

CONNECTION

BROADBAND:
MAKERS EDITION

RACING THE BARRELS

A teen and her
horse make a
winning pair

A WOODWORKING LEGACY

Know-how and teamwork
built lasting art

HONORING MAKERS

Broadband empowers
creativity



BY SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

Celebrating 65 years

This spring telco leaders from across the country gathered in Washington, D.C. We met with regulators and elected officials to not only champion the success of rural broadband providers who are expanding their reach with the support of good public policies, but also to advocate for all the good work our member companies do.

We also celebrated our strong legacy of success and commitment to rural America through service excellence, kicking off a number of activities that led up to our big day: On June 1, NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association celebrated its 65th anniversary.

While the early rural telephone program was born out of the rural electrification program in the mid-1940s, local providers began to realize that a national organization was needed to represent the unique needs of those new companies (many of them cooperatives) that were borrowing federal dollars to build critical communications services to rural parts of the nation. On June 1, 1954, NTCA was born.

We have seen many changes in the ensuing 65 years. Membership in NTCA has grown considerably, with cooperative and independent telcos serving an ever-expanding portion of the population. Regulations and funding mechanisms that impact how communications services are deployed have changed considerably. And, of course, the technology and ways people connect have gone from party lines to broadband.

As a member of NTCA, your telco is part of a large family that connects homes and businesses, farms and small towns, country roads and growing cities across rural America. And that's a reason to celebrate! 📶

Precision agriculture

Rural broadband creates opportunities



BY NOBLE SPRAYBERRY

The difference between success and failure for those who work in agriculture is, as it has ever been, small and frequently dependent on unpredictable factors: Too much rain. Not enough rain. Fickle prices. And more.

The goal is to manage the challenges in the best way possible, maximizing opportunity and limiting risk. Increasingly, internet-based technology can better balance the margin between losses and gains.

A recent report by the U.S. Department of Agriculture made the case for further extending broadband internet services to rural areas by highlighting the benefits of fast internet for agribusiness.

The report "Insights on Rural Broadband Infrastructure and Next Generation Precision Agriculture Technologies" offered a broad look at the possibilities for broadband to make use of data-driven tools to improve results.

Farmers and ranchers can follow the path of other modern businesses by using digital tools across the production cycle, according to the report. These new tools can support decision-making with integrated data. Automation can increase efficiency. Real-time insight can improve productivity. And entering into global markets becomes more attainable.

The trend can benefit farmers, ranchers and others in agriculture while also supporting technology companies leveraging these new or expanded markets. In fact, they have an opportunity to capture a portion of a global digital agriculture market projected to be between \$254 billion and \$340 billion.

New tools are needed to help farmers and ranchers better estimate the potential profit and economic risks associated with growing one particular crop over another. They may help with decisions about which fertilizer is best for current soil conditions or provide guidance on the best applications for pesticides. There are opportunities to create better water management strategies and to provide ways to use sensors to monitor animal health and nutrition.

"Connected devices equip farmers with a clear picture of their operations at any moment, making it possible to prioritize tasks more effectively and to triage the most pressing issues," according to the report.

Rural broadband capable of supporting these data-intensive tools makes it all possible, and the financial potential of the market emphasizes the need to continue to expand broadband networks throughout the nation. If fully realized, fast internet services paired with new "precision agriculture" technologies have the potential to add \$47-\$65 billion annually to the U.S. economy. 📶



LIFELINE IS A FEDERAL PROGRAM TO HELP LOW-INCOME AMERICANS PAY FOR PHONE OR BROADBAND SERVICE

FAQ:

How much will Lifeline save me?

Eligible customers will get at least \$9.25 toward their bill.

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You have the choice (where applicable) of applying your benefit to one of three types of service offerings:

- Fixed or mobile broadband
- Fixed or mobile voice-only
- Bundles of fixed or mobile voice and broadband

NOTE: Lifeline can only be used for one source of communication from the list above.

Can I receive more than one Lifeline credit?

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How do I qualify?

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Additionally, consumers at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines will continue to be eligible for a Lifeline program benefit. (State determinations of income will no longer be accepted.) There are no changes to the eligibility criteria for Tribal programs.

NOTE: Some states have additional qualifying programs, allowances and stipulations. Check with your local telecommunications provider for information about benefits that may be available in your state.

How do I enroll in the Lifeline program and start receiving this benefit?

To find out whether you qualify for Lifeline assistance, please visit www.lifelinesupport.org or call your local telecommunications provider.

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Lifeline is a government assistance program that can help pay a portion of your telephone, mobile phone or internet bill each month. Consumers are allowed only one Lifeline program benefit per household.

Building communities locally and globally



RUTH CONLEY
Chief Executive Officer

The internet has changed the way we define community.

Sure, we'll always have the community where we live. Many of us have a community of faith through our church or a school community with our kids.

But one of the things people discovered early on with the internet was the amazing ability to connect people with similar interests into an online community. If no one else in your town was into quilting or vintage motorcycles or jewelry-making, there were thousands of enthusiasts online who shared those hobbies.

Unique, long-distance relationships formed during those early days of group email lists, message boards and online forums. Whatever our hobbies or interests, many of us have benefited from sharing ideas, swapping stories and soliciting advice with fellow enthusiasts.

As you'll read in the pages of this magazine, creative folks like artists, bakers, photographers, carpenters, seamstresses and metalworkers all use broadband to enhance their skills or to even turn their passions into moneymakers.


Even if your hobbies don't involve creating anything tangible, your broadband connection from Foothills Communications has likely helped you find joy in your interests.

There are hundreds of active online communities for gaming, hunting, hiking, gardening, music, genealogy, sports and more just waiting for new members to plug in. Many of these are global groups that would be impossible to assemble if not for the reach of broadband networks like ours.

Personally, I'm gratified to know that artisans and craftspeople from our region have a chance to share work that celebrates our local culture. Through their skill, they hopefully earn money to support themselves, as well as export our culture to the rest of the country to help ensure our way of life thrives.

There is more good news for anyone wanting to learn those old ways — or something new. Whether it's refinishing furniture, replacing a headlight, or learning to play the trombone, there are probably videos from experts on YouTube to walk you through the learning process step by step. This is the kind of skills library that has never before been available. Thanks to broadband, it's right at our fingertips.

While I normally use this space to tout the big-picture societal benefits of broadband — such as economic development, educational opportunities or telemedicine — I think it's important to remember the hundreds of small ways a broadband connection makes our lives a little better.

Whether you're learning a new skill or sharing community with fellow enthusiasts, we're proud to be the company in the middle that helps you make those connections. 



CONNECTION

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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, which 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.

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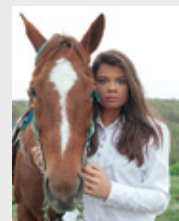
Foothills Mission Statement

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

Produced for Foothills Communications by:



On the Cover:



Salyersville teenager, Jackie Beth Arnett, learned the challenges of barrel racing, and she aims to go far in the sport.
See story Page 8.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL ENTRY FORM AND CONTEST RULES

ENTER THE FOOTHILLS BACK-TO-SCHOOL DRAWING CONTEST

See promo on the back page for additional information.



Entry Form:

To enter, please fill out the form below and submit with your entry to:

Foothills Back-to-School Drawing Contest
Marketing Department
P.O. Box 240, Staffordsville, KY 41256.

Parent: By signing this form, I give permission for identification of my child and his/her picture and artwork in The Foothills Connection. I also attest that the artwork is the child's original creation.

Student's name: _____

Name of Parent or Guardian: _____

Address: _____

Telephone number: _____

Email address: _____

Grade in school (2019-2020): _____

Rules:

- ★ Students in Foothills' service area may enter one of three divisions: entering kindergarten or first grade, second or third grade, or fourth or fifth grade.
- ★ The drawing focus of this year's theme — Storytelling through drawing: a picture of your favorite book.
- ★ The drawing must be an original creation of the child.
- ★ The entry form, signed by a parent or guardian, must be enclosed with the submission.
- ★ Entries must be postmarked by August 1.
- ★ Only one entry per child is allowed.
- ★ After all entries are submitted, they will be judged by a committee.
- ★ Winners will be notified by August 15.
- ★ The winners' names will appear in an upcoming edition of The Foothills Connection.

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★ *freedom* ★
★ **ring!** ★

Foothills Communications will be closed in celebration of Independence Day on Thursday, July 4. We wish our customers a safe and happy Fourth of July!

Beat the heat

Slip and slide through summer

BY ANNE P. BRALY

The start of summer means travelers will be flocking to beaches and lakefronts in droves. When it comes to enjoying the purity of a dip in the water, there's no better way to do it than by taking the plunge at a water park that sparkles with fun. So grab a towel — don't forget the kids — and slip-slide your way to a day of excitement.

And they all come to play at Kentucky Splash, a water park that includes an 18,000-square-foot wave pool, a lazy river and a tower with three slides that will take your breath away as you plunge down one of two tube slides or body surf your way down 40 feet to the water below.

The Aquatwist is a water ride that is totally enclosed. You twist and turn your way along its 180-foot length from a 30-foot-high starting point, and you'll get a thrill as it drops you into the water in 10 seconds — or less.

Small children have their own place to splash around out of the way of the big kids at play. Tadpole Island features a Caribbean-themed playhouse with kid-sized slides and lots of bells and whistles to entertain the little ones. And, of course, mom and dad will enjoy taking it easy on the lazy river.

"There's lots to do, but the park isn't so big that it's hard to keep up with everyone," says manager Diane Bruers.



Families enjoy the water slides at Wilderness at the Smokies, including the Cyclone Racer.

Kentucky Splash opened in May 2001, so this marks its 18th year of providing aquatic fun for kids of all ages. One thing that sets Kentucky Splash apart from other water parks around the state is price, Bruers says. Tickets are \$10 per person, and children 2 and under are admitted free. Prices have not changed in almost 10 years.

Like many small towns, Williamsburg, Kentucky, faced a dilemma when it came to deciding what to do with an aging municipal swimming pool that had provided summer fun for families for decades. The choices were to demolish it or transform it into a facility that would attract people from all around. The answer: a water park now named Kentucky Splash that brings visitors from across Kentucky. And because Williamsburg is just 11 miles from the Tennessee line, it attracts folks from the Volunteer State, too.

A number of familiar chain hotels are located nearby, along with some that are independently owned. The water park itself has a campground, offering 25 RV sites with full hookups — water, sewer, electricity, Wi-Fi internet and cable TV — along with a fire pit and picnic table. Six tent sites are available for primitive camping, each with a fire pit and picnic table, and there's a bathhouse on-site. During busy months, reservations are recommended.

No outside food or drink may be brought into the park, but there are two full concession stands and several food booths selling burgers, hot dogs, chicken strips, pizza, nachos, cheese fries and more. Online: www.williamsburgky.com (click on the Kentucky Splash link). 📱



Families enjoy the numerous water slides at Wilderness at the Smokies.

WILDERNESS AT THE SMOKIES

Sevierville, Tennessee

www.wildernessatthesmokies.com

This state-of-the-art water park offers year-round fun under a glass dome that makes you feel like you're in the great outdoors. Even during less-than-perfect weather, you can enjoy 66,000 square feet of fun under the dome. Water features include a hair-raising ride on the Storm Chaser — a 55-foot plummet down a dark tunnel before a zero-gravity fall into an oscillating funnel, which gives way to a pool below. Runaway Canyon is a five-story raft ride that rockets you through water curtains, huge tunnels, explosive turns and loops before a 60-foot drop. Wilderness at the Smokies is one thrill after another.

Tickets: \$49 per person (must be purchased online). Overnight guests at the resort's hotel receive complimentary admission.

ALABAMA SPLASH ADVENTURE

Bessemer, Alabama

www.alabamasplash.com

Upsurge takes you up, up, then drops you down 216 feet through twists and turns. To take a break from the excitement, tube the lazy river or ride the waves in the 800,000-gallon wave pool. Splash Adventure is an 89-acre water park that operates from May to July, and then on weekends during August and early September.

Tickets: \$27-\$32 (day passes). Season tickets available.

CAROLINA HARBOR WATER PARK

Fort Mill, South Carolina

www.carowinds.com

Located on the grounds of Carowinds Amusement Park, Carolina Harbor is the largest of all noncoastal water parks in the state. There are more than 20 waterslides, two wave pools and a 1,000-foot-long lazy river that takes riders across the state line into North Carolina. Blackbeard gets his revenge on a six-story waterslide that features death-defying twists and turns, along with exhilarating slides. The kids have their own play area, featuring Kiddy Hawk Cove and Myrtle Turtle Beach. It's all part of your ticket to Carowinds, a park that also features the world's tallest giga coaster just steps outside the water park. Private cabanas, providing shade and a place to relax, are available for rent.

Tickets: \$33-\$45 (depending on time of day). Discounts available for seniors and military.



The Hal Rogers Family Entertainment Center is home to the Kentucky Splash Water Park.



RIDING FAST

MAGOFFIN COUNTY TEEN PURSUES HER LOVE OF BARREL RACING

BY PATRICK SMITH

As soon as she could sit up, Jackie Beth Arnett was riding horses. As she's gotten older, not much has changed. Today, her mother, Jacqueline Arnett, says the 15-year-old Salyersville, Kentucky, resident lives, eats and breathes for horses.

Jackie Beth loves horse riding in general, but she's specifically infatuated with barrel racing. In eastern Kentucky, one can find pleasure horses and walking horses in droves, but finding an American quarter horse, the breed commonly used for barrel racing, is rare. Because it's rare, and so is nearby barrel racing, Jackie Beth and her family travel with their quarter horse on nights and weekends to ride and race.

All that time on the road isn't in vain. Like any parent, when Arnett sees her only daughter so happy, she smiles, too. "When you talk about horses, she lights up," says Arnett. "She loves being with the horse, riding the horse, taking care of the horse — she loves all of it."

Jackie Beth's love of horses has translated into success during competitions. In August 2018, she qualified for the American Quarter Horse Youth Association World Championship Show in Oklahoma City. "That was a high honor," Arnett says. "There were only about 10 youths on the Kentucky team. We didn't win, but we learned a lot and got a lot of experience. It was great for her as a barrel racer."

There's room ahead to grow, and Jackie Beth has no lack of desire to keep going.

GETTING STARTED

About seven years ago, flipping through television channels one day, Jackie Beth

passed a barrel racing segment on RFD-TV. It sparked an interest that hasn't wavered. As she learned more and more, a co-worker of Arnett's heard of Jackie Beth's interest and gifted her a well-worn barrel racing saddle. The condition was of no matter to Jackie Beth. Neither was the fact that she didn't have the right kind of horse. And while a typical barrel racing pattern uses three barrels, Jackie Beth only had one. Again, it didn't matter.

She put the saddle on a gelding and took an old oil barrel from her mamaw's barn. She was determined to learn barrel racing. For her birthday in February 2017, Jackie Beth had one request: "to learn to barrel race." Arnett searched high and low online for a nearby coach to make it happen. Eventually, she came across a trainer in Richmond, Kentucky.

Opening a jewelry box as her last present for her 13th birthday, Jackie Beth expected to see a necklace or ring. She felt slightly disappointed she wouldn't

Jackie Beth Arnett and her late horse Frenchie have competed in quarter horse competitions all over the region.



“When I ride, every care in the world disappears. It just makes me happy.”

—Jackie Beth, Magoffin County barrel racer

yet be able to pursue her dream of barrel racing. To her surprise, inside the box was a piece of paper with the words: “Chuck Givens Quarter Horses. Your first lesson is Wednesday at 6 p.m.” Jackie Beth was ecstatic.

She headed to the basement, placed her barrel racing saddle on an exercise bench and watched professionals ride for three days prior to her first lesson. With each new video, she tried to better emulate their moves and learn to race.

After Jackie Beth practiced on an older gelding for several months with her trainer, Arnett and her husband, Jeffrey, bought their daughter a sorrel quarter horse mare named Yawl French Kiss, affectionately known as “Frenchie.” “I freaked out,” Jackie Beth laughs. “It was just how I felt when I got the riding lessons for my birthday. I cried and cheered. Ever since, I’ve tried to continue to get better and better.”

Over time, Jackie Beth has learned to ride as one with her horse. “These horses

are bred to go fast, but you need a rider that’s able to control and drive the horse,” Arnett says.

SUPPORTED BY HER FAMILY

Jackie Beth visited the farm that belongs to her mamaw, Brenda Powers, in Kentucky’s Breathitt County three or four times a week to be with Frenchie. The horse, however, passed away this spring.

Unless she continues racing and follows her dream, she feels she would be letting down Frenchie, who was to be cremated and buried in the family cemetery. “She can never be replaced, but when the time comes, I will find another horse,” she says. “I owe everything to Frenchie. She never gave up on me and I’m not giving up now.”

Jackie Beth has a large support system, and a family passionate about her skill with a horse. Often accompanied by her parents and mamaw, she has traveled throughout Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana and

farther away. “My biggest concern was just keeping her on the horse. She looks like she’s going to fly off at any time,” Arnett says. “But we love to watch her race.”

Jackie Beth’s uncle, John Montgomery, is also a faithful supporter. “Uncle John taught me everything I know about horses,” she says. “If it wasn’t for my family, there’s no way I’d be where I am now.”

Though she was only a freshman at Magoffin County High School during the 2018-19 school year, Jackie Beth has big plans for the future. With a personal record of 14.8 seconds as her fastest time, she hopes to pursue barrel racing in college. Many larger schools like Morehead State University and the University of Kentucky have teams.

“I’ve always loved horses,” says Jackie Beth. “When I ride, every care in the world disappears. It just makes me happy. There’s no other way I can explain it. I can’t see myself doing anything else.” 🗨️



MAKING ART

and a living

How the internet helps creative people thrive

BY JEN CALHOUN

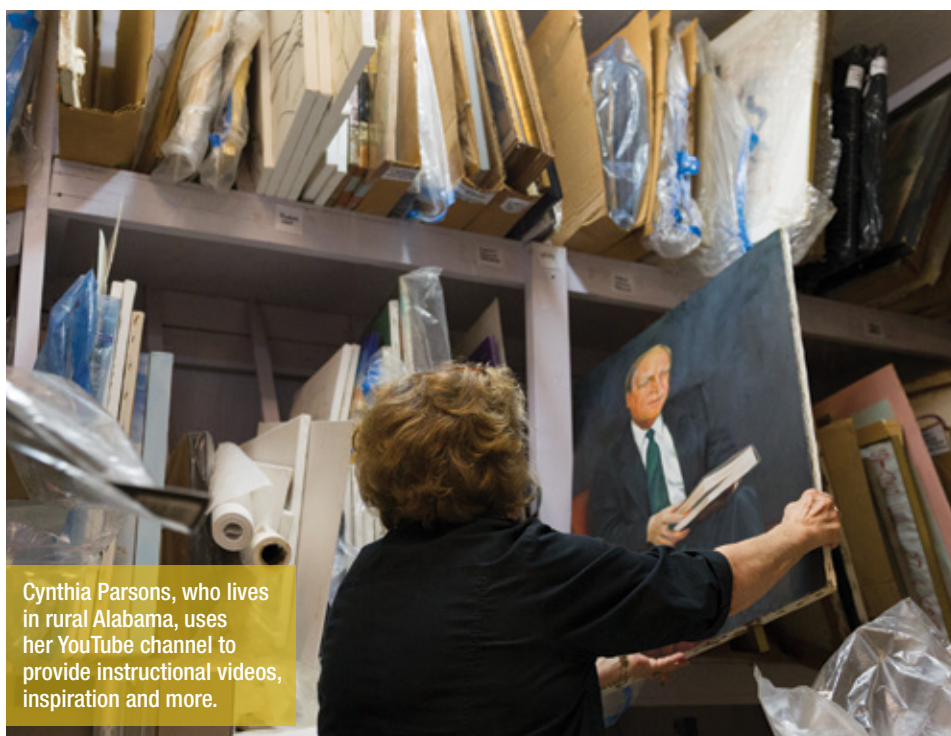
For centuries, artists gathered in big cities to share ideas, sell their art and connect with other creatives. But with greater access to faster internet, more and more creative people are choosing to live in rural areas where the cost of living is low and connectivity is just a click away.

Take John George Larson, for example. He, an accomplished sculptor and painter from rural Minnesota, chose to live with his family in a nearly century-old farmhouse about three hours east of Minneapolis. “Part of my process as a ceramic sculptor involves working with a kiln that uses wood as fuel,” Larson says. “These kilns are kind of dirty and large, and I can’t really do that in a residential area.”

INTERNET EQUALS OPPORTUNITY

Larson is one of a growing number of rural residents who use the internet to help fuel creative careers. From candelmakers to photographers to musicians, millions of people have found a way to share their talents and make a living online.

According to a recent article on the website The Motley Fool, Etsy, the online marketplace that offers artisans and crafters a place to sell their handmade items,



Cynthia Parsons, who lives in rural Alabama, uses her YouTube channel to provide instructional videos, inspiration and more.

continues to grow. Revenue in its fourth quarter of 2018 came in at \$200 million — an increase of more than \$63 million from the previous year’s fourth quarter. The company’s chief executive officer, Josh Silverman, expects more increases through 2019.

If it sounds unbelievable that artists are no longer mostly starving, think again, says Mark McGuinness, a poet, podcaster and creative coach. The internet has not only opened doors to creativity, but it’s also opened the doors for artists of all kinds. Period.

“We are now living at a time of unprecedented opportunity for artists



While sculptor and painter John George Larson lives a rural lifestyle outside Minneapolis, the internet connects him to other creatives.

and creative professionals,” McGuinness writes in a blog post on his website, wishfulthinking.com. “Once upon a time, if you wanted to get your work in front of an audience, you had to submit it to an editor, agent, manager, curator, talent scout, whoever. A gatekeeper who had the power to open the gate and usher you through, or slam it in your face.”

The gateway shouldn’t close anytime soon, either. According to the 2018 Global Digital report, more than 4 billion people around the world now use the internet, making the possibility of sharing ideas and selling creative goods greater than ever before. Today, musicians from Texas can share music or give lessons to someone in Tanzania. Folk artists in Alabama can sell paintings to a collector in Albania.

COUNTRY IS COOL AGAIN

For Larson, a rural area offers other benefits. His work requires some solitude, not to mention the natural clay found in the area where he lives. “I don’t use that clay in all my work, but I try to incorporate it as much as possible,” he says. “That’s kind of a big reason why we chose to live in a rural area.”

But Larson, who studied ceramics at Utah State University and under the tutelage of a sculptor in Japan, is far from being isolated from other artists or even art buyers. Thanks to a fast fiber optic internet connection provided by a rural broadband company, he learns new things and explores new ideas every day through online articles. He also connects with others and showcases his craft through his Instagram account, @johngeorgelarson, and his website, johngeorgelarson.com.

“When we moved here, we didn’t realize this kind of high-speed internet was already offered at the house,” Larson says. “I don’t even think I realized how important it would be until after we started using it. Now, we use it every day, all the time. I use it for research for my own work or commission work that I do for other people and businesses. I read a lot of research articles about different topics, and it helps me develop a project or a design.”

While marketing his work used to tire him, Larson is finding ways to make art through apps. “I just started doing animation of my artwork on Instagram,” he says. “One of the things I’ve been thinking of lately is motion and movement in my work. Some of my pieces are made to be viewed from a variety of different angles. So, if you place them on a shelf one way, they’ll look different than if you place them another way. It’s an allegory for our lives and human experience because we can experience life from different perspectives.”

SPREADING THE WORD

Cynthia Parsons, an award-winning artist and painter who lives in a rural region of northern Alabama, says the internet has opened a whole world of connectivity and possibility.

On her YouTube channel, Open Art Studio of Cynthia Parsons, she offers videos of students working through challenges during class or clips of cotton fields at sunset so others can paint them. She might film a farmer harvesting his corn or make an instructional video about how to save old watercolor paint. She also records regular videos of her son, Elbert, as he recovers from an injury that nearly took his life years ago.

Parsons, who regularly sells her artwork and has taught classes everywhere from Birmingham, Alabama, to France, believes art is everywhere. “You can’t look through your eyes and not see art or the potential of some kind of creation,” she says. “It might be someone doing crafts and using popsicle sticks or carving a bar of soap. All those things are art, and all that creative energy we use when we do it resounds through the universe.”

Parsons finds joy in moving her work and the work of others through time, space and physical boundaries. “For me, the internet is about sharing,” she says. “That’s what it’s been able to do for me. It lets me share these moments of decision-making from my students. The videos of my students are about one minute or two minutes or maybe three. When I show

people what they’re dealing with, it lets others see how they might solve any problems they might be having with their work.” 🗨️

Get creative

Creative industries and people make jobs for Americans. Here are a few facts:

- The value of arts and cultural production in America in 2015 was \$763.6 billion, amounting to 4.2% of the gross domestic product. The arts contribute more to the national economy than do the construction, mining, utilities, insurance, and accommodation and food services industries.
- Artists are highly entrepreneurial. They are 3.5 times more likely than the total U.S. workforce to be self-employed.
- Arts and cultural goods and services drive industries primarily focused on producing copyrighted content, accounting for just over half of their combined \$1.17 billion value.
- 97% of U.S. employers say creativity is increasingly important to them. Of the employers looking to hire creatives, 85% say they are unable to find the applicants they seek.

Sources: National Endowment for the Arts, Artists and Arts Workers in the United States, 2011, The Conference Board, Ready to Innovate, 2008, National Endowment for the Arts, The Arts Contribute More Than \$760 Billion to the U.S. Economy, and U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Value Added by Industry as a Percentage of Gross Domestic Product, 2017, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Data for 1998-2015, 2018



Married 53 years, Judy and Curt Fitzpatrick also teamed up to make wooden furniture from 2000-2014. The six-day-a-week schedule turned them off of the “hobby,” however.



Teamwork

COUPLE'S WOODWORKING HOBBY CREATES FAMILY HEIRLOOMS

BY JEN CALHOUN

For 14 years, Curt and Judy Fitzpatrick created hundreds of handmade furniture pieces that now fill the homes of their friends, family and acquaintances.

“Basically, I did all the building of the furniture, and my wife did all the finishing,” says Curt Fitzpatrick, who took to carpentry after retiring in 2000 as a maintenance worker at Special Metals in Boyd County. “It started out as a hobby, but pretty soon, I was doing it from morning until nightfall, six days a week.”

The schedule got old, however. “It got to where I was totally burned-out,” he says. “I didn’t want to go in that shop for nothing. I didn’t want to put a sander in my hand. It just happened overnight. One day I was enjoying it. The next day it just wasn’t there anymore. I told my wife that the only way I’m going to be able to give this up was to sell all my tools. So that’s what I did in 2014.”

Even though the Fitzpatricks quit woodworking five years ago, they’re happy with all the rooms they’ve helped fill with their hard work. “Each of my three grandchildren has two bedroom sets right now,” Judy Fitzpatrick says. “Unless they burn, they’ll have them for the rest of their lives because it’s made out of solid oak wood. They just don’t deteriorate. It feels good that they’ll have something we built for them long after we’re gone.”

IN THE BEGINNING

Curt Fitzpatrick wore plenty of different hats during his career as a plant maintenance worker. “Have you heard that saying, ‘Jack of all trades, master of none?’” he asks. “That was me. I was an electrician, a pipe fitter, a welder, a millwright.”

Woodworking was new to him, however. It was an exotic curiosity that he’d never tried. He liked the idea of taking a block of wood and shaping it into something functional and beautiful. He liked the sheer potential the wood represented, and he was drawn to the artistry of it all. “I loved just putting pieces together and seeing what I could do with my hands. It fascinated me.”

But he didn’t know where to start. “Woodworking tools are entirely different,” he says. “I didn’t have any, and I didn’t know anything about them.” Still, he needed something to occupy his time, and woodworking appealed to him.

“My dad died in 1957 when I was 10 years old,” he says. “He was a carpenter by trade, and the things he built with just hand tools would blow your mind. I was so young when he died that I never picked up anything from him. But maybe it’s in my genes. I don’t know.” He started by making small knick-knacks, shelves and other little pieces popular with beginners.

Then, his wife showed him a picture of a bedroom set she liked and told him, “You can do it.”

“Well, I didn’t think I could,” he says. “But she really believed in me, so I ordered plans for it out of a woodworking book, and I made it.”

From there, his confidence grew and he started making more pieces for his children and grandchildren. Then, friends started making requests, and their friends, too. It wasn't long before the requests piled up from all over the tri-state area. He made everything from curio cabinets to a 7-foot-long dining room table and a Murphy bed.

Mission furniture, with its clean lines and iconic slats, was his favorite to build. But he was happy to take requests, as long as it wasn't too ornate. "When people wanted things, I'd write it down in a book. I'd tell them, 'When I get to it, I'll let you know.'"

TRUE TEAMWORK

After her husband finished each piece, Judy Fitzpatrick lovingly stained the furniture and coated it in polyurethane. "I handled each piece seven times," she says. "I would put probably two or three coats of stain on it, then a coat of poly. Then, it would have to be sanded. Then, I'd do it all over again."

Until 2013, she was still working a full-time job at an insurance office. "I'd come home from work at 5 p.m., and I'd pretty much go straight back to working," she says with a laugh. "I loved putting on that stain and watching that wood just come alive. I loved seeing the grain of the wood just pop out. We were like a team. Well, we are a team. We've been a team for 53 years of marriage."

But Judy Fitzpatrick got a little tired of the constant work, too. "I don't miss it at all," she says. "It was just tedious. But I'll tell you what I do miss. I miss seeing something in a book and thinking, 'I'd really like to have that.'"



The Fitzpatricks made hundreds of pieces of furniture for friends, family and themselves. Items included everything from Murphy beds to cradles and curio cabinets.

"We were like a team. Well, we are a team. We've been a team for 53 years of marriage."

—Judy Fitzpatrick, who helped her husband, Curt, produce hundreds of pieces of handmade furniture in a 14-year period



LOW AND SLOW

BBQ brings friends together

A spark ignited one summer afternoon almost 20 years ago when David “Hoss” Johnson and three friends decided to toss a coin and see where it landed on the field of competitive barbecuing.

The four men — Johnson, Jeff Chandler, Steve Hatfield and David Schmitt — were all born and raised in Huntsville, Alabama. Johnson played football at the University of Alabama under legendary coach Bear Bryant. Schmitt played football at the University of North Alabama. Hatfield was on the baseball team at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and Columbia State in Tennessee.

Only one of the foursome, Chandler, knew anything about smoking meats and competing in the sport of barbecuing. But that’s all it took when he suggested they enter a competition — not on the amateur level, but as professionals. So, the men paid their entry fee for the WhistleStop Barbecue Festival and gave their team a name: Fork Down and Pork, a riff on the football term “fourth down and short.” They came home with a first-place award in the “anything goes” category for their butterflied scallops stuffed with shrimp, wrapped with bacon and drizzled with hollandaise sauce.

“The next day was for barbecue, and we didn’t do great,” Johnson says. “We came in about 35th out of 60, which wasn’t bad for a first time, but it wasn’t great. We did barbecued pork, ribs and chicken. And we did a brisket, too. But brisket is very hard to do. Just go to Texas if you want good brisket.

“I mean, it’s kind of like football. If you want good football, you come to the South. If you want good brisket, you go to Texas,” he says, sipping on a glass of water and recalling the days when the three men would cook all weekend and go back to their daytime jobs and families during the week.

Following graduation from Alabama, Johnson played offensive line for the St. Louis Cardinals under coach Gene Stallings and then for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. He left the NFL to become athletic director for football operations for the City of Huntsville, Alabama. Johnson retired after 25 years and is now a missionary and national football direc-

tor for SCORE International, a position that takes him on mission trips and to football camps around the world. And in several countries — including Italy, Israel and Costa Rica — he’s fired up a smoker and treated those around him to a taste of the South, complete with barbecue, beans and coleslaw.

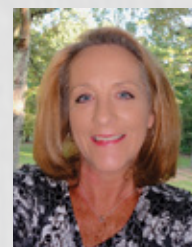
The Fork Down and Pork team quit the competition circuit in 2010. “We had families and kids. Some had grandkids, changed jobs. You know, life happens,” Johnson says. But he continues to cook not only for those in other countries, but also for friends at home, too. One thing he’s learned from all his years of smoking meats is a creed to which every good smoker adheres: low and slow, meaning to cook the meat at a low temperature and not rush things. Johnson says if he’s cooking meat that needs to stay in the smoker for up to 18 hours, he tries to keep a steady temperature of 185 degrees. For meats that need to cook no more than 12 hours, he keeps

the temperature around 250 degrees.

Different cuts of meat call for different woods added to the coals. Johnson likes hickory chunks for pork, mesquite for chicken and applewood chunks for ribs. Another trick he’s learned is not to add the injection liquid or rub to a pork butt until the meat has finished cooking and not to discard all the fat and juices that run off the meat. When the butt has finished cooking, let it sit in a covered pan for an hour or so. Then, remove the bone if there is one, and pull the pork apart. Mix the rub and injection sauce together, and massage it into the meat, adding any accumulated fat and juices back in as needed to make the meat moist. “There’s nothing worse than dry barbecue,” Johnson says.



Barbecue master
David “Hoss” Johnson.



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

SMOKED PORK



VINEGAR SAUCE FOR SMOKED PORK

- 1 cup white vinegar
- 2 tablespoons salt
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes

Combine all ingredients, taste and add water to dilute, as necessary.

Note: David Johnson combines this sauce with enough of his barbecue rub to make a thin paste. Then, he massages as much as he needs into the smoked, pulled pork after it has been cooked and shredded. As for amounts needed, it's a judgment call. Taste as you go using your favorite rub.

COLESLAW

David Johnson says sugar is the key to this coleslaw. "You need to make sure it's sweet enough," he says.

- 1 head of cabbage, shredded
- 2-3 carrots, shredded

Dressing:

- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup white or apple cider vinegar
- 1 teaspoon celery salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1 tablespoon yellow mustard

In a large bowl, toss together shredded cabbage and carrots. In separate bowl, mix together dressing ingredients, then add to cabbage mixture, combining thoroughly. Chill before serving. Makes 10-12 servings.

HOSS'S PORK AND BEANS

- 1 (28-ounce) can of baked beans (your favorite)
- 2 tablespoons Karo syrup
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 Vidalia or other sweet onion, chopped (about 1/2 cup)
- 6 tablespoons mustard
- 6-7 tablespoons ketchup
- 10 pieces of maple-smoked bacon, chopped
- 2 tablespoons bacon grease
- 1 green pepper, chopped
- 1 cup pulled pork
- Dash of cayenne pepper, to taste (optional)

Combine all ingredients, mixing thoroughly, and place in greased baking dish. Bake, covered, for 45 minutes to an hour in a 300 F oven. 🍴



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