



HETC

JULY/AUGUST 2025

CONNECTION

Bursting With Joy

Ceremonies shine at
Moon Shadow Haven

LEGENDARY RIDE

TEENS & TECH



By Shirley Bloomfield, CEO
NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association

World Wide Web Day

Celebrate decades of digital innovation

World Wide Web Day is Aug. 1. It's a celebration of a 1993 internet milestone that transformed our society, changing everything from work and health care to communications and entertainment.

Before the web, accessing information and resources on the interconnected computers spanning the globe required specific software and skills. Email use was even limited—in business, fax machines still ruled. Then, researchers in Switzerland, including Tim Berners-Lee, developed the World Wide Web. Not only was information easier to share, but the freely distributed tools that made it possible fueled decades of innovation.

Now, rural internet service providers like yours manage the high-speed networks unlocking the modern web. NTCA's 2024 Broadband/Internet Availability Survey Report showed that 89% of rural customers served by providers responding to the survey have access to speeds of at least 100 Mbps.

That's a dramatic change compared to 1993, when connecting was slow and noisy, reliant on dial-up modems and copper lines. Back then, a speed of 14.4 Kbps was great—nearly 7,000 times slower than a 100 Mbps connection today.

Students can now access endless resources online and attend virtual classes. Telemedicine brings services and specialists otherwise unavailable in rural communities. Farmers monitor crops, manage resources and keep livestock healthy with internet-connected tools. And that's only the beginning.

NTCA members across rural America make it all possible. So, let's take a moment to celebrate not only World Wide Web Day, but also the communications professionals in your community.

Thank you for all you do. 📺



Help your community thrive

Local businesses are a cornerstone of the United States' economy, particularly in rural communities. You need to look no further than your local utility providing a fast, reliable internet network. Companies like these are not only committed to providing excellent service but also uplifting their communities.

A report last year by Capital One Shopping, a site operated by the banking and credit card company, highlighted the importance of local retailers.

- In one week, **91% of American consumers** shop at small and local stores.
- **68%, or \$68 out of every \$100**, spent at local stores remains in the local economy.
- American shoppers spent an estimated **\$4.51 trillion** at local stores in 2023, equivalent to **54.3% of all retail sales**.
- The average person **shops locally 213 times per year** or once every **1.7 days**.

Community Benefits to Shopping Local

- **Shopping small** keeps **dollars local**.
- Dollars spent at an independent business may **recirculate** in the local economy **an average of six to 15 times**.
- Small businesses make up to **136% more charitable donations** per employee than businesses with 500 or more employees.
- Residents of communities with more independent businesses **drive three-quarters fewer miles** than their neighbors who have less access to small local shops.





istock image by Nadezhda1906

A Sunshine Shield in Your Pocket

Apps to protect your skin

Long days outdoors are a joy of summer. A little sun can even increase your vitamin D levels, which has a range of health benefits. On the other hand, bathing in too much sunlight is not good for the skin, raising the potential for skin cancer. And some people are more susceptible than others.

So, it just makes sense to track and manage sun exposure. Think about all the things we already monitor—steps, sleep and even what we eat. Why not also track exposure to ultraviolet light, the rays produced by the sun?

In fact, your phone's weather app may already offer a forecast for expected sun exposure at your location. Other apps though can ramp up the details. Early UV apps were basically glorified timers with general advice tacked on. Today's versions

are more sophisticated, providing information on everything from cloud cover to how much sun is reflecting off surfaces around you.

These apps often have easy-to-understand color-coded displays that show your risk level. Most will customize their recommendations based on your skin type, which means you're getting advice that's relevant to you specifically.

Some of the more advanced options do more than track UV exposure. They can use your smartphone's camera to analyze your features and suggest proper levels of sun protection. Many will even send timely reminders when it's time to reapply sunscreen based on your activity level and which products you're using.

The more comprehensive sun safety apps don't only monitor UV rays. They

include educational content about sun damage and skin cancer prevention. Some even track vitamin D production, helping you balance protection with healthy sun exposure.

Family-friendly versions allow users to set up profiles for multiple family members with different skin types, making it much easier to manage sun protection during group outings like beach days or picnics.

Of course, no apps replace a proper checkup with your dermatologist, but they do offer daily reminders about a danger we can't always see. So, next time you're heading outdoors for a day in the sun, check the app store for your favorite device and see if there's an app that provides the details you need to stay safe. At minimum, the apps can keep the importance of skin protection top of mind. ☀️

Hearts and home

Making connections that matter

I always enjoy these long, sunny days, which are perfect for slowing down and spending time with the people who matter most. It's an opportunity to unplug and enjoy the outdoors, and at HCTC, we believe the communications services we provide can help connect us in person and online.



CRAIG COOK
Chief Executive Officer

Have you ever noticed how we can all get stuck looking at our phones? Even though our internet connects thousands of homes and businesses, the best connections often happen when we look up and see each other face to face. This summer, I invite everyone to find that sweet spot, using our internet to make your real-life get-togethers even better.

Think about that family reunion you're planning. Group texts make organizing easy. Video calls let you chat with relatives who moved away. When everyone finally gets together, your phone can capture precious moments and then store, edit and share those images online. Fast reliable internet makes it all possible.

Similarly, our local markets and festivals thrive because vendors can easily process card payments without the need for expensive and complex systems. And they can keep potential customers updated by posting online about sales and new products. But being out and about shopping is still an opportunity for connections where neighbors meet in person, shake hands and catch up.

Also, thanks to rich and affordable streaming services for music and video, families can gather indoors or outside for movie nights. Perhaps some things that start small can grow into monthly traditions where neighbors become friends.

At HCTC, we don't just support a fast, industry-leading internet service. We believe these resources can create paths to new possibilities. Your stories of connection and success fuel our passion—grandparents who video chat with grandkids, local businesses that ship to customers around the nation or young artists sharing digital creations with the world.

This summer, try using technology with purpose. Create a shared family photo album that relatives can add to from anywhere. Use social media to organize a park cleanup day. Stream music for an impromptu block party. Record video interviews with town leaders to save and share their stories.

The best communities blend new technology with cherished traditions. At HCTC, our investment in this community allows us to use technology to make our ties to one another stronger.

As we enjoy summer, remember that our most important connections will always be with each other. We are proud to provide the technology that helps those connections grow. Let's make this a summer of real connection, both online and in person. 📞

HCTC CONNECTION

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HCTC

HCTC is more than a provider of state-of-the-art telecommunications products and services. We are a member-owned cooperative with an elected board of directors who govern our organization using our bylaws, member input and business and industry conditions to guide their decisions. We are proud residents of the communities we serve, and we're dedicated to not only providing the best services possible, but doing so in a way that is ethical, safe and productive for our friends and neighbors. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Mission Statement: To be the premier provider of modern telecommunications and broadband services throughout our region.

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UTILITY RESOURCES

On the Cover:



Moon Shadow Haven is a charming site for events and weddings, like Stormie and Richard Trujillo's nuptials. See story Page 12.

Photo courtesy of
Witte Idea Photography

Congratulations!

HCTC is proud to support higher education. The cooperative awarded \$2,000 scholarships to the following students from communities within our service area:

Gracelyn Geurin
Haelea Deal
Jocelyn Barrera
Addison Hahn

Clark Crenwelge
Aiden Irwin
Regina Johns
Katelyn Holland

Hannah Kruse
Kymbrea Broyles
Lili Ramirez
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Board Incumbents Seek Reelection

The following members of the HCTC Board of Directors are seeking reelection in 2025:

Robert "Bob" Trees, representing District 1A—Ingram

Dorrie Cooper, representing District 5—Fredonia, Katemcy, Pontotoc and Streeter

Anthony Bohnert, representing District 6B—Comfort and Sisterdale



We wish everyone a spectacular Fourth of July weekend. Our offices will be closed on Friday, July 4, in observance of Independence Day. Have a fun and safe holiday.



Mark your calendar

HCTC will hold its annual meeting on **Oct. 6**. Join us virtually from the comforts of home, just like last year.

Follow us on Facebook or check hctc.net for more details.





CATCH A WAVE

These water parks are built for thrill, not chill

Story by KATHY DENES

If summer has a signature scent aside from freshly mowed grass, it's the chlorine of swimming pools and water slides. Water parks are the ultimate hot-weather attractions, and some have been popping up lately that go far beyond splash pads and lazy rivers. These parks lure the adventurous with endless waves and whitewater for rafting, kayaking, canoeing and even surfing—no wild oceans or rivers required.

The first of these parks in the country, the U.S. National Whitewater Center in Charlotte, North Carolina, is home to a whitewater river that challenges even the most experienced wave riders. Touted as the world's largest artificial river, its recirculating treated water flows along dual concrete channels offering rapids

varying in intensity from Class II to Class IV.

The sprawling facility is geared to all sorts of outdoor recreation and is still evolving nearly 20 years after opening. Guided rafts and kayakers with whitewater experience ride the same rapids U.S. Olympic athletes use for training and team trials. The Wilderness and Competition channels provide varying intensity and length before ending in the tranquil pool where riders steer their boats onto a conveyor belt and ride back to the start for another go.

"The USNWC was the first whitewater channel specifically designed for family-level fun at an Olympic-standard facility," says course lead designer Scott Shipley, an engineer, kayak champion

and three-time Olympian who holds four world titles. "Until Charlotte, every whitewater channel in the world was an Olympic channel first that was later adapted for commercial rafting. We created a channel for family recreational rafting first and then added a competition channel. We focused on the church and school groups that will be using it as a way to help get them active."

SURF CITY

At Riversport OKC in Oklahoma City, Olympic and Paralympic athletes train in rowing as well as canoe and kayak. In fact, it is slated to be the canoe slalom venue for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics. Its whitewater center offers rowing, kayaking and surfing lessons,



ABOVE: Progressing from bodyboarding to kneeboarding takes very little time with FlowRider's perpetual waves.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Rafting can get pretty wild on Riverpark Rapids in downtown Oklahoma City.

along with tubing, paddleboarding, high-speed slides and even fun on dry land.

Riverpark Rapids whitewater rafting and kayaking center is in Riversport Adventure Park, in the Boathouse District along the Oklahoma River. Whitewater kayaking and guided rafting start at the top of the artificial river, reached via a conveyor belt. From there, it's an easy slide into the river to start a memorable ride.

Those ready to Surf OKC can catch a wave, no previous skill needed. Starting with bodyboarding, the staff teaches all the basics to help visitors hang 10. Wipeouts are inevitable, but there are no sharks in the nonstop waters of the FlowRider surf machine. Found all over the world, these compact wavemakers keep endless, shallow water flowing atop a trampolinelike surface.

TEST THE WATERS

Riverpark OKC is open daily 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the summer and on weekends in the late spring and early fall. Day passes and memberships are available. Each Thursday through Aug. 7, Riverpark offers NightWater Evening Rafting from 6-8 p.m. riversportokc.org

The Charlotte Whitewater Center will celebrate Independence Day by hosting a free two-day festival, July 3 and 4, with live music and more. Evening events those days include illuminated rafting and kayaking on the river's Competition Channel, but this requires purchase of an activity pass. See the center's website for schedules, pass information and events, plus details about any required gear and skill prerequisites. whitewater.org. 📱

RAPID REFORMS

When tasked with transforming the Rio Vista Dam area on the San Marcos River into a recreational hub, kayak champion and engineer Scott Shipley designed a relaxing haven for swimmers and tubers, as well as a whitewater park with waves, eddies and fast jets for kayakers and boarders. Unlike the concrete whitewater parks he creates across the globe, which create perpetual rapids by pumping water in manmade channels, the traditional whitewater park in San Marcos is one of many across the U.S. made by modifying a natural river. The San Marcos River flows through 130 acres of parkland. Learn more about Rio Vista Park at visitsanmarcos.com.



In the hills above Charlotte, North Carolina, the U.S. National Whitewater Center caters to whitewater enthusiasts ranging from novice paddlers to Olympic athletes.



High above Riversport, a young visitor secured with a safety harness navigates one of the six levels of SandRidge Sky Trail.

RESPIRE on the RISE

Popular
Frio Canyon
Motorcycle
Stop draws
riders

Story by LAZ DENES

From Alaska's Dalton Highway to U.S. 1 in the Florida Keys, from the Park Loop Road in Maine to California's iconic Pacific Coast Highway, motorcycle enthusiasts have many choices of where to experience the best rides.

One staple on most every annual list of great American rides is right here in the Hill Country—the 100-mile loop incorporating FMs 335, 336 and 337 trademarked as the Three Twisted Sisters. Thousands of riders are drawn to the area each year by its breathtaking panoramas and challenging climbs, twists and turns alongside steep canyons and the Nueces River.

Mickey Adams, a lifelong rider, has worked at the Frio Canyon Motorcycle Stop and adjacent Bent Rim Grill since moving to the area 10 years ago. Mickey traveled many revered American motorcycle routes and ranks the Three Sisters among the best of the best. “I moved here because I just fell in love with the Hill Country, and the roads are so good,” he says. “It’s just so peaceful, especially during the weekdays.”

The Frio Canyon Motorcycle Stop is a popular respite situated in the southeast corner of Leakey, a half-mile west of Highway 83. Among his duties there,

Mickey manages the gift shop, where guests can find merchandise celebrating the legendary ride, adorned with the moniker trademarked by the husband-and-wife team of Lawson and Krista Dry, who took over the business in early 2023.

CONSTANTLY EVOLVING

Lawson fell in love with the Three Sisters and the stop in Leakey after experiencing both for himself. He eventually bought the establishment from its previous owner, the late Bob Albright, who was a cousin of Lawson's grandmother.

A chopper and some road signs mark the 100-mile loop through the Hill Country known as the Three Twisted Sisters.





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Barnyard Stompers play during a rally. Riders refuel with a meal at the Bent Rim Grill. Krista and Lawson Dry bought the Frio Canyon Motorcycle Stop and Bent Rim Grill in 2023. The parking lot is often full of classic cruisers.

Lawson and Krista gave the place their own signature touches. They built a stage out back where there's live music every Saturday night. The business is now open seven days a week with extended hours for food and bar service. The renovated bar serves liquor, wine and beer. The grill menu also received a makeover and features new creations, including Texas Tots, a double order of tater tots topped with sliced ribeye, grilled jalapenos and onions on a melted cheddar cheese skirt, and the Dirty Dog, a deep-fried, foot-long hot dog with chili and queso, topped with three onion rings.

The upgrades are the result of watching, learning and listening to input from customers, and they've helped Lawson and Krista appeal to a wider customer base, starting with motorcycle enthusiasts and clubs and growing to include community organizations and families.

"Krista and I just like trying new ideas and new things because our No. 1 thing is that we don't want our customers to get bored with the place," Lawson says. "The driving factor when we bought the place was, how can we drive more people to come here? We want to cater to everybody."

Mandi Mudd, the Bent Rim Grill's head chef, moved from the Corpus Christi area five years ago. She also rode the Three Sisters many times and was familiar with the motorcycle stop and grill. She enjoys the upbeat and busy vibe of the restaurant and bar, as well as the family relationship among the employees.

"I've been around motorcycles all my life—I've been riding since I was in my



mama's belly," she says. "I love getting to see all the people and some really beautiful bikes that come through here all the time. People come from all over, some even ship their bikes here, and they fly or drive in just so they can ride the Three Sisters. And our food and the atmosphere here is pretty special. We've had the Hill Country's best burgers for I don't know how many years."

EXPANDING CUSTOMER BASE

The food and the atmosphere are such a draw that it no longer surprises the staff to see a helicopter load of patrons fly in for lunch or dinner on occasion.

"We see just about everything," Mickey says. "One time we had the oldest motorcycle club in America, the Boozefighters, here at the same time as a Ferrari club, and they were all sitting together and interacting. I thought that was amazing."

As Lawson and Krista have overseen the evolution of the business and witnessed the uptick in its popularity, they are quick to credit their focus on keeping its website fresh and up to date. It and the constant flow of news and imagery on its social media channels are all



made possible by HCTC's high-speed internet service.

"We want everybody to come to the place," Lawson says. "Whether you're into cars or bikes, hiking or water sports, we really enjoy seeing everybody in here having a good time, and we do everything we can to make that happen." 📶

FRIO CANYON MOTORCYCLE STOP AND BENT RIM GRILL

657 W. Ranch Road 337, Leakey
830-232-6629

friocanyonmotorcyclestop.com

Find the business on Facebook and Instagram @friocanyonmotorcyclestop.

Juicy burgers are
a crowd favorite.



THE KIDS ARE

How teenagers navigate digital communication

Story by DREW WOOLEY

Born into the world of smartphones and social media, today's teenagers spend more time communicating online than any of their predecessors. While that familiarity with the online world builds skills with digital platforms, it also affects how they experience adolescence.

"We see that a lot of their development is shaped through their interactions with technology," says Kaitlyn Burnell, director of research for the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Winston Center for Technology and the Developing Mind. "It's not just reflecting those aspects of development but also fundamentally changing how they're going through those experiences."

Experts say the key to making sure those changes are positive is understanding how teens are communicating online and giving them the knowledge to shape their own experiences.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is often the most public form of online communication for young people and an easy way to communicate on a large scale. While social status and approval from peers has always been important for adolescents, Burnell says that influence is amplified by social media's ability to track those reactions in real time.

"Adolescents place a lot of importance on the number of likes and the quality of the comments they're getting," she says. "There's no real counterpart of that in the past. The best thing I can come up with is maybe the number of yearbook signatures or something old school like that. But it's very, very different."

That isn't always a bad thing. While image-heavy platforms like Instagram can lead some to struggle with body image, recent studies show a well-curated social media feed can inspire young people more than discourage them. Many teens understand how their feeds work.

"To adolescents' credit, they're pretty sophisticated in tailoring their algorithms," says Michaeline Jensen, University of North Carolina at Greensboro associate professor. "If they're not liking what they're getting, they game it—unfollow some stuff or press the thumbs down to try and steer toward different content. They're pretty sophisticated with trying to make their online spaces a place that's affirming and positive for them."

DIRECT MESSAGING

Direct messaging is reserved for more personal interactions. Private messages are the go-to way to express love, get emotional support or just check in with a parent.

"It's how they talk to people who really matter to them," Jensen says. "Things like day-to-day logistical stuff can make parenting easier, so you can check in and get work done. But it does seem like when teens have those more emotionally supportive conversations over text, those seem to be perceived positively by the kids."

Written chats proved to be more popular than video chats even during periods of separation like the coronavirus pandemic. While video calls can be an authentic way to communicate with faraway family, the interface can prove distracting when talking to other teens.

"Hypothetically, video communication should be more enriching because it's as close to a face-to-face conversation as you can get," Burnell says. "However, the problem that we've identified is that



online

the default for most software is that you see yourself and that isn't always great. If you're occupied with how you look, then that's going to impede those social benefits."

SOCIAL GAMING

Teens often spend social time gaming online, whether with local friends or players across the world. While there are concerns about this hurting offline relationships, Sophie Janicke-Bowles, an associate professor at California's Chapman University, found the opposite can be true.

"When it comes to kids hanging out with friends, social gaming is taking that over," she says. "And it can actually increase both the online and offline connection when hanging out with friends. So, it can be a contributor to more social interaction rather than less."

Gaming spaces can still expose players to coarse language or bullying. An awareness of how those platforms are used and who they are exposing adolescents to is crucial for creating a positive experience.

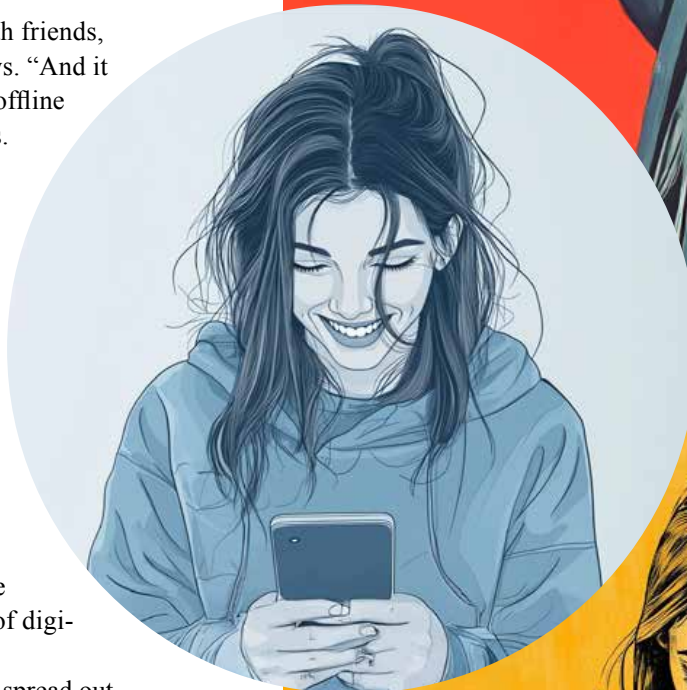
RURAL CONNECTIONS

Building digital literacy can be challenging in rural areas, where the digital divide is closing but schools may not have resources to teach how to make the most of digital communication.

"It makes sense that if families are more spread out from each other you can't just go next door and hang out with your friend," Jensen says. "There might be greater reliance on digital technologies in order to facilitate those social connections, and we don't yet know how kids will adjust to that."

But the upside for rural kids can also be much greater. Digital communication can help them stay in touch with local friends who do not live miles away or even find communities around their personal interests that do not exist nearby. The key is staying aware of how they use those tools, even as they are rapidly changing.

"We know that for everyone, these forms of digital communication are just embedded within our daily lives," Burnell says. "Everyone relies on digital forms of communication for social support. So, it's important to remember it's not just good or bad. It depends on the content, it depends on the person, and it depends on what they're doing." 📱



Adobe Stock (altered) AI-generated illustrations by LucyJ

Moonlit

Venue Is on the Rise

Mountain Home couple turns historic site into unique events space

Story by JAMIE BIESIADA

In 2007, Jim and Jane Adams bought a 17-acre property in Mountain Home featuring a historic main house and several cottages. They initially planned to retire there, living in the home and using the cottages for guests. Weekends were spent tackling what Jim calls a “major fixer-upper.”

Over time their plans shifted, and the Adamses looked to generate revenue from the property. Their initial idea for an RV park changed after a consultant suggested a wedding and events venue, capitalizing on the existing cottages. The couple agreed, and in 2018, they started work on the project. But it needed something important—a name.

One evening, brainstorming with friends, the word “moon” emerged, inspired by Johnson Creek’s moonrises. Jim recalls one of their friends saying, “You know, we need a sign.”

“And no sooner did she say that than ‘Moonshadow’ by Cat Stevens came on the radio,” Jim says. Another friend suggested the area was a haven, and Moon Shadow Haven was born.

A VIVID HISTORY

Today, Moon Shadow Haven features the Lodge, which can accommodate up to 250 guests under a 40-foot vaulted ceiling, and a chapel, completed in late 2021. The Adamses renovated six

guest cottages, with more planned. Many locals who stayed in the cottages years ago still return.

It sits on property that has been inhabited for thousands of years, evidenced by the arrowheads that can be found. The Adamses have about 1,700 feet of frontage along the creek’s striking waters and well-established foliage. It’s home to some “massive trees,” Jim says, including one that’s an estimated 400 years old with a 100-foot canopy.

In 1921, Ned and Olive Estes purchased the land, Jim says. They built the main house, big enough to sleep eight, in the mid-1920s. In the mid-1930s, Ned used salvaged materials from an older home in Kerrville to build some cottages, six of which remain. The property also includes a former general store, gas station and post office.

Moon Shadow Haven marks the Adamses’ later careers. For Jim, it’s his fourth, following 17 years at Compaq and a stint in real estate before managing Jane’s office. Jane founded a medical practice in The Woodlands in 1985.

They get the word out about Moon Shadow Haven on social media, at bridal shows and on websites like The Knot and Wedding Wire.

“Word of mouth is getting out there, as well,” Jim says. “We’re getting the exposure from people who have seen us, people who’ve attended events here, etc., and the word is spreading.” 📱

MOON SHADOW HAVEN

118 Creekridge Trail, Mountain Home
830-745-4454

moonshadowhaven.com

Find the venue on Facebook
and Instagram as
Moon Shadow Haven.

CHARGE SMART

Maximize your battery life

Checking the battery meter on a watch, phone, tablet or mobile computer is part of our highly connected world where devices can travel with us just about everywhere. We depend on the availability of services like music, text messages, voice calls and—often most importantly—maps.

Keeping those batteries charged and healthy represents not only convenience but also a way to avoid the expense of replacing a battery or even a device that will no longer hold a charge.

First, keep in mind that the type of device, the software it uses to manage battery life and the batteries themselves vary. Be sure to check the specifics for each of your devices.

Generally, though, modern gear relies on lithium-ion batteries. Apple notes that a battery's lifespan hinges on the care given to the device and the charge cycles, the number of times the battery uses the equivalent of one full charge. Discharging a battery 75% one day, recharging to 100% overnight and using 25% the next day—a total of 100% of use—equals one charge cycle.

Here are a few general guidelines for good battery health:

HEAT: THE SILENT BATTERY-KILLER

Temperature matters.

Consider removing protective cases when charging overnight. They can trap heat around your device, adding warmth that can degrade your battery.

Avoid charging in direct sunlight or hot cars, which can shave months off your battery's life.

The ideal charging environment is 65-75 degrees—what's comfortable for you is likely good for the battery, too.

SMART CHARGING HABITS BY DEVICE

Not all devices are created equal, but some principles apply across the board:

Smartphones—Short, frequent charges are better than long ones. Graze rather than feast.

Laptops—If you work plugged in, consider using software settings to limit charging to 80%. Always check the owner's manual for options on your specific device.

Tablets—Avoid leaving them on the charger when not in use. A rule of thumb is to keep the charge between 20% and 80%.

DISPELLING BATTERY MYTHS

Overnight charging won't immediately kill your battery, but it's still not ideal long term.

Quality matters, but reputable third-party charger options are generally safe.

Fast charging doesn't significantly damage batteries. While it generates more heat, occasional use is fine—just don't make it your only charging method.

TECH THAT HELPS

Modern devices increasingly offer battery-preserving features. Apple's Optimized Battery Charging learns your daily charging routine and delays charging past 80% until you need it. Similarly, Samsung's battery protection mode caps charging at 85% to extend battery lifespan.

The bottom line? Think of your device battery as a marathon runner, not a sprinter. Gentle, consistent treatment wins the long game. ☑



Burger Bliss

Create a meal perfect for summer

Few things in life are better than a big juicy burger in the middle of summer. Mouths water at the thought. And it takes just a few ingredients to reach perfection.

There's more to making the perfect burger than hand-patting the beef, though that's an excellent start. But before you do that, add a little salt and pepper, a dash of Worcestershire sauce, an envelope of onion soup mix and mayonnaise. Yes, mayo. Ignite the fire, add your burgers to the grill and get ready for a taste explosion.

And since it's summer, add a watermelon salad and finish the meal with a big scoop of easy-to-make peach ice cream—no churning required—and you have a meal fit for a summertime feast.



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

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

MAYO BURGERS

- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1/2 cup plain bread crumbs
- 1 envelope onion soup mix
- 2 pounds ground beef
- 8 hamburger buns

Combine mayonnaise, bread crumbs and soup mix in bowl.

Mix mayonnaise mixture into ground beef. Shape into 8 patties. When forming

hamburger patties, make a shallow indentation or dimple in the middle of each patty. This divot will keep the center from bulging up as it cooks so that the patty will stay flat and even. Even cooking and heat distribution will keep each patty juicy and consistent. Grill or broil until done. Serve burgers on buns with desired condiments.



WATERMELON SALAD WITH BALSAMIC REDUCTION

- 2/3 cup balsamic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 7- to 8-pound watermelon
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/4 cup fresh mint leaves, chopped
- 2/3 cup crumbled feta cheese

In a small saucepan set over medium-high heat, combine the balsamic vinegar and sugar. Bring the mixture to a boil and continue cooking, stirring and scraping down the sides as needed, until it has reduced and is the consistency of syrup,

about 5 minutes. It will thicken as it cools and only yield a few tablespoons. Set it aside to cool while you prepare the salad.

Cut the watermelon into cubes or use a melon baller to scoop it into balls. Put the melon pieces in a large bowl.

In a small bowl, whisk together the lime juice and olive oil with a pinch of salt and pepper. Pour the dressing over the watermelon, add the chopped mint and feta cheese, and toss to combine. Drizzle the salad with the balsamic syrup and serve immediately.

SUMMER PEACH NO-CHURN ICE CREAM

- 1 pound fresh peaches, peeled, pitted and sliced
- 1 14-ounce can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 8-ounce block of cream cheese
- 2 cups heavy whipping cream
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Using a food processor, pulse the

peaches until they are pea-size chunks. Alternatively, dice the peaches by hand and, in a large bowl, lightly mash them to release juices. Cover with a towel and set aside.

In a large mixing bowl or a stand mixer, mix the sweetened condensed milk, cream cheese, heavy whipping cream and vanilla on a medium-high speed until stiff

peaks form. Gently fold in the peaches until just combined.

Pour the mixture into a freezer-safe container. Cover with plastic wrap, allowing wrap to lie directly on top of the ice cream mixture. This will keep the ice cream from forming crystals on the top. Freeze at least 4 hours for soft-serve ice cream or 6 hours to overnight for firmer ice cream, then scoop away! 🍦



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