

BTC Fiber

MARCH/APRIL 2021

CONNECTION

ARTIST KARIS FEEZELL

Making a difference in
the lives of others

CREATING QUILTS

Pikeville woman utilizing
website for sales

CONNECTING CREATIVES

Artists and artisans unite
through broadband



By SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO

NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

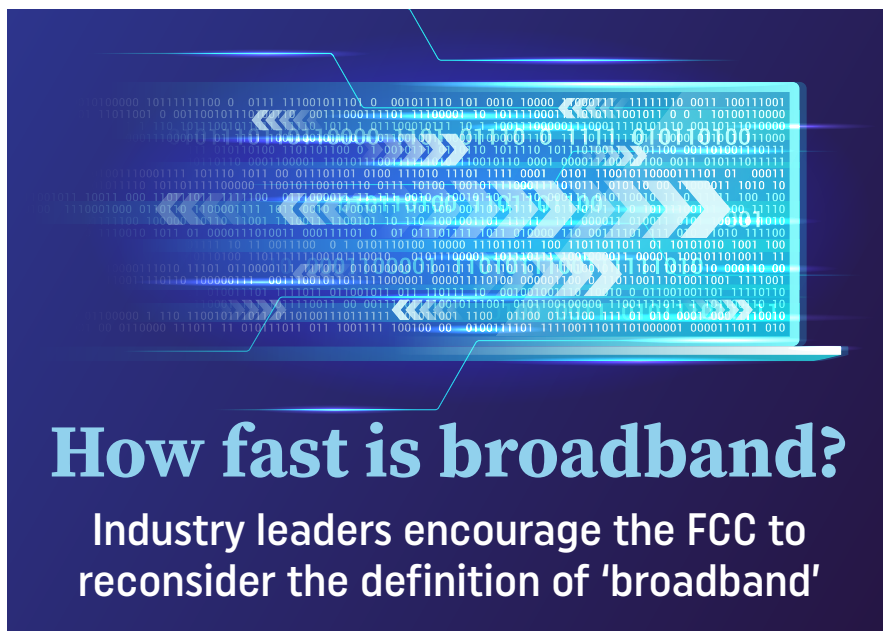
Here's to hope in 2021

The pandemic has made it clear that every American needs broadband to thrive. We need it for work, for school, for health. And we need it for accessing government services, for growing businesses and for building communities. If there is a silver lining to 2020, which was a hard year for so many, it's that more people are now acutely aware of the essential nature of broadband services.

The new year brought new challenges, many of them playing out at our Capitol, a building I've had the honor of visiting many times to talk to members of Congress about the need to support broadband for all of America. But I choose to have hope that better angels of our nature will guide us to rebuild, and I believe NTCA and our members have an opportunity to help that rebuild with the work that we do supporting broadband connectivity and other critical services for rural communities.

The hard-working members of NTCA have made so much progress in the past decade toward solving the rural broadband challenge. There is much work yet to do, but I have hope in the progress they are making. Through federal and state funding programs, coupled with local investments by providers themselves, we are on our way as a country to connecting everyone.

There is a day in our future when we can say that everyone who needs or wants a broadband connection has access. That day is coming, sooner than later. I have hope. 📶



By STEPHEN V. SMITH

We as a nation need to rethink what is considered true broadband connection speeds. That's the message telecom industry leaders recently sent to the Federal Communications Commission.

NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association joined with the Fiber Broadband Association in sending a letter to the FCC in December addressing the definition of broadband. The letter came as the FCC prepares its next report to Congress on the state of broadband deployment in America.

For the past five years, the FCC has considered any connection speeds of 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload to be the benchmark for broadband.

“By any measure, this benchmark does not reflect what American consumers need today, let alone tomorrow,” wrote NTCA CEO Shirley Bloomfield and Fiber Broadband Association President and CEO Gary Bolton.

In urging the FCC to redefine what speeds are considered broadband, Bloomfield and Bolton wrote that “while all Americans would be best

served by the Commission adopting a gigabit symmetric benchmark ... it should at least raise the minimum broadband performance benchmark for the Sixteenth Broadband Deployment Report to 100/100 Mbps.”

Raising the definition, a benchmark that impacts funding decisions and technology choices, would put the country on a path toward ensuring all Americans have broadband access that actually meets their needs, the letter states. With millions of people using broadband at home to work, participate in school and attend doctor appointments, broadband has become essential to everyday life.

Bloomfield and Bolton further concluded that redefining broadband would allow the FCC to “keep pace with broadband service that Americans both need and want,” while providing “a benchmark the Commission can then use to ensure that we build our networks right the first time by driving investment in future-proof broadband infrastructure.” 📶



To hear an interview with Gary Bolton on this and related topics, visit www.RuralBroadbandToday.com, or search for “Rural Broadband Today” on your favorite podcast app, Spotify or Amazon Music.

The price of entertainment

Consumers can tap into a rushing stream of content delivered across devices ranging from TVs to smartphones. Sports, news, movies, comedies, dramas, music — the list of options is seemingly endless.

But there is a cost. And for many consumers that price increases each spring. If you have it handy, take a moment to review a bill for your TV programming from three years ago. Compare it to today, and in most cases the difference is obvious — television programming is pricier.

The increases are not limited to traditional cable TV providers either. Streaming services have seen prices spike, too. When Google launched YouTube TV, the monthly price was about \$35. Now, it's \$65.

In cases such as Google, as well as other providers, adding new, desirable content channels helps drive the increases. For traditional networks, investment in higher-quality programming has become essential to compete with streaming services like Netflix, Amazon and HBO Max. Those costs are then passed on to cable providers and their customers.

But more content is not always the root

cause of the higher prices. In fact, for many providers, such as the rural communications companies serving much of America, the increasing cost of content is an annual struggle to hold prices down. It's not a push to increase profits, and their efforts to control prices illustrate the give and take behind what you see on your bill.

For these companies, only a small portion of a monthly television subscription fee goes to personnel costs, equipment upgrades and tasks such as equipment maintenance. So, where does all the money go?

Much of the cost is wrapped up in agreements allowing TV providers to bring content to you. Networks like ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox regularly renegotiate these agreements. In many cases, these are annual negotiations.

A 2019 analysis of cable TV rates by Consumer Reports found that while advertised rates generally increased by 3% to 4% annually, fees for the major networks and channels airing live sports climbed between 8% and 10% each of the previous four years.

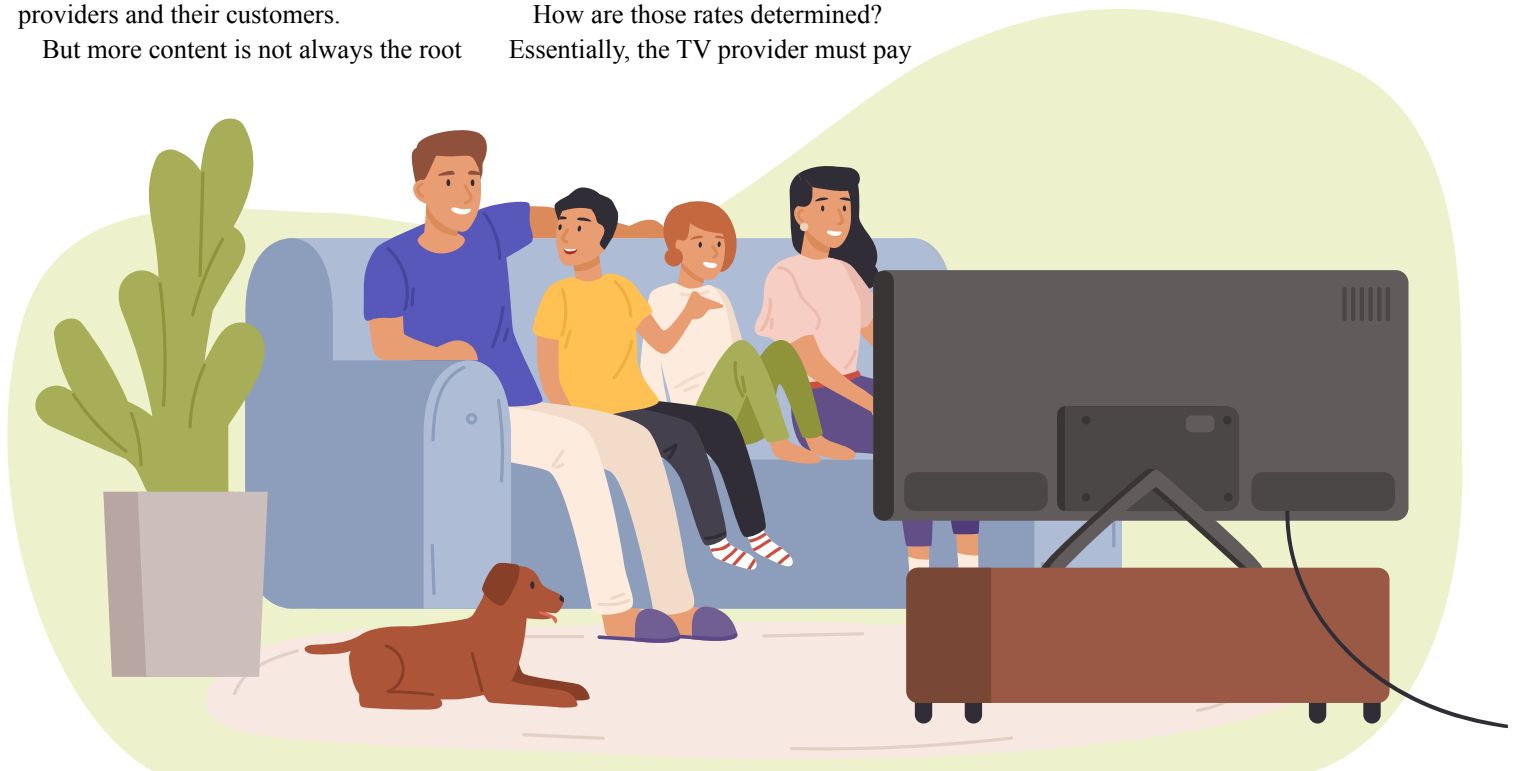
How are those rates determined? Essentially, the TV provider must pay

networks a fixed fee for each subscriber of the service. But each year there are fewer traditional TV subscribers to carry that load. In 2020 alone, about 6.3 million people dropped their cable or satellite TV service, according to investment research firm Moffett Nathanson.

Without an expanding subscriber base to offset these increasing costs, TV providers often pass the expense on to consumers in the form of fees added to advertised prices, according to the FCC's 18th Annual Video Competition Report.

When it comes to these hidden costs, there is one bright spot for consumers. The Television Viewer Protection Act passed at the end of 2019 requires cable and satellite companies to disclose the total monthly price of subscribers' TV bills, including all individual fees and charges, when they sign up.

That transparency won't make your bill any lower. But it will give you an accurate picture of the full cost of your monthly TV bill. 🗨️



Brutal negotiating from TV networks drives video rates

My least favorite part of my job here at BTC Fiber is having to inform you of a price increase. Unfortunately, thanks to unrelenting price increases from TV providers, I must be the bearer of bad news.

There is never a good time to increase the price of a service, but doing so this year in the middle of an economic slowdown will be particularly tough for some customers.



CHARLIE BORING
General Manager

That timing was part of the argument we and our friends from the associations who represent us laid out in response to price increases from the TV networks we carry. But those arguments once again fell on deaf ears.

Beginning April 1, 2021, BTC Fiber must raise our video rates depending on your package. Prices on other services will remain unchanged.

This is not a decision we wanted to make, but I took some solace in knowing that even the big guys are facing similar action. Comcast rolled out significant increases to video and broadband service Jan. 1.

Our staff and board does everything possible to keep rates low. But in this case, we have no choice if we want to ensure we can

continue to provide you service in the future. In order to deliver the programs you love, BTC Fiber must pay networks such as ESPN, Fox, CBS and NBC a certain amount per TV subscriber per month. Those rates have increased dramatically in recent years — sometimes tripling or quadrupling.

Notably, in a statement released before their rate hike, Comcast pointed out outrageous increases in programming costs from the TV networks. “Rising programming costs — most notably for broadcast TV and sports — continue to be the biggest factors driving price increases for all content distributors and their customers, not just Comcast,” the Comcast statement reads.

Now, if you read this column regularly, you know I’m no friend of the massive telecom corporations whose stock price is their main motivation to sell. However, on this issue, we find ourselves in the same boat. Just like Comcast, other large corporate providers, along with our fellow small independent telcos around the country, are seeing exorbitant price hikes from networks. We all must consider or implement price increases in coming months.

If you would like information on the entertainment options available streaming online over our broadband service, be sure to reach out to our staff.

When forces out of our control require us to make a tough decision like this, we’re going to double down on doing what we do best: serving you. 🗨️

Connection is a bimonthly newsletter published by BTC Fiber, ©2021. It is distributed without charge to all customers of the company.



is a member-owned cooperative dedicated to delivering advanced telecommunications technology to the people of Bledsoe and Sequatchie counties and portions of Van Buren, Cumberland and Hamilton counties.

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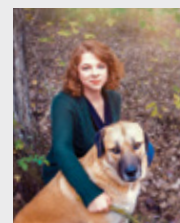
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On the Cover:



Karis Feezell teaches art and sells some of her work to help bring awareness to human trafficking.
See story Page 8.

NOTICE:

To All Customers of Bledsoe Telephone Cooperative

TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

The Public Service Commission of Tennessee designated Bledsoe Telephone Cooperative (BTC) as an "Eligible Telecommunications Carrier" for its service area for universal service purposes. The goal of universal service is to provide all citizens access to essential telecommunications and broadband services.

BTC provides the supported services – voice telephony service and broadband Internet access service – throughout its designated service area. These supported services include:

- Voice grade access to the public switched network;
- Minutes of use for local service provided at no additional charge;
- Access to emergency services such as 911 and enhanced 911; and
- Broadband Internet access service which includes the capability to send data to and receive data from the Internet, but excludes dial-up service.

Voice telephony service is provided at rates that start at \$14.50 per month for residential customers and \$23.50 per month for business line customers. Broadband Internet access service is provided at rates that start at \$76.95 per month for residential customers and \$86.95 per month for business customers. BTC would be pleased to provide you with specific rates for voice and broadband for your area upon request. Broadband bundled with telephony services is available at a bundled price. Use of these services may result in added charges including taxes, surcharges, and fees.

BTC also offers qualified customers Lifeline service. Lifeline is a non-transferable, federal benefit that makes monthly voice or broadband service more affordable. The program is limited to one discount per household. Eligible households may apply the monthly Lifeline discount to either broadband service (home or wireless) or voice service (home or wireless) but not both. Lifeline customers also have the option to apply the discount to a service bundle, such as home phone and home broadband. The Lifeline voice service also includes toll blocking to qualifying customers without charge. For details on the amount of the current discount provided under the Company's Lifeline service, please contact our customer service.

A household is eligible for the Lifeline discount if the customer's annual household income is at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines. You may also qualify for the Lifeline program if a customer, a dependent, or the customer's household participates in one or more of the following programs:

- Medicaid
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Supplemental Security Income;
- Federal Public Housing Assistance (Section 8)
- Veterans and Survivors Pension Benefit.

Please call BTC if you have any questions. 423-447-2121



Bill paying made easy

BTC Fiber makes it easy to pay your bill online from the comfort of your home.

With online bill pay, you get:
Safe and secure payment options.

Sign up for online billing today at
btcbillpay.com.



Don't forget to set your clocks ahead!
Daylight saving time starts at
2 a.m. on March 14.



A rider navigates the Tunnel Trail in Sumter National Forest.

TAKE PRIDE IN YOUR RIDE

How to safely blaze the ATV trails

Story by ANNE P. BRALY

In coming weeks, ATVs and other off-road vehicles will come out of hibernation, and riders will be hitting the trails more than any other time of year. There's something about early spring that makes for great riding — cool mornings, mild afternoons, pleasant evenings, new growth appearing all around you. They all come together to make an ideal day as you ride trails through the forests of the South.

"I think the best part about riding is getting to see so much of the forest and so many different habitats in a short period of time," says David Baldwin with the U.S. Forest Service at South Carolina's Francis Marion National Forest. There's one main thoroughfare, the Wambaw Cycle Trail, that's 40 miles long with two different loops — one north and the other south.

"Within a 19-mile section of the north section, you'll witness Carolina Bay trees, hardwood ponds, longleaf pine stands and a variation in terrain that is rare in the low country," Baldwin says.

But if you're new to the sport, how do you know which all-terrain vehicle is best for you? Alice Riddle, an outdoor recreation planner at Sumter National Forest, says it's important to ride vehicles that are age- and size-appropriate. One size does

not fit all. ATVs come with a warning label, clearly stating the minimum age of the rider. Not sure where to look? The label is affixed so riders can easily read it when seated in the proper operating position.

If you're new to the sport, talk with local shops and other riders, and do your homework ahead of time. The internet is a good resource, Riddle says. There are also training courses for both ATV and dirt bike riding. Check with your local bike shop.

It may seem as though the sounds of motorized vehicles are incongruous with

the peaceful sounds of nature, but it's all part of the plan the Forest Service offered when the trails first went in, says Riddle. "National forest lands provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities," she says. "Motorized trails are one of these opportunities. There are many hiking trails or general forest areas that one can go to in order to find a peaceful hike or solitary experience. Motorized trail bikes are only allowed on designated trails for motorized use on National Forest Lands. With national forests encompassing many thousands of acres, there are opportunities for all to enjoy." 🗨️



Choosing an ATV properly fitted to you is a key for safety.



TOP TRAILS

There are two national forests in South Carolina open to the public with well-maintained trails: Sumter National Forest in the Piedmont region offers a gently sloping topography with elevations up to 400 feet, and Francis Marion National Forest in South Carolina's low country — a flat sandy environment with many bogs that the trails skirt. Both offer trails for different levels of ability.

- **Cedar Springs Trail at Sumter** is 11 miles long and offers moderately challenging trail loops.
- **Parsons Mountain Trail** at Sumter is 10.3 miles long and easy — a good one for beginners.
- **Francis Marion has one main trail** — the 40-mile Wambaw Cycle Trail — with two loops. The north loop has more technicality in terrain and is best for more advanced riders than the south loop. On each of the loops, riders will approach signage where the trail forks and have the ability to choose to continue on or head back to the trail head.

MAP IT



One of the primary rules for off-road safety is carrying a trail map with you.

You'll find maps for Sumter and Francis Marion National Forests online at fs.usda.gov.



Volunteers groom trails by pulling a cluster of tires to flatten the path.

SAFETY FIRST

On nice days, trailheads can fill up quickly, says David Baldwin with the U.S. Forest Service. The Forest Service maintains the trails in South Carolina's two national forests. And since there are different loops and trails that riders can take, they do not get terribly congested, he adds.

Keep in mind, though, the trails are not race tracks. "Riders need to be aware there could be hazards that occur along the trail, and they need to be ready to stop on a moment's notice," warns Alice Riddle, an outdoor recreation planner at Sumter National Forest. "Riders must be in control of their bikes at all times. They are responsible for their safety and others. All trails have passing areas, so wait for those opportunities and don't create new impacts to the trail. If it's your first visit to a trail, start off with the loops closer to the parking area until you become familiar with the trail system."

Here are some additional rules of safety and etiquette to be considered when riding the trails.

- Keep in mind that there are going to be riders of all different skill levels around you. So, whether you are a seasoned professional who is training for your next race or a first-time rider who is learning to ride, everyone shares the trail.
- Do not ride above your ability. This practice prevents you from getting injured and keeps other riders safe, as well.
- There are spots on the trails where other riders may pass if they need to, so slow down, let them pass, or pull over if need be. This safety rule keeps the trail flowing nicely during busier days.

Karis Feezell with her dog Fenna.



Karis Feezell has loved to draw for as long as she can remember. Six years ago, she taught herself how to paint. Now, she teaches others the craft and sells her work.

These accomplishments aren't easy. The 21-year-old Pikeville artist struggles daily with physical issues. Feezell has cerebral palsy and Beckwith-Wiedemann syndrome, along with birth defects that affect her hands and feet. When she was born, the umbilical cord was tied in a knot, resulting in lack of oxygen for eight minutes. This damaged the cerebellum, causing constant tremors.

"It is a struggle to control my hands, particularly when it comes to opening them," she says. "The fact that I have these issues and can still draw and paint is proof to me that God is still working miracles to this day."

Instead of focusing on the things she can't do, Feezell focuses on those things she can and finds solace in making a difference in the lives of others. Her feet turn in as a result of the CP, but it does not affect her ability to walk, and surgeries on both legs have improved her gait and severe knee issues. "In spite of the many complications that usually accompany CP and Beckwith-Wiedemann syndrome, I process information, think and talk normally," she says.

She still has the marks associated with Beckwith-Wiedemann syndrome — a strawberry-colored patch of skin at the top and base of her spine and dimples behind her ears. "They are a daily reminder that God does fight my battles and that nothing is out of His control," she says.

The ability of ART

Pikeville woman using talents to help others

Story by LISA SAVAGE

PAINTING WITH PASSION

Feezell started teaching art in 2015. The one-on-one lessons proved successful, and she added more clients.

Some of her first students were her neighbors — three brothers. The oldest one went on to win Best of Show of Tennessee in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's 2020 Federal Junior Duck Stamp Design Contest, which focuses on waterfowl and wetlands artwork.

Joshua Lee became the youngest person to win the Best of Show in the 25-year history of the contest after taking art classes from Feezell. "Joshua is very talented," she says. "I was happy to have played a role in helping him discover his talent."

Feezell makes it her mission to expose students to a variety of different styles and mediums used in the fine arts. "Teaching art has given me a wonderful opportunity to grow and experience the joy of helping others improve in their talents," she says. "I like to help them establish their own unique style, as well as strengthen their artistic imagination, helping them transfer what they see in their minds onto canvas."

She especially loves helping students explore the techniques best for creating waterfowl and animals, which are among her favorite things to draw. "I used to think of my mind as a bird inside an inescapable cage of my defected body," she says. "I wanted to do and achieve so much but could not because of my physical issues."

As Feezell has grown, she has learned to focus on things she can do. "In pushing through difficult tasks, I have found the strength to turn my disabilities into abilities," she says. "The gift of art has shown me that beauty really can come from ashes. Art is just another way to show God's amazing power." Her website, ashes2beautyart.com, reflects that thought.

Feezell often channels her emotions through her art.

"They say a picture is worth more than a thousand words," she says. "Whatever you're going through — whether it's shame, fear, sorrow, anger or regret — know that it is just for a season. It is OK to feel those emotions. Just don't let them define your life and who you are. The season will not last forever."

The income Feezell receives as an art teacher helps her financially support two girls through Holt International. She has sponsored Wen from China for three years and Nhu from Vietnam for a little over a year.

ONLINE SALES AND TOOLS

Feezell uses an online platform to sell her art and reach others by featuring her techniques on videos she posts on her website.

Filming of some of the videos took place during live broadcasts she hosted with other artists last year during the pandemic. Each session had a theme and showed the process of her paintings.

She sells her artwork online at ashes2beautyart.com and explains her techniques and influences for a particular piece there. She works to raise awareness about human trafficking through her other website, art2freehearts.com, which supports Blazing Hope Ranch with 25% of all art sales. During her annual



Karis Feezell with her three youngest art students after presenting them with woodburning gifts.

art show, she contributes 40% of the art sales to Blazing Hope Ranch. Through art sales, fundraisers and shows, she has raised almost \$7,000 for the ranch since she began supporting them three years ago.

The ranch provides a safe haven in the Dayton area for women who survived human trafficking. The website provides information, statistics and ideas about ways to help make a difference in human trafficking. One of her favorite pieces, which the song "Chattanooga Choo Choo" inspired, also proved to be one of her most challenging efforts. Her first print of that piece sold for \$170 at the Chattanooga Girls Choir Auction.

"The most difficult part was freehanding the straight lines with my tremors," she says. "It took a lot of time, late nights and intense work to complete this, but it was worth it all in the end. I can see God's strength show up in my weakness when I look at this painting, and it makes me glad to know that I serve a God who is so much bigger than my struggles."

Her art show in December raised \$2,125 through art sales, including two silent auctions and direct donations. Out of the money raised that evening, \$1,000 was donated to Blazing Hope Ranch. "I am extremely blessed to have so many people supporting me, because that allows me to help make a difference in the lives of others," she says. 📧



LEARN MORE
ashes2beautyart.com
art2freehearts.com

CREATIVE SPACES

Artists and craftspeople find community online

Story by DREW WOOLLEY



Jessica Sanders, left, and Addie Moore keep ETX Creatives running along with Lisa Horlander, who is not pictured.



The online community is home to 350 artists and creatives.



ETX Creatives welcomes artists and visitors at in-person events.

Addie Moore just wanted to know a schedule for local art shows. A mixed media artist and art teacher at Chapel Hill High School, she and her friends knew there was a need for better communication among creatives in Tyler, Texas, and beyond.

“I heard it enough times that eventually I realized, ‘OK, I guess I have to do it,’” she says of her commitment in 2018. “Our first meeting we just went out for a beer and decided to make a Facebook group.”

That group became ETX Creatives, an online community of artists and artisans throughout East Texas. Today, the curated Facebook group is home to 350 creatives who use the space to share their work, offer inspiration and encouragement, or share news about upcoming exhibitions.

“We’re a largely rural area, so you have your friends from high school, church or that you’ve met over time. But it tends to happen in pockets,” says Moore. “There aren’t a lot of public spaces, so the internet provided a space for us to connect, express what we’re doing artistically and to let people know you’re not alone in Edom or your small town. You have a community.”

BREAKING THE BLOCK

Having a community of people who understand the struggles of the creative process has been especially important over the last year when artists and creatives have been hit hard by the economic challenges of the coronavirus pandemic.

“It’s a great place for us to say, ‘I’m having some creative block,’ or ‘How are you staying positive during this

time?’” says Moore. “I think having this creative community that knows what we’re going through and can give suggestions if we’re stuck or having trouble with a particular process has been a great support.”

ETX Creatives also hosts a blog on its website, etxcreatives.com, where visitors can find updates on the latest events and shows across East Texas. The site also allows promotion of items ranging from handmade ceramics and jewelry to clothing and one-of-a-kind paintings. The group also produces the “ETX Creatives Podcast” to showcase local artists and to delve into the creative process.

Before the pandemic, ETX Creatives hosted in-person exhibitions and workshops where hundreds of visitors from throughout the state could try their hand at printmaking or creating their own T-shirts. While those meet-ups have been put on pause, the group has continued to raise funds for local artistic projects.

And the best may be yet to come. Along with her ETX Creatives partners Jessica Sanders and Lisa Horlander, Moore is working to organize their informal group into an official non-profit. Once established, they can raise money for their own space, where they aim to continue hosting public events, have a permanent gallery and provide studio space for short-term artist residencies.

“My ultimate goal is to influence an economy among the creative community so people want to buy from local artists,” says Moore. “It can create appreciation and community support beyond just a space for us to talk to each other.” 📩

THE FUTURE OF ART

When it was founded in 1961, the Kentucky Guild of Artists and Craftsmen promoted local creators with a traveling "Guild Train" that exhibited their work across the state. The Guild Train no longer runs, but the organization still brings artists, craftsmen, collectors, galleries and other interested parties together.

In recent years, the guild's transformation has seen it harness the power of the internet to build social media communities and host online collections, where visitors can view and purchase work from member artists. Greg Lakes, who joined the guild after he and his wife opened the Clover Bottom Bed and Breakfast in McKee, hopes organizations like the guild continue to see the value of online communities for their members.

"Those places are where you have to be now to be viable as a selling artist," he says. "We have a lot of great artists in the area who come to the guild, and I think the groups that are going to survive are the ones who develop their online presence."

For more information, visit kyguild.org.



CREATIVE VOICES

Access to fast internet services creates fresh opportunities for creators in rural communities throughout the nation.

"I've never had to advertise. I just use Facebook to let people know when the classes are, and people usually use that to save a spot."

— Tammie Franklin, owner and teacher at Tammie's Treasures Painting Classes in River, Kentucky

"It helps us stay connected, and we reach a larger audience. It's one of the best ways we have to spread the word about what we do."

— Debra Ruzinsky, director of the Appalachian Center for Craft in Smithville, Tennessee



A stitch in time

Pikeville woman creates quilts & stained glass Story by LISA SAVAGE

As a young girl, Renee Taylor watched her mother sew, making elaborate wedding dresses and men's suits.

Years later, Taylor taught herself how to sew and began quilting. Her youngest brother built a log cabin, and she wanted to make him a quilt as a gift. "I went down and bought a book and taught myself how to do it," she says. "It took about a year to make that quilt, but I did it. And I found out that I loved it."

Since then she has honed her quilting skills, and she's even taught the craft for the past 30 years. She uses patchwork and appliqué, which are by-hand and machine techniques, for designs she creates. She also uses needle turn, as well as starch and press methods, featuring hummingbirds and various kinds of flowers.

She has dozens of designs available for sale on her website, reneeataylor.com.

MOVING TO PIKEVILLE

Taylor grew up in Huntsville, Alabama. She and her husband, Clifford, lived in Panama City, Florida, for many years and would visit their son, who was living in Dunlap at the time. They fell in love with the area.

"We came up here to visit in 2005, and it was a crazy year," she says. "With the hurricanes, taxes and insurance, we decided we had enough of Florida." They saw a log cabin they loved and



bought it. They have lived in Pikeville ever since.

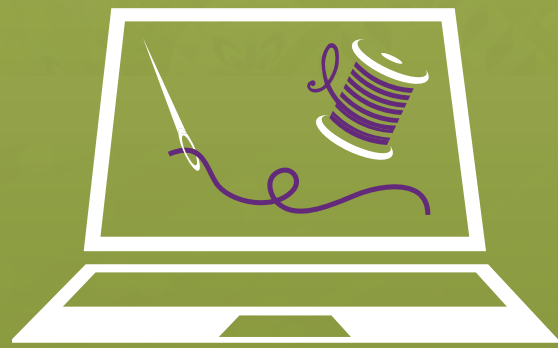
While Taylor taught herself to quilt in 1970, she decided to expand her talents and took a stained glass class in the early '80s. "I loved it," she says. "Creating stained glass and quilt designs are similar."

She creates her quilt designs at home and displays them on her website. She

also goes to four stained glass shows a year and makes it to as many quilting shows as she can. The stained glass studio next door to her house gives her a place to create art and sell her pieces. She's just down the road from the popular Wooden's Apple House, and most of her customers find her shop after driving past the sign while headed to the apple orchard.

“People will see my sign and come in and visit to see what I’ve got,” she says. Her antique glass wind chimes are popular, and they make great gifts.

Taylor is now 74, and she and her husband are both disabled. The stained glass studio and quilt designs keep them both busy. “I love it, and I can do whatever it takes to make a little extra to help us out,” she says. 🗨️



Let BTC Fiber design your website

When it comes to quilt designs, Renee Taylor knows her stuff. Until a few years ago, she didn't know anything about selling and displaying her quilt creations online, though. That's why she depends on BTC Fiber for her website needs. "It works out really well for me," she says. "I didn't know anything about a website, and they take care of everything."

The website is easy to navigate, and it's set up so visitors can message with questions or make a purchase. It's one of the services BTC Fiber offers, says Russ Camp, chief information officer at BTC Fiber.

The design process takes place in-house, and customers can talk to the designer instead of using an automated domain system based in another state. "They can talk to somebody and work with them to get exactly what they're wanting in a website," Camp says. "If using a company that isn't local, they might find out that the quality isn't on par with what we're able to offer."

Anthony Ladd, local designer and owner of kneelindesign.com, creates the websites and designs. "He does a great job and has an insight to help each client achieve the exact look they want on their website," Camp says.

BTC Fiber hosts about 30 websites and links to most of them on its own website's business directory. Once a website is up and running, BTC Fiber continues to provide customer service. "They can talk to us directly if they're having any issues," Camp says.

The websites are designed to be easy to navigate, and BTC Fiber offers an array of creative services, from customer packaging to promotional artwork, to set these sites apart from the competition. BTC Fiber can also link any of the clients' social media accounts from their websites.

Creativity, cost and time also factor in with the initial cost, but on average, a one-page design typically costs only about \$5.95 a month to maintain, Camp says.

For more information about website hosting, contact BTC Fiber at 423-447-2121.



Sunny side up?

Mix it up in the morning

Ham and eggs just go together — you rarely think of one without picturing the other. And they are so often seen together on an Easter menu.

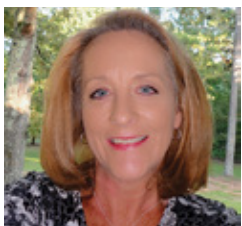
But what do you do once the Easter lunch is over and you're faced with leftover ham and lots of eggs?

For starters, make sure that you've handled all the food safely. With a lot of cooks in the kitchen prepping so much food, sometimes safe food handling practices fly out the window. Make sure you're preparing — and storing — food properly, so all of your guests leave with a full tummy and not a sick stomach.

While you're boiling eggs to dye for Easter, boil some extras, and make sure you keep them in the refrigerator until you're ready to use them.

Don't serve or eat any eggs that have been at room temperature for more than two hours.

As for your ham, if it's ready to eat then, you simply have to warm it up. But if you have to roast it yourself, make sure the internal temperature reaches 145 F.



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HAM AND EGG CASSEROLE

- 2 medium cooked potatoes, peeled and sliced
- 4 hard-boiled large eggs, chopped
- 1 cup diced fully cooked ham
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1 large egg
- 1 1/2 cups sour cream
- 1/4 cup dry bread crumbs
- 1 tablespoon butter, melted

In a large bowl, combine the potatoes, eggs, ham, salt and pepper. Combine the raw egg and sour cream. Add to potato mixture and gently toss to coat. Transfer to a greased 11-by-7-inch baking dish.

Toss bread crumbs and butter. Sprinkle over casserole. Bake, uncovered, at 350 F for 20 minutes or until bubbly and cooked through.

CREAMED HAM AND EGGS

- 3 tablespoons butter
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 1/2 teaspoon dry mustard
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 1/4 cups milk
- 1 cup diced cooked ham
- 4 hard-boiled eggs, chopped
- 4 biscuits

Melt butter in a large saucepan over low heat. Stir flour, mustard, salt and pepper into butter until mixture is smooth and bubbly. Remove from heat and add milk. Return to heat and bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Boil until mixture thickens — about 1 minute.

Stir ham and eggs into milk mixture and cook until heated through. Spoon creamed ham and eggs onto biscuits and serve.

PUFFY HAM AND EGG QUICHE

- 1 (17 1/3 ounce) box frozen puff pastry
- 8 ounces ham, chopped
- 4 hard-boiled eggs, sliced
- 8 ounces mozzarella cheese, shredded
- 1 beef bouillon cube
- 1/4 cup evaporated milk, warm
- 1 tablespoon parsley, chopped
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 4 tablespoons Parmesan cheese, grated

Preheat the oven to 375 F. Roll one sheet of puff pastry into a pie dish. Sprinkle ham on the bottom of the pie. Add a layer of sliced hard-boiled eggs and a layer of the mozzarella cheese.

Dissolve the beef bouillon in the warm milk and mix with parsley, beaten eggs and Parmesan cheese. Pour over ham, eggs and cheese. Cover the pie with the second puff pastry. Bake for 45 minutes or until golden brown. Let it sit for 5 to 10 minutes before cutting and serving.



Hard boiled eggs benedict

- 4 hard-boiled eggs
- 2 English muffins (split half)
- 4 slices ham
- Chopped parsley (optional)

Hollandaise Sauce:

- 4 large egg yolks
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1/2 cup butter (very slightly softened, cut into 5 pieces)
- Pinch of salt
- Dash of cayenne pepper (optional)

Prepare hollandaise sauce by placing a heat-proof bowl over a pan of gently simmering water (about 1 1/2 inches of water). The bottom of the bowl should not be touching the water. Alternatively, a double boiler set can be used. Add egg yolks and lemon juice to the bowl and whisk vigorously until the mixture becomes shiny/glossy and thickens. Whisk in

one piece of butter until fully incorporated into mixture. Repeat with remaining pieces, one at a time.

Whisk in a pinch of salt and a dash of cayenne, if using. If mixture is too thick, whisk in a bit of warm water, a tablespoon at a time. Remove from heat and use immediately.

In a hot skillet, over medium heat, heat the ham. Toast the English muffins until lightly browned. Cut each hard-boiled egg into fourths. Assemble by placing an English muffin half on a plate (cut side up), topping with 1 slice of ham, 1 egg (cut into fourths), and drizzle with 1/4 of the hollandaise sauce. Topped with chopped parsley, if desired, and serve warm.

Alternately, to make this dish a little easier, buy an envelope of Knorr's hollandaise sauce mix and follow package directions.



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