

MARCH 2023

PENNLINES

Going Wild for Food

Foraging Reveals Abundance
of Backyard Bounties

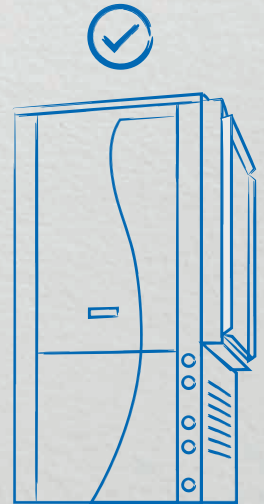
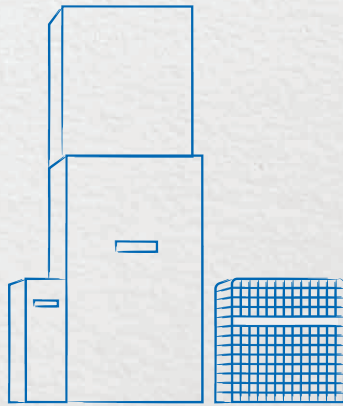
APPS TO HELP YOU
SAVE ENERGY

IN PENNSYLVANIA,
WE TALK TURKEY

THE SECRET OF
MUSHROOMS

INSIDE!
HOLLYWOOD
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Farm Bill Aims to Revitalize Rural America



I HAVE THE DISTINCT HONOR and privilege of representing Pennsylvania's most rural district in Congress. With 18 counties sprawling through the western and north-central portions of the Commonwealth, the 15th Congressional District makes up one-third of the state. Throughout this area, in particular, rural electric cooperatives have a long history of improving the quality of life for rural citizens.

That work continues today to ensure rural Americans have the same access as their urban counterparts to goods, services and the essential conveniences of living in 21st-century America. No issue currently pinpoints this better than the topic of rural broadband access.

I live in an area with high-quality internet service to my home, but just a few miles away, my neighbors are on the wrong side of the digital divide. It is like this across my district and across this country, with digital haves and have-nots on the same road creating a checkerboard of connectivity.

Broadband access is one of the many issues the U.S. House Committee on Agriculture will examine as we work to reauthorize federal agriculture policy in the upcoming Farm Bill. This reauthorization happens every five years, and I am pleased to lead the committee as chairman — the first from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 170 years.

This Farm Bill aims to revitalize rural America, which means tackling things like energy costs and the politicization of pesticides, keeping a watchful eye on excessive regulations, and much more. Our farm team will trade their dress shoes for work boots as we travel to every corner of the country to hear firsthand about what's working, what's not and what we can do at the federal level to improve agriculture policies.

Broadband connectivity used to be a luxury. Today, internet access is essential for performing daily activities. Life is increasingly conducted online, and modern living requires constant, reliable internet access to fully participate.

To address this need, the federal government has committed tens of billions of dollars over the past 15 years to fund new broadband systems across the country. The bipartisan infrastructure bill alone provided a staggering \$42 billion for broadband infrastructure last summer. Multiple federal agencies are responsible for distributing billions in broadband aid under their purview, and coordinating the distribution of these funds is essential. Too often, huge appropriations become insufficient through wasteful spending, inadequate oversight and poor planning.

As we work to bridge the digital divide, we must operate like electric cooperatives have to fully understand the unique needs of rural communities. 📶

U.S. REP. GLENN "GT" THOMPSON
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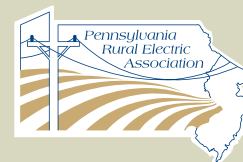
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A Beautiful Way to Be Well



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THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT

I don't know if a butterfly flapping its wings in the Amazon sets off a tornado in Texas, but I don't doubt their power. As detailed in the story on page 22, monarch butterflies will begin heading north this month after wintering in Mexico — following a 2,000-mile trek from Pennsylvania late last summer. It's quite a journey on those little wings.



When he was a kid, my youngest brother was captivated by a 1976 *National Geographic* cover of monarch butterflies clustered in a Mexican forest. The image stuck with him, and some 30 years later, it served as the inspiration for a music video he created with the rock band The Shins. He traveled to Mexico with the band and shot the video for their song "Saint Simon" in a forest full of wintering monarch butterflies, completing a journey that started in childhood.

Often attributed as a metaphor for chaos theory in mathematics, the butterfly effect is the idea that even small events can have a significant influence on the future. It's said that a butterfly flapping its wings in one corner of the world could set off a weather event in another part of the world. Pretty powerful stuff for something so delicate. I don't know if butterflies can change the weather, but I believe there's power and inspiration in small movements.

In 1933, Morris L. Cooke, an engineer from Carlisle, Pa., came to Washington, D.C., to push the idea of rural electrification. At the time, more than 5 million of America's 6 million farms still had no electricity. Cooke penned a short document that laid out the plan to electrify rural America.

This "12-minute-memo" would eventually land on President Franklin D. Roosevelt's desk and become the foundation for the Rural Electrification Act, which FDR signed in 1936. Roosevelt named Cooke as the nation's first administrator of the Rural Electrification Administration.

From this small beginning emerged a powerful movement, one that would see local residents establish electric cooperatives that brought life-changing electricity to rural communities across the country. Today, some 900 electric cooperatives serve 42 million people, bringing power to over 21 million homes, businesses, schools, and farms in 48 states. Pretty powerful stuff.

PETER A. FITZGERALD
EDITOR



LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION: Actors and camera crews prepare for a day of filming in Gettysburg, which provides the backdrop for "A Gettysburg Christmas," a new holiday movie to be released later this year. Several stars, including Lee Majors — best known as "The Six Million Dollar Man" — are headlining the production, which wrapped up in January.

STARGAZING

Christmas movie wraps up filming in Gettysburg

After many of us packed away the Christmas decorations, the celebration was still going strong in Gettysburg, where crews spent 10 days in January filming "A Gettysburg Christmas" at stores and restaurants around town.

Lee Majors, 83 — best known to those of a certain age as Steve Austin, "The Six Million Dollar Man" — was among the stars to arrive in Adams County, which is served by Adams Electric Cooperative.

Majors' co-stars include Kate Vernon, Kelley Jakle, Tom Vera, Jake Busey — son of actor Gary Busey, an Academy Award nominee — and TV actor Bruce Boxleitner, who had leading roles in "How the West Was Won" and "Scarecrow and Mrs. King."

"A Gettysburg Christmas," featuring locals as extras, was written and directed by actor Bo Brinkman. The movie is a modern-day tale of hope, redemption and love.

Scenes were filmed at several local businesses, including the Dobbin House Restaurant & Tavern, Mr. G's



Ice Cream, Farnsworth House Inn and The Christmas Haus.

The movie, which will premiere at Gettysburg's Majestic Theater later this year, will kick off the annual A Gettysburg Christmas Festival.

HOT IN HERE

State wildfires top 1,000 for third straight year

Pennsylvania's largest wildfire in 2022 — known as the Big Fill wildfire — burned more than 700 acres on Sandy Ridge Mountain in Centre County in early November.

That fire capped an above-average season in the Commonwealth that brought 1,034 reported wildfires, the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) says. It also marked the third year in a row that more than 1,000 wildfires occurred here — a streak that has not happened since the 1980s.

DCNR says 99% of wildfires are caused by humans. The Centre County blaze began Nov. 9 after a 100-acre controlled burn in the area got out of control.

NATURE NEWS

Light pollution poses threat to PA Wilds

Normally, people don't like to be in the dark — unless, of course, they're visiting the Pennsylvania Wilds, where darkness is a main attraction, especially for stargazers.

The rural region has some of the darkest skies in the country, according to pawilds.com. Excessive artificial lighting, however, is causing a phenomenon known as "sky glow."

"[Sky glow] reduces the visibility of stars and other astronomical features," the website says.

Groups working to slow the light pollution include the Pennsylvania Outdoor Lighting Council, which helps municipalities draft lighting ordinances, and the Dark Sky Fund, which funds and educates the public and businesses about the benefits of reducing light pollution.

Several rural electric cooperatives service the Wilds region, which covers more than 2 million acres of public land in north-central Pennsylvania.

Susquehanna River North Branch named 2023 River of the Year

After the public cast 11,438 votes online, the North Branch of the Susquehanna River came out on top as Pennsylvania's 2023 River of the Year.

Four waterways were nominated for the honor, with the North Branch receiving 4,098 votes, Perkiomen Creek 3,110, Conestoga River 2,490 and Schuylkill River 1,740.

Flowing from the New York state line to Sunbury, the winning river meanders through eight Pennsylvania counties, including Susquehanna, Bradford, Wyoming, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Columbia, Montour, and Northumberland. 🍷

CAN WE TALK?

Penn Lines is working on an article about work-related depression in farming. If you're a cooperative member who is in the industry and would like to share your story, please send a confidential email to Managing Editor Jill Ercolino at jill_ercolino@prea.com.

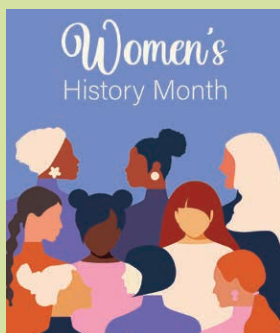
TIME LINES



MARCH 2003

Twenty years ago, Pennsylvania was gearing up to implement its first building code, which standardized construction practices across the state. The new law, however, was not without controversy. Rural officials, contractors and property owners were concerned about ongoing inspections, requirements they believed could stifle development, and most important, the extra costs for homeowners and taxpayers.

MARCH



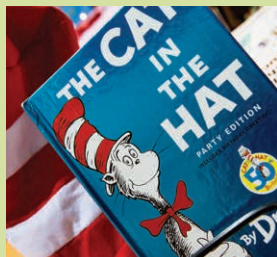
Women's
History Month

YOU GO, GIRL!

Look around. You've got a lot of great women in your life. Give them a high-five in honor of Women's History Month in March.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DR. SEUSS!

Theodor Seuss Geisel – better known as Dr. Seuss – was born on March 2, 1904. Celebrate his 119th birthday by reading your kids a couple of his classics or – better yet – serving up some green eggs and ham.



MAD FOR MAPLE

Take a road trip in March to experience one of the events celebrating Pennsylvania maple products, including the PA Maple Weekend – Taste & Tour in Somerset County, March 11-12. Learn more at somersetcountymaple.org.



A WILD GOOSE CHASE

Snow geese are expected to make their annual stop in Lancaster County in March as they head north. While their arrival is unpredictable, increase your sighting odds with a trip in the beginning or middle of the month.

LUCK OF THE IRISH

Wearing green and sipping green drinks on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, are long-standing traditions. Look up some local festivities and join the celebration.

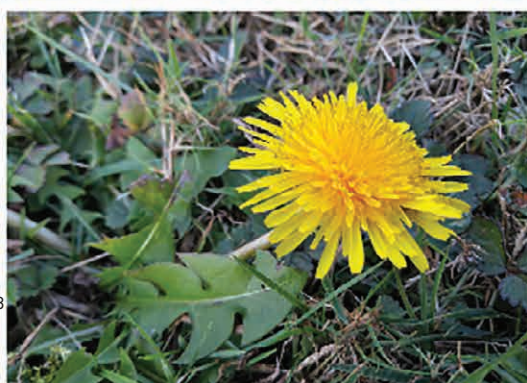
GOING WILD FOR FOOD

Foraging Reveals Abundance of Backyard Bounties

ABIGAIL ZIEGER

Penn Lines Contributor

DEBBIE NAHA-KORETZKY



Gail Cutshall recalls a dish her mother made every spring during the Great Depression. “We had lots of potatoes in the garden,” the 96-year-old says, “and we’d have fried potatoes with a dandelion salad beside it.”

A member of Huntingdon-based Valley Rural Electric Cooperative (REC), Cutshall remembers how her mother would fry bacon, add a little onion, vinegar, sugar, and salt, and then thicken the mixture with a slurry of flour and water. She would then pour this special dressing over a bed of young dandelion greens.

“When the dandelions come up new — before they get very big — the green part is really good and tender,” she says. “My mother would pick those as long as they were good, but when the weather starts to heat up, they get a little bitter, you might say.”

Eating off the land wasn’t unusual when Cutshall was young.

“Way back then, people ate what they could get,” she says. “We didn’t use to have salads or salad fixings — like people these days have — until the garden got going. Then, we’d have lettuce and different things in my dad’s garden. But the dandelions came first.”

A delicious discovery

Dandelions are often the first introduction people receive to edible, wild plants, says Debbie Naha-Koretzky, who lives in Harrisburg and is author of the book, “Foraging Pennsylvania and New Jersey.” Known as the Wild Edibles Lady, she discovered dandelions were safe to eat when studying biology in college.

“I was sparked,” she recalls. “There’s something that just grows wild out there, and it’s edible!? I wanted to learn what else I could about what’s growing in the wild.”

Finding wild, edible food is known as foraging, a skill that has been around for thousands of years. It involves learning which plants are edible and how to gather and prepare them. For many people across history, this wasn’t just a hobby — it was a means of survival.

In modern times, most of us no longer have to rely on foraging for sustenance. However, the practice has been gaining popularity in recent years. Those who do it say it’s a pleasant pastime: Foraging opens the door for quiet time in the woods and fields, builds a connection with nature and our past, and provides an opportunity to gather free delicious and nutritious food.

Before eating just any plant, though, it’s imperative to know some basic safety rules, Naha-Koretzky says. While many edible plants are easy to identify, other plants are poisonous in whole or part and can cause severe illness and

even death. That’s why, she says, it’s important to learn how to accurately identify plants, which parts are edible, and when and how to prepare them. Bottom line: If you aren’t absolutely certain about the plant you are picking and how to use it for food, it’s best to leave it untouched.

Naha-Koretzky suggests starting with a plant you’re already familiar with, such as the dandelion.

“Really get to know the plant. Identify it as best you can,” she says. “Use field guides, have someone show it to you, and where it grows in its natural habitat. It’s good if you can follow the plant through the seasons.”

The foraging expert also recommends observing the plant’s exact details, such as its leaf and stem shape, overall size, structure, and coloration. She notes plants look different at different times of the year because as they grow, they change.

As you move onto identifying new plants, Naha-Koretzky says, use several reliable sources to cross-reference what you find. She advises borrowing two or three field guides from the local library, visiting reliable

ABIGAIL ZIEGER



MEMORIES TO SAVOR: Gail Cutshall, a member of Huntingdon-based Valley Rural Electric Cooperative, remembers sitting at the family table as a young girl and savoring her mother’s spring salad, made from freshly picked dandelion greens.

FORAGING FINDS: Debbie Naha-Koretzky, author of "Foraging Pennsylvania and New Jersey," is known as the Wild Edibles Lady. Here, she harvests a wild pawpaw. These often-overlooked fruits ripen in mid- to late September and taste like a combination of banana, mango and pineapple.



HENRY KORETZKY



websites, and double-checking findings with someone who is knowledgeable. In addition, check all parts of the plant in detail to help rule out possible look-alikes, the author says, and make sure reference photos reflect the same season you're in as you forage.

"Never rely on one person, one book or one website," she advises.

A bag, some scissors and a field guide

Once you are equipped with trustworthy resources and are certain of a plant's identification and how to safely use that plant, you're ready to begin foraging.

When setting out on your first adventure, you'll only need to bring a bag or basket for your plants, a small pair of scissors or a pocket knife, and a field guide to double-check your identification, Naha-Koretzky says. If you are interested in harvesting a plant that is a little tougher on the skin, such as stinging nettles or thistle roots, bring a pair of gloves along as well, she says.

Be sure to pick only in safe and legal locations — your backyard is a great place to start. If you go to a park, ask

DO YOUR RESEARCH: Before eating any plant you've foraged, make sure you've thoroughly researched and properly identified what you've found to rule out any possible – and potentially poisonous – look-alikes.

about its rules before beginning, she says. While many parks and trails are open to foragers, others practice the “leave-no-trace” rule, meaning plants and other objects should be left untouched.

It’s also good to practice the golden rule of foraging: Pick only what you need from a given area and no more — the amount you take should always be a small percentage of the total plants available and only a small portion of each individual plant, Naha-Koretzky says. If you find only a few of any given species in an area, refrain from harvesting at all. This gives the plants a chance to propagate so they are available for years to come.

A different approach

Once you have collected your plants and made 100% sure of their identification, it’s time to prepare them. When trying a new edible plant, look for ways to substitute the wild one for a more familiar, cultivated plant.

“A lot of plants have familiar counterparts,” Naha-Koretzky says. “I could use wild greens where I could use spinach, like in a quiche or in an omelet. Or say pawpaws ... I can use ripe pawpaw pulp as a substitute for pureed bananas, like in banana bread.”

Dandelions, like many other foraged plants, are extremely versatile, says forager Stephanie Rozelle, who lives in Susque-

Common Pennsylvania Edibles Through the Seasons – and a Recipe, Too!

Just as domesticated crops have different harvest times, so do wild plants. Each season yields a variety of nutritious plants to pick. This is by no means an exhaustive list, but it’s a good place to start for those new to foraging.

Spring

Spring is a great season for tender shoots and leaves.

- Burdock
- Dandelions (see recipe at right)
- Plantain
- Fiddleheads
- Stinging nettles
- Violets
- Ramps

Summer

Summer brings berries and nutritious greens.

- Blackberries
- Blueberries
- Elderberries
- Lamb’s quarters
- Mint
- Purslane
- Raspberries
- Wood sorrel

Fall

Fall is the season for fruits.

- Apples
- Black walnuts
- Chestnuts
- Wild grapes
- Rose hips

Winter

Several evergreens offer winter nutrition.

- Juniper
- Pine
- Spruce
- Wintergreen
- Wild greens growing under the snow



Wild Dandelion Quiche

- Single pie crust (store-bought or homemade)
- Butter or bacon grease
- 1 green or wild onion, chopped
- 1 cup packed young dandelion flowers and leaves, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic or one small head wild garlic, minced
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 8 eggs, beaten
- 3/4 cup milk
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/2 cups shredded cheddar cheese

Instructions

1. Gather foraged greens and wash in cold water. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees.
2. Prepare pie crust. Poke a few holes in it with a fork and bake 5-6 minutes in preheated oven.
3. Meanwhile, heat butter or bacon grease in a skillet. Add onion, chopped dandelions, garlic, and salt and pepper to taste. Cook for just 2-3 minutes or until the greens are wilted. Set aside.
4. Beat eggs, milk and salt together in a large bowl. Stir in cheese and dandelion mixture.
5. Pour egg mixture into hot pie crust. Lower the oven temperature to 400 degrees and bake for about 30 minutes, or until set and a sharp knife inserted into the center of the quiche comes out clean.



PHOTOS BY ABIGAIL ZIEGER

LOTS OF OPTIONS: Foraged ingredients, including violets and dandelions, can be used to add a twist to baked goods, jams, teas, salads, and more.

hanna County, a region served by Claverack REC. In addition to cooking, many foragers use plants for medicinal purposes, too.

"We dry the [dandelion] leaves and save them for our rabbits because it's really good fiber for them," Rozelle says. "We harvest the roots and dry those for tea. Dandelion heads: We use those for tea, and then we also make dandelion jelly out of them in the spring."

Foragers say searching for wild food reveals surprising details in plants you may never have noticed, and cooking these "found" ingredients treats your senses to novel tastes, textures, and smells. For Cutshall, the taste of tender spring dandelions drizzled with her mother's bacon dressing is unforgettable. She also remembers her father's dandelion wine. Plus, the more you practice looking for edible, wild plants, the easier it gets to locate and identify them. Soon, Rozelle says, you'll see food growing everywhere.

"We don't have to go far to find all sorts of things," she says. "Even on our one little acre, we find a lot of stuff ... it was just an untapped resource. Instead of having to buy things from other people or barter ... we can find it right here." 🌱



Better than cannabis, better than CBD

New Joint-Supporting “Miracle Oil” Capsule Delivers Hip, Knee, and Shoulder Comfort in Just Days

Thousands of Americans are rediscovering normal freedom of movement thanks to a “miracle oil” capsule that’s outperforming hemp in promoting joint comfort.

According to the official figures from the CDC, more than 58 million Americans are living with joint discomfort. This epidemic has led to a search for alternative approaches – as many sufferers seek relief without the harmful side effects of conventional “solutions.”

Anti-aging specialist Dr. Al Sears is leading the way with a new formula he calls “the most significant breakthrough I’ve ever found for easing joint discomfort.”

The capsule is based on a “miracle oil” historically treasured for its joint health-supporting properties. Marco Polo prized it as he blazed the Silk Road. And to this day, Ayurvedic practitioners rely on it to promote optimal joint health.

Now, with a modern twist backed by science, Dr. Sears is making this natural solution for joint health available to the public.

Your Body’s Hidden “Soothing System”

Joint health research changed forever with the discovery of the endocannabinoid system (ECS) in 1992. Up until that point, research on cannabinoids focused on psychoactive effects. Now, scientists were looking at a new way to fight occasional aches and pains.

Your ECS serves as a central “signaling system” that tells your body how to react to things you do every day. It controls several critical bodily functions such as learning and memory, sleep, healthy immune responses – and your response to discomfort.

A recent study revealed a direct link between the ECS and creaky, sore joints. Researchers at the University of Edinburgh studied the aging of mice with endocannabinoid deficiencies versus “normal” mice.

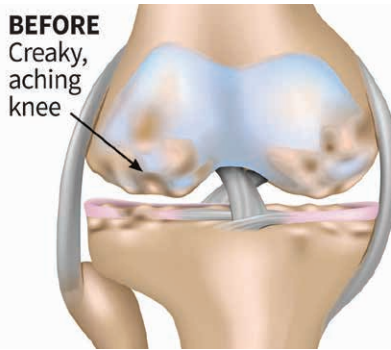
As they aged, the deficient mice had a whopping 60% more joint degeneration than the mice with a healthy ECS.

As the name suggests, the ECS responds to cannabis. At the time it was discovered, scientists assumed that was the best way to support it. But thanks to Dr. Sears’ all-natural solution, you can power up your ECS without marijuana.

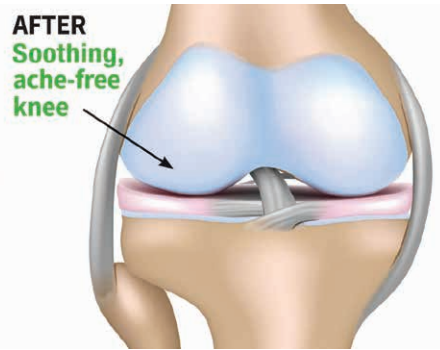
“Calling it the ‘endocannabinoid system’ was a misnomer from the very beginning,” Dr. Sears explained. “Modern research reveals that you don’t need cannabis to activate this incredible system. You don’t need to ‘get high’ to get joint relief.”

A scholarly review found that plants and herbs that don’t produce mind-altering effects can support the ECS and help it maintain its

BEFORE
Creaky,
aching
knee



AFTER
Soothing,
ache-free
knee



The active ingredient in Mobilify soothes aching joints in as little as 5 days

healthy functions.

This includes common foodstuffs, such as kava, chocolate, black pepper, and most significantly – the star ingredient to Dr. Sears’ own **Mobilify** formula – frankincense.

Modern scientists say this natural ingredient meets “cannabinoid tetrad” – the signs used to determine if something supports the ECS. While it doesn’t produce a “high” like cannabis does, it binds to the same receptors to support a healthy response to discomfort.

All the Benefits of CBD – Without Cannabis

Indian frankincense, the chief ingredient in **Mobilify**, has been shown to provide all the benefits of cannabis without any feelings of sluggishness or sleepiness.

And studies show that users don’t have to wait long for the comfort they’re looking for.

In a study published in the International Journal of Medical Sciences, 60 patients with stiff knees took 100 mg of Indian frankincense or a placebo daily for 30 days. Remarkably, Indian frankincense “significantly” supported healthy joint function and relieved discomfort in as little as five days.

Additional research linked regular use to lasting comfort.

In another study, 48 participants were given an extract made from frankincense for 120-days. When the results came in, researchers determined the extract strongly supported joint comfort – especially in the knees.

These results were all achieved without marijuana. Research continues to back up the idea that you can support smooth, strong, and healthy joints naturally – without tiredness or sluggishness.

Get Moving Again with Mobilify

Mobilify has already helped thousands of Americans stay on their feet and breeze

through their daily activities with ease.

One user even reported getting results the same day it was used.

“**Mobilify** really helps with soreness, stiffness, and mild temporary discomfort,” Joni D. said.

Larry M, another user, compared taking **Mobilify** to living a completely new life.

“After a week and a half of taking **Mobilify**, the discomfort, stiffness, and minor aches went away...it’s almost like being reborn,” he said.

Dennis H. said it helped him get back to his favorite hobby.

“I can attest to **Mobilify** easing discomfort to enable me to pursue my golfing days. Definitely one pill that works for me out of the many I have tried,” he said.

How to Get Mobilify

Right now, the only way to get this powerful, unique **Mobilify** formula that clobbers creaking joints without clobbering you is directly from Dr. Sears. It is not available in stores.

To secure your bottle of this breakthrough natural joint discomfort reliever, buyers should call with Sears Health Hotline at **1-800-329-8491**. “The Hotline allows us to ship the product directly to customers.”

Dr. Sears believes in this product so much, he offers a 100% money-back guarantee on every order. “Just send me back the bottle and any unused product within 90 days, and I’ll send you your money back,” said Dr. Sears.

The Hotline will be taking orders for the next 48 hours. After that, the phone number may be shut down to allow them to restock. Call **1-800-329-8491** to secure your limited supply of **Mobilify**. If you are not able to get through due to extremely high call volume, please try again! Call NOW to qualify for a significant discount on this limited time offer. To take advantage of this exclusive offer use Promo Code: **PLMB323** when you call.

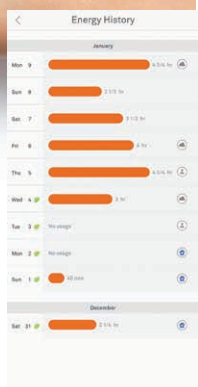
Apps to Help You Save Energy

ABBY BERRY



A WAY TO SAVE: A smart thermostat paired with a smartphone app can help you manage energy used to heat or cool your home, which can help you save energy and money.

PHOTO SOURCE:
GOOGLE NEST



THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT: Whether you want to reduce energy use to save on monthly bills or shrink your carbon footprint, there are several smartphone apps that can help you achieve real energy savings.

PHOTO SOURCE: KAROLINA GRABOWSKA,
PIXABAY

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF reasons why people are interested in cutting back on energy consumption — some are motivated to save on their monthly energy bills, while others may be more concerned about reducing their personal carbon footprint.

Actively practicing energy efficiency and conservation provides multiple benefits. For parents, being more conscious about energy use can be a tool to teach kiddos about sustainable habits for the future. Conserving energy also means fewer carbon emissions, which results in better air quality and a healthier environment. Also, I think we can all agree saving money on our monthly utility bills is a great reason to monitor home energy use.

Regardless of why you're interested in using less energy, there are several smartphone apps that can help you achieve meaningful savings, including:

- **Smart thermostat apps.** I know what you're thinking, and yes, to use a smart thermostat app, you must purchase a smart thermostat. But heating and cooling make up a large portion of the average home's energy consumption (and cost!), so saving on heating and cooling can have a big impact on bills. Smart thermostats and their accompanying apps are handy and promote energy-efficient behavior. Plus, these devices have become much more affordable over the years. You can purchase an EnergyStar®-certified smart thermostat for as low as \$100, which can save you 8% on annual heating and cooling costs, or about \$50 per year. The device will quickly pay for itself, and you'll gain insight into better ways to heat and cool your home. In addition, the ability to control the thermostat from anywhere can equate to real savings.

- **Energy cost calculators.** If you

want to reduce energy use at home, it's important to know where your consumption is going. Energy cost calculators can help pinpoint your energy use with a few simple steps and identify areas to save. The concept is pretty simple: Just plug in the wattage of your various appliances and how often you use them to see which ones are using the most energy. Most energy cost calculator apps are free and can be downloaded to any Apple or Android device. If you browse the app store, you'll find multiple energy cost calculator apps, but most are similar in functionality. Be sure to read the app's reviews and download the one that best aligns with your energy-efficiency goals.

- **JouleBug app.** If you're competitive, the JouleBug app should be right up your alley. JouleBug makes energy conservation simple and fun through personal tasks and badges earned within the app, group challenges you can tackle with friends, and communities you can join to learn about local sustainability efforts. The JouleBug app, which is free and can be downloaded to Apple or Android devices, is an easy tool to make saving energy fun.

These are just a few apps that can help you find new ways to save energy. Smart lightbulbs are typically paired with apps for convenient control of home lighting. Also, smart plugs come with apps to help you control how you power everyday devices and electronics.

Whether you use an app or not, saving energy is always a smart idea that can help you save money on your monthly bills and reduce your carbon footprint. 🌱

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

“I haven’t been this excited since I got my first bicycle!”

Introducing **ZOOMER!**

The portable, folding, battery-powered chair that offers easy one-handed operation

Remember when you were a child and got your first bicycle? I do. It gave me a sense of independence . . . I felt like I could go anywhere, and it was so much easier and more enjoyable than walking. Well, at my age, that bike wouldn’t do me much good. Fortunately, there’s a new invention that gives me the freedom and independence to go wherever I want . . . safely and easily. It’s called the **Zoomer**, and it’s changed my life.

My Zoomer is a delight to ride! It has increased my mobility in my apartment, my opportunities to enjoy the out-of-doors, and enabled me to visit the homes of my children for longer periods of time. The various speeds of it match my need for safety, it is easy to turn, and I am most pleased with the freedom of movement it gives me.

Sincerely, A. Macon, Williamsburg, VA

After just one trip around your home in the **Zoomer**, you’ll marvel at how easy it is to navigate. It is designed to maneuver in tight spaces like doorways, between furniture, and around corners. It can go over thresholds and works great on any kind of floor or carpet. It’s not bulky or cumbersome, so it can roll right up to a table or desk– there’s no need to transfer to a chair. Its sturdy yet lightweight aluminum frame makes it durable and comfortable. Its dual motors power it at up to 3.7 miles per hour



and its automatic electromagnetic brakes stop on a dime. The rechargeable battery powers it for up to 8 miles on a single charge. Plus, its exclusive foldable design enables you to transport it easily and even store it in a closet or under a bed when it’s not in use.

Why spend another day letting mobility issues hamper your lifestyle? Call now and find out how you can have your very own **Zoomer**.

Now
available
with sporty
two-arm
lever steering
(Zinger Chair)



journey
zoomer

Call now toll free and order one today!

1-888-599-0185

Please mention code 117798 when ordering.

mobility | sleep | comfort | safety

enjoying life never gets old™

journey
HEALTH & LIFESTYLE

The Zoomer and Zinger Chairs are personal electric vehicles and are not medical devices nor wheelchairs. They are not intended for medical purposes to provide mobility to persons restricted to a sitting position. They are not covered by Medicare nor Medicaid. © 2023 Journey Health and Lifestyle



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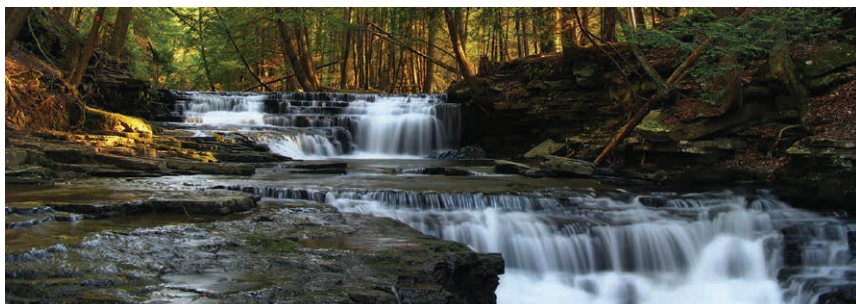
In & Around

Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative

Welcome to the Pennsylvania Wilds, home to Wysox-based Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative (REC), which serves nearly 19,000 homes, farms and businesses in northeastern Pennsylvania across more than 2,800 miles of line.

The cooperative's rugged service territory hides gems within its lush wilderness, perfect for hiking and camping within the region's many state parks, such as Salt Springs in Montrose or Vosburg Neck in Tunkhannock.

For those looking for open spaces but perhaps with less daunting terrain, you might want to visit one of the area's golf courses, such as Stone Hedge Golf Course in Tunkhannock and Tall Pines Players Club in Friendsville, both which receive electricity from Claverack REC. And if you're after something with a little more oomph, why not link up



SERENE STREAM: The Fall Brook runs through Salt Springs State Park in Susquehanna County.

with the Endless Mountains Primitive Outdoorsmen in Black Walnut and check out their demonstrations of muzzle-loaded firearms and ax throwing (ear and eye protection **strongly** encouraged).

While you're out that way, grab the kids and give the agritourism scene a try at Brown Hill Farm in Tunkhannock — tour its sunflower fields or just let the little ones run through the corn maze, take hay rides, play with potato slingshots, or climb a hay bale tower. And if you're in town during the summer months, don't miss out on the many

local fairs throughout the region. You can even say hello to cooperative employees when they host their annual meeting in August at the Wyoming County Fairgrounds in Meshoppen.



Main Office: Wysox, Pa.
Consumer-members served: 18,956
Website: claverack.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.

MAY'S QUESTION

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

PLEASE EMAIL YOUR ANSWER, along with a selfie, to CommunityCorner@prea.com by **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22**. Please include your full name, the name of your cooperative and a daytime telephone number and put "May 2023 Q&A" in the subject line.

MARCH RESPONSES

In honor of Dr. Seuss' March birthday and his creation, green eggs and ham, what's the weirdest thing you've ever eaten?



"One time, my husband was making breakfast for the family. For some unknown reason, he decided to put blue food coloring in our oatmeal. Although it tasted perfectly normal, the blue coloration was more than any of us could stand, and we had to throw out the entire pan, which was painful given our limited food budget at the time. Whoever heard of BLUE oatmeal anyway?"

— MARY BROWN, SOMERSET RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



"Stuffed home-raised pigeons that had been raised by my husband's grandfather in his garage and cooked by his grandmother!"

— LINDA BOKINSKY, SOMERSET RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

REA Energy Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives
serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

REA ENERGY COOPERATIVE, INC.

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EBENSBURG DISTRICT OFFICE

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

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

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Stacy Hilliard, CCC, CKAE
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Purchasing & Facilities Manager
Brendan Short
Right of Way/Forestry Supervisor
Renee Spalla
Supervisor of Consumer Services
Chris Weller
Load Management Supervisor

OUTAGES & EMERGENCIES

1-800-332-7273
724-463-7273

OFFICE HOURS

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

Happy Birthday, REA Energy!



WHAT A DIFFERENCE 86 YEARS has made! Take a minute and imagine what your life would be like without electricity. Then think about what rural areas throughout Pennsylvania must have been like without electricity all those years ago.

Some current REA members may remember what life was like without electricity. Memories may consist of reading the newspaper by lamp light, cooking with a gas stove, milking dairy cows by hand and listening to a battery-powered radio

with only a few channels.

Rural Electrification Administration is created

Before 1935, electricity was mainly available only to people who lived in or near cities or larger towns. Nearly 90% of urban areas had electricity, but only 10% of rural areas did. In fact, many people believed that farm families did not want — or even need — electricity. Things began to change rapidly, however, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed an executive order on May 11, 1935, creating the Rural Electrification Administration (REA), a branch of the U.S. Department of Agriculture charged with lending money to help get electricity to rural areas.

Private utility companies, which supplied electric power to most of the nation's consumers, argued it was too expensive to string electric lines to isolated rural farmsteads. Plus, they said, most farmers were too poor to be able to afford electricity.

Luckily, for rural residents, the Roosevelt Administration believed that if private enterprise could not supply electric power to them, then it was the duty of the government to do so.

By 1939, the REA had helped to establish 417 rural electric cooperatives, which served 288,000 households. The actions of the REA encouraged private utilities to electrify the countryside, as well. By 1939, rural households with electricity had risen to 25%.

It wasn't long before neighbors in our area joined together to create nonprofit cooperatives, which could borrow money from the REA to build electrical systems.

On March 4, 1937, Southwest Central Rural Electric Cooperative — known today as REA Energy Cooperative, Inc. — was incorporated. This was a result of the determination of Mr. Sterling J. Orange, who would become the cooperative's first general manager, to bring electricity to rural residents of Indiana, Cambria and parts of surrounding counties.

Today, with 70 full-time employees and nearly 18,500 members in seven counties, REA Energy continues to serve our members with reliable electric service, reasonable rates, and a sense of being a "good neighbor," and not just another company. Thank you from your board of directors, management, and employees for your support and loyalty throughout the years. 🎉

STACY HILLIARD, CCC, CKAE
COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING MANAGER



Petitions for Director Candidates Due by June 16

STACY HILLIARD, CCC, CKA, COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING MANAGER

IN 2023, DISTRICTS 1 AND 2 are up for re-election.

District 1 includes Cowanshannock Township in Armstrong County. District 1 also includes the following townships in Indiana County: East Mahoning, North Mahoning, South Mahoning, Washington and West Mahoning, as well as Creekside Borough. In Jefferson County, District 1 includes Bell, Gaskill, Perry and Young townships.

District 2 includes the following townships in Blair County: Allegheny, Juniata and Logan. District 2 also includes these townships in Cambria County: Adams, Allegheny, Conemaugh, Cresson, Croyle, East Taylor, Gallitzin, Middle Taylor, Portage, Richland, Summerhill, Washington and West Taylor.

Qualifications

To be eligible for director candidacy, individuals must meet the following criteria and all other guidelines listed in the cooperative's bylaws:

- ▶ Be at least 18 years old.
- ▶ Signed and submitted an application for service at primary residence.
- ▶ Received electric service at primary residence continuously for the past year.
- ▶ Not employed by, or financially interested in, any

business in competition with REA.

- ▶ Never been an employee of REA or any electric cooperative or association.
- ▶ Not a close relative of a director or employee of REA.
- ▶ Have paid all balances due REA within 90 days of billing during the previous one-year period.
- ▶ Have not been convicted of theft of services from REA.
- ▶ Have not been convicted of, or pled guilty to, a felony or crime of moral turpitude.

Complete director qualifications are detailed in Article III, Section 2(a), of the cooperative's bylaws. Packets containing all the necessary information and forms are available at the cooperative's offices or by emailing reaenergy@reaenergy.com.

Important dates to remember

This year, the first day that members can submit petitions to run for director is March 16. To register as a candidate, you must reside in District 1 or 2.

Interested applicants will need to have their petitions submitted and received at the cooperative by 3 p.m. June 16, 2023.

Information about nominees will be mailed to members in Districts 1 and 2 in the beginning of August. Election results will be announced at REA Energy's Annual Meeting on Sept. 14. 📺



District 1 - Tom Beresnyak
District 2 - James "Rick" Shope
District 3 - Michael Bertolino
District 4 - Tom Aurandt
District 5 - Robert Neese

District 6 - John Learn
District 7 - Anthony Enciso
District 8 - Wayne Farabaugh
District 9 - Sandra Dill



Chad Carrick,
President
and CEO

Right-of-Way Maintenance Scheduled for 2023

BRENDAN SHORT, RIGHT-OF-WAY / FORESTRY SUPERVISOR

REA ENERGY IS COMMITTED TO and strives toward providing the highest quality service to our members. Right-of-way (ROW) vegetation maintenance plays a major role in carrying out this commitment, so REA Energy can provide safe and reliable electricity to its members.

There are benefits of having a well-established vegetation maintenance program (VMP). The first benefit is public safety. High voltage distribution lines can be a danger to society. If vegetation is allowed to grow into any high voltage line, this can create a very dangerous situation for utility personnel, unaware landowners or the public.

Electrical energy is always trying to find its way to ground, but needs a conductor to get there. An example would be vegetation, which can become a conductor. When vegetation is touching or laying on distribution lines, there is the potential the electrical energy is using that vegetation to find a path to ground, which has the potential to energize a portion of the vegetation it is touching. If landowners notice this situation, they are advised not to take matters into their own hands; instead, call REA Energy and report the situation. Trained professionals in the industry can assess the situation and resolve it.

The second benefit of a well-established VMP is storm restoration time. With a proper VMP in place, storm restoration times may be reduced drastically because a properly maintained ROW allows utility personnel better access to the lines and the ability to see where the outage is located. This allows personnel to assess the situation and determine what tools and material may be needed to properly restore the line.

With an unmaintained ROW, utility lines can become entangled with brush and tree limbs. When ROWs are in this form, restoration times may increase due to personnel having to spend more time looking for the outage location. Once the location of the outage has been determined and found, utility personnel may get tangled in the overgrown ROW. Untangling the utility lines is very time consuming for utility personnel. This makes it very hazardous for all parties involved, right down to the public.

Landowner notification

REA uses various methods to notify landowners before any vegetation management work takes place on the property. Letters are mailed to members, and information is included in *Penn Lines* magazine. The final notification will be an in-person visit from a representative of the professional vegetation management contractor. If you're not home, they will leave

a yellow door-hanger providing their phone number to address your questions or schedule a meeting. If you're home, the representative will explain what work must be accomplished. Landowners should ask questions so they have a complete understanding of the work that will be performed on their property.

REA Energy's Cycle Trimming Program

There are approximately 2,200 miles of electric line to maintain in the cooperative's territory. REA Energy requires tree trimming, tree removal and herbicide treatment on a cyclical basis. Currently, the cooperative has adopted a five-year vegetation management cycle to maintain all ROWs in its service area. Adequate trimming and spraying programs make it possible to provide safe, reliable electric service and reduce outage times and overall costs.

In 2023, the following cycle trimming, mowing and herbicide projects are scheduled:

- ▶ Kenwood Substation / Metering Point — 84 miles
- ▶ Washington Substation — 139 miles
- ▶ St. Augustine / Fallentimber Substation / Metering Point — 115 miles
- ▶ Summerhill Substation — 57 miles
- ▶ Birtle Substation — 21 miles

Reliability

Our focus this year is to reduce vegetation related outages. This is achievable with proper maintenance and the willingness of members to work with the cooperative to maintain ROWs. REA Energy appreciates your cooperation with its VMP. This will enable the cooperative to reduce outages, keep the system safe for employees and landowners, and minimize overall costs. If you have any questions about ROW issues, you can visit reaenergy.com to see proper specifications for ROW clearance or contact the Indiana office at 724-349-4800 or the Ebensburg office at 814-472-8570. 📞

Plant the Right Tree in the Right Place

Trees beautify our neighborhoods, and when planted in the right spot, can even help lower energy bills. But the wrong tree in the wrong place can be a hazard... especially to power lines.

For more tips on smart tree planting in your community, contact your local electric cooperative or visit www.ArborDay.org.

LARGE TREES	MEDIUM TREES	SMALL TREES
Height/spread of more than 40 feet, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maple• Birch• Oak• Spruce• Pine	Height/spread of 25 to 40 feet, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Washington hawthorn• Goldenrain tree• Eastern redbud• American arborvitae• Dogwoods	Height/spread of no more than 25 feet such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Star magnolia• Crabapple• Lilac

Be safe! Always call 811 before you dig to locate any buried utility lines.

Source: The Arbor Day Foundation and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

Patricia Berringer was chosen as the winner of the REA Energy Services 2022 Contest. Customers whose REA Energy Services job or product was \$500 or more were entered into a drawing for a prize valued up to \$500. Congratulations, Patricia, and thank you for choosing REA Energy Services.

REA Energy Services will be conducting a similar customer contest in 2023. Visit reaservices.com to learn more about the products and services offered.

ELECTRICAL CONTRACTING

RESIDENTIAL

- Meter Sockets
- Entrance Cable Replacement
- Complete 100-, 200- and 400-amp Services
- Complete Wiring on New Construction
- Manufactured Home Services
- Home/Farm Meter Pole Services
- Panel and Breaker Replacement
- Automatic and Portable Generators

COMMERCIAL

- Three-Phase Switch-Gear Installation
- Motor-Control Installation
- Complete Wiring



- Commercial Lighting
- Automatic and Portable Generators
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www.reaservices.com

FOR A FREE ESTIMATE CALL:
724-349-4800, ext. 3

HICPA007896

REA Energy Cooperative, Inc. is beginning a project this month to replace members' aging meters with new, modern ones.

Powermetrix, the cooperative's contractor, will start changing out meters in the Cherryhill Substation area, followed by the Brown's Crossroads, Clyde, Curry Run, Latimer, Livermore and Parkwood substations to balance out the year. We plan to replace approximately 4,000 to 5,000 meters per year.

The contractor's representatives will carry REA identification cards and have REA contractor IDs on their vehicles. The contractor will not need to enter your home or business to change out the meter. However, you will experience a brief interruption in service as the new meter is installed.

REA would like to thank you for your cooperation as we complete this process.

**Stop by REA
Energy's booth at the
Indiana-Armstrong
Home Builder's Show
at the Kovalchick
Complex,
March 24-26, 2023.
Members who visit the
booth will receive a
free gift.**

Right-of-Way Management News

REA Energy contractors will be completing tree-trimming work in the following areas during March:

- Contractor crews from Penn Line Tree Service will be trimming the rights of way in the Kenwood and Strongstown areas, in addition to emergency maintenance areas.

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

AVOID LADDER MISSTEPS

At the workplace and at home, many injuries are preventable. A well-thought-out work plan, setting aside enough time for the task at hand, and committing to safety can all play a role in preventing injuries.

Injuries and deaths associated with ladder use are no exception. Thousands of ladder-related injuries and about 100 fall deaths happen each year.

In addition, always look up and look out for power lines before transporting a ladder outdoors. Carry the ladder horizontally instead of vertically.



According to the American Ladder Institute, the **five most common mistakes** people make when **using ladders** are:

- **Overreaching.**
- **Missing the last step** when coming down.
- Not keeping **three points of contact.**
- Using the **wrong type or size** ladder for the job.
- Placing it on **uneven ground.**

Learn more at:

**Safe
Electricity.org®**

Untangling the Kinks in the Electricity Supply Chain

Electric utilities saw warning signs even before the pandemic

PAUL WESSLUND

MOST OF US FIRST HEARD about supply chain issues two years ago when the COVID-19 pandemic left us looking at empty store shelves.

Shortages also affected electric utilities, and electric cooperatives are among those taking steps to manage supply chain constraints, says Stephanie Crawford, regulatory affairs director with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

"This didn't happen overnight," Crawford says. "Many of these dynamics started before the pandemic."

Creating a supply chain task force

Those dynamics include the fact that there's only one U.S.-based

manufacturer of the kind of steel used to make transformers, which are vital pieces of equipment that help regulate power levels. That, coupled with a lack of workers, has meant transformer manufacturers have struggled. Lead times for ordering transformers jumped from one or two months to as long as two years.

Those delays threatened to slow progress on essential work, like restoring power after a storm or connecting service for new co-op members.

And it wasn't just transformers in short supply, Crawford says. Electric co-ops also faced delays "for meters, conductors, utility poles, bucket trucks — essentially all the things needed to keep the system running efficiently, including restoration needs and serving new load."

To reduce those backlogs, the utility industry, including electric co-ops, created a task force last summer to work with the federal government on resolving supply chain slowdowns.

Incentives for U.S. manufacturing

The task force recommended several actions the federal government could take to help utilities. Suggestions included offering incentives to encourage the domestic manufacturing of steel for transformers.

The task force also identified national trends and policies that could conflict with the utility supply chain:

Worker shortages: The same lack of people to fill jobs in many parts of the economy, from restaurants to hospitals, also affects the production of materials needed by utilities.

Competition for workers: Communities want their economic development efforts to attract major new employers. But a large, new business could end up luring workers away from companies that supply essential utility equipment. The industry task force recommended the government support incentives for utility-related work.

Renewable energy and infrastructure initiatives: Electric vehicles, solar energy and even efforts to expand broadband service can use some of the same materials needed by utilities. The task force recommended the government avoid putting utility work at a disadvantage in favor of other projects.

All of these supply chain issues are causing utilities to rethink traditional business practices, Crawford says.

"They've not needed to project the demand for transformers five years in the future because you could get a transformer in 60 days," she says. "Now, when it's taking more than a year for the equipment to be available, they're going to have to look at it through a different lens."

Utilities have been adapting to dramatic changes, Crawford adds, and supply chain management is one of the latest twists.

"Real investment needs to be made in domestic manufacturing and supply capabilities to make sure all utilities can get the equipment they need," she says. "This is critical infrastructure, especially as we rely on the electric grid to power everything from transportation to working at home."

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.




ALTEC



RYAN HALL


THE WAITING GAME: In addition to transformer shortages, electric utilities are experiencing longer-than-normal wait times for other essential equipment, such as bucket trucks and utility poles.




KILL LAKE WEEDS

Proven **AQUACIDE PELLETS**
Marble size pellets. Works at any depth.

Before



After



10 lb. bag
treats up to
4,000 sq.ft.
\$115.00

50 lb. bag
treats up to
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In Pennsylvania, We Talk Turkey

STEVE PIATT

WHEN THE NATIONAL WILD TURKEY Federation (NWTF) held its annual convention and sport show last month in Nashville, the party was even bigger than usual. And with good reason: The conservation organization is observing its 50th anniversary.

It's a major milestone for the NWTF, formed in 1973 as a nonprofit dedicated to the conservation of the wild turkey and the preservation of our hunting heritage. Through the entire journey, Pennsylvania has been front and center in its success, from leadership and membership to a passion for turkey hunting that's second only to the pursuit of the whitetail in the Keystone State. And among our 250,000-plus spring gobbler hunters, plenty rank turkey hunting at the top of the list.

It's unlikely our obsession with wild turkey would have happened without the Pennsylvania Game Commission's successful reintroduction of the birds, which led to the first spring gobbler season in 1968. Five years later, the NWTF's Pennsylvania Chapter was formed. At the time, there were an estimated 1.3 million birds in North America. Today, that number is over 7 million.

The NWTF almost immediately became a major player on the wildlife conservation landscape, thanks largely to the dynamic leadership of Pennsylvanian Rob Keck, who served as CEO of the organization for 30 years alongside another Pennsylvanian, Carl Brown, the chief operating officer of the NWTF during that same period.

The Pennsylvania chapter quickly gained momentum through its growing



membership, which at more than 13,000 today ranks second only to Tennessee's chapter, whose membership balloons each year through attendance at the Nashville convention.

The arrival of the NWTF, along with the Keystone State's growing turkey population, triggered a turkey-hunting movement that also extended into competition calling. Pennsylvania was right in the middle of it all, hosting the U.S. Open Championships in Perry County in the 1970s.

In the early days, people like the Rohm brothers (Terry and Robby) and their father, Dale, legendary caller and video pioneer Denny Gulvas, Dick and Scott Smith, the Leishers, and George Bausinger made their mark on the national calling scene, and were followed by a wave of others.

In addition, Pennsylvania turkey callmakers have literally carved out a reputation among the nation's finest. In fact, callmaking pioneer D.D. Adams' name is etched on the Grand National Award each year for the best-sounding pot call.

And we hunt. It's generally acknowl-

edged that if you can tag a high-pressured tom on public land in the Keystone State, you are a skilled turkey hunter.

Through it all, the NWTF chapters in Pennsylvania and across the country have continued to conserve and enhance wildlife habitat, improve access, recruit new hunters, and fund conservation projects, often through public-private partnerships. Millions of dollars have been raised through banquets and other special events to support that work, and the organization's volunteers remain the driving force behind it all.

It hasn't always been easy; the struggle to maintain that momentum was plainly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, which shuttered the convention and banquets and crippled fundraising. But the NWTF has soldiered on.

Fifty years is something to be proud of — and that isn't just talking turkey. 🦃

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

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

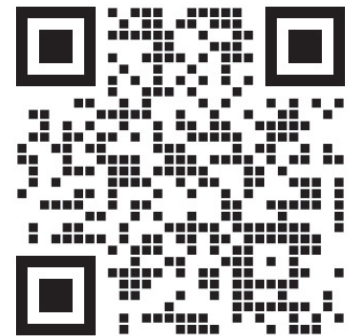
Attention High School Seniors:

The Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association Scholarship Trust Fund in Memory of William F. Matson is offering scholarships to high school seniors whose parents/guardians are members or employees of Pennsylvania and New Jersey electric cooperatives. At least five, \$1,000 one-time scholarships will be awarded. Scan this QR code for more information about the scholarship and the application.



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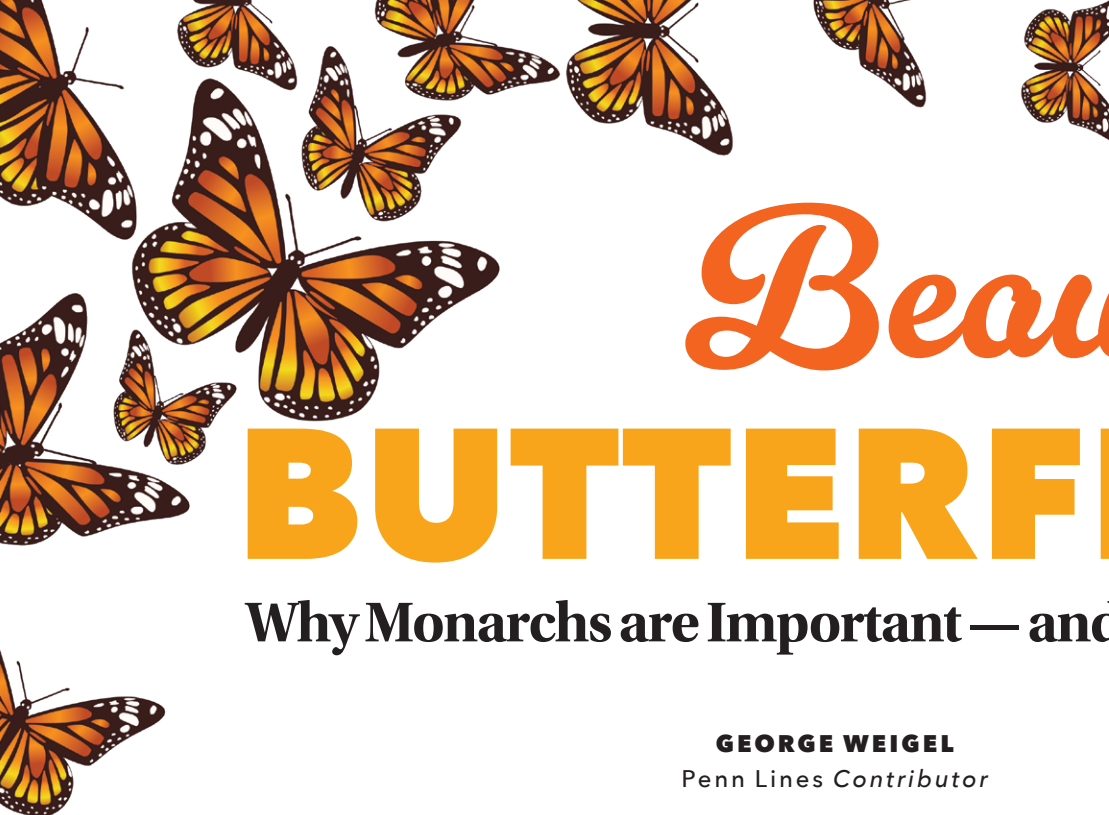
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Questions:

If you have any questions or need additional information, please email Steph Okuniewski at Stephanie_Okuniewski@prea.com or call at 717.982.1455.



Beautiful BUTTERFLIES

Why Monarchs are Important — and Need Our Help

GEORGE WEIGEL

Penn Lines Contributor

THE MONARCH BUTTERFLY — ONE of Pennsylvania's biggest, showiest and best-known insects — is in trouble.

Last summer, despite decades of forewarnings, the familiar orange-and-black butterfly landed on the Red List of Threatened Species, an endangered-species list maintained by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

As recently as the 1980s, monarchs numbered in the hundreds of millions and were a familiar summer sight in Pennsylvania backyards.

Since then, factors ranging from habitat loss to a nose-dive in monarchs' must-have plant — the milkweed — have sharply shrunk the population.

Northern monarch populations are down as much as 70% in the past decade, according to IUCN estimates. And numbers are pointing to another near-record low year in

Mexico's overwintering monarch population, according to the Monarch Watch program at the University of Kansas.

Is this a sign?

Centre County Master Gardener Pam Ford says the monarch's precipitous decline is more than just a cosmetic hit.

"Monarchs, like all butterflies, are an important part of the ecosystem," she says. "They play a significant role in the food web and the pollination of flowering plants."

They're also a good indicator of overall ecosystem health, says Lisa Schneider, a fellow Centre County master gardener who volunteers and teaches with Ford at the three-acre Snetsinger Butterfly Garden in Ferguson Township's Tom Tudek Memorial Park. Parts of the county are served by Dubois-based United Electric Cooperative

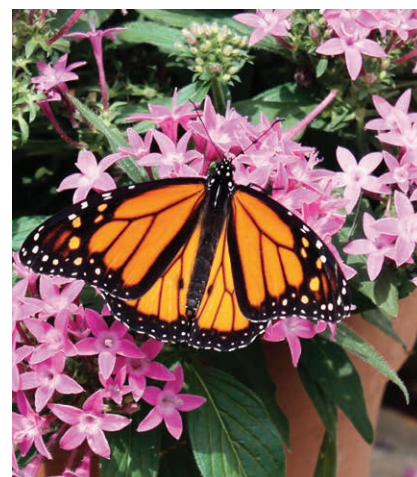
ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF GEORGE WEIGEL



THE HUNGRY CATERPILLAR: Monarch caterpillars feed strictly on milkweeds, which makes them toxic to most predators.



BECOMING A BUTTERFLY: Monarchs change from caterpillars into adult butterflies in this hanging structure, known as a chrysalis.



A FAMILIAR SIGHT: Monarch butterflies are one of Pennsylvania's biggest and best-known insects.



WHERE ARE THE MONARCHS?: As recently as the 1980s, monarchs numbered in the hundreds of millions. Since then, factors ranging from habitat loss to a nosedive in their must-have plant – the milkweed – have sharply shrunk the population.

and Huntingdon-based Valley Rural Electric Cooperative.

“Butterflies react to even minor changes in the environment,” she says. “Their decline serves as the proverbial ‘canary in the mine shaft,’ a sign that other living elements in their habitats, such as wildflowers or other pollinators, might be fading, too.”

Ford adds that monarchs serve as a “gateway insect” because they draw children and budding naturalists into the important, but often overlooked, world of insects.

“Humans are captivated by monarchs because of their striking, easily recognizable colors,” she says. “Their annual migration to their overwintering grounds in Mexico is an amazing feat that inspires our imagination.”

It’s that migration that sets monarchs apart from all other butterflies — and fuels their allure.

As summer starts to fade, Pennsylvania’s monarch butterflies begin a flight that takes them 2,000 miles into the high-elevation oyamel fir forest of central Mexico.

The butterflies typically fly 25 to 30 miles a day, arriving at their Mexican winter home around the end of October, according to

Monarch Watch. (Monarchs from the Midwest migrate to coastal California.)

After spending most of the winter in a semi-dormant state, the monarchs mate and start a new journey back north in early March. Their offspring are the ones that eventually show up in Pennsylvania and other points north by May and June.

The root of the problem

In recent years, however, monarchs have become the poster children for the broader pollinators-in-trouble movement. So what’s gone wrong? Monarch Watch identifies five main problems:

- 1) The advent of “Roundup-ready” crops has opened the door for the wider use of herbicides on fields and, by some estimates, wiped out millions of acres of milkweeds.
- 2) More land is being mowed and sprayed, a practice that favors grass over milkweeds and native flowering plants that butterflies need.
- 3) Summer habitats are shrinking as some 6,000 acres per day of U.S. land are converted into housing, retail and industrial space.
- 4) Forested winter habitats have been thinned or eliminated, often due to illegal logging.

“Butterflies react to even minor changes in the environment. Their decline serves as the proverbial ‘canary in the mine shaft,’ a sign that other living elements in their habitats ... might be fading, too.”

5) Worsening droughts and a changing climate have harmed monarch food sources and confused the timing of their reproductive and flight habits.

Groups, such as Monarch Watch, the Xerces Society, and the Monarch Joint Venture, have been sounding the alarm to reverse the first two issues.

Government agencies and conservation groups, such as the Rainforest Trust, have been working to stop illegal logging and to protect threatened habitats.



HOW TO HELP: Home-garden Monarch Waystations are a way to supply monarchs with the host and nectar plants they need on their annual journeys.

In 2020, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, which represents more than 900 cooperatives across the country including the 14 in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, helped the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service develop an agreement that encourages co-ops, investor-owned utilities, and transportation departments to preserve and create monarch habitats along their rights of way — an area covering an estimated 26 million acres. Farmers nationwide are also involved in similar federal habitat-protection programs.

Meanwhile, save-the-monarch campaigns have spawned free milkweed seed give-aways, numerous citizen-science projects that count and monitor monarch populations, and the development of a network of Monarch Waystation gardens.

More than 40,000 U.S. gardeners have turned their yards into these waystations, which are Monarch Watch-certified habitats filled with the host and nectar plants monarchs need throughout their annual journeys. (Certification information is available at monarchwatch.org.)

Ford says these small, at-home efforts can add up to make a big difference.

“Whether you have a two-acre habitat or a back patio of potted plants, each is a valuable piece of a larger puzzle,” she says. “When we start connecting these habitats with one another, the picture expands.”

Wanted: more milkweed

A good starting point is adding milkweeds to the yard. They’re critical because they are the only plant family on which monarchs will lay their eggs.

The butterflies choose milkweeds because monarch caterpillars take up the plant’s cardiac glycosides, making them toxic to birds and other predators.

Of the 130 species of milkweeds, Ford says three in particular are the best choices for Pennsylvania yards: common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*), swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*) and orange butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*).

All three are native milkweeds that can be started by planting the seeds directly in the ground, ideally in early fall. The orange-blooming orange butterfly weed is also often available in plant form and sold in the perennial section of garden centers.

Ford suggests planting all three since they mature and flower at different times.

Once established in a yard, milkweeds usually reseed themselves each year. Seedlings also can be dug up and moved.

Two other milkweeds for the Northeast recommended by Monarch Watch are the whorled milkweed (*Asclepias*

verticillata) and poke milkweed (*Asclepias exaltata*).

Beyond that, monarchs benefit from a steady diet of flowering plants throughout summer — preferably familiar native ones.

Nectar from these plants supplies adult butterflies with nutrients during their most active time.

Schneider says it's also important to avoid insecticides

and to aid butterfly habitats by adding trees and shrubs and leaving leaves in garden beds.

“Dead trees and fallen leaves are a crucial element in creating a butterfly habitat,” she says, adding that most butterflies overwinter in our yards. “That leaf litter is garden gold.” 🍂

15 of the Best Flowering Plants for Monarch Butterflies

Penn State Extension suggests these 15 plants as good nectar sources for adult monarch butterflies.

Milkweed. Perennials that bloom pink or orange in summer and usually reseed themselves in fall.

Purple coneflower. A native perennial with drooping, daisy-like, pinkish-lavender petals in mid- to late summer.

Wild bergamot. A mint-family native perennial with pink, spidery summer flowers.

Liatris. Also known as blazing star, this native perennial produces spiky pinkish-purple flowers in summer.

Coreopsis. A native perennial with long-blooming, yellow, early-summer flowers.

Buttonbush. A native, moisture-loving, 6- to 8-foot flowering shrub that produces rounded white flowers in summer.

Joe Pye weed. A tall native perennial with pink umbrella-shaped flower clusters in late summer.

New England aster. A native perennial with purple daisy-like flowers in late summer to fall.

Blue mistflower. Sometimes called hardy ageratum, this fast-spreading native perennial has buttony blue flowers from mid-summer to frost. It seeds readily.

Ironweed. A tall native perennial with umbrella-like clusters of purple flowers in late summer.

Maximilian's sunflower. A tall perennial with showy golden flowers in late summer.

Goldenrod. A native perennial with arching golden flowers from late summer into fall.

Mexican sunflower. A tall annual flower with sunflower-like orange blooms throughout summer.

Zinnia. An annual with showy flowers in multiple color choices that bloom all summer.

Verbena. A slender-stemmed annual with small buttony purple flowers that bloom all summer.



MEXICAN SUNFLOWER: One of the best annual flowers for attracting monarch butterflies in summer.



SWEET SUMMER NECTAR: Coneflowers and liatris are native perennials that are among the best for providing summer nectar to monarch butterflies.



JOE PYE WEED: A tall, native perennial that's a good monarch nectar source in summer.

The Secret of Mushrooms

ANNE M. KIRCHNER

IT TOOK ME A LONG time to appreciate mushrooms. Perhaps, it's because they are considered fungi with little flavor. And when cooked, the texture offers little satisfaction to the palate. What could possibly make this vegetable desirable?

I discovered mushrooms are the “meat” of the vegetable world. When paired with certain foods, the distinctive, earthy taste of a mushroom comes to a pleasant fruition. Cremini mushrooms — aka, young portobello mushrooms — are now a staple in my kitchen. I enjoy showcasing them with chicken, grains and sauces. 🍄

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



COUNTRY-STYLE CHICKEN

- 1 (3-pound) fryer chicken, cut up
- 8 medium red potatoes, cut into wedges
- 1 small yellow onion, sliced
- 8 ounces cremini mushrooms, halved
- ¼ cup olive oil
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 tablespoon oregano
- 3 cloves garlic
- ¼ cup water

Place the chicken pieces, potatoes, onion and mushrooms in a slow cooker. Combine the remaining ingredients in a bowl; mix well. Pour the liquid over the chicken. Cook on low for 7 to 8 hours or on high for 4 to 5 hours. The chicken can also be baked in a covered dish at 375 degrees for 1 hour. *Makes 6 to 8 servings.*



BARLEY AND MUSHROOMS

- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 cup quick pearled barley
- 8 ounces cremini mushrooms
- 4 green onions, diced
- 2 cups chicken or beef stock

Heat the olive oil over medium heat in an oven-safe skillet. Add the barley and sauté for 2 to 3 minutes. Add the mushrooms and green onions; sauté 2 to 3 minutes more. Add the chicken or beef stock and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium low. Cover the skillet and cook for 12 minutes. Let the barley stand for 5 minutes. *Makes 4 servings.*



BURGUNDY MUSHROOM SAUCE

- ¼ cup unsalted butter
- ½ red onion, thinly sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 21 ounces beef broth
- ½ cup burgundy wine or cranberry juice
- 1 pound cremini mushrooms, sliced

Melt the butter in a large saucepan over medium heat; add the red onion and garlic. When the onions are soft, add the flour and stir to make a paste. Slowly add the beef broth and allow the sauce to thicken. Slowly add the wine or cranberry juice. Add the mushrooms and simmer on low heat until they soften. Serve the sauce with beef and mashed potatoes. *Makes 6 to 8 servings.*

News from the Path Valley Hotel

Dear Sleep, I Owe You a Public Apology

MITCHELL KYD

ONE OF THE BEST THINGS about seeing March 1 on my calendar is knowing that February is finally over. Not a fan. There are too many gray days, no signs of spring and too many roadblocks to getting better sleep, like not being able to open my window.

When the thermometer reads too-darn-cold degrees, my circadian rhythm gets out of whack and misses the cues that precede and follow February. The owls aren't calling in the dark, there are no songbirds to start the day and it will be months before I can drift off at night, hypnotized by the thrum of summer bugs.

Have you ever watched a baby fall asleep? There's a power switch in there somewhere. One minute their eyes are open, then instantly closed for renovations. Toddlers fight sleep, but when they're finally willing to give up, they know the bliss of crashing anywhere, anytime, in any position. Fast forward 12 years and you'll meet them again as teenagers, where all those same standards apply. Oh, to sleep like that!

By the time we're adults with jobs, bills and babies of our own, it isn't that we can't sleep, it's that we mayn't sleep. There are too many demands on our time and too many commitments to get the rest we crave. *Dear Sleep: Consider this a public apology. I took for granted what a gift you are!*

Adults, ages 18 to 64, need between seven and nine hours of sleep a night, reports the National Sleep Foundation, a research-based organization of physicians, psychologists, academic researchers and other sleep experts. Sleep experts? Yes, we long ago reached a place where sleep science holds its own medical niche among all the other things that ail us — as my grandfather would say.

A recent study by the Centers for Disease Control found 32.6% of working adults in the U.S. sleep fewer than six hours a night. To put that another way: If you work with 24 other people or shared the road with 24 other drivers today, at least eight of you were sleep deprived. The study

also noted almost half of all Americans feel sleepy during the day at least three times a week.

I don't know about you, but when I don't sleep well, it's not pretty. Not only am I dragging my bad self around for the day, but my brain also doesn't fire on all cylinders and my interpersonal skills do constant battle with the dark side. It doesn't take long for me to run out of nice. Fortunately, I'm in the life-experience bracket that has fewer obligations and, in theory, I'm allowed to get needed sleep. So when did it get so

hard to fall and stay asleep?

Our rural ancestors must be shaking their heads and saying: *"Well, what did you expect? You've forgotten what we knew. You have too much leisure time, spend too many hours indoors and eat too many things that didn't poke up through the dirt."*

True, but in my defense, it's been February...

If you're struggling to feel rested, the sleep specialists have some suggestions. Keep a sleep schedule. No screens before bedtime. Turn off electronics.

Fill your room with the scent of lavender. Block ambient light. Lower the thermostat. Cut caffeine. Choose relaxing music that mirrors the heartbeat. Yadda. Yadda. Yadda.

I tried all that. Nothing worked until I found this simple, homeopathic remedy: grandbabies. If you don't have any, borrow some from a neighbor. Take two a few hours before bedtime, entertain as directed, and I guarantee you'll sleep ... well ... like a baby.

In the meantime, March is finally here! We all get an extra hour of daylight and will welcome the first day of spring. As a bonus, on March 13, we honor the 25th Annual National Napping Day. Search online for the history of the nap and get validation for taking one. Or skip all that and simply celebrate with a little needed sleep! 🛌

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



ISSUE MONTH

May 2023
June 2023
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May 15

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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.

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ANTIQUUE 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.

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

VINTAGE WOMEN'S and children's clothing from the 1900s-1950s. Men's workwear/farmwear/denim 1900s-1950s. Clothing can be in ANY condition. Quantity preferred. Call or text photos of items to 814-386-5763.

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

What's Your Appliance Safety IQ?



Clothes Dryer

Children have been electrocuted when hiding behind dryers; some pets also like to nap there.

Install a childproof lock on the laundry room door, as well as on your washer and dryer—especially front-loading models.

Clean lint screen between loads, and thoroughly clean the vents and duct system at least twice a year.

Make sure hoses, seals and connections do not leak and are secure.



Refrigerator

Follow the manufacturer's instructions for maintenance.

Clean the coils every six months to a year.

Keep an eye out for dust or lint under or behind your fridge and remove it to let your refrigerator breathe.

If you have young children in your home, make sure your refrigerator is not a tipping hazard. Consider using an appliance anchor that secures your tall appliance to the wall.



Hot Water Heater

Make sure your hot water heater is well-maintained.

Make sure it does not have excessive pressure buildup by testing the relief valve (or have it tested) at least once a year.

Ensure vents are connected securely and that the correct parts are used to avoid carbon monoxide production.

Have all components of the appliance inspected regularly (at least once a year) by a technician.

The Daydream

JOHN KASUN

THE ONLY LIGHT IN THE room came from the large flashing neon sign hanging just outside my second-floor office window. The huge grandfather clock in the corner of the office cast a twisted shadow across the floor, and with each flash of light, it looked like something out of a second-rate horror movie.

Its tick-tock, tick-tock grew louder with every quick movement of its hands. Each tick brought me closer to the looming deadline hanging over my head like a huge ax with a gleaming blade — ready to end my career in a heartbeat. I had been hovering over my typewriter for what seemed like days. I had a bad case of writer's block, that cold, gnawing feeling that eats away at your gut like a stomach ulcer that's been splashed with a mixture of tomato juice and vodka. My mind was blank.

Suddenly, my office door swung open, and she stood silhouetted against the dim light of the hallway. Her tall, willowy figure was wrapped in a short, tight dress that clung to her every curve. Her long, flowing blond hair fell seductively over one eye as she stepped into the room, and her stiletto heels clicked on the hardwood floor as she moved toward me. It was my assistant, Carol Love. She drew closer and closer, and then with one smooth fluid motion, she was perched on the corner of my desk, her legs crossed with one shoe dangling suggestively from her toe.

For just a moment, it all came back to me: the reasons I had become a writer — the fame, the adventure, the money, the women and, of course, the danger. Not everyone is suited for this job, and many lesser men can only dream of the life I lead. I could smell the strong, black coffee Ms. Love held as it mixed with the exotic scent of her perfume, the appropriately named "Danger in the Night." Slowly she leaned forward, parting her bright-red pouting lips as she whispered, "John ... John ... JOHN!!"

I jerked awake, spilling hot chocolate all over my shirt and shorts and almost falling backward. "John, the editor from *Penn Lines* called again; your column is late," Sandy, my wife, said in a matter-of-fact tone.

As I struggled to become completely aware of my surroundings, I saw her standing in the doorway with her dog, Abbey. "I told her you just about had it wrapped up, and I come in here to find you dozing off in your shorts with a smile on your face. What in the world were you dreaming about?"

"Never mind," she added. "You better get busy because if she calls again, I am handing you the phone. You should be able to come up with a good story as to why you are

late. After all, you are the 'great writer.'"

Sandy had no sooner disappeared when her head popped back through the doorway. "By the way," she said. "I don't know what you have planned, but it better not be about me or Abbey. You always seem to be picking on us." And with a flip of her apron, she was gone. Abbey lingered just long enough to give me what appeared to be a doggy grin topped off with a slight growl.

As quickly as it began, it was all over, and I was again left alone with my looming deadline, blank mind and wet shorts. From experience, I knew the best thing to do was grasp the first idea that came to mind and make it work.

My fingers flew over the keyboard as I wrote, "Slowly, the lion crept toward Sandy as she knelt in the high grass to fill the water jug. Her cowardly dog, Abbey, had crawled away, leaving Sandy unprotected and unaware of the pending danger. Without a weapon, it was up to me to kill this massive beast with my bare hands" ... but first I have to get out of these wet shorts. 🐾

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.



Winter Wind-Down

"IN LIKE A LION, OUT like a lamb" was always what we said about March weather growing up, and we're really hoping that holds true. While Mother Nature usually sneaks in one more good storm before the month's end, spring is nearly in sight, and that's something to smile about.

This month begins a new Rural Reflections contest year — 2023 winners in five categories (artistic, human, landscape, animal and editor's choice) will receive \$75 and runners-up will each receive \$25 — so send in your finest shots of Pennsylvania. 📷

LISE MILLER • ADAMS EC



MARY LOU SHEARER • REA ENERGY COOPERATIVE



CINDY SMITH • NORTHWESTERN REC

NICOLE PRINGLE • BEDFORD REC



AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHERS are encouraged to send photos for the 2023 "Rural Reflections" contest (no digital files) to: *Penn Lines* Photos, P.O. Box 1266, Harrisburg, PA 17108-1266. On the back of each photo, include your name, address, phone number and the name of the electric cooperative that serves your home, business or seasonal residence.

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

ADDRESS CHANGES:

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



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