

The

Communicator

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2015

CATHEDRAL CAVERNS

What lies beneath
in Grant

GRANT YARD SALE:

Roadside rummaging and
crafts galore

FALL FOLIAGE

Capturing colorful landscapes
with your camera

By SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO
 NTCA—THE RURAL BROADBAND ASSOCIATION

Internet technology is personal when it comes to your parents aging in place

Working in the telecommunications industry, it's easy to get caught up in all the technology, the federal regulations and the constant challenges of keeping rural America connected. It is good to be reminded that the hard work our rural service providers are doing in their communities is making real progress toward improving the lives of people on a daily basis.

Consider the impact that the Internet can have on the lives of the elderly. My parents live in western Michigan, and on a recent visit with them we discussed their ability to “age in place” in their home. As maintaining a safe and healthy lifestyle becomes more challenging for the elderly, adjustments such as installing a walk-in shower and adding handrails in strategic places can make it easier for our loved ones to remain in their familiar environments and avoid assisted living or nursing home care indefinitely.

A reliable broadband Internet connection — such as that offered by your local telecommunications provider — can play a critical role in making this possible.

STAYING CONNECTED

Seniors can remain in their homes with more confidence when they can stay connected with their caregivers. Broadband enables such connectivity, but goes well beyond that by allowing seniors to connect to entertainment options, friends across the country and even health care providers.

FOCUS ON TELEMEDICINE

In fact, broadband's ability to help the elderly age in place is most notable in the realm of telemedicine. Thanks to the hard work of community-based telecommunications providers like yours, seniors have



access to high-quality health care support that can help them live more independently.

The Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) works with NTCA to advance an understanding of rural telecommunications issues. FRS published the white paper “Aging in Place and the Role of Broadband” in 2012, which highlights a number of telemedicine applications that are made possible by the high-speed Internet connections our rural telcos deliver to their communities. These include:

- Videoconferencing capabilities that allow doctors and patients to communicate over the Internet
- Remote health monitoring services that record vital signs, such as blood pressure and blood sugar levels, and relay that information to doctors and family members
- Systems that transmit large digital files such as X-rays and photos between technicians, specialists or primary care providers

And I believe this is just the beginning. As technology brings us new ways to care for ourselves, you can be assured that your local telecommunications provider will be there with the broadband access to keep you and your aging loved ones connected. ☎

AGING IN PLACE: FACTS & FIGURES

U.S. POPULATION AGE 65 AND OVER

- 2010 - 40.3 million
- 2020 - 55 million
- 2030 - 70 million
- 2050 - 88.5 million

87 PERCENT

of adults age 65 and over want to stay in their current home and community as they age, according to research from AARP.

\$17 BILLION

will be spent annually over the next three years on remodeling homes to help seniors age in place, according to the Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies.

INCREASINGLY CONNECTED

In 2000, 86 percent of adults 65 and older did not go online. Today, only 39 percent of that age group does not use the Internet, according to the Pew Research Center.

5 KEY AREAS FOR A BETTER LIFE

The AARP Public Policy Institute lists five areas where technology can help support the needs and ambitions of older adults:

- Personal fulfillment
- Health preservation
- Social connectedness
- Functional capability and activity
- Caregiver support

DON'T BE A PIRATE

Are you illegally downloading music and video from the Web?



The days of download services like Limewire and Napster are over, and free music, movies and television shows are off-limits. In fact, continued illegal downloading of copyrighted material can result in major fines or worse.

The Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) is a law criminalizing any device controlling access to copyrighted works.

Essentially, it means it's a crime to download any form of copyrighted media without paying.

While movies and books glorify piracy on the high seas, this new form of "digital piracy" can land illegal downloaders in a lot of trouble with the law — not to mention a computer filled with viruses.

Know The Facts: Your Guide to Understanding the DMCA

- ▶ **If you download copyrighted songs, albums, software, movies or any other media without paying for it, that is classified as a DMCA violation.** These products are not free — they are stolen.
- ▶ **There are several ways to legally access copyrighted material on the Internet.** Legitimate streaming services like Netflix and Hulu offer access to television shows and movies. iTunes, Google Play and Amazon allow subscribers access to music, videos, apps and games legally. With your broadband Internet connection, these services are easy to access, legal and virus-free.
- ▶ **Be aware that no one should contact you about a DMCA violation other than your Internet service provider.** Your provider will contact you with specific details, including the exact time and date of the violation, along with the title of the illegally downloaded material. Your provider will partner with you to make sure the violations don't happen again, as repeat violations can cause permanent termination of services. Any email or message about a violation not from your Internet service provider is likely a scam.
- ▶ **Having an encrypted wireless router is important to help protect yourself from DMCA violations.** When a router is unencrypted, you have no control over who uses your service. Also, it's important to monitor all users in your home who access the Internet. Be aware of teenagers' activity online, as they are classified as the most frequent offenders.
- ▶ **"Free" downloads are often loaded with viruses or malware that can bog down your computer or steal your personal information.** If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- ▶ **Not everything is copyrighted.** Some things are old enough to not be covered by copyright rules. Ideas, facts or discoveries are not considered to be tangible and would not be considered copyrighted material. Some software is "open source," meaning it can be downloaded and used for free. Occasionally, some producers will offer items for free under a "creative commons" license. These are usually detailed in the license or user agreement. These, however, are the exceptions. It's safe to assume that any major commercial album, movie, TV show or piece of software is copyrighted and can lead to trouble for unauthorized downloaders.
- ▶ **The artists, photographers, performers, producers, designers and developers who make the content that you love, depend on legitimate sales to fund their work.** If everyone stole their work, they wouldn't be able to create more of it. ☹️

Cooperatives are exceptional

Every month or two a news story will appear that looks at the so-called “digital divide” between big cities and rural areas like ours. This narrative paints a picture that rural Americans have a more difficult time getting reliable Internet access through broadband.



JIM COOK
General Manager

While statistics may back up that idea in some parts of the country, I'm proud to say our area is the exception thanks to this cooperative.

In some of the recent numbers I've seen from the FCC, there is a stark contrast between broadband access in rural America and in big cities, if taken as a whole.

As you've read in these pages before, the FCC has redefined broadband as Internet speeds of at least 25 Mbps. Based on that threshold, 94 percent of urban residents have broadband access, compared to only 55 percent of people in rural America.

Sitting in an office in New York or Los Angeles, it would be easy to see those numbers and think rural America has been left behind in today's technology-driven, connected world.

But that's not the case here in our part of North Alabama.

We're happy to offer speeds well above those thresholds to some customers, and we're working hard to bring those connections to everyone across the service area.

We are proud to be the exception to those numbers because it means we're serving our customers. But we're also proud to be exceptional because it means our founders were right about banding together to create NHTC.

Cooperatives like ours were founded by local residents who knew a reliable communications network was important and were willing to join together to bring such a network to our area.

The statistics clearly show that corporate America is not meeting the needs of rural communities like ours. Companies focused on pleasing stockholders don't see enough profit in our region to invest in building a network.

That's where cooperatives like NHTC come in. We answer to our customers, who are member-owners of the cooperative.

October is National Cooperative Month, which is a great time to think about our business model and how it benefits families and businesses in our area.

In a news release from the USDA published in July, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said “Broadband is fundamental to expanding economic opportunity and job creation in rural areas, and it is as vital to rural America's future today as electricity was when USDA began bringing power to rural America 80 years ago.”

Sec. Vilsack is correct. Without access to broadband, our community would be at a disadvantage. And without NHTC our area wouldn't have such access.

Please join us in October (and throughout the year) in celebrating what our founders created and all the advantages we enjoy today because of their vision and dedication to their communities. 📺

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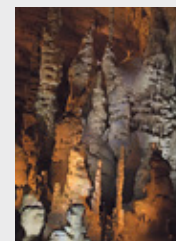
Barry Jones
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On the Cover:



Cathedral Caverns sets the spooky scene for the Haunted Hollow, an annual fundraiser for the DAR baseball team.
See story Page 8.

26th Annual NEW HOPE FOUNDER'S DAY OCT. 10 • DOWNTOWN NEW HOPE

- » FUN & GAMES
- » MUSIC
- » FOOD
- » PARADE
- » ARTS & CRAFTS
- » UGLY WALK
- » HORSESHOE
PITCHING

For more information: 256-655-5140 or 256-603-3182

CUSTOMER APPRECIATION DAY! FRIDAY, OCT. 30 • 8:30 A.M. TO 4:30 P.M.

Come on out and join NHTC on Oct. 30 as the cooperative celebrates 64 years of serving the community. Enjoy the comforts of our newly-remodeled customer lobby. There will be BINGO for prizes at 9 a.m. and again at 2 p.m. Hot dogs will be provided beginning around 11 a.m., and refreshments will be available throughout the day. Don't forget to register for door prizes. Also, snap a pic of your Halloween costume in the photo booth. NHTC will award one adult and one child for the most creative outfits.



Meet Mahalia

NHTC would like to introduce Mahalia Barnes, a customer service representative who started in April. Barnes, who lives in Grant with her husband, Blake, enjoys gardening and days at the lake. She is a member of Victory Baptist Church in Crossville, where she sings in the choir. Her favorite part of the job is interacting with the coworkers and NHTC members.

CONGRATS TO DAR TRACK TEAM

NHTC congratulates the DAR Track Team on a very successful season after the girls finished fourth and the boys finished sixth at the state track meet. Savannah Smith took home the gold medal in the 400-meter dash and the silver in both the 200-meter dash and the high jump. She will run track at the University of South Alabama next year. Logan Congo also took home a gold medal in the 800-meter run and a bronze in the 1,600-meter race. He was awarded a track scholarship to Union College in Barbourville, Kentucky, where he will attend this fall.



I GOLF BECAUSE I CARE

Monday, Oct. 19

Robert Trent Jones at Hampton Cove

Lunch/registration begins at 11 a.m.,
with a shotgun start at 12:30 p.m.

For more information, visit online at
www.thecare-center.org or call 256-723-
2273. Registration fee is \$600 per team.



**CELEBRATE COOPERATIVE
BUSINESSES!**

October is National Cooperative Month highlighting businesses like New Hope Telephone Cooperative that are built and owned by their customers. NHTC was founded by local residents who wanted a better communication network for this area. Due to the rural nature of the region, for-profit telecommunications providers would not serve the area because of the high cost of deploying service and the low returns on their investments. Without the cooperative business model, the region would not have the outstanding service it has today. Remember to celebrate this legacy, not just in October, but all year-round.

**Music
in the Park**

New Hope City Park • 6 - 8 p.m.
Free admission • Bring lawn chairs

Sept. 1 New Hope Senior Center Pickers & Singers
Sept. 8 Josh Fuell & The Grant Mountain Boys
Sept. 15 Master's Touch
Sept. 22 Robert Galloway
Sept. 29 Glory Echoes
Oct. 6 Dennis Martin's Songwriters' Roundtable
Oct. 13 Tried by Fire
Oct. 20 The Alabama Still Waters Quartet
Oct. 27 Grand Finale



CRAWFISH AND BRISKET:

Eating your way from the Big Easy to the Heart of Texas

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ANNE BRALY

New Orleans and nearby Austin, Texas, are both known for a fantastic, eclectic mix of cuisine. Foodies flock to both cities, but by sticking to the French Quarter or Austin's famed Sixth Street, they are missing out on a host of funky little roadside restaurants between the two. Here's a look at the culinary destinations on a foodie roadtrip from "The Big Easy" to "The Live Music Capital of the World."

HOUMA, LOUISIANA

44.8 miles via Highway 90

It takes no more than an hour from New Orleans to arrive in this town steeped in Cajun flavors, much like that found at Nancy's Seafood Shack (1226 Grand Caillou Road). The Gulf is close by, so frozen seafood is a travesty here.

"I learned how to cook from my grandma," says owner Doug Davis. His accent has a melodic cadence that screams Southern Louisiana. Even on days when the special is hamburger steak, the common becomes uncommon.

"Anything you find here has Cajun flair," Davis says. And if crawfish is in season, ask for instructions on the art of eating those little creatures.

NEW IBERIA, LOUISIANA

80 miles via Highway 90

As the drive north begins, Highway 90 traverses swamps and intersects fields of sugar cane. But eventually civilization returns, leading you to Brenda's Dine In and Take Out (411 West Pershing St.).

Soul food has a chameleon-like ability to absorb the flavors of whatever region



Brenda's Dine In and Take Out



TECH-SAVVY TRAVELER:

It's not difficult to find a great place to eat in places like New Orleans and Austin — the real challenge is deciding which restaurant to try first. From biscuits to brisket, mobile apps and websites like **Yelp** and **Zomato** can help you find the best place that serves your favorite dish. **Around Me** is a convenient app that helps you find fabulous food near you, wherever you happen to be.



in which it's served. At Brenda's, this comes in the form of Cajun favorites like shrimp stew and crawfish etouffee. But there's one food that transcends borders: fried chicken. Some say Brenda Placide's is the best for miles around. Her secret? "I make it with a lot of love," she says.

The restaurant is an unimposing structure. Inside, the dining room has simple tables and walls of photos, including a couple of Tommy Lee Jones from when he was in town filming a movie. "He loved my gumbo," Placide says.

For dessert, there's another stop about a mile away: KK's Cafe and Cakery (204 East Main St.).

"I get lots of tourists — international ones, too," says owner Kay Speer. Most come in as part of the Tabasco Food Tour, a multi-stop tour of area restaurants. At KK's, they're treated to top favorites: made-from-scratch praline or turtle cheesecake.

"I have a passion for sweets," Speer says. But the passion carries over toward the savory side of food served in the cafe, too. "We're very serious about our gumbo. Very."

BREAUX BRIDGE, LOUISIANA

25.6 miles via Highway 31

Breaux Bridge is a charming town that draws thousands annually to experience Acadian history and flavor at such places as Cafe des Amis (140 East Bridge St.).

On any given day, there are diners from around the globe who come to experience a mix of Cajun fusion, such as the crawfish pie. It's one of those oh-my-gosh dishes, a presentation of puff pastries smothered with crawfish cream sauce.

Just tell anyone you're going to Breaux Bridge for lunch or dinner and they'll ask, "Oh, are you going to des Amis?"



Cafe des Amis' crawfish pie



LAKE CHARLES, LOUISIANA

83.2 miles via Highway 90

Lake Charles is a good halfway point between New Orleans and Austin. Take a break from the road at Darrell's (119 West College St.). It's a sports bar with a minimalist approach, serving little more than po' boys. But there's one in particular that has become an addiction — Darrell's Special with ham, turkey and beef. What makes it different from a club sandwich? The gravy. It's easy to taste why it was voted the second-best sandwich in the state of Louisiana by onlyinyourstate.com. It's a monster of flavor that comes with a side of napkins.

BEAUMONT, TEXAS

57.2 miles via Highway 90

The backroad between Lake Charles and Beaumont takes you through a series of small towns. As you travel west, it doesn't take long before Highway 90 becomes I-10 and the huge "Welcome to Texas" sign looms.

This state-line city has a restaurant blending Louisiana and Texas cultures at Tia Juanita's Fish Camp (5555 Calder Ave.). Suzy Lalonde, a Cajun, met Ricky Martinez, a Hispanic man in the restaurant rehab business.

What is it that draws the crowds? Boudin, a rustic Louisiana sausage, made in-house and used to make boudin que-sadillas, or nachos topped with French cream sauce that Lalonde incorporated into the traditional Tex-Mex dish.

There's fine dining, too: blackened tilapia Pontchartrain, salmon with caper-lime sauce and, for Sunday brunch, French toast bananas Foster or Chi-Chi's Eggs Benedict.

ATASCOCITA, TEXAS

76.4 miles via Highways 90 and 1960

If you're in Texas, barbecue is a must, and as you pass through Atascocita, follow the smoke signals to Tin Roof BBQ (18918 Town Center Blvd.).

These guys know how to smoke the daylights out of a brisket. And the jalapeno peppers they add to smoked sausage will make your tastebuds sing.

Barbecue is a regional thing, co-owner Brek Webber explains. In Texas, you'll find mostly beef-based 'cue. And here, the barbecue isn't sauced. If you want sauce, add it yourself.

Though new, the building looks like it's from Texas pioneer days — aged wood, a big Texas steer out front, a deck with picnic tables and a stage for weekend hoe-downs, all capped with a big tin roof.



Tin Roof BBQ

BASTROP, TEXAS

From Atascocita to Bastrop: 145 miles via Sam Houston Parkway and Highway 290

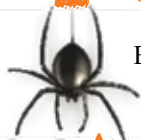
The trip from Atascocita into Bastrop is a drive-thru history lesson over an arid landscape that quickly evolves into one with lots of greenery and big loblolly pines that lead you to The Roadhouse (2804 Highway 21).

In 2009, Texas Monthly voted the Jalapeno-Cream Cheese Burger one of its 50 Greatest Burgers in Texas.

"It's funny how the gourmet burger scene is coming on strong in chain restaurants," says owner Amy Bruder. "They're trying to recreate what we've been doing for years."

Roadhouse is about more than a good burger. It's about hand-cut steaks, grilled pork chops and green chili chicken, plus breakfast on weekends. 🍷

FAIRLY FOUL



BY MATT LEDGER

A musty, disorienting haze greets the bravest of souls strolling toward a darkened abyss underneath Grant. Each step takes them further into a cryptic maze of spine-tingling fear as an ominous low hum rumbles in the distance. A diabolical scream suddenly echoes off the cavern walls, leaving all with uncertainty about what lies ahead ... or who crept up behind them.

The DAR baseball team puts the fun back in fundraising with a visit to the “Bat Cave.” The team will trade their bats and uniforms for more seasonally spooky attire. The third annual Haunted Hollow will be at Cathedral Caverns for a triple-header of Saturdays — Oct. 17, 24 and, of course, Halloween night.

“They’re working together, so it helps build a great relationship for our players and parents because we’ve spent so much time together building toward this event,” says Tiffany Motes, parent coordinator. “We had to think outside the box for something that would bring people to us.” The students’ committee develops new ideas for the event each year and promises to add a few new twists for 2015.

Founded by Jacob Gurley, Cathedral Caverns opened in the 1950s and became a state park in 2000. The mouth of the cave measures 126 feet across, leading the way to countless stalagmite formations, including “Goliath,” which measures 243 feet in circumference.

Ideal for family adventures and field trips, the sprawling park covers 493 acres, featuring gemstone mining, campsites, hiking trails and picnic sites.



TOP: With ghoulish uniforms, the DAR baseball team await visitors in the cave.

ABOVE: The creative teens even built and displayed a makeshift headstone for Cathedral Caverns’ founder, Jacob Gurley.

LEFT: Visitors navigate a narrow passage in nearly complete darkness with numerous props to bump into along the way.

CREEPY CAVE DWELLERS

The first year of the fundraiser, the team’s event was held along a woodland trail. Needing more than 50 people each night to run such a complex event, teammates recruited friends, siblings, parents and, naturally, the DAR Diamond Girls.

Despite being rained out on Halloween night, that fundraiser was more profitable than any other, eclipsing all of their smaller annual fundraisers during the previous year. Without an athletic fund, each DAR sport must find ways to purchase jerseys and equipment and cover travel expenses.

Park Superintendent Lamar Pendergrass

allowed the tour into the cave for 2014. “He does much of the behind-the-scenes work to help us pull it off,” Motes says, appreciatively.

The cavern enhanced the frightening ambiance of the experience and was an even greater success. “It was much warmer inside the cave — precisely 60 degrees, year-round — we were even able to make a maze to add more mystery,” Motes says.

Once visitors exit the labyrinth, they must still navigate the trail passing each of the characters — sixth through 12th graders — a second time while trying to escape the shadowy underground chasm. 📱

HAUNTED HOLLOW

at Cathedral Caverns • 637 Cave Road
www.alapark.com/cathedral-caverns-state-park
www.facebook.com/hauntedhollowccaverns
 \$10 admission

Committed to Serve

BY MATT LEDGER

Ryne Hicks' father, Chris, received the email notification, and an excited call to Ryne followed. The New Hope High School student would attend a one-week camp at the United States Military Academy at West Point.

"I was really blessed to get picked," says Ryne, a NHHS senior.

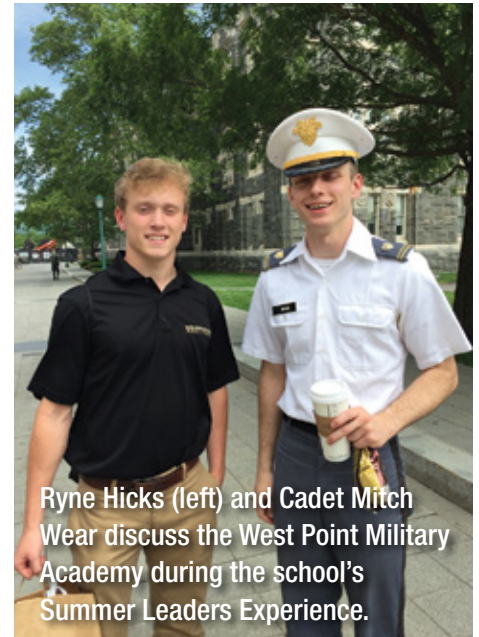
On May 30, the Summer Leaders Experience at the academy in New York included 1,000 high school students selected from nearly 6,000 applicants.

Hicks and his classmates filed into Legion Square for a mock reception day similar to what they would experience as a cadet — an intense barrage of shouted commands and repetitive tasks.

"Reception day is pretty incredible, when you have to do simple tasks under an enormous amount of stress," Hicks says. "That was the first time I questioned if I am really cut out for this. There was tons of yelling, and it felt like I did 1,000 pushups that day."

After that eye-opening welcome, the remainder of the week was filled with history classes, weapons demonstrations and even a game of dodgeball. Teens toured the forts and artillery batteries surrounding West Point, which was originally a Revolutionary War fortification.

To improve his chances of becoming a "plebe" — the nickname given to first-year cadets at West Point — Hicks is focused on studying mathematics as a senior at NHHS. Ryne will also seek interviews — possibly with U.S. Senator Jeff Sessions or U.S. Congressman Mo Brooks



— to obtain the congressional nomination needed to attend West Point.

Ryne is determined to serve in the military. If he does not attend West Point, he plans to enroll in the University of Alabama and join the ROTC program. As a third option, he might join the enlisted ranks of the Army infantry. "I feel that it's my duty to give back to the country that has given me everything," Hicks says. "It's called the 'long gray line' at West Point, following in the footsteps of all those great generals." ☎

Kindness starts with kin

To celebrate the remarkable efforts of relative child care providers, the Family Guidance Center of Alabama created the Kids and Kin Program, which came to New Hope in August.

The new program began by hosting classes and a support group at the New Hope Library. From aunts and uncles, to older siblings or grandparents, the focus is to aid those dedicated individuals striving to make a difference in the lives of younger relatives. The free program is open to anyone and has no income requirement.

Participants learn about community resources and hear from professionals on numerous topics, including health care, special needs and literacy. Classes include door prizes and free children's books. Participants who qualify and complete the Kids and Kin Voluntary Certification Program can earn \$150 in free toys and educational materials; either a smoke detector, carbon monoxide detector or first-aid kit; and free CPR and first-aid training.

Kids and Kin dates

All classes are from 10 a.m. until noon at the New Hope Library, 5496 Main Drive.

- September 4
- September 25
- October 16
- October 30

Future dates TBD

*dates subject to change. Please call to verify.



For more information about Kids and Kin, please contact Kim Broyles at 256-724-2554 or kbroyles@familyguidancecenter.org. Kids and Kin is funded by the Alabama Department of Human Resources.

CAR TALK

What will readers find at your blog?

Joseph Scott: My blog talks about the stuff car guys and gals want to discuss — you know, the watercooler kind of talk. Topics include the fastest cars, the best classic muscle car of the day, Ford vs. Chevy, or what times the cars ran at the drag strip last weekend. I try to cover the car show and cruise-in scene with the latest trends in the hobby. I always try to relate to whatever topics a car guy wants to talk about. Each year, I cover some of the bigger car shows in the Southeast with a story and photos.

How has blogging changed your life?

JS: I guess cars have always been a part of my life story, but starting a blog to tell stories has made me look at the car scene from a different perspective. I'm kind of surprised at how many folks read my articles and give me good feedback.

What was your first car, and why did you pick it?

JS: A Volkswagen Scirocco. It was a two-door hatchback and had a four-speed manual shift. My mother taught me to drive a stick. It was burgundy metallic and served me well for almost nine years. It was nothing special, but it gave me the freedom of driving and the independence of my own set of wheels to express my style.

What questions should a buyer ask before buying an older-model car?

JS: A couple of key considerations would be:

- Where did the car spend most of its life? Down south in a wetter climate? In the West with its dry climate? Or up north where it's colder with snow and ice conditions? Older cars can and will rust out really bad if they were not maintained correctly.

- Also, do some research on the year and model car you are considering buying to see some of the typical issues it may have. Some cars just seem to be plagued with more problems than others, so if it's a car whose replacement or original parts are tougher to find, you will need to factor that into your restoration budget.

What's a good first car for someone who may want to get into car restoration?

JS: Typically the Ford Mustang and the Chevy Camaro are cars that many folks love to fix up and restore because there are so many places nowadays to buy parts, and their costs are fairly affordable if you search around. Old pickup trucks are another easy market to get into if you want to restore one of those because many of them can be found at good prices.



Joseph Scott having a good day at a car show with his Mustang.

Joseph Scott

A Q&A with Joseph Scott, a blogger from Athens, Alabama, who writes about everything from his love of cars to the latest news in the automotive industry.



Check out his blog...
carsandcoffeetalk.blogspot.com

OTHER CAR BLOGS YOU MIGHT LIKE:

► www.askpatty.com

A blog with reliable advice and tips for women who want to learn more about cars — buying and selling, repair, car care and safety.

► www.autosavant.com

A team of writers worldwide share their extensive love of cars.

Of all the cars made today, which ones do you think will stand the test of time and be collectibles in the future?

JS: The Shelby Mustangs. Carroll Shelby had such an impact on our car culture that his name still carries so much respect, and the limited production Shelby Mustangs built in the last few years will fetch top dollar in the next 20-25 years if they are original and have been maintained well. Another car that may be a sleeper and surprise some folks is the Pontiac Solstice. It was only produced from 2005 to 2009 by General Motors' Pontiac division, which is now out of business. It was a sleek little two-door coupe (or convertible) that still looks good today. They only made a little over 65,000 of them. 🗨️



Whatever your interest, there is likely an online community of people who share that interest with you. Our "Featured Blogger" series introduces you to people who write on the Web about a variety of topics. In the November/December issue, we'll focus on food blogs.



Get “THE SHOT” this fall

BY MELISSA SMITH

Autumn is the perfect time to get out and capture beautiful, colorful photos before the cold of winter. Green leaves turn to varying shades of gold, vermillion and orange, and the sky takes on a deeper hue of blue. To make sure you get the best photos possible, give these tips a try.

No matter what kind of camera you have, photographing in direct, harsh sunlight is not ideal. To capture autumn’s glory in the most stunning light, plan to shoot at sunrise or just before the sun sets, depending on what direction your subject is facing. For example, if shooting portraits, avoid situating your subject in front of the light, because that will form a silhouette. The time immediately before the sun sets is known as the “golden hour” and will give a very warm glow to your subject and highlight the reds and oranges of fall. Planning accordingly will ensure you get the best light.

Also, learn to appreciate overcast days. The diffused light from cloud cover can really make the color in your images pop.


Adding a tripod to your collection of camera equipment could really come in handy, especially when photographing landscapes. For those using DSLRs — the more expensive cameras with detachable lenses — selecting a slower shutter speed is beneficial in certain situations, such as slowing down moving objects (i.e. “misty” affect of water in a waterfall) or

night shots. However, slowing the shutter speed allows more light to enter the camera because the shutter is open longer. This will make the photo blurry if the camera moves, so a tripod is recommended for stability. It eliminates camera-shake caused by a photographer holding the camera.

Whether you’re using a smartphone, DSLR or a handy point-and-shoot, a great photo is all in the composition. **Try using the rule of thirds when composing a photo. Think of an image divided into thirds, with two vertical and two horizontal imaginary lines**

forming three rows. Place important elements in the photo on or near an intersection of the lines. Also, check your camera, because some display the grid in the viewfinder.

Consider using a filter while shooting with your DSLR. Polarizing filters are budget-friendly and give rich contrast to your fall photos. Have you ever noticed

that colors become more vibrant when you put sunglasses on? Think of a filter as a pair of sunglasses for the camera. It will suppress glare and enhance reflective surfaces and contrast. 



» TIPS JUST FOR SMARTPHONE USERS:

- Use apps on your smartphone to make adjustments to the contrast or sharpness of your image. Apps such as VSCOcam, Aviary and Afterlight offer editing options and filters other than the basic camera app.
- When taking photos with your smartphone, tap the screen to make sure the subject is in focus. You can also lighten an area of the photo that is dark by tapping when the light bulb appears. This will help set your best exposure.

Protect your priorities

Did you know that working smoke alarms cut the risk of death in home fires in half? Join others during October's National Fire Safety Month and secure your home. Protect what matters most with NHTC's Home Security Solutions, and make sure your family is safe from possible fires. Feel secure knowing that in the case of a fire emergency, authorities will be notified through the security system. That's just another way NHTC has your family's safety and best interest at heart.

NHTC can customize home security solutions to best meet your family's needs. Have peace of mind knowing that your home and what you value most is protected. Basic packages start as low as \$18.99 a month and include a keypad, motion detector, three door/window contacts, key fob, siren, back-up battery, window decal and yard sign.



Some of what NHTC Security Solutions has to offer:

- 24-Hour alarm monitoring
- Alert when child is home from school
- Remote unlocking
- Homeowner's insurance savings
- Consolidation with your NHTC bill
- A FREE consultation, security sign and window decal with a one-year product replacement guarantee

Security packages

start at just \$18.99 per month, but can be customized with any of these additional options:

- Door/window contacts
- External sirens
- Pet-immune motion detectors
- Glass break sensors
- Additional key fobs
- TotalConnect
- Wireless and cellular backup
- Lifetime protection plan
- CareConnect
- Home automation
- Cameras

*A 36-month agreement is required. AL LIC # 1660.

HERE ARE SOME FACTS ABOUT FIRE SAFETY:

- In fires considered large enough to activate the smoke alarm, hardwired alarms operate 93 percent of the time, while battery-powered alarms operate only 79 percent of the time.
- Smoke alarm failures usually occur when batteries are missing, disconnected or dead.
- An ionization smoke alarm is generally more responsive to active fires. A photoelectric smoke alarm is generally more responsive to smoldering fires. For the best protection, or where extra time is needed to awaken or assist others, consider using both types of alarms. Or, choose a combination ionization and photoelectric alarm.
- Most fatal fires kill only one or two people. In 2013, 12 home fires killed five or more people, resulting in a total of 67 deaths.
- During 2007-2011, about one of every 320 households had a reported home fire per year.

SOURCE: WWW.NFPA.ORG



CareConnect

Make sure that your elderly loved ones and their independence is protected. The CareConnect PRS Unit does not require purchasing any additional equipment and includes 24/7 UL Certified Monitoring. For just a \$9.99 monthly fee (added to a current NHTC Security Solutions plan), you can be comforted knowing your loved ones are safe. You will receive a waterproof pendant that may be worn in the shower. The pendant offers one-button activation and two-way voice communication.

Signing up for a lifetime protection plan for only \$4.99 a month will cover the cost of labor and equipment, as well as circumstances out of your control such as a lightning strike. ☎

Call 256-723-4211 for more information and choose your plan today!



Seniors can feel secure at home with a CareConnect Personal Response Unit.

A decade of deals

BY MELISSA SMITH

If you're searching for bargains, look no further than Main Street in Grant on Saturday, Sept. 26, starting at 6 a.m.

The 10th Annual Grant City-wide Yard Sale will stretch for a mile through downtown, beginning at the North Marshall Utilities building and ending at the red light.

There are about 150 spaces available for the yard sale. For \$20, vendors can rent spots that are 25-feet wide. Anyone who wishes to be a vendor may contact the Grant Chamber of Commerce at 256-728-8800.

"We have many local vendors, and some come from as far away as Birmingham," says Shirley Baggett, president of Grant's Chamber of Commerce.

Yard salers will find anything from furniture and jewelry to leather goods and food along the route. "It has everything from a belt buckle to a homemade fried pie," Baggett says.

A new feature this year will be live music throughout the day beginning at 9 a.m. Music will feature the Steve Helton Band, The Scottsboro Cloggers, Spare Change and the musical talent of Jami Bellar.

Stop by Grant Station (across from Grant Pharmacy and Peoples State Bank) and enjoy the music.

"This event helps our local merchants in Grant with business," Baggett says. "We've got restaurants, a hardware store, gas stations and a shoe store; it really helps our local economy."

The yard sale is not only a way to make money for the community, but also a way to bring the community together. "This one day is set aside each year for our community to come together and for everyone to make a little money. We just call it a win-win," Baggett says.

Also, the chamber does not profit from entry fees in any way. All the proceeds from the yard sale are put right back into the budget for the next year's sale.

Sheila Barbuck has been around the yard sale since the very beginning, as she was the executive director of the chamber during the first yard sale. "This is a really great way to bring the community together, and it seems like it's grown every year," Barbuck says. "It's been one of the most successful events the chamber has ever done."

In case of rain, the sale will take place the following Saturday, Oct. 3.



From bright letters to vintage windows, the yard sale has something for everyone.

Photos courtesy of Ramona Edwards.



First rule of yard sales: All of the best ones have a lemonade stand.



You're bound to find some doggone good deals at the Grant Citywide Yard Sale.



The 10th Annual Grant City-wide Yard Sale will be held Sept. 26.



Bargain hunters search through a few used books and other items at the Grant Public Library.

CATFISH STAR IN HOLLYWOOD

Some venues are so deeply etched into the collective consciousness of northern Alabamians that they have become a permanent part of the terrain. Such can be said for Mud Creek Fish Camp and Bar-B-Que. It plays a starring role in Hollywood — Alabama, that is.

So what separates a fish restaurant from a fish camp? For one thing, a fish camp is usually family-owned. Second — and most obvious — fish camps must have a massively huge fish decorating the walls.

Both hold true for Mud Creek.

The restaurant was opened in 1946 by Lester “Leck” Carver; his wife, Elsa; son, Bill; and daughter-in-law, Nell. When Leck and Elsa retired in the late 1970s, Bill and Nell took over. When Bill and Nell retired, their son, Billy, and son-in-law, Gerry Teal, took over. And that’s where things stand to this day. It would be tough to find a more “family” business than that.

Now, picture a 200-seat restaurant — expanded from its early days when it seated a mere 140 fish-loving patrons — with panelled walls sporting a few deer



Despite its growth, Mud Creek keeps that fish camp feel.



Gerry Teal, left, and Billy Carver have made sure the family business continues to thrive in North Alabama.

heads and a few sailfish and swordfish reproductions with views of Gunter'sville Lake from every table. If you can take your eyes off the view and the other wall decorations, you'll see it: a giant 13-pound bass. Teal caught it, made a reproduction of it and hung it for all to admire.

“I feel certain it will never happen again,” he says.

Six days a week, Tuesdays through Sundays, the staff serves up some of the best catfish on the planet, as well as barbecue. The restaurant was recently honored with inclusion in the newly formed Alabama Barbecue Hall of Fame, one of just 29 barbecue restaurants in the state.

“We sell about 200 pounds of catfish a week,” Teal says. That comes in second to the massive amounts of pork butts they go through to make their barbecue. “We sell about 500 pounds of that each week.”

The original recipe for the catfish is about as down-home as the restaurant: a cornmeal/flour-based batter with a little salt and pepper added.

“People sometimes ask: ‘What’s the secret to good catfish?’ It’s really no secret at all,” Teal says.

It’s a simple equation: Take the best catfish you can find — in Mud Creek’s case, it comes from the Mississippi Delta — then cook it in the best oil you can find

and fry it at a perfect 350 degrees. The sum of all that comes to great catfish that gets great reviews in person and online.

Each plate comes with two sides, one of the most common being coleslaw, made from a recipe developed by Shorty Bishop who helped out at the restaurant when it first opened. The baked beans with the addition of a little pulled pork in the mix let you sample the ‘cue along with your catfish.

“We must be doing something right because we’re still going strong after 69 years of business,” Teal says. ☎

IF YOU GO

Mud Creek Fish Camp & Bar-B-Que
844 County Road 213
Hollywood, AL
Phone: 256-259-2493



Food Editor **Anne P. Braly** is a native of Chattanooga, Tenn. Prior to pursuing a freelance career, she spent 21 years as food editor and feature writer at a regional newspaper.

A FINE FILLET WITH ALL THE FIXIN'S



Editor's Note: Mud Creek Fish Camp prepares its baked beans and coleslaw in bulk. These recipes have been reduced.

MUD CREEK'S ORIGINAL FRIED CATFISH

Catfish fillets
Equal parts flour and cornmeal
Salt and pepper (generous portions
of each)
Good quality oil (such as Crisco or
peanut oil)

Combine flour, cornmeal, salt and pepper. Add oil to heavy skillet, such as cast iron, until it reaches about halfway up sides. Heat oil to 350 degrees. A good test is to flick a little of the dry breading into the oil, and if it sizzles, the oil is ready. Dredge catfish fillets in flour mixture, shaking gently to remove excess. Lay a couple of fillets gently in hot oil and fry for 2-4 minutes, depending on thickness of fillets. Turn fillets

with spatula and cook for another 2-4 minutes or until golden brown. Remove and keep warm in low oven while frying remaining fillets.

MUD CREEK'S COLESLAW

2/3 gallon mayonnaise
1 pint vinegar
Salt, to taste
3-1/3 cups sugar
1 head cabbage, shredded
1 bag carrots, shredded

Combine mayonnaise, vinegar, salt and sugar, stirring until well blended. Place cabbage and carrots in large bowl. Add mayonnaise mixture a little at a time until the slaw reaches correct consistency. This will depend on the moisture content of the cabbage as well as your personal

preference. Stir to combine. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

MUD CREEK'S BAKED BEANS

1 (No. 10) can (116 ounces) pork
and beans
1-1/3 cups tomato sauce
1-1/3 cups moderately sweet barbecue
sauce
2/3 cup chopped bell peppers
2/3 cup chopped onions
1/4 pound chopped barbecue pork
2-3 tablespoons brown sugar, or to
taste

Combine all ingredients and bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes or until thick and heated through. 🍴



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