

WC west
carolina

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2025

CONNECTED

Tee Up a Good Time

High Meadows
Country Club

NEWBERRY
ATHLETICS

COWBOY POETS





By Shirley Bloomfield, CEO
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

Ensuring Access for All

Supreme Court upholds
Universal Service Fund

Money raised by a small fee on your communications bill makes a critical difference throughout rural America. Earlier this year, a ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court allowed the Universal Service Fund, or USF, to continue.

I can't emphasize enough how critical this ruling is in a journey that began in 1934, when the Communications Act decreed all Americans should have access to rapid, efficient and nationwide communication services at reasonable prices.

Then, the 1996 Telecommunications Act created the USF to better connect rural areas and make voice and broadband services more affordable for rural and low-income consumers, schools, libraries and rural health care facilities.

By affirming that the Federal Communications Commission has discretion to collect the fees, the court kept this foundational tool in place. A March survey of nearly 270 NTCA members indicated that the USF programs help keep rural broadband rates more affordable. Without this funding, rural consumer rates could be more than double those in urban areas.

Policymakers in Washington, D.C., are debating how to reform universal service programs going forward, so that they can continue to serve the needs of millions of Americans.

It is essential that our elected officials understand the positive impacts the critical USF programs have had—and continue to have—on the availability, affordability and sustainability of voice and broadband services for millions of consumers, businesses and anchor institutions in rural America.

Visit ntca.org/universalservice. 



Secure Your Digital World

Keys for success


While October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month, protecting yourself requires year-long vigilance. And everyone's needs vary based on the online tools and resources you use.

Remember, bad actors are increasingly sophisticated—they want access to your information. The FBI offers a few tips for some of the key points of emphasis, and they provide a good starting point for planning your personalized security strategy.

Create a sturdy defense. Update systems, software and apps. Also, install a strong, reputable antivirus program.

Connect carefully. Be cautious when connecting to a public Wi-Fi network. Avoid sensitive transactions, including purchases. Create a strong and unique passphrase for each online account.

Lock down all accounts. Establish multifactor authentication. Examine the email address in all correspondence and scrutinize website URLs before responding to a message or visiting a site. Don't click on anything in unsolicited emails or text messages.

Guard your information. Be cautious about your information in online profiles and social media accounts. Sharing the names of pets, schools and family members gives scammers hints they need to guess your passwords or the answers to your account security questions. Never send payments to unknown people or organizations, particularly those urging immediate action. 

RAISING HISTORY

Heritage breed farmers preserve the past while protecting the future

Story by LES O'DELL

Farmers, ranchers, shepherds and homesteaders work to raise crops and livestock as efficiently as possible. Like any business, the goal is to maximize income and profitability.

Yet many agriculturalists also see themselves as conservationists, working to preserve the past while ensuring the future by using Earth-friendly farming methods and raising animals facing extinction.

In Pikeville, Tennessee, Amy Balog and her family raise endangered agricultural animals, also called heritage livestock breeds. “There are so many reasons why,” she says. “It’s not only keeping the genetics going. It’s the history and provenance of the breeds.”

Her Faverolles chickens, Sebastopol geese and Saxony ducks are among 180 breeds listed on the Conservation Priority List, an annual ranking of farm animals on the brink of disappearing. The list includes varieties of 11 different animals, from rabbits to cattle, horses and hogs. Many breeds fall out of favor in commercial agricultural settings. Perhaps they don’t put on weight as quickly as other breeds, for example. But they still have value.

SUSTAINABILITY

Protecting biodiversity and genetic resources is an important reason for protecting heritage breeds, says Allison Kincaid, executive director of The Livestock Conservancy. But many producers choose heritage animals because they want to make a difference.

“None of us can predict what the future of agriculture will look like. This is about keeping these breeds around as a genetic

reservoir,” she says, adding these animals are key to food security. “If we didn’t have this diversity, eventually we would narrow our food system down to where it wasn’t sustainable. There would be no backup.”

Likewise, farmer Grant Breitreutz of Redwood Falls, Minnesota, takes a conservation approach to crop production. “We’ve been no-till for 12 years for all of our crops,” he says. Grant leaves farm implements that expose the soil, such as plows and discs, in the machine shed. Instead, he plants cover crops, grasses and other plants he sows without exposing the soil in order to replenish organic nutrients and to minimize erosion.

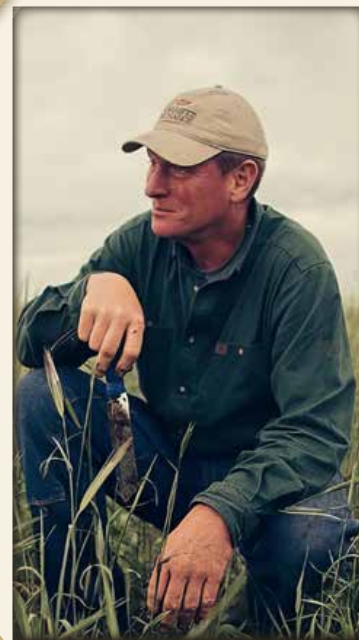
Grant pivoted to conservation farming practices to ensure his soil is healthy and hearty enough to produce bumper crops for generations to come. “If we’ve done this for 130 years of farming, how much time do we have left? So, that’s why we focus so hard on building our soils back,” he says. “It has made a world of difference, and the crops are much more drought resistant and are yielding more bushels per acre. Plus, our pastures have tripled in production over the years by taking care of the soil first.”

The Breitreutz family won the inaugural Minnesota Leopold Conservation Award, presented in 2024 by the Minnesota Soil Health Coalition. Grant says honors are not important, but preserving things for future generations is. Amy agrees.

“It’s more about quality over quantity and quality is what keeps these lines going. If we don’t do it, I’m afraid they’ll all get lost,” she says.



Amy and Daniel Balog, who live outside Pikeville, Tennessee, raise heritage animals like the Sebastopol goose she’s holding.



Grant Breitreutz uses no-till techniques that protect soil quality on his Minnesota farm.

For more about agronomic conservation, visit sandcountymn.org and to learn about livestock conservation efforts, visit livestockconservancy.org.

Photo courtesy of Amy and Daniel Balog

Photo courtesy of Grant Breitreutz

Exemplary Service

Our promise to you

There's a lot of noise out there these days. You've seen it—bright, catchy headlines, attention-grabbing deals and promises that seem too good to be true. And often, they are.



CHRIS TOWNSON
Chief Executive Officer

If you've ever found yourself squinting at the fine print, wondering what you missed, you're not alone. There's a lot buried in those details—fees that weren't mentioned up front, service that changes after a few months and conditions that seem to shift like sand.

Now, hear my heart: That's not how we do things at West Carolina.

We believe in being straight with people. No gimmicks. No gotchas. We won't lure you in with one thing only to give you something else. Our commitment is, and always has been, to be honest, to be clear and to be here for you. That's the kind of service we'd want for our own

families. It's the kind of service you deserve.

At the core of who we are, you'll find two values that shape everything we do: Work the Dream and Serve with Heart.

Work the Dream is more than a motto, it's a mission. We believe in doing what's needed, not just what's easy. This isn't just a job to us. We show up every day because we care about this place and the people who call it home. Our dream is to help you live your dream, right here in the communities we share. Whether it's providing the fastest fiber internet in the region or simply showing up with kindness and a solution, we do it with purpose.

Serve with Heart means exactly what it says. You are not a number to us. You're not a transaction. You're a neighbor, a friend and a member of this community we love. So, when we answer the phone, install your service or solve a problem, that moment matters to us. We pour care into the little things, because we know they add up to something much bigger: trust.

West Carolina's story is not just about technology, though we're proud of what we've built. It's a story about people. About communities banding together to make something good and lasting. We don't measure our success in megabits or minutes. We measure it in the difference we make right here at home.

So, when you choose West Carolina, know this: You're choosing a team that stays until the job's done right. You're choosing neighbors who care more about serving you well than selling you something you don't need. You're choosing a promise that still means something.

That's exemplary service. That's our promise to you, and we're honored to keep it. 🗨️

west carolina

CONNECTED

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2025

VOL. 13, NO. 5

West Carolina Connected is a bimonthly newsletter published by West Carolina Telephone, © 2025. It is distributed without charge to all members/owners of the cooperative.

west carolina

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
864-446-2111
westcarolina.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Westley "Wes" McAllister, President
North McCormick, Area 8

John Michael Thomas, Vice President
Iva, Area 2

Jane U. Stone, Secretary
Donalds, Area 3

Aimee Gray
Starr, Area 1

Lee W. Logan
Due West, Area 4

Eric McCall
Antreville/Lowndesville, Area 5

James Robert Hester
Calhoun Falls, Area 6

Darren Campbell Lewis
Abbeville, Area 7

Talmadge R. Bussey
South McCormick, Area 9

Produced for West Carolina by:

Pioneer
UTILITY RESOURCES

On the Cover:



Photo by Mark Gilliland

In a cooperative spirit, members of the High Meadows Country Club share maintenance jobs around the nine-hole course.
See story on Page 12.

HOCUS FOCUS

Capture the spirit of the season

West Carolina looks forward to another spooktacular Halloween, which means another opportunity to enter our photo contest—if you dare!

We can't wait to see all of the creative costumes. The entry with the most likes on our Facebook page will win a prize. All local residents can enter images of their children, ages 12 and under.

For a complete list of rules and details on how to enter, go to westcarolina.com/halloween.



Alaiyah's Wednesday Addams costume, complete with Thing, takes top prize in the 2024 West Carolina Halloween photo contest.

Silas takes second place in last year's contest for his bread bag costume.

Photos courtesy of West Carolina

UNFORGETTABLE SUMMER

Our employees enjoyed connecting with our community during our Summer Bash events. Even those high temperatures couldn't stop the fun of seeing so many of the members we serve.

We're grateful for the community's support, and these events are a small way of saying thank you to our members. We couldn't do what we do without you.



CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT: West Carolina employees Chad Culbreth, left, and Travis Taylor play with Travis' children at the Summer Bash in Iva. Employee Courtney Dominick dresses as our mascot, Owlbert, to take photos with customers at the Summer Bash in Greenwood. Benji Greeson, left, from 92.9 WZLA, interviews CEO Chris Townson during the Summer Bash in Abbeville. Chris, left, greets retired board member Ned McGill and his wife, Willyne.



DON'T GET HOOKED BY RANSOMWARE

Ransomware is malicious software that locks victims out of data on their devices until they pay for access to be restored. The FBI does not recommend paying the ransom.

Consider the common threats:

Phishing emails—These emails trick users into downloading a malicious attachment disguised as a harmless file.

Software vulnerabilities—Hackers can find holes in a piece of software's cybersecurity protection or buy information on these flaws to download the malware onto a device or network.

Stolen logins—Whether they're obtained through phishing, purchased on the dark web or hacked, stolen credentials give cybercriminals direct access to download malware onto a device.

HOW CAN I AVOID IT?

The best defense is to protect yourself and your devices before an attack can begin.

- Back up important data to eliminate most of the leverage an attacker might have.
- Regularly update your computer's software and operating system.
- Update your computer's cybersecurity tools.
- Always be aware of phishing, social engineering and other strategies that can lead to a ransomware attack.



Mapping out your perfect road trip

Story by DREW WOOLLEY

Fall is the perfect time for travel and new experiences with family and friends. And while flying can have its conveniences, most travelers prefer to hit the road when mapping out their next adventure. According to AAA's domestic travel forecast for a recent holiday weekend, 87% of travelers planned to make trips by car.

PREPARE FOR THE ROAD AHEAD

"I usually tend to drive, and most people choose to drive. And the reason for that is, for most families and groups of people, it's the most affordable way to travel," says AAA Texas Communications Manager Doug Shupe. "It's also the most convenient. You can leave when you want to leave and return when you want to. But there definitely needs to be some preparation before taking a long road trip."

Before everyone piles into the car, make sure you're ready for the journey. That includes giving your vehicle a quick inspection, planning a route and having the supplies—and the tunes—to keep everyone happy until you reach your destination.

SAFETY CHECK

Before any lengthy road trip, Doug recommends taking your vehicle for a tuneup at a trusted repair facility. But if you can't find time for that, it's still a good idea to do a few quick checks on your own.





Check your tires to make sure they're properly inflated and in good condition.

That includes the tread. If you can put an upside-down quarter in the grooves of your tires and see the top of George Washington's head, it's probably a good idea to replace them before taking a long trip.

If your vehicle's battery is more than 3 years old, consider having it tested before getting on the road. Vibration can also cause a battery to fail sooner, so check that the terminals are secure and free of corrosion.

Examine your radiator and cooling system to make sure they're in good condition. Check belts and hoses for cracks or fraying that could lead to problems after extended use.

Ensure your wiper blades are in good shape in case you pass through a rainy patch, and have someone help you check that your headlights, taillights and turn signals are all working properly.

PLANNING YOUR ROUTE

One of the best parts of any road trip is mapping out a path, as long as there's a little room for improvisation. Plan ahead and make the most of these tools



that can help you find the right stops along the way.

Know what's coming—Apps like Roadtrippers and GasBuddy can help you pick the best place to make a pit stop. Get suggestions for must-visit restaurants and scenic drives or just scope out the most affordable gas prices so you can make the most of your detours.

Go analog—GPS is an invaluable resource on the road, but it's still smart to have a physical map to orient yourself just in case you lose signal or your battery dies. Maps can even be a fun distraction for kids and give them a hands-on way to follow along with where you are.

Track your itinerary—If you've already set up all your reservations for hotels, restaurants and attractions, TripIt can keep track of it all in one place. The app syncs with your inbox to compile an itinerary, so you don't have to search for each confirmation email, and sends you reminders so you can focus on having fun.

Don't be afraid to rest—If you're driving for multiple days, be realistic about how far you can go before resting for the night. It's better to lean toward too many stops than too few. You can even pull over for a quick 30-minute nap if you're feeling drowsy.

FUN AND GAMES

Hitting the open road also means getting to spend plenty of time with your favorite people. So don't forget



to prepare the food, games and music that will help you make the most of it.

State of play—Road trip games are classic, from the Alphabet Game and I Spy to Two Truths and a Lie and 20 Questions. Make your own fun by taking turns thinking of a movie and describing it in the worst way possible to see who can guess it. Or, learn more about each other by picking a category like songs, books or foods and building your own top-five lists.

Fight the munchies—Stops at hole-in-the-wall restaurants are a must for



any road trip. But someone is bound to get hangry in between meals. Everyone's favorite snacks will vary, but it's hard to go wrong with some trail mix or jerky. You can even pack fruit and rice cakes for healthy options.

The perfect mix—Planning out a playlist that will make everyone happy is a tall task. You want music that will fit the mood and maybe even complement the terrain you're driving through. Fortunately, you don't have to do it alone these days. If everyone shares the same music service, you can make a shared playlist that everyone can contribute to. You can even make a game out of it, guessing who's the secret Swiftie or where all those oldies came from. 📱

More Than a Game

Newberry's Wolves work
together beyond sports

Story by JOHN CLAYTON



Newberry College head football coach Todd Knight has helmed the Wolves for the past 16 seasons.



Ella Allardice recognizes she is not the typical college student.

Ella found her way from her home in Zimbabwe, a landlocked country in southern Africa, to Newberry College at the upper edge of South Carolina's Midlands to play field hockey and further her education.

"I tell people this a lot—I'm not your average student," she says. "An average student would probably just hang out, go to class and go to sports events. But if you take these opportunities and make the most of them there is so much you can get out of them. The biggest takeaway I have from college is just realizing how it is so much fun, but you also learn how real everything is. I'm paying bills, I'm experiencing the real world, I'm having deadlines, but that is life."

Ella is a senior majoring in psychology at the Lutheran school with an enrollment of about 1,500 students. She is an example of what Newberry athletics leaders look for in their student-athletes. The college competes at the NCAA Division II level in the South Atlantic Conference with 26 men's and women's sports programs.

Ella's field hockey team was among the most successful programs for the Wolves

in 2024-25, going 15-4 and finishing as SAC co-champions.

But that's not the final measure of success, says Hunter Perry-Gallinger, associate athletic director for external relations and senior woman administrator.

"We're really here to make better people," Hunter says, citing the nearly 5,000 hours of community service volunteered by student-athletes during the last academic year.

"That's why I really, really love sports, and I love the Division II space," she says. "We're competitive on the field, but, at the end of the day, we're helping our community. We're learning valuable skills and, hopefully, we'll be better people."

GETTING INVOLVED

In May, Becca Hartrick was a member of Newberry's first class of female graduating triathletes. Now, her professional future awaits, and Newberry prepared her for the challenges she will face. She juggled academics and school activities with a demanding sports schedule for four years—time management training that should serve her well in professional life.

"It was challenging, but if you're a good communicator with your professors and

with your coach and really understand how much time you have for your activities and for your classes, you can do it," says Becca, who graduated with a degree in psychology.

Hurricane Helene blew inland late last September, causing devastation across the Carolinas. Newberry—the college, the city and the county—were hit hard. Hunter says the culture of service being built at the college was on full display in the wake of the storm.

"All of our student-athletes were out helping, cleaning up campus and moving trees and doing what they could," Hunter says. "I think that tells a lot about our student-athletes and how they really care about the community, and they're thankful to be in such a great community."

OLD AND NEW TRADITIONS

When the Wolves kick off Sept. 6,



Newberry will begin its 112th college football season. The last 16 of those have been played under head coach Todd Knight.

College football has evolved and reinvented itself time after time, and Todd is navigating new territories with the NCAA transfer portal and NIL—name, image, likeness—rules that have been literal game-changers at every level of the sport.

But some things remain constant for the coach as he recruits student-athletes to Newberry College.

“From a recruiting aspect, we talk about how active we are in the community,” Todd says. “We show up at the numerous events in Newberry and show support for our great city and all that they do.”

Every Thursday, players and coaches volunteer at a Newberry food bank. “Multiple kids and coaches—we’re out there together, handing out food and trying to be a positive influence in the



Photos courtesy of Newberry College

community,” Todd says. “I think with a school our size and a small, Southern town like Newberry, it’s very important to be plugged into the community. Your fan base is coming from this town and from the kids’ parents.”

But it’s the teaching moments off the field and outside the classroom that mean the most, Todd says, adding that those moments show his players that they can make a difference in people’s lives.

“There are people out there struggling. They’re in need, and you can make a difference. The last couple of years, that’s caught on with our kids,” Todd says.

“I can’t wait to see these kids come back to campus 15-20 years from now and be good men, raising sons and daughters and bringing them back to see where they went to school. Wins and losses? Yeah, that’s important. But seeing a kid make it—that’s what it’s all about.” 📩

ABOVE: Becca Hartrick pedals the cycling leg of the triathlon during the NCAA National Championship.

TOP: Wolves defenders, from left, Sofia Urzillo, Finet Heemskerck and Emma Westbrook build a wall in front of goalie Ayanda Mangenah.

HOW THE WEST WAS HEARD

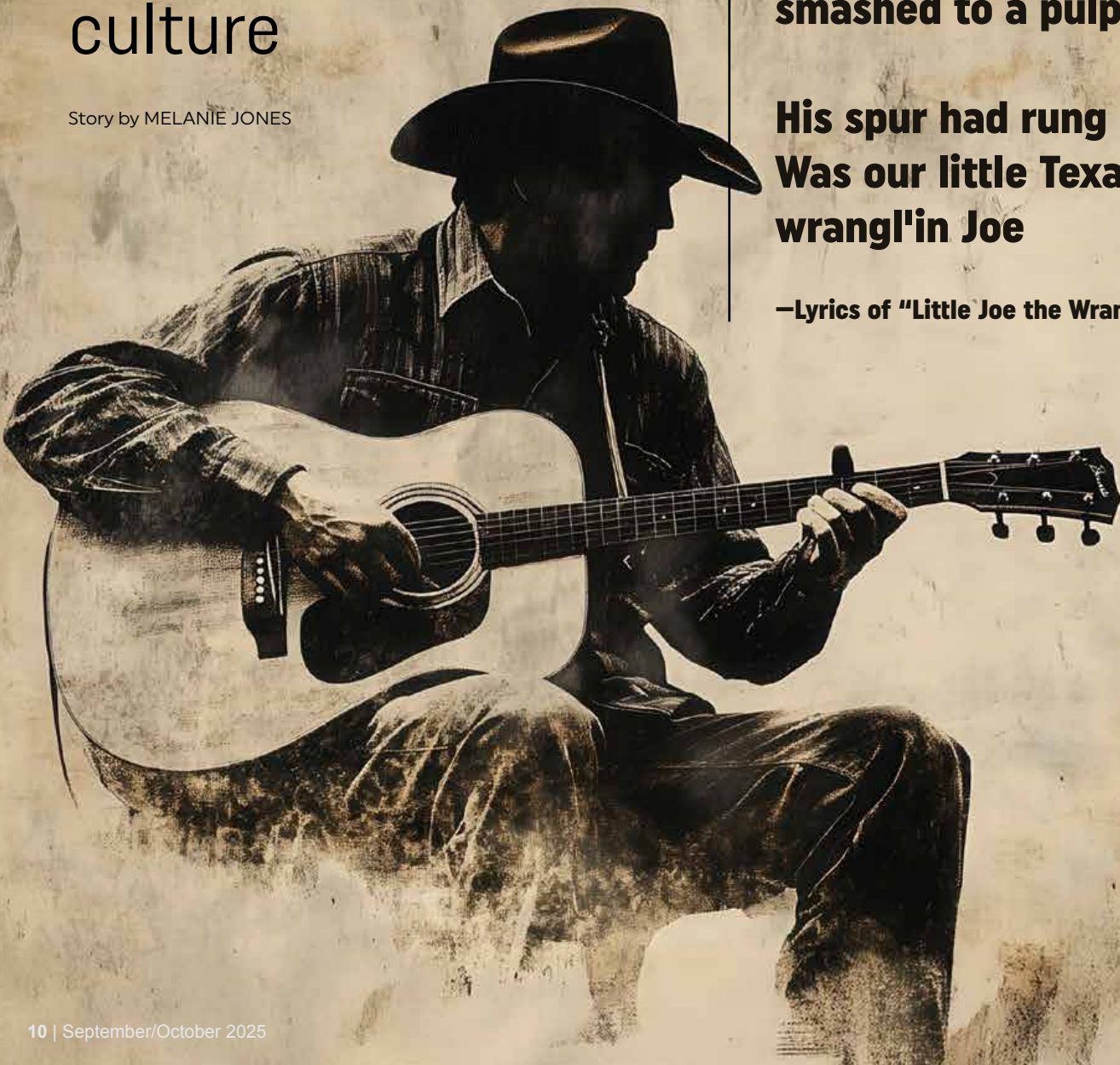
Poet and musician captures cowboy culture

Story by MELANIE JONES

**Next morn'in just
at daybreak
And beneath his horse,
smashed to a pulp**

**His spur had rung his knell
Was our little Texas Faithful,
wrangl'in Joe**

—Lyrics of “Little Joe the Wrangler”





Andy Hedges plays several instruments favored by cowboys, including the banjo.

Andy Hedges, a cowboy poet, musician and podcaster, collects oral histories of the Old West the way rodeo champs collect belt buckles. He's a champion of cowboy culture, and he has the hat to prove it.

"I think there's something about that image that just resonates with people," he says. "They know cowboys represent some of the best of American values—independence, honesty, hard work. And when they hear it, they're hearing real, authentic stories from cowboy culture. They learn the real truth behind the cowboy image."

Cowboy poetry also extends to music, with songs like "Rounded Up in Glory" and "Little Joe the Wrangler." Roy Rogers and Gene Autry brought that style of music to the silver screen, although the Hollywood version is not at the heart of the genre.

Authenticity inspires events across the country, from the Cowpoke Fall Gathering in Loomis, California, to Old West Days in Valentine, Nebraska. Minnesota annually declares a Cowboy Poetry Week, and Andy is returning to Jonesborough, Tennessee, where he performed several times. Cowboy music has even made it to the world-famous Carnegie Hall.

DISCOVERY

Andy, who lives in Lubbock, Texas, is part of a movement that began in 1985, when a group of cowboys met in Elko, Nevada, for the inaugural National Cowboy Poetry Gathering. It's where cowboys swap tales, sing songs of the range and recite poetry that fills lonely days and nights.

What makes a poet a cowboy poet? Andy says his friend Vess Quinlan explains it this way: "He told me there's two ways you can make a deposit in the cowboy poetry bank. One is by being a working cowboy who writes poetry. The other one is to be a non-cowboy who writes poetry that is so good, it becomes accepted by working cowboys. And, of course, it has to be authentic. It has to ring true to those people."

"A lot of people write or recite cowboy poetry or sing the old cowboy songs or write new songs," Andy says. "The truth is a lot

of us, including myself, have never made a living as a cowboy."

Andy has spent years immersing himself in cowboy culture's history, poetry and music. "I try really hard to represent the culture in an authentic way," he says.

He grew up hearing stories of his dad, who worked the rodeo circuit before becoming a Primitive Baptist preacher. He watched old Hollywood Westerns and listened to Western music. "All I really thought I wanted to do was be a cowboy," he says.

But his true obsession with cowboy culture began when he saw an episode of "Austin City Limits" featuring Michael Martin Murphy and friends. Those friends included cowboy poet Waddie Mitchell, cowboy singer Don Edwards and the groups Sons of the San Joaquin and Riders in the Sky. "It just opened that world up to me," Andy says. "I didn't realize there were people who still sang the old songs. I'd never heard cowboy poetry before I heard Waddie on that show."

A self-taught guitarist, young Andy learned some of the old songs. "It was really the beginning of a lifelong obsession with cowboy poetry and cowboy songs," he says.

By the time he could drive, the homeschooled teen was traveling to cowboy gatherings. By 20, he made it to Elko, where he's appeared 17 times. Since recording his album of duets, "Ride On, Cowboy," he and some of the album's guests have appeared on the Grand Ole Opry and practiced, practiced, practiced their way to Carnegie Hall, where they performed for an appreciative audience in March 2024.

The music has an international audience. While travelers come to the United States for gatherings, some performers also toured overseas. Andy even traveled to Turkmenistan as part of a cultural exchange. "The cowboy has always been the folk hero of America," he says. "People identify with that image. You know, when I traveled to Turkmenistan, or just travel overseas not performing, when I wear a cowboy hat, people love that and immediately associate that image with the United States." 📺

SWAPPING STORIES

Cowboy poet and musician Andy Hedges will be the teller-in-residence at the National Storytelling Center in Jonesborough, Tennessee, Sept. 2-6. Andy has participated in the National Storytelling Festival before.

"It's a really fantastic gathering of all kinds of storytellers from different traditions," he says of the festival. "I was honored to be there representing the cowboy tradition and sharing cowboy poetry with them." As teller-in-residence, he'll perform a concert every day, make media appearances and take part in other community events. For more information on the event, go to storytellingcenter.net.

To learn more about cowboy culture, check out Andy's podcast, "Cowboy Crossroads." You can download episodes at andyhedges.com/cowboy-crossroads.



Eric Moat, center, and Howard Stentz take a break to chat with Tom Howie, left. They are all High Meadows Country Club members.

Teeing Up Good Times

Member-owned High Meadows Country Club offers a unique golf experience

Story by JOHN CLAYTON

Mark Twain called golf “a good walk spoiled.” But he never played the nine-hole layout at Abbeville’s High Meadows Country Club, where golf and a bit of fun have always gone hand in hand.

High Meadows, the only golf club in Abbeville County, celebrated its 60th anniversary last year. It is owned, operated and maintained by its members.

“I think the magic of it is that everybody pitches in. Everybody works together, collaborates to make it successful,” says High Meadows member Shannon Sears, who is also West Carolina’s director of commercial operations.

Members may come for the golf, but they stay for the fun and camaraderie. “It’s always had a little bit of a ‘Caddyshack’

vibe,” Shannon says, referring to the 1980 film about a country club with a colorful cast of characters. “If it were more of a true country club, it would be like ‘Caddyshack,’ and its origin was like a country club with a pool and tennis courts, but now there’s just the golf course.”

A GRAND EXPERIMENT

High Meadows members call Johnny “Oscar” Myers the club’s “grand poohbah.” He organizes the tournaments, occasionally runs the pro shop, keeps the books and generally makes sure everything is up to par. Somebody has to do it. The club has no employees.

“We stay busy,” Oscar says. “But we cut up and have fun. We play golf on Wednesdays. We’ve got 30-something

members, and we’ll have 20-something playing on a Wednesday.”

A small cadre of members also keeps the course in shape, mowing the fairways and making sure the equipment stays in working order. The club was never intended as a real estate investment with homes on every fairway, so it has always been a social club.

The nine-hole, par-36 course features two sets of tees and plays to 3,252 yards. There are no club-owned carts, but members can bring their own.

“It’s just a good, little semiprivate, mostly private course,” Oscar says.

Before the construction of High Meadows Country Club began in 1963, 40 member-owners each bought shares in the club for \$40,000 in start-up capital, the



A foursome tees off during an afternoon outing.

equivalent of about \$420,000 today. It was enough to get started, and the members still own the club.

In addition to the sweat equity provided by members since the very beginning, the club collects green fees, mostly by the honor system. There's a drop box at the first hole if the pro shop isn't open.

There's no real dress code, but don't even think about trying to fudge on your handicap for the annual member-guest tournament, held every August. The tournament attracts golfers from all around the Lakelands and provides the biggest financial boost for the club each year.

"Other clubs make sure not to schedule any big events on the weekend of the member-guest," longtime member Tom Howie says.

Tom played in and won his first member-guest at High Meadows 40 years ago and never left. He says the camaraderie

and friendships over the years, along with the casual atmosphere, kept him coming back.

"It's just a bunch of people who play for the love of the game," Tom says. "They love the course and the traditions. It's what they do, and they just keep it going."

PARS AND POSSIBILITIES

The team effort to "keep it going" has worked for decades as generations of High Meadows members dedicate themselves to the course's upkeep.


Steve McKinney heads up the volunteers, but that doesn't mean it's easy, especially with a membership that has more than a touch of gray. "The ones that do most of the grass-cutting, they're all in their 70s," Oscar says. "Walt Hilley is 85, and he'll still help cut grass. Everybody out there is in their late 60s and 70s, and they do all the work."

Work and play going hand in hand at High Meadows is just part of the unique

traditions at the club. Shannon says the qualities that make the club unique also make it something of a hidden gem in Abbeville County—maybe a little too hidden.

"We want to invite people to come out and participate," Shannon says. "There are some limitations to it because it's owned by the members, and it's almost a self-service type of golf course."

Still, the future of the course will be shaped and fueled by a new generation of members. Shannon would like to see the high school golf teams, like Dixie and Abbeville, return so young players can be introduced to the course. With them could come new and needed possibilities for the club.

"It's a great getaway, a way to spend an afternoon," he says. "We're going to have to fight to keep it going, and we're going to have to have participation from more than the people who are doing it today." 

Dinner on a Stick

Kabobs make for easy meals, quick cleanup

Do you ever crave an easy meal with meat and vegetables? Try putting kabobs on the menu. It's a tasty grill-friendly choice, and cleanup is easy.

Begin with a tender cut of meat like top sirloin, which is affordable. Filet also works well. If you'd like, substitute chicken or tofu. Just remember to cut your protein portions to about the same size so they cook evenly. You can add as many chopped veggies as you like.

Begin with a fresh marinade. Homemade chimichurri does double duty as a marinade and seasoning sauce—it works for any protein. Round out your meal with crunchy Asian coleslaw and a fresh apple cake for dessert.

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

GRILLED CHIMICHURRI STEAK KABOBS

CHIMICHURRI SAUCE

- 1/2 cup fresh cilantro, packed, leaves and tender stems
- 1/2 cup fresh parsley, packed
- 3 tablespoons fresh oregano or 3 teaspoons dried
- 1 lemon, zested and juiced
- 3-4 cloves of garlic
- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 teaspoons red wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

Put all ingredients in a food processor

and pulse until blended. Taste and season with salt and pepper as desired.

STEAK KABOBS

- 32 ounces top sirloin, or the protein of your choice, cut into 2-inch cubes
- 36-48 baby potatoes, golden or mini reds
- 2 medium bell peppers, any color, chopped into 2-inch pieces
- 2 small red onions, chopped into 2-inch pieces
- Kosher salt and ground black pepper



CRUNCHY ASIAN COLESLAW

- 2 packages ramen noodles, any flavor
- 2 16-ounce packages shredded coleslaw mix
- 1 cup slivered almonds, toasted
- 5 green onions, chopped
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1/3 cup rice vinegar

Reserve the flavor packets from the noodles for another use or toss. Crush the

noodles and set aside. Toss together the coleslaw mix, almonds and green onions in a large salad bowl.

Whisk together the sugar, oil and vinegar in a small bowl until mixed. Add the dressing to the coleslaw mixture and toss to coat. Mix in the chopped noodles. Serve immediately. Makes 12 servings.

Note: You may prepare the salad in advance, adding the noodles just before serving so they are crunchy.

FRESH APPLE CAKE

- 1 cup oil
- 2 cups sugar
- 3 eggs
- 2 1/2 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup pecans or walnuts, chopped
- 3 cups apples, peeled and chopped

CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

- 1 8-ounce package cream cheese, softened
- 16 ounces powdered sugar

- 8 tablespoons butter
- 2 teaspoons vanilla

Measure oil into a large bowl, then whisk in sugar and eggs.

Mix together the flour, salt, baking powder and cinnamon, then add to the creamed mixture, beating well. Add vanilla, then fold in nuts and apples.

Pour mixture into a greased 9-by-13-inch pan. Bake at 350 F for 50 minutes or until cake tests done. Cover with foil if it gets too dark around the edges.

To make frosting: Combine all frosting ingredients and spread over cooled cake.

After reserving some of the chimichurri to use during cooking and for dipping the cooked kabobs, combine the rest of the sauce and the cubed protein in a sealable bag. Set aside to marinate. Meanwhile, soak the skewers in water a minimum of 20 minutes so they don't burn on the grill.

Add potatoes to a large pot, cover with water and 2 teaspoons of salt. Boil for 5-7 minutes or until fork tender. Drain and rinse the potatoes. Let them sit in cold water to cool. Chop veggies and have them ready to slide onto your skewers.

Now it's time to assemble: Using a soaked skewer, put either a potato or piece

of meat on first, so the rest of the veggies don't slide off the end. Then alternate between meat, potatoes and veggies.

Prepare the grill to about 500 F. Once it's ready, place steak kabobs perpendicular to the grill grates. Grill 3 minutes on each side for medium doneness. If you use chicken, cook for 5-7 minutes. Tofu needs to cook about 10 minutes. While cooking, brush the reserved chimichurri on the kabobs.

Remove the kabobs from the grill and let rest for 3-5 minutes. Use the chimichurri as an extra dipping sauce, if desired. 🍴





233 Highway 28 Bypass
Abbeville, SC 29620

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
HILLSBORO, OR
PERMIT No. 66

To *gig speed*...
and beyond!



Try 1 Gig Internet for just \$65/month
for your first 6 months — that's **\$15/month in savings!**



Call us to
learn more

westcarolina.com/beyondgig | (864) 446-2111

