

the tennessee magazine

September 2025

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SHUTTERBUG SHOWCASE:

Celebrate Tennessee

Family Fills Parks Passport | Lasting Legacies of Homecoming '86

the tennessee magazine

Celebrating the Extraordinary Nature of Everyday Life

SEPTEMBER 2025



ON THE COVER
“Moses Takes a Dip”
by Michelle Ariston of
Shelbyville earns top
honors in our “95 Reasons
to Celebrate Tennessee”
photography contest in
partnership with the Wilson
County-Tennessee State
Fair. See other winners
beginning on page 12.



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TENNESSEE'S
ELECTRIC
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Celebrating the Extraordinary Nature of Everyday Life

Official publication of the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association

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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

Join us Saturday, Sept. 20, for CEMC's 87th annual meeting

Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation's 87th annual meeting will be held on Saturday, Sept. 20, and we hope to see you there!

This year's meeting will be held at Rossview High School in Clarksville. Doors will open at 8 a.m. for registration and voting, and the business session will begin at 10 a.m. In the meantime, you're invited to:

- Pick up your **attendance gift** (one per registered member, while supplies last).
- Enjoy a complimentary **breakfast**.
- Browse through the selection of **door prizes** to be given away during the meeting.
- Enjoy **live music** provided by Rising Creek.
- Visit our **information booths**.
- Bring the kids for fun at the youth corner, featuring inflatables (weather permitting) and age-appropriate prizes.

An election will be held to fill three seats on the board, and the

results will be announced during the business session. You can read more about the candidates on pages 20-21 of this magazine. We'll also present the financial report and review highlights of the cooperative's activities over the past fiscal year.

If you can't attend the meeting, you can still participate by attending early voting at any CEMC business office on Friday, Sept. 19, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Early voting will be conducted via drive-thru, offering a quick and convenient option for voters. Registered members who participate in early voting will be eligible for \$100 electric bill credits and giveaways.

CEMC's annual meeting is a great way to stay informed about your cooperative, visit with friends and neighbors and maybe even take home a prize. We look forward to seeing you at Rossview High School on Sept. 20!



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By Mike Knotts

Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association

Not a moment too soon

Do you ever make mistakes? Of course you do, and so do I. Every day, in fact. Try as we may, no human being has ever mastered it all. Perfection is impossible, even if a large percentage of the people in the world find comfort in seeking it out.

For most things in life, you can make a mistake and simply correct it and move on. More significant mistakes might require a heartfelt apology and some effort toward reconciliation. Big mistakes might even cost you a penalty of some kind — money, time or even your freedom. But ultimately, almost every mistake you make can be compensated for in one way or another.

But there are some mistakes that have little margin for error. And while that might sound dramatic, it is a reality that many of us live with and most take for granted. The proverbial airline pilot or brain surgeon comes to mind as examples of people we might hope would obsess over perfection.

The professionals who keep the lights on in our hometowns must obsess about perfection because electricity doesn't offer many apologies for mistakes. Whether designing a circuit or installing a power line, there are thousands of your neighbors who sweat the small stuff each and every day so you don't have to sweat out the summer heat.

Electricity is different than any other source of energy you consume. Most forms of energy can be stored and saved for later. Whether it's the gasoline in your truck or the propane for your grill, most energy sources can be reserved in large quantities and used when they are needed.

This is not true for electricity, however. Electricity must be generated and consumed at essentially the exact same time. Batteries do store electricity and power many, many items that are important to us. But batteries can't effectively power your home, the local school, the county jail or hospitals for any significant length of time. The overwhelming majority of electricity use occurs in real time.

That means the electricity that is powering the lamp beside you right now is being produced by a power plant at the same time you are using it. So you can imagine how obsessive engineers and planners must be to correctly match the electricity needs of virtually everything we do with the production capacity from a relatively small number of power plants.

It's a dizzying problem that has taken mankind over a hundred years to master. And sometimes mistakes do happen. But unlike forgetting your friend's birthday or failing a test in school, mistakes on the electric grid can have life-or-death consequences.

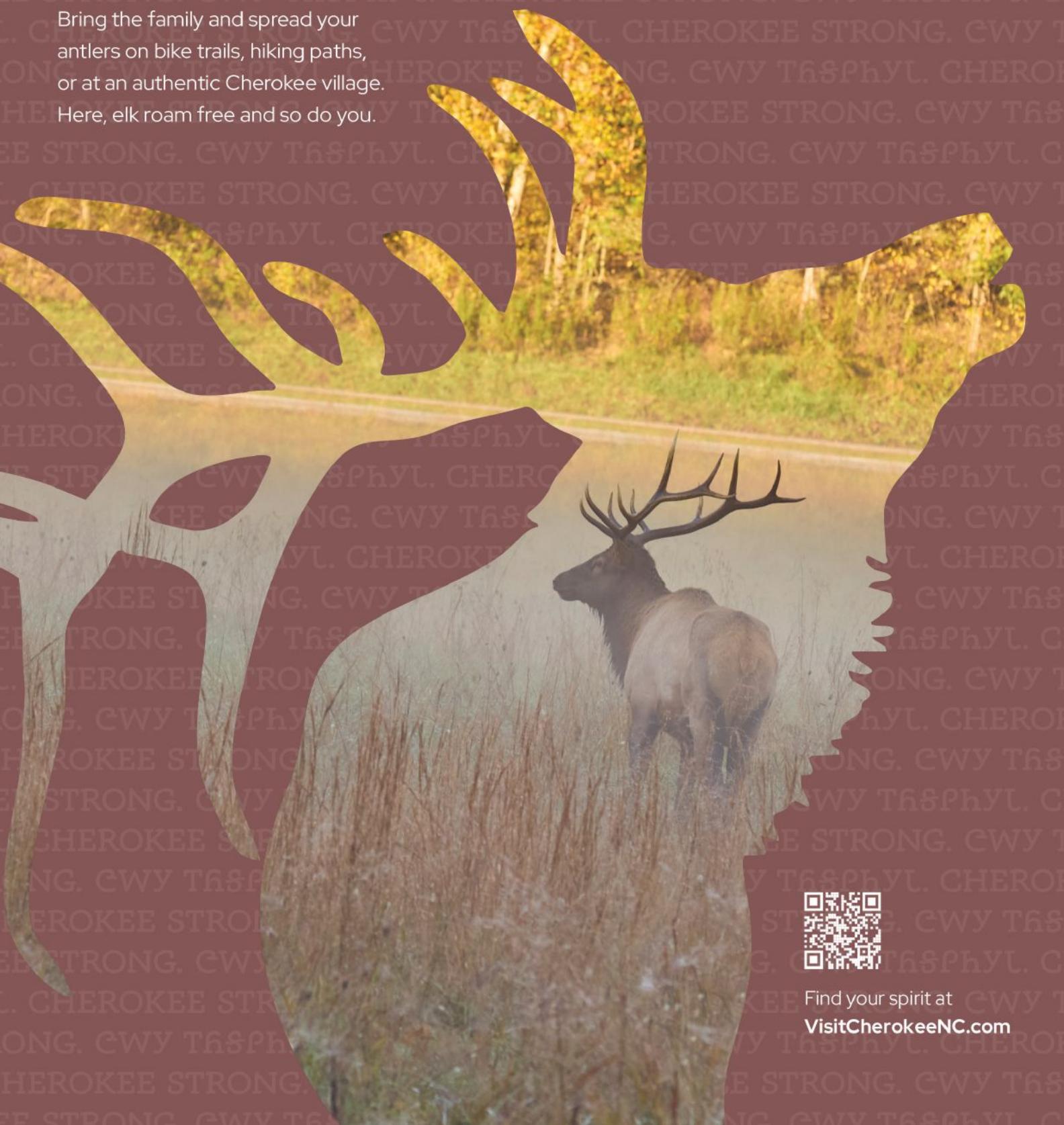
Thankfully, your co-op has some amazingly smart men and women who have dedicated their careers to making sure you get the power you need, when you need it. While we take it for granted that flipping the switch means the lights will come on, these awesome people put in the work so you can worry about something else. Like what type of flowers to get that special someone the day after your anniversary.

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Goodwills & Landfills

Dying trees and dust-covered boxes can teach us a lot about life's impermanence

We have a lovely ash tree in the backyard along the creek. Aside from being a shade tree and home to many birds, it has significant sentimental value to me. I call her Old Mossy. It's been her name since I moved here in 2018. I'm not sure what she calls me.

The last few years I've noticed more and more of her limbs turning gray and leafless. I called a landscaper friend who told me the tree would be completely gone within a year or two. "I'll come back and take it all down when the time comes," he said, and expressed his regret.*

Old Mossy's north side is spattered with green moss, and her limbs hang low enough to climb. I've done this, but the last time I climbed Old Mossy, I did so gently to remove branches that had seen better days, a crude amputation in the hopes that I might prolong her life as well as keep the dead wood from falling on visitors.**

Trees are solid, strong and sturdy, and their strength gives us the notion — however false — that they'll be here forever, just like some people we know. Trees outlive us. They're here when we arrive, and they'll be here when we're gone. When we plant a tree, it's never a foregone conclusion that we'll sit under its shade. I have fond memories of an oak tree I climbed as a kid. Its boughs were like my second living room. I went back a few months ago, and it's still there and even bigger. But Old Mossy's days are numbered, and I'll be sad to see her go.

Trees get old and gray, as we do. It's an inevitable outcome of living one day at a time until those days stack up on us, and we only have so many. So, in light of this, I've spent the last year putting things in boxes, loading up my car and driving to Goodwill, where a nice man puts them in bins to be sorted and resold.

In the last several months, I have made over 20 trips to Goodwill. I've delivered thousands of DVDs and CDs I no longer watch or listen to. I now stream those movies

anytime I want and listen to all that music without discs or cassettes. I've donated 60-plus boxes of clothing, small appliances, pots, pans, books, shoes, tools and, inexplicably, trucker caps.***

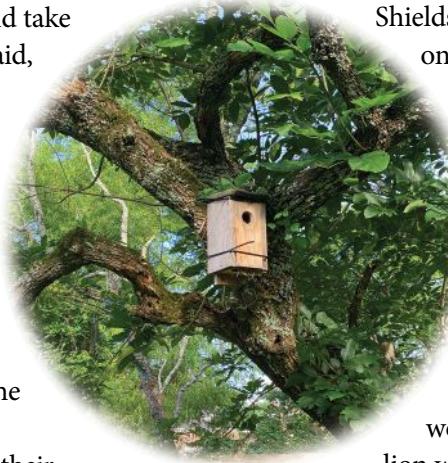
The upside of downsizing

Robert William Shields was a minister by occupation, but he is most notable for keeping a precise, minute-by-minute diary of his life from 1972 until 1997. For 25 years, Shields typed 3,000 to 6,000 words each day on one of his six overworked typewriters, sleeping no more than two hours at a time so that his nocturnal life and dreams wouldn't go unrecorded. Every five minutes of Shields' life was accounted for — meals, conversations (short as they must have been), even bathroom breaks, typewritten on 11-by-14-inch paper, bound and stored in boxes. His diary holds the world record with a jaw-dropping 32 million words. It took 91 boxes to store the collection, which now resides somewhere at Washington State University.

When asked by a reporter in 1994 why he did it, his answer was, "I don't know. It's an obsession. That's all I can say. ... If I ever stopped, it would be like turning off my life."

As a writer, I understand Shields' obsession. If we don't write it down, did it ever happen? It's the writer's curse, really, to be trapped as our own stenographer.

And as I get older and consider downsizing things into Goodwill boxes, it's hard to let go of some of the evidence of my time here. Like Mr. Shields, I have accumulated a small mountain of debris from my life. I've left a long line of breadcrumbs as I've traversed this earth. My debris is in the form of letters, scrapbooks, paintings, drawings and handwritten lyrics to songs, not to mention all the furniture and knickknacks someone will have to sort through. Most of that stuff has no meaning or context to anyone but me.



Help, hope and hurricanes

I have a small, ceramic doll's head sitting on my desk next to some guitar picks. I pick it up once in a while and hold it in my hand. No one but me could ever know its significance.

It's a memento from 20 years ago, August 2005. My son, Buddy, and I volunteered to travel with a group to coastal Mississippi to help homeowners caught in the path of Hurricane Katrina.

Our little group was assigned to homes that had been flooded with ocean muck 10 feet high. Each morning, we walked into living rooms, kitchens and bedrooms submerged for days in water, then drained when the flooding subsided, then left to sit in the August heat before we arrived. We started with the refrigerators (because the smell was what you might imagine) and left the homes each night with just concrete slabs and bare studs, prepped for complete renovation. We hauled everything — waterlogged furniture, drywall that fell apart in damp clumps, ceiling fans drooped like dead flowers — to the curb in our wheelbarrows.

During one particularly overwhelming moment, I went outside for a breather and looked down to see a little ceramic face poking up out of the mud, a head from a child's doll that had likely washed down the hill from another home. I picked it up, wiped off the mud with my thumb and began to cry. After I regained my composure, I joined the others and went back to work.

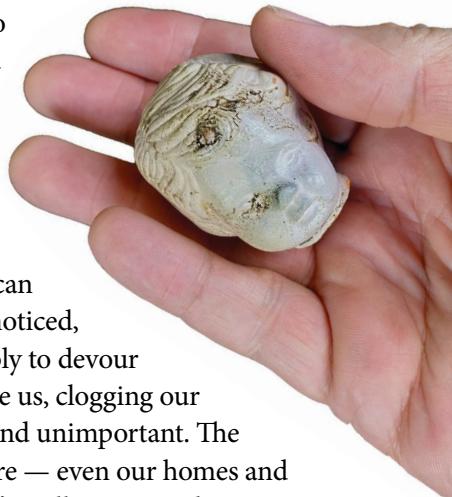
Days after returning home, I was going through my backpack and found the doll head. I didn't remember putting her there, but I guess I didn't have the heart to put her in a curb-bound wheelbarrow.

To this day, one glance of this little ceramic face brings all the emotions of that week back to me. She smiles her

calm smile and reminds me to focus on the people I love and to cherish the memories we make together.

We hold onto everything out of an understandable need to be loved and remembered. But these touchstones can pile up around us, almost unnoticed, like insects that swarm invisibly to devour our trees. Too much can choke us, clogging our minds with the unnecessary and unimportant. The books, the videos, the furniture — even our homes and cars — it's all on loan. We don't really own anything. It accumulates like pages of a diary until it goes to someone else when we leave. Despite our deepest wishes, most all of it ends up in Goodwills and landfills.

If you pass through Wilson County, you might see a man under the shade of a dying ash tree, his hair turning the same stony gray as the limbs overhead. He's carrying boxes to the trunk of his idling car. You'll notice he's tired, but he's lighter, and that's why he's smiling.



Download Antsy McClain's song, "Goodwills & Landfills"

Antsy McClain is a Nashville-adjacent singer-songwriter, author and graphic artist. Go to unhitched.com for more. Use this QR code to download "Goodwills & Landfills" **FREE** to readers of *The Tennessee Magazine*. The song addresses our tendency to hoard stuff that, despite our deepest wishes for immortality, is all just going to end up in two places, after all.



Try these new footnotes, painstakingly handcrafted for your reading pleasure!

* Ash tree blight is primarily caused by an invasive little insect called the emerald ash borer. It's a tiny little bug the size of a pen nib, and it finds ash trees particularly delicious. They multiply quickly, attacking and killing the trees within a few years. Ash tree blight was first detected in Tennessee in 2010 and has since spread across the state with a horde-like appetite. Tennessee has an estimated 270 million ash trees, and if left alone to perform its destruction, the emerald ash borer will see to the death of every ash tree it encounters. Everybody's gotta eat, as they say. But it's a shame when your favorite tree is on the menu. I'll plant something big and lovely right by Old Mossy's trunk when she goes. Then I'll sing with the birds and thank her for her service.

** Experts insist that plants respond when we talk or sing to them. And scientists have determined that trees communicate through underground networks of fungi called mycorrhizal networks, nicknamed

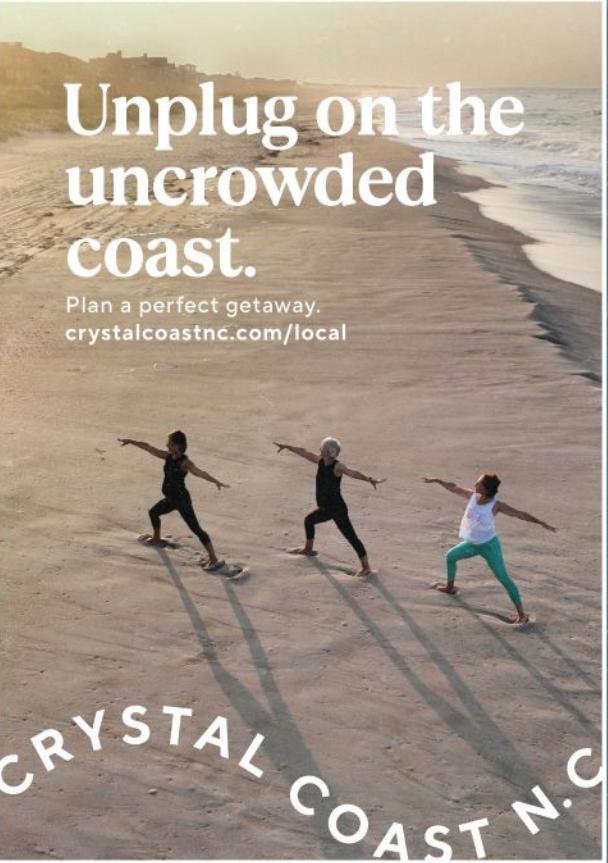
the "wood-wide web." These networks facilitate the sharing of water and nutrients and allow trees to send distress signals about drought or disease, even insect infestations. It makes me wonder what signals Old Mossy might be sending to her organic neighbors and what impact it may or may not have. I wish trees had podcasts.

*** I had an inordinate supply of trucker caps, those mesh-backed caps with high, foam tops exhibiting logos like Peterbilt, John Deere and Dollywood. (OK, I kept that one. I'm not a philistine.) The collection stems from a previous fashion stage where I was convinced the trucker cap would give me a combined air of nonchalance and sophistication. I was wrong. Dead wrong. But on the right head, a trucker cap is quite nice. You'll find dozens at the Goodwill here in Mount Juliet. For those who might suggest I was emulating my dad, I should mention here that my father — a bona fide truck driver — never once owned a trucker cap. Not one. Not even ironically.

A wide-angle photograph of a surfer riding a large, curling wave. The surfer is positioned on the right side of the frame, leaning into the turn. The ocean is a deep blue, with white foam from the breaking waves. The sky is overcast with a mix of grey and blue.

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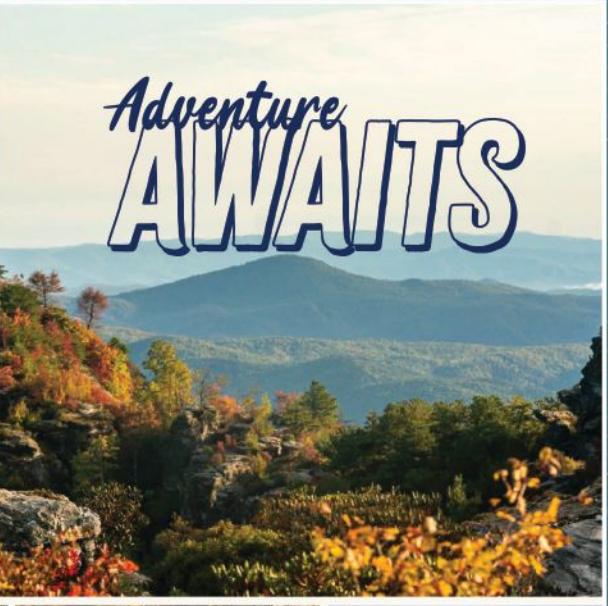
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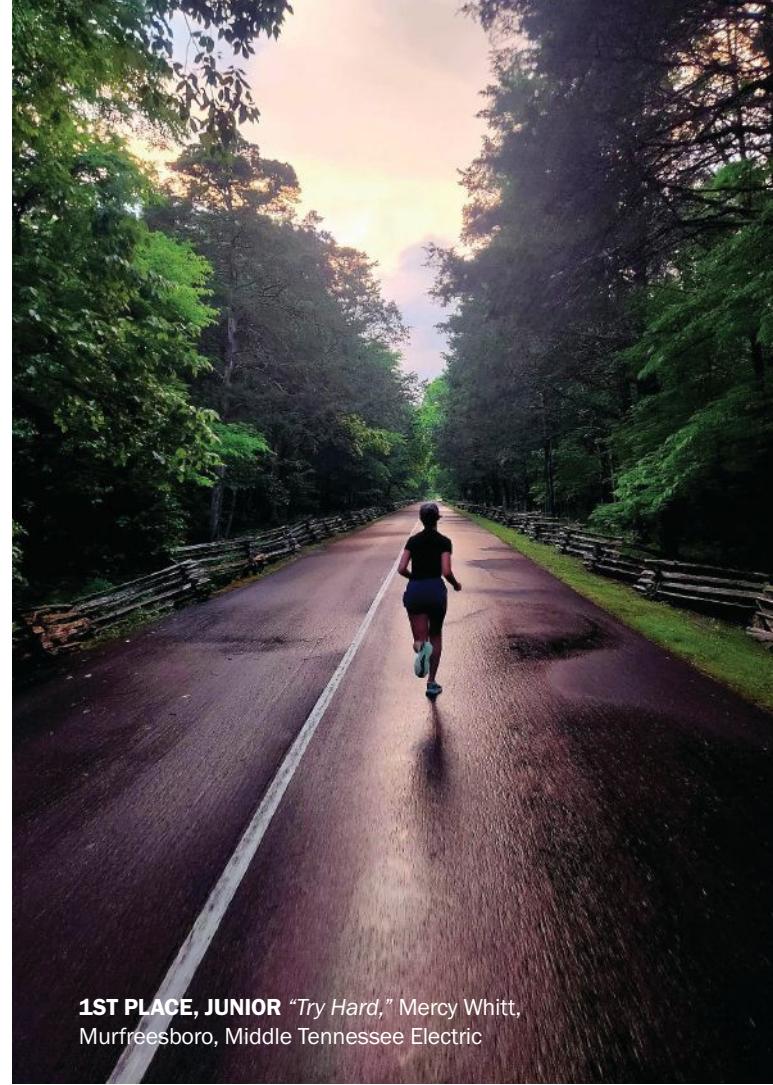
Shutterbug Showcase

95 Reasons to Celebrate Tennessee

For our latest Shutterbug Photography Contest, *The Tennessee Magazine* partnered with the Wilson County-Tennessee State Fair and tasked readers to show us "95 Reasons to Celebrate Tennessee." Nearly 1,000 such celebrations were entered, and 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. A giant

magazine cover was unveiled at the fair's Aug. 14 Opening Ceremony. Congratulations to Michelle Ariston of Shelbyville, Duck River EMC, whose "Moses Takes a Dip" graces this month's cover.

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.



1ST PLACE, JUNIOR "Try Hard," Mercy Whitt,
Murfreesboro, Middle Tennessee Electric



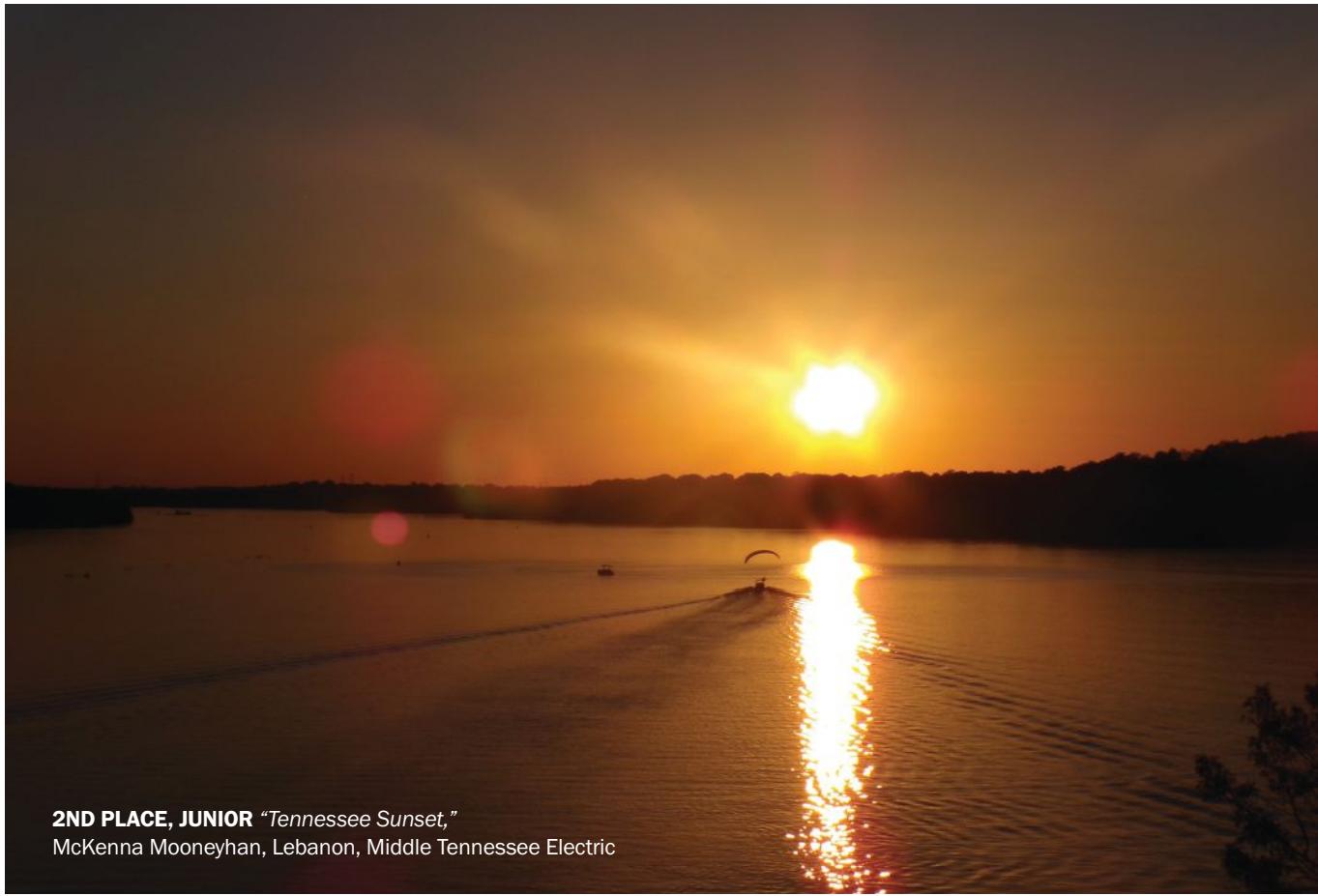
1ST PLACE, PROFESSIONAL "The Sewanee Memorial Cross,"
Carl Banks, Belvidere, Duck River EMC



2ND PLACE, PROFESSIONAL "The Market,"
Brian Ragle, Livingston, Upper Cumberland EMC



2ND PLACE, ADULT "Hay Time," Logan Johnson,
Brush Creek, Upper Cumberland EMC



2ND PLACE, JUNIOR "Tennessee Sunset,"
McKenna Mooneyhan, Lebanon, Middle Tennessee Electric



1



3



2

- 1 3RD PLACE, ADULT** "Comet Over Middle Fork Bottoms," Ginger Hawk, Three Way, Gibson EMC
- 2 3RD PLACE, JUNIOR** "Crowned by Sunlight,"
Micah Hughes, Jackson, Southwest Tennessee EMC
- 3 3RD PLACE, PROFESSIONAL** "Kiss on Main,"
Tabitha Mogridge, Russellville, Holston EC

Tennessee Events

Festivals, celebrations and other happenings around the state

West Tennessee

SEPT. 13

Hunter D. Stafford Memorial Wildlife Supper

Holly Grove Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Brighton. 901-476-8379 or hollygrovechurch.com

SEPT. 20-21

Mid-South Balloon Festival

Rossville. info@midsouthballoonfest.com or midsouthballoonfest.com

SEPT. 26-27

47th Annual Chester County BBQ Festival

Chester County Courthouse Square, Henderson. 731-989-5222 or chestercountybbqfestival.com

SEPT. 26-27

Tennessee Kruzin' Nationals

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

OCT. 3-5

54th Annual Reelfoot Arts and Crafts Festival

Reelfoot Lake, Tiptonville. 731-694-9283 or reelfootartsandcrafts.com

OCT. 5-11

The 58th Davy Crockett Days Festival

Davy Crockett Cabin Museum, Rutherford. davycrockettdays@outlook.com

Middle Tennessee

SEPT. 19-21

Fall Heritage Festival

Cowan Railroad Museum. info@fallheritagefestival.org or fallheritagefestival.org

SEPT. 20

Autumn in the Brier

Greenbrier Historical Society Library and Museum. 615-779-1953 or carolyn_howerton@yahoo.com

SEPT. 20

Bell Buckle Songwriters Festival

Bell Buckle. 931-808-7640 or bellbucklechamber.com

SEPT. 20

31st Annual Autumn Run Car Show

Hampton Plaza, Clarksville. 615-517-1423 or memorylanecruisers.net/club-car-show

SEPT. 20-21

Autumn Blaze Arts Festival

Waverly United Methodist Church. 931-296-5393 or humphreyscountyarts council.org

SEPT. 27

Eagleville Fall Festival

City of Eagleville. 615-274-2922 or eaglevilletn.com

SEPT. 27-28

42nd Annual WilCo Pow Wow

Wilson County Fairgrounds, Lebanon. 615-443-1537 or wilcopowwow.com

East Tennessee

SEPT. 19-NOV. 2

Fall Festival

Flat Top Mountain Farm, Soddy Daisy. 423-580-0136 or flattopmountainfarm.com

SEPT. 20

Third Annual Chatta Town Tasting Festival 2025

Chattanooga Green. 404-437-6320 or vonzarainc.com

SEPT. 26-OCT. 31

Corn Maze and Pumpkin Patch

Maple Lane Farms, Greenback. 865-856-3511 or tnmaplelanefarms.com

SEPT. 27-28

Fall Folk Arts Festival

Exchange Place Living History Farm, Kingsport. 423-288-6071 or exchangeplacen.org

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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.

So what's keeping you from having a better quality of life?

Check all the conditions that apply to you.

Personal Checklist:

<input type="checkbox"/> Arthritis	<input type="checkbox"/> Dry Skin
<input type="checkbox"/> Insomnia	<input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety
<input type="checkbox"/> Diabetes	<input type="checkbox"/> Mobility Issues
<input type="checkbox"/> Lower Back Pain	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor Circulation

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

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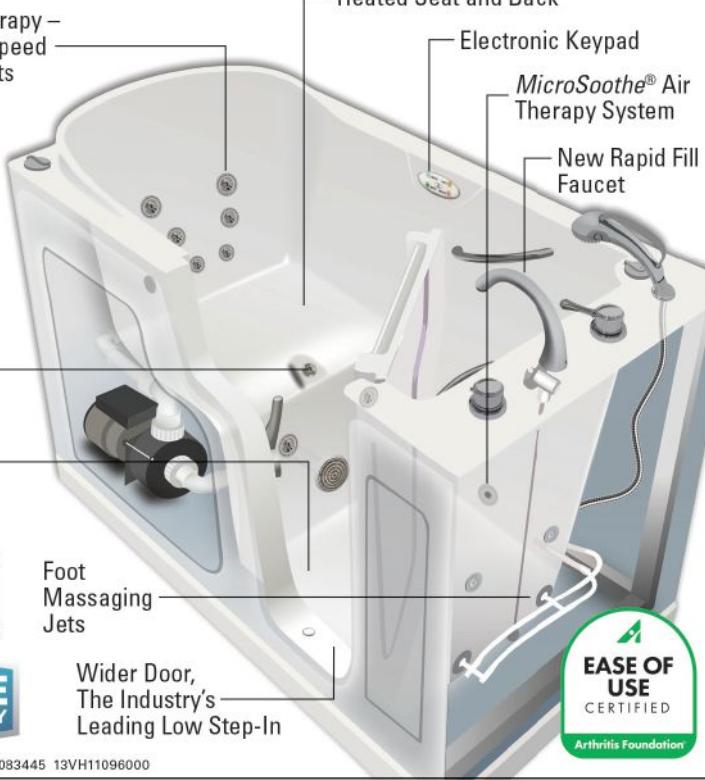
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We're searching for Tennessee's most talented and gifted poets. Enter our next Poet's Playground contest!

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 Wednesday, Oct. 1. First-place poems will be published in the December 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.

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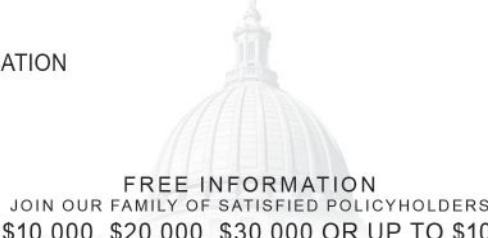
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CEMC's 2025 director candidates

Three seats on Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation's board of directors will be filled during the co-op's 2025 annual meeting on Saturday, Sept. 20, at Rossview High School in Clarksville. Members will elect directors to fill the Cheatham, South Robertson and South Montgomery positions. CEMC's nominating committee met July 8 and recommended incumbent directors Wesley H. Aymett, Dr. K. Jean "Jeannie" Beauchamp and Rex D. Hawkins for new three-year terms. Nominated by petition is Walter A. Culver, who is vying for the Cheatham County seat, and Sally P. Castleman, who is vying for the South Robertson County seat.

Wesley H. Aymett of Ashland City is the nominee from Cheatham County. Aymett has represented Cheatham County on the CEMC board since October 2000 and currently serves as vice president. He is a Credentialed Cooperative Director and holds a Board Leadership certificate from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Aymett is the retired agency manager of the Cheatham County Farm Bureau in Ashland City. He holds a

bachelor's degree in animal science and an associate degree in meteorological technology from Western Kentucky University. He has also served on the board of Robertson Cheatham Farmers Cooperative.

Walter A. Culver of Pleasant View was nominated by petition for the Cheatham County seat. Culver, who currently works as a logistics and transportation management consultant, has more than 30 years of experience in the field.

He has held various leadership roles throughout his career, including vice president of logistics at BFC Solutions, director of transportation at Dealer Tire LLC and strategic management at FedEx Corporation. He has also successfully managed large budgets and large service vehicle fleets.

He holds a Master of Science in operations research from George Washington University and a Bachelor of Science in management from Case Western Reserve University.

Culver serves as president of the Harris Farms Master Homeowners Association in Pleasant View, where he leads the board, oversees finances and property, ensures member safety

and assists members with their concerns by working with the board and local and state officials. He previously served as an adult committee leader with Boy Scouts Troop 456 in Germantown/Memphis.

He and his wife, Anne, have three adult children. He enjoys running, outdoor activities and gardening.

Culver is seeking a seat on CEMC's board to help support growth and operational improvement while providing strong representation for all CEMC members. If elected, he will leverage his 30-plus years of strong leadership and business experience to focus on safety, network reliability, financial prudence, planning and growth, and a great member experience.

Dr. K. Jean "Jeannie" Beauchamp of Coopertown is the nominee from South Robertson County. Beauchamp has represented South Robertson County on the CEMC board since June 2012 and currently serves as assistant secretary-treasurer. She is an NRECA Credentialed Cooperative Director and holds a Board Leadership certificate and a Director Gold certificate.

Beauchamp is a board-certified pediatric dentist who owns Clarks-



Wesley H. Aymett



Walter A. Culver



Dr. K. Jean "Jeannie" Beauchamp



Sally P. Castleman



Rex D. Hawkins

ville Pediatric Dentistry. She received her dental degree from the University of Tennessee in Memphis. She is the past president of the Tennessee Dental Association and the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry. She is involved in several community and dental organizations and is active in her church, including yearly mission trips to Haiti.

Sally P. Castleman of Cedar Hill was nominated by petition for the South Robertson County seat. A registered architect, she retired from the Department of the Army in May 2024 after serving more than 30 years as Fort Campbell master planner. Prior to that, she spent 10 years in private architectural practice.

In 2018, she was named Installation Management Command Engineering and Planning Executive of the Year and was selected to attend the Harvard Senior Executive Fellows program. She holds a Bachelor of Architecture from the University of

Tennessee, Knoxville, and attended Austin Peay State University.

Appointed in 2013 by the Clarksville mayor, Castleman served on the CDE Lightband Power Board until 2020, gaining experience in municipal power operations, including SCADA systems, broadband services, right-of-way management and substation planning. She also served on the Montgomery County Common Design Review Board.

Since retiring, she has supported her family's business, Castleman Construction LLC, in various capacities. She and her husband, Steve, are active in Gateway Christian Church and participate in small groups and community events. They have three children: Luke, John and Noah.

Castleman is seeking a position on the CEMC board to help maintain the cooperative's reputation for strong leadership and customer service and work alongside management and other directors as the organization grows and adapts in the future.

Rex D. Hawkins of Clarksville is the nominee from South Montgomery County. Hawkins was appointed in December 2024 to serve the remainder of the term of C. David Morgan, who passed away in November 2024.

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 the city of Clarksville River District Commission.

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

Why attend CEMC's annual meeting?

Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation's annual meeting is your chance to participate in the important business of your co-op — including electing directors, reviewing financial updates and recapping the year's highlights — and we've made sure there's plenty of fun in store too!

Join us for a FREE, delicious breakfast, enjoy activities and prizes for the kids in the Youth Corner and

take in live musical entertainment by Rising Creek. There will also be informational booths and lots of exciting door prizes given away throughout the event. (See page 22 for a preview of some of the prizes.)

This year's meeting will be held on Saturday, Sept. 20, at Rossview High School in Montgomery County. Doors open at 8 a.m. for registration and voting, with the business session

beginning at 10 a.m. Director election results and prize winners will be announced during the business portion of the meeting. You must be present to win, so make plans to stay for the entire event.

If you've never attended a CEMC annual meeting, this is the perfect time to see what it's all about. There's truly something for everyone, and we'd love to see you there!

Here's a peek at some of the prizes up for grabs at this year's annual meeting

GRAND PRIZE

The Grand Prize is a "create-your-own" energy efficiency makeover from Lowe's.

The winner will receive a Lowe's gift card!



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ELECTRIC BIKE



ELECTRIC YARD MAINTENANCE PACKAGE

The Pick Tennessee Products Package includes a handmade lap quilt, two Hinkle rocking chairs and Lodge cast iron skillets.



NINTENDO SWITCH 2



The Grand Ole Christmas Package includes two tickets to the Opry Country Christmas show on Sunday, Dec. 14, and a \$100 restaurant gift card.

Dollywood
PARKS & RESORTS

The Gatlinburg Retreat includes a \$250 gift card for lodging, a \$200 Dollywood Parks and Resort gift certificate, a \$50 gas card and a \$50 gift card to The Peddler Steakhouse.

Saving electricity one lightbulb at a time

It's small, bright and comes in a variety of sizes and colors. It illuminates almost every room in your home, yet it's often overlooked until it needs to be replaced. Despite its simplicity, this item can significantly improve your home's energy efficiency with just a few easy changes. Any guesses? That's right — lightbulbs!

By making a few mindful adjustments, you can reduce your electricity bill and conserve energy. Here's how:



1. Turn off lights when not in use.

This might seem obvious, but it's an easy habit to overlook. If you're not home, not in the room or don't need the lights on, flip the switch. Don't forget about outdoor lighting. Porch lights, patio lights or decorative string lights should also be turned off or unplugged when not needed. This small action can lead to meaningful energy savings, especially when lights are often left on for extended periods.

2. Maximize natural light. Take advantage of daylight whenever possible. Open curtains and blinds during the day to brighten your home naturally, reducing the need to turn on lights. You can also strategically place mirrors and light-colored furniture to reflect and amplify natural light throughout your space.

3. Clean light fixtures regularly. Dust and dirt can accumulate on lamps and fixtures, reducing their brightness and causing you to use more energy to achieve the same level

of light. Make lighting part of your regular cleaning routine to maintain optimal efficiency.

4. Switch to LEDs. LED bulbs use up to 75% less energy than traditional incandescent bulbs and last significantly longer, making them a cost-effective choice. Available in various color temperatures and styles, LEDs are a smart upgrade that enhances both your lighting and your savings.

5. Use motion sensors and dimmers.

Motion sensors automatically turn lights on when movement is detected and off when a space is empty, eliminating unnecessary energy use. Dimmers allow you to adjust brightness levels based on your needs, further conserving energy when full illumination isn't required.

With just a few simple changes, your lighting can be both functional and energy-efficient. Every switch flipped, bulb changed and beam of natural light welcomed in helps move your home toward greater sustainability, one lightbulb at a time.

Calendar artwork correction

Regrettably, in July's issue of *The Tennessee Magazine* the artwork displayed for pocket calendar cover winner Oliver Lambert was mislabeled. Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation sincerely regrets the oversight and apologizes for the error.

Oliver's properly labeled, winning submission is shown at right.



Pocket Calendar Cover — Oliver Lambert Cheatham County Central High School



Dove season safety tips

Dove hunting season in Tennessee is underway. While it's an exciting time for hunters, there are some essential safety tips to keep in mind — especially when it comes to power and fiber lines.

Know your surroundings.

Before you begin your hunt, identify where power and fiber lines and any other utility infrastructure are located on the property. Just because you're used to seeing these lines doesn't mean they aren't dangerous. Power lines can carry high voltage and pose a serious risk of electrocution.

Avoid contact.

As with any outdoor activity, maintain a safe distance from power and fiber lines as well as electrical equipment. Be especially cautious in wooded or overgrown areas where lines and equipment might be less visible. Never climb or place deer

stands on any utility poles. A good rule of thumb is to stay at least 10 feet away from all lines and utility equipment.

Don't shoot at or near utility lines.

If you see a dove perched on a power or fiber line, resist the urge to take a shot. Shooting at lines can cause widespread power or communication outages, potentially affecting homes, schools and emergency services. Repairs can be costly, sometimes costing thousands of dollars, and could lead to legal and financial consequences. And besides, there's a chance you'll miss the dove. The risk is not worth the damage.

Be a responsible hunter.

While dove hunting might be a fun hobby for some, hunters are responsible for their actions. That includes being mindful of where they shoot and any damage that could result.

Let safety be your first priority this dove season. Taking a few extra moments to look for utility lines and following basic precautions can prevent accidents and protect your community. Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation appreciates your efforts to keep our equipment safe.



Gunshot fiber cable like the one shown above causes costly damage to utility equipment. Each incident can cost CEMC between \$2,500 to \$5,000 to repair.

Look up and look out

Stay safe around overhead lines during harvest



Harvest season is one of the busiest — and most dangerous — times of year for Tennessee farmers. Long hours, oversized equipment and narrow rural roads increase the risk of accidents, especially when it comes to overhead power lines. Every year, tractors, combines and sprayers collide with utility infrastructure, leading to serious injuries, outages and costly repairs.

According to the National Ag Safety Database, an average of 62 farm workers are electrocuted in the U.S. each year, often due to contact with power lines while operating large equipment. These lines can be hard to spot — especially at dawn or dusk — and the size of modern machinery only increases the risk.

Even when no injuries occur, accidents with power lines or poles often knock out electricity or internet for nearby CEMC and Cumberland Connect members. A single incident in the field can disrupt service

for entire neighborhoods and cause significant delays for restoration crews — not to mention expensive repairs for the equipment operator.

That's why CEMC is urging farmers to "look up and look out" during harvest. Whether you're in the field or on the move, take time to assess your surroundings and stay alert to overhead hazards. Here are some key tips to stay safe:

Keep your distance. Always maintain at least 10 feet of clearance around power lines in all directions.

Use a spotter. When moving large equipment near poles or lines, a second person on the ground can help you maintain a safe path.

Stay put if contact occurs. If your equipment makes contact with an energized or downed power line, contact 911 immediately and remain

inside the vehicle until the power line is de-energized. In case of smoke or fire, exit the cab by making a solid jump out of the cab (without touching it), and hop away to safety.

Watch your materials. Consider equipment and cargo extensions of your vehicle. Lumber, hay, tree limbs, irrigation pipes and even bulk materials can conduct electricity, so keep them out of contact with electrical equipment.

Train your crew. Ensure all workers, especially seasonal hires, understand electrical hazards and emergency procedures.

CEMC is proud to support the farmers who feed and fuel our region. A few extra moments of caution could prevent injury — and keep your operation, and your neighbors, up and running.



CEMC/Cumberland Connect and fiber contractor Vonalas Inc. recently partnered to donate a total of \$21,000 to six nonprofit organizations across our territory. One of those recipients was YAIPAK Outreach in Clarksville, where leaders from all three organizations gathered to present the donation.

Pictured left to right: **Mark T. Cook, P.E., broadband manager; Susie Yonkers, community relations coordinator; Sherry Nicholson, founder and CEO of YAIPAK; Frank Glaspie, vice president of Vonalas; and Jennifer Brown, business development director.**

Scan to read more about our community partnership with Vonalas!



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Top home energy efficiency upgrades worth the investment

Q: Are home energy efficiency upgrades really worth the investment?

A: Yes! Home energy upgrades can pay for themselves over time, improve your home's value and improve your comfort.

For many Tennesseans, the idea of improving your home's energy efficiency can feel like a nice-to-have, not a need-to-have. However, the truth is investing in home energy upgrades can dramatically increase your comfort, reduce energy waste, lower your utility bills and boost your property value.

Let's take a look at some of the most impactful home energy upgrades and how they can add real, lasting value to your home.

Energy-efficient heating and cooling

Heating and cooling account for nearly half of the average home's energy use, making HVAC upgrades a smart place to start. Modern systems are not only more energy-efficient — they're also better at keeping your home consistently comfortable year-round.

Ductless mini splits, for example, are a great solution for older homes or additions without existing ductwork. These compact systems offer zoned temperature control, allowing you to heat or cool only the spaces you're using — saving both energy and money.

Upgrading to a high-efficiency SEER2-rated air conditioner or an Energy Star-certified heat pump can significantly lower your cooling costs during Tennessee's hot and humid summers and unpredictable winters.

Heat pumps, which both heat and cool your home, are a top choice for homeowners in our (comparatively) mild climate.

If you're looking for maximum efficiency, a geothermal heat pump might be a good option. These systems tap into the earth's stable underground temperature to offer ultra-efficient year-round comfort — while qualifying for some of the largest federal incentives and local rebates.

Although more expensive than traditional heat pumps, these systems usually pay for themselves within 10 years in energy savings. Plus, they're built to last: Expect to get 25 years out of indoor components and 50-plus years for ground loops.

Electric heat pump water heaters

Your water heater might be the hardest-working appliance in your home and one of the most expensive to operate. Heat pump water heaters (sometimes called hybrid electric water heaters) are up to three times more efficient than standard electric models. They work by capturing warmth from the surrounding air and using it to heat water — using a fraction of the electricity in the process. The result? Hot water on demand and serious savings over time.

Air sealing and insulation

Even the most efficient HVAC system can't do its job well if your home is





leaking air like a sieve. Air sealing your attic, crawl space and other key areas helps prevent heated or cooled air from escaping.

When you add insulation to the equation, you'll enjoy even more comfort. Proper insulation and air sealing can reduce your energy bills by up to 15%, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. But the benefits go beyond the bottom line. These upgrades can eliminate drafts, reduce humidity and improve indoor air quality — leading to a healthier and more comfortable living environment.

Energy-efficient windows

Swapping out single-pane or aging windows with low-E replacements can make a big difference in how your home feels — and performs. Newer windows are designed to minimize heat transfer, keeping the summer heat out and the winter warmth in. That translates to lower heating and cooling costs and a quieter, more comfortable home.

Modern windows can also improve curb appeal and resale value. Real estate experts say that energy-efficient windows are among the most desirable features for today's homebuyers.

Smart thermostats and smart outlets

The age of automation is here, and your home can benefit from it. Smart thermostats learn your habits and preferences to automatically adjust the temperature for maximum efficiency — without sacrificing comfort. They're also programmable and app-connected so you can control your HVAC system from anywhere. Be sure to find out if your local power company offers a rewards program to help you save even more.

Smart outlets are another simple but effective upgrade. They can cut off "phantom" energy loads from devices that stay plugged in — like TVs, coffee makers or gaming systems — and give you the ability to manage use via smartphone or schedule.

Other upgrades worth considering

While the big-ticket upgrades deliver the most dramatic results, even small changes can have a significant cumulative effect.

- LED lighting uses up to 90% less energy than incandescent bulbs and lasts much longer.
- Advanced power strips with surge protection and auto-shutoff features help eliminate energy waste.
- Low-flow showerheads and faucet aerators reduce water and water heating costs.

The savings payoff

Simply put, energy upgrades make your home better. A more efficient home is more comfortable, more affordable to live in and more attractive to future buyers.

Brad Wagner is a programs operations manager at TVA EnergyRight, and he's committed to helping people make informed decisions and lower their energy costs.



Story by Amber Weaver • Photographs courtesy of the Easley family

Stamps of Love

How a family adventure led to a greater appreciation of what Tennessee has to offer

Aron and Mandy Easley have always considered themselves to be outdoorsy people. That adjective was taken to the next level as their family of five completed the Tennessee State Parks Passport in just four years.

“As a family, we’ve trudged through and across swamps. We’ve climbed mountains,” Mandy said. “We’ve literally done everything in between on this journey, and it has been amazing to see all the beauty Tennessee has to offer.”

The adventure begins

Aron is a Tennessee native and has lived in the state his whole life. On the other hand, Mandy grew up in Dallas, Texas. They met while Aron was studying at Middle Tennessee State University, where Mandy later joined him, and as they say, “The rest is history.” The couple has lived in Franklin, served by Middle Tennessee Electric, for more than a decade now along with their three children.

Prior to the pandemic, the Easley family occupied their free time with any educational opportunity they could. In 2020, that became more of a challenge as businesses began to close out of safety precaution. A conversation with a park ranger at Bicentennial Capitol Mall State Park about the passports, though, changed the course of their next four years.

“We got the passports, and then, little by little, it became kind of a challenge and then an adventure for us and our kids,” Aron said.

The passport to Tennessee’s hidden gems

The Tennessee State Parks Passport is a great way to explore, discover and document all the hidden gems Tennessee has to offer. A passport, which includes a short write-up about each

park’s highlights and amenities as well as space to take notes and place the stamps, can be picked up at a visitors’ center at any state park. From there, travelers can visit every state park across the Volunteer State and collect stamps along the way. Stamps are available at the Passport Stamp Station sign at each park. Once all Tennessee State Parks are visited and a stamp is received from each one, you are considered a Tennessee State Parks Ambassador and will receive a special certificate to celebrate the incredible journey.

Planning makes perfect

This incredible journey doesn’t happen by accident. Both Aron and Mandy spent countless hours planning to experience all 60 state parks in Tennessee. The family of five didn’t just show up at each park, grab the stamp and run, either.

“We didn’t just want to drop in,” Aron said. “We wanted to actually experience something at each park, and that took some effort and planning. It was a labor of love, especially on Mandy’s part, accomplishing this. It was definitely a planning victory as well as just being able to see them all.”

The two parents spent a lot of time on the Tennessee State Parks website and studying a map of the state. They broke the parks up into what they could knock out on a Saturday and then into the bigger trips that would require more planning and miles to cover. From there, they would research and make calls to find out what opportunities were available for

them to enjoy as a family as well as where the stamp would be located.

“The challenge of logically getting to all these places was fun for me,” Mandy said. “I’m a super hardcore planner, so planning out all the trips, stops and the most efficient way to get everywhere was a good challenge.”

The countdown to the finish line was on.

Creating unforgettable memories

As you can imagine, the countdown to the finish line was filled with unforgettable moments for both Aron and Mandy but also for their three children: Austin, Maggie and Maisie. At each state park, the family would check out the store, the trails and the visitors’ center. Many times, they stayed overnight in the cabins or camped in tents at the parks. As



Above, Mandy Easley and the kids hike at Norris Dam State Park. Opposite page, Aron, Austin, Maggie and Maisie Easley stand on the natural bridge at Pickett CCC Memorial State Park.

the children got older, they would do longer hikes, boating and even partake in the activities the rangers were hosting. It didn't take long for the family to realize they were creating memories that would last a lifetime.

Austin is 11 years old and their oldest of the bunch.

"He is a super curious guy," Mandy said. "He loves to know how things work."

Austin got to see how many things work with this passport journey. In fifth grade, Austin spent numerous days in the classroom, learning about Tennessee history. That history, including the Eternal Flame at the Red Clay State Historic Park, was brought to life at several of the state parks.

"It was surprising to us how much his experiences through this and his history class lined up," Aron said. "He was able to tie back his personal

experiences at these parks. It was a full circle moment for us and really put a bow on the adventure, if you will."

Aside from making real-life applications outside of the classroom, Austin now feels as if he has a greater understanding of the state he is growing up in.

"The Tennessee State Parks say so much more about the state than what you would see just in walking around the streets of Tennessee," Austin said. "I feel like the parks are a great way to learn more about the state, its history and its wildlife."

Maggie is 9 years old and the middle child of the Easley family.

"She's a bold and brave girl," Mandy said. "She has some girly tendencies, though."

Aron and Mandy were able to have a front-row seat in watching Maggie come out of her shell on this adven-

"We got to witness firsthand the joy of seeing these state parks through our kids' eyes. We got to see the fire lit underneath them for nature, history and a love for our home state as 10th generation Tennesseans. It's an adventure we wouldn't trade for the world."

— Aron Easley

ture, especially with the wildlife that the family wouldn't typically encounter in their backyard.

"The first time we went to Chickasaw State Park, there were a bunch of baby frogs on the trail. We got to catch them, but I was sad to let them go," Maggie said. "At Savage Gulf State Park, we saw a cool neon orange and black striped cricket. It was so cool!"

As for 3-year-old Maisie, she didn't have much to share about these



Top left, Mandy, Austin and Maggie pose at Fort Loudoun State Historic Park. Above left, the Easley family at Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park after visiting their final state park to complete their passports. Right, Austin and Maggie smile at Fort Loudoun.

travels, but she does have a completed passport too.

"Maisie is just the joy of our lives at the moment," Mandy said. "She's a bright spot for us, and she just goes along wherever we take her."

While there were innumerable family memories made, Aron and Mandy did manage to sneak one or two moments in for just the two of them — one being on their 20th wedding anniversary on a full-moon guided kayak float at Long Hunter State Park.

"It was amazing," Mandy said. "It was a clear sky. You couldn't have asked for a better night to be able to enjoy the sights and sounds with each other."

Trying to pick favorites

If you asked the family of five which Tennessee State Park was their fa-

vorite, you would get more than five different responses.

For more information on the Tennessee State Parks Passport, visit tnstateparks.com/about/passport.

rugged one, they chose Lamar Alexander Rocky Fork State Park.

"It's nearly impossible to pick an overall favorite," Aron said. "Tennessee is a really big state, and the topography from West Tennessee to East Tennessee changes significantly. The parks are all so different and so cool in their own way. They all bring something unique to the table."

The couple narrowed it down to three based off categories. Their favorite for overall activities was Fall Creek Falls State Park. Their favorite historical one was Fort Loudoun State Historic Park. Then for their favorite

"We had the really cool chance to visit that just after a snowfall," Mandy said. "Walking along that stream with the snow on the boulders was amazing. It was a really special trip."

An adventure worthwhile

When the Easleys collected their last stamp from Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park, they realized that this four-year adventure was more than just something to do — it led to a deeper appreciation of the state they call home.



Clockwise from top left: Aron (with baby Maisie bundled in his coat), Maggie and Austin hike after a late spring snowfall at Lamar Alexander Rocky Fork State Park; Aron and Maisie explore in the creek at Mousetail Landing; Austin and Maggie gather close inside Hazard Cave at Pickett CCC Memorial; and the Easley girls sit on the dock at Harrison Bay.

History Lesson

by Bill Carey

The Tennessee History Guy



12 things started during Homecoming '86 that still exist

Last month's column was about the parades, reunions and passenger train associated with Homecoming '86.

This month's column is about things that started because of Homecoming '86 that still exist today. It's not a complete list, but I've come up with a dozen:

Among the Tennessee authors who took part in a reunion in October

1986 were Alex Haley, Tom T. Hall, Wilma Dykeman and John Egerton. Out of that event emerged the **Southern Festival of Books**.

"Before this time, there were 'literary festivals' that focused on poetry and fiction," recalls Robert Cheatham, president of Humanities Tennessee from 1978 until 2012. "We marketed this as a 'book festival.' It was a more mixed bag and includ-

ed nonfiction and history, and we dubbed it a 'celebration of the written word.'

For decades, the Southern Festival of Books was staged at the State Capitol and Legislative Plaza. In 2023, the event moved to the Bicentennial Mall, the Tennessee State Library and Tennessee State Museum. Last October, 25,000 people came to the event, which featured about 200 authors and 100 vendors.



A bluegrass band called My Brother's Keeper performs at the Boones Creek Opry.
Boones Creek Opry photo

A few months ago, it was announced that the Southern Festival of Books might be discontinued because of cuts at the National Endowment for the Humanities. Within weeks of the announcement, more than 1,200 people made donations, and a series of sponsors (led by Vanderbilt University) stepped forward. So, in spite of NEH cuts, the Southern Festival of Books — which started because of Homecoming '86 — will be held on Oct. 18 and 19, 2025.

The big Homecoming '86 event in Lauderdale County was a reunion at the decommissioned Dyersburg Army Air Base, where B-17 crews trained during World War II. Patricia Higdon, a history teacher at Halls High School, was in charge of the celebration, which got a boost when she convinced a pilot to fly a B-17 to the

event in July 1986. Among the people who attended that reunion were men who had trained at the base four decades earlier.

"It was a wonderful weekend, and I couldn't have pulled it off without my students," Higdon says. "They wrote letters to people all over the country who had been here during the war. Many of the people who had been here during the war also gave us uniforms and other memorabilia."

After 1986, Higdon set up a small museum in her home for all the World War II artifacts. Over the years, local officials helped the collection find a permanent home at the former air base.

Meanwhile, the Halls Homecoming '86 was such a success that it led to annual air shows. By the late 1990s, these air shows were attended by as

many as 30,000 people and featured B-17s, P-51s and other World War II era aircraft.

Today, you can still find Patricia Higdon at the **Dyersburg Army Air Base Veterans Museum**. The museum has 11,000 square feet of exhibits and several exterior exhibits, including an A-7 Corsair and a CH-46 Sea Knight helicopter.

The Johnson City area has at least three attractions that started because of Homecoming '86: a privately owned museum of Appalachian artifacts called **Knob Creek**, the **Boones Creek Historical Trust** (which consists of an old house, a museum and a regular live show called the Boones Creek Opry) and a 725-acre hiking area called **Buffalo Mountain Park**.

The way Buffalo Mountain Park came about is as follows: In 1985,



The Southern Festival of Books in 2011.
Tennessee History for Kids photo



the Johnson City Homecoming '86 committee wanted to blaze walking trails on nearby Buffalo Mountain on land that was then owned by the U.S. Forest Service. The trail was created in 1986, and at the end of the year a plan emerged under which Johnson City would "swap" land with the forest service.

That process took eight years. Today, the best way to get a view of Johnson City is to climb to the top of Buffalo Mountain on a trail that would not exist were it not for Homecoming '86.

The best-known structure ever to exist in the Robertson/Sumner Coun-

ty community of White House was an inn built around 1796 and torn down in the 1950s. During Homecoming '86, the community built a replica of the **White House Inn**. It served as the library and archives for decades and now houses the city museum, visitor's center and chamber of commerce.

Not far from White House, Goodlettsville has a lot of late 18th century history associated with a fort called **Mansker's Station**. The Goodlettsville Homecoming '86 committee, headed by Pam Garrett, rebuilt the fort.

"The town of Goodlettsville let us use Moss-Wright Park, but we had to

raise all the money," recalls artist David Wright, who designed the fort as one of the committee members. "As I remember it, we raised \$125,000."

Two blockhouses, four cabins, a blacksmith shop and surrounding wall later — on Oct. 4, 1986 — Historic Mansker's Station opened to the public. It is still used for public tours and field trips, and the town of Goodlettsville stages a weekend-long living history event called Heritage Days every April.

Many **local history books** were researched, written and published because of Homecoming '86. Among them are histories of Pulaski, Ridge-top, Belleville, Tullahoma, Strawberry Plains, Cedar Hill, Lookout Mountain, Spring Hill, Kingsport, Coal Creek/Lake City, Rutherford County, Giles County, Clay County, Carter County, Johnson County and the list goes on and on.

Speaking of local history books, Homecoming '86 inspired two McMinn County ladies to write two books about Englewood. That led to the organization of the Community Action Group of Englewood (known as CAGE).

In 1994, CAGE renovated an empty retail space on the town square and converted it to the **Englewood Textile Museum**, which is still open.

CAGE stages three annual events: a Christmas parade, a Halloween event called Dining with the Dead and a weekend-long June reunion on the town square with a pancake breakfast, square dance and combined church service.

So why did Homecoming '86 make a permanent mark on Englewood?

"I don't know," says Bobbie Dickson, one of the original organizers of CAGE. "We just have a love for our town; that's just how we are."

Besides Bobbie Dickson, the other remaining CAGE organizer is Huberta Williams. Williams' nephew, Mark Cochran, now represents McMinn County in the State House. So if you go to a CAGE event, you are certain to see Rep. Cochran manning a table and taking photos for its Facebook page.

Back to the list: One of the Davidson County Homecoming '86 projects evolved into a nonprofit organization called the **Nashville Tree**

Foundation. Its founder was Betty Brown, but another of its original board members was Justin Wilson (later the state comptroller). In the last 39 years, the foundation has planted about 25,000 trees in Davidson County — 6,000 in the immediate aftermath of the 1998 tornado.

The **Farragut Folklife Museum** in Farragut Town Hall was started because of Homecoming '86. Today the museum consists of galleries on local history, the Civil War Battle of Campbell's Station and — most importantly — on Adm. David Farragut, who was born near there.

However, my favorite Homecoming '86 project was not a park, museum or festival. It's the "**Looking Back at Tennessee**" collection at the Tennessee State Library and Archives.

In the spring of 1986, a team of state librarians, including photographer Connie Burkhalter and state archivist Pat Morris, traveled to libraries in places such as Dover, Dunlap, Eliza-

bethton and Savannah. Their schedule was announced in advance.

"People brought in old photos and old glass negatives," Burkhalter says. "Pat and I did the best we could, reproducing the photographs. It was incredible to work on."

As a result of this project, 7,614 photographs were duplicated that are now searchable at the Tennessee State Library and Archives. Among them are more than three dozen photos that I have used in my Tennessee History for Kids booklets, in hardback books that I have authored and in this column.

So, the reason we have a photo of the Ashland City stagecoach from the 1880s is Homecoming '86. The reason we have a photo of African-American children at Depot Bottom School in McMinnville in 1910 is Homecoming '86. The reason we have a photo of about 60 old men standing on the patio of the Cloudland Hotel at the top of Roan Mountain in Carter County is Homecoming '86.



TOP LEFT: **The White House Inn.** White House Chamber of Commerce photo

TOP RIGHT: **Folks gather at the June reunion in Englewood.** Community Action Group of Englewood photo

BOTTOM LEFT: **Historic Mansker's Station.** Tennessee History for Kids photo

Reasons to Roast

Recipes by Tammy Algood

Food styling by Cynthia Kent

Photographs by Robin Conover



Boursin Bird and
Oven-Roasted Carrots

There's a word for why roasted foods are so good.

It's a French word called "Maillard." You don't have to pronounce it; the important thing is that it's science that makes food better. You know the Maillard reaction as the "something special" you get from roasting: crispiness, browning and sweetness from concentrated sugars. There are lots of ways and other reasons to roast. Try these recipes and learn them all. It's educational!

Boursin Bird

Yield: 4 servings

- 4 skin-on chicken breasts (can be boneless or bone-in)
- 4 ounces herbed soft cream cheese or Boursin cheese, room temperature
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Line a rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil and coat lightly with cooking spray. Set aside.

Wearing plastic gloves, gently separate the skin from the chicken, leaving one side attached. Stuff 2 tablespoons of the cheese underneath the skin. If necessary, hold the open portion of the skin tightly and massage the cheese so it is evenly distributed underneath. Repeat with each chicken breast, and place on the prepared baking sheet.

Sprinkle evenly with the salt and pepper. Roast 25 minutes or until the chicken is done and no longer pink. Allow to rest 10 minutes before serving warm.

Note: *Chicken with the bone intact will take up to 5 minutes longer to cook than those with the bone removed.*

Oven-Roasted Carrots

Yield: 6-8 servings

- 2 pounds baby carrots, peeled
- 2 tablespoons vegetable or canola oil
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter, melted
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- Chopped fresh parsley

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper and lightly coat with cooking spray.

Place the carrots in a single layer on the sheet. In a small bowl, stir together the oil and melted butter. Evenly drizzle over the carrots. Sprinkle with the salt and pepper.

Roast for 18 minutes, checking for doneness with a cake tester or ice pick.

Roast 30 minutes if using large carrots. Sprinkle with the parsley and serve warm.

Herbed Beef Roast

Yield: 8 servings

- 1 (3½- to 4-pound) boneless beef rump roast
- 1 tablespoon vegetable or canola oil
- 2 teaspoons garlic salt
- 2 teaspoons black pepper
- 2 teaspoons dried basil
- 2 teaspoons dried thyme
- 2 teaspoon dried parsley

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Lightly grease a roasting rack and place the beef on the rack in a shallow pan. Rub the oil over the outside of the roast.

In a small bowl, combine the salt, pepper, basil, thyme and parsley. Rub over the outside of the beef. Insert an ovenproof thermometer in the thickest portion of the roast.

Position the roast in the oven so you can view the thermometer dial from the oven window. Roast 2 hours or until the roast reaches the desired doneness. Transfer to a cutting board and cover loosely with aluminum foil. Let rest 15 minutes. Carve into thin slices and serve warm.

Late-Summer Garden Feast

Enjoy this as a meal by itself with toasted bread, top homemade pizza crust or ladle over hot pasta, grits or rice.

Yield: 6 main dish servings

- 8 cups mixed vegetables (your pick of yellow squash, bell peppers, leeks, beets, eggplant, mushrooms or new potatoes)
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1½ teaspoons dried herbes de Provence or Italian seasoning
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees. Coat an 18-by-12-inch rimmed baking dish

with cooking spray. Place the vegetables in a single layer in the pan. Drizzle evenly with the oil, then sprinkle with the herbs, salt and pepper.

Roast for 20 minutes and stir. Return to the oven and roast another 10 minutes or until the vegetables are lightly browned. Serve warm.

Garlic Roasted Asparagus

Yield: 6 servings

- 2 pounds fresh asparagus, trimmed
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 medium garlic cloves, peeled and minced
- ¾ teaspoon garlic salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- ½ teaspoon finely grated lemon zest

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Place the asparagus spears on a lightly greased rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle with the oil and sprinkle evenly with the garlic, salt and pepper. Roast 15 minutes, turning the spears halfway through, if desired. Transfer to a warm serving platter and garnish with the lemon zest. Serve warm.

Note: *For the best presentation, leave the asparagus whole.*

Mustard and Herb Salmon

Yield: 6 servings

- 6 large salmon steaks, skinned
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
- 1 tablespoon fine dry breadcrumbs
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon honey
- ½ teaspoon white pepper

Preheat the oven to 225 degrees.

Line a rimmed large baking sheet with parchment paper. Place the salmon steaks with the skinned side down on the baking sheet and set aside.

In a medium bowl, stir together the butter, parsley, breadcrumbs, lemon juice, mustard, salt, honey and white pepper. Blend until well combined. Evenly spread the butter mixture over the top of each salmon steak.

Roast in the center of the oven for 25 to 30 minutes or until the salmon is opaque and done. Allow to rest 5 minutes before serving warm.

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.



Tips & Tricks

Roasting brings out the natural sweetness found in root vegetables such as beets (the highest sugar content of any vegetable), potatoes, radishes, parsnips, rutabagas, turnips and carrots. Those natural sugars caramelize while roasting happens.

Roasting is a dry heat cooking method that is done uncovered in the oven.

If there is a fat side for meat roasting, it is placed up so the fat will, in essence, self-baste during roasting.

For the best results, cut the vegetables into equal sizes so they cook evenly. Also, make sure the vegetables are in a single layer in the pan.

If you are seasoning vegetables with fresh herbs, sprinkle on as the pan comes out of the oven. Dried herbs are added before it goes into the oven to roast.

Ask Chef Tammy

Kyle writes, "Is brining really necessary? If so, for how long?"

Kyle, I like to brine lean meat cuts in a mixture of salt and water with a bay leaf and a few peppercorns for a day. It does two things: It allows the meat to absorb moisture and hang onto it while cooking. This gives you a moist and juicy finished product that's full of flavor.

Betsy asks, "I have a recipe that calls for dried chiles, but I am not a fan of the heat it brings. Can you give me a suggestion for use that won't be so aggressive? I have access to multiple types but am not sure which to select."

Betsy, I would use dried guajillo (pronounced "gwa-hee-oh") chiles. These only have mild to medium heat with a nice smoked flavor. Most are no more than 6 inches long and rather skinny with a tapered end.

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

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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



July's flag location

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/flag or email flag@tnelectric.org. Entries must be postmarked or received via email by

Wednesday, Oct. 1. Winners will be published in the November issue of *The Tennessee Magazine*.

July flag spotters

Thanks for the postcards and emails again this month identifying the location of the flag, left, which was found in a frame on the bookshelf on page 30.

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

Thomas Elliott

Piperton, Chickasaw EC

Lounita Sampson

Lebanon, Middle Tennessee Electric

Jenna Coulson

New Tazewell, Powell Valley EC

Artist's Palette Assignment for November

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 — November, 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 Wednesday, Oct. 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:

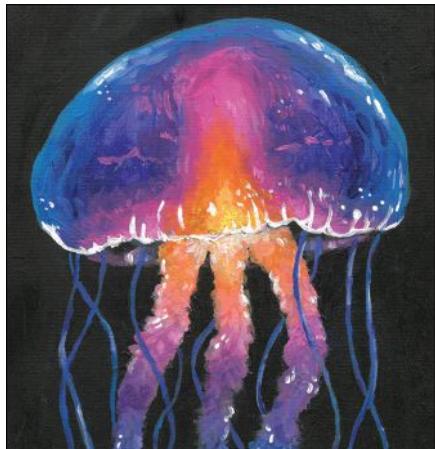
You may send multiple entries in one envelope along with one SASE with sufficient postage.

Winners will be published in the November issue of *The Tennessee Magazine*.

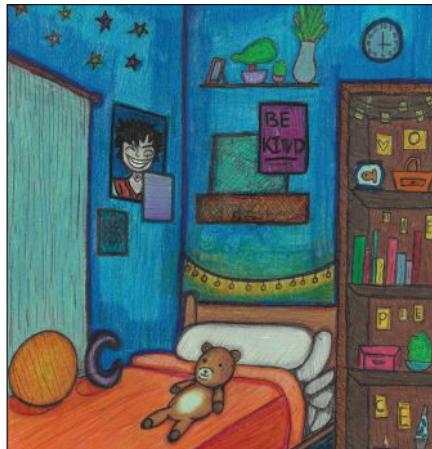
First place wins \$50, second place wins \$30 and third place wins \$20. Winners are eligible to enter again after three months. Winners will receive their awards, artwork and certificates of placement within six to eight weeks of publication.

Artist's Palette September Winners

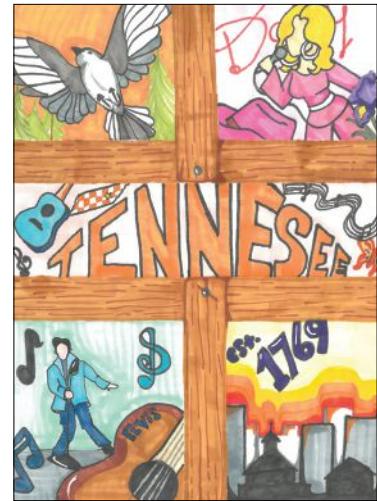
14-18 AGE GROUP WINNERS



FIRST PLACE: Amelia Williams,
16, Sequachee Valley EC



SECOND PLACE: Shayleigh Smith,
14, Upper Cumberland EMC

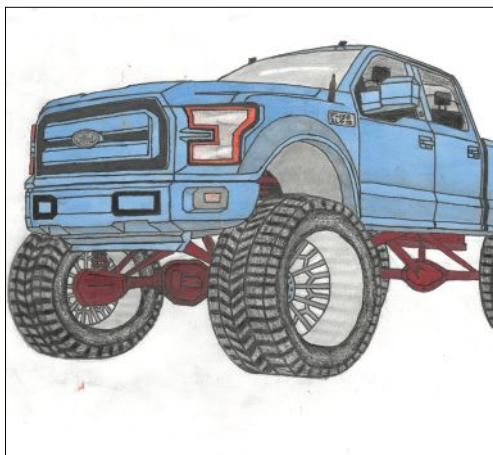


THIRD PLACE: Elianna Dunn,
16, Volunteer EC

9-13 AGE GROUP WINNERS



FIRST PLACE: Grace Rogers,
13, Volunteer EC

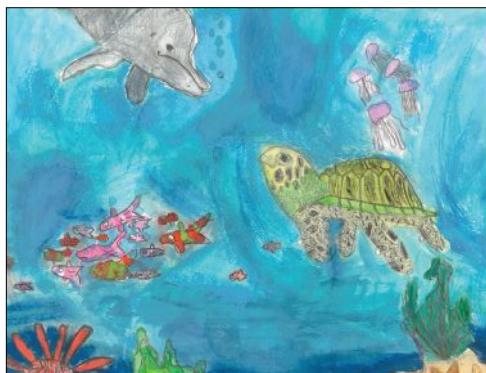


SECOND PLACE: Tanner Ralph,
13, Upper Cumberland EMC



THIRD PLACE: Szabina Irene Horvath,
12, Middle Tennessee Electric

8 AND YOUNGER AGE GROUP WINNERS



FIRST PLACE: Lincoln Lovario,
8, Volunteer EC



SECOND PLACE: Arabella Susid,
8, Duck River EMC



THIRD PLACE: Hunter Suggs,
7, Cumberland EMC

Point of View

by Robin Conover



“Full Moon Nights”

Canon EOS 5D Mark IV, EF 200-400 mm *f*4 L IS USM 1.4 Ext at 400mm, ISO 1250, *f*-11 at 1/250 second, Gitzo tripod

Moon and stargazing have fascinated cultures around the world for millennia. For me, staring upward at countless stars in the night sky always fills me with wonder and a sense of peace.

Capturing some of that wonder was my mission while photographing the hunter’s moon last year. Photographing the night sky with a full moon can be challenging. Following the tips here might help you find success rather than frustration the next time you want to shoot the moon.

The next full moon opportunities will be the harvest moon on Sept. 7 and the hunter’s moon on Oct. 6. Both will both provide excellent opportunities to practice your photography skills.

This year’s hunter’s moon will be the next supermoon visible in Tennessee. It will appear larger and brighter in the night sky simply because it is. Supermoons aren’t optical illusions. They occur because the moon is physically closer to Earth.

Because the moon’s orbit around Earth isn’t a perfect circle, we have three to four supermoons a year. These closer passes provide photographers even more opportunities for incredible images.

It amazes me that a 400 mm zoom can produce the details above. According to NASA, the surface of the moon is an average of more than 238,000 miles away, yet we can clearly see the impact craters with rays of debris cast outward. Other

features, visible with binoculars and long lenses, include mountains and darker lowlands, which are basically impact areas filled with lava.

To get started, you will need to pay attention to moon’s schedule, exposure, composition and your equipment.

The moon’s schedule: There are several apps available for iPhone and Android, some free and some paid, to assist you in locating where and when the moon will rise and set. Tracking this information is extremely useful for photographers. It can also help you plan ahead for locations to include elements in the foreground of your image.

Everyone’s skill sets are different in this realm, so spend some time researching what’s available to find the right combination of price and features that will work best for you.

Exposure: Going manual is the best way to go when photographing a bright moon in a black night sky. Auto metering will rarely, if ever, give you the correct exposure in this situation. You will need a combination of a fast enough shutter speed so that the moon remains sharp, the lowest ISO you can get away with to decrease noise and an *f*-stop to allow the entire surface of the moon to be in sharp focus. In general, start with *f*-11, a shutter speed of at least 1/15 of a second and the lowest ISO to make this combination work.

With longer lenses like a 200 mm or 400 mm, there is a general rule of thumb to use a shutter speed of at least 1/the focal length of the lens. For this shot, I chose 1/250 of a second to help eliminate any camera movement.

Composition: Start by manually focusing on the moon or setting the focus to infinity on your lens. Then put some thought into what you want to shoot. Don’t just plop the moon in the center of your composition and shoot. Take some time to plan some foreground feature like a skyline, mountains, water, trees or structures to make a more interesting shot. In general, keeping the moon off center makes for a more interesting image.

I zoomed in tight to just the moon in this image so I could test the combinations of ISO and shutter speed to find the best exposure combination for my lens.

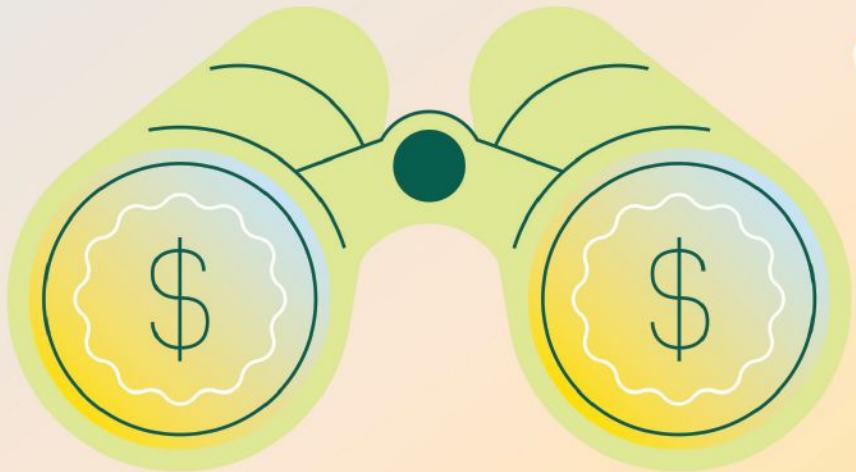
Equipment: The most important pieces of equipment you will need are a sturdy tripod to keep your camera perfectly still, a longer telephoto lens and a camera that allows you to set the exposure manually.

You might also benefit from using a remote shutter release or timer.

Patience is also needed. Combining all of the elements successfully could take some time to capture your masterpiece. Don’t forget to just enjoy the view until you perfect your night sky photography skills.

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