

The

Communicator

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2018

PUTTING ON A SHOW

The New Hope
Saddle Club
doesn't horse
around

FAITHFUL TO FITNESS

Exercise groups bring praise
and fellowship

RELAX AND UNWIND

Vacation destinations for
Valentine's Day





RURAL CONNECTIONS

BY SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

Promoting rural entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurs, those brave individuals willing to take a chance on an idea to start a business, are an important part of any thriving economy. We've seen rural entrepreneurship in particular become a key to sparking development in downtowns and invigorating communities.

Indeed, attitudes are changing about where someone can be an entrepreneur. When people think of startups, they often envision cities like New York, Austin or San Francisco. Big cities are no longer the only locations where startups can thrive thanks to low costs, an eager workforce and the availability of broadband.

Networks like the one your local telco has built provide a critical link for new and existing businesses. Through the power of broadband, any rural area is a possible hotbed for entrepreneurial activity.

New rural businesses can connect with suppliers, customers and peers in ways that were impossible just a few years ago. Robust fiber optic networks allow for companies to hire remote workers, share big files with designers or engineers, and hold virtual meetings through videoconferences.

Being an entrepreneur is not for everyone. It takes patience, drive and energy, a positive attitude, and a high tolerance for risk. But I'm glad that today when those type of people look at rural America, they now see opportunities thanks to hardworking NTCA members like your local telco. ☎



Stream on!

More than half of U.S. homes use streaming for never-ending entertainment

Regardless of location, high-speed internet brings endless entertainment options. More so than ever before, viewers have options for high-quality programming through streaming devices and services.

Streaming is an entertaining addition to traditional television services. Nearly 60 percent of U.S. TV homes have at least one internet-enabled device capable of streaming to a TV set, according to a recent survey by The Nielsen Company.

HOW POPULAR ARE STREAMING DEVICES?

Since June 2016, streaming devices have grown by 12 percent.

WHAT IS A STREAMING DEVICE/STREAMING SERVICE?

A streaming device is a gadget that uses the internet and allows viewers to connect to content online. A streaming service is a downloadable app that lets users watch content online.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

While traditional TV services are still crucial, at the touch of a button, streaming offers limitless entertainment. Streaming allows viewers to watch whatever content they choose, when and how they want.

WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT IT?

Variety: Whether you're looking for reruns of "The Dick Van Dyke Show" or original streaming-only content like Netflix's "Stranger Things" and Amazon Prime's "All or Nothing," it's all online.

Simplicity: Streaming devices and streaming services are simple to set up and require little to no technical knowledge.

Affordability: Streaming devices like AppleTVs are typically less than \$180, while some Roku models are about \$40. Streaming services like Netflix and Hulu are about \$10 per month or more. ☎

STREAMING DEVICE EXAMPLES:

Apple TV, Google Chromecast, Amazon Fire TV, Roku, a video game console or smart TV.

STREAMING SERVICE EXAMPLES:

Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime, YouTube and HBO Now.

69.5 MILLION U.S. TV homes have at least one internet-enabled streaming device.

39 MILLION U.S. TV homes have an internet-enabled game console.

6.5 MILLION U.S. homes have a streaming device, game console and smart TV.

Source: The Nielsen Company

More Americans are getting their news to go




BY DREW WOOLLEY

In today's world, everyone is connected all the time. That's changed the way we communicate, shop and even get our news. A recent report from the Pew Research Center took a closer look at how people's news habits are changing and the surprising groups driving the growth of mobile news.

Online news is closing the gap with TV. Today, 43 percent of Americans get their news online, just 7 percent fewer than those who say they get it on TV. That's less than half of the 19-point gap that existed in 2016, meaning the internet could soon become most people's primary news source.

News on mobile is still growing. In 2017, 45 percent of adults in the U.S. regularly got news from a mobile device, a 9 percent increase from 2016 and more than double the percentage in 2013. And while many of those people also turn to a desktop or a laptop computer for news, nearly two-thirds prefer a mobile device.

Mobile news growth is being driven by older adults. About 85 percent of adults get news from a mobile device, an increase of 13 percent from 2016. That increase is mostly made up of those 65 and older whose mobile news consumption jumped 24 points to 67 percent in 2017. For those aged 50 to 65, 79 percent of people get news from a mobile device, about twice as many as in 2013.

Two-thirds of the country gets news from social media. A small increase in the overall consumption of news on social media from 2016 to 2017 was spurred by a significant uptick among people 50 and older. Now, more than half of Americans older than 50 get news on social media. 

WATCH OUT FOR FAKE NEWS

One of the biggest drawbacks of online news is that it can be difficult to tell which sources are reliable and which are not. Since the FBI announced Russia's efforts to spread false stories during the 2016 election, it's more important than ever to protect yourself against unreliable information.

» Start with the facts.

A recent BuzzFeed analysis of CNN, ABC News and Politico found the vast majority of the news outlets' reporting to be truthful. Subscribing to a reputable newspaper or magazine can be a good first step to inoculating yourself against fake news.

» Step outside your bubble.

People tend to consume media inside echo chambers that confirm their beliefs. Whether it's a group of friends or your social media feed, take some time to break out of your normal news habits and challenge your views.

» Think like a fact-checker.

The best way to get to the bottom of any subject is to dig deep. Read as many sources as you can and check sites like Snopes or Politifact that specialize in verifying popular news stories.

TV networks won't stop increasing their fees

Imagine you run a delivery company and you charge \$100 to bring goods to a business in our region. Then, consider how a new toll booth would affect your business.



JIM COOK
General Manager

You already spend much of your \$100 on gas, wages for your driver and maintenance for the truck. Imagine how it would affect your operation if a new toll booth charging \$10 each way opened up directly on the route.

Suddenly, instead of \$100 to cover wages, fuel and maintenance, you now only have \$80. A delivery company that spends more to deliver something than it charges is not going to be in business very long. You would have to charge customers more to cover the new costs.

This is the situation small rural telcos like NHTC find ourselves in when it comes to the rates we have to pay television networks to provide their programming.

You see, if you are one of our many TV subscribers, NHTC has to pay a fee for virtually every channel in your TV package (except the shopping channels). While sports channels are by far the most expensive, even the less popular channels charge from a few nickels to a few dollars per subscriber to carry their programming. Some of the more expensive channels can be up to \$8 per subscriber. If you multiply those fees by every channel in your package, you can see what we're up against. Almost all of your monthly television bill goes directly to those networks. The days of commercial breaks covering the networks' financial demands are long over.

This hasn't always been the case. Only a few years ago, local channels did not require a fee for NHTC to retransmit their programming. Now, however, not only are they requiring us to pay a fee, but they are also increasing that fee every year. This year, for instance, many local stations are doubling the fees TV providers like NHTC have to pay for each television subscriber.

In addition to fees, many popular cable channels require that providers carry — and pay for — less popular channels owned by their corporate parent companies.

Like the delivery business in my story above, these new "tolls" keep popping up and have greatly affected what we have to charge for television service. Now, your first thought might be to have the driver go a different route in order to avoid the new toll, but in the analogy I'm making with NHTC and TV networks, there's only one route to deliver the goods our customers want. Certain programming is only available on certain networks, and we have to carry that network to provide what our customers expect.

This is why — despite the pretense of having negotiations — TV networks with the unchecked power to charge whatever they want creates an unfair fight for NHTC and other small rural telcos working on behalf of our members.

We know you are counting on us to deliver quality television programming at an affordable price. Our staff works every day to control our overhead expense and to be as efficient as possible in everything we do. I hope this metaphor of the delivery company and the increasing toll road helps you understand why NHTC is forced to raise the rates or fees we charge members for television service. As your trusted local telco, we were able to absorb the cost of the first few retransmission rate increases. We have not adjusted our TV package rates since December 2015. However, the board and I are charged with ensuring the long-term continued financial viability of the cooperative, and with that in mind we have to pass some of these costs along to our subscribers.

We appreciate the opportunity to be your trusted provider for broadband, video and phone service today — and well into the future. ☎

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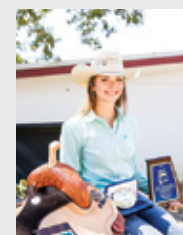
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On the Cover:



Hannah Hill, a member of the New Hope Saddle Club, displays her 2017 Youth AOHA State Championship award and barrel buckle.
See story Page 8.

Start the year off with fewer unwanted calls



The **National Do-Not-Call Registry** gives you a choice about whether or not to receive telemarketing calls at home. The registry applies to all telemarketers with the exception of businesses with whom you have an existing relationship and certain non-profit and political organizations. Commercial telemarketers are not allowed to call you if your number is listed on the registry.

Consumers may register their residential telephone number, including wireless numbers, on the National Do-Not-Call Registry at no cost, either by telephone or via the internet. To register by phone, call 1-888-382-1222. For TTY, call 1-866-290-4236. You must call from the telephone number you wish to register. To obtain additional information or register online, please go to www.donotcall.gov.

Inclusion of your telephone number on the National Do-Not-Call registry is effective 31 days following registration. You may remove your number from the list at any time. NHTC is happy to provide you with this information, as required by the Federal Communications Commission.



- Visit BroadbandBuildsBusiness.com
- Complete the online nomination form
- Share the link on Facebook and Twitter
- Encourage others to nominate their favorite small business

Hurry, the deadline for nominations is Feb. 28!

New Directories arriving soon

NHTC's members will begin receiving new directories in February. Due to significant growth in the area, all of our members will be listed alphabetically, without the separation of the three exchanges for New Hope, Grant and Owens Cross Roads.

BEST WISHES in 2018!

The NHTC staff and board of directors would like to wish you and your family a safe and happy new year!



A getaway to **ROMANCE**

The Main Inn at Beaumont Inn was built in 1845 and offers the perfect ambiance for a night of romance.

Photo courtesy of Beaumont Inn.

Romance can happen wherever you are. But add a wonderful dinner and beautiful surroundings, and you've upped the ante. Here are some suggestions for hotels, inns, lodges and resorts that know what it takes to create a memorable getaway, whether it's a Valentine's retreat or simply some much-needed time away to recharge.

Beaumont Inn

638 Beaumont Inn Drive, Harrodsburg, Kentucky

Named one of the South's most charming inns, Beaumont, in the heart of horse country, has drawn couples from around the region for 99 years. Harrodsburg, the oldest town in Kentucky, offers history and charm. The inn follows suit, adding all the modern amenities you would expect, including comfortable linens, free Wi-Fi and cable TV in the 31 guest rooms and the suites located in Beaumont's three buildings — Goddard Hall, circa 1935; Greystone House, circa 1931; and the Main Inn, circa 1845.

Breakfast is included in your stay and is served every morning.

- ▶ **Where to eat:** The inn features two dining options. The Main Dining Room received the prestigious America's Classic Award from the James Beard Foundation in 2015 and serves classic dishes, including corn pudding, country ham and fried chicken. The Owls Nest Lounge serves wines and cocktails, along with appetizers and entrees. In town, step back in time for a burger or pot roast at Kentucky Fudge Company, 25 S. Main St. Or if you're looking for a taste of Mexico, reasonable prices and killer enchiladas, try La Fonda, 121 S. Main St.
- ▶ **Rates and reservations:** \$120-\$196, weeknights; \$133-\$208, weekends. Contact 859-734-3381 or beaumontinn.com



Overlook Pavilion at Gorham's Bluff is a beautiful place to say "I do" or renew your vows with the one you love.

♥ Gorham's Bluff

100 Gorham Drive, Pisgah, Alabama

Choose a room with a fireplace, antique furnishings and other beautiful trappings or a private cottage that offers all the amenities of home without all the distractions. Gather family on the bluff and say your vows for the first time, or renew your vows in the wedding pavilion overlooking the Tennessee River from atop Sand Mountain. Gorham's Bluff is the go-to place in the mountains of North Alabama to experience luxury, privacy and romance.

- ▶ **Where to eat:** Most meals are served in The Lodge at Gorham's Bluff. Breakfast is made to order, box lunches can be delivered to your room, and three- or four-course dinners by candlelight are offered each evening.
- ▶ **Rates and reservations:** 256-451-8439 or gorhamsbluff.com/the-lodge. Suites begin at \$155 per night.

♥ Dancing Bear Lodge

7140 E. Lamar Alexander Parkway, Townsend, Tennessee

You'd be hard-pressed to find a more scenic, romantic getaway in Tennessee than Dancing Bear near the Great Smoky

Mountains. Cabins and cottages are equipped with wood-burning fireplaces and kitchens stocked with fruits and other treats. Many have hot tubs, too. And all offer great porches with rocking chairs where you can relax and view the wooded hillside and other surroundings. If weather permits, ask the front desk to deliver a gourmet picnic basket, and then find a quiet spot in the Smokies to relax with that special someone.

- ▶ **Where to eat:** You don't have to leave the property to find one of the best restaurants in the area, Dancing Bear Appalachian Bistro. Executive chef Shelley Cooper brings gourmet dining to the mountains, with farm-to-table specialties such as cast-iron beef tenderloin with loaded potato casserole, seasonal vegetables, wild mushrooms and house-made steak sauce. Reservations are strongly suggested during popular times, such as Valentine's Day. The resort's Apple Valley Cafe offers casual dining, breakfast through dinner. In nearby Maryville, restaurants run the gamut from fast food to white tablecloth.
- ▶ **Rates and reservations:** \$160-\$300 per night. Contact 800-369-0111 or www.dancingbearlodge.com.

♥ Red Horse Inn

45 Winstons Chase Court, Landrum, South Carolina

Plan your escape to Red Horse Inn in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The inn was chosen as one of America's



The Red Horse Inn was named one of America's most romantic inns by Travel and Leisure.

most romantic inns by Travel and Leisure. Choose a guest room in the inn or a private cottage, several of which are pet-friendly and all of which offer views of the surrounding pasture or mountains. All accommodations have whirlpool tubs or hot tubs.

- ▶ **Where to eat:** Breakfast is included in your stay at Red Horse. In nearby Saluda, North Carolina, The Purple Onion, 16 E. Main St., offers live bluegrass on Thursdays and Saturdays and Mediterranean-inspired pizzas, seafood and pastas nightly.
- ▶ **Rates and reservations:** \$175-\$325 per night, depending on accommodations. Contact 864-909-1575 or www.theredhorseinn.com.

♥ Stag Leap Country Cabins

2219 FM 2782, Nacogdoches, Texas

Nestled deep into the woods of East Texas, Stag Leap is the ideal secluded place for a romantic getaway. There are seven cabins, ranging in size from one bedroom to three. All cabins have full kitchens and charcoal grills, so you can bring your own food or dine in Nacogdoches just 2 miles away. Cabins also have wireless internet and satellite television. For some fresh air, step outside and enjoy the 200 acres of woodlands and waterways right outside your door. Most cabins have whirlpool tubs, inside or out, and gas or electric log fireplaces for romantic ambiance. Also, a private, centrally located hot tub for six, or just the two of you, may be reserved.

- ▶ **Where to eat:** Creekside Cafe at Pine Creek Lodge, 341 Pine Creek Road, is next door to Stag Leap and offers gourmet dining in a casual atmosphere. Try the rabbit Dijonnaise or grilled rib-eye. And it's said that the catfish at Clear Springs Restaurant, 211 Old Tyler Road, is the best on the planet.
- ▶ **Rates and reservations:** \$140-\$195 per night (cash discounts offered). Contact www.stagleap.com or 936-560-0766. 📞

Saddle up!

A passion for riding leads to fun and accomplishments

BY RACHEL BROWN KIRKLAND

When Hannah Hill was 7, her grandpa's gift of a miniature pony named Dancer was the first step along a trail that led to the New Hope Saddle Club. She isn't the only club member earning equine accolades.

The 2017 New Hope High School graduate won the youth timed events competition last year at the Alabama Open Horseman Association's state show in Montgomery. Saddle Club President Ricky Tallent, 57, claimed the grand championship in halter showmanship.

While Tallent is a veteran of the horse world, this was Hill's first time competing at the state level. Next year, she'll be plying her skills for a championship in the adult division for riders 18 and older.

A PASSION FOR HORSES

Her grandfather's love of trail riding inspired Hill, as did the barrel racing videos she watched. This year, Hill won with a 5-year-old horse named Rebel, who prefers Mountain Dew to apples. She and the gray horse bonded from the beginning.

"I can ride any horse, but I don't click with every horse," Hill says. "I don't have to think about riding Rebel. I just know how to. He gives you 100 per-

cent every time, no matter what. He's super gritty and has a lot of heart. I like that about him."

Rebel's qualities are not unlike her own. In high school, Hill was involved in FFA, the student government association, varsity softball and homecoming court. She also worked on the yearbook staff for two years, serving for one as editor. And she was inducted into the National Honor Society.

She rescues and re-homes abused horses, was named Senior Miss Ardmore Rodeo Queen, and has been a volunteer for the Special Olympics. Hill plans to attend Calhoun Community College and study nursing.

A LONG TRADITION

The New Hope Saddle Club is a winning, family-friendly organization that is part of the Tennessee Valley Saddle Club Association, which consists of three clubs: New Hope Saddle Club, Madison County Saddle Club and Limestone County Saddle Club. Individuals can join the club for an annual fee of \$10 or families for \$20.

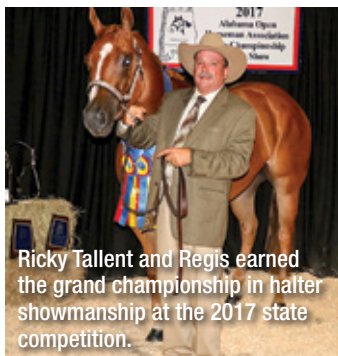
To qualify for state competition, riders must participate in at least eight shows within their own club and rank in the top 15. The New Hope Saddle Club hosts 12 shows annually at the

Saddle Club

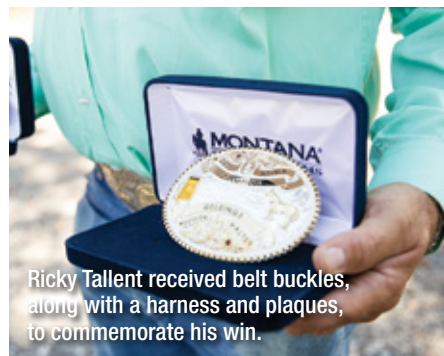
Hannah Hill and Ricky Tallent's love of horses began when they were children.



Hannah Hill was awarded a saddle, belt buckles and several plaques for her first-place win.



Ricky Tallent and Regis earned the grand championship in halter showmanship at the 2017 state competition.



Ricky Tallent received belt buckles, along with a harness and plaques, to commemorate his win.

city park between April and August. Members of the public are invited to watch.

Tallent says he began showing horses when he was about 10. His grand-champion win at last year's state competition was with Regis, a 3-year-old gelding whose registered name is My Secret Conclusion.

Describing the saddle club as a family-oriented group whose members look out for one another, Tallent encourages others to get involved, especially local youth.

"We're all like one big family," he says. "We get along, and we help each other." ☺

To learn more, visit <http://www.showaoha.org/TVSCA.htm>.

All Wi-Fi routers are not the same

Make sure you get the performance you need

Streaming movies, listening to online music services, sharing files between work and home and completing school assignments are only a few of the ways high-speed broadband can make life better.

A weak or out-of-date Wi-Fi router can turn fun and productivity into frustration and irritation.

A Wi-Fi router makes it possible to wirelessly connect the internet to computers, smartphones, televisions, game consoles and more. But it's important to realize all routers are not the same — far from it.

“Buying the wrong router can mean you do not have access to the full speeds available through a service such as New Hope’s high-speed Internet,” says Wes Hohn, central office technician at NHTC.

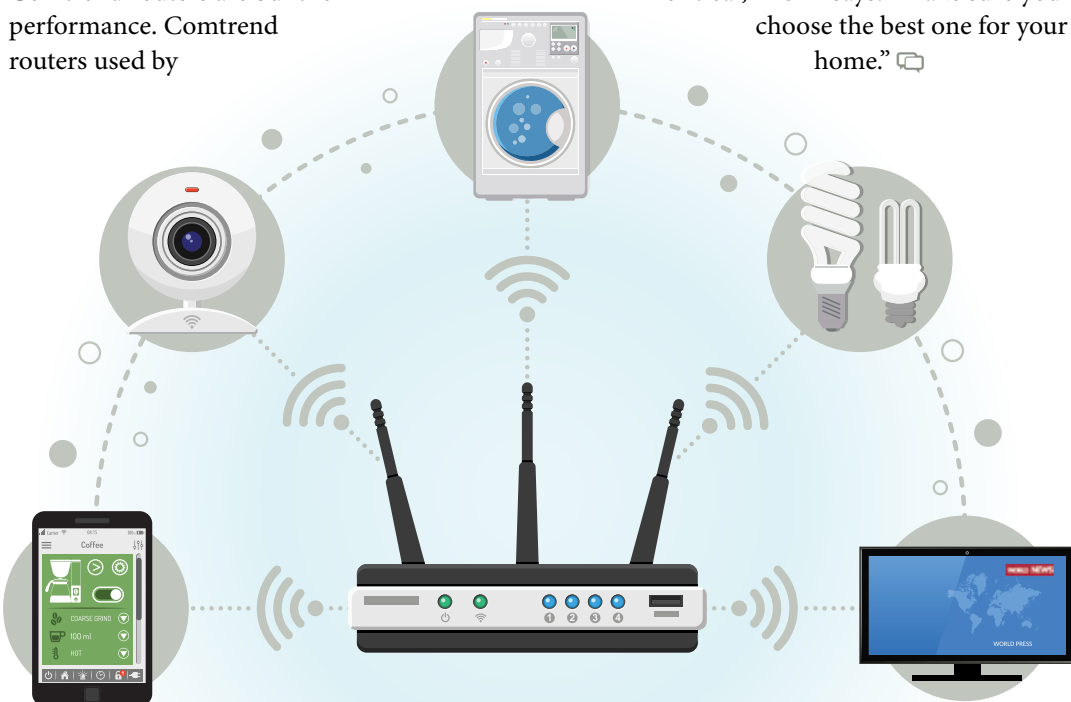
NHTC’s fiber-to-the-home internet service is designed to keep a home’s internet moving fast. “The router you choose will impact Wi-Fi coverage and connections throughout your home,” Hohn says.

Compared to the low-cost routers such as those typically found in big-box stores, Comtrend routers are built for performance. Comtrend routers used by

NHTC are capable of handling gigabit speeds. For comparison, the common Netgear N300 Wi-Fi router can handle speeds no faster than 300 Mbps.

There are other key differences between a Comtrend router and lower-performing routers. Comtrend routers rely on the latest technology, such as the ability to broadcast at 2.4 GHz or 5 GHz. That means the Comtrend routers can transmit for longer distances and with less interference from other devices in the home than routers using older standards. For example, many discount routers offer only 2.4 GHz, limiting their usefulness.

Comtrend can be configured to match the performance a customer needs. And after the installation, the team at New Hope Telephone can maintain and troubleshoot any issues that may arise down the road. “For the best home Wi-Fi experience, the choice of router is critical,” Hohn says. “Make sure you choose the best one for your home.”



“

For the best home Wi-Fi experience, the choice of router is critical. Make sure you choose the best one for your home.

—WES HOHN
CENTRAL OFFICE
TECHNICIAN AT NHTC

”

Some factors that may affect wireless internet speeds include:

- Placing your wireless router centrally in your home — doing so will help to maximize coverage and speed throughout the house.
- Remembering to check your device manual for maximum speed and Wi-Fi technology — each wireless device has different speed capabilities.
- Distance between your router and your device.
- Other wireless devices — these may cause interference.
- Number of walls or obstacles between the router and your device.



Spend smart in 2018

Your guide to the latest apps for coupon clipping

BY LUIS CARRASCO

If one of your New Year's resolutions is to finally start clipping coupons, or to just be smarter with your shopping budget, don't even bother taking out the scissors — take out your smartphone instead. Whether you like flipping through digital sales circulars or getting cash back on your purchases, the path to savings has never been smoother.

Here's a quick look at some of the services and apps available. All apps are compatible with iOS and Android devices.

COUPONS

Flipp allows you to browse through weekly sales ads from your favorite retailers — including Home Depot, Toys R Us and Walmart — or just search to see if an item you want is on sale. You can also make a shopping list and the app will point you to any existing deals. It also notifies you about expiring coupons and nearby discounts.

If you still enjoy searching for bargains in the newspaper, the **SnipSnap** coupon app lets your phone's camera do the clipping.

You can snap a picture of a printed offer and the app will capture the pertinent information so that you can use it at your favorite retailer. It also allows you to share coupons with your friends or find coupons other users have digitized.

Many retailers — including Target, Hobby Lobby, Michaels and Walgreens — also have their own apps that offer coupons.

'TEXTING CLUBS'

Hundreds of companies participate, so odds are that your favorite retailer, convenience store or chain restaurant is ready to send you coupons or deal alerts through a text. Simply check their website or ask a representative the next time you visit. Standard texting rates apply, though, so be careful of signing up for too many if you don't have unlimited texting.

Here are two to get you started: text SUB to 782929 for deals at Subway; text JOIN to 527365 for discounts at JC Penney. Any service you sign up for may be canceled anytime by texting the word STOP.

MONEY BACK

Both **Ibotta** and **Ebates** give you cash back for shopping, but they each take a different approach. When you shop through the Ebates website or app, the company receives a commission from the retailer and you get a part of that money, which you can then receive through a check or PayPal.

With Ibotta, you can either find cash-back rebates before you shop or check the app after you come back from the store. Either way, you watch a brief commercial or answer a survey and then take a photo of your receipt. The app recognizes the products on sale and deposits the money into your account, which you can then receive through PayPal, Venmo or a gift card.

Whichever app or service you choose, enjoy being a savvy shopper in 2018! 📱

Learning the language of tech

Enjoy a translator for today's essential tools

When people ask me what I do for a living, one of my favorite responses is that I am a translator. I translate between the technicians who build our networks, fix our computers, and sell us the latest in technology and those people who do not consider themselves “techie.” I think learning how to use technology is very much like learning a new language, so having a translator is always helpful.

In 2018, my plan is for this column to be your translator, helping you gain a better understanding of everyday technology. I will cover some basic things you need to know,

and I will introduce you to some of my favorite gadgets that you might find helpful.

In the meantime, here are some tips to get you started on using technology in your golden years.

- ▶ Remember, it is not your fault that you struggle to understand the language of technology. The lingo is not your native language, and it takes time to learn it. However, it is up to you to take the opportunity to learn whenever you can.
- ▶ Ask questions. You may think your question is trivial, but you will never learn if you don't ask. We all know that a child who speaks French

because they are raised in France is not smarter than someone who cannot speak French. We all have knowledge, and kids today have a better understanding of technology because it is part of their everyday lives.

- ▶ Start by picking technology that allows you to do what you love. If you enjoy playing cards or games, choose a tablet that allows you to play games. If you love creating crafts, sign up for sites such as Pinterest to look up ideas for woodworking, quilting or scrapbooking.

I have so much respect for those of you in your golden years. You have so many skills

and so much knowledge that many of us will never know or understand. However, I want you to have the same opportunities to learn how to go online safely and enjoy using technology. There are things out there that can help keep you safe and make your life a little easier. I am looking forward to introducing you to some of these things and teaching you about the language of technology. 🗨️



CARISSA SWENSON
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AND EDUCATION
CONSULTANT
FOR CONSORTIA
CONSULTING.



Do you want to learn the basics on how to use your smartphone or computer? Are you interested in signing up for a Facebook or Pinterest account? **Check out www.gcflearnfree.com for free tutorials on how to do all this and more.**



PHYSICALLY FIT AND SPIRITUALLY ENRICHED

First Baptist Church of New Hope reaches out through dance fitness ministry

BY LISA SAVAGE

The music was loud, yet the words of prayer and praise were soothing. It was easy to move to the beat as the dance fitness class began.

As the eight women used weights to warm up, the beat was slow. It wasn't long, though, until Nicole Dempsey picked up the pace as she led dance and aerobic movements set to energetic Christian music.

The Devoted Fitness For Women class at First Baptist Church of New Hope brings together women of all ages for a time of physical and spiritual enrichment, Dempsey says.

Three years ago, Dempsey and her husband, Shane, met with their pastor, the Rev. Tim Verhine at First Baptist Church

of New Hope, to brainstorm about ministries for young families.

Dempsey's husband suggested a fitness ministry for women. He explained how much his wife looked forward to the Zumba class she attended every week and how much the fitness program had grown.

STAYING FIT

Zumba, a mix of exercise and Latin dance, is a registered trademark, and Dempsey is not a certified Zumba instructor or fitness trainer. She liked the mix of dance and fitness, however, and she wanted to use that concept for the church exercise group. While it's not exactly Zumba, the class does use upbeat music and dance moves.

"I expressed my concerns about dance fitness at church," Dempsey says. "Would members be offended, and what music

would I play? I had never led a fitness class before."

She says her husband and Verhine searched the internet to find examples of how it could work.

"I didn't fully commit that night, but the next week after much prayer, I felt God pulling at my heart and knew I had to follow through with his plan," she says. "I thought 'God, is this really how you are going to use me to build your kingdom?' I fully committed, and God handled the rest."

Once Dempsey made the choice, she worked to create a unique fitness class. "I wanted these ladies to leave class feeling physically better and spiritually enriched. I wanted them to look forward to the time of fellowship and prayer," Dempsey says. "The music was very important to me because I wanted it to be upbeat and uplifting."



Members of the Devoted Fitness for Women dance class are, top from left, Nicole Dempsey; her daughter, Hadley Dempsey; Beth Whitaker; Dempsey; and Cathy Baker. Bottom, from left, are Jeannie Jackson, Dempsey and Joan Pullen.

A UNIQUE CLASS

Each class starts with a few minutes of prayer requests, praises and sharing. Uplifting songs by popular Christian artists such as TobyMac, Mandisa, MercyMe, Newsboys and more provide the soundtrack.

The class combines cardio, easy-to-follow, choreographed routines, and a tone-and-burn segment where members bring hand weights and a yoga mat for a full-body workout.

Dempsey says members range from beginners to those with more advanced levels of fitness. Some participants have set personal goals. “But most take it one class and one week at a time,” she says. “These ladies are so encouraging and wonderful prayer warriors.”

A PERSONAL BLESSING

Dempsey says the ministry has been a blessing to her. “I pray that every lady who has attended or that decides to attend feels the same,” she says. “If you are looking for a workout class, we would love to have you.”

Several women who attended the Zumba dance class joined Dempsey at

the dance fitness class at her church on Thursday nights. Cathy Baker goes to both classes and loves them. “I feel a lot better physically, and we’re bonding with other ladies using uplifting music,” says Baker of Dempsey’s class.

She says going to the classes with other women makes it easier. Some nights it’s harder than others. The class is a great stress reliever for the fifth-grade teacher.

INSPIRING OTHERS

Lindsey Hemphill and Stephanie Massanelli liked the class so much they decided to start a dance fitness program at their church, New Salem Baptist. Dance fitness is a popular way to exercise, and their approach is easier to master than some programs. “The dance moves are much easier to follow,” Massanelli says.

The class at New Salem, called Hot Mess Dance Fitness, is on Tuesday and Thursday nights. “We’ve been doing it over a year, and we average about 10 ladies per class,” Massanelli says.

Dempsey says new members are always welcome, and she hopes fitness classes such as those started by New Salem spread to other churches in the community.

“I would like to help other ladies start fitness classes like ours at their church or in their community,” she says. “I’m just trying to introduce ladies to exercise and to share God’s love. I want ladies to know they are loved, and if they don’t know the greatest love, then I want to introduce them to Him.” ☺

DON'T MISS ONE OF THE LOCAL CLASSES

Classes are free!

Devoted Fitness for Women

First Baptist Church of New Hope
Thursdays at 6 p.m.
in the Family Life Center.
Child care is available.

Hot Mess Dance Fitness

New Salem Baptist Church
Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6 p.m.
in the Christian Life Center.
Child care is available.

The secret to perfect BISCUITS

Like a magician in her lab or an artist in her studio, Phyllis Cabe stands in her kitchen at The Big Biscuit Barn, where she takes basic biscuit dough and turns it into delicious masterpieces of culinary genius.

Cabe opened her restaurant right outside one of North Georgia's most historic towns, Fort Oglethorpe, locally known as the gateway to Chickamauga and Chattahoochee National Military Park. Because of its location, visitors from across the globe happen upon this eatery known for serving the biggest, best biscuits in town.

"I also have a solid group of regulars — people who come here every day, and some who eat here twice a day," she says.

They come for eggs, sausage and biscuits with gravy for breakfast. Then, they return for fried chicken with garlic-cheese biscuits for lunch, among other menu offerings.

Suffice it to say, Cabe knows a thing or two about making biscuits, an art she learned at her mama's apron strings and then further developed before opening The Big Biscuit Barn in 2007. Now, she makes 400-500 biscuits daily. While some are served alongside entrees

with butter and jam, others are made into the giant Cinnabarn cinnamon rolls — a house favorite — crispy fried fruit pies, crusts for chicken pot pie and other creations.

First and foremost, Cabe stresses the importance of not overworking the dough when making biscuits. Don't knead it, she says.

"Pick the dough up and lay it over itself six or seven times, incorporating layers in the dough, working in a little more flour if the dough feels too wet," she says. "This helps to create a fluffier biscuit."

Before cutting the dough, let it proof for about 15 minutes. Once the biscuits are cut and on the baking sheet, let them proof again for another 15 minutes. This, Cabe says, is her secret to making good biscuits, and something she discovered by accident.

"Nobody does that," she says. "And recipes won't tell you to. But I've thought this through a million times, and it makes a difference."

Here are more tips for making biscuits the way it's done at The Big Biscuit Barn:

- If you don't have White Lily flour, go get some. Cabe swears by it.
- When using a biscuit cutter, go straight down through the dough without twisting the cutter. "The less you mess with it, the prettier the biscuit," Cabe says. And you



Phyllis Cabe makes 400 to 500 biscuits daily at The Big Biscuit Barn in Ft. Oglethorpe, Georgia.



A Biscuit Primer

Phyllis Cabe, owner of The Big Biscuit Barn, teaches the basics of biscuit making in classes at her restaurant. Winter classes are Jan. 13 and Feb. 10. Groups are welcome. For reservations or more information, call 706-861-0000.

don't need to spend a lot of money on fancy biscuit cutters. Cabe uses a pineapple can that's been cut in half.

- Your rolling pin is not a bulldozer. Very lightly roll out the dough, sprinkle it with flour and continue rolling lightly to your desired thickness.
- For tall biscuits with a crispy edge, place a biscuit on the baking sheet so that one side lightly touches the biscuit next to it. Allow about an inch of space between rows.

The Big Biscuit Barn

Where: 1391 Lafayette Road, Rossville, Georgia

Phone: 706-861-0000

Hours: 6 a.m.-2 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, 6 a.m.-noon Saturday



FOOD EDITOR
ANNE P. BRALY
IS A NATIVE OF
CHATTANOOGA,
TENNESSEE.

WHITE LILY BISCUIT DOUGH

This recipe is on the back of every bag of White Lily flour. Cabe tweaks it by upping the amount of liquid. "People always add too much flour, so upping the amount of buttermilk compensates for that," she says.

- 2 cups White Lily all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup vegetable shortening
- 7/8 cup buttermilk
- 1/4 cup butter, melted

Heat oven to 475 F. Combine flour, baking powder and salt in large bowl. Cut in shortening with pastry blender, or two knives, until mixture has a cornmeal texture. Blend in buttermilk with fork. Turn dough onto lightly floured surface. Fold dough over itself 6-7 times, just until smooth. Roll dough into a 7-inch circle that is 1/2- to 3/4-inch thick. Cut out 7 to 8 biscuits using a floured 2-inch biscuit cutter. You may use larger cutter to make fewer but bigger biscuits. Place on baking sheet so that edges almost touch, leaving about an inch of space between rows. Shape dough scraps into a ball. Pat out to desired thickness. Cut out additional biscuits. Bake 8 to 10 minutes or until golden brown. Brush with butter, if desired.

Note: Cabe makes the first part of the recipe (through the shortening) and keeps it on hand in the refrigerator. She says the mixture will last three to four weeks. She adds the buttermilk right before making her biscuits.

SPINACH-ARTICHOKE BISCUITS

- 1 recipe White Lily biscuit dough
- 1 package Hidden Valley spinach-artichoke dressing mix
- 2 cups chopped chicken (rotisserie or fried)
- 2 cups chopped spinach, well drained
- Ranch dressing

Make biscuit dough, adding 2 tablespoons dry dressing mix to the dough; roll out to 1/2-inch thickness. Using a 2-inch biscuit



cutter, cut biscuits and place on baking sheet. Gently press an indentation into each biscuit. Combine chicken and spinach. Place about 1 tablespoon mixture into biscuit and bake at 475 F until lightly browned. Remove from oven and sprinkle with 1 tablespoon dressing mix. Serve immediately with ranch dressing for dipping, or make a dip using the remaining dressing mix and following package directions.

CHICKEN CORDON BLEU BISCUITS

- 1 recipe White Lily biscuit dough
- Chopped chicken (fried, grilled or boiled)
- Chopped ham
- Provolone cheese, shredded
- Garlic salt
- Greek seasoning

Chill dough, then roll out to 1/2-inch thickness. Using a 6-inch cutter, cut dough into circles. Top each circle with meats, cheese and seasonings. Fold dough over filling and crimp edges of dough with a fork. Deep fry until golden brown.

Note: Any combination of meats and cheeses works with this recipe. Ham and Swiss cheese is a good choice. Or try corned beef, Swiss cheese and well-drained sauerkraut for a biscuit Reuben served with some Thousand Island dressing for dipping. 📺

"STUFFED" BISCUITS

- 1 recipe White Lily biscuit dough
- Cooked meats, such as crumbled sausage or shredded ham
- Mrs. Dash seasoning
- Shredded cheese (your choice)
- Melted butter

Heat oven to 475 F. Roll out dough to 1/2-inch thickness and cut into biscuits using a 2-inch biscuit cutter. Place biscuits on baking sheet and lightly press down the center of each biscuit, making an indentation. Place meat in the indentation and sprinkle with Mrs. Dash. Bake at 475 F until biscuits are lightly browned. Remove from oven and sprinkle with cheese and drizzle with melted butter. Serve immediately as an appetizer.

Note: You can turn these into dessert by stuffing the biscuits with Heath Bits and drizzling them with your favorite chocolate icing after baking. Or stuff them with cinnamon-sugar-butter and drizzle with confectioner's sugar glaze after baking.



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