



Mountain Telephone

**BROADBAND:**  
HELPING YOU CONNECT



SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2020

# CONNECTION

## ROCKHOUSE FALLS FARM

Couple makes a life  
and a living in the hills

## COFFEE CENTRAL

SheBrews Coffee and  
Books finds its place

## LONG-DISTANCE BONDS

Broadband makes connections  
across the miles



By SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO

NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

## Broadband matters now more than ever

Rural broadband providers are supporting two critical bills making their way through Congress. One would secure present efforts to keep you connected, while the other provides support for future broadband expansion.

The Keeping Critical Connections Act was introduced earlier this year by U.S. Sens. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., and Kevin Cramer, R-N.D. This bill would appropriate \$2 billion to help smaller broadband companies who worked with struggling customers during the pandemic and who did not disconnect those who couldn't pay.

As the health crisis and economic shutdown disrupted millions of lives, internet providers across the country took the Pledge to Keep Americans Connected by waiving late fees, opening community Wi-Fi hot spots, and not terminating service to customers because of their inability to pay their bills.

For all this good work, however, our members have seen uncollectibles rise. NTCA members have on average some \$80,000 in accumulated nonpayments by customers since the pandemic hit. These are significant amounts, as these broadband providers are often small companies with fewer than 30 employees. Keeping Critical Connections will help them continue serving their communities.

In terms of long-term deployment, NTCA also supports the Rural Connectivity Advancement Program Act of 2020, introduced by U.S. Sen. John Thune, R-S.D. This bill would set aside a portion of the proceeds from FCC spectrum auctions to fund rural broadband deployment.

These bills will help broadband providers like yours continue their work to ensure every American has access to the communications services necessary in today's world. 📶



Podcast listenership continues to grow as Americans increasingly turn to the audio format for news, entertainment and learning. “Podcasts now reach over 100 million Americans every month,” said Tom Webster, senior vice president of Edison Research, whose Infinite Dial research reveals that 37% of Americans listen to podcasts every month.

That's an increase from 32% just one year ago. That number has climbed steadily as more content becomes available to appeal to a wide range of interests.

Two new podcasts have been released this year that address a topic of growing importance: rural broadband.

Heading into 2020, rural broadband had become a major point of focus in the U.S., with an increasing number of state and federal programs aimed at solving the lack of broadband access in parts of rural America. When the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted businesses, schools and health care delivery, the need for nationwide broadband access was amplified.



A podcast from NTCA



In February, NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association launched its “**Smart Rural Communities**” podcast. The show takes a look at rural broadband providers who are bringing advanced digital infrastructure to small towns and regions through powerful fiber networks. These broadband networks are jumpstarting economic growth, igniting educational opportunities and improving health care in some of America's most remote areas.

“**Rural Broadband Today**” launched in June. This podcast tells the stories of those working to bring broadband internet access within reach of every citizen. The interview-style show presents conversations with elected officials, industry experts and business leaders at the forefront of America's efforts to solve the rural broadband challenge. It's produced by WordSouth — A Content Marketing Company. 📻

Both podcasts can be found on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, or by visiting [www.ntca.org/smart](http://www.ntca.org/smart) and [www.ruralbroadbandtoday.com](http://www.ruralbroadbandtoday.com).

# Can you see me now?

Videoconferencing technologies empower remote work



If you've found yourself logging on for more video meetings at work lately, you're not alone. According to the 2019 Impact of Video Conferencing Report by Lifesize, 48% of business professionals say their use of videoconferencing at work has increased compared to two years ago.

And that study was before a global pandemic drove even more companies to work remotely. Videoconferencing isn't without limitations, but businesses and workers are finding it an essential tool for empowering remote work.

## FLEXIBILITY

With videoconferencing, employees and contractors can work from home while still collaborating with their teams and attending important meetings. The flexibility enables individuals in rural communities to not only have more control over their work-life balance but also "telecommute" to urban companies for better opportunities.

Companies also benefit from the ability to recruit talent from anywhere. Business owners have the freedom to set up shop in rural communities, for example, then employ or partner with experts from around the world.

## CONNECTION

Video teleconferencing not only empowers remote productivity but also helps workers overcome some of its challenges. According to Buffer's 2019 State of Remote Work Study, 19% of remote workers cite loneliness as their biggest struggle when working remotely. Video calls can help.

Compared to telephone conferences, video calls make it easier to form connections. The experience more closely reflects face-to-face

encounters. For example, participants can see facial expressions and body language to better identify how others are responding to their ideas as they collaborate on projects.

## SAVINGS

When teams work over videoconferencing platforms, everyone involved saves time and money. Cutting a commute across town — or in some cases, the globe — benefits people's schedules, companies' bottom lines and even the environment.

Plus, the work itself can be more efficient online. In the Lifesize study, 89% of respondents agreed that videoconferencing reduces the time it takes to complete projects or tasks. People may be more likely to enter an online meeting with an agenda and honor the scheduled start and end times. Plus, they can avoid the interruptions common to in-office meetings.

## OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES

Despite its many benefits, videoconferencing isn't without challenges. Not all tech tools are secure, so companies must research available options carefully to protect their employees and data. Team leaders must make an effort to coordinate meetings ahead of time to ensure everyone is online and available. And if any employees lack access to fast, reliable internet, technical difficulties can bring meetings to a frustrating halt.

Despite their drawbacks, videoconferencing platforms are here to stay. In the Buffer survey, 99% of respondents agreed they'd like to work remotely at least some of the time for the rest of their careers. Thanks to the increasingly widespread use of videoconferencing technology, they just might. ☎

## Three options for effective videoconferencing

### 1 ClickMeeting

For interactive meetings and webinars, try ClickMeeting. Presenters can share their screen, run live Q&A sessions to engage the audience and collect valuable attendee data using polls. With an automated follow-up feature, this platform makes it easy to keep the momentum going after a webinar ends.

### 2 Microsoft Teams

For a platform that scales with ease, check out Microsoft Teams. Users can schedule video meetings with a single person or run large webinars and meetings of up to 10,000 participants. A long list of features and functionalities makes it a top choice for many businesses.

### 3 Google Meet

For fans of the Google Suite, Google Meet is a convenient choice that smoothly integrates with other applications like Google Calendar and Gmail. Participants can easily join in from their web browser or dial in to listen from anywhere. This platform has big-business capabilities without the big-business price tag, making it a great option for growing companies.

# Bringing people together when we have to be apart

The farmers, businesspeople and other residents who founded our cooperative knew technology could help them keep in touch with others near and far. For decades, technology has helped them create and maintain these essential human connections.



**SHAYNE ISON**  
General Manager

Because of the telephone lines we strung across our part of Kentucky, parents could talk with children and grandchildren who had moved away. With that technology, sons and daughters serving their country at military bases from coast to coast had a lifeline back home. If bad weather rolled through, we could call and check on friends and family, and if trouble did strike we could reach help by calling first responders.

Building our phone network connected the people of our communities like never before.

Today, I think those founding members would be amazed at the ways we use the technology highlighted in this issue to stay connected.

Thanks to the broadband network Mountain Telephone provides, we upload photos of our gardens, craft projects or baking creations to share with friends and families within our community or around the country.

We share videos of first steps, birthdays and graduations through social media platforms. Streaming video has allowed us to virtually attend classes or church. Video calls allow us to catch up with friends and families, hold meetings for work or participate in virtual Sunday school.

Even when we use cellular networks to make video calls, it's often the fiber optic backbone we've built that connects the cell towers.

The pandemic has significantly sped up our willingness to adopt such technology. I've seen experts suggest that in the last three to five months, Americans have used virtual meetings, video chat and applications at levels we weren't projected to reach for another three to five years.

Perhaps you've embraced new technology during this unusual year. Even if it's not virtual meetings, many members have, for the first time, tried paying bills over the web or online shopping.

I appreciate your patience and willingness to learn these new skills. I know I'm ready for things to get back to normal, but I'm proud to see the difference our cooperative makes in keeping our community connected — no matter how you choose to do that today or in the future. 📞

## OCTOBER IS NATIONAL COOPERATIVE MONTH

Every year, we take time to recognize National Cooperative Month, and I never pass up a chance to celebrate our cooperative story. I will always appreciate the bold decision by the local residents to band together to found Mountain Telephone. No other company was willing to invest in a telecommunications network in our area, so they took it upon themselves to bring our region into the modern era. Their cooperative spirit lives on today through our board and employees who proudly continue the tradition of connecting our members through technology. Thank you to our members for your continued support!



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## 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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### On the Cover:



Kate McMillan hangs out with her friendly chickens at Rockhouse Falls Farm in Frenchburg. See story Page 8.

# TEXTING IS GREAT, BUT SOMETIMES IT'S EASIER TO TALK.

**VoIP from Mountain Telephone can help!**

**Plug your home phone into your MRTC approved router to make and receive calls AND unlock loads of FREE features like:**

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*Happy  
Labor Day*

Mountain Telephone offices will be closed Monday, Sept. 7, in observance of Labor Day. From our family to yours, have a happy, safe and relaxing holiday.

## CUSTOMER APPRECIATION DAYS CANCELED

Mountain Telephone made the tough decision to cancel its upcoming Customer Appreciation Days in September and October. The decision was made in an effort to follow COVID-19 safety guidelines and to protect our customers. Mountain Telephone apologizes for any inconvenience and hopes to make it up to you soon!

# GET ORGANIZED

*It's easy and fulfilling ... really*

**W**alk into a well-organized home, and you experience a sense of freedom. Freedom from clutter, freedom from chaos and freedom from the claustrophobia that comes from a house in disarray.

People become frustrated when they can't find the things they need, says Liz Jenkins, a certified professional organizer and owner of A Fresh Space in Nashville.

"The visual distractions make it hard to be productive because everywhere you look, there is something that needs to be done," she says. "People who have disorganized homes are often very frazzled people because nothing ever seems to go smoothly for them, and that's caused by the chaos around them that prevents them from functioning properly."

The key to organization requires letting go of what is not used, loved or functional, says Houston-based Ellen Delap. She is past president of the National Association of Productivity

and Organizing and a certified professional organizer at [professional-organizer.com](http://professional-organizer.com).

"Work with a partner, and donate those items to a cause that is important to you," she says. "True editing means that you have decided that you have 'enough' and you only need to keep what is essential. This is for all types of organizing in your home, whether it is your kids' clothes or toys, your kitchen, your garage, or your closet. Think of decluttering as peeling the layers of an onion. Go layer by layer until you have what is needed and precious."

There are several areas around the house that are considered clutter "hot spots," according to Delap.

**The garage:** This is one of the biggest hot spots, because it's often the dumping ground for things people don't know what to do with, as well as the last spot anyone gets organized. Garages are commonly not where we park the car. That is where large items are placed before a final decision is made. Those items sit in the garage over a period of time.

When garage-cleaning day arrives, make sure you have plenty of heavy-duty trash bags, basic cleaning supplies, empty boxes for collecting items for donation and plastic containers in varying sizes to categorize and store tools and other items. This type of edit may create space so that you can actually park your car.

**The kitchen and pantry:** This is a challenging area that's the hub of your home. Get organized by creating zones to help you get meals and snacks easily prepared, such as a coffee zone and areas for keeping knives, cutting boards and bowls together. Create a baking zone with your whisks and other utensils in one drawer. Near your stove, store pots and pans.

Pantry organizing starts with editing and decluttering. Empty it all out. Then group items as grocery stores do, in categories like breakfast, snacks, beverages, baking and condiments. Place frequently used items at eye level for adults for easy access. For your kids, use open baskets with food at their level to help them independently access snacks. An organized kitchen and pantry make it a joy to prepare meals together.

**Master closets:** People don't go through their clothes often enough, so things tend to pile on top of each other. Your closet is where you create the start of a great day. Begin with letting go of clothes that are too big or uncomfortable or clothes you would not want to be seen wearing. This is more easily done with a "clutter buddy" who helps you decide if that's your best look, what you love or even what fits properly.



Creating a well-organized space means letting go of items that are not used often.

Edit out what you have seldom worn, and arrange your clothes in categories that work for you. Some of us prefer color to organize our clothes, while some of us prefer to organize outfits. You know what works best for you. If you have multiple closets, cull down to one closet for each season, or have two closets — one for dressy clothes and one for daily wear.

The laundry room: It's easy for things to pile up in a laundry room, such as clean clothes forgotten on a folding table. It's important to establish a laundry routine that sets up days of the week for completing a load, meaning that you get it from the dryer back to the closet in one day. If you stick to it, you'll find your life goes much more smoothly, with no last-minute searching for that matching blue sock.

The home office: This is the room in the house that often becomes a dumping ground for all things. Create a command center where you can triage incoming paper into categories: to do, to pay and to file. Next, organize your files by context, such as home, auto, financial and personal. Finally, create an archive section for papers you need to keep. This section could include taxes, legal documents and those papers you want to keep longer than one year. Move papers throughout your process so that there is a flow.

Remember your goal when you're knee-deep in decluttering your life: to restore the rooms in your home to their original use and intended function. 📧

## FIVE EASY ORGANIZING TIPS

Professional home organizer Liz Jenkins often finds that clients who are disorganized lead "frazzled" lives. "Nothing ever seems to go smoothly for them because of the chaos around them that prevents them from functioning properly," she says.

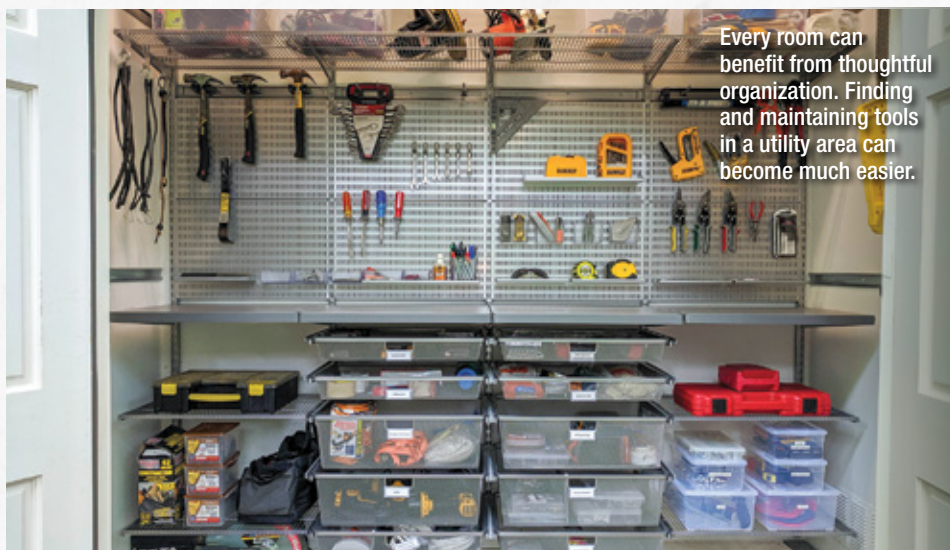
**Here are some tips for organizing your living space and, thereby, your life.**

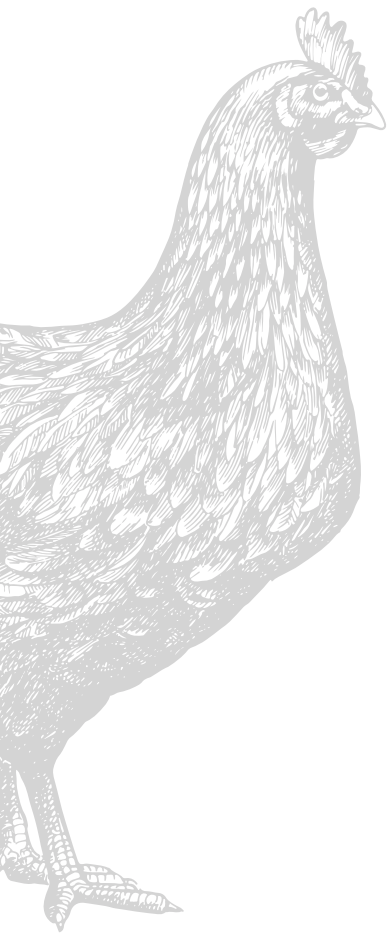
1. Create "homes" for groups of items that belong together, ideally in the spaces where you use them.
2. Use containers to corral groups of items on shelves or in drawers.
3. Label everything!
4. Reduce what you bring into the house. The less you have, the less you have to store.
5. Dedicate time every day to getting and staying organized. Even five minutes tossing unwanted items away every day will make a huge impact in the long run.



### Looking for someone to help?

Consider hiring a professional like you would a personal trainer or other service provider to make your home a haven and place to relax. The NAPO website — [www.napo.net](http://www.napo.net) — has a directory that helps you find a local professional who can help with organizing, decluttering and even productivity.





# UP ON THE FARM

*Couple builds a homestead in the hills of Eastern Kentucky*

Story by JEN CALHOUN | Photography by MELISSA GAINES



When Kate and Scott McMillan first set out to find their dream property in 2015, they weren't quite sure where they'd end up. They only knew their farm in the eastern part of New York state was no longer working for them.

"The taxes were killing us," Kate McMillan says. "Scott is getting closer to retirement, and we knew we wouldn't be able to afford it after that."

As the couple looked for a new home, they considered West Virginia, North Carolina and Indiana. They needed a place where Scott could continue to work as an elevator mechanic, and they also wanted a home that gave them the chance to grow food and raise animals. It was their first road trip to Kentucky that sold them on the state.

"We got a hotel in Lexington and made a trip out to this general area. We knew immediately we wanted to be here," Kate

Kate and Scott McMillan, owners of Rockhouse Falls Farm, moved to Kentucky from rural Eastern New York in 2016.

*"We've relied on Mountain Telephone's internet service for building our website, which is where we sell our products. We also use Facebook and Instagram to attract new customers and notify existing customers of the latest information. Without the high-speed internet service, I couldn't do any of that."*

— KATE MCMILLAN,  
co-owner and operator of  
Rockhouse Falls Farm  
in Frenchburg





McMillan says. “Then, we ended up hooking up with a Frenchburg real estate agent, Philip Lawson. We told him what we were looking for, and he showed us some pictures of a place that had it all. When we looked at the pictures, we were sure he was wrong. But we went and visited the property anyway.”

The property, now called Rockhouse Falls Farm, included 44 acres of wooded hills, hollows, streams and natural springs that backed up to the Daniel Boone National Forest. It also featured various waterfalls and “rock houses” — ledgelike rock structures that water had shaped over hundreds of years or more. “When the real estate agent drove us up here, we knew immediately we wanted to be here,” she says.

### **BUILDING A LIFE AND A BUSINESS**

Around the time the McMillans moved to Rockhouse Falls Farm in May 2016, Scott began clearing land for a farm in his spare time and building a barn from scratch. Kate learned how to make soaps and soy candles and started raising chickens and ducks for eggs. In 2018, she registered at the Menifee County Farmers Market in Frenchburg to sell her products, inspiring a loyal following of repeat clients.

The popular soy candles and wax melts come in about 20 fragrances, including Cranberry Marmalade, Black Raspberry Vanilla, Chocolate Drizzle, McIntosh Apple, Lavender & Sage and Honeysuckle & Jasmine. Soap scents range from Plain & Simple to Eucalyptus & Mint and Cedar Beer Charcoal. One line of soaps includes bits of loofah that grow on the farm.



## *Local, fresh and fun*

Rockhouse Falls Farm is at 2501 Fletcher Ridge Road in Frenchburg. Owners Kate and Scott McMillan welcome visits and shopping at the farm, but call 606-768-4347 for an appointment. For the latest information on their offerings or to buy soaps and candles, visit [www.rockhousefallsfarm.com](http://www.rockhousefallsfarm.com). You can also find them on Facebook and Instagram. Rockhouse Falls Farm candles, soaps, eggs and produce are sold weekly at the Menifee County Farmers Market, 62 Back St. in Frenchburg.

“I sell them online, too,” Kate McMillan says. “We’ve relied on Mountain Telephone’s internet service for building our website, which is where we sell our products. We also use Facebook and Instagram to attract new customers and notify existing customers of the latest information. Without the high-speed internet service, I couldn’t do any of that. We also use boosters so we can have internet service when we’re in the barn or working outside or in the shop.”

The internet service has helped in other ways, as well. “This was going to be my year of craft shows,” Kate McMillan says. “I had been making a bunch of soaps and candles to sell at different festivals and craft shows all over. But now they’ve all been canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic. So, we’re relying on Facebook and other social media to get the word out about the products on my website.”

### **COMING SOON**

As they’ve cleared more land, McMillan says she has added various types of produce for purchase from the farm. “We’ve probably tripled our growing area, and we’re going to keep expanding.”

The couple is considering adding more animals and developing the land into a full-fledged sustainable farm. Not only do they want to know where their food comes from, but they also want to make sure they have a supply on hand if food shortages occur. “We’ve got some big plans that we’re hoping will pan out,” she says. “But we’re asking that people watch our website and our Facebook page for upcoming announcements.” 📧



Rockhouse Falls Farm soaps come in many varieties.



# Far from home

Broadband connects families across the globe



Story by KALEIGH COX

**F**or Joshua and Kate Baker of Minnesota, welcoming their first child in 2019 was a time of joyful celebration and anticipation. Joshua Baker's parents, however, weren't close enough to celebrate in person, as they still live in his hometown over 1,000 miles away in New York.

Fortunately, the Bakers had broadband internet, so when they found out they would be parents, they turned to FaceTime to share their news. "With FaceTime, you get to see their emotion," Kate Baker says. "They were very excited!"

The Bakers are not alone. With the arrival of fast, reliable broadband, people aren't just connecting to the internet. They're connecting to one another. When families find themselves spread across the globe, the ability to connect instantly is a particularly special gift.

When their son, Micah, was born, the Bakers continued to use online apps and tools to keep his grandparents involved in his life. Planning a trip to meet in person would take significant time, money and coordinated effort. But the internet makes it easy to spontaneously pop on and connect anytime, just as two families living in the same town might do.

The Bakers also invited his parents to join Cluster, a social media app that enables users to share photos, videos and other updates with a small, private group of family and friends.



Joshua and Kate Baker use broadband to keep in touch with distant family.

Joshua Baker's mom, Faith Baker, was delighted. "We love to be as connected as we can," she says. "I can struggle with the separation and feel that we miss so much. I appreciate how they've found ways to overcome that."

Even 10-month-old Micah seems to appreciate the technology. “He recognizes his grandparents and understands who they are,” Kate Baker says.

She says being a new mom is busy, but staying connected online is worth the time and effort. “We’ll send pictures and keep communicating that way. It makes his grandparents feel included,” she says.

### STAYING CONNECTED

For Jess and Sarah Curry in Texas, broadband wasn’t available in their early days of starting a family. As a military family navigating deployments, it was hard to stay connected. Jess Curry has left on deployment nine times over the past 20 years, and during those times, he would have to wait in line for an opportunity to check his email every few days. Even when videoconferencing technology became available, the inability to use it at home complicated things.

“We’d get all dressed up and drive to post to do a scheduled 15-minute video call,” Sarah Curry says. “There was so much pressure, and it seemed the kids would inevitably be melting down during the call. I would drive away feeling like I was supposed to be grateful, but I was miserable knowing my kids had cried through the call — and that seeing their dad for just a few minutes would only make them cry more.”

Thanks to advances in technology and a stronger internet connection, the most recent deployment was nothing like those early years. “He has Wi-Fi in his room and office, so we can talk on FaceTime every few days,” Sarah Curry says. “In between calls, the kids love using Marco Polo to record and send video messages

for their dad to watch and reply to when he can. Before, it was hard for the kids to be put on the spot and think of all the things they needed to say to him. Now, they can send what they want to say when they think about it. Especially for my teenagers — that’s been really helpful.”

With the steady communication, each kid’s relationship with their dad feels more natural and ongoing, even during deployment. He’s more present for the little moments, like when their 15-year-old daughter’s dance class tried to teach a parent to dance.

“We called up Dad and used the screen on the computer,” says Sarah Curry. “She taught him this dance, and they did it together on a split screen. He was in his uniform doing plies and other ballet moves. He’s going to do what it takes to connect with his daughter, even if it means he has to pirouette in his room.”

### OPEN COMMUNICATION

In many families, the internet allows children to connect with people they may never have met otherwise. When Linda Martin of North Carolina adopted her son Max in 2008, people around her discouraged her from pursuing an open adoption.

“We wanted him to be able to ask questions and learn about his family history, but we had a lot of pushback,” Martin says. “People said that birth parents move on and lose interest.”

Thankfully, that hasn’t happened, she

says, and connecting online has helped. When Max was an infant, Martin shared photos and updates over email. As he grew, he began to pursue his own relationship with his birth mom, starting with phone calls with Martin present. Now, at 11 years old, Max likes using online apps to stay connected.

“We text a lot, and we use Instagram’s video call feature to talk face to face. I tell her everything, and I like to hear what’s going on in her life, too,” Max says. He shares pictures of his cat, gives updates when he loses a tooth and even made an excited video call when he landed the role of the Nutcracker in his ballet company’s production. He also gets to learn about his birth mom’s life. “She told me she went to Coachella the day after she found out she was pregnant with me,” he says. “So, technically, I can say I’ve been to Coachella.”

While Martin acknowledges that an open adoption isn’t right for everyone, she’s thankful for the ways her son has been able to know his birth mom. They met in person for his birthday last year, and the foundation of connecting online helped Max overcome any hesitations and enjoy the meeting. “It was really fun!” he says.

They hope to meet again when he turns 13, but in the meantime, he’s thankful for opportunities to share his life with her online. “We talk a lot now, and I get to tell her everything,” Max says. ☑



When Jess Curry was on deployment with the U.S. Army, broadband helped his family stay in touch.



After adopting Max, left, Linda Martin of North Carolina used broadband to help him stay in touch with his birth mother.



SheBrews Coffee and Books in Campton offers a fresh take on the old Wolfe County Library. Pictured from left are SheBrews employees Sierra Spencer, Sydni Smith and Eula Gibson. Owner Renae Cannon is on the far right.

# COFFEE TIME!

## SheBrews brings a fresh vibe to Campton

Story by JEN CALHOUN | Photography by WILLIAM LEMASTER

Renae Cannon always loved the atmosphere of a good coffee shop and bookstore. While ducking into a Barnes & Noble or a family-owned shop in a quirky spot, Cannon has seen how spaces can come alive when filled with rows of books and the smell of a fresh brew.

That appreciation drove her to open SheBrews Coffee and Books in Campton, a gathering spot that offers coffee, books, live entertainment, a game room and a free book exchange. “I wanted to bring something different to the community,” says Cannon, a former elementary school teacher turned entrepreneur. “I didn’t want to compete with anyone already doing business here. I just wanted to add to what we already have. Coffee shops and bookstores are some of the most relaxing environments for me, so it worked out.”

### COFFEE, FOOD AND CONNECTION

SheBrews is in the old Wolfe County Public Library building on Main Street — the same place Cannon spent much of her childhood exploring the stacks. “Growing up, I didn’t have a lot of money, but I loved to read,” she says. “I spent all my free time in this library. Starting this coffee shop and bookstore lets me stay true to my roots.”



But unlike the library of her youth, SheBrews sells coffee and all the espresso-based favorites like cappuccinos and lattes. The shop also offers doughnuts, scones, muffins, bagels, soups and salads, and shakes and smoothies, among other items.

Cannon wanted to create a gathering spot for everyone in the community, including the youth. She added a small stage for live music and a separate game room for young people to play foosball, air hockey, pool and Xbox games. “Having been in education, I knew a lot of these kids,” she says. “To my knowledge, there was no single place where they could come and hang out safely and just be kids. We wanted to give them a place for that.”

She also wanted to pass on her love of books by offering new titles for sale and

a free book exchange for anyone to enjoy. “The way it works is you bring a book so you can take a book. I really enjoy sitting back and watching that shelf change. It’s neat to see what people are liking in this area and finding new authors on the shelves.”

Creating a space for community connection isn’t new to Cannon. In recent years, she and her husband organized free movie nights for her church. Later, they branched out into developing events for the entire community, including a skating party at the local skatepark and a movie night at a lake. “We already had so much support for these events,” she says. “When I decided to start a business, I knew I wanted to do something that would bring the community together.”

### WEATHERING THE STORMS

The business has been tested a couple of times since opening in February 2019. About five months after starting SheBrews at its first location, the building Cannon was leasing was sold, and she had to move out. In August 2019 she opened her replacement location in the old library, but new challenges arrived with the 2020 coronavirus pandemic.

Months after relocating, SheBrews had to close its dining room to guests. Cannon acted quickly in an effort for the business to survive. Within a matter of days, she added a walk-up deck area with a sliding window to sell take-out items to customers. She added strings of lights for a happy feel and an overhang for guests to stay out of the rain. Still, the virus cut into sales. “It’s been a challenge,” she says. “We lost more than half of our sales, and we’re still quite new. It was a scary time for me.”

The community embraced SheBrews, however, leaving no doubt in Cannon’s mind that the town saw a need for the coffee shop. Throughout the closure, customers bought numerous gift cards and refused to collect their free coffees from the store’s punch cards.

“I’ve lost track of how many hundreds of dollars’ worth of gift cards people bought,” she says. “And they’re waiting to use them. That was super supportive. My heart is so warm and full with all the support people have shown us.” ☺



## COMFORTABLE CAFE

SheBrews is in the old Wolfe County Public Library at 235 Main St. in Campton. SheBrews sells coffee and cappuccinos, protein smoothies, soups and sandwiches, books, and more. Take-out service and a free book exchange are also available. Visit the shop’s website at [www.shebrewscoffeeandbooks.com](http://www.shebrewscoffeeandbooks.com) for more information, to order ahead or to buy gift cards. SheBrews’ Facebook page offers the latest information on events.



SheBrews owner Renae Cannon always loved bookstores and coffee shops, so she decided to start her own.



Sydni Smith prepares a drink for one of the cafe’s customers.

# Apples

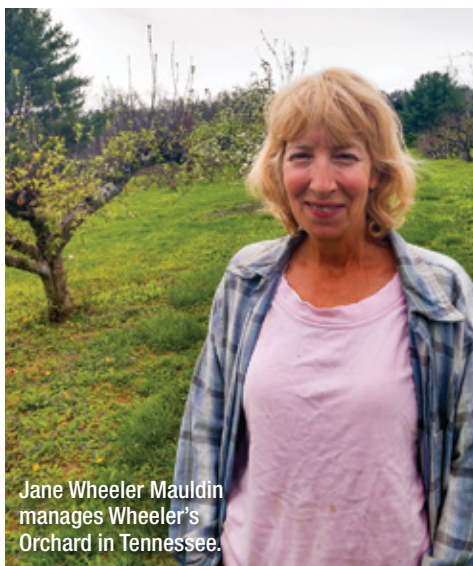
## *in abundance*

A Tennessee sustainable orchard offers many choices

**A**pple season around the South turns mountaintops and hillsides into beautiful shades of reds, greens and golds. Through the years, winds have swept across the Cumberland Plateau and deposited minerals into the land, creating topsoil perfect for growing fruits of all kinds — apples, specifically, at Wheeler’s Orchard atop Tennessee’s Fredonia Mountain.

It was 1974 when Wade Wheeler and his wife, Ann, left their home in Chattanooga, traveled north to Dunlap, Tennessee, and then on up Fredonia Mountain to settle with their children. Their land was perfect for farming — 50 acres in a gorge where cooler air protects plants from the scorching heat of summer and warm air from the valley guards tender vegetation in early spring. “Dad talked to some old-timers who told him that the man who once owned the property grew the best fruits on the mountain,” says his daughter, and the farm’s manager, Jane Wheeler Mauldin.

In 1978, the Wheelers planted their first apple trees — familiar old varieties like Granny Smith, Gala, Red Delicious and Golden Delicious. Fifteen years later, a second planting of newer varieties — Braeburn, Mutsu and Fujis — resulted in 10 acres of apple trees.



Jane Wheeler Mauldin manages Wheeler’s Orchard in Tennessee.

The Wheelers also lease land near Fall Creek Falls along the Cumberland Plateau where they grow Pink Lady and Arkansas Black apples, as well as a couple of heirloom varieties, Black Twig and Limber Twig.

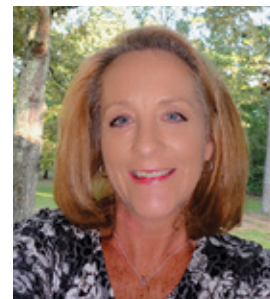
Wheeler’s Orchard, one of the only sustainable orchards in the Southeast, grows 22 varieties of apples, and a third planting is scheduled. The orchard will soon bring some of the latest apples to market, including Harvey Cumberland and Ginger Gold.

Braeburn, though, is Mauldin’s favorite. “They’re an amazing apple for cider, to

cook with and to eat,” she says. “I like to pick them a little early — before they’re fully ripe — so they have a little bit more tang to them.” Every apple variety has a slightly different flavor. Some are better for eating, while others are best suited for baking. But some, such as Braeburn, pull double duty. These also include Granny Smith, Jonagold, Honeycrisp, Mutsu and Pink Lady.

Visit the orchard and pick your own apples, or buy them prepped in the orchard’s apple shop where shelves hold everything apple — fruit fresh from the orchard, homemade cider, apple butter, apple jelly and more. There are also local crafts, teas, soaps and honey here. And jelly made from the orchard’s grapes is a favorite each autumn.

Bring a picnic, spread out a blanket, and enjoy the cool mountain breeze.



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



## OLD-FASHIONED APPLE CRISP

- 6 medium Braeburn or other crisp cooking apple, peeled and chopped
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 3/4 teaspoons ground cinnamon, divided
- 1 1/2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- 3/4 cup old-fashioned oats
- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup cold unsalted butter, diced into small cubes
- Pinch of kosher salt

Heat oven to 350 F. Butter an 8x8" baking dish. Set aside.

In a mixing bowl, add apples, sugar, 3/4 teaspoon of the cinnamon and lemon juice. Stir to combine, then transfer to the prepared baking dish.

In a separate mixing bowl, add brown sugar, oats, flour, remaining cinnamon, salt and diced cold butter. Use a pastry cutter or two forks to cut the butter into the oat mixture until it resembles pea-sized crumbs. Spread this topping over the apples in the baking dish and gently pat to even it out. Bake 40-50 minutes or until golden brown and bubbly. Serve with a scoop of vanilla ice cream, if desired.

## HOMEMADE APPLESAUCE

*This applesauce is delicious with oatmeal for breakfast or as a side to roasted pork for dinner.*

- 3 Golden Delicious apples, peeled, cored and quartered
- 3 Fuji apples, peeled, cored and quartered
- 1 cup unfiltered apple juice
- 2 tablespoons cognac or brandy (or for a nonalcoholic substitution, apricot juice)
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 3 tablespoons honey
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

In a large saucepan, combine the apples and remaining ingredients. Bring to a soft boil and continue cooking until the

apples are soft, 20-30 minutes. Using a hand blender or potato masher, blend to desired consistency. Serve warm immediately or chill for later use.

Note: For a sweeter applesauce, add 2 tablespoons sugar. And you can use whatever apples are available, although combining two different varieties provides a richer flavor.

## FRIED APPLES

*This is an easy go-to dessert. The Wheeler family especially enjoys it around the holidays.*

- 3 tablespoons butter
- 10 tart apples, peeled, cored and sliced
- 1-2 teaspoons cinnamon

- 2/3 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup water or apple cider

Melt butter in a skillet, then add the remaining ingredients. Simmer over medium heat, covered, until the apples are tender. Remove the lid from the pan and continue to cook until the liquid has reduced to a thick syrup, stirring occasionally, about 15 minutes. Delicious over vanilla ice cream. 🍷

## If you go

**Where:** Wheeler's Orchard  
956 Wheeler Road  
Dunlap, Tennessee

**When:** The farm is open through December.

**Information:** [wheelersorchard.com](http://wheelersorchard.com)



**Mountain Telephone**

P.O. Box 399 • 425 Main St.  
West Liberty, KY 41472

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