

CONNECTED



Hitching post

Wedding venues vow
to go beyond

**GROWING
GREENWOOD**

**RETIRING
THOROUGHBREDS**



By SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO
NTCA–The Rural Broadband Association

Seven decades of service

Supporting rural communities through better communications

NTCA proudly represents more than 850 telecommunications companies across rural America as they provide a variety of services including robust broadband, landline, wireless, data, video and IT support. June 1 marks our 70th anniversary, and it’s a perfect opportunity to reflect upon how far this life-changing industry has traveled.

The independent telephone industry began to develop throughout rural America in the 1890s, largely because these regions were ignored by large national providers.

After World War II, as the telephone’s popularity surged and the value of connectivity was recognized, Congress passed legislation to extend loans to bring telephone systems to rural communities.

With funding on the way, the need for an independent national organization to represent small telephone companies was at an all-time high and, in 1954, NTCA was born.

Eight rural telephone systems in seven states became the original members and got to work advocating to grow the industry.

Over the last few decades, NTCA has focused on the evolution of our members from telecommunications to broadband providers as well as numerous key priorities for rural America, including building a sustainable future for universal service, building Smart Rural Communities, providing cybersecurity tools, being the catalyst for policy engagement and so much more.

As NTCA celebrates its platinum anniversary, we are excited to see what is next for this vibrant industry as it supports rural America and beyond. 📧

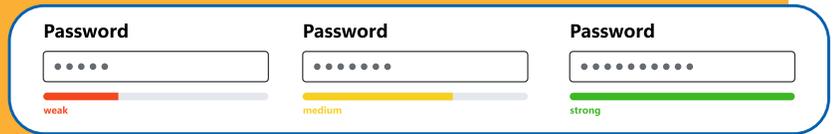
3 tips for password security



Illustration by origami8/Adobe Stock

Passwords are everywhere. From health care and school to work and play, software, websites, essential services and more, most of our daily online activities require a secure login.

The U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency offers three tips to better password security — and a good password follows all three.



1 MAKE THEM LONG

At least 16 characters — longer is stronger!

2 MAKE THEM RANDOM

Option 1: Use a random string of mixed-case letters, numbers and symbols. For example:
cXmnZK65rf*&DaaD or Yuc8\$RikA34%ZoPPao98t



Option 2: Create a memorable phrase of five to seven unrelated words. Then, get creative with spelling and the addition of a number or symbol.

- » Strong: HorsePurpleHatRunBaconShoes
- » Stronger: HorsPerpleHatRunBayconShoos
- » Strongest: HorsPerpleHat#1RunBayconShoos

3 MAKE THEM UNIQUE

Use a different strong password for each account. For example:

- » **Bank:** k8dfh8c@Pfv0gB2
- » **Email account:** LmvF%swVR56s2mW
- » **Social media account:** e246gs%mfS#3tv6



Fortunately, password managers can help you keep up with these longer, more complex codes. Options range from tools already in your web browser to commercial software.



The 30-second commute

Remote work can be a wonderful opportunity

To those who spend long hours in an office, on the road or in the field, working from home might sound like a dream. And, for some, it is.

It's estimated that by 2025 about 22% of the U.S. workforce — or 32.6 million people — will work remotely. A 2023 study by Forbes Advisor found 12.7% of the nation's full-time employees work from home, while another 28% work a hybrid model, dividing the work week between home and the office.

Working from home can help save money on gas, as well as wear and tear on vehicles. The flip side, however, is being face to face with household chores all day. The isolating nature of solo work can also be a challenge, as can establishing the distinction between work and home life.

TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

- It makes sense that fast, reliable internet is the first component to remote work success. If your link to the working world is compromised, you can't get anything done. A backup location is another must, just in case a storm

knocks out the electricity or your peace and quiet is temporarily disturbed.

- Experts advise setting up a dedicated workspace — not in an area like your living room or bedroom — free from distractions, preferably with a door. While it might be tempting to work from the bed or couch, soft surfaces don't provide proper support and can lead to headaches, strains and arthritis. It's also important to consider how your workspace will appear to your co-workers and clients during on-screen meetings.
- Creating a routine is vital for remote work. If your family and neighbors know your schedule, they'll be less likely to present distractions.
- The opportunities for remote jobs are out there, you just need to know where to look. Computer tech jobs continue to be the most common opportunities, as are marketing, accounting, HR/recruiting and customer service.

REMOTE WORK RED FLAGS

When searching for work-from-home opportunities, it's important to avoid pitfalls. If the job sounds too good to be true, it usually is. Be wary if:

- The ad says things like, "unlimited earning potential," "investment opportunities and seminars" or "quick money."

- The job requires upfront expenses from you.
- You're asked for personal information — Social Security number, birthdate, banking account numbers, etc. — early in the interview process or as part of your initial application.
- You are offered a job without an interview or anyone contacting or asking for references. 🗨️



Pros of working from home

- Better work-life balance
- More freedom
- Improved employee mindset
- Decreased wardrobe budget
- Comforts of home
- No commute, less wear and tear on vehicle
- Self-regulated hours
- Flexible schedule

The West Carolina Tel Connected is a bimonthly newsletter published by West Carolina Telephone, © 2024. It is distributed without charge to all members/owners of the cooperative.

Serving the underserved

Our work continues

This past spring, we had the honor of participating in press conferences announcing sweeping progress for underserved areas of Anderson, Pickens and Abbeville counties thanks to \$44 million in federal grants designated by the South Carolina Broadband Office, or SCBBO.



JEFF WILSON
Chief Executive Officer

Soon residents in parts of these counties will have access to high-speed fiber internet through our subsidiary WCFIBER and Upcountry Fiber, a partnership between Blue Ridge Electric Co-op and WCFIBER. The grant allows us to continue to fulfill our mission to help bridge the digital divide where little to no internet access exists. An additional \$17 million from WCFIBER and Upcountry Fiber will be invested to extend the reach of these projects.

Nearly 3,000 Anderson County, 1,400 Pickens County and 125 Abbeville County addresses identified by SCBBO that currently do not have access to broadband internet service are included in the grant. Construction has begun. By the end of 2025, those addresses included in the SCBBO grant, and an additional 17,000 addresses surrounding the areas, will be

able to sign up for broadband internet service through either WCFIBER or Upcountry Fiber, depending on their location.

Upon completion of construction mainly funded by this grant, WCFIBER and Upcountry Fiber together will have invested approximately \$71 million since 2021 in making broadband available to areas that have been previously underserved. The resulting construction of about 3,200 miles of fiber will pass nearly 47,000 eligible addresses, mainly residential.

We are so thankful to Jim Stritzinger and his team in the South Carolina Broadband Office for their efforts to modernize the infrastructure in these underserved communities and entrusting us to be a part of that effort. Their diligence and commitment to bridging the digital divide is not simply their profession, it's truly a calling.

Additionally, county and state officials have advocated strongly for their communities, and we are deeply grateful for their efforts to advance this life-changing technology across South Carolina.

Once these projects are completed, no matter where you are within the grant footprints, you can expect to receive exceptional fiber internet service from either WCFIBER or Upcountry Fiber.

Utility cooperatives like ours have a long history of serving our neighbors in traditionally underserved areas. These grants not only benefit people in their homes but also make it possible for them to have access to better health care, education and job opportunities, which helps to build a better, more competitive community for everyone.



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

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On the Cover:



Sam McCall dips his wife, Emily for a kiss and a dramatic exit, after their nuptials at a local wedding venue.. See stories Pages 9 and 12.

Introducing our **Streaming Care Program**

WCTEL is aware of the financial strain families face due to the unprecedented TV programmer rate increases at the beginning of 2024. While we can't control programmers' rates, we believe in providing alternatives, and that's where streaming comes in. Streaming offers a more affordable option, allowing you to choose from various services and packages that suit your needs.

As a special promotion, WCTEL is excited to offer a complimentary one-month subscription to Hulu + Live TV for customers who upgrade to our Gig speed package. Hulu + Live TV provides access to live TV programs, Hulu's on-demand library, ESPN+ and Disney+, offering a diverse range of content for our customers to enjoy.

Understanding that transitioning to streaming can be challenging, we've introduced the Streaming Care Program, an in-home support service designed to help set you up for streaming success, available for \$100. For more information or to schedule, please call our offices at 864-446-2111.

At WCTEL, we are committed to offering quality services and ensuring our customers have the support and resources needed to navigate the evolving entertainment landscape. Join us in embracing the future of streaming with our new Streaming Care Program.



Reflecting on **Mother's Day, Father's Day**

In celebration of Mother's Day and Father's Day, WCTEL honors parents of all kinds. From biological mothers and fathers to adoptive parents, stepparents and guardians, we extend our gratitude for the diverse roles you play in shaping lives.

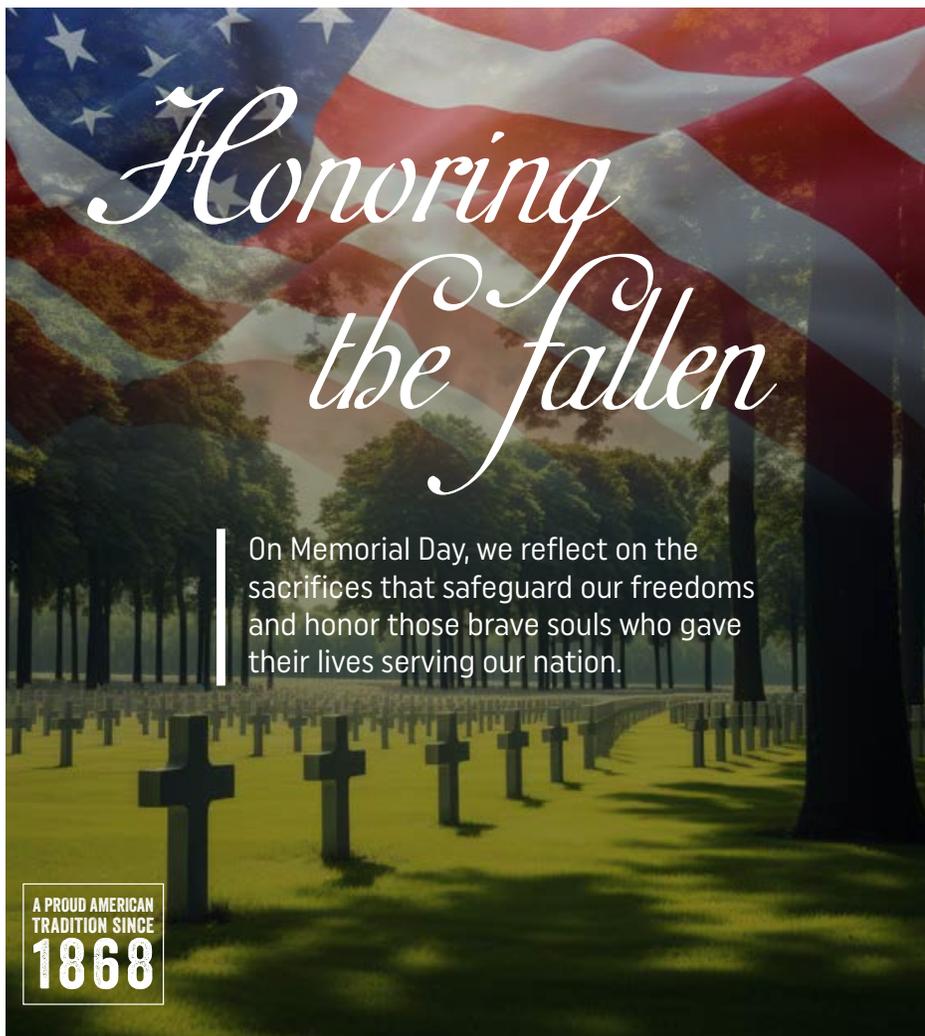
Recognizing that not everyone's journey is the same, we pay tribute to those who have lost parents, acknowledging the strength it takes to navigate that path.

We also honor individuals who may not have children but contribute significantly to the lives of others as mentors, caregivers and pillars of support. We strongly believe that you can be a parent without having a child. The act of parenting is universal and seen through widespread examples across this world.

We cherish and uplift the spirit of parenting in all its forms. Thank you for what you do!

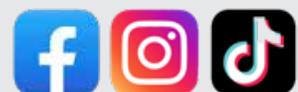
Holiday office closures

WCTEL's offices will close on Monday, May 27, in observance of Memorial Day.



Follow us on social media

on Facebook, Instagram and TikTok.



OLD FRIENDS, NEW LIVES

THOROUGHBREDS FIND REFUGE AFTER RACING

Story by KATHY DENES

Two former star athletes — fierce rivals in their youth, when they raced neck and neck to world renown — enjoyed the spotlight together recently during an unbridled celebration of their 30th birthdays. There was no sign of the competitive spirit that once drove them. Instead, they displayed the calm that comes with finding greener pastures on the sprawling Kentucky farm where they both live.

Retired racehorses Silver Charm and Touch Gold are the very definition of Old Friends — which is the name of the group that houses them and more than 250 other thoroughbreds. Visitors to Old Friends' 236-acre Dream Chase Farm in Georgetown, Kentucky, get to meet these majestic retirees. Since its founding in 2003 by Michael Blowen, a former Boston Globe film critic, Old Friends has welcomed about 15,000 visitors for guided tours each year.

Silver Charm, who won the first two legs of the 1997 Triple Crown, enjoys retirement at Old Friends' Georgetown, Kentucky, farm.



Photos by Laura Battles



ABOVE AND LEFT: Guests meet Touch Gold at the Belmont champion's 30th birthday party.

FAR LEFT: Old Friends founder Michael Blowen addresses guests at the birthday celebration for former rival racehorses Touch Gold and Silver Charm.

MEET THE CHAMPIONS

- Go to oldfriendsequine.org/visit to schedule a tour.
- Walking tours, 90 minutes:
 - » General — \$30 per person, up to 20 people, no children younger than 10
 - » Founder's — \$100 per person, up to 15 people, led by Old Friends founder Michael Blowen, no children under 10
 - » Private — By appointment, \$75 per person with volunteer tour guide, \$200 per person with Blowen as tour guide, up to 10 people, no charge for children 11 and under
- Driving option, three hours:
 - » Every Horse on the Farm — \$150 per person, up to five people meet all the equine residents of Dream Chase Farm, led by Old Friends photographer Laura Battles, no children
 - » Buses and groups of more than 10 people, call 502-863-1775 for tour options.

SANCTUARY

The distance between Louisville's Churchill Downs and the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation Sanctuary Farm at Chestnut Hall in Prospect is only 15 miles. But for the thoroughbreds who call the farm home, it's a very long journey.

This sanctuary and event venue was created in 2021 by the TRF, a national group working to save thoroughbred horses from neglect, abuse and slaughter and providing lifelong sanctuary after their racing days are done. The farm is not open to the public, but tours can be booked through private appointment.

Visit trfinc.org for details about tours and any planned events, like the May Front Porch Summer Concert Series outside the historic Chestnut Hall farmhouse. 📞

RETRAIN, REHOME

Other groups are also hard at work for these animals, rescuing, retraining and rehoming them after their exit from racing. For the past decade, the Thoroughbred Aftercare Alliance has helped fund the efforts of 86 such groups across the United States, including some based in Lexington, Kentucky.

One of those Lexington organizations, New Vocations, has placed more than 8,000 rehabilitated and retrained retired racehorses in adoptive homes since 1992. Another, the all-volunteer CANTER USA, has transitioned more than 25,000 horses. And for 20 years, the thoroughbreds served by the Secretariat Center at Kentucky Horse Park have been placed in new homes and in a range of new jobs, from therapeutic riding programs to mounted police units.

Providing a safe and secure retirement for thoroughbreds past their racing prime is an expensive endeavor, and most organizations doing this kind of work rely heavily, or sometimes exclusively, on donations. Horse sponsorships, monetary gifts, working as a volunteer, shopping at their online stores, fundraiser participation and buying "wish list" items are a few ways to help. Scheduling tours is another way, and it's the most fun!

Cultivating growth

New collaboration and direction at Greenwood Chamber

Story by RACHEL BROWN KIRKLAND

This spring, Trentsie Williams will again join in the excitement as Greenwood prepares for the annual South Carolina Festival of Flowers. Forklifts and flatbed trailers will move the greenery out of storage as businesses get ready for droves of visitors.

But this time, she has a year under her belt as president and CEO of the Greenwood Chamber of Commerce, which hosts the event. The festival draws more than 100,000 people each year and generates more than \$3 million in economic impact, especially during its main weekend, slated for June 6-9. Beginning her second year at the helm of the chamber, Trentsie embraces the colorful history of a place that began more than 200 years ago.

In 1823, John McGehee and his wife, Charlotte, built a summer house between Abbeville and Cambridge. They are recognized as the settlers of Woodville, a village that sprouted around the homestead they named Green Wood. A few decades later, in 1850, the village became Greenwood.

POSITIVE OUTLOOK

Trentsie grew up in Greenwood County. After earning an accounting degree from Florida's Pensacola Christian College, she returned to Greenwood, working with two nonprofit agencies, GLEAMNS Human Resources and Meg's House. In 2022, she completed her master of business administration degree from the University of South Carolina-Aiken. "I'm one of those people who just does things because they're interesting sometimes," she says. Then when the previous chamber president retired, Trentsie got the job.

Today, she enjoys applying her deep knowledge of the community to forge connections among chamber members to help businesses thrive. "We have such an



amazing and supportive community, from large manufacturers to small businesses," she says. "If I need assistance, I know who to call."

This year, the chamber is celebrating 110 years. To commemorate the anniversary, Trentsie is collaborating with the Greenwood Community Improvement Foundation on a renovation project to revitalize the chamber's offices, located at 110 Phoenix St., and to fund workforce initiatives.

IN BLOOM

As the lead administrator for the Festival of Flowers, the Greenwood Chamber is always looking for volunteers who can commit to work anything from a few hours to a few days in a variety of roles. Find out more about volunteering and check out the schedule of events at scfestivalofflowers.org.

"We'll be out there wherever the events are," Trentsie says of herself and the chamber staff.

Volunteers assist with setup and cleanup, handing out water during the bike tour and 5K run/walk and lend a hand with the popular wine walk. "It's great to see families together enjoying activities our volunteers have organized," Trentsie says. 



Photos courtesy of the Greenwood Chamber of Commerce

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The annual South Carolina Festival of Flowers relies on numerous volunteers, including, from left, Athena Hagood, Candace Timmerman and Trestsie Williams, president and CEO of the Greenwood Chamber of Commerce.

A ladies' luncheon is just one of many events during the South Carolina Festival of Flowers. Attendees at last year's event include, from left, Jessica Garcia, Elyn Reeder, Teresa Goodman, Nicole Munnerlyn and Trestsie Williams.

Trentsie announces the Greenwood chamber's Small Businessperson of the Year each June.

Festival of Flowers

- » Topiaries: 55
- » Visitors: 100,000+
- » Main weekend: June 6-9
- » Newest display: Double helix topiary
- » scfestivalofflowers.org



Photos courtesy of Jenny Williams Photography

TOP LEFT: Carlee Jones and her bridal party enjoy the scenic view from the second floor of The Terrace.

ABOVE: Carlee and Logan go for a stroll after tying the knot.

Romantic rendezvous

The elevated experience with Abbeville ambiance

Story by ANNE BRALY

When Carlee Jones and her fiancé, Logan, began looking for the perfect location for their wedding reception, they looked no further than The Terrace, a newly opened, 30-acre venue in the rolling hills just minutes out of downtown Abbeville.

Owned by Will and Gina Beaufort, The Terrace had everything they needed to make the day the special celebration they were hoping for. “My absolute favorite part about The Terrace was the bridal suite,” Carlee says. “It was so open and spacious, and the balcony was gorgeous.”

The suite had all the important things a bride needs to make her day complete — mirrors all around, plenty of outlets for hair dryers, steam irons and phone chargers, and lots of natural light, vital for good photos. “The Terrace exceeded every expectation for our special day,” Carlee says.

FAMILY TRADITION

The Terrace hosted its first wedding last September, but the property has been in Will’s family for four generations. It was first a working farm that Will’s granddad, Tom Beaufort, called The Terrace. “It was only fitting to name it what he called it my entire life as a remembrance of him,” Will says.

In transforming the farm into an event venue, the Beaufords built a 7,500-square-foot structure with indoor-outdoor seating for up to 299 guests. By keeping decorations to a minimum, the wedding couple has a blank slate to decorate to their tastes.

A kitchen with a commercial refrigerator, three-bay sink and ice maker offers everything a caterer needs. To keep with pre-wedding rituals of separating the bride and groom, the bridal suite is located upstairs, while the large room for groomsmen is downstairs, both with private restrooms.

Weddings today range from traditional to themed events. Most of The Terrace’s ceremonies lean toward the traditional, although it hosted a Western-themed wedding last autumn. “At the end of the wedding, the couple branded their initials in a cowhide rug that they planned to use in their home,” Will says.

PLANNING MAKES PERFECT

Once engaged, couples should plan far ahead, particularly if they hope to get married during the popular wedding months of April, May, June, July and November.

The Terrace, which is almost completely booked for 2024, requires that couples hire a wedding coordinator to ensure everything runs smoothly. “We meet with them and discuss all the details, such as lighting, heat and air conditioning, and storage,” Will says. If needed, The Terrace offers the services of its in-house coordinator.

STAYING CONNECTED

Wedding venues depend on social media and their websites to offer information and all the details couples need to choose the perfect setting for a very memorable day.

From the security system to PowerPoint presentations at corporate events and TVs in the groomsmen room, Will says the products offered by WCTEL “are a tremendous asset to not only The Terrace, but the entire community.”



Living the HIGH LIFE

Hot Air Balloon Rides Make for a Magical Experience

Story by JEN CALHOUN

As a child growing up in California, Kim McCourt scrambled up hills, cliffs and trees to see the land below. “I had this need to see all those things I never even knew were there,” he says.

But when his family moved to the flatlands of Florida, he had to find a new way to see the world. In 1998, he took his first flight in a hot air balloon. “I learned that ballooning is, well, kind of magical,” says Kim, who is now a licensed hot air balloon pilot in the Orlando region. “There’s the exploration part of it, and you’ve got Mother Nature all around you.”

ULTIMATE ADVENTURE

These days, Kim often travels the skies with tourists who want to experience a ride they can’t find at the region’s theme parks. For many, it’s a way to fly without being contained in the metal tube of an airplane. “In the balloon, you can see so much more, and you can actually feel everything,” Kim says. “You can breathe the air.”

There’s a spiritual component, too, says Mark West, vice president of the Balloon Federation of America. West, a former Navy pilot, also served as president and chief engineer of Aerostar International, which was once the largest hot air balloon manufacturer in the country.

“Ballooning has an incredible amount of magic to it,” Mark says. “Virtually everyone who sees one is enamored with them. I suppose they’re kind of representative of breaking free of the bonds of Earth and floating away.”

UP AND AWAY

Across the country, hot air balloon rides are a popular pastime for families celebrating a special occasion or tourists looking for a new experience. Some passengers want to make memories with their families, while others go to commemorate important events, like marriage proposals, bucket lists and to spread the ashes of loved ones into the sky. “There are all kinds of stories,” Kim says. “The only things that stay the same are the sun coming up and people smiling.”

Photos by Kim McCourt



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Balloons get ready for a flight.

Most hot air balloons are operated by gas.

Hot air balloons take off during an event.



But as wide-open spaces dwindle, so do the balloon rides. Pilots simply don't have enough space to land. Weather's also been a factor, because unreliable winds can ground a pilot. Kim says he's seen this firsthand. "Over the last 15 years, the weather went from 275 days we could fly to probably 100 days," he says.

He worries other factors could cause ballooning to take a hit, too. "Fabric, wicker, propane, repairs and parts are way more expensive these days, so it takes more money to maintain them," Kim says.

HOPE FLOATS

Despite the challenges, Kim still grins like a kid after an early-morning

flight. "There's nothing like it," he says. "When we lift off and the sun starts to rise, we might rest at the top of a tree and stare clear down to the bottom of a pond. Then we'll take off again and maybe rest right on top of the water where the mist is coming off the surface. It's up and down, up and down — gently. One person said it was like flying in the hand of God while getting a brain massage."

Balloonists enjoy attempting to describe the sensation of floating on — and with — the air, Mark says. "One of my good friends said it was 'having a destiny without a destination.' I think it attracts people who want to enjoy the beauty of the Earth and want to experience that kind of freedom." 🗨️

To catch a ride with Kim McCourt, visit greaterorlandoballoonrides.com. For more information on hot air ballooning and the people who are passionate about it, visit the Balloon Federation of America's Facebook page, or find the group at bfa.net.



1783

THE BIRTH OF THE HOT AIR BALLOON

▶ June 1783 — First unmanned flight

After a year or two of experimentation and invention, brothers Joseph Michel and Jacques Etienne Montgolfier publicly launch their version of a hot air balloon. It held no passengers. The balloon landed in the middle of a vineyard a little over a mile from where it had taken off.

▶ September 1783 — Confused farm animals

The first balloon flight with passengers launches in Versailles carrying a duck, a rooster and a sheep. The animals made it out alive. However, sources say the sheep kicked the duck and damaged its wing. King Louis XVI of France was pleased to learn that animals could breathe so high up.

▶ November 1783 — First human flight

Jean-François Pilâtre de Rozier and another passenger take the first untethered, human-occupied flight. The flight, which launched in France, lasted about 25 minutes and reached an altitude of about 500 feet. Less than two years later, de Rozier and his passenger would become the first people to die in a hot air balloon crash during a flight from France to England.

▶ December 1783 — Hydrogen balloon

Jacques Charles, a French physicist who had been experimenting with hydrogen balloons, boards one with a few colleagues. They traveled 25 miles in less than two hours. They also carried a barometer and a thermometer. Afterward, gas balloons became the preferred method of ballooning.

Sources: DragonFly Balloon Adventures, Virgin Balloon Flights, National Balloon Museum

Sentimental

The emotional origins of an Iva wedding venue

SURROUNDINGS

Story by MATT LEDGER

Tori Beth Goforth grew up dreaming of getting married under a tent on her family's 900-acre tree farm, Charlie's Creek Nursery. In early October 2018, Tori Beth and Jake Goforth were engaged with thoughts of that summer wedding.

A week later, the family received difficult news. Tori Beth's grandfather, Heyward Black, was diagnosed with a terminal form of leukemia. "It was hard for us to wrap our minds around it," Tori Beth says. "He was the patriarch of the family, one of those weathered men who we all thought could withstand any kind of storm."

The family's initial grief turned to a conversation about how to build a venue for the wedding in just five and a half months. Tori Beth's father, Don Black, and his brother, Jake, accepted the incredibly difficult task of designing and building a venue while helping their father navigate his final chapter.

The Black family has plenty of experience in the wedding business. Libby Black, Tori Beth's mom, was a buyer for a bridal boutique, and Tori's aunt, Carol Black, worked at a florist shop. The two women had long thought about opening a wedding venue. Don and Libby co-own the tree farm property with Jake and Carol.

"We were very blessed to have other people in the industry walk alongside us in the planning process to make this happen," Tori Beth says.

Heyward's focus was making it to that wedding. "He did everything he could on his end," Tori Beth recalls. "They did not give him long to live, but they gave him experimental drugs that insurance didn't cover. He said he would try anything and took multiple blood transfusions. Every time he talked to a doctor, he mentioned our wedding date." As 2019 began, everything was taking a toll on Heyward, and rainstorms had construction behind schedule.



FOREVER ROOTED IN MEMORY

On April 13, 2019, Tori Beth and Jake were married in a Hartwell church. The ceremony was followed by a reception for 300 guests at the recently completed venue on the family farm in Iva, including Heyward. "He had so much energy and danced most of the night," Tori Beth recalls. Heyward had yet another surprise in store, conspiring with the DJ for one more special moment.

Chris Tomlin's faith-based "Good, Good Father" played for Tori Beth and Don, during the father-daughter dance. Halfway through the song, Heyward decided to cut in on his son for the remainder of the dance. "Everyone started laughing and crying while he did it," she remembers.

Heyward passed away 12 days later.

LEFT: Heyward Black surprises his granddaughter, Tori Beth Goforth, during the father-daughter dance at her wedding.





CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: Tori, Heyward Manor's first bride and daughter of owners Don and Libby Black, and her then fiancé, Jake, stand in the construction of the venue only three and a half months before her wedding day.

The Black family poses for a photo during the grand opening of Heyward Manor in November 2019.

Large windows provide a bright atmosphere for weddings on sunny days.

Sam and Emily McCall enjoy a moment after their wedding at Heyward Manor.



A NEW LEGACY

The Black family opened the venue to the public in November 2019. The finishing touches were completed inside and out, and the building was named Heyward Manor, in remembrance of a life well lived.

"Simply put, you can feel love and peace as soon as you drive onto the grounds," Tori Beth says. "It's what fairy tales are made of, and our greatest honor is making those wedding dreams come true." She is now the communications manager for the family business.

Reserving a venue, especially during popular wedding months, can be tough.



Photos courtesy of Katie Jaynes Photography



Some couples are now opting to get married on nontraditional days. For example, Thursdays and Fridays are becoming increasingly popular. "We also receive a surprising number of Monday requests from brides wanting a destination wedding, so they can plan an entire extended weekend of events for the families and other guests," Tori Beth says.

Heyward Manor is closed on Sundays and requires couples to hire a wedding planner to help with everything from day-of management to full-service planning and design. "Our team is also very involved throughout the process," Tori Beth says. "Most couples book their wedding venue first, so we are often the first people they speak to in their planning process. Based on their vision, goals

and budget, we assist in giving vendor recommendations and venue detail recommendations."

The wedding industry changes from year to year, but at this time, Heyward Manor recommends couples book at least a year in advance. "And 2025 is quickly booking up," Tori Beth says. "We also have couples looking into 2026 and 2027."

CULTURAL ROOTS

Other than traditional weddings, Heyward Manor has also celebrated spiritual events and even a few Ukrainian weddings since opening. "It's always so fun and exciting to witness other cultural weddings that differ from the traditional American ceremony," Tori Beth says. "Being a part of different types of celebrations is such an honor and a privilege that we hold very dear to our hearts."

Before it was a tree farm, the land was a campground used by the Methodist church with buildings that have now been repurposed. For example, the groom's suite was once the campground's dining hall. But the place where so many I do's have been repeated is a new structure built on the same ground where the former campground's chapel stood.

"It's in a location beside the pond that is both peaceful and beautiful," Tori Beth says. "But we also wanted to honor the history of the land by placing the venue in the same place as the chapel." 📍

OLDIES

but goodies

Classic recipes create timeless tastes

Although we love creating new recipes in keeping with today's tastes and trends, there's something sweet about a vintage recipe that can still hold its own. Get ready for a trip down memory lane with these old-fashioned recipes we still love.

From classic chicken tetrazzini to a delightful lemon icebox pie, these vintage recipes are worth holding onto. They may have been gone from our culinary repertoire for a decade or two, but they certainly are not forgotten.

Ready for some nostalgia and satisfied smiles at your table? Give these retro recipes a try, and they're sure to stir up good memories.



**Food Editor
Anne P. Braly
is a native of
Chattanooga,
Tennessee.**

Photography by **Mark Gilliland**
Food Styling by **Rhonda Gilliland**



CHICKEN TETRAZZINI

No roundup of retro recipes is complete without a classic chicken tetrazzini.

- 16 ounces linguini or spaghetti, cooked
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 4 chicken breasts, cooked and diced
- 2 cans cream of chicken soup
- 2 cups sour cream
- 1 teaspoon garlic salt
- 1 tablespoon chopped parsley
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 2 tablespoons Parmesan cheese, grated
- 2 cups mozzarella cheese shredded

Preheat the oven to 350 F. Grease a 9-by-13-inch baking dish and set aside.

Cook noodles to al dente, according to the box instructions. Drain and set aside. Meanwhile, in a large bowl, combine chicken, soup, sour cream, butter, chicken broth, garlic salt, parsley and pepper. Mix well, then stir in cooked noodles. Pour mixture into prepared baking dish. Sprinkle both cheeses on top and bake, uncovered, for 36-42 minutes, until cheeses are melted and casserole is bubbling.

CREAMED CORN

If you can't wait until summer to take advantage of sweet Silver Queen corn, use the sweetest corn you can find.

- 13 ears of fresh corn, husks and silks removed
- 1 cup evaporated milk
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper

Remove silks from corn. Cream the corn by cutting the kernels from the cobs, then scrape the

corn cobs with the back of the knife to get all the "milk" and pulp. Transfer creamed corn to a large skillet. Add milk, butter and salt. Cook over low heat, stirring often, for 30 minutes. If corn becomes too thick, add more milk for desired consistency. Sprinkle with pepper. Makes 6-8 servings.



CLASSIC SOUTHERN CORNBREAD SALAD

- 1 skillet of your favorite cornbread
- 1 cup diced onions
- 1 green or red bell pepper, seeded and diced
- 1 cup diced tomato
- 1 15-ounce can whole kernel corn, drained
- 1 pound bacon, cooked until crisp and crumbled
- 2-3 cups mayonnaise
- 1 package ranch dressing mix

Crumble cooled cornbread into a large bowl. Add onions, bell pepper, diced tomatoes, corn and bacon. Stir until well combined. In a separate bowl, stir together mayonnaise and ranch mix until well-blended. Add mayonnaise dressing mixture to salad and stir until fully mixed. Cover and refrigerate at least 2 hours before serving.



LEMON ICEBOX PIE

Finish your retro meal with a slice of this much-loved pie.

Crust:

- 1 1/2 cups graham cracker crumbs
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 7 tablespoons butter, melted

Filling:

- 2 14-ounce cans sweetened condensed milk
- 1 cup fresh lemon juice
- 5 large egg yolks
- 1 tablespoon lemon zest
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 2 tablespoons powdered sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

For the crust: Preheat the oven to 350 F. Combine the cracker crumbs, sugar and butter in a medium bowl. Mix with a fork until the crumbs are well coated and stick together when pinched. Press the mixture into the bottom and up the sides of a 9-inch pie plate. Bake until set, about 10 minutes. Set aside to cool slightly, about 10 minutes.

For the filling: Whisk together the condensed milk, lemon juice, egg yolks and lemon zest in a medium bowl until combined. Pour the filling into the crust and bake until the center is set but still slightly jiggly, about 15 minutes. Let cool for 30 minutes, then refrigerate until chilled, about 2 hours.

Once pie is chilled, beat the heavy cream, powdered sugar and vanilla in a large bowl with a mixer on medium speed until soft peaks form. Spoon onto the center of the pie and serve.

Alternatively: Buy a premade graham cracker crust as a timesaver. 📌



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