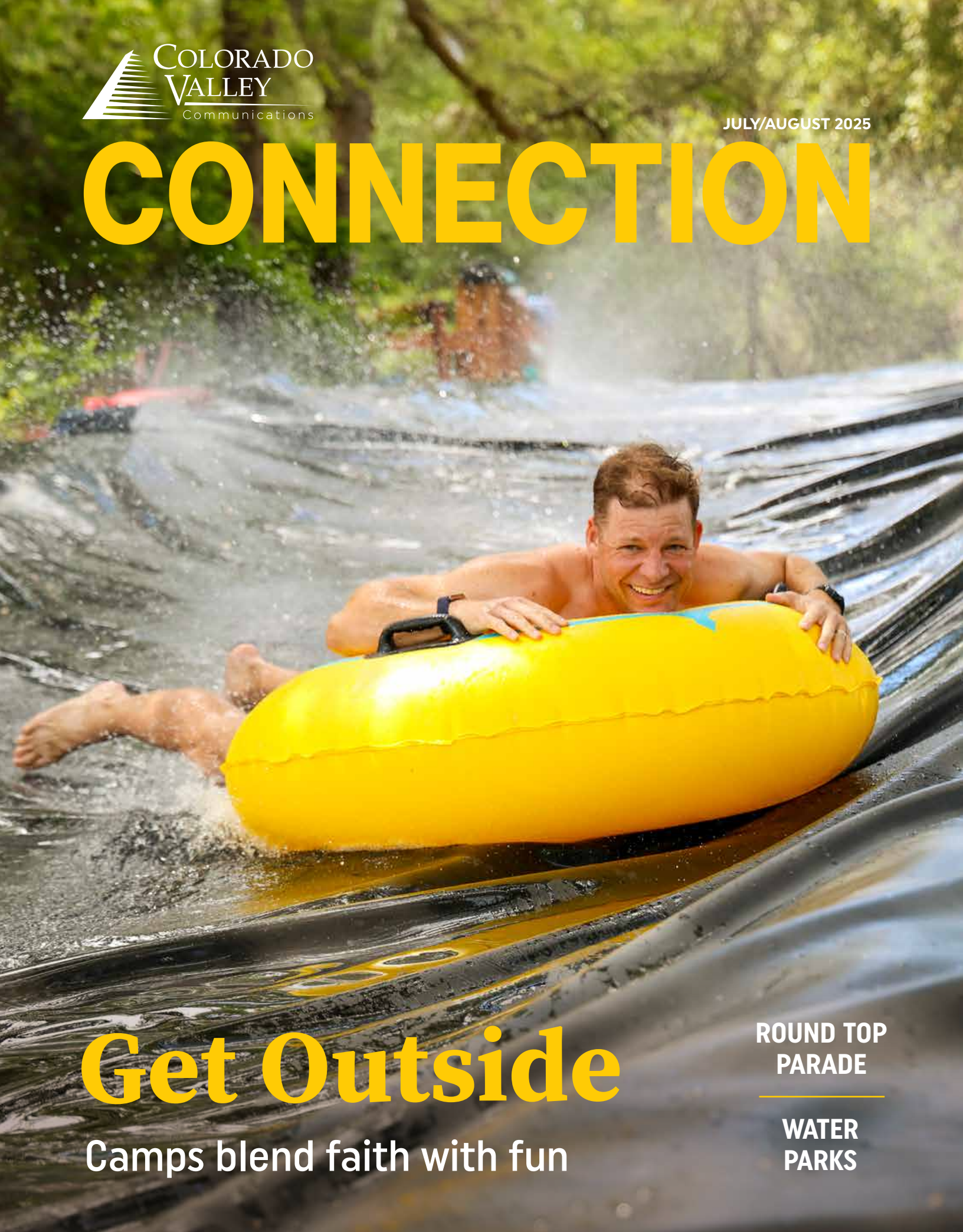


CONNECTION



Get Outside

Camps blend faith with fun

ROUND TOP
PARADE

WATER
PARKS



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

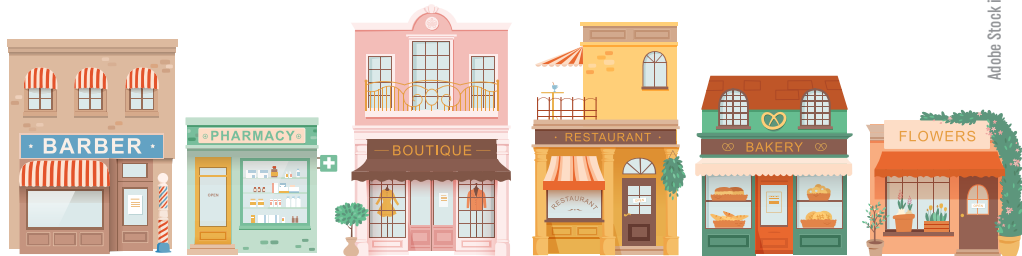
Local businesses are a cornerstone of the United States' economy, particularly in rural communities. You need to look no further than your local utility providing a fast, reliable internet network. Companies like these are not only committed to providing excellent service but also uplifting their communities.

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



KELLY ALLISON
General Manager

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 Colorado Valley Communications we believe the communications services we provide can help connect us in person and online.

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 CVCTX, 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 CVCTX, 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. 

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To sign up for service, to increase your bandwidth or to let us know where to build out our fiber network next, visit cvctx.com.

Customers in several parts of our service area can access fiber to the home, while expansion for access is in the works for other locations.

For more information on Colorado Valley's service area, visit cvctx.com/maps. To learn about the service available at your address, visit cvctx.com/signup.

Produced for CVCTX by:



On the Cover:



Camp Lone Star and Lutherhill Ministries provide summer fun for children and adults. From water slides to ropes courses, they offer a bit of everything. See story on Page 12.

Photo courtesy of
Camp Lone Star

Congratulations, Scholarship Winners!

Colorado Valley Communications is proud to announce the 2025 scholarship recipients. Congratulations to the Class of 2025. We can't wait to see what you do next!



Colorado Valley Communications General Manager Kelly Allison, left, and CVCTX Board President Gene Kruppa congratulate the recipients of the cooperative's 2025 scholarships.

Fayetteville High School

Lawson Fritsch

Hallettsville Sacred Heart High School

Marcus Seger

La Grange High School

Jodie Kaspar

John Kaspar
Jessica Torres
Hunter Sabo
Walker Finch

Schulenburg High School

Madison Kunschick
Adin Beyer
Kaylee Beyer

Round Top-Carmine High School

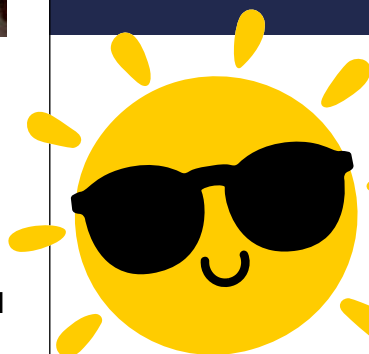
Evan Blazek

Weimar High School

Katharina
Chaloupka

Happy 4TH OF July

CVCTX's offices will be closed Friday, July 4,
to mark Independence Day.
We wish everyone a fun and safe holiday.



Summer Hours Extended

Colorado Valley Communications will offer
longer hours this summer until Aug. 7. We will
be open 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through
Thursday and 7:30-11:30 a.m. on Friday.

Fixed Wireless Service Improved

CVCTX is working to make our fixed wireless signals even better. We now offer higher speeds serving more territory.

Fixed wireless offers the same service as broadband using a radio signal instead of cables, making it a good choice for rural areas. Users can download or upload large files, run a digital phone system, stream music or use internet-based applications and databases as much as necessary—all without a data cap.

Call 800-242-5911 to learn what speeds are available in your area.





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.

Patriotism on

Round Top's Fourth of July celebration marks 175 years

Story by MELANIE JONES

For the past 175 years, crowds eager to celebrate America's birthday have flocked to Round Top for the Fourth of July parade. In the tiny town's square, cars line up for a mile in either direction and every parking space is filled. Red, white and blue are everywhere, from colorful bunting to the clothes worn by people in the crowd.

Organizers say the parade in the town of 100 residents attracts about 5,000 people from places like Houston, Austin, San Antonio and everywhere in between.

The celebration is more than a parade. The festivities start with a color guard presentation of flags and speeches by local and state dignitaries. Then it's time for the main event.

The Round Top Cannoneers fire a Civil War-era cannon to launch the parade. The blast signals the parade to roll out. The brass band float leads the way for a procession of about 125 participants traveling around the town square. The lineup includes many floats—some patriotic, some dramatic, some comical—antique cars and tractors, fire engines, bands and longhorn cattle. Horseback riders bring up the rear.

LONG TRADITIONS

Michael Sacks started riding the brass band float every year when he was 12. The now-48-year-old president of the Round Top Rifle Association, the group that stages the festivities, will be there again this year.

"I've never seen the parade as a bystander," Michael says.

Michael joined the rifle association 30 years ago, but his father, Ronnie Sacks, has been a member even longer. Ronnie, who will celebrate his 75th birthday this year, joined the group when he was 18. Because his dad's been a part of the parade for so long, it's in Michael's blood. "I've been involved with it since I was a kid," he says. "For me, playing in the brass band, being one of the first floats to go through the parade and see the crowd is my favorite."

Michael isn't the only child of a rifle association member who gets involved. "About 50 rifle association members, spouses and children, as well as several



Parade



A cowboy church sponsors a musical float.



Floats compete for prizes in a variety of categories.

other volunteers who are 'friends of the RTRA' help to make the parade and celebration happen each year," he says. "We typically start days in advance. There are also many hours behind the scenes organizing and working on the logistics to make this day what it is."

Which float is the crowd favorite varies from year to year. "I would say it's probably whoever has the most patriotic float," Michael says. And you can be sure someone knows which float is most patriotic—or the most comical or one of any number of different categories.

Parade organizers present trophies or certificates to the best float in each class.

The fun doesn't stop when the last of the trail riders clears the parade route. The party lasts all weekend. The Round Top Rifle Association will sell barbecue plates after the parade, serving about 1,300 to 1,400 diners, and there's live music all day. Local businesses get in on the act with shops hosting sales and restaurants booking live music all weekend. And, of course, fireworks light up the night.

For more information about the parade, go to roundtoprifle.com/fourth-of-july.

Celebrating German Heritage

Despite its name, the Round Top Rifle Association isn't really a gun club. It's a sporting and social club with roots in Germany. Founded in 1873, it was originally named Round Top Schützen Verein, German for shooting society, after the protective societies that guarded small villages in Germany. Its purpose is to promote outdoor sports such as bicycling, games and dances, in addition to trap and target shooting.

The group bought over 10 acres of land in 1881 and built a dance hall. A year later, the town moved its Fourth of July celebration to the rifle association's property. The dance hall has been modernized and expanded over the years, but it still stands and is the site of many parties and dances, as well as sharpshooting competitions. And it's still the location of the oldest Fourth of July celebration west of the Mississippi River.

Cannoneers first fired the cannon to get the attention of their neighbors in Warrenton, but in 1889, it did not fire. As the club's president bent down to inspect, it exploded. He died shortly thereafter from blood loss and infection. It was later determined that the cannon was overfilled with powder and stuffed with cord wood.

That was the end of the cannon fire until 1975, when the then-mayor of Round Top had the cannon restored in time for the following year's U.S. bicentennial celebration. It's been the signal for the start of the Independence Day parade ever since.

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.

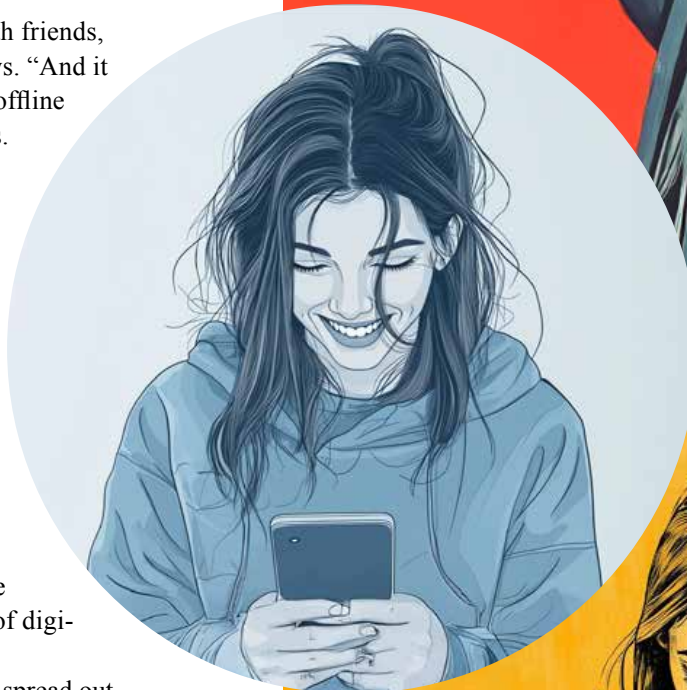
RURAL CONNECTIONS

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

Dive Into Faith and Adventure

Camps use today's summer fun to build tomorrow's leaders

Story by MELANIE JONES

Summer camp is where kids get to spend some time enjoying the outdoors, soaking up the sun and just being kids. It's the time for splashing around in pools, ponds and rivers in a place built for games and adventure.

Camp Lone Star and Lutherhill Ministries both offer ropes courses and traditional camp activities to help children—and adults, too—learn to lead, develop their spiritual lives and just have some good, old-fashioned fun. While both are Christian camps affiliated with the Lutheran church, everyone is welcome to attend.

“At Lutherhill, we believe that every person who steps onto our grounds should feel right at home,” says Anne Liddle, the camp’s development director. “Hospitality is one of our core values, guiding us to create a community where all are truly welcomed and celebrated.”

Ryan
Neuhaus of
Camp Lone

Star says that camp, too, invites everyone to experience the outdoors in all its meanings. “Outdoors is trying to create a safe place where people can get outside themselves. So, it’s never about creation in itself or being outside,” he says. “It’s always about trying to help people see that they’re in a safe place where they can be vulnerable or where they can be honest and where they can grow. Where they can get outside of their fears, they can get outside of their shame. It’s about getting outside themselves and seeing what’s stopping them so they can grow together as a community or individually or both. That has been kind of the DNA and the pulse of Camp Lone Star.”

LUTHERHILL MINISTRIES

Lutheran youth leaders started the camp at Lutherhill in 1954 to provide summer fun and education for kids. What began as a 50-acre camp on former petroleum company land expanded to 155 acres with cabins, a dining hall and a retreat center. Lutherhill is also home to a chapel that sits at the highest point in Fayette County.



Lutherhill campers play gaga ball, a gentler, kinder type of dodge ball.

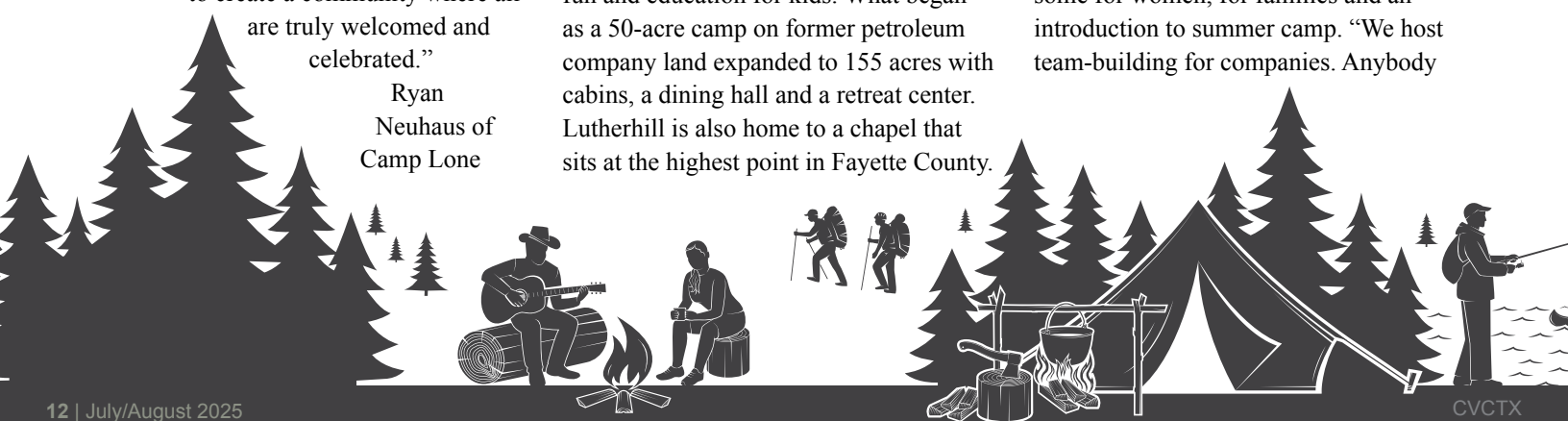
Photo courtesy of Lutherhill Ministries

“It overlooks the countryside and provides views of beautiful sunsets,” Anne says.

Lutherhill offers youth and family summer camps for children in elementary school through high school, as well as adventure programs, day camps and off-site day camps.

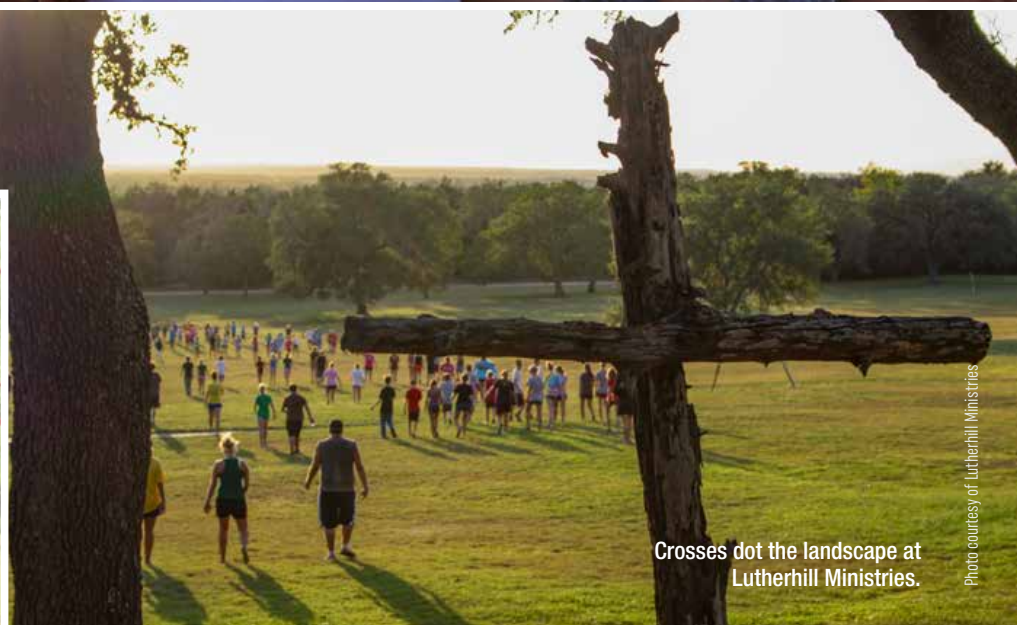
What’s summer camp without the chance to do a little swimming? Lutherhill has a pool, as well as a pond with kayaks and a large floating trampoline. There are archery and slingshot ranges, many arts and crafts activities and the Zoom Flume water slide going down the hill. There are sports courts and high and low rope challenge courses. There’s even an ax-throwing range for older kids and a labyrinth the kids can walk and pray through. “And then s’mores, of course,” Anne says.

At the 12-bedroom retreat center, the ministry hosts gatherings, including some for women, for families and an introduction to summer camp. “We host team-building for companies. Anybody





Campers bond while enjoying music at Lutherhill.



Crosses dot the landscape at Lutherhill Ministries.

Lone Star campers play 9 Square in the Air.

can rent Lutherhill,” Anne says. “We welcome all. Hospitality is one of our core values. It’s a very welcoming place where you can have the place to yourself, or we’re happy to do things for you.”

Anne says Lutherhill Ministries’ core values are hospitality, community and love of Christ. “We want to make sure everyone feels that love when they come to Lutherhill,” she says. “We want them to feel safe and know they are a child of God.”

CAMP LONE STAR

Another La Grange facility, Camp Lone Star, started in 1941 when a Lutheran youth group wanted to provide a place for kids to have adventures and grow in faith.

For retreat attendees and campers alike, Lone Star offers a variety of activities, including low ropes, high

ropes, a climbing wall and more. “We know through such challenges, groups can learn as individuals but also grow stronger together as a group, and so they leave ready to rock and roll,” Ryan says.

The camp and retreat center has a huge swimming pool, archery and ax throwing, pickleball, basketball and volleyball courts. Kids can float on the Colorado River, which runs through the property.

There are several Bible studies and devotions. “God’s word is usually a big component to most groups that come out,” Ryan says. “For sure, it’s the filter that we run everything through.”

Sometimes children and teens come to

Camp Lone Star after some less-than-kind experiences with their peers. “Safety and transparency and community is not something that’s trusted for them,” Ryan says. “School is a scary place. Camp allows them a place where they can be kids again without fear of what someone’s going to record or social media blast about them.”

Both camps have “camperships,” scholarships funded by donors, so children and teens can experience a summer free from financial worries.

To learn more or to apply for a campership to Lutherhill Ministries, go to lutherhill.org. For Camp Lone Star, visit camplonestar.org.



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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