

# The Communicator

MARCH/APRIL 2018

## A LIFETIME OF SERVICE

Commissioner Hill  
has a passion for  
giving back

## SHINY AND NEW

A modern-day theater for  
New Hope Elementary School

## BIRTHDAY CELL-EBRATION

Happy 45th to the modern  
mobile phone





BY SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO  
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

## Rural youth are the future

At NTCA and the Foundation for Rural Service, we believe an investment in our rural youth is an investment in the future of rural America.

That's why we are committed to making those kinds of investments. Each year, our partners at FRS award \$100,000 worth of scholarships to assist rural students in attending college or technical school. FRS also coordinates a trip each year for rural youth to visit Washington, D.C., and learn about the way our government works.

I am thrilled about the launch of the FRS Rural Youth App Challenge and excited to see the bright ideas that come from the minds of our rural youth.

I believe deeply in the importance of these programs, but for NTCA members like your local provider, support for our rural youth goes much deeper.

Your broadband provider works hard to bring a reliable internet connection to students' homes — and often their schools — to get the education they need. They make sure teachers can connect to the resources and research needed to provide quality instruction. And once these young men and women graduate, it will be your broadband provider whose service enables them to apply for jobs, start a business or work remotely.

I'm proud of the investments NTCA, FRS and our member telcos have made and will continue to make in the future of rural America. ☑



Apps play a big role in making life easier. They are often the fastest and easiest way to access social media, check the weather forecast, pay bills, listen to music, shop and access just about anything imaginable on the internet.

That's why the Foundation for Rural Service created the FRS Rural Youth App Challenge. Students will develop a concept for a mobile app that addresses a problem or improves a process in their rural community, or anywhere in rural America, says Jessica Golden, executive director of the Foundation for Rural Service. "Youth engagement is a huge part of what we do," she says.

The FRS is the charitable arm of NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association and has been involved in scholarships, youth tours in Washington, D.C., and many other programs geared toward engaging the youth of America, Golden says.

It's all part of the emphasis on the importance of broadband, which is becoming a vital thread in the American fabric. "We want all our youth to see themselves as a gamechanger and a voice of the rural communities," she says. "We want them to think outside the box."

The App Challenge will judge students based on how well-researched and well-presented the app is. While the idea can be similar to an existing app, it must be an original idea.

The program launched Jan. 23, and the deadline for submissions for the contest is April 20. Students in grades 7-12 are eligible.

Either a single student or groups with as many as five participants may enter. A parent of at least one student in the group must be a member of a cooperative that is an NTCA member.

Winners will be announced in mid-to-late May. The winning team will receive \$1,000 in gift cards and Codecademy scholarships. The first 10 student applicants with complete applications will also receive a subscription to Codecademy-PRO, worth about \$84. ☑

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**  
Go to [frs.org](http://frs.org), send an email inquiry to [foundation@frs.org](mailto:foundation@frs.org), or call 703-351-2026.



**HEY  
TELEMARKETERS:**

**DO NOT CALL!**

**T**he Federal Trade Commission and the Federal Communications Commission established a National Do Not Call Registry. Joining this registry can drastically reduce the number of telemarketing calls you receive.

**JUST THE FACTS ABOUT DO NOT CALL:**

- Once you've registered, telemarketers have 31 days to stop calling your number.
- Register as many as three non-business telephone numbers. You can also register cellphone numbers — there is not a separate registry for cellphones.
- Your number will remain on the list permanently unless you disconnect the number or you choose to remove it.
- Some businesses are exempt from the Do Not Call Registry and may still be able to call your number. These include

political organizations, charities, telephone surveyors and businesses with whom you have an existing relationship.

Strict Federal Trade Commission rules make it illegal for telemarketers to do any of the following, regardless of whether or not your number is listed on the National Do Not Call Registry:

- Call before 8 a.m.
- Call after 9 p.m.
- Misrepresent what is being offered
- Threaten, intimidate or harass you
- Call again after you've asked them not to



**IT'S EASY!**

Add your number to the  
Do Not Call Registry

Register online at  
**[www.donotcall.gov](http://www.donotcall.gov)**  
or call 888-382-1222.  
For TTY, call 866-290-4236.

You must call from the telephone number you wish to register.

**ATTENTION LOCAL  
BUSINESS OWNERS:**

**Make sure you follow  
the Do Not Call rules**

No matter if you're a one-person shop or a beloved company, local business owners should remember that National Do Not Call Registry rules and regulations apply to you. After all, you don't want to upset a loyal customer, or frustrate potential new customers, with unwanted phone calls.

If you are a company, individual or organization that places telemarketing calls, it is very important that you familiarize yourself with the operations of the National Do Not Call Registry. Unless you fall under one of the established exceptions, such as telemarketing by charitable organizations or for prior business relationships, you may not make telemarketing calls to numbers included in the National Do Not Call Registry.

For information regarding National Do Not Call regulations, visit the National Do Not Call Registry at [www.telemarketing.donotcall.gov](http://www.telemarketing.donotcall.gov). You can find the Federal Communications Commission and Federal Trade Commission rules governing telemarketing and telephone solicitation at 47 C.F.R. § 64.1200 and 16 C.F.R. Part 310, respectively.

**OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION:**

The Do Not Call initiative, regulated by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), requires telephone service providers to notify customers of the National Do Not Call rules and regulations. ☎

# Keeping our part of the 'net' neutral

It's very rare that telecommunications policy grabs headlines, dominates social media feeds, and leads the news broadcasts. But that's exactly what we saw after the FCC's decision on net neutrality.



**JIM COOK**  
General Manager

It's encouraging to see people around the country take stock, realize how important their broadband service is to their daily lives, and take action to protect it. Concerns over net neutrality have caused some of our members to email, call or message us on social media. I'm proud that our members are tuned in to the issues and willing to communicate with us about the future of their service.

The term "net neutrality" refers to policy that would prevent internet providers from interfering with selective forms of internet traffic through blocking or slowing down certain services or websites.

There's a lot of conflicting information about how the regulations and the FCC changes to the rules will affect broadband, but I wanted to set the record straight for NHTC customers. Our No. 1 concern has been and will always be delivering to you the best online experience

possible. We do not throttle, prioritize or block any legal internet traffic and have no plans to do so in the future. Essentially, we are keeping our members' connections net neutral.

I understand that many people have concerns about this ruling, but please know that NHTC has no intention of making changes to our service based on the FCC's decision.

**“I can't speak for what other profit-driven corporate telecommunications providers may do, but we have been net neutral and will stay that way because it's the right thing to do for our customers.”**

I can't speak for what other profit-driven corporate telecommunications providers may do, but we have been net neutral and will stay that way because it's the right thing to do for our customers.

The only thing the FCC's decision will change for us will be reducing the amount of regulatory paperwork we have to keep. Representatives from NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association — which represents 850 small, rural, community-based member companies like ours — testified to this before congressional committees.

For small telcos like ours, the so-called net neutrality rules implemented in 2015 required extensive reporting that took time and effort from our team. That's time and effort we'd rather spend on growing and improving our network and customer service features.

NTCA Senior Vice President Michael Romano told Congress the 2015 rule's "heavy-handed regulatory burdens can be distracting at best or devastating at worst."

In summary, some experts would have us believe that the removal of net neutrality rules is a threat to the internet as we know it. But here at NHTC, we're going to keep your internet service open and free as you enjoy it today — and will work hard to make it even better tomorrow. ☞

## The Communicator

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### Send address corrections to:

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### On the Cover:



Commissioner Craig Hill farms his family's land while following his parents' lead and serving the community. See story Page 12.

**PLEDGE:** NHTC does not throttle, prioritize or block any legal internet traffic, and we have no plans to do so in the future.

TUESDAY, MAY 15, 2018

Save  
*the*  
Date

# 2018 NHTC Annual Meeting

NEW HOPE MIDDLE SCHOOL GYM | VOTING STARTS AT 5 P.M.  
BUSINESS MEETING FOLLOWS AT 7:30 P.M.

- DOOR PRIZES
- REFRESHMENTS
- ENTERTAINMENT

BE SURE TO BRING A VALID PHOTO ID TO VOTE IN THE BOARD ELECTION.  
SEE YOU THERE!



Don't forget to move your clocks forward one hour! Daylight saving time will begin at 2 a.m. on Sunday, March 11.

## ATTENTION HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS: NEED MONEY FOR COLLEGE?

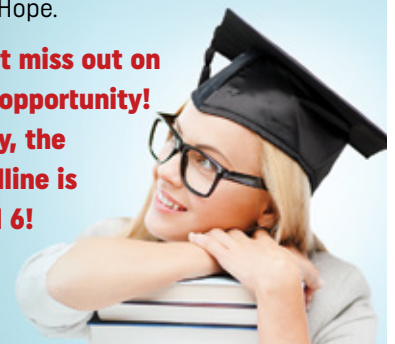
College students can always use extra money for tuition and books. NHTC wants to help two local graduating high school seniors with college expenses. **One student each from DAR and NHHS will receive a \$1500 scholarship from NHTC.**

To be eligible to participate in this program, applicants must:

- Be a graduating high school senior from either DAR or NHHS
- Have at least an overall B average
- Complete the application process
- Parent or guardian must have active service with NHTC

Scholarships are awarded to students who exemplify academic achievement and community involvement. Applications are available online at [nhtc.coop](http://nhtc.coop), from the school guidance counselor's office, and from NHTC's business office at 5415 Main Drive in New Hope.

**Don't miss out on this opportunity! Hurry, the deadline is April 6!**





# TAKING IT LOW AND SLOW

ON THE TRAIL FOR

# THE BEST BBQ IN THE SOUTH

BY ANNE BRALY

Other regions of the country have certainly tried to imitate, but none have been able to duplicate the barbecue found in states across the South. Some restaurants have different sauces, while others are known by the type of wood they use for smoking. But all are known for the magical spell they put on the grill. Just follow the smoke from state to state on this road trip around the South to get your 'que on.



## Owensboro, Kentucky — Moonlite Bar-B-Que Inn

2840 W. Parrish Ave.

It once said, "Bahhh," but your taste buds will say, "Ahhh," when you bite into the barbecued mutton that put Moonlite on the map. Order it by the plate, on a sandwich or by the pound, and don't forget an order of the famous Kentucky burgoo. There's a barbecue buffet serving lunch and dinner and a dine-in menu with traditional pork or beef barbecue, catfish and chicken.



## Memphis, Tennessee — Central BBQ

147 E. Butler Ave., 2249 Central Ave. and 4375 Summer Ave.

Memphis is in the heart of the barbecue belt, so it's hard to visit and not find a good pit. Central, though, is consistently ranked in the top three and always comes home from competitions with a trophy. So when you want to pig out on ribs, pork, chicken, turkey, brisket, sausage and even bologna, Central can't be beat. No sauce meets the meat until the latter comes out of the smoker, and even then, not until you order. The spice mixture has been a deeply held secret since the first Central opened in 2002. Now, there are three locations, all of which have been featured in national publications, and it's a favorite stop for TV food personalities, too.





## Little Rock, Arkansas — Whole Hog Cafe

2516 Cantrell Road; 12111 W. Markham St.; and 5107 Warden Road, North Little Rock

It's no small feat to garner a win in the esteemed Memphis in May World Championship Barbecue Cooking Contest, but Whole Hog has done it three times with two second-place wins for its ribs and a first-place for its whole hog. What began as a food truck in a parking lot in Little Rock has now spread across the nation, but its heart belongs in Little Rock, where you can order a simple pulled pork sandwich or get a taste of it all with the Ultimate Platter, which includes pulled pork, smoked beef, smoked chicken, ribs, three sides and dinner rolls. Hungry yet?



## Dallas, Texas — Pecan Lodge

2702 Main St.

In a state known for its barbecue, Pecan Lodge was named one of the top four barbecue joints in the world — that's a pretty big deal. But owners Justin and Diane Fourton say they weren't out to set the world on fire, just the seasoned woods they put in the pit to smoke their mouthwatering brisket, among other meats. It's well worth the hour-long wait you might encounter. Order the brisket on a sandwich or by the pound, or have it piled into a salt-crusted sweet potato with cheese, spicy sour cream, butter and onions. It all smacks of Southern comfort.



## Jackson, Mississippi — Pig & Pint

3139 N. State St.

This joint puts a spin on barbecue with its barbecue chicken tacos and pork belly corn dogs, while also offering traditional favorites like pulled pork, smoked brisket and barbecued chicken. It gives a nod to other regional cuisines, too. There are Asian smoked wings and fried boudin balls, a Louisiana favorite served with beer mustard and housemade bread-and-butter pickles. The menu may sound outlandish, but the food is a hometown favorite that's picked up awards, including best barbecue in Mississippi by firstwefeast.com.



## Decatur, Alabama — Big Bob Gibson Bar-B-Que

1715 Sixth Ave. S. and 2520 Danville Road SW

Cross the Alabama border and ask for a good barbecue place and chances are you'll be directed to the town on the banks of the Tennessee River just south of the Tennessee border where Big Bob started cranking out the 'cue back in 1925. Gibson created his empire from smoked chicken smothered in white sauce, a recipe that's appeared in numerous publications, as well as in bottles sold online and in the restaurant. The menu expanded over the years to include every kind of smoked meat you may crave — pork butts, turkey breasts, whole chickens, brisket and ribs. And don't forget a slice of peanut butter pie.



## Gainesville, Georgia — The Hickory Pig

3605 Thompson Bridge Road

When you envision a barbecue shack, the building housing The Hickory Pig is what comes to mind. From the stack of wood out front, to the giant pig in the parking lot, to the ramshackle building, it's a place with pure Southern small-town charm. And the food? Just bite into a fork-tender rib and you'll see why it's a favorite in the north Georgia area for barbecue. The Brunswick stew is not to be missed.



## Spartanburg, South Carolina — Carolina BBQ and More

7115 Lone Oak Road

Southern Living named Carolina BBQ as the best barbecue joint in the state, a reputation built on finger-licking 'cue: St. Louis-style ribs, hickory-smoked chicken and turkey, brisket and pulled pork. Brunswick stew is made from scratch, and you won't shut up about the chocolate hush puppies. The red slaw is known as some of the best in the business, and you're welcome to take home a bottle of the barbecue sauce for yourself. 🍷







Bailey Hines, a member of New Hope Boy Scout Troop 7073, places a flag on a fire during a flag retirement ceremony. Proper retirement of the flag is one of the community service projects of the Boy Scouts.

# Be prepared

## Scouting makes a difference in young lives

BY LISA SAVAGE

**C**hase Guida has gone camping — one of the things he loves most about Boy Scouts — in some pretty cool places. His favorites are the caves of Cathedral Caverns and Raccoon Mountain in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Camping is also a requirement to become an Eagle Scout, a goal of 15-year-old Guida. “Part of it is the prestige,” he says. “But everything you’re learning is fun and helps you prepare for your future.”

Becoming an Eagle Scout is an aspiration for Guida and several other members of New Hope Boy Scout Troop 7073. The path to scouting’s highest award highlights the skills and traits emphasized by the organization.

### COLLECTING MERIT BADGES

A Boy Scout is required to obtain 21 merit badges before applying for Eagle Scout — the highest recognition in scouting. Eight merit badges can

be the scout’s choice, and 13 have specific requirements. The required badges include camping, cooking, swimming, hiking or cycling, citizenship in the community, citizenship in the nation, citizenship in the world, communication, lifesaving or emergency preparedness, environmental science or sustainability, family life, first aid, personal fitness and personal management.

The troop works on one merit badge a month, says Scoutmaster Mark Cowan. “One of the things I love most about Boy Scouts is how it prepares you for life,” he says.

Cowan wasn’t involved in Boy Scouts as a child, but he and his wife, Shawn, became

leaders when their son, Jackson, started in Cub Scouts, which is open to those in first grade through fifth grade. Boy Scouts is for ages 12 to 17.


### LIFE EXPERIENCES

Scouting goes beyond merit badges. The scouts organize flag retirement ceremonies, present colors, and are involved in activities such as community cleanups. “We do a lot of community service,” Cowan says.

Cowan considers the merit badge for family life one of the most important. “It teaches about the dynamics of a family, being a dad, and the responsibility that comes with that,” he says.

For Eagle Scout, requirements also include the development of a project that helps someone outside their family, such as a church, school or other organization. The project has to be approved by the local and state levels of the Boy Scout Council. “The scout does all the planning and raises the

money on his own to do it,” Cowan says.

Once a scout has the required 21 merit badges, he can apply for Eagle Scout. Of the 11 scouts currently in the New Hope troop, six are on track to attain Eagle Scout within two years. 



The New Hope Boy Scout Troop 7073 organizes a chicken dinner fundraiser each spring to help with the cost of summer camp. The event is April 7, and the plates are sold in advance. To place an order, see a Boy Scout or call Cowan at 256-990-6216. The Boy Scouts meet at 6:30 p.m. each Monday at the New Hope United Methodist Church. Other scout leaders are Michael Kennemer, Tracy Graley and Spence Guida.



# Show off

New Hope Elementary auditorium now a state-of-the-art facility

BY LISA SAVAGE



Front, from left, are Andrea Bridges, Care Center; Mary Louise Stowe, school board member; Tanya Spears, PTO president; Jackie Hester, assistant principal; and Melissa Brown, former PTO president. Back, from left, are Commissioner Craig Hill; Sen. Clay Scofield; Vince Edmonds, principal; and Rep. Ritchie Whorton.

The decades-old wooden theater seats in the auditorium at New Hope Elementary were dilapidated, with splitting wood on some seats. As students gathered for an assembly four years ago, a third-grader sat down and the seat broke.

The student's leg was injured, and the experience was also embarrassing, New Hope Elementary principal Vince Edmonds says.

Edmonds and members of the Parent-Teacher Organization already had plans to raise money for a theater renovation, but it was important to move forward as soon as possible. "Not only was it unsightly, but it was also unsafe," Edmonds says.

The auditorium was renovated with help from the community, elected officials and other groups. "We stripped it down to the nails," Edmonds says of the \$120,000 effort.

The renovation included theater-style seating for about 530 people, as well as modern theater lighting and a sound system. The stage was also restored and the wood refinished to its original luster.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Various groups and organizations contributed to the project, including The Care Center, a nonprofit organization in southwestern Madison County. The organization works to enhance education and

employment opportunities, and it offers crisis and recovery support. The PTO also organized several fundraising events.

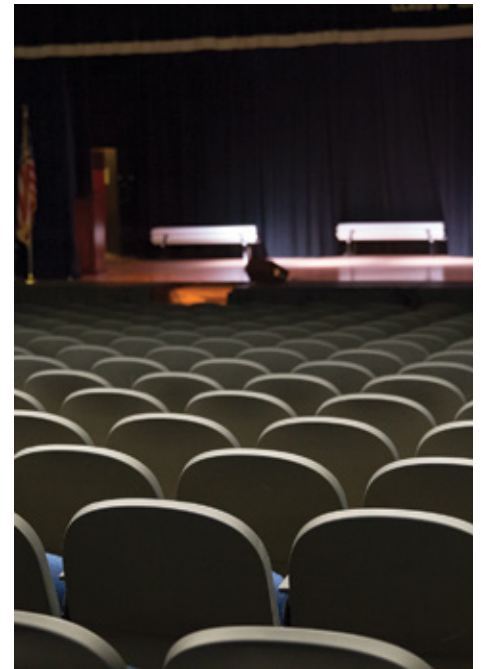
New Hope Telephone Cooperative uses the auditorium for meetings and made a contribution, Edmonds says. Funds were directed to the project from city and county officials, as well as the local legislative delegation.

"We even sold the old seats," Edmonds says. "It was nostalgic, and they sold better than I expected. We didn't make a lot, but it was better than throwing them in the trash."

## COMMUNITY GATHERINGS


The auditorium is available for the elementary and middle schools, which is kindergarten through eighth grade. The high school is on the same campus and can use the theater for plays and other productions.

The auditorium is an ideal venue for the school's show choir and drama club. "We didn't really have a venue for either," Edmonds says. "It's going to benefit so many people."



Schools in Owens Cross Roads can also use the auditorium if needed, Edmonds says.

Future uses were kept in mind when planning the remodel. For example, the auditorium is set up for a projector, so it's possible to show movies during community events.

"Now we have a venue that will be something for our schools and our community to use and be proud of," Edmonds says. "To have a venue like this in our area is really a blessing." 



# Mobile phones turn 45

## Wireline technology makes cellphone popularity possible

BY PATRICK SMITH

While you've likely heard of Steve Jobs, the influential entrepreneur and one-time leader of Apple, you probably don't know of Martin Cooper, a Motorola employee who made the first cellular phone call on April 3, 1973. Jobs' achievements with the iPhone, along with much of Apple's recent success with the device, wouldn't be possible without Cooper.

When Cooper stood in midtown Manhattan and placed a call 45 years ago, he forever changed how we communicate. Known as the father of modern cellphones, Cooper successfully connected to Bell Labs headquarters in New Jersey, calling on what would become the world's first commercial cellphone.

Much like Jobs' success was dependent on Cooper, today's cellular technology is dependent on a wired copper

and fiber optic backbone to connect wireless communications.

Wireless technology needs a hardwired foundation to operate. Without wireline technology, cellphones would neither be able to make calls nor use internet data.

### THE WIRELINE BACKBONE

When it comes to cellphones and the wireline technology they need to operate, think of the concept like the wireless router in your home. A wired connection runs from the wall to your router so it can broadcast and receive a signal. The same principle applies to the fact that cellular phones need a wired connection to operate.

Copper and fiber lines running overhead and underground play a crucial role in carrying signals between more than 300,000 cell sites across the country. When you use your cellphone to make

a call or access the internet, your connection spends part of its journey on the same network that makes landline calls and internet connections possible.

### RURAL TELCOS PLAY A VITAL ROLE

Telecommunications companies provide an essential service by keeping cellular callers connected in rural areas. Many rural telco providers supply wireline copper or fiber service to large cellular towers. These lines keep people connected when they are making cellular calls in rural regions, whether they're traveling through the area or residing there.


### 3G SPEEDS AND BEYOND

As fiber optic connections become more common, they also help to lay the groundwork for faster cellular speeds. The blazing-fast speed of fiber not only means faster upload

and download speeds for area homes and businesses, but it also means faster cellular data speeds.

Mobile data service — 3G, 4G and 4G LTE — relies on fast connections from telecommunications providers to cell towers, so users can have dependable mobile access to the internet.

While a release date has not been set, developers are working to create a new 5G technology, which could offer data speeds as fast as 10 Gbps. Peak 4G LTE speeds top out at about 50 Mbps today, making 5G potentially about 200 times faster.

And while it's impossible to predict the future and the developments that newer, faster cellular technology will bring, it's clear that progress isn't possible without a strong base of copper and fiber wireline technology to connect our calls and provide high-speed mobile data. 



# Gadgets for the golden years

**L**os Angeles Times Publisher Ross Levinsohn once said, “The speed at which technology evolves affects everyone; we repeatedly hear that constant innovation is overwhelming for consumers, who struggle to keep pace.”

I couldn’t agree more with that statement. It seems like as soon as I learn a new piece of software, or how to use the latest technology gadget, it becomes outdated and replaced with a newer version.

If it gets overwhelming for me — a professional who works with technology daily — I can just imagine how overwhelming it is for someone who considers themselves non-techie.

I want to take a bit of the guesswork out of researching technology and point out a few gadgets that I think are good starter items for those adopters in their golden years.

## Tablet: Amazon Fire

The Amazon Fire is a great starter tablet for a couple of reasons. It is reasonably priced, coming in under \$100. It’s great for watching movies or TV shows, checking email, playing games and, of course, reading books. The Fire even has a blue light filter that makes reading on the tablet less strenuous on



your eyes. If you have trouble reading small print, you can make the font larger so that it is easier to read, even without your reading glasses.

## Gadget for a Non-Techie: Pix-Star Wi-Fi Picture Frame

If you are looking for a great gift for a parent or a grandparent, this is a good one. The picture frame is connected to Wi-Fi and has an email address. The system makes it very easy to add updated photos to the frame. Family and friends can simply email photos directly to the frame.

## Medical Tech Gadget: MedMinder Pill Dispenser

Never worry about remembering to take your medicine at the right time each day. MedMinder can help you remember your meds by calling, texting or emailing you. Multiple features and differing models ensure the right style for different needs.

## Voice Control Gadget: Amazon Echo Show

Once the Amazon Echo Show is set up, you can get the information you want easier. Ask the built-in helper, Alexa, for the temperature, score of the game, or a fact you can’t

remember. My favorite feature of this device is the ability to “drop in” on loved ones to see how they are doing. Just by answering a call with your voice, you can see and hear the people you care about the most.

The best way to learn how to use the latest in tech gadgets is to give them a try. You never know; you may find you enjoy using them! 📱




**CARISSA SWENSON**  
IS A TRAINING  
AND EDUCATION  
CONSULTANT  
FOR CONSORTIA  
CONSULTING.



To learn more about the gadgets mentioned in the article, visit the following websites:

- ▶ [www.amazon.com/fire](http://www.amazon.com/fire)
- ▶ [www.pix-star.com](http://www.pix-star.com)
- ▶ [www.amazon.com/echo-show](http://www.amazon.com/echo-show)
- ▶ [www.medminder.com](http://www.medminder.com)





From left, Craig Hill and his sons, Cason and Hudson, walk around the family farm where they recently planted 24,000 oak trees.

# Roots

## NEW HOPE'S HILL GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY HE CALLS HOME

BY LISA SAVAGE

**L**ike a lot of guys, Craig Hill always wanted to be like his father. It's the influence of both his parents, however, that Hill says drives him to do what he can to give back to the community.

"I'm a product of what my mother and father taught me," says Hill, who represents District 3 on the Madison County Commission. "They were hard workers who cared about where they lived. I'm so thankful for that."

His father, Nolan, worked at Redstone Arsenal as a civil engineer, and he was devoted to his community, serving on the New Hope City Council and later as mayor.



His mother, Linda, stayed home to take care of their children — Hill and his brother, Harrel. She also volunteered at school and for the town. She drove a senior citizens bus for outings and helped with many other activities, including serving in the Parent Teacher Association. “She was just always there doing anything she could to help others,” Hill says.

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Guided by his parents’ influence, Hill studied hard at New Hope High School. He also loved sports, especially basketball and baseball. “My dad was the sole source of income, so I knew I’d have to help pay my way through college,” he says. “I was able to do that by shooting basketball.”

He earned a scholarship to Freed-Hardeman University in Tennessee. He had planned to follow in his father’s footsteps as a civil engineer. However, the small, private Christian university did not have such a program.

“My dad told me to take all the math classes I could,” he says.

Hill planned to finish his college education at Athens State University. But the longer he played basketball, the more he thought about becoming a coach, which changed his career plans.

At 22 years old, he became the head basketball coach at Madison County High School. “I loved where I was raised, and I had an opportunity to come home,” he says.

He taught algebra and was the head coach for 14 years. “I was fortunate,” he says. “I had some good kids who worked hard.”

His only team rule was to do right. “I told those kids that we represent our community, both on and off the floor,” he says.

He later became the school’s athletic director and an assistant principal, serving in those positions for 11 years. He retired in 2016 after 25 years with the school system.

## BACK TO HIS ROOTS

Hill was raised in the community where his ancestors lived. His mother’s parents, William and Ellaree Craig, worked for the

county — his grandmother for the probate office and his grandfather for the road department. His father’s parents, Walter and Era Hill, lived on a farm, and his grandfather was a preacher.

Hill’s father grew up on the farm, and it’s near the land where Hill and his brother were raised and where they still live. Hill’s brother is about six years younger, but they were close growing up. They still are. “We have planted 24,000 oak trees there,” Hill says. “We want our children to be able to benefit from that.”

Hill’s father has passed, but his mother still lives in the home where she raised her sons. Hill and his wife, Karen, and their sons — Hudson, 15, and Cason, 11 — live on part of the land. Hill’s brother and his family are just across the pasture.

“One of my greatest wishes is for my sons to be as close as me and my brother are,” Hill says.

## GIVING BACK

Hill loves his community, and that’s why it’s important to him to try to make a difference.

“I believe it’s important to give back to the communities that have shaped who we are,” he says. “This is my home, and it’s my desire to make a difference, much like my parents taught me.”

While serving on the New Hope City Council, Hill helped secure funding for a new senior center and doctor’s office. He also worked to secure land for a commu-

nity storm shelter, to replace old bridges, and to purchase the city’s first trash truck for debris removal. Hill served as the Council liaison to New Hope’s branch of the Huntsville-Madison County Library.

Hill was also president and vice president of the Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments, serving on the board of directors for 11 years. That role helped him learn about challenges across the region and gave him the opportunity to work with other governments to address those issues.

The council of governments was established in 1968 with a goal to identify and address common regional issues, opportunities and challenges of Northeast Alabama’s municipalities and counties.

Hill was elected in 2016 as the District 3 commissioner of Madison County, representing the southern and eastern portions of the county. The district includes New Hope, Owens Cross Roads, Gurley, Hampton Cove and Redstone Arsenal.

It’s important to plan for improvements and growth, but it is his goal to make sure growth is sustainable. He says services like the fiber internet network offered by New Hope Telephone are a great example of having the infrastructure in place to promote growth.

“People choose to live in this area for a reason,” he says. “If we can provide the services our area needs, it’s just going to be positive for our communities.” 📞



Craig Hill enjoys coaching his son's baseball team.

# Baking for spring

## with Jason Smith

Springtime baking means shedding the heavy ingredients of winter: “All that butter and those heavy chocolates,” says Jason Smith.

Smith, a resident of Grayson, Kentucky, once a cafeteria manager at Isonville Elementary and also a florist and caterer, was the 2017 Food Network Star. Just months before that win, he won Food Network’s “Holiday Baking Championship,” followed by a victory on “Holiday Baking: Adults vs. Kids.” In less than a year’s time, he baked his way to three major wins, making more than 50 dishes to impress the judges.

Smith’s successes in the food competitions came as no surprise, says Felicia Green, who served as a teacher and a principal at Isonville Elementary for 27 years before retiring in November 2016. “He always went the extra mile,” she says. “I remember he was always making things for us to put in the teachers lounge. And on TV, his personality is so genuine.”

In the past year, Smith has also been a judge for Food Network’s “Best Baker in America.” He now has a show of his own in the works, which he hopes to make “very dessert heavy.”

Smith’s earliest memories of cooking go back to a hot day on his family’s tobacco farm



in Laurel County, Kentucky. “I decided I didn’t want to be outside hoeing tobacco, so I went inside and asked my grandmother if I could stay and help her in the kitchen,” he recalls.

On the menu that day? Fried chicken, fresh corn on the cob, potatoes and strawberry shortcake made with berries from the garden, along with biscuits left over from breakfast that morning.

Smith says his grandmother saw something in him that day that others had dismissed. “She always told my mom about how much I loved to be in the kitchen, whether it was to wash the dishes or peel potatoes,” he says.

Cookbooks are one of Smith’s hobbies. He collects them and enjoys reading the stories behind the recipes. “I’ve taken so many recipes and switched things around to give the recipes new life,” he says.

That’s a trademark of his as evidenced by recipes he shares.



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



### BLACKBERRY-GRAPE PIE

- Dough for double-crust pie
- 2 pints fresh blackberries
- 2 cups green grapes
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- Zest from 1 small lemon
- 1 teaspoon freshly grated ginger
- 1 1/2 cups sugar

Heat oven to 350 F. Spray an 8-inch pie plate and place 1 sheet of dough in it, allowing edges to hang over. In a large mixing bowl, toss the berries and grapes in the cornstarch, lemon zest, ginger and sugar, stirring to coat. Pour into pie shell. Place other sheet of dough on top, and crimp the edges of the 2 sheets of dough together. Then, using a sharp knife, make 4 slits in middle of top to let steam escape. Brush with egg wash (one egg whisked with a little cold water) and place pie on cookie sheet. Tent pie with a sheet of aluminum foil and bake 30-45 minutes. Remove foil and bake a few more minutes to brown the top.





## Lemon Chiffon Cake with Blueberry Mousse

### LEMON CHIFFON CAKE WITH BLUEBERRY MOUSSE

- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 2 unbeaten egg yolks
- 1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons cold water
- 2 teaspoons lemon extract
- 2 teaspoons lemon zest
- 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons sifted cake flour
- 3/4 cup white sugar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons fresh thyme, minced
- 4 egg whites
- 1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar

#### Blueberry mousse:

- 2 cups heavy cream
- 1/4 cup powdered sugar
- 2 pints fresh blueberries
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup finely chopped or grated/  
shredded white chocolate

Heat oven to 325 F. Mix together oil, egg yolks, water, lemon extract and lemon zest. Sift dry ingredients together, then mix into the wet ingredients in a stand mixer until smooth. In another large bowl, combine egg whites and cream of tartar,

beat with a mixer until stiff peaks form. Pour batter over the beaten egg whites and gently fold with a figure-eight motion until all streaks disappear. Pour into a lined 13-by-18-inch sheet pan or rimmed cookie sheet and bake for 25-30 minutes or until a toothpick stuck into middle comes out clean. Take out and let cool; cut into 1-inch squares.

**Meanwhile, make the mousse:** Place the cream and sugar in a large bowl and whip into stiff peaks. Then fold in the vanilla and half the blueberries.

**To assemble:** Place 1/3 of the cake cubes and then 1/3 of the mousse in a trifle bowl. Then sprinkle a few blueberries and some of the white chocolate over the top. Repeat layers until all the cake, mousse, berries and white chocolate are used. Make sure to save a few berries for the garnish. You can also garnish with fresh thyme sprigs on top. Refrigerate for 8 hours or overnight before serving. Serve with strawberry sorbet if desired.

### CARROT CAKE WITH COCONUT FROSTING

- 2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon allspice
- 1 3/4 cups packed light brown sugar
- 3/4 cup vegetable oil
- 4 large eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 3/4 cup tomato soup
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1/2 cup grated fresh carrots

#### Coconut frosting:

- 4 tablespoons butter, divided
- 2 cups shredded coconut
- 1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, room temperature
- 2 teaspoons milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 1/2 cups powdered sugar

Heat oven to 350 F. Spray a 10-cup tube pan. In a bowl, sift together the flour, baking powder, soda, salt, cinnamon and allspice. Place brown sugar, oil and eggs in stand mixer and mix till fluffy; add the vanilla extract and tomato soup and mix in. Then add the dry mixture. Turn the mixer on low and slowly drizzle in the buttermilk until combined, and then stir in the carrots. Pour into pan and bake for 30-35 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the middle comes out clean. Let cool and frost with coconut frosting.

**Coconut frosting:** Melt 2 tablespoons butter in a skillet and add the coconut; toast until lightly brown, then place on a paper towel to cool. Cream the rest of the butter and cream cheese till fluffy in a stand mixer; mix in milk and vanilla extract, then slowly add the powdered sugar, mixing well. Fold in 1 3/4 cups of the cooled coconut. Frost cake and sprinkle remainder of coconut on top. 📺



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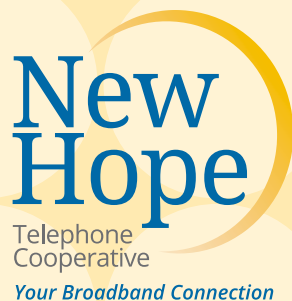
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