

May 2024 • tnmagazine.org

THE TENNESSEE MAGAZINE

**BLACKSMITH
JASON BIVENS**

Botanical Beauty
Across Tennessee

Lettuce Do More
With Salads

State Park Spotlight:
Mousetail Landing



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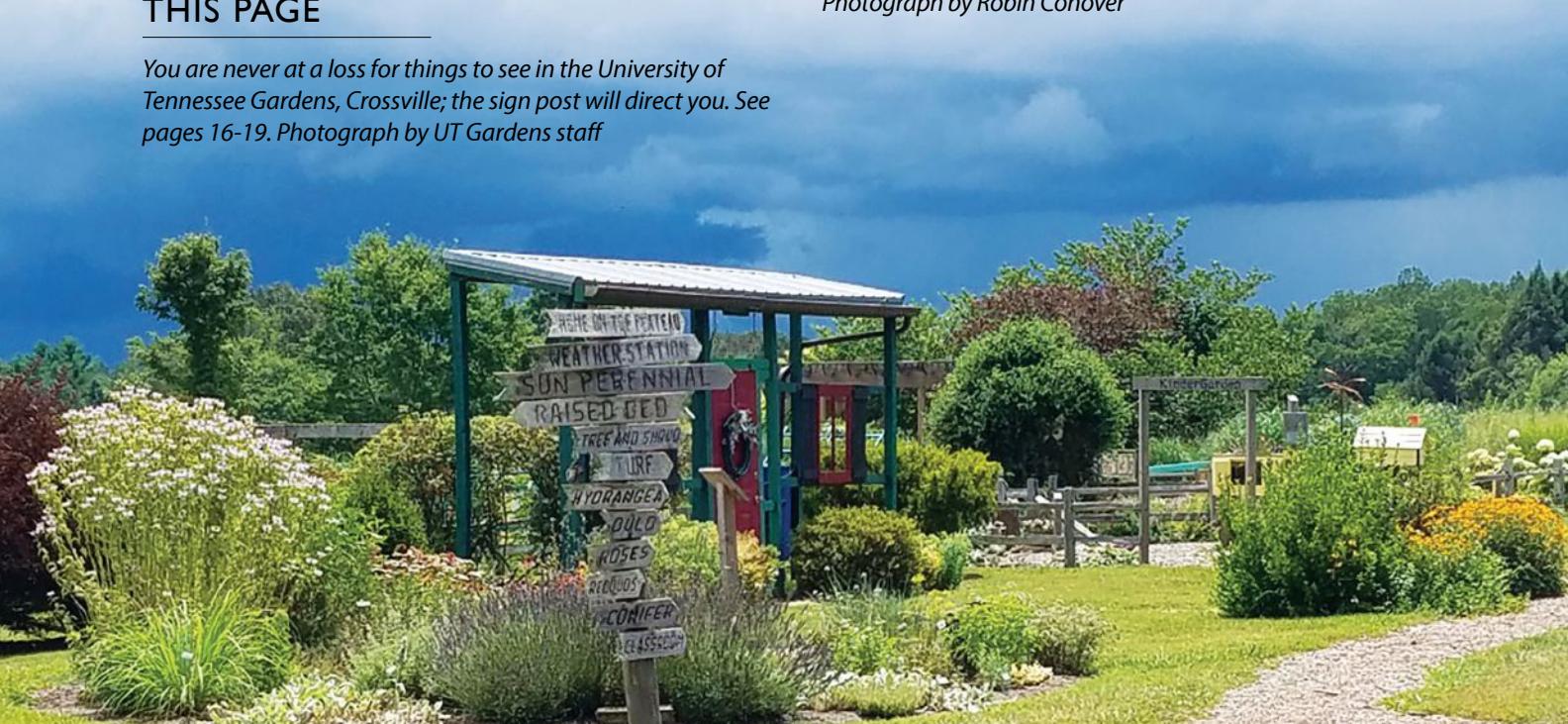
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ABOUT THE COVER

From his blacksmithing shop, Jason Bivens makes a sought-after line of knives, among other handcrafted treasures. Photograph by Robin Conover



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Corporation provides safe, affordable and reliable services the cooperative way by maintaining a dedicated, highly skilled workforce guided by cooperative values and principles and a commitment to excellence.

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Between the Lines

News from your community

How we restore power

We do our best to avoid them, but there's no way around it: power outages occasionally happen — especially during this time of the year. Thanks to the great work the Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation team does each day to strengthen our power system, most of our consumers experience rare and brief outages. Unfortunately, when strong storms roll through, they sometimes leave damage in their wake.

When the power goes out, how do CEMC crews know where to start working? How do you know if your outage has been reported? We've got answers to these questions and more, and it all starts with a safe, efficient plan for power restoration.

When it's safe for our crews to begin the restoration process, they start by assessing the damage and making a plan. Usually, this plan will focus on restoring power to the greatest number of people in the shortest time possible.

This process typically begins with repairs to main distribution lines that serve many homes and businesses. After those repairs are made, crews work on smaller lines that feed neighborhoods or streets. Finally, service lines that serve individual homes or businesses are repaired.

We can't control the weather, but we can prepare for it. CEMC keeps a supply of extra poles, transformers and other equipment on hand so we can quickly get to work in the event of an outage. When widespread outages occur, multiple crews will be out in the field simultaneously working to repair damage at multiple locations. We also



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

coordinate with nearby co-ops to bring in additional crews when necessary.

If you experience a power outage, don't assume a neighbor reported it. It's best to report the outage yourself, and we make it easy to do. Outages can be reported through your SmartHub account, which is available via mobile app or on our website, cemc.org; by using our Text Alerts service; or by calling our outage reporting number at 800-987-2362. For more information about reporting outages, visit us online at cemc.org/outagemap.

If you have a medical condition that requires electrical equipment, please let us know, and always have a backup plan in place. This plan could include a portable generator, extra medical supplies or moving to an alternate location until power is restored. If you plan to use a generator for backup power, read all safety information and instructions before use.

Mother Nature can be unpredictable, but as a member of CEMC, you can feel confident knowing we're standing by, ready to restore power as quickly and safely as possible.

How a Safe Step Walk-In Tub can change your life

Remember when...

Think about the things you loved to do that are difficult today — going for a walk or just sitting comfortably while reading a book. And remember the last time you got a great night's sleep?

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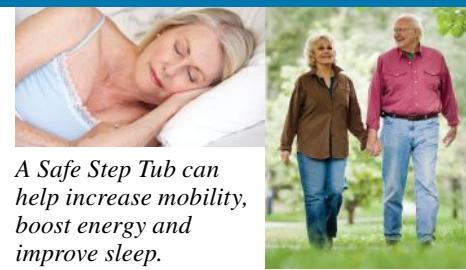
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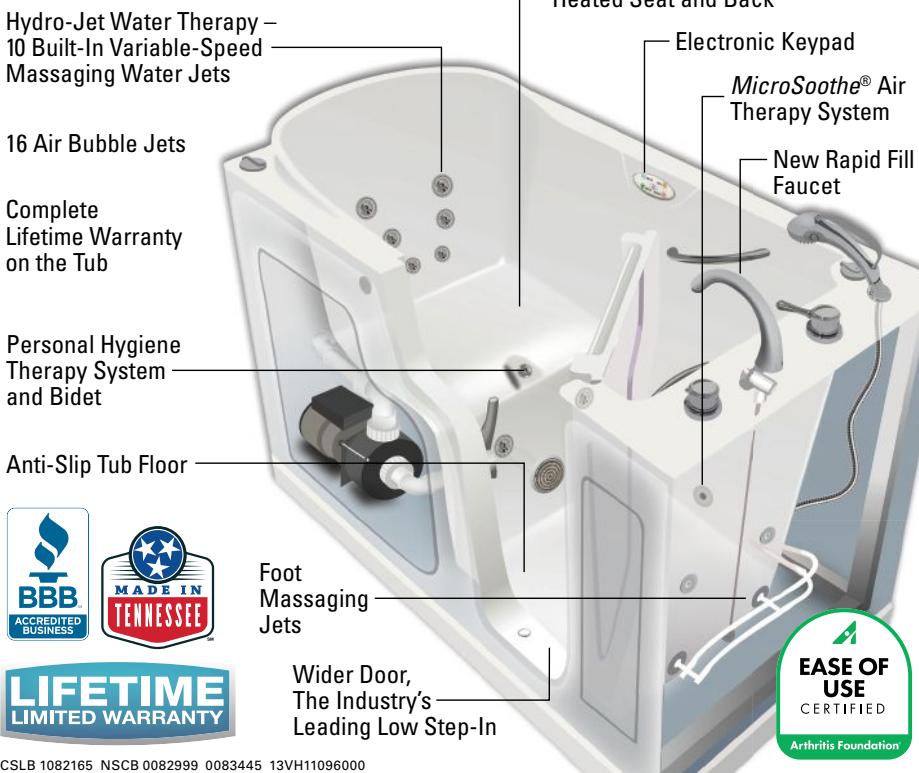
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Executive, editorial and
advertising offices:
2964 Sideo Drive, P.O. Box 100912
Nashville, TN 37204
Phone: 615-367-9284
Email: thetennmag@tnelectric.org

General Manager

Mike Knotts

mknotts@tnelectric.org

Vice President of Communications

Trent Scott

tscott@tnelectric.org

Editor

Chris Kirk

ckirk@tnelectric.org

Editor Emeritus

Robin Conover

rconover@tnelectric.org

Designer

Ron Bell

rbell@tnelectric.org

Field Editor and Senior
Communications Specialist

Nicole Christensen

nchristensen@tnelectric.org

Contributing Writer

Trish Milburn

Communications Support Specialist

LaQuella Bond

lbond@tnelectric.org

Advertising inquiries

American MainStreet Publications

611 S. Congress Ave., Suite 504

Austin, TX 78704

Phone: 800-626-1181

Website: amp.coop

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Executive and editorial offices

Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association executive,
editorial and advertising offices:
2964 Sideo Drive, P.O. Box 100912
Nashville, TN 37204 Phone: 615-367-9284
Email: thetennmag@tnelectric.org



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TENNESSEE TODAY

Viewpoint

Superlatives aren't always supreme

Breaking news. Red alert. Crisis status. Influencers. Clickbait. Notifications. Do any of these sound familiar to you? If you watch the news, scroll on social media or put your phone down for more than 10 minutes, you are likely to be overwhelmed with messages trying to get your attention.

While the number of organizations and apps that are competing for your time and focus continues to grow, the one thing that remains constant is that there are 86,400 seconds in every day to do anything — sleep, eat, pray, play, work or anything else. But the demand for your attention continues to grow. And how we handle that is a huge challenge.

Those who are trying to be noticed are facing more competition, so they resort to increasingly extreme language to stand out among the crowd. A simple thunderstorm might now elicit a “red alert” weather statement from the local news station, for instance. I can’t help but think about Aesop’s fairy tale, “The Boy Who Cried Wolf.”

Unfortunately, this trend of overemphasizing everything has extended to political candidates. Anyone running for office needs to build “name identification” because if you do not know that person’s name, you probably aren’t going to vote for them.

In the February edition of *The Tennessee Magazine*, I encouraged you to pay closer attention to your local political races and get involved in your own community. Your school board members, county commissioners or state representatives have a greater effect on your daily life than most people acknowledge. However, it is impossible to ignore the impact that the presidential election this fall is having on campaigns — whether in Washington, D.C., or Warren County.

Now that the major-party candidates for president are known, inevitably one or both will tell you, “This is the most



By Mike Knotts

Tennessee Electric
Cooperative Association

important election in our lifetime,” or, “If you don’t vote for me, the country will never be the same.”

This is the politician’s version of clickbait. It is meant to evoke fear and cause you to spend a few of those precious 86,400 seconds of your day devoting your thoughts to the election. But these types of statements are not unlike salesmen offering free samples to encourage you to consider their products or the old newspaper adage, “If it bleeds, it leads.” Getting your attention is the goal.

It is true that our country has significant challenges, and our federal government is facing important policy decisions. Unfortunately, those types of superlative statements don’t always reflect reality.

However, I would argue that we have faced many, many more serious challenges and existential threats in our nation’s history. Some of those stories are detailed in a wonderful book called “The Soul of America” by our fellow Tennessean, Jon Meacham. He very eloquently shows that our nation has always won “the battle for our better angels” and surmises that we will face many more.

While I will likely share thoughts in this column throughout the rest of this year about the policy challenges that confront your local cooperative and the reliability of the electric grid, I encourage you to look past this year’s grandiose speeches and shock-value statements by presidential candidates. This election will be important, but your choice should be based on your own vision for the future, not by an attempt to manipulate your attention. ■

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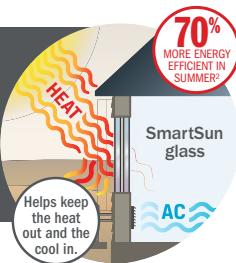
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TENNESSEE ALMANAC

Bite-sized news, notes and knowledge — May 2024



JUNE 1

Statehood Day, Tennessee State Library and Archives

Activities for Statehood Day at the State Library and Archives will take place between 10 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, June 1. Highlights include the presentation of our three original state Constitutions and an honor guard (taking place at 11 a.m.) as well as numerous family-friendly activities, including old-time music, historic games, coloring activities, collection showcases and tours of the facility.

Plans are still being finalized, so keep an eye on the Library and Archives website, sos.tn.gov/tsla, as well as its Instagram and Facebook pages.

Rogersville's Testerman named National Teacher of the Year



Leeping Lenses Photography

Missy Testerman, a kindergarten through eighth grade English as a second language teacher at Rogersville City School, was named the 2024 National Teacher of the Year by the Council of Chief State School Officers in early April.

As National Teacher of the Year, Testerman will represent educators and serve as an ambassador for students and teachers across the nation. She plans to spend her year of service empowering teachers to advocate for students and fellow educators by using their voices and sharing their experiences with those outside the classroom.

Congratulations to this exemplary East Tennessee educator!

'LINEMAN, GET YOUR REST'

Ben Cupples, a lineworker for Southwest Tennessee Electric Membership Corporation, wrote a poem titled "Lineman, Get Your Rest." The Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association worked with Ben to record the poem and added video footage to it. It was released on April 8, Lineworker Appreciation Day, and has now been watched thousands of times. You can view the video honoring Tennessee's electric lineworkers at youtube.com/tnelectric.



50 YEARS AGO IN THE TENNESSEE MAGAZINE

The May 1974 edition of *The Tennessee Magazine* featured an article on Gruethi in Grundy County, "Tennessee's Old Swiss Colony." View the entire issue at tnmagazine.org.

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From the editor



It's May, and much is happening with *The Tennessee Magazine*:

A few weeks ago, I traveled to Mousetail Landing to take photos for this month's state park feature (see page 36). Park Manager Daniel Burgess graciously showed me around the Linden park, and at that time, trailsides and lakeshores were bursting with spring's emerging colors. Especially evident were dogwood, purple phlox and fire pinks like those above. It reminded me that this is an awesome time of year to take to the trails at any of our impressive state parks across Tennessee.

Speaking of springtime spectacle, this month's magazine also features a trip to just a handful of Tennessee's botanical gardens. Plan to visit these or find your own where you can bathe in the beauty of flowers, shrubs and even works of art.

May is Military Appreciation Month, and Memorial Day is Monday, May 27. Bill Carey's history column beginning on page 28 describes Franklin High School's Wall of Remembrance in memorial to alumni who paid the ultimate sacrifice in service of their country.

Antsy McClain's humorous and heartfelt musings have generated some wonderful reader response. He's back this month (page 10) with thoughts on Brushy Mountain State Penitentiary, youthful mischief and finding the straight and narrow.

Finally, our cover story features Jason Bivens, a Warren County blacksmith who appeared on "Forged in Fire," which happens to be one of my favorite shows. See page 12 to learn more about him, his craft and how he did in the competition.

Thanks for reading,

Chris Kirk
Editor, *The Tennessee Magazine*

My TENNESSEE Notebook

by Antsy McClain

Standing in the shadow of Brushy Mountain State Penitentiary *Confessions of a former juvenile delinquent*

Every prison movie I've ever seen haunts me like a long, dark shadow.* Scenes from those movies — as well as a few haunting scenes from my own life — were flooding my mind as I stood in the shadow of Brushy Mountain State Penitentiary in Petros on a recent spring day.

I was stunned to see it, this majestic Gothic building wrapped in the surrounding forest. The afternoon sunlight gives the building a strange warmth as it leans against the gray-brown foothills of the Cumberland Mountains. It was closed for the season on the day I was there. The tourist season doesn't start until April, and I was a few weeks early.

That's right, I said "tourist season."

Brushy Mountain is now a tourist destination with a brewery and restaurant on site. Travis Tritt is playing there in July. People will soon be coming from all over the world. It closed as a prison in 2009 and was repurposed in 2018 as a place to bring the family, have a burger, drink a beer and see some live music; all the while visitors are not so gently reminded of the dark solitude of incarceration.

The terrain is no accident. Indeed, officials in 1896 broke ground deliberately for the maximum-security complex here in these mountains, making escape inconvenient — if not outright impossible. The most famous escape attempt was made by James Earl Ray (killer of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.) who tore off into the mountains with several other prisoners only to be caught a few days later in the surrounding maze of dense trees.

Brushy Mountain's tour schedule for April and May is Thursday to Sunday, 10:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., the last tour starting at 5 p.m. The prison is open on Memorial Day. It is open daily through the peak season — June, July and August — and then slows to the Thursday-to-Sunday schedule again in September and October. Except for occasional private ghost tours conducted by independent guides, the prison is closed November through March.

I have my own reasons for being spooked here. If fate's right hand had twisted only slightly in my life, I could have easily taken a turn toward penitentiary doors. I was clearly heading that way as a boy of 14 — angry, bored and looking for trouble.

The pivot foot, or what I learned from eighth grade basketball

I had a growth spurt in my 14th summer and was encouraged to try out for the junior high basketball team. I didn't enjoy it. I left my uniform in the locker room one day and never went back.

But there's one lesson from all those ball practices I think about to this day: the pivot foot. After you find yourself in possession of the ball, you can dribble and run, but once you've stopped, you're not allowed to move again. One of your feet must be planted as if nailed to the floor. This is done to avoid a "traveling" penalty. You can turn 360 degrees from that foot while trying to pass the ball.

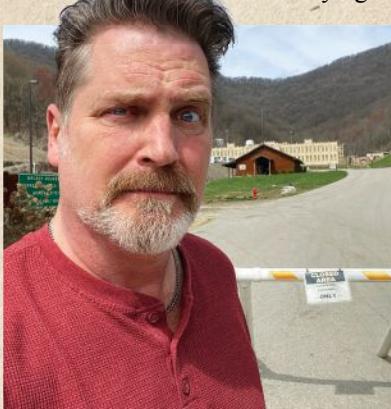
I got to use my pivot foot that same year in a much different way, and I remember right where I was.

I was sitting on a hard, wooden bench outside the judge's chambers in the long, echoey hallway of juvenile court, or "juvy," as it was lovingly called. I was next to my mom who sobbed openly while my stepfather rubbed his big, calloused hand along her back in a futile gesture of comfort. I can still hear his calloused fingers as they gently snagged the fabric of Mom's blouse and the echo of hard-heeled lawyers clopping by us on the dark, hardwood floor.

I had been arrested for possession of various substances I will avoid mentioning here in the hopes of gaining some points for good taste, and because, well, it's embarrassing now, it still stings and, thankfully, I've moved on.

The pivotal point for me didn't come while I was standing in front of the stern, impatient judge who resembled Lurch from "The Addams Family." No, I had already decided to turn over my new leaf moments earlier on the bench in the hallway. I put these good people here. They didn't deserve this.

I was sentenced to three months of probation and assigned a kindly probation officer who came to my high school once a week to monitor my progress. I found new friends. I changed my ways. And I never had reason to sit on that bench again or go anywhere near that courthouse for any reason other than to update my car tags. On my last visit with the probation officer, the school vice principal, Mr. Sherman, came over in some manner of congratulations and told me words I've never



The author stands fearfully in front of Brushy Mountain State Penitentiary. The once-loathsome destination is now a tourist attraction serving beer and food.

forgotten: "You try so hard to be a bad kid, but you're just not very good at it. This isn't you."

He was right. So I planted my foot and pivoted. I did a 180, dropped that particular ball and walked away. It was one of the best moves of my life.

But that experience left a lingering dread deep inside of me. I saw firsthand how easy it could be to end up behind bars, and, therefore, I now see every prison movie as a biopic; namely, mine — or at least something dwelling in the misty outer reaches of "The Could Have Been."

I used to bring this up in conversation, but I don't do that anymore. And I thought long and hard about bringing it up here because this is pretty vulnerable stuff. The last time I mentioned it publicly was a few years ago with a group of friends at a bar in Nashville, and it didn't go well. There was a lull in the small talk, and loathing small talk as I do, I attempted to steer the conversation in what I thought would be a more meaningful direction.

"Show of hands," I said eagerly. "Who else has the fear that you might end up in prison some day?"

I've only heard silence like that in a bar twice. The other time was when the bartender got a phone call and shouted, "Is there a Bob here?"

My acquaintances looked at me like I was insane, as did a few people from neighboring tables who heard me ask my question a little too loudly.

They collectively shook their heads, saying, "No," and "God, no." The thought that they might one day be handcuffed and led to a prison cell had never occurred to them. Not once. One guy even asked, "What's wrong with you?"

What's wrong with me? Well, I could fill up all 40 pages of this magazine trying to answer that question, but for the remainder of that night, I chimed in only with the dreaded, forgettable small talk about rush-hour traffic and keto diets. As I recall, I slipped out early and went home to a frozen pizza.

All these years later, I'm still certain I can't be the only one who carries this fear. So I decided to ask around.

After weeks of questioning, it appears that I am, indeed, the only person I know who has a fear of being handcuffed and hauled away to prison.

So, I forgot about trying to get others to admit to it and decided to talk to my friends who'd actually been there, who spent some time on the inside. As a musician, I belong to a particular demographic closer in proximity to the more colorful citizens, decorated as they are by the dubious stripes of life. I have a number of rehabilitated, now-legit, law-abiding friends who once made a mistake, paid their dues and

**I have seen all the prison movies, but my favorite is "The Shawshank Redemption," although I've never rented it or even watched it straight through. Not once. Like most Americans, I saw it in several installments on random Saturday afternoons in the early 2000s in between mowing the grass and watering the houseplants. For some*

"If fate's right hand had twisted only slightly in my life, I could have easily taken a turn toward penitentiary doors."

are now living their best lives. One of these friends — one of my best friends, actually — is my buddy Daren. I decided to reach out on the subject at hand and texted him.

"I'm thinking of doing one of those tours at Brushy Mountain State Pen. It's like a tourist thing now. Restaurant. Brewery. Wanna join me? Meals and hotel rooms on me. I'm buying."

Daren replied quickly, "I already toured it once. But yeah." "Oh. You've been there?"

"Yeah, I was there for three days when they transferred me to another prison."

Daren robbed a bank. In his words, he was "19 and stupid." He did 12 years. It was a long time ago.

"Oh. Wow. OK. Well," I texted. "You mind going back? Giving me a tour? Or would that be too triggering?"

"Not at all," he replied. "I don't care. That sounds awesome. I can give you a tour you won't get from the staff there."

"OK," I responded. "Tours start back up in April. I'll give you a call and we can sort our calendars."

Daren replied with a thumbs up.

I set my phone down and let my mind sweep gently over the chapters of my life that brought me where I am today.

Daren's life runs a strong parallel to my own. Both of us were raised in trailer parks by single moms with stepfathers who came into the picture a little too late to ward off our imminent delinquency. Each of us found his pivot. Mine was found in juvy; Daren found his in prison. Recently, over burgers, fries and iced tea, we talked about our mistakes, expressing gratitude for what they taught us and where we were fortunate enough to go since.

I'll be putting the tour together soon and scheduling our sojourn to Brushy Mountain. In the meantime, I'll take in the newness of spring, the songbirds and green buds of another Tennessee in bloom.

Yesterday, I heard the sound of my calloused fingers brushing across the back of a favorite person, and it caught me off guard. Full circle stuff like that often does. A while ago, that sound might have triggered something dark and shameful. Today, I hear that sound and think of the people who helped me pivot. I like that. ■

Antsy McClain is a Nashville-adjacent singer-songwriter, author and law-abiding citizen 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. Listen to and download Antsy's songs "Jailbird Beauty" and "Jailbird Beauty 2.0" for FREE here:



reason, "The Shawshank Redemption" aired every Saturday on cable TV for years. Morgan Freeman's lush, velvety baritone would stop me, mesmerized in front of the television with a dripping pitcher of water and rusty lawn shears in my lifeless hand. I stood trancelike until Tom Selleck's life insurance commercial would once again

break my concentration, freeing me to return to my chores. However, 20 minutes later, that godlike voice would lure me back in from sweeping grass off the back porch. Morgan's glorious siren song would be delivering another melodic couplet about the mysterious Andy Dufresne. I was powerless to stop him.



Jason Bivens at home in his workshop uses a Little Giant Power Hammer to shape the handle of a hunting knife. At right, a gas furnace heats steel to red-hot temperatures, making it pliable and workable. Bivens uses power hammers and traditional handheld hammers to draw out and shape the blade.

FORGING *a Dream*



*Story and photographs
by Robin Conover*

Hammering out a career one piece at a time

Jason Bivens can almost always be found in his workshop, which also pulls duty as a garage and blacksmith shop. Located at the end of a long gravel driveway in Warren County, the shop is full of tools and projects in various stages of completion.

After working his full-time job as a mechanic in Lebanon, Bivens works on his own projects at home — sometimes late into the evenings and almost always on the weekends. Bivens is part mechanic, artist, traditional craftsman, blacksmith, bladesmith and teacher.

Three cars sitting with the hoods up occupy about a third of the space while numerous blacksmithing tools — including a gas forge, welder, power hammers, anvils and a lathe — claim the rest of the space.

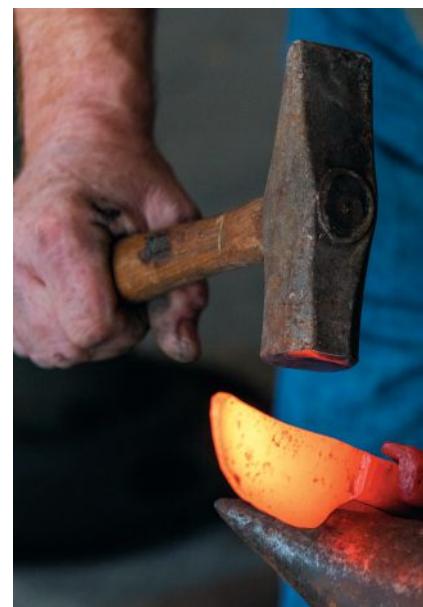
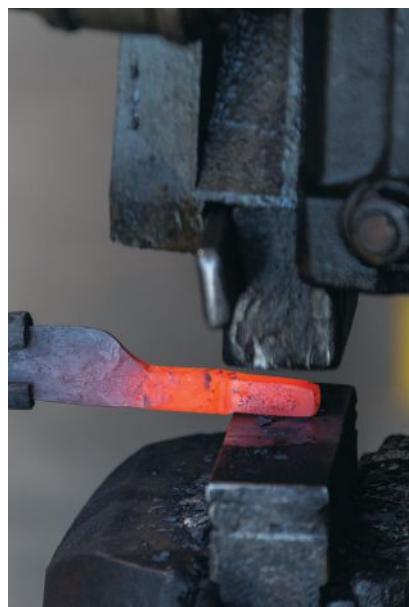
You can tell with one look that the shop is Bivens' happy place. His shop cat, Dale, is also a frequent visitor.

It's a place that any 12-year-old could spend hours fumbling around, creating masterpieces from their imaginations — and that is exactly how Bivens' journey began.

"I've been doing this since I was 12," says Bivens, who has been honing his skills and designs since the 1980s. "I was obsessed with the Conan movies and had to make my own sword. I started working on it in my father's shop."

With that first project — making the Atlantean Sword wielded by Arnold Schwarzenegger in the "Conan the Barbarian" movies — Bivens began to find his talents.

Since that beginning, the talented bladesmith and trained master mechanic appears to have attained the skills and tools to fix or make just about anything he sets his mind to.





On this particular Saturday, he's hammering away on a piece of recycled spring steel from a car, shaping it into one of his favorite hunting knife designs.

As he shapes the handle with a Little Giant Power Hammer from the 1940s, you can feel the force behind each strike as it pummels the red-hot steel into shape. The hammer strikes with enough force that the impact of every blow radiates through the cement floor.

The cement floor is new. It was just poured over the winter and paid for with the winnings from a competition. You see, Bivens has become a bit of a celebrity as of late after winning the "On the Road" edition of "Forged in Fire."

A knife begins to take shape from red-hot steel clasped by blacksmithing tongs Bivens designed himself.

Airing on the History channel since 2015, the nationally broadcast show is a competition series that pits bladesmiths against each other as they attempt to make the strongest hand-forged bladed weapons. Their skills are tested during elimination challenges.

Bivens found himself on the show somewhat by accident after he responded "yes" to a text from a colleague asking if he would like to compete in a "Forged in Fire"-style competition. Bivens explained he didn't realize what he agreed to until he started receiving calls from the producers.

The season Bivens competed in last fall had a twist. It was the first time producers took the show on the road to meet bladesmiths in four different regions of the country to compare and contrast regional styles. In episode 3 of season 10, Bivens competed against two other blacksmiths and won the Appalachian Mountains region — held at Clay Spencer Blacksmith shop in North Carolina — with his traditionally styled pitchfork design.

After the other three regional winners were named, the four traveled to Stamford, Connecticut, to compete in Episode 5 of Season 10 at the show's home studio. They competed to be named the overall American Champion and win \$20,000 for themselves and \$10,000

worth of equipment for the school they represented. Bivens represented John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, North Carolina.

Show hosts assigned parameters for each elimination round that the bladesmiths were required to meet. These included the style of weapon with specific dimensions and what types of steel would be available to use. The craftsmen then competed to make the historically accurate weaponry that could withstand several tests to determine the blade's sharpness, durability and strength in each round.

Bivens, who is a Caney Fork Electric Cooperative member, beat out the competition with blades that the

judges noted combined strength, artistry and handling.

"I let the hammer do the work," says Bivens, describing his technique. "Otherwise, you end up with a bad shoulder," he laughs.

"People try to force the steel, and that just doesn't work. You can't force it. You just can't force something to do something it doesn't want to do," says Bivens.

Following his talents and sharing his experience with others, Bivens has served as an instructor at regional folk arts centers, including John C. Campbell Folk School in North Carolina and the Appalachian Center for Craft in Smithville.

Bivens helped found the Warren County Blacksmith Association and has demonstrated numerous times at the Warren County Fair. Bivens is also active in the Appalachian Area Chapter of Blacksmiths.

"I give all credit to the Lord," says Bivens. "I'm not a super-religious person, but I do believe in God, I do attend church. And I do believe that because of him, I have my talent. He gave me the one talent of working with my



A collection of blades features several of Bivens' favorite designs.

hands, and with that, I've become a master mechanic, a bladesmith, blacksmith, woodworker and house builder. All these things I'm able to do because of the one gift God gave me through my ability to work with my hands."

For more information: Bivens sells his work as he makes it and not to order. To find out more about his art, purchase a piece of his work or find out about classes, please contact him through his Facebook account: facebook.com/jason.bivens.50.

"(God) gave me the one talent of working with my hands, and with that, I've become a master mechanic, a bladesmith, blacksmith, woodworker and house builder. All these things I'm able to do because of the one gift God gave me through my ability to work with my hands."



Meet Mother Nature at Tennessee's Botanical Gardens

Visit these fine examples of the state's botanical gardens, or use them as a starting point for exploring enchanted attractions across Tennessee.

Check out tnmagazine.org/botanical-gardens for more.

Story by Pamela A. Keene



Hope in Leoma

Hope Botanical Garden is the little engine that could. Born from the decades-long vision of founder Jerry Clayton, the 4-acre botanical garden in rural Tennessee's Leoma barely pops up on a Google search for "botanical gardens in Tennessee."

"With eight themed gardens, Hope Botanical Garden is little, but it's mighty," says Clayton, a former environmentalist with the Tennessee Valley Authority. "The focal point is our 2-acre maze created by planting evergreen arborvitae to make the pathways. We think it's one of the largest all-arborvitae mazes in the country."

The maze accesses another 2 acres of seven specialty planting areas via its various exits: Visitors Garden, Pink Garden, Meditation Garden, Water Garden, Japanese Garden, Native Garden and Children's Garden.

"Our planning began in 2017, shortly after I repurchased a 4-acre site that I had sold in 1991," Clayton says. "It took us five years of transforming the native landscape into our botanical garden, working exclusively with volunteers and funds from donations, fundraising events and sponsorships. Last year, the state of Tennessee gave a nice grant to help make our restrooms ADA-compliant."

Clayton donated the land; the garden opened on April 22, 2022, as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Its mission is to promote knowledge, enjoyment and conservation of native and site-adapted plants through display, enjoyment and scientific research.

A reliable group of approximately 20 community members, some of whom are University of Tennessee Extension Master Gardeners or members of area garden clubs, continues to donate time and plants from their own gardens. They help with propagating plants for seasonal sales, teaching classes and setting up for special events.

The board of directors and the all-volunteer staff are listed on the garden's website.

Above, UT Gardens, Crossville, has an extensive daylily display that is a showstopper in midsummer. Photograph by UT Gardens staff. At right, the entry at Hope Botanical Garden in Leoma invites visitors to stroll its manicured 4 acres. Photograph by Ron Majiros. Opposite page, 250,000 tulips grace the landscape at Dixon Gallery and Gardens each spring. Photograph by Louis Ziggy Tucker.



Hope Botanical Garden offers a place to simply sit and relax, to enjoy nature and learn about plants and the environment. Visitors can receive a private tour as Clayton takes them through the site.

"People who come here tell me there's just something about this place, that it's not like any other public garden," he says. "For me, it's definitely not

about making money. It's about our labor of love and bringing people together who have a passion for plants, nature and community. We're continuing to build Hope Botanical Garden one plant at a time."

Hope Botanical Garden, 16 Ford Road, Leoma. 931-271-5425, hopebotanicalgarden.org.

Combining art and nature

When Memphis philanthropists Margaret Oates Dixon and Hugo Norton Dixon bequeathed their home, gardens and art collection for the enjoyment and education of future generations in 1974, Dixon Gallery and Gardens soon became a destination for people who love classical art, historic architecture and expansive gardens.

Today, the 17-acre estate, which opened as a public garden in 1976, continues to showcase the couple's Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art pieces, an extensive decorative arts porcelain collection and a



sprawling array of four seasons of color ranging from 250,000 tulips each spring to a woodland garden with winding paths beneath a canopy of oak trees.

“The gardens and gallery touch all the right notes for gardeners and art lovers alike,” says Jessie Wiley, director of development and communications for the organization, which is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. “Our theme is ‘Beauty inside and out,’ and our visitors say it’s true. Where else can you see works by Renoir, Degas, Cézanne and Monet; a historically significant residence from the 1940s; and well-tended and diverse plants and gardens in such a serene and beautiful setting?”

Many of the works in the 2,000-plus-item permanent collection include flowers and horticultural subjects. The interior décor is complemented by flower arrangements from the Memphis Garden Club Cutting Garden.

The gardens are diverse — ranging from traditional layouts, including the Suzanne Mallory Formal Gardens with four different types of boxwoods, to loosely designed pollinator plots that encourage butterflies, birds and insects.

Pathways link open lawns and smaller spaces. In the spring, the grounds are filled with blooming azaleas, dogwood trees, wildflowers and native plants.

Programming focuses on children and youth.

“Our Art to Grow initiative takes arts and gardening into public, private and parochial schools, including to our adopted schools in Shelby County and our nearby ZIP codes. Free art and horticultural lessons spread our mission of education,” Wiley says. “Our pop-up events like Kids in the Garden and our summer camps help children develop an early love of gardening as they plant and harvest



vegetables. It’s a fun time for youngsters through hands-on learning.”

*Dixon Gallery and Gardens,
4339 Park Ave., Memphis.
901-761-5250, dixon.org.*

Statewide outreach open to all

What started in 1983 as a test site for annual bedding plants has grown into a multiple-location showplace for gardeners across the state. Under the umbrella of the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture and known as the State Botanical Garden of Tennessee, three sites in Knoxville, Jackson and

Crossville comprise extensive public gardens open at no charge.

The majority of financial support for the State Botanical Garden of Tennessee’s three locations is generated by ornamental plant trials, grants, sponsorships and fund-raising events like plant sales.

“The gardens were initiated to evaluate seed-grown bedding plants for All-American Selections, an independent nonprofit that tests new, never-before-sold, improved varieties for home gardeners,” says James Newburn, managing director of UT Gardens, Knoxville. “The gardens have now grown to include separate demonstration gardens that highlight the best of the best and are part of the impetus for people to visit.”

For the UT Gardens, trialing and presenting new plants to the public are only part of the story. Education, research and growing new gardeners factor heavily at all three sites.

The 10-acre UT Gardens, Knoxville, offers adult workshops, youth programs and summer camps, school field trips and tours while also serving as the living laboratory for collegiate classes in everything from plant identification to plant disease to insects to art. More than 25 specialized areas include a kitchen garden, a rose garden, a hillside perennial walk, a labyrinth, a children’s garden, wetlands, arboretum and an official Monarch Waystation.

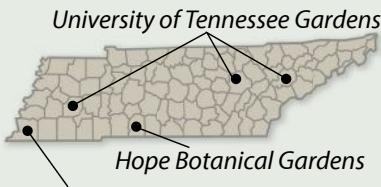
“One of the most distinguishing factors about our Knoxville location is our close association with plant science and beyond, including landscape design, forestry



Above, Dixon Gallery and Gardens was the estate of Margaret Oates Dixon and Hugo Norton Dixon. Photograph courtesy of Dixon Gallery and Gardens. At left, the Post Wild Pollinator Garden demonstrates a landscape design style that provides food and shelter to pollinators year-round. Photograph by UT Gardens staff. Opposite page, Hope Botanical Garden offers small-but-mighty enjoyment and education in nature. Photograph by Ron Majiros.

Gather at these gardens and find more online

Following is a list of events at these featured gardens in May. For more on gardens across the state, visit tnmagazine.org/botanical-gardens where you'll find a map with links to information on other botanical attractions.



Fish Fry, May 7, and **Mother's Day Celebration**, May 11-12, Hope Botanical Garden, Leoma

Symphony in the Gardens, May 12, Dixon Gallery and Gardens, Memphis

Plateau Discovery Garden Tour — Magnificent May, May 17, UT Gardens, Crossville

and horticulture and other disciplines,” Newburn says. “It’s a win for the gardens and a win for students.”

Soon breeders and seed companies asked to learn how their plants performed in other parts of Tennessee. In response, plant evaluations expanded to the West Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center in Jackson. Under the leadership of horticulturist and gardener Jason Reeves, the program focused on trees, shrubs, ornamental grasses, perennials and vegetables.

UT Gardens, Jackson, also showcases DIY projects for home gardeners such as a glass bottle trellis, various mailbox plantings and upcycled items like bicycles, stoves and even satellite dishes serving as garden art.

In 2012, UT Gardens, Crossville, joined the UT Gardens system. Located at UT Plateau AgResearch and Education Center, it was begun by the Cumberland County Master Gardeners to illustrate the variety of plants best suited for Middle Tennessee and the colder climes of the Cumberland Plateau. Shalena Durkot is garden coordinator.

The UT Gardens, Crossville, also has an extensive educational component. One outstanding feature is the Kinder Garden.

“Engaging children and youth is a priority in all our programs, but Crossville has created Kinder Garden, an initiative to instill a love of gardening and environmental stewardship to the next generation,” Newburn says. “Youngsters are always so curious, and when an activity is interactive and educational, the learning stays with them.”

All campuses of the UT Gardens rely heavily on volunteer programs that utilize trained master gardeners, student interns and other volunteers for the extensive

maintenance and creative displays required at each site. They also are essential in providing educational programming.

Recognizing the value of the UT Gardens to green industry professionals as well as homeowners across the state, the Tennessee General Assembly resolved to name the UT Gardens the official State Botanical Gardens of Tennessee. The bill was signed by then-Gov. Bill Haslam in 2013.

“These locations represent three completely different geographic regions of Tennessee — the Tennessee Valley, the Cumberland Plateau and the West Tennessee Delta,” Newburn says. “No matter where you live in the state, you have a comprehensive resource to learn about what grows best in your area, rich access to gardening education and a place to enjoy Mother Nature and all she has to offer.”

Knoxville, University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, 2518 Jacob Drive. 865-974-7324, utgardens.tennessee.edu/locations/knoxville/.

Crossville, UT Plateau AgResearch and Education Center, 320 Experiment Station Road. 931-484-0034, utgardens.tennessee.edu/locations/crossville/.

Jackson, West Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center, 605 Airways Blvd. 731-424-1643, westtn.tennessee.edu/ut-gardens-jackson-about-us/. ■



Mason retires, Swearingen appointed to CEMC board

Michael (Andy) Mason of Springfield announced his retirement from Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation's board of directors, effective March 22.

Mason, who joined the board in 1997, represented North Robertson County for 27 years.

"It has been an honor to serve as director not only for North Robertson County but for all of the members of CEMC," says Mason.

"We are thankful for Mr. Mason's dedication and loyal service to CEMC and the membership," says General Manager Chris Davis. "We wish him all the best in his future endeavors."

Rodney Swearingen of Cross Plains has been appointed to fill the remainder of Mason's term, which will be up for election in September.

Swearingen is an agency manager for Farm Bureau in Robertson County where he has been employed for 18 years.



Michael (Andy) Mason

He is a 2000 graduate of the University of Tennessee at Martin where he received a Bachelor of Science degree in criminal justice.

Swearingen has a son, Hayden, and daughter, Reese. In his spare time, he enjoys working on

his farm, tending to livestock and assisting his local high school's athletic programs.

"I am a lifelong resident of Robertson County," says Swearingen. "As a child growing up, my siblings and I were raised and provided for by the diligence my father put in with CEMC until his retirement in 2017. I have seen

firsthand through his hard work and long hours what made CEMC the corporation it is today. CEMC is a valuable resource for our communities, and I look forward to providing fair, quality customer service to the members. I will work to help keep the cooperative business model and find ways to continue to bring low-cost and reliable electricity."



Rodney Swearingen

Springtime AC inspection can pay off in summer

A springtime tuneup can prevent your air conditioning system from going on the fritz later, when the weather is so hot that you won't want to be without the AC for even a few hours.

It typically costs less than \$150 to have a professional inspection of your system, and it's well worth the money. (Visit EnergyRight.com/Rebates to check for any available home energy rebates.)

Some contractors offer an annual preventive maintenance agreement, which will cost a few

hundred dollars a year and typically includes a fall and spring inspection of your HVAC system and discounts on repairs and equipment. A better deal most often is to pay as you go for individual inspections.

Either way, your cooling system will get attention from a qualified, licensed service technician who is trained to spot problems that most homeowners overlook. The tech might even alert you if a small repair now will prevent your family from sweltering this summer during an AC breakdown.

Local young leaders learn about government during co-op event in Nashville



From left, CEMC Community Relations Coordinator Susie Yonkers, Stewart County High School student Dalton Price, Sen. Bill Powers and Montgomery Central High School student Katie French meet during the 2024 Youth Leadership Summit in Nashville.

Stewart County High School student Dalton Price and Montgomery Central High School student Katie French were in Nashville March 18-20 for the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association's annual Youth Leadership Summit. The juniors were sponsored by Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation.

The 46 delegates to the event received a hands-on look at state government, learned networking and leadership skills and developed a better understanding of their local electric cooperatives.

Tre Hargett, Tennessee secretary of state, welcomed the students to the Capitol where they visited with legislators, sat in on committee meetings and debated and voted on a mock bill.

In addition to meeting lawmakers and experiencing the state Capitol, students also developed their leadership and team-building skills at the Joe C. Davis YMCA Outdoor Center at Camp Widjiwagan, participated in an electric safety demonstration and completed a leadership training course with leadership expert Amy Gallimore. Delegates also attended a Nashville

Predators hockey game as special guests of the Preds.

"It was an honor to have been selected to go to the Youth Leadership Summit," says CEMC delegate Katie French. "This opportunity afforded me the chance to meet legislators while gaining invaluable insights into electric cooperative leadership skills and a firsthand experience of the Tennessee General Assembly. I'm incredibly grateful for this opportunity!"

Delegates to the Youth Leadership Summit are encouraged to be leaders and use their talents to improve their communities. "The future of Tennessee is only as strong as the next generation of leaders," says Todd Blocker, vice president of member services for the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association and director of the Youth Leadership Summit. "Investing in these young people is a great opportunity to make a lasting impact on the communities we serve. These students are selected by their local electric co-ops, school officials and guidance counselors, and they are among the most talented students in the state. It is an honor to help them learn and grow."

CEMC and TVA extend Community Care fund

Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation is continuing its partnership with the Tennessee Valley Authority by participating in the Community Care Fund program in 2024.

CEMC has matched funds offered by TVA to selected charitable organizations throughout its five-county service area. CEMC and TVA awarded a total of \$112,000 to 14 agencies this year.

Receiving Community Care Fund grants from CEMC and TVA in 2024 are:

- **\$11,000 - Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee.** Funds will provide support to Cheatham, Montgomery, Robertson, Stewart and Sumner counties.
- **\$10,000 - The Bethesda Center.** Funds will provide food support and will assist members who are struggling to pay for utility bills, rent and medication.
- **\$1,000 - Camp Rainbow.** Funds will be used to help pay camp fees and purchase supplies for children with serious illnesses who are unable to attend traditional summer camps.

- **\$7,000 - United Methodist Urban Ministries.**

Funds will be used to assist members struggling to pay rent, make utility bill and mortgage payments, and purchase medication, childcare and food.

- **\$15,000 - United Way of Greater Clarksville.**

Funds will be used to assist members struggling to pay rent, make utility bill and mortgage payments, and purchase medication, childcare and food.

- **\$12,000 - United Way Robertson County.** Funds will be used to assist members struggling to pay rent, make utility bill and mortgage payments, and purchase medication, childcare and food.

- **\$4,000 - Northland Ministerial Association (Hope Center).** Funds will be used to assist members struggling to pay rent, make utility bill and mortgage payments, and purchase medication, childcare and food.

- **\$4,000 - Cooperative Outreach for Personal Emergencies (C.O.P.E.).** Funds will be used to assist members struggling to pay rent, make utility bill and mortgage payments, and purchase medication, childcare and food.



Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee was awarded an \$11,000 Community Care Fund grant from CEMC and TVA.



Gallatin CARES received a \$7,000 Community Care Fund grant.

- **\$5,000 - Highland Rim Economic Corporation.** Funds will be used to assist members struggling to pay rent, make utility bill and mortgage payments, and purchase medication, childcare and food.
- **\$4,000 - Hands of Hope.** Funds will be used to assist members in overcoming food insecurities and help them purchase hygiene products and other essentials.
- **\$7,000 - Gallatin CARES.** Funds will provide food support and assist members who are struggling to pay for utility bills, rent and medication.
- **\$7,000 - Portland C.A.R.E.S.** Funds will provide food support and assist members who are struggling to pay for utility bills, rent and medication.
- **\$2,000 - Manna Cafe.** Funds will provide food support and assist members who are struggling to pay for utility bills, rent and medication.
- **\$17,000 - United Way of Sumner County.** Funds will be used to assist members struggling to pay rent, make utility bill and mortgage payments, and purchase medication, childcare and food.

Since the program began in April 2020, the Community Care Fund has helped numerous local



United Way of Robertson County was awarded a \$12,000 Community Care Fund grant.

charitable organizations across the Tennessee Valley region provide assistance to those most impacted by the pandemic.



Join us at your local CEMC office on Thursday, May 16, for Member Appreciation Day!

We'll be serving free hot dogs, chips, cookies and soft drinks from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the CEMC offices in Dover, Clarksville, Ashland City, Springfield, White House and Portland.

Members in attendance can also register for a chance to win an electric grill! We hope to see you there!



Sign up for bank draft for a chance to win a \$250 electric bill credit

All members of Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation who are enrolled in bank draft prior to Friday, May 31, will be entered into a drawing to win one of five \$50 electric bill credits. As an added bonus, members who sign up for bank draft any time during the month of May will be entered into a second drawing with a chance to win a \$250 electric bill credit.

Bank draft is a convenient way to make electric bill payments automatically. With bank draft, your bill is securely drafted from your checking or savings account each month on your due date, eliminating late fees. You will continue to receive your electric bill each month — in your mailbox or your inbox — and we'll take care of the rest.

To sign up for bank draft, give us a call at 1-800-987-2362, stop by your local CEMC office or enroll via SmartHub online or in the mobile app. When signing up by phone or in your local office, you will be required to sign an authorization form and provide a voided check.



SIGN UP FOR BANK DRAFT AND WIN!

Enroll in bank draft by May 31 for a chance to win CEMC bill credits.



Please note: this contest is open to members enrolled in bank draft payments only. It does not apply to members enrolled in Auto Pay recurring credit/debit card payments.

5 WAYS TO SAVE THIS SUMMER

When summer temperatures rise, so do our energy bills. Here are a few ways you can reduce energy use and grow your summer savings.

1. Raise your thermostat.

The smaller the difference between the indoor and outdoor temps, the more you'll save.



2. Install window coverings

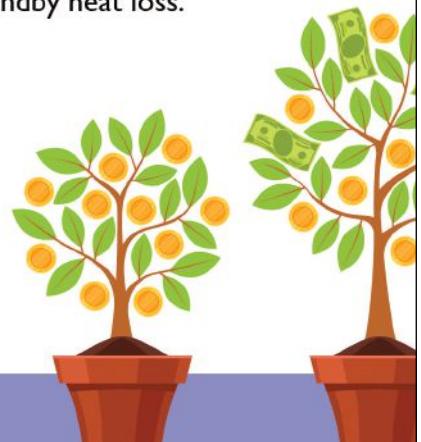
like blinds or light-blocking curtains to prevent indoor heat gain during the day.



3. Seal leaks with caulk and weather stripping around windows and exterior doors. Air leaks force your air conditioner to work harder and run longer than necessary.

4. Run ceiling fans for additional cooling, but turn them off when you leave the room.

5. Lower your water heater thermostat to 120 degrees to reduce standby heat loss.



Source: Department of Energy

The fiber effect:

How fiber internet can boost property values



We've said it before, and we'll say it again: The internet has become an essential part of modern life, and access to high-speed internet is increasingly important, especially in rural areas. High-speed internet brings all kinds of upsides to connected communities, and one of the most interesting yet little known effects is broadband's effect on property values. In fact, a recent study showed that fiber internet service can increase a home's value by as much as 4.9%!



That's right — a recent survey in 2023 conducted by the Fiber Broadband Association and RVA found that fiber internet service can increase a home's value by up to 4.9%. Furthermore, this survey listed very-high-speed, reliable internet service as the second-most-desired amenity for a single-family home (the most-desired was a laundry room). Respondents to the survey even found reliable, high-speed internet to be more desirable than features such as a walk-in closet or a two-car garage!

There are several reasons why the impact of fiber internet stretches as far as the value of your home. One of the primary benefits of fiber internet is its superiority to more traditional delivery methods. Fiber internet services can provide faster download and upload speeds than traditional copper-based or satellite internet services, making it easier to stream high-quality video, work from home, access

telemedicine, provide increased independence for seniors and communicate with others.

Another reason fiber internet services are boosting property values is that they attract new residents and businesses. With access to high-speed internet, remote workers and small-business owners can move to rural areas without sacrificing the connectivity they need to run their businesses. This can lead to an influx of new residents and businesses, which can, in turn, increase demand for properties in the area. Fiber internet also opens up a new range of tools, services and tactics that a business can take advantage of or offer their customers, such as promoting themselves on social media, offering remote consultations and much more.

Finally, fiber internet services can provide a competitive advantage for rural properties that have these services available. In a crowded real estate market, properties with fiber internet services can stand out from the competition and attract more buyers. This can lead to higher property values and faster sales.



In conclusion, fiber internet can affect our communities in ways that go beyond connectivity. With their high-speed internet connectivity, ability to attract new residents and businesses and competitive advantage in the real estate market, properties that offer fiber internet services are becoming more valuable — and at Cumberland Connect, we're proud to help foster new growth in our communities.



This institution is an equal-opportunity provider and employer.

Scan to learn more about the
CCFiber difference!



Why solar is not free

Q: I often hear claims that you'll never pay an electric bill again if you go solar. Is that true?

A: The ability to generate your own renewable energy at home is an amazing thing. It's pretty cool that the technology is accessible to home and property owners across the country. The concept of free energy from the sun is appealing, but solar power isn't actually free. There are costs associated with capturing that energy for use in your home.

Installing a residential solar system doesn't equate to \$0 energy bills. Prices for the solar system and installation vary, but adding solar typically comes with a five-figure price tag. Solar systems only provide power when the sun is shining. You still rely on your electric utility for power at night and when the skies are cloudy. Most electric utility rate structures include a set monthly service fee. Unless you plan to disconnect from local electric service completely, you will still have a monthly electric bill.



Installing a residential solar system doesn't necessarily equate to \$0 energy bills. You will need to rely on your electric utility for electricity when your system is not producing power.

Solar might be a good investment for you, or it might not. Several factors impact how well the investment pencils out, including where you live, home orientation and shading, electric bill rate structure and cost, available incentives and tax credits, budget and your credit rating.

If you are considering solar on your home, I suggest taking these three steps:

First, make your home as energy efficient as possible. It wouldn't make sense to put a new motor on a boat with holes in it, so why would you put a solar system on an energy-wasting home? Invest in reducing wasted energy before investing in creating new energy. The efficiency updates I recommend before installing solar include insulating and air sealing your home and upgrading to efficient appliances — especially the heating, ventilation and air conditioning system.

If your HVAC system is older than 10 years or malfunctioning, make sure replacing it is in the budget. Remember: Energy efficiency upgrades might have a better return on investment than installing solar.

Make your home as energy efficient as possible before purchasing a solar system. A more efficient home means a smaller — and lower-cost — solar system. Photo source: Amy Carlson, Valley Electric Association



A more efficient home means a smaller — and lower-cost — solar energy system. Solar systems are typically designed to produce the amount of energy a home uses in a year, so if you complete energy efficiency improvements before installing a solar system, make sure the solar contractor accounts for those energy savings.

Second, check with your electric utility about the requirements to install solar and how it will impact your bill. If you decide to install solar panels, working with your utility will be essential because you will need to take important steps such as signing an interconnection agreement to ensure the system is properly connected to the electric grid.

Third, get at least three quotes to compare each contractor's recommended system design, equipment and cost. It's a significant investment, so you want to know your options.

There are several ways to pay for a solar system and installation. It can be bought outright with cash or financed by a loan. This allows you to own the system immediately or at the end of the loan term. State and federal tax incentives can help offset the costs.

There is also the option to install a solar system through a lease or power purchase agreement. In this structure, a

Get at least three solar quotes to compare each contractor's recommended system design, equipment and cost.

third party — usually the solar installer — owns the system. This third party installs the system on your property and then sells you the energy produced at a predetermined rate. The third party is responsible for maintaining the system and owns it at the end of the agreement term.

Loans, leases and power purchase agreements can impact the sale of a home. Although a solar system might increase the value of your home, some buyers — or their lenders — are not interested in taking on leases or power purchase agreements.

Investing in solar is one way to support the transition to renewable energy. Before you make the leap, improve your home's energy efficiency and empower yourself by thoroughly weighing the costs and benefits. ■

Miranda Bouteille 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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The incredible stories behind Franklin High's Wall of Remembrance

A few weeks ago, I saw something in the hall of my son's school in Williamson County that astonished me.

Franklin High School has a Wall of Remembrance honoring its alumni who died in military service — along with those of the all-black institutions known as Franklin Training School and Natchez High School, which predated integration.

There are frames representing 33 men on the wall. They include people who died in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, the Cold War and Iraq. There are photos of 32 of the 33, with brief descriptions of what they did in the military.

As a veteran, I'm overwhelmed by this Wall of Remembrance and the work that went into it. I've spoken to Lt. Col. William Hoover, who put it up when he was head of the JROTC program there, and I visited the Williamson County Archives, whose staff helped him do most of the research behind it. I'd love to see other high schools do something similar. (And if there is another high school that honors all its graduates who died in military service in this manner, please email me at bill@tnhistoryforkids.org, and I'll mention it in a future column.)

First, let me mention some of the stories of the people honored on Franklin High's wall, with tidbits I've found in their obituaries:

Stories of the dead

There are a lot of lessons on the Franklin High School Wall of Remembrance.

The earliest graduate on the wall is Capt. Silas Carlisle of the Class of 1932; the most recent is Petty Officer 2nd Class Matthew Bergman of the Class of 2008.

If you peruse the wall, you will notice that 13 alumni of Franklin High died in military service in 1944. The next highest year represented on the wall is 1966, when four alumni of Franklin High and Natchez High died in Vietnam.

Four of the 33 men on the wall were officers; 29 were enlisted men. The highest-ranking was Maj. James Conway, a special forces officer declared missing in action in April 1966.

Some of the stories on the wall remind us that many families had to wait a long time to learn the fates of their loved ones. Sgt. Mack Terry (Class of 1939) died at a



A school resource officer looks over the first half of Franklin High School's Wall of Remembrance. Tennessee History for Kids photo



Mack Terry,
Class of 1939



Reedy Sears,
Class of 1939



James Conway,
Class of 1948



James Cunningham, Class
of 1964

Japanese prisoner of war camp. From my research, I learned that his family was notified that he was missing in August 1942; they were told that he had been taken prisoner in April 1943; they were notified that he had died in July 1943.

Reedy Sears graduated from Franklin High in 1939. His name appeared regularly in the Clarksville newspaper in the early 1940s, when he played football and basketball at Austin Peay. Sgt. Sears was a radio operator and gunner on a B-17 that was shot down over Germany in November 1944. He was declared missing at that time and declared dead a few months later.

Franklin High alum Petty Officer 2nd Class James Harper was one of about 800 crew members who perished when his aircraft carrier was bombed by the Japanese in March 1945. The name of his ship was the USS Franklin.

“He was determined to get into the Navy,” Harper’s mother said after he died. “He had a mind and a will of his own, that boy.”

It is striking how young the Franklin/Natchez High alumni who died in the Vietnam War were. Among the Vietnam dead were Spc. John Woods (age 19), Pvt. Charles Hardison (19), Cpl. Larry Buford (20), Pfc. Richard Carothers (21), Pfc. Danny Marlin (21), Pfc. James Cunningham (22) and Spc. James Peay (22).

Speaking of Vietnam, it is notable that Tennessee’s public school system was segregated during that war, but the U.S. military was not. Four of the nine Vietnam War deaths on the wall went to Natchez High, five to Franklin High.

Pvt. James Cunningham (Natchez Class of 1964) died in Vietnam while treating the wounds of his commander, who was almost certainly white. “After learning that his company commander had been wounded, and although enemy mortar rounds were raining upon the area, PFC Cunningham hurried to the aid of his leader,” said Cunningham’s Bronze Star certificate, which his family received posthumously. “As he was treating the wound, a hostile mortar round exploded nearby, fatally wounding him.”



Charles Hardison,
Class of 1966



Richard Buerstetta,
Class of 2004

Cunningham was not allowed to attend school with white people, but he likely died trying to help a white person.

Story behind the wall

Hoover created Franklin High’s Wall of Remembrance about 15 years ago as part of the school’s centennial. “We had a night where we recognized all living Franklin graduates who were veterans, and they ranged from young to very old,” he says.

Hoover then visited the Williamson County Archives and found that — thanks largely to longtime County Archivist Louise Lynch — it had enormous amounts of information to offer him. “Given the time involved and the research I had to do, I could not have found all these photos without the archives,” says Hoover.

Franklin Principal Willie Dickerson, a Natchez High graduate, directed Hoover to put the Wall of Remembrance in the hallway across from the concession stand that is used during basketball and volleyball games. “We obviously wanted the students to see it,” Hoover says, “but we knew that if we put it there that people who visit the school would be more likely to see it as well.”

It took Hoover several months to put it all together, and it was dedicated in November 2012. "There were family members who came to the ceremony," Hoover recalls. "There were parents who came, widows who came, children of veterans who came. It was really special."

Hoover admits that it is possible that there are names missing from the list. "If we ever found anyone we overlooked, I would assume that this person would be added," he says, pointing out that he is retired from Franklin High School and its JROTC program.

How to do something similar

It would be refreshing to see other schools put together Walls of Remembrance similar to Franklin High's. Researching the wall would be a great project for a high school history class.

Here are a few tips:

The most obvious way to start a Wall of Remembrance is by word of mouth. If teachers advertise in local newspapers and social media that they are creating a list of graduates who died in military service, they might be surprised at how fast they can put together a list. Then, using research tools such as newspapers.com, it might be possible to track down obituaries, which would confirm the circumstances of their deaths.

I strongly endorse the use of county archives. Your archives might already have a record of known local veterans who died in military service, similar to the one in Williamson County. "We have two file cabinets with folders on many veterans from this county," says current archivist Bradley Boshers. "Some of these files contain government records, some newspaper articles and some photos."

Leesa Harmon, a public archivist for the Williamson County Archives, says she has had a lot of success with two websites. "I'm amazed at what I've been able to find on Fold3.com (a paid site) and teva.contentdm.oclc.org (a free site produced by the Tennessee State Library and Archives)," she says. "I've had a lot of success tracking down records and photos, especially of World War I veterans."

Finally, a word about population patterns: If you write a list of current high schools in Tennessee and compare it to a 1945 list, you will notice that there is little overlap. There are a number of reasons for this phenomenon: Schools consolidated; districts shifted; buildings were torn down and rebuilt in another location with a new name; interstates were built; apparel factories closed; car parts factories opened; new neighborhoods were developed; etc.

Let's also not forget that every black Tennessean who died in World War I, World War II, Korea and Vietnam went to an all-black high school. (I did a whole column about these institutions in February 2020 and tried to compile a complete list of them at that time.) These high schools are all gone, although some of the buildings are still in operation as integrated institutions.

My suggestion to a teacher wanting to do a Wall of Remembrance is to study the district covered by your current school and find out what school served that district in the early 1900s. Your wall might, like Franklin High's, include names from more than one school.

I can assure you, however, that a photo of a person who went to school in that same part of the county — and who then went on to die in World War II or Vietnam — will mean a lot to a young person today. ■

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TENNESSEE EVENTS

Festivals, celebrations and other happenings around the state

West Tennessee

May 10-12 • Mother's Day Weekend Classic Baseball

Tournament, West Tennessee Healthcare Sportsplex, Jackson. jacksonsportsplex.com/baseball

May 11 • Cardboard Boat Regatta and Scout Day, Discovery Park of America, Union City. 731-885-5455 or discoveryparkofamerica.com

May 18-June 30 • Garden Tours, private, public and farm gardens throughout greater Memphis. 901-299-5887 or experiencememphisgardens.org

Middle Tennessee

May 3-4 • Cannon County Good Ole Days, Cannon County Courthouse Square, Woodbury. 615-563-5304 or cannoncountygoodoledays.com

May 4 • Spring Fest and Artisan Show, Fiddlers Grove Historic Village, Lebanon. 615-547-6111 or fiddlersgrovetcn.com/spring-fest-in-the-grove

May 4 • Cornbread and Moonshine Festival, historic Granville. 931-653-4151 or granvilletn.com

May 11 • Strawberry Festival, historic downtown Wartrace. 615-971-9365 or facebook.com/wartracetennessee

May 11 • Maury County Master Gardeners Annual Plant Sale, The Baker Building, Columbia. 931-486-0980 or maurycountymastergardeners.org

May 11 • Sixth Keg County Arts and Crafts Fair, Centerville Courthouse Lawn. 931-242-0428 or hickmanartsandcraftsguild.org

May 18 • Middle Tennessee Cornbread Festival, downtown Smithville. 931-259-3413 or centerhillevnts.com

May 25 • Heritage Day, historic Granville. 931-653-4151 or granvilletn.com

East Tennessee

May 3-4 • Blooms, Bluegrass and BBQ Festival, historic downtown Sweetwater. smopoatn@gmail.com or bloomsbluegrassbbq.com

May 3 and 10 • Sheep Shearing Days, Museum of Appalachia, Clinton. 865-494-7680 or museumofappalachia.org/sheep-shearing-day-3

May 4-5 • Second Annual Birchwood Fiber Festival, Birchwood Community Center. 423-284-8209 or birchwoodfiberfestival.com

May 4-5 • Chattanooga Taco Festival, Camp Jordan, East Ridge. 423-650-1388 or touchtheskyevents.com

May 18 • Tennessee Mountain Laurel Festival, Courthouse Square, Wartburg. tennesseemountainlaurelfestival.com

May 24-26 • CaveJam, the Caverns, Pelham. 931-516-9724 or thecaverns.com/featured/cavejam

June 1 • National MooFest, historic downtown Athens. friendlycityfestivals.com/moofest

List your events in The Tennessee Magazine

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

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

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

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

Information must be received at least two months ahead of the event date, and we accept submissions up to a year in advance.

Due to the great demand for space in each month's magazine, we cannot guarantee publication. Find a complete listing of submissions we've received at tnmagazine.org/events.

LETTUCE EAT SALAD

Delicious ingredients add flavor and variety

The growing season is finally here. Local cool weather crops like lettuces are filling farmers markets ... but wait! There's more! Great salads can be created with all kinds of ingredients, even

transforming a traditional starter into the only course you'll need for a complete meal. Try these great recipes — you can even serve them on a bed of lettuce if you like.



Quinoa and Pine Nut Herbed Salad

Recipes by

Tammy Algood

Food styling

by Cynthia Kent

Photographs

by Robin Conover

Quinoa and Pine Nut Herbed Salad

Yield: 6 servings

1 cup quinoa

2 cups low-sodium chicken stock

½ cup frozen limeade concentrate, thawed

Zest and juice of 1 lime

½ cup raisins

1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and minced

½ cup toasted pine nuts

5 green onions, white parts only, chopped

2 garlic cloves, peeled and minced

½ cup chopped fresh cilantro

½ cup chopped fresh parsley

½ teaspoon onion salt (more to taste)

¼ teaspoon black pepper

Mixed salad greens

Chopped fresh tomatoes

Place the quinoa and stock in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Cook uncovered for 8-10 minutes or until the liquid has been absorbed. Stir occasionally. Remove from heat and transfer to a mixing bowl. Cool to room temperature.

Meanwhile, in a small saucepan, heat the limeade concentrate over low heat. Add the zest, juice and raisins. Remove from the heat, cover and allow to stand for 30 minutes.

When the quinoa has cooled, add the jalapeno peppers, pine nuts, onions, garlic, cilantro, parsley, salt and pepper. Stir well and add the raisin mixture, tossing to blend. Cover and allow to stand at room temperature for 1 hour or refrigerate for up to 8 hours. Bring to room temperature before serving over mixed salad greens and topped with chopped tomatoes.

Southern Egg Salad — Serve by the scoop or as a sandwich filling.

Yield: 6 servings

6 hard-cooked eggs, peeled and chopped*

3 tablespoons sweet pickle relish

2 tablespoons mayonnaise

1 tablespoon sour cream

½ teaspoon prepared mustard

¼ teaspoon onion salt

¼ teaspoon black or white pepper

¼ teaspoon lemon juice

Chopped fresh parsley for garnish

In a mixing bowl, combine the eggs, relish, mayonnaise, sour cream, mustard, salt, pepper and lemon juice. Blend well, cover and chill at least 2 hours before serving with a garnish of parsley.

**Alternative: Substitute smoked eggs by peeling but leaving whole. Preheat the smoker to 180 degrees and add the eggs directly to the grate. Close the lid and smoke for 30 minutes. Remove from the smoker and cool for 30 minutes before chopping and proceeding as directed.*

Unbeatable Tuna Salad — Serve on salad greens or as a sandwich filling.

Yield: 4-6 servings

2 (5-ounce) cans tuna, drained*

1 hard-cooked egg, peeled and chopped

1 celery stalk, finely chopped

¼ cup purple onion, finely chopped

½ cup mayonnaise

1 teaspoon lemon juice

¼ teaspoon celery seeds

¼ teaspoon garlic salt

¼ teaspoon black pepper

Place the tuna, eggs, celery and onions in a mixing bowl and set aside. In a small bowl, whisk together the mayonnaise, lemon juice, celery seeds, salt and pepper. Add to the tuna bowl and stir to blend well. Cover and refrigerate at least 1 hour before serving.

**Alternative: Substitute equal portions of either canned lump crabmeat or salad shrimp for the tuna if desired.*

Toasted Couscous and Mango Salad with Lime Dressing

Yield: 4-6 servings

1 cup low-sodium chicken stock or water

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

1 cup couscous

¼ cup lime juice

1 teaspoon pickled diced jalapeno peppers

¾ teaspoon ground cumin

½ teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon black pepper

½ cup cilantro leaves

½ cup olive oil

1 red or green bell pepper, seeded and chopped

1 mango, peeled, pitted and diced
1 (15-ounce) can black beans, drained and rinsed

2 green onions, sliced

Mixed salad greens

1 avocado, halved, pitted, peeled and sliced into thin strips

Place the stock or water in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Meanwhile, place the vegetable oil in a medium skillet over medium-high heat. When the skillet is hot, add the couscous and stir quickly to evenly toast. This will take no more than a minute.

Transfer the toasted couscous to the boiling stock. Turn off the heat, cover and allow to sit undisturbed for 8-10 minutes or until the liquid had been absorbed. Uncover, fluff with a fork and allow to cool.

Place the lime juice, jalapenos, cumin, salt, pepper and cilantro in a food processor. Process to chop. With the blade running, slowly add the olive oil. Process until smooth.

When the couscous has cooled, transfer to a serving bowl and add the bell peppers, mango, black beans and onions. Toss to mix and drizzle with the dressing. Toss again and serve over mixed salad greens. Garnish with the avocado.

Vegetable Barley Salad

Yield: 4-6 servings

1 cup barley

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

1 medium sweet onion, peeled and chopped

2 large garlic cloves, peeled and minced

2 medium carrots, peeled and chopped

2 celery stalks, chopped

3 cups low-sodium chicken or vegetable stock

1 cup cooked edamame or fresh English peas

2 teaspoons soy sauce

2 teaspoons sesame oil

Sturdy salad greens

Shaved Parmesan for garnish

¼ cup toasted pine nuts

Place a large skillet (that has a lid) over medium heat and add the barley.

Toast just until it begins to brown, stirring quickly. This will take no more than one minute. Transfer the barley to a shallow bowl.

Add the oil to the skillet. When hot, add the onions, garlic, carrots and celery. Cook for 4 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the barley and cook 4 minutes longer. Add the stock, stir and cover. Reduce the heat to simmer, and after 20 minutes, stir in the edamame or peas, soy sauce and sesame oil. Cook 7 minutes longer. Remove from the heat and allow to cool for 10 minutes.

Serve over sturdy salad greens and garnish with shaved Parmesan and pine nuts.

Spiced Bulgur and Chickpea Patties

Yield: 6-8 servings

½ cup fine bulgur

1 (15-ounce) can chickpeas, drained and rinsed

1 shallot, peeled and minced

1 large garlic clove, peeled and minced

2 tablespoons finely chopped cilantro leaves

½ teaspoon allspice

½ teaspoon black pepper

½ teaspoon ground cumin

½ teaspoon ground coriander

½ teaspoon salt

⅛ teaspoon cayenne

¾ cup all-purpose flour

2 tablespoons plain cornmeal

1 teaspoon baking powder

Oil for frying

Mixed salad greens

Lime wedges

Place the bulgur in a heat-resistant bowl and add 2 cups boiling water. Stir, cover and allow to stand for 10 minutes. Drain through a fine-meshed colander to remove any excess moisture.

Meanwhile, place the chickpeas, shallots, garlic, cilantro, allspice, pepper, cumin, coriander, salt and cayenne in a food processor. Puree until smooth. Transfer to a mixing bowl and stir in the flour, cornmeal and baking powder. Add the bulgur and stir to blend. If the dough is too sticky, add more flour a tablespoon at a time. Form into patties, each using 2 tablespoons of the dough. Place on a waxed paper lined baking sheet and refrigerate for 10 minutes.

Place the oil a half-inch deep in a heavy skillet over medium-high heat. When hot, slide the patties in the oil and fry about 2 minutes or until lightly browned on one side. Do not overcrowd the pan. Flip and repeat. Drain on paper towels.

Serve warm or at room temperature on mixed salad greens with lime wedges. ■

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

Tips and tricks

Get creative with spring salad greens to show off these salads. Instead of your usual iceberg, grab baby spinach, butter, mesclun, arugula, oak leaf, frisee, sorrel or radicchio for something different and fun. All are readily available, and you will welcome the changes in texture and flavor.

All lettuce varieties should be washed with a gentle spray of cold water and allowed to drain in a colander to remove any excess moisture. Never allow the greens to soak in water.

All of the grains called for in the recipes can be interchanged to fit your taste as well as availability in your area.

Look for the variety of listed grains in the section of the supermarket where you purchase rice.

Store grains at room temperature in your pantry. Transfer to a glass or airtight plastic container rather than storing in the original opened bag.



Chuck writes: "I am slowly going through the recipes my grandmother hand-wrote and kept in a drawer. In one for a soup, she says to use a liaison. This is near the end of the cooking time. Can you please help me figure out what this means? Thank you!"

Chuck, liaison is an old term that refers to a thickening agent. That

can be flour, arrowroot, cornstarch or even egg yolks in some cases. My guess is that your grandmother was talking about using either flour or cornstarch.

A tablespoon or two is mixed with cold water and stirred until smooth. Then it is added to the dish, which is a soup in your case.

Janice asks: "What is quinine water? I have it in a recipe book for cocktails."

Janice, that's tonic water, which is simply water charged with carbon dioxide. Sometimes fruit extracts are added as well as sugar. A minuscule amount of quinine is added, which gives tonic a slightly bitter taste that is particularly good when paired with gin. ■

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A RIVER RUNS BY IT

Mousetail Landing State Park a hidden jewel

Story by Trish Milburn • Photographs by Chris Kirk

Long before there were interstates or even cars, rivers were the highways of America. Not only did people travel and transport goods by water, they also often made their living on or adjacent to the country's rivers, and communities grew up along those waterways. Such was the case for Mousetail Landing in Perry County.

Mousetail Landing State Park, one of the more interestingly named parks in the state, sits on the east bank of the Tennessee River and is home to more than 1,200 acres of outdoor recreation and pieces of the area's history. The story goes that the source of the area's

name originated during the Civil War when one of the local tanneries that shipped tanned goods to other river communities such as Louisville and Paducah, Kentucky; St. Louis, Missouri; and Evansville, Indiana, caught fire. Innumerable mice that had been attracted by the cowhides fled toward the river.

"One of my goals is to tell the story of Mousetail Landing itself, before channelization of the river," says Park Manager Daniel Burgess, who has been with the park since 2014 and manager since 2021. "The river was a way of life for most people who lived in this area."

Though Burgess says there is more to accomplish toward his goal, one item on the to-do list has been completed — the Historical Landing Trail. This trail, as you might expect from the name, goes out to the historic site of Mousetail Landing. It's 0.55 mile one way, so 1.1 miles for a there-and-back hike.

Another piece of history that lies within the park is the Parrish Cemetery, which has graves dating back around a century. Some are marked simply with fieldstones with no text, as are many older cemeteries.

What to do

Water-based activities are, of course, popular at Mousetail Landing. If you have a canoe or kayak, you might want to spend your time exploring the park's water trails.

If fishing or pleasure boats are more your speed, you can put in at the park's boat launch ramp. Or you can utilize the courtesy pier or enjoy bank fishing along the river. Species you might be able to reel in are crappie, bluegill, bass, catfish and redear sunfish.

The swimming beach on the Spring Creek embayment of the river is open all year, though there are no lifeguards on duty during any season.

Several miles of hiking trails invite visitors to enjoy calming forest walks or the more

challenging Eagle Point Trail, an 8-mile overnight trail that has between 800 and 1,000 feet of elevation change throughout the hike. Two primitive overnight shelters — each with eight bunk beds (bring your own sleeping bag to use on them), a wood-burning stove, a picnic table and a fire ring — provide a place to rest before continuing your hike. You can also use tents at these shelter sites. There are no restroom facilities at these shelters, however.

Burgess says that Shelter 2 is particularly popular because it sits on a bluff that affords stunning views of the river, sunsets and the Busseltown unit of the Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge across the river.



Above, the visitor center is a great first stop to get information about Mousetail Landing State Park and pick out a souvenir. Below left, marked trails provide miles of hiking enjoyment throughout the park. Below right, take a rest from your outdoor activities at picnic sites near a group pavilion that can be reserved for larger gatherings. Opposite page, water-based activities such as swimming, paddling and fishing are popular at Mousetail Landing.

damage that is too costly to repair.

Special events

Burgess gives credit to the Friends of Mousetail Landing State Park for hosting a lot of the special events in the park such as the annual Easter egg hunt. One event that is still managed by the park staff is the Junior Fishing Rodeo, to be held June 8 this year. The park partners with area businesses and the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency for the event that offers prizes for the most fish caught, the biggest fish and even the smallest fish, which can be good for a few chuckles.



Worth the trip

Though the park is about a 40- to 45-minute drive from Interstate 40, Burgess says the trip is well worth it.

"I believe the park is a hidden jewel," he says. "If people come once, they return for years to come." ■

Mousetail Landing State Park

For more information, visit tnstateparks.com/parks/mousetail-landing or call the park office at 731-847-0841.



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Inspiring words from your neighbors

We're searching for Tennessee's most talented and gifted poets. Enter our next Poet's Playground contest!

Subject: Poems do not have to include the word "Tennessee" explicitly, but their themes should celebrate our state and what makes it beautiful — whether highlighting something unique to Tennessee, memories of the state or the beautiful nature it has to offer.

Age categories: The competition has six age divisions — 8 and younger, 9-13, 14-18, 19-22, 23-64 and 65 and older. Each group will have first-, second- and third-place winners. First place wins \$50 and

will be printed in the magazine, second place wins \$30 and third place wins \$20. Poems capturing first-, second- and third-place honors will be published online at tnmagazine.org.

What to enter: A poem of **100 words or fewer, including articles**, pertaining to the theme. One entry per person, and please give your entry a title.

Deadline: Entry must be submitted online or postmarked by Friday, May 31. First-place poems will be published in the August issue.

Please note: By entering, you give *The Tennessee Magazine*

permission to publish your work via print, online and social media.

Please enter online at tnmagazine.org or mail

handwritten entries to: Poetry Contest, *The Tennessee Magazine*, P.O. Box 100912, Nashville, TN 37224. Make sure to print your poem legibly, and be sure to keep a copy of your poem as submissions received via mail will not be returned.

All entries must include the following information, or they will be disqualified: your name, age, mailing address, phone number, email address and the name of your local electric cooperative.

Photograph by Robin Conover



SHUTTERBUG SHOWCASE

In the next installment of our Shutterbug Photography Contest, *The Tennessee Magazine* is partnering with the Wilson County-Tennessee State Fair to highlight “95 Reasons to Celebrate Tennessee — Sow the Fun. Harvest the Memories,” which is the theme of this year’s fair. The topic is general, giving you plenty of room for creativity; we do want to know the town and county where each photo was taken.

There is much to celebrate across Tennessee, and we’d love to see each of the state’s 95 counties represented among the entries. *The Tennessee Magazine*

will name first-, second- and third-place winners as well as honorable mention recipients in each division — **Shutterbug, Junior Shutterbug** (ages 17 and younger) and **Professional**. The fair could bestow additional honors upon entries capturing the spirit of the theme.

Images can include people or not, and they can be selfies. As you accept this challenge, please stay safe. We don’t want anyone to take a tumble in the name of the Shutterbug contest.

Contest rules

1. The contest is open to amateur and professional photographers. For the purposes of this competition, you are considered a professional if you regularly sell your images or garner more than 50% of your income from photography.
2. Photographs must have been taken by you.
3. A photographer can enter no more than three photographs. There is no cost to enter.
4. All entries must be made online. We

won’t accept prints for this contest. Sign on to tnmagazine.org and click on “Entry Forms” under “Contests.” Complete the form and upload your photograph(s).

5. Employees of Tennessee’s electric cooperatives and their immediate families are not eligible to win.
6. Please include the name of each recognizable person, if any other than yourself, in your photograph. It is the photographer’s responsibility to have the subject’s permission to enter his or her image in the contest. You must include the subject’s name and contact information with your submission. Omitting any of this information can result in disqualification.
7. By entering the contest, photographers automatically give *The Tennessee Magazine* and the Wilson County-Tennessee State Fair permission to publish the winning images in print and digital publications, to social media and on websites.

Shutterbug assignment:

“95 Reasons to Celebrate Tennessee — Sow the Fun. Harvest the Memories.”

Submissions — online entries only

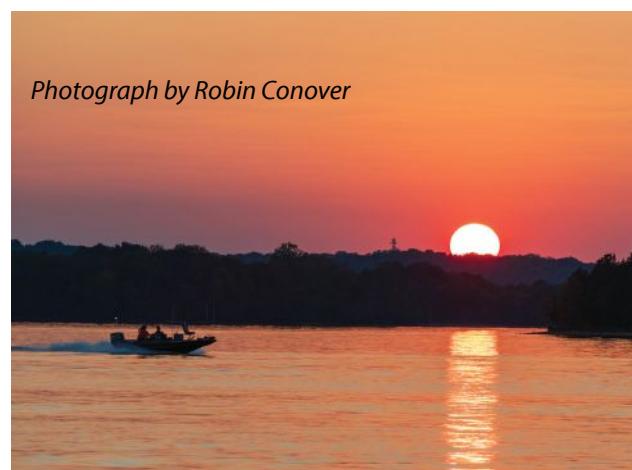
To enter, visit tnmagazine.org and click on “Entry Forms” under the “Contests” tab.

Deadline

Entries must be entered online by the end of the day on Monday, July 15. Winners will be published in the September issue.

Prize packages:

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



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 or email flag@tnelectric.org. Entries must be postmarked or received via email by Saturday, June 1. Winners will be published in the July issue of *The Tennessee Magazine*.

March Flag Spotters

Thanks for the postcards and emails again this month identifying the correct location of the flag, which was found on the dog's collar on **page 31**.

Winners are drawn randomly from each month's entries.

March's lucky flag spotters are:

Marita Warner, Medina, Gibson EMC

Ingrid Noe, Pleasant Shade, Upper Cumberland EMC

Cathy Frazer, Dandridge, Appalachian EC



Artist's Palette Assignment for July

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

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

Entry: Send your original art to: *The Tennessee Magazine*, Artist's Palette — **July**, 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 Saturday, June 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.

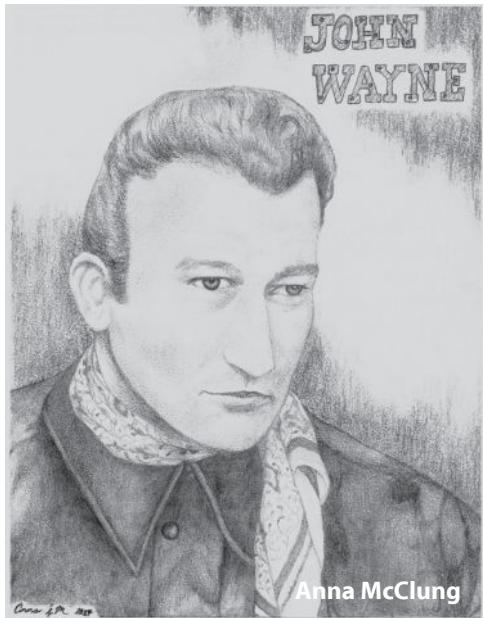
Artwork will not be returned **unless** you include a self-addressed, **stamped** envelope (SASE) with your submission. **Only the U.S. Postal Service** will be used for returns. *For best reproduction results, do not fold artwork.*

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

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

Winners will be published in the July 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 May Winners



Anna McClung



Julianna Wanner



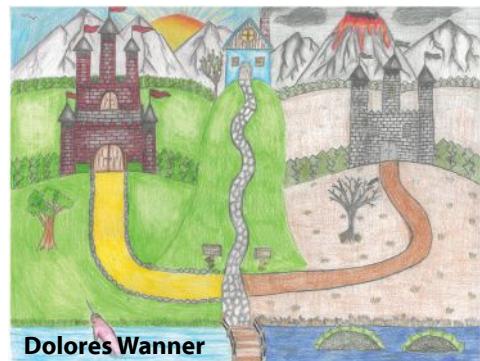
Cheyenne Davis

WINNERS, 14-18 AGE GROUP: First place: Anna McClung, age 17, Meriwether Lewis EC; Second place: Julianna Wanner, age 16, Middle Tennessee Electric; Third place: Cheyenne Davis, Age 17, Volunteer EC

Advika Lakshmanan

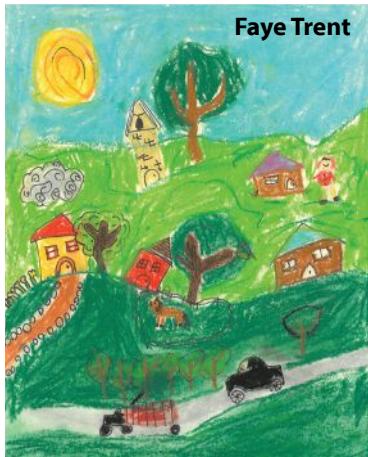


Shayleigh Smith

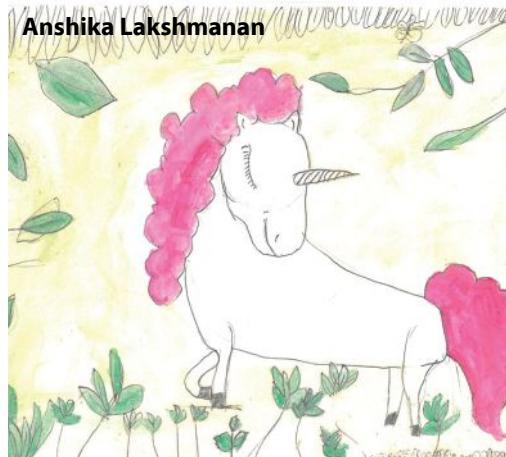


Dolores Wanner

WINNERS, 9-13 AGE GROUP: First place: Advika Lakshmanan, age 10, Middle Tennessee Electric; Second place: Shayleigh Smith, age 13, Upper Cumberland EMC; Third place: Dolores Wanner, age 11, Middle Tennessee Electric



Faye Trent



Anshika Lakshmanan



Nora Cobb

WINNERS, 8 AND YOUNGER AGE GROUP: First place: Faye Trent, age 8, Powell Valley EC; Second place: Anshika Lakshmanan, age 6, Middle Tennessee Electric; Third place: Nora Cobb, age 7, Middle Tennessee Electric



Point of View

By Robin Conover

A new lens can always bring challenges, especially with a large telephoto or zoom lenses. I recently purchased an older Canon 200-400 *f*4 L IS USM with 1.4 extender. It is an intimidating lens due to its size, cost and handling. I was anxious to take it out for a spin.

The lens is not for the faint of heart. It weighs nearly 8 pounds. Attach it to a camera body and a tripod, and it all weighs a ton! But the trade off is that it is fast, very sharp and has a built-in 1.4 extender that makes it a 280-560 mm.

I took it out for the first time to one of my favorite places: Radnor Lake State Park in Nashville. I knew I wouldn't have to hike too far with it before finding some subjects.

I spotted this red-eared slider about 20 feet away, sunning on a dead tree limb hanging above the water. I wanted to test for sharpness and make sure I cut out any camera vibration, so I chose a higher ISO of 1,000 and a high shutter speed of 1/1,000 second.

The higher shutter speed kept the image sharp, and the lower *f*-stop of 5.6 helped to blur the background a bit. I also put in the removable polarizing lens to cut out the reflection and glare from the lake's surface.

I was very pleased with the sharpness of the textures in the bark of the tree and in the turtle. His eyeball is tack sharp. All in all, it is a very sharp lens that has very good autofocus capabilities for following moving subjects like birds in flight. The downfall is the weight of the thing.

"Red-Eared Slider Sunbathing" by Robin Conover, Canon EOS 5D Mark IV, 200-400 mm at 400 mm, *f*4 L IS USM EXT lens with a polarizer, ISO 1,000, *f*5.6 at 1/1000 second, Gitzo tripod

I'm reminded of a tenet in photography — the best camera is the one you always have with you. While I will use this lens for special situations, it's not going to be an everyday lens.

Whether you are a beginner or a professional, you have to find the gear that you will be comfortable with and have with you all the time. For many, that could be a smartphone, and that's perfectly OK.

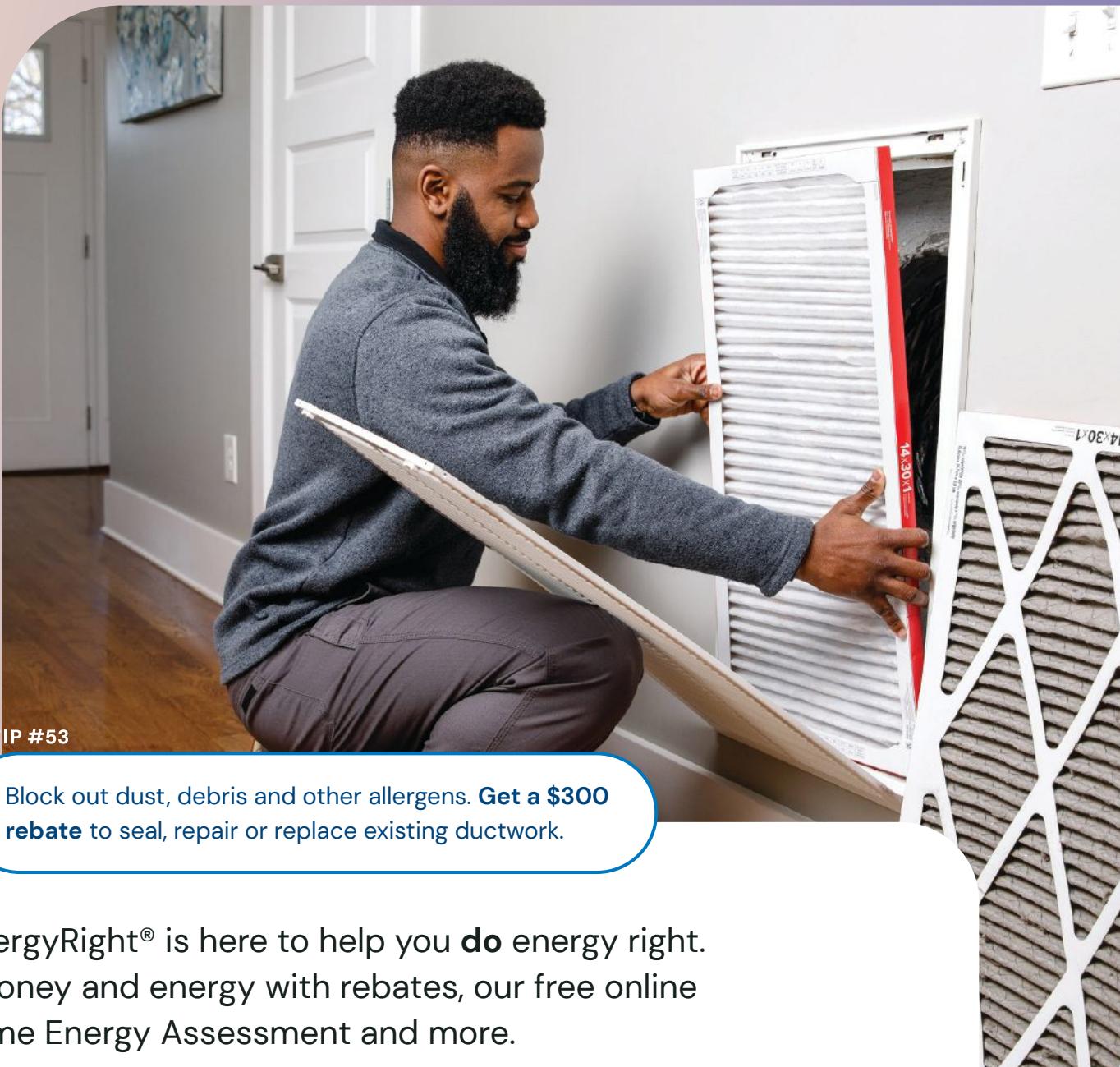
Smartphones have come such a long way with respect to their photographic capabilities. Some of the newest features in recent software updates include AI technology to help you create incredible images, isolate subjects from the backgrounds and enhance search capabilities.

The software now recognizes the content and locations of your images more than ever before. The search functions are one of the time-saving advantages technology offers now.

Try it out for yourself. If you have a fairly updated phone with current software, search your photos for a subject like "kids" or "dogs" or "beach." And, voila! All your pics of said subject appear. You can also search by location or time of day. Try "golden hour," and all your images shot during that time of day will come up.

Technology isn't perfect, but it is fun to play with and learn how to use to our advantage, especially with respect to photography. Unfortunately, my search request for winning lottery ticket numbers did not reveal any useful results. ■

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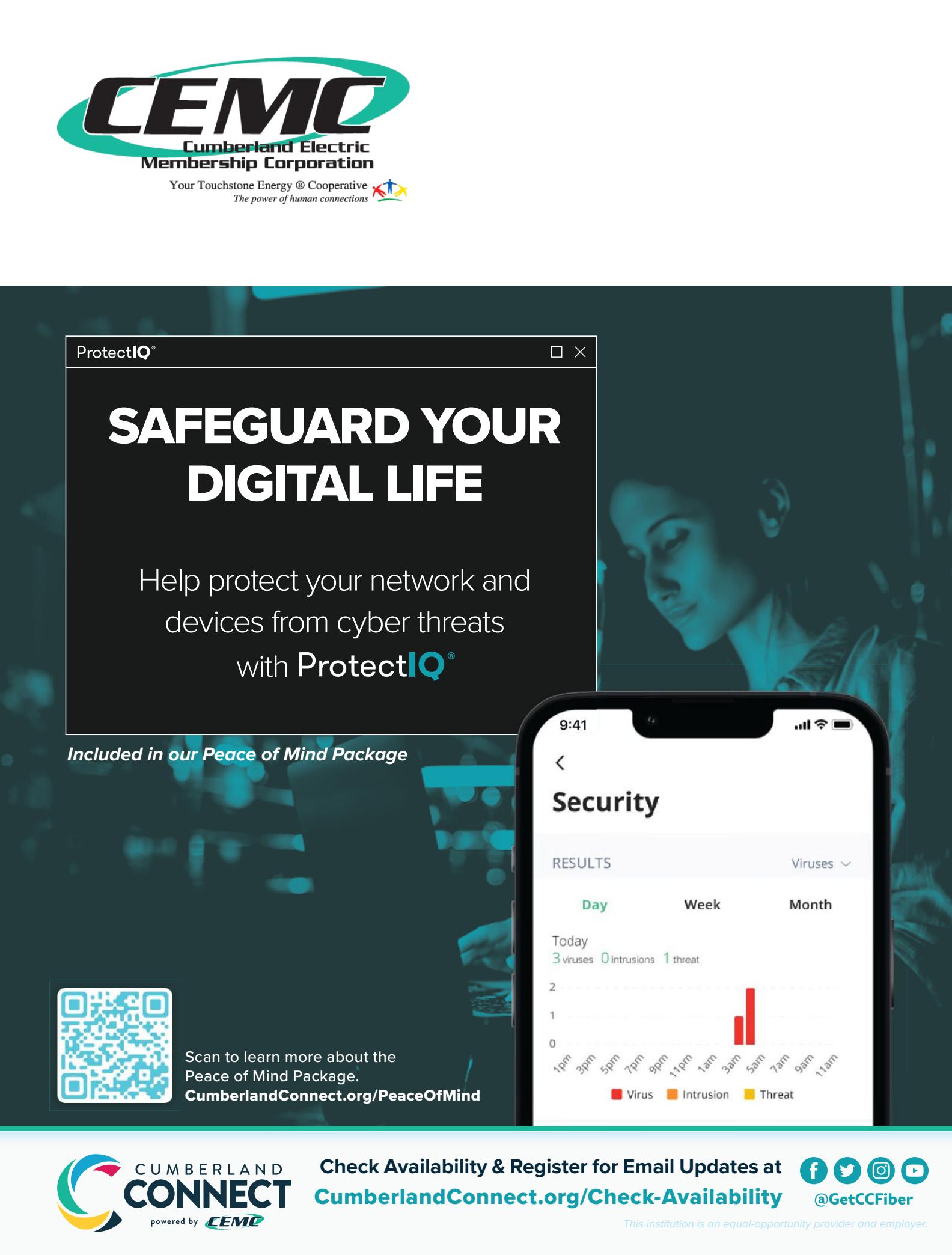


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