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OCTOBER 2024

NOVEC *Cooperative* **Living**

Sarah, now 26, looks over her father's most famous pumpkin carving: the Star Wars Death Star.

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NORTHERN VIRGINIA VIRTUOSO

PAGE 10

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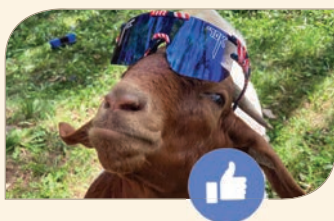
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VIEWPOINT

A unique approach to business and pumpkins

October is National Cooperative Month and we get to recognize the many contributions that cooperatives make all around the country. Along with the electric cooperatives we represent, there are over 30,000 businesses that use the cooperative business model. That model is unique because it has members that collectively own the business — they use the product and/or service. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, in 2023 cooperatives accounted for 2 million jobs that generated more than \$700 billion in annual revenue. Some big-name companies that you may not have realized are cooperatives include Land O'Lakes, Ocean Spray, Ace Hardware and Blue Diamond Growers.

October also means that Halloween is almost here, with



pumpkins being carved and set out to light the way for trick-or-treaters. Our Cooperative Focus feature this month is a unique story about a NOVEC member who has created a name for himself as a master pumpkin carver. Be sure to check out the pictures of his amazing creations. Of course, our October issue wouldn't be complete without traditional pumpkin recipes that you can turn into your own amazing creations.

As we celebrate our 80th anniversary of serving our members, this issue's Our Communities column gives a brief history of VMDAEC and what a special year it has been.

We are honored to be part of the cooperative family and serve the 16 electric cooperatives that represent over 2 million people throughout our three-state area. It is a blessing to be part of an organization that operates in the best interest of our members and their local communities. ●

Brian S. Mosier

Brian S. Mosier, President & CEO
Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives

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OUR MISSION

To inform you about your cooperative and its efforts to serve your energy needs; how to use electricity safely and efficiently; and the people who define and enhance the quality of life in communities served by electric co-ops.

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Although their tenures at VMDAEC overlapped, the combined careers of Richard Johnstone, Janet Bailey, right, and Debbie Swiderski, left, represent more than 80 years at the Association.

PHOTO BY GREGG MACDONALD

Stronger Together

VMDAEC celebrates 80 years



by Gregg MacDonald, Staff Writer

IN 1964, WHEN U.S. SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE ORVILLE FREEMAN PROCLAIMED CO-OP MONTH a nationally recognized event to be celebrated annually each October, the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives was already celebrating its 20th anniversary. Formed in 1944, VMDAEC is celebrating its 80th year in 2024.

“One of the primary reasons the Association was formed in 1944 was the difficulty in purchasing line materials during WWII,” says retired VMDAEC CEO Richard Johnstone. “So, working together as a group to purchase needed materials was a foundational reason that co-ops got together and formed the Association.”

Johnstone, who worked at VMDAEC for 36 years, from 1985 until 2021, says cooperatives also initially recognized the need to work together to negotiate wholesale power supply purchases. “Another reason to collaborate was to share best practices and to have consistent, uniform training for the line crews, to ensure their safety and that of the public,” Johnstone adds. “That and the recognition that the cooperatives needed to have a presence at the General Assembly, to protect the interests of co-op member-consumers and to advocate for legislation that would treat rural areas fairly and equitably.”

Today, VMDAEC continues to serve 16 member-owned electric cooperatives in these same capacities. Thirteen in Virginia, two in Maryland, and one in Delaware are currently members, serving more than 2 million people overall.

“I’ve been working for VMDAEC for 24 years now, and I’m proud to work for an organization that — while undergoing many changes over time — has not lost sight of its founding mission,” says *Cooperative Living* Deputy Editor Laura Emery. “We exist to serve the member-owned electric cooperatives in the three-state area, and that’s as integral to the operation of our organization today as it was when it was founded 80 years ago.”

Emery’s 24-year (and continuing) tenure is not unheard of at the Association, as it tends to attract long-term employees who develop deep loyalties to the Association and the cooperatives it serves. “My 30-year career with VMDAEC was among the highlights of my life,” says Janet Bailey, who retired in 2021 as *Cooperative Living*’s production manager.

“I was so fortunate to be part of the electric cooperative family and I treasure many happy memories of working for and with truly wonderful people,” echoes Debbie Swiderski, who retired as vice president of safety training and educational services after working at the Association for 24 years.

“The Association really is a ‘cooperative of cooperatives,’ a great example of the power, influence, effectiveness and efficiency gained when people work together in common cause, creating a whole much greater than the sum of its parts,” says Johnstone. ●



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Small Communities, Big Opportunities

Small-town man making a big impact in his community

by Jim Robertson, Staff Writer

Brandon White has helped prevent hundreds of hours of power outages with his bird's-eye view of the Central Virginia Electric Cooperative system.

A drone hobbyist for several years and journeyman lineman, White launched at the opportunity to obtain his operator's license and successfully completed the FAA Unmanned Aircraft Systems Part 107 exam.

Born and raised just 5 miles from the co-op in Nelson County, Va., White grew up working on a farm and decided after a year that college wasn't the right path for him and took a job at a local auto repair shop. When an opportunity as a groundman on a line crew opened at CVEC, doubling his earnings, White decided to give it a shot.

"The most rewarding part of my career is the life I'm able to provide for my family."

— Brandon White

"They said if you don't mind being outside, working hard and being part of a group, this will be a good place for you," White recalls. "It checked all the boxes for me."

Joining the CVEC crew with no prior experience, the co-op invested time, resources and, eventually, money into White's development. He began his four-year apprenticeship through the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives after just six months.

White is grateful for the confidence and support provided by his co-op. "They're willing to put in as much, if not more, as you're willing to put in," he says. "The more endorsements you have, the more valuable you are to your employer." In addition to obtaining his commercial drone license, White is also certified as a crane operator and holds a commercial driver's license.

While he's not on a pole or in a bucket maintaining or restoring power for CVEC members, White can be found flying drones troubleshooting or inspecting the co-op's infrastructure throughout the mountainous region. Identifying potential issues like cracked insulators, rotting poles, broken crossarms and tree limbs allows CVEC crews to make repairs and prevent service interruptions.

Earlier this year, White had the opportunity to showcase his skills as a drone operator at the annual Gaff-n-Go Rodeo in Doswell, Va., the largest regional lineworker rodeo in the U.S. Competing against his peers from neighboring co-ops and the U.S. Army, White took home first place. He was proud and excited to share the moment with his wife and two daughters.

"The most rewarding part of my career is the life I'm able to provide for my family, which is also the hardest part," White admits. As expected, the demanding job of a lineworker has no boundaries when it comes to time. If the power goes

out, they do as well. He wishes he could be with his family for every event and gathering, but he accepts the realization that with success comes sacrifice.

White encourages young adults who may be like he was to consider a trade school and

learn a skill or to take a look at their local electric cooperatives. "There are big opportunities in small communities," he says. "Sometimes, you just need to take a leap of faith." ●



► For more information, visit vmdaec.com/powerfulcareers.

PHOTOS BY JIM ROBERTSON

Vanquish Vacation Weight

Some simple steps to shed the surplus

by Vanessa LaFaso Stolarski, Contributing Columnist

Returning from vacation with a few extra pounds is common and nothing to get too obsessive about. After all, you enjoyed your time away. There's no need to ruin the memories by beating yourself up for too many margaritas or cruise buffets. More importantly, resist the temptation of extreme dieting or other quick-fix, weight-loss methods. Instead, get back on track with these simple steps to lose that vacation weight healthily and sustainably.

STEP IT UP

Increasing physical activity is key to burning off the extra fat you gained while grilling and chilling at the pool. Start by re-establishing your normal exercise routine, but consider increasing the intensity. For instance, if you typically walk for 30 minutes, try intermittent jogging for part of that time, add ankle weights or increase the time.

Don't limit yourself to structured workouts. Look for opportunities to move more throughout the day. Take the stairs instead of the elevator, park further away from your destination or take a walking work meeting.



PHOTO BY ROBERT KNESCHKE VIA CANVA.COM



BOOST YOUR FIBER

Increasing fiber intake can help you feel fuller for longer and promote healthy digestion. Fill half your plate with non-starchy vegetables at every meal, and choose whole fruits instead of juice. The fiber in whole fruits helps slow the absorption of glucose, otherwise known as sugars, and keeps you satiated for longer. Incorporate beans by adding them to salads, soups or side dishes.

Keep in mind that many vegetables do not contain as much fiber as you might think. Add oatmeal or wild rice to your meals for an extra boost. Fun fact — the almighty avocado contains nearly 4 grams of fiber per serving.

DROP THOSE CARBS

While carbohydrates are necessary for optimal health, reducing your intake of refined carbs can help you shed water weight and decrease bloating. Limit flour-based foods like pasta and bread, which can cause water retention. The same goes for sugary foods.

Instead, opt for complex carbohydrates, like quinoa, sweet potatoes or oats,



PHOTO COURTESY BITZ45 VIA CANVA.COM

which provide more nutrients and fiber. Increasing the consumption of low-carb veggies like leafy greens, broccoli and cauliflower can help you feel full while ensuring proper nutrient intake.

HIKE UP YOUR PROTEIN

Increasing protein intake can help preserve muscle mass and boost metabolism. Both are crucial for long-term fat-burning. Start the day with protein-rich foods like eggs, Greek yogurt or a protein shake with whey protein to keep you energized. Including 25-30 grams of lean sources such as chicken breast, fish, tofu or lean beef in every meal can curb hunger, balance hunger hormones and reduce cravings for unhealthy foods.

Patience is key to the process. It may take a week or two to see some momentum on the scale. Just remember, slow weight loss equals healthy weight loss. ●

Vanessa LaFaso Stolarski is a certified nutrition counselor, weightlifting coach, life coach and stress-management specialist.

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Fall is ATV Time

Precaution is the key to fun and safety

by Nicole Zema, Virginia Farm Bureau Federation

All-terrain vehicles are essential for many farm chores, and many landowners enjoy riding them recreationally.

“But they also pose serious hazards to operators,” says Curt Porterfield, training coordinator for Virginia Tech Environmental Health and Safety. “These vehicles, based on their size, can be a lot more powerful than people anticipate. Their weight and speed make it easy for an individual to lose control.”

Porterfield says the Occupational Safety and Health Administration reports that 500 people die in the U.S., and another 100,000 are seriously injured while operating ATVs every year. OSHA also found that between 2003 and 2013, there were 2,090 injuries and 321 deaths because of occupational use of ATVs — with 60% of ATV-related fatalities occurring in agriculture.

Farmers and others using ATVs should keep some critical safety tips in mind.

Matt Nuckols, Virginia Farm Bureau’s safety coordinator, says selecting properly sized personal protective equipment is crucial for any ATV activity — work or play.

“ATVs are a popular way to explore nature and experience the outdoors,” he says. “In addition to modern, well-fitting protective gear, it’s important that riders read their owner’s manual thoroughly, to know the vehicle’s hazards and limitations.”

Porterfield adds that safely enjoying ATVs comes down to four simple rules:

1. Wear your helmet.
2. Know your terrain.
3. Control your speed.
4. Avoid steep slopes.

PREVENT ROLLOVERS

Rollovers are the most common types of ATV incident, Porterfield explained, often occurring in hilly areas. On steep terrain, is it better to go up, or sideways?

“It doesn’t matter,” Porterfield says. “Just limit it to 15 degrees. If not, it’s better to go sideways and be able to lean



and reduce rollover risk. Know how to fight the gravity.”

Of 129 ATV rollover events analyzed by researchers for the Traffic Injury Prevention journal, side rolls represented 47% of rollovers, with rear rolls at 44%, and forward rolls at 9%.

“I personally know several people who have died in ATV overturns, and asphyxiation from the weight of the machine on that person’s chest is ultimately what took their life,” Porterfield says.

The risk for ATV overturns increases when the center of gravity shifts, he explains.

“Think about what adding a sprayer does. It moves the center of gravity toward the rear. Just 10 gallons is an extra 80 pounds of weight in the back.”

CONSIDER ROPS

Depending on the machine, ATV manufacturers may offer optional rollover protection systems.

“They’re not required, but recommended,” Porterfield says. He still hears plenty of excuses for not using ROPS. “ROPS will hinder the load,” Porterfield has heard farmers say. “But there’s no excuse that’s going to bring someone back from a serious workplace injury or fatality.”

ATV SAFETY 101

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and print Virginia Tech Environmental Health and Safety’s ATV pre-ride checklist and see other safety resources. Learn more about Virginia Farm Bureau safety resources at vafb.com/safety. ●



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Of Light & Magic

When it comes to pumpkin carving, Centreville's Noel Dickover is a cut above the rest

by Laura Emery, Staff Writer

Every Halloween, Noel Dickover turns the front lawn of his Centreville, Va., home into a sprawling showcase of beautifully intricate, hand-carved pumpkins, all softly aglow.

People flock to this suburban neighborhood on Oct. 31 just to be delighted by the glowing gourds transformed by this pumpkin-carving extraordinaire, who — thanks to dozens of news media outlets — is now somewhat of a local celebrity.

“I’ve had enough press coverage that people come to my neighborhood from all over the place,” he says. Dickover rattles off a list of news media outlets that have featured his pumpkins: NBC, NPR, CBS, ABC, Fox News, BBC, The Washington Post and the list goes on. But if you spend some time chatting with Dickover about his love of pumpkin carving, it will become evident that wowing costumed youngsters — especially his 3-year-old granddaughter Katarina — is what drives his passion.

“My granddaughter loves Elsa, so last year I had to do a blinged-up Elsa pumpkin,” he says. “A lot of my latest pumpkin carvings have been more kid-friendly ones, just to get Katarina excited about my pumpkin carving.” He also has a 3-month-old grandchild.

After working as a contractor, independent consultant and nonprofit leader for the

federal government for most of his career, the George Mason University graduate began working as a project manager back at GMU in the Office of the Provost two years ago. “It’s a terrific place and I love working there,” he says. In an amusing stroke of serendipity, the Office of the Provost held a “wicked pumpkin-carving contest” within a month of hiring Dickover. Unfortunately, the staff got wind of his superior sculpting skills and wouldn’t let him compete.

Dickover has spent a quarter of a century perfecting his seasonal hobby of pumpkin carving, and he hasn’t lost focus on why he does what he does. “It’s a way to escape the stressors

of normal life,” he says. It’s also something that continues to bring his family together.

“If you ask my kids — my son and daughter, who are now grown — what their most favorite time growing up was, they will tell you that it was sitting around the kitchen table carving pumpkins around Halloween. It brought our family together,” he says.

Over the last three decades, the Dickover Halloween yard display has become a family affair. “My entire family — my wife, Nam, and my grown children, Sarah and Justin — have gotten to be really amazing at carving pumpkins. Even our nieces and nephews have learned to carve. They

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Snow White - 2022



Dickover carves pumpkins with son Justin and daughter Sarah.



R2-D2 - 2010

are very good at it, and they all have their own style," he says. As a result, visitors get to see a variety of pumpkins each year. Dickover says there can be anywhere from 20 to 50 pumpkins on display in his yard on Halloween.

LET THE CARVING COMMENCE

A member of Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative, Dickover's part-time passion dominates his evenings beginning the second week of October.

Using a deft hand, a clay loop, X-Acto knives, mini pumpkin saws and V-shaped tools, he makes the magic happen. He transforms plain pumpkins into jaw-dropping works of art. It

takes Dickover anywhere from eight to 12 hours to carve a single pumpkin.

It's at night when Dickover's beautiful jack-o'-lantern art is meant to shine. "I make sculptures for nighttime viewing but search online and you'll notice almost all the amazing three-dimensional pumpkin carvings you see are for daytime viewing," he notes. "That wouldn't make sense for me since I show them on Halloween night."

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of Dickover's work is the ephemeral nature of pumpkins. To ensure that the pumpkins last as long as possible once carved, Dickover covers the carved parts with petroleum jelly to preserve the cut flesh. Then, the pumpkins are placed

in clear plastic bags to be stored in a refrigerator until they are set out to shine in all their gourd glory.

Dickover's carvings are primarily inspired by science fiction and fantasy movie and television characters. He's carved something for everyone: Maleficent, Minions, Mickey Mouse, Aladdin, Harry Potter, Pokémon, Pirates of the Caribbean, Corpse Bride, Cat in the Hat, Jack Skellington, Star Trek, Spiderman, Little Mermaid, Zombies, Lady and the Tramp, Star Wars' Darth Maul, and much more.

The Darth Maul he carved in 1999 was one of his first carvings (along with one of Scooby-Doo), and it's what got him passionate about the fascinating — yet perishable — art of carving pumpkins. "Teenagers were blown away by the Darth Maul, and it's hard to get teenagers floored about anything. I enjoyed doing it, so it just grew from there," he says.

According to Dickover, the pumpkin that garnered the most online attention was the Star Wars Death Star. "I'm still mainly known for that one," he says.

The 40-pound, fully rendered R2-D2 pumpkin that Dickover carved in 2010 was a huge hit, going viral just days after carving. "In thinking about carving R2-D2, I chose a tall, cylindrical-looking

(continued on page 12)

Of Light & Magic

(continued from page 11)



pumpkin,” he explains. Dickover created the intricate three-dimensional design based on R2-D2 images, and it took him about 11 hours to complete.

“George Lucas even commented on it,” Dickover says, almost as an afterthought — as though having the creator of the legendary Star Wars franchise notice his R2-D2 pumpkin carving isn’t a point to linger on.

Dickover elaborates: “Yeah, the guy who made Star Wars ... that dude. He liked it — which was kind of impressive.” Dickover is a huge Star Wars fan; he named his dog Lando Calrissian after a Star Wars character. “But, really, what I love is people coming to my house on Halloween and seeing the pumpkins. There’s nothing better than that. I have my own art gallery on my front lawn once a year.”

As thrilling as it may have been for his work to be seen by Lucas, Dickover doesn’t capitalize on being in the spotlight every October. He says he’s had plenty of opportunities to monetize his situation ... but chooses not to, calling it a “money-losing operation.” He’s happy just squashing the competition on the candy-collecting circuit each Halloween.

“I’ve never been an artist of any kind,” says Dickover, “so it’s fun to become an artist one month out of the year and have people really appreciate it.”

THE ART OF IT

Dickover is constantly perfecting the art of what he does. He explains that it takes him longer to carve pumpkins



now than it did when he first started. “That’s counterintuitive, I know,” he says with a laugh. “But I’ve become a bit of a perfectionist over time.”

Texture and depth are what excite Dickover. “The magic happens when you take a pumpkin and you transform it by going further than just carving it — by playing with depth and texture, as well as gradients of light coming through,” he explains. “It’s all about getting the right angles for light to come through. And when you’re playing with depth, you’re carving out the back of the pumpkin almost as much as the front.”

He’s even started seeing the world around him differently. “At this point, he says, “I can look at someone on TV and immediately know how I would carve them. Your mind just starts to work that way and eventually you start to see things and go, ‘I want to carve that.’”

Most of what Dickover carves is



what he calls “fantasy objects,” but he did once try his hand at realistic themes. “In 2001, I carved an image of Uncle Sam. At the time, it was like doing heart surgery on a pumpkin; the hardest thing I could have ever imagined doing. Nobody looked at it. Nobody commented on it. They wanted to see Scooby-Doo. They wanted to see SpongeBob SquarePants. Nobody thinks about reality when they’re coming to your house dressed up as a Power Ranger. That realization was instrumental to me, so I don’t carve regular people anymore.”

Then, after a pause, he adds: “It’s not for me. It’s for the people showing up in costumes ... I give the people what they want to see.”

► For more information, visit fantasypumpkins.com.



Dickover’s pumpkins can be viewed at 14223 Hartwood Court in Centreville, Va., on Halloween night.

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For as long as I have been associated with electric cooperatives, customers have raved about *Cooperative Living* magazine. The publication has everything from energy-saving tips to human interest stories to historical recollections to favorite recipes. The magazine includes stories of interest to the general population, as well as a customized insert specific to NOVEC customers. Since you are reading my CEO letter, you have found the NOVEC insert.

As NOVEC tries to meet the needs and expectations of our customers, we are changing the way we deliver *Cooperative Living* magazine. We are going digital.

More and more, people prefer getting their magazines, newspapers and correspondence via their computers or portable devices. Digital delivery saves on printing costs and postage. It is also environmentally friendly because over the course of a year, it saves the paper and ink associated with more than 1 million magazines. We know that our customers are tech-savvy; more than 124,000 customers manage their power needs through our SmartHub app and over 77,000 customers receive their monthly electric bills electronically.

Beginning with the November-December issue of *Cooperative Living*, NOVEC customers registered with SmartHub and/or E-Billing will be linked to *Cooperative Living* magazine online. The link will be included in the monthly bill notification and will take users to the magazine on novec.com.

So you know it's a safe link to click, the email will come from: customerservice@novec.com.

Now I fully understand some of you may still want a paper copy of the magazine. No problem. You may opt out of digital delivery if you like and continue to receive a paper copy of the magazine. (See page 17 of this edition for more details.)

October's safety message is about the end of daylight saving time, which concludes on Nov. 3 at 2 a.m.; that's when all of us reset to standard time, 1 a.m. Adjust your personal schedules and be extra alert for pedestrians and other motorists as the days become shorter and it gets darker earlier.

Best Regards,

Dave Schleicher

NOVEC VALUES

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|------------------|------------|--------------|
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| • Accountability | • Teamwork | • Innovation |



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For updates, tips on safety, energy savings ideas, and career information, find us on social media or go to novec.com.

NOVEC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

ENERGY TIP OF THE MONTH

Now is the time to schedule annual maintenance for your home's heating system. A qualified technician can clean filters, check for leaks and ensure all components are working efficiently to keep your home cozy and warm when the temperatures drop.



NOVEC HELPS Races for History at Cardboard Boat Regatta

By Jenny Shaskan

NOVEC HELPS (Hands Engaged in Local Public Service) joined crews from across Northern Virginia for the sixth annual Reston Museum Cardboard Boat Regatta on Aug. 10. Approximately 40 self-propelled, homemade vessels participated in the races on Lake Anne. Proceeds from the event support the historic Reston Museum in its mission to protect, preserve, and interpret the history of Reston.

Led by Pam Rochon, NOVEC HELPS board member, NOVEC Engineers Ian Hobson, Ryan Adrian, SungMin Kim, Cullin Anastasia, and Aleyda Rojas, GIS Analyst Henry Stepanus, and GIS Technician Tajinder Chawla built the seaworthy “Powerful” out of liquid nails, cardboard, and plenty of duct tape. Hobson volunteered to captain the “Powerful” and won his heat with a time of 2:07. NOVEC HELPS organizers are already tweaking the boat design for next year’s race.

NOVEC HELPS is an employee managed, 501(c)(3) organization separate from NOVEC. It supports area nonprofit organizations with monetary contributions and volunteer services. Visit novechelps.org for more information.



NOVEC Engineer Ian Hobson captains the NOVEC HELPS vessel “Powerful” at the Cardboard Boat Regatta on Lake Anne in Reston.

OCTOBER IS NATIONAL

C O O P
M O N T H

Electric cooperatives are not-for-profit, community-led utilities. Because we are a co-op, we can adapt to our local members’ needs, providing the programs and services you care about most. That’s the power of co-op membership.

Cooperative Living: Digital Delivery Coming Soon

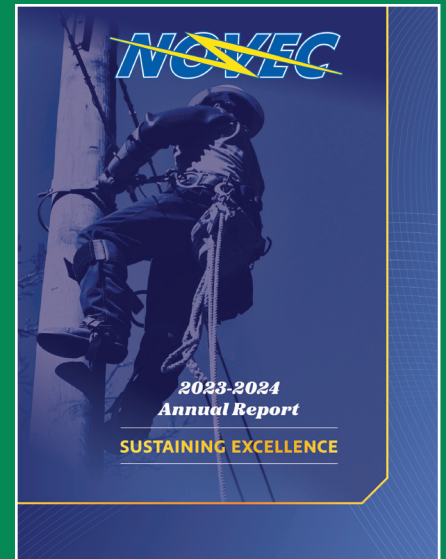
By Robin Earl

An exciting change takes effect with *Cooperative Living's* November-December issue. Some customers will receive NOVEC's magazine in their inboxes instead of their mailboxes.

A digital link to *Cooperative Living* will be sent to customers who are enrolled in E-billing and/or SmartHub, NOVEC's mobile app. The magazine link will be included as part of the digital bill notification that indicates your NOVEC electric bill is ready to pay. The bill notification will be sent according to your chosen preference. If it is emailed, it is sent from customerservice@novec.com. As always, the current edition of *Cooperative Living* is posted on NOVEC's website early each month, so you can browse through it online anytime.

NOVEC is adding the digital delivery option in response to customer inquiries. It's also a more environmentally friendly approach that saves trees, as well as printing and delivery costs.

If you are not signed up for E-billing or SmartHub, join the digital wave of *Cooperative Living* readers by calling NOVEC Customer Care at 703-335-0500. It is necessary to provide a valid email address to receive the link each month. Customer Care also can assist you if you prefer to continue receiving your magazine in the mail.



**LOOK FOR NOVEC'S
2023-2024 ANNUAL
REPORT AT NOVEC.COM**

The publication provides a comprehensive look at the Co-op's accomplishments, community service, and financial results, as well as initiatives that will power NOVEC and its customers into the future.

Visit Co-ops Vote Website Before Casting a Ballot

By Robin Earl

Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 5. Before casting your ballot, visit the Co-ops Vote website at vote.coop for voter registration details, polling locations, absentee voting deadlines, and other pertinent voter information.



In Virginia, early in-person voting is underway and concludes Saturday, Nov. 2. Contact your local registrar's office for county-specific hours and locations. Voter registration ends Oct. 14. Absentee and mail-in ballot requests must be received by Oct. 25 and ballots must be in registrars' offices by noon on the third day after the election. According to Virginia law, they will be counted if they are postmarked by Election Day.



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AND VISIT VOTE.COOP TO
CHECK YOUR NOVEMBER 5
ELECTION DETAILS.**

What to Expect During a Widespread Outage

By Robin Earl

With a reliability record that exceeds 99%, NOVEC is a leader in delivering reliable electricity. But if the weather gets rough and the power does go out, it's helpful to understand the restoration process.

Restoration priorities

Although restoring power after a widespread outage is a complicated process, NOVEC prioritizes repairs that will restore power to the largest number of customers as quickly as possible. If a storm knocks out power to 1,500 customers, and one repair will turn the lights back on for 1,200 of them, NOVEC crews address that first. Then they turn their attention to tasks that restore service to the remaining affected customers. Electric line contractors also may be called in to help.

It's important to remember that NOVEC is an electric distribution cooperative. If its electricity transmission provider is experiencing an issue, it affects NOVEC's ability to restore service.

The "estimated time of restoration" (ETOR) gives customers an idea when they can expect the power to come back on. ETORs can change several times during an outage as damage information becomes known. When a customer calls and the phone number is recognized as part of an outage, the ETOR is part of the outage

description. ETOR updates also are found at novec.com/outagecenter or through the SmartHub app.

Quality Assurance Manager Kevin Bowling said damage assessment crews set out to assess the damage in the field before line crews are deployed for restoration. ETORs are updated as new outage information is obtained from crews in the field.

While you are looking for flashlight batteries and hoping the food in the freezer stays frozen, NOVEC is continually adapting to the conditions to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the field crews, Bowling said.

Safety first

Long shifts under difficult conditions demand rigorous attention to employee and customer safety. For instance, Bowling said that during a storm it's too dangerous to operate bucket trucks if winds are stronger than 35 mph. Crews must wait until the winds die down before work can begin on overhead electric lines. Completing repairs the right way — the safe way — can be a time-intensive process. Safety is a NOVEC value, and the Cooperative is dedicated to ensuring all employees go home safely every day.

Construction Supervisor Scott Sheffield said, "Every call is an adventure. When we go out to investigate

an outage, we never know what we will find or what it's going to take to get the power back on ... People are generally very grateful. They see that we are out in the baking heat, in blizzards, in pouring rain." He smiled, "Sometimes, customers thank us with homemade treats when the work is done."

Planning for disruptions

The NOVEC Emergency Service Restoration Team conducts annual training with a combination of tabletop and full-scale exercises.

Tabletop exercises bring together employees from multiple departments who have outage responsibilities. Participants work through possible scenarios, rehearsing how their teams would respond and what measures would be implemented.

The full-scale exercise is more comprehensive. It involves all emergency response personnel in an actual field test of procedures. Personnel and equipment are deployed to exercise sites and simulate response protocols.



NOVEC prepares to install a new electric pole in Loudoun County.

Powering Up After an Outage

When the power goes out, we expect it to be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm or natural disaster causes widespread damage, extended outages may result. Our line crews work long, hard hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of consumers in the shortest time possible. Here's what's going on if you find yourself in the dark:

1. High-Voltage Transmission Lines:

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

2. Distribution Substation:

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

3. Main Distribution Lines:

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

4. Tap Lines:

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

5. Individual Homes:

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

For NOVEC Lineworkers, the Learning Never Stops

By Robin Earl

Electric lineworkers make their jobs look easy, but it's a challenging career path. Job descriptions provide some insight into the physical and mental challenges they face every day, in all conditions.

"Essential job functions" for a 1st class line technician include: "Perform construction, troubleshooting, repair, maintenance, and service restoration of energized overhead and underground transmission and distribution facilities to ensure compliance with plans, specifications, work and job orders, regulations, applicable codes, and NOVEC standards."

First class lineworkers, also known as journeymen, help guide apprentices while keeping up with changing regulations from local, state, and federal agencies. Journeymen also need to keep abreast of new installation and repair techniques and procedures, while looking out for efficiencies and improvements, all while interacting with customers in a professional manner.

Mark DeChristopher, NOVEC construction manager, said that lineworkers learn safety, quite literally, from the ground up. He said, "They learn situational awareness under constantly changing conditions and how to watch out for their fellow workers. Because linework is an inherently dangerous job, safety protocols are essential and non-negotiable."

First class lineworkers do not arrive on day one with these skills. They learn them over years of on-the-job experience under more seasoned supervisors. Apprentices learn to operate backhoe/loader, digger derrick, material and bucket trucks, trailers, miscellaneous equipment and tools, and perform maintenance on all their equipment. They develop the



Second Class Apprentice Lineworker Caleb Ralston participates in the hurtman competition at the 2023 Gaff-n-Go Rodeo.

skills to work on energized cables and set electric poles, under the close watch of 1st class technicians.

Apprentice lineworkers at NOVEC put in 8,000 hours on the job — about four years — before they can progress to journeyman status. In addition to this intensive on-the-job training, apprentice lineworkers spend one week every six months at the state-of-the-art Electric Cooperative Training Center in Palmyra, Virginia, upgrading their knowledge and learning new techniques.

Second Class Apprentice lineworker Caleb Ralston, 26, joined NOVEC a year and a half ago with some experience in the telephone industry and 12 weeks of climbing school under his belt. "I wanted to be part of a co-op. I knew at NOVEC I'd be able to achieve the quality of life I was looking for."

Ralston said the most valuable part of his training has been "watching the team leads and the journeymen lead by example. Looking up to them has been uplifting. I've learned so much."

Education never ends, even as lineworkers advance in the field and take on supervisory roles. Because the technology is always changing, training is ongoing. DeChristopher agreed, "It's a fast-moving industry. There is always something new to learn."

Girl Power

CALLING YOUNG WOMEN CURIOUS ABOUT ENERGY INDUSTRY JOBS

Electric cooperatives in Virginia, Maryland and Delaware will again host Girl Power, one-day energy career camps for young women — high school age and older — who are curious about working on a line crew, in a substation, with advanced metering technology, or as a fiber broadband technician. Instructors will lead students through activities in the classroom and on simulated job sites.

Campers will learn about job safety, including how to safely climb a utility pole and operate a bucket truck. Students will also meet with industry professionals who will review their resumes and answer questions about career paths and workplace culture.

The program expanded to two locations for 2024. Girl Power will be held on Thursday, Oct. 3 in Salisbury, Maryland and on Wednesday, Oct. 30 in Palmyra, Virginia. Register at vmdaec.com.



Victoria Taylor (center) listens to her dad, NOVEC Construction Supervisor Jesse Taylor (left), as she takes a turn at pole climbing during the 2023 Girl Power event.

SCHOOLS THAT OFFER LINEWORKER TRAINING

Those who want to gain education and experience before they apply for a lineworker position can boost their resumes by enrolling in a school offering courses in electrical line work. Mark DeChristopher, NOVEC construction manager, said that although NOVEC may hire someone without experience or knowledge of line work, those who come in with credentials have a leg up. He said that new employees who have completed a lineworker training program at one of these institutions may be eligible to speed up their training as a NOVEC apprentice.

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| ✦ Laurel Ridge Community College, Warrenton campus, Virginia | ✦ Laurel Ridge Community College, Middletown campus, Virginia | ✦ Southeast Lineman Training Center, Trenton, Georgia |
| ✦ North American Lineman Training Center, McEwen, Tennessee | ✦ Southside Virginia Community College, Blackstone, Virginia | ✦ Blue Ridge Community and Technical College, Martinsburg, West Virginia |

NOVEC Energy Solutions Provides Natural Gas at Competitive Prices

By Robin Earl

NOVEC Energy Solutions, a NOVEC for-profit subsidiary, provides natural gas to homes and businesses at competitive prices. NES supplies the gas to your current utility, and that utility delivers the gas to your home or business. Switching your natural gas provider is simple and seamless; there are no disruptions to service.

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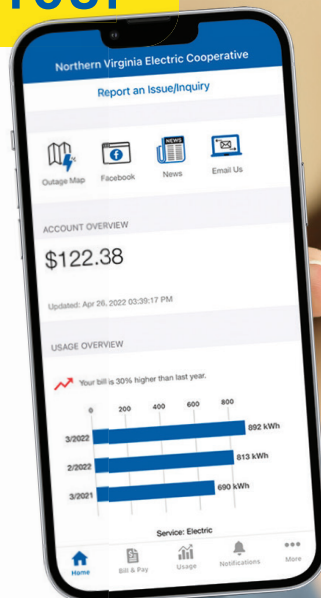
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NOVEMBER 2-3, 2024

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For the Love of Art

RAAC's 19th annual Fall Art Tour draws art lovers to Rappahannock County

by Laura Emery, Staff Writer

Art has the power to provoke thought and evoke emotion, and it often represents a community's cultural identity.

This fascination and love for art draws people from all walks of life to Rappahannock Association for Arts and Community's Fall Art Tour. The 19th annual Fall Art Tour, produced by RAAC and co-chaired by Andrea Salley and Claire Cassel, will take place this year on Nov. 2-3 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. throughout Rappahannock County, Va.

The self-guided tour is an invitation to do more than view art; it's an enriching opportunity to experience art, perhaps for the first time. The public is invited to engage with various local artists in their studios and galleries throughout the county.

"We believe that a community infused with the arts is stronger, livelier and more connected," says Matthew Black, president of RAAC. Net proceeds from the Fall Art Tour provide grants to artist projects and produce community arts events throughout the year through the Claudia Mitchell Arts Fund.

"The heart of the annual Art Tour is the fine art created by so many wonderful artists in so many mediums and styles. There are over 80 artists. You'll see painters, sculptors,

potters, jewelry-makers, printmakers, wood and fabric artists, and photographers," says Salley, Art Tour co-chair for the last three years.

The Art Tour is the perfect weekend trip, as it's an easy drive from Washington, D.C., Arlington, Fairfax, Richmond, Charlottesville and other metro-area cities. "It's also one of the best fall weekends in Rappahannock County, with peak fall colors, the scenic Blue Ridge Mountains, farm stands along the tour route, and many local dining options and even apple-picking at orchards along the way," explains Salley.

The Fall Art Tour map will be available online, at fallarttour.org, starting Monday, Oct. 28. But, before then, the website can be visited for more details about the tour and pictures of artists' work.

Glass artist Patricia Brennan, featured in the January-February 2022 issue of *Cooperative Living*, will be on the Fall Art Tour with Thornton River Art in Sperryville, Va. She says, "We hope local residents come celebrate the wonderful collection of artists in our community. The RAAC Fall Art Tour is a very special event." ●

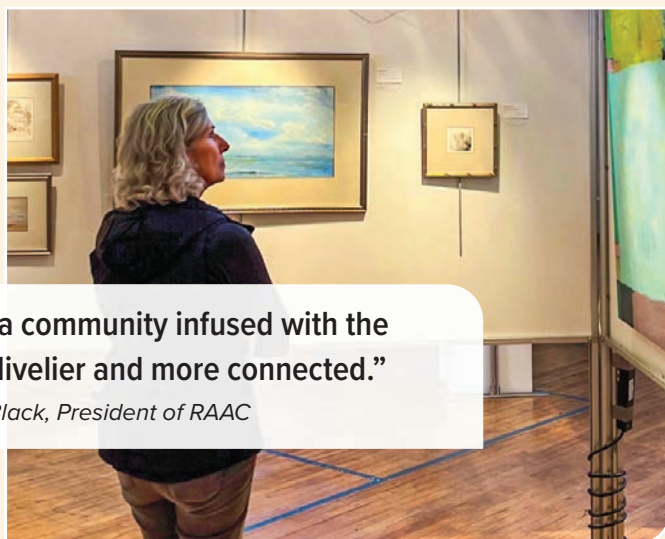


► For more information, visit fallarttour.org.



"We believe that a community infused with the arts is stronger, livelier and more connected."

— Matthew Black, President of RAAC



PHOTOS COURTESY RAAC

GOING WITH *the* FLOW



SOME MIGHT SAY RUTHIE WINDSOR-MANN HAS PAINT RUNNING THROUGH HER VEINS.

The Rappahannock Electric Cooperative member is participating in the Fall Art Tour for the ninth year. According to Windsor-Mann, she showed early signs of being creative. “I got kicked out of dance class at three years old because I was making up my own dances,” she says with a laugh. Still, to this day, she can’t follow a recipe in the kitchen. “I like to make up my own recipes,” she explains.

This desire to create and “go with the flow” spills over into her love of painting — something she’s been doing for 54 years. “I don’t have just one style. I do it all ... abstract, impressionistic, pallet-knife

work, watercolor, etc. I like being surprised. I don’t force it. I go where the painting leads me,” she explains. On the tour, visitors get the opportunity to visit her in her one-room studio just outside of the town of Washington, Va.

The veteran painter’s personality is as colorful and unique as her art. “I like to say that painting keeps me out of trouble and gives me no time for responsibility,” she says with a laugh. She is most inspired by dramatic lighting. She says, “If the light is good, I’ll paint it.”

Windsor-Mann was awarded a RAAC grant last year to publish her second book, “12 Months on 12 Acres,” a series of art

sketches. “RAAC is absolutely fantastic,” she says, “and so is the Fall Art Tour. It brings together people from all over the place who love art.” ■



THE ART *of* WOOD

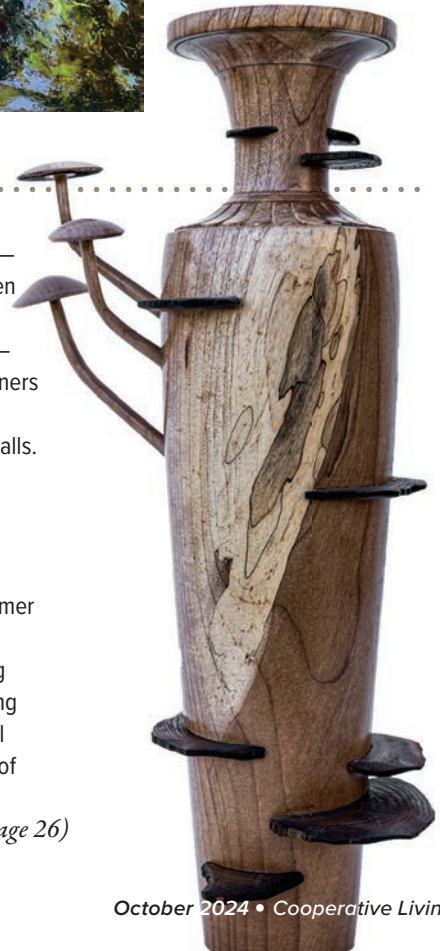


JASON GOLDMAN, A SELF-DESCRIBED “STORYTELLER,” HAS BEEN ON THE ART TOUR SINCE 2019. He regales visitors with his stories and sells his wood art, each piece telling its own story.

Everything about Goldman is eclectic — from his personality to his works of wooden art. His Flint Hill studio and showroom is his haven. The beloved tools of his trade — chisels, gouges, rasps, carving knives, veiners and hand planes, along with spray paint, inks and dyes — cover every inch of the walls. From within this studio, Goldman creates everything from wood jewelry and cheese boards to wood vases and burial urns.

“I can’t sit still. I love to make things,” he says. The former punk rock band drummer loves discussing his love of wood art. The rewarding part of what he does, according to Goldman, is when he can take something raw from nature and turn it into a beautiful heirloom wooden work of art. Each piece of

(continued on page 26)



For the Love of Art

(continued from page 25)

wood comes to life in vibrant detail — often showcasing the wood's natural grain and texture variations — under Goldman's skillful hands.

"Nature gives us incredible designs, colors, textures and even smells, and all of that is hidden inside a piece of wood. It's my passion to find the best way to present it," he explains.

Goldman gets his inspiration from mid-century modern furniture, Japanese culture, architecture, skateboarding, ancient pottery, punk rock and more. "I can get inspired by anything," he says. "Some of my pieces are extremely classic and elegant, but I also do some wild-looking stuff with graffiti and fun colors."

Being a part of the RAAC Fall Art Tour is

something Goldman doesn't take for granted. "It's great. It helps artists discover other artists and gives us all a reason to create. Without the Art Tour, I wouldn't have had a lot of the other opportunities that have come from that," he explains. Goldman is a RAAC grant recipient.

He has been "getting his juice" from REC for at least 20 years, and says he appreciates being a member of an electric cooperative. "I've only lost power for an extended period of time once, during a derecho years ago," he says. ■



OF MUD and MAGIC



SARA ADAMS LIKES MAKING PEOPLE HAPPY — AND SHE GETS TO DO THAT BY BEING PART OF THE FALL ART TOUR. Adams is a potter who displays her work, along with three other potters, at River District Gallery in Sperryville, Va. "I love playing with clay. You can build most anything with clay, and that's a lot of fun," she says.

Adams has plenty of stories to tell about creating unique items for unique people. "People come in with all sorts of requests. A guy came in the other day with a white handlebar mustache, and he said, 'I want to learn



how to make a mug with that little lip on it for my mustache.' I told him we haven't made one of those yet, but we could make it for him," she says with a laugh.

A man whose house had burned down brought in a damaged heirloom piece of pottery that had survived the fire. "He wanted to know if we could recreate that for him. We love being able to do things like that," she says. Each piece is handcrafted with love.

On Christmas Eve one year,

Adams recalls getting a call from a gentleman in a state of panic saying he'd forgotten to get a Christmas present and wanted to come by the gallery. "So, one of us ran over to the gallery and opened it up for him, and he bought the

gift he needed," she says.

Adams is inspired by her love of color. "We have glazes that you can layer and when you layer certain glazes together, it'll bring out other colors. I also like textured clay. The glaze falls over the ridges in the texture and you can make new colors that way," she explains. "I love sharing what we do with people on the RAAC Fall Art Tour." ■



Be a Hero: Battle Phantom Load

Right now, you have things plugged in around your house that are draining energy—even when they're switched off. These “always on” energy loads, known as phantom load, **account for almost 10% of residential electricity use.**



EnergizeEfficiently



Defeat the phantom by unplugging these common culprits when they're not in use.

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Cell phone chargers | ☐ Home theater components |
| ☐ Digital picture frames | ☐ Coffee makers |
| ☐ Laptops | ☐ Toasters |
| ☐ Televisions | ☐ Mixers |
| ☐ Video game systems | ☐ Hair dryers |

For more energy saving tips, visit ee.odec.com.



The view from the bottom
of The Channels Fire Tower
atop Clinch Mountain.

The Channels Challenge

A hike for the ages that's worth the effort

by Amanda S. Creasey, Outdoors Writer

Everyone told us how hard hiking to The Channels would be. “The hike there is a slog.” “It’s uphill all the way there.” “It’s really, really hard.” These are just a few warnings we received before our adventure in The Channels Natural Area Preserve.

However, despite these warnings, no one who issued them said it wasn’t worth the work involved. “The Channels are awesome.” “It’s totally worth the climb.” “You’ll love it,” they also told us.

Having now joined the ranks of those who have visited The Channels, I can personally vouch for the challenge the 6.7-mile, out-and-back hike poses. With an elevation gain of roughly 1,400 feet and some grades as steep as 30%, the trek to The Channels is indeed a challenge. But, I can also personally vouch for the reward.

Here’s how I remember the experience: My husband, our two dogs and I pull into the small, 10-space gravel parking lot a little after 9 a.m. on a Monday. I took the day off from work and I’m determined to enjoy the journey, regardless of its legendary arduousness.

The first mile-and-a-half prove relatively easy, especially compared to our expectations. We are walking uphill, but the trail is wide, and its incline is gradual and gentle. At a switchback, we stop for snacks, sitting in the grass alongside the trail. I peel an orange and a hard-boiled egg, drink some water



The trail features many steep drop-offs, like the one shown here.



Climbing the fire tower, pictured here, at The Channels is prohibited.



Sandstone rock formations create a maze of shadow and light near the summit of Middle Knob on Clinch Mountain.

and fortify our dogs with some mini Milkbones. My husband crunches some almonds and chews a handful of dried cherries.

Then we start again.

FULL STEAM AHEAD

At the next switchback, things quickly get tougher. “Now I understand what everyone was talking about,” I tell my husband, tightening the belly strap of my brand-new hiking backpack around my waist.

We trudge on for perhaps another mile, our conversation waning as our breath grows more labored. After a few more switchbacks, we pause to view the mountains through the trees, startling two pileated woodpeckers whose red

heads and black and white wings flash amongst the branches as they flee our presence.

When we start moving again, I have to stifle the temptation to check my work email on my phone. Surprisingly, I have service. It is Monday, after all. Best to stay informed about what awaits me at work when I return tomorrow.

But I let the urge pass like the cloud shadows I watch drifting over the mountains. I tell myself that all the work will still be there, whether I know about it now or later. I keep my attention on the cloud shadows, the rocky trail, the rhythmic sound of my own breathing, and the satisfying sensation of exertion in my lungs, legs and shoulders.

Matt Creasey marvels at The Channels, a maze of sandstone boulders and crevices.



REACHING THE SUMMIT

We navigate a small rock scramble and arrive at the top of the trail, where stands a massive fire tower, stretching toward the sun, its lower landings chopped off in an attempt to prevent would-be climbers. From this vantage point, we're treated to a spectacular panoramic view of the mountains surrounding us, and the valley below. We are in The Channels.

We had shed most of our layers during our trek uphill. Here, in the shade of the rocks and rhododendrons, we don them all again. We wander amongst the great stones, leaving bright pink dog waste bags in various places to help us find our way back out again. The temperature difference from one place in the labyrinth to another is striking.

In search of a warm place to enjoy a snack, we clamber up the face of a monolith and emerge into the treetops and sunlight. Two black vultures circle overhead. We are on the 4,208-foot summit of Middle Knob on Clinch Mountain, but I feel like we're on top of the whole world. Nothing but silence and sunshine. We stay like this for a while; my husband, our dogs and I splayed out on a rock in the sun at the top of the world. I close my eyes and

feel the warm sun on my face, the solid stone beneath my back. The insides of my eyelids darken as a vulture's shadow passes over my face.

"Should we set a timer?" My husband's suggestion interrupts my reverie, the human world of time constraints encroaching upon the timelessness of this mountaintop.

"A timer?"

"If we're going home today, I don't want it to get too late."

Neither do I. But I can't bring myself to set a timer. "Just a little longer," I say. "We don't need a timer."

BACK TO REALITY

A few more minutes and we climb back down, passing our dogs between us and setting them safely on the ground amongst the towering rocks. We wander around just a bit longer before following our carefully placed

pink bags back to the trail.

As we descend, the way back feels a bit less laborious, gravity on our side. After a while, though, our hips, thighs and calves begin to complain at the constant bracing, and my shoulders grow tired of my backpack's weight. Still, I'm delighted by the fresh breeze, the quality time with my husband and dogs, the achievement we've all experienced together.

Four hours after we began, my husband announces: "I can see the parking lot! I didn't think I was going to make it."

"But you did," I say. "We all did."

By the time we reach the car, we have encountered perhaps a dozen fellow hikers and one other dog. Including ours, six cars now wait in the parking lot.

As he buckles his seatbelt my husband says, "It wasn't that bad."

"No," I say. "It was totally worth it." I lean my head back against the headrest, the open window letting the sun kiss my face, and the breeze muss my hair. I take a deep breath.

The car ride takes me back to the human world — the realm of work and time and responsibilities. But the rocks are still there — the realm of rest, wonder and timelessness.

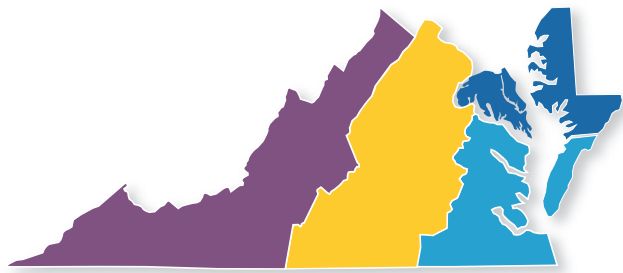
I carry their serenity with me. Their tenacity, fortitude and steadfastness are resources I can always draw on when the man-made world becomes too much for me. ●



Amanda Creasey holds Soda (left) and Nacho (right) in the depths of a sandstone crevice within The Channels.

Events Around the Area

Editor's note: All information is believed to be accurate as of press time. Before attending, please use the contact information to verify the status of an event. Listing an event does not constitute an endorsement.



BLUE RIDGE WEST

OCTOBER

19 MIDDLETOWN. Lighting of the Luminaries. South End of Historic Main St. Begins at dusk. 540-869-2226. Middletownva.gov.

19-20 MIDDLETOWN. 160th Anniversary of the Battle of Cedar Creek. 336 Belle Grove Rd. Bellegrove.org.

26 BLACKSTONE. Blackstone Wine and Beer Festival. 201 N. High St. 12-6 p.m. 804-921-7460.

31 CLIFTON FORGE. Merchant Trick or Treating. Downtown Clifton Forge. 12-4 p.m. Facebook.com/cliftonforgemainstreet.

31 SHENANDOAH. Halloween Costume Parade. Shenandoah River Park. 4 p.m. Townofshenandoah.com. 540-652-8773.

NOVEMBER

9-10 FISHERSVILLE. 2024 Fall Arts & Craft & Vendor Show. 277 Expo Rd. Times vary. 540-337-2552 or 540-246-8681. Expocraftshow@gmail.com.

11 MIDDLETOWN. Veterans Day Ceremony. 8050 S. Main St. 1 p.m. 540-869-2226. Middletownva.gov.

PIEDMONT

OCTOBER

19 LEXINGTON. Annual Fall Festival. Timber Ridge Presbyterian Church. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. 540-460-2246.

19 MANASSAS. Manassas Woman's Club Yard, Bake & 2024 White House Ornament Sale. Trinity Episcopal Church. 8 a.m.-1 p.m. 703-795-4553. Elle4nowens@verizon.net.

19 MANASSAS. 51st Annual Bazaar. St. Thomas United Methodist Church. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. 703-368-5161. Stthomasumc.org.

19 PRINCE GEORGE. Virginia Czech & Slovak Folklife Festival. The Prince George County Regional Heritage Center. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Bestpartva.org.

19 ASHLAND. VEWS Fall BBQ & Brew Fest. 12324 Goddins Hill Rd. 5-9 p.m. Virginiaequinewelfare.org.

19-20 GOOCHLAND. Pro Rodeo Autumn Festival. Rassawek Vineyard. Times vary. Rassawek.com.

25-27 MANASSAS. Annual Holiday Bazaar. Sudley United Methodist Church. Times vary. Sudley-methodist.org.

NOVEMBER

1-2 FARMVILLE. Christmas Market. Farmville United Methodist Church. Times vary. Farmvilleumc.org.

2 RUCKERSVILLE. 49th Annual "Helping Hands" Holiday Craft Bazaar. Ruckersville Elementary School. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. 757-343-0463. Facebook.com/wcoghelpinghandsbazaar.

2 CULPEPER. Culpeper Women in Faith Christmas Bazaar. 1233 Oaklawn Drive. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. 540-825-0764.

2 CENTREVILLE. UWF Holiday Bazaar & Craft Fair. Centreville United Methodist Church. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. 703-830-2684. Centreville-umc.org.

8-10 SPOTSYLVANIA. CYT Fredericksburg: Rodgers & Hammerstein Cinderella. Spotsylvania High School. Times vary. Cytfredericksburg.org.

9 MINERAL. 29th Annual Belmont Club of Women Arts & Crafts Fair. Belmont Community Center. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Bwc7124.org.

9 CULPEPER. Cruisin For Heroes Fundraiser. Old House Vineyards. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Facebook.com/groups/969965209721565.

9 LOCUST GROVE. 17th Annual Holiday Bazaar. The Lake of the Woods Church. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. 540-972-9060. Lowchurch.org.

9 GORDONSVILLE. 18th Annual Veterans Day Parade. Main St. 2 p.m. 540-832-2234.

NOTICE: Beginning January 2025, Happenings listings will remain free of charge for nonprofit organizations and electric cooperative sponsored or related events. A charge of \$50 will be assessed for all other listings per issue.

PRINT DEADLINES: Nov. 1 for Jan. 15-Feb. 28
Jan. 1 for Mar. 15-April 15

Email: happenings@co-opliving.com
Send to: Happenings, 4201 Dominion Blvd., Suite 101, Glen Allen, VA 23060
Online: co-opliving.com/happenings

TIDEWATER

OCTOBER

19 EXMORE. 8th Annual Exmore Auto Show in Town Park. 3398 Main St. Registration starts at 8:30 a.m. Rb55ford@yahoo.com. Facebook: search 8th Annual Exmore Auto Show in Town Park.

19 CHINCOTEAGUE. Starfish Mini-Golf Tournament "Putt-A-Round" for Literacy. 6557 Maddox Blvd. 11 a.m. 757-789-1761. Shoreliteracy.org.

26 FRANKTOWN. Art and Food Festival. Franktown United Methodist Church. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Normaclaude23413@gmail.com. Franktownunitedmethodist.org.

NOVEMBER

2-3 KING GEORGE. 19th Annual Caledon State Park Art and Wine Festival. Caledon State Park. Times vary. Events.caledonstatepark@gmail.com. Dcr.virginia.gov.

MARYLAND

OCTOBER

26 SNOW HILL. Halloween in the Forest. Furnace Town Living Heritage Village. 5-7:30 p.m. Furnacetown.org.

26 ST. MICHAELS. OysterFest. Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Cbmm.org.

NOVEMBER

8-10 EASTON. Waterfowl Festival. Waterfowlfestival.org.

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art, and much more.

Virginia Czech & Slovak Folklife Festival

October 19, 2024 | 11am - 4pm

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BestPartVA.org

Tow Trucks, the Bee Gees and Gas Station Hot Dogs

Life on the road can be adventurous

by Margo Oxendine, Contributing Columnist



Many blessed drivers have ferried me to Charlottesville and back these past eight months. God bless every one of them!

The idea of having to drive 100 miles there, on a busy interstate, have tests and appointments, and then turn around and brave the 100 miles back home is honestly just too much for me.

But, shoot — I remember driving to Virginia Beach in one day when I was younger. Sometimes, I'd take two days, stopping to stay with friends in Richmond before taking to the highway to make it to the beach the next day. Then at some point, it seems, I stopped going altogether.

Nowadays, the idea of a small cabin in the middle of the woods, maybe by a lake, seems much more my speed. Then again, I have a nice house in the middle of the mountains, across from a golf course, with a screened porch. What more do I really need?

But I digress, back to the drivers who brought me to and then home from Charlottesville.

We had as much fun as possible on those trips — chatting, sit-dancing to Barry White and the Bee Gees on the radio, laughing and enjoying ourselves.

Stepping out of the car at the hospital's front entrance threw me for a loop one day. I went to grab my purse (along with a bag and pillow, of course), and it wasn't there. I'd forgotten my purse, of all things! It was sitting home in its chair. On that trip, I found out that the last place one needs a purse is at the hospital. So, lucky me? I guess so.

On my most recent — and hopefully last — trip for a while, a man who's become a pretty good friend drove me there for the second time. It was chat, chat, chat all the way. He even said he'd take me to my favorite restaurant when I was done. Hurray! When I was done, I called my friend to tell him I'd be waiting in front of the hospital.

"My car blew up!" he announced.

This was the same car that he had just paid \$1,600 to have fixed the day before. How could it blow up?

We may never know.

He found a kind stranger to come pick me up at the hospital while he waited for the tow truck at a gas station.

Is there food there? I wondered.

"Yes," he said.



So, my fabulous lunch came down to a gas station hot dog twirling on a grill, and a bag of Fritos. Not exactly what I'd been pining for, but still, something to eat.

We waited two hours for the tow truck. I figured that when it arrived, I'd ride in the back seat, and keep my mouth shut.

But when the behemoth truck showed up, it only had one bench seat in front. I was squeezed between two big men, with toolboxes and oily rags all around us. And we had 100 miles to go. Not to mention, I was still hungry. And the truck was very loud. I hoped we wouldn't need another tow truck for this tow truck.

I'm glad the driver was a speedy fellow. I guess no police are anxious to try to pull over a huge tow truck with an extended trailer and another car tacked onto the back. We made it home in record time, even if it was uncomfortable as all get-out. The driver even backed the behemoth up my scary driveway; there was nowhere else to turn that thing around.

My legs were all cramped up when I finally fumbled down from the tall tow truck. But, I did manage to limp into my quiet home, onto my porch, and gobble my usual lunch: chicken salad and cottage cheese. It was a celebratory lunch, as I don't have to return to Charlottesville for another year! ●

To order a copy of Margo's "A Party of One," call 540-468-2147 Mon.-Wed., 9 a.m.-5 p.m., or email therecorderoffice@gmail.com.

[SCENE IT!]



PHOTO BY MARGARET JOHNSON, SVEC MEMBER



WHEREZ IT?

Look for the CL logo, like the one above, in the pages of this issue of *Cooperative Living*. Submit the page number where you found it, along with your name, email and phone number to **Wherezit**, c/o *Cooperative Living*, 4201 Dominion Blvd., Suite 101, Glen Allen, VA 23060 or go online at co-opliving.com under "Contests." Deadline is **Oct. 20**. The winner will receive a \$25 Amazon email gift card.



Eastern Hophornbeam

A tree for all seasons

by Steve Carroll, Contributing Columnist

Despite having four-season interest, Eastern hophornbeam (*Ostrya virginiana*) is often underappreciated and underplanted. One distinctive feature — and the source of its most widely used common name — are the distinctive fruit clusters that resemble those of beer-making hops. Another of its common names, ironwood, recognizes its very hard wood, but this name is more often applied to the closely related *Carpinus caroliniana* (also called musclewood). Yes, common names can be confusing.

Hophornbeam is a slow-growing, medium-sized tree that may reach 30 to 40 feet in height. It's in the birch family (Betulaceae), so is related to birch, alder and filbert, as well as the ironwood/musclewood mentioned above. It will grow in full sun to full shade, preferring some shade, and it does best in moist to dry soil having a slightly acidic to neutral pH. Hophornbeam tolerates drought, wind and ice, but not flooding or salt. During spongy moth (formerly gypsy moth) outbreaks, it can experience significant leaf loss but otherwise does not suffer greatly from insects or disease.

Because of its wide environmental tolerance and resistance to drought, hophornbeam can be planted as a street tree and in and around parking lots. Especially when grown in the open, lower branches are often horizontal to slightly drooping. Its natural range stretches from Nova Scotia and Manitoba south to Texas and northern Florida. In the southeast U.S., it is more common inland than along the coastal plain.

Leaves are 4 to 8 inches long and 2 to 4 inches wide. They are usually tapered at both ends, are darker above than below, and have doubly toothed margins. The leaves are fed on by

caterpillars of a number of butterfly and moth species.

Though not one of our showiest fall trees, leaves do turn yellow to orange-brown.

Flowers are grouped in separate male and female catkins that form on the same tree.

Pollination by wind occurs as the leaves expand. After fertilization, seeds form in tight clusters of 10-20 inflated pillow-like sacs, forming the hops-resembling clusters shown in the photo. These sacs, each of which contains a single nutlet, are yellow when formed, then turn brown in autumn. It's not unusual for these to persist through the fall and into winter.

In addition to its characteristic fruit, hophornbeam also forms distinctive, ornamental bark. On mature trees, the reddish-brown bark forms long, narrow, vertical strips

attached in the middle but curled out at the ends, lending a shaggy appearance. This bark contributes to the tree's horticultural value, particularly during winter.

Buds, catkins and seeds are eaten by deer, small mammals, grouse, turkey and other birds; the leaves are host plants for caterpillars of a number of butterfly and moth species. The hard, heavy, durable wood — harder even than oak, ash and persimmon — has been used in making sleigh runners, wagon wheel hubs, tool handles and more. Native Americans pounded wood chips into a powder, a tonic from which was then used to treat fever, skin conditions and indigestion.

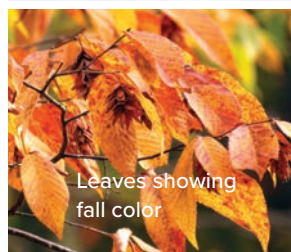
Hophornbeam does not show off. Its spring flowers are overshadowed by those of dogwood and redbud. Its fruits, though unique, can't compete with pawpaw and persimmon. And its fall foliage fades into the

background in competition with sugar maple, red maple and black tupelo. Taken together, however, hophornbeam has something to brag about year-round. If only there was room on our small property to plant one. ●

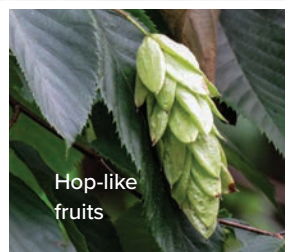
A
slow-growing,
medium-sized
tree that may reach
30 to 40 feet
in height.



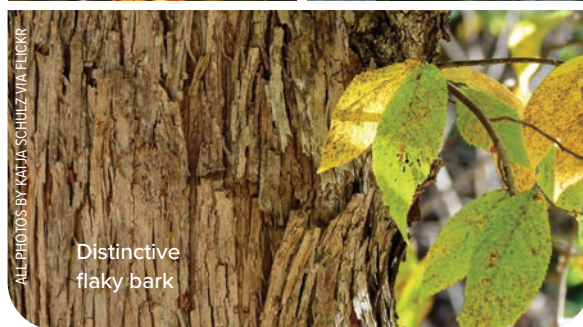
Male catkins



Leaves showing
fall color



Hop-like
fruits



Distinctive
flaky bark

ALL PHOTOS BY KATJA SCHULZ VIA FLECK

Steve Carroll is a botanist and ecologist who speaks and writes about trees, gardening and the world of plants. He is the co-author of "Ecology for Gardeners," published by Timber Press.

Carve out some time for these pumpkin recipes!



Soft Cinnamon Pumpkin Cookies

recipe courtesy of Sophia Jennings

Ingredients:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 ½ cups all-purpose flour | ¼ cup brown sugar |
| ½ teaspoon baking soda | ½ teaspoon vanilla extract |
| ¼ teaspoon baking powder | 1 egg |
| ¼ teaspoon salt | ½ cup pumpkin purée |
| ½ cup butter, melted | ½ cup semi-sweet chocolate chips |
| ½ cup granulated sugar, divided | 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon |



Directions:

Preheat oven to 400 degrees and line a cookie sheet with parchment paper. Combine flour, baking soda, baking powder and salt together in a small bowl. Set aside. Take melted butter and beat in ¼ cup of granulated sugar and brown sugar. Add vanilla, egg and pumpkin. Beat until well blended. Gradually add the flour mixture and beat until flour mixture just disappears. Mix in chocolate chips. Using a cookie dough ball, drop cookie dough on the prepared cookie sheet 2 inches apart. In a small bowl, combine remaining ¼ cup of sugar with cinnamon and sprinkle cookie dough with the cinnamon sugar. Bake for 9-11 minutes or until sides are firm to the touch. Do not overbake. Let cool on cookie sheet for 5 minutes. Yields 18.



PHOTOS BY SOPHIA JENNINGS



Pumpkin Chili

recipe courtesy of Sophia Jennings

Ingredients:

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|---|---------------------------------|
| 1 tablespoon cooking oil | ¾ teaspoon cumin |  | 15-oz. can black beans, drained |
| 1 lb. ground turkey | ¼ teaspoon ancho chili powder | | 2 cups pumpkin purée |
| 1 bell pepper | 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon | | 2 ½ cups chicken broth |
| 1 ¼ teaspoons garlic powder | 1 teaspoon salt | | sour cream, shredded cheese, |
| 3 ½ teaspoons onion powder | 2 (15-oz.) cans fire-roasted tomatoes, not drained | | avocado and pumpkin seeds, |
| 1 tablespoon paprika | 15-oz. can kidney beans, drained | | for garnish, if desired |
| 1 teaspoon oregano | | | |

Directions:

In Dutch oven, heat oil over medium heat. Add the turkey, break into pieces with wooden spoon, and cook through until browned, about 7-8 minutes. Drain fat. In same Dutch oven, cook pepper until softened, about 5 minutes. Add in the powders, spices, cinnamon and salt. Cook, stirring for 30 seconds. Stir in tomatoes, beans, pumpkin, chicken broth and turkey. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, then reduce heat to low. Cover and cook for 20 minutes, stirring every 5 minutes. Serve with sour cream, shredded cheese, avocado, and pumpkin seeds, if desired. Yields 8.

Got a tasty treat to share?

Email your favorite **holiday brunch recipes** to cooperativekitchen@co-opliving.com, or mail to Cooperative Kitchen, c/o *Cooperative Living*, 4201 Dominion Blvd., Suite 101, Glen Allen, VA 23060 and include your email address.

You also can submit them online at co-opliving.com/cooperativekitchen. Selected recipes will be published in future issues of *Cooperative Living* and/or at co-opliving.com. Because of volume we cannot guarantee publication of all recipes. Reader recipes are submitted in good faith. *Cooperative Living* cannot warrant results.

BUSINESS

FIREARM-RIGHTS RESTORATION. Call for free consultation: Attorney John Janson at 434-953-8794 (Virginia Bar #91236).

REAL ESTATE

ARE YOU PART OWNER OF A FARM OR INVESTMENT PROPERTY? With family members, partners or unknown parties? Do you want to separate or cash out your interest? Call today for a free consultation. (VSB #91236) Attorney John Janson at 434-953-8794. Johnmjanson@gmail.com.

WATERFRONT. ½ ACRE with dock. 175 feet of bulkhead on deep water. 35 ft. sailboat. Paved driveway and electric. \$225,000 for boat and lot. Call 302-436-2034.

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CLASSIC FORD 600 Tractor (1957). Front loader and backhoe. Two buckets and booms, different widths, new front tires, many new parts. 540-788-4368. Leave message or email piperlove42@outlook.com.

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Entire collections or single items, bottles or decanters. Sealed and unopened. The older, the better. Cash. Call 540-845-6107 or email majiddk@comcast.net.

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AUCTIONS

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SUBMIT: We accept classifieds by email (classifieds@co-opliving.com), telephone (804-297-3429) or mail to: Classifieds, 4201 Dominion Boulevard, Suite 101, Glen Allen, VA 23060. Please type or print your ad as you would like it to appear and how many months it should run. Include your name, street and email address. Ads with incomplete information will be returned to the sender.

RATES: Non-business: \$70 per 25-word block plus \$2.50 per word over 25; OR "Mini" ad – \$5 per word (max. 10 words). Business, agent and broker ads: \$130 per 25-word block, plus \$5 per word over 25. Display Real Estate: \$299 per block.

DEADLINE: Oct. 5 for November-December issue; Publisher reserves the right to designate classification or reject any ad. No personals, please.

NOTICE:

Beginning January 2025, Marketplace rates will be as follows:
Non-business: \$100 per 25-word block plus \$5 per word over 25.
"Mini" ad – \$5 per word (max. 10 words).
Business, agent and broker ads: \$150 per 25-word block plus \$5 per word over 25.
Display Real Estate: \$350 per block.

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- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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trick or treat



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◀ PUMPKIN PAMPERS

Miles and Maeve keep very well in a pumpkin shell.

PHOTO SUBMITTED
BY GRANDMOTHER
CINDY DAVIS

CELL BLOCK CUTIE ▶

This little inmate has done her time.

PHOTO SUBMITTED
BY KAYLA WHIRLEY



GHOSTED BY GRAMMI ▼

June is looking fa-boo-lous in the costume made by her Grammi. PHOTO SUBMITTED BY SANDY CLARK

▼ CHICK OR TREAT

The family's beloved pet chicken is comfy in Colonel Sanders' bucket.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY TAMMY EDWARDS



GROOT EXPECTATIONS ▶

Lucas hopes to score some serious sweets.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY AMANDA MAY



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