

West Carolina Tel

MAY/JUNE 2015

# CONNECTED

## A FINE DAY FISHING

Local angler wins  
Bassmaster Classic  
on home lake

## HERE COMES THE GIG!

WCTEL introduces gigabit  
Internet service to the region

## MEETING DATE SET

WCTEL Annual Meeting  
scheduled for Aug. 17





## RURAL CONNECTIONS

BY SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO  
NTCA—THE RURAL BROADBAND ASSOCIATION

# Net neutrality ruling could open the door for better rural service

When the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) voted in February to reclassify broadband as a Title II utility, it put rules in place that regulators say will ensure an open, neutral Internet for America's consumers. These rules include some encouraging signs for rural telecommunications companies and cooperatives.

The FCC ruling opens the door for some of the important, common-sense policy changes NTCA has been pushing for years.

I believe the order pushes the FCC closer to bringing universal service funding into the 21st century and changing rules so every network your data crosses will be treated equally.

Beyond that, the order has the potential to give NTCA's nearly 900 rural telco members the regulatory certainty they need to continue investing in network upgrades. The order is not perfect, but I think there are a few ways it will help rural telecommunications.

### THE PATH TO CHANGE

Perhaps the biggest single issue facing rural providers is universal service funding. The system was set up so all telephone users nationwide would pay into a fund that would be distributed to telephone providers to offset the cost of building and maintaining phone lines in sparsely populated areas. The sheer distances covered by rural networks in order to connect members drive up operation costs, and the universal service fund was designed to offset some of that investment.

We've been making the case for years that the USF should be updated to focus on broadband connections rather than phone lines to more accurately capture what's happening in the industry. I believe the net



neutrality order lays the groundwork for this important reform.

The other area where the new order helps rural telecommunications is the treatment of so-called "middle mile" providers.

Not every company that maintains the networks forming the basic Internet infrastructure is a direct-to-customer provider like your local telco. Many companies operate the "middle mile" networks that your data must pass over to get from distant servers to your computer or device. NTCA has been pushing for more seamless interconnections and similar regulatory treatment between the middle mile and the "last mile," which is the part of the network your local telco provides. I believe the FCC's ruling brings the industry closer to a level playing field.

As with any new major policy shift, there are parts of the order we at NTCA may not agree with, but I think there's a chance this will lead to good things for rural telcos. NTCA will continue our work to be sure the order plays out the way we and our allies believe it will, and that the FCC will continue to take steps toward supporting rural telecommunications. [📧](#)

## SURVEY SAYS...

Thank you to everyone who participated in the January/February readership survey. See Page 4 for the winner of the drawing. The results below show what the magazine means to you. Thanks for reading!

### 90.5%

have a better understanding of the role their telecommunications provider plays in community and economic development because of the magazine

### 85.3%

of respondents read every issue of the magazine

### 84.8%

read all or most of the issue

### 84.3%

have a better understanding of technology because of the magazine

### 73.4%

have visited a website to learn more about a topic featured in the magazine

### 54.5%

have prepared a recipe featured in the food pages

### 45%

have changed their service plan to better meet their needs because of information in the magazine

### 27.6%

have bought a gadget reviewed in the magazine

# INTERNET HISTORY

## The Internet (as we know it) turns 20

**A**pril 1995 marked the birth of the commercial Web, far surpassing the financial and social influence of the early, research-based Internet. It's been 20 years since that step in the Internet's history triggered the rise of giants like Yahoo, Amazon and eBay. Here's a look back at how the Internet got to where it is today.



### 1962

- MIT professor publishes memos discussing a “Galactic Network,” created through networking computers.

### 1965

- The first network is created by linking a computer in Massachusetts with another in California.

### 1969

- ARPANET, a closed network for the U.S. Department of Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, becomes the first stable link of multiple computers. The first hosts were built at five universities.

### 1972

- The public gets its first look at ARPANET at the International Conference on Computer Communications.
- Ray Tomlinson writes a program allowing the first “electronic mail” message, including use of the @ symbol.
- The term “internetting” is first used.

### 1975

- ARPANET has grown to include 61 institutions.

### 1979

- Science professors form a Computer Science Research Network called CSNET.

### 1981

- More than 200 computers are connected to CSNET, which soon allows email between 10 countries.

### 1982

- Snipes, the first networked computer game, debuts.

### 1984

- The Domain Name System introduces .gov, .mil, .edu, .net and .com.
- The National Science Foundation launches NSFNET, a research network.

### 1985

- The number of connected networks in the U.S. reaches 2,000.

### 1987

- The number of networks in the U.S. reaches 30,000.

### 1988

- Providers gain authorization to use the Internet to send commercial email.
- The first computer worm virus infects 6,000 of the 60,000 connected hosts on the Internet.

### 1989

- Companies launch commercial email services.
- A system using HTML that allows computers to easily browse other hosts is proposed, creating the World Wide Web.

### 1990

- ARPANET shuts down.
- The first search engines emerge.

### 1991

- NSFNET now connects 600,000 hosts in 100 countries.

### 1992

- One-millionth computer is connected to the Internet.

### 1995

- NSFNET is privatized and defunded, dropping the last major commercial restrictions on the Internet and creating the modern Internet as we know it.
- Many Internet mainstays are launched, including Amazon.com, Yahoo and eBay. ☒



## Lifeline Service

*When you need help paying for telephone service*

Is your annual household income at or below 135 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines for a household of its size? Do you or someone in your household participate in any of the following low-income government assistance programs? If so, you may qualify for Lifeline Service.

- Medicaid
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Section 8 Federal Public Housing Assistance (FPHA)
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- National School Lunch Program's Free Lunch Program

To find out whether you qualify for Lifeline assistance, customers must fill out standard forms, available at your local telephone company's office, as mandated by the Federal and/or State government. Your telephone company is not responsible for determining who qualifies for these programs or who receives assistance. Customers must meet specific criteria in order to obtain assistance with their local telephone service, and qualifying is dependent upon government-established guidelines. To qualify for Lifeline credit, each customer must apply and provide proof that he/she, or a household member for whom he/she is financially responsible, participates in at least one of the programs listed above or that the customer meets the income-based requirements. Additional eligibility requirements may also apply. Customers must choose to apply the Lifeline discount to a landline or a wireless number, not both.

***For more details about Lifeline Service and to apply for assistance, please contact your local telephone company.***

## Empowering members to be advocates for rural telecommunications

The results are in. Almost 200 readers responded to the West Carolina Tel Connected readership survey in our January/February issue. Your responses gave us good insight into what we're doing right and how we can serve you better.



**JEFF WILSON**  
Chief Executive Officer

I appreciate those who took the time to share this valuable feedback with us.

Not surprisingly, the stories about local people in our community and the articles about food are the most popular pages among respondents. But I was pleased to see readers also enjoy the articles with information about your cooperative.

Perhaps that readership is why 85 percent of respondents said this magazine gave them a better understanding of technology, and 90 percent said they have a better understanding of the role this cooperative plays in economic and community development because of West Carolina Tel Connected. It's very gratifying to know our efforts are working.

I share this data not to boast about how proud we are of this magazine, but to explain the reason why I'm proud of it. I believe having informed and educated members is a key factor to the long-term health of this cooperative.

In fact, educating our members is one of the seven core principles that lay the foundation for a cooperative. The National Cooperative Business Association says members should be informed about company and industry news "so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperative."

Informed and engaged members make our cooperative better.

Broadband has been in the news quite a bit lately, from net neutrality to the president discussing high-speed network expansion. It's important for our members to know how federal regulations, state policies and shifts in the industry can affect their broadband and telephone services.

Educating you on issues that matter to rural telecommunications and your community empowers you to become advocates for rural America. Big corporations and urban residents certainly find ways to make their voices heard, and it's up to cooperatives like us and members like you to let legislators and policymakers know that rural America matters and decisions that affect telecommunications cooperatives matter to rural America.

I hope you enjoy the stories and photos in this magazine. I always do. But I also hope you come away with a little better understanding of your cooperative, the role we play in this community and the role you can play in making rural America better. 📧

Congratulations to  
*Elena Sutton of Abbeville*  
winner of our survey prize drawing!

The West Carolina Tel Connected is a bimonthly newsletter published by West Carolina Telephone, © 2015. It is distributed without charge to all members/owners of the cooperative.



is a member-owned cooperative dedicated to delivering advanced telecommunications technology to the people of Abbeville, Anderson and McCormick counties.

West Carolina Telephone  
233 Highway 28 Bypass  
Abbeville, SC 29620  
Telephone: 864-446-2111  
www.WCTEL.com

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Lee W. Logan, President  
Due West, Area 4

Stanley H. Keaton, Vice-President  
Antreville/Lowndesville, Area 5

Jane U. Stone, Secretary  
Donalds, Area 3

Talmadge R. Bussey  
South McCormick, Area 9

L. Ned McGill  
Starr, Area 1

John Michael Thomas  
Iva, Area 2

James T. Hester  
Calhoun Falls, Area 6

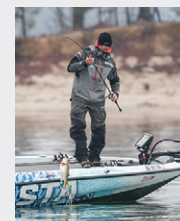
William "Billy" Bauman  
Abbeville, Area 7

Westley "Wes" McAllister  
North McCormick, Area 8

Produced for West Carolina Tel by:



#### On the Cover:



Casey Ashley of Donalds won the Bassmaster Classic in February on Lake Hartwell. See story Page 9.

### **Board Member Elections for 2015**

At the Annual Meeting, scheduled for August 17, 2015, an election will be held to elect three members for the Board of Directors. The three seats up for election this year are due to normal rotations as per our Bylaws and are as follows:

**Area 3 – Donalds**

**Area 5 – Antreville/Lowndesville**

**Area 8 – North McCormick**

The three Directors who currently hold these positions all plan on seeking re-election.

A Nominating Committee will be appointed and shall select one or more members from each of these three areas to be nominated to the membership. If you wish to notify the Nominating Committee of your interest in serving on the Board, you may provide the company CEO a letter of intent which can be turned in to any of the Company offices during regular business hours. Materials on qualifications and how to file are also available upon request from any of our offices. Please remember you must be a member from the area where the vacancy is occurring and meet the other qualifications outlined in the Bylaws.

A person not nominated by the Nominating Committee may file as a petition candidate which is more specifically described in our Bylaws. Petition candidates will have a period of time following the announcement of the Nominating Committee's report to file as a petition candidate and still be listed on the election ballot provided you have met the Bylaw qualifications to be a Board member.

In order to be considered by the Nominating Committee, you must have your letter of intent turned in to one of our offices on a timely basis. Contact the Administrative Office of the cooperative 864-446-2111 to inquire about the deadline. Petitions must be returned in accordance with the bylaw requirements.

If you have any questions, you are encouraged to contact the CEO, Jeff Wilson 864-446-2111.

This information is for notification of the process for Board election only and is NOT the notice of the Annual Meeting.

**ALWAYS CALL  
BEFORE YOU DIG**



# ISLAND HOP

## *The Carolina Coast*

BY ROBERT THATCHER

Need a break? Take a Lowcountry road trip to seafood, culture and fun

**I**slands on the Carolina Coast offer warm sand and a cool ocean breeze. While you may not need any more convincing than that, here are more tips to get the most out of your island-hopping road trip.

### **1** Bird Island — Walk from Sunset Beach, NC

Bird Island may seem an unlikely place to start a road trip. There's no road here. Just sand, sea and sky.

But Bird Island is actually the perfect beginning for an island-hopping journey. This pristine preserve of high dunes and tidal creeks offers a glimpse of how the Carolina coast looked before people arrived — and why millions visit here today.

Bird Island has no road, but it does have a mailbox. Visitors leave heartfelt messages in the famous "Kindred Spirit" mailbox. So let's begin with a wish...

*Dear Kindred Spirit: Help us kick off our shoes, enjoy the best seafood on earth and leave our cares in the salty breeze...*



Bird Island

### **2** Pawleys Island — 58 miles, US Route 17

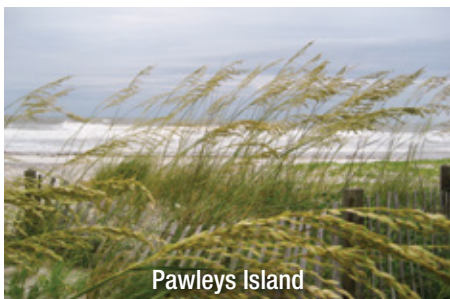
Rinsing off our feet, we drive down the "Grand Strand," a 60-mile arc of uninterrupted beach fun. After Bird Island's quiet, the surf shops of Myrtle Beach come as a shock. But a left turn at the Pawleys Island traffic light takes us back in time.



#### **TECH-SAVVY TRAVELER:**

Nothing ruins a beach trip like a rainy day. Stay ahead of the storms by checking the weather online. While you're on island time, weather sites and apps — like **weather.com** and **weather.gov** — are handy for monitoring daily temps, checking beach conditions, reading tide charts or knowing when a picturesque sunset will occur.





Pawleys Island

Photo courtesy of Joe Thatcher

Fish with the locals on the causeway. Beach comb by rustic cottages. And as night falls, listen for stories of the haunting “Gray Man” story on a rickety crab dock. Just hope you don’t see the island’s famous ghost — he’s a harbinger of hurricanes.

To experience Pawleys’ “arrogantly shabby” vibe, enjoy a hearty breakfast at the Sea View Inn. It’s one of the few remaining seaside inns with rocking-chair porches, no TVs and ocean-breeze air conditioning. For dinner, you can’t go wrong at nearby village of Murrells Inlet, the self-proclaimed “seafood capital of South Carolina.”

### 3 Fort Sumter and Folly Beach — 73 miles, US Route 17

Our trip is about islands, but Georgetown, across the Intracoastal Waterway, is a side trip through history that shouldn’t be missed. Take time for its colonial homes, churches and rice plantations. A favorite is Hopsewee Plantation, built 40 years before the Revolutionary War. Stroll Spanish moss-draped paths and dine in an antebellum tearoom.

Moving down the road, you’ll also need to experience Charleston. (Think Georgetown on steroids.) Fortunately this historical tour keeps us island hopping with a ferry ride to Fort Sumter National Monument in Charleston Harbor. Stand in awe where the Civil War began.

Many Charleston islands are gated resorts or only accessible by boat. But a fun exception is Folly Beach, where you can browse eclectic shops and watch some of the South’s best surfing.

Another reason to visit Folly Beach is Bowens Island Restaurant. A long sandy lane winds through thick foliage to this graffiti-covered shack. But marsh dining is worth the drive. And cooks in the cinder-block basement will pile steamed oysters on your plastic cafeteria tray.



Edisto Island

Photo courtesy of Amy Thatcher

### 4 Edisto Island — 45 miles, US Route 17 to Hwy. 174

The 24-mile road to Edisto Beach meanders through creeks and former rice fields. That marsh expanse gives Edisto a quiet separation from the world. This island is no secret — it has a Bi-Lo and a golf course — but its distance from the bustling mainland may be the reason Edisto continues to hold on to its quiet, natural splendor.

You’ll see the Edisto difference in the night sky. With little surrounding development, Edisto is a stargazer’s paradise. And you’ll feel it between your toes as you walk the island’s sandy roads shaded by a live-oak canopy. A great walk or bike ride can be had at nearby Botany Bay Plantation. This wildlife area takes you through the remains of four colonial plantations — now home to egrets, osprey and bald eagles.

If shells are your passion, explore the pristine beaches of Edisto Beach State Park. Wade across the inlet at low tide to Edingsville Beach for some of the best shelling in the Lowcountry. Check with the park and time your trip right to go on a guided sea turtle walk during nesting season.

A day of shelling and napping brings on a big appetite, and Edisto delivers delicious solutions. Whaley’s — long ago Edisto’s only gas station — now serves up tasty mahi-mahi bites. The Old Post Office and Sea Cow Eatery now deliver shrimp and grits, rain or shine.

## 5 St. Helena and Hunting Islands — 73 miles, US Route 17 to US 21

Continue down the coast to Beaufort, a city defined by over 1,000 sea islands. Water is always in view as you stroll this town’s seaside shops, or take a buggy ride through neighborhoods where “Prince of Tides,” “Radio” and “The Big Chill” were filmed.

Be sure to celebrate a vibrant part of Sea Island culture at nearby St. Helena Island. Here you’ll find the Penn Center, one of the first schools for former slaves. The center provides a great introduction to the Gullah people, descendants of slaves who worked on nearby rice plantations, retaining elements of African language and tradition.

Our trip comes full-circle at Hunting Island — again on one of the rare undeveloped Sea Islands. The boardwalk here snakes through marshes teeming with life. You’ll see why the Vietnam scenes in “Forrest Gump” were filmed here.

It’s also home to Hunting Island Lighthouse, one of the few 19th century lighthouses still open to the public. So work off those seafood calories with a climb up 169 steps, and be rewarded with a breathtaking panorama.

An old song says there are “a hundred thousand islands flung like jewels upon the sea.” That’s true of the Carolina coast. Each sea island is a multi-faceted jewel, and there are too many to visit in one trip. So wander your own way through these marshy isles. You’ll collect a treasure of Lowcountry memories. 📷



Penn Center, St. Helena Island

Photo courtesy of the Penn Center

# Curing childhood obesity, 100 miles at a time

BY MELISSA SMITH

**R**ace Across USA runner Jessica Hardy says she's heard a million Forrest Gump jokes from her friends.

The Race Across USA team will run 117 back-to-back marathons, while visiting schools along the way, only stopping to rest one day every week.

Hardy, along with a team of international athletes, began her journey on Jan. 16 in Huntington Beach, California. They are hoping to make it to Washington, D.C., by June 2, and are scheduled to run through Iva on May 7.

For the safety of the runners, organizers were looking for a southern route to avoid cold weather and less-traveled roads to avoid traffic.

"We wanted to stay on back roads," says Race Across USA Director Sandy Van Soye. "It made sense to go through South Carolina to keep runners [as] safe as possible."

## RACING AWARENESS

The goal of the race is to educate people about childhood obesity, encourage healthy lifestyles and raise money for The 100 Mile Club, an organization encouraging children to participate in daily physical activity and walk or run 100 miles within the school year. The club sponsors children who cannot afford the cost of activity programs.

"Along the way, we have been visiting schools," Van Soye says.

Early on in the trek, she says they



Rates of childhood obesity have more than doubled in the last 30 years. The Race Across USA aims to raise awareness and combat the problem.

reached over 2,000 kids in New Mexico alone.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, childhood obesity has more than doubled over the last 30 years.

"Obesity just seems like the plague of the modern world," says Darren Van Soye, a member of the 100 Mile Club Board of Directors. "Because of modern conveniences, television, Xbox and fast food, a monster was created, not just in the U.S., but all over the world."

Running a marathon (26.2 miles) a day doesn't make Hardy too tired to interact with children. That's her favorite part.


It motivates her to keep going, even

when running through a snowstorm.

"I think about those times when I'm standing in front of the kids and making an impact on them," she says. "This is so much bigger than just me running."

Darren Van Soye says a lot of participants are like Hardy and don't have to be a world-class distance runner to participate.

"You don't have to be superhuman to do this," Darren Van Soye says. "We allow teams. You can walk or run."

If you would like to participate in the Race Across South Carolina portion, or ask the team about visiting a local school, visit [RaceAcrossUSA.org](http://RaceAcrossUSA.org). 



- ▶ The Race Across USA team will be in Iva on May 7.
- ▶ Their route from California to Washington, D.C. will cover 3,080 miles.
- ▶ Participating runners will run 26.2 miles every day, taking one day every week to rest.
- ▶ For more information on the run and how you can participate, visit the website [RaceAcrossUSA.org](http://RaceAcrossUSA.org). For more information about the 100 Mile Club, visit [100MileClub.com](http://100MileClub.com).

INFORMATION FROM [RACEACROSSUSA.ORG](http://RACEACROSSUSA.ORG)



# Q&A

## with the Bassmaster

### Local angler shares his story of winning the Bassmaster Classic

This past February, Donalds native Casey Ashley claimed his first-ever Bassmaster Classic on his home lake, fulfilling a lifelong dream in front of a horde of locals who flocked to Lake Hartwell in droves.

At 30 years old, Ashley reached the pinnacle of professional angling, earning \$300,000 for his efforts by surging up the leaderboard from fifth to first on the final day, amassing 20 pounds, 3 ounces. That pushed his three-day total to 50 pounds to earn him the win.

Now, as his career takes a higher trajectory, he took the time to answer several questions.

**Connected:** Many top competitors in BASS have never won a Classic. How does winning the Classic so young change your professional career?

**Casey Ashley:** It opens a door; that's for sure. It allows you to meet and build relationships with several people in the industry, sponsors etc., but it also gives you a platform to spread the love of fishing.

**Connected:** To do so on your home lake, talk about that. That has to be a dream come true for you.

**CA:** Winning the Classic is a dream come true, but winning it on my home lake, in front of all my family and friends, that was an even bigger gift. I wasn't expecting to have as much support from people all over the area as I did.

**Connected:** Tell me about growing up in your small town and fishing there. How'd you get your start?

**CA:** I grew up fishing with my daddy at a very young age and then started tournaments at around 10 years old. I've been hooked ever since.

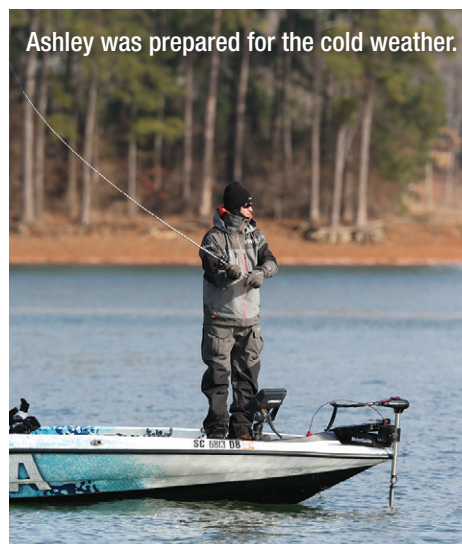
**Connected:** Being on your home lake,

intimately knowing it, did you fear overthinking your strategy during your tournament days?

**CA:** No, I try not to get stuck on local knowledge. I try to fish based off what's going on at that moment and what I've figured out for myself.

**Connected:** What type of pressure did you experience being in the top six on the final day with former Classic winners like Randy Howell and Michael Laconelli?

**CA:** It was a little nerve-wracking, but be-



ing so far behind first place, I didn't have the pressure of the lead. I could still relax and go out and just fish.

**Connected:** How did the winter storm affect your game plan leading up to your final practice days?

**CA:** I wanted the cold front. I wanted the fishing to be tough for everybody else, and I based my practice on the knowledge that it was coming.

**Connected:** I read a Zoom Super Fluke soft jerkbait on a spinhead lure made by your dad, Danny, was your primary weapon. Does it feel a little like he's fishing there in the boat with you when you have success with something such as that?

**CA:** Yeah, we've actually caught them on that bait at Hartwell before. I started with pearl white and ended with pearl white. For me, pearl white is THE only color to throw with that bait. It's my confidence color.

**Connected:** What are your goals now with this under your belt?

**CA:** An AOY Championship couldn't hurt! 📺

# RELATIONSHIPS: *She can relate*

## What will readers find at your blog?

**Laurie Lyons:** Readers will find a variety of things when they visit my blog ... mostly heart-felt musings on life, relationships, marriage, parenting, the teen years and everything in between. But they will also find a new recipe posted every day, which is challenging but enjoyable. I also talk about places I visit because I love traveling and seeing new sights whether locally or beyond.

## Why did you become a blogger, and how has blogging changed your life?

**LL:** I started a blog because I love to write, to share from the heart, so I began regaling the world with tales of life. But no one came. Then I realized that since I was in my 40s, I had worthwhile things to say to people to help them with their life's journey. I found my voice and began promoting my blog and have never looked back.



Blogging has changed my life in so many ways. It's the people I meet, whether face to face or virtually. I love connecting with people and have met some amazing women.



## When did you realize you wanted to help others with their relationships?

**LL:** I have been helping others with their relationships since I was a teen. About ten years ago I decided to become a certified life coach so I would be better equipped to help. I have had additional training as a women's mentor. I am in my 50s and have experienced so many different events and situations in my life. I was determined to make those things count so they didn't happen in vain, and I could help people through situations by sharing what I have learned through those times.

## Men and women: Can we ever get along?

**LL:** All things are possible, right? Men and women are different in so many ways; however, if we are aware of our strengths and weaknesses — and those of our mate — then it becomes easier to get along. I think it is always a great idea to come up with ways to stay connected even in the midst of a disagreement. Relationships are more important than any particular issue that may arise. Our differences can serve to draw us closer if we choose to allow that to happen, by not insisting on always doing

things our way.

## With kids to chase after and work to deal with, how can a couple keep the romance alive?

**LL:** I think it's the little things that keep the romance alive — knowing what best speaks to the heart of your spouse. It doesn't have to be romantic getaways to exotic places (though that couldn't hurt). It's helping with the dishes, bringing an unexpected cup of coffee, just being there when your mate needs to vent or share an exciting bit of news. It's celebrating life on a daily basis, leaving work at work and being fully engaged when it's couple or family time. ☺

## OTHER RELATIONSHIP/ MARRIAGE BLOGS YOU MIGHT LIKE:

- ▶ **wearethatfamily.com**  
Kristen blogs about her life as a mom and wife.
- ▶ **fridaywereinlove.com**  
Camille and Jacob work on keeping their marriage strong through date nights and blogging.

Whatever your interest, there is likely an online community of people who share that interest with you. Our "Featured Blogger" series introduces you to people who write on the Web about a variety of topics. In the July/August issue, we'll focus on photography blogs.

# Gotta have gadgets

..... BY MELISSA SMITH .....

**W**hether you're planning on relaxing by the pool or an adventurous road trip, here are some gadgets you need in your life this summer. These products will make your life easier and more fun, all while helping you stay connected.

## 1 Waterproof listening:

Enjoy your favorite jams while you relax in the pool, hot tub or even the shower. **The Waterproof Bluetooth Speaker**

(\$69.99, Brookstone.com) isn't afraid of the water, because it can float along with you while your device rests safely on shore. Pair the speaker with any device and enable Bluetooth to stream your summertime soundtrack wherever you are.



## 2 Solar charging:

Going camping, but you haven't finished that great e-book you were in the middle of? Take your e-reader without fear; you can keep it and all your other electronic devices charged with the **Solio Xcellerator**

(\$120, solio.com) solar charger. Prop up the Xcellerator on the kickstand (included) and point the solar panels toward the sun, and



your devices can be fully charged in as little as 90 minutes — even in low light.

## 3 Selfie printing:

Got a minute? Print out your summertime selfies in 58 seconds with the **iPhone 5/6 Photo Printer** from Hammacher Schlemmer

(\$159.95, hammacher.com.) Don't worry about replacing the ink cartridge, because it doesn't have one! Special color-infused paper activated by heat gives you beautiful 300 dpi photos quicker than you can say "selfie stick." This printer is completely controlled by a free downloadable app on your device — iPhone 5/5s/5c or iPod Touch — or you can connect your iPhone 4, iPhone 6 and iPad or Android phone via the Micro-USB cable.



## 4 Rock-solid case:

If you plan on relaxing at the beach, don't be afraid to take your iPad. The **Aryca AriCase Rock Mini** (\$69.99, air-droppedsupplies.com) is sandproof, waterproof and shock resistant. So, lay back and catch up on your summertime



## Six devices to make summer even better

reading without worry of your tablet being ruined by the elements.

## 5 Entertaining the kids:

Avoid "Are we there yet?" by grabbing the **LeapPad3 Learning Tablet** (\$99, amazon.com) to keep the kids entertained and educated on your family road trip. The LeapPad3 has Wi-Fi capability and 4GB of memory, as well as a front and rear camera. The battery is rechargeable and can last up to six hours. Let the kids surf the Web without worry, because the LeapPad3 is equipped with LeapSearch so they can view kid-friendly content.



## 6 Stay ahead of the weather:

The **Netatmo Weather Station** has both beauty and brains. With its streamlined design and innovative technology, the **Netatmo Weather Station** (\$164, amazon.com)

can tell you about the air quality inside and outside your home. It measures temperature, humidity, barometric pressure, indoor CO2 concentration and noise level — all monitored from an app on your mobile device. It's never been easier to monitor the weather. You also get a free lifetime personal account to store your data. ☑



# HERE COMES THE GIG!

When the president of the United States spoke recently about the need for greater broadband speeds in our country, he showed a chart listing cities where gigabit Internet access is available: Hong Kong, Paris, Chattanooga and Kansas City were among them.

Now you can add the WCTEL service area to that list.

In fact, thanks to WCTEL's upgrades to the fiber network in McCormick and Abbeville counties, most of the cities and towns in the area, including Starr and Iva, can list gigabit Internet access among the benefits they can offer prospective businesses and families looking to relocate.

With its launch of gigabit Internet service this month, WCTEL put the Freshwater Coast on the map as one of the areas with the most advanced broadband networks available. Those connected to WCTEL's fiber system can enjoy speeds up to 100 times faster than the 10 megabits per second (Mbps) once considered typical, and 40 times faster than the new definition of broadband — 25 Mbps — adopted by the Federal Communications Commission in January.

January was also when Google announced it would be building a gigabit fiber network in parts of Atlanta and Charlotte. "It will be a big deal for Atlanta and Charlotte to get gigabit networks when the work is done in a couple of years," CEO Jeff Wilson says. "We're happy that through careful planning, we've got that quality of a network right now in rural upstate South Carolina."

## THE GIG: HOW?

In order to join the short list of U.S. providers offering gigabit speeds, WCTEL first had to build a 1,300-mile, world-class fiber network. "Our network was the first large-scale fiber network in South Carolina," says Wilson. "The leadership

here at the time could see that high-speed broadband over fiber was the infrastructure of the future. Now as we look ahead, gigabit service takes that next step in giving our members the absolute best service available anywhere."

With the construction of the fiber network essentially complete, WCTEL decided last year to begin the work of making gigabit speeds available. Switches and other components along the system had to be upgraded. "It was a significant investment by the cooperative," Wilson says. "But it's an investment in the future of our community."

## THE GIG: WHY?

Only a small percentage of consumers today actually need the capacity of a gigabit connection. But as with any type of critical infrastructure, WCTEL's network has been built with the future in mind.

Gigabit service means students will be able to access advanced



WCTEL ran 1,300 miles of fiber all across McCormick, Abbeville and Anderson counties in order to deliver the best Internet service available.

learning tools, families will take advantage of new entertainment options and home automation technology, and businesses will use the ultra-high-speed connection to compete and grow.

“Today, camera cards or memory sticks hold the same amount of data as entire computers a few years ago,” says Shannon Sears, director of commercial operations for West Carolina. “With SmartTVs, tablets and other connected devices, the same thing is happening with the demand for broadband capacity. Thanks to gigabit service, WCTEL will be ready to support our members as their needs grow.”

### THE GIG: WHEN?

Before rolling out the full network, WCTEL needed a test area and selected part of Savannah Lakes to try out the service in April. As of May 1, gigabit Internet speeds are available immediately to the entire area served by the cooperative’s fiber network.

Upgrades continue in the cities of Abbeville, McCormick and Calhoun Falls in order to make the gigabit upgrade available there. 📡

## What is a gig?

The rate at which information (photos, movies, music) flows from its source to your device (computer, tablet, gaming console) is measured in bits per second.

- One megabit, or Mb, is 1,000 bits.
- One gigabit, or Gb, is 1,000 megabits.



Internet speeds of 10 megabits per second (or Mbps) are commonly available throughout the U.S.

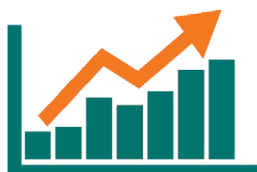
**1 Gbps is 100 times faster than 10 Mbps!**



### That’s fast!

Downloading a typical HD movie:

- 10 Mbps connection = 3 hours, 30 minutes
- 1 Gbps connection = less than 2 minutes



### Economic Impact

A study released by the Fiber to the Home Council found that communities with widely available access to gigabit Internet service have a per capita GDP (gross domestic product) that is 1.1 percent higher than communities with little to no gigabit service. In the 14 gigabit communities studied, this meant a difference of approximately \$1.4 billion in additional GDP!

## WCTEL marks 20 years of Internet Service

In today’s world of streaming video, gigabit connection speeds and Wi-Fi, the days of humble dial-up connections and 56K modems seem a long way off.

Mainly because they are.

WCTEL was one of the first rural telephone companies to offer Internet service 20 years ago in 1995.

“The decision to jump on what was then a new form of communication was a bold move, and one that continues to shape our cooperative,” says CEO Jeff Wilson. “The Internet seems like such an ever-changing, new technology that it’s hard to believe it’s been around for 20 years.” Technically, the Internet and its forerunners have been around for much longer.

In 1965, scientists in Massachusetts connected to a computer in California over telephone lines, making the first long-distance computer network. But for 30 years, the Internet remained an obscure, complicated network used only by researchers and governments.

In 1995, the Internet and World Wide Web went commercial, laying the groundwork for the Web we know today.

While some telcos hesitated to offer Internet service, WCTEL jumped on board early and continues that legacy of innovation today. In the telecommunications industry, West Carolina has the reputation as a forward-thinking cooperative on the cutting edge of technology.

“West Carolina was one of the first rural telcos in the country to offer Internet service,” Wilson says. “We’re also proud to have been one of the first telcos to offer television service through DE Plus, one of the first with a fiber network and now one of the first with a gigabit network.”

# DISHES FROM THE BAYOU



Seth Bowdoin's menu is in chalk because it's always changing based on what's in season and what culinary direction he wants to take.

Cajun cooking is known more in Louisiana than Texas, but in the heart of Quitman, Texas, you'll find some of the best Cajun food west of the state line at Seth's Lake Fork Creek Steak and Seafood.

Owner Seth Bowdoin's culinary background comes from a gumbo of influences. His heart beats to the tempo of Cajun country. The culture courses through his veins. His name, too, is rooted in the spirit of Louisiana.

"In the late 1600s, two Bowdoin brothers immigrated to the United States," he says. "One brother traveled north and contributed to the eventual establishment of Bowdoin College in Maine. The other brother settled in South Louisiana and learned to cook."

To cook Cajun is to discover the love and experience the joy of one of the most interesting of all American cuisines. It's a style of cooking that originated in the deep southern pockets of Louisiana. Some folks say it's the only cuisine that's

truly American, grabbing bits of French Canadian, African and Native American inspiration, tossing them in a blender and coming up with cuisine that's all its own.

"The style itself came out of the necessity to survive, and the original cooks were just working with ingredients that were available in the region — wild game, seafood, wild vegetation and herbs," Bowdoin explains.

This is clearly evident on his menu, where crawfish tails, gator and etouffee are as common as burgers and fries in other eateries.

Bowdoin was raised in Golden, Texas, a little west of Quitman, and gives a nod to his stepfather for furthering his culinary passion.

He acquired knowledge of cooking from his mother, who was a Le Cordon Bleu chef. "But I also learned a thing or two from an old Cajun named 'Possum' from down around Madisonville, Louisiana," Bowdoin says.

Like many cooks, though, experience

## COOKIN' CAJUN

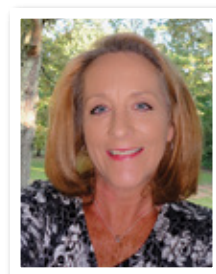
- ▶ Most recipes rely on sauteing onions, celery and green bell peppers, otherwise known as the "holy trinity."
- ▶ File powder is made of ground sassafras leaves and is a common ingredient used for thickening gumbo, etouffee and other dishes.
- ▶ Many dishes begin with roux, a simple mixture of equal parts of flour and oil, stirred over low heat in a cast-iron skillet or Dutch oven until dark brown.
- ▶ Meats commonly found in Cajun kitchens include deer, rabbit, wild hog, squirrel, raccoon, ducks, quail and dove. Nutria (swamp rats) are becoming more mainstream, too.
- ▶ Popular fish and seafood varieties are shrimp, crab, crawfish, oysters, frog legs, alligator, speckled trout, redfish, black drum, red snapper, grouper, flounder and catfish.

has been his biggest teacher.

"You learn a lot of stuff just by doing it," he says. "Most people assume that Cajun means spicy, but that's not necessarily true. True Cajun food is meant to be well-seasoned to bring out the unique flavors of the different ingredients used."

The following recipes are ones used at Bowdoin's restaurant, though as any seasoned cook might say, each chef needs to put his or her own unique twist on the dish.

"After all, we are just a group of imperfect people, making nearly perfect food," he says. 🗨️



Food Editor **Anne P. Braly** is a native of Chattanooga, Tenn. Prior to pursuing a freelance career, she spent 21 years as food editor and feature writer at a regional newspaper.

## WHITE CHOCOLATE AND CARAMEL BREAD PUDDING

- 15 dinner rolls
- 7 eggs
- 3 teaspoons vanilla
- 1 can evaporated milk
- 1 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 4 cups whole milk
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 cups white chocolate chips
- 2 cups caramel chips

### White chocolate sauce:

- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 1 can evaporated milk
- 2 cups white chocolate chips

Heat oven to 425°F. Grease bottom of 9-by-13-inch pan. Cut rolls into small pieces and place into large bowl. In a separate bowl, blend eggs, vanilla, evaporated milk, nutmeg, cinnamon, whole milk and sugar. Pour mixture over bread pieces and fold to saturate bread. Pour into greased pan and top with white chocolate and caramel chips. Bake for 20 minutes, then rotate and bake for an additional 10 minutes. Top with sauce. Serve warm.

**White chocolate sauce:** Mix powdered sugar, evaporated milk and white chocolate chips and bring to low boil. Pour over bread pudding.

## SETH'S LAKE FORK CREEK SWEET CHILI SAUCE

- 1 cup white vinegar
- 1 1/2 cups white sugar
- 2 heaping tablespoons ground fresh chili paste

Bring vinegar to boil and add sugar slowly, continuously stirring. When dissolved, add chili paste. Reduce heat to low boil and cook for 10 minutes, stirring frequently. Serve warm. For a more intense flavor, add more chili paste. Delicious sauce for pork, chicken, shrimp and gator.

## CAJUN REMOULADE

- 2-3/4 cups flour
- 2 cups chopped green onion
- 1/2 gallon mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup mustard



## CAJUN SHRIMP ALFREDO

### Shrimp:

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 4 cloves garlic
- 1 pound shrimp, peeled and deveined

### Alfredo sauce:

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 small yellow onion, chopped
- 1/2 tablespoon minced garlic
- 1 quart heavy whipping cream
- 2 teaspoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 2 to 3 cups Italian cheese blend
- 3/4 cup Parmesan cheese
- Black pepper and sea salt, to taste

### Pasta:

- Bow tie pasta
- Sea salt

**For shrimp:** Melt 1 tablespoon butter in skillet over medium heat. Add garlic and shrimp and saute until shrimp turns pink. Do not overcook shrimp. Remove from heat and set aside.

**For sauce:** Combine 2 tablespoons butter, onion and minced garlic in a medium skillet on medium heat and saute until onion is caramelized. Add heavy whipping cream and lemon juice. Bring to a rolling boil. Add Italian cheese blend and Parmesan. Reduce heat and allow cheese to melt. You can add more cheese if you desire a thicker sauce. Remove from heat and add salt and pepper to taste.

**For pasta:** Follow instructions on package. Add sea salt to taste. When done, drain and place on plate. Top with alfredo sauce and sauteed shrimp. Garnish with additional cheese blend, if desired. Makes 4-6 servings.

- 1/4 cup horseradish
- 2 ounces capers
- 1 ounce Tobasco sauce
- 6 ounces chili sauce
- 1 tablespoon chili powder

Combine all ingredients in large bowl and blend well. Great as an accompanying sauce for everything Cajun. A delicious spread for Po' Boys.



233 Highway 28 Bypass  
Abbeville, SC 29620

Presort STD  
US Postage PAID  
Permit #21  
Freeport OH

# STEALING HOME ISN'T AN OPTION



**\$50 off** WCTEL's Security Kit

Choose a peace of mind solution for as low as \$49.

864-446-2111 | [www.wctel.com](http://www.wctel.com)

Certain restrictions apply. Expires 6.30.15. 36-month agreement required.

