

LESSONS IN LIBERTY

Youth Tour connects
past, present in
Philadelphia, D.C.

Page 8

Plus:

Farm Family of the Year
School Mascot Mania
Dazzling Dragon Exhibit



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ON THE COVER

Arkansas Youth Tour delegates make their first-ever stop in Philadelphia, visiting the Liberty Bell on their way to Washington, D.C. Pictured (from left) are Braylee Logue of Crossett (Ashley-Chicot Electric), Trace Young of Arkadelphia (South Central Electric) and Evan Erwin of Hamburg (Ashley-Chicot Electric).
Photo by Chance Allmon



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Just Ducky

BY JENNIFER CHRISTMAN CIA

Every year, our Youth Tour Delegate Photo Contest results in stunning snapshots of Washington, D.C., reflecting patriotism, perspective and presence.

This year's winning photo embodies all three — and a duck!

Gliding through the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool with the Washington Monument in the distance, the duck adds personality to an already striking image. Captured by **Elijah Miller of North Arkansas Electric Cooperative**, the photo stands out for its composition, color and calm.

Says Elijah, who lives in Salem, "In that moment, I was overjoyed by getting to see the Lincoln Memorial. In my rural area, I'm used to seeing animals, but in my nation's capital, I was honestly surprised."

During the trip, students were encouraged to photograph their experiences and enter their best work. Three chaperone-selected finalist photos were posted on Arkansas Living's Facebook page, and the photo with the most likes was declared the winner. The prize? Publication here and a gift card.

In addition to Elijah, this year's finalists were **Gracey Crawford of Ouachita Electric Cooperative**, who submitted a compelling nighttime image of the Capital Wheel at National Harbor, and **Chloe Kitchens of C & L Electric**

Cooperative, who captured the reflective elegance of Arlington National Cemetery's Memorial Amphitheater in sunlit stone and shadow.

Youth Tour's beauty lies in moments like these — in letting young people take the lead, as we also did with the cover story (page 8).

They notice what



Elijah Miller



Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool by Elijah Miller of North Arkansas Electric Cooperative.

we might overlook. They find joy in small things. They remind us to pay attention.

Keep your camera ready and your ducks in a row,

Jennifer

Jennifer Christman Cia
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Watermelon Days

BY VERNON "BUDDY" HASTEN

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



Aug. 3 is National Watermelon Day and I, for one, have always loved watermelon.

I grew up in southern Iowa, and the soil near the Mississippi River has a particular combination of sand and dirt that is perfect for growing

melons. Cantaloupe (or muskmelons, as we called them), watermelons and honeydew melons all grow very well in this area. I spent my summers in high school working on a farm that raised all sorts of produce and melons.

Every time I see a pile of watermelons for sale, I'm reminded of a slow-moving tractor and wagon in the field — three men on each side tossing melons up to one man on the wagon, who stacked them in perfect rows. The hardest job belonged to the man closest to the wagon; he had to pick his own row, toss melons up to the stacker, and also catch and pitch melons from the two outer rows.

I remember my first day in the field, not knowing what was ripe and what wasn't, and just picking everything in sight. I was quickly chastised by the foreman, who then taught me how to tell what was ready to pick. It's a skill that I am always proud to showcase to my wife, Tracy, my two sons, Nick and Chad, and my daughter, Madeline, every time we go to select a watermelon. I have picked thousands of melons, and it is likely those experiences that made me so fond of the fruit.

Another favorite memory I have is going to the annual Watermelon Festival in Montrose, Iowa, every August. They would have several refrigerated semi-truck trailers full of watermelons, which were free to the public. All you had

to do was get in line, get a slice and then head off to some makeshift plywood tables to enjoy. We didn't receive a lot of treats as kids, and getting all the ice-cold watermelon we could eat was pure joy and an experience we looked forward to every year. It was also a source of pride in high school, knowing that I had picked a portion of those watermelons that everyone savored during the festival.

For most of my life, I thought the sweetest watermelons came from southeast Iowa, until someone gifted me a Cave City watermelon last year. Being a self-proclaimed watermelon aficionado, I immediately sized up this Cave City watermelon. It definitely looked impressive on the outside, but how would it sound? I gave it my patented and highly tested thump test and processed the sound with my calibrated watermelon hearing; it sounded pretty amazing. It had the deep vibrato resonance that indicated this melon was nearly perfect. However, the true test lay in cutting it open and seeing just how sweet this melon

would be. I remember being delighted by the pure sweetness, and it immediately gave me flashbacks to my early days.

A Google search for "Where are the sweetest watermelons grown?" will yield this top answer: "Cave City, Arkansas." It is attributed to the area's rich, sandy soil. I completely agree, since this matches the soil type of the sweetest watermelons I remember in Iowa.

However, Cave City

takes the prize for sweetest. The annual Cave City Watermelon Festival was scheduled for July 24-26, so I regret that by the time this article makes it to mailboxes, the festival will already be over. However, I hope that you can still get a Cave City watermelon this year to enjoy.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention other watermelon greatness in our great state. A Google search for "Where are the largest watermelons grown?" will yield this top answer: ➤



Cave City serves up slices of the good life at its annual Watermelon Festival in July. The Hope Watermelon Festival takes place Aug. 7-9.

WATERMELON *continued on page 6*

Spotlight shines on Arkansas communicators, lineworker

Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas communicators recently received honors in the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) 2025 Spotlight on Excellence Awards. The Spotlight on Excellence Awards program recognizes exceptional work produced by electric cooperative communication and marketing professionals across the country.

Arkansas Living Magazine received a gold award for Best Web-Based Project for the magazine's website, ArkansasLivingMagazine.com. The magazine won the silver Spotlight award in this category in 2024.

Arkansas communicators also received a silver award for Best Social Media Post for "Restoring Power One Time-lapse at a Time," which captivated audiences with compelling visual storytelling. The footage, captured by Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. lineworker Frankie Garcia during mutual-aid efforts following a storm in Florida last year, showcased the dedication and teamwork behind power restoration.



Scan the QR code to see the Facebook post.



COURTESY OF FRANKIE GARCIA

Lineworker Frankie Garcia during mutual-aid efforts.

Crowned and connected: Miss Arkansas has co-op roots



COURTESY OF MISS ARKANSAS

Kennedy Holland is the new Miss Arkansas 2025.

Kennedy Holland's summer plans changed in a big way when she was crowned Miss Arkansas 2025 on June 14.

The University of Central Arkansas student was interning with the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas at the Little Rock campus when she won the title, competing as Miss Metro.

Her connection to the cooperative community runs deep. Kennedy is the daughter of Katie and Sean Holland of Greenwood; Sean serves as a member of the Arkansas Valley Electric Cooperative's Board of Directors.

As Miss Arkansas, she will promote her community service initiative, Compassion Legacy, which focuses on advocating for and funding adaptive recreational spaces. She was scheduled to speak at the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas' 2025 Summer Directors' Conference in Jonesboro in late July.

She'll also shift her focus to the national stage as she prepares to compete in the Miss America pageant this September.

Congratulations, Kennedy. Your co-op family is cheering you on!


WATERMELON *continued from page 5*

"Hope, Arkansas." Hope has a history of producing record-breaking watermelons, and produced a world record holder in 2005. However, Chris Kent of Sevierville, Tennessee, broke this record in 2013, when he produced a 350.5-pound watermelon. I would love to see Hope take back the title with a real whopper this year. Hope claims to be the Watermelon Capital of the World and undoubtedly has some rights to this claim. However, watermelon.org states that seven cities make this boast, and it is too close to call, so they ask for readers to provide their input to help them decide.

The Hope Watermelon Festival is set for Aug. 7-9 this year, so if you are eagerly reading Arkansas Living as soon as it hits your mailbox, it's not too late to visit Hope to appreciate some delicious watermelon. I have yet to try a Hope watermelon, and it is on my list this summer. I can't

imagine anything sweeter than the Cave City watermelon I had last year, but I am ready to find out.

Now for the great part: Watermelon is not only sweet and tasty, it's packed with nutritional value. Watermelon is 92% water (good for hydration) and it contains lycopene, an antioxidant associated with reduced risk of heart disease. Additionally, it contains citrulline, which is associated with improved blood flow and reduced blood pressure. Watermelon is also full of vitamins A and C as well as potassium and magnesium. The Mayo Clinic even has a webpage titled, "The Wonders of Watermelon."

I am sure that readers will be split as to whether the best watermelons come from Cave City or Hope, but I hope everyone will support these local growers, seek out one of their special melons and maybe even attend a festival before summer slips away. 

Building community, one nail at a time

Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas employees turned compassion into action, volunteering with Habitat for Humanity from June 4-6. Across two home-building sites, 31 team members rolled up their sleeves, giving their time, skills and energy to build homes — and hope — for Little Rock families.

Volunteers tackled a wide range of tasks, learning new skills and making a tangible impact. The experience went far beyond construction. It was a chance to grow, connect and give back.

Compensation Analyst and organizer Doris Whitt said, “This event was a shining example of what we can achieve when we come together with purpose. Thank you to everyone who participated — you made a difference!”

Volunteers included: Matthew Bellott, Cynthia Bennett, Tory Bowren, Tammy Brantley, Linsey Cantrell, Allen Ficut, John Finley, Madison Frankum, Lily Green, Corey Hanks, Abraham Hutson, Matt Irwin, Lori Jones, Forest Kessinger, James King, Kenny Lafayette, Phillip Latus, Sarah Littleton, Lance Martin, Michael Massery, Jonathan Robertson, Rodney Scarbrough, Scott Schichtl, Iris Stanley, Kailyn Tidwell, Eugene Vlad, Stormi Walters, Angela Washington, Thomas Wheeler, Doris Whitt and Shawn Wise.



Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas employees volunteer with Habitat for Humanity.

COURTESY OF DORIS WHITT

Where Is It?

Welcome back to our hidden object contest, “Where Is It?”

In July’s issue, we hid an all-American apple pie. One correct reader who found it in a recipe headline joked, “It wasn’t easy. I had to cross my ‘t’s,’ dot my ‘i’s’ and finally found the pie as the dot over the ‘i’ in ‘Fruitful’ on page 34.”

Winners selected in our drawing to receive an insulated Arkansas Living grocery tote were:

Mary Diehl, Holiday Island (Carroll Electric Cooperative)

Karl Graewert, Quitman (First Electric Cooperative)

Jennifer Winchester, Warren (C & L Electric Cooperative)

Charles Weiss, Clinton (Petit Jean Electric Cooperative)

Morgan Hostetler, Pocahontas (Clay County Electric Cooperative)

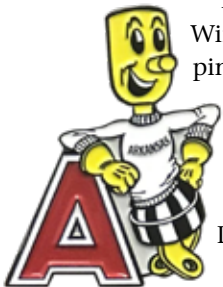
For August, we’ve hidden an Arkansas Youth Tour Willie Wiredhand pin, exchanged by students during the trip. Good luck pinpointing it!

For a chance to win a tote, enter by Aug. 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. June’s winner was: Connie Manning, De Queen (Southwest Arkansas Electric Cooperative).*



- A small, engraved cartoon is hidden in the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. The drawing of a bald-headed man known as “Kilroy” was left by Allied forces throughout Europe and the Pacific theaters of war.
- The Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., has more steps than the “Rocky” steps at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.
- The word “FUTURE” was originally misspelled on the wall of the Lincoln Memorial.
- One of the mythical creatures or grotesques on the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., is of “Star Wars” villain Darth Vader, which was the winning design in a National Geographic children’s contest.
- Arkansas artifacts — the Berns Quartz, Walmart founder Sam Walton’s cap and an outfit worn by Carlotta Walls of the Little Rock Nine — are all part of the Smithsonian Institution collection.
- An empty burial chamber for George Washington can still be found two stories below the rotunda of the U.S. Capitol.
 - At the 1957 National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) annual meeting, then-U.S. Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson spoke, urging youth to visit the nation’s capital. At his encouragement, Youth Tour was formed. Today, more than 100,000 students have participated in the educational trip to Washington, D.C.
- *“If one thing comes out of this meeting, it will be sending youngsters to the national capital where they can actually see what the flag stands for and represents.”* — Lyndon B. Johnson, 36th U.S. president

LESSONS IN LIBERTY

Youth Tour connects past, present in Philadelphia, D.C.



Representing the state's 17 electric cooperatives, Youth Tour delegates pose in front of the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool.

STORIES BY ARKANSAS YOUTH TOUR DELEGATES
PHOTOS BY CHANCE ALLMON

History came alive for 47 high school seniors during the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas Youth Tour. From June 14-20, they explored Washington, D.C., and new this year, Philadelphia — uncovering America's story, making unforgettable memories and forging new friendships.

JD Lowery, Arkansas Youth Tour coordinator and director of community and economic development for the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas, said, "Youth

Tour is a leadership trip. Students not only learn about the cooperative business model, but it often sparks interest in public

service. Adding Philadelphia to the trip before Washington, D.C., is a powerful way to experience the full arc of American history — from the founding ideals to the functioning of modern democracy."

In D.C., students attended the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Youth Day Rally. Allison Ober of Clarksville (Arkansas Valley Electric) was selected by her peers as Arkansas' Youth Leadership Council (YLC) representative, earning a \$5,000 college scholarship. She will attend state and NRECA leadership events throughout the year.

Five delegates wrote stories highlighting special parts of the trip.



Arkansas' Youth Leadership Council representative Allison Ober of Clarksville sits behind a mock Resolute desk at The People's House, a White House Experience Museum.



Youth Tour delegates take a seat in a mock Oval Office at The People's House, a White House Experience Museum.



ECHOES OF INDEPENDENCE

Visiting symbols of freedom in Philadelphia

By Sydney Turner — Fayetteville, Ozarks Electric

Youth Tour began in Philadelphia with an inspiring visit to some of history's most poignant landmarks: Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell. Independence Hall was shrouded from the surrounding metropolis by a park of towering trees; city skylines were barely visible above the grove. The visual contrast was representative of the area's unique historical significance, and of the growth inspired by the Founding Fathers who signed the Constitution in the very building that still stands tall despite its age.

The Liberty Bell no longer rings above Independence Hall. Instead, it rests in the Liberty Bell Center overlooking its former perch. Despite this, the two still feel deeply intertwined — a true representation of the values of liberty and independence fought for by America's forefathers. Even in its advanced age, the Liberty Bell is perfectly preserved and still fulfilling its role as a symbol of international peace and prosperity.

For Phoebe Hopper of Magazine (Arkansas Valley Electric), the experience was profound. "It was where history was made in pursuit of a more perfect union," she reflected. "We are still in the process of reform. We need to remember we are still on that journey."

Both sites stand as reminders of the impact of the past and present. They are powerful symbols of how far we have come and how much more we can do to ensure that future generations inherit an even greater nation.



Arkansas Valley Electric delegates (from left) Phoebe Hopper of Magazine and Elysia Cox of Scranton pose in front of the Liberty Bell.



Youth Tour delegates stand in front of the George Washington statue at Independence Hall.



NEVER FORGOTTEN

Holocaust Museum confronts painful past

By Aubrey Lee — Berryville, Carroll Electric

On our first full day in Washington, D.C., we toured the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. When we walked into the building, delegates became solemn as we began to recall this devastating history.

We walked through exhibits of the lives of the Jewish community in Europe from the late 1920s, all the way to the survivors being liberated and rebuilding their lives.

Multiple Holocaust artifacts were displayed, such as a concentration camp sign, a train car used to deport Jews and other persecuted people and a pile of shoes taken from those in the camps. Seeing these things made the event not just a story in a history book, but something real and raw that devastated millions of people.

Sadie White of Fayetteville (Ozarks Electric) said, "It made the event more alive and not just a story. Getting to talk to Ruth Cohen, a Holocaust survivor, and seeing artifacts from that time made it more impactful and feel incredibly more real." ➤

Jeremy Dunn of Clinton (Petit Jean Electric) takes a photo in the portrait gallery of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.



Cohen and her family lived in Czechoslovakia leading up to World War II and were deported from their homeland in 1944. She and her sister were sent to multiple camps during the Holocaust, one of the most notable being Auschwitz-Birkenau. In 1945, they were liberated from Holleischen Labor Camp. Afterward, she spent a year in the hospital recovering.

“Everyone — young and old — should study and learn about the Holocaust and make sure it never happens again,” Cohen said.

While the museum was tough emotionally and mentally, everyone was deeply impacted and touched by the exhibits and Cohen’s story.

Holocaust survivor Ruth Cohen speaks to students at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum about time spent in a concentration camp.



HALLOWED HALLS

History meets unexpected heroes at Capitol

By Annabelle Anderson — Forrest City, Woodruff Electric

Touring the U.S. Capitol was one of our most memorable experiences. As a high school student passionate about politics and history, walking through the Capitol felt like stepping into the pages of textbooks.

The edifice is truly stunning. The neoclassical style of architecture, along with the massive dome, evoke an overwhelming feeling of awe when stepping inside. Yet, what really caught our attention was finding the statue of Johnny Cash in the National Statuary Hall.

There he stood, guitar in hand and clad in his signature black outfit, representing Arkansas alongside a congregation of revered political personalities. It was especially fitting to see a musician honored in that setting — one who used his influence to promote prison reform and the rights of Native Americans, not just to entertain.

The opportunity to speak with our U.S. senators was one of the most significant aspects of the experience. When asked what inspired him to pursue a life of public service, Sen. Tom Cotton said, “I was in the Army, and it was rewarding to be able to serve my country that way, but I wanted to serve my country in other ways as well.”

Katie Tomboli of Pine Bluff (C & L Electric) said, “The best part for me was meeting the senators. As a person interested in politics, it was an invaluable experience to meet those who represent Arkansas in Congress.”

Walking through the Capitol that day wasn’t about hearing facts from a tour guide. It made us aware that we’re not only learning history — we’re experiencing it, and one day we’ll be the ones making history.



ABOVE Youth Tour delegates alongside Johnny Cash, the newest statue to represent Arkansas at the U.S. Capitol.

LEFT Sen. Tom Cotton (front row, right) and Sen. John Boozman (front row, left) meet Youth Tour delegates at the U.S. Capitol.



HISTORIC INK

National Archives preserves the past

By Mac Lunsford — Corning, Clay County Electric

Stepping into the sacred and silent halls of the National Archives felt like traveling back in time hundreds of years. We stood face to face with these pieces of parchment that shaped the country, now showing signs of age with faded ink. Seeing the Bill of Rights, Declaration of Independence and the Constitution outstretched filled us with awe and reverence for our country.

Besides the infamous documents, the Archives told other stories, like less-iconic Founding Father Gouverneur Morris, who authored the preamble, and Abigail Adams, who was a political adviser ➤

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to her husband, President John Adams, and an advocate for women's rights.

"It's super cool seeing the real documents that our Founding Fathers fought so hard to make. It was neat to see their signatures," said Jack Coleman of Mountain Home (North Arkansas Electric).

Visiting the National Archives, and Youth Tour as a whole, were incredible experiences. Truly, a dream come true.

SILENT TRIBUTES

Remembering heroes at Arlington Cemetery

By Kaitlyn Carmical — Cabot, First Electric



Youth Tour concluded with a profound and deeply reverent experience: a tour of Arlington National Cemetery. The hilly grounds of the sprawling memorial are lined with rows of headstones, arranged in formation to reflect the unity of those who served.

At the heart of the cemetery, the group witnessed the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The solemn ceremony underscored the sacrifice of those who gave their lives in service to the nation.

Following the ceremony, Sentinel and Beebe native E4 Specialist Jaxon Hamby spoke to the delegates about his role and daily responsibilities as a guard at the tomb.

The job, Hamby explained, is as mental as it is physical. Sentinels rotate through 26-hour shifts with 21-step walks repeated across the tomb's black mat in honor of the 21-gun salute — the military's highest tribute.

Serving at the tomb is a volunteer role. Soldiers must be stationed at Fort Myer, Virginia, in active-duty status and apply for a slot in the elite unit. Each Sentinel trains for about a year before earning the badge — one of the rarest honors in the U.S. military. Then, they spend their second year training their replacement.

When asked what meant most in his role, Hamby recalled honor flights — moments when veterans visit to lay wreaths in tribute. "It's just really, really great seeing all those soldiers who fought for our country and getting to honor them while they're honoring their fallen brothers," he said.

The history of the guard dates back to 1925, when the first civilian watch was posted. The military assumed the role a year later. Since July 2, 1937, the tomb has been guarded around the clock — 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.



Seeing the Declaration of Independence up close at the National Archives is a powerful moment.




Witnessing the guard change at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is a solemn experience.



Sentinel Jaxon Hamby of Beebe, a guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery, shares his experiences with Youth Tour delegates during their visit.

"We're always here," Hamby said. "That's the promise."

Colt Hood of Fayetteville (Ozarks Electric) said, "It really is a special place. I love that it allows the present to remember the past."

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Fueling History

South Arkansas museum celebrates oil, brine, timber

BY KAT ROBINSON

Arkansas has many treasures to celebrate. The bounty you'll find in the southern section of our state is celebrated with a unique museum that takes visitors back in time to the early 20th century, when a rush to profit from vast natural resources transformed the region.

The Arkansas Museum of Natural Resources lies along Scenic Highway 7 in Smackover, to the northwest of El Dorado. It showcases the history of three natural resources — petroleum, brine and timber — and how they changed daily life for the people who lived in south Arkansas.

Museum origins

"The focus of the museum is on the 1920s south Arkansas oil boom and the subsequent changes brought about by the discovery of oil in 1921 to south Arkansas," says museum director Jonathan Plant. "Formerly known as the Oil Heritage Center and the Arkansas Oil and Brine Museum, the museum began in 1977 when Rep. Bobby G. Newman collaborated with local families in a grassroots effort to preserve the story of the state's oil and brine industries. Newman and state Sen. W.D. Moore worked for the passage of the legislation to start the planning and development of the Arkansas Oil and Brine Museum."

A local family donated the nearly 20 acres where the museum sits today. The first version, which was designed to resemble a 1920s gas station, opened in 1986. The current facility, a 25,000-square-foot, two-story edifice, opened to the public in 1989, and it was renamed in 1997.

The center is a great place for a summertime visit, thanks to the expansive array of galleries and exhibits inside and covered picnic areas outside. The interactive exhibits make learning about Arkansas' gifts accessible to people of all ages.

Plant shares some of what visitors experience, starting with the geology gallery, which includes a simulation of an exploratory oil shaft and a walk-in globe that shows the locations of the brine fields throughout the world. "Here, they will discover how petroleum and brine developed over hundreds of millions of years ago," he shares.

The next area is a time machine, where a narrator shares a journey down into the earth. "Visitors embark on a journey from the prehistoric seas to witness the formation of oil, and then end their trip in the industrial revolution," Plant says.



KAT ROBINSON



KAT ROBINSON

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP The Arkansas Museum of Natural Resources depicts life during the 1920s, when the small town grew to around 25,000 people due to an oil boom.

The Smackover jail, the Horseshoe Café and the Republic Supply Store are some of the museum's attractions.

The museum's depiction of an oil worker in the 1920s.



KAT ROBINSON

Boom town

Leaving the time machine, a staircase takes guests down into an exhibit hall featuring a city street at night in 1923, complete with a representation of what Smackover was like when thousands of men, eager to make their mint in the oil business, descended upon the town. The discovery of oil in these parts led to a boom that exploded the population of Smackover from around 100 people in 1920 to more than 25,000 in 1925! The nearly 40 square mile oil field played host to one of the fastest mineral booms to ever hit North America. There were over 1,000 wells drilled, and production that once swelled to more than 69 million barrels a year.

“You can walk through the Horseshoe



Café, the Republic Supply Store, and even the Smackover jail,” Plant continues. “You can also explore a room in Mrs. Murphy’s Room and Board, as well as peek into the Lease Office, where deals were made inside the Rogerson Hotel. Watch a movie about the oil boom in the American Theater. Then, acquaint yourself with the story of the ‘Goat Woman of Arkansas,’ and see her original mobile home inside the museum.”

Ongoing legacy

Even after the boom ended in the 1940s, oil has continued to be pumped from the earth here, and there are active wells in 10 south Arkansas counties.

More interpretation covers the history of logging in the area, and how the piney woods of south Arkansas provided not only the structures and furniture of those who lived there but the income brought into the area by commercial wood harvesting and sales.

A further collection of galleries offers a more contemporary view of the area’s oil industry. There’s also an exhibit showcasing the South Arkansas bromine industry and some of the substance’s numerous uses. Since 2007, all brine produced in the United States has come from this brine field. Bromine has been produced in Arkansas since 1957.

Outside the museum, walk through Oil Field Park, which includes several pieces of machinery used during the oil boom and a reconstruction of a 112-foot-tall wooden derrick.

About 10,000 people visit the museum every year, and admission is free. The museum is open 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday and 1-5 p.m. Sunday. For more information, call (870) 725-2877 or visit AMNR.org.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP Gas station memorabilia lines the museum’s gallery.

The museum has a Main Street corridor with a vehicle from 1923.



Rhena Salome Miller Meyer, known as the “Goat Woman of Smackover,” was a former circus performer who lived in Smackover for many years.

The Arkansas Museum of Natural Resources collects and preserves the area’s natural resources.



Reeling in Summer

Tips to outsmart the heat and the fish



STORY AND PHOTOS BY CARLTON AND LEIGH WING

As temperatures climb, your fishing expectations don't need to fall — you just need to adjust your approach.

Fish can get hot and lethargic in the summer just like us, but also like us, they still must eat.

One of the great blessings of living in Arkansas is that we can fish all year long, so don't let the temperature or the season stop you! Here are some tips to improve your chances:

1. Fish at the beginning or end of the day.

Fish are more active at dawn or dusk when the food chain activates, and your lure has a better chance of joining in the activity.

2. Find deeper water.

It doesn't have to be very deep to make a difference to a fish, but deeper water is cooler.

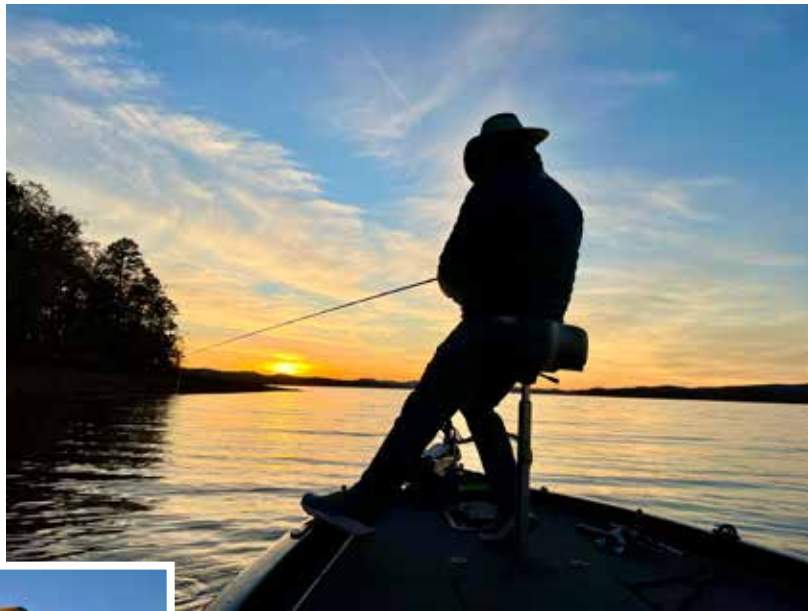
3. Find shallower water.

("Wait, but your last tip just said ...")

Fish do their own thing like people do. Some like to go deep, others shallow. Some people like pineapple on pizza, others think it's sacrilege. There are no guarantees in fishing, just percentages. (We are pro-pineapple-pizza columnists, by the way.)

4. Fish a little slower.

When fish are lethargic, they may not want to move much to chase something that may or may not be lunch. Calories are the currency of the water. If it takes 10 calories of energy to eat a 5-calorie minnow, some fish will pass unless you give them time to let the rationalization process



Dawn and dusk offer the most promising fishing conditions.



No matter the weather, it's always fishing season in Arkansas.


start. For example, imagine you just ate lunch at work, the air conditioning is out, and you really don't want to move. But if someone drags a doughnut across the conference table slowly, you have enough time to rethink your initial instinct to say, "No."

5. Fish a little faster. ("You did it again!")

Other fish need to react before they think. "Was that a doughnut? I like doughnuts!" They forget it is hot and they are trying to "cut back on the sugar." Fish typically eat when they are either hungry, mad or reacting to fast-moving food reminding them of feasts from cooler seasons.

6. Lastly, make sure to take care of yourself!

Bring water with electrolytes, find shade, take breaks and enjoy the pursuit of finding out which contradictory tip works on any given day in Arkansas' Great Outdoors.

For more "Arkansas' Great Outdoors" content, visit facebook.com/arkansasgreatoutdoors/. 

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Propelled by Passion

Meet the Hendersons, Arkansas' full-throttle Farm Family of the Year

BY JENNIFER CHRISTMAN CIA

Farming legacies are typically measured in generations, with land passed down, traditions honored and boots filled by sons and daughters who watched and toiled from childhood. But in northeast Arkansas, the Hendersons of Keiser — named Farm Family of the Year by Arkansas Farm Bureau in December — are writing a different kind of story. One that started not with a plow, but with a plane.

Murry Henderson Jr., husband of Dee and father of Bryce and Macy, laughs when people assume he grew up on a tractor. “I didn’t know anything about farming. My family doesn’t farm or has never farmed as far as I know,” the Mississippi County Electric Cooperative member says.

A first-generation farmer with no agricultural roots, Henderson built his operation from scratch — a rarity in an industry where land and know-how are often inherited. His childhood dream was aviation, not agriculture, but the two would become inseparable. Today, he operates Lepanto Crop Service, an aerial application business covering four counties, and he farms more than 4,000 acres.

With an uncle who flew as an ag pilot, Murry heard the calling of the cockpit long before climbing into one. As a child, he’d already charted his flight and therefore career path, declaring it in a letter to his parents when he was in fifth or sixth grade: “I told them I was going to be an ag pilot one day.”

He didn’t actually fly until after high school, but one ride solidified everything. “We took off down this gravel road, and we flew for about 15 or 20 minutes. And I said, ‘This is it. This is what I want to do.’”



Members of the Henderson family include (from left) Beau Blake, Macy Henderson, Murry Henderson, Dee Henderson, Abigail Nelson and Bryce Nelson.

From runway to row crops

In 1995, Murry rented an airstrip from a family member on one condition: He had to farm the 100 acres that came with it. Unsure but undeterred, he leaned on a friend, Ron Holthouse, for guidance. “He loaned me equipment. ‘I’ll teach you,’” Henderson recalls. What began as 100 acres

expanded to thousands, with fields of cotton, corn, rice and soybeans. Nearly 500 acres are owned, and the rest leased. Murry says with a laugh, “If we had to buy it all, we’d be broke.”

His brother — also a first-generation farmer — built an equally sizable operation. “Now I’m farming 4,200 acres, and he’s farming 3,800 acres,” Murry says.

In an industry where family lineage often opens doors, the Hendersons had to prove themselves. “Most of the time,



Lepanto Crop Service covers four counties in northeast Arkansas with two crop-dusting planes.



The Hendersons farm thousands of acres of cotton, corn, rice and soybeans.

Pilot Murry Henderson and his wife, Dee, operate Lepanto Crop Service and farm over 4,000 acres of row crops.

the older landlord asks, ‘Who’s your family?’” Murry says. “When I said, ‘No one,’ it was kind of a shocker.”

Still, he earned their trust. “You treat people right, do what you say, and it builds.”

While he’s built a thriving business on the land, Murry’s true passion has always been in the air. Through Lepanto Crop Service, he serves 50 to 60 customers with two crop-dusting planes.

It’s fast, demanding work, but for Murry, it’s pure joy. After more than 17,000 flight hours, the thrill hasn’t faded. “It’s kind of like being a race car driver — the adrenaline,” he says.

He enjoys running operations from a different vantage point. “Everybody thinks it’s hard. ... It’s just like being in a pickup truck, telling people what to do,” he says, adding with a grin, “I’m just in an airplane.”

But Murry knows the stakes. Crop dusting is not without danger. “About 10 ag pilots die a year,” he says, citing risks like midair collisions. Fortunately, technology is making flying safer. “We’ve got GPS systems, ADS-Bs that let us know if another plane is nearby. I’ve even got a light bar on my hood that flashes if someone’s close.”

Heart of the operation

His focus on safety isn’t just professional — it’s personal. Everything Murry does is for his family, and they’re right there with him.

His wife, Dee, has been part of the operation since Day One. She later left a nursing career to manage the business office and care for their children.

“Bringing the kids to work with us and letting them grow up out here — it really worked for us,” Dee says. “All our customers know our kids.” Now, Dee handles the books, payroll, logistics and “everything in the office,”

Murry says. “That’s a full-time job.”

The Hendersons’ children have followed similar paths as their parents. Son Bryce is a commercial airline pilot who lives in nearby Brookland with his wife, Abigail. Daughter Macy is studying nursing with plans to become a nurse practitioner, while her fiancé, Beau, is finishing his commercial pilot training and learning the ropes of ag flying from Murry firsthand.

Another vital member of the Henderson enterprise is Murry’s 78-year-old father. Murry explains, “He retired on a Friday. Monday morning, he was on my porch. He said, ‘I think I messed up. I’ve got to have something to do!’”

Recognition takes root

The Farm Family of the Year program has recognized outstanding rural families since 1947, and the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas have been proud longtime sponsors of this cherished tradition.

Being named Mississippi County Farm Family and then Northeast District Farm Family were honors in their own right. The Hendersons never expected to win the statewide title. “Huge shock. I was very floored,” Murry says. “I never considered myself a big farmer.”

So humbled was Murry that he didn’t even register his name being called — and almost missed it when it happened. He heard “Mary” not “Murry.” He says with a laugh, “I thought it was somebody else’s wife. I was still looking around, and Macy said, ‘Daddy, that’s you!’”

It was a fitting twist for a man who never imagined this life, let alone this honor. The Hendersons didn’t acquire a legacy — they founded one, acre by acre and flight by flight, fueled by grit, purpose and love.

“We’re the beginning, I guess,” Murry says. “We hope to get to pass it on.”

Dragon Discoveries

Ancient myths meet modern science at Hot Springs museum

STORY BY JACK SCHNEDLER PHOTOS BY MARCIA SCHNEDLER

The dragons have joined the dinosaurs this summer at Mid-America Science Museum on the northwest outskirts of Hot Springs.

"The Lost World of Dragons" exhibition continues through Aug. 17. That gives families time before school resumes to see a menagerie of these fearsome mythical creatures. Stars of the show are seven models of assorted fire-breathing beasts imagined across the planet from ancient times until today.

Famous fire-breathers

These often long-tailed legends have played title roles since the 1970s in the classic game "Dungeons & Dragons." They've appeared in J.R.R. Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings" trilogy, the "Harry Potter" books and films, and television's "Game of Thrones." The movie remake of "How to Train Your Dragon" is a hit this summer.

"Books often discover new audiences when they are translated to film," exhibit visitors are told. "Nonetheless, the reason a myth like dragons has survived the ages is because of our own desire for it to be real, especially when physical evidence may seem to back up the story."

Dynamite duo

The dragons complement the museum's permanent Dinotrek, an assortment of dinosaur models, some of which utter menacing roars. Two Jurassic Era species, Triceratops and Tyrannosaurus Rex, pose along the walkway from the parking lot to the entrance. A smaller dinosaur stands indoors. Ten more lurk along a mile of paved and wooded paths behind the museum.

"The Lost World of Dragons"

Where

Mid-America Science Museum
500 Mid-America Blvd., Hot Springs

When

On exhibit through Aug. 17
Hours: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, 1-5 p.m. Sunday

Admission

Adults \$14, 65 and up \$13,
children 12 and under \$12

Contact

(501) 767-3461
midamericamuseum.org



"The Lost World of Dragons" exhibit at Mid-America Science Museum in Hot Springs features creatures from China (pictured), Europe and Central America.

Visitors to "The Lost World of Dragons" see examples from around the world, including China, Europe and Central America. One posting relates the legend of the dragon that killed the Anglo-Saxon hero King Beowulf in the iconic Norse saga set in the eighth or ninth century A.D.

Visitors learn that Tolkien's novel "The Hobbit" borrowed extensively from "Beowulf." Tolkien's hero, Bilbo Baggins, disturbed Smaug the dragon while stealing a cup from its lair. Smaug spread terror and destruction before being killed by Bilbo's companion, Bard the Bowman.

Global myths

An enlightening account accompanies the model of a prehistoric pyramid dedicated to Quetzalcoatl, the feathered serpent of the Toltecs, Mayans, Aztecs and



"The Lost World of Dragons" features educational interactive components.

other prehistoric cultures in today's Mexico:

"At the center of Chichen Itza is a 79-foot-high stone pyramid dedicated to Kukulkan (Quetzalcoatl) by the Mayans around 1000 A.D. The structure embodies Mayan myth by brilliantly calculating natural astronomical cycles. Twice each year, at spring and fall equinoxes, the great serpent appears to come to life.


"Around 3 p.m., a play of light and shadow creates the eerie impression of the featured serpent gradually undulating down the stairway of the pyramid. As the shadow moves down the stairway, the body of the snake ultimately unites with one of the enormous stone heads."



A sea serpent dragon is common in German and Norse mythology.

Educational facts like this are blended with entertainment in "The Lost World of Dragons."

Available are a number of interactive kiosks, including multiple-choice questions listing four possible answers, one of which is correct.

This and other hands-on activities for youngsters provide plenty of lively detail for a back-to-school report titled "What I Did This Summer." 



Dragons have played title roles in literature and movies for years.

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First Electric delegates attend Youth Tour

Addison Warford (Bryant High School); Emma Keller (Homeschool); Rocky Knight (Perryville High School); and Kaitlyn Carmical (Cabot High School) represented First Electric at Youth Tour, an all-expenses-paid educational trip to Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., from June 14-20.

Applications for the 2026 Youth Tour will be available for high school juniors in February. For more information, visit firstelectric.coop/community/programs/youth-tour.

First Electric Youth Tour delegates (from left) Addison Warford, Emma Keller, Rocky Knight and Kaitlyn Carmical visit the U.S. Capitol during the weeklong educational trip.



CHANCE ALMON

Annual meeting recap, director election results

David Luebke has been elected to a six-year term as Director for Position 2 in the Jacksonville District of First Electric Cooperative. A longtime resident of Scott and a semi-retired farmer, Luebke brings valuable experience and familiarity with the cooperative and the communities he serves.

Luebke was approved by the nominating committee at the March meeting, held at the cooperative's headquarters in Jacksonville. He appeared on the ballot, which was mailed to members in early June. The results were verified at the cooperative's annual meeting on June 26.

Luebke previously served on the Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation board and has completed various director training programs, including the Credentialed Cooperative Director, the Director Gold Credential and Board Leadership Certificate. He is committed to continuing his training at both the state and national levels.

Beyond his cooperative work, Luebke is active in his local church and engaged in family life, with seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

NOTICE: Capital Credit margins are allocated or assigned to members who belong to the cooperative during the year in which a margin is generated. Margins are allocated proportionally based on the amount a member paid for electricity during the margin year. The amount of capital credit allocated for First Electric residential members for 2024 is 4.83%. For other rate classes, please contact our office at 800-489-7405. For more information on capital credits, go to firstelectric.coop/capital-credits.

Members fund donations to local nonprofits

The Operation Round-Up Board of Trustees met on July 10 at First Electric's headquarters in Jacksonville to review applications submitted by nonprofit organizations serving our communities.

The following applications were approved and funded:

Cleburne County

Feline Fix Them \$1,000

Perry County

Civic Improvement Association of Perry \$1,000

Pulaski County

City Connections, Inc. \$1,000

Fishnets Missions \$2,000

Goodness Village \$1,000

Holy Sews, Inc. \$2,000

Methodist Family Health Foundation \$1,500

Saline County

Boys & Girls Clubs of Saline County \$2,000

Imagination Library of Saline County \$2,000

White County

Pangburn Fire Department \$2,000

Timothy Hill Ranch Arkansas \$1,500

Since 1998, the program has donated over \$1.6 million to nonprofits and scholarships, thanks to members who voluntarily round up their electric bills by a few cents each month. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our members who participate. To enroll, call 800-489-7405 or visit firstelectric.coop/community/programs/operation-round-up.



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Mascot Mania

Arkansas schools let their spirit animals (and goblins) roar

BY CHRIS HOOTEN

When it comes to high school mascots, dogs and cats have overrun our state. Arkansas has more bulldogs than the Westminster Kennel Club, but panthers outnumber all mascots. Ironically, when most high schools first adopted mascots in the 1920s, hunters and trappers were eradicating the state's panther population.

Here's a quick look at some of our more unique mascots and their origins:

DIERKS OUTLAWS

Dierks adopted Outlaw as its mascot in the mid-'20s, but not a pistol-flashing desperado. Note the secondary definition for outlaw: an intractable horse, wild, difficult to break. The definition spilled into Dierks' reputation for breaking the rules by adding men from the lumber mill (and elsewhere) to field a football team. The town called a meeting in 1938 to consider



JUSTIN MANNING

The Fordyce Redbugs play at "Bear" Bryant Stadium, named after the famed University of Alabama football coach, who was born in Fordyce.

changing the mascot (with its unruly stereotype) to the Lumberjacks. High school athletes spoke from the heart. Donald Nunn began to cry but then shouted: "I'd rather play in red long johns and be called outlaws than to play in our new suits and be called Lumberjacks or anything else!" The crowd roared in approval and gave Nunn a standing ovation.

FORDYCE REDBUGS

Perhaps no Arkansas town has a greater reputation for its unique traditions than Fordyce, home of famed University of Alabama coach Paul "Bear" Bryant and railroad tracks (originally the famous Cotton Belt line) that practically run through the north end zone. In 1925, the Fordyce Lumber Company donated land for the field, recruiting local men and football players to clear it. Fordyce newspaper reporter Willard Clary noted that redbugs (chiggers) were "tearing up" the crew and suggested Redbugs as a mascot. A century later, Redbug Field at Paul "Bear" Bryant Stadium remains the home of the Fordyce Redbugs.

HARRISON GOLDEN GOBLINS

Soon after Clary tagged Fordyce the Redbugs, a high school senior journalist at Harrison, Tom Millard, titled the school's first newspaper in October 1926 as The Goblin. Harrison's championship basketball team, formerly the Yellow Jackets, promptly adopted the Goblin mascot, which spread to the entire school, says Goblin historian Evan Cowling. The original Goblin was a clownish, yellow imp with pointy ears, long nose and wide grin. The Goblin smiled for 40 years but turned psychedelic in 1968. It was the first of the "mean" Goblins, Cowling says, with a red face and yellow hair that popped on Harrison's navy blue helmets. The face of the Goblin returned to yellow by 1980, although the 1970s apparently took a toll. He was gaunt, losing teeth and showing need of rehab. By 2000, however, the Goblin's teeth returned.



Formerly the Yellow Jackets, Harrison High School's mascot is now the Golden Goblins.

NASHVILLE SCRAPPERS

The school hired E.T. Moody in 1921 as a teacher and football coach, and his wife, Louise, kept the football players hydrated at practice with lemonade and water. She often worried they were too small but noted they were scrappy, and the Scrappers nickname was born. Louise also chose the school's orange and black colors, but Nashville's logo was simply an "N" on jerseys and head gear until 1985, when football coach Gary Segrest, a Bigfoot enthusiast and Dallas Cowboys fan, toyed with a logo.

OZARK HILLBILLIES

Starting in grade school, Ozark students shout the battle cry: "H.P.R.D." Hillbilly Pride Runs Deep, and it has since 1935, after a coach at Fort Smith's St. Anne's Academy (closed in 1973) referred to the Ozark Bulldogs as "hillbillies and drunkards," according to former Ozark history teacher Norman Powell. The purple and gold Ozark Hillbillies initially

borrowed uniforms from the Mountaineers of what was then College of the Ozarks in Clarksville. Ozark is the only school in America with a living, breathing Hillbilly mascot, with former pastor Ted Darling playing the shotgun-totin' Mr. Hillbilly since 1996.



JUSTIN MANNING

Former pastor Ted Darling plays the Ozark Hillbilly mascot.

STUTTGART RICEBIRDS

Until the late '20s, local newspapers referred to Stuttgart as the "maroons" or "Rice Men," says Glenn Mosenthin, director of the Grand Prairie Historical Society. The term ricebird can refer to many birds, but in Arkansas County, red-winged blackbirds flock to rice fields



JUSTIN MANNING

The Stuttgart High School Ricebirds take the field.

by the hundreds of thousands. And at the time Stuttgart took Ricebirds as its mascot, blackbirds would gorge on rice from September to early December during an extended, labor-intensive "cut-and-bundle" harvest. "Not on par with mosquitoes and buffalo gnats, but those birds were a huge nuisance," says Grant Beckwith with the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service. 🍷

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Guarding Honor

Arkansas native reflects on serving at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

For E4 Specialist Jaxon Hamby, standing watch at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is more than a duty — it's a calling.

Hamby, a 2022 graduate of Beebe High School, serves as a Sentinel in Arlington National Cemetery. His path to the Army was shaped by family tradition. His father, both grandfathers and several uncles also served in the Army. Jaxon's father, Mark, is an outside fiber plant technician for Connect2First.

"I am so proud of him," Mark said. "He's an infantryman in the U.S. Army. There's only like one or two maybe three picked each time to be an Honor Guard, and he was one of them. He did it, and now, he's a full-blown Sentinel."

Speaking recently to high school students during the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas' Youth Tour, the 20-year-old soldier shared what inspired him to pursue one of the U.S. Army's most prestigious and demanding roles.

"I was a casket bearer in the cemetery before this," Hamby said. "I felt like I kind of mastered that too fast, and I wanted more of a challenge. This just seemed like the right place for me."

Stationed with the 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment in Fort Myer, Virginia, also known as "The Old Guard," Hamby volunteered to be a Sentinel. Entry requires a grueling selection and training process that Hamby likens to drinking out of a fire hose.

"We memorize 17 pages of knowledge verbatim," he said. "You're only allowed two deficiencies across your uniform and guard change — and everything is measured down to a 64th of an inch."

Hamby explained that the role demands as much mental strength as physical endurance. Sentinels work 26-hour shifts, performing repeated 21-step marches across the black mat at the tomb — a tribute to the 21-

gun salute, the military's highest honor.

A typical day begins at 5:30 a.m. with physical training, followed by hours of ceremonial duties, uniform maintenance and guard changes. Sentinels post every half hour in the summer heat and every hour in winter — regardless of weather.

"One of my first winters, I was posted for two hours in 8 degrees with snow and ice coming off the trees," Hamby said. "It was terrible, but it was worth it."

Even off the mat, duties don't end. At night, guards switch to camouflage uniforms and take turns patrolling the plaza to ensure the tomb remains watched at all times.

Now, after completing nearly 600 walks, it's become second nature.

"I used to be nervous, shaking. Now, it's muscle memory," he said. "But it's still a challenge. You don't forget the weight of what you're doing."

Mark has visited Arlington National Cemetery to watch his son perform his duty. "It almost chokes me up talking about it. I'm so very proud of him. I can't even believe it."

To be considered for the voluntary role, soldiers must be on active duty and stationed at Fort Myer. Those

selected train for roughly a year before earning the Sentinel badge — one of the most prestigious and rare honors in the U.S. military.

"It's not for everybody," Hamby said. "You've got to want to be here."

The guard's origins trace back to 1925, when a civilian was first assigned to watch over the tomb. The military took over the duty the following year. Since July 2, 1937, the tomb has been protected continuously — 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

"We're always here," Hamby said. "That's the promise."



E4 Specialist Jaxon Hamby of Beebe is a Sentinel at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery.

CHANCE ALLMON



CHANCE ALLMON

Sentinel Jaxon Hamby (bottom, center) spoke to students during the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas Youth Tour.

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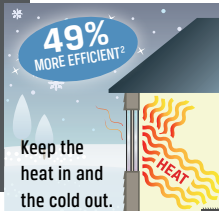
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*Using U.S. and imported parts.

Snapshots from our readers



Going fishing with Papa.
Kara Riley, Kingston.



Ellie Rose giving Steely Dan a cool drink.
Cherie McGhee, Avilla.



Beckett taking a flying leap! Michelle Bell, Centerton.



Man and his best friend spending a peaceful afternoon fishing together. Judy Criner, Pangburn.



Fishing with Daisy.
Jamie and Lucas Minton, Ward.



River trying to keep her ducks and chickens in a row.
Jerdeana Henderson, Witter.



Henry and Poppa enjoy a fin-tastic day.
Kassy Starr, Sparkman.



Sonny is "wowed" by Grady's big catch from the Cache River. Raven Slane, Pangburn.



The fish aren't biting, but the birds sure are! Marsha Sinks, Cabot.

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.

Pest Patrol

Creative strategies to deter pesky critters



BY JANET B. CARSON

Each year, animal pests seem to get worse in our gardens. Whether it is rabbits or squirrels, deer or armadillos, they can wreak havoc in very little time.



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Unfortunately, there isn't a quick fix for any and all animal pests. What has worked in the past may not have much effect today, as the urban/rural interface gets blended more and more. Human scents and loud noises are everyday fodder for wild animals today, so gardeners need to get a bit creative. Not every solution works for every yard.

Some plants are more resistant to animal pests than others, typically herbs or plants with strong scents or fuzzy leaves tend to be resistant. Keep in mind that when animals get hungry enough, they may eat plants that are supposedly resistant. Solutions include spray deterrents, physical barriers and traps. They all have their pros and cons.

Animals are attracted to yards and gardens looking for food, water and shelter. The top five animal issues are listed below, but there are other animals that can cause problems, including moles, voles, gophers, groundhogs and even rats. Try to properly identify the animal causing problems. When it comes to animal issues, try, try again. A variety of approaches may give the longest lasting benefits.

For more information, visit agfc.com/education/nuisance-wildlife/. 

ANIMAL	PROBLEM	SOLUTION
Armadillos	Nocturnal. Seek earthworms and grubs. Can destroy a landscape by erratic digging.	Traps or physical barriers.
Birds	Primarily pests of fruits and some vegetables.	Bird netting or scare devices.
Deer	Deer population is exploding, and residential neighborhoods are plagued with them. They love hostas, but will feed on a wide range of plants, especially when native food sources are lacking. Usually most active at dawn and dusk.	Deer fencing or electric fencing for edible gardens. Look for deer-resistant plants. Repellent sprays such as Repel, Plantskydd, raw eggs with water (must be reapplied after rain). Motion-activated water sprays, ultrasonic and light-based deterrents.
Rabbits	Tender vegetation of many annuals, perennials and vegetables. Most active at dawn and dusk.	Low fencing or protective barriers. Liquid repellent sprays and blood meal. Rabbit-resistant plants.
Squirrels	Major bird-feeder problem. Nut trees, fruits and some vegetables, occasionally eat blooms of some flowers. Active during the day. Can strip the bark of thin-skinned trees.	Physical barriers, pepper sprays, flashing spinners, motion-activated sprayers. Trapping and relocating.



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RECIPES AND PHOTOS
BY JULIANA GOODWIN

Sun-Dried Tomato Herb Spread

Makes 6 servings.

- | | | | |
|-----|------------------------------------------|-----|----------------------------------------|
| 1 | (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened | 2 | green onions, sliced |
| 1/4 | teaspoon garlic powder | 1/3 | heaping cup sun-dried tomatoes, minced |
| 1/3 | cup basil, minced | 1/3 | cup shredded Italian cheese |
| 1 | tablespoon fresh rosemary, minced | | Crackers and vegetables for serving |
| 1 | teaspoon fresh oregano, minced | | |

In a large bowl, stir together all ingredients (except crackers/vegetables) until well-combined. Cover and refrigerate for an hour before serving.

Notes: The fresh basil is key in this recipe, but you can use dried rosemary and oregano if you don't have any in your garden. If using dried, use half as much.



Virgin Strawberry Mojito

Makes 3 servings.

- | | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------|---|-----------------------------------------------|
| 3 | cups water | 1 | tablespoon sugar |
| 1/2 | cup sugar plus 1 tablespoon | | Carbonated strawberry-flavored water, chilled |
| 20 | mint leaves, divided | | Strawberries, mint (optional garnish) |
| 2 | tablespoons lime juice | | |
| 1 | cup strawberries, hulled | | |

In a medium pot, bring water to a boil and add 1/2 cup sugar. Once the sugar dissolves, remove from heat and add 5 mint leaves. Cool completely. Discard mint leaves.

Place liquid in a blender with remaining mint, lime juice, strawberries and 1 tablespoon sugar. Blend until as smooth as possible.

Divide mixture between three medium glasses filled with ice. Top off with carbonated water. Garnish with a strawberry and additional mint, if desired. Serve immediately.

Note: You can serve as-is or strain if you prefer a smoother drink.





Easy Olive Tapenade

Makes 4-5 servings.

- 2/3 cup green olives
- 2/3 cup pitted kalamata olives
- 1 cup tomatoes (cut in big chunks)
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup fresh parsley
- 1/4 cup fresh basil
- 2-inch slice red onion
- Toasted French bread for serving

Place all ingredients (except bread) in a food processor, and pulse into a chunky paste.

Serve with toasted French bread.

Notes: This is a salty dish. If it is too salty for your liking, serve over a block of cream cheese, or stir into a block of cream cheese with 2/3 cup shredded cheddar and make a cheeseball.



This month's web exclusive recipe:

Herb Potato Salad

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.

Summer Send-off

Serve simple backyard favorites for season's final fling

Lemon Ice Box Pie

Makes 6-8 servings.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 (14-ounce) can sweetened condensed milk | 1 (8-ounce) carton whipped topping (I use Cool Whip) |
| 3 egg yolks | 1 graham cracker crust |
| 1/2 cup lemon juice | Lemon slices, mint leaves (optional garnishes) |

Combine sweetened condensed milk, egg yolks and lemon juice in top of a double boiler. Cook over simmering water, whisking constantly, until thickened. Remove from heat, and let cool completely.

Fold in whipped topping until smooth. Spoon into graham cracker crust and freeze until firm. Thaw in refrigerator before serving. Garnish if desired.

Erna Spath, Mountain Home

Strawberry Tea Punch

Makes 4 servings.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 1 1/2 quarts boiling water | 1 (6-ounce) can lemonade concentrate |
| 3 family-size tea bags (I use Lipton) | 1 (10-ounce) bag of frozen strawberries, thawed |
| 1/2 cup sugar | |

Brew tea in boiling water for 4 minutes. Remove tea bags, and stir in sugar, lemonade and strawberries. Serve chilled.

Note: Double recipe for a full pitcher.

Sue Bell, Violet Hill

Honey-Lime Grilled Chicken

Makes 4-6 servings.

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1/4 cup honey | 1 tablespoon olive oil |
| 2 limes, zested and juiced | 1/2 teaspoon chili powder |
| 2 tablespoons soy sauce | Salt and pepper, to taste |
| 2 cloves garlic, minced | 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts |

In a shallow dish or a zip-top bag, combine honey, lime zest and juice, soy sauce, garlic, olive oil, chili powder, salt and pepper. Add chicken and marinate for at least 30 minutes. Grill over medium heat for 5 to 7 minutes per side, or until cooked through. Serve with extra lime wedges if desired.

Amirah Koster, Jonesboro



JENNIFER CHRISTMAN CIA

9-Layer Summer Salad

Makes 10 servings.

- 8 ounces fresh baby spinach
- 1 yellow bell pepper, finely chopped
- 2 stalks celery, finely chopped
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 cup frozen green peas
- 1/2 cup red onion, finely chopped
- 1 cup Colby Jack cheese, shredded (more for garnish)
- 6 slices bacon, cooked crisp and crumbled
- 1 cup buttermilk ranch dressing

In a 9x13 dish, layer half the spinach, bell pepper, celery, tomatoes, peas, onion, cheese, bacon and dressing. Repeat layers and top with additional cheese. Cover and chill for several hours until ready to serve.

Mary Vaughn, Fayetteville

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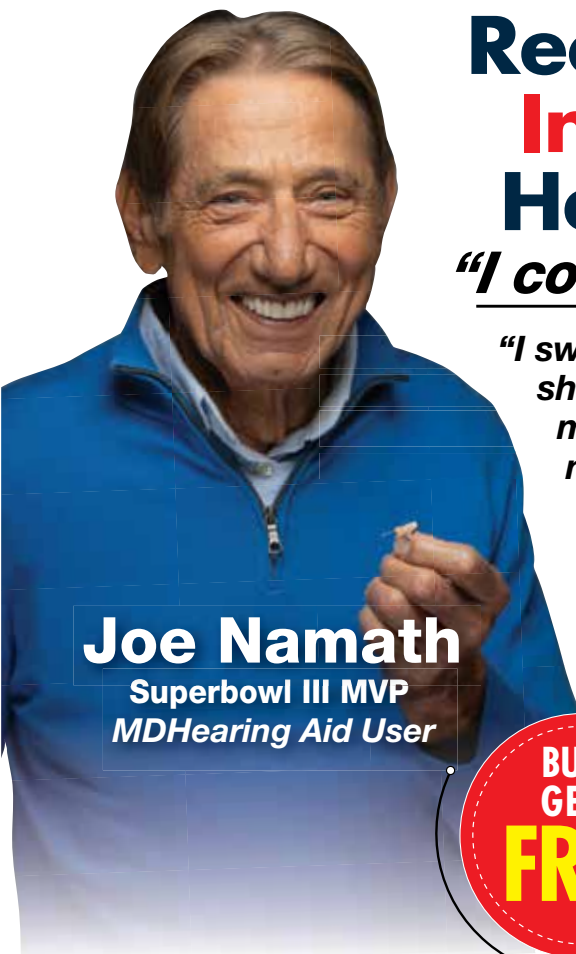
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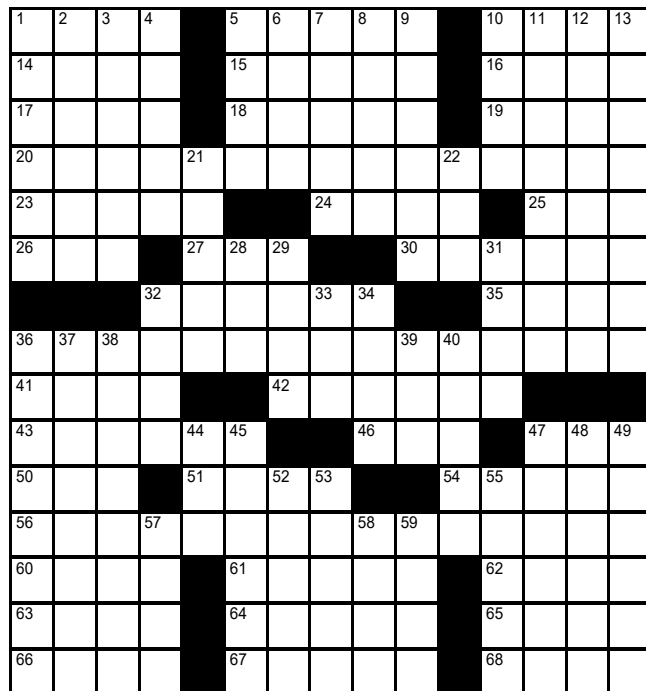
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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Only in August in Arkansas *By Victor Fleming*

ACROSS

- 1 "That ___ last year!"
- 5 Move through muck
- 10 Epps of "The Mod Squad" (1999)
- 14 "The ___ McCoys"
- 15 "___ it!" ("Get started!")
- 16 "Thin" coin
- 17 Does one's part?
- 18 Starters, typically
- 19 1977 Scott Turow memoir
- 20 ___ Rod Run (Aug. 22-23 in Mena)
- 23 Sprinter Szewinska or "The Faerie Queen" character
- 24 Snow glider
- 25 Protestant denom.
- 26 Cotton or Boozman (abbr.)
- 27 "Close, ___ no cigar"
- 30 Contents of an adjuster's in-basket
- 32 Dress up like
- 35 ___-Ball
- 36 Aug. 8-9 in Hot Springs
- 41 ___ Mills (old name in photography)
- 42 Alpaca relatives
- 43 No longer in style
- 46 Cocoa container
- 47 Golden State sch.
- 50 Joke around
- 51 "The Godfather" score composer Nino
- 54 "Sesame Street" Muppet
- 56 National Championship ___ (Aug. 23-31 in Clinton)
- 60 Frilly
- 61 Belittle
- 62 "Super" star?
- 63 Iris location
- 64 Churns
- 65 Ending with church or movie



- 66 "How've ya ___?"
- 67 Start of a prohibition
- 68 "When all ___ fails ..."

- 31 Pops, as the question
- 32 Phnom ___
- 33 "I'm ___ ears!"
- 34 Did a few laps, perhaps

DOWN

- 1 Baghdad residents
- 2 Batten down
- 3 Machine-washable counterpart of silk
- 4 Ashley, Jimmy, Mary-Kate or Merlin
- 5 "Man and Superman" author
- 6 "A ___ know!"
- 7 German autos
- 8 Lesley of TV news
- 9 Class for beginner cooks
- 10 "Blue Moon" of baseball
- 11 Off-road two-wheeler
- 12 Redundant agreement
- 13 Backslid
- 21 Bigwig
- 22 "Bad" cholesterol letters
- 28 "Made in the ___"
- 29 Relate

- 36 Oprah has one
- 37 "___ to Do Is Dream" (Everly Brothers classic)
- 38 Pharisee's contemporary
- 39 Aussie runner
- 40 Psyched
- 44 Genesis vessel
- 45 In the direction of
- 47 Like lots of secondhand clothes
- 48 Meshed utensils
- 49 One of the Borgias
- 52 Customary social restraint
- 53 "Encore!"
- 55 "Home on the ___"
- 57 Blue-green
- 58 1952 Olympic city
- 59 Mare's ___ (false discovery)

CROSSWORD ANSWERS ON PAGE 41

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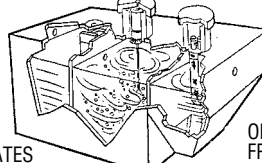
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Barren Riches

Rapp's spices up Mountain Home's food scene



STORY AND PHOTOS
BY ROB ROEDEL

Three visionaries are contributing to the revitalization, growth and sustainability of historic downtown Mountain Home by repurposing a historic building and providing excellent dining experiences.

Chris Gordon, Kyle Swallow and Russell Tucker are business partners at Rapp's Barren, a hip restaurant housed in the Baker building that was built in 1892. The trio directed the renovation of the two-story structure over an 18-month period.

The name Rapp's Barren represents a bit of history.



According to legend, Henry Rapp was an early settler in the area, which in the 1800s, was known as Rapp's Barren. The area was eventually

Kyle Swallow and business partners Chris Gordon and Russell Tucker are proprietors of Rapp's Barren.

renamed Mountain Home.

I enjoyed talking with other guests during my visit. The crowd was diverse with locals, visitors, college students and senior citizens — all with one thing in common. They were having a great time. Some lucky guests were enjoying dining on the patio and the second-floor balcony overlooking the town square as the sun was setting.

The fare at Rapp's Barren is the work of chefs Michael and Kelsey Blaha, who worked in the catering industry for the Pro Golf Association, before relocating to the Mountain Home area. The owners and the husband-and-wife duo have created a menu that includes creative twists on familiar dishes.

One of the top appetizers at Rapp's Barren is the Carne Asada Fries. No frozen fries here; instead fresh, hand-cut potatoes are fried to a golden brown. The creation is then topped with white queso, pico, grilled jalapeños and carne asada. A definite top-shelf, must-try offering.

The Shrimp and Grits feature three smoked cheddar grit cakes, sautéed shrimp and andouille sausage with a spicy Cajun sauce. I love shrimp and grits, and this twist on the classic is a notch above



Located in historic downtown Mountain Home, Rapp's Barren is housed in the old Baker building built in 1892.

due to the unique smoked cheddar grit cakes.

The Pretzel and Queso were nice also. There is nothing like a freshly prepared jumbo soft pretzel to provide a bit of comfort. Plus, the white queso dip was a welcomed add-on.

Rapp's menu includes some "healthy eats" that are local favorites. The Honey Chipotle Salmon Skewers are at the top of the list. The skewers included grilled salmon with



The Shrimp and Grits feature smoked cheddar grit cakes, sautéed shrimp and andouille sausage.



THE EATING ESSENTIALS

Rapp's Barren

601 S. Baker St.
(870) 424-7277
rappsbarrenbrewing.com

Hours of Operation

Tuesday-Thursday: 11 a.m.-9 p.m.
Friday-Saturday: 11 a.m.-10 p.m.
Sunday: 10 a.m.-5 p.m.



A white plate containing a meal of salmon, rice, and vegetables. The salmon is cooked and flaked, resting on a bed of brown rice. Sliced green bell peppers and yellow bell peppers are visible at the bottom of the plate.

Honey Chipotle Salmon Skewers are a creative catch served with quinoa and a tangy glaze.

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

CROSSWORD ANSWERS
for puzzle on page 38

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Calendar



Hot Springs Baseball Weekend



Mountains, Music & Motorcycles



Bluegrass & Fried Chicken Festival



Soar NWA



National Championship Chuckwagon Races

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Aug. 2

Arkansas Fiddle & Banjo Championships & Concert

Mountain View, facebook.com/
OzarkFolkCenterStatePark

Aug. 2-3

Arkansas Sales Tax Holiday

Statewide, dfa.arkansas.gov

Aug. 5-9

Tontitown Grape Festival

Tontitown, tontitowngrapefestival.com

Aug. 7-9

Hope Watermelon Festival

Hope, hopewatermelonfest.com

Aug. 8-9

Hot Springs Baseball Weekend

Hot Springs, hotsprings.org/events/
baseball-weekend/

Aug. 9

Gravette Day

Gravette, gravettear.com/gravette-day-1

World Elephant Day

Little Rock, littlerockzoo.com/events/
world-elephant-day/

Aug. 15-16

Soar NWA

Bentonville, soarnwa.com

Aug. 15-17

Mountains, Music & Motorcycles

Mountain View,
mountainsmusicandmotorcycles.com

Aug. 22-23

Bluegrass & Fried Chicken Festival

Mountain View, arkansasstateparks.com/
events/bluegrass-fried-chicken-festival

Queen Wilhelmina Car Show

Mena, queenwilhelminarodrun.com

Aug. 23

Great Southern Stone Skipping Championships

North Little Rock, stoneskipping.org

Aug. 23-31

National Championship Chuckwagon Races

Clinton, chuckwagonraces.com

Aug. 29-30

Caddo River Festival

Glenwood, facebook.com/caddoriver.fest

Camden Hot Air Balloon Festival

Camden, facebook.com/explorecamden

Aug. 30-31

Treasures in the Ozarks


Hardy, facebook.com/treasuresintheozarks

Weekends Aug. 30-Oct. 5

Arkansas Renaissance Festival

Mount Vernon, arrenfest.com

Find more events at arkansaslivingmagazine.com/around-arkansas.
Submit events at arkansaslivingmagazine.com/submissions/submit-an-event.



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