

MAY 2023

PENNLINES

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ON THE COVER

Jesse Phillips, the herd manager for Sugar Branch Farms in Bradford County, wants other farmers to know depression isn't a dirty word.

PHOTO BY KAYLIN E. ACRI

Delivering Real Results for Pennsylvania



GOV. JOSH SHAPIRO AND I were elected to bring people together and get things done for all Pennsylvanians.

We know the people of Pennsylvania want an economy that works for them and their families, safer and healthier communities, a quality education for their kids and a Commonwealth where real freedom is protected. Whether you're a farmer in Bradford County or a nurse in Bedford County, if you live in a big city or a small town,

the Shapiro-Davis Administration is working for you.

We got down to business our very first week in office, signing an executive order to eliminate the requirement for a college degree for 65,000 state jobs. In our second week in office, the governor signed an executive order to transform how the state approaches licensing, certifications and permits. Under the Shapiro-Davis Administration, businesses will have certainty when they apply for a state permit or license, with a timeline the state is required to meet. And if we don't respond by that deadline, applicants get their money back. Those are just two examples of how we're delivering real results for the people of Pennsylvania.

In early March, the governor unveiled his budget, a set of commonsense solutions to the most pressing issues facing Pennsylvania communities. Some of the highlights of the budget proposal include:

- Expanding the Property Tax and Rent Rebate Program to help more seniors and disabled Pennsylvanians afford to stay in their homes;
- Providing funding for Pennsylvania agriculture and the farms all across the Commonwealth that put food on our tables and in our stores;
- Addressing key workforce shortages by providing tax breaks for those who want to become cops, nurses and teachers in Pennsylvania;
- Funding nearly 400 new Pennsylvania State Police troopers;
- Creating a new grant program for rural public libraries;
- Providing universal free breakfast in schools; and
- Investing more in apprenticeship programs, bringing career and technical training back into the classroom to give students the freedom to chart their own course.

I grew up in McKeesport, a steel town that has often felt forgotten by our leaders at the state and federal levels. Many rural Pennsylvanians can understand that feeling. As the governor noted in his budget address, it's unfair that too many rural communities lack access to health care, affordable high-speed internet and capital. The Shapiro-Davis Administration is committed to breaking down barriers for communities that have been left out of our shared prosperity.

Gov. Shapiro and I believe that government can and should be a force for good in our lives, that we can do big things — if we work together. 🤝

LT. GOV. AUSTIN DAVIS

EDITOR
Peter A. Fitzgerald

MANAGING EDITOR
Jill M. Ercolino

SENIOR EDITOR
Michael T. Crawford

LAYOUT & DESIGN
Kaylin E. Acri

ADVERTISING & PRODUCTION
COORDINATOR
Michelle M. Smith

CONTRIBUTING COLUMNISTS
Yvonne Butts-Mitchell,
James Dulle, John Kasun,
Anne M. Kirchner, Steve Piatt

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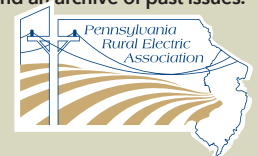
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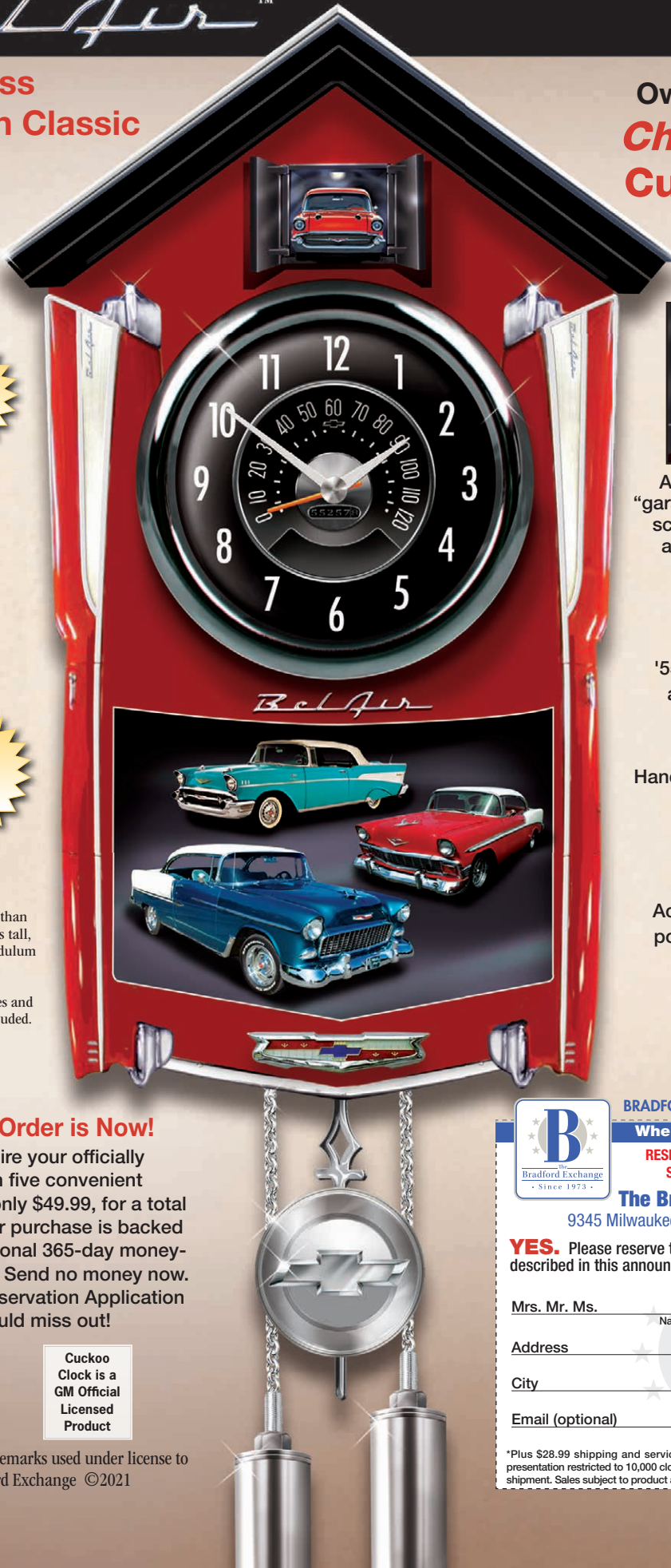
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THE HUMAN CONNECTION

I recently asked Bard to tell me a story. Now, Bard isn't one of our staff writers or columnists. Bard is actually Google's new artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot, a computer program designed to simulate human conversations. More than just a search engine, Bard accesses the knowledge of the internet and uses language modeling technology to formulate responses to questions.

AI has been in the news lately due to rapid advancements in this technology. Some AI platforms can pass medical exams, write college essays – even tell jokes and express opinions. Bard told me it thought the new Major League Baseball rules have made the game more exciting.

The pace of AI advancement has some technology experts nervous about the future (think: the Terminator movies where machines take over). Several tech leaders, including Tesla CEO Elon Musk and Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak, have even called for a pause in AI development to assess the risk to humanity.

Google acknowledges that Bard is an experimental system, and that it is prone to mistakes. When I asked Bard to tell me a story about the moon, it told me a story about a little girl who went to the moon, where she met a rabbit and, overhead, she could see – the moon. When I asked Bard to tell me a story about rural Pennsylvania, it told me a story about a little girl who cared for an injured deer on her farm. She named it Bambi, but had to leave Bambi behind because her parents had to leave the farm to find work in the city. They eventually made enough money to buy – you guessed it – a farm. And Bambi and the little girl were reunited and lived happily ever after.

Inconsistencies aside, the stories seemed to lack something in the telling – perhaps a human touch. No doubt, Bard and other AI platforms will get better, but I have my doubts about machines taking over. Rather, I believe we'll find a way to work together. From the wheel to the word processor, that's been the case with humans and machines.

In this month's *Penn Lines*, there's a story of co-op members using software to improve efficiency for a farming business. Machines play an important role, but it's the human connection that makes the story.



PETER A. FITZGERALD
EDITOR



SENIOR FOOD BOX PROGRAM: If you're a senior citizen, you may be eligible to receive a box of nutritious food monthly from the state Department of Agriculture.

SOMETHING FOR SENIORS
Program provides nutritious foods

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture is participating in the Senior Food Box Program, which is designed to improve the health of low-income senior citizens by supplementing their diets with nutritious foods.

Residents who are at least 60 years old and meet certain household guidelines are eligible to participate.

The boxes are not intended to provide a complete diet, but are good sources of nutrients typically lacking in the diets of older Americans. Among the types of food included are nonfat dry and shelf-stable milk, juice, oats, ready-to-eat cereal, rice, pasta, dry beans, peanut butter, canned meat, poultry or fish, and canned fruits and vegetables.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture purchases the food for the state Department of Agriculture, which works with local nonprofit agencies to facilitate the distribution of monthly food boxes to eligible participants.

For more information, call 800-468-2433 or email RA-fooddist@pa.gov.

HELP WANTED
State looking for groups to help keep Pennsylvania beautiful

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) is looking for individuals and groups who want to keep Pennsylvania beautiful by picking up litter along 150,000 acres of state-maintained roadside. PennDOT has a wide variety of beautification programs available for those interested.

The agency will provide volunteers with safety training, gloves, safety vests, trash bags and, if requested, warning signs to use during litter pick-ups.

Volunteers must be at least 8 years old, and participants under 18 must be accompanied by an adult. Those interested should contact their local PennDOT County Maintenance Office for help in selecting a stretch of road or an area to beautify.

OH, DEER!
Pa. deer population 'in a pretty good place,' state official says

The Pennsylvania Game Commission reports hunters harvested an

estimated 422,960 white-tailed deer during the 2022-2023 hunting season with 164,190 bucks and 258,770 antlerless deer taken. These numbers represent a 12% increase over the previous year's estimated take.

"The long-term buck harvest trend indicates Pennsylvania's deer population is in a pretty good place right now," says David Stainbrook, Game Commission Deer and Elk Section supervisor. "We see generally stable population trends in most of the state, near goal levels, and we are seeing more older bucks available for harvest. For five years running, about one of every four Pennsylvania hunters has tagged a buck, with two of every three bucks harvested being 2.5 years old or older."

The regular firearms deer season accounted for the largest part of the 2022-2023 deer harvest, as is typical in most years. Firearms hunters took more than 250,000 deer, while bowhunters accounted for just over one-third of the total deer harvest

with more than 145,600 whitetails. The muzzleloader harvest was a little more than 25,700.

THIS & THAT Fish-for-Free Days set in May, July

Two annual Fish-for-Free Days are coming up Sunday, May 28, and Tuesday, July 4, in Pennsylvania. On those days, anyone — resident or non-resident — can fish without purchasing a fishing license. All other fishing regulations, however, still apply.

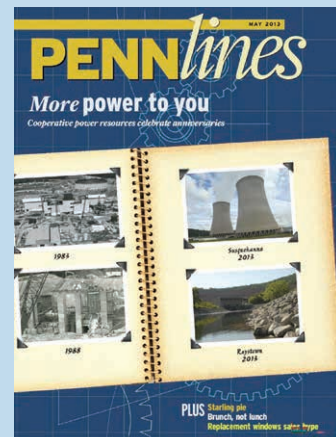
Crayola giving away 1 million free crayons

Crayola is giving away 1 million free crayons at its Crayon Experience locations, one of which is in Easton, Pa.

Registration, which ends May 31, is required. Each household is limited to two boxes and sign-up is on a first-come, first-served basis. Crayons will be given away while supplies last. For more information, visit crayolaexperience.com.



TIME LINES



MAY 2013

Ten years ago, two of the major reasons why electric cooperatives enjoy some of the lowest generation rates in the Mid-Atlantic region — and still do — were celebrating milestones. The Susquehanna Steam Electric Station nuclear plant was marking its 30th year of coming on line, while the Raystown Hydroelectric Plant was marking its 25th year of commercial operation.

MAY



FLOWER POWER

Get in the spring spirit at the May Garden Mart, May 7 and 8, at Fountain Park, Franklin, Pa. The venue will be in full bloom with all the things you need to create a beautiful lawn and garden. Learn more at franklinpa.gov.

THANKS, MOM

Mother's Day is Sunday, May 14. Whether the woman you call "Mom" is near or far or a memory, take a moment to think about her beautiful qualities and smile.

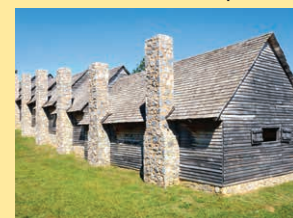


RAISING AWARENESS

The PA Breast Cancer Coalition is drawing attention to the disease's impact with "67 Women, 67 Counties: Facing Breast Cancer in Pennsylvania," a traveling photo exhibit making a pit stop May 16 to 30 at the Washington Crown Center, Washington, Pa. Learn more at pabreastcancer.org.

MAKING HISTORY

Shoot a long bow, try on Roman armor and jump into a World War II fox hole when "Across the Centuries" — an homage to 2,000 years of world history — marches into Franklin County's Fort Loudoun Historic Site, May 20 and 21. Admission is \$5 per car. Learn more at fortloudounpa.com.

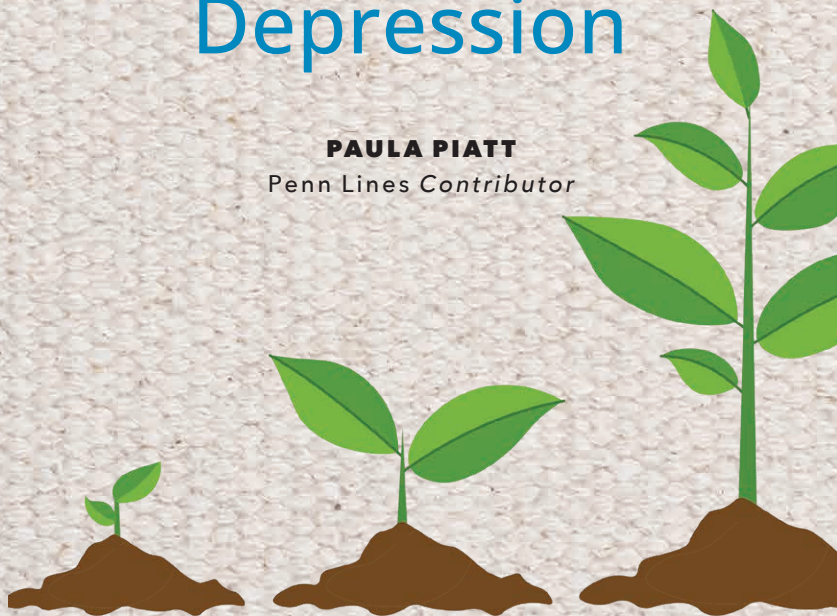




THE SEEDS OF SUPPORT

Help
Available for
Farmers
Battling
Depression

PAULA PIATT
Penn Lines Contributor



SINCE JESSE PHILLIPS WAS A KID, it's been about the cows. Still is.

A 4-H lamb project introduced him to agriculture and livestock at a young age, and a couple dozen sheep during those early years kept his interest alive. But he always came back to the cows — “his first love.”

Fast forward, he was “living the dream” in 2018 with his wife, Samantha, 2-year-old son, Emerson, and his own cows on their farm in Bradford County, a region served by a trio of rural electric cooperatives (RECs): Claverack, Sullivan County and Tri-County. Like many working in the dairy industry today, the couple was getting by; each day had its challenges — some more than others — but the blessings outnumbered the complaints.

A brutal cold spell in January that year and an overzealous Holstein would soon, however, change the course of their lives.

Waking up New Year's Day, the couple found that one of the cows had disconnected a hose from the farm's watering system, flooding the manure troughs in the barn. Normally, a paddle-and-chain system would move the manure from behind the cows and out of the barn, but the frigid temperatures rendered it immobile. The pair chopped through the ice for four days until they could finally run the chain system. For 10 to 15 feet, all went smoothly.

“Then everything came unglued,” Phillips remembers. “(The trough cleaner) was in pieces.”

Not to be deterred, he remembered a friend in Sullivan County who had the same model and was offering it up for parts. “I gotta go get this part,” he told Samantha, who, having a “weird” feeling in the pit of her stomach, tried to convince him not to go.

“It was a bad day to drive, and looking back now, there were five solid [signs] that said, ‘You probably shouldn't go,’” Phillips remembers.

They included a flat tire on his trailer; the earlier conversation with Samantha; the behavior of his dog, a faithful, long-time companion who “wanted out of the truck like it was on fire;” another conversation with his wife; and finally: “As I was driving,” he recalls, “I thought to myself, ‘This is foolish. This is a main road, and it's really bad.’ But I put it in four-wheel drive and proceeded on.”

Broken bones and stitches

When Phillips's truck came to rest in frozen Elk Creek, it had hit a guardrail head on, stood straight on end, cart-wheeled over the bridge and fell 25 feet before landing on the driver's side. He doesn't remember much, but was told he mentioned his back hurt and implored first responders not to cut off his Carhartt bibs.

Doctors at UPMC Williamsport found two broken

vertebrae in his neck, two more in his back, a broken collarbone and shoulder blade, and a split sternum. Almost 40 stitches covered his head. Unlike Phillips, though, the bibs didn't survive.

Home after almost a week in the hospital, he lived in a recliner and hospital bed in his living room.

“I went from 100% self-reliant and not afraid to work 100 hours a week to ... you just lay there and you think and you continue to think,” he says. “I watched my wife struggle for days and days and days just keeping up the daily tasks. There were times I just didn't ... I didn't want to keep going.”

Life on the farm, however, didn't stop. Cows needed to be milked, chores done and meals prepared. He watched from the window as his wife, his dad, Randy, his mom, Kim — a longtime employee at Sullivan County REC — and his younger brother kept things going.

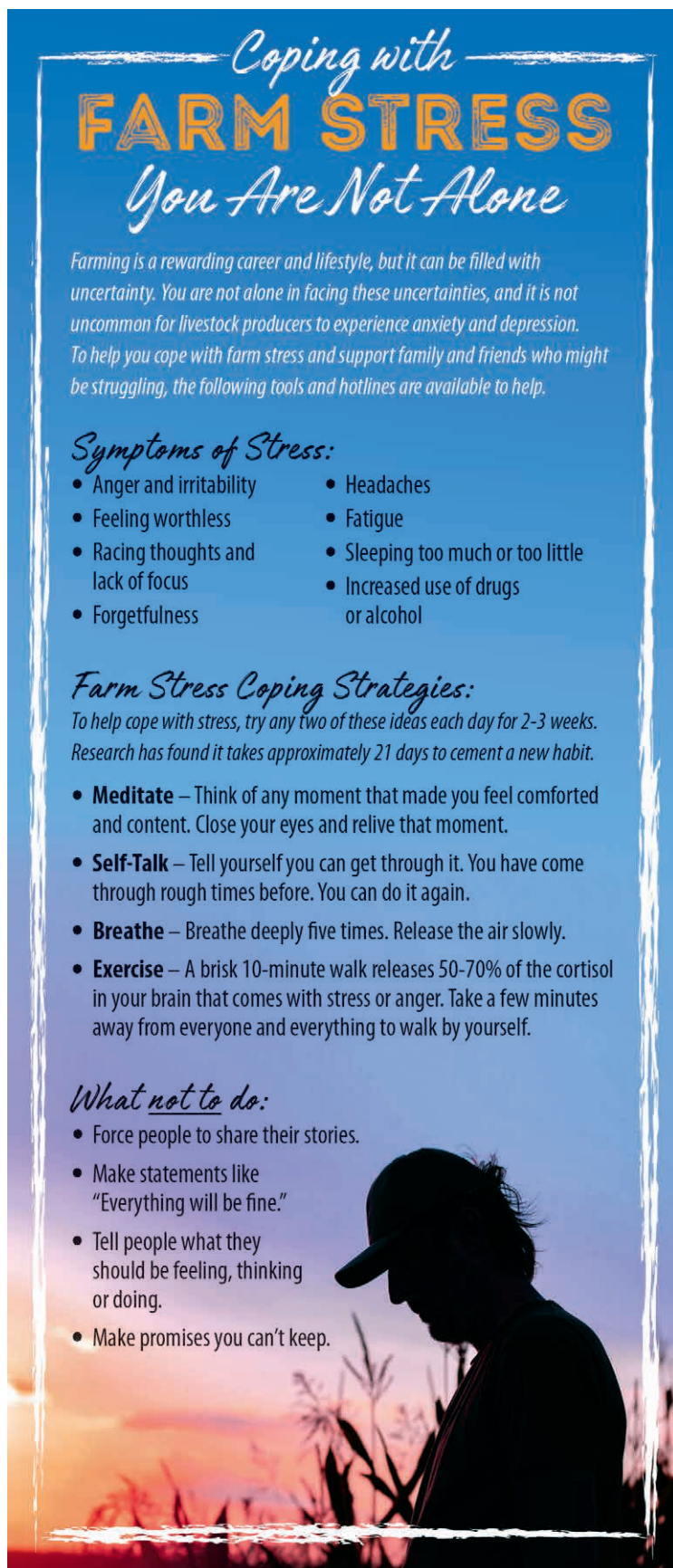
Two things pulled Phillips through those dark days: his faith and a willingness to talk about his circumstances. Support came from his family, his mom's coworkers at Sullivan County REC and many others in the small, tight-knit, rural community he called home.

“My dad would just sit with me and talk, just to keep me motivated and moving,” Phillips remembers.

Continued on page 10



THE ROAD TO RECOVERY: Five years after injuries from a truck accident forced him to sell his dairy cows, Jesse Phillips is back on his feet, recovering from depression. He is shown here with his wife, Samantha, and their children, Emerson, 5, Corbin, 3, and Josie, 1.



Coping with **FARM STRESS** *You Are Not Alone*

Farming is a rewarding career and lifestyle, but it can be filled with uncertainty. You are not alone in facing these uncertainties, and it is not uncommon for livestock producers to experience anxiety and depression. To help you cope with farm stress and support family and friends who might be struggling, the following tools and hotlines are available to help.

Symptoms of Stress:

- Anger and irritability
- Feeling worthless
- Racing thoughts and lack of focus
- Forgetfulness
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Increased use of drugs or alcohol

Farm Stress Coping Strategies:

To help cope with stress, try any two of these ideas each day for 2-3 weeks. Research has found it takes approximately 21 days to cement a new habit.

- **Meditate** – Think of any moment that made you feel comforted and content. Close your eyes and relive that moment.
- **Self-Talk** – Tell yourself you can get through it. You have come through rough times before. You can do it again.
- **Breathe** – Breathe deeply five times. Release the air slowly.
- **Exercise** – A brisk 10-minute walk releases 50-70% of the cortisol in your brain that comes with stress or anger. Take a few minutes away from everyone and everything to walk by yourself.

What not to do:

- Force people to share their stories.
- Make statements like “Everything will be fine.”
- Tell people what they should be feeling, thinking or doing.
- Make promises you can’t keep.

And so many people were coming by the house, his wife just left the front door open with a note that said, “The door’s unlocked, ring the doorbell and just go in...”

“The support from people was the greatest thing to happen, but the hardest thing to understand,” he says, looking back on the months immediately following the accident. “Why would someone take time out of their day and come and sit in my living room for three or four hours and talk?”

He now knows, however, what a difference that support made and encourages others, especially fellow farmers, to take advantage of the help that’s available. The state, for instance, has supported and developed a handful of mental health programs and services in recent years that cater specifically to those in agriculture, an industry teeming with stressors and plagued by suicide.

“If you do need help, if you do need to talk to somebody, to let things out, it doesn’t make you weak, it doesn’t make you any less,” Phillips says. “Go to somebody else who’s milking cows. It doesn’t matter if you’re milking 10 cows or 10,000 cows, we all have the same struggles and triumphs. Just don’t be afraid to talk to someone.”

Making the call

There’s always “someone” at the other end of the AgriStress Helpline, a free and confidential crisis and support line — available at 833-897-2474 — that you can call or text 24 hours a day. The helpline is staffed with crisis-intervention professionals who understand the issues facing those in agriculture. Supported by the state Department of Agriculture, the helpline has translation capabilities in 160 languages. It’s there for those willing to reach out — or for an advocate who wants to reach out for them.

“The first thing is making a connection, finding out where they are and what their needs are,” says Tara Haskins, who oversees the Total Farmer Health initiative for the AgriSafe Network, a national nonprofit dedicated to agriculture health and safety. “And then [we] try to help them navigate some resources and empower them [with ideas or suggestions].”

If it’s a crisis situation, and the caller is expressing suicidal thoughts, the helpline staff has access to local 9-1-1 dispatchers, who can alert emergency personnel and send help. All callers are offered a 24-hour follow-up call, and people can reach out as many times as they need.

Penn State Cooperative Extension also provides support through its Farm Stress Team, an interdisciplinary group created in 2020 and headed up by Ginger Fenton, a dairy extension educator.

While it does not provide counseling, the team offers information to help farm communities and families identify depression and the warning signs of a mental health

crisis. Webinars and workshops (all available on the web; search for “PSU Farm Stress Team”) not only focus on tools available, but also offer suggestions on navigating stressful times. One such program, “Weathering the Storm,” helps farmers and their families understand the effects of stress.

“It increases awareness of the issues, the warning signs of stress, and talks about communicating what you’re feeling,” Fenton says. “It also discusses stress management, coping mechanisms and resources.”

The hard part

All of today’s mental health resources are built on decades of data about farm life — and it doesn’t have to be a truck accident that causes a farmer to reach the breaking point.

Milk prices, a drought, flooded fields, a spring freeze after the fruit trees have budded, supply chain issues that cripple repairs on the tractor — the list of what can go wrong is never-ending, often compounding and usually out of an individual’s control.

Six years ago, a University of Iowa study found that between 1992 and 2010, the suicide rate for farmers was three and a half times that of workers in other occupations — and that was before COVID-19 and a three-year pandemic. More recent data from the Centers for Disease Control indicates agricultural workers are twice as likely as those in other occupations to die by suicide.

Last year, a survey funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture found that fear, financial stress and family dynamics are the biggest stressors for those in farming, and “embarrassment” and “cost” are the biggest obstacles to seeking help.

And, experts say, the stigma surrounding mental health issues is real, especially in the agricultural community, where the can-do, gotta-get-it-done attitude is what often gets a farmer through the day. That need to be self-reliant and continue the family farm tradition can weigh heavily on the mind, too.

“That ruggedness mentality, even though it is so helpful in getting that job done and being successful in a profession that has so many unknown factors, is not beneficial when you need to reach out for help,” AgriSafe’s Tara Haskins says. “Factors beyond your control are the most distressing factors when it comes to mental stress and crisis.”




And it’s not just farmers. Those in agri-business — bankers, feed store owners, veterinarians — also deal with difficulties.

Connie Kuhlman, in her 40 years with Dairy Farmers of America, has seen and felt the crush of reality herself. Every day, she’s on Bradford and Susquehanna county farms checking milk quality and food safety.

“There have been times when I’ve walked away from farmers, and then turned around and said, ‘Hey, I’m really

Fast Facts

from the 2022 PA Animal Agriculture Mental Wellness Survey

- **90% of farmers and ag professionals** view mental health as important
- **Top four symptoms of stress** experienced by farmers:
 1. Tired / less energy - 72.5%
 2. Nervous / anxious - 45%
 3. Low energy - 42%
 4. Difficulty sleeping - 37.5%
- **Top three factors influencing stress:**
 -  Fear
 -  Financial stress
 -  Family dynamics
- Stress symptoms greatly increase with obstacles such as cost, availability, family, and embarrassment
- Learn the symptoms:
 - 50% of farmers feel confident in recognizing symptoms in others
 - 37% of farmers feel confident in responding to symptoms in others

Help is available 24/7 to the agriculture community

Who to Call:

- **AgriStress Helpline:** Call 833-897-2474. This hotline is available 24/7.
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** Dial 988 or 800-273-8255. Or text GO to 741741 for those in need of emotional support day or night.
- **Rural Response Hotline:** Call 800-464-0258. Monday to Friday (8 a.m. - 5 p.m.). Free personal counseling and financial/legal services are available.
- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA):** Call 800-662-4357.

This is part of an initiative of the Pennsylvania Beef Producers Working Group, Center for Beef Excellence, Center for Poultry and Livestock Excellence, and Center for Dairy Excellence and is funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and the USDA Farmer Rancher Network Assistance Program.

Sources: Michigan State Extension | Penn State Extension

worried about you. I'm not leaving until I know you're OK," she says. "I've dealt with the same people for so many years, I can usually get a good gut feeling about their stress level. And I've had a couple cases where I truly feared for the safety of the farmer's life."

Her own breakdown came during COVID-19. While on a Zoom call with co-workers, she listened as a new program was introduced that would change the way farmers were paid for their milk — and it wasn't for the better.

"I knew it was the final nail for a lot of my producers. They couldn't cash flow at that time, and this was going to make it even more difficult. I opened the phone line ... and just sobbed," she says of one of the worst moments in her career.

Phone calls poured in from her co-workers, including the chairman of the organization's board, and after talking through it, she moved on to help some of her longtime producers leave the industry with their dignity intact — one of the proudest moments of her career, Kuhlman says.

Eventually, that time came for Jesse Phillips, too. After the truck accident, he realized he would have to give up his herd — the herd he worked so hard to raise and maintain.

"What I kept struggling with the most mentally was ... I feel like those cows trusted me. They listened to me. They knew that was their job. I needed them as much as they

needed me," he says. "Everything you built is what you watch go. That was as hard as anything else."

Phillips remembers watching the cows leave the farm for new homes.

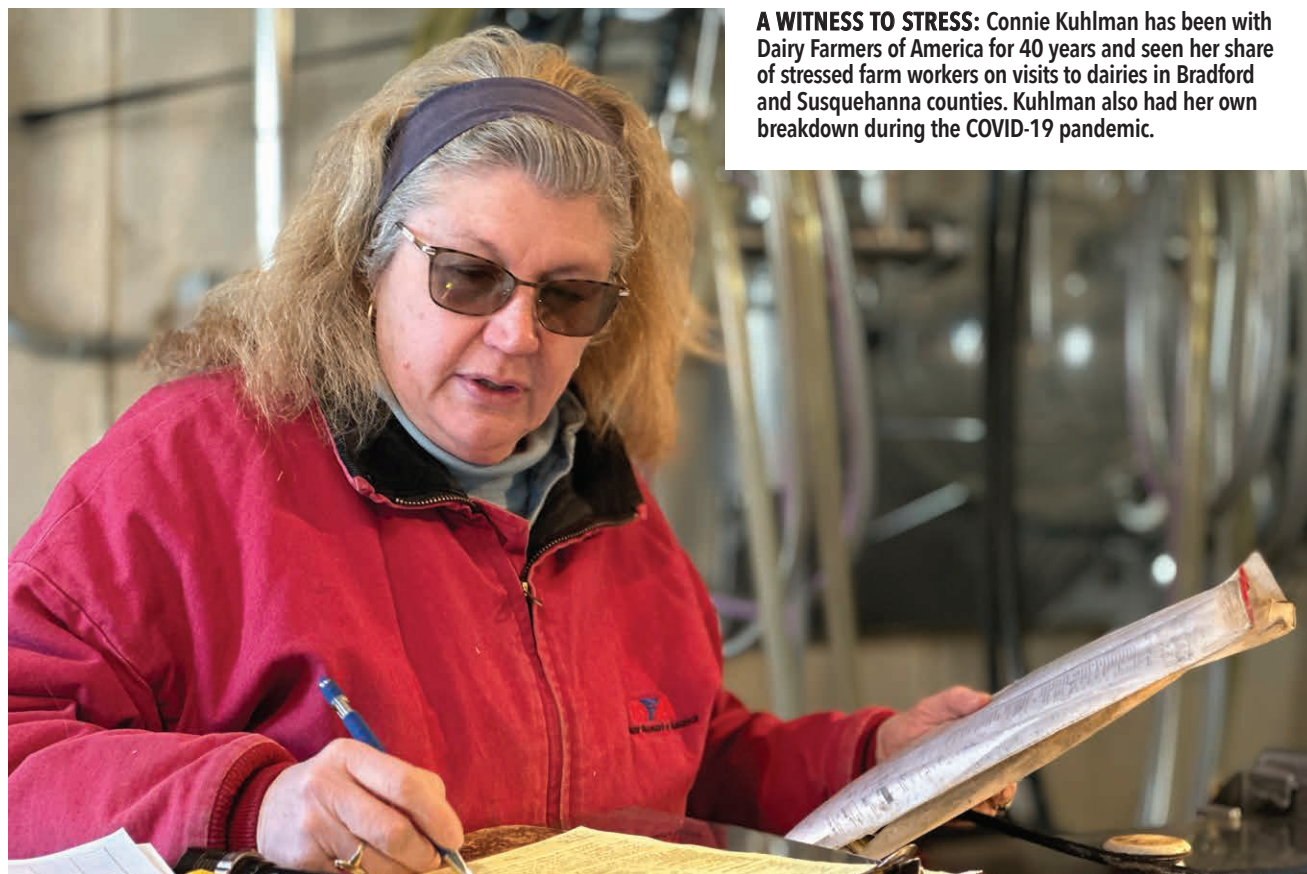
"Yes, she's got the No. 100 in her ear, but her name is Sophie, and she was born in the middle of a snowstorm in March," he recalls thinking to himself. "I slept in the barn that night to make sure her life started out the way it was supposed to, and now I'm not going to see her life all the way through..."

'Don't bottle things up'

Five years later, Phillips is back with the cows. With "as good a recovery as you could make," he's herd manager for Sugar Branch Farms, which sits on Tri-County REC lines just outside of Troy in Bradford County.

"I'm not saying that I don't have some bad days ... I work for a farm, and my hobby is a farm, too. But it gave me a different perspective on life in general," he says of his journey. "Don't be afraid to talk to someone; don't bottle things up because the bottle can only hold so much, and it's going to explode. You have to be able to talk"

Just know there are folks out there who will listen. And help. 🗣️



A WITNESS TO STRESS: Connie Kuhlman has been with Dairy Farmers of America for 40 years and seen her share of stressed farm workers on visits to dairies in Bradford and Susquehanna counties. Kuhlman also had her own breakdown during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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*The **So Lite™ Scooter** is easy to transport and almost impossible to tip over.*

Like millions of older Americans, I struggle with mobility. For years, I watched my quality of life slip away, as I was forced to stay home while friends and family took part in activities I'd once enjoyed. I thought I'd made some progress when I got a mobility scooter, but then I realized how hard it was to transport. Taking it apart and putting it back together was like doing a jigsaw puzzle. Once I had it disassembled, I had to try to put all of the pieces in the trunk of a car, go to wherever I was going, and repeat the process in reverse. Travel scooters were easier to transport, but they were uncomfortable and scary to drive, I always felt like I was ready to tip over. Then I found the **So Lite™ Scooter**. Now there's nothing that can hold me back.

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weighs only 40.8 pounds without the battery! What's more, it easily folds up for storage in a car seat, trunk or even on an airplane. It folds in seconds without tools and is safe and reliable. Best of all, it's designed with your safety in mind, from the newest technology and superior craftsmanship. Why spend another day letting your lack of mobility ruin your quality of life? Call now and find out how you can get a **So Lite™ Scooter** of your very own.



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The Next Best Thing to a Sunroom

JAMES DULLEY

DEAR JIM: I want a sunroom, but I cannot afford one, so I thought about installing a bow or bay window. Is it better to buy a pre-made unit or assemble one from separate windows? What are important efficiency features? — Colin W.

DEAR COLIN: Installing a bay or bow window can be a relatively inexpensive improvement as compared to adding a sunroom. Depending on its height and depth, it can dramatically increase the perceived size of a room and function as shelf space for plants or even as a bright breakfast bar.

I recommend installing a complete bay or bow window unit as opposed to having one built from individual windows. The complete units seal well and are less expensive to install. You may even be able to install one yourself because the installation process is similar to any replacement window.


Another advantage of installing a complete unit is energy efficiency. The tight seals not only eliminate rainwater leaks, but also block air leakage. Most of the complete units

have insulation built into the head and seatboards to reduce heat loss. This is also a plus if you plan to place potted plants on the seatboard because it keeps the soil near room temperature.

Bay windows are more commonly installed than bow windows. A bay window consists of glass on three panels. These are usually constructed from angled casement or double-hung windows on each side with a fixed picture window between them. The side windows are usually angled at 30 or 45 degrees from the wall. A 45-degree model provides a deeper seatboard.

A bow window is typically constructed using four or more windows, all tilted at different angles to create a curved, circular appearance. Just two or all the windows are operable and can be opened. Since more windows are used with a bow design, the installed cost is often higher than with a bay window. The complete bow units will be as efficient as the bay ones.

You will have a choice of the type of windows you want to use in a complete unit. Casement windows are the best choice for several reasons. They are the most energy efficient because they close and compress the weatherstripping for an excellent seal. Double-hung windows use a sliding type of weatherstripping, which is good but not as effective as casements.

Casement windows also can be opened to any angle. This allows them to catch even slight breezes for better, natural ventilation during the summer. Choose high-efficiency glass and be sure it has a low-emissivity coating to save energy and reduce the fading of your carpeting. To block more outdoor noise, select glass with argon or krypton gas in the gap between the panes. 



A MORE AFFORDABLE IMPROVEMENT: If you can't afford to add a sunroom to your home, a new bay or bow window unit could be a good money- and energy-saving alternative.

Have a question for Jim? Send inquiries to **JAMES DULLEY**, Penn Lines, 6906 Royalgreen Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45244, or visit dulley.com.

Knife Versus Snake

Next time something slithers too close, be prepared!

Some years ago, my girlfriend and I visited the Southwest town of Sedona. It's a wonderful place. While jewelry stores, art galleries and upscale boutiques have crept into Sedona's downtown, the air still maintains an electric charge. In one of these Sedona stores I acquired a Bowie knife that soon proved well worth the sticker price.

Disappearing into the stunning red rock formations that Sedona is known for, my girlfriend and I set out to hike Bell Rock, a butte just south of that famous desert town. We couldn't have been happier.

Our happiness didn't last long. Before we knew it, we stumbled upon a rather nasty diamondback rattlesnake. Acting quickly, I pulled my Bowie knife out of its holster and gave Mr. Snake a quick shave. We were lucky. Not only did my skill with a knife ensure our safety, but I had the makings for a new rattlesnake belt.

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The next time something slithers too close, make sure you're prepared with the Diamondback Bowie Knife. This 12" knife comes with a high quality 420 surgical grade stainless steel blade. The handle is made of genuine natural bone that's been hand carved in the pattern of a diamondback. Completed with brass handguards, spacers and end cap and accessorized with a genuine leather tooled sheath, this is one blade a mamba won't want to mambo with.

What's more, while supplies last, we'll include a pair of \$99 8x21 power compact binoculars **FREE** when you purchase the Diamondback Bowie Knife. Simply put, this offer is an incredible bang for your buck. Act now: We only have 271 knives left for this ad!

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"The feel of this knife is unbelievable ... this is an incredibly fine instrument." — H., Arvada, CO



"This knife is beautiful!" — J., La Crescent, MN

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In & Around

Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative

There's something for everybody in the northwestern corner of the Commonwealth, home to the aptly named Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative in Cambridge Springs, which serves more than 19,000 homes, farms, and businesses across more than 2,500 miles of line.

The cooperative's service territory alternates between peaceful countryside views and small but bustling towns. If you're coming from the south up Interstate 79, start your adventure with some axe throwing at Minnesota Axe and follow it up with a movie at the Meadville Cinema, both in the same building and served by the cooperative. If you're traveling from the east, take a swing or 18 at the Union City Golf Course, just north of Canadohta Lake, which is open for fishing and sailing.



LAKE LIFE: Crawford County's Conneaut Lake, the largest natural glacier lake in Pennsylvania, and its park offer visitors a place to swim, boat, fish, play mini golf, and enjoy amusement park rides, and concerts.

Of course, Lake Erie is a stone's throw away to the north, but if you're after something a bit smaller and less crowded, head west from any of the aforementioned locations and visit Conneaut Lake, the largest natural glacier lake in Pennsylvania. Go for a swim, hop on a boat or stay on dry land at the Conneaut Lake Park for mini golf, amusement park rides and concerts.

In between each stop, you won't struggle to find small parks with playgrounds for the kids or larger parks for

woodland hiking. There really is something for everyone in the region.



Main Office: Cambridge Springs, Pa.
Consumer-members served: 19,629
Website: northwesternrec.com

Co-op Q&A

We've got questions, you've got answers...

and we want you to share them with us. Every month, *Penn Lines* staff will ask readers a fun question and we'll publish selected answers in the next issue.

JULY'S QUESTION

You're having a Fourth of July picnic. What family favorites must be on the menu?

PLEASE EMAIL YOUR ANSWER and a selfie to CommunityCorner@prea.com by **FRIDAY, MAY 19**. Be sure to include your full name, the name of your cooperative and a daytime telephone number and put "July 2023 Q&A" in the subject line.

MAY'S RESPONSES

Let's hear it for the moms on Mother's Day. What makes yours so special?



JODY ZIMMERMAN

"My mother is more of a quiet role model, doing more with her actions than her words. I just remember her saying, 'Remember the moments, not the days,' on the good days or the bad days. She's always there for a listening ear and a helping hand."

– JODY ZIMMERMAN, BEDFORD RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



ALICE BOWDEN

"My mother, Alice Bowden, was the best mother a person could ever wish for! Her family always came first. She always made sure we had good food to eat, clean clothes to wear and a clean bed to sleep in. I remember growing up and the wonderful smells coming from her kitchen – the smell of homemade bread, the big pot of vegetable soup, and the delicious apple pie."

– ELOISE POWELL, UNITED ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



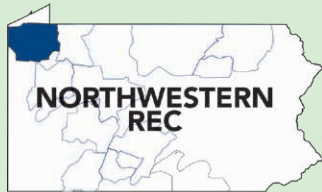
BETTY SIMPSON

"My mom, Betty Simpson, is a beautiful human with quite possibly the biggest heart in the world. She has always believed in her three children, supported us in all of our endeavors and has always been the peacekeeper in our family, which is a full-time job when you have three children competing to be the most stubborn. I would not be the person I am today without the unconditional love my mom has shown since Day One."

– STEPH OKUNIEWSKI, PENNSYLVANIA RURAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

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Amy Wellington, *Editor*

Mother Nature's Recent Back-to-Back Wallops Caused Extensive Outages



THE FIRST STORM STARTED SHORTLY before 7 a.m. on March 25, with severe winds lasting more than 12 hours. I thought this was the worst storm event in all my 12 years with the co-op. Then, just a few days later, the April 1 storm hit.

At the height of our outages from the first storm, we had more than 9,200 members without power, and four substations were affected by power supply outages. Thankfully, we were quickly able to pick up 3,300 of those members through our backfeeding capabilities. For the first time in more than 40 years, we had to ask our sister cooperatives for assistance. Five two-man crews arrived from Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative (REC), Valley REC and Somerset REC.

All hands were on deck from the beginning of the outage until all power was restored on March 27. Our call center recorded over 3,800 calls for 334 separate outages. Crews reported 37 broken poles, which beat our previous record of nine poles since (and not including) the tornadoes of 1985.

Although power had been restored to all 9,200 members, crews were still cleaning up from that storm when severe weather hit us again the afternoon of April 1. This was a brief event compared to the severe winds the previous weekend, but within just a few hours, we had nearly 13,000 members out of power. This was the worst I've ever seen it at the co-op.

Just like the weekend before, we had reports of trees and lines down in every part of our service territory. Six of our 17 substations had a power supply interruption, but only two of those subs, Centerville and Oil Creek, remained out until the evening of April 4. We weren't the only cooperative hit that day, and even though it was bad for us, several of our sister co-ops were in worse shape. There was no mutual aid available right away this time.

Again, all hands were on deck. Crews and other staff members worked around the clock taking outage calls, dispatching crews, removing trees and other hazards from lines, rebuilding multiple spans of wire, delivering meals to the workers in the field, and so much more.

We didn't have as many broken poles with the second storm — only 20 were reported — and we experienced only 92 separate outages. However, our call center, Cooperative Response Center (CRC), which handles after-hours and outage calls for distribution cooperatives across the country, experienced peak call conditions. Although we don't recommend it, when CRC is overwhelmed, many of our members turn to our Facebook page to report outages.

Northwestern's Facebook page grew by nearly 1,000 new followers in less than two weeks. We did our best to keep up with all the questions and comments and are thankful for the wonderful praise received for the line crews.

The preferred alternative to calling the outage hotline is to use the free SmartHub app, either on a smart device or a computer, to log in and report your outage. In the future, we are hopeful to use text messages to report outages as well.

Thank you all for your patience during these back-to-back wallops by Mother Nature. Even the clearest right of way couldn't withstand her recent fury. Most importantly, we are thankful each of our linemen made it home safely to their families. 🏠

Cooperatively yours,

RYAN MELLER
PRESIDENT & CEO

Powering Up

When electricity goes out, most of us expect power will be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm causes widespread damage, longer outages may result. Co-op line crews work long, hard hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of consumers in the shortest time possible. Here's what's going on if you find yourself in the dark.

1 High-Voltage Transmission Lines

Transmission towers and cables that supply power to transmission substations (and thousands of members) rarely fail. But when damaged, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.

2 Distribution Substation

Each substation serves hundreds or thousands of consumers. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to determine if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself, or if problems exist down the line.

3 Main Distribution Lines

If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of consumers in communities or housing developments.

4 Tap Lines

If local outages persist, supply lines, called tap lines, are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service, outside businesses, schools, and homes.

5 Individual Homes

If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your residence may need to be repaired. Always call to report an outage to help line crews isolate local issues.

graphic by Funnel Inc.

Think Safety When Operating a Generator

A GENERATOR CAN BE A valuable piece of equipment to keep appliances working during a power outage. Generators can be either temporary or permanently installed.

A permanent generator is wired into a house by a qualified electrician using a transfer switch that prevents a generator from feeding electricity back into overhead lines, which can be deadly for linemen.

A temporary generator is powered by gasoline and should not be attached to a circuit breaker, fuse or outlet. Before purchasing a generator, you need to know the wattage required to run the appliances you will attach to the generator. You also need to know the surge power, which is the power it takes to turn an appliance on.

Once you have purchased the proper generator, follow these tips to properly operate your generator:

- Read and follow all manufacturer operating instructions to properly ground the generator. Be sure you understand them before hooking up the generator.
- Never operate a generator in a confined area. Generators can produce numerous gases, including toxic and deadly carbon monoxide.
- Generators pose electrical risks, especially when operated in wet conditions. Use a generator only when necessary if the weather creates wet or moist conditions. Protect the generator by operating it under an open, canopy-like structure on a dry surface where water cannot form puddles or drain under it. Always ensure your hands are dry before touching the generator.
- When you refuel the generator, make sure the engine is cool to prevent a fire, should the tank overflow.
- There should be nothing plugged into the generator when you turn it on. This prevents a surge from damaging your generator and appliances.
- Be sure to keep children and pets away from the generator, which could burn them.
- Shut down the generator properly. Before shutting down a generator, turn off and unplug all appliances and equipment being powered by the generator.
- Remember maintenance between uses. It is also a good idea to inspect the fuel and oil filters, spark plug, oil level and fuel quality, and to start the generator on a regular basis before an emergency occurs.

May is Electrical Safety Month. For more information on electrical safety, visit safeelectricity.org.

Sixty Years and Counting: The Erie Hunt and Saddle Club Scheduled to Open May 13

BY CLARISSA SCHNEIDER, EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATOR

IF YOU OWN A HORSE in the tri-state area, there is a likely chance you have heard of the Erie Hunt and Saddle Club (EHSC). The club is a non-profit, volunteer organization on Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative's lines with the mission of "horsemanship through knowledge." Formed in 1962, the EHSC consists of more than 50 acres of property on the corner of Eureka and Old State Roads in Edinboro, Pa.

The club has the facilities to support a variety of equine activities during its regular season, which occurs each year between May and October. Each year, the club offers a variety of shows in various riding disciplines, educational clinics and equine training. On the grounds, there are three sand show rings, stabling for 110 horses, an announcer stand with a sound system, a clubhouse with a kitchen, designated seating areas and a nine-hole disc golf course.

This year, the EHSC plans to open the grounds on Saturday, May 13. During its season, EHSC attracts more than 6,000 individuals to its facilities. In 2022, the club sold out its 110 stalls for two of the three hunter/jumper shows. This year, the club is also reinstating its Open Show Series on June 10-11 and July 1. The show will include many past favorites and feature new classes aimed at equestrians with disabilities, miniature horses, and ranch riding.

"During the pandemic, the club had to pause most of its activities," says Halli Bidwell, local trainer and coach of the Allegheny and Mercyhurst Equestrian teams. "We are excited that the club is regaining momentum and can schedule more events. The club and its members strive to provide high-quality show experiences in different horsemanship disciplines at the local level."

As any horse owner knows, equine activities are costly, particularly showing in rated equine shows where participating in classes can cost hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars, whereas classes at an EHSC show begin at \$5.

"That is why our mission is so important," says Sarah Dennis, board secretary and proud parent of a Lake Effect Equestrian IEA athlete. The club strives to provide an affordable avenue for equine activities so new and younger riders can get a horseshow experience.

As a 501(c)3 organization, the EHSC is dependent on the community, the horse industry and its members to support its continued operations. At the end of 2022, it was estimated the club had approximately 200 members.

EHSC members enjoy many benefits, including access to the grounds, discounts on horse stalls for most activities, first access to facility events, a monthly digital newsletter and cost-free registration for the club's Year-End Awards. Annual membership dues start at \$30.

Membership dues and business sponsorships are critical to the club's operations. All funds raised through memberships, sponsorships, grants and donations are reinvested straight back into the club for improvements.

"Currently, the Erie Hunt and Saddle Club is looking to fund several high-priority, and costly, capital improvement projects," explains Laura Tighe, EHSC board president. "Two of these projects include horse stall renovations and permanent water drainage solutions for the showing arenas. After 60 years of use, it is normal to expect that the facilities would need some TLC."

Those interested in joining the EHSC are encouraged to visit the grounds on opening day, Saturday, May 13. Opening day is a big day for preparing the grounds for the rest of the season and a fantastic way for club members or community-minded individuals to earn volunteer hours.

Have plans that day? For more information about the club, including the 2023 show calendar, memberships, and sponsorships, visit eriehuntandsaddleclub.org or follow the EHSC on Facebook or Instagram. 📍

LITTLE LEAPER: Hailee, 6, rides her trusted steed, Hawk, at the the Erie Hunt and Saddle Club (EHSC), a volunteer organization dedicated to the promotion, education and enjoyment of equestrian activities. Hailee is one of the youngest members of the EHSC, and Hawk is the club's oldest horse.

KENDRA BRAWN



Perform Your Own Energy Walkthrough

YOU GO TO THE DOCTOR once a year for a checkup; it's smart to do the same thing for your home with a home energy assessment to help diagnose and stop waste. That's the best medicine to help make your home more comfortable and efficient.

Little bits of energy waste add up, so making sure all the systems in your home are working at peak efficiency matters:

- Set your water heater temperature at 120 degrees Fahrenheit, which is hot enough for comfortable showers without wasting energy.
- Energy-efficient LED lighting uses less energy and lasts longer than conventional incandescent bulbs.
- Use a programmable thermostat to automatically adjust home temperatures while you're asleep or away to save up to 10% on your heating and cooling costs.
- Electronics continue to use energy even when they're fully charged or turned off. Use advanced power strips to stop these vampire loads from feasting on your electricity.
- Purchase Energy Star®-rated appliances and electronics to save on energy and water use.
- Seal cracks and gaps around your home with caulk or expanding foam. This acts as a windbreaker for your home, helping the insulation work up to its full potential.
- Check insulation levels; make sure they're up to



at least the minimum recommendations found at energystar.gov.

- Ductwork exposed in unconditioned spaces, like attics, should be air-sealed and insulated. This will keep you from heating and cooling the great outdoors.

Smart energy savings around your home really add up to making your home more comfortable and efficient.

Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative offers its members Home Energy Audits as well. Visit NorthwesternREC.com or contact Rian Doubet, energy solutions representative, at 800-352-0014. 📞



Whispering Pines Golf Course

Wednesday, June 21
Shotgun start @ 9 a.m.



Call us

1-800-352-0014



Join us for our 19th annual

Member-to-Member Benefit Golf Scramble



A storm warning means

TAKE ACTION

Stay Safe During and After a Storm

Storms can be unpredictable and wreak havoc on the power grid. Severe wind and ice accumulation can cause power lines to gallop or snap. Tornadoes and hurricanes can bring down transmission towers, power poles and power lines and damage other equipment. Lightning can strike a transformer. All types of severe weather events can cause damage or make utility equipment difficult to access.

Do all you can to keep yourself and others safe during or after a storm.

KEEP YOU AND YOURS SAFE

- Install a weather app for severe weather notifications.
- Shelter in a safe area. (Storm warning = take action!)
- Have an evacuation plan in place (e.g., for floods, wildfires).
- Make sure your emergency kit is properly stocked and up to date.
- Follow all manufacturer's instructions when using a generator.
- Place a portable generator at least 20 feet away from doors and windows.
- Use a generator in an open area (not in a garage, carport or enclosed space).
- Ensure carbon monoxide alarms are installed on every level of your home.

KEEP OTHERS SAFE

Do not plug a generator into a wall outlet, which can cause backfeed. Backfeed means that power can go from your home back into the power grid and endanger crews that are working to restore power.

DURING CLEANUP

- If there is an outage, do not go outdoors until the power has been restored.
- Ice, snow, standing water or storm debris could be covering downed power lines.
- Never approach a downed power line; call 9-1-1 to report it. Alert others to stay away.
- Do not trim trees/branches within 10 feet of an overhead power line.

Learn more at:



Cutting Through the Carbon Jargon

Understanding some of the terminology associated with carbon capture can shed light on this unique way of managing greenhouse gases

PAUL WESSLUND



CARBON CAPTURE, UTILIZATION AND STORAGE

Carbon capture, utilization and storage, also known as CCUS, is a complex process that aims to capture carbon dioxide (CO₂) that is emitted during the burning of fossil fuels or other industrial activities. Through CCUS, CO₂ can potentially be recycled or stored to prevent emissions from reaching the atmosphere.

Capture: CO₂ is separated from other gases produced during industrial processes, including natural gas- and coal-fired power generation plants or steel or cement factories.

Utilization: CO₂ can potentially be utilized to create economically valuable products, including building materials, fertilizers and plastics.

Storage: CO₂ can be injected into geologic formations, including oil and gas reservoirs, unmineable coal seams and deep saline reservoirs—structures that have stored crude oil, natural gas, brine and carbon dioxide over millions of years. The CO₂ is stored permanently and safely.

WHAT IF INSTEAD OF LETTING greenhouse gases escape from power plants, you could grab that carbon dioxide before it even reaches the atmosphere?

It's a simple idea that's getting a lot more attention as concerns grow over the burning of fossil fuels, which power many industries and generate a large share of the nation's electricity.

This idea has a name: carbon capture — two words that have created a whole new set of jargon within the energy industry. However, understanding some of the terminology associated with this complex process can shed light on this unique way of managing greenhouse gases.

Let's take a closer look at three key terms related to carbon capture.

1. You've likely heard the term "net zero." This means you don't increase the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere — essentially, any greenhouse gas you emit is reduced in another way. Net zero is what happens when a nation, state, or commercial business sets a goal to offset the carbon emissions it produces from burning coal, oil, or natural gas.

This can be as simple as planting lots of trees, which convert carbon dioxide to oxygen as part of their photosynthesis process. Or it can be as complex as building hi-tech equipment to remove greenhouse gases from the air before and even after they are emitted. Furthermore, some industries intend to electrify their operations, which would have profound impacts on electric cooperatives, including those in Pennsylvania where leaders continue to be concerned about the increased load's impact on grid reliability.

2. Carbon capture, utilization and storage is one tool for reaching net zero. In the past, it was simply called "carbon capture," but is now often referred to as CCUS.

Nearly 50 years ago, the idea of

preventing carbon dioxide from being released into the atmosphere started when carbon dioxide in natural gas wells was captured and then reinjected underground to boost production from oil wells.

As concerns grew about the effects of greenhouse gases, researchers started exploring technology that would permanently "store" the carbon dioxide from coal power plant exhaust in underground rock formations. The word "utilization" comes from efforts to find other uses for the carbon dioxide, particularly to make cement and other building materials.

Some criticize CCUS, saying it is expensive and a distraction from the goal of replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy. However, with projections that even by 2050 nearly half the electricity in the U.S. will still be generated by coal or natural gas, a recent federal report says, "CCUS has a critical role to play in decarbonizing the global economy." The 2021 federal infrastructure law includes some \$12 billion for CCUS development as well as potentially lucrative tax credits.

3. Carbon dioxide removal (CDR) — also referred to as direct air capture (DAC) — doesn't focus on keeping greenhouse gases from entering the atmosphere; instead, it takes it out of the air. One company is building industrial plants just for that purpose, while some other businesses are using carbon dioxide from DAC for other purposes, like fertilizer production.

There's no denying the drive toward reducing carbon emissions and increasing electrification across the economy, and it will require a variety of approaches — from innovative carbon-capture equipment and reforestation to energy efficiency. 🌱

PAUL WESSLUND writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.

Public Opening Weekend
Friday April 28th-Sunday April 30

Season Pass Holder Opening
Saturday April 22 & Sunday April 23

WE WELCOME TO:

MOUNTAIN RIDGE

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May Madness: Turkeys, Trout and More

STEVE PIATT

MAY IS A MONTH OF many options for sportsmen and women in Pennsylvania.

Sleep is not among them.

That's especially true if you're a turkey hunter, even more so if you choose to pursue both gobblers and trout. Tack on the enjoyable but exhausting search for coveted morel mushrooms and wild leeks (often at the same time you're hunting or fishing), and it's entirely possible to wander through the month in a fog, sleeping more in your truck or at the base of an oak than in the comfort of your own bed.

With apologies to fans of the NCAA basketball tournament, I call it May Madness.

It's just that way for so many of us, both blessed and cursed by an obsession with spring gobbler hunting. Typically, the hunt sends us afield in the morning darkness and, thanks to earlier sunrises as the month progresses, calls for an even earlier wake-up as the season drags on. It is, to those who understand it all, a small price to pay to watch and listen to the woods come alive in the morning, and perhaps hear a booming gobble from a roosted longbeard.

But there's more to May than spring turkey hunting. The Keystone State has nearly 5,000 miles of stocked trout streams and another 125 stocked lakes, as well as an astounding 16,000 or so miles of water holding wild trout. Many turkey hunters gladly trade an evening scouting session for an evening hatch, plying their favorite water for stocked or wild trout, and



STEVE PIATT

THE TROUBLE WITH TROUT: Trout season has arrived for another year, but it creates a quandary for those who love to fish and hunt spring gobblers. Sleep can be hard to come by.

sometimes both. But alas, the state has now established all-day turkey hunting in the latter half of the season, further complicating our decision-making.

It is not an easy sporting biathlon of sorts, this turkey and trout slog, and it's one where sleep typically comes in the form of multiple naps — in your truck, parked in the sun and enjoying the warmth after a cold set-up afield, or a mid-afternoon session before grabbing the fly rod and heading to your stream of choice.

And when you are finally able to flop into your bed, you're often haunted by what the next morning may bring, tossing and turning as you plan your set-up, second-guess your location, and wonder if a gobbler will respond when you let out your first series of soft yelps on a slate call. So even when you can sleep, you often can't.

If you're lucky, the quest for turkeys and trout is interrupted by the discovery of wild leeks (in some regions of the state, they're called ramps) or morel mushrooms. Leeks, a wild onion with an increasingly strong taste as they grow in spring, are typically easier to stumble upon. A turkey-hunting foray in the Allegheny National Forest a couple years ago sent me into a several-acre field of them, although they were a bit

large for my sensitive palette at that time. But the spot is marked on my mapping app for future reference.


Morel mushrooms are the sportsman's version of striking gold in the field; the edible fungi are coveted by gourmet cooks for their taste and texture. For some, it is a quest all its own, with visions of turkeys and trout cast aside. Morel discoveries are closely guarded secrets, and even a turkey hunter is more likely to tip you off to the location of a gobbler before giving up his morel hot spot.

My own morel-hunting efforts have been an exercise in futility. They can be found almost anywhere, but it seems, too, they are found nowhere, although seasoned morel hunters will point you to old apple orchards, dead elm trees and numerous other potential locations.

I often dream of a perfect May morning when I exit the woods, a gobbler over my shoulder and a mesh bag of morels in my vest.



Then I can go home and get some sleep. 🍷

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.



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Honor Your Mother

ANNE M. KIRCHNER

ON MAY 12, 1907, ANNA JARVIS honored her mother with a memorial service in Philadelphia. The event highlighted her mother's lifetime advocacy for child and family health care. By 1914, Mother's Day became a national holiday and continues to be celebrated on the second Sunday of May.

Ironically, Anna spent many years trying to end Mother's Day. She was opposed to the holiday's commercial and political appeal. Anna believed honoring one's mother should be a humble act. This year, celebrate your mother — or mother figure — by making her a simple treat. 🍪

ANNE M. KIRCHNER focuses her writing on human connections, travel and culinary arts, researching food origins, exploring cooking techniques, and creating new recipes.

PHOTOS BY ANNE M. KIRCHNER



CHOCOLATE MAYONNAISE CAKE

- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 cup lukewarm water
- ½ cup white or milk chocolate chips, optional

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Apply cooking spray to a 9-by-12-inch baking pan; set aside. Mix all ingredients, except chocolate chips, together in a large bowl and pour the batter into the prepared baking pan. If desired, sprinkle the batter with chocolate chips. Bake the cake for 25 to 30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool the cake on a wire rack. *Makes 12 servings.*



CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

- 1 stick margarine
- 1 cup Crisco shortening
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1½ cups brown sugar
- 4 eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 4 cups all-purpose flour
- ½ cup whole-wheat flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 12 ounces chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a large mixing bowl, cream together the margarine, shortening and sugars until smooth. Add the eggs and vanilla and mix well. In a separate bowl, sift together the flours, baking soda and salt. Add the dry ingredients to the margarine mixture and mix until a dough forms. Add the chocolate chips. Using a cookie scoop, drop the cookie dough onto a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Bake the cookies for 10 to 12 minutes. *Makes 5 dozen cookies.*



BERRY SKILLET COBLER

- 2½ cups strawberries, halved
- 2 cups raspberries
- 1 cup blueberries
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- ¾ cup granulated sugar, divided
- 3 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1½ cups flour
- 2 tablespoons baking powder
- 6 tablespoons cold butter
- ¾ cup whole milk, plus extra for topping
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 10-inch cast iron skillet. Gently toss the berries, lemon juice, 1/2 cup sugar and cornstarch together in the skillet. In a mixing bowl, combine the flour, 1/4 cup sugar and baking powder. Using a pastry cutter, cut the butter into the dry ingredients. Add the milk and vanilla; stir gently until a sticky dough forms. Drop the biscuit dough on top of the filling, covering most of the fruit. Brush the top of the dough with milk. Bake the cobbler for 30 to 35 minutes. *Makes 6 to 8 servings.*

Preventing Home Electrical Fires



Fire departments respond to an average of **46,700** home fires each year caused by electrical failure or malfunction.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA):

Over a recent 4-year period...



30%

happened in cold weather months (Nov. – Feb.)



1

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Source: NFPA's Electrical Fires Report, 2022

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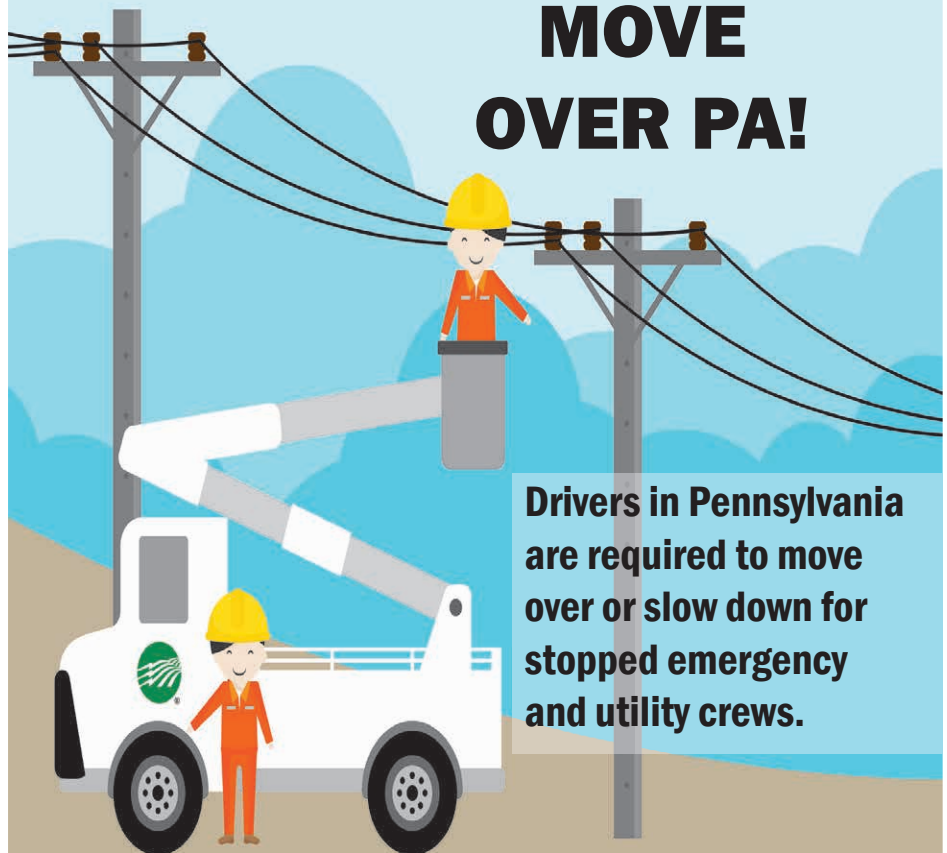


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CREATING APPS

How One Classified Ad Changed the Game for a Fruit Grower and a Software Developer

MICHAEL CRAWFORD

AWESOME APPLES: Blake Slaybaugh, Mt. Ridge Farms vice president, enjoys one of the premier honeycrisp apples picked at his family farm in Biglerville.



FOR APPLES

LATE ONE MORNING OUTSIDE THE Borough of Biglerville, approximately 20 miles from the Pennsylvania-Maryland border, row after row of trees sway in a cool, gentle breeze. Across the 650 acres of Mt. Ridge Farms, the tiny buds of fruit flowers are beginning to open, drawing in the air of a new season that will soon have the branches weighed down with apples and peaches.

It's a serene scene made possible by a lot of hard work that goes far beyond digging holes and dropping in seedlings.

"Every year, the paperwork required to manage, run and operate a farming business dramatically increases," says Wendy Slaybaugh, office manager at the farm, a fifth-generation orchard recognized as an Outstanding Fruit Grower by the Adams County Fruit Growers Association in 2017 and member of Gettysburg-based Adams Electric Cooperative. "There are a blur of responsibilities, tasks, jobs and

managerial commitments that play out in the background.

"We do a lot of our mechanical work here," she adds. "We're pushing out trees, maybe getting ready for new orchards. We're pruning trees right now and shredding the brush. There's always something that needs your time."

Most recently, Mt. Ridge Farms hosted the International Fruit Tree Association's 2022 Winter Tour, where the family shared the approaches and procedures they follow for managing the farm.

Still, despite the heavy workload, Wendy and her husband, Dave, the farm's president, find

"A very inexpensive ad in Penn Lines magazine changed my life."

OUTSTANDING ORCHARD: Rows of apple trees grow on the fields this spring at Mt. Ridge Farms, which is approximately 20 miles from the Pennsylvania-Maryland border in Biglerville. Shown are: Vice President Blake Slaybaugh, left, President Dave Slaybaugh and Office Manager Wendy Slaybaugh, center, and Michael Constantino, owner of Noble Orchards Software Solutions.



time to read their monthly copy of *Penn Lines*. In early 2018, while paging through stories on healthcare, heating efficiency and recipes for Asian-inspired cuisine, something caught the couple's attention.

It was a classified ad: "Stop using spreadsheets and expensive software that doesn't meet your expectations." Those few words made a big impression on Wendy Slaybaugh.

"I thought, 'Why not? We need to start somewhere,' and this is where it all began," she says. "It turned out to be one of the most important phone calls we have ever made and a huge asset to our business."

Changing course

That same day, more than 100 miles away in northern Somerset County, the phone began ringing in the Windber home of Michael Constantino, the software developer and member of Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative who had placed the ad in *Penn Lines*. Under the name of Noble Software Solutions, Constantino — who began his career in the technology industry at 17 fixing Apple computers — had written software for a variety of industries, but never imagined he'd be programming for the agriculture industry.

"I got excited about the possibility of creating software for an industry that was relatively unknown to me," he recalls. "The Slaybaughs were looking for a way to reduce their

recordkeeping time. Just to transition from paper-and-pen recordkeeping ... and make it digital was going to be a monumental project, but we were all up to the challenge."

Over the course of several months, Constantino designed a program customized to the Slaybaughs' exact needs — something simple that could save them time when they needed to report metrics without forcing them to completely change how they kept records.

"He created a database where I keep production records, and we implemented digital recordkeeping for our spray program," Slaybaugh explains. "It was very customizable — we were able to fine tune it to how we do things or how we would want to do things. He's been a pleasure to work with, and I'm thinking that maybe our start here broadened his horizons."

Indeed, Constantino admits he's fallen in love with the growing industry.

"I purchased all my apples from the grocery store with no idea what all went in to the production of an apple — or any fruit. I've learned about the wealth of knowledge growers have, the level of commitment required to produce fruits and the precision with which growers execute their work."

Working with the Slaybaughs transformed Constantino's business.

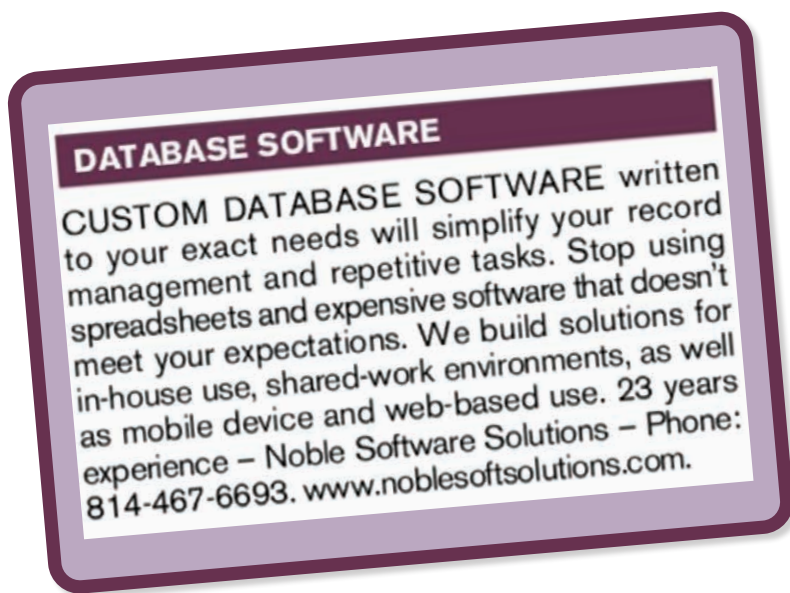
As word spread about his creation for Mt. Ridge Farms, calls from other farms began to come in. Now, Noble Orchards Software Solutions specializes in software for growers and has fielded projects from Michigan, New York, North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, and even British Columbia. Noble also has a solution for spray consultants to help them provide recommendations to their clients easily and efficiently.

"A very inexpensive ad in *Penn Lines* magazine changed my life," says Constantino, who has worked on everything from the floppy-disk-operated Apple II to modern Macintosh computers. "It connected me and my passion with a new community and their passion. It was a good fit from the beginning."

A special place

Years later, Biglerville holds a special place in Constantino's heart. Even with a new and growing client list, he still makes time to visit with the couple who changed his business.

"Regular stops at Mt. Ridge Farms are always built into my schedule when I visit the area," he says. "Checking in to see how things are going, catching up or having a quick lunch where it all got started is important to me." 🍏



TIME FOR A CHANGE: This classified ad, placed by one cooperative member and responded to by another, is responsible for changing the direction of a software developer's business and making recordkeeping a whole lot easier for the owners of Mt. Ridge Farms, an Adams County apple producer.

News from the Path Valley Hotel

The Center of a Small Town's Universe

MITCHELL KYD

EVERY SMALL TOWN HAS SOME claim to fame. For the place I call home, it could be our history. Nearly 10 years before the Battles of Lexington and Concord, our local militia laid siege to our British fort and gave the Brits the boot, firing the real first shots of independence.

Part of that story later gave us a splash of Hollywood fame. Quintessential good guy John Wayne starred in a movie, "Allegheny Uprising," about our town in 1939, and we know The Duke would never lie about our fierce, frontier spirit.

Despite national fame, ask anyone near here what they associate with my hometown and the answer might be doughnuts. Yes, those chunky little lifesavers of deep-fried dough slathered with icing or a crumble of coconut became a hallmark. Unlike our short-lived British fort, the doughnuts endured, fresh daily, thanks to a family-owned restaurant that has been part of our community for more than 50 years.

What started out as a little ice cream stand with a few walk-up windows grew into an iconic destination, those spots that burrow deep in our memories and connect the generations. Picture the soda shop from "Grease" or the drive-in from "American Graffiti," minus the hoodlums and turf wars. Our spot aged along with my generation, and beautifully, as it grew up to become a family restaurant with all the favorites: soft-serve sundaes, juicy, stacked burgers, overstuffed hoagies, daily specials and, of course, those doughnuts.

My grandparents took me there as a kid, but the real fun began in my teens when I realized that spot was the center of the universe. Nights were spent cruising the parking lot to see who was "around," then cruising again 30 minutes later to see who else was around. When the prospects were best, we went inside for late-night fries and to play favorites on the jukebox — songs we all knew by the number. Girls practiced and perfected their flirting as guys leaned over our tables or slid into our booths. First looks were followed by first dates. First dates led to steady dates. Later, "I love

you" led to marriage proposals in the same parking lot.

As life happens, young girls grew into wives and mothers, boys into dads, and soon we were bringing our own kids to our hang out. Our kids grew up, too, but they brought us grandkids, who pranced up to the walk-up windows exactly as we did, waiting for that cone of cold, creamy, spiraled perfection to be pressed into their waiting hands. Over the decades, there were surely hundreds of local kids who got a shot at their first jobs there, earning money for a first car or a first semester.

Across five decades, our spot was still our spot, but as a gathering of girlfriends, our conversations shifted, too. Dating gossip morphed into concern about who needed a little extra help during a scary illness or who needed our strength to face the loss of a spouse.

The guys continued to gather, too, but as older men, grouching over morning coffee, swapping fish tales and laying out solutions about how to set the world straight. Photos we all once kept in wallets became "pix" on our phones that were flashed across the table as bifocals were adjusted.

Astronomers prepare us for some amazing sights in the night

sky: comets, eclipses, meteor showers. What they can't see coming are shadows of change falling on places that beam light in our stories, the ones we foolishly think will always shine as in our memories.

If you're lucky enough to have a gathering place like this where you call home, support and cherish it. New owners bring new chapters.

To the Dinsmore family, past and present, and to the owners of small businesses everywhere, thank you for your lifetimes of commitment to our communities. You give us more than great food and a place to meet. You weave a tight, connecting thread into our collective memory and that is a beautiful gift. 🎁

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.



CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

ISSUE MONTH AD DEADLINE

July 2023	May 15
August 2023	June 15
September 2023	July 14

Please note ads must be received by the due date to be included in requested issue month; ads received after the due date will run in next issue. Written notice of changes/cancellations must be received 30 days prior to issue month. No ads accepted by phone/email. For more information, please call 717-233-5704.

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- Non-members should submit name, address, phone number, and email address, if applicable.
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LOOKING TO BUY OR SELL? Timberland Realty specializes in land, sporting properties, camps, cabins, farms, waterfront, exquisite second homes and timberland since 1987. Call our office at 716-962-9935 or agents by region - Western PA: Craig Wozniak, 412-559-4198, Ron Westover, 724-422-5525. Central PA: John Tallman, 717-921-2476. Brian Bullard, Managing Broker, 716-499-5608. Website: www.timberlandrealty.net.

WHY PURCHASE A MOBILE HOME when you can get a custom-built cabin that will appreciate in value? Cabins qualify as second home for tax purposes. Visit us at www.penwoodcabins.com. Call 814-967-2002 to discuss customization.

INTERESTED IN LEASING PROPERTY in the Canton, Pa., area for hunting. If you might be interested in leasing your property, please give me a call and ask for Robert. If there is no answer, leave a message. 570-344-5358.

FOR SALE: 12' x 60' TRAILER. SUMMER HOME in 55+ park. All new plumbing, hot water tank and water lines, toilet, breaker box, gutters, flooring. All new painting, curtains, blinds, etc. (furniture, microwave, and rugs). Penn Lake Village, Route 285, Conneaut Lake, PA 16316. 814-336-9055.

RECIPES & FOOD

SPECIAL OFFER - BOTH COOKBOOKS FOR \$12. "Country Cooking" - \$5, including postage. "Recipes Remembered" - \$7, including postage. Both of these cookbooks are a collection of recipes from men and women of the electric co-ops of Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Payable to: Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association, P.O. Box 1266, Harrisburg, PA 17108. Write Attention: Cookbooks.

SHAKLEE

FREE SAMPLE Shaklee's Energy Tea. Combination red, green and white teas that are natural, delicious, refreshing, safe. For sample or more information on tea or other Shaklee Nutrition/Weight Loss Products: 814-392-4383 or www.pws.shaklee.com/sbarton.

TRACTOR PARTS - REPAIR/RESTORATION

ARTHURS TRACTORS. Specializing in vintage Ford tractors, 30 years experience, online parts catalog/prices, Indiana, PA 15701. Contact us at 877-254-FORD(3673) or www.arthurstractors.com.

TRAVEL & TOURISM

NEW SMYRNA BEACH, Florida, oceanfront condo rental. Two bedroom, two bath, deck overlooking beach and pool. \$895/week or \$3,200/month, plus taxes and cleaning fees. No pets. Not available Jan. - Mar. Call 814-635-4332 or 814-979-8058.

PATTON, PA- Fully furnished 3-bedroom home for rent. Located 2 miles from Rock Run Recreation and Prince Gallitzen State Park. Rates starting at \$75 a night. 814-674-8037 or 814-656-2945.

TOOLS & EQUIPMENT

JOHN DEERE 60D HEAVY-DUTY AUTO-CONNECT MOWER for 3000 series compact tractor. Never used. \$2,500. 724-454-5658.

VAN RENTAL

15-PASSENGER VANS TO MINI-VANS to car rentals. Call Rent-A-Wreck in Erie. Locally owned for the last 37 years. Rent-A-Wreck, 814-833-9941.

WANTED TO BUY

ANTIQUEN AND CLASSIC American and foreign cars, motorcycles, trucks, Broncos, Blazers and Scouts. Any condition. Will buy entire car collections. krmiller1965@yahoo.com. 717-577-8206.

ANTIQUEN AND CLASSIC motorcycles wanted. All makes and sizes. BSA, Norton, Triumph, Honda, Yamaha, Suzuki, Kawasaki, etc. krmiller1965@yahoo.com. 717-577-8206.

TOYOTA SKID STEER LOADERS - Older models of #7, #8 or #10. Any condition or hours. Engines, pumps, or any part of machines. 330-696-1399. Will travel for pick up.

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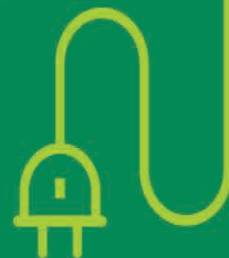
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Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

The location of your thermostat can impact your HVAC system's ability to maintain an ideal indoor temperature. For maximum accuracy, thermostats should be placed in the center of the home, away from air vents, plumbing pipes and exterior doors. Avoid placing items like lamps and televisions near your thermostat, which can cause the HVAC to run longer than necessary. Avoid installing thermostats in rooms that tend to feel warmer or colder than the rest of the home. Do not place furniture in front of the thermostat, which can block air flow and result in inaccurate readings.



Say What?

JOHN KASUN

I RECENTLY READ AN ADVERTISEMENT for a piece of equipment I was considering purchasing and noticed the words, “limited lifetime warranty.” I understand the word warranty, and if I tie that together with lifetime, that pretty much means this thing is guaranteed for life against breakage or failure.

However, adding the word “limited” changes everything. It must mean it is guaranteed for life — unless. Unless what? Unless it breaks? Unless my dog dies? Unless I decide to use it? There is often a difference between what is said and what is meant, and it is important to know the difference.

A perfect example of this are those garden hoses advertised on TV. They have enough pressure to blow the siding off a two-story building, can roll themselves up when you shut off the water and are so light you can keep one in your shirt pocket just in case of an emergency. You can’t crush the brass ends in a vise, and even running over them with a truck does no harm.

What they don’t tell you is that you can’t drag them on the ground, expose them to direct sunlight or leave water in them after use. I guess it would be the perfect garden hose if I needed one I kept in the cellar out of the sunlight, carried everywhere, used only at night and not only drained the water out after each use but also dried the inside.

I took my new understanding of warranties and guarantees a step further recently when I was considering visiting my brother in Florida. We both grew up in Pennsylvania and spent our youth hunting, and I thought it might be nice to see if there were any hunting opportunities in his area we could enjoy together.

Within a few minutes of allowing my fingers to do the walking across the keyboard, I found an interesting hunting advertisement not far from his home. Wild hogs are abun-

dant across the South and quite destructive. Farmers and fruit growers are often anxious to have them eliminated, and hunting is one of the desired tools. The ad indicated the cost for a hog hunt on private property was \$250 per day, per hunter, and you were guaranteed to see hogs. As a matter of fact, if you did not see any hogs, they returned \$150 of your fee. Interesting, until you think about it for a moment: On an unsuccessful hunt, we would pay \$100 each — or \$200 — not to see anything.

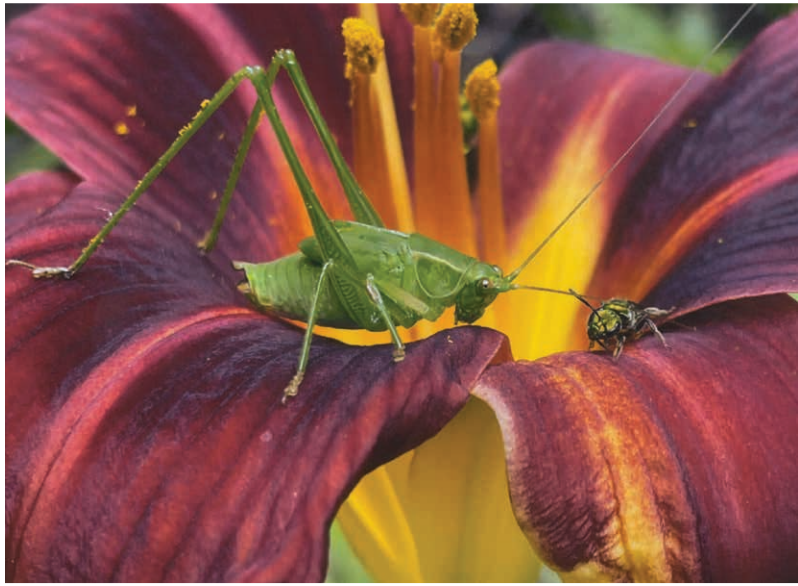
Instead of being angry at what to me seemed to be a deceptive ad, my mind quickly shifted gears. I own several acres of wooded property with open fields near my home in Pennsylvania.

Why don’t I offer a free-range lion and/or elephant hunt on my property? I was thinking of charging \$3,000 for a lion hunt and \$5,000 for an elephant hunt, with a combined price of \$6,000, if booked together. If the client does not see a lion or an elephant, I would refund all of the money, minus a \$1,000 guide fee. Sounds like a good deal to me. It would only cost hunters \$1,000 not to see anything on my land.

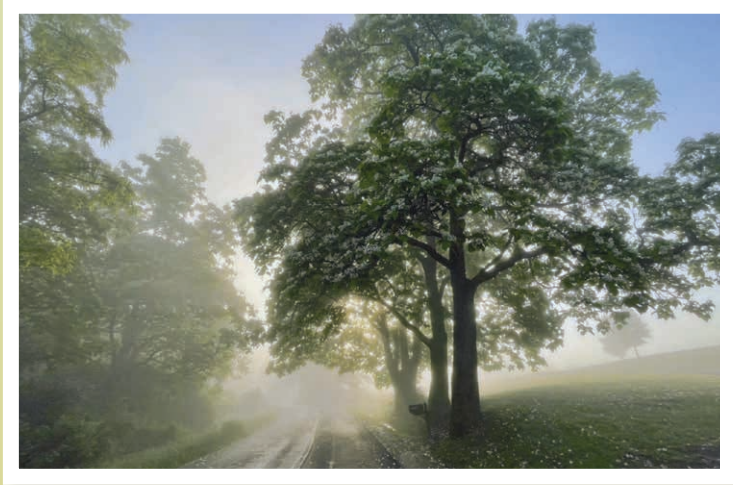
If you compare that cost with the cost of traveling to Africa for a similar hunt, you can see what a bargain it really is. The fact that there are no lions or elephants on my property is not actually the point. The point is, much like the “limited lifetime warranties,” there are differences in what you hear, what you think you heard and what is actually meant. The moral of the story is to not only listen but also understand. 🗣️

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.





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ANDREA KOVACS ROSE • TRI-COUNTY REC

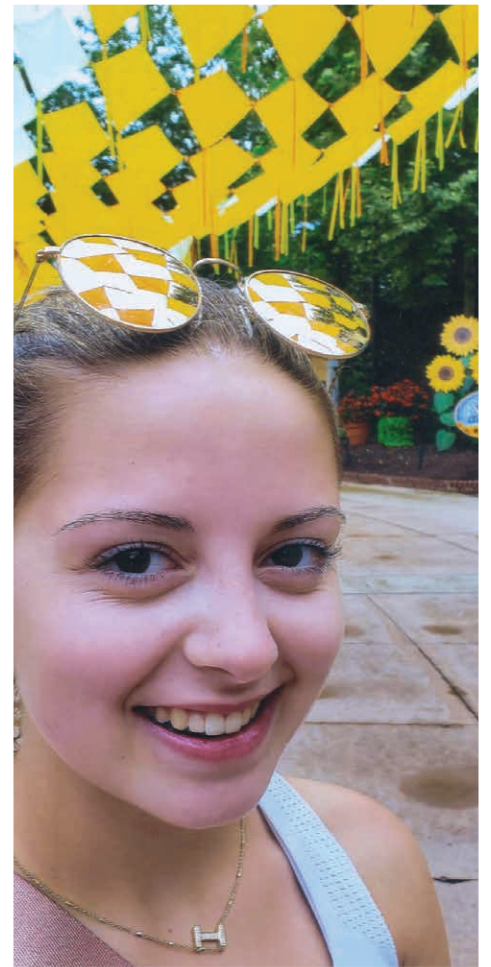


Reasons to Smile

The sun is shining longer, the temperature is steadily rising, and critters and humans alike are ready to play! Whether you're headed outside to dig into the garden or kick a soccer ball with the kids, we hope your winter frowns turn upside down.

Don't forget to send us photographs of your reasons to smile for this year's Rural Reflections contest — 2023 winners in five categories (artistic, human, landscape, animal and editor's choice) will receive \$75 each and runners-up will each receive \$25. 📷

ENNIS J. MCCOY • BEDFORD REC



AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHERS are encouraged to send photos for the 2023 "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 at the end of the contest year if a self-addressed, stamped envelope is included.

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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