

# CONNECTED

## Honoring History

Wilmington on the Way keeps the past alive



SPECIAL OLYMPICS

CAMPING TIPS

# Get the Support You Need and Avoid Tech Support Schemes



Adobe Stock image by keppinon

**T**hese days, you don't have to be a technophobe to get fooled by scams. As criminals become more sophisticated, their messages and approaches have become convincing enough to fool anyone.

That's especially true if you think your computer might be at risk. Tech support scammers often tell elaborate stories to convince people they need to hand over their financial information or remote access to their digital devices.

The Federal Trade Commission offers advice for times you're unsure about someone claiming to offer technical support and provides steps you can take to protect yourself.

Real tech companies aren't in the habit of reaching out by phone, email or text message every time your computer might have a problem. If someone does, that's a red flag.

Legitimate security pop-ups and messages will never tell you to call a phone number for help. If your computer's security software detects a legitimate problem, it will likely recommend a virus scan and walk you through the process.

Look out for language telling you to move money to "protect it." Scammers may suggest depositing money in a "federal safety locker" or buying gold to give to someone. These protections are fake, and a real government employee will not demand payment in gold or cash. 📧

## Plan a StayCation

**T**aking a break doesn't necessarily mean long drives or booking a flight and a pricey hotel. Often, there are a wealth of adventures close to home, which means there's an affordable summer staycation right outside your door.

Here are a few tips to consider:

### BE A TOURIST

Pop online and check out travel sites like TripAdvisor for your area. Are you overlooking destinations closest to you? Make a short list of nearby stops and plan a visit. You may be surprised by what you find.

### GEOCACHING

Check your preferred app store for a geocaching app and prepare to enjoy real-world puzzle solving. Often, you'll be guided to a nearby state or national park where clues will challenge you to find hidden caches.

### VIRTUAL CONCERTS

Find a cozy spot and enjoy a virtual concert—as a bonus, there are no crowds. Options include YouTube Live Concerts or NPR's Tiny Desk Concerts. Both serve a range of musical tastes. And look for genre

specific options like K-Love OnDemand, which features Christian artists. All are typically free.

### A FAMILY OLYMPICS

Do you need to keep the kids moving? Organize a family Olympics. Go to a local park and choose events to suit all ages and abilities. Then, post your results on your favorite social media and challenge family and friends to join the fun. 📧



Adobe Stock image by master1305

# Hit the Books

## Online troves await digital bookworms

Story by DREW WOOLLEY

**T**here are few better ways to escape the heat and humidity than with a classic summer read. Finding your next great adventure has never been easier with the vast digital libraries available on the internet. Whether you're looking to relax with your favorite e-reader or find an audiobook for a long road trip, you can start reading and listening today.

### PROJECT GUTENBERG

Since 1971, a veritable army of volunteer book nerds has been expanding and maintaining this digital archive of classic reads as they enter the public domain. Today, the Project Gutenberg library includes over 75,000 free e-books that you can download and read in a web browser or on most mobile devices. While you won't find the latest best-sellers on Project Gutenberg, it is an excellent place to return to classics like "Pride and Prejudice" or "Moby Dick" without paying a cent.

### LIBBY AND HOOPLA

Your library card is already a passport to free reads, but did you know it may also hold the key to a treasure trove of digital books and audiobooks? Apps like Libby and Hoopla let you borrow books and audiobooks from participating libraries around the world simply by linking your card to an account. Check out popular reads on your phone, tablet or browser, but don't take too long. Just like with your local library, you can only borrow them for a limited time.

### LIBRIVOX

If you prefer to sit back and let someone read to you, or if you just

don't have the time to sit down with a book, LibriVox is your friend. You can find audiobooks, in various languages, recorded by volunteers worldwide. Much like Project Gutenberg, all LibriVox audiobooks are in the public domain. Audio quality and reading styles can vary widely from one title to the next, but if you're looking for a free repository of classic audiobooks read by real people, LibriVox has you covered.

Whether you want to dig into a timeless classic, settle in with the latest thriller or listen to a new favorite while tidying up, there have never been more ways to find free books online. Happy reading! 📖

### THE WIDE WORLD OF PODCASTS

It's easy to see why podcasts have become so popular in the last decade. Most are free, they're easy to find and the variety of topics means you're bound to find something that speaks to you.

If you aren't sure where to start, platforms like Apple Podcasts, Spotify and iHeartRadio host thousands of podcasts that explore science, business, comedy, narrative fiction and so much more. Try top-ranked shows or go searching for deep dives on your favorite topics.

# When Summer Settles In

## Connect to what you love

Early summer has always been one of my favorite times of the year in the rural South.



**CHRIS TOWNSON**  
Chief Executive Officer

Growing up on a Sand Mountain farm in the southern Appalachians of North Alabama, May and June marked a turning point. Winter faded, spring loosened its grip and the heat of summer began to settle in. Days stretched longer, the air grew heavy and the countryside came alive.

When I close my eyes, I can still see it, hear it and smell it.

Birds calling from the tree line, a tractor cutting hay, a screen door creaking open to catch the evening breeze. Freshly cut grass drifting across the yard and that rich, earthy scent after a summer rain. Gardens filling with their first vegetables. The school year wound down, and you could feel it.

Summer was coming.

I loved growing up in the Townson household, the son of a co-vocational plumber and preacher named Steve and a servant-hearted mom, Helen Rose. We lived on my grandparents' farm, where life revolved around family, faith and hard work. Helping with farm chores, row crops and my grandfather's roofing business were part of growing up.

It's not just the place that makes those memories so vivid—it's the connections. Family gatherings. Church dinners. Neighbors helping neighbors. Long summer evenings when chores were finished and folks gathered on porches.

Those moments are deeply imprinted on who I am. The communities we serve here in the Upstate remind me of the place where I grew up—places where neighbors still know one another, and connections still matter.

As summer settles across our region, farmers markets fill with neighbors searching for the perfect Better Boy tomato or pickling cucumbers. Graduates step into a new season of life, and families gather on porches, patios and in backyards.

Those connections still shape our lives—and increasingly the technology in our homes helps make them possible. That's where West Carolina comes in.

Summer brings its own rhythm to our part of the Carolinas. School doors close, graduation celebrations fill our calendars and families gather. Grandkids come to stay, college students return home and grills fire up. With more people under one roof, WiFi usage climbs as devices come online—movies streaming, games connecting and video calls keeping families in touch.

And summer in the South isn't meant to be spent only indoors.

We enjoy our backyards, porches, patios, pools and cook sheds, and many families want reliable WiFi outdoors, too. That's why we continue expanding solutions that support the way people live today.

Our Outdoor Living package extends WiFi into the spaces where summer happens, while our WiFi X service helps ensure strong, secure coverage. Through the WiFi X app, members can manage devices, set parental controls and keep their networks running smoothly.

This summer, we're providing a complimentary speed upgrade for all customers for a full year.

We want your connection to simply work—wherever summer takes you. Because when your technology works the way it should, you're free to focus on what matters most: time with the people who matter most—around the dinner table, on the porch or during a quiet summer evening as the countryside settles in.

That's the kind of connection worth having. ☑

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**On the Cover:**



Volunteers including from left, Ryan Kimbrell, Deborah Fuller, Geraldine Ware, Pearly Davis, Barry Russell and Erik Engebretsen work to preserve the center's six historic buildings.

Photo courtesy of Jess Bowie

See story Page 8.

## HONORING THE FALLEN

On Memorial Day and every day, we honor America's fallen heroes and the families who carry their memories forward.

West Carolina's offices will be closed **Monday, May 25**, in observance of Memorial Day.

## STREAMING CARE TO THE RESCUE

Feeling overwhelmed trying to switch from traditional cable to streaming? You're not alone. **West Carolina's Streaming Care service** is designed to make the transition simple and stress free.

With this in-home service, a West Carolina technician will help set up streaming on your smart devices and walk you through the process so you can start streaming with confidence. **Appointments start at \$100 an hour**, and during the visit our team can help connect devices, install streaming apps and answer questions along the way. Learn more or schedule your appointment at [westcarolina.com/care](http://westcarolina.com/care).

## IS IT TIME TO UPDATE YOUR ROUTER?

When was the last time West Carolina replaced your router? Many home networks are running on outdated equipment that cannot keep up with today's connected homes.

With WiFi X, you get our newest high-quality router along with white-glove service from our team. We install the router, optimize your network and make sure your devices are connected so you can enjoy fast, reliable WiFi throughout your home.

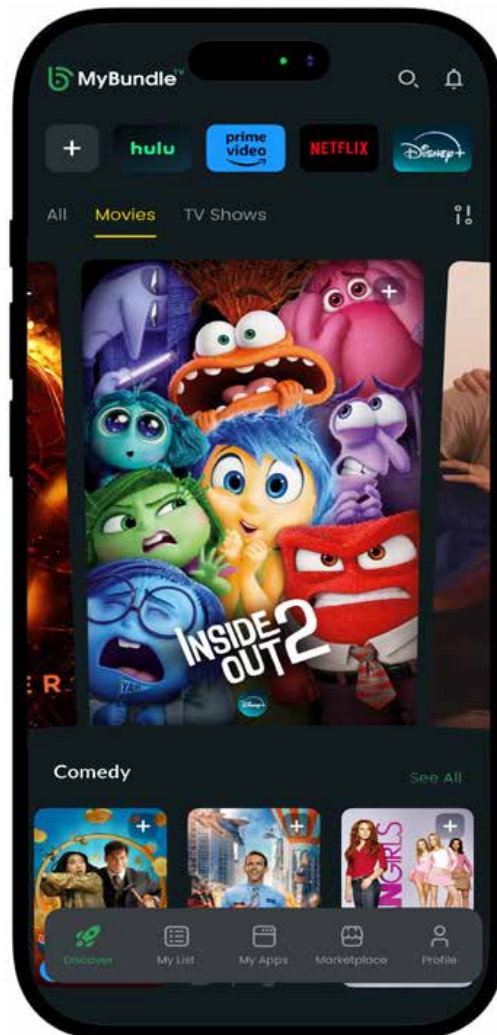
WiFi X also helps fortify your network against hackers and online threats. With built-in security features that monitor your network and block suspicious activity, you can feel confident your home network is better protected. In today's connected world, protecting your network is more critical than ever. Learn more about WiFi X at [westcarolina.com/wifi-x](http://westcarolina.com/wifi-x).

## A SMARTER WAY TO MANAGE STREAMING

Trying to keep up with all your streaming apps? The free MyBundle app makes it easier to manage everything in one place.

With MyBundle, search for movies and TV shows to see exactly where they are streaming, track the services you subscribe to and discover new content based on what you like to watch. It is a simple way to spend less time searching and more time enjoying your favorite shows.

Download the free MyBundle app and learn more at [mybundle.tv/wcfiber/app](http://mybundle.tv/wcfiber/app).



## SUMMER PROOF YOUR HOME WIFI WITH AN OUTDOOR EXTENDER

Ever notice how your WiFi signal drops the moment you step into the yard? West Carolina's Outdoor WiFi helps extend your connection up to 200 feet beyond your home.

That means you can stream music on the patio, watch a game by the pool or stay connected while spending time in your cook shed. It is a simple way to bring your home WiFi with you while you enjoy the outdoors.

# RV There Yet.

## Step off the beaten path at a campground

Story by DREW WOOLLEY

**W**ith remote work becoming more mainstream, it has never been easier to hit the road in a recreational vehicle. As more Americans realize the appeal of making their office a national park one day and a beach the next, 16.9 million households are interested in buying an RV in the next five years, according to the RV Industry Association.

“There are so many great things happening this year, from America’s 250th birthday to the World Cup,” says Monika Geraci, a spokesperson for Go RVing. “People are discovering that RVing is one of the best and most affordable ways to be a part of the action and see incredible places across the country.”

### GETTING STARTED

When it comes to choosing an RV, there are options. At its most basic, you can pack a car with gear and head out. If you’re ready for more, renting an RV is a possibility. Of course you can also buy your own. About 90% of all RVs produced are towable, which can be an affordable solution.

When planning your first trip, Monika recommends staying close to home. Pick a destination just 30 or 40 miles away so you can learn how to work the water and power hookups in a low-stakes environment. The one challenge new campers shouldn’t stress about is backing up the RV.

“Everyone is a beginner once,” she says. “Most people in the RV community are incredibly helpful. If you’re struggling, a neighbor will likely offer to spot you.”

### MAKING CAMP

Once you’re on the road, you’ll have plenty of pit stops to choose from. Deciding where to pull over and stretch your legs will mostly depend on the camping experience you want.

**RV parks and resorts:** These are the best sites for beginners and families. With amenities like pools, Wi-Fi and full hookups for your utilities, you’ll have everything you need to keep everyone comfortable and happy.

**State and national parks:** The place to be for anyone looking to get away from it all and enjoy some incredible scenery. Just don’t expect the same amenities and ease of use you’ll find at an RV park.

**Off the beaten path:** There are plenty of apps and online platforms that can help you find low-cost or even free “boondocking” options, meaning a dry camp without utility hookups. These can range from sites on private and public land to secluded spots that provide truly one-of-a-kind experiences. 📱



Adobe Stock image by dVande



Adobe Stock image by Non

### THE 2-2-2 RULE

Burnout on long drives is a real concern for beginners and veterans alike. A good rule of thumb to keep from overdoing it is to travel in twos:

- Drive no more than 200 miles at a time.
- Arrive at your destination by 2 p.m.
- Stay for at least two nights.

Following the 2-2-2 Rule can help drivers stay fresh and ensure everyone has time to enjoy the destination, rather than watching the world through a windshield.

### CAN'T-MISS STOPOVERS

**Anchor Down RV Resort** sits on Douglas Lake in Tennessee with views of the Great Smoky Mountains. Full-service sites with access to boating, paddling, fishing and scenic drives make it a perfect base for exploring the area.

If you're longing for something more coastal, don't skip **Topsail Hill Preserve State Park** in the Florida Panhandle. With a combination of dune lakes, beach access and convenient RV hookups, it blends natural beauty with biking, bird-watching and swimming excursions.

# MAKING IT HAPPEN

## Willington on the Way connects the past to the present

Story by BRANDI DIXON

After spending much of their lives doing mission work overseas, Willington natives the Rev. Sara Juengst and her husband, Daniel, decided to retire in their beloved hometown.

Unfortunately, the area took a downturn while they were away. Buildings were run down and neighborhoods were abandoned.

But Sara had a vision. In 2000, she took her first steps toward establishing what is now Willington on the Way. Thanks to a series of donations, gifts and grants, the deteriorating 1912 buildings at the heart of the town transformed into a center for history, learning and preservation.

“Some people make things happen. Sara made everything happen,” says Barry Russell, current president of Willington on the Way.

Barry says what was once the town’s “little post office” became Willington

on the Way’s first bookstore. As more buildings were added to the center, the bookstore was moved to a larger space. Today, with more than 40,000 new and used books on the shelves, shoppers have access to every genre imaginable.

The continued growth of Willington on the Way is possible because of donations from the Bobby Edmonds family, the Wright Andrews family and Sara’s own Juengst/Covin family.

### THE ROAD TO RESTORATION

With so much history being preserved and restored, it was only natural that the name Willington on the Way came to the forefront.

“As they were restoring the buildings, it had a traveling effect,” Barry says. “We are on our way to restoration while highlighting the history of the town.”

Today, Willington on the Way is noted

for three main points of history across its campus—cotton, music and education.

“At one time, it was rumored that 18 fiddlers lived in town, so we have a flagship exhibit to the Cowan Family String Band,” Barry says.

On the education front, guests will note the impressive diorama honoring Willington Academy that graduated 11 state governors, three United States presidents and more.

“The idea of getting to know about the area where I grew up has been so eye-opening,” says Pearly Milton, Willington on the Way’s vice president. “People assume you know everything about a place because you live here, but you don’t. Preserving pieces of history, making them available to the community and providing opportunities for others to learn how these things influenced and affected all of us is life changing.”



Donated artifacts are used in Willington on the Way displays.

Photos courtesy of Jess Bowrie

## STEP INTO LIVING HISTORY

Today, Willington on the Way encompasses six historic buildings, restored and repurposed into a bookshop, history center, curiosity shop, discovery annex and more. Visitors can delve into Willington's rich history by observing multiple dioramas, reading historical documents on display and experiencing music.

"The post office building was renamed the Daniel P. Juengst Post Office and Railroad Center," Pearly says. "It has authentic mailboxes and scales and some of the old stuff from the railroad, and it was renamed to honor Sara's husband."

Also on-site is the African American Culture Center. The authentic, one-room schoolhouse, formerly known as the Green Olive School, is one of several church schools that provided Black children a place to learn before the integration of public schools. Guests can view desks from years past, along with articles, photographs and other historical items.

Community donations help fill the history center at Willington on the Way. Items pour in, ranging from farming equipment to typewriters. Each donation is assessed to determine its historical significance and relevance to the displays. Suitable items are then carefully stored and cataloged until they are needed for

exhibits. However, not all donations can be displayed across the campus, and that's where the nonprofit's curiosity shop comes into play.

"We were getting these interesting saucers or ashtrays or things like that that were really neat, but what do you do with them?" Barry says. The Curiosity Shop sells unique items that let visitors take home interesting pieces of history while also supporting the cause. All the proceeds from The Curiosity Shop go toward the ongoing restoration of the buildings.

"With old buildings like these, there's always something to repair," Pearly says. "The more you maintain on a regular basis, the better chance of it not being a major issue, so there's always a great need for funding."

## JOIN THE EFFORT

Volunteers are always needed and welcome. Whether dressing in period clothing to lead a demonstration or helping with the ever-growing list of maintenance projects, people of all skills and abilities are encouraged to give their time.

Thanks to the board's efforts, a newly revamped website is up and running, allowing everyone who's curious about

## WILLINGTON ON THE WAY

1801 Morrah Bridge Road, McCormick

Bookshop: 864-391-2665

History Center: 864-391-4478

[willingtonsc.com](http://willingtonsc.com)

Follow Willington on the Way on Facebook.

visiting, volunteering or donating to stay up to date. Log on to [willingtonsc.com](http://willingtonsc.com) to plan a day trip, learn about ways to help and sign up for the Willington on the Way newsletter.

"We're also on Facebook now, thanks to a new volunteer who's heading that up," Barry says. "We want to reach as many people as possible and are working on communicating and advertising in those ways to both aid our fundraising and tourism." 🗨️



ABOVE: Willington on the Way Board President Barry Russell is also involved with the maintenance and restoration of the buildings.

LEFT: The History Center is a treasure trove of artifacts, photographs and other items detailing Willington's past.

# Wiener take all!

## Dash to a dachshund race for a howling good time

Story by SARA DIAMOND PATTERSON

**C**an you see a wiener dog and not smile? Most people can't. With their extra-long bodies, wide smiles and constantly wagging tails, dachshunds just look silly. And they know it.

"Dachshunds make people smile because they're tiny dogs with huge personalities," says Debbie Kiker, dachshund enthusiast and director of Alabama's Hueytown Chamber of Commerce. "Watching them waddle and wiggle, it's impossible not to laugh—it's pure happiness on four short legs."

Developed in Germany to hunt badgers, dachshunds' powerful, slinky build, strong jaws and distinctively loud voices were perfect for that calling. Some 300 years later, they're more adept at burrowing into the covers and hunting down snacks. Today they're seeing success in a different sort of sport.

### SPEED DEMONS

When you think of dachshunds, speed likely doesn't come to mind, but they can run up to 15-20 mph for very short distances. Some folks in Australia noticed this, and in the 1970s began what evolved into today's dachshund racing.

More chaos than competition, there's no official standard, but most race-courses are 50-100 yards long. Each dog has a two-person entourage. One handler waits at the starting line with a pup to send flying to the other, who motivates the racer with a squeaky toy, snack or just love at the finish line.

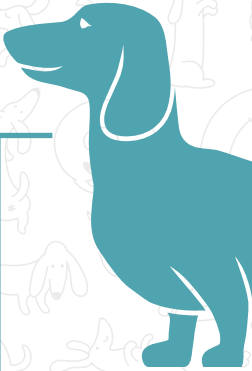
The Hueytown Chamber brings the doxies to town as part of PAW Palooza, a full day celebrating all things canine.

"What I love best about the weenie dog races is the smiles, and it brings the community together," Debbie says. "The dogs steal the show, and it's all just good, lighthearted fun. Just being involved is the fun of it all, seeing the dogs run, or wander, and the crowd cheering. Everyone is just enjoying the moment. Some dogs sprint, and some stop and sniff. Every run is a surprise."


The chamber is considering moving PAW Palooza to April, as September can be a little steamy for tiny-legged racers so close to the ground. For updates, find PAW Palooza & Wiener Dog Race on Facebook. [📱](#)



AI-generated image by Brandon Pomrenke/FreePik



## DOXIE FACTS AND FANS



National Dachshund Day is June 21, the longest day of the year.

Napoleon Bonaparte was very fond of his dachshunds. The last four he owned are reportedly buried with him in the four pedestals holding his sarcophagus at Les Invalides in Paris.

John Wayne's dachshund, Blackie, alerted his family to a house fire in 1958 in Encino, California, while the actor was filming on location in Japan.

"Being the owner of dachshunds, to me a book on dog discipline becomes a volume of inspired humor. Every sentence is a riot."

—"Charlotte's Web" author E.B. White

"Nothing will turn a man's home into a castle more quickly and effectively than a dachshund."

—Queen Victoria

### FAMOUS DACHSHUNDS

#### Crusoe

A miniature black and tan from Canada, Crusoe enjoys internet fame for his pet blog, New York Times' bestselling book and YouTube videos in homemade costumes. More than 3 million people follow him and his brother, Oakley, on Facebook.

#### Slinky Dog from 'Toy Story'

Part metal, part dog, all heart, Slinky Dog is quite possibly the most famous doxie of all, introducing generations of children to the breed.

#### Lump

Pablo Picasso was, by all accounts, smitten with his dachshund, Lump, and incorporated the pup into many of his later pieces.

# Let the Games Begin



## Local athletes prepare for Special Olympics USA Games

Story by MELANIE JONES

**A**shley Bond concentrates as she prepares to throw a colorful bocce ball toward the target ball on the sand court. She celebrates the cheers following a good throw.

Ashley has Down syndrome, and she earned a spot to compete in the Special Olympics USA Games in Minnesota this year. It's not the first time the 34-year-old qualified for nationals. She also competed when the games were in Florida and New Jersey, and she has taken home her share of medals at all levels since she first became a Special Olympian at age 9.

Bocce isn't Ashley's only sport. She also competes in bowling, equestrian, basketball, swimming and track and field.

"Going to the U.S. games is so special," Gloria Bond, Ashley's mother, says. "Watching her compete and seeing her reactions is so much fun."

Gloria and her husband, Ed, volunteer with Special Olympics. "Whatever needs to be done, we do," she says, and she encourages others to do the same.

### VOLUNTEER SPIRIT

It takes plenty of volunteers to pull off a Special Olympics competition at any level, especially the nationals. Shelby Thomas, Special Olympics director for Area 5, which includes Abbeville, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick and Newberry, says her group has about 1,500 volunteers. Also, about 20 to 25 parents work the games on a regular basis.

"I definitely get so much back from participating with the Special Olympics and the athletes than I could ever give," Shelby says. "I know that's something that so many people say, but it is so true. You don't realize what a difference you can make just by being there to help out for the games themselves, the logistics or helping with the athletes themselves. It's so rewarding."

"Special Olympics is really good for our athletes because it helps them to see that they can do things that everybody else can do," she adds. "They've got people there rallying around them."

Health care providers, social workers and others volunteer at the state-level games to serve the athletes, make sure they are healthy and have access to the resources they need. "By being involved in the Special Olympics, parents can learn more of what's out there for their child, what the child can do and what kind of services are available," Shelby says.

### NATIONAL LEVEL

Area 5 is sending 15 individuals to nationals in Minnesota in June as part of the South Carolina delegation. That number

includes athletes, coaches and unified partners—athletes without intellectual disabilities who complete the events alongside Special Olympians to encourage and support them. Area 5 athletes will compete in track and field, bocce and flag football. The cost to send each member of the delegation is \$1,000.

Donations to help send the crew, including Ashley and her parents, to the Special Olympics USA Games can be made by mailing a check to Area 5 Special Olympics SC, 200 E. Centennial St., Clinton, SC 29325. And volunteers for local games are always welcome. For more on Special Olympics South Carolina Area 5, go to [so-sc.org/sports/local-programs/area-5](http://so-sc.org/sports/local-programs/area-5).

"If you ever do participate, you're going to want to do it every chance you get," Shelby says. "It's addictive." 🗨️



Ashley Bond will take part in the bocce ball competition at the Special Olympics USA Games in Minnesota.

Photo courtesy of Gloria Bond



# Cracking the Code

## How QR squares work



Adobe Stock image by N Felix/peopleimages.com

Story by DREW WOOLLEY

**Y**ou've probably seen them on tables at restaurants, parking meters and even TV screens. In the last few years, the black and white squares known as QR codes have started showing up just about everywhere. And while they may look cryptic, they are actually designed for convenience.

### A BETTER BARCODE

QR codes, short for quick response codes, were invented in 1994 by Japanese company Denso Wave. The goal was to create a label similar to barcodes, which only store data horizontally. By storing data both vertically and horizontally in a matrix, QR codes read faster and can store more complex information, such as a website link or location.

The three larger squares in the corners of every code help the camera orient the image, while the rest of the small dots correspond to binary code that stores the data.

Initially, QR codes were widely used to track auto parts on factory floors. They became especially prevalent during the

COVID-19 pandemic as restaurants and retailers began using them for contactless menus and checkout.

### HOW TO: USING QR CODES

**What they are:** QR codes are scannable barcodes that instantly link your smartphone to a website, video, form or other digital content.

**How to scan one:** Open your smartphone camera and point it at the QR code. A link or notification will appear on your screen—just tap it. That's it. Most modern iPhones and Android devices have QR scanning built right into the default camera. No special app is needed.

**Tips for a good scan:** Hold your phone steady, about 6-10 inches from the code. Make sure the code is well-lit and not damaged or partially covered.

**A word of caution:** Only scan QR codes from sources you trust. Scammers can use them to direct you to fraudulent websites. [🔗](#)



# Redemption Recipes

Childhood dinner villains return as comfort-food heroes

**B**russels sprouts, kale and other greens, peas, mushrooms or pickled beets. There's a long list of foods that grossed us out as kids. Sprouts were squishy. Greens were bitter. Peas were pushed to the side. Pickled beets were vinegary, and mushrooms were just strangely mushy.

So why is it that as we age, some of us grow to love those foods?

"As infants and children, we are born preferring sweet tastes," says registered dietitian Danielle Townsend. "As we age, our other taste senses develop, which opens up our palette to foods that we didn't like before."

Here are some ideas using those once-hated ingredients in dishes that just might become part of your regular dinner rotation.



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

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

## TUSCAN SPINACH CHICKEN

- |   |                                   |     |                             |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----|-----------------------------|
| 1 | tablespoon olive oil              | 1   | cup cherry tomatoes, halved |
| 4 | boneless skinless chicken breasts | 1   | teaspoon garlic powder      |
|   | Sea salt, to taste                | 3   | cups baby spinach           |
|   | Ground black pepper, to taste     | 1/2 | cup heavy cream             |
| 1 | teaspoon oregano                  | 1/4 | cup Parmesan cheese, grated |
| 3 | tablespoons butter                |     | Lemon wedges, for serving   |

Heat oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add chicken and season with salt, pepper and oregano. Cook until browned on both sides, about 8 minutes per side. Remove from the skillet and set aside.

In the same skillet over medium heat, melt butter. Add cherry tomatoes and season with salt, pepper and garlic powder. Cook until the tomatoes begin to soften, then add the spinach and cook until it starts to wilt.

Stir in heavy cream and Parmesan and bring mixture to a simmer. Reduce heat to low and simmer until sauce is slightly reduced, about 3 minutes. Return chicken to skillet and cook until heated through, 5 to 7 minutes. Serve with lemon wedges.





## PEA SALAD WITH SMOKED ALMONDS

- 2 16-ounce packages frozen peas
- 6 ounces smoke-flavored almonds, finely chopped
- 1/2 sweet onion or more to taste, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise or reduced-fat mayonnaise
- 1/2 cup sour cream or light sour cream
- Ground black pepper, to taste
- 1/2-1 cup cheddar cheese, shredded

Place frozen peas in a colander and rinse under cold water until thawed. Drain and transfer to a large bowl. Add almonds and onions. Mix well. Fold mayonnaise, sour cream and black pepper into the pea mixture until evenly coated. Transfer to a serving container and top with shredded cheese. Cover and refrigerate until serving.

## ROASTED BEET PANNA COTTA WITH CANDIED WALNUTS

- 1 pound beets, scrubbed with stems removed
- 1 teaspoon powdered gelatin
- 2 tablespoons water
- 2 cups heavy cream, divided
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice

### CANDIED WALNUTS

- 1/2 cup walnuts
- 1/4 cup maple syrup

Preheat oven to 400 F.

Wrap each beet loosely in foil and roast on a baking sheet for 1 hour or until tender. Remove beets from the oven and set aside to cool.

Stir the gelatin and water together in a small bowl. Let soak for 5 minutes.

Peel and discard the beet skins and place flesh in a blender along with 1 cup heavy cream. Puree until smooth.

Combine the remaining cream with the sugar and lemon juice in a large pot over medium heat. Warm until the cream becomes hot to the touch, but not boiling. Add the softened gelatin, remove from heat and stir until dissolved. Add the pureed beet mixture to the pot and stir until combined. Pour into a desired vessel, such as a pie plate. Let chill completely before serving, at least 4 hours.

For the walnuts: Combine the walnuts and syrup in a saute pan over medium heat and cook the nuts, stirring constantly, until the sugar dries and crystallizes, about 5 minutes. Set the nuts aside to cool.

To serve, spoon the panna cotta into individual serving dishes and garnish with candied walnuts.



## CHEESY BAKED BRUSSELS SPROUTS



- 5 slices bacon
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 2 small shallots, finely chopped
- 2 pounds Brussels sprouts, halved
- Kosher salt
- Cayenne pepper, to taste
- 3/4 cup heavy cream
- 1/2 cup Swiss or Gouda cheese, shredded
- 1/2 cup sharp cheddar cheese, shredded



Preheat oven to 375 F.

Cook bacon in a large ovenproof skillet over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until crispy, about 8 minutes. Using a slotted spoon,

transfer to a paper towel-lined plate and let cool slightly. Discard bacon fat.

Return the skillet to medium heat and melt butter. Add shallots and Brussels sprouts. Season with salt and cayenne. Cook, stirring occasionally, until tender, about 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, transfer bacon to a cutting board and finely chop.

Remove skillet from heat and drizzle with cream. Top with Swiss cheese, cheddar and bacon. Bake the casserole until the cheese is bubbly, 12 to 15 minutes.

**NOTE:** If the cheese isn't nicely browned, broil, watching closely, for about 1 minute.



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