

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2018

CONNECTION

A LOCAL LEGEND

Maynard Meyer keeps
the pulse of Madison

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Fostering a plan to care
for abandoned pets

SAVE SOME ROOM

Classic holiday dish may
leave you stuffed



BY SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

Rural broadband is on our wish list

The federal government is not usually known for moving quickly. That said, the Rural Utilities Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, has been working at a fast and furious pace the past several weeks on its e-Connectivity Pilot Program. This program could make \$600 million available in loans and grants to bring broadband to rural areas where service is desperately needed.

Now, let's hope the USDA is just as fast and furious when it comes to releasing funds to rural broadband providers who can continue to build networks in areas where connectivity is sorely needed.

Many of you reading this enjoy access to a reliable broadband network thanks to your local telecommunications provider. The cooperative and independent telcos who are part of NTCA have done a tremendous job of connecting their members and customers to some of the fastest internet service available in the country. Even so, rural America is home to many communities that are so remote, isolated and sparsely populated that extending service to them is a serious challenge.

Through NTCA, telcos like yours share their opinions and concerns with elected officials and agencies. We sent a letter to RUS stating that the rules of the e-Connectivity Pilot Program should be set in a way that makes sense and that prioritizes the most productive use of limited federal dollars.

Seeing progress that releases new dollars for rural broadband is definitely on our wish list this season. 📶

Groups study impact of broadband on rural prosperity

Several national associations, nonprofits and government agencies joined forces throughout 2018 to examine the impact of broadband on life in rural America.

The Farm Foundation, a nonpartisan agricultural policy institute, launched a project entitled "What's on the Horizon for E-Connectivity in Rural America." As part of this project, the group organized a series of E-Connectivity Listening Sessions in collaboration with CoBank, NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"We want to identify the challenges rural communities now face in providing quality broadband services, as well as the innovative options being used to address those challenges," said Constance Cullman, Farm Foundation president and moderator of the listening sessions.

One of the sessions was in Birmingham, Alabama, in August. Among the panelists was Fred Johnson, executive vice president and general manager of Farmers Telecommunications Cooperative in Rainsville, Alabama. Johnson also serves on the board of directors for NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association.

Johnson applauded the effort to bring stakeholders together to share the accomplishments of small, rural broadband providers. "Closing the digital divide is a goal we all share, and creating partnerships to reinvest in our networks is an important component of achieving that goal," he said.

Also speaking at the Birmingham session was Jannine Miller, USDA's senior advisor for rural infrastructure. She discussed the Interagency Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity that was formed in 2017. The task force identified over 100 recommendations for the federal government to consider in order to help improve life in rural America. The recommendations centered around five areas, with e-connectivity being central to all components (see illustration below).

More information about the listening sessions — including videos of the events — can be found at www.farmfoundation.org. 📺

RURAL BROADBAND: A KEY TO AMERICAN PROSPERITY



Source: USDA. The agency's full report can be found at www.usda.gov/ruralprosperity.

Always on

More than one-quarter of adults constantly online



Social media, text messages, gaming, weather reports, email and much more are daily parts of busy lives. But just how connected are we really to the online world?

For about 26 percent of the U.S. population, the answer to that question is dramatic — just more than a quarter of adults say they are online “almost constantly,” according to a Pew Research Center study released earlier this year.

The widespread use of smartphones and mobile devices has helped drive the sense of being online all the time, a result that is up from 21 percent in a similar 2015 poll.

While not everyone feels constantly connected, about 77 percent of Americans still go online daily. Forty-three percent go online several times a day, and about 8 percent go online only about once a day. Meanwhile, 11 percent connect several times weekly, and a similar percentage does not use the internet at all.

The biggest indicator of the time spent online is access to a mobile device. Of those who possess a smartphone or similar device, 89 percent go

online daily and 31 percent report almost constant use.

Meanwhile, of the people who do not have a mobile device, only 54 percent report daily online usage and only 5 percent are constantly connected.

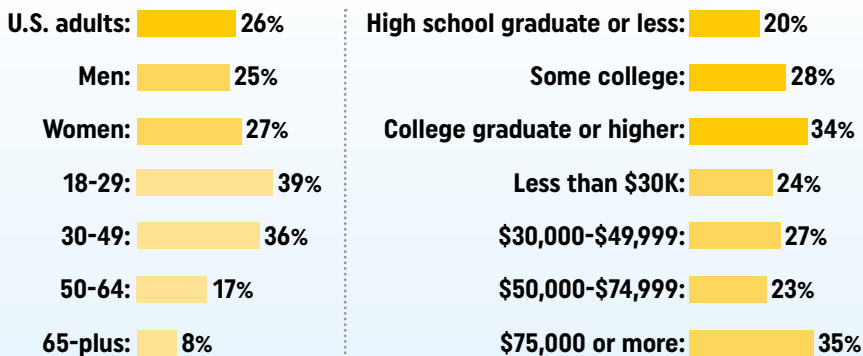
But when the poll added age into the mix, the results grew more interesting. Age matters less than it did three years earlier. Americans between the ages of 30 and 49 indicated the same rate of almost constant online use as younger adults: 36 percent to 39 percent for the younger generation. Meanwhile, the percentage of those between the ages of 50 and 64 who report constant online use has spiked from 12 percent to 17 percent since 2015.

Households with higher incomes and those who live in urban and suburban areas report almost constant online usage at a rate that is nearly double that of residents of rural areas, where only 15 percent report the highest usage.

As online tools become more useful and services better connect friends and families, the importance of access to fast, affordable internet connections continues to increase. 📶

A connected nation

The chart represents the percentage of Americans who describe themselves as being online “almost constantly,” according to a Pew Research Center poll.



Source: Pew Research Center analysts Andrew Perrin and Jingjing Jiang reported results of the study.

Thankful for world-class broadband in rural America

Lately, I've seen many commentators and public officials paint our nation's digital divide with a broad brush. "Urban areas have great internet connectivity, and rural areas don't," they say. I'm thankful those people are wrong.



KEVIN BEYER
Chief Executive Officer

I always enjoy taking time at Thanksgiving to look back on the year and appreciate what we have, both personally and at Farmers Mutual and Federated Telephone. We are truly blessed.

I'm thankful we live in a country where we can put so much energy into things like holidays, family get-togethers and football games instead of worrying about clean water or our general safety. Our country may not be perfect, but I'd certainly rather be here than anywhere else.

When I think about where we are, I'm thankful for our community. I appreciate the scenic beauty of our area and the genuine, hardworking and caring people who make up the backbone of the communities we serve.

I'm truly thankful for the team we have at Acira and the work they do every day to make sure we serve you the best way we can. This year in particular, I appreciate their hard work expanding our cooperatives in the counties of Big Stone, Chippewa, Lac Qui Parle, Stevens and Swift.

I'm also thankful for the modern conveniences our network provides. Whether it's streaming an unlimited catalog of quality entertainment, running a smart home or connecting with loved ones hundreds of miles away, we have amazing technology that previous generations could not have imagined.

It is clear to me that we need to continue telling that story. I've seen or heard an oversimplification many times where a political leader or supposed expert talks about the disparity between the wonderful internet service found in urban areas and the primitive connections of rural America. Such a sweeping generalization is simply not accurate.

While it's true many communities in rural America are suffering from slow broadband speeds as a result of neglect from big corporate internet providers or isolated terrain, the fiber optic connections we offer are world-class. And we're working hard every day to bring those connections to more people in our region.

There are apartment complexes in Los Angeles and New York stuck with slower internet speeds than those we provide to farmers in our communities. Some businesses in Chicago and Seattle do not have the same access to high-speed broadband as small businesses in our service areas.

Broadband has become essential for modern life, and I don't believe people should have to sacrifice their connectivity just because they want to live in a rural area like ours. That's why our mission is the same as it's always been — to connect you with the best technology available today.

I'm thankful for the opportunity to help create such a network in our community, and I'm thankful for the trust you place in Farmers Mutual and Federated Telephone. 📶

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POWERED BY FARMERS MUTUAL TELEPHONE COMPANY
AND FEDERATED TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE

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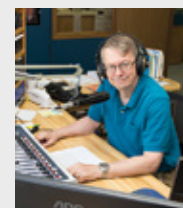
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WORDSOUTH

A CONTENT MARKETING COMPANY

On the Cover:



Maynard Meyer has kept the pulse of Madison, playing the hits and taking calls for 30 years at KLQP "Q-92" FM.
See story Page 12.



Are you having trouble using the telephone due to a hearing or speech disability?

Minnesota Relay is a free telephone service that uses specially trained communications assistants (CAs) to facilitate telephone calls between people with hearing and speech disabilities and other individuals. Calls can be made to anywhere in the world (long distance charges apply), 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. All calls are completely confidential.

To make a relay call dial 7-1-1. Once connected to the relay service, tell the CA the type of relay call you wish to make. Or, you may dial the specific toll-free number for the type of relay service.

Captioned Telephone Service (CTS)

CTS uses a special telephone with a text display screen so that a person who is hard of hearing can listen to and read captions of everything the other person on the call says. You speak directly to the other person on the call, and a relay CA transcribes everything the other person says into captions, which appear on the display screen of your CTS phone.

Internet Protocol Captioned Telephone Service (IP CTS)

Internet-based forms of CTS are available for those who would like to use CTS on a computer, tablet or select smartphones. Go to: www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/internet-protocol-ipcaptioned-telephone-service.

Computer (ASCII): 1-800-627-3529

Computer users can access Minnesota Relay. Set your communications software to the following protocols: speeds ranging from 300 to 2,400; 8 Bits; No Parity; 1 Stop Bit; Full Duplex. When calling at a rate of 300 or below, follow the above using Half Duplex.

Hearing Carry Over (HCO): 1-800-627-3529

HCO allows a person who can hear clearly but who has very limited or no speech capability to make and receive phone calls. Using a special text telephone, you type your conversation for the relay CA to read to the other person, and then listen directly to the other person's response.

Hearing User: 1-800-627-3529

A hearing person may use a standard telephone or mobile phone to place a relay call and speak with a person who is deaf, hard of hearing or speech disabled.

Internet Protocol (IP) Relay
IP Relay combines text-based relay service with the ease of the internet – no need for a text telephone. You are able to make your relay call using a computer, laptop, tablet or select smartphones. Go to: www.sprintrelay.com.

Spanish Relay: 1-877-627-5448

Spanish-speaking persons with a hearing or speech disability are able to make relay calls. This is not a translation service – both parties must speak

Spanish, and at least one party must have a hearing or speech disability.

Speech-to-Speech (STS): 1-877-627-3848

STS allows a person who has difficulty speaking or being understood on the phone to communicate using his or her own voice or voice synthesizer. The CA revoices your words so that the other person on the call can understand them, and the other person speaks directly to you.

Text Telephone (TTY): 1-800-627-3529

This service allows a person who is deaf, deaf-blind or speech disabled to use a TTY to communicate with the other person on the call.

Video Relay Service (VRS)

VRS allows a person who uses American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate over the phone. The VRS user connects to the CA via an internet-enabled device with a video camera. The CA relays the conversation back and forth between the parties – in ASL with the VRS user and by voice with the called party. Go to: www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/video-relay-services.

Voice Carry Over (VCO): 1-877-627-3024

VCO allows a person with a hearing disability, but who wants to use his or her own voice, to speak directly to the other party. The CA then types the other party's response, which is displayed on the VCO user's text telephone.

For More Information on Minnesota Relay Services:

www.mnrelay.org
1-800-657-3775

Emergency Assistance
TTY callers should dial 9-1-1 directly in an emergency. All 9-1-1 centers are equipped to handle TTY calls. Minnesota Relay can process emergency calls, but this may delay the response to your call.

Billing Options for Long Distance Relay Calls:

- Direct
- Collect
- Third-Party Billing
- Carrier Calling Card
- Prepaid Calling Card

To file a Complaint Regarding Minnesota Relay:
1-800-657-3775
Email: mn.relay@state.mn.us

You will need to provide the date and time of the relay call, the CA's identification number and the nature of your complaint.

You may also file a complaint with the Federal Communications Commission:
www.fcc.gov/complaints
Voice: 1-888-225-5322
TTY: 1-888-835-5322
ASL via VP: 1-844-432-2275

Telephone Equipment Distribution (TED) Program

The TED Program provides free specialized telecommunications equipment to income-eligible Minnesotans who have trouble using the telephone due to a hearing, speech, or physical disability. For more information on the TED Program:
Website: mn.gov/dhs/ted-program
Voice: 1-800-657-3663
TTY: 1-888-206-6555
ASL via VP: 1-866-635-0082

Twenty-two runs offer something for everyone at this cool winter sports destination managed by the city of Duluth, Minnesota.

Let it snow!

Ski resorts can offer hours or even days of entertainment. The Midwest offers some of the best skiing adventures in Minnesota and North Dakota for everyone from the most daring skiers to those preferring the bunny slopes. These venues offer a flurry of activities to maximize your wintertime fun, whether you're skiing, snowboarding or sledding. Here are some picks to lift your spirits during the frigid months of winter.

Huff Hills Ski Area

5455 County Road 80, Mandan, North Dakota

While it may not be the largest ski resort in the Midwest, Huff Hills can certainly present a challenge. The 16 runs range from beginner to advanced slopes. Rattlesnake and Cougar are known as the toughest with their glades and fun terrain changes as well as short, punchy steep sections. They have been known to challenge even the most experienced visitors.

Huff Hills has a cafeteria-style restaurant that serves burgers, fries, chicken strips, pizza, hot dogs, chili and soup — filling food after a day on the slopes. There's hot chocolate to warm your bones or cold beer if you've worked up a sweat.

An on-site rental shop can provide a snowboard, skis or helmet. Lessons are available on weekends by appointment. There's always something unique going on, from night skiing to bike races, so check the website if you're looking for something off the beaten path.

- **Lift tickets** — Adults: \$25. Children ages 12 and under and seniors: \$20. Season passes available. Prices are higher on weekends and holidays. Half-day tickets are available.
- **Phone** — 701-663-6421
- **Online** — www.huffhills.com

Bottineau Winter Park

1 Winter Park Road
Bottineau, North Dakota

Located high up in the Turtle Mountains, Bottineau is a resort for snow lovers of all skill levels, including those with disabilities — the Annie's House Adaptive Program provides adaptive equipment and trained instructors.

Your day can be spent riding one of six lifts that will take you to one of eight downhill trails for skiing and snowboarding. There are beginner slopes as well as ungroomed expert glade runs for advanced skiers. Tubing is another fun activity offered at the park.

Bring your own equipment or rent it when you arrive. Lessons are available. When you're ready to warm your toes and appease your hunger, head over to Annie's House Visitor Center where you'll find a full-service cafeteria.

- **Lift tickets** — (Thursday and Friday night rates) Adults: \$25. Youth ages 13-17: \$20. Children ages 6-12: \$15. Tubing (two hours): \$15. Season passes available. Prices are higher for full days and on weekends and holidays.
- **Phone** — 701-263-4556
- **Online** — skibwp.com

Spirit Mountain

9500 Spirit Mountain Place
Duluth, Minnesota

If the name alone doesn't rev your engines, a visit to Spirit Mountain certainly should. Created and managed by the city of Duluth, the park offers 22 runs of varying difficulties on 175 acres ideal for skiing, snowboarding, fat tire biking and snow tubing. There are also Nordic trails and an Alpine coaster.

There are two chalets on the property — one at the bottom of the mountain and the other on top. Both have restaurants and bars, a rental shop, restroom facilities and child care, which requires 24-hour notice.

When the day is done, stay at one of 10 partner hotels that offer guests discounted lift tickets.

- **Lift tickets** — Prices can vary by day. Ages 13-61: \$55. Ages 6-12, 62 or older



and military: \$44. Ages 5 and younger: \$5. Discounted season passes available.

- **Phone** — 800-642-6377
- **Online** — www.spiritmt.com

Andes Tower Hills

4505 Andes Road, Kensington, Minnesota

Andes Tower Hills is a ski resort on a hill — a big one named Tower Hill — with 15 runs from beginner to expert levels. The resort gives folks a chance to learn to ski or, for more advanced skiers, an opportunity to enjoy a day on slopes that may be more challenging than expected. In fact, more than 1 million skiers have trekked to Andes Tower Hills — now more than 30 years old — to test their skills at skiing, snowboarding, tubing and cross-country skiing. There are several cross-country trails that pass early settlers' sites. Because it is the highest elevation in the area, a surveying tower was built on its summit, and that's the source of its name: Tower Hill.

The resort offers lessons, and group rates are available. There is rental equipment, along with plenty of lodging in the nearby Alexandria Lakes area.

- **Lift tickets** — Ages 12-61: \$44. Ages 62 and older: \$30. Children under 6: Free with adult ticket purchase. Discounted tickets after 3 p.m.
- **Phone** — 320-965-2455
- **Online** — andestowerhills.com

Wild Mountain

37200 Wild Mountain Road
Taylor Falls, Minnesota

Ski it, tube it, or jump on a board

and ride down Wild Mountain, a resort encompassing 100 acres along the scenic St. Croix River. There are 26 runs ranging from beginner to advanced. Bring your own equipment or rent it on-site. If you don't feel so confident on the slopes, get a lesson from one of the pros before taking off on your own.

There's also night skiing, tubing at twilight, race programs and race camps during the holidays for high school teams. There's so much going on at Wild Mountain that you may want to stay the night or longer. If you can snag one of the cabins at Wannigan Point, consider yourself lucky. It's the closest to Wild Mountain. Otherwise, there are a number of chain and independently owned motels in the area, as well as a handful of bed-and-breakfast lodgings.

- **Lift tickets (day lift walk-in)** — Ages 13-61: \$55. Ages 61 or older: \$48. Ages 6-12: \$42. Children 5 and under: Free. Discounts are available for advance purchases online and for night skiing.
- **Phone** — 651-465-6365
- **Online** — www.wildmountain.com





HI! I'M JADE GEHRKE!

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, be sure to read this column in future publications. I'm always happy to help!

DEVICE OF THE MONTH



Sony's 4K Blu-ray

Streaming offers the easiest and most practical way to watch movies and TV shows. But if you invest in a high-quality television, there's no better way to show it off than with a 4K Blu-ray. Sony's UBP-X700 upscales your old DVDs to HD, comes with access to your favorite apps, including 4K Netflix and Amazon, and supports Dolby Vision HDR: \$249.99 MSRP.

Tune in

TVs for today's viewing needs

More than 90 years after televisions first became commercially available, you might think buying one would be as easy as picking a toaster. But if you're in the market for a new TV, it's easy to get bogged down in resolutions, audio standards, acronyms and initials.

Considering what's most important to you — clarity, bright colors, deep blacks — will help you choose how best to spend your money.

4K OR HD: A 4K TV is fast becoming the default selection as prices continue to drop. While not all 4K sets are created equal, all do provide much better image quality than 1080p HD displays. Finding 4K content comes at a cost, though. Expect to pay a premium for the higher resolution from streaming services such as Netflix or through the purchase of an ultra-HD Blu-ray player.

SMART TV: Smart TVs connect to the internet, and most offer all your favorite streaming services without the need for additional streaming boxes such as an Apple TV or Roku. While a Smart TV's interface and flexibility may fall short of the dedicated devices, they get the job done.

LED OR OLED: LEDs — light-emitting diodes — are what light up your TV. Depending on the size of the screen, a typical HD TV can have thousands of LEDs. An OLED, or organic light-emitting diode, is much smaller than an LED, and a TV may have millions of them. OLED TVs have the edge when displaying deep, dark blacks in images. The size of the OLEDs also means these TVs can be impressively thin, light and less power hungry. OLEDs also offer a wider viewing angle, with better results when viewed from the side than with LEDs.

So why pick an LED TV? Price is probably the biggest factor. OLEDs are still top-of-the-line devices and are priced accordingly. They also can't yet match LEDs for brightness or better all-around value.

HDR: HDR, or High Dynamic Range, provides a higher level of contrast between light and dark in 4K TVs. In practice, HDR provides more vivid images and colors that pop. There are two major competing players in the market, Dolby Vision and HDR10. While HDR10 is supported by more televisions, Dolby Vision is considered superior. 📺



'On the cusp'

Stevens Community Humane Society hoping for new facility in time for winter

BY JOHN CLAYTON

There's good news and bad news. The good news is the Stevens Community Humane Society is poised to keep growing. The bad news is that it needs to. "We're at the point now where we're ready to move forward and actually grow and take it to the next level, so to speak," says Humane Society Board President Karon White.

The local humane society, which is not affiliated with the Humane Society of the United States, has laid the groundwork for a new facility thanks to a bequeathal from a local resident and help from a private investor.

"We were very fortunate to have that sum of money left to us, and we're using that as starter money for a building," says White, who is one of nine board members running the all-volunteer organization. "We have a private investor willing to purchase the building. Our plan is to remodel it and take out a long-term lease."

And the move couldn't come too soon. The plan is to have the facility at least able to house dogs in time for winter — something a lack of adequate heating made impossible at the group's former base of operations at a private residence.

The SCHS, which takes in about 200 animals annually, focuses on temporary care, housing, adoptions and rescues, as well as transporting animals to larger no-kill organizations. With the new facility, more animals can have access to the year-round care they need. During its 15 years of existence, the SCHS has worked to foster animals with help from volunteers like



Shelby Deckert. She has fostered animals for five years, first in Minneapolis and now in Morris.

"My own dog was a tough case and lived in foster care for six months before I got her," Deckert says. "I just thought that if someone kept her for six months, and helped create the dog she was for me, that's something I want to do."

Deckert, whose previous dog passed away in April, says it's easy to become emotionally attached to the animals she fosters. "To see them going to new homes and see them appreciated and loved — it makes it all worth it," she says.

The SCHS makes sure every animal it adopts out has been spayed or neutered and is up to date on vaccinations. Adoption fees — which are \$100 for cats — \$150 for dogs and \$50 for kittens, help cover the cost of medical care and other expenses. The association vets potential adopters and asks them to fill out online applications through its website.



Stevens Community Humane Society president Karon White set out to create a no-kill shelter that cares for a growing number of animals each year.

White says the SCHS is against the practice of adopting animals and giving them as gifts, particularly during Christmastime, and there's a "no black cats on Halloween" policy. The group also offers educational opportunities for people who want to learn more about caring for their animals. "We're really careful about interviewing and following up with placements, making sure it's a healthy, long-term environment for all of them," White says. 🐾



Shelby Deckert fosters a Labrador retriever mix named Spike that was found as a stray.

RELEASE YOUR INNER *Fashionista*

The latest styles are only a few clicks away

BY PATRICK SMITH

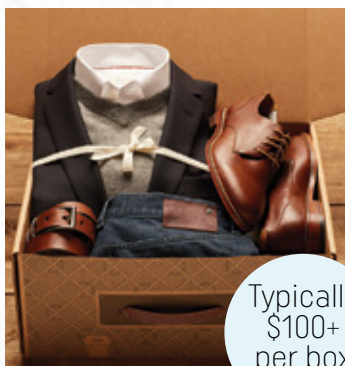
Sometimes it's tough to find the latest designer clothes around town. And remember the last time you hit the mall? It was miles away, you couldn't find anything that matched your style, and you searched endlessly to find your size. If that scenario rings a bell, it's time for an online fashion subscription. You'll get your perfect style and fit every time without the drive.

The latest fashion trends you see online and in magazines can be delivered to your doorstep with no hassle. And if you don't like what came your way in the latest shipment, relax. Most of the time you can return or exchange it. It's stress-free shopping.

Whether you live in a fashion capital like New York City or a rural town that barely makes it onto a map, the power of a high-speed internet connection means you can always dress to impress.

In the past two issues, we featured several food and pet subscription services — look back if you missed it. If you're curious about other online subscriptions out there, don't wait on us. Check them out for yourself. Everything from hot sauces to geeky toys and candles to kids' school kits is shipping out daily.

HERE ARE A FEW OF OUR FAVORITE ONLINE FASHION SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES:



Typically
\$100+
per box

TRUNK CLUB

Operated by Nordstrom, Trunk Club provides high-quality fashion without the struggle of putting together an impeccably matched outfit. Professional stylists for men and women fill your box with everything you need: shirts, earrings, belts, jackets, shoes, sunglasses, handbags and more. You choose your style, price range and frequency, and they do the hard work for you.



Typically
\$100+
per box

STITCH FIX

Stitch Fix brings you five hand-selected clothing items that match your personal style profile in every box. There's no subscription required, and you'll find a mix of familiar brand names, along with new ones, to keep you up to date with the most popular trends for men and women.



As low as
\$59
per box

YOGA CLUB


Honestly, what's more comfortable than yoga pants? Keep up with the newest styles by ordering through Yoga Club. You'll save up to 60 percent off retail prices. From just pants to full outfits for your workout, Yoga Club keeps you feeling stylish and comfortable for your next trip to the gym.



Typically
\$100+
per box

RACHEL ZOE

Ladies, start planning your seasonal wardrobe around Rachel Zoe's Box of Style. With a new shipment of several items each quarter, Rachel Zoe brings you everything you need to stay on the cutting edge of sophistication and glamour. A typical box may include a necklace, fragrance, makeup and beauty items, wallet clutch, and more.

*Note: Items from Rachel Zoe cannot be returned. 

GET SMART

The latest connected devices supercharge your home

The holidays are the perfect time to stock up and make your home “smarter” with a variety of devices that allow you to automate and remotely control door locks, lights, household systems and more.

SMART HUB: You can control many smart devices through individual phone apps, but to truly take advantage of a smart home setup, you need a hub. While some hubs run everything through an easy-to-use app — such as the Wink Hub, \$69 — there's something cool about controlling your devices with voice commands through an Apple HomePod, \$349; Google Home, \$129; or Amazon Echo, \$99.99.

The hub you choose will determine the other smart gadgets you buy since there are competing communication standards.



SMART LIGHTS: If you want remotely controlled outdoor Christmas lights, the easiest solution is to connect them to something like the iHome iSP100 Outdoor SmartPlug, \$39.99. The plug connects through your Wi-Fi network, is compatible with all digital assistants and is resistant to dirt, dust and rain. If you have an Echo, the company Light Rhapsody makes indoor holiday lights, \$59.99, that use Alexa to set different colors, add effects, change brightness, dance to music and turn the lights on or off.



Here are five gadgets that can make your life around the house easier — or at least more fun. Remember, the smart home experience is better with a high-speed broadband connection.



SMART THERMOSTAT: A smart thermostat is not only handy — the devices are capable of learning your routine and effectively program themselves — but it can help you save money by heating and cooling your home more efficiently. One of the most popular options is the Nest thermostat, which starts at \$169. With its new temperature sensors, which can be placed in different rooms, you can tell the thermostat a specific area of the home, such as the baby's room or the kitchen, to maintain a specific temperature.

SMART LOCK: The many features that smart locks offer include unlocking with your phone, responding to voice commands and linking to other devices, such as unlocking the door if the smoke detector goes off. The new Kwikset Kevo, \$314 for all features, also adds a neat new option. To open your door, you just need to touch the lock — even with the side of your finger or your elbow. It's a lifesaver if you're juggling kids or some last-minute gifts.



SMART TOY: Speaking of gifts, how about the DropMix Music Gaming System, \$69.99, by Harmonix, the people who created “Rock Band.” The DropMix Music Gaming System is played by placing color-coded cards on the board and building musical tracks using elements from songs. The game comes with 60 cards with music by popular artists, and more packs are available in different genres, including hip-hop and rock. 🎮



Each weekday morning Maynard Meyer can be heard on the radio sharing the latest news around Madison.



Maynard followed in his father Julien's footsteps in 1967, joining KMBO, where his father worked as a part-time announcer and engineer.

HALL OF FAME CAREER REACHES 50 YEARS

Meyer makes waves beyond radio in Madison

BY JOHN CLAYTON

Maynard Meyer's voice has been waking up the residents in and around Madison, Minnesota, for more than 30 years.

Meyer wears several hats at the independently owned KLQP "Q-92" FM radio station, including those of station owner, news director, engineer and host of his morning drive show. During the program, the Minnesota Broadcasting Hall of Famer spotlights upcoming bridal showers and rummage sales before playing Elvis Presley favorites or hits by Elton John.

This year marks the 50th in radio for Meyer, 66. He started his career in Benson at the age of 16 at his hometown station, which belonged to the father of his childhood friend and KLQP business partner, Terry Overlander.

"If I'd put in the same effort working in Minneapolis-St. Paul instead of working for myself, I'd probably be a lot richer," Meyer says. "But I wouldn't be nearly as happy. There's something to be said for working for yourself."

Meyer hasn't stopped working for himself. He has spent no small amount of time and effort working for Madison and its residents, serving five terms on the city council and two terms on the local

school board. He has spearheaded several fundraising projects that have breathed new life into the historical Grand Theatre and the Madison swimming pool.

"When people see me coming, I think they're kind of scared off now," Meyer says. "They try to hide their wallets."

He has also spent the past 25 years as executive director of the Madison Chamber of Commerce. He has put forth considerable effort in helping to build the business community in the city known as the "Lutefisk Capital of the USA," which is also home to around 1,400 residents.

The chamber office was long ago relocated to the radio station offices. "It works out well. We're here a lot," says Meyer, who moved to Madison with high school sweetheart Deb, his wife of 46 years. The couple raised three children in Madison and now have six grandchildren.

Meyer has also been an active member and past president of the Madison Kiwanis Club, and he says being involved in the community is the right thing to do. "I really enjoy small-town living," Meyer

says. "I've seen too many people in other places who just sit and complain about everything ... I'm interested in seeing the community survive and thrive as best it can, so this is what I can do."

Like many small towns, he says Madison has struggled to keep young people, but now, some local high school graduates are coming back as professionals, eager to start families and careers. "A lot of our younger people are coming back now, and they're getting involved," he says.

And if they listen to Meyer each morning, they will be informed about happenings in their hometown, from church events to the annual Norsefest and its lutefisk-eating contest each November.

"We offer what you're not getting elsewhere," Meyer says of the radio station's commitment to all things local. "The key to our survival is not competing with music — people can get whatever music they want whenever they want it now."

He notices a strange set of car keys on his desk and offers an aside. "If you're missing your Chevy car keys, here they are," he says. "Come by and get them. We've got them for you. That's what we do."

Meyer recalled his Broadcast Hall of Fame induction speech. In describing his

and the station's role in the Madison area, he told the story of a listener dropping off a hubcap found on a roadside. It turned out to belong to the city's lone bus.

"Somebody brought it into the radio station," he says. "And you know what? We got that hubcap back on the bus." 🗨️



Among the treasures at the Lac qui Parle History Center is the original study used by Robert Bly, Minnesota's first poet laureate.



Long known as the Lutefisk Capital, Madison has a mascot named Lou T. Fisk.

THE GRAND GESTURE: FUNDRAISERS SAVE 'LOCAL INSTITUTION'

A labor of love began in 2011 for Maynard Meyer and Kris Kuechenmeister, who has also worked with Meyer as office manager at KLQP "Q-92" FM for the past 34 years.

The Grand Theatre had been an iconic Main Street attraction since before Humphrey Bogart's saloon owner, Rick Blaine, told Sam to "play it" in "Casablanca."

But over the years, The Grand fell on hard times. The city took ownership of the theater after the recipient of a community development loan defaulted on it in the mid-1990s, and it sat vacant until Meyer and Kuechenmeister teamed up to save it in 2011.

"We formed an LLC, and we lease it from the city," Meyer says. "It's an institution. I think people kind of like it. We get the movies pretty quick, and it's good to see something on Main Street."

The initial 2011 fund drive raised around \$115,000 to transition The Grand's two auditoriums from film to digital formats, buy upgraded projectors and new screens, and generally prepare the entire theater for its reopening. An additional \$45,000 raised since The Grand reopened provided for new seating, which was installed last year, in both theaters.

Now, a GoFundMe page Meyer operates helps with general maintenance and other expenses.

"I like movies, and Kris is good with numbers, so it's a good partnership," he says. "It's not a money maker."

The Grand Theatre project is one of several Meyer has been involved with over the years that have utilized partnerships between the city and members of the community.

The Madison Swimming Pool reopened, thanks to donations from the public. The

money helped with needed upgrades for the pool, which was constructed during President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Public Works era, Meyer says.

The Madison Chamber of Commerce also helped facilitate the purchase of the former First Lutheran Church building to create the Prairie Arts Center in 1973. After purchase, the building was donated by the chamber to the city of Madison, which continues to maintain it. The Prairie Arts Center is home to the Lac qui Parle Players, a theater troupe formed in 1984.

Meyer says public-private partnerships have helped promote the arts and other civic activities that might otherwise have been cast aside. "We've had good luck with those partnerships," he says. "A lot of the time, the tax dollars are not there for these things, especially in small towns."



Stuffed for the HOLIDAYS

The holidays change from year to year for Mike and Mary Rinehart. In the past, they have divided their time between visiting family in Ohio and South Dakota. This year, though, things might be a little different for the couple, who moved from Chattanooga, Tennessee, to Jamestown, North Dakota, a little more than five years ago.

They have lost family members over the past year, and plans are a little up in the air as to how and where they will spend Thanksgiving Day. But one thing is certain to be a part of the special holiday — the stuffing. And there's always enough left over to fill another pan for baking.

Stuffing is one dish that remains true to the Thanksgiving table. And there are dozens of variations, including those

made with sausage, onions or even cherries. Mary Rinehart also kicks her stuffing up a notch with the addition of Swiss cheese.

The recipe is as unique as any set of instructions for stuffing you may have tried. It's a recipe passed down from her fraternal great-grandmother, Elizabeth Noretto, who emigrated from her home in Bern, Switzerland, to America in the 1800s. Mary Rinehart treasures it.

"As long as I can remember, our family always made this dressing and stuffed the turkey with it every Thanksgiving and Christmas," she says. "Now, I've been making it for the past 30 years or more."

When she first prepared the stuffing for friends in North Dakota, it was something they had never tried. "I made it for our

neighborhood get-together last October," she recalls. "One of our neighbors hunted geese, so we had a big meal with goose and my stuffing, and everyone loved it. They were surprised when they found out it had Swiss cheese in it. They really liked the flavor."

The recipe is fairly basic — bread cubes, warm stock, onion and eggs. But it's another unexpected ingredient, in addition to the Swiss cheese, that may have you taking a second look. It's the dairy that makes this stuffing so comforting and delicious: warm milk along with the cheese. And you want to use enough of the milk to make it good and sloppy.

"That's the only trick to it," Rinehart says. "My grandmother always said that you have to make sure it is really sloppy."



You'll use a lot of milk to get the consistency just right."

And the milk must be warm in order to melt the cheese.

Rinehart says she usually stuffs her turkey because she believes it tastes better that way. As the turkey roasts, the juices make their way through the stuffing and result in a rich, delicious side dish that is always the first to disappear.



FOOD EDITOR
ANNE P. BRALY
IS A NATIVE OF
CHATTANOOGA,
TENNESSEE.

MIDWEST DRIED CHERRY-SAUSAGE STUFFING

- 6 cups unseasoned bread cubes
- 1 pound bulk pork sausage
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) butter
- 2 chopped onions
- 4 stalks chopped celery
- 2 1/2 tablespoons crumbled sage leaves
- 1 1/2 teaspoons crumbled thyme leaves
- 1 cup dried cherries (see note)
- 1 cup toasted and chopped walnuts
- 1 cup warm chicken broth
- Salt and pepper

Place bread cubes in a deep bowl. In a skillet, saute the sausage until brown; drain grease and transfer to bread bowl. In the same skillet, melt butter, saute onions and celery for 10 minutes or until soft, then add to bread bowl, along with the sage, thyme, cherries and walnuts. Add salt and pepper to taste. Add just enough chicken broth to moisten the bread mixture. You do not want it soaking wet. If stuffing the turkey, stuff the neck and cavity loosely, folding the neck skin under and fastening with a skewer. If not cooking the mixture in the bird, lightly pack stuffing into a large, shallow baking dish. If you bake the stuffing inside the bird, roast as directed, making sure the center of the stuffing reaches at least 165 F. If you bake in a separate dish, drizzle the stuffing with a little bit of stock, cover and bake at 325 F for 20-30 minutes. Then, uncover and return to bake for 10 more minutes or until lightly golden on top.

Note: If you cannot find dried cherries, dried cranberries may be substituted.

ELIZABETH NORETTO'S SWISS CHEESE STUFFING

- 1 1/2-2 (12-ounce) bags of plain bread cubes
- 2 eggs
- 1 stick melted butter
- 1 finely chopped onion
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon thyme

- 1 teaspoon dried sage
- 2-3 cups finely shredded Swiss cheese
- 3-4 cups warm milk (see note)
- 1 cup warm chicken broth

Combine bread cubes, eggs, butter, onion, baking powder, thyme, sage and Swiss cheese in a large bowl and mix thoroughly. Add warm milk and chicken broth, mixing until the stuffing is very moist and has a sloppy consistency. Stuff the turkey and roast as directed, making sure stuffing reaches a safe internal temperature of at least 165 F. Do not stuff until you are ready to put the turkey in the oven. Place any leftover stuffing in a buttered baking dish and bake at 350 F for 1 hour or until the top and edges are lightly browned.

Note: In order to get the right consistency, you may need to add more warm milk a little at a time.

WILD RICE DRESSING

This is a classic recipe that requires no extra baking.

- 1/2 cup wild rice
- 2 1/2 cups water
- 1/2 cup brown rice
- 1 tablespoon instant chicken bouillon granules
- 1/4 teaspoon ground sage or nutmeg
- 3 cups sliced, fresh mushrooms
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 6 green onions, sliced
- 1/2 cup toasted, slivered almonds (optional)

Rinse wild rice in a strainer under cold water for about 1 minute. In a large saucepan, combine wild rice, water, brown rice, bouillon granules, and sage or nutmeg. After bringing to a boil, reduce heat. Cover and simmer for 20 minutes. Stir in mushrooms, celery and green onion. Cook, covered but stirring frequently, over medium-low heat for 25 minutes or until vegetables are just tender. Garnish with toasted almonds, if desired. Serve immediately. Makes 8-10 servings. 📖

A Merry Christmas to all!
**You're invited to a
HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE.**



Hot cider and goodies will be served!
Be sure to register to win fun prizes.

FARMERS MUTUAL HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE

Bellingham Office

Wednesday, Dec. 12, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.



FEDERATED TELEPHONE HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE

Morris & Chokio Offices

Friday, Dec. 14, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.