

# Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives  
serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

## Claverack REC

570-265-2167

1-800-326-9799

Email: [mail@claverack.com](mailto:mail@claverack.com)

Website: <http://www.claverack.com>

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

James E. Luce, Zone 6  
Chairman

570-833-5668

Charles R. Bullock, Zone 7  
Vice Chairman

570-280-8470

Steven T. Sliwinski, Zone 9  
Secretary/Treasurer

570-364-5250

Danise C. Fairchild, Zone 1  
Vice Secretary/Treasurer

570-265-3599

Dr. Robert R. Faux, Zone 2

570-574-3531

Angela S. Joines, Zone 3

570-756-4979

Gary L. Hennip, Zone 4

570-247-7233

Vacant, Zone 5

Charles R. McNamara, Zone 8

570-553-4385

Bobbi Kilmer

President & CEO

### Staff

Annette Bender, *Executive Assistant*

Steve Allabaugh, *Director, Engineering*

Doug Nichols, *Director, Operations*

Shelley Young, *Director, Financial Services*

Brian Zeidner, *Director, Member Services*

### Office Hours

Monday through Friday

7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Jeff Fetzer, CCC, *Local Pages Editor*

## Guest Column



# Reflecting on member service experiences

by Brian Zeidner, *Director of Member Services*

I AM occasionally invited to write a guest column for *Penn Lines*, and I always enjoy communicating with members in this way. As I thought of potential topics, I found myself reflecting on some of my most memorable experiences during the time I have worked in the co-op's member services department.

One of the duties I have is to help members discover what is causing anomalies in their bills — specifically, what is causing a high bill.

Many years ago, I helped one gentleman at the front counter. We reviewed his bills, and they were obviously much higher than normal.

I asked the standard questions: Did he have additional appliances? Was there trouble with the well pump or water heater? Were pool pumps, dehumidifiers, electric heaters, block heaters, etc. being used?

Running out of routine questions, I asked if he had recently acquired any tropical fish or exotic pets. He paused, looked perplexed and told me his kids had recently won an iguana at the fair. Then I asked how they kept the reptile warm. It turns out a 1,500-watt heating device for the iguana was adding about \$100 a month to his electric bill!

Another experience occurred while I was presenting a safety demonstration using our tabletop display to a group of very engaged senior citizens. This was a change from my usual audience of fourth-graders, who often have plenty of stories and occasionally some bizarre questions regarding electricity and safety.


After discussing conductors like

metal, copper and water, and insulators like rubber, plastic and glass, I emphasized the danger of letting our bodies become conductors for electricity. I worked my way through the model. Several vehicles on the model demonstrate how rubber tires are generally not good conductors of electricity.

During the question-and-answer period following the presentation, one very astute senior asked if studded snow tires would be a good conductor of electricity. I was stumped. I had never thought about this and was surprised one of my fourth-graders had not previously posed that question!

One day I received a call from a very reputable farm and home contractor in our area, who does a fair amount of work for Claverack members. He advised me of a member who had a very deteriorated electrical service, going as far as expressing concern about a potential house fire.

Because the cost of the repair was significant and this member was on a very limited income, the situation created a severe hardship. The contractor had decided to donate his labor to help this member and wondered if the cooperative would be willing to help with the cost of the electrical components? We gladly offered to help using money from our member assistance funds.

Reflecting on these experiences makes me realize how fortunate I am to serve you, our members. I am humbled by the opportunities and proud to be an employee and a member of this great experience. 

# Nation's top-rated arts camp draws kids from around globe to Bradford County

By Jeff Fetzer

THE NATION'S top-rated arts camp hides along a back road in Bradford County.

Unless you live nearby, chances are you've never heard of Camp Ballibay. But the Wylusing Township summer camp served by Claverack REC has been churning out happy campers for more than 50 years from its remote location along Ballibay Road three miles northeast of Camptown.

The camp draws several hundred children and teens from all over the country and around the globe for its two- to four-week camps each summer. Some of the campers are already acting, singing or dancing professionally. Occasionally, they are the sons and daughters of celebrities. Many are simply kids with a passion for the arts seeking a welcoming environment to explore their creativity with like-minded peers.

"Our philosophy is to give campers a safe spot to explore the arts, to explore their interests to learn new things in an environment that is safe and supportive," says Christine Michener, dean of campers at Camp Ballibay during the



**JAMMING:** Camp Ballibay Executive Director John Jannone, a Claverack member, plays drums with a group of teens participating in the camp's Rock Farm. Jannone, whose parents started the art camp in Wyalusing Township in 1964, says Ballibay has been offering instruction in rock music since the early 1980s, more than a decade before competitors like School of Rock came onto the scene.

summer months, and a dance professional and teacher at a performing arts school in Philadelphia the remainder of the year.

The camp offers sessions for girls and boys between ages 8 and 16 in theater, art, music, dance, media and rock music, as well as camps in which the emphasis is on exploring a variety of art forms while also enjoying horseback riding, gardening and other outdoor activities offered on the 174-acre property.

Camp Ballibay has been the top-ranked art camp in the country since 2011 on the review-based website [campratingz.com](http://campratingz.com), and it maintains the highest rating among all summer camps in Pennsylvania on the site. Read through the overwhelmingly positive reviews from parents of children who have attended Ballibay and you'll notice consistent high praise for the freedom campers are given explore a variety of art forms while attending.

That's by design.

Camp Ballibay founders Gerard and Dorothy Jannone opened the camp in 1964 to provide youngsters with an alternative arts education environment, explains the Jannones' son and Camp Ballibay Executive Director John Jannone.

John Jannone, a Claverack member who was born and raised on the camp grounds, said his parents, both deceased, were educators who taught in New York and New Jersey public schools in the 1950s.

"They were very concerned with the rigidity and hierarchical nature of teaching that they saw in the public school system," Jannone says, "and my parents both believed that the best teaching was less structured, more playful, more collaborative and more fun. That's how kids were going to achieve maximal learning."

That is the concept the couple



**RHYTHM SECTION:** Ellie Taube, 13, of Margate, N.J., plays bass while Joe Papaccio, 13, of Hudson Valley, N.Y., joins in on drums during Rock Farm at Camp Ballibay in June. Rock campers form bands, create songs and put on a performance as part of their stay at the Bradford County arts camp.



**SHAPES OF THINGS:** Amber Jackson of LeRaysville helps a camper shape a clay jar in Camp Ballibay's Art Barn. Jackson, who interned with the camp this summer, is a Lock Haven University student majoring in art and early education. Her parents are Claverack members Doug and Kim Jackson.

brought to Camp Ballibay, originally called "The Farm," when it opened as an art and horseback camp in 1964. It was a concept informed by alternative education models of the early 20th century: Montessori, Summerhill and Waldorf.

Jannone says his parents, who had lived in Newark, N.J., before moving to Bradford County, purchased adjoining farm properties near Camptown in 1963



**TAKE A SPIN:** Camp Ballibay ceramics counselor Arianna Crawford of Spencer, N.Y., assists a student on the pottery wheel during the camp's opening summer camp session in June. Crawford began attending the camp at age 14, and the recent Oberlin College graduate has returned every year since.

and began working on their dream.

"That first summer there was not much," Jannone said. "There were two cabins for girls, one cabin for boys, and the office was in the original farmhouse. They built a little pole barn to be the dining hall and cooked all of the food in the office."

Jannone said 30 kids, all from New Jersey public schools, were the first attendees at the camp.

By the time John Jannone was born in 1969, his parents had left their teaching jobs and moved to Camp Ballibay, where they would remain the rest of their lives.

Jannone says though his father was quite active in the community, he didn't promote the camp locally.

"Around here, people viewed it as suspect," Jannone says. "They thought it was a hippie camp — it wasn't — so my parents kept it under wraps."

A long-time associate professor at Brooklyn College, Jannone says it has only been within the last 10 years that there has been some emphasis on promoting the camp to local residents. He notes, however, that the cost of the summer camps, which ranges from \$3,300 for the two-week camps to \$5,500 for a four-week session, tends to depress local attendance.

"The vast majority of the kids we get here are from North Jersey, North Carolina, Washington, D.C., and Brooklyn," Jannone says. "We also get a lot of kids from Texas, California and Canada. We had a bunch of kids here in our second session from China, and we always get a few kids from France. We have a reputation that extends well beyond the Northeast U.S."

It's a reputation enhanced by excellent reviews on camp websites and more than 50 years of word-of-mouth advertising, sometimes by the well-heeled and influential.

"We have children of celebrities here, and we have had a lot of kids who have become known, but we don't publicize that information," Jannone says. "We attract child professionals and occasionally children of celebrities because we are not dropping names



**DRAWING INSPIRATION:** A pair of aspiring young artists work on pen and ink drawings in the Art Barn at Camp Ballibay. The camp, served by Claverack in Bradford County's Wyalusing Township, is the top-ranked arts camp in the country, drawing about 250 students from around the globe for two- to four-week camping experiences focused on areas including visual arts, film, theater, music, rock music and dance.

and, in part, because of our total lack of treating them differently."

Jannone adds, however, that most of the campers are simply kids with a passion for an art form.

"When a child knows at 8 or 9 or 10 that they are an artist, that's unusual," Jannone says. "If they are more interested in their art or music than pop culture, it can be hard to make friends. So they come here and find many kids who are having a similar experience."

He says the beauty of the camp's natural setting is also a draw for campers, most of whom come from metropolitan areas. In addition, the camp maintains a low camper-to-staff ratio. The camp can accommodate a maximum of 150 students at a time and employs about 50 staff members.

The caliber of camp instructors is another big draw. For instance, this year's rock music camp, called Rock Farm, featured Jonathon "Boogie" Long of Baton Rouge, La., as head of the rock music program. Long, 28, has

*(continues on page 18d)*

**Top-rated Arts Camp**

*(continued from page 18c)*

been a touring musician since age 14 and is a past winner of Guitar Center's King of Blues contest for best unsigned blues guitarist in America. The camp's head of film and video, Niav Conty, is a freelance director, cinematographer, screenwriter and editor in New York City. She has won multiple awards for her work, and is currently developing a feature film shot entirely in Bradford County and around Camp Ballibay.

Christine Michener notes that in addition to having visiting artists and working professionals spend a portion of the summer at the camp, many of the cabin staff and camp counselors are hired through Camp America, a program that provides a 9-week work visa for European students who seek employment at summer camps in the United States.

"We have a lot of staff from England, Scotland, Germany, so campers get to interact with staff members from all over the world," Michener says.

Jannone, a Wyalusing High School graduate with a bachelor's degree in philosophy from Colgate University and a master's degree in electronic arts from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, says the formula for the camp's success created by his parents has passed the test of time.

About 75 to 80 percent of first-time campers return the following year, and about 50 percent of the staff do the same, according to Jannone. He points out his co-director at the camp, Kristin Alexander of Charleston, S.C., attended the camp as a student for four years before joining the staff in 1993. Alexander, who is on the dance faculty at

the College of Charleston, was named dean of campers at Ballibay in 1999 and has worked at the camp in a leadership capacity every year since.

"When they find this place, if it's what they are looking for, their loyalty is extreme," Jannone says. "The reason why we can be so good for the kids who need us is because we don't try to be everything to everyone. It's not about the business, it's about offering something to the kids who are searching for something."

Camp ceramics counselor Arianna Crawford of Spencer, N.Y, counts herself as a former camper who found what she was looking for at Camp Ballibay.

Crawford, an Athens High School graduate, began attending Camp Ballibay at age 14.

"This is my eighth summer, fourth working on staff, at Ballibay," says Crawford, who graduated from Oberlin College in May. "This is just about my favorite place in the world. This is a camp where you can do everything. It has a free-choice approach."

Joe Papaccio, 13, of Hudson Valley, N.Y., spends his time at camp banging away on the drums.

Papaccio, a third-year participant in the school's Rock Farm, says he's been to other summer camps but found them to be too regimented.

"I love it here," he says from behind a drum set. "It's a sanctuary for me. And it's beautiful here."

For more information about Camp Ballibay and its program offerings, visit [www.campballibay.com](http://www.campballibay.com). ☀

**Claverack to conduct member survey by phone**

Claverack will be conducting a member satisfaction survey by phone with the help of TSE Services in the coming weeks.

If you are one of the 250 members to receive a call, please participate so we can find out how we are doing and how we can better serve you.

The telephone survey will take five to seven minutes. Phone calls will be made Monday through Friday from 5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m., and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

**Going away for the winter?**

Claverack offers members who will be away from home for an extended period – including "snowbirds" who migrate to warmer climates for the winter – two convenient and timely ways to receive their electric bills while they are gone.

**ONLINE BILLING**

Claverack's SmartHub program gives members the ability to receive and pay electric bills electronically, either online or through the SmartHub mobile app available for smartphones and tablets.

With SmartHub, members receive an email notification when a new bill is generated. They can then pay their bill electronically using a checking account, MasterCard, Visa or debit card.

SmartHub participants also have access to their account information 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

To explore the features of SmartHub, visit the Claverack website, [www.claverack.com](http://www.claverack.com), and click on the SmartHub option on our home page.

**SEASONAL ADDRESS PROGRAM**

The co-op also offers a Seasonal Address Program that allows members to receive their electric bills at an alternate mailing address.

It's easy to sign up for the program: just call our billing department and provide your alternate address, along with the dates you expect to be away. During this period, your correspondence from Claverack will be mailed directly to the seasonal address, eliminating the need for the postal service to forward it to you.

For more information on the Seasonal Address Program or SmartHub, contact the Claverack office at 1-800-326-9799.

