

JANUARY 2024

PENNLINES

Sweet Success

Home Bakers Rise to the
Occasion at PA Farm Show

**FINDING ADVENTURE
CLOSE TO HOME**

**TRACTOR 'DANCERS'
KICK UP THEIR WHEELS**

**RING IN HEALTHY
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This over-the-top
chocolate cake, baked
by Cambria County's
Sharon Karlheim, took
first place at the PA
Farm Show last year.



ON THE COVER

Competitive baker Pam Foor,
a member of Bedford Rural
Electric Cooperative, has
won numerous ribbons at
the PA Farm Show, including
third place in 2023 for this
glorious chocolate cake with
white icing.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF
THE PA DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE

'Connecting Our Communities' is What 2024 PA Farm Show is All About



RUSSELL REDDING

I FIRMLY BELIEVE THE BEST WAY to ring in the New Year in Pennsylvania is with a visit to our Pennsylvania State Fair™ — the PA Farm Show. The 2024 theme, “Connecting Our Communities,” seems particularly appropriate for inviting rural electric cooperative members to our annual mid-winter celebration, which pays tribute to Pennsylvania’s \$132.5 billion agriculture industry and the dynamic people who make it great.

Why is that? “Connecting our communities” is what cooperatives do. In fact, for more than 80 years, these hometown energy providers have been connecting rural places with the power they need to compete and succeed and with possibilities for better, more prosperous lives.

The state Department of Agriculture shares a similar goal, and together, we can continue to give voice to rural Pennsylvanians and others who need a leg up to compete.

So we hope you’ll join us in Harrisburg, Jan. 6-13, to celebrate our shared work, learn more about broadband and other investments in Pennsylvania’s future, and connect to others who also share a love of Pennsylvania agriculture.

The Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association, which serves as the unified voice for the 14 rural electric cooperatives in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, is among the generous sponsors of the PA Preferred® reception that kicks off the Farm Show. The reception features some of the Commonwealth’s best locally produced food and beverages, while celebrating those who put them on our tables.

The Farm Show will also connect you to exciting competitions among winners from 108 local and county fairs — read about some of them in this month’s feature story — along with top-quality products that make Pennsylvania a national leader in agriculture.

At the PA Preferred® Culinary Connection, you’ll find inspiration for preparing Pennsylvania products at home. There, you’ll witness friendly, but intense competition and sample delicious recipes sourced from state farms and skillfully crafted by celebrated chefs and aspiring ones, too.

In our 1-million-square-foot classroom — otherwise known as the PA Farm Show Complex and Expo Center — you’ll be able to connect with neighbors who care for animals and raise crops on fields next door and in distant city neighborhoods. We also invite you to bring along a young person or friend who may be looking to enter a new field, one where they can put their passions and skills to work. The PA Farm Show can help connect you and your family to enriching careers in agriculture.

Whether you’re an annual visitor or first-timer, we hope you’ll join us to celebrate Pennsylvania and the diverse people connecting generations, geographies, cultures, and communities across our great Commonwealth. 🍷

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EDITOR

Peter A. Fitzgerald

MANAGING EDITOR

Jill M. Ercolino

SENIOR EDITOR

Michael T. Crawford

LAYOUT & DESIGN

W. Douglas Shirk

ADVERTISING & PRODUCTION

COORDINATOR

Michelle M. Smith

CONTRIBUTING COLUMNISTS

**John Kasun, Anne M. Kirchner,
Yvonne Butts-Mitchell,
Steve Piatt**

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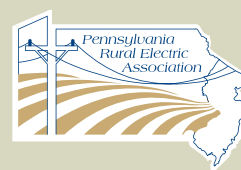
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STARTING OFF ON THE RIGHT FOOT

As a Slovak, my wife is fond of this saying from her native country: as New Year's Day goes, so goes the whole year. For her, it's not just a day for good intentions, but good actions. One of her favorite actions is hitting the trail for a New Year's Day hike. It may be a self-fulfilling prophecy, but



I've noticed what follows is a lot of hiking throughout the year.

We are fortunate to have such a wealth of parks and trails in the Commonwealth for that pursuit. While we've hiked in a number of

different places, including some different states and even a few other countries, we truly enjoy the outdoor beauty Pennsylvania has to offer hikers.

Often, when I'm on the trail, I find myself marveling at the work that went into creating these wondrous pathways through the woods. Traversing a steep switchback with carefully laid stones, I am grateful for the effort others took to ease my way along these trails.

In detailing the history of our state parks, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) notes the significant contribution of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The CCC was one of President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs, which also helped spur the rural electric cooperative movement.

Following the Great Depression, the CCC employed millions of American men by putting them to work on civic projects across the country. Over a nine-year period, these men helped create more than 700 new state parks, many of them in Pennsylvania. In fact, Pennsylvania had more than 150 CCC camps that worked on state parks and forests – second only to California. According to the DCNR, Pennsylvania received so many camps because of a forward-thinking plan set forth by Gov. Gifford Pinchot, who was the first head of the U.S. Forest Service and an early proponent of rural electrification.

Thanks to those early pioneers, and to those who continue to maintain our state parks and trail systems, we can enjoy hiking in some of the finest surroundings nature has to offer – even in January. To cite another of my wife's Slovak expressions: There's no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing. Happy New Year.

PETER A. FITZGERALD
EDITOR



BIG BOARS: Feral hogs, which can grow up to 5 feet long and weigh up to 400 pounds, are now roaming in 14 Pennsylvania counties. Classified as an invasive species, the animals cause an estimated \$2.5 billion in agricultural damage a year nationwide.

HOG WILD

Pennsylvania's feral boar population on the upswing

A recent study based on data from the University of Georgia shows that feral hogs have been reported in at least 14 Pennsylvania counties, mostly in the south-central and north-central regions of the state.

Feral hogs can cause tremendous damage to agricultural crops and forests. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, which tracks the spread of the non-native hogs, says the animals cause \$2.5 billion in agricultural damage each year, can destroy forests and may transmit diseases and parasites.

Wild hogs, also known as wild boar and razorbacks, are an invasive species that can grow up to 5 feet long and weigh up to 400 pounds. They're tusked, hairy, sharp-toothed, aggressive and can run 30 miles per hour.

Feral swine had a presence in only 20 states just four decades ago, researchers report. Now, the animals can be found in 36 states as their range expands westward and northward.

To learn more about feral hogs, check out the Pennsylvania Game Commission's fact sheet at [pgc.pa.gov/Hunting/Documents/Stop Feral Swine](http://pgc.pa.gov/Hunting/Documents/Stop_Feral_Swine).

BIGGER AND BETTER

State Archives moves into 'coolest building in state government'

State and city officials recently cut the ribbon to open the new State Archives building at 1681 N. Sixth St. in Harrisburg.

The 146,000-square-foot building, which has double the storage space available at its former location in the Capitol Complex, is open to the public 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesdays through Saturdays, effective Jan. 3.

"I think this is the coolest building in state government," Gov. Josh Shapiro said following his brief tour preceding the ribbon-cutting ceremony. "I want all Pennsylvanians and Pennsylvanians for generations to come to appreciate the important work that is done here and to be able to rediscover our history and, most importantly, to learn from it."

Among the historic documents in the archives are the original copy of an act passed in 1780 calling for



the gradual abolition of slavery, the records from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission during the Three Mile Island partial meltdown and the minute-by-minute field notes from former State Police Commissioner Paul Evanko after the Flight 93 crash near Shanksville on Sept. 11, 2001.

GREEN WITH ??????

DEP solves mystery behind discolored Lancaster County creek

The mystery behind the sudden change of color of a Lancaster County creek to a shade of bright green has been solved.

The curious change in color of the Little Conestoga Creek was reported on Nov. 25. Officials with the state

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) investigated and soon discovered the source was an accidental spill of green food dye, which officials said was not harmful to the public, the environment or wildlife. Following water tests, DEP determined no further action was necessary.

CURBING COLLISIONS

Grant funding will be used to build wildlife crossings

Pennsylvania will receive \$840,000 in grant funds as part of the Federal Highway Administration's Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program. The grant money is designated for programs that will reduce and prevent the number of deadly collisions between vehicles and wildlife on the Commonwealth's roads through wildlife crossings.

In September, State Farm Insurance Company released information showing that Pennsylvania reported the highest number of auto insurance claims filed for animal-vehicle collisions among all states between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023. 🐾

TIME LINES



A decade ago, *Penn Lines* shared the news that the U.S. Navy would be commissioning the USS Somerset in honor of the passengers and crew who died aboard Flight 93. The plane was among those hijacked by terrorists on Sept. 11, 2001. More than 1,200 Somerset County residents, along with Flight 93 family members, were expected to attend the ceremony at Philadelphia's Penn's Landing that March.

CORRECTION

The photo of Santa on the December 2023 cover of *Penn Lines* was taken by Samantha Cribbs. The photo on page 20 was taken by Savannah Tutko. The images were inadvertently attributed to another photographer.

JANUARY



SKATE INTO THE NEW YEAR

Whether you're a beginner or advanced skater, Pennsylvania has lots of picturesque lakes and reservoirs for a winter's glide. Cook Forest, Gifford Pinchot, Nockamixon and Presque Isle state parks are just a few that offer ice-skating fun. In fact, at Cook Forest State Park's lighted pond, you'll find a fire ring, skate rental, and a nearby sledding hill.

SHAKE IT UP!

It's always a good idea to head to the Pennsylvania Farm Show, slated this year, Jan. 6-13, at the Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg. And while you're there, try the newest milkshake flavor from the Pennsylvania Dairymen's Association: salted caramel. Learn more at farmshow.pa.gov.



PA DAIRYMEN'S ASSOCIATION



IT'S A BIRD ...

Help document eagle activity around Mercer County's Shenango River Lake Jan. 13 during Eaglefest, an event hosted by the Shenango River Watchers and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. For more information, call the ranger station at (724) 646-1124.

SOMETHING'S BREWING

Looking for a little excitement on a dreary winter weekend? Lift your spirits by tapping into a post-holiday beerfest. The Pocono Winter Beerfest is happening Jan. 20, while the Pittsburgh Beerfest is on track for Jan. 26 and 27. For details, go to shermantheater.com/event/pocono-winter-beerfest and pittsburghbeerfest.com.





SWEET SUCCESS:

Home Bakers Rise to the Occasion at PA Farm Show

PAULA PIATT

Penn Lines Contributor

THE INGREDIENTS ARE ALL THERE: flour, butter, sugar, eggs and chocolate — don't ever forget the chocolate. But it's those extras in the recipe that make it special — dedication, perseverance, humility and, yes, even a bit of luck.

In the Pennsylvania Farm Show baking world, it takes all of this and more to craft a championship entry. Held each January in Harrisburg, the Farm Show hosts hundreds of contests. The family living division is one of 41 classifications, and it alone has more than 30 contest categories from quilts and preserved food to photography and clothing. But don't think that just because there are hundreds of contests that any of them are easy.

"It's an awakening when you get there," says Sharon Karlheim, who lives in Cambria County, a region powered by Indiana-based REA Energy Cooperative and Dubois-based United Electric Cooperative. She's been competing in the baking contests for more than a decade.

"The first time I went I had a nice cake. I thought, 'OK, I got this,'" she remembers, laughing now at her naiveté. "Oh my goodness, it's another ballgame. There are generally somewhere between 75 and 85 entries, and they're all first-place winners."

Refining the recipe for success

Eligibility for the statewide Chocolate Cake, Blue Ribbon Apple Pie and Incredible Angel Food Cake comes after

THE WINNING RECIPE: Sharon Karlheim, shown with 2021 PA Fair Queen Addison Neff, has not only qualified for PA Farm Show baking competitions, she's also won them. Here, she accepts the blue ribbon for her apple pie.

(All photos on page 8 are courtesy of the Pa. State Department of Agriculture.)

winning at one of the "approved Pa. agricultural fairs." Karlheim has earned her place at the state table through the Cookport and Harmony grange fairs in addition to the American Legion County Fair in Ebensburg. And she's not the first to think "I've got this."

Everett's Pam Foor, a member of Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative (REC), was also a contest rookie once. After growing a blue-ribbon Christmas cactus one year, she and her husband wandered over to the baked goods.

"There was a peach pie there, and he said, 'Yours looks better than that one. Why don't you enter it?'" she remembers. The next year, she was off and running with the peach pie, a chocolate cake, jelly, and some cookies. But Foor was soon floored. "I had no idea that there was so much involved in it. You go down and you think you're going to win, and it doesn't work that way."

Well, unless maybe you're Jim Harper.

Although he had never before created a whoopie pie ("I like them, I just never made them."), the Pennsylvania Furnace baker held a lock on Pennsylvania's Greatest Whoopie Pie for the contest's first four years, beginning with the inaugural 2016 competition. Each year, his chocolate/peanut butter confections wowed the judges, as he tinkered with the same recipe.

"It's an eye for detail," Harper says. "You can always make it better — whether it's better flavor, or a little taller, or a little fluffier or creamier. There's the peanut butter icing — making it smoother or a little stronger, but not too sweet, maybe a little thicker."

But chocolate and peanut butter year after year? "That's what my kids would eat," he says.

Harper, who lives in Huntingdon County, an area

served by Valley REC and New Enterprise REC, is not alone in latching on to one recipe and working to perfect it.

For years, Foor leaned on lemons for her angel food cake recipes. A cookbook collector, she says she reads them “like most people read novels,” and once she finds a recipe, she’ll stick with it. “One year I had six chocolate cakes baked, and I was not pleased with any of them,” she says. “If I go down and I don’t win, I’ll keep the same recipe the next year and revamp something.”

Karlheim, too, keeps an eye on the competition each year — even when she wins. After grabbing the blue ribbon for her chocolate cake in 2023, she noticed a particular

flavor combination placing among the winners. She’s headed to Harrisburg this year with an “Almond Joy” cake — and an apple pie and an angel food cake after qualifying in all three contests — that hopefully also appeals to the judges.

It’s all about the judges

No matter how “good” you think your entry is, the judges are the final arbiter. Each is assigned a table with about a dozen entries and must whittle them down for the next round of 10. Creativity and appearance may catch their eye, but at 15 points, those are worth only half of the 30 points assigned to flavor on the scorecard. And taste is so very personal.

“Anybody can make a chocolate cake, but on that particular day, with that particular judge, what are they looking for? Judges are people too, and a lot of it depends on who the judges are,” Foor says.

Harper agrees: “Judge 1 might like more chocolate, Judge 2 likes dark chocolate and Judge 3 likes bittersweet; everybody is different. Your flavors have to complement each other; that’s the hardest part,” says the baker, who appreciates the judges with professional backgrounds. “Even if they don’t like it, they’ll still say that it’s the best product.”

And, of course, there are rules. The apple pie filling must be at least 60% apples, the chocolate cake must feature chocolate or cocoa as the main ingredient, and for the angel food cake, bakers are asked to use Pennsylvania-produced and -packed eggs. Everything must be made “from scratch,” a list of ingredients is required, and all garnishes must be edible.

All contestants agree: There’s “edible,” and then there are quality ingredients.

“Use the best ingredients that you can afford,” says Foor, who enters either through the Bedford County Fair or the Claysburg Farm Show. “Find your freshest fruits and get the higher quality ingredients. I have a local farmer here, and I use his farm-fresh eggs. It really does make a difference.”

Harper left competitive baking back in 2020 for this very reason. After winning with his red raspberry bars in that year’s inaugural Jelly/Jam Bar Cookie Contest, he decided the price of ingredients — good ingredients — was cost prohibitive after shopping for fruit and finding cherries were \$7 per pound.

“When COVID hit,” he said, “the price of everything went through the roof. I stopped competing at even the local fairs.”

Harper is all about the ingredients and the science



BEGINNER'S LUCK: Jim Harper of Huntingdon County is another winning PA Farm Show competitor. Funny thing is, he had never made a whoopie pie before, but that didn't stop him from winning Pennsylvania's Greatest Whoopie Pie contest four years in a row.

PA STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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behind the creation. Watching his grandmother in the kitchen, he remembers “from nothing, she made these great chocolate chip cookies. It was like magic!” To this day, his recipes are more like “equations,” he says, and it’s taken him years to put them all together.

“People will say to me, ‘I tried your recipe, and it didn’t turn out.’ That’s because that recipe uses my water, my sugar, my flour — all in my oven,” he says, ticking off the variables that make a difference: the minerals in the ground that grew the wheat that made the flour, the diet of the cows that gave the milk. Even the color of the pans and the hotspot in your oven can play a role.

“I really make it hard for myself,” he says with a chuckle, realizing the lengths he goes to in the kitchen. But he may be starting to get the competitive itch again. “I’m thinking maybe next year I’ll start getting back into it. I really enjoy going down each year and catching up with the people.”

Precious cargo

So, yes, earning a spot in the statewide baking competitions is hard, but so is ... actually getting there. It’s January, there’s always the chance for bad weather, and none of these contestants live next door to the Farm Show Complex. It can be a harrowing ride to Harrisburg with the precious cargo — potentially award-winning cakes and pies — buckled in the back seat.

“My husband always takes me,” says Karlheim of her

TURNING A NEGATIVE INTO A POSITIVE: Pam Foor, a member of Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative, displays her first-place angel food cake and ribbon at the 2020 PA Farm Show. What the judges didn’t know is that the cake – and Foor – had a meltdown just hours before the contest.

spouse, Regis, her No. 1 supporter. “He drives a truck for a living, so he’s very good. We leave here at 4:30 in the morning, and there’s deer and we never know if we’ll have ice, sleet, snow or whatever. If someone runs into us or we have to hit the brakes, it’s all over.”

Foor takes two of everything with her. This year, that includes an angel food cake, chocolate cake and apple pie, as she, too, has qualified for all three top contests in 2024. She also brings a “repair kit,” which came in handy one cold January day. The apple pie competition was in the morning, and her angel food cake was safely stowed in the car, waiting for the afternoon judging.

“I went to get my cake out of the car and it was cold, but it was in this cake box and the sun was so hot ... the top of it had just melted. I’m not gonna lie, I cried a little bit,” she remembers. But she still had an hour before the judging. “I got my spatula out, got my extra icing out and decorated it the best that I could in that freezing cold car.”

And promptly won first place.

“Apply final frosting in a sub-freezing car in the parking lot” was probably not in the recipe, but that’s one of the “extras” that puts these bakers over the top. 🍪

Electric Co-ops are Preparing for Extreme Weather

You're not imagining things: Climate disasters are increasing. Between 2018 and 2022, an average of 18 occurred each year. Before that, an average of just 8.1 were reported per year from 1980 to 2017

SCOTT FLOOD

FROM THE EARLIEST days of electricity, weather has presented the biggest challenges to reliability and safety. Severe thunderstorms, tornadoes, heat waves, heavy snowfalls, flooding and wind have long put power lines and Pennsylvania's co-op crews to the test.

If you thought storms seem to be more frequent and more intense these days, you're not wrong. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which tracks weather and climate disasters causing more than \$1 billion in damage, reported an annual average of 18 such events between 2018 and 2022. That compares to an average of just 8.1 major disasters per year from 1980 to 2017.

While scientists and policymakers debate the causes of our wild weather, electric cooperatives are diligently preparing for it by hardening the vital infrastructure that delivers electricity to members' homes, farms and businesses. They've also been taking steps to prevent damage from happening in the first place.

For example, you may have noticed your cooperative's emphasis on tree trimming, vegetation management and pole replacements, all of which help to reduce the potential for weather-related outages.

On the prevention side of things, cooperatives protect poles and wires by installing devices that safely divert surges caused by lightning strikes. Cooperatives also have invested in sophisticated management systems — what some call the smart grid — to alert staff to potential issues before they grow into problems. Paired with innovative technology like reclosers, these systems are engineered to keep your power flowing even in the toughest weather conditions (or when a squirrel makes a poor choice).

Power outages are just one way extreme weather can affect your energy costs. Weather extremes in one part of the country can have significant effects on energy availability and costs elsewhere. Consumers can help their cooperative limit the impact of

higher costs by shifting their energy use during peak times. For example, instead of running the dishwasher in the early evening when energy costs are highest, set it to run while everyone's asleep and rates are lower. The more members reduce energy use at peak times, the less everyone will have to pay for energy.

Reducing the impact of weather disasters and implementing steps to prevent damage are just some of the ways your electric cooperative ensures your power is always ready when you need it most. 🌱

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. He 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.



PROACTIVE STEPS: Severe weather events have always challenged power reliability and safety. Throughout the year, electric co-ops take proactive steps to prepare lines and equipment to withstand severe weather damage.

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IT'S NEVER TOO SOON

Some Stiltz customers need a Homelift immediately. But others want to "future-proof" their homes for when the stairs become a challenge.

"I can't imagine what we'd do without it. I wish we had installed our Stiltz Homelift several years ago!"

— Mr. James, Roanoke VA

Did you know?

Falls are the leading cause of hospitalization for older adults in the US. More than a quarter of Americans age 65+ fall each year. The average hospital cost for a fall injury is \$35,000.

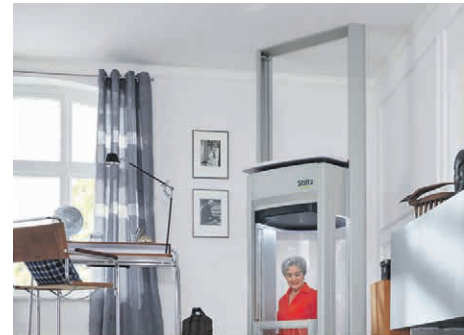


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Homelifts

Tips to Stay Warm and Save Energy This Winter

MIRANDA BOUTELLE

DEAR MIRANDA: My winter energy bills are typically higher. Can you offer advice on how to lower them during colder months?

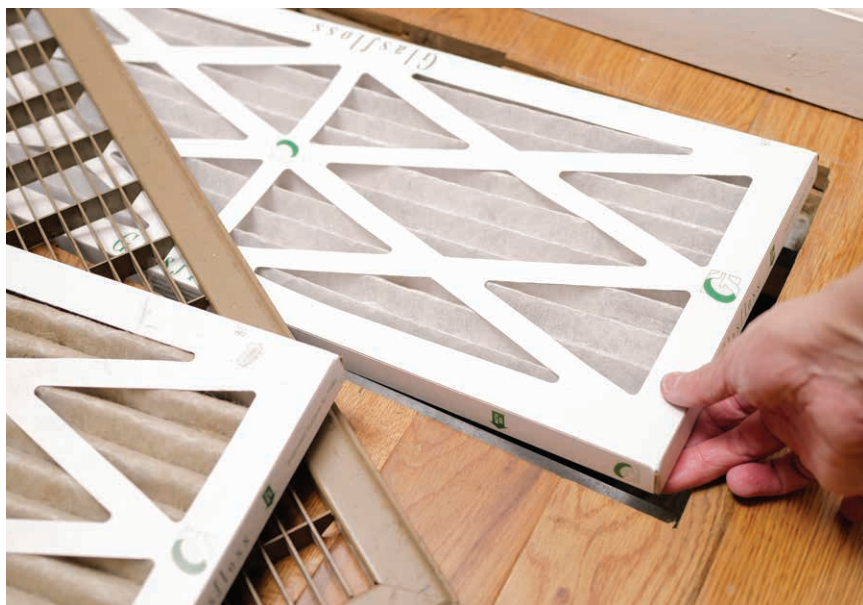
A: Colder weather can increase energy use and bills since heating accounts for the highest winter-time energy consumption in most homes. The amount of energy used to heat your home depends on your equipment, how you use it and the efficiency of your home's shell — the building components that separate the indoors from the outdoors.

A forced-air furnace is the most common type of heating system and is fueled by natural gas, propane, oil, or electricity. Heat pumps are growing in popularity and available for forced-air systems. If you have a forced-air system, check the filter regularly and replace when it's dirty. Ductless heat pumps, or mini-splits, boilers, radiant heat, baseboard heaters and electric resistance heaters are other common heating systems.

If you don't know what type of system you have, find the model number of your equipment and look it up online. You'll find information about the system and recommendations for servicing it, which can improve its efficiency.

The easiest way to save money on heating is to keep your thermostat as low as your comfort will allow. The closer your home's temperature is to the outdoor temperature, the less energy is used.

The U.S. Department of Energy recommends a thermostat setting of 68 degrees in the winter while you are awake and lower when you are asleep or away from home. Adding an additional layer of clothing, slippers



MARK GILLILAND, PIONEER UTILITY RESOURCES

or a hat can keep you comfortable in a cooler home, but keep in mind that setting the temperature too low can cause pipes to freeze and other issues.

Do you use electric resistance space heaters to heat a room or small section of your home? If so, you may see an increase in your electric bill. For example, operating a 1,500-watt electric space heater for two hours a day at the U.S. average electricity rate of about 16 cents per kilowatt-hour will cost you about \$15 a month. Operating that same space heater for 12 hours a day will cost you about \$90 a month.

If you choose to use space heaters, use them safely. Keep them 3 feet away from anything flammable, do not leave them unattended and plug them directly into the outlet, not an extension cord or power strip.

Air sealing can also make a big improvement in the comfort of your home as well as provide energy savings. A common air-sealing practice is applying weatherstripping to exterior

CHECK YOUR FILTER: If you have a forced-air system, check the filter regularly and replace when it's dirty.

doors and windows. You can also seal around plumbing penetrations to help eliminate drafts. Gaps often exist between the drywall or wood and the plumbing pipes and drains. Filling these gaps with expanding foam can reduce drafts in bathrooms and kitchens.

Cold, windy winter days are the perfect time to find opportunities for air sealing. Rattling doors or moving curtains can indicate air leakage.

As outdoor temperatures dip this winter, take a few proactive steps to maintain comfort in your home and keep your energy bill in check. 🍷

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 nearly 900 electric co-ops.



FEELING REJUVINATED WITH CBD

Everyone feels the hurt as you age, but CBD can help you deal with it.

BY BETH GILES

Life really does fly by. Before I knew it, my 60s had arrived, and with them came some new gifts from dear ol' Mother Nature—frequent knee pain, stress, low energy and sleeplessness. Now, I'm a realist about these things, I knew I wasn't going to be young and springy forever. But still, with "golden years" nearly on my doorstep, I couldn't help but feel a little cheated. It was until I found my own secret weapon. Another gift from Mother Nature.

It began a few months back when I was complaining about my aches and pains to my marathon-running granddaughter, Jen. She casually mentioned how she uses CBD oil to help with her joint pain. She said that CBD gave her more focus and clarity throughout the day and that her lingering muscle and joint discomfort no longer bothered her. She even felt comfortable signing up for back-to-back marathons two weekends in a row this year. That made even this self-proclaimed skeptic take notice.

But I still had some concerns. According to one study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 70% of CBD products didn't contain the amount of CBD stated on their labels. And, as a consumer, that's terrifying!

If I was going to try CBD, I needed to trust the source through and through. My two-fold research process naturally led me to Zebra CBD.

First, I started calling my family and friends. Call me old fashioned but I wanted to know if there were people whom I trusted (more than anonymous testimonials) who've had success using CBD besides my granddaughter.

Secondly, I wanted cold hard facts. Diving deep into the world of CBD research and clinical studies, I came across Emily Gray M.D., a physician at the University of California at San Diego (UCSD) Medical School and medical advisor to Zebra CBD who is researching the effects of CBD. Dr. Gray wrote "early results with CBD have been promising and we have a lot of research underway now. I've had several patients using CBD with good success. It's important that you know your source of CBD and how to use it properly."

After hearing it from the doctor's mouth, I returned to my research, asking more people and was amazed by the number of close friends and family who were already on the CBD train. Apparently, I was the only one without a clue! And funny enough, a couple of friends who commented were using the same brand as my granddaughter—Zebra CBD. There was no consensus as to why they were using CBD, but the top reasons given were for muscle & joint discomfort, mood support, sleep support, stress and headaches, as well as supporting overall health & wellness.

Eventually, even the most skeptical of the bunch can be won over. With a trusted CBD source in mind, I decided to give it a go.

When I viewed Zebra CBD's selection online, I was impressed by its array of products, including CBD oils called tinctures, topicals, chewable tablets, mints and gummies. After reading on their website that all their products are made with organically-grown hemp, I ordered... and it arrived within 2 days!

The first product I tried was the Rub.

Now this stuff was strong. Immediately after rubbing it on my knee, the soothing effects kicked in. It had that familiar menthol cooling effect, which I personally find very relieving. And the best part is, after two weeks of using it, my knee pain no longer affected my daily mobility.

The Zebra Mint Oil, on the other hand, had a different but equally positive effect on my body. To take it, the instructions suggest holding the oil in your mouth for about 30 seconds. This was simple enough, and the mint taste was, well, minty. After about 15 minutes, a sense of calm came over my body. It's hard to describe exactly. It's more like an overall sense of relaxation—as if I just walked out of a spa, and now I'm ready to seize the day. Needless to say, I've really enjoyed the oil.

While it hasn't been a catch-all fix to every one of my health issues, it has eased the level and frequency of my aches. And it sure doesn't seem like a coincidence how much calmer and more focused I am.

All-in-all, CBD is one of those things that you have to try for yourself. Although I was skeptical at first, I can safely say that I'm now a Zebra CBD fan and that I highly recommend their products.

Also, I managed to speak with a Zebra CBD spokesperson willing to provide an exclusive offer. If you order this month, you'll receive \$10 off your first order by using promo code "PL10" at checkout. Plus, the company offers a 100% No-Hassle, Money-Back Guarantee. You can try it yourself and order Zebra CBD at ZebraCBD.com/PennLines or at 1-888-762-2699.

Local Lore

Adams Electric Cooperative

The Conductor

On Jan. 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, granting freedom to enslaved people in states rebelling against the Union. But long before this federal action, ordinary Pennsylvanians labored in secret to help people escape slavery.

In Chambersburg, Franklin County — parts of which are served by Gettysburg-based Adams Electric Cooperative — some residents served as stewards of the Underground Railroad, a network of secret routes and safe houses for slaves seeking freedom.

While the Underground Railroad wasn't a literal railroad, that wasn't quite the case in Chambersburg.

One local, Abraham Ritner, used his job as a conductor on the Cumberland Valley Railroad as a cover to help fugitive slaves. Ritner also had the cover of his father, an abolitionist governor; still, the stakes were high. The Fugitive Slave Act was passed in 1793 to punish anyone helping fugitive slaves. Ritner and his wife, Mary, also lived barely 200 feet from the infamous slave catcher George Gross.

Today, Ritner's former home at 225 E. King St. in Chambersburg is known as the John Brown House,



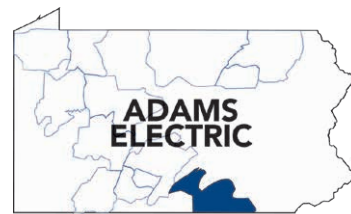
FRANKLIN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SAFE HAVEN: The John Brown House, named after the abolitionist, served as a safe haven for people escaping from slavery. Despite its name, the Chambersburg home was the former residence of Underground Railroad "conductor" Abraham Ritner, who used his actual job as a train conductor to help fugitive slaves.

named after the abolitionist who used the building as a staging ground for his ill-fated arsenal raid on Harpers Ferry, W.Va. The former residence, now owned by the Franklin County Historical Society, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is open to visitors by appointment. Learn more at franklinhistorical.org/john-brown-house.

Pennsylvania, as one of the 13 original colonies of the United States, is rich with local lore. Have

a story, old or new, that you think people haven't heard? Let us know at communitycorner@prea.com.



Main Office: Gettysburg, Pa.
Consumer-members served: 34,157
Website: adamsec.coop

Attention: Young Artists

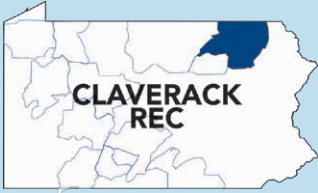
A NEW YEAR is right around the (community) corner, and we're switching things up in 2024 by trying to see things from a certain point of view: your children's (ages 5-17)!

Each month in the new year, we'll feature a picture drawn by our young readers (or our readers' youngsters) about something you've read in *Penn Lines*. Paints, pencils, crayons — whatever medium the artist feels most appropriate — as long as it is a physical creation. You may send digital photos of the drawing to CommunityCorner@prea.com, but please: no digital artwork.

Be sure to include the young artist's name, age and electric cooperative, plus a short (between 25 and 50 words) description of the art.

Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

CLAVERRACK REC

32750 Route 6
Wysox, PA 18854
570-265-2167
800-326-9799

Email: mail@claverack.com
Website: <https://www.claverack.com>

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Monday through Friday
7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Casey M. Wood, VP, Communications
C&T Enterprises, Inc.



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.

Turning Plans into Action at Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative



STEVEN G. ALLABAUGH

DEAR MEMBERS,

I hope you had a peaceful and fulfilling holiday season. As we step into a new year, it feels like a fresh start for all of us. While personal New Year's resolutions may at times be grandiose and difficult to attain, here at Claverack, we are focused on turning our New Year's "resolutions" into reality.

We laid the groundwork for these resolutions long before January. As summer winds down each year, our dedicated team starts developing detailed capital and operating budgets that will guide our efforts and investments in the coming year. These budgets are carefully analyzed and dissected to ensure they are fiscally responsible and aligned with our mission of providing our valued members with safe, reliable, and affordable service. Once the budgets are approved by the board of directors, it is time for us to roll up our sleeves and get to work.

In 2024, our budgets prioritize continued investments in right-of-way management, infrastructure improvements, and the implementation of new technology to improve reliability and offer enhanced services.

This will be the third and final year of our Accelerated Ash Tree Removal Program. This program requires the aggressive removal of dead and dying ash trees along our lines and outside our maintained rights of way that have been attacked by the invasive emerald ash borer. In 2024, we plan to carry out ash mitigation work at five additional substations, targeting trees across our entire system. Last year, we removed more than 16,000 dead and dying ash trees threatening our power lines. The program has reduced the total member outage time due to trees contacting our lines by more than 62% and decreased the overtime hours put in by lineworkers by 26% from 2022 to 2023. The accelerated ash removal charge will be removed from member bills at year's end, and our vegetation management budget will return to more normal levels in the future.

Infrastructure upgrades are another essential aspect of our resolutions. We are nearing the completion of the Herrick substation replacement project, which involved selecting a new site and overcoming supply chain delays. This vital project replaces aging structures and equipment, allowing for technological upgrades that will provide reliable service for years to come. We also have line upgrade projects planned, including the replacement of 15 miles of small, aged conductors with larger wire in the Vernon, Franklin Forks and Middletown substation areas, to improve reliability in these regions.

Our investment in the fiber optic network continues with plans to install new lines in our Litchfield, Plank Road, Monroeton, Leroy, Evergreen and Hollenback substation areas in Bradford County. We aim to begin installations in Susquehanna County by the end of the year. This will enable our broadband subsidiary to offer fiber-to-the-home internet service to members in these areas. We will also install several electronic reclosers that integrate with our Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition system — or SCADA — on the fiber optic network. This significant step forward in our long-term plan to create an advanced distribution grid will expand our monitoring and operational capabilities to devices on our electric distribution lines. Furthermore, we will

Continued on page 16D

Compete for an All-Inclusive Experience at the Nation's Capital

CALLING ALL HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS!

The National Rural Electric Youth Tour is back and offering an incredible opportunity for up to four lucky students whose parents or legal guardians are Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) members. Get

TRIP OF A LIFETIME: Students chosen to represent Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative visit Capitol Hill during the 2023 Rural Electric Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. Shown, from left, are: Matthew Leonard, Michelle Romanik, Adeline Sutton and Josh Stoddard.

ready to embark on a weeklong trip to our nation's capital!

If you know a high school junior who loves sightseeing, history, politics and making new friends, Youth Tour could be the experience of a lifetime for them.

During the 2024 Rural Electric Youth Tour, selected students will join peers from across the country to explore Washington, D.C., for six exciting days. This adventure is a perfect blend of fun and education.

From June 16-21, participants will have the chance to:

- Discover the historic sites of Washington, D.C.
- Visit world-famous museums
- Learn about electric cooperatives and the cooperative movement
- Make lifelong friends

In addition to the incredible experience, students selected for the Youth Tour may also be eligible for special scholarship opportunities.

Let's go over the rules for



Claverack's 2024 Rural Electric Youth Tour:

- ▶ The Youth Tour application is open to any high school junior (2023-24 school year) with parents or legal guardians who are Claverack REC members. Claverack REC will select and sponsor up to four students for the 2024 Youth Tour.
- ▶ Applications must be submitted by 4 p.m. Friday, Feb. 9.
- ▶ Finalists will be chosen by Claverack REC based on the submitted application and video.
- ▶ One of the four selected students

may be chosen as Claverack's Youth Leadership Council (YLC) candidate. The YLC candidate will compete with others for the opportunity to be the Pennsylvania YLC representative. More details can be found in the online application. All decisions are final.

- ▶ Claverack REC will mail notification of the selection process results on Tuesday, Feb. 13.

To apply for Youth Tour, please complete the application available at claverack.com/youth-tour.

Remember to attach a high-resolution 4-by-6 or 5-by-7-inch school photo (in .jpg format) or a scanned school photo with a resolution of 300 dpi or higher.

Additionally, all applicants must create a 3-5-minute video that includes:

- ▶ Introduction of yourself and what cooperative you are from
- ▶ Highlights of your extracurricular activities in high school
- ▶ Description of your non-school activities, such as work, hobbies or community service
- ▶ Discussion of your plans after high school graduation
- ▶ Answer to the question: "If you could have lunch with anyone — dead, alive or fictional — who would it be and why?"

Please remember to include the link to your video as instructed in the application.

If you have any questions or need assistance, please don't hesitate to reach out to Karen Evangelisti at karene@ctenterprises.org or call 570-268-1332.

Don't miss this incredible opportunity to compete for an all-inclusive experience in the nation's capital with the Rural Electric Youth Tour! Start your application and video planning now! 📺

2023 PROGRESS, 2024 PLANS

Thank you for the support and patience you've given us in 2023 as we've built out the area's best local fiber network. Here's to 2023 and a look at what's in store for 2024!



350
miles of fiber-optic
cable installed



2
huts
installed



1700+
homes
passed



750
fiber customers

% of work completed

70% Lime Hill/
Herrick **58%** Litchfield **61%** Plank Road **37%** Monroeton



In 2024, we'll install 500 miles of fiber — the approximate distance from Claverack's headquarters to Damariscotta, Maine! The next townships to be included in the construction plans are*:

- Asylum
- Burlington
- Franklin
- Leroy
- Monroe
- N. Towanda
- Terry
- Towanda
- Wilmot

In Q1 2024, connections for the Litchfield and Plank Road service areas will begin — then continue with Monroeton in Q2 and Q3, and finish up in Hollenback in Q4.

Interested in receiving Revolution internet? Let us know at revolutionbroadband.net/register or give us a call at 570-268-1349.

We can't wait to connect with you!

**Services will be offered in select areas. See fiber build map on website for details.*

REVOLUTION revolutionbroadband.net | 570-268-1349

TURNING PLANS INTO ACTION

Continued from page 16A

connect several substations to the new fiber optic network, enhancing cybersecurity and improving communications capabilities.

We have some exciting educational programs planned this year, too, including offering members the opportunity to drive our electric vehicle. We are also launching a pilot educational program in collaboration with experienced and interested members to research a low-growing pollinator habitat that benefits our ecosystem and is compatible with electric lines. More details on these initiatives will be shared in future *Penn Lines*. As always, we remain committed to promoting energy conservation, including the continuation of our appliance rebate program, which helps members offset the cost of purchasing certain Energy Star®-rated appliances. We will also continue to offer our HOPE program to help members experiencing financial difficulties and our support of many local nonprofit agencies.

Of course, investing in and maintaining our system comes at a price. 2023 saw significant increases in electric generation and transmission (G&T) costs, accompanied by extremely high inflation in the electric utility market. These

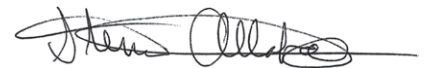
factors led to the first consequential increase in member rates in many years. While inflation remains high, the news is better this year. In 2024, our rates per kilowatt-hour for G&T and distribution will remain the same, while our fixed customer charge will increase by \$2 to keep up with inflation. While we are thankful a significant rate increase is not necessary, please know we are mindful of the impact any potential future rate increases can have, and we will continue to work toward providing reliable service at the lowest

possible cost.

In keeping with the spirit of the new year, we resolve to continue providing the safe, affordable and reliable services you have come to expect from us over the past 87 years.

Thank you for your continued trust and support. 🍷

Warm regards,



STEVEN G. ALLABAUGH
PRESIDENT & CEO
CLAVERACK RURAL ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE



New Look. New Experience. Same SmartHub.

Manage your account like never before with the new, improved SmartHub web application. A simplified yet enhanced design is coming your way soon. This new version of SmartHub puts your usage and payment details front and center for fast, easy access. The simplified menu structure will make navigating SmartHub a breeze.

Not a SmartHub user?

Visit www.claverack.com/smarthub-101 to learn more and to register.



**Claverack Rural
Electric Cooperative, Inc.**

REVOLUTION

Smart Management. Smart Life. SmartHub.

Space Heater Safety Tips

Space heaters are a great way to warm specific rooms in your home without having to crank up the thermostat, but using space heaters doesn't come without risk! Use the tips below to keep your home safe.

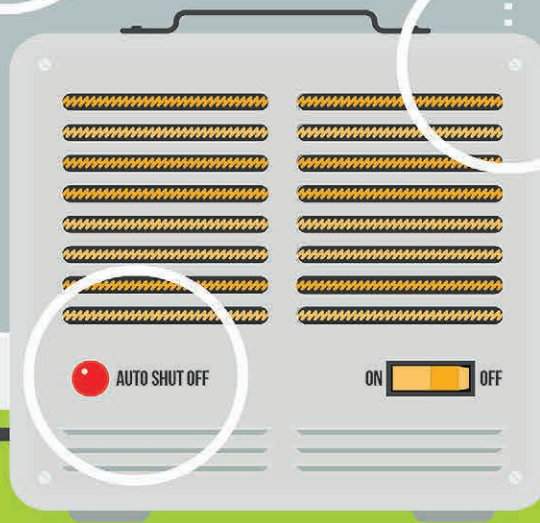
DO: Plug your space heater directly into the wall outlet.



DO: Keep your space heater in low-moisture rooms.

DO: Keep your space heater at a safe distance (at least 3 feet) from kids, pets and flammable items.

DO: Buy a unit with an automatic shutoff in case the unit tips over, or you forget to shut it off.



DO: Always follow the directions and take a broken space heater to a qualified appliance service center.



DON'T: Leave your space heater unattended. Always unplug it before you leave the house or go to bed.

DON'T: Place your space heater near curtains, clothing, furniture or bedding.

DON'T: Use an extension cord to plug in your space heater. It can cause the heater to over-heat, and can be a tripping hazard.

DON'T: Try to repair a broken space heater yourself.

DON'T: Put your space heater in your bathroom. The moisture can damage the unit, which could cause it to malfunction.



Why Do Cows Wear Bells and Other Ruminations

MITCHELL KYD

IT'S JANUARY, AND IN MY EXPERIENCE, one of the most accurate predictors of a string of snowy, sloppy, slippery days in my region is the arrival of the Pennsylvania Farm Show. That eight-day stretch nearly always includes a chunk that shouts *nope!* about leaving home.

As a kid, anticipating the Farm Show eased the pain of watching Christmas vacation evaporate. It was “The Holidays: Part Two.” An excursion there was considered an excused, educational absence, and sometimes we went during the week as well as Saturday. My favorite days to visit were during the draft horse events. There is something majestic, yet unassuming, about those Belgian and Percheron giants with tiny names like Mike or Duke, Bell or Pearl.

Fast forward to the year we traveled with our own kid, who had the honor of being the state fair queen, to county fairs and ag events across the state, including the Farm Show. Every invitation that year meant late nights and a lot of turnpike travel, and in those ancient times, humans staffed the toll booths. My husband always had a corny dad joke ready as a reward (or punishment?) for anyone stuck on the late shift. His favorite was: *Why do cows wear bells?*

An entire village springs to life during Farm Show week and half a million visitors make the trek to Harrisburg each January to enjoy it. With competitions, exhibitions and demonstrations, it continues to be the largest indoor agricultural expo in the country. Organizers managed a virtual event in 2021, maintaining the show's record for being in continuous operation since 1946.

The exhibit halls and arenas overflow with the state's finest, from quilts, houseplants, and apples to evergreens, home brews, and apple pies. There's more than enough to fill your day, so plan ahead.

Also, you will get hungry, and multiple visits to the food court is a Farm-Show must. Sample Pennsylvania's home-grown best, but venture beyond the standards of burgers, brisket and fresh-cut fries. Try something new like “lolly pork chops,” goat sloppy Joes, mushroom jerky, potato donuts, cider slushies, hemp tea, honey ice cream, maple cotton candy or fried berry Oreos.

Later, applaud 4-H members and other young entrants

as they demonstrate they know what it takes to harvest a garden or raise an animal. They not only know the satisfaction that comes from that responsibility, but they also know where our food comes from without delusions or indifference.

You can tune into an entirely new language at the Farm Show, too, because you can't help overhearing the smack talk among competitors — the bleating, mooing, grunting, snorting, barking, neighing and braying. I remember sharing the hallway outside the small arena one year with an antsy Hereford who was waiting for his grand entrance. He issued a bellow that rocked those concrete walls and rumbled down my spine.

The Farm Show is an institution, linking our future

with the past in annual tribute to our state's bounty. Visit farmshow.pa.gov for all the details and future dates if you missed it this year.

Right now, however, you may be wondering if I intended to let you hang without the punchline to my husband's corny joke, but here it is — with my apologies to farmers everywhere: *Why do cows wear bells?* Because their horns don't work, of course! 🐮

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.



Finding Adventure Close to Home

STEVE PIATT

WHEN AN ADVENTURE of a lifetime is over, as is the case with my Alaskan mountain goat hunt, there's a mix of lingering adrenaline and a bit of depression — a “what now?” feeling that's tough to shake without another experience on the horizon.

Thankfully, it's something I can usually get over with time in a tree stand, watching our two Labs work the pheasant fields and planning our 2024 excursions.

As I write this, I'm two months out from the goat hunt and still in a state of disbelief. The bruises are gone, although I still have a thumb issue. It's likely a product of one of the many falls during the climb into goat country or maybe during the descent, when I was loaded down with about 80 pounds of gear and goat meat.

Yes, I took a beautiful billy after a five-hour trek. The journey included a miserable bushwhack through a wet tangle of alders and deadfalls, then another, final climb until, really, there was no more vertical to ascend — even for the goat.

Looking back, the hunt involved two stages: the climb, then the shot. If you're able to endure the torturous trek up the mountain, chances are pretty good you're going to get an opportunity at a goat. Their major defense is the location where they reside, which is often inaccessible. In fact, my guide's first words after my shot were, “I hope we can recover him.”

We could ... after finding a narrow notch in a cliff that allowed us to retrieve the spectacular animal, which



MISSION ACCOMPLISHED: After intense training all summer and a grueling five-hour trek up a mountain, Steve Piatt finally got his goat, a beautiful billy, on his recent trip to Alaska.

sometime later this year will occupy a place on our wall. This isn't to show off to others — a common misconception — but for me to admire and remember the effort and experience.

But now what?

Maybe a return to Newfoundland for moose, the West for elk or antelope, the Yukon or Alaska, this time for Dall's sheep. Maybe a fly-in fishing trip for huge, aggressive northern pike in northern Alberta or Saskatchewan.

They all sound great, but I can find plenty of adventure right here in Pennsylvania, too, and right now that's my plan for 2024.

I don't have to look very far. The Keystone State's deer and bear hunting opportunities are superb, and there's always a chance that, just maybe, next year I'll draw a coveted Pennsylvania elk-hunting permit.

My goat-hunt preparation forced me to push aside a lot of fishing opportunities in 2023, but that won't

be the case this year. Smallmouth bass on the Susquehanna River will again be on the schedule, but a major focus will return to trout. There will be days and evenings on waters like Kettle Creek, Sinnemahoning's First Fork, Pine Creek, Sullivan County's picturesque Hoagland Branch, and scores of smaller waters that hold the wild fish.

Paula and I will also do plenty of camping in 2024. We tend to gravitate to remote state parks like Worlds End, Sinnemahoning, Sizerville and Ole Bull which, not surprisingly, all have quality trout fishing nearby.

So 2024 will again be a year of adventure. It will just be closer to home. And it won't hurt nearly as much as last year. 🐾

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.

Will This Strange Antarctic Squid Solve America's Memory Crisis?

New Deep Sea Discovery Proven to Be The #1 Natural Enhancer of Memory and Focus

Half a mile beneath the icy waters off the coast of Argentina lives one of the most remarkable creatures in the world.

Fully grown, they're less than 2 feet long and weigh under 10 pounds...

But despite their small size, this strange little squid can have a bigger positive impact on your brain health than any other species on the planet.

They are the single richest source of a vital "brain food" that 250 million Americans are starving for, according to a study published in the British Medical Journal.

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.

Because DHA is so important, lacking enough of it is not only dangerous to your overall health but could be directly related to your brain shrinking with age.

With more than 16 million Americans suffering from age-associated cognitive impairment, it's clear to a top US doctor that's where the problem lies.

Regenerative medicine specialist Dr. Al Sears, says thankfully, "there's still hope for seniors. Getting more of this vital brain food 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 4 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 that 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 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 function in the most effective way possible?



MEMORY-RESTORING SENSATION: The memory-saving oil in this Antarctic squid restores decades of lost brain power starting in just 24 hours.

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 2 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 regularly receives 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 **1-800-966-2267**. "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 **1-800-966-2267** 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 **PLOM124** when you call.

Ring in Healthy Possibilities

ANNE M. KIRCHNER

After we ring in the new year, many of us scramble to replace poor eating habits. We spent the holiday season feasting on rich foods. We overindulged on sweets and neglected daily exercise. It's time to return to healthy activities. As you refocus, consider eating more whole grains and legumes.

Whole grains are a staple in many households because they help manage blood pressure, cholesterol levels and weight. My favorites include oats, brown rice, quinoa and barley. Legumes, such as lentils, chickpeas and beans, are common ingredients in Mediterranean diets. They are an affordable way to add plant-based protein to a diet. Whole grains and legumes are very versatile. Enjoy exploring the possibilities! 🌱

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



CARROT LENTIL SOUP

4 tablespoons butter
 ½ yellow onion, chopped
 1 pound baby carrots
 ½ cup lentils
 4 cups water or vegetable broth
 ½ cup orange juice
 2 teaspoons dill, plus extra for garnish
 Salt and pepper, to taste
 Feta cheese

Melt the butter in a saucepan. Add the onions and cook until soft. Add the carrots, lentils and water or vegetable broth. Bring the mixture to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium low and simmer for 15 to 20 minutes. Remove the soup from the heat and blend in a food processor until slightly smooth. Stir in the orange juice, dill, salt and pepper. Gently reheat the soup. Garnish each serving with feta cheese and dill. *Makes 6 to 8 servings.*



QUINOA POWER BOWL

1 cup quinoa
 2 cups water
 6 tablespoons olive oil, divided
 Juice and zest of 1 orange
 2 tablespoons dark balsamic vinegar
 1 teaspoon kosher salt
 ½ teaspoon black pepper
 2 cups chopped kale
 1 15.5-ounces can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
 1 medium apple, thinly sliced
 1 cup fresh raspberries
 Feta cheese

Place the quinoa in a fine-mesh strainer and rinse with cold water. In a saucepan, combine the quinoa and water; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium low and cover the pot with a lid. Simmer for 12 to 15 minutes. Remove from the heat and let stand for 5 minutes. Fluff the quinoa with a fork; set aside. In a small bowl, whisk together 4 tablespoons of olive oil, the orange juice and zest, the vinegar, salt and pepper. Set the dressing aside. In a large mixing bowl, massage the kale with the remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Add the quinoa, chickpeas and dressing; toss to combine. Serve the quinoa in a large bowl topped with apple slices, raspberries and feta cheese. *Makes 4 to 6 servings.*



CHICKEN, MUSHROOM AND BARLEY SKILLET

4 tablespoons olive oil, divided
 4 chicken thighs, skinned and cubed
 ½ teaspoon kosher salt
 ¼ teaspoon coarse black pepper
 1 cup quick pearled barley
 8 ounces cremini mushrooms
 3 green onions, diced
 2 tablespoons white wine or cider vinegar
 2 cups chicken stock
 Salt and pepper, to taste

Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil over medium heat in a large skillet. Add the cubed chicken, salt and pepper; sauté until fully cooked. Remove the chicken from the skillet and set aside. Heat the remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil in the skillet. Add the barley and sauté for 2 to 3 minutes. Add the mushrooms and green onions; sauté 2 to 3 minutes more. Deglaze the pan by adding the white wine or cider vinegar. Add the chicken stock; bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium low. Cover the skillet and cook for 12 to 15 minutes. Uncover the skillet and add the cooked chicken; cook an additional 5 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper, and serve with your favorite vegetable side dish. *Makes 4 to 6 servings.*

The Miracle of Hemp in a Pill?

New hemp technology is 450% better for discomfort relief than regular hemp oil

Americans are rejoicing about a brand-new technology that gets the goods on the health benefits of hemp.

A next generation hemp technology is now available across the nation and can be purchased without a prescription.

And the best part, it comes with a new delivery system that's 450% more absorbable than oil.

So you can say good-bye to pills, oils and creams.

Canna LS contains pure "full spectrum hemp," which works to relieve joint discomfort, restore sharp memory, and support a healthy normal inflammatory response, to name a few. And since it has no THC, it heals without the "high."

Exciting new scientific research shows that hemp contains special molecules called cannabinoids which bind to receptor sites in the brain and body. When taken orally, hemp activates these receptors.

Why This New Technology Is Better Than Hemp

Unfortunately, most hemp found on the market can't deliver a fraction of these results. "The problem is, most hemp formulas come in oil form," according to Chief Technologist Mi Hwa Kim of The Green Gardener. "Oil doesn't breach the cell membrane, which is where the real healing happens. Our body is 80% water, our cells 90%. And you know what they say about oil and water — they don't mix."

This is why **Canna LS** contains a unique "water soluble" system. The technology is shown to improve absorption

in the cells by 450%, quickly boosting the body's cannabinoid levels.

"The other problem is that most of these formulas only contain a single compound extract," says Ms. Kim. "Hemp's full spectrum of cannabinoids are shown to work synergistically. In short, they work better together. It's called the "entourage effect." Most miss out on the full effects because they are missing some of the best rejuvenating compounds within the hemp plant. This is why we've made **Canna LS** with "full spectrum" hemp." "Finally, most hemp formulas are made on foreign farms with pesticides, or grown using non-organic seeds and processes. We've grown the hemp in **Canna LS** at a 100% organic American farm, under strict agricultural guidelines. It's grown without pesticides or GMOs. And it's grown to contain no THC."

How It Works

The key to hemp's health benefits is the Endocannabinoid System, a network of receptors in the cells. The system is there to maintain homeostasis (balance). In response to toxins in our body, it releases cannabinoids to set things back to their natural state.

"It's really an amazing God-given system that's been completely over-looked," says Ms. Kim. "Our bodies are practically designed to work with the compounds in hemp, which is why we needed a technology like **Canna LS** that unleashes its full potential."

Over time, with aging, the endocannabinoid system even-

tually burns out. Fewer cannabinoids are released, so the body's levels deplete. The result is, all sorts of symptoms of aging like age-related memory loss, blurry vision, joint discomfort, and much more.

"This is why there's almost nothing hemp can't do and no health concern it can't address," says Mi Hwa. "The trouble is, most hemp formulas are just not absorbable enough for the cell, so they fail to activate the endocannabinoid system. This is why they don't deliver anything close to the full range of potential results."

Fortunately, **Canna LS** is clinically shown to enter the cell membrane 450% more powerfully. This is how it boosts cannabinoid levels fast, helping to relieve joint discomfort... re-store foggy memory... and support healthy blood sugar. And what most people really love is that the "pearl" gel is easier to take than taking a pill or oil.

Not Yet Sold In Stores

Full-spectrum hemp, like **Canna LS**, is available nationwide. However, several major pharmaceutical companies are currently testing hemp in clinical settings, which means it may require a prescription in the future. It's advised to get **Canna LS** while you can.

Taking All The Risk Off Consumers

A large percentage of men and women using **Canna LS** experience truly amazing results. That's why it's now being sold with a guarantee that goes way beyond the industry standard. "We can only make this guarantee because we are 100%



certain our customers will be satisfied," says Ms. Kim. We want to take full risk off consumers. So in addition to offering substantial discounts for first-time customers, we also make them a huge promise that ensures they don't have to risk a cent."

Here's how it works: Take **Canna LS** exactly as directed, and you must be thrilled with the results! Otherwise, simply return the bottles and any unused portion within 90 days of purchase.

Where To Find Canna LS

To secure the hot, new **Canna LS** formula, buyers should contact the Sears Health Hotline at **1-866-864-7811** TODAY. "It's not available in retail stores yet," says Dr. Sears. "The Hotline allows us to ship directly to the customer." Dr. Sears feels so strongly about **Canna LS**, all orders are backed by a 100% money-back guarantee. "Just send me back the bottle and any unused product within 90 days from purchase date, and I'll send you all your money back."

Call NOW at **1-866-864-7811** to secure your supply of **Canna LS**. Use Promo Code **PLCA124** when you call. Lines are frequently busy, but all calls will be answered!

Horsepower and Hoedowns

Tractor Aficionados Have Been Kicking up Their Wheels at Farm Show for More Than a Decade

MICHAEL T. CRAWFORD

Gas-powered tractors revolutionized farming in the 19th century. Then, they made life easier for those earning a living off the land. Today — at least for some — tractors make it a little more entertaining.

Just ask Bill Blough.

“My son, who lives in Cranberry Township ... brought home a Sunday magazine one weekend about a group of farmers from Nemaha, Iowa — the Farmall Promenade — dancing with tractors,” recalls Blough, founder and former president of the Roof Garden Tractor Buddies in Somerset County. “I’m the goofy guy who said we should square dance on tractors here, and it just sort of fell together after that.”

A lifelong farmer, Blough turned to his colleagues, rallying a motley crew of farmers in the



county curious enough to try most anything once. And when “once” proved too fun to stop, the newly formed Tractor Buddies decided to share the hobby with the community, performing at local festivals and the county fair. The 14-member group kicks up its wheels roughly a dozen times a year, including an annual performance at the Pennsylvania Farm Show.

Dressing the part

Since square dancing traditionally involves couples, some men will play the women’s roles and dress the part.

“We put eight tractors out there — some of the guys wear skirts and dresses — and we have a lot of fun doing it,” explains Blough, who has performed with the group at the Farm Show for 13 years. “We’re what the Pennsylvania Cable Network puts on television.”

The exact number of Farm Show “dancers” changes from year to year. One year, the Tractor Buddies danced with a club from Selinsgrove, a performance that sent 16 tractors into the Farm Show arena. While the Tractor Buddies have been tearing up the dance floor for more than two decades, it’s been even longer for Blough, who has done traditional square dancing and ridden tractors since he was a boy at 4-H gatherings.

“Right now, we have seven members under 28 years of age, and everything is going strong,” explains Allen Rhoads, a member of Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) and vice president of the Tractor Buddies. “It amazes me that we’ve got a group of people under 30 years old who are wanting to do something that we’ve been doing for 21 years. They like what we’re doing, and they’re very good at it.”

Brandon Rhoads, 26 (no known relation to Allen Rhoads), loves how different the activity is from anything he’s ever heard of. A tractor aficionado with “too many” of his own, he learned how to square dance just so he could ride with the group.

“My mom and dad wouldn’t let me square dance on the tractor unless I took square dance lessons on foot,” says the twenty-something, also a Somerset REC member and owner of May Hill Rhoads Farm. “There’s not [another] group that does it in the state — there used to be, but they disbanded. It’s different; it’s unique. It’s not something you see everywhere you go.”

Tractor dancers perform inside a 100-foot circle, so the Tractor Buddies use narrow front-end tractors to ensure they can move with precision. Otherwise, there are no

restrictions on the make or model of the tractors they use. Allen Rhoads has 15 different tractors he likes to show off, his favorite being a Cockshutt 20. But truly, he says, the tractors are just one part of the overall experience.

“Being with friends — that’s what it’s all about,” the 77-year-old enthusiast says. “In the summer, we get together every week and practice for about an hour and a half. Our wives bring food in, and we sit down to eat and talk for two hours.”

Serious fun

While the tractors move in sync, there’s no choreography here. Similar to traditional square dancers, tractor square dancers follow nothing more than the caller’s improvised directions.

“That’s the beauty of it; it’s just a matter of listening and doing what the caller tells you to do,” says the elder Rhoads, a retired cattle and dairy farmer in Jenner Township. “We can teach someone to square dance, but we can’t teach someone to drive a tractor, so we absolutely demand they know how to drive [one].”

Blough, who dances a female role with his John Deere 3010 diesel, says he can’t overstate the importance of tractor safety. The retired 4-H leader has the scars to prove it; his right hand was replaced with a prosthetic hook after he lost it in a farming accident when he was 21.

It’s a tale he regularly recounts. On Dec. 16, 1968, the power take-off shaft of a manure spreader was frozen to its shield, Blough says. His gloves, wet from wintry weather, immediately froze to the spinning shaft and pulled his hand into the tractor, resulting in a seven-week stay at Somerset Hospital and multiple surgeries.

“I tell everyone to stop and think and be cautious and conscious every minute,” he says. “Nothing beats the real thing and once you have an accident, you can’t go back.”

Thankfully, the tale has a happy ending. Not only was Blough able to go back to work on the farm, but he also married his nurse, the former Dorothy Jane Hoover. And it clearly didn’t take away his affection for tractors.

“Some people still ask, ‘How can you dance with only one hand?’” he says with a chuckle. “Well, I farmed all those years with one hand!”

The Tractor Buddies will perform Wednesday, Jan. 10, at this year’s Farm Show. If you miss them there, you can still see them perform at events throughout Somerset County during the summer and early fall.

The group is sponsored in part by the Allied Milk Producers’ Cooperative, of which Somerset REC Board Secretary/Treasurer Lowell Friedline serves as secretary. To learn more about the Tractor Buddies, visit roofgardentractorbuddies.com. 📍

SPIN YOUR WHEEL ROUND N’ ROUND: Bill Blough, left, a founding member of Roof Garden Tractor Buddies in Somerset County, and Tyler Zimmerman perform a “right-hand star” during the tractor square dance at the 2023 Pennsylvania Farm Show. Also shown, at right, is Lauren Baker, riding in the buddy seat.

You Can't Fly Without an Airplane

JOHN KASUN

LIFE IS A WONDERFUL AND PRECIOUS gift, but it doesn't come with a book of instructions. Of course, there are guidelines and even laws we must obey. If some drivers suddenly decided to stop on green and go on red, our intersections would be a jumble of crumbled metal and broken plastic, and insurance agents would be pulling out what little hair they might still have. So the laws don't really tell us how to live life. Instead, they try to keep us on our side of life's road.

There are numerous general rules like, "Treat others like you wish to be treated," or "A penny saved is a penny earned." These guidelines have been developed by those who have traveled the highway of life before us. Think of these rules as guide posts, or reminders, that try to keep us in the middle of the road.

Rules are constantly being tested by life's travelers. Several years ago a friend announced he was getting divorced.

"What happened?" I asked.

"People told me the grass was greener on the other side of the fence, but no one ever told me about the barbed wire I would have to crawl through to get there," he replied.

Life isn't about just being alive, it's about actually living. We often act as if we will live forever, but life can end in an instant. Therefore, it is necessary to keep a balance in our lives by doing what is necessary, shouldering our responsibilities and helping others. But it is equally as important to live. The following true stories help illustrate that point.

When my wife and I lived in Texas, our landlady was in her late 60s and had been widowed twice. She married a third time, and she and her husband became world travelers. After returning from a trip to Egypt, she told me of having the opportunity to ride a camel in a caravan to the pyramids. She said her new husband was reluctant to take on such an adventure and didn't want her to go. I asked what she did. "I left him at the hotel and hopped on a camel," she said with a twinkle in her eyes. "I told him I was going because I may not ever be back this way again."

She choose to live life on her terms.

On my way home one day, I passed a neighboring farm and found myself gazing at a small herd of buffalo. For a few seconds, I must have looked as puzzled as Michael J. Fox in the movie "Back to the Future" as I wondered if I was really in the early 1800s. I pulled into the main gate, where the owner had tossed some corn shocks over the fence. I climbed the gate and joined him as he gazed down on the buffalo, peacefully eating their newly delivered treat. For at least a minute, I marveled at being close to such magnificent beasts.

"Gene," I asked, "what's the plan for the buffalo?" I

thought the answer might be selling buffalo meat, selling the hides or some other money-making idea.

With his eyes riveted on the buffalo, he slowly said, "I just always wanted a herd of buffalo."

I couldn't think of a better reason. What value can you place on fulfilling a lifelong desire?

A good friend who was always quite shy and very quiet suddenly began taking flying lessons. All of his buddies kidded him, thinking it was a passing whim. However, the lessons continued, he soloed and signed up for instrument training. He never spoke of his

passion for flying, except when asked. Soon the subject of flying was forgotten, and everyone assumed his passion had cooled. Then one day he proudly announced that he had just purchased a new airplane. Everyone was dumbstruck until someone finally asked, "Why did you buy an airplane?"

With a puzzled look he responded, "You can't fly without an airplane!"

It is a new year and today is truly the first day of the rest of our lives. Let's all make our time count; let's make our lives count. Wishing you a happy and blessed New Year from the Kasuns. 🍷



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.

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Attention Former Youth Tour Students:

The **Jody Loudenslager Scholarship** is available to any college-bound or current college student who was selected to participate in the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association Youth Tour program. Scan this QR code for more information about the scholarship and the application.

Requirements & Dates to Remember:

Applicants are required to furnish necessary aptitude test scores, transcripts (high school or unofficial college, if applicable) and financial aid information. All applications and required documentation must be emailed to Steph Okuniewski (email address below) no later than **May 3, 2024**. Finalists will be sent a follow-up questionnaire that must be returned by **June 3, 2024**. Scholarship recipients will be announced in July 2024.



Questions:

If you have any questions or need additional information, please email Steph Okuniewski at Stephanie_Okuniewski@prea.com or call 717.982.1455.

ISSUE MONTH AD DEADLINE

March 2024	January 15
April 2024	February 14
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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.

No ads accepted by phone/email. For more information, please call 717-233-5704.

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Source: American Red Cross, Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Congratulations, 2023 Winners

HUNDREDS OF *Penn Lines* readers submitted photos for the 2023 Rural Reflections contest, and a panel of independent judges selected the year's winning entries. Each winner in the categories of most artistic, best landscape, best human subject, best animal subject and editor's choice will receive a \$75 prize. However, all of the readers who submitted photos during the past year deserve our appreciation. In February, *Penn Lines* will publish the judges' other favorite photos. These runners-up will each receive \$25.

In March, we will begin publishing the 2024 photos, so please start sending your snapshots (no professional photos, please) to *Penn Lines* Photos, P.O. Box 1266, Harrisburg, PA 17108-1266. Include your name, address, daytime phone number and the name of the electric cooperative that serves your residence, business or seasonal home.

Remember, our publication deadlines require that we work ahead, so send your seasonal photos in early. We need spring photos before mid-March, summer photos before mid-May, fall photos before mid-July and winter photos before mid-September. Please note: 2023 photos that were accompanied by self-addressed, stamped envelopes will be returned in February. Photos received in 2024 — if accompanied by self-addressed, stamped envelopes — will be returned one year after receipt. 📧

MOST ARTISTIC



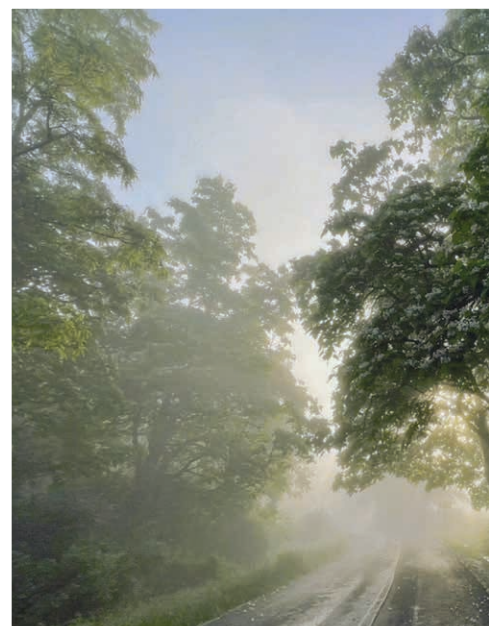
JEANNE HENRY • SOMERSET REC

EDITOR'S CHOICE



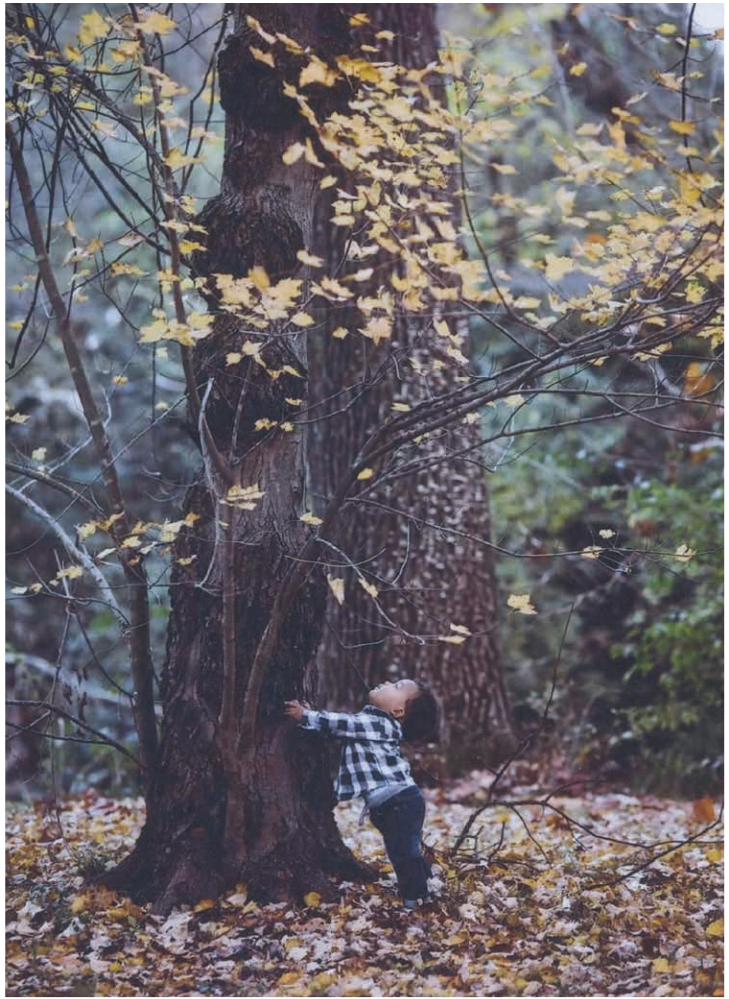
AMY MILLER • VALLEY REC

BEST LANDSCAPE



WES TOMER • REA ENERGY

BEST HUMAN SUBJECT



MARGARET BUMBAUGH • TRI-COUNTY REC

BEST ANIMAL SUBJECT



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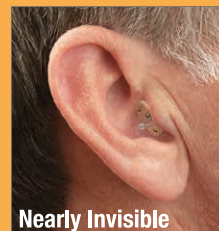
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