Bread Pudding
SCRAPPY SWEETS

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Between the Lines

News from your community

Giving thanks and giving back

“Concern for Community” is one of the founding principles of cooperatives around the world, including Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation. Supporting the people and places we serve is a priority for our team all year long, but during this time of year, “Concern for Community” seems especially important.

In October, our co-op participated in the Tennessee Electric Co-op Day of Service. Members of our team took part in two projects this year. On Oct. 20, our team worked at Isaiah 117 House in Robertson County, which provides physical and emotional support in a safe and loving home for children awaiting foster care placement. Volunteers worked around the house, cleaning, organizing materials, hanging curtain rods and more. Then on Oct. 28, employees volunteered at the Legends Bank Game Changer Charity Shoot, which benefited the Clarksville Association for Down Syndrome (CADS). With the mission to educate and create a support network for individuals with Down syndrome, their families and the community, CADS serves more than 120 families in Middle Tennessee and Kentucky.

We’re fortunate to have Isaiah 117 House and CADS in our community, and it was an honor for us to support each of these organizations.

In the six-year history of the Tennessee Electric Co-op Day of Service, some 2,700 employees from electric co-ops across the state have volunteered 6,500 hours to complete 153 individual service projects in co-op communities.

It is easy to get caught up in the excitement of the holiday season. There is so much to do and so much to see that it can be easy to forget that many families in our communities go without, and that can be especially difficult during this time of year.

Our communities are strongest when we care for one another. Let me challenge you to find opportunities to give back this season. You can support Isaiah 117 House or CADS or any number of other local community organizations.

There are other ways you can give back to the community that go beyond dollar donations. Take some time to go through your closets and find clothes that no longer fit or have lost their use. Bag those items up, and take them to your local Salvation Army, Goodwill or church clothing drive. Volunteer for a local food or toy drive, deliver meals to the sick and the elderly or simply make a meal for a neighbor in need.

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No matter how great or small the act, every time we give back, we strengthen our community. Take the time to give back this holiday season. You’ll be glad you did.
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Manager’s Viewpoint

A Journey

In early 1982, I was looking for work. Having recently graduated from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, I was young, full of energy and ready to change the world. I already knew everything — or at least I thought I did. As I applied for accounting jobs around the Southeast, I put in an application at the Tennessee Valley Authority as a “backstop” in case I didn’t find my dream job.

Some 40 years later, I guess I never found that “dream job,” but I’m content with the path I’ve taken.

I began my career in the electric utility industry as an accountant for TVA, sending out monthly power bills to electric co-ops, municipal electric systems and large businesses. (Yes, your electric cooperative gets a bill from TVA every month.) I worked in an old brick building with no windows, small offices and green carpet — not dream-job surroundings, but not too bad.

Working for a large government agency has pluses and minuses. One of the minuses is frequent reorganizations and something called a “reduction in force,” which is a fancy way of saying layoffs. After several years at TVA, at the request of the CEO, I left — along with 6,000 of my closest friends — to continue looking for that dream job.

I learned two things from my next job. As the chief finance and administrative officer of a community mental health center, I learned how to manage a company’s financial operations in a challenging environment. I also learned that mental health professionals are some of the most dedicated health professionals I’ve ever met. They are incredibly invested in their work and, at least in my experience, very much underpaid.

The other lesson I learned is that I really, really wanted to get back into the electric utility business.

I got that chance at Tri-County Electric in Lafayette. At Tri-County, I went from working for a large corporation in a city to a smaller company in a rural area. I learned in my first year that when ice storms or tornadoes hit, it’s all hands on deck until everyone has their electricity back on. Those days began with breakfast at the office as the line crews began their dawn-to-dark work, supported by the rest of us. (I was also introduced to something called “chocolate gravy,” which is used to defile perfectly good biscuits.)

After many years at Tri-County, I took a position at the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association as vice president for government affairs. That’s a respectable term for “lobbyist.” Among my duties was protecting electric cooperatives from bad legislation. Over the years we’ve stopped a lot of harmful legislation and helped enact some good laws.

In today’s divisive political climate, it is easy to be dismissive and harshly judge some of our political leaders. Granted, some have earned that judgment. But over my two decades of working with elected leaders in
Nashville and Washington, I’ve been fortunate to meet some true statesmen — men and women who are genuinely concerned about their communities. Without their assistance, we might not have Tennessee’s “Move Over” law now nor passed the changes that allow electric cooperatives to provide broadband.

I’m retiring from TECA in a couple of months after 22 years as a lobbyist and CEO. I am the first to admit that I have been incredibly fortunate over the years. Among my first bosses, I had only one who thought he was the only one who could do his job. He cajoled and demeaned his employees. He genuinely thought we would call him for help the Monday after he retired. (He is probably still waiting for that call.) I had another boss who trusted us to do good work, gave us the tools to do our jobs and stayed out of our way. He was always there if we needed him to provide leadership and guidance.

I knew who I wanted to be like. I’ve tried to closely emulate him, and I hope I’ve come close. No leader accomplishes anything without dedicated co-workers and a supportive family. I’ve had both.

I apologize for the walk down memory lane for my last column, but it seemed like the thing to do as I head home after 40 years of working for nonprofits — 36 of them with electric utilities.

The final point I’d like to convey: Electric cooperatives are owned and operated by the people we serve. That is incredibly unique. As member-owners, you should stay engaged, informed and involved in your cooperative. That’s what makes it work like it should.

It has been my honor to work for the men and women of Tennessee’s electric co-ops and for you and the 2.5 million Tennesseans who get their electricity from a cooperative. Maybe I found that dream job after all.

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2023 Calendar — featuring photos from the pages of The Tennessee Magazine

“Barns of Tennessee” — This 160-page hard-bound book highlights more than 350 images of Tennessee barns, with most photos taken by readers of The Tennessee Magazine.

The Tennessee Magazine subscription — it’s a gift that never goes out of style! Keep family and friends entertained with the people and places of Tennessee.
“A gingerbread house is made of cookies and royal icing; a gingerbread home is built of hard work and family.” It doesn’t have quite the same ring as Ralph Waldo Emerson’s famous quote, but nevertheless, gingerbread houses have continued to be a steadfast holiday tradition in homes all over the world.

There is a whole different side to gingerbread houses that many don’t consider as they build their store-bought at-home gingerbread house kits: the time and energy some skilled artists invest into making elaborate gingerbread creations from scratch that don’t even feel right being called “gingerbread houses” mostly because, often, they aren’t actually houses.

For 30 years, the National Gingerbread House Competition has brought together a wide variety of gingerbread sculptors of all different ages, and they compete in four categories: children (ages under 8), youth (ages 8 to 12), teen (age 13 to seniors in high school) and adult (ages 18 and up). The competition celebrates the artistry it takes to put together such wonderful gingerbread house creations. It is held in the Omni Grove Park Inn in Asheville, North Carolina, and has had quite a few entries over the years from some skilled Tennesseans who have joined the competition along with people from not only all over the U.S. but internationally as well.

One Tennessean who has been placing high in the most recent competitions is Emma Rhinehart, a 14-year-old high schooler from Columbia. She is entering the competition again this year to go up against the 75 to 80 other teen division competitors after her successes with her past three entries: placing third in her first year of competition in 2019 in the youth division, second in 2020 in the youth division and second again in 2021 in the teen division.

“I didn’t really expect much out of it,” Emma said on how she thought she might do in her first competition back in 2019. “I was kind of just doing it for fun, as something my nana always did. It was more of a fun thing to do with my sisters and my nana to work and see all of it come together. But after the first time, I was like, ‘Oh, maybe I could place higher,’ because they get better and better every year.”

Emma estimates that she has been building gingerbread houses (outside of the competition) since she was 2 years old alongside her older two sisters, Sarah and Jenna.

“The girls started making gingerbread houses in house-form when they were really young, and it just snowballed...
into these big, grand creations,” said Rachael Spafford Rhinehart, Emma’s mother.

Emma said her nana, Merry Spafford, is her source of inspiration throughout this competition.

“I started doing something small my first year, and then my nana helped with the concept of making it bigger,” Emma said, adding that Merry is the one who taught her and her sisters all about gingerbread houses.

Merry has entered the National Gingerbread House Competition 19 times over the years, placing as high as third in the adult category, which is not an easy feat since that division tends to have the most competition. There are between 100 and 150 entries in the adult division of this year’s competition, according to Rachael.

Merry was a family and consumer science and visual arts teacher at Greenback Public School who started making gingerbread houses with her students 26 years ago as a class project. The creations were donated to the Fantasy of Trees, a fundraiser for the East Tennessee Children’s Hospital in Knoxville. She learned about
the National Gingerbread House Competition from a Knoxville chef she met at the Fantasy of Trees in 2003, and the next year, she entered with a teaching colleague for the first time.

“As a family, we began making and decorating small houses the day before Christmas to give as gifts,” Merry said. “The girls were all very young when we started doing this, and most of their first attempts looked like a messy pile of sugar and candy.”

All five of Merry’s granddaughters have entered the competition, and all of them have won or placed multiple times. Emma’s two older cousins, Amanda Spafford Stover and Emily Spafford, entered the competition for multiple years. Once Emily went to college to study nursing and Amanda went into the Navy, they chose to stop competing, so Merry asked Emma and her two sisters to start entering the competition in 2019. Emma’s oldest sister, Sarah, has stopped competing since she is busy with college, so Jenna and Emma decided to enter the competition together this year. They build their gingerbread houses for the competition at Merry’s house in Loudon.

“Making gingerbread is a way to use your imagination and creative skills all while having fun and making a huge mess in the kitchen,” Merry said. “It is my favorite time to spend time with my granddaughters.”

One thing many people might not realize is these gingerbread houses might not actually be houses.

“Outside of the competition, we usually just do houses, but usually a house is too simple for a competition,” Emma said. “If you were to do a house, it would have to be very detailed, but usually they’re not really houses.”

People have entered many types of unique gingerbread creations for the competition such as stables, reindeer or carousels, to name a few. Emma said right after they make their gingerbread creations for one year’s competition, they start looking for ideas on Pinterest to inspire their own concepts for the next year.

“There’s always a picture or idea of how it started,” Emma said.

But inspiration can strike anywhere, not just from the internet. Emma said she got her idea for her “Merry Minion” gingerbread house competition entry in 2020 from a minion blow-up decoration in Walmart’s holiday section.

“Last year’s entry, when my nana was teaching while she was at a school, the librarian she worked with asked if she would ever do a piece with books like a library or something, so we kinda tied that into mine, ‘Santa Study,’” Emma said.

Merry added that she makes a foam board model of her gingerbread house in February or March after deciding on the idea to make sure everything will fit together and be structurally sound, and she starts working on her competition entry in June.

Emma and her siblings have usually built their gingerbread houses over the entirety of their fall break at Merry’s house, but this year, they switched it up and built it every weekend in November leading up to the competition.

The gingerbread houses have a 2-foot cube maximum size requirement, meaning they cannot exceed 2 feet lengthwise, widthwise or heightwise. They also have to be 70 percent gingerbread and 100 percent edible … although, what can be considered “edible” might surprise people who don’t know much about this level of gingerbread artistry.

“We’ve used dried spaghetti in some of them, so it’s the most out-of-the-ordinary food items that you would ever think to put on a gingerbread house,” Emma said. “It’s not always sweet, so it could be crackers or anything.”

“On my gingerbread ‘Santa Study’ from last year, my windows are actually the gelatin sheet things that are the casing of hot dogs,” Emma said.

This year, they hit an additional obstacle when an allergy test showed that Emma was allergic to cinnamon, leading to Merry making cinnamon-less dough for this year’s competition.
“We kind of always thought it was the cat at her house until I got allergy tested and it turned out it was cinnamon,” Emma said. “We were like, ‘Oh, that makes sense why I was always red and had headaches at her house.’ There’s cinnamon embedded in every crease of that house!”

Emma said she usually doesn’t talk about her participation in the National Gingerbread House Competition unless someone brings it up to her.

“When they ask about it, they usually go straight to, ‘Oh, it’s like a kit house from Walmart’ or something,” Emma said. “They don’t really understand that it’s all from scratch, and it’s really big, not graham cracker-sized.”

Emma said people sometimes ask how the gingerbread houses stay up and assume inedible additions help make the creations sturdy.

“They’ll ask if I have a wooden post in the middle of it or if I use super glue or Elmer’s glue. Nope, it’s all edible,” Emma said.

The judging is just as meticulous as the concept and building processes. The judges are very well-known and are usually pastry chefs, even some from Food Network like Carla Hall, who judged in 2021.

“While they judge the pieces, obviously no one’s in the room. They have food drills, and they’ll sometimes drill into your piece to see if it’s gingerbread,” Emma said. “For my Minion piece, they didn’t know what the Minions were made out of, so they drilled into one to make sure.”

Emma said that at the ceremony after the judging, they’ll call the top 10 entries for each age division first and then narrow it down to the top three.

Attention to detail separates gingerbread competition champions from the rest of the pack, and by the time construction is finished, the Rhineharts’ entries are intricate, involved masterpieces.

“Standing there looking at all the top 10, you just wonder what’s going to happen because there’s so many good, detailed pieces, and it just comes down to what the judges think,” Emma said. “It was definitely surprising when I got third my first year.”

The National Gingerbread House Competition always hits the weekend before Thanksgiving, which adds another layer to “family” and “togetherness” for Emma’s family.

“It is fun to go back each year as a family and spend that time together, building the projects. But we also take the weekend and stay and experience Asheville at the same time,” Rachael said.

“It brings a lot of our family together since it’s around Thanksgiving when we’re doing it all, with lots of laughing,” Emma said. “It definitely is a tradition.”

The Omni Grove Park Inn will announce one competition finalist per day starting on Dec. 1, leading up to the grand prize winner, who is announced on Dec. 12, National Gingerbread House Day. Visit the inn’s Instagram feed, @omnigrovepark, or Facebook page at facebook.com/omnigroveparkinn, to see the 2022 competition results. There is also a public viewing of the competition’s gingerbread houses at the inn from Nov. 28 to Jan. 2.
Quality light is an essential ingredient in successful photography. Harsh and directly overhead, it can lead to overexposed images or fine details lost in the shadows. But skillful use of light and patience behind the shutter yield compelling images. A slight change to light’s direction or intensity can alter a photograph’s mood, draw the eye’s focus or create captivating first-glance illusions.

Our next Shutterbug Photography Contest tasks entrants show their grasp of “Light and Shadow.”

In addition to striking use of light, composition and subject matter will be considered in choosing the winners. Images can include people or not, and they can be selfies. They do not have to be taken in Tennessee. As you accept this challenge, please stay safe. We don’t want anyone to take a tumble in the name of the Shutterbug contest.

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

2. Photographs must have been taken by you.

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

4. All entries must be made online. We won’t accept prints for this contest. Sign on to tnmagazine.org to complete the form and upload your photograph(s).

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

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

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

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Entries must be entered online by midnight (Central Standard Time) on Monday, Jan. 16. Winners will be published in the March issue.

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Judges will select a first-, second- and third-place winner in each division and age group. These prizes will be awarded: First place wins $150, second place $100 and third place $50.
Tennessee State Parks receives awards for environmental programs

Well-Earned Recognition

Tennessee State Parks receives awards for environmental programs

Story by Trish Milburn
Photographs courtesy of the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation
If you’ve been following our series of features on Tennessee’s state parks, you already know that the park system provides a lot of enjoyment to a lot of people — an invaluable service during difficult, uncertain times and a respite from the worries and stresses of everyday life. It stands to reason, then, that keeping the parks going and continuing to innovate take a lot of work. Recently, some of that dedication and hard work by park employees was recognized with well-deserved awards.

Go Green With Us

Tennessee State Parks has received the President’s Award from the National Association of State Park Directors (NASPD) recognizing the parks for their work in sustainability with the Go Green With Us initiative.

The award is given to an individual or organization that has made an extraordinary contribution, innovation and/or best practice at a state, regional or national level furthering the goal of a state parks system.

Greer Tidwell, deputy commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, and Mike Robertson, director of operations for Tennessee State Parks, accepted the President’s Award at the NASPD national conference in Sunriver, Oregon, in early September.

“We are very grateful to the NASPD for honoring Tennessee State Parks,” says Tidwell. “The teams at our parks show commitment to sustainability practices every day and are worthy of this honor. We look forward to such commitment well into the future.”

Go Green With Us was created in 2015 as a partnership among Tennessee State Parks and citizens to help protect and preserve the parks through conservation, sustainable operations and recycling. The program not only implements sustainable practices throughout park operations but also provides sustainable options for park guests such as recycling, water bottle filling stations, Earth-friendly merchandise and environmentally friendly lodging and recreational opportunities.

Before the program launch, a Go Green With Us Committee was formed of representatives from Tennessee State Parks and other divisions within the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC). This committee compiled a comprehensive guide to outline the many actions staff and visitors can take to effectively incorporate environmental sustainability into all aspects of park operations. In the first year the Go Green guidelines were launched, it was a voluntary program. Each park has a designated Go Green representative who is responsible for coordinating the park’s implementation of the guidelines and reporting progress. Robin Peeler, East Tennessee park area manager, and Kelsey Davis, environmental consultant for the Office of Sustainable Practices at TDEC, are co-managers of the Go Green With Us program. As of October 2018, the implementation of the Go Green guidelines became mandatory for all parks. They are required to execute the basic prerequisites in each category for the items that apply to the park.

The Go Green With Us program uses nine metrics for evaluation of the 56 state parks. Through this evaluation process, the parks can earn Bronze, Silver, Gold or Platinum recognition levels. Parks accumulate points for providing various green-friendly programs and information as well as completing certain tasks. For instance, repurposing materials such as using scrap lumber for bird feeder craft projects earns a park one point. Installing solar lights or other solar-powered mechanisms earns two points. Earning and maintaining TVA Clean Marina certification earns three points. The points system is extensive and touches every aspect of park operations from maintenance to guest services, from historic preservation to transportation, and much more.

In the first year of the program, no park reached Platinum, and only three parks reached Gold. Only five years later, however, a lot of hard work and promotion of the program led to 22 parks reaching Gold and 28 reaching Platinum levels.

At left, Tennessee State Parks received the President’s Award from the National Association of State Park Directors for the Go Green With Us initiative. Above, Trails and Vista Administrator Michael Meister displays information on Tires to Trails accompanied by the Project Excellence Award the program earned.
The program has had a significant impact with regards to environmental stewardship and reducing the parks’ carbon footprint. In 2021, a total of 394 tons of material was recovered and recycled across the 56-park system. Fifty-five of the parks had replaced plumbing fixtures with low-flow alternatives and installed LED lights in high-traffic areas. Four parks composted more than 8.6 tons of food waste. All the parks reduce carbon emissions by having a no-idle policy, and 53 use alternative patrols for rangers. Every park tracks rare, threatened and endangered species and actively works to remove invasive species. Most of the parks also plant native species in landscaping.

Through fiscal year 2021, the energy efficiency upgrades alone have saved $1.8 million, more than 18 million kilowatt-hours of electricity and 14,576 tons of carbon dioxide emissions. And that’s just one slice of a large pie of overall positive outcomes from the Go Green With Us program.

“We also have a ‘Wildcard’ option where parks can get additional points for items that go above and beyond or that were not listed in the guidelines,” says Kim Schofinski, deputy communications director for TDEC.

A few examples of Wildcards over the years include:
• Cove Lake State Park — shop manager uses locally sourced wood to construct gift shop displays; ranger has planted a tree orchard in the park to foster growth of new trees to replace trees that have been removed.
• Henry Horton State Park — partnered with Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) to install pollinator habitats along roadways.
• Johnsonville State Historic Park — hosted a virtual week of Go Green programming during Junior Ranger Camp to safely provide engaging educational opportunities during the pandemic.
• Panther Creek State Park — worked with a Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency wildlife survey manager to conduct a new study of bat species and populations at the park.

It’s good to see such a collection of hard work and a wide-reaching and impactful program recognized nationally.

“This award recognizes the importance of sustainability and the work that goes into it in our parks,” says Robertson. “The Go Green With Us program is a valuable service to Tennesseans, and we are honored that our parks have been recognized by such a prestigious organization.”

Tires to Trails
One of the items of modern life that poses significant problems when it comes to disposal is the tire. Not only are tires unsightly and breeding grounds for pests like mosquitoes, they also can release harmful chemicals into the air and groundwater and don’t decompose. Close to 300 million scrap tires are generated in the United States each year.

Thus, finding uses for these tires that are no longer fit for the road is imperative. Tennessee State Parks were recently recognized for contributing to that effort. The system was honored with the Project Excellence Award from the Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals for the innovative Tires to Trails program, which recycles tires. The award was presented in September at the National Outdoor Recreation Conference in Knoxville.

“This is a wonderful recognition of an outstanding program,” says David Salyers, commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation. “We have seen great success with Tires to Trails, and the award is a tribute to all who have worked to make it successful.”

The award is presented annually to exemplary outdoor recreation projects and collaborating agencies and organizations that were keys to the success. Selection criteria include unique or special circumstances, problem-solving, level of innovation and creativity, impact or effect of a project and collaborative team effort.

Tennessee State Parks officials, along with those from the Tennessee Department of Transportation, cut the ribbon in June on a new hard-surface pathway over 2.5 miles long—made from rubber crumbs derived from tires — at T.O. Fuller State Park in Memphis. The path is one of the longest rubber-bearing trails in the U.S. The project was a partnership among TDEC, TDOT, the city of Memphis, Shelby County and Memphis City Beautiful.

Tires that had been illegally dumped in the area around the park were gathered by volunteers and local contractors, then transformed into crumbs by Patriot Tire Recycling in Bristol, the only facility in the state with the ability to recycle tires in such a way. Once the tires were recycled into crumbs, the material was taken back to the park for construction of the trail.

Workers cleaned up more than 24,000 dumped tires, including passenger, commercial truck and heavy equipment tires. The cleanup had 450 registered volunteers and saw 10,000 tires collected in one day. The project, which began with col-
While a trip to one of Tennessee’s state parks might automatically bring warm-weather images to mind, there’s a beauty and peaceful quiet that comes from the less-crowded winter visits. The parks still offer plenty of programs and special events in the colder months. Here is a sampling:

Dec. 1 • Winter Tree Keys, Warriors Path State Park — Learn to use botanical keys to identify winter trees by their bark, buds, fallen leaves and more.

Dec. 2-3 • Christmas at the Carter Mansion, Sycamore Shoals State Park — Step into the traditions of a circa 1780 Colonial Christmas at this historic home.

Dec. 3 • Christmas Garrison, Fort Loudoun State Park, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m., 6-7 p.m. — Celebrate Christmas as the soldiers did during the French and Indian War. Demonstrations throughout the day will feature blacksmithing, laundering, cooking and artillery drills. There will also be a Christmas church service and Wassail tasting. The candlelight tour of the fort begins at 6 p.m.

Dec. 3-4 • Christmas on the Mountain, Fall Creek Falls State Park — Enjoy live music, Christmas decorations, a craft fair and a visit from Santa Claus.

Jan. 1 • First Day Hikes — Several parks host hikes on the first day of the year. Among these are Chickasaw, Cordell Hull Birthplace, Hiwassee/Ocoee Scenic River, Montgomery Bell and Old Stone Fort.

Jan. 15 • Geocaching and S’mores, Hiwassee/Ocoee Scenic River — Learn to use your smartphone or GPS device to find geocaches (hidden treasures), then enjoy some yummy s’mores by the campfire.

Jan. 21 • Winter Garden Seminar: Wild Edibles and Medicinals, Warriors Path State Park — Learn the traditional uses of common plants.

Feb. 3-5 • 19th Annual Reelfoot Lake Eagle Festival, Reelfoot Lake State Park — The park has been hosting bald eagle tours in January and February for years, and this festival celebrates our national symbol with special tours, raptor programs, children’s programming and other activities.

Feb. 4 • Full Moon Cemetery Lantern Tour, Montgomery Bell State Park — Learn about the people who called this area home before it became a state park.

Feb. 25 • Maker Market and Craft Fair, Bledsoe Creek State Park, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. — Bundle up and enjoy seeing what the 35 vendors have to offer. Food trucks will be on site to provide breakfast, brunch and lunch.

The Tennessee Running Tour continues through the winter months. This is the 44th year of the longest state parks running series in the country. Twenty different races are held at state parks beginning in October and lasting until early March. Visit tennesseerunningtour.com to find out about times, locations, fees and more.

For a fuller listing of events and programs being held at state parks across the state, visit tennesseestateparks.com/events. Check back often as these are frequently updated as dates draw nearer. You’ll also find information about any related fees or requirements for specific programs.
‘Reflections of a Veteran’

I have always enjoyed reading the Tennessee history lessons by Bill Carey. We do, however, appear to have different opinions as expressed in his “Reflections of a Veteran” in your November issue. Military members are an all-volunteer force, always combat-ready. Enlisted personnel are not compensated as well as their civilian counterparts and are subject to frequent transfers far from home, causing hardship. When one expresses thanks to a veteran, it is an expression of respect. Mr. Carey may prefer to visit a bar on Veterans Day. I will attend our local (Houston County) Veterans Day program, where the service and sacrifice of former and current veterans is recognized.

Susan Gould

I did not have Bill Carey’s email. Excellent article and I agree with his opinion. I always enjoy his columns.

Gary L. Houston

Editor’s response:

We heard from many readers regarding Bill Carey’s November column on Veterans Day.

To anyone who was offended by what they read, we sincerely apologize.

It was certainly not our intention nor Bill Carey’s to discount anyone’s service or sacrifice — nor was the message intended to belittle Veterans Day commemorations and expressions of thanks.

The message was intended to be one veteran’s thoughts on politicization and commercialization of a solemn day of observance and how best to honor service and sacrifice, but the tone of the delivery upset many readers.

Concerned readers noted that a coupon and a simple, “Thank you for your service,” can be seen as grateful gestures of reconciliation for veterans who were mistreated upon coming home, returned to a nation indifferent to their service and sacrifice or suffered physical as well as unseen traumas.

What was missing from our November issue was perspective, and we will give space in a future issue to offer that perspective on how Veterans Day celebrations and other gestures help the veteran community.

To our veterans and their families, we are grateful for your service and the incredible sacrifices that have been made to secure our freedoms. We apologize for missing the mark on this column, and we appreciate your feedback.

Chris Kirk, editor
The Tennessee Magazine

Watch those pets!

I enjoy receiving your magazine each month.

In the November issue, the Home Energy Q&A section features a photo of a dog looking at a Christmas tree.

The caption reads “A tree decked out in festive décor is a welcome sight to two and four-legged loved ones.”

Please remind readers that holiday trees and décor can be hazardous for our pets, so make sure pets are supervised around holiday décor, especially lights.

Thank you!

Linda Collins, Cumberland EMC

Editor’s response:

Thank you very much for well-reasoned word of caution. The canine model featured in our energy column appears well-behaved, but I’m sure there are plenty of pets with an adventurous — maybe even mischievous — streak. So, yes, please keep your four-legged family members in mind as you deck the halls this holiday season. In addition to shock and choking hazards presented by lights, also remember that some festive plants can make pets sick — as can human food and drink. Consult your veterinarian for more information on treats that are appropriate for your pets.
CO-OPS CONNECT

ENERGY + COMMUNITY

Our robust power grid connects your community with a safe and reliable supply of affordable energy. Co-ops connect.
ALL CEMC OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED

FRIDAY, DEC. 23
MONDAY, DEC. 26
MONDAY, JAN. 2

FOR THE CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR’S HOLIDAYS

CEMC personnel will be available in the event of an emergency by calling 1-800-987-2362

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from your friends at CEMC!
Join CEMC in decorating the Trees of Giving

Each year during the holiday season, the lobbies of Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation are decorated with trees bearing coats, hats, gloves and other winter clothing instead of the typical ribbons, bows and garland you might expect. These trees, known as Trees of Giving, will help bring warmth to those in need in our local communities this winter.

We invite everyone — employees and members alike — to help decorate our trees by donating cold-weather clothing such as coats, hats, gloves, scarves, warm socks and pajamas. Donations of nonperishable food items are also welcome and appreciated.

Donations will be accepted from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. through Friday, Dec. 16, and will be delivered to local charitable organizations for distribution before Christmas.

Give space heaters their space

Space heaters can work wonders on the coldest winter days to warm rooms your central heating system can’t quite reach. But while manufacturers have worked to build more safety features into this alternative heating source, users still should take precautions to ensure these cozy heaters don’t become fire hazards.

Space heaters are designed as supplemental sources of heat, not as the main source. So you shouldn’t run them constantly, especially in rooms you don’t use much. Check your space heaters for an Underwriters Laboratories seal, and follow these guidelines for safely using them:
• Keep space heaters at least 3 feet away from drapes and furniture that could catch fire.
• Don’t use extension cords with space heaters unless absolutely necessary.
• Inspect the heater’s cord periodically for frayed wire or damaged insulation. Don’t use a space heater with a damaged cord.
• Check periodically for a secure plug/outlet fit. If the plug gets hot, the outlet might need to be replaced by a qualified electrician. This could be the sign of a home wiring issue.
• Place your heater on a flat, level surface. Don’t place heaters on furniture; they could fall and break or even start a fire.
• Unless the heater is designed for use outdoors or in bathrooms, don’t use it in wet areas.
Five ways to fight winter chill and save energy

We all have our favorite season. Some people love crisp, cool weather and bundling up under a favorite blanket while others prefer the warm temperatures and all the fun outdoor activities that go with summer.

But there’s one thing we all can agree: High winter bills are never fun. Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation is here to help you find ways to manage your home energy use and keep winter bills in check.

Here are five tips to help increase your home’s energy efficiency this winter:

1. **Mind the thermostat.**
   This is one of the easiest ways to manage your home energy use. We recommend setting your thermostat to 68 degrees (or lower) at home. When you’re sleeping or away for an extended period of time, try setting it between 58 and 62 degrees; there’s no need to heat your home when you’re away or sleeping and less active.

2. **Button up your home.**
   The Department of Energy estimates that air leaks account for 24 to 40 percent of the energy used for heating and cooling a home. Caulking and weather stripping around windows and doors are other simple, cost-effective ways to increase comfort and save energy. It likely needs to be sealed if you can feel drafts while standing near a window or door.

3. **Use window coverings wisely.**
   Open blinds, drapes, or other window coverings during the day to allow natural sunlight in to warm your home. Close them at night to keep the cold, drafty air out. If you feel the cold air around windows, consider hanging curtains or drapes in a thicker material; heavier window coverings can significantly block cold outdoor air.

4. **Consider your approach to appliance use.**
   When combined, appliances and electronics account for a significant chunk of our home energy use, so assess how efficiently you use them. For example, only wash full loads if running the dishwasher or clothes washer. Look for electronic devices that consume energy even when they’re not in use like phone chargers or game consoles. Every little bit helps, so unplug them to save energy.

5. **Think outside the box.**
   If you’re still feeling chilly at home, think of other ways to warm up — beyond dialing up the thermostat. Add layers of clothing, wear thick socks and bundle up under blankets. You can even add layers to your home! If you have hard-surface flooring, consider purchasing an area rug to block cold air that leaks in through the floor.

Winter months often bring some of the highest energy bills of the year. By being proactive about saving energy, you can increase the comfort of your home and reduce monthly bills.
Thirty employees from Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation took part in the Tennessee Electric Co-op Day of Service in October. This year, employees assisted two agencies — Isaiah 117 House in Robertson County and the Clarksville Association for Down Syndrome (CADS).

“Our employees get so excited about this event every year,” says Susie Yonkers, CEMC community relations coordinator and organizer of the Day of Service projects for CEMC. “It is incredibly fulfilling to be able to give back to the people in our communities in this way.”

For our first project, our team spent four hours on Oct. 20 cleaning, organizing materials, hanging curtain rods, etc., at Isaiah 117 House in Robertson County. Isaiah 117 House provides physical and emotional support in a safe and loving home for children awaiting foster care placement.

For our second project, employees volunteered at the Legends Bank Game Changer Charity Clay Shoot Oct. 28 at Cross Creek Clays in Palmyra. Proceeds from this event benefited the Clarksville Association for Down Syndrome (CADS). With the mission to educate and create a support network for individuals with Down syndrome, their families and the community, CADS serves more than 120 families in Middle Tennessee and Kentucky.

“Isaiah 117 House and CADS are both important to our communities, and our team is proud to partner with them for this year’s Day of Service event,” says CEMC General Manager Chris Davis. “Our mission is to improve quality of life for the people and places we serve, and that doesn’t stop with providing electricity. Our team members live and work in these communities, too, and what happens here matters.”

The Tennessee Electric Co-op Day of Service is coordinated by the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association. More than 750 electric co-op employees devoted 1,500 volunteer hours to complete 46 local community service projects across the state during this year’s event. In the six-year history of the event, 2,700 employees have volunteered 6,500 hours to complete 153 individual service projects in co-op communities.
Fiber to the Farm: How broadband service is making a positive impact on local farms

Farming is not an easy job — there are so many factors throughout a farm’s day-to-day operations that farmers need to manage to ensure that everything is running efficiently and profitably. The world depends on farmers to maintain our food supply, and the demand for the products that farmers produce is certainly not getting any smaller. According to a recent study by the United Nations, the world’s population is expected to reach 9.8 billion people by the year 2050. This substantial increase in population will, in turn, require an increase in the amount of food produced by farms. The World Resources Institute estimates that an increase in food production of roughly 56 percent will be required to close this gap and ensure that the world’s population holds an adequate food supply. Luckily, new innovations and technologies are propelling the agricultural world forward and helping farmers increase efficiency and productivity to meet this ever-increasing demand.

A crucial component in the development of new agricultural technologies has been the deployment of broadband Internet services throughout rural areas. A large portion of new agricultural technology relies on a broadband connection to function. Our team sat down with TC Groves, owner of Corn Silk Farms in Orlinda to discuss the impact that broadband access has had on his farm. Corn Silk Farms has been a Cumberland Connect subscriber since January 2021, and the farm produces wheat, corn, and soybeans for a variety of applications — including flour milling, producing livestock feed, and creating a seed supply for farmers in future seasons. Before having access to a fiber Internet connection, Groves used satellite Internet for his business because it was the only form of Internet available at the time. “Satellite Internet was awful,” says Groves. “You pretty much didn’t even have Internet.” Even something as simple as checking email was nearly impossible, which can be detrimental to any business. Finally gaining access to a fast, reliable Internet connection has not only simplified the process of performing the business’s administrative tasks, but also opened the door to other Internet-based technology that helps increase efficiency and supervision of the farm’s day-to-day operations.

For Corn Silk Farms, the ability to remotely monitor the farm has made the greatest impact on the ease of operations. Groves has set up cameras throughout the farm for applications that go beyond simple surveillance — these cameras allow for the monitoring of crucial equipment on the farm. “We have technology on our grain dryer where we can now monitor it on our phones. That was impossible before,” says Groves. “We used to have somebody stay here and keep an eye on the grain dryer as it was running.” He explained that if a malfunction were to happen while the equipment was running, it could pose a major hazard for the farm. Now that this equipment can be remotely monitored, this eliminates the need for someone to be physically present at the grain dryer station while the equipment is operating. “That has been a game-changer for us,” says Groves.
A stable fiber connection has created avenues for even more applications and technology on the farm. Groves informed us that much of his equipment is now cloud-based, which allows for real-time data to be transmitted, organized, and accessed from anywhere in the world. "We can now watch the sprayer and the combines go across the field. We can view data such as how many bushels per acre, the rate of the sprayer, and how much fuel is left in the equipment. It is very precise," states Groves. Operating a farm includes managing several various moving pieces all at once, and the benefits of leveraging cloud data and over-the-air transmission from equipment create much-needed simplicity in a complicated enterprise.

Be sure to watch our Business Highlight video with TC Groves and Corn Silk Farms!

We want to thank Mr. Groves for giving us the opportunity to highlight his business, and you can follow our Facebook page to see even more Business Highlights by visiting

www.facebook.com/GetCCFiber

Scan this QR code to view the Corn Silk Farms Business Highlight video on our YouTube channel:

Check Availability & Register for Email Updates at CumberlandConnect.org/Check- Availability

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.
**HOME ENERGY Q&A**

**Winterization tips for energy savings**

**Invest a few minutes and save big during the coldest time of year**

**Q**: How can I keep my home warm while saving on my electric bill this winter?

**A**: Winterizing is an important step to keep your home cozy and your bills low. These tried-and-true methods will ensure your home is sealed tightly and ready for colder weather. I’ve also included tips that address common misconceptions.

### Insulating pipes and water heater

You can raise the water temperature inside your home’s water pipes by 2 to 4 degrees by insulating, according to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). Insulating allows you to turn down the heat on your water heater, saving energy and money.

Start by insulating the pipes coming out of your water heater. If you have a gas water heater, keep pipe insulation at least 6 inches away from the flue. Insulate hot and cold water lines. The latter can prevent condensation and freezing pipes. Insulating your water heater can save 7 to 16 percent on water-heating costs, DOE says. Insulation kits are available at hardware stores. Don’t obstruct the pressure relief valve, thermostats or access valves.

### Air sealing

Air sealing and insulation are a great combination for minimizing home energy use. Insulation is like a warm sweater for your home, and air sealing is the windbreaker. All the cracks, gaps and holes in a typical home can be like having a window open year-round.

Air sealing eliminates those leaks. It can be done as a do-it-yourself project or by a professional.

Your fireplace adds ambiance to your home but isn’t necessarily effective at heating it. If you have a wood-burning fireplace, close the damper when your fire is extinguished. Photo credit: Mark Gilliland, Pioneer Utility Resources
Window sealing and improvements
Windows can be a source of drafts and wasted energy. Close windows tightly.
Add weather stripping around windows to prevent warm air from escaping your home, and caulk the gaps where the window trim meets the wall and the window frame. Add curtains to make the room feel warmer.
Storm windows are a lower-cost option for upgrading single-pane windows. They are available with low-emissivity coatings, which insulate better, and are available for installation either from the inside or outside of the window.

Fireplace dampers
When I was little, my dad told me it was too cold to have a fire. I remember thinking that made no sense, but he was right.
We had an open wood-burning fireplace — not a wood stove. A fireplace can draw the warm air out of the house, cooling it down or causing your heating system to use more energy.

Some gas fireplaces require a damper to remain permanently open so gas can vent out of the home. Check the specifications of your unit to ensure safe operation.

Best practices for closing off parts of a home
Through the years, I have heard a lot of debate about closing off rooms or parts of the home to save energy.
Best practices come down to the type of heat source. If you have a zonal heating system where individual areas are controlled separately, you can close doors and only heat the areas you use. Examples of zonal systems are wall heaters, baseboard heat, hydronic radiant heat, radiators and ductless heat pumps, also called mini-splits.
Keep areas with plumbing or water lines warm enough so pipes do not freeze.
If you have a central forced-air heating system, leave doors open to all heated areas. Closing doors or register dampers forces the system to work harder, uses more energy and can shorten the life of heating equipment.

Check your filters
Maintaining a clean filter in your furnace is one of the best ways to keep it running efficiently and prevent costly repairs. Check your furnace or ductless heat pump filter monthly during peak heating season.

Miranda Routelle is vice president of operations and customer engagement at Efficiency Services Group in Oregon, a cooperatively owned energy efficiency company. She also writes on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.
Letters etched in stone at the Bear Spring Furnace

There are abandoned iron furnaces — limestone monoliths ranging from 30 to 50 feet tall that cause passersby to stop and stare — all over Dickson, Stewart and Montgomery counties.

One of them is the Bear Spring Furnace. Just east of Dover, it sits in a rural part of a county in which, today, only about 1 percent of the residents are African American. And yet, in October 1834, because of the death of Thomas Yeatman, the entire industrial operation at Bear Spring Furnace was set to be auctioned — forge, factory, horses, wagons, 18,000 acres and no fewer than 200 enslaved people.

For years I’ve wondered who Yeatman was and how it is that the only remaining signs of him are few letters etched in stone.

In 1815, Yeatman ran a Nashville dry goods store that sold everything from cloth to spices to glassware — things people wanted but that had to be imported from far away. Like every other merchant of that era, Yeatman operated on credit. In the fall after harvest season, he’d ask his customers to settle their accounts. Then he’d make the long trip to Philadelphia where he’d order all the goods he intended to stock the next year. “Those persons indebted to the subscriber will please call at his store to settle their accounts, as he expects to start for Philadelphia in a few weeks,” he announced in a Nashville Whig ad in November 1816.

Yeatman made this trip every winter, making better contacts with merchants and bankers each time. On one of his buying trips, he learned there had been a sharp increase in
In the early 1800s, the most important industry on the Highland Rim was iron — separating ore into pig iron, then shaping it into nails, horseshoes, kitchen appliances, wagon axles and other products. These iron furnaces required thousands of acres and hundreds of people to tend fires and haul rock, firewood and finished product. It was difficult, hot work, and a lot of it was done by slaves.

In 1830 Yeatman, Woods & Co. bought Dickson County’s Cumberland Iron Works. The firm then built another big operation in Stewart County east of Dover. By 1833, Bear Spring Furnace produced 2,000 tons of rolled iron and 4,000 kegs of nails.

But on June 12, 1833, at the age of 45, Thomas Yeatman died of cholera on a steamboat bound for Philadelphia. The legal process of settling his estate led to plans being made for the Bear Spring operation to be auctioned in October 1834.

As it turns out, outsiders did not take over ownership of the Bear Spring Furnace; Yeatman’s sons and remaining partners simply shifted their ownership percentages. In 1843 the firm expanded and changed its name to Woods, Yeatman & Co. By the time the Civil War began, the business owned nearly 60,000 acres and more than 400 slaves.

Only 6 miles separated the Bear Spring Furnace from Fort Donelson, and the U.S. Army destroyed much of the iron smelting operation in the weeks after the 1862 battle at the fort. However, the owners resumed the operation after the war and built the limestone furnace that still stands on Highway 49 in Stewart County. But in the late 1870s, a sharp decline in iron prices soured the outlook for the industry. In 1878 the business sold 14,000 acres, but some version of the operation remained until around World War I.

Reading the complicated story of Yeatman, Woods and the Bear Spring Furnace might make you overlook that each enslaved person who showed up on the company balance sheets was a human being. But here’s a troubling anecdote from the history of the Highland Rim: In 1856, there was a rebellion among the thousands of enslaved people who worked in the iron industry in Montgomery, Dickson and Stewart counties.

Although the extent of the insurrection was exaggerated in the press (as such rebellions typically were in that era), six of the enslaved were executed for their alleged roles in the insurrection. Among the condemned were some of the enslaved held by U.S. Sen. John Bell of Tennessee. Bell had acquired those slaves two decades earlier when he married Thomas Yeatman’s widow, Jane Eakin Yeatman.
**West Tennessee**

Now-Dec. 24 • Enchanted Forest Festival of Trees, Museum of Science and History, Memphis. 901-636-2362 or moshmemphis.com

Now-Dec. 30 • “Let It Glow” Drive-Thru and Walk-Thru Light Shows, Discovery Park of America, Union City. 731-885-5455 or discoveryparkofamerica.com

Dec. 1 • Christmas Parade, downtown Henderson. 731-989-5222 or chestercountychamber.com

Dec. 2 and 9 • Pictures With Santa, Beale Street, Memphis. facebook.com/bealestreetusa or bealestreet.com

Dec. 3 • The Jackson Symphony-Family Christmas, Carl Perkins Civic Center, Jackson. thejacksonsymphony.org

Dec. 3 • Christmas Parade, Town of Somerville Square. 901-465-9500 or somervilletn.municipalone.com

Dec. 3-10 • Sorghum Valley Christmas Village, Dyer County Fairgrounds, Dyersburg. 731-285-5023 or facebook.com/dyercountyfair

Dec. 9-10 • Christmas on the Square, downtown Dyersburg Court Square. facebook.com/mainstreetdyersburg

Dec. 9-11 • The Nutcracker Ballet, Carl Perkins Civic Center, Jackson. balletartspresident@gmail.com or balletartsjackson.org

Dec. 9-12 • A Homestyle Christmas, downtown Ripley. 731-635-1230 or rgrear@bankofripley.com

Dec. 10 • Christmas Parade, downtown Jackson. 731-425-8382 or jacksontn.gov

Dec. 31 • New Year’s Eve on Beale, Beale Street, Memphis. bealestreet.com

**Middle Tennessee**

Now-Dec. 3 • David Alford’s “A Holiday to Remember,” Belmont Mansion, Nashville. 615-460-5459 or belmontmansion.com

Now-Dec. 31 • Holiday Wonders Drive-Thru Light Show, Bowie Nature Park, Fairview. 615-387-6140 or facebook.com/fairviewtngov

Now-Dec. 31 • Victorian Christmas, Granville. 931-653-4151 or granvilletn.com

Now-Jan. 8 • Rembrandt, Goya and Durer: The Marvel of Old Masters, Monthaven Arts and Cultural Center, Hendersonville. 615-822-0789 or monthavenartsandculturalcenter.com

Dec. 1-9 • Mayberry Christmas Dinner Theatre, Granville. 931-653-4151 or granvilletn.com

Dec. 2 • Night Market, downtown Bell Buckle. bellbucklechamber.com

Dec. 2-3 • A Quilted Christmas, throughout Bell Buckle. bellbucklechamber.com

Dec. 2-4 • Minton Sparks’ Spoken Word and Poetry Festival, Tennessee Performing Arts Center, Nashville. 615-782-4040 or tpac.org

Dec. 3 • Candlelight Christmas Concert, Springfield Middle School. 615-380-8071 or willowoakarts.org

Dec. 3 • 14th Annual Frosty Fun Run, Hop Springs, Murfreesboro. 615-494-3141 or fleetfeet.com/s/murfreesboro

Dec. 3 • Tree Lighting, Monthaven Arts and Cultural Center, Hendersonville. 615-822-0789 or monthavenartsandculturalcenter.com

Dec. 3 • Third Annual Mistletoe Marketplace, Three Star Mall, McMinnville. 931-247-3318 or threesisterscandlecotn.com

Dec. 3 • Fourth Annual Christmas Bazaar, Shelton Farms, Pelham. 931-952-0207 or rusticlaceevents.com

Dec. 3, 10 and 17 • Old Fashioned Christmas, downtown Bell Buckle. bellbucklechamber.com

Dec. 3 and 17 • Christmas Through the Ages: A Victorian Christmas, Wynnewood State Historic Site, Castalian Springs. 615-452-7070 or historiccastaliansprings.org

Dec. 3-25 • Mistletoe Trail, River Bluff Park, Ashland City. 615-792-1766 or acmistletoetrail@gmail.com

Dec. 4 • Christmas Cheer Craft and Vendor Event, Coffee County Conference Center, Manchester. 931-273-4158 or kelleyfelice74@gmail.com

Dec. 4 • Christmas Cheer Craft and Vendor Event, Coffee County Conference Center, Manchester. 931-273-4158 or kelleyfelice74@gmail.com

Dec. 4 • Annual Christmas Parade, Liberty. 615-464-8085 or charlotte.bratten@yahoo.com

**Submit your events**

Complete the form at tnmagazine.org or email events@tnmagazine.org. Information must be received at least two months ahead of the event date, and we accept submissions up to a year in advance. Due to the great demand for space in each month’s Almanac, we cannot guarantee publication. Find a complete listing of submissions we’ve received at tnmagazine.org/events.
Dec. 4 • An Italian Christmas—Middle Tennessee Choral Society, MTSU Wright Music Building/Hinton Music Hall, Murfreesboro. 931-561-5482 or mtchoralsociety.org

Dec. 4 • Christmas Sing-Along with Shawn Knight, Erin United Methodist Church. 931-289-2787 or houstoncountyartscouncil.org

Dec. 6 • Big Bad Voodoo Daddy’s Swingin’ Holiday Party, CMA Theater at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, Nashville. 615-416-2001 or countrymusichalloffame.org

Dec. 8 • A Night of Nashville: A Country Christmas, The Princess Theatre, South Pittsburg. facebook.com/anightofnashville

Dec. 9-11 • Nativity Festival, McMinnville. 931-273-0273 or facebook.com/mcminnvillenativity

Dec. 10 • Country Christmas, Granville. 931-653-4151 or granvillettn.com

Dec. 10 • Christmas Through the Ages: An Early Tennessee Christmas, Cragfont State Historic Site, Castalian Springs. 615-452-7070 or historiccastaliansprings.org

Dec. 10 • Ninth Annual German Christkindlmarkt, Christ Lutheran Church, Clarksville. christmasbazaar@hotmail.com or christlutheranclarksville.org

Dec. 10 • Hidden History — A Behind-the-Scenes Tour, Cragfont State Historic Site, Castalian Springs. 615-452-7070 or historiccastaliansprings.org

Dec. 10 • Mike Farris Sings! The Soul of Christmas, CMA Theater at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, Nashville. 615-416-2001 or countrymusichalloffame.org

Dec. 10-11 • 38th Annual Bethlehem Marketplace, Southeast Baptist Church, Murfreesboro. 615-896-0940 or sebaptist.org

Dec. 10-11 • 38th Annual Bethlehem Marketplace, Southeast Baptist Church, Murfreesboro. 615-896-0940 or sebaptist.org

Dec. 17 • The Christmas Craft Fair, Lane Agri-Park Community Center, Murfreesboro. 931-952-0472

Dec. 17 • Grand Reopening and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, Big Creek Winery Tasting Room, Christiana. 615-785-2124 or facebook.com/bigcreekwinerytastingroom

Dec. 17 • Muletown Flea Market, Glover’s Secondhand, Columbia. 931-374-2030 or gloverssecondhand.com

Dec. 17 • Candlelight Christmas Tour, Wynnewood State Historic Site, Castalian Springs. 615-452-7070 or historiccastaliansprings.org

Dec. 17-18 • Tchaikovsky’s The Nutcracker, MTSU Wright Music Building/Hinton Music Hall, Murfreesboro. mtsinfonietta.com

Dec. 17 • Ninth Annual German Christkindlmarkt, Christ Lutheran Church, Clarksville. christmasbazaar@hotmail.com or christlutheranclarksville.org

Dec. 17 • Mike Farris Sings! The Soul of Christmas, CMA Theater at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, Nashville. 615-416-2001 or countrymusichalloffame.org

Dec. 17-18 • Tchaikovsky’s The Nutcracker, MTSU Wright Music Building/Hinton Music Hall, Murfreesboro. mtsinfonietta.com

Dec. 31 • New Year’s Eve MoonPie Celebration, downtown Bell Buckle. bellbucklechamber.com

East Tennessee

Now-Jan. 1 • Enchanted Garden of Lights, Rock City Gardens, Lookout Mountain, Georgia. seerockcity.com/lights

Now-Jan. 1 • Shadrack’s Christmas Wonderland, Smokies Stadium, Kodak. 865-321-7547 or shadrackchristmas.com

Now-Jan. 1 • Shadrack’s Super-sized Christmas Adventure, Smokies Stadium, Kodak. 888-321-7547 or shadrackchristmas.com

Now-Jan. 31 • Lights Over Gatlinburg, Gatlinburg SkyLift Park. 865-436-4307 or gatlinburgskylift.com

Now-Feb. 20 • Smoky Mountain Winterfest, Sevierville area. 888-738-4378 or visitsevierville.com

Dec. 1-3 • 17th Annual Santa Mouse Arts and Crafts Show, Dotson Memorial Baptist Church, Maryville. blountartsandcraftsguild.com

Dec. 3 • 60th Annual Christmas Parade, historic downtown Sevierville. 888-738-4378 or visitsevierville.com

Dec. 3 • Christmas at the Courthouse, Sevier County Courthouse. seviercountyn.gov

Dec. 3-4 • Meigs County Downtown Christmas, downtown Decatur. 423-334-5496 or facebook.com/meisdeciaturchamber

Dec. 3-18 • Santa’s Hiwassee Holiday, Hiwassee River Rail Adventure, Delano. 423-894-8028 or train-rides/hiwassee-holiday-train

Dec. 6 • Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer: the Musical, Niswonger Performing Arts Center, Greeneville. boxoffice@npacgreeneville.com or npacgreeneville.com

Dec. 7 • Cirque Dreams Holidaze, Knoxville Civic Auditorium and Coliseum. 865-215-8999 or knoxvillecoliseum.com

Dec. 9-10 • Candlelight Christmas, Museum of Appalachia, Clinton. 865-494-7680 or museumofappalachia.org

Dec. 10-11 • Mistletoe Market Holiday Craft Show, Collegedale Commons. 423-650-1388 or touchtheskyevents.com

Dec. 17 • The Nutcracker—Chattanooga Ballet, Niswonger Performing Arts Center, Greeneville. boxoffice@npacgreeneville.com or npacgreeneville.com

Dec. 17 • Talmi Entertainment’s Nutcracker! Magic of Christmas Ballet, Tennessee Theatre, Knoxville. info@tennesseeetheatre.com or tennesseetheatre.com
Buttermilk Bread
Pudding with Rum Sauce
Recipes by Tammy Algood
Photograph by Robin Conover
Chances are you have already been cooking festive foods for about a month. It’s just that time of year. There’s lots of extra work involved, which most cooks take on cheerfully. There’s also often waste, too, between bags of special ingredients bought for the holidays and the everyday foods that don’t get consumed at their usual rate. Bread puddings offer a delicious solution for dubs and drabs of any number of things that can combine to become something new and tantalizing. Start with these surefire recipes, then get creative!

**Spiced Pecan-Topped Pumpkin Bread Pudding**
Yield: 12 servings

1 cup chopped pecans
½ cup firmly packed brown sugar
2 tablespoons dark rum or 1 teaspoon rum extract
1 tablespoon unsalted butter, melted
3 teaspoons ground cinnamon, divided
2 teaspoons ground allspice, divided
1 loaf day-old French bread, diced (5 cups)
1 cup pumpkin purée (Not pumpkin pie filling)
2 cups half-and-half or milk
1 cup granulated sugar
5 eggs
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
2 teaspoon ground cloves
Zest of 1 orange
Whipped cream

Spread the pecans on a rimmed baking sheet lined with parchment and place in the oven while it preheats to 350 degrees for 5 minutes. Meanwhile, in a mixing bowl, stir together the brown sugar, rum or extract, butter and 1 teaspoon each of the cinnamon, allspice and ginger. Add the pecans and toss well to evenly coat. Transfer back to the baking sheet and spread in an even layer. Bake 5 minutes longer. Set aside to cool completely.

Meanwhile, line a 10-inch spring-form pan with foil and place the bread evenly in the pan. Set aside. In the bowl of an electric mixer bowl, blend the pumpkin, half-and-half or milk and granulated sugar. Add the eggs, vanilla, nutmeg, cloves, orange zest and the remaining cinnamon, allspice and ginger. Mix until smooth and pour over the bread. Let stand 30-40 minutes. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Evenly spread the pecans over the top. Bake at 350 degrees for 44-45 minutes or until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean. Let cool 15 minutes before serving warm with whipped cream.

**Caramel Banana Bread Pudding**
Yield: 8 servings

1 ½ cups caramel sauce or syrup
¼ teaspoon sea salt
8 slices white, buttermilk or potato sandwich bread
3 medium bananas, peeled and thinly sliced on the diagonal
4 eggs
1 ½ cups half-and-half
½ cup milk
2 ½ tablespoons sugar, divided
1 teaspoon banana or rum extract
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

Preheat the broiler. Lightly grease 8 ⅓-cup ramekins.

In a small bowl, combine the caramel and sea salt. Spoon 1 generous tablespoon into each ramekin and set aside.

Place the bread on a lightly greased jellyroll pan. Spread 1 generous tablespoon of the sauce over each bread slice. Broil 1 to 2 minutes or until the caramel is bubbly. Watch carefully to avoid burning. Cool on a wire rack.

When cool, cut each bread slice into 6 squares. Set 1 banana slice on each bread square. Arrange on the edges, side by side, into prepared ramekins so it fits snugly.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the eggs, half-and-half, milk, 1½ tablespoons of the sugar and extract. Pour enough custard into each ramekin to reach the top. Let stand until the bread absorbs the custard, about 30-40 minutes.

Meanwhile, position the rack in bottom third of the oven and preheat to 400 degrees. Pour the remaining custard into the ramekins. Brush the exposed bread pieces with the melted butter. Sprinkle the tops with the remaining tablespoon of sugar.

Set the ramekins in a large roasting pan. Pour enough hot water into the pan so that it comes halfway up the sides of the ramekins. Bake 45 minutes or until a tester inserted in the center comes out clean. Remove the ramekins from the pan and cool on a wire rack. Serve warm.

Note: This can be made up to 8 hours in advance. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use. Bring to room temperature before serving.

**Chocolate Bread Pudding**
Yield: 6 servings

2 cups milk
¾ cup heavy cream
4 cups diced day-old Italian bread
4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
4 ounces unsweetened chocolate, finely chopped
2 eggs
1 cup sugar
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
½ teaspoon salt
Whipped cream

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees and position the rack in the bottom third of the oven and preheat to 400 degrees. Pour the remaining custard into the ramekins. Brush the exposed bread pieces with the melted butter. Sprinkle the tops with the remaining tablespoon of sugar.

Set the ramekins in a large roasting pan. Pour enough hot water into the pan so that it comes halfway up the sides of the ramekins. Bake 45 minutes or until a tester inserted in the center comes out clean. Remove the ramekins from the pan and cool on a wire rack. Serve warm.

Place the milk and cream in a 2-quart heavy saucepan over medium-high heat. Meanwhile, in a large bowl, toss the bread with the melted butter. Set aside.

Place the chocolate in a mixing bowl. When the milk mixture begins to simmer, remove from heat and pour over the chocolate. Let stand for 2 minutes, then whisk until smooth. Add the eggs, sugar, vanilla and salt and whisk until well combined. Pour over the bread, cover loosely with plastic wrap and place a smaller bowl on top. Weight with a heavy can and let the pudding stand for 1 hour.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees and grease an 8-inch square baking dish. Transfer the pudding to the prepared dish and bake for 40-45 minutes until the pudding is set but the center still
trembles slightly. Do not overbake because the pudding will set as it cools. Serve warm or at room temperature with whipped cream.

**Buttermilk Bread Pudding with Rum Sauce**
Yield: 10 servings
6 cups cubed French bread
1 ¼ cups buttermilk or whole milk
1 cup plus 3 tablespoons heavy cream, divided
¼ cup sugar, divided
4 eggs, lightly beaten
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
2 tablespoons plus ½ teaspoon rum, divided
Pinch of salt
4 tablespoons unsalted butter
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

Place the bread cubes in a 13-by-9-inch greased baking dish and set aside. In a mixing bowl, whisk together the buttermilk or whole milk, 1 cup of the cream, ¼ cup of sugar, eggs, vanilla extract, ½ teaspoon of the rum and salt. Pour over the bread cubes and stir gently to combine. Let stand for 30-40 minutes. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees and bake for 50 minutes. Place on a wire rack to cool.

Meanwhile, place the butter in a medium saucepan over medium-low heat to melt. Add the remaining sugar and cream as well as the cinnamon. Stir constantly until the sugar dissolves and the sauce begins to thicken, about 8 minutes. Add the remaining rum. Set aside to cool for 10 minutes before serving warm.

**Butter Pecan Bread Pudding**
Yield: 8-10 servings
1 day-old French baguette, cut in cubes and allowed to sit for an hour to dry out
5 eggs
3 cups milk
1 cup granulated sugar
1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract
½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, room temperature
1½ cups firmly packed brown sugar
1½ cups pecan halves
1 cup caramel syrup or sauce

Place the bread cubes in a greased 13-by-9-inch baking dish and set aside. In a mixing bowl, whisk together the eggs. Add the milk, granulated sugar and extract. Evenly pour over the bread cubes. Set aside and allow to stand for 30 minutes. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Melt the butter in a mixing bowl in the microwave on low power for 30 seconds. Continue in 30 second increments until melted. Add the brown sugar and continue stirring until the sugar dissolves completely. Fold in the pecans. Pour over and very gently fold into the bread cube mixture. Do not mix.

Bake 50-55 minutes or until the top is browned. The center will still be a little soft but will set as the mixture cools. Place on a wire rack to cool 30 minutes before serving warm with drizzles of caramel syrup or sauce.

---

**Ask Chef Tammy**

Jonathan asks, “Can you help me with an easy way to peel beets? I struggle with this and love the vegetable!”

Jonathan, here’s what I do, and it makes the job of peeling beets effortless: Place the untrimmed beets in a pot of water and bring to a boil for 15 minutes. Make sure you leave the root on them as well as about ½ inch of the stem. Then drain in a colander and run cold water over them to make handling easy. Cut off the ends, and the peel will slip off.

Julie writes, “I love making stewed apples, but sometimes the flavor is nothing short of blah. I don’t want to add more sugar and am not a fan of cinnamon. Can you give me some other suggestions for giving it some much needed flavor? Much appreciation.”

Julie, there are multiple options for curing the blahs! Try adding citrus zest and a little juice to the mixture. Lemon and orange work better than lime. You can also tie some whole cloves in cheesecloth and allow that to simmer with the apples, which makes discarding easy. Lastly, you can add some powdered ginger or a bit of mace or nutmeg to the apples.
White Chocolate and Raspberry Bread Pudding
Yield: 10 servings
6 (1½-inch thick) slices stale French bread, cut in cubes
4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
4 eggs
1 cup heavy cream
1 cup milk or half-and-half
¾ cup sugar
1 teaspoon pure vanilla or almond extract
1 teaspoon ground cardamom
1 pint fresh raspberries
½ pound white chocolate, broken into small pieces
1 cup vanilla ice cream, melted

Place the bread cubes in a greased 8-inch square baking dish. Drizzle with the melted butter and set aside. In a mixing bowl, whisk the eggs, then add the cream, half-and-half, sugar, extract and cardamom. When well blended, pour over the bread cubes. Set aside to soak for 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Place water in a kettle and bring to a boil. Pull out a pan large enough for the 8-inch square pan to sit in.

Very gently fold the raspberries and white chocolate into the bread crumb mixture. Cover with foil. Set the pan inside the larger pan and place on the oven rack. Carefully pour the hot water into the larger pan until it comes halfway up the sides of the pan. Bake for 45 minutes. Remove the foil and bake another 12-15 minutes or until the top is browned. Carefully remove from the oven and place on a wire rack to cool for at least 45 minutes. Serve warm with drizzles of the melted ice cream.

Selecting the proper bread is a key to success. Typically, you want to utilize breads that are a bit dense and chewy. The best ones are plain loaves of French or Italian bread as well as brioche or challah.

Sauces can be a great addition when serving bread pudding, particularly if you overcooked it and the recipe seems dry.

Use thin sauces enhanced with fruit or chocolate if the flavors are compatible or a simple vanilla sauce if the bread pudding is already spiced.

Reheat leftover bread pudding in the microwave on low power.

Tips and tricks
Searching for holiday inspiration? Browse our extensive recipe archives online at tnmagazine.org.
COMMUNITY CORNER

Find the Tennessee flag

We have hidden somewhere in this magazine the icon from the Tennessee flag like the one pictured here. It could be larger or smaller than this, and it could be in black and white or any color. If you find it, send us a postcard or email us with the page number where it’s located. Include your name, address, phone number and electric cooperative. One entry per person. Three winners will be chosen from a random drawing, and each will receive $20.

Note that the icon we hide will not be on an actual flag or historical marker, will not appear on pages 20-26 and will not be placed in any ads. This month’s flag will not appear on this page (that would just be too easy). Good luck!

Send postcards only (no phone calls, please) to: The Tennessee Magazine, Find the Flag, P.O. Box 100912, Nashville, TN 37224. Or you can fill out the form at tnmagazine.org or email flag@tnelectric.org. Entries must be postmarked or received via email by Friday, Dec. 30. Winners will be published in the February issue of The Tennessee Magazine.

October Flag Spotters
Thanks for the postcards and emails again this month identifying the correct location of the flag, which was found on a tripod leg on page 10.

Winners are drawn randomly from each month’s entries. October’s lucky flag spotters are:
Norma Anderson, Newbern, Forked Deer EC
Della Matthews, Allardt, Volunteer EC
Larry Stanifer, New Tazewell, Powell Valley EC

Artist’s Palette Assignment for December

Three age categories: 1 to 9, 10 to 14 and 15 to 18 years old. Each group will have first-, second- and third-place winners.
Media: Drawing or painting on 8½-by-11-inch unlined paper, canvas or board. We encourage the use of color.
Entry: Send your original art to: The Tennessee Magazine, Artist’s Palette — December, P.O. Box 100912, Nashville, TN 37224. (Please make sure you include the month on the outside of the envelope!) Only one entry per artist, please.
Deadline: Art must be postmarked by Friday, Dec. 30.
Include: Your name, age, address, phone number, email address and electric cooperative. Leaving anything out will result in disqualification.

Artwork will not be returned unless you include a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your submission. For best reproduction results, do not fold artwork.
Each entry needs its own SASE, please. Siblings must enter separately with their own envelopes. Attention, teachers: You may send multiple entries in one envelope along with one SASE with sufficient postage.
Winners will be published in the February issue of The Tennessee Magazine. First place wins $50, second place wins $30 and third place wins $20. Winners are eligible to enter again after three months. Winners will receive their checks, artwork and certificates of placement within six to eight weeks of publication.

Changes ahead for Poet’s Playground

Thank you to everyone who entered our “Poet’s Playground” over its successful years-long run. Beginning in 2023, we are making some changes to how we conduct our poetry contest and will no longer be accepting entries each month.

Keep an eye on future issues of The Tennessee Magazine and our website, tnmagazine.org, for details.

Thank you, again, to the dedicated, talented poets who shared their voices with us and readers across the state each month.
Artist’s Palette October Winners

WINNERS, 15-18 AGE GROUP: First place: Anna DelGiorno, age 17, Middle Tennessee Electric; Second place: Ansley Waters, age 16; Third place: Kayleen Lavallee, age 15, Volunteer EC

WINNERS, 10-14 AGE GROUP: First place: Lily Kertai, age 12, Middle Tennessee Electric; Second place: Adriana Legall, age 14, Tennessee Valley EC; Third place: Abbie Mena, age 13, Tennessee Valley EC

WINNERS, 1-9 AGE GROUP: First place: Elias Uberman, age 8; Second place: Alexis Min, age 8; Third place: Aashvi Ghimire, age 7, Middle Tennessee Electric
Poet’s Playground

Age 8 and younger
The Tennessee Titans
The Tennessee Titans
is the best team of all.
They’ll do their best
and give it their all.
For the Tennessee Titans
is the best team of all.
— Kingston Walters,
Caney Fork Electric

Age 9-13
The Midnight Lullaby
The day is gone
The sun has set
The moon is high
The stars are bright
An owl hoots
A coyote howls
The midnight song
The crickets chirp
The frogs burp
A lovely melody
The dancing stars
And shining moon
A brilliant beauty
And bright reality
And as we sleep
With happy dreams
A marvelous song
That floats along
The midnight lullaby
— Paulina Trout,
Duck River EMC

Age 14-18
The Glass Slipper Didn’t Fit
I’ll never be Cinderella
And you’ll never be the prince
Our story wasn’t enchanting
You weren’t some frog I kissed
There wasn’t a fairytale ending
Or a happily ever after
Just two love-drunk kids
Writing our own chapter
I wasn’t Sleeping Beauty
And you weren’t any hero
We were more of two villains
But we went from ten to zero
Romeo and Juliet
Had a tragic end
Mark Antony and Cleopatra
Fought but didn’t win
While we won’t go down in history
As many before us did
The question will always linger
Of what could’ve been...
— Shay Simpson, Meriwether Lewis EC

Age 19-22
Fresh Winter
Washed in snow
are the peaks of the mountains,
and covered in ice
the springs and the fountains.
Foliage has fallen
leaving woven branches bare.
Chirping flyers have flown away
to lands I know not where.
The scent of cold lingers heavy.
And heaps of firewood have been
piled already.
Winter like night
is quiet and unhurried.
Harboring none of the frenzy
and worry.
The blankets of white
covering nature’s usual mess.
The stillness puts even
the wild things to rest.
And in the season where
there is no warmth in the weather,
The people find warmth
in staying together.
— David Smith,
Fayetteville Public Utilities

Age 23-64
Tennessee’s Secret
Some say it’s the sweet tea
and rocking chairs,
flowing freely with southern charm.
Some say it’s the loyalty of the people,
protecting each other from harm.
Some say it’s the college football,
proud of the orange and white.
Some say it’s the heartwarming
traditions, teaching what’s wrong
and what’s right.
Some say it’s the Smokies and
waterfalls, absorbing the nature within.
Some say it’s downtown Nashville,
where both music and country begin.
Some say it’s the outside surroundings,
breathing in all that you see.
I say it’s the internal beauty, how
Tennessee becomes you and me.
— Nikki DeSalvatore,
Middle Tennessee Electric

Age 65 and older
The Spirit of Christmas
Christmas trees, Christmas music,
hurried shoppers, letters to Santa,
parties, family gatherings.
Manger scenes, Christmas plays,
advent candles, special worship services.
A celebration of sharing,
A celebration of giving,
A celebration of love.
Christmas spirit hanging in the air,
Stars sprinkling the sky
Bells ringing with copper
kettles for donations
for those in need
“Peace on earth”…
what an amazing idea,
could it really happen? This year
maybe the spirit of Christmas
and joy will reach all the
corners of the world!
And, indeed, there truly is
“Peace on earth!”
— Sandra Fortune, Mountain EC

Read more poetry at tnmagazine.org.
For more than 50 years, The Tennessee Magazine has been the official publication of our electric cooperatives, keeping consumer-members informed about their co-ops, showcasing the wonders of electric service and highlighting the special events around the state.

The cover of the December 1972 magazine featured the top contestants in the Miss Tennessee Rural Electric beauty contest. Inside, readers learned about the capabilities of different types of electric vehicles and found recipes for delicious Christmas cookies and other festively sweet treats.

While our fashions, appliances and recipes have significantly changed since our first issue in 1958, our mission to entertain, educate and inform our readers has not. Here’s a glimpse of what members saw 50 years ago in The Tennessee Magazine. View the entire December 1972 edition online at tnmagazine.org.
Dear Connie Sue,
I was wondering if you have ever seen a lamp such as this? It was originally oil. I inherited the piece around 30 years ago from a lady who lived in Cheyenne, Wyoming.
— Sheila

Dear Sheila,

For decades, I appraised these lamps proudly positioned in my clients’ front windows. Most of the lamps were decorated with floral ball shades and bases. Animal motif lamps are less plentiful, more intriguing and can still sell for $500 to $750 at a good auction.

Today we refer to these as “Gone with the Wind lamps.” The name and popularity were inspired by the movie.

Dear Connie Sue,

I have enclosed pictures of an antique sideboard my husband inherited from his Aunt Edie. The value would be nice to know, but he is most interested in the age, where it came from and if we are calling it by the correct name.

We know there was a mirror in it at one point, but it was damaged.

We appreciate any information you can give us. We were unable to find out anything from the markings.
— David and Melinda, Holston Electric Cooperative members

Dear David and Melinda,

Yes, this is a gold oak sideboard. Similar pieces were offered in the 1908 Sears and Roebuck catalog for $11.95. A few decades ago, golden oak anything was sought after. It reminded us of our aunts and grandmothers.

Today, however, large and heavy oak furniture is selling for less than the cost of its lumber. At its highest, this sideboard could have brought more than $750. Now, though, the same piece would struggle to bring $200.

Dear Connie Sue,
I have a sugar bowl that has been passed down to the oldest daughter of each family for the last 300 years. Enclosed are some photos. What can you tell me about it?
— Candy, Murfreesboro

Dear Candy,
The Clews brothers, makers of your sugar bowl, bought a stoneware company in England around 1817. They produced transferware pottery in a couple of locations in England near Stoke and exported their products to the United States from 1818 to 1834. Their pottery was inexpensive and appealed to the growing middle class market.

James Clews tried to bring the products closer to buyers by setting up production in Troy, Indiana. It was a big leap over the water! He brought craftsmen from England. Even still, the enterprise floundered.

Your family’s sugar bowl was made in England. It is the Basket and Brick pattern. Values vary widely — from $50 to more than $150.

Dear Connie Sue,

This belonged to my husband’s dad. We were wondering if you knew its value. You came to my house once several years ago. There were obviously a few more things we came across that I didn’t ask you about.
— Deidre

Dear Deidre,

C.G. Morehead offered prints of his watercolor painting of the Grand Ole Opry in 1973. It’s a popular piece. One recently sold for $61 on eBay. Others are offered for more than $100.

I’ve visited so many houses and so many people in my 45 years of appraising.

Want to learn more about your antiques?

Send your inquiry with photos to the mailing address or email below. Only published appraisals are free. Private appraisals are available for a fee.

Mailing address: Connie Sue Davenport, P.O. Box 343, White House, TN 37188
Email: treasures@conniesue.com

Connie Sue Davenport makes her living by appraising houses full of antiques for private clients and at appraisal events hosted by businesses and organizations. Her website, ConnieSue.com, describes these services.
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Upper Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation
South Carthage, TN

Volunteer Energy Cooperative
Decatur, TN
Many years ago I found myself sitting in a college fine art photography class listening to our next assignment. It was on landscapes, and our instructor begged us not to submit photographs with barns or kittens for this or any other critique if we wished to pass. Evidently, he had seen far too many of each during his career. I have to say that I understand his position now after teaching my share of photography workshops.

That said, some barns beg to be photographed, and I could not pass up this one in Sumner County last winter after an overnight snowfall. The scene had so many elements that make a great photograph — a beautiful winding road weaving in front of and behind the barn, the red exterior against fresh snow and Old Glory prominently displayed under the hay hood.

I’m sure this barn has sheltered livestock, housed hay and weathered many storms, but on this day it was the center of a Norman Rockwell-esque photograph for me.

I parked safely in a neighboring driveway and walked back and forth for a bit to find the best composition. With the barn set a ways off the main highway, I chose a 100-400mm telephoto to capture the scene. In this case, I metered on the treeline as the bright white snow would have thrown off the exposure, resulting in gray snow rather than white.

After shooting this composition, I stood there for a short time, feeling the cold and all the history this structure has witnessed. I could imagine a horse-drawn wagon creaking up the farm road to a simple family farmhouse with a fire in the hearth on this cold winter’s day.

I imagine life was harder then — just for the lack of all the modern conveniences we have come to rely upon so heavily today. But I also imagine it was simpler and more peaceful, perhaps even more meaningful, without the noise of modern societies.

This holiday season, I plan to enjoy the winter, spending it around the kitchen tables of loved ones, on trails I haven’t explored yet and far away from the noise.

In seed time learn,
in harvest time teach,
in winter enjoy.”
— William Blake
Eye Doctor Helps Tennessee Legally Blind To See

High Technology For Low Vision Patients Allows Many To Drive Again

For many patients with macular degeneration and other vision-related conditions, the loss of central visual detail also signals the end to one of the last bastions of independence: driving.

A Lebanon optometrist, Dr. John Pino, is using miniaturized telescopes that are mounted in glasses to help people who have lost vision from macular degeneration and other eye conditions.

“Some of my patients consider me the last stop for people who have vision loss,” said Dr. Pino, one of only a few doctors in the world who specialize in fitting biotic telescopes to help those who have lost vision due to macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, and other debilitating eye diseases.

Imagine a pair of glasses that can improve your vision enough to change your life. If you’re a low vision patient, you’ve probably not only imagined them, but have been searching for them. Biotic telescopes may be the breakthrough in optical technology that will give you the independence you’ve been looking for.

Patients with vision in the 20/200 range can many times be improved to 20/50 or better. Macular degeneration is the leading cause of blindness and vision loss in people over 50. Despite this, most adults are not familiar with the condition. As many as 25% of those over the age of 50 have some degree of macular degeneration. The macula is only one small part of the retina; however, it is the most sensitive and gives us sharp central vision. When it degenerates, macular degeneration leaves a blind spot right in the center of vision, making it difficult or impossible to recognize faces, read a book, or pass the driver’s vision test.

Nine out of 10 people who have macular degeneration have the dry form. New research suggests vitamins can help.

The British medical journal BMC Ophthalmology recently reported that functioning, especially driving,” says Dr. Pino.

When Elaine, 57, of Kingsport, TN, came to see Dr. Pino she wanted to keep her Tennessee driver’s license and was prescribed biotic telescopic glasses to read signs and see traffic lights farther away. Dr. Pino also prescribed microscopec glasses for reading newspapers and menus in restaurants.

As Elaine puts it, “My regular glasses didn’t help too much – it was like looking through a fog. These new telescopic glasses not only allow me to read signs from a farther distance, but make driving much easier. I’ve also used them to watch television so I don’t have to sit so close. I don’t know why I waited to do this; I should have come sooner.”

“Biotic telescopes can cost over $2,000,” said Dr. Pino, “especially if we build them with an automatic sunglass.”

“The major benefit of the biotic telescope is that the lens automatically focuses on whatever you’re looking at,” said Dr. Pino. “It’s like a self-focusing camera, but much more precise.”

To learn more about biotic telescopes or to schedule a consultation with Dr. Pino, give us a call at 1-855-405-8800. You can also visit our website at:

www.lowvisiontn.com

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Merry Christmas from our families to yours!