

The
Communicator

Vol. 5, No. 2

February 2006

The Season of Love

Inside:

Everyone Benefits
from Optical Fiber

Local Residents Reach
Out to Katrina Victims

Mark Poole Fires
Up Your Tastebuds

Plus:

Community Photos
Upcoming Events
Local Advertisers
MORE!

*Happy
Valentine's
Day from
NHTC!*



It's my privilege to visit with you once again, sharing with you the growth and progress within the company. It feels good to inform you that we have internalized the concepts of constant change and preparation for the future.

Everyone grasps these ideals in different ways. One employee has taken to heart these concepts, even in his personal life. Bobby Morrison, NHTC accountant, planned ahead for February, the 'Month of Love', by marrying Charity Massey on Jan. 14th. I would say that is really internalizing changes for the future. Best wishes to the happy newlyweds!

We have also celebrated another exciting change within the company. Recently, we welcomed aboard Paula Goodson of Grant. She has joined our customer service staff and is looking forward to helping us serve you. For more information on Paula, please see the article on Page 3.

Another change is on the way. Beginning with the March issue of *The Communicator*, this column will be written by the members of the NHTC's management team. For the next few months, each department manager will be visiting with you. They will share how their department is involved in the progress that we have underway. It will be exciting for each of them to share their

thoughts. I am looking forward to reading what they choose to share.

Along with the management team's participation, we need your continued contributions to your *Communicator*. Please make an extra effort to send us your news, nominees for 'Cook of the Month', photographs and schedules for upcoming events. We want this to be interesting and informative for each of our communities. We will provide the information about the goings on at NHTC. We are counting on you to help us with the rest.

Since February is known as the 'Month of Love,' we decided it was the perfect time of year to remind you that "We Love Our Customers." Please come by the office on February 14 for our Customer Appreciation Day (you'll find more information on Page 4).

In honor of the newlyweds and the 'Month of Love', I leave you with this thought from Margaret Bonnano. "It is only possible to live happily ever after on a day to day basis."



*Teresa Hunkapiller
General Manager of
New Hope Telephone
Cooperative*

NHTC photo included in national calendar



The photo at left was featured in the August 2005 issue of *The Communicator* as part of a photo essay on country stores. The National Telecommunications Cooperative Association (NTCA) chose the photo to be included on the cover of its 2006 member calendar, which is distributed to its member companies across the country.



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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The **Communicator**

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On the cover:

There is no better symbol of devotion than the red rose, as noted by poet Robert Burns: "O, my love's like a red, red rose, That's newly sprung in June..."

NHTC welcomes Paula Goodson to team



Customers may have noticed a new face at New Hope Telephone Cooperative. Paula Goodson joined the team in December as a Customer Service Representative. Her duties include greeting customers and taking payments, at the front desk and the drive-thru. She and her husband, Phillip, make their home in Grant. When not running after their children (Tyler, age 12, and Caitlin, age 10), they enjoy searching for and collecting antiques.

Can you find it?

Thanks to everyone who participated in last month's contest. The answer, *Mark Twain*, was found at the bottom of page 12. Eleanor Rice of Grant was January's contest winner. She won a \$5 credit on her phone bill. Look for another chance to win next quarter.

Welcome New NHTC Business Customers

AMY'S LASTING IMPRESSIONS
GRANT

DIGITAL PRINTING INNOVATIONS
OWENS CROSS ROADS

ROBIN'S FITNESS CENTER
NEW HOPE

Don't throw those phone books away!

Help us keep old phone books out of the landfills. When your new NHTC telephone directory arrives, put your old one in a basement or spare room next to a phone. Keep one in your car for those times when

you're on the road and need a phone number. If you simply don't need your old phone book, stop by our office and drop it in the recycling box in the foyer. Thanks for pitching in!



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"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things...." Revelation 4:11

Better Business Bureau warns of Make-A-Wish chain letter scam

Several people across North Alabama have received letters supposedly from the Make-A-Wish Foundation. The letters most often request business cards for a sick British child be mailed to an Atlanta address.

According to the Better Business Bureau, there is no organization operating in Atlanta under the Children's Make-A-Wish name. The requests are bogus and should not be taken seriously. The Postal Inspector has been advised of these solicitations.

According to the Make-A-Wish Foundation, they never participate in chain letters or other direct solicitation wishes. Additionally, the foundation does not conduct these types of wishes.

If you receive a letter, or wish to

check on a scam, contact the Better Business Bureau by logging on to northalabama.bbb.org, or calling 800-239-1642. Remember, when in doubt, check it out.

Ways you can help the Make-A-Wish Foundation:

- ✓ Refer a child with a life-threatening medical condition for a wish experience.
- ✓ Make a donation to the Make-A-Wish Foundation, 3550 North Central Ave., Ste. 300, Phoenix, AZ 85012-2127.
- ✓ Volunteer for your area chapter. Contact the Alabama regional office in Marietta, GA at 770-916-9474.
- ✓ Visit wish.org for more information.

New Hope Telephone's *Customer Appreciation Day*

**Tuesday
February 14th**

To show our appreciation for all our subscribers, we're inviting everyone to stop by our office on Valentine's Day for refreshments!

Be sure to register for these drawings:

- 1 of 4 \$50 Savings Bonds
- 19 inch Emerson TV
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Pictures from NHTC's Charity Drive

New Hope Telephone Cooperative would like to thank its members for their outpouring of support to the Salvation Army, WAFF's Can-a-thon, Toys for Tots and the Angel Tree. These pictures show how successful our charity drives were thanks to your generosity. Donations of food and clothing can still be dropped off.



Peggy Key, Jan Clark & Joyce Passeur, the Looney Belles, bring gifts for Toys for Tots.



The Angel Tree received much support from throughout the community.



Corporal Green and Sergeant Hood from KIL0 214 US Marines Reserve in Huntsville receive donations for Toys for Tots.



Volunteers Lester Moon and Marvin Higuera pick up donations for the Angel Tree.



NHTC's Tim Wright, delivered canned goods collected during WAFF's Can-a-thon.



Steven Campbell and Donald Morrison of NHTC delivered a van packed full of donations to the Salvation Army.

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Benefits of Fiber

Fiber network plan benefits NHTC and its members

(Note: This is Part Two in a series examining NHTC's plan to build a Fiber-To-The-Home system.)

The Board of Directors at New Hope Telephone Cooperative has adopted a strategic plan that includes an emphasis on fiber technology. Over the course of the next 10 years, NHTC will basically rebuild its system — moving from one that is copper-based to one that has fiber as its foundation.

The primary reason behind this plan is to provide members with access to modern services. “With fiber, there is plenty of extra bandwidth,” says Steven Campbell, NHTC Central Office Manager, “so there’s a lot of growth potential.”

The fiber system, Campbell says, will be “built for the future,” enabling the company to offer new services as they become available.

When a home is wired with a fiber connection, it has access to crystal-clear voice service, high-speed Internet and a wide selection of television programming.

“With IP TV (in which the television signal is served over Internet Protocol), it might be possible to offer 200 more channels,” says Campbell. Fiber technology would also make possible Video-on-Demand capabilities. “For example, a customer could rent a movie and watch it anytime they wanted, as many times as they wanted, over, say, a 48 hour period,” he says.

Further, it would be possible for cus-

tomers to manage their television programming on the Internet, adding or deleting channels, making movie selections based on ratings, and other custom features.

Fiber would also provide access to high-speed, always on Internet service without the need for DSL equipment. “It would be a lot cleaner and more efficient,” says Campbell. “Fiber doesn’t allow interferences, so there would be



Fiber is a much different technology than copper, and NHTC is preparing their employees to work with it. Here, several employees undergo fiber training. Central Office Manager Steven Campbell says he and all Central Office employees are certified in fiber splicing, along with all outside plant technicians.

no more problems with electric fences. Lightning and surges don’t affect it like they do DSL equipment, either.”

Telephone service would also be greatly enhanced. “It would be digital telephone,” Campbell says. “You could even have a video phone, where you could see the face of the person you’re talking to.”

Calling features could be managed via a Web site just like television pro-

gramming. “If you wanted Call Forward for the weekend, you could just log on and activate it,” Campbell explains.

For businesses, Campbell says fiber will enable the cooperative to offer advanced services. These include the creation of private networks that NHTC would manage for business customers.

These are a few examples, Campbell says, of services NHTC can envision as possible offerings over a fiber system.

But with technology creating new services every day, the future is difficult to predict. “The speeds of fiber will enable us do to a lot of things that we don’t even know about now,” he says.

In addition to the many benefits customers will realize, fiber will become an important asset to NHTC’s operations as well. “We’ll be taking three networks and putting them into one,” Campbell explains. There are high maintenance costs associated with copper, and equipment such as power supplies are expensive. It is also necessary to keep an inventory of expensive parts for upkeep.

“Fiber will cut maintenance costs by a great degree,” says Campbell. “One company experienced a 70% savings in maintenance with fiber.”

“Fiber-To-The-Home is the foundation for providing high-quality services well into the future,” says Teresa Hunkapiller, NHTC General Manager. “Building a fiber network is a move that will benefit our members and their company for many years to come.”

Love one Another

Local residents travel south to help hurricane victims

Way down south in Bayou La Batre, Alabama, amid the swamps and the flood-wrought devastation, things are stirring. The winds of a hurricane have been traded for the winds of change, and the tide which almost destroyed everything has finally turned.

Bayou La Batre was one of the hardest hit areas along the Alabama coastline during the recent Hurricane Katrina disaster. Then a storm surge came in and left everything under three feet of water. Homes were flooded and residents were left with nothing.

Unfortunately, while the eyes of the world were focused on the horrific tragedy in New Orleans, tiny Bayou La Batre was all but forgotten. At least it seemed that way to Babs Bridges and her husband, Donald.

The Bridges, who live near New Hope, soon began making frequent trips to Bayou La Batre in an effort to bring help and hope to its poverty-stricken residents. Their most recent visit was made



Sarah Shubert, Monica Harris, Brooke Canterbury and Ashlyn Maples deliver food to hurricane victims living in FEMA trailers.



Jake Etheredge, Justin Harris and Tren Harris measure sheet rock to repair walls damaged by flood waters.

the week after Christmas. They were joined by the youth leaders of Owens Cross Roads Church of Christ, Jake and Andrea Ethridge, and a group of teenagers from the church.

The teens, who stayed from Tuesday to Friday in a building donated by the Booster Club, passed out food, paper products, cleaning supplies and other items to local residents, many of whom are still living in tents.

According to Babs, the teens became involved not just physically, but spiritually and emotionally as well. They became so close to a local family who also volunteers there that one of the family's children cried uncontrollably the day the teens left for home.

Incredibly, one of the teen girls was baptized in the fifty-seven degree freezing waters of Bayou La Batre's ocean.

Amidst all of the caring for others, the group needed a little caring of its

own. Luckily, Donald knew that ahead of time, so he brought along his mother, locally celebrated cook Dorothy Bridges. "She cooked up big meals and fed us all like kings and queens," Babs says. Dorothy's sister, Opal Craig, also came to help.

The Churches of Christ, through generous donations from the Lions' Club, the Salvation Army and other organizations are spear-heading the relief efforts in Bayou La Batre.

Volunteers give residents forms to fill out that list what work needs to be done in their homes and what furniture and appliances they need.

Several volunteers from Churches of Christ in the Bayou La Batre area spend their days tearing out molded walls, wet insulation, and bad wiring inside houses and replacing it, so residents can finally go home.

"It's going to be a long haul," Babs says. "It's not going to be a quick fix."

Still, each day brings new hope for residents there. They are no longer forgotten. And thanks to a whole lot of people, both young and old, they never will be again.



Justin Harris sprays a bleach mixture to kill mold.

We're back and ready to serve!



Thank You

Thank you so much for your patience and encouragement over the past several weeks. We are open for business again and ready to take care of you. We know you must be hungry for some great BBQ, so come see us soon! We look forward to seeing you again!

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OCR School gets help with volunteer program from local restaurant owners

Local restaurants have partnered with Owens Cross Roads school to help with their parent volunteer program. This program, coordinated by Parent Partner, Patra Lyon, welcomes parents and community members into the school to help teachers with various tasks.

In an effort to thank these parents

for all they do, Cazadores Restaurant, Ken's Restaurant, and El Omeca Restaurant have agreed to honor a \$5.00 gift certificate for every 25 hours a parent volunteers.

To find out more about becoming a parent volunteer at OCR School, contact Stephanie Thorson at 725-4233.



As a part of a character education lesson on kindness and in honor of our veterans, every student from Owens Cross Roads made a special patriotic gift to send to our troops in Iraq. Pictured above are sixth graders Braxton Babbidge, Matthew Whitehead, Tyler Pruitt, Leanna Craig, and Shana Stapler working on some windsocks.

We need your recipes!

South Hampton Nursing and Rehabilitation Center is putting together a cookbook featuring recipes from residents, staff, and the community. If you have a recipe you'd like to submit, send complete instructions along with your name to:

SHNRC • Recipes • 213 Wilson Mann Road • Owens Cross Roads, AL 35763

Fax recipes to: 256-725-3423
Email to: lfisher@shnrc.com

Submissions must be received by March 31, 2006

Cookbooks will be sold throughout the community for \$15 each with the proceeds going for the purchase of a wheelchair accessible van for the residents. This will improve the quality of life for many residents.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 2006

February 6th

New Hope City Council Meeting
New Hope City Hall, 7:00 pm

Grant City Council Meeting
Grant Town Hall, 6:30 pm

February 13th

New Hope Planning Commission
New Hope City Hall, 7:00 pm

February 20th

New Hope City Council Meeting
New Hope City Hall, 7:00 pm

Grant City Council Meeting
Grant Town Hall, 6:30 pm

New Hope Historical Association Meeting
City Hall, First Floor - Museum, 7:00 pm
Contact: Lou Ann Poole, 723-2525

February 23rd

Owens Cross Roads City Council Meeting
OCR Town Hall, 7:00 pm

Keep your community informed about area events. Please send information about upcoming community events to: NHTC, Attn: Maria Goodson, P.O. Box 452, New Hope, AL 35760. While space is limited, we do want to publish information about upcoming events in the community.

We're more than just great pizza!



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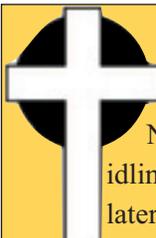
723-4181

Tuesday - Saturday 11am-9pm & Fridays 11am-10pm

Think About It

Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful.

-- Albert Schweitzer



Inspiration Corner

A Valentine Story: They met on a blind date. Neither one was looking for a relationship, just idling along from past ones gone bad. Eight days later they were engaged. Love at first sight or simply the will of God? I once had a college instructor say, "There is no such thing as love at first sight". With that wisdom in mind it must have been the will of God. For twenty-two years now I have been so blessed with Teresa as my wife that I praise God daily for her and that first blind date.

God's love! That's what makes a relationship last. In Ephesians chapter 5 the relationship between husband and wife is like one's relationship with God. Paul explains it as the church. One scripture I hear quoted is how the wife is to submit to her husband in everything; Ephesians 5:24. However, to rely on one passage without "the rest of the story" is to build on a partial foundation. You see, the rest of the story is that "husbands are to love their wives even as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for it". In other words, love founded on the principles of God will last forever as a two-way street. One cannot receive more than one is willing to give, lest, in the same manner one who spends more than they earn goes bankrupt. The love account can go bankrupt as well. To learn how to make love last forever I invite you to go straight to the source, which is God. You are invited to find His instructions on relationships in a church and Bible near you.

May you be blessed this month as we celebrate Valentinus the Christian martyr.



*Michael Carpenter,
Pastor
New Hope United
Methodist Church &
Oak Bowery United
Methodist Church*



PASTOR'S NOTE

BY LARRY BISHOP, PASTOR
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF NEW HOPE

Sifting through mom's dresser drawers a young man found cards for her birthday, Valentine cards and get well cards too numerous to count. In another drawer there was costume jewelry, a ring and several pairs of earrings.

But the drawer that seemed to be the most interesting was the drawer with all the rags. The drawer was full of remnants from old clothing such as shirts, trousers and a variety of discarded materials. You see mom collected these rags so she could make quilts. Quilting is the art of taking discarded material (rags) and sewing them together and making something useful and beautiful.

The clothing remnants remind me of "The Parable of the Lost Son" found in the gospel book of Luke. The story tells of a young man that asks his father for his share of the estate. His father agreed and divided his property and gave his son his share. Not long after that, the young man left his father's house and went into a distant land. He squandered his wealth on wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country and he began to be in need. Jobs must have been scarce, because he started feeding pigs for a living. Things got so bad and he was so hungry that he started eating the pig's food.

When he came to his senses, he said, "How many of my father's hired men have food to spare and here I am starving to death! I will go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men." So he got up and went to his father.

What this young man decided to do was gather all his "rags" together and bring them to his father. His father, when he saw him, had compassion for him, ran to him, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

The father said to his servant, "Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fatted calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate."

Our lives sometimes get like those old rags and we cannot see any good use for them. But in the right hands they can be sewn together and become beautiful and useful.

See you in church Sunday.



The
Tree Stump
Philosopher

- Wrinkles don't hurt.
- Forgive your enemies. It messes with their head.
- Growing up is mandatory, growing old is optional.
- Families are like fudge...mostly sweet, with a few nuts.

A history of New Hope School

(Note: This is the third and final installment in this series. The first part of this series on school history was compiled by Miss Bernice Dilworth.)

By Sara Burlison

In 1974, an effort was begun to place the brick building (constructed in 1919 and opened in 1920) on the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage. This effort was begun about the same time that the Madison County Board of Education was debating whether the building should be demolished or remodeled to accommodate the recent growth in student population and also to insure its safety as a facility for children. This indecision went on for a period of two to three years. The struggle between those who wanted to preserve the building and the County Board was quite spirited.

Mr. Harvie Jones, a Huntsville architect and representative to the Alabama Historical Commission, visited the old building and wrote a strong argument for preservation. Miss Elizabeth Carpenter, a former teacher and librarian at the school, spearheaded the drive to preserve the building. When a decision was finally made to demolish the building, Miss Carpenter secured an injunction to stop the demolition. The injunction was lifted and plans proceeded with the demolition.

The Alabama Historical Commission did designate the building a state landmark "worthy of recognition and restoration". The building was added to the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage. The designation of the Alabama Historical Commission came about a week after the Madison County Board of Education had termed the building a fire and safety hazard and had authorized its demolition. Just a few days before the demolition was begun, the old building burned. Arson was suspected.

Enrollment continued to increase and a separate elementary cement block building, including a lunchroom, was added to the plant in 1949. Local assistance was expected

and the facility was to last 20 years. (This lunchroom-too small to accommodate both elementary and high schools- was later converted to elementary classrooms.)

The new high school building, finished in 1958, included six classrooms, the home economics department, library, auditorium, science department and office space. In 1968, two new rooms were added for a modern commercial department. A federal government program provided the finance for this project. In 1959, a football stadium was built, and in 1968, an up-to-date gymnasium was completed.

With the growth of the student population, a new lunchroom was needed. This was completed in 1963, and the space formerly used for a lunchroom in the elementary school was converted into classrooms and a library. A band room was constructed in 1973. In 1974, a pod-like structure was completed to house the middle grades (5-8). It was carpeted and air conditioned.

During the summer of 1986, air conditioning was installed in the elementary school. Renovation of the old gymnasium for the elementary children was begun that year and completed in 1987.

During the summer of 1987, the elementary school and the high school buildings were completely renovated. Both buildings were now equipped with central air conditioning, heating and carpeted floors, and excellent lighting.

In 1993, the elementary and the high school buildings were connected with a new addition. This new construction included seven new classrooms. In 1999, a new high school was built on the far end of campus. (This was the former location of the old "pod" structure that housed the middle school grades.) A new gymnasium was built for the high school at this time. The old high school building became the middle school (grades 5-8). At this time the two separate schools were still sharing a lunchroom. In 2005, a new lunchroom was built for the high school.



Teacher Talk

By Carolyn Creighton
NHES Assistant Principal

Making Writing Fun

Previously, this column has dealt with sense memories, how the National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges suggests more writing instruction, and ways to store personal writings, once begun.

Now, how about writing just for fun? What a great way to help your kids feel comfortable with writing. If you are keeping a notebook as suggested in last month's column, writing can just happen. Check out this poem based on a trip to the store:

Blue Suede Spandex

*Do you ever wonder how it feels to be
Elvis?*

Standing beside the road in front of a muffler shop

*Dressed in a Superman suit and waving to
the crowd--*

*With his dark pompadour contrasting his
yellow ear muffs*

*Waving to me and the cars behind me as
we move on?*

*I don't know how he feels standing there,
waving for his supper.*

*I don't know if I want to buy a muffler
From this company*

Because I thought,

*As the rest of the country did
That Elvis had left the building.*

If he hasn't,

And is still around

On the plains of Memphis

Doin' the jailhouse rock-

Then he needs to tell us,

Especially the muffler shop.

Is this earth-shaking writing? No. Will it stimulate your child's imagination as you travel places? Absolutely. Will fun writing open doors of communication? It should. Why not give fun writing a try on your next car trip? Enjoy.

Valentine Friends

In Memory of Two Old Ladies as told by one of them

To Lucille Maples

By Ethel Maddox

The best of friends. They went to church together. They went to the grocery store together. Had a lot of fun together. But sometimes got in trouble. Like one day they went to the grocery store. They parked the car, got out, went in.

Laughing and talking, taking their own good time. They picked up their groceries. They checked out. The boy sacked up their groceries and then said "Lady, which car?" She said "The light blue one." He said "The one that the motor's still running?" Well, they went out to the car to help put the groceries in the car and

found out that the motor was running with the doors locked and the keys locked up on the inside.

Well, she went back in the store and she called her daughter-in-law that lived about 2 or 3 miles out of town and told her to go next door and get an extra set of keys and bring them down to her. Well, she brought the keys down. They unlocked the door and loaded up the groceries and they went on their way home, laughing and talking about how crazy they were.

But that wasn't all. A few days after that they went back to the grocery store. But everything went on just fine. They got their groceries and loaded up and they went on their way home but on the way home they stopped at this little store.

They decided they wanted a cone of ice cream. So they went in the little store, told the girl they wanted a cone of ice cream and she said "One dip or two?" They looked at one another and it was an awful hot day and they decided one dip wasn't enough so they got two dips.

Well, you never saw as much ice cream in your life piled up on one little cone. They went out the door snickering and laughing and talking about how they were going to get rid of all that ice cream. They didn't want to waste a bit of it. They licked and they lapped and licked and they lapped till they got rid of all of it and boy were they full of ice cream.

I know this is a true story because I'm one of these old women and you're the other one. Lucy and Ethel!



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South Hampton Nursing & Rehabilitation Center is a state licensed skilled facility offering short and long term nursing care and rehabilitation services. Our focus is to promote healing and recovery for a return to independent or assisted living whenever possible, and to provide long term nursing care and supervision when independence is not a viable option. Please call or come by South Hampton to meet the staff and tour our facility.



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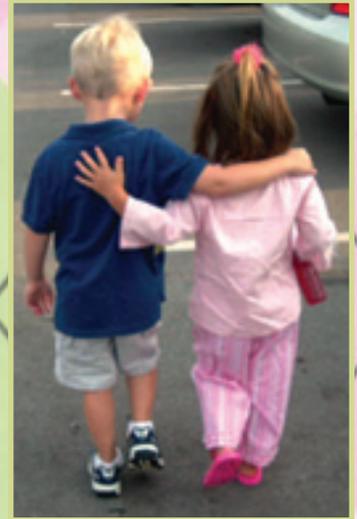


Brandon Russell.

Photo sent by Rhonda Russell.



Billy & Archie Butler on their 58th Anniversary. Photo sent by Rhonda Cain.

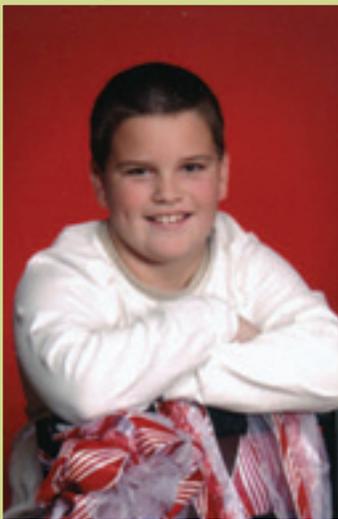


Garrett Dudley & Erin Sloan.

Photo by Salee Sloan.



*Paw Paw David's sweethearts.
Maw Maw Tammy & Halsey Pritchett.*



Blake Russell.

Photo sent by Rhonda Russell.



Great Paw Marvin & sweetie Addie Ann.

Photo sent by Tammy Pritchett.



*Breanna Maples. Daughter of
Darren & Stephanie Maples.*

The April photo theme is **"Spring is in the Air"**. To participate in our Community Photos section, please send your favorite photos, matching the theme, to: NHTC • Attn: Maria Goodson • P.O. Box 452 • New Hope, Alabama 35760. You may prefer to e-mail your photo to mgoodson@nehp.net. If your entry is selected, you'll see your photo in print. **The deadline for the April entry is February 22nd.**

Be sure to include the photographer's name, address and phone number, as well as the name of any people featured in your photos. Do not write on the back of your photos, but rather write your information on a small piece of paper and tape it to the back.

If you would like your photos returned, please include a self-addressed stamped envelope. 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.



Now we're cookin'!

New Hope's Mark Poole is a master of the fiery grill

It all started with a bragging session. "Some of the guys at work were bragging about who was the best cook," says Mark Poole of his coworkers at Huntsville Utilities. To determine who could fire up a grill and back up their talk, the men entered a contest at WEUP Radio.

Poole came away with the top award for ribs and chicken. The win sparked an interest in competition cooking that has brought him some great experiences and many new friends.

While Poole has been perfecting his ribs, pork and chicken on a grill for many years, entering competitions was a whole different experience. He recalls one event where participants donned tuxedos and decorated their tents with fine tablecloths and wine glasses in preparation for the judging.

"It's a challenge to take a piece of meat and cook it to the point that it's tender, moist and has the right taste," says Poole. "When you try to get a piece of meat tender, it takes time and patience."

For instance, Poole's ribs will cook six hours before they are ready for consumption. To get pork butt just right so that it is cooked through and through yet remains tender and tasty, Poole cooks it some 22 hours.

Poole's competition team, Prime Time Bar B Q, consists of himself and wife, Lou Ann. "Most teams have four or five guys," he says. "It's just me and Lou Ann, and that's the way I want to keep it."

The team has competed at CityFest in Tuscaloosa on two occasions, coming away with a 10th-place rib and 5th-place rib. "That was a tough competition," he says. They have also participated in a Guntersville cookoff to raise funds for the American Cancer Society, earning a 2nd-place chicken two consecutive years.

Competition cooking is serious business. Many participants travel across the U.S. — and even to other countries — several months of the year. They spend thousands of dollars on meat, compete for major prizes, and have corporate sponsorship like professional racing teams.

Even though Poole has retired from Huntsville Utilities, he has no plans of devoting that much time to competition cooking. "The Whistle Stop is the



YOU CAN ALMOST TASTE IT—There is an art to grilling meat, and Mark Poole is quite the artist. Here he offers a sample of pulled pork, chicken and ribs — with a jar of white barbecue sauce for sopping.



SMOKING UP A MEAL—Mark Poole raises the lid on a grill he built to use in competition cooking.

only one we're doing now," he says of Huntsville's Whistle Stop Festival & Rocket City BBQ Cook-off. Held each May, the event draws thousands of visitors and more than 60 cooks. "They come from all over the United States, and some foreign countries," Poole says.

The Prime Time team has earned a third-place rib and a fifth-place rib at Whistle Stop. "When you can get your name called out among those folks, it's special," Poole says.

Poole and his wife once attended a judging school, "for the purpose of understanding what the judges want." They gained a better knowledge of how to present their entry boxes (meat neatly positioned on a bed of leafy lettuce that completely covers the bottom of the styrofoam box, no lettuce poking out when the lid is closed, no drops of sauce or fingerprints on the box), and how the food should taste.

Poole finds competition cooking an enjoyable pastime. It challenges him, and brings him in contact with interesting people from different parts of the world. But he is quick to point out that he receives the most pleasure when sharing his culinary skills within the community. "Twice a month, on the second and fourth Monday, we prepare a meal at the Masonic Lodge for all the brothers," Poole says. "I really enjoy that — it's one of my favorite things."

He also helps with school fundraising dinners, the New Hope Founder's Day Chili Cookoff, and even hosts a community Halloween party at his home (where he serves up stew cooked in a 15-gallon washpot).

Food also provides Poole with opportunities for casual fellowship. "Sometimes I'll call some friends and say 'come over and let's eat some chicken,'" he says. "We'll sit out in the shed with some bread and enjoy."

While many of Mark Poole's techniques are closely guarded trade secrets, he selected a few recipes to share this month:

Prime Time Soppin' Sauce

This sweet, ketchup-based pork sauce has been in Mark's family since the 1960's, when a family member discovered it in a Cullman establishment. It goes great with pulled pork.

32 oz. Heinz® Ketchup	32 oz. water
3/4 cup sugar	1 small onion, diced
1 whole lemon (diced) or lemon juice to equal 1 whole lemon	
1 clove garlic, crushed or 1 tsp. garlic powder	
1 Tbsp. coarse ground black pepper	
1 1/2 tsp. celery seed	

Combine all ingredients in pan. Bring to boil and turn down to a simmer. Cook for about 45 minutes. Cool and bottle.

White Barbecue Sauce

This sauce tastes great with smoked chicken. But that doesn't stop some people from pouring it over pulled pork as well.

1 pint mayonnaise	2 Tbsp. black pepper
2 Tbsp. salt	6 Tbsp. lemon juice
6 Tbsp. vinegar	4 Tbsp. sugar

Blend ingredients together until smooth. Can use more black pepper and less sugar if you prefer it less sweet.

Glaze for Ribs

If you want those ribs to shine, coat them with this savory glaze.

1 cup ketchup
1 cup honey
1 cup RC Cola® (or Coca Cola®)

Mix all ingredients. Glaze over ribs.

My Mother-in-Law's Slaw

Mark's mother-in-law is the source of this simple recipe that produces an outstanding complement to any barbecue.

1 head of cabbage, small	1 cup sugar
1 cup water	3/4 cup vinegar
pinch of salt	

Combine water and sugar. Heat if needed to dissolve sugar. Grate cabbage very fine. Add a pinch of salt, then mix vinegar, water, sugar together. Pour over grated cabbage. Let set for 24 hours or overnight.

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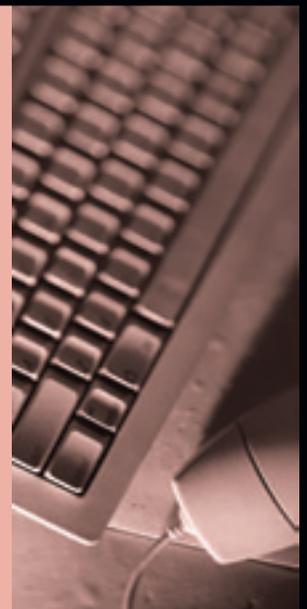
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