

JULY/AUGUST 2024

CONNECTION



Riding together

Saddle club forges family bonds

EQUINE THERAPY

TRAVEL WITH PETS



By Shirley Bloomfield, CEO
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

Serious security


NTCA members are committed to protecting you

Everyone should take cybersecurity seriously, managing passwords and being aware of all the possible threats to your personal information, finances and more. That's not meant to frighten you, because you do have help. NTCA member providers across the nation take your security as seriously as you do, and they work daily to secure the networks bringing you the critical internet-based services you need.

Recently, I had the opportunity to share more about NTCA's cybersecurity efforts for both consumers and broadband providers, including CyberShare: The Small Broadband Provider ISAC, through a meeting with U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency Director Jen Easterly.

CISA recently launched the Secure Our World program to raise awareness about cybersecurity best practices and empower the public to take proactive steps to protect themselves online. Resources available to the public include a public service announcement, tip sheets on topics like phishing, multifactor authentication and the importance of creating strong passwords and updating software. And there is even a bingo board to make this critical topic engaging for the youngest internet users.

Also, Cybersecurity Awareness Month each October highlights these important issues and emphasizes that you're also part of the team helping keep us all safe. While NTCA members work behind the scenes, you can help by recognizing phishing attempts, choosing strong passwords and more. Visit cisa.gov/secure-our-world for more.

Together, we'll help keep everyone safe and secure online. 

Password management

Essential tools to keep you safe

From work and school to games and streaming entertainment services, access relies on passwords. The U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency suggests you consider using a reliable tool to manage these key bits of information — password managers.

Memorizing complex passwords for multiple accounts is difficult, or impossible. So, sometimes passwords are too simple and easily hacked. Password managers, though, can help.



Adobe Stock graphic by Jemastock

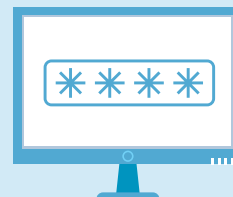


THE BASICS:

A password manager is a software tool that organizes all your passwords. Then, a single master code unlocks this vault — encouraging use of long, complex passwords.

FREE BUILT-IN MANAGERS:

Web browsers, including Safari, Chrome and Edge, have built-in password managers, and these can be accessed across devices like computers and phones. These may suffice for those with only basic needs, but they are limited. For instance, passwords in Apple's Safari aren't accessible on an Android phone running Google Chrome.



PAID TOOLS:

For more robust options, there is software like LastPass, 1Password and Bitwarden. These work across multiple types of devices and have additional features, such as the ability to generate passwords and integration into your favorite web browser.

TWO KEYS FOR SUCCESS:

Make your master password long, reliable and unique. Sixteen characters is recommended. Also, regularly review your stored passwords to remove passwords for accounts you no longer use.



From pages to pixels

E-books are changing the way we read

Readers today can find themselves facing a technological conundrum. While many book lovers treasure traditional books, electronic devices, designed to make reading more comfortable and accessible, are hard to ignore.

For some, there's nothing like the sensation of holding a book and feeling the paper as the pages turn. Printed books will always have emotional, if not monetary, value as collectibles. And they certainly aren't going anywhere.

These days there are countless options of things to download and read on our phones and tablets, but dedicated, handheld electronic book readers, often called e-readers, offer text and lighting customizations and many other conveniences to enhance the reading experience. Nonreflective, electronic-ink displays give them a paper-like look and make it easier to read outdoors compared with reading on a phone or tablet. And, dedicated e-readers present fewer distractions — you won't be interrupted by notifications, calls or texts.

Over the past few years, the price of e-readers has fallen while the hardware has improved. High-end features, such as backlit, high-resolution screens and waterproofing, are standard. If you don't have an e-book reader, there's never been a better time to invest in one.

E-READERS' EDGE

- **Portability:** E-readers are lightweight and can store thousands of books.
- **Customization:** Most allow you to adjust the font and size, background

lighting, etc. They can make reading accessible for individuals with visual impairment by providing text-to-speech and other customizations.

- **Searchability:** E-readers' built-in search functions mean you can easily find a favorite quote or passage in the book.
- **Built-in resources:** Dictionaries and thesauruses allow for immediate definitions.
- **Environmentally friendly and affordable:** No trees are harmed in e-book production, and they usually cost much less than traditional books.

WHICH ONE IS BEST?

Amazon Kindle is synonymous with e-reader for good reason. According to both *Wired* magazine and *The New York Times'* *Wirecutter*, the Kindle is the most affordable, best and easiest choice for reading electronic books.

- **Amazon Kindle:** With a 6-inch screen and a high pixel density for sharper text, the least expensive Kindle — around \$100 on Amazon — offers just about all the advantages of the more expensive e-readers. If you're planning on reading outdoors this summer, it's worth the extra charge, roughly \$50, to upgrade to the waterproof Kindle Paperwhite with its better lighting options.
- **Rakuten Kobo:** Japanese retailer Rakuten currently offers six Kindle-comparable e-readers ranging from \$110 to \$400. The Libra 2 has a physical page-turn button and Bluetooth

support, so you can connect headphones and listen to audiobooks.

- **Barnes & Noble Nook:** The book retailer's e-reader features a touch screen and page-turning button, as well as the ability to annotate and highlight text. The devices start around \$100. As an added perk, Nook owners can read the complete contents of any book for free while in stores for one hour per day. ☑

What will you read?

Once you've settled on an e-reader, where do you find the books? Amazon, Barnes & Noble and Kobo all sell tomes to download to their specific e-readers. But you could read for years without having to spend another dime. Sources of free e-books include:

- **OverDrive.com**, used by 43,000 libraries and schools worldwide, allows anyone with a library card to pull e-books, magazines and audio books.
- **Project Gutenberg**, a library of more than 70,000 free e-books to download or read online. Thousands of volunteers digitize and proofread the books available at gutenberg.org.
- **Mybookcave.com**
- **Planetebook.com**
- **ManyBooks.net**
- **OpenLibrary.org**
- **GetFreeEbooks.com**

Enjoying our summer traditions

A time we celebrate together

We're in the dog days of summer. Did you know that phrase dates back to the Romans? When I hear it, I always think about long, hot days perfect for a dip in a creek or pool, or a family gathering beneath a shade tree. It's a time of year bookended by two of my favorite holidays — the Fourth of July and Labor Day.



KEVIN BEYERS
Chief Executive Officer

One of the many things I enjoy about my role with Farmers Mutual and Federated Telephone is seeing all the ways our community comes together. We're more than a communications company. We not only want to provide you industry-leading services — like internet as fast as the summer is hot — but we also have a deep, lasting commitment to helping this place we call home thrive.

There's no better time than summer to experience the energy, bustle and cherished traditions that make being outdoors so enjoyable. From the Fourth of July with fireworks that light up the night sky to Labor Day and its laid-back barbecues, these holidays are benchmarks in the rhythm of the year. But they go beyond the festivities and events. They carry a deeper significance, a reminder of the

values we hold dear and the ties that unite us.

For us, the Fourth of July isn't just about celebrating independence. It's about coming together as a community to honor our shared heritage and celebrate our freedoms. Whether it's an annual parade or a neighborhood party or church potluck, these traditions are uniquely our own. We see family and friends often enjoying the same events and places as our parents, grandparents and even older generations. Throughout it all, we also remember those men and women who served our nation, because we would not be where we are as a community or nation without their service and sacrifice.

And then there's Labor Day, a time to pause and reflect on the hard work and dedication that built our community and the nation's economy. Workers play vital roles in our past, present and future, and we're proud our services make much of this work possible. Often the economies of rural places like ours are dismissed, but we see the work and commitment that make the businesses in our region possible. These efforts are worth celebrating every day.

But perhaps what's most remarkable about these holidays — really this entire summer season — are the connections we make along the way. In a world that often feels increasingly disconnected, the traditions tie us not only to this place but also to each other, and we're all the better for it.

At Farmers Mutual and Federated Telephone, we're acutely aware of the role we play in fostering this sense of community. It's a responsibility we welcome, whether that means providing access to high-speed internet, supporting our schools, sponsoring a game or any other service we can provide. Together, we make this place all that it is, and I look forward to seeing you out and about during the dog days. 🗨️

Connection is a bimonthly newsletter published by Farmers Mutual and Federated Telephone, © 2024. It is distributed without charge to all of our customers.



Farmers Mutual Telephone Company
301 Second St. S.
Bellingham, MN 56212
farmers@farmerstel.net
320-568-2105

Federated Telephone Cooperative
201 State Hwy. 9 S. • P.O. Box 107
Morris, MN 56267
emailftc@fedtel.net
320-324-7111 or 320-585-4875

FARMERS MUTUAL TELEPHONE COMPANY BOARD

Gerald Stensrud, District I, Vice President
Dean Olson, District I, Secretary
Michael Sorenson, District II
Galen Jorgensen, District II
Scott Wittnebel, District III, President
Troy Hoyles, District III
Jerome Kallhoff, District IV

FEDERATED TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE BOARD

Lucas deNeui, District 1
Tim Danielson, District 2, Secretary
Lynn Swenson, District 3
Dan Smith, District 4, President
Nancy Taffe, District 5, Vice President
Jon Hanson, District 6
Dennis Schroeder, District 7

Produced for Acira by:



On the Cover:



Traildusters Saddle Club events are family-friendly gatherings to promote horsemanship as part of the Western Saddle Clubs Association. See story Page 12.

Photo courtesy of Traildusters Saddle Club



Farmers Mutual and Federated Telephone's offices will be closed on **THURSDAY, JULY 4**, for Independence Day. We wish everyone a fun and safe holiday.

Capital credits are coming

Farmers Mutual and Federated Telephone will distribute Capital Credit Dividends soon.

Current members with a refund of less than \$500 and an active billing account will have their capital credit dividend applied directly to their account.

Any member with a refund of more than \$500 or an inactive billing account will receive a capital credit dividend check by mail.

Know what's below

Summer is officially here, and that means it's time to tackle backyard projects ideal for long weekends. If your to-do list includes a job that involves any digging, the first step is to call 811.

Minnesota's excavation laws require homeowners and contractors to call 811 before digging. Starting a digging project without first knowing where underground utility lines are buried can result in damage to expensive infrastructure and put lives at risk. Gopher State One Call notifies all utilities based on the caller's address, allowing those stakeholders to safeguard their facilities.

Find out more at gopherstateonecall.org.





PET-FRIENDLY ADVENTURES

Map out trips with furry friends

Story by KATHY DENES

Summer typically means travel, whether scenic road trips or flights to vacation destinations. And more than ever before, beloved pets are tagging along for the ride.

Pet-friendly travel is a hot topic addressed by top vacation resources like Conde Naste Traveler, which has an online list of nationwide hotels and Airbnbs it deems best for accommodating pets, especially dogs.

Meanwhile, on travelandleisure.com, search “pets” and you’ll unleash a wealth of helpful articles. Even financial companies are weighing in. NerdWallet compiled a list of Best Hotels for Pets in 2024, based on factors like fees and amenities, and rated air travel options, topped by Alaska Airlines. But if you don’t want to do the research yourself, there are travel agencies that specialize in planning and taking care of the details for you.

Also, hotels, resorts, parks and campgrounds usually post their pet policies, fees and amenities, as do airlines, trains and even cruise lines that allow furry passengers. Many websites are focused entirely on pet-friendly travel. Just browse by city, state or destination at resources such as:

- bringfido.com
- petswelcome.com
- tripswithpets.com





EXPERT ADVICE

“Before deciding to bring your pet along on a trip, you need to ask yourself whether or not it’s in your pet’s best interest to do so,” says Dr. Rena Carlson, president of the American Veterinary Medical Association.

What’s a fun adventure for you might be an overwhelming experience for your dog. “If you choose to include your pet, a pre-trip veterinary visit is a good idea, to make sure your pet is healthy and up to date on vaccinations and microchip registration, and to obtain a health certificate, which is required by law if you’re traveling to a different state with your pet,” Carlson says.

Your veterinarian can also provide vital information about the risk of parasites and other diseases that your pet may be exposed to at your destination, as well as possible preventive steps or treatments.

“Make sure to plan for their comfort in transit, whether by land or air, with regular breaks and by choosing the least stressful travel options,” Carlson says. “Confirm in advance that your destinations are pet-friendly, and try to maintain your pet’s routine as much as possible to help them feel secure. Your careful planning can ensure a safe and enjoyable trip for everyone involved.” 🗨️



For more great tips for traveling with your pet, check out:

- » pettravel.com
- » petfriendlytravel.com
- » avma.org

YOUR OWN MASSIVE BACKYARD

Tourism departments are great resources for planning trips that will include pets. Explore Minnesota has travel tips and information on just about any type of destination in the state. Its website, exploreminnesota.com, has links to almost 500 hotels where pets are allowed inside, as well as to articles detailing pet-friendly resorts and parks.

For travelers with dogs, the site ranks North Shore towns among the top spots to visit, “with their cobblestone beaches, Lake Superior to wade into, hiking paths and waterfalls to explore, cafes with dog-friendly patios and many welcoming resorts.”

Kelly Lessard, who writes on sidewalkdog.com from the perspective of her dog, Kramer, singles out Grand Marais as a particularly great destination. “There’s a difference between places that accept dogs and places that welcome dogs,” she writes. “Grand Marais is probably at the top of my list as a dog destination.”

For the camping-minded, Lessard has a few recommendations:

Crow Wing Lake Campground in Brainerd is a family-friendly destination that has an off-leash pet park and a free pet washing station. Guests can rent paddle boats, paddle boards, canoes and enjoy a pool.

Tofte’s Crescent Lake Campground is in Superior National Forest near the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. There are 34 private sites, including six waterfront campsites. Dogs are welcome but must be kept on a leash.

Town & Country Campground in Savage is pet-friendly and near attractions like Valleyfair, the Minnesota Zoo and Mall of America. Visitors, who may have as many as three dogs, can enjoy the saltwater pool, playground and viewing wildlife.

SMOOTH STREAMING

TIPS FOR SEAMLESS ENTERTAINMENT



Photo by Kijakal/Adobe Stock



Photo by Alvaro/Adobe Stock

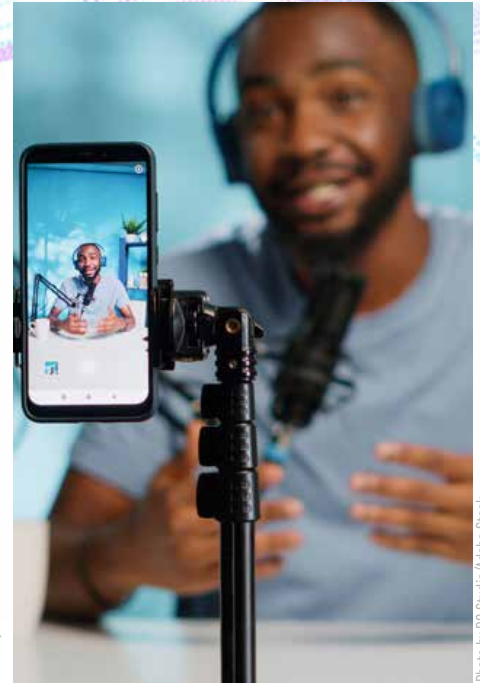


Photo by DC Studio/Adobe Stock

Whether it's music, movies, gaming or more, streaming and interactive online content are a part of daily life for many of us. With a little care and planning, you can have the smoothest experience possible. Also, keep in mind the professionals at Farmers Mutual and Federated Telephone are always ready to support you, answering your questions and offering the advice you need to make the right choices.

Here are a few items to consider:

1 ANTICIPATE HOW YOU WILL USE YOUR STREAMING SERVICES:

When assessing your internet needs for streaming, consider the number of people in your household and their activities. Will there be remote work, gaming or multiple streaming services involved? Once you understand your usage patterns, you can make sure your internet plan matches your needs.

2 DEVICE COUNT: Don't overlook the number of devices connected to your Wi-Fi network. It's common for households to have various smartphones, tablets and smart appliances online all at the same time. Remember, each connected device consumes bandwidth, which can affect the performance of all your devices.

3 WI-FI COVERAGE: Slow streaming can sometimes be attributed to Wi-Fi issues rather than insufficient bandwidth. Evaluate the placement of your router, and consider investing in a mesh Wi-Fi system to ensure comprehensive coverage throughout your home. This can significantly improve streaming performance, especially in larger homes or areas with signal dead zones.

4 UNDERSTANDING STREAMING: Streaming involves the continuous transmission of media

content from an online server to a digital device. It can include a wide range of content, from livestreams to recorded movies and TV shows. At times, it can seem like an endless stream of content possibilities. However, there are potential bottlenecks, so consider cataloging all the streaming services you use — including online gaming — to make sure you have the internet connection and Wi-Fi setup that's right for you.

5 TECHNOLOGICAL EVOLUTION: Streaming technology has rapidly evolved, revolutionizing how we consume media. Stay informed about advances in streaming services and internet technology to make informed decisions about your streaming setup. For example, image resolution for some movies is now much higher than just a few years ago. And you need a faster connection to enjoy this rich content. 📺

Healing therapy

Morris equine foundation connects people with horses

Story by JAMIE BIESIADA

For Dustin Walters, who lives with muscular dystrophy, regular therapeutic lessons with horses have not only helped him physically, but mentally.

“He’s always been an upbeat, happy guy, but you can just tell the sunshine in his eyes — it’s just something very exciting for him,” says his mom, Deb.

Dustin has been taking lessons with the If Wishes Were Horses Foundation in Morris since October. There, he’s done everything from brushing and feeding the pony, Cheyenne, to riding her, he says. It’s led to a deep connection between the two.

Similarly, Melissa Ehrenberg, who lives with autism, has formed a connection with an Arabian horse named Apollo, but she enjoys working with all the horses at IWWH. “They taught me everything,” Melissa says.

A DREAM FOUNDATION

Donna Brandt, president and director of IWWH, is a 30-year veteran horsemanship instructor. She also knows the therapeutic power of horses firsthand — after a February 1991 car accident, horses were a part of her own recovery.

“It’s a full-body exercise without impact,” Donna says. “I had major knee injuries — my knees had gotten pinned between two cars — so I had a lot of injuries. It was something that allowed me to gain that strength back.”

Fast forward to more recent years when Donna met Lesley Barry, a Morris



Dustin Walters enjoys grooming and riding Cheyenne.

resident and business owner. Lesley owns the farm where IWWH operates, and her business, Good Life Services, provides in-home care for people with developmental and physical disabilities. It had long been her dream to create a foundation dedicated to connecting horses to people with physical, emotional or cognitive challenges.

Lesley asked Donna to start the nonprofit thanks to her earlier experience in the field, and IWWH was born. IWWH is waiting on its final nonprofit approval, expected this summer. The foundation began accepting clients last summer.

‘FINDING JOY IN EVERY SINGLE DAY’

IWWH works with clients of differing abilities. No matter what an individual’s ability level may be, Donna says forming a connection with horses can help people in their day-to-day lives. For instance, she says, riding a horse demands a certain level of focus. For clients with autism, riding can often help improve their concentration. It’s also a low-impact workout for those with physical limitations.



Melissa Ehrenberg enjoys her time with the horses, including Odie.

“Our clients have to work for everything that they need and want, and struggle with everyday life,” Donna says. “They’re working toward their dreams. Your dreams don’t just get handed to you, and these guys have all kinds of challenges. And yet, they’re finding joy in every single day. You should see their faces beaming when they’re on a horse.”

Lessons cost \$50 each. The vast majority of IWWH’s staff members work on a volunteer basis, and donations help fund the operation. While Donna hopes to one day create a facility where clients can receive both physical and mental therapy services, one of her more immediate goals is a much-needed indoor riding facility.

To learn more about If Wishes Were Horses, check out the organization’s new website, iwwh.org.

Photos courtesy of If Wishes Were Horses



Planting ideas

FARMER FROBERG USES SOCIAL MEDIA TO PROVIDE LESSONS, LAUGHS

Story by MELANIE JONES

Wearing a plaid shirt and a gray Froberg's Farm cap, Tyler Froberg shares a cool fact about a favorite fruit with youthful viewers. "Every strawberry in the world is picked by hand," he tells eager young minds. "And it takes half an hour to pick one row."

Most fruit and vegetables are harvested by machines, which helps the fourth-generation farmer talk about farming as a STEAM — science, technology, engineering, arts and math — career option he promotes in a video for Lego's education branch, known as Rebuilding the World with Agriculture.

Tyler has made a few videos for Lego, promoting school-based projects like building a strawberry-picking machine that won't destroy the delicate fruit. But his screentime isn't

limited to collaborations with Lego. As Farmer Froberg, Tyler has more than 780,000 social media followers learning about gardening, farming and life on a fruit and vegetable agritourism farm.

TEACHING THROUGH VIDEOS

When he first got out of the Army, Tyler worked on the family farm in Alvin, Texas. "I decided that I had my GI Bill, so I should probably go to college," he says.

After earning a degree in agriculture, he worked for a year as an agriculture science teacher. "I loved it, and when you love something, you tend to be good at it, and when you tend to be good at it, you get recognition for it," he says.

"I think I achieved something that I never thought I would through social media."

— Tyler Froberg
@farmer.froberg

Tyler Froberg, known to his 780,000 followers as Farmer Froberg, took to social media so he could educate people about farming and gardening.



LEFT: Tyler, right, and his uncle, Alfred Froberg, show off watermelons grown at Froberg's Farm.

BELOW: Tyler enjoys making social media videos with his sons, or, as he calls them online, "Little Farmer Frobergs." Tyler and his son, Dustin, have fun sharing gardening lessons.



Photos contributed by Tyler Froberg

A nonprofit recognized Tyler as the person it needed to run a program teaching farm skills to fellow veterans. "When I was there, though, I missed the spark that you got with young people, whether it was seeing a seed germinate or seeing an animal being born," he says. "While I was teaching adults, I didn't see the same spark."

Around that time, TikTok became popular, and Tyler got an idea. "I should make little videos, like ag lessons," he says. "I'm still a teacher, and maybe that will scratch that itch. And so, I did."

In the first two months, several of his videos got a respectable number of views. "I had a video hit 10,000 views, and then I had a video hit 250,000 views, and I was like, 'Huh, there might be something to this.'"

Tyler has posted a few poems, tried growing square watermelons and loofahs, and succeeded in growing star-shaped zucchini. He's even zipped layers of jackets to the tune of "Stand by Me" — which got over 5 million views the first time he posted it. But his favorite videos to make are any with his sons in them. "We just laugh and have fun," he says, talking about "Little Frobergs" Dusty, Carson Lee and Tommy "Tomcat."

"I'm not one of those content creator parents that are like, 'No, no, no. You have to say that this way,'" he says. "It's only been three years, and so, it's still kind of new for us. They get excited to go out and film with me." Tyler's wife, Kristi, known on social media as "Momma Froberg," also gets the occasional guest spot.

STAGES TO SUCCESS

Tyler's made plenty of silly videos. His personal favorite involves being a rubber duck farmer. "There were these rubber ducks everywhere, and it was just a lot of fun," he says.

Despite his following on social media, Tyler doesn't consider himself an influencer. "Influencers are putting on makeup trying to influence you to use this certain brand or product, or there are ag influencers who create content for people in the ag industry. They work with brands and influence followers to use certain brands or products, and I don't feel like I do that."

Tyler says there are a few stages every content creator goes through. The first step is embarrassment. "You don't want anybody you know to know that you're creating content," he says.

"Then comes, 'So you're still doing that thing?'" he says. "That's when you see your mom and she's like, 'Oh, you're still making the little videos. It's so cute.'"

The third phase is thinking content creation is a waste of time. "You're starting to take it more seriously," he says, "but you're not getting a lot out of it yet."

Then there's the final step — success. "For me, I got invited to give a commencement speech at a college graduation, and walking out on stage and realizing, 'oh wait, I think I did it.' I'm still not 100% sure, but I think I achieved something that I never thought I would through social media."

What about those strawberry-picking machines?

"I would like to think that Lego went as far as they could with that and got hundreds of thousands of submissions for strawberry-picking machines, but I don't know that to be true," he says. But he planted the seed of an idea. Now it's time to see what grows. 🗨️

CHECK IT OUT!

Tyler Froberg's videos are available on Instagram and TikTok at [farmer.froberg](https://www.instagram.com/farmer.froberg). His YouTube and Facebook accounts are under the name Farmer Froberg. For more on his family's farm, go to [frobergfarm.com](https://www.frobergfarm.com).



Generations in the saddle

Traildusters Saddle Club strengthens family bonds

Story by JAMIE BIESIADA

Horsemanship is truly a family affair for the Traildusters Saddle Club. Part of the larger Western Saddle Clubs Association, the Morris-based Traildusters attracts entire families, furthering the WSCA's mission of promoting good horsemanship and sportsmanship.

Elysia Woodke, a nurse by trade who works on a family farm now, attended her first Traildusters event in May 2023. Since then, she and her daughter, Britney, 14, "jumped in with both feet." They've been to almost all the club's events since, as well as Britney's first WSCA show.

"It's super encouraging," Elysia says. "It's meant to be fun. Everybody participates. Everybody jokes around. Everybody wants everybody else to do well." It's become a place where she and Britney can connect. Another of Elysia's children, 6-year-old Brendon, will join them this year.

Photo by Elysia Woodke

Jordan Supan knows that family environment well. She joined the Traildusters as a fifth grader in 2005. She's now the club's secretary, and her 2-year-old daughter, Brynlee, enjoys riding with her at events.

Jordan always had a passion for horses. She got her first pony when she was very young from her grandparents, Bob and Jean Ritzschke. She graduated to a horse when she was 10. "I have learned so much as a rider and horseman," she says.

Now, she enjoys sharing what she's learned with others. "As a club we are a very family-centered, horse-driven group of people who always try to support one another, creating a fun environment for everyone to ride, learn and enjoy the company of like-minded people," Jordan says. "That is my favorite part. So, whether someone is new to riding or has ridden since before they could walk, there is always a place for them in a saddle club."



Photos by Jean Ritzschke



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Britney Woodke and her younger brother, Brendon, take a ride on Star.

Jordan Supan prepares for a showmanship competition with her horse, Princess.

Jordan's horse makes a turn in a barrel racing event.

FOR THE LOVE OF HORSES

Bob and Jean helped found Traildusters. The group wound down after a few years, but they revived it in 2005 for their own children. Today, they regularly watch their grandchildren, including Jordan, in the saddle. Bob is the club's longtime president, and Jean is treasurer.



Photo by Elysia Woodke



Photo by Jean Ritzschke

LEFT: Brendon, 6, sits atop Mufasa, a miniature paint horse. Brendon plans to start riding with the Traildusters Saddle Club this year. **ABOVE:** Jordan competes in an egg and spoon race with her horse, Princess.

“We just do it because I love to watch my grandkids ride,” Jean says. “I love horses. We have a super group of Traildusters members. It’s just fun.”

Each year, the Traildusters Saddle Club hosts three public events, as well as five “playdates” just for club members. Riders compete in their age groups within two categories, performance and games. “Performance classes are largely scored on how well the horse and rider work in unison and how the horse moves,” Jordan says. “Games are scored by fastest time without knocking down an obstacle.”

Playdates are when Traildusters members get together and just have fun, Jean says. They hold pleasure and gaming competitions and whatever else club members are interested in doing that day. “Yes, it’s a competition per se, but it’s more learning,” Jean says. “If kids are having trouble on a certain jump or whatever, that’s where they can go practice and learn. It’s a lot of helping out that way.”

CLUB ROYALTY

Jordan always enjoyed watching rodeos with her family, and she was particularly taken with rodeo queens. But since she doesn’t ride in rodeos, Jordan investigated other saddle clubs that had royalty and found each club had its own rules and standards. When she was 15, she approached the Traildusters board with the idea of adding royalty and was told to submit an essay. She did and was crowned the club’s first queen. She proudly wore the crown and sash, serving as the face of the club and an ambassador for riding.

The club has since expanded the royal court, adding a princess and an interview portion to the contest. Jordan was named queen again in 2018, when she also ran for queen of the WCSA. She earned the title of Ms. Horsemanship.

“Since being Ms. Horsemanship, I have taken many of the things I learned back to Traildusters and have joined our club royalty committee in helping other young ladies achieve the same dream I had,” Jordan says.

BENEFIT TO THE COMMUNITY

The saddle club hosts its events at the Stevens County Fairgrounds in Morris, and when the Traildusters are in town, the riders aren’t the only ones who benefit. “There’s quite a few businesses in town that benefit from the horse shows coming into town,” Jean says.

While the club has a lunch wagon at its events, competitors and spectators often head to restaurants, stay in hotels and shop in local stores. “I think that’s important,” Jean says.

Traildusters has a group on Facebook to get word out to members about upcoming events. The club also relies on word of mouth and puts up fliers around town.

It’s working, attracting new members like Elysia and Britney. Elysia said the club’s horses benefit from the relationship as much as the members. “You can just tell once they get to the arena that they just absolutely love it,” she says. “They like to work.”

And, the cherry on top is all the family bonding that comes from Traildusters and riding as a whole. “I absolutely love that it is a club that the whole family can enjoy, and there is no age limit,” Jordan says. 📱



Adobe Illustration by wernerimages

Sensational SUMMER SALADS

Among summer's many charms are vegetables and fruit blooming with flavor, and it doesn't take a lot of effort to turn them into delicious salads.

These recipes cover all the salad bases. From crisp leafy tossed salads to sturdy mixes that can sit out for a couple hours while the kids play in the yard and you visit with friends. Keep it easy and choose a make-ahead recipe featuring hearty pastas, grains and beans that can work as a side dish or a full meal, or throw together fruit or vegetable combinations that hit sweet or savory notes.

Summer salads are versatile, so feel free to swap out lettuces, and use a variety of fruits instead of just one kind. After all, it's summertime, and the living — and cooking — should be easy.



**Food Editor
Anne P. Braly
is a native of
Chattanooga,
Tennessee.**

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



BLUEBERRY PEACH SALAD

- 1 pint fresh blueberries
- 2 peaches, diced (leaving the skin on adds texture, vitamins and color)
- 2 cucumbers, sliced
- 1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped basil
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

In a large serving bowl combine the blueberries, peaches, cucumbers and feta.

In a jar with a lid or measuring cup combine the lemon juice, Dijon, honey, olive oil, basil, salt and pepper. Whisk together until well combined.

Pour the vinaigrette over the salad and gently mix everything together. Taste for seasoning and garnish with extra basil. Serve or cover and refrigerate the salad until ready to serve.



SUMMER CORN SALAD

- 3 cups corn kernels (approximately 4 ears)
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, quartered
- 1 cup cucumbers, diced
- 1 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 1/4 cup red onion, diced
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon fresh parsley
- Fresh basil ribbons
- Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil and add the corn. Cook for 3 to 4 minutes or until the kernels turn bright yellow. Drain the corn and cool completely. Use a sharp knife to remove the kernels from the corn cob, scraping the cobs to get all the "milk" from the cobs.

In a large bowl, combine the corn kernels, cherry tomatoes, cucumbers, feta cheese and red onion. Drizzle the olive oil and vinegar over the salad.

Season generously with salt and pepper, to taste, and toss well to combine. At this point, the salad may be made ahead. Just before serving, sprinkle with fresh herbs, and toss to combine.



MAIN DISH TORTELLINI SALAD

Grilled chicken heightens the flavor of this salad.

- 2 (10-ounce) packages cheese tortellini, prepared according to package instructions
- 2 cups shredded chicken
- 1 cup halved cherry tomatoes
- 8 ounces fresh mozzarella pearls
- 1 cup roasted red bell peppers, chopped into 1/2 -inch pieces
- 1 cup basil pesto (store-bought or homemade)
- 1 1/2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- Fresh basil ribbons, for garnish

In a large bowl, combine the tortellini, shredded chicken, cherry tomatoes, mozzarella, roasted peppers, pesto and olive oil. Cover and refrigerate. Can be prepared up to a day ahead. When ready to serve, top with fresh basil.



SUMMER SHRIMP SALAD

- 2 pounds shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped red onion
- 1 rib celery, finely chopped

Dressing:

- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 lemon, zested and juiced
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- Pinch of freshly ground black pepper

Bring a pot of water to a boil. Add the shrimp and boil for 2 to 3 minutes, until cooked through and pink. Plunge the cooked shrimp in an ice water bath to cool.

Meanwhile, make the dressing: Stir together the mayonnaise, lemon juice and zest, dill, mustard, garlic, salt and pepper.

In a mixing bowl, stir together the cooled shrimp, red onion, celery and dressing, until creamy. Serve plain or nestled on butter lettuce leaves garnished with fronds of fresh dill, if desired. 🍴

WANT YOUR **Summer** TO SIZZLE?



Get our blazing-fast
internet service
today!

- ✓ FAST
- ✓ RELIABLE
- ✓ LOCAL



320-568-2105 | farmerstel.net



320-585-4875 | fedtel.net

