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ON THE COVER

Laura Goss is executive director of the Adams County Library System, one of many bringing programs and services to rural Pennsylvanians. Goss is also a member of Adams Electric Cooperative.

PHOTO BY
JILL M. ERCOLINO

Collaboration Leads to Three New State Parks, Including Wyoming County's First



For the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and our state parks system, 2022 was a tremendous year of celebrations for three wonderful new additions.

We were able to purchase land to develop three new state parks with the working names of Big Elk Creek, Susquehanna Riverlands and Vosburg Neck. Each park has its own unique features, history and resources that we are excited for the public to discover. Here is a little bit of information about each park:

- **Big Elk Creek in Chester County** features 3.5 miles of Big Elk Creek, a tributary of the Elk River and the Chesapeake Bay. The 1,712-acre park was acquired through The Conservation Fund with the assistance of the Mount Cuba Center and Chester County. Big Elk Creek was an important transportation and natural resource corridor for indigenous people for thousands of years. It was also an important area for freedom-seekers on the Underground Railroad to the North.
- **Susquehanna Riverlands in York County** is a 1,100-acre park situated in a largely wooded tract, where Codorus Creek flows into the Susquehanna River. It offers an amazing view up and down the river. The land was acquired with assistance from the Lancaster Conservancy and is adjacent to its Hellam Hills and Wizard Ranch nature preserves.
- **Vosburg Neck in Wyoming County** provides scenic views along the North Branch of the Susquehanna River. This beautiful park offers scenic hiking opportunities, a pleasant path for strolling along a former railroad bed, invigorating shared-use trails and significant public access for water-based recreation.

In total, DCNR was able to conserve nearly 3,500 acres of vital natural and cultural resources. Each are a testament to the collaborative work involved in conservation.

Big Elk Creek and Susquehanna Riverlands are in areas that face significant development pressures to accommodate growing populations.

Meanwhile, Vosburg Neck is a point of pride because it's the first state park in Wyoming County, a territory served by Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative. The 669-acre site was wonderfully maintained by the North Branch Land Trust, and we are grateful for its partnership to acquire the park. We hope to enhance the beautiful views with hiking trails, recreational infrastructure and other types of amenities that make our state parks great.

The new state parks are now open to the public; however, they won't be fully operational and ready with new buildings, such as restrooms, and full staff until the end of 2026. Visit dcnr.pa.gov to learn more about our state parks. I hope you consider visiting Vosburg Neck and the other 123 parks in our state system soon. 📍

JOHN HALLAS
STATE PARKS DIRECTOR

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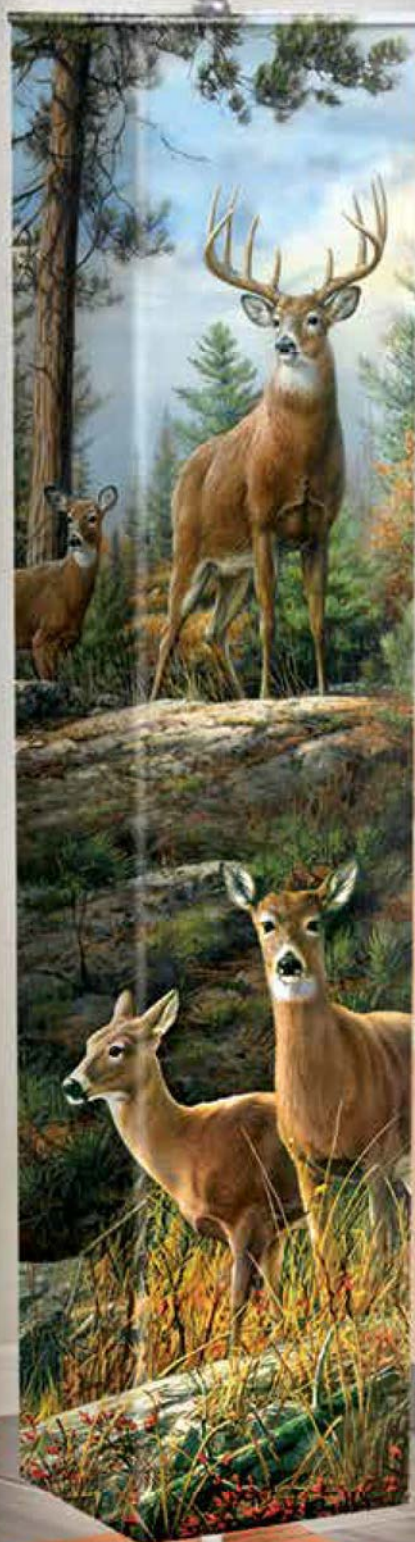
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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE

Before I set one boot into boot camp, I spoke to an Army captain about joining the military. He wanted me to know just what I was getting myself into. After all, this was a serious decision.

"In the Army, you train every day for something you hope you never have to do," he told me.

I carried that thought with me into basic training – and through six years of active duty in places like Iraq, Afghanistan and Bosnia. It was a serious business, and I was glad for the constant focus on training and safety. It helped me come home to my family.

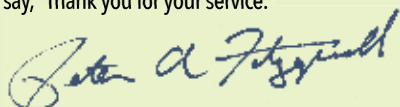
In my time working with electric cooperatives, I've seen that same focus when it comes to our lineworkers. Line work is also a serious business. It's one of the most dangerous professions in the country. To keep our lights on, lineworkers train for something they *have* to do every day, which is deal with the dangers of electricity.

Electricity is unforgiving, and can be deadly when storms knock out power lines – or when mishandled. That's why line work requires constant focus and attention. Lineworkers go through rigorous training to be able to perform their jobs. To support their efforts, the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association hosts more than 20 different schools and hundreds of different safety sessions every year – all geared to help ensure lineworkers can come home to their families at the end of the day.

When the lights go out, lineworkers answer the call – often in the worst conditions that Mother Nature can send us. They contend with ice and snow, thunderstorms and whipping winds – all while working with deadly voltage amid dizzying heights.

This month, we're celebrating those who perform line work by recognizing April 10 as Lineworker Appreciation Day. It's an opportunity to pause and say thanks for all they do to keep the power flowing to our homes and communities.

It takes a special breed to step into a storm in the middle of the night and say, "I'll take care of it." But that's exactly what our lineworkers do. They put their lives on the line to provide an essential service to us all. From this veteran, I'd just like to say, "Thank you for your service."



PETER A. FITZGERALD
EDITOR



SICK PUPPIES: Common in southern states, the highly contagious dog flu has made its way to Pennsylvania. Symptoms include a cough, thick nasal discharge, low-grade fever, lethargy and reduced appetite. Most dogs recover, but a vet visit is recommended.

THE PET CORNER

Dangerous dog flu spreads to Pennsylvania

Canine influenza — sometimes known as “dog flu” — is spreading across the United States, including parts of Pennsylvania, according to the American Veterinary Association. The transmissible respiratory disease does not affect humans, but it is dangerous — and can even be deadly — for man’s best friend.

Common in southern states, canine influenza has recently been reported in Pennsylvania, Colorado, Minnesota and California. Most of Pennsylvania’s cases have been in the southeastern section of the state, including the Philadelphia area. In March, however, a Cumberland County animal rescue reported it was in “crisis mode” after all 50 of its dogs came down with suspected cases of dog flu. Three were hospitalized.

Canine influenza is easily spread between dogs through direct contact, nasal secretions, and contaminated objects, such as bowls, collars and leashes, or by people who move

between infected and healthy dogs. Dogs typically develop signs of illness between two and four days after the virus is contracted. Symptoms include a cough, thick nasal discharge, low-grade fever, lethargy and reduced appetite. More severe cases include high fever and difficulty breathing, and secondary complications can include pneumonia and/or bacterial infections.

Most dogs will recover after two to three weeks, but the fatality rate can be as high as 10%, with young and elderly dogs at high risk of complications. Dog owners who believe their dog has canine influenza are encouraged to contact their veterinarian immediately.

LANTERNFLY UPDATE

Six more counties added to state’s quarantine zone

The state Department of Agriculture has added six more counties to the spotted lanternfly quarantine zone in an effort to slow the invasive insect’s spread.



Those recently added to the zone — which now covers 51 counties — are Butler, Clearfield, Clinton, Fayette, Lawrence and Somerset, the majority of which are serviced by rural electric cooperatives.

“Spotted lanternfly is an invasive pest that is disruptive and damaging to our agriculture commodities and a nuisance pest for all Pennsylvanians,” says Secretary of Agriculture Russell Redding, a member of Adams Electric Cooperative. “Through collective and intentional efforts, including instituting quarantine zones, we continue to slow the spread of this insect, and I call on all Pennsylvanians to assist.

“Before the eggs hatch,” he added, “do your part to help manage the pest by scraping egg masses and reporting where they are found. Each egg mass destroyed eliminates 30 to 50 lanternflies before they have an opportunity to hatch and spread.”

Homeowners can get more information from Penn State Extension at its offices and extension.psu.edu/spotted-lanternfly.

CALL IT A COMEBACK American martens may be making a return

The Pennsylvania Game Commission is considering a plan to reintroduce the American marten, a once-common, native, squirrel-sized member of the weasel family, into rural, forested areas.

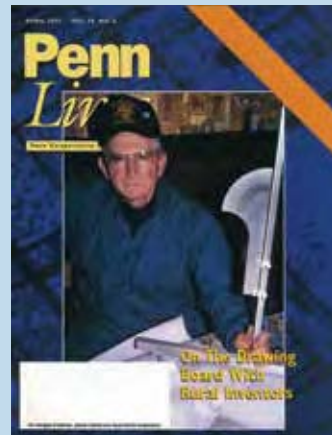


Although American martens once existed throughout the Commonwealth, by the late 1800s, most were living in the north-central forests that contained both coniferous and deciduous trees. The last reported American martens disappeared from Pennsylvania around the turn of the 20th century.

A 2022 feasibility study revealed Pennsylvania has suitable marten habitat, much of which can be found on publicly owned land, including the Allegheny National Forest. The final plan will likely be introduced in early 2024. 🐾

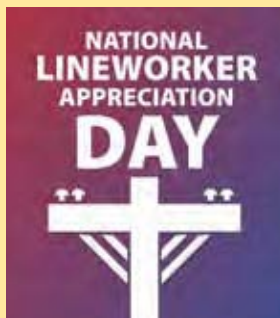
TIME LINES

APRIL 2003



Necessity is the mother of invention, and lots of great ideas have originated in the Keystone State. Twenty years ago, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office reported more than 2,500 patents had been issued to rural Pennsylvanians alone over a 10-year period — a number that outranked those of 14 other states. Highlighted inventors developed everything from a protractor to make life easier for pipe fitters to a more reliable device — known as a load limiter — to manage residential power use.

APRIL



THANK A LINEWORKER

When the lights go out, they go to work. April 10 is National Lineworker Appreciation Day. Don't forget to say thanks to your cooperative's hardworking crews.

CELEBRATE EARTH DAY

In 1970, Earth Day signaled the birth of the modern environmental movement. Now, each April 22, more than 1 billion people join the celebration. From clean-ups to festivals, communities in Pennsylvania are planning lots of family-friendly events. Go online and get involved.



GET BUZZED

Elk County — a region serviced by two rural electric cooperatives — is the place to be April 26 to 29, when the Chainsaw Carvers Rendezvous buzzes into Ridgway. Awards, demonstrations and live music are planned. Learn more at chainsawrendezvous.org.

GROOVY, BABY!

Rub elbows with colonists, bobby-soxers and hippies at Huntingdon's Mayfest, April 29. The free event, smack dab in Valley Rural Electric Cooperative territory, features five blocks of historically themed events and entertainment. Learn more at mayfestofhuntingdon.org.



MAYFEST OF HUNTINGDON

BY THE BOOK:

Rural Libraries Fill a Void

KATHY HACKLEMAN

Penn Lines Contributor



RAY SCHWARTZ BELIEVES A PUBLIC library is the “heart of a community.”

A member of the Adams County Library System Board of Trustees, Schwartz has spent much of the past 12 years encouraging others to see the community’s libraries through the same eyes. The buildings, like the books inside, hold a lot of meaning, he says.

“Libraries are effectively the only ‘people’s institution’ that are fully open to all,” says Schwartz, who also serves on the Adams Electric Cooperative (EC) Board of Directors. “They do not have an entrance fee or eligibility requirement, and do not require an access badge or a certain belief.”

Something old, something new

While books are still at the core of what libraries provide, visitors will find unexpected things, too.

“Some libraries offer the opportunity to check out [museum] passes, music, and movies as well as items like fishing rods, board games, video games, and even specialty cake pans,” says Christi Buker, executive director of the Pennsylvania Library Association.

“Technology is [also] a huge growing component of library services,” she adds. “Many libraries provided hot spots during the pandemic for residents who did not have access to the internet.”

Although local libraries steadily add materials and services to meet the needs of visitors, young and old, their funding has not grown at a similar pace.

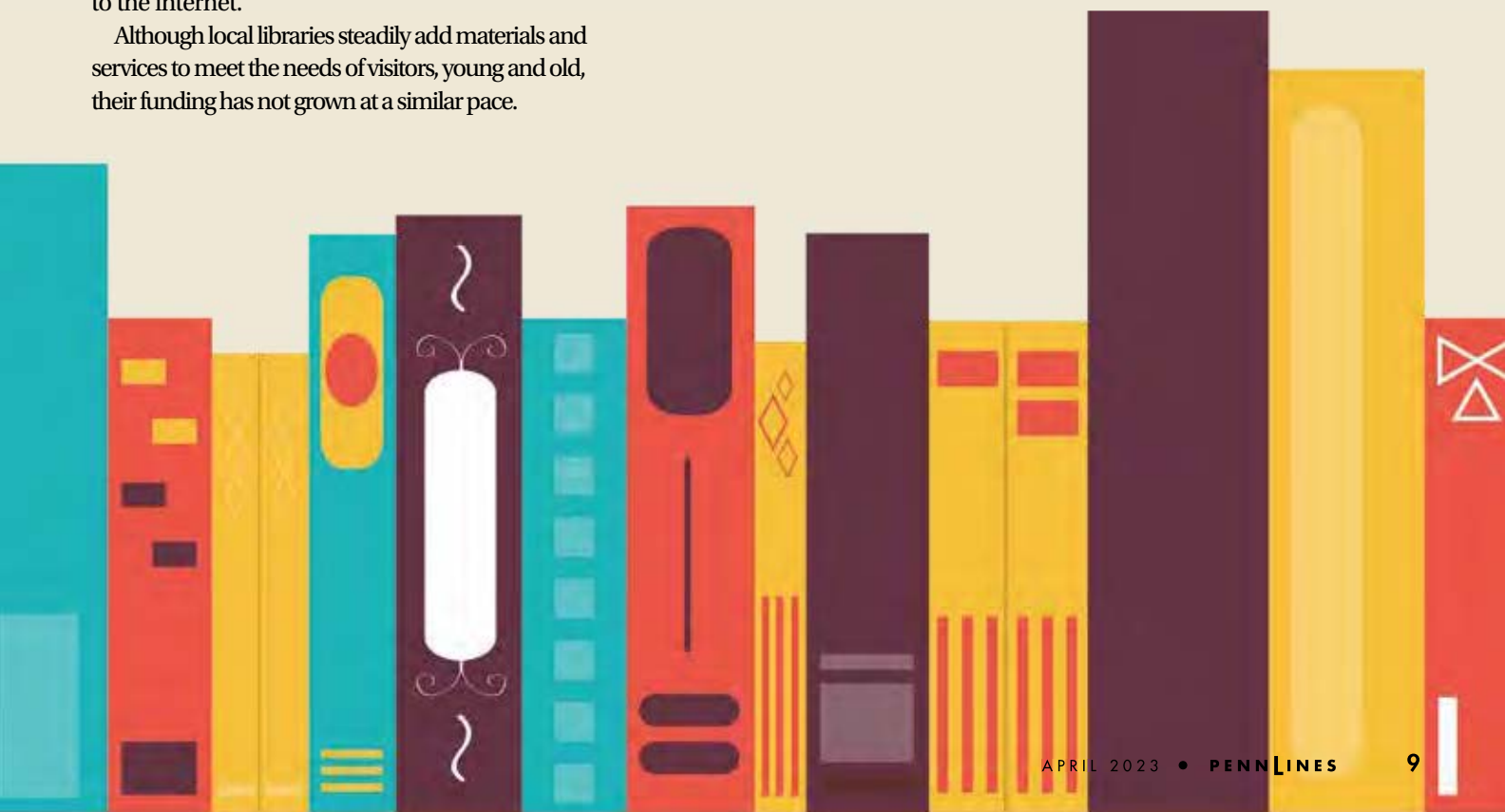
“Financial resources can be a challenge, especially when you are in a small, rural community,” Buker notes. “Libraries receive some state aid, but most libraries’ operational budgets come from local sources, such as townships and boroughs, or endowments — if they are lucky enough to have one.”

On top of that, state law requires libraries to remain open a fixed number of hours or face a funding cut, Schwartz says. The law also sets forth the number of staff hours and the percentage of the operating budget that must be spent on collections. Those requirements prevent libraries from cutting staff or collections to save money, leaving local fundraising as one of the few remaining options — a task that’s often left up to staff and a core group of dedicated volunteers.

The Adams County Library System, for instance, which has its main library in Gettysburg and branches in Biglerville, Carroll Valley, East Berlin, Littlestown, and New Oxford, is planning a building project that will require an intensive capital fundraising effort.

The system’s largest library — the main branch in Gettysburg — is a three-story facility built in the 1920s that no longer meets the needs of today’s organization or public. Located in the

“Your ZIP code should not determine your future opportunities, and the library can help fill those gaps.”



LIBRARY SYSTEM OF BRADFORD COUNTY



GETTING THE WORD OUT: Staff of the Library System of Bradford County participate in community events with the goal of spreading the word about its programs and services. Here, System Administrator Lea Chisum, left, and Spalding Memorial staff member Rebecca Williams attend the 2022 Senior Expo, hosted by state Rep. Tina Pickett, who represents consumers served by Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) and Tri-County REC.

ADAMS COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM



SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE: Rural libraries across Pennsylvania are the backbone of their communities, offering something for everyone. The Adams County Library System, for instance, has a variety of programs that cater to the young and young-at-heart.

community's historic downtown, the building has a number of issues; limited parking is among them.

Schwartz, however, believes so strongly in the importance of libraries to their communities and residents, he's willing to devote the extra effort to make the new 27,000-square-foot library a reality. For him, it's important to give back to an organization that has given his family so much.

"When I moved to Gettysburg, I was commuting to Germantown, Md.," he says. "I would check out books on CDs because I had such a long commute. I did that for 10 years."

A wonderful resource

Schwartz would also take his granddaughter to story time when she was a youngster, providing him with a different glimpse into library programming.

Laura Goss, also a member of Adams EC, serves as the system's executive director and says the Adams County libraries reach a lot of people — together, they have around 33,000 cardholders. Because of this, programming focuses on all ages, from baby story time through leisure and educational presentations for adults.

Each community the system serves is different, so each location has different programming. A popular systemwide program, however, is "SummerQuest," a summer learning program for all ages. This year's event kicks off with the traditional "FunFest," slated from 3 to 7 p.m. Friday, June 9, at the Gettysburg Area Recreational Park. The event will include about 40 nonprofits and free activities for children and adults.

Goss says a donation from Adams EC allows the system to spread funds among all of its branches. In 2022, the cooperative continued its support of literacy with donations to several other libraries and programs in its territory, which covers Adams, Cumberland, Franklin, Perry and York counties. Beneficiaries included Coy Public Library in Shippenburg, the Adams County Reads "One Book" Program, the Glatfelter Memorial Library in Spring Grove, the Jean Barnett Trone Memorial Library in East Berlin, and the York County Literacy Council's Buck A Book Reading Program.

During the pandemic, the Adams County system switched most of its programming online. Once the libraries reopened, staff discovered there were some programs that worked better online, so those continue to be available virtually. Public computers and internet access are available at all branches, too.

"We have Wi-Fi throughout the buildings," Goss says. "That extends outside the walls of the library, and sometimes even when the library is closed, we can see people outside using their computers."

Goss hopes once a new building is constructed in Gettysburg, the staff will be able to provide many other new options for cardholders.

'We felt welcome'

Another area that has incorporated a group of smaller libraries into one system is the Library System of Bradford County, which is made up of nine libraries along Routes 6 and 220 in territories served by Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative (REC). Communities with branches are Troy, Canton, Burlington, Ulster, Sayre, Athens, Towanda, Monroeton and Wyalusing.

Lea Chisum, the system's administrator, is also active in the Pennsylvania Library Association and the national Association for Small and Rural Libraries. Pennsylvania has 603 public libraries, with about half of those in what are defined by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania as rural counties.

Chisum says small and rural libraries face several challenges. In addition to being largely dependent on donations to finance operations, they have small staffs as well as a small pool of residents, making it difficult to find willing board members. Still, those small libraries are expected to provide the same resources and programming available in larger facilities.

Chisum's focus on providing what the community needs is based on her own childhood experience.

"I grew up in rural Texas, and we were poor," she recalls. "We moved several times and everywhere we went we were new, and a library was the first place we felt welcome. Your ZIP code should not determine your future opportunities, and the library can help fill those gaps."

Although Chisum has been with the library system for five years, she still is working to spread the word about the rural Bradford County libraries. She believes a key part of marketing is community involvement so she makes it a priority to be visible at the county fair and other local events. This allows her to visit one-on-one with residents and explain what the county's library system offers.

Trudy Fix, branch manager at the Hustontown Library (part of the Fulton County Library System) and a member of Valley REC, is familiar with explaining the benefits of a small library.

"We have what we call a 'library of things,'" she says. "We have all kinds of books and reading programs, as well as public computers, DVDs, CDs, audio books, copying and faxing, but we also have hot spots and laptops that are checked out like books, along with sewing machines and some tools."

As part of its outreach efforts, the library provides large-



A HELPING HAND: Ray Schwartz, who serves on the Adams Electric Cooperative Board of Directors, is active with the Adams County Library System, too. A familiar face at the main branch in Gettysburg, Schwartz serves on the board of trustees and is helping to raise money for the branch's proposed new building.

National Library Week Marks 65th Anniversary

National Library Week is an annual celebration highlighting the valuable role libraries, librarians and library workers play in strengthening our communities.

The 2023 celebration, April 23-29, marks the event's 65th anniversary with the theme, "There's More to the Story."

The annual celebration was the brainchild of the National Book Committee, a nonprofit citizens' organization formed in 1954 by the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers. At the time, research showed Americans were spending less on books and more on radios, televisions, and musical instruments.

In 1957, the committee developed a plan for National Library Week based on the idea that once people were motivated to read, they would support and use libraries. The first National Library Week was observed in 1958 with the theme, "Wake Up and Read!"



ADAMS COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM



STORY TIME: Sherry Feeser, a youth services coordinator with the Adams County Library System, enthralls preschoolers with a story.

LIBRARY SYSTEM OF BRADFORD COUNTY



SUMMER FUN: Summer reading programs have been a library tradition for decades. Here, staff and directors from the Library System of Bradford County celebrate their program's launch in 2019.

ADAMS COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM



FUNFEST: The Adams County Library System kicks off its summer program with FunFest, a June event that features free activities for children and adults.

print books to the local senior center and paperbacks to a store in Waterfall, where residents can check them out without having to travel to a library.

Melanie Lambert is also a boots-on-the-ground fan of rural libraries. A part-time employee of the Sullivan County Library in Dushore, she is a retired teacher who served on the library board and was active in the library's "friends group" before joining the staff.

"This is a dream job," she says. "It's a pleasant place to work and I get to discuss books all day. ... I enjoy being able to help people, especially with their computer issues, and I enjoy reading and discussing books."

Lambert, a member of Sullivan County REC, is the wife of current co-op director Jim Lambert and daughter of Wayne Gavitt, who previously served on the co-op board and the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association board.

She says the Sullivan County Library's strategic plan includes a focus on providing social and educational opportunities for older residents since much of the library's focus traditionally has been on children.

A recent foray into new adult programming included a sewing class followed by a "learning-to-quilt" program. Other popular adult programs are ukulele lessons and "story walks," where pages of a book are placed on signs along a walking route. By the time participants get to the end of the trail, they have read a book.

The importance of rural libraries

If all of this programming sounds overwhelming, the people in charge of getting it done don't think so. In fact, most are planning to expand their collections and programming. While it's impossible to predict what technology changes are coming, libraries are poised to keep up with them.

"Libraries in rural areas are probably more important than they are in urban areas," Buker says. "In rural communities, the library is often the only support in the sense of being a community center, a place to find information and bring together families. We know internet access and technology access can be limited in rural areas. The library is many times the only way people can connect, plus the library has materials and staff to assist them." 📖

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Staying One Step Ahead of Mother Nature

It's estimated 50% of power outages can be attributed to overgrown vegetation. Electric co-ops are working to trim those numbers down.

JENNAH DENNEY

MOTHER NATURE TENDS TO HAVE a mind of her own. Utility power lines are constantly at risk from severe storms — particularly fallen and overgrown tree limbs, which can lead to power outages. It's estimated 50% of outages can be attributed to overgrown vegetation, which is why electric co-ops regularly trim and maintain their rights of way.

This tried-and-true method requires a significant amount of labor, and while it's effective, electric co-ops have started introducing other, more innovative vegetation-management methods to improve reliability for members.

The ideal technology ensures a consistent supply of power while managing the environment. Today, there

are several cutting-edge vegetation-management tools, and each has its own advantages.

On the cutting edge

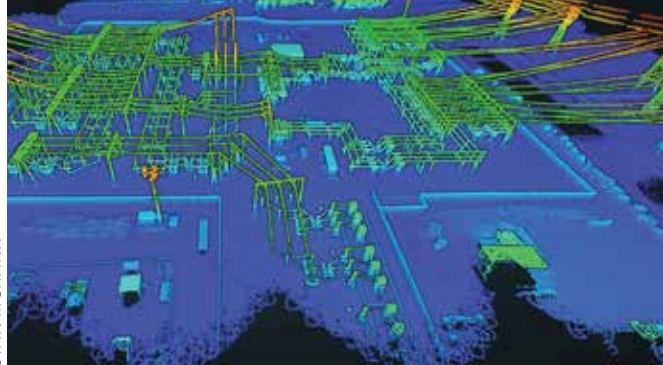
Lidar, which stands for "light detection and ranging," gives exact, three-dimensional data about the shape of the surface around utility assets. Lidar is a popular way to scan forests to determine how tall trees are and acquire additional information, including whether a tree has leaves. Lidar doesn't provide health data in general, but the technology can be paired with high-resolution multi-spectral satellite imagery to obtain this information. Timely data like this is extremely beneficial and can help electric co-ops make proactive planning decisions.

Satellites provide coverage 24 hours a day and can supply two kinds of images: a wide macro view of the area near utility assets and a more detailed micro view. Satellite data can often be used in place of other monitoring methods. With satellite technology, co-ops can learn a lot about local vegetation, including its health, and the information is based on real conditions, rather than guesses.

Today's satellite images can have a spatial resolution as small as 1.6 feet, which makes it easy for co-op crews to spot when vegetation is growing in the right of way near power lines and utility equipment. Typically, satellites can speed up the inspection process. While drones and helicopters are effective, they can take longer to fly along a network of power lines. A satellite, however, can take pictures of the same area in just a few hours.

Electric co-ops are also using fixed-wing aircraft and drones to keep an eye on and control vegetation near power lines. Drones fly very close to assets to take the clearest images so

STAN MCHANN



3-D DATA: Lidar technology, which stands for "light detection and ranging," gives exact, three-dimensional data about the shape of the surface around utility assets.

co-ops can see how close vegetation is to equipment and if a tree is likely to fall.

Many co-ops are using drones with cameras. These began as a novelty tech for utilities, but are now considered essential tools. Drones are often used for detailed vegetation surveys, unlike the large-scale monitoring done by satellites. Once lidar or satellites (often together) have collected data on a large amount of vegetation near power lines, drones can be used to inspect a single area and do all the necessary checks without putting operators in danger.

A better understanding

Electric co-ops place a priority on vegetation management. It is the most crucial tool for reducing the likelihood of power outages. A thorough understanding of the vegetation's past, present and projected future is essential for a successful approach to reducing these risks.

The growth of lidar, drone and satellite data presents an opportunity to close the loop with continuous vegetation-management intelligence and increase the system's dependability and safety. In the end, all three vegetation-management technologies serve different purposes, and electric co-ops choose the ones that work best for them. 🔄

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

BRANDI WILLIAMS



GETTING A CLOSE-UP: Drones fly very close to utility assets to take the clearest images and provide data to help co-ops keep an eye on how close vegetation is to equipment.

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Easy Behavior Changes to Save Energy

MIRANDA BOUTELLE

DEAR MIRANDA: I want to lower my energy use, but I don't know where to start. How can I find out how much energy I use? What are some ways I can save energy without spending a lot of money?

A: You can change your energy use by changing your behavior. When looking at electric bills, many people focus on the total dollar amount. I suggest changing your focus to energy use because while you don't have control over the cost of the energy, you can control how much you use.

Set goals

Instead of thinking about your bills in terms of dollars, think about them in terms of kilowatt-hours (kWh), which is the unit of energy used for most electric bills. Review your monthly kWh use to gauge your consumption.

Once you've reviewed your energy use, set goals by trying to use less energy than the month before and check your results on your next bill.

Know when to use less energy

Some electric utilities offer time-of-use rates, which means electricity costs are dependent on the time of day. This pricing structure more closely reflects the cost to electric utilities and helps consumers understand that energy costs more when the demand for it is higher.

Even if your electric bill does not include time-of-use rates, it can be beneficial to delay energy-intensive chores or tasks to when demand is lower. Peak hours are typically in the

morning as we prepare for work and in the evening when we get home and start preparing food and turning on entertainment devices. Doing laundry and running the dishwasher are easy activities to delay until after peak hours.

Power 'off' for energy savings

When looking for energy savings, remember that "off" is the most efficient setting. Turning off lights is a classic strategy, especially if your lighting is incandescent. Consider switching to energy-saving LED light-bulbs, too.

Computers and gaming systems can waste energy even when in sleep mode. The higher the wattage and the more hours the device is on, the more energy used. Laptops use the least energy, followed by personal computers at about 200 watts. Gaming consoles typically use less energy than gaming PCs. Don't forget to turn off the monitor as well.

You can lower your energy use even more with smart power strips, which cut power to devices that are not in use. Many electronics continue to draw power even when they are turned off. This could add 5% to 10% to your monthly bill, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. Installing smart power strips is an easy way to ensure devices are completely turned off and not drawing power.

Adjust the temp

When it comes to lowering your energy use, the settings on your thermostat are another great place to check. Keep in mind, the weather affects your electric bill for heating and air conditioning.

The closer you can keep the indoor temperature to the outdoor temperature, the more you will save. You want to protect your home from damage in extreme heat and cold, but if you can

turn the temperature down a few degrees in winter and up in summer, you will save on energy costs.

Ensuring your filters in your heating and cooling system are clean is an easy way to keep your system maintained and operating efficiently. Adding annual servicing by a professional maximizes the efficiency and can lengthen the life of your system.

Understanding your energy use and making small adjustments to your routine will help you reach your energy use goals. 🌱

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



MARK GILLILAND, PIONEER UTILITY RESOURCES

SET SOME GOALS: If you want to use less energy, start by setting goals. Review your monthly kilowatt-hour use to gauge your consumption and then set energy-saving targets for the next month.

Public Opening Weekend
Friday April 28th-Sunday April 30

Season Pass Holder Opening
Saturday April 22 & Sunday April 23

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Season passes can be purchased ahead of time or at the office.

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In & Around

New Enterprise Rural Electric Cooperative

It's starting to warm up, and that makes it a perfect time to get outside, lace up your shoes and visit the service territory of New Enterprise Rural Electric Cooperative, which serves more than 3,700 homes, farms and businesses in south-central Pennsylvania across more than 470 miles of line.

Situated largely in northeastern Bedford County and the southern and northern edges of Huntingdon and Fulton counties, respectively, the cooperative's service territory is home to a 12.6-mile stretch of the Huntingdon and Broad Top Rail Trail. Whether walking, running or biking, visitors can investigate landmarks like the Foundry Museum or the old Hopewell Train Station along the way. If you're after something more



A SLICE OF SCENERY: A bridge passes over the Raystown Branch of the Juniata River along the Huntingdon and Broad Top Rail Trail.

fast-paced, take a drive out to the Redrock Raceway in Claysburg (if you're coming from New Enterprise, you'll pass the Osterberg-Bowser Covered Bridge). And if you think this might be a good place to spend the week, visit River Mountain Farm in Hopewell, where you can get some rest and relaxation in a restored cottage (or barn!) for a few nights.



Main Office: New Enterprise, Pa.
Consumer-members served: 3,753
Website: newenterpriserec.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.

JUNE'S QUESTION

In celebration of Father's Day, what's your favorite memory with your dad?

PLEASE EMAIL YOUR ANSWER, along with a selfie, to CommunityCorner@prea.com by **MONDAY, APRIL 17**. Be sure to include your full name, the name of your cooperative and a daytime telephone number and put "June 2023 Q&A" in the subject line.

APRIL RESPONSES

April Fools' Day leads to all kinds of pranks. Tell us about your best one and who you played it on.



"Years ago, I mailed a letter to my out-of-town sister. She loved getting my newsy letters, but one year on April 1, she received one of my letters. Imagine her surprise when she opened it up, and it was blank except for the words, 'APRIL FOOL!'"

— CLAUDIA LANG, NORTHWESTERN RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



"A former colleague of mine ... was a die-hard Penn State football fan. After Penn State took down the statue of Joe Paterno, I Photoshopped the statue standing right in front of his picture window. I posted that on Facebook [and the] caption read, 'Paterno statue found at the home of a local Penn State fan.' The community all enjoyed poking fun at him for that one, too."

— DAVE POTCHAK, NEW ENTERPRISE RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

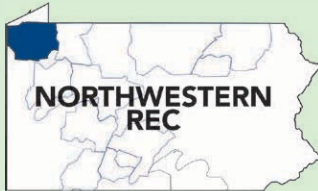


"My daughter once taped closed the handle of the hand-held sprayer of my kitchen sink and aimed it toward whoever came to operate the faucet. When I turned the faucet on, I got sprayed with the full force of water that was intended for the sink."

— KEVIN HESS, REA ENERGY COOPERATIVE

Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives
serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

NORTHWESTERN REC

P.O. Box 207
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www.northwesternrec.com

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Amy Wellington, Editor

COOPERATIVE CONNECTION

On Average, Our Rates Remain 27.6% Lower than Local Investor-Owned Utilities



FOR THE PAST COUPLE OF months, my column has focused on the pending changes to your electric bill. We were in the middle of an extensive rate study by the time those issues went to print, which is always a month or two in advance. So, we knew why we were facing an increase, but exactly what that increase would look like still wasn't completely clear.

But by now, you should have received a notification in the mail detailing exactly how your bill will change this month. At its February meeting, your board of directors reviewed the results of the comprehensive rate study and determined it necessary to increase the cost-of-service (COS) charge for most of our rate classes.

The COS charge is a fixed charge that covers a portion of the expenses the co-op incurs to make sure you have electricity available at any given time. The tangibles covered by the cost-of-service charge are things like trimming and clearing rights of way, trucks and equipment, poles, meters and wires, computer systems, and software. Whether you use any electricity or not, those tangibles must be in place and ready when you flip the switch.

We're always looking for ways to manage costs, which may include volume purchasing, energy efficiency programs and the implementation of new technologies. We also remain committed to providing reliable service to our members. Doing so requires system maintenance programs, such as right-of-way clearing and pole inspection. We also need to invest in training our employees, replacing aging equipment, and rebuilding and upgrading our electric distribution system.

Effective with the April 2023 electric bills, more than 92% of our membership will see a \$15 increase — from \$30 to \$45 — in their monthly COS charge. These are residential accounts with single-phase electric service. The delivery charges (kilowatt per hour) associated with the amount of electricity you use will not be changing for any single-phase accounts. Including the \$15 cost of service increase, the typical residential bill of 1,000 kWh usage, for example, will equate to an increase of about 10% per month.

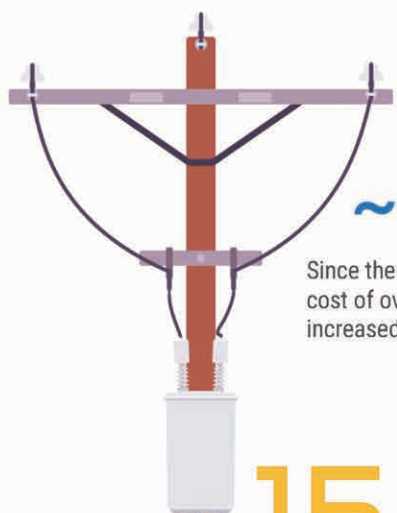
Other accounts that require more equipment and three-phase electric service, like large commercial accounts, will see about a \$50 COS charge increase. Certain large commercial accounts will also see some minor restructuring to their energy and demand charges. All our rate information can be found on NorthwesternREC.com.

Where private power companies can spread maintenance costs across an average of 35 consumers per mile of line, co-ops — because of the territory they serve — average just eight members per mile of line. So, comparable maintenance expenses for a mile of line are spread over fewer consumers. Still, even with the \$15 increase, our rates will, on average, remain 27.6% lower than those of local investor-owned utilities.

The decision to raise the COS charge was not taken lightly by your board of directors. Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) provides service to you, the members, at cost and remains not-for-profit. By increasing the accessibility charge

Continued on page 18B

THE IMPACT OF RISING COSTS



52
~56%

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the per-foot cost of overhead and underground wires has increased 52% and 56% respectively.

150%

Due to supply shortages, the cost of a 10 KVA transformer increased by 150%. This equipment is critical to delivering power.

62%

The average cost of a 40-foot pole has increased 62% since 2019.

462%

Between 2019 and 2023, the cost of PVC conduit increased a whopping 462%.



Northwestern Rural Electric
Co-operative Association, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Continued from page 18A

by \$15, the board of directors believes there is a better balance for providing service to you at cost. Any margins left at the end of the year are fairly returned to you in the form of capital credits. The amount of electricity you use throughout the year determines the size of your capital credits check. At the end of 2022, Northwestern REC returned \$675,797 to the members.

We have supported 73 renewable projects so far. They include three windmill projects, 69 solar (photovoltaic) projects and one methane digester. To promote energy conservation, we offer free energy audits, as well as free 24/7 electric water heater service and a free electric water heater when needed.

Programs are available for eligible members who need payment assistance. LIHEAP cash and crisis funds are available through April 28. Our own Member-to-Member fund is also available to those who qualify. For more information, please call the Member Services department at 800-352-0014. 📞

Cooperatively yours,

RYAN MELLER
PRESIDENT & CEO

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

This planting season include energy efficiency in your landscaping plans. Adding shade trees around your home can reduce surrounding air temperatures as much as 6 degrees. To block heat from the sun, plant deciduous trees around the south side of your home. Deciduous trees provide excellent shade during the summer and lose their leaves in the fall and winter months, allowing sunlight to warm your home.

Source: [energy.gov](https://www.energy.gov)





NOMINATING & MEMBER RESOURCE MEETINGS

April 12 ~ District 6 Nominating Meeting
United Methodist Church
Miller Station Road, Cambridge Springs

April 13 ~ District 8 Nominating Meeting
East Mead VFD
Route 27, Meadville

April 18 ~ District 9 Nominating Meeting
Vernon Central VFD
Route 19, Meadville

April 19 ~ Member Resource Meeting
VFW Post 740
Route 98, Edinboro

April 20 ~ District 7 Nominating Meeting
United Methodist Church
Route 8, Centerville

Send reservations to info@northwesternrec.com or call 800-352-0014.

All 2023 Nominating/Resource Meetings begin at 6 p.m. with dinner. Door prizes and 50/50 raffle available at each meeting.



CELEBRATE

the Power Behind Your Power.

Lineworker Appreciation Day | April 10, 2023

APPRENTICE OF THE WEEK

Apprentice Lineman Camden Mattocks, featured left, received high marks at the Central Ohio Lineworker Training (COLT) program held in February.

The COLT program, offered by the Ohio Electric Cooperatives just outside Mount Gilead, Ohio, is an elite, hands-on apprentice and journeyman lineworker training center that includes a 16-acre training field.

The cooperative principle, "cooperation among cooperatives," opens this invaluable training program to surrounding cooperatives, including Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative (REC). Mattocks joined the co-op in September 2022.

"We're fortunate to have Camden on board," says Ryan Meller, Northwestern REC president & CEO. "We snagged him from a local investor-owned utility."

Please help us celebrate the power behind your power by thanking our local lineworkers on Monday, April 10, which is National Lineworker Appreciation Day. There would be no power without these guys!

Efficiency Upgrades to Help You Save on Your Electric Bill

SPRING AND SUMMER ARE opportune times for home upgrades and DIY projects. If you're planning to make improvements to your home, consider upgrades that promote better efficiency.

Here are a few projects that can help you save energy and money — and increase the comfort of your home.

Installing a smart thermostat is one of the simplest ways to manage home energy use and keep summer bills in check. Smart thermostats are easy to install and allow you to control your heating and cooling system from your phone. You can purchase an Energy Star®-certified smart thermostat for as low as \$100, which can save you 8% on annual heating and cooling costs, or about \$50 per year for the average consumer-member. This upgrade will quickly pay for itself, and you'll gain insight into better ways to heat and cool your home.

Speaking of smart, additional devices like smart LED lightbulbs also offer convenient control and help boost energy savings at home. With smart lighting, you can set a schedule for when and how your lights should be turned on or off. And the next time you head out to run errands and realize



GETTING COMFORTABLE: Applying new (or replacing old) weather stripping around doors and windows can instantly make your home more comfortable and reduce energy waste.

you left the lights on, all you have to do is turn them off through your phone. Smart lights come in a variety of shapes, colors and brightness levels — and you can purchase bulbs for indoor or outdoor use. Schedule outdoor smart lights to illuminate your home at night and when you're out of town for better security.

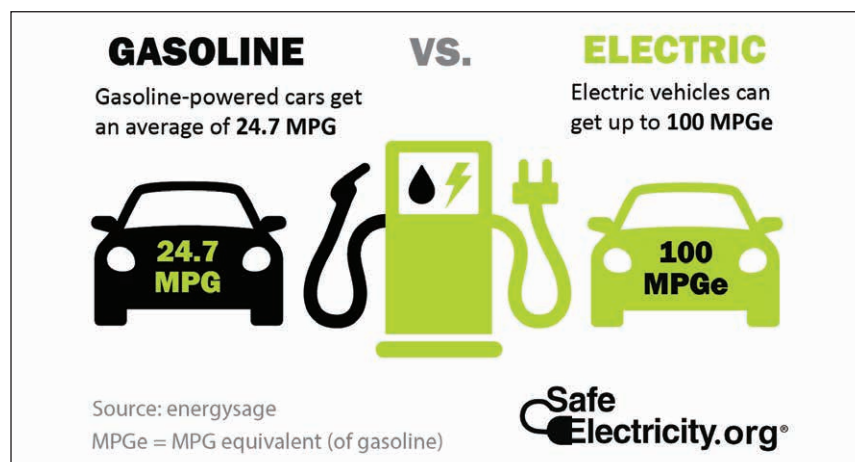
While it's not as trendy as incorporating smart technologies, sealing air leaks around your home is a simple,

effective way to save energy and lower your bills. Applying new (or replacing old) weather stripping around doors and windows can instantly make your home more comfortable and reduce energy waste. Applying caulk to fill gaps can also improve the seal of your home. Caulk can be applied to a variety of areas, including windows, doors, bathtubs and sinks.

If your home feels too warm during summer (and too chilly during winter), even after you've sealed with weather stripping and caulk, your home may need additional insulation. Insulation is considered a more expensive efficiency upgrade; however, if your home is under-insulated, additional insulation can make a big impact on reducing energy use and costs. The cost of new insulation depends on a variety of factors like materials, size of the home and whether you use a contractor. Typically, the project costs can be recouped in a few years and your home will immediately feel more comfortable.

Of course, there are additional efficiency upgrades that can make a big impact on energy use, like replacing old appliances with Energy-Star® models or replacing old, leaky windows with new, energy efficient windows. But these upgrades can be a bit pricey.

If you want to make your home more energy efficient but you're not sure where to start, your best bet is to enlist the help of an expert to conduct an energy audit of your home. Contact our Energy Solutions department at 800-352-0014 to schedule a free energy audit. An energy audit can easily identify areas to boost efficiency, and then you can determine the projects you want to tackle first based on your budget and needs. 🏠



CALL BEFORE YOU DIG



To help stay safe and prevent accidents, call 8-1-1
before you dig to get underground utilities marked.

Once all utilities are marked, respect the boundaries, and dig carefully. Keep at least 24 inches away from the utility line markings. Stop work immediately if contact is made with an underground line. Your first priority should be evacuating the area for safety. Call 911 to notify emergency personnel and the affected utility. Do not resume work until the area has been confirmed safe by your electric utility.

For more information on digging safety visit SafeElectricity.org

**Safe
Electricity.org**

The Best of Spring

ANNE M. KIRCHNER

HAVE YOU NOTICED SPRING IS HERE? Daffodils are in full bloom, the days are getting longer and birds are chirping outside your window. April gets its name from the Latin word “aperio,” meaning “to open or bud.” And there’s no better time to put together a menu inspired by new beginnings.

What’s better than a bowl of light soup on a cool spring day? A skillet frittata can be served for breakfast, lunch or dinner. Quick breads are easy to make and can showcase the best of spring’s fruits and vegetables. 🌱

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 KIRCHNER



CELERY SOUP

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 small onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 6 cups celery, diced
- 1 large Idaho potato, peeled and cubed
- 4 cups vegetable stock
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ⅛ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon dill

- ½ cup fresh parsley
- 1 cup baby spinach
- ½ cup sour cream
- Everything Bagel Seasoning

Heat the olive oil over medium heat in a stock pot. Add the onion and garlic; sauté for 5 minutes. Add the celery, potato, vegetable stock, bay leaf, salt, black and cayenne pepper, and dill. Bring to a boil; cover the pot and reduce heat to a simmer. Cook for 10 minutes. Remove the bay leaf and place soup in a food processor or blender. Add the parsley and spinach, blend well. Return the soup to the stock pot over low heat. Stir in the sour cream and warm. Serve with a sprinkle of the seasoning. *Makes 6 to 8 servings.*



SPRING SKILLET FRITTATA

- 12 eggs
- 2 tablespoons whole milk
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 8 ounces cremini mushrooms, sliced
- 1 cup spinach, chopped
- 2 green onions, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- ¼ cup Parmesan cheese

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Whisk together the eggs and milk in a bowl; set aside. Heat the olive oil in a 10-inch oven-safe skillet over medium heat. Add the mushrooms and cook for 2 to 3 minutes. Add the spinach, green onions, garlic and salt; cook for 2 minutes more. Pour the egg mixture over the vegetables in skillet. Resist the urge to stir! Cook the eggs on the stove until the edge of the eggs begin to set, about 5 minutes. Sprinkle the eggs with Parmesan cheese and transfer the skillet to the oven. Cook the frittata for 10 minutes or until the eggs are set. *Makes 8 to 10 servings.*



CITRUS CARROT BREAD

- 1 egg
- ⅓ cup canola oil
- ¼ cup honey
- ½ cup orange juice
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 1½ cups all-purpose flour
- ½ cup whole wheat flour
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- 1½ cups grated carrots
- ½ cup raisins (optional)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Combine the egg, canola oil, honey, orange juice and vanilla in a large mixing bowl; set aside. In a small bowl, combine the all-purpose flour, whole wheat flour, cinnamon, baking powder, baking soda and salt; mix well. Add the dry ingredients to the orange juice mixture. Stir until the dry ingredients are moistened. Fold in the grated carrots and raisins. Pour the batter into a 9-by-5-by-3-inch greased loaf pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 to 55 minutes or until a wooden toothpick inserted in the center of the loaf comes out clean. *Makes 6 to 8 servings.*

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— J. Fitzgerald, VA



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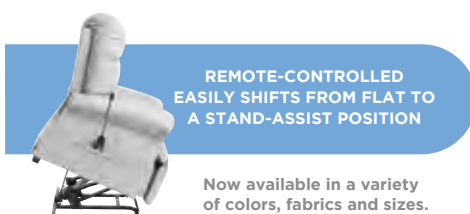
in comfort. Generously filled, wide armrests provide enhanced arm support when sitting or reclining. It even has a battery backup in case of a power outage.

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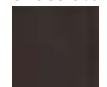
Light Gray



Saddle

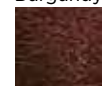


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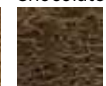
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46642

Watch Those Tree Sizes

GEORGE WEIGEL

What Size Tree to Buy?

Another question at tree-buying time is, “How big of a tree should I buy?”

Different sizes come with different pros and cons.

In general, smaller to mid-sized ones — in the 4- to 6-foot-tall range — are the best all-around bet for most home gardeners.

Numerous studies have found smaller trees establish faster and usually match or surpass the size of larger ones — sometimes in as little as three years, according to research by Texas A&M University.

The reason: It’s better to have a hefty root system that can easily support all above-ground growth than a large canopy with a relatively small rootball.

Smaller trees are also easier to handle. They don’t need gigantic planting holes, require less water after planting, usually don’t need staking and suffer less transplant shock, meaning they have a higher survival rate.

Maybe most important, smaller trees cost way less than their bigger brothers.

The main case for bigger trees is they give more immediate impact and a little more immediate shade than smaller ones.

ONE OF LANDSCAPING’S COSTLIEST — and most common — mistakes is planting a too-big tree in a too-small space.

Keep that in mind if you’re planting a tree or three to mark Arbor Day, which is held on the last Friday of April.

Trees might look small and innocent in the nursery pot, but given enough time, some of them can grow into 100-foot-tall behemoths.

That’s fine if you have the space, but most urban and suburban yards are big enough to support only small to mid-sized trees.

Oversize trees are a leading cause of power outages when limbs or whole trees drop on electric lines. They’re also very expensive to remove later when you realize your house is a potential target for a big, old failing tree.

Trees don’t grow as well or last as long either when they’re not given the space they need to spread out — both above and under the ground.

Too-big canopies end up causing costly and unnecessary pruning that, if done improperly, can shorten the tree’s lifespan and create hazards related to disease and rotting.

Tree roots constricted by walls, sidewalks, and driveways also fail sooner and are more likely to blow over in storms because of a limited root system.

The solution is to research a tree’s mature size before buying. One good tree-selection resource is the free, 25-page *TreeVitalize* booklet, produced by the Pennsylvania Urban and Community Forestry Council. To download, go to treepennsylvania.org, choose “Resources” then “Library,” and scroll down to the booklet’s link.

Penn State Extension offices and numerous online and print resources — not to mention point-of-sale plant tags and signs — also offer tree-size guidelines, although they don’t always agree.

One reason for that is the question, “How big at *what age*?”

While one source might give a size estimate 10 to 15 years down the road, another might use 20- to 25-year estimates. No matter what size is listed, keep in mind trees don’t come with stop buttons. While their growth may slow with age and vary drastically from species to species, trees never stop growing until they die.

The lesson is to estimate on the high side. Also, stay well under power-line heights if you’re planting a tree anywhere near utility lines. Better yet, stick to shrubs in those situations.

When gauging how close to plant to a structure, divide the estimated “mature-canopy” width in half and plant no closer than that to keep limbs from invading the space. (Example: A dogwood tree that’s listed at 20 feet wide should be planted at least 10 feet away from a structure.)

Roots can grow two to three times as far out as the above-ground canopy, so factor that in if you’re trying to keep roots from reaching a wall or pushing up a sidewalk.

As for making sure you’re giving trees enough soil space, most arborists advise against planting trees in those skinny 2- to 3-foot-wide “tree lawns” between curbs and sidewalks.

And to avoid sight-blocking and utility conflicts, a good rule of thumb is to keep trees at least 50 feet away from intersections and at least 20 feet away from driveways, fire hydrants, and utility poles.

That may seem excessive now, but future property owners will thank you for your foresight. 🌳

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.

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Growing Together

ABIGAIL ZIEGER

A GARDEN IS AN EXCITING thing for a child. You put tiny specks in the ground and, lo and behold, up comes food you can eat! What's better than getting outside, working with your hands and growing healthy, delicious food?

There are clear benefits to gardening with children. It's a science lesson waiting to happen: Children learn all about our natural world when they grow plants. They also gain the physical and mood-boosting benefits of outdoor time and exercise that are so hard to come by in our screen-centered society. What's more, their self-confidence and sense of responsibility grow as they take charge of caring for a living thing that is their very own. From the smallest child digging alongside you to older children taking on elaborate projects, all kids can savor the joys of a garden.

For my son, in particular, who always had an unusual affinity for vegetables, a garden probably seemed like his own personal snack stash. When he asked to make his own patch when he was 4 years old, of course we said yes. I remember sitting down with him to make garden plans: "I want a garden like Dada's," he said in his tiny voice. "I will plant tomatoes and peppers and melons." We drew a picture of what it would look like once it was growing.

He was eager to start, so my little guy used his big preschooler muscles to drag the garden cart full of loads of straw and leaves to help prepare the soil. We got a small set of kids' garden tools, complete with a red trowel and a kneeler printed with a ladybug design.

Once the weather was warm enough, we helped him plant small rows of carrots, cantaloupe, tomatoes and peppers. My child chattered away while we sowed, inadvertently smearing dirt on his nose and cheeks as he wiped his face. He intermittently stopped to pour some dirt on his belly just for fun.

Through the summer, my boy would stand outside with the hose, watering his garden, the grass around it, the side

of the shed, and the occasional passersby. He would start and stop the hose over and over again, putting his hand on and off the nozzle and squealing happily when he accidentally sprayed himself. Then we'd make miniature rainbows in the sunlight shining on the water droplets.

Once the harvest started coming, it was a huge hit. My son would call us every time he found something new. He gobbled sweet cherry tomatoes by the handful and delighted in the petite gnarled carrots that we pulled out of the dirt. In his fervor, he accidentally broke a stem or two, and we never did have success with the cantaloupes.


Our first children's garden would never have landed a spot on the cover of a magazine. There was no dreamy garden fountain or picturesque gnomes and fairy houses. We didn't even end up with all that much food at the end. It was just a little patch of earth that was tended by a preschooler with a little help from his parents. But that was the magic of it.

In the years that followed, our kids continued to help in the big garden, and our daughter asked for her own garden plot as well. (Spoiler alert: We obliged.) We saw evidence of all the benefits we read about: The kids loved being outside, they learned a bit about plants and they took special pride in eating their own home-grown food. But most of all, it was just lovely to be side-by-side with our hands in the dirt, marveling at the new life that manages to sprout up each year despite all of our mistakes.

In the end, perhaps gardening with children is not all that much about growing plants — maybe it's more about growing together. 🌱

ABIGAIL ZIEGER is a music teacher and singer by trade, but also enjoys capturing life experiences through writing. When not singing, teaching or typing, she can be found working in her kitchen, helping her kids with school or consuming copious amounts of coffee. A member of Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative, Abigail lives with her husband and four children in northeast Pennsylvania.







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Source: energy.gov



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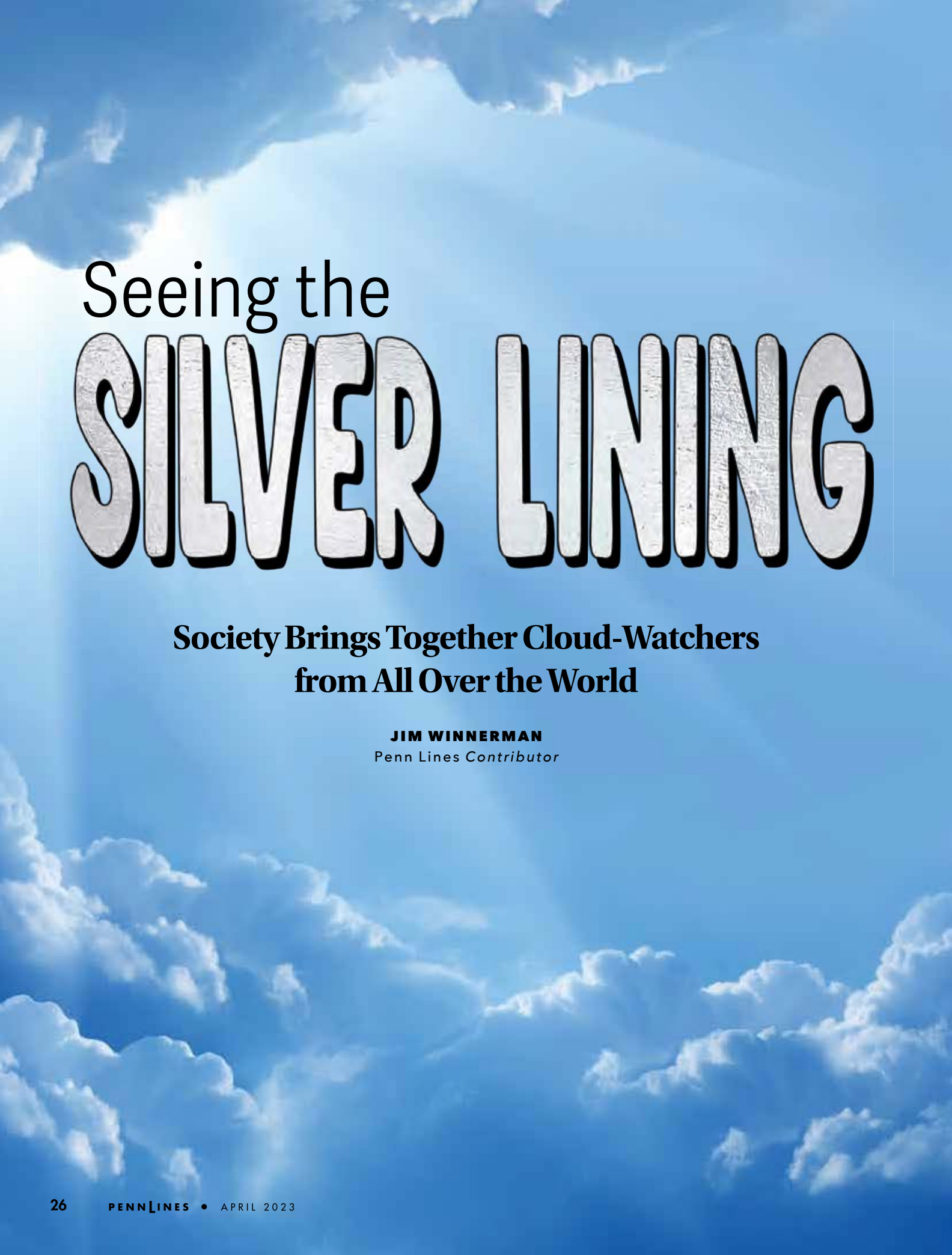


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Seeing the **SILVER LINING**

**Society Brings Together Cloud-Watchers
from All Over the World**

JIM WINNERMAN
Penn Lines Contributor

CLOUDS HAVE DIFFERENT MEANINGS FOR different people. To cooperative lineworkers, for example, clouds might forecast storms and outages ahead. To others, though, clouds are far less ominous.

Since grade school, Liz Anderson has appreciated the fluffy puffs in the skies above.

"I would look up at the sky," she remembers, "and draw the clouds I would see."

Her celestial interest continued into adulthood, and recently, after searching online for an image of a cloud to use as a screen saver, she stumbled upon the Cloud Appreciation Society.

"I joined a year ago and received my welcome packet, which included a certificate stating as a member I was 'obligated to henceforth seek to persuade all who'll listen of the wonder and beauty of clouds,'" says Anderson, who lives in Jermyn, a small town along Pennsylvania's Lackawanna River. "It was all very official."

The welcome packet also contained a lapel pin of a fluffy cloud and a two-sided cloud identification wheel.

"I used the wheel perhaps over-enthusiastically and it fell apart," she says, laughing, "but they sent me a new one."

Connecting with clouds

The Cloud Appreciation Society was founded in 2003 by Gavin Pretor-Pinney, a British citizen who was living in Rome while on sabbatical from his graphic-design business.

After seven months glancing into the heavens at the clear, blue Roman skies, he discovered he missed the constantly changing cloud formations that were an everyday event in his native United Kingdom.

He returned home so engrossed in learning about clouds, the subject dominated his conversation for a year. Then, a friend invited him to speak at a small literary festival. Pretor-Pinney titled his presentation, "The Inaugural Lecture of the Cloud Appreciation Society."

Afterward, he had to inform audience members intent on joining that the society did not exist. However, sensing he might be onto something, he launched a website, cloudappreciationsociety.org, a few months later, and the society was born. Now, promoting cloud-watching is his full-time occupation.

Today, the society enjoys a membership of more than 51,000 cloud-watchers scattered across 120 countries, all

united through their appreciation of this heavenly mist. To learn more about joining, visit the society's website. (Note: Members pay an annual fee.)

"Their beauty and color remind me every day just to be grateful for life," Anderson says. "I believe cloud-spotting promotes feelings of positivity and well-being — much-needed to help counter the negativity in today's society."

Kim Pelkey of Philadelphia has been a member of the society for three years. "I now see the sky as being similar to the sea, with currents and layers," she says. "I truly do



HEAD IN THE CLOUDS: Kim Pelkey of Philadelphia is among more than 51,000 cloud-watchers in 120 countries who are members of the Cloud Appreciation Society. Formed in 2003, the group celebrates a heavenly pastime: cloud-spotting.



CLOUD TALK: Some believe clouds convey emotions. These cirrus clouds, for instance, appear to be in danger of a nervous breakdown, says Gavin Pretor-Pinney, founder of the Cloud Appreciation Society.

notice the beauty found while looking up more than I had before becoming a member.”

Pretor-Pinney thinks the society reconnects people with their childhood and their early relationship with the sky.

“That is why I believe it has grown so quickly,” he says.

“If you consider the shapes you see in clouds, it will save you money on psychoanalysis bills,” Pretor-Pinney adds, with his sky-blue eyes twinkling. “Besides, most people think of a cloud only as something that gets in the way of the sun. Somebody had to come to their defense.”

Anywhere, anytime

Anderson watches the clouds from her backyard, while Pelkey looks for cloud formations from her porch during summer dinners. Both are perfect places to enjoy the sky, Pretor-Pinney says.

“Clouds are one part of nature that comes to us,” he says. “I do not go out at a specific time, because that is not how the sky works. You just have to be prepared to stop what you are doing to appreciate it for a few moments.”

For cloud-watchers, there is no need to rush off to a far-off beach or cabin in the woods to enjoy the sky. And, no tools, money or a plan of action is required.

Pretor-Pinney points out clouds are common to everyone — no matter where they are in the world.

“They are the most egalitarian of nature’s displays,” he says. “We all share and can have a fantastic view of the sky, and clouds are forever changing.”

With his subtle sense of humor, Pretor-Pinney insists he started the society as an “excuse to legitimize doing nothing.” However, it has evolved far beyond what he or anyone else could have imagined.

When Cloud Appreciation Society members from Texas, Norway, France and other nations sent the society similar images of an unusual cloud formation, which appears as if you are looking up from underneath a raging sea, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) took notice. WMO is responsible for assigning scientific names



OBSESSED: Gavin Pretor-Pinney is founder of the Cloud Appreciation Society. He created the group after an extended trip to Rome reminded him how much he missed the United Kingdom’s cloudy skies.

Continued on page 30

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WHAT DO YOU SEE?: Some cloud-watchers say this formation reminds them of an abominable snowman chasing a seahorse.

Continued from page 28

to all known cloud types and has published the International Cloud Atlas since 1896. It has not, however, added a new cloud classification since 1953.

Then, in 2017, with photos supplied by society members as a catalyst, the WMO assigned the formation the official name of “Asperitas,” which is Latin for “roughness.”

“I remember seeing that formation,” Anderson says, “and thinking it was quite unusual long before I joined the society.”

The society’s website goes far beyond showcasing images of clouds and their names. It also features links to poetry, music, art, and merchandise, all with cloud themes. Items available include a bumper-sticker with the message, “CLOUD SPOTTER AT THE WHEEL — KEEP YOUR DISTANCE,” and embroidered patches with the words, “Look up,” underneath a finger pointing skyward.

Society members are also treated to a daily “Cloud-a-Day” email, and Pretor-Pinney gives a weekly talk, too, which is broadcast on the Cloud Appreciation Society’s Facebook page.

“It’s a good thing to stop and appreciate the wordless beauty of the world around you,” Anderson says. “Take a break and look up!” ☁️



LOOK UP: New members of the Cloud Appreciation Society receive a welcome packet that includes a membership certificate, badge and a cloud identification wheel.

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NURSERY & GARDEN

TREES AND SHRUBS for all your landscaping needs. Rare, unusual, amazing. Bloomfield Nursery. 167 Sproul Mountain Road, Roaring Spring, PA 16673. 814-224-4508.

NURSERY & GARDEN

MONARCH HABITAT - MILKWEED SEED. Same price since 2018. 1 tbsp. = approximately 450 seeds, \$3. One-fourth cup = approximately 1,800 seeds, \$12. Orders over 3 tbsp. add \$2 shipping & handling. Include self-addressed stamped envelope. Jeff Carlstrom, 6621 Scandia Road, Russell, PA 16345-6929. CLIP & SAVE.

2022 DR PREMIER 300 CHIPPER/SHREDDER. Used very little. Paid \$1,000, sell for \$600. Call Cedar Run Inn, 570-353-6241.

POWDER COATING

ALMOST ANYTHING METAL can be powder coated: auto parts, lawn furniture, wheels, etc. Restores, protects, preserves. 1,200-degree manifold coating. Arthurs Powder Coating, 263 Sexton Road, Indiana, PA 15701. 724-349-3770.

REAL ESTATE

VIRGINIA'S EASTERN SHORE. Fishermen and beach lover's paradise. Access Chesapeake Bay or Atlantic Ocean within minutes. Waterside Village 3/4-acre homesites near marina from \$18,000 with fenced and locked RV/camper storage available. Beach access nearby. Waterfront sites available on bayside and seaside. Many free boat ramps within minutes. Low, low taxes. Kirkwoodontheshore.com. 757-678-7631.

REAL ESTATE

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.

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.

WANTED TO BUY

ANTIQUe 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.

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

OLD METAL ADVERTISING SIGNS, old license plates, oil cans, gas pumps, pop machines, advertising thermometers and clocks. Please call Mike at 814-673-5174.

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.

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

Attention Former Youth Tour Students:

The **Jody Loudenslager Memorial Scholarship** is available to any college-bound or current college student who was selected to participate in the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association Youth Tour program. Scan this QR code for more information about the scholarship and the application.



Requirements and Dates to Remember:

Applicants are required to furnish necessary aptitude test scores, transcripts (high school or unofficial college, if applicable) and financial aid information. All applications and required documentation must be emailed to Steph Okuniewski (address below) no later than **May 5, 2023**. Finalists will be sent a follow-up questionnaire that must be returned by **June 5, 2023**. Scholarship recipients will be announced in July 2023.

Questions:

If you have any questions or need additional information, please email Steph Okuniewski at Stephanie_Okuniewski@prea.com or call 717-982-1455.



Sometimes, It's Not the Thought That Counts

JOHN KASUN

MY WIFE IS AN EXCELLENT cook, who is always in total control of the process. I, on the other hand, am limited to unscrewing tight lids and opening bags of chips.

However, on a recent Sunday morning, that all changed. My job had kept me away from home, and my wife never sleeps well when I'm not there. Now that I was back, I decided to let her sleep in. As I got out of bed, I announced I would make breakfast. She rolled over, sighed slightly and pulled the covers over her head, which I took as her approval.

For my menu, I selected blueberry pancakes and bacon. It would be simple and only require one skillet and a small mixing bowl. I planned to fry the bacon while I mixed the pancake batter, remove the cooked bacon and put the pancakes in the same skillet.

I started by popping a bag of frozen blueberries in the microwave to thaw out, thinking 10 minutes at maximum power should do the trick. I then placed several strips of bacon in the skillet, turned the heat to high, and focused my attention on mixing the pancake batter. I placed the eggs, milk and pancake mix on the counter. As I broke the first egg into the bowl, a second egg slowly rolled to the edge of the counter and hung there just long enough for me to spring forward in an attempt to grab it. My arm knocked over the milk carton, and just as the egg splattered on the floor, it was followed by a stream of milk.

"No sense crying over spilled milk," I thought as I quickly tossed a couple of paper towels over the mess and turned back to the task at hand. I was not going to be discouraged over one small setback.

Within minutes, the mixing bowl was full of pancake mix, milk and eggs. As I inserted the hand-held mixer into the bowl, I hit the start switch — not realizing it was also the speed control. The bowl looked like a dragster coming off the starting line as it spun across the countertop. I reacted

by lifting the mixer out of the batter. Suddenly, everything in the kitchen, including me, was covered in pancake batter. It looked as if someone had just painted a racing stripe around the entire kitchen.

Undeterred by this minor problem, I reached for a larger bowl and started over. This time, however, I used a large wooden spoon to stir the batter, but quickly realized the mixture was too thick because it was like trying to mix cement with a yardstick. I soon found another mixer I could hold with one hand while turning the bowl with the other, which seemed perfect for the job. I added more milk to thin the batter, but it was too much, so I added more pancake mix, but then needed a larger bowl as my current one was overflowing.

By now, the counter was full of bowls and kitchen tools, leaving me little room to work. Also, the floor was slippery where I had spilled the milk and egg, so I moved the entire operation to the kitchen table to finish the job. I caught the smell of burning bacon just before the fire alarm went off. As I lifted the smoking skillet from the stove, I heard a loud *pop-bang* from the microwave. The frozen blueberries had exploded, and the inside of the microwave was now a deep purple color.

"My goodness, what have you done?" my wife asked as she stood in the kitchen doorway with a shocked look on her face. "I dreamt you said you were going to cook breakfast ... it must have been a nightmare!"

As I opened my mouth to explain, she held up her finger. "Please don't say a word. I am going back to bed," she said. "Call me when you get this mess cleaned up. Then, I am going out for breakfast."

I wanted to say, "It's the thought that counts," but decided against it. She just didn't seem to be in the right mood. 🍷

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 Valley Rural Electric Cooperative.





STEVEN MCEWEN • UNITED REC

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Winter Neverland

Raise your hand as high as you can if you are *done* with winter and ready for spring. Snowball fights and sled rides have their place, but we're ready for some warmth. We just have to weather some April showers, and we'll be enjoying May flowers in no time.

Don't forget to send your finest shots of Pennsylvania 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. 🍷

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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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