



Swans a Swimming

Arkansas awaits the
return of the trumpeters

Page 8

Plus:

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Arkansas Food Hall of Fame
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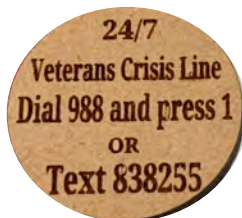


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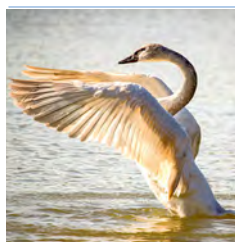


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ON THE COVER

Majestic trumpeter swans flocking to Arkansas' Cleburne County for the winter have developed quite a following.

Photo by Jessica Logan

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And the Awards Go to ...

BY JENNIFER CHRISTMAN CIA

You know the Emmys, the Tonys and the Oscars. Well, in the cooperative journalism world, we have the Willies.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Statewide Editors Association (SEA) presents the Willies Awards annually. Named for electric cooperative mascot Willie Wiredhand, the awards recognize statewide publications for excellence in writing, photography and design.

Arkansas Living recently won a good number of them. And since we celebrate our 78th birthday this month, I thought I'd use this space to honor our enduring publication and our many contributors. Emphasis on *many* contributors; our small but mighty staff could only do this with the help of outstanding leadership, a team of amazing co-op editors, the most helpful co-workers, our trusted freelance and contract professionals and our wonderful readers.

Arkansas Living has educated and entertained members of Arkansas' electric cooperatives since 1946. Mailing out more than 420,000 copies each month, Arkansas Living has the largest circulation of any publication in the state.

And we're not alone. We are one of 32 SEA publications, collectively

delivering 12 million copies per month to households around the country.

This year, Arkansas Living won five SEA awards, a variety of Excellence/Merit (secondary honors) and Willie (top honors) awards in different categories. We'll link to all these stories in the online version of this column on our (ahem, award-winning!) website at arkansalivingmagazine.com/story/and-the-awards-go-to/ in case you'd like to revisit them.

Award of Merit

Best Treatment of a Technical Subject: Special Series: The Balance of Power

Award of Excellence

Best Digital Communication: ArkansasLivingMagazine.com
Best Entertaining Feature 650 Words or More: "Arkansas Icons," a cover story on Arkansas' new Johnny Cash/Daisy Bates statues at the U.S. Capitol

Willie Award

Best Column: "Hash Brown High Jinks," an Editor's Welcome column
Best Photo Essay: "Magic Moments" (our annual Reader Photo Contest)

Did you see that last one? Yes, YOU — our readers — won top honors for your fabulous photos! Look for next year's contest winners in January's issue. Also enjoy reader Jessica Logan's brilliant photo on the cover of this month's issue and other reader photos in the cover story on page 8.

Thank you for making us look good, and for your continued support all these years.

With gratitude,

Jennifer Christman Cia
jennifer.cia@aeci.com



Arkansas Living's five Willies Awards given by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Statewide Editors Association.

CHANCE ALLMON

I Pledge Allegiance

BY VERNON "BUDDY" HASTEN

President and CEO of Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., and Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation



A common tactic used by television reporters and podcasters is to go to a crowded public place and ask random people general questions about American history, politics or world events to point out how uninformed people are. Our nation's

Pledge of Allegiance is one thing many Americans don't know much about.

The first pledge was created in 1887 by Capt. George T. Balch, a Civil War veteran, to teach children loyalty to the United States. It read, "We give our heads and hearts to God and our country; one country, one language, one flag!"

Francis Bellamy, a minister, revised this version in 1892, and that is the origin of the pledge we know today. He wrote the pledge to inspire patriotism in a post-Civil-War America when patriotism was at a low point.

Bellamy's original version read, "I pledge allegiance to my Flag and the Republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." Given the large number of immigrants in the country, and to avoid confusion with flags from their home countries, the words were changed in 1923 to, "I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America."

Congress officially recognized the pledge and added it to the federal Flag Code in June of 1942. Today, we recite the Pledge of Allegiance with our right hand over our hearts.

The final change to the pledge occurred in June 1954, during the Cold War when Americans wanted to distinguish the United States from state atheism promoted by communist countries. President Dwight D. Eisenhower and other American presidents were honoring President Abraham Lincoln's birthday by attending Lincoln's

church. The pastor's sermon that day was based on the Gettysburg Address. He stated that Lincoln's words "under God" were what truly set the United States apart from other countries. Eisenhower was so moved that he pressured Congress to add the words "under God" to the pledge, and on June 14, 1954, in a Joint Resolution to the Flag Code, Congress created the Pledge of Allegiance we know today.

I have recited these words thousands of times in my life and never questioned them. However, given all the media blitz during this highly polarized political election year, several words truly caught my attention when I recited it last. When I got to the words, "and to the Republic for which it stands," my mind drifted to all the

media commentary related to threats to democracy and the rebuttals that firmly state that we are a republic and not a democracy.

This is another area where we take these terms for granted and often use them interchangeably to describe our form of government.

Our Founding Fathers did their homework and studied history and the success and failures of different forms of

government. They wanted to avoid the tyranny of a monarchy and mob rule of a pure democracy, so they created a constitutional federal republic that is mixed with elements of democracy.

A constitutional republic is a form of government in which representatives elected by the people perform their duties under the constraints of a constitution that specifies and limits the power of government.

Our Constitution specifies the separation of powers. The legislative branch makes laws, the executive branch enforces laws, and the judicial branch interprets laws. It also contains checks and balances to ensure that no branch becomes too powerful or absolute, and these are the elements that make America a constitutional federal republic.

The Founding Fathers also wanted the will of the people and not a monarch to be reflected in the laws, and ►



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ALLEGIANCE *continued on page 6*



AECC adds capacity at Fitzhugh Generating Station

Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation (AECC) is expanding its Thomas B. Fitzhugh Generating Station near Ozark.

The \$93 million capital investment project includes adding two natural gas generating units at the Fitzhugh station, which will increase capability by 100 megawatts (MW) —

bringing the total generation capacity to 270 MW. The two additional units will also have the ability to operate on fuel oil.

“The expansion at Fitzhugh is crucial to continue providing reliable, affordable dispatchable power to our 17 member cooperatives and, ultimately, the 1.2 million electric cooperative members served by the local electric cooperatives,” said Vernon “Buddy” Hasten, president/CEO of AECC and Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. “AECC strives to be positioned to have wholesale generation resources that are not weather-dependent. The investment at Fitzhugh is intended to ensure readily dispatchable energy to meet the growing demand for electricity.”

Construction began in late September, and its completion date is slated for the fourth quarter of 2025. Fitzhugh was AECC’s first generating plant. It came online in 1963 and was repowered in 2003.



CHANCE ALLMON

Leaders of the community and the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas break ground on the expansion of the Thomas B. Fitzhugh Generating Station near Ozark on Oct. 4.


.....

ALLEGIANCE *continued from page 5*

they wanted the citizens engaged in government. To this end, they established the electoral process in which citizens vote for representatives to make decisions for them. Public opinion or the will of the people is the democratic element of our government, and it is assured through the electoral process.

However, this only works if we vote. Election Day is Nov. 5, and it is not too late to be a part of our amazing process, but we need to cast our votes. The will of the people cannot be truly known if its citizens do not vote and use the elements of a democracy to influence our system of government. Voting is a critical element of our entire system of government.

The last pledge words that caused my mind to pause were the words “one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.” The word “indivisible” has been an absolute in my thinking my entire life. But, with today’s heated rhetoric on both sides of the political aisle, I found myself thinking for the first time in my life, “I sure hope we are indivisible because the alternative is terrible for all.”

I truly believe that our nation and our cooperatives are stronger together. We should work together to ensure that future generations can recite the Pledge of Allegiance with the same certainty and confidence I have over my lifetime — to ensure that they, too, will enjoy the privilege of living in the greatest nation in history. 

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Crews assist after hurricanes Francine, Helene

In September, Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas crews assisted with power restoration in multiple states due to two hurricanes.

In mid-September, crews were dispatched to Louisiana to restore service to DEMCO members impacted by Hurricane Francine.

In late September, crews were dispatched to Clay Electric Cooperative of Keystone Heights, Florida, to assist with power outages from Hurricane Helene. After Florida restoration efforts were complete, crews moved to Georgia to assist with mutual aid.



Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (AECI) Utility Solutions crews assist after Hurricane Helene's destruction.

Where Is It?

Welcome back to our hidden object game, "Where Is It?"

In the October issue, we hid a black cat. Joked one correct reader who found it in a ghost towns story photo: "Don't be a 'fraidy-cat!' But if you creep really slowly, you might see the little black Halloween kitty sitting on the steps of an old, abandoned house in Rush ... page 18!"

In a random drawing of correct answers, five winners were selected to receive Arkansas Living mugs:

- Steve Avery, London (Arkansas Valley Electric Cooperative)
- Nancy Sparks, Lakeview (North Arkansas Electric Cooperative)
- Frank Obermire, Cassville, Missouri (Carroll Electric Cooperative)
- Paula Arterberry, Tontitown (Ozarks Electric Cooperative)
- Sandra McMullen, Hornersville, Missouri (Mississippi Electric Cooperative)

For November, we've hidden a Thanksgiving gravy boat, and — good gravy! — will it be a challenge to find! For a chance to win, enter by Nov. 15 via the "Where Is It?" link on the homepage of arkansaslivingmagazine.com, or go directly to

arkansaslivingmagazine.com/where-is-it-contest/.

Or mail in entries to:

Where Is It
Arkansas Living
P.O. Box 510
Little Rock, AR 72203.

Include your name, address and electric co-op (nonmembers also are eligible), plus the correct page number.

** If your magazine arrives after the deadline, submit your entry by the 15th of the following month. We'll send a prize to a randomly selected latecomer! September's winner was: Barbara Mathes, Mayflower (nonmember).*



- Butterball turkeys are processed at two plants in Arkansas — Ozark and Huntsville.
- Debuting in 1968, Snoopy holds the record for most appearances in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.
- Egyptians were the first group of people to use scarecrows.
- The sound of leaves rustling in the wind is called psithurism.
- On Nov. 26, 1922, archeologist Howard Carter opened King Tutankhamun's tomb in Egypt.
- Apple doesn't allow villains to use their products in movies or television shows.
- You can always see your nose, but your brain chooses to ignore it.
- In 1801, James Monroe received every electoral vote but one. A New Hampshire delegate wanted George Washington to be the only president ever elected unani-mously.
- Fingers have fingertips, but toes don't have toetips. Although you can tiptoe but not tipfinger.
- Las Vegas' new, 875,000-square-foot entertainment venue, Sphere, is the largest spherical structure in the world.
- "Remember that the one who forgets the language of grati-tude can never be on speaking terms with happiness."
— John Robbins, author



Swans a Swimming

Arkansas awaits the return of the trumpeters

PHOTOS BY ARKANSAS LIVING READERS





ABOVE Trumpeter swans in fog. DEBBIE CANNON FRITSCHÉ

TOP RIGHT A trumpeter swan hides its face with its wing while grooming. LEAH SMITH



BY JACK SCHNEDLER

Arkansas' most captivating winter visitors fly to The Natural State from the distant north around the end of each November. They stay three months or so, attracting admirers to their seasonal Cleburne County home on three small lakes a half-dozen miles east of Heber Springs.

They are trumpeter swans. Their celebrity status reflects their stature as North America's largest waterfowl, weighing 15 to 30 pounds with wings spanning 6 to 10 feet. Their snowy white plumage as adults would suit them for the starring role in Hans Christian Andersen's timeless fairy tale about the gorgeous swan long scorned wrongly as an ugly duckling.

"What makes trumpeters so amazing is their size, but also their beauty and their grace in flight," says Karen Rowe, bird conservation program coordinator for the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. "They have real strength, as seen when they take off from the water. Their trumpeting call is the source of their name. It's sometimes musical, and it's wonderful to hear."

Trumpeter swans were common in Arkansas two centuries ago, but settlers found them to be easy hunting. Rowe points out, "They are huge birds, easy to hit, and they produced a lot of food as well as feathers." ➤

By the 1880s, migrating trumpeters were gone from Arkansas. By 1930, fewer than 70 were known to exist anywhere in the United States or Canada. Extinction seemed to loom. Then, work by various wildlife agencies and the Trumpeter Swan Society gradually rebuilt the wild population, now estimated to be as many as 50,000 birds.

Swan lakes

The first winter migrants reported in Arkansas were three trumpeters seen early in 1992 at privately owned Magness Lake. A fenced viewing location with parking exists along Hays Road, where much smaller waterfowl species sometimes mingle with the swans on the 30-acre oxbow lake.

In the mid-1990s, two swan-friendly artificial lakes were created a few miles southeast of Magness on the property of Verlon Abrams, a former Arkansas commander of the American Legion.

“Verlon is the unsung hero of our local swans,” Rowe says. “His lakes have become so popular that they are marked on Google Maps.”

After the digging of the unnamed 14-acre and 22-acre lakes off Hiram Road, Abrams placed shoreline corn feeders to attract the trumpeters. There are no fences, and the swans seem accustomed to close-range viewers. On some days, more swans can be seen here than at Magness Lake. The overall total last winter was 300 or more.

Abrams died in September 2023. His lakes are being maintained for the trumpeters by his daughter, Vicki

Owens, with the invaluable help of retired teacher Kenny Nations. As longtime friends of the Abrams family, Nations and Terry Butler have continued filling the lakeside feeders with the corn that is a favored swan food. They’ve also kept watch on the sites.

“Trumpeters are very docile, and they don’t seem to mind visitors,” says Nations, who also helps maintain the Magness Lake viewing area. “I sometimes monitor the shoreline and caution people if they’re getting too close or misbehaving, like throwing things in the water.”

Owens describes the swans as “very entertaining while communicating with each other and their juveniles. They often squabble, and you will see them chasing each other while nipping. It’s also a sight to see these large birds coming in for a landing with their amazing glide across the water.”

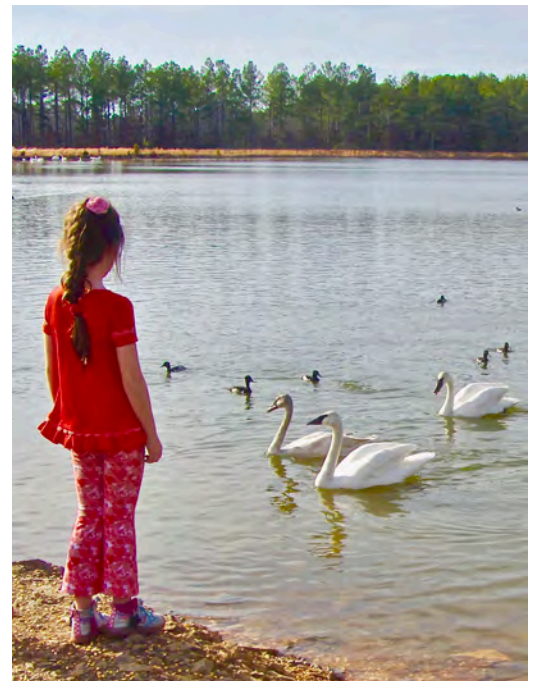
Birds of a feather

Scattered swan sightings have occurred elsewhere in Arkansas. But Rowe says that the Cleburne County trumpeters “are the only large winter gathering in Arkansas. They are also the southernmost large migrating population in the United States.”

It is unknown why the first swans three decades ago settled at Magness Lake. The species is almost entirely vegetarian, feeding on leaves and stems of aquatic plants. The shallow Cleburne County lakes provide ample food, supplemented by the corn that Nations and Butler stock in the winter. At the two lakes, swans consume at least 10



ABOVE Swans walking on water. LEAH SMITH



RIGHT Two man-made lakes off of Hiram Road in Heber Springs give visitors an up-close look at the trumpeter swans. MARCIA SCHNEIDLER

tons of corn each winter.

The increasing winter swan count here is explained by Rowe as a generational process: “The juvenile swans learn the route from their parents. Later, they bring along their own offspring — and so on and so on.”

The young swans, known as cygnets, can be distinguished from the all-white adults by their gray or brown plumage patches. Adults usually mate for life at age 3 or 4. They normally stay with their offspring for the first year or so.

Nations, who has become an avid photographer of the trumpeters, suggests that the best time of day to take their picture “is very late afternoon or the evening with the sun behind you.” He reminds visitors “not to feed the swans corn by hand. Don’t ever feed them bread or other human food. And always keep your dogs in your vehicle.”

It is an open question whether flocks of trumpeter swans will continue wintering in Arkansas in the years and decades ahead. The species has made a remarkable comeback, but its future survival is threatened, principally by loss of habitat to human incursion.

Their uncertain fate is yet another reason to visit the Cleburne County lakes this winter. 



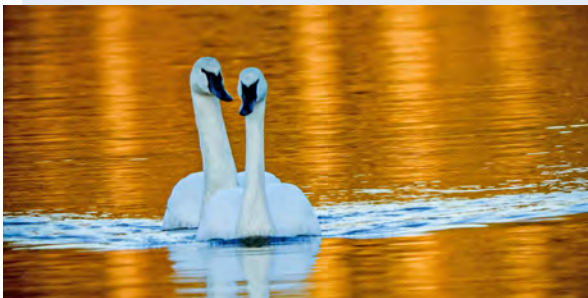
Trumpeter swans coming in for a landing at Magness Lake, Heber Springs. DEBBIE SMITH

TRACKING THE TRUMPETERS

Magness Lake: Drive east on Arkansas 110 from its intersection with the Arkansas 5/25 Bypass just east of Heber Springs. Go 4 miles to Sovereign Grace Baptist Church, marked with a white sign. Turn left onto paved Hays Road. Go a half mile to Magness Lake, which has a parking area on the right.

The Abrams Lakes: From the Arkansas 5/25 intersection, head east for 2 1/2 miles on Arkansas 110. Turn right on Hiram Road, marked with a small “Swans” sign, to reach the first lake created by Verlon Abrams in about 4 miles and his second pond in another mile.

The Heber Springs Chamber of Commerce provides updates on the presence of the swans. Visit heber-springs.com or [facebook.com/HeberSpringsChamber](https://www.facebook.com/HeberSpringsChamber).



Retired teacher Kenny Nations, who took this photo, helps maintain the areas the trumpeter swans have claimed as their winter homes. KENNY NATIONS

Trumpeter stats and facts

Wingspan: 6 to 10 feet

Weight: 15 to 30 pounds

Lifespan: Up to 24 years

Male name: Cob

Female name: Pen

Juvenile name: Cygnet

Term for a group: Bevy

Term in flight: Wedge

Term on the ground: Bank



Hope for Change

CEO's column inspires students' veteran coin project

BY JENNIFER CHRISTMAN CIA

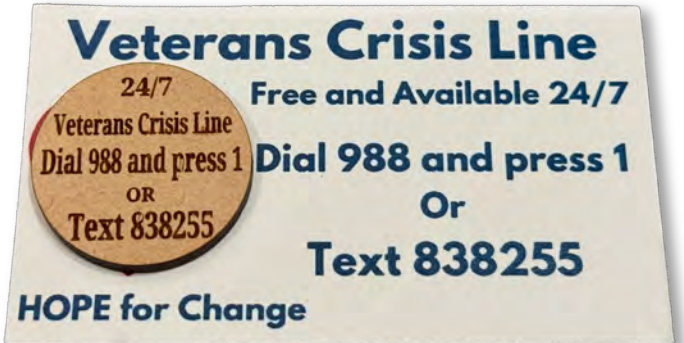
Veterans Day, observed Nov. 11, is always meaningful to Vernon “Buddy” Hasten.

He had a 20-year Navy career before joining the power industry and ultimately becoming president and CEO of Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., and Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation.

Last November, Hasten shared in “Thankful for Veterans,” his column in Arkansas Living magazine, that the occasion personally meant more to him than ever before due to a painful family tragedy.

“My nephew, Jeremy — an Army Ranger who served tours in Afghanistan, Iraq and Kuwait, and a father — took his own life on his 37th birthday,” he wrote. “Jeremy struggled with PTSD, and while he had transitioned to civilian life, he ultimately lost the battle. Jeremy is missed and remembered by a large and loving family.”

Last year, as fifth graders, Luke Ajayi and Kevin Nguyen of John Tyson Elementary School of Innovation in Springdale, read Hasten’s column, encouraged by their teacher, Jennifer Boogaart, an Ozarks Electric Cooperative member. A regular reader of Arkansas Living (as well as a recipe contributor), Boogaart — the school’s Education Accelerated by Service and Technology (EAST) facilitator



Hope for Change coins, created by students Kevin Nguyen and Luke Ajayi, help to spread awareness of the Veterans Crisis Line.

and the Gifted and Talented (GT) teacher — said she often shares the magazine with her students.

Reading Hasten’s column moved Luke and Kevin to devote a school project to the critical cause of veterans’ mental health.

In the duo’s self-made video about their project, Kevin said, “The article said that more than 6,000 veterans die by suicide every year, which is double the general population. ... Buddy Hasten’s article inspired us to start thinking about what we could do to help.”

Pocket-sized support

Reading about the national, round-the-clock Veterans Crisis Line, Luke and Kevin aspired to spread awareness about the free service in a tangible, scalable way.

“They worked all year and finally came up with a product that they’re really proud of,” Boogaart said with a smile, her own pride for her students evident.

That product: Hope for Change. Through multiple attempts and redesigns, the two created a laser-printed wooden, quarter-sized coin attached to a business card. Both contain the same life-saving information: “24/7 Veterans Crisis Line, Dial 988 and press 1 or Text 838255.”

Their goal is to produce and share as many coins as possible, distributing them through organizations that care for veterans, as well as fire and police stations. Speaking of police, the Redfield Police Department honored Luke and



Vernon “Buddy” Hasten, president and CEO of Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., and Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation, congratulates students Luke Ajayi and Kevin Nguyen after presenting their Hope for Change project.



CHANGE ALLIUM

Students Kevin Nguyen and Luke Ajayi present their Hope for Change project at the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas Directors' Summer Conference in Rogers.



JENNIFER CHRISTMAN CIA

Kevin with an Everyday Heroes Award.

Coins were distributed to attendees of the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas Directors' Summer Conference in July in Rogers, where the students made a stage presentation about — and received a standing ovation for — Hope for Change.

While Hasten's words initially motivated the students, Hasten said, he was equally affected by them.

"What an outstanding job by two amazing young men," he said. "They did a phenomenal job representing their project, their school and their families, and they have a lot to be proud of.

"Our entire conference was inspired by Luke and Kevin."

In return, the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas wanted to help the students to produce coins and promote Hope for Change.

Senior Director of Corporate Communications Rob Roedel, who served as the conference's emcee, shared a conversation he had with Boogaart. "I called her, and I said, 'We want to help you guys. And she says, 'No, we don't want anything. I'm trying to teach them about service.' I said, 'We're going to help you. Because we're about service too, but service sometimes takes a little help, and this program is very special.'"

He presented Luke and Kevin with a check, asking, "Five hundred dollars. Do you think that will help you guys make some coins?"

"Yes!" both answered wide-eyed and emphatically to much applause.

It is the sincere hope of the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas that Hope for Change succeeds and endures. After all, like Kevin said in their video, "Mental health matters. Veterans matter. Our project matters. We have hope that our coin will lead a veteran to make a change."

Hope for Change coins can be acquired by contacting Jennifer Boogaart at jboogaart@sdale.org. 

The students' display shows Hope for Change's evolution from a large disk to a small coin fastened to a business card.



COURTESY OF JENNIFER BOOGAART

Coming together for a cause: Luke Ajayi (center) and teacher Jennifer Boogaart (right) pose with Dr. George Velez (left), CEO and medical center director for the Veterans Healthcare System of the Ozarks, at the September Health Summit in Fayetteville.



Tastes of Arkansas

Arkansas Food Hall of Fame honors inductees

BY KAT ROBINSON

Arkansas' people and its top food experts have named the 2024 class of the Arkansas Food Hall of Fame. Nominations from all 75 counties were taken by the Division of Arkansas Heritage in the spring of this year, and on Sept. 30, this year's inductees were announced.

This year's three inductees as Arkansas Food Hall of Fame Restaurants were:

Herman's Ribhouse

2901 N. College Ave., Fayetteville
(479) 442-9671, hermansribhouse.com

This Fayetteville eatery, originally opened by Herman Tuck in 1964, has become the place for the city to celebrate victories — personal victories such as business deals, engagements and reunions and public victories like Razorback football, basketball and baseball wins. Current owner, Dominique Wright, worked his way up from dishwasher to manager to owner through dedication of keeping the restaurant's best dishes, simply adding to the flavor to keep folks coming back in the door.



COURTESY OF ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, HERITAGE AND TOURISM



Opened in 1964, Herman's Ribhouse, owned by Dominique Wright, is a winning tradition in Fayetteville.



COURTESY OF THE FADED ROSE

The Faded Rose

1619 Rebsamen Park Road, Little Rock
(501) 663-9734, thefadedrose.com

Ed and Laurie David decided back in 1981 to bring New Orleans flavors to Little Rock. After renovating a building in Little Rock's Rebsamen Park neighborhood, the couple opened the doors the next year. Over time, it became a staple in an ever-changing food scene — its owners and staff dedicated to high-quality steaks and seafood and keeping the eatery a welcoming spot for regulars and newcomers alike.

The flavors of New Orleans abound at The Faded Rose in Little Rock.

Doe's Eat Place

1023 W. Markham St., Little Rock
(501) 376-1195, doeseatplacelr.com

The Little Rock outlet, the first franchised from the original in Greenville, Mississippi, took on a life of its own under proprietors George Eldridge and his daughter, Katherine. Opened in 1988, the downtown edifice was already a hotspot known for its massive steaks and irresistible tamales before becoming the famed haunt where members of Bill Clinton's campaign staff would gather during the 1992 presidential election. Its interior's veritable wallpapering of photos of famous and notorious folks is the perfect setting for deal-making in a ravenous city.



COURTESY OF ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, HERITAGE AND TOURISM

Doe's Eat Place in Little Rock is known for its famous tamales, massive steaks and notable patrons.

PROPRIETOR OF THE YEAR

Chef Rob Nelson

Tusk and Trotter American Brasserie
110 SE A St., Bentonville
(479) 268-4494, tuskandtrotter.com

Arkansas-raised, French-trained chef Nelson's High South cuisine, through restaurants beginning with Bentonville's Tusk and Trotter in 2011, has helped shape the new generation of culinary development within our state. His dedication to connecting to local farmers and producers has become a blueprint for upcoming chefs hoping to promote Arkansas' food identity and showcase the treasures we have in our state. Nelson's mentorship is well-known, and he continues to open more outlets for his culinary creativity with a new Tusk and Trotter in Rogers and a concept he's just premiered, a barbecue destination called Brothers Meet House in Bentonville.



COURTESY OF ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, HERITAGE AND TOURISM

Chef Rob Nelson brings his celebrated High South cuisine to Northwest Arkansas.

FOOD-THEMED EVENT OF THE YEAR

Mount Nebo Chicken Fry

Dardanelle

For more than seven decades, the Mount Nebo Chicken Fry has been a celebration of chicken, which drives much of the industry in Yell County. The event includes a feast of chicken, baked beans, cumin rice and potato salad held atop Mount Nebo; a 10K race from town up the mountain; a chicken scat bingo; one of the world's largest chicken dances; and many more activities each August.



COURTESY OF MOUNT NEBO CHICKEN FRY

The Mount Nebo Chicken Fry has been a Dardanelle staple for more than 70 years.

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

Juanita's Mexican Cantina

Little Rock

This year's Arkansas Food Hall of Fame ceremony also celebrated the memory of a classic Arkansas restaurant with its Gone But Not Forgotten award: Juanita's Mexican Cantina. Half Mexican restaurant, half concert venue, the longstanding downtown destination was just as well-known for its cheese dip and beverages as it was for the musical acts it brought to its stage.



COURTESY OF ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, HERITAGE AND TOURISM

Former owner of Juanita's Mexican Cantina, Mark Abernathy (center), receives the Arkansas Food Hall of Fame Gone But Not Forgotten award from Arkansas Heritage Director Marty Ryall (left) and Secretary of the Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism Shea Lewis (right).



COURTESY OF BEECH STREET BISTRO

Beech Street Bistro in Crossett offers Cajun/Creole cuisine with a colorful vibe.

PEOPLE'S CHOICE

Beech Street Bistro

202 Beech St., Crossett
(870) 304-2183, facebook.com/beechstbistro

Each year, the general public gets to vote on the state's favorite restaurant, and this year, the people chose Beech Street Bistro in Crossett. Chester and Laura Huntsman took an old house and turned it into the heart of the community, bringing a bright and colorful Cajun/Creole eatery into a town that needed a place to celebrate. Within its brightly colored and decorated walls, the couple has conjured delightful dishes — often accompanied by Chester's narration, musical instrument playing and antics. Though the Huntsmans have had to step away due to Chester's health, the restaurant they established has quickly earned its spot as a permanent and beloved part of a hungry town.

Author Kat Robinson is a member of the Arkansas Food Hall of Fame Committee. 

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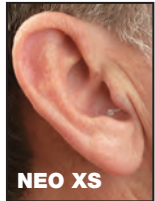
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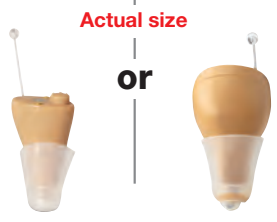
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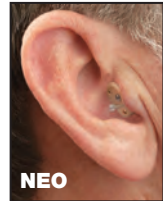
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¹ Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Federal Reserve. ² Sources: National Mining Association and Kitco.

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Crossing the Line

Ozark Highlands Trail reaches Missouri border

BY BOB ROBINSON

Spread the word to hikers across the country and around the globe: The Ozark Highlands Trail (OHT) has reached the Missouri state line! Originating at Lake Fort Smith State Park, the 300-mile footpath winds its way through northern Arkansas' scenic forests before terminating at the Missouri border.

In the words of French poet Moliere, "Long is the road from conception to completion." The road to completion of the OHT is an interesting tale, replete with heroes.

Construction of the trail began in 1977. With a secondary goal of providing young people with meaningful work experience and needed earnings, trail construction was performed by various government-funded youth employment programs, such as the Young Adult Conservation Corps and Youth Conservation Corps.

Their work was short-lived. In 1981, with only 40 miles of trail completed, the government program lost funding, and work was halted. Noted Arkansas photographer and author Tim Ernst then proposed a plan to use volunteer labor to complete 165 miles of trail and extend it to the Missouri state line. Ernst founded the Ozark Highlands Trail Association (OHTA) to achieve this ambitious objective.

OHTA's dedicated volunteers completed construction to the original eastern terminus at the Woolum crossing of the Buffalo River in 1984. By incorporating the existing Buffalo River Trail (BRT), the OHT/BRT reached Dillard's Ferry on Arkansas 14, adjoining the Lower Buffalo Wilderness.

Trail construction is not allowed in a wilderness area. Consequently, hikers are in for a "true wilderness adventure." The next 15 miles to the OHT Spring Creek Trailhead

are bushwhacking, meaning no trail and no markers. But no worries, hikers can purchase Duane Woltjen's "Ozark Highlands Trail Route Lower Buffalo Wilderness" to guide them. The guidebook and OHT maps may be purchased at ozarkhighlandstrail.com/shop.

The OHT Sylamore Section begins at the Spring Creek Trailhead. In 2000, Woltjen and his wife, Judy, of the OHTA stepped up to lead this construction. The yeoman



Hikers of all ages participate in the annual Ozark Highlands Trail Association Hare Mountain hike.



Terry Keefe Falls is one of the natural wonders along the trail.



Hiker Chuck Gibson rock hopping across Little Rocky Creek.

task of completing the 87-mile OHT/OKT (Ozarks Keystone Trail) from Matney Knob to the Missouri state line was headed by Jackson Rhoades.

After almost 50 years of volunteer labor, the 300-plus mile Ozark Highlands Trail is open for business.

“A special thanks to the thousands of volunteers who have built and maintain one of the great hiking trails in the USA — generations of hikers will follow in your footsteps,” Ernst said.

Fortunately, as OHTA’s leadership roles concluded over the years, others like current OHTA President Philip Brown have stepped up to fill those positions. His incentive mirrors that of other volunteers.

“My motivation for joining the OHTA was to ‘give back to the trail’ as a trail maintainer,” Brown said. “I accepted the duties of OHTA president to work with the board and association members to assist in the evolution of the organization.”

A walk in the woods

Arkansans are fortunate to have an internationally renowned hiking trail in their backyard. In September 2023, Sophie Dumortier traveled all the way from Switzerland to hike the OHT. Although an experienced backpacker, she found the rugged, isolated terrain of Arkansas’ Ozark Mountains more challenging than European hiking.

After settling into a backpacking routine, she expressed excitement at spotting a young fox, a boar and numerous Arkansas deer. She jokingly compared herself, with her backpack, to the turtles along the trail.

At the conclusion of Dumortier’s 165-mile, 16-day backpacking adventure, she grew comfortable with its tranquility, describing the adventure as “a great experience alone in this beautiful wild nature.”

Backpacking the OHT is not for everyone. But for many, the trail calls to them. Severing the cord with the so-called “real world” for an extended escape into the woods can be therapeutic.

The Trans Ozark Trail

As Ernst and the OHTA worked to extend the OHT to Arkansas’ northern border, John Roth and the Ozark Trail Association (OTA) constructed the Ozark Trail (OT) across southeastern Missouri. The two trails are now joined to form the Trans Ozark Trail, a continuous 700-mile footpath from Lake Fort Smith State Park, to St. Louis, Missouri. The OHT/OT are now part of the elite club of internationally renowned trails that include The Appalachian Trail and Pacific Crest Trail.

It’s just one more reason to be glad to call The Natural State home. 🍃



Hikers experience natural and unique beauty along the Ozarks Highland Trail.

BOB ROBINSON



The Ozark Highlands Trail extends 300 miles to the Arkansas/Missouri border.

PHILIP BROWN



Ozark Highlands Trail Association volunteers maintain the trail, which now extends to Missouri.

BOB ROBINSON

Glass Act

Window shopping for energy savings

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE

Q: My windows are old and drafty, and I'm thinking about replacing them. Can you recommend a few options I should consider?

A: Upgrading or improving your windows is an important component of your home's energy efficiency. According to the Department of Energy, heat gain and loss through windows consumes 25% to 30% of residential heating and cooling energy use.

Start by identifying the kind of windows you have. Are they single-pane or double-pane? Looking closely at the window's edge, you can see the number of windowpanes. Are the frames metal, wood or vinyl? Some manufacturers etch the make and model numbers in a corner of the glass, so you can look up the manufacturer for more information. Single-pane windows and double-pane windows with metal frames are the least energy-efficient. There are several options for improving your windows, ranging from replacement windows to storm windows to budget-friendly repairs.

Window efficiency

Several components can make windows more efficient. High-quality frame materials insulate and reduce heat transfer. Two or more panes of glass with space in between (filled with air or gas) improve the window's insulation capability. Warm edge spacers hold the panes of glass the proper distance apart and help insulate the edges of the panes. Low-emissivity (low-e) coatings applied to the glass can reflect infrared light, keeping the heat in during the winter and out during the summer.

Window efficiency is rated in U-factor and Solar Heat Gain Coefficient (SHGC). U-factor measures heat transfer through the window, which relates to how well it insulates. The lower the U-factor, the more efficient the window. The SHGC measures how effectively the window blocks heat from the sun.

Replacement and maintenance

If you want to replace your existing windows, I recommend shopping for ENERGY STAR®-certified windows. ENERGY STAR® sets specific U-factor and SHGC requirements based on your geography, so you get the best fit for your location. Replacement windows offer additional benefits, like improved operability and aesthetics. As with many industries, the window industry has been impacted by price increases over the past few years, so keep in mind,

this can be an expensive upgrade.


Storm windows are a lower-cost solution for some homes. Traditional storm windows are made with clear glass. Low-e storm windows have energy savings similar to replacement windows at about a third of the cost. Storm windows are mounted to the interior or exterior and are available in operable styles, so you can still open and close your windows. Look for ENERGY STAR®-certified models.

If you want to maintain the historic architecture of your existing windows, low-e storm windows are a great option. Some companies can refit your existing window frames with custom double-pane glass and weatherstripping.

As with any home improvement project, be sure to get multiple quotes to compare pricing and scope of work. You may find additional savings with rebates or tax credits for window upgrades.

If new windows or storm windows are not in the budget, your best bet is to maintain your existing windows. Keep the paint and caulking on the exterior in good condition. That will help prevent damage from the elements. Caulk around the inside trim, ensure sash locks are installed properly and seal tight when locked. There are a variety of weatherstripping types for windows to keep drafts at bay.

Whether you replace or make improvements to what you have, adding efficiency to your windows will add year-round comfort to your home.

Miranda Boutelle writes on energy-efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 electric co-ops. 



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Co-op volunteers help restore power in Jamaica

In July, First Electric's Perryville Crew Chief, John Hawkins, joined a team of nine American electric co-op lineworkers to help restore power in Jamaica. Devastation was caused by Hurricane Beryl, a Category 4 storm that severely affected the southern coast and left thousands without electricity.



Nine electric cooperative lineworkers help restore power in Jamaica following the devastation in July caused by Hurricane Beryl.

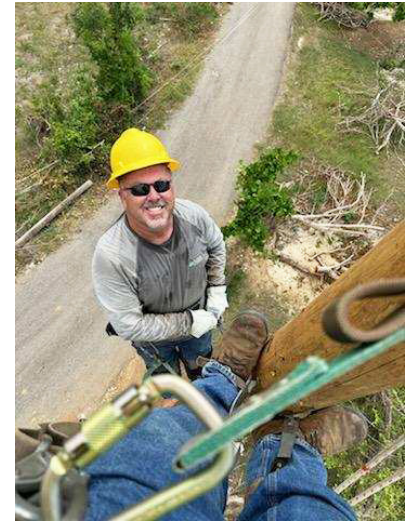
The co-op volunteers worked with Jamaica Public Service's employees in St. Elizabeth Parish, a region heavily impacted by the hurricane. Despite the challenges, the team restored power ahead of schedule, shared knowledge with local workers and returned home early.

John's dedication to improving quality of life extends beyond this recent mission. Since 2013, he has volunteered over 1,051 hours with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) International, contributing to electrification projects in Guatemala, Haiti,

Bolivia, Brazil and now Jamaica.

First Electric is proud of John's unwavering commitment to improving quality of life for our members in central and southeastern Arkansas — and beyond!

To read more, please visit: nrecainternational.coop/volunteers-restore-power-jamaica.



First Electric lineman John Hawkins volunteers to help restore power in hurricane-damaged Jamaica.

First Electric supports the Salvation Army Angel Tree program

Every child deserves to experience the joy of Christmas morning. The Salvation Army Angel Tree program helps provide Christmas gifts for hundreds of thousands of children nationwide each year. Once a child or senior adult has been registered and accepted as an Angel, their Christmas wish list is shared with donors in our community, who purchase new clothing and toys. The gifts are then distributed to the families to place under their Christmas tree.

First Electric is excited to partner with and support the Salvation Army Angel Tree program this year! Please visit one of our five office locations, (firstelectric.coop/office-locations) to select your Angel. First Electric will also serve as a delivery point for gifts; however, you are welcome to deliver them to any Salvation Army location by visiting saangeltree.org/.



Important Dates:

Participating businesses will have Angels available on Nov. 8, and Walmart locations will have them beginning on Nov. 20.

The deadline to have them returned to The Salvation Army is Dec. 6.

Members fund donations to local nonprofits



Village Walk for Cancer Research received a \$2,000 donation from Operation Round-Up.

Operation Round-Up, a member-supported program, awarded \$15,500 to 12 local organizations in October. The donations were made possible through the generosity of First Electric members who volunteer to have their bills rounded up to the next even dollar each month.

Enrolling in this program is easy: Call (800) 489-7405, use the First Electric app or visit firstelectric.coop/operation-round-up. We encourage you to join this initiative!

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Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund of Faulkner County - \$250

Lonoke County

Lonoke County Fair - \$1,000

Monroe County

Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund of Monroe County - \$250

Perry County

Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund of Perry County - \$1,000

Pulaski County

United Cerebral Palsy of Central Arkansas, Inc. - \$1,500
Restoration of Hope, Inc. - \$1,500

Saline County

Village Walk for Cancer Research - \$2,000
Habitat for Humanity of Saline County - \$2,000
Friendship Community Care - \$2,000
Civitan Services - \$2,000
Arkansas Learning Through the Arts - \$1,000

White County

Single Parent Scholarship Fund of White County - \$1,000



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**First Electric will
be closed Thursday,
Nov. 28, and
Friday, Nov. 29, for
Thanksgiving.**



Shake a (Boot)leg

Cheers to the third Ozark Moonshine & Music Festival

BY WERNER TRIESCHMANN

Call it the little festival that could. For the third year in a row, the Ozark Moonshine & Music Festival, sponsored by Petit Jean Electric Cooperative, brings the “pickin’, sippin’, dance-hall skippin’” to Van Buren County Nov. 1 and 2.

The two-day event is a unique mixture of country and bluegrass music, along with the liquid wares of Arkansas distillers — including Little Rock’s Rock Town Distillery, Newport’s Postmaster Distillery and Helena’s Delta Dirt Distillery.

The festival will also feature arts and crafts vendors and food trucks. Signature cocktails and beer will be available for purchase at the bar, with regular tastings at the Distiller’s Expo.

In addition, expect chain saw carving, blacksmithing and archery. There will be educational exhibits and historic reenactments, along with guests from Discovery Channel’s “Master Distiller” and “Moonshiners.”

The big change for the festival this year comes with a switch in locations from a shopping center parking lot in Fairfield Bay to the Van Buren County Fairgrounds in Clinton.



There will be plenty of pickin’, sippin’ and dance-hall skippin’ at the third annual Ozark Moonshine & Music Festival that has relocated to Clinton.

something when approximately 6,000 traveled to Fairfield Bay and passed through the gates the first year. Attendance last year surpassed 7,000.

“Our vision is by 2027 to be the largest live music festival in the state,” Simpson says. “We had 25 craft vendors last year, and this year we have 57. Our number of food trucks will increase as well.”

Not all festivals that sprout up in Arkansas are as dedicated as the Ozark Moonshine & Music Festival, which is established as a nonprofit and conducts outreach programs throughout the year. Children’s Advocacy Alliance (CAA) is the festival’s main charity focus, raising funds and awareness of CAA’s mission to help “neglected and abused children in central Arkansas.”

The music acts for the 2024 festival corresponds to the growth it has experienced. There will be two stages occupied with acts playing throughout both days. Country hitmakers Lonestar, seller of 10 million plus records and Country Music Association (CMA) winners, headlines. Simpson notes that

Festival CEO Ginger Simpson doesn’t hide the festival’s desire to grow as it continues. Organizers knew they had



Chain saw carving, blacksmithing and archery will be part of the festivities at the Ozark Moonshine & Music Festival.



More than 7,000 festivalgoers are expected this year, many of whom will visit the Distiller’s Expo for tastings.

Lonestar's stage is large enough to be trucked in by an 18-wheeler. Other festival acts are concentrated in the bluegrass genre, including Arkansas band The Gravel Yard Bluegrass Band, a "fusion of old-school bluegrass and soulful country."

Distillers will be sharing what they know and make during the festival, and organizers don't want the history of moonshine in Arkansas to pass by without comment. They dedicate part of the festival website to a modest history lesson about the Prohibition Era and note that the homemade moonshine and moonshine makers who had to hide from the law are "part of Southern culture."

To drive the point home, visitors to the festival get a chance to play a game that mimics the old cat-and-mouse criminal and police chase of a bygone era.

At the festival gate, attendees will be given the option to attend the event as a "Bootlegger" or as a "Revenuer." Purchasing a Revenuer's badge (\$5 directly benefitting CAA) ensures you will not be sent to "Bootlegger Jail" at any point during the festival. If you are not wearing a Revenuer's badge, however, you take your chances of being identified as a Bootlegger and sent to "jail," where donations of "bail money" benefitting CAA will be demanded for your release.

Why take a chance? Buy yourself a badge, so you can fully enjoy the "pickin', sippin', dance-hall skippin'" without lookin' over your shoulder for the long arm of the law.

The Ozark Moonshine & Music Festival takes place at the Van Buren County Fairgrounds in Clinton from 1-10 p.m. Nov. 1 and 10 a.m.-10 p.m. Nov. 2. One-day festival passes cost \$45-\$60. Two-day festival passes cost \$85-\$100.

Tickets are available at the gate or online at ozarkmoonshinefest.org. For more information, call (501) 546-4007. 



COURTESY OF OZARK MOONSHINE AND MUSIC FESTIVAL

Some of the music festival's proceeds will support the Children's Advocacy Alliance, helping local neglected and abused children.

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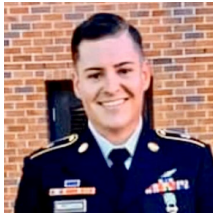


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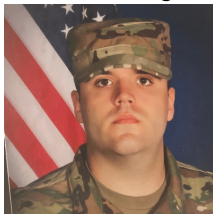
Johnny Bradley



Kevin Dixon



Kyle Sanders



Luke Irving



Mark Hamby



Mitch Swann



Nate Roberts



Paul Simmons



Shawn Berry



Tel Webster



Tim Hendricks

Not pictured: Jordan Lott and Matt Goetz.

MEMBER BASICS: Joint vs. Single Membership

First Electric Cooperative members have either a joint or single membership.

A single membership lists one name on the account and bill. Only that person can inquire about specific account information or change their service. In addition, only the person listed may vote in the cooperative's annual election.

A joint membership is two persons who are married to each other. Both people may inquire about account information and make changes to the service. Although only one vote is allowed per membership, either may cast the vote.

Members who want to add or remove a person from an account may call (800) 489-7405 during regular business hours. A member service representative will be able to explain what form and document(s) are needed to make the change.

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Snapshots from our readers



Unexpected beauty caught in a rain puddle. Crystal Hollis, Fairfield Bay.



Kamden with his goat Daisy Mae. Frankie Read, Blytheville.



Wylee Ann is in her "Hen Den Coop DeVille!" Stormie Thomas, Star City.



Brooks learning the art of fly-fishing. Toni Woodard, VMStudio. Taken at Dry Run Creek.



Kloey-Dawn is pumpkin-picking perfection. Martha Higgins, Jonesboro.



Cat-ching a few rays. Steven Sams, Hindsville.



Ryleigh is the cutest pumpkin. Raegan Gentry, at Schaefer's Pumpkin Patch.



Ethan and Elijah see the Big Boy locomotive at its stop in Kingsland. Denise Coston, Searcy.



Kolt says, "Oh, life is good!" Hope Hartsfield, at Jackson Farm in Black Rock.

Share your photos with your fellow Arkansas Living readers! Please submit high-resolution photos with detailed information about the pictures (who took it, where, who is in it, etc.) to: arkansaslivingmagazine.com/submit-a-photo.

Bloom Boom

Plant bulbs for springtime splendor




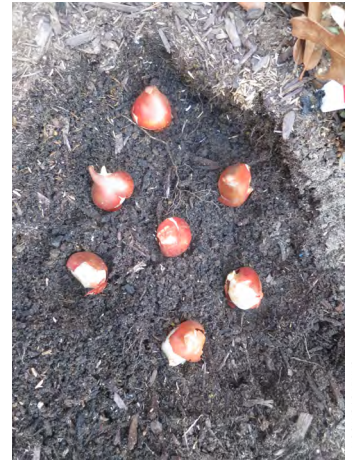
BY JANET B. CARSON

One of the easiest ways to add color to your spring garden is to plant spring-flowering bulbs. Now through early January is the ideal time to plant.

When choosing bulbs, select those that are large, firm and blemish-free. The size of the bulb determines the size of the flower next spring.

Plant bulbs in holes two to three times their size, deep in the ground in a sunny, well-drained location. Planting in large masses will make a stunning display next spring. Bulbs are sold in their dormant or dry state. When planted, they begin to initiate roots, and the stems inside the bulbs begin to grow.

Spring-blooming bulbs need to go through a chilling process to reach their full potential. Typically, a minimum of 12 to 16 weeks of temperatures between 35 and 50 degrees are required for the bulbs to stretch and elongate a stem and leaves. The colder the winter, the taller the tulips and daffodils will be. 



Planting bulbs in large masses will make a stunning spring display.

Crocuses are early bloomers and come in yellow, purple and white.

| BULB TYPE | CHARACTERISTICS | COLOR VARIETIES |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| Crocuses | Early bloomer, small corm, multiplies over time. Long-lived and deer-resistant. Plant 3 inches deep. | Yellow, purple and white. |
| Grape Hyacinths | Small bulbs. Cluster many close together to make an impact in the spring. Plant 3-4 inches deep and 2 inches apart. Foliage will appear in early winter, blooms early spring. | Short clusters of purple, white or pink blooms. |
| Hyacinths | Mid-season bloomer. Larger bulb. Plant 4-6 inches deep. Most fragrant of the bulbs. Fertilize annually after bloom to encourage larger blooms next year. | Purple, pink, white, yellow and apricot blooms. |
| Daffodils | Early, mid-season and late varieties. Large bulbs. Plant 4-8 inches deep, depending on the size of bulb. Very long-lived. Can be naturalized and will come back for years. Deer-resistant. | Yellow, orange, white or petals with yellow, orange, white, red or pink cups. Single and double varieties. |
| Tulips | Early, mid-season and late varieties. Bulb size varies with species, so planting depth will vary. Often considered the showiest spring bulb and highly prized. In Arkansas, they are usually treated as an annual, so depth of planting not as critical (if you are planning to dispose of them after bloom). Not deer-resistant. | Wide range of colors from red, pink, purple, orange, yellow and white. Bi-colors and parrot forms available. Stems will continue to grow even as they open in bloom. |
| Flowering Onions (Alliums) | The last spring bloomer to bloom. Large, globe-shaped flowers with a slight oniony smell. Large, expensive bulbs. Plant three times as deep as they are wide. Long-lived, deer-resistant. | Purple, pink or white. Short and tall varieties exist. |



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Twice as Nice

Tasty recipes transform Thanksgiving leftovers

RECIPES AND PHOTOS
BY JULIANA GOODWIN

Curried Wild Rice and Turkey in Acorn Squash

Makes 4 servings.

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----|--------------------------------|
| 1 | cup wild rice mix uncooked | 1/2 | large red onion, chopped |
| 1 | 1/2-2 cups chicken broth | 2 | Granny Smith apples, chopped |
| 1 | acorn squash | 2 | teaspoons curry powder |
| | Olive oil | 1 | cup leftover turkey, diced |
| | Salt | 1/3 | cup pecans or walnuts, chopped |
| | Sprinkle of pumpkin pie seasoning | 1/4 | cup dried cranberries |
| 2 | teaspoons brown sugar, divided | | |
| 2 | tablespoons olive oil | | |

Make rice according to package directions, substituting chicken broth for water. Start rice before baking acorn squash.

Heat oven to 400. Slice acorn squash in half and scrape



out seeds. Rub inside with olive oil. Sprinkle with salt. Bake cut side down for 20 minutes. Flip it over, sprinkle pumpkin pie seasoning and 1 teaspoon brown sugar in each half. Bake for another 20 minutes cut side up. Set aside to cool slightly.

In a large nonstick skillet, heat olive oil. Add red onion and cook for 5 minutes. Add apples and curry and cook for 3-4 minutes. Stir in rice, turkey, nuts and dried cranberries. Toss just until combined. Don't overmix.

Slice each acorn half in half again. Fill with rice mixture so it is spilling out on plate.

Butternut Squash Bisque with Leftover Mashed Potatoes

Makes 5 servings.

- | | | | |
|-----|---|-----|------------------------------|
| 2 | tablespoons olive oil | 2 | carrots, peeled and sliced |
| 1 | yellow onion, chopped | 5 | cups chicken broth |
| 1/4 | teaspoon ground ginger | 1 | cup apple juice |
| 3/4 | teaspoon cinnamon | 1/2 | teaspoon salt |
| 1/2 | teaspoon curry or turmeric | | Water as needed |
| 1/4 | teaspoon pepper | 1 | cup leftover mashed potatoes |
| 1 | butternut squash, peeled, chopped and seeds removed | 1/4 | cup heavy cream |

In pot, heat oil and add onion. Cook for 5 minutes. Add ginger, cinnamon, curry/turmeric and pepper, and cook for 1 minute. Add butternut squash, carrots, chicken broth, apple juice and salt. If liquid does not cover vegetables, add water until it does. Boil until vegetables are fork-tender, 20-



25 minutes. Once tender, remove from heat, stir in mashed potatoes, and cool for 5 minutes. Stir in heavy cream.

Purée using an immersion blender or by dividing into batches and using a regular blender. Taste and add more salt or cinnamon as desired.



Berry Salad with Cranberry Dressing

Makes 4 servings.

Cranberry dressing

- 1/4 cup cranberry sauce
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 small garlic clove
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- Pinch of salt

Salad

- 6 cups mixed greens
- 8 strawberries, sliced
- 16 blackberries
- 1 small cucumber, sliced
- 2 ounces goat cheese crumbles
- 4 tablespoons pecans or walnuts, chopped

For dressing: Place all ingredients in food processor, and process until smooth.

For salad: Divide all salad ingredients evenly between four bowls. Serve with cranberry dressing. Refrigerate leftover dressing.



This month's web exclusive recipe:
**Cranberry, Ham, Turkey
 and Gouda Sliders**

More recipes on our website:
arkansaslivingmagazine.com

*Juliana Goodwin is a food columnist, cookbook author and avid traveler.
 If you have a question, email julianalovesfood23@gmail.com.*

Simple Suppers

One-pot wonders make cooking — and cleanup — a snap!

Bar B Q Sandwiches

Makes 8-10 servings.

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------|---------------------------------|
| 1 1/2 pounds ground beef | 2 | tablespoons barbecue sauce |
| 3/4 cup celery, chopped | | |
| 3/4 cup onion, chopped | 2 | tablespoons vinegar |
| 1/2 cup green pepper, chopped | 1 | tablespoon Worcestershire sauce |
| 1 (8-ounce) can tomato sauce | 1 | tablespoon mustard |
| 1/4 cup ketchup | 1 1/2 | teaspoons salt |
| 2 tablespoons brown sugar | 1/4 | teaspoon pepper |
| | 8-10 | hamburger buns |

In a large skillet, brown ground beef and drain. Set aside.

Sauté celery, onion and green pepper until tender. Add in tomato sauce, ketchup, brown sugar, barbecue sauce, vinegar, Worcestershire sauce, mustard, salt, pepper and beef, cooking until all ingredients are combined and hot. Serve on buns.

Recipe by Judy Giddings of Hot Springs, shared by daughter, Erin Rogers, who works for Ozarks Electric in Fayetteville



Easiest Chicken and Veggie Dinner

- Olive oil and butter for sautéing
- 2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cubed
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 3 large zucchini, peeled and diced
- 2 (14-ounce) cans of diced tomatoes
- 1 (14-ounce) can of sliced mushrooms, drained
- Grated Parmesan cheese

Add olive oil and butter to a large skillet. Season chicken with salt and pepper to taste.

Over medium-high heat, cook chicken and zucchini until chicken is done and zucchini starts to soften. Add tomatoes with juice and mushrooms. When heated through, top with Parmesan and serve.

Shawna Sewejkis, Mountain Home

Chicken Chowder

- 2 (12.5-ounce) cans chicken breast, drained and shredded
- 1 (12.5-ounce) can chicken broth
- 1 (12-ounce) can evaporated milk
- 2 (10.5-ounce) cans cream of potato soup
- 1 (10.5-ounce) can cream of chicken soup
- 1 (14.75-ounce) can cream-style corn
- 1 (10-ounce) can diced tomatoes and green chiles (I use Ro-Tel)
- Shredded cheese (optional garnish)

Add all ingredients to a large pot, stirring to mix. Heat thoroughly, but do not boil.

Garnish with shredded cheese if desired.

Notes: This recipe was from a former co-worker. It has been enjoyed by everyone at work and by many family members and friends.

Erna Spath, Mountain Home

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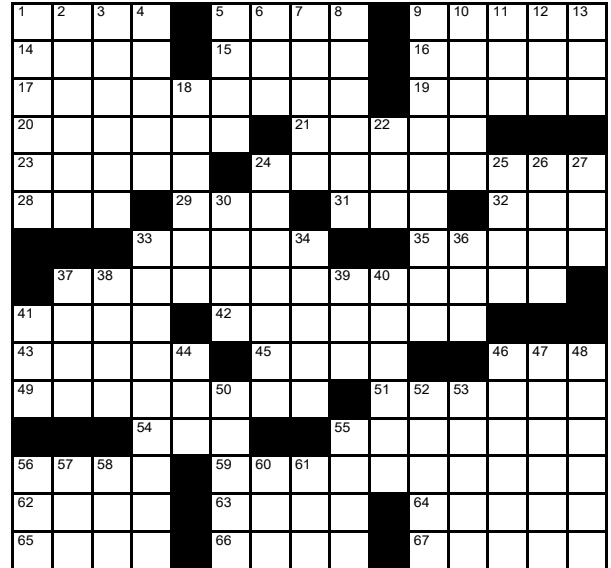
Feast on the 28th *By Victor Fleming*

ACROSS

- 1 Dinner companion, say
- 5 Poet Ogden
- 9 Sacred hymn of praise
- 14 Norse god
- 15 Danish shoe maker
- 16 Did not enjoy at all
- 17 With 24-Across, Thanksgiving table sight
- 19 Football's Graham and filmdom's Preminger
- 20 Extreme fright
- 21 "Fly Away" singer Kravitz
- 23 Bit of chef's attire
- 24 See 17-Across
- 28 Brownie's grp.
- 29 "... the end of an ___!"
- 31 Half a mint?
- 32 Disallow
- 33 Pore in a leaf
- 35 "Humble" dwelling
- 37 Thanksgiving table sight
- 41 Baseball feature
- 42 Chores requiring travel
- 43 Actor Milo
- 45 "I swear" may start it
- 46 Org. in which a 300 score is perfect
- 49 Thanksgiving table sight
- 51 "Do unto ___ ..."
- 54 '30s Giant slugger Mel
- 55 Circles around the sun
- 56 Disney chief Bob
- 59 Thanksgiving table sight
- 62 Drift
- 63 Prego rival
- 64 "It's the ___ I can do"
- 65 Like a poor loser
- 66 Celestial bodies, poetically
- 67 Lovett and Waggoner

DOWN

- 1 Army identification
- 2 Spot sellers, for short



- 3 ___ del Fuego
- 4 First month, in Madrid
- 5 Cornhusker's state (abbr.)
- 6 11-pointer, in blackjack
- 7 La ___ (Milan opera house)
- 8 "I swear!"
- 9 Item used to call home, maybe
- 10 Attendant of Bacchus
- 11 Bar assn. member
- 12 ___'s Greek Castle (Little Rock eatery)
- 13 Professionals at Arkansas Heart Hosp.
- 18 Octets with an extra member
- 22 CIA relative
- 24 "Titanic" director
- 25 Bassoon's kin
- 26 "Luck Be a ___"
- 27 About-face from WSW
- 30 Memorization method
- 33 "Ditto"
- 34 "What ___" ("Ho-hum")
- 36 Lib. inventory
- 37 Word with bed or head
- 38 Honolulu's island
- 39 Bit of ink, casually
- 40 Detach, in a way
- 41 Distress signal
- 44 Back at sea?
- 46 Correspondence buddy
- 47 One way to cook a tough cut
- 48 Liabilities' counterparts
- 50 P.C. problem-solver
- 52 Bird sound
- 53 Bee product
- 55 Computer brains (abbr.)
- 56 1040 reviewer, initially
- 57 Gloppy stuff
- 58 Anvil and stirrup site
- 60 1950s Mideast alliance
- 61 Classic sports car

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CROSSWORD ANSWERS ON PAGE 41

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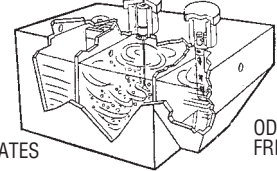
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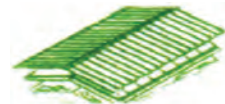
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Small town, big flavor at Highway 270 Grill in Poyen



STORY AND PHOTOS
BY ROB ROEDEL

For the record, “Small Town USA” is not only the beloved anthem of rural Arkansas that has been penned and performed by Justin Moore, it is

also the theme of the Highway 270 Grill in Poyen.

When Daniel Ellison opened the restaurant in November of 2020, his goal was to provide fresh, high-quality food with a downhome flavor.

Ellison succeeded, and as a result, the restaurant has a growing fan base. When the Highway 270 Grill began operation, it had 36 seats. Today, after a couple of expansions, it has 85 seats.

Ellison has several other businesses, but I could tell that the Highway 270 Grill was special to him, his family and employees. He said that he basically grew up in the restaurant business, and many of the recipes are from the restaurant he worked at while growing up in Missouri.

For appetizers, I was served hand-breaded fried pickle chips (fried spears are also offered) that were not the frozen variety. As I dipped the disks of goodness in the house-made ranch dressing, another basket appeared



A Fried Catfish dinner — served with slaw, okra and hushpuppies — and a side of grilled shrimp skewers make for a feast.

on my table, Brisket Bites — little nuggets of golden-brown fried treats featuring chopped smoked brisket and homemade macaroni and cheese. This is a must-try, as it is a winner.

The BBQ Stuffed Potato was a large baked potato stuffed with smoked pork (beef and chicken are also available) and topped with baked beans, barbecue sauce and shredded cheese. This creation delivered unique flavor combinations with each bite. The meats are smoked on-site. The plate came with a side of coleslaw and a slice of Texas toast.

You can't have a downhome



Since 2020, Daniel Ellison's Highway 270 Grill has pleased Poyen patrons.



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Hand-breaded fried pickle chips are the real “dill” at Highway 270 Grill.



This spud's for you: Highway 270's loaded BBQ Stuffed Potato.

restaurant without outstanding fried chicken, and the Highway 270 Grill has some good chicken. I enjoyed the Chicken Fried Chicken. This was a very large chicken breast that was hand-breaded and topped with white cream gravy. It was fork-tender and Sunday-dinner-worthy.


I was told that the Double Dipped Pork Chop was also very good. Maybe you can try one, and let me know when you visit. Make sure you try the hand-breaded onion rings, too.

The Fried Catfish dinner was a whopper. The USDA catfish was breaded in a custom blend of ingredients and fried to golden perfection. I had a side of grilled shrimp skewers also.

Highway 270 Grill offers a variety of fried pies. I sampled the establishment's Brownie Sundae.



Cheesecake Roll Ups offer a tasty twist on a classic dessert.

Poyen and is a frequent guest when he isn't on the road. The Highway 270 Grill is also a favorite of Moore's bus driver, who told Ellison that the restaurant has the best food between Poyen and Tupelo, Mississippi, where the driver resides. 

This decadent dessert included a warm fudge brownie, two scoops of ice cream, whipped cream, chocolate sauce and cherries. It hit the spot. Another unique sweet tooth item was the Cheesecake Roll Ups. Picture a cheesecake egg roll. If you are a big cheesecake lover, then you will want to save room to try them.

Of course, my favorite part of the restaurant was a relaxing, small-town atmosphere with attentive employees. County singer Justin Moore lives in

Dining recommendations? Contact Rob Roedel at rob.roedel@aecc.com.

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

for puzzle on page 38

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Calendar

COURTESY OF ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, HERITAGE AND TOURISM



Hot Springs Renaissance Faire



Arkansas Cornbread Festival



GloWild Lantern Festival



Wings Over the Prairie Festival



Coulter Celebration of Lights

COURTESY OF ASU-MOUNTAIN HOME

Nov. 1-3

Lit'l Bita Christmas

Jonesboro, astateredwolves.com/lbchristmas

Nov. 2

Arkansas River Holiday Market

Fort Smith, arholidaymarket.com

Nov. 2-3

Hot Springs Renaissance Faire

Hot Springs, hotspringsrenfaire.com

Nov. 7-9

Holiday House

Little Rock, jllr.org/holiday-house

Mountain View Bluegrass Festival

Mountain View, mountainviewbluegrass.com

Nov. 7-Jan. 4

GloWild Lantern Festival

Little Rock, littlerockzoo.com/extra-fun/glowild

Nov. 8-9

NWA Holiday Market

Springdale, nwaholidaymarket.com

Nov. 9

Arkansas Cornbread Festival

Little Rock, arkansascornbreadfestival.com

Reigning Cats & Dogs

Little Rock, warmhearts.org/reigning2024

Veterans Day Parade and Celebration

Fort Smith, facebook.com/VeteransDayParadeAtChaffeeCrossing

Nov. 19-Jan. 1

Searcy Holiday of Lights

Searcy, experiencesearcy.com/holiday-of-lights

Nov. 22-23

Mountain Home Craft Fest

Mountain Home, mhcraftfest.com

Nov. 22-Jan. 1

Lights of the Ozarks

Fayetteville, experiencefayetteville.com

Nov. 23

Lighting of the Square

Bentonville, downtownbentonville.org/event/lights

Northern Lights Holiday Festival

North Little Rock, northlittlerock.org/events/2024-northern-lights-holiday-festival

Nov. 24-Jan. 1

White River Wonderland

Batesville, whiteriverwonderland.com

Nov. 29-30

Wings Over the Prairie Festival

Stuttgart, stuttgartduckfest.com

Nov. 29-Dec. 29

Coulter Celebration of Lights

Mountain Home, asumh.edu/lights

Dec. 1-30

Enchanted Forest Trail of Lights

Sherwood, cityofsherwood.net/267/trail-of-lights

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