



the tennessee magazine

March 2025

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SHUTTERBUG SHOWCASE

Something Blue

**Tight Votes to Save
the Smokies**

Cut the Mustard

the tennessee magazine

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TENNESSEE'S
ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVES
TNMagazine.org

Celebrating the Extraordinary Nature of Everyday Life

MARCH 2025



ON THE COVER

“Breathtaking in Blue” by Debbie Karnes placed in our “Something Blue” photography contest. See winners and honorable mention recipients beginning on page 12.



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Nature of Everyday Life

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Mission Statement

Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation 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.

Between the Lines

News from your Community



Chris A. Davis

CEMC General Manager

Energizing opportunity

There is power in opportunity.

There is power in opportunity. Opportunities are presented before us every day. Some are small and require little thought, like what you eat for breakfast or the movie your family will watch after dinner. Some are much bigger and can even be life-changing, like moving to a new town or starting your own business.

Author and motivational speaker Ken Poirot once said, "Today is your opportunity to build the tomorrow you want." Essentially, the opportunities and decisions made today shape the outcomes of tomorrow. While this is certainly true on a personal level, it is also the case for us here at Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation. We work every day to build a better tomorrow for our members.

At CEMC, we provide safe and reliable energy so you can take advantage of the opportunities in your life. We trim trees today, so the power stays on tomorrow. We send students in our area to programs like Washington Youth Tour, Youth Leadership Summit and 4-H Electric

Camp to provide young people with unlimited opportunities. When disaster strikes, we participate in the mutual aid model to help other co-ops across the state and the nation. We provide reliable infrastructure and broadband access to attract industries worldwide to our service area. We help recruit and retain jobs. We work with our local, state and national government to provide the opportunity of more jobs, healthier communities and, most importantly, brighter futures, literally and figuratively. We invest now in the future of rural and suburban Tennessee.

These types of opportunities allow CEMC to energize every moment, and we are grateful to work alongside you as we build a brighter future together.



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By Mike Knotts

Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association

New look, same love

You hold in your hands the newest and most beautiful edition of *The Tennessee Magazine* in its nearly 70-year history.

For the past year, the small but incredible team of writers, editors and designers

that brings this publication to you each month has taken on extra tasks and put in long hours to rethink and redesign this publication. After many meetings, lots of good ideas, scientific research and talented creative effort, the work has culminated in this edition.

I love it. And I hope you will too.

This magazine is special because it celebrates truly special people, places,

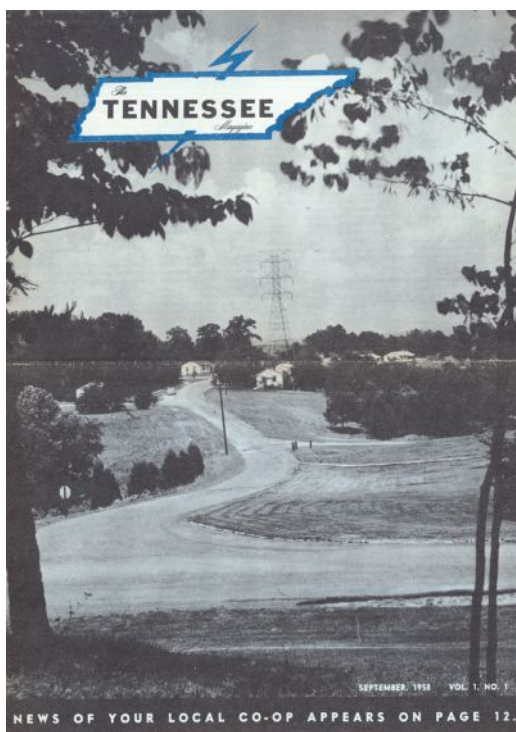
the recipes warm their bellies. I have received handwritten letters in gorgeous cursive writing sharing how the photography inspired calm and quiet reflection. Sometimes the editorial that I write might challenge your thinking or inspire some well-deserved nostalgia. Sometimes those same editorials spark a spirited disagreement.

Occasionally, we hear from readers who tell us they collect and catalog copies, creating their own personal archives. It is humbling to know that people care enough to make this a part of their lives for years. For others, opening the mailbox and flipping through these pages are the start of an enjoyable hour that provides an escape from the hustle and bustle of modern life.

Our contests are designed to both inspire and entertain. One of my favorite days of the month is when reader-submitted artwork is laid across the tables of our office. There are amazingly talented artists, poets and photographers among us. And in case you were thinking of writing to ask me, I can say that, yes, there is a flag hidden somewhere. I promise it's there.

However you choose to engage with it, we are proud to bring you a publication that is more than the sum of its parts. It is meaningful, and we hope it enriches your life in ways both small and large.

So celebrate this new design with us, and enjoy the first new look in over a decade. As you do, know that our love for this great place we call home goes back generations. And that will never change. Please write us a letter and tell us what you like or what you don't. We would love to hear from you.



Volume 1, Issue 1, of *The Tennessee Magazine* hit members' mailboxes in September 1958.

events, history, customs and curiosities. It celebrates the tremendous treasures we enjoy and is brought to you by people who care deeply about the community — your local electric cooperative. Indeed, *The Tennessee Magazine* has become the place to tell the stories of our shared experiences. But it is also a vehicle to keep you informed about how your electric co-op energizes every moment.

Each month, readers share stories with me about how the articles inform their minds and touch their hearts — and how

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

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From the Editor



By Chris Kirk

Editor, *The Tennessee Magazine*

Welcome to *The Tennessee Magazine*



The main feature this month highlights winners of our latest Shutterbug Photography Contest. Turn to page 12, and marvel at the winning entries capturing “Something Blue.”

Oh, good! You found us! Please, come inside and make yourselves comfortable.

After nearly 14 years of following a design blueprint that served us well, *The Tennessee Magazine* is thrilled to welcome you into our new digs. Allow me to play the overexcited host of this flavor of renovation show.

On second thought, we don’t need another one of those, but I am excited to finally reveal all the hard work we’ve done over the last year-plus, scrutinizing fonts, tweaking logos and examining column layouts.

No more shop talk. Here’s what’s in it for you, our loyal readers. We entered this process focused on delivering a clean design that is easy to read and showcases the stunning photography that accompanies our articles. But, most importantly, we did not change our philosophy on the areas we spotlight: important news from your electric cooperative as well as all the really cool stuff that makes Tennessee a great place to live, work and play.

Bill Carey sheds some light on the first votes toward preserving the lands that eventually became the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. It wasn’t a sure thing, and the votes were close. See page 28.

Another cool nugget we’ve discovered is that Tennessee is along the pathway to space exploration. Learn about the R/S RocketShip beginning on page 32.

There’s much more, including staples like musings by Antsy McClain, another state park spotlight and the always popular recipes.

We’re still ironing out some finer details, filling out punch cards as we find scuffs and scratches. But it’s all built on a firm foundation of trust and service to our readers and communities.

Thanks for reading,

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My Tennessee Notebook

Written and illustrated by Antsy McClain

Age is just a number

(A real, actual number that just goes up. Really fast.)

I am at the age now that when someone asks me how old I am, I have to think for a minute, even do math. I just don't give it a lot of thought. I usually answer them with a question: Do you want my outer age or my inner age?

My outer age is the one on my driver's license. It's the number that keeps track of my time here using clocks and calendars, all of which are manmade devices to control what is ultimately uncontrollable. My inner age is more important. It's how old I feel on the inside, and that number has been stuck at 19 since I was, well, 19.

My left knee feels about 45, and my lower back is basically however old Ed Asner was when he was on "The Mary Tyler Moore Show." That's right, my back is Lou Grant. But inside, I'm 19.¹

Birthdays are weird anyway, if you ask me, especially as an adult. They're great when we're kids, I guess, sitting at the head of the table, little narcissists that we are, surrounded by cake and ice cream and presents, everyone singing at us. Kids love that kind of thing. But most adults feel silly in that scenario. And every adult I know hates to be sung at.²

I'm at an age now that, I must admit, I once saw with dread. I say that with embarrassment now. As a young man, I always felt like I was a

bit more enlightened than most. I memorized Longfellow and passages of Shakespeare. When I watched "The Brady Bunch," I wasn't just watching a sitcom. I saw nuanced, metaphorical layers addressing the human condition.³

So when an old person told me that life was short, I believed them. Who would know better than they? But still, I ran from the notion that I would get old one day. I would see the aging, their stooped over bodies, the gray hair and wrinkled faces, and I would react like so many in my age group: with polite dismissal. I would push it all from my mind and pretend it wasn't ever going to happen to me. And many will argue that is precisely what a young person needs to do: Live! Run! Take it all in!

There were just so many things our youthful eyes could not see rightly, blinded as we were by the superficial and skin-deep. It was years before I could let go of the shell that meant so little and embrace the interior that meant so much.

When I was a boy and walked past an old person with a cane, I saw immobility. What I didn't see was their contentment, their sense of accomplishment, their legacy. We see the cane, but we don't see the mileage or the injuries that led to the cane until we are much older ourselves, and we notice our own injuries, our own scars, leaving their more obvious traces.

Portrait of the author as a younger man preoccupied with silly things like career, etc., and also as an older man, on the same park bench, preoccupied with, well, birds.



Artwork © 2025 by Antsy McClain. All Rights Reserved. Unhitched.com

Footnotes to give you younger, healthier looking skin

¹ All that said, your outer age doesn't care how old you feel on the inside. Your outer age always wins, as if to say to us, "Feel as old as you want to. No one can be 19 forever, and I will have the last word. Now, go enjoy your cake."

² There are only two scenarios when I have cheerfully tolerated being sung at. One was on my birthday as a child, and the other occurred in a London pub at 2 a.m., surrounded by friends and empty Guinness bottles. I was in my early 50s. The song was "Danny Boy." And you haven't lived until a disheveled chorus of properly intoxicated men sing boisterously into the air around you, caring not whether you join in. I didn't join in because I was overcome with emotion. I just smiled at them with big round tears in my eyes. Oh, Danny boy, the pipes, the pipes are calling, indeed. Thank you, lads. I have never forgotten that night.

³ Oh, yes, there is more than meets the eye beneath the mustard-yellow veneer of this 1970s blended family. Behind those paneled walls, a keen observer will see more than a split level suburban life, an entire subfloor of metaphor and meaning lying just beneath the orange shag carpet.

Greg Brady, in particular, went through some heavy, existential soul searching. In Season 3, Episode 18, for instance, Greg loses a bet that he can do twice as many chin-ups as his younger brother, Bobby, and has to do whatever Bobby says for an entire week. Greg learns a valuable lesson in the folly of hubris.

Jan, the middle daughter, carries a deep-seated angst one might easily associate with Joan of Arc. And Marcia, the oldest Brady daughter, learns in Season 1, Episode 4, that scuba and karate are the most popular classes at her high school, but she really wants to take ceramics. She must then face the life-altering choice of following the crowd or being her own woman.

Even Alice, the family's housekeeper, cook and confidante, must wrestle with what it means to be human. She likes Sam, the butcher, for instance, and they've talked about getting married, but she tells him the Bradys need her. Alice denies herself happiness so Mike and Carol Brady can better cope with a house full of kids and still enjoy their carefree bedtime reading every night in their freshly laundered pajamas.

See "The Existential House of Brady, A Comparative Analysis of 'The Brady Bunch' to Homer's 'The Iliad' and 'The Odyssey.'" Doubledown Press, 1987, pp. 102 - 112. OK, this book doesn't really exist, but it should. It should totally exist.

Mark Twain famously said, "Don't begrudge getting older; it's a privilege denied to many." But my favorite quote about aging is from Ralph Waldo Emerson, who said, "The best tunes are played on the oldest fiddles." There is a reason why all my guitar player friends, as soon as they can, buy the oldest, coolest vintage guitar they can afford.

The wood has dried, making the tone deeper, more mellow. There is no comparison between a brand new guitar and one that has been played — and loved — for years. The older, the better. And it's true with all things that make music: guitars, fiddles, pianos, even people.

There is a man here in Wilson County I used to see all the time as I would head out on my morning errands. He was older than me by 20 years, it seemed. He was a runner, very fit, lean and sinewy. His pace was slow and deliberate, wisely making minimum joint impact. One summer morning I passed him, offered the customary Wilson County Wave and saw the words on his T-shirt, words I will never forget: EVERYTHING HURTS.

I laughed, but as I pulled onto my street, the humor morphed into a deep-seated respect. Everything hurt, but there he was, out there doing it anyway. A great lesson. Words to live by. I never met him, and we never spoke. I only saw him running on the sidewalk in my neighborhood as I drove by, but it surprises me how often I think about that man and his shirt. I once thought about buying a similar shirt myself but quickly dismissed the idea because it smacked of stolen valor. I hadn't earned it. Not like him, and I realized I could no more wear that shirt than I could don a Marines uniform.

But I woke up yesterday with an aching left knee and adjoining IT band. The night before, all I did was sit cross-legged in a rocking chair with a cocktail in my hand, watching TV with my girlfriend, Michelle. I hadn't been on a treadmill, hadn't exercised, hadn't even climbed any steps. I haven't been upstairs in weeks. I sat. In a rocking chair. In my robe and slippers. There was absolutely no reason for my knee to be hurting, but there we have it.

Lucky for me, Michelle is a licensed massage therapist and knew exactly what to do, so I was right as rain within a few minutes, but I now have to admit to myself that I woke up injured — after sleeping ... in a bed ... for eight hours.

This kind of realization can be a real slam to the ego of my inner 19-year-old. And he was a bit depressed that morning, so Michelle and I took him out for a nice pancake breakfast, and he seems fine now.

Listen to Antsy McClain's song, "Picking Up Speed (When You're Over the Hill)," here:

Antsy McClain is a Nashville-adjacent singer-songwriter, author and graphic artist who feels like he's 19. Go to unhitched.com for his books, music and events. Use this QR code to download "Picking Up Speed" **FREE** to readers of *The Tennessee Magazine*. He wrote it years ago but relates to it more now.





1ST PLACE, ADULT

"The Old Greyhound Bus Station c1938,"

Jackie Medlin, Jackson, Southwest Tennessee EMC



1ST PLACE, JUNIOR *"Drishti,"* Daksh Ajmera,
Franklin, Middle Tennessee Electric



Shutterbug Showcase

Something Blue

Our shutterbugs have the blues ... and that's a good thing for our "Something Blue" photo contest. More than 1,000 submissions creatively captured the color blue in nature and neon, sky and sea, birds' beaks and cats' eyes.

Guest judges Lacy Atkins and Robin Conover, both award-winning photographers, returned to help select the winners in each of our three categories: Junior, Professional and Adult Shutterbugs.

Thank you to everyone who submitted photographs. Be sure to visit tnmagazine.org to view these winning entries and additional images recognized as finalists.

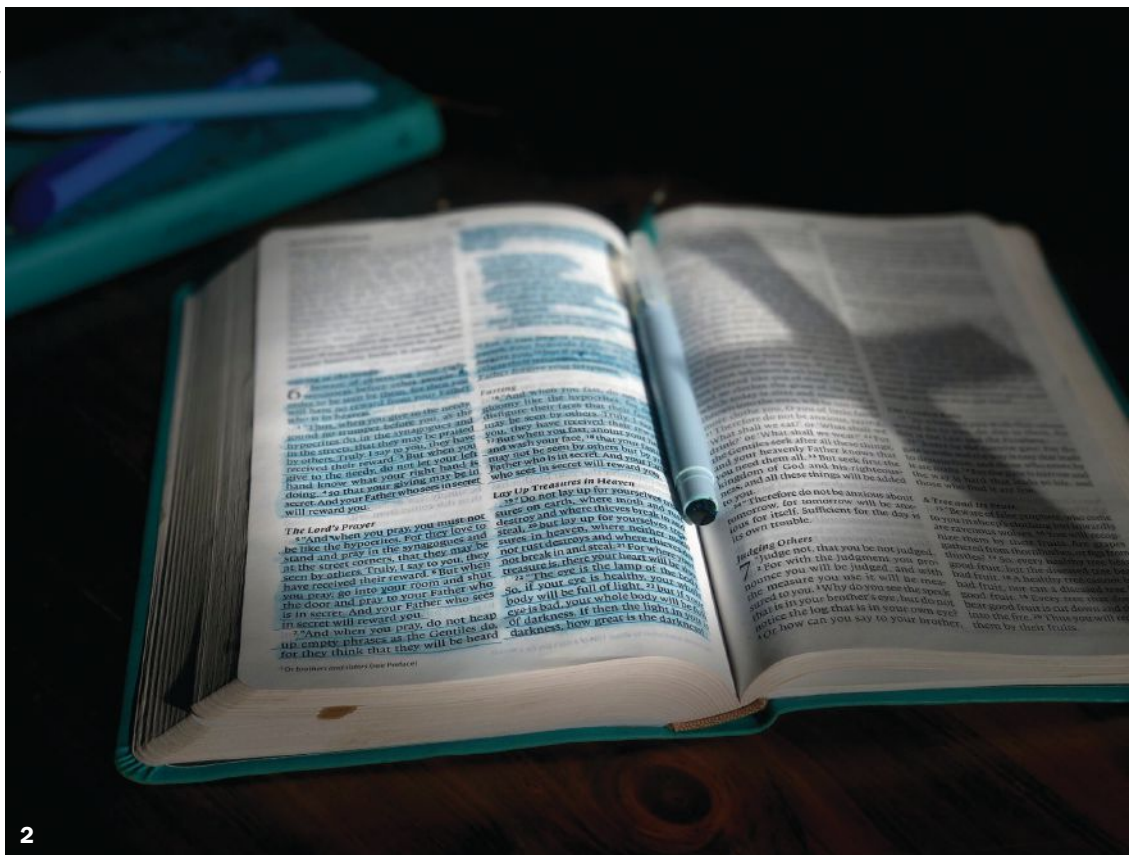
Check future issues of *The Tennessee Magazine* for details on our next Shutterbug Photography Contest.



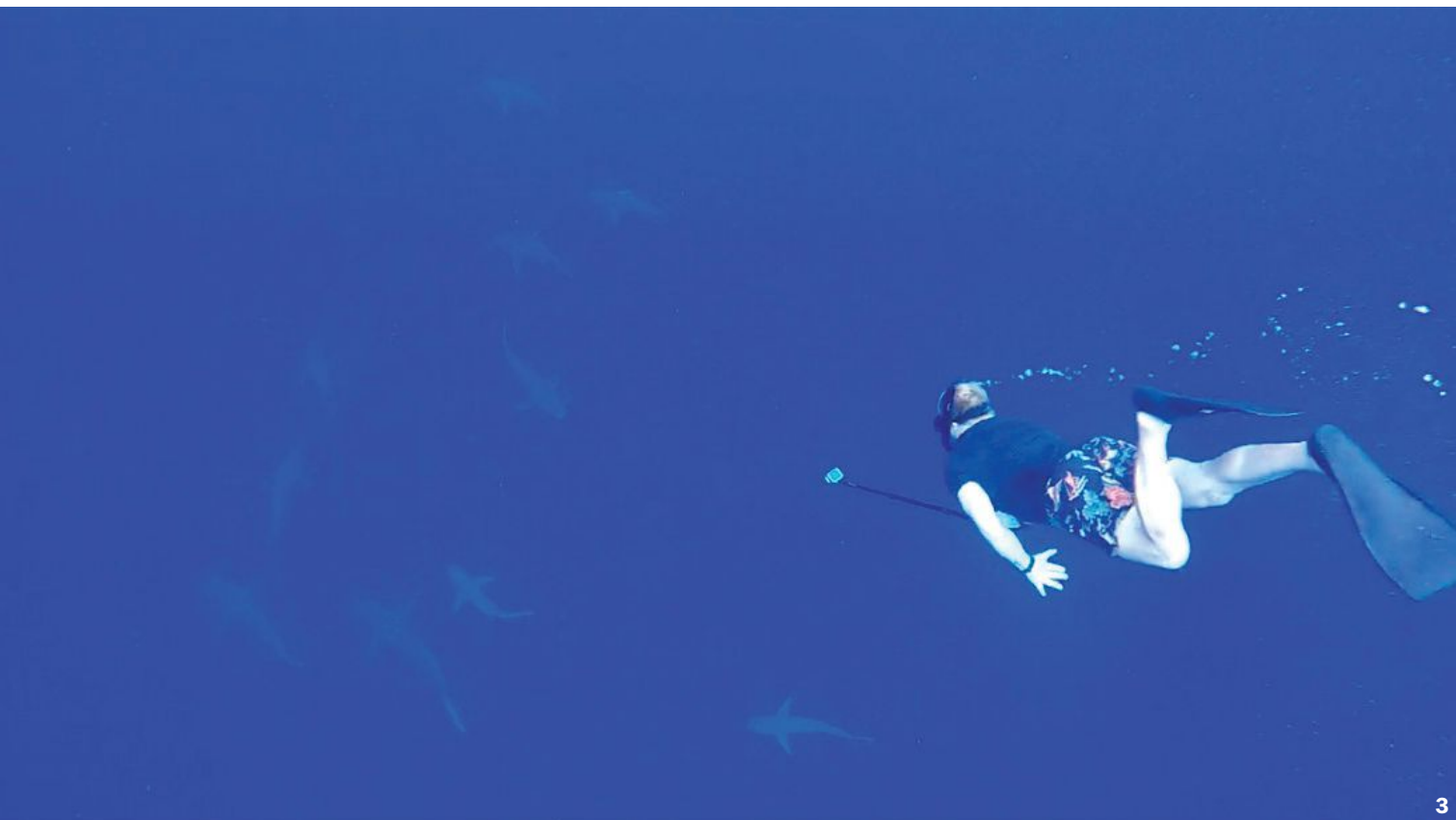
1

1 2ND PLACE, PROFESSIONAL
"Blue Ice at Sunrise,"
 Murray Blake,
 Spring Hill,
 Duck River EMC

2 2ND PLACE, JUNIOR
"The Truth in Blue,"
 Paulina Trout,
 Columbia,
 Duck River EMC



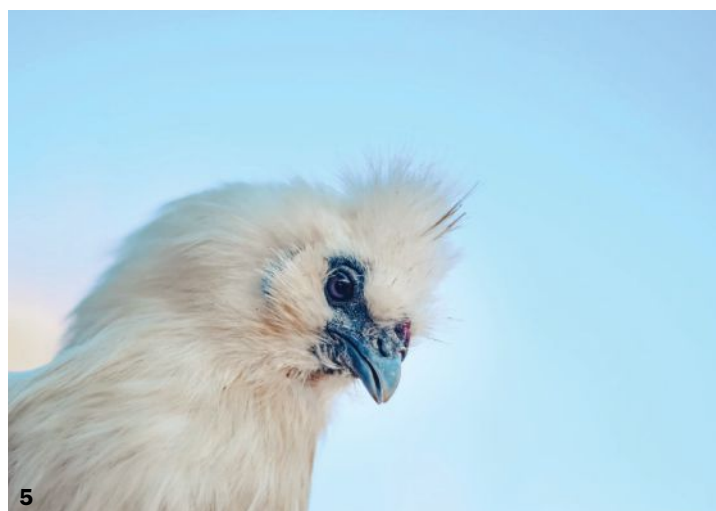
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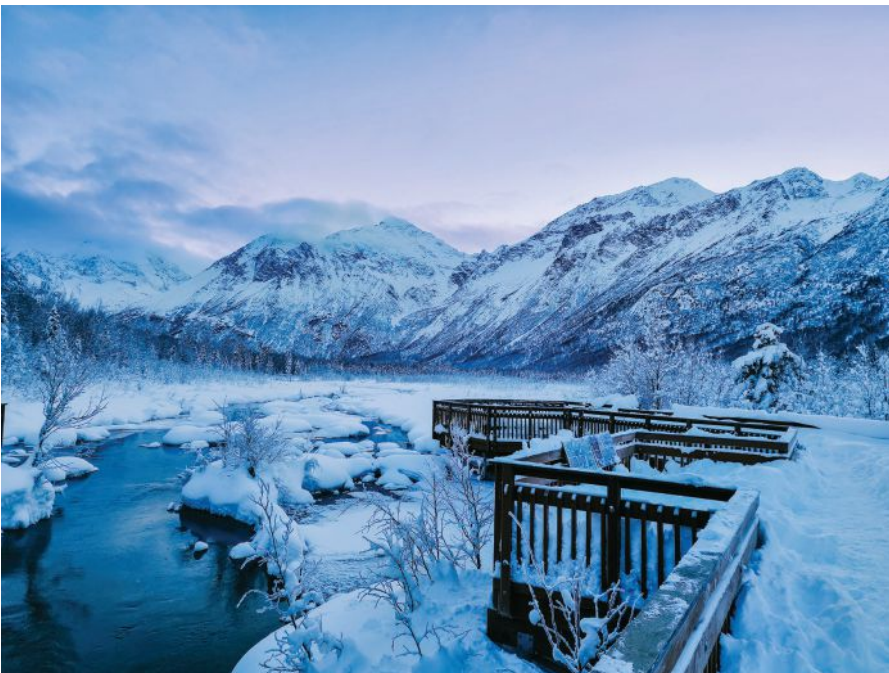


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- 3 2ND PLACE, ADULT** *"Deepest Blue,"*
Jim Fox, Sparta, Caney Fork EC
- 4 3RD PLACE, PROFESSIONAL** *"Singing the Blues,"*
Donna Bourdon, Decatur, Appalachian EC
- 5 3RD PLACE, JUNIOR** *"Silkie with Blue Features,"*
Kinley Hunley, Bruceton, Meriwether Lewis EC
- 6 3RD PLACE, ADULT** *"The Steal,"*
Michael Hoffman, Mount Juliet, Middle Tennessee Electric



HONORABLE MENTION, ADULT *“Lighthouse,”* Don Hinds,
Crossville, Appalachian EC



HONORABLE MENTION, ADULT *“Serenity,”* Taylor Marsee,
New Tazewell, Powell Valley EC



HONORABLE MENTION, ADULT
“Bright Shiny Blue Jay,” Ron Blair,
Greenbrier, Cumberland EMC



HONORABLE MENTION, PROFESSIONAL
"Invitation to Stroll," Dennis Williams,
 Jackson, Southwest Tennessee EMC



HONORABLE MENTION, PROFESSIONAL
"The Calm Crossing," Joel Ang, White Pine,
 Appalachian EC



HONORABLE MENTION, PROFESSIONAL
"The Color Blue," David Adkins,
 Trenton, Gibson EMC



HONORABLE MENTION, JUNIOR
"Solitude by the Lake," Adriana Legall,
 Iron City, Tennessee Valley EC



HONORABLE MENTION, ADULT
"Dark Skies," Nancy McKenzie, Darden,
 Tennessee Valley EC



HONORABLE MENTION, JUNIOR
"Nature's Jewels," Kimberly Mazas,
 Whitesburg, Holston EC



HONORABLE MENTION, ADULT
"Breathtaking in Blue," Debbie Karnes,
 Fairview, Middle Tennessee Electric



HONORABLE MENTION, PROFESSIONAL
"Blue Refuge," Donna Bourdon,
 Decatur, Appalachian EC



HONORABLE MENTION, JUNIOR
"Ocean Eyes," Kelsey Wix, Hohenwald,
 Meriwether Lewis EC

Caught in the Middle

Balancing caregiving between generations

By Pamela A. Keene

Chances are you know someone who consistently provides care for a family member. Perhaps that's you. Either way, you're not alone.

If you're a caregiver, it's also very possible you're a member of the "sandwich generation" — people who balance their time between caring for a spouse or child as well as for a parent.

As people live longer and the population ages, the number of adults in the sandwich generation has also risen significantly. A Pew Research Center study in late 2021 found that adults in their 40s and 50s are most likely to have a child younger than 18 still living at home as well as a parent aged 65 or older.

"Being a caregiver — whether for a child with disabilities or an older adult — may present challenges in adapting or finding resources," says Greg Link, director of the Office of Supportive and Caregiver Services with the U.S. Administration on Aging. "When you are both caring for an older adult family member

with medical or health issues and a child with disabilities, the dynamic shifts, and often the caregiving responsibility falls to one family member, often women."

Every situation is different, just as every family is different, but having open and candid discussions, particularly long before they are necessary, will help manage expectations, help define responsibilities within the family and give maximum consideration to the people who need the care.

Regular check-ins with the caregiver — and, of course, with the loved one — through visits and/or phone calls can help relieve a caregiver's feelings of isolation or loneliness as well as the handling the day-to-day challenges of ongoing care.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, on average, family caregivers spend more than 57 hours each week caring for someone who is disabled or living with limitations. That's more than

eight hours a day — all on top of work and other responsibilities — so it's easy to see why many caregivers can feel overwhelmed.

"Caregivers often forget about themselves and their own needs, especially if they don't have a supportive and engaged network — including family — who checks in with the caregiver regularly and can be available to help," Link says. "More often than not, when the caregiver is doing a good job, people don't volunteer to help."

Link encourages families to help each other. He says to be specific and start with simple tasks such as preparing a meal and sharing it with the family, the person receiving care and the caregiver. It will encourage conversation and quality time.

Respite takes many forms — taking a break for a few hours, a few days or several weeks; bringing in a professional or trained aid to assist with care; and asking a family member to prepare a meal and stay to



“It’s best to be prepared, do some initial research ... and talk about how your family can be ready to provide the utmost care and support for your loved ones.”

– **Greg Link** Director of the Office of Supportive and Caregiver Services with the U.S. Administration on Aging

enjoy it — and the options for how to spend this time are diverse.

The National Respite Network, archrespite.org, can connect caregivers to organizations in every state that provide access to respite services. This could include temporarily hiring and paying for a professional caregiver or finding home-care options. It offers specific steps to identifying the type of respite that is best for the primary caregiver.

A number of local, regional and national organizations offer information and support for caregivers as well as providing help for the person being cared for. Area Agencies on Aging, local departments of human or social services, area Easterseals organizations and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are ideal places to start.

The Eldercare Locator is one of the best places to learn about resources for older adults and their family caregivers. A public service of the

Administration for Community Living, it connects people via ZIP code search to aging and disability resource centers, state units on aging and local area agencies on aging.

“The Eldercare Locator is comprehensive, and it provides broad-based resources to assist caregivers, family members and care receivers,” Link says. Funded by the U.S. Administration on Aging, part of the Administration for Community Living, it maintains a current database that provides information for older adults and caregivers about eldercare facilities and resources across the country. Website links assist with information about long-term care planning, options for long-term care and contact information for home- and community-based services available through the Older Americans Act.

“Don’t overlook groups like the Alzheimer’s Association, the

Parkinson’s Foundation, various organizations that provide information about cancer, the American Heart Association, the American Lung Association and similar groups that provide resources and support for patients and caregivers,” Link says. “The number of resources for caregivers and those receiving care are numerous.

“The reality is that caregiving will touch many of us in some way, and it’s best to be prepared, do some initial research about the availability of resources and talk — at least in general terms — about how your family can be ready to provide the utmost care and support for your loved ones.”

Pamela A. Keene, an Atlanta-based journalist, writes lifestyle, gardening, travel, health care and consumer articles. She is an avid gardener, has visited seven continents and is an award-winning photographer.



There’s More Online

Visit **tnmagazine.org** to find more information on caregiver resources, support and respite.

Hawkins appointed to CEMC board

Rex Hawkins of Clarksville has been appointed to serve the remainder of the term of David Morgan, who passed away Nov. 20, 2024. Hawkins will represent South Montgomery County on Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation's board of directors.

A graduate of Austin Peay State University with a degree in construction technology, Hawkins is the owner and chief executive officer of Hawkins Homes LLC, which has served the Clarksville area for more than 30 years.

He served two terms as president of the Montgomery County Home Builders Association, served on

the Clarksville Area Chamber of Commerce board, was a member of the Aspire Clarksville Foundation's VI campaign cabinet, and served on



Rex Hawkins of Clarksville will represent South Montgomery County on CEMC's board of directors.

the City of Clarksville River District Commission.

"I am deeply committed to the values of community, sustainability and service that CEMC upholds," Hawkins says. "Having lived and worked in Clarksville my entire life, I understand the critical role CEMC plays in powering our homes, businesses and daily lives. I believe in the importance of providing reliable and affordable energy, especially as we navigate the challenges of a rapidly changing energy landscape."

Hawkins and his wife, Kendra, have three children — Kourtnee, Madison and Greyson — and two grandchildren — Batson and Bradlynn.

Stay in touch: Update your contact info

On occasion, Cumberland Electric Membership or Cumberland Connect might need to contact you regarding your electric or internet account. Help us stay in touch by keeping your contact information up to date.


Keeping your contact information current benefits you in multiple ways.



- Faster outage reporting and response.
- Timely alerts about planned outages.
- Smoother member service interactions.
- Important member updates and event reminders.

Ensure your phone number, email and mailing addresses are up to date so you can enjoy the benefits of staying connected. Information can be updated through SmartHub, either online or via the mobile app, or by contacting customer service at **800-987-2362**.

HELP US STAY IN TOUCH!

Update your contact information so we can reach you.



Dishwasher vs. hand-washing

What saves the most energy — hand-washing or using the dishwasher? It's a kitchen cleanup debate "as old as time," as they say. Not really, though, as dishwashers weren't common in North America until the 1970s. Ever since, though, it seems there have been countless commercials and advertisements on which is best for your after-meal cleanup. Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation is here to set the record



straight: Using a dishwasher is more energy-efficient for most households.

That decision comes down to one single factor: The dishwasher uses less hot water. Typically, when you hand-wash, you fill one side of the sink with hot water to wash and another for rinsing, or you let the tap run to rinse. Filling the average kitchen sink can take 4 to 6 gallons of water, depending on the size and depth of the sink bowl. A running kitchen sink can use 2 gallons of water per minute, depending on the faucet type. A standard Energy Star-rated dishwasher uses around 3 to 4 gallons of water per cycle. The Energy Star-rated dishwasher uses less water, meaning it uses less energy and saves money on your electric bill.

Regardless of where you stand on the debate, we hope you will take these steps to be more energy-efficient.

Ways to use your dishwasher more energy efficiently:

- Avoid prerinsing dishes. Just scrape off food scraps and grease before loading them into the washer.
- Skip the heated drying cycle. Open the dishwasher door slightly at the end of each cycle to help dry the dishes.
- Only run the dishwasher when there's a full load.

Ways to hand-wash more energy efficiently:

- Be sure to scrape dishes before placing them in the sink. This way the soapy water is used for only dishes.
- Don't fill the sink all the way. A half-filled sink will get the job done.
- Rinse your dishes with cool water.

Stay aware to avoid utility scams

Utility scams have become more sophisticated as scammers take advantage of our increasing reliance on technology. They often pose as utility employees, threatening to disconnect services if payments aren't made immediately. Scammers reach consumers through calls, texts, emails or even in-person visits, with digital scams on the rise. For instance, caller ID spoofing makes it difficult to identify fraud, and fake utility payment websites trick people into making payments. Another common scam involves fake refunds for overpaid bills, aiming to steal personal information.

To spot a scam, watch for red flags: urgent threats of service disconnection, unusual payment methods like gift cards or cryptocurrency, and communication with poor grammar or strange email addresses. Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation will never demand immediate payment or request sensitive information like banking or Social Security numbers over the phone. We offer secure payment options through various channels, including in-person, 24-hour payment kiosks, our website and the SmartHub app.

If you're ever unsure about a suspicious communication, contact



us directly at **800-987-2362**. We encourage you to report potential scams so we can protect our community. By staying alert, we can help prevent fraud and keep your personal information safe.

Why does CEMC trim trees?

Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation provides safe and reliable electricity and broadband services to more than 114,000 homes and businesses in Cheatham, Montgomery, Robertson, Stewart and Sumner counties. In order to contin-

ue doing so, we maintain more than 8,500 miles of power lines. One of the ways we do that is through trimming trees. Trimming trees now keeps the power on later.

While it might seem like a simple task, trimming trees is one of the largest expenses an electric co-op incurs every year. Our team, along with tree trimming contractors, clears limbs, brush and sometimes even entire trees that are too close to power lines or other electrical equipment. While these practices don't eliminate every power outage for

the service area, they do reduce the number.

Although some power outages such as those caused by car accidents or inclement weather are beyond our control, many can be prevented. Our team works diligently to ensure that trees and other vegetation are kept away from power lines to help maintain reliable service for our members.

Trimming trees allows CEMC to provide safe and reliable electricity to our members and lineworkers. It also helps save our members money in the long run. If you see trees or vegetation that could pose an electrical hazard, you can help by notifying CEMC at **800-987-2362** for guidance.

For more information regarding CEMC's vegetation management program, please visit us online at **cemc.org**.



A safe planting season

Sunshine and springtime are in our future, and that means farmers are preparing to get back in the fields. It's no secret that farmers work year-round to feed and clothe the world, but that doesn't mean that they are exempt from electrical safety hazards. Here are some tips to share with the farmer in your life before they head out for planting season.

Have a plan. Start each morning on the farm with a plan of the day's work. Know what jobs will happen around power lines, and have a plan to keep yourself and everyone else on the farm safe — that includes those running planters or spraying fertilizer. Not only could a hazard halt your operation, but it could also impact your community's electricity and broadband access.



Stay away from lines. Always keep yourself and equipment at least 10 feet away from power lines in all directions. Have someone spot you when moving bigger and taller equipment to make sure no lines are contacted. Always lower equipment

to its lowest level before moving or transporting them. Wind, uneven ground or other factors outside of your control can cause equipment to contact power lines.

Call your co-op. Use qualified electricians for work on any farm electrical systems. Do not attempt to raise or move a power line to allow equipment or yourself to cross a path. Call Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation at 800-987-2362 for assistance. If you come into contact with a line, call 911 and CEMC immediately and, if possible, stay in your vehicle until help arrives.

CEMC wishes all our farmers a safe and happy planting season. We thank you for all that you do for our community!

Be ready for storm season

Preparedness is the best defense

Springtime brings warmer weather and more opportunities for outdoor activities. However, it can also create conditions for severe storms. Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation crews are always prepared and ready to respond should power outages occur in our area. When severe storms cause power disruptions, our line crews take all necessary precautions before they get to work on any downed lines.

Safety and preparedness are essential to protecting families during storms and outages. The Federal Emergency Management Agency recommends these items as a starting point for storm and disaster preparedness. Additional resources can be found at ready.gov:

- **Stock your pantry** with a three-day supply of nonperishable food, including canned goods, energy bars, peanut butter, powdered milk, instant coffee, water and other essentials (i.e., diapers and toiletries).
- Confirm that you have **adequate sanitation and hygiene supplies**, including towelettes, soap and hand sanitizer.
- Ensure your **first-aid kit is stocked** with pain relievers, bandages and other medical essentials, and make sure your prescriptions are current.
- **Set aside basic household items** you will need, including flashlights, batteries, a manual can opener and a portable, battery-powered radio or TV.
- **Organize emergency supplies** so they are easily accessible in one location.

In the event of a prolonged power outage, turn off or unplug major appliances, TVs, computers and other sensitive electronics. This will help avert damage from potential power surges and will also help prevent overloading circuits during power restoration. That said, do leave one light on so you will know when power is restored.

If you plan to use a portable generator, make sure it's rated to handle the amount

ARE YOU STORM READY?

Follow these safety and preparation tips during spring and summer storm season.

Be prepared.

- Create an emergency kit with power outage essentials: batteries, power banks, flashlights, nonperishable foods, water, medical supplies and prescriptions.
- Develop an emergency family plan with meeting points, communication methods and evacuation routes. Share your plan with all family members.
- Monitor weather for important updates that could impact your emergency plan.

Stay safe.

- Ensure a safe shelter: Stay away from windows and doors. In tornadoes, move to a basement or an interior room without windows.
- Use portable generators safely: Operate outdoors in well-ventilated areas, place on a flat, dry surface, do not overload and always read the operating manual before use.
- Severe storms can bring down tree limbs and power lines. If you encounter a downed line, stay back. Always assume a downed line is live and dangerous.

of power you will need, and always review the manufacturer's instructions to operate it safely.

Listen to local news or an NOAA Weather Radio for storm and emergency information, and check CEMC's social media pages for outage information.

Severe storms can occasionally bring down power lines. If you see a downed line, always assume it's energized, and never approach it. Call 911 and CEMC immediately, and keep others away. If flooding occurs, never walk through areas where power lines could be submerged.

If you experience an outage, please report it by calling or texting us at 800-987-2362 or by using the SmartHub mobile app.

Advance planning for severe storms or other emergencies can reduce stress and anxiety caused by weather events and lessen the storm's impact.

Storm preparedness is the best defense against severe weather. Taking action today can help ensure safety and readiness for any unexpected events.





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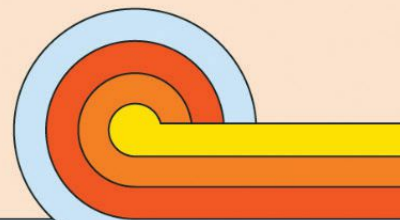
Retro Recharge

Sweepstakes

Complete your FREE DIY Home Energy Assessment before March 16, 2025, and you'll automatically be entered to win a retro prize pack or a gift card worth up to \$600.



Take the new and improved
DIY Home Energy Assessment
EnergyRight.com/home-energy-assessment.



Spring cleaning for your digital life



As flowers start to bloom and the days grow longer, it's not just your home that could use a refresh — your digital life could benefit from some spring cleaning too! If you dread opening your inbox because of the overwhelming amount of junk mail, this is your sign to make a change. The new season is an excellent opportunity to declutter and organize your devices, making your digital life feel more secure, efficient and manageable. Here are six simple steps to help you declutter your digital world and start fresh this season.

Streamline your inbox

If your email inbox is buried under hundreds of unread messages, it's time to take control. Begin by unsubscribing from newsletters or promotional emails that no longer serve you. Then, create filters and folders to organize incoming emails and archive important older ones. Before long, you'll transform chaos into a clean, manageable inbox.

Sort through your photos

Take a moment to sift through your photo library. Delete any duplicates, blurry images or outdated screenshots you don't need anymore. Organize your photos into folders by events or themes

like vacations, family or pets. To ensure these memories are safe, be sure to back them up to the cloud.

Delete unnecessary apps and files

Go through your devices and delete apps you no longer use. Not only does this clear up space, but it also helps your devices perform better. Apply the same approach to your desktop and file folders — delete old, unnecessary files and organize important documents into clearly labeled folders. A tidy digital space often inspires productivity and focus.

Update and strengthen your passwords

When was the last time you updated your passwords? Use this season as a reminder to make your accounts more secure. Create unique, strong passwords for each account, and consider using a password manager to keep track of them. This simple task can go a long way in protecting your personal information.

Improve your internet setup

A smooth digital experience starts with a reliable internet connection. Check if your home network is keeping up with your needs. With Cumberland Connect's high-speed internet,

you can enjoy seamless streaming, faster downloads and reliable connections across all devices.

Refresh your social media presence

Digital spring cleaning doesn't have to stop at the device level. This is a great opportunity to audit your social media accounts as well! Unfollow pages or people that no longer align with your interests or clutter your newsfeed, update your profile pictures and bios, and review privacy settings to ensure you're only sharing content only with who you want. A streamlined feed can make social media a more enjoyable and meaningful experience, and it can go a long way with your mental well-being too.

Why it's worth your time

Spring cleaning your digital life is about more than just staying organized. It's about gaining peace of mind. By decluttering, securing and optimizing your technology, you'll give yourself the gift of a more enjoyable online experience. So, put on your favorite spring playlist, roll up your sleeves and enjoy a fresh, clutter-free digital life this season.



Does your internet service need a refresh? Scan this code to learn more about **Cumberland Connect!**



This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Landscaping to save energy

How strategic planting can reduce your energy costs year-round

Q: How can landscaping help lower my energy bill?

A: **There's a lot going on in the space around our homes.** Competing factors of aesthetics, safety, energy efficiency, water conservation and increasing risk of wildfires are a lot to consider. Thoughtful planning and good design can address these factors and result in year-round energy savings.

Carefully positioned trees can save up to 25% of a typical household's energy use, according to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). When selecting the right trees and other foliage, research what is best for your local climate. Select native species naturally adapted to your location for lower maintenance.

Strategically placed deciduous trees allow for summer shade and passive solar heat gain in the winter when leaves have fallen. This can lead to energy savings in the summer and winter.

Strategically placed trees shade your home during the summertime, which can lower your energy bills.



Slower-growing trees might take longer to provide maximum shading benefit, but their roots are typically deeper and their branches stronger. These factors can make them more drought resistant and less likely to be damaged by wind, snow or ice.

Be sure to plant large trees far enough away from your home to prevent damage from falling branches or root damage to your home's foundation.

Keep in mind that if you have a rooftop photovoltaic solar system, even a small amount of shade can significantly reduce energy production. Consider smaller plantings closer to the home to shade walls, windows or hardscaped surfaces such as driveways and sidewalks.

Windbreaks are another landscaping strategy that can be beneficial for energy savings in windy areas. The DOE says windbreaks reduce wind speed by as much as 30 times the windbreak's height. That, in turn, reduces wind chill near your home and can lower heating costs. The DOE recommends planting two to five times the mature tree's height away from your home.

Plant evergreen trees and shrubs for windbreaks, and consider adding fences or earthen mounds to help lift the wind up and over your home. In cold climates, they offer the added benefit of acting as snowdrifts to keep snow from piling up against your home.

Keep landscaping clear of dryer vents, heat pumps and air-conditioning units to ensure access for maintenance and airflow around those locations.

If you live in an area at risk of wildfire, create a defensible space around your home. Consider hardscaping with gravel, bricks, pavers or stone shaded by fire-resistant awnings or covers. Locate fire-resistant

plants and trees at proper distances from your home and other structures on your property.

When landscaping, always consider safety first. Call before you dig to ensure you know where any underground power, gas, water or sewer lines are located. The national 811 Underground Service Alert program routes you directly to your local resources. Call 811 or go to call811.com before you dig.

Be mindful of overhead power lines, too. Look up and check the surroundings before setting up ladders. Be thoughtful when planting new landscaping that could encroach on power lines. Utility equipment should have at least 10 feet of clearance, when possible.

As you prepare to refresh your yard for the coming spring and summer, consider ways you can boost your energy efficiency for more comfort and savings year-round.

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.



Plant trees that provide shade during the heat of the summer.

Photo credit: Mohave Electric Cooperative



Keep landscaping clear of HVAC and air-conditioning units to ensure maintenance access and airflow around equipment.

Photo credit: Mark Gilliland, Pioneer Utility Resources

Smokies votes a century ago closer than you might think

A hundred years ago, the Tennessee General Assembly did one of the most important things in its history when it allocated tax dollars to buy land for what is now the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Ninety-nine years ago, the Knoxville City Council did one of the most important things in its history when it did something similar.

Considering how small the sums of money were and how popular the national park is today, it's amazing how close both votes were.

When people tell the story of the national park, they usually start with the Knoxville residents who introduced the idea in the first place — most notably Anne and Willis Davis. To summarize a long story, the Davises got the idea of the Smokies as a na-

tional park when they visited some of the parks that already existed in the Far West. They were instrumental in starting the Great Smoky Mountains Conservation Association, which appealed to the nationwide committee that was looking for national park sites. Thanks to a letter writing campaign and to wonderful photos taken by Jim Thompson, the committee agreed to visit the Smokies.



On Aug. 6, 1924, committee members hiked to the top of Mount LeConte via a trail that had been cleared only a few days earlier. They saw Rainbow Falls, Myrtle Point and Cliff Tops, then spent the night in a log shelter that had just been built for them. On the way down, the group hiked past Alum Cave Bluffs.

Eight weeks later, the committee recommended that the Great Smoky Mountains be turned into a national park.

Carlos Campbell, a participant in the creation of the park, would later write a book called “Birth of a National Park in the Great Smoky Mountains.” According to Campbell, the national committee’s decision to recommend the Smokies as a na-

tional park was the first of nine steps toward the park becoming a reality. Most of the other steps had to do with money.

You see, just because a committee of the National Park Service recommended that the Smoky Mountains be turned into a national park did not mean that the federal government would buy the 515,000 acres that now make up the park. Someone else — notably, the taxpayers of Tennessee and North Carolina, private citizens and foundations — had to come up with the cash. That took years.

The first step in the fundraising effort was taken by the state of Tennessee. While campaigning for

re-election, Gov. Austin Peay decided to make the Smoky Mountains acquisition one of his goals. (At that time, it wasn’t clear whether the land would be a state park, a national forest or a national park.) In the fall of 1924, Peay announced he had signed an agreement with W.B. Townsend of the Little River Lumber Company to buy the 76,000 acres that the

A group of people camp atop Mount LeConte in July 1925 — a few months after the Tennessee General Assembly first allocated tax dollars to buy land in the Great Smoky Mountains.

Thompson Brothers photo, McClung Collection





On March 17, 1925, members of the General Assembly posed for this photo after they disembarked from a train in Townsend. Afterward, they boarded private autos for a quick tour of the Blount County side of the Smoky Mountains.
Thompson Brothers photo, McClung Collection

company owned on the Tennessee side of the Smokies for \$273,000.

Many newspapers didn't think much of this idea. "One of the most preposterous schemes of the Peay administration," is how the *Nashville Banner* described it.

Many lawmakers agreed with the *Banner*. Therefore, in January 1925, Gov. Peay told the legislature that the state only would be asked to provide two-thirds of the \$273,000. The city of Knoxville — which wasn't even in the same county as the proposed park — would pay one-third.

To encourage the legislature to support the measure, the Knoxville Chamber of Commerce raised \$5,000 to fund a big trip. On March 17, all House and Senate members (and some of their spouses and secretaries) took a train to Townsend. From there they were taken in cars to Cades Cove, Little River Gorge and Elkmont — where they were wine and dined.

This junket seemed to work at first; the Smoky Mountains bill was passed by the Senate 20-13. But on April 8, 1925, it was rejected by the House, where only 45 out of 99 members voted for it.

However, exactly a day later, the same proposal passed when 13 of the House

members who had voted against it voted in favor of it.

What happened? This is what the *Knoxville News Sentinel* tersely reported:

"After the vote Wednesday, (Gov.) Peay summoned several representatives to his office who had voted against the bill. They changed their votes when the bill came up Thursday."

It wasn't until a year later that the Knoxville City Council voted on its contribution of one-third of the \$273,000. As the vote neared, Knoxville Mayor Ben Morton brought every council member into his office and tried to talk them into it. According to Campbell, who was witness to the process, six were willing to vote for it, but five were not since they had promised their constituents they would focus on local services.

"When the question was finally put to a vote, the results were six for participating with the state and five against it," Campbell writes. "Seeing that they had lost their efforts to block the purchase, all five opponents changed their votes, and the official result was unanimous for the city's participation."

Granted, these two votes didn't ensure that the national park would exist. There would be much larger financial hurdles along the way. There was a grassroots fundraising effort that raised more than \$500,000 — some of it from Tennessee schoolchildren who gave a penny or a nickel. In 1927, the North Carolina legislature allocated \$2 million for land acquisition, and the Tennessee legislature allocated another \$1.5 million for land acquisition (financed by a gasoline tax). And in March 1928, the Rockefeller Foundation announced a gift of \$5 million, ensuring the final success of the park movement.

So the \$273,000 allocated by the combined state of Tennessee in 1925 and the city of Knoxville in 1926 ended up being a small part of what later was more like \$10 million. But the Great Smoky Mountains National Park might not exist today if it weren't for these two close votes.

Tennessee Events

Festivals, celebrations and other happenings around the state

APRIL 3-6

Mule Day

Columbia. 931-381-9557 or muleday.com

Come celebrate the 51st Mule Day in early April. Event festivities include mule shows like the Mule Pull and the Tennessee State Gaited Mule Championship along with dancing, music, arts and crafts and food.

Mule Day's highlight is the parade on Saturday, April 5. Some 100,000



Photograph courtesy of Mule Day

to 200,000 people attend the parade each year. The 2025 parade grand marshals are Mountain Mule Packer Ranch's Mike and Michele Toberer along with their hero mules that stepped in to help deliver supplies to people in need in the mountains of Tennessee and North Carolina after Hurricane Helene.

Mule Day funds help support the Maury County community, including Mule Day WORKS, a scholarship program for career and technical education and vocational training.

West Tennessee

MARCH 14-15

Military Expo

Discovery Park of America, Union City.
731-885-5455 or discoveryparkofamerica.com

MARCH 15-16

13th Annual Mid-South Daffodil Show

Dixon Gallery and Gardens, Memphis.
901-312-1248 or daffodilusa.org

MARCH 18

A Taste of Ireland — The Irish Music and Dance Sensation

Krider Performing Arts Center, Paris.
info@pace-live.com or atasteofirelandshow.com

Middle Tennessee

MARCH 15

63rd Irish Celebration

Erin. houstoncountychamber@gmail.com or houstoncochamber.com

MARCH 15, 22 and 29 • APRIL 5, 12 and 19

Wildflower Hikes

Owl's Hill Nature Sanctuary, Brentwood.
615-370-4672 or owlshill.org

MARCH 18-23

"Mamma Mia!"

Tennessee Performing Arts Center, Nashville.
615-782-4000 or tpac.org

MARCH 21-22

17th Annual Blooming Arts Festival

Linden. bloomingartsfestival.com

East Tennessee

MARCH 9

Time to Paddy 5K, 10K and Lucky 13.1 Half Marathon

Tennessee River Park Pavilion 2, Chattanooga. 760-669-6471 or support@bodiesrc.com

MARCH 29

Spirit of Nations Powwow

Jefferson County High School, Dandridge
indiancreekproductions@gmail.com or indiancreekproductions.com

MARCH 29

4-H Day

C.E. Brehm Animal Sciences Building, Knoxville. asnodgrasstn4h@gmail.com or 865-507-7027

APRIL 4-6

Knoxville Home and Remodeling Show

Chilhowee Park and Exposition Center, Knoxville. 423-910-4663 or knoxvillehomeremodelingshow.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.



Story by Amber Weaver

Photographs courtesy of United Launch Alliance

From Sea to Space

*How the Tennessee River is the heart of the operation
for a unique cargo ship*

1

United Launch Alliance (ULA) strives to save lives, explore the universe and connect the world through space technology and launch services. Since 2006, ULA has had 150 consecutive launches. Before those rockets are launched into space, though, they go to sea via the Tennessee River, among other waterways. That voyage is completed by none other than a rocket ship: the R/S RocketShip to be exact.

What is the R/S RocketShip?

The R/S RocketShip, previously named the Delta Mariner, is a 312-foot cargo vessel that is used to transport space flight hardware components from ULA's 1.6 million-square-foot production facility in Decatur, Alabama. It is the only U.S. flagged ship with the capability to transport rockets on both rivers and open ocean. Weighing nearly 19 million pounds, the ship can hold 163,800 gallons of fuel and produces 8,000 horsepower. The R/S RocketShip can transport Atlas V, Delta IV

and Vulcan Centaur boosters, second stages and payload fairings in an environmentally controlled setting. A crew of 16 river pilots and ULA personnel also have a complete living quarters and dining area on board.

The heart of the journey

Since its start in 1999, the R/S RocketShip has made countless trips from the ULA facility to both Vandenberg Space Force Base in California and Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida. While neither the facility nor stations are in the Volunteer

State, the ship must travel through Tennessee with every voyage it makes.

The Tennessee River is the heart of each ULA rocket ship journey. The parts that make the spacecrafts are fabricated in Decatur, and then those are loaded on the R/S RocketShip at ULA's own loading and landing port. The R/S RocketShip then makes its route south through the various locks on the Tennessee River, eventually going up through the state of Tennessee. It then crosses over and enters the Ohio River and



the Mississippi River, totaling 2,642 river miles.

Once the river miles are complete, the R/S RocketShip either heads south and around the Florida Keys for eight days and 1,694 ocean miles to reach Cape Canaveral Space Force Station or heads through the Panama Canal for 23 days and 8,812 ocean miles to reach Vandenberg Space Force Base.

1 R/S RocketShip is a unique cargo ship used to transport rockets from United Launch Alliance's (ULA's) production facility in Decatur, Alabama.

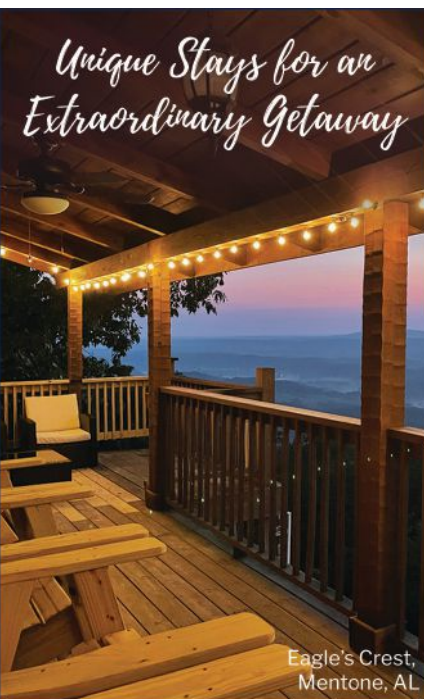
2 The ULA Vulcan Cert-1 rocket is off-loaded from the R/S RocketShip at Port Canaveral, Florida.

3 A ULA Vulcan Centaur Pathfinder Testing Tank (PTT) booster leaves Decatur, Alabama, to begin its journey on R/S RocketShip to Cape Canaveral, Florida, for site testing.

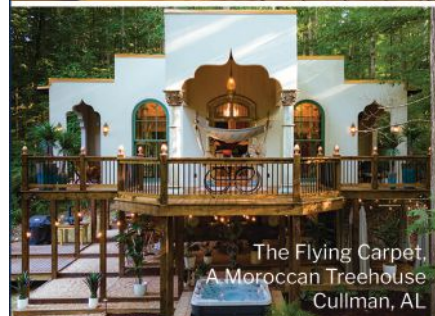
4 The R/S RocketShip arrives at Port Canaveral, Florida, to deliver the ULA Vulcan Cert-1 booster and Centaur V upper stage from ULA's factory in Decatur, Alabama, on Jan. 21, 2023.

What's next?

The big blue and white vessel that is often seen traveling the Tennessee River, the ship you now know is carrying mission critical hardware for defense purposes or space exploration, soon will have a companion. Bollinger Shipyards is currently designing and creating a second transport vessel that will serve as a duplicate for the R/S RocketShip. Fittingly named the R/S SpaceShip, it will have the same capacity as the R/S RocketShip and is expected to be delivered to ULA in January 2026.



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Mustard Medley

Recipes by Tammy Algood | Food styling by Cynthia Kent | Photographs by Robin Conover

Smoked Bologna,
Maple and Mustard
Glaze and Double
Mustard Crackers

We're all ready for some sunshine, right? So muster up all the mustards in your fridge and on your shelves because mustards are like sunshine for your mouth! These recipes call for a variety of mustards — from humble yellow to the fanciest Dijon — in ways sure to brighten your days ... whether it's sunny out or not.

French Vinaigrette

Yield: $\frac{3}{4}$ cup

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup + 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 3 tablespoons white or champagne wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 small garlic clove, peeled and minced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon onion salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon black pepper

In a jar with a tight-fitting lid, add the oil, vinegar, mustard, garlic, salt and pepper. Cover and shake well to emulsify. Use immediately or refrigerate until ready to enjoy.

Balsamic Vinaigrette

Yield: $\frac{2}{3}$ cup

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup + 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 teaspoon stone ground or Dijon mustard
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon dried thyme leaves
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon black pepper

In a jar with a tight-fitting lid, add the oil, vinegar, mustard, salt, thyme and pepper. Cover and shake well to emulsify. Use immediately or refrigerate until ready to enjoy.

Maple and Mustard Glaze

Welcome to your ham's new best friend!

Yield: $\frac{3}{4}$ cup

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup stone ground, yellow, Dijon or honey mustard
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup pure maple syrup

In a small bowl, whisk together the mustard and syrup until well blended. Use immediately or cover and refrigerate up to 3 days. Bring to room temperature before using.

Smoked Bologna

Yield: 8 servings

- 1 (1-pound) bologna log
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons mustard of your choice (spicy, stone ground, honey, Dijon or yellow)

Preheat the smoker to 225 degrees. Meanwhile, score the bologna log with a sharp knife, being careful not to cut it too deep. In a small bowl, whisk together the sugar and mustard. Rub all over the bologna, getting into the cut crevices. Place the bologna in the smoker for 3 to $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Slice and enjoy. Refrigerate any leftovers.

Mustard Butter

Think of this as an instant sauce. A dollop is perfect over grilled steak, chicken, fish or steamed root vegetables.

Yield: $\frac{2}{3}$ cup

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup unsalted butter, softened
- 2 tablespoons Dijon, stone ground or honey mustard
- 1 tablespoon fresh minced parsley
- 1 tablespoon + 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon black pepper

With a fork, mash together the butter, mustard, parsley, lemon juice, salt and pepper in a medium bowl until well blended. Transfer to a sheet of waxed paper. Roll the butter mixture into a log and refrigerate at least 1 hour.

Note: *This butter log can be covered in heavy-duty aluminum foil, labeled and frozen for up to 1 month. Thaw in the refrigerator overnight before using or simply slice off the amount needed while the butter is still frozen.*

Double Mustard Crackers

Want to add a bit of zip to the same old cheese tray? This is how!

Yield: $4\frac{1}{2}$ dozen crackers

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup unsalted butter, cold and cut in pieces
- 2 cups grated Swiss cheese
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 egg yolk
- 3 tablespoons honey mustard
- 2 teaspoons dry mustard
- 1 teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ heaping teaspoon black pepper

Place the butter and cheese in the bowl of a food processor and blend until not quite smooth. Add the flour, egg yolk, honey mustard, dry mustard, salt and pepper. Pulse until just combined.

Place 2 sheets of waxed paper on the countertop and evenly divide the dough between each sheet. Roll each into a log, then wrap in aluminum foil. Freeze for 2 hours.

Position the racks to the upper and lower part of the oven and preheat to 350 degrees. Generously grease 2 baking sheets.

Cut each log into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch slices and place 1 inch apart on the sheets. Bake 16 minutes, switching the sheets halfway through baking. When golden-brown, remove from the oven and transfer to a rack to cool completely. Repeat with the remaining dough. Store in an airtight container.

Grilled Buffalo Wings

Yield: 6–8 servings

- 4 pounds chicken wings
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon onion or garlic powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon paprika
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup hot sauce
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup spicy mustard
- Blue cheese dressing for dipping

Preheat the grill to medium-high or 375 degrees. Meanwhile, place the wings in a large zip-top bag and add the cornstarch, salt, pepper, onion powder and paprika. Seal and shake to evenly coat. Transfer directly to the grill and cook 35 minutes or to 170 degrees, turning halfway through.

In a small saucepan over medium-low heat, combine the butter, hot sauce and mustard. Cook, stirring occasionally until the butter melts and the sauce is well blended.

Transfer the wings to a large bowl and add the sauce. Toss to evenly coat with tongs and return to the grill. Cook 15 minutes longer or until the sauce sets. Let cool 5 minutes before serving warm with blue cheese dressing.

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.

Double Mustard Crackers



Tips & Tricks

Keep a ballpark of mustards in your fridge. The shelf life is extremely long, and you'll like having different flavors available for different recipes.

Mustard is the most popular condiment served at ballpark concession stands. White mustard seeds are used to make yellow mustard. The distinctive color comes from turmeric. Spicy mustards are made from brown mustard seeds.

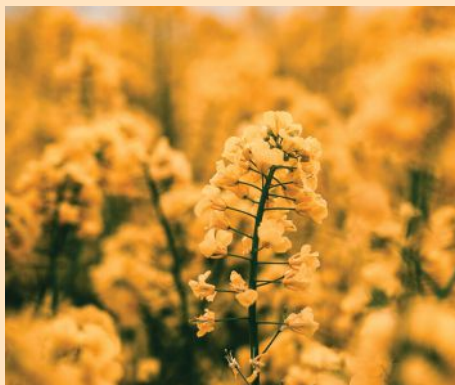
Dry mustard is a blend of different colored seeds.

Prepared mustard comes from a crushed seed in the Cruciferae family.

The mustard plant has some not-so-surprising relatives such as radishes and horseradish.

After the husk is removed, it is finely ground into powder.

When you hear the phrase, "Put some mustard on the ball!" it means to put some power in the throw.



Ask Chef Tammy

Roger asks, "Are cayenne pepper and red pepper the same thing? I have both and honestly can't tell the difference."

Roger, yes they are the same thing. Some companies will label theirs red pepper, but the cayenne chile is the basis of both after it is dried and then ground into powder. Store it in the refrigerator to extend the shelf life.

Celeste writes, "What spirit should I use when making a hard sauce? I have my grandmother's recipe, but it just lists liquor."

Celeste, you have several spirit options when making hard sauce. Rum, brandy or whiskey are the usual selections. I have used all of them at some point and prefer brandy. In England, hard sauce is commonly called brandy butter.

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

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TENNESSEE STATE PARKS | TRAVEL

From the Ground Up

Middle Fork Bottoms State Park provides combination of recreation and flood control

Story by Trish Milburn | Photographs by Tennessee Drone Services Inc.

In August of last year, Middle Fork Bottoms, located in the small community of Three Way north of Jackson, became Tennessee's newest state park. Even though it still has that "new park smell," it's already a lovely place to enjoy the outdoors. And for Park Manager Michael Champagne, a 17-year veteran of Tennessee State Parks, it's an exciting place to work because he gets to guide the building of a park from the ground up.

"I get to help decide everything from where the main entrance sign goes to what projects are worth pursuing," he said. "It's a challenge — but a fun challenge."



Land in transition

Even before these 860 acres were designated as a state park, the property was already in transition from its former uses for row crop, sod and hog farming. A variety of groups and agencies — The Nature Conservancy, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, West Tennessee River Basin Authority, city of Jackson, Madison County and Tennessee State Parks — have had a hand in this transition that went from farmland to flood plain restoration to a park with various habitats.

"We have oak savanna, grasslands, meadows, bottomland hardwoods, five small lakes and 2 miles along the Middle Fork of the Forked Deer River," Champagne said.

That's a lot of variety for a relatively small park.

Revitalization efforts that have already been accomplished are the planting of 250,000 hardwood trees that cover 450 acres, 5 acres of newly planted bald cypress and the restoration of 200 acres of wetlands.

Available now

While there are currently no facilities at the park, there's still plenty to do. A 4-mile paved, interconnected trail is available for visitors wanting to hike, bike, go for a run or simply slowly meander in order to soak up the sights, sounds and scents. It is Americans with Disabilities Act compliant, so those in wheelchairs and other assistive devices will find it welcoming. No matter how you're enjoying the trail, it will expose you to various species of animal residents as well as lakes with picturesque names like Papershell, Bulrush and Cypress. It also crosses the river.

Among the many creatures you might spy are the feathered residents — great egrets, great herons, red-winged blackbirds and numerous others.

"The park is popular with birders," Champagne said. "The birding here is phenomenal."

If you are a birding enthusiast or are simply curious about the more than 170 species of birds that have been spotted in the park, mark your calendars for May 24. A Birds of Middle Fork Bottoms State Park program will be held from 8 to 11 a.m. Advance registration and a \$10 are required. More details can be found on the park's website.

Several park residents are also of the furry, four-legged variety, such as white-tailed deer, coyotes, bobcats and rabbits.

Four of the five lakes are fishable, stocked with bluegill, catfish and

bass. No fishing is allowed at Retriever Lake, which has been set aside for dog training purposes.

One of the lakes, Middle Fork Lake, is open to paddlers bringing their own paddle craft. No motorized craft are allowed, and life jackets must be worn.

In the works

While there are plans to add to the visitor experience of the park, don't expect it to become a resort park with



a golf course or overnight lodging. In the works, however, are a visitor center that will have a 150-seat meeting space and a gift shop. Construction is currently slated to begin this fall with the planned opening in December 2026 or early 2027.

Also planned for the future are two picnic shelters with nearby restrooms, a boardwalk from the visitor center to the river, kayak and canoe launches, a pollinator habitat and a floating classroom. Champagne is currently working on securing a grant for the last item on that list.

Unlike other parks

Champagne said the main reason that Middle Fork Bottoms won't have a lot of the same types of recreational facilities that other state parks have is because the park is designed to flood and

Middle Fork Bottoms State Park

For more information, visit the park's website at tnstateparks.com/parks/middle-fork-bottoms or call **731-435-6725**.



look swampy at times. You wouldn't want a golf course in a place intended to periodically flood.

"The flood mitigation has had a huge impact on lowering flood risks in surrounding subdivisions and downstream," Champagne said.

Just as this land is in transition, so is the park as an entity. Each time you visit, it will be slightly different based on the season and how far development has progressed. That's all the more reason to visit often.



Community Corner

– What our neighbors are up to –

Find the Tennessee Flag

We have hidden somewhere in this magazine the icon from the Tennessee flag like the one pictured above. 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 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 Tuesday, April 1. Winners will be published in the May issue of *The Tennessee Magazine*.

January flag spotters

Thanks for the postcards and emails again this month identifying the location of the flag, left, which was found in the spoon on page 32.

Winners are drawn randomly from each month's entries. January's lucky flag spotters are:

Kelley Massey

Dyersburg, Forked Deer EC

Jennifer Pitts

Hartsville, Tri-County Electric

Ricky A. Mills

Arthur, Powell Valley EC

Artist's Palette Assignment for May

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 — May, 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 Tuesday, April 1.

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:

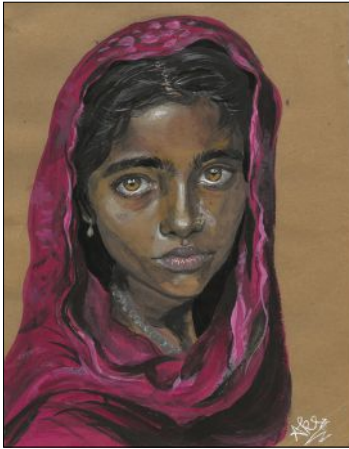
You may send multiple entries in one envelope along with one SASE with sufficient postage.

Winners will be published in the May 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 March Winners

14-18 AGE GROUP WINNERS



FIRST PLACE: Audrey Smith, 17,
Middle Tennessee Electric



SECOND PLACE: Tikvah Smith, 16, Meriwether Lewis EC

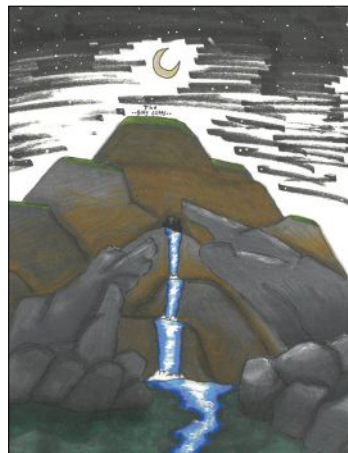


THIRD PLACE: Victoria Maners, 16,
Cumberland EMC

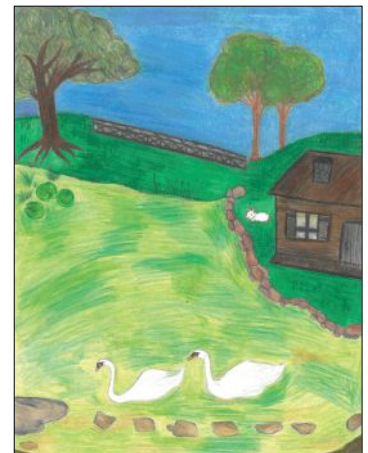
9-13 AGE GROUP WINNERS



FIRST PLACE: Seanna Lilly Easton, 11, Appalachian EC

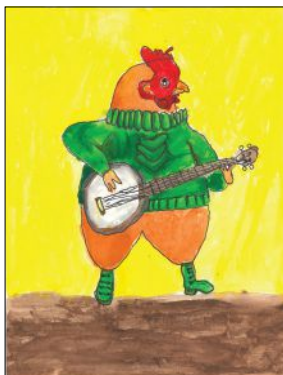


SECOND PLACE: Rainey Brewer,
13, Meriwether Lewis EC



THIRD PLACE: Natalee Stevens,
12, Duck River EMC

8 AND YOUNGER AGE GROUP WINNERS



FIRST PLACE: Lane Schill,
7, Duck River EMC



SECOND PLACE: Scarlett Schulz, 8,
Cumberland EMC



THIRD PLACE: Eastyn Pearson, 6,
Middle Tennessee Electric



Sometimes it's better to be lucky than good.

Certain moments in nature are simply elusive. Witnessing and capturing these fleeting moments are why I have always loved photography and being out in nature.

Driving to Radnor Lake State Park in Nashville on this spring day last year, I had planned to hike to an observation deck to photograph the sunset and whatever else I saw along the way on the trail. As I parked, I heard an owl call — and it was close by. I heard it again and started looking for it as I was getting out my gear.

Barely having time to get my camera and lens affixed to the

tripod, I saw one barred owl fly up from Otter Creek to a low-hanging perch about 40 feet away. It was deep in the woods and in very contrasty lighting. At first, I didn't think it was going to be a great setup for a good shot, but, just minutes later, another barred owl joined the first.

It became obvious the second was the male of the young pair and that he was trying to woo the female with a crawdad in his talons as a gift. I was able to observe them for several minutes as they ate and jumped from branch to branch before they

both flew back to the creek for bathing and more hunting.

After several misses on more crawdads, they eventually settled back on the orig-



“Barred Owls”

Canon EOS 5D Mark IV, EF 200-400 mm f5.6 L IS USM with 1.4x built-in converter at 540mm, lens at 540mm, ISO 3200, f5.6 at 1/125 second, Gitzo tripod

inal perch where I had first observed them and started preening themselves and each other. I kept shooting images to capture all the activity but wasn't sure I would have anything really good at the end of the day. All the limbs between myself and the couple and the less-than-ideal lighting made the correct exposure and composition difficult to find.

If we can attribute human emotions to animals, this image captured the sweetest, most gentle interaction between them. I didn't see this particular pair together again, never saw a nest site either, but was thrilled to have observed them for this afternoon courtship.

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