the tennessee magazine

November 2026

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Beyond Nashville's Nutcracker

There's a Place: Halls | Cookie Swap: Make Now, Bake Later

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Celebrating the Extraordinary Nature of Everyday Life

NOVEMBER 2026

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ON THE COVER

Nashville Ballet dancers perform the "Shepherdess and Shepherd" variation in Paul Vasterling's "Nashville's Nutcracker" at the Tennessee Performing Arts Center. Learn about the ballet company beginning on page 12.

Photo credit: Sarah Hartsell/ Nashville Ballet



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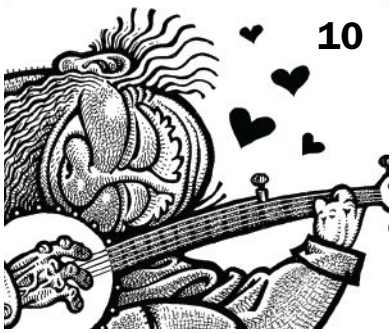
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Celebrating the Extraordinary Nature of Everyday Life

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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.



Chris A. Davis
CEMC President, Chief Executive Officer

A season to give thanks

There's something about November that invites us to slow down and appreciate the people and things that mean the most to us.

Maybe it's the cooler temperatures, the beautiful fall colors or the tradition of gathering around the table with family and friends. Whatever the reason, November reminds us how much we have to be grateful for.

For me, one of those things is the opportunity to serve the members of this cooperative.

That's something I don't take lightly. Our work directly impacts the people and communities we're fortunate to call home. We provide safe, reliable electricity to your homes, farms, and businesses. Through our broadband services, we're also helping connect our communities in new and important ways.

None of that would be possible without our employees.

I'm grateful for those who work in the field, often in difficult weather and challenging conditions. I'm also grateful for the employees who answer your calls, restore power after storms, install broadband service, maintain our equipment and keep everything moving behind the scenes. Much of their work might go unnoticed, but it makes a difference every day.

I'm also grateful for you, our members, and the trust you place in us. When you need us, you count on us to be there. While things don't always go as planned, our commitment remains the same: to listen, respond and find ways to better serve you.

Perhaps what I appreciate most is the sense of community throughout Middle Tennessee. We see neighbors helping neighbors, especially when times get tough. We see people supporting local schools, churches, businesses and organizations. Often, small, everyday acts of kindness say the most about who we are.

That sense of community is what makes being a cooperative special.

As Thanksgiving approaches, I simply want to say thank you. Thank you for being a member, for trusting us to serve you, and for allowing us to be part of the communities we call home.

I hope you and your families have a safe and enjoyable Thanksgiving, with plenty of good food, conversation and time with the people you love.

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By Mike Knotts
Tennessee Electric Co-ops

What we bring to the table

Thanksgiving dinner is usually more than just a meal. It can be quite an operation of pure logistical skill.

Someone has to buy the groceries, thaw the turkey, get up early to put it in the oven and baste it a time or two as it cooks. Others might bring the side dishes, while the organizer lives in fear that three people might arrive with macaroni and cheese while no one remembers the rolls.

Then there are the family recipes. Every household seems to have that one dish that must be prepared exactly the way a grandmother, aunt or great-grandfather made it. Suggesting a change can be a controversial — borderline risky — move. The first time I shared a Thanksgiving meal with my in-laws, they kept referring to the "stuffing." Meanwhile, I kept looking for a casserole dish with the cornbread "dressing" that is supposed to accompany the turkey and probably discussed — in a less than curious tone of voice — this new phenomenon of bread that at one time was inside the carcass of an uncooked bird. The controversy about which one is the best remains unresolved to this day.

But somehow, regardless of the specific choice of carbs, the meal comes together. Some bring food, someone sets the table, someone washes the dishes and someone keeps the children entertained. Each person contributes what he or she can, and everyone benefits.

The same is true in our communities. None of us has every skill, every answer or enough time to do everything alone. We depend on teachers, first responders, small-business owners, farmers, volunteers and neighbors who notice when someone needs a hand. Their combined contributions become something greater than their own.

Your electric cooperative is a great example of this. Years ago, Tennesseans joined together when no single family could have built the poles and strung wires needed by an entire community. Working together, however, they accomplished something that once seemed impossible.

Each November, our thoughts naturally turn toward gratitude. We give thanks for family and friends, for food on the table and for comforts that are easy to overlook. We should also be grateful for the people whose quiet contributions make our communities stronger.

That spirit is alive and well in Tennessee. We see it in churches collecting food for families, volunteers coaching youth teams and neighbors clearing limbs after a storm. We see it whenever people set aside their differences and focus on what they can achieve together.

This Thanksgiving, take a moment to appreciate what each person has brought to your table and what others contribute beyond it. A contribution might seem insignificant on its own, but when combined with others, they make a meal, a family and a vibrant community.

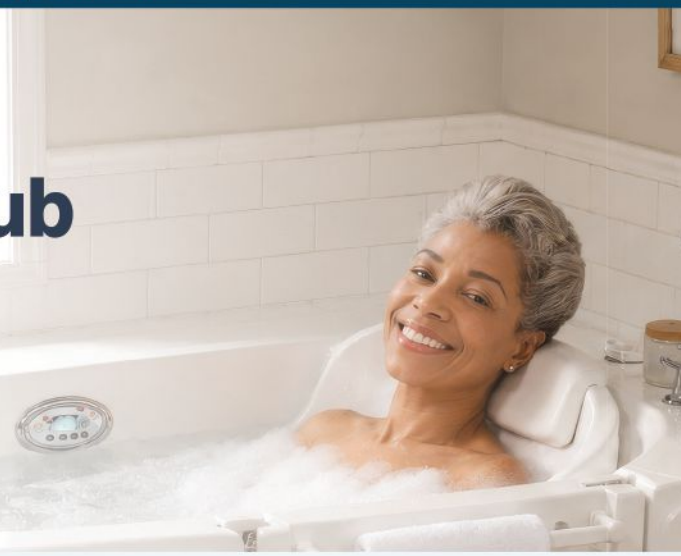
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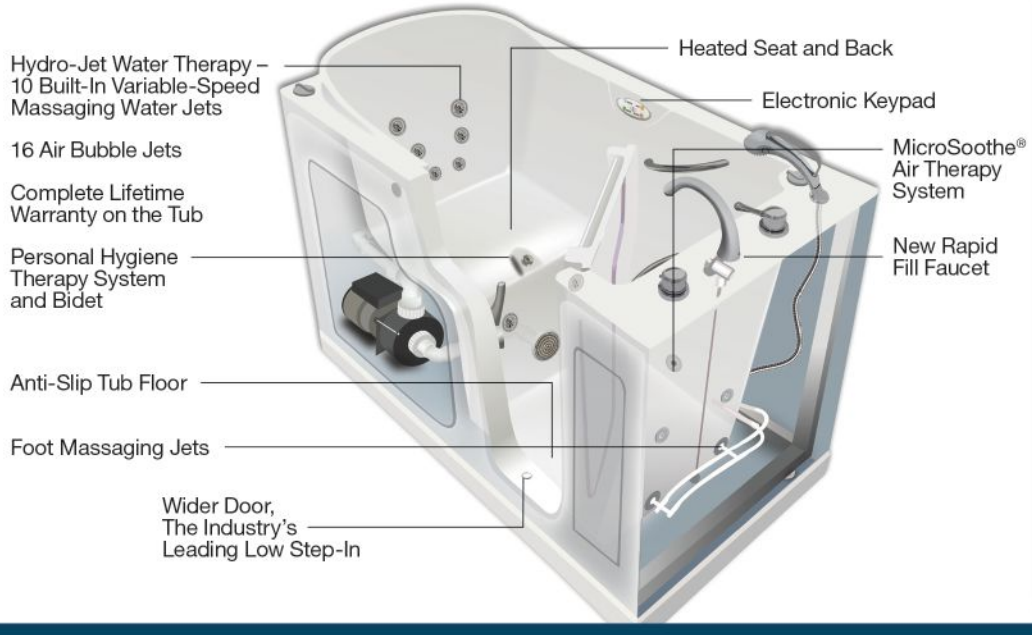
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By Chris Kirk
Editor, The Tennessee Magazine

Making new discoveries among old favorites

I'll admit it: It's really hard for me to step outside my comfort zone. So I was a little wary in green-lighting a story on ballet for November's edition of *The Tennessee Magazine*. As you no doubt noticed from the cover, we're featuring the Nashville Ballet this month on pages 12-15.

Like many of my trips toward the unknown, I enjoyed the journey. I haven't purchased a season pass, but I really liked discovering a world I effectively knew nothing about. The story pitch was excellent input from our field editor and senior communications specialist, Nicole Christensen. Our communications strategist, Amber Weaver, eagerly accepted the task and produced a captivating story about art, community and creativity. And I love that the company has given a Nashville twist on the traditional holiday story of "The Nutcracker."

I also haven't spent much time in or around the West Tennessee town of Halls, so I enjoyed visiting via this month's "There's a Place" feature. It's fitting we cover that community and its ties to service to our nation the same month as Veterans Day. See pages 28-31.

I wouldn't call myself a stranger to the cookie sheet and oven, but I'm not whipping up batches of fresh-baked cookies all that often. But that scent sure does set the holiday mood throughout the Kirk home. Maybe I'll take advantage of the stress-easing "make then bake" cookie recipes found on pages 36-38.

We round out this month's magazine with plenty of touches of the familiar. Bill Carey notes the helpfulness of the folks from the National Park Service (pages 16-19). Antsy McClain is back with a fun ode to the banjo (pages 10-11), which is also one of my favorite instruments. And we're accepting entries in our next Shutterbug Photography Contest (page 34) and revisiting another compelling theme: "weather."

Turn the page, learn something new and settle in with old favorites!

Thanks for reading,



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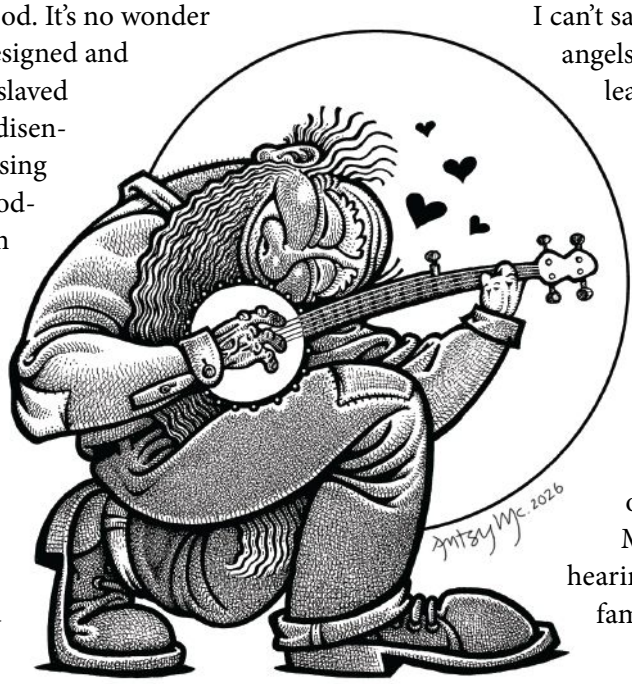
Brace yourselves, dear readers. I am about to say one of the most divisive, polarizing things one can say in polite society. What I am about to say has been known to end dinner parties, start family feuds and disrupt wedding ceremonies:

I love banjo music.

I believe the banjo* is perhaps the most amazing instrument designed by humankind. I feel my spirits lift upon hearing those first notes. It is impossible for me to be sad while listening to banjo music. Instantly, I smile. I tap my foot, which, if you're a musician, is the equivalent of a dog wagging its tail.

The banjo's effects on mood are well documented. The sound of a banjo has been known to reduce stress hormones and increase levels of dopamine and serotonin in the brain. Granted, most music has this power (especially when avoiding sad, minor keys), but the banjo, in particular, has been cited as having an almost supernatural ability to raise our mood. It's no wonder such an instrument was designed and played so vigorously by enslaved people, the homesick and disenfranchised who needed to sing and dance for reasons a modern-day bluegrass musician can never know.

But I believe music carries an energy, maybe even the power of past souls who sang and played into the air around them to express their joy — or to release their sadness. Music will forever be a mystery to me, but if you have ever sang — really sang with all your heart — in the midst of an audience at a live concert, you know what I'm talking about.



When my wife, Michelle, and I were first becoming friends, I debated letting her in on my nerdy fondness for the banjo. For weeks, I held off, knowing that stating something so divisive too soon could be the death knell of a budding relationship. One night, however, we were talking on the phone, and it just fell out of me. I was unable to stop it. "I love banjo music!" It came out too loud, too sudden and awkward, revealing weeks of being bottling up. The moment of silence afterward was almost more than I could bear. I considered hanging up to regain my composure. I would tell her my phone died. When she asked me about the banjo, I would deny having said it. Yes, that's a good plan. But what I heard next changed the trajectory of our coupling from, dare I say, friend to eternal soulmate. After a short pause of disbelief, she blurted, "Omygosh! I LOVE the banjo!"

I can't say what I heard next was a choir of angels, but it was pretty close. My heart leapt inside my chest as I realized our relationship had just scaled another level, avoiding an important deal-breaker line item. (The previous levels involved a deep love for Will Ferrell movies, a mutual disdain for the feel of microfiber and, not the least of which, an almost unhealthy love for Led Zeppelin.**) It seemed we were surviving all the pitfalls of modern romance.

My first memory of the banjo was hearing my Uncle Sonny play one at a family gathering. I was little — like, "sitting-on-the-floor-looking-up-at-grown-ups" little.

These footnotes have never been known to hurt anybody. These are good footnotes. Really good.

* The banjo has its roots in Africa. Made of gourds and animal skins, early American banjos were played mostly by enslaved African descendants in the Southern states and in the Caribbean. It gained widespread popularity in the 1830s and grew to a crucial role in bluegrass music in the 1900s.

** Most women I know have a hard time with Led Zeppelin. Maybe it's the overly aggressive drums. Maybe it's the scream-singing. Whatever it is, I've seen not a few women instinctively reach for the car radio at the first notes of "Whole Lotta Love." Favorite classic rock stations have been lost to me for decades because they happen to play Led Zeppelin. For years I never heard anything past the first two bars of "Kashmir" before the station was changed by a female hand.

Not so with Michelle. She has a Spotify playlist we listen to often on road trips. I call it "Led Zeppelin — and Other Stuff Most Men Have Not Been Able to Listen to In Their Cars Since They Were Teenagers."

Take it from me: There's nothing like driving through the Rockies with Zeppelin's "Misty Mountain Hop" blaring from rental car speakers — while your wife sings along to every word.

I heard that mix of metal and skin, the bouncy rhythm from faraway mountains first made by mythic man. It traveled all that way to sit a few feet in front of me, on the lap of my beloved uncle. He was at the kitchen table among coffee cups and not a few ashtrays. That banjo bored its way into my tender, young soul. It got in there — deep — never to come out.

Since that day, the sound of a banjo will stop me in my tracks and send me, almost uncontrollably, toward its making. It happened most recently in an East Nashville neighborhood, but I couldn't follow its siren song as I was with a group of friends. Having not been installed with "the software" at an early age as I was, they were unable to isolate and pursue the beguiling sound. They seemed oblivious to it. I spent the next 30 minutes in an internal tug of war, trying to ignore my inner beacon going off like a homing device, turning me into a head-bobbing, banjo-seeking pigeon.

Another early experience at a bluegrass festival solidified my fascination. A preteen boy was propped up on a lawn chair, trying to tune his new banjo, and a kindly old man with a long white beard and overalls was watching. His smile had a few teeth missing. His overalls had patches on the knees. His boots were worn and scuffed. After the boy struggled with his new instrument, the man asked if he could tune it up for the boy. He handed the banjo to the man. By the looks on everyone's faces, no one expected too much from the scruffy old man.

He crouched down and shuffled his heels into the dirt to steady himself. He pressed the body of that banjo up against his left ear. He tuned each string right to where it needed to be. He closed his eyes and played a flawless rendition of "Foggy Mountain Breakdown," and a crowd quickly gathered. He then played an old tear-jerker called "A Daisy a Day." My Uncle Ed would play that song at family reunions. A soft, tender ballad written by folksinger Jud Strunk, it's a pledge of devotion that even the grave won't separate.

When he was done, the old man smiled. Everyone broke out in applause. He handed the banjo back to the boy and said, "I think it's broken in now." The boy took it gingerly, reverently, realizing it had just performed magic. I don't know who the man was, and I don't know what happened to that young boy, but I can bet he's still playing the banjo, installed, as he must be, with "the software."

The summer and fall festivals are all winding down now. I played a few. I got to go to a few. All summer, I kept thinking of my family. Our family reunions were filled with music. My grandmother and aunts would sing old gospel hymns in perfect four-part harmony. My uncles played songs on guitar and banjo, things they learned from the radio.

If I had blinked, I would have missed it; it all went by so fast. Most of them are gone now, those flesh-and-blood harbingers whose duty and honor it was to pass down the old ways to whomever might accept them. I'm glad I didn't blink. I opened my eyes wide to it all. My soul opened and took in every note.

All those beautiful people, all those ragged old songs. The gnarled, hardworking hands that played them on instruments, ancient and new: They are all inside of me now, forever. They flew in on the backs of those songs, and they're still in there. They reappear in misty, blue shadow or warm, golden light whenever I hear one of those old songs. tn

Hear Antsy's rendition of the classic, "A Daisy a Day"

Antsy McClain is a Nashville-adjacent singer-songwriter, author and graphic artist. Go to unhitched.com for more. Use this QR code to hear "A Daisy a Day" FREE to readers of *The Tennessee Magazine.* Prints of the old banjo player (at left) are also available at the link. The art was drawn by hand in brush and ink by Antsy from a favorite childhood memory, mentioned in the column.

Story & Photographs by Amber Weaver • Additional Photographs courtesy of Nashville Ballet

Beyond Nashville's Nutcracker

How Nashville Ballet brings dance, dreams and the community to life



Nashville Ballet Company artists perform in Paul Vasterling's "Nashville's Nutcracker." *Photograph by Karyn Photography*

The lights dim, and the familiar opening notes of Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker" begin to fill the room. But this isn't quite "The Nutcracker" you remember. The Christmas tree begins to grow. A little girl named Clara watches as the familiar comforts of her family's holiday celebration disappear into a world of magic. Mice march across the stage. Toy soldiers prepare for battle. Snowflakes swirl through a winter wonderland, and somewhere ahead waits a kingdom filled with sweets, fairies and a little more Nashville than audiences might expect.

Each year, crowds return to Jackson Hall at the Tennessee Performing Arts Center to watch Nashville Ballet bring the familiar story to life in a way that belongs uniquely to Music City. For many families, it is a treasured holiday tradition. For Nashville Ballet, however, it is also an invitation to discover what happens beyond that stage.

"When individuals attend Paul Vasterling's 'Nashville's Nutcracker,' I hope they feel a sense of community, a sense of family, and also just remember that the holidays are about all of us coming together and celebrating what makes our time together so special," said Nick Mullikin, Nashville Ballet artistic director and CEO. "I also hope they gain an understanding that there is more behind Nashville Ballet than this performance."

Setting the stage

And there is more. Nashville Ballet was founded in 1986 and has grown to be the state's largest professional ballet company. The nonprofit organization has a mission to create, perform, teach and promote dance as an essential and inspiring element of the community. While that is done through the performances put on by 31 full-time company artists from multiple countries across the world, that mission is also accomplished through School of Nashville Ballet and through community outreach.

Where dreams take motion

Just west of downtown Nashville, all ages participate in dance classes at the Martin Center for Nashville Ballet. The customized 44,000-square-foot facility serves as a home for the professional dancers, school students, administrative offices and even some performances.

"In addition to our main stage performances, we have a full academy for ages 2 to 102," Mullikin said. "If you want to just do a drop-in as an adult and learn about ballet for the first time, you're able to do that. If you want to train to become a professional dancer like those you see on stage, you can do that here as well."

At School of Nashville Ballet, students receive exemplary dance instruction for every experience level. Students stretch their imaginations, learn self-expression, nurture their skill and artistry, and reach their fitness goals through varied programs.

"We have little bitties dancing with their caregivers all the way through adults," said Jennifer Kulev, Nashville Ballet school director. "When you see a performance here, you watch it. Here at the school, though, is where you actually experience it. I think people are surprised to know how broad our programs are. We have something for everyone."

Children ages 2 to 8 take classes focused on movement, music, creative play and disciplined ballet study. Students ages 8 to 18 participate in a variety of Community Youth Division classes that introduce classical ballet training through a more flexible, less intensive structure. The Academy Division focuses on developing dancers with both expressiveness and clear classical



Retired Nashville Ballet Company artist Owen Thorne holds up the glowing orb during "Nashville's Nutcracker."
Photograph by Heather Thorne

lines while providing guidance to help students discover and develop their own artistry. Students can also step beyond the world of ballet and embrace dance styles like jazz, tap, hip hop, musical theater and contemporary. In total, more than 2,500 students participated in Nashville Ballet programs in 2025.

"Students here are not only learning how to be professional dancers; they're also learning how to be better people," Mullikin said. "These classes and scholarships provide them the opportunity to learn discipline, resilience and what it takes to actually create something in life. The ballet community teaches us that there is hope and inspiration, but goals and aspirations take time."

Sharing the magic

Dancing doesn't stop within the Martin Center. The Community Engagement initiative of Nashville Ballet exposes children, teens and adults to the artistry, beauty and athleticism of dance by providing unique experiences that cultivate an interest in ballet. Last year, the program served experiences to over 55,000 people at TPAC, libraries and local community centers.

"Not only are we creating fantastic work, but we are also going into the community to try and enrich it," said Briona Richardson, Nashville Ballet director of community engagement and education. "It's so powerful. It's so transforming the work that I get to do."

The initiative focuses on education, advocacy, connection and access. One of the education efforts involves homeschool students. More than 1,000 families come to Nashville Ballet to spend time in tours, watch rehearsals and work with artists to create something of their own. As for advocacy, it's about creating experiences and spaces for the audience to connect with each other.



Company dancer Gwyneth Smith is focused in rehearsal.

"Creating spaces where the audience can have conversations about that shared experience and how it relates back to their life — it's that connection that turns us into advocates," Richardson said. "We can talk about it, and we can share our excitement about it."

Some of those spaces that help make that possible include the Relevé Society where a group of arts enthusiasts comes together to watch rehearsals before the shows and attend cocktail gatherings after. Through those events, the society meets with dancers, choreographers and other donors. Another space includes the Ballet Ball.

"What I love most about the Ballet Ball, aside from dressing up fancy, is seeing our dancers take a piece of work that they've just learned right after some very big performances and see them bring it to life with some popular music of today," said Michelle Chianese, Nashville Ballet director of development. "It's an incredible way to support our mission, continue to watch our dancers flourish and support our community engagement programs."

Another space is geared toward the tiniest dance enthusiasts, and that's the Nutcracker Tea. Funding scholarships for aspiring dancers, attendees view snapshots of "Nashville's Nutcracker," participate in arts and crafts, and take professional pictures with props and ballerinas.

"Our 'Nashville's Nutcracker' Tea has become a favorite family holiday tradition," Chianese said. "It kicks off the holiday season the Sunday before Thanksgiving. It is a mini-Nutcracker extravaganza."

Meeting the communities where they are is a big part of the access focus — whether that's with Nashville Ballet's podcast, arriving early



Company artists deep in rehearsal work to make each production the best it can be.

to a show to learn more, or even donuts and dancing where seniors ages 65 and up come to the Martin Center, watch a rehearsal and try the choreography for themselves. When it comes to the last pillar of connection, it's simple.

"We're bringing the community into Nashville Ballet but also taking Nashville Ballet into the community," Richardson said.

Beyond the Kingdom of Sweets

Nashville Ballet has entered its 41st show season, which is focused on the theme of "Movement Taking Form."

"The 2026-2027 season is huge," Mullikin said. "It celebrates all different parts of what makes up Nashville Ballet. 'Movement Taking Form' is more than a theme for the year — it's an invitation to witness a company in motion and to be a part of what it's becoming."

Some of the performances are held at the Martin Center, but most are at TPAC in collaboration with the Nashville Symphony. This season has five performances created by Nashville Ballet staff and dancers. The program opened with George Balanchine's "Allegro Brilliante" in September. October was filled with Mullikin's version of "Giselle," which hasn't been performed by the company since 2009, and Maria A. Konrad's "Día De Los Muertos." In February, Paul Vasterling's famous story of "Cinderella" will be on stage. Then the season will close out in May with the cutting-edge work of "Attitude" featuring Mullikin's original "Erase the Night."

This month through the end of the year is when you can see "Nashville's Nutcracker." It's sure to delight audiences of all ages and bring a smile to your face as Clara makes her way through the Tennessee Centennial Exposition at the Parthenon, Shelby Bottoms, the Parthenon Garden and the Belle Meade Mansion.

"It's a fun story about imagination, dreaming and true love for one another," Mullikin said. "I would encourage you to come in, see the show and see how we celebrate the story of Nashville coming to life."

That goes for "Nashville's Nutcracker" but also Nashville Ballet as a whole.

Meet one of the dancers



Originally from Atlanta, Colette Tilinski began her ballet training at Metropolitan Ballet Theatre in Alpharetta, Georgia. She made her way to Nashville Ballet and attended the organization's summer intensive in 2017. She has been with Nashville Ballet ever since.

Since joining the main company, Tilinski has taken on featured roles, including Aurora in Paul Vasterling's full-length production of "The Sleeping Beauty" and Sugar Plum Fairy and Snow Queen in "Nashville's Nutcracker."

"With the classical pieces we are doing this season, those are really special ballets where we focus on precision and technique along with telling a storyline that's a bit more traditional," she said. "As dancers, we have the responsibility to carry the lineage and history of the classics forward while elevating them."

Tilinski also originated the lead role in the world premiere of Mullikin's "Erase the Night."

"These contemporary works are really special moments for us as dancers because we see an entire creation process that becomes this huge cohesive piece that's really beautiful at the end."

The audience can see Tilinski in these main roles, but there are many things they don't see like how much time goes into being a company dancer.

"Rehearsal processes are different every day," she said. "We have class in the morning for an hour and a half, and then we have up to six hours of rehearsal. We focus on the staging process, coaching, cleaning or working with our partners on musicality."

While so much goes into a ballet production, Tilinski said something else the crowd doesn't see just might be her favorite part.

"Ballet is so collaborative," she said. "Dancers are working with each other and alongside staff, musicians and conductors. Everyone has to work cohesively to make even a 13-minute ballet come to stage. The biggest thing the audience doesn't see is that there are so many people who have to come together to make something so beautiful on stage."

Learn more and purchase tickets!

nashvilleballet.com

by Bill Carey
The Tennessee History Guy



Footsteps, ranger hats and Tennessee history



Lucas Wilder of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park.
National Park Service photo

The National Park Service has done great things for Tennessee history and for kids

The National Park Service has had a rough time of late. Many parks have seen their budgets slashed, some of their historical signs have been taken down and some rangers have been fired, especially in February 2025.

In this column, I'll share how much the National Park Service has done for my organization and for history teachers across the Volunteer State.

I'm the founder of Tennessee History for Kids, an organization that helps teachers teach and students learn Tennessee history, American history, civics, geography and basic social studies.

One of the things we do is produce inservices that help teachers learn about people, events and topics they are required to cover in class. The in-person events last all day, and we have staged them at the Hermitage, Rhea County Courthouse, Memphis Cotton Museum, Norris Dam, Discovery Park of America, the State Capitol and many other places.

During the pandemic, we started doing "virtual" training events on Zoom. Since 2020, in fact, we have put on 101 virtual inservices — each scheduled for two hours, late on weekday afternoons.

A few years ago, it occurred to me that virtual inservices are not limited by proximity. So I started asking national park rangers from all over the country to speak at Tennessee History for Kids events. We focused on parks that preserve and interpret important things in American history that are listed in Tennessee's social studies standards.



Lawson Nwakudo of Brown v. Board National Historic Park in Topeka, Kansas. *National Teachers Hall of Fame photo*

National parks have been very generous about donating time to leading these events — even the parks that are nowhere near Tennessee! In fact, national park rangers have led at least 25 of our inservices. Here's a list:

Five events (three in-person, two virtual) with Andrew Johnson National Historic Site in Greeneville. The two most recent were in July 2025 — when ranger Ashley Burns led a Tennessee History for Kids "Summer Road Show" — and on Oct. 20 — when she presented at a virtual event. Every time Burns speaks to our teachers, she tells fascinating stories about the man who rose from runaway indentured servant to 17th president of the United States.

Four events (all virtual) with Brown v. Board National Historical Park in Topeka, Kansas. The fourth, in February of this year, was led by park ranger Lawson Nwakudo. One of the most interesting things Nwakudo told the 61 teachers is that many of the people involved in the Brown v. Board decision were the descendants of former enslaved people from Tennessee who lived in a part of Topeka called "Tennessee Town."

Three events (two in-person, one virtual) with Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park. All three of these events were led by park ranger Chris Young — who has presented to (at the three events combined) 143 teachers. Whether speaking to teachers face-to-face or on Zoom, Young amazed the teachers with stories about the many Civil War Battles of Chattanooga, including the so-called "Battle Above the Clouds."

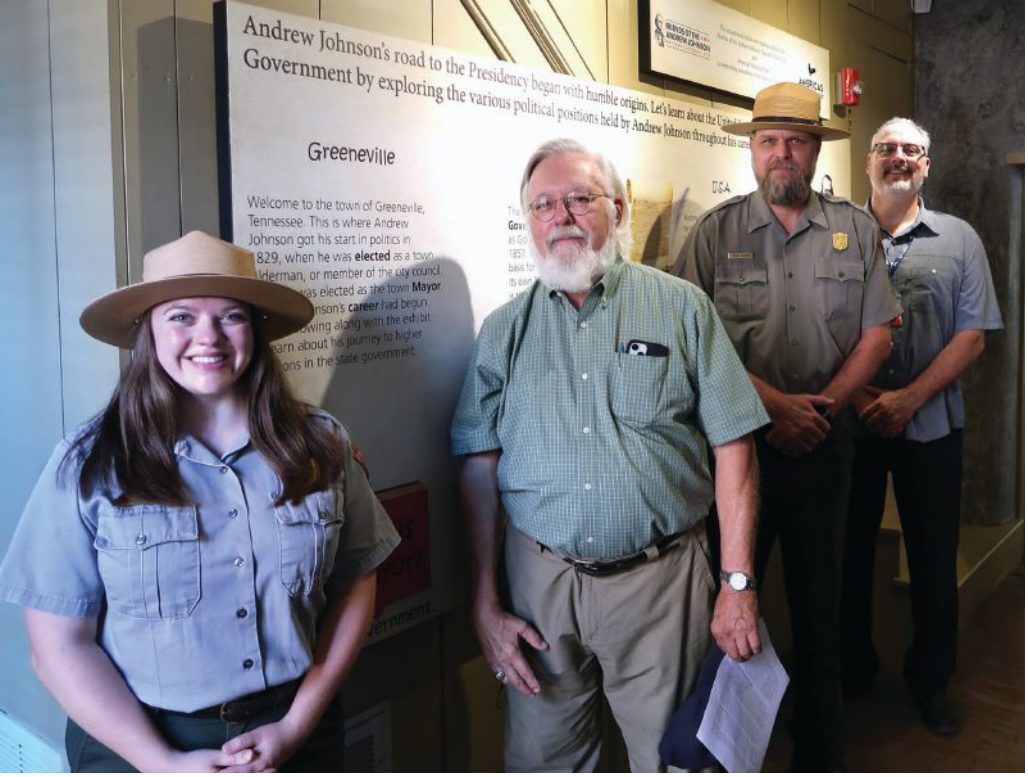
Two events (both virtual) with Golden Spike National Historical Park in Utah. The second, in September 2025, drew 56 teachers and was led by park ranger Jonathan Fairfield. He mesmerized the teachers with his presentation about how the Transcontinental Railroad was built, mostly by people from China and Ireland.

Three virtual events led by William Caldwell of Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail. (The second, in November 2024, drew an incredible 85 teachers.) There's one scheduled this month (Nov. 11), and 35 teachers are preregistered so far. They are looking forward to Caldwell's wonderful presentation about the events that

led to the Battle of Kings Mountain, which some say was the turning point in the Revolutionary War.

One virtual event in November 2024 led by Rob Briwa, ranger at Homestead National Historical Park in southeast Nebraska. One of the things Briwa told the 67 teachers was that the Homestead Act is directly connected to women's suffrage, which is why the first states in which women were allowed to vote (Wyoming, Utah, Colorado and Idaho) were in the West.

Two virtual events with Fort Donelson National Battlefield led by David Hatfield. He does a great presentation about the Battle of Fort Donelson, which led to the Union Army taking over Nashville a week later.



Ashley Burns of Andrew Johnson National Historic Site, left, led the Tennessee History for Kids "Summer Road Show" in Greeneville in July 2025. *National Park Service photo*





Above: It's a 1,600-mile drive from Nashville to Golden Spike National Historical Park, which is why any inservice with Tennessee teachers has to be virtual. *National Park Service photo*

Right: Chris Young leads a Tennessee History for Kids event on Lookout Mountain while a teacher snaps a selfie. *Tennessee History for Kids photo*

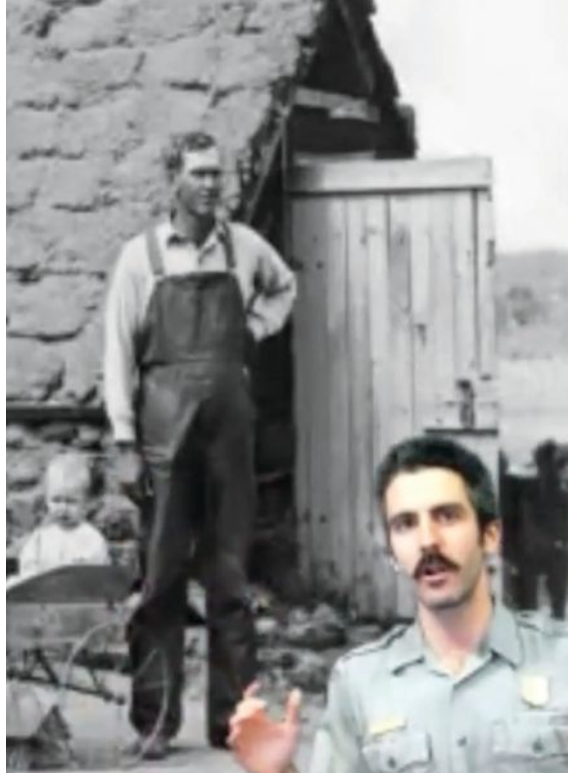
Two events (one in-person in 2018, the other virtual) led by the staff of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park. The most recent of those events was led by park ranger Lucas Wilder on Oct. 28. Forty teachers were registered to hear Wilder talk about why the Cumberland Gap is important not only to Tennessee history but American history.

Two virtual events with Shiloh National Military Park, the second of which was in April 2024. During his presentation, ranger Matt McMillen told 52 teachers stories of the horrible two-day Civil War battle in Hardin County.

Finally, we had a virtual event with Chalmette National Battlefield in Louisiana, site of the Battle of New Orleans. Park ranger Ian Gray led that event in November 2022. Teachers who attended were fascinated by Gray's stories of the fighting men from Tennessee who were called "dirty shirts" during the battle.

We had another Zoom event scheduled with Chalmette in February 2025, and 70 teachers were registered. But it had to be canceled at the last minute because the park ranger who was going to lead it got fired a week before the scheduled event, when the National Park Service laid off 1,000 people.

Our training events aren't limited to teachers. If you'd like to tune in to some of our virtual inservices, go to tnhistoryforkids.org.



A scene from ranger Rob Briwa's virtual presentation about the Homestead Act.
Tennessee History for Kids photo

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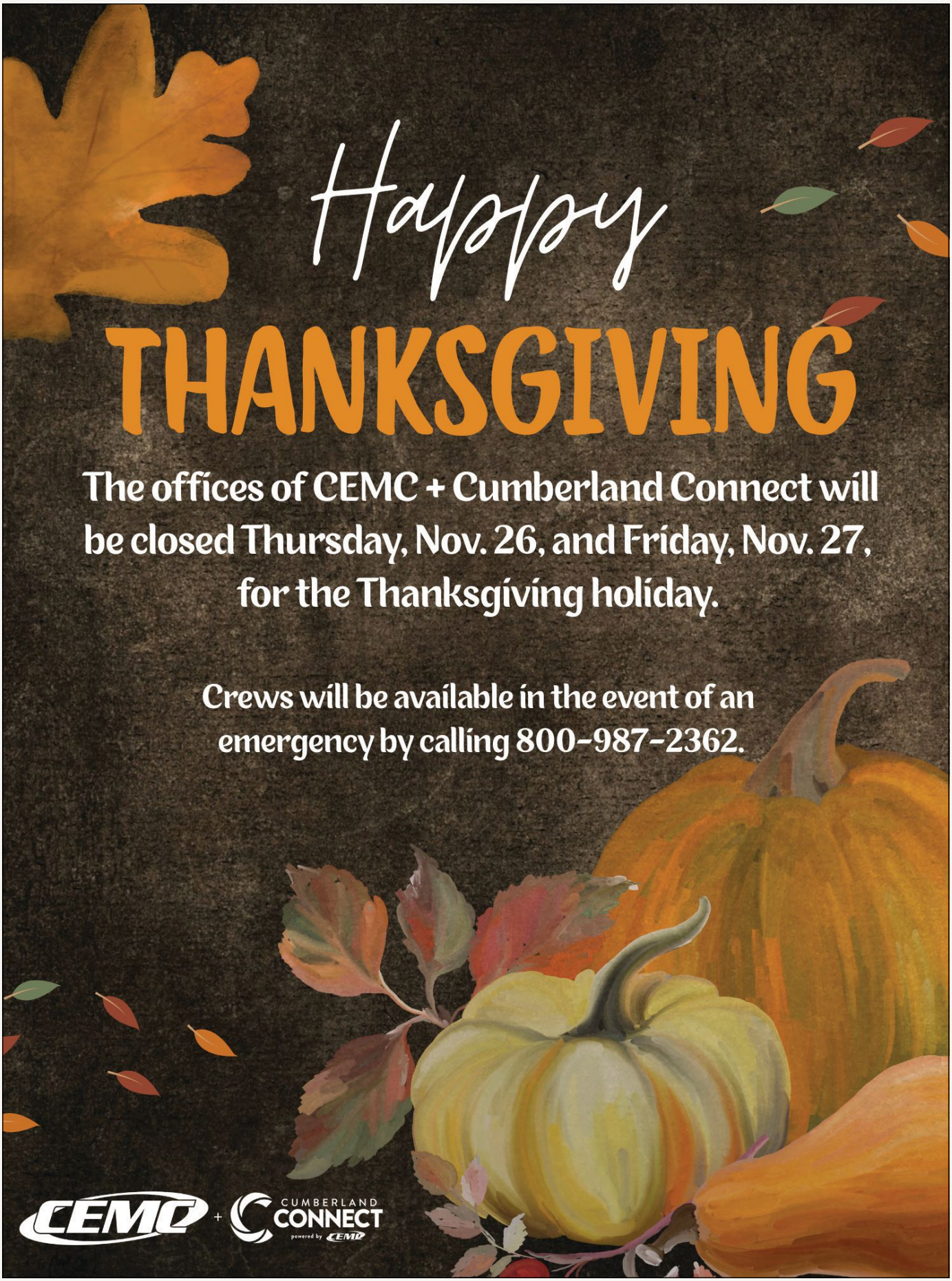
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The offices of CEMC + Cumberland Connect will be closed Thursday, Nov. 26, and Friday, Nov. 27, for the Thanksgiving holiday.
Crews will be available in the event of an emergency by calling 800-987-2362.
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Optimize your HVAC

As November settles in and temperatures begin to drop, your HVAC system will soon become one of the hardest-working appliances in your home. Before your system undergoes all that extra work this winter, now is a great time to ensure it is optimized and ready to go.

Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation recommends taking a few simple steps this fall to help your HVAC system operate efficiently throughout the winter.

Start with something simple. One of the easiest and most effective measures you can take is checking filters. A clogged or dirty filter makes it harder for air to move through your system, which can cause it to work longer and harder than necessary. Check filters regularly and replace them according to the manufacturer's recommendations. Vents matter too. Take a look around your home to make sure furniture, curtains, rugs and other household items aren't blocking any supply or return vents.

If you have a heat pump, your outdoor unit also deserves extra attention this time of year. Falling leaves, limbs and other debris can collect around the unit and restrict airflow, so keep the area around your outdoor unit clear. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning recommendations. If you have a traditional central air conditioning system, your outdoor unit will likely remain idle during winter months, but it's still good practice to keep it clear of debris.

Don't overlook what you can't see. With forced-air systems, ductwork plays an essential role in delivering heated air throughout your home. Leaks, gaps or disconnected sections can allow conditioned air to escape before it reaches the rooms where you need it. If you've noticed rooms that never seem to get comfortable or unusually high energy use, ask an HVAC professional to inspect your ductwork.

Fall is also an ideal time for a professional tune-up. A technician can inspect your heating system, identify potential problems and make sure it is operating safely and efficiently before the coldest weather arrives. Regular professional maintenance can also help extend the life of your equipment.

If your heating and cooling system is nearing the end of its life and you're considering replacing it, CEMC — in cooperation with TVA — offers low-interest loans to help make the investment more manageable. Visit **EnergyRight.com/financing** or **CEMC.org** to learn more about available heat pump financing, eligibility requirements, program details and possible rebates.

Finally, take more control of your energy use by proactively managing your thermostat. There's no reason to heat an empty house. Lowering the temperature when you're asleep or away can help reduce energy use. Better yet, a programmable or smart thermostat can make those adjustments automatically, taking one more thing off your to-do list. Visit **EnergyRight.com/residential/rebates/smartthermostat** to learn more about TVA's Smart Thermostat Program and any available rebates.

Your home heating system has an important job this winter. Giving it a little extra attention this fall to help the system operate more efficiently, reduce unnecessary energy use and potentially prevent an inconvenient breakdown on a cold winter night.



Air leaks: Where, how and why to fix them



Let's face it — air leaks happen. Whether caused by construction gaps, imperfections, weather or settling and structural movement, uncontrolled airflow into and out of your home can occur over time.

Some common areas for air leaks include windows, doors, and attic entrances. The good news? Each is an easy fix.

Windows

Signs of a leak: Drafts, rattling panes, visible gaps or light shining through the edges.
How to fix: Use caulk to seal gaps between the window frame and wall.

Doors

Signs of a leak: Drafts or visible light around the edges.
How to fix: Install a door sweep along the bottom. Use weatherstripping around the sides and top, and add a foam or rubber threshold seal.

Attic entrances

Signs of a leak: Hot or cold air around the attic entry.
How to fix: Add an insulated cover or tent, and use weatherstripping around the edges.

Sealing air leaks is a simple but highly effective way to improve your home's energy efficiency. Here are three reasons why it matters:

Reduces energy waste. Air leaks allow heated or cooled air to escape, forcing your HVAC system to work harder to maintain your desired indoor temperature. Sealing those leaks reduces energy loss and helps your system operate more efficiently.

Lowers energy bills. When conditioned air stays inside your home, your HVAC system uses less energy, which can help lower your monthly utility bills.

Improves indoor comfort. Sealing air leaks can eliminate drafts and reduce uneven temperatures, making your home more comfortable.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please contact Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation at 800-987-2362 or visit us online at **CEMC.org.**

A pet owner's guide to electrical safety



When your children were little, time was spent on child proofing the home. From putting away frayed cords to plugging in outlet covers, you did everything to keep your children safe from electrical hazards. While most of us do not think of it, the same type of precautions should be taken when it comes to your pets. Look around your home, and ask yourself these questions to keep your pet and your household electrically safe:

Can my pet reach an electrical cord?

Hazard: Puppies, kittens and rabbits might chew electrical cords. Over time, those damaged cords can expose wires and create a shock or fire hazard for the pet and the home.

Tip: Route cords behind furniture, use cord covers or keep them elevated and out of your pet's reach.

Are any of my electrical cords damaged or exposed?

Hazard: If a cord has been previously damaged or your fuzzy family member chews the cord, do not keep using it.

Tip: Replace cords or have the equipment properly repaired. This goes for all cords if there are frayed or exposed wires.

How close is my pet's water bowl to an electrical device?

Hazard: Excited pets and water close by can create a dangerous combination.

Tip: Keep water bowls, fountains and other sources of moisture away from outlets, power strips and electrical equipment. Also, make sure cords and plugs are positioned safely with aquariums so that electrical connections stay dry.

Could my pet knock over an electrical device?

Hazard: Small appliances, chargers, heating pads and many other electrical devices can pose a risk if pets knock them over, chew their cords or get too close.

Tip: Unplug devices and store them away, if possible, when they are not in use, especially if you are leaving your pet home alone. Secure cords and other devices so they can't be easily pulled down or tipped over.

Can my pet access outdoor electrical equipment?

Hazard: While the backyard might be your pet's favorite place to be, outdoor electrical equipment can pose serious hazards. Keep pets away from outdoor outlets, extension cords, lighting equipment and other electrical devices. We know it goes without saying, but never allow pets to approach utility equipment such as transformers, substations or pad-mounted electrical equipment.

Tip: Before letting your pet roam outdoors, check the area for accessible electrical equipment and secure or block off anything your pet could chew, knock over or otherwise disturb.

Know what to do if a pet is shocked.

While we hope this never happens, CEMC wants you to know what to do in an emergency. If you see your pet in contact with an electrical source, do not touch your pet or attempt to pull it away with your hands. Turn off the power at the breaker if you can do so safely.

Once the power is off, move your pet away from the electrical source and seek veterinary care immediately. If you cannot safely disconnect the power, call CEMC at 800-987-2362 or 911 for assistance.

Leftover food energy hacks

You prepared the meal of a lifetime. Everyone at the table loved it — even your pickiest eater. And, in a rare occurrence, the whole family pitched in to clean up and tuck away the leftovers.

While Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation knows picture-perfect mealtimes like this don't happen every night, there is one thing you can usually count on: the leftovers. With a few simple energy hacks, you can make the most of the energy you already used to prepare the meal — and avoid using more energy than necessary when it's time for that second helping.

Don't forget the refrigerator. How you store leftovers matters, both for food safety and energy efficiency. Keep your refrigerator set to 40 degrees or below, and don't pack the fridge too tight. Before tucking away the leftovers, make sure the food has cooled. Store leftovers in shallow containers so they can cool quickly and safely. The U.S. Department of Agriculture recommends refrigerating leftovers within two hours and using them within three to four days.

Good refrigerator habits can also help your appliance use energy efficiently. Keep the refrigerator door closed as much as possible, and avoid putting very hot food directly into the refrigerator. Allowing food to cool briefly before refrigerating can reduce the amount of work the appliance has to do to maintain its temperature.

Reheat with the right appliance. When you are ready to pull that incredible meal back out to enjoy again, match the appliance to the amount of food you're reheating. For a single serving, use the microwave instead of heating the full-size oven. For several servings, consider whether the stovetop, toaster oven or air fryer makes more sense than turning on the oven. These smaller appliances can be a more energy-efficient choice when you're heating a small amount of food.

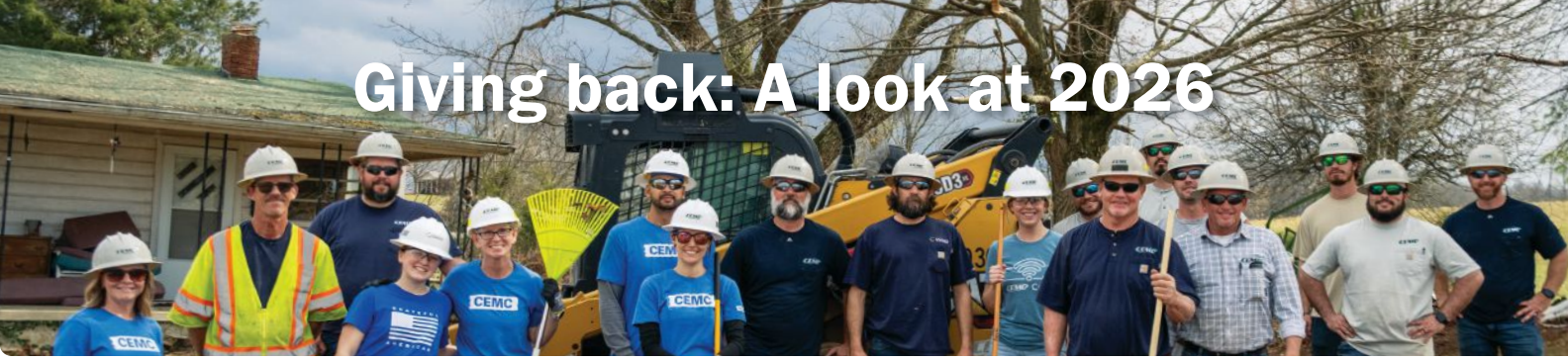
The basic rule is simple: Avoid heating a large appliance for a small job. Choosing the right-sized appliance helps reduce the energy needed to get your food hot and back on the table.

Make every trip to the oven count. If you're already using the oven, make the most of the energy it's consuming. Warm up several servings at once, bake tomorrow's meal or a dessert while you're already cooking, or prepare multiple dishes at the same time when practical.

Whether you're reheating a single serving, storing a week's worth of leftovers or making the most of an already-heated oven, a little planning can go a long way. By choosing the right appliance, storing food properly and making each use of your cooking appliances count, you can make the most of the energy you've already used and avoid using more than you need.



Giving back: A look at 2026



November tends to bring giving thanks to the front of mind, but for a cooperative, giving back is something that happens all year. CEMC and Cumberland Connect are owned by the members we serve, and part of what that ownership means is reinvesting in the communities where our members live. As the year winds down, here's a look at some of what that support went toward in 2026.



Community Cares funds

This year, CEMC, in partnership with TVA, distributed $75,000 in Community Cares funds to 13 organizations across our five-county service area, including Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee, United Way chapters in Montgomery, Robertson and Sumner counties, Habitat for Humanity and smaller local groups like Portland CARES and Highland Rim Economic. Every one of these organizations supports our area by helping to provide vital essentials such as food, clothing, supplies and much more.



A day of service in Portland

Winter Storm Fern left a mess of downed trees and debris, and cleaning it up took a lot of helpful hands. CEMC and Cumberland Connect employees spent a day alongside the Portland Chamber of Commerce, the Halter Group and Sumner County Highway Department, clearing right-of-way areas and helping neighbors clear extensive damage. The Gary Sinise Foundation covered lunch for the crew, a nice reminder of how many people show up for support once word gets out.



Getting students ready for school

Backpacks, pencils and folders don't cost much individually, but for a family stretching a budget before the start of a new school year, they add up fast. That's why this past August, CEMC and Cumberland Connect supported our students and teachers by handing out supplies at Back-to-School Bash events in Cheatham and Sumner counties, donating to Back-to-School drives in Stewart and Robertson counties and sent volunteers to help sort donations for the Teacher Warehouse in Montgomery County.



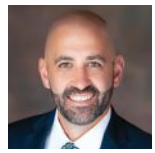
Scholarships and youth programs

One of the most important facets of our community support is local youth, and that's why we carried on the tradition of funding lineworker and senior scholarships for local students, along with continued sponsorship of youth programs like the Washington Youth Tour and 4-H Electric Camp. These programs give students hands-on experience with electricity and cooperative principles along with valuable leadership skills. To our members, thank you for making this kind of investment in our communities possible, year after year.

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Hosting without the high energy

Keep your home comfortable for guests and energy costs in check all season



Q: With Thanksgiving and the holiday season approaching, we're getting ready to host! But how will the extra cooking, people and cooler weather affect our energy use? Can we keep the house comfortable without draining our appliances?

A: Hosting season and heating season tend to arrive at the same time, and that combination can add up fast. The good news is that a few smart habits can help you keep things cozy for your guests without your having to pay for it later.

Nudge down your thermostat

More bodies in the house means more natural body heat, which can actually allow you to nudge the thermostat down a degree or two during family gatherings without anyone noticing.

If you have a programmable or smart thermostat, use it to your advantage. Set it to adjust automatically for when guests arrive and when they leave rather than manually changing it throughout the day.

Quick tip: Have a few throw blankets on hand for anyone who feels a chill.

Let the oven do double duty

If you're baking or roasting for a crowd, your oven is already

running for extended periods, so put that heat to work. Once you turn the oven off, leave the door cracked open after cooking (once it's safe to do so) to let residual warmth escape into the kitchen instead of going to waste.

It's also worth resisting the urge to peek. Heat escapes every time the oven door opens during cooking, and the oven has to work harder to recover that lost temperature, using more energy in the process.

Quick tip: Use the oven light if you need a look at your apple pie.

Put curtains and blinds to work

As the winter season brings shorter days, sunlight is a free source of heat. On sunny days, open curtains and blinds on south-facing windows to let natural warmth in during the afternoon.

Once the sun goes down, close them again. Windows lose heat quickly after dark, and closed curtains add a layer of insulation that helps keep warmth inside.

Quick tip: Easing the bedtime transition for excited kids? Find the calm (and save energy) with glow-in-the-dark stickers and flashlights instead of the overhead lights.

Give your fireplace a fair shake

A crackling fire adds ambiance to any gathering, but an open damper when the fireplace isn't in use can pull warm air right out of the house.

If you're using the fireplace, make sure the damper is fully open for proper airflow and safety. When you're finished for the night, close it once the embers are fully out to prevent heated air from escaping up the chimney.

Quick tip: No fireplace? Put a yule log video on TV for a cozy feeling without the smoke.

Watch indoor, outdoor traffic

Hosting means more comings and goings through exterior doors, and every open door lets warm air out and cold air in.

Encourage guests to gather coats and bags before opening the front door so goodbyes don't turn into a long stretch of cold air sweeping in. It's a small thing, but it adds up over the course of an evening.

Quick tip: Tack a cute, seasonal sign near the door. Something like, "We give thanks to you … for closing the door behind you!" reminds guests so you don't have to.

Load up the washers

Big gatherings often mean more dishes and more laundry. Running the dishwasher and washing machine with full loads rather than partial ones makes the most of the energy and water used per cycle.

If your dishwasher has an air-dry option, use it instead of the heated-dry cycle to save a bit of extra energy on cleanup day.

Quick tip: Make it a game! Kids and grownups alike love a "30 seconds to bring your plates to the dishwasher" competition.

Small adjustments, big difference

None of these tips requires a change in how you host or the memories you make with your loved ones. They're simple adjustments that work quietly in the background while you focus on the parts of the season that actually matter.

Whether you're hosting a full house for the holidays or just settling in during cooler weather, a little energy awareness now can mean a more comfortable home and lower energy use when the season winds down. tn

Pro Tip

Keep things cozy without using more energy than you need.



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. Visit EnergyRight.com for more energy-saving tips and recommendations.


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The roar of the B-17 still reverberates through the heritage of Halls

Story by Mark Johnson • Photographs by Robin Conover

There's a place in West Tennessee called Halls, an agricultural town of roughly 2,000 residents surrounded by acre upon acre of Lauderdale County soybean, corn and cotton fields. This was my next stop after spending time in McNairy County's Selmer during an August swing through the western part of our state. (Read about Selmer in the October 2026 edition of *The Tennessee Magazine*.)

On the morning of Aug. 20, I left Selmer and headed northwest to Jackson on Highway 45. Then, I picked up highways 412 and 54, which led me through Bells, Alamo, Maury City, Frog Jump, Gates and on into Halls. As I headed northwest, the land flattened into broad expanses of row crops interrupted only by clusters of trees that signaled either another town or a river.

I entered Halls on South Church Street, passing a Dollar General store, a Food Rite grocery and a number of low industrial buildings that reminded me of Quonset huts, the prefab structures that housed American soldiers during World War II. The comparison couldn't have been more fitting.

I'll elaborate on this in a minute.

Before I knew it, I found myself at a traffic light at the intersection of Church and Main, the heart of downtown Halls. I was surrounded by the familiar trappings of small-town America: mostly one- and two-story brick storefronts built close to the sidewalk, a hometown bank on one corner, locally owned shops and businesses on the others, with the railroad corridor just a block away. Nothing towers over anything else, and while I waited for the light to change, I could see remarkably far in every direction — past awnings, stenciled plate-glass windows and old commercial buildings to where the town simply begins to thin out. Not a single other car was in sight.

It's Halls, y'all ...



Town of Halls
Contact: 731-836-9653
townofhallstn.us

The downtown business district itself is compact, extending only a few blocks in either direction from the intersection. Within roughly a quarter mile, the tight storefronts begin giving way to houses, churches, newer businesses and crop fields.

The light turned green, and I made a left onto Main. Immediately, my GPS told me I'd arrived at my Airbnb destination. I pulled into a small parking area flanked on one side by an open-air pavilion and on the other, a new-ish-looking marketplace, like a strip mall but with much more style and character. Though most of it was one story, the center of the structure featured a second floor with a decorative tower. I would soon learn that this was Hansbrough's Market, considered one of the main community centerpieces of the town. Storefronts included a bakery and coffee shop, an attorney's office, a gift shop and art studio, a nail shop (for fingers, not for carpentry), a barbecue stand and a hot dog place.

My lodging of the night was on the second floor.

I parked and stepped out. Even at 2 p.m. on a Thursday, the town was nearly silent. No traffic. No train rumbling past. No voices. Just a subtle chorus of bird songs.

It was time to try something I'd planned weeks ago when I was preparing for this trip. Closing my eyes, I





Above, murals and window artwork across town were done by local artist Chandler Reed.

Hillary Wheeler and her aunt ,Pat Higdon, greet visitors at the Veterans' Museum. Pat and her husband were critical in creating and continuing the museum.



Chelsea Olds touches up a cake at HaddieJo's Bakery.

tried to imagine myself standing in the exact same spot at the same time of day — but in 1944.

Boom, I was there, but everything was different. Most obvious is an incredible wall of noise coming from the skies, so loud that I consider covering my ears. Looking up, I see the source — a never-ending parade of low-flying B-17 bombers thundering across the sky, one behind the other, in formation. The ground beneath me vibrates with the din.

But that's not the only source of noise. As opposed to the modern-day empty streets, these roads are teeming with military vehicles — brown and olive-drab jeeps, cargo trucks with canvas tops, and Ford and Chevrolet staff cars. Groups of soldiers walk along the sidewalks, entering and exiting storefronts and shouting to one another. A Glenn Miller tune drifts from an open doorway.

A few soldiers, I notice, are moving in and out of the two-story homes that line nearby streets. In the backyards, I see ladies feeding chickens and an occasional bawling milk cow.

Wow. Things were hopping around here in 1944.

Halls, you see, was home to one of the largest inland Army air bases east of the Mississippi during the Second World War. Originally meant to be located at nearby Dyersburg, the facility was named Dyersburg Army Air Base and operated from 1942 through the end of the war in 1945. The sprawling installation was tasked with training nearly 8,000 airmen — particularly B-17 Flying Fortress crews — before they were sent overseas to the European theater, there to lay a whooping on the Nazis. These crewmen represented, by some estimates, around 12% of the B-17 crewmen who ultimately served with the Eighth Air Force in Europe.

At its wartime peak, the base brought an extraordinary influx of military personnel, aircraft, vehicles and activity to the county, essentially overtaking the tiny village of Halls and at least doubling its population. With military housing filled to capacity, almost every local family with extra space in their home hosted soldiers during those years. For a tiny West Tennessee town, Halls played an outsized role in the war effort.

Not many small towns can boast that.

I carried my stuff up to the tidy, one-room apartment, dropped it off, and headed back out to my main stop of the day — officially called the Veterans' Museum at Dyersburg Army Air Base.

This was a short drive, only 2 miles from downtown. My route led me past a bevy of industrial buildings and the towering bins and elevators of the Hurt Seed Company, a major player in the nation's agricultural seed industry. This is also where much of the garden and crop seed for the Tennessee Farmers Co-op system has been processed for many years.

I found the museum, a one-story brick building, amidst a sea of concrete — the remnants of the long-defunct base. The glare of the midday sun reflecting off the concrete surrounding the building was



Josh Bizzle, owner of Hi-Octane Red Head Barbecue, removes a pork butt from the smoker. Once the barbecue is sold out, that's all for the day!



Above, the Veterans' Museum holds an incredible collection of artifacts, photographs and memorabilia from the historic Dyersburg Army Air Base. Below, surrounding Halls you'll find farmland, and the compact downtown business district boasts welcoming storefronts.





blinding, and I was glad to duck inside to escape the stifling heat. Upon entering, I was greeted by tour guide Hillary Wheeler, museum director Rebecca Carmack-Summar and board chair Pat Higdon, a co-founder of the facility. These ladies couldn't have been more welcoming.

Before Hillary gave me a fascinating tour through multiple rooms filled with thousands of pieces of memorabilia, I sat down with Pat and Rebecca.

"It was both an exciting time and a challenging time for Halls after the base moved in," said Pat, who taught American history and economics at the nearby high school for 30 years. "The Army requisitioned around 2,600 acres, and many people lost homes and cropland, while others found steady work. The war was ever-present. More than 100 airmen died in training accidents while stationed here, and B-17s were taking off and landing 24 hours a day. The noise was so bad that people's chickens stopped laying eggs and their cows stopped giving milk."

But it wasn't all bad, Rebecca added.

"Many people met their husbands and wives and started families here over those years," she pointed out. "Much of our museum is dedicated to the experiences of those families. Every year, people who remember this place fondly come back to visit."

Rebecca told me that the base continued to be an important part of the community long after it closed in 1945. In fact, nearly every local I interviewed told me they learned how to drive on the vast expanses of concrete or attended high school bonfires there or hunted doves in the grain fields that eventually overtook the runways. Over the past 80 years, the base has transitioned from the main identity of Halls to a unique thread in the town's fabric. For today's residents, it's simply what they grew up with, as if *every* small town had its own WWII air base.

Following the museum tour, Pat drove me around the base and parts of the town, pointing out homes, buildings and old facilities that were once beehives of activity. As the sun dipped into an orange sky, I was sad to say my goodbyes to the ladies of the museum.

After a good night's sleep in my apartment at Hansbrough's Market, I decided to stroll around the place in search of caffeine. I found it in spades at HaddieJo's Bakery, along with good conversation with employee Addie Hurt. Armed with the bizarre but delicious "dirty" energy drink that Addie had recommended, I walked over to Hot Diggity Dogs gourmet hot dog stand where manager Donna Ward presented me with a scrumptious chili cheese dog. While chatting with Donna, Josh Bizzle, owner of Hi-Octane Red Head Barbecue — Hot Diggity's neighbor — walked over with, hands down, the best bowl of baked beans I've ever tasted.

Our little group sat under the pavilion, nibblin' on baked beans and chili dogs, chatting about the singular history and down-home flavor of the village of Halls.

The skies were quiet, and the town was at peace. tn

Learn more about the Veterans' Museum at DYAAB:
dyaab.us

Tennessee Events

Festivals, celebrations and other happenings around the state

NOV. 19–21

Holiday Lighting Weekend

Graceland, Memphis.
800-238-2000 or graceland.com

The Holiday Lighting Weekend kicks off the holiday season at Elvis Presley's Graceland in Memphis.

Thursday evening is the Holiday Lighting Ceremony, a free event where the Christmas lights at Graceland are switched on. Also on Thursday night is Graceland Unwrapped: After Dark — a chance for guests to see what the holidays were like when Elvis was there at Graceland.

Friday night is the Jingle Jam Holiday Party at The Guest House at Graceland. Guests are encouraged to wear festive clothes or pajamas and celebrate with host Elvis Radio DJ Argo and with 2026 Ultimate Elvis Tribute Artist Contest winner Finley Watkins.

On Saturday is Elvis Unbuttoned: Archives Show & Tell with Graceland's vice president of archives and exhibits, Angie Marchese, where guests can view rarely seen items. Saturday evening is Dean Z's Rockin' Christmas Show, where 2013 Ultimate Elvis Tribute Artist Contest champion Dean Z performs classic Christmas hits.

For more information on the Holiday Lighting Weekend and the holiday season at Elvis Presley's Graceland (including Christmas tours), please go to graceland.com.





Photos courtesy of Elvis Presley's Graceland

West Tennessee

NOV. 13–DEC. 30
Let it Glow Light Show, Drive-Thru and Walk-Thru
Discovery Park of America, Union City. 731-885-5455 or discoveryparkofamerica.com

NOV. 13–FEB. 14
Lantern Festival
Memphis Zoo. 901-333-6500 or memphiszoo.org

NOV. 19–DEC. 23
Christmas at Graceland
Graceland, Memphis. 800-238-2000 or graceland.com

NOV. 20
Santa, Snow and Cocoa
West Tennessee Delta Heritage Center/Tina Turner Museum, Brownsville. 731-779-9000 or westtnheritage.com/events

NOV. 20–22
USJ Holiday Mart
Carl Perkins Civic Center, Jackson. usjholidaymart@usjbruins.org or usjbruins.org/support-usj/holiday-mart

NOV. 28
'Home Alone in Concert'
Orpheum Theatre, Memphis. 901-525-3000 or orpheum-memphis.com

DEC. 1–6
'The Great Gatsby'
Orpheum Theatre, Memphis. 901-525-3000 or orpheum-memphis.com

DEC. 3
Three Dog Night
Graceland Soundstage, Memphis. 877-777-0606 or gracelandlive.com/shows

DEC. 5
Jay Leno
Graceland Soundstage, Memphis. 877-777-0606 or gracelandlive.com/shows

Middle Tennessee

NOV. 6–7
The Christmas Sampler
The Center, Springfield. christmassampler@gmail.com or facebook.com/thechristmassampler

NOV. 6–7
Fall All Seasons Craft Fair and More
Monterey Station, Cowan. 931-308-3802 or sites.google.com/view/eventswithsherrie

NOV. 6–8
November Book Sale
Williamson County Public Library, Franklin. 615-423-2268 or wcpltn.org/393/2026-book-sales

NOV. 7
Pumpkin Destruction
McCulleys Amazin' Acres, Sparta. 931-761-2971 or amazinacres.com

NOV. 13–14
10th Quilt Show and Boutique
Dickson First Methodist Church.
931-209-3337 or facebook.com/WOWE2012

NOV. 13–15
Christmas Village 2026
The Fairgrounds Nashville. 615-256-2726
or christmasvillage.org

NOV. 13–DEC. 31
Christmas in Granville
Historic Granville. 931-653-4151 or
granvilletn.com/christmas-in-granville

NOV. 20–22
48th Annual Santa's Workshop
Hyder-Burks Agricultural Pavilion, Cookeville.
931-510-3279 or santasworkshoptn.com

NOV. 22
Nutcracker Tea
Fisher Center for the Performing Arts at
Belmont University, Nashville.
615-297-2966 or nashvilleballet.com

NOV. 27–DEC. 23
Holly Jolly Festival of Lights
Lucky Ladd Farms, Eagleville.
615-274-3786 or luckyladdfarms.com

NOV. 27–DEC. 27
'Paul Vasterling's Nashville's Nutcracker'
Andrew Jackson Hall, Nashville.
615-297-2966 or nashvilleballet.com

East Tennessee

NOV. 6–FEB. 15
Smoky Mountain Winterfest
Sevierville, Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg.
info@visitsevierville.com or
visitsevierville.com/Winterfest.aspx

NOV. 15
Speedway in Lights 5K
Bristol Motor Speedway.
423-989-6974 or speedwaycharities.org

NOV. 22
Turkey Trails
Tennessee River Park Pavilion 2,
Chattanooga. 760-669-6471 or
support@bodiesrc.com

tnmagazine.org/events

NOV. 24–29
'Death Becomes Her'
Tennessee Theatre, Knoxville. 865-684-1200
or tennesseetheatre.com/events

NOV. 28
The Hungry Turkey Chattanooga
Coolidge Park, Chattanooga.
865-300-6722 or jay@runrhino.run

DEC. 5
64th Annual Christmas Parade
Near Sevier County Courthouse, Sevierville.
info@visitsevierville.com or
scoc.org/ChristmasParade.aspx

Submit your events

The Tennessee Magazine publishes event listings as space allows, giving preference to events of regional or statewide interest and those that are annual or one-time happenings. The magazine does not publish recurring events such as those held weekly.

The magazine assumes no responsibility for the accuracy of information submitted for publication and advises calling or emailing ahead to confirm dates, locations, times and possible admission fees.

To be included in the calendar, visit our website, **tnmagazine.org**, and fill out the submission form. You can also email listings to **events@tnmagazine.org** or send them to: **Tennessee Events, P.O. Box 100912, Nashville, TN 37224.**

Please include the name of the event, where it will be held (both town and physical location), a phone number readers can call for more information and an email or website address, if applicable, where readers can learn more.

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 magazine, we cannot guarantee publication. Find a complete listing of submissions we've received at **tnmagazine.org/events**.

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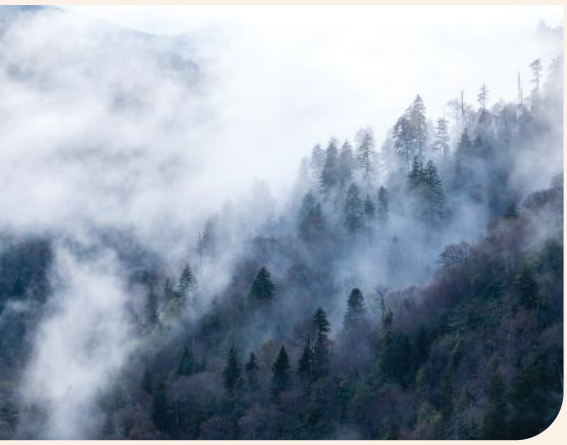
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I hereby certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.
— Chris Kirk, Editor

Call for Entries

Shutterbug Showcase



In our next Shutterbug Photography Contest, *The Tennessee Magazine* wants to see how you creatively capture **"Weather."** It's a broad topic, so stretch your skills to show us spectacular scenes beyond simple sunset snapshots.

Tennessee's weather can be wildly wacky, offering any number of ways to tackle this theme in the Volunteer State, but the contest is open to photos taken anywhere.

The Tennessee Magazine will name first-, second- and third-place winners as well as honorable mention recipients in each division — **Shutterbug, Junior Shutterbug** (ages 17 and younger) and **Professional**. As you accept this challenge, please stay safe and remain weather-aware. We don't want anyone to find themselves in trouble in the name of the Shutterbug contest.

SHUTTERBUG ASSIGNMENT

"Weather"

SUBMISSIONS — ONLINE ENTRIES ONLY

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

Entries must be entered online by the end of the day on Friday, Jan. 15. Winners will be published in the March 2027 issue.

PRIZE PACKAGES

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

CONTEST RULES

1. The contest is open to amateur and professional photographers. For the purposes of this competition, you are considered a professional if you regularly sell your images or garner more than 50% of your income from photography.

2. Photographs must have been taken by you.

3. A photographer can enter no more than three photographs. There is no cost to enter.

4. All entries must be made online. We won't accept prints for this contest. Sign on to tnmagazine.org and click on "Entry Forms" under "Contests." Complete the form, and upload your photograph(s).

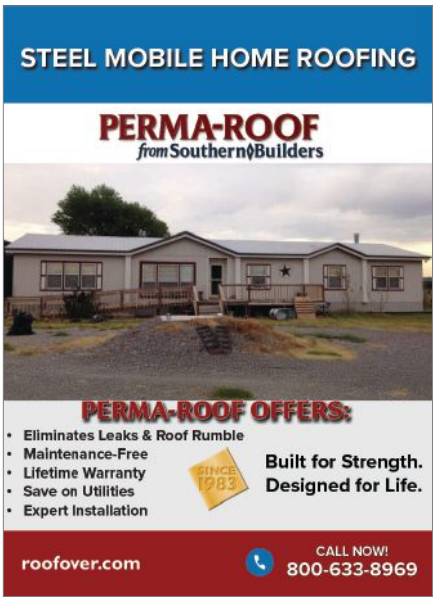
5. Employees of Tennessee's electric cooperatives and their immediate families are not eligible to win.

6. Please include the name of each recognizable person, if any other than yourself, in your photograph. It is the photographer's responsibility to have the subject's permission to enter his or her image in the contest. You must include the subject's name and contact information with your submission. Omitting any of this information can result in disqualification.

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

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2027 Calendar
Featuring photos by Robin Conover, these 2027 calendars will be ready to ship in time for the holidays!

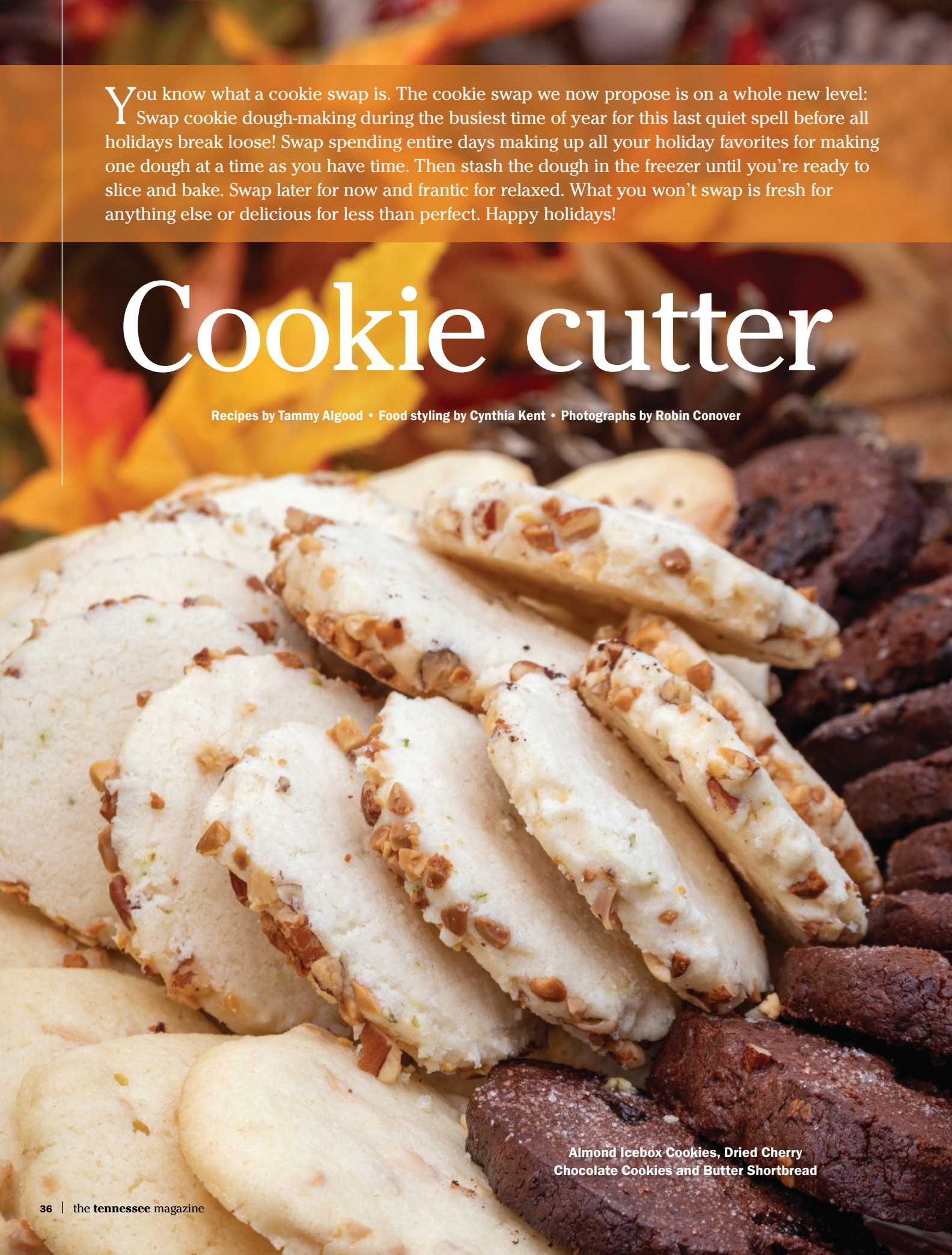
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You know what a cookie swap is. The cookie swap we now propose is on a whole new level: Swap cookie dough-making during the busiest time of year for this last quiet spell before all holidays break loose! Swap spending entire days making up all your holiday favorites for making one dough at a time as you have time. Then stash the dough in the freezer until you're ready to slice and bake. Swap later for now and frantic for relaxed. What you won't swap is fresh for anything else or delicious for less than perfect. Happy holidays!

Cookie cutter

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



Almond Icebox Cookies, Dried Cherry Chocolate Cookies and Butter Shortbread

Dried Cherry Chocolate Cookies

Yield: about 20 cookies

- **1½ cups all-purpose flour**
- **⅓ cup unsweetened cocoa**
- **½ teaspoon salt**
- **¾ cup (1½ sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature**
- **⅓ cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar, divided**
- **2 egg yolks**
- **¼ cup chopped dried cherries**
- **¼ cup semisweet mini chocolate chips**

Stir together the flour, cocoa and salt in a medium bowl and set aside.

Beat the butter and ⅓ cup of the sugar in the bowl of an electric mixer on medium speed until fluffy, about 2 minutes. Add the egg yolks and beat another minute.

Reduce the mixer speed to low and add the flour mixture half at a time, beating just until combined. Stir in the cherries and chocolate chips.

Place a large piece of plastic wrap on the counter and transfer the dough on top. Form a log and wrap tightly. Refrigerate at least 2 hours or overnight. The dough can also be frozen up to 3 months. If freezing, add another layer of plastic wrap and label/date the outside. Thaw in the refrigerator overnight, and bake as directed.

When ready to bake, preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Unwrap the dough and slice into ⅓-inch slices. Place on the baking sheet at least an inch apart. Sprinkle the tops with the remaining 2 tablespoons of sugar.

Bake for 20 minutes. Allow to cool on the baking sheet on a wire rack. If storing, place in an airtight container.

Butter Shortbread

Three equally incredible variations are listed below!

Yield: around 5 dozen

- **3½ cups all-purpose flour**
- **¾ cup sugar**
- **1 cup finely chopped pecans, almonds or walnuts**
- **1 cup unsalted butter, softened**

In a medium bowl, stir together the flour and sugar. Set aside. Place the nuts in a shallow rimmed pan and set aside.

In the bowl of an electric mixer, beat the butter at medium speed for 2 minutes until creamy. Gradually add the flour mixture, blending completely.

Divide the dough in half and shape into logs around 1½ inches in diameter. Roll in the nuts until evenly coated and place on a piece of plastic wrap. Repeat with the other log. Wrap tightly and refrigerate at least 2 hours or overnight. The dough can also be frozen up to 3 months. Thaw in the refrigerator overnight, and bake as directed.

When ready to bake, preheat the oven to 300 degrees and line a rimless baking sheet with parchment paper. Cut into ¼-inch slices and place at least an inch apart on the baking sheet. Bake for 20 to 22 minutes or until golden-brown. Cool on the baking sheet for 5 minutes, then transfer to wire racks to cool completely. Store in an airtight container.

Variation 1: Add 1 tablespoon slightly crushed dried lavender to the flour mixture and proceed as directed. I use a mortar and pestle.

Variation 2: Add 1 tablespoon finely grated lemon, lime or orange zest to the flour mixture and proceed as directed.

Variation 3: Add ¼ cup finely chopped bittersweet chocolate to the flour mixture and proceed as directed.

Pecan Refrigerator Shortbread

Yield: around 16 cookies

- **1 cup all-purpose flour**
- **½ cup cornstarch**
- **½ cup powdered sugar**
- **¾ cup chopped candied pineapple or cherries (red or green or a mixture)**
- **½ cup chopped pecans**
- **¾ cup unsalted butter, softened**

In a medium bowl, stir together the flour, cornstarch and powdered sugar. Add the candied fruit and nuts, tossing well to evenly coat. Set aside.

In the bowl of an electric mixer, beat the butter at medium speed for 2 minutes until creamy. Gradually add the flour mixture and mix until well blended. Place the dough onto a piece of plastic wrap and shape into a roll. Tightly wrap, then wrap in aluminum foil. Refrigerate for at least 4 hours or overnight. It can also be frozen up to 3 months. Thaw in the refrigerator overnight, and bake as directed.

When ready to bake, preheat the oven to 375 degrees and line a rimless baking sheet with parchment paper. Cut the roll into ¼-inch slices and place on the baking sheet at least an inch apart. Bake for 9 to 11 minutes or until golden-brown. Immediately transfer to wire racks to cool completely. Store in an airtight container.

Nutty Brown Sugar Cookies

Yield: around 5 dozen

- **3½ cups all-purpose flour**
- **1 teaspoon baking soda**
- **1 teaspoon cream of tartar**
- **¾ teaspoon salt**

- **2 cups light brown sugar**
- **1 cup unsalted butter, softened**
- **2 eggs**
- **2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract**
- **1 cup chopped walnuts or pecans**

In a medium bowl, stir together the flour, baking soda, cream of tartar and salt. Set aside.

In the bowl of an electric mixer, cream the sugar and butter at medium speed for 2 minutes. Add the eggs, one at a time, blending well after each addition. Stir in the vanilla.

Reduce the mixer speed to low and gradually add the flour mixture until well blended. Stir in the nuts.

Divide the dough in half and place each on a piece of plastic wrap. Form into logs no more than 2 inches in diameter. Wrap tightly and refrigerate at least 2 hours or overnight. The dough can also be frozen up to 1 month. Thaw in the refrigerator overnight, and bake as directed.

When ready to bake, preheat the oven to 375 degrees and line a rimless baking sheet with parchment paper. Cut into ¼-inch slices and place 1½ inches apart on the prepared sheet. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes or until golden-brown around the edges. Transfer to wire racks to cool completely. Store in an airtight container.

Almond Icebox Cookies

Yield: about 4 dozen cookies

- **2¼ cups all-purpose flour**
- **½ teaspoon salt**
- **1 cup unsalted butter, softened**
- **1 cup sugar**
- **1 egg**
- **2 teaspoons pure almond extract**
- **⅔ cup slivered or sliced almonds**

In a medium bowl, stir together the flour and salt. Set aside.

In the bowl of an electric mixer, cream the butter and sugar at medium speed for 2 minutes or until creamy. Add the egg and extract, blending well.

Reduce the mixer speed to medium-low and gradually add the flour mixture. When thoroughly blended, stir in the almonds. Cover and refrigerate 1 hour.

Divide the dough in half and place each on a piece of plastic wrap. Shape into logs around 6 inches in length. Wrap again over the plastic wrap in parchment or waxed paper and freeze for at least 1 hour or until firm.

When ready to bake, preheat the oven to 350 degrees and line a rimless baking sheet with parchment paper. Cut into ¼-inch slices and place 1 inch apart on the prepared sheet. Bake for 12 minutes or until just slightly golden-brown. Transfer to wire racks to cool completely. Store in an airtight container.

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

- These cookie doughs are rolled into large cylinders or logs after mixing. They are wrapped in either plastic, parchment or waxed paper and placed in the refrigerator to thoroughly chill and firm up.
- Creaming the butter and sugar of cookie dough is always the first step to success. This incorporates air into the mixture and gives the baked cookies a nice, light texture.
- Although it isn't necessary, if you have superfine sugar, it easily creams with the butter.
- Allowing the dough to spend the night in the refrigerator is best if you have the time because the dough can then be sliced uniformly.
- Chilled dough has the added benefit of keeping cookies from spreading too much when placed in the oven.

Ask Chef Tammy

Carl writes, "How do I prepare Brussels sprouts for cooking?"

Carl, start by removing any yellow looking outer leaves, and trim the stem end. Using a sharp paring knife, cut an X in the core end. This allows the sprouts to cook evenly.

Janie asks, "How much corn do I use to substitute for the kernels cut from an ear?"

Jamie, assuming the recipe calls for a medium ear of corn, you will need right between ⅓ and ½ cup of kernels.

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

Throw Yourself a Bone

Full tang stainless steel blade with natural bone handle —now ***ONLY $79!***

The very best hunting knives possess a perfect balance of form and function. They're carefully constructed from fine materials, but also have that little something extra to connect the owner with nature.

If you're on the hunt for a knife that combines impeccable craftsmanship with a sense of wonder, the **$79 *Huntsman Blade*** is the trophy you're looking for.

The blade is full tang, meaning it doesn't stop at the handle but extends to the length of the grip for the ultimate in strength. The blade is made from 420 surgical steel, famed for its sharpness and its resistance to corrosion.

The handle is made from genuine natural bone, and features decorative wood spacers and a hand-carved motif of two overlapping feathers— a reminder for you to respect and connect with the natural world.

This fusion of substance and style can garner a high price tag out in the marketplace. In fact, we found full tang, stainless steel blades with bone handles in excess of $2,000. Well, that won't cut it around here. We have mastered the hunt for the best deal, and in turn pass the spoils on to our customers.

But we don't stop there. While supplies last, we'll include a pair of $99 Stauer pocket binoculars *and* a genuine leather sheath **FREE** when you purchase the ***Huntsman Blade***.

Your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed. Feel the knife in your hands, wear it on your hip, inspect the impeccable craftsmanship. If you don't feel like we cut you a fair deal, send it back within 30 days for a complete refund of the item price.

Limited Reserves. A deal like this won't last long. We have only 1120 ***Huntsman Blades*** for this ad only. Don't let this beauty slip through your fingers. Call today!

EXCLUSIVE FREE
Stauer® Pocket Binoculars
-a $99 value-
with purchase of Huntsman Blade





BONUS! Call today and you'll also receive this genuine leather sheath!

What Stauer Clients Are Saying About Our Knives

★★★★★
"This knife is beautiful!"
— J., La Crescent, MN

★★★★★
"The feel of this knife is unbelievable...this is an incredibly fine instrument."
— H., Arvada, CO

Huntsman Blade ~~$249~~*

Offer Code Price Only **$79** + S&P Save $170

1-800-333-2045

Your Insider Offer Code: HBK360-03

You must use the insider offer code to get our special price.

ACCREDITED BUSINESS BBB **Rating of A+**

Stauer® 14091 Southcross Drive W., Dept. HBK360-03
Burnsville, Minnesota 55337 www.stauer.com

**Discount is only for customers who use the offer code versus the listed original Stauer.com price.*

California residents please call 1-800-333-2045 regarding Proposition 65 regulations before purchasing this product.

• 12" overall length; 6 ½" stainless steel full tang blade • Genuine bone handle with brass hand guard & bolsters • Includes genuine leather sheath

Stauer... *Afford the Extraordinary.*®

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.



September's flag location

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@tnmagazine.org. Entries must be postmarked or received via email by Tuesday, Dec. 1. Winners will be published in the January issue of *The Tennessee Magazine*.

September flag spotters

Thanks for the postcards and emails again this month identifying the location of the flag, left, which was found next to the cutting board on page 38.

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

Lisa Payne
Eads, Chickasaw EC

Debra Smith
White House, Cumberland EMC

Blake Sewell
Greenback, Fort Loudoun EC

Artist's Palette Assignment for January

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 — January, 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, Dec. 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 January 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 November Winners

14–18 AGE GROUP WINNERS



FIRST PLACE: Aaron Benson,
18, Middle Tennessee Electric



SECOND PLACE: Nasah McKay,
15, Meriwether Lewis EC



THIRD PLACE: Beckhem Reid,
14, Middle Tennessee Electric

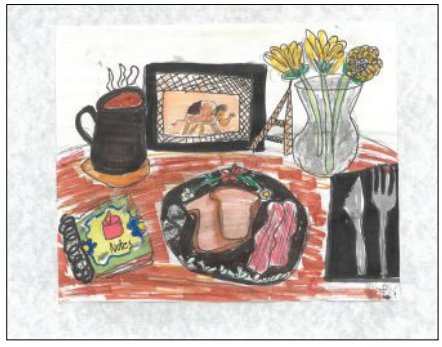
9–13 AGE GROUP WINNERS



FIRST PLACE: Clara Hoey,
10, Middle Tennessee Electric



SECOND PLACE: Mary Elizabeth Graham,
11, Middle Tennessee Electric

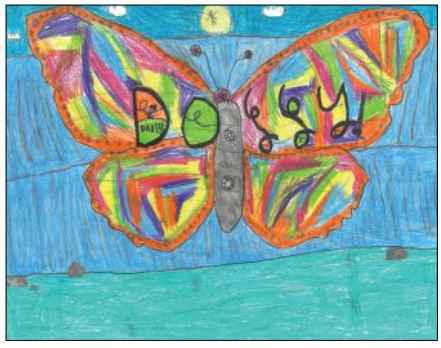


THIRD PLACE: Lillian Bergman,
10, Cumberland EMC

8 AND YOUNGER AGE GROUP WINNERS



FIRST PLACE: Van Hutchinson,
8, Middle Tennessee Electric



SECOND PLACE: Emery Tipps,
8, Middle Tennessee Electric



THIRD PLACE: Iris Martin,
8, Cumberland EMC

Point of View

by Robin Conover



"On the Wings of a Monarch," Radnor Lake State Park, Nashville. Canon EOS R5 Mark II, EF 200-400 mm *f*4 L IS USM with 1.4 Ext at 560mm, ISO 1200, *f*-5.6 at 1/1,250 second, Gitzo tripod

Watching monarch butterflies float silently on a breeze before gently landing on delicate blooms can be one of the most meaningful moments in nature. It is inspiring to me that any survive the annual migration of thousands of miles.

Seeing their distinctive orange and black wings flit by immediately brings a smile to my face. As a photographer with the goal of capturing a monarch in flight, that smile can quickly fade as these creatures seem to be almost constantly and erratically on the move.

Capturing this image took a fast shutter speed, the perfect angle of light to backlight the subject and an autofocus setting chosen to identify fast movement within the frame. While this image isn't perfectly sharp, I accomplished most of what I set out to do.

For perspective, these amazing creatures weigh an average of only half a gram but spend about two months in the fall migrating thousands of miles. Beginning in August, the eastern population takes flight. They can travel up to 100 miles a day toward their overwintering grounds in Mexico.

Monarch sightings in Tennessee generally increase in September and October during their southern migration. It's critical that they stop along the way to feed on the nectar of late-blooming summer flowers.

If you are interested in attracting more butterflies to your yard next year, November is one of the best times in Tennessee to sow native wildflower seeds, including milkweed, for next year.

Some Tennessee state parks have been working in recent years to restore wildflowers and native grasslands. To my eye, the initiative seems to be definitely helping populations of several different species of butterflies, moths and ground-nesting birds.

Visiting Radnor Lake in October, I witnessed several more monarchs than I have in years past. This year I've also been using an interesting smartphone app called "Project Monarch" to track individuals on their journeys.

In early September, I was introduced to the project at the Cape May Point Arts and Science Center in New Jersey. Project Monarch is an ongoing, collaborative scientific project with nearly 80 organizations combining efforts to tag monarchs with tiny transmitters. It sounds implausible, but scientists and volunteers are combining efforts across the country to capture healthy monarchs, carefully glue a tiny transmitter to each thorax and release them.

Observing the process, I saw that affixing a butterfly with a transmitter is a very delicate and precise venture yet very doable. Seven were successfully tagged and released within an hour.

The tiny BluMorpho transmitters being deployed for the first time in this project are powered by tiny solar panels. They transmit location data that can be viewed in real time on the app. I've watched several butterflies with the initials CMP, identifying where they were tagged, move hundreds of miles south. My dream is to capture an image of one of the tagged monarchs during this fall migration.

As of the date of this writing, some 1,500 monarchs of the 3,650 goal have been tagged at many different locations across the U.S. and are being tracked across their migration routes. This will provide a much expanded database of knowledge for scientists to study the globally endangered monarch butterflies.

As I've witnessed the migration this year, you can bet I threw some butterfly kisses skyward. tn

TVA EnergyRight®

A house full of guests shouldn't mean a bill full of surprises.

Between hosting and heating, November asks a lot of your home. A free DIY Home Energy Assessment helps you find where energy is slipping out, so you can fix it before the season gets busier.

Even more to be thankful for this season:

A **$50 rebate** on an HVAC tune-up to catch small problems before they become big ones.

A **$300 rebate** on duct sealing to help stop energy loss.



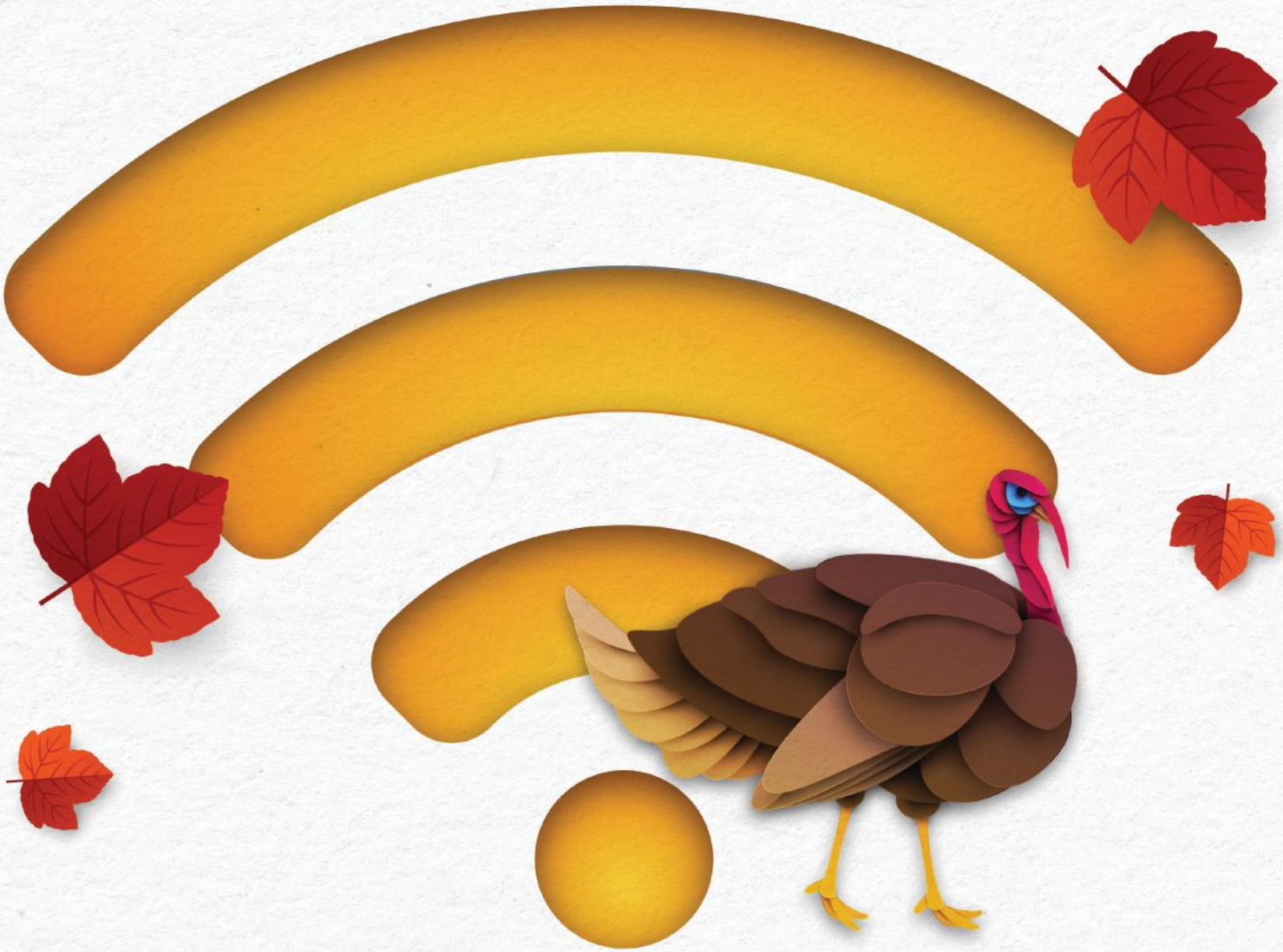
Ready to get started?

Take your free assessment at EnergyRight.com and find the rebates that can help you save.

Terms and conditions apply. All TVA EnergyRight rebate-eligible upgrades must be installed by a TVA-vetted member of the Quality Contractor Network. All upgrades are eligible for program financing with participating local power companies.

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The power of human connections

Happy Thanksgiving!



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This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.