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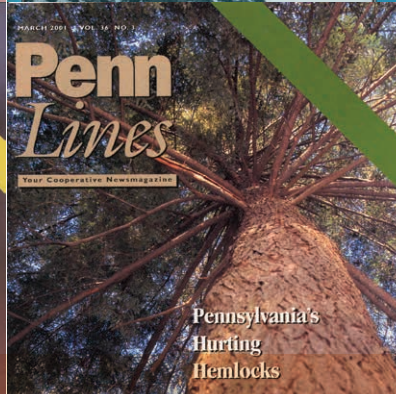
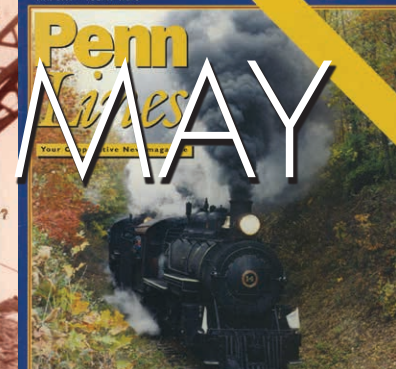
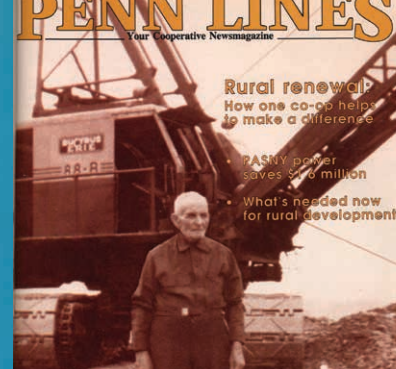
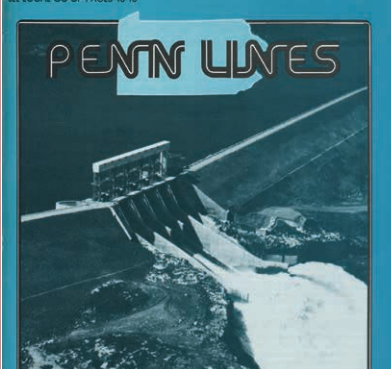
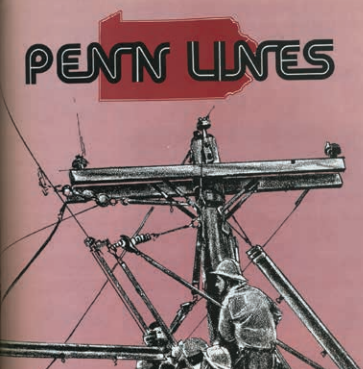
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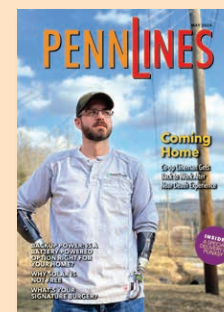
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Penn Lines may have gone through some transformations over the years, but it's dedication to Pennsylvania's rural people and places and their stories hasn't changed at all.



ON THE COVER
United Electric Cooperative's Branden Bauer, who almost died in a 2021 electrical contact accident, is hoping his story helps others avoid a similar fate.

PHOTO BY JEFF FETZER

Advocacy Matters

Cooperatives rally to keep the lights on, save rural jobs



STEVE BRAME

MOTHER'S DAY IS AROUND THE CORNER, and that got me thinking about something my own mom was fond of saying, "If you don't stand up for yourself, who will?"

As I've grown up and into a career serving and supporting rural electric cooperatives, I've realized Mom was right: advocacy matters, especially when attempts to do the right thing have unintended consequences — like they sometimes do in Washington.

That was the case recently when the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) announced a plan to increase the energy efficiency of distribution transformers — a crucial piece of equipment in keeping your lights on — by switching up the materials used to produce them.

Under the new rule, manufacturers would have been required to use amorphous metal, an ultra-thin, non-traditional steel, almost exclusively to produce transformers instead of grain-oriented electrical steel (GOES), an industry standard that's made right here in Pennsylvania.

While cooperatives nationwide support sensible energy efficiency efforts, they quickly opposed the new rule, and so did the groups that represent them, including our organization, the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association, and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association in Washington.

Why? Because thanks to the lingering effects of the global pandemic, transformers are already in short supply. A massive, mandated shift from GOES to amorphous steel, a scarcer option, would have made a bad situation much worse — all at a time when demand for electricity is only increasing.

And without transformers, cooperatives' hands are tied. They wouldn't be able to restore service to members or modernize their systems. A tighter equipment supply would have also led to higher operating costs and possibly unintended consequences for electric rates.

Here, rural jobs were at risk, too. GOES is produced at two U.S. plants, one in Butler, Pa., a region crisscrossed by cooperative lines, and the other in Ohio. The shift to amorphous steel would have effectively forced GOES out of the market and resulted in the loss of 1,300 jobs in rural Pennsylvania alone.

Clearly, Washington's plan wasn't good for the grid, consumers, or local economies, so cooperatives and their advocacy groups rallied, speaking with a unified voice to change the DOE's mind. Cooperatives here pitched in by working with U.S. Rep. Mike Kelly, who grew up in Butler and led the effort in Congress to oppose the plan and keep the local plant open. Bipartisan legislation was also introduced to override the rule.

These collective efforts led the DOE to make its own shift.

In April, the department softened its stance and announced a less-restrictive final rule. The compromise allows transformer producers to continue using GOES to meet the department's new efficiency targets. It also gives them more time to comply.

As an industry, we spoke up and we spoke out to keep the lights on and preserve rural jobs — and Washington listened. We showed that advocacy matters. Thanks, Mom. And Happy Mother's Day. 🍷

STEVE BRAME
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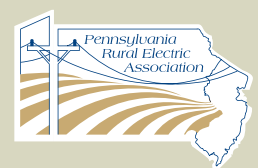
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DO YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO?

The road to electrocution is too often paved with assumptions. So-and-so didn't think such-and-such and assumed this-and-that but then ... zap.

Electricity is hazardous. Deadly. It might be impossible to overstate the power of energy. There are hundreds of miles of electrical lines between us, powering desk lamps, computers, printing presses – only a few of the things needed just to put my words in front of you – thanks to a lot of people working together to deliver electricity **safely**.

It's why you may have heard of cooperatives visiting schools, teaching local youngsters how to recognize potential electrical hazards and how to report them. You'll also find cooperative lineworkers at county fairs, demonstrating safety protocols around live wires as well as the consequences of contact.

In the spirit of National Electrical Safety Month, consider this: Do you know how to recognize a hazardous situation? Do your co-workers? If someone gets hurt, who are you going to call?



Every year, cooperatives send their lineworkers, engineers and other employees to the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association's Job Training & Safety schools. These schools are led by industry experts who devote hundreds of hours to teaching cooperative staff what to do – and, more important, what not to do – around electricity.

This training is important – and can mean the difference between life and death. When you read this month's feature story, you'll know exactly what I'm talking about.

So if you're ever unsure about what to do when it comes to electricity, call your local rural electric cooperative. Even better, get educated about electrical safety. Every month in *Penn Lines*, your cooperative publishes valuable articles on a range of energy issues – safety, among them. When it comes to electrical hazards, it's always best not to assume.

MICHAEL T. CRAWFORD
SENIOR EDITOR



YOURERIE.COM

A HAPPY SURPRISE: Punxsutawney Phil, the groundhog famous for predicting the start of spring, and his mate, Phyllis, gave their handlers quite a surprise recently: two pups, who arrived in March and are said to be doing well.

THE 'PHIRST PHAMILY'

No one predicted latest Punxsutawney Phil development

After Punxsutawney Phil used his mysterious groundhog skills in February (OK, he emerged from a hole and didn't see his shadow) to call for an early spring, no one — not even his handlers — could have predicted what was going to happen next.

"We have babies," the Punxsutawney Groundhog Club announced on social media recently.

Yep, in a surprising turn of events, Phil and his mate, Phyllis, have welcomed two little ones.

"It was very unexpected; we had no idea that she was pregnant," Tom Dunkel, president of the club's Inner Circle, told a local TV station.

Following the news, well-wishes poured in.

"CONGRATS TO THE PHIRST PHAMILY OF PUNXSUTAWNEY," one Instagram follower wrote.

"Can I be a fairy hogmother?" another asked.

For now, the phoursome is tucked away at the Punxsutawney Memorial Library, their home away from home at Gobbler's Knob, the Jefferson County landmark where Phil makes his famous seasonal predictions on — you guessed it: Groundhog Day, each Feb. 2. The region is served by Dubois-based

United Electric Cooperative.

Phil phans can catch a peek of the phamily at the library's inside viewing area during regular hours. The library's exterior viewing area is open 24 hours a day.

And if you can't visit, the club has posted a video of the pups on its Instagram account, @punxsyphil.

ON ALERT

Ag officials take precautions after nearby states detect bird flu in dairy cows

Pennsylvania agriculture officials say there is no cause for panic here after the bird flu was detected in dairy cows in several states, including neighboring Ohio and Michigan.

For safety, however, the Commonwealth has instituted a quarantine order that requires cattle imported from a state where highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) has been detected to be tested within five days of movement.

At presstime, Pennsylvania had not had a positive HPAI case on a dairy farm. Also, meat and milk supplies are safe, according to Pennsylvania State Veterinarian Alex Hamberg, who said pasteurization should kill the virus.



Hamberg is encouraging dairy farmers to consult with their vets. Symptoms of the disease include rapid drops in milk production and milk taking on a deep, rich yellow or orange color, similar to an egg yolk.

The state's Center for Dairy Excellence has been giving updates during weekly conference calls with farmers and providing biosecurity kits upon request. For more information, call the center at 717-346-0849 or visit centerfordairyexcellence.org.

NATURE'S WONDERS

Cameron County designates four sites perfect for stargazing

Recently, much of the nation was focused on getting a glimpse of April's solar eclipse, but on most nights in certain parts of Pennsylvania, visitors can take part in something just as spectacular: stargazing.

In Cameron County, for instance, officials are working to earn an official "Dark Sky Place" designation. With funding from the Pennsylvania Lumber Heritage Region, the county — parts of which are served by Mansfield-based Tri-County Rural Electric Cooperative — has designated four new stargazing

locations with plans for a fifth in the works.

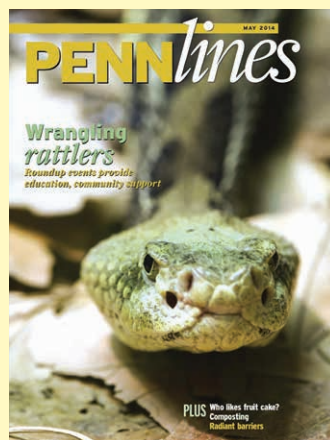
Those locations are:

- ▶ **Moore Hill Stargazing Area** near State Game Lands No. 14 via Moore Hill Road (41.46425197129469, -78.31511400318615)
- ▶ **Whittimore Hill Stargazing Area**, which can be accessed via May Hollow Road (41.468500, -78.227639)
- ▶ **Bucktail Overlook**, which can be reached via Mason Hill Road from Sterling Run or Driftwood (41.34982480922727, -78.15349680319066)
- ▶ **Sinnemahoning State Park** along Route 872 (41.422685619304225, -78.02948741676141)

Cool, windless nights offer the best viewing conditions. Smartphone apps, such as Stellarium and Google Sky, can be useful for stargazing, too. (Just point your phone toward the sky to see names of major stars, planets and constellations.)

For more information and other places to explore in Cameron County and across Pennsylvania, go to visitPAGO.com.

TIME LINES



MAY 2014

A decade ago, *Penn Lines* slithered into the world of rattlesnake roundups, five of which were sanctioned by the state at the time in Bradford, Cameron, Potter, Tioga and Wyoming counties. Educational for hunters and the public alike, the events followed a strict set of rules and at the end of each hunt, every snake — after it was measured and tagged — was returned to the exact spot where it was captured. Money from the roundups went to good causes, including local volunteer fire companies. All, except the Bradford County hunt, continue today.



CAN YOU DIG IT?

Looking to stock up on native plants? Then don't miss the 2024 Central Pennsylvania Native Plant Festival Saturday, May 4, at Millbrook Marsh Nature Center, State College. Workshops, food vendors and music are planned, too. Learn more at panativeplantsociety.org.

WINGING IT

On May 11, the community of Galeton in Potter County will be hosting King of the Wing, a chicken wing cook-off for a good cause: to raise funds for its annual Fourth of July celebration. Join the fun — and eat some wings — from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Centertown Park. Look for more details at visitgaleton.com.



FOOD, FUN AND FIRE

Head to Huntingdon May 17 and 18 for the Fifth Annual BBQ Bonanza, a two-day fundraiser at the Huntingdon County Fairgrounds, featuring barbecue competitions, crafts, a car show, activities for the kids, a demolition derby, and more. Get all the details at jcy-bbqbonanza.com.

ROLL OUT THE BARREL

Grab your favorite dance partner and get on the road to Johnstown for Polkafest 2024, May 31 to June 2 at Peoples Natural Gas Park. Admission for adults is \$5 on Friday and Saturday and free on Sunday. The annual event — one of only a few to combine Polish and Slovenian polka styles — features some of the country's best bands. Learn more at visitjohnstownpa.com/polkafest.





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COMING HOME

Co-op Lineman Gets Back to Work After Near-Death Experience

JEFF FETZER

Penn Lines Contributor

Sitting at his desk in United Electric Cooperative’s “war room,” a dispatch center used to coordinate outage response during major storms, Branden Bauer is locked in a different sort of battle on a sunny February afternoon. This one involves picking up a paper clip from the top of his desk with the chunky prosthetic hooks that have replaced his hands.

After several failed attempts to grip the clip, Branden changes his approach. He slides the fastener beyond the edge of the desk, opens the body-controlled hook attached below the elbow of his right arm, grabs the clip and attaches it to a work order.

The line superintendent tackles trivial tasks, like picking up a paper clip or eating potato chips — chugging them from a cup works best, he says — much like he has handled the more daunting challenges he has faced since losing both hands in an electrical-contact incident: with persistence, an

ability to adapt, and a stubborn will to succeed.

That Branden returned to work at all following the 2021 electrocution that claimed his lower arms and nearly killed him may seem nothing short of miraculous to those who don’t know the 33-year-old. But it came as no surprise to those in his orbit, including Shane Farrell, United Electric’s operations manager and Branden’s supervisor.

“Branden is very determined, and his personality, along with an awesome family support system, helped him through this,” Farrell says. “With his great attitude, nothing

"One of the journeymen was praying over me, asking God to save my life. That's my first memory after I came to."

gets him down. He is an awesome story of perseverance and determination."

'When all hell broke loose'

That story began Jan. 8, 2021, when Branden, then a 30-year-old journeyman lineman, came into contact with a high-voltage electric line during a system-improvement project in Jefferson County. While working from a bucket 40 feet above the ground and attempting to attach a guy wire to a new pole, Branden's arm brushed against an energized 7,200-volt electric line.

"That's when all hell broke loose," he recalls. "As soon as I contacted one of my forearms with the phase, instantly I was locked up."

Branden remembers hearing crew members on the ground screaming, "Get away from it," while he tried — unsuccessfully — to buckle his knees and collapse into the bucket to avoid the electric current coursing through his limbs.

"Then my eyes went shut, and everything went dark," he says. "I don't know how to explain it, but I was coherently thinking for maybe 5 to 10 seconds, and I knew in my head that this might be the end."

Those who witnessed the electrocution told Branden he remained locked onto the high-voltage line for 30 to 45 seconds before he slumped over the front of the bucket.

"I either passed out or died, I'm not quite sure," he says. "I think I passed out."

After Branden's crew chief lowered the bucket to the ground, frantic crew members pulled the lineman from the bucket — his leather gloves smoldering, his body almost too hot to touch, his eyes wide open but lifeless — and placed him on the ground.

Some of the crew, Branden says, thought he was already dead as they pulled off his shirt and prepared to administer CPR.

And then Branden regained consciousness.

"One of the journeymen was praying over me, asking God to save my life," Branden says. "That's my first memory after I came to."

The crew members, who Branden says did "everything right," tried to calm their co-worker and prevent him from seeing the devastation to his hands and arms as they awaited medical personnel.

"But me being in shock and kind of stubborn, I wanted to see what was going on," he says. "I looked down at my left hand, and my pinkie and ring finger were gone and looked like cigar butts, kind of burned black and sooty. I looked at

my right forearm, and it was just complete carnage."

Once emergency personnel arrived, they stanced the bleeding and told Branden they would need to place him on a stretcher to carry him to an awaiting ambulance. From there, he would be transported to a helicopter landing site and life-flighted to a burn treatment center.

"I said, 'No. I'm not getting on a stretcher,'" he says. "So, with help from my crew chief and an EMT, I got to my feet and walked about 100 yards to the ambulance."

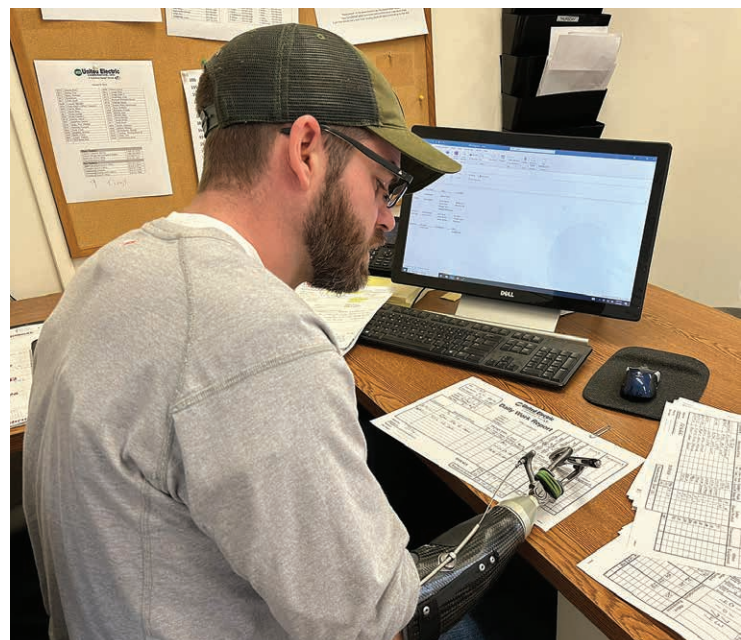
Before departing from the accident site, Branden also shared news with his crew that under ordinary circumstances would have been cause for celebration: He and his wife, Katelyn, were expecting their first child.

"I just kept saying, 'I can't die. I can't die. I'm going to be a father,'" Branden says, choking up as he recalled the memory. "That whole flight to Pittsburgh, all I could think about was my daughter: Am I going to get to see her birth? Will I be able to hold her? Am I going to get to pick her up from school one day? Will I get to walk her down the aisle?"

'I never thought I was going to die'

After evaluation and emergency surgery at the burn unit at UPMC-Mercy, Branden received some positive news: His internal organs appeared to have escaped injury during the electrocution.

"So the path of electricity went into my arms, out my hands and out the wire," he says. "It never crossed my body, thankfully, because I'd be dead if it did."



That didn't mean Branden was in the clear, however. He had two blood clots in his lungs. And when he tried to stand, his blood pressure would drop and he would nearly pass out. Also, his heartbeat raced at about 120 to 140 beats per minute for much of his five-week stay in the burn unit. His weight plummeted from 195 pounds to 165. At one point, the loss of blood from numerous surgeries required a blood transfusion.

"That five weeks was a living hell for me," he says. "My body wouldn't calm down from the accident. They said I was in fight-or-flight mode."

"Just because I was alive, didn't mean things couldn't go downhill quickly," he adds. "But, in my head, I never thought I was going to die. I just wanted to shake it off and get back to work."

Katelyn was also resolute, standing by his side through every twist and turn of his recovery.

"She was my rock," Branden says. "She told me later that she cried herself to sleep every night, but when she came in to see me, she was solid every time, smiling and being there for me."

The couple had been married less than two years when the accident forever altered their lives. Three months pregnant at the time, Katelyn took leave from her job as a speech therapist at DuBois Middle School and stayed in Branden's brother and sister-in-law's home in Pittsburgh so she could be closer to her husband.

"The visiting hours were from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.," she says, "and I was the first one in line to get in there each morning, and the last one to leave. Every night, I was so afraid to leave him. I was just panicked, worrying he was going to take a wrong turn. It was an emotional roller coaster."

Because Branden was hospitalized at the height of

COVID-19, he was only permitted one visitor the entire time he was a patient in the burn unit.

"His parents weren't even able to see him," Katelyn says. "It was just me. I was just trying to be strong for him because, you know, I had to be."

'I was just thanking God'

During his hospitalization, Branden estimates he had about 10 surgeries. His left arm was amputated below the elbow shortly after he arrived at the burn unit, but the medical team held out hope that his right hand could be saved. Ultimately, the damage proved too severe, and his right arm was amputated, also below the elbow, about a week and a half after the accident.

"Even though amputation was obviously something you didn't want to hear, if he was going to live through this, I knew we would do anything to make it work," Katelyn says. "I was just thanking God that he was going to survive."

She also knew her husband's mental toughness and optimism would be key to his recovery.

"Honestly, if anyone could handle something like this, it would be Branden," Katelyn says. "He is just very strong, mentally."

"I had psychologists come, and they'd say, 'Let's talk,'" Branden recalls. "I'd tell them, 'I'm fine — get out. I'm just wired that way. It is what it is. Let's just get it done and let me get out of here. No need for sympathy — just do it. Do I have hard days? I do. But life goes on, and you gotta keep moving.'"

And that's just what he has done.

The couple agrees their faith and continuous support from family helped to ease the burden — a burden that grew, albeit joyously, when their daughter, Harper, arrived in July 2021, six months after Branden's accident.

Branden was a week removed from one of his numerous



"RE-UNITED": Since recovering from life-altering injuries sustained in a high-voltage electric accident in 2021, Branden Bauer has returned to work at DuBois-based United Electric Cooperative. Bauer began his career at United at age 20 as an apprentice lineman and now serves as the co-op's line superintendent.



"I just kept saying, 'I can't die. I can't die. I'm going to be a father.'"

surgeries when his daughter was born.

"That was definitely an emotional time," Katelyn says. "You have a new baby and you're a new dad, and he could barely even hold her because he was so wrapped up following his surgery. We're in the hospital, and Branden's brothers were coming in and [changing his dressings], and I'm having a nurse come in to help me. It was a lot. It really was."

Back to work

Another set of helping hands would be on the way a few months later, when Branden's arms were fitted with prosthetic limbs. The ability to grip again was transformative, and Branden set his sights on mastering the body-controlled hooks. He was eager to regain his independence, drive a vehicle again and, he hoped, return to work at United Electric, where he began his career at age 20 as an apprentice lineman.

"Branden's plan was always to get back here to United," President & CEO Brenda Swartzlander says. "He's always

had a great attitude, good work ethic, and he loved line work. So, when he was ready to come back, we happened to need some help in engineering and operations and were happy to use his knowledge, skills, and experience in those departments."

In October 2022, Branden returned to duty at United, initially working five hours a week. Swartzlander says there was an overwhelming feeling of joy and relief among the staff.

"He was such a big part of the family here," she says. "The cooperative program is just one big family — the way everybody pulls together and wants to help. Everybody was just really happy to see him back here because he's such a positive presence. He's just amazing."

As Branden continued to progress physically, he was cleared for more hours of work, and last fall, he was promoted to line superintendent.

He logs about 25 hours a week in his new role, with a

Continued on page 26



FAMILY TIME: Branden and Katelyn Bauer read to their daughters, Addie, left, and Harper. Katelyn was pregnant with Harper, who will turn 3 in July, when an electrical-contact incident resulted in the amputation of both of Branden's arms below the elbows.

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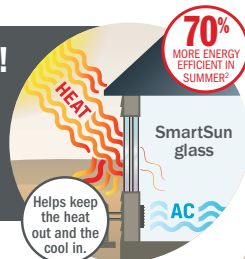
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[†]**DETAILS OF OFFER:** Offer expires 7/31/2024. Not valid with other offers or prior purchases. Buy one (1) window or entry/patio door, get one (1) window or entry/patio door 40% off, and 12 months no money down, no monthly payments, no interest when you purchase four (4) or more windows or entry/patio doors between 5/12/2024 and 7/31/2024. 40% off windows and entry/patio doors are less than or equal to lowest cost window or entry/patio door in the order. Additional \$200 off your purchase, minimum purchase of 4 required, taken after initial discount(s), when you purchase by 7/31/2024. Subject to credit approval. Interest is billed during the promotional period, but all interest is waived if the purchase amount is paid before the expiration of the promotional period. Financing for GreenSky[®] consumer loan programs is provided by federally insured, federal and state chartered financial institutions without regard to age, race, color, religion, national origin, gender, or familial status. Savings comparison based on purchase of a single unit at list price. Available at participating locations and offer applies throughout the service area. See your local Renewal by Andersen location for details. CA License CLSB #1050316. Central CA License #1096271. License #RCE50303. FL License #CGC1527613. OR License #198571. WA License #RENEWAP877BM. WA License #RENEWAW856K6. All other license numbers available upon request. Some Renewal by Andersen locations are independently owned and operated. ²Values are based on comparison of Renewal by Andersen[®] double-hung window U-Factor to the U-Factor for clear dual-pane glass nonmetal frame default values from the 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015, and 2018 International Energy Conservation Code "Glazed Fenestration" Default Tables. ³Based on testing of 10 double-hung units per ASTM E2068 20 years after installation. [†]It is the only warranty among top selling window companies that meets all of the following requirements: easy to understand terms, unrestricted transferability, installation coverage, labor coverage, geographically unrestricted, coverage for exterior color, insect screens and hardware, and no maintenance requirement. Visit renewalbyandersen.com/nationsbest for details. [†]Review aggregator survey of 5-star reviews among leading full service window replacement companies. January 2024 Reputation.com. "Renewal by Andersen" and all other marks where denoted are trademarks of their respective owners. © 2024 Andersen Corporation. All rights reserved. RBA13747 [†]Using U.S. and imported parts.

Backup Power: Is a Battery-Powered Option Right for Your Home?

SCOTT FLOOD

WE DEPEND ON RELIABLE electricity more than ever, which is why even the briefest service interruption can be incredibly frustrating. It's no wonder many homeowners are taking a closer look at the latest battery-powered systems as backups during an outage.

Battery technology has advanced significantly in recent years, with batteries able to hold more electricity even as they shrink in size and cost. The same innovations that boosted the performance of electric vehicles are being engineered into today's battery-powered backup systems.

As their name implies, these systems are essentially high-capacity batteries you can use to power your home during an outage. Some are constantly charged by the power grid, while others rely on solar panels for recharging.

Traditional standby generators use small internal combustion engines fueled by natural gas, propane or diesel. They can be connected to your home's electrical panel and kick on automatically whenever the flow of electricity stops. Assuming you keep them refueled, most generators can operate for days. However, some can be noisy, and nearly all produce smelly exhaust containing deadly carbon monoxide gas, so they can't be operated indoors.

Most home battery backups are smaller than comparable generators. Because they don't use combustion to generate electricity, there's no danger of carbon monoxide exposure. That



GOAL ZERO

INSIDE SYSTEM: Portable, battery-powered backups can be used indoors to power smaller appliances, like your laptop, TV or microwave.

makes them safer and more environmentally-friendly than generators. Most can be installed in a small space indoors. Battery backups are also significantly quieter.

During an outage, battery backups start instantaneously, unlike generators that may take a few moments to reach operating speed. Battery backups also don't require fuel or regular maintenance, such as oil changes or spark-plug replacement.

Of course, battery-powered generators present some disadvantages. The amount of power they deliver is limited by their battery capacity. When they're out of electricity, they may need to be recharged for hours before being used again, so they're not as well-suited for lengthy outages.

Energy-hungry appliances, such as air conditioners and water heaters, may drain the batteries' capacity more quickly, so you may have to disconnect them during an outage. Fortunately, some battery backups are modular, allowing you to add capacity as needed. If you only need a few devices powered during an outage, consider a portable battery-powered system. These small, quiet backups can be used indoors to power smaller appliances, like your

laptop, TV or microwave.

While there are fast-charging systems on the market, they carry substantially higher price tags. In fact, the upfront cost of a battery backup is more than a standby generator — in some cases, twice as much for comparable performance. And like the one in your mobile phone, batteries in these systems can degrade over time.

Being able to recharge battery backups with solar panels appeals to many homeowners, but the performance will depend on the amount and angle of sunlight on your roof.

So whether you're considering a battery system or a traditional standby generator, start by calculating the amount of power you need to keep your home's systems and conveniences operating efficiently. Once you know that, you can determine which models are up to the task and calculate how long the device you're considering can power your home. 🏠

For more than four decades, business writer **SCOTT FLOOD** has worked with electric cooperatives to build knowledge of energy-related issues among directors, staff and members. Scott writes on a variety of energy-related topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing nearly 900 electric co-ops.

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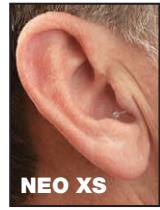
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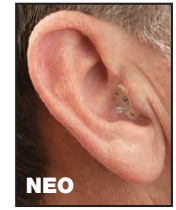
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Why Solar is Not Free

MIRANDA BOUTELLE

DEAR MIRANDA: I often hear claims you'll never pay an electric bill again if you go solar. Is that true?

A: The ability to generate your own renewable energy at home is an amazing thing. It's pretty cool that the technology is accessible to home and property owners across the country. The concept of free energy from the sun is appealing, but solar power isn't actually free. There are costs associated with capturing that energy for use in your home.

Installing a residential solar system doesn't equate to zero energy bills. Prices for the solar system and installation vary, but adding solar typically comes with a five-figure price tag. Solar systems only provide power when the sun is shining. You will still need to rely on your electric utility for power at night and when the skies are cloudy. Most electric utility rate structures include a set monthly service fee. Unless you plan to disconnect from local electric service completely, you will have a monthly electric bill.

Solar might be a good investment for you — or it might not. Several factors impact how well the investment

pencils out, including where you live, home orientation and shading, electric bill rate structure and costs, available incentives and tax credits, your budget, and credit rating.

If you are considering solar on your home, I suggest taking these three steps:

First, make your home as energy efficient as possible. It wouldn't make sense to put a new motor on a boat with holes in it, so why would you put a solar system on an energy-wasting home? Invest in reducing wasted energy before investing in creating new energy. Updates I recommend include insulating and air sealing your home and upgrading to efficient appliances — especially the heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system.

If your HVAC system is older than 10 years or malfunctioning, budget to replace it. Remember: Energy efficiency upgrades might have a better return on investment than installing solar.

A more efficient home means you'll need a smaller — and lower-cost — solar energy system. Solar energy sys-

tems are typically designed to produce the amount of energy a home uses in a year, so if you complete energy efficiency improvements before installing a solar energy system, make sure the solar contractor accounts for those energy savings.

Second, check with your electric utility about solar installation requirements and how such a system will impact your bill. If you decide to install solar panels, working with your rural electric cooperative will be essential, since you will need to take important steps, such as signing an interconnection agreement, to ensure the system is properly connected to the electric grid.

Third, get at least three quotes to compare each contractor's recommended system design, equipment and cost. It's a significant investment, so you want to know your options.

There are several ways to pay for a solar system and installation. It can be bought outright with cash or financed by a loan. This allows you to own the system immediately or at the end of the loan term. State and federal tax incentives can help offset the costs, too.

Investing in solar is one way to support the transition to renewable energy. Before you make the leap, improve your home's energy efficiency and empower yourself by thoroughly weighing the costs and benefits. 🌞

MIRANDA BOUTELLE is the chief operating officer at Efficiency Services Group in Oregon, a cooperatively owned energy efficiency company. She has more than 20 years of experience helping people save energy at home, and she writes on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.



AMY CARLSON, VALLEY ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

UP YOUR EFFICIENCY: Make your home as energy efficient as possible before purchasing a solar system. A more efficient home means a smaller – and lower-cost – solar system.

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MONTHLY RATES

NON-TOBACCO RATES

MONTHLY RATES

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	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
30	8.96	7.80	9.77	8.61	14	11	18	16	58	29.07	21.98	50.43	36.04	89	62	169	117
36	9.12	8.21	10.32	9.44	15	13	22	18	59	31.60	23.51	55.50	38.76	98	68	188	129
37	9.21	8.47	10.52	9.81	15	13	22	20	60	34.14	24.28	59.98	41.71	109	73	207	140
38	9.21	8.60	11.69	10.16	16	14	24	21	61	37.60	25.65	66.43	47.11	122	84	236	156
39	9.46	8.73	12.35	10.56	17	15	25	22	62	41.49	27.91	73.90	51.33	136	93	265	171
40	9.63	8.96	12.94	11.01	18	16	27	24	63	44.70	34.39	85.55	59.61	152	102	287	187
41	10.05	9.19	13.66	11.61	20	17	30	26	64	48.23	38.53	93.16	64.39	169	112	323	206
42	10.47	9.26	14.21	12.46	22	19	33	29	65	53.18	41.15	100.34	70.37	188	125	356	229
43	10.98	9.39	14.72	13.25	24	20	38	31	66	59.15	44.62	115.74	75.41	209	135	392	248
44	11.58	9.73	15.67	14.10	26	22	41	34	67	65.66	49.09	130.13	83.65	231	148	436	272
45	12.25	10.15	16.86	15.16	28	24	46	38	68	74.33	59.65	145.11	112.92	262	174	491	322
46	12.84	10.65	17.85	15.87	30	25	49	40	69	82.98	65.91	161.68	129.33	293	188	548	352
47	13.43	11.16	19.14	16.84	33	27	54	44	70	93.20	73.30	181.25	148.72	330	204	615	387
48	13.48	11.88	20.44	17.77	35	29	58	48	71	102.45	82.71	204.38	159.34	374	235	702	443
49	13.71	12.33	21.77	18.77	38	31	63	52	72	113.68	94.13	232.46	172.23	427	272	807	512
50	14.46	12.99	23.41	20.00	40	34	69	57	73	127.55	108.24	267.15	188.15	493	319	937	596
51	15.38	13.75	25.38	21.18	45	35	78	62	74	142.08	123.01	303.50	204.84	562	367	1074	685
52	16.37	14.88	28.02	22.76	49	38	87	67	75	159.25	140.48	346.45	224.56	644	424	1235	789
53	17.46	15.88	30.95	24.81	55	44	101	77	76	200.03	174.92	418.29	276.67	785	530	1489	982
54	18.69	16.72	33.99	26.20	60	46	112	83	77	249.54	216.74	505.52	339.94	956	658	1797	1215
55	20.70	17.51	37.13	27.86	67	50	122	90	78	310.70	268.40	613.27	418.11	1167	817	2179	1504
56	22.69	19.48	41.67	31.07	74	53	140	97	79	374.78	322.52	726.16	500.00	1389	983	2578	1807
57	24.69	20.63	45.59	33.43	81	58	154	107	80	450.51	386.48	859.57	596.78	1651	1180	3050	2164

* \$500,000 and \$1,000,000 monthly rates are rounded up to the nearest dollar. Therefore, actual monthly rates at \$500,000 and \$1,000,000 may be slightly less.

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Local Lore

Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative

A Need for Speed

Sometimes the speed limit is just *too slow*. Maybe that’s why racing has such a strong following. On Memorial Day weekend, the Indianapolis 500 will hold its 108th run, so let’s roll back the clock and meet the race’s first winner, a native of Crawford County.

Ray Harroun was born Jan. 12, 1879, in Spartansburg. He wasn’t a big fan of school, according to the Crawford County Historical Society (CCHS) in Meadville, not far from Cambridge Springs-based Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative. After dropping out of high school, Ray worked as a dental assistant before serving in the U.S. Navy during the Spanish-American War. Afterward, Ray took a job as a chauffeur and discovered his love of cars.

Eventually, Ray found he had a knack for engineering and built his own race cars, which led him to Marmon, an auto manufacturer. His

pro prowess, combined with a strategic approach to racing, earned him the nickname “Little Professor.” Ray designed and built the No. 32 Marmon Wasp that he drove in the Indy 500. At the time, CCHS says, race cars had two seats — one for the driver, and one for the mechanic — but Ray designed his with only one. Instead of an extra seat, he added another innovation — the first rearview mirror — since he didn’t have anyone to check his blind spots.

In 1911, Ray went up against 39 other racers in the first Indy 500, where he started in 28th. He completed the race in 6 hours, 42 minutes, 8 seconds, at an average speed of 74.59 mph, and took home the prize of \$14,250. He finished more than half a mile ahead of the second driver.

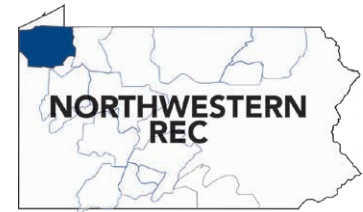
Although Ray retired from competitive driving after winning, he remained in the automotive industry for the rest of his life. He died Jan. 19, 1968. To learn about other remarkable men and women of Crawford County, visit crawfordhistorical.org.

Who are the local legends where you call home? Let us know your stories at communitycorner@prea.com.



INDIANAPOLIS MOTOR SPEEDWAY MUSEUM

LIFE IN THE FAST LANE: Ray Harroun, a U.S. Navy veteran and a native of Spartansburg, Crawford County, was a high school dropout who possessed a natural affinity for automotive engineering that led him to win the first Indianapolis 500 in 1911. Though his starting position was 28 of 40 drivers – based on when his paperwork for the race was received – he finished the race in 6 hours, 42 minutes, 8 seconds, at an average speed of 74.59 mph, and took home the \$14,250 prize.



Main Office: Cambridge Springs, Pa.
Consumer-members served: 19,611
Website: northwesternrec.com



This month’s work of art is from Bryce Yeager, age 5, whose parents are members of Indiana, Pa.-based REA Energy Cooperative. According to his mom, Bryce loves woodland animals. His drawing of a deer eating grass, fruit trees and flowers was inspired by “Plants that Deer Like Best,” the Power Plants column by George Weigel that appeared in the February *Penn Lines*. Thanks, Bryce!

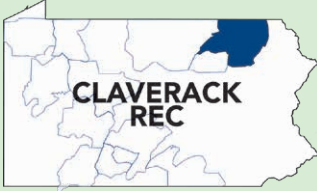
CALLING ALL KIDS, ages 5 to 17: Show off your artistic skills!

Each month, we’ll feature the artwork of our young readers (or our readers’ youngsters), inspired by something they’ve read in *Penn Lines*. Paints, pencils, crayons, clay, sand – any physical medium is OK! You may send digital photos of the creation to CommunityCorner@prea.com, but please: no digital artwork.

Be sure to include the artist’s name, age and electric cooperative, plus a 25- to 50-word description of the art.

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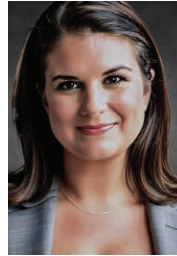
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C&T Enterprises, Inc. is a jointly owned subsidiary of Claverack (Wysox, Pa) and Tri-County (Mansfield, Pa) Rural Electric Cooperatives. C&T provides shared management and support services for the two parent electric cooperatives, the cooperatives' telecom affiliates of Revolution Broadband and Tri-Co Connections, and C&T's subsidiary utilities of Wellsboro Electric Co. (Wellsboro, Pa), Citizens' Electric Co. (Lewisburg, Pa), and Valley Energy (Sayre, Pa), a natural gas distribution company.

Revolution Broadband: Bridging the Digital Divide in Rural America, One Customer at a Time



CASEY WOOD

IN THE HEART OF RURAL PENNSYLVANIA, a revolution is underway. Revolution Broadband, a trailblazer in rural connectivity, recently celebrated a momentous achievement: connecting its 1,000th customer. Tom and Carol Sager, residents of Athens, now hold the distinction of being Revolution Broadband's milestone customer. This achievement underscores the cooperative's unwavering commitment to bridging the digital divide and providing fast and reliable fiber internet access to unserved and underserved areas in rural Bradford, Susquehanna, and Wyoming counties.

A legacy of service

Founded in 1936, Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative (REC), Inc. has been a lifeline for rural communities. With nearly 19,000 active accounts and an extensive network of 2,800 miles of electric lines spanning eight counties, Claverack REC was a trailblazer in powering homes, farms, and businesses. Recognizing the need for high-speed internet access in rural communities, the cooperative took yet another bold step forward.

Pioneering connectivity

With the forward thinking of the board of directors and management, Claverack REC established Claverack Communications, LLC to address the lack of fast, reliable internet service available to the customers in its service territory. The result? Revolution Broadband. "Revolution is a game-changer in rural connectivity," Tom says.

Since its inception in 2022, Revolution Broadband's local team has committed itself to providing prompt, individual attention to its customers. Currently passing over (or able to serve) 2,000 homes and businesses in its initial service area in Bradford County, Revolution Broadband is making a significant impact. Claverack REC President & CEO Steve Allabaugh highlights this



MILESTONE: Staff from Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) and Revolution Broadband recognize Revolution's 1,000th customer. Shown, from left, are: Steve Allabaugh, Claverack REC president & CEO; Lisa Milne, Claverack REC member services representative; Revolution customers Tom and Carol Sager; Martin G. Boss III, Manning Technology Services, LLC vice president of operations; and Kyle Lane, Revolution director of broadband operations.

Continued on page 18B

GUEST COLUMN

Continued from page 18A

achievement, stating, “This milestone is a testament to Claverack’s mission to serve our community. Revolution Broadband’s influence goes beyond mere connectivity — it is about creating stronger communities and empowering individuals with fast, reliable, and affordable internet access.”

A bright future

Revolution has completed 250 active miles (of the planned 1,500 miles of fiber at project completion), thanks to funding from the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund and the Unserved High-Speed Broadband Funding Program. Looking ahead, Revolution’s goal is to connect more residents in Bradford County in 2024 and extend its reach to Wyoming County by year’s end. Plans are also underway to expand into western Susquehanna County in 2025.

Kyle Lane, director of broadband operations at Revolution, remains optimistic for more connectivity.

“We are hopeful that funding opportunities will arise,” he says, “allowing us to extend our reach to the hardest-to-reach members who may have been missed by previous governmental programs.”

CASEY WOOD

VICE PRESIDENT OF COMMUNICATIONS



WE CAN'T WAIT TO CONNECT WITH YOU!

When you see something being hung on utility poles — you might think that getting internet is “right around the corner.” However, there are still a few steps that need to be taken*:

Mainline fiber splicing and network connection

Once the miles of fiber-optic cable are attached to utility poles, the fiber needs to be spliced and then terminated in a hut or cabinet to connect it to our network.

Installing drops

A *drop* is the dedicated fiber-optic cable that runs from the mainline fiber to your house. This step also includes placement of a Network Interface Device (NID) on the outside of your house.

Home installation and activation

We’ll bring the outside fiber-optic cable into your house, and install the Optical Network Terminal (ONT). Then your Revolution service is activated and tested — ensuring that you are getting the internet experience you deserve with enough bandwidth to connect multiple devices at once and no data caps to worry about — ever!

**From the start of construction to home installation, the timeline is typically 6-8 months.*

For more details on the full construction process, visit our news page and search the phrase *construction process*. For updates on where internet is available today – and where it will be, check out the status map on our homepage.

REVOLUTION

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LUCKY WINNERS

To commemorate the connection of its 1,000th customer, Revolution has chosen 10 random customers to receive a special prize. This gesture is a tribute to this historic occasion and an expression of our gratitude toward our Revolution customers. The lucky winners are: Ashley Pellet, Patricia Bromley, Stephen Lomauro, Mark Fields, Robert Ercole, Lydia Miller, Ann Rae Travis, Ernie Wolfe, Jessica Guadalupe and Melissa Nowland.

INSPECTION NOTICE

In late April, Constellation ClearSight, our trusted colleague, began routine inspections to assess the condition of utility poles. These inspections aim to ensure the safety of our lineworkers and the integrity of our infrastructure.

Please be aware that inspectors may use drone technology in some areas to carry out their tasks, which involve working near utility poles and meters and taking photos. All inspectors will be easily identifiable by wearing reflective vests, hard hats and ID badges.



SCAN FOR MORE INFORMATION

All Claverack REC offices will be closed Monday, May 27, in observance of Memorial Day.

REVOLUTION: The Difference You Won't Understand Until You Experience It

CASEY WOOD, VICE PRESIDENT OF COMMUNICATIONS

LIVING IN THE TRANQUILITY OF a rural environment, with vast acres of wooded land, often means sacrificing access to modern amenities. However, Revolution Broadband is changing the game for residents like the Farleys. By providing reliable, high-speed fiber internet connectivity, Revolution Broadband enables rural residents to participate in the digital age without compromising their peaceful lifestyles.

We had the privilege of sitting down with Jen and Nick Farley, Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) members and new customers of Revolution Broadband, to discuss their experience with the service and discover how it has enhanced and transformed their daily lives. Let's explore how Revolution Broadband has brought a new era of connectivity to the Farley family's rural living experience.

Local roots, global connectivity

Jen, who grew up in Wyalusing, and Nick, a Towanda native, are avid supporters of their local communities and require reliable internet access to stay connected to an increasingly digital world. With Nick's career at Procter & Gamble and Jen's work in education at Northern Tier Career Center, reliable, high-speed internet has become a necessity.

"With Revolution Broadband's service, education, telemedicine, online banking, and everything else has become immediately accessible," Jen says. "It's really transformative."

A quest for reliable connectivity

As part of her work, Jen serves eight school districts and is a Ph.D. student at Penn State University. After trying two internet service providers, the Farleys quickly discovered they weren't getting the reliability and speeds to meet their needs. The frustration of slow and unreliable connections hindered Jen's ability to perform her duties efficiently and slowed her educational pursuits.

The Farleys found it easy to switch to Revolution Broadband's fiber internet. They were drawn to its excellent reputation for providing fast, reliable and affordable connectivity. With its lightning-fast speeds, Jen can expand her reach and participate in virtual classrooms without experiencing lagging connections or buffering videos. She can video conference without interruptions and upload and download materials quickly. Jen and Nick can enjoy seamless online entertainment without the disturbances of buffering.



FINALLY CONNECTED: Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative members Nick and Jen Farley have ditched their slow internet and satellite subscriptions in favor of Revolution Broadband's high-speed fiber internet service.

A customer-centric experience and cost-savings

In addition to Revolution's exceptional service, the Farleys were impressed by the dedication to customer satisfaction. From the initial installation process to ongoing customer support, their experience has been stress-free. The knowledgeable and friendly local customer service team at Revolution Broadband ensured all their inquiries were promptly addressed, and the couple was thrilled to say goodbye to their satellite dishes. With Revolution Broadband's fast streaming capabilities, the Farleys no longer had to rely on expensive satellite TV subscriptions, resulting in immediate monthly cost savings of more than \$200.

Timely resolution to unexpected issues

When Lenny, their dog, unexpectedly chewed through one of their cables, the Farleys experienced a disruption in their internet connectivity. They contacted Revolution Broadband's customer service, even though it was outside regular business hours.

"Revolution responded to our situation with the dog so quickly," Nick says. "It was truly impressive."

Join the Revolution

Revolution Broadband shares the same commitment to reliability, technological advancement, fiscal responsibility and member-focused service that Claverack REC has demonstrated for more than 80 years.

"You won't understand the difference until you experience it," Jen says.

Please visit [RevolutionBroadband.net](https://www.RevolutionBroadband.net) to discover current and upcoming service areas, explore package offerings and details, and express your interest in broadband services. For additional inquiries, call 570-268-1349. 📞

Don't Touch That!

PETE YASTISHOCK, DIRECTOR OF SAFETY & COMPLIANCE

YOU'RE DRIVING TO YOUR HOUSE and notice a wire across the road. Your first instinct may be to stop and pull it to the side so it doesn't touch on to your vehicle. Stop right there — **DON'T TOUCH THAT!**

Imagine you're at your home, up on a ladder doing spring gutter cleaning. You spot a wire nearby and think it would be easy to push it back with a broom. Think again — **DON'T TOUCH THAT!**

Now you're moving a combine across the field, and you encounter a low-hanging wire between the poles. You may be tempted to take a shovel and flip the wire over the cab. Resist the urge — **DON'T TOUCH THAT!**

Out on your ATV, you come across a low-hanging wire over the trail. You might consider propping it up with a tree branch for others to pass safely. But remember — **DON'T TOUCH THAT!**

Our trained lineworkers can't determine if a wire is energized just by looking at it. They rely on special tools and specific procedures to ensure that it's de-energized. Just because a wire isn't sparking, buzzing or moving doesn't mean it's safe. It could still be energized and pose a danger. Different line specifications and construction methods further complicate the matter.

Our line crews have shared stories of vehicle accidents where a pole was hit and someone moved a wire to free their car. At other times, individuals have attempted to help during storms by cutting a conductor to clear the roadway. Those who took these actions were incredibly lucky, as luck does not last long when dealing with electricity.

When you are near a utility wire or conductor, remember: **DON'T TOUCH THAT!** Never assume a line is safe. Uncontrolled electricity can have catastrophic results. As we remind our colleagues every day: Take time for safety! 🚫



DON'T TOUCH THAT: Never assume a line is safe; these conductors could be, or become, energized.

The Cooperative Advantage

JENNIFER JONES,
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE NO. 3: Members' Economic Participation

Being a member of a cooperative is unique. The principles by which we operate put the needs of our members first. Cooperative Principle No. 3 recognizes members contribute equitably to the capital of their cooperative. As a member of Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative (REC), your involvement is critical to its financial well-being.

In its simplest form, members' economic participation is your use of electricity and payment for those services. The cooperative delivers services "at cost" and remains not-for-profit regardless of the value of benefits delivered. Members pay for the electricity consumed and this revenue is used to cover the costs of generating, transmitting, and distributing electricity.

Any funds remaining after deducting expenses, also known as margins, belong to the membership and are returned based on the electricity used. These allocated funds, called capital credits, accumulate each year you remain an active member on cooperative lines. This capital is governed by your elected board of directors and is normally retained for a period of time. Funds are typically earmarked for working capital to support new construction and system improvements, to invest in equipment, and to help reduce long-term debt.

The board of directors reviews the margin allocation and evaluates the cooperative's financial standing annually. If feasible, the directors determine what portion of margins are to be returned to the membership. The board will be evaluating the margin allocation and the potential for a capital credits retirement this spring, and we will share more details as they become available.

Cooperation means working together for a common purpose or benefit. As a Claverack REC member, you have responsibilities to uphold and benefits to receive. This is what sets your cooperative apart from an investor-owned utility. Be proud of your membership and the active role you play in Claverack REC. 🚫

GROW

THE MESSAGE OF SAFETY

Planting season is a busy and stressful time for farmers. **Safe Electricity** reminds farmers to:

- **STAY IN** your vehicle or machinery if it comes in contact with a power line; **DO NOT** get out.
- **LOOK UP** to avoid machinery/power-line contact (long extensions or tall antennas can get caught).
- **ALWAYS HAVE 10 FEET** of clearance surrounding the live lines — even if no contact is made, an electrical current can arc or jump.
- **STAY AWAY** from a sagging or downed line; call 9-1-1 to have the utility dispatched.
- **USE A SPOTTER** with a broad vantage point when operating machinery around power lines.
- **TEACH** the 10-foot clearance rule to anyone working on your farm and review power line locations.

Learn more at [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.SafeElectricity.org)

The logo for Safe Electricity.org features the word "Safe" in a bold, sans-serif font above the word "Electricity.org". A stylized graphic of a power plug or socket is integrated into the letter "E" of "Electricity".

What's Your Signature Burger?

ANNE M. KIRCHNER

MAY IS NATIONAL HAMBURGER MONTH. There are many tales about who made the “first burger” and where it was created — some say in Texas, some in Connecticut, others say Oklahoma. This much is true: For more than 100 years, the popular American sandwich has been a featured menu item at fast-food restaurants, gourmet kitchens and backyard barbecues.

Handcrafted burgers offer mouthwatering culinary experiences. Consider using caramelized onions, specialty cheeses, jams, sauces and more. Pretzel buns, bagels and ciabatta rolls also offer unique twists. And specialty diets have introduced many vegan and gluten-free options. This month, kickoff the grilling season by creating a signature hamburger. 🍔

ANNE M. KIRCHNER focuses her writing on human connections, travel and culinary arts, researching food origins, exploring cooking techniques, and creating new recipes.

PHOTOS BY ANNE M. KIRCHNER



CARAMELIZED ONIONS

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large yellow onion

Thinly slice the yellow onion. Heat the olive oil in a skillet over medium-low heat. Add the sliced onions and cook slowly, stirring occasionally until the onions soften and caramelize. **Do not increase the heat.** When properly prepared, the cooking time will be 60 to 90 minutes. *Makes approximately a half cup.*



RED PEPPER JAM

- 3 large red bell peppers, deseeded and chopped
- 1/3 cup pineapple juice
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1/3 cup white vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

In a food processor or high-speed blender, pulse the bell peppers and pineapple juice until finely chopped. In a medium saucepan over high heat, add the bell pepper mixture, sugar, white vinegar and red pepper flakes. Bring to a boil, then turn down the heat to medium. Stir often for 45 to 60 minutes until the jam has thickened. Add the kosher salt. Once cooled completely, store in an airtight container in the refrigerator. *Makes approximately 1 cup.*



CHIPOTLE LIME HAMBURGERS

- 1 1/2 pounds ground beef
- 1 egg
- 2 teaspoons tomato paste
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- Zest of 3 limes
- 2 teaspoons chipotle chili powder
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 6 hamburger buns
- 6 slices Havarti cheese
- 6 green lettuce leaves
- Caramelized onions
- 1/2 cup Red Pepper Jam

In a large mixing bowl, add the ground beef, egg, tomato paste, Worcestershire sauce, lime zest, chili powder, onion powder and kosher salt. Mix until combined. Form into six quarter-pound patties. Place the hamburger patties on a hot grill and cook for 5 to 7 minutes. Flip the hamburgers and grill for 5 minutes. Place a slice of Havarti on top of each hamburger and cook until melted. Assemble the burgers by placing a piece of lettuce on the bottom bun, then the hamburger patty with the melted cheese. Top with caramelized onions. Spread red pepper jam on the bun crown. *Makes 6 servings.*



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Fleeing Florida, Heading Home

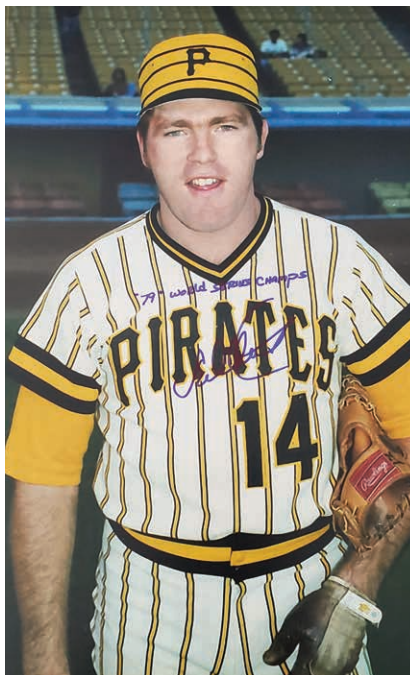
STEVE PIATT

IN THE SPRING OF 1976, I'd had enough. Enough of the state of Florida, where I had been attending college for two years. Enough of school itself, although my time at Manatee Junior College did help lay the groundwork for my eventual career. Enough of missing the opening days of trout, deer and small-game seasons back in Pennsylvania. (I had yet to discover and then develop an obsession with the wild turkey.)

About the only thing keeping me in the blast furnace known as The Sunshine State was my job at *The Bradenton Herald*, which had hired me as a sports reporter a year earlier. I was surrounded by exceptional journalists who honed my writing skills by regularly taking the time to tell me, usually politely, that my work was lousy, why it was lousy and how I could improve it. And I did. I think.

Juggling college and the job was, at times, a challenge. I had spread out my class load so I attended school year-round, but I admittedly still cut a lot of classes. The decisions were usually pretty easy: attend a three-hour world literature class in the evening or watch Chris Evert play tennis — and get paid to do so. Go to biology class or the Pittsburgh Pirates spring training game. Philosophy class or Tampa Bay Rowdies soccer. I even watched future Hall of Famer Wade Boggs play high school baseball. Yeah, I'm that old.

Within the smoke-filled newsroom of *The Herald*, I was known as The Kid. I was 19 and then 20, looked much younger, and my sports editor every once in a while treated me to a fun assignment, like an LPGA golf



A CURE FOR HOMESICKNESS: Ed Ott, who hailed from Lycoming County and played for the Pittsburgh Pirates for several years, was an avid sportsman, too. A few decades ago, Ott helped a young sports reporter, transplanted from Pennsylvania to Florida, feel a little more at home. Ott passed away two months ago.

tournament, a Florida Gators football game up the road in Gainesville and, knowing my Pennsylvania roots, a Pirates spring training game.

At rickety old McKechnie Field, now a beautifully renovated LECOM Park, I was surrounded by more talented, experienced and well-known writers. Writers I had read and admired as a youngster. Pirates beat writer Charlie Feeney encouraged me and introduced me to several players. And there was Pirates Manager Danny Murtaugh (who did, in fact, curse like a pirate), as well as visiting writers and announcers like Jack Buck.

This was much better than philosophy class.

In the clubhouse, I sought out an up-and-coming catcher, Ed Ott, but not because of anything he did on the field that day.

Ed hailed from Muncy, Pa., and somewhere along the way — perhaps through his media guide bio — I learned he enjoyed hunting and fishing.

And that's what we chatted about. We had fished some of the same trout streams, and talked a little about deer hunting back in the Keystone State. It was a short visit, but for about 10 minutes I felt like I was home. Just a couple of Pennsylvania guys talking hunting and fishing.

At the time, Ed was fighting for a spot on the Bucs' roster. I was just fighting homesickness.

He went on to a very nice career (eight years, all but the last with the Pirates), serving as a highly dependable catcher and playing a key role in the Pirates' 1979 World Championship. Sadly, Ed passed away this past March.

The Pirates broke camp a couple weeks later and headed north.

In mid-May, I graduated, barely and with no distinction, from Manatee Junior College.

I then almost immediately quit my job at *The Herald* and headed north myself, packing up my 1964 Ford Galaxie 500 and driving straight through, back to Bradford County. I was facing an uncertain future, but I knew darn well it wasn't going to be in Florida.

A couple days later, I was fishing Sullivan County's scenic Hoagland Branch. If I recall, it was a water Ed Ott and I had talked about.

I was, at least temporarily, unemployed.

But I was home. 🏠

STEVE PIATT is a veteran newspaper editor and outdoor writer who along with his wife, Paula, has hunted and fished across North America. He is most at home on the water and in the fields of the Keystone State. He lives in Bradford County.

Fish Oil Failure Shines Grim Light on America's Memory Crisis

America's Top Memory M.D. Reveals Why Fish Oil Doesn't Protect You from Senior Moments – and the #1 Alternative

More than 16 million Americans suffer from age-associated cognitive impairment, and according to nationwide research, these numbers are only rising.

Thankfully, anti-aging specialist and best-selling author Dr. Al Sears says there's an easy way to banish senior moments and brain fog for good.

It's a safe, natural compound called DHA – one of the building blocks of your brain. It helps children grow their brains significantly bigger during development. And in adults, it protects brain cells from dying as they get older.

For years, most people thought fish oil was the best available source of DHA...

But industrial fish farming practices have depleted the nutritional content of nearly every fish oil you can buy.

Today, roughly 20 million Americans are wasting their money on fish oils that hardly do anything at all.

And since they think they are addressing the problem, fish oil's failure has led to America's memory crisis continuing to grow practically unchecked.

Fortunately, Dr. Sears says, "there's still hope for seniors. Getting more DHA can make a life-changing difference for your mental clarity, focus, and memory."

Dr. Sears, a highly-acclaimed, board-certified doctor— who has published more than 500 studies and written four bestselling books — says we should be able to get enough DHA in our diets... but we don't anymore.

"For thousands of years, fish were a great natural source of DHA. But due to industrial fish farming practices, the fish we eat and the fish oils you see at the store are no longer as nutrient-dense as they once were," he explains.

DHA is backed by hundreds of studies for supporting razor-sharp focus, extraordinary mental clarity, and a lightning quick memory... especially in seniors.

So, if you're struggling with focus, mental clarity, or memory as you get older...

Dr. Sears recommends a different approach.

THE SECRET TO A LASTING MEMORY

Research has shown our paleo ancestors were able to grow bigger and smarter brains by eating foods rich in one ingredient — DHA.

"Our hippocampus thrives off DHA, and grows because of it," explains Dr. Sears. "Without DHA, our brains would shrink, and our memories would quickly fade."

A groundbreaking study from the University of Alberta confirmed this. Animals given a diet rich in DHA saw a 29% boost in their hippocampus — the part of the brain responsible for learning and memory. As a result, these animals became smarter.

Another study on more than 1,500 seniors found that those whose brains were deficient in DHA had significantly smaller brains — a characteristic of accelerated aging and a weakened memory.

PEOPLE'S BRAINS ARE SHRINKING AND THEY DON'T EVEN KNOW IT

Dr. Sears uncovered that sometime during the 1990s, fish farmers stopped giving their animals a natural, DHA-rich diet and began feeding them a diet that was 70% vegetarian.

"It became expensive for farmers to feed fish what they'd eat in the wild," explains Dr. Sears. "But in order to produce DHA, fish need to eat a natural, marine diet, like the one they'd eat in the wild."

"Since fish farmers are depriving these animals of their natural diet, DHA is almost nonexistent in the oils they produce."

"And since more than 80% of fish oil comes from farms, it's no wonder the country is experiencing a memory crisis. Most people's brains are shrinking and they don't even know it."

So, what can people do to improve their memory and brain



Why the 'brain fuel' ingredient in fish oil is slowly drying up.

function most effectively.

Dr. Sears says, "Find a quality DHA supplement that doesn't come from a farmed source. That will protect your brain cells and the functions they serve well into old age."

Dr. Sears and his team worked tirelessly for over two years developing a unique brain-boosting formula called **Omega Rejuvenol**.

It's made from the most powerful source of DHA in the ocean, squid and krill — two species that cannot be farmed.

According to Dr. Sears, these are the purest and most potent sources of DHA in the world, because they haven't been tampered with. "**Omega Rejuvenol** is sourced from the most sustainable fishery in Antarctica. You won't find this oil in any stores."

MORE IMPRESSIVE RESULTS

Already, the formula has sold more than 850,000 bottles. And for a good reason, too. Satisfied customers can't stop raving about the memory-boosting benefits of quality-sourced DHA oil.

"The first time I took it, I was amazed. The brain fog I struggled with for years was gone within 24 hours. The next day, I woke up with the energy and mental clarity of a new man," says Owen R.

"I remember what it was like before I started taking **Omega Rejuvenol**... the lack of focus... the dull moods... the slippery memory... but now my mind is as clear as it's ever been," says Estelle H.

"My mood and focus are at an all-time high. I've always had trouble concentrating, and now I think I know why," raves Bernice J. "The difference that **Omega Rejuvenol** makes couldn't be more noticeable."

And 70-year-old Mark K. says, "My focus and memory are back to age-30 levels."

These are just a handful of the thousands of reviews Dr. Sears receives regularly thanks to his breakthrough memory formula, **Omega Rejuvenol**.

WHERE TO FIND OMEGA REJUVENOL

To secure bottles of this brain-booster, buyers should contact the Sears Health Hotline at **1-800-694-8798**. "It takes time to manufacture these bottles," says Dr. Sears. "The Hotline allows us to ship the product directly to customers who need it most."

Dr. Sears feels so strongly about this product he is offering a 100% money-back guarantee on every order. "Send back any used or unused bottles within 90 days and I'll rush you a refund," says Dr. Sears.

The Hotline is taking orders for the next 48 hours. After that, the phone number may be shut down to allow for inventory restocking.

Call **1-800-694-8798** to secure your limited supply of **Omega Rejuvenol**. Readers of this publication immediately qualify for a steep discount, but supplies are limited. To take advantage of this great offer use Promo Code **PLOM524** when you call.

Chicken Diapers and the Lone Free-Ranger

MITCHELL KYD

IN 2016, NETFLIX RAN A documentary called “Chicken People” showcasing folks who are serious about their poultry. It’s now on YouTube. Chicken people treat their feathered friends to pedicures, shampoos and trendy blow-outs, along with a shiny finishing spray, after taking them on long car rides to compete at best-of-breed events like the Ohio National Poultry Show. This is not that kind of story, but those fowl relationships do make me feel better about my own story.

When my son’s friends brought backyard chicks to their gentrified development, homeowner association members were delighted with the prospect of fresh eggs nearby. At the time, nobody knew there was a rooster

peep among them, but his pre-dawn racket finally blew his cover and he had to go. Because my kids and I all have hearts bigger than our brains, my son adopted him and was instantly catapulted to notoriety. He became that annoying neighbor I wrote about in this column two years ago, the one with the big-mouth chicken.

After a few days penned in the old chicken coop, the rooster was released to lord over his new territory as the lone free-ranger. He developed an attitude to match. I wanted to be friends and started tossing a handful of scratch feed when I visited, but our relationship went through a trial phase. He’d puff up as I approached but wouldn’t charge. As he got braver, he started testing me with his chest bumps when I turned my back. Finally, he spurred me, and that was the day we made a pact. I picked up the broom, looked him square in the eye and explained how it was all going to work going forward.

Did I mention this rooster had been named as a peep? I suggested we rename him something worthy of his fierce spirit like Rooster Cogburn, but no; his given name stuck. It’s Blossom. He’s been branded as delicate and there are no signs of hens in his house. He has reasons to be angry.

Blossom greets all guests as invaders, including my son-in-law. He raises his hackles, cocks his head and shoots

a laser beam of intimidation from his beady little eyes. Hesitate for a moment in a crisis of confidence, and you’ll get his full battle dance performed with the intensity of a Maori warrior in the midst of a haka. It’s not surprising that when I questioned where we could put Blossom to keep him warm over those cold winter nights, my son-in-law suggested: “*In peanut oil?*”

Nonetheless, I have converted the bully into my personal bodyguard who neither trusts nor tolerates anyone else. When I pull in, Blossom runs to my Jeep, follows me to the kitchen door and hops onto a side table outside to wait for his hand-fed dessert: a crumbled granola bar, a few slivered almonds or his absolute favorite, Spam. Don’t judge. At

first, I was afraid he might get snatched by coyotes or suffer his demise as a classic Greek chicken tragedy — crossing the road. Now I fear he may expire from high cholesterol.

Pet photos with Santa are one of the many things my daughter manages in her store. In 2022, she sent me a candid of three darling critters waiting for their session. They were skunks. Last Christmas, two new families brought in their unusual house pets: chickens — in diapers.

If you can’t quite picture how you would possibly diaper a chicken, there are dozens of tutorials online. You can also shop there for chicken diapers. They’ll be delivered directly to your door, disposables or washables.

For the record, I have never diapered a chicken or taken it on a car ride to meet other chickens or Santa. The fact that Blossom has hopped into my Jeep and snuck into the kitchen on several occasions is simply evidence that doors close too slowly. I may be a crazy cat lady, but I’m definitely not chicken people. Yet. 🐔



BLOSSOM, THE WARRIOR ROOSTER

YVONNE BUTTS-MITCHELL celebrates the joys and poignant moments of rural living under the pen name Mitchell Kyd. Her stories from the Path Valley Hotel were hatched by encounters with contractors, critters and creepy crawlies while rehabbing the family cabin after its 17-year stint as a giant closet.

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Continued from page 12

goal of returning to full-time status. The position offers Branden the chance to get out in the field to plan jobs, meet with the line crews and talk to members.

“I miss working with my hands,” he admits, “but I still get to be around the guys and use my knowledge to help organize the chaos of line work and improve the co-op.”

When he’s not at work, Branden is at home taking care of his two daughters. The couple welcomed their second child, Addie, last April.

Branden has also been able to resume his favorite fall outdoor activity, hunting, and says he was able to kill a buck with his crossbow just three days after receiving his first pair of prosthetic limbs. He’s also done a little golfing, plays cornhole and even let his brothers talk him into competing in a Tough Mudder endurance competition in Pittsburgh last year.

The Clarion County native has also taken on a challenge he claims intimidates him more than participating in a 10-mile obstacle course sans hands: speaking before groups about the electrical-contact accident that claimed his lower arms.

“I remember having a public speaking class in college, and I hated it,” he tells a group of utility line and safety professionals who gathered this winter for a training program, sponsored by the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association, the voice for the state’s 13 rural electric cooperatives. “I never wanted to do it again. But I knew I had to get out there, face my fears, and tell my story.”

A new challenge

During his “Life without Lim(b)its” presentation, which he has given nearly 20 times since recovering from the accident, Branden recounts the accident, detailing mistakes that were made, safety precautions that weren’t taken, and the impact the accident had on those around him. He also talks about all of the things that went right that day, stressing how the immediate, trained response of his fellow crew members helped save his life.

Many of Branden’s talks have been in front of groups of electric cooperative lineworkers. He says he volunteered to offer his presentation to the co-ops in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, specifically, because they had offered him so much support through their donations, prayers and well wishes following the accident.

“I hope this keeps an accident from happening,” Branden says, “because I don’t want anyone to have to go through what I went through these past few years.

“Are there still challenging days?” he asks. “Yeah. But there are challenging days for everybody. You just find a solution and you work through it. I was always very stubborn ... I don’t know how to give up.” 🐾



NO LIMITS: Loss of limbs hasn’t stopped Branden Bauer from enjoying his favorite activities. Above, he displays a buck he harvested while hunting with a crossbow. He’s also back to riding bicycles, golfing, and he even participated in a “Tough Mudder” endurance competition since recovering from his injuries.



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Penn *Lines*, PEOPLE AND PLACES

Magazine's Editors Carry on Tradition of Spotlighting Rural Life

JILL M. ERCOLINO

GENERATIONS OF RURAL PENNSYLVANIANS HAVE grown up with a copy of *Penn Lines* in their home.

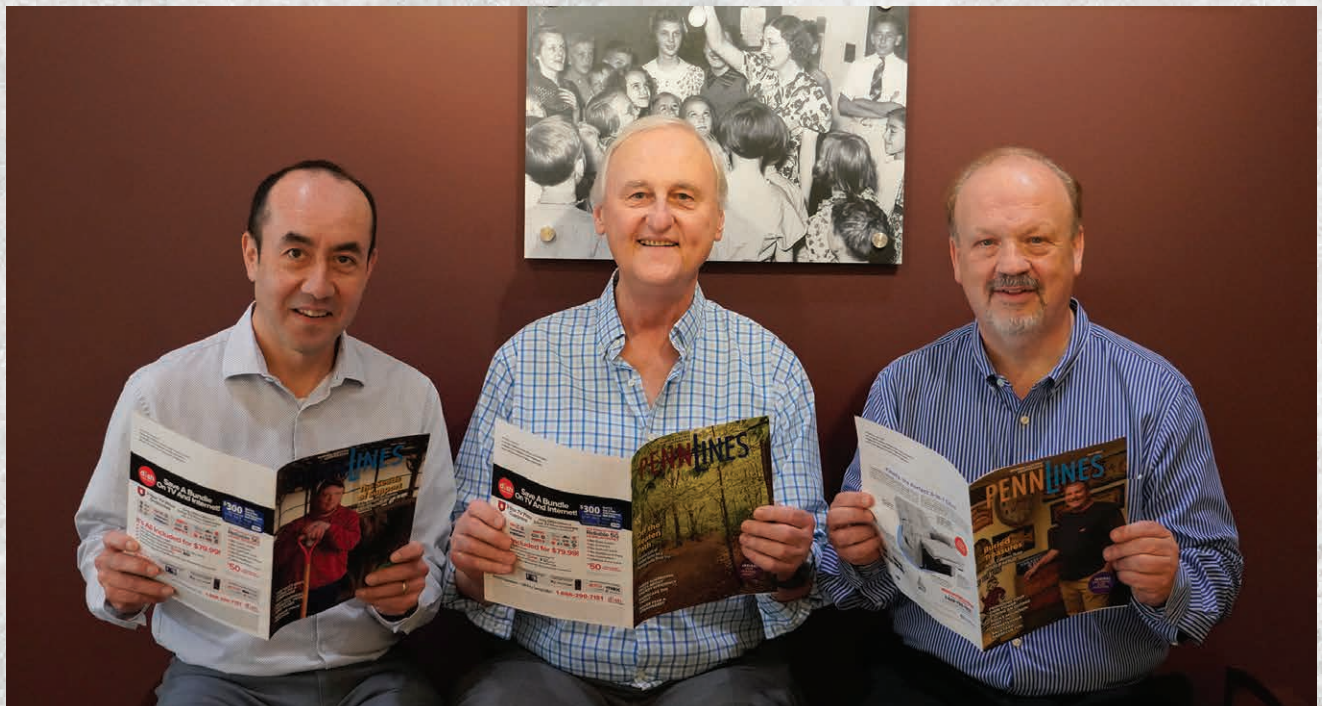
It may be dog-eared and tattered — clipping the monthly recipes is a must-do for lots of home cooks — but most of the time, you know where to find it: on the coffee table or maybe even the kitchen counter.

And while *Penn Lines* may be a magazine, in its nearly

six decades, the publication has evolved into something more meaningful: a trusted source of information that's not only about your local cooperative and the energy industry but also about life in rural Pennsylvania.

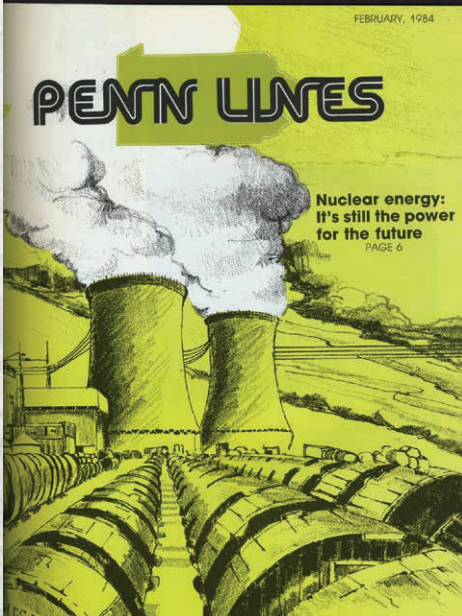
That didn't happen by accident — or overnight.

Behind the scenes and through the years, editors, writers, and cooperative leaders and communicators have

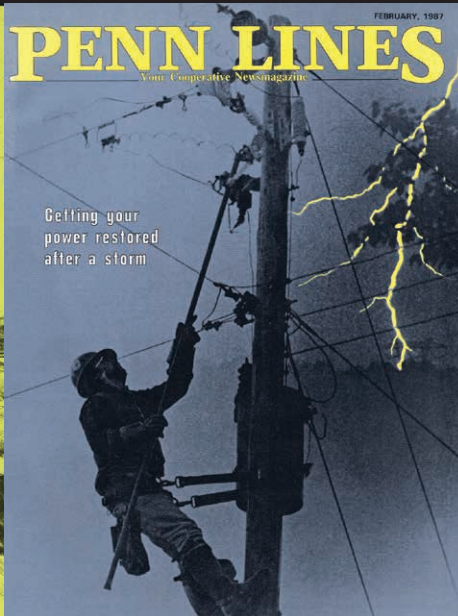


EDITORS, PAST AND PRESENT: *Penn Lines*' editors have spent their careers at the magazine highlighting rural Pennsylvania's people and places. They are, from left: current Editor Pete Fitzgerald; Jim Krut, who oversaw the magazine from 1984 to 1990; and Perry Stambaugh, now a state representative who guided *Penn Lines* from 1990 to 2006.

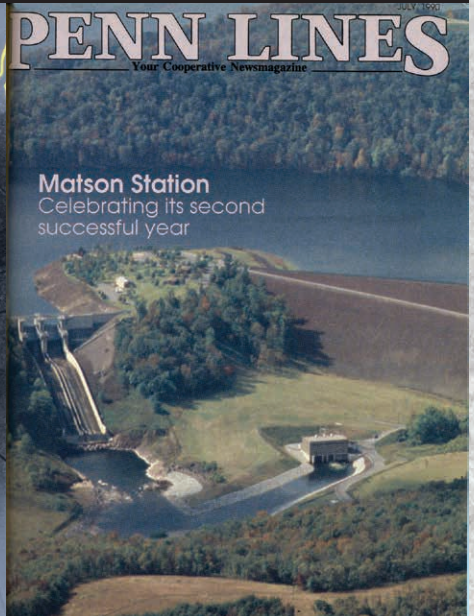
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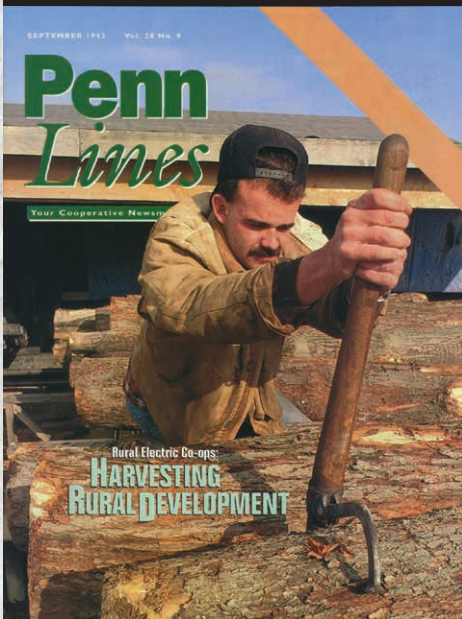
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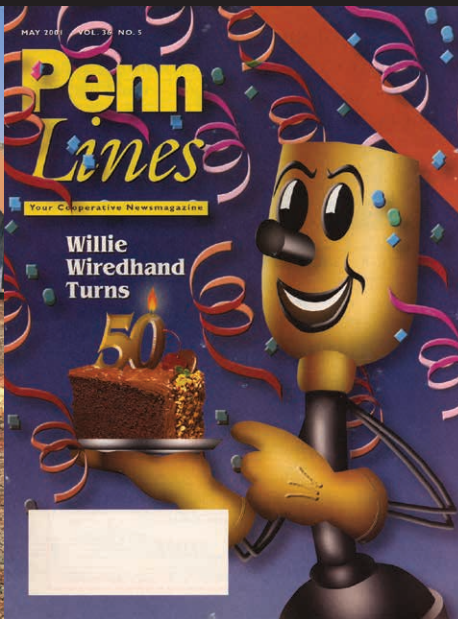
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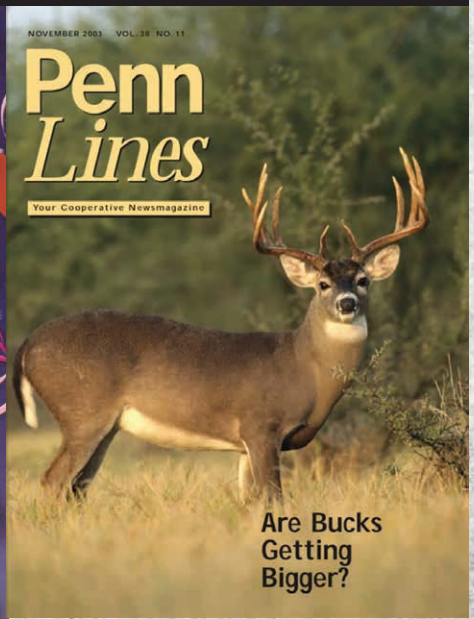
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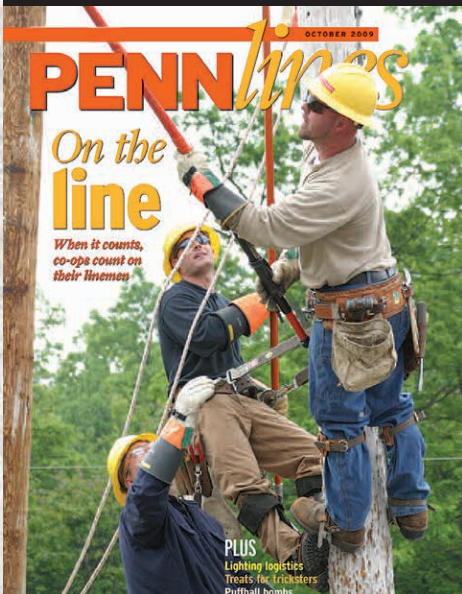
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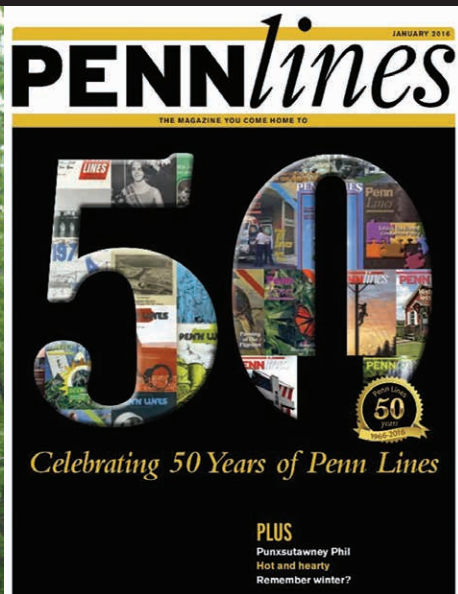
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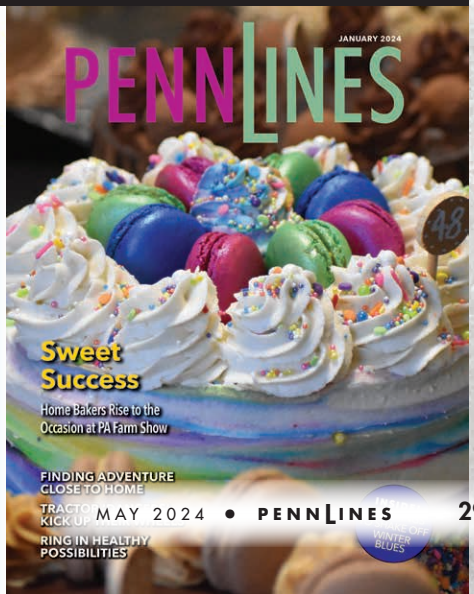
2009



2016



2024



embraced a shared vision, one that's made *Penn Lines* a fixture in cooperative communities, where it's told your stories and shared your values.

"Going to the mailbox every day is still a ritual for most people in rural Pennsylvania," former editor Perry Stambaugh says, "and having *Penn Lines* in there once a month is part of home."

Cooperatives, their people and places

Today, Stambaugh is a state representative for Perry and Juniata counties. He's also a farmer. In 1990, however, he was a writer starting what would become a 16-year stint as *Penn Lines* editor.

Others who have held the position include Jim Krut, his predecessor who went on to establish and lead the communications department at Adams Electric Cooperative for two decades (a U.S. Army veteran, he also gained fame as the "Helicopter Zombie" in 1978's "Dawn of the Dead"), and Stambaugh's successor, Pete Fitzgerald, a fellow U.S.

Army veteran who leads the magazine today.

The trio's service has spanned four decades — or the majority of *Penn Lines*' lifetime.

"By the time I became editor," Fitzgerald says, "I had inherited what was a very strong tradition — an institution — in rural Pennsylvania in terms of what *Penn Lines* was to its readers. My mission was not to mess that up."

While these editors have guided the magazine through several redesigns — the most recent in 2022 — *Penn Lines* hasn't strayed from its rural roots, despite the cosmetic changes.

Articles highlighting cooperatives, their people and places, mixed with common-sense information about energy and statewide issues, continue to be the magazine's backbone.

And as local newspapers fade away, especially in rural areas, *Penn Lines* has remained — a constant in the lives of 600,000 readers — to plug that information void. In each issue, the center section — "the magazine's heart," as Fitzgerald calls it — is dedicated to local cooperative content.



STORIES THAT MATTER: Current *Penn Lines* Editor Pete Fitzgerald, left, credits Jim Krut, one of his predecessors, with sharing impactful stories with readers. During his time, Krut explored radon poisoning and Lyme disease. Later in his career, Krut worked for Adams Electric Cooperative in Gettysburg, where after retiring he helped to write a book about its 75-year history.

“The cooperative focus has always been on the member, and that’s where *Penn Lines* continues to reach people,” he says. “We’re telling a local story about members and their communities. With the increasing disappearance of print, there’s a thirst for local content out there, and *Penn Lines* is helping to fill that gap.”

“One of the secrets [of local newspapers] has always been to put a lot of local names and faces in the paper,” Krut adds, “and the same is true with *Penn Lines*, but with one difference: *Penn Lines* illustrates electrical safety, electrical efficiency and rural problems that no one else may be addressing.”

Over the years, *Penn Lines* readers have been alerted to important topics, too, such as radon poisoning, Lyme disease, the state’s opioid epidemic and the loss of rural hospitals. The magazine has also reported on legislation impacting the cooperative way of life, both positively and negatively.

“For the main editorial feature,” Stambaugh says, “we tried to find the statewide issues everyone was talking about, whether it was economic development ... emergency services — just anything that would apply to readers whether they lived in Erie County or down in Adams or York counties. I think we succeeded at that.”

“During my tenure, Lyme disease was just being discovered,” Krut recalls, “so we did articles on that. We also covered radon. People had no idea what radon was or where they could get a radon detector, but by the time we were done, some co-ops were selling radon detection kits.

“So, as co-ops and as part of the co-op family, we worked to solve rural problems, and we did much of that through *Penn Lines*.”

A standard of excellence

Along the way, *Penn Lines* has won a number of awards. The magazine also continues to maintain high interest among readers, with nearly 90% reading it on a regular basis.

The editors say that’s because they’ve worked closely with the state’s rural electric cooperatives and their communicators to maintain a standard of excellence in the magazine.

“Everyone sort of fed off of each other and continually improved and made the final product better and better and better as time has gone on,” says Stambaugh, who also oversaw national publications, including *RE Magazine* for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Then, as now, the goal is to make every issue of *Penn Lines* interesting and informative, which can be challenging when the main topic, energy, is complex.

“We have this mission of education — that’s one of our



BETTER AND BETTER: Perry Stambaugh discusses the standard of excellence that’s defined *Penn Lines* throughout its history. Since leaving the magazine, he’s worked at national publications and now serves as a state representative for Perry and Juniata counties.

cooperative principles,” Fitzgerald says, “and we take it very seriously. The key is providing an entertaining and enjoyable platform to understand these important issues.

“It comes down to the compelling writing and the human-interest feature stories that *Penn Lines* is known for,” he adds. “There is a tremendous tradition here of just solid writing and reporting.”

While at the helm, Krut says he was a student of magazines and what made them successful. He wanted *Penn Lines* — a benefit of cooperative membership that’s mailed monthly — to be the type of magazine readers would be compelled to buy if they saw it on a newsstand.

“If you can’t keep up with what the best publications are doing, you’re going to lose the attention of your audience,” he says. “There has to be something in it for them, and it has to be about them.”

To be a success, publications also require buy-in, particularly from the people behind the scenes. *Penn Lines* has had that in its favor, too.

“You don’t stay with an organization as long as Jim and I and Pete have been with the electric co-op program if you don’t believe in its mission or you don’t feel connected to its mission,” Stambaugh says. “Here, you just feel like you’re having a positive impact on a lot of people.”

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

ISSUE MONTH AD DEADLINE

July 2024	May 16
August 2024	June 14
September 2024	July 15

Please note ads must be received by the due date to be included in requested issue month; ads received after the due date will run in next issue. Written notice of changes/cancellations must be received 30 days prior to issue month.

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- Non-members should submit name, address, phone number, and email address, if applicable.
- Month(s) in which the ad is to run.
- Ad copy as it is to appear in the publication.
- Heading ad should appear under, or name of special heading (additional fee). See below for FREE heading options.

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- | | |
|---|---|
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> Nursery & Garden |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employment Opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> Real Estate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Events | <input type="checkbox"/> Recipes & Food |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gifts & Collectibles | <input type="checkbox"/> Tools & Equipment |
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Just Remember: They are all True

JOHN KASUN

UNLIKE AN ACTOR, A WRITER rarely gets to interact with their audience. I pretty much know what happens on my end. In my mind, I see myself writing with a feathered pen and ink by the light of a flickering candle while my wife peers out the window at the old church steeple, struggling to see if one light or two peers back from the darkness. If you remember your history, Paul Revere knew one light meant the British were coming by land and two meant by sea. In my case, one light means my column is due and two means it is late!

Skillful writing hinges on having an idea to write about. Again, drawing from history, one of Shakespeare's famous lines from "King Richard III" comes to mind. In the middle of a furious battle and with his horse lying mortally wounded at his feet, King Richard shouts: "A horse! A horse! My kingdom for a horse!" I often find myself in that same situation as a deadline looms, and I do not have an idea for a column. I often say to my wife, "Do something — anything — I can write about," because so much of what I write about has its roots in real-life happenings.

To the reader, the job of being a writer may seem easy because they rarely see our struggle. That is why I want to thank those of you who have taken the time to introduce yourselves when our paths cross in public and let me know you read the column. I often thought my hard work ended up at the bottom of a bird cage, occupied by an oversized parrot with an eye patch and one leg, or worse yet, as a wrapping for dead fish.

When I have the pleasure of meeting readers in person, I often say, "Remember, all my stories are true." While that may not be exactly correct to the letter of the law, my stories have all originated, in part, from real-life experience. I'm often asked where I get ideas for the columns, and although hard to believe, all I have to do is listen and pay attention; the ideas are everywhere.

For example, the battery in my truck went dead this past week. The battery was under warranty, so I simply removed the battery, taking it and my sales slip to the dealer for a replacement, plus any prorated adjustment that might be due. Sounds simple? Don't believe it.

When I arrived at the dealership, I showed them my paperwork and said I have the defective battery in the trunk of my wife's car. The service man asked, "Where is your truck?" I answered, "It is at home in the garage with a hole under the hood where the dead battery used to live.

It's the same one I brought here to get replaced."

"We need your truck so we can test the battery with a load on it," he responded.

I know my eyes must have crossed because ever since I traded in my horse for a car, I never needed to bring my car with a dead battery in for a check.

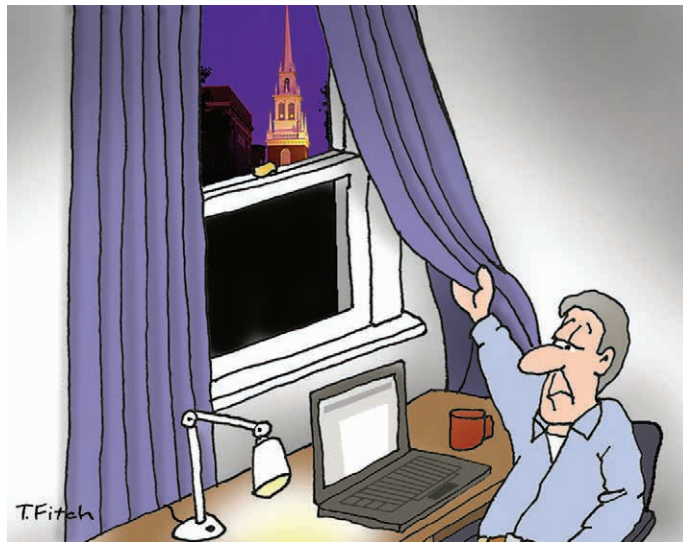
"Sir," he continued politely, "Is there any way you can go home and bring the truck back with you?"

At times like this I speak slowly and low because

I never know if I am on "Candid Camera" or just stepped into the "Twilight Zone" or a parallel universe. "I do not believe so," I said. "The truck is very heavy, so I am pretty sure I can't carry it.

"What if I buy a new battery, take it home, install it in the truck and drive it back here so you can remove the good battery, reinstall the bad battery and check it so you are sure it is bad," I added. "Then you can take out the bad battery and reinstall the good battery and settle up with the warranty credit?" After a thoughtful pause, he said, "I guess that would work."

I don't make this stuff up; no one would believe it. Just remember, they are all true. 📌



JOHN KASUN, a lifelong Pennsylvanian with more than 30 years of writing experience, looks for the humor in everyday life and then tells a story from that perspective. He is a member of Huntingdon-based Valley Rural Electric Cooperative.

Simple Joys

LIFE IS SPRINGING UP ALL around us as May brings warm weather back to Pennsylvania. And while it certainly won't take long for those of us who complained about the cold to complain about the heat, we hope you can focus on the simple things that fill your heart with joy.

If you happen to have a camera at the same time, share your simple joys with us! Send in your finest shots of Pennsylvania's citizens, creatures and culture for this year's Rural Reflections contest. The winners in five categories (artistic, human, landscape, animal and editor's choice) will receive \$75 each and runners-up will each receive \$25. 📷



DAWN MISNER • TRI-COUNTY REC

SHANA SENSENIG • BEDFORD REC



JOYCE MELLOTT • NEW ENTERPRISE REC

How to enter

AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHERS are encouraged to send photos for the 2024 Rural Reflections contest (no digital files) to: *Penn Lines Photos*, P.O. Box 1266, Harrisburg, PA 17108-1266. On the back of each photo, include your name, address, phone number and the name of the electric cooperative that serves your home, business or seasonal residence.

Remember: Our publication deadlines require us to work in advance, so send your seasonal photos in early. Photos that do not reflect any specific season may be sent at any time. Photos will be returned one year after receipt if a self-addressed, stamped envelope is included.



JOSIAH KALP • ADAMS ELECTRIC



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