



Mountain Telephone

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2024

CONNECTION

Milling About

Grinding grains the old way

HOME SWEET
DOME

HEALTHY
TAILGATING



By Shirley Bloomfield, CEO
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association


The Most Important Rural Broadband Program You Probably Don't Know

In Washington, D.C., we often talk about the new grant programs that are going to help bridge the digital divide in our country. But I want to highlight what I believe has been the most successful rural broadband initiative, the federal Universal Service Fund.

So, what is the Universal Service Fund? The Communications Act of 1934 included language that said all Americans should have access to “rapid, efficient, nationwide communications service with adequate facilities at reasonable charges.” Today, the USF is the main federal program helping rural consumers connect to services comparable in price and quality to those in urban areas. This makes services more affordable for low-income families and supports critical connections for schools, libraries and health care facilities in rural communities by offsetting the high cost of building and managing rural communications networks.

There is one big difference that sets the USF apart from many of the new grant programs: The USF not only supports the construction and deployment of networks but also the maintenance of those networks. It helps ensure that these networks are maintained and sustained so Americans continue to make use of broadband long after the last shovel is put down.

An NTCA survey found that without the High-Cost USF program all rural consumers will pay at least \$100 more per month for their broadband service. And the viability of some rural broadband networks would be at risk, as the operations costs and repayment of the loans needed to build them cannot be covered.

NTCA is committed to efforts to preserve the USF so that the mission of universal service for all Americans can be fulfilled. 

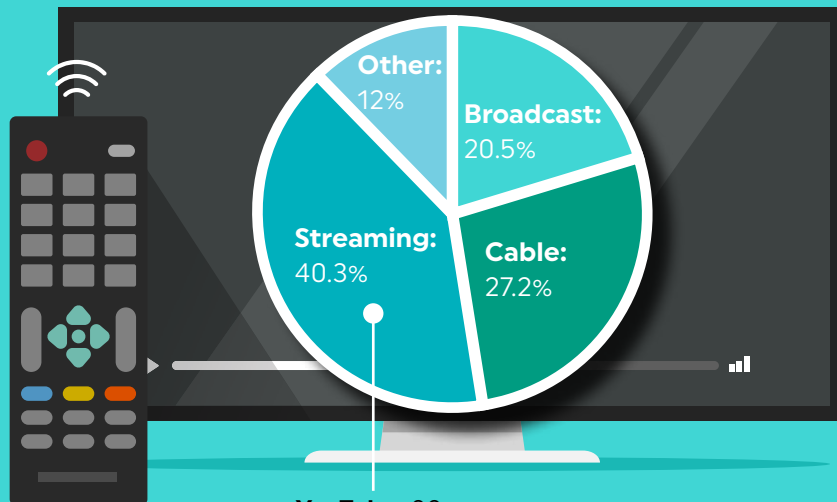
Streaming Remains Strong

Each month Nielsen, a company that has long tracked viewership habits across a range of media, updates The Gauge. The report offers a snapshot of how various forms of media are consumed to create a picture of the media landscape.

Several key trends shaped the streaming results, such as June marking the end of the school year and start of school breaks, which led viewers 17 and younger to drive the largest upticks in TV usage across all ages.

As a result, this June streaming topped the earlier viewership record set by cable for that month in 2021.

A SUMMER STREAMING SNAPSHOT



- YouTube:** 9.9%
- Netflix:** 8.4%
- Other streaming:** 6%
- Prime Video:** 3.1%
- Hulu:** 3%
- Disney+:** 2%
- Tubi:** 2%
- Roku Channel:** 1.5%
- Max:** 1.4%
- Peacock:** 1.2%
- Paramount+:** 1.1%
- Pluto TV:** 0.8%

Source: Nielsen The Gauge



A Web for All

Technology assists those with diminished sight

About two-thirds of Americans rely on some form of contact lenses or glasses to correct nearsightedness, farsightedness and more. Then there are eye injuries and diseases like glaucoma that can diminish sight, and the inevitable process of aging can also cause a slow decline in eyesight.

In an increasingly online world—where vital information is often communicated using text on screens—people with diminished vision can struggle. However, there are resources available to help those with impaired sight, and even blindness, interact online.

For example, the Americans with Disabilities Act requires all websites to be accessible to everyone. While not every website is ADA compliant, sites for government agencies, banks and larger organizations are. The basic tools you need are free and as handy as web browsers like Chrome, Edge, Firefox and Safari.

BROWSER BY BROWSER

Microsoft's Edge browser scores well for assistive technologies. It lets users

increase the size of text and get image descriptions for screen readers. Also, a simple keyboard command—Ctrl+Shift+U on PCs and Shift+Command+U on Macs—signals the browser to read the current webpage aloud. Most other browsers require users to go into system preferences or use an extension for screen readers.


Meanwhile, Chrome's TalkBack screen reader adds spoken, audible or vibration feedback to your device. While the browser does not have a way to change the look of text, it does have extensions that allow users to customize their browsers to control visual clutter.

Google, the maker of Chrome and a popular search engine, has an award-winning disability employee resource group and says it is committed to hiring employees with disabilities. That commitment also helps it find ways to make its site more accessible.

Like Chrome, Apple's Safari comes with its own screen reader, VoiceOver. Users can choose the voice they find most pleasing and set the speech speed. It also lets users increase contrast, zoom in and

remove ads and distractions.

Firefox allows users to adjust the settings so every site has the same font, type size and color to enhance the ease of reading. It also has extensions for changing text to speech and making bookmarks larger, among other things.

While users may need a sighted person to set up the assistive features, modern technologies unlock the world to more people than ever. 



Influence That Matters

Connect locally to make a difference

If you venture into the world of social media—and most people do—you'll cross paths with personalities known as influencers. From social media platforms like Facebook and X to video sites such as YouTube and TikTok, online personalities have the power to generate attention. With attention comes income, often six figures or more.



SHAYNE ISON
General Manager

These people, and they can range wildly in accuracy and professionalism, seem to touch on every possible topic: lifestyle, health, politics, sports, entertainment and just about anything else. They can attract millions of eyeballs, and some of the largest, most visible companies advertise on their channels.

I don't mean to imply this is a new trend. It's not, at all. However, as other types of media fall more into the background, online influencers continue to have greater reach and, well, influence. But in our busy and often highly online lives, we shouldn't lose sight of the other influencers around us. You don't have to look far, either.

One of the things I enjoy about our community, and this is true of many rural places like ours, is that there are individuals who make a tangible positive difference. They lift others up. They provide help where it's needed. You need look no further than the pages of this magazine to see stories of neighbors helping neighbors, and what's more powerful of an influence than that?

You see, every time you smile at someone you pass in the aisle of a store, volunteer with a community organization, help your child with homework or have any of the other interactions that make up daily life, you're an influencer. This is also something we all can do.

In fact, a commitment to helping others is a core part of our mission at Mountain. Naturally, it begins with the services we provide—we want our community to have the best communications resources anywhere.

We've seen how high-speed internet changes lives, opening doors for local businesses, expanding career options, supporting education and connecting to an exciting world of online resources. We strive to be the people who can answer your questions, solve your communications problems and provide the resources you need today while planning for the future.

But that's only part of the equation. Every year, MRTC gives back. One of our guiding principles is that you benefit not only from the services we provide but also through direct contributions of time and money invested into our community.

So, as you enjoy our industry-leading communications services, if there are online influencers you find informative or entertaining, please do enjoy. But I hope you can also join us in finding opportunities to create beneficial, helpful moments right here at home. It's that spirit of togetherness that makes this place so special.

As always, it's a pleasure serving you, and I hope MRTC remains a positive influence in your life. 📞

The Mountain Telephone Connection is a bimonthly newsletter published by Mountain Rural Telephone Cooperative, © 2024. It is distributed without charge to all member/owners of the cooperative.



Mountain Telephone

Mountain Rural Telephone Cooperative, Inc., is a member-owned cooperative dedicated to providing communications technology to the people of Elliott, Menifee, Morgan, Wolfe and a section of Bath counties. The company covers 1,048 square miles and supplies service to nearly 11,500 members.

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UTILITY RESOURCES

On the Cover:



William Walter has been grinding his own corn and grains for decades using a 1931 gas-powered mill.
See story Page 12.

Photo by William LeMaster



MRTC's Customer Appreciation Days are Here

LET'S CELEBRATE YOU!

MRTC is excited to announce this fall's Customer Appreciation Days. We'll be setting up shop in the following locations on these dates and times:

THURSDAY, SEPT. 12

Elliott County Extension
Farmers Market Shelter
11 a.m.-4 p.m.

TUESDAY, OCT. 22

Wolfe County Extension Office
Community Room
11 a.m.-4 p.m.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 19

Menifee County Farmers Market
11 a.m.-4 p.m.

FRIDAY, OCT. 25

MRTC Headquarters Building
425 Main St., Suite A, West Liberty
11 a.m.-4 p.m.

FRIDAY, OCT. 4

Bath County
Mud Lick First Church of God
12-6 p.m.

★ H A P P Y ★
Labor Day

MOUNTAIN TELEPHONE'S BOARD AND STAFF WISH YOU A SAFE AND RELAXING LABOR DAY WEEKEND. IN OBSERVANCE OF THE HOLIDAY, OUR OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED ON MONDAY, SEPT. 2.



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

Our community. Your co-op.

Building a better future—together



MRTC is a different kind of communications services provider. As a cooperative, our board is made up of your friends and neighbors. Together, we put our community's needs first, including bringing you fast and reliable internet service.

October is National Cooperative Month. Let's celebrate the community and the company we've created.

Mountain Telephone
606-743-3121
mrtc.com

SPIRITS OF THE SEASON

Ghost Tours Scare Up Connections to the Past

Story by KATIE TEEMS NORRIS



Photo courtesy of American Ghost Walks

Allison Jornlin, depicted here in an illustration, researches and writes scripts for ghost tours.

For many, October isn't complete without spine-tingling ghost stories, and chances are your hometown has a few of its own. Allison Jornlin, co-founder and tour developer with American Ghost Walks, conducts research and writes ghost tour scripts in towns across the United States. Allison is also a paranormal investigator and speaker, and

she's been featured on the CW Network's "Mysteries Decoded."

Ghost tours are immensely popular, and Allison says they can be found in almost every large city and even in many small towns across the country. "I think people have lost their connection with history and with their ancestors, and this is a way to reconnect," she says.

Unlike haunted house attractions that have terrifying special effects, ghost tours offer authentic history in locations that give guests the chance to literally step into the paranormal. They allow people to connect to the haunted past through walking tours, bus/trolley tours, investigation-style tours and even pub crawls. Some guests report experiencing



Photo courtesy of Bulldog Tours

The Old Charleston Jail, which once held pirates, Civil War prisoners and the first known female serial killer, is an especially spooky spot.



Photo courtesy of Birmingham Historic Touring Company

A group pauses before entering the First Presbyterian Church during a ghost walk in Birmingham, Alabama.



Ghost tours can include exploring the paranormal by bus or trolley, as well as on foot.

paranormal phenomena, like feeling unexplained cold spots or photographing disembodied faces and shadowy figures.

Allison pores through old newspapers and historical archives and interviews local people to give her tours as much local flavor as possible. “I’m looking for stories that are unique to the community that they come out of,” she says. While many stories across the country have common themes, Allison says, every place is a little bit different.

“You don’t have to believe in ghosts to enjoy the tour,” she says. Skeptics can have fun learning spooky stories. Tour guides often encourage guests to share their personal paranormal experiences to relate to one another. Ghost tours can’t guarantee guests will have an otherworldly encounter, but there is always a possibility.

If you’re ready to test your luck, consider joining these popular local tours, if you dare:

- Charleston, South Carolina’s, rich history, fascinating places, people and landmarks bring with them incredible stories—and lots of ghosts. Check them out through Bulldog Tours. bulldogtours.com/tours/ghost
- The Birmingham Ghost Walk in Alabama includes two walking tours and the Ghosts and Graveyards Chauffeured Experience. bhamhistory.com
- Old Louisville is home to what many consider to be the “most haunted neighborhood in America.” Learn why through Old Louisville Ghost Tours, in Louisville, Kentucky. louisvillehistorictours.com/louisville-ghost-tours 📱

FUN FACTS

- Most ghost tours in the U.S. run year-round.
- Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, claims to have America’s oldest ghost tour. It began in 1970 and is still running. In 1973, historian Richard Crowe started Chicago’s first ghost tour. He told ghost stories on the radio around Halloween, which inspired Allison Jornlin and her brother to establish American Ghost Walks.
- Many ghost stories have common themes. Allison notes the prevalence of stories about women who met unfortunate ends. Guides across the nation tell local stories of jilted lovers, forlorn widows and vanishing hitchhikers.

SCARING UP A GREAT TOUR

Are you spending the spooky season exploring a new town—or your own hometown? A ghost tour is a fun way to learn about the history of a place and its people. Before you book one, follow these tips:

CHOOSE A TOUR THAT SUITS YOUR GROUP

While each tour is unique, they typically fall into these categories: walking tours, bus tours, investigation tours and pub crawls. Investigation tours allow guests to become paranormal researchers for one night, and they typically focus on one building or property. A haunted pub crawl offers spirits of both the alcoholic and ethereal kinds.

CHECK THE WEBSITE

Tour companies list important information on their websites, including an overview, length of the tour, walking distance, accessibility, age-appropriateness and cancellation/refund policies. Many tours encourage guests to purchase tickets in advance.

READ THE REVIEWS

Check Google reviews and websites like Yelp or Tripadvisor for reviews. Search for detailed reviews that weigh the pros and cons of the tour. If you find positive reviews of a specific guide, you may be able to book a tour on a night when that person is working.

If you still have questions after your research, don’t be afraid to give the tour company a call.

The great indoors

Nature Rooms RRG offers a luxurious way to experience the wild

Story by JEN CALHOUN

Photography by WILLIAM LEMASTER

Matt Hogg has always been a little different—in a good way, of course. He enjoys the unexpected, and he loves any experience that will make a good story and an even better memory.

In college, for example, he performed as the University of Kentucky Wildcats' mascot. Later, he went on to the NBA to become G-Wiz, the mascot for the Washington Wizards.

"I always kind of had these unique aspects of my life," Matt says. "I think I wanted to stand out from the crowd and not do the normal thing."

When it comes to his business ventures, he also likes to stand out. Matt and his wife, Jenny, own Nature Rooms RRG, a Red River Gorge-based vacation rental property company with several distinctive units, including luxurious and airy geodesic domes and glass houses offering panoramic views of nature.

DISTINCTIVE DWELLINGS

The idea for the unusual vacation rentals came after Matt started looking to buy short-term rental properties in the Red River Gorge a few years ago. He was already immersed in a course on glamping—a glamorous alternative to camping—and the idea of offering guests a thoroughly uncommon experience intrigued him.

As he combed through the available inventory in the Gorge, however, he couldn't find anything that was quite right. "I thought maybe I should just find some land and build something," he says. "I liked the idea of tree houses, but it's hard to find someone to build them."

That's when it occurred to him. Why not build a deck up in the trees and erect a geodesic dome tent on it? "The domes really

caught my eye," he says. "Also, the structure—which is a steel frame and a vinyl cover—goes up super quick, and then you can finish it any way you want on the inside. You can do it super simple and just put a bed in it. Or you can do what we did, which is basically build it out like a fully functional cabin with a kitchen, full bathrooms, a hot tub on the deck and an outside shower."

Matt and Jenny started with a single, 9-meter geodesic dome they call Home Sweet Dome. It includes two bedrooms, a bathroom, a full kitchen, hot tub and an outside shower. Recently, they also added two more geodesic dome tents and three mirror glass homes, all tucked into a picturesque valley with rock cliffs, trees and a creek. The domes rest on decks, giving the feel of tree houses.

Inside the domes, the rooms are decorated in a clean, comfortable Scandinavian style that complements the natural setting and makes it easy for guests to relax. The rectangular glass homes, known as OOD module homes, give guests views of the surroundings on three sides. The modular tiny homes are engineered to make people feel like they're outside but with all the amenities and comforts of a home.

WILDERNESS CONNECTION

The trails and activities in the Gorge give visitors a chance to get away from the day-to-day business of life and enjoy time with family and friends. But they still want their high-speed internet connection. "It's one of those things that's in the necessity category," Matt says. "Even when people want to get away from

it all, they still want to watch a show on Netflix or at least check their emails.”

Kent Cole, Mountain Telephone’s install-repair and support supervisor, is seeing this more and more, especially at cabins and other rentals in the Gorge. At the Nature Rooms RRG property, his team installed a GigaPro system, which offers Wi-Fi coverage for all the units and the outside areas surrounding them.

“We sent a team over, and they were able to run cable back out of the original dome and up to the top of a pole,” Kent says. “It was a good solution, because it’s kind of a remote area. Also, the GigaPro is weather-hardened, so it doesn’t have to be sheltered. The rain doesn’t affect it.”

The connections are strong, too, no matter how secluded the spot. It’s all part of the high-quality service Mountain continues to offer. “I think you have to keep finding new and better ways to meet people’s needs,” Kent says.

“You have to grow. Wireless is important. Everybody wants to be mobile, and we’re going to do whatever we can do to help them.”



GLAMP IT UP!

To find out more about Nature Rooms RRG and its properties, visit natureroomrrg.com or find the business on Facebook and Instagram. The website offers pictures and information on each vacation home and links to reservations.



CLOCKWISE, FROM CENTER: Nature Rooms RRG rents several different sizes of geodesic domes, as well as three rectangular glass tiny homes.

A bedroom inside Nature Rooms’ largest dome.

Inside, Home Sweet Dome is decorated with a Scandinavian aesthetic.

MRTC installed a powerful system that connects vacation rentals and outside areas with high-speed, fiber Wi-Fi.

Story by DAVID HERDER and DREW WOOLEY



RUNNING TOWARD THE FUTURE

Rural Athletes Must Overcome Hurdles to Win Scholarships

For much of her life, Olivia Murphy focused on becoming a collegiate swimmer. The biggest obstacle she faced didn't come in the pool—it was catching the eye of college coaches.

Each year thousands of student-athletes pursue college athletic scholarships. Ultimately, only about one out of every 50 succeeds, according to a 2021 study by Next College Student Athlete. That bar can be even tougher to clear for athletes like Olivia, who live in rural areas, where it's often difficult to get the attention of major programs.

For those students, earning a spot on a college roster takes more than just the talent and commitment to be a high-level athlete—it also takes a “second job” as a communicator and organizer, working just to be seen.

“I didn't start the actual recruitment process until summer of my junior year, which is a little late for some people,” says Olivia, a Tennessee resident and 2024 Tullahoma High School graduate.

MAKING A SPLASH

Olivia's path was more straightforward than that of many other athletes: Swim fast, win races. A key member of the Wildcats' school-record-setting relay team, she recorded plenty of fast times while helping the team win its first division title.

She knew she had the speed, she just needed the coaches to know it, too. “When you first reach out to a coach, whether it's through a questionnaire or an email, you put your best events and your best times in there,” Olivia says.

When prospective recruits submit statistics, coaches compare their times to those of their current swimmers, as well as the

ones winning division and national titles. Athletes from almost every sport send out these cold-call emails to coaches across the country. In sports like football and basketball, where skills can't be boiled down to a set of times or statistics, athletes will create their own highlight videos and send those to coaches.

This can be especially valuable for rural athletes. Coaches can't visit every town to scout athletes, but there's no travel time in opening an email. Olivia says coaches especially want to see the swimmers' videos. “They love videos,” she says. “Most coaches like to see video because they want to see your technique or where your weaknesses might be.”

SHOWCASING SKILLS

Sometimes, rather than sending videos, recruits travel to camps and showcases so coaches can watch them in action and compare their skills to athletes at a similar level. These are often sport-specific camps run by college programs where potential recruits get hands-on practice time with

Photo illustration by Mark Gilliland



Photo courtesy of Olivia Murphy

Olivia Murphy's best swimming events are the 100-meter freestyle, butterfly, backstroke and the 50-meter freestyle.

coaches. At regional showcases or tournaments, thousands of athletes can test their skills while scores of coaches look for diamonds in the rough.

Landyn Cox, a 2024 high school graduate from McKee, Kentucky, competes in archery and found success at these large events since most high schools don't have archery teams. He was offered a scholarship to be an archer at the University of the Columbians in Williamsburg, Kentucky. He competed on the USA Archery U18 Compound National Team, the World Archery 3D Championships and other USA Archery Team events. He says the USAT events are a solid way to draw attention. "If you win like one of the USATs or certain big events, that gets your name out there pretty fast," he says.

MAKING A DECISION

Once coaches begin recruiting, the challenge comes in settling on a school. Olivia narrowed down her list to three. "I wanted to limit myself to three visits because I'm really bad at decisions," she says.

Part of the process was deciding what size school she wanted to attend. Many athletes feel the need to compete at a prestigious NCAA Division 1 school, but they



Photo courtesy of USA Archery

Landyn Cox first competed in archery through the National Archery in the Schools program.

SCORING AN OFFER

1. Know your skill level and learn the NCAA or NAIA eligibility requirements.
2. Compile an athletic resume with:
 - Skills video
 - Athletic stats
 - Academic transcripts, ACT/SAT scores
 - Extracurricular activities
3. Email coaches.
 - Include your athletic resume.
 - Subject line: Name, position, current grade level and key stat: "Jane Doe, High School Sophomore, Pitcher, 90 mph fastball"
 - Individually craft each email, clearly stating why you're interested in that program.
4. Make campus visits and meet coaches. Keep sending updated stats.
5. Lock down your offer and negotiate your amount. Don't discount merit-based, academic or other scholarships.



could find a home—and potentially more playing time or better financial aid—at a smaller school. "Division 1 isn't everything," Olivia says. "It's not live or die."

No matter the size or program, a visit is the critical component. After a successful recruiting visit where she got along great with her future teammates, Olivia chose Delta State University, a Division II school in Cleveland, Mississippi.

"They need to go where they feel like they best fit," she says. "I was like,

'There's no way that I'm not going to go Division 1,' and then I found a school that matches up with Division 1 schools and I got better scholarship offers and felt like I fit with the team better. And so, I was like, 'Oh, that's not the end of the world.'"

But it will be a whole new world for Olivia, Landyn and other rural athletes as they aim to parlay their hometown successes and hard work to the next level. 🏹

KEEPING IT REAL



Local man uses old-time mill to grind grains

Story by JEN CALHOUN

Photography by WILLIAM LEMASTER

Growing up on a farm outside West Liberty, William Walter always knew where his food came from. And when it came to the cornbread and grits on his table, he even knew how they got there. “I heard my grandfather and father talking about it a whole lot,” says William, a 75-year-old who retired as the outside plant engineer at Mountain Telephone nearly 20 years ago. “It always seemed real interesting to me.”

What interested him was the process of grinding corn into cornmeal and grits. “My grandfather had a mill years ago,” says William, who’s always been drawn to making things with his hands and doing things the old way. “My father knew how to run it, but he never did own one.”

William ground his own grains off and on for most of his life, but it wasn’t until about 2002 or 2003 that he grew more serious about it. That’s when he bought a 1931 gasoline engine-powered mill with two coarse and grooved stones pulled from a quarry in Western North Carolina.

“These smaller mills didn’t come about until they invented or designed the internal combustion engine in what was probably the late 1800s,” he says. “But it’s the same technology of the water-powered mills, which have been around for centuries.”

BACK TO THE OLD WAYS

Simply put, the milling process requires William to deposit corn and other grains at one end. The mill crushes them into piles of flour, meal or grits that come out the other end.

There’s more to it than that, of course. The process takes time to perfect, and it can be time-consuming. The stones also need to be adjusted depending on the desired coarseness, and there’s plenty of upkeep. For example, the stones eventually wear smooth and need to be roughed up again.

But none of that bothers William. There’s a craftsmanship involved in the process that appeals to him. His wife, Susan, describes him as “an old-fashioned guy” in the sense that he likes old things, and he likes making things by hand. “If you came to our house, you’d notice we’ve got a lot of old-fashioned decorations,” she says. “We’ve got a lot of arrowheads and cast-iron stuff. We’ve even got an old fireplace crane that I use to cook on sometimes.”

William’s interest in the old ways grew from a respect for the craftsmanship he experienced growing up on his family farm in Grassy Creek. In addition to being a farmer, his grandfather worked as a blacksmith, tanned hides and did leather work. “I would like to see these old ways keep going,” William says. “It’s just been in my family, and I like the old ways.”



LEFT: William Walter, left, and his son, Lyle, set up the grist mill on the family's farm.

ABOVE: William grew interested in grinding his own grains as a child. His father and grandfather often talked about it.

Because of that, Walter takes his mill to festivals, including the Morgan County Sorghum Festival that takes place in West Liberty every year in September. “Some kids are really fascinated by it,” he says. “You put that corn on the top of that hopper, and when it comes down that little chute at the bottom of the sifter it’s cornmeal.”

AUTHENTIC AND FRESH

In the last 20 years or so, William, his wife and, most recently, his son, Lyle, have built up a small business. They sell cornmeal, flour and grits, and William also grinds corn for people who grew it themselves. He calls the brand Walter’s Mill, and each bag of product includes a homemade label and printed recipes William learned from his mother.

The difference in his product is that William grinds the corn with heart—literally. The heart is what he calls a part of the grain that starts the sprout. “It’s sort of like the yolk in an egg,” he says. “The rest of the parts of the corn provide nourishment to the heart.”

Commercial cornmeal, he says, generally has the heart removed from it for two reasons. One, the heart is extracted to make corn oil. The other reason is because the heart can give the product a much shorter shelf life. But leaving the heart in the cornmeal or grits gives it a much better flavor, William says. “People who buy from me say it’s the best-tasting stuff.”

There are also ways to preserve it for longer periods of time. “At room temperature, grains with the heart still in it won’t go much longer than a month,” he says. “Just like oil, it can go rancid. However, if you put it in the deep freeze, it’ll keep for years.”

William is proud of the job he does, even if he tends to be modest about his accomplishments. “I guess I do sell quite a bit of it,” he says. 📧



TOP: The gas-powered grill uses special stones to grind the corn.

BOTTOM: Lyle and William bag fresh cornmeal from the bin.

WALTER’S MILL: THE REAL DEAL

Interested in Walter’s Mill products, or have you grown some corn you’d like William Walter to grind into cornmeal and/or grits? Call him at 606-734-3880, email him at wwalter@mrtc.com or text him at 606-634-3877.

William will also be at the 2024 Morgan County Sorghum Festival in downtown West Liberty. The festival runs from Sept. 27-29.

Kick Off THE SEASON



Healthy Eats for Your Tailgate

It's time to think about tailgating. Even if you aren't a football fan, you can enjoy the food that goes along with the big game, from pots of chili to tater skins and Buffalo wings.

But these tailgating treats may not agree with your waistline. There are healthy alternatives to consider for lightening up your football spread without sacrificing taste. You'll score some touchdowns yourself.



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

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

WHITE CHICKEN CHILI

- 4 boneless chicken breasts (2 to 2 1/2 pounds)
- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 teaspoon dried parsley
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 3 stalks celery, chopped
- 3/4 cup chopped red bell pepper
- 2 cans whole green chilies, chopped (see tip)
- 3-4 cans cannellini beans, drained and rinsed (see note)
- 2-3 teaspoons cumin
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 1/2-1 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 1/2-1 cup grated Monterey Jack cheese
- Additional chicken broth, if needed

In large pot, add chicken breasts and completely cover with water (4-6 cups). Simmer chicken breasts with basil, salt, onion powder, garlic powder, thyme and parsley until completely cooked.

Remove chicken from broth and let cool. Reserve the seasoned broth for the chili. Once chicken is cool, chop and set aside.

In a large stock pot, add butter and olive oil, and saute onion, celery and bell pepper until vegetables are translucent. Add chopped chilies and two cans cannellini beans. When mixture is warm, mash beans with a potato masher.

Add 2-3 cups of the reserved broth, chopped chicken, cumin and 1-2 more cans cannellini beans. Let simmer 30 minutes to an hour. If mixture becomes too thick, add more broth. Add sour cream, heavy cream and fresh cilantro, and stir well. Taste and adjust seasonings, such as salt and cumin. Just before serving, stir in grated Monterey Jack cheese and ladle into serving bowls.

Tip: You will get better quality if you buy the whole chilies rather than chopped chilies.

Note: Progresso brand provides a better-quality bean that holds up well as the chili simmers, and you should only need three cans. If you use another brand and find that it is disintegrating as the chili simmers, add a fourth can of beans.



PARMESAN CHICKEN WINGS

These delicious wings are oven-baked.

- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons ground pepper
- 3 large eggs, beaten
- 1 1/2 cups panko breadcrumbs
- 1 1/4 cups grated parmesan cheese
- 2 pounds chicken wings, cut at joints, wing tips discarded
- 3 tablespoons balsamic glaze (store-bought or made from scratch)
- Lemon wedges
- Ranch dressing
- Celery and carrot sticks

Preheat oven to 450 F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Coat with cooking spray. Combine flour, garlic powder and pepper in a shallow dish.

Place eggs in a second shallow dish. Combine panko and cheese in a third shallow dish. Working in batches, dredge chicken pieces in the flour mixture, then the eggs and finally in the panko mixture, shaking off excess after each dredging. Place on the prepared baking sheet. Coat the chicken lightly with cooking spray.

Bake, turning the chicken halfway through, until the chicken is golden brown, and an instant-read thermometer inserted in the thickest portion registers 165 F, 20-25 minutes.

Arrange the chicken on a platter. Drizzle with balsamic glaze and serve with lemon wedges and ranch dressing for dipping with celery and carrots.

DOUBLE DIP HUMMUS

This recipe from Eating Well could be the creamiest hummus you've ever tasted. It's best made a day in advance.

- 8 ounces dried chickpeas (about 1 cup)
- 1 tablespoon baking soda
- 7 large cloves garlic, divided
- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1/2 cup tahini, divided
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice plus 1 tablespoon, divided
- 1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cumin, plus more for garnish
- Paprika for garnish
- 1/4 cup chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 2 tablespoons of the prettiest chickpeas for garnish.

Rinse the remaining chickpeas and garlic and set the colander over a bowl. Refrigerate the chickpea mixture, reserved cooking water and pretty chickpeas separately overnight.

The next day, combine the chickpeas, 6 of the garlic cloves and 1/2 cup of the reserved cooking water in a food processor (or blender) with 1/4 cup each oil, tahini and lemon juice. Add salt and cumin. Process until creamy. Transfer to a serving bowl. Puree the remaining 1/4 cup each oil and tahini with the remaining garlic clove, 2 tablespoons of the cooking water and 1 tablespoon lemon juice until smooth.

Place chickpeas in a medium saucepan and cover with 2 inches of water. Stir in baking soda. Soak overnight. Drain the chickpeas and rinse well. Rinse out the pan. Return the chickpeas to the pan and cover with 2 inches of fresh water. Add garlic. Bring to a boil. Keep at a rolling boil until the chickpeas are tender and almost falling apart, 25-40 minutes.

Reserve about 3/4 cup of the cooking water, then drain the chickpeas. Set aside

Make an indentation in the center of the hummus and spoon in the tahini-lemon mixture. Sprinkle the hummus with cumin and paprika, if desired. Garnish with the reserved whole chickpeas and parsley. Serve with fresh carrots, celery and other colorful vegetables and/or pita chips. 📺





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