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NOVEMBER



JEFF FETZER

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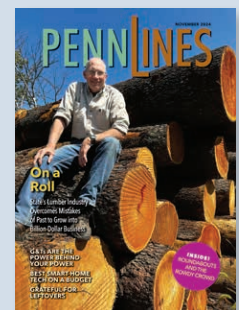
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The beauty of Pennsylvania's hardwood forests is showcased at the Canyon Vista overlooking Worlds End State Park in Sullivan County.



ON THE COVER

Marc Lewis, co-owner of Dwight Lewis Lumber, perches on a pile of black cherry logs at the sawmill in Hillsgrove, Sullivan County. Established in 1941, the business practices sustainable forest management on its 16,000 acres.

PHOTO BY JEFF FETZER

Stronger Together

Acts of Kindness Greet Local

Lineworkers Restoring Power in the South



STEVE BRAME

IN THE AFTERMATH OF HURRICANES Helene and Milton, the principle of “cooperation among cooperatives” — one of the seven your local cooperative lives by — has never been more essential.

These storms struck the Southeast in rapid succession, leaving widespread destruction in their wake. Entire communities were wiped out, hundreds of lives were lost, and millions of people were left without power. The need for restoration was urgent, and cooperatives across the country stepped up, as they always do, to help each other.

One of the most powerful aspects of the cooperative model is that when disaster strikes, cooperatives don’t stand by — they act. Within days of the hurricanes, lineworkers from Pennsylvania and New Jersey were on the ground in some of the hardest-hit areas of Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina. As I write this, some are still there, working tirelessly to restore power to communities that were left in the dark. Our local crews didn’t hesitate to travel hundreds of miles away from home, knowing they would be working in extremely challenging conditions while missing family milestones, including their kids’ birthdays and their own honeymoons (yes, one Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative lineworker left home right after his wedding to support his colleagues in North Carolina).

The selflessness and commitment of these lineworkers exemplify the cooperative spirit because, for them — and the rest of the cooperative family — helping one another is second nature. It’s built into their DNA, and it’s one of the core values that sets them apart. When one cooperative is in need, others respond — whether the need is in Pennsylvania or New Jersey or across the country.

This is not the first time we’ve seen cooperatives rise to the challenge. The cooperative model is based on mutual support. When a region is hit by a disaster of this magnitude, it’s the cooperative network that ensures help arrives swiftly and efficiently. After Helene and Milton, crews from at least a dozen states and many more cooperatives worked hour after hour in hazardous conditions — up steep mountains, through deep ravines, and across flood-ravaged landscapes — to replace poles and restring power lines. These are some of the most difficult and dangerous conditions lineworkers face, but they do so with a sense of duty and purpose.

The bond between cooperatives is not just about providing power; it’s about community. Despite the devastation they’ve endured, the people living in these communities have gone out of their way to express their appreciation to our lineworkers in small, yet meaningful ways. They’ve left thank-you notes on the dinner table for crews to find after a long day of work. They’ve even done their laundry. These acts are a reminder of the close relationship between cooperatives and their members — a relationship that extends beyond providing a service and into something much more meaningful.

The principle of cooperation among cooperatives is a reminder that they are stronger together. Whether it’s recovering from hurricanes, navigating other natural disasters, or dealing with everyday challenges, cooperatives were built on the idea that mutual support is the key to success. When one of them is in need, the rest step in without hesitation.

This is the cooperative way: standing together, lending a hand, and ensuring that no one faces adversity alone. 🤝

STEVE BRAME
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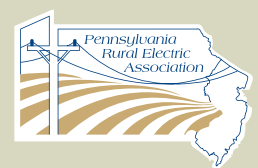
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COMING THROUGH THE STORM

My lights turned on this morning, as they do just about every morning. Even when you're in the business of electricity, it's something that's easy to take for granted. Electricity powers so much of our daily lives we tend to forget it's there – until it's not.

It powered the text I got from my cousin in North Carolina, letting me know the family was OK in the wake of Hurricane



NRECA/ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Helene. But things were bad. Their business – a tree nursery in Morganton, N.C. – suffered catastrophic losses. Much worse, they lost employees and close friends to the devastating storm that took hundreds of lives throughout the Southeast.

As a kid, I spent several summers in the hills of western North Carolina with my cousins. I hunted for arrowheads in fields that grew Christmas trees, many of which would end up in Pennsylvania homes. We built a "trout farm," which was more of a minnow pool, along the small creek by the home- stead. It's unimaginable to me that the little creek and surrounding streams would overflow to the point of wiping out homes, farms, and communities in the area.

My cousin said the reality on the ground was much harsher than what was on the news. Mudslides had changed the landscape. The flooding made roads inaccessible, cutting people off from getting assistance. Even the local hospital had no power. But there was help. The community members helped each other find food and shelter, and they welcomed help from others.

In the aftermath of the storm, electric cooperative crews from Pennsylvania and New Jersey joined thousands of fellow lineworkers from more than a dozen states to assist sister cooperatives in Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. In Morganton, my family's nursery opened its loading dock for the utilities to use as a staging area for restoration efforts.

In this month of thanks, I'm grateful for those who bring power back to people's lives. I'm grateful for the hills of North Carolina, and the resilience of small communities. It's a long road ahead, but they will come through this storm. And the lights will come back on.

PETER A. FITZGERALD
EDITOR

The Cooperative Development Foundation has set up a dedicated page to raise funds for electric cooperatives and co-op employees directly affected by Hurricane Helene. Here's the link to donate: weblink.donorperfect.com/DRFHelene.



DRIVING IN CIRCLES: A PennDOT study found that circular intersections – otherwise known as roundabouts – create a safer environment for motorists. Roundabouts that replaced traditional intersections have cut the number of injury crashes in half, the agency reports.

ROUND AND ROUND PennDOT: Roundabouts reduce crashes, injuries

Driving in circles pays off, according to the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT). The agency reports crashes involving injuries dropped by 51% at traditional intersections replaced with roundabouts, and the total number of crashes dropped by 7%. During the 20-year review period, there were two fatalities at roundabouts on state routes.

PennDOT evaluated 47 roundabouts on state routes that replaced stop- or signal-controlled intersections. Each had at least three years of crash data available before and after the roundabouts were built and had at least one crash during the review period.

Although roundabouts tend to be safer and more efficient than traditional intersections, topography, property impacts, and capacity issues can limit their use.

READY, AIM ... STANDBY Is Pennsylvania ready for Sunday hunting?

The Pennsylvania Farm Bureau has dropped its long-standing opposition to Sunday hunting, but it's not yet clear if the state's near-total ban on the practice will change as a result.

Pennsylvania's Sunday hunting ban is at least two centuries old, and makes exceptions for hunting crows, coyotes,

and foxes during open seasons. A 2019 law put other exceptions in place to allow hunting on three Sundays a year: one during rifle deer season, one during archery deer season and a third decided by the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC).

Eleven states have a total or partial ban on Sunday hunting. And Commonwealth hunters have been pushing lawmakers to remove the ban, arguing more time to hunt could encourage more hunting license purchases. Revenue from those sales helps fund habitat improvements and other conservation efforts.

State Rep. Mandy Steele (D-Allegheny) and state Sen. Dan Laughlin (R-Erie) have both introduced bills that would remove the Sunday prohibition and empower the PGC to regulate hunting days.

Both measures would strengthen existing trespassing penalties and create a database to link farmers dealing with pests to hunters willing to take aim at the problem.

POWER UP! 2025 Pennsylvania Farm Show theme revealed

State officials have announced the theme for the 2025 Pennsylvania Farm Show is "Powering Pennsylvania." The annual event is scheduled Jan. 4-11 at the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex and Expo Center in Harrisburg.

Because of the vital role they play in powering rural Pennsylvania, the state's rural electric cooperatives will be collaborating with the state Department of Agriculture on related events.

The Farm Show brings half a million visitors to the state capital for eight days of competition and family fun with an educational twist.

Learn more at farmshow.pa.gov.

WE ARE! Beaver Stadium home to the most lively college football crowd

Penn State's Beaver Stadium ranks first among the places that host the nation's rowdiest college football crowds, according to a recent study by The Roar, a pop-culture, sports-related blog.

Researchers reviewed 50 universities with top-ranked football programs, analyzed each of the stadiums on 11 key metrics, such as percentage of filled seats, percentage of reviews mentioning loudness, percentage of reviews mentioning tailgating and number of team cheer hashtags.

"Nittany Lions fans don't just show up, they show out!" the study reported. "Beaver Stadium boasts the highest percentage of Google reviews mentioning great fans (12.9%),

atmosphere (18.4%) and tailgating (10.9%)."

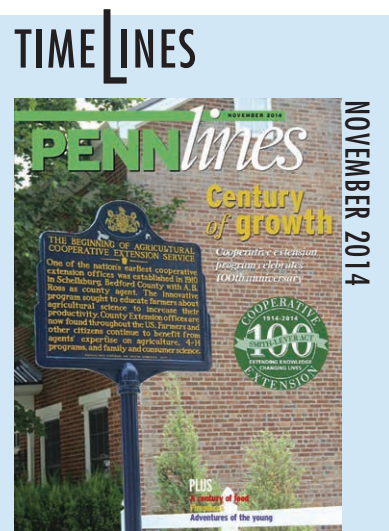
Wolverines fans in Michigan Stadium, Ann Arbor, took home second place, while those in Bryant-Denny Stadium in Tuscaloosa, Ala., home base of the Crimson Tide, took third.

A LOT ON YOUR PLATE New specialty plate promotes hunting, fishing and boating

The Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) and Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) have announced a new specialty license plate for sportsmen.

The Pennsylvania Sportsman Registration Plate, available through PennDOT, features Pennsylvania hunting, fishing, and boating imagery, including the white-tailed deer, ruffed grouse, and anglers fishing from a kayak on a scenic river. The plate costs \$40 plus the registration fee, of which \$14 will be allocated evenly to the PGC and PFBC to promote youth hunting and fishing activities.

Applicants for the license plate must submit Form MV911, "Application for Special Fund Registration Plate," available at pennDOT.pa.gov. This plate is available for passenger cars or trucks under 14,000 pounds. 🚗



A decade ago, *Penn Lines* was recognizing the U.S. Cooperative Extension movement as it celebrated its 100th anniversary. Pennsylvania's own history of disseminating practical, research-based information about agriculture and home economics, however, dates back even further. Realizing the need for an educational network serving the state's rural community, Penn State University (then Pennsylvania State College) established what would become the state's extension service in 1907. And it all began in Bedford, where a state historical marker at 3744 Pitt St. commemorates the event.



WINE AND DINE

Celebrate the fall's harvest in Lake Erie wine country. Wineries will be pairing their products with harvest-inspired foods, ranging from savory to sweet Nov. 8-10. Tickets cover a food-and-wine sample pairing at each winery. Learn more at lakeeriewinecountry.org (click on "Wine Country Events").

'TIS (ALMOST) THE SEASON

Kick off the holiday season with Susquehanna County Interfaith's Very Merry Christmas Reveal Tour Nov. 8-9 at its shops in Forest City, Susquehanna and Montrose. Three beloved Christmas movies will inspire the floor-to-ceiling décor of these unique holiday venues. Gifts are available for every budget, and proceeds benefit the community. Visit interfaithsc.org/christmas-reveal for more information.



LUMINOUS REMEMBRANCE

Join the Gettysburg Foundation Saturday, Nov. 16, from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. to commemorate the November 1863 dedication of the Gettysburg National Cemetery. The event will feature more than 3,000 candles, each lit in memory of a fallen soldier, whose names will be read throughout the evening. Learn more at gettysburgfoundation.org/exhibitions-tours-events/special-events.

LIGHT AS AIR

Light up your spirits Nov. 21-24 at the Big Balloon Build, where up to 100 artists will come together to craft a Winter Wonderland at S&T Bank Arena in Indiana, Pa. The event will benefit children and youth served by the United Way of Indiana County. For more details and ticket information, go to uwindianacounty.org/its-a-wonderful-life.



On a ROLL

State's Lumber Industry
Overcomes Mistakes of Past to
Grow into Billion-Dollar Business

JEFF FETZER

Penn Lines Contributor

FOR A FEW FLEETING WEEKS each fall, the forests of Pennsylvania ignite in a fiery display of crimson, orange, gold, and bronze before the elements — wind, rain and time — extinguish the blazing autumnal display.

It's part of a cycle of renewal, a seasonal pause before the woods come alive again in the spring.

But about a century ago, the Pennsylvania hillsides, valleys and ridges weren't just bare for a season; they were devastated for decades.

During Pennsylvania's lumber boom in the mid-1800s to early 1900s, the state's vast stands of towering old-growth forests were felled at a dizzying pace. This left behind a desolate landscape, environmental degradation and communities scrambling to adjust to the loss of population and jobs after the timber companies moved on.

Yet, just as trees sprout new growth each spring, Pennsylvania's forests overcame the indiscriminate logging activities of the past and have gone on to flourish. Today, the Keystone State houses the most abundant hardwood forests in the nation and has been the top producer of hardwood lumber and exports in the United States for many years.

But it's taken a lot of work to get there — and keep it that

way. While on this journey, those tasked with managing the forests — everyone from state agencies to private land-owners — have had to overcome misconceptions deeply rooted in the past as they work to preserve the state's forests for the future.

"No other state has the sheer volume of hardwoods that we have and the diversity of the species we have," says Jonathan Geyer, executive director of the Pennsylvania Hardwoods Development Council. "Pennsylvania also has some of the highest quality hardwoods, not just in the U.S., but in the world."

State Forester Seth Cassell agrees: "Our forests are really the fabric of Pennsylvania. They are the fabric of



our history, but also a big part of our future. Our forests provide so much to Pennsylvania: clean air, clean water, wildlife habitat, scenic beauty, places to recreate. And they're not just nice to have; they're really important to our economy, too."

'Wood is good'

Pennsylvania is home to more than 16.6 million acres of forestland — nearly 60% of the state's land area — and more than 90% of the trees within those forests are hardwood species, including an abundance of black cherry, maple and oak.

According to a 2018 economic impact study, the forest products industry employs about 65,000 Pennsylvanians, which is close to 10% of the state's manufacturing workforce, and has a \$21 billion direct impact on the state's economy annually.

"We are an industry that has employees in every single county in Pennsylvania," Geyer says.

In his role with the Hardwoods Development Council, a

"Our forests are really the fabric of Pennsylvania. They are the fabric of our history, but also a big part of our future."

bureau within the state Department of Agriculture, Geyer's focus is on developing, expanding and promoting the hardwoods industry.

"The future of our forest is dependent on the forest market," Geyer says. "If people understand that using wood improves forest health, and we increase our use of wood, our forests will be in fantastic shape for the future."

He explains that modern sustainable forestry practices provide a continuous timber resource, while also creating habitat for wildlife, cleansing the air, protecting waterways, and providing recreational opportunities enjoyed by leaf-peepers, hikers, bikers, birders, and hunters.

"We want people to understand that wood is good," he says. "It's renewable. It's sustainable. It stores carbon. We are not an industry that is just cutting down trees and leaving the forest in disarray."

Timber's deep roots

That wasn't the case, however, during Pennsylvania's storied lumber boom, when its virgin white pine and hemlock forests were systematically decimated by logging, leaving much of the state devoid of mature timber stands by the 1920s.

The literal meaning of Pennsylvania is "Penn's Wood" — "sylvan" is Latin for "of the woods" — so it's no surprise the Commonwealth played a key role in supplying timber to help build our fledgling nation.

During the Industrial Revolution, the bulk of the industry was concentrated in Maine, Massachusetts and New Hampshire. However, as the forests of New England were depleted, the industry moved south into New York and

FORESTRY FORESIGHT: State Forester Seth Cassell, director of the Bureau of Forestry for the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, says the founders of forestry conservation in Pennsylvania had incredible foresight. Their decisions more than a century ago built the state forest system, which today flourishes on 2.2 million acres.



PA DCNR



TAKING A TOLL: Once lush with towering forests of hemlock and white pine, this barren landscape was a common sight across Pennsylvania in the aftermath of the lumber boom from the mid-1800s to early 1900s. The state's vast forests were decimated by aggressive logging, leaving behind a stark reminder of the industry's environmental toll before conservation and sustainable forestry practices took root.

Pennsylvania, and by the 1870s, the Commonwealth had become the top lumber-producing state in the nation. That lasted until the turn of the 20th century when the lumber boom busted, leaving behind a barren, treeless landscape and an array of environmental problems that would take the state decades to overcome.

"There were problems that we always talk about with deforestation — erosion and water quality," says Joshua Roth, site administrator for the Pennsylvania Lumber Museum in Potter County, a region served by Tri-County Rural Electric Cooperative. "But one thing that is often overlooked is the economic problems that were created."

He says the population of many counties in the "Big Woods" region of north-central Pennsylvania never rebounded from the collapse of the lumber industry more than a century ago.

"If you look at population data, there are not a whole lot of people who live in this area in the Northern Tier of Pennsylvania," Roth says. "That was clearly not the case during the height of the lumber industry."

Potter County's population peaked in 1900, when census data shows more than 30,000 residents living there, he says. But by the 2020 Census, the county's population dipped to 16,000.

"So twice as many people lived here in 1900, and most of those folks were employed at the local mill, or they worked in the woods, drove a locomotive, worked in a paper factory, or peeled hemlock bark," Roth says. "And when the resource was played out, all those people had to find something else to do. They had to go where the work was, which was no longer the north-central part of Pennsylvania."

Frequent wildfires were another vestige of the lumber boom era.

"A lot of what the western states are experiencing today with wildfires was commonplace in Pennsylvania at the turn of the 20th century," Roth says. "And when state government finally got involved, its No. 1 mandate in terms of managing the forest was to manage it for fire control and prevention."

The state steps in

In 1895, Pennsylvania created the Division of Forestry within the Department of Agriculture. In addition to establishing a forest fire protection system, the new agency purchased cut-over land for reforestation and watershed protection.

"After taking all the timber off, a lot of the timber companies defaulted on their taxes," says Cassell,

"A lot of what the western states are experiencing today with wildfires was commonplace in Pennsylvania at the turn of the 20th century."

who also is director of the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Bureau of Forestry. “The Commonwealth was able to buy those lands very cheaply, and it bought those lands to restore them.”

The land acquisitions would result in the formation of the Pennsylvania State Forest system, which today encompasses more than 2.2 million acres in 20 state forest districts.

“What amazing vision and foresight the founders of forestry conservation in Pennsylvania must have had,” Cassell says. “They traveled around the state and looked at thousands of acres that were completely harvested — hardly any trees left, silt flowing into the streams, uncontrolled fires — and they looked at that and said, ‘Hey, we should conserve this.’”

Cassell, who co-owns a Lycoming County hunting cabin served by Tri-County REC, says the Division of Forestry, now the Bureau of Forestry, was one of the nation’s first conserva-

tion organizations, and its efforts to manage the state’s public forest resources have been a resounding success.

The state’s scarred landscape eventually healed, regenerating into the highest-growing stock of hardwood timber in the nation. Also, the lessons learned from the indiscriminate logging practices of the past would give way to a science-based, forest-stewardship approach that today ensures the long-term health, viability, and productivity of the state’s forests.

“A big part of our work is helping landowners with their journey of managing the land ... and helping them do that in a way that uses the most recent science and sustainable practices,” Cassell says, noting the vast majority of forestland in Penn’s Woods is owned by private landowners. “Our forests aren’t going to be healthy by accident: It takes people who are trained professionals, it takes loggers and people in the woods products industry, and it takes landowners who are interested in sustainable practices.”



JEFF FELTZER

‘We’re the tree huggers’

Dwight Lewis Lumber in Hillsgrove has been practicing sustainable forestry on its 16,000 acres in north-central Pennsylvania for decades.

Served by Sullivan County REC in Forksville, the lumber operation began in 1941 when Gleason Lewis built a sawmill to mill lumber harvested on the family farm. Before long, the farmer-turned-businessman was purchasing timber from neighbors and selling the lumber locally. He also began acquiring tracts of forestland in Sullivan and neighboring counties. Gleason Lewis’ son, Dwight, eventually took over the operation, and his sons, Marc and Mel, now co-own the company.

Marc, a former member of the co-op’s board of directors, says he’s been involved with the family business since he was old enough to pile lumber.

When he began working at the mill full-time after graduating from Penn State in 1978, he says there were six to eight sawmills operating in the county. Dwight Lewis Lumber, which employs about 30 people, is the last one remaining. A sister company, Lewis Lumber Products, employs an additional 30-plus workers at its retail hardwood lumber and custom-moulding and mill-work facility in Lycoming County.

Marc attributes the company’s longevity to a variety of factors, including the addition of the retail lumber and custom milling business and working with conscientious

A NEW GENERATION OF LOGGERS: Dan Wettlaufer bucks tulip poplar logs harvested on private property in Lycoming County. Second-generation loggers, Dan and his brother, Brian, members of Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative, co-own Dennis Wettlaufer Logging of Muncy Valley, which has provided contract logging services for Dwight Lewis Lumber for decades.



HARVESTING AND HELPING: Marc Lewis, a member of Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative, inspects hardwood lumber milled at Dwight Lewis Lumber in Hillsgrove. Marc and his brother, Mel, are third-generation co-owners of the business, which produces about 6 million board feet of lumber annually.

logging contractors who share its commitment to professional forestry practices.

“Another thing that sets us apart is that all of our timberlands, just like all of Pennsylvania’s state forestlands, are Forest Stewardship Council-certified,” Marc says.

“So annually, a third-party comes in and looks over our documentation and makes sure that we’re doing the right thing in the forest for the future.

“We pride ourselves in that we’re not destroying the land,” he adds. “Everybody thinks when you’re cutting trees you’re destroying the land, but we’re harvesting in order to have a new crop.”

And that harvesting, when done sustainably, results in a forest with a diversity of species and age classes that provide long-term benefits for wildlife and the environment, while also ensuring a continuous supply of timber.

“I think the biggest thing for people to understand is that, you know, we’re the tree huggers,” Marc says. “We’re not out there trying to cut down every tree. We care about trees and the future of our forests by managing them properly. And we’ve got a great product to sell.”

He says there are constant headwinds facing the lumber industry. For instance, Marc says, solid wood cabinetry has fallen out of favor, with homeowners favoring painted fiberboard instead.

“It’s been a pretty tough market for a while now,” he says. “Cherry has lost its flavor. It used to be cherry was king of the hardwoods. Now we get more requests for maples and oaks than we do for cherry.”

The one bright spot has been white oak, which has

surged in price in recent years due to the nation’s burgeoning bourbon industry, Marc says. Bourbon is aged exclusively in charred new white oak barrels.

Still chugging along

While market trends impacting the wood-products industry tend to fluctuate, Matt Sampson, president of the Pennsylvania Forestry Association board, says the industry is facing bigger threats, including invasive species and climate change.

And it’s the job of groups like the forestry association — recognized as the nation’s oldest grassroots state organization devoted to forest conservation — and the Bureau of Forestry to monitor forest conditions and find ways to keep the land healthy and vital.

“As foresters, we’ve been trained to look at the forest, see how it’s interacting and see if there’s a treatment to help that forest grow better — sort of like doctors of the woods,” says Sampson, who has a degree in industrial forestry. “I like to say, ‘Healthy forests, healthy us.’”

Sampson says Pennsylvania’s forests have proven to be remarkably resilient, and he expects that will continue as long as people find a reason to care for and value them.

“For everything that they have been battered with — invasives, climate change, the deer herd — the forests are still chugging along, and we still have a viable industry,” he says. “I feel good about the state of Pennsylvania’s forests, and I feel good about the direction Pennsylvania, and everybody involved in forestry — the industry, state, federal, private landowners — are going.” 🍷

Local Lore

Valley Rural Electric Cooperative

Super-sized Serpent

Pennsylvania is no stranger to cryptids — unexplained, elusive creatures that haunt the wilds and murky depths. Bigfoot, the Squonk and the Giwoogle all (allegedly) call the Keystone state home. In Huntingdon County, home to Valley Rural Electric Cooperative, cryptozoologists speak of a colossal reptile.

The legend of a giant snake at the Broad Top Coal Field began in the 1800s. The story goes that a lumberjack was sitting on a log when it began to move. Perhaps the log wasn't secure on the ground? Or perhaps, as the lumberjack would claim, the log was actually a gargantuan serpent?

Since then, travelers have reported running over small logs only to spot them slither across the road. In the 1950s, several strip miners also reported an abnormally sized serpent



PENNSYLVANIA PYTHON?: Since the 1800s, locals and travelers alike have reported sightings of a massive serpent with yellow markings in Huntingdon County. While details are sparse, most descriptions paint the mysterious snake as a 20-foot-long python.

roaming the mountaintop. Over time, locals have swapped tales about a 20-foot-long snake with yellow markings around its neck and eyes.

While the details about the markings are sparse, most describe the serpent as a python; however, no python species are known to be native to Pennsylvania. Some believe it may have escaped a circus train that was running along the Pennsylvania Railroad (today, Conrail). From there, it took refuge in the coal mines, venturing out to hunt.

Curious to learn more? Visit

huntingdonhistory.org or the Huntingdon County Historical Society, 106 Fourth St., Huntingdon, for more information about the giant snake and other legends.



Main Office: Huntingdon, Pa.
Consumer-members served: 22,433
Website: valleyrec.com

Derby Dreams

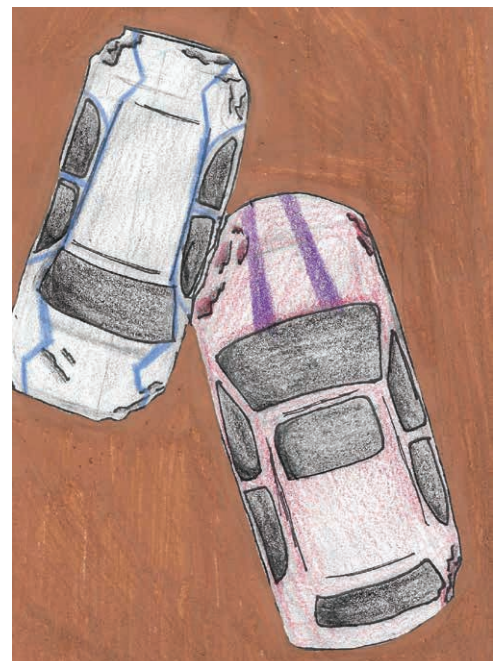
"I go to the Spartansburg County Fair in Spartansburg. Whenever I go, I watch the derby, especially when my brother participates. I was inspired by the 'Crash Course' article in *Penn Lines* to draw this, and someday, I hope to participate in a derby just like my brother."

Emily Smith, age 14, Valley Rural Electric Cooperative

CALLING ALL KIDS, ages 5 to 17: Show off your artistic skills!

Each month, we'll feature the artwork of our young readers (or our readers' youngsters), inspired by something they've read in *Penn Lines*. Paints, pencils, crayons, clay, sand – any physical medium is OK! You may send digital photos of the creation to CommunityCorner@prea.com, but please: no digital artwork.

Be sure to include the artist's name, age and electric cooperative, plus a 25- to 50-word description of the art.



REA Energy Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

REA ENERGY COOPERATIVE, INC.

75 Airport Road • P.O. Box 70
Indiana, PA 15701-0070
724-349-4800 • 800-211-5667

EBENSBURG DISTRICT OFFICE

127 Municipal Road
Ebensburg, PA 15931
814-472-8570

Website: www.reaenergy.com
Email: reaenergy@reaenergy.com

Chad Carrick
President and CEO

STAFF

Barry Baker
Indiana Operations Manager

Erin Bauer
ACRE Coordinator

Shane Cribbs
Network & Systems Manager

Dave Daugherty
Safety & Right of Way Manager

Jeff Dishong
Ebensburg Operations Supervisor

Lisa Gardill
Accounting & Finance Manager

Nick Hartman
Manager of Engineering

Stacy Hilliard, CCC, CKAE
Communications & Marketing Manager

Local Pages Editor

Bryon Roland
Purchasing & Facilities Manager

Renee Spalla
Supervisor of Consumer Services

Chris Weller
Load Management Supervisor

OUTAGES & EMERGENCIES

844-920-3395

OFFICE HOURS

Indiana Office: 7 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Ebensburg Office: 7 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Monday, Wednesday and Friday
Closed Tuesday and Thursday

Being a Member Pays



STACY HILLIARD

DID YOU KNOW YOU OWN REA Energy Cooperative? A cooperative is a not-for-profit business governed by the members who use its services. Democratically controlled and operated at-cost, a cooperative may return excess revenue, called margins, to members based on patronage. As a consumer-member, you are entitled to these margins when financial conditions are favorable. These are known as capital credits.

This year, your cooperative is paying out capital credits through the year 1984. If you were a member of the cooperative at that time, you should have received a check in the mail in October.

What are capital credits?

Capital credits are defined as: “Margins assigned to cooperative members each year based on their purchases from the cooperative (in the case of electric cooperatives, electricity). Used by the cooperative as working capital for a period of time then paid to individual members, capital credits should not be confused with profits, which are a return on capital.”

A cooperative does not earn profits like other businesses. Instead, any revenues remaining after all expenses have been paid are returned to members from time to time in proportion to their use of the co-op’s services. The size and timing of any refund a member may receive depends on the cooperative’s financial condition. The board of directors must decide if REA Energy is financially sound enough to refund a portion of outstanding capital credits.

REA Energy’s finances are set up so any capital furnished by each member is clearly reflected and credited to their capital credits account at the end of each fiscal year. Capital credits represent each member’s share of the cooperative’s retirements and can only be returned when they will not impair the operations of REA Energy.

When allocated, the capital credits — sometimes called patronage capital — go to each membership based on the amount of revenue provided by the member after deducting the cost of generation and transmission service and transition costs from their account. Upon request, a member will be provided with the details of the capital that has been credited to his/her account and the balance of the account.

Some things to remember:

- ▶ A member’s earned capital credits are reserved for them even if they discontinue REA Energy’s services. When refunds are issued, we will attempt to reach you at your last known address, so it is important for REA Energy to always have your current address.
- ▶ If a member is deceased when refunds are issued, the capital credits will belong to their estate and be paid to the executor/executrix. REA Energy will need to have certain forms (available at our offices) completed and returned to the cooperative before any distributions will be made. Per Pennsylvania law, if both the member and their executor are deceased, the monies will be returned to the state. After a waiting period, these funds are returned to

Continued on page 16B

BEING A MEMBER PAYS

Continued from page 16A

the cooperative as escheats funds that may be used for member assistance, community projects and education/scholarships.

- ▶ There is a difference between “allocated” and “retired” capital credits. Allocated refers to the amounts assigned to each member who was billed for service during the year that margins were earned; these amounts are retained until the retirement of a certain year. Once retired, REA Energy will issue refunds.
- ▶ REA Energy follows a first-in, first-out practice when retiring capital credits, where the earliest credits are retired first. For example, your neighbor may receive a refund when you do not because they were a member during a year when capital credits are being refunded and you were not.

What happens to unclaimed capital credits?

Sometimes, patronage capital retirement checks remain unclaimed. This may be due to an address change, name change or death; however, we will continue to try to reach these individuals or their heirs. A complete list of individuals who have unclaimed capital credits prior to 1980 can be found at reaenergy.com. You can access the list by clicking on the capital credits button in the top right corner of the homepage. If the monies remain unclaimed, REA Energy will eventually return the money to local communities through various means.

If you know any of the individuals listed on the website, please contact us at memberservice@reaenergy.com, 724-349-4800 or 800-211-5667. 📍

STACY HILLIARD, CCC, CKAE
COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING MANAGER

LOCAL LEGISLATORS VISIT REA ENERGY



State Reps. Brian Smith and Jim Struzzi and state Sen. Joe Pittman visited REA Energy’s Indiana office to tour the facilities and discuss legislation that could impact Pennsylvania electric cooperatives and their members.

YOUR NEWLY ELECTED REA ENERGY DIRECTORS



Michael Bertolino
District 3



Thomas Aurandt
District 4

Annual Meeting Wrapup

KAYLA KING, MARKETING AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST

REA ENERGY COOPERATIVE, INC.

(REA) held its 87th annual meeting Thursday, Sept. 19, at the Kovalchick Complex in Indiana, Pa. Nearly 400 members attended in person and virtually.

The Credentials and Elections Committee members who witnessed the annual meeting were John “Tom” Brady, Louise Bendis, Chairman Robert Fairman, Dennis Gillespie, Paula Hencel, R. Michael Keith, Shelby Miller, Janice Reichert and John Shrift.

Election results

This year, Districts 3 and 4 were up for regular election. In District 3, incumbent Michael Bertolino, board chairman, ran unopposed and was declared re-elected.

District 4 was a contested race this year; incumbent Thomas Aurandt ran against Howard Terndrup. The cooperative’s attorney, Tom Leventry, announced during the annual meeting that Aurandt, with 336 votes out of 606 total, won the seat for District 4.

Cooperative updates

This year’s special guest was Matt Leonard, PREA/Allegheny manager, government & regulatory affairs. He spoke on several topics, including federal and state legislation that could impact cooperatives, energy grid reliability grants, generation mandates, and this year’s election.

“I have to say your board of directors and the staff at REA are very engaged with local officials at the state and federal levels,” Matt said. “You have a great group of people working on your behalf, and they are as engaged, if not more engaged, than any other cooperative in the state with your elected leaders in helping me explain what it

is that we’re doing.”

Bertolino and REA President & CEO Chad Carrick held a town-hall-style presentation for their reports on the cooperative. Communications and Marketing Manager Stacy Hilliard moderated.

Bertolino said the work ethic of the cooperative’s staff, the tree-trimming program and the purchase of In The Stix Broadband are some cooperative accomplishments he is proudest of since becoming board chairman.

“I am proud of the board, the management and the employees of REA for a job well done over the years and being able to serve all our members of the cooperative with a smile and good work,” Bertolino said. “Thank you so much.”

Carrick discussed some of our members’ most frequently asked questions. One of the most popular ones concerns the rollout of broadband through REA’s subsidiary, In The Stix Broadband. Information about the three main fiber phases and the company’s existing infrastructure was presented during the annual meeting. Upon completion, the REA Energy fiber ring build will have more than 450 miles of connectable fiber, giving those in Indiana and Cambria counties an option for high-speed fiber internet. The ring is currently under construction, with approximately 90 miles completed.

Carrick also shared his top concerns about the cooperative.

“The No. 1 thing that I worry about is, of course, safety,” he said. “Safety, obviously, for the employees, the folks on the front lines and the folks at the front counter. Everybody understands nowadays that it’s dangerous out there. We see safety as a foundation in



MAKING CONNECTIONS: REA Energy Board Chairman Michael Bertolino, left, and President & CEO Chad Carrick, right, welcome Matt Leonard, PREA/Allegheny manager, government & regulatory affairs, to the cooperative’s 87th annual meeting.

everything we do at the cooperative.”

Carrick wrapped up with a discussion on blinks, outages and reliability.

While most of the cooperative’s outages occur because of downed tree limbs during major storms (storms and fallen trees made up approximately 70% of all outages in 2023), REA has also experienced numerous outages and blinks from our transmission supplier, FirstEnergy. Carrick shared that the co-op has an established relationship with local Penelec employees, which helps when we are trying to get power restored. REA Energy has also invested more than \$40 million in tree trimming and system improvements over the past five years to decrease outage frequency and times.

“The board just passed a four-year construction work plan for \$42 million,” he said, “so you can see we’re getting pretty aggressive with making certain our members receive reliable power.”

Other business

Immediately following the business meeting, the board held a reorganization meeting and elected officers for 2024-2025. They are Bertolino, chairman; Wayne Farabaugh, vice chairman; and Robert Neese, secretary/treasurer. Farabaugh was chosen to serve as the cooperative’s representative on the PREA board, and Neese will serve as the alternate PREA delegate. 📍

REA ENERGY COOPERATIVE, INC. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

District 1 Tom Beresnyak

District 2 Rick Shope

District 3 Michael Bertolino

District 4 Thomas Aurandt

District 5 Robert Neese

District 6 John Learn

District 7 Anthony Enciso

District 8 Wayne Farabaugh

District 9 Sandra Dill

Electrical Safety Tips for Hunters



- Keep clear of electrical equipment.
- Do not shoot at or near power lines.
- Know where power lines are located where you hunt.
- Be vigilant in areas where lines are less visible.
- Never place deer stands on utility poles.
- Never place decoys on power lines or equipment.



IMPORTANT NOTICE!

REA Energy Offices will be closed Monday, Nov. 11, in observance of Veterans Day and Thursday, Nov. 28, in observance of Thanksgiving. Please call 844-920-3395 to report any power outages. Payments can be placed in the drop box at both office locations, by calling our payment system at 844-920-3395, or via SmartHub at reaenergy.com.

Right-of-Way Management/Facility Construction News

REA Energy contractors from Penn Line Tree Service will be trimming the rights of way in the Uniontown substation area in addition to emergency maintenance areas in November.

Members in the affected areas will be notified. Contractors will perform all right-of-way work per REA Energy specifications. All contractors will carry employee identification cards, and their vehicles will display their company name. If you have any questions, call 724-349-4800 or view the specifications at reaenergy.com.

Your Board of Directors



Michael J. Bertolino
Chairman
District 3

Wayne Farabaugh
Vice Chairman
District 8

Robert P. Neese
Secretary/Treasurer
District 5

Sandra Dill
District 9

Tom Beresnyak
District 1

Anthony Enciso
District 7

Thomas Aurandt
District 4

John R. Learn
District 6

J.R. "Rick" Shope
District 2

REA Energy is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

STORMS CAN BRING

HIDDEN ELECTRICAL DANGERS

Outside

Severe weather can sometimes cause damage to overhead power lines. That damage could be noticeable — a downed line across an open road, for instance. However, it may not be as obvious if it is camouflaged by storm damage.

In either case — whether you see a downed line or you suspect one could be hidden under debris or standing water — do not go near the area. Stay away and call 9-1-1, and a crew will be dispatched to deenergize the line. Warn others to stay away as well.

Power lines and other electrical equipment do not have to be sparking, arcing (giving off a flame), or on fire to be energized.

At Home

Never step into a flooded basement or other standing water. The water could be covering electrical outlets, appliances, or cords.

If your home's electrical system has been damaged, water-logged or otherwise compromised, have it thoroughly inspected by a professional electrician before using any electricity (inside or out).

Learn more at:

 **Safe
Electricity.org**[®]

**Always assume a
downed power line is
energized, dangerous
and deadly.**



G&Ts are the Power Behind Your Power

SCOTT FLOOD

YOU MIGHT BE SURPRISED to learn that your local electric cooperative doesn't generate the electricity you use in your home or business. In most cases, your co-op does not own a power plant but instead purchases electricity from an outside source, then routes the power to your community.

For more than 900 electric cooperatives across the country, the source for electricity is a different kind of cooperative. Referred to as "G&Ts," these generation & transmission cooperatives exist to help electric co-ops serve their members as reliably and affordably as possible. Their only members are local electric co-ops, so G&Ts are actually cooperatives that serve — you guessed it — cooperatives.

Across the nation, 64 G&T cooperatives provide access to wholesale power at a better price than each member co-op could obtain on its own. And like your local co-op, G&Ts are not-for-profit organizations that exist to serve the needs of their members.

Working behind the scenes

The power supplier for the 14 rural electric cooperatives in Pennsylvania and New Jersey is Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Allegheny). Headquartered in Harrisburg, Allegheny has a diversified power supply portfolio with significant investments in nuclear and hydropower resources and minimal reliance on carbon-based fuels. Approximately 60% of its energy supply comes from these clean, stable and relatively low-cost resources. The remainder is purchased on the open market.

G&Ts like Allegheny employ a leadership team of experts in data, finance, engineering and other important specialties that are essential

for electric co-ops.

"Allegheny also works in close coordination with its sister organization, the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association (PREA)," PREA/Allegheny President & CEO Steve Brame says. "Through this important partnership, we not only work together to power rural Pennsylvania but also to empower the cooperatives and members who call these communities home."

In addition, G&Ts constantly work with local co-op staff to study and forecast power needs.

Allegheny, for instance, manages the cooperatives' Coordinated Load Management System (CLMS), which lets cooperative consumer-members become partners in the effort to control electric rates. CLMS works by shifting electricity use of residential electric water heaters, electric thermal storage units, dual fuel home heating systems and other special equipment

in the homes of volunteer consumers from times of peak demand to times of lesser demand. In doing so, the program improves the efficiency of your cooperative's system, cuts costly demand charges and reduces the need for new generating capacity.

So while your co-op may not generate the electricity you use every day, it's part of an even bigger not-for-profit cooperative whose mission is to make your service even more reliable and affordable. As the power behind your power, just like your electric co-op, G&T cooperatives like Allegheny exist to serve you. 🌱

For more than four decades, business writer SCOTT FLOOD has worked with electric cooperatives to build knowledge of energy-related issues among directors, staff and members. Scott writes on a variety of energy-related topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 electric co-ops.



SHIFTING AND SAVING: Jeremy Kelley, Coordinated Load Management System (CLMS) database and SCADA administrator, inspects a connection for the CLMS servers at the Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc. headquarters in Harrisburg.

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The Joy of Puppyhood

STEVE PIATT

IF A DOG OWNER, AND especially a hunter, ever forgets the time, effort, expense, and patience it takes to raise a solid canine companion for both home and field, I have a remedy for that.

Simply get another puppy.

Paula and I have done just that, plucking a 7-week old black Labrador retriever from a quality northern New York kennel in mid-July, knowing that in the process our summer schedule — and our lives — would change dramatically.

No trips to PNC Park for a couple Pirates games. No dinners out. Early wake-up calls courtesy of a whining ball of fur. A singular focus on getting control of “Molly,” who learned her name at the typical nine weeks, snapping her head our way before resuming her gnawing attack on our tolerant 4-year-old yellow Lab, Riley.

It’s a scenario we’re well accustomed to. Molly is our eighth Lab, and while we’ve made plenty of training mistakes in the past, we’ll likely discover a couple new ones this time around.

But already, there are promising signs. Molly loves to retrieve, bouncing with joy after her training bumper. She took her first swim at three months and made a water retrieve a day later. Now, she waits patiently in front of her bowl of kibble, a pained expression on her face, until we finish her prayer and say the magic word — “Amen” — that allows her to dive in.

In fact, there’s not much she won’t eat. Sticks. Acorns. Pebbles. Grass. It’s a constant battle as we grapple with her, shoving our fingers into her jaws — knowing her razor-sharp puppy teeth await — to remove whatever she’s eating that she shouldn’t.



MEET MOLLY: The Piatts have welcomed a new member to the family – Molly, a heart-melting black Lab puppy who’s slowly but surely learning the word, “No.”

She is a typical Lab pup, one part angelic heart-melter and one part Tasmanian devil, and she’s able to make that transition in the time it takes to blurt out a quick, sharp, “No!”

Our vocabulary these days has been boiled down to one-syllable words; only the tone and volume change depending on the gravity of the situation. Sit. Stay. Come. Down. Occasionally, we’ll add some longer statements, such as “Drop it!” or “Leave it!” or “Go pee.”

But the go-to has, and will always be, a simple, “No.” We say it hundreds of times daily. And by nightfall, as Molly continues to bounce from one trouble spot to the next, we’ve settled into a rhythmic monotone of “no,” “no,” “no,” like the sound of an old LP record that’s skipping.

We know, based on experience with seven previous Labs, this is the way it has to be. What will eventually emerge in time and with our consistent effort is a well-behaved canine at home and in social settings, comfortable around both people and other dogs.

And with this two-pronged approach to training, Molly should also become a superb hunting dog, with our focus on pheasants as opposed to waterfowl.

The product of hunting and field trial stock, Molly is exactly what we were looking for, even if it makes for additional training challenges. She is supercharged, with a boundless energy level and intensity that will serve her — and us — well in the field. And, in time, she’ll learn to dial it down on the home front, perfectly content to just be part of the family.

As much as we’d like to see Molly get her first snoot full of pheasant, we won’t rush things. She certainly won’t head afield on opening day this year, but likely later in the season. Riley, a Kansas-bred pointing Lab and a fine hunter on her own, will serve as an excellent example for the excited pup. A couple trips to a shooting preserve will offer the kind of controlled setting — and steady action — needed to give us a clear idea of how Molly performs.

That, however, is looking too far ahead.

Right now, Molly is eyeing my pricey hunting boots.

“No!” 🐾

STEVE PIATT is a veteran newspaper editor and outdoor writer who along with his wife, Paula, has hunted and fished across North America. He is most at home on the water and in the fields of the Keystone State. He lives in Bradford County.

ADVERTISEMENT

Popular CoQ10 Pills Leave Millions Suffering

Could this newly-discovered brain fuel solve America's worsening memory crisis?

PALM BEACH, FLORIDA — Millions of Americans take the supplement known as CoQ10. It's the coenzyme that supercharges the "energy factories" in your cells known as *mitochondria*. But there's a serious flaw that's leaving millions unsatisfied.

As you age, your mitochondria break down and fail to produce energy. In a revealing study, a team of researchers showed that 95 percent of the mitochondria in a 90-year-old man were damaged, compared to almost no damage in the mitochondria of a 5-year-old.

Taking CoQ10 alone is not enough to solve this problem. Because as powerful as CoQ10 is, there's one critical thing it fails to do: it can't create new mitochondria to replace the ones you lost.

And that's bad news for Americans all over the country. The loss of cellular energy is a problem for the memory concerns people face as they get older.

"We had no way of replacing lost mitochondria until a recent discovery changed everything," says Dr. Al Sears, founder and medical director of the Sears Institute for Anti-Aging Medicine in Palm Beach, Florida. "Researchers discovered the only nutrient known to modern science that has the power to trigger the growth of new mitochondria."

Why Taking CoQ10 is Not Enough

Dr. Sears explains, "This new discovery is so powerful, it can multiply your mitochondria by 55 percent in just a few weeks. That's the equivalent of restoring decades of lost brain power."

This exciting nutrient — called PQQ (*pyrroloquinoline quinone*) — is the driving force behind a revolution in aging. When paired with CoQ10, this dynamic duo has the power to reverse the age-related memory losses you may have thought were beyond your control.

Dr. Sears pioneered a new formula — called **Ultra Accel Q** — that combines both CoQ10 and PQQ to support maximum cellular energy and the normal growth of new mitochondria. **Ultra Accel Q** is the first of its kind to address both problems and is already creating huge demand.

In fact, demand has been so overwhelming that inventories repeatedly sell out. But a closer look at **Ultra Accel Q** reveals there are good reasons why sales are booming.

Science Confirms the Many Benefits of PQQ

The medical journal *Biochemical Pharmacology* reports that PQQ is up to 5,000 times more efficient in sustaining energy production than common antioxidants. With the ability to keep every cell in your body operating at full strength, **Ultra Accel Q** delivers more than just added brain power and a faster memory.

People feel more energetic, more alert, and don't need naps in the afternoon. The boost in cellular energy generates more power to your heart, lungs, muscles, and more.

"With the PQQ in Ultra Accel, I have energy I never thought possible at my age," says Colleen R., one of Dr. Sears's patients. "I'm in my 70s but feel 40 again. I think clearly, move with real energy and sleep like a baby."

The response has been overwhelmingly positive, and Dr. Sears receives countless emails from his patients and readers. "My patients tell me they feel better than they have in years. This is ideal for people who are feeling old and run down, or for those who feel more forgetful. It surprises many that you can add healthy and productive years to your life simply by taking **Ultra Accel Q** every day."

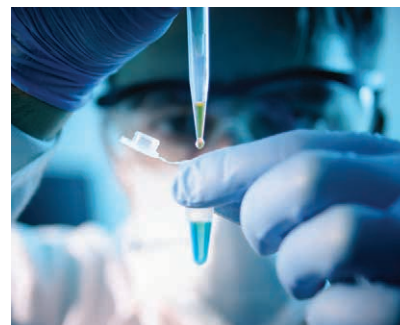
You may have seen Dr. Sears on television or read one of his 12 best-selling books. Or you may have seen him speak at the 2016 WPBF 25 Health and Wellness Festival in South Florida, featuring Dr. Oz and special guest Suzanne Somers. Thousands of people attended Dr. Sears's lecture on anti-aging breakthroughs and waited in line for hours during his book signing at the event.

Will Ultra Accel Q Multiply Your Energy?

Ultra Accel Q is turning everything we thought we knew about youthful energy on its head. Especially for people over age 50. In less than 30 seconds every morning, you can harness the power of this breakthrough discovery to restore peak energy and your "spark for life."

So, if you've noticed less energy as you've gotten older, and you want an easy way to reclaim your youthful edge, this new opportunity will feel like blessed relief.

The secret is the "energy multiplying" molecule that activates a dormant gene in your body that declines with age, which then instructs your cells to pump out fresh energy from the inside-out. This



MEMORY-BUILDING SENSATION: Top doctors are now recommending new **Ultra Accel Q** because it restores decades of lost brain power without a doctor's visit.

growth of new "energy factories" in your cells is called mitochondrial biogenesis.

Instead of falling victim to that afternoon slump, you enjoy sharp-as-a-tack focus, memory, and concentration from sunup to sundown. And you get more done in a day than most do in a week. Regardless of how exhausting the world is now.

Dr. Sears reports, "The most rewarding aspect of practicing medicine is watching my patients get the joy back in their lives. **Ultra Accel Q** sends a wake-up call to every cell in their bodies... And they actually feel young again."

And his patients agree. "I noticed a difference within a few days," says Jerry from Ft. Pierce, Florida. "My endurance has almost doubled, and I feel it mentally, too. There's a clarity and sense of well-being in my life that I've never experienced before."

How To Get Ultra Accel Q

This is the official nationwide release of **Ultra Accel Q** in the United States. And so, the company is offering a special discount supply to anyone who calls during the official launch.

An Order Hotline has been set up for local readers to call. This gives everyone an equal chance to try **Ultra Accel Q**. And your order is backed up by a no-hassle, 90-day money back guarantee. No questions asked.

The discount offer will be available for a limited time only. All you have to do is call TOLL FREE 1-877-506-1743 right now and use promo code **PLUAQ1124** to secure your own supply.

Important: Due to **Ultra Accel Q** recent media exposure, phone lines are often busy. If you call and do not immediately get through, please be patient and call back.

Best Smart-Home Tech on a Budget

MIRANDA BOUTELLE

DEAR MIRANDA: How can smart-home technology help me lower my power bill?

A: Smart technology can make it easier to save energy by simplifying or automating tasks. It can also optimize energy use to reduce waste and improve efficiency.

When upgrading to smart technology at home, consider the purchase cost as well as long-term savings. For example, you may pay a little more for a product with the latest technology, but it could result in significant savings each year and over the lifetime of the appliance.

Here are some smart devices that will take the work out of saving energy:

Heating and cooling systems:

Smart thermostats save energy by automatically adjusting your heating or cooling system. For example, you can save as much as 10% a year on heating and cooling costs by adjusting your thermostat 7 to 10 degrees from

its normal setting for eight hours a day, according to the Department of Energy (DOE).

You can program a smart thermostat to change the temperature when you are asleep or away or use a smartphone app to adjust your thermostat settings. Some models use artificial intelligence to maximize efficiency by learning your patterns and preferences. Prices range from \$80 to \$250, depending on features. Smart thermostats do not work with all heating and cooling systems, so check the compatibility before you buy.

Water heaters: Your water heater can also be controlled for energy savings. Installing a timer on your electric water heater to turn it off at night and when you don't need hot water can reduce energy use 5% to 12%, according to the DOE.

If you are already planning to replace your electric storage water heater with a heat pump water heater, consider a model equipped with smart technology features, including Wi-Fi capabilities that enable you to control it remotely or during peak demand times, view the amount of hot water available, and track energy use. Some models can notify you or shut off if a leak is detected. Depending on the manufacturer

and size of the unit, a smart heat pump water heater may only cost a few hundred dollars more than a standard heat pump water heater.

Lighting: Smart lighting gives you the power to control lights in your home remotely or set a lighting schedule that fits your lifestyle. This can save energy while providing security benefits, too. If you or other members of your household are notorious for leaving lights on, smart lighting can also help with that.

Smart light switches are another budget-friendly way to control lighting. They're priced from about \$10 to \$50. Some have dimmable options and can also control ceiling fans. Some also have occupancy sensors that turn lights off when no movement is detected in a room.

A wide variety of smart shades, curtains and blinds are available, too, including styles with integrated controls. You can also add smart controls to your existing blinds or curtains. Both options allow you to adjust the tilt of blinds and open or close curtains. Set a schedule, control them remotely or use a voice command paired with a voice assistant, such as Alexa or Google Home. This can help to reduce heating and cooling needs. Smart controls start around \$70. To save the most energy, prioritize windows with the most incoming light.

Upgrading to smart-home technologies can make it easy to use less energy at home. Choose options that make the most sense for your lifestyle to optimize savings. 🏠

MIRANDA BOUTELLE is the chief operating officer at Efficiency Services Group in Oregon, a cooperatively owned energy efficiency company. She has more than 20 years of experience helping people save energy at home, and she writes on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.



IN CONTROL: Smart thermostat apps let you adjust your thermostat settings when you are away from home.

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ANNE M. KIRCHNER

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SPICY TURKEY HASH

- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 large russet potatoes, diced
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 green pepper, diced
- 1½ cups turkey breast, diced
- 1 cup pepper jack cheese, grated
- 6 eggs
- ¼ cup green onions, diced
- 1 avocado, diced
- ½ cup cherry tomatoes, diced

Cook the potatoes, salt, pepper and red pepper flakes in olive oil over medium heat until the potatoes are fork tender. Add the green pepper and turkey. Lower the heat to medium and sprinkle the cheese over the hash. Make 6 wells in the hash; crack an egg into each well. Cover the pan and cook until the egg whites are set. Garnish the hash with green onions, avocado and tomatoes. *Makes 4 to 6 servings.*



CRANBERRY PANCAKES

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 2 eggs, slightly beaten
- ½ cup yogurt
- ½ cup water
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- ⅓ cup homemade cranberry sauce

Combine the flour, sugar, baking powder and baking soda in a large bowl. In a separate bowl, combine the eggs, yogurt, water and butter. Whisk together the dry and liquid ingredients. Stir in the cranberry sauce (recipe below). Cook the pancakes on a 300-degree, preheated griddle. *Makes 10 to 12 pancakes.*

Homemade Cranberry Sauce: Combine 12 ounces fresh cranberries, 1 quartered orange with the peel and 1/3 cup granulated sugar in a food processor. Pulse until sauce resembles salsa.



MASHED POTATO QUICHE

- 2 cups mashed potatoes
- 4 tablespoons butter, divided
- 1 shallot, diced
- 1½ cups sliced mushrooms
- 1½ cups freshly chopped broccoli
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 6 ounces Swiss cheese, shredded
- 4 eggs
- 1 cup whole milk

Spread and press the mashed potatoes into a greased deep-dish pie pan. Bake for 30 minutes at 375 degrees. Brush the potato crust with 2 tablespoons melted butter and bake 15 minutes more. Sauté the shallot, mushrooms, broccoli and oregano in 2 tablespoons butter. Remove the pie crust from the oven. Sprinkle Swiss cheese over the crust and add the sauteed vegetables. In a small bowl, beat together the eggs and milk. Pour the mixture over the vegetables. Bake for 45 minutes or until the eggs are firm. *Makes 8 servings.*

Great Holiday Insights from a Cartoon Cat

MITCHELL KYD

OF ALL THE THINGS THAT define the holiday season, it seems to me that recalling shared memories must be one of the very best hallmarks.

In our house, weeks ahead of families and friends balancing on extra chairs to squeeze around a suddenly small table, we return to an annual ritual of rewatching our favorite holiday movies. Many are true oldies now, but they're always goodies. They include the original black-and-white version of "Miracle on 34th Street" and the 1964 Rankin-Bass stop-motion classic about Rudolph.

The year my son was born, "A Garfield Christmas" hit the TV specials. That snarky feline had been catapulted out of the cartoon pages and onto TV screens five years earlier, but it was the first time I had heard him whine and complain in a voice of his own. It was an instant hit for us. The story of his holiday visit to the farm with his human, Jon, wrapped up some great gift-giving insight. Creative and resourceful, Garfield cobbled together a scratching post from an old gardening tool for his dog buddy Odie (not only a great gift but a labor of love when you don't have thumbs). While working in the barn, Garfield discovered an old stash of Grandpa's love letters to Grandma, which he presented to her and warmed her heart. The moral of Garfield's TV story? Christmas gifts come from the heart.

That thought certainly makes my giving more fun and gratifying — for me and for the people I hold closest. A meander through a flea market led to one of my best gifts last year when a vintage toy Jeep magically appeared among the clutter of a kids' toy section. It was green, released by Tonka in 1971, and although it was big enough to safely transport an entire platoon of toy Army men, it wasn't Army-green. It was bright lime, very much like my daughter's real Jeep. Who knew at the time that toy was made that it was a preview of coming attractions? The toy was produced more than 30 years before Jeep released a Wrangler with similar bright paint. I knew she would love it.

It was obvious that little Jeep had seen heavy action and

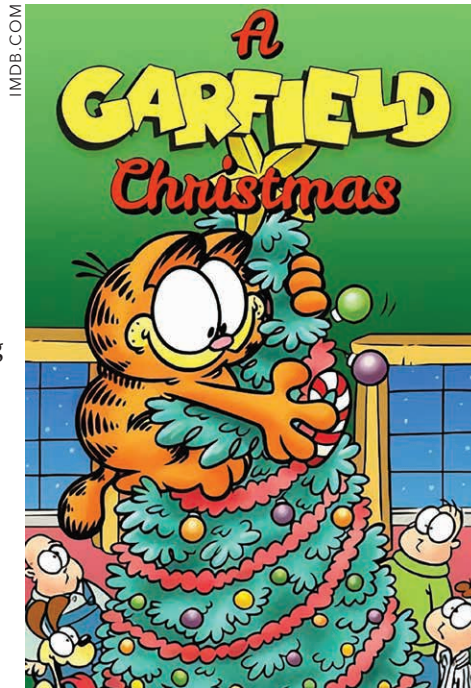
tough duty in backyards and playgrounds. The metal body was slightly battered with a bit of rust where the paint had worn off. There was even a little sandbox grit in the crevices. It had survived 50-plus years intact, but the dents and scars told a story of happy kids spending hours barreling through mud holes and ruts. Because that Jeep already had stories of its own, it was a perfect gift for a Jeep Girl from her storyteller mom.

Two weeks later, I was shopping in my favorite used book store, looking for just the right thing and nothing in particular, when a children's hardback jumped out of the stacks. "Bounce the Jeep" told a charming tale about a farmer's Jeep off on a peace-time adventure of his own. Published in 1945 at the close of WWII, it was released as the American public was first being introduced to the Jeep as a civilian utility vehicle. That little book had been loved up and handed down for nearly 80 years while becoming a piece of history. Along the way, I'm sure it had a string of parents and grandparents reading it aloud. I knew my daughter would appreciate the power of being next in line to share it.

That kids' book and a battered toy Jeep were my favorite finds for my grown kid last year, and while I'm not suggesting you abandon buying needed items or completely ignore a wish list, maybe this is the year to go rogue. Let a few, true surprises find you. The best gifts can be waiting anywhere, and Garfield has already suggested where to start looking.

Happy holidays to all of you! Thank you for making time to read this story; it is my 50th column for *Penn Lines*. I love hearing from readers, and if you'd like to share a gift-giving memory or comment on a story, contact me at mkydfreelancer@gmail.com. Cheers! 🍷

YVONNE BUTTS-MITCHELL celebrates the joys and poignant moments of rural living under the pen name Mitchell Kyd. Her stories from the Path Valley Hotel were hatched by encounters with contractors, critters and creepy crawlies while rehabbing the family cabin after its 17-year stint as a giant closet.



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Average Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions, 0 (September 0).
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Average Paid Distribution by other Classes of Mail through the USPS, 16 (September 14).
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Average In-County, 0 (September 0).
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TOTAL DISTRIBUTION: Average, 169,303 (September 169,804).
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Peter A. Fitzgerald

Editor DATE: 9-27-2024

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No Pie for You

JOHN KASUN

MY WIFE CAME HOME FROM the grocery store last week with the car loaded with groceries. My job, of course, was to get the groceries from the car, bring them into the kitchen and help with the sorting. The final step is getting everything properly stored. Aside from the refrigerated items, most go in our hall pantry.

I noticed she had bought several cans of canned milk, and when I went to place them on the shelf in the pantry, I saw we already had several cans on hand. I realize that it pays to have extras, but with the rising cost of groceries, it is also important to know what you need and what you already have on hand.

Now, I have been married to the same wonderful woman for much of my life. However, despite the many years I've been married, I constantly amaze myself at some of the stupid things I do — and I did a whopper while putting those groceries away.

Walking into the kitchen with the cans of milk in my hand I said, "I just wanted you to know we already have several cans of milk on the shelf, and I don't think we really needed any more." As the words were coming out of my mouth, I saw her remove several large cans of pumpkin from a bag and place them on the table. As she slowly turned toward me, I realized she was planning to bake the pumpkin pies I had requested earlier in the week. She was also thinking ahead to Thanksgiving. She always adds some canned milk to her pumpkin pies, which happen to be one of my three favorites.

"When you want to take over the cooking and baking in this house, let me know and then you can also be in charge of buying the groceries," she said.

"Oh, you misunderstood," I stammered. "I didn't actually mean we had too much canned milk on hand. I meant to say you can NEVER HAVE too much canned milk on hand."

It was a feeble attempt at pulling my foot out of my mouth, where it seemed firmly entrenched. Her sudden silence told me my pumpkin pie was now further away than it had been a few moments earlier and my next wedding anniversary might be in jeopardy, too.

The whole incident took less than 30 seconds, and it reminded me of the "Seinfeld" episode where Jerry and his friends decide to order soup from a local eatery where the chef, who they dubbed the "Soup Nazi," was very particular and high strung. He was famous for his excellent soups, but had very strict requirements for customers ordering them. If someone made even the slightest mistake, he would dismiss them with: "No soup for you!"

In this pie situation, I had no one to blame but myself. I crossed that invisible line. My wife never tells me what oil to put in the car or what brand of tires to buy, and I had no business telling her how much canned milk to keep on hand.

Books have been written on marriage, but actually the secret to a happy one is quite simple. In many ways, it is very much like electricity. You don't have to understand how it works to realize its

benefits, but you do have to respect it or you'll get shocked. A good marriage is very much the same thing: Neither one of you is in charge; it's an equal partnership. You work with your partner to get the job done and respect what she (or he) does, even if you don't always agree with how they do it.

If I had done that, I would be eating pumpkin pie right now instead of crow. She didn't say it, but I could see it in her eyes: "No pie for you!" 🍷



JOHN KASUN, a lifelong Pennsylvanian with more than 30 years of writing experience, looks for the humor in everyday life and then tells a story from that perspective. He is a member of Huntingdon-based Valley Rural Electric Cooperative.

Thank You For Your Entries

NOVEMBER IS ALWAYS AN INTERESTING time of year. Big events happen around the same time color starts fading from our world and the cold forces us inside. But maybe that's why we wrap up the month by giving thanks for the blessings we can still find.

At *Penn Lines*, we're thankful for you, dear readers, and the many photos you've sent us all year long. Our 2024 contest is now closed, and the winning entries, chosen by an independent panel of judges, will be featured in the January and February issues of *Penn Lines*. But keep your best shots coming for next year's Rural Reflections contest. If your photo wins top honors, you could receive a \$75 prize in one of our five contest categories: artistic, human, landscape, animal and editor's choice. See the 2025 contest submission information below. 📧

EILEEN FARR • TRI-COUNTY REC



How to enter

AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHERS are encouraged to send photos for the 2025 Rural Reflections contest (no digital files) to: *Penn Lines* Photos, P.O. Box 1266, Harrisburg, PA 17108-1266. On the back of each photo, include your name, address, phone number and the name of the electric cooperative that serves your home, business or seasonal residence.

Remember: Our publication deadlines require us to work in advance, so send your seasonal photos in early. Photos that do not reflect any specific season may be sent at any time. Photos will be returned one year after receipt if a self-addressed, stamped envelope is included.



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JOHN BENDER • CLAVERACK REC



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ADDRESS CHANGES:

For change of address, please contact your local electric cooperative. For cooperative contact information, please visit www.prea.com/member-cooperatives

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AND

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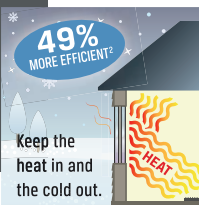


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¹DETAILS OF OFFER: Offer expires 11/30/2024. Not valid with other offers or prior purchases. Buy one (1) window or entry/patio door, get one (1) window or entry/patio door 40% off, and 12 months no money down, no monthly payments, no interest when you purchase four (4) or more windows or entry/patio doors between 11/12/2024 and 11/30/2024. 40% off windows and entry/patio doors are less than or equal to lowest cost window or entry/patio door in the order. Additional \$45 off each window/door; minimum purchase of 4 required, taken after initial discount(s), when you purchase by 11/30/2024. 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 provided by various equal opportunity lenders. 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. 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. ⁴It 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. ⁵Review aggregator survey of 5-star reviews among leading full service window replacement companies. December 2022 Reputation. "Renewal by Andersen" and all other marks where denoted are trademarks of their respective owners. © 2024 Andersen Corporation. All rights reserved. RBA13747 ⁶Using U.S. and imported parts.