

March 2024 • tnmagazine.org

# THE TENNESSEE MAGAZINE

## Holding the Door Open for Healing



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Selfies**

**Gardening on  
a Budget**

**Refreshing  
Rosemary**

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Set ceiling fans to rotate counterclockwise to create a cooling downdraft without lowering the thermostat.

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## THIS PAGE

*A solar eclipse selfie by Atoka's Laura Stohl earned an honorable mention in our latest Shutterbug Photography Contest. See the winners on pages 28-31.*

## ABOUT THE COVER

*Rick "The Elevator Guy" Hunt stands at his post where he volunteers at TriStar Summit Medical Center in Hermitage. Rick helps new patients find their way, assists the elderly on their way to their appointments and does it all with a smile, despite his own painful struggle with cancer. See page 10. Photograph by Antsy McClain*

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# Between the Lines

*News from your community*

## Co-op careers

When young people are asked what they want to be when they grow up, most don't mention a career at their local electric co-op. I'd like to change that. Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation provides critical services to our communities, and we offer diverse career paths that cater to a range of skills and interests.

Paths. One of the biggest advantages of pursuing a career at a co-op is the variety of paths available. Whether you have a penchant for engineering, finance or community outreach, there's a role for you. Skilled lineworkers build, maintain and repair infrastructure, ensuring uninterrupted power supply and broadband services to homes and businesses. Engineers design and optimize systems, and professionals in finance and administration ensure the smooth operation of the business. Community engagement specialists build connections between the co-op and the communities we serve. As our industry becomes more advanced, our need for skilled programmers and network security experts grows. The possibilities are vast, providing individuals with the chance to align their passions with fulfilling careers.

Possibilities. Looking to the future, career opportunities at electric co-ops are promising. Coupled with technological advancements, the growing demand for electricity and the increasing electrification of our economy open up new opportunities for innovation and specialization.



**By Chris A. Davis**  
*General Manager,  
Cumberland Electric  
Membership  
Corporation*

As the energy landscape evolves, co-ops adapt, creating needs for skilled professionals in emerging fields. This translates to job stability for employees, offering a sense of security as they contribute to the essential service of powering communities.

Passion. One of the main differences that set careers at electric cooperatives apart is the deep sense of passion our employees often bring to their roles. Our team members share a commitment to serving their communities. This shared purpose fosters a unique workplace culture where employees take pride in their contributions to the well-being of their neighbors and friends. The work we do matters, and it impacts everyone in our communities.

Careers at electric cooperatives offer a diverse range of opportunities promising job stability and a sense of purpose rooted in service. Whether you're drawn to the technical intricacies of power distribution or the community-focused aspects of outreach, CEMC provides a fulfilling environment for individuals passionate about making a difference in the lives of others.

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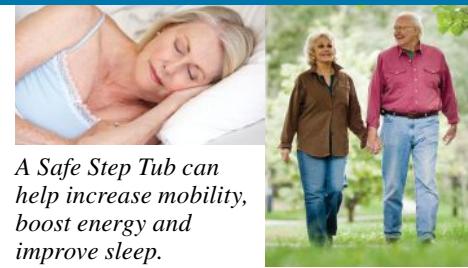
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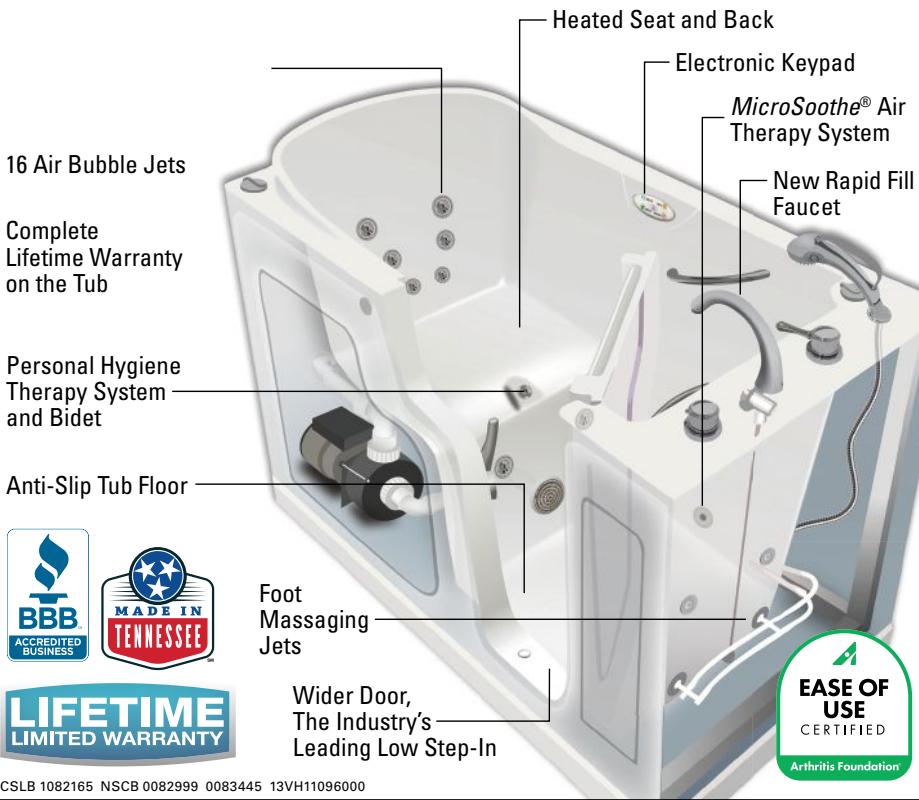
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Executive, editorial and advertising offices:  
2964 Sicode Drive, P.O. Box 100912  
Nashville, TN 37204  
Phone: 615-367-9284  
Email: [thetennmag@tnelectric.org](mailto:thetennmag@tnelectric.org)

General Manager  
**Mike Knotts**  
[mknotts@tnelectric.org](mailto:mknotts@tnelectric.org)  
Vice President of Communications  
**Trent Scott**  
[tscott@tnelectric.org](mailto:tscott@tnelectric.org)

Editor  
**Chris Kirk**  
[ckirk@tnelectric.org](mailto:ckirk@tnelectric.org)  
Editor Emeritus  
**Robin Conover**  
[rconover@tnelectric.org](mailto:rconover@tnelectric.org)  
Designer  
**Ron Bell**  
[rbell@tnelectric.org](mailto:rbell@tnelectric.org)  
Field Editor and Senior Communications Specialist  
**Nicole Christensen**  
[nchristensen@tnelectric.org](mailto:nchristensen@tnelectric.org)  
Contributing Writer  
**Trish Milburn**

Communications Support Specialist  
**LaQuella Bond**  
[lbond@tnelectric.org](mailto:lbond@tnelectric.org)  
Advertising inquiries  
**American MainStreet Publications**  
611 S. Congress Ave., Suite 504  
Austin, TX 78704  
Phone: 800-626-1181  
Website: [amp.coop](http://amp.coop)

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2964 Sicode Drive, P.O. Box 100912  
Nashville, TN 37204 Phone: 615-367-9284  
Email: [thetennmag@tnelectric.org](mailto:thetennmag@tnelectric.org)

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# TENNESSEE TODAY

*Viewpoint*

## Slow down and move over

Utility workers have a dangerous job, but we can help make it just a bit safer for them. Doing so does not require any specific training or special skills. In fact, every licensed driver already possesses the ability to help.

As I began writing the words above, I noticed that the theme seemed a bit familiar. A quick search of my notes proved my intuition to be correct. Seven years ago I shared similar thoughts in this magazine. Well, some ideas are just worth repeating, so I hope the previously published article that follows will serve as a new reminder for you today.

When I was a kid, my parents taught me some pretty basic concepts about good manners: Address adults as ma'am or sir. Don't put your elbows on the dinner table. Say please and thank you. Open the door for ladies. Look someone in the eye when you shake his or her hand. Now that I'm an adult, I don't have to think about chewing with my mouth closed; I just do it. Unfortunately, not every lesson we learned as young people sticks with us into daily practice. When is the last time you flossed your teeth, for instance?

Not only do we tend to forget some of the simple lessons of life, but we often pick up new bad habits along the way as well. I think this is particularly true in how many of us approach the use of our automobiles. A parked car is basically harmless. However, when we drive a 2-ton hunk of metal at a speed of 60 miles per hour, we are essentially controlling a guided missile. If that car makes contact with a stationary object, significant damage will occur. Here is a terrifying

question, though: What if that stationary object were a human being?

Well, that is a life-or-death issue. And there are groups of people who deal with that threat every single day. Police, firefighters and EMTs are routinely out in the road, dealing with problems. Most of us instinctively know what to do when we encounter this type of situation — slow down and get out of the way so you don't become the next person to whom these first responders must attend.

But what about others who commonly work along our roadways? Think back to your childhood. After your mom or dad told to you stop asking, "Are we there yet?" on the family vacation, did you ever start counting the utility poles to pass the time?

Electric linemen spend a huge amount of their time working alongside the road. While their truck will have its lights flashing and orange cones surrounding it and the workers will wear fluorescent vests, do you give them the same courtesy you afford our police and firemen?

Hopefully no one needs to tell you to do the right thing when you approach a utility vehicle — change lanes and slow down — just like no one needs to tell you to knock on the door of someone else's house if you want to go inside. But in case you need some extra encouragement, you must move over for utility workers in Tennessee. It's the law. ■



**By Mike Knotts**  
Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association

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# TENNESSEE ALMANAC

Bite-sized news, notes and knowledge — March 2024

## From the editor

Last month I lamented the final gloomy throes of winter we must sometimes weather through February. But now it's March, and we stand at the threshold of another promising growing season. Spring officially begins this month, so it's time to sharpen the loppers and mower blades, plan our plantings and dream of the bounty from our own gardens.



My personal landscaping goals are far from ambitious, but even small-scale success takes a little bit of forethought. One tip I try my best to follow is to take full advantage of the first nice days to spend some time in the yard. It gets easier each week to put off the outdoor maintenance, and you never know which future weekend will turn out to be a rainout or scorcher.

Our gardening guide, found on pages 16-18 with supplemental tips online at [tnmagazine.org](http://tnmagazine.org), is a great starting point. This year, we're offering ideas for trimming the gardening budget.

March is also National Reading Month, and we invited Kathleen Davis to share strategies for improving children's literacy. Learn about the pillars of reading success beginning on page 14.

Tennessee is full of interesting, endearing people with fascinating stories to share. In our latest Shutterbug Photography Contest, we tasked readers with showing us their personalities through self portraits. Find the winners on pages 28-31.

Step outside and take a deep breath. Spring is a wonderful time in the Volunteer State! We hope you enjoy this March edition of *The Tennessee Magazine*.

Thanks for reading,

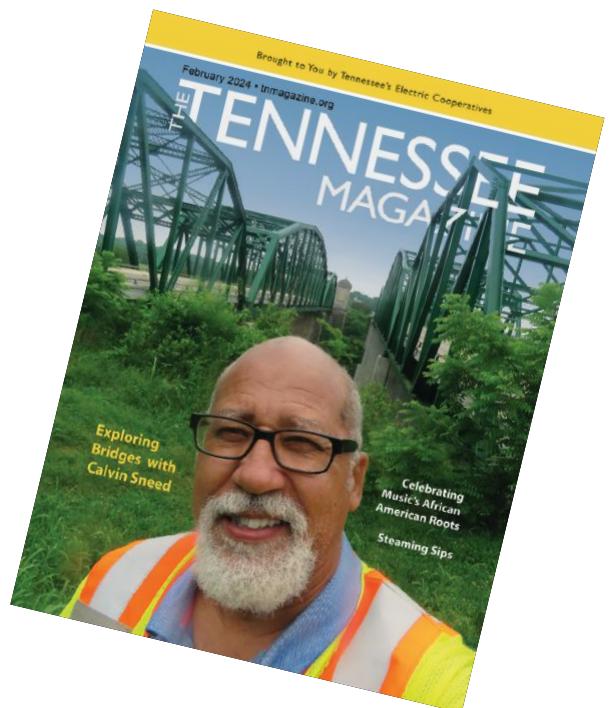
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Kirk".

Chris Kirk  
Editor, *The Tennessee Magazine*

## A couple of corrections

In the February history feature about bridge buff Calvin Sneed, two errors slipped past our fact-checkers. The "endangered" Old Stone Fort Bridge across the Duck River is actually found in Coffee County, and Robbie Jones is currently employed by Richard Grubb & Associates.

We apologize for the errors and thank our readers for keeping us on our toes.



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# TENNESSEE EVENTS

*Festivals, celebrations and other happenings around the state*

## West Tennessee

**March 9 • Big Gun, An AC/DC Tribute Band**, Krider Performing Arts Center, Paris. [kridercenter.com](http://kridercenter.com)

**March 9 • The Jackson Symphony — Classic Edge**, The NED, Jackson. 731-427-6440 or [thejacksonsymphony.org/concerts-events](http://thejacksonsymphony.org/concerts-events)

**March 12-17 • "Mrs. Doubtfire,"** Orpheum Theatre, Memphis. 901-525-3000 or [orpheum-memphis.com/event/doubtfire](http://orpheum-memphis.com/event/doubtfire)

**March 23 • A.J. Croce**, Graceland, Memphis. 877-777-0606 or [gracelandlive.com/croce](http://gracelandlive.com/croce)

## Middle Tennessee

**March 9 • Spring Festival**, downtown Smithville. 931-259-3413 or [centerhillevnts.com](http://centerhillevnts.com)

**March 9 • County Sumner Irish Festival**, Bledsoe's Fort Historical Park, Castalian Springs. 615-230-8474 or [visitsummerntn.com](http://visitsummerntn.com)

**March 15-16 • Quilts in the Boro**, Lane Agri-Park Community Center, Murfreesboro. 615-631-0460 or [quiltingbees.org](http://quiltingbees.org)

**March 16 • 62nd Annual Irish Celebration**, Erin. 931-289-4839 or [houstoncochamber.com](http://houstoncochamber.com)

**March 22-23 • 16th Annual Blooming Arts Festival**, downtown Linden. [bloomingartsfestival.com](http://bloomingartsfestival.com)

**March 23 • Third Annual Spring Barn Sale**, Shelton Farms, Pelham. 931-952-0207 or [rusticlaceevents.com](http://rusticlaceevents.com)

## East Tennessee

**March 15-16 • Spring Barbershop Harmony Society Competition**, Silverdale Baptist Church, Chattanooga. 423-596-3105 or [choochoochorus.org](http://choochoochorus.org)

**March 16 • Wayne Henderson and Friends**, Heritage Hall Theatre, Mountain City. 423-727-7444 or [heritagehalltheatre.org/events](http://heritagehalltheatre.org/events)

**March 18-25 • Eddie's 550 Tee Off for Alzheimer's**, the Club at Gettysvue, Knoxville. [pedalforalzheimers.org](http://pedalforalzheimers.org)

**March 23 • Spirit of Nations Powwow**, Jefferson County High School, Dandridge. [indiancreekproductions.com](http://indiancreekproductions.com) ■

**Submit your events** Complete the form at [tnmagazine.org](http://tnmagazine.org) or email [events@tnelectric.org](mailto:events@tnelectric.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 issue, we cannot guarantee publication. Find a complete listing of submissions we've received at [tnmagazine.org/events](http://tnmagazine.org/events).

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# My Tennessee Notebook

Story and photographs by Antsy McClain

## Rick the Elevator Guy

*Wilson County man finds service — and healing — in retirement*

If you've gotten on an elevator at TriStar Summit Medical Center in Hermitage, chances are you've been helped on by a tall, friendly man with a warm smile and kind eyes.

That's Rick Hunt, and he's known around here as Rick the Elevator Guy. Donning his blue vest, jeans and comfortable running shoes (he walks an estimated 60 miles per month here), Rick is what you might call the strong, silent type.

Rick is strong because he had to be, and he is silent because his tongue and voice box were removed after a squamous cell cancer\* diagnosis in 2009. Three rounds of chemo, 35 treatments of radiation and eventual surgeries in 2010 and 2012 left him cancer-free but speechless at age 56. He had smoked a little in the 1970s, but doctors said it

was unrelated.

A small bandage just above his collarbone is the only sign that he might have any health problems. Unable to speak or eat conventionally (his meals are blended in a Vitamix with water), Rick the Elevator Guy performs mighty feats of compassion that continue to touch the lives of thousands who pass through those large steel doors on their way to the frustrating world of health care, where clipboard questionnaires await, asking

for medical history and medicines they can't remember the names of.

Rick's own health crisis began with the detection of an irritating lump on the base of his tongue. His quotes here are taken from an ongoing email conversation I've been having with him for the past few weeks.

"At first, I said no thanks to the surgery," Rick said. "How about juicing carrots? Let's take the holistic approach? They answered that without the surgery, I'd need hospice care in six to 12 months. They gave us time to think about it."

"My wife, Elaine, and I headed home from that appointment, and we were both feeling blue. After a few moments, she looked over at me and said, 'Well I guess you won't be able to tell me how to drive anymore!'

"We both laughed. We prayed and gave much thought to our next step. They did the surgery, and 12 years later,

I'm still here, living one day at a time."

### How I met Rick the Elevator Guy

Getting sick is overwhelming. I know this firsthand. I have been both a patient and a caregiver at TriStar Summit.

I got on Rick's elevator the first time in August 2018 on my way to a fourth-floor appointment set up by my family doctor. I'm nervous in hospitals, but Rick smiled, and I smiled back. I had been having migraines and "foggy" episodes often associated with early signs of a stroke.



Rick Hunt at his volunteer post where he helps patients at TriStar Summit find their way. Left, Rick's sign near the elevators.





Rick's wife, Elaine, interprets during Rick's acceptance speech after he was presented with the Frist Humanitarian Award last year. Elaine has learned to read Rick's lips and mannerisms quite well over the years. Rick also has an app on his phone called Speak4Me that converts text to spoken word. Photographs courtesy of Rick and Elaine Hunt

That day changed my life forever. I was diagnosed with a rare blood cancer called polycythemia vera.\*\* The rest of the afternoon was a blur. If I saw Rick at the elevator on my way down, I don't remember. I'm not even sure how I got home.

Over the next several months, my wife, Deana Lynn, became my caregiver and health coach. She was amazing. She altered my diet, looked up symptoms and treatments online, bought supplements and joined support groups on social media. She went with me to my treatments. Soon I was bouncing back with my usual energy. My migraines stopped, my symptoms subsided and aside from taking a handful of pills every day and seeing far too many doctors on a regular basis (no offense, guys; you know I love ya), I'm doing just fine.

Then, in April of 2021, Deana Lynn started waking up in the middle of the night with lower back pain. I spent every night for the next week dispensing copious amounts of ibuprofen and rubbing her back with jars of Icy Hot — to no avail. The pain just grew worse. After a few doctor visits and a conclusive blood test, she was diagnosed with stage 1 pancreatic cancer.\*\*\* It was my turn to take care of her. The next year and a half became a dizzying whirlwind of blood tests, doctor and surgeon consults, countless medications, chemotherapy and radiology.

Deana Lynn's oncologist, Dr. Brian Hemphill, just so happened to share office space with mine, Dr. Chirag Amin, and we got to encounter the kindness of Rick the Elevator Guy on a weekly basis, if not more often. We would sometimes talk about Rick on our rides home, knowing he must have one heck of a story.

Rick and the author recently by the elevators at TriStar Summit. Rick's cancer is gone, and the author's is currently being managed well with treatment.

Our sharing of doctors on the fourth floor further reinforced the nickname my wife and I had started to call ourselves: the Cancer Twins.

We had to laugh about this or else fall irretrievably into the abyss. Gallows humor, as they call it, is not for everyone, but it worked for us. Just as Elaine's driving joke loosened the tension for she and Rick, humor worked as an immediate release valve on this pressure cooker we now called daily life. We laughed as often as we could. In the meantime, we began greeting Rick by name along with the other weary regulars.

After several doctors told us surgery was not an option, Deana Lynn opted out of further treatments. We focused on quality of life. We visited with family. We laughed with friends. We went to the beach. We slow danced, which actually is just hugging to music.

We were eventually forced to let go of everything we had ever hoped to do or be, and Deana Lynn let go of life in our home, surrounded by love, on Sept. 28, 2022. She was 52 years old.

### A light in the midst of darkness

As a caregiver, I've wandered the halls of too many hospitals, meeting the eyes of fellow wanderers who waited for test results, burdened with all it means to love someone who is sick. Clutching long-cold cups of coffee, we smiled our weary smiles, nodding quietly as we passed each other on our way to our own little nightmares or prayers-come-true.



Rick was there, smiling that kind smile, doing what he could to cut through the malaise he knows firsthand.

During Deana Lynn's treatments, I would often find a chair in the lobby and watch the elevator doors open and close, a ballet of wounded dancers wandering in and spilling out with their crutches, casts and canes. I'd listen to their cheerful chatter echo through the lobby as they greeted the nice, quiet man in the blue vest.

I'm now alone as I return to Rick's elevators for fourth-floor follow-ups and bloodwork. Entering the lobby is not easy for me. Going up the elevator is not easy. Sitting alone in the same waiting room where the Cancer Twins held hands, whispered our little jokes and plotted our escape — none of it is easy. I am the surviving twin, and half of me — it feels like more — is gone.

So, I seek out the familiar. I reach for solid and steady touchstones: people who remind me that there is stability in a world that has gone off its axis, rocking wildly as I stumble, trying to stand and move forward.

And I'm sure I speak for many when I say Rick Hunt, the Elevator Guy, has been one of those beacons for me.



Rick and Elaine at home. "We have a simple life," Rick said. "A content life. Being content is a powerful testimony in a greedy world."

Photograph courtesy of Rick and Elaine Hunt

### The origins of service

"How did you become Rick the Elevator Guy?" I asked.

"I'm not sure of the actual date," he replied. "But it was sometime before all the COVID stuff started. My wife, Elaine, and I moved to Mount Juliet in 2013. I was trying to enjoy retirement, but something was missing. I was playing golf with neighbors, having a good time, but I wanted to work. I have worked on and off for 50 years. — 33 years with Verizon in Maryland, where

I'm from. I finally said,

'Lord, where would you like me to be as I play this game of life in the fourth quarter?'"

"Sometime later I was at TriStar Summit for a doctor's appointment, sitting in the lobby. I was watching people get on and off the elevators, and I'd see the doors closing as seniors approached with walkers, and I heard God whisper, 'Right here, this is where I want you.'"

"I smiled," Rick continued. "I can't speak! How can you use me here?"

"After my doctor visit that day," Rick said, "I went to the hospital administration and said I would like to be a volunteer. I filled out all the paperwork, and soon I was at the elevators, creating my new position."

Rick volunteers five days a week — 8-11 a.m., then home for lunch and back at the hospital 1-3 p.m. His role has expanded over the years. He does much more than help folks on and off the elevators. "I walk people back to the ICU or same-day surgery," he said. "I find extra wheelchairs, I spend time in oncology with cancer patients, and it's not always just the patients. I try to encourage many on the staff throughout the hospital and doctors' side who have their own struggles. I help them find a smile."

### We are all part of Rick's story — and Rick is a part of ours

This was not an easy story for me to write. I've been very private about my journey until now. And recalling the painful details of the last few years was not easy. My original intent was to tell Rick's story and his story alone. I tried a dozen ways to keep me/us out of this, but I realized it had to be included. Deana Lynn's story and mine are like so many others, and we are what Rick is all about: showing



kindness and love to an army of the wounded, diagnosed with bad news and limping as fast as we can to get to an elevator before it closes.

"The world we live in is filled with hate and anger and fear," said Rick. "When people are at the hospital or doctor's office, many times they are dealing with serious issues on top of all that other stuff. I don't care what culture, race, religion or sexuality people have; when they walk in my doors, I want them to feel loved, I want them to know my smile is for them."

### Standing at the gauntlet

Living through a health crisis feels like a cosmic fraternity hazing, and the initiation process is brutal. You limp along an endless gauntlet while one indignity after another is being thrown at you. But as I continue to sit in sad waiting rooms with my fellow wounded, Rick's words remind me that, despite our differences, we are all the same in every way that truly matters.

And thankfully, there are caring people who help us along the way. We encounter them everywhere: at the coffee counter or the grocery store. And occasionally someone will hold open heavy steel doors, giving us all the time we need to make life's more difficult steps.

This morning, I went to the fourth floor for a little bloodwork and a consult with my oncologist. And there in the lobby, as I walked in from the cold, I saw the familiar face of my friend Rick with his blue vest and peaceful smile. I said hello, and he said hello back. We chatted for a bit.



Tattoos on Rick's arms and neck alert responders in the event of an emergency. While this is often done using necklaces or bracelets, there's no denying the efficacy of indelible ink in such a situation.

I heard him loud and clear. His voice rings deep in my heart. It's the voice of a warrior, the voice of a friend.

He held the elevator open as I shuffled in with other patients. He pushed the second and third

floor buttons — and the fourth for me. He waved as the steel doors softly rumbled closed, and the elevator lifted us upward to whatever awaits.

An elderly woman with a walker said, "What a nice man."

"I love that guy," someone else said, "I wonder what his story is."

"I'll bet he's got a good one," I said with a smile. And I joined my fellow riders in a small, collective sigh. ■

Antsy McClain is a Nashville-adjacent singer-songwriter, author and graphic artist who performs with his band, the Trailer Park Troubadours, around the world and in parts of Wilson County. Find his full bio, music, books, artwork and tour dates at [unhitched.com](http://unhitched.com).



### Detecting cancer

**Squamous cell carcinoma** is diagnosed in 1.8 million Americans each year. It is typically not fatal but can spread to other parts of the body and be deadly if not diagnosed and treated. Symptoms of tongue and mouth cancer might include a red or white patch on the tongue that won't go away, a sore throat that doesn't go away, a sore spot or lump on the tongue that doesn't go away, pain when swallowing, numbness in the mouth that won't go away, painful or burning feeling over the tongue, problems moving your tongue or speaking, a lump in the neck or unexplained bleeding from the tongue not caused by biting your tongue or another injury. In rare cases, one can feel pain in the ear.

**Polycythemia vera** is currently diagnosed in about 50 in 100,000

Americans. It causes bone marrow to produce too many red blood cells, raising the risk for heart attack, stroke or blood clots. It is not hereditary and typically occurs in middle age. Symptoms can include migraine headaches, high blood pressure, itchiness of the skin when in the sun or after taking hot showers, shortness of breath, dizziness, flushed face and night sweats. A simple blood test can determine your likelihood of having the disease. If you're experiencing similar symptoms, ask your doctor for a CBC test, which examines levels of hemoglobin (red blood cell proteins that carry oxygen) and hematocrit (red blood cell percentage in the blood). There is no cure, but the first step for treatment is usually a weekly blood draw to lower the red blood cell numbers. A secondary risk of high platelet count (the sponge-like tissue

that forms clots to prevent bleeding) can occur. If that happens, a daily regimen of chemo tablets is often prescribed.

**Pancreatic cancer** accounts for about 3% of all cancers in the U.S. and about 7% of all cancer deaths. The survival rate is about 12% depending on various factors. It is slightly more common in men than in women. It typically doesn't show signs or symptoms until later stages. Symptoms might include pain in the stomach, side or lower back; trouble with food digestion; weight loss; bloating of the stomach; and yellowing of the eyes and skin. If you are experiencing these symptoms, ask your doctor for a tumor marker test such as a CA19-9, and get scanned. The most often used imaging tests for detecting pancreatic cancer are ultrasound, CT, MRI or PET scans.

# THE IMPORTANCE OF READING



We have always heard that reading is important, that reading aloud to kids is highly recommended and that if we want our kids to become lifelong learners, we must first start with reading. As parents, we know the value of reading, but do we fully understand why each component of reading is essential? Are we aware of the foundations of reading that help a child find success and, therefore, become more motivated to read?

There are, in fact, **five pillars**, or key concepts, at the core of every effective reading instruction program: **phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension**. Each of these pillars helps support and create a good foundation for reading.

## Get your kids reading more: The five pillars to reading success

Story and photographs by Kathleen Davis

When trying to understand **phonemic awareness**, the best place to start is with our ears. Think of the sounds we hear in everyday speech. Connecting this to a child's reading foundation means that the child is able to identify individual sounds in words and understand the connection of those sounds to letters in the alphabet. This is why reading to your child at a very young age is so important. The more you read (or just simply talk), the more exposure that child receives to word sounds. Furthermore, playing word games like rhymes and tongue twisters can also help a child identify the sounds in words. Music is another highly beneficial way to expose children to more words and rhyming patterns.

Don't be afraid to use "big" words with kids. Use the words in context and, if necessary, explain the meaning.

**Phonics** is the process of breaking down words into their individual sounds. Imagine a child who is learning to read a new word. That child must begin by chunking the word based on its sounds and syllables. Children must first understand the sounds the letters make and then connect them with more letters. A quick and easy way to work on this is "playing teacher." You can do this in the car, at dinner, anywhere and anytime. Tell your child that he or she is the teacher. They need to give you words for you to sound out and spell. The "teacher" will need to check if you spelled the words correctly. You can take turns being the teacher. Add paper if necessary, or use your finger and write letters in the air. Mess up! Laugh! Make it fun!

The third strand, **vocabulary**, seems like common sense, and, in a way, it is. Essentially, the more vocabulary children are exposed to, the better their vocabulary (and hence reading ability) will be. Ever come across a new word you have never

seen before? Maybe it was in a different language? You probably didn't know how to read that word, where the vowels made short sounds versus long sounds, let alone what the word meant. This is one example why vocabulary is so important. When children sound out an unfamiliar word, they must automatically connect the word to a word they are familiar with. If they find a match and it makes sense in the sentence, they continue reading. If the word is not in their oral vocabulary, they will have a difficult time recognizing that word in print, even if they are able to produce an accurate pronunciation by decoding.

Vocabulary can be taught both directly and indirectly; however, new words are learned more effectively within context. Reading to children from a variety of texts (that might be above a child's reading level) exposes children to new words that they might not be able to read or understand on their own. Reading aloud also allows for opportunities to discuss the meanings of those new words. The key to growing vocabulary is exposure to words; talking and having conversations at dinner, in the car, during bath time, etc., can all increase a child's vocabulary. Listening to music and (dare I even suggest?) exposure to the "right" kind of television shows can also help with vocabulary growth. Lastly, don't be afraid to use "big" words with kids. Use the words in context and, if necessary, explain the meaning.

As a child grows, reading becomes less about the focus of each individual word and transforms into the ability to read accurately and quickly. This is called **fluency**, and it provides a framework for concentration of the meaning of the text as a whole. Allowing children to read texts that are "below" their reading level will help support better fluency (and confidence). Once again, reading aloud to your children (with good expression — think theatrics!) provides an opportunity for them to hear a good fluent reader and exposes them to vocabulary and concepts that they might not be able to handle on their own. The goal is for children to be able to "read like they talk" — smoothly and with minimal errors.

Reading with good fluency is very important; however, it is not a standalone skill. If children are reading quickly with minimal errors but are struggling with understanding the texts, they might need to slow down. They might also need to move to simpler texts with more understandable concepts. Having children feel success while reading is extremely beneficial. Comprehension, the fifth strand, goes hand in hand with fluency. **Comprehension** is reading accompanied with understanding. Reading rate and accuracy are meaningless if children are unable to comprehend what they are reading.

Monitoring fluency and comprehension can be done through encouraging your child to read aloud. If he or she is continuously stumbling on words or sounding out words, you might need to assess if they should pick another genre or simpler texts altogether. Nonfiction can often be more difficult than fiction, and rhyming texts are usually the easiest

As a child grows, reading becomes less about the focus of each individual word and transforms into the ability to read accurately and quickly.

genre (to read) since word patterns are more predictable. Asking basic questions about the texts children are reading allows a window into their understanding. "What is the problem?" "How do you think the problem will get solved?" "Why did the characters do what they did?" "What do you think will happen next and why?" The more engaged you are in their learning, the higher their odds of success.

Children who have mastered the five pillars of reading and are able to read

independently are shown to have a better grasp on "general knowledge" as a whole than those who do not. This means that, in general, your child's journey through school will come easier. In addition, a child who is not struggling with the foundational skills needed to be a successful reader will be more motivated to read throughout their lives.

It is never too late to help a child become a better reader. Determining which pillar a child is struggling with is the first step. Remember to make it fun, take it one step at a time and keep reading aloud to your children, even the big ones. ■

Kathleen Davis is the creative mind behind "BRAVE," "Feathers From Above" and the recently released middle grade book, "Dean's Magical Mix Up: The Principal's Pin." She began her literary journey after a fulfilling career as an elementary school teacher. She endeavors to impart messages of love and optimism to her young readers. Visit her website at [kathleendavisbooks.com](http://kathleendavisbooks.com).



# DIGGING DOLLARS



## *How to save money in the garden*

Our annual gardening guide

By George Weigel

Plant prices are up sharply the past two years. So are costs for insecticides, fertilizers, deer repellents, mulch, tools and other accessories gardeners use to keep their green investments alive. Even bagged dirt is no longer dirt-cheap. What's a gardener on a tight budget to do? Fortunately, this is one pastime that lends itself well to lots of belt-tightening strategies. Let's dig into specifics ...

Gardeners use a variety of purchased products in their yard work, most of which have sharply increased in price over the past two years.

## Ways to save on plant purchases

You could pay full price at prime planting time like the majority of gardening consumers, or you could pay half or less with some bargain-sniffing strategies. Start by looking for markdowns on overstocked, out-of-bloom or past-prime plants. These are often perfectly healthy ... just not attractive enough to fetch top dollar.

Four top savers: perennials relegated to a bargain rack after they've

finished blooming for the season; annuals and vegetables that are still viable but unsold after the spring rush; trees and shrubs that are misshapen markdowns but fixable via pruning and patience; and tulips, daffodils and other spring-blooming bulbs that are often 50 percent off when unsold but still plantable by the end of October.

If you shop local, get on your favorite garden center's loyalty program. These offer discounts, coupons, rewards and special sales to regular customers. While you're at it, let local garden-center managers know you're interested in plants they want to clear out. You might get a call before plants go on the clearance rack — and maybe even year-end freebies.

Bargains are sometimes possible through mail-order and online vendors, but expect the plants to be small and "bare root" — i.e., shipped with weight-saving packing material around the roots instead of soil. Coddle them in a pot for a year to maximize success.

Plant bargains also can be found from unconventional sources, including plant societies, Master Gardeners, libraries, public gardens, farmers markets, schools and garden clubs — all of which often hold plant-sale fundraisers using divisions from members' yards, locally started seedlings and discounted greenhouse transplants.

Landscape companies are another overlooked plant resource. Landscapers routinely dig up healthy plants during renovations simply because they've outgrown the



Above, do-it-yourself compost not only saves having to buy bagged soil amendments, it's a good way to recycle organic yard waste. Below, buying plants when they're not in peak form and demand can yield significant discounts.

space or a new homeowner doesn't like them. Landscapers might let you salvage their digouts before they go to a dump.

## Ways to trim the plant budget

Wherever you buy plants, opt for less-expensive smaller sizes. Given patience and good growing conditions, a quart-sized perennial will end up at the same mature size as a gallon-sized one but at a significantly lower starting price.

Leaning small especially saves on trees, which can double in price for just 2 or

3 feet of additional height. Research has found that smaller transplant sizes usually establish faster and catch up to their bigger brethren within a few years.

Starting new plants from seed yields way more plants to the dollar than transplants. Vegetables and annual flowers are fairly easy to start from seed inside in winter. Basic workshop lights with fluorescent tubes are sufficient for growing seedlings, which usually need only about six weeks of inside growth before being ready to plant outdoors.

Even less expensive is planting seeds directly in the ground outside, bypassing the need for lights, pots, potting mix and such. (See [tnmagazine.org](http://tnmagazine.org) for more on how to direct-seed plants.)

A third plant budget-stretcher is mining your own plants for expansion. Most perennial flowers can be dug and divided into fist-sized pieces after several years of growth, giving you free plants to use elsewhere.

Clumps of spring bulbs also can be dug and divided after their foliage browns in spring, and some shrubs will yield newbies if their "suckers" (roots that send up shoots) are dug and transplanted. Virginia sweetspire, summersweet, hydrangea, diervilla, kerria, lilac, bayberry, sweetshrub, sweetbox and forsythia are good sucker-transplant candidates.

Check with friends and neighbors to see if they'd like to trade divisions, which can yield free new varieties for your



yard. New shrubs, trees, roses and evergreens can be created by snipping 4- to 6-inch pieces off the tips of “mother plants” and sticking them into moist potting mix. That induces roots to grow from the buried cut ends, giving you a new “baby” copy of the plant.

This works for many annual flowers and tropicals, too. (Visit [tnmagazine.org](http://tnmagazine.org) to learn how to start new plants from cuttings.)

If you’re spending too much on annual flowers (the ones planted anew each spring), save money by converting space to perennials (plants that come back year after year). Limit those \$6 annuals to pots, hanging baskets and window boxes. Perennials cost more upfront and don’t bloom as long as annuals, but the payback is usually three years or less. Some annuals such as ageratum, celosia and cosmos are good at “self-seeding,” meaning they come up on their own each spring from seed dropped by last year’s flowers.

Save on your potted-plant budget by starting with fewer plants each season. With patience, pots of fewer premium-priced potted annuals will fill in eventually and cost less than tightly packed ones.

Another pot option is scavenging the yard for perennial flowers that you can dig and divide to use in pots. The best are ones with colorful foliage that add interest beyond the few weeks they’re in flower such as coralbells, hosta, golden sedge, variegated liriope and ferns. Return the perennials to the ground in fall to overwinter and mine again next year.

#### **Ways to save on gardening products**

The fastest way to save on gardening products is to cut out

things that you — and your plants — really don’t need.

Some possibilities: wound dressings for pruned trees (not necessary and sometimes counterproductive), leaf shine (a soft, damp cloth with diluted soap cleans dusty houseplant leaves), compost activator (a few shovelfuls of finished compost or soil adds decomposition microbes) and tree fertilizer spikes (trees usually get the nutrients they need from soil, decomposing mulch and fertilizer on the surrounding lawn).

Next is reducing the amount of fertilizer you use in general. Plants take up only the nutrients they need. Adding more doesn’t make them grow bigger or better,



Plants are less expensive when you start them from seed versus buying greenhouse-grown transplants.

is another expense and can be polluting. If plants are growing well, there’s usually no need to add anything. If they’re not, a soil test will tell if lack of nutrition is a culprit — along with exactly what nutrients are needed and in what amounts. Extension offices and many garden

centers offer inexpensive do-it-yourself soil-test kits to help you spend fertilizer dollars wisely.

Bug and disease sprays are another potential cost-saver. Some gardeners routinely use pesticides “just in case,” both wasting money and potentially killing beneficial insects that would’ve controlled pest bugs naturally (and at no charge). Most bugs and diseases target only specific plants, and much of the damage is temporary or cosmetic anyway. Consider products only when particular plants are under threat from intolerable or potentially fatal damage — and when there are no better alternatives.

Expensive potting mix can be stretched by mixing your own from bulk ingredients or by “refreshing” last year’s saved mix with half new mix (assuming last year’s mix wasn’t bug- or disease-ridden).

Even costly hardscaping materials such as bricks, stone, patio furniture, garden ornaments and fencing are sometimes available for free or heavily discounted from neighbors advertising them through local social media channels. ■



Dividing clumps of expanded perennials is a way to add plants at no charge.

George Weigel is author of five gardening books and a retired Pennsylvania Certified Horticulturist who specialized in garden design for homeowners. He’s also a garden speaker, garden tour leader and, since 1993, garden columnist for The Patriot-News newspaper and its PennLive.com website in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

## **There's more online!**

Find more tips on trimming your gardening budget — from starting plants from seeds and clippings to finding fun ways to repurpose household items — at [tnmagazine.org](http://tnmagazine.org).





Tennessee Voices for Cooperative Power gives you  
the power to speak about energy policies that  
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Voices for  
Cooperative  
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Cooperatives

# The power of partnerships

During the week of Jan. 14, bitter cold brought historic demand for electricity across the Tennessee Valley region. On Wednesday, Jan. 17, the Tennessee Valley Authority set a preliminary all-time record peak of approximately 34,524 megawatts. The previous all-time record was 33,482 in August of 2007.

I am extraordinarily proud that, working together, we collectively met that demand and kept folks across the region safe and warm. Of course, keeping the lights on is our job. But it's important to acknowledge the effort everyone — from linemen to plant operators to those staying warm at home — played in ensuring people across our seven-state region had power during the extreme cold.

After Winter Storm Elliott in 2022, TVA undertook an extensive review that led us to enact more than 250 immediate, corrective actions. In addition, in the last three months, we've invested nearly \$123 million to harden the system and enhance reliability and resiliency at our coal, gas and hydro facilities. This included adding insulation and enclosures around exposed equipment to prevent freezing and installing state-of-the-art smart heat trace monitoring systems to help us be more responsive to potential issues. During January's extreme weather, those investments helped us keep assets operating.

We worked closely with electric cooperatives and other local power company partners to help get the word out to conserve energy during a four-hour peak period on Wednesday, Jan. 17. Small measures



Guest Column  
By Jeff Lyash, CEO  
Tennessee Valley Authority

undertaken by everyone across the state — turning the thermostat down a few degrees or waiting to start the dryer until later in the day — played a big role in helping us protect the grid. We are working to quantify that, but it's important that everyone across the region knows they played a role in helping us keep the lights on.

Thank you to everyone for the roles you played in meeting this historic demand. Your efforts were essential and appreciated, and I'm very grateful for your partnership.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Lengthen the life of your clothes dryer with regular cleaning. Clean the lint filter after every load, which improves air circulation and safety. Check the lint trap opening and use a vacuum to remove any lint that's fallen inside the opening.

If you use dryer sheets, check the lint filter for residue buildup. Remove any residue with hot water and a nylon brush or toothbrush. Over time, dryer sheets can leave a film on the filter, which can affect the performance of the motor.

# Sign up for text alerts for outage reporting, updates and more!

Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation offers members three convenient ways to report power outages: by calling 800-987-2362, via SmartHub (online or through the mobile app) and through the text alerts service.

## How does the text alerts service work?

Once subscribed to outage text alerts, you can text CEMC at 800-987-2362 (using the command OUT) when there is a power outage affecting you.

## What are the available text commands?

Get the outage information you need by texting these commands to 800-987-2362:

- Text **OUT** to report an outage.
- Text **HELP** for help with our text alert system.
- Text **QUIT** to unsubscribe from outage text alerts.

## How do I sign up for text alerts?

Simple. We must have your mobile phone number on file. To add or update a mobile number on your CEMC account, call us at 800-987-2362 during business hours or use the SmartHub app. Keep in mind that the subscription process is not immediate, so don't wait until your power is out to update your mobile number. If your mobile phone number is already associated with your CEMC account, you don't need to do anything! You will be added

to our text alert service automatically and receive a text confirming that you are subscribed to outage text alerts. If you no longer wish to receive outage alerts via text, you can unsubscribe at any time by texting the command QUIT.

## Do I need to report my outage?

CEMC is alerted when a main transmission line, substation or circuit has been damaged. However, if it's an isolated incident, you might need to report it. If you do not receive an outage alert text, play it safe and text the command OUT to 800-987-2362.

## Will I receive nonoutage related texts?

CEMC will occasionally text you information regarding important co-op events or changes as well as any CCFiber information from Cumberland Connect that affects your area. Text communication will come from one of these three areas: **Electric** — electric outage communication; **Fiber** — CCFiber information from Cumberland Connect; and **General** — general information from CEMC. You can unsubscribe at any time by texting the command QUIT if you no longer wish to receive these alerts. You will be prompted to choose one of these areas (QUIT electric, QUIT fiber, QUIT general or QUIT ALL).

To learn more about CEMC's text alert system, visit us online at [cemc.org/outagemap](http://cemc.org/outagemap).



**TEXT ALERTS**  
**NOW AVAILABLE!**

Outage reporting, updates and more on your mobile phone.

# Breathe easier and live healthier by improving indoor air quality

## The importance of indoor air quality at home, at work and in the classroom

Did you know that, on average, Americans spend a whopping 90% of their time indoors and that the concentrations of some pollutants might be up to five times higher indoors than outdoors? Both short- and long-term exposure to indoor air pollution can lead to a range of health issues including headaches, fatigue, respiratory diseases, heart disease, cognitive deficits and cancer.

Ready for some good news? Take a deep breath: Healthy indoor air quality has been associated with enhanced cognitive performance, better decision-making and increased productivity. That's why TVA EnergyRight and your local power company are ready to help you improve indoor air quality at home, on the job and at school.

### **What makes indoor air unhealthy?**

Contaminants such as allergens, carbon monoxide, chemicals, radon, smoke and mold all contribute to poor indoor air quality. There are plenty of potential polluters, too, such as gas ovens and ranges, wood-burning fireplaces, cleaning solutions, chemicals used in certain paints and furnishings, outdated heating and air conditioning systems, damp basements, pet dander and dirty ventilation systems.

### **What do you need for good air quality?**

Fortunately, the recipe for cleaner, healthier indoor air is simple: adequate ventilation and controls for pollution, temperature and humidity levels. Read on for tips and resources that can dramatically improve the air you breathe wherever you are.

### **Three ways to improve air quality at home ... and save money.**

#### **1. Minimize pollutants.**

An easy way to improve air quality is to cut down on pollutants like carbon monoxide, radon or harsh chemical cleaning products.

Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas that can build up quickly indoors. Have your gas appliances, chimneys, and fireplaces or wood stoves checked annually by a professional. If you haven't had your home checked for radon, a natural radioactive gas that

can build up in your home, now's the time! According to the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC), radon is a very serious problem in our state.

Certain cleaning products could also contain harmful chemicals and fumes that can linger in the air; glass cleaners, bleach, air fresheners and cleaning sprays are common culprits. Try to use nontoxic cleaning products whenever possible. For a green, cost-effective clean, try distilled white vinegar, baking soda and pet-friendly essential oils.

Find a contractor who can help make sure your home's ventilation systems are working well and that your air quality is within a healthy range.  
*[energyright.com/residential/quality-contractor-network](http://energyright.com/residential/quality-contractor-network)*

#### **2. Tend to your heating and cooling system.**

The average lifespan of an HVAC system is 15-20 years. If you're approaching the end of your unit's functional lifespan, investing in a new one is an excellent way to improve air quality and lower energy costs.

Not ready for a new system? Be sure to replace your air filter regularly. Clean filters do a better job of trapping dust, dirt and airborne particulates. Plus, they're easier on your HVAC system, helping it work more efficiently and last longer.

Keeping your HVAC unit in tip-top shape is another good way to improve indoor air quality. You can knock out your electric HVAC tune-up with a \$50 rebate from TVA EnergyRight. Be sure to explore all our rebates on HVAC systems, duct systems, air sealing and more.

*[EnergyRight.com/Rebates](http://EnergyRight.com/Rebates)*

#### **3. Get your ducts in a row.**

Excellent ventilation in your home can reduce the concentration of indoor pollutants. Install an externally vented exhaust fan in your kitchen and bathrooms, and open windows regularly to circulate fresh air. You can also get your duct system professionally cleaned to keep clean air flowing, seal cracks or holes in ductwork and increase the efficiency of your HVAC system.

Don't know who to hire for ductwork deep-clean or fan installation? Try a TVA-vetted contractor from the Quality Contractor Network.

[EnergyRight.com/Quality-Contractor-Network](https://EnergyRight.com/Quality-Contractor-Network)

### **Three ways to improve air quality at work and in the classroom.**

#### **1. Upgrade your HVAC system.**

Much like the heating and cooling systems in your home, commercial HVAC systems have a huge impact on indoor air quality. Upgrading your building's HVAC system can significantly lower your monthly energy bill, help you achieve energy efficiency goals, reduce maintenance costs and control seasonal spikes in energy use while improving workplace or classroom comfort and air quality.

And guess what? TVA EnergyRight and local power company partners are offering business and industry customers incentives on qualifying HVAC equipment.

[EnergyRight.com/  
business-industry/incentives/hvac](https://EnergyRight.com/business-industry/incentives/hvac)

Thanks to a partnership with the Tennessee Department of Education's Energy Efficient School Initiative, TVA EnergyRight and local power companies are also helping public schools throughout the region save on energy costs and improve indoor air quality. Participating public schools learn about saving energy and receive grants to make much-needed

energy upgrades, fostering happier, healthier learning environments.

[EnergyRight.com/business-industry/school-uplift](https://EnergyRight.com/business-industry/school-uplift)

#### **2. Purify with photosynthesis.**

Treat yourself to a plant or two and infuse a breath of fresh air into your workspace or classroom. Science alert! How do plants purify the air? During photosynthesis, plants convert carbon dioxide (exhale!) into fresh oxygen (inhale!). The process can also remove toxins commonly found in office furniture and heavy-duty cleaners — like formaldehyde, benzene and trichloroethylene — which makes a pretty plant pretty amazing.

#### **3. Reduce emissions.**

If your work environment is less desk and more distribution, then you might be familiar with the chug-chug of internal combustion forklift engines. Lower emissions and elevate workplace air quality by switching from gas to electric forklifts.

[EnergyRight.com/  
business-industry/incentives/electric-forklifts](https://EnergyRight.com/business-industry/incentives/electric-forklifts)

Whether you're at home, at work or hitting the books, TVA EnergyRight and your local power company are here to help you breathe easy. Take the next step toward improving indoor air quality today! Explore all of our resources at [EnergyRight.com](https://EnergyRight.com).



Replace your air filter regularly. Clean filters do a better job of trapping dust, dirt and airborne particulates, and they're easier on your HVAC system, helping it work more efficiently and last longer.

# Clearing the path to reliability

Trees are majestic, beautiful and good for the soul. But we also know that our members depend on us to deliver reliable power to their homes and businesses. That's why Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation strives to balance maintaining the beautiful surroundings we all cherish with ensuring reliable electricity. You might not realize it, but there are several benefits to regular tree trimming.

## Reliability

Keeping power lines clear of overgrown vegetation improves service reliability. After all, we've seen the whims of Mother Nature during severe weather events with fallen tree limbs taking down power lines and utility poles. While many factors can impact power disruptions, about half of all outages can be attributed to overgrown vegetation. This is why you sometimes see CEMC crews or contractors out in the community trimming trees near power lines. Our trimming crews have been trained and certified based on the latest industry standards.

In fact, all U.S. electric utilities are required to trim trees that grow too close to power lines. Scheduled trimming and herbicide application throughout the year keep lines clear from overgrown or dead limbs that are likely to fall, and we are better able to prepare for severe weather events. Plus, we all know it's more cost-effective to undertake preventative maintenance than it is to make repairs after the fact.

## Safety

Working near power lines can be dangerous, and we care about your safety and that of our lineworkers. For example, if trees are touching power lines in our members' yards, they can pose a grave danger to families. If children can reach those trees, they can potentially climb into a danger zone. Electricity can arc, or jump, from a power line to a nearby conductor such as a tree.

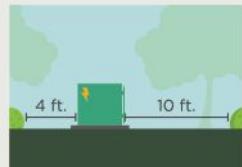
Any tree or branch that falls across a power line creates a potentially dangerous situation. A proactive approach lessens the chances of fallen trees during

## 3 Ways to Help Limit Tree Trimming

**1. Plant trees in the right place.** Trees that will be shorter than 40 feet should be planted at least 25 feet from power lines (taller than 40 feet should be at least 50 feet away).



**2. Don't block pad-mounted transformers.** Plant shrubs at least 10 feet away from transformer doors and 4 feet from transformer sides.



**3. Report dangerous branches.** If you spot a tree or branch that is dangerously close to power lines, please let us know.



**Trimming improves safety for all.**

**Let's work together to enjoy the beauty of trees and reliable electricity.**

Did you know that electric utilities are required to trim trees and other types of vegetation that grow too close to overhead power lines? We know you love your trees, and we will do everything we can to avoid trimming them. Here's how you can help:

severe weather events that make it more complicated and dangerous for lineworkers to restore power.

## Affordability

As a co-op, CEMC always strives to keep costs down for our members. If trees and other vegetation are left unchecked, they can become overgrown and expensive to correct. A strategic vegetation management program helps keep costs down for everyone.

When it comes to vegetation management, there are ways you can help, too. When planting new trees, make sure they're placed a safe distance from overhead power lines. Medium-height trees (40 feet or smaller) should be planted at least 25 feet from power lines. Taller trees (over 40 feet) should be planted at least 50 feet from power lines. You can also practice safe planting near pad-mounted transformers. Plant shrubs at least 10 feet from the transformer door and 4 feet from the sides. If your neighborhood has underground lines, remember to contact 811 before you begin any project that requires digging.

Additionally, if you spot an overgrown tree or branch that's dangerously close to overhead lines, please let us know by contacting us at 800-987-2362.

We have deep roots in our community, and we love our beautiful surroundings. It takes a balanced approach, and our vegetation management program is a crucial tool in ensuring service reliability. To learn more about CEMC's Vegetation Management program, visit [cemc.org/electric-service/vegetation-management/](http://cemc.org/electric-service/vegetation-management/).

# Get ready for spring: Spring cleaning tips from your local cooperative



As springtime is in bloom and the days grow longer, it's the perfect time for a fresh start. Just as you declutter your home during spring cleaning, you can also tidy up your online and energy consumption habits. In this article, we'll explore some valuable tips for our members that will help ensure you're ready for a bright year ahead.

## Is your contact information up to date?

Occasionally, CEMC/Cumberland Connect might need to get in touch with you — so it's important your contact information is current.

Take a look at SmartHub to ensure we have your most recent phone number and email address. You can view your contact methods by logging into SmartHub and looking for **Contact Methods** under the **Settings** menu. From here, you can add or edit contact information. You can also give us a call at 800-987-2362 to update your details!



## Energy efficiency tips:

### 1. Update home lighting:

A quick and easy tip is to consider replacing old incandescent bulbs with energy-efficient LED lights. LEDs use less energy and last longer, helping you save on both electricity bills and environmental impact.

### 2. Smart thermostats:

Install a smart thermostat that can automatically adjust your home's temperature when you're away. This can significantly reduce energy consumption and lower your utility costs.

### 3. Appliance checkup:

Perform a thorough inspection of your household appliances. Cleaning air filters on air conditioners and vacuuming refrigerator coils can optimize their performance and efficiency.

### 4. Seal gaps and cracks:

Seal any gaps or cracks around doors and windows to prevent drafts. This small step can have a big impact on energy conservation and make your home more comfortable.

## Cybersecurity tips:

### 1. Update and patch devices:

Just like your home needs maintenance, so do your digital devices. Regularly update and patch your computers, smartphones and other connected devices to ensure they have the latest security features.

### 2. Use strong, unique passwords:

Remember to always use strong, unique passwords for your online accounts. Utilizing a mix of letters, numbers and symbols can significantly enhance cybersecurity. You might also consider getting a password manager to make it easier than ever to create and organize your passwords.

### 3. Enable multi-factor authentication (MFA):

Enable MFA wherever possible. This adds an extra layer of security by requiring users to provide two forms of identification before accessing their accounts, such as a one-time passcode on their phone.

Scan to log in to SmartHub and check your information or call **(800) 987-2362** for assistance.



# Spring cleaning tips to maximize efficiency

**Q.** What are some energy-saving tasks I can add to my spring cleaning list?  
**A.** Spring is a great time to refresh, clean and enhance energy efficiency at home. By adopting simple yet effective energy-saving strategies during our spring-cleaning routines, we can create an efficient living environment that could also lower our utility bills and extend the life of our heavily used appliances.



Schedule cleaning services for your air conditioner in the spring before the heat of summer.

Be sure to include these spring cleaning tips to add some energy savings to the job.

Even though it's out of sight, don't leave it out of mind: Check the filter in your HVAC system. Your furnace worked hard during the winter. Ensuring your system has a clean filter is a low-cost and easy way to protect your equipment and maximize efficiency. A dirty furnace filter can cause your system to work harder than necessary, decreasing efficiency and shortening the system's life.

While the filter is easy to replace yourself, you should have your air conditioning serviced and professionally cleaned. Both the indoor and outdoor units should be cleaned. Dirty refrigerant coils reduce

While cleaning light fixtures and ceiling fans, check your bulbs and replace any that are incandescent or compact fluorescent with energy-saving LEDs.

efficiency. This also applies to heat pumps and ductless heat pumps, also known as mini-split systems. The technician can check refrigerant levels and refill or repair if necessary.

HVAC contractors get busy responding to calls for repairs during the summer heat. Scheduling cleaning services for your air conditioning in the spring — before the heat of the summer — can ensure the work gets done before the rush and even save you money. Some HVAC contractors offer special discounts for cleaning services in the milder months, which helps fill their schedules and keep their technicians working.

Window A/C units can get dirty, too. They can be cleaned with the proper tools, cleaning agents and know-how. Always unplug the unit before cleaning, and wait until it's completely dry to plug it back in again. Take the time to clean it properly in the spring before you need it in the summer.

Cleaning light fixtures and fixture covers can brighten your space by removing dust and grime collected during the winter. While you are at it, be sure to check your bulbs and replace any incandescent or compact fluorescent bulbs with energy-saving LEDs. Although they tend to cost a little more, LEDs last longer and use less energy.

Good-quality LED lightbulbs are expected to last 30,000 to 50,000 hours, according to the Department of Energy. A typical incandescent lamp lasts about 1,000 hours, and a comparable CFL lasts 8,000 to 10,000 hours. To put this into everyday use, if you have an LED light on for 10 hours per day, it can last 13 years compared to only about three months for an incandescent bulb and about two-and-a-half years for a CFL.

Don't forget the oven. A clean oven heats more evenly and quickly, providing better results and lower energy use. A clean oven window allows you to see the food and how it's cooking without opening the oven door, which wastes energy.





Replacing your furnace filter is a low-cost and easy way to protect your equipment and maximize efficiency.

If cleaning windows is on the list, check the seals and sash locks to ensure they close tightly. Check for any areas that need caulking or sealing to reduce drafts. Sealing around windows contributes to year-round comfort in your home. Clean windows also allow more light into the home, reducing the need to turn on lamps and overhead fixtures.

Spring is the ideal time to declutter, deep clean and implement practices that not only tidy our homes but also reduce energy consumption, contributing positively to our homes' energy efficiency and saving money on energy use. ■

*Miranda Boutelle 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.*



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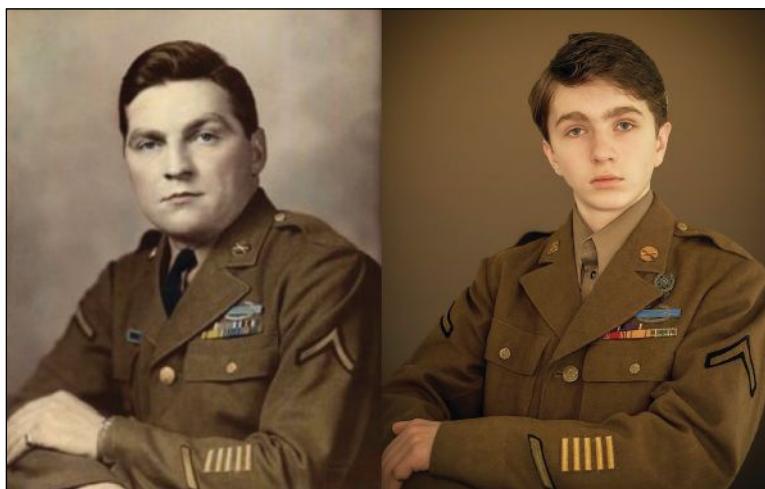
# SHUTTERBUG SHOWCASE



^ FIRST PLACE, JUNIOR, "Mirror Mirror..."  
Grace Kelley, Hohenwald, Meriwether Lewis EC



^ SECOND PLACE, JUNIOR, "A Streak of What's Left,"  
Shay Simpson, Hohenwald, Meriwether Lewis EC



^ THIRD PLACE, JUNIOR, "In Honor of My Grandfather,"  
Luca Ferrer, Spring Hill, Duck River EMC

Shutterbugs from across the state entered more than 500 images relating to our latest contest theme, "Selfies." These interesting photographs introduced us to some of your passions, family members and adventures. Thank you for sharing these moments with us.

Guest judges Lacy Atkins and Robin Conover, both award-winning photographers, helped our staff select the winners in each of our three categories: Junior, Professional and Adult Shutterbugs. Thank you to everyone who submitted photographs. Be sure to visit [tnmagazine.org](http://tnmagazine.org) to view these winning entries and additional images recognized as finalists.



^ HONORABLE MENTION, JUNIOR, "Besties Forever," Ashlynn Kanagy, Huntland, Fayetteville Public Utilities



^ HONORABLE MENTION, JUNIOR, "Morning Coffee,"  
Shay Simpson, Hohenwald, Meriwether Lewis EC



FIRST PLACE, PROFESSIONAL, "Morning Sunrise," Melissa Bateman, Spring Hill, Middle Tennessee Electric



^ SECOND PLACE, PROFESSIONAL, "Grounded," Casey Hall, Clarksville, Cumberland EMC



^ SECOND PLACE, PROFESSIONAL, "Grounded," Casey Hall, Clarksville, Cumberland EMC



^ HONORABLE MENTION, PROFESSIONAL, "Peace Be With You," Laura Horton, Tullahoma



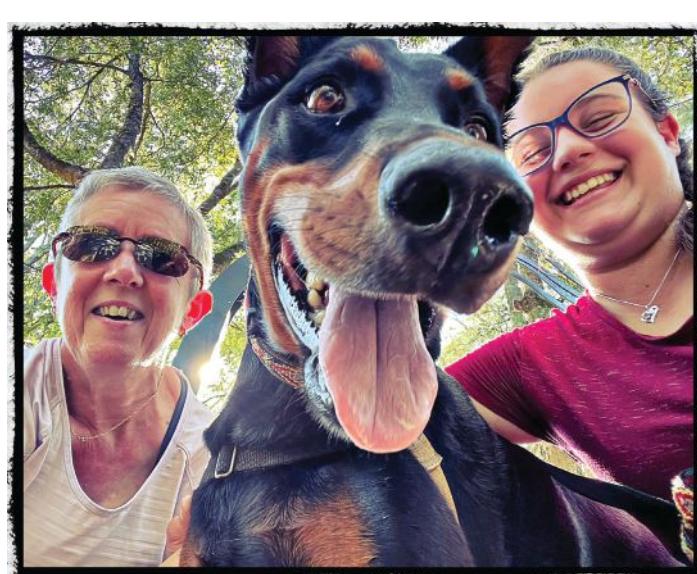
^ HONORABLE MENTION, PROFESSIONAL, "Breath of Winter," Dalton Courtney, Drummonds, Southwest Tennessee EMC



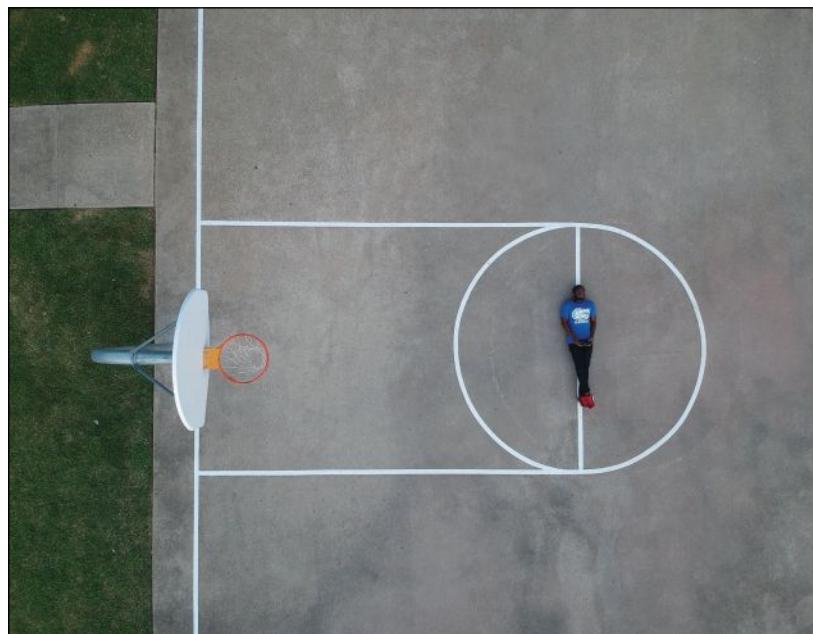
^ HONORABLE MENTION, ADULT, "Prism Selfie," Priscilla Landry, Jasper, Sequatchie Valley EC



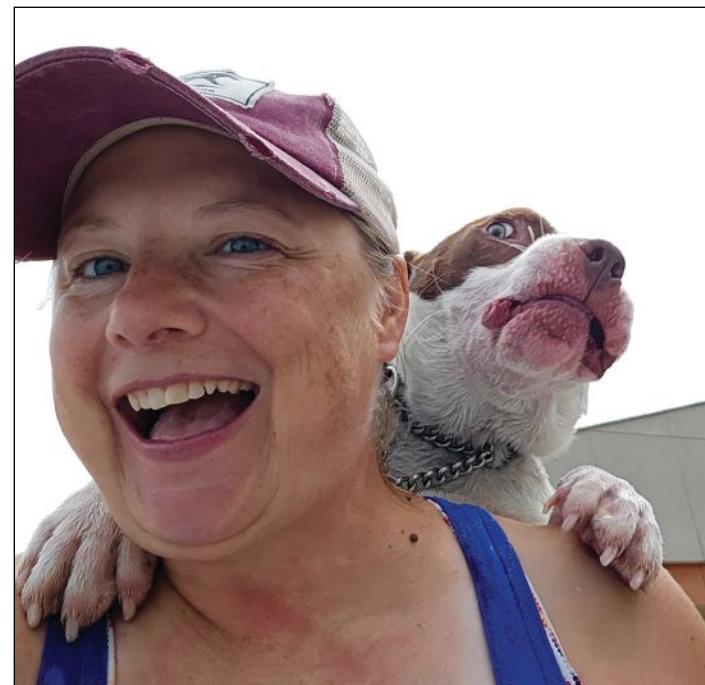
^ FIRST PLACE, ADULT, "I am Bubbleman," Jeff Fladen, Nashville



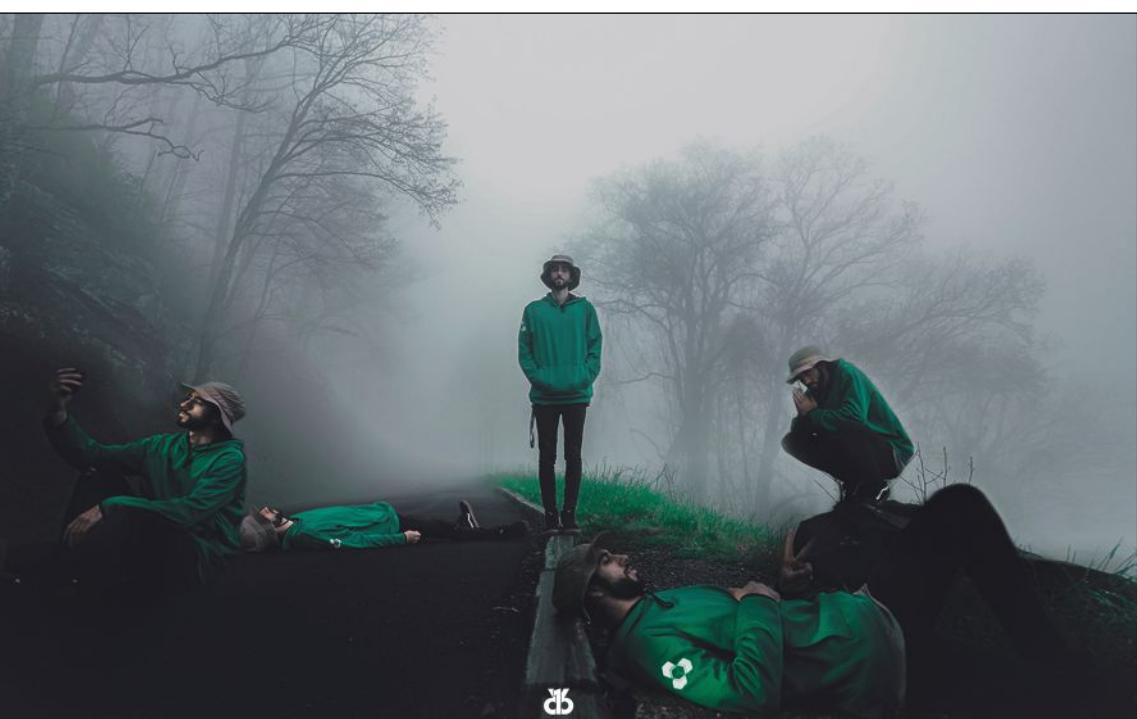
^ HONORABLE MENTION, ADULT, "Roxie Runs," Debbie McDonald, Murfreesboro, Middle Tennessee Electric



^ SECOND PLACE, ADULT, "Elevate Free Throw," Muzzammil Yushau, Murfreesboro, Middle Tennessee Electric



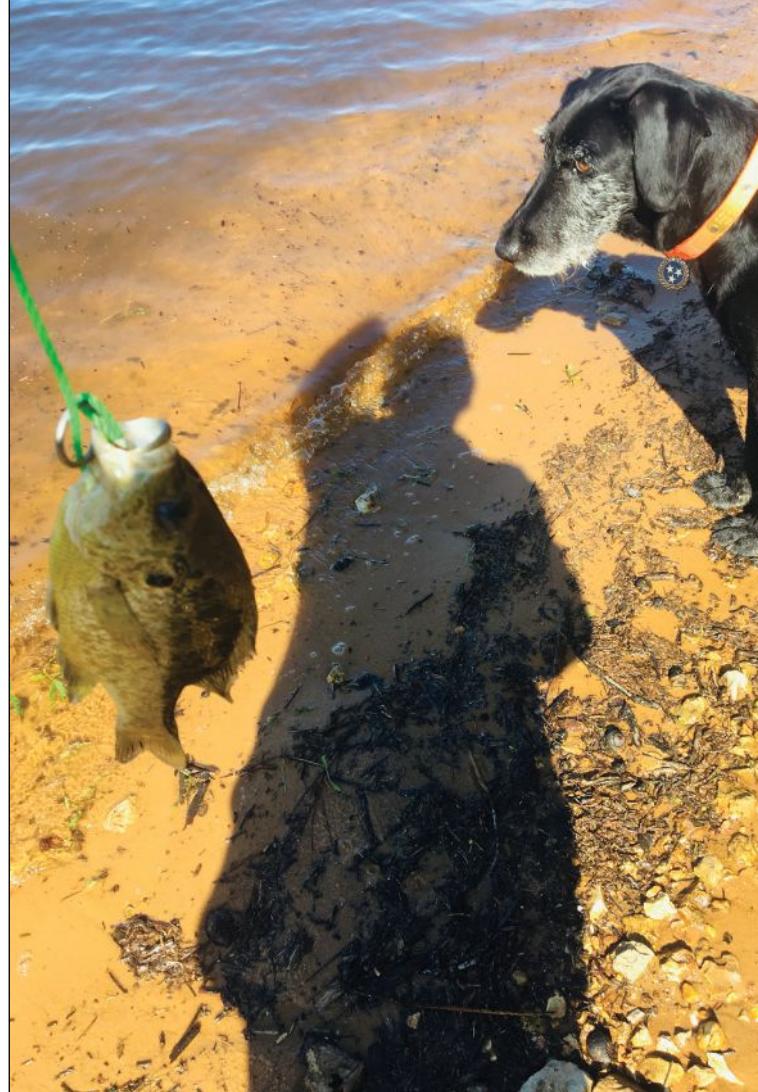
^ HONORABLE MENTION, ADULT, "Water Dog," Hollie Cox, Coalmont, Sequachee Valley EC



^ THIRD PLACE, ADULT, "Split Dimensions," Nicholas Doonis, Spring City



^ HONORABLE MENTION, ADULT, "Selfie, Sicily Restaurant," Michael Hull, Franklin, Middle Tennessee Electric



> HONORABLE MENTION, ADULT, "Georgia Girl Loves a Redear," Peggy Jennings, Clarksville, Cumberland EMC



^ HONORABLE MENTION, ADULT, "BambooYou," Amy Starr, Centerville, Meriwether Lewis EC

< HONORABLE MENTION, ADULT, "A Little Halloween Fun," Jennifer Taylor, Mercer, Southwest Tennessee EMC

# REMEMBER ROSEMARY

*Add a sprig of spring with rosemary*



## **Smoked Rosemary Potato Chips**

Recipes by Tammy Algood

Food styling by Cynthia Kent

Photographs by Robin Conover



Rosemary is a common kitchen herb. Traditionally, this sharply fragrant plant has symbolized remembrance. More recently, rosemary has been identified as having antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. Also, it's delicious, lending bold elegance to every dish it graces. To enjoy all its benefits, try some of these recipes.

### **Smoked Rosemary Potato Chips**

Yield: 6 servings

Olive oil cooking spray

1 (7.5- to 8-ounce) bag lightly salted wavy potato chips

½ cup grated Parmesan cheese (not shredded)

3 tablespoons minced fresh rosemary, divided

Preheat the smoker to 225 degrees. Meanwhile, place a piece of parchment paper on a rimmed baking sheet and coat lightly with cooking spray. Add the chips and evenly scatter in the pan. Spray lightly with the cooking spray. Sprinkle evenly with the Parmesan and 2 tablespoons of the rosemary.

Place in the smoker and smoke for 50 minutes to 1 hour or until the Parmesan has toasted. Scatter with the remaining rosemary and cool on a wire rack before serving.

### **Rosemary and Olive Focaccia**

Yield: 8 servings

3 cups all-purpose flour

1½ teaspoons instant yeast

1½ teaspoons sugar

1½ cups room-temperature water

2 teaspoons salt, divided

4 tablespoons olive oil, divided

½ cup sliced black olives

1 tablespoon finely minced fresh rosemary

Place the flour, yeast and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer and mix well. Add the water and mix with the paddle attachment at low speed for 3 minutes, stopping halfway through to scrape down the sides. Let the dough rest in the bowl for 10 minutes.

Add 1½ teaspoons of the salt and mix on low speed for 30 seconds. Increase the speed to medium-high and knead (mix) for 8 minutes. The dough will be very wet.

Pour 2 tablespoons of the olive oil into a large bowl. Use a pastry brush to evenly coat the sides of the bowl. Transfer the dough to the oiled bowl. Use your hands to flip the dough in order to evenly coat with the oil. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and allow it to sit undisturbed for 2 to 2½ hours or until it is bubbly and has nearly tripled in size.

While the dough is rising, make sure the oven rack is in the middle of the oven. Coat the inside bottom and sides of a 13-by-9-inch baking pan with cooking spray. Add the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil to the pan. Spread evenly with a pastry brush. Ten minutes before the rising is complete, preheat the oven to 450 degrees.

Transfer the dough to the prepared baking sheet. Use your fingers to gently pat out the dough to the corners of the pan. If the dough snaps back, cover it with plastic wrap and let it rest another 10 minutes before pressing again.

Allow the dough to rest for 10 minutes. Use a fork to lightly poke the surface of the dough all over about 20 times. Sprinkle evenly with the olives, rosemary and remaining salt. Bake for 20-22 minutes or until the focaccia is golden-brown. Cool on a wire rack in the pan for 15 minutes. Transfer to a cutting board and cut into pieces.

### **Rosemary Shrimp**

Yield: 4 servings

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

3 tablespoons olive oil

8 garlic cloves, minced

½ cup dry white wine or low-sodium chicken stock

2 tablespoons white wine vinegar

1 tablespoon lemon juice

3 bay leaves

1 teaspoon kosher salt

2 tablespoons minced fresh rosemary

1 tablespoon chopped fresh oregano

½ teaspoon dried crushed red pepper

1 pound medium shrimp, peeled with tails on and deveined  
Rosemary sprigs for garnish

Melt the butter with the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the garlic and sauté 1 minute. Stir in the wine or stock, vinegar and juice, cooking 1 minute longer. Add the bay leaves, salt, rosemary, oregano and crushed pepper. Cook 2 minutes, stirring constantly.

Add the shrimp and cook 4 minutes or just until shrimp turn pink. Remove the bay leaves and discard. Garnish with the rosemary sprigs and serve as an appetizer or over hot cooked pasta.

### **Rosemary Infused Chicken Wings**

Yield: 4 servings

2 pounds chicken wings

3 tablespoons vegetable oil

4 large garlic cloves, peeled and minced

¼ scant cup minced fresh rosemary

1½ teaspoons garlic salt

½ teaspoon black pepper

Place the wings in a large zip top bag and set aside. Place the oil, garlic, rosemary, salt and pepper in a jar with a tight-fitting lid. Close and shake to emulsify. Pour over the wings, seal the bag well and refrigerate for 2 hours. Turn the bag halfway through the marinating time to evenly distribute the oil mixture.

Preheat the grill to medium to medium-high. Remove the wings from the refrigerator and allow to come to room temperature. Grill for 15 minutes, turning occasionally. Lightly char and check with an instant-read meat thermometer for doneness. Do not touch the bone. It should register 165 degrees. Rest for 5 minutes before serving warm.

### **Lemon Rosemary Shortbread**

Yield: 3 dozen cookies

7 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened

¼ cup sugar

1 egg

1 tablespoon finely minced fresh rosemary

Zest of 1 lemon, finely grated  
2½ cups all-purpose flour  
½ cup cornmeal

Place the butter and sugar in the bowl of an electric mixer and beat until fluffy, around 3 minutes. Add the egg, rosemary and lemon zest, stirring on low speed until combined. Add the flour and cornmeal and beat on low speed until the dough comes together and is fully mixed.

Turn out onto a lightly floured surface and gently knead until the dough is smooth. Roll the dough into a cylinder and wrap in plastic. Refrigerate for 45 minutes or until firm or freeze the dough for up to 3 months.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper. Cut the dough into ¼-inch slices and place on the prepared cookie sheets. Bake 12-14 minutes or until lightly golden. Cool for 1 minute on the sheet then carefully transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. Store in an airtight container.

### Super Quick Rosemary Lamb Chops

Yield: 3-4 servings  
½ cup coarse breadcrumbs  
2 teaspoons finely minced fresh rosemary  
¼ teaspoon garlic salt  
¼ teaspoon black pepper  
¼ teaspoon garlic powder  
¼ teaspoon paprika  
6 lamb chops, around ¾-inch thick  
1 tablespoon vegetable oil

In a shallow bowl, stir together the breadcrumbs, rosemary, garlic salt, pepper, garlic powder and paprika. Dredge the lamb chops in the crumb mixture and place on a plate lined with wax paper. Refrigerate for 10 minutes.

Place the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add half of the lamb chops in a single layer and sauté for 3 minutes on each side until browned. Drain on paper towels and repeat with the remaining chops. Serve warm. ■

### Tips and tricks

Rosemary is one of the easiest herbs to grow and loves the sun. It will typically overwinter well outside in our area.

It takes quite a bit of time for the sturdy leaves to soften when cooked, so use fresh whenever possible. Mince it for the best results.

If you cut too many sprigs, simply place the extras in a vase of water that is changed every three days. The vase works better than a clam shell package or produce bag. Rosemary doesn't benefit by being put in the refrigerator, so don't waste the space. Leave it on the counter for inspiration.

In addition to the recipes here, rosemary is great with stuffing, duck, scones, zucchini, eggplant, pate and potatoes.

*Tammy Algood develops recipes for **The Tennessee Magazine** that feature farm-fresh Tennessee food. Those fresh, local ingredients will always add cleaner, more flavorful foods to your table. We recommend visiting local farms and farmers markets to find the freshest seasonal produce.*



Email your cooking questions to Tammy Algood: [talgood@tnelectric.org](mailto:talgood@tnelectric.org).

**Charlene writes:** "I have made my own mustard, and it is quite pungent, gritty and runny. Can you help me save it?"

Charlene, first of all, give the mustard some time. It will be sharp and a little on the bitter side after it is first made. After a week or so in the refrigerator, it will calm down. As far as the thin tex-

ture, I would regrind the mixture. This will crack the mustard seeds more and eliminate the gritty texture. It will also make it so the seeds are able to absorb more of the vinegar liquid.

**April asks:** "I have a recipe that calls for superfine caster sugar. Can I substitute regular sugar for it in the recipe rather than buying it?"

April, superfine caster sugar (sometimes spelled castor) is nothing more than granulated sugar that is ground so it will dissolve quickly if not instantly. It is perfect when making meringues. To make your own rather than purchase it, place granulated sugar in a food processor fitted with a metal blade and grind to a very fine consistency. ■

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## Interstate 40 The origin of Tennessee's heartline



In 1965, here is how the intersection of Interstate 40 and I-24 looked in Nashville. Tennessee State Library and Archives photo

A few weeks ago, I drove from Nashville to Knoxville and back on the same day to see my son for his birthday. It took about three hours each way, which was notable because it was raining and dark on the return drive.

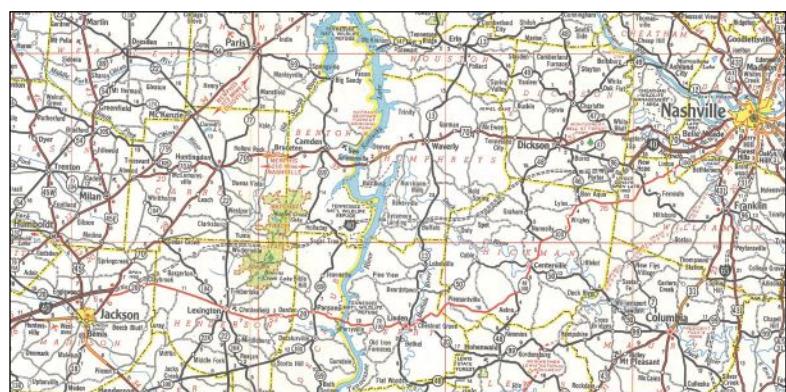
I realize how impossible it would have been to pull off such a short round trip before Interstate 40 existed. So I thought I'd write a column about the history of I-40. Here are some things I've learned:

The general route Interstate 40 takes through Tennessee was tentatively laid out in a 1955 U.S. government document now known as the "Yellow Book." After the plan was funded by Congress, it was up to civil engineers in each state to find the best places for interstates to cross rivers and mountain passes. It wasn't until May 1959, for example, that it was decided that the split between I-40 and I-75 west of Knoxville would be at a place called Hope Gap, in Loudon County. Today, hundreds of thousands of people drive through Hope Gap on their way to and from Knoxville. I suspect that almost none of them know what the gap was once called.

The only completed stretches of Interstate 40 shown on this 1963 map were one north of Jackson and another west of Nashville. (Shell 1963 map)

Interstates got numerical identifiers in September 1957. It was then that the public learned that the superhighway connecting Memphis to Knoxville would be called Interstate 40.

When interstates were built, there were newspaper articles explaining that they would be "limited access" — a concept not everyone understood at the time. Also, the impact interstates would have on small-town downtowns was not fully understood when they were under construction. There were people who owned hotels near town squares who thought interstates would improve their business. They wouldn't learn otherwise until the interstate opened and people started going to the brand-new Holiday Inn at the exit ramp.



Interstates weren't built by state governments, but by private contractors who graded, drained and paved segments of it along the way. In July 1958 alone, Tennessee bid out and awarded 53 interstate contracts to companies such as McDowell & McDowell Construction Co. of Nashville, Oman Construction of Nashville, J.B. Michael Construction of Memphis and Tillet Brothers Construction of Shelbyville. By 1960, more than 6,000 Tennessee residents were working on the new superhighways.

The first two segments of Interstate 40 to be opened were a 22-mile stretch near Jackson and a 35-mile stretch between Kingston and Knoxville — both of which were opened to traffic on Dec. 1, 1961. "The 35-mile Knoxville-Kingston Interstate stretch will definitely be opened to carry traffic for the Tennessee-Vanderbilt football game here Dec. 2," reported the Knoxville News Sentinel. The next year saw the opening of 16 miles of I-40 in Putnam County, 19 miles in Cheatham and Williamson counties, and 9 miles in Haywood County.

It would be some time until Interstate 40 was completed all the way from Nashville to Knoxville. The various stretches of interstate in Nashville weren't completed until about 1969 because there were so many property owners to be dealt with in the city. And, due to problematic terrain, it wouldn't be until 1974 that the steep 9-mile stretch of I-40 between Cumberland County and Harriman was finished. "It has taken eight years to complete and stabilize the area, which transverses a geological fault that crosses the state from Kentucky to Alabama on the eastern slope of the Cumberland Mountains," the Tennessean explained on Aug. 20, 1974.

Since it took so long to complete Interstate 40, drivers had to take a lot of steps when they planned trips that they don't have to take now. During the era in which the interstate was being built, drivers had to read the newspaper, ask the gas station attendant along the way and/or obtain the highway map. It might have taken six hours to get from Nashville to Knoxville in 1960, five in 1965 and three in 1975.

One way to document the completion of Tennessee's interstate system is to look at old highway maps. The 1963 map shows only a segment here and there of I-40 open. The 1974 map shows Interstate 40 as mostly completed, other than a 17-mile stretch between Knoxville and Jefferson County.

The I-40 story in Memphis is a long one about which I devoted an entire column in 2018. The original plan called

Above, a sign along Interstate 40 in the 1960s. At right, construction vehicles are lined up to work on an interstate. Tennessee State Library and Archives photos



for the interstate to go through Overton Park. However, a grassroots organization called Citizens to Preserve Overton Park fought this proposal, citing a federal law that said the government could not run

a highway through an existing public park unless there was "no feasible or prudent alternative to do so." In 1971, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of the grassroots organization, but it wasn't until 1981 that the Tennessee Department of Transportation gave up on the plan for I-40 to go through Overton Park. Because of this change of plans, Interstate 40 goes around Memphis instead of directly through it today.

When I-40 was built, there were no billboards along the way, and more than one person noted how beautiful the route was. "As one travels I-40, one of the most impressive features is its complete freedom from eye-sore signs and advertisements," a Nashville Banner columnist wrote in February 1962. If you've driven I-40, you know that this didn't remain the case for long.

Finally, here's a somber discovery: The first person killed on I-40 (in Tennessee) was almost certainly 16-year-old Beth Harris. On Oct. 17, 1961, after a pep rally at Jackson High School in Madison County, Harris got into a car driven by another high school student. I-40 was paved in that part of the state but not yet opened to the public. The teenage driver ignored the "Do Not Enter" signs and floored the accelerator, according to the next day's Jackson Sun.

Because the road was still being worked on, there was an eight-ton gravel spreader parked in the middle of the highway. By the time the driver saw it, it was too late. The convertible skidded 300 feet and crashed into the back of the gravel spreader — killing Beth Harris and injuring the driver.

Harris is buried in Jackson's Hollywood Cemetery — about 4 miles south of Interstate 40. ■





# BEAUTY *from* TRAGEDY

*Sad history and peaceful present coexist  
at Fort Pillow State Historic Park*

**A**s is the case of many parks dedicated to preserving the history of the Civil War, the natural beauty, peaceful environs and recreational activities that visitors to Fort Pillow State Historic Park enjoy today make it easy to forget the land's tragic past. But the story of that past has been preserved and explored through the park's preserved breastworks, reconstructed

*Story by Trish Milburn • Photographs by Robby Tidwell*

inner fort, museum and interpretive programming presented by the rangers on staff.

Steep bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River near Henning, 40 miles north of Memphis, made this area a strategic location during the Civil War. The fort was originally built by Confederate troops in 1861 and named after Gen. Gideon J. Pillow of Maury County.

At right and below, activities and programs at Fort Pillow State Historic Park include paddling, ranger-led discussions and living history events. Opposite page, an observation deck offers spectacular views of the Mississippi River.



While all war is tragic, the events that followed the Battle of Fort Pillow on April 12, 1864, are among the saddest, so much so that it became known as the Fort Pillow Massacre. Confederate troops under Maj. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest killed a large number of U.S. Army troops, many of them African American soldiers, who were attempting to surrender.

“The Confederate Army attack on the U.S. Army while occupying Fort Pillow remains one of the most controversial moments in the American Civil War,” says Park Manager Robby Tidwell. “The Confederate Army marked it as a military victory as they successfully retook the fort. The memory and eyewitness accounts of the massacre inspired the battle cry of ‘Remember Fort Pillow’ amongst U.S. Colored Troops for the remainder of the war.”



### Fort Pillow today

While visitors can tour the parts of the park that tell the story of the battle and tragic aftermath, Fort Pillow State Historic Park is now also a place of natural beauty and opportunities for enjoying the outdoors. Nearly 20 miles of hiking trails, three water trails on Fort Pillow Lake (also known as Sullivan’s Pond) and Cold Creek, year-round canoe and kayak rentals, boating and fishing are among the ways to enjoy modern-day Fort Pillow.

Also available are a newly renovated campground with RV and tent sites, a picnic pavilion for group gatherings, a group camp that accommodates up to 200 guests, a butterfly garden that can be rented for weddings and a newly built observation deck overlooking the Mississippi River.

“Most visitors are not aware that Fort Pillow has very steep bluffs made of Mississippi alluvial loess,” says Tidwell, who began his career at Fort Pillow as a seasonal laborer in 2000 and became the park manager in 2005.

“Most think the park will be flat like most areas within West Tennessee.”

Fort Pillow hosts several annual events. Next up is the Spring Hike on March 23. Then comes Living History, scheduled for April 13 this year.

“Living History is our largest event of the year,” Tidwell says. “This event is a full day of activities, including open encampments, museum tours, hikes, cannon demonstrations, rifle demonstrations, Civil War-era cooking demonstrations, food vendors and much more.”

Some of the many other events are Park Day held for cleanup and an Easter egg hunt, both in April; the Youth Fishing Rodeo in June; and the Fall Festival in October.

It’s not unusual for park staff to express affection for the parks where they work, especially if they are there for a long time. This is definitely true for Tidwell. In addition to his daily tasks and interaction with visitors, he can see pieces of his days before he was a ranger when he looks around the park.

“Before I started with Tennessee State Parks I worked as a farmhand in Tipton County,” he says. “We baled and delivered hay, stacked sod, worked with cattle and ran a sawmill during off time. The wood that we cut and planed during my childhood was stored in a barn and never used. I have been able to use that wood to redo the wood structures and displays within the museum. This makes all the displays and structures hold a very sentimental place in my heart.” ■



## Fort Pillow State Historic Park

For more information, visit [tnstateparks.com/parks/fort-pillow](http://tnstateparks.com/parks/fort-pillow) or call the park office at 731-738-5581.



# 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, mailing address, phone number, email address and electric cooperative. One entry per person. Three winners will be chosen from a random drawing, and each will receive \$20.

Note that the icon we hide will not be on an actual flag or historical marker, will not appear on pages 20-25 and will not be placed in any ads. This month's flag will not appear on this page (that would just be too easy). Good luck!

Send **postcards only** (no phone calls, please) to: *The Tennessee Magazine*, Find the Flag, P.O. Box 100912, Nashville, TN 37224. Or you can fill out the

form at [tnmagazine.org](http://tnmagazine.org) or email [flag@tnelectric.org](mailto:flag@tnelectric.org). Entries must be postmarked or received via email by Monday, April 1. Winners will be published in the May issue of *The Tennessee Magazine*.

## January Flag Spotters

Thanks for the postcards and emails again this month identifying the correct location of the flag, which was found in the pie on **page 8**.

Winners are drawn randomly from each month's entries.

January's lucky flag spotters are:

**Sue Wheeler**, Brighton, Southwest Tennessee EMC

**Linda H. Shier**, Smyrna, Middle Tennessee EMC

**Allen Long**, Russellville, Holston EC



## Artist's Palette Assignment for May

**Three age categories:** 8 and younger, 9 to 13 and 14 to 18 years old. Each group will have first-, second- and third-place winners.

**Media:** Drawing or painting on **8½-by-11-inch unlined** paper, canvas or board. We encourage the use of color. **Please follow these size guidelines.** Oversized canvas entries and framed pieces are especially difficult to handle and **cannot be returned**.

**Entry:** Send your original art to: *The Tennessee Magazine*, Artist's Palette — **May**, 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 Monday, April 1.

**Include:** Your name, age, mailing address, phone number, email address and electric cooperative. Leaving anything out will result in disqualification.

**Please note: By entering, you give *The Tennessee Magazine* permission to publish your work in print, online and via social media.**

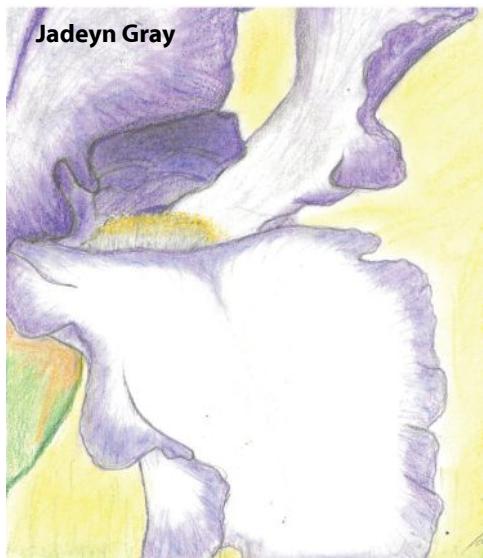
Artwork will not be returned **unless** you include a self-addressed, **stamped** envelope (SASE) with your submission. **Only U.S. Postal Service** will be used for returns. *For best reproduction results, do not fold artwork.*

**Each entry needs its own SASE, please.** Siblings must enter separately with their own envelopes.

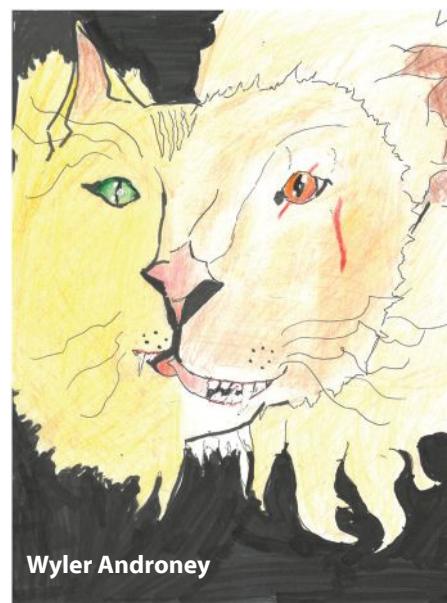
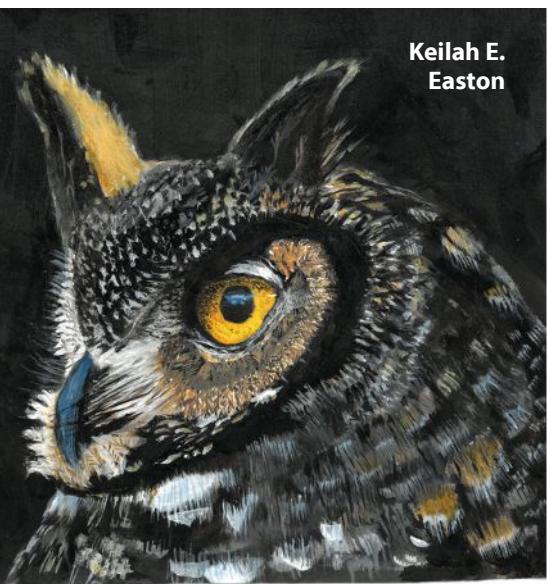
**Attention, teachers:** You may send multiple entries in one envelope along with one SASE with sufficient postage.

**Winners** will be published in the May 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.

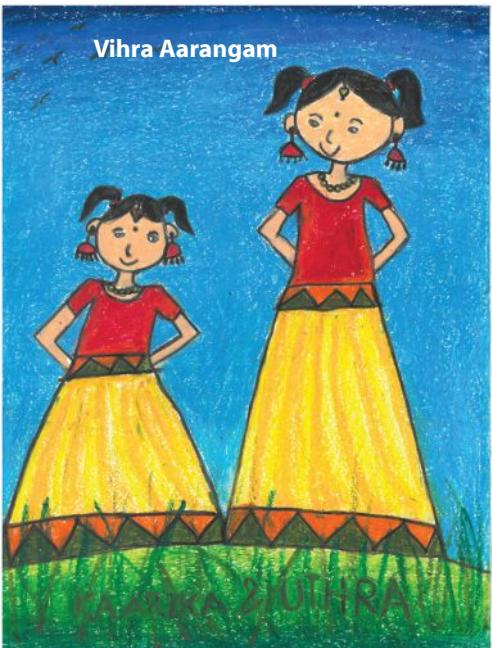
# Artist's Palette March Winners



**WINNERS, 14-18 AGE GROUP:**  
**First place:** Jadeyn Gray, age 15, Plateau EC;  
**Second place:** Lola Petersen, age 14, Middle Tennessee Electric;  
**Third place:** Jasmine Wanner, Age 15, Middle Tennessee Electric



**WINNERS, 9-13 AGE GROUP:** First place: Keilah E. Easton, age 13, Appalachian EC; Second place: Katie Kieffer, age 11, Sequachee Valley EC; Third place: Wyler Androney, age 13, Cumberland EMC



Mary Elizabeth Graham

Margaret Stockard

**WINNERS, 8 AND YOUNGER AGE GROUP:** First place: Vihra Aarangam, age 5, Middle Tennessee Electric; Second place: Mary Elizabeth Graham, age 8, Middle Tennessee Electric; Third place: Margaret Stockard, age 6, Cumberland EMC



# Point of View

By Robin Conover

When the path of totality stretched through Tennessee on Aug. 21, 2017, it was the first total solar eclipse I had experienced and photographed. I will hopefully be photographing my second in just a few weeks.

Preparing for the first, I had been closely watching the weather that week from Nashville. The forecast was for intermittent to mostly cloudy skies. The chances of cloud cover obscuring the eclipse diminished the farther east you could get. Checking the map and the path, I decided to relocate to Fall Creek Falls State Park in Pikeville and to one of my favorite locations, a rock outcropping known as Buzzard's Roost. About 30 other people — including photographers, astronomers and onlookers — gathered on the rugged overlook to view the celestial event.

Researching how to photograph an eclipse helped me prepare for this first-in-a-lifetime shoot. If you start now, you'll have about a month to prepare for the next total solar eclipse, which will happen on April 8.

The top two things I learned were how important location and safety are to your success. Choosing the right location with a clear view of the sky that is within the path of totality will help ensure that you will see it. Protecting your eyes with eclipse glasses and your lens with an appropriate eclipse filter will allow you to view the entire event without injury.

"2017 Total Eclipse" by Robin Conover, Canon EOS 5D Mark III, EF 100-400 mm at 400 mm, f4.5-5.6 L USM lens, ISO 2500, f8 at 1/8 second, with an ND 5.4, 18 stop, eclipse filter, Gitzo tripod

The path of totality, where the shadow of the moon will completely cover the sun, will cross Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, northwest Tennessee and Kentucky, Missouri and Illinois and continue northeast to Maine. Check the [greatamericanclipse.com](http://greatamericanclipse.com) website for a wealth of specific information, maps and times for the upcoming eclipse.

If you want to stay close to home in Tennessee, head for the most northwest portion of the state. The Discovery Park of America in Union City is planning an entire day of activity for all ages. Reelfoot Lake State Park is also planning a pontoon boat cruise to view the eclipse from the lake. Please check the website [tnstateparks.com/parks/reelfoot-lake](http://tnstateparks.com/parks/reelfoot-lake) for the details as reservations are required.

My experience viewing the total eclipse seven years ago was unforgettable. From start to finish, the moon traversed the sun for about three hours with totality lasting only four minutes.

Experiencing the eerie but peaceful blue twilight before the darkness brought a quiet focus to everyone at Buzzard's Roost. It was as if the fading heat and light from the sun brought a childlike wonder to all of us.

The birds, frogs and people became silent as the light faded to darkness. And, as if on cue, as the light began to reappear, the birds began to sing, frogs began to chirp and the humans all cheered and clapped to celebrate the light. ■



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<sup>†</sup>Using U.S. and imported parts.

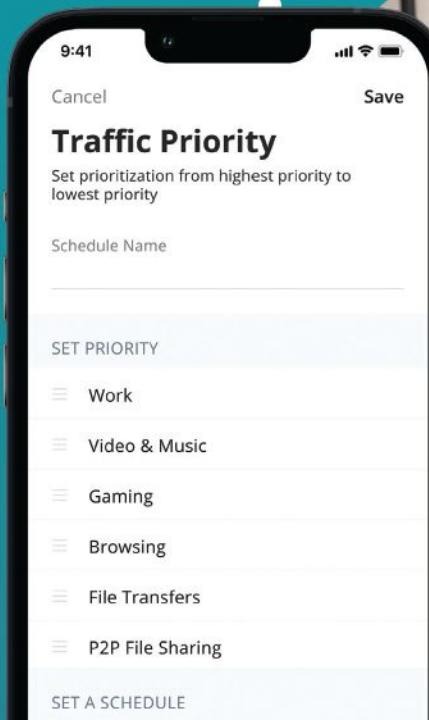


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