has also been accepting payments for us for quite some time. This service has been so well received, that both Community Bank and Citizens Bank & Trust in New Hope are both offering our customers the same convenience.

While taking care of your banking needs, you may also pay your telephone bill. The only requirements are that you must pay with the stub provided in your telephone bill and you must pay the full amount printed on the stub. Remember the banks will need a few days to get your payments to us. If you are paying near the late-fee date (20th of each month) or near the cut-off date (last day of each month), you should come into our office to make your payment, to assure yourself of no late penalty and no interruption in your services.

If you take advantage of this wonderful convenience, be sure to thank the kind folks at your local bank who are making this possible. We do still offer payment via bank draft or credit card (MasterCard, Visa, Discover Card). For more information call one of our customer service representatives at 256-723-4211. They will be glad to assist you.

LOCAL HEROES



Josh E. Torres of New Hope is a Lieutenant with the U.S. Marine Corps. He is scheduled for deployment to Iraq in January. A 1995 graduate of New Hope High School, Torres holds a mathematics degree from Auburn University. The nine-year USMC veteran is married to Wendy Celeste. His is a brother to George Torres, and his mother and stepfather are Yazmin Arce-Vidot and Edwin Vidot, Sr., of Owens Cross Roads.

Help us honor our local soldiers

Send us the name, and a photo, of your family member from Grant, New Hope or Owens Cross Roads who is serving our country overseas. Please include the names of their family members, their branch of service and the unit they are assigned to. Send material to New Hope Telephone Cooperative, Attn. Tammy Pritchett, PO Box 452, New Hope, Alabama 35760.



Toys for Tots drive a success

Clothing/food drive goes through next month

Employees of New Hope Telephone Cooperative displayed the true Christmas spirit by working with the Marine Corps Reserves in the annual Toys for Tots drive. Signs in front of the office building promoted the drop-off point, and huge boxes were set up in the lobby to hold donations.

Through the end of February, NHTC is also collecting winter clothing for the needy. You can bring by

items such as coats, gloves, hats, socks, scarves and blankets, as well as non-perishable food items (boxed or canned foods, dried beans, pasta, cereal, etc.) during normal office hours.

Pictured above with toys are (left to right) NHTC employees Steven Campbell, Patsy Martin, Rhonda Russell, Donald Morrison, Nikki Dudley and Phillip Cooper.

New rate plans coming soon

The Alabama Public Service Commission recently approved a plan that provides for expanded local calling areas. This action will allow NHTC to offer new cost-saving plans to its members. Look for details in upcoming issues of this magazine.

Spots available on Cable channels

Reasonably-priced advertising spots are available on several NHTC Cable channels, including Discovery, ESPN, Fox News, Lifetime, TBS, TNT, Weather Channel and USA.

Rates range from \$2 to \$5 per 30-second spot, depending on the time frame in which they appear. Advertis-

ers may also take advantage of special event packages that feature NFL, NASCAR, NCAA sports and NWA.

To discuss how advertising on NHTC's Cable system can benefit your business, contact Ken Whitehead today at Avalon Media Group by calling 256-381-7840.

Edith Roberts touched many lives through her gift of teaching

Edith Roberts touched the lives of 1,035 area children and their families while operating a private kindergarten



g a r t e n followed by a preschool for a total of 35 years.

When she and her family moved to New Hope in 1963, she

was asked to teach first grade at New Hope Elementary. During that year the other elementary teachers told her that New Hope needed a private kindergarten. She believed that an 8:00 to 11:00 a.m. schedule would suit her desire better, since it would allow her to spend more time caring for her husband and their young family. Therefore, she opened the New Hope Private Kindergarten in August 1964 with twelve pupils.

In the earliest years the kindergarten met in what used to be the living room of the Roberts' home. As the enrollment grew, the remodeled carport became the larger room that was needed and remained so throughout the rest of her career. The popularity of her program caused the enrollment to grow to the point that the larger room also became too small, so she held morning and afternoon sessions for a few years.

Mrs. Roberts loved to tell people that kindergarten was a German

word that meant children's garden. In her case, the children she taught were the flowers of her garden, which she nurtured, taught, and caressed as they were each day transplanted into an environment without Mommy. In a sense, she was their mommy for three hours a day as she wiped a tear away, resolved a squabble, or placed a band aid on a real or imagined minor injury.

The core of her curriculum included – first and foremost – a Bible story each day, memorizing the alphabet and the Pledge of Allegiance, "balls and sticks" printing, and elementary number facts. Each child received a check on a wall chart for every accomplishment. For memorizing and saying the Pledge of Allegiance, each child was given a miniature American flag.

These learning experiences were interspersed with snack time, which was always preceded by a thanksgiving prayer, and this time was followed by a 30 minute play time. So effective was her teaching and nurturing, that the first grade teachers vied for her kindergarten students to the point that New Hope Elementary school administration eventually had to divide her students equally among the teachers.

In addition to holiday parties, the special highlights of the year were the annual spring field trip to the Birmingham Zoo and, of course, graduation. This ceremony was more than the speeches and presentation of diplomas. For 35 years, it was probably the best free show in New Hope.

Each child was assigned a children's rhyme or short poem to memorize for recitation. Two songs that were always sung by the children as part of the musical portion of the program were "This Land is Your Land, This Land is My Land" and "It's a Small World After All."

Just before the presentation of the diplomas, Mrs. Roberts always delivered a brief speech. She often said that the preparation and delivery of this speech was the hardest thing she had to do all year, maybe with the exception of planning the program and preparation of the children for their parts on that specific program.

She acknowledged, as does her family, that none of this could have taken place without the confidence of the families of three generations who entrusted their precious children into her care, and without the support she received from area schools, churches, other businesses, and the New Hope city government.

It is appropriate that, when she left this world to go home to meet her Maker on February 28, 1994, she departed from the original New Hope Private Kindergarten room, which had become her bedroom.

Affection and esteem for her was demonstrated by people from the local community and many others as well, when over 400 of them signed the New Hope Funeral Home register during visitation. Some stood in line for up to an hour and a half to greet and console her family.■

—Roland Roberts

Record crowd attends recent New Hope Christmas festivities

It was standing room only at New Hope City Hall Wednesday evening, December 8. A large crowd of local residents gathered for a community event to celebrate Christmas.

Refreshments, decorations and Santa himself greeted those in atten-



dance. "We had approximately 200 here," says Sherrie Davis, water clerk/operator for the City of New Hope.

Davis, along with city clerk Wenona Patterson, worked long hours decorating city hall for the event.

The fifth annual celebration began with the ceremonial lighting of the Christmas tree, located in a pavilion adjacent to city hall. Mayor Brad Beasley was assisted in the lighting by Madison County Commissioner Jerry Craig.

Back inside, the crowd enjoyed cake, cookies, cider, hot chocolate and other holiday treats. Children from

the First Baptist Church sang, and everyone joined in to sing Christmas carols.

Rev. Larry Bishop, pastor of the First Baptist Church, led the ceremonial service. "The community turned out and supported the event," he says. "There were a lot of children there, and we talked about the real meaning of Christmas. It was an outstanding program."

Jolly Ole St. Nick was on hand to hear the Christmas wishes of children, who had their photo taken with Santa.

"We were pleased with the turnout," says Patterson. "We're expecting a larger crowd next year."

Around Town...

FLOOD ASSISTANCE—The First Baptist Church in New Hope became an emergency shelter on Wednesday, December 8. That evening, the American Red Cross set up a resource center in the church's gymnasium. Throughout the night and into the next day, those affected by recent flooding could come by the shelter to discuss assistance with Red Cross personnel.

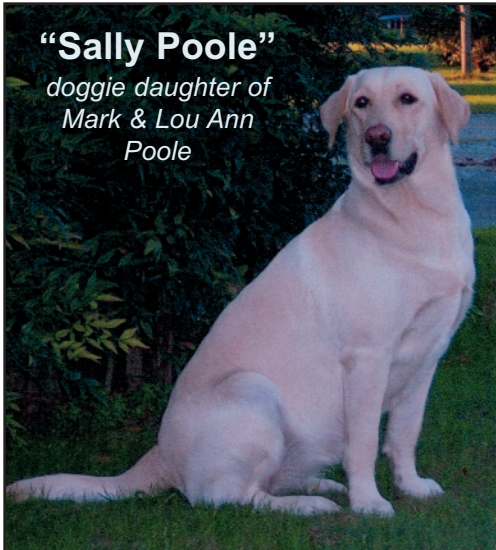
HELP FOR DRUG ADDICTION—Are drugs or alcohol affecting your family or a friend? Narconon provides free assessment and referral services to those struggling with drug or alcohol addiction. If you or someone you love is struggling with drug abuse and relapses, call 1-800-246-6101. "Don't give up... drug addiction can be overcome."

HOMEMAKERS TEAM WITH CURVES—Members of the Owens Cross Roads Homemaker's Club have joined with Curves of Hampton Cove. The Club has an emphasis on educating the community, while Curves is a physical fitness club for the body and heart. To join the fun, contact the O.C.R. Homemaker's Club at 725-4566 or Curves of Hampton Cove at 533-9277.



In December, the New Hope Lions Club conducted screenings for 168 students in the second, fourth and sixth grades at New Hope Elementary School. The screenings tested both sight and hearing. Assisting the Club with the screenings were volunteers Lorna Light and Ava Cambron, along with school nurse Kerri Dewitz. Pictured above, left to right, with the Alabama Lions Sight Conservation Association mobile screening unit are Club members Charley McPeters (secretary/treasurer), Austin Galloway and George Jones. The New Hope Lions Club has a long tradition of community service. Those interested in joining the work of the Club can visit www.newhope-lionsclub.com, or contact McPeters at 723-4695. The Club meets the second and fourth Tuesday of each month, 7 p.m., in the community room at Community Bank.

Man's BEST Friend



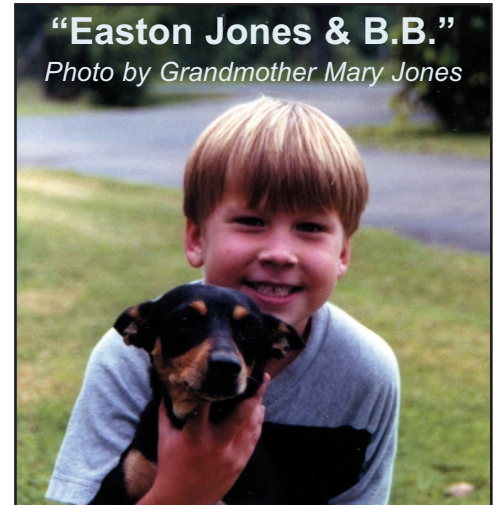
"Sally Poole"

doggie daughter of
Mark & Lou Ann
Poole



"Tucker"

Photo by Angie Whitt



"Easton Jones & B.B."

Photo by Grandmother Mary Jones



**"Gracie
Mae"**

Photo by
Amy Trupiano



"Chucky Black"

best friend of Geraldine Black



"Dancer"

best friend of Alfred Lankford

"Garett Dudley and his dog Petey"

Photo by Nikki Dudley



PHOTO CONTEST: Our March/April photo theme is **"For All You Cat Lovers."** Send your favorite photos to: NHTC • Attn: Tammy Pritchett • P.O. Box 452 • New Hope, Alabama 35760. We will select winners for publication in our next issue! If your entry is selected, you'll see your photo in print, plus receive a free gift from NHTC.

Deadline for entry: February 10, 2004.

NOTE: Be sure to include photographer's name, address and phone number, as well as the name of any people featured in your photos.

All submissions become the property of New Hope Telephone Cooperative and will not be returned. By submitting your photos: (1) you attest that you are the creator and owner of the photos, (2) you give New Hope Telephone permission to publish your material in The Communicator, (3) you agree to offer said photos without the expectation of payment from New Hope Telephone, and (4) you understand that photos are selected for publication in The Communicator at the sole discretion of New Hope Telephone, and that submission of your photo does not guarantee your photo will appear in the magazine.

RECIPE

Coconut Bun Buns

12 large marshmallows	1/2 cup white syrup
2 cups coconut	12-oz. chocolate chips
1/2 block paraffin	

Melt marshmallows and syrup in microwave on high until melted. Then, add coconut. Let cool. Roll into 1-inch balls. Dip in melted chips and paraffin.

—Submitted by Tanya Cooper

NHTC doubles its Internet capacity

New Hope Telephone Cooperative is near the end of a year-long process that will improve service to its broadband subscribers.

For several months, work has been progressing to double NHTC's main connections to the Internet. Beginning 2004 with four T-1 lines, the cooperative closed the year with eight such connections.

These T-1 connections are the 'pipes' through which all NHTC Internet customers transmit data to and receive data from the Internet. What was once adequate capacity had become insufficient to handle the amount of Internet traffic from New Hope Telephone members.

The main factor driving the need to expand its capacity was the growth in New Hope Telephone's DSL service. DSL, or digital subscriber line, is a type of broadband connection that gives users a constant, always-on connection to the Internet. It allows for much faster speeds than traditional dial-up service, making it possible to move larger amounts of information across the Internet more quickly.

"We've had phenomenal growth in our DSL customers within the past year or two," says Rusty Bright, Internet Administrator for NHTC.



There are a number of factors contributing to the growth. One is the falling prices of computers. "More and more people are getting their first computer, and they want a fast, dependable Internet connection," says Bright. "Much of our growth has been in the residential market."

But that's not the only market tapping into the power of broadband. "A lot of businesses are going with DSL," says Bright. "For those that need a constant connection, DSL is much cheaper than a T-1 line. It's a good business decision."

NHTC members are finding a variety of uses for the greater capacity of a broadband connection. There are several gamers in the cooperative's service area, people who com-

pete in online video games. A fast, reliable connection is necessary in order to be competitive.

"We are also seeing older people whose children are buying them computers and getting them a DSL connection," says Bright, "so they can send video email."

Whatever use people find for DSL, the service has proven to be extremely popular with New Hope Telephone's members. And the recent capacity upgrade ensures customers that NHTC is prepared to meet that demand.

New Hope Telephone Cooperative

P.O. Box 452

New Hope, Alabama 35760

Pre-sort
Standard
US POSTAGE PAID
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