

Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives
serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

Claverack REC

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Office Hours

Monday through Friday

7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Jeff Fetzer, CCC, *Local Pages Editor*

Guest Column



A neighbor named Joe

by Brian Zeidner, *Director of Member Services*

FOR YEARS, I had a neighbor named Joe.

Being a rural resident, that meant I couldn't really see his house from mine, but Joe was a great neighbor for many years. We shared dinners together, visited on his porch in the evenings, and my boys and I hunted in Joe's fields and woods.

In time, Joe's health declined, and he could no longer live on the Sugar Hill farm he loved. Joe passed away last fall. At the memorial service, I heard one of his nephews comment that Joe always said the greatest thing that happened on the farm during his lifetime was getting electricity because it made his life better.

The cows gave more milk, the chickens laid more eggs, and the work and life on the farm became a little bit easier.

Upon returning to the co-op office, I decided to look up Joe's records to see when the lights came on at his farm. The easement for power lines on Joe's farm was dated 1938. In fact, I could

see from our map designations that his was the first map number in that one square-mile block.

As I pondered that, I thought, other than a mission trip to a third world country, I have never known life without electricity. I enjoy heat, water, lighting, refrigeration and entertainment because of my access to affordable power.

In fact, my farming experiences are relatively easy and enjoyable compared to what Joe did to earn a living for many years.

So, I would encourage you to reflect on the special people in your life. Talk to them. Learn from them. Appreciate them. If they are anything like my neighbor was, knowing them will make your life richer.

I can't say that getting electricity was the best thing that ever happened to my family. But I can say that living in rural America, having wonderful neighbors and friends and working for your electric cooperative is truly a blessing for me. ☀

Pet project fetches rapid growth for 102-year-old vet center

By Jeff Fetzer

WITH a decline in farming in north-eastern Pennsylvania translating to a shrinking customer base, Claverack member Dr. Stephen Laudermilch opted to go small in order to grow his family's century-old large animal veterinary practice.

"When I went to veterinary school, I was originally only going to be doing dairy," says Laudermilch, a 2011 graduate of Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine. "But the large animal landscape has changed so much because so many farms have gone out. I knew we needed to diversify, and to do that, I really wanted to grow the small animal side of the business."

Armed with the same drive that led him to the awards podium at the PIAA state wrestling championships in



BEST FRIEND: Buddy the French bulldog receives attention from Dr. Stephen Laudermilch under the watchful eye of Laudermilch's nephew, Zealous Laudermilch, at the Endless Mountains Veterinary Center in Athens. EMVC offers small animal pet care services at five locations in Pennsylvania and New York.



FAMILY TIME: Claverack member Dr. Stephen Laudermilch, his wife Elisabeth and their five children on their farm property near Rome. Laudermilch has been the driving force behind the expansion of the family's longtime large animal veterinary practice. When he joined Endless Mountains Veterinary Center in 2011, the business employed four veterinarians and two additional employees. The growing practice now operates five veterinary centers staffed by 80 employees, including 14 veterinarians.

Hershey his junior and senior years at Northeast Bradford High School, Laudermilch shepherded the expansion of the family business from a six-person, one-location operation to an enterprise with about 80 employees and five veterinary clinics in just eight years.

When Laudermilch joined his father, Dr. Donn Laudermilch, and brother, Dr. Benjamin Laudermilch, in the practice in 2011, the business was known as Rome Veterinary Center, and the focus was primarily medical services for dairy and beef farmers. The center also operated a part-time small animal clinic.

Looking to expand their scope of operations, in 2012 the Laudermilchs renamed the practice Endless Mountains Veterinary Center (EMVC) and opened a branch office in Athens.

EMVC has been growing ever since, adding veterinary centers in Tunkhannock, Montrose, and Owego, N.Y.

Laudermilch says the practice continues to serve the area's large animal veterinary needs, providing mobile medical care and around-the-clock emergency services at client locations within an hour's drive of the dispatch center in Rome. While beef and dairy cattle make up the bulk of their large-animal care activities, the center also provides veterinary services for horses, goats, sheep, pigs and camelids.

The Rome location also has a facility for large animal evaluation, surgery and long-term care.

"Large animal is our roots," Laudermilch says, noting at its peak, the veterinary center maintained a staff of seven veterinarians, all focused solely on large animal care.

Today, EMVC has 2.5 to 3 full-time equivalent veterinarians on staff to provide large animal care services and has had to expand its coverage territory

to make up for a declining agricultural customer base.

While the business catered exclusively to the livestock crowd for its first 81 years of operation, Dr. Donn Laudermilch, along with his wife, Tina, began a small animal clinic at the Rome Veterinary Center in 1998 to accommodate local residents' veterinary needs for their pets. The small animal office was open a half day on Mondays and all day on Wednesdays until Dr. Stephen Laudermilch joined the practice in 2011.

"Ben and I are young, and we both wanted to be here long term," says the 33-year-old veterinarian. "I wanted to open multiple small animal veterinary clinics so we could have a more permanent business structure. We see this as a long-term play. We are in the growing phase and want this to be here for our kids to continue in the future if they choose to."

That's probably not an unreasonable expectation given their family's veterinary pedigree and history of high achievement.

Stephen and Benjamin are among nine children of Claverack members Dr. Donn and Tina Laudermilch of Rome. Their seven siblings include two medical doctors, a pastor, a Cornell University dairy science graduate involved in agriculture, a brother with



ALL CREATURES: Dr. Donn W. Laudermilch joined the Rome Veterinary Center, now the Endless Mountains Veterinary Center, in 1979 as a large animal veterinarian and has been a practice owner since 1981. He and his wife, Tina, established a part-time small animal clinic at the center in 1998. Prior to that, the practice had catered exclusively to large animal medicine since opening in 1917.

a doctorate in biophysics from Yale University, a nurse and a chemistry teacher.

Stephen Laudermilch notes that the father and son veterinarians all completed their undergraduate degrees in three years before heading off to veterinary school.

In addition to excelling academically, the Laudermilch family had considerable athletic abilities as well. Four of the six boys won medals in the state wrestling championships while attending Northeast Bradford High School.

Stephen Laudermilch, a three-time state qualifier who finished eighth in the state in his weight class as a junior and third as a senior, attributes his success in all aspects of his life

to his faith.

"I have a lot of drive," he says, "and the drive I have in business is the same drive I had when wrestling, and a central part of that is that I want to be a good steward of what I've been given by God. He's given me gifts and abilities and opportunities and resources. The reason for doing well in wrestling, in academics, in business is because I always want to do the best that I can."

Laudermilch, who considered the idea of going into the ministry while in high school, says that central to the Endless Mountains Veterinary Center's mission is operating in a manner that honors God.

"The way I define success in our business is not by making money, but by adding value to people's lives," he says. "Our philosophy is treating people well, treating our patients well, keeping prices competitive and paying our employees really well, so they have a reason to stay with us."

That's not a new philosophy, he says, noting the practice's longest-ten-
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ALL IN THE FAMILY: Dr. Benjamin Laudermilch and wife Chelsea with their five children. The Claverack member joined his father's veterinary practice, then known as Rome Veterinary Center, in 2007. He specializes in large animal medical care, traveling to farm clients within an hour's drive of his home in Rome, Bradford County.

Pet project

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ured employee, Ruth Carrington, has worked as the veterinary center's large animal receptionist for 52 years.

"We want to be a premier employer," Laudermilch continues. "People consider pets part of the family, and one



BROTHERS: Dr. Stephen Laudermilch, left, and Dr. Benjamin Laudermilch stand outside of the Rome Veterinary Center, one of five facilities under the Endless Mountains Veterinary Center umbrella that they own and operate, along with their father, Dr. Donn Laudermilch.

way we can add value is to treat their pets as part of the family, too. So we try to recruit staff and veterinarians who believe like we do."

Laudermilch says he knew from an early age he wanted to be a veterinarian. As a child, he would accompany his father as he made calls to area farms. And while he enjoyed the animal aspect of the farm visits, the Rome resident says what he remembers most is the relationships his father had built with his customers.

"I wanted to be a vet because I love working for people," he says.

It's been a career choice he has not regretted, and he says he enjoys every aspect of the profession: performing


surgery, working with large and small animals, problem solving, managing employees, and handling the business and marketing components of the growing practice.

"I thoroughly enjoy every aspect of what I do," says Laudermilch, who makes it a point to visit EMVC's five centers each week, in addition to handling emergencies and farm visits for the large animal practice. "I am an extremely high-energy person. I don't sleep much. I am intrinsically motivated. Work is like recreation for me."

He says growth of the Endless Mountains Veterinary Center's small animal practice has exceeded all expectations, adding that the clinics are at the point where he would like to hire as many as five additional veterinarians to keep up with demand for services.

He hopes to expand the business' service offerings, to include puppy obedience classes, doggie day care, and, eventually, 24-hour emergency services for companion animals.

"We want to continue to grow and invest in our community," Laudermilch says. "We'll see what God brings us. If we find other clinics in the area that are shutting down we would consider adding on."

Additional information about Endless Mountains Veterinary Clinics can be found on the business' website, emvets.com. 

OFFICE CLOSING
All Claverack offices will be closed on **Monday, May 27**, in observance of **Memorial Day**.

Install a heat pump, receive a rebate

If you are planning to build a new home or replace your existing heating system, Claverack encourages you to consider installing one of the most energy-efficient heating and cooling systems on the market: heat pumps.

In addition to saving money on heating bills, members who install either a ground-source or air-source heat pump in their homes are eligible for a rebate from Claverack.

Rebates are based on the type of heat pump you install. Claverack offers a \$100-per-ton rebate for air-source heat pump installations, and a \$150-per-ton rebate for ground-source heat pumps. The maximum rebate amount is \$900. Only heat pumps installed within the past 12 months are eligible for rebates.

Additional information about heating and cooling is available on Claverack's website, claverack.com.

The co-op can also direct members to local mechanical contractors who sell, install and service heat pumps. Please call the Claverack office at 1-800-326-9799 for more information about these installers or our rebate program.

Co-op offers scholarship to MU students

Applications are being accepted for a \$1,000 scholarship that is available for the 2019-2020 academic year to a Mansfield University student who is a Claverack member or dependent.

To be eligible for consideration, students must:

- ▶ be enrolled full time at Mansfield University
- ▶ demonstrate financial need
- ▶ be a member or dependent of a member of Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative
- ▶ demonstrate the highest traits of leadership, citizenship and character.

Students can apply online by visiting our homepage, claverack.com, and clicking on Scholarships under the "Your Community" drop-down menu at the top of the screen.

Claverack endowed the scholarship fund at Mansfield University in 2000, with a goal of providing financial assistance to any Claverack member or dependent pursuing a degree at the university.

A member of the State System of Higher Education, Mansfield University attracts many students from throughout the cooperative's service territory.