

The Foothills

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2017

CONNECTION

PAW'S PASSION

Foreman and
grandson bond
through hunting

FOOTBALL FULFILLMENT

Employees find joy in
helping local team

CLASSROOM COMPUTING

Gadgets that give your
student an edge

NTCA THE RURAL BROADBAND ASSOCIATION

RURAL CONNECTIONS

BY SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

Keeping rural in the conversation

A writer for several respected national news websites recently asked this question on Twitter: "There's a weird amount of focus on 'rural broadband' ... Is this really important to people?"

This immediately told me two things. First, rural broadband is getting enough attention to creep into the awareness of urban media outlets. That's a good thing.

But secondly, this tweet also told me that we still have a lot of work to do in telling our rural success story.

What the writer didn't understand was that for years a lack of investment from large nationwide providers, along with geographic challenges, has left many rural residents with inadequate broadband access. Research has shown that a lack of access can cripple a local economy, lower academic achievement and reduce positive health care outcomes.

Telcos like yours believe people shouldn't face longer odds at a successful life just because of where they live, and they have done great work in extending broadband service to their parts of rural America. It's encouraging to see this issue gaining national attention.

It didn't take too long before the writer's Twitter feed was full of insight from rural advocates. "The overwhelming consensus ... is that rural broadband is, in fact, incredibly important and I'm a moron," he wrote.

A moron? Certainly not. More likely, he's someone who hasn't been to rural America to see the impact of reliable broadband. This was only one exchange on Twitter, but at NTCA, we're working every day to make sure everyone knows just how important rural broadband really is. ☎

THE END OF AN ERRAND?

Big changes in grocery shopping ahead



New data shows that a growing number of consumers are avoiding the pains of the weekly grocery-grab by shopping online.



About **25%** of all American households buy some groceries online, according to the Food Marketing Institute and Nielsen's "The Digitally Engaged Food Shopper" report.



That number is up from previous years thanks to **online delivery sites** like AmazonFresh. Walmart, Kroger and even some local grocers are bringing convenience through their online grocery pickup options.



By 2025, Americans are expected to spend more than **\$100 billion** on online grocery shopping, the report says.

FOOD SHOPPING FACTS

Curious to know how you could be shopping in the future? Check out these stats from the Food Marketing Institute and Nielsen:



Within the next decade, consumer spending on online grocery shopping could equal the gross sales of **3,900** grocery stores.



Mobile devices are used by **60%** of shoppers for deals and coupons.



2/3 of shoppers say mobile devices improve their lives.

HOW SATISFIED ARE WE WITH ONLINE SHOPPING?

More than 80 percent reported satisfaction with their online shopping experience. What makes it so popular?



81%
The ease of checkout



80%
The variety of brands and products offered online



73%
The number of shopping options offered



69%
Free or discounted shipping

Sources: Food Marketing Institute and Nielsen study, "Digitally Engaged Food Shopper," and invespro.com's blog, "Online Consumer Shopping Habits and Behavior."

LISTEN UP, TELEMARKETERS: DO NOT CALL!

You might not know that the Federal Trade Commission and the Federal Communications Commission have established a National Do Not Call Registry. If you join this registry, it can help reduce the number of telemarketing calls you receive.

THE BASICS ABOUT DO NOT CALL:

- The Do Not Call Registry prohibits sales calls. Political calls, charitable calls, debt collection calls, informational calls and telephone survey calls are still allowed.
- You can register up to three nonbusiness phone numbers, including cellphones.
- Your number goes on the list the day after you register. After that, telemarketers have 31 days to stop calling.
- Telephone numbers on the registry do not expire. The number you register is only removed when it's disconnected and reassigned.
- Companies may still call if you've recently done business with them or if you've given the company written



permission to call you. But if you ask a company not to call you again, it must honor your request.

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 to stop



Register up to three nonbusiness numbers online at **www.donotcall.gov**.

You can also call **888-382-1222** to register the telephone from which you are calling.

For TTY, call 866-290-4236.

ATTENTION LOCAL BUSINESS OWNERS:

You must follow the Do Not Call rules

Local businesses may not think of themselves as typical telemarketers, but the same Federal Trade Commission Do Not Call laws apply to them.

If you are a company, individual or organization that places telemarketing calls, it's important to 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 the numbers included in the National Do Not Call Registry.

For information regarding these 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. Sections 64.1200 and 16 C.F.R. Part 310, respectively.

OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION:

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

Kids at heart

When I was young, being prepared to go back to school meant making sure I had my pencils and paper ready. Today, kids need more than what they can fit inside their backpacks to be prepared to get the education they need — and we are here to help.



RUTH CONLEY
Chief Executive Officer

Having broadband at school and at home is an increasingly important part of equipping today's students for academic achievement and career skills development. I recently ran across a statistic about internet and education that presents a strong reminder to those of us in the business of bringing broadband to rural communities. According to a study commissioned by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, high school graduates who consider themselves "online" are twice as likely to go to college as those who do not use the internet.

While attending college isn't necessarily the key to success for every student, other research at home and abroad points to broadband access as a key to higher test scores and better-educated students:

- A 2015 study by the U.S. Federal Reserve Board showed that high-speed internet improved students' postsecondary outcomes and that students with access to high-speed internet in their junior year of high school had better SAT scores than those without.
- Earlier this year, a New Zealand researcher published a report stating that fiber internet service at schools raises National Standards passing rates in each of the three areas of the test.
- An Irish study from 2014 showed that the use of the internet in a classroom was associated with significantly higher average math scores and improved reading scores on standardized tests.
- In 2011, researchers found that South Korean students who used the internet for educational purposes showed higher academic achievement than those who did not.
- A 2009 study from Brazil showed eighth-graders with broadband at home had significantly higher test scores than students without a connection.
- In the U.S. Chamber of Commerce report, 60 percent of surveyed school districts said distance learning over broadband was important to give students access to Advanced Placement courses.

Results like these are at the foundation of why we have worked so hard to build the high-speed broadband network we have today. You see, while I'm glad that our network allows our youth to stream movies or play their favorite video games, I'm even more pleased that our service allows their teachers to use new and engaging ways to educate their students. I'm proud that our network allows children and parents to get help with their homework and connect with tutoring services. And I'm very proud that our network lets students pursue their passions through research or developing skills in their chosen careers.

We don't know what the future holds for today's students, but we have a pretty good idea that technology will play a significant role in their lives. Whether they are farming, building, nursing, teaching, running a business or piloting planes, computer skills and the resources provided through technology are going to be essential to their careers.

As your locally rooted telecommunications provider, we want to give educators the resources to help our children excel — and then provide the technology those students need to start careers, open small businesses and raise families right here at home.

Foothills Communications has equipped generations of local families with the communication tools they need to thrive. As school bells ring back in session, we're proud to be equipping the next generation. 📺

The Foothills

CONNECTION

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2017

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Foothills is a member-owned cooperative that has been serving residents and businesses in eastern Kentucky since 1951. In the early days, we only offered telephone service over copper wires. Over the years, we have expanded our network and now provide broadband Internet and cable TV services over fiber-optic facilities to much of our service area. Our service area includes Magoffin County and portions of Johnson County and Lawrence County. We love being part of the communities we serve; our customers are our families, friends and neighbors.

Foothills Communications
P.O. Box 240
1621 Kentucky Route 40 West
Staffordville, KY 41256
www.foothills.net
606-297-3501

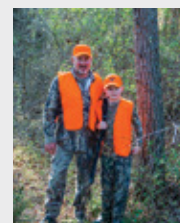
Foothills Mission Statement

"To provide the latest in communications at affordable prices with exceptional service."

Produced for Foothills Communications by:

WORDSOUTH
— A CONTENT MARKETING COMPANY —

On the Cover:



Jeff McDowell and his 9-year-old grandson Luke Ferguson enjoy getting up before daybreak to begin their hunting excursions. See story Page 12.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Sherry Shepherd, winner of the "Make a link to Dad" Father's Day drawing through Facebook. She won a George Foreman grill courtesy of Foothills Communications. Like Foothills Communications on Facebook for more opportunities to win prizes.



CONTACT US ANYTIME!



Did you know that you can call Foothills anytime, day or night? Operators are always standing by!

Just call **297-3501** or visit **Foothills.net**. The Foothills staff will be happy to help you pay a bill or add a new service.

Plus, if you add a new feature or premium movie channels through Foothills.net, there are no activation fees!



In observance of Labor Day, Foothills Communications' office will close Monday, Sept. 4, and the cooperative would like to offer you something special.

From Sept. 2-4, watch channels 400-492 for a weekend full of free entertainment!



Get your business noticed! Advertise with Foothills.



Put your ads on local stations or larger networks: HGTV, ABC and more.

A great value for your business

- Choose video ads or still graphics!
- Local radio station WSIP New County 98.9 provides sound for still graphics
- Perfect for local businesses and churches

Give Foothills Communications a call today at 297-3501 or visit **Foothills.net for more information.**

MEET THE LEGENDS OF SOUTHERN SPORTS

Museums celebrate football, racing and more



The Paul W. Bryant Museum in Tuscaloosa is a must-see for sports fans touring Alabama.

Photo courtesy of Paul W. Bryant Museum.

We can't all be our team's starting quarterback. Nor can we all pitch a perfect game, catch the checkered flag seconds ahead of the rest or hit perfect 3-pointers. Fortunately, though, there are museums across the South that allow us to come close to sports legends.

Paul W. Bryant Museum

300 Paul W. Bryant Drive, Tuscaloosa, Alabama

As head football coach of the University of Alabama's Crimson Tide for more than 25 years, Paul W. "Bear" Bryant was larger than life. It's only fitting that in 1988, only five years after his death, a museum bearing his name and housing a collection of items related to all University of Alabama sports teams opened at the university. The museum draws not only fans of the Tide, but also fans from visiting teams on game day, says museum director Ken Gaddy.

- **Most prized item:** Coach Bryant's Presidential Medal of Freedom
- **Where to eat:** Dreamland Bar-B-Que at 5535 15th Ave. is a local favorite in Tuscaloosa. They offer barbecue, smoked sausage, homemade sides and more, but they're famous for their ribs. As their slogan says, "ain't nothing like 'em nowhere!"
- **Admission:** \$2, adults; \$1, seniors 60-plus and children 6-17; free, children younger than 6
- **Information:** 205-348-4668 or bryantmuseum.com

Ty Cobb Museum

461 Cook St., Royston, Georgia

Ty Cobb's name is a legend in the world of baseball. He played outfield for 22 seasons for the Detroit Tigers, setting 90 Major League Baseball records during his career. But he was

more than a ballplayer. In 1953, he donated a quarter of his estate to establish the Ty Cobb Education Foundation. To date, more than \$16 million has been awarded to Georgia residents who prove financial need to attend college. Also visitors will find art and memorabilia: Cobb's baseball glove, his 1907 Batting Champion award, his childhood Bible and a Tigers uniform. There are also film, videos, books and historical archives. The Northeast Georgia museum draws thousands of folks annually from around the country who want to learn more about the man famously known as "The Georgia Peach."

- **Most prized item:** A bronzed cleat that Cobb actually wore
- **Where to eat:** The Old Corner Hardware Store Lunchroom at 919 Church St. It's only open for lunch Wednesday through Saturday, and folks in town say the chicken and dumplings are a home run.
- **Admission:** \$5, adults; \$4, seniors 62-plus; \$3, students; free, under age 5 and active military
- **Information:** 706-245-1825 or www.tycobbmuseum.org

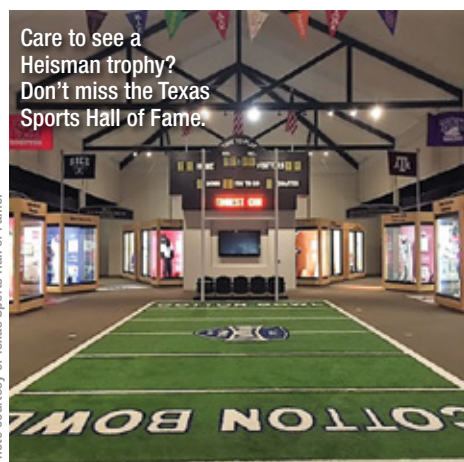


Photo courtesy of Texas Sports Hall of Fame.

Texas Sports Hall of Fame

1108 S. University Parks Drive, Waco, Texas

You've most likely seen a Heisman trophy before, but only on TV. At the Texas Sports Hall of Fame Museum, you'll see one of the oldest in existence up close and personal — a 1938 model awarded to Davey O'Brien, quarterback for Texas Christian University. "That's what excites most people," says Jay Black, vice president of

museum operations. But there are 15,000 more objects to pique your interest, including trophies, uniforms, equipment and more. Plus, there's a sports simulator where kids play ball.

- **Most prized item:** Final-out baseballs from Nolan Ryan's seven no-hitters
- **Where to eat:** Vitek's BBQ — at 1600 Speight Ave., about a mile from the museum — is the home of the famous Gut Pak. In case your imagination isn't enough, it's a monster: Fritos, cheddar cheese, sausage, hand-chopped brisket, beans, pickles, onions, jalapeno peppers and barbecue sauce with sliced bread.
- **Admission:** \$7, adults; \$6, seniors 60-plus; \$3, students first-12th grade; free, children 6 and under
- **Information:** 254-756-1633 or www.tshof.org

Women's Basketball Hall of Fame

700 S. Hall of Fame Drive, Knoxville, Tennessee

The Women's Basketball Hall of Fame is the only museum dedicated to all levels of women's basketball. The museum has a number of interactive exhibits that will challenge and entertain visitors of all ages. Test your skills on the court or walk through and see all the sights. There are trophies, signed basketballs and uniforms. While parents might appreciate learning the history of the game, kids will enjoy the hoops, a passing course and a dribbling course. The collection is large, and exhibits often change, so visitors may not see the same items from one visit to the next.

- **Most prized item:** The first rulebook for women's basketball, written by Senda Berenson in 1901.
- **Where to eat:** Calhoun's on the River is located at 400 Neyland Drive on Knoxville's historic waterfront. It offers a panoramic view of the Tennessee River and is accessible by boat.
- **Admission:** \$7.95, adults; \$5.95, seniors 62-plus and children 5-15; free, children under 5
- **Information:** 865-633-9000 or www.wbhof.com



Photo courtesy of Harrelson Photography for Darlington Raceway.

Darlington Raceway Stock Car Museum

1301 Harry Byrd Highway, Darlington, South Carolina

Even if you're not a fan of stock car racing, you'll find a tour of the Darlington Raceway Stock Car Museum an experience like no other. The museum offers a glance into the remarkable history of a sport born in the South. "It's a trip through the history of not only Darlington Raceway, but also the entire sport," says Dennis Worden, director of public relations. The museum offers an informational movie, memorabilia and more than a dozen race cars on display. The location is also home to the National Motorsports Press Association Hall of Fame, where you can learn about the personalities who made stock car racing into the sport it is today, including Junior Johnson, Dale Earnhardt and more. Kids will enjoy learning about the 1951 Hornet, which inspired the character of "Doc" in the animated 2006 Pixar film "Cars."

- **Most prized item:** Richard Petty's 1967 Plymouth championship car.
- **Where to eat:** When you cross the finish line, go next door to the Raceway Grill. In the past, famous race car drivers would enjoy the homemade French fries, hamburger steaks, sandwiches, rib-eyes and more. Hours are Wednesday-Saturday from 11 a.m.-9 p.m.
- **Admission:** \$7.50, adults; \$5, military; free, children under 12
- **Information:** 843-395-8821 or www.darlingtonraceway.com

A season to remember

Foothills employees help Johnson Central win first state title

BY WILL GAINES

John Blair and Redford LeMaster leave work every afternoon in the fall to make the 15-minute drive to Johnson Central High School.

Their destination is a practice field where they volunteer as coaches for the Golden Eagles football team. Blair helps with the offensive line and special teams, while LeMaster coaches junior varsity.

Both dedicate hours to their job at Foothills Communications during the day and then dedicate nearly as much to the football team.

Their dedication paid off last year when they helped Johnson Central win the school's first state championship. The Golden Eagles defeated Franklin-Simpson 48-0 in the Class 4A title game.

"It was probably the most special moment of anything I've ever been a part of," Blair says. "I've never experienced anything like that before. We knew we were going to be state champions at halftime, because it was already over. I hope I get a chance to experience it again, but that was something I'll never forget."

Nineteen seniors were on the championship team, and they

only lost five games in four years. One of those seniors was 2017 Kentucky Male Athlete of the Year Geordan Blanton.

The team also reached the championship game in 2015 but lost 36-6 to South Warren. They returned in 2016 determined to redeem themselves. "It was the right time for us," LeMaster says.

A FULFILLED CALLING

Blair never planned to be a coach. It all happened by chance. He's worked at Foothills for 18 years and is in the mapping department.

He has always loved all high school sports, not just football. He would rather watch high school football, basketball, baseball or wrestling than any college or professional game.

In 2004, Johnson Central hired Jim Matney as its new football coach. Blair, at the time, was helping with firing a cannon and fireworks during the games.

Matney and Blair developed a friendship. In 2008, Matney



asked Blair to join his staff as a volunteer assistant on the football and wrestling teams. Matney was also the head wrestling coach.

Blair's volunteer status doesn't allow him to devote as much time as the full-time coaches, but he helps as much as he can.

During the summer, Blair leaves Foothills around 6:30 p.m. and tries to catch the end of the team's workouts. It's the same during the season. He also has responsibilities after practice, such as cleaning and watching film. And he loves the scouting trips he takes with the other coaches.

Every Sunday night, all the coaches meet at Matney's

house to eat dinner. After dinner, they go over the previous week's film and then look ahead to the next opponent. The whole process takes anywhere from four to six hours. He loves it all.

"I really enjoy it, especially when we are winning," Blair says. "I enjoy the camaraderie of our staff. We are all really good friends, and I also enjoy our kids. I try to make a difference in just one of our players' lives. If I can do that, then I've fulfilled my calling I guess."

A LOVE FOR THE GAME

LeMaster has enjoyed football since he was a kid. He played in high school but had to stop because he couldn't



John Blair, left, and Redford LeMaster were a part of the coaching staff that led the 2016 Johnson Central High School football team to the state title.

find a ride after practice. His home was a long drive from the school.

He's made up for that missed time by being a volunteer coach. He's been an employee at Foothills for 16 years and is an installer and repairman.

He coached elementary school-age kids for seven years. Two years ago, a friend who was on the staff at Johnson Central asked if LeMaster wanted to move up to varsity. They had coached at the elementary level together. He jumped at the opportunity and hasn't looked back.

"I've loved football since I was 8 years old," he says. "I guess it's the team aspect of it that I love. Everybody coming



Johnson Central senior Gunner Slone celebrates winning the state title against Franklin Simpson High School.

together and getting along. Last year's team was really special. In the championship game, we only gave up 18 yards. They couldn't do anything against us."

Football is also a family affair for him. His stepson, Grant Vanhooose, was a senior offensive and defensive lineman on the team.

Experiencing the championship season with him made it even more special.

"You can't describe it," LeMaster says. "It had never been done before at Johnson Central, and then to be a part of that with him was so special."

He, like Blair, dedicates much of his time to helping with the team. His job with Foothills requires him to travel, but he always finds time to make it to practice.

A TOWN THAT LOVES FOOTBALL

Paintsville residents love their high school football. "On Friday night under the lights, when you look up in the stands

and see people that you grew up with cheering you on, it feels awesome," Blair says. "I really feel like this state championship kind of united the community."

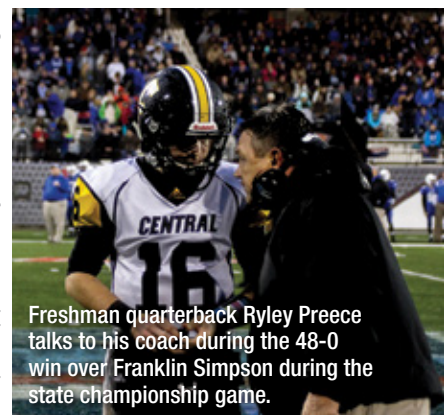
The Golden Eagles played the championship game in Bowling Green at Western Kentucky's L.T. Smith Stadium. It takes about six hours to get to Bowling Green, but the Johnson Central fans still showed up in large numbers. At least six buses carried fans from Paintsville to Bowling Green.

After the Golden Eagles won the championship, the town gave them a warm welcome home. "When we were coming back, they lined up at the county line waiting to greet us," LeMaster says. "Everybody lined up behind the buses and followed us into town, and then we had a big greeting at the gym. It was really special."

A local businessman purchased the team's state championship rings, and the players



Johnson Central players give head coach Jim Matney a celebratory Gatorade bath after winning the school's first state championship in football.



Freshman quarterback Ryley Preece talks to his coach during the 48-0 win over Franklin Simpson during the state championship game.

and coaches received them at a banquet last spring. Blair said that was a big highlight for him.

MORE TO COME

Neither Blair nor LeMaster plans on leaving his coaching duties anytime soon.

Their immediate plans are to help Johnson Central continue its winning tradition. That will be a tall task after losing such a large and successful senior class. But both are confident that the winning attitude will rub off on the younger players.

Success on the field isn't where the two coaches get their joy, however. They enjoy being around the game and helping the players. As long as they can do that, then they'll be on the sidelines every Friday night.

"It's one of the only hobbies I have, and it consumes a lot of my time, but it's really about these kids," Blair says. "I wouldn't trade it for anything." 🗨️

Back-to-School GADGET GUIDE

BY LUIS CARRASCO

It's back-to-school time in 2017, and while we still don't have self-driving cars that will handle that early morning drop-off, robot dogs that come with homework-shredding attachments, or even lockers that won't jam, several services and gadgets will make the life of any student (and parent) a little easier. Here are a few of them along with suggested age ranges.

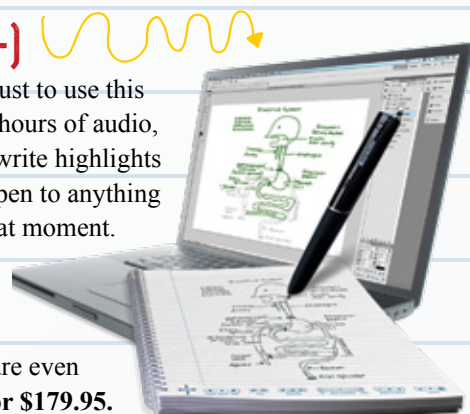


BITSBOX (6-14)

To build a fantastic future, we are going to need more people going into science, technology, engineering and mathematics. STEM box subscription services, which range from programming projects to the more traditional chemistry sets and electronics-building, give students the chance to tinker, create and put theoretical concepts to practical use. Bitsbox (www.bitsbox.com) focuses on coding, with kids as young as 6 learning the basics of programming and producing fun apps. Technology moves very quickly, but having coding knowledge — understanding the basic way that computers do what they do — is invaluable. ... but if you must put a price on it, **Bitsbox starts at \$20 per month.**

LIVESCRIBE ECHO SMARTPEN (18+)

It would almost be worth going back to college just to use this pen in class. The device records as much as 200 hours of audio, which is synchronized to your notes. You could write highlights during a presentation and then simply touch the pen to anything you wrote, and it will play the recording from that moment. With the included software, all notes and drawings are transferred to your computer along with the attached audio. You can share any piece you want as an interactive PDF, and your notes are even searchable. **Available at store.livescribe.com for \$179.95.**



XYZPRINTING DA VINCI MINI (10+)

Having a 3D printer at home would have been unthinkable only a few years ago, but consumer models like the da Vinci Mini have made it an affordable investment. The educational use of a 3D printer is only limited by the imagination or by the included access to an online STEM and arts curriculum for grades K-12. The printer includes 3D modeling software for beginners and uses filaments derived from cornstarch, making them biodegradable and nontoxic. If dads are still not convinced, it also makes neat toy soldiers. **Available at us.xyzprinting.com for \$289.95.**

ROCKETBOOK WAVE SMART NOTEBOOK (13+)

Each page of the notebook has a series of symbols at the bottom that, when used with the Rocketbook Wave app, allows everything from notes to doodles to be stored digitally. The app scans, enhances and sends the notebook page to a chosen cloud service, including options like Evernote, Dropbox and Google Drive. If you use the included FriXion pen — made by Pilot and available at most office stores and online — you can pop the notebook in the microwave and completely erase it once it's full. The only caveat is that if you don't upload your pages regularly, the disappearing ink feature is just a mean prank waiting to happen. **Available at www.getrocketbook.com, erasable models start at \$27.**



Defeat the BACK-TO-SCHOOL BLUES

Apps and sites to help your student



The kids are back to school! Whew! As a mom who works from a home office and lives with a couple of rambunctious boys, I must admit that life is just a little bit simpler when they are back in school.

I love them to pieces, but they can be a distraction! Even if my days are a little less crazy during the school year, it picks right back up when school is over at the end of the day.

They are always starving — who knew boys could eat so much? They have practices and activities to get to and of course HOMEWORK. I didn't like homework as a kid and don't like it as a parent, especially as my boys continue to grow older and the homework gets a bit harder.

Their frustration increases, and my patience decreases. I'm already dreading the day they bring home geometry homework, and don't even get me started on spelling! I'm sure spellcheck has already corrected me at least a dozen times as I write this article.

However, I'm resourceful, and we have super-high-speed internet at home, so there are tools that will make these homework stresses easier. I will do my

best to ensure my kids are better spellers than I am, and I want to give them their best chance at good grades in all their subjects. Here are a couple of sites and apps I recommend:

KHAN ACADEMY

Khan Academy is well-known in the education world, but a lot of parents are unaware of it. The academy has great, free educational videos on math, science, politics and lots of other topics with content for students from kindergarten to graduate studies. If your child is struggling with a topic, and content is available, I strongly encourage you to check it out.

<http://www.khanacademy.org>

VOCABULARY SPELLING CITY

This is a great website and app to help your kids prepare for their spelling tests. Many schools implement it districtwide. If your school doesn't, you can always set up a parent account.

Reviewing spelling words is free, and with a premium account, you can also access lessons on vocabulary and writing. I love that I can enter my sons' spelling words and then they can play games and

take practice quizzes to prepare for tests.

<http://www.spellingcity.com>

ADDITIONAL SITES

If you are looking for a specific subject or topic your child needs help with in school, take a look at the list of suggested apps at Common Sense Media. They break down the apps based on age and topic. You may just find something that makes evening homework a little more manageable.

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/lists/homework-help-apps>

Raising kids isn't easy, and parents today face a different set of challenges than previous generations. Technology is a huge part of that. Take advantage of the help that's out there to make your after-school routines a little more bearable. ☎



CARISSA SWENSON

IS A TRAINING AND EDUCATION CONSULTANT FOR CONSORTIA CONSULTING.

*Parenting
Tip*

The pace of school is picking up, and that's great. But there can be challenges, too. Cyberbullying is never OK. If your child faces a cyberbully, ask the bully to stop, unfriend them and report them to proper authorities if necessary.



BY JEN CALHOUN

There are soccer moms and football moms, basketball moms and baseball moms. Then, there are hunting moms. Jenny Ferguson is one of those moms.

When hunting season arrives — and it doesn't matter which hunting season — Ferguson packs her car with camouflage and her 9-year-old son, Luke, and heads to Paw's house.

Paw, also known as Jeff McDowell, is a construction crew foreman with Foothills

Communications. He's also Ferguson's stepfather and the much-loved grandfather of Luke.

For nearly three years, the pair have been hunting buddies, swapping stories and shooting, skinning and cleaning their kills.

"I think it's a special bonding time for them," says Ferguson, who has enjoyed watching the man who raised her spend time with her son. "It's really hard to get that special time with kids. We're always

on the go — ballgames, soccer games, school, doctor's appointments. It's always something."

But when Paw and his grandson go out in the woods, it's quiet and still, she says. They have their customary traditions, like heading out early in the morning and having a big breakfast when they finish.

The bond is strong, McDowell says, although he's not sure how to explain it.

"We hunt squirrel, coyote, deer, turkeys, any kind of hunting he wants to do," he

Luke Ferguson has bagged a doe, a buck and several squirrels since he started hunting with his grandfather.



says. “I don’t really care if I hunt anymore; I just enjoy hunting with him. Just watching him enjoy it means more than anything.”

During a typical week before a hunt, the pair generally talk every day to plan their trip, Ferguson says. Then, on Friday night, Ferguson will pack up Luke and take him to his grandparents before the Saturday hunt.

“I like that he doesn’t just take Luke hunting,” Ferguson says. “When Luke killed a deer, Jeff helped him skin it and clean it. So I like that he’s involved and he sees that hunting is not just about sitting in the woods — there’s work you have to put into it.”

McDowell also teaches Luke survival and gun-safety skills. He has learned to navigate his way through the woods and likes to hunt for roots, such as ginseng and bloodroot. He also enjoys whittling.

HUNTING LIFE LESSONS

The lessons in outdoor life are paying off in other parts of Luke’s life as well.

Luke was target shooting by the age of 3, with lessons from his father and his paw. The family has always enforced gun safety and the responsibility of using guns.

“It’s given them so much respect and discipline,” Ferguson says of Luke and his 5-year-old brother, Carter, who prefers fishing over hunting. “My kids know what a gun is, and they know what it’s used for. When they’re not hunting, they’re not allowed access to them, and we don’t keep them loaded in our house. They know

safety, and I think that’s important. They know the power of them. It’s a respect thing.”

Maybe that’s one reason Luke is an unusually driven, focused and disciplined third-grader, Ferguson says.

So far, he has bagged a doe, a buck and several squirrels. He’s also learned turkey calls and bird calls and gotten so good at them that he recently earned the runner-up title at his school’s talent show.

When he was in second grade, he placed fourth overall in an accelerated reading competition. He won a certificate, a trophy and an Xbox.

But video games don’t hold much appeal for Luke, who can’t get enough of the outdoors, Ferguson says.

“Even when it’s 95 degrees outside, we have to threaten to ground him to get him to come in and cool off and get some water,” she says. “He loves to be outside. He loves to drive his four-wheeler or to go build traps and climb trees.”

LIKE GRANDFATHER, LIKE GRANDSON

But mostly, Luke just loves to be with Paw, an avid hunter and native of the region.

“Paw is just the greatest thing in his eyes,” Ferguson says. “He’s just such an outdoorsman and so knowledgeable. If I were to ever get stranded in the woods, I would hope it would be with Jeff. He would definitely survive.”

The pair also love to trade tales — some of which may be a tad tall, Ferguson says.

“Jeff’s a huge storyteller,” she says. “He might act modest, but when he and Luke start storytelling, it’s like a contest to see who can get the loudest. I wonder sometimes if the stories are kind of elaborated.”

But that’s just one of the ways the grandfather and grandson take after each other.

“He’s outgoing,” McDowell says with a smile on his face. “He loves the outdoors. He’s just a redneck hillbilly. I guess maybe a little bit of me rubbed off on him.”

Ferguson hopes the time spent and the lessons learned with McDowell will pay off for her son in the future.

“I think if you keep them in the woods, you’ll keep them out of trouble,” she says. “You’re not going to have a kid hanging out, partying or drinking and on drugs until 2 in the morning when they know they’ve got to get up at 5 a.m. to go turkey hunting. It’s priorities. Luke is still little now, but this world is so fast-paced. It’s important to give our kids positive things to focus on and to work towards.” 🗨️



Jeff McDowell, left, points out a target to his 9-year-old grandson Luke Ferguson during one of their hunting excursions.

GOING DUTCH

Learn the secrets to the all-in-one pot

A Dutch oven is the workhorse of your outdoor cooking experience. It's an all-in-one pot that can withstand the heat it takes to make myriad meals from beginning to end — appetizer to dessert.

Cookbook author J. Wayne Fears says there are some tricks to success — the primary one being experience. He offers these tips to help with the learning curve:

- Make sure you have the right accessories — lid turners and heavy leather gloves among them. “I’ve been burned more times than I can count,” Fears says.
- When you’re making something like cake or biscuits, put them in a cake pan set on a cake rack inside the Dutch oven. The heat will circulate better, and cleanup is much easier. Soups and stews should be added directly to the pot.
- There’s no set time or temperature in Dutch oven cooking. You’re cooking outside, so you never know how hot the fire will be.
- Always watch the pot. “When you’re cooking, don’t get distracted and walk off,” Fears says. “You will have a problem. I guarantee it.”

From his home office in New Market, Alabama, he discusses what led him to become

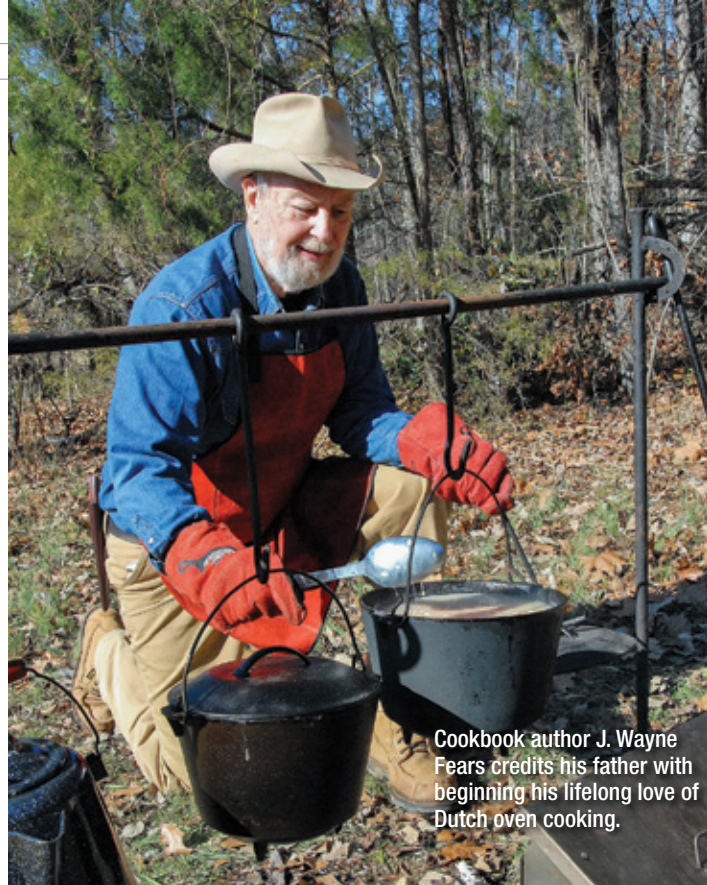
an expert at using one of the oldest cooking methods known to modern man — a cast-iron Dutch oven set over flames.

Fears’ father was a trapper who often used a Dutch oven. He instilled in his son a love of the outdoors and impressed on him the importance of knowing how to cook. When Fears was a young man, he also had a Scoutmaster who was a Dutch oven cooking expert.

After college, Fears worked for Gulf States Paper Corp. Knowing his affinity for hunting and wildlife management, the firm asked him to turn 500,000 acres it owned into a profitable hunting preserve. It didn’t take long for the operation to expand, with organized hunts offered in remote areas of Colorado, British Columbia and Alaska. “And those people expected to be fed well,” he says.

Fears, a member of the International Dutch Oven Society, now shares his techniques with readers around the world in two cookbooks, “The Complete Book of Dutch Oven Cooking” and his latest, “The Lodge Book of Dutch Oven Cooking.”

“I’m extremely proud of this book and the partnership with Lodge,” he says. “I tried to pick recipes that would make it easy for first-time Dutch oven cooks but that were delicious enough that seasoned Dutch



Cookbook author J. Wayne Fears credits his father with beginning his lifelong love of Dutch oven cooking.

oven cooks would not get bored cooking them.”

Fears says Dutch oven has become a trendy cooking method, particularly with millennials and “preppers,” people preparing for the worst — no electricity or other modern cooking methods. “Millennials are also finding it’s a great, fun way to entertain. Something different, rather than grilling,” he adds.

There are two methods to cook the food — over an open flame using hardwood or on a grill over charcoal. “You can control the heat better with charcoal and have enough ready to add more if needed,” he says.

But there’s only one kind of Dutch oven he recommends: the Lodge preseasoned cast-iron camp Dutch oven made in South Pittsburg, Tennessee. “Now with preseasoned, you don’t have to spend all day seasoning the thing,” he says.

Dutch ovens come in various

sizes, but there are several things common to all: a flat, recessed lid so coals can be placed on top; a strong bail for hanging over the fire; and a heavy lid with handle in the center.

What is the most interesting food Fears has cooked in a Dutch oven? Caribou brains. It was a stormy night in Alaska, and his group of hunters were stranded in camp and ran out of food.

“I told them what it was, and they liked it, but I did get a lot of strange looks,” Fears says.

Fortunately, most of his recipes tend to follow a more traditional route. Here are some of his favorites.



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

SARA GRAVE'S BEEF STEW

"This beef stew has to be the best in the country," says Fears. It can be made entirely outdoors, or you can use your kitchen stove to brown the meat in advance.

- 1 package Adolph's beef stew mix
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 cup flour
- 3 pounds beef round, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1 package McCormick's beef stew seasoning
- 1 package McCormick's brown gravy mix
- 6 large Irish potatoes, cubed
- 1 cup carrots, peeled and sliced

In 12-inch Dutch oven, bring 3 quarts of water to a boil over charcoal or hardwood fire, keeping bottom of oven from coming into direct contact with coals. In separate pan on medium high heat, add 2 cups of warm water and stir in Adolph's stew mix. Heat to simmer, then add to water in Dutch oven. Heat oil in a skillet over medium heat. Coat cubed meat with flour and brown in oil on all sides. Add browned meat to boiling water in Dutch oven, stir, cover with lid on and reduce heat to low. Cook for 2 hours, stirring every 20-30 minutes to prevent meat from sticking to bottom. After 2 hours of cooking, mix McCormick's beef stew seasoning mix into two cups of warm water. When completely mixed, add to Dutch oven mixture. Stir well. Mix McCormick's Brown Gravy Mix in two cups of warm water. Add to Dutch oven and stir. While stew continues to cook on low heat, peel and cut potatoes and carrots. Bring water to a boil in two pots and put potatoes in one and carrots in the second. Reduce heat and let the potatoes and carrots boil until they can be easily pierced with a fork. Remove and drain. (Cooking potatoes and carrots separately has proven to keep them more tender.) Add vegetables to Dutch oven mixture. Stir. Remove from heat and serve. Makes 6-8 servings.



STUFFED BAKED APPLES

- 4 baking apples
- 1/3 cup raisins or dried cranberries
- 1/3 cup slivered almonds
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
- 2 cups water
- 4 ounces orange juice concentrate
- 2 tablespoons honey

Wash apples and core 3/4 of apple, leaving a little of the core in the bottom. In a bowl, combine raisins, almonds, cinnamon and nutmeg. Mix well. Take mixture and stuff each apple. In a bowl, mix honey, water and orange juice concentrate. Mix well. Place apples in a 9-inch aluminum pan. Pour liquid mixture over apples. Place pan on trivet in 12-inch Dutch oven over charcoal or hardwood fire, keeping bottom of oven from coming into direct contact with coals. Bake until apples are tender. Makes 4 servings.

DUTCH OVEN PINEAPPLE UPSIDE DOWN CAKE

- 1/4 cup butter, softened
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1 can pineapple slices, drained, reserving juice
- 1 small jar of maraschino cherries
- 1 (9-ounce) package Jiffy golden yellow cake mix
- 1 egg

Heat Dutch oven over charcoal or hardwood fire, keeping bottom of oven from coming into direct contact with coals. Melt butter in the pineapple-upside-down cake pan and sprinkle it with 1/2 cup of brown sugar. Place pineapple slices over the brown sugar and place a maraschino cherry in each center. Set aside. In a medium bowl, beat yellow cake mix, egg and half of pineapple juice for 4 minutes. Pour batter over pineapple slices in cake pan. Place pan in 12-inch Dutch oven on trivet or cake rack. Cook until cake is golden brown and toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Remove from Dutch oven, pour remaining half of pineapple juice over cake and allow to cool in pan for 2 minutes. Carefully flip onto serving plate and serve warm. Makes 6 servings. 📖





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