

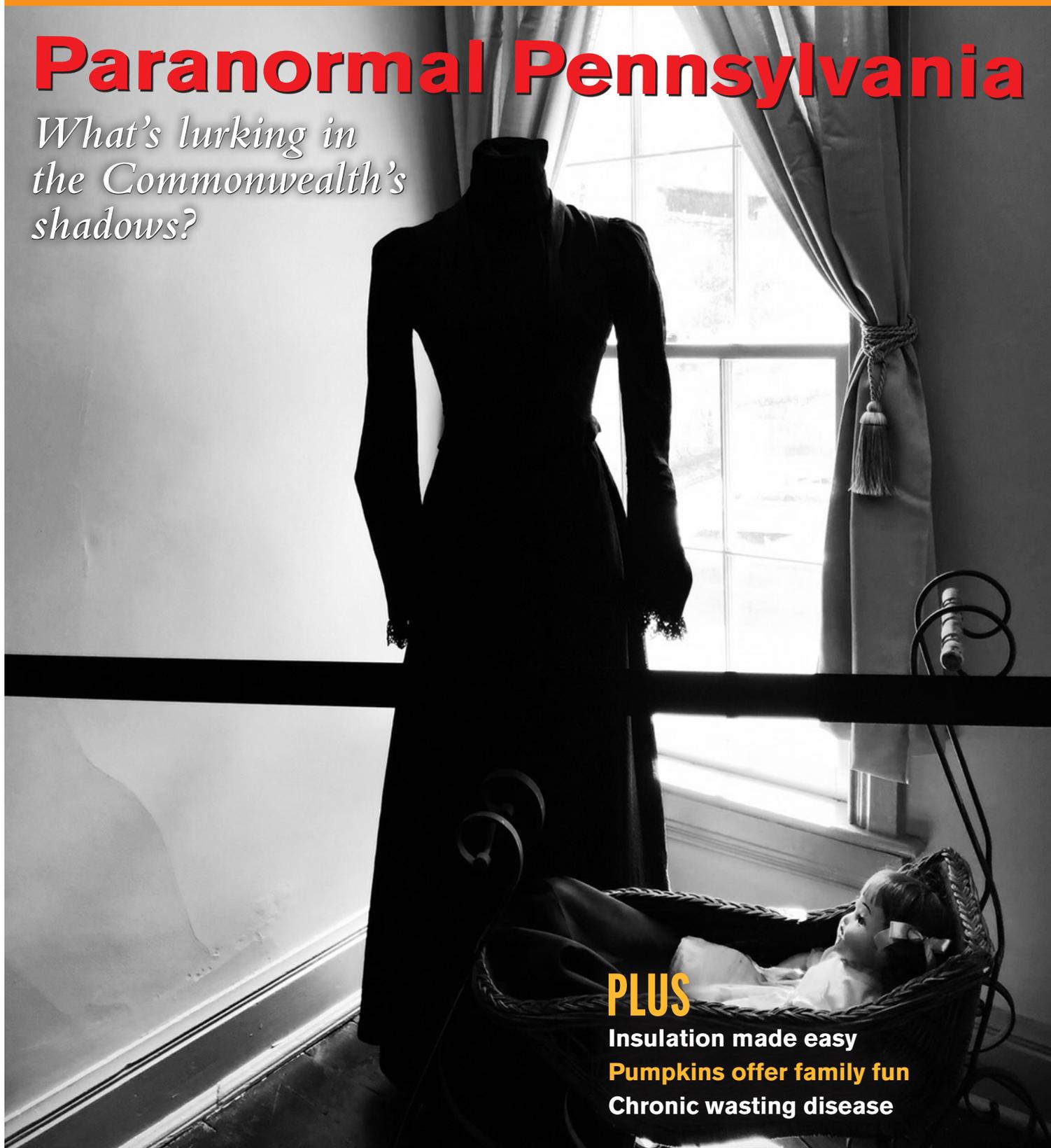
OCTOBER 2022

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**OCTOBER 2022**  
Vol. 57 • No. 10

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*Penn Lines* (USPS 929-700), the newsmagazine of Pennsylvania's electric cooperatives, is published monthly by the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association, 212 Locust Street, P.O. Box 1266, Harrisburg, PA 17108-1266. *Penn Lines* helps 167,000 households of co-op consumer-members understand issues that affect the electric cooperative program, their local co-ops, and their quality of life. Electric co-ops are not-for-profit, consumer-owned, locally directed, and tax-paying electric utilities. *Penn Lines* is not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts. The opinions expressed in *Penn Lines* do not necessarily reflect those of the editors, the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association, or local electric distribution cooperatives.

Subscriptions: Electric co-op members, \$5.39 per year through their local electric distribution cooperative. Preferred Periodicals postage paid at Harrisburg, PA 17107 and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes with mailing label to *Penn Lines*, 212 Locust Street, P.O. Box 1266, Harrisburg, PA 17108-1266.

Advertising: Display ad deadline is six weeks prior to month of issue. Ad rates upon request. Acceptance of advertising by *Penn Lines* does not imply endorsement of the product or services by the publisher or any electric cooperative. If you encounter a problem with any product or service advertised in *Penn Lines*, please contact: Advertising, *Penn Lines*, P.O. Box 1266, Harrisburg, PA 17108. *Penn Lines* reserves the right to refuse any advertising.



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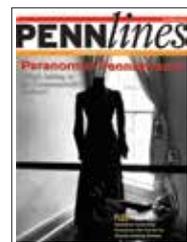


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### ON THE COVER

A haunted mourning dress is just one of the oddities you'll find in Pennsylvania, which some say is bursting with paranormal activity.

Photo by Johlene Riley



## News from across the Commonwealth

### Reinstated coal tax funds benefits for ailing coal miners

Coal miners with black lung disease no longer have to worry if a federal fund, created to provide sick workers with benefits and cover their healthcare costs, will expire.

The recently enacted Inflation Reduction Act reinstated a coal excise tax, which Congress has allowed to lapse in the past, and made it permanent to support the Black Lung Disability Trust Fund.

About \$149 million is provided

annually through the fund to miners whose former employers have gone bankrupt. About 2,000 Pennsylvania miners and their families receive the benefits, which help with expenses that aren't covered by Medicare and other forms of insurance.

The disease, caused by inhaling coal dust over long periods of time, scars the lungs and makes it difficult to breathe and continue to work.

On average, eligible miners receive between \$700 and \$1,200 a month from the federal fund, depending on how many dependents they have.



### American martens, last seen in the early 1900s, could be reintroduced in PA

The Pennsylvania Game Commission is considering reintroducing a small member of the weasel family back into the PA Wilds.

The 2-pound, 2-foot-long American martens were driven from their homes following deforestation in the 1920s and 1930s. These native omnivores prefer forest canopy in large tracts of land with significant snowfall. Their diet consists of small animals, like red squirrels, mice, red-backed voles, birds, rabbits, fish, grasses and berries.

According to the commission's reintroduction proposal, the process would take about five years. If successful, the commission believes the American martens would improve ecosystem diversity, enhance tourism and allow for a trapping season. ❁

### Penn Lines brings home three awards for writing

*Penn Lines*, published by the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association (PREA), recently received three awards at the 2022 National Electric Cooperatives Statewide Editors Association (SEA) Willies Awards.

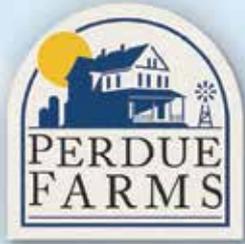
The magazine won two first-place honors: one for "Small wonders: Pennsylvania's tiny boroughs find ways to persevere" in the category of "Best Entertaining Feature" and another for "Charging ahead: Electric vehicle expansion generates interest, concern" in the category of "Best Treatment of a Technical Subject."

The articles were published in November 2021 and April 2022, respectively. "Small wonders" focused on life in some of the Commonwealth's smallest municipalities and the people who are helping them survive. "Charging ahead" explored the growing popularity and pros and cons of electric vehicles.

*Penn Lines* also received an Award of Merit in the "Best Editorial" category for January 2022's "Lighting the way," which recounts PREA's formation 80 years ago and its achievements on behalf of its 14 member cooperatives in Pennsylvania and New Jersey and their consumers.

The Willies Awards – named in honor of Willie Wiredhand – were presented during the SEA Summer Business Meeting, held in August in Chicago. The annual competition draws more than 300 entries from cooperative publications nationwide.





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# The electric co-op history of innovation

*From high-tech to high-touch*

By Paul Wesslund

**D**id you know one of the most cutting-edge places for technology is right up the road at your local electric cooperative?

That's right. Innovation isn't happening just in computer labs or on satellites rocketing into space. Electric co-ops lead even the highly-technical electric utility industry in such fast-changing areas as renewable energy and smart meters, which improve efficiency.

While it may seem surprising to think of your electric co-op as a high-tech leader, it's part of a way of doing business that has been finding new approaches to solving modern problems for nearly 100 years.

## Making light out of darkness

In fact, electric co-ops were originally created to solve one of the most basic and complex of needs and desires: making light out of darkness.

That legacy still works today, and it's why time is set aside each October to recognize National Co-op Month. It's a reminder that business succeeds not only through competition, but also through cooperation.

As a result of the member-owned cooperative form of business, co-ops stand out in many areas of the electric utility industry. Electric vehicles, for example, are getting a boost from co-ops, with some placing charging stations in public parks and other rural locations. And just as co-ops first brought electricity to unserved rural areas nearly a century ago, today some are working to bring high-speed internet service to their communities.

In the early part of the last century, America's cities were being trans-



**BRINGING BROADBAND:** Just as electric co-ops first brought electricity to unserved rural areas nearly a century ago, today some are working to bring high-speed internet service to their communities.

formed by this new thing called electricity. But outside the municipal boundaries, people could only look with envy at the glow from over the horizon. Setting poles and stringing power lines miles outside of town for one or two customers was deemed too expensive.

Luckily, go-getters in America's rural communities believed they could solve the problems that kept the power companies from connecting them to modern society.

They called their friends and neighbors together and started forming their own utilities. They were community-based organizations, democratically-run, not-for-profit businesses called cooperatives. Today, there are more than 900 electric co-ops in the U.S.

It wasn't easy, especially at first. They got a huge boost when, after getting the attention of some key politicians, the federal government created the Rural Electrification Administration (REA). The REA made loans available, helping to finance expensive utility construction. It provided technical consulting,

developing engineering techniques to carry electricity longer distances. The agency drew up model co-op bylaws and even went on the road with tent shows to demonstrate how to use the latest conveniences, like electric ovens and washing machines.

## A true grassroots movement

But the biggest innovation is simply the co-op itself, which has one mission: to make life better for its members.

Electric co-ops didn't spring from a national directive or organization. They are truly homegrown products of what local people wanted for their community. Electric co-ops first started forming as early as 1914, and the formation of the REA in 1935 helped smooth the way forward. But it was local initiative over the next three decades that finally brought electric service to nearly everyone.

The story of electric co-ops is of a true grassroots movement of unique, homegrown organizations. The one characteristic that applies to all of them is that they care for and listen to the local members they serve.

For electric co-ops, one size does not fit all — it's the community that's in charge. In recognizing that every one of us is different, co-ops make both an electric connection, and a human connection.

And that's a truly powerful innovation. ✿

*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.*

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BOO: Johlene "Spooky" Riley, owner of the Museum of Haunted Objects in Gettysburg, has provided a home for a number of eerie items, including Rosie, a doll with a mind of her own.

# Paranormal PENNSYLVANIA

*What's lurking in the Commonwealth's shadows?*

By Jill M. Ercolino  
Senior Editor/Writer

**I**n a museum full of haunted things, she is the queen.

Hidden from sight behind glass and under a black shroud, an Indonesian doll — said to be cursed — presides over the Room of Dark Objects, a creepy collection of items oozing bad vibes.

Visitors, standing on the other side of the glass, can pull a lever to lift the covering and look at her — but only for a few seconds. Johlene “Spooky” Riley, owner of the Museum of Haunted Objects in Gettysburg, doesn’t want to take any chances.

“She’s under lock and key for a reason,” Riley says.

The doll may be contained — for now — but what about the other unsettling creatures and things lurking in the Commonwealth’s shadows?

Hairy, manlike beasts, ghosts and ghost lights, shadow figures, massive birds and odd flying objects have all reportedly been spotted in Pennsylvania.

Are they real? Are they fake?

Eric Altman, a native of Westmoreland County and cryptid expert, has investigated hundreds of these cases. “Cryptid” refers to creatures (such as Big Foot or the Loch Ness Monster) that some claim to exist, but have

never been proven.

Altman says it’s difficult to verify every single encounter, but he does know one thing is for sure: From east to west, Pennsylvania is brimming with paranormal activity. “2022 has been insane,” he says. “It’s mind-numbing how much stuff has been going on.”

Hauntings, however, are nothing new to Gettysburg, where history and horror have gone hand-in-hand for years.

## **‘It’s very dangerous’**

Each year, nearly 1 million visitors make a pit stop in this small Adams County community, the site of the bloodiest battle of the Civil War, to explore its museums and battlefields. While Gettysburg may be famous for its role in American history, it’s also conjured up quite a reputation as a supernatural hotspot.

“You can just feel it,” says Riley, an author, TV, radio and podcast personality, and well-known paranormal investigator in the area, which is served by Adams Electric Cooperative. She also is founder of the Gettysburg Paranormal Association.

A Maryland native, Riley arrived in Gettysburg in the late 1990s and immersed herself in its past. Eventually, she began leading ghost tours and hunts, and as her reputation grew, so did her collection of odd objects.

“Getting the mail has always been fun,” Riley says with a laugh. “I never know what’s going to show up. People feel they need to rid themselves of these things, and I’m the one



**IT'S ALIVE:** This manual typewriter – on display at the Museum of Haunted Objects in Gettysburg – was found at a nearby historic home. The keys reportedly click to life on their own.

who gets them.”

She inherited the cursed doll from a tiny, older lady with a thick accent who bought the figurine online on a whim. Bad luck followed, but that wasn't all, according to the woman: The doll's appearance began changing, too. By the time she came to Riley, the doll eerily resembled her creeped-out owner.

“She came to me at work one day and said, ‘Take this. It's very bad luck ... it's very dangerous,’” Riley says, “but I was skeptical. Usually, when someone buys something like this online, they're just getting someone else's junk.”

Still, Riley took precautions; she and her son ensconced the doll in a glass case and hid her away at his house.

“And you know what? Nothing happened,” she says. “In fact, he was having the best life ever.”

In 2018, when the pair decided to open the Baltimore Street museum — in the same building where Civil War heroine Jenny Wade was born — Riley suggested taking the doll out of hiding

and putting her on display. They weren't prepared for what they found.

“Her features had morphed again,” Riley says. “She changed from an older woman into my son.”

Today, Riley's peculiar possessions are showcased in three themed rooms, but that's not nearly enough space to display the growing collection. Soon, she's planning to open a second Gettysburg location, which will include at least one room devoted exclusively to dolls.

Visitors at the original site will find an antique manual typewriter that mysteriously clicks to life, a Nazi-era key immersed in special oils to protect the public from its negative energy, and a black mourning gown that appears to inhale and exhale.

And then there's Rosie, a porcelain doll with a shock of human hair and a mouthful of human teeth who disappeared one night from another location only to return the next day, Riley says. Some children visiting the museum report the doll has called to them as they were leaving, asking them to come back and play.

Rosie is one of the museum's most popular objects. “People get all kinds of crazy activity around her,” Riley says.

Yet, she continues to put all of these unsettling objects together in one place. Why?

“You know, I wonder that myself,” she says, “especially when I'm having a run of bad luck: Did I do this to myself? But I'm trying to protect people — that's just how I am — and I've been doing this long before I had the museum.”

Riley and the museum's staff routinely cleanse the building and its contents with salt and water blessings, which is enough — most of the time. Some items, however, have a dark, powerful energy that can be difficult to contain, she says.

“People will think this is silly ... but we had to close the museum for a week because some objects weren't playing well with others,” Riley admits. “We've had to get rid of some.”

### **‘Bigfoot is my forte’**

Meanwhile, in southwestern Pennsylvania, Eric Altman has been investigating and documenting strange beings and happenings in the Laurel Highlands for more than two decades. Founder of the Pennsylvania Bigfoot Society, he's also involved in numerous other paranormal organizations.

“Bigfoot is my forte, though,” he says, adding the first recorded encounter in the area was in the early 1930s. “And that’s just one of many weird things that has happened here over the decades.”

Altman describes the Laurel Highlands, which is home to thousands of rural electric cooperative consumers, as a vast, forested, supernatural slab of land. The region spans five counties, Fayette, Somerset, Westmoreland and portions of Bedford and Cambria, but he says one area in particular — Chestnut Ridge, the western-most section of the Allegheny Mountains — appears to be a magnet for eerie activity.

Altman lives along the foothills of Chestnut Ridge and says people have related a number of troubling incidents, including run-ins with Bigfoot, glowing, transparent humanoids that crawl along the ground, a massive prehistoric bird, a bipedal dog-like creature and, lately, hovering balls of light that have been captured on home security cameras.

Many of the stories are featured in a 2017 documentary, “Invasion on Chestnut Ridge,” which includes interviews with Altman, his mentor Stan Gordon of Greensburg — a legend in UFO and cryptid circles — and several witnesses.

Much of the documentary is devoted to a mysterious UFO crash that happened in December 1965 near Kecksburg, a small community in Westmoreland County. Newspaper articles at the time report police and military officials quickly swooped in and sealed off the site to the public.

Since then, several experts have said the UFO was a meteor. Witnesses, however, claim investigators carted off an acorn-shaped object, which one observer said was the size of a Volkswagen Beetle and inscribed with hieroglyphics. True or not, the incident has earned Kecksburg a reputation as the “new” Roswell, a well-known site in New Mexico where a similar crash and cover-up reportedly occurred.

Altman says it’s difficult to explain why Chestnut Ridge attracts such a multitude of what he calls

“head-scratchers.”

“Scientists, engineers and lots of others have been trying to figure out what’s been happening there for 60-some years,” he says, adding he hasn’t entirely ruled out drugs, alcohol and wishful thinking as reasons for the sightings. “There’s also the possibility these things are real. All we can do is talk to the witnesses, look for evidence and try to make sense of it.”

## The ghosts of Portage

About 100 miles northeast of Chestnut Ridge is another Laurel Highlands community, Portage, where it seems the dead don’t want to leave.

Irene Huschak, a member of REA Energy Cooperative and president of the Portage Area Historical Society, says ghostly encounters are common in this Cambria County town, which has a rich railroading and coal mining history.

“It’s a very old community that’s been the site of a number of tragedies,” she says, “including a mine explosion and train accidents.”

The ghosts, however, are more friendly than fearsome. Huschak says two have taken up residence at the Portage Station Museum on Lee Street. One is Tom, a tall, thin coal miner and railroad worker, and the other is Bob, a portly train conductor with curly, dark hair. Both, she says, like to hang out around the steep, narrow stairs that lead to the second floor.

Volunteers and visitors have reported fleeting shadow figures, loud footsteps and cold spots, believed to be a sign of a paranormal presence, Huschak says.

Curious about the truth behind the spirits, she invited a few local psychics, including Ryan Michaels,

who appeared on the A&E series, “Psychic Kids,” to the museum on separate occasions to investigate. Each confirmed the presence of the entities.

“When I walked in, I sensed an energy on the staircase — a tall, thin gentleman — and when I picked up the dousing rods — boom! — they went right toward the door frame of the stairs,” Michaels says, adding he believes the spirit, since identified as Tom, is attached to tools on display on the second floor. “When the tools wound up there, it was a dream come true for him. He loved his job and loved the museum and wanted to stick around.”

Since that experience, Huschak has learned other businesses in town have “visitors,” too.

At the Chatter Box, a local coffee shop and emporium filled with mannequins, antiques and local memorabilia, owner Bonnie Fox says the building’s original proprietor, the late Anna Schoenfeld, has stopped by a few times. For many years, Schoenfeld and her husband, Sigmund, ran a department store at the site, which Fox and her husband renovated into a restaurant.

“I was in the kitchen with my husband scooping some soup, and when



SEARCHING FOR BIGFOOT: Cryptid expert Eric Altman of Westmoreland County has investigated hundreds of weird creatures and happenings in Pennsylvania’s Laurel Highlands.

I looked around, there was a female figure in a long, white dress standing in the hallway watching us,” she says. “It was kind of unnerving, but I think she just needed to know everything was going to be OK.”

Charlie Rimini, owner of the nearby Parkway Restaurant, says his late mother, Josephine, and father, Chas, make regular appearances at the family-owned institution. His daughter, who passed in June, also shows up occa-

**A SPOOKY STAIRCASE:** Irene Huschak says two spirits – Tom and Bob – like to hang out on the staircase of the Portage Station Museum in Cambria County.

sionally, leaving behind “pennies from heaven,” he says.

Rimini describes his dad as a card-playing jokester who likes to fiddle with the automatic dishwasher, flicker the lights and knock pans off the shelves. His mom, on the other hand, is a reassuring presence who keeps a watchful eye on the family and business, he says.

“People don’t believe us,” Rimini says, “but I assure you, they’re here every day just like they were when they were alive. I remember my mom telling me that no matter what happened, she’d never leave the restaurant, and she hasn’t.” ❁



## What the Squonk?

### Creepy creatures reported in state’s rural regions

Here are just a few of the creepy creatures that have been reported in Pennsylvania:

**The Giwoggle of Clinton County** – In the late 1800s, angry witches in West Keating Township reportedly conjured up these cryptids to exact revenge on their enemies. The creatures, described as humanoid wolves, had dark eyes, bird claws for arms and horse hooves for feet.

**The Potter County Nondescript** – This hairy, gorilla-like creature with tusks was spotted in the late 1800s, too. One witness said it roared, beat its chest and took a giant leap in the man’s direction. A barking dog stopped the attack, and local fishermen and hunters were warned to be careful.

**The Squonk** – First documented in a 1910 book, this unhappy, mythical creature resembled a pig and had loose-fitting skin covered with warts and moles. The author claimed it lived in Pennsylvania’s hemlock forests, where it could be heard weeping.

**The Goblin Scarecrow** – This creature, a howling demonic-looking scarecrow stuffed with thousands of crawling bugs, was first seen in Potter County in the 1950s and later sighted in Elk, McKean and Tioga counties. Sometimes, the Goblin Scarecrow would chase and attack its victims; other times, it would simply stand still and scream.

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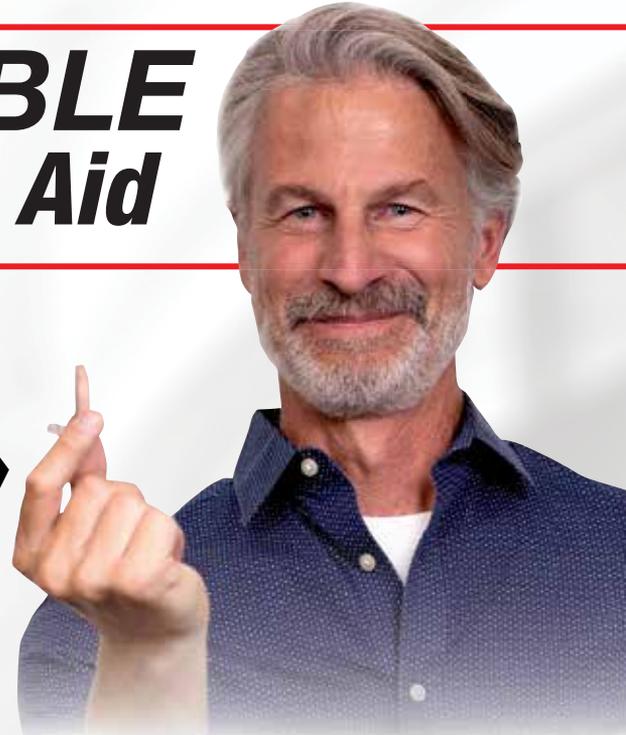
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# Insulation made easy

By Miranda Boutelle

**D**ear Miranda: What cost-effective improvements will make my home comfortable year-round?

**A:** It isn't pretty, but insulation and air sealing typically provide the biggest bang for your buck when it comes to home energy efficiency improvements. When installed together, they can save you money and make a big difference in comfort and energy use.

## Insulation rating

Insulation is rated in R-value. The "R" stands for resistance to heat transfer. The higher your R-value, the slower the heat transfer, or less wasted energy. To determine the R-value of your existing insulation, multiply the number of inches by the R-value per inch for the type of insulation.

Insulation level recommendations are based on your geographic location. Generally, the colder the climate, the higher the recommended R-value. To learn more, go to [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov).

## Where to insulate

The typical locations for insulation are the attic, walls and floor. If you have a forced-air heating or cooling system, your ductwork should be insulated, too. You want a consistent thermal barrier around your home for maximum efficiency.

Attic insulation minimizes energy waste and can help maintain a more consistent temperature throughout your home. Attics can be insulated using batts or blown-in insulation. Recommended R-values range from R-30 to R-60.

Exterior walls and walls separating heated and unheated areas of the home — such as garages or enclosed



porches — should be insulated to an R-value ranging from R-13 to R-21, based on your location and wall construction.

Your home should also be insulated between the floor and crawlspace or unheated basement. If your basement is heated, install insulation in the box sills — the area between the foundation floor of the home's main level.

## Importance of air sealing

Think of insulation as a cozy sweater and air sealing as a wind-breaker for your home.

You know that cozy sweater is no match for winter winds, so you need an extra layer to stop it from ripping through. The same goes for your home.

Air sealing prevents drafts and air infiltration from outside. It can improve efficiency, comfort and indoor air quality.

Air sealing can be done as a DIY project, but it is challenging to pin-

point and properly seal air leaks. Consider hiring a contractor to complete a blower door test and seal leaks.

Typically, air sealing is done around plumbing and electrical penetrations with spray foam or caulk. If using spray foam around gas appliances, temporarily turn off pilot lights. Spray foam is extremely flammable.

## DIY considerations

If you are considering a DIY approach, protect yourself when going into spaces with insulation and do your research about best practices for proper home ventilation.

Also, contact two or three local contractors for a project estimate. Sometimes, the contractor can get cheaper bulk pricing on insulation. ❁

*Miranda Boutelle writes on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.*

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**First Legal-Tender  
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**VERY LIMITED!**  
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O PRIVY MARK



Actual size  
is 38.1 mm

## The U.S. Mint Just Struck Morgan Silver Dollars for the First Time in 100 Years!

It's been more than 100 years since the last Morgan Silver Dollar was struck for circulation. Morgans were the preferred currency of cowboys, ranchers and outlaws and earned a reputation as the coin that helped build the Wild West. Struck in 90% silver from 1878 to 1904, then again in 1921, these silver dollars came to be known by the name of their designer, George T. Morgan. They are one of the most revered, most-collected, vintage U.S. Silver Dollars ever.

### Celebrating the 100th Anniversary with Legal-Tender Morgans

Honoring the 100th anniversary of the last year they were minted, the U.S. Mint struck five different versions of the Morgan in 2021, paying tribute to each of the mints that struck the coin. The coins here honor the historic New Orleans Mint, a U.S. Mint branch from 1838–1861 and again from 1879–1909. These coins, featuring an "O" privy mark, a small differentiating mark, were struck in Philadelphia since the New Orleans Mint no longer exists. These beautiful

coins are different than the originals because they're struck in 99.9% fine silver instead of 90% silver/10% copper, and they were struck using modern technology, serving to enhance the details of the iconic design.

### Very Limited. Sold Out at the Mint!

The U.S. Mint limited the production of these gorgeous coins to just 175,000, a ridiculously low number. Not surprisingly, they sold out almost instantly! That means you need to hurry to add these bright, shiny, new legal-tender Morgan Silver Dollars with the New Orleans privy mark, struck in 99.9% PURE Silver, to your collection. Call 1-888-395-3219 to secure yours now. PLUS, you'll receive a BONUS American Collectors Pack, valued at \$25, FREE with your order. Call now. These will not last!

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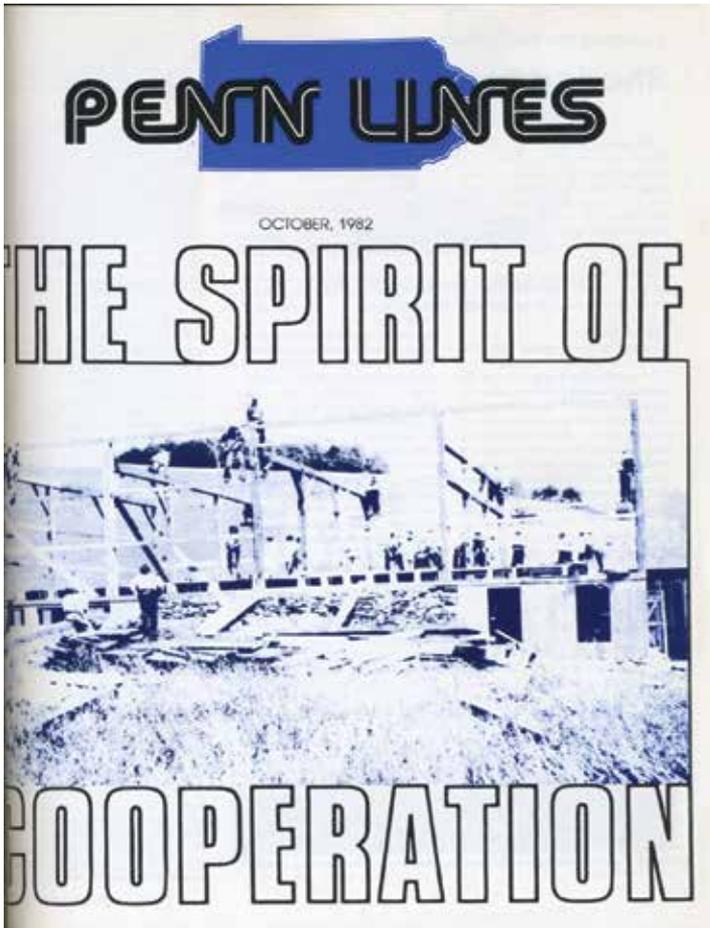
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Your Newsmagazine Through the Years



National Co-op Month has been a recognized celebration since 1964.

Celebrated each October by Pennsylvania's rural electric cooperatives and others, representing everything from dairy farms and community banks to citrus growers and bakeries, this annual event raises awareness about cooperatives and their commitment to building resilient communities.

Of the more than 40,000 cooperatives nationwide, 900 are electric co-ops — and Pennsylvania is home to 13.

Receiving *Penn Lines* is a tangible sign that you're a member of an electric cooperative, all of which were created to fill a significant need that dates back to the early 1930s. Back then, less than 10% of rural Pennsylvanians had electricity. Private power companies didn't think it was profitable to extend electricity beyond urban areas, which left much of the nation's countryside in darkness. That all changed when President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Rural Electrification Act. This opened the door for rural residents to take charge and use government loans to establish rural electric cooperatives. Pennsylvania's first was Meadville-based Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative, incorporated in February 1936.

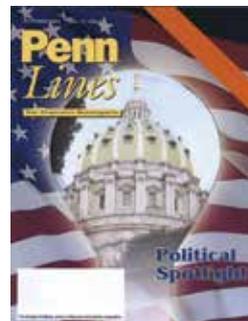
Since then, Pennsylvania's cooperatives have existed for one reason — and one reason only: to serve their members.

1982



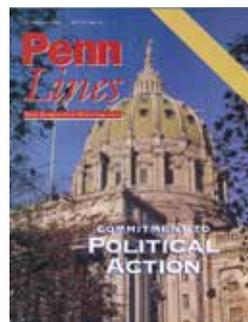
2012

Pennsylvania joins more than 30 other states in enacting voter ID laws.



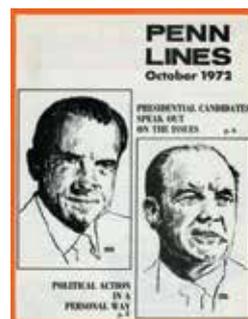
2002

Pennsylvania gubernatorial candidates Mike Fisher (R) and Ed Rendell (D) describe the rural policies they would like to pursue, if elected.



1992

The Action Committee for Rural Electrification has been a constant voice for rural electric cooperatives in the political arena since 1966.



1972

President Richard Nixon and Sen. George McGovern discuss the issues facing rural Americans as the presidential election draws nearer.

# Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives  
serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

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**Amy Wellington, Editor**

## From the President & CEO



# Great food drive and drive-thru

The results of the 86th annual meeting

By Ryan Meller, *Interim President & CEO*

THE 86th annual meeting, which took place on Aug. 20, was a great event. I want to personally thank you for attending the drive-thru event and for welcoming me as your interim president and CEO.

This was the third consecutive year the annual meeting was held at New Beginnings Church of God in Meadville as a drive-thru and pre-recorded virtual event. We also collected food donations during the drive-thru for our sixth annual-meeting food drive.

Member participation was tremendous. We had more than 860 memberships register during our event, and we gathered nearly 1,400 pounds of food items that were donated to the Center for Family Services food pantry.

Each membership received a \$25 electric bill credit and a special LED lightbulb for their participation. Unlike the past two annual meetings, which were closed to the public due to COVID-19, the 2022 business meeting was open to those members who wanted to stay.

A handful of members — about 10 — did stay for the business meeting, which began at 11 a.m. In her presentation, board Chair Kathryn Cooper-Winters encouraged members to vote in the November general election regardless of their political affiliation. Through the Co-ops Vote initiative, co-op members across the country can learn more about their local candidates and their stance on topics that affect electric cooperatives.

Kathy also took a special moment

during the meeting to recognize Michael Sample, our District 3 director who passed away on Jan. 3, 2022. She presented a resolution in the form of a plaque to Mike's wife, Debra, and his daughter, Sydney, for all his efforts and dedication to the cooperative.

Democratic member control is one of the seven core principles that guides all cooperatives. During the live portion of the business meeting, Mark Bellini, who chaired the Member Panel for Director Elections, announced the 2022 election results. Elected to the board of directors for three-year terms were June Shelhamer of Edinboro for District 1, Earl Koon of Edinboro for District 2 and Robert Agnew of Conneautville for District 4. Also elected to serve the two-year balance of Mike Sample's term was Candy Brundage of Corry for District 3.

Co-op rates will remain stable for the rest of 2022. Through Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc., our generation and transmission cooperative based in Harrisburg, the 14 electric co-ops in Pennsylvania and New Jersey own about 60% of their generation, which is why Northwestern's rates have remained the same since 2008.

The state of the co-op is strong and stable for the foreseeable future. We will continue to focus on providing safe, reliable, and affordable electricity with great emphasis on safety for our lineworkers and our communities.

I look forward to serving you in the future and anticipate seeing you at more in-person events in 2023. 🌟

## Co-op celebration and creepy Crawford County

By Amy Wellington, *Director of Communications*

OCTOBER is National Co-op Month. It's a special time of year when we celebrate the cooperative difference and remember our roots. We attribute our beginnings to Mrs. Georgia Haefeli, who in 1935 was the first Pennsylvania resident to contact the Rural Electrification Administration in Washington, D.C., which resulted in the creation of Steamburg Electric Cooperative — now known as Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative (REC).

Unfortunately, Mrs. Haefeli, of Linesville, died prematurely in February 1936 and never witnessed the result of her efforts. There were many other rural folks from northwest Pennsylvania who worked alongside Mrs. Haefeli and continued her mission long after her death. Most of their names are recorded in our archives — names like A.D. Stainbrook and William Wenner are some of the most recognizable today.

Other names and stories have nearly all been lost to time. Years ago, we used to hear more stories of when the lights first came on, but those days have become few and far between. We recognize and thank all our ancestors who helped Northwestern REC become the organization it is today. Like yours, our roots are deep in Crawford County.

### A ghostly good month

So, October is National Co-op Month, but it's also time for Halloween and a ghostly good month to explore some creepy Crawford County history. I'm not a history buff per se, but I do like uncovering local history and am drawn to true-crime books. Imagine my excitement when I discovered "Murders, Mysteries, and History of Crawford County, Pennsylvania 1800-1956," a book by Don Hilton.

The book begins in 1800 when Crawford County was formed and ends in 1956, the year the author was born. I reached out to the author about writing a sequel to this book for events that occurred after 1956.

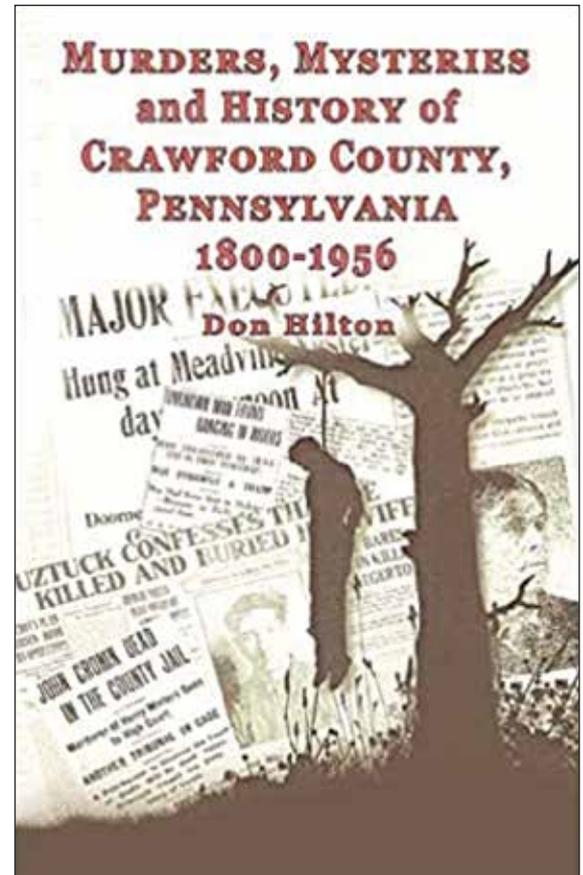
Hilton explained: "I'm not a news-

paper reporter, so writing about disturbing, more recent events is uncomfortable. To me, it's one thing to write about your great uncle, the murderer. It's quite another to write about your brother, the murderer. But it's amazing how quickly these stories are forgotten in family histories. More than once, I had people tell me they never knew, for example, that their grandma had served time for murdering their grandpa!"

I was surprised to find myself wanting to know someone — a relative, perhaps — in this book! I did recognize some of the judicial names from local history lessons and indirectly knew the grandson of one of the murder victims. But there were no relatives of mine in the book. I suppose that is a good thing.

The first murder ever recorded in the new county happened in 1805 at Samuel Lord's store in Meadville. As an original settler to the area, Lord was able to speak the languages used by local Native Americans, so they frequented his store. One of the native men, while under the influence of alcohol, struck and killed his wife with a hatchet on the front porch. With no criminal proceedings to be found in the archives, it is believed this crime and punishment were handled by native authorities.

After being convicted of a brutal murder on Feb. 7, 1817, in what is now known as Spartansburg in northeast Crawford County, George Speth Van Holland was condemned to death by hanging. At his hanging on July 26, 1817, Van Holland was irritated the sheriff hired someone else to perform the deed. The man shouted the sheriff "should do his own work," before pushing the hired man off the scaffolding. He later died of his injuries. Sometime



after the execution, Canadian authorities came looking for Van Holland in conjunction with another murder. It appears the first person legally executed in Crawford County was most likely a serial killer, too.

Intertwined with the timeline of crimes in this book, Hilton includes other important historical facts, as well. For example, in 1844, Samuel Morse sent the first telegraph from Washington, D.C., to Baltimore, Md. And in 1851, Cambridge Township was created from Venango.

In February 1870, a Mead Township farmer disappeared while on a trip to buy cattle. He never made it to his destination, and his body was found on April 30, 1870, in French Creek just south of Meadville. Foul play was suspected as the body was bound and gagged. Despite a \$2,000 reward — or \$50,000 today — this case was never solved.

In 1888, Nikola Tesla unveiled the AC transformer.

The first female jurors in Crawford County were Mrs. Sadie Arthur of Rome Township, Mrs. Maude Rickerson of Saegertown, Mrs. Augusta Mosier of Cussewago Township and Mrs. C.H. Kuler of West Shenango Township. In July 1923, they and other jurors found George Ewing innocent by reason of self-defense for the killing of Prince Crawford. Crawford's family in Georgia could not afford to have his body sent home. The Rev. G.W. Corey and other residents of Spartansburg donated enough money to transport Crawford's body to his mother.

In late April 1932, Norman Hartweg discovered a woman's body in Pymatuning Swamp. She had been killed elsewhere and dumped in the muck at the north end. There were no missing persons from the area, and this Jane Doe case has never been solved.

Twenty-two-year-old Doris Hatch

disappeared from Cambridge Springs on July 27, 1953. William Turner, also from Cambridge Springs, was the prime suspect in her disappearance, but no charges were ever filed. Her employer, First National Bank, offered a \$500 reward that eventually grew to \$1,000 — or \$8,500 today. In March 1955, her body was found in Connecticut. Turner ended his own life before authorities were able to take him into custody, but he adamantly professed his innocence in letters he left behind. This case was closed.

There you have it ... some creepy and mostly unknown history of Crawford County. These are just a handful of the 135 murders and mysteries mentioned in Hilton's book that took place between 1800 and 1956. To find out more, you will just have to read his book.

Hilton grew up on the east side of Conneaut Lake. His family ran a tourist home on the lake shore, just north of the



Author Don Hilton

*Midway Hotel, starting in the late 1800s. Hilton's father and uncle, who were twins, ran the Midway boat for many years. They were also later known as the "twin captains," who ran the Barbara J., the paddlewheel boat on Conneaut Lake. He graduated from Conneaut Lake High, as well as Thiel College and Kent State University. He currently resides in Ohio. ✿*



# Focused on YOU.

Electric cooperatives were created to serve their members. Because we're a co-op, we're able to adapt to our community's unique needs. That's the power of co-op membership.

**OCTOBER IS NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH**

# Time to charge your ETS room heaters

**ELECTRIC THERMAL STORAGE (ETS)** heat is quiet, odorless, extremely comfortable and very affordable, and it's based on a concept of heating that originated in Europe.

In an ETS system, a heating medium (usually very dense ceramic bricks) is combined with electric heating elements that run through the medium. The elements are turned on during off-peak hours, when the unit can be charged at a lower rate. The bricks heat up and then store the heat for hours inside the insulated cabinet. During on-peak hours, we cut off the heating elements, and you can then heat your home by operating a small

fan that circulates air over the bricks, which heats them and your home. By shifting the energy use to off-peak

Our approximate ETS control hours are as follows:  
**September 15 – May 15**  
 7–11 a.m. & 5–10 p.m.  
**May 16 – September 14**  
 Noon–7 p.m.  
 Control periods are in effect Monday through Friday.

hours, we help keep overall rates to our members low. This also helps the environment by reducing the amount of energy consumed during peak times when demand for energy is highest.

Soon, we will be entering the heating season. The amount of heat stored in the brick core of the heater is regulated, manually or automatically, according to seasonal weather conditions. For older units, there is a dial to select charge levels (I-II-III), where I offers minimal stored-heat capacity and III sets the unit to maximum charge. Knowing where to properly set the charge level can be a process of trial and error. ❁

## What would you do if you encountered a downed power line?

While not an everyday occurrence, overhead power lines, padmount transformers (green boxes) and other electrical equipment can become damaged due to storms, fires, car accidents, or animal interference.

*(Spoiler alert: Do not do any of these things.)*

If you were in an accident involving a downed overhead power line, would you get out of the car and run? If you saw a car accident involving a downed line or damaged green box, would you run to the scene to help? If you saw a downed line across a road, would you approach it or try to move it?

**Any of these actions can cause serious injury or death from electrocution.** Downed lines and other damaged equipment can energize the ground, nearby people and objects. Never go near a downed power line or try to move it with an object. Electricity can jump from a wire or object to you to find the quickest path to ground.

The safest place to be after an accident involving a downed power line is inside your vehicle. Unless your vehicle is on fire or giving off smoke, here is what you should do:

1. Stay inside your vehicle or cab.
2. Call 9-1-1 and report the downed or damaged power lines and their location.
3. Try to remain calm.
4. Wait for the utility crew to arrive to deenergize the power.
5. Do not get out until someone from the utility says it is safe to do so.

If you must get out of the vehicle because it is on fire, cross your arms over your chest and make a clean, solid jump out, then intentionally hop with your feet together as far away as you can. If you are unable to make solid hops, shuffle with your feet close together.

When you exit, do not touch the vehicle and the ground at the same time. You could become electricity's path to ground.

When electricity escapes into the ground, it is likened to ripples in a pond, with each ripple representing a different voltage. Therefore, hopping helps avoid step potential, which is the action of placing each foot at a different voltage. ❁

### CAR ACCIDENT



Stay inside your vehicle or cab since the ground or objects could be energized.

Call 9-1-1 and report that there are downed or damaged power lines or a dislodged green box.

Wait for the utility crew to arrive to deenergize the power.

Do not exit until someone from the utility says it is safe to do so.

### ONLY EXIT IF THE VEHICLE IS ON FIRE

Cross your arms over your chest and make a clean jump out.

Do not touch the vehicle and the ground at the same time.

Make solid hops with your feet together as far away as you can.

Do not return to the vehicle.



### IF YOU ARE A BYSTANDER

Do not approach the scene to try and help.

Stay at least 50 feet away and do not lean on or touch anything, including fences or guardrails.



Learn more at: 

# 7

## COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

### 1 VOLUNTARY AND OPEN MEMBERSHIP



Cooperatives are voluntary organizations open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

### 2 DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL



Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. The elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary cooperatives, members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote), and cooperatives at other levels are organized in a democratic manner.

### 3 MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION



Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the cooperative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing the cooperative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

### 4 AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE



Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.

### 5 EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION



Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and employees so that they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public, particularly young people and opinion leaders, about the nature and benefits of cooperation.

### 6 COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES



Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

### 7 CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY



While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies accepted by their members.

# Pumpkins offer family fun and good eats

By Anne M. Kirchner

One of my childhood memories is going to the pumpkin patch. Each year, I searched for the pumpkin that would make the “perfect” jack-o’-lantern. Some years the pumpkin would be tall and skinny. Other years the pumpkin would be short and squatty. I was always attracted to a pumpkin’s rich orange color.

Years later, my husband and I spent our first date at the pumpkin patch. When we purchased our first home, we decorated the porch with pumpkins. We used pumpkins of different colors, sizes and texture. And when our children were born, we passed on the pumpkin tradition.

Fast forward to my years as a cook: I often pair pumpkin with traditional warm winter spices. Cinnamon, ginger, cloves and nutmeg are my favorites. I also discovered pumpkin and chocolate make the perfect match. And one can’t go wrong including pumpkin in select breakfast recipes.



Trained in public relations, **Anne M. Kirchner** focuses her writing on human connections, travel and culinary arts. She enjoys researching food origins, exploring cooking techniques and creating new recipes.

## Cream of Pumpkin Soup

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 cup yellow onion, chopped
- 3 cups chicken broth, divided
- 1 (15-ounce) can pureed pumpkin
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream

Heat the olive oil in a medium saucepan; add the onion and sauté until tender. Add 1 1/2 cups chicken broth and stir well. Bring the mixture to a boil. Cover the saucepan and reduce the heat to medium; simmer for 15 minutes. Transfer the broth mixture to a food processor or blender; process until smooth. Return the mixture to the saucepan. Add the remaining 1 1/2 cups chicken broth, pumpkin, salt, pepper, cinnamon and ginger. Stir well and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in the whipping cream and heat through. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

## Pumpkin Chocolate Chip Bundt Cake

- 2 eggs
- 2 cups pureed pumpkin
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup canola oil
- 1/4 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Generously spray a 12-cup Bundt pan with cooking spray; set aside. In a large mixing bowl, combine the eggs, pumpkin, sugar, canola oil, Greek yogurt, vanilla and spices. Whisk the ingredients until the mixture is smooth. Add the flour, baking soda and salt to the wet mixture, mixing gently. Stir in the chocolate chips. Pour the batter into the Bundt pan. Bake for 40 to 45 minutes. Cool the cake for 20 minutes on a wire rack before inverting the cake onto a serving platter. Allow to cool completely. Before serving, dust the cake with powdered sugar. Makes 16 to 20 servings.

## Pumpkin Pancakes

- 1 1/2 cups whole milk
- 1 cup pureed pumpkin
- 1 egg
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 2 tablespoons cider vinegar
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup whole wheat flour
- 3 tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

Mix the milk, pumpkin, egg, canola oil and cider vinegar in a small bowl; set aside. In a separate bowl, combine the flours, brown sugar, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, cloves and salt. Add the dry ingredients to the pumpkin mixture; stir until well combined. Warm an electric griddle to 350 degrees. Spray the griddle with cooking spray. For each pancake, pour 1/3 cup batter onto the warm skillet. Cook the pancakes for 3 to 4 minutes or until small bubbles appear on the pancakes. Flip the pancakes and cook for 1 to 2 minutes. Repeat with the remaining batter. Makes 4 to 6 servings.



# CoQ10's Failure Leaves Millions Wanting

Use this pill to supercharge your brain and think better than ever.

Millions of Americans take the supplement CoQ10. It's the "jet fuel" that supercharges your cells' power generators, known as mitochondria.

As you age, your mitochondria begin to die. In fact, by age 67, you lose 80% of the mitochondria you had at age 25. But if you're taking CoQ10, there's something important you should know.

As powerful as CoQ10 is, there is a critical thing it fails to do. It can't create new mitochondria in your cells.

## Taking CoQ10 is not enough

"There's a little-known NASA nutrient that multiplies the number of new power generators in your cells by up to 55%," says Dr. Al Sears, owner of the Sears Institute for Anti-Aging Medicine in Royal Palm Beach, Florida. "Science once thought this was impossible. But now you can make your heart, brain and body young again."

"I tell my patients the most important thing I can do is increase their 'health span.' This is the length of time you can live free of disease and with all your youthful abilities and faculties intact."

Medical first: Multiply the "power generators" in your cells

Al Sears, M.D., recently released an energy-boosting supplement based on this NASA nutrient that has become so popular, he's having trouble keeping it in stock.

Dr. Sears is the author of over 500 scientific papers on anti-aging and recently spoke at the WPBF 25 Health & Wellness Festival featuring Dr. Oz and special guest Suzanne Somers. Thousands of people listened to Dr. Sears speak on his anti-aging breakthroughs and attended his book signing at the event.

Now, Dr. Sears has come up with what his peers consider his greatest contribution to anti-aging medicine yet — a newly discovered nutrient that multiplies the number of tiny, energy-producing "engines" located inside the body's cells, shattering the limitations of traditional CoQ10 supplements.

## Why mitochondria matter

A single cell in your body can contain between 200 to 2,000 mitochondria, with the largest number found in the most metabolically active cells, like those in your brain, heart and skeletal muscles.

But because of changes in cells, stress and poor diet, most people's power

generators begin to malfunction and die off as they age. In fact, the Mitochondria Research Society reports 50 million U.S. adults are suffering from health problems because of mitochondrial dysfunction.

Common ailments often associated with aging — such as memory problems, heart issues, blood sugar concerns and vision and hearing difficulties — can all be connected to a decrease in mitochondria.

## Birth of new mitochondria

Dr. Sears and his researchers combined the most powerful form of CoQ10 available — called ubiquinol — with a unique, newly discovered natural compound called PQQ that has the remarkable ability to grow new mitochondria. Together, the two powerhouses are now available in a supplement called Ultra Accel II.

Discovered by a NASA probe in space dust, PQQ (Pyrroloquinoline quinone) stimulates something called "mitochondrial biogenesis" — a unique process that actually boosts the number of healthy mitochondria in your cells.

In a study published in the Journal of Nutrition, mice fed PQQ grew a staggering number of new mitochondria, showing an increase of more than 55% in just eight weeks.

The mice with the strongest mitochondria showed no signs of aging — even when they were the equivalent of 80 years old.

## Science stands behind the power of PQQ

Biochemical Pharmacology reports that PQQ is up to 5,000 times more efficient in sustaining energy production than common antioxidants.

"Imagine 5,000 times more efficient energy," says Dr. Sears. "PQQ has been a game changer for my patients."

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

## It works right away

Along with an abundance of newfound energy, users also report a sharper, more focused mind and memory, and even younger-looking skin and hair. Jerry M. from Wellington, Florida, used Ultra Accel II and was amazed at the effect.

"I noticed a difference within a few



NASA-discovered nutrient is stunning the medical world by activating more youthful energy, vitality and health than CoQ10.

days," says Jerry. "My endurance almost doubled. But it's not just in your body. You can feel it mentally, too," says Jerry. "Not only do I feel a difference, but the way it protects my cells is great insurance against a health disaster as I get older."

## Increase your health span today

The demand for this supplement is so high, Dr. Sears is having trouble keeping it in stock. "My patients tell me they feel better than they have in years. This is ideal for people who are feeling or looking older than their age... or for those who are tired or growing more forgetful."

"My favorite part of practicing anti-aging medicine is watching my patients get the joy back in their lives. Ultra Accel II sends a wake-up call to every cell in their bodies... and they actually feel young again."

## Where to find Ultra Accel II

To secure the hot, new **Ultra Accel II** formula, buyers should contact the Sears Health Hotline at **1-800-714-1368 TODAY**. "It's not available in retail stores yet," says Dr. Sears. "The Hotline allows us to ship directly to the customer." Dr. Sears feels so strongly about **Ultra Accel II**, all orders are backed by a 100% money-back guarantee. "Just send me back the bottle and any unused product within 90 days from purchase date, and I'll send you all your money back." The customer is responsible for the return shipping.

Call NOW at **1-800-714-1368** to secure your supply of **Ultra Accel II**. Use Promo Code **PLMB1122** when you call. Lines are frequently busy, but all calls will be answered!

# Why is the bark falling off trees?

By George Weigel

**T**ree trunks and their bark clothing usually drift into the background during a growing season dominated by flowers and lush foliage.

But their newfound attention when the flowers and leaves drop in fall often spawns worrisome calls to gardener hotlines and tree companies as owners notice the bark seems to be coming off.

The best scenario — and a common gardening fakeout — is that some trees naturally shed bark. It may come off in flakes, a la kousa dogwoods and sycamores, or it might peel or shred off, a la birch, shagbark hickory, and paperbark maple.

So the first step in determining whether to panic or not is to know what tree you have, then investigate whether it's an "exfoliating" species or not.

Now for the bad news.

Sometimes bark loss means a tree is in trouble — or is already dead.

Dead trees ultimately lose their bark — sometimes while still standing, sometimes not. But they'll also give you other clues, such as wilting and/or dropping foliage all over. Their branches also become brittle, and the branch wood shows no green when you scrape into it.

A dead tree also will eventually fall, so if that's what you have, call a tree company ASAP to 1) confirm the tree is dead and 2) remove it, if it is.

Short of that, bark loss can be a sign that something is threatening tree health.

Some of the lesser evils include frost cracks, small lightning strikes, wounds from bad pruning or storm tear-offs, and wounds from rodent chewing or buck rubs.

Trees are surprisingly good at sealing



PHOTO BY GEORGE WEIGEL

**HEALTHY OR NOT?:** The tree at left is shedding bark because it's dead, while the tree at right is a healthy paperbark maple, which naturally sheds bark.

off wounds and growing callus tissue, somewhat akin to how we heal a cut and grow new skin.

As long as the tree doesn't become infected and hasn't lost its critical cambium layer the whole way around inside the bark (a malady called "girdling"), recovery is possible.

The prognosis is more foreboding if you're seeing sunken soft spots in the trunk, leaking sap or mushroom-like growths in addition to bark loss.

Those are signs of disease, rot or infection that can spread beyond the tree's ability to compartmentalize the damage. That's a threat to the entire tree.

Wood and root-rot diseases are difficult to stop once they get going. If you have a valuable tree and suspect disease, a tree company might be your only hope.

While leaf diseases and leaf-attacking bugs, like Japanese beetles and caterpillars, generally cause more cosmetic rather than fatal issues, boring insects

are a different matter. They do their damage when the larval stage feeds on the inner wood, where they're safely out of the reach of predators and most insecticides.

The emerald ash borer is the most infamous example lately. Its fat, worm-like, tunneling larvae have killed millions of ash trees in multiple states in the past five years, including many in Pennsylvania.

One of the early symptoms of the emerald ash borer is a condition calling "blonding," when the older bark of infested ash trees sloughs off to reveal a lighter bark underneath.

Then there are troubles related to weather (either drought or soggy conditions) and "operator error," including planting too deeply, over-mulching, and "mower blight" (when homeowners repeatedly damage trunks by bumping into them with lawn mowers or horse-whipping them with string trimmers).

In any event, pay attention to that bark now that it's more noticeable.

It might be just "doing its thing." Or it might be trying to tell you something important. 🌿



**George Weigel** is a retired horticulturist, author of two books about gardening in Pennsylvania and garden columnist for *The Patriot-News/PennLive.com* in Harrisburg. His website is [georgeweigel.net](http://georgeweigel.net).

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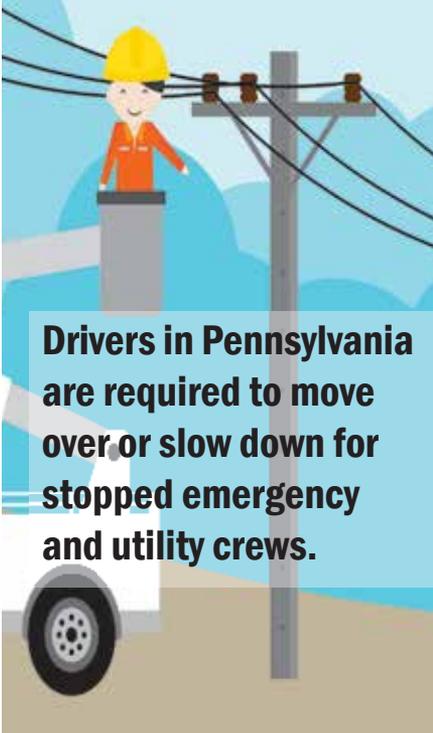
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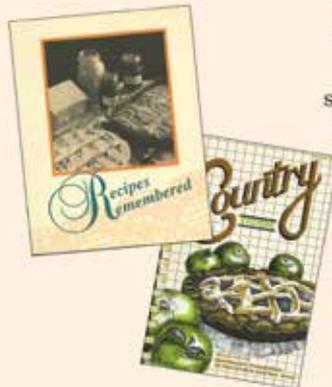


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PHOTO COURTESY OF RED RIDGE WHITETAILS, WILLIAMSPORT

# Chronic wasting disease

## *State officials hunt for answers*

**I**t doesn't take more than a leisurely drive through rural Pennsylvania to see a common theme. The road names say it all: Deer Court, Deer Ridge, Deer Creek Road, Deer Alley, Deer Way, Whitetail Deer Run, Deer Park Road, Deerfield Drive, Whitetail Ridge, etc.

Deer hunting has been a way of life in Pennsylvania for centuries, and in more recent years, hundreds of private hunting preserves and related businesses have popped up around the Commonwealth. However, a significant situation requiring hunters as well as owners of private deer farms to make adjustments has taken place in the past decade.

The first case of chronic wasting disease (CWD) in Pennsylvania was confirmed in a captive deer in 2012, and just two months later in a wild, free-ranging whitetail.

"There is no cure, no vaccine, no immunity," says Andrea Korman, CWD section supervisor for the Penn-

By Kathy Hackleman  
Penn Lines Contributor

sylvania Game Commission's Bureau of Wildlife Management. "No state has been able to control it once it has become established."

Pennsylvania, however, is doing its best to manage the killer disease.

### **Not the end of deer hunting**

CWD attacks the animal's brain cells and is always fatal in deer, elk and other cervids (mammals with solid, deciduous antlers). Symptoms include emaciation, excessive drooling, general lack of fear of humans and lack of response to stimuli.

As of August, about 1,000 deer had tested positive for CWD in the Commonwealth, with confirmed cases in the following counties: Adams, Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Clearfield, Cumberland, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Indiana, Jefferson, Juniata, Lancaster, Lycoming, Mifflin, Perry, Snyder, Somerset, Warren and Westmoreland.

**NO CURE:** Deer season is upon us, but a deadly illness, chronic wasting disease, is raising concerns among state officials and hunters alike. Currently, Bedford, Blair and Fulton counties have the highest number of positive cases.

So far, CWD has not been detected in the Commonwealth's elk population.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention cautions against eating the meat of any CWD-positive animal. However, Korman stresses, hunters should not stop hunting due to concerns about the disease.

"One of the best strategies we have right now is to increase harvest numbers," she says. "This is not the end of deer hunting in Pennsylvania, but do get your deer tested and don't transport high-risk parts [spinal column, spleen, lymph nodes, brain, eyes, tonsils]."

"Remember, there is no indication CWD can be transmitted to humans, but there is also a lot we still don't know about the disease."

To help stall the spread of CWD,

state officials have set up seven Disease Management Areas (DMAs) that have special regulations for hunters. The game commission is also providing free testing for hunters who harvest deer in DMAs. To learn more about the DMA zones, regulations and testing facilities, see the map at right and go to the game commission's website, [pgc.pa.gov](http://pgc.pa.gov) — click on “Wildlife” and then “Wildlife Health.”

Currently, the only way to confirm a diagnosis of CWD is to test the brain tissue or lymph nodes of dead animals. Pennsylvania officials, however, are hoping they are close to a fast and easy test that can be done on live animals.

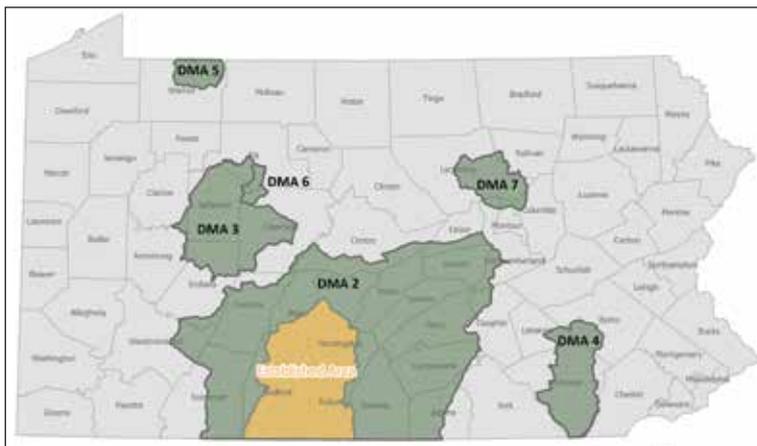
“We want to give hunters peace of mind,” Korman says. “But nothing we have now is sensitive enough to pick up really early infections. Before last season, detections were doubling every year and this year, they didn't double, so I hope we are starting to see some results from our efforts.”

So far, the highest number of positive CWD cases is in DMA No. 2, which covers Bedford, Blair and Fulton counties, portions of which fall within territories served by Adams Electric Cooperative, Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative (REC), New Enterprise REC, and Valley REC.

“About 90% of the positive cases come from those three counties,” Korman says. “Twenty percent, or one in five, of hunter-harvested deer in that area are testing positive. Certainly, there are other states with higher numbers, but our goal has been to keep it at 5%, so we are certainly not where we want to be in terms of positive cases.”

It's difficult to say why the south-central part of the state has so many positive cases, she says, although it is a rural area with a large free-ranging deer population, as well as several private deer farms.

Most deer that have tested positive



**MANAGING CWD:** To combat chronic wasting disease in the Commonwealth's deer herds, state officials have set up Disease Management Areas (DMAs) that have special regulations for hunters. To learn more, go to [pgc.pa.gov](http://pgc.pa.gov).

in DMA No. 2 and the other zones have not shown signs of the disease, Korman says. The time from infection to observable symptoms is about 18-24 months, she says, but an infected deer usually looks sick only in the final few weeks of its life, when it's most likely to exhibit CWD symptoms.

Pennsylvania is not the only state dealing with CWD, which was first confirmed in the United States — in Colorado — in 1967. “All states have different levels of management and different levels of deer density,” Korman says, “but no state has this under control.”

### High standards for deer farms

Pennsylvania Game Commission officials deal only with wild, free-ranging deer, while the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture oversees captive deer farms, many of which provide a traditional hunting experience at a private preserve.

Ag Department spokesperson Shannon Powers emphasizes deer farms are tightly regulated. Each is required to be in either a state or federal certification program that requires farm owners to follow extremely high standards to control CWD. If a positive case is reported, the deer farm is placed under quarantine for five years, and it must follow a number of steps before being allowed to reopen for business.

Meanwhile, deer farmers are concentrating on how they can help prevent the spread of CWD as deer are their livelihood, as well as their

hobby. The number of private deer farms in the state is down from a high of around 1,200 a few years ago to around 700. The drop followed the increase in CWD cases and the stringent requirements imposed since the confirmation of cases in Pennsylvania.

Josh Newton, operations manager of Red Ridge Whitetails and

Cervid Solutions in Williamsport and president of the Pennsylvania Deer Farmers Association, says it is unfortunate that some members of the public have vilified deer farms (because the first Pennsylvania case was found at a deer farm and the first case found in the U.S. was in a research animal).

“[Deer farmers] are doing everything we can to fight this war,” says Newton, a member of Forksville-based Sullivan County REC. “This is a deer disease; it is not a deer farm disease. We need to come together and use the best science. Genomic testing is a solution. We can fix this problem. We need commonsense solutions.”

Those solutions, he believes, include testing farmed animals for their susceptibility to CWD, and then selectively breeding subsequent generations until most, if not all, farmed deer are not susceptible to CWD.

Of course, wild, free-ranging deer pose a different problem and will need different solutions. In August, Gov. Tom Wolf announced a second round of funding — \$2 million, this time around — to the University of Pennsylvania's Veterinary School, which continues to research CWD in wild deer herds.

More information about slowing the spread of CWD is available from the Pennsylvania Game Commission ([pgc.pa.gov/cwd](http://pgc.pa.gov/cwd)), Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture ([agriculture.pa.gov](http://agriculture.pa.gov)), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)), Penn State University ([extension.psu.edu](http://extension.psu.edu)), and the Pennsylvania Deer Farmers Association ([padfa.com/cwd](http://padfa.com/cwd)). ❁

# PREA announces scholarship winners

## Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association Scholarships in Memory of William F. Matson

Eight Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association (PREA) Scholarships in Memory of William F. Matson were recently awarded to outstanding students whose homes are served by rural electric cooperatives.

The scholarships are awarded each year to students in rural electric cooperative service areas in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Selection is based on academic excellence, community involvement, need and cooperative membership. The scholarship is named for William F. Matson, who served for 22 years as president of PREA and Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc. until his death in June 1986.

The recipients are Elizabeth Bruner, Tri-County Rural Electric Cooperative (REC); Kate Burrowes, Claverack REC; Sarah Hostetler, Somerset REC; Macy Hughes, United Electric Cooperative; Alice Polcrack, Sullivan County REC; Kaylin Rose, Northwestern REC; Logan Ruter, Tri-County REC; and Allison Semetkoskey, REA Energy Cooperative.



**Elizabeth Bruner** is the daughter of Clark and Connie Bruner of Blairsville and was home-schooled. She is a student at Penn State DuBois, where she is majoring in wildlife and fisheries science. Involved in 4-H for the past 13 years, she is a member of the Pennsylvania 4-H State Council and earned the 4-H Diamond Clover Award. She has also been involved in many conservation organizations, including the Wildlife Leadership Academy, Trout Unlimited, the Pennsylvania

Governor's Youth Advisory Council, the National Deer Association and the Rivers Conservation Camp. She served as the Indiana County Fair queen and as a deacon at Blairsville United Presbyterian Church.

Elizabeth's hobbies include fly fishing and tying, hunting, archery, shooting, hiking, and driving her team of Haflingers.



**Kate Burrowes**, daughter of Walter III and Charlotte Burrowes of Rome, is a graduate of Tioga Central High School. Kate is a student at the State University of New York Potsdam, where she is majoring in art education. In high school, she was a member of the Girls Varsity Club and cross country and track teams. She also was a member of the National Honor Society and Student Council, serving as vice president of both her senior year. Kate participated in the Drama Club, Science Olympiad, Spanish Club, the yearbook staff, Prom Committee, Agriculture Club and NYSSMA. In addition, she was an elementary aide her senior year, sang in the chorus and was a member of the band, where she was co-president of the Tri-M Music Honor Society.



**Sarah Hostetler**, a graduate of North Star High School, is the daughter of Josh and Melissa Hostetler of Boswell. She is attending Pennsylvania Highlands Community College, where she is majoring in early childhood education. During high school, Sarah was involved in Spanish Club, Student Council, yearbook, and the Community Arts Club, where she held a variety of leadership positions. She also lettered in varsity softball all four years of high school.

An active volunteer, Sarah has logged more than 500 hours of com-

munity service with her church youth group, the Bible2School program, local food pantries and other organizations.



**Macy Hughes**, daughter of William and Sherry Hughes of LaJose, is a graduate of Harmony Area School District. Macy is a student at Saint Francis University, where she is studying to become a physician assistant. While in high school, Macy served as senior class president, Student Council vice president, editor of the yearbook, Harmony School Board student representative, a section leader for the concert/marching band, and vice president of the chorus. She was also a member of the National Honor Society and the Harmony Safety Committee, participated in musical theater, and was an elementary science outreach coordinator.

Outside of school, Macy was president of the Harmony 4-H Club, the Clearfield County Teen Council and Westover Baptist Youth Fellowship. She also earned the 4-H Diamond Clover Award.



**Alice Polcrack**, daughter of Erik and Jane Polcrack of Shunk, is a student at Susquehanna University, majoring in biomedical sciences, and a recent graduate of Sullivan County High School, where she was valedictorian. During high school, Alice was involved in numerous activities, including cross country, band, choir, Ski Club, the National Honor Society, Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), and the Scholarship Challenge. She held several leadership positions and is an active community volunteer. She serves on the 4-H County Council and is president of the Pennsylvania 4-H State Council. At the recent National FBLA Conference, Alice placed eighth in the

help desk division.

In her spare time, Alice works at Baumunk's General Store, where she is a waitress, clerk and cook. She also enjoys volunteering at the Animal Care Sanctuary in East Smithfield.



**Kaylin Rose**, daughter of Jeff and Krista Rose of Cochranton, is a graduate of Cochranton Junior/Senior High School and a student at

Saint Francis University, where she is studying exercise physiology and physical therapy. During high school, Kaylin served in various leadership positions on Student Council, including president her senior year. She also was a member of the National Honor Society, serving as secretary her senior year, and was junior class president. She was a member of the Academic Decathlon Team, played varsity softball and volleyball, played French horn in the concert band, and was a member of the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association's district and regional bands.

Outside of school, Kaylin helps with Vacation Bible School and Children's Church. She has served as president of the local 4-H Club and as president and vice president of the Crawford County 4-H Council. Kaylin also was a member of the Tri-County Surge traveling softball team.



**Logan Ruter**, a graduate of Coudersport Junior/Senior High School, is the son of Ryan and Carrie Ruter of Coudersport. A student at Saint Francis University, he

is enrolled in the physician assistant program, where he is studying health science. In high school, Logan was a member of the football, basketball and trap shooting teams. He served as president of the Varsity Club, Student Council, Coudersport Chapter of the National FFA Organization and the National Honor Society.



**Allison Semetkoskey**, daughter of Joseph and Karen Semetkoskey of Indiana, is a student at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, where she is majoring in business management.

A recent graduate of Marion Center High School, she was a member of the varsity basketball, softball, volleyball and powerlifting teams. She also served as treasurer of the senior class and the National Honor Society, and was a member of Student Council.

Allison was also involved in the Future Business Leaders of America, where she was president of the Marion Center Chapter and Region 3 and served as state treasurer. In addition, she was a member of the Indiana County Junior Chamber of Commerce, is an Indiana County Sports Hall of Fame athlete, and participated in the Marion Center Force Volleyball Club.

## Jody Loudenslager Memorial Scholarship

Two students selected to participate in past Rural Electric Youth Tours have been named recipients of Jody Loudenslager Memorial Scholarships. They are Abigail Palotas, Northwestern REC; and Karina West, Tri-County REC. The scholarship is named in honor of Jody Loudenslager, a 1995 PREA Youth Tour student from Trout Run, Pa., who was among the 230 passengers who died in July 1996, when TWA Flight 800 exploded shortly after takeoff from New York.



**Abigail Palotas**, daughter of Scott and Sharon Palotas of Meadville, is a student at Gannon University, where she is majoring in mathematics.

At Gannon, she is president of the Honors Program and a member of Gamma Sigma Sigma Service Sorority, Beta Beta Beta Biological Honors Society and Phi Eta Sigma

National Honor Society.

Abigail, a graduate of Maplewood High School, also enjoys reading and spending time with friends and family.



**Karina West**, daughter of Scott and Diane West of Shinglehouse, is a student at the University of Rochester (UR), where she is majoring in cell and developmental biology

and minoring in chemistry, and social and emotional development. At school, Karina serves as a research assistant at the Mariani Laboratory and Project FLIGHT. She is also a member of the Special Olympics Club, where she has served as the president, event coordinator and social media chair, the Alpha Phi International Fraternity, the UR Women's Club Rugby, the Health Education and Advocacy Leaders Club, and the Partners in Reading Club, where she was a seventh-grade math tutor.

A graduate of Oswayo Valley High School, Karina volunteers at The Margaret Home, the Crisis Nursery and the Potter County Fair. She also is a Comfort Keepers in-home caregiver. 🌟

## Get Ready

2023 Youth Tour will be held June 18-23 in Washington, D.C. Please contact your local rural electric cooperative for additional information.



# Cooperative cybersecurity

By Justin Luebbert

As cybersecurity threats continue to grow both at home and in the workplace, it's important to know what we can do as individuals, how we can work with others and measures we can take to reduce our risk of cyber threats.

October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month — but good cyber hygiene should be practiced year-round because as the grid evolves and new technologies emerge, this creates additional opportunities for threats against our systems.

Electric cooperatives are coming together to fight back and add resiliency to the electric grid.

You can help too. Good cyber hygiene is equally important at home and in our personal lives. With smart (internet-connected) technologies integrated into many of our homes, it's essential to take steps to protect devices and personal data.

Here are a few cybersecurity tips you can implement at home:

- ▶ **Enable multi-factor or two-factor authentication for your online accounts.** This extra layer of security allows websites and applications to confirm you're really who you say you are. By adding this second step, you're making it a lot harder for hackers to access your accounts.
- ▶ **Use secure passwords.** This means using unique passwords for all your accounts and ensuring they are at least 15 characters long. Randomly generated passwords or passphrases are typically more secure. You might also consider using some type of password manager. In addition to sug-



**COOPERATING COOPERATIVES:** Electric cooperatives are working together to establish relationships, provide tools, and share resources and training information to harden and improve the overall cyber landscape.

gesting new, strong and unique credentials for every login, many password managers will let you know if your existing passwords are weak, reused or have been associated with a data breach so you can take action immediately.

- ▶ **Think before you click.** Be careful when clicking links or opening attachments. This is one of the most important ways to protect yourself against scammers and hackers. If you receive a text message or email that seems too good to be true, threatens you for not taking immediate action, or displays a sense of urgency, take extra precaution.

Remember, it's important to practice good cyber hygiene at home, in

the workplace and even on the go. Be vigilant as you connect to outside networks and carefully read emails before clicking or opening links and attachments. Consider using a virtual private network, which encrypts your online activities while you're working on the go or even at home.

We all have a part to play in combatting cyber threats. Electric cooperatives and their local and national partners will continue working together to advance cybersecurity defenses for all co-op members and the communities they serve. ❁

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

# Classified Advertisements

<b>ISSUE MONTH</b>	<b>AD DEADLINE</b>
<b>December 2022</b>	<b>October 14</b>
<b>January 2023</b>	<b>November 15</b>
<b>February 2023</b>	<b>December 15</b>

**Penn Lines** classified advertisements reach more than 167,000 rural Pennsylvania households! Please note ads must be received by the due date to be included in the requested issue month. Ads received beyond the due date will run in the next available issue. Written notice of changes and cancellations must be received 30 days prior to the issue month. Classified ads will not be accepted by phone, fax or email. For more information please contact Michelle M. Smith at 717-233-5704.

## PLEASE SUBMIT A CLEARLY WRITTEN OR TYPED SHEET WITH THE FOLLOWING REQUIRED INFORMATION:

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- Ad copy** as it is to appear in the publication.
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# Political spotlight

## *Supporting cooperative candidates*

The Action Committee for Rural Electrification (ACRE) — the political action arm of electric cooperatives — has made its endorsements of U.S. congressional and state legislative candidates to represent electric cooperative service areas in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The recommendations are based on the candidates' support for and voting record regarding rural electrification and their stance on various rural and member concerns, in accordance with ACRE bylaws.

By voting for ACRE-endorsed candidates on Nov. 8, you will help ensure your local electric cooperative has a voice before Congress and the state legislature.

To see the full list of ACRE-endorsed candidates, please visit: [prea.com/2022-acre-endorsements](https://prea.com/2022-acre-endorsements).

You can also access the list with your smartphone. By scanning the QR code below, you will be taken to the list of endorsed candidates. Electric cooperatives represented are noted after each House, Senate or congressional district.



*Paid for by the Action Committee for Rural Electrification*

# The MUD Kit

By John Kasun

**M**y wife is a very creative and skilled holiday decorator, while I am what is referred to as “decor-challenged.” My wife has always believed that when they took out my tonsils as a child, they somehow also removed my holiday spirit.

I must admit I never understood the logic of why we put up the decorations and then take down the decorations. My wife and I live on a dead-end road with few neighbors, who after one year of living here, have pretty much seen our decorations. If I had to choose between decorating for the holidays and passing a kidney stone, the kidney stone is in first place all the way.

However, over the years of married life, I have learned the house will be decorated for the holidays, and I will be a part of the joyous event, even if my part is kicking and screaming. So after years of bucking the trend, this year I have decided to take the offensive. I have developed what I call the MUD kit. MUD stands for Man’s Ultimate Decoration.

The MUD kit is designed to provide one decoration that will service all of the holidays with easy-to-make minor changes. Even better, it never has to be taken down or put into boxes. Sound good? Here’s how it works:

The kit comes with three pumpkins, one large, one medium and one small.



Also included are a can of white paint, a can of blue paint, a can of red paint, a black hat, a candle, a turkey feather, two ears of corn, a big ball of cotton and a golf club.

For Halloween, which I might add will be upon us shortly, put the three pumpkins on your porch. Carve a happy face in the smallest pumpkin and insert the candle. That’s it for Halloween. Next comes Thanksgiving. Stack pumpkins, largest on the bottom, medium in the middle and small happy-face on top. Put black hat on head, stick turkey feather in hat and lay the corn on the ground. We now have a pilgrim ready for dinner — and Thanksgiving is complete. Now for Christmas. Take away the ears of corn but save for later, remove turkey feather from hat and paint pumpkins white. We now have a snowman. Christmas decorating finished. Here comes Easter. Remove black hat and stick two ears of corn in head to look like rabbit ears. Paint corn white, add big ball of cotton to the butt and —

voila! — the Easter Bunny.

Now, between Easter and the Fourth of July, our pumpkins will be getting pretty ripe, which leads us right into the decorations for the Fourth. Remove big cotton ball, unstack pumpkins, and cover them with some red and blue paint. Our pumpkins have now taken on that all-American look.

While everyone likes the nighttime fireworks, some people want to get the party started earlier, and our Fourth of July decorations are made to order for these folks. Take the golf club and hit the pumpkins as hard as you can. By this time of the year, they will be soft and should explode into small, wet pieces of flying red, white and blue mush. The effect will be very similar to that of a starburst fireworks display, and better yet, it can be seen in the daylight. Plus, no one can get hurt with flying pumpkin mush. Gallagher, the comedian, started this way, and people loved him. Now, use the big cotton ball to wipe the pumpkin mush off of the golf club, discard the cotton ball and place the club in your golf bag. Nothing to store, untangle or put away, plus you just got a free golf club.

The prototype of the MUD decorating kit has been so successful that I am in the process of developing a MUD Deluxe kit. The MUD Deluxe decorating kit will contain something special for Christmas: a large box of aluminum foil. You wrap the aluminum foil on your rain gutters and it reflects the light from you neighbors’ decorations. You get the same decorative effect without running up your electrical bill.

You know, I think I’m getting into this holiday spirit thing. ❁



A writer with more than 30 years of experience, **John Kasun**, a lifelong Pennsylvanian, looks for the humor in everyday life and then tells a story from that perspective. He is a member of Valley Rural Electric Cooperative.

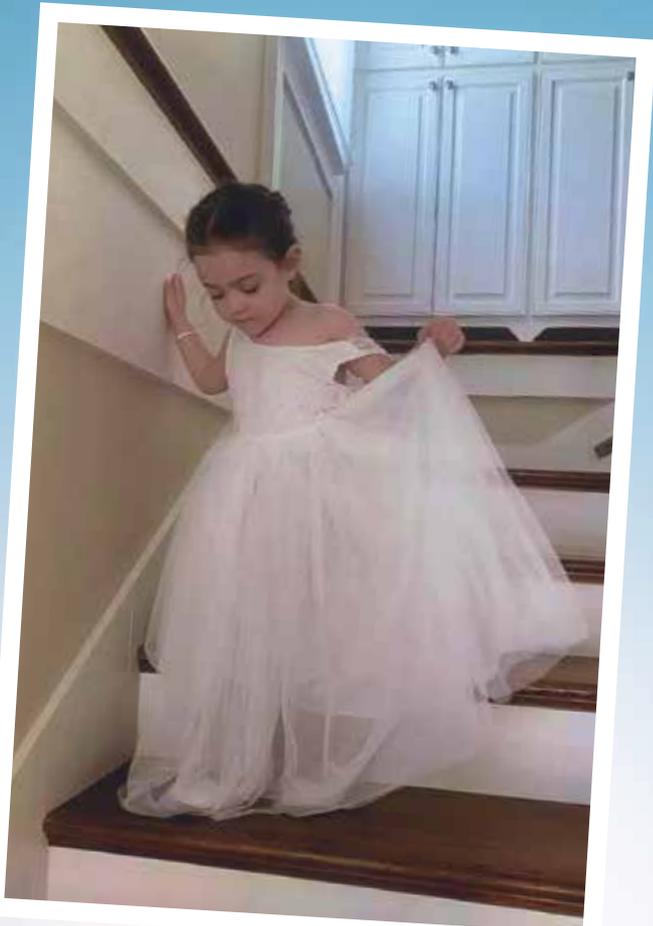
## Last call for 2022 photos

It's time to wind down the 2022 Rural Reflections contest, so hurry and get your photos ready to mail. Entries must be postmarked by Oct. 31 to be placed in competition for the 2022 prizes.

Amateur photographers who are members of a rural electric cooperative have a chance to win a \$75 prize in one of our contest categories: artistic, landscape, human subject, animal and editor's choice. Runners-up will receive a \$25 prize. Entries received after Oct. 31 will be entered in the 2023 contest.

Winning entries and the runners-up, all selected by an independent panel of judges, will be printed in the January and February issues of *Penn Lines*.

Amateur photographers may send photos (no digital files, please) to *Penn Lines* Photos, P.O. Box 1266, Harrisburg, PA 17108-1266. Include your name, address, phone number, and the name of the electric cooperative that serves your home, business, or seasonal residence. Include a self-addressed, self-stamped envelope if you want the photo to be returned. ❁



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