

## Brown Eyes & Bluegrass



CRYSTAL GAYLE \* RICKY SKAGGS

★  
ARKANSAS COUNTRY  
MUSIC AWARDS


PAGE 8

*Also Starring*

Crystal Bridges Expansion ★ Mudbug Madness ★ SeaPerch Success

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STEVE HALLENS

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The Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas are proud sponsors of the Arkansas Country Music Awards, taking place June 1.  
*Graphic illustration by Dixie Rogers with AI-assisted elements.*



KRISTEN ASAIAN PHOTOGRAPHY

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ROB ROEDEL

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# Cat-ching Up

BY JENNIFER CHRISTMAN CIA



At the world-class Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, one of the most beloved attractions isn't a painting or sculpture.

It's a cat.

He's Hamish, the museum's whiskered welcome committee of one. Everyone's favorite four-legged docent has even been drafted into the "Security" detail, thanks to a custom tag an employee created for his tracking-enabled collar.

Nine years ago, I wrote about him for the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette. As the museum's expansion opens next month (see story, page 12), I checked back in with Bentonville's most famous feline — and his owner Cara Upton. Upton and her husband, Michael, live near Crystal Bridges and run a Facebook page (Famous Hamish) dedicated to their adventurous pet, allowing museum attendees to share sightings of the cuddly art lover.

As for the latest mews, Upton reports Hamish is still there at Crystal Bridges, living his best nine lives. He's often holding court near the Frank Lloyd

Wright House, lingering by the employee entrance or sneaking into the cozy library for a catnap.

He's fur-ever on duty, ready for a snuggle or

ABOVE LEFT With Dale Chihuly's vibrant "Fiori Boat" as his backdrop, Hamish struts the catwalk.

LEFT Crystal Bridges visitors "LOVE" Hamish, the unofficial greeter who paws-es before the Robert Indiana sculpture of the same name.

a selfie with strangers. And he was no scaredy-cat during all the recent construction and noise. "None of that has fazed him whatsoever," Upton shares.

Adopted from the Springdale Animal Services in 2016, Hamish adopted Crystal Bridges as his domain. In fact, Hamish mostly treats the Uptons' house like a snack stop between shifts, while his other two cat brothers, Nigel and Rainbow Cupcake, and human "sister," Amelia (age 12), are content to stay closer to home.

"Hamish really just comes home to eat," Upton says. Then it's back to work.

For some people, "He's a destination," Upton says with a laugh. "People who have never been to the museum before but have heard of Hamish — that's their reason to go and then discover the art."

For the Uptons, lifelong Bentonville residents, that kind of impact never gets old, nor do the photos and stories of their cat shared online.

"We are so happy to see everybody happy with our cat," Upton says.

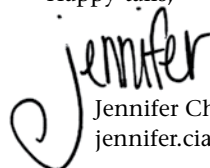
As much as Hamish is a ham, he can also be a tender cat-alyt for consolation.

Upton shares the story of a woman who encountered Hamish on the trails during a particularly difficult time. "He sat in her lap for hours," Upton says. "Just his presence made a tangible real-life difference."

She continues, "He's just a cat, he's not like any sort of specially trained animal. He's just a normal cat who loves people. The amount of joy and comfort he gives people brings me all the warm fuzzies and makes me really proud of him."

In a place built to celebrate great works of art, Hamish is paws-ively a masterpiece all his own.

Happy tails,



Jennifer Christman Cia  
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COURTESY OF HANNAH ADKINS@WILDLIFE.OF.CRYSTALBRIDGES

COURTESY OF AUDRA FLAMMANG

# USS Arkansas: Our Namesake Submarine

BY VERNON "BUDDY" HASTEN

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



In March 2025, I was invited to join David Bazzel and Roger Scott on 103.7 FM "The Buzz" in Little Rock for my first appearance on their show. They were curious about my background, especially my 20 years in the nuclear submarine force. I shared a

few unclassified highlights — surfacing through the ice at the North Pole, transiting the Panama Canal as hundreds of American high school students sang the national anthem and answering the question I'm asked most often: the longest I was ever underwater, which was 102 days.

During the interview, a caller said he served with me on USS Phoenix (SSN 702). The caller was Capt. Alan Malone, my executive officer during Phoenix's decommissioning, and we connected for the first time in 27 years. As a member of the USS Arkansas Commissioning Committee, he shared that the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas could support the ship and crew through the committee.

There have been five ships named USS Arkansas in the U.S. Navy. The first was a steamer built in 1863 in Philadelphia that served the Union Navy as a supply ship supporting their blockade of Confederate ports. This ship was decommissioned in 1865, sold at public auction and ultimately sank off the coast of Key Largo, Florida, in 1866. The second was USS Arkansas (BM-7), a monitor-class ship commissioned in 1902 for coastal defense. Its name was changed in 1909 to free the name Arkansas for a new battleship.

The third was USS Arkansas (BB-33), commissioned in 1912, fought in WWI and WWII. USS Arkansas (BB-33) earned four battle stars during WWII and participated in D-Day and invasions of Southern France, Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

Cool fact: This third ship is responsible for the Arkansas state flag. When the Daughters of the American Revolution prepared to present a flag at the ship's 1912 commissioning, they discovered Arkansas didn't have one. A statewide

contest followed, and Pine Bluff teacher Willie Kavanaugh Hocker's design was selected and adopted in 1913.

Furthermore, USS Arkansas (BB-33) also participated in Operation Magic Carpet, bringing home American servicemen from the Pacific and was finally used for atomic bomb testing at Bikini Atoll in 1946. She survived the first blast (ABLE) but was sunk by the underwater nuclear test (BAKER) on July 25, 1946. She is resting today, inverted in about 180 feet of water in the Bikini Lagoon acting as an artificial reef.

The fourth was USS Arkansas (CGN-41), a Virginia-class nuclear-powered guided missile cruiser commissioned in 1980 that suffered early decommissioning in 1998 due to the high cost of midlife reactor refueling.

The fifth is USS Arkansas (SSN-800), the 27th Virginia-class nuclear-powered submarine under construction at the Newport News Shipyard in Virginia. She is 377 feet long, 34 feet wide, weighs 7,800 tons and is capable of speeds of 25+ knots with an impressive reactor core life of 33 years. Imagine going 33 years between trips to the gas station. Another interesting fact: During the keel laying in 2022, the initials of her sponsors — the six women of the Little Rock Nine — were welded into her steel and she will literally take their names all over the world. At the christening, Newport News Shipbuilding President Jennifer Boykin said, "Their courageous spirit will forever inspire Arkansas and her crew."

The crew of USS Arkansas (SSN-800) consists of 15 officers and 120 enlisted dedicated sailors. A longstanding tradition is for the crew of U.S. Navy vessels to do Namesake Visits to strengthen the bond between the crew and the location for which the ship is named. I never got to go on one when I was serving, but those who did always returned with great stories. These visits help the crew form relationships with those they are representing.

This year, the cooperatives were able to support USS Arkansas' Namesake Visit. The crew was treated to a tour of our state Capitol and met with Arkansas House Speaker Brian Evans and Rep. Shad Pearce. ➤



The crest of the USS Arkansas (SSN 800) reflects the state's heritage and naval legacy. The crew recently made a Namesake Visit to Arkansas, strengthening their connection with the state.

COURTESY OF VERNON "BUDDY" HASTEN



Familygrams — limited to 40 words — were the brief messages that kept President/CEO Vernon "Buddy" Hasten connected to his family during his naval deployments.

USS ARKANSAS *continued on page 6*

# AECC breaks ground on Naples Power Plant

Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation (AECC) held a ceremonial groundbreaking for an 850-megawatt (MW) natural gas-based generation facility in Morris County, Texas, near Naples. Construction of the Naples Power Plant is scheduled to begin in summer 2026. AECC plans to have the dispatchable generation resource in commercial operation by 2029.

Vernon “Buddy” Hasten, president and CEO of AECC and Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (AECI), said, “The facility in Morris County, Texas, is crucial to maintaining reliable energy resources. AECC continues to develop proven, readily dispatchable power generation technologies to provide our members with reliable, affordable electricity.”

Hasten said that AECC evaluated potential sites in Arkansas prior to selecting the Texas location. He cited the Morris County site’s proximity to natural gas pipelines and transmission as the primary factors in the location selection.

This new state-of-the-art asset will be one of the lowest-emitting and most efficient simple cycle natural gas generation stations in AECC’s fleet.



Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation officials break ground on an 850-megawatt natural gas facility near Naples, Texas.

# Hasten discusses infrastructure at NRECA PowerXchange



President and CEO of Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation and Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. Vernon “Buddy” Hasten (center) participated in a panel discussion on utility infrastructure at the March National Rural Electric Cooperative Association PowerXchange Conference in Nashville.

## USS ARKANSAS *continued from page 5*




Scan to tour USS Razorback

They also toured the Clinton Presidential Library and Museum, the Old Mill in North Little Rock, the USS Razorback (see QR code to take a tour yourself), and a trip to the Arkansas Derby at Oaklawn. They also met with officials from Benton, Bryant and Hot Springs.

I was blessed to have dinner with the crew, including Commanding Officer, Cmdr. Michael Huber; Chief of the Boat, STSCM Winfred “Keith” Cameron; and Assistant Weapons Officer, Lt. Cade Anderson. We intend to maintain our relationship with the crew of the USS Arkansas.

I have many fond memories of our namesake city sending Christmas cards from local schools when we were deployed over the holidays or delivering treats for the crew when we pulled into port. These little reminders of home are real morale boosters. Messages from home on a submarine were sparse. Our families were allowed one Familygram for each month we were deployed and they consisted of only 40 words, so these little extras were always appreciated.

I want to personally thank the USS Arkansas Commissioning Committee for allowing us to help support the crew, and we look forward to more opportunities to thank these dedicated men and women for their service. It is our chance to show them true Arkansas hospitality and to demonstrate that the name on their ship represents a state — and a network of cooperatives — that stands firmly behind them. 



USS Arkansas crew members enjoy dinner with representatives of the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas during their recent Namesake Visit. From left: Cmdr. Michael Huber; President/CEO Vernon “Buddy” Hasten; STSCM Winfred “Keith” Cameron; and Lt. Cade Anderson.

## Agriculture Hall of Fame inducts six

Six leaders in farming, forestry and public service were inducted into the Arkansas Agriculture Hall of Fame on March 27 at the Statehouse Convention Center in Little Rock.

This year's honorees were: Jim Carroll III of Moro; Joe Fox of Fayetteville; Allen B. Helms Jr. of Clarkedale; former U.S. Sen. Blanche Lincoln of Washington, D.C.; John Paul Pendergrass of Charleston; and the late Benny Petrus of Stuttgart.

The Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas are proud to sponsor this program — which seeks to build public awareness of agriculture and to recognize past and current leaders — with Arkansas Farm Bureau and Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas.



Jim Carroll III



Joe Fox



Allen B. Helms Jr.



Sen. Blanche Lincoln



John Paul Pendergrass



Benny Petrus

## Where Is It?

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

In April's issue, we hid Easter lilies. Wrote one correct reader who found the flowers in a photo of downtown Jacksonville: "I picked them from the mural on page 15 ... just in time for Easter! He is Risen!"

Winners selected in our drawing to receive an Arkansas Living mug were:

**Glenn Philpott, Siloam Springs (Ozarks Electric Cooperative)**

**Dory Hammeke, Bella Vista (Carroll Electric Cooperative)**

**Liston Haseman, Oden (Rich Mountain Electric Cooperative)**

**Geraldine Crawford, Piggot (Clay County Electric Cooperative)**

**Troy Caler, Texarkana (Southwest Arkansas Electric Cooperative)**

For May, we've hidden a graduation cap saluting all those stepping into their next chapter. Find it and consider yourself top of the class.

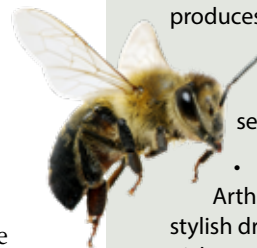
Enter by May 15 by clicking on the "Where Is It?" link on the homepage of [arkansaslivingmagazine.com](http://arkansaslivingmagazine.com), or go directly to [arkansaslivingmagazine.com/where-is-it-contest/](http://arkansaslivingmagazine.com/where-is-it-contest/).

Or mail entries to: Where Is It, Arkansas Living, P.O. Box

510, Little Rock, AR 72203.

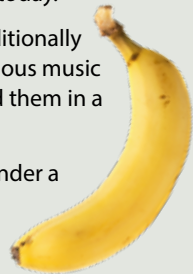
Include your name, address and electric co-op (nonmembers also are eligible), plus the correct page number.

*\* 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. March's winner was: Susan Whalen, Hot Springs Village (First Electric Cooperative).*



## TRIVIA

- Human eyes can perceive between 1 million and 10 million colors. Some women have tetrachromacy, a rare condition linked to the X chromosome, that allows them to see 100 million or more colors.
- Kleenex tissues were originally developed from a Kimberly-Clark material used in gas mask filters during World War I and were later repurposed as the "disposable handkerchiefs" used today.
- Trombones were traditionally associated with religious music until Beethoven used them in a secular symphony.
- Bananas glow blue under a black light.
- The highest temperature ever recorded in Arkansas was 120 degrees in Ozark on Aug. 10, 1936. The lowest temperature recorded in the state was -29 degrees in Gravette on Feb. 13, 1905.
- Fireflies produce light through a chemical reaction that combines oxygen, adenosine triphosphate (ATP), the chemical luciferin and the enzyme luciferase. This process, called bioluminescence, produces little to no heat.
- Some bees can fly over 29,000 feet above sea level.
- President Chester Arthur was known for his stylish dress, earning him the nicknames "Elegant Arthur" and "Gentleman Boss."
- The term "buttload" comes from medieval England, referring to a large cask or a "butt" used to store liquid. A buttload equals roughly 126 U.S. gallons.
- "You need to have faith in yourself. Be brave and take risks. You don't have to have it all figured out to move forward."  
— Roy T. Bennett, author





DENNIS CARNEY



COURTESY OF THE ARKANSAS COUNTRY MUSIC AWARDS

Since the first event in 2018, the Arkansas Country Music Awards have celebrated harmony, heritage and heart — the songwriters, storytellers, singers and strummers carrying Arkansas’ sound far beyond the state line.

This year, though, carries a different kind of charge. Bigger. Brighter. A banner year for a show that has grown into one of the state’s most anticipated cultural homecomings, beginning with two headliners who are among the genre’s most recognizable names.

“To have Crystal Gayle and Ricky Skaggs in the same year is a pretty big deal,” says Arkansas Country Music Awards Vice President Charles Haymes.

It’s also a bit of a family reunion. Gayle says in a recent phone interview with a laugh, “Ricky and I are actually distant cousins.”

Gayle says she’s just as eager to return to Arkansas. “It’s been a while since I’ve been there, so I’m looking forward to it,” she says.

The red-carpet evening begins at 6:30 p.m. Monday, June 1, at Reynolds Performance Hall on the campus of the University of Central Arkansas in Conway. The ninth annual ceremony will be cohosted by Haymes and Miss Arkansas 2014 Ashton Gill. Information and tickets are available at [arkansasmusic.org](http://arkansasmusic.org).

The night is also powered by a partnership that has been there from the beginning. The Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas are “the only ones who have sponsored every single year,” Haymes says.

JD Lowery, director of community and economic development for the cooperatives, says, “We’ve supported the Arkansas Country Music Awards from the beginning,

BY JENNIFER CHRISTMAN CIA

and we're proud to continue that commitment. This event shines a light on Arkansas talent, and we're honored to help keep that light bright."

### Roots and resonance

Both Gayle and Skaggs may hail from Kentucky, but the work that made them legends carries a strong Arkansas imprint. Their most enduring chapters were shaped alongside Arkansans whose influence runs deep in the genre's history.

For Gayle, that connection begins with North Little Rock native Allen Reynolds — the "hidden gem to a lot of people here," as Haymes describes him. Reynolds produced all of Gayle's biggest hits and wrote three of her top 10 singles. His fingerprints are on some of Gayle's most recognizable songs, from "Don't It Make My Brown Eyes Blue" to "Ready for the Times to Get Better."

Gayle calls Reynolds "a big important part of my career ... not only a great producer, but just a great person." She adds that working with him "was just a magical time," and that he encouraged her to take ownership of her music from the start: "He would say, 'You've got to listen to these songs and you have to like them ... you're going to be singing these songs. I'm not.'"

When Gayle steps onto the stage, she'll be honoring the Arkansan who helped shape her shimmering sound and her storied career. "Being there honoring Allen is very important to me," she says.

Skaggs' Arkansas ties run just as deep. One of bluegrass' defining modern voices, Skaggs has long been connected to The Whites — the harmony-rich family trio of Buck White and daughters Sharon and Cheryl, who started singing together in Mansfield before carrying their sound to Nashville. Sharon White is Skaggs' wife and longtime musical partner.

Skaggs' role in inducting The Whites into the Arkansas Country Music Hall of Fame is a personal moment that Haymes predicts "should just be incredible."

Joining Reynolds and The Whites in this 2026 Hall of Fame class are Jimmy Doyle & Patsy Gayle. The pair spent nearly five decades entertaining audiences across Arkansas and beyond, as members of the Arkansas River

Bottom Band and longtime owners of Jimmy Doyle's Country Club (a two-time award recipient for Venue of the Year; the couple retired in 2021).

Crystal Gayle shares another bond: "I actually played at his club when I first started," she says. "We're all connected."

Over the years, the Arkansas Country Music Awards have honored some of the most iconic names in the genre — a lineage that places this year's class in distinguished company. Past Hall of Fame inductees include Johnny Cash, Glen Campbell, Conway Twitty, Levon Helm, Charlie Rich, K. T. Oslin and Collin Raye. The show has also drawn major special guests and performers such as Tanya Tucker, Lee Ann Womack and Louise Mandrell, underscoring its growing national pull.

### Milestones and momentum

The awards themselves have grown just as dramatically. In the early years, Haymes says, "You'd have like 10 to 20 in a category for the selection committee to pick the final five from." In recent years, many categories have drawn 25 to 40 nominees, reflecting the depth of talent across the state. This year includes 51 first-time nominees, continuing a trend of strong newcomer participation.

The show itself moves with the rhythm of a live concert. ➤



**"We've supported the Arkansas Country Music Awards from the beginning, and we're proud to continue that commitment. This event shines a light on Arkansas talent, and we're honored to help keep that light bright."**

**— JD Lowery, Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas**



ABOVE Arkansas Country Music Awards Vice President Charles Haymes and Miss Arkansas 2014 Ashton Gill will return as cohosts for the Arkansas Country Music Awards on June 1 at Reynolds Performance Hall in Conway.

RIGHT JD Lowery, director of community and economic development for the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas presents at a past awards show.

“You’ll have an opening performance, then three or four categories, then another performance,” Haymes says. Hall of Fame inductions are woven throughout the night, creating a mix of celebration, storytelling and surprise.

And the awards, 27 categories in total, don’t just honor performers. Five nonperforming honors recognize those who help keep Arkansas’ music ecosystem thriving — venues, promoters, publications, radio stations and DJs. “It’s an industry awards show,” Haymes says. “It’s not just the people that stand center stage and hold an instrument.”

Arkansas’ influence on country music runs deeper than many realize.

“Everybody knows who Johnny Cash and Glen Campbell were,” Haymes says, “but there are so many Arkansans that have played a key role in the overall success and popularity of country music.”

With what Haymes calls “probably the biggest year for our special guests,” the 2026 Arkansas Country Music Awards feel like a milestone — a moment when the state’s past, present and future meet under one spotlight.

When the curtain rises and first notes ring out on June 1, it will echo decades of Arkansas stories — sung, written, produced, lived. The awards honor that past while opening the door to whatever comes next. And if this year is any indication, what comes next is big. 📺



## Award Nominees

Below are a few artists who picked up multiple Arkansas Country Music Awards nominations.



Lance Carpenter has five nominations.



Cliff & Susan have four nominations.



Waylon Wyatt has five nominations.



Kelsey Lamb has four nominations.

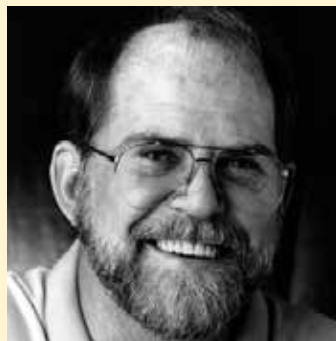
PHOTOS COURTESY OF ARKANSAS COUNTRY MUSIC AWARDS



## Hall of Fame Inductees



Patsy Gayle & Jimmy Doyle



Allen Reynolds



The Whites

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# BUILDING BRIDGES

*Bentonville's world-class art museum expands vision, size*

COURTESY OF SAFDIE ARCHITECTS

BY BOB ROBINSON

Once again, Crystal Bridges is about to change the way Arkansas — and America — experiences art. From June 6-7, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art opens its new expanded galleries and facilities to the public. The addition adds 114,000 square feet of galleries, studios, dining options, event spaces and more, increasing the Bentonville facility's overall size by 50%.

"Alice Walton founded this museum with the goal of making great American art more accessible to people in our region and beyond," says Rod Bigelow, the museum's executive director. "Now, under Olivia Walton's next-generation leadership, this vision has continued to exceed all expectations." Olivia, board chair of Crystal Bridges, is married to Tom Walton, who is founder Alice's nephew.



COURTESY OF SAFDIE ARCHITECTS

The additional structures at Crystal Bridges have been designed by the world-acclaimed Safdie Architects, drawing from the firm's original building design.

The expanded gallery space will be used to host "two landmark gifts," donated by Olivia and Tom as well as collectors Candace and Michael Humphreys of Dallas. Art from the Waltons includes 18 works by women artists, such as Yayoi Kusama, Alice Neel and Njideka Akunyili Crosby. Artwork from the Humphreys

A bridge connecting two art galleries will have nature views overlooking 5 acres of countryside.



LEFT Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville will open its expanded galleries and facilities June 6-7.

will introduce 100 new artists to the museum’s holdings, comprising 200 pieces spanning a wide range of eras and artistic styles.

“Through their extraordinary generosity, Candace and Michael Humphreys have broadened and deepened the stories of America that we tell at our museum, and that have established Crystal Bridges as a leading destination for major collections of American art,” Olivia says.

The new galleries will include a circular event plaza with a water feature, increasing opportunities for outdoor community programming, performances and events. It will also include 5 acres of surrounding countryside, with a stream, gardens, wooded trails and a 15,000-square-foot pond.

Sculptures from the Humphreys’ donation will be on exhibit amid the museum’s picturesque Ozark landscape. They include an elaborate piece by Tom Otterness titled “Carousel,” a full-sized carousel with seven bronze figures, as well as other new works of art.

Interspersing the structures across the museum grounds was in keeping with the goals of Alice Walton and Moshe Safdie. As Safdie explains, “At Crystal Bridges, we set out to merge art and nature.”

### Engaging experiences

The expansion includes a spacious wing that will house the Learning and Engagement Hub. The facility will double down on its commitment to making art a part of everyone’s life. It will offer studios where visitors are encouraged to create their own art, including digital art and ceramics studios. The structure’s event space will be used for lectures, films and performances. Its home-like lounge provides an inviting atmosphere for family, friends and community members to gather.

The Hub features Quartz & Honey, a new, light-filled cafe, offering a menu of desserts, cocktails and more. As visitors leisurely enjoy their beverages and treats, the floor-to-ceiling windows will afford an unobstructed, encompassing view of the stylish structures integrated into the exterior expansion area. Diners may view community programming, performances and outdoor activities scheduled at the adjoining circular event plaza.



Crew members position an outdoor sculpture during the museum’s expansion.



The new Quartz & Honey Cafe will overlook the event plaza.

Nature lovers of all ages will enjoy the science-, art- and nature-based playscape, Ozark Discovery Canopy. By incorporating the wooded ravine separating the museum and the campus parking area, the landscape design reflects Crystal Bridges’ core pillars of art, architecture, nature and wellness. Visitors can splash and explore in a flowing water feature and creek, interact with a large, rotating boulder, lounge on oversized swings, race down a wide, family-sized slide and more. Interacting with these features will create a sensory-rich experience that brings families and visitors together in nature.

“With the addition of diverse galleries, workshops and ➤

COURTESY OF CRYSTAL BRIDGES

COURTESY OF SAFDIE ARCHITECTS

gardens, the expansion exponentially advances the museum’s mission of serving as a centerpiece of communal and cultural life,” Safdie explains.

**Framing the future**


Since opening its doors in 2011, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art has welcomed more than 15 million visitors, general admission free. It was founded in 2005 as a nonprofit charitable organization by arts patron and philanthropist Alice.

“To think that all the children growing up in this region now have access to art as a part of their education is probably the most fulfilling thing I have ever done,” Alice says.



Merging art and nature has been a shared vision of Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art founder Alice Walton and architect Moshe Safdie.

The museum and newly expanded facilities are part of the 134-acre Crystal Bridges campus, which includes the new Heartland Whole Health Institute, an 85,000-square-foot structure designed by Marlon Blackwell Architects, and the new Alice L. Walton School of Medicine (AWSOM), a 154,000-square-foot medical education facility designed by Polk Stanley Wilcox Architects. Both buildings showcase art from the Crystal Bridges and Art Bridges Foundation collections.

With its expanded galleries, outdoor spaces and hands-on learning opportunities, Crystal Bridges deepens its role as a cultural anchor for Arkansas. Its purpose — to make art accessible, inspiring and shared — has never been more crystal clear. 

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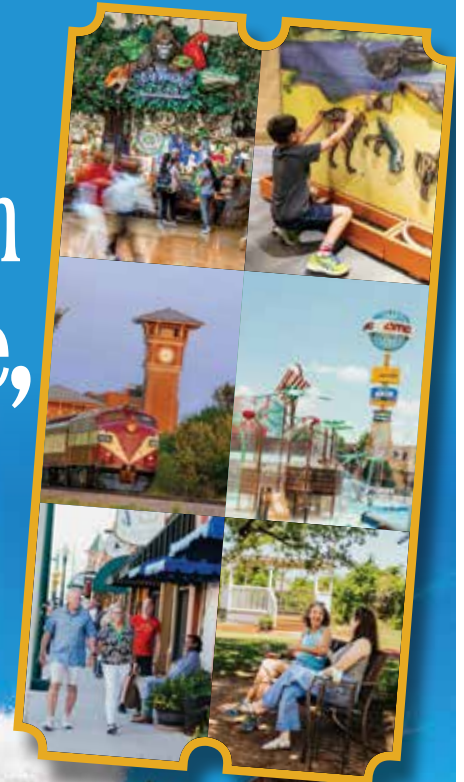
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# Innovation in Motion

## Top Arkansas 4-H teams surge ahead to International SeaPerch Challenge

BY ARKANSAS LIVING STAFF

What began as PVC pipe, motors and pool noodles transformed into sleek, maneuverable underwater robots as Arkansas 4-H teams converged on The River Center in Benton for the 2026 SeaPerch Challenge.

The event brought together 55 teams and 191 youth from 12 counties, each showcasing skill, teamwork and creativity across four divisions. Students designed, built and piloted underwater robots through obstacle and mission courses, supported by technical reports and presentations.

The Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas partner with Arkansas 4-H each year to support the SeaPerch Challenge, reinforcing a shared commitment to education, service and hands-on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) opportunities for students across the state.

Arkansas received six invitations to the International SeaPerch Challenge, and those spots were awarded to the first- and second-place teams in each of the three older divisions. The following six teams will represent Arkansas at the international competition in Maryland later this month:

### Intermediate Stock Overall Winners

- First Place — HydroRappers, Grant County: Jackson Knight, Priyesh Laxmi, Abigail Martin
- Second Place — Disco Dolphins, Grant County: Eva McGinley, Audrey Connell, Macy Ashcraft, Jolene Hooks

### Senior Stock Overall Winners

- First Place — Deep Water Vanguard, Grant County: Gracie McGinley, Gavin McGinley
- Second Place — Three Dudes and a Robot, Grant County: Jaxson Andrews, Hudson Billings, Ayden Barber

### INTERMEDIATE STOCK OVERALL WINNERS



First Place — HydroRappers



Second Place — Disco Dolphins

### SENIOR STOCK OVERALL WINNERS



First Place — Deep Water Vanguard



Second Place — Three Dudes and a Robot

### OPEN CLASS OVERALL WINNERS



First Place — Aquanauts




Second Place — Rolling Stokes

### Open Class Overall Winners

- First Place — Aquanauts, Grant County: Eli Watson, Garrett Key, Pryiam Laxmi
- Second Place — Rolling Stokes, Madison County: Phalynn Stokes, Cache Stokes, Olive Stokes

The youngest competitors were also recognized for their strong performances. The top two Junior Stock Overall Winners were:

- First Place — Sea Squad, Saline County: Nathaniel Schmid, Sy'Eir Cranford, Grayson Sadler
- Second Place — Team Eels, Saline County: Beau Robbins, Cade Holland, David Canada.

To learn more about the Arkansas 4-H SeaPerch Challenge, visit [4h.uada.edu](http://4h.uada.edu). More information about the SeaPerch initiative can be found at [seaperch.org/about](http://seaperch.org/about). 

# Bragging Bites

*Topwater fishing lures deliver top-tier action*



BY CARLTON AND LEIGH WING

Few lures in fishing inspire more exciting mental imagery than the topwater. Anglers dream of violent crashes from hungry fish leaping into the air to grab a well-placed surface offering.

A topwater is a lure that floats along the surface, enticing a fish to come from underneath.

While a few fish provide a timid sip like proper English tea, most crash the surface with the reckless abandon of a Cajun gulping perfect gumbo.

May is a great month for topwater lures, less so for your blood pressure. You've been warned. Anglers may not remember the three-item grocery list from their spouse's 10-minutes-ago request, but they can repeat every detail of a 5-pounder rising through the water column like the Red October slamming a Whopper Plopper 5 years ago on Lake Ouachita. It's why anglers don't need to go jogging; 30 minutes of telling topwater fishing stories gives them all the cardio a heart can handle.

Here are two types of surface lures that should enhance your chance for a great cardiogram:

**1. Buzzbait:** These are relatively simple to throw, basically a propeller spinning on the water as you retrieve it. Start with a smaller one and get comfortable with the cast, and start your retrieve as soon as it hits the water. What keeps this bait on top is the propeller turning as you wind it back.

**2. Popper:** These lures have a concave front and will sit on the water after the cast. Then you pop them back with short bursts with your fishing rod. Each short slap with the rod brings the popper back toward you a few inches, making a gurgling sound and attracting fish from below. It imitates an injured baitfish with its erratic stops and sputters. Bass can be vicious predators but can't resist a lazy meal.

One final tip for topwater fishing: Don't set the hook based on the violent crash you see; wait until you feel something pulling back. It takes discipline and a few lost fish to realize that sometimes those fish are so excited to eat they miss, and sometimes you can pull it away from them while they are in the act of reaching for your lure.

There's no more exciting way to fish!

Watch Carlton and Arkansas Democrat-Gazette Outdoors Editor Bryan Hendricks fish topwaters on the Maumelle River on "Arkansas' Great Outdoors" Episode 62 ([tinyurl.com/AGOEpisode62](http://tinyurl.com/AGOEpisode62)). Good luck. Your cardiologist will thank you!

Carlton and Leigh Wing host the "Arkansas' Great Outdoors" weekly television series. Visit [facebook.com/arkansasgreatoutdoors](https://facebook.com/arkansasgreatoutdoors).



A Booyah Buzzbait (top), made by Pradco in Fort Smith, represents a buzzbait, while the Storm Chug Bug (bottom) represents a popper. Both are topwater lures used for high-intensity fishing.



"Arkansas' Great Outdoors" host Carlton Wing's heart races when he catches a largemouth bass on a buzzbait.

COURTESY OF THE WING FAMILY

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# Mudbug Madness

May festivals celebrate crawdads, community

BY CHRIS HOOTEN

Norma Sims recalls transforming from a bank bookkeeper into the pipe-smoking Mammy Yoakum in May 1970 during the first “Home Folks Days” in Harrison, a retail-focused forerunner to the booths and tents of modern festivals.

Local business workers in Harrison decorated store fronts and dressed as characters from Al Capp’s famous comic strip, “Li’l Abner.” Employees of the winning business won a season pass to a recreational theme park that opened in 1968 at Marble Falls called Dogpatch USA.

“It was great fun,” says Sims, whose name is synonymous with tourism the past 36 years in Harrison and the Ozarks region. “We

dressed up on Friday and wore those outfits all day, and if you worked on Saturday, you wore them again.”

By 1991, however, Dogpatch USA was in financial trouble and would close two years later. Many Harrison businesses wanted to get away from the Dogpatch themes of Home Folks (later Dogpatch) Days like Li’l Abner running from Daisy Mae.

Dr. Charles Adair provided a solution. As the Harrison School District superintendent and the 1991 Chamber of Commerce president, his committee introduced Crooked Creek Crawdad Days to feature the city’s famous Ozark stream where Adair caught crawdads as a boy. The festival eventually dropped Crooked Creek from the name but stayed downtown through 2019.

The 2026 **Crawdads Days** is set for May 7-9 at the Northwest Arkansas District Fairgrounds. The annual event shifted in 2022 to the fairgrounds for ample parking, more restrooms and secure indoor areas for some vendors.

“The biggest advantage is everything is in one location and not scattered,” says fairgrounds manager Allison Black. “We had a big turnout last year (about 7,000 people) to breathe the new life into this event after COVID-19.”

Crawdads Days cancelled in 2020 and 2021 and, like most festivals, is still recovering from corporate sponsors

dropping community outreach from their post-COVID budgets.

“We’re all in the same boat, trying to break even or have a little money left for repairs,” Black says. “We try to offer as much as we can for free as a service to the community.”

At Crawdads Days, that’s still a lot. The



COURTESY OF MARIA RUBIO

A packed weekend in Harrison offers the Spring Chute Out, a ranch rodeo Friday night and full rodeo Saturday night.



COURTESY OF CRAWDAD DAYS



COURTESY OF CRAWDAD DAYS

Crawdads Days beauty pageant winners represent all ages.



COURTESY OF CRAWDAD DAYS

Walkers and runners can work up an appetite at the Crawdad Days 5K race.

kids, pony and camel rides and an exotic petting zoo with porcupines, kangaroos and monkeys. Musical acts include Hunter Courville and Cajun Fever (zydeco, blues, swamp-pop and rock) and 7 South (country, Southern rock and red dirt). Carnival rides are available with the purchase of an arm band. The adult crawfish-eating contest, accredited beauty pageant for all ages and 5K race have entry fees.



A petting zoo with kangaroos, porcupines, monkeys and other exotic animals is part of the Crawdad Days fun.

2026 lineup includes a crawfish-eating contest for

In addition to Crawdad Days, the packed weekend in Harrison offers the **Spring Chute Out**, a ranch rodeo Friday night and full rodeo Saturday night with livestock provided by Rough Stock Unlimited of Gainesville, Missouri. Teams of cowboys sign up for ranch rodeo with events such as doctoring/sorting, wild cow milking, steer tripping, calf mugging and other common ranch work done on horseback.

“You don’t see a lot of ranch rodeos in Arkansas,” says Harrison Roundup Club president Mark Hanshaw. “This is our third year to use Rough Stock Unlimited and cross-promote with Crawdad Days, and I can see some real growth here for Friday and Saturday nights.”

Visit [crawdaddays.net](http://crawdaddays.net) for more details.

### Ozarks to the Delta

One week later (May 15-16) and 250 miles south



BIGSTOCK.COM

of Harrison, Kattie Jordan and her four-person committee will kick off the **Dermott Crawfish Festival** ([tinyurl.com/DermottCrawfish](http://tinyurl.com/DermottCrawfish)), which dates to 1984.

“It takes 10 months to plan and sell this event,” says Jordan, a former music promoter entering her third year as president of the Dermott Crawfish Festival committee. “We had more than 3,000 people here last year from all over southeast Arkansas, almost 40 vendors selling crafts and food.”



BIGSTOCK.COM

Mudbugs and all the fixings are the main attraction at Crawdad Days in Harrison and the Dermott Crawfish Festival in Dermott.

Festivalgoers will dig their way through 2,000 pounds of crawfish, while listening to musical acts Nathaniel Kimble (blues), Barney’s Country Band, Nia Renee of “American Idol” fame and the Bass Rhythms and Grooves Band. Admission to the Dermott Crawfish Festival is free. 🍷



Held May 15-16, the Dermott Crawfish Festival expects more than 3,000 visitors from across the state.

# Water Heater Woes

*Avoid costly — and cold — surprises*

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE

**Q:** How can I tell if my water heater needs repair or replacement?

**A:** We all count on having reliable hot water in our homes. Nobody wants to get caught off guard with an unexpected cold shower or failed water heater. I tend to live in the “if it isn’t broken, don’t fix it” school of thought, but a failed water heater can cause damage to your home and property. Emergency replacement of a water heater can add unnecessary cost, not to mention inconvenience. Evening or weekend replacement or repair can lead to higher costs charged by a plumbing company.

The typical lifespan of a storage water heater is 10 to 15 years, according to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). If your water heater is older than that, plan to replace it soon. Don’t have records of when it was installed? No problem. Find the serial number on the water heater’s sticker or metal plate. Look up the serial number online or call the manufacturer to find its age. Here are some signs that your storage water heater might be approaching the end of its life:

- **Water on the floor or sediment** at the bottom of the water heater could mean its days are numbered. Sediment can be a sign of corrosion, which leads to a leak or failure.



If your water heater is 10-15 years old, it’s time to start planning and budgeting for a replacement.

- **Rusty or discolored water** when you turn on your faucets can be a sign the tank is rusting inside.

- **Water not getting as hot** as it used to could be a sign of a failing electric element or a gas burner not functioning properly.

- **Odd noises** could indicate an issue with the components. If you’re hearing unusual noises from your water heater, schedule a checkup with a plumber. Well-functioning water heaters typically don’t make much noise.

A professional plumb-



Everyone loves a hot shower. Installing a high-performance aerator showerhead helps you reduce your hot water use.

er may be able to replace failing components. If you are having issues with the tank itself, it’s likely time for a new unit.

If you’re in the market for a new water heater, a heat pump water heater might be a good fit for your home. These systems are two to three times more energy-efficient than conventional electric-powered tank water heaters, according to the DOE.

Even if your water heater is in great shape, you can save at home by lowering your hot water use. Some easy ways to do this are washing laundry in cold water and installing high-performance aerators on faucets and showerheads to reduce the amount of hot water you use. Save on energy costs by installing a timer on your water heater to prevent it from operating during peak energy use hours, typically in the mornings and evenings. It also helps lower the strain on the electric grid.

Knowing the signs of water heater failure can save you from home damage and offer opportunities to explore options for more efficient equipment to lower your electric use.

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

# NOW Serving Little Rock and NWA Helping Macular Degeneration Patients

## 8 Ways We Can Help

When you've been told **"nothing else can be done"** then it's time for a low vision exam.



### 1 Spectacle Miniature Telescopes

Designed for tasks requiring better central vision and mobility, these glasses are used by drivers to see signs and traffic lights, by grandparents to see grandchildren playing soccer and bridge players to see cards on the table.

### 2 Bioptic Driving Glasses

Bioptic Drives glasses allow drivers to continue to drive when they struggle with seeing road signs. These glasses have small telescopes that allow drivers to see road signs and traffic lights. They can also be used by grand parents to see grandchildren playing soccer and other sports.



### 3 Spectacle Microscope Glasses

Compounded high powered prescription lenses give crystal clear images for reading. Where regular reading bifocals or lenses don't help enough microscope glasses allow reading vision.



### 4 Spectacle Prismatic Glasses

These moderate powered lenses are useful for near tasks like reading, writing, and handicrafts.

### 5 E-Scoop Contrast Enhancing Glasses

Macular degeneration and other diseases reduce contrast sensitivity. E-Scoop lenses combine 5 elements to create a larger, clearer high contrast image. E-Scoop lenses improve overall vision and reduce the risk of a fall.



### 6 Electronic Magnification

Portable purse size & full size magnification far superior to hand held magnifiers. Take it with you, to read menus, price tags books and newspapers.



### 7 Virtual Reality Wearables

Affordable autofocus, head worn electronic magnification for advanced loss. For advanced vision loss these provide many advantages over traditional cctv's. Induction charging and other specialty features for advanced vision loss.

### 8 Testing and solutions individually prescribed

If it's one thing experience has taught me. There is no one solution for helping low vision patients. Each case involves listening carefully to the specific needs of each patient, carefully examining their usable vision and then using the best low vision solutions to address their individual needs. Prescription telescope, bioptic and reading glasses are only available by prescription.

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# Operation Round-Up Continues to Make a Difference

On April 9, First Electric Cooperative’s Operation Round-Up board met at headquarters in Jacksonville to review applications from organizations making a difference across our service area. In total, 25 applications were reviewed and funded, each representing meaningful work to support local communities.

Funded by members who voluntarily round up their electric bills to the nearest dollar, Operation Round-Up continues to demonstrate the power of small change creating big impact. These contributions support a wide range of needs — from food assistance and education to emergency services and community development.

The following organizations were reviewed and funded as follows:

## Arkansas County

- Personal Pep Rally — \$2,000
- Literacy Council of the Ouachitas — \$1,000
- Imagination Library of Arkansas County — \$500

## Cleburne County

- The Community School of Cleburne County DBA Spark Community — \$1,800
- Tumbling Shoals-Ida Fire Department — \$2,500

## Conway County

- ASPSF of Conway County — \$500

## Faulkner County

- Heart of Heroes — \$750

## Garland County

- ASPSF of Garland County — \$250
- The Entertainment Foundation — \$1,000

## Grant County

- ASPSF of Grant County — \$250

## Lonoke County

- Christ Corner Food Closet — \$1,000
- The CALL in Lonoke & Prairie Counties — \$2,000
- Lonoke County Council on Aging — \$1,500
- ASPSF of Lonoke County — \$1,500

## Perry County

- Casa Community Center — \$2,000
- Stony Point Community Association — \$1,500
- Rose Creek Community Building — \$1,000
- Perry County Historical Museum — \$2,000

## Pulaski County

- Here to Help Foundation — \$2,000
- North Pulaski Community Complex — \$1,000
- Our House, Inc. — \$750
- ASPSF of Pulaski County — \$1,500

## Saline County

- Salem Fire Department — \$2,500
- ASPSF of Saline County — \$1,500

## Yell County

- ASPSF of Yell County — \$250

Operation Round-Up is a simple way members can make a lasting impact. Since its inception, the program has provided critical funding to organizations that strengthen the communities we serve. First Electric is proud to partner with our members to support neighbors in need — proving that even small contributions can power big change.

For more information, visit [firstelectric.coop/community/programs/operation-round-up](http://www.firstelectric.coop/community/programs/operation-round-up).

**JOIN**

**Operation ROUND UP**

**Operation Round-Up is powered by members helping members.**

**Consider enrolling today and be part of something that truly makes a difference right here at home.**

**Enroll in Operation Round-Up at [www.firstelectric.coop](http://www.firstelectric.coop), through the First Electric app, or by calling 800-489-7405.**

# May is Electrical Safety Month

At First Electric Cooperative, safety is more than just a priority; it's a responsibility we share with every member we serve. May is Electrical Safety Month, a time to highlight simple steps that help keep families and communities safe around electricity.

Electricity powers our daily lives, but it also demands respect. Taking a few precautions can prevent serious accidents:

- Avoid overloading outlets and extension cords
- Keep appliances and cords away from water
- Call before you dig to avoid underground lines
- Stay clear of overhead power lines when using ladders or equipment
- Replace frayed cords or damaged outlets promptly
- Stay away from downed power lines and report them immediately

We're proud to bring electrical safety education directly to our communities. Our employees

present hands-on demonstrations using our electrical safety trailer, giving participants a real-world look at how electricity behaves and why caution matters.

In addition, Scott Davis shares his engaging magic program, "Making Accidents Disappear," designed especially for elementary-age students. Through fun, interactive lessons, he helps young children understand the importance of electrical safety in a memorable way.

These efforts turn awareness into action — especially for young people who carry these lessons home.

This May, we encourage you to review your own safety practices and discuss electrical safety with your family. Together, we can make smart choices that keep our communities safe and powered every day.



Magician Scott Davis partners with First Electric to present his "Making Accidents Disappear" show, using magic tricks to teach children vital lessons about electrical safety.

**MEMORIAL DAY**

★★★★★

**Our offices will be closed on May 25 to honor and remember the brave men and women who gave their lives in service to our country.**

Crews will be on hand in the event of an outage.

To report an electric outage, please call 800-489-7405 (Option 2).  
To report an internet outage, please call 833-411-2234 (Option 2).



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# Lakefront Legacy

*Italian roots, enduring traditions shape Chicot's shoreline*

STORY BY JACK SCHNEDLER PHOTOS BY MARCIA SCHNEDLER

Lake Village, set on Arkansas' largest natural lake, celebrates its Italian-American heritage with a museum created by a congregation founded 160 years ago in the state's most southeastern county.

**Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church Museum** ([ourladyofthelake.us](http://ourladyofthelake.us)), 314 S. Lake Shore Drive, honors the fortitude of long-ago immigrants from hilly north-central Italy. They came to flat Chicot County at the end of the 19th century to labor in the cotton fields of Sunnyside Plantation near Lake Chicot, which at 22 miles long is also North America's biggest oxbow lake.

These new Americans, the museum points out, "struggled against exploitation, prejudice and language barriers, with many dying from malaria and other lowland diseases. Many of their descendants are now among the leading citizens of Arkansas and the nation."



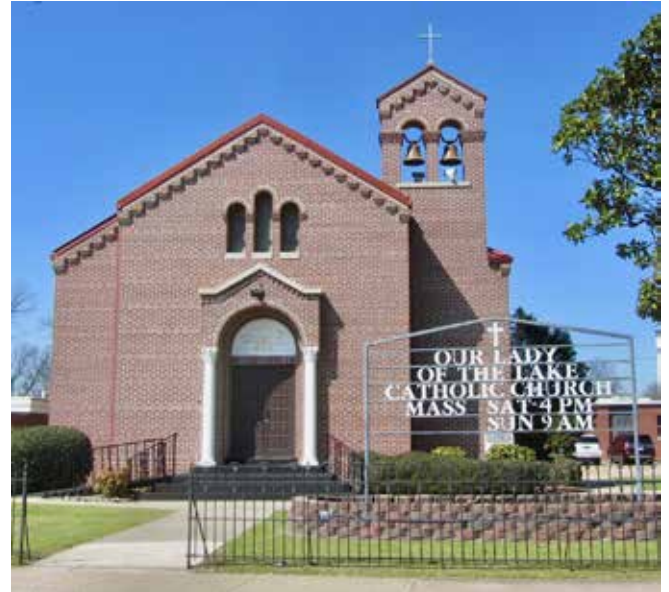
The museum's trove of memorabilia evokes the county's sustained Italian heritage, including the church's annual Spaghetti Dinner each March. A display titled "A People Set Apart" displays around 100 photographs of Italian family life over the decades.

One newspaper photo of a half dozen women in aprons is headlined "They're Making Pasta!" Another image, captioned "Johnny's Party Pig — All Dressed Up," portrays a grinning chef and his roast suckling pig with an apple in its mouth.



Mixing and rolling meatballs for Sunday's spaghetti dinner are (from left) Jean Olivi, Stella Grassi, Dorene Pieroni, Nina Pieroni, Libby Borgognoni and Mary Grassi.

An old newspaper clipping shows locals preparing for the annual Spaghetti Dinner.



ABOVE Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church has a free museum in the rectory next to this main building.

LEFT An accordion and other Italian-heritage items are on display at Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church Museum.

The museum, in the church's next-door rectory, is open to visitors most days by calling ahead to (870) 265-5439. There is no admission charge, but donations are welcome.

## Sunnyside spirit

Lake Village visitors can buy handmade pasta and see more photographs of the county's Italian heritage at **Regina's Pasta House** ([facebook.com/reginaspastashop71654](https://www.facebook.com/reginaspastashop71654)), 3877 U.S. 65/82.

Owner Jeremy Moyer, descendant of a Sunnyside settler, is happy to explain the dozens of vintage photographs displayed in his shop. He points out that while some Italians left Sunnyside to form Tontitown in northwest Arkansas, many stayed in Chicot County. He also reminds customers that handmade pasta should be boiled for no more than two minutes.

A longtime non-Italian favorite, **Rhoda's Famous Hot Tamales** ([tinyurl.com/RhondasFamousHotTamales](http://tinyurl.com/RhondasFamousHotTamales)), 714 St. Mary's St., occupies an unpretentious, no-frills structure. Its tamales continue to draw accolades, as do its fried pies. Hours can vary, so check ahead at (870) 265-3108.

Lake Village's **post office**, 206 S. Cokley St., displays one of the surviving murals created across the nation as a Depression-era federal project. The oil painting, "Country Wild Life," by Avery T. Johnson, shows an array of creatures along Lake Chicot.

On the 15-mile drive northeast from Lake Village to **Lake Chicot State Park** ([arkansasstateparks.com/parks/lake-chicot-state-park](http://arkansasstateparks.com/parks/lake-chicot-state-park)), a stop can be made at **Hyner Cemetery** ([readtheplaque.com/plaque/hyner-cemetery](http://readtheplaque.com/plaque/hyner-cemetery)), on Sunnyside Road, two miles east of Causeway Road. Its tumbled gravestones mark burials "of those devout, courageous Italian immigrants who came to America in 1895."

Lake Chicot's oxbow, a C-shaped curve, was created a half-dozen centuries ago when its water separated from the Mississippi River. The lake is a popular venue for birdwatching and fishing. A photo display in the state park's visitor center shows 20 of the 275 avian species sometimes sighted in this hot spot for migratory birds. Fishermen can catch bluegills, channel catfish, largemouth bass, crappie and redear sunfish.

### Beyond the lake

A new nighttime event at the state park is the **Alligator Prowl Lake Tour**. Participants "venture onto the water as park staff guide you through cypress-lined shores and quiet backwaters while searching for alligators and other nocturnal wildlife. Learn how alligators hunt, navigate and thrive in the darkness." There is a fee to take part and advance reservations are requested.



Arkansas' largest natural lake, Lake Chicot, is a destination for fishing and other recreational activities.




Regina's Pasta House sells handmade pasta along Lake Chicot's shore in Lake Village.

Fifteen miles southeast of Lake Village, the state's only surviving antebellum mansion rises near the Mississippi River levee. Seventeen-room **Lakeport Plantation** ([lakeport.astate.edu](http://lakeport.astate.edu)) was built in 1859, largely by slave labor. It survived after the Civil War by employing sharecroppers. In 2001, the owners donated Lakeport for restoration to Arkansas State University, which opened it to the public in 2007.



Group and self-guided tours offer glimpses of the opulence enjoyed by plantation operators. One prized 19th-century artifact is a floorcloth, described as "one of the most stylish treatments of the time" and "a rare gem in spite of much loss and wear, since few such cloths have survived. Two sections have been cleaned for display. One shows the pattern, created using 14 separate colors, each separately block printed."

A Chicot County visit including Lakeport Plantation and Our Lady of the Lake Church Museum brings into focus some of the ways life has evolved over many decades in one of Arkansas' four corners. 

The Lakeport Plantation near Lake Village was restored by Arkansas State University and is open to the public for tours.

WEB EXCLUSIVE! Read an expanded version of this story at: [arkansaslivingmagazine.com](http://arkansaslivingmagazine.com)

# Willie Wiredhand says: Save a Little, Smile a Lot

Howdy, friends!

Willie Wiredhand here with a friendly reminder — saving energy doesn't have to cost a fortune. In fact, some of the best ways to lower your bill are simple, low-cost (or no-cost) habits you can start today.

Here are a few, easy wins:

- Turn off lights and electronics when you leave a room (don't worry — they won't get lonely, I promise!)
- Change your air filter regularly to keep your system running efficiently (a clean filter is a happy filter!)
- Use ceiling fans to help circulate air (they cool people, not rooms — just like I can't cool off without a little sweet tea!)
- Wash clothes in cold water when possible (your clothes won't mind — they're just hanging out anyway!)
- Seal small air leaks around doors and windows (because nobody likes paying to heat or cool the outdoors!)

During warmer months, try setting your thermostat a few degrees higher when you're away. In the winter, bundle up and lower it just a bit — your wallet will thank you.

Little changes add up over time, and before you know it, you'll see the difference on your bill. Plus, you'll be helping your cooperative manage energy wisely for everyone.

So, go ahead — flip that switch, check that filter and keep more of your hard-earned money where it belongs.

Until next time, stay safe and energy-smart!

— Willie



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*"It's a beautiful knife with a great blade and a sure grip"*

— William B. Wilmington, NC

My friend Sergio is a mixed martial arts fighter. His shoulders are broad. His muscles have muscles. He's not the kind of person you want to be on the wrong side of.

This manly man has a saying about being tough: You should either know how to fight or look like you do.

The message is simple enough. People spoiling for a fight usually don't pick the biggest guy in the bar. If you look like someone who shouldn't be messed with, you likely won't be. With our Blue Bone Bowie Knife on your hip, that's exactly the message you'll send.

As beautiful as it is functional, this knife is 10" overall and features a high-quality 420 surgical stainless steel blade with a serrated spine. The handle is constructed of genuine natural bone with redwood spacers. On the handle you'll find design work that's carved by hand, a testament to its craftsmanship.

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# Snapshots from our readers

Roman and Eliana taking shelter from a spring shower. Kristen Asaiah Photography, taken at Burns Park, North Little Rock.



Rylee says, "My bottle wasn't nearly this big!" Sabrina Brooks, Prim.



Abigail showing Sissy how to fish. Staci Henderson, Murfreesboro.



Liara's berry first strawberry has her completely mesmerized. Sandi Lemke, Bella Vista.



**Gabbie doing her share on the farm.**  
Christy Umholtz, Ozark.



**Bo and his buddy, Reba the cow, sharing a special secret.**  
Rodney Davis, Earle.



**Billie's first tornado warning!**  
Krista Ashcraft, Rison.



**Briggs, Blakely and Boston — two handsome ring bearers and a beautiful little flower girl.**  
Marcia Johnson, Van Buren.



**Farmer Oakley is getting ready to plant her garden.** Ali Love, Scotland.

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](http://arkansaslivingmagazine.com/submit-a-photo).

# Thrill, Fill, Spill

*Container formula creates standout potted perfection*



BY JANET B. CARSON

Growing plants in containers has been a gardening tradition for as long as there have been gardeners. But container gardening today has taken the tradition to a whole new standard. No longer limited to a simple terra-cotta pot of porch geraniums, gardeners now have endless choices in size, shape, color and material — all inviting more

creativity and intention.


Container gardens can be used for flowers, edibles (fruits, vegetables and herbs) or small trees and shrubs. Opt for the largest container you can handle. The more volume you have, the more plants you can add. It also will cut down on how often you have to water. Finite spaces dry out more quickly, and the smaller the container, the more water it will need.

Container choices abound in all sizes and colors and construction, which include the traditional terra-cotta, but now glazed terra-cotta, concrete, ceramic, wood and even glass. Plastic and fiberglass pots have come a long way and can look like ceramic or concrete, but are extremely lightweight and durable.

All containers for outdoor plants must have at least one drainage hole. If using containers on decks, it will help with staining and drainage to put something under the pots, like a brick or pot feet. Don't use trays to help hold water, because they can breed mosquitoes.

It is best to use sterile potting soil in containers. Avoid using garden soil from your yard, which is heavier and also may contain weeds and diseases. Choose plants that will need the same conditions — sunlight and water needs are most important. Watering needs will vary by plant species, but most containers will need frequent watering during the summer months. The more you water, the more often you will need to fertilize since daily watering will leach out nutrition.

For seasonal ornamental containers, try to use a minimum of three plants that harmonize with one another for a dramatic effect:

- **A thriller** — a larger, more upright plant that creates interest;
- **A filler** — plants that are mid-height but spread to fill up the container and showcase the thriller;
- **A spiller** — plants that run or cascade down the container to soften it. 



An arrangement shows the “thrill, fill, spill” formula in action — layered color and texture for standout appeal.

GENERATED BY AI

	THRILLERS	FILLERS	SPILLERS
SUN VARIETIES	Tree-formed tropicals, Hibiscus, Mandevilla, Banana, Ti, Canna, ornamental grass, Angelonia, Dahlias	Pentas, Petunias, Lantana, Coleus, Bushy Mandevilla, Begonia, Diamond Frost Euphorbia, Sunpatiens, Vinca	Ornamental sweet potato vine, Petunias, Verbena, Dichondra Silver Falls, Creeping Jenny, Moss Rose, Bougainvillea
SHADE VARIETIES	Large, upright tropical houseplants, Elephant Ears, Bromeliad	Impatiens, Heuchera, Coleus, Caladiums, Ferns, Torenia	Asparagus fern, Creeping Jenny, ivy – variegated or green

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# Serving Up Sunshine

*Lively sips, sides and sweets brighten the season*

RECIPES AND PHOTOS  
BY JULIANA GOODWIN

## Cherry Limeade

Makes 5 servings.

- |   |   |     |   |
|---|---|-----|---|
| 1 | (16-ounce) package<br>frozen sweet dark<br>cherries | 3   | cups water                                  |
| 1 | cup sugar   | 3/4 | cup fresh lime juice,<br>plus 2 tablespoons |
|   |   | 2-3 | tablespoons honey                           |

Place cherries, sugar and water in a pot and bring to a simmer for 10 minutes. Allow to cool. When completely cool, puree mixture in a blender.

For best results, refrigerate for 2 hours or overnight. Pour in a pitcher and add lime juice and honey. Stir. Serve over ice.



## Hot Honey Corn Salad

Makes 6 or more servings.

### Dressing

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons hot honey
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 1 teaspoon sugar

### Salad

- 2 (15-ounce) cans whole kernel corn, drained
- 2 large celery stalks, diced
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- Half a green bell pepper, diced
- 2-3 tablespoons red onion, chopped
- 1/4 cup cilantro or parsley, chopped



**For dressing:** Combine all dressing ingredients.

**For salad:** In a mixing bowl, combine salad ingredients. Pour dressing on salad and stir. Cover and refrigerate for 2 hours.



## Pina Colada Dessert

Makes 12 servings.

### Crust

- 1 (15.25-ounce) box yellow cake mix
- 1 stick unsalted butter, melted
- 1 egg

### Filling

- 2 (3.4-ounce) packages coconut instant pudding mix
- 3 cups whole milk
- 1 1/3 cups sweetened shredded coconut, divided

### Topping

- 1 (8-ounce) container whipped topping, thawed
- 1 (20-ounce) can pineapple tidbits, drained
- Cream of coconut (optional)

**For crust:** Heat oven to 350. Combine cake mix, melted butter and egg. Stir until well combined. Heavily grease a 9x13 pan. Pat mixture down in pan to make a crust. Bake for 16-18 minutes, until edges are golden brown. Remove and cool completely.

**For filling:** In a mixing bowl, whisk together pudding mix, milk and half (2/3 cup) the shredded coconut. Spread over cooled crust.

**For topping:** Evenly spread whipped topping on filling. Refrigerate for 2 hours.

While dessert chills, toast remaining coconut by heating in a nonstick pan over medium-low heat for about 5-7 minutes. Stir frequently and watch carefully so it doesn't burn. When it turns light brown, it's ready. Allow to cool.

Before serving, thoroughly drain pineapple and spread evenly on whipped topping. Sprinkle toasted coconut on dessert and drizzle with cream of coconut, if desired. Use a knife to slice dessert.



*This month's web exclusive recipe:*

## Pesto Artichoke Pasta Salad

More recipes on our website: [arkansaslivingmagazine.com](http://arkansaslivingmagazine.com)

*Juliana Goodwin is a food columnist, cookbook author and avid traveler. If you have a question, email [julianalovesfood23@gmail.com](mailto:julianalovesfood23@gmail.com).*

# Let's Salsa!

*Celebrate Cinco de Mayo with heat and sweet*

## Debi's Salsa

Makes 24 servings.

- 2 tablespoons minced garlic
- 3 tablespoons lime juice
- 2 tablespoons cumin
- 1/2 bunch fresh cilantro
- 1 1/2 tablespoons salt
- 6 (14-ounce) cans diced tomatoes
- 1 (10-ounce) can diced tomatoes and green chilies (like Rotel)

Place garlic, lime juice, cumin, cilantro and salt in food processor and blend, adding a splash of tomato juice from cans if needed to blend smoothly. Transfer to a mixing bowl.

Add diced tomatoes and diced tomatoes with green chilies to food processor, pulsing to desired consistency. Add to bowl and stir well.

*Debi Waddle, Cabot*

## Our Favorite Salsa

Makes 7 pints.

- |    |   |       |                         |
|----|---|-------|-------------------------|
| 1  | gallon tomatoes (about 10-12 medium), chopped   |       | chopped                 |
|    |   | 2     | teaspoons seasoned salt |
| 12 | jalapenos or to taste, chopped                  | 2     | tablespoons pepper      |
|    |   | 1 1/2 | cups sugar              |
| 1  | quart green peppers (about 3-4 medium), chopped | 1     | cup vinegar             |
|    |   | 3/4   | cup lime juice          |
| 1  | quart onions (about 2-3 medium),                | 3     | garlic cloves, chopped  |

Cook tomatoes, jalapenos, green peppers and onions in large pot over medium heat for 45 minutes to 1 hour. Add seasoned salt, pepper, sugar, vinegar, lime juice and garlic. Continue cooking until desired consistency. Ladle into hot, sterile jars, leaving a little headspace. Seal and process according to standard canning methods.

*Note: If salsa is slightly watery upon opening, drain to desired consistency or add cornstarch to thicken.*

*Marsha Dillard, Yellville*



JENNIFER CHRISTIAN/CIA

## Clesani Farms Salsa Casera

Makes 8 or more servings.

- |     |   |     |                          |
|-----|---|-----|--------------------------|
| 2   | (7-ounce) cans salsa casera   | 1   | large tomato, chopped    |
| 1-3 | chipotle peppers in adobo sauce (depending on heat tolerance; see note) | 1/2 | onion, chopped           |
|     |   | 1/2 | red bell pepper, chopped |
| 1   | teaspoon sugar  | 1   | teaspoon garlic powder   |
| 1/2 | cup cilantro, chopped   | 1   | teaspoon salt            |
| 2   | jalapenos, chopped  | 1   | teaspoon pepper          |

Add salsa casera, chipotle peppers and sugar to a food processor, and pulse until desired consistency. Transfer to bowl and stir in cilantro, jalapenos, tomato, onion, red bell pepper, garlic powder, salt and pepper. Chill for at least 1 hour before serving.

*Note: For less heat, use no more than 1 chipotle pepper and remove seeds and membranes from jalapenos.*

*Clay Newman, Rogers*

## Pineapple Mango Salsa

Makes 12 or more servings.

- |   |                                  |         |   |
|---|----------------------------------|---------|---|
| 1 | pineapple, peeled and chopped    | 1/2     | red onion, finely chopped                   |
| 3 | mangos, peeled and chopped       | 3       | limes, juiced                               |
| 2 | tomatoes, chopped                | 1/4-1/2 | cup olive oil                               |
| 1 | cucumber, chopped                | 2       | tablespoons garlic, minced                  |
| 3 | white nectarines, finely chopped | 2       | tablespoons pink Himalayan salt or to taste |
| 3 | jalapenos, finely chopped        | 2       | tablespoons pepper or to taste              |
| 1 | bunch cilantro, chopped          |         |   |

Stir together all ingredients in a mixing bowl. Combine well and refrigerate overnight before serving.

*Wayne Harris, Rogers*



JENNIFER CHRISTMAN, CIA

## Strawberry Salsa

Makes 12 or more servings.

- 1 quart strawberries
- 3 Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored and quartered
- 3 kiwis, peeled
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice

1/4 cup brown sugar

Cinnamon-sugar tortilla chips (like Stacy's or Siete brands)

Add strawberries, apples and kiwis to food processor, lightly pulsing to desired consistency. Add lemon juice and brown sugar and mix well. Serve with cinnamon-sugar tortilla chips.

*Debra Horton, Jonesboro*



## New Recipe Contest: FLAVORS OF FALL!

Arkansas Living's Flavors of Fall recipe contest celebrates craveable autumn cooking — perfect for cool nights, game days and holiday gatherings. To enter our random drawing, just submit any personal favorite fall recipe — hearty suppers, slow-cooked favorites, seasonal sides, pumpkin and apple delights, cozy casseroles, tailgate favorites and sweet fall treats. Four Arkansas Living readers will win a Mueller Pro Chopper, a versatile kitchen tool with eight blades to make quick work of onions, peppers and all your fall chili fixings!



Submit your recipe by June 15 to be entered in a random drawing. Enter at [arkansaslivingmagazine.com/submit-a-recipe](http://arkansaslivingmagazine.com/submit-a-recipe).

### SUMMER, SERVED! CONTEST WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Thank you to everyone who participated in our Summer, Served! recipe contest. Congratulations to our four winners, each receiving a copy of the "Cooks of the Buffalo" cookbook:

**Jean Rabalais, Norman (Rich Mountain Electric Cooperative)**  
**Twila Mitchell, Bentonville (Carroll Electric Cooperative)**  
**Thomas Whittenhall, Hot Springs (First Electric Cooperative)**  
**Diana Jones, Shirley (Petit Jean Electric Cooperative).**

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## CROSSWORD PUZZLE

### This Month's Extensions *By Victor Fleming*

#### ACROSS

- 1 "Get \_\_\_!" (Settle down!)"
- 6 Radio toggle switch
- 10 Texter's views preceder
- 14 Cheese, in Spanish
- 15 Aesop's race loser
- 16 Angelou or Rudolph
- 17 Calm and resolute, despite adversity
- 19 "The \_\_\_ have it!"
- 20 "\_\_\_ get going?"
- 21 Burned, as food
- 23 1974 CIA spooF
- 25 Centers of action
- 26 "\_\_\_ has it ..."
- 29 Felt-\_\_\_ pen
- 32 Biblical no-no
- 33 Acapulco article
- 34 Kansas city
- 37 "Lights out" music
- 40 Ice cream maker Joseph
- 41 Tall, planted cylinder adorned with streamers
- 43 Debtor's note
- 44 Destine for trouble
- 46 Sikh headdress
- 47 Motor additive logo
- 48 Uncomfortable groove
- 50 "The Raven" author
- 51 Mississippi County town
- 53 Made soapy
- 56 "... and \_\_\_ bed"
- 58 Menu phrase
- 61 Wets thoroughly
- 65 "\_\_\_ do for now"
- 66 Baseball's "Say Hey Kid"
- 68 Family \_\_\_
- 69 Angel feature
- 70 "Unsafe at Any Speed" author Ralph

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
14					15					16			
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- 71 "Airplane!" actor Robert
- 72 Sugary endings
- 73 Batik workers
- 77 "Edit" menu option
- 78 Richard in Chicago City Hall from 1989-2011

#### DOWN

- 1 Here, in Havana
- 2 \_\_\_-ho
- 3 Alter the look of
- 4 "For real?"
- 5 After a certain high school dance
- 6 "Eureka!"
- 7 Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota
- 8 Before (abbr.)
- 9 Euripides drama
- 10 Cry of success
- 11 Burger condiment
- 12 "Laughing" carnivore
- 13 Arid-area refuges
- 18 Month with 8 other appearances in this puzzle
- 22 B&O and Union Pacific
- 24 Don't go to bed
- 26 Felt contrite about
- 27 "Edit" menu option
- 28 Richard in Chicago City Hall from 1989-2011
- 30 P.C. problem-solver
- 31 Ending for xeno- and techno-
- 35 Counterpart of long.
- 36 What Pam's full name ends with
- 38 Cooking utensils
- 39 Dines
- 42 Lengthwise
- 45 Abs and pecs
- 49 "Coffee or \_\_\_?"
- 52 Sentence granting permission
- 53 Doth speak
- 54 Ne plus \_\_\_
- 55 BBC Sci-Fi series
- 57 Opposite of amo (Latin)
- 59 Spanish aunts
- 60 Fashion mag since 1945
- 62 "Smooth Operator" singer
- 63 Beholder
- 64 Armenia and Estonia, once (abbr.)
- 67 L.A.'s "L"

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# 'Round-the-Clock Comfort

*Benson's Grill a Fort Smith favorite at any hour*



STORY AND PHOTOS BY ROB ROEDEL

Benson's Grill in Fort Smith is a longstanding restaurant known for its fresh, homemade food served in a warm, diner-style atmosphere. It has maintained a loyal customer base since opening in 1968 and emphasizes large portions and good prices.

The restaurant had a few different names over the years and was renamed Benson's Grill in 1997. It is currently owned by Ted Cserra and managed by Alan Parr, who highlights the establishment's focus on fresh, local food and solid reputation.

"If you leave here hungry, it is

your own fault," Parr said with a grin. "Word-of-mouth is the only advertising that we have had. Benson's is a Fort Smith institution with a few generations of loyal customers."

The restaurant offers an old-school vibe with an attentive and welcoming staff, serving satisfying meals cooked on a griddle.

Benson's has a slogan, "Where breakfast is served all the time."

During my visit, I sampled a few of

the many breakfast menu options, including the All-in-One, featuring two eggs, two huge fluffy pancakes and bacon (ham and sausage are also options). The over-easy eggs were the work of a skilled cook, while the thick bacon had a great hickory-smoked flavor and the pancakes were plate fillers.

I dove into the Man Size Breakfast next. It was more than I could have eaten on an empty stomach: three scrambled eggs, a huge portion of hash browns, two sausage patties and two pieces of cinnamon raisin toast. This was another hit.

Next up, their G.O.T.cha! Breakfast was unveiled. This inventive dish begins with an open-faced biscuit, followed by



Oh, man! The Man Size Breakfast includes three scrambled eggs, hash browns, two sausage patties and cinnamon raisin toast.

a layer of fresh hash browns, then two scrambled eggs finished off with a choice of ham, bacon or sausage. The whole plate is smothered in outstanding white gravy. According to the staff, this popular breakfast is so hearty that finishing the plate nearly guarantees you'll need a nap afterward.



Benson's Burger Bowl layers crinkle-cut fries with a third-pound hamburger patty, white gravy, an over-medium egg, crumbled bacon and shredded cheese.



The staff at Benson's Grill in Fort Smith serve up delicious menu items 24 hours a day.



## THE EATING ESSENTIALS

### Benson's Grill

2515 Rogers Ave.  
Fort Smith  
(479) 782-8181  
[bensongrill.org](http://bensongrill.org)

**Hours of Operation**  
Open 24 hours daily




The triple-decker Philly Club is another original creation with a Philly sandwich on top and a BLT sandwich on the bottom. Toasted sourdough bread ensures that the sandwich is sturdy enough to withstand the generous array of ingredients. This one is a winner for sure. A big serving of crunchy onion rings accompanied the sandwich.

Benson's is known for hamburgers, so I tried the Cyclops Burger, including a griddled one-third-pound, hand-patted burger with lettuce, onion, American cheese, bacon, a fried egg, tomato and pickles on a toasted bun. There is nothing like a hamburger that features a tiny bit of crunch that only a well-seasoned griddle can deliver.

The restaurant has two famous specialty items: Mamma's Mexican Surprise and Benson's Burger Bowl. I opted for the burger bowl. What a fun item. It featured a big bowl of golden-brown crinkle-cut fries, topped with a one-third-pound hamburger, white gravy, an over-medium egg, crumbled bacon and a bit of shredded cheese.

Desserts like freshly made pies and cheesecakes sweeten any visit.

Benson's Grill is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week and certainly lives up to its tagline, "A place like no other." 



Benson's Cyclops Burger is a beastly bacon cheeseburger with a fried egg.

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Dining recommendations? Contact Rob Roedel at [rob.roedel@aecc.com](mailto:rob.roedel@aecc.com).



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# Calendar



Toad Suck Daze

COURTESY OF TOAD SUCK DAZE



Norfolk Pioneer Days

COURTESY OF NORFOLK PIONEER DAYS



Mother's Day at the Little Rock Zoo

COURTESY OF LITTLE ROCK ZOO



Mayhaw Festival

COURTESY OF MAYHAW FESTIVAL



UAMS Health Little Rock Open

NELSON CHENAULT

## May 1-2

### Steel Horse Rally

Fort Smith, [thesteelhorserally.com](http://thesteelhorserally.com)

### Mountain View Iris Festival

Mountain View, [mountainviewirisfest.com](http://mountainviewirisfest.com)

## May 1-3

### Arkansas Pottery Festival

Fayetteville, [tinyurl.com/Pottery26](http://tinyurl.com/Pottery26)

### Toad Suck Daze

Conway, [toadsuck.org](http://toadsuck.org)

## May 2

### Mayhaw Festival

El Dorado, [mayhawfestival.com](http://mayhawfestival.com)

### Chocolate Gravy Cookoff 2026

Searcy, [tinyurl.com/ChocolateGravy26](http://tinyurl.com/ChocolateGravy26)

## May 5

### Cinco de Mayo 5K Glow Run

Beebe, [tinyurl.com/Cinco5k](http://tinyurl.com/Cinco5k)

## May 7-9

### Crawdadd Days

Harrison, [facebook.com/crawdaddays](http://facebook.com/crawdaddays)

## May 9

### 501Fest

Little Rock, [501festival.com](http://501festival.com)

## May 10

### Mother's Day at the Little Rock Zoo

Little Rock, [littlerockzoo.com](http://littlerockzoo.com)

## May 15-16

### Magnolia Blossom Festival and World Championship Steak Cook-Off

Magnolia, [blossomfestival.org](http://blossomfestival.org)

### Osceola Heritage Music Festival

Osceola, [osceolaheritagemusicfestival.com](http://osceolaheritagemusicfestival.com)

### Picklefest

Atkins, [facebook.com/peopleforabetteratkins](http://facebook.com/peopleforabetteratkins)

### Norfolk Pioneer Days

Norfolk, [cityofnorfolk.org/pioneer-days](http://cityofnorfolk.org/pioneer-days)

### Dermott Crawfish Festival

Dermott, [tinyurl.com/DermottCrawfish](http://tinyurl.com/DermottCrawfish)

## May 16-17

### Fayetteville Strawberry Festival

Fayetteville, [tinyurl.com/StrawberryFestivalAR](http://tinyurl.com/StrawberryFestivalAR)

## May 22-23

### Homecoming Hootenanny

Mountain View, [tinyurl.com/HomecomingHootenanny](http://tinyurl.com/HomecomingHootenanny)

## May 24

### Memorial Day Fireworks

Hot Springs, [hotsprings.org/events/memorial-day-fireworks](http://hotsprings.org/events/memorial-day-fireworks)

## May 24-31

### UAMS Health Little Rock Open

Little Rock, [littlerockopen.com](http://littlerockopen.com)

## May 25-30

### Old Fort Days Rodeo

Fort Smith, [facebook.com/OldFortDaysRodeo](http://facebook.com/OldFortDaysRodeo)

## May 28-30

### Mosquitofest

McCrory, [facebook.com/mosquitofestival](http://facebook.com/mosquitofestival)

## May 28-31

### Eureka Springs Blues Party

Eureka Springs, [tinyurl.com/EurekaBlues](http://tinyurl.com/EurekaBlues)

## May 30

### 2026 Survivors Challenge

Fort Smith, [findarace.com/us/events/2026-survivors-challenge](http://findarace.com/us/events/2026-survivors-challenge)

## June 1

### Arkansas Country Music Awards

Conway, [arkansasmusic.org](http://arkansasmusic.org)

Find more events at [arkansaslivingmagazine.com/around-arkansas](http://arkansaslivingmagazine.com/around-arkansas).  
Submit events at [arkansaslivingmagazine.com/submissions/submit-an-event](http://arkansaslivingmagazine.com/submissions/submit-an-event).



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#### ARKADELPHIA

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Jeremy Hughes

#### ASHDOWN

Joey Bailey

#### BARLING

Brandon Zimmerman

#### BATESVILLE

Vicki Stephenson

#### BENTON

Todd Matthews

#### BERRYVILLE

Tonya Williams

#### BRYANT

Laryssa Calley  
Matt Steele

#### CABOT

Paul Killingsworth

#### CARLISLE

Victor Seidenschwarz

#### CHARLESTON

Jim Milam

#### CLARKSVILLE

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Dan Pevy

#### DES ARC

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Stacy Berry

#### FARMINGTON

Griggs Covington

#### FAYETTEVILLE

Whit Hensman  
Randy Hutchinson  
Taylor Wethers

#### FORT SMITH

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#### GLENWOOD

Simon Mack

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#### GREEN FOREST

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#### GREENBRIER

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#### PARIS

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#### ROGERS

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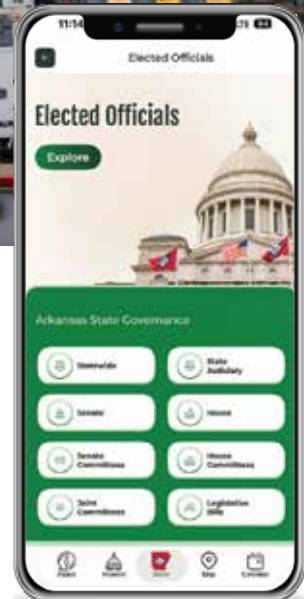


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