

CONNECTED



ACING DRIVERS ED

Teenager Gabe Gable is a rising star at Modoc

DESIGN DESTINY

Andy Johnston takes strange route to a career in design

PLANTING STARTUPS

New program aims to help area entrepreneurs



RURAL CONNECTIONS

BY SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO
NTCA—THE RURAL BROADBAND ASSOCIATION

Internet technology is personal when it comes to your parents aging in place

Working in the telecommunications industry, it's easy to get caught up in all the technology, the federal regulations and the constant challenges of keeping rural America connected. It is good to be reminded that the hard work our rural service providers are doing in their communities is making real progress toward improving the lives of people on a daily basis.

Consider the impact that the Internet can have on the lives of the elderly. My parents live in western Michigan, and on a recent visit with them we discussed their ability to “age in place” in their home. As maintaining a safe and healthy lifestyle becomes more challenging for the elderly, adjustments such as installing a walk-in shower and adding handrails in strategic places can make it easier for our loved ones to remain in their familiar environments and avoid assisted living or nursing home care indefinitely.

A reliable broadband Internet connection — such as that offered by your local telecommunications provider — can play a critical role in making this possible.

STAYING CONNECTED

Seniors can remain in their homes with more confidence when they can stay connected with their caregivers. Broadband enables such connectivity, but goes well beyond that by allowing seniors to connect to entertainment options, friends across the country and even health care providers.

FOCUS ON TELEMEDICINE

In fact, broadband's ability to help the elderly age in place is most notable in the realm of telemedicine. Thanks to the hard work of community-based telecommunications providers like yours, seniors have



access to high-quality health care support that can help them live more independently.

The Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) works with NTCA to advance an understanding of rural telecommunications issues. FRS published the white paper “Aging in Place and the Role of Broadband” in 2012, which highlights a number of telemedicine applications that are made possible by the high-speed Internet connections our rural telcos deliver to their communities. These include:

- Videoconferencing capabilities that allow doctors and patients to communicate over the Internet
- Remote health monitoring services that record vital signs, such as blood pressure and blood sugar levels, and relay that information to doctors and family members
- Systems that transmit large digital files such as X-rays and photos between technicians, specialists or primary care providers

And I believe this is just the beginning. As technology brings us new ways to care for ourselves, you can be assured that your local telecommunications provider will be there with the broadband access to keep you and your aging loved ones connected. ☺

AGING IN PLACE: FACTS & FIGURES

U.S. POPULATION AGE 65 AND OVER

- 2010 - 40.3 million
- 2020 - 55 million
- 2030 - 70 million
- 2050 - 88.5 million

87 PERCENT

of adults age 65 and over want to stay in their current home and community as they age, according to research from AARP.

\$17 BILLION

will be spent annually over the next three years on remodeling homes to help seniors age in place, according to the Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies.

INCREASINGLY CONNECTED

In 2000, 86 percent of adults 65 and older did not go online. Today, only 39 percent of that age group does not use the Internet, according to the Pew Research Center.

5 KEY AREAS FOR A BETTER LIFE

The AARP Public Policy Institute lists five areas where technology can help support the needs and ambitions of older adults:

- Personal fulfillment
- Health preservation
- Social connectedness
- Functional capability and activity
- Caregiver support

DON'T BE A PIRATE

Are you illegally downloading music and video from the Web?



The days of download services like Limewire and Napster are over, and free music, movies and television shows are off-limits. In fact, continued illegal downloading of copyrighted material can result in major fines or worse.

The Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) is a law criminalizing any device controlling access to copyrighted works.

Essentially, it means it's a crime to download any form of copyrighted media without paying.

While movies and books glorify piracy on the high seas, this new form of "digital piracy" can land illegal downloaders in a lot of trouble with the law — not to mention a computer filled with viruses.

Know The Facts: Your Guide to Understanding the DMCA

- ▶ **If you download copyrighted songs, albums, software, movies or any other media without paying for it, that is classified as a DMCA violation.** These products are not free — they are stolen.
- ▶ **There are several ways to legally access copyrighted material on the Internet.** Legitimate streaming services like Netflix and Hulu offer access to television shows and movies. iTunes, Google Play and Amazon allow subscribers access to music, videos, apps and games legally. With your broadband Internet connection, these services are easy to access, legal and virus-free.
- ▶ **Be aware that no one should contact you about a DMCA violation other than your Internet service provider.** Your provider will contact you with specific details, including the exact time and date of the violation, along with the title of the illegally
- downloaded material. Your provider will partner with you to make sure the violations don't happen again, as repeat violations can cause permanent termination of services. Any email or message about a violation not from your Internet service provider is likely a scam.
- ▶ **Having an encrypted wireless router is important to help protect yourself from DMCA violations.** When a router is unencrypted, you have no control over who uses your service. Also, it's important to monitor all users in your home who access the Internet. Be aware of teenagers' activity online, as they are classified as the most frequent offenders.
- ▶ **"Free" downloads are often loaded with viruses or malware that can bog down your computer or steal your personal information.** If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- ▶ **Not everything is copyrighted.** Some things are old enough to not be covered by copyright rules. Ideas, facts or discoveries are not considered to be tangible and would not be considered copyrighted material. Some software is "open source," meaning it can be downloaded and used for free. Occasionally, some producers will offer items for free under a "creative commons" license. These are usually detailed in the license or user agreement. These, however, are the exceptions. It's safe to assume that any major commercial album, movie, TV show or piece of software is copyrighted and can lead to trouble for unauthorized downloaders.
- ▶ **The artists, photographers, performers, producers, designers and developers who make the content that you love, depend on legitimate sales to fund their work.** If everyone stole their work, they wouldn't be able to create more of it. 📧

Exceptional speeds from WCTEL

Every month or two a news story will appear that looks at the so-called “digital divide” between big cities and rural areas like ours. This narrative paints a picture that rural Americans have a more difficult time getting reliable Internet access through broadband.



JEFF WILSON
Chief Executive Officer

While statistics may back up that idea in some parts of the country, I’m proud to say our area is the exception thanks to this cooperative and our new gigabit service.

WCTEL is proud to offer broadband speeds most urban residents only dream of!

In some of the recent numbers I’ve seen from the FCC, 94 percent of urban residents have access to broadband of at least 25 Mbps, compared to access for only 55 percent of people in rural America. From those figures, it would be easy to assume rural America has been left behind in today’s technology-driven, connected world.

But that’s not the case here in the Freshwater Coast region.

In fact only 8.9 percent of urban Americans and 3.7 percent of rural residents have access to the gigabit Internet service we have in Abbeville, McCormick and southern Anderson counties. As a WCTEL customer, you have access to Internet speeds that 91 percent of big-city residents don’t have!

We are proud to be the exception to those numbers because it means we’re serving our customers. But we’re also proud to be exceptional because it means our founders were right about banding together to create West Carolina Tel.

“As a WCTEL customer, you have access to Internet speeds that 91 percent of big-city residents don’t have!”

Cooperatives like ours were founded by local residents who knew a reliable communications network was important and were willing to bring such a network to our area.

The statistics clearly show

that corporate America is not meeting the needs of rural communities like ours. Companies focused on pleasing stockholders don’t see enough profit in our region to invest in building a network.

That’s where cooperatives like WCTEL come in. We answer to our customers, who are member-owners of the cooperative.

October is National Cooperative Month, which is a great time to think about our business model and how it benefits families and businesses in our area.

In a news release from the USDA published in July, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said “Broadband is fundamental to expanding economic opportunity and job creation in rural areas, and it is as vital to rural America’s future today as electricity was when USDA began bringing power to rural America 80 years ago.”

Sec. Vilsack is correct. Without access to broadband, our community would be at a disadvantage. And without WCTEL our area wouldn’t have such access.

Please join us in October (and throughout the year) in celebrating what our founders created and all the advantages we enjoy today because of their vision and dedication to their communities. ☑

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

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Produced for West Carolina Tel by:



On the Cover:



Fifteen-year-old Gabe Gable has been racing for 11 years and has set his sights on racing in the big leagues with NASCAR. See story Page 12.

Photo courtesy of
Doc Scruggs Race Photos.



Notes from the board

At recent meetings of the WCTEL Board of Directors, the directors:

- » Passed updated bylaws, effective July 1, 2015. These can be found online at: www.wctel.com.
- » Announced that WCTEL will be retiring \$1.6 million in capital credits, which will be mailed out by the end of September.
- » Heard from leaders at Savannah Lakes Village and the town of Lowndesville about the exciting things happening in the area.
- » Recognized WCTEL Directors Jane Stone (who represents Donalds), Jim Hester (who represents Calhoun Falls) and Ned McGill (who represents Starr) for receiving the Director Core Curriculum (DCC) Certificate from NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association. This Certificate is awarded to telco directors who complete the course requirements focusing on policy, technology, business and governance.

The Board would like to say a special thanks to Savannah Lakes Village and the town of Lowndesville for hosting board meetings. Board members are looking forward to having future board meetings around the service area.

TechLink ▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶

West Carolina's TechLink event is a great way to learn the basics of and get help with popular computer programs, websites and social media. Each month a different topic is featured and classes are held at all three West Carolina Tel offices. The classes are free and open to everyone.

- ▶ **September: Internet Navigation Basics**
- ▶ **October: eBay, Craigslist, Amazon, Paypal and more**



CHILDREN'S COSTUME CONTEST

Calling all ghouls, ghosts and goblins! West Carolina is hosting another Children's Costume Contest on Oct. 29 from 3 to 5 p.m. The contest, held at WCTEL's Abbeville, Iva and McCormick offices, is open to all kids ages 12 and younger. Contestants will receive a treat and have their photos taken. Photos will be posted to WCTEL's Facebook page, and the three photos with the most likes will receive a \$50 Toys R Us gift card (one gift card per family).



EVERY 14 SECONDS ...

... an older adult is seen in an emergency department for a fall-related injury. That's why the National Council on Aging is sponsoring Falls Prevention Awareness Day on Sept. 23.

The NCOA offers six tips to help prevent falls:

1. Exercise to keep good balance and flexibility.
2. Talk to your doctor about fall risks.
3. Ask your pharmacist if any medications you are taking may cause dizziness or balance problems.
4. Get your vision checked annually.
5. Keep your home safe by removing trip hazards, increasing lighting and installing handrails.
6. Talk with your family members and ask them for help with these steps.

If you or a loved one is at risk of falling, consider a Personal Emergency Response System (P.E.R.S.) from West Carolina as a way to increase safety and peace of mind in the event of a bad fall or other emergency. Kristen Turner is ready to help at 864-446-2111. P.E.R.S. systems start at \$21.95 per month.



CRAWFISH AND BRISKET:

Eating your way from the Big Easy to the Heart of Texas

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ANNE BRALY

New Orleans and nearby Austin, Texas, are both known for a fantastic, eclectic mix of cuisine. Foodies flock to both cities, but by sticking to the French Quarter or Austin's famed Sixth Street, they are missing out on a host of funky little roadside restaurants between the two. Here's a look at the culinary destinations on a foodie roadtrip from "The Big Easy" to "The Live Music Capital of the World."

HOUMA, LOUISIANA

44.8 miles via Highway 90

It takes no more than an hour from New Orleans to arrive in this town steeped in Cajun flavors, much like that found at Nancy's Seafood Shack (1226 Grand Caillou Road). The Gulf is close by, so frozen seafood is a travesty here.

"I learned how to cook from my grandma," says owner Doug Davis. His accent has a melodic cadence that screams Southern Louisiana. Even on days when the special is hamburger steak, the common becomes uncommon.

"Anything you find here has Cajun flair," Davis says. And if crawfish is in season, ask for instructions on the art of eating those little creatures.

NEW IBERIA, LOUISIANA

80 miles via Highway 90

As the drive north begins, Highway 90 traverses swamps and intersects fields of sugar cane. But eventually civilization returns, leading you to Brenda's Dine In and Take Out (411 West Pershing St.).

Soul food has a chameleon-like ability to absorb the flavors of whatever region



Brenda's Dine In and Take Out



TECH-SAVVY TRAVELER:

It's not difficult to find a great place to eat in places like New Orleans and Austin — the real challenge is deciding which restaurant to try first. From biscuits to brisket, mobile apps and websites like **Yelp** and **Zomato** can help you find the best place that serves your favorite dish. **Around Me** is a convenient app that helps you find fabulous food near you, wherever you happen to be.



in which it's served. At Brenda's, this comes in the form of Cajun favorites like shrimp stew and crawfish etouffee. But there's one food that transcends borders: fried chicken. Some say Brenda Placide's is the best for miles around. Her secret? "I make it with a lot of love," she says.

The restaurant is an unimposing structure. Inside, the dining room has simple tables and walls of photos, including a couple of Tommy Lee Jones from when he was in town filming a movie. "He loved my gumbo," Placide says.

For dessert, there's another stop about a mile away: KK's Cafe and Cakery (204 East Main St.).

"I get lots of tourists — international ones, too," says owner Kay Speer. Most come in as part of the Tabasco Food Tour, a multi-stop tour of area restaurants. At KK's, they're treated to top favorites: made-from-scratch praline or turtle cheesecake.

"I have a passion for sweets," Speer says. But the passion carries over toward the savory side of food served in the cafe, too. "We're very serious about our gumbo. Very."

BREAUX BRIDGE, LOUISIANA

25.6 miles via Highway 31

Breaux Bridge is a charming town that draws thousands annually to experience Acadian history and flavor at such places as Cafe des Amis (140 East Bridge St.).

On any given day, there are diners from around the globe who come to experience a mix of Cajun fusion, such as the crawfish pie. It's one of those oh-my-gosh dishes, a presentation of puff pastries smothered with crawfish cream sauce.

Just tell anyone you're going to Breaux Bridge for lunch or dinner and they'll ask, "Oh, are you going to des Amis?"



Cafe des Amis' crawfish pie



Darrell's Po' Boy

LAKE CHARLES, LOUISIANA

83.2 miles via Highway 90

Lake Charles is a good halfway point between New Orleans and Austin. Take a break from the road at Darrell's (119 West College St.). It's a sports bar with a minimalist approach, serving little more than po' boys. But there's one in particular that has become an addiction — Darrell's Special with ham, turkey and beef. What makes it different from a club sandwich? The gravy. It's easy to taste why it was voted the second-best sandwich in the state of Louisiana by onlyinyourstate.com. It's a monster of flavor that comes with a side of napkins.

BEAUMONT, TEXAS

57.2 miles via Highway 90

The backroad between Lake Charles and Beaumont takes you through a series of small towns. As you travel west, it doesn't take long before Highway 90 becomes I-10 and the huge "Welcome to Texas" sign looms.

This state-line city has a restaurant blending Louisiana and Texas cultures at Tia Juanita's Fish Camp (5555 Calder Ave.). Suzy Lalonde, a Cajun, met Ricky Martinez, a Hispanic man in the restaurant rehab business.

What is it that draws the crowds? Boudin, a rustic Louisiana sausage, made in-house and used to make boudin quesadillas, or nachos topped with French cream sauce that Lalonde incorporated into the traditional Tex-Mex dish.

There's fine dining, too: blackened tilapia Pontchartrain, salmon with caper-lime sauce and, for Sunday brunch, French toast bananas Foster or Chi-Chi's Eggs Benedict.

ATASCOCITA, TEXAS

76.4 miles via Highways 90 and 1960

If you're in Texas, barbecue is a must, and as you pass through Atascocita, follow the smoke signals to Tin Roof BBQ (18918 Town Center Blvd.).

These guys know how to smoke the daylight out of a brisket. And the jalapeno peppers they add to smoked sausage will make your tastebuds sing.

Barbecue is a regional thing, co-owner Brek Webber explains. In Texas, you'll find mostly beef-based 'cue. And here, the barbecue isn't sauced. If you want sauce, add it yourself.

Though new, the building looks like it's from Texas pioneer days — aged wood, a big Texas steer out front, a deck with picnic tables and a stage for weekend hoe-downs, all capped with a big tin roof.



Tin Roof BBQ

BASTROP, TEXAS

From Atascocita to Bastrop: 145 miles via Sam Houston Parkway and Highway 290

The trip from Atascocita into Bastrop is a drive-thru history lesson over an arid landscape that quickly evolves into one with lots of greenery and big loblolly pines that lead you to The Roadhouse (2804 Highway 21).

In 2009, Texas Monthly voted the Jalapeno-Cream Cheese Burger one of its 50 Greatest Burgers in Texas.

"It's funny how the gourmet burger scene is coming on strong in chain restaurants," says owner Amy Bruder. "They're trying to recreate what we've been doing for years."

Roadhouse is about more than a good burger. It's about hand-cut steaks, grilled pork chops and green chili chicken, plus breakfast on weekends. 📍

By luck or by design

Graphic designer enjoying career after switching from accounting

BY ANDY JOHNS

Like many seventh graders, Andy Johnston took a “vocational index test,” to indicate what careers might best suit his talents. When he got the results, one of his top options was a graphic designer.

He didn’t listen.

A few years later, after graduating from college with an accounting degree, he began his career working with numbers — but he wouldn’t stay there for long.

“I found out that while I could do that, I didn’t love it,” he says.

During his first few years in the workforce, Johnston began handling some basic volunteer graphic design work for his church and a few other design-related projects.

Finally, he decided accounting wasn’t for him, and he took a temporary graphics job in the marketing department at Self Regional Healthcare.

Four years later, he’s the owner of AJ Design and Marketing, LLC., with an impressive list of local clients.

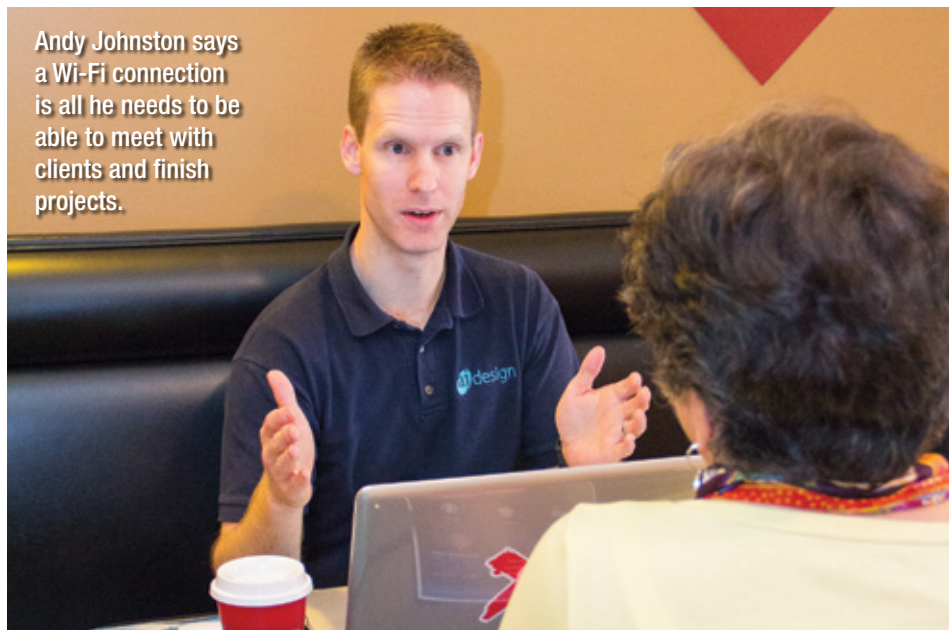
In addition to Self Regional Healthcare, the longtime Abbeville resident has worked for Abbeville First Bank, the John de la Howe School, the Freshwater Coast Community Foundation and the Montgomery Center for Family Medicine.

He says the visuals are important, but the bigger part of his job is creative problem-solving.

“They’re not just paying for artwork; they’re paying for communication problem solutions,” he says. “That’s where the value is.”

The Web development, he says, is just a “requirement of providing creative services in 2015.”

In addition to established local clients, he’s helped some smaller startup companies build an online presence, including Sugar Boutique in Greenwood.



Andy Johnston says a Wi-Fi connection is all he needs to be able to meet with clients and finish projects.

Thanks to the Web, online retailers have more tools available to reach customers than ever before, he says. “It seems like it’s easier than it’s ever been to hang a shingle and start a store,” he says.

WEB-BASED BUSINESS

Technology, especially the Internet, is the key for Johnston to do his job. He uses cloud computing to save and share his files on servers over the Internet.

“The cloud goes with you anywhere,” he says. “Coffeehouses are my satellite offices. Work can happen anywhere.”

It all depends on a fast, reliable broadband connection from WCTEL.

“Instead of click and wait, it’s moving on the speed of the work that I’m doing,” Johnston says. “It is ample to do everything I need to do quickly.”

While download speeds are important for anyone streaming movies or downloading files, upload speeds are even more important for someone like Johnston who is uploading photos, graphics and other files. While many providers can offer nice

download speeds, only a fiber network like WCTEL’s can provide the upload speeds needed for publishing online.

“That upload pipe is critical to content creators,” Johnston says.

Recently, Johnston was talking with a videographer in Greenwood who complained about slow upload speeds. When the man learned he could get gigabit speeds with WCTEL in Abbeville, he said he would consider relocating to Abbeville.

“Everything is so Internet-dependent these days,” Johnston says. “It’s just become entrenched in the way we do things.”

Most importantly, West Carolina’s network allows him to do his job in Abbeville, rather than having to move or commute.

“This is a great place to raise a family,” he says.

Johnston and his wife, Jennifer, have four kids ages 10, 9, 6 and 3. “When I’m not working, I’m at church or the baseball fields,” he says. ☺

ENGAGING ENTREPRENEURS

New extension program aims to help local business startups

BY ANDY JOHNS

Wilder Ferreira has helped businesses get better for a long time — no matter what continent he and the business are on.

Growing up in Brazil, Ferreira worked at his family's auto parts shop. As he grew older, he studied computer science and eventually wrote software the family store still uses to manage its parts inventory.

Since those early days in Brazil, he's earned degrees from the Pontifical Catholic University of Goiás, Auburn University and Clemson University and has begun working as an extension economist with Clemson. Now, Ferreira is bringing his creative problem-solving skills and expertise in the beef market and supply chain to Abbeville, McCormick and southern Anderson counties in order to help business owners and potential entrepreneurs grow the region's economy.

"Whoever has an idea can put it on our plate and we'll look at it," he says.

The program is supported by a grant from the Freshwater Coast Community Foundation and the Clemson Extension Agency. West Carolina Tel provides office space for Ferreira.

Feasibility studies to determine the likely success of an entrepreneur's idea is a major focus of the work. Ferreira and his two student workers plan to do several such studies in three years at no charge to the entrepreneurs. "Studies that cost \$10,000 — we'll be doing free," he says.

The goal is to make the region into an entrepreneurship-friendly community, and state officials hope to use the new program



Wilder Ferreira hopes to help both existing and new business thrive.

as a model to roll out in other areas of South Carolina. "I haven't seen anything like this," Ferreira says.

Ferreira is excited about the approach to economic development. Instead of working to bring in businesses from other areas, he hopes to help the Freshwater Coast "grow its own entrepreneurs."

EXISTING BUSINESSES

In addition to helping start new businesses, Ferreira hopes to help existing businesses thrive.

A significant base for Abbeville County's economy comes from food production, particularly beef. In McCormick, tourism from fishing and other water sports is a significant economic driver.


Ferreira says he would love to create some type of food production summit in Abbeville so farmers and other producers could come together to leverage the local resources. "It's mainly putting people together," Ferreira says. "Everybody is doing something. It's just not coordinated."

One idea, he says, is to promote beef coming from the region under a specific

brand similar to Kobe beef, Wisconsin cheese, Vermont syrup, Vidalia onions or Chilton peaches. Other ideas include creating community farmers markets for buying and selling locally grown produce, developing a licensed, commercial-style kitchen where local growers can package food, and building an online database of local growers that restaurateurs and grocers can search for locally grown produce each week.

Farther south in McCormick County, Ferreira is looking into the creation of a fish hatchery along the banks of the Savannah River, greenhouse farms for produce and hunting guide services.

Ferreira is also available by appointment for consultations with business owners who have encountered a problem or who are exploring growth options.

Lee Logan, chairman of the board of the West Carolina Rural Telephone Cooperative, will lead an advisory committee overseeing the program. "We have to continue to make the rural communities as viable as they can be," Logan says. "We want to enable the people of our community to make a better future for themselves." 

CAR TALK

What will readers find at your blog?

Joseph Scott: My blog talks about the stuff car guys and gals want to discuss — you know, the watercooler kind of talk. Topics include the fastest cars, the best classic muscle car of the day, Ford vs. Chevy, or what times the cars ran at the drag strip last weekend. I try to cover the car show and cruise-in scene with the latest trends in the hobby. I always try to relate to whatever topics a car guy wants to talk about. Each year, I cover some of the bigger car shows in the Southeast with a story and photos.

How has blogging changed your life?

JS: I guess cars have always been a part of my life story, but starting a blog to tell stories has made me look at the car scene from a different perspective. I'm kind of surprised at how many folks read my articles and give me good feedback.

What was your first car, and why did you pick it?

JS: A Volkswagen Scirocco. It was a two-door hatchback and had a four-speed manual shift. My mother taught me to drive a stick. It was burgundy metallic and served me well for almost nine years. It was nothing special, but it gave me the freedom of driving and the independence of my own set of wheels to express my style.

What questions should a buyer ask before buying an older-model car?

JS: A couple of key considerations would be:

- Where did the car spend most of its life? Down south in a wetter climate? In the West with its dry climate? Or up north where it's colder with snow and ice conditions? Older cars can and will rust out really bad if they were not maintained correctly.



• Also, do some research on the year and model car you are considering buying to see some of the typical issues it may have. Some cars just seem to be plagued with more problems than others, so if it's a car whose replacement or original parts are tougher to find, you will need to factor that into your restoration budget.

What's a good first car for someone who may want to get into car restoration?

JS: Typically the Ford Mustang and the Chevy Camaro are cars that many folks love to fix up and restore because there are so many places nowadays to buy parts, and their costs are fairly affordable if you search around. Old pickup trucks are another easy market to get into if you want to restore one of those because many of them can be found at good prices.



OTHER CAR BLOGS YOU MIGHT LIKE:

► www.askpatty.com

A blog with reliable advice and tips for women who want to learn more about cars — buying and selling, repair, car care and safety.

► www.autosavant.com

A team of writers worldwide share their extensive love of cars.

Of all the cars made today, which ones do you think will stand the test of time and be collectibles in the future?

JS: The Shelby Mustangs. Carroll Shelby had such an impact on our car culture that his name still carries so much respect, and the limited production Shelby Mustangs built in the last few years will fetch top dollar in the next 20-25 years if they are original and have been maintained well. Another car that may be a sleeper and surprise some folks is the Pontiac Solstice. It was only produced from 2005 to 2009 by General Motors' Pontiac division, which is now out of business. It was a sleek little two-door coupe (or convertible) that still looks good today. They only made a little over 65,000 of them. 🗨️

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 November/December issue, we'll focus on food blogs.

Get “THE SHOT” this fall

BY MELISSA SMITH

Autumn is the perfect time to get out and capture beautiful, colorful photos before the cold of winter. Green leaves turn to varying shades of gold, vermillion and orange, and the sky takes on a deeper hue of blue. To make sure you get the best photos possible, give these tips a try.

No matter what kind of camera you have, photographing in direct, harsh sunlight is not ideal. To capture autumn’s glory in the most stunning light, plan to shoot at sunrise or just before the sun sets, depending on what direction your subject is facing. For example, if shooting portraits, avoid situating your subject in front of the light, because that will form a silhouette. The time immediately before the sun sets is known as the “golden hour” and will give a very warm glow to your subject and highlight the reds and oranges of fall. Planning accordingly will ensure you get the best light.

Also, learn to appreciate overcast days. The diffused light from cloud cover can really make the color in your images pop.

Adding a tripod to your collection of camera equipment could really come in handy, especially when photographing landscapes. For those using DSLRs — the more expensive cameras with detachable lenses — selecting a slower shutter speed is beneficial in certain situations, such as slowing down moving objects (i.e. “misty” affect of water in a waterfall) or

night shots. However, slowing the shutter speed allows more light to enter the camera because the shutter is open longer. This will make the photo blurry if the camera moves, so a tripod is recommended for stability. It eliminates camera-shake caused by a photographer holding the camera.

Whether you’re using a smartphone, DSLR or a handy point-and-shoot, a great photo is all in the composition. **Try using the rule of thirds when composing a photo. Think of an image divided into thirds, with two vertical and two horizontal imaginary lines**



forming three rows. Place important elements in the photo on or near an intersection of the lines. Also, check your camera, because some display the grid in the viewfinder.

Consider using a filter while shooting with your DSLR. Polarizing filters are budget-friendly and give rich contrast to your fall photos. Have you ever noticed

that colors become more vibrant when you put sunglasses on? Think of a filter as a pair of sunglasses for the camera. It will suppress glare and enhance reflective surfaces and contrast. [☞](#)



» TIPS JUST FOR SMARTPHONE USERS:

- Use apps on your smartphone to make adjustments to the contrast or sharpness of your image. Apps such as VSCOcam, Aviary and Afterlight offer editing options and filters other than the basic camera app.
- When taking photos with your smartphone, tap the screen to make sure the subject is in focus. You can also lighten an area of the photo that is dark by tapping when the light bulb appears. This will help set your best exposure.

Teenage driver sets pace for successful career

BY MELISSA SMITH

Living life in the fast lane is nothing new to Gabe Gable.

The McCormick, South Carolina, native is a standout on the dirt track on Saturday nights. So far in his career, he has notched almost 30 wins and has become a mainstay in victory lane at Modoc Raceway.

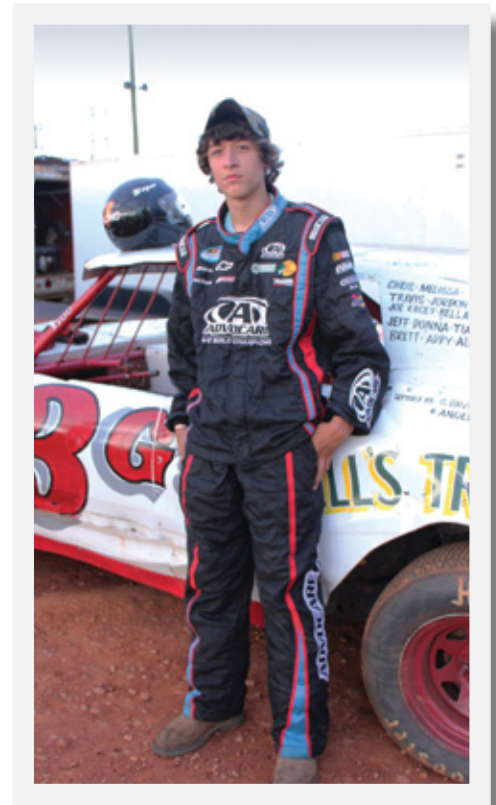
However, his success on the racetrack is only part of what makes this hardworking racer exceptional. What's most special about him? He's only 15 years old and is just able to legally drive on the street, but

that hasn't slowed him down on the track.

"When I was 5, I would go to the dirt track races with my family and say I wanted to do that one day," Gable says.

He began go-kart racing as a 4-year-old and continued until he was 8. "We bought a regular dirt track car and raced for two years, and then moved up into the stock V8 car," he says.

The difference between a dirt track car and a stock car is that the dirt track car is more technical to operate. Navigating the turns on the banked dirt track while the



Gable and other racers gear up for races in Modoc throughout the summer.

car is completely sideways is much more difficult than it looks, and Gable had to adjust.

Adjusting is something important for Gable in his line of work. One mistake can lead to scary situations.

“When I was little and racing go-karts, I was in first place, got loose and spun around and knocked out a fence. I flipped over backward,” Gable says. “But, I actually just got back into the car and kept racing.”

Now, Gable has his own pit crew and sponsors — though he still helps work on his own car.

Gable says the most challenging part of racing is not physical. It’s the mental aspect. “I start preparing a week ahead of the race,” Gable says. “I start setting my mind to it, thinking about what can happen and how I can be better prepared for it.”

Gable’s entire family provides as a support group, but his biggest fan is his grandfather, George Gable, who also shares a love of racing. “He used to drive back in the ’80s but doesn’t anymore,” Gable says. “When I do something wrong, he shows me how to correct it and makes me a better driver.”

George certainly knows what it takes to drive and doesn’t hesitate to pass along that knowledge to his grandson. “It’s real special; I really love that he is driving,” George says.

Racing runs in the Gable family. “I’ve got two brothers who used to race, and one still does,” George says.

George knew Gable would carry on the family tradition when they raced go-karts. “I just kept watching him and saw that he was really progressing, and I saw that he has what it takes to make a really great driver,” he says.

George is a native of McCormick, South Carolina, where he owns a construction company. “I ran dirt tracks when I was younger and won quite a few races,” he says. Like Gable, he drove a stock V8 car. According to George, people who recruit



Now 15, Gable already has years of experience as a race car driver. He started kart racing at 4 years old and graduated to bigger cars as a preteen.



So far, Gable and his No. 3 car have notched 30 wins, primarily at Modoc Raceway.

Photos courtesy of Doc Scruggs Race Photos.

for NASCAR look at competitors doing well on dirt tracks at the level Gable now races.

And Gable, who works with his grandfather in the construction business and is a student at Longcane Academy, dreams of racing in NASCAR one day.

“Basically, you just have to be spotted,” Gable says. “You have to start running big races, and if you win, they may send you a letter saying they want you to come drive. I’m just trying to get spotted so I can be recognized.”

His favorite driver is Dale Earnhardt Jr. Not only does he have his sights set on a NASCAR goal, but he also remains a big fan. “My race suit is signed by Ty Dillon,

Richard Childress’ grandson. He’s the Nationwide driver. I’m big fan. I met him once in Augusta, Georgia,” Gable says.

When he isn’t racing in South Carolina, Gable likes to go to NASCAR races in Talladega, Alabama, and Darlington and Charlotte, North Carolina. But, most of his time is spent at his home track, Modoc Raceway.

Gable says his friends think it’s “pretty cool” that he races, especially since it takes so much time dedicated to practice and mental preparedness.

“To some people, racing is just something to do, but it’s what I live for,” Gable says. 🗨️

MODOC MADNESS

The Modoc Raceway has thrilling races scheduled through October. Visit modocraceway.com for more details.

CATFISH STAR IN HOLLYWOOD

Some venues are so deeply etched into the collective consciousness of northern Alabamians that they have become a permanent part of the terrain. Such can be said for Mud Creek Fish Camp and Bar-B-Que. It plays a starring role in Hollywood — Alabama, that is.

So what separates a fish restaurant from a fish camp? For one thing, a fish camp is usually family-owned. Second — and most obvious — fish camps must have a massively huge fish decorating the walls.

Both hold true for Mud Creek.

The restaurant was opened in 1946 by Lester “Leck” Carver; his wife, Elsa; son, Bill; and daughter-in-law, Nell. When Leck and Elsa retired in the late 1970s, Bill and Nell took over. When Bill and Nell retired, their son, Billy, and son-in-law, Gerry Teal, took over. And that’s where things stand to this day. It would be tough to find a more “family” business than that.

Now, picture a 200-seat restaurant — expanded from its early days when it seated a mere 140 fish-loving patrons — with panelled walls sporting a few deer



Despite its growth, Mud Creek keeps that fish camp feel.



Gerry Teal, left, and Billy Carver have made sure the family business continues to thrive in North Alabama.

heads and a few sailfish and swordfish reproductions with views of Gunterville Lake from every table. If you can take your eyes off the view and the other wall decorations, you’ll see it: a giant 13-pound bass. Teal caught it, made a reproduction of it and hung it for all to admire.

“I feel certain it will never happen again,” he says.

Six days a week, Tuesdays through Sundays, the staff serves up some of the best catfish on the planet, as well as barbecue. The restaurant was recently honored with inclusion in the newly formed Alabama Barbecue Hall of Fame, one of just 29 barbecue restaurants in the state.

“We sell about 200 pounds of catfish a week,” Teal says. That comes in second to the massive amounts of pork butts they go through to make their barbecue. “We sell about 500 pounds of that each week.”

The original recipe for the catfish is about as down-home as the restaurant: a cornmeal/flour-based batter with a little salt and pepper added.

“People sometimes ask: ‘What’s the secret to good catfish?’ It’s really no secret at all,” Teal says.

It’s a simple equation: Take the best catfish you can find — in Mud Creek’s case, it comes from the Mississippi Delta — then cook it in the best oil you can find

and fry it at a perfect 350 degrees. The sum of all that comes to great catfish that gets great reviews in person and online.

Each plate comes with two sides, one of the most common being coleslaw, made from a recipe developed by Shorty Bishop who helped out at the restaurant when it first opened. The baked beans with the addition of a little pulled pork in the mix let you sample the ’cue along with your catfish.

“We must be doing something right because we’re still going strong after 69 years of business,” Teal says. ☑

IF YOU GO

Mud Creek Fish Camp & Bar-B-Que
844 County Road 213
Hollywood, AL
Phone: 256-259-2493



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.

A FINE FILLET WITH ALL THE FIXIN'S



Editor's Note: Mud Creek Fish Camp prepares its baked beans and coleslaw in bulk. These recipes have been reduced.

MUD CREEK'S ORIGINAL FRIED CATFISH

Catfish fillets
Equal parts flour and cornmeal
Salt and pepper (generous portions
of each)
Good quality oil (such as Crisco or
peanut oil)

Combine flour, cornmeal, salt and pepper. Add oil to heavy skillet, such as cast iron, until it reaches about halfway up sides. Heat oil to 350 degrees. A good test is to flick a little of the dry breading into the oil, and if it sizzles, the oil is ready. Dredge catfish fillets in flour mixture, shaking gently to remove excess. Lay a couple of fillets gently in hot oil and fry for 2-4 minutes, depending on thickness of fillets. Turn fillets

with spatula and cook for another 2-4 minutes or until golden brown. Remove and keep warm in low oven while frying remaining fillets.

MUD CREEK'S COLESLAW

2/3 gallon mayonnaise
1 pint vinegar
Salt, to taste
3-1/3 cups sugar
1 head cabbage, shredded
1 bag carrots, shredded

Combine mayonnaise, vinegar, salt and sugar, stirring until well blended. Place cabbage and carrots in large bowl. Add mayonnaise mixture a little at a time until the slaw reaches correct consistency. This will depend on the moisture content of the cabbage as well as your personal

preference. Stir to combine. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

MUD CREEK'S BAKED BEANS

1 (No. 10) can (116 ounces) pork
and beans
1-1/3 cups tomato sauce
1-1/3 cups moderately sweet barbecue
sauce
2/3 cup chopped bell peppers
2/3 cup chopped onions
1/4 pound chopped barbecue pork
2-3 tablespoons brown sugar, or to
taste

Combine all ingredients and bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes or until thick and heated through. 📺



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