

The

# Community Connector

MAY/JUNE 2017

## ANSWERING HER CALL

Teacher of the  
Year goes above  
and beyond

## SMALL BUSINESS WINNER

Goody 2 Shoes kicks up  
its heels

## COASTER TO COASTER

Experts pick their top  
theme park rides







## NTCA THE RURAL BROADBAND ASSOCIATION

### RURAL CONNECTIONS

BY SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO  
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

### Taking the voice of rural America to Capitol Hill

Working in the nation's capital, sometimes it can feel as if people have forgotten how to work together toward a common goal. That is one reason I look forward to springtime, when NTCA hosts our annual Legislative and Policy Conference. Leaders from telcos just like yours, from all across the country, visit D.C. to meet with policymakers and to speak with one voice — yours.

As this year's conference began in late March, telco leaders gathered for a meeting with new FCC Chairman Ajit Pai. A product of rural America himself, Chairman Pai shared with us his ideas on ways to ensure that discussions among our elected officials about improving the nation's infrastructure also include the critical role of broadband.

Telco leaders came to Washington ready to share with lawmakers their stories, data, challenges, investment plans and economic opportunities for rural America that they are primed to kick-start. The energy and enthusiasm of this group was inspiring, as they went from meeting to meeting reminding policymakers about the importance of broadband for all Americans.

There are significant challenges when working to deliver broadband in rural areas, such as federal regulations and funding — not to mention the challenges inherent with building infrastructure to areas of low population density and rugged terrain. But you can be proud to know that your telco is part of a much larger family of service providers that is taking your message to lawmakers: that rural broadband is good for all of America.

Last year, U.S. consumers received about 2.4 billion robocalls monthly, according to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The regulatory agency is proposing new rules that could bring relief to consumers weary of this annoying — and sometimes dangerous — practice.

The FCC is considering rules that would give telephone companies the authority to block spoofed robocalls — wherein callers fake their Caller ID information in order to hide their identity — when a subscriber requests that calls originating from that number be blocked. The proposed rules would allow providers to block spoofed robocalls when the spoofed Caller ID information cannot possibly be valid, including numbers that have not been assigned to anyone.

In its proposal, the FCC highlights the danger of robocalls by referencing IRS reports. “There have been over 10,000 victims of a scam in which callers pretend to be representing the IRS and claim the called party owes back taxes,” according to the FCC. Threatened with arrest or deportation, victims of these scams have collectively paid over \$54 million.

More recent reports tell the story of callers already having some personal information about a targeted consumer or business, then tricking them into saying “yes” to a seemingly harmless question in order to falsely authorize charges to their victims.

While the idea of blocking calls may seem like a good one on the surface, the FCC is quick to point out that a balanced approach must be taken. “It is also important for the Commission to protect the reliability of the nation's communications network and to protect consumers from provider-initiated blocking that harms, rather than helps, consumers,” according to the FCC's proposal. “The Commission therefore must balance competing policy considerations — some favoring blocking and others disfavoring blocking — to arrive at an effective solution that maximizes consumer protection and network reliability.”

These latest steps from the FCC continue efforts by industry, regulatory and consumer groups to put an end to robocall practices — and that is welcome news for the millions of Americans on the receiving end of those annoying calls. ☎

# Build Broadband With Us!

As Washington focuses on improving our nation's critical infrastructure, broadband needs to be a key component of those plans. Why?



Rural broadband providers contribute billions of dollars to the U.S. economy and support billions of dollars in e-commerce.



The rural broadband industry supports nearly 70,000 jobs.

*(From 2015 survey)*



Members of NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association serve rural customers in 45 states, covering 37 percent of the nation's landmass.



Rural broadband providers collaborate with local leaders on broadband-enabled solutions.

## TAKE ACTION!

- ▶ Sign up to be an advocate at [www.buildbroadbandwithus.com](http://www.buildbroadbandwithus.com).
- ▶ Follow and share at [www.twitter.com/NTCAconnect](https://twitter.com/NTCAconnect) and [www.facebook.com/NTCARuralTelecom](https://www.facebook.com/NTCARuralTelecom).
- ▶ Contact your U.S. elected officials and let them know that "I am served by a rural broadband provider, and I know firsthand the positive impact this vital service has on a community. Please include rural broadband in your plans as Washington focuses on building our nation's infrastructure." (For contact information for your U.S. senators and U.S. representative, visit [www.usa.gov/elected-officials](http://www.usa.gov/elected-officials)).

# #BUILDBROADBANDWITHUS



# Better care during a busy season

**S**ummertime. It's the season for cookouts, vacations and long days of fun in the sun. Unfortunately, it's also the season for more scrapes, cuts, bites and falls. But New Hope Telephone Cooperative is providing the technology that may help take care of those "oops" moments.



**JIM COOK**  
General Manager

In the summer, more of us go outside to work in the yard, play sports or explore the great outdoors. And whenever our activity levels increase, we are more likely to experience an accident that leaves us seeking medical attention.

Medical data shows that in the summer, we as Americans experience more falls, auto accidents, dog bites and injuries related to sports, water, bicycling and skateboarding. In fact, some hospitals even refer to summer as "trauma season."

At New Hope Telephone Cooperative, there are many reasons we've built a robust broadband network, but one of the most important reasons is to help doctors, nurses and other providers take better care of the people in our community.

Across the country, broadband is enabling rural doctors, small hospitals, rehabilitation therapists, pharmacists and regional specialists to connect with patients and with each other in ways that were impossible only a few years ago. From cloud-based appointment scheduling and medical record keeping to automated inventory tracking and ordering, there are dozens of ways providers are harnessing the power of broadband to provide their patients with better care.

Doctors can compare symptoms and diagnoses with colleagues around the country. X-ray images can be sent to specialists at major hospitals for analysis. Nurses can transmit prescriptions to pharmacists so that medicine is ready before a patient even arrives at the pharmacy. And everyone in the medical field has an unbelievable amount of training opportunities and research right at their fingertips.

This year, as there's more talk in Washington about investing in infrastructure, it's important to remember that infrastructure doesn't just mean roads and bridges. At New Hope Telephone Cooperative, we've invested millions of dollars in building the broadband infrastructure that connects the cornerstones of our community, including education, public safety, commerce and, of course, health care. With that in mind, we're happy to join telcos across the country in NTCA's campaign encouraging federal, state and local officials to "Build Broadband with Us." I hope you will review the information on Page 2 of this magazine to find out more about this campaign.

As your local broadband provider, we're proud of the strides our local health care providers are making in caring for their patients and proud of the role we play in helping them.

I hope everyone has a fun, safe, injury-free summer. But know that if you fall victim to trauma season, local health care providers are backed by a strong broadband network to help deliver the best possible care and get you back out there enjoying summer again. 📶

## The Communicator

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### On the Cover:



Owens Cross Roads Elementary School teacher Jenny Stone was named Teacher of the Year for the 2016-17 school year. See story on Page 8.





## FRESH IS BEST!

*It's time for the Farmers Market!*

Owens Cross Roads Farmers Market is the place to find locally grown fruits, vegetables, fresh eggs, herbs, flowers, baked goods and crafts. Farmers: no need to drive all over the county — sell your produce locally!

The Farmers Market is open to local vendors from May 1 until Aug. 27, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 6 p.m. On Saturdays, the market is open from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m.

Yard sales and solicitation of live animals are not allowed.

For selling guidelines and more information, please contact the Owens Cross Roads town clerk.

## Lions Club keeps city clean

Local volunteers worked with the Lions Club to remove about 514 bags of trash — including trash from the Adopt-a-Block project — from the New Hope community. It was enough to fill a dump truck.

On April 1, volunteers clocked 18 miles of walking over the course of the clean-up, helping make the community a more beautiful place to live.

"We would like to thank New Hope and Owens Cross Roads city councils, Commissioner Craig Hill, Madison County Department of Transportation, Green Team and our local business donors who helped make this effort possible," says Lions Club member Ava W. Cambren. "God bless each of you for your generosity."



## Your help is appreciated

The Lions Club would like to thank the following businesses for their donations:

- ALFA
- All Star Pools
- Barbara's Beauty Shop
- Baker Hardware
- Betty's Boutique
- Brown Wrecker Service
- Cadence Bank
- Click Construction
- Cooper's Small Engine
- D&M Automotive
- Dennis Martin Realty
- Discount Tobacco LBC Inc.
- Dot's Dairy Den
- El Paso
- G&G Pizza
- Galen's
- Grandmother's House
- Green Team
- Gregg's Used Autos
- Hardee's
- Hi Tech
- Hornbuckle Barber Shop
- Howard's Trophy Shop
- Hubbard Tire
- Jiff-e-Mart New Hope Grocery
- Julia's Hair Care
- Main Street Florist
- Mason's Beverage
- Masters Car Wash/Cleaners
- New Hope Auto Sales
- New Hope Discount Drug
- New Hope Funeral Home
- New Hope Telephone Co.
- Old Vienna
- Piggly Wiggly
- Perfect Timing Grill and Bar
- Pit Stop Beverages
- Royal Rooster
- Salon on Main
- Shell Food Mart #15
- Stapler Construction
- Stapler Furniture
- Styles by Beverly
- Subway
- Tara Graphics
- Wavaho
- W&W BBQ

## Join us for MUSIC AT THE GAZEBO

This summer, turn Monday into Mon-YAY! Kick back under the stars and enjoy some local music in beautiful downtown New Hope on Monday nights from 6-8 p.m., weather permitting. The event is at 5496 Main Drive, New Hope.

- May 1 — Dennis Martin and the Double Barrel Band
- May 8 — Robert Galloway
- May 15 — Josh Fuell
- May 22 — Glory Echoes
- May 29 — New Hope Senior Center Pickers and Singers
- June 5 — Shannon Hubbard
- June 12 — Steve Stapler
- June 19 — Leon Venerable
- June 26 — Songwriter's Night (Local songwriters will perform original songs)

Hot dogs and drinks will be provided by the city of New Hope on the final night of the series.

Don't worry about cooking dinner; treat yourself and enjoy the food vendors.



# COAST OF THE TOWN

*Experts discuss their favorite thrill rides*

The anticipation is heart-throbbing. There's nothing between you and the ground but a metal bar across your lap as the train of terror rises to the top of the first drop, the grinding and creaking of machinery heard above the screams. Higher and higher you go; your heart is pumping. Do you dare look down? Then, suddenly, you're in a free fall, jerking 'round and 'round, down and under, sometimes upside down. Before you know it, you've stabilized. Then in front of you is another mountain to climb, and in the distance you see rails that seemingly defy gravity. Are you ready to take the ride?

We asked four people — all of whom have nerves of steel and find death-defying coaster rides a pleasant way to spend the day — about their favorite roller coasters around the South.



**Kevin Lusk, 40,  
Chattanooga, Tennessee**  
Favorite coaster: Dollywood's  
Wild Eagle

Like many, Lusk's passion for coaster-riding began as a child when his parents took him on trips to Walt Disney World. On off years, they'd visit parks closer to home, such as Atlanta's Six Flags, Opryland in Nashville (now closed) and Lake Winnepesaukah in North Georgia near Chattanooga. "Riding coasters gets in your blood, and you can't stop," he says.

His favorite coaster to date is Dollywood's Wild Eagle, a coaster that defies gravity and tradition by taking riders on a trip along the side of the tracks rather than in cars directly on them. The coaster is America's first wing coaster and is perched 21 stories above Dollywood. It takes riders on a unique experience, creating the sense of soaring high above the Smoky Mountains. "You truly do feel like an eagle flying," he



Dollywood's Wild Eagle



says, adding that his 8-year-old daughter, Aleah, rode it for the first time last year and now “wants to ride it again and again.” Like father like daughter. “It is without a doubt her favorite coaster, too,” Lusk adds.

**Hometown favorite ride: Lake Winnepesaukah’s Cannonball**

“It was built in the 1970s and was my first big coaster. It’s a big old wooden thing — an oldie but a goodie.”



**Chuck Campbell, 56, Williamsburg, Virginia**  
Favorite coaster: **The Intimidator 305 at King’s Dominion**

A California native, Campbell frequented the many parks around the state and by the age of 12 was hooked on coasters, but he admits to being rather frightened of them at first. But the defining moment happened when he took his initial ride on an old wooden coaster, the Wild Mouse, along the boardwalk at Santa Cruz beach. “It featured a series of hairpin turns, and the cars were designed to lean over as you changed direction,” Campbell says. “Then, there was a ‘double down’ followed by a sharp hill and curve upward, which threatened to catapult riders into the Pacific. It was terrifying! But I decided that the boardwalk’s large wooden coaster, the Giant Dipper, couldn’t possibly be scarier, so I gave it a try. I’ve been riding coasters ever since.”

But it’s the Intimidator 305 at King’s Dominion in Virginia that he finds hard to beat when it comes to a coaster that will leave your stomach in your throat. “It’s hard to top that fast ride up the lift hill, followed by a 305-foot plunge into a huge banked curve,” he says. “Many riders, including me, experience what’s called a ‘gray out,’ in which the world becomes fuzzy around the edges for a few moments until the g-forces let up. The rest of the ride is a great mix of high-speed changes in direction that throw riders around like rag dolls.” Campbell ranks the Intimidator 305 among the top 10 worldwide.

**Hometown favorite: The Griffon at Busch Gardens, Williamsburg, Virginia**

“Griffon’s cars ‘hang’ over the edge

for a few seconds, giving riders a chance to reconsider their lives before the big plunge,” he says, adding that the ride gives you a great view of the James River if you can open your eyes long enough to see it.



**Erik Johnson, 43, Gainesville, Florida**  
Favorite coaster: **Fury 325, Carowinds, Fort Mill, SC**

It wasn’t until his early 30s that Johnson developed his love for the big coasters. Until then, he stuck to the smaller ones. But with a bit of encouragement, plus researching at [themeparkreview.com](http://themeparkreview.com), a bible of sorts for coaster lovers, Johnson took the plunge and hopped on Kumba, a legendary coaster at Busch Gardens in Tampa, Florida. Since then, he’s ridden many of the nation’s biggest and has found Carowind’s Fury 325, the world’s tallest full-circuit coaster, to be his favorite. “It’s one of the best examples of what I would call a speed coaster,” he says. “Instead of having a lot of up and down airtime hills, Fury has more twists and turns to help the coaster maintain its speed.”

Kentucky Kingdom in Louisville has his runner-up pick. “Kentucky Kingdom really has become a great park since it reopened in 2014,” Johnson says. “As for the coasters, I really liked Lightning Run. While

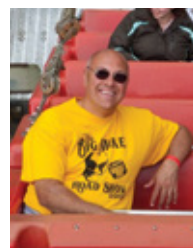


The Intimidator 305 at King’s Dominion

medium-sized, it’s pretty wild and produces a lot of fun airtime moments. They’ve added Storm Chaser since I was last there, and I understand that one is quite good.”

**Hometown favorite: Kumba**

“After my first ride, I was hooked and embarked on my new hobby to travel all across North America to ride roller coasters,” Johnson says. “It was one of the coasters that really brought on a resurgence to roller-coaster building in the early 1990s.”



**Michael Betzler, 51, Montville, New Jersey**  
Favorite coaster: **New Texas Giant, Six Flags Over Texas, Arlington, Texas**

Like many beginners, Betzler admits to being a little afraid of coasters in his youth. That all changed after watching a documentary on Pennsylvania’s Leap The Dips, the oldest of all coasters in the United States. His interest was piqued, and he joined roller coaster clubs, met other enthusiasts and embarked on a hobby that has taken him across 31 countries. He has visited 445 parks and, so far, has ridden 1,427 roller coasters. His adventures led to the creation of The Big Mike Road Show, an internet production all about his rides. His favorite is the New Texas Giant, an award-winning wooden behemoth that opened in 1990. It soon fell into disrepair, however, and closed. But the wooden frame remained, and the coaster was rebuilt and reopened better than before with a metal track covering the wood structure. “It’s fast and smooth and such a great ride,” Betzler says. “This was the first coaster of its kind — a hybrid coaster with metal on wood — and now there are many more like this around the world.”

**Favorite hometown ride: Kingda Ka at Six Flags Great Adventure in Jackson, New Jersey**

“It was once the fastest coaster in the world — now second — at 128 miles per hour in 3.5 seconds. And it’s still the world’s tallest at 456 feet high.”

# Peaceful, easy feeling

## Teacher of the Year inspires her students and co-workers

BY MELISSA SMITH



Jenny Stone helps Lilly Green with a craft during class.

A feeling of peace washed over Jenny Stone during an educational conference to kick off a new school year. The speaker told the gathered teachers about how they should accept the gifts given to them by God and use them daily.

At that moment 25 years ago, Stone knew she was in the right place, at the right job, and at the right time.

"I knew I was meant to be with little kids and that they were meant to be with me," says the Owens Cross Roads Elementary School pre-kindergarten teacher.

In her classroom, Stone often joins the children around the brightly patterned rug where they learn their colors and the months of the year.

The room, which is filled with artwork, tiny chairs and child-sized tables, is where the 4-year-olds learn social skills and academic basics, such as how to properly stand in a line and follow directions. "By the time they reach kindergarten, they are already ahead of the game," Stone says. "The rewards are more than academic."

### ANSWERING HER CALL

Stone and her husband, Randall, married in 1974 and eventually settled in the Asbury community. Earlier in her career, she began the college coursework to pursue a business management degree, but she realized that wasn't her true calling.

Through the years, she taught kindergarten at several Christian schools and became director at Kids Korner, a preschool in Guntersville. She was well-respected in her role and proved that experience is often the best teacher.

"Someone asked me a question about early childhood development, and I answered," she says. "Then, they asked someone else who had a degree, and they gave them the same answer."

She decided to go back to college to get

the degree to back up her knowledge and experience. She graduated from Athens State University with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education.

Stone has taught pre-kindergarten at Owens Cross Roads Elementary School for the last four years. She has made a lasting impact on not only the students but also her peers, who voted her Teacher of the Year for 2016-2017. "I was so shocked," she says.

Owens Cross Roads Elementary principal Scott Weeks says, "Mrs. Stone has a direct impact on the climate of the school with her gentle spirit and humble leadership. Her peers know that they can always turn to Jenny for advice or for a sympathetic ear."

Relating to children has always been second nature to Stone. "I felt a connection to them because I had children of my own," she says.

She has six children and 10 grandchildren, with the grandchildren ranging in age from infant to 14 years old. "They're all beautiful, and, yes, I have photos of all of them," she says.

Stone loves spending time with her grandchildren and loves that they already know the importance of education. "When they come to my house, they like to sit at the kitchen table and all play school," she says. 🗨️



Teaching the children fundamental skills to function at higher grade levels is Jenny Stone's goal as a teacher.



# Goody 2 Shoes named Small Business of the Year



Goody 2 Shoes employees Marissa Spivey (front), Mandy Thompson (left) and Lou Shubert are pictured with owner Terry Farmer.

## What led you to start this business?

"We wanted to offer customers quality name-brand shoes at reasonable prices," Lyvonne Farmer says. "We started out with shoes and gravitated more toward boutique clothing, and it's grown from there. We moved from Madison to this location in 2005."

## What is the best part of your job?

"I love talking with the customers. All I can say is that God has really blessed me. I feel like he gave me an opportunity, and I used it. Now, my son Terry runs the day-to-day operations, and I enjoy going by the store and interacting with customers," Lyvonne Farmer says.

## Why is it important to shop local?

"It's more personal. Customers have someone they can talk to. If they want something specific, they can ask for it. Local people know you, and if they have a problem, they will come back and know you will take care of them," Terry Farmer says.



## GOODY 2 SHOES

**Owner:** Lyvonne and Terry Farmer

**Year Founded:** 2005

**Description:** Goody 2 Shoes offers womens and plus-sized name-brand clothing and shoes mostly made in the USA. Some brands include Umgee, Focus, Simply Southern, Celebrity Pink Jeans, Lucky Brand Shoes, PTBT, Blowfish and Yellowbox. Terry Farmer also offers a custom line of clothing, Uniquely You, and monogrammed jewelry along with other gifts.

**Location:** 8488 Highway 431 S., Owens Cross Roads

**Phone number:** 256-725-3610

**Website:** Facebook page: Goody 2 Shoes Owens Cross Roads

*"We are proud to be part of the community where this business offers unique and quality products to customers and contributes to the local economy. It is an honor to award them with the Small Business of the Year award, and we wish them much more success in the future."*

**-NHTC**



## CELEBRATING NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

April 30-May 6, 2017 is National Small Business Week. America's 28 million small businesses account for about half of all jobs in the private sector. NHTC is proud to celebrate their contributions by spotlighting our Small Business of the Year. Congratulations to **Goody 2 Shoes** and to all the small businesses we are honored to serve!

# A key question for modern parents

## What age is appropriate for the first mobile phone?

**A**s I was watching my son warm up with his teammates at a fourth-grade basketball tournament, one of the other parents leaned over and asked me at what age we planned on giving him a mobile phone.

My initial thought was, “I don’t know, a long time from now!” When I said I wasn’t sure, the parent informed me that they decided 12 was the magic age for their kids. As I thought about this, I couldn’t help but think that I was 18 and in college before I had my first mobile phone. Do 12-year-olds really have mobile phones? When I asked that very question, I quickly found out that several of the 10-year-olds currently playing basketball already had mobile phones.

Does a 10-year-old need a mobile phone? A 12-year-old? At what age is a phone necessary for our kids? Truthfully, I don’t know. Owning a mobile phone is a big responsibility.

You need to decide what age is right for your kids based on their maturity and need. If your child is responsible and involved in activities that frequently take them away from parents, such as sports, then maybe life would be easier for everyone if they had a phone. The decision shouldn’t be treated as simply giving them another toy or gadget, though. A



mobile phone provides a child access to the world, and they need to understand that it is a privilege, not a right. I believe it should be considered a rite of passage much like getting a driver’s license.

We have found a middle ground we can live with for now. We gave our son a GizmoPal when he was 8. The GizmoPal is a wearable mobile phone that can only send and receive calls from a few select

contacts that I designate. This allows my son to call me when he needs to, and I can reach him when he is away from me. This might be when he’s playing at the city park, when he might be getting home late from a ball game, or when he is in a crowded store. The GizmoPal doesn’t allow apps; it’s simply for calling or for the child’s caretaker to track them to a location. Through the GizmoPal app, I can see exactly where he is on a map on my smartphone.

Ultimately, as a parent, the choice is yours. What is right for your family may not be right for mine. I still haven’t decided a “magic” age for my sons. Only time will tell when I cave in to the pressure of a mobile phone. My hope is that I can delay that day as long as possible. I plan on sticking to the simple GizmoPal for my sons for the foreseeable future. ☎

### ONLINE RESOURCES

For more information on this topic, go to [www.common sense media.org](http://www.common sense media.org) and look under Parent Concerns. They have a whole section dedicated to cellphone parenting.



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

*Parenting  
Tip*

If you think your child is old enough to need a cellphone, the **GizmoPal by LG** may be the place to start. Wearable as a watch, the phone allows your child to call parents and allows parents to see where they are. GizmoPals are available at Amazon, Verizon and Best Buy starting at \$75 plus subscription.



# ALL GOOD IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

## *Broadband access helps drive real estate value*

According to the experts, June is the busiest month for moving in the United States. And whether people are buying, selling or looking for a new place to rent, broadband plays a role in where they decide to move — and how much they are willing to pay.



Access to a **24 Mbps CONNECTION** increases a home's value by

**3.8%**

over one where only dial-up is available.

Homes with **FIBER AVAILABILITY** have a transaction price that is about

**1.3%**

more than similar homes in neighborhoods where fiber is not available.

Access to a **GIGABIT CONNECTION** increases the sale price for homes by

**7%**

over homes with a top speed of less than 25 Mbps. That's an average difference of \$5,437, or about the same as adding a fireplace.

People who live in multifamily housing units, such as apartments and condos, say fast and reliable internet service is the **single most important amenity** — more important than cable TV, a pool, security and workout facilities.

For landlords, giving renters access to fiber broadband can **increase resident satisfaction** and reduce churn. In apartments and condos, renters frequently spread the word about better broadband access, bringing in more renters.

Fiber broadband increases condo purchase prices by

**2.8%**



Fiber broadband increases rental values by

**8%**

That's \$40 per month on a \$500 monthly rent payment.



**51%**

of homebuyers used the internet to find the house they purchased.



# Life on the ice

## Babbidge commits to play hockey at Tufts University

BY MELISSA SMITH

Mason Babbidge recalls skating in his parents' basement on roller blades as a toddler, and not long after that he took to the ice and started playing hockey. He joined his first team when he was 4 years old.

Babbidge was born in Wisconsin and moved to New Hope when he was 4. He has always done what he can to stay involved with the sport he loves, even in an area where it isn't as popular as sports such as football.

"My brother played hockey when I was growing up, and I always just wanted to follow suit," Babbidge says.

### GROWING UP ON THE ICE

His youth league hockey team, the Chargers, was based in Huntsville. "I was always playing and going to games while I was growing up," he says.

The Chargers competed against teams from the Atlanta and Nashville areas as well as in northern Florida. Tournaments were played in Chicago, Canada and Detroit, so he stayed busy during hockey season.

With the University of Alabama at Huntsville campus so close to home, Babbidge grew up as a fan of the Division I UAH Chargers, the only

collegiate hockey team in the area. He also supported the Huntsville Havoc, a semi-pro team.

While growing up in New Hope, Babbidge says he practiced several times a week in Huntsville and Decatur, and then weekends were sometimes spent on the road. "I know my schedule was so grueling on my mom," he says.

During his freshman, sophomore and junior years, he also played basketball at New Hope High School. After basketball practice was over, he would get in the car and go straight to hockey practice.

Babbidge spent his senior year of high school playing for a junior league team, the Florida Palm Beach Hawks. "I took online classes until March of that year, and then I moved back to New Hope and graduated from NHHS in 2015," he says.

Now, he is living in Boston, where he plays for the Islanders Hockey Club. Babbidge says it's common for many hockey players to spend a couple of "gap years" between

Mason Babbidge has played hockey since he was a toddler and will soon play for Tufts University.



Photos contributed by Maleea Babbidge.



Mason Babbidge, right, and his brother, Braxton, pose after a graduation ceremony.

high school and college playing junior league hockey.

The hockey player has been accepted to Tufts University and has committed to playing for the Jumbos next year.

Babbidge says his success on the ice has shaped him into the person he is today, but he also has life goals that don't involve hockey. "It's a huge part of my life, but it's time to move on to the next chapter," he says. He plans to study economics

and minor in entrepreneurial leadership or dentistry.

For now, he's the second-leading scorer on his team with 49 points in 44 games.

Luckily, he hasn't suffered significant injuries — just a few concussions and the time his best friend knocked out one of his teeth playing street hockey. "It's just part of the game," he says with a laugh. ☺



# Dedicated to customer service

## Say 'hello' to some of NHTC's newest employees

BY MELISSA SMITH

**N**HTC is excited to introduce new team members, and congratulate a long-time employee who has been promoted to a new position. These individuals are eager to help serve customers, many of whom they have known their entire lives.

### ►► MORGAN CLARK

Morgan Clark is one of the familiar smiling faces at NHTC. She started as a customer service representative in December, and she is excited to serve members in this role. "I know everybody in New Hope," she says.

While growing up in Owens Cross Roads, Clark attended elementary school there and graduated from New Hope High School in 2011. She earned her bachelor's degree in business administration from Faulkner University in 2015.

Clark's duties include processing customer payments, assisting with payments via phone, and directing service orders. She considers herself a problem-solver, and she loves to interact with customers. "I love helping people I've known for my whole life," she says.



### ►► SHAWN SMITH

Shawn Smith is NHTC's new manager of plant operations. He has been with NHTC for 18 years and has seen the evolution of technology during his time at the cooperative. When he started at NHTC, he helped splice the copper lines for internet service. For the last five years, he has worked as the outside plant manager to make sure customers receive high-quality services, as well as quick repairs when necessary.

NHTC is currently in the last phase of its fiber-to-the-home project. "If everything goes well, our goal is to finish it up this year," he says.

Smith worked on the first fiber installations at River Ridge in Owens Cross Roads. "I enjoy a challenge and finding the solution to a problem," he says.

Smith has called New Hope home for more than 40 years. His wife, Karen, works at Redstone Credit Union, and they have two children, Austin and Aiden. Smith and family are members of Redemption Church in Owens Cross Roads, and he serves on the Madison County Recreation Center board in New Hope. He also coaches youth league baseball and basketball.

He looks forward to watching NHTC grow. "There are very few places in America where a customer can call if they are having a problem and someone will be there to help them within the hour. We take pride in taking care of our customers," he says. ☎



### ►► CHARLES LAWLER

Charles Lawler helps make sure all NHTC services run the way they should. He is an outside plant technician who has been with the company since February 2015. His primary duties include installing copper and fiber cables and making repairs.

Lawler lives in New Hope and has two children, Peyton and Thomas. Originally from Huntsville, he graduated from Huntsville High School and later earned a degree in network engineering from Virginia College. "This is a good place to work and good people to work with," he says.

# History, fine dining and ... SPOONBREAD

Spoonbread is served with every meal at Boone Tavern Restaurant in Berea, Kentucky.

The tavern is known throughout the country, and the world, for many things. Its history goes back more than 100 years to when it opened as a guesthouse for Berea College. And it has built a reputation for award-winning accommodations and customer service.

The inn, one of just a handful of Kentucky hotels to receive the LEED green building certification, has hosted many dignitaries, including the Dalai Lama, President Calvin Coolidge, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and auto magnate Henry Ford.

But sometimes it's the simplest of things that builds a reputation, and in the case of Boone Tavern's restaurant, it's the spoonbread.

"The fascination of it brings people here," says Executive Chef David Poulton.

Some say spoonbread was born of a mistake. Maybe the first cook added one egg too many and it turned into a soufflé rather than the intended cornbread. That's the most likely scenario. But for sure, this culinary gaffe turned into a mainstay of many Appalachian meals in the late 1800s. Its light, airy texture made for a more elegant presentation than cornbread. Also, since cornmeal was readily available in the South, spoonbread became more common than yeast breads.

Now it's not so common, but still, some people come to the restaurant, located inside the inn on Berea's campus, just to get the spoonbread, says Bruce Alcorn, a Berea native who has been in charge of spoonbread production for more than 40 years.

The recipe has been the same since

innkeeper Richard Hougen first developed and served it to guests in the 1940s, and Alcorn has the recipe imprinted in his mind. The trick to a successful batch, he says, starts at the beginning — allowing the milk to scald without coming to a full boil.

"You can mess it up if you don't do that," he says.

Alcorn estimates he makes 24 to 28 pans — eight servings per pan — of spoonbread daily, sometimes more, sometimes less depending on the time of year.

Any cornmeal will work, but in keeping with the restaurant's farm-to-table mission, the cornmeal used at Boone Tavern Restaurant comes from the Berea College farm store whenever possible, Poulton says.

Other products gleaned from the store include beef, pork, bacon, oatmeal and other processed foods. Fresh vegetables are used from the college's farm whenever they are in season. The majority of food products that cannot be obtained from the college farm and store are from farmers and other members of Kentucky Proud, a program established by the Department of Agriculture in the Bluegrass State.

The spoonbread recipe has remained the same through the years, but there have been a few incarnations that the restaurant experimented with before Poulton came on board more than two years ago.

"I've been told that we once served it with three different butters — plain, apple butter and cinnamon butter. And once we made chocolate spoonbread for a dessert. I heard that didn't go over real well," Poulton says.

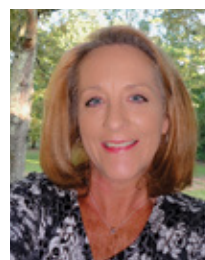
Now the spoonbread is back to its origins, served warm with plain butter — honey if you ask — with every lunch and dinner entree. The options include



David Poulton is executive chef at Boone Tavern, where a farm-to-table mission — and its famous spoonbread — keeps patrons coming back to the historic restaurant.

favorites such as "Pork Chops the Tricky Way" (pork loins breaded with tomato and Parmesan) served with cheese grits, braised greens and mustard cream, as well as lamb meatloaf served with mashed butternut squash, local wild mushrooms, balsamic glaze and cucumber yogurt sauce. Both dishes have roots in Appalachia, but you'll find them on the menu alongside seared scallops with asparagus and ricotta ravioli or a dish with an Asian influence — tempura salmon with papaya honey glaze and a wasabi drizzle.

For those unable to make the trip to Berea to sample the dishes — and the spoonbread — Poulton is happy to share some of the inn's recipes. 📖



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



## Boone Tavern's Spoonbread

- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter  
(1 tablespoon softened, 3  
tablespoons melted)
- 3 cups milk
- 1 1/4 cups white cornmeal (preferably  
stone ground)
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon fine salt
- 2 eggs, well beaten

Grease a 9-inch round cake pan with some of the softened butter. Cut out a parchment paper circle to fit inside the pan, nestle it into the bottom, and grease the paper with the remaining softened butter. Set the prepared pan aside. In a 2-quart saucepan, scald milk (do not allow to fully boil), whisking occasionally, over high heat. While whisking, pour in cornmeal in a steady stream. Whisk vigorously to incorporate the cornmeal, about 1 minute. Remove pan from heat and set aside to let the cornmeal mixture cool to room temperature. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Transfer the cornmeal mixture to the bowl of a standing mixer fitted with paddle attachment. Add the remaining butter, baking powder, salt and eggs and mix on medium speed until the mixture is uniform and aerated, about 15 minutes. Pour batter into the prepared pan and bake until golden brown and puffy and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, about 1 hour and 20 minutes. Serve immediately with butter.

## Lamb Meatloaf

### **Meatloaf:**

- 1 medium onion (finely diced)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 pounds ground lamb
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon curry powder
- 3 tablespoons dried oregano leaf
- 1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 2 eggs



### **Mashed butternut squash:**

- 2 cups cubed butternut squash  
(peeled and seeded)
- 2 cups cubed baking potatoes  
(peeled)
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1/2 cup warm milk
- Salt and pepper, to taste

### **Cucumber sauce:**

- 8 ounces plain Greek yogurt
- 1/2 cup grated seedless cucumber
- 1/4 teaspoon onion powder
- Salt and pepper, to taste

### **Balsamic-glazed mushrooms:**

- 2 cups mushrooms (rough  
chopped)
- 1 (8-ounce) can beef gravy
- 2 tablespoons balsamic glaze
- Olive oil

**For meatloaf:** Sauté onion in olive oil until translucent. Add all dry ingredients and simmer 2 minutes. Let cool.

Combine mixture with ground lamb and eggs. Mix thoroughly. Form loaf on baking pan or other cooking vessel. Cook at 350 degrees until internal temperature of 155 F degrees. Let rest before serving.

**For mashed squash:** Boil squash and potatoes until soft. Drain. Combine with butter and milk. Mix thoroughly. Season to taste.

**For cucumber sauce:** Mix all ingredients together. Chill for one hour.

**For mushrooms:** Sauté mushrooms until soft. Add gravy and glaze. Simmer 5 minutes.

**To Serve:** Place mound of mashed squash on plate and top with a slice or two of lamb meatloaf. Top with a spoonful of balsamic-glazed mushrooms. Serve cucumber sauce on the side. Makes about 6 servings. 🍽️



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JOIN US AT OUR  
NEW LOCATION!

**Tuesday, May 16**

**New Hope Middle  
School gymnasium**

- **Voting** begins at 5 p.m.
- **Business Meeting** at 7:30 p.m.
- **Robert Galloway** from 5-6 p.m.
- **Ventriloquist Lesha Campbell Everett** from 6:15-7 p.m.
- **Board elections:**  
Place 2 Incumbent Jim Duncan and Place 3 Incumbent Jeff Cooper

*Bring your admittance ticket and a valid photo ID to participate in the board elections.*

# 2017 ANNUAL MEETING

**Music • Food • Fun • Door Prizes**

**An important announcement**  
will be made during the meeting.  
Make sure you're one of the first  
to hear the

## **BIG NEWS!**