



Mountain Telephone

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2026

CONNECTION



Little Green Cottage

Carefully curated
treasures

SCHOLARSHIPS

TRAVEL TIPS



By Shirley Bloomfield, CEO
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

Protecting the Vulnerable

The internet powers many indispensable resources, including educational opportunities, telehealth, deployment of smart ag tools and the ability to stay in touch with loved ones. However, it is also the most common place for the recruiting and selling of sex-trafficking victims.

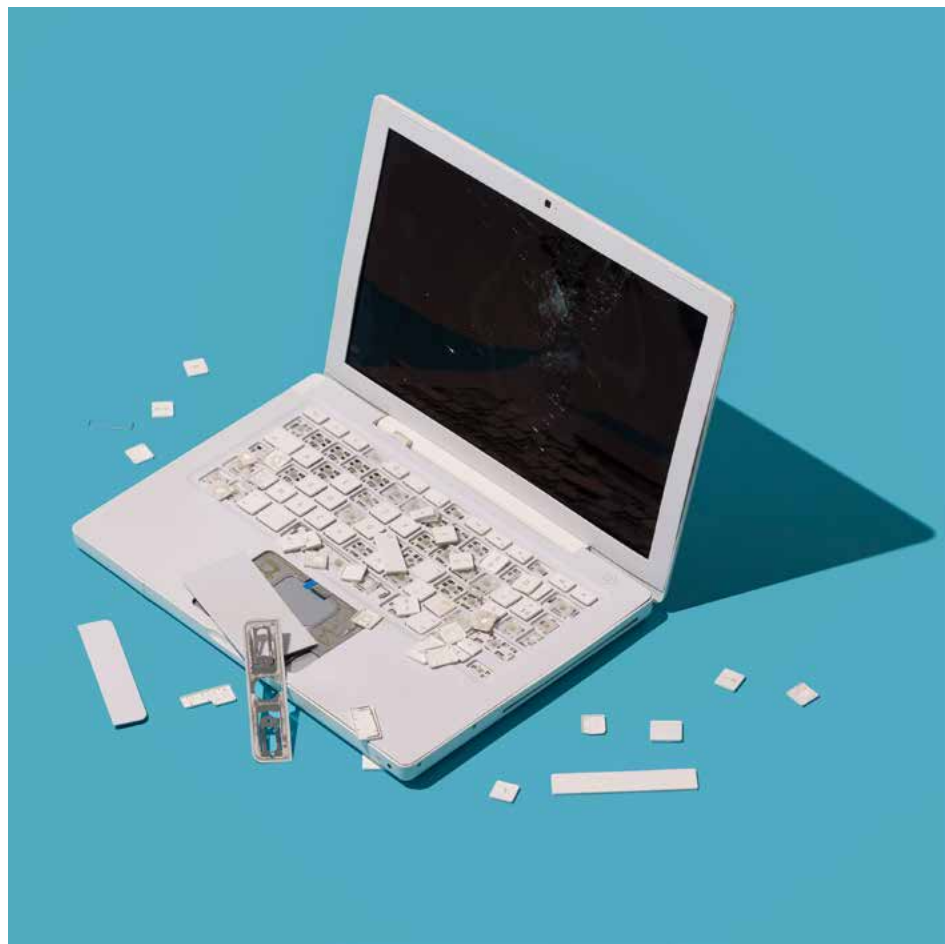
More than 150,000 new escort ads are posted online in America daily. Seventy-five percent of underaged victims report being sold online, and human trafficking is one of the fastest-growing criminal activities in our country.

January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month, and as we raise awareness to combat these crimes, NTCA members, and the association as a whole, are proud to collaborate with Guardian Group and Operation IFAST—ISPs Fight Against Sex Trafficking. It has been beyond gratifying to see the number of NTCA members step up to be the front line of defense with their “boots on the ground” staff.

Originating with CLtel in Clear Lake, Iowa, and in coordination with Guardian Group, a team of former intelligence professionals, Operation IFAST works to prevent and disrupt sex trafficking of women and children in the United States. Over 100 companies in 22 states and over 1,400 of their employees participate in the program, which helps educate and train their teams to report potential trafficking situations to local law enforcement or the National Human Trafficking Hotline.

NTCA members are committed to helping keep their communities safe and being part of the solution.

To learn more about Operation IFAST, visit guardiangroup.org/operation-ifest. 



Adobe Stock image by stokkete

Hard Reset

What to do with old, broken devices


Many people have outdated or unused electronic devices they aren't sure what to do with after the holidays. While recycling is good for the environment, many phones and tablets also contain rare materials that are much more useful in another device than sitting in a landfill.

Here's how to dispose of your old devices properly:

Phones: Most phone manufacturers will let you trade in your old phone when you buy a new one. But if you still have old devices, retailers like Best Buy, Staples and Home Depot offer in-store drop-off for unused devices. EcoATM also has more than 6,000 kiosks across the country where you get cash for your old phone.

Computers: If you can't upgrade your computer to extend its lifespan, many manufacturers have take-back programs. Barring that, Best Buy has a trade-in calculator for PCs, while Apple offers its own recycling program for Macs. You can also donate your computer to an organization like Computers with Causes that will find students, foster homes or shelters where your computer can make a difference.

TVs: Often, finding a new home for your TV is the best option if it still works. Consider Goodwill, schools and libraries. If it's completely dead, Best Buy has a haul-away service that can send your old TV to one of its recycling partners.

Looking for a recycling center near you? Visit earth911.com to find the closest e-waste center. 

GAME ON



Adobe Stock image by Milijan Zivkovic

Growing numbers of seniors are playing video games to stay sharp

Story by DREW WOOLLEY

Today's gamers might not fit the picture many people have in their heads. As the generation that grew up with Sega and Nintendo has come of age, the Entertainment Software Association's 2025 annual study found that the average gamer is 36 years old. The same study found that 28% of gamers in the United States are over the age of 50.

"It's easier to play video games now than at any other time in history. You don't have to go to an arcade. You don't have to buy a console or PC, although many players still do," says Aubrey Quinn, senior vice president of communications and public affairs at the ESA. "Video games can be played anytime, anywhere, with devices almost everyone has on them all the time—smartphones and tablets."

Other than having fun, older gamers say they're drawn to the pastime because it helps them keep their minds sharp. And, as our world becomes increasingly digital, more people are turning to video games as a way to support their mental, social and emotional health.

IMPROVED COGNITIVE ABILITY

While everyone can benefit from enhanced attention, short-term memory

and hand-eye coordination, these can be especially important for seniors looking to keep their minds active. Puzzle games can help improve recall and mental agility, while action and adventure games can encourage problem-solving and support spatial reasoning, particularly those games that require navigating 3D spaces.

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Over the last decade, social interaction has become an essential part of gaming for many players. Connection with players online or on the couch can help older individuals improve their social relationships and build healthier emotional lives. A comprehensive literature review in the journal *Brain Sciences* in 2024 found that older people who played games showed a significant improvement in sleep quality and psychiatric symptoms.

BETTER BALANCE AND MOVEMENT

As motion controls have become standard for modern gaming consoles, games built around movement have also become more popular. These games provide a fun way for older players to stay active and can improve balance, all in a safe and low-stakes environment. 🎮

PRESS START

Haven't touched a video game since the heyday of arcade cabinets? Don't worry. It has never been easier to get in the game.

One-stop shop—Much like a smartphone, every major console has its own digital storefront with access to thousands of games. Once you're set up, you can start playing without leaving the house to buy physical games.

Play your way—Accessibility for games is at an all-time high. "Aging often includes the need for extra support in games," says Aubrey Quinn, senior vice president of communications and public affairs for the Entertainment Software Association. "Accessibility features like large text, clear subtitles and chat speech-to-text are making it easier for older players to experience the benefits of play." Even if players have limited dexterity or mobility, there is a wide array of customized game pads and adaptive joysticks that can help anyone play without frustration.

What to play—Aubrey finds that baby boomers and Silent Generation gamers are often drawn to puzzle games like *Candy Crush*, *Wordle* and *Tetris* that are easily available on mobile platforms. A significant portion of those players also enjoy simulation games, action games and shooters. If you're jumping in for the first time, games like the *Portal* series and *Journey* offer engaging problem-solving and exploration at your own pace.

250 Years of Connections

We are stronger together

This year, Americans will mark a significant milestone—one worthy of attention and reflection as we celebrate our nation's 250th birthday. After all, since the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, we've come a long way as a country and as a society.



SHAYNE ISON
General Manager

News that once was delivered by horseback and word of mouth comes today through the modern, reliable communications services Mountain Telephone provides. The progress achieved by our internet networks over the past 10 years alone is notable.

Early Americans depended on one another in ways that still feel familiar to those of us who live in rural communities. We know when people work together with a shared purpose, we can build something better for the next generation.

We see it every day when a neighbor steps up to help after an illness or injury, when volunteers combine their talents to put together a fundraiser and when students get online to learn and create from homes once considered too remote for reliable internet. That's what a

community in action looks like.

This commitment to serving others is exactly why Mountain Telephone exists, and it's why we're so proud of what we do. Our broadband network is the modern version of the roads and bridges that tied those early American communities together. Every home we connect, every small business that reaches new customers online and every student who can join a virtual classroom help write the next chapter in our shared story of progress and possibility.

I'm especially proud that everyone at Mountain Telephone lives right here in the communities we serve. We shop at the same grocery stores, cheer at the same ballgames and enjoy the same local events. When we install a new service or upgrade a connection, it's not just another job—it's a continuation of the legacy of neighbors helping neighbors. That sense of shared purpose powered this company from the very beginning, and it still guides everything we do today. It's why we continue to invest in new technology as we strive to meet today's needs and prepare for tomorrow's opportunities.

Just as our founders once dreamed of a nation united by shared ideals, our community unites through opportunity and connection.

As celebrations begin across the country, I hope we all take a moment to appreciate not just the history behind this milestone, but the everyday work that keeps our communities strong. Because strong connections built this nation. And it's what will carry us forward for the next 250 years. 📶

The Mountain Telephone Connection is a bimonthly newsletter published by Mountain Rural Telephone Cooperative, © 2026. It is distributed without charge to all member/owners of the cooperative.



Mountain Telephone

Mountain Rural Telephone Cooperative Inc., is a member-owned cooperative dedicated to providing communications technology to the people of Elliott, Menifee, Morgan, Wolfe and a section of Bath counties. The company covers 1,048 square miles and supplies service to nearly 11,500 members.

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UTILITY RESOURCES

On the Cover:



Located in West Liberty, Dorcas Burton's home decor and gift shop, Little Green Cottage, is a treasure hunter's paradise.
See story Page 12.

Photo by William LeMaster

CALLING ALL SHUTTERBUGS!

Have you captured a breathtaking snapshot that shows the beauty of Bath, Elliott, Meniffee, Morgan or Wolfe counties? If so, we want to hear from you.

Mountain Telephone is accepting photos for its next directory and calendar. Printed photos will no longer be accepted. Each submission can include up to two photos, which must be digital, high-quality JPEG images. To submit photos, go to mrto.com and select the "Photo Contest" tab. For additional questions, contact Hope Potter at hpotter@mountaintelephone.com. Winning photos will be selected based on creativity, quality and portrayal of the area. The deadline for submissions is June 1. Winners will be announced on or before Sept. 30.

All entries must be submitted by the original photographer who has sole ownership of any copyright. By entering the contest, you agree to have your photograph displayed on the MRTC directory or annual calendar without any fee or other forms of compensation.

2025/2026 MOUNTAIN TELEPHONE DIRECTORY COVER CONTEST WINNER



BY: EVERETT
MARKWELL
743 EXCHANGE

"Near Dark"



Mountain Telephone

BATTERY BACKUP NOTICE

The fiber telephone service in your home requires electric power to operate. Therefore, at no added cost, an eight-hour battery backup power supply was installed with your service to allow for emergency operation during power outages.

This means that emergency phone service is anticipated to function for at least eight hours in an extended power outage. The ability of the battery to power your phone service can be affected by many factors, including the age of your battery, improper home wire grounding, unprotected power surges, manufacturer defect, improper storage conditions or failure to keep the power pack plugged in. Our batteries do not power self-owned phone handsets that require separate power. You must have a phone capable of being plugged into a Mountain Telephone jack to use the backup battery.

If longer backup battery operation is desired, we now have 24-hour battery packs available for an additional fee. Should longer operation be needed, we suggest you look for commercially available backup power options, like a generator, from vendors such as Uninterruptible Power Supply, etc. For more information, please call 606-743-3121.

NEED HELP PAYING FOR SERVICES?

Lifeline assistance may be an option for you!

You are eligible if you meet income requirements and receive one of the following benefits:

- SNAP
- Medicaid
- Supplemental Security Income
- Federal Public Housing Assistance
- Veterans Pension or Survivors Pension benefit

To find out if you qualify for Lifeline assistance, please visit lifelinesupport.org or call 800-234-9473.

Discovering Hidden Gems

Travel vlogger highlights off-the-beaten-path destinations

Story by KATIE TEEMS NORRIS

Gems exist in small towns all around you, but you might not know it. Take some time to explore interesting locales within a short drive or take a longer trip to make memories. YouTubers are traversing the country and taking audiences along for the ride—join them in uncovering the magic in places others may overlook.

BUILD THE DREAM

“There are so many things around me within driving distance that I had no idea about. And I believe that’s also the same for everybody else,” says Tony Hossri of the YouTube channel Build the Dream. Based in Georgia, Tony films his outdoor explorations and city tours for his vlog, or video blog.


With a little research, you can also find beautiful hikes and fun small towns. Tony searches the name of a building or other historic

sites on Google when he’s looking for places to experience. He also uses the AllTrails app to find great hiking destinations.

See what you can find and start making memories. While visiting Cincinnati, Tony saw around 50 people riding scooters. He joined up with the group on his bicycle. “They got to this random tunnel area where they had this giant scooter trick fest,” he says.

While researching online is a good place to start, Tony says, “Let your phone be a tool to give you a better life, not a way to waste your life by endlessly scrolling.” If using distracting apps gets in the way of having new adventures, consider deleting them like Tony did.

“Look up a neighboring town, neighboring city, neighboring hike,” Tony recommends. “Do everything you can to get out of the matrix to live a more fulfilling, memorable life.”

Visit buildthedreamnow.com and follow Build the Dream on YouTube to start getting ideas for your next adventure. 

The South Carolina Lowcountry is a great destination for travelers looking for adventures on the water and culinary experiences.

Adobe Stock photo by makasana photo

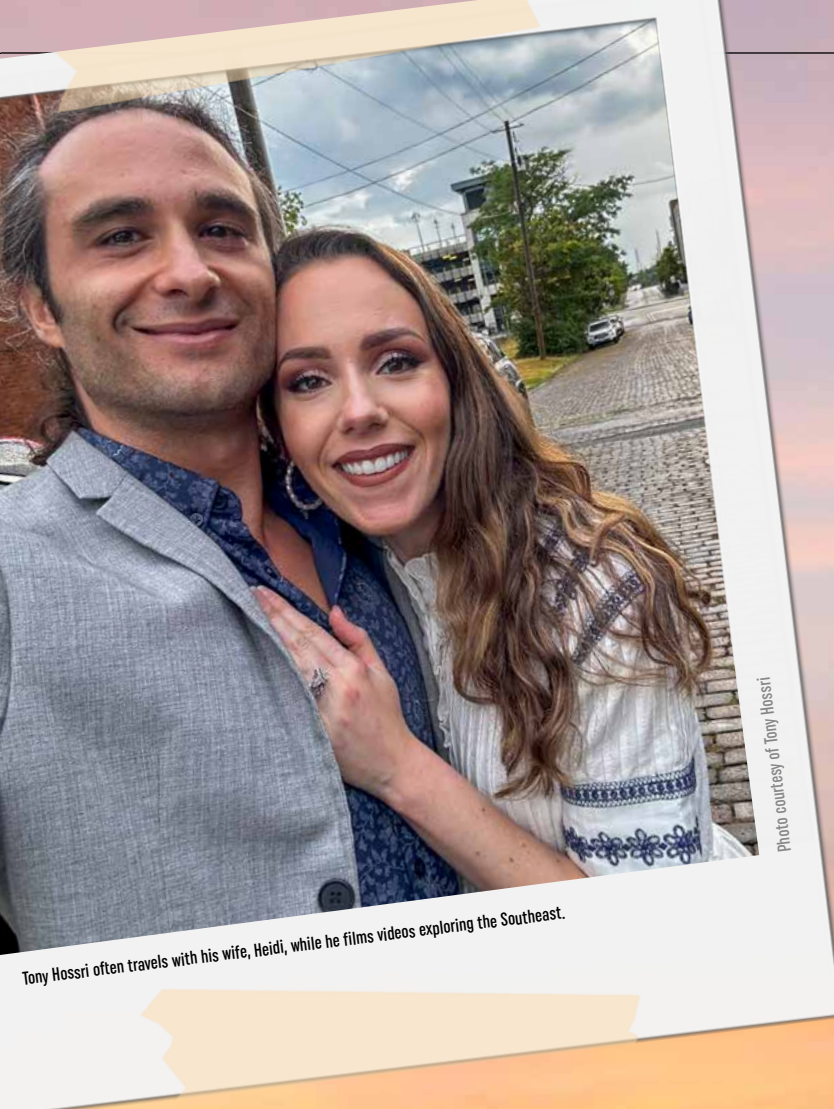


Photo courtesy of Tony Hossri

Tony Hossri often travels with his wife, Heidi, while he films videos exploring the Southeast.



Travel Safely

Did you know posting your vacation on social media can pose a risk to you and your home? Consider waiting to post about your travels until after you've returned.



Nearby Adventures



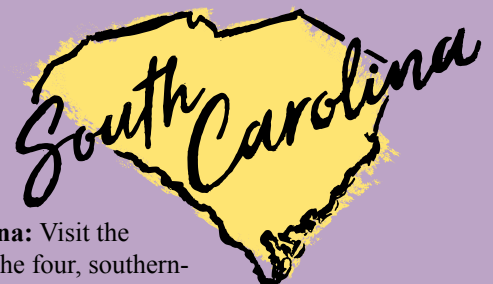
Alabama: Monte Sano means “mountain of health” in Spanish. Since the late 1800s, visitors have been coming to Monte Sano State Park in Huntsville for hiking, biking, climbing and bouldering. Go to alapark.com.



Kentucky: In Corbin, Cumberland Falls, measuring about 68 feet tall and 125 feet wide, earns the title of the Niagara of the South. Go to explorekywildlands.com.



Tennessee: Located three hours east of Nashville, Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area includes 125,000 acres of the Cumberland Plateau. Go to nps.gov.



South Carolina: Visit the Lowcountry, the four, southernmost counties in the state, for water-based outdoor adventures. For ideas and destinations, go to southcarolinalowcountry.com.

Scholarships Support Rural Students


Attention, high school seniors! Now is the time to apply for scholarships through Mountain Telephone and the Foundation for Rural Service. With as much as \$9,000 available, don't miss out on these opportunities.

"These scholarships can be so important for our local high school students," Mountain Telephone General Manager Shayne Ison says. "I encourage everyone to take time to review the application. If you qualify, apply!"

MOUNTAIN TELEPHONE AND MOREHEAD STATE UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIPS

Since 1988, Mountain Telephone has offered a four-year renewable scholarship for high school seniors going to MSU. Currently, Mountain offers four renewable awards for students at each high school in Elliott, Menifee, Morgan and Wolfe counties and one in Bath County. The application deadline is March 15. Learn more at mrtc.com/scholarships.

MOUNTAIN TELEPHONE AND KENTUCKY COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM SCHOLARSHIPS

Mountain will award two scholarships—valued at up to \$1,500 each—to high school graduates who live in the cooperative's service area and will present one scholarship in Bath County. These scholarships can be renewed for one year as long as minimum renewal criteria are met. Scholarship recipients are evaluated each semester and must maintain at least a 2.0 GPA. The application deadline is April 15. Learn more at mrtc.com/scholarships. 



FOUNDATION FOR RURAL SERVICE SCHOLARSHIPS

For more than 30 years, the Foundation for Rural Service has provided scholarships in rural communities that receive telephone and broadband service from members of NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association.

FRS has awarded more than \$2 million in scholarships to support students from rural America for the first year of a two-year or four-year college or vocational school. New for 2026, FRS is also offering a scholarship for nontraditional students.

FRS GENERAL SCHOLARSHIP

FRS will award multiple \$2,500 scholarships to students throughout the country. If a scholarship recipient from Mountain Telephone's territory wins, Mountain will provide a portion of the scholarship to FRS.

COMMON GROUND SCHOLARSHIP

Two students from rural communities will have the opportunity to win the \$9,000 award for those interested in studying environmental sustainability, social justice, telecommunications or economic development.

EVERETT KNEECE SCHOLARSHIP

This \$7,000 award honors generous philanthropist Everett Kneece, who had a passion for rural America.



Steven Middleton

2001 SCHOLARSHIP WINNER NOW TEACHES

From local scholarship recipient to senior instructor of mass communications at Morehead State University, Steven Middleton is grateful for the help he received from Mountain Telephone 25 years ago.

Steven, who lived in Elliott County, recalls not being sure what he wanted to do after high school. His mother saw the scholarship announcement from Mountain Telephone and encouraged him to apply. "I remember submitting a handwritten letter," Steven says.

He looks back on that time and believes that if it weren't for the \$2,500 scholarship, he wouldn't have gone to Morehead State University or to college at all. Now, in 2026, he is entering his 18th year of teaching. "A large percentage of students here are first-generation college students, just like I was," he says. "I try to help them navigate college life, because it was a big adjustment for me."

When he isn't busy in the classroom, Steven can be found directing documentary films. He has 19 to his credit, including his recent award-winning work about a local Appalachian artist, "From the Cowboy's Boot Heel: The Musical Journey of Rob McNurlin." The film aired nationally on PBS in November 2025.

Steven's scholarship advice to local high school students? "Listen to your mother and apply," he says.

HERBERT AND ISABEL BITZ MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

This \$5,000 scholarship is awarded to a student who exhibits a strong dedication to rural America.

JSI SCHOLARSHIP

This provides \$5,000 for a student interested in science, math, medicine or engineering.

SARAH TYREE GOOD NEIGHBOR SCHOLARSHIP

A student who shows what it means to be a good neighbor through humanitarian acts, inclusion and kindness can earn a \$5,000 scholarship.

TIM OWENS-RON LAUDNER SCHOLARSHIP

A student planning to study fine arts or music has the chance to win this \$2,500 scholarship.

DIANA JO DREYER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Thanks to INDATEL Services LLC, a woman who intends to study business can earn this \$2,500 award.

NONTRADITIONAL STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP

Students who have not recently graduated from high school and who may be entering college or vocational school while working can apply for the \$2,500 Nontraditional Student Scholarship.

HOW TO APPLY

Visit frs.org/programs/youth-programs/scholarships to find a link to Kaleidoscope, the application platform.

Applications must be accessed from the Kaleidoscope link on the FRS website.

Applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. EST on Feb. 14.

One application covers all available scholarships.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Read the terms and conditions carefully.
- Don't use artificial intelligence, and don't plagiarize.
- Complete all requirements of the application.

FORGED IN FIRE

Metalworking opens opportunities for rural farriers

Story by DREW WOOLLEY

There have always been parts of metalworking that feel a little bit supernatural to Jim Poor. While most of the craft is the product of diligent training and hard work, some elements of working with heat and metal are stubbornly unpredictable and come down to a touch of each smith's own personal sorcery.

"In my world of making tools, lastability is the most important thing," he says. "There's a lot of heat treating that goes into tooling, and that's magical stuff because you can't see it. You do it, but you can't really know the results until you send it out to the customer. So, it becomes kind of like black magic."

Jim has been trying to unravel the mysteries of metalworking since he was 12 years old. When he was growing up in Abilene, Texas, his father shod horses on the racetrack circuit, and Jim helped him after school. Once he graduated from high school, Jim found himself shoeing horses after work to make extra cash. It was at one of those jobs that he heard about the Texas Professional Farriers Association.

"One of my customers used to read the local news to me while I was shoeing his horses. And one day he read that this group was going to be at the Abilene County Fair shoeing horses for \$40," Jim says. "I was only getting \$25, so I thought I should see what these guys were doing."

Meeting other local farriers and blacksmiths opened up new opportunities to turn his side gig into a full-time job, hone his craft and even compete across the globe.

"I love competing the most. It's a small community, but it allowed me to travel all over the world and have so many

experiences," Jim says. "I don't think anything else I could've done with my limited education would allow that."

HEAT TESTING

Despite his years of experience, Jim remembers having plenty of nerves the first time he smithed competitively. It was 1985, three years since he started shoeing professionally, when he decided to take part in an event in his hometown.

"I thought it was pretty interesting, but it was scary at the same time," he says. "There were people there who knew a whole lot more about this craft than I did. I was still pretty young, but I just loved it."

A few months later, Jim joined some of his TPFA colleagues at a competition in Oklahoma, followed shortly by a trip to the nationals in Jackson, Mississippi. Farrier competition is divided into novice, intermediate and open divisions, with competitors earning points based on how well they finish and how many others are in their division. Farriers face off in classes where they have a set time to complete a task. Judges rate their performance.

For all his lack of experience, Jim climbed the ranks in short order. After just three competitions, he was already shoeing in the open class. Those competitions quickly became highlights of his year, regularly testing himself against hundreds of other farriers as part of major competitions in Texas, California, Florida and Calgary. At one of those events in California, Jim met Kathleen, the woman who would become his wife.

"She can do just about anything, but she does more of the artistic work than I do," Jim says. "We met each other out there



Competitors race the clock to get their work ready for judging.

and just became inseparable from that day forward. We dated but could only meet at competitions for several years. Of course, that was another reason to go.”

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Over the course of his competitive career, Jim earned a position on the American Farriers Team nine times, while Kathleen helped establish the first women’s international team, Women Horseshoers of America. After years of traveling the world to compete and teach, they established Flatland Forge in Tuscola, Texas, where they now focus on making farrier tools like tongs, punches and 27 different styles of hammers.

“Most people are pretty surprised we produce that many different hammers. But I’ve found out that some people are just collectors,” Jim says. “They may not even use them. They just like the look of them and the craft of them.”

In many ways, Jim envies aspiring farriers and blacksmiths today. With the rise of the internet, it is much easier to discover new techniques and learn from the best artisans in the world. Even before the internet, that accessibility was what drew him back to the craft as a young man. But the best advice he can give to anyone forging their path now is the same as it was then.

HAMMER DOWN

For anyone looking to build a career as a farrier or blacksmith, Jim Poor’s advice is simple: “Find people who are close by to you, and don’t be a jerk. You’ll get a lot of help.”

The easiest way to do that is connecting with a local group. Jim joined the Texas Professional Farriers Association as a young man, while his wife, Kathleen, connected with the Western States Farriers Association early on. If you’re looking for organizations in your state, start here:

ALABAMA

Alabama Professional Farriers Association
President Sam Howard
Email: sam.howard18@icloud.com

KENTUCKY

Derby City Horseshoeing Association
President Zeke Evans
Email: horseshoes92@gmail.com

INDIANA

Indiana Farriers Association
President Dustin Shuck
Email: dustinshuck@yahoo.com
Website: indianafarriers.org

SOUTH CAROLINA

South Carolina Farriers Association
President Dusty Newby
Email: dustynewby@gmail.com

TENNESSEE

Rutherford County Blacksmith Association
President Matt Clarady
Email: rcbablacksmiths@gmail.com
Website: rcbablacksmiths.org

“What I’ve always loved most is that blacksmithing is something that you don’t need money to learn. All it takes is effort,” Jim says. “You have to be a self-starter. You’ll work 10 times more hours than somebody with a day job. But all you need to succeed in this craft is a willingness to learn and work.” 📧

TREATS, TREASURES AND TRINKETS

A world of wonders awaits inside the Little Green Cottage

Story by ANDREA AGARDY | Photography by WILLIAM LEMASTER

It's not hard to understand how shoppers arriving at Dorcas Burton's West Liberty gift shop and home decor store might think they're about to step into a fairy tale.

When Dorcas moved her store into the converted house on Highway 191 late last summer—next door to the business's former home—she felt the time was right to give it a new name. So, what had been Primitive Homestead became the Little Green Cottage. "I just felt since the primitive things are not quite as popular as they used to be, it was time for a change," Dorcas says.

She has rented both buildings for years, using one house for storage while running

her shop out of the other. "I was just over here one day and I thought, 'This is the better house. It's more open and there's a little bit more room,'" she says. "So, we just decided to move the shop over here and call it the Little Green Cottage."

True to its name, the shop resembles a quaint storybook cottage, with bright white siding complemented by cheerful green paint on the porch, fence, shutters and doors. She even plants flowers in window boxes in warmer months.

Dorcas credits the store's signature shade to possible divine intervention. "The green was my touch when I decided to move," she says. "I don't know if it was a God thing, but it was just like all

these ideas just started flooding my head. Even the name and the ideas of the painting outside and the painting inside. It just all came together."

BLENDING YESTERDAY AND TODAY

The shop's shelves feature new pieces alongside carefully chosen antiques. Dorcas sources the store's antiques herself, going "junking" with a friend. "We usually go on Thursday, and that's what we do all day long," she says. "We'll just head out to different places, or we'll even stop at yard sales or rummage sales. It's really fun and I enjoy doing that."

Dorcas especially loves mixing new items with antique and vintage pieces. "The older stuff is really hot right now, and it's amazing how the younger women love it. I'm talking teenage girls up into their 20s. I think a lot of it is because they probably didn't grow up with it and when they see it now, it's like it's something really cool."

And it's not just women who appreciate antiques. Dorcas often welcomes male customers into the shop, including one regular who's always looking to expand his collection. "We have a fellow that comes in because he collects brass. His grandmother left him her brass collection when she passed away, and it's got him hooked on it," Dorcas says. "Now he just loves finding brass pieces. When I'm out junking if I see unusual brass items, I'll get them because I know he loves them."

That attention to detail and genuine interest in her customers helped Dorcas build a following of return customers, both locals and out-of-towners. "We have really



Little Green Cottage owner Dorcas Burton sources many of the antiques she sells in her shop herself, picking up pieces when she goes on "junking" trips with a friend.

strived to create a beautiful store that will serve the community,” she says. “A place people can come where they can just kind of forget everything else and just browse and shop.”

In addition to curating the merchandise, Dorcas also designs all the shop’s displays. “We try to create a unique shopping experience that sparks joy and wonder. We want each inch of display to delight the senses and leave the customer with a feeling of warmth and nostalgia,” she says. “We like to make ‘think outside the box’ displays and encourage our customers to do the same in their own homes. I simply love it when customers show me pictures of how they have displayed items they have bought from us.”

SWEET ADDITIONS

The shop’s offerings now include specialty food items such as breads and brownies from Sevierville, Tennessee’s Apple Valley Creamery. “It’s the same bread that they sell at The Apple Barn down there,” Dorcas says. “They bake them and ship them the same day, and we get it the next day. The breads have just been amazing, people love that.”

The Little Green Cottage also stocks jams and jellies made by Cooper’s Mill in Bucyrus, Ohio.



The Little Green Cottage recently started selling jams and jellies made by Cooper’s Mill.



The store’s merchandise is a carefully curated mixture of antiques and new pieces.

THE POWER OF CONNECTION

Dorcas uses her shop’s Mountain Telephone internet connection to update the Little Green Cottage’s Facebook page. After more than 20 years in business, she appreciates the ease and efficiency of keeping in contact with her customers and attracting new shoppers.

“That Facebook page is just wow,” she says. “That’s kind of almost like a lifeline because everybody will check in on it.

I’ve had people tell me, ‘We would check your Facebook every day to see what you got into or what’s going on.’ That’s been a huge help.”

LITTLE GREEN COTTAGE

85 Highway 191, West Liberty

606-743-3810

Follow the Little Green Cottage on Facebook.



The shop offers a wide array of home decor items to suit a variety of styles.

The Ultimate Comfort Food

Beans or no beans, chili always hits the spot



Is there any food in America that creates more of a stir than chili? It's certainly a bowlful of contention.

If your heart lies in Texas, beans take a hike. Southerners, though, love their beans. In the Midwest, it's all about comfort with ground beef, tomatoes and beans, or a simple, creamy chicken chili full of flavor. But every bowl of chili, no matter where you live, has one thing in common—each is a serving of comfort that wraps around you like a well-worn blanket.



Food Editor
Anne P. Braly
is a native of
Chattanooga,
Tennessee.

Photography by **Mark Gilliland**
Food Styling by **Rhonda Gilliland**

WHITE CHICKEN CHILI

Prep time: 20-25 minutes

Cook time: 1 hour

- 4 boneless chicken breasts
 - 1 teaspoon dried basil
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - 1 teaspoon onion powder
 - 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
 - 1 teaspoon dried thyme
 - 1 teaspoon dried parsley
 - 1 tablespoon butter
 - 2 tablespoons olive oil
 - 1 large onion, chopped
 - 3 stalks celery, chopped
 - 3/4 cup chopped red bell pepper
 - 2 cans whole green chilies, chopped
 - 3-4 cans cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
 - 2 teaspoons cumin
 - 1 cup sour cream
 - 1/2 cup heavy cream
 - 1/2 cup chopped fresh cilantro
 - 1 cup grated Monterey Jack cheese
- Additional chicken broth, if needed

In large pot, add chicken breasts and completely cover with water, 4-6 cups. Simmer chicken breasts with basil, salt, onion powder, garlic powder, thyme and parsley until completely cooked.

Remove chicken from broth. Reserve the seasoned broth for the chili. Once chicken is cooled, chop and set aside.

In a large pot, add butter and olive oil, and saute onion, celery and bell pepper until vegetables are tender. Add chopped chilies and two cans cannellini beans. When mixture is warm, mash beans with a potato masher.

Add 2-3 cups of the reserved broth, chicken, cumin and 1-2 more cans cannellini beans. Let simmer 30 minutes to 1 hour. If mixture becomes too thick, add more broth. Add sour cream, heavy cream and fresh cilantro. Stir well. Taste and adjust seasonings. Just before serving, stir in grated cheese and ladle into serving bowls.

TEXAS-STYLE CHILI

Prep time: 45 minutes

Cook time: 3-4 hours

- 1/4 cup ground ancho chile pepper
- 1 tablespoon ground chipotle chile pepper
- 2 tablespoons ground cumin
- 2 teaspoons dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 cup cornmeal
- 1 4-pound beef chuck roast, trimmed of excess fat and cut into 1 1/2-inch cubes
- 8 slices bacon, cut into 1/4-inch pieces
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 2 small yellow onions, large dice
- 5 garlic cloves, chopped
- 3 jalapeno chiles, cored, seeded and finely diced
- 4 cups low-sodium beef broth
- 2 cups water, plus more for the chili paste and deglazing the pan
- 1 1/4 cups dark beer
- 1 cup canned crushed tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon molasses

- 2 teaspoons unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 cup grated Monterey Jack cheese
- Additional chicken broth, if needed

Mix the chile powders, cumin, oregano, coriander, cinnamon and cornmeal in a small bowl and stir in 1/2 cup water to form a thick paste. Set aside.

Season the beef with the salt and set aside.

In a Dutch oven, fry bacon over medium heat until the fat renders and the bacon crisps, about 10 minutes. Remove the bacon to a paper towel-lined plate. Pour all but a few teaspoons of fat from the pot into a small bowl. Set aside.

Increase heat to medium high. Sear the meat in three batches in single layers until well browned on one side, adding more of the reserved bacon fat as necessary. Place the seared meat on a plate. Add about 1/4 cup of water to the pot and scrape the bottom with a wooden spoon to release all the flavorful brown bits. Pour the dark liquid over the seared meat.

Reduce heat to medium and add 3 tablespoons of the reserved bacon fat to the pot. Add the onions and cook, stirring frequently, until softened. Add garlic and jalapenos, and cook 2 minutes more. Add the reserved chile paste and saute until fragrant.

Add the broth and stir with a whisk until spice mixture is completely dissolved. Again, scrape the bottom of the pot to release any spices. Stir in the water, beer, crushed tomatoes, molasses and cocoa powder. Add reserved bacon and seared beef back to the pot and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and cover, leaving the lid just barely ajar. Simmer, stirring occasionally, until the meat is tender and the juices are thickened, 2 1/2 to 3 hours. Taste and adjust seasonings. Ladle the chili into bowls and serve with desired toppings.



TWO-MEAT CHILI

Prep time: 20 minutes

Cooking time: 1-1 1/2 hours

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 pound ground pork
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 green pepper, diced
- 1-2 tablespoons flour
- 2 28-ounce cans chopped tomatoes
- 1/2 cup chili powder (more or less, to taste)
- Salt, to taste
- Cumin, to taste
- 1-2 8-ounce cans tomato sauce

Brown meats together in large chili pot with onion and green pepper. Drain grease and stir in flour. Add remaining ingredients, starting with 1 can tomato sauce. If it seems too thick, thin it out with more tomato sauce.

Simmer for at least 1 hour. Serve with sour cream, corn chips and shredded cheese. 🍴





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