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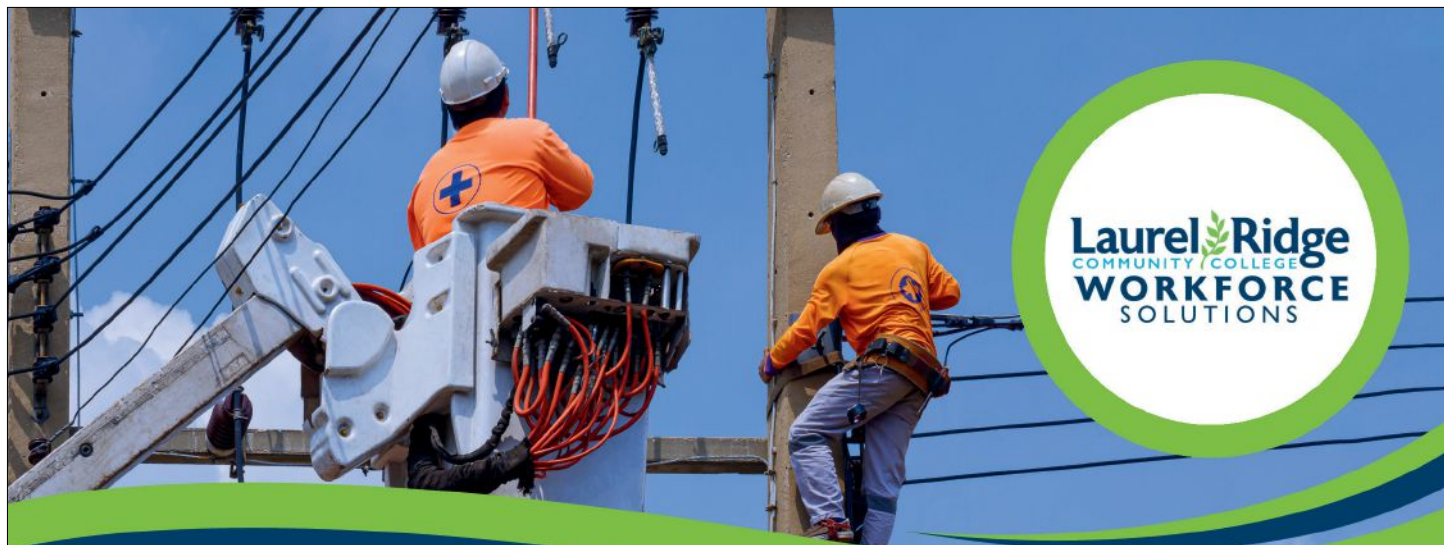
MAGIC MOMENTS

PAGE 10



James Madison University
students spread joy
while in character.

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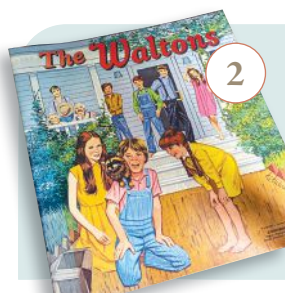
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VIEWPOINT

True Colors on Display

It's October and the fall season is in full swing. Throughout our readership area, the leaves are at different stages of changing colors. Check out our Explore More feature on the State Arboretum of Virginia in Boyce, Va., where you can see beautiful trees on full display.

We also get to celebrate National Co-op Month in October. It's a chance to recognize a unique business model made up of members who collectively own a business by virtue of using the product and/or service.

This month's Cooperative Focus is about the James Madison University chapter of the nonprofit organization A Moment of Magic. With more than 25 chapters on college campuses nationwide, the group is dedicated to visiting hospitalized and medically vulnerable children



while dressed as princesses, superheroes and literary characters — all portrayed by college students. A calling to care for others is a value shared by electric cooperatives, as one of the 7 Cooperative Principles is Concern for Community.

Check out Walton's Mountain Museum in Schuyler, Va., which faithfully recreates many of the sets used by the makers of the 1970s television show "The Waltons" and features many original props and other memorabilia. Also in this issue, we showcase the wonderful food served at Hanover Tavern, a mainstay in that community since the 1750s.

It is an honor to be part of the electric cooperative family and to have our primary focus be serving our member-owners. We do everything we can to help keep your power on, so you can spend your time enjoying the fall colors. •

Brian S. Mosier

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

Cooperative Living

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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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Please recycle.



OUR COMMUNITIES



Goodnight, John-Boy

Walton's Mountain Museum recreates beloved television show

by Gregg MacDonald, Staff Writer

IN THE PIEDMONT REGION FOOTHILLS OF VIRGINIA'S BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS LIES THE COMMUNITY OF SCHUYLER (PRONOUNCED SKY-LER). Originally called Walker's Mill, it was renamed in 1882 after the area's first local postmaster and mill operator, Schuyler George Walker.

The community's most famous native son, however, wasn't born there until 1923.

Earl Hamner Jr., the oldest of eight children, was the author of the 1970 autobiographical novel, "The Homecoming," that became the inspiration for the 1970s television show "The Waltons." Hamner helped create the iconic television show, and became a prolific screenwriter, television producer and writer for many other television shows.

"My daddy went to school with Mr. Hamner and I knew him and his family," says Mary Clark, who works in Schuyler's Walton's Mountain Museum, which opened 33 years ago on Oct. 16, 1992.

Clark says that the building that now houses the Walton's Mountain Museum was once the school where Hamner graduated in 1940. "He lived right down the street and his father operated a sawmill behind the house," Clark says of Hamner. "Even after he became famous for being a writer and for 'The Waltons' and moved out to California, he remained genuine and always came back to Schuyler for visits."

KEEPING IT REAL

The Walton's Mountain Museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. May through October; weekends only in March, April and November; and closed December through February. Admission is \$12 for adults and free for children under 12. Discounts are available for groups of 20 or more.

Inside are replicas of several rooms from the television show, including the Walton's kitchen and living room, John-Boy's bedroom, and merchant Ike Godsey's general store. Many actual props from the television show are on display, as are hundreds of photographs (like the cast photo shown above) and dozens of "The Waltons" collectibles. The actual horse-drawn cart used in the beloved episode "The Pony Cart" is also on exhibit. "My favorite room is probably the kitchen," Clark says. "The woodburning stove in there is beautiful and exactly like the one in the show."

A replica of the television version of the Walton's home is located directly across the street from the museum, and Earl Hamner Jr.'s actual family home is also nearby. ●

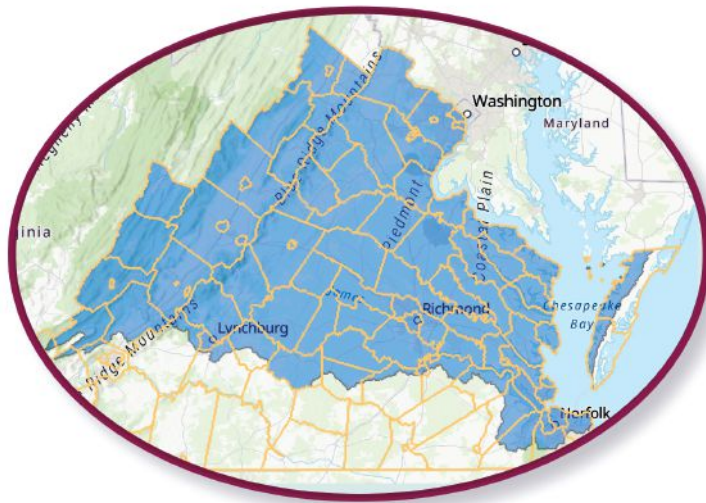
Walton's Mountain Museum; 6484 Rockfish River Rd, Schuyler, Va.;
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The Best of Both Worlds

Hanover Tavern delivers classics with a modern twist

by Peggy Hyland, Contributing Columnist

In the little hamlet of Hanover — once called Hanover Courthouse — lies Hanover Tavern, which has been around for centuries but is determined not to rest on its laurels. It delivers southern classics that feel timeless and never dated.

The friendly reception and service set a welcoming tone from the moment my companion and I enter. The building has been extensively renovated and reconstructed in the early 2000s to preserve its historic glory while providing modern services, including a theater and event space.

It was a stormy night, so my companion and I were both craving soup. The she-crab soup was thick, creamy, chunky and flawlessly balanced. It's one of Hanover Tavern's most popular dishes for a very good reason. The Shelton's Mushroom Soup is made from an 18th century recipe and was simply amazing. I love a good mushroom soup and this



PHOTO COURTESY HANOVERTAVERN.ORG

was simply the best I have ever had. We could not resist another southern classic: fried green tomatoes. They were served with a pimento cheese remoulade and topped with Parmesan cheese and bacon. They were tangy, crispy, crunchy and just right.

The porterhouse-cut pork chop was expertly cooked to a juicy and tender perfection. It was topped with a delectable tomato gravy. My pimento cheese craving was satisfied with the smoked pimento macaroni and cheese, which had a creamy, smoky indulgence. My companion opted for the buttermilk fried chicken, one of the restaurant's

most popular dishes. It was moist, crispy and delectable. The basil sweet corn rice as a side was a masterful blend of flavors and textures. The side dish of spiced peaches was a true southern summer dream. We also added a Chesapeake-style crab cake, which exceeded my expectations. It delivered all the flavor with none of the fillers that often hide crab's simple elegance.

Despite declaring I could not eat another bite, I was unable to resist the bread pudding. That evening's featured flavor was strawberry, pineapple, white chocolate and almond. It was served with a rich ice cream, a masterful blend of classic French flavors with a southern twist.

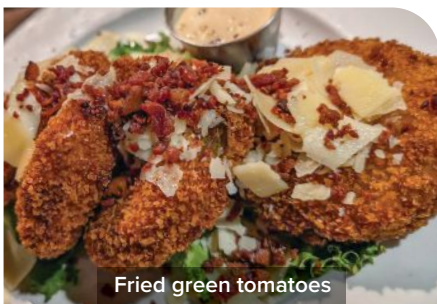
Hanover Tavern has been feeding area families for generations and is poised to continue feeding families for many more generations to come. Whether you want an intimate dinner, a casual evening with friends — or something more formal — Hanover Tavern has you covered. ●



Buttermilk fried chicken



Pork chop with smoked pimento macaroni and cheese



Fried green tomatoes



Shelton's Mushroom Soup and she-crab soup

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Flexible Bending

How the body's range of motion can make or break you

by Vanessa LaFaso Stolarski, Contributing Columnist

For anyone engaged in on-the-job physical labor, whether scaling a utility pole or hauling hay bales, physical flexibility often takes a back seat to strength. However, in industries like electrical work and agriculture — where the body is constantly tested by lifting, reaching, twisting and crouching — limited flexibility can quietly set the stage for serious injuries. Even daily routines like cleaning, gardening or vehicle maintenance can invite injury, if physical range of motion is limited.

WHY FLEXIBILITY MATTERS

Jobs in agriculture and other trades involve physically demanding movements throughout the day. These repetitive movements, when muscles and joints are stiff, cause the body to compensate with poor mechanics. Over time, these movement patterns can lead to strains, sprains and chronic pain. Tight hamstrings, for example, can pull on the lower back during lifting. Restricted hips can limit the knee's range of motion, and stiff shoulders can turn routine overhead work into a recipe for rotator cuff injuries.

GENTLE MOVEMENTS FOR IMPROVED FLEXIBILITY

You don't need to be athletic to improve flexibility. Try these beginner-friendly stretches targeting the vulnerable areas for most active workers. As your body adapts to these, try the progressions to expand your practice and range of motion. Start each stretch gently, holding each for 15 to 30 seconds and repeating them two to three times per side. Remember, stretching should never be painful — mild tension is enough to spark change.



PHOTO COURTESY PEXELS.COM

1. HAMSTRINGS: SEATED FORWARD FOLD

- **How:** Sit with legs extended, hinge at the hips and reach toward your toes. Keep your back straight and stop when you feel mild tension in the hamstrings.
- **Modify:** Too difficult? Bend slightly at the knees or use a band or towel around your feet to hold on to.
- **Progress:** As you loosen up, try a standing forward fold for a new challenge.

2. SHOULDERS/PECTORALS: DOORWAY CHEST STRETCH

- **How:** Stand in a doorway, place forearms on each side and lean forward until you feel a stretch across your chest and shoulders.
- **Modify:** Take a small step forward with one foot into a lunge position. Lean only as far as the discomfort allows.
- **Progress:** Raise your arms higher on the frame to target upper chest, or stretch one arm at a time for deeper release.

3. HIPS: FIGURE FOUR STRETCH

- **How:** Lie on your back, cross one ankle over the opposite knee and gently pull the uncrossed leg toward your chest.
- **Modify:** Do it seated and gently press down on the bent knee to open the hip.
- **Progress:** Increase hold time as your hips become more mobile.



PHOTO COURTESY PIRRYL.COM

4. SPINE: CAT-COW STRETCH

- **How:** On hands and knees, alternate arching your back like a cat and dipping it like a cow, moving slowly while breathing deeply.
- **Modify:** Lie on your back and alternate between arching and curling up your knees.
- **Progress:** Add a gentle twist by threading one arm under the other and laying the shoulder on the floor to open the upper back further. ●



PHOTO COURTESY AKSHAY GUPTA VIA PEXELS.COM



Vanessa LaFaso Stolarski is a certified nutrition counselor, weightlifting coach, life coach and stress-management specialist.

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Benjamin Franklin is credited with inventing the modern Franklin stove in the 1740s.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, home heating equipment is the second leading cause of home fires and third leading cause of home fire deaths.

Dirty chimneys, usually caused by the buildup of creosote — the highly-combustible residue that accumulates inside chimneys — is one of the leading causes of chimney fires.

While small amounts of creosote are normal when operating woodstoves, burning wet or unseasoned wood, or not addressing issues with airflow, causes more creosote to amass faster. Left untreated, creosote buildup significantly increases fire risk.

A 20-year fire service veteran, Fox has also repeatedly responded to attic fires caused by neglected, cracked chimneys. He strongly suggests having multiple working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors inside a home as well keeping a working fire extinguisher nearby and calling 911 as soon as you think there might be a fire issue.

“Time is never on your side when fighting fire,” Fox stresses. “It takes time for dispatch to page the fire department and for firefighters to arrive. That one phone call will get the ball rolling.” ●

Preparing Woodstoves for Winter

How to stay both safe and warm in chilly weather

by Alice Kemp, Virginia Farm Bureau Federation

After a cold day on their Christmas tree farm, Ronald and Roberta Clouse love to warm up by their woodstove.

“When I’m plowing snow or working outside all day in the cold, it’s nice to be able to come in and get near the woodstove,” Ronald says. “It puts out a good heat.”

With their rustic charm and reliable warmth, crackling woodstoves make spaces cozy during winter. But that homey comfort comes with responsibility. Without proper care, woodstoves pose serious fire risks.

MAINTENANCE ROUTINES

The Clouses heat their home with two woodstoves and begin preparations well before the first frost. Their chimneys are inspected and cleaned thoroughly each fall, and Ronald meticulously checks the woodstoves — replacing cracked or deteriorating fire bricks so they’re functioning safely and efficiently.

“I also check the chimneys about midway through the heating season to ensure everything is still in good shape,” he says. “Each stove sits on a wide stone

hearth without furniture or anything nearby that could catch fire.”

CLEAN CHIMNEYS, SAFE HOMES

“The main issue with woodstoves is chimney fires,” says Nathan Fox, assistant chief of Tazewell County’s Clearfork Volunteer Fire Department. “Most are due to poor chimney maintenance or burning wood that hasn’t been properly seasoned.”

WOODSTOVE SAFETY CHECKLIST

- Burn only dry, well-seasoned hardwood. Avoid burning wet or green wood, paper, plastic and trash. Don’t ever overload your woodstove.
- Have chimneys professionally inspected and cleaned annually.
- Keep a 3-foot clearance around your woodstove — no rugs, furniture or flammable materials of any kind.
- Inspect, maintain and replace woodstove components: firebricks, door seals, gaskets, stove pipes, ash buildup.
- Use dampers and air controls properly to regulate burn and airflow.
- Always extinguish a fire before going to bed or leaving home.
- Store ashes in a metal container with lid at least 10 feet from the house.
- Test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors regularly and replace batteries.
- Keep a fire extinguisher within reach and ensure everyone knows how to use it.

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Do You Believe in Magic?

Healing through imagination, college students spread joy

by Lydia Weaver, Contributing Writer



JMU's AMoM chapter members with a young girl at CureFest in Washington, D.C.

Abigail Knesch is all too familiar with the woes that frequent hospital stays bring. For her and thousands of other children and young adults, small moments can have a lasting impact.

Earlier this year, Knesch was visited by volunteers with James Madison University's A Moment of Magic. The nonprofit organization has more than 25 chapters on college campuses nationwide. It is dedicated to bringing imagination, healing and compassion to hospitalized and medically vulnerable

children through character visits, play-based connection, interactive workshops and mental health support. Children might be visited by princesses, superheroes or even literary characters — all portrayed by college students.

"Being a teen who is frequently dealing with doctors' appointments and hospital trips, companies like A Moment of Magic are truly what make each day a little less bland," Knesch says. "I got to meet them when I was hospitalized at VCU, and I have truly never felt more joy in a hospital in my life."

Whether it's bedside in a hospital room, at a cancer research fundraiser or a community outreach event, AMoM's personal interaction often is the key for lending positivity to a child's medical experience. Knesch says even though she was an older patient in terms of pediatric care at the time, AMoM's imagination-filled visit to her was still special.

It was even more so, perhaps, after having played Elsa in her high school's musical rendition of the Disney classic. Because of that, she could appreciate the volunteers' performance in a different way than the younger children.

"Getting to make funny faces and having them play along with their characters and never break [from character] was really fun," says Knesch, now a college freshman, "especially since kids my age don't get those kinds of experiences very often."

In Virginia, there are three AMoM chapters that make regular visits to bring joy to children in hospitals and community spaces. JMU's chapter is the most established and has made the most visits, even visiting other locations to offer guidance, chapter president Kayla Coppage says. The volunteers are most often found in pediatric oncology units, singing songs, coloring, giving hugs and playing games.

In Coppage's time with the organization, the JMU chapter has visited hospitals as far away as Virginia Beach and Baltimore. Kylee McGrane-Zarnoch, AMoM's national founder and executive director, praises the

PHOTOS COURTESY JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY'S A MOMENT OF MAGIC

Magic

A Moment of Magic is dedicated to bringing imagination, healing and compassion to hospitalized and medically vulnerable children.

Shenandoah Valley volunteers' time commitment and dedication to the cause.

"They are incredible," McGrane-Zarnoch says. "I get to work with [JMU] quite a lot. Their energy and their passion for the mission and the individual families is so palpable. It's really special. They're so active in the community and they care so much about who they're serving. That's the embodiment of the mission. If I could have 50 JMU chapters, we would be all set."

BEHIND THE MAGIC

McGrane-Zarnoch founded AMoM as a college student in 2014, and says the program grew organically from there. From the first hospital visit in New York, peers were eager to join and get involved.

"By making service work look like something that people could get involved in really easily — it just had this organic appeal," McGrane-Zarnoch says. "It's not necessarily a really difficult

thing to put on a princess costume and go to a children's hospital, but for a child, that might be the thing that changes the trajectory of their week, the thing that really makes the difference in their treatment journey.

"Then the next time they go to the hospital, they might not just have feelings of anxiety or being scared and overwhelmed, they might have a positive association."

Despite its growth and larger numbers today, the organization wants to keep the experience of those visited consistent regardless of location. McGrane-Zarnoch says they are on track to impact more than 20,000 children nationwide this year. Training volunteers is one of the biggest factors in ensuring equal experiences for all, she explains.

From the fun aspects of acting and character portrayal to the serious lessons regarding privacy laws or coping with trauma, AMoM's training is comprehensive. Each chapter president receives in-person training in New York, and then they teach new chapter members at their schools.

"No matter how big we get, we're still a small organization," McGrane-Zarnoch says. "We're a close-knit community, and that's really tied together by the mission and who we're doing it for."

One challenge is staying in character through emotional moments. Volunteers are taught coping mechanisms for their own mental health, but they also learn how to thoughtfully answer tough

Kylee McGrane-Zarnoch, AMoM founder and executive director, brings joy to pediatric patients as an ice queen.



JMU's Cassidy Frank and Kayla Coppage visit with Abigail Knesh in her hospital room at VCU.

questions, respond to sensitive topics and be respectful of situations without breaking character.

"I like to remember that if I feel like I'm going to cry, I'm taking attention away from that child," says Cassidy Frank, JMU's magic experience coordinator. "This is supposed to be a happy moment. It's not about me, it's about them. If we're going to have emotions, we try to do it away from the visit."

Along with the characters, each visit includes volunteers not in costume known as Magic Makers. These volunteers help the characters get ready, take pictures, coordinate the meetings upon arrival and handle questions about the program so character volunteers can focus on role-playing for the children. Sometimes, the Magic Makers are awaiting their own future character assignments.

"We have over 100 [characters] on a national level," Coppage says. "But at our chapter, we probably have 10 to 15." That number includes some members playing multiple roles, like Coppage and Frank, who both have three options, and some shared roles, making duplicate availability for visits.

To be assigned a character to portray, before any training begins, members must submit an audition, including pictures and voice samples of accents. The national team selects what

(continued on page 12)



Do You Believe in Magic?

(continued from page 11)

character they think may be the best fit, and the local chapter approves the casting decisions. Assignments can be from Disney and Pixar movies, Marvel superhero characters, or even popular books. Then, students must fundraise to cover the costs of their costumes.

"I want you to be so good at what you do that you aren't someone who's trying to be [a princess], you just are that person," McGrane-Zarnoch says. "Lead with empathy. So, if [a princess] would comfort that child in that moment, that's what you should do."

CHARACTERS WHO CARE

Coppage and Frank have been volunteering and portraying characters with AMoM since their first year on campus. Both seniors now, they remain committed and continue to make time for weekly meetings and planning responsibilities as part of the executive board.

All the traveling, training and practicing seem minor when they describe some of the magical moments they've experienced. Frank says she tells her family that being involved in the program is the best thing she's ever done.

"I met a little boy in the hospital



Kayla Coppage and Adley Gordon at CureFest 2024.

while he was getting his chemotherapy treatment," she says. "I had met him previously as [another character], but [this time] we sat with him the whole time he was getting [treated]. We played charades, we sang songs, we read books, we played with his sister. We were at that one [visit] for an hour and a half. Time had kind of flown by. He told me that was his last treatment, and he was glad he got to see us. I think of him all the time."

Coppage recalls interacting with Adley Gordon, a young girl who was playing by herself at CureFest USA, an annual festival for childhood cancer patients in Washington, D.C. Adley was diagnosed with leukemia in 2022, just two weeks before her second birthday. "We really connected. We played so loud and so long that we got asked to move," Coppage says.



Kayla Coppage makes children smile as a candy racer character.



While dressed as a fairy, Cassidy Frank interacts with a young patient.

For over a year now, Adley has been cancer free, and her parents, Chad and Kira Gordon, say they've found a lifelong friend in Coppage.

"Her gifts and kind messages lifted us up and gave us smiles when all we wanted to do was cry," the parents say in a statement to AMoM. "We cannot thank Kayla and A Moment of Magic JMU enough. We are blessed to be a part of their amazing family, and they will always be a part of Adley's adventure."

Being the reason a child smiles isn't just rewarding work, it's important work. Joy is known to bring healing, and that can stem from even small interactions in bleak situations.

As Coppage says, "Everyone can use a little magic." ●

"We're a close-knit community, and that's really tied together by the mission and who we're doing it for."

— Kylee McGrane-Zarnoch, AMoM's national founder and executive director



► For more information, visit amomentofmagic.org.



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Don't let **phantom load** sneak up on your electric bill

Finding and eliminating phantom loads can help reduce your electric bill. You can do this by unplugging!



A computer left on all day can cost 21 cents per day, or \$75 per year. Many electronic devices consume energy — even when powered off.



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Cellphone and battery chargers continually draw power as well even when no device is connected to them, so unplug when not in use or when the device is fully charged.

For more tips on scaring phantom load away, try our new home energy calculator on ee.odec.com

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RAPPAHANNOCK
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

October is National CO-OP MONTH



Every October since 1964 we celebrate National Co-op Month to highlight the value and service cooperatives bring to mostly rural areas.

Cooperatives have a rich history of business and service going back to the first modern cooperative launched by the Rochdale Pioneers in England in 1844. National Co-op Month highlights the 7 Cooperative Principles that guide Rappahannock Electric Cooperative (REC) and set all cooperatives apart from other business structures:

Open and Voluntary Membership

REC has an obligation to serve everyone in our service territory — no matter the type of customer. Service territories, established in the mid-1900s, continue to see demand increase with economic and population growth. Your Cooperative serves 182,000 connections across 22 counties stretching from the Blue Ridge Mountains to the Chesapeake Bay. All customers are treated the same, as member-owners with equal and fair access to all the benefits and services REC offers.

Democratic Member Control

Your Cooperative is governed by a member-

elected board of directors made up of your neighbors and fellow member-owners. At this year's Annual Meeting in August, more than 17,000 member-owners participated in the election of three board members, showing your engagement and the value you place on member control.

Member Economic Participation

As a member-owned, not-for-profit organization, REC invests its profit margins in system improvements that benefit members and also returns them to members in the form of capital credits. In June, REC's Board of Directors voted to approve the return of \$8.1 million back to

members in the form of bill credits. This is a sizable increase over last year's return. REC returns your investments in a first-in, first-out method. For example, this year REC returned the money to members who had funds in their 1989 Capital Credit account.

Autonomy and Independence

Your Cooperative is an autonomous, self-help organization controlled by members. Any agreements with other organizations, including governments, or any raising of capital from external sources will comply with existing regulations and ensure democratic control by members.

continued on page 14



Education, Training and Information

Safety is our top priority at REC. We partner with state and local public safety organizations, like fire departments and first responders, to educate our member-owners and the public about electrical safety. In 2024, our employees attended 490 events across our service area, sharing information on safety, energy efficiency, sustainability and more. Find an event near you: myrec.coop/community-events.

Cooperation Among Cooperatives

Cooperatives work together locally and across the country. One of the most visible forms of this cooperation is mutual aid. It's common for cooperatives to dispatch crews to help other co-ops restore power after major storms hundreds or even thousands of miles away. REC has been the recipient of this aid, and we have sent crews to help where needed. Another example is partnerships to provide additional needed services like rural broadband. By working together, cooperatives can control costs and better manage supply chain challenges.

Concern for Community

You'll find REC member-owners and employees involved in each of our communities. We help in our churches and schools, organize fundraisers and volunteer



as coaches, officials and umpires in local youth sports. You'll find us supporting community projects and serving in volunteer fire and rescue departments. Your Cooperative is focused on advancing our communities. This year, REC passed a major milestone in delivering high-speed broadband internet to 10,000 members. REC has partnered with Firefly Fiber Broadband, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Central Virginia Electric Cooperative, to



construct 2,650 miles of fiber network — the distance from Fredericksburg to San Diego, Calif. — in five counties. It's part of an effort to bring high-speed internet to unserved and underserved communities in our service region. Such progress is bridging the digital divide between rural areas and more populated localities, and cooperatives are at the forefront of this effort, just like in the original rural electrification push during the 1930s and '40s.

Bringing the Internet Home:

How REC Helped Transform Life for One Greene County Family



"Thank you. You guys have made my day — or made my year actually."

For Jen Hill, living in rural Greene County meant a constant struggle to stay connected. Before high-speed internet reached her home this year, simply getting online was a daily challenge.

"It was difficult to find places where I could connect," says Hill, who works remotely as a computer programmer. "I would find myself going to the library, sitting in the parking lot at a McDonald's or, you know, just going through all kinds of machinations in order to get connected to work."

"I would find myself working early mornings or late nights in order to have the speeds to do things that I needed to do."

That all changed as a result of REC's efforts to build a fiber network that an internet service provider now uses to provide broadband to Hill and her neighbors.

"It was fantastic to just realize that I didn't have to check speeds all the time. Now, I can just work anytime I want. I never have any issues so it can be more on my schedule."

Hill is grateful for the investment REC made to create this new reality for her family. "I know that [REC has] spent a lot of money and time in order to go into out-of-the-way areas and connect [high speed internet] there," she says. "Providing broadband to areas that couldn't get it in any other way."

For REC and the teams that helped bring broadband to her family, Hill has one simple message: "Thank you. I appreciate it so much. You guys have made my day — or made my year actually — and having it available now, it's been awesome."

Strong Member Turnout in 2025 REC Director Elections

REC members gathered virtually on Aug. 20, 2025, for the Cooperative's Annual Meeting. More than 17,000 members participated in this year's election process, reinforcing REC's foundation as a member-owned and democratically governed utility.

As a result of the election, three directors were reelected to continue their service on the Board of Directors:



In Region I, Michael Lindsay was reelected. This region includes the counties of Frederick and Shenandoah, the portion of Page County located north of U.S. Route 211, and the portions of Warren and Rappahannock counties west of Route 522.



In Region VI, Linda Gray was reelected. This region includes Caroline County.



In Region VII, Mark Wood was reelected. This region includes Louisa County.

Managing Director – Communications and Public Relations. "Thousands of members participated in the proxy designation process to elect other REC member-owners to represent the best interest of the membership as a whole on the Cooperative's Board of Directors."

By participating in the election, REC members help ensure their voices are heard in shaping the future of their cooperative.

"REC prides itself on being a democratic organization," says Casey Hollins,



Layton Reames and Tabitha Perryman with "Chuck Norris."

Meeting "Chuck Norris" at the Culpeper Madison Rappahannock Farm Show

Earlier this year, budding farmpreneur Layton Reames wrote a letter to REC to see if someone in the company wanted to buy one of his goats he was selling as a 4-H project. On behalf of the Cooperative, Michaela Jamrozek and Tabitha Perryman answered.

Reames, 14, would get up at 5:30 a.m. to feed and take care of his goats. Then he'd do it again after school in the evening.

His goats are supplemental income.

At REC, Jamrozek is a distribution design representative and Perryman is an operations and construction assistant. They headed to the Culpeper Madison Rappahannock Farm Show on July 14 and won the bidding at \$11 per pound on Reames' 91-pound goat named "Chuck Norris." Then they sold it back to the floor, as typical for businesses, as a fundraiser for Reames.

Fall into Savings

Energy-Efficiency Tips for October

As the days grow shorter and temperatures start to dip, October is the ideal time to get cozy while keeping energy costs low. Change your energy use habits with these timely strategies you can apply right now to save energy and money:

1. Seal in the Comfort

Drafty doors, windows and attic access points can let warm air escape, increasing your heating load. A few affordable fixes go a long way:

- Apply caulking or weatherstripping around doors, windows and attic hatches.
- Use insulated foam gaskets behind switch plates and electrical outlets on exterior walls.

2. Optimize Your HVAC System

Heating and cooling often account for 35% to 45% of a typical home's electric bill, so small tweaks here can lead to big savings:

- Change your HVAC filter every one to two months to maintain efficiency—clogged filters can increase bills by 5–15%.
- Schedule a professional performance check-up now, before winter demand spikes.

3. Set Thermostats Smartly

Adjusting your thermostat by even a few degrees can make a noticeable difference:

- Aim for 68 degrees in winter. Each degree above that can increase heating costs by about 3%.

4. Choose Efficient Lighting & Appliances

- Replace any burnt-out or frequently used bulb with an LED. They use 25% to 80% less energy and last much longer.
- In the kitchen, cook efficiently: use a slow cooker for long stews, keep lids on pots and only preheat the oven when needed.

5. Unplug the "Vampires"

Even when appliances are off, many continue to draw power, — a phenomenon known as standby or "phantom" load:

- Use a power strip to completely switch off groups of appliances when not in use.
- Unplug chargers, electronics and entertainment devices when they're idle for extended periods.

Why Now?

October marks the transition into a heavier heating season. These efficiency upgrades and habits ensure you get ahead of rising bills and get the most comfort from your energy use. By combining small behavioral changes with DIY upgrades, you'll stay warm and save, and aren't those the two best parts of fall?



Fall Quick-Tip Checklist

Easy ways to save energy (and money) this October

- ☐ Seal leaks around doors, windows and attic hatches.
- ☐ Change HVAC filters monthly for top performance.
- ☐ Set thermostat to 68 degrees when heating.
- ☐ Lower water heater temp to 120 degrees.
- ☐ Switch to LEDs in high-use fixtures.
- ☐ Unplug "energy vampires" like chargers and electronics.

Small steps now lead to lower bills all winter long!

REC Stands with Communities on National Night Out

At REC, safety is our top priority — both for our employees and for the communities we serve. That commitment extends beyond our daily work of maintaining reliable electricity. It also means investing in safety education for our workforce and sharing knowledge with our members about how to use electricity safely at home, work and in the community.



REC at Tappahannock National Night Out

Each year, REC proudly partners with local law enforcement and emergency services for National Night Out (NNO), held the first Tuesday in August. This nationwide event is designed to strengthen the bond between neighbors and public safety organizations, bringing back a true sense of community while highlighting the importance of working together for safer neighborhoods.

REC in Your Community

In August, REC employees connected with thousands of members at National Night Out celebrations across our service territory, providing hands-on demonstrations and educational resources about electrical safety while standing alongside our public safety partners. REC participated in NNO events at:

- Culpeper – Culpeper Sports Complex
- Ruckersville – Walmart
- Front Royal – Main Street Gazebo
- Ruther Glen – County Line Baptist Church
- King William – King William High School
- Spotsylvania – Spotsylvania Towne Center
- Tappahannock – Prince Street
- Louisa – Courthouse Square
- Sparta – Sparta Fire Department
- King & Queen – King & Queen Courthouse



REC at Culpeper National Night Out



Greenwood Fire Department Touch a Truck in Winchester

Supporting Safety All Month Long

Our commitment to community safety doesn't stop with National Night Out. Throughout August, REC supported additional initiatives to raise awareness and provide resources to local first responders, including:

- Brandy Station Volunteer Fire Department Parade featuring an REC bucket truck.
- Greenwood Fire Department Touch a Truck in Winchester.
- J&R's Annual Car, Truck & Motorcycle Show in Madison, where REC served as an event sponsor to benefit the Madison County Volunteer Fire Department.

By showing up, investing in local events and partnering with first responders, REC demonstrates a unified force for safety. Together, we are building stronger, safer communities for today and for generations to come.



Top 5 Electric Safety Tips

1. Look Up Before You Lift

Always check for overhead power lines before using ladders, farm equipment or tall machinery.

2. Call or Click Before You Dig

Dial 811 or visit va811.com before starting any project that involves digging. Underground power lines and utilities can be just inches below the surface.

3. Use Outlets Safely

Never overload outlets or power strips, and always replace damaged cords immediately.

4. Stay Away from Downed Power Lines

If you encounter a downed power line, stay away. Even if lines are down they could be energized and dangerous. Call 911.

5. Be Generator Ready

Have your generator inspected and fueled before storm season, and always keep it outdoors when running.

Remember: A few simple precautions can prevent serious accidents and keep your family safe.

Tips to Avoid Energy Scams

Do you know the warning signs of an energy scam? Scammers will often use high-pressure tactics that create a sense of urgency. They may also ask for unusual payment methods such as gift cards or cryptocurrency.

Dodgy communication is typically associated with a scam, including poor grammar, spelling errors or unusual email addresses. If you spot any of these warning signs, take a moment to pause and determine if it might be a scam.



Meet the CARE Charity Board
Greg Worley

When Greg Worley retired in January 2024, slowing down wasn't part of his plan. An avid outdoorsman, Worley enjoys hiking, biking and camping. He and his wife also love attending concerts and estate sales. But in addition to his hobbies, Worley dedicates much of his time to giving back.

Through his church in Richmond's East End, Worley volunteers as a rideshare driver, helping those in need get to essential appointments. He hopes to expand that service into the Ashland area. He also makes regular visits to a local convalescent home, where he has built a lasting friendship with one resident over the years.

"Charity work, serving the community and helping others, it's the perfect opportunity," Worley says with a smile.

Worley's passion for service isn't new. Years ago, he served on Hanover County's Community Services Board, supporting local nonprofits and helping secure grants. During that time, he worked closely with fellow volunteer Donna Douglas. When Donna decided it was time to step away from the CARE Charity Board, she encouraged Worley to consider joining.

"I think community is important," Worley explains. "Being a Christian includes being involved in church and your local communities. When you step in, you see the needs firsthand. Many people in our community are often overlooked — both the very young and the very old. Being involved helps us understand what's driving those needs and where help is most needed."



Making an Impact Through CARE

Worley says he is most proud of helping direct funds to smaller, community-driven programs.

"The ability to disperse funds to groups that qualify and need it the most is very rewarding," he says. "It's not just about meeting needs, it's also about celebrating the arts and supporting programs that bring people together."

As part of the CARE Charity Board, Worley helps review applications and ensure resources are distributed fairly. "We try to serve the community 100% with the grant requests that come in," he says. "Do we always agree on everything? Of course not. But that's part of the process, and it's a good one. Rolling up our sleeves, going through those requests and supporting local organizations is just rewarding."

Worley encourages REC members to consider enrolling in The Power of Change, REC's charitable giving program.

"It's the best money spent," he says. "Every penny goes back into the community. It's painless; some months it could be three cents, the next it could be 98 cents, but it's never over a dollar. It's community-driven, it's community-based and it supports those in need."

About The Power of Change

Each month, more than 35,000 REC members round up their electric bill to the next whole dollar. The donated funds are awarded to nonprofits and charities that support communities across REC's service territory.



The average monthly donation is just **52 cents** — but together, those small contributions make a big difference.

Learn more and enroll today at myrec.coop/donate.

National Fire Prevention Month

Save Lives: Check Your Smoke Alarms

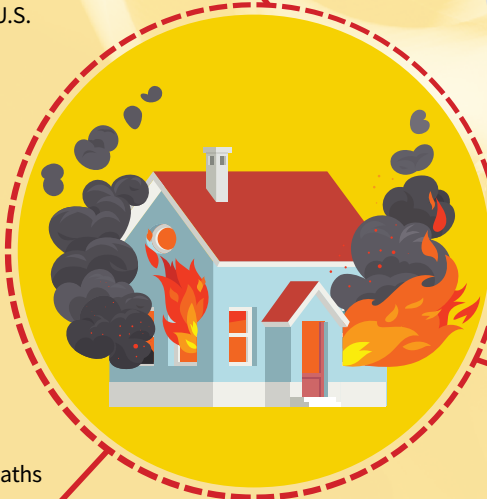
4.5 people on average die per day in the U.S. from house fires.¹



38% of fire deaths are in homes with no smoke detectors.²



50% less risk of dying from fires in homes with working smoke alarms.²



Sources: ¹U.S. Fire Administration. ²National Fire Protection Association.



Smoke Alarm Safety Tips

- Install smoke alarms in every sleeping room and outside each separate sleeping area.
- Install alarms at every level of your home, including the basement.
- Interconnect the smoke alarms. When one sounds, they will all sound.
- Test all smoke alarms at least once a month. Press the test button to see if the alarm works.
- Keep doors closed. A closed door may slow the spread of smoke, heat and fire.

Taking these easy steps to make sure your smoke alarms work correctly could make all the difference for your loved ones' safety.

October is National Fire Prevention Month. Check your smoke alarms this month to make sure they're working correctly. You may have as little as two minutes to escape to safety in a house fire, and working smoke detectors are essential to quickly alert you to danger.

REC Lineworkers Head to the International Lineman's Rodeo

This fall, some of REC's finest lineworkers will represent the Cooperative, and our members, on the international stage. After delivering an outstanding performance at the 21st annual Gaff-n-Go Rodeo in May, two REC journeyman teams have earned the honor of competing at the International Lineman's Rodeo in Overland Park, Kansas.



The International Rodeo draws the best of the best from across the U.S. and around the world. To qualify, competitors must first prove their skills at regional rodeos such as Gaff-n-Go, one of the largest lineworker competitions on the East Coast.

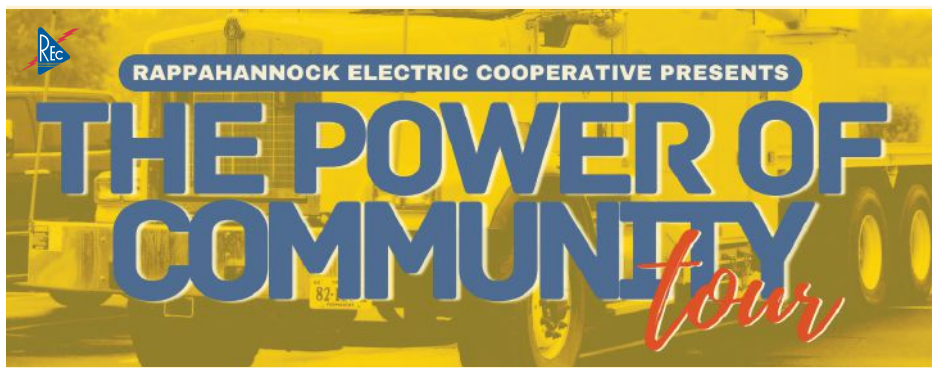
At Gaff-n-Go, REC lineworkers shined. Teams earned perfect scores in multiple events, including Hurtman Rescue, Wire Transfer, 15KV Fuse Coordination and Climbing Skills. These events test the very skills lineworkers use every day to keep electricity flowing safely and reliably.

REC is sending a team of eight lineworkers and three judges to the International Lineman's Rodeo in Overland Park, Kansas, Oct. 15-18.

Journeyman Team 1 includes:
Austin Lambert, climber.
Jordan Stevens, climber.
Addison Spicer, groundman.
Jason Morris, alternate.

Journeyman Team 2 includes:
Kory Settle, climber.
Cameron Lewis, climber.
Dillion Sheads, groundman.
Wes Gallahan, alternate.

Judges are:
Shawn Dixon.
Todd McCall.
Calvin Jackson.



OCTOBER

Festival of Leaves
Front Royal

OCTOBER 11

Bowling Green Harvest Festival
Bowling Green

OCTOBER 18

Frog Level Festival & Parade
Caroline

OCTOBER 25

Trunk or Treats
multiple events throughout the territory

OCTOBER 2025



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myrec.coop/gift

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Energy-Efficiency Tip

Water Heater Replacement Made Easy with REC

Say goodbye to cold showers and surprise expenses. With REC's Water Heater Replacement program, you can buy your new water heater through us and finance it right on your electric bill. Our trusted plumber partners handle the installation, so you can sit back while we take the stress away. Learn more at myrec.coop/waterheaters.



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Made in the Shade

Gardening in cool, calm spaces offers unexpected beauty

by Beth Burrell, Contributing Columnist

One of the most common questions I hear is, “What can I plant in the shade?” There are actually far more shade-loving plants than many people realize. In fact, shady spots can be some of the most rewarding areas to cultivate. With tall canopy trees above, shade gardens evoke a more intimate, tranquil atmosphere.

WINTER BLOOMS AND FRAGRANT FOLIAGE

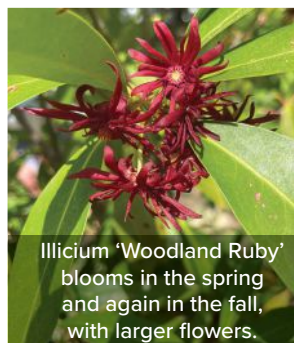
Daphne odora ‘Aureomarginata’ (winter daphne) is an outstanding choice for dry shade. This compact, evergreen shrub produces sweet, fruity-scented blooms in March — an early highlight in the garden. Even when not in bloom, its striking green and gold variegated leaves provide year-round interest. Native to China and Japan, winter daphne is slow growing, eventually reaching 3 to 4 feet in both height and width.

Edgeworthia chrysantha, or paper bush, is a close relative of daphne and blooms just a few weeks later. Native to the Himalayas, this plant gets its common name from its traditional use in Japanese papermaking, including the production of banknotes. Clusters of yellow, fragrant flowers appear on bare stems in late winter, exuding a light gardenia-like scent. After flowering, its bluish-green leaves with silvery undertones give it a rhododendron-like appearance. Over time, it can grow to a height of 5 feet or more and spread up to 6 feet wide.

Illicium ‘Woodland Ruby,’ a cross of the native anise tree and *Illicium*



Golden Japanese forest grass thrives in the shade, adding brightness to the forest floor.



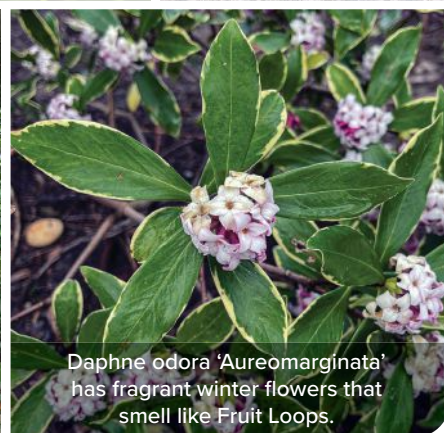
Illicium ‘Woodland Ruby’ blooms in the spring and again in the fall, with larger flowers.



The whimsical wavy foliage of hosta ‘Wheee!’ will make you look twice at this happy perennial.



No shade garden should be without *Lobelia cardinalis* ‘Black Truffle.’ Its dramatic burgundy foliage and fire-engine-red flowers are a showstopper in late summer.



Daphne odora ‘Aureomarginata’ has fragrant winter flowers that smell like Fruit Loops.

PHOTOS COURTESY SCOTT BURRELL

mexicanum, offers both beauty and practicality. It produces larger, more striking purple-red flowers in spring and again in fall. Its glossy, evergreen leaves have a distinct anise scent, and the entire plant is toxic — making it naturally deer-resistant. A moderate grower, it can reach 6 feet or more, making it ideal as a screen or a standout specimen.

GRASSES AND GROUNDCOVERS THAT SHINE IN SHADE

Golden Japanese forest grass (*Hakonechloa macra* ‘Aureola’) brings graceful texture and vibrant color to shady areas. Unlike most grasses, it thrives in partial to full shade, forming low, cascading mounds of narrow golden foliage. It’s especially effective if planted along paths or borders where its luminous color stands out.

Of course, hostas are the quintessential shade plants, with thousands of cultivars to explore. One especially whimsical variety is hosta ‘Wheee!’ It is a mid-sized cultivar with narrow, rippled leaves and wavy petioles. Growing to about 15 inches

tall, it adds a playful, sculptural element to garden beds or containers.

BOLD COLOR AND POLLINATOR POWER

If you’re looking for a plant with both dramatic foliage and brilliant flowers, try *Lobelia cardinalis* ‘Black Truffle.’ This native cultivar features deep burgundy leaves and vivid red flower spikes that attract hummingbirds and butterflies. Ideal for moist, shady borders or naturalized settings, it brings bold contrast, vertical interest and essential pollinator support from mid to late summer.

Whether you’re drawn to unique foliage, fragrant blooms or wildlife-friendly plants, there are plenty of exciting options to transform your shade garden into a serene and colorful retreat. Now, it’s your turn to start the adventure. Seek out some of these uncommon treasures and make your shady space shine. ●

Beth Burrell holds degrees in landscape design and ornamental horticulture. Her family gardens have been featured on the TV show “Home Grown.”

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¹DETAILS OF OFFER: Offer expires 11/30/2025. Not valid with other offers or prior purchases. Get \$379 off per window, get \$779 off per entry/patio door and 12 months no money down, no monthly payments, no interest when you purchase four (4) or more windows or entry/patio doors between 10/1/2025 and 11/30/2025. Subject to credit approval. 12-month Promo Period: while no payments are due, interest accrues but is waived if the loan is paid in full before the Promo Period expires. Any unpaid balance owed after the Promo Period, plus accrued interest, will be paid in installments based on the terms disclosed in the customer's loan 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. Some Renewal by Andersen locations are independently owned and operated. [†]Review aggregator survey of 5-star reviews among leading national full-service window replacement companies. January 2024 Reputation.com. [†]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 for details. ²Values are based on comparison of Renewal by Andersen® double-hung window U-Factor to the U-Factor for clear dual-pane glass nonmetal frame default values from the 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015, and 2018 International Energy Conservation Code "Glazed Fenestration" Default Tables. ³Based on testing of 10 double-hung units per ASTM E2068 20 years after installation. "Renewal by Andersen" and all other marks where denoted are trademarks of Andersen Corporation. © 2025 Andersen Corporation. All rights reserved. RBA14201



It is not necessarily what one learns about trees, but what one learns from them.

The *Magic* of Trees

PHOTO COURTESY AMANDA S. CREASEY

A day at the State Arboretum of Virginia

by Amanda S. Creasey, Outdoors Writer

This was going to be a story about trees, pure and simple — a factual story about the trees I saw at the State Arboretum of Virginia in Boyce, Va. How old are they? How big? How beautiful?

What I was not prepared for — though, perhaps I should have been — was the magic of the trees. The magic started before my friend, her baby, my dogs and I even got out of the car. It was lunchtime. We were hungry and looking to start our visit with a picnic. Ignoring our grumbling stomachs, we passed by several food trucks and vendor tents preparing for a weekend event.

Although tempted to stop, we drove by the iconic brick gate across from the herb garden, opting to get the lay

of the land before settling on a picnic site and planning for our visit. We continued down a narrow dirt road, under cotton-ball clouds adrift in a robin's-egg blue sky.

We hadn't made it very far when, from the passenger seat, I spotted it — the place I wanted to eat lunch. It was a treehouse of sorts, nestled amongst the leaves in the distance. We wound our way along the serpentine lane until we came to a small parking area. Abandoning our plan for a quick driving tour before lunch, we heeded the call of the trees, unloaded our crew and coolers, and walked down a short path to the treehouse.

Trees of all sizes and ages lined the path, their leaves shimmering slightly in the breeze. Some, presumably suffering

from a blight, had recently been cut down, stumps and logs smelling tangy and sweet in the warmth of the late morning sun. One little redbud was bedecked with colorful, sun-faded prayer flags that fluttered in the wind. I paused to investigate and found it was a memorial to some late patron, a nature lover who, in life, had found peace here.

As I walked along the trail, my

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Orland E. White
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co-opliving.com



Hewlett Lewis
Overlook Pavilion



Ginkgo tree

looking out over a marsh to the rolling hills. Cardinals, bluebirds and catbirds darted in and out of the sheltering tree branches. There was nowhere else I wanted to be more than in that treehouse in the fresh air with my dogs and my friend and her baby — eating strawberries in the shade of a redbud tree.

“I’d love to come back here early in the spring,” I said to my friend, imagining what it would be like to sit in this very spot when the redbud was in bloom, its delicate purple blossoms presiding over the pavilion. When we finished eating, we continued our journey.

I looked at the beautiful blue sky above. I heard the breeze whispering secrets through the green leaves on all the trees. I saw the seed pods swaying from the redbud branches, listened to the various birds calling in the boughs, felt the warm sun on my back, and watched a small bunny, still as stone, peering at us from the underbrush.

I wanted to come back in the fall, when the ginkgo grove would be golden. I wanted to come back in the winter too, when I might see the rolling hills white with snow and the barren branches gray

friend pushing her baby in the stroller ahead, my two dogs trotting between us on their leashes, an elderly stranger happened along in the opposite direction. Stooping to pet my small dogs, she struck up a conversation about her practice of adopting senior dogs. Despite her evident advanced age, she was active, spry and energetic. After our conversation ended, she went on her way along the sun-dappled path under the canopy of trees. I walked on, reaching the treehouse a few minutes after my friend.

A sign at its base told us its name: Hewlett Lewis Overlook Pavilion. We settled at the top, taking out our strawberries and cheese, avocado and crackers, cupcakes, and water bottles. We ate our treehouse picnic nestled beside the boughs of a redbud, listening to the trill of redwing blackbirds,



against a winter’s sky, the trees pleasantly exhausted from their summer’s work and preparing for spring.

With a baby on board and naptime to consider, my friend and I decided to explore the nearest trail, the Native Plant Trail, which traces a loop through wetland and meadow habitats with a slight jog into a woodland.

As we walked, I thought about the trees and their various seasons. I thought about the elderly woman and her adopted senior dogs in their current seasons of life, my dogs and I in ours, and my friend and her baby in theirs. It was then that I realized that it is not necessarily what one learns about trees, but what one learns from them. ●

QUICK DISH

Parmesan Crusted Chicken

recipe courtesy of Family Features/Culinary.net

Ingredients:

½ cup mayonnaise
¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves
(about 1 ¼ lbs.)
4 teaspoons Italian seasoned dry
breadcrumbs

Directions:

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Combine mayonnaise with cheese in medium bowl. Arrange chicken on baking sheet. Evenly top with mayonnaise mixture, then sprinkle with breadcrumbs. Bake 20 minutes or until chicken is thoroughly cooked.

Save yourself some time with these tasty recipes!

Skillet Lasagna

recipe courtesy of Family Features/Culinary.net

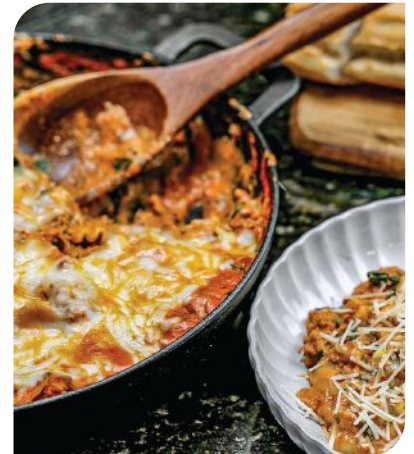
Ingredients:

1 lb. ground beef
1 tablespoon onion powder
1 tablespoon garlic powder
salt, to taste
pepper, to taste
44 oz. marinara sauce
½ cup heavy whipping
cream

½ cup ricotta
1 ½ cups frozen spinach
9 lasagna noodles
1 cup mozzarella cheese
bread, for serving
Parmesan cheese,
for topping (optional)

Directions:

In large skillet or Dutch oven, brown ground beef with onion powder, garlic powder, and salt and pepper, to taste. Drain excess grease. Mix in marinara sauce, heavy whipping cream, ricotta and spinach. Break up lasagna noodles and add to skillet. Cover and let sit over medium heat 10 minutes. Stir and top with mozzarella cheese. Cover and let set 10 minutes. Serve with bread and top with Parmesan cheese, if desired. Serves 4-6.



Savory Street Tacos

recipe courtesy of Family
Features/Culinary.net

Ingredients:

1 chuck roast (2-3 lbs.)
1 pkg. taco seasoning
1 can (10 oz.) beef consommé
16-20 street taco tortillas
1 pkg. (8 oz.) shredded cheese
¼ cup avocado oil
salsa, for serving
guacamole, for serving
queso, for serving

**Directions:**

Cover chuck roast with taco seasoning then place in slow cooker. Pour beef consommé over roast and cook on low 6 hours to braise. Heat oven to 425 degrees. Use fork to shred roast. Brush outside of tortillas with avocado oil and fill with meat and shredded cheese. Place in casserole dish and bake 10-15 minutes or until tacos reach desired crispiness. Place on tray and serve with salsa, guacamole and queso. Serves 4-6.
Tip: Recipe can be doubled for more servings.

GOT A TASTY TREAT TO SHARE?

Email your favorite **soup** recipes to 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 them online at co-opliving.com/cooperativekitchen.

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

You may know your way around the kitchen, but do you know **how to save energy** while preparing your favorite meals?



Saving energy in the kitchen is easy when you adjust how you use your kitchen appliances and cookware. The U.S. Department of Energy estimates cooking accounts for 4.5% of total home energy use.

- Use the oven window to check on a dish's progress. Every time the oven door is opened, the temperature inside is reduced by as much as 25°F, forcing it to work even harder to get back to the proper cooking temperature.
- Keep the shiny metal reflectors under the burners on your electric stovetop clean. This is important for your stovetop to function effectively.
- Use the microwave, crock pot or toaster oven rather than an electric stove. The average toaster oven can use up to half the energy of the average electric stove over the same cooking time.

For more energy-saving tips,
visit ee.odec.com 

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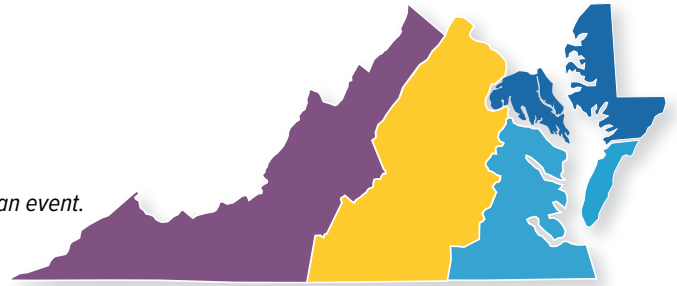
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Events Around the Area

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

OCTOBER

17-19; 24-26 CLEAR BROOK. Ravenwood Medieval Faire. Frederick Co. Fairgrounds. Times vary. Ravenwoodfaire.us

18 MIDDLETOWN. Lighting of the Luminaries. South end of Historic Main St. Begins at dusk. 540-869-2226. Middletownva.gov

18-19 MIDDLETOWN. Battle of Cedar Creek Reenactment. Belle Grove Plantation. Bellegrove.org

26 WINCHESTER. Musica Viva Chamber Choir: "Exploring DaVinci." 26 W. Boscawan St. 3-4:30 p.m. Winchestermusicaviva.org

NOVEMBER

11 MIDDLETOWN. Veterans Day Ceremony. Middletown Veterans Memorial. 1 p.m. 540-869-2226. Middletownva.gov

PIEDMONT

OCTOBER

17, 18, 24, 25 RUTHER GLEN. And Then There Were None. Caroline Community Theatre. 7 p.m. 540-938-0877. Carolinetheatre.org

17-18, 24-25 MANASSAS. Factory of Fear, The Horror Hotel. 9419 Battle St. Times vary. Info@virginiaartfactory.org. Virginiaartfactory.org

18 PRINCE GEORGE. Virginia Czech & Slovak Folklife Festival. Prince George Co. Regional Heritage Center. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Bestpartva.org

18 MANASSAS. 52nd Annual Bazaar. St. Thomas United Methodist Church. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Stthomasumc.org

18 MONTPELIER. Annual Church Bazaar & Stew. Church of Our Saviour. 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Cosepiscopal.net

18-19 GOOCHLAND. Rassawek Pro Rodeo Autumn Festival. Rassawek Vineyards. Times vary.

24-26 MANASSAS. Holiday Bazaar. Sudley United Methodist Church. Times vary. Sudley-methodist.org

25 FREDERICKSBURG. Hartwood Presbyterian Church Bicentennial Celebration. Hartwood Presbyterian Church. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. 202-308-9767. Hartwoodchurch@verizon.net.

25 BLACKSTONE. 10th Annual Blackstone Wine and Beer Festival. 201 N. High St. 12-6 p.m. Facebook: Blackstone Wine and Beer Festival.

NOVEMBER

1 WALKERTON. A Walk Through History. Locust Grove Farm. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. 804-239-9409. Locustgrove1665.com

1 CENTREVILLE. Holiday Bazaar and Craft Fair. 6400 Old Centreville Rd. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. 703-830-2684. Centreville-umc.org

7-8 FARMVILLE. Christmas Market. Farmville United Methodist Church. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Farmvilleumc.org

7-8 LYNCHBURG. Heart of Virginia Quilt Show & Sale. Heritage Baptist Church. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. 434-944-8639. Facebook.com/jpandjon

8 MINERAL. 30th Annual Belmont Art & Craft Fair. 7124 Belmont Rd. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Cherylmarshbcow@gmail.com.

8 PRINCE GEORGE. 15th Annual "Original" Tinsel Town Holiday Bazaar. Prince George High School. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 804-380-8658. Jamesriverjuniors@yahoo.com.

8-9 FISHERSVILLE. 2025 Fall Arts & Craft Show. Augusta Expo. Times vary. 540-337-2552. Expocraftshow@gmail.com.

TIDEWATER

OCTOBER

9-12 SUFFOLK. Suffolk Peanut Festival. Suffolk Executive Airport. Suffolkpeanutfest.com

18 MORATTICO. 17th Annual Oyster Roast. Morattico Waterfront Museum. 3-5 p.m. 804-761-6213.

NOVEMBER

15 HEATHSVILLE. Northern Neck Artisan Craft Show. 73 Monument Pl. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Info@rhhtfoundationinc.org

MARYLAND

OCTOBER

18 SNOW HILL. Halloween in the Forest. 3816 Old Furnace Rd. 5-7:30 p.m. Furnacetown.org

25 SECRETARY. Secretary Vol. Fire Co. Memorial Car, Bike and Truck Show. 115 Myrtle St. 9-11 a.m. Svfc16.org

25 ST. MICHAELS. OysterFest. Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Cbmm.org

NOVEMBER

14-16 EASTON. Waterfowl Festival. Waterfowlfestival.org

PRINT DEADLINES: Nov. 1 for Jan. 15-March 15
Jan. 1 for March 15-April 15

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Fall Travel Weather Is Here

Recalling the road trip of a lifetime

by Margo Oxendine, Contributing Columnist



This is the time of year I usually take a week of vacation to travel. What better time than October?

It is my very favorite month of the year. It's just so blessedly beautiful, no matter where you go or whatever direction you gaze. I bet if you looked out your windows now, you'd say to yourself, "Gosh, it's a gorgeous day."

The sky is a special shade of what must be called "October blue." Brighter, more intense, than any other time of year, I often think.

I won't be taking a vacation anywhere this year, but that doesn't mean I can't relive one of my most memorable getaways. I took it with the woman who was usually my most-preferred companion: my dear late mother.

She had a perfect name for it: a busman's holiday.

So where were we headed?

Vermont. We were driving. We had no true idea of just how far Vermont is from Virginia. We figured we'd "swing by" Niagara Falls on our way. I still laugh when I think of that.

Our first stop was Connecticut, where my father's family lived. We stayed in a big, marvelous house where my cousin, Janet, and her husband, Bob, lived. It was in a very posh neighborhood. Mom and I felt luxurious, but rather out of place.

It would take a whole column to tell you the wild tale of me setting off their panic alarm by mistake. If you want to read it, it's in my book. (Purchase information is available at the end of this column.) Short version: the police came, the neighbors dressed in tuxedos for a party came to gawk, too. And I, in shorts and a T-shirt, hollered, "We didn't know! We're from the hills of Virginia!"

After Greenwich, Conn., we ventured to Janet and Bob's "getaway" in Stratton, Vt. Bob had helped



develop a ski resort there, and they had a huge cabin. It slept 16 comfortably. And, boy, were we comfortable.

As I recall, we did a lot of shopping. We bought wonderful sweaters and shoes.

We went to the famed Vermont Country Store, and it was a wonderland. The workers at the resort were kind enough to start up the chair lift and give us a long ride to the top, where the views can't be described in words.

We spent a lot of time driving around, looking for covered bridges (found some of those) and moose (saw none). We went on a hayride. We had one of those proverbial "times of our lives." On our drive back to Virginia, we stopped in Stockbridge, Mass., and spent lots of time and even some of our "leftover" money at Norman Rockwell's house and museum.

I don't recall how many days our busman's holiday took altogether, but I know that the memories will live with me forever. We left one gorgeous autumnal clime for another — and, gee, what a great idea and time it was. ●

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.



PHOTO BY JONATHAN SNOODY, SVEC MEMBER



WHEREZ IT?

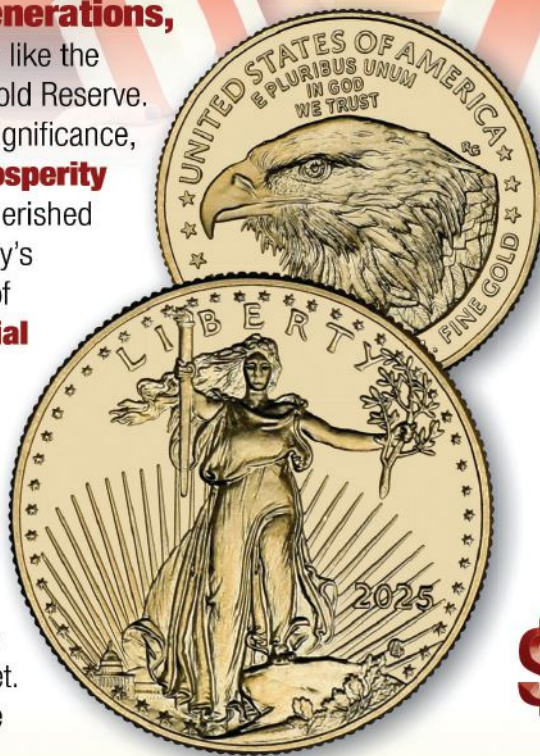
Look for the CL logo, like the one above, in the pages of this issue of *Cooperative Living*. Submit the page number where you found it, along with your name, email and phone number to **Wherezit**, c/o *Cooperative Living*, 4201 Dominion Blvd., Suite 101, Glen Allen, VA 23060 or go online at co-opliving.com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

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- (2) fax: 202-690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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At one time, sections of hollow gum trunks were used to make beehives.

BLACK GUM: An Autumn Masterpiece

One of fall's most dramatic displays of color

by Steve Carroll, Contributing Columnist

With autumn now in full swing, many tend to pay extra attention to trees and shrubs whose leaves abandon the green of chlorophyll in favor of the striking colors of fall. The black gum tree, also known as black tupelo, puts on one of the earliest and most dramatic fall displays as its green leaves turn a variety of oranges, reds and purples. Fortunate is the homeowner who has a black gum tree in their yard.

Black gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*) grows throughout much of the eastern deciduous forest, from Maine to northern Florida, and west to Michigan, southern Illinois, central Missouri and east Texas. It can grow 80 to 100 feet tall, but in cultivation more commonly reaches 30 to 60 feet. It does best in full sun to partial shade, preferring acidic soil.

Leaves are generally 3 to 6 inches long — sometimes with shallow teeth toward the tip — and are thick and lustrous green above in summer. Caterpillars of more than two dozen butterfly and moth species dine on these leaves. While the tree's leaves are expanding, the small flowers hang in clusters. Male and female flowers usually form on separate trees. Thus, in order to produce the small purplish-blue fruits so favored by birds, a male and female tree must be close enough for pollinating bees and other insects to transfer pollen.

Honey produced primarily from a single species typically commands a higher price, and this is true of tupelo honey. It is highly prized for its light color and mild taste. Southern beekeepers often keep honeybee hives near black gum's close relative, the Ogeechee tupelo (*Nyssa ogeche*), even placing hives on floating platforms in the wet forests favored by this

species. Thousands of these trees have been planted in bee farms along Florida's Apalachicola River to support honey production.

Not to rush the fall season, but black gum is also attractive in winter. Branches typically grow horizontally from the trunk, giving the tree a distinctive silhouette. The bark

pattern on older trees — dark gray with prominent furrows, ridges and scaly plates — has frequently been compared to that of alligator hide. Black gum wood is resistant to splitting and has been used for tool handles, rough flooring, railroad ties and pulpwood.

As black gum ages, it commonly loses branches and dies back from the top, exposing a hollow trunk. These hollows are taken advantage of by raccoons, opossums, feral bees and even bears. At one time in history,

sections of hollow gum trunks were cut into sections, covered with a board and used to make beehives — hence another of its many common names: bee gum.

Due to its taproot, black gum is not easily transplanted, but nursery-grown balled and burlapped trees work well. A number of varieties are available for purchase, including pyramidal and weeping forms, as well as varieties having a range of fall colors.

If black gum seems right for a space on your property, don't delay. Fall is a great time to plant, and given this tree's slow growth, now is the perfect time. ●

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



PHOTO COURTESY KATJA SCHULZ VIA FLICKR



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IT'S FALL, Y'all!

by Laura Emery, Staff Writer

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A REAL RE-EWE-NION ▲

When the cousins get together on the farm, it's shear joy. PHOTO SUBMITTED BY ASHLYN ROSE



BE-LEAF IN MAGIC ►

Baxter loves to play in the leaves.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY
ANGIE HOWARD



FALL-ING IN LOVE ►

Dynistyn and her pony, Treasure, share a very special bond.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY AMANDA EAST



A SEASON OF CHANGE ►

Fall harvest is the culmination of months of dedication, labor and resilience.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY KEN NEWMAN



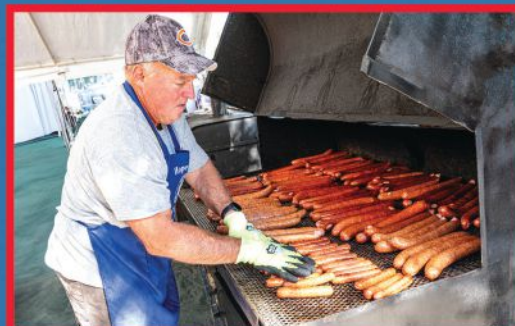


Virginia Czech & Slovak Folklife Festival

October 18, 2025 | 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Prince George County Regional Heritage Center
6404 Courthouse Road, Prince George, Va.

Celebrate Czech & Slovak heritage with traditional food, locally baked treats, and goodies from Praha Bohemian Bakery, beer, live music, including Gerdan: A Kaleidoscope of Music, presenting "Music from the Heart of Eastern Europe," games, agricultural exhibits, and the Teeny Tiny Farm petting zoo. Explore authentic artifacts and treasures in the museum and gift shop.



Rain or Shine | Free Admission

Details:
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