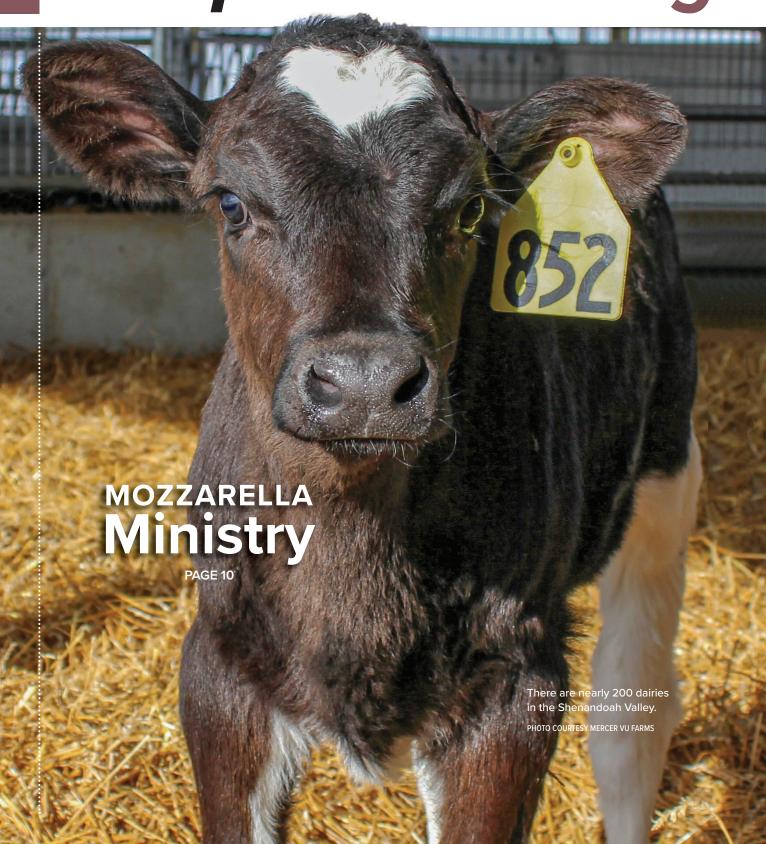
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VIEWPOINT

Summertime, Graduates and Fun Times

une marks the start of summer when students have graduated and get a chance to enjoy some sun and fun

with their friends and family. We are blessed to live in an area that is a short drive away from the mountains, beach and a wide range of amazing attractions. As you plan out your adventure, be sure to check out our Fairs & Festivals Guide that is included in these pages.

This issue's Cooperative Focus feature is about a "cheese ministry" in the Shenandoah Valley that helps local farmers use surplus milk by making it into cheese that is then distributed to area residents in need. This story is a fitting way to recognize National Dairy Month.



We also have a feature about WWII veterans who will get together in Stephens City, Va., this month to celebrate their military heritage.

Of course, we need to recognize Father's Day, which is celebrated on the 15th of this month. It is such a blessing to be a father, and it seems that the older I get, the more I appreciate it. I'm sure it has nothing to do with my children being old enough to be out of the house.

To help assist this year's cooperative-member graduating students, our Education Scholarship Foundation awarded a record \$124,500 in scholarships. Congratulations to the class of 2025 and we pray you have many more milestones to celebrate in the years ahead!

Brans, Mosii

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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Honoring Veterans

Military history museum holds appreciation celebration

by Gregg MacDonald, Staff Writer

JACK EINSTEIN, A DISTANT RELATIVE OF ALBERT EINSTEIN, WAS BORN IN RADFORD.

VA., IN 1924. This was the same year that J. Edgar Hoover became the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the first Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade was held in New York City. Today, Einstein — a WWII Army veteran who will turn 101 next month — is still going strong and frequently takes part in the annual Military Appreciation/Living History Day at the American Military Heritage Museum in Stephens City, Va. "I always enjoy talking to youngsters who ask me all sorts of questions about WWII," he says.

Now, in its 12th year, this year's event will take place on Saturday, June 7. "It all started in 2014 to celebrate the 70th anniversary of D-Day," says historian P.M. Fravel, who owns the museum and has seen annual event attendance grow threefold, from 400 people in its first year to 1,200 people last year. He says the event allows veterans to get together and reminisce. "To me, the best compliment we ever get is when veterans' family members come up and say, 'This is the most granddad has ever spoken about his service."

The free event will be held rain or shine from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. It will include an expansive museum display of original artifacts depicting America's involvement during WWII, as well as displays on the Civil War, World War I, Korea and Vietnam.

Reunions for military veterans will start at 10:30 a.m., followed by a group photograph at 11:30 a.m. All veterans who register as they enter will also receive a full BBQ luncheon at noon. The museum encourages local veterans to spread the word about the event and spend the day there.

"A variety of military history reenactors will provide numerous 'living history' displays and interpretations throughout the day," Fravel says. "Two U.S. Military tanks, including an operational WWII Stuart tank, will be on display. A military dress-up area for children will also be available, as well as free WWII Jeep rides throughout the day." •

The American Military Heritage Museum is located at 811 Fairfax Pike, 1.5 miles east of Stephens City, Va. For more information, visit facebook.com/amhmuseum or contact P.M. Fravel at fravel@clemson.edu.

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Berlin's Blacksmith is a **Hot Destination**

Got a restaurant for Peggy to review? Let us know at editor@co-opliving.com.

Maryland restaurant did not disappoint

by Peggy Hyland, Contributing Columnist

ith beach season finally here, we headed east, stopping in Berlin, Md., to check out Blacksmith Bar & Restaurant. The covered deck was filled with patio tables that could be expanded to accommodate parties of various sizes, perfect for the summer crowd. We settled in to peruse the menu, which featured a dizzying array of specials, from seafood fritters to ribeye. Chef Justine Zegna rotates the specials based on availability and demand. Crowd favorites are likely to make repeat appearances, especially their mac and cheese (Brie, Gruyere and Gouda) topped with a tempura-fried lobster tail.

We decided to sample our way through some of the regular offerings, starting with the deviled eggs, which were fried to crispy perfection, filled with lump crab and sprinkled with Old Bay. They were truly stellar. We then turned our attention to the seafood fritters. They were made from shrimp, crab, lobster and halibut. The outside was light and crispy, and the filling was incredibly silky. They were served with a fantastic house-made ranch dressing. Ranch is never my go-to, but my ranch-loving companion and I happily topped our fritters with it.

As a seafood and fresh pasta fan, I could not resist the hand-cut pappardelle pasta with shrimp and lump crab. The tarragon-truffle cream had a beautiful garlicky herb finish, and everything went harmoniously with the delicate shrimp and lump crab. As much as I love crab and shrimp, the pasta was so good I would happily eat it plain. My companion chose the boneless short ribs with shrimp and stone-ground





polenta. The polenta was incredibly creamy, and the shrimp were cooked to perfection. The bourbon and bacon cream sauce was tangy, perfect for the tender short ribs. It was nothing short of inspired.

We were full but could not resist dessert. My companion chose the bananas Foster cheesecake, a cannoli shell topped with toasted coconut. The texture of the filling was divine, and the cannoli shell was crispy and golden. I am a sucker for bread pudding, and the butterscotch and salted caramel bread pudding was outstanding. It was served over freshly whipped cream and had a salted caramel icing. It was enormous, definitely big enough to share. They also had an espresso martini with the same butterscotch toffee topping and ice





cream as the bread pudding did.

The wine list is reasonably priced, and several regional beer offerings are available, including one made in Berlin. The service was delightful and attentive. Berlin is about 20 minutes from Ocean City, without the crowds and hustle found closer to the beach. It is a great place to stop on your way to or from Ocean City. They are closed on Sundays, so plan ahead to ensure you do not miss them. Berlin is a charming town, and Blacksmith is good enough to make it a destination in its own right.

Blacksmith Bar & Restaurant 104 Pitts St., Berlin, Md. Monday-Thursday, 11:30 a.m.-9 p.m., Friday-Saturday, 11:30 a.m.-9:30 p.m. 410-973-2102

Are You Eating Healthy?

How science rewrites the rules of what and how we eat

by Vanessa LaFaso Stolarski, Contributing Columnist

ow and what we eat constantly evolves, reflecting not only new science but also culture, technology and society's collective aspirations for health. From the low-fat craze of the 1980s to today's macronutrient-mapped plans, our dietary beliefs and habits have shifted dramatically. Here's a look at some common nutrition trends, how they've changed and what the latest research reveals.

FAT: ENEMY OR ESSENTIAL?

Then: In the 1980s and 90s, dietary fat was demonized. Supermarket shelves filled with low-fat cookies, skim milk and fat-free salad dressings became standard. The belief was simple: Fat makes you fat and leads to heart disease.

Now: Today, fats — especially the unsaturated kind — are widely recognized for their health benefits. Avocados, nuts, olive oil and fatty fish are celebrated for supporting brain function, hormonal balance and reducing inflammation.

The Research: A landmark study in the British Medical Journal showed no significant link between saturated fat intake and heart disease. More recently, the Mediterranean diet, rich in healthy fats, has been shown in studies to reduce heart disease and increase longevity. Moreover, we now understand that fat is an essential nutrient. In other words, the body does not produce fatty acids on its own, so it must get them from food. Eating some fat is not only beneficial but required for long-term health.

CARBS: FOUNDATION OR FOE?

Then: Traditional food pyramids put bread, pasta and grains at their base, suggesting they should make up the bulk of a healthy diet. Carb-loading was common for everyone, not just athletes.

Now: Carbohydrates are scrutinized with growing awareness about refined sugars and white flour and their link to obesity and diabetes. Whole grains, complex carbs and a focus on glycemic index are emphasized in low to no-carb diets such as Ketogenic, Atkins or Paleo, which are applauded for their positive effects on body composition.

The Research: A 2022 literature review found



that reducing refined carbohydrate intake and opting for whole grains leads to better glycemic control and weight management. However, extremely low-carb diets aren't necessary or even beneficial.

PROTEIN: SUPPLEMENT TO SUPERFOOD

Then: Protein was viewed primarily as a concern for bodybuilders or growing teens. Average adults rarely gave it much thought and protein intake was rarely monitored by healthcare providers.

Now: Protein has become a star macronutrient for satiety, weight management and muscle maintenance, especially in aging populations. No longer taking second stage to carbohydrates, protein should make up half a person's plate or be portioned according to a person's body weight.

The Research: A 2020 meta-analysis in the journal Nutrients concluded that higher protein intakes support weight loss and muscle maintenance. Recent research also supports the benefits of diversified protein sources including plant-based, which are linked to lower cardiovascular risk.

MINDFUL EATING: PERSONAL OR TOO MUCH?

Then: Diet advice was mostly a one-size-fits-all paradigm, with broad guidelines and little attention to individual variation. Variables such as lifestyle, fitness regimen, activity level and family history were not considered.

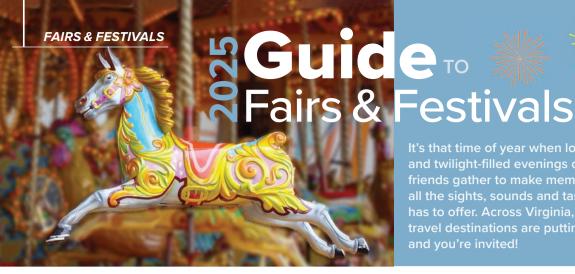
Now: Genetics, gut microbiome profiles and personalized meal planning apps are ushering in the era of personalized nutrition. Mindful eating, which includes paying attention to hunger cues, emotions and food quality, is now mainstream.

The Research: A 2021 PREDICT health study demonstrated that individuals respond differently to the same foods, supporting the push for precision nutrition. Mindful eating practices have shown benefits in reducing binge eating and improving weight outcomes. ●

OURTESY BIGBRAND VIA FLICKR COMMONS

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

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It's that time of year when long, sunlit afternoons and twilight-filled evenings come alive as family and friends gather to make memories while experiencing all the sights, sounds and tastes the commonwealth has to offer. Across Virginia, these fairs, festivals and travel destinations are putting out the welcome mat ...

SALEM FAIR | SALEM, VA **July 2-13**

Come experience the fun and excitement of the Salem Fair, which takes place in the heart of the Roanoke Valley on the grounds of the Salem Civic Center Complex. There will be rides, music, competitions, food and games. Fees apply for rides, food and games. For more information, visit salemfair.com.

MADISON COUNTY FAIR MADISON COUNTY, VA

July 16-19

The Madison County Fair promises to be a good time, with something for everyone to enjoy! Fairgoers will be able to enjoy musical performances by Dark Hollow Band, Melissa Quinn Fox, Austin Boggs, Hurt Hollow Bluegrass Band and James Tamelcoff. There will also be axe throwing, a hypnotist, wrestling, livestock shows, exhibits, a bull-riding rodeo, a demolition derby and more. For more information, visit madisoncountyfairva.com.

VIRGINIA LAKE FESTIVAL CLARKSVILLE, VA

and you're invited!

July 18-19

Explore Clarksville, Va., on the largest lake in Virginia at the 48th annual Virginia Lake Festival. The festival includes a multitude of events open to the public at no charge. Activities for all ages (including helicopter rides) and live bands all weekend! There will be music by the Fastlane Band. At nightfall, boats gather on the lake and festival goers gather at the shoreline to see the extravaganza fireworks show. For more information, visit clarksvilleva.com.

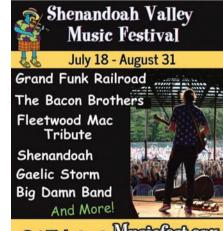
SHENANDOAH VALLEY MUSIC FESTIVAL | ORKNEY SPRINGS, VA

July 18-19, July 25-26, Aug. 15-16, 30-31

Escape to the foothills of Great North Mountain and enjoy great music under the stars. Coming this summer: Grand Funk Railroad, The Bacon Brothers, Shenandoah, Gaelic Storm, Big Damn Band and more! Package deals include discounts on tickets and lodging at historic Shrine Mont. For more information, visit musicfest.org.

DISCOVER HOPEWELL. VIRGINIA

Visit Hopewell, Va., located just 20 minutes south of Richmond at the convergence of the James and Appomattox rivers. Come take in a show at the historic Beacon Theater. Explore the water on foot or kayak at the Hopewell Riverwalk. Browse the shops in historic downtown, then break for coffee or lunch at one of our cafés or restaurants. Visit historic Weston Manor and Appomattox Manor to walk in the footprints of the nation's founders. Enjoy drinks and dinner at the Boathouse at City Point overlooking the James River. For more information, visit hopewellva.gov.



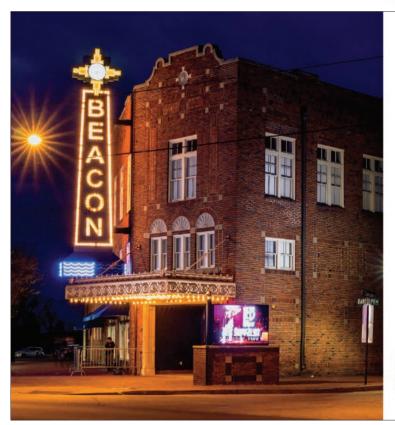
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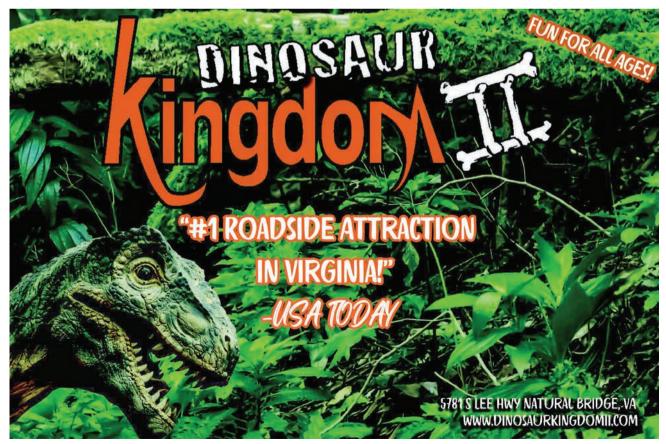
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PLAN YOUR TRIP





Fairs & Festivals Guide

(continued from page 7)

CHINCOTEAGUE BLUEBERRY FESTIVAL | CHINCOTEAGUE ISLAND, VA July 24-26

The 37th annual Chincoteague Island Blueberry Festival, the opening act for the world-famous Pony Swim, will happen on July 24-26 at the beautiful Chincoteague Center. There will be delicious food, nonstop live music, talented artists and crafters, and blueberries in their many forms. For more information, visit chincoteagueblueberryfestival.com.



DINOSAUR KINGDOM II

Weekends through October

Check out the wild and wacky roadside attraction that the Washington Post called, "Amazing! Brilliant! Hilarious!" Dinosaur Kingdom II will transport visitors to an alternate reality filled with lifelike fiberglass dinosaurs along a wooded, walking adventure. Young visitors can discover dinosaur bones, experience a triceratops bullfight or mine for fossils. Buy tickets online at dinosaurkingdomii.com or on site at the ticket booth.

HAUNTING TALES

Weekends through October

Walk through dark streets and alleyways and in the very footsteps of Stonewall Jackson, Robert E. Lee and his beloved horse, Traveler, as you listen to entertaining, enlightening and eerie tales told to you by professional tour guides. Experience the nightly phenomena in the heart of the famous Stonewall Jackson Memorial Cemetery. For more information, visit qhosttourlexingtonva.com.







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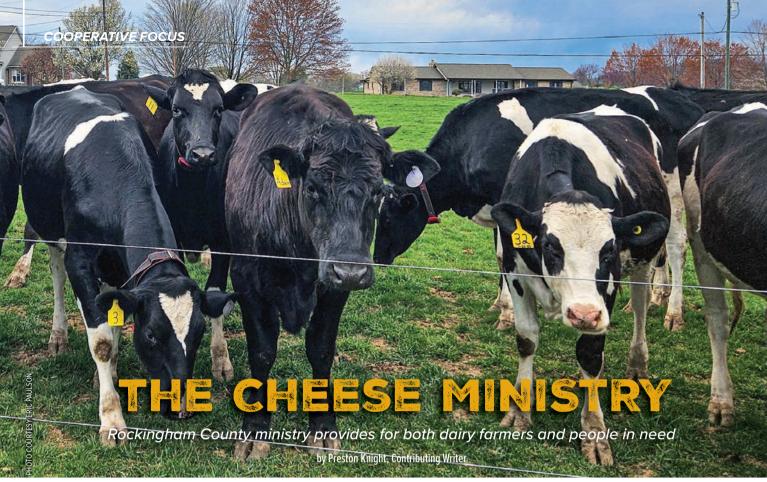






LIMITED OFFER

"Gold is money. Everything else is credit." - J.P. Morgan



truggling dairy farmers needed a plan. Former Rockingham Cooperative's Keith Turner offered something more. Hope.

"Hope is a powerful motivator," he says. "We all need hope."

In the fall of 2017, the Shenandoah Valley's dairy industry, mirroring that of the commonwealth and the nation, was ripe for a boost of any kind. It was then that one farmer in Rockingham County, the top-producing dairy county in Virginia, invited Turner to his kitchen table; and a common tale of fear and foreclosure emerged.

And so did a new concept — The Cheese Ministry.

"If we could take milk off the market and buy that cheap surplus milk and get it made into cheese," says Turner, the feed division manager at Rockingham Cooperative at the time, "that extra demand for milk helps underpin the market, and by making cheese to give to people in need, we're helping to feed people who normally never would be able to afford cheese.

"Helping farmers and feeding people

at the same time: that's the uniqueness of The Cheese Ministry."

June is National Dairy Month, and no one need look any further than the positive impact of Turner's program as a reason to celebrate it. Through donations and a corporate partner, Rockingham Cooperative, a chain of retail farm and consumer products stores based in Dayton, Va., The Cheese Ministry incurs minimal cost in supporting local dairy farmers who might be facing financial burdens.

Farmers, in turn, get to do what they do best: supply the rest of us with high-quality sustenance. "A co-op should be people helping people," says Turner, who now works in business development at the co-op. "If you get it right, that is."

'SOMETHING SPECIAL' GOES ON

Turner calls purchasing power a "core competency" at Rockingham Cooperative to lower its members' costs. The co-op has about 5,200 members, many overlapping as members of Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative. This purchasing concept gives The

Cheese Ministry a better chance to succeed. Turner says that donated funds are used to purchase cheese in large volumes to lower the cost and multiply the benefits to people in need.

"I am a big picture thinker," he says. "We strategically purchase cheese using excess milk to lower the cost of the cheese produced." Cheese is sourced from Lanco-Pennland, a dairy cooperative with a cheese plant in Hancock, Md., that donates part of the production cost as a charitable contribution. Several local dairy farmers are members of Lanco-Pennland, with their milk shipped to the cheese plant.

It takes 10 pounds of milk to produce one pound of cheese. Turner says a 40,000-pound trailer load of cheese currently costs about \$110,000 to

DAIRY IN VIRGINIA

Virginia is home to about 68,000 dairy cows, producing an average of 7.9 gallons of milk per day. In 2024, about 170 million gallons of milk were produced.

Source: Virginia State Dairymen's Association

deliver. Volunteer drivers and donated equipment cover virtually all expenses to get the cheese from Maryland, except for the price of diesel fuel.

The Cheese Ministry's partnerships with farmers extend well beyond Rockingham County. One such farmer is Mercer Vu Farms, a Rappahannock Electric Cooperative member in Clarke County. Mercer Vu Farms delivers milk to Lanco, buys cow feed from Rockingham Cooperative and delivers cheese to distribute to its local food bank. "I think The Cheese Ministry is a win-win for everyone," says Rod Hissong, one of the family operators of Mercer Vu. "It helps the farmer by moving product and helping consumers. And it helps the underprivileged by providing high-quality protein and

nutrition from dairy products."

Regardless of where the milk for the cheese originates, adding demand for cheese incrementally helps to support milk prices, Turner explains. This is not lost on those who keep watch on the industry at a broader level. "The work The Cheese Ministry has done is

simply incredible," says Eric Paulson, executive secretary of the Virginia State Dairymen's Association, which is also based in Rockingham County. "They ensure that dairy producers receive a fair price for the milk, which helps the local dairy industry, and then uses that cheese to help support the local community.

"For dairy producers, there's something special about seeing the milk they worked hard to produce turned into cheese, then distributed to provide a nutritious meal to someone who truly needs it." The cheese, which is mozzarella, is natural with no additives or color agents, Turner says. The milk used to produce the cheese is full-fat whole milk, which results in a higher-fat cheese, he adds.

Food pantries tell Turner that cheese

is one of their most requested foods. Cheese arrives twice a year for dispersal across area churches and food cupboards at Hope Distributed, a large nonprofit operation serving more than 34,000 people a year in Rockingham County and the surrounding area.

"We want to give the best to people in need," Turner says. "A number of the immigrants, refugees and low-income people we deliver cheese to come from backgrounds where cheese is not part of their diet. Many of the people we have given cheese to really like the cheese. Their children love the cheese. In a small way, this creates more demand for real cheese."

That impact is invaluable. And it can be just as meaningful to the dairy farm community.

> "Helping farmers and feeding people at the same time: that's the uniqueness of The Cheese Ministry." Keith Turner, Rockingham

Cooperative

MINISTERING HOPE

Ten years ago, 640 dairies operated in Virginia, and today, the number is down to 339, Paulson says. He calls the Shenandoah Valley the "heart of the dairy industry," with 165 dairies in Rockingham County, 25 in Augusta County and eight in Shenandoah County. When combined, those three counties alone make up over half of Virginia's dairies.

'One of the big challenges dairy farmers face is that they can't control the price they receive for their milk," Paulson says. "We often say they're price takers, not price makers. Because milk is perishable, it gets shipped off to market right away, and the farmer won't know what they earned for it until the milk check arrives a month later. That lag time makes planning tough and adds to the rollercoaster of milk price volatility."

With decades of experience, Turner has endless stories of working alongside farmers, many in the Amish and Old Order Mennonite communities, to assist them in keeping their operations running. He advises the importance of running the family farm as a business and having a strategic plan.

"Milk markets are volatile, and it can be difficult for the average farmer to navigate," Turner says. "It all can fall on one set of shoulders, especially a family farm."

The Cheese Ministry alone does not save dairy farmers involved in the process. But it at least provides a form of relief. The ministry falls under a larger nonprofit also started by Turner, The Farm Ministry, which also distributes pork and beef. It was recently the recipient of a salary donation from Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin and first lady Suzanne Youngkin.

Turner first envisioned adding cheese to the portfolio after meeting with a struggling dairy farmer in November 2017. The initial shipment arrived within weeks, and to date, cheese totaling nearly \$800,000 in market value has been handed out ever since.

"I would encourage other co-ops to get involved. Co-ops are here to help people," Turner says. "The Cheese Ministry gives farmers hope in the fact that somebody's making an effort to try to help them, to help their financial situation. When you're below breakeven, and you're a dairy business, it's a seemingly hopeless, helpless situation one that's very difficult. Sitting there and looking in the eyes of somebody whose family is fearful of losing the family farm, that's where the concept came up. It was just like flipping a switch. People ready to give up and walk away found a glimmer of hope.

"We're a ministry of hope."

For more information, visit thefarmministry.org/cheese-ministry.

Tiny Spaces, **Big Impact**

Unique groundcovers that will amaze you

by Beth Burrell, Contributing Columnist

ooking for a groundcover that stands out from all the rest?

Here's a selection that's adaptable, worthy of foot traffic and will enhance your landscape's aesthetics. These hardy perennial living carpets are robust enough to endure foot traffic, making them perfect for walkways, narrow paths and rock gardens. Their compact size also adds a finishing touch to the landscape, offering a harmonious blend of aesthetics and functionality.

In my woodland garden, the first spring standout is Creeping Speedwell (Veronica 'Georgia Blue'), with brilliant blue flowers blanketing its evergreen foliage in April. Despite its delicate appearance, this six-inch gem is resilient, thriving even in rocky, dry soils. Planted close by is Dwarf Sweet Flag (Acorus minimus aureus), boasting small golden grass-like leaves in a tight swirling mat. This colorful sweetie enjoys boggy conditions yet will tolerate clay soil and is deer resistant.

Creeping phlox (Phlox subulata 'Violet Pinwheels'), a native cultivar, offers one of the most vibrant purpleblues available. It forms a lush evergreen mat, reaching a height of only four



Vivid gold teardrop leaves on Ajuga 'Cordial Canary' are covered in deep purple spike flowers in April.



Veronica 'Georgia Blue' is covered in delicate sky-blue flowers in April which compliments the dwarf gold Acorus grass tucked into the next stepping stone. Both are evergreen and love part-shade.



Phlox 'Violet Pinwheels' is an intense display of purple-blue on semi-evergreen foliage in early spring.

inches, and is less aggressive, thriving best in full sun. A quick shear after flowering will keep it tidy and promote new growth. Its semi-evergreen leaves will shed a few during winter, but fresh growth appears in spring.

Bugleweed (Ajuga 'Cordial Canary') produces an impressive three-inch-tall mound of narrow, vibrant yellowgold leaves that expand beautifully, showcasing striking blue-lavender flowers in spring. This unique variety thrives in morning sun to partial shade and prefers slightly moist soils, often hard to find in typical garden centers, so ordering online is the key to snagging this beauty.

Miniature Stonecrops are ideal, and I love mixing several varieties to enhance texture and color as they blanket the ground. A standout combination includes Sedum 'Blue Carpet' with its light grey foliage and Sedum 'John Creech' with tiny shell-shaped leaves blooming pink early in summer. These deer- and rabbit-resistant sedums fit perfectly into small crevices or between stepping stones, beautifully complementing larger perennials.

While a moist area in the garden can be a challenge, I've discovered a



Strawberry geranium is extremely versatile and adaptable to both moist and very dry soil conditions once established.



Creeping Jenny (Lysimachia 'Aurea'); is inviting, but be warned that it spreads in the garden with unyielding stamina and is almost impossible to remove once established.

groundcover that thrives in part-shade, damp conditions and is one of the most drought-tolerant options available: Strawberry geranium (Saxifraga stolonifera). It spreads through runners, quickly filling challenging spots. I absolutely adore the airiness of its light pink starry flowers that rise six inches above silvery green leaves — a real delight in the late spring garden.

One groundcover to watch out for is Creeping Jenny (Lysimachia 'Aurea'). Its eye-catching chartreuse foliage is tempting, but be warned that it grows and spreads with relentless vigor. Once established, it's almost impossible to remove, as its roots and runners delve deep into the soil.

The impact of groundcovers is incredible — many can be walked on and are adaptable to various site conditions, making them ideal for filling gaps between pavers, tiny nooks and walkways. These "green mulches" will spread around the garden, bringing your landscape to life for you to enjoy. •

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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- Mr. James, Roanoke, VA

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Guide ™ Fairs & Festivals

- OUR READERS LOVE EVENTS! MAKE PLANS TO SHARE YOURS
- Fall Fairs & Festivals Guide Publication: Sept. 1, 2025
 - Space Reservation Deadline: July 25, 2025
- Don't miss this chance to have your biggest attendance ever! Cooperative Living's special Fairs & Festivals sections are coming up in our September issue.

Each issue of *Cooperative Living* reaches over 600,000 homes and businesses throughout Virginia and Maryland that's more than 1.8 million readers and potential visitors to your festival or special event.

CONTACT: SONJA KINNEY skinney@vmdaec.com | 804-297-3429



Calling All **Photographers!**

ODEC wants your images for the 2026 Energy Efficiency Calendar! We're looking for photos of your favorite landscapes, people, wildlife and flora in our beautiful region, as well as your patriotic pride.

Submission Requirements:

- High resolution (3,000 pixels)
- No editing
- Landscape (horizontal)
- Location required

Send submissions to EnergyTips@odec.com







When Hurricane Debby swept through Virginia last August, it reminded us all how quickly conditions can change. Despite being downgraded to a tropical storm, Debby left behind significant damage — suspected tornadoes, broken power poles and outages impacting more than 5,000 REC members. Thanks to REC's around-the-clock storm response and system resilience, restoration began swiftly — but weather events like this underscore one powerful truth: Preparedness is a shared responsibility.

As hurricane season begins (June 1 – Nov. 30), now is the ideal time to make a plan, stock your emergency kit and stay connected with REC.

"Our crews are always ready — but when members prepare too, we're all in a stronger position," said Casey Hollins, Managing Director — Communications and Public Relations. "Preparedness isn't a panic. It's a peace of mind."

How You Can Prepare Now

Among the items to gather before a storm arrives:

- Flashlights, lanterns and extra batteries. (Avoid candles as they can pose a fire hazard.)
- Non-perishable food and manual can opener; at least one gallon of water per person per day.
- Board and card games, coloring/art supplies to keep little ones entertained.

A comprehensive list to help you prepare for a storm: myrec.coop/outagecenter

REC's Proactive Push to Stay Prepared and Keep Costs Down

Power outages aren't just inconvenient—they're also costly. That's why REC takes proactive steps to strengthen the grid, reduce outages, and minimize restoration time, taking advantage of the latest technology to do so.

- For instance, through advanced satellite technology, REC
 has identified and removed thousands of hazard trees
 that pose a risk to the system before storms even hit.
- And in 2023 and 2024, REC used drones to inspect about 63,000 poles, with another 39,000-plus to be inspected this year. The drones capture hundreds of thousands of images, which are then analyzed with needed repairs prioritized to minimize expenses and maximize reliability for members.



Powering Our Future: Clarity, Responsibility, and Readiness



Dear Members,

Across Virginia and the nation, energy demand is climbing - and fast. Virginia's Department of Energy recently projected that annual demand growth for energy is increasing to 6.5%, up from a historic norm of 1.4%. Forecasts from the

regional grid operator, PJM, show that electricity demand in Virginia alone will double by 2040. Knowing these forecasts, generation capacity in Virginia must increase rapidly. PJM recently indicated that power supply could run short as early as next summer if action isn't taken.

Virginia has benefited greatly from economic growth fueled by data centers and new industries, but that growth brings an urgent need for strategic investments in power generation and transmission. At Rappahannock Electric Cooperative (REC), we've long understood that energy decisions made today will shape affordability and reliability for years to come. That's why we take a proactive, member-first approach — one built on responsibility, transparency and care. We have a fundamental obligation to serve, and we intend to meet that obligation — responsibly, reliably and with care.

Let's Talk About the Power Bill

While the nature of our industry requires long-term planning, we know many members are feeling the strains in the cost of living and rising electric bills. Please know we can provide information, answer questions or arrange flexible payment options when times are tough.

It's important to understand that approximately 65% of your electric bill reflects the cost of power supply. These costs are rising because of factors like natural gas market volatility, higher capacity prices, and the need to invest in new generation and transmission to meet growing demand. Capacity charges — set by PJM — are necessary to ensure that power plants are available during the hottest and coldest days of the year.

While we can't directly control power supply costs, we work hard to control the parts we can — the approximately 35% of your bill tied to REC's distribution system of poles, wires and operations. We:

- Keep operations efficient and cost-effective
- Leverage technology to wisely plan system improvements, such as right-of-way maintenance
- Build resilience into the grid to perform better during storms and extreme temperatures — to avoid or delay equipment replacements
- Successfully pursue grants and outside funding to support REC's needs

A Strategic Approach to Growth

Our service territory is growing rapidly — from new homes, small businesses, advanced manufacturing and hyperscale data centers. To specifically manage the data center growth without exposing traditional members to risk, we created Hyperscale Energy Services — an REC affiliate company. Hyperscale was created to provide the data centers with market power from PJM. Hyperscale also allows us to manage financial risk effectively by ensuring that very large users pay their fair share of system costs. We're proud to lead in this space, getting legislation passed that gives cooperatives more flexibility to serve these large accounts responsibly — aligning with independent recommendations from the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) to protect consumers.

Standing Up for Members at Every Level

Recently, REC filed a new delivery rate proposal for large power users with the State Corporate Commission. This is a fairnessfocused step to maintain long-term co-op financial strength, ensuring that every member benefits from a reliable, affordable grid.

Behind every pole, every substation, every innovation and every REC employee is one goal: to put members first.

Thank you for your continued trust and partnership.

John Hewa | President & CEO

Your Energy Dollar



65% Generation/ **Transmission Costs**



35% Distribution -Costs

Controlling **Energy Costs**

REC can't directly control generation and transmission costs, but it works hard to control the approximately 35% of your bill tied to REC's distribution system of poles, wires and operations.

June 2025 17



Smart Summer Tips for Staying Cool — without Spiking Your Energy Bill



Cool Fan Facts

- Did you know ceiling fans should spin counterclockwise in summer? That creates a wind-chill effect that makes you feel cooler.
- Also remember, ceiling fans cool people and not rooms. Be sure to turn off ceiling fans when nobody is in the room.



Embrace the Chill of Water

 Keep a spray bottle of cold water in the fridge and mist your skin when it's hot. You can also soak a towel in cold water and place it around your neck or wrists — key pulse points — to cool down quickly without adjusting the thermostat.



Block Out the Sun

 Keep blinds or blackout curtains closed during peak sunlight hours (usually 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.) This helps keep your home cool, reducing the strain on your cooling system.

WANT SOME MORE SAVINGS?

Find more pro tips to help you save: *myrec.coop/save*

REC Earns Tree Line USA Distinction for 25th Consecutive Year

REC has once again made history — this month becoming the first electric utility in Virginia to receive the prestigious Tree Line USA recognition for 25 consecutive years.



REC's President and CEO, John D. Hewa, was on hand for a ceremony at Hoover Ridge Park in Madison County on April 25 to formally accept the award.

"Being recognized as a Tree Line USA utility for 25 years is an incredible honor," Hewa said. "It speaks volumes about REC — about how deeply we care for the community, the habitat, the environment and our rights-of-way. It also reflects the expertise and dedication of our staff in ensuring that we do the right things to keep power safe and reliable."

This national honor, awarded by the Arbor Day Foundation, highlights utilities that demonstrate a strong commitment to proper tree care, community education and sustainable vegetation management practices.

For a quarter-century, REC has stood at the forefront of this effort.

"We take great pride in being an industry leader," said Cindy Devlin Musick, Senior Director of Vegetation Management Services. "Our commitment goes beyond just pruning trees — we strive to protect natural habitats, leverage innovative technology to identify hazard trees and educate our members about the vital connection between trees, rights-of-way and reliable electric service."

REC's certified arborists and foresters play a key role in this mission. Each year, they partner with local communities to plant and give away dozens of trees, fostering greener spaces and stronger relationships. In addition, they continually pursue advanced training and certifications to ensure they are delivering the highest standard of service to REC's member-owners.

Their work also includes overseeing vegetation management contractors — ensuring they not only prevent outages by clearing potential hazards, but also actively enhance natural habitats. This includes planting native vegetation, maintaining wildflower areas and supporting biodiversity across the region.

Striking the right balance between safety, reliability and sustainability is no small feat. But it's one REC takes seriously.

"We are honored to receive the Tree Line USA award for the 25th year," Musick said. "It's a reflection of our dual commitment — to reliable service and responsible environmental stewardship."

Powering People, Not Just Poles

Real Help, Real Impact

When frigid temperatures sent electric bills soaring over the winter, Quiana Bolling and a team of dedicated Member Services representatives were ready to help.

They listened closely to members' concerns, explained how cold weather drives up energy use — and, in turn, monthly bills — and offered practical tips to help lower energy use and costs moving forward.

"Our only job is to serve our members, and that's honestly a blessing," Bolling said. "We get to help people every single day."

Whether it's setting up flexible payment arrangements, walking members through energy use tools in MyREC SmartHub or simply being a listening ear, REC's member service representatives are committed to providing not just answers, but genuine support. They know that behind every call is a person trying to make life work — and they treat each one with empathy and respect.

"Every call is a chance to make a difference," she added. "We don't just talk about bills — we talk about real life."

The team understands that REC members juggle busy lives, family responsibilities and unexpected challenges. That's why they see every conversation as an opportunity: a moment to lighten someone's load, offer a solution or simply show that someone cares.

From energy-saving advice to personalized account support, Member Services is here to make sure no one has to navigate tough times alone.

Your Go-To Support Team for All This (and More)

Flexible Payment

Arrangements: We know life happens. If you need a little extra time or support, our team will work with you to find a payment plan that fits your needs.

Budget Billing: Prefer predictable monthly bills? Ask our Member Services team if Budget Billing is a good fit for you.

MyREC SmartHub Tools: Build your Home Profile in SmartHub to get personalized energy tips. Need help? Our team is happy to guide you step-by-step.

Expert Energy Advice: Our Member Services team partners with REC's energy specialists to bring you the most up-to-date tips for saving energy and money.

In-Person Support: Stop by your local REC office — our team loves connecting face-to-face and helping members find the best solutions.









REAL REAL REAL Members. Giving. Impact.

From backpacks to brush trucks, your spare change is transforming lives across REC's service territory — one round-up at a time.



"THANKS TO THE POWER OF CHANGE, WE'RE NOT JUST FEEDING FAMILIES — WE'RE NOURISHING THEM."

- Gretchen Ledmor, Carver Food Enterprises Center

HOW YOUR SMALL CHANGE CREATES BIG IMPACT

Members round up bills or donate monthly.

Twice a year, 100% of grants are awarded to local nonprofits.
(Deadlines: Aug. 10 & Feb. 10)

Over \$118,000 awarded to 38 organizations in the spring of 2025.



APPLY OR DONATE TODAY!

thepowerofchange.org





BIG Impact, Small Change: Meet a Few of the 38 Awardees

GED Support for Adults

Literacy Council of Madison County



Brush Truck Replacement

Walkerton Community Fire Association



Give a Girl the **Right Shoes**

Girls on the Run, **Piedmont**



Home Repair Program

Warren County Habitat for Humanity



Meals & Clothing Program

Love to NIC. Winchester



TAG Creative Learning Initiative

Tappahannock Artist Guild



See all the recent The Power of Change funding recipients at **thepowerofchange.org**

Your Voice. Your Vote. Your Cooperative.

REC's Annual Meeting is August 20 — and your participation matters.

As a member-owner of REC, you have the power to shape the future of your co-op. Director Elections are a vital part of our democratic process, giving you a say in the leadership that guides the decisions impacting your service and community.

- Mark your calendar for the Annual Meeting on August 20.
- Learn about the candidates for REC's Board of Directors starting mid-June on myrec.coop and in the July issue of Cooperative Living.
- Watch your mailbox in early July for your Proxy Designation Form.
- Check your email for proxy voting instructions if we have your current email address on file.

Because at REC, your vote isn't just important — it's powerful.





JUNE	
Autism Awareness Festival	JUNE 7
Louisa, Va.	
Culpeperfest	JUNE 13
Culpeper, Va.	
Juneteenth Celebrations	VARIES
Service Territory Wide	
King William Juneteenth Celebration	JUNE 14
King William, Va.	
Caroline County Agricultural Fair	JUNE 19
Caroline, Va.	
JULY	
Playin' in the Park	TBD
Orange, Va.	
Beaverdam July 4th Parade	JULY 4
Hanover, Va.	
Madison County Fair Parade	JULY 16
Madison, Va.	
Madison County Fair	JULY 18
Madison, Va.	
Caroline's Promise School Supply Drive Caroline, Va.	JULY 26
Warren County Fair Warren, Va.	JULY 30
	1111V 64
Frederick County Fair Frederick, Va.	JULY 31
•	



John D. HewaPresident &
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 Staff Writer - Brian Baer Designer - Justice Newkirk

Contact Information: P.O. Box 7388 Fredericksburg, VA 22404 800.552.3904 | office@myrec.coop

Rappahannock Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

SACRED STONE OF THE SOUTHWEST IS ON THE **BRINK OF EXTINCTION**





enturies ago, Persians, Tibetans and Mayans considered turquoise a gemstone of the heavens, believing the striking blue stones were sacred pieces of sky. Today, the rarest and most valuable turquoise is found in the American Southwest- but the future of the blue beauty is unclear.

On a recent trip to Tucson, we spoke with fourth generation turquoise traders who explained that less than five percent of turquoise mined worldwide can be set into jewelry and only about twenty mines in the Southwest supply gem-quality turquoise. Once a thriving industry, many Southwest mines have run dry and are now closed.

We found a limited supply of turquoise from Arizona and purchased it for our Sedona Turquoise Collection. Inspired by the work of those ancient craftsmen and designed to showcase the exceptional blue stone, each stabilized vibrant cabochon features a unique, one-of-a-kind matrix surrounded in Bali metalwork. You could drop over \$1,200 on a turquoise pendant, or you

could secure 26 carats of genuine Arizona turquoise for just \$99.

Your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed. If you aren't completely happy with your purchase, send it back within 30 days for a complete refund of the item price.

The supply of Arizona turquoise is limited, don't miss your chance to own the Southwest's brilliant blue treasure. Call today!

Jewelry Specifications:

· Arizona turquoise · Silver-finished settings

Sedona Turquoise Collection

A. Pendant (26 cts) \$299 * \$99 +s&p Save \$200 B. 18" Bali Naga woven sterling silver chain \$149 +s&p

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^{**}Complete set includes pendant, chain and earrings.

A Blue Ribbon STATE Event



Show off your hobbies, skills at the State Fair of Virginia

by Alice Kemp, Virginia Farm Bureau Federation

o you know how to bake a delicious pie that disappears in seconds? Do you grow roses that are the envy of neighbors? Now's your chance to celebrate your skills and earn a coveted blue ribbon.

Each year, hundreds of bakers, gardeners, cooks and crafters from across the commonwealth enter the arts, horticulture and culinary competitions at the State Fair of Virginia. Competition guides, deadlines and category descriptions for this year's fair (held Sept. 26 through Oct. 5) are available at statefairya.org.

"The State Fair of Virginia has a competition for everyone," says Sarah Jane Thomsen, the fair's manager of agriculture education and strategic programming partnerships. "From livestock competitions and various artistic expressions to preserved foods, culinary favorites and homegrown produce — get involved and try to win your own blue ribbon."



Open to both adults and youth, the fair's contests welcome beginners and seasoned pros. While some categories award small cash prizes, the real rewards are bragging rights and celebrating your work.

ENDLESS OPPORTUNITIES

Have a green thumb? Gardeners and growers can vie for top prizes in horticulture and field crops competitions spanning fruits, vegetables, row crops, flowers and succulents. There are even categories for fairy gardens, hanging baskets and terrariums.

Culinary creatives can showcase their breads, cakes, cookies, jams, sauces, syrups, pies and more. New this year are fun twists like protein balls or bites, a picnic potluck recipe contest and a special milkshake challenge.

Just as creativity is limitless, so are the categories for the state fair's arts competitions. Artists can show off their skills in countless media, with new categories like amigurumi crochet, slow stitch quilting, blown glass, punch needle, hat burning and more.

Have a Virginia Farm Bureau antique or interesting object? You can display that too. This year's fair also introduces fresh new youth categories. Young artists can create masterpieces with their pets, while budding chefs can whip up chocolate or crockpot candy, gluten-free snacks or after-school treats.

A STATE FAIR TRADITION

Longtime knitter and quilter Mary Kay Beasley has been entering fair competitions for over 25 years and has the ribbons to prove it. She's won over 20. "I try to enter at least four or five



items every year," Beasley says. "My whole reason for doing it is to show that knitting and quilting can still be interesting and cool. It's allowed me to keep the crafts in front of people's eyes."

It's also an opportunity to connect with old friends and fellow fiber enthusiasts.

"We're all like, 'What do you have in the fair?' And we'll walk around to see what items we've entered. It's a really nice thing" she says. Last year, Beasley entered a Wizard-of-Oz-themed quilt made for a neighbor expecting her first baby — whose nursery was inspired by the film. After winning a ribbon, she gifted the quilt to the new mom. "It's one of my very best memories!" she exclaims. •



Get the Membership Advantage — enjoying valuable benefits and savings while helping Virginia farmers.



We advocate for Virginia farmers in the halls of government, which helps provide a reliable food supply.



Our county boards invest in future leaders through our Young Farmers programs and annual scholarships.



We help farmers attain grants for cutting-edge technology that helps create more sustainable farms.



We support worthy causes like local food banks and the Agriculture in the Classroom program.



Back in the Saddle Again

Guided horseback trail rides in the Shenandoah Valley



he white barn is nestled at the foot of Graves Mountain in Syria, Va.
When my husband and I walk up, we're greeted at the gate by an exuberant dog, who we later learn is named Cinch. He has a merle coat. Another couple and a woman on her own are already here, wearing their helmets and milling around in the sun while our guides prepare the horses, which stand nearby, stamping their hooves and swishing their tails.

Casey Haynes, one of the owners of Circle H Equine at Graves Mountain Farm & Lodges, offers us helmets, sunscreen and bug spray. As Ashley, one of our guides, gives a basic rundown of how to steer and stop, a second dog trots out of the barn. Callie, a kelpie/blue heeler mix, stretches out in the shade of the mounting block, squinting up at us.

For a 90-minute guided trail ride, Circle H will accommodate up to eight riders. There are five of us today, plus two guides. The horses include Harley, a large, dark brown Fresian; Sam; John, a brown Quarter horse; Kate the mule; a buckskin named Diablo; Lucy and Thunder. One at a time, Ashley and Devon, our second



with the right rider.

Harley for the man up front. Sam for his wife. The woman

mounts John. A shot of nerves courses through my body when Devon stops Diablo at the block and beckons me over. Thankfully, the gentle horse does not live up to his name, though Devon tells me he used to. My husband ends up on Kate, while Ashley rides Lucy in the front with Devon in the back on Thunder.

Although I grew up around horses, it's been nearly two decades since I sat astride one. That's a lot of time since I viewed the world from this vantage point, the rhythm of another animal's stride rocking beneath me, ears pricked forward, mane falling to one side of his neck. But muscle memory is long, and my body settles naturally into the old, familiar position, heels automatically shifting downward in the stirrups, thighs and knees slightly gripping the saddle, right hand resting on right thigh, left hand holding the reins. It's like I never dismounted.

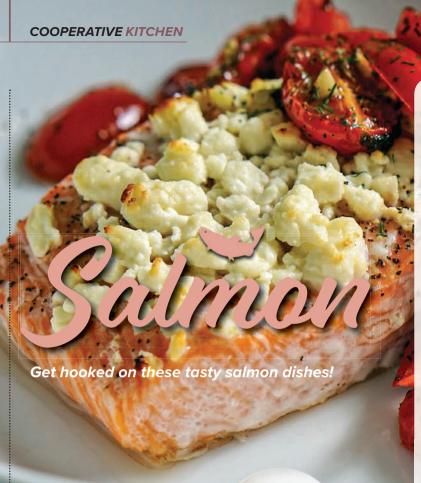
Once we're all mounted, Cinch enthusiastically leads the way down a stony dirt path toward the hillside apple orchards. Circle H hosts these guided trail rides year-round, canceling only for heat advisories, thunder, lightning or dangerous conditions due to flooding or ice. Fortunately, none of these concerns plague us today, and we head out between the apple trees, mountains sloping up to either side, with faster-moving, cotton-ball clouds, their shadows drifting over the mountainside.

A horse whinnies to us from the other side of the fence as we meander by, kicking up reddish brown dust that drifts away in the gentle breeze. We flush dozens of blue jays out of a stand of trees along a small stream, the sun gleaming off their bold, blue plumage.

About halfway through the ride, my knees ache, and I wish I'd followed some of my fellow riders' examples and stretched. I try hard not to let the discomfort define the ride, focusing instead on the bright yellow of the flowers blooming along the trail, the sound of the stream rushing over its rocky bed, and the nostalgic smell of horses and leather — spicy, warm and musky. And before I know it, we're back at the barn, our 90-minute trail ride over. I dismount stiffly, patting Diablo's shoulder and thanking him for the ride. For one sweet moment, he tucks his velvety muzzle into the crook of my arm as if in farewell, and then he's led away.

A two-hour drive later, my husband and I arrive home. My sit bones are sore. But achy and sore as I might be, I'm glad I got back on a horse. And I don't plan to let another 20 years go by before I find myself back in the saddle again. •

For more information, visit www.gravesmountain.com.



Feta Roasted Salmon and Tomatoes

recipe courtesy of Family Features/Milk Means More

Ingredients:

3 cups cherry tomatoes, halved
2 teaspoons olive oil
1 teaspoon minced garlic
½ teaspoon dried oregano or dried dill weed
¼ teaspoon salt

nonstick cooking spray

1/2 teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper, divided 1 1/2 lbs. salmon or halibut fillets, cut into four serving-size pieces 1 cup (4 oz.) crumbled feta cheese

Directions:

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Line 18-by-13-by-1-inch baking pan with foil. Lightly spray foil with nonstick cooking spray. Set aside. In medium bowl, toss tomatoes, olive oil, garlic, oregano or dill weed, salt, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Place fish pieces, skin side down, on one side of prepared pan. Sprinkle with remaining pepper. Lightly press feta cheese on top of fish. Pour tomato mixture on other side of prepared pan. Bake, uncovered, 12-15 minutes, or until fish flakes easily with fork. Place salmon on serving plates. Spoon tomato mixture over top. Serves 4.

Honey Mustard Crunch Salmon

recipe courtesy of Family Features/ North Coast Seafoods

Ingredients:

1 bag (1 lb., 3 6-oz. portions) salmon salt and pepper, to taste Honey Mustard Glaze: 1/3 cup honey 1/4 cup whole-grain mustard 2 tablespoons smooth Dijon mustard 2 tablespoons mayonnaise



2 teaspoons horseradish 1 teaspoon smoked paprika *Crunch:*

3/4 cup panko breadcrumbs 2 tablespoons dried parsley

2 tablespoons olive oil

Directions:

Thaw salmon and pat dry. Arrange on oiled baking tray. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. *To make glaze:* In small bowl, combine honey, mustard, Dijon mustard, mayonnaise, horseradish and paprika; mix until well combined. Chill glaze until ready to use. *To make crunch:* In bowl, combine breadcrumbs, parsley and oil; mix well. Reserve. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Top each salmon portion with 1 tablespoon glaze and spread evenly over fish. Press crunch evenly onto glaze. Bake 15-17 minutes until fish is cooked through. Serve with drizzle of remaining glaze.

Salmon Marsala

recipe courtesy of Family Features

Ingredients:

4 Alaska salmon fillets (4-6 oz. each) salt and pepper, to taste 2 cups flour ½ cup olive oil 1 cup Marsala wine



2 cups mushrooms, sliced 2 cups chicken stock 2 teaspoons fresh thyme 2 tablespoons cold butter 4 fresh thyme sprigs,

for garnish

Directions:

Season salmon fillets with salt and pepper, to taste. On plate, season flour with salt and pepper, to taste. Dredge both sides of each salmon fillet in seasoned flour, shaking off excess. Heat large sauté pan and add olive oil. Then place each piece of salmon in pan. Cook for 2-4 minutes, turn fillets over and cook until almost done. Remove fillets from pan; set aside. Off heat, add wine to pan, scraping bits off the bottom. Return pan to heat and add mushrooms. Season with salt and pepper, to taste, and cook for 1 minute. Add stock and thyme, and let liquid reduce by half. Return salmon fillets to pan. Cook, while basting fish, until fillets are heated through. Remove fillets to 4 serving plates. Return pan to heat, add cold butter and swirl until incorporated and sauce slightly thickens. Remove from heat and divide sauce evenly over salmon fillets. Garnish each plate with 1 thyme sprig, if desired.

GOT A
TASTY TREAT

Email your favorite **side dish and quick dish 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.

Maximize comfort and savings



Top tips for thermostat and A/C efficiency



According to the U.S. Department of Energy, air conditioners use about 6%* of the average home's energy use. To mitigate the cost, set your thermostat as high as possible in the summer, preferably no lower than 78. The smaller the difference between indoor and outdoor temperatures, the lower your overall cooling bill will be.



Also, use a ceiling fan when in the room. Fans can help you feel cool while using your air conditioner less. You can raise the thermostat temperature a few degrees and still feel comfortable.



Finally, don't forget to have your HVAC system professionally maintained. Regular maintenance ensures that your system is operating efficiently.

*U.S. Department of Energy







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

JUNE

20 WINCHESTER. **3rd Annual Kernstown Battlefield Golf Classic.** Rock Harbor Golf
Club. 7 a.m.-2 p.m. Kernstownbattle.org.

23 WINCHESTER. Lions Club Annual Golf Outing: Swing for a Cause.

Winchester Country Club. Check-in at noon. Whlionsclub@gmail.com. birdease.com/whlgolfouting.

JULY

2-13 SALEM. Salem Fair. 1001 Roanoke Blvd. Salemfair.com.

4 MIDDLETOWN. July 4th Celebration. Historic Main Street and Middletown Park. 540-869-2226. Middletownva.gov.

10 STAUNTON. Jazz in the Park Concert Series. Gypsy Hill Park. 7-9 p.m.
Every Thursday through Sept. 4.
Facebook.com/jazzintheparkconcerts.

PIEDMONT

JUNE

14 FREDERICKSBURG. Flag Retirement Ceremony. Memorial Park. 10 a.m. 540-681-1486.

19 HOPEWELL. Downtown Hopewell Farmers Market. Library St. Every Thursday through Sept. 25. 7-9 p.m. Hopewelldowntown.com.

21 CUMBERLAND. Juneteenth Celebration. Bright Hope Center. 10 a.m-3 p.m. 804-909-0049.

25-28 AMISSVILLE. Amissville Volunteer Fire and Rescue Company Carnival. 14711 Lee Hwy. 6 p.m. Amissvillevfr.org.

28 HOPEWELL. Fireworks on the Appomattox. Downtown Hopewell.
7-9 p.m. events. 9:30 p.m. fireworks.
Hopewelldowntown.com.

JULY

5 MANASSAS. 50th Anniversary

Parade. City of Manassas Park. 9 a.m. Cmwg@manassasparkva.gov. Manassasparkva.gov.

11 MANASSAS. ARTfactory's Actors Theatre presents Cabaret. 9419 Battle St. 7 p.m. Info@virginiaartfactory.org. Insidenovatix.com/events.

12 GORDONSVILLE. Horton Vineyards Nebbiolo Vertical Tasting. Horton
Vineyards. 11:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Facebook.com/events/2096441407445471.

TIDEWATER

JUNE

21 CAPE CHARLES. Concerts in the Park:

Can U Dig It. Cape Charles Central Park. 7 p.m. Citizens4centralpark@gmail.com. Capecharlesvirginiascape.com.

28 CAPE CHARLES. Concerts in the Park: Celeste Kellogg. Cape Charles Central Park. 7 p.m. Citizens4centralpark@gmail.com. Capecharlesvirginiascape.com.

JULY

10-12 PARKSLEY. Christmas in July. Grace United Methodist Church. Times vary. 757-442-0708. Wrlaw@msn.com.

MARYLAND

JUNE

28 SNOW HILL. Summer Music Series: The Stringbuzzards. 3816 Old Furnace Rd. 5-8 p.m. Furnacetown.org.

JULY

6 SNOW HILL. Artisan Day.

3816 Old Furnace Rd. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Furnacetown.org.

12 SNOW HILL. Summer Music Series: Lauren Glick. 3816 Old Furnace Rd. 5-8 p.m. Furnacetown.org.

12 ST. MICHAELS. Cars & Coffee: European Invasion. 102 E. Marengo St. 9 a.m.-12 p.m. 443-309-9829.

PRINT July 1 for Aug. 15-Sept. 15
DEADLINES: Aug. 1 for Sept. 15-Oct. 15

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June is **Inspirational**

Rural graduations bring smiles

by Margo Oxendine, Contributing Columnist



t's June, which
I like to think
of as Rural
Celebration Month.
This month
is traditionally
associated with

weddings and graduations. There's much to celebrate, many gifts and cards to buy, plenty of cake to eat, and lots of dancing.

I've reached the age where weddings are pretty much off my radar now. But I can't forget the days when I had to acquire ghastly bridesmaid dresses for one-time use. (Only once did I ever get to wear one twice.) At least, misery loves company, and I wasn't the only girl in an orange gown with puffy sleeves and — heaven forbid — a peplum.

Graduations are now the only celebrations on my June calendar. And there aren't too many of those anymore, either. Nowadays, they are usually the graduations of the grand-children of folks I knew in high school or college.

But as a small-town newspaper reporter and photographer, I love

attending graduations at our local rural high school. Although I have never had children, I can live vicariously for a while and cheer with everyone else.

I take more photos at graduations than at any other event. I like to capture groups of friends straightening each other's caps, laughing and goofing about before the ceremony.

Since the stage is so dark, I have difficulty taking good photos with my small camera. But I try. I aim to capture the obligatory photo of the grads spraying Silly String around the stage and onto their teachers and principal.

Afterward, I race out of the auditorium ahead of most everyone, because that is where the "magic" happens. Buddies and girlfriends hug and cheer with joy, while parents, siblings and grandparents try to join in the fun. I capture the very best photos after the ceremony. I see them in the newspaper later that week, and I know they're something that will be clipped out and saved for posterity. That makes me smile.

One oddball thing I also enjoy about

graduation is that the girls wear fabulous heels or, maybe, glittery sneakers. Meanwhile, many of the boys don boots that you know they wear around the farm every day, perhaps usually paired with faded blue jeans. They clomp or mince across the stage, providing glimpses into their personalities.

Our lovely auditorium has around 800 seats. They are never close to being filled, except during graduation. Then, I swear, there are people standing along the ends of the aisles against the wall. The place is packed.

Most folks bring the whole family: babes in bunting, toddlers and active small children — they're all there, audibly wondering what is going on. It's a happy free-for-all.

Here's the best thing about graduation at our rural high school: Years ago, the graduating class decided against having guest speakers. As you probably know, graduation speakers can tend to ramble on and on. Instead, the school now has the valedictorian and salutatorian give their own personal speeches, which are often quite amusing and encouraging.

Then, diplomas are handed out, Silly String is sprayed, and with much pomp and circumstance, the grads leave the auditorium to start their new lives. It's positively inspirational!

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.





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 **June 20**. The winner will receive a **\$25 Amazon email gift card**.

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"The renown of Italy's jewelry, with its sensual beauty and extraordinary craftsmanship, is founded on the goldsmithing skills passed down through generations." - The New York Times





Tguess I was a little bored. For the past hour, I'd been on the phone with Daniele, the head of my office in Italy, reviewing our latest purchases of Italian gold, Murano glass and Italian-made shoes and handbags.

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

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American Beech

A beautiful and versatile tree

by Steve Carroll, Contributing Columnist



ature American beeches draw attention no matter the season. Before the leaves unfurl, long, sharply pointed buds are prominent. As the buds open, bright spring-green leaves emerge and expand. Fast-forward to season's end: the leaves turn yellow-tan, while the distinctive fruits open and drop their protein- and fat-rich nuts to the ground, where a host of mammals and birds seek them out. Beeches hold onto their dead, dry leaves in winter as if to resist the coming season. And no matter the time of year, the distinctive smooth, gray bark stands out.

American beech (Fagus grandifolia) is the only beech in North America and is closely related to oaks and chestnuts. It's native from Canada's maritime provinces west to Wisconsin, and south to east Texas and northern Florida. In the mid-Atlantic, it's more common in the Piedmont and along the coastal plain than in the mountains.

AN IMPORTANT TREE

Beech is a large, slow-growing tree. It favors well-drained soil and tolerates both sun and shade, the latter of which helps make it one of the most important trees of eastern forests. Because it tolerates shade, it can grow slowly under a canopy

Beech wood
is susceptible to
splitting, so it's not
often used for
construction or

of other species. When these overstory trees die, beech can reach for the sun and form the new canopy. Beech is noticeably absent from urban and suburban sites, though — a result of its shallow roots, intolerance of compacted soil and eventual large size.

Beech flowers are wind-pollinated and inconspicuous. They are either male or female, and both types are on the same tree. If female flowers are successfully fertilized, the resulting fruit is a prickly husk enclosing one to three nuts. These nuts tend to be especially abundant every two to three years or more, resulting in a mast crop gorged on by wildlife.

The leaves are 2 to 6 inches long, toothed and tapered at the tip. In the fall, they turn yellow to tan. The plants host more than 125 butterfly and moth caterpillars.

BEAUTY AND VERSATILITY

One of beech's most distinctive characteristics is its smooth, gray bark, which, unfortunately, entices admirers into carving initials, declarations of love and other sentiments — all bad news for the tree. One well-known example was Daniel Boone's creatively spelled declaration

on a beech outside Jonesborough, Tenn.: "D. Boon cilled a bar in year 1760."

Beech wood is medium-heavy and hard, and susceptible to splitting; therefore, it is not often used for construction or furniture. However, because it's odorless and tasteless, it can be used for food-related items such as barrels and butcher blocks. In the right location, a large beech makes a grand addition to the landscape. Speaking of large, Virginia Tech's Big Trees website informs us that the National Champion American beech is located on private property in New Kent, Va.

Beech is a critical part of our eastern forests. Unfortunately, it's susceptible to diseases, two of particular concern: beech leaf disease, caused at least in part by a nematode, and beech bark disease, which results when a native fungus invades after a tree is fed on by an introduced scale insect. Foresters and conservationists are greatly concerned about these diseases since a significant loss of beeches would alter our forests forever.

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.

FRAMED & , fabulous

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by Laura Emery, Staff Writer

LEGEN-DAIRY

This cow may have had a beef with its shades at first but is milkin' it now. PHOTO SUBMITTED BY TERESA MINNICK

▼ I GOAT YOU, BABE

Who's a cool kid now? Hurley is. PHOTO SUBMITTED BY LELE MULLINS

LIKE FATHER.

FELINE FABULOUS ▶ Sebastian looks specs-tacular and he knows it. PHOTO SUBMITTED

BY KATHRYN COPPAGE

John, Johnathan and Bo are ready for some fun in the sun. PHOTO SUBMITTED BY KATHY HUDSON

◆ THROWING SHADE TO THE WIND

UV got to admit, Mocha looks doggone good in his shades. PHOTO SUBMITTED BY DÉBORA BURK

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