

CONNECTION

Guiding Light

Christian camp offers faith and peace

CHEER LEADER

PLAY BALL!



By Shirley Bloomfield, CEO
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

The Journey to Connectivity


NTCA members create broadband networks so fast and reliable that it's easy to take for granted the effort and expertise needed to bring these services to homes and businesses. These professionals do amazing work, particularly when considering the intricate, multi-step journey to build, expand and maintain a network.

It begins with detailed research and careful planning. The broadband provider must learn exactly how many homes and businesses might want service, as well as the challenges posed by the landscape. Then, a thorough review of the numbers determines if the project makes financial sense. It's a puzzle where the pieces are population density, infrastructure costs and potential demand for the service.

Then there's the engineering—design, build and inspect. Detailed maps identify routes for cables, permitting, environmental regulations and access to land. Some of these projects can take two to four years from the first engineering drawing to the first connection.

The work doesn't stop when the network goes live. These networks require maintenance, technology upgrades and customer support.

These networks are lifelines connecting rural communities to telehealth, education, remote work and cutting-edge technologies. With the help of service providers like yours, we're building broadband to last and ensuring no community gets left behind in our increasingly digital world.

To learn more, check out the Foundation for Rural Service and JSI's latest report, "Delivering Broadband From Beginning to 'End,'" at frs.org/delivering-broadband-beginning-end. 



Safe Searches

Tips to avoid scams

When you need information fast, a quick check of Google is often the first stop. In fact, some people find it easier to search online for everything, including the addresses for a specific website like a bank, trusted repair service or health care provider.

Unfortunately, scammers know this, too, so they sometimes create bogus sites with addresses confusingly close to the real thing.

Google is aware of this trend, and it touts advanced systems that keep users' search results 99% spam-free. The company also offers a few tips for closing the final security weaknesses.

- Pay close attention to the URL—the specific web address—before clicking any unfamiliar link. Typically, in an email, hovering the cursor over the address will show the complete link. Don't click the link if it looks suspicious.
- The three dots next to the search results in Google can be used to find more details about the webpage, store or business you're considering. You can find clues indicating if the site is legitimate before clicking the link.
- When you're looking for official resources, watch out for unusual address formatting. For example, there's typically only one correct customer service number for a larger company. But not all businesses have customer service numbers, and searching for them requires you to be mindful. Watch for strange formatting in the website address, including unexpected symbols or emojis.

A Rockin' RECIPE

Hannah Dasher cooks up an online storm



Performer Hannah Dasher created a countryfied niche for herself on social media.

Photo courtesy of Jeremy Ryan Photography

Story by BRANDI DIXON

Hannah Dasher is a blast of classic country and rock 'n' roll paired with social media influencer. Stepping into the home she calls “Honky-Tonk Graceland” and features on her social media is, as Hannah says, like going back in time to “your meemaw’s house.”

“Avocado green canisters, gold salt and pepper shakers, brass pots. I love my retro kitchen, and I love that the fans feel right at home,” she says, adding that she enjoys entertaining.

Music and songwriting are Hannah’s first loves. “I was rehearsing my acceptance speech for best new female vocalist of the year in my mirror at age 10,” she says. “I grew up listening to ’90s country radio, and knew I wanted to be an entertainer.”

Hannah pursued music professionally, taking her big hair and a heaping helping of Southern charm to Nashville, Tennessee. She started out writing songs for other artists, getting some big accolades thanks to collaborations with Brad

Paisley, Lainey Wilson and Ian Munsick, to name a few. She continued performing whenever she had the chance.

STAND BY YOUR PAN

In 2020 during the pandemic, Hannah found herself stuck. “All the stages shut down, and I needed a stage,” she says. “Talking with some friends I learned a lot of girls my age couldn’t cook, so I stumbled into the world of social media, and it was the perfect storm.”

Hannah took to TikTok to share her

family’s beloved recipes and a few of her own, all while sprinkling in a bit of her signature rockin’ country flavor. The recipe produced the now-viral Stand By Your Pan social media accounts. More than 1.5 million followers join Hannah daily in her retro kitchen.

“I love that this brought country and noncountry music fans together,” she says. “It’s hard to pigeonhole into just one world, and I’m glad that I can be this representative of the past and the future via a semicelebrity chef.” 🗨️

ALL THE RIGHT INGREDIENTS

When Hannah Dasher isn’t cranking out content, she’s picking up a guitar and writing music.

“God always sends it from the left side of the sky and out of my mouth,” she says of her process. “Sometimes it’s melody and lyrics simultaneously, but you just never know, and you always have to be looking for it.”

Hannah is on the road this year with her band on The Wanted Tour, featuring stops across the United States, the United Kingdom and Sweden. She encourages fans to spread the word and come see her and her “boys.”

A Message From New DTC CEO Kasey Kreuger

I am honored and excited to introduce myself as the new chief executive officer of DTC Communications. It is a privilege to lead such a dynamic and innovative organization, and I am eager to embark on this journey with all of you.



KASEY KRUEGER
CEO

MY JOURNEY TO DTC COMMUNICATIONS

I've made the move from Western Kansas to Middle Tennessee, bringing with me a lifelong commitment to cooperatives and a deep appreciation for the cooperative spirit. With over a decade of leadership experience in the telecommunications industry, I am excited to contribute my expertise to the DTC team.

MY VISION FOR THE FUTURE

The DTC Board of Directors and leadership team have established a strong vision, and I look forward to continuing the great work that DTC has been doing. As I step into this role, my vision is to keep pushing the boundaries of excellence. I am committed to expanding

our network capabilities, enhancing customer experiences and fostering a culture of excellence within our team. Our goal is to not just meet but exceed the expectations of our members.

A COMMITMENT TO OUR COMMUNITY

Community engagement is something I care deeply about. I believe our success is tied to the well-being of the communities we serve. As CEO, I will ensure we remain committed to making a positive impact through our services and initiatives. Whether it's supporting local nonprofit organizations, participating in community development projects or fostering educational opportunities, we are dedicated to being a force for good in our community.

LOOKING AHEAD

As we move forward, we are excited about the future and the opportunities it holds. We are confident that, together, we can achieve great things and continue to set new standards in the telecommunications industry. I look forward to collaborating with our talented team, engaging with our members and building on the strong foundation that has been established.

MAKING MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS

Our tagline, "Making Meaningful Connections," isn't just a slogan—it's at the core of everything we do. We understand that in today's world, connectivity is more than just a convenience, it's a necessity.

That's why we strive to offer services that not only meet your needs but also enrich your life. Whether you're running a business, attending online classes, working from home, FaceTiming with family or just surfing the web, we aim to keep you connected in ways that matter most to you. We promise to continue innovating and improving your experience to ensure you receive the highest quality product at a fair and reasonable price.

I look forward to meeting our members soon. Thank you for your continued support and trust in DTC Communications. Together, we will continue making meaningful connections every day. 📞

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DTC Communications is a member-owned telephone cooperative established in 1951. The cooperative supplies communication, entertainment, and security products and services to residential and business customers primarily throughout Middle Tennessee.

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UTILITY RESOURCES

On the Cover:



Lighthouse Christian Camp provides summertime getaways for kids in need of a break from everyday life.

See story Page 8.

Photo courtesy of Michael Kilgore

CELEBRATING THE CLASS OF 2025

Cannon County High School

Graduation is at 7 p.m. on Thursday, May 15, at the football field, 1 Lion Drive, Woodbury.

The valedictorian is **Sadey Grizzle**, daughter of Scotty and the late Sarah Grizzle. She plans to attend Middle Tennessee State University and pursue degrees in radiology and veterinary medicine.

The salutatorian is **Lily Crook**, daughter of Melinda and Jason Crook. Lily plans to attend Middle Tennessee State University and study concrete industry management.

DeKalb County High School

Graduation is at 7 p.m. on Friday, May 16, at the football field, 1130 W. Broad St., Smithville.

The valedictorian is **Kora Kilgore**. The daughter of John and Ginda Kilgore, Kora plans to attend Anderson University in South Carolina where she will play softball. She hopes to teach math at DCHS and eventually coach the high school softball team.

The salutatorian is **Madeline Martin**. The daughter of Tim and Michiko Martin, Madeline plans to attend the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, to pursue a degree in either biology or nursing. She then wants to earn an advanced degree as either a doctor or a nurse practitioner.

Smith County High School and **Gordonsville High School** honor students who score a certain threshold using a Latin honors system—summa cum laude, magna cum laude and cum laude. They will announce lists near the end of the school year. **Watertown High School** also announces academic achievements at the end of the school year.

Gordonsville High School

Graduation is at 10 a.m. on Saturday, May 17, at the high school at 110 Main St. E., Gordonsville.

Smith County High School

Graduation is Friday, May 16, at the football field, 312 Fite Ave. E., Carthage. Follow Smith County High School | Carthage, TN on Facebook for updates on the time.

Watertown High School

Graduation is at 7 p.m. on Thursday, May 22, at the high school at 9360 Sparta Pike, Watertown.

615-765-7635



Sadey Grizzle



Lily Crook



Kora Kilgore



Madeline Martin

PLAY SOME MOUNTAIN MUSIC

The 54th annual Smithville Fiddlers' Jamboree and Craft Festival is July 4-5 in Smithville. There are four ways to watch the jamboree live:

- Channel 3 and 303 for DTC TV customers
- DTC Communications Facebook page
- DTC3 YouTube channel
- dtc.tv

The two-day festival began in 1972. Entertainment starts at 9 a.m. daily. The competition features fiddlers, as well as other music and dance categories. The jamboree partners with the National Clogging Organization and The National Clogging & Hoedown Council in sanctioning four clogging categories. "We're excited," says Jamboree director Kim Luton. "The winners here will go on to participate in the national competition in Nashville at the Grand Old Opry."



There is no charge for spectators. For more information, visit smithville-jamboree.com or follow Smithville Fiddlers' Jamboree and Craft Festival on Facebook.

REMEMBER THE FALLEN

DTC will be closed on **Monday, May 26**, in honor of Memorial Day. Please join us in paying tribute to the men and women who gave their lives in service to our country.

FIND YOUR NUMBER!

A prize may be waiting for you in this issue! We have randomly selected the telephone numbers of 10 lucky DTC members and hidden them through this publication.

615-529-1212

Find your number and call 615-683-1010 to claim your prize!



Minor Leagues

MAJOR FUN

Road trip to
baseball's most
entertaining
destinations

Story by JOHN CLAYTON

Ric Sisler admits he misses the annual spring-to-fall marathon of a baseball season. “When it’s in your blood, it doesn’t matter what you’re doing. You’re always going to be pulled toward that industry, and I’m

certainly no exception,” he says. “Going to the ballpark, the camaraderie and being around the yard was just a thrill for me.

“I certainly don’t miss tarp pulls and some of those types of things,”

he says with a laugh, referring to the back-breaking work of getting protective tarps on and off the diamond during rainy weather.

The national pastime is most certainly in Ric’s blood. He played for three

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Marketers and merchandisers will say quite a lot. Creative—some may say outlandish—nicknames, mascots and logos are part of the landscape of minor league baseball. Here are a few of our favorites:

Florida: The Fort Myers Mighty Mussels—The nickname is more about seafood than sinew.

Alabama: Rocket City Trash Pandas—It pairs Huntsville’s role in the space industry with a cute raccoon reference.

Georgia: Augusta GreenJackets—The GreenJackets mascot is

akin to a yellow jacket, but the reference is to Augusta’s long history with The Masters golf tournament, which awards the winner a green jacket.

North Carolina: Kannapolis Cannon Ballers—The alliteration is nice for the team once known as the Intimidators after the late NASCAR star and Kannapolis native Dale Earnhardt Sr., who was then part-owner of the team. The Cannon Ballers mascot, Boomer, has an uncanny resemblance to Earnhardt.

Kentucky: Bowling Green Hot Rods—The nickname gives the team a link to the nearby National Corvette Museum.



Young fans take in a midseason fireworks display from ground level at PNC Field, home of the Scranton Wilkes-Barre RailRiders.

seasons in the New York Yankees minor league system before running several minor league organizations as a front office executive and as vice president/general manager of the independent South Coast League based in Georgia. His father, Dick Sisler, was a Major League Baseball manager and All-Star player, and his grandfather, George Sisler, is enshrined in the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

Ric, who is still involved in athletics as director of corporate sponsorships at Western Carolina University, says many fans of the game come back season after season.

“Minor league baseball has been part of the fabric of our society in a lot of smaller towns,” he says. “It was kind of a binding agent for folks to come watch baseball with their friends and neighbors and just have a wholesome time.”

While the minor leagues are about family fun and community pride to many fans, the game is a balance of business and player development for the teams and their MLB affiliates. The minors have long relied on fan-friendly, creative promotions and player interactions to sell tickets, and all of that comes with an affordable price tag.

“I think people have always gone to minor league games because it’s

affordable,” Ric says. “You had great entertainment and could see some potential big-league players there at

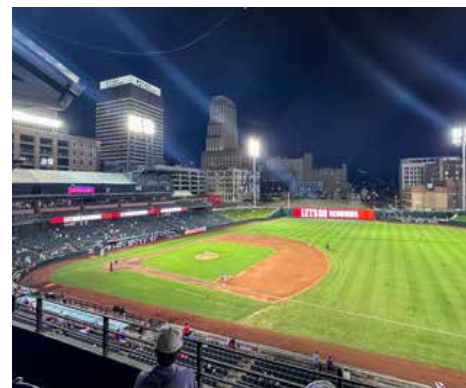


Photo courtesy of Andy Johns

The Memphis Redbirds offer another reason to visit West Tennessee.

an affordable price. You’re very close to the field and close to the players. It was a different setting from the Major League parks. I don’t want to see that change.”

Planning a trip this summer—or maybe even a baseball pilgrimage? There’s a game, sports history and tradition, as well as a bunch of fun waiting for you. 📺

HISTORIC HOME FIELDS

Some of the oldest ballparks in the country are in the Southeast, and three of them are on the National Register of Historic Places.

That list includes Birmingham, Alabama’s Rickwood Field, which is the nation’s oldest professional baseball park still with its original structure. Opened in 1910, two years before Boston’s Fenway Park, Rickwood was home to the Negro Leagues’ Birmingham Black Barons.

The double-A Birmingham Barons play an annual ceremonial game at Rickwood, and Major League Baseball hosted a game between the St. Louis Cardinals and San Francisco Giants at the venerable ballpark last season, a 6-5 Cardinals victory.

Jackie Robinson Ballpark in Daytona Beach, Florida, was the first ballpark to allow the Brooklyn Dodgers’ African American prospect whose name now graces the stadium to play with white players in the segregated South in 1946. The park dates to 1914 and was originally named Daytona City Island Ballpark.

Spartanburg, South Carolina’s Duncan Park was constructed in 1926 and was home to minor league baseball almost continually until 1994. It was also home to the Spartanburg Sluggers, a Negro League minors team from 1928-52. An estimated 21,000 spectators reportedly crowded in and around the ballpark to attend Game 5 of the 1938 American Legion World Series between Spartanburg and Los Angeles.

The 3,000-seat stadium is currently Spartanburg High School’s home field. The city of Spartanburg is building a new stadium for the Hub City Spartanburgers of the South Atlantic League. The city is the new home of the former Down East Wood Ducks of Kinston, North Carolina.

Providing a Light

Free camp offers kids a week of peace and fun

Story by MELANIE JONES

Kids at Lighthouse Christian Camp hit Center Hill Lake every summer, kayaking and canoeing. They hike, fish and ride horses. It's a week of peace for children who may have a lot on their minds, and it's all for free.

The kids are referred by teachers or school counselors. Camp staff and volunteers seek out prospective campers by going into the community and handing out flyers offering a week of camp for free.

"For 44 years now, the mission and the purpose of Lighthouse Christian Camp has been to reach out to underresourced, disadvantaged and often needy children with the love of Christ, providing free weeks of summer camp during June and July," Executive Director Michael Kilgore says, "then discipling them and encouraging them and mentoring them year-round."

Donations from community members cover the cost of their stays. The camp receives no government funding and very little from organized churches to host the 700 to 1,000 campers who take part each year. "We don't have the money now for this year's summer camp," Michael says. "But I have no doubt that when we put the call out and let people know that there's a need, they will provide."

615-536-2215



Photos courtesy of Michael Kilgore

Campers worship at the pavilion.

LASTING IMPRESSIONS

The camp leaders don't leave the children's lives when the kids head home. DeKalb County kids can attend after-school programs at the camp, and there are two weekend retreats each month, one for boys and one for girls.

The benefits can last a lifetime. Michael says he was once in a store 60 miles away when a security guard approached him. "Do you remember me?" the guard asked. "I came to camp there as a child."

"So, we see many, just very positive results," Michael says.

Campers originally start from ages 9 to 11, but if they return at least every other year, they can attend until they are 18. "Because they come all the way through 18 years of age, when they turn 14 or 15, we're trying to teach them to take responsibility and move up and give back and mentor others," Michael says. "At 16,

615-563-6867

17 and 18, we hope they're responsible enough to make them full-fledged counselors and even put them on summer staff."

FUN AND FOOD

The 400-acre camp is bordered on three sides by Center Hill Lake. "A lot of these kids have never been on a boat whatsoever," Michael says. "So, we take them out while they're here and they get to actually drive the pontoon boat, which is a huge thing for them."

There are also kayaks and canoes, plus two swimming pools. Kids make the most of the hiking trails, and they have a chance to ride horses.

"If you ask the kids what their favorite thing to do is, it's sad, but the answer is usually eat," Michael says. "Most of these kids don't get fed very well at home. Here, they eat three meals a day plus snacks in between. They get to eat seconds, so they get full. It's amazing how many thank-you letters at the end of camp say, 'Man, I love the food.'" 📧



Lighthouse Christian Camp

205 Serenity Place, Smithville

615-597-1264

lighthousechristiancamp.com

Lighthouse Christian Camp is on Facebook

Patty Jackson, who turned 90 in February, writes notes in birthday cards to every camper who attended Lighthouse Christian Camp over the past two years.

912-258-3383

WIDOWS SERVE SPECIAL ROLES

In 2006, Lighthouse Christian Camp expanded to include homes for widows, in keeping with the biblical command in the Book of James to look after widows in their time of distress.

The camp's third quadplex for widows is now under construction. Each home is designed with four apartments, each with a bedroom, kitchen, dining room, bathroom and living room. There's a common area in the middle if residents want to get together and watch TV or share a meal. DTC internet powers the homes' security camera doorbells.

The widows pay \$130 a month for rent, and the camp asks for 15 hours of

volunteer work. "That would be mentoring kids, helping them with their homework, cooking or cleaning or helping with the different programs for the kids," Executive Director Michael Kilgore says.

Patty Jackson, 90, has lived in the home for four years. Her husband died several years ago, and she was still working. After the death of a friend she had planned to retire and travel with she was at a loss.

Then Patty learned of opportunities for widows to serve at the camp. "She sat down to interview and said, 'Well, Michael, what kind of things do you have that I can do here?'" Michael recalls. "I said, 'Well, Miss Patty, we have lots of kids.' She kind of

snickered and said, 'Honestly, I don't really like kids.'" Finally, they settled on laundry.

After a few months, that wasn't enough for Patty, and Michael had her start labeling generic birthday cards for campers—700 to 1,000 cards a year. "She started doing that and was moved in her spirit. She said, 'That's not enough, it's too generic,'" Michael says, and she asked if she could start writing notes in the cards. She also pays the postage. "God has renewed the love of children in Miss Patty."

"It's just amazing how God uses these widows in this camp to give them purpose in their later years," Michael says.



Campers fish from the banks of Center Hill Lake.

615-697-3311

LOOK TOWARD THE

Light

Whatever you call them, fireflies mesmerize

Story by **SARA DIAMOND PATTERSON**

Catching lightning bugs in a Mason jar with holes punched in the lid is a summer ritual for kids across the country. Watching their light show together is often a time for families to slow down, which is what Lynn Frierson Faust's family began doing in the Great Smoky Mountains during the 1960s.

They marveled for years at the unique light display, as the flying beetles blinked on and off at the same time for several hours after dark. When Lynn heard the August 1991 edition of *Science News* magazine featured an article on fireflies that blink in unison, she figured she would finally find out why and how they made their magic.

"I remember thinking, 'Oh cool, a lightning bug feature. It'll talk about our light show.' Only it didn't mention one thing," she says. In fact,

the authors said the Western Hemisphere had no species of fireflies that blinked synchronously.

Lynn let them know they were mistaken and invited them to come to the Smokies to see the show for themselves. The scientists did and agreed Lynn was right, lighting the way for her life's work.

'JUST SO DARN FUN'

As "The Lightning Bug Lady," Lynn is internationally known for her research on the ecology and habits of the more than 125 species of U.S. fireflies, helping

THE LOWDOWN

HOW: Fireflies produce their magical flashes through bioluminescence, a chemical reaction.

WHY: Each of the more than 125 species of fireflies in the United States—2,000 worldwide—has a unique signature flash pattern the males use to attract females of their specific type.

WHERE: Everywhere. Many Western species do not flash or fly, but they're out there.

WHEN: Warm summer nights.



AI-generated artwork by Firefly

LEND A HAND

Pesticides and habitat reduction have taken a toll on firefly populations. Maintaining a "wild" area of your yard with a little water, native vegetation and undisturbed soil will make your home more firefly friendly. But the easiest way to help is simply by turning out the lights during their active period. Visit xerces.org or firefly.org for more tips.

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Photo courtesy of Lynn Frierson Faust



A BBC crew takes a break from filming in 2019. Naturalist Lynn Frierson Faust examines equipment she and Mark Zloba, ecological manager at the Edge of Appalachia, use to gather fireflies at the preserve outside of Cincinnati.

to raise awareness of their unique life cycles and importance within ecosystems.

She scrambles to 14 states each year to catch them emerging during their eight-week active season, usually early June to late July. For 18 years, she has been the worldwide go-to on the subject, serving as on-site scientific consultant for BBC Earth, Discovery, National Geographic and other international film crews. Lynn's 2017 book, "Fireflies, Glow-worms, and Lightning Bugs," was the first-ever comprehensive firefly field guide and shared the results of her nearly three decades of research on behalf of museums, universities, state and national parks and nature centers.

"I'm not a scientist per se, but I've done the research, a whole lot of research," she says. "I'm just a regular person obsessed with these and fortunate to have the time and a little knowledge to build on."

Throughout history, fireflies have symbolized hope and mystery, serving as transient reminders that life is fleeting. In some cultures, people see them as their lost ancestors, a sacred connection between the earthly and spiritual worlds.

When she began, Lynn didn't have much research to start with. "There were just a bunch of dusty old scientific papers, but that's about it," she says. "There's just not been that much research done on them since they aren't harmful or helpful to people or crops."

They are, however, a great indicator species for the health of ecosystems. "When they disappear, we have to know why and where to look." And

HERE THEY ARE!

No matter where you are, you don't have to go far to find the magic. You can look for lightning bugs anywhere from your backyard to wildlife management areas or wooded parks, avoiding light pollution and areas that spray for mosquitos.

The Southeast offers the most variety of firefly species. "Generally speaking—and this holds true for almost all living things—as you go south closer toward the equator, you get a greater diversity of species but maybe fewer numbers," firefly expert Lynn Frierson Faust says. "Whereas when you go north in latitude, you get greater numbers but fewer species."

The *Photinus carolinus* species in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park of Tennessee and North Carolina are known for their synchronous flashes. You can see them put on a similar show at South Carolina's Congaree National Park. Thousands of these fireflies emit between five to eight flashes of light all at once followed by eight to 10 seconds of darkness.

Their light shows have become so popular, each year more than 20,000 people enter a lottery drawing at each park for viewing spots during the two-week active period, usually in early June depending on temperatures and soil moisture.

Lynn says they will always serve as a nostalgic reminder of days gone by.

"Lightning bugs are fantastic ambassadors leading people back into nature and to a better understanding of the connectedness of it all," she says. "Plus, they're just so darn fun." 📺

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NAME GAME

Officially known as Lampyridae, worldwide fireflies are called blinkies, glowflies, moon bugs, peeney-wallies, blinkin' bees, hoturu, fire beetles and candle flies. Here at home, "lightning bug" is more common in the South and Midwest, while "firefly" is typically heard in the West and large cities in the East. Some researchers attribute the differences to weather. While lightning is most active in the South and Midwest, the West sees the most wildfires.

They'll Tumble for You

Gym promotes positivity

Story by MELANIE JONES

Seals of delight fill the gymnasium at Infinity Athletics during birthday parties and Tiny Tumble time. Christian hip-hop and feet launching off the springboard can be heard during Cheer FUNDamentals and All-Star Cheer classes. And through it all are the voices of coaches and teachers sharing instructions and words of encouragement.

Infinity Athletics owner Jennifer Sykes says watching her students master a new skill is her favorite part of her career. "I enjoy being with the kids and watching the kids and the staff learn," she says. "They realize they can achieve a goal they didn't realize they could, just see that pride in themselves, because they're going to use that the rest of their lives. They're going to look back and remember, 'I can do this.'"

ALL-STAR FACILITY

At over 6,000 square feet, Infinity Athletics features a full-size competition floor and a 40-foot trampoline ending in an inground, foam block pit. The cheerleading and tumbling facility also offers a custom ninja rig complete with rock-climbing wall and a separate floor for younger and beginner classes.

Program offerings include parent-child classes, for ages 18 months to 2 years old,

615-563-1879

Photos courtesy of Infinity Athletics



An instructor leads a young student in a backbend.

and preschool classes for 3- and 4-year-olds. Both are highly structured times to teach toddlers the basics of gymnastics and work on building confidence, balance, learning and social skills in a fun setting.

For older kids, there are tumbling classes for beginner, intermediate and advanced levels. Cheerleaders can choose between All-Star Competitive Cheer, which travels throughout the country and can be a bit intense, and FUNDamentals for students curious about competitive cheering but without the cost and pressure.

"Some kids love the FUNDamentals program the first time and then want to go full blown All-Stars, and then some just love it, look forward to it every year and that's all they want to do," Jennifer says.

For those interested in less-structured activities, the gym hosts Kids Night Out, Tiny Tumble and birthday parties. Kids Nights Out participants can use the gym facilities and have pizza upstairs. In the Tiny Tumble class, held on Wednesday mornings, preschool-age children with one parent or chaperone "basically have free rein of the gym," Jennifer says. Birthday parties are a bit like Kids Night Out. The ninja rig, which is like a child-size, safer version of the "American Ninja Warrior" obstacle course, is especially popular.



Infinity Athletics brings in inflatables for birthday parties.

615-735-0826

It's important to Jennifer that Infinity Athletics is a Christian gym, and that means Christian music for the cheer routines. She rarely can find the high-energy, beat-filled music the cheerleaders need on Christian radio, so she seeks out Christian hip-hop. Just in case, she previews every song. "They're able to learn new artists that they can listen to and help have more uplifting words and positive messages," she says.

And positivity is the key. At Infinity Athletics, Jennifer and the coaches want their kids to walk away feeling encouraged, empowered and, well, cheered. ☎

INFINITY ATHLETICS

675 Bright Hill Road, Smithville

615-215-9050

infinityathletics.com

Find Infinity Athletics on Facebook and Instagram.

All Stars on the Court

DTC names area's best basketball players

DTC Sports announces its fourth annual DTC Communications All-Star Team for the 2024-25 basketball season.

The team includes 10 boys and 10 girls from area high schools, including Cannon, DeKalb and Smith counties, along with Gordonsville and Watertown. The 2024-25 season was the

16th year of area high school basketball coverage on DTC3, your local sports channel.

DTC Communications and DTC Sports celebrate local teams' successes during the season, and we're proud to recognize the outstanding student-athletes from the DTC service area. [🗨️](#)

615-215-4321

615-548-8116

DTC ALL STAR TEAMS



Addie King, junior,
Cannon County



Abi Alexander, junior,
Cannon County



Avery Agee, senior,
DeKalb County



Chloe VanVranken, junior,
DeKalb County



Makenzie Herron, junior,
Gordonsville



Kali Underwood, junior,
Gordonsville



Chloe Collins, senior,
Smith County



Emry Jones, sophomore,
Smith County



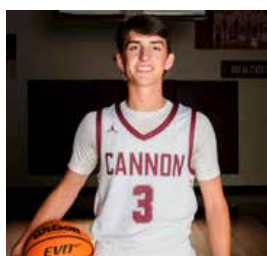
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Watertown



Molly Followill, sophomore,
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Eli Pelham, senior,
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Jordan Parker, senior,
DeKalb County



Dallas Kirby, senior,
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Tucker Smith, senior,
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Carter Gibson, junior,
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Smith County



Gage Gibbs, sophomore,
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Logan Hackett, senior,
Watertown



Jack Beasley, sophomore,
Watertown

Fantastic Frying

Flavorful chicken with the finest sides

Many say munching on piping-hot, crispy fried chicken is a joy like no other. Whether it's juicy white meat from the breast or the wings or the deep, engaging flavors of the dark meat found in thighs and legs, when it comes to fried chicken, most everyone has a preference. But there are a few things that good pieces of fried chicken have in common—the skin must stay on, and it must be crispy.

That's not too much to ask, but it's something that many cooks cannot achieve. There's a knack to it that may take a few extra steps, but the endgame is well worth it.

Serve the chicken alongside a big spoonful of potato salad and finish with a bowl of banana pudding and you have a meal fit for a beautiful summer evening.



**Food Editor
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is a native of
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Tennessee.**

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

CRISPY FRIED CHICKEN

- 1 (4-pound) chicken, cut into pieces
- 1 cup whole milk buttermilk
- 2 cups all-purpose flour for coating
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 quarts vegetable oil for frying

Dry chicken with paper towels. Put the flour in a large plastic bag. Let the amount of chicken you are cooking dictate the amount of flour you use. Season the flour with paprika, garlic powder, salt and pepper to taste. Paprika helps to brown the chicken.

Dip chicken pieces in buttermilk then, a few at a time, put them in the bag with the flour, seal the bag and shake to coat well.

Place the coated chicken on a cookie sheet or tray, and cover with a clean dish

towel or waxed paper. Let sit until the flour reaches a paste-like consistency. This step is important to ensure that the skin will be crispy and adhere to the chicken.

Fill a large skillet (cast iron is best) about 1/3 to 1/2 full of vegetable oil. Heat until very hot.

Put in as many chicken pieces as the skillet can hold. Brown the chicken in hot oil on both sides.

When browned, reduce heat and cover the skillet. Let cook for 30 minutes (the chicken will be cooked through but not crispy). Remove cover, raise heat again and continue to fry until crispy. Drain the fried chicken on paper towels. Depending on how much chicken you have, you may have to fry it in a few batches. Keep the finished chicken in a slightly warm oven while preparing the rest.



LOADED BAKED POTATO SALAD

- 4 pounds russet potatoes
- 1-2 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 3/4 cup sour cream or full-fat Greek yogurt
- 1/2 cup cheddar cheese
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 12 ounces bacon, cooked, cooled and chopped
- 6 green onions, whites and green parts, chopped

Preheat the oven to 400 F. Place cleaned potatoes on a baking sheet and pierce four to five times with a fork. Lightly coat with olive oil, sprinkle with kosher salt and cook for 50-60 minutes or until easily pierced with a cake tester or skewer. Remove from the oven and let cool for 5 minutes. When cool enough to

handle, peel the potatoes and cut into 1-inch chunks, discarding the potato skins. The potato flesh may crumble and get shaggy, and that's OK—transfer it all to a large mixing bowl. While still warm, sprinkle the potatoes with the apple cider vinegar. Set aside for 15-30 minutes or until the potatoes are cooled.

Meanwhile, cook the bacon in a large skillet or in the oven, drain and let cool. Crumble into bite-size pieces.

In a small bowl, mix the mayonnaise and sour cream. Season with the kosher salt and pepper.

When the potatoes are cool, pour the mayonnaise mix over them with the crumbled bacon, green onion and cheddar cheese. Gently fold the ingredients together. Season with more salt and pepper to taste. Refrigerate for 3 hours up to overnight before serving. Store in the refrigerator for up to four days.

NUTTER BUTTER 'NANA PUDDING

- 8 ounces softened cream cheese
- 1 (14-ounce) can sweetened condensed milk
- 2 (3.4-ounce) boxes instant vanilla pudding
- 2 3/4 cups cold milk

- 8 ounces whipped topping divided
- 1 (1-pound) package Nutter Butter or other peanut butter sandwich cookies
- 5-7 ripe bananas, sliced



In a large mixing bowl, beat the softened cream cheese until smooth. Add the condensed milk and mix until there are no lumps.

In a second bowl, mix the pudding mix and milk together until smooth. Pour the pudding into the cream cheese mixture and mix until completely combined. Fold in half of the whipped topping.

Line the bottom of a trifle dish with a layer of Nutter Butter cookies. Add a layer of banana slices on top of the cookies. Spread a layer of the pudding mixture evenly over the bananas. Repeat 1-3 times, depending on the size of your dish.

Spread the remaining whipped topping on top of the pudding. Cover and chill for at least 4 hours but overnight is best.

Crush a few Nutter Butters on top of the whipped topping immediately before serving. 🍪



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