

The

Communicator

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2016

TRACING A FAMILY TREE

The local library unlocks
genealogy secrets

NHHS GRIDIRON MEMORIES

Alumni game honors the
first football team

BREAKING OF BREAD

A seasonal slice that rises
to the occasion



CHANGES COMING to the LIFELINE PROGRAM

Lifeline is a federal program designed to help low-income Americans pay for vital telecommunications services. Important changes to the program will take effect Dec. 2, 2016, including the addition of broadband services.

For new subscribers, eligibility for Lifeline will be limited to the following criteria as of Dec. 2, 2016:

- SNAP
- Medicaid
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance
- The Veteran's Pension or Survivor's Pension benefit

Consumers at or below 135 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines and those who qualified previously through any of the Tribal criteria will continue to be eligible for a Lifeline Program benefit.

To find out whether you qualify for Lifeline assistance, customers must fill out standard forms, available at your local telephone company's office, as mandated by the Federal and/or State government. Your telephone company is not responsible for determining who qualifies for these programs or who receives assistance. Customers must meet specific criteria in order to obtain assistance with their local telephone service, and qualifying is dependent upon government-established guidelines. To qualify for Lifeline credit, each customer must apply and provide proof that he/she, or a household member for whom he/she is financially responsible, participates in at least one of the programs listed or that the customer meets the income-based requirements. Additional eligibility requirements may also apply. Consumers are allowed only one Lifeline program benefit per household. Lifeline can only be used for one source of communication — cell phone or landline.

Please see the January/February 2017 issue of this magazine for more details about the new Lifeline program, or contact your local telephone company to apply for this assistance.

Cord stackers are highly satisfied with their video viewing experience

With a broadband connection, there are countless hours of programming available from video streaming services such as Netflix and Hulu. However, a recent study revealed that consumers say one viewing strategy is most satisfying — taking advantage of the latest streaming options but pairing them with the tried-and-true programming found with traditional TV service.

The J.D. Power 2016 Streaming Video Satisfaction Study, released in August, found that 60 percent of streaming customers were “cord stackers,” those who watch streaming video in addition to a traditional paid TV service. This group reported the highest level of satisfaction among all groups, with 826 points on a 1,000-point scale.

Streaming's popularity is due not only to the variety of programming available, but also to the flexibility of being able to watch on smart TVs, tablets, smartphones and other devices.

In the J.D. Power study, satisfaction was lowest among “cord cutters,” those who choose to cancel their paid TV subscriptions.

Source: www.jdpower.com

STACK IT UP!



NTCA THE RURAL BROADBAND ASSOCIATION RURAL CONNECTIONS

By Shirley Bloomfield, CEO
NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association

Senate Caucus focuses on rural broadband issue

Depending on when you've opened this issue of your telco's magazine, the national election is a few days away or has just passed. You may already know who our next president of the United States will be. Regardless of the outcome, however, there will remain much work to do in this country to continue expanding broadband service into our rural regions.

That's one reason I am particularly excited about the work of the Senate Broadband Caucus. Launched this summer, the caucus was formed by U.S. Senators Shelley Moore Capito, R-W.Va.; Angus King, I-Maine; Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn.; Heidi Heitkamp, D-N.D.; and John Boozman, R-Ark. to “serve as a platform to engage in discussions across Committee jurisdictions and to inform Senators and their staff about emerging broadband issues,” according to the initial news release from the caucus.

I had the opportunity to moderate a caucus session in September, where the group pulled together representatives of various agencies to discuss ways to invest in rural broadband. It is encouraging to see such interest in rural broadband deployment in the U.S. Senate, especially across party lines. Telecommunications providers like yours have done a tremendous job bringing broadband to parts of rural America, but as we look across the country, there is still much work to be done. We are on the right track! ☑

Hey
telemarketers:
DO NOT CALL!

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) have 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.
- You can register up to 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 that you already have a relationship with.

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

ATTENTION LOCAL BUSINESS OWNERS:

You must follow the Do Not Call rules

When you own or work for a local business, you likely don't think of yourself as the typical fast-talking, high-pressure telemarketer. However, local businesses that make phone calls to customers or potential customers should be aware that the same National Do Not Call Registry rules and regulations apply to them.

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. 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.

IT'S EASY!
ADD YOUR NUMBER TO THE
DO NOT CALL REGISTRY

Register online at
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.*

Being Authentic

“In this ever-changing society, the most powerful and enduring brands are built from the heart. They are real and sustainable. Their foundations are stronger because of the human spirit, not an ad campaign. The companies that are lasting are those that are authentic.”

— Howard Schultz, CEO of Starbucks



JIM COOK
General Manager

Judging by the success of Starbucks, Mr. Schultz clearly knows a little about business. But the reason this quote sticks with me is the last word: authentic. It's a word that apparently means a lot at the nation's most famous coffee company — and it's a word that means a lot to us here at NHTC.

The first definition from Oxford Dictionaries says authentic means “of undisputed origin; genuine.” I like that, but the second and third definitions are even better: “made or done in the traditional or original way, or in a way that faithfully resembles an original” and “accurate or reliable.” Those last two definitions sum up why being authentic matters to NHTC.

I think authentic is an overused word. We see it used to tout “authentic” Mexican or Italian food or “authentic” arrowheads or fossils at souvenir shops. But do you always believe the claim, or do you just assume it's mostly an empty boast?

In an age in which we're bombarded with companies, politicians and celebrities trying to portray themselves in a flattering way that may be 180 degrees from the truth, it's clear why someone or something being truly authentic carries weight with people.

Here at NHTC, I can assure you that our commitment to our members is authentic. It's genuine, it's reliable and it's a commitment that faithfully resembles the original commitments our founders made to this community decades ago. This authenticity is seen in our work to deliver a better, more connected experience to our members by building a fiber network in our community.

To borrow more words from Mr. Schultz, we are a company that is built from the heart, real and sustainable.

But as Mr. Schultz's quote suggests, it's easy for a CEO to make such a claim. However, you can truly tell if a company is authentic by looking at the way its employees work every day.

Our commitment is demonstrated by our customer service team and installation technicians making sure you get the services you need. It's shown in the way our repair techs will stay late or come out in bad weather to fix problems you're having. It's in our engineering team and accounting staff working hard to maximize the amount of customers we can connect or upgrade for each dollar we invest.

That's how you can tell if a company is authentic. That's how you know NHTC's commitment to you is authentic. And in Mr. Schultz's words, that's what will allow this company to endure and thrive for generations to come. 📞

The Communicator

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2016

VOL. 15, NO. 6

The Communicator is a bimonthly magazine published by New Hope Telephone Cooperative, ©2016. It is distributed without charge to all cooperative members/owners.



is a member-owned corporation dedicated to providing communications technology to the residents and businesses of New Hope, Grant and Owens Cross Roads.

Send address corrections to:
New Hope Telephone Cooperative
P.O. Box 452
New Hope, AL 35760
256-723-4211
www.nhtc.coop

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Garland Elders, President
Owens Cross Roads Exchange

Mike Whitaker, Vice President
New Hope Exchange

Jeffrey Cantrell, Treasurer
Grant Exchange

Randy Morrison, Secretary
Grant Exchange

Calvin Bearden
Grant Exchange

Jeff Cooper
New Hope Exchange

Jim Duncan
New Hope Exchange

Greg Glover
Owens Cross Roads Exchange

Barry Jones
New Hope Exchange

Produced for NHTC by:



On the Cover:



Rick Lovelady spends time at the Elizabeth Carpenter Public Library in New Hope researching his family history on Ancestry.com. See story Page 12.



WE SALUTE YOU, VETERANS

*Thank you for
your service*

Everyone at New Hope Telephone Co-op would like to honor every man and woman who has served in our nation's armed forces. You have helped to keep us safe and to protect the freedoms we hold dear.

“Honor to the soldier and sailor everywhere, who bravely bears his country's cause. Honor, also, to the citizen who cares for his brother in the field and serves, as he best can, the same cause.”

— President Abraham Lincoln

Happy Anniversary!

On July 20, 2016, M.L. and Ruby Wilhelm celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary. They were born and raised in the New Hope area, graduated from New Hope High School in 1945, and lived in New Hope for more than 67 years. Both are 90 years old, and they are content living independently in Louisville, Kentucky, but miss their family and friends in Alabama.

Their family includes a son, Mickey “Pat” in Louisville, Kentucky; and a daughter, Debra Bliss Kent, in Dallas, Texas; four grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.




Annual New Hope FFA Fruit Sale

The New Hope chapter of FFA is having its annual fruit sale. Orders must be in by Nov. 9, so hurry and get yours in today! Call 256-851-3280 to place your order.

Catch the CHRISTMAS PARADES

Don't miss the New Hope Christmas parade on Saturday, Dec. 10. The parade will begin once it gets dark in downtown New Hope. Refreshments and a visit by Santa will follow at the New Hope City Hall. Also, catch the Grant Christmas parade on Saturday, Dec. 10, starting at 1 p.m.

PUBLIX PARTNERS



Getting your groceries has never been more rewarding. If you shop at Publix, thanks to the Publix Partners program, the money you spend can go toward a cumulative total to earn money for your local school. All schools in NHTC's service area — New Hope, Kate Duncan Smith DAR School and Owens Cross Roads — participate in this program.



A MOST BEAUTIFUL YARD

Congratulations to the Owens Cross Roads Homemakers and Community Leaders Yard Beautification winners: Joey and Beth Parker, 3805 Old Highway 431 South, Owens Cross Roads.



The Hermitage



Texas White House



Lincoln Birthplace Symbolic Cabin

A PRESIDENTIAL TOUR

See how the South honors the nation's highest office

With the 58th inauguration of America's president just weeks away, visiting presidential homes or museums in person and exploring exhibits, artifacts, documents and photos offer an opportunity that's both educational and entertaining. A trip to any presidential site is a trip through our nation's past.

Here's a look at several locations around the South that keep history alive.

HERMITAGE, TENNESSEE

Originally a cotton farm with a two-story log cabin, the property President Andrew Jackson bought would become The Hermitage in 1804. There he constructed his mansion and over the years added additional buildings. The buildings are open for tours and offer a window into the lives of the Jackson family before and after the Civil War. Go room by room and see where the former general and president, along with his beloved wife, Rachel, entertained guests with stories of Jackson's military victories. Or see the bedroom where Jackson took his last breath, gazing at a portrait of his wife. A self-guided tour of the grounds around the mansion includes an inside look at slave cabins, the smokehouse, the gardens and Jackson's tomb. Also, stay to view "Born for the Storm," an exhibit using multimedia elements and objects from the extensive Hermitage collection.

"It gives our guests a thorough understanding of the life and times of our seventh president," says Jason Nelson, vice president of marketing.

► **Hours and information:** 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., March 15 to Oct. 15; and 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Oct. 16 to March 14. Online: thehermitage.com.

► **Also in Tennessee:** The home of President James K. Polk is in Columbia, and it has the largest collection of Polk artifacts in the country (www.jameskpolk.com). Also, in Greeneville you can visit the home of President Andrew Johnson and the cemetery where he is laid to rest (www.nps.gov).



TECH-SAVVY TRAVELER:

The National Park Service maintains dozens of historical sites including presidential birthplaces, libraries and other landmarks. Research parks and sites near you at **NPS.gov** or in the **Passport to Your National Parks** app.





Texas White House President's Office

STONEWALL, TEXAS

Take a tour of Texas' breathtaking Hill Country to visit the Texas White House, where former president Lyndon B. Johnson conducted much of his business in his family home. Ranger-led tours take you through his office, Lyndon and Lady Bird's separate bedrooms, the living room where the president met with heads of state, and more.

"It's a walk through time," says Dave Schafer, chief of interpretation for the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park.

The home is on the family's ranch property, where Johnson was born, lived, died and is now buried. Free, self-guided ranch tours are another option that allow visitors to stop by his boyhood home, schoolhouse and family cemetery.

- ▶ **Hours and information:** 10 a.m.-4 p.m., seven days. Online: www.nps.gov.
- ▶ **Also in Texas:** The George W. Bush boyhood home in Midland was also home for several years to President George H. W. Bush (www.bushmuseummidlandtx.com). The Eisenhower Birthplace State Historical Park, which has hiking trails and picnic areas, is in Denison (www.thc.state.tx.us).

HODGENVILLE, KENTUCKY

Most Americans are familiar with the birth cabin and boyhood home of our 16th president, Abraham Lincoln. But did you know that the homes are not the actual ones inhabited by the Lincoln family?

"Most folks are surprised to learn that, but both are historic cabins and are very similar to how the Lincolns would have lived," says Stacy Humphreys, chief of interpretation and resource management at the park.

More than 200,000 people come to Lincoln's birthplace annually to relive

his early life on the frontier and see the first Lincoln Memorial, circa 1910. The memorial includes a replica "birth cabin," and nearby is Sinking Spring, where the Lincoln family got their water.

In addition to the memorial, another favorite site in the park is Lincoln's boyhood home on Knob Creek, about 10 miles from the birthplace memorial and visitors center. It's a big park down a road off the beaten path.

Time your visit for Lincoln's birthday, Feb. 12, and witness a wreath-laying ceremony at about 10 a.m. that morning.

- ▶ **Hours and information:** 8 a.m.-4:45 p.m., seven days. Online: www.nps.gov.
- ▶ **Also in Kentucky:** Zachary Taylor National Cemetery is in Louisville and contains the mausoleum where the president and his wife, Margaret, are interred (<http://www.cem.va.gov>).



Monticello

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA

High on the ridge overlooking the city of Charlottesville, Monticello makes a commanding statement. The home of President Thomas Jefferson, the stately plantation with its surrounding gardens, lies in stark contrast to the nearby slave cabins, reconstructed to show a dark but important side of Monticello's history.

Many regard the president's home, built in 1769, as his architectural biography, a structure that shows a mind as adept at engineering and agriculture as it was for politics.

One of the most interesting objects in the home is the great clock that Jefferson designed. It has exterior and interior faces, an hour-striking Chinese gong and a seven-day wall calendar.

"It reveals his desire for order, interest in technology and ability to adapt traditions," says Mia Magruder Dammann,



Into the Storm Exhibit • Hermitage

marketing associate with the Thomas Jefferson Foundation. "By any measure and in any age, Jefferson was a brilliant mind and the founding father who best embodied the American spirit of innovation."

- ▶ **Hours and information:** 10:15 a.m. (first tour), 4:10 p.m. (last tour). Online: www.monticello.org.
- ▶ **Also in Virginia:** Mount Vernon, home of George and Martha Washington, is in Mount Vernon (www.mountvernon.org). The Sherwood Forest Plantation was the Charles City home of the 10th U.S. President, John Tyler, from 1842 until his death in 1862 (www.sherwoodforest.org). Richmond's Tuckahoe Plantation, circa 1733, was the boyhood home of Thomas Jefferson (www.tuckahoeplantation.com).

COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

A charming Southern town, Columbia lays claim to the only presidential site in South Carolina — the boyhood home of President Woodrow Wilson, our nation's 28th president. Recent renovations returned the structure to its original blueprint with furnishings and decor that closely match that seen by Wilson when he lived there as a teenager in the 1870s.

"Two very important things make this museum unique," says Fielding Freed, director of historic house museums for Historic Columbia. "First, it was the home of teenage Tommy (Woodrow) Wilson. Secondly, it's the only museum in the country that focuses on Reconstruction, a period that is often misunderstood but is a very important part of American history, from 1865 to 1876."

- ▶ **Hours and information:** 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. (Tuesday-Saturday tours); 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. (Sunday tours). Online: www.historiccolumbia.org.

MEMORIES ON THE TURF

First NHHS team honored during alumni game

By MELISSA SMITH

About 50 boys showed up for the first practice, and by the end of the first week, the numbers thinned out to 16 players. It was 1961, and they were the first football team at New Hope High School.

"We had to play both sides," Jerry Glenn says. Many of the boys had never played a down, other than pick-up games in their front yards with other kids in the neighborhood.

The Indians didn't win a game that first season. "We had to start from scratch," Ralph Hatcher says. Workouts were hard, and water breaks were scarce.

Hatcher and Glenn joined 11 of their teammates on the field during halftime of this year's annual alumni football game on July 30. Each man was presented a jersey with his number during a ceremony in their honor.

It was a group that began the school's football tradition, one they witnessed firsthand under

the bright lights at the current stadium. When the first team took the field, though, they didn't play under lights or in a stadium. And they noticed the difference during their alumni game appearance.

"All of us that walked on the field were amazed at the condition of the field and how well-kept it is," Hatcher says.

Back in 1961, their first games were played in the afternoon in the outfield of the baseball field.

"That first year, we didn't have sod, and there was a lot of dust," Hatcher says. "We practiced and worked out in a very dusty area."

They also didn't have a top-of-the-line weight-lifting facility like the players do now. "Our dressing room was a room we had to clean out behind the old band room," Glenn says. "Then, we went in and built our lockers."

Glenn, the former NHHS quarterback, says his fondest memory was the first game they won against Locust Fork in 1962. 🗨️



New Hope High School's first football team was honored during halftime of the alumni game this year.

Photos courtesy of Rick Finch.



Many players hadn't been on a football field since they played in high school.



The New Hope Indians alumni team takes the field during the July 30 game.

A MEETING OF GENERATIONS

Each year, former New Hope High School football players come together to play in an alumni game against an alumni team from Gurley High School (MCHS). Funds raised from the game supplement each school's football program, and participants get one more chance to put on a uniform and play ball.

Even though New Hope fell short 37-7 to their longtime rival Gurley this year, the players were happy to be on the field with their former teammates.

Juan Bishop, a 2000 graduate of NHHS, says playing in the game

and giving back to the community was more important than winning. "What meant more to us was that we were actually giving back to the program for those younger guys in high school," he says.

The game raised money for the football programs, including helping players pay for athletic camps they may not be able to afford.

While many of the players haven't stepped foot on a field since their last high school game, they say the experience was worth the soreness and time spent preparing. "It's fun to go out there and play football — you always have a dream of that last play you play," Bishop says.

NOT ALL ROUTERS ARE CREATED EQUAL

Find your perfect solution

Online gaming, streaming movies, smartphones, tablets, computers and more are all part of the everyday world. But, sometimes a movie might stutter or a download may lag. A winning moment might turn into gaming heartbreak.

When trouble appears, the first stop on the path to a solution might be simple — upgrade the router, the little box that extends Wi-Fi throughout your home.

Here's a guide to understanding what router might best suit you and two options to consider:

KEY ONE:

The amount of physical space you need covered by a router matters. For example, someone in a one-bedroom apartment might have different needs than a family in a large four-bedroom home.

KEY TWO:

The connection to the internet does not have unlimited capacity. Every computer, gaming system and smartphone eats into the total available bandwidth.

GRASP THE GHZ

When buying a router, consider the GHz, or gigahertz. Think of the router as a mini radio station in your home and the GHz as the channel.

If your emphasis is on covering a larger area, consider a 2.4 GHz router, which has better range. If speed is the priority — such as gaming or streaming video — 5 GHz moves data faster.

Remember, though, when reviewing routers, the range estimates are only approximations.

COMTREND AC1200 ROUTER \$90



The Comtrend AC1200 uses both 2.4 GHz and 5 GHz channels. It provides excellent wireless coverage for smaller, single-level homes.

- Set at 2.4 GHz range, the signal should reach about 150 feet indoors and 300 feet outdoors.
- When set to 5 GHz, the router will reach about 50 feet indoors and 100 feet outdoors.

COMTREND AC2050 ROUTER \$235



The Comtrend AC2050 can extend the range of your network significantly. If you want to check your email in the backyard or work by the pool, this is the best router.

- The router uses both 2.4 GHz and 5 GHz channels.
- At 2.4 GHz, the range is about 300 feet indoors and 600 feet outdoors.
- At 5 GHz, the range is about 100 feet indoors and 200 feet outdoors.

Both of these routers offer 801.11ac technology on the 5 GHz band, which allows for much faster speeds.

When in doubt, contact NHTC at 256-723-4211 for help deciding which router is the best fit for you and your family.

Chris Nease

ENTERTAIN *with* ELEGANCE

A Q&A with Chris Nease, a blogger from Richmond, Virginia, who has entertained readers with her party ideas since 2008.

Check out her blog at
CELEBRATIONSATHOMEBLOG.COM

Q: How has blogging changed your life?

CN: I started my blog as a way to curate ideas for my new party styling business and found that I preferred the creative outlet that a blog provided over the party business. So when it began to take off and make money, I dropped the business to do the blog full time. It's been the dream job I never knew I wanted.

Q: What will readers find at your blog?

CN: Inspiration and ideas for the home hostess. The main focus is on home entertaining, party design, tips, recipes and do-it-yourself ideas.

Q: What is the primary thing a hostess can do to ensure her party runs smoothly?

CN: Have a properly cultivated guest list. When you bring together the right mix of people, the party practically runs itself.

Q: What is your favorite way to entertain during the holidays?

CN: I like to dress it up a little but still keep things fun, not stuffy. We've been hosting an annual Christmas cocktail party since 1998, and it's become one of my favorite days of the year. Everyone dresses up in cocktail attire and mingles over drinks and heavy hors d'oeuvres, and we end the night with some dancing. It's such a fun time!

Q: Is it best to stick with tried-and-true recipes?

CN: I love to break that rule! I'm known for trying new recipes for dinner parties or holidays because what better way to get a good gauge of how well it goes over?

Q: What can be done to dress up a party without too much fuss?

CN: Serve water or juice mixers in pretty decanters or pitchers; add fresh herb garnishes to food platters; fill glass vases or pretty bowls with ornaments; or make special ice for drinks using shaped silicone trays by freezing juice or adding berries to the water molds.

Q: Is it a good idea to count on guests to bring dishes if they offer?

CN: It really depends on the type of party. If I've already planned out the menu, I usually only take up offers of food from my closest friends. Otherwise, I'll suggest they bring a bottle of wine.

Q: What's an economical idea for a holiday centerpiece?

CN: This is my no-cost favorite: Lay a wide ribbon down the center of the table like a runner. Then add evergreen clippings down the center and fill in with pine cones, ornaments and candles. 🕯️



OTHER ENTERTAINING BLOGS:

► **PIZZAZZERIE.COM**

Nashville-area blogger Courtney Whitmore entertains readers with her wit and passion for parties.

► **EVERYDAYLIVING.ME**

A faith-based blog that shares decorating tips and homespun recipes from Alabama for a memorable holiday gathering.

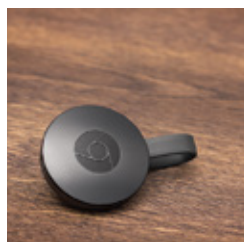
A high-tech wishlist

DON'T MISS OUT ON THE LATEST GADGETS

Christmas isn't about the getting — it's about the joy of giving! Getting someone the perfect gift could be the highlight of the season for them and for you. Here's a guide for some of the hottest technology items this season.

STREAMING TV BOX

Three brands currently dominate the streaming entertainment box marketplace: Roku, Apple TV and Amazon Fire. Once set up and connected to your home broadband router, each will allow viewers to stream Netflix, Hulu and other subscription-based video services and channels straight to their TV. Features on different models vary, but some distinctions — like Amazon's voice-command remote, Apple TV's features when linked to other Apple products, and Roku's price and versatility — give each one its own advantages.



CHROMECAST

Chromecast allows you to send the video you're watching on your phone or tablet straight to your television. The small hockey puck-shaped dongle turns your television into a giant monitor for TV shows, movies, music, sports and games. But that's not the end to the Chromecast lineup. Chromecast Audio allows you to turn any speaker into a Wi-Fi-enabled network of sound. One device allows you to connect

a speaker to your phone or tablet wirelessly. More dongles mean more speakers can be linked to synchronize your music across multiple rooms of your home. Both Chromecast and Chromecast Audio are \$35.

SMART WATCHES

While connected timepieces were a novelty last Christmas, they are moving into the mainstream for this gift-giving season. While many consider the Apple Watch (\$350-\$10,000) to be the top of the class, others, like the Samsung Gear S2, the Pebble Steel (\$150) and the Moto 360 (\$300 and up), offer similar features to keep you connected with their own unique style.



SAMSUNG GEAR VR

Technology enthusiasts have been talking about (and wishing for) good virtual reality devices for years. Now, they may have arrived with the Samsung Gear VR (\$100).



Insert your Samsung phone into the device in order to play games and watch movies in an entirely new experience.

GIFT CARDS

Don't forget that many online services offer gift credits that allow the recipient the chance to pick out exactly what they want. Here are a few gift card ideas for:



Music lovers: Pandora, Spotify, iTunes



Shoppers: Amazon Prime Membership (for free shipping)



Gamers: Steam



Movie lovers: Netflix, iTunes, Amazon



Photo lovers: Shutterfly, Snapfish



Book lovers: Amazon Kindle Store, iTunes (for iBooks).

DRIVING DATA INTERPRETERS

A handful of gadgets, led by the Mojio (\$99), allow users to basically connect their car's engine to their smartphones. The device plugs into the car's OBD2 port (where the mechanic reads the "Check Engine" codes) and connects to a mobile app that can provide information on how the car is running, where it has been and what it may need in order to keep putting on the miles. Open this gift early if you've got some holiday travel in your plans.



ALL IN THE FAMILY

Local man traces ancestry through library

By MELISSA SMITH

“From this valley they say you are going
I will miss your bright eyes and sweet smile
For they say you are taking the sunshine
That has brightened our pathways a while.”

“Red River Valley”

Rick Lovelady sits on the bench outside the Elizabeth Carpenter Public Library in downtown New Hope most mornings waiting for the library to open. “Red River Valley” rings out into the air as he saws on his fiddle, one he made himself.

Playing the fiddle is in his blood. “My sisters asked me once where I got playing the fiddle,” he says. “I started thinking and decided I would find out.”

After some research, Lovelady learned that his great-great-grandfather played the fiddle, and that is where his journey began.

“There’s really no end to it,” Lovelady says about genealogy research. This last year has taken him to places he never thought he would go and has given him a new perspective on family.

FAMILY TRADITION

Lovelady has spent countless

hours in the library tracing his ancestry. “The tools are right here, and it’s free,” he says.

He began his research on Ancestry.com, then through the DNA links provided by the AncestryDNA results, he was able to make contact with others. “The DNA points you where you need to go,” he says. “There are hundreds, or thousands, of people searching for the same people you are.”

For \$99, AncestryDNA will test a sample of a person’s saliva. The resulting report will show a list of DNA markers that connect people bearing the same traits. Lovelady strongly recommends that anyone beginning to research their family



Rick Lovelady sits outside the Elizabeth Carpenter Public Library in New Hope entertaining passersby with his fiddling.

history start with the DNA test.

Every month, a Genealogy 101 class is taught at the library. Attendees can learn how to navigate certain websites with guidance from the teachers. And, because the library has a subscription to Ancestry.com, anyone can do research for free. The only cost would be to print information for just 15 cents per copy.

Lovelady says he's traced his roots back to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. He has found relatives who fought in the Civil War, the War of 1812 and the Revolutionary War. He even learned some relatives were lords and ladies in England.

His search then led to New Jersey where he found more information. "Lovelady Island is right in the middle of the Atlantic," he says. His search then led to his finding a family member who in the early 1700s changed their name from Lovelace to Lovelady.

"There may be some surprises, but don't let that throw you," Lovelady says. Having run into dead ends with research, he has found the best thing to do is just keep searching, because somewhere there is bound to be a connection.

In the Deep South, some information has become particularly difficult to find because many records were destroyed during the Civil War. "The Yankees, bless their hearts, they burned up everything," he says.

SEARCHING FOR ANSWERS

Lovelady recently returned from a weeklong trip to North Georgia, where he discovered ties to his family. According to his research, he found that



Rick Lovelady holds up a photo of his ancestor, Elliott Allen Smith, who is buried in Cleburne County. He is hoping to one day document his gravesite.

many of his relatives were moonshiners.

The most interesting relative he has come across was a great-great-grandfather buried in Cumming, Georgia. "I found out he was deaf and mute. He had a wife and three children, and he wound up in Georgia through the years after the war ended. He was trying to make his way home, but due to incidents in the war, he lost his hearing and ability to speak," Lovelady says.

Through his DNA link, which provided email addresses and contact information, Lovelady found some of his kinfolk, and they showed him where his ancestor was buried in the cemetery in the heart of the Georgia town.

There, at the highest point of the cemetery, he saw a Confederate flag and knew it had to be the grave of his great-great-grandfather Joseph John Lovelady. After more researching, examining census records and speaking with historians in Atlanta, he also learned his ancestor was a cobbler.

"I think when the war was over, he was trying to get home to Alabama. I think a church took him in and got him a job

as a shoemaker, but he just never made it home," Lovelady says. He died in 1869.

During this trip, he also found the grave of his great-great-grandmother, Mary Avaline Ellis. "I never knew her, and I wouldn't know anything about her if not for genealogy," he says. During the visit, he pulled out his fiddle and played "Wildwood Flower" at her graveside. Her husband, Wiley Columbus Ellis, Lovelady's great-great-grandfather, also played the fiddle.

Lovelady says anyone and everyone should know their family history. "Do it now. Don't wait until it's too late," he says, emphasizing the importance of talking to elderly relatives.

In fact, he was able to reconnect with a first cousin living in North Carolina that he hadn't seen in 20 years. She had no idea she was within a 30-minute drive of where their great-great-grandparents were buried. "We had a wonderful time," he says. "That would've never happened if not for the DNA connection," he says.

She also plays the fiddle. 🎻



Rick Lovelady makes fiddles and also plays for residents at area nursing homes.



TALENTED AND TASTY

A baker gives her recipe secrets

The scent of freshly baked bread wafts through the air every time the door to Blackbird Bakery opens, and during the holiday season it never stops opening. Breads are the centerpiece of many holiday meals, and no one knows this better than bakery owner Carla Perkins.

“We sell lots of bread for both personal enjoyment and for gifts,” she says.

Apple-cinnamon, Tennessee sweet sourdough, jalapeno cheddar — they’re just a handful of the tempting breads filling the bakery just off the main road through Bristol, Virginia’s historic downtown.

Take a seat inside and feast your eyes on the confections housed within the bakery’s cases. Cookies, pies, doughnuts, cakes, tarts, cupcakes and yes, breads — all freshly made daily.

You’d think Carla has spent a lifetime learning her craft. Not so.

“I grew up around some of the best bakers — my mom and sister,” she says. “But I never took an interest in it until I got married.”

But even then, baking was more a curious, albeit delicious, hobby rather than a career. But before long, baking became her passion. She left her job as a special education teacher and opened the bakery

with her husband, Randall.

“I’ve never looked back,” she adds.

That was in 2008 after spending a year renovating the old building. It’s now a shining example of urban renewal, revealing its former life as a Masonic temple building with a handsome staircase, high ceilings and expansive windows. But since opening day, even more work has been put into the business, expanding it a couple of times. There’s been a demand for extra seating and a space for parties and other private events. Also, the kitchen is now on its third expansion. And the baking continues.

Perkins says that the bakery’s success is quite a triumph due to the fact that she’s had no formal training. But some people are born to it. And Carla Perkins was.

“I never turn down an opportunity to gain more insight and knowledge of the baking process, though,” she says. “At the Blackbird, I am surrounded by lots of talented bakers who continue to show me

new and better ways to do things.”

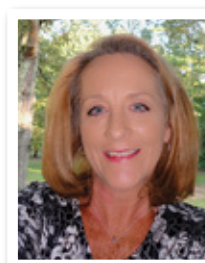
So when baking bread at home, something she enjoys doing during the holidays when and if she has the time — “The continued popularity of Blackbird leaves me very little time to do so,” she says — Perkins has learned that using ingredients, such as eggs, at room temperature is the key to success.

“Also, the creaming of butter and sugar cannot be understated,” she adds.

Here are some of her favorites, recipes you may make at home and that will likely become holiday traditions. 📖



Carla Perkins, who opened Blackbird Bakery with her husband, Randall, shows off a loaf of Cranberry Nut Orange Bread.



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

CRANBERRY NUT ORANGE BREAD

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup (1/2 stick) salted butter
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon orange zest
- 1/4 cup orange juice
- 1 1/2 cups chopped cranberries
- 1 cup chopped pecans

Heat oven to 350 F. Grease a 9-by-5-inch loaf pan. In a large bowl, sift together flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Combine well. Cut in butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. In a separate bowl, stir together egg, orange zest and orange juice. Gradually stir in flour mixture. Stir just until flour is moistened. Gently fold in cranberries and nuts. Pour into prepared pan and bake for 60-75 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Transfer to wire rack; let stand

for 5 minutes. Remove bread from pan and place on wire rack. Cool completely before slicing. Makes 1 loaf.

SWEET POTATO BREAD

- 1 1/2 cups cooked, mashed sweet potatoes (Approximately 2 medium or 1 large sweet potato)
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1/4 cup buttermilk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/4 cups granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup light brown sugar, packed
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
- Pinch of salt

Heat oven to 350 F. Grease a 9-by-5-inch loaf pan. Set aside. Peel sweet potatoes and cut into medium-sized cubes. Place

in small saucepan and cover with water; bring to a boil, cover and reduce heat. Cook until fork tender; drain and mash with fork or mixer. Cool completely before using. Once cool, combine sweet potatoes, eggs, oil, buttermilk and vanilla. Mix well and set aside. In a large mixing bowl, combine all dry ingredients and whisk to combine. Add wet mixture to dry mix and stir just until combined. Pour batter into prepared pan and bake for 60-70 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Let stand in pan for 10 minutes before removing to rack to cool. Makes 1 loaf.

Note: This recipe can be altered by adding 1 cup of golden raisins or 1 cup of chopped nuts. A nut-based streusel added to the top of the batter before baking would also be delicious.

PINEAPPLE NUT BREAD

- 2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups canned crushed pineapple, drained
- 2/3 cup milk
- 1/4 cup (1/2 stick) salted butter, melted
- 1 large egg
- 1 cup shredded, sweetened coconut
- 1/2 cup macadamia nuts, chopped

Heat oven to 350 F. Grease a 9-by-5-inch loaf pan. Set aside. In a medium bowl, mix together flour, sugar, baking powder, ginger, baking soda and salt. Set aside. In a medium bowl, combine pineapple, milk, melted butter and egg. Mix well. Add wet mixture to the dry mixture and mix until just combined. Fold in coconut and nuts. Spread into prepared pan and bake for 50-60 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes before removing. Remove from pan and cool on a wire rack. Makes 1 loaf. 📖





P.O. Box 452
New Hope, AL 35760

Presort STD
US Postage PAID
Permit #21
Freeport OH

SNOW DAYS DON'T HAVE TO BE SLOW DAYS

Warm up to our broadband savings!

Speed up your broadband and SAVE!

- NHTC will waive the upgrade fee (\$25 in savings)
- **REDUCED FEES** for six months. Call to see how much you can save.
- Available speeds up to 50 Mbps.



Call NHTC today before this offer melts!

All download and upload speeds are best-effort up to the stated speed. Actual speeds may vary depending on devices connected to the internet. Option availability may vary. Not all speeds are available in all areas. Offer ends Dec. 30, 2016.

256-723-4211
nhtc.coop

