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THE TENNESSEE ZINE

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Readers named Golly G's Ice Cream their favorite place for dessert in Middle Tennessee. See pages 12-15 to see other winners taking top honors in the 2024 Best of Tennessee Readers' Choice Awards. Photograph courtesy of Golly G's Ice Cream



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Between the Lines

News from your community

For less than a dollar

The holidays are a time filled with iconic movies.

“The Year Without a Santa Claus,” “It’s a Wonderful Life” and “Home Alone” might be among the movies your family plans to watch again this year, even if you can quote the films in their entirety.

Aside from the classic “Merry Christmas, ya filthy animal” line, one aspect of “Home Alone” always stands out: the shopping list.

In the movie, 8-year-old Kevin, played by Macaulay Culkin, is accidentally left at home while his family travels to Paris for Christmas. Kevin successfully defends his Chicago home from a comical pair of bumbling burglars. While alone, though, Kevin makes a trip to a local grocery store, and his total comes out to less than \$20 with the use of a \$1 coupon.

For \$19.83, Kevin purchased 10 items:

- Milk
- Orange juice
- Bread
- Microwavable macaroni and cheese
- Microwavable turkey dinner
- Laundry detergent
- Toilet paper
- Dryer sheets
- Plastic wrap
- Plastic army figurines

Nowadays, that same shopping list, according to a Walmart in Tennessee, would cost more than double (and that’s with picking the cheapest options):

- Milk: \$2.24
- Orange juice: \$3.98
- Bread: \$2.92

- Microwavable macaroni and cheese: \$2.98
- Microwavable turkey dinner: \$3.74
- Laundry detergent: \$12.97
- Toilet paper (nine rolls): \$6.36
- Dryer sheets: \$1.97
- Plastic wrap: \$3.68
- Plastic army figurines: \$2.33

The dollar off coupon, while it would help, wouldn’t cover a single item.

There is something you use every single day, though, that the coupon would cover. In fact, in Tennessee, it’s less than 15 cents: The average residential electricity rate in Tennessee is 12.9 cents per kilowatt-hour; that’s 20% below the national average of 16.2 cents. Each year, low rates save Tennessee co-op members \$574 million based on 2023’s total kWh sales.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average annual price increase of electricity is less than the average annual price increases of other items you probably use each day, including gasoline, bread, milk and butter.

As the prices of everyday items go up, Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation is focused on keeping the cost of energy low. We are proud to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy for your family this season and every day throughout the year.



By Chris A. Davis
*General Manager,
Cumberland Electric
Membership Corporation*

Mission Statement

CEMC provides safe, affordable and reliable services the cooperative way by maintaining a dedicated, highly skilled workforce guided by cooperative values and principles and a commitment to excellence.

The Tennessee Magazine

(ISSN 0492746X), Volume 67, No. 12, is published monthly by Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association, 2964 Sidco Drive, Nashville TN 37204. Periodicals Postage Paid at Nashville TN and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Tennessee Magazine*, PO Box 100912, Nashville TN 37224-0912.



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The Tennessee Magazine

Communication for
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Official publication of the
Tennessee Electric
Cooperative Association
Executive, editorial and
advertising offices:
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The Tennessee Magazine is the official publication of Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association and its member electric cooperatives. It is published and distributed monthly to communicate electrical use and safety, economic development and educational and community interests of more than 1 million Tennessee families and businesses who own, operate and control the tax-paying, business-managed, locally owned electrical distribution and service systems of the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association. Copyright 2024. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited.

Subscriber services — To order a subscription or change your address, write to *The Tennessee Magazine*, P.O. Box 100912, Nashville, TN 37204. Cost of subscription for members of participating electric cooperatives is \$3.84 per year (32 cents per month), plus Periodicals Postage Paid from equity accruing to the member. For nonmembers, a subscription is \$15 per year or \$30 for three years. Single copy, \$2.50.

Executive and editorial offices

Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association executive, editorial and advertising offices:

2964 Sidco Drive, P.O. Box 100912

Nashville, TN 37204 Phone: 615-367-9284

Email: thetennmag@tnelectric.org



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TENNESSEE TODAY

Viewpoint

Energizing every moment

“Life moves pretty fast. If you don’t stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it.” When a much younger Matthew Broderick looked into the camera and delivered those lines in the 1986 classic movie “Ferris Bueller’s Day Off,” I doubt he knew how famous he would soon become. But those words would soon become a frequent topic for college entrance essays, inspirational framed prints sold in office supply stores and even a magazine article or two just like this one.

While the actor created the memorable moment, it was the writer and producer who gave us the inspirational words. Amazingly, John Hughes penned the entire film in less than a week to avoid an upcoming labor dispute. Whether Mr. Hughes knew it or not, in his haste he provided some wisdom that several generations have now pondered.

As I consider how 2024 has come and gone so quickly, I find myself wondering if I have missed it. A lot has transpired over this year. And it is all too easy to be overwhelmed by it all. Whether it is seminal moments in my children’s lives, big decisions in the workplace, the death of colleagues and cherished loved ones, the announcement of new life for excited parents, national championships, improbable upsets or the election of leaders — life does come at us pretty fast.

Let me encourage you to consider this. Much of life’s meaning comes in the everyday, ordinary moments. Yes, it is easy to focus on the big events. How did you feel the last time your good friend called you on your birthday to tell you they were thinking of you? Or when you finished a hard day’s work and saw the fruits of your labors shining for others to enjoy and experience? Or when you read a book to your grandchild and they fell asleep in your arms?

Just last week, I had an experience that helped me refocus. It was another day of waking up and rushing to get out of the door to a busy day filled with

more commitments than I could possibly accomplish. But as I walked into the kitchen, I noticed the silhouette of three large trucks parked outside. I saw the logo of my co-op on the side. I immediately and absentmindedly looked up at the lights above the kitchen counter. Still on. Good. Time to get to the office and get to work.

But as I pulled out of the driveway, I saw several men working to restore power to my next-door neighbor. Another normal day for these five hardworking professionals, yes, but not an everyday occurrence for me and my neighbors. Twenty minutes later, I arrived back at the scene with fresh doughnuts, cold Red Bulls and an assortment of Gatorades. A thank you for the job underway. An acknowledgment that they were seen and their work was appreciated.

That morning outside my neighbor’s front door, I saw five smiles from five decent men who appreciated someone saying thank you. We chatted about their work, our community and even learned that we had some mutual friends working at the local high school. Everyday life, connecting strangers together. Then we looked across the road and saw a mother and her young son. He was watching the crew and was mightily impressed with the trucks and their flashing lights. The look of wonder on that boy’s face made me proud to be a part of your cooperative’s everyday work, and I’m glad I stopped to look around. It was too good to miss. ■



By Mike Knotts

Tennessee Electric
Cooperative Association

How a Safe Step Walk-In Tub can change your life

Remember when...

Think about the things you loved to do that are difficult today — going for a walk or just sitting comfortably while reading a book. And remember the last time you got a great night's sleep?

As we get older, health issues or even everyday aches, pains and stress can prevent us from enjoying life.

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Then read on to learn how a Safe Step Walk-In Tub can help.

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TENNESSEE ALMANAC

Bite-sized news, notes and knowledge — December 2024



NOV. 29-DEC. 29

Holidays Under the Peaks at the Tennessee Aquarium

SCUBA Claus dives in the Tennessee Aquarium's River Giants exhibit during the annual Holidays Under the Peaks celebration. Photo courtesy of the Tennessee Aquarium

Celebrate the season with a holiday visit to the Tennessee Aquarium. A festive adventure through a fun-filled underwater wonderland begins with holiday music and decor in the River Journey lobby. Look for seasonal surprises throughout your tour — including a light-bedecked tree twinkling in sync with the jolly jolts of an electric eel! “The Polar Express 3D” returns to the Tennessee Aquarium IMAX 3D Theater. And look for SCUBA Claus diving in the River Journey building on weekends in December!

Visit tnaqua.org/holidays for full details. The Tennessee Aquarium is closed Christmas Day.

50 YEARS AGO IN THE TENNESSEE MAGAZINE

View the entire December 1974 edition of *The Tennessee Magazine* at tnmagazine.org.



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From the editor

Putting together a monthly magazine can really affect your perspective. Our dedicated staff is usually working at least a month ahead of the time readers are expected to receive each magazine, so it can be easy to forget the current date.

As this issue goes to press, it's earlier in November, but in my editor's mind, addled by an alternate timeline skewed by deadlines, the holiday season is in full, festive swing.

If I'm not careful, I can miss out on all the real world fun! Once the December magazine is put to bed, I'm lost again in the desktop publishing wilderness, thinking it's January. There have been years that I haven't gotten my fill of my favorite carols and seasonal treats. And that's a real bummer.

So now, especially around the holidays, I take great effort to wake from my workload focus and enjoy "real life." And my kids enjoy riding my earlier holiday mood because they always want to decorate at a time that a younger Chris Kirk would declare was much too early for holly, ribbons and lights.

And glitter. Oh, so much glitter.

As Mike Knotts aptly addressed on page 6 in quoting a noted philosopher from film, "Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it."

So, sure, let's go ahead and get out the tree, stockings and other decorations. But I'm drawing the line at the outdoor decor. I guess I'm semistuck in some of my ways.

Thank you for reading our magazine, writing to us, entering our contests and celebrating the great people, places, food, events and everything else across Tennessee.

From everyone at *The Tennessee Magazine*, Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association and our electric co-ops, we wish you a most blessed holiday season and all the best in the year ahead.

Thanks for reading,

Chris Kirk

Editor, *The Tennessee Magazine*

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2025 Calendar – Featuring photos by Robin Conover, these 2025 calendars are in stock and ready to ship!

The Tennessee Magazine subscription – It's a gift that never goes out of style! Keep family and friends entertained with the people and places of Tennessee.



My TENNESSEE Notebook

by Antsy McClain

Our Ghosts of Christmas Past can visit us in dreams

Our Christmas tree always looked like Dale Earnhardt and Liberace collided with a truck hauling gold spray-painted macaroni.

My handmade, uncooked macaroni masterpieces dangled on red yarn alongside my sister's lovingly sculpted paper plate snowmen. Construction paper turkeys the size and shape of our little hands grew brittle and faded, but Mom placed each one carefully on a limb, facing outward like sentinels watching over our family during another holiday season.¹

Our tree was always smothered in fake spray snow. My mother loved that stuff. By mid-December, fake snow dust was on every piece of furniture in the house. Our guests would leave with wide, white streaks — like a skunk's back — on their clothes from sitting on the living room sofa.

Metallic strands of silver were draped in clumps between the ornaments. They were supposed to look like icicles, but all they ever did was reach out and shock anyone wearing slippers on the shag carpet who dared walk by.

Our holiday meals were assembled from years of McCall's and Woman's Day magazine recipes. There was always turkey and the usual side dishes — corn pudding, sweet potatoes, green beans with Funyuns, Cool Whip Surprise, something we called "Funeral Potatoes" and Mom's "Death by Mayonnaise" casserole — but every year would usually contain a few surprises.

"I saw this in Woman's Day," an industrious aunt might say, "and I thought we could try it out." She would then uncover the dish to reveal the latest trend in 1970s cuisine involving dried Chinese noodles, Ritz crackers and sweetened condensed milk.

Due to my family's eccentricities in the kitchen, I now have strange culinary predilections that most people don't share, nor should they. My mother was considered the best cook in our

family, despite her tendency to burn just about everything. We always joked that the smoke alarm was Mom's cooking timer.²

Since I grew up eating burnt food, I actually like things "overcooked." My daughters will make chocolate chip cookies when I visit, and they always know to burn a few for their old man. I like that. It's comforting. Reminds me of my childhood.

One of my favorite holiday treats is potato candy.³ But I like it stale. In my family, it was made at Thanksgiving and left to sit out with the sugar cookies and fudge on a plate in the dining room of Grandma's house for weeks before we all showed up again for dinner on Christmas Day.

A bowl of hard candy was always next to a bowl of walnuts on the coffee table in our living room. I never once saw anyone crack and eat the walnuts. The candy was striped red, white and purple and stuck together for years. I think Mom pulled the bowl out of storage every year and set it back out to gather lint, furnace dust and cat hair. The one piece I popped in my mouth tasted like a cherry cough drop soaked in Estée Lauder and Glade.

My mother loved Christmas. She hosted Christmas Eve dinners every year, inviting folks who were going through a rough time: recent divorcees, single moms and their children, elderly shut-ins. My stepfather, Rusty, would drive to their homes to pick them up while Mom put the finishing touches on holiday favorites in her tiny kitchen. Christmas Eve transformed our little two-bedroom, one-bath house into a place of refuge from the storms of life. Our living room was filled with a lovable band of misfits my mother had curated personally from church and neighborhood homes. Our guests laughed and chatted comfortably, drinking punch⁴ from a large, ornate glass bowl with matching cups that only came out for very special occasions. And despite her meager income, Mom made sure every guest had a gift.⁵



The author in 1975 with his sister, Tiffany, and mother, Mary Lou, who sold Avon and started shopping for Christmas as early as April every year to provide thoughtful gifts for all her friends, neighbors and family.

My stepfather was just here, in a dream I had. I'm writing this in my journal now so I don't forget.

I can still feel his strength, his casual but unwavering confidence. His scent is still here, too, in the room with me. And that's what shakes me the most, makes me ask the question, "Was he actually *here*?" Because I can still smell him: a mix of Aqua Velva, Corn Huskers Lotion and hours of body sweat soaked and dried into his flannel work shirt.⁶

I guess writing this column has stirred something up, and I've been dreaming about my family a lot this week. Mom has been here. A favorite aunt and uncle just dropped by last night to say hello in my sleep.

In my dream of Rusty, he asked me what I was writing, and I replied without looking up, "Just working on my column for *The Tennessee Magazine*."

"Nice," he replied, and he disappeared before I realized I had just been visited by a loved one I hadn't seen since he died in 2008. But it felt so natural to be inside the dream, I didn't think anything of it.

And that's how dreams work, I guess. Most of the people I've written about here have passed on. I think of them often and smile. They taught me, they guided me and they were

Mom was considered the best cook in the family, despite her tendency to overcook — even burn — just about everything. We always joked that the smoke alarm was her cooking timer.

sometimes disappointed in me. But they were always rooting for me.

Some of you reading this might be missing someone, and that makes the holidays hard. I know. I didn't decorate — I couldn't even set up my tree — for two years after my wife, Deana Lynn, passed away.

But I have a new tree this year, and I'll soon be opening the boxes with my own children's hand-sized turkeys and paper plate snowmen from so many years ago. Only the construction paper is faded. The memories are as vivid as when they were made.

And it's nice to know that I can still visit with loved ones — if not in life, then in dreams at least.

Have a wonderful holiday season, dear readers. Cheers!

Listen to Antsy's song about his mom and how she pinched pennies during the holidays, called "Mary Lou's Christmas List."

Antsy McClain is a Nashville-adjacent singer-songwriter, author, graphic artist and lover of potato candy. Go to unhitched.com for his family recipe for potato candy and more. Use this QR code to download and listen to "Mary Lou's Christmas List," **FREE** to readers of *The Tennessee Magazine*.



Footnotes to give you confidence, better health and a brighter smile!

¹ Commemorative Winston cigarette ornaments, gifted by my uncle, danced randomly on our tree. He would save proof-of-purchase labels from the cartons he went through on his two-packs-a-day habit, and the premiums were his annual contribution to the family gift exchange.

We had a Winston tote bag in the pantry for years that held plastic Kroger and Kmart bags. Mom played solitaire for years using a deck of cards that boasted "Winston Tastes Good Like a Cigarette Should" printed on the box in gold letters.

A Tiffany-inspired Winston lampshade hung above my uncle's pool table, which cost at least a hundred proof of purchase labels and definitely revealed where we fell in his priorities.

² I'm of the suspicion that Mom routinely burnt food because even more than her love for cooking, my mother loved to talk. And I believe her chattiness would cause her to forget that she had placed something in the oven or on the stove.

She once welcomed a hapless pair of Jehovah's Witnesses into our home, sat them down on the sofa and talked at them for more than three hours without taking a breath. I would meander through the living room just to see the looks of despair on their faces, as if silently admonishing themselves — and God — for their misfortune of arriving at our house.

We never saw another set of Jehovah's Witnesses ever again. An encyclopedia salesman once left our home in tears and promptly joined the Air Force.

³ Potato candy is rumored to be an old Irish American recipe made by boiling a small potato and mixing it into a dough using powdered sugar, lots and lots of powdered sugar. A generous layer of peanut butter is spread onto the flattened dough and rolled up and sliced into pinwheels. In my opinion, it is best when it has sat out for at least a week until the dough gets crispy and the peanut butter has what could be called a "room" taste.

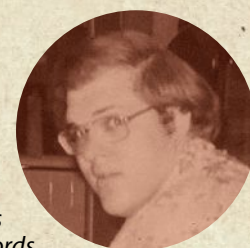
⁴ My mother and stepfather had both sworn off liquor when they started going to church. From that point forward, the only punch my mother ever served was 7UP and rainbow sherbet. As the sherbet would melt, the 7UP got cloudy until it looked like milk from a goat that also happened to be a Shriners clown.

A sweeter, more sugary concoction has never been known to man. After one cup, my teeth were coated with a film so persistent, it challenged even the sturdiest toothbrush.

One morning in early January, after weeks of family recipe consumption, I went to my dentist. He took one look at my teeth and told his secretary to cancel that day's appointments.

⁵ Mom started Christmas shopping in April, putting ceramic knickknacks and cotton blouses on layaway at Kmart until she had the funds she needed from selling Avon. In the weeks leading up to Christmas, she would go through her list of family, friends and dinner guests and thoughtfully wrap each present. There were always a few extra in case someone was invited at the last minute or showed up unexpectedly. It was not in my mother's nature to leave anyone out.

⁶ Rusty was a blue collar guy. He told me, "There are two kinds of men in this world: the kind who shower before work and the kind who shower after work. You're gonna be the kind who showers before work." In other words, he wanted me to go to college and be a white collar guy. While I've never considered myself white collar, and I've never had a job where someone called me "boss," he and Mom made sure I got to college. When I graduated high school, they gave me a big leather suitcase and a crisp \$100 bill. I took the hint and hit the road, looking back only figuratively — in my writing — over the years. Writers have a tendency toward restlessness only to romanticize the worlds they couldn't wait to escape.



Above, the author's stepfather, Clyde Russell "Rusty" Bell, in 1976.

FOOD • TRAVEL • ARTS • SHOPPING

BEST *of* TENNESSEE

READERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2024

Celebrating the best of our state is something *The Tennessee Magazine* strives to do every month, and our readers lend us an extra hand in selecting our Best of Tennessee awards. This year, we revamped the categories to make voting for your favorites even easier. As always, responses poured in from our Tennessee experts for every category — from bakery to festival to even the best place to take the kids. Without further ado, we present the winners of the 2024 Best of Tennessee Readers' Choice Awards, handpicked by you — our readers.

Bakery

West

Two Sisters Bakery
621 Old Hickory Blvd., Jackson
731-668-1495
facebook.com/p/Two-Sisters-Bakery-100057305814518

Middle

Julia's Homestyle Bakery
1911 Medical Center Parkway,
Suite B, Murfreesboro
615-890-2253
myjulias.com

East (tie)

Magpies Bakery
846 N. Central St., Knoxville
865-673-0471
magpies-bakery.square.site

East (tie)

Town House Bake Shop
2524 Keith St. NW, Suite 5
423-478-2822
m.townhousebakeshop.com

Barbecue

West

Central BBQ
Four Memphis locations, including
6201 Poplar Ave., Memphis
901-417-7962, eatcbq.com

Middle

Slick Pig BBQ
1920 E. Main St., Murfreesboro,
and 1303 Plaza Drive, Smyrna
615-890-3583
slickpigbbq.com

East

The Original Ridgewood Barbecue
900 Elizabethton Highway, Bluff City
423-538-7543
ridgewoodbbq.com

Brewery/Craft Beer/ Winery

West

Century Farm Winery
1548 Lower Brownsville Road,
Jackson



Golly G's
Ice Cream



Yee-Haw
Brewing Co.



731-424-7437
centuryfarmwinery.com

Middle

Arrington Vineyards
6211 Patton Road, Arrington
615-395-0102
arringtonvineyards.com

East (tie)

Monkey Town Brewing Company
287 First Ave., Dayton
423-775-1800
monkeytownbrewing.com



Buster's Place

East (tie)

Yee-Haw Brewing Co.
126 Buffalo St., Johnson City
(with additional Tennessee locations
in Knoxville and Nashville)
423-328-9193
yeehawbrewing.com

Catfish

West

Catfish Cabin
1290 S. Highland Ave., Jackson
731-422-1001
catfishcabinjackson.com

Middle

Uncle Bud's
2719 Old Lebanon Road,
Nashville
615-678-8080
unclebuds.com

East

Huck Finn's Catfish
3330 Parkway,
Pigeon Forge
865-429-3353
huckfinnscatfish.com

Hamburger

West

Huey's Restaurants
10 locations, original
location: 1927 Madison
Ave., Memphis
901-726-4372
hueyburger.com

Middle

Buster's Place
1615 NW Broad St., Murfreesboro
615-895-5464
bustersintheboro.com

East

Frostee Freeze Drive-In
1617 N. Broad St., Tazewell
423-626-3522
facebook.com/frosteefreezein

Home/Country Cooking

West

Brooks Shaw's Old Country Store
56 Casey Jones Lane, Jackson
731-668-1223
www.caseyjones.com

Middle (tie)

Bell Buckle Cafe
16 Railroad Square, Bell Buckle
931-389-9693
facebook.com/TheBellBuckleCafe

Middle (tie)

Kleer-Vu Lunchroom
226 S. Highland Ave., Murfreesboro
615-896-0520
facebook.com/profile.
php?id=100041896763696



Bell Buckle Cafe

East

The Old Mill
175 Old Mill Ave., Pigeon Forge
877-653-6455
old-mill.com



West Tennessee
Strawberry Festival

Place for Dessert

West

Dumplings Bistro and Bakery
31C Wiley Parker Road, Jackson
731-664-4959, dumplingsbistro.com

Middle

Golly G's Ice Cream
6308 Highway 41 A, Pleasant View
(with locations also in Clarksville
and Greenbrier)
615-746-5849, gollygs.com

East

Suba's Restaurant
2736 S. Shady St., Mountain City
423-727-5657, subasrestaurant.com

Farmers Market

West

West Tennessee Farmers' Market
91 New Market St., Jackson
731-425-8308
[jacksontn.gov/residents/arts_](http://jacksontn.gov/residents/arts_entertainment/farmers__market)
[entertainment/farmers__market](http://jacksontn.gov/residents/arts_entertainment/farmers__market)

Middle

Nashville Farmers' Market
900 Rosa L. Parks Blvd., Nashville
615-880-2001
nashvillefarmersmarket.org

East

Market Square Farmers Market
Market Square, Union Avenue and
Market Street, downtown Knoxville
865-805-8687
[nourishknoxville.org/](http://nourishknoxville.org/market-square-farmers-market)
[market-square-farmers-market](http://nourishknoxville.org/market-square-farmers-market)



Andrew Jackson's Hermitage

Festival

West

West Tennessee
Strawberry Festival
1200 E. Main St., Humboldt
731-784-1842
strawberryfestivaltn.com

Middle

Wilson County-Tennessee
State Fair
945 E. Baddour Parkway,
Lebanon
615-443-2626
wilsoncountyttnstatefair.com

East

Mountain City Sunflower Festival
222 W. Main St.,
Mountain City
423-291-9029
sunflowerfestivalmctn.com

Historic Site

West

Shiloh National Military Park
1055 Pittsburg Landing Road, Shiloh
731-689-5696
nps.gov/shil/index.htm

Middle

Andrew Jackson's Hermitage
4580 Rachel's Lane, Hermitage
615-889-2941
thehermitage.com

East

Cades Cove
Cable Mill Road, Townsend
865-436-1200
[nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/](http://nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/cadescove.htm)
[cadescove.htm](http://nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/cadescove.htm)

Museum/Art Gallery

West

Discovery Park of America
830 Everett Blvd., Union City
731-885-5455
discoveryparkofamerica.com



Johnson County
Center for the Arts
Gallery on Main



Middle

Frist Art Museum
919 Broadway, Nashville
615-244-3340, fristartmuseum.org

East

Johnson County Center for the Arts
Gallery on Main
129 W. Main St., Mountain City
423-460-3313
jocoartcenter.org

Place to Take the Kids

West

Discovery Park of America
830 Everett Blvd., Union City
731-885-5455
discoveryparkofamerica.com

Middle

Nashville Zoo
3777 Nolensville Pike, Nashville
615-833-1534, nashvillezoo.org

East

Dollywood Parks and Resorts
2700 Dollywood Parks Blvd.,
Pigeon Forge
800-DOLLYWOOD
dollywood.com

Outdoor Adventure

West

Reelfoot Lake State Park
2595 Highway 21 E.,

Tiptonville

731-253-9652

tnstateparks.com/parks/reelfoot-lake

Middle

Fall Creek Falls State Park
2009 Village Camp Road, Spencer
423-881-5298
tnstateparks.com/parks/fall-creek-falls

East

Great Smoky Mountains
National Park
107 Park Headquarters Road, Gatlinburg
865-436-1200
nps.gov/grsm/index.htm

State Park

West

Reelfoot Lake State Park
2595 Highway 21 E., Tiptonville
731-253-9652
tnstateparks.com/parks/reelfoot-lake

Middle

Fall Creek Falls State Park
2009 Village Camp Road,
Spencer
423-881-5298
tnstateparks.com/parks/fall-creek-falls

East

Roan Mountain State Park
1015 Highway 143, Roan Mountain
423-547-3900
tnstateparks.com/parks/roan-mountain



Congratulations to our grand-prize winners

Each winner, drawn from all qualifying entries, will receive certificates from Tennessee State Parks for up to a four-night stay at any state resort park inn, \$250 to spend while enjoying his or her visit and a basket of farm-direct, locally made artisan foods from Pick Tennessee Products.

Jeff Hall,
Gibson EMC

Chris Vandeman,
Caney Fork EC

John Combs,
Volunteer EC



Dollywood Parks and Resorts

Choctaw community: Tennessee's best-kept secret

If you ask Google, it might tell you that there are no Native American reservations in Tennessee. But that's misleading.

In West Tennessee, there's a piece of land owned by the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. It's about 220 acres, and only about 100 people live there. There are no businesses — just homes, a community center, a storm shelter and some ball fields.

It may or may not be accurate to call this property in Lauderdale County a reservation because the Henning land is a subset of a much larger reservation in a neighboring state. But many people in Lauderdale County and in the West Tennessee Choctaw community refer to it by that name.

How it came about is one of Tennessee's best-kept secrets.

Those who remained behind

When settlers first migrated across the Appalachian Mountains, the Choctaw were living in present-day central Mississippi — south of the Chickasaw Indians and west of the Creek.

In the vernacular of the 19th century, the Choctaw were one of the Southeast's five "civilized" tribes — along with the Cherokee, Creek, Chickasaw and Seminole. These nations were referred to (in newspapers and textbooks) as "civilized" because they adopted many aspects of the culture of the United States such as a written constitution, centralized government, horticulture and religion.

When the U.S. government forced these tribes to migrate west in the 1830s, about 11,500 Choctaw Indians



Bill Carey (author of this article), Leilani Elyse Allen, Cubert Bell, Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben, Angel Bell and two of Cubert Bell's smaller grandkids at a Thanksgiving event at the Choctaw community center in Henning. Allen is the current princess for the Mississippi Band of Choctaws; Bell is the princess for the Tennessee Choctaw community.

left Mississippi to head west. However, about 4,000 remained behind.

For many years, Mississippi's Choctaw population ebbed away until only about 1,500 remained in about 1910. The numbers have since rebounded. Today, there are about 11,100 members of the Mississippi Band of Choctaws. The band owns about 35,000 acres in central Mississippi, scattered over nine counties.

Golddust

So when and why did a community of Choctaw Indians move to Lauderdale County?

It was hard to find work in Neshoba County, Mississippi. Meanwhile, there were farmers in the tiny Mississippi River town of Golddust, Tennessee, who needed sharecroppers to grow cotton. Around 1952, one of these farmers managed to recruit some Choctaw Indians living on tribal land in Mississippi to move to Golddust.

"We left the reservation because we thought that if we could get away from the low-income area and raise crops, we could make a better living," a young man named Cubert Bell said in 1976. "But sharecropping never worked out."

Bell, who now lives on the Henning Choctaw land with his wife, Lacy, grew up in Golddust. "The houses were remote, and it was primitive," he recalled. "We had no running water. We did have electricity, but we didn't have much that operated on electricity."

The isolation of the Native Americans in Golddust was increased by the fact that they spoke the Choctaw language at a time when public schools in Tennessee weren't equipped to deal with second languages.

Bell left Golddust as a freshman in high school to attend Harrison-Chilhowee Baptist Academy in East Tennessee (now known as The King's Academy). After graduation, Bell enlisted in the Marines and was sent to the Vietnam War.

Most of Tennessee's Mississippi River towns vanished over the years because of flooding and the decline of ferry travel. Golddust suffered the same fate. After about 1965, people in Golddust scattered to places such as Ripley, Henning, Dyersburg and Memphis.

"I was a small child in Golddust," said Margaret Moore, a niece of Cubert Bell who is now president of the

Tennessee Choctaw Development Club. "But my father became a welder and got a job at a factory, so we moved to Memphis."

Chucalissa

Meanwhile, there was something occurring near Memphis that had a big impact on Tennessee's Choctaw community.

In 1936, the government of Shelby County bought land south of

Memphis for a park for African Americans (remember, this was during segregation). On the property was a prehistoric mound complex that Civilian Conservation Corps workers excavated and researched during the Great Depression.

Eventually, University of Memphis archaeologist Charles H. Nash and his students began digging around the mound complex.

They discovered

thousands of artifacts that proved that generations of Native American communities had lived in the area. Nash dubbed the place Chucalissa (a Chickasaw word meaning "Abandoned House").

By the 1950s, there was no more need for segregated parks in Memphis. Nash wanted Chucalissa preserved, but he also wanted it turned into a living history area for Native American culture. "Nash dreams of a Chucalissa alive with activity," *Memphis Press-Scimitar* columnist Eldon Roark wrote in 1958. "Indians making pottery, baskets, beadwork, arrowheads; chanting Indian songs and doing ceremonial dances; cooking over open fires and demonstrating the ways of life of their forefathers."

Nash's persistence paid off. It took years, but various local and state governmental agencies worked together to organize what is now called the Chucalissa Indian Mounds and the C.H. Nash Museum, now part of the University of Memphis.

Along the way, Nash recruited a Mississippi Choctaw Indian named L.D. John to move to the Chucalissa property with his wife, Alice, and two children. L.D. and his family lived there in one of several small houses. They served as caretakers and demonstrated to school groups and visitors how Native Americans made pottery and beadwork. The John family thus became the first of dozens of Choctaw Indians to live at Chucalissa.



Members of the First Indian Baptist Church (Golddust) in 1962 (Cubert Bell photo)

The best remembered of these Choctaw Indians at Chucalissa was Wood Bell — a World War II veteran who became a guide in 1971 and died in 1999. “As a tour guide at Chucalissa for 28.5 years,” the *Commercial Appeal* said, “the respected Choctaw elder taught countless schoolchildren what had been passed down to him about the ancient ways.” Wood Bell and other members of Tennessee’s Choctaw community took part in annual powwows staged at Chucalissa that featured crafts, music, dancing demonstrations and stickball games.



Scenes from the Thanksgiving celebration at the Choctaw community center in Henning, which took place three weeks before the official Thanksgiving holiday.

Indians at that time, wanted to do it, that they would look into it.

“Then we went to Chief Martin and asked him. At first, his reaction was to tell us that we had to move back to Mississippi. But we persisted. Finally, he agreed.”

In 1994, the Choctaw Housing Authority received a \$1.37 million grant from the U.S. Department of Housing. That grant funded the purchase 88 acres near Henning and the construction of 20 single-family homes there.

As of today, the Choctaw parcel has been expanded to include about 220 acres. However, there are no businesses there and no signs on public property that indicate that there is a reservation there (two of the reasons so few Tennesseans know that it exists).

A few weeks ago, they held a Thanksgiving feast at the community center attended by about 200 people. Most were members of the Tennessee Choctaw community — such as Cubert and Lacy Bell and many members of their family, including niece Margaret Moore, son Cubert Jr. and several Bell grandkids.

Also present was Cyrus Ben, current chief of the Mississippi Band of the Choctaw Indians. “Days like today take me back to the powwows I used to attend at Chucalissa when I was a boy,” Ben said. “It’s wonderful for us to get out, see our neighbors, speak our language, eat some of our food and celebrate our culture.”



decades, Chucalissa gave impetus for the West Tennessee Choctaw community to remain an active group with appreciation of its traditions.

The purchase

In the late 1980s, some of the members of Tennessee’s Choctaw community — now scattered in several West Tennessee counties — began talking to federal officials and to the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians about long-term needs. (After all, Choctaw Indians living in Tennessee were still members of the Mississippi band.)

“We asked people at the Indian Health Service why we couldn’t get services for more than 200 Choctaws living in West Tennessee,” said Cubert Bell, a nephew of Wood Bell and now one of the prominent elders among the Tennessee Choctaw community. “They told me that if Chief Phillip Martin, who was the chief of the Mississippi Band of the Choctaw



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CEMC members win big at co-op's 86th annual meeting

Congratulations to all of this year's winners at Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation's annual meeting! Several door prizes, youth prizes, bill credits and the grand prize were given away during the meeting, which was held Saturday, Sept. 28, at White House Heritage High School.

In addition to the major door prize winners, 12 members were awarded bill credits valued between \$50 and \$250. Bill credit winners are:

\$250 winners: Robert Reynolds, Clarksville, and Alton Mann, Joelton.

\$100 winners: Benito Sanchez, Goodlettsville; Belinda Cottar, White House; Meagan Hooper, Portland; Ronald White, Clarksville; and Matthew Smith, White House.

\$50 winners: Debbie Caruso, Clarksville; David Andrews, Springfield; Maury Sterry, Greenbrier; Peggy Wahl; and Kevin Simons, White House.

Electric bill credits of \$100 were also awarded to these members who attended early registration on Friday, Sept. 27, at CEMC district offices: Ray Harris,

Clarksville office; Roy Pippin, Springfield office; Eloise Viera, Portland office; Kyle Thompson, Gallatin office; Harold Watts, Ashland City office; Carol Williams, Dover office; and Eric Allen, White House office.

Youth Corner prize winners were Layklynn Sutton, Andrew Borkowski, Mavis Kiser, Hally Breen, Ory Dunn, Ella Hamsley, Allison Borkowski and Emmi Lou Underwood.

Additionally, all current Cumberland Connect subscribers were entered in a random drawing for six months of free gig-speed internet service during the meeting. The 10 lucky winners were Mary McClenny, Jim Davis, Lauren Kilgore, Ronald Rigsby, Elizabeth Whaley, William Hogue, Jared Roessler, Alejandro Bassim, John Hamric and Jerre Williams.

Joyce Welborn and Joseph Krause each won a Nest Thermostat from the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Congratulations to all of this year's winners, and thank you for your participation at CEMC's annual meeting!



Douglas Drake was the grand prize winner at CEMC's 86th annual meeting. He was awarded a \$1,000 Lowe's gift card.



Anna Merchant claimed the Gatlinburg Retreat Package.





Fernando Garza, Katrina Dickerson-Herring, Michael Parks, Cyrette Brant, Cathey Barnhill and David Caira were the scholarship winners.



The Outdoor Adventure Package was awarded to Lisa Jones.



William Wilson won the Smart Cleaning Set.



The Vehicle Maintenance Package went to Steve Yates.



Winner of the Fit and Fabulous Package was Daniel Stekman.

CEMC members win big at co-op's 86th annual meeting, continued



Left, the Pick Tennessee Products Package winner was Michael Donnelly. Right, Denise Braconier was the winner of the PlayStation 5. Also winning door prizes but not pictured were Charles Cain, Grand Ole Christmas Package; Latisha Jones, Smart TV; and Joe Fort, Smart Home Kit.



TREES OF GIVING

Now accepting donations of **NEW** hats, scarves, gloves, socks, coats and nonperishable food items at all CEMC offices

MEMBER DONATIONS WELCOME



Donations should be placed on or under the trees by
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13

CEMC participates in 2024 Tennessee Electric Cooperative Day of Service

A group of 40 employees from Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation, along with 10 employees from the Tennessee Valley Authority, participated in the 2024 Tennessee Electric Cooperative Day of Service on Thursday, Oct. 17. This year, volunteers focused their efforts on assisting YAIPak, a nonprofit organization in Clarksville.

Volunteers from CEMC and TVA spent the morning at YAIPak's warehouse, sorting through clothing and other items donated for the unhoused population, preparing a shipment of supplies that were sent to East Tennessee flood victims following recent hurricanes and delivering furniture and other household goods to a newly housed veteran.

"We chose YAIPak because of their outstanding work in meeting the needs of those in crisis wherever they are by providing support, comfort and resources," said Community Relations Coordinator Susie Yonkers, coordinator of the Day of Service project at CEMC. "Their dedication to the neglected, hurting or those who have been affected by natural disasters aligns perfectly with our cooperative's mission to support and uplift our local communities."

"Electric cooperatives have a unique and deeply rooted relationship with the communities we serve," added CEMC General Manager Chris Davis. "We are not just service providers; we are neighbors and partners who want to make this wonderful region we live in a better place."

Projects like the Tennessee Electric Co-op Day of Service are important to CEMC because they allow employees to give back and make a tangible difference in the lives of their own neighbors and friends.



CEMC employees deliver furniture to a newly housed veteran during the 2024 Tennessee Electric Co-op Day of Service.

Statewide impact

The Tennessee Electric Co-op Day of Service is coordinated by the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association. As a part of this year's event, 31 separate community service projects were completed. More than 630 electric co-op employees devoted more than 1,300 volunteer hours across the state.

Since its inception, the Tennessee Electric Co-op Day of Service has completed 210 projects with the help of 4,164 volunteers who have collectively contributed 10,000 hours of service.



Employees from CEMC and TVA volunteer their time and services to assist YAIPak, a nonprofit organization in Clarksville, with a variety of tasks during the 2024 Tennessee Electric Co-op Day of Service.

The gift that keeps on giving

“The gift that keeps on giving.” It’s an expression everyone knows, especially this time of year. The Powering Tennessee specialty license plate that honors Tennessee’s electric lineworkers does exactly that — keeps on giving.

There are more than 3,500 electric lineworkers in the state of Tennessee — 3,500 people who typically go unnoticed unless the power goes out, 3,500 people who get out of their beds and leave the safety and comfort of their homes and families each day to provide safe and reliable electricity for their communities. It is dangerous work, but there is something simple you can do to show your support for lineworkers and their families.

Funds raised through sales of the Powering Tennessee specialty license plate benefit the Tennessee Lineworker Lifeline Fund, a nonprofit foundation created to assist lineworkers and their families in the event of a serious injury or fatality while on the job.

The Powering Tennessee specialty license plate and the Tennessee Lineworker Lifeline Fund are



supported by local utilities, the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association, Tennessee Municipal Electric Power Association, Tennessee Valley Public Power Association and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

Tennessee motorists don’t have to be lineworkers to show their appreciation for these brave men and women — anyone with a private vehicle registered in Tennessee can get the plate. Learn more about the plates and the Tennessee Lineworker Lifeline Fund by visiting poweringtennessee.org.

ALL CEMC OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED

TUESDAY, DEC. 24
WEDNESDAY, DEC. 25
WEDNESDAY, JAN. 1

FOR THE CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR’S HOLIDAYS

CEMC personnel will be available in the event of an emergency by calling 1-800-987-2362



Holiday cyber safety:

Tips for secure shopping and protecting your network



The holiday season is in full swing, and while we're all rushing to check off our shopping lists, it's easy to overlook one crucial detail: cybersecurity. With more people than ever turning to online shopping, staying safe in the digital world is as important as finding the perfect gift. Whether you're making purchases online, hosting guests or unwrapping new tech gadgets, protecting your personal information and home network should be a top priority. Here are a few simple tips to help keep your holiday season cyber-safe and worry-free.

It wouldn't be the holiday season without the hustle of holiday shopping — and with more people turning to online stores to check off their lists, cybersecurity should be at the top of yours. Start by ensuring that you're shopping on secure websites; look for "https" in the URL and a padlock symbol next to it. Public Wi-Fi might seem convenient for shopping when you're on the go, but it's also a hacker's playground, so stick to private connections or use a virtual private network (VPN) for extra security. Be cautious of phishing emails and fake deals — scammers often use the holiday rush to trick people into providing sensitive data. A good rule to keep in mind is, "If it looks too good to be true, it probably is." Finally, enable two-factor authentication on your accounts to add an extra barrier of protection. With these quick tips, you can keep your holiday shopping merry and stress-free.

Staying cyber-safe doesn't stop with holiday shopping, though! If you're planning on having guests in your home for the holidays, there are simple steps you can take to protect your home network and connected devices. When guests bring their devices into your home and connect to your Wi-Fi, you never know what kind of data or malware those devices could unwittingly introduce into your network. Setting up a guest network is an

easy way to isolate guest devices from your own. If you're a Cumberland Connect subscriber, you can easily set up a guest network through the CCFiber SmartIQ app. You can even schedule the guest network to only be active during the period your guests are staying in your home.

Finally, as new connected devices fill your stockings, keeping them secure should be a priority. You might already use antivirus software for devices like computers, but how do you protect other devices that can't be covered by traditional antivirus software? Cumberland Connect has the simple solution with ProtectIQ, part of our Peace of Mind Package. When you subscribe to the Peace of Mind Package, your network automatically gains a network-level layer of security that covers all connected devices on your network. This includes devices like smart assistants, smart doorbells, cameras and baby monitors that can't be protected by traditional antivirus software. ProtectIQ detects threats and intrusions on your network and can quarantine them before they can reach a connected device. If a device infected with malware enters your home, ProtectIQ can also help stop this device from sending the malware to other devices on your network. We still recommend that you use antivirus software on compatible devices, but ProtectIQ gives you extra peace of mind that your entire network is covered during the holiday season and beyond.

By following these tips and using tools like Cumberland Connect's ProtectIQ, you can enjoy the holidays with peace of mind, knowing your personal information and devices are protected. As you wrap up your holiday shopping and enjoy time with loved ones, make sure your cybersecurity is wrapped up too — because staying safe online is the best gift you can give yourself this season.



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Simple ways to save in the kitchen

Q: How can I save in the kitchen during the most expensive time of the year?

A: The holiday season brings opportunities to enjoy meals with friends and family, leading to spending more time in the kitchen. Whether hosting a few or a crowd, consider making new energy efficiency traditions this year with these tips to manage your energy use.

Let's start with cooking your meal. Your electric oven is typically the highest-wattage appliance in the kitchen. Yet, people usually don't turn their ovens on for long periods of time. Assuming an average oven wattage of 3,000 and an average cost of 16 cents per kilowatt-hour, according to the United States Energy Information Administration, it costs 48 cents an hour. Let's say you use your oven for four hours to make a special meal. That's less than \$2 of electricity. While that might not seem like a big deal now, operating your oven for four hours every day is \$700 a year.



Using smaller appliances instead of your oven can help you save. A slow cooker uses between 100 and 450 watts, which is significantly less than an electric oven at 2,000 to 5,000 watts. That means you can

use a slow cooker for a longer period and still use less energy.

Opt for your microwave or toaster oven to reheat or cook smaller items. The microwave uses significantly less energy than the oven. A toaster oven uses about half the energy of a conventional oven, according to Energy Star.

Do not turn on your oven and leave the door open to heat your home. This can break your oven and be a safety hazard, especially with gas ovens that can cause carbon monoxide buildup.

When cooking on the stovetop, match the pot or pan size to the burner. Lids help your pots retain heat, which cooks food faster and wastes less heat. Keep your stovetop clean to ensure the appliance heats evenly.

If you're looking to upgrade your stovetop, consider switching to an induction cooktop. It uses an



Slow cookers use less energy than an oven. You can use a slow cooker for a longer period and still use less energy.

electromagnetic field below the surface to heat pots and pans directly. This provides more precise heat, faster cook times and higher efficiency. It can also improve the air quality in your home when compared to a gas cooktop.

In my experience, people like to gather in the kitchen during parties. To avoid overheating your guests in a room that has a hot oven, turn your thermostat down a few degrees before guests arrive.

Next, let's look for refrigerator savings. The gaskets on your refrigerator doors should make a tight seal to keep in cold air. Make sure you clean and maintain them or replace them if necessary. Don't let frost build up in the freezer, which can decrease efficiency and make your freezer work harder to maintain a balanced temperature.

Wait until food cools before putting leftovers in the fridge. Putting hot food in the refrigerator results in more energy used to cool it down. Aim for about 30 minutes of cool time. Perishable food should be refrigerated within two hours after it is cooked, according to the United States Department of Agriculture.

Setting your refrigerator colder than needed wastes energy. The U.S. Department of Energy recommends



Before you start cooking on your stovetop, clean the burners to ensure the appliance heats evenly, which can help you save energy. Match pots to appropriately sized burners to avoid wasting energy.

37 degrees for the refrigerator and zero for the freezer. Use an appliance thermometer to monitor the temperature.

When it comes to cleanup, run full loads of dishes in the dishwasher — being careful not to block any moving parts. Use eco mode if your dishwasher has that setting. If you are in the market for new appliances, select Energy

Star models.

Whatever you choose to cook or how you cook it, keep in mind these simple tips to make your kitchen more efficient and save energy this holiday season. ■

Miranda Boutelle is vice president of operations and customer engagement at Efficiency Services Group in Oregon, a cooperatively owned energy efficiency company. She also writes on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.



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POET'S PLAYGROUND



Inspiring words from your neighbors

A note: Please keep your entries to *100 words or fewer*. Submissions exceeding the limit will be disqualified. Thank you to everyone who entered their poems for Poet's Playground, and we encourage you all to keep writing poetry.

Age 8 and younger

Tennessee: Where the Birds are Chirping

The lakes are clear.
And the grass is green.
The sky is oh so blue.
Tennessee is the prettiest yet.

The birds are chirping
And the dogs are barking at the inn —
And I am singing too.
So then we all sing.

The birds tweet tweet tweet
And the water is glimmering —
Like the spotlight of the show of
Tennessee.

I am in the meadows of my home
And this is what I see in Tennessee.

— *Francis Brown,*
Southwest Tennessee EMC

Age 9-13

Evensongs

Night is approaching,
I can see it in the sky.
The stars begin to twinkle,
While bats go flying by.

The whippoorwill is calling,
His voice echoes still.
I can hear the notes of music,
Resound from hill to hill

Owls join the chorus,
They're hooting sharp and strong.
It makes the stars grow brighter,
In pure incessant song.
My heart is filled with awe
At the perfect harmony;
Of nature's busy night,
It wonders even me.

So may I always love
The land of my heart.
It's Tennessee, Tennessee,
Since my early start!

— *Nathaniel Cookson,*
Tennessee Valley EC

Age 14-18

Remember

Thinking back to yesterday with
Grandpa at my side
Telling of the Mayflower sailing upon
the oceans tide

As the first foot in the sand was planted
Soon freedom to the land was granted

176 years after the Pilgrims grounded
My dear Tennessee was founded

228 years later I am here
Filled with sweet peace and no sense
of fear

As Grandpa rocked back and forth in
his chair
He finished his story in the fresh
autumn air

Hand in hand we thanked the Lord
for our beautiful Tennessee home
May God bless this land and
wherever we may roam

— *Ella Hamsley, Cumberland EMC*

Age 19-22

Tennessee

Strangers to this land
do not understand
this blessed state
of being

Oh, the glorious people
Who knobbled their knees
Split the skin of their fingers
And wore the soles from their shoes
To make a home

To live here
Is to truly know the wonder
Of God's most precious pearl
To stand upon the precipice
Overlooking an imitation of Paradise
brightened by little lighting angels
and truly understand
What freedom means

For this place
My home
Only fuels me with love
And life's greatest
Shield and treasure.

Hope

— *Ruby Purgason, Appalachian EC*

Age 23-64

Appalachian Solace

In the hustle and bustle, I find solace,
In the quiet hum of ancient whispers,
Where the earth holds stories, deep as
roots,
And the wind sings lullabies, soft and
true.

These mountains cradle my restless
spirit,
In their folds, I am both small and
infinite,
The chaos of the world fades to echoes,
As I breathe in the calm of this old
place.

Every step up these worn, winding
trails,
Is a journey back to who I once was
Among the trees that stand tall,
unyielding

I find my strength, my peace, my
resolve.

— Daniel James, Volunteer EC

Age 65 and older

The Ancient Road

They say the old folks talked sometimes
About an Ancient Road
That ran down through our
neighborhood
Not too far from our home.

Long time ago as we went by
I heard my mother say
“There used to be an old road there.”
She pointed out the way.

Old writings of a neighbor man
Make it seem so clear.

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He wrote that in the former times
“The Great Road” ran though here.

O Tennessee, the hope remains
That this story be retold
And in the future we all shall learn
More of the Ancient Road.

— Charlotte Garrett,
Upper Cumberland EMC

Do you have a way with words?

We're searching for Tennessee's most talented and
gifted poets. Enter our next Poet's Playground
contest!

Subject: Poems do not have to include the word “Tennessee”
explicitly, but their themes should celebrate our state and what
makes it beautiful — whether highlighting something unique to
Tennessee, memories of the state or the beautiful nature it has
to offer.

Age categories: The competition has six age divisions — 8
and younger, 9-13, 14-18, 19-22, 23-64
and 65 and older. Each group will have
first-, second- and third-place winners.
First place wins \$50 and will be printed
in the magazine, second place wins
\$30 and third place wins \$20. Poems
capturing first-, second- and third-place
honors will be published online at
tnmagazine.org.

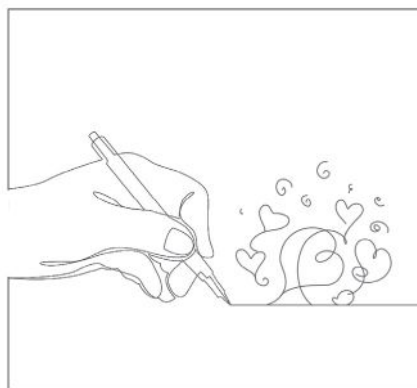
What to enter: A poem of **100 words**
or fewer, including articles, pertaining

to the theme. One entry per person, and please give your entry
a title.

Deadline: Entry must be submitted online or postmarked by
Friday, Jan. 31. First-place poems will be published in the April
issue.

Please note: By entering, you give *The Tennessee Magazine*
permission to publish your work via print, online and social
media.

Please enter online at tnmagazine.org or mail



handwritten entries to: Poetry Contest,
The Tennessee Magazine, P.O. Box
100912, Nashville, TN 37224. Make sure
to print your poem legibly, and be sure to
keep a copy of your poem as submissions
received via mail will not be returned.

All entries must include the following
information, or they will be disqualified:
your name, age, mailing address, phone
number, email address and the name of
your local electric cooperative.

TENNESSEE EVENTS

Festivals, celebrations and other happenings around the state

West Tennessee

Now-Dec. 23 • Holiday Festivities — Tours, Concerts and More, Graceland, Memphis. 877-777-0606 or graceland.com/christmas

Dec. 7 • “A Charlie Brown Christmas: Live On Stage,” Orpheum Theatre, Memphis. 901-525-3000 or orpheum-memphis.com

Dec. 7 • St. Nicholas Festival, St. Nicholas Orthodox Church, Jackson. 731-300-3230 or orthodoxjackson.com/festival

Dec. 13-15 • Ballet Memphis presents “The Nutcracker,” Orpheum Theatre, Memphis. 901-525-3000 or orpheum-memphis.com

Dec. 14 • Christmas Fiesta, Dixon Gallery and Gardens, Memphis. 901-761-5250 or dixon.org

Dec. 20 • The Bellamy Brothers, Williams Auditorium, Henderson. williamsauditorium.com

Middle Tennessee

Now-Dec. 22 • “We Need A Lot of Christmas Dinner Show,” The Barn at Fiddle Dee Farms, Greenbrier. 615-669-6293 or christmasdinnerstheater.com

Dec. 5-6, 11-13 • Mayberry Christmas Dinner Theater, historic Granville. 931-653-4151 or granvilletn.com/mayberrydinnertheater

Dec. 6 • A Jacksonian Christmas, Andrew Jackson’s Hermitage, Nashville. 615-889-2941 or thehermitage.com

Dec. 6-7 • A Quilted Christmas, Bell Buckle. 931-808-7640 or bellbucklechamber.com/a-quilted-christmas

Dec. 6-26 • Nashville Ballet presents “Nashville’s Nutcracker,” Tennessee Performing Arts Center, Nashville. 615-297-2966, ext. 710, or tpac.org

Dec. 7 • Sixth Annual Christmas Bazaar, Shelton Farms 2125 US 41, Pelham. 931-952-0472 or facebook.com/SheltonFarmsVenue

Dec. 7, 14, 21 • Old Fashioned Christmas, Bell Buckle. 931-808-7640 or bellbucklechamber.com/old-fashioned-christmas

Dec. 11 • “A Carpenters Christmas,” Williamson County Performing Arts Center, Franklin. 615-786-0186 or wcpactn.com

Dec. 14 • Christmas Light Run, McGregor Park, Clarksville. visitclarksvilletn.com/event/christmas-light-run/2153

Dec. 21-22 • “A Maury Christmas Carol,” Cherry Theatre, Columbia. 931-442-5007 or buildingblockarts.com/ticket

East Tennessee

Dec. 6 • Fantasy of Lights Christmas Parade, downtown Gatlinburg. 865-436-4178 or gatlinburg.com

Dec. 7 • Christmas in the Country, Exchange Place Living History Farm, Kingsport. 423-288-6071 or exchangeplacetn.org

Dec. 7, 8, 14 and 15 • Chattanooga Holiday Market, Chattanooga Convention Center. 423-565-9130 or chattanoogaamarket.com

Dec. 13-15 • Chattanooga Ballet presents “The Nutcracker,” Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Auditorium, Chattanooga. 423-757-5580 or tivolichattanooga.com

Dec. 14 • Liquidambar Art Gallery Christmas Reception, Sequatchie Valley Institute, Whitwell. 404-698-5444 or liquidambarvi.wordpress.com

Dec. 16 • “A Christmas Carol,” Niswonger Performing Arts Center, Greeneville. 423-638-1679 or npacgreeneville.com

Dec. 21 • Chattanooga Ballet presents “The Nutcracker,” Niswonger Performing Arts Center, Greeneville. 423-638-1679 or npacgreeneville.com

Dec. 21-22 • “Home for the Holidays,” Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Auditorium, Chattanooga. 423-757-5580 or tivolichattanooga.com

Dec. 22 • “Christmas With C.S. Lewis,” The Walker Theatre, Chattanooga. 423-757-5580 or tivolichattanooga.com ■

Submit your events

Complete the form at tnmagazine.org or email events@tnelectric.org.

Information must be received at least two months ahead of the event date, and we accept submissions up to a year in advance. Due to the great demand for space in each month’s issue, we cannot guarantee publication. Find a complete listing of submissions we’ve received at tnmagazine.org/events.

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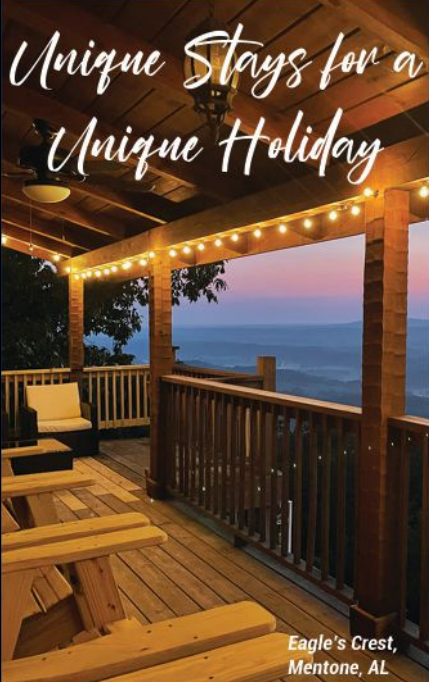
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A MENU to REMEMBER

Try something new
this season with our
holiday menu.
Blend your traditions
with new flavors
and festivities.

Spiced Right Filet

Recipes by Tammy Algood

Food styling by Cynthia Kent

Photographs by Robin Conover

Some of us work all year to snag perfect holiday gifts for loved ones. Those who travel might carefully pack suitcases with a number of events in mind. One thing is clear: You need a plan to ensure the season is merry and bright. We hope this holiday menu is just the plan you need to make a festive meal both worry-free and wonderful. Happy holidays!

Spiced Right Filets

Yield: 4 servings

- 1 tablespoon garlic or onion salt
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 tablespoon paprika
- 1 tablespoon black pepper
- 4 filet mignon steaks
(1½-2½ inches thick)

In a small bowl, stir together the garlic or onion salt, salt, paprika and pepper. Evenly sprinkle over both sides of the steaks and allow to stand at room temperature for 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, preheat the grill to medium high and grease the grill grate. Place the steaks over direct heat around 5 inches from the heat source. Cover the grill and cook until an instant-read thermometer reads the desired doneness. Only turn once.

As a guide, 125 to 130 degrees is medium rare, 130 to 135 degrees is medium and 135 to 140 degrees is medium well. Keep in mind that the temperature will rise around 5 degrees as it rests for 10 minutes before serving. Serve warm.

Smoked Salmon Corn Cakes

Forget the frying pan! These healthier corn cakes bake in a mini muffin pan!
Yield: 12-15 appetizer servings



- 1 (8.25-ounce) can cream-style corn
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 cup self-rising cornmeal
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 eggs, beaten
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 cup crème fraîche
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh dill

- 1 (6-ounce) package
thinly sliced smoked
salmon, julienned*

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 24-cup miniature muffin pan and set aside.

In a mixing bowl, whisk together the corn, sour cream, cornmeal, oil, eggs and pepper. Spoon into the individual muffin cups. Bake 20 minutes and cool for 10 minutes.

In a small bowl, stir together the crème fraîche, lemon juice and dill. When ready to serve, spoon a dollop of the crème fraîche mixture on each corn cake and top with the smoked salmon.

** Note: If you aren't a fan of smoked salmon, top with slivers of prosciutto.*

Cranberry Cocktail

This is not an overly sweet cocktail, and the recipe can easily be doubled or halved! Yield: 3-4 servings

- ⅓ cup St-Germain or elderflower
liqueur*
- ⅓ cup vodka*
- 1¼ cup cranberry juice
- Cranberries or lime wedges for
garnish

In a small pitcher, stir together the St-Germain or elderflower liqueur, vodka and cranberry juice. Refrigerate until ready to serve. Pour over ice in glasses if using immediately. Serve with a garnish of fresh cranberries or a lime wedge.

** For a nonalcoholic version of this drink, substitute lemon-lime soda for the St-Germain and club soda for the vodka.*

Pull Apart Yeast Rolls

No need to be intimidated when making bread. Just follow the steps and exercise patience.
Yield: about 24 rolls

- 1 (0.25-ounce) package active dried yeast
- ¼ cup hot water (110-115 degrees)
- 1 teaspoon plus 2 tablespoons sugar,
divided
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
- 1¼ teaspoons salt
- 1 egg
- 1¼ cups milk
- 4 cups all-purpose flour
- Softened unsalted butter*



In small bowl, combine the yeast, hot water and 1 teaspoon of the sugar. Let stand five minutes.

Meanwhile, in the bowl of an electric mixer, combine the remaining sugar, butter and salt until creamy. Add the egg, milk and yeast mixture, beating until well blended.

With the mixer on low speed, gradually add the flour, beating until smooth. Turn the dough out onto a well-floured surface and knead 3 minutes or until smooth and elastic. Place in a well-greased bowl, turning to evenly coat all the dough. Cover and let rise in a warm place away from drafts 35 minutes or until doubled in size. This amount of time will vary depending on the temperature in your kitchen, so watch closely.

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Lightly grease two 9-inch square baking pans or a 9-by-13-inch baking dish and set aside.

Punch the dough down and turn onto a floured surface. Divide the dough into 24 pieces and shape into balls. Place in the prepared pans, cover and let rise 15 minutes. Bake 15 minutes or until golden-brown on top. Serve warm with the softened butter.



Baked Pasta Cheese Casserole



White Chocolate Crème Brulée

** Note: To make these rolls extra special, serve with a drizzle of truffle oil.*

Baked Pasta Cheese Casserole

Yield: 10 servings

8 cups low-sodium chicken stock
1 (16-ounce) box penne pasta
1 tablespoon salt, divided
4 sandwich bread slices, torn into large pieces
1 cup grated Parmesan-Reggiano cheese, divided
2 tablespoons chopped fresh chives
½ teaspoon seasoned salt
1 cup shredded fontina cheese
¾ cup crumbled Gorgonzola cheese
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
2 teaspoons all-purpose flour
1½ cups heavy cream
¼ teaspoon black pepper
¼ teaspoon paprika

Place the stock in a large stock pot and add 8 cups of water. Place over high heat and bring to a boil. Add the pasta and half of the salt. Cook according to the package directions.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 500 degrees. Grease a 9-by-13-inch baking dish and set aside.

Place the bread in a food processor and quickly pulse, stopping after

1 second each time until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Transfer to a small bowl and stir in ¼ cup of the Parmesan-Reggiano, chives and seasoned salt. Set aside.

Place the remaining Parmesan-Reggiano along with the fontina and Gorgonzola in a large mixing bowl and set aside.

In a medium saucepan, melt the butter over medium-low heat. Whisk in the flour, stirring for 30 seconds. Gradually whisk in the cream and increase the heat to medium. Bring to a boil, stirring occasionally. Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer 1 minute. Add the pepper, paprika and remaining salt, stirring to blend.

Drain the pasta and add to the cheese bowl. Pour the cream mixture over the top and cover with foil. Allow to stand 3 minutes, then uncover and gently stir with a rubber spatula until the mixture is combined. Transfer to the prepared baking dish.

Sprinkle the top evenly with the breadcrumbs, pressing lightly down. Bake 6 to 7 minutes or until the topping is golden-brown. Serve warm.

White Chocolate Crème Brulée

This is the ultimate make ahead dessert. All you have to do when ready

to serve is pop the filled ramekins under the broiler as you clear away the main dinner dishes. Refresh drinks while the treats cool slightly to set, and dessert is served! Yield: 6 servings

4 ounces white chocolate
2 cups whipping cream, divided
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
5 egg yolks
½ cup sugar, divided
1 (21-ounce) can strawberry or cherry pie filling or whole berry cranberry sauce

Preheat the oven to 300 degrees. In a large saucepan, combine the chocolate and ½ cup of the cream. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly, for 3 minutes until the chocolate is melted. Remove from the heat and add the remaining cream and extract. Stir well to combine.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the egg yolks and ¼ cup of the sugar. Whisk briskly until the sugar completely dissolves. Add to the cream mixture, whisking until well combined. Pour through a fine mesh sieve into a bowl with a spout and set aside.

Spoon 2 tablespoons of the pie filling or sauce of your choosing into six 4-ounce ramekins. Top with the

cream mixture. Place the ramekins in a large roasting pan and place in the oven. Add water to a depth of ½ inch to the roasting pan.

Bake 45-55 minutes or until the edges are set. Cool the ramekins in the pan on a wire rack for 30 minutes. Remove from the water bath, cover and chill for 8 hours.

When ready to serve, preheat the broiler to high with the rack 5 inches from the heat source. Sprinkle the



Tips and tricks

If you want, make your own crème fraîche by placing 1 cup whipping cream and 2 tablespoons buttermilk in a glass jar. Cover and allow to stand undisturbed at room temperature for at least 8 hours and up to 24 hours. Stir, cover and refrigerate for up to a week.

Skip the light or diet cranberry juice when shopping for ingredients to

make the cocktail. It is much better with regular juice.

Truffle oil can be expensive, so consider the alternative of extra virgin olive oil for a drizzle over the rolls if necessary. Just make sure it is one of good quality. If you have an exceptional avocado oil, it is a worthy substitute.

An instant-read thermometer is essential for accurately cooking steaks to the desired doneness. It makes a great stocking stuffer!

remaining sugar evenly over each ramekin. Place in a roasting pan and arrange ice cubes around the ramekins. Broil 4 to 5 minutes or until the sugar is melted. Let stand 5 minutes before serving.

*Tammy Algood develops recipes for **The Tennessee Magazine** that feature farm-fresh Tennessee food. Those fresh, local ingredients will always add cleaner, more flavorful foods to your table. We recommend visiting local farms and farmers markets to find the freshest seasonal produce.*



Email your cooking questions to Tammy Algood: talgood@tnelectric.org.

Raymond writes: “I have been given a bottle of grapeseed oil and am not sure how to use it. I haven’t opened the bottle yet because of my lack of knowledge. Any guidance is appreciated.”

Raymond, my favorite use of grapeseed oil is in sauteing. It has a high smoke point, which lends it to the quick, high

temperature cooking method. Before doing that, I would suggest you use it in a salad dressing. I think you’ll be pleased with both experiences.

Josie writes: “There is a soup I want to make, but one of the ingredients is listed as horse beans. Can you please help? I have looked in the dried and

fresh bean area of the grocery with zero luck.”

Josie, I love family recipes! Horse beans are the same as fava beans, which should be easily found in your supermarket. They look like large butter beans and are available dried or cooked in cans.



Jumping-Off Point

Panther Creek State Park a great spot to start a regional vacation

Story by Trish Milburn • Photographs by park ranger Cade Norris

Lots of Tennessee's state parks are located in rural areas, offering peace and quiet and natural wonder. But at Panther Creek State Park, situated adjacent to Morristown and within view of housing developments, you can still find all those things while being close to a small city.

In fact, according to Park Manager Jason Chadwell, 1,400-plus-acre Panther Creek has one of the most impressive trail systems in all of Tennessee's state parks. The park has 17 trails that stretch a total of 28 miles, many of them affording views of the beautiful Cumberland Mountains and Cherokee Lake. There are approximately 10 miles of trail designated for horseback riding and another 10 miles designated for mountain biking (horses and bikes must be kept separate). Hikers, however, are not restricted to any trails; they have access to and can use the entire 28-mile trail system.

"The trail system at Panther Creek is the biggest attraction for visitors," Chadwell says.

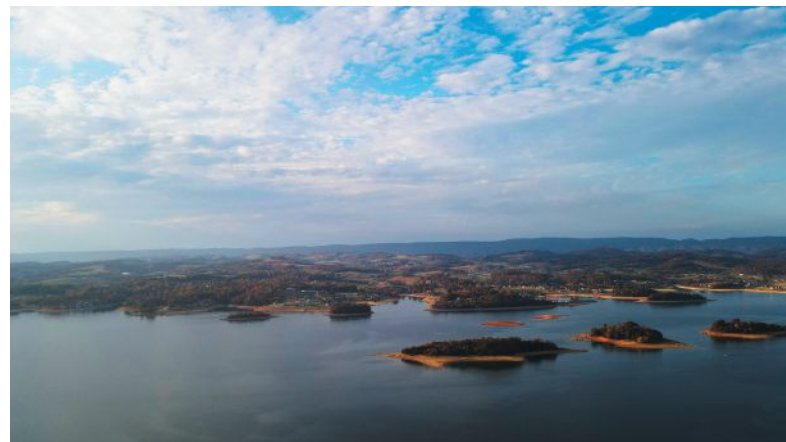
Rich with wildlife

Despite not being far away from more populated areas, the park is still home to many types of animals. During Chadwell's 22 years at Panther Creek, some of his fondest memories are actually encounters with wildlife.

"My first recollection of seeing American bald eagles in the wild occurred shortly after I began working at Panther Creek," Chadwell says. "I was patrolling along the park road on top of Hunt Knob in the area where the Smallman

Shelter is located when I noticed several folks looking and pointing toward the sky. Curious, I exited my vehicle, and looking, up I saw, circling approximately 100 feet above me, two bald eagles. They were gliding on the air current like vultures often do. They were so close and so beautiful. They circled a few times then flew off in the direction of Cherokee Dam. On another occasion, I was walking along the Pioneer Trail at dusk. I was in a heavily wooded area, and looking up, I saw a barred owl flying among the branches and limbs. The ease and speed with which the bird navigated those obstacles and also that it flew without making the slightest noise whatsoever were truly fascinating.

"Finally, I oftentimes see red foxes when closing Hunt Knob at night. I remember on one occasion, as I approached in my vehicle, a fox began running in the woods just off the roadway. As I traveled slowly along the road, the fox was running in the wood line in front of my vehicle. It would dip farther back into the woods, and I would lose sight of it for a moment, but then it would



reappear. I followed and observed the fox for approximately a quarter mile before it finally descended the ridge and did not reappear. It was an amazing thing to observe.”

Start here, go there

Panther Creek’s location makes it a good starting point for visiting several parks — state and national alike. Within close driving distance are Cove Lake, Norris Dam, Big Ridge and Seven Islands state parks as well as Cumberland Gap National Historical Park and Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Before you venture forth from Panther Creek, however, make time to explore all the park has to offer.

The aforementioned trails provide hours of outdoor enjoyment and glimpses of the park’s furry and feathered residents. Panther Creek also participates in the annual hike events along with all other Tennessee state parks. These signature hikes include First Day Hike (Jan. 1), Spring Hike, National Trails Day Hike and Day After Thanksgiving Hike.

The campground at Panther Creek is consistently rated one of the best in the Tennessee State Parks system. The 50-site campground features two modern bathhouses with laundry rooms, high-speed Wi-Fi access, two covered pavilions and a seasonal camp store. Sites include grills, fire rings, picnic tables, water hookups and 20-, 30- and 50-amp electrical service. Nine sites feature sewer hookups while a dump station is conveniently located adjacent to the campground to provide service for other campers. The park also has a group camp that can accommodate up to 100 people.

If you like playing or would like to try out disc golf, visit the park’s 18-hole, professional level disc golf course. It has served as a course used during the Tennessee State Disc Golf Championship since 2017.

With the park’s location being next to 30,000-acre Cherokee Lake, there are abundant opportunities to enjoy water recreation such as boating, canoeing, kayaking, fishing and water skiing.

For the kids

You can enjoy a picnic while your kids or grandkids play on the climbers, slides and swings at the park’s playground.

Panther Creek was also one of the first parks to host a Junior Ranger Camp beginning in 2007. This is an annual day camp held in June for area youth between the ages of 10 and 14. The camp is divided into theme days that include Outdoor Skills Day, Nature Study Day, Aquatic Day, Conservation Day and Graduation



Day. During Junior Ranger Camp, children learn land navigation, canoeing and water safety skills, shelter building, wilderness survival and stream monitoring. They also observe and learn about park wildlife and participate in several hikes and a conservation project.

Connection to the past

It’s always interesting to learn about a place’s history. Like much of what became the United States, Native Americans occupied this area prior to the arrival of Europeans. The Panther Springs community, in which the park is located, is one of the oldest white settlements in Hamblen County. Pioneers, most of whom were Scots-Irish, German and English, migrated to the area from North Carolina and the Watauga Settlement in East Tennessee in about 1785.

“Prior to the establishment of the park, much of the land on which the park is now located was used for farming,” Chadwell says. “Cultural artifacts such as springhouses, family cemeteries and the remnants of homes and barns remain within the park.”

Positive improvements

Chadwell says the best parts of being the park manager at Panther Creek are “the actions I am able to take to improve the park (planting wildflower fields, assisting with development of the new recreation lodge and playground, upgrading trail signage, etc.) and then being able to see our visitors use and enjoy those improved facilities and resources.” ■

Panther Creek State Park

For more information, visit the park’s website at tnstateparks.com/parks/panther-creek or call the office at 423-587-7046.



SHUTTERBUG SHOWCASE

The next installment of our Shutterbug Photography Contest tasks readers with the color-focused theme “Something Blue.” Images can be from any year and any place, but they must contain at least one element of the color blue. Enter any subject matter that captures what blue means to you.

The Tennessee Magazine will name first-, second- and third-place winners as well as honorable mention recipients in each division — **Adult Shutterbug**, **Junior Shutterbug** (ages 17 and younger) and **Professional**.

Images can include people or not, and they can be selfies. As you accept this challenge, please stay safe. We don’t want anyone to take a tumble in the name of the Shutterbug contest.

Contest rules

1. The contest is open to amateur and professional photographers. For the purposes of this competition, you are considered a professional if you regularly sell your images or garner more than 50% of your income from photography.
2. Photographs must have been taken by you.
3. A photographer can enter no more than three photographs. There is no cost to enter.
4. All entries must be made online. We won’t accept prints for this contest. Sign on to tnmagazine.org and click on “Entry Forms” under “Contests.” Complete the form and upload your photograph(s).
5. Employees of Tennessee’s electric cooperatives and their immediate families are not eligible to win.
6. Please include the name of each recognizable person, if any other than yourself, in your photograph. It is the photographer’s responsibility to have the subject’s permission to enter his or her image in the contest. You must include the subject’s name and contact information with your submission. Omitting any of this information can result in disqualification.

7. By entering the contest, photographers automatically give *The Tennessee Magazine* permission to publish the winning images in print and digital publications, to social media and on websites.

Shutterbug assignment “Something Blue”

Submissions — online entries only

To enter, visit tnmagazine.org and click on “Entry Forms” under the “Contests” tab.

Deadline

Entries must be entered online by the end of the day on Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2025. Winners will be published in the March 2025 issue.

Prize packages

Judges will select a first-, second- and third-place winner in each division and age group. These prizes will be awarded: First place wins \$150, second place \$100 and third place \$50.

“Indigo Bunting and Bee at Sunflowers” by Kathy Taylor of Dover received an honorable mention in our September 2021 “A Tennessee Summer” Shutterbug Photography Contest. Send us your photos meeting our next theme, “Something Blue.”



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Find the Tennessee flag



We have hidden somewhere in this magazine the icon from the Tennessee flag like the one pictured here. It could be larger or smaller than this, and it could be in black and white or any color. If you find it, send us a postcard or email us with the page number where it's located. Include your name, mailing address, phone number, email address and electric cooperative. One entry per person. Three winners will be chosen from a random drawing, and each will receive \$20.

Note that the icon we hide will not be on an actual flag or historical marker, will not appear on pages 20-25 and will not be placed in any ads. This month's flag will not appear on this page (that would just be too easy). Good luck!

Send **postcards only** (no phone calls, please) to: *The Tennessee Magazine*, Find the Flag, P.O. Box 100912, Nashville, TN 37224. Or you can fill out the form at

tnmagazine.org or email flag@tnelectric.org. Entries must be postmarked or received via email by Thursday, Jan. 2. Winners will be published in the February issue of *The Tennessee Magazine*.

October Flag Spotters

Thanks for the postcards and emails again this month identifying the correct location of the flag, which was found on the girl's dress on **the cover (page 1)**.

Winners are drawn randomly from each month's entries.

October's lucky flag spotters are:

Sue Blackman, Williston, Chickasaw EC

Rhonda C. Banks, Dover, Cumberland EMC

Joy Phillips, Bulls Gap, Holston EC



Artist's Palette

Assignment for February

Three age categories: 8 and younger, 9 to 13 and 14 to 18 years old. Each group will have first-, second- and third-place winners.

Media: Drawing or painting on **8½-by-11-inch unlined** paper, canvas or board. We encourage the use of color. **Please follow these size guidelines.** Oversized canvas entries are especially difficult to handle and cannot be returned. Framed pieces will not be accepted.

Entry: Send your original art to: *The Tennessee Magazine*, Artist's Palette — **February**, P.O. Box 100912, Nashville, TN 37224. (Please make sure you include the month on the outside of the envelope!) Only one entry per artist, please.

Deadline: Art must be postmarked by Thursday, Jan. 2.

Include: Your name (*legibly, please!*), age, mailing address, phone number, email address and electric cooperative. Leaving anything out will result in disqualification.

Please note: By entering, you give *The Tennessee Magazine* permission to publish your work in print, online and via social media.

Artwork will not be returned **unless** you include a self-addressed, **stamped** envelope (SASE) with your submission. **Only the U.S. Postal Service** will be used for returns. *For best reproduction results, do not fold artwork.*

Each entry needs its own SASE, please. Siblings must enter separately with their own envelopes. **Attention, teachers:** You may send multiple entries in one envelope along with one SASE with sufficient postage. **Winners** will be published in the February issue of *The Tennessee Magazine*. First place wins \$50, second place wins \$30 and third place wins \$20. Winners are eligible to enter again after three months. Winners will receive their awards, artwork and certificates of placement within six to eight weeks of publication.

Artist's Palette *December Winners*



Marit Chapman

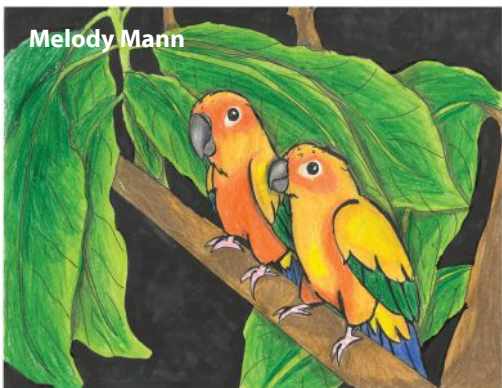


Abby Gallo

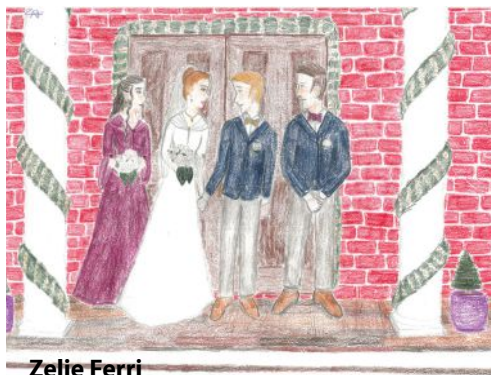


Julia Keeler

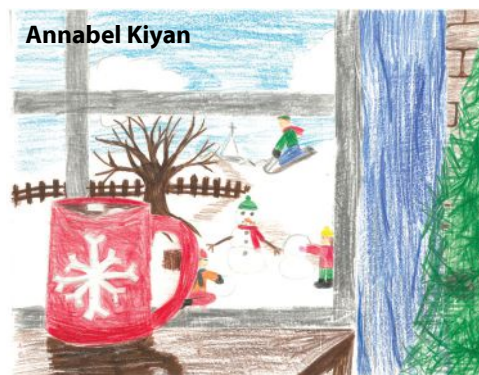
WINNERS, 14-18 AGE GROUP: First place: Marit Chapman, age 14, Volunteer EC; Second place: Abby Gallo, age 17, Meriwether Lewis EC; Third place: Julia Keeler, Age 18, Cumberland EMC



Melody Mann



Zelie Ferri



Annabel Kiyan

WINNERS, 9-13 AGE GROUP: First place: Melody Mann, age 12, Cumberland EMC; Second place: Zelie Ferri, age 13, Middle Tennessee Electric; Third place: Annabel Kiyan, age 10, Volunteer EC



Reia Block



Sonia Gallo



Vanna Lou Reynolds

WINNERS, 8 AND YOUNGER AGE GROUP: First place: Reia Block, age 8, Mountain EC; Second place: Sonia Gallo, age 8, Meriwether Lewis EC; Third place: Vanna Lou Reynolds, age 6, Middle Tennessee Electric



Point *of* View

By Robin Conover

"Foothills Sunrise"

by Robin Conover, Canon EOS 5D Mark IV,
EF 24-70 mm at 28 mm, f2.8 L USM lens,
ISO 100, f22 at 1/2 second, Gitzo tripod

At the end of each year, I take stock in what I've learned, lost, experienced and captured through my camera lens. I remember friendships and family, vacations and photography trips. All have their wins and losses, lessons learned and opportunities to make memories.

Many of my memories flood back as I review new images I've captured since January. This sunrise is one of my new favorites.

I had a photographer friend, Cheryl Stewart, call to ask if I wanted to join her on an impromptu trip to photograph the northern lights that were visible in parts of Tennessee in May. I said yes, and we left two hours later. We packed quickly, met in Lebanon and got on the road to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

It was going to be the last night forecasters had predicted we might be able to see the lights in East Tennessee. We chose Cades Cove and arrived just before dark. We found a few other photographers and tourists gazing up at the night sky. It was clear, but we never saw the northern lights that night.

While we didn't get what we set out to shoot, we found so much more in just a few hours. We saw numerous bears with cubs, experienced the cove as night settled across the valley, photographed one of the cove's churches at night and viewed thousands of stars you can't see when you live close to large cities with light pollution.

The next morning, we left the hotel before sunrise to get to my favorite location on the Foothills Parkway just west of Townsend. Sunrise did not disappoint. As the clouds began to break up and the sunlight hit them, the colors rapidly changed from the blue hue of twilight to the rich purples, oranges and reds of sunrise.

For all of us, each year brings unexpected victories and challenges. This trip that lasted less than 24 hours reminded me to appreciate every minute, take every opportunity that is given to you and say yes to impromptu photography adventures.

I wish all of you a safe and happy holiday season with many new and unexpected adventures in the new year. ■

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