

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2017

# CONNECTION

## MAKING SCHOOL COOL

Tech investment pays dividends at school

### MIDWESTERN AUTOBAHN

A road trip designed to soak in German culture

### WINTER'S KITCHEN

Recipes that help you get to know your roots



# NTCA THE RURAL BROADBAND ASSOCIATION

## RURAL CONNECTIONS

BY SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO  
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

### Keeping rural in the conversation

A writer for several respected national news websites recently asked this question on Twitter: “There’s a weird amount of focus on ‘rural broadband’ ... Is this really important to people?”

This immediately told me two things. First, rural broadband is getting enough attention to creep into the awareness of urban media outlets. That’s a good thing.

But secondly, this tweet also told me that we still have a lot of work to do in telling our rural success story.

What the writer didn’t understand was that for years, a lack of investment from large nationwide providers, along with geographic challenges, has left many rural residents with inadequate broadband access. Research has shown that a lack of access can cripple a local economy, lower academic achievement and reduce positive health care outcomes.

Telcos like yours believe people shouldn’t face longer odds at a successful life just because of where they live, and they have done great work in extending broadband service to their parts of rural America. It’s encouraging to see this issue gaining national attention.

It didn’t take too long before the writer’s Twitter feed was full of insight from rural advocates. “The overwhelming consensus ... is that rural broadband is, in fact, incredibly important and I’m a moron,” he wrote.

A moron? Certainly not. More likely, he’s someone who hasn’t been to rural America to see the impact of reliable broadband. This was only one exchange on Twitter, but at NTCA, we’re working every day to make sure everyone knows just how important rural broadband really is. ☎

## THE END OF AN ERRAND?

Big changes in grocery shopping ahead



New data shows that a growing number of consumers are avoiding the pains of the weekly grocery-grab by shopping online.



About **25%** of all American households buy some groceries online, according to the Food Marketing Institute and Nielsen’s “The Digitally Engaged Food Shopper” report.



That number is up from previous years thanks to **online delivery sites** like AmazonFresh. Walmart, Kroger and even some local grocers are bringing convenience through their online grocery pickup options.



By 2025, Americans are expected to spend more than **\$100 billion** on online grocery shopping, the report says.

### FOOD SHOPPING FACTS

Curious to know how you could be shopping in the future? Check out these stats from the Food Marketing Institute and Nielsen:



Within the next decade, consumer spending on online grocery shopping could equal the gross sales of **3,900** grocery stores.



Mobile devices are used by **60%** of shoppers for deals and coupons.



**2/3** of shoppers say mobile devices improve their lives.

### HOW SATISFIED ARE WE WITH ONLINE SHOPPING?

More than 80 percent reported satisfaction with their online shopping experience. What makes it so popular?



**81%**  
The ease of checkout



**80%**  
The variety of brands and products offered online



**73%**  
The number of shopping options offered



**69%**  
Free or discounted shipping

Sources: Food Marketing Institute and Nielsen study, “Digitally Engaged Food Shopper,” and invespro.com’s blog, “Online Consumer Shopping Habits and Behavior.”



# LISTEN UP, TELEMARKETERS: DO NOT CALL!

**Y**ou might not know that the Federal Trade Commission and the Federal Communications Commission have established a National Do Not Call Registry. If you join this registry, it can help reduce the number of telemarketing calls you receive.

## THE BASICS ABOUT DO NOT CALL:

- The Do Not Call Registry prohibits sales calls. Political calls, charitable calls, debt collection calls, informational calls and telephone survey calls are still allowed.
- You can register up to three nonbusiness phone numbers, including cellphones.
- Your number goes on the list the day after you register. After that, telemarketers have 31 days to stop calling.
- Telephone numbers on the registry do not expire. The number you register is only removed when it's disconnected and reassigned.
- Companies may still call if you've recently done business with them or if you've given the company written

permission to call you. But if you ask a company not to call you again, it must honor your request. .

Strict Federal Trade Commission rules make it illegal for telemarketers to do any of the following, regardless of whether or not your number is listed on the National Do Not Call Registry:

- Call before 8 a.m.
- Call after 9 p.m.
- Misrepresent what is being offered
- Threaten, intimidate or harass you
- Call again after you've asked them not to

Register up to three nonbusiness numbers online at **[www.donotcall.gov](http://www.donotcall.gov)**.

You can also call **888-382-1222** to register the telephone from which you are calling.

For TTY, call 866-290-4236.

## ATTENTION LOCAL BUSINESS OWNERS:

### *You must follow the Do Not Call rules*

Local businesses may not think of themselves as typical telemarketers, but the same Federal Trade Commission Do Not Call laws apply to them.

If you are a company, individual or organization that places telemarketing calls, it's important to familiarize yourself with the operations of the National Do Not Call Registry. Unless you fall under one of the established exceptions, such as telemarketing by charitable organizations or for prior business relationships, you may not make telemarketing calls to the numbers included in the National Do Not Call Registry.

For information regarding these regulations, visit the National Do Not Call Registry at [www.telemarketing.donotcall.gov](http://www.telemarketing.donotcall.gov). You can find the Federal Communications Commission and Federal Trade Commission rules governing telemarketing and telephone solicitation at 47 C.F.R. Sections 64.1200 and 16 C.F.R. Part 310, respectively.

#### OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION:

The Do Not Call initiative, regulated by the Federal Trade Commission and the Federal Communications Commission, requires telephone service providers to notify customers of the National Do Not Call rules and regulations.



# Kids at heart

**W**hen I was young, being prepared to go back to school meant making sure I had my pencils and paper ready. Today, kids need more than what they can fit inside their backpacks to be prepared to get the education they need — and we are here to help.



**KEVIN BEYER**  
Chief Executive Officer

Having broadband at school and at home is an increasingly important part of equipping today's students for academic achievement and career skills development. I recently ran across a statistic about internet and education that presents a strong reminder to those of us in the business of bringing broadband to rural communities. According to a study commissioned by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, high school graduates who consider themselves "online" are twice as likely to go to college as those who do not use the internet.

While attending college isn't necessarily the key to success for every student, other research at home and abroad points to broadband access as a key to higher test scores and better-educated students:

- A 2015 study by the U.S. Federal Reserve Board showed that high-speed internet improved students' postsecondary outcomes and that students with access to high-speed internet in their junior year of high school had better SAT scores than those without.
- Earlier this year, a New Zealand researcher published a report stating that fiber internet service at schools raises National Standards passing rates in each of the three areas of the test.
- An Irish study from 2014 showed that the use of the internet in a classroom was associated with significantly higher average math scores and improved reading scores on standardized tests.
- In 2011, researchers found that South Korean students who used the internet for educational purposes showed higher academic achievement than those who did not.
- A 2009 study from Brazil showed eighth-graders with broadband at home had significantly higher test scores than students without a connection.
- In the U.S. Chamber of Commerce report, 60 percent of surveyed school districts said distance learning over broadband was important to give students access to Advanced Placement courses.

Results like these are at the foundation of why we have worked so hard to build the high-speed broadband network we have today. You see, while I'm glad that our network allows our youth to stream movies or play their favorite video games, I'm even more pleased that our service allows their teachers to use new and engaging ways to educate their students. I'm proud that our network allows children and parents to get help with their homework and connect with tutoring services. And I'm very proud that our network lets students pursue their passions through research or developing skills in their chosen careers.

We don't know what the future holds for today's students, but we have a pretty good idea that technology will play a significant role in their lives. Whether they are farming, building, nursing, teaching, running a business or piloting planes, computer skills and the resources provided through technology are going to be essential to their careers.

As your locally rooted telecommunications provider, we want to give educators the resources to help our children excel — and then provide the technology those students need to start careers, open small businesses and raise families right here at home.

Acira has equipped generations of local families with the communication tools they need to thrive. As school bells ring back in session, we're proud to be equipping the next generation. 📺

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POWERED BY FARMERS MUTUAL TELEPHONE COMPANY  
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**WORDSOUTH**

A CONTENT MARKETING COMPANY

### On the Cover:



Local school systems are finding that technology can provide inspiration and new educational opportunities for students.

See story Page 12.

## AVOID THE SPOOF!



If you have a phone, you've probably gotten one of these calls: someone claiming to be an IRS representative, a collection agent or even someone from a local utility.

The calls are scams, made to appear credible by having caller ID show a phone number that seems legitimate, often a local exchange, but the number has been spoofed. The caller may really be hundreds, if not thousands, of miles away.

Answering one of these calls opens the door to a range of scams, including attempts to sell bogus medication, computer services and more.

Your personal information is a frequent

target, and it's a serious problem. In a blog post earlier this year, FCC Chairman Ajit Pai wrote that U.S. consumers receive 2.4 billion robocalls monthly. Many of those calls show spoofed phone numbers, which makes tracking down the culprits difficult for authorities.

Unfortunately, people fall prey to these calls, which can result in identity theft. If you feel you are a victim, one great resource is [identitytheft.gov](http://identitytheft.gov).

And remember, when in doubt, protect your personal information. Even if the call seems to be from a local number, the person on the other end of the line might be up to no good. Be cautious.



## WE'VE FOUND A NEW HOME!

The Federated Telephone Cooperative office in Morris has moved to a new location at 201 State Hwy. 9 S. We invite our members to drop by and see us.



*Mark your calendar!*

Through September and October,  
don't miss the Stevens County  
History Museum Annual Horizontal  
Grandeur Fine Arts Exhibition.

Sept. 4 - Labor Day (Acira offices closed)  
Sept. 10 - Grandparents' Day  
Sept. 11 - Patriot Day  
Sept. 22 - Fall begins  
Oct. 9 - Columbus Day  
Oct. 31 - Halloween

## FALL BURNING WARNING

Each year, fires are intentionally started in area road ditches to clean off debris, brush, etc. that can block the flow of water in long sections of ditches and helps lessen snow build up on roads during winter months. Please use caution when burning, as you are responsible for all damage to telecom equipment caused by ditch fires.

Before you start that fire, remember to check for telecom equipment in and around the burn area. Damaged telecom equipment often causes telephone interruptions and internet outages for your friends, your neighbors and you.

**If damage does occur, all expenses will be billed based on the time and materials needed for repairs.**

## Giving you more of what you want!

Summer's not over, at least not officially. So, there's still time for something cool ... KOOL TV from Alexandria. Our Federated Telephone customers will find this new channel at 19.8 or 327 on a digital box.

- » Check out the KOOL TV website: [www.kooltv-mn.com](http://www.kooltv-mn.com).
- » Catch local news, classic TV shows and retro movies.
- » "Greater Minnesota Now-Weekends" airs from 9-10 a.m. on Saturdays.
- » Start your day right with "Ag Day" weekdays from 6-8 a.m.



# TAKE THE OKTOBERFEST ROAD TRIP

*Great food,  
tasty beer and  
Bavarian  
culture*



Servings at Gasthof Zur Gemutlichkeit are generous and there is an extra charge for sharing, though it's worth every penny. One such offering is a platter-sized pancake stuffed with goulash and served with pickled red cabbage.

Loosen your lederhosen and make room for the brats and brews. It's Oktoberfest season, and no one knows how to observe it better than restaurants that celebrate German culture. It's time for a delicious road trip that will take you on a tour to taste some of the best German fare from Minnesota to North Dakota.

## Gasthaus Bavarian Hunter

8390 Lofton Ave., Stillwater, Minnesota

The drive from Minneapolis to Stillwater takes less than 30 minutes, but in no time you go from a busy, metropolitan city into the very heart of Bavaria, or seemingly so.

Karl and Elizabeth Schoene, immigrants from Bavaria, chose the location because the surroundings of stately pines and other natural elements reminded them of their homeland, says daughter-in-law Kim Quade, who now owns and manages the restaurant. They decorated the interior to mimic restaurants in Germany. Every hour on the hour, a choir of cuckoo clocks performs. Steins, nutcrackers and other German-inspired accoutrements line shelves and walls.

The menu, too, reflects its founders' heritage, with a bevy of bratwurst and other sausages, schnitzels, spaetzles, dumplings and more. "We've maintained a very traditional style of German and Bavarian food," Quade says.

- **Oktoberfest:** Live music, polka dancing, German food and beer in tents on the lawn. Also, this is the place where the popular German nailing game, hammerschlagen, began in the United States. Fridays are adults only. Saturdays and Sundays are for families, and expect balloons, face painting and other activities.
- **When:** Sept. 15-17 and 22-24.
- **Admission:** \$5 on Fridays and \$3 on Saturdays and Sundays.
- **Phone and hours:** 651-439-7128. Wednesday-Friday, 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Sunday, noon-8 p.m.

## Wurst Beer Hall

630 First Ave., Fargo, North Dakota  
253 miles from Stillwater

Crowds fill the benches on any given night to enjoy the 41 brews on tap. But visitors are not here to simply raise glasses. It's the food that brings them in droves. Classic German fare, including jaeger schnitzel, flights of traditional German sausages, German potato salad, spaetzle dumplings and Bavarian pretzels can be found alongside Americanized German fare, such as elk, wild boar and rabbit sausage. And there is spaetzle mac.

"Our menu is the essence of German food," says owner Lisa Meyers. "It's German comfort food — the kind that fills you up and makes you want to go home and take a nap."

- **Oktoberfest:** Adult-oriented evenings of fun with stein-hoisting competitions and das boot races, as well as hammerschlagen.
- **When:** Sept. 15, 22, 23 and 30.
- **Phone and hours:** 701-478-2437. Open seven days 11 a.m. to midnight.

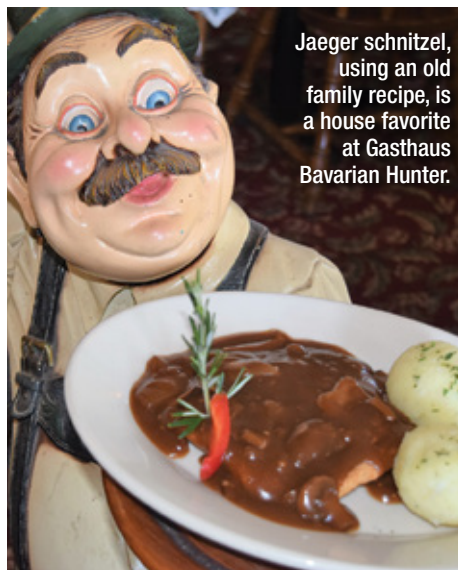
## Depot Cafe

1300 Second Ave.  
Jamestown, North Dakota  
Distance from Fargo: 96 miles

While the Depot features mostly American fare, including full hearty breakfasts, burgers, chicken strips and fried shrimp, Thursdays are the day that fills the glass-topped tables and vinyl booths with German-food lovers.

While knoephla, a creamy potato-based soup, is a house favorite, you'll only find it served on Thursdays. And there are rarely, if ever, any leftovers to serve the next day, says cafe supervisor Bonnie Pope. German entrees, which are always made from scratch, change every Thursday, but you might find sauerkraut and sausage on the menu or a German hot dish with ham, rice and cabbage.

There is one house favorite served daily: fleischkeuchla. Though it's hard to pronounce, it's simple to describe: a beef patty wrapped in dough and fried, then topped with brown gravy. It's served with delicious mashed potatoes, along with



Jaeger schnitzel, using an old family recipe, is a house favorite at Gasthaus Bavarian Hunter.

canned peas and carrots reminiscent of an elementary school cafeteria.

The Depot Cafe is located in the Jamestown Business Center complex.

- **While in Jamestown:** Visit the National Buffalo Museum and Frontier Village to learn about life on the prairie as it was before and after settlers first inhabited the area.
- **Phone and hours:** 701-252-1003. Open seven days a week from 7 a.m. - 8 p.m.

## Hans House

116 Central Ave., Elbow Lake, Minnesota  
Distance from Jamestown: 178 miles

Sometimes it's the most unexpected places that leave an impression. Such is the case of Hans House, in the charming lakeside town of Elbow Lake, a 10-minute drive off Interstate 94.

Eugen Wittemann, chef and owner, was a chef's apprentice in his home in Germany's Rhine Valley. After receiving his certification, he began a journey that would take him to places such as Munich, where he fed Olympic athletes; England, where he worked in a Swiss hotel; and aboard the Royal Caribbean line of ships, where he was executive chef. He landed in Elbow Lake eight years ago and opened Hans House.

The menu is chock-full of American favorites. "I have to cater to the locals," he says. But there's a nice selection of German favorites too: Bauern Frueh Stueck, which is a German omelet that's

massive and filled with bacon, ham, sausage, hash browns and pickles. Also there are crispy pork schnitzel, jaeger schnitzel and the XXL schnitzel, which is a pound of meat that comes with another pound of fries. "It's the kind of thing people bet other people to finish," Wittemann says.

The chef makes everything from scratch, including his sausages and breads. "I've never seen him cook out of a bag or box," says server Persephone England.

- **Phone and hours:** 218-685-4193. Monday-Saturday, 6 a.m.-2 p.m.; Sunday, 8 a.m.-2 p.m.

## Gasthof Zur Gemutlichkeit

2300 University Ave. NE  
Minneapolis, Minnesota  
Distance from Elbow Lake: 221 miles

Gasthof Zur Gemutlichkeit translates into English as Inn of Coziness, and while the interior is cozy with its old-world charm, the food is big and bold.

Servers walk past with huge platters of schnitzel and steins of beer. This is the first indication you won't leave hungry. In fact, Adam Richman, host of "Man v. Food," barely finished, but did win, the restaurant's famous Meterbratwurst Challenge.

Dinner is a celebration of everything German, from schnitzels and sauerbrauten to specialties such as Hohnchen (breaded chicken in peppercorn sauce) and Kasseler Rippchen (smoked pork chops). An accordion player also strolls among the tables. And a downstairs bar has a stage with live polka. Reservations are encouraged. This place hops to the heartbeat of Germany every night.

- **Oktoberfest:** The parking lot is tented, live music plays, beer and bratwurst are served and the restaurant is packed inside and out.
- **When:** Sept. 22-23 and 29-30; Oct. 6-7 and 13-14.
- **Phone and hours:** 612-781-3860. Tuesday-Wednesday, 3-10 p.m.; Thursday-Friday, 3 p.m.-2 a.m.; Saturday, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. ☞



# Get front-row quality at home with 4K

Staring at the giant wall of TVs in an electronics store can confuse even the most tech-savvy among us, especially if you're trying to keep up with cutting-edge technology.

Is your high-definition TV really outdated? What is 4K? Which screens offer the best picture? What brands are reliable? If you're feeling lost, there's still plenty of time to find the best TV for the big game this football season. Keep these factors in mind when deciding which one is right for you:

## •4K TVS (ULTRA-HD):

What exactly does 4K mean? If you've been impressed with the sharpness of a 1080p resolution screen, you'll love that 4K is four times better. And while all content is not yet available at 4K quality, your viewing options are growing. A 4K experience is the closest you can get to theater quality in your home, but if you aren't ready to make the leap, at least go for the HD 1080p TV over a 720p model.

•**SMART TVS:** If you use a streaming service like Netflix or Hulu, a smart TV makes them simple to access without a set-top box, such as a Roku or Apple TV.

## •LED, LCD, PLASMA:

Which one's for you probably depends on your budget. LED (light-emitting diode) provides the brightest and best picture quality, but it's also the most expensive. LCD (liquid-crystal display) technology has

been around for years and still offers great picture quality at a more modest price. Plasma is the least expensive, but you get the picture quality that matches the price.

•**CURVED SCREENS:** It might seem like a gimmick, but curved screens do have their advantages. They can offer a wider field of view and better picture quality. They may also require a larger model to truly appreciate the curve.

•**INTERLACED OR PROGRESSIVE:** Simply put, progressive is better. A progressive-scan TV displays all lines in a frame of video at once, while interlaced only displays every other line at one time. If your goal is to get the best picture, go for the TV with the 1080p description over 1080i.

•**REFRESH RATE:** Do you ever notice that movement seems jumpy while playing

games or watching sports? If so, your TV probably has a low refresh rate, such as 60 hertz (cycles per second). The higher the number, the better, so look for a TV with a refresh rate of 120 hertz or 240 hertz for the smoothest video.

•**BRAND:** When it comes to TVs, quality and reliability are worth the extra money. Go with a well-known brand and be willing to pay a little more if necessary.

•**SIZE:** Consider how much space you have and how far away from the screen you'll be sitting. An 80-inch TV sounds like a great idea, but you'll need room to enjoy it comfortably. Most studies indicate that you should take the size of the TV and multiply it by about 1.5 to get the optimal distance you should sit from the screen. For an 80-inch screen, that's about 10 feet. ☞



“

## HI, I'M JOHN WEEDING!

In this column, in each issue, you'll learn about technology and read simple tips to get the most out of your electronics. For more tips or help with your devices, please come see me at the store. I'm always happy to help!

”

## DEVICE OF THE MONTH

### LG 55-INCH 4K ULTRA HD SMART LED TV (Model Number UF6800)

Movie-theater quality comes home at an affordable price with the LG 55-inch 4K TV. With built-in smart TV technology and LED picture clarity, this television is perfect for watching sports and playing games. Offering four times the resolution of full HD, a 120 hertz refresh rate and three HDMI inputs, the LG 55-inch 4K TV lets you confidently make the jump to ultra-HD 4K and enjoy countless hours of entertainment.



# The Cooperative Difference

Most of our members know that, as cooperatives, Farmers Mutual Telephone & Federated Telephone Cooperative aren't your typical companies. But what does it actually mean to be a cooperative, and what sets us apart from more traditional telecommunications providers?

In simple terms, a cooperative is a not-for-

profit, democratically controlled, member-owned business. It is built, run and controlled by members like you.

October is National Cooperative Month, but cooperatives are always an important part of the American landscape. Privately owned companies have to consider bringing in big profits for their shareholders. As a result, pro-

viding broadband and phone service to rural areas might not be cost-effective for them. A cooperative's only purpose is to serve you, the members.

Our mission is to bring you the best telecommunications service available, and to help us do that, we are guided by seven core principles.

## WHY 7 COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

Farmers Mutual & Federated Telephone are cooperatives. But what does that mean? There are **SEVEN PRINCIPLES** that make us different than other telecommunications providers.

### 1 Voluntary and Open Membership

Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to anyone who is able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership.



### 2 Democratic Member Control

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members. Members are given opportunities to actively participate in setting policies and making decisions.



### 3 Members' Economic Participation

Members contribute equitably to the capital of their cooperative. That capital is then used to operate the cooperative, with each member benefitting in proportion to the amount of business they do with the cooperative.



### 4 Autonomy and Independence

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members, regardless of any agreements they may enter with other organizations.



### 5 Education, Training and Information

Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and employees so everyone can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperative.



### 6 Cooperation Among Cooperatives

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together with local, regional, national and international organizations.



### 7 Concern for Community

While cooperatives always focus first on member needs, they also work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies and programs accepted by the members.



**FARMERS MUTUAL**  
Telephone Company

**Federated**  
TELEPHONE

• **October is National Cooperative Month** •

# Back-to-School GADGET GUIDE

BY LUIS CARRASCO

It's back-to-school time in 2017, and while we still don't have self-driving cars that will handle that early morning drop-off, robot dogs that come with homework-shredding attachments, or even lockers that won't jam, several services and gadgets will make the life of any student (and parent) a little easier. Here are a few of them along with suggested age ranges.

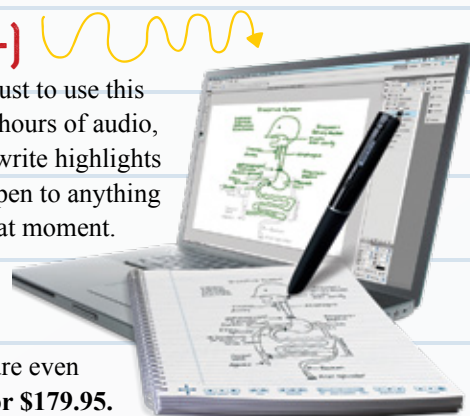


## BITSBOX (6-14)

If we're ever going to get closer to that fantastic future, we are going to need more people going into science, technology, engineering and mathematics. STEM box subscription services, which range from programming projects to the more traditional chemistry sets and electronics-building, give students the chance to tinker, create and put theoretical concepts to practical use. Bitsbox ([www.bitsbox.com](http://www.bitsbox.com)) focuses on coding, with kids as young as 6 learning the basics of programming and producing fun apps. Technology moves very quickly, but having coding knowledge — understanding the basic way that computers do what they do — is invaluable. ... but if you must put a price on it, **Bitsbox starts at \$20 per month.**

## LIVESCRIBE ECHO SMARTPEN (18+)

It would almost be worth going back to college just to use this pen in class. The device records as much as 200 hours of audio, which is synchronized to your notes. You could write highlights during a presentation and then simply touch the pen to anything you wrote, and it will play the recording from that moment. With the included software, all notes and drawings are transferred to your computer along with the attached audio. You can share any piece you want as an interactive PDF, and your notes are even searchable. **Available at [store.livescribe.com](http://store.livescribe.com) for \$179.95.**



## XYZPRINTING DA VINCI MINI (10+)

Having a 3D printer at home would have been unthinkable only a few years ago, but consumer models like the da Vinci Mini have made it an affordable investment. The educational use of a 3D printer is only limited by the imagination or by the included access to an online STEM and arts curriculum for grades K-12. The printer includes 3D modeling software for beginners and uses filaments derived from cornstarch, making them biodegradable and nontoxic. If dads are still not convinced, it also makes neat toy soldiers. **Available at [us.xyzprinting.com](http://us.xyzprinting.com) for \$289.95.**

## ROCKETBOOK WAVE SMART NOTEBOOK (13+)

Each page of the notebook has a series of symbols at the bottom that, when used with the Rocketbook Wave app, allows everything from notes to doodles to be stored digitally. The app scans, enhances and sends the notebook page to a chosen cloud service, including options like Evernote, Dropbox and Google Drive. If you use the included FriXion pen — made by Pilot and available at most office stores and online — you can pop the notebook in the microwave and completely erase it once it's full. The only caveat is that if you don't upload your pages regularly, the disappearing ink feature is just a mean prank waiting to happen. **Available at [www.getrocketbook.com](http://www.getrocketbook.com), erasable models start at \$27.**





# Defeat the BACK-TO-SCHOOL BLUES

## Apps and sites to help your student



**T**he kids are back to school! Whew! As a mom who works from a home office and lives with a couple of rambunctious boys, I must admit that life is just a little bit simpler when they are back in school.

I love them to pieces, but they can be a distraction! Even if my days are a little less crazy during the school year, it picks right back up when school is over at the end of the day.

They are always starving — who knew boys could eat so much? They have practices and activities to get to and of course HOMEWORK. I didn't like homework as a kid and don't like it as a parent, especially as my boys continue to grow older and the homework gets a bit harder.

Their frustration increases, and my patience decreases. I'm already dreading the day they bring home geometry homework, and don't even get me started on spelling! I'm sure spellcheck has already corrected me at least a dozen times as I write this article.

However, I'm resourceful, and we have super-high-speed internet at home, so there are tools that will make these homework stresses easier. I will do my

best to ensure my kids are better spellers than I am, and I want to give them their best chance at good grades in all their subjects. Here are a couple of sites and apps I recommend:

### KHAN ACADEMY

Khan Academy is well-known in the education world, but a lot of parents are unaware of it. The academy has great, free educational videos on math, science, politics and lots of other topics with content for students from kindergarten to graduate studies. If your child is struggling with a topic, and content is available, I strongly encourage you to check it out.

<http://www.khanacademy.org>

### VOCABULARY SPELLING CITY

This is a great website and app to help your kids prepare for their spelling tests. Many schools implement it districtwide. If your school doesn't, you can always set up a parent account.

Reviewing spelling words is free, and with a premium account, you can also access lessons on vocabulary and writing. I love that I can enter my sons' spelling words and then they can play games and

take practice quizzes to prepare for tests.

<http://www.spellingcity.com>

### ADDITIONAL SITES

If you are looking for a specific subject or topic your child needs help with in school, take a look at the list of suggested apps at Common Sense Media. They break down the apps based on age and topic. You may just find something that makes evening homework a little more manageable.

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/lists/homework-help-apps>

Raising kids isn't easy, and parents today face a different set of challenges than previous generations. Technology is a huge part of that. Take advantage of the help that's out there to make your after-school routines a little more bearable. ☎



**CARISSA SWENSON**

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*Parenting  
Tip*

The pace of school is picking up, and that's great. But there can be challenges, too. Cyberbullying is never OK. If your child faces a cyberbully, ask the bully to stop, unfriend them and report them to proper authorities if necessary.

# THE CONNECTED CLASSROOM

Local educators are using new school methods to teach old-school lessons

BY DREW WOOLLEY

The lights were out in a hallway of Morris Area Elementary School, but the atmosphere was far from sleepy. Caleb Greene's fifth-grade students were gathered around a race course loop made of masking tape. They cheered on chariots, which they engineered, pulled by glowing robotic Sphero balls.

As their chariot crossed the finish line, the winning team raised their arms in triumph, more interested in the trophy than the fact that they had learned about engineering and creative problem-solving.

"They love doing challenges like that," Greene says. "It teaches them to think outside the box and use the design process to come up with new solutions, test them and improve them. But they just see some toy robots that are really cool."

Greene first began seriously integrating technology into his classroom two years ago when the school made the decision to gradually roll out Chromebook computers to every student, starting with the fifth and ninth grades.

Similar programs have become popular at schools across the region, including Dawson-Boyd High School about an hour south.

Chromebooks were distributed to ninth through twelfth grades during the 2015-16 school year.

"Almost every class uses them," Dawson-Boyd High School Principal Ryan Stotesbury says. "They make it possible to tailor the curriculum to the strengths and weaknesses of each student or give quizzes and get the results immediately. It makes things much more efficient."

And perhaps even more important, teachers are now discovering ways to use that technology in the classroom to challenge their students like never before.

## THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

The first time Greene introduced his class to the Sphero balls, there was confusion. What were these contraptions, and where were the directions?

"Some of my highest-scoring kids struggled because they're so used to getting everything out of a textbook where they can't really explore the ideas," he recalls. "Now we're giving them an objective and asking them how to get there. That's where you see the creative work going on."

By the end of the year, getting a challenge that seemed



Students take their turn giving the school announcements to classmates during a high-tech video broadcast complete with a green screen and tablet teleprompter.

impossible was commonplace for students, as was figuring out a solution.

Similarly, MAES teacher, Austen Miller uses technology in his second-grade classroom to encourage kids to engage more actively with the school's "Tiger Paw Values."

Each Friday, the class puts together a YouTube newscast using the Green Screen iPad app to celebrate student accomplishments around the school and to perform skits that show the importance of core values.

"That way, it's not just teachers telling them why something is important, they're actually hearing it from their peers," Miller says.

His class also uses an app called Play-Doh Touch, which allows students to scan characters they've built out of Play-Doh and then animate them.

"It combines digital learning with something physical in the real world," Miller says. "I always try to attach some kind of reading or writing skill to it, where they're going to have to tell a story, incorporate a couple of different characters or create a certain setting. Then we talk about those different story elements."

And with schools increasingly providing Chromebooks or iPads to students, Stotesbury believes technology can give them equal access to the tools they need.





“All students get the Chromebook, whether it’s something they can afford or not,” he says. “That opens the door to the creativity students crave. They really appreciate the freedom it gives them to research or do a project in new ways.”

## TEACHING FOR TOMORROW

Stotesbury says the focus has begun to shift away from dedicated computer labs in the school. “The labs are still getting used, but the more you use Chromebooks, the less you need the computer lab,” he says. “We’re really looking at more of a mobile mindset down the road.”

A key factor as the program expands will be ensuring that all students have access to a quality internet connection at home. While most families are served by Farmers Mutual Telephone and Federated Telephone, there are still a few students without a reliable connection.

One approach to address that problem could be expanding the ways students can work with technology while at school, something Greene and Miller hope to do in the future. Both teachers have plans to build maker-spaces in their classrooms — collaborative workspaces where students can explore ideas using high- or low-tech tools. They also intend to start after-school programs where kids can have more time to create, and they even want to find ways to teach students the basics of coding.

“Getting started on these subjects is so important because most of the jobs these kids will be taking when they graduate in 2024 probably don’t even exist yet,” says Greene.

For teachers like Greene and Miller, the daily challenge is to find a way to channel the information students learned using pen and paper in a way that is not only more entertaining, but also more effective.

“The things in the textbook are still important, but taking notes every day and studying those notes every night is monotonous. It’s stagnant,” says Greene. “That’s the old way. By using these new tools, we can teach kids in a more engaging way, and they’re learning more.” 📱



Eighth-grader Kannon Wicht works on a math app in a computer lab at Dawson-Boyd High School.



Handheld tablets are a lighter option than laptops, perfect for younger children to carry anywhere they go.



Computers make homework easier according to Dawson-Boyd seventh-graders Sawyer Plessner, left, Dain Polhamus and Carlos Bellefeuille.



# HEARTLAND CUISINE

*Diverse and deserving greater appreciation*

**B**eth Dooley understands the divided nature of regional cuisines. They all begin with local foods and then branch in different directions.

“The temperate regions of our country — California, the Hudson River Valley, Vermont, Oregon — are considered culinary centers. Yet, the stunning variety of our bounty in the heartland reflects a place that is simply unparalleled in its diversity and too often ignored,” says the resident of Minneapolis and author of six cookbooks.

Dooley, too, knew little about the cuisine of the heartland — an area encompassing Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, eastern North Dakota and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan — before moving to Minneapolis from New Jersey in 1979.

She details the move in her latest cookbook, “In Winter’s Kitchen: Growing Roots and Breaking Bread in the Northern Heartland.” It’s not a traditional cookbook but rather a delicious account of her finding her path in the foodways of the Midwest heartland. Recipes are near the end of the book.

“I was sad to leave my family but was weary of the New York area and the pace of the East Coast,” she says. “I love being outside, no matter the cold. Perhaps it’s the wide-open skies here that cultivate

an openness in our culture.”

It’s this closeness to the land and the welcome she received after her move that led to a strong connection with farmers, producers and chefs. She also joined her local Community Supported Agriculture program, finding the heartland’s dramatic change of seasons ideal for growing a cornucopia of fruits and vegetables. She also realized the ethnic heritage of its people — including Scandinavian, Eastern European, African, South American and Asian — created a remarkable melting pot of culinary diversity.

“It’s by getting to know the people who grow my food that I’ve come to truly respect both them and the bounty they produce,” Dooley says.

Some of Dooley’s earliest memories go back to times spent in the kitchen.

“In my grandmother’s beloved kitchen, ... I’d learned to knead dough until it was soft as a baby’s bottom and simmer raspberries into jam thick enough to coat the back of a spoon,” she writes in her new book.

“As a young home cook, I could devote an entire Saturday to crafting beautiful meals straight out of ‘Gourmet’ for friends who came and lingered at the table well past midnight,” she recalls.

The meals she now serves



An East Coast native, Beth Dooley learned to love the foods of Midwest chefs. She tells her story with “In Winter’s Kitchen: Growing Roots and Breaking Bread in the Northern Heartland.”

reflect the rustic simplicity that defines heartland cuisine: wholesome grain breads, comforting stews, thick pork chops braised in hard cider, wild game and plenty of flaky fruit pies — primarily rhubarb, blueberry and apple.

“I’ve become a more responsive, spontaneous cook, working with whatever is in season,” she says. Foods of the heartland aren’t much different from those she could get back East, only better and fresher, she says.

“The vegetables from our farmers markets here remind me of heading to the shore with my grandmother where we’d pick up Jersey tomatoes, sweet corn and tiny blueberries at farm stands along the way,” she says. “But as the farms were sold off and converted to shopping malls and condos for New York City commuters,

our food was shipped in from California. When we moved here, I was delighted to find a farmers market in this metro area so close to its producing farms.”

Now, if she were to leave Minnesota, she would have an even longer list of misses: freshly ground flour for her breads, whitefish and fried whitefish livers, “real” wild rice, rhubarb pie, fried smelt and smoked duck.

Heartland cuisine, she has learned, is simply “the way people have always eaten,” she says.



FOOD EDITOR  
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## PICKLED GINGER CARROTS

- 1 pound carrots, cut into 4 1/2-inch sticks
- 1 1/4 cups water
- 1 cup white wine vinegar
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1/4 cup thinly sliced ginger
- 2 tablespoons kosher salt

Bring a pot of water to a boil and blanch the carrots until they're bright orange, about one minute. Drain and refresh carrots under cold running water. Transfer the carrots to clean canning jars or a glass container with a lid.

In a medium saucepan, bring the water, vinegar, sugar, garlic, ginger and salt to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 2 minutes. Pour the hot liquid over the carrots and let cool, uncovered. Then cover and chill before serving. Makes about 2 pints.



## FALL FRUIT TART

### *Rich tart pastry:*

- 1 cup unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, chilled and cut into small pieces
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- Pinch of salt
- 2-3 tablespoons ice water

### *Filling:*

- 5 medium tart apples, peeled and cored
- 1/2 cup fresh cranberries, rinsed and sorted
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, chilled and cut into small pieces
- 1 tablespoon brandy or applejack, optional
- 2 tablespoons sugar mixed with 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

### *Glaze:*

- 1/3 cup apple or apricot jam or jelly
- 2 tablespoons brandy or applejack, optional

**Pastry:** Put the flour, butter, sugar and salt in a large bowl and cut in the butter with a pastry cutter, two knives or your fingertips until it resembles coarse meal.

Using a fork to toss, drizzle in the water a little at a time, adding just enough to create a stiff dough. Gather the dough, shape it into a ball and flatten slightly, wrap it in waxed paper, and chill in the refrigerator for at least an hour but preferably overnight. Roll out the dough on a lightly floured surface, forming a 12-inch circle. Line a 9-to-10-inch tart pan with the dough. Trim and crimp the edges and prick the bottom of the dough with a fork. Heat the oven to 400 degrees. **Filling:** Slice the apples thinly and arrange in concentric circles around the dough. Toss the cranberries over the apples, and then place dots of butter over the fruit. Brush with the brandy, if using, and sprinkle with the cinnamon-sugar. Set the tart on a baking sheet and bake until the apples are caramelized and the crust is well browned, 50 minutes to one hour.

**Glaze:** While the tart is baking, put the jam and brandy, if using, in a saucepan over medium heat, cooking until the mixture is melted and smooth. Spoon the glaze over the warm tart and allow to cool a little before slicing into wedges to serve. Makes 8-10 servings.

## OLD-FASHIONED MAPLE SWEETS

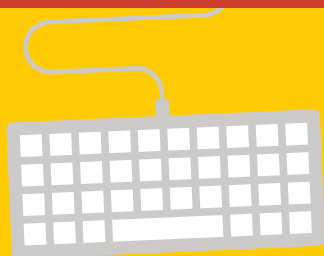
### *A great dish as a side — or dessert!*

- 3 pounds (6 to 8) sweet potatoes
- 1/4 cup maple syrup
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- Pinch freshly grated nutmeg
- Splash of whiskey, optional
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Heat oven to 400 degrees. Wash the sweet potatoes, poke lightly with a fork and roast in the oven until the skins are shriveled and potatoes are very tender, 45-50 minutes. Remove from oven and allow to cool enough to handle. Peel and set aside. Lightly butter a medium baking dish. Reduce the heat to 300 degrees. In a small saucepan, heat the maple syrup with the butter and stir in the cinnamon and nutmeg. Season with optional whiskey, salt and pepper, to taste. Slice the potatoes and layer, brushing the maple syrup mixture between the layers. Pour any remaining syrup over the potatoes. Bake until the potatoes are glazed and hot, about 20 minutes. 🍷

# MOVE TO THE HEAD OF THE CLASS

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