

THE SIXTH  
DECADE PAGE 4

ELDERBERRY'S  
ALLURE PAGE 12

LOST CAR  
SYNDROME PAGE 30

CHECK OUT YOUR  
REC NEWS  
PAGE 13

JULY 2026

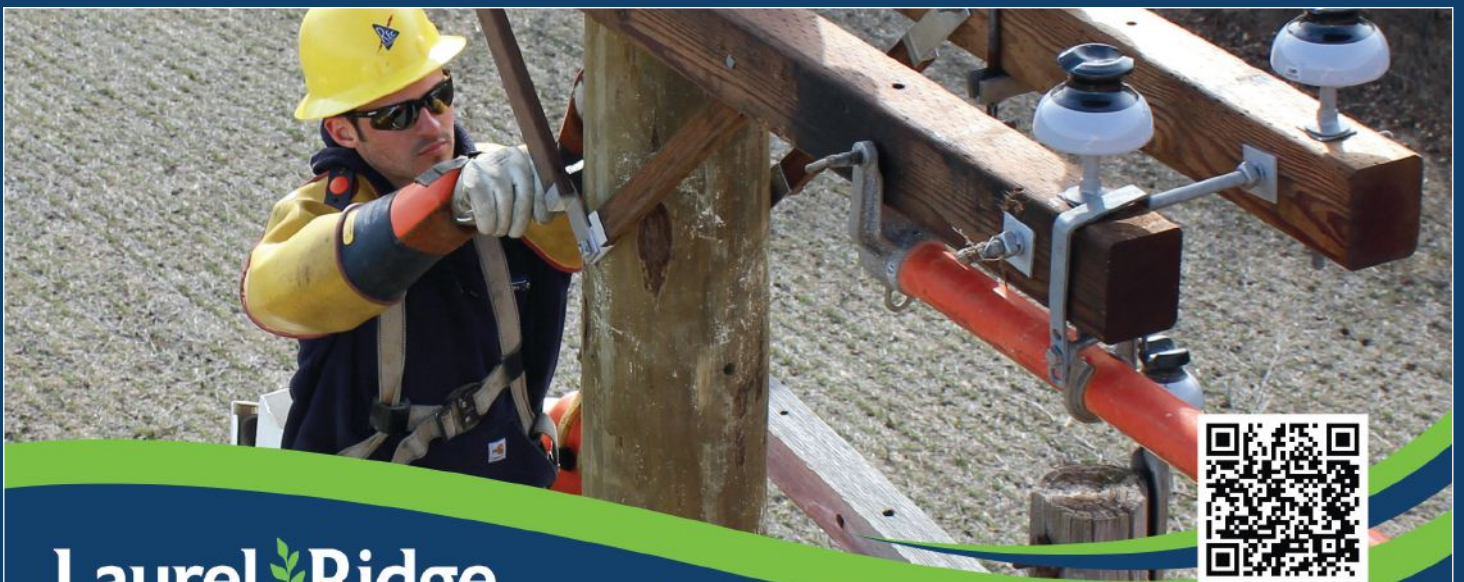
RAPPAHANNOCK ELECTRIC

# Cooperative Living

TRAVELING THE  
PATH *of* PRESIDENTS

PAGE 8





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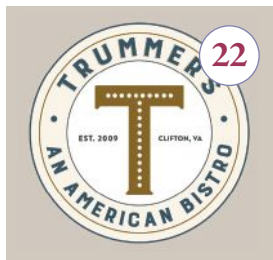
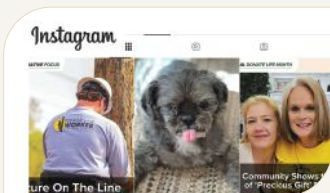
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*Correction: Due to a production error, a portion of Community Electric Cooperative's June local pages were printed incorrectly. The complete content can be found at [co-opliving.com/15882/natures-troublemakers](http://co-opliving.com/15882/natures-troublemakers).*

Cover illustration by Michael Halbert/Ink Art

VIEWPOINT

# Honoring Our Past, Energizing Our Future



For our 16 regional electric cooperatives, July 2026 offers an opportunity to reflect on where we have come from and use that rich history as a foundation for the future of our dynamic, mission-driven businesses.

This year, we celebrate our nation's 250th anniversary, 90 years since the Rural Electrification Act sparked the cooperative movement, and 80 years since this magazine was established to tell the stories of the people, places and communities connected by electric cooperatives. Today, those cooperatives serve more than 2 million people across Virginia, Maryland and Delaware.

July is also when we gather for our annual meeting, bringing together the elected directors and staff of our

cooperatives to share our mission, discuss the challenges ahead and shape a vision for the future. These directors — chosen by you, the member-owners of our cooperatives — volunteer their time to help guide their co-ops through complex issues affecting the energy industry while overseeing the finances, operations and long-term direction of their organizations.

To me, these directors and the dedicated professionals serving throughout our co-ops represent the very best of what our nation was founded upon: neighbors working together to strengthen their communities and create opportunities for future generations.

Electric cooperatives helped electrify rural America and strengthen the nation. For 250 years, America has thrived through local leadership, innovation and shared purpose. Electric cooperatives continue that tradition today — member-owned, community-focused and committed to the future. ●

*Brian S. Mosier*

Brian S. Mosier, President & CEO  
Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives

# Cooperative Living

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## OUR MISSION

To inform you about your cooperative and its efforts to serve your energy needs; how to use electricity safely and efficiently; and the people who define and enhance the quality of life in communities served by electric co-ops.

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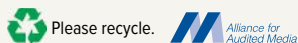
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GAIL GOODRICH HARWOOD PHOTO; INSET: JAMES RUSSELL PHOTO

## Warsaw's President Washington

*Northern Neck man helps audiences connect with life and legacy of the nation's first president*

by Jeff Caldwell, Staff Writer

For Northern Neck Electric Cooperative retiree and member Andrew Packett, history is part of his DNA. Packett traces his family's roots in the Northern Neck to the 1660s, when his ancestors arrived as indentured servants. Today, he is a living historian who not only studies George Washington but embodies him as a costumed speaker and historical interpreter.

Packett spent 12 years as a park ranger at the George Washington Birthplace National Monument before beginning a 13-year communications career at NNEC. Over time, his love of storytelling evolved into a second identity.

Today, he performs as George Washington, "Your Humble Servant," at museums, historical societies and community events throughout the region.

"Everyone wants George this summer," says the affable performer between appearances tied to the nation's 250th anniversary.

Packett performs free of charge in most cases, using Washington's story to inspire audiences of all ages. About 80% of his presentations come directly from Washington's own words, letters and writings.

He believes modern Americans could learn much from the nation's first president during a time marked by division and partisanship.

"Most people don't realize that being an American is like driving a car or owning a weapon," he says. "As with anything in life, there is responsibility. Citizenship requires us to do the right thing. It requires moral character and integrity — to vote, and to look out for the good of the public more so than ourselves."

Paraphrasing Patrick Henry, Packett adds, "In order to move forward, we have got to recognize what has transpired in the past so we don't make the same mistakes."

And for Packett, one lesson from history stands above the rest: "When people need a hero, they need look no further than Washington." ●

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# The Digital Dawn

Celebrating the sixth decade of Cooperative Living

by Laura Emery, Staff Writer

In celebration of *Cooperative Living's* 80th anniversary, each issue this year spotlights one of the eight decades since this publication — first published in October 1946 — began inspiring, informing and connecting electric cooperative members.

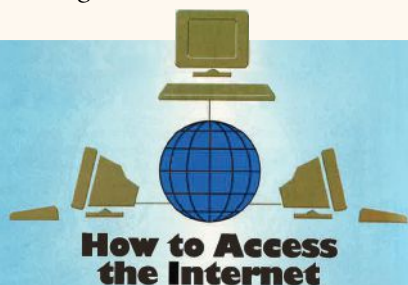
During the magazine's sixth decade, from 1996 through 2006, *Rural Living*, which was later renamed *Cooperative Living*, continued balancing nostalgia and tradition with a rapidly changing world. Debates over electric deregulation, the rise of internet culture, natural disasters, national tragedy and the approach of a new millennium filled the magazine's pages.

## A WIRED WORLD

The January 1996 issue announced that *Rural Living* would transition from 12 issues a year to 10. In March 1996, readers were introduced to the "information superhighway" and the rapidly expanding "World Wide Web."

The July 1996 issue featured the headline "Gee-Whiz, Bob, What's a CPU?" while also profiling a Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative member who recalled having electricity for the first time.

In the October 1996 issue, *Rural Living* celebrated its 50th anniversary.



## READER FAVORITES

Several long-running reader favorites debuted in 1997. The Food for Thought column, written by then-Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative board member John Bonfadini, tackled controversial topics ranging from school prayer and cancer to sex education and standardized testing.



The Down Home column debuted and quickly became one of the magazine's most beloved features. The series highlighted small towns and the gathering places that defined rural life. The first stop was Victoria, Va.

By September 1997, Virginia entered a lengthy debate over electric deregulation and customer choice. Throughout 1998, the magazine tracked the growing push toward electric competition, with wholesale competition expected by 2001 and retail competition by 2004.

The August 1998 issue explored growing fears surrounding Y2K and whether computers would malfunction when the calendar rolled over to Jan. 1, 2000. (Fortunately, they did not.)

The start of 1999 came with the announcement that Jack Reasor had resigned from Virginia's 38th Senate District seat to become president and CEO of the two federated organizations representing the interests of electric cooperatives in Virginia, Maryland and Delaware — Old Dominion Electric Cooperative and the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives.

Natural disasters repeatedly put one of the seven cooperative principles, Cooperation Among Cooperatives, to



January 2000

the test. In February 1999, the magazine documented a devastating ice storm that caused widespread outages across Virginia. Hurricane Floyd followed later that year.

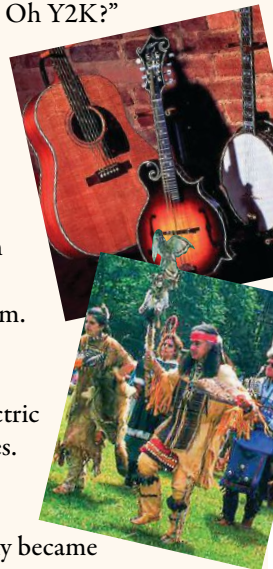
In the March/April 1999 issue, *Rural Living* revisited a decade of travel stories featured in the Rural Retreats column. That same issue announced that Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative was entering the internet business to provide local internet access in south-central Virginia.

As Y2K fears intensified, the May 1999 issue continued to answer reader questions about the Y2K bug with headlines such as "Why, Oh Y2K?" "Tick, Tick, Tick ..." and "Bitten by the Bug."

During the 1990s, the publication featured stories on watermen, powwows, evolving farm crops, Appalachian fiddlers and Northern Virginia's high-tech boom. The magazine reflected the people, cultures and issues shaping life in electric cooperative communities.

## NEW MILLENNIUM

*Rural Living* officially became *Cooperative Living* in January 2000.



The magazine also launched its first website as electric cooperatives nationwide continued delivering power to 26 million Americans.

Throughout 2000, The Cooperative Century series explored a variety of businesses and organizations built around cooperative principles.

In 2001, *Cooperative Living* expanded its content. New features debuted: the Rural Living column and the WhatzIt photo contest.

### A NATION CHANGED

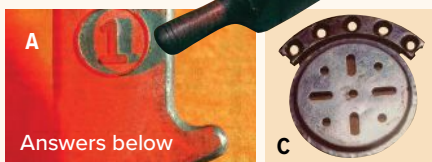
The Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks deeply impacted the nation and the magazine's readers. In October 2001, Editor Richard G. Johnstone Jr. reflected on a country forever altered by the terrorist attacks, writing about grief, resilience and the unity that emerged in the aftermath. Americans, he observed, rallied together with passion and shared purpose.

A patriotic "God Bless America" editorial appeared alongside the November/December 2001 cover story, "A Window on Tragedy." The cover story recounted the experience of electric cooperative executives who were meeting near the World Trade Center when American Airlines Flight 11 struck the north tower. Amid confusion and fear, the group safely evacuated, relying on cooperation and quick thinking to survive. The article reminded readers of life's fragility and the enduring strength of cooperation.

### BEYOND ENERGY

While keeping readers abreast of intense energy debates, *Cooperative*

### WHATZIT?



Answers below

*Living* remained focused on telling the stories of the people cooperatives served. The March/April 2002 Fairs & Festivals Guide celebrated everything from peanuts and pork to antique cars and music festivals throughout Virginia.

In January 2003, *Cooperative Living* warned readers about the potential consequences of electric deregulation and retail choice, openly questioning whether deregulation would truly benefit rural Virginians. The Youth Art Contest also debuted in 2003, with winners announced in the July issue. That same issue featured the inaugural Gaff-n-Go Rodeo, hosted by Central Virginia Electric Cooperative in Nelson County, Va.

In October 2003, the magazine covered both the Northeast blackout and Hurricane Isabel's destruction across Virginia. Nearly 230,000 electric cooperative members lost power, and utility crews from across the country traveled to Virginia to assist with restoration efforts.

By January 2004, editorials argued Virginia's experiment with electric deregulation had failed to deliver benefits for many consumers, especially those in rural areas.

The February 2004 issue recounted the emotional reunion between a mother and the infant son she had given up for adoption years earlier. Later that year, "Virginia's Delightful Dozen," invited readers to vote for their favorite places, people and attractions across the state.

The November/December 2004 issue featured BARC Electric Cooperative

board member and World War II veteran Jim Tennant, who had survived a near-fatal plane crash over France in 1944, evaded German capture and eventually made his way back to Allied lines.

### MUSIC AND MILESTONES

The February 2005 issue featured Big & Rich member Kenny Alphin, whose parents were members of Rappahannock Electric Cooperative.



Legendary bluegrass musician Ralph Stanley appeared on the September 2005 cover. The magazine described Stanley as the quintessential Virginia gentleman, praising the endurance, faith and timelessness reflected in both the man and his incomparable music.

In October 2005, *Cooperative Living* reported on the signing of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, which boosted oil, natural gas and electricity supplies while promoting alternative energy sources. In that same issue, it was reported that electric cooperative crews from Virginia, Maryland and Delaware traveled south to help restore power along the Gulf Coast in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

### SIXTY YEARS

*Cooperative Living* celebrated its 60th anniversary in January 2006. The commemorative issue reflected on extraordinary change, from rural electrification to the internet age, and recognized that the publication remained focused on educating members about important co-op issues while spotlighting the people and places served by electric cooperatives. ●

A. HORSESHOE GAME END B. ANTIQUE DIE TOOL C. PART FROM ERECTOR SET



The Pokémon franchise exploded in 1996 and became a worldwide craze.



The early 2000s saw the rise of reality TV with shows such as *The Real World* and *Survivor*.



Wikipedia launched in January 2001. Facebook launched in February 2004.



Hurricane Katrina killed 1,836 people along the Gulf Coast in late August 2005.

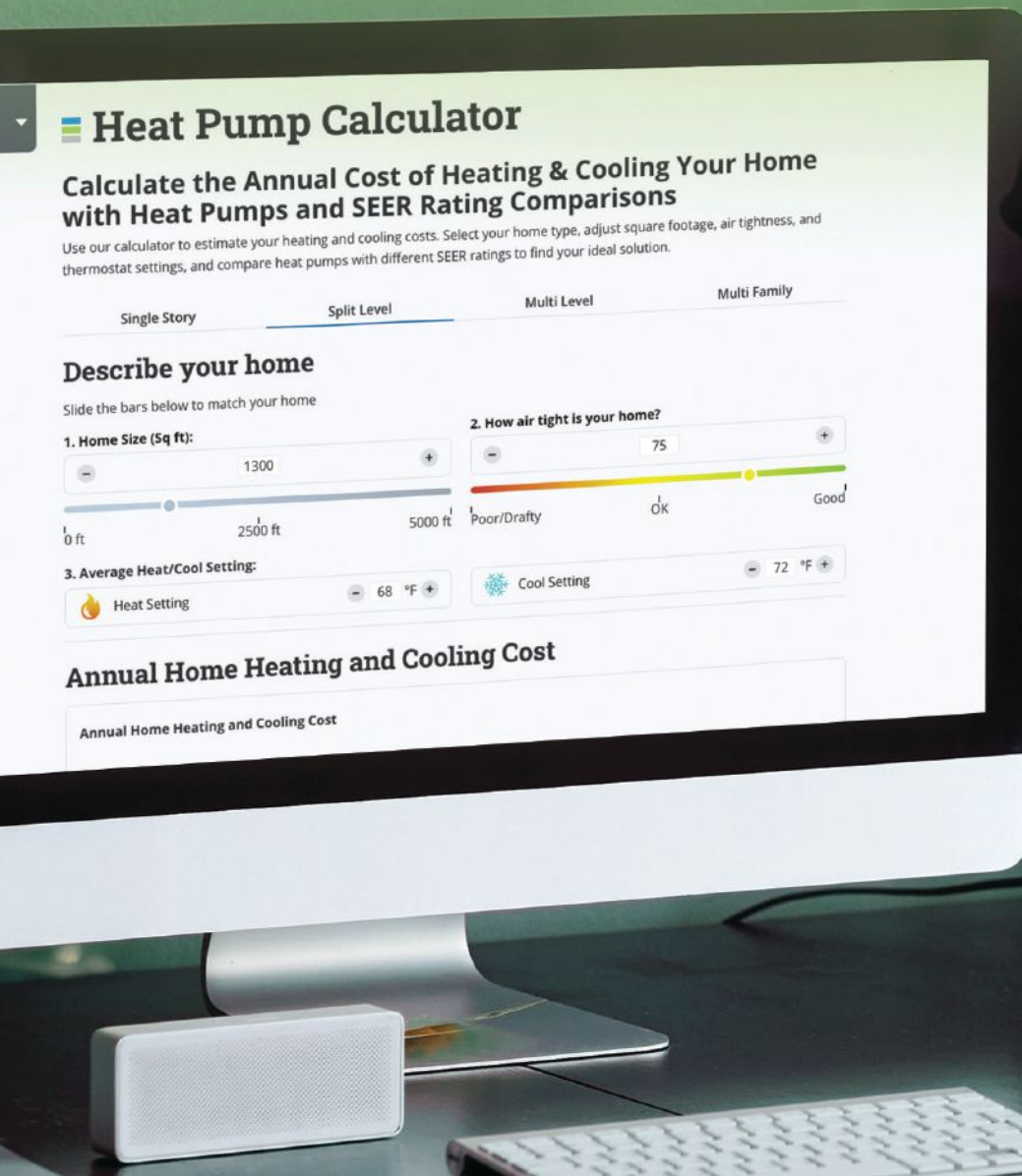
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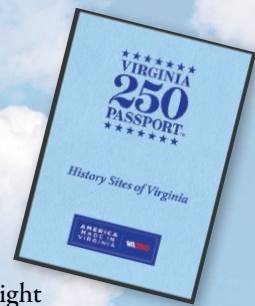
# The Path of Patriots

*Virginia gave rise to a revolution, a democratic republic and eight presidents*

by Chris Dovi, Contributing Writer

**A**s the nation celebrates the 250th anniversary of its independence from Great Britain — and, more importantly, the birth of its democratic republic — what better way to mark the milestone than to visit some of the places that helped make America great. Virginia, the Mother

of Presidents, gave birth to eight of the nation's greatest leaders. Nearly all left a legacy of historic sites worth visiting. First step? Get your **Virginia 250 Passport** at [virginiahistory.org/virginia-250-passport](http://virginiahistory.org/virginia-250-passport). Then it's time to gas up and hit the highway. Destination: history.



## George Washington

FIRST PRESIDENT (1789-1797)



We cannot tell a lie: Our nation's first president has three homesteads of importance, all located in Northern Virginia or the Northern Neck.

*George Washington*



### Wakefield

Begin with Washington's birthplace at Wakefield in Westmoreland County. Although the home where he was born burned on Christmas Day 1779, a replica stands amid 500 acres of national parkland along Pope's Creek.

[Nps.gov/gewa](http://Nps.gov/gewa); [dbr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/096-0026](http://dbr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/096-0026)

### Ferry Farm

Washington's childhood home, Ferry Farm in Stafford County, was also destroyed by fire. You can visit an exact replica of the 1740 original. This is where Washington allegedly chopped down that famous — though fictional — cherry tree.

[Kenmore.org/visit-george-washingtons-ferry-farm](http://Kenmore.org/visit-george-washingtons-ferry-farm)

### Mount Vernon

Finally, visit the mother of all presidential sites, Mount Vernon in Fairfax County. It's everything you'd expect from the home of the nation's most beloved Founding Father. The house is original. Don't stop at the mansion; the museum and education center are attractions in their own right. This year's July 3-4 activities will include fireworks, commemorations and a performance by the National Concert Band. [Mountvernon.org](http://Mountvernon.org)

MOUNT VERNON LADIES ASSOCIATION PHOTO



## Thomas Jefferson

THIRD PRESIDENT (1801-1809)



Jefferson was known to be a prolific inventor who also improved upon the designs of other inventions. Visit the historic sites where he lived to see items that offer a glimpse into his brilliant mind.

### Tuckahoe Plantation and Poplar Forest

Historic sites associated with Jefferson's life include Tuckahoe Plantation near Richmond and Poplar Forest in Bedford County. Poplar Forest activities related to the 250th include "Give Me Liberty: Virginia & The Forging of a Nation." This signature exhibition from the Virginia American Revolution 250 Commission will be on display at Poplar Forest from Oct. 12 to Nov. 23. [Visithistorictuckahoe.com](http://Visithistorictuckahoe.com); [Poplarforest.org](http://Poplarforest.org)

### Monticello

The centerpiece of Jefferson's legacy remains Monticello in Charlottesville, designed by the same hand that penned the Declaration of Independence. Explore the site with a special guided tour of Monticello by Thomas Jefferson, as portrayed by interpreter Bill Barker. Get tickets for this special tour through July 31. [Monticello.org](http://Monticello.org)



## James Monroe

FIFTH PRESIDENT (1817-1825)



Although he managed to acquire from Spain the territory that would become Florida, Monroe often stands in the shadows of Washington, Jefferson and Madison. But he was no shrinking violet. His presidency became known as the "Era of Good Feelings," yet he also is remembered for the Monroe Doctrine, a stern warning against European interference in the Americas.

### Highland

Prodded by friend Thomas Jefferson, Monroe bought 1,000 acres not far from Monticello in Albemarle County and built a home on the property that today tells many new stories, thanks to ongoing archaeological study of the site since 2012. The property is now owned by his alma mater, the College of William & Mary. Discounted admission tickets (\$10) are available on Independence Day. [Highland.org](http://Highland.org)

## James Madison

FOURTH PRESIDENT (1809-1817)



Although he stood just 5 feet, 4 inches tall, James Madison was no flyweight. He wrote the first draft of the U.S. Constitution, not to mention many of the Federalist Papers, at his Orange County, Va., home.

### Belle Grove Plantation

You can tour, or even sleep in, the King George County plantation house where James Madison, the Father of the Constitution, was born. Operating now as a historic site and bed-and-breakfast, Belle Grove was built on the banks of the Rappahannock River in 1670 and changed hands among multiple families after Madison's years of residence. [Bellgroveplantation.com](http://Bellgroveplantation.com)

### Montpelier

For another Madison experience, try Montpelier, the longtime home of Madison and his nearly equally famous wife, Dolley Madison. The historic site and museum hosts a few commemorative events this month: the Orange Music Festival, July 3; Salon 1776's "Talk and Sip" series; and the Educator Seminar, July 20-23, discussing the Declaration of Independence as the basis for the U.S. Constitution. The attraction is one of many discounted stops on the Virginia 250 Passport. [Montpelier.org](http://Montpelier.org)



## The Path of Patriots

(continued from page 9)

### William Henry Harrison

NINTH PRESIDENT (1841)

*W. H. Harrison*



Poor President Harrison, we hardly knew him! He served just 33 days, dying not long after giving the longest inaugural address in history. He had a lot to say, but much was left undone.

#### Berkeley Plantation

Harrison's birthplace, Berkeley Plantation in Charles City County, bills itself as "Virginia's most historic plantation." This year, it's celebrating its 300th anniversary alongside the nation's 250th anniversary.

[Berkeleyplantation.com](http://Berkeleyplantation.com)



Berkeley Plantation



Sherwood Forest

SHELLEY LIEBLER PHOTO

### John Tyler

10TH PRESIDENT (1841-1845)

*John Tyler*



After John Tyler assumed office, detractors dubbed him "His Accidency" because he was the first vice president to become president following the untimely death of William Henry Harrison, his campaign running mate and neighbor. Tyler fathered his youngest child at age 70, and his last living grandchild, Harrison Ruffin Tyler, died only last year.

#### Sherwood Forest

If you're in the neighborhood visiting Berkeley Plantation, drop by Sherwood Forest. In 1845, after his presidency, Tyler renamed his expansive property Sherwood Forest as a nod to Robin Hood because he was regarded as an "outlaw" by the Whig Party. The site is partnering with Monticello this year to promote the Declaration Book Club. [Sherwoodforest.org](http://Sherwoodforest.org); [Monticello.org/bookclub](http://Monticello.org/bookclub)

# History's Keeper

by Chris Dovi, Contributing Writer



BEN MARCHI PHOTO

When the time came to move an original copy of the Declaration of Independence from Virginia's Capitol Square to a special exhibit commemorating the 250th anniversary of its signing, owner Ben Marchi couldn't simply call FedEx. Instead, the rare document was transported through a more distinguished arrangement to its temporary home at Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest, a historic site near Lynchburg, Va.

"It was cool," says Marchi, a Poplar Forest board member. "[Virginia State] Sen. Mark Peake personally delivered it in his car to Poplar Forest." That's not exactly

high security, but it is comparatively cheap cab fare. Marchi, who lives in Easton, Md., is a member of both Choptank Electric Cooperative in Salisbury, Md., and Rappahannock Electric Cooperative in Fredericksburg, Va., where he owns a cabin.

Poplar Forest is displaying the document as part of a special exhibit tied to the year's 250th anniversary festivities. Marchi says he is pleased to bring his personal copy of the Declaration "home" to a place once beloved by the Virginian who drafted it in 1776.

"You know, for me, personally, the Declaration of Independence is probably the most significant document in the history of mankind," says Marchi, who acquired the rare copy about 15 years ago from a dealer in New York. "Up until we declared independence,

# Zachary Taylor *Zachary Taylor*

12TH PRESIDENT (1849-1850)



Like his predecessor, Harrison, Taylor's presidency was short-lived — only 16 months — leaving little time for accomplishments of much note. The son of an American Revolution colonel, he was also a war hero and earned the nickname "Rough and Ready" for his battlefield exploits.

## Orange County Historical Marker

President Taylor's time in Virginia was brief. He was born in Orange County in 1784 before his family hightailed it a year later for Kentucky territory. Today, a historical marker at the intersection of Spotswood Trail and Montebello Drive in Gordonsville, Va., modestly commemorates Taylor's Virginia ties.



CREATIVE COMMONS PHOTO



WOODROWWILSON.ORG PHOTO

# Woodrow Wilson *Woodrow Wilson*

28TH PRESIDENT (1913-1921)



Just a boy living in the South during the Civil War and Reconstruction, Wilson again encountered war as president — he shifted from neutrality to a policy of defending democracy abroad when he led the nation into World War I.

## Presidential Library and Museum

The Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library and Museum in Staunton includes the birthplace of the nation's 28th president. Perhaps best known for creating the Federal Reserve System and the League of Nations, precursor to the United Nations, Wilson oversaw U.S. participation in WWI. [Woodrowwilson.org](http://Woodrowwilson.org)

most human beings in the world were the subject of someone; meaning they lived under a monarch or emperor or were subject to an authoritarian ruler. This represented the moment when people broke free and declared very importantly that our rights do not come from the government. But that we are endowed by our creator."

The document has a fascinating history, says Marchi, explaining that his copy dates to 1818 — the period when many Americans first became familiar with the calligraphic version bearing the now-famous collection of signatures. Before then, most Americans would have seen what became known as the [John] Dunlap broadside, a typeset version that lacked the elegance of the

handwritten parchment beyond Jefferson's immortal words.

"Dunlap set the type, and they were printed just like a newspaper," Marchi says. Much like *Cooperative Living*.

But in 1818, Benjamin Owen Tyler set out to recreate the parchment version now displayed in Washington, D.C. He painstakingly reproduced the penmanship and each of the signatures, and produced only about a thousand copies, of which, Marchi says, "only a couple hundred survive today." Jefferson, who personally endorsed Tyler's efforts, owned two of the copies, although both are now lost. Another copy on display at the University of Virginia once belonged to the Marquis de Lafayette.

Marchi is reluctant to share the cost

of acquiring an original copy of the Declaration, though he did confirm it was "a little pricier than copies in a gift shop."

But what the document represents, he says, is truly priceless, noting his plans to eventually place the copy in the care of a historical institution. In the meantime, he encourages people to visit Poplar Forest.

"For me, it represents the freedom of the individual," Marchi says, calling it a statement of principles that apply to all human beings.

"As imperfect as we are, it's a perpetual guiding light up to this day for governments and movements around the world," he says. "And that's remarkable."





# Dramatic and Delicious

*Elderberry offers beauty in the landscape and flavor at the table*

by Steve Carroll, Contributing Columnist

If you are interested in a shrub that has attractive flowers, conspicuous fruit and the prospects for enjoyment at the dinner table, consider the elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*).

This widespread shrub tolerates a variety of habitats, growing along streams and in fields, woods, swamp forests, floodplains and roadside ditches. Its tolerance of wet soil means it can be planted in rain gardens, but elderberry does not do well under prolonged drought. Its soft wood also puts this shrub at risk of damage from ice and heavy snow. Elderberry is native from Nova Scotia west to Manitoba, and south to Texas and Florida. Closely related plants that are native to our region include red elderberry (*Sambucus racemosa*) and several species of viburnum.

Elderberry leaves open in early spring, forming opposite each other along the stem. These compound leaves may be up to 12 inches long, with five- to 11-toothed leaflets (most often seven) that are 3 to 6 inches long. Leaves turn yellow to yellow-green in the fall, but autumn color is not a reason for planting this shrub.

Flowering may occur between April and July, depending on location, elevation, weather and other factors. The fragrant, white flowers are one-quarter inch in diameter, but they make a dramatic visual impact by growing in flat-topped or slightly rounded clusters that may be up to 8 inches across. The quarter-inch, purple-black berries hang in clusters; these ripen in July and August and typically overlap with the end of flowering.

Left to its own devices, elderberry grows as a medium-sized shrub, spreading through suckering and typically



Ripe elderberry fruit

PHOTO COURTESY TIM GREEN VIA FLICKR

reaching a height of 6 to 12 feet. Those who wish otherwise should keep the pruners handy to limit growth to one or a few stems. Given this variation in growth form, elderberry can be grown as a specimen shrub, a border or a screen.

Whatever shape it assumes, elderberry is widely used by wildlife and people alike. Small mammals, turtles and a variety of songbirds and game birds feed on the fruit. Birds are important in dispersing the seeds when they pass through the digestive system and end up at a distance from the maternal plant. Native bees nest and lay eggs in elderberry's hollow stems and branches, and a number of caterpillars, including those of the cecropia moth — North America's largest native moth — eat the leaves.

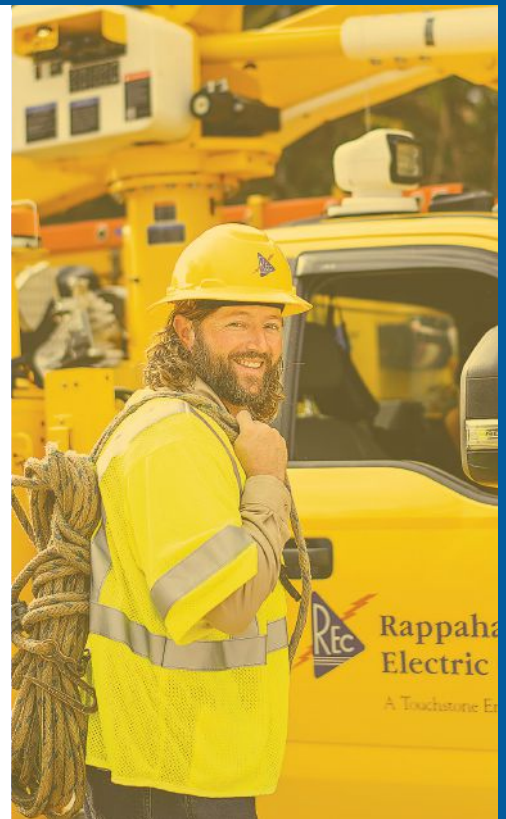
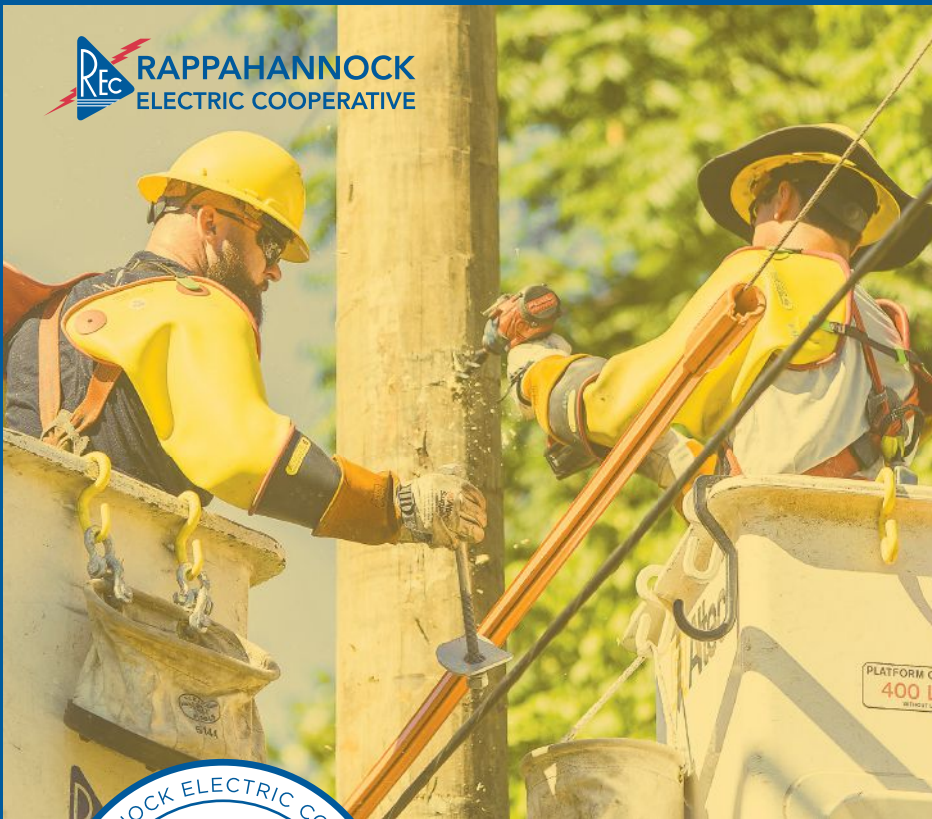
About those dinner table uses: Most of the plant parts, including uncooked fruits, contain cyanogenic glycosides and are toxic to humans. Cooking the fruit breaks these toxins down, at which point the fruit can be used to make jellies, jams, syrups, baked goods and wine. Should you be lucky enough to discover elderberry growing at the back of your lot, as a friend recently did, you face a tough decision: Jam? Pie? Wine? All three? ●

*Steve Carroll is a botanist and ecologist who writes about trees, gardening and the world of plants. He is the co-author of "Ecology for Gardeners," published by Timber Press.*

Elderberry's small, fragrant flowers are grouped into large, eye-catching clusters.



DAVE LAGE PHOTO VIA FLICKR



# 2026 Director Elections Open

As a member-owner of Rappahannock Electric Cooperative (REC), you have a vital role in shaping the Cooperative's future. This year, members will elect three directors to serve on REC's Board of Directors.

The 2026 Annual Meeting will be held virtually on Aug. 5 at 7 p.m., allowing members to participate from anywhere. While preregistration is required to vote during the live meeting, a livestream will be available for all members to watch.

In early July, all REC members will receive a Proxy Designation Form by U.S. mail. If you have a valid email address on file with REC, you will also receive instructions by email on how to access and complete your proxy designation online.

## OPTION 1: DESIGNATE YOUR PROXY ONLINE

If you have a valid email on file with REC, you will receive step-by-step instructions by email. You will be provided with a unique username and password to complete your proxy designation securely online. Beginning July 1, all members can log in or create a profile on MyREC SmartHub to participate in the proxy process.

## OPTION 2: MAIL IN YOUR PROXY DESIGNATION FORM

Your Proxy Designation Form will arrive by U.S. Mail in early July. If you do not plan to attend the virtual Annual Meeting on Aug. 5, you can complete and return the form to designate your proxy. Deadline: Completed forms must be received by 5 p.m. on July 31.

## WANT TO VOTE LIVE AT THE VIRTUAL ANNUAL MEETING?

You must register between July 27 at 7 a.m. and July 31 at 5 p.m. Only registered members will receive instructions to join the virtual meeting and vote in real time on Aug. 5 at 7 p.m.



Register at  
[myrec.coop/register](https://myrec.coop/register)



Call  
1-800-552-3904

-OR-

Participation instructions will be emailed  
Aug. 5 to registered participants.



# MEET THE CANDIDATES

## REGION IV



**Sanford Reaves Jr.**  
— *Incumbent*

Rev. Sanford Reaves Jr. is a life-long native of Culpeper. He graduated in 1974 from the Culpeper County High School. Reaves is also a 1976 graduate of Smithdeal-Massey Business College of Richmond and 2005 graduate of the Virginia Union University School of Theology (Master of Divinity). He's a son

of Antioch Baptist Church of Culpeper and a member of the Mount Zion Baptist Church in Locust Grove. He is also a 46-year member-owner and proud supporter of REC, and is grateful to REC members for trusting in him to serve on the Board of Directors for the past 8½ years.

Reaves lives in the Salem district of Culpeper with his wife of 50 years, Lorraine. They have three children, seven grandchildren and four bonus grands. Since 1995, he has been the owner and president of Sanford and Sons Construction and janitorial

services. Reaves worked as operations manager for Federal Express 7½ years and general manager for Omni Services Inc., Sanis Division of Culpeper for 8½ years. Reaves is also a licensed realtor and has served on the Culpeper County planning commission since 1994 and currently serves as chairman.

Reaves is a man of integrity and high morals, which allowed him to serve as pastor of the Mount Zion Baptist Church of Locust Grove for 18 years before retiring in 2024.

Reaves gets much satisfaction from serving his community. He has served on the board of directors of the Chamber of Commerce, Salem educational foundation, Culpeper NAACP president and moderator of the Wayland Blue Ridge Ministers and Deacons Union. He is currently serving on the Culpeper wellness foundation board. He promises to continue working to ensure that our REC members continue receiving safe, reliable, affordable and sustainable energy.



**Letitia "Tish" Smyth**

Letitia "Tish" Smyth has been a member of Rappahannock Electric Cooperative since moving to the Culpeper area in 1991. Smyth grew up in the Valley of Virginia and, together with her husband, Sterling, raised their three sons in Virginia's Piedmont region.

Smyth began her career as a teacher, dedicating 16 years to education. She later became a real estate agent, serving her community for more than 20 years by guiding clients through the buying and selling process. Her professional approach reflects her background in education, with an emphasis on planning, execution and continuous improvement.

Smyth has contributed to several local boards and community organizations. She served on the Culpeper Renaissance board, where she volunteered at events, participated on committees and held the position of president for four years. She also has been active with the Greater Piedmont Realtors, where she has served as president and past president.

Smyth earned her bachelor's degree in North Carolina. She is active at Reformation Lutheran Church, where she serves as a teacher, pianist and member of the new building committee. In her spare time, Smyth enjoys gardening and is studying to become a chaplain.

## REGION V



**Randy Thomas**  
— *Incumbent*

A resident of Spotsylvania County for 25 years, Jesse R. “Randy” Thomas has served his community for many years. His contributions include being a charter member and board member of the Stafford Rotary Club, as well as serving on the Fredericksburg Area Builders Association board.

Additionally, Thomas served on the board of the Fredericksburg Country Club (past president) and its Finance Committee. Prior to serving on REC’s Board, Thomas volunteered as a member of REC’s CARE Charity Inc. Board. He is also an active member of the Lake Anna Civic Association.

Thomas graduated from Stafford High School and attended Radford University. He was a partner and vice president of

Washington Chichester and Clarke Insurance in Fredericksburg, and has over 25 years of experience in finance, budgeting, planning and acquisitions. His career experience includes working as an insurance agent for REC from 1993-1999, providing liability, worker’s compensation, auto and property lines. Thomas is vice president of Danaher-Skewes and Associates, employed since 2007.

Thomas participates in community activities such as manager and coach in the Cal Ripken and Babe Ruth Baseball Association, coach in the parks and recreation league youth football, and volunteers with the athletic programs at Fredericksburg Christian School. He resides in Spotsylvania County with his wife and two children.

## REGION IX



**Eugene “Gene” Campbell Jr.**  
— *Incumbent*

Eugene L. Campbell Jr., resides in King William County with his wife, Suzanne. They have one son, Wyatt Campbell, who graduated from James Madison University in 2025. Born on a dairy farm in King William County, Campbell earned a B.S. degree in Civil Engineering from Virginia Tech in 1973.

He began his career as a consulting engineer and retired in 2014 as a project manager for Southwood Builders, a commercial construction firm in Ashland.

Campbell is very active in his community, having served 47 years in the Ruritan Club in various leadership roles, including President, Vice President, Secretary and Director. He is currently serving his 15th term as Secretary/Treasurer of the King William Ruritan Club Foundation.

He is a lifetime member of the King William Historical Society, where he served for 14 years as Secretary of the Society’s Museum Council. He is also a lifetime member of McKendree United Methodist

Church, holding positions as Chairman of the Board of Trustees, the Administrative Council and the Finance Committee. He currently serves as lay Leader and a member of the Administrative Council. Outside the local community, Campbell served 10 years on the Bon Secours Memorial Regional Medical Center Community Advisory Board, serving as Vice Chairman and Chairman.

In local government, he served 17 years on the King William County Economic Development Authority, including two terms as chairman. He also chaired the County Redistricting Committee and the County Tricentennial Committee Celebration and served six years on the County Electoral Board.

Since joining the REC Board in January 2018, Campbell has focused on understanding the regulations and operations of electric cooperatives. He has completed several leadership programs, including the NRECA Credentialed Cooperative Director program, the Board Leadership Certification and the GOLD Leadership Certification. If reelected, Campbell pledges to continue representing the interests of REC members, ensuring their concerns are heard.

# YOUR PARTICIPATION MATTERS

REC is a democratically controlled Cooperative, owned by you, our members. The Annual Meeting is a forum in which REC members can exercise the democratic process and be involved in Cooperative decision-making.



Lineworker Colby Monroe, who earned a perfect score in the Recloser Change-Out event, relocates an arrester.

# Lineworkers rise to the challenge at Gaff-n-Go Rodeo

REC lineworkers and equipment operators brought skill, safety and teamwork to the forefront at the 22nd annual Gaff-n-Go Rodeo, held May 15-16 at Meadow Event Park in Doswell, Va. The annual event gathered utility professionals from across the region and beyond for two days of competition, camaraderie and celebration of the demanding work required to keep power flowing safely and reliably.

For REC, the weekend was marked by standout performances. Zach Carlisle, Andrew Gray and Cody Lockhart were named Overall Equipment Operator champions with a perfect overall score. The team also earned first place with perfect scores in both the OCR Change-Out and Digger Derrick/Mini Ex Obstacle Course events. Hunter Jost, Matthew Murphy and Travis Scheulen added to REC's strong showing with a second-place



Gaff-n-Go features events that simulate the real-world challenges of linework.



**Zach Carlisle, Andrew Gray and Cody Lockhart were named Overall Equipment Operator champions with a perfect overall score.**



**Hunter Jost, Matthew Murphy and Travis Scheulen added to REC's strong showing with a second-place finish in the Digger Derrick/Mini Ex Obstacle Course.**



**Chad Foster and Trey Roberts had reason to celebrate, achieving perfect scores in all Journeyman and Equipment Operator events.**



**Brandon Deane speaks with lineworkers from other cooperatives.**

finish in the Digger Derrick/Mini Excavator Obstacle Course.

Across the grounds, competitors demonstrated the precision, control and focus needed in the field every day. Events included climbing, Hurtman Rescue, Lineworker Down — CPR, recloser work, equipment operation and other challenges rooted in real-world safety practices. REC apprentices earned perfect scores in Climbing Skills, Double Dead-End Insulator Change-Out, Hurtman Rescue

and Lineworker Down — CPR, while journeyman and equipment operator teams also recorded perfect scores in key events.

“The sense of competition is really fun,” said Lineworker Brandon Mills. “My favorite is probably the Hurtman Rescue because it means so much to everybody here. It’s not just an event. It gets to show our families what has to happen if something were to happen to us.”

Beyond the competition, Gaff-n-Go reflected the close-knit spirit of the utility industry, with families, coworkers, vendors and grill teams competing in the Gaff-n-Grill competition. “We’re one big co-op and everybody’s working together,” said Jason Satterwhite, REC’s Chief Grid Operations Officer. “Everybody’s encouraging each other. So there’s always the internal competition with our teams, but it’s like a family.”



## New Kalahari Resort Powered by REC

A major new hospitality and entertainment development is taking shape in Spotsylvania County, where Kalahari Resorts & Conventions is building its fifth resort and first in Virginia. Located along Interstate 95, the project will be served by REC.

The resort is planned to include 907 guest rooms and suites, a 175,000-square-foot indoor water park, a 90,000-square-foot indoor adventure park and 150,000 square feet of meeting and convention space. It is expected to create about 1,400 full- and part-time jobs.

For REC, the project reflects the Cooperative’s role in supporting growth throughout its service territory by providing reliable electric service for new homes, businesses and major developments.

“Projects like this show how electric cooperatives support more than residential meters — we support the growth and vitality of the communities we serve,” said Herschel K. Arant, Jr., P.E., Chief Growth Officer at REC. “As Spotsylvania County continues to grow, REC remains focused on providing reliable electric service for the homes and businesses that make up our communities.”



## REC Expects to Give Back About \$10 Million to Members

As a not-for-profit cooperative, REC assigns any margins remaining after expenses to members in the form of capital credits. As financial conditions allow, these credits are retired and paid out to members over time.

REC must balance the retirements of credits between margins earned decades ago with those earned more recently. Each year, the REC Board determines the most appropriate balance between maintaining the Cooperative’s financial health and returning funds to the membership.

This year, REC expects to return approximately \$10 million in capital credits using a “first in, first out” method, which recognizes longer-term members whose equity in the Cooperative dates back to the early 1990s. As a result, some members may see a credit on their July electric bill.



# Apply Now for The Power of Change Grants

The Power of Change application period is open through Aug. 10, 2026, for nonprofits seeking funding for projects that support community needs. In March, the program awarded \$122,185 to 40 nonprofits across REC's 22-county service area.



Through The Power of Change, Rappahannock Electric Cooperative (REC) member-owners voluntarily donate to nonprofit organizations serving people in need. Since 2005, the program has provided more than \$1.8 million to nonprofits across REC's service territory.

Twice a year, member-owner donations are distributed to eligible 501(c)(3) nonprofits for projects related to food insecurity, housing and shelter assistance, health and education, and other community needs. Recent recipients included the Fairy Godmother Project in Fredericksburg,

Cars Changing Lives in Front Royal and the Ruckersville Volunteer Fire Company. A full list is available at [myrec.coop/recipients](http://myrec.coop/recipients).

Thousands of REC member-owners support the program through recurring monthly donations, one-time gifts or by rounding up their electric bill to the next whole dollar. The average round-up is 51 cents per month, but together those donations generate more than \$200,000 each year for nonprofits serving low-income residents, senior citizens, veterans and others in need.

Nonprofits may apply online during two



## THE POWER OF CHANGE

annual application periods: December through Feb. 10 and June through Aug. 10. Organizations may submit one application in a 12-month period. Funding decisions are made in March and September, with funds distributed in April and October.

Visit [thepowerofchange.org](http://thepowerofchange.org) to apply by Aug. 10, 2026.

## Same Energy. Different Impact.

Demand for electricity in the summer months peaks between 3 and 7 p.m. You can help lower demand and help stabilize the Cooperative's future wholesale power costs by shifting when you take on energy-intensive activities. This will benefit all member-owners.

### Shift appliance use to off-peak hours.



- Run the dishwasher before you go to bed.
- Use the oven earlier or later (during off-peak hours).
- Space out use of major appliances.

### Use a programmable or smart thermostat.



- Automatically adjust the temperature setting during peak hours.
- Schedule home cooling cycles for efficiency.

### Opt for low-energy alternatives during peak hours.



- Use small appliances such as slow cookers or air fryers — or fire up the grill — instead of the oven.
- Air-dry clothes instead of using the dryer.
- Use ceiling fans for additional cooling.

**There's still time to sign up and save!** Earn \$1.75 per kilowatt hour (kWh) saved on specific days with the Summer Savings Plan. Learn more: [myrec.coop/SummerSavings](http://myrec.coop/SummerSavings)



## Five Fun Ways to Save This Summer

Reducing electricity use while staying cool in the summer does not have to be all about sacrifice. In fact, some of the best energy-saving habits may already be part of your summer routine. Leaning into simple seasonal favorites can help your home stay cooler and give your cooling system a little break.

**Fire up the grill.** Cooking outside keeps extra heat out of the kitchen and makes dinner feel like a summer event. Pair grilled meals with no-cook sides like salads, fruit or pasta salad.

**Dress for the season.** Lightweight clothing, breathable fabrics and lighter bedding can help you stay more comfortable indoors and at bedtime.

**Spend more time outside.** Porch sitting, backyard games, gardening, evening walks and pool days can mean fewer lights, screens and appliances running indoors. Just remember to turn them off before you head outside.

**Keep meals cool and simple.** Salads, sandwiches, wraps, fresh fruit and no-bake desserts are easy summer staples that help avoid heating up the kitchen.

**Enjoy a little breeze.** Fans can help you feel cooler while relaxing, sleeping or spending time with family. Since fans cool people, not rooms, turn them off when you leave.

This summer, saving electricity can be as simple as enjoying the things you already love about the season — good food, fresh air, comfortable clothes and time spent outside.



RAPPAHANNOCK ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE PRESENTS

## THE POWER OF COMMUNITY *tour*

### JULY

**July 4**  
**Beaverdam July Fourth Parade**  
Beaverdam Ruritan Club  
Hanover  
10 a.m. to noon

**July 11-12**  
**Fredericksburg Comicon**  
Fredericksburg Convention Center  
Fredericksburg  
Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**July 15**  
**Madison County Fireman's Parade**  
Main Street Madison  
Madison  
6:30 to 9 p.m.

**July 17**  
**Madison County Fair**  
Madison County Fairgrounds  
Madison  
4 to 9 p.m.

**July 30**  
**Warren County Fair**  
Warren County Fairgrounds  
Noon to 8 p.m.



**John D. Hewa**  
President &  
Chief Executive  
Officer

Board of Directors



**Michael W. Lindsay**  
Region I



**Christopher G. Shipe**  
Region II



**Darlene H. Carpenter**  
Region III



**Sanford Reaves, Jr.**  
Region IV



**Randy Thomas**  
Region V



**Linda R. Gray**  
Region VI



**J. Mark Wood**  
Region VII



**Eric Paulson**  
Region VIII



**Eugene L. Campbell, Jr.**  
Region IX

Local Pages Editor – Casey M. Hollins, CCC

Contact Information:  
P.O. Box 7388  
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<sup>1</sup>DETAILS OF OFFER: Offer expires 7/31/2026. Not valid with other offers or prior purchases. Get 18 months no money down, no monthly payments, no interest when you purchase six (6) or more windows or entry/patio doors between 7/1/2026 and 7/31/2026. Only valid on initial visit. Subject to credit approval. 18-month Promotional Period: when no payments are due, interest accrues but is waived if balance is paid in full before Promotional Period expires. Any unpaid balance owed after Promotional Period, plus accrued interest, will be paid in installments based on terms disclosed in the financing agreement. Financing is provided by various financial institutions without regard to age, race, color, religion, national origin, gender, or familial status. Savings comparison based on purchase of a single unit at list price. Available at participating locations and offer applies throughout the service area. See your local Renewal by Andersen location for details. License numbers available at [renewalbyandersen.com/license](http://renewalbyandersen.com/license). Some Renewal by Andersen locations are independently owned and operated. <sup>2</sup>Based on testing of 10 double-hung units per ASTM E2068 20 years after installation. <sup>3</sup>It is the only warranty among top selling window companies that meets all of the following requirements: easy to understand terms, unrestricted transferability, installation coverage, labor coverage, geographically unrestricted, coverage for exterior color, insect screens and hardware, and no maintenance requirement. Visit [renewalbyandersen.com/nationsbest](http://renewalbyandersen.com/nationsbest) for details. <sup>4</sup>Review aggregator survey of 5-star reviews among leading national full-service window replacement companies. January 2024 Reputation.com "Renewal by Andersen" and all other marks where denoted are trademarks of Andersen Corporation. ©2026 Andersen Corporation. All rights reserved. RBA14201

# Comfort with Class

*Trummer's pairs seasonal elegance with refined comfort in the heart of Clifton*

by Peggy Hyland, Contributing Columnist

**W**inding roads led us through lush forests to the charming village of Clifton, where Trummer's has been delighting diners for 16 years. The menu change with the seasons, so we were excited to see what fresh wonders awaited us.

We passed through the cozy bar and headed to the upstairs dining room. Filled with natural light and set beneath soaring ceilings, the main dining room felt perfectly balanced — open yet still intimate. We enjoyed cocktails as we perused the menu. My dining companion chose the house signature cocktail, the Titanic, and I opted for the seasonal cocktail, the Roman Holiday. The restaurant also offers an exceptional wine list, with diverse prices and offerings to suit every palate.

Trummer's menu has impressive range and depth. I began with the barbecue bone marrow. It comes with both apricot jam and a mint gremolata, which complemented the tender bone marrow beautifully. After devouring the dish, we had the option to use the bone as a luge for a shot of bourbon.

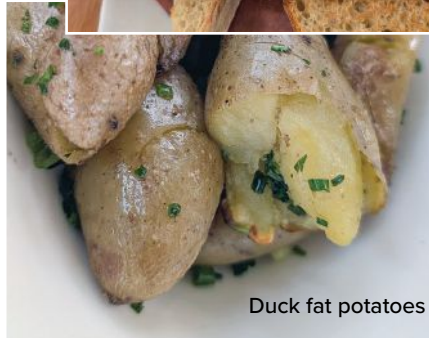
Our server mentioned a new chicken soup offering, a temptation we could not resist. It was true to the homestyle chicken noodle soup we all love, but more elegant and fresh. The orzo, fresh vegetables and spring herbs paired perfectly with the tender rotisserie chicken.

Even with a small menu, I could not decide on my main course. When I asked for a recommendation between two dishes, our server paused to consider what would best follow my appetizer. She recommended the braised short rib goulash.

It was truly exemplary: The paprika



BBQ bone marrow



Duck fat potatoes



Lemon posset tart



Chicken soup

gravy was silky and savory, and the meat was served atop Boursin spätzle. The meat was velvety soft, and the cheesy, creamy buttermilk spätzle was brilliantly executed. The spätzle should not be missed and is available as a side dish.

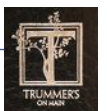
My companion was tempted by the spring risotto but could not resist the appeal of the prime rib, which is on the weekend lineup. It was rich and tender, with a house-made horseradish sauce. The duck fat potatoes were expertly crisped, with a tender center.

For dessert, I asked our server for a recommendation, and she again paused before suggesting something that would fit the flavor profile of my entire meal. Her suggestion was spot on: The lemon posset tart was the creamy, light treat that I needed to balance out my decadently rich meal. The fresh raspberries were bright, the toasted

meringue was light and creamy, and the lemon curd was lush and tangy. The white chocolate pearls were genuinely superb. My companion chose the Black Forest strudel, a rich and luxurious dish with Luxardo cherries, Callebaut chocolate and mascarpone.

Trummer's is perfect for a meal that balances elegance and elevation with casual comfort and refined homestyle favorites. Whether for a relaxing brunch with friends or an intimate evening for two, Trummer's makes the winding road to Clifton well worth the trip. ●

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7134 Main St., Clifton, VA 20124  
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Friday through Saturday, 12-9:30 p.m.,  
Sunday, 11 a.m.-3:30 p.m.  
703-266-1263  
[Trummersrestaurant.com](http://Trummersrestaurant.com)



Got a restaurant for Peggy to review? Let us know at [editor@co-oliving.com](mailto:editor@co-oliving.com).



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# The Homefront Heroes

*The heart of the Revolution*

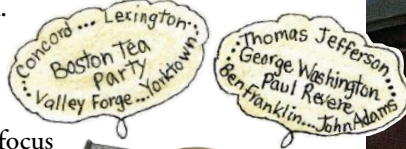
story and artwork by Anne M. Dellinger, Contributing Columnist

As America observes its **250th birthday**, there is much to remember and celebrate about our nation's independence.

There will be parades and fireworks.

Famous Revolutionary War battles and historic uprisings will be reenacted.

The heroic deeds of well-known patriots will be reviewed and honored.



And while most of the focus will be centered on the war's big names and their legendary accomplishments, it will be equally important to remember and respect the Revolution's numerous unsung heroes, especially the farmers and their families.

Many men were farmer-soldiers who served part time in the militia. When they were away fighting, their wives and children were responsible for managing all the farm duties in addition to the daily household chores.

These hardworking farm families gave much of their time, goods and energy to the war effort.

Their countless contributions from the farm to the battlefield became the lifeline that the colonists needed to prevail over the British military.

It's understandable that these homefront heroes deserve to share some of the limelight during the country's celebrations.

As a child of modern times, you might find it difficult to imagine growing up on a farm during the turbulent Revolutionary War years and having to take on adult responsibilities.

However, if you are curious about comparing your lifestyle with that of children in the 1700s, then imagine stepping back in time by picturing yourself going inside one of their homes and taking a brief survey of your findings. (The photo above is from the Wickham House Museum in Woodstock, Va.)



*Welcome to the kitchen area.*

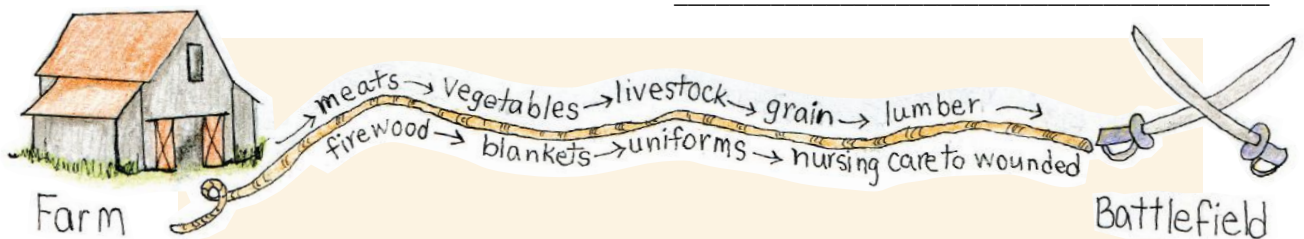
*When compared to your own family's kitchen, what basic conveniences are missing here?* \_\_\_\_\_

Girls in the family began cooking between ages 6 and 10 over an open hearth. *What foods do you think they cooked in the big, black pots in the fireplace?* \_\_\_\_\_

They also had to learn to churn butter, knead dough, make candles and soap, and help with cleaning. *Which of these jobs do you know how to do?* \_\_\_\_\_

Managing the fire for warmth and cooking was a daily chore done mostly by the boys. *If this had been your job, what steps would you have followed to keep the fire going?* \_\_\_\_\_

Most families made their own clothing. Girls learned to use a device that created yarn from sheep wool or linen from flax to be used for weaving. *Can you identify this important machine?* (A) \_\_\_\_\_



KIDS! CLIP AND KEEP YOUR KIDS KORNER COLUMNS IN A THREE-RING BINDER AND YOU'LL HAVE A NOTEBOOK CHOCK FULL OF FUN IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES FOR THE FUTURE!



## Super Sleuth CORNER

During the Revolution, a particular type of hat was worn by the Continental Army soldiers and famous figures such as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. It was designed with three corners that helped rain slide off of the hat and onto the shoulders while keeping the face dry.

Owlbert would like for you to find a picture of this hat hidden in this magazine. Follow the directions below and then submit your findings for a chance to win a **\$25 Amazon email gift card**.

- Find the hat and give the page number.
- What is the name of this hat?
- Have you ever seen this hat worn in a Revolutionary War reenactment?

Submit your answers online at [co-opliving.com/super-sleuth](http://co-opliving.com/super-sleuth) or send answers with your name, address and phone number to:

Cooperative Living Super Sleuths  
4201 Dominion Blvd., Suite 101  
Glen Allen, VA 23060

*Kids Korner submissions are for children under the age of 16.*

**Have you ever sewed a button on a shirt or completed a sewing project?** \_\_\_\_\_

Children were also expected to perform outdoor chores such as fetching water from wells, gardening, gathering eggs and taking care of the livestock. **Which of these chores have you done?** \_\_\_\_\_

These rigorous daily chores were crucial to a family's survival in the 1700s. It was a time when learning practical life skills was considered more important than acquiring an academic education. While most children learned to read and write, they often had to quit school between ages 8 and 10 to begin working as "miniature adults" alongside parents.

Even though it sounds like a life of all work and no play, children of the past learned to balance their hard chores with outdoor fun. They found time to fish, swim, fly kites and play games of marbles, hoop and stick, and blind man's bluff.

As you envision stepping out of the picture and back into 2026, perhaps you now have a greater appreciation for the time and energy given by the dads, moms and children who "kept the home fires burning" while supporting the Revolution.

This is the year we all need to pause and be grateful for our strong-minded, gritty ancestors — those who bravely fought on the battlefields and those who stayed behind, carrying out the everyday routines that actively supported the cause.

Their heroic actions and sacrifices contributed greatly to the freedom and independence that every American cherishes today. Perhaps everyone should say **thank you** at least 250 times on July 4 — maybe while the fireworks are *bursting in air!* ●



MAY

## Super Sleuth Winner

The **May Super Sleuth** was about bees, pollination and protecting vital pollinators. For a chance to win a **\$25 Amazon email gift card**, kids were asked to find a picture of a bee colony hidden in the magazine and then provide the page number it was hidden on. They were also asked to identify what the cluster of bees is called, share whether they've ever seen a huge collection of bees and then say what they could do to protect a huge mass of bees from harm if encountered.

The winning answers are:

- Page 35
- A swarm
- "Yes, at my friend's house. Her dad is a beekeeper."
- "Let it be. Warn people to stay away from it."

OUR WINNER IS KARA.

**Congratulations, Kara!**  
*Northern Virginia  
Electric Cooperative member*



Cooperative planning is member-first and member-focused, forecasting for reliability rather than investor profit.



## Why 'Extra' Power Matters

ODEC PHOTO

### *Capacity, reliability and the power of the cooperative difference*

by Jack McCarthy, Contributing Writer

Few energy organizations have appeared in the news more often in recent years than PJM Interconnection. That's no coincidence. As electricity costs, reliability and an increase in electricity demand make energy a true kitchen-table topic, more people are starting to ask an important question: Where does my power come from — and how is it kept reliable when I need it most?

PJM doesn't generate electricity or own power lines in your neighborhood. Instead, it operates behind the scenes, coordinating the flow of electricity in an interconnected grid serving 67 million people across 13 states and the District of Columbia, including regions served by electric cooperatives in Virginia, Maryland and Delaware. Every day, PJM works in partnership with generation partners such as Old Dominion Electric Cooperative and with distribution cooperatives to balance how much electricity people use with how much power is available to meet that demand.

This balancing act becomes most critical when demand surges — when the system is under the greatest strain

and the margin for error is smallest. In those moments, reliability reflects years of planning, from PJM's coordination of the regional grid to the long-term investments cooperative systems make to secure dependable power.

#### DEMAND VS. CAPACITY

When people think about electricity, they usually think about energy — the power used to light homes, cool buildings and charge phones. In the electric grid, energy refers to the actual generation of electricity over time. It's measured and priced in very short intervals, typically every five minutes, reflecting real time supply and demand.

But there's another concept just as important to ensuring reliability: capacity.

Capacity is a commitment. It represents a resource's promise to be available to produce electricity for the grid. Without capacity, there is no guarantee electricity will be there when you need it. Capacity is paid for in advance, ensuring power plants and other resources are ready to perform when demand spikes. Unlike energy,

which is sold as it's produced, capacity revenues are earned regardless of how often a resource runs because availability itself has value.

Think of it this way: Energy is the electricity you use. Capacity is the assurance that electricity will be there when you need it most. Generation partners such as ODEC, who own and operate generation resources, help provide that assurance. ODEC makes a commitment to the PJM market in advance, stating that when extra power is needed, owned resources can be called upon by PJM to help fill the demand gap.

#### PLANNING FOR 'EXTRA' POWER

According to PJM, electricity demand this summer is expected to peak at about 156,400 megawatts. To meet that demand reliably, PJM has approximately 180,200 MW of generation capacity available, along with about 7,800 MW of demand response — programs that pay participating customers to temporarily reduce electricity use during periods of high demand. Many electric cooperatives, often in partnership with generation partners such as ODEC, offer these programs to their members.

At first glance, that might seem like more power than is necessary. But that margin isn't excess — it's protection. In fact, across the broader electric system, resources once considered backup — a safety net for reliability — now play a much larger role. As electricity demand grows and power plants retire, the grid is increasingly relying on committed capacity not merely as a cushion, but as a core part of keeping power available when it is needed.

The electric grid isn't built for a typical day. It's built for the worst days — the ones that test the system's limits.

#### THE COOPERATIVE DIFFERENCE

This is also where the cooperative model offers a unique advantage.



“Extra” power is a commitment to reliability that puts members first.

ODEC PHOTO

In a system where short-term market conditions can change quickly, long-term planning and investment provide an added layer of stability.

Some electric cooperatives receive their wholesale power from generation partners, including ODEC, which are

owned by the distribution cooperatives they serve. Because these generation partners are member-owned and operate within the same not-for-profit system, their approach to planning differs from investor-owned utilities.

Cooperative planning is member-first

and member-focused, forecasting for reliability rather than investor profit. Through shared generation ownership, cooperatives benefit from a stable power supply shaped by member needs. By working collaboratively, cooperatives can pool resources to own and operate shared generation facilities, helping ensure capacity is in place before it's called upon.

Even when electricity is plentiful, these investments pay off because generators are compensated by PJM for their capacity. During heat waves, winter storms and unexpected outages, owning committed capacity — resources already accounted for and ready to perform — can make a critical difference.

Because, in the end, “extra” power isn't really extra at all. It's the result of careful planning, shared investment and a commitment to reliability that puts members first. ●



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# Summer Treats



*Favorite summer recipes from the Cooperative Living archives*

## Shirley's Fruit Salad

recipe courtesy of Anne Whaples of Cambridge, Md. (July 2001)

### Ingredients:

- 1 (20-oz.) can pineapple chunks (drain and reserve juice)
- 1 (16-oz.) package cream cheese (can use low fat or neufchâtel)
- 1 jar maraschino cherries (sliced, drain and reserve juice)
- 1 bag mini-marshmallows
- 1 cup slivered almonds
- 1 (15-oz.) can mandarin oranges (drain)
- 1 cup coconut

### Directions:

Beat softened cream cheese with pineapple and cherry juices until it develops whipped-cream consistency. Mix with remaining ingredients and chill. Sprinkle slivered almonds on top to serve.

## Strawberry Bread

recipe courtesy of Cindy Adams of Mechanicsville (June 2004)

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup unsifted flour
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1½ cups sugar
- ¾ cup pecans
- 1 teaspoon orange or vanilla extract
- 1½ cups fresh strawberries
- 2 eggs, well-beaten
- 1 cup salad oil

### Directions:

Mix all dry ingredients, then fold in remaining ingredients. Fold together — do not overmix. Bake at 350 degrees in greased loaf pan for approximately 1 hour until golden brown on top.

## Pineapple Date Salad

recipe courtesy of Marguerite Gartner of Mount Sidney (June 2002)

### Ingredients:

- 1 (3-oz.) box lemon gelatin
- 1 cup hot water
- 1 cup dates, chopped
- ¾ cup cold water
- 1 (8-oz.) can crushed pineapple
- ½ cup nuts (your choice)

### Directions:

Dissolve lemon gelatin in hot water. Add cold water, then let set until slightly jelled. Add crushed pineapple (including the juice), dates and nuts.

### GOT A FAVORITE RECIPE?

Eighty years of *Cooperative Living* means 80 years of delicious recipes. Which recipes have become your family's favorites? Email your favorite recipes to [cooperativekitchen@co-opliving.com](mailto:cooperativekitchen@co-opliving.com), or mail to Cooperative Kitchen, c/o *Cooperative Living*, 4201 Dominion Blvd., Suite 101, Glen Allen, VA 23060. Include your email address. You can also submit recipes online at [co-opliving.com/cooperativekitchen](http://co-opliving.com/cooperativekitchen).

Due to volume, we cannot guarantee publication of all recipes. Reader recipes are submitted in good faith. *Cooperative Living* cannot warrant results.

**AUCTIONS**

**HOME ON TWO ACRES.** New Canton, Va. 24719 James Madison Hwy. Timed online auction. Investment Home on +/- 2 Acres! Located in the Gold Hill community in Buckingham County. Lots of road frontage along Hwy. 151 Property Sold "As Is." Bidding begins Friday, June 26, 6 p.m. Auction Closing Date, Friday, July 10, 6 p.m. A 10% Buyer Premium will be added to the highest bid.

**GARRETT ESTATE AUCTION.** New Canton, Va. Bidding begins Friday, June 26, 6 p.m. Auction Closing Date, Friday, July 10, 6 p.m.

**CARWILE AUCTIONS INC.** Facebook & Auction Zip. VAAR392. 434-547-9100. www.carwileauctions.com

**BUSINESS**

**FIREARM-RIGHTS RESTORATION.** Call for free consultation. Attorney John Janson at 434-953-8794 (Virginia Bar #91236).

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**ARROWHEADS.** Buying all types of Native American artifacts. Any size collection. 757-373-3502.

**AMERICAN WHISKEY AND BOURBON.** Entire collections or single items, bottles or decanters. Sealed and unopened. The older, the better. Cash. Call 540-845-6107 or email majiddk@comcast.net.

**VINTAGE SPORTS CARDS.** Pre-1980. Baseball, football, basketball, hockey and non-sports. Sports memorabilia/autographs. Vintage toys, G.I. Joe and diecast cars (Hot Wheels, Matchbox, Corgi, etc.). The older, the better. Fair cash offers. Call or text Loni at 434-760-5060.

**MADISON COUNTY FAIR**

July 15-18, 2026

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madisoncountyfairva@gmail.com madisoncountyfairva.com

**SUBMIT:** We accept classifieds by email (classifieds@co-opliving.com), telephone (804-297-3429) or mail to: Classifieds, 4201 Dominion Blvd., Suite 101, Glen Allen, VA 23060. Please type or print your ad as you would like it to appear and how many months it should run. Include your name, street, email address and pre-payment. Checks should be made to Cooperative Living. Ads with incomplete information will be returned to the sender.

**RATES:** Non-business: \$80 per 25-word block plus \$5 per word over 25; OR "Mini" ad - \$5 per word (max. 10 words). Business, agent and broker ads: \$150 per 25-word block, plus \$5 per word over 25. Display Real Estate: \$299 per block.

**DEADLINE:** July 5 for August issue; Publisher reserves the right to designate classification or reject any ad. No personals, please.

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VECTEZY PHOTO

# Lost in the Lot

*A rural driver learns that finding her car can be harder than finding treasure*

by Margo Oxendine, Contributing Columnist



**A**m I really that old? Am I losing it? Why does this keep happening to me?

Lately, I've had trouble finding my car at times. Several times.

For some reason the temperature is in or near the 90s, every single time. So, yes, it's unbearably hot, and I'm no longer good with heat. How I lived and worked and rode my bike around Key West for seven years, I can't fathom now.

Because of knee surgeries and heart troubles, I had a disabled parking placard for several years. Now I do not.

It was easy to find my car in the handicapped space. I never had a problem. But now? I often can't grasp the idea of just where I parked.

The first time this happened was at Walmart. It was 96 degrees. I trudged to where I thought my car was, but it wasn't there. I looked in adjacent rows. I could not find it. I ran out of ideas. I was hot. I felt faint. I didn't know

how I'd make it or what I was going to do.

Suddenly, a solution presented itself. I saw two friends in a truck coming to park. I waved them down.

"Please help me!" I cried. I must have looked almost a fright. "Can you drive me around and help me find my car?"

Well, sure they could. Around and around, row after row, we drove, all keeping out an eagle eye. No car.

Finally, there it was! Nowhere near where I thought I'd parked it. We were all relieved.

The next time it happened was also at Walmart. It's just such a huge space! I didn't see anyone I knew, but I kept slogging through the lot and eventually found it: a treasure, of sorts! I never had a harder time finding treasure in Key West than I've had finding that dang car.

I think part of the problem is rural living. Around our environs, we never have to wonder where we've parked the car. It's always right there! But in the "big lots," it can be difficult.

I learned that for certain last week, when I had to go to a hospital in Alleghany County for a doctor's appointment. I found a spot near the front of a lot and parked. I was next to a glorious new color of Jeep, sort of a creamy mint julep color. "I won't



forget this!" I thought.

A couple hours later, I came out. I spied the creamy green Jeep and headed toward it. But ... there was a different car in my spot. Uh-oh.

I knew I had foolishly left my keys in the console. When you live in rural parts, you tend to do that from time to time. Besides, no matter where I park, chances are I have the oldest, least attractive car in the lot.

Geez, I thought. Someone has actually stolen my car! I didn't have the energy to hike way back to the hospital entrance to call the police and report the theft. I saw a nice-looking fellow a few rows away and called out, "Can you help me, please?"

He readily agreed to drive me back to the hospital and started tossing stuff from his passenger seat to make room for me.

While I stood there, I looked around the big lot. And behold! In the next row was a second creamy mint green Jeep, with my heap right next to it. Who knew?

I told the kind fellow, "I must seem like a ditz!" We laughed.

Did I learn a valuable lesson? Yes! I learned not to leave my keys in the car in any city, and that I'd absolutely love to have one of those snazzy mint green Jeeps! ●

*To order a copy of Margo's "A Party of One," call 540-468-2147 Mon.-Wed., 9 a.m.-5 p.m., or email therecorderoffice@gmail.com.*

## CELEBRATING



### HAPPY BIRTHDAY, ROBERT "BOB" JUMP!



Robert "Bob" Jump of Neavitt, Md., celebrates his 80th birthday on July 23. He retired from Choptank Electric Cooperative in 2012 after serving 37 years. His son, Rob Jump, currently works at the co-op. Bob enjoys boating, fishing, family time and following the sports activities of his five grandchildren. "I liked the people I worked with at Choptank," he says. "It was a great atmosphere to work in."

#### Know someone turning 80 this year?

Nominate them to be featured in *Cooperative Living* by emailing saycheese@co-opliving.com. Please send a photo of the individual being nominated, along with their birthdate and a short description about them.

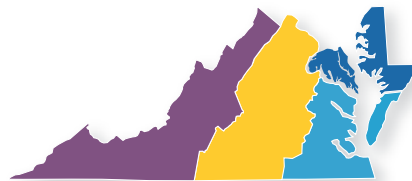


### WHEREZ IT?

Look for the CL logo, like the one above, in the pages of this issue of *Cooperative Living*. Submit the page number where you found it, along with your name, email and phone number to **Wherezit**, c/o *Cooperative Living*, 4201 Dominion Blvd., Suite 101, Glen Allen, VA 23060 or go online at co-opliving.com under "Contests." Deadline is **July 20**. The winner will receive a **\$25 Amazon email gift card**.

# Events Around the Area

Editor's note: All information is believed to be accurate as of press time. Before attending, please use the contact information to verify the status of an event. Listing an event does not constitute an endorsement.



## BLUE RIDGE WEST

### JULY

**4-5 LEXINGTON. Balloons Over Rockbridge.** Virginia Horse Center. Balloonoverrockbridge.com

**17-18 ORKNEY SPRINGS. Shenandoah Valley Music Festival.** Musicfest.org

**18 WARM SPRINGS. 5th Annual Fairview Community Cancer Crusade.** 464 Charger Lane. 5-9 p.m. Crusadecancer@yahoo.com.

### AUGUST

**15 MIDDLETON. 16th Annual Car, Truck & Tractor Show.** Historic Main Street. 3-8 p.m. 540-869-2226. Middletownva.gov

**12-16 BRANDY STATION. Brandy Station Vol. Fire Dept. Annual Fair, Parade and Tractor Pull.** 20057 Fleetwood Heights Road. 540-825-0354. Bsvfd.com

## TIDEWATER

### JULY

**25 DELTAVILLE. Groovin' in the Park.** Deltaville Maritime Museum. 3-6 p.m. Deltavillemuseum.com

**25 DELTAVILLE. Holly Point Market.** Deltaville Maritime Museum. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Deltavillemuseum.com

## MARYLAND

### AUGUST

**1 SNOW HILL. Blessing of the Combines.** Downtown. 6030 Public Landing Road. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Blessingofthecombindes.org

**1-8 POCOMOKE CITY. Great Pocomoke Fair.** Great Pocomoke Fairgrounds. 2037 Broad St. See website for schedule and information. Thegreatpocomokefair.org

**7-9 FEDERALSBURG. 66th Annual Wheat Threshing, Steam & Gas Engine Show.** 5806 Federalsburg Highway. 10 a.m. 410-673-2414. Threshermen@gmail.com. Threshermen.org

**8 PRESTON. Peach Festival.** 3680 Choptank Road. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Office@bestheshdapreston.faith.

**PRINT DEADLINES:** Aug. 1 for Sept. 15-Oct. 15  
Sept. 1 for Oct. 15-Nov. 15

**Email:** happenings@co-opliving.com  
**Send to:** Happenings, 4201 Dominion Blvd., Suite 101, Glen Allen, VA 23060  
**Online:** co-opliving.com/happenings

## PIEDMONT

### AUGUST

**1 MANASSAS. 33rd Annual Manassas African American Heritage Festival.** Metz Middle School. 11 a.m-6 p.m. Maahf.com



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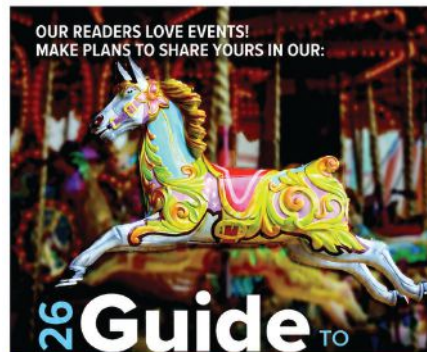
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## 2026 Guide TO Fairs & Festivals

Don't miss this chance to have your biggest attendance ever! *Cooperative Living's* special **Fall Fairs and Festivals** section is coming up in our September issue.

### Fall Fairs & Festivals

Publication: Sept. 1, 2026  
Space Reservation Deadline: July 24, 2026

Take advantage of our circulation and make sure your festival or special event is included!

**CooperativeLiving** CONTACT: SONJA KINNEY  
skjkinney@vmdaacc.com | 804-297-3429

# Stars, & STRIPES Smiles

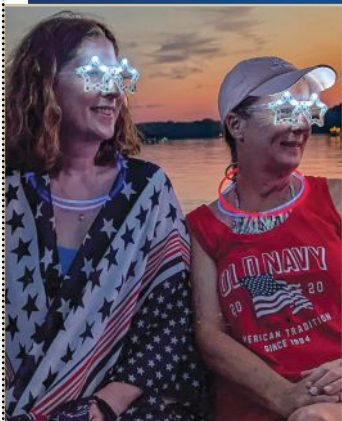
by Laura Emery, Staff Writer

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You may also mail your photo(s) to: Say Cheese, 4201 Dominion Blvd., Suite 101, Glen Allen, VA 23060. Do not send originals; photos cannot be returned.



◀ **FOURTH OF JULY FLAIR** ▶  
These festive friends, Christy and Jen, had stars in their eyes as they watched fireworks sparkle over the water.  
PHOTO SUBMITTED BY MARY STAVITZSKI STAHMER



**STAR-SPANGLED SPRINKLES** ▶  
A little water and a lot of giggles make July Fourth fun for two-year-old Oaklynn.  
PHOTO SUBMITTED BY PAM COOK



**PIER PRESSURE** ▶  
The best kind of pier pressure ends with a spectacular fireworks display over the water.  
PHOTO SUBMITTED BY LEE CRAVEN



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