



Mountain Telephone

MAY/JUNE 2022

CONNECTION



Old school

Craft students give a boost to Hazel Green

**TELEWORKS
REALLY WORKS!**

**DECIPHERING
CRYPTO**



By SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

A partner to support RURAL AMERICA

The Foundation for Rural
Service makes a difference

Our members work hard to serve our nation's rural communities, but they do not do it alone. I'd like to shine a spotlight on an organization whose work I respect, appreciate and support.

The professionals of the Foundation for Rural Service, known as FRS, deserve praise for all the benefits they provide to thousands of people. Established as a nonprofit in 1994, they have made a positive difference for nearly 30 years.

Many of you may know their efforts to help educate young people in rural communities through scholarships and the popular Youth Tour trip to our nation's capital. FRS also annually takes key congressional staff out into our communities to see the challenges faced when deploying broadband.

In particular I want to give a special nod to the annual FRS Community Grant Program designed to benefit communities served by NTCA members. The goal is to support local efforts committed to improving and sustaining rural America. The grants have four areas of concentration: business and economic development, community development, education and telecommunications — the last is a chance to highlight a local plan to support broadband resources for telehealth, education and more. For more information about these programs, visit www.frs.org.

Just like the NTCA member serving you, a remarkable community partner where you live, FRS combines the resources and visibility of all NTCA members to benefit communities like yours across the country. 📩



Get your free annual credit report

Spot scammers early

A free credit report is one of the quickest ways to spot identity theft — someone taking your name, date of birth, address, credit card or bank account information, Social Security or medical insurance numbers.

Scammers can quickly drain a bank account, run up charges on a credit card, get a new credit card in your name and more.

What is a credit report?

A credit report is a summary of your personal credit history, including identifying details such as an address, date of birth and information such as whether bills were paid on time or someone has filed for bankruptcy.

Three national credit bureaus — Equifax, Experian and TransUnion — collect and update this information.

The credit bureaus must:

- ▶ Make sure the information they collect about you is accurate
- ▶ Give you a free copy of your report once every 12 months
- ▶ Give you a chance to fix any mistakes

How do I order my free annual credit reports? The simplest solution is to visit AnnualCreditReport.com. It's fast and easy.

Cryptocurrency 101

A beginner's guide to the new currency

For many people, the idea of cryptocurrency, or digital money, is downright mysterious. Still, cryptocurrency has been around more than a decade, and a growing number of people are starting to use and invest in the world of virtual coins and tokens.

But what, exactly, is it? How does it work? And how do you get it?

CRYPTO BASICS

Put simply, cryptocurrency is digital money. There are no physical coins or paper dollar bills you can pull out and put in a billfold. But it's also not backed up by any asset. According to bitstamp.net, cryptocurrencies are a tradable asset in and of themselves. Their price is determined by demand and the supply available.

Like gold, cryptocurrency's value is in its scarcity and its uses — or potential uses in crypto's case, according to an Investopedia article in December 2021. Bitcoin, which is the most valuable of the different cryptocurrencies, is limited to a quantity of 21 million bitcoins. And while gold is often useful for industrial applications and in valuable jewelry, crypto might be of service in a number of retail transactions one day.

HOW TO GET IT

Most people buy it online and store it in a virtual wallet. The easiest way to buy cryptocurrency is through one of many centralized exchanges that come up on an online search. There are several types of cryptocurrencies, including the three top ones: Bitcoin, Ethereum and Tether.

CRYPTO AND TAXES

The banking system and the government do not oversee cryptocurrency transactions. Instead, these transactions are supported by blockchain, a technology that tracks who owns what. But that doesn't mean cryptocurrency isn't taxable. In fact,

the Internal Revenue Service taxes cryptocurrency as either property, investment or earned income. Because of this, crypto dabblers should keep careful records of all their transactions.

UPS AND DOWNS?

Cryptocurrency is known for its volatile market. In one day in 2021, Bitcoin dropped by 30% — a huge fluctuation in any other trading market. As a new currency that's not legal tender and which any government can issue, crypto can move wildly up or down based on just about anything — perceptions, news articles or, most notably, a tweet from tech entrepreneur Elon Musk.

RESEARCH AND START SLOW

To find out more about cryptocurrency, make sure to do your research. Seek out sources crypto advertisers or others with vested interests in particular products aren't backing. Those determined to try it out should invest conservatively while learning more about the market along the way. 🗨️

Crypto lingo

Knowing more about cryptocurrencies requires learning new words and phrases. Here are a few that are sure to pop up frequently:

FUD — FUD is an acronym that stands for "fear, uncertainty, doubt." In the crypto world, FUD is negative information that can deter investors.

HODL — HODL is an acronym for "hold on for dear life," but internet lore jokes that its origins came from a typo for the word "hold." Either way, cryptocurrency investors use it to caution others against selling when the market is volatile.

NFT — NFT stands for non-fungible tokens. NFTs are pieces of digital content linked to the Ethereum blockchain. Non-fungible basically means that the digital content is unique and cannot be replaced. Because of this fact, NFTs make digital works of art and other items into one-of-a-kind assets.

Sats — Short for Satoshis, sats are the smallest fraction of a bitcoin that you can send — 0.00000001 of a bitcoin. Hardcore bitcoin traders look at sats, not the dollar amount of bitcoin. Note: Satoshi Nakamoto is the made-up name of the person or people who created bitcoin.



Congratulations, graduates

A bright future awaits

Throughout our community, young adults are experiencing a milestone — they're about to begin their first post-high school summer. It's a moment that deserves celebration — a cap on 12 years of hard work and accomplishment.



SHAYNE ISON
General Manager

Even if you're like me and the high school years have been in the rearview for a while, the memories can still seem fresh. After all, this is such a vivid time, one often filled with excitement, hope and, quite possibly, expectancy. Each of these young people will soon make choices, many of which have been years in the making. Some of them will go on to higher learning. Others may breathe a sigh of relief to leave school behind and enter the workforce, start families or explore countless other possibilities. All graduates must choose their own paths.

Some of our young people have already faced adult challenges, working jobs or carrying responsibilities that, in an ideal world, would have waited until they were older. Life isn't the same for everyone, and it's often difficult. We appreciate that the circum-

stances for each high school graduate are unique, and we hope we can offer one consistent thread of support to all members of the communities we serve. At Mountain Telephone, we often discuss the principles that are the bedrock of what we do, one of which is concern for the community.

Our communications network — our fast, reliable internet service in particular — can open doors that didn't exist just a few years ago. Online learning, work-from-home jobs, support for employers and so much more are now available. We are in a rural area, but we have an immediate connection to resources needed to thrive in a modern world. The playing field is more level than ever between cities and communities like ours.

One example of success is the young people leaving high school today and the link they have, not only to the online world, but also to real-world resources once unheard of in rural communities. Imagine moving away for school or a job and being able to use a video call to connect with family back home. No matter how far our graduates roam, there's a convenient link to the people who have supported them every step of the way.

We believe, however, that helping the community goes beyond the services we provide, and we know many other local businesses feel the same. Scholarships, internships, support for athletic and academic programs and work experiences are just a few ways we work to help students attending our schools and this current group of young graduates about to strike out on their own.

While this is a time of celebration for the Class of 2022 and their families, I believe it's also a time for us to celebrate as a community. Life will bring hurdles and triumphs. Many of these former high school students will go on to become part of the fabric of our communities, and others will venture away, carrying the values and lessons they learned here with them for the rest of their lives.

I wish to congratulate all the graduates and their families. Thanks to you, the future is bright, exciting and filled with possibilities. 📞

The Mountain Telephone Connection is a bimonthly newsletter published by Mountain Rural Telephone Cooperative, © 2022. 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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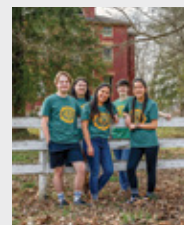
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On the Cover:



Craft Academy students plan to revitalize Hazel Green Academy. From left: Blake Orr, Wade McGuire, Oni Terrado, Logan Smith and Jane Zhang.

See story Page 12.

MRTC holds first Madden Bowl Challenge

Mountain Telephone customer Jesse Clinger won the grand prize in the cooperative's first live gaming event, the Madden Bowl Challenge, on Feb. 11. The grand prize package included a 65-inch gaming TV and an Xbox Series X video game console.

The tournament-style contest at MRTC headquarters in West Liberty featured 32 contestants, who were randomly selected from the 185 entries received. Each contestant was able to use a full gig of broadband speed to maximize their gaming potential. "Our goal for the event was to engage with the younger generation and show them the importance of having the right speed plan for their needs, particularly gaming," says MRTC Director of Marketing and Public Relations Lisa Fannin. "We also just wanted to open up communication with the gamers in our communities."

After the grand prize, three runners-up took home an Xbox Series S video game console. They were Troy Patterson, Cody Lewis and Zachary Howell. MRTC also bumped up all 32 participants' broadband speeds to 1 gig for six months.



Affordable Connectivity Program and MRTC internet

The Affordable Connectivity Program is a Federal Communications Commission program that helps connect families and households struggling to afford internet service.

The benefit provides up to \$30/month discount for internet service.

To find out if your household is eligible, visit [fcc.gov/acp](https://www.fcc.gov/acp).



The tournament offered 32 contestants the chance to compete for prizes that included a 65-inch gaming TV and an Xbox Series X video game console.

Mountain Telephone's Madden Bowl Challenge tournament included snacks and a full gig of service for each contestant. Pictured from left are Carla Hileman, Tammy Cole and Missie Preece.

In honor of those who
sacrificed
Mountain Telephone offices will close on Monday, May 30, in recognition of Memorial Day.



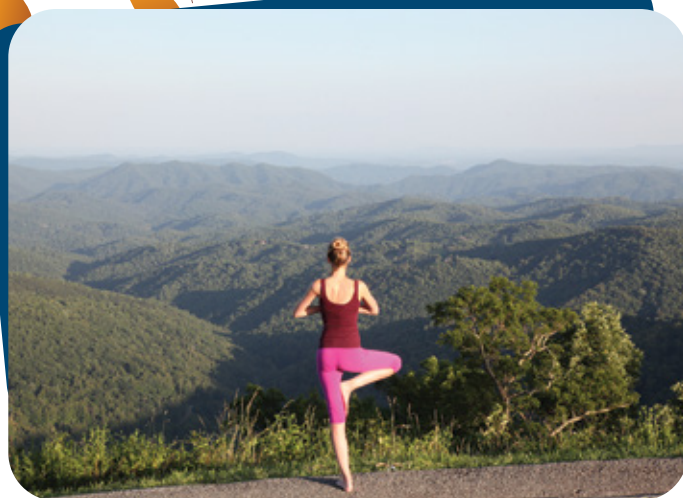
Relaxing DESTINATIONS

Yoga retreats offer an escape from daily realities

Story by ANNE BRALY

When thermometers begin to rise, it's natural to think about a beach vacation, but during summer months, crowds are less than ideal. Instead, head toward the country and the mountains where you can get away from it all and reconnect with nature.

Here are five picturesque properties around the South to consider, each one far from your noisy neighbors and the stresses of everyday life. Some offer yoga, others a chance to hike new paths, while one is ideal for sitting back to catch up on your quilting or scrapbooking.



GRAND OAK RETREAT • SCOTTSBORO, ALABAMA

Grand Oak Retreat is located on a large stretch of land overlooking Lake Guntersville, cradled in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains. It's open to all, but caters to scrapbookers, quilters and other crafty folks.

The large lodge with a beautiful, wraparound porch has five bedrooms with multiple beds to accommodate most families or groups. There's a large work area where crafters can spread out and work while enjoying panoramic views of the lake. Snacks and drinks are available 24 hours a day in a well-stocked kitchen, and guests get three home-cooked meals with a menu that uses local ingredients depending on the season.

For a fully relaxed retreat, guests may arrange massages at an extra cost.

For reservations or more information, visit grandoakretreat.com.

TENNESSEE FITNESS SPA • WAYNESBORO, TENNESSEE

Think of a retreat to Tennessee Fitness Spa along historic Natchez Trace as a summer camp for adults. There's swimming, racquetball, a gym, sauna, hot tub and hiking trails around the picturesque Natural Bridge, a geologic formation thought to be the only double span natural bridge formation in the world. It's a short walk from the spa's dining hall and makes for a beautiful meditative experience.

The center places a strong focus on getting guests back in shape, whatever their goals: losing weight, quitting smoking, detoxing or simply relaxing by the pool. It's a good opportunity to shed that excess weight, whether it be physical or mental, through fitness training, yoga, meditation, water aerobics and more. Just let the staff know what you want, and they'll tailor a routine to meet your needs.

Accommodations range from standard rooms to penthouse suites and private cottages. Most people stay for one week, but guests can arrange for shorter stays, depending on availability.

For more information, visit tennesseefitnessspa.com.

THE RED HORSE INN LANDRUM, SOUTH CAROLINA

This hidden gem tucked into South Carolina's Blue Ridge mountains is an adults-only getaway offering an elegant escape from everyday routines. It's a chance to relax, recover and rejuvenate — all the things you want from a resort vacation. Leave the cooking, cleaning, kids and work behind. Disconnect from everyday life and reconnect with your partner.

Reserve a room in the inn or in one of a half dozen cottages, all with luxury bedding and other appointments. Breakfast is served daily, and afternoons can be spent on the terrace with a glass of wine from the award-winning wine bar.

The inn is located just north of Greenville, South Carolina, a town known for its food scene, and also an area folks looking for majestic waterfalls and nature trails visit.

For more information, visit theredhorseinn.com.

ART OF LIVING RETREAT BOONE, NORTH CAROLINA

Meditation and yoga are two powerful tools for bringing on health and happiness, and at Art of Living Retreat, high in the Blue Ridge Mountains overlooking Boone, North Carolina, you'll rediscover yourself. The center offers getaways focused on happiness and meditation, along with silent retreats. There's also Sri Sri yoga, an ancient, holistic method that integrates body, mind and spirit, targeting internal organs, circulation and body alignment.

Weekend retreats might also include artmaking and journaling or a girls-only time with nature trails, meditation and yoga. Packages at Art of Living include

accommodations at the center's Shankara Wellness hotel with meditation and yoga classes daily, along with one treatment like massage or relaxation therapy, and three meals a day. Snag a seat outside with views of the mountains if the weather allows.

For more information, visit artoflivingretreatcenter.org.

CLIFFVIEW RESORT CAMPTON, KENTUCKY

Come for stunning views of the Red River Gorge, and stay for the adventure you'll experience at Cliffview Resort.

There's plenty to do off the beaten track — a chance to get away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life and connect with nature on a grand scale. Go rock climbing on the cliff high above, take a kayak and explore life in an underground cave beneath the gorge, or zip line above it to experience the magnificent Red River Gorge from a different perspective.

For a more relaxing retreat, take a leisurely walk on well-traveled paths, or wet a line and fish for your dinner from a stocked pond located on the resort property. Or venture over to the Red River and test your skill against smallmouth bass and sunfish.

Book a room in the lodge where you'll find a comfortable place to rest your head with breakfast the next morning. There are 16 rooms in the lodge, plus two cabins, each with 11 to 12 bedrooms and full kitchens to cook your own meals. Don't want to cook? You're on vacation, after all. Red River Gorge and nearby Daniel Boone National Forest have a number of restaurants with offerings ranging from pizza to hot dogs and barbecue to brew pubs.

For information, log onto cliffviewresort.com or call 606-668-5204. 📞



The Art of Living Retreat offers guests serenity and beauty in the mountains of North Carolina.

Growing STRONG

Local organization offers loans to help businesses grow

Story by JEN CALHOUN
Photography by WILLIAM LEMASTER

When the pandemic hit, businesses across the region learned quickly that remote operations, websites for online ordering and other digital offerings could keep their companies thriving during the strangest of times. Then, they realized none of those things were going away.

But those things can involve equipment and infrastructure that can take a chunk out of the bottom line — especially for small businesses. That’s where Gateway Area Development District’s Revolving Loan Funds can help, says Josh Farrow, executive director of GWADD.

GWADD, which serves Morgan, Menifee, Montgomery, Bath and Rowan counties, works with local elected officials and citizens to provide for regional growth, and provides help to economic development agencies. It also administers federally funded revolving loans.



Josh Farrow, executive director of Gateway Area Development District, helps businesses get the money they need to improve and grow.

The team at Gateway Area Development District includes, from left, Jocelyn Gross, Josh Farrow and Jason Boggs.



NEW FUNDS FROM CARES ACT

Revolving loan funds, or RLFs, are one-time loans that, once borrowers repay, go out to other entities. GWADD administers two RLFs. The first is a development capital fund that came about through a grant from the Economic Development Administration with the U.S. Department of Commerce. “It was founded in 1986. It’s a legacy fund that has a larger pot of money to loan out,” Farrow says.

The newest RLF is part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, or CARES Act, which became law in March 2020 to address problems surrounding COVID-19. This RLF is designed to help businesses make ends meet or modify their operations in the face of the latest challenges the pandemic has caused. Some businesses might need help with cash flow, while others might want to buy equipment and set up technology infrastructure for remote work.

Others might need money for websites to manage online orders. “Our target for these loans is to help with economic

development or economic growth,” Farrow says. “The point is to retain jobs and create new ones.”

COMPETITIVE TERMS

But many business owners might not know these loans are available. “We’re still getting people to apply, and we still have money to loan. Right now, our restrictions have been loosened, so we can be very competitive in the loan market with other financial institutions,” Farrow says.

He believes these loans can provide businesses with the help they need while also helping the local economy grow and prosper. “I think we have good infrastructure in all of our area. We’re very competitive, and we’re poised to do even better,” he says. 🗨️

Get informed

To learn more about the Gateway Area Development District and its Revolving Loan Funds, visit the RLF page on its website at gwadd.org/revolving-loan-fund. For the latest updates, visit Gateway Area Development District on Twitter and Facebook.

Taking the guesswork out of working from home

Story by JEN CALHOUN

Wendy Crain-Lawson realizes searching for a job is tough. It can get even tougher when those jobs involve online interviews, virtual workspaces and a boss who might be stationed in another state.

Crain-Lawson, workforce services director with the Kentucky Career Center, gets questions all the time: How do I prepare? What questions will they ask me? And, above all: Is this job for real?

“It’s very intimidating,” she says. “But we have local people who can really help with that process and make it less stressful.”

ENTER TELEWORKS USA

Crain-Lawson directs those interested in working from home to Tracie Spencer, a virtual trainer and employment specialist with Teleworks USA, a Kentucky-based organization that connects work-from-home job seekers with companies looking to hire. “We are local people helping local people find jobs,” Spencer says.

Many of the jobs available provide customer service for big-name companies. Some start at \$16 per hour or more and offer benefits and advancement opportunities. It’s important to remember that these are real jobs with real demands, however. “Employers generally require their employees to have a quiet home office space without children or other people around them, and shifts can vary depending on the call volume and the time of year,” Spencer says.

But she can take the mystery and fear out of finding and getting these jobs for each person she helps. She can help with everything from finding the right fit to preparing for interviews. “I’m like a tour guide for the application process,” she says. ☎



Local resources for your job search

Teleworks USA

Teleworks USA is a Kentucky-based organization that links workers with companies that hire for virtual, work-from-home jobs. Teleworks helps workers prepare for these well-paying positions with some of the top companies in the nation by offering informational sessions. They can also work with job searchers on a one-on-one basis or in a workshop setting to find the right fit and prepare for an interview. Many of the jobs Teleworks can help people find are customer-service and call-center-based, and some start at \$16 per hour. To find out more, visit teleworkusa.com or find Teleworks USA on Facebook. You can also contact Virtual Trainer and Employment Specialist Tracie Spencer for more information at tspencer@teleworkusa.com or 606-216-6811.

Kentucky Career Center JobSight

JobSight links job seekers with employers throughout Eastern Kentucky. It can help you file for unemployment, find a job or train for a new career. Visit jobsight.org to see the hottest full-time and part-time jobs in your area. The website also offers information on everything from upcoming job fairs to tips on preparing for a new career path. You can also like the Kentucky Career Center Facebook page to get the latest information, tips and resources for job seekers.



©kite_rin/Adobe Stock

GAMING on the GO

Your mobile devices have plenty to offer

Sure, mobile games may be a distraction many of us turn to while waiting in line or during a slow episode of our favorite TV binge. But that doesn't mean they have to be bad. As our mobile devices have evolved into tiny computers in our pockets, the visuals and clever design of mobile games have grown right along with them. If you're burned out on Angry Birds and Candy Crush, try one of these games to keep your idle thumbs busy.

Good Sudoku

There are plenty of sudoku apps available but only one that puts goodness right in the name. The game's designers set out with the goal of helping players fall in love with the familiar Japanese logic puzzles. Clear difficulty levels, helpful hints and coaching for new techniques at each level make it the perfect entry for the sudoku-curious out there. If you're already a logic master, it also has more than 70,000 puzzles to be conquered and a global leaderboard to chase.

THREES

You'd be hard-pressed to find a better puzzle game than Threes. It's easy to pick up since there are only four directions a player can swipe. But the task of pairing numbers into ever greater multiples of three can quickly become a challenge requiring players to think at least three moves ahead. Whether you're looking to pass 5 minutes or chase high scores on the leaderboard, Threes is worth checking out.

Among Us

Among Us became wildly popular in 2020 in part because it's easy to understand. A group of players attempts to prep their spaceship for takeoff while one imposter tries to pick the others off while no one is looking. It's a simple premise that can lead to chaotic hijinks as players try to smoke out the saboteur. Lying to your friends has never been so fun.

DEVICE 6

Who knew your phone could be the perfect platform for a clever noir story? Device 6 puts players in the role of Anna, a woman with amnesia trying to figure out how she woke up on a mysterious island. The game infuses the classic text adventure genre with modern style and engaging visuals as words move around the screen in unexpected ways. If you're looking for something a little different from the typical mobile experience, Device 6 is bound to have a few welcome surprises in store.

NYT CROSSWORD

Sure, you could pull out the newspaper and pen to fill out your crossword the old-school way. Or you could save yourself the ink stains and errors by tackling the daily crossword on your phone. The app offers Mini and Midi puzzles for a challenge you can knock out in minutes. Or take on the full crossword each day, along with the archive of over 10,000 puzzles. Now there's no excuse not to stay sharp.





Make the CONNECTION

The video game industry remains scorching hot, and not just because people turned to a virtual distraction during the pandemic. Certainly, they did. However, the trajectory of the gaming industry continues a yearslong trend of increased popularity.

Nielsen, a company tracking how various audiences use media, provided some insight last year into video game usage.

At one point during the pandemic, 55% of U.S. consumers reported playing video games. In fact, people were buying games at a fast clip, with sales rising about 14% during 2020.

There's a twist with modern gaming, too. People use it to connect with each other. The game Fortnite became famous for in-game live events, and more and more people began using services like Twitch to watch others play games, according to Nielsen.

Simply, gaming goes beyond, well, just a game. It's an experience, one made possible by fast, reliable internet.

But are you maximizing your connection for how you experience gaming?

THE CONNECTION

Your internet provider connects your home to the online world, a physical connection where the final stop is a router. Think of this as the gateway between your home and the internet.

Most modern routers allow two types of connections: Wi-Fi and Ethernet.

BENEFITS OF WI-FI

Wi-Fi uses radio waves to connect the router to your devices, eliminating the clutter of cables. Devices ranging from televisions to refrigerators can use this technology to connect online.

Gaming-related benefits of Wi-Fi include:

- Convenient for mobile games on phones and iPads.
- The ability to connect multiple devices without cables.
- Most devices, including computers, set-top boxes and more, have Wi-Fi connectivity. The same can't be said for wired Ethernet connections. Even some laptops lack the option for an Ethernet connection.
- For watching streaming content such as Twitch, Wi-Fi wirelessly takes devices ranging from TVs to tablets online.

BENEFITS OF ETHERNET — WHEN GAMING GETS SERIOUS

An Ethernet connection is a physical link between your device and router. With modern online gaming, success can depend upon how fast the twitch of a finger on a controller can be translated into actions in an online world living on a faraway computer server.

When speed matters, an Ethernet is often the right option.

- Consistency: Unlike Wi-Fi signals, which can be affected by walls or even signals from other devices, the wired connection's speed should remain consistent with that provided by your internet service.
- Lower latency, which is the time it takes a bit of data to leave your device, reach its online destination and then complete the round trip. With gaming, lower latency is critical, and Ethernet is a difference-maker.
- Simple and secure: Connect an Ethernet cable to your device and to your router and get playing. It's that simple. Unlike with Wi-Fi routers, you typically do not need to enter a password to connect.
- The downside is that cable clutter is real. Serious gamers in particular, though, will benefit from devices connected via Ethernet.



Sitting from left: Blake Orr, Oni Terrado, Jane Zhang. Standing from left: Tom Kiffmeyer, Wade McGuire, Rita Rogers, Roy Rogers, Logan Smith, John Nickell, Pam Wilson, Donna Brewer.

HAZEL GREEN ACADEMY'S REDO

Students breathe new life into an old school

Story by JEN CALHOUN | Photography by WILLIAM LEMASTER

When a group of students from the Craft Academy for Excellence in Science and Mathematics first saw the old Hazel Green Academy, they felt a connection.

Here was an old group of buildings dating back to the 1880s where residential high school students not unlike themselves had once learned. “It was very similar to the Craft Academy in some ways,” says Jane Zhang, one of the members of a Craft Academy leadership team that is spearheading a project to revitalize the historic school campus in Hazel Green.

They saw the likenesses in the piles of dusty books, scattered clothing and the row of beds still made up from when the academy closed in 1983. “It was like walking into a time capsule,” says Oni Terrado, another member of the leadership team.

LOST IN TIME

What really hooked the students on HGA, however, was the lost community they found there. The collection of crumbling buildings once meant something to the people of Eastern Kentucky, says Wade McGuire, who, along with fellow graduating senior Logan Smith, started the project with the guidance of Dr. Rachel Rogers and Dr. Thomas Kiffmeyer. Rogers is an instructor and the Craft Quality Enhancement Plan director, and Kiffmeyer is an associate professor of history at Morehead State University.

“Logan and I got very excited,” Wade says. “We read through the history, and we learned the campus used to hold a hospital of sorts, a day care and a public library. We saw it as a chance to build up the community again.”

With the help of future classes of Craft Academy students and community partnerships, the ongoing project is designed to renovate the campus and its buildings so they can be community resources. Future projects could include a day care, a community garden, a wellness center and rooms for artists and artisans to learn and create.

STARTING OUT

Logan and Wade first came across HGA when they were looking for a project early last fall. “We approached Dr. Rogers about it, and she came back to us with the Hazel Green Academy, which is near where she lives,” Wade says.

Both students were from Hindman in Knott County and had studied Appalachian history and culture. Through Kiffmeyer, Wade and Logan say they learned to better appreciate where they came from. “Dr. Kiffmeyer is our research mentor, and I just love his passion on the subject,” Logan says. “He’s really excited about the project, too.”

Still, Wade and Logan knew their own enthusiasm wouldn’t be enough to power a project this big. They gathered other



The old girls dormitory, above, and a classroom building, right, at the Hazel Green Academy.

Top right: The Jot 'Em Down thrift store was the students' first project on the Hazel Green Campus.

students to form a leadership team, which includes Oni, Jane and Blake Orr. In the fall of 2021, they started by gathering around 50 students from Craft Academy to form two service-learning projects. The students cleaned up and organized HGA's existing consignment store, Jot 'Em Down. "It was a long process but a rewarding one in the end," Jane says.

In addition, they've met with representatives from East Kentucky Power, the Hazel Green Christian Church and Mountain Rural Telephone Cooperative, as well as engineers and others, to find ways to make the revitalization efforts happen. They've developed marketing plans; written requests for proposals for funding; and developed social media sites to track their progress, tell their story and collect donations. The students have also added juniors to the leadership

team, and they hope future students at Craft Academy can carry on with their own projects at HGA. "We want future classes to put their own spin on it, too," Logan says. "Nothing is set in stone right now, but we do want it to be for the community."

Blake, who handles social media for the team, says he hopes the project will continue long after the original leadership team has graduated. "Our inspiration is from all the community that was originally there. We want to make a real impact," he says.

Jane agrees. "This project is beyond important to us all. We are all incredibly passionate about it, which is why we work so well together. It's shown me ways we can improve and aid our community, and it's inspired me to advocate for Appalachia in every way I can." 🗨️

Revitalizing Hazel Green Academy

The Hazel Green Academy project is ongoing and requires funding and support from the community. For more information on how to donate, volunteer or simply to keep tabs on the progress, visit them on Instagram at [hazel_green_academy](#), or contact the leadership team at craftacademyleadshipteam@gmail.com.

What is the Craft Academy?

The Craft Academy for Excellence in Science and Mathematics is a public residential school known for its emphasis on science, technology, math and engineering, as well as its dual-enrollment program with Morehead State University. It's a place where academically gifted high school juniors and seniors from around the state can get hands-on learning experience with an emphasis on innovation, design, creativity, and civic and regional engagement, according to the school's website.

So *fresh* and so

A unique technique locks more flavor in your veggies

The profusion of fresh vegetables coming our way this spring means it's time to learn a bit about blanching, a technique that brings out the beautiful flavors that only fresh produce can bring — a taste explosion.

Blanching can be a cook's best friend. It destroys enzymes that make green veggies turn brown and mushy, so it's ideal when you want to add green vegetables, such as peas and asparagus, to your risotto. Blanching also removes bitterness from some of our more bitter vegetables, like broccoli rabe. It's also a great way to skin tomatoes, as blanching loosens the skins without cooking the fruit, something that also works for peaches and plums. And if you're planning to prepare and serve a veggie platter, blanch the carrots, broccoli, pea pods and cauliflower. The veggies will retain their color, but your guests will find them much easier to chew.

Blanching is nothing more than boiling vegetables until they're just crisp-tender, then plunging them in an icy bath. It sounds like a simple process, and it is, but there are just a few steps to follow to bring out the best of spring and summer's bounties.

If you're a vegetable gardener, think ahead for the cold days of winter when the flavor of fresh vegetables is just a memory, that is, unless you've blanched in advance of freezing them. Not only does blanching preserve the color and texture of your vegetables, it will also preserve their nutrient content.

Now that you know why you should blanch, here's how:

In order to stop the enzyme action that breaks vegetables down, the food must reach 180 degrees.

The time spent in boiling water and time spent in ice water should be roughly equal. If you're not able to prepare a cold immersion for your vegetables, putting them in a colander under cold running water will work.

Adding salt to your boiling water will help make green vegetables even greener. Steer clear of lemon juice or other acids, though; these will react with the

chlorophyll and turn your greens brown. And don't use baking soda — it will damage the nutrients found in vegetables.

Use 1 gallon of water for each pound of food to be blanched. If you overload the water with vegetables, it will lower the water's temperature and slow the cooking process, defeating the purpose.

Once the vegetables are crisp-tender, move them from the boiling water and into a large container of ice water. This will stop the cooking process. Then you're ready to bag them for freezing or use them right away in your spring and summer meals. 📦



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

clean

SALAD NICOISE

- 2 hard-boiled eggs
- 1/2 pound of small potatoes
- 1/2 pound of green beans, blanched
- 1/2 head of green lettuce, washed and torn into bite-sized pieces
- 1 (7-ounce) can of tuna fish
- 4 ounces of tomatoes, diced, or cherry tomatoes
- 10 black olives
- 2 tablespoons of capers
- 1/2 cup of vinaigrette dressing (your favorite)

Cook the potatoes until tender and let cool.

Build each salad starting with a layer of lettuce, then add half the vegetables, including potatoes, tuna, eggs and olives to each plate. Sprinkle with capers. Serve with vinaigrette dressing. Makes 2 servings.



RISOTTO WITH BLANCHED ASPARAGUS

- 1 pound asparagus, trimmed, cut into 2-inch lengths
- 5 cups canned or homemade chicken broth
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1 1/2 cups arborio rice
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 6 tablespoons butter
- 3/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese (about 3 ounces)

Blanch asparagus pieces in a large pot of boiling, salted water for 2 minutes. Drain. Rinse asparagus under cold water. Drain asparagus well.

Bring chicken broth to a simmer in a small saucepan. Reduce heat to low and keep broth hot. Heat olive oil in a heavy large saucepan over medium heat. Add chopped onion and saute until translucent, about 4 minutes. Add rice and stir for 3 minutes. Add dry white wine and cook until liquid evaporates. Continue cooking until rice is tender but still slightly firm in center and mixture is creamy, adding chicken broth 1 cup at a time and stirring almost constantly, about 20 minutes. Add blanched asparagus pieces and stir until heated through, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Add 6 tablespoons butter and stir until incorporated. Stir in grated Parmesan cheese. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Makes 4-6 servings.

WALNUT BROCCOLI SALAD

- 2 pounds broccoli florets
- 1/2 cup toasted walnuts
- 1/2 cup jumbo mixed raisins
- 8 strips bacon cooked and crumbled
- 1/2 red onion thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon rice vinegar
- Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

Bring a big pot of water to a boil and season it liberally with salt. It should taste like the ocean. Add the broccoli florets to the water and cook for 60 seconds, until they're bright green in color. Immediately drain the broccoli florets, then rinse with cold water for 2 minutes or place in an ice-water bath until the broccoli has cooled down.

Transfer the broccoli to a salad spinner, and spin the broccoli dry or drain well if you don't have a spinner. Then blot dry further with a kitchen towel to prevent any excess water from diluting the dressing.

Combine the broccoli with the toasted walnuts, raisins, bacon, onion, mayonnaise, vinegar and salt and black pepper, to taste. Stir well. Chill for at least 30 minutes, preferably an hour, before serving to allow the flavors to marry. Makes 6 servings.



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