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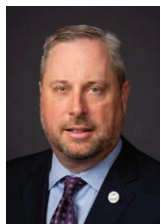
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 Randy Owen, field service technician for Mansfield-based Tri-County Rural Electric Cooperative, rings in the nation's semiquincentennial with a Liberty Bell replica he designed.

PHOTO BY
 COLIN P. MCGUIRE

An American Story: The Legacy of Rural Electrification



STEVE BRAME

AS AMERICA MARKS ITS 250TH BIRTHDAY this month, we'll hear a great deal about the people, principles and events that shaped this nation. That is fitting. Milestones give us a reason to look back, not simply out of nostalgia, but to better understand the responsibility we carry forward.

For those of us who serve rural electric cooperatives, that history has a special meaning.

The American story has always been closely tied to rural places. Long before there were highways, power lines, broadband connections or modern farm equipment, the strength of the country depended on the people who worked the land, built communities and embraced self-reliance. Thomas Jefferson, one of the nation's Founding Fathers and the architect of the Declaration of Independence, once wrote that "cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens."

That view reflected something we should not forget today: Rural America was not separate from the nation's future. It was central to it.

And yet, for much of our history, rural communities were too often asked to wait for progress. In the 1930s, while many cities and towns were being transformed by electricity, millions of farms and rural homes remained in the dark. Private utilities generally did not see the value of serving areas where homes were miles apart and the return on investment was uncertain.

Despite this, rural people did what they have done throughout American history: They organized and solved the problem together.

Rural electric cooperatives are also marking a milestone this year: the 90th anniversary of the Rural Electrification Act. With the signing of that legislation in 1936 and the determination of local citizens, electric cooperatives began bringing power to places that had been overlooked. Neighbors signed up neighbors. Communities set poles, strung lines and built systems that changed daily life in ways that are hard to overstate. Electricity made farms more productive, homes safer, schools stronger and small businesses more viable.

That was not just an energy story. It was an American story.

Rural electric cooperatives were built on the belief that essential service should not depend solely on geography or profit potential. They were built on local control, democratic governance and responsibility to the people at the end of the line. Those principles are as relevant today as they were when the first co-op lines were energized.

At the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association and Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc., we see that legacy every day. Our 14 member cooperatives serve communities that are essential to the state's — and the nation's — economy, food supply, workforce, and quality of life. We also know the challenges are different now. Reliability, affordability, energy policy, grid resilience, and new technologies all require careful decisions and steady leadership.

America's 250th birthday is a reminder that the work of building this country has never belonged to just one generation. Each generation inherits a promise and a responsibility.

For electric cooperatives, that responsibility is clear: They were created to bring power where it was needed most. Today, we carry that mission forward by keeping rural Pennsylvania connected, resilient and ready for the future. 🌱

STEVE BRAME

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Penn Lines (USPS 929-700), the newsmagazine of Pennsylvania's electric cooperatives, is published monthly by the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association, 212 Locust Street, P.O. Box 1266, Harrisburg, PA 17108-1266. *Penn Lines* helps 168,000 households of co-op consumer-members understand issues that affect the electric cooperative program, their local co-ops, and their quality of life. Electric co-ops are not-for-profit, consumer-owned, locally directed, and taxpaying electric utilities. *Penn Lines* is not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts. The opinions expressed in *Penn Lines* do not necessarily reflect those of the editors, the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association, or local electric distribution cooperatives.

Subscriptions: Electric co-op members, \$8.52 per year through their local electric distribution cooperative. Preferred Periodicals postage paid at Harrisburg, PA 17107 and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes with mailing label to *Penn Lines*, 212 Locust Street, P.O. Box 1266, Harrisburg, PA 17108-1266.

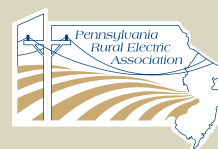
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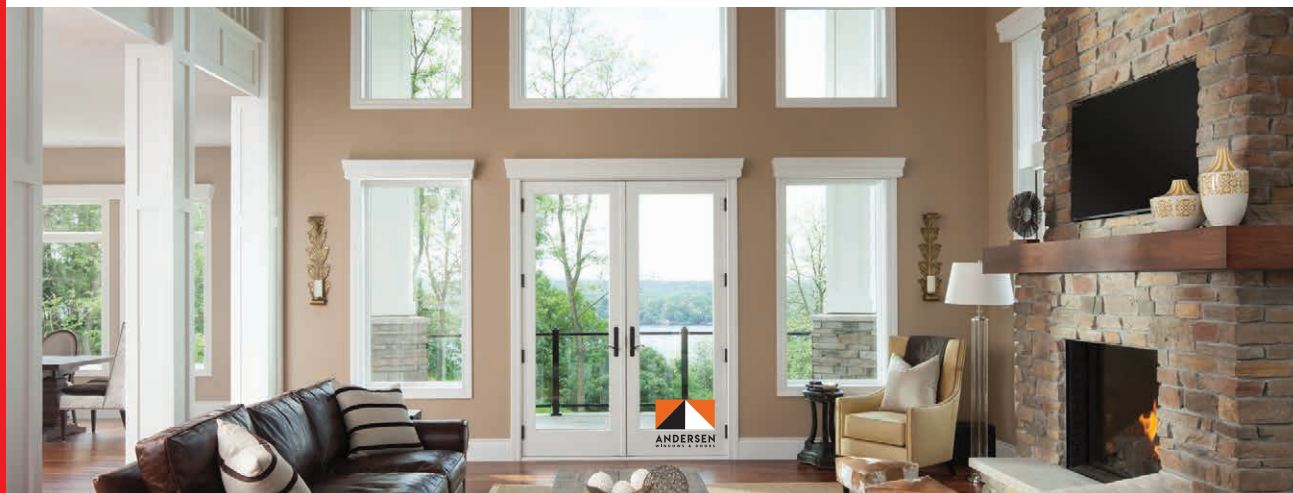
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LEGACY OF LOCAL OWNERSHIP

On a rainy family trip to Ireland, I found myself making an unexpected connection with the country and its history. No, I did not discover a long-lost relative, though Fitzgerald is a pretty popular name on the Emerald Isle.

The connection was with electricity – or, more precisely, Ireland's history of rural electrification.

With the rain coming down outside, I picked up Niall Williams' "This is Happiness," a novel set in a small Irish village just as electricity is arriving in the countryside. Williams uses that moment to explore themes of home and community, and how the wonder of electricity represented the crossing of one way of life into another.

The story takes place in the 1950s, and I was surprised to learn that rural electrification came somewhat later to Ireland than it did here. Ireland's Electricity Supply Board set its first rural electric pole in 1946, and the last communities were not connected until 1978.

Rural residents here experienced the same wonder Williams describes, but there was a key difference. In Ireland, a centralized government program delivered power to rural areas.

In the United States, government loans helped rural communities build and own their own power companies: electric cooperatives.

This year marks the 90th anniversary of the Rural Electrification Act, which gave rural communities the means to invest in their own energy future. Instead of simply waiting for electricity to arrive, neighbors came together and built cooperatives to do it themselves.

Today, that model of community ownership lives on in the nearly 900 electric cooperatives across the country, including 13 in Pennsylvania.

Recently, I attended Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative's Annual Meeting, where that legacy was on full display. Despite a heavy downpour, members gathered as a community to conduct the business of their cooperative.

They heard financial reports, elected directors, awarded scholarships, and recognized board members and employees.

With the storm outside, members cheered the co-op employees who keep the lights on – a simple but powerful expression of appreciation and ownership.

That moment captured the heart of the cooperative story. Electricity transformed rural life – here and in Ireland. But in communities like Somerset, local ownership gave people something more lasting: a voice, a responsibility and a stake in their future. Ninety years later, that remains the real power of the cooperative model.

PETER A. FITZGERALD
EXECUTIVE EDITOR



CHOCOLATE CHIP CHAMPION: A recent study found that the most popular ice cream flavor among Pennsylvanians is chocolate chip. Nationally, strawberry came in as the No. 1 flavor.

CHIPS AHoy!*

Pennsylvanians name their favorite ice cream flavor

Yuengling, cheesesteaks and now ... chocolate chip ice cream?

Indeed, when it comes to food staples throughout the Commonwealth, this flavor recently cemented itself as the most popular among Pennsylvanians.

Nationally, chocolate chip came in at No. 2, according to a study conducted by Innerbody Research, an online health and wellness platform, while strawberry took the country's top spot. Meanwhile, Pennsylvanians voted Lancaster County's Turkey Hill as the most popular brand of ice cream in the state.

Speaking of the sweet treat, the state Department of Agriculture and Pennsylvania Tourism Office recently launched the 2026 Scooped Ice Cream Trail. Now in its ninth year, this year's program includes 59 PA Preferred creameries across the Commonwealth.

Travelers can plan their trail adventure at visitpa.com/scooped. The digital passport rewards dedicated ice cream lovers with points for every stop and purchases made from now until Sept. 7.

EYES ON THE ROAD

Law targeting distracted drivers goes into effect after one-year warning period

Distracted driving is now officially illegal in Pennsylvania.

As of June 5, a law banning handheld mobile devices while driving is now enforceable. The move comes after a one-year introduction period, during which drivers received written warnings if they were caught violating the act.

With the new law, motorists face a \$50 fine, plus court costs and fees.

Among the devices banned are handheld phones, smartphones, personal digital assistants, portable computers or similar devices used for voice communication. Also outlawed while driving is texting, emailing, browsing the internet, instant messaging, social media use and transmitting/receiving electronic data.

Because this is considered a primary offense, law enforcement officers can now stop a driver solely for holding a mobile device. Hands-free technology, GPS devices and systems integrated into the vehicle are exempt from the ban.

If a distracted driver causes a fatality, they may also face up to five years in prison. 📵



With our 60th anniversary in full swing, we're looking to feature even more of our readers in *Penn Lines*.

► **Have you been married 50 years or more?**

Penn Lines has reached a milestone – and we want to recognize cooperative members who are celebrating similar ones. If you're a couple – or you know a couple – who's been together 50-plus years, let us know. You could be featured in an upcoming issue. Please email your name, years married, address, daytime telephone number, and the name of the cooperative serving your home, business, or seasonal residence to PennLines@prea.com by **Wednesday, July 15**.



► **Are you feeling reflective?** Answer one of the following questions – and the best responses will be featured in the magazine:

1. *Where were you and what were you doing in 1966?*
(50-100 words)
2. *What would you put in a time capsule to be shared with readers in 2086?*
3. *Write a letter to the future: What do you hope rural life looks like in 2086?*
(50-100 words)

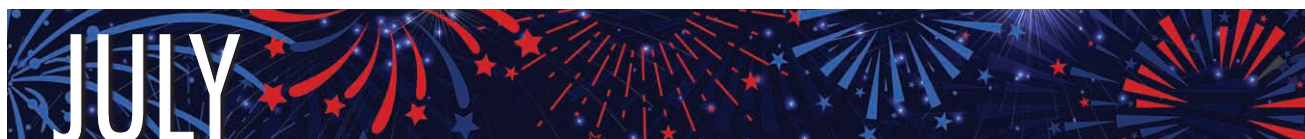
Please email your name, response to the question, address, daytime telephone number, and the name of the cooperative serving your home, business or seasonal residence to PennLines@prea.com by **Wednesday, Aug. 19**.

TIME LINES

JULY 2016



A decade ago, *Penn Lines* traveled down historic Route 6 to give an overview of the many things people can find when they explore co-op country via one of the state's most famous roads. The attractions along Route 6 are perfect examples of how rich rural electric cooperative territories are – and how endless their influence is across the Commonwealth. (For our more recent experience along Route 6, check out the May 2026 issue of *Penn Lines*.)



SNACKTOWNSTREETFAIR.COM



SNACK TIME

Artists, authors, vendors, live music and more will be featured during the Snack Town Street Fair July 11 in Hanover, York County. Open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 40 York St., the one-day free festival is being hosted by the Hanover Area Chamber of Commerce. Find more information at snacktownstreetfair.com.

FLOWER FEST

July 17 is the day the Freedom Farms Wildflower Festival kicks off in Valencia, Butler County. Running through July 19 – and then again from July 24 to 26 – the event invites attendees to pick flowers to their heart's content. Admission to the first weekend is \$20, while the second weekend's ticket is \$10. For more information, visit freedomfarmspa.com.



EVENTS.ELITEFEATS.COM/26CONQUER



CONQUER THE CANYON

Runners near and far have a chance to conquer the canyon in Wellsboro, Tioga County, on July 25 when 5K, 10K, half-marathon, and full-marathon races commence along Route 6. Festivities begin at 8 a.m. with the launch of the marathon and half-marathon. Find more details, including registration fees, at marksraceschedule.com.

WOMEN ON THE WATER

A three-day paddling experience will be held July 31 to Aug. 2 at Camp Lackawanna in Tunkhannock, Wyoming County – but only for women. The Women on the Water Sojourn, hosted by the Endless Mountains Heritage Region, will feature camping, night hikes and yoga, along with conservation-related workshops. For more information, visit emheritage.org.



EMHERITAGE.ORG

LET *Freedom* RING

Local Artists Reimagine Iconic Liberty Bell in Celebration of America250PA

COLIN P. MCGUIRE

Senior Editor/Writer

When word came out that Pennsylvania would be celebrating America's 250th birthday by commissioning artists in every county to paint their own version of the state's iconic Liberty Bell, Bob Heinrich Jr. quickly threw his name in the hat.

Not only did he want to work on the bell representing Sullivan County, but he also wanted to create something that would stand the test of time through one of his lifelong passions: art.

"This was absolutely one of the biggest honors I've ever been a part of," Heinrich says. "I have been drawing since I was little, so this was something I knew I really wanted to do."

Like Heinrich, dozens of artists across Pennsylvania were thrilled to get the news that their ideas had been selected for the "Bells Across PA" art series. The project

was put in motion by America250PA, a commission established in 2018 to plan the commemoration of the country's 250th birthday here in the Keystone State, one of the 13 original colonies. Each fiberglass replica is 3-foot-tall and more than 120 are being showcased statewide.

Because rural electric cooperatives played a crucial role in American history, too, we're ringing in the nation's semiquincentennial by sharing the stories of the bells representing many of Pennsylvania's co-op territories and the artists who designed them.

"Doing this was a high point of my life in Somerset County," says 82-year-old Kathy Trexel Reed, whose bell, "Unending Spirit," pays tribute to the county and its people. "I'm so happy I was able to represent this place the way I did."

ERIE COUNTY:

Nicolas Cardell Gore, “Pursuit of Liberty”

(Served by Northwestern REC and Warren Electric Cooperative)

Erie’s Nicolas Cardell Gore was thrilled when he received the call that he was selected to participate in the Bells Across PA program. There was only one problem.

“I was living in a one-bedroom apartment at the time,” he says with a laugh, “so, all I could do was clear my entire living room out and work on it in there.

“I’ve since bought a house,” he deadpans.

Gore grew up in Erie and lived there until he graduated from high school, at which point, he joined the U.S. Navy. After spending about a quarter-century away from the city, he returned in 2023 and immediately picked up a passion he had yet to explore: art. Just three years later, his work can be seen by all bell enthusiasts at the expERIENCE Children’s Museum in Erie.

In designing the bell, Gore was committed to making it what he called “Erie specific,” focusing on the city’s naval history as well as landmarks, such as Perry Square.

“This was my first public piece of art,” he says, “and this process helped build my confidence. To have the mayor and other politicians look at it, shake my hand and say it’s great, it meant everything. Now, I know that I’m on the right path.”



FULTON COUNTY:

Charlie Harr, “Our Town, Our Nation”

(Served by Bedford REC, New Enterprise REC and Valley REC)

At 50 years of age, Charlie Harr has spent nearly half a century with a paint brush in his hand. Just ask him.

“I can’t remember a time when I wasn’t creating something,” he says. “I teach art. I run painting events. I’m a full-time artist.”

His craft landed him a spot among the Pennsylvania artists tapped to paint a Liberty Bell replica, which is currently on display at Friends of Fulton County, 101 Lincoln Way West, McConnellsburg. Named “Our Town, Our Nation,” the bell features scenes of small-town life, including images of the county’s courthouse, local farmers and the area hospital.

Harr’s creation came together quickly, he says, noting he had only a weekend to illustrate a design draft and present it to the program’s committee members. “I really like working under pressure like that, so it was kind of cool,” says the artist, who opened Charlie’s Art & Soul Studio in McConnellsburg in 2014. “I had been training

for this my whole life, and it turned out pretty much like I envisioned it would.”

His participation ranks high among his life’s artistic achievements.

“Everybody around town seems to really enjoy it,” he says, “and it’s kind of cool because when I drive past it, I always see someone taking a picture with it or of it.

“Now, I get messages from people who see other bells around the state,” he adds with a laugh. “It’s a really neat thing; we’re all like a family now.”



JEFFERSON COUNTY: Monica Smatlak Liao, “Punxsutawney Seasons”

(Served by REA Energy Cooperative and United Electric Cooperative)

Some artists featured in the “Bells Across PA” program chose to use their designs to pay homage to the landscape that paints their counties. Monica Smatlak Liao chose to use her canvas to create a tourist map of Punxsutawney, the home of Punxsutawney Phil and the site of Groundhog Day celebrations.

“I wanted people to see the areas of interest around Punxsutawney,” she says, “and we needed to have Groundhog Day featured, too, so I thought, ‘Why don’t we do the different seasons of the year?’ So, as you go around the bell, you go through different parts of town and the different seasons.”

Liao, who currently lives in Allegheny County but is a former Punxsutawney resident, worked closely with borough Manager Bill Spencer to pick out the places to showcase on the bell, which can be found at the

Punxsutawney Civic Center, 301 East Mahoning St. The replica features images of Christmas trees in Barclay Square, as well as scenes from the town’s Fourth of July festival. She also consulted with members of Punxsy’s historical society.

Liao says she worked on the bell about six hours a day for a month. Her routine of waking up with her morning cup of coffee, heading down to the basement and painting became such a highlight of her day that by the time she finished working on it, she missed the bell’s presence in her home.

“Bill just told me to go for it, so I did,” Liao remembers. “It was all just so much fun. I can’t really remember a time when I wasn’t painting, so to be able to do this was such an honor.”



SOMERSET COUNTY: Kathy Trexel Reed, “Unending Spirit”

(Served by Somerset REC and Bedford REC)

While Kathy Trexel Reed had known about the statewide bell project for months, she didn't think she would actually create the one representing Somerset County.

“I asked two people who I admire and respect to submit their work,” she says. “When they chose not to and the county commissioners asked me to do it, I gave it very deep thought for a few days before agreeing.”

The 82-year-old's specialty is paper-cutting, so part of her parameters for taking on the project was the assurance that she would be able to use her specific skills to create a design that would be much different from others across the Commonwealth. The glued paper designs featured on the bell, she says, represent Somerset County as the home of businesses, families and recreational activities.

Located at the Somerset County Annex Office Building, 300 North Center Ave., the bell features Uncle Sam riding across a county map on a penny farthing bike, Somerset's famous covered bridges and the Tower of Voices at the Flight 93 National Memorial Park, a nod to 9/11 and the county's role in that part of the nation's history.

To accomplish the project, Reed, who returned to the area to retire, worked with a sign-making company that photographs art and transfers it onto vinyl material that can be wrapped around three-dimensional objects.

The result was one of Reed's most cherished accomplishments.

“I wanted the various vignettes to be a tribute to the county and its citizens,” she says, “and I wanted to represent all of my county, which I dearly love. I told the committee when the piece was unveiled that it was a high point in my life in Somerset County, and I still believe that.”



SULLIVAN COUNTY: Robert Heinrich Jr., “We the People”

(Served by Sullivan County REC and Claverack REC)

When Robert Heinrich Jr. sat down to concoct a plan to potentially design and paint Sullivan County’s Liberty Bell replica, he thought about the nation’s five founding principles: equality, rights, liberty, opportunity and democracy.

“I wanted to base so much of what I did on our Founding Fathers’ five principles,” explains Heinrich, a member of Sullivan County REC. “They said if we follow those, our country should be OK, and I wanted to replicate that and honor those same things with this bell.”

It wasn’t a quick journey to land the job as Sullivan County’s bell artist. Heinrich, who was born and raised there, initially submitted an application in 2022. When he didn’t get a response for a couple years, he began to wonder if the bell project was even going to happen.

Then, after he received a call that he had been selected to paint the bell, he faced a new challenge: the limited window of time he had to complete the project. He had three months, from October to December 2025.

“At first, I didn’t think I could do it because I had to move some stuff around to find the time,” he says. “And then, when I got the bell in October, the weather wasn’t cooperating. If I would have been able to work on it outside, it would have been a lot easier, but we got it done, and it turned out all right.”

In addition to images that pay tribute to the Founding Fathers’ principles, the bell, which can be found at the Eagles Mere Inn, 29 Mary Ave., also features a fair share of keystones, a nod to Pennsylvania’s moniker as the Keystone State. Sullivan County’s heritage also played an important role in the artist’s vision.

“In our county, we have a lot of good heritage,” he says, “and I just wanted to replicate that and those principles on this bell.”

Continued on page 22





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Co-op Power Provider Launches New Website

MICHAEL T. CRAWFORD, SENIOR TECHNICAL EDITOR

AFFORDABILITY IS ON THE MINDS of many families and businesses across the country.

When costs rise everywhere else, it's only natural to look more closely at your electric bill and wonder what the people behind the power are doing to keep energy affordable. Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Allegheny), the wholesale power provider for your rural electric cooperative and the 13 others in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, takes that responsibility seriously. Recently, it launched a new website, alleghenyelectriccoop.com, to show how cooperative electricity is some of the most affordable in this region.

"An informed membership is an empowered one," says Todd Sallade, Allegheny vice president – power supply & engineering. "Cooperatives are unique in that they are controlled by the people they serve. We owe it to

our members to educate them about how their energy is produced and how it's managed so they can make informed decisions."

Information is power

The website features a breakdown of cooperative-owned energy sources, including the Susquehanna Steam Electric Station, a nuclear power plant in Luzerne County, and the Raystown Hydroelectric Plant in Huntingdon County. Allegheny also draws energy from hydroelectric facilities along the Niagara and St. Lawrence rivers in New York. Together, these resources produce nearly two-thirds of the energy used by cooperative consumer-members and help protect your cooperative from the market's volatility — a key part of the strategy to maintain affordable rates.

Visitors will also find expanded information about Allegheny's

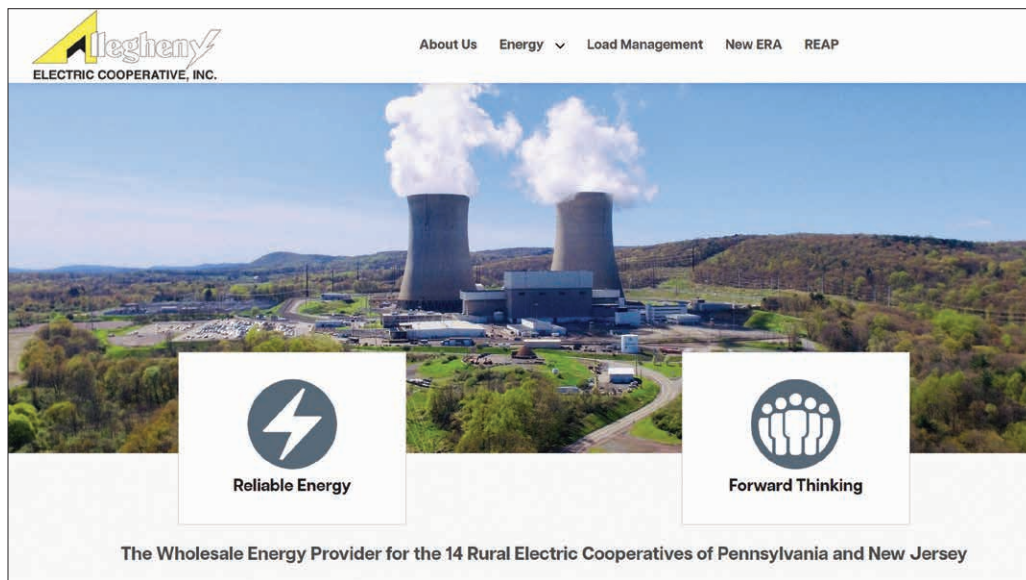
demand-response program, the Coordinated Load Management System (CLMS). This voluntary partnership with consumer-members helps keep rates in check by balancing electricity use during periods of peak demand and reducing the need for more expensive power purchases.

"CLMS is a practical example of how knowledge can lead to savings," CLMS Manager Brian Smith says. "By learning how small changes in electricity use can make a difference, members can make smarter energy choices that benefit both their household and their cooperatives as a whole."

At its core, the new website is about connection. It's an invitation to explore, learn and better understand how Allegheny works on cooperative consumer-members' behalf every day. It makes information about where energy comes from and how cooperative programs support affordability easier to find and use.

As Allegheny celebrates its 80th anniversary, technology has changed and its energy mix has evolved, but its commitment to consumer-members and affordability remains the same. Learn more at alleghenyelectriccoop.com.

ALLEGHENY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC., based in Harrisburg, Pa., is the wholesale power provider for the 14 rural electric cooperatives in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The cooperative has a proud history of investing in sustainable energy solutions to benefit the communities it serves while providing reliable energy at an affordable price.



NEW WEBSITE: Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc.'s new website, alleghenyelectriccoop.com, features information about its history, its approach to power supply, its generation resources, and initiatives to reduce costs for members, such as the Coordinated Load Management System.



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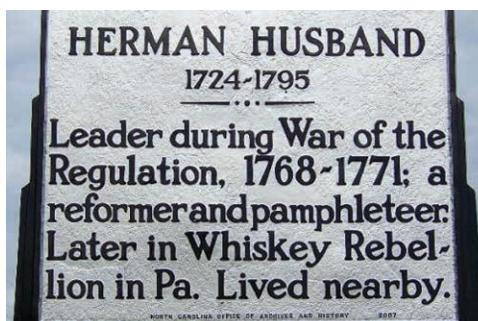
Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative

A Rebel with a Cause

To most history scholars, Herman Husband was a preacher and, more important, the leader of the Regulator Movement, a citizen uprising in North Carolina that targeted colonial officials believed to be corrupt.

Eventually, after moving to Pennsylvania, he would become known as Somerset County's first official settler. The honor is commemorated on a state historical marker at the intersection of Main Street/Glades Pike (Route 31) and Plank Road in Somerset, which today is the home base of Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative.

Labeled an insurgent in North Carolina and using the assumed name "Tuscape Death," Husband fled to the Keystone State in 1771 to evade hanging. By April 1795, however, his



life was quite different.

He had become a prominent citizen as well as a member of the Pennsylvania General Assembly, who successfully convinced his fellow lawmakers to pass the act that created Somerset County from parts of Bedford County. He also managed to befriend Benjamin Franklin.

Husband's most famous act during his time in Somerset was when he raised a liberty pole in the town square, featuring the words, "Liberty and No Excise."

Husband died in June 1795 after spending time in jail for his role in

ESCAPING DEATH: After having a bounty placed on his head for his role in the Regulator Movement, Herman Husband fled North



Carolina in 1771 and became the first official settler in what is now known as Somerset County.

the Whiskey Rebellion, a violent tax protest that started in western Pennsylvania. And so, despite owning the title as the county's first settler, it turned out that not even Husband could "escape death" for too long. 🐰



Main Office: Somerset, Pa.
Consumer-members served: 13,922
Website: somersetrec.com



Big bunnies

This month's artwork comes from Daphne DeShong, age 8, the daughter of Keith and Megan DeShong, members of Huntingdon-based Valley Rural Electric Cooperative. Daphne decided to draw "a mommy and baby bunny that I see in my backyard," she says. "They come out every evening to enjoy some grass and will even hop and play together sometimes." Thank you, Daphne, for sharing your artwork and story with us!

Daphne DeShong, age 8, Valley Rural Electric Cooperative

CALLING ALL KIDS, ages 5 to 17:
Show off your artistic skills!

Each month, we'll feature the artwork of our young readers (or our readers' youngsters), inspired by something they've seen at home or read in *Penn Lines*. Paints, pencils, crayons, clay, sand – any physical medium is OK! You may send digital photos of the creation to CommunityCorner@prea.com, but please: no digital artwork.

Please include the artist's name, age and electric cooperative, plus a 25- to 50-word description of the art.



Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative

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Website: <https://claverack.com>

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Casey M. Wood, VP, Communications
C&T Enterprises, Inc.



ENTERPRISES, INC.

C&T Enterprises, Inc. is a jointly owned subsidiary of Claverack (Wysox, Pa) and Tri-County (Mansfield, Pa) Rural Electric Cooperatives. C&T provides shared management and support services for the two parent electric cooperatives, the cooperatives' telecom affiliates of Revolution Broadband and Tri-Co Connections, and C&T's subsidiary utilities of Wellsboro Electric Co. (Wellsboro, Pa), Citizens' Electric Co. (Lewisburg, Pa), and Valley Energy (Sayre, Pa), a natural gas distribution company.

Stewardship in Changing Times



STEVEN G.
ALLABAUGH

IF IT FEELS LIKE ELECTRICITY has been in the news everywhere you turn lately, you are not wrong. In 2025, our industry has been front and center as data centers, rising demand for power, grid reliability and higher electric costs have made headlines across the country. Here at home, those issues are not just stories on your newsfeed; they affect family budgets, local businesses and our community. That is one reason the value of a local electric cooperative still matters. For 90 years, Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) has worked to be a steward for our consumer-members, making practical decisions, planning and keeping our focus where it belongs.

There is something especially meaningful about that this year. As we prepare to celebrate America250, Claverack REC is marking 90 years of its own history. In both cases, the story is really about people taking responsibility for their future. Just as Americans once chose to build a nation of self-government, rural families here in northeastern Pennsylvania came together in the 1930s to bring electricity to the places that big investor-owned utilities had ignored. They did not sit back and wait. They worked together, solved problems close to home and built something that would serve generations to come.

That same spirit is still alive at Claverack REC, and it shaped our work throughout 2025.

We continued making steady investments in the electric system to improve reliability, modernize older infrastructure and strengthen the grid for the years ahead. Our crews completed major line rebuilds and upgrades across the system, removed more than 10 miles of aging copper conductor and carried out a strong maintenance program that included inspections of 6,864 poles at ground level and 6,922 more by drone. We also installed or replaced more than 1,300 poles and replaced 81 Oil Circuit Reclosers (OCRs) in our preventive maintenance program. The result? Outage duration was reduced by 74% compared with the year before.

We were not just focused on the next outage or the next season. We were also looking to the future. In 2025, Claverack completed a five-year construction work plan to guide future investment and earned a three-year certification through the Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program. We also put better tools to work, including satellite-based vegetation analysis, to help us target right-of-way maintenance more effectively.

In 2025, Claverack REC was awarded a Pennsylvania Grid Resilience Grant to support satellite vegetation management and the installation of intelligent electrical devices across our system. These are connected to the fiber-optic network and help improve system visibility, responsiveness and long-term reliability. Because trees and vegetation remain one of the biggest causes of outages, crews and contractors completed 536 miles of routine vegetation clearing and applied herbicide treatment along 500 miles of rights of way. There are no shortcuts when taking care of the basics.

Being a cooperative has always meant more than poles and wires. It also means providing great member service. In 2025, our team handled 27,822 phone interactions, each answered by a member services representative right here in our Wysox office. We completed 4,427 service orders supporting our members' needs. We launched a redesigned website, expanded digital tools through SmartHub and paperless billing,

Continued on page 16D

Claverack REC and CoBank Support Local Healthcare Initiatives

CASEY WOOD, VICE PRESIDENT, COMMUNICATIONS

AS A MEMBER-OWNED COOPERATIVE, one of Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative's (REC) guiding principles is "Concern for Community." Through its community support program, Claverack REC recently donated \$15,000 to two local healthcare organizations working to expand access to critical diagnostic services throughout the region. Through CoBank's Sharing Success Program, each donation was matched dollar-for-dollar.

Representatives from Claverack REC presented \$7,500 to both Guthrie Troy Community Hospital and Endless Mountains Health Systems (EMHS). With CoBank's matching contributions, each organization received \$15,000 to support important medical equipment projects that benefit members in our service territory and patients across northeastern Pennsylvania.

Supporting vital services

As part of its 75th anniversary celebration, Guthrie Troy Community Hospital has been raising funds to add contrast-enhanced mammography technology to its newly upgraded mammography suite. The hospital has already invested \$500,000 to expand breast-imaging services, including 3D mammography, follow-up ultrasounds and referrals for breast MRI services. The addition of contrast-enhanced mammography will help provide fast answers, reduce travel and wait times for patients, and improve early breast cancer detection, particularly for women with dense breast tissue.

EMHS plans to use its donation to help purchase an additional digital radiography plate for its busiest X-ray room. The equipment will improve efficiency in the radiology department and ensure patients receive timely diagnostic imaging services close to home.

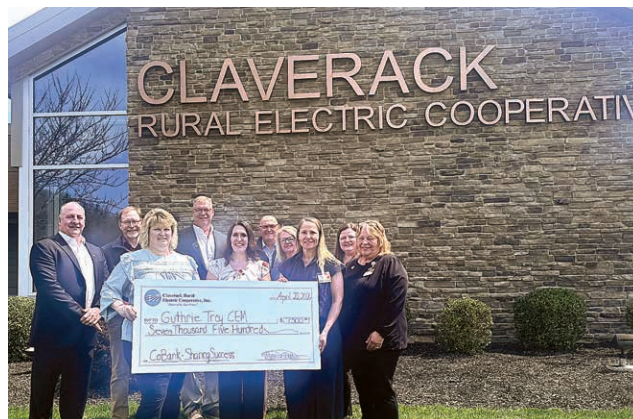
"We are proud to support organizations that are making meaningful investments in the health and well-being of our communities," says Claverack REC President & CEO Steve Allabaugh. "Access to quality healthcare is essential for our communities, and we are pleased to help both Guthrie Troy Community Hospital and Endless Mountains Health Systems enhance the services they provide. We are also grateful to CoBank for amplifying the impact of these donations through its Sharing Success Program."

Claverack REC funded its share of the donations through the cooperative's Community Services Grant Program, funded by unclaimed patronage capital. Under state law, rural electric cooperatives may retain unclaimed capital credits that would have otherwise been transferred to the Commonwealth. These funds must be used for member assistance, educational initiatives, and civic and charitable

purposes that benefit the communities served by the cooperative. The program does not affect member electric rates. [e](#)



OFFERING HELP: Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative directors and staff present a \$7,500 donation through the cooperative's Community Services Grant Program to Endless Mountains Health Systems (EMHS) to support the purchase of additional radiology equipment. The funding, matched by CoBank through its Sharing Success Program, will help expand access to timely diagnostic imaging services close to home. In front, from left, are Claverack Vice Chair Angela S. Joines (Z3) and EMHS MHA/CEO Loren Stone. In back, from left, are Claverack Chair Timothy Tewksbury (Z6); Director Dr. Robert Faux (Z2); President & CEO Steven Allabaugh; and Director Gary Hennip (Z4).



GIVING BACK: Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative directors and staff present a \$7,500 Community Services Grant Program donation to members of Guthrie Troy Community Hospital. The funding will support the purchase of enhanced breast-imaging services, including the addition of contrast-enhanced mammography technology. The contribution was matched by CoBank through its Sharing Success Program, amplifying the impact for patients across the region. In front, from left, are Claverack Vice Chair Angela S. Joines (Z3); Guthrie Director of Operations and Nursing Services Amber King; Chair of Radiology Dr. Geneva Ballard; and Radiology Manager Pam Sherman. In back, from left, are Claverack Chair Timothy Tewksbury (Z6); Claverack President & CEO Steven Allabaugh; Director Dr. Robert Faux (Z2); Director Gary Hennip (Z4); Guthrie Resource Development Representative Patty Dawsey; and Director of Resource Development Tricia Huston.

YOUR COOPERATIVE, YOUR COMMUNITY, YOUR CAPITAL CREDITS

When you turn on the lights, heat your home, or charge your phone, you're doing more than using electricity – you're investing in a cooperative that you and your neighbors own together. That investment comes back to you through capital credits, and we're excited to share that Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative's Board of Directors recently approved a retirement for members that had active electric accounts in 1994, 2009 and/or 2010.

This year's retirement – totaling approximately \$924,000 – is a celebration of shared success. It reflects the power of local ownership, responsible management and the trust you place in us every day.

Current members will receive their retirement for the years noted above as a bill credit on their July bill. Inactive or former members will receive a check by mail. These checks will be mailed in early July. Please make sure your mailing address is always up to date with us so your check can be delivered without delay.

Unfortunately, we have been unable to deliver checks to many former members because we don't have their current addresses. We need your help to locate these former members so we can return their funds. Please visit claverack.com/capital-credits for more information and to review the full list. If you recognize any former members and can provide us with their addresses, please contact us at mail@claverack.com or 570-265-2167.

OPERATION ROUND-UP: MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS

Financial hardships can occur to anyone at any time, affecting a family's ability to keep up with its electric bills. But you have the power to make a difference by participating in Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative's (REC) Operation Round-Up Program.



This voluntary initiative enables you to assist fellow cooperative members who need help with their electric bills. Not only is participating in the program inexpensive – it costs less than \$1 a month – but it also allows you to have a positive impact on the lives of your neighbors.

Contributing is simple. Claverack REC rounds up your monthly electric bill to the nearest dollar amount, with the difference between the rounded-up amount and your actual bill being directed to our Member Assistance Fund. For instance, if your electric bill is \$100.32, you could pay \$101, with the extra 68 cents going to the fund to support families served by our cooperative. On average, members contribute \$6 annually.

But what if you can spare more than just spare change? Claverack REC has introduced additional options for you to contribute beyond the traditional round-up amount. Members, for instance, can choose to add an extra dollar amount on top of their monthly donation. This can be done by filling out the round-up form on our website, claverack.com/operation-round-up, or by contacting our office and working with a member services representative to make the change.

Your bill will reflect the total amount donated each month. Furthermore, if you prefer to make a one-time donation, you can enter the desired amount in the associated field on our online round-up form, and we will add it to your account. The donation will then be included in your next bill, and it will be listed as "Roundup Amt."

By being a good neighbor and opting to help others, you have a straightforward and impactful way to make a difference through Operation Round-Up. To sign up, call us at 800-326-9799 or visit claverack.com and select "Operation Round-Up" from the "Your Account & Co-op" drop-down menu at the top of the screen. Join us today in supporting our community and creating positive change through Operation Round-Up.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Continued from page 16A

and developed an appliance energy calculator to help members better understand and manage their energy use. We also continued programs that support members through difficult times, including low-income assistance through our HOPE program, which provided nearly \$60,000 of assistance to more than 127 member families in need. In a year when many families were watching every dollar, we stayed committed to being here to help.

Another big part of 2025 was the continued growth of Revolution Broadband. In rural Pennsylvania, high-speed internet is not a luxury. It is virtually a necessity of everyday life — for work, school, healthcare, business and staying connected. During the year, 313 miles of fiber were constructed, three key network facilities were installed and more than 1,500 subscribers were connected. We also held six educational open houses and established a dedicated fiber field crew to support continued expansion. Just as important, those fiber investments also help strengthen

the electric side of our business, supporting smart-grid technology, improving system visibility and helping Claverack REC prepare our distribution grid for the future.

The cooperative difference could also be seen in the community. In 2025, Claverack participated in 47 community events, delivered nine electrical safety presentations to local schools and sponsored five students for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Youth Tour. We expanded our native pollinator habitat project at our headquarters and gathered input from more than 500 members through a survey that confirmed what matters most to the people we serve: reliability and cost. We welcome feedback from our members and appreciate those who took the time to provide it. We were also able to assist more than 88 local charities with more than \$63,000 of support, which was funded by unclaimed capital credits that would have otherwise been returned to the state.

That same member-first approach guided our financial decisions as well. Claverack REC ended 2025 with positive operating margins and managed the cooperative with a long-term view. We were able to continue to retire capital credits to our members as we returned more than \$900,000 in 2025.

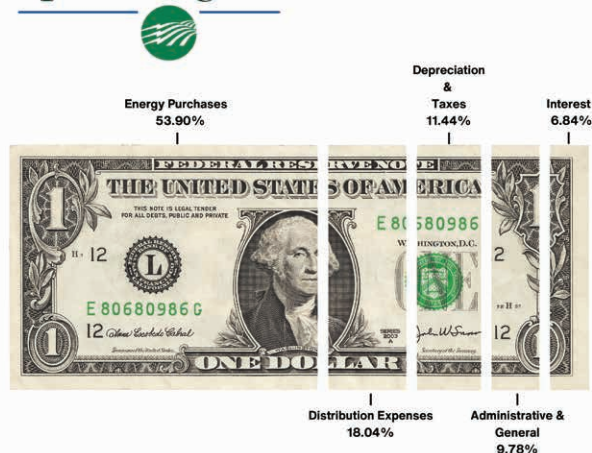
While we did enact a modest rate increase, our rates remain significantly lower than nearby investor-owned utilities for the average residential consumer. In a year when electric bills were getting more attention everywhere, that matters. Our long-standing partnership with Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc. also continues to help reduce exposure to market volatility, which has kept generation and transmission costs lower than market prices.

As Claverack REC marks 90 years and our nation prepares to celebrate America250, it is worth remembering what that history represents. Today, as legislators question utility profits flowing to shareholders, Claverack's 90-year history is proof that the not-for-profit cooperative model works. We have always been focused on serving our consumer-members rather than outside investors, and that model has stood the test of time because it works. It focuses on local needs and long-term thinking. That was our approach in 2025, and it will continue to be in the years ahead.

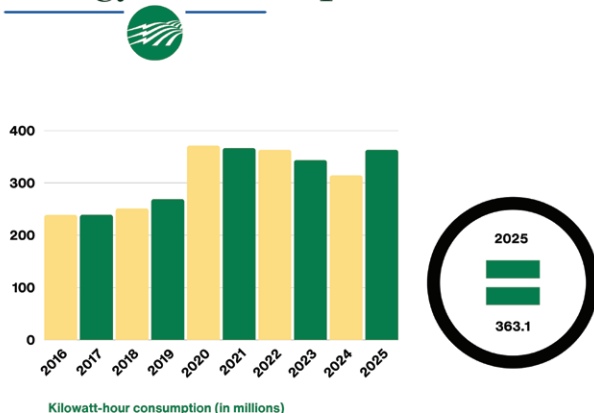
We also encourage you to stay connected in the months ahead. Please plan to attend our online annual meeting on July 22, and join us at the Wyoming County Fair on Sept. 4 for our second Member Appreciation Event. We will share more information about that event in the August edition of *Penn Lines*. And if you would like to take a deeper dive into 2025, we invite you to review the 2025 Annual Report at claverack.com. 📖

STEVEN G. ALLABAUGH
PRESIDENT & CEO

Operating Dollar



Energy Consumption





SWIMMING POOL SAFETY

Make sure that any lighting equipment in your pool is up to code and regularly examined by a professional. To change or repair a light, ensure the electricity to the pool is first turned off at the circuit breaker.

*If you are in the water and feel electric current, which can cause a tingling sensation, shout to let others know, try to stay upright, tuck your legs up to make yourself smaller, and swim away from anything that could be energized. **Do not use a metal ladder to exit the pool.***

*Remember, water and electricity are a dangerous mix, even outside the pool. **Never touch any electrical appliances or outlets when you are wet or standing in water.***

Learn more at

 **Safe
Electricity.org®**



Use Fans Most Effectively for Comfort

JAMES DULLEY

DEAR JIM: To save money, we are going to try to use fans more and air-conditioning less. What types of fans are best for comfort and when should we use them? — *Robert B.*

DEAR ROBERT: Using fans properly for bringing in air from outdoors or moving the air within your house can make you feel cooler while reducing your air-conditioning expenses. Moving air feels many degrees cooler than still air, allowing you to set the air conditioner thermostat a few degrees higher. Also, as air flows over your skin, moisture evaporates, even if you are not noticeably sweating, making you feel cooler.

There are two types of ventilation. One moves indoor air throughout your house and the other draws outdoor air into it. Both have their places and can be effective.

Installing a ceiling paddle fan and running it at medium or high speed creates a direct breeze on your

skin. During the winter, reverse the rotation and run it on low speed. This gently circulates the warm air around the room without creating a chilly breeze.

Select the proper-size ceiling fan to avoid wasting electricity and maximize comfort. Here are some general sizing guides for lower cost four- or five-blade fans, comparing room size with a fan's diameter. For rooms up to 75 square feet, find a fan with a 36-inch diameter; from 75 to 144 square feet, a 36- to 42-inch diameter; between 144 to 225 square feet, a 44- to 50-inch diameter; and from 225 to 400 square feet, a 50- to 54-inch diameter.

Although running any electric fan can make you feel cooler, it actually raises the air temperature because the electricity used creates heat. When no one is in a room to feel the cooling breeze, switch off any electric fan, including ceiling fans. Each

kilowatt-hour of electricity used by a fan produces 3,414 Btu of heat, which your central air conditioner has to remove.

Small personal fans can be very effective to create a breeze while you sit or work in one location. If you purchase a small fan, select one that can also be used as a zoning space heater during winter.

Additionally, select a fan with a wide range of speeds. You should be able to feel a comfortable breeze from 10 feet away at high speed and slight air movement from 3 feet away at low speed. A horizontal, reversible, dual-window fan provides an even wider range of ventilation options for comfort.

Setting your central air conditioner blower to "continuous" can help to balance out room temperatures, but it will not create much of a cooling breeze. Standard blower motors are powerful and a continuously running one heats the air. Variable-speed, electronically commutated motor blowers use less electricity on continuous low speed, so running these makes more sense.

Natural outdoor ventilation is effective and free. When you open double-hung windows or an entry door with a storm/screen door, crack open both the top and bottom sashes to create a natural vertical air flow. You can also open the windows on the windward side of your home just a little and the windows much wider on the other side to create a stronger breeze. 🌬️



WIND WITHOUT WASTE: Selecting the right ceiling fan can maximize your comfort without maximizing your electric bill. Whether big or small, don't leave the fan running if no one is in the room.

HAVE A QUESTION FOR JIM? Send inquiries to James Dulley, Penn Lines, 6906 Royalgreen Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45244 or visit dulley.com.

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— Mr. James, Roanoke, VA

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The Power of Story

MITCHELL KYD

RAISE YOUR HAND IF ONE thing you learned about U.S. history is a story about young George Washington and a cherry tree. Now, raise your other hand if you also heard a famous tale about Alexander Graham Bell spilling acid on his pants and sending the first successful telephone call saying: “Mr. Watson, come here. I want you.” Any of that sound familiar?

By all accounts, both of those teachings are embellishments on our American roots. The story of little George hacking down his father’s cherry tree is fabricated. It’s attributed to writer Mason Locke Weems, a traveling minister who wanted to make sure our first president was portrayed and remembered as worthy and beyond reproach. As one of Washington’s early biographers, Weems published his book seven years after the former president’s death, so who could question that anecdote?

The Bell story is mostly correct; his first transmission to collaborator Thomas Watson is well documented. But the acid dropped on his pants? Unlikely. There’s no mention of it in his detailed lab notes. I think we can all agree that if acid were burning through his pants and onto his flesh, that first call would have been more like: “Ow. Ow! OWWWW! Watson! Get in here! And bring some neutralizer!”

How did Bell describe his invention in his patent? What words convinced investors that his telephone was a practical and profitable tool and not an electrical toy? How were telephone numbers first determined? What savvy marketer convinced a wary public the telephone was not only safe but necessary?

I worked in telecommunications my entire career, and I can tell you I don’t know any of that without research. The important thing is nearly all of us remember something about that first call because we learned about it through a story. It makes sense to me that we call records of the past our “history.” The word “story” is right there; it’s not “histodates” or “histevents.” Story is the integral part, and it’s

what makes the past relatable. Stories help us remember.

We are celebrating the 250th anniversary of our Declaration of Independence this year. The basic details of that event have been passed down through as many as 12 generations, all because someone committed them to writing. But where are the stories behind that story?

I hated history as a kid. All those dates and titles — too much steak, too little sizzle. My brain wasn’t wired to provide a permanent home for dates and dull facts. In fact, my son had a term for that. He called it “R-LETTT”: Remember Long

Enough to Take Test. Maybe if more stories had been sprinkled in, I would recall more of what I was taught.

My inquiring mind wants to know about those summer days in Philadelphia in 1776. Were those five framers of the Declaration extraordinary people, or were they simply ordinary people who accepted an extraordinary challenge? Was one among them prone to stomping off if things weren’t going his way? Who was the



calming mediator who could coax everyone back to the table? Which man was the truly talented wordsmith, the one who chose the exact, strong words to pack the biggest punch? And who called the timeouts when he knew what the group really needed was a break — and maybe a tankard of ale?

Who’s capturing your stories? If it isn’t you, the answer is probably no one. The celebrations of this summer will be filled with family gatherings and once-in-a-lifetime events. You can mark those moments with names and dates scribbled on the back of some photos, or you can preserve your family history through your stories. Starting now, become a storyteller. Write it down. If you want some quick tips to get you started, email me. It’s easier than you think. 📧

YVONNE BUTTS-MITCHELL celebrates the joys and poignant moments of rural living under the pen name Mitchell Kyd. Her stories from the Path Valley Hotel were hatched by encounters with contractors, critters and creepy crawlies while rehabbing the family cabin after its 17-year stint as a giant closet. She can be reached at mkydfreelancer@gmail.com.



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(Offer may vary, \$100,000 coverage not available in all states.)

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Continued from page 12

TIOGA COUNTY: Randy Owen, “Tioga County - Where the Path Forks”

(Served by Tri-County REC and Claverack REC)

Randy Owen isn't just an artist; he's also a field service technician for Tri-County REC. And perhaps one of the biggest thrills in the process of developing and painting the Tioga County Liberty Bell replica was marrying art and his job.

“I was kind of fortunate,” he says. “Because of what I do at Tri-County, I get to explore a lot of the county, so I already had in mind the things I wanted to represent.”

Owen's bell, displayed at the Gate House at Smythe Park, 62 S. Main St., Mansfield, highlights the Grand Canyon of Pennsylvania, the county's courthouse and, uniquely, images of old postcards from the area, which encircle the bottom of the bell. The artist, who's been drawing his entire life, wanted to add more to his design, he says — he didn't want to leave any piece of local history behind — but time constraints didn't allow him to include some last-minute ideas.

Still, with the help of Joel Gregory of Modern Color Collision & Paintworks in Mansfield, who provided the clear coat of acrylic paint that makes the bell shine, Owen has received a lot of compliments on his creation.

“Everybody has been very positive overall,” he says. “I was really happy to hear that the county commissioners felt represented by it — that was really cool.”



YORK COUNTY:

Andi Simpson, “She Lays in the Valley”

(Served by Adams Electric Cooperative)

Growing up on a farm in the York County area, Andi Simpson was happy to lean into where she’s from with her bell’s design. And where she’s from includes farms, fields, valleys and hills that she believes are some of the most beautiful in Pennsylvania.

“I was a farm kid who didn’t know what I wanted to do with my life,” she says. “But I had some good professors in college and went down the graphic design/fine arts path and never looked back. This project was a perfect way to combine my history with my passion.”

She was required to submit three potential ideas for the bell; however, once she got started, Simpson used them only as a guide, opting instead to design and paint as she went along.

Because she couldn’t fit the bell up the steps that lead

to her art studio, Simpson decided to make a sun room off the side of her house the bell’s home while she worked on it. Painting it while being surrounded by her plants and the light that trickled through the glass was an experience she called “amazing.”

The landscapes featured on the bell, which will eventually be located at the Brillhart Station along the York County Heritage Rail Trail, don’t just speak to her family’s history, but to the history of the Commonwealth, she notes. The beauty of Pennsylvania’s farmland, Simpson says, was too pure to pass up as she mulled the things she wanted to showcase.

“I’ve worked on some pretty cool projects,” she says, “but this one is very special to me.” 🍷



Let's Go on a Picnic

ANNE M. KIRCHNER

PHOTOS BY ANNE M. KIRCHNER



IT'S MIDSUMMER – TIME TO kick off your shoes and enjoy a casual outdoor meal. Whether a scenic park, a lakefront beach or even your own backyard, your mood will improve as you feel the sunshine on your face. Relax, enjoy the sounds of nature and feel the breeze on your face.

Your outing will be complete when you plan a classic picnic menu with a few culinary twists. Use an air fryer to bake chicken tenders and eat them at room temperature without utensils. Add capers to potato salad for a tangy, energizing flavor. Create the essence of summer with strawberry shortcake cookies. 🍓

ANNE M. KIRCHNER focuses her writing on human connections, travel and culinary arts, researching food origins, exploring cooking techniques, and creating new recipes.

AIR FRYER CHICKEN TENDERS

- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 2 teaspoons garlic salt
- 2 pounds chicken tenders
- 2 cups panko breadcrumbs
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- Olive oil spray, as needed

Preheat air fryer or oven to 400 degrees. In a large bowl, combine the mayonnaise, mustard and garlic salt. Add the chicken tenders and stir to coat evenly. In another bowl, mix the breadcrumbs and Parmesan cheese. Roll the chicken tenders in the breadcrumb mixture; coat evenly. Place the tenders in a single layer in the air fryer basket or on a baking sheet. Spray with olive oil and bake 5 to 7 minutes. Turn over the chicken tenders, spray with olive oil and cook for 5 to 7 minutes more. *Makes 4 servings.*



DILL POTATO SALAD WITH CAPERS

- 1½ pounds small new potatoes
- 1 cup celery, diced
- ¼ cup capers
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon caper juice
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon dried dill
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper

Wash potatoes and cut into bite-size pieces. Place potatoes in a pot and cover with water. Bring water to a boil, then reduce heat to medium-low. Cook potatoes for 12 to 15 minutes. Drain potatoes and set aside in a serving bowl. Once potatoes are cooled, add celery and capers. In a small bowl, whisk together remaining ingredients. Add mixture to potatoes and toss to coat. Serve warm or at room temperature. *Makes 6 to 8 servings.*



STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE COOKIES

- 2 cups bread flour
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 stick butter, grated
- ¾ cup almond milk
- 1 large egg
- 1½ teaspoons almond extract, divided
- ¾ cup fresh strawberries, chopped
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 1 tablespoon strawberry jam
- 1 tablespoon water

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Combine the flour, sugar, baking powder and grated butter in a large mixing bowl; set aside. In a small bowl, whisk the almond milk, egg and 1 teaspoon almond extract. Add the liquid mixture to the flour bowl. Using your hands, knead the ingredients together. Avoid overworking the thick and sticky dough. Fold in the strawberries with your hands. Chill dough for 1 hour. Using a medium cookie scoop, drop dough onto parchment-lined baking sheets and bake for 12 to 15 minutes. While cookies cool, whisk the powdered sugar, strawberry jam, ½ teaspoon almond extract and water. Drizzle the glaze over the cookies. *Makes 2 dozen cookies.*

Unfit to be Tied

STEVE PIATT

OVER MANY YEARS, I've flailed my way into becoming a decent fly fisher — good enough to catch most of the easy trout and occasionally a difficult one. Along the way, I've accumulated the requisite number of rods, flies and other gear to stock a small sport shop.

But it hasn't been easy.

While I consider my casting ability adequate — certainly good enough for the smaller streams I typically fish — it's always a challenge to get to that point.

The reason is simple: I am a knot-tying klutz.

Fly line backing to reel, fly line to backing, leader to fly line, tippet to leader, and (finally) fly to tippet offer up a series of challenges that at times leave me exhausted, sweating, and wondering if it's all worth it.

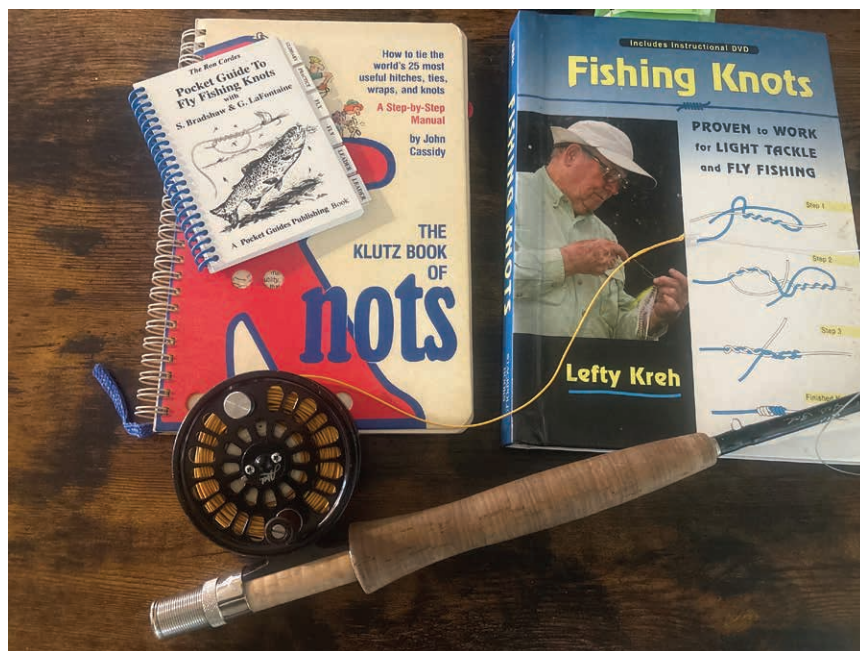
Of course it is. But there are days when my fumbling ways — often as trout rise steadily in front of me — take my frustration level to the limit and send me back to the truck to regroup.

Inexplicably, it has always been that way. My hand-eye coordination is fine. I can hit a baseball, shoot a basketball and golf with a 6 handicap. But when it comes time for my fingers to tie a knot, it's as if I am wearing boxing gloves.

For the record, I can handle tying my shoes. In fact, there are fly-fishing-related knots I tie with relative ease, including a surgeon's knot, which connects leader and tippet.

That is not to imply I could have made it as a surgeon.

Thankfully, I can type with a measure of dexterity, keeping my fingers on the home row and pounding away instinctively. I choose not to think about it, fearing if I did, I would get tied up in — well, knots.



KNOT ENOUGH: Books and guides help fishers know their knots, but fishers cannot knot without practice.

And knots are exactly the problem, even after decades of fly-fishing.

Each winter, I practice at home in my recliner or at my desk; it's much easier tying a knot using both eyes than watching a rising trout with one. I watch helpful step-by-step videos, and I read — “The Klutz Book of Knots,” “Pocket Guide to Fly Fishing Knots,” and the legendary Lefty Kreh’s “Fishing Knots: Proven to Work for Light Tackle and Fly Fishing.”

But when the books and videos are set aside, I am left with the same fingers.

It's not a product of age, although admittedly these days I use a clip-on magnifier to assist as I grapple with an improved clinch or a Duncan loop. I try not to let my shortcomings impact my fly selection, knowing a size 14 Adams is a much easier tie than a size 18. In recent years, I have made life easier with a loop-to-loop connection of fly line to leader. It's one less knot to tackle (a difficult nail knot) and makes for more actual fishing time.

Until a few years ago, I sat at a vise and tied my own flies. That was a separate battle of its own as I wrestled with hooks, beads, dubbing and thread. I limited my patterns to basic nymphs and foam terrestrials, quickly learning not to torture myself with hackle or deer hair. My flies did catch trout and, incredibly, I was able to execute a fine whip finish to each fly, a contradiction to the steps it took to reach that stage.

I've learned to accept my limitations and vowed to continue to reach my full potential, knowing the struggles will remain.

And when I catch a trout on my favorite Pennsylvania streams — Kettle Creek, the First Fork of the Sinnemahoning, Pine Creek and so many remote waters holding wild trout — it will be worth the effort. 🎣

STEVE PIATT is a veteran newspaper editor and outdoor writer who along with his wife, Paula, has hunted and fished across North America. He is most at home on the water and in the fields of the Keystone State. He lives in Bradford County.

STEVE PIATT

AN EVENING OF REMEMBRANCE

Penn Lines Readers Bring
Flight 93 Issue Along on
Meaningful Evening Out

KELLY M. LUVISON
PENN LINES CONTRIBUTOR



CORNING, JUST A STONE'S THROW from the Pennsylvania state line north of Lawrenceville and Mansfield, is a glossy little city in the middle of an otherwise rural expanse of New York state.

It's the home of Corning Inc., the famed glassworks company that has morphed over the decades into a multi-national powerhouse in cutting-edge science.

Older readers of *Penn Lines* will likely associate the Corning name with products like Pyrex or Correlle Ware, iconic kitchen brands that revolutionized cooking in the early and mid-1900s. Today, some might even call Corning a romantic gem, with its glass-themed tourist attractions, art galleries, history museums, trendy boutiques, Finger Lakes wines and stylish restaurants.

It was at The Cellar — one of several chic eateries on Corning's Market Street — where a copy of *Penn Lines* tagged along on a 24th anniversary dinner date with Lisa and Robert Ross last September. The pair, members of Mansfield-based Tri-County Rural Electric Cooperative (REC), call Tioga County home, and their recent adventure earned them a win in our third and final 60th anniversary contest: On a Date with *Penn Lines*.

'It was four days before our wedding'

The couple grew up in Tioga County — Lisa in Millerton and Robert on Buckwheat Hollow Road just outside of

Lawrenceville, where they have now lived for the past 19 years.

"We're about six houses up on Buckwheat Hollow from the main road," Lisa says, "so we're just rural enough, you know, that we love our neighbors and we can use our burn barrel whenever the weather's right."

Robert, who's known as Ross to most, was raised by his grandparents and, in his own words, muscled his way through the school of hard knocks. He currently works at Corning Inc.'s Sullivan Park Research and Development Center. Lisa, who studied graphic design at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh, has spent most of her working life doing layout and design for print publications, including the *Elmira Star-Gazette* and *Mansfield Penny Saver*. Today, she does freelance design and other work from home. She's also taken on a new part-time gig "away from the computer": working at an area nursery.

The couple met in the late 1990s and started dating while attending Williamson High School in Tioga. They got engaged in 1998 and eventually set a wedding date for Sept. 15, 2001. Then, like so many others, their world was knocked off its moorings by the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11 in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania's Somerset County.

"It was four days before our wedding. It was rough because we were hurting as a country," Lisa says. "How do

we celebrate in the midst of what's going on? It was such a tragedy that we actually thought about canceling our wedding."

But friends, family and Lisa's pastor at Jackson Baptist Church ultimately convinced the pair to move ahead with their plans.

"We went through with it, and we all wore little ribbons on our dresses," Lisa says. "We made sure to have a moment of silence and a special prayer during our wedding ceremony for all the innocent lives lost because of those terrorist attacks."

A special issue of *Penn Lines*

Last fall, the Rosses marked their wedding day 24 years later at The Cellar in Corning — but not without a memento or two.

"Always remember" — in bright red type — was the lead headline on the cover of *Penn Lines* in September 2021. "Legacy of Flight 93 lives on 20 years later" read the subtext.

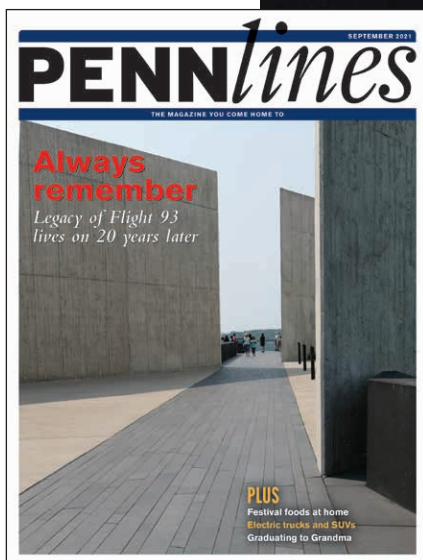
"I made sure I took that issue with us," Lisa says of their anniversary date night. She had saved it in a tote filled with other keepsakes.

"I know we're just two people among millions of Americans who remember that horrific day," she adds, "but since it happened the exact week we were planning our wedding, it weighs extra on our hearts."

Today, the Rosses are living their best rural life and have two grown children. Their eldest, Jordan, is a member of the U.S. Air Force, and Leanna is following in her mother's footsteps and studying at the Cleveland Institute of Art.

As for *Penn Lines*, Lisa says she loves the recipes, the lifestyle articles and "that funny guy in the back."

"I read some of them out loud to my husband because I just find them so comical," she says. "I can relate, and he can relate." 🍷



DATE NIGHT WINNERS: Lisa and Robert Ross, the winners of our "On a Date with *Penn Lines*" contest, took a copy of the September 2021 issue with them while celebrating their 24th wedding anniversary last year. Why that particular issue? The pair were married in 2001, just four days after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania. The Rosses are members of Mansfield-based Tri-County Rural Electric Cooperative.

ISSUE MONTH AD DEADLINE

September

July 15

October

August 14

November

September 14

Please note ads must be received by the due date to be included in requested issue month; ads received after the due date will run in next issue. Written notice of changes/cancellations must be received 30 days prior to issue month.

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ON SALE! – CO-OP COOKBOOK GIFT PACK FOR \$12, includes shipping. "Country Cooking" and "Recipes Remembered" are collections of recipes from electric co-op members of Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Payable to: Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association, P.O. Box 1266, Harrisburg, PA 17108. Write Attention: Cookbooks.

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I May Have Nicked It

JOHN KASUN

THE OTHER DAY MY WIFE, Sandy, and I planned to do some outdoor projects around the yard. Sandy was already outside, busy in her flower beds, as I sat on the patio putting on my boots. Suddenly, she was standing in front of me, dripping wet. “That new hose you bought just blew up and soaked me,” she said.

My wife had planted numerous flower beds and ornamental shrubbery around our property, and to make maintenance easier, I installed multiple outdoor faucets. I also purchased separate hoses for each faucet so she didn’t have to change or drag a hose from place to place. Full disclosure: I actually bought the extra hoses so I didn’t have to change or drag hoses from place to place.

I bought those new, lightweight hoses as seen on TV that can expand, contract and be run over by a truck without damage. I won’t disclose the cost of these hoses, but let’s just say when you buy six at once, don’t count on going to a steakhouse for dinner any time soon. Actually, don’t plan on going to a place where live servers bring you food.

As I was lacing up my boots, I kept wondering where I put the receipt for those hoses. There is no way a new hose should have exploded. I was sure I could get a replacement if I had the proper paperwork. All the while, my wife stood in front of me, dripping water into an ever-growing puddle. As I stood up, she whispered something too low for me to hear.

“What?” I asked.

As we get older, I notice we say “what” a lot in our conversations, and I didn’t think any more of what she said until she repeated it in a low voice, “I might have nicked it.”

If we had not been married for so long, I might have assumed the voice was from an 8-year-old girl who got dirt on her new dress and was afraid she might be in trouble.

I sat back down and said, “Sandy, I thought you told me the hose, ‘blew up.’ Exactly what does ‘I may have nicked it’ mean?”

“Well,” she replied, “I was using the new electric trimmer you bought me to trim some shrubs, I didn’t see the hose, and I may have nicked it.”

“OK,” I said, “Let me install a new hose, and then I will see if I can fix the one you ‘nicked.’”

A few minutes later, I stood at the scene of the crime. It was easy to find because everything within 10 feet was soaked. At first, I felt like a detective, but I soon turned into an EMT, trying to find signs of life in the hose that was in pieces to my right, left and straight ahead. A few minutes later, with the water back on, I was on the patio with what used to be a hose in my hand.

“Can you fix it?” Sandy asked with a shy smile.

“Fix it?” I said. “If I nicked myself shaving like you nicked this hose, I would have to carry my head to the office in a basket.”

With a shy smile, she used one of the best tricks offered in the “Wife’s Handbook.” She

reminded me of the time I backed the lawnmower through the closed gate in our new fence and sweetly told me not to worry because “accidents happen.” And because I have done some more dumb things she does not know about, I decided to just shut up and buy a new hose. 🍷



JOHN KASUN, a lifelong Pennsylvanian with more than 30 years of writing experience, looks for the humor in everyday life and then tells a story from that perspective. He is a member of Huntingdon-based Valley Rural Electric Cooperative.

Happy Birthday, America! Let's Celebrate

This month marks an especially memorable time in U.S. history: We're celebrating our 250th birthday. Whether you plan to celebrate with a hefty slice of watermelon, a snack between friends, a waltz through a field on a sunny day, or merely taking in a glowing sunset, get outdoors and soak up the celebrations near and far.

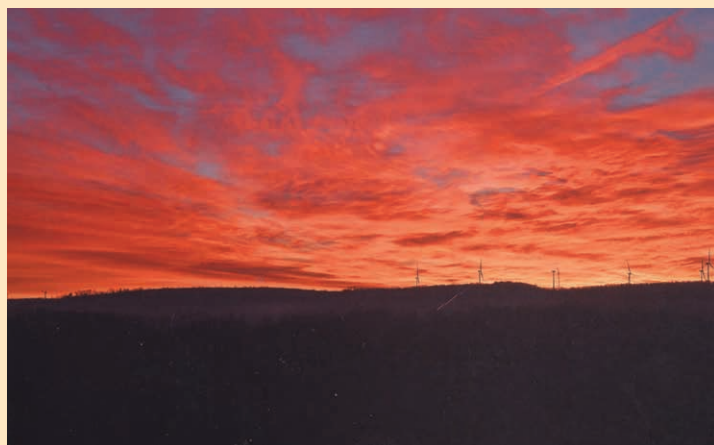
Also, plan to take photos while you celebrate and submit them to our Rural Reflections contest. The best photos in each of five categories (animal, artistic, human, landscape and editor's choice) will run in the January 2027 issue and receive a \$75 cash prize. Runners-up will run in the February 2027 issue and receive \$25. 📷



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Remember, our publication deadlines require that we work ahead, so send your seasonal photos to us early. We need fall photos before mid-July and winter photos before mid-September. *Please note:* Hard-copy, physical photos mailed to our office will not be returned. Therefore, if you mail a photo, please make sure it's a print, not an original.

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