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AIM HIGH

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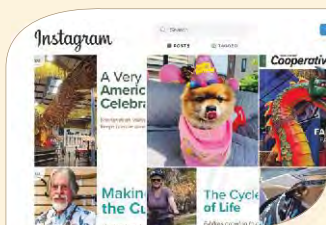
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COVER: KALEB JEFFRIES DURING A DRONE FLIGHT ON VIRGINIA'S EASTERN SHORE.
PHOTO BY JIM ROBERTSON.

VIEWPOINT

Changing Seasons

Labor Day always signaled the last gasp of summer and the start of school for me as I was growing up. It was a time when you could feel the summer season changing to fall, and the baseball team you were rooting for had a realistic chance to make the playoffs. Go Phillies!

The fall season also meant that fairs and festivals would be in full swing, and that we could meet our friends and enjoy all the games and entertainment they provided. In this issue, we feature some special events across Virginia that will provide fun for the whole family.

We are honored to give out a Good Samaritan Award to individuals who have provided exceptional service to others that constitutes a body of good works so extraordinary, so



selfless and so life-changing to those whom it has touched. Be sure to read the article in this issue.

There are a lot of businesses throughout our three-state service territory that support the VMD Association in the events and services that we provide to our members. One of these businesses is Sentinel Robotic Solutions, which is featured in our cover story about using technology to help positively impact families of autistic children in the A&N Electric Cooperative and surrounding communities. It is an amazing story that we are excited to bring to our readers. We want to thank SRS and the rest of our Associate Members that continue to support us in our mission to serve our members. ●

Brian S. Mosier

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

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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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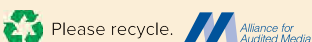
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PHOTOS BY GREGG MACDONALD

From left, Georgia, Lola and Amelia of Snow Hill, Md., show their support of local farmers.

Small Town Celebration is an Annual Blessing Snow Hill, Md., event celebrates 23 years

ONCE EVERY YEAR, MASSIVE AGRICULTURAL MACHINES ROLL INTO TINY SNOW HILL, MD. (population 2,200), where they park in the middle of town for a blessing from an association of local clergy. The event is called the “Blessing of the Combines” and it just celebrated its 23rd year. The all-day festival begins with a parade of tractors, local floats and huge combines.

Combines are complex modern farming machines that literally “combine” three harvesting functions simultaneously. They reap (cut and gather), thresh (separate grain from the stalk) and winnow (separate any remaining debris from the grain). These massive machines, which can cost upwards of \$500,000 each, can cut a 40-foot-wide swath through a crop field. They have become essential to many modern farmers.

Following the parade, the massive machines are blessed and then local dignitaries say a few words. This year, Maryland Secretary of Agriculture Kevin M. Atticks was the keynote speaker. “I really enjoy this event,” Atticks says. “Agriculture is very important to Snow Hill, as it is for all of Maryland.”

After the blessing, Snow Hill becomes one giant street fair, celebrating the American farmer. The festival is attended by local farmers from Maryland, Delaware and Virginia, as well as about 4,000 local and nearby residents.

Choptank Electric Cooperative board member Donna Richardson West, a Snow Hill resident who is also part of a local farming family, attends every year. She says her farm has its own large combine, although this year, it was not in the parade.

“I still came out to support our local farmers,” she says. ●



Donna Richardson

Virginia Peanuts



Aboutpeanuts.com

**Virginia Peanut
Growers
Association**





PHOTO BY JIM ROBERTSON

A Unique Opportunity

by Jim Robertson, Staff Writer

Young women invited to explore powerful careers

Over the past couple of years, several curious young women in high school and college — even some who had completed school — gathered at the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Electric Cooperative Training Center in Palmyra, Va., for a unique opportunity. They experienced firsthand what it's like to work on a utility line crew.

The 2023 Girl Power Camp is scheduled for Friday, Nov. 3, at the Palmyra Training Center. The one-day energy career experience is intended for high school girls interested or curious about working on a line crew, in a substation, as a drone operator, with advanced metering technology or as a fiber broadband technician. Instructors will lead students through various activities in the classroom and outdoors. Campers can expect to learn about safety on the job, including how to safely climb a utility pole, operate a bucket truck and operate a drone.

With more women taking on roles in the field, attracting them to the responsibilities and teamwork of a line crew remains a challenge. These types of operations roles often lead to a variety of leadership opportunities within an organization.

"It was a true learning experience with none of the performance pressure sometimes found in a classroom," says Jane Baker, director of career and technical education and principal at Blue Ridge Technical School. "The variety was exceptional, and my students came back 'pumped' about the experience."

Human resources professionals from various electric cooperatives throughout the three-state region also met individually with each student. They learned about students' interests and explained the wide variety of career options at electric cooperatives. Students also had their resumes reviewed and learned some tips for answering interview questions. Finance professionals are expected to join the discussions this year, as well.

Madison County High School Principal Betty-Jo Wynham describes the event as a great example of how community partnerships can help expand learning beyond the classroom walls, and help students discover the diverse career opportunities available to them. "Hearing from women who are passionate about their careers in this industry and the pathways they took to get there, paired with hands-on learning experiences, was very powerful and proved to showcase career opportunities better than any human resources website," says Wynham, who is also the career and technical education administrator at MCHS.

The camp is offered at no cost, thanks to the generosity of several industry partners with a passion for recruiting young women to the energy industry. ●

► For more information or to register for this year's Girl Power Camp, visit vmdaec.com/powerfulcareers.

Space may be limited due to growing interest, so register early.



Are You Hip?

Some 'kneed to know' info about joint pain

by Vanessa LaFaso Stolarski, Contributing Columnist

Believe it or not, a sedentary lifestyle can sometimes be a greater cause of future knee joint pain or discomfort than your glory days of running marathons or shooting hoops.

Yes, the knee joint is heavily impacted by daily activities and weight-bearing movements, but sitting for long periods can result in shortened hip flexors.

Many knee issues, therefore, are hip issues. The hip joint plays a significant role in supporting the knees and distributing stress during movement.

Here are three hip-mobility exercises to try:
Consider doing these three-to-five times per week, depending on pain levels.

HIP CIRCLES

Hip circles are a gentle-yet-effective exercise that targets the muscles around the hip joint, enhancing flexibility and reducing knee discomfort. To perform hip circles:

STEP 1: Stand with feet shoulder-width apart and place hands on hips.

STEP 2: Slowly rotate hips in a circular motion, first clockwise and then counterclockwise.

STEP 3: Perform 10-15 repetitions in each direction, making the circles as wide as comfortably possible.

STEP 4: Take deep breaths throughout the exercise, allowing your body to relax and improve the range of motion.

GLUTE BRIDGES



Glute bridges are excellent for strengthening the glutes and lower back, which, in turn, can help stabilize the hips and reduce strain on the knees. To perform glute bridges:

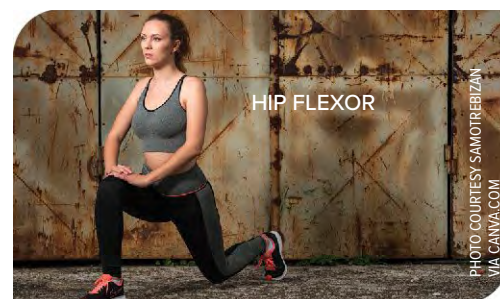
STEP 1: Lie on your back with knees bent and feet flat on the floor, hip-width apart.

STEP 2: Place arms at sides, palms facing down, for support.

STEP 3: Press through heels and lift hips off the floor, engaging glutes and core.

STEP 4: Hold the bridge position, squeezing glutes at the top for a few seconds before lowering hips back down.

STEP 5: Perform 12-15 repetitions, focusing on the contraction of the glutes with each repetition.



HIP FLEXOR STRETCH

Tight hip flexors can contribute to knee pain, so it's essential to incorporate hip flexor stretches into your routine. To perform the hip flexor stretch:

STEP 1: Stand with one foot forward and the other foot back in a lunge position.

STEP 2: Shift weight forward onto the front leg, bending the knee at a 90-degree angle.

STEP 3: Keeping the back straight, gently push your hips forward to feel a stretch in the front of the back leg's hip.

STEP 4: Hold the stretch for 20-30 seconds, then switch to the other leg.

Incorporating a regular routine with hip-mobility exercises can significantly improve knee pain. These exercises target the muscles surrounding the hip joint, providing support and stability to the knees during daily activities. As with any exercise program, it's essential to start slowly and consult with a healthcare professional before beginning a new exercise regimen, especially if you have existing knee or hip issues. With consistent practice, these hip-mobility exercises can enhance joint health and help you enjoy a more active and pain-free lifestyle. ●

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

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2023 FALL FAIRS & FESTIVALS GUIDE

AS THE HOT DAYS OF SUMMER give way to the crisp, cool, colorful days of fall, it's time to explore Virginia's diverse array of fall fairs, festivals and events. Below, you'll find some special fall events that perfectly capture the magic of the new season.

FIELD DAY OF THE PAST | Sept. 15-17

Field Day of the Past is held in Amelia County at Redfield Farm, 11404 Circle Drive. This is where you go for all the power-pulling action — tractor pulls and truck pulls. And, of course, live music, gold panning, carnival rides, heritage exhibits, animal exhibits, mechanical bull rides, educational exhibits, arts and crafts, and all the food and fun one can handle. For tickets and more information, visit fielddayofthepast.net.



26th ANNUAL CULPEPER HARVEST DAYS FARM TOUR | Sept. 16-17

Fun for all ages, the tour showcases both traditional and unique farms in the beautiful Blue Ridge foothills that make up Culpeper County. The event provides a wonderful educational experience and includes an array of hands-on

activities and demonstrations. The 15 carefully selected farms and ag-related businesses on the tour reflect Culpeper's agricultural heritage and the millions of dollars in production, wages and salaries generated by the agricultural industry in the county and state. Tours will be held from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. daily. For more information, visit culpeperfarmtour.com.

Field Day of the Past

SEPT. 15-17, 2023



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SEPTEMBER 30, 2023

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61st ANNUAL PEANUT FESTIVAL | Sept. 22-23

Emporia and Greensville County are stoked on peanuts — the 61st annual Peanut Festival, that is. All your favorites will be on hand: a car show, arts and crafts, educational exhibits, a parade, live entertainment, cultural exhibits, a carnival and all that delicious festival food visitors enjoy each year. Visit virginiapeanutfestival.com for more info.

JOHN JACKSON PIEDMONT BLUES FESTIVAL | Sept. 30

Woodville Va. – Don't miss the John Jackson Piedmont Blues Festival, which pays tribute to Rappahannock County native John Jackson and his legacy while also celebrating the musical and cultural heritage of Rappahannock County. John Jackson's life and legacy will be celebrated through Piedmont



Blues music performances, cultural food vendors, historical displays and educational demonstrations. The festival is held at Eldon's Farm, 4432 Sperryville Pike. Gates open at 10 a.m. Facebook @ John Jackson Piedmont Blues Festival.

SOUTH BOSTON HARVEST FESTIVAL | Sept. 30


The 32nd annual South Boston Harvest Festival will be held from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 30 historic downtown South Boston. The Harvest Festival is a free community event sponsored by many businesses, industries and community agencies.

Enjoy a fun-filled day of shopping, live music, children's activities and delicious food. Throughout the day continuous live music and other entertainment will take place on two stages. For more information, go to downtownsobo.com.

HIGHLAND COUNTY HANDS & HARVEST FESTIVAL | Oct. 6-8

Nothing says fall like enjoying tours of farms and tastes of freshly made apple butter and cider. Shop with talented arts and crafts vendors, enjoy live entertainment, climb the Sounding Knob Fire Tower, and more! For more information, go to highlandcounty.org/hands-harvest-festival.


(continued on page 8)



MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR A WEEKEND OF FREE FAMILY FUN!

Visit some of Culpeper County's finest working farms. Enjoy farm animals, fresh produce, blooming flower arrangements, live equestrian events, music and good food! Take advantage of this once a year opportunity to get close to the workings of local agriculture and experience unique access to farms and Ag facilities. Pick up kids activities, educational information, and learn about Culpeper farms at the Welcome Center at Culpeper Agricultural Enterprises on Route 29.

**Saturday & Sunday
September 16 – 17, 2023
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.**



www.culpeperfarmtour.com



October 21 & 22, 2023



Visit Rassawek.com for more information

**John Jackson
Piedmont Blues Festival**

A Tribute to a Rappahannock Legend
Last Saturday in September



Presented by
Virginia Cooperative Extension

Follow Us on Facebook @ John Jackson Piedmont Blues Festival
Eldon Farms 4432 Sperryville Pike, Woodville, VA 22749






2023 FALL GUIDE

(continued from page 7)

DINWIDDIE COUNTY FAIR | Oct. 6-8

The 2023 Dinwiddie County Fair will be held Oct. 6-8 this year at Virginia Motorsports Park. This year's fair will feature live music, variety shows, fireworks, carnival rides and fair foods! It promises to be fun for the whole family, for only \$10 a carload. For more information, go to dinwiddieva.us.

CZECH & SLOVAK FOLKLIFE FESTIVAL | Oct. 21

During the late 19th century, more than 700 Czech and Slovak families

came to live in Virginia. The greatest number settled in the counties of Prince George, Dinwiddie and Chesterfield. Come learn about the rich and unique culture of Virginia's longtime Czech and Slovak-American community. There will be food, music and beer! You are guaranteed to enjoy yourself. This festival will be held from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. on the lawn at the Prince George County Regional Heritage Center. For more information, go to bestpartva.org.

RASSAWEK AUTUMN FESTIVAL | Oct. 21-22

The Rassawek Autumn Festival showcases a professional rodeo this year. Come and see trade demonstrations that include new and

old heavy equipment, blacksmithing, welding and carpentry. Guests can also enjoy pig races, bluegrass music, market and food vendors, children's activities, and beer and wine. Visit rassawek.com to save \$5 by getting your tickets in advance.

FESTIVE FRIDAYS

| Nov. 24, Dec. 1, 8, 15, 22

Come enjoy the old-fashioned holiday charm in historic Cape Charles' Winter Wonderland each Friday from Nov. 24 to Dec. 22. Santa and Mrs. Claus will be on hand. Bring the kids for free horse-drawn carriage rides. See the Northampton High School marching band on parade each week. Shops and restaurants will be open and there is a free holiday movie weekly.

TAKE FALL TRAVEL TO NEW HEIGHTS IN HIGHLAND COUNTY, VIRGINIA!

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- BARN QUILT TRAIL
- VIRGINIA MAPLE SYRUP
- HANDS & HARVEST FESTIVAL OCTOBER 6 - 8, 2023

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Step into a world of rich history and vibrant culture with Authentic & Delicious Foods, Beer, Music, Dancing, and Wonderful Baked Goods.

Discover the story of the Czech & Slovak families who transformed abandoned farmland into a thriving community in the late 1800s.

Explore the Agricultural Exhibits, and marvel at the stunning Czech & Slovak Gallery featuring captivating stories, photos, and displays.

The Gift Shop is a treasure trove of Czech glass, books, art, and much more.

Virginia Czech & Slovak

Folklife Festival

October 21, 2023 | 11am - 4pm



With free admission and parking, the only thing you'll need to spend on is food & drink. Don't forget the children's activities! Immerse yourself in a cultural experience like no other!



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Prince George County Regional Heritage Center | 6406 Courthouse Road, Prince George, VA 23875 | (804) 863-0212

Fixated on His Future

The sky's the limit for young Chincoteague, Va., man's dreams

A mentor and his protege prepare for a drone flight on Virginia's Eastern Shore.

by Jim Robertson, Staff Writer

Kaleb Jeffries only watches one TV channel — The Weather Channel. The repeated use of drone footage in covering storms and viewing ocean life from above fascinates the 23-year-old, who was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. His condition causes him to become fixated on certain things or topics, such as the weather and how electronics work.

Kaleb, a 2018 graduate with honors from Chincoteague High School, is a science and technology enthusiast, especially when it comes to meteorology. Growing up near the NASA flight facility at Wallops Island played a significant role in influencing Kaleb's passion for studying weather patterns and events.

In September 2013, the young weather fanatic had a unique opportunity to meet his idol, Jim Cantore, a well-known meteorologist who covers extreme weather events. Cantore was in town for the inaugural flight of NASA's Global Hawk aircraft. The unmanned aerial vehicle offers scientists a unique vantage point to observe atmospheric conditions with its ability to fly at 65,000 feet and for periods of up to 30 hours.

Cantore was dining at Steamers Restaurant & Sports Bar in Chincoteague, Va., where Kaleb's stepfather, Jonah Baker, managed the bar. He told the meteorologist

about Kaleb and how he idolized him. Baker asked Cantore if he could wait 5 minutes for Kaleb to arrive. He agreed and spent nearly an hour visiting with Kaleb and took a few photos together that later appeared on Cantore's Twitter feed. He gave the 13-year-old a signed football and later tweeted a photo of them with a caption reading, "Say hello to Kaleb Jeffries. He is Chincoteague's finest weather forecaster!"

Ten years later, Kaleb still talks about that day as if it were yesterday. He and Cantore maintain contact via Twitter.

"It's been difficult here on the Eastern Shore," says Kara Jeffries, Kaleb's mother and a science



instructor at Chincoteague High School. “There’s just not as many opportunities for people like my son, or kids like him.” After high school, Kaleb participated in the vocational evaluation offered by the Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center, which helps students learn more about themselves and potential career paths they can consider. Unfortunately, nothing substantial came from that effort.

“Kaleb has always been a hard worker,” says Kara proudly. Since age 14, he has worked seasonally bussing tables at the Crab Shack and, more recently, Pico Taqueria.

“The DARS partnership with SRS provides exceptional opportunities for our consumers with disabilities to explore and pursue college and careers in aerospace and other highly technical fields.”

— Robin Sexauer, DARS program

A POWERFUL PARTNERSHIP

During his freshman year of high school, Kaleb was referred to a program offered through the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services. The mission of DARS is to improve the employment, quality of life, security and independence of older Virginians, Virginians with disabilities and their families. Candidates must be referred to the program. Anyone may refer a person with a disability who wants to work.

While at a spring 2022 career fair at Eastern Shore Community College, Robin Sexauer, the Jeffries’ main contact with the DARS program, visited the Sentinel Robotic Solutions table, where Jason Taylor was promoting an



PHOTO COURTESY KALEB JEFFRIES

upcoming workforce development training course for drone operations.

“We initiated a conversation about current drone programs and the potential for kids with disabilities to learn about drones and the workforce,” says Taylor, SRS director of unmanned aerial systems programs. “After the meeting, Robin and I, with support from SRS leadership and a partnership with ESCC, immediately started the process to develop a new program and hold the first class as soon as possible.”

Kara explains, “Knowing about Kaleb’s interest in drones, Robin with DARS informed us of a drone class being offered at Eastern Shore Community College.” A hopeful and excited Kaleb attended the class for students with disabilities. The class was conducted by Sentinel Robotic Solutions, an unmanned systems consulting partnership located beside the Wallops Flight Facility. SRS has trained more than 100 drone operators for the electric cooperatives in Virginia, Maryland and Delaware. As members of A&N Electric Cooperative, which serves the Eastern Shore of Virginia and Smith Island in Somerset County, Md., SRS has also helped lead several aerial projects and training at the co-op.

Taylor, class instructor, quickly noticed something different about

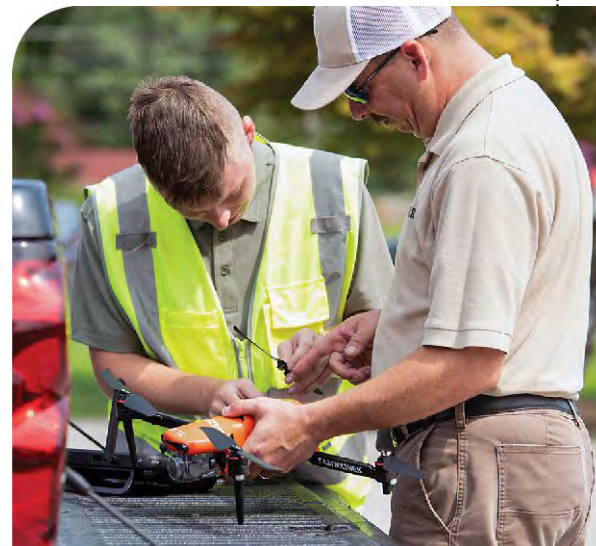
Jason Taylor guiding Kaleb through the inspection and setup of a drone prior to flight.

flaleb in the mobile command center during a planned demonstration involving a simulated terrorist attack at the Port of Virginia in 2023.

Kaleb. “Out of all the students we had, Kaleb showed great interest in UAS and how weather may affect it,” he says. This led to Taylor inviting Kaleb to sign up for an upcoming UAS Part 107 class to obtain his Remote Pilot Certificate. UAS Part 107 is the rule administered by the Federal Aviation Administration regarding regulations, operating requirements and procedures for safely flying drones.

“The DARS partnership with SRS provides exceptional opportunities for our consumers with disabilities to explore and pursue college and careers in aerospace and other highly technical fields,” explains Sexauer. In addition to providing vocational training through classroom instruction and tours of academic programs at ESCC, SRS partnered with DARS to develop work experience programs in the community teaching hands-on skills required in these fields. “These opportunities have given the consumers the confidence and direction to pursue avenues that they might not have ever considered. Parent

(continued on page 12)



Fixated on His Future

(continued from page 11)

participation has improved as a result of these programs as well.”

LIFE-CHANGING OPPORTUNITY

Kaleb continued to impress Taylor with his enthusiasm and knowledge of weather patterns and events. After all, his idol is one of America’s favorite meteorologists.

Taylor makes an effort to identify students with strengths that could benefit the SRS programs. During a conversation with SRS Founder and COO Peter Bale and CEO Erika Bale, owners of SRS, Taylor describes Kaleb by saying, “The kid’s smarter than I am.” He made a case for including Kaleb in a planned demonstration involving a simulated terrorist attack at the Port of Virginia in Norfolk in spring 2023.

As an official intern with SRS, Kaleb was heavily immersed in the operation at the port, assisting with setup and conducting operations. This involved collaborating with the team to prepare the necessary equipment, including robotics systems, sensors and communication devices.

“Kaleb played a pivotal role in setting up the demonstration area, ensuring that all the required tools and systems were installed properly and functioning,” says Taylor. “He displayed a high level of technical competence and attention to detail during this process, ensuring that all components were in working order.”

Weather reporting was a key aspect of Kaleb’s internship. He diligently monitored weather conditions and collected data using meteorological instruments and online resources. “Kaleb displayed a strong understanding of weather patterns and their potential impact on UAS operations,” says SRS Lead Engineer Chase Riley, who led the demonstration. He designed and established a preflight checklist that



covered all items required for safe and efficient operations for the tethered aerostat communication relay — basically, a weather balloon. His setup, maintenance and monitoring of the system was critical to the success of the demonstration.

During the demonstration, a highlight for Kaleb was being able to stay in his own hotel room. “That was so wonderful!” exclaims Kaleb, who also learned some life skills and how to conduct himself during a business dinner. “Don’t over-order from the menu,” he recalls. “And continue conversation until everyone’s food arrives.”

OPTIMISTIC FUTURE

Kara has noticed a significant change in her son since participating in the project at the port. “He is more motivated and finally has some direction and purpose,” she says. “It’s nice to see him working toward a goal.” The goal is to pass the FAA drone certification, which could lead to a career. He was one correct answer away from his goal on the last attempt.

Like many students on the spectrum, Kaleb never cared much for school. The drone class inspired a shift in his attitude. “It was the first time I have seen Kaleb want to attend class,” says Kara.

A weather fanatic since age 3, Kaleb’s experience with SRS has taught him that he can still have a career that includes studying weather without becoming a meteorologist with a college degree. Kara credits Sexauer for this newfound hope and optimism for Kaleb’s future. She has been instrumental in finding

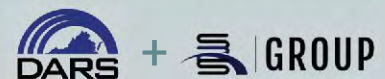


opportunities for him to explore his interests. “If it wasn’t for Robin, Kaleb would never have worked with SRS or taken the drone class,” she says. “We are so grateful.”

Since that first conversation at the career fair, SRS staff has mentored other students with drone operations and engineering. Noah Ferebee, an intern referred by DARS and a student in one of Taylor’s UAS classes, assisted SRS with a 120-mile transmission line inspection on the A&N Electric Cooperative system. Currently, Abhiram Gaddam, a student at Parkside High School in Salisbury, Md., is assisting SRS engineers with design and development of multiple land and air system prototyping, including work with solid modeling computer-aided design.

The concern for community displayed by these electric co-op members is consistent with the guiding principles followed by A&N Electric Cooperative. Quality of life continues to improve on the Eastern Shore, thanks to the thoughtful acts of people like Sexauer, Taylor and companies like Sentinel Robotic Solutions.

Together, they’re making dreams become reality. ●



“DARS’ partnership with SRS through its drone programs has been a game-changer for individuals with disabilities on the Eastern Shore,” says DARS Commissioner Kathy Hayfield. “We work with many students interested in robotics or gaming and the potential transferable skills to drone operation opens the doors for numerous careers.”

► For more information, please visit dars.virginia.gov or dors.maryland.gov.

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For more energy efficiency tips, visit ee.odec.com or scan the QR code here.



Regular HVAC maintenance can save money by helping your system operate more efficiently! A quick tuneup may prevent costly breakdowns.

The Fight Against Famine

Spotlighting the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank

by Laura Emery, Staff Writer

Hunger is unacceptable — that's the core belief behind everything the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank does. Founded in 1981 in Staunton, Va., the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank is the largest organization of its kind in western and central Virginia. Within the organization's first year, it distributed 233,000 pounds of food to people facing hunger through 202 member agencies in 18 counties along the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Since then, the Food Bank has expanded and grown. It relocated to a new facility in Verona, Va., which now serves as the organization's headquarters. There were three other branches established between 1982 and 1985: Charlottesville, Winchester and Lynchburg.

The Food Bank now proudly serves 25 counties and eight cities — covering over 12,000 square miles — on either side of the Blue Ridge. It provides nutritious food to approximately 110,000 people annually through a network of over 400 community partners and programs. These partners include food pantries, shelters, soup kitchens and program sites like schools, community centers and healthcare clinics.

Les Sinclair, Blue Ridge Area Food Bank's communications and PR manager, says, "We are a partner food bank with Feeding America, the largest hunger-relief organization in the U.S. Their latest research shows that 9 out of 10 high food insecurity counties are rural. This aligns with the majority of our service area. We serve 10 of Central Virginia Electric Cooperative's service counties: Albemarle, Amherst, Appomattox, Augusta, Buckingham, Campbell, Fluvanna, Greene, Nelson and Orange."

September is Hunger Action Month across the nation. Sinclair explains that Hunger Action Month is an important opportunity for the Food Bank to raise awareness of hunger

September
is Hunger Action
Month across
the nation.



Volunteers pack food boxes for seniors.

in the community. According to the Food Bank's website, the latest data reveals that 1-in-12 people living in the Blue Ridge area experience hunger, including 1-in-12 children.

Sinclair explains that the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank website is a great resource. "If someone needs food assistance, we have a Food Finder tool to help locate a food pantry nearby. If they have the means to do so and wish to donate, they can do that on our website as well."

Between July 2021 and June 2022, the Food Bank estimates it provided — with the help of generous donors and hardworking partners and volunteers — 20.8 million meals to those in need. That's about 7.2 million pounds of produce and 24.9 million pounds of food distributed. These numbers speak volumes about the impactful work being done at Blue Ridge Area Food Bank to deliver food — and hope.

"It all starts with food," Sinclair says. "Our mission is to make sure everyone has enough to eat. We believe that it all starts with good, nourishing food — and we want to help make sure that the people who need it get it." ●

► For more, visit brafb.org.



PHOTOS COURTESY BLUE RIDGE AREA FOOD BANK

CHOPTANK FIBER IS NOW OFFERING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Good News ...

Choptank Fiber is offering financial assistance to customers. We have been declared an approved Internet Service Provider (ISP) for federal and state programs that help families pay their monthly internet bills. Combining all three programs can reduce your internet subscription by \$60 per month. Choptank Fiber's 100 Mbps plan is marketed at \$84.95 per month. Once approved for the discounts, a family could get that for less than \$25 per month. That's very fast internet with no data caps. Faster packages are also available and applicable for the same discounts. Don't let economic stress prevent you and your family from participating in the wonders

of high-speed internet when Choptank Fiber gets to your rural address. Check out ways to qualify by logging onto the Choptank Fiber Discount page or call our Member Service Center. This is one more way the leaders and staff here at Choptank Electric Cooperative are working to serve our community.



Mike Malandro,
President & CEO
Choptank Electric
Cooperative

For more information and to see if you qualify

> www.choptankfiber.com/discounts

Chop-A-Watt Brings Relief to Low-to-Moderate Income Families

Members who qualify could receive up to \$7,000 in weatherization improvements to their home. This includes upgrades to water heaters, appliances, insulation and heating and cooling systems.

**For more information
and to see if you qualify** > www.choptankelectric.coop/chop-a-watt

2024 Annual Meeting Date Announced

Our Annual Meeting will be held on Thursday, April 25, 2024, in Salisbury, MD. Location details are pending and will be announced later this fall.



Offices Will Be Closed Monday, September 4, 2023

HAPPY LABOR DAY!!!



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I am the summer intern for the Marketing and Communications department here at Choptank Electric Cooperative. As such, I've been asked to write a little about what I'm studying, what I'm doing here at the Co-op and report on the activities of the other summer interns. When my internship is over, I will be a sophomore at Salisbury University studying business management and communications. I've lived on the Eastern Shore of Maryland my whole life. Choptank Electric Cooperative has always been active in my community, so I decided that I wanted to intern here when I was making decisions last winter.



Samantha Casale,
Government Affairs and
Public Relations Intern

As a business management major and communications minor, I knew that interning at Choptank Electric Cooperative would give me real-world experience that will help with job opportunities after I graduate.

During my brief time as the communications intern, I've already experienced so many great opportunities. I've been on jobsites and got to see how quickly and safely our crews are at restoring power to our members. Of course, I had the appropriate attire (a hard hat and a neon vest)! On my first day, I traveled to Cecil County to attend a ribbon-cutting ceremony

to celebrate a Choptank Fiber expansion. I have also attended and worked at the exhibit booth at fairs and festivals in Choptank's service territory.

I have always liked writing, especially about a topic I enjoy. When I was asked to draft this article, I was over the moon. All these opportunities have been wonderful, but the most amazing parts about working at this Cooperative are the people. From day one, I have witnessed just how much we put our members first here at Choptank Electric Cooperative.

My positive experience is mirrored by the four engineering interns spending the summer with us:



Owen Mank,
Engineering Intern

Owen Mank attends the University of Maryland, where he studies electrical engineering. He plans to specialize in renewable energy harvesting. He is interning for the RGrid fiber optic design team.

Owen heard about Choptank Electric through the school's student representative program, and he applied for this internship to get a more personal understanding of how power is distributed to regions.

His favorite parts of the internship so far are seeing the steps that go into designing the fiber optic grid and contributing to it by going into the field to get distances for

designing and tagging for pole change outs. He appreciates learning everything that must be considered in the design process. He hopes his internship experience will give him a more direct understanding of how power and internet distribution is achieved, which will be helpful if he decides to go into researching ways to improve it.

Owen hopes to go on to graduate school to achieve a doctorate in power systems/harvesting. He would also like to do research for the U.S. Department of Energy to further the ability to transition into cleaner energy sources to better protect our environment that we inhabit.



Justin Thompson,
Engineering Intern

Justin Thompson attends the University of Maryland, College Park, where he studies electrical engineering. Here at Choptank Electric, Justin interns with RGrid contractors and works on the fiber project.

As an engineering intern, Justin goes out into the field to get pole measurements and underground distances for the fiber construction and comes back into the office to design it. His favorite part of the internship so far is witnessing "behind the scenes" how power and fiber/internet gets delivered into homes. Justin finds it rewarding



Cooperative Interns

Summer of 2023

By Samantha Casale, Government Affairs and Public Relations Intern

to see our members get excited when they see our crew. "If we are out around their homes, they know it means they are getting close to fiber," he explains.

Justin hopes his internship experience brings more knowledge about power and fiber distribution. He also hopes to gain a better understanding of the business side of things and how co-ops and contractors work together.

Justin plans to graduate from the University of Maryland, College Park, next year and assume a position as an electrical engineer soon after.



Jordan Figueroa,
Engineering Intern

Jordan Figueroa attends Elizabethtown College where he studies electrical engineering. While at school, Jordan enjoys being a pole vaulter on the men's track team. He is interning for the engineering department working with RGrid contractors.

He believes interning at Choptank will be beneficial as he works to gain experience in his field of study.

Jordan's favorite parts about this internship so far has been building

professional relationships with Choptank and RGrid staff as well as developing skills for when he begins his career. Throughout the rest of his internship, Jordan hopes to learn more about how Choptank

"We have been very impressed with this group of local interns. These students are completing valuable work, bringing high speed internet to the Eastern Shore. One of the objectives of our internship program is to expose students to rewarding careers within the utility industry allowing them to stay in our local communities. We hope these students will consider keeping their incredible talent on the Shore."

– Leroy Sverduk,
Vice President of Engineering
Choptank Electric Cooperative

Fiber works. He would also like to learn more about the electrical distribution side of the business.

Jordan plans to graduate from Elizabethtown College in May of 2024.



Isaac Dressler,
Engineering Intern

Isaac Dressler attends Penn State where he studies electrical engineering. While looking for a way into the electrical engineering world, he got word that Choptank Electric would be a great place to start. Isaac says, "A co-op with a great reputation would be a great start to get my hands dirty." Isaac is interning for the electrical engineering department.

Isaac enjoys seeing the process unfold from the computer work and design, to witnessing that design become developed. He also enjoys the balance of fieldwork and office work, therefore being able to enjoy the outdoors as well. He hopes to learn more about how the infrastructure for power generation is designed and more about fiber optic communication.

Isaac plans to finish his degree in electrical engineering at Penn State and to explore jobs in that field of study. Though he is not specific on any field of this degree, Isaac says, "For now, I am happy receiving quality experience at Choptank Electric that will benefit me in the long run."



Dan Worell explains the different stages of an oyster's growth and how electricity plays an important role in his farming

Dan Worrell, founder and operator of Fallen Pine Oyster Farm, took a leap of faith right before the Covid-19 outbreak to start an oyster catering company, Shell and Barrell. Worell's passion started when he worked for the Oyster Recovery Partnership as a shell recovery technician, and as a nationally ranked competitive oyster shucker after college. "Being on the water, in intense environmental conditions, and producing a high-quality product can be overwhelming much of the time. However, improving overall water quality, highlighting the importance of this growing industry, and working the water like my great grandparents is well worth it," says

Worell. During 2021, he changed gears from catering to farming, when he found a gemstone of an existing oyster lease located in a remote area of Worcester County. Worell's oyster farm sits on the north shore of Brockat Norton Bay, which is a stone's throw away from Chincoteague Bay.

Requiring the use of single-phase and reliable power for his on-site refrigeration and oyster tumblers, Choptank Electric Cooperative was there to take the call. On a hot and humid August day in 2022, Worell was to receive a full truck load of 4' by 6' floating oyster cages that look like upside down pontoon boats. Employing a small army of



Nick Tyler takes great care in working the land and growing oysters

Separating the oysters by size, the tumbler is an important piece of Fallen Pines's equipment



Oyster Farming on Maryland's Eastern Shore

Fuels Member's Passion

By Matthew Teffeau, Manager Government Affairs and Economic Development

Fallen Pine's end product makes it all worth it

friends and family that day, he could not believe what transpired as a fuse box blew due to the harsh salty marsh environment. Within minutes, an outage was reported to Choptank and a crew was dispatched to his location. "If I were to pick one day I could not have a repair vehicle blocking our road, it was that specific day," Worell recalls. Deciding to break for lunch, Worell and his flotilla of large trucks returned to find that Choptank Electric's crew had completed the repair and restored power. "Not only was I relieved, but I have rarely been as impressed with the cooperation, and customer service that CEC provided."

Keeping the lights on and operating a small business like Fallen Pine Oyster Farm in a remote area is a 24/7 undertaking. Worell, like many, is driven to succeed in his endeavor to grow the oyster farming industry and build future infrastructure to help it grow. Maintaining the increase in demand for his oysters is his biggest challenge right now. The typical market-size oyster takes over two growing seasons (May to November) to achieve. "Growing oysters is a labor-intensive job, and nature doesn't always cooperate with market demands," Worell explains. "We must cultivate and check on the oysters daily before they are ready to go to market. Not

having reliable sources of energy would make the job impossible."

Worell's oysters, Salt Buoys and Wild Ass Ponies, come with a distinctive oceanic taste being so close to the Chincoteague Bay and Atlantic Ocean. He has labeled them as Maryland's saltiest oysters due to the elevated salinity levels from evaporation in the coastal bay. Bringing fresh products to local markets has been a long-standing tradition on Maryland's Eastern Shore. If you would like to learn more about Worell's operation, please visit www.fallenpineoystercompany.com.

HURRICANE HARDENING

Hurricane season in the United States runs June 1 through November 30. As the intensity and frequency of storms have increased over the past decade, electric cooperatives whose territories are vulnerable to hurricanes have worked to improve their systems to minimize damage and disruptions from high winds and flooding and speed recovery times. Here are some of the key measures that Choptank Electric Cooperative has taken to harden the grid.

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

Conduct regular trimming and removal of trees within rights-of-way

LIGHTNING ARRESTERS

Install devices that divert surges from lightning strikes to keep power flowing

Arrester

DA/FLISR

Deploy “self-healing” systems like distribution automation and fault location, isolation and service restoration to minimize the scope and duration of outages

Sensor

Cutout
fuse

WIRE UPGRADES

Replace standard conductor with larger-diameter, coated “tree wire” to resist damage from wind and tree limbs

Semiconducting
shield

POLE MANAGEMENT

Increase pole inspections and repairs and replace wood poles with higher-class wood, metal or concrete to better withstand strong winds

Deformed
rebar
Pre-stress
strand

Helical
wire

Spun
concrete

Internal
raceway...

UNDERGROUNDING

Move vulnerable sections of line underground to protect them from high winds and falling trees

Pad-mounted
transformer

Underground
power lines

Pole



Mobile Substation Ready

By Bobby Schaller, MultiMedia Manager

Our number one priority is to provide reliable, safe and affordable power to all of our 56,000 - plus members. With 6,369 miles of power line spanning The Eastern Shore of Maryland, there is no shortage of challenges to overcome in accomplishing our mission. Because of that, we are always preparing to meet those challenges that lie ahead.

This could mean changing out a damaged pole, clearing trees from out of a right-of-way or taking part in important training. Earlier this summer Choptank Electric Co-op, Delaware Electric Co-op and A&N Electric Co-op came together for training related to the connection of our mobile substation. In the event that we were to experience a substation transformer failure, this mobile substation provides us with the ability to move in, connect to the existing substation bus work and restore power to our members.

Sharing equipment and knowledge

among other cooperatives is important. Cooperation among cooperatives is one of the seven founding principles of co-ops. Simply put, we are able to serve our members most effectively by working together. Sharing

“We share this mobile substation with Delaware Electric Cooperative, so when they had a need for it, it just made perfect sense to use this as a training opportunity for all involved.”

– Lance Lockerman,
Vice President of Operations
Choptank Electric Cooperative

this mobile substation and the knowledge to run it makes the whole Delmarva Peninsula stronger.

Fortunately, we have only had to use



the mobile substation a handful of times over the years, and because of that we regularly familiarize and train with it to keep the knowledge fresh. With training, education and adopting new innovations, we have kept our work environment compliant and safe, making it easier for us to keep our members first, every day.

“Not only was I relieved, but I have rarely been as impressed with the cooperation and customer service that Choptank Electric Cooperative provided.”

– Choptank member Dan Worrell, of Fallen Pine Oyster Farm, speaking of a quick and timely repair.



Choptank Electric Trust Awards



The Choptank Electric Trust is a 501(c)(3) charitable foundation funded by Operation Round Up donations from members of Choptank Electric Cooperative. Funds from the Trust are distributed in all nine counties of MD's Eastern Shore. To apply or to find out more about this program:

> www.choptankelectric.coop/operation-round-trust-fund

July 2023

- Betterton VFC - \$2,374
- Tides of Grace - \$5,000

The total of approved applications for July was \$20,640, which included \$13,265 for individual home and medical expenses.



Choptank Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Choptank Electric, a Touchstone Energy Cooperative, is a not-for-profit, member-owned, electric distribution co-op serving approximately 56,000 residential, commercial and industrial members in all nine counties on Maryland's Eastern Shore.

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Choptank Fiber, LLC

Choptank Fiber, LLC, is a wholly owned broadband subsidiary of Choptank Electric Cooperative. Choptank Fiber's goal is to install true gigabit broadband with no data caps one community at a time until we serve all our members on the Eastern Shore.

Making a Positive Connection

Story courtesy of Family Features

Six small, kind gestures to make a big impact each day

Everywhere you look, you can see moments of kindness. From a friend sending a thoughtful text message to a stranger holding the bus for someone running late or a person paying for someone else's coffee, acts of kindness happen every day. While these moments can have a monumental impact on the person on the receiving end, they often go unrecognized.

A study published in the "Journal of Experimental Psychology" found that performing acts of kindness improves individual well-being and leads to more positive moods. At the same time, many people underestimate the impact their kindness may have on themselves and others.

To help foster positive connections among friends, family and communities, which the U.S. Surgeon General's advisory revealed can help reduce the risk of serious health conditions, people should consider ways to weave moments of kindness into their daily lives.

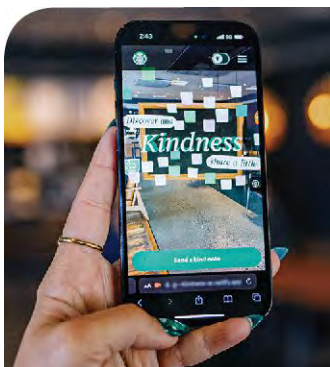
Here are a few simple ways to show kindness:

HOLD THE DOOR FOR STRANGERS

It may seem small, but holding the door for someone who is entering or exiting a building after you is a brief way to offer a helping hand and set off a contagious string of goodwill.

SEND A THOUGHTFUL SURPRISE

Sending someone a favorite treat, book or even a photo memory can provide a positive boost to not only the recipient, but the sender as well. To take this gesture one step further, have a gift delivered to a person you don't know but may need a thoughtful gesture — such as a basket to a soldier overseas or senior citizens in local nursing homes or assisted living facilities.



CELEBRATE AND SHARE KINDNESS ONLINE

So much of the world is connected via social media. To build positive connections online, seek out digital spaces or services that emphasize and inspire kindness, such as the Starbucks Kindness Mobile AR experience. By combining the real world with augmented reality, the experience invites people to

explore and share acts of kindness through notes inspired by real stories of kindness, photos, videos and Kindness Cards that can be shared on social media or by text message.

LOOK FOR VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteering time to local organizations, such as nursing homes, homeless shelters or food pantries, is an engaging and personal way to help those in your community.

BE KIND TO YOUR MIND

By practicing gratitude, compassion and kindness toward yourself, you can spark moments of kindness that are more genuine and intentional with others. Meditation invites calm and kindness, opening

the door to cultivating a more considerate relationship with mind, body and world.

"Experiencing kindness in the world begins with cultivating kindness toward ourselves," says Dora Kamau, mindfulness and meditation teacher at Headspace. "This week, try being kind to your mind and notice how this has a ripple effect on others and the world around you."

OFFER WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT AND GRATITUDE

Whether it be via a text, note or conversation in-person, words are a direct way to show kindness and help individuals feel seen, appreciated and respected. Depending on what the situation requires, providing a compliment or saying "thank you" can make a significant impact on someone's day. ●

Letting the Light In

by Miranda Boutelle, Contributing Columnist

Before looking into window replacement, assess the condition of your existing windows for opportunities to improve their efficiency.

Opening up to energy-efficient windows

Q: My windows are old and drafty, and I'm thinking about replacing them. Can you recommend a few options I should consider?

A: Upgrading or improving your windows is an important component of your home's energy efficiency.

A ccording to the Department of Energy, heat gain and loss through windows consume 25% to 30% of residential heating and cooling energy use.

Start by identifying the kind of windows you have. Are they single pane or double pane? Looking closely at the window's edge, you can see the number of windowpanes. Are the frames metal, wood or vinyl? Some manufacturers etch the make and model numbers in a corner of the glass, so you can look up the manufacturer for more information.

Single-pane windows and double-pane windows with metal frames are the least energy efficient. The lower the efficiency of your existing windows, the higher the potential for energy savings.

There are several options for improving your windows, ranging from replacement windows to storm windows to budget-friendly repairs.

WINDOW EFFICIENCY

Several components can make windows more efficient. High-quality frame materials insulate and reduce heat transfer. Two or more panes of glass with space in between (filled with air or gas) improve the window's insulation capability. Warm-edge spacers hold the panes of glass the proper distance apart and help insulate the edges of the panes. Low-emissivity coatings applied to the

glass can reflect infrared light, keeping the heat in during the winter and out during the summer.

Window efficiency is rated in U-factor and Solar Heat Gain Coefficient, or SHGC. U-factor measures heat transfer through the window, which relates to how well it insulates. The lower the U-factor, the more efficient the window. The SHGC measures how effectively the window blocks heat from the sun.

REPLACEMENT AND MAINTENANCE



If you want to replace your existing windows, I recommend shopping for Energy Star-certified windows. Energy Star sets specific U-factor and SHGC requirements based on your geography, so you get the best fit for your location. Replacement windows offer additional benefits, like improved operability and aesthetics. As with many industries, the window industry has been impacted by price increases over the past few years, so keep in mind, this can be an expensive upgrade.

Storm windows are a lower-cost solution for some homes. Traditional storm windows are made with clear glass. Low-emissivity storm windows have energy savings similar to replacement windows at about a third of the cost. Storm windows are mounted to the

interior or exterior and are available in operable styles, so you can still open and close your windows. Look for Energy Star-certified models.

If you want to maintain the historic architecture of your existing windows, Low-E storm windows are a great option. Some companies can refit your existing window frames with custom double-pane glass and weatherstripping.

As with any home improvement project, be sure to get multiple quotes to compare pricing and scope of work. You may find additional savings with rebates from your electric co-op, or state or federal tax credits for window upgrades.

If new windows or storm windows are not in the budget, your best bet is to maintain your existing windows. Keep the paint and caulking on the exterior in good condition. That will help prevent damage from the elements. Caulk around the inside trim, ensure window locks are installed properly and seal tight when locked. There are a variety of weatherstripping types for windows to keep drafts at bay.

Whether you replace or make improvements to what you have, adding efficiency to your windows will add year-round comfort to your home. ●

Miranda Boutelle writes on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Why have a stairlift when you can have a Homelift?

Stay in the home and neighborhood you love with a Stiltz Homelift.

WHY LIMIT YOURSELF?

Stairlifts were introduced in the 1920s, and not much has changed since. A stairlift has one use: to move you (and only you) between floors, slowly. And it fits in only one place: your staircase. Finally, a stairlift won't keep up with you as your mobility needs change over time. For example, a stairlift can't carry a walker or wheelchair.

THE MODERN SOLUTION

A Stiltz Homelift, on the other hand, is an affordable, modern Homelift that is so compact, it fits just about anywhere in your house. It requires no special machine room, no supporting walls, and runs off a standard home electrical outlet. One look at our unique freestanding rail system, and

you can tell right away why we're called "Stiltz"!

A Stiltz Homelift is 100% safe. The lift will not operate when the door is open, and sensors stop the lift cab if something is in the way. A battery backup lowers the lift cab in a power outage.

A Stiltz Homelift is versatile. Our elevators carry two people, or even a wheelchair. And the small footprint means they fit just about anywhere. Install your Homelift through the floor; in a stairwell, up to a landing — even inside a closet!

A Stiltz Homelift is clean and quiet. Our self-contained electric drive system is very quiet. No messy hydraulics, no noisy vacuum systems, no machine rooms required.

A Stiltz Homelift is an extra pair of hands. Move laundry, suitcases, groceries and vacuum cleaners — up and down between floors.

IT'S NEVER TOO SOON

Some Stiltz customers need a Homelift immediately. But others want to "future-proof" their homes for when the stairs become a challenge.

"I can't imagine what we'd do without it. I wish we had installed our Stiltz Homelift several years ago!"

— Mr. James, Roanoke VA

Did you know?

Falls are the leading cause of hospitalization for older adults in the US. More than a quarter of Americans age 65+ fall each year. The average hospital cost for a fall injury is \$35,000.



HOMELIFT SPECIALISTS

Stiltz is one of the world's leading Homelift manufacturers, so you'll be in good hands. Your elevator will be installed and maintained by Stiltz trained professionals — expert technicians who truly care about your freedom.

Why choose Stiltz?

- Affordable
- Small Footprint
- Full Safety Features
- Clean, Quiet Operation
- Low Power Consumption
- Freestanding Design
- Wheelchair Accessible
- Carry Laundry or Pets
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Call 1-833-521-4340

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Stiltz
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Adorable baby animals are among the fan favorites at the State Fair of Virginia.

Our Fair Your Way®

by Alice Kemp, Virginia Farm Bureau Federation

Explore the fun at the State Fair of Virginia

There's no shortage of things to do at the State Fair of Virginia. This year's theme, "Your Fair, Your Way," encourages guests to create their own exciting fair adventures.



The State Fair will be held Sept. 22 through Oct. 1 at The Meadow Event Park in Caroline County. The 10-day event will feature a thrilling mix of attractions, food, rides and exhibitions — all while honoring Virginia agriculture and natural resources.

"2023 is a celebration of the many ways fairgoers enjoy the event," says Marlene Jolliffe, the fair's executive director. "We wouldn't be who we are today without our loyal fairgoers who create traditions and have their own approach to what makes their visit special."

Among the experiences from which fairgoers can choose are new acts like Dan-Dan the Farmer Man's comedy show and the Cast in Bronze bell carillon, a unique musical experience featuring the world's largest and heaviest musical instrument.

"We continue to expand our grounds attractions and entertainment so guests can build their fair adventure the way they want," Jolliffe says.

Returning crowd-pleasers include two nights of Revenge Roughstock Rodeo Company's adrenaline-pumping professional bull riding, bronc riding and barrel racing, and families can root for their favorite speedy swine at the famed Rosaire's Royal Racers track.

Master chainsaw carver Ben Risney will wow guests by sculpting logs into one-of-a-kind masterpieces, with some auctioned off to benefit the fair's scholarship program.

The fair also showcases the best of Virginia, featuring hundreds of unique creations from talented Virginia artisans, cooks and crafters, with winning entries for baking, quilting, woodworking and metalsmithing displayed.

Families can visit Young MacDonald's Farm on the fair's south side to interact with farm animals and see the iconic duck slide and chick incubator. Guests also can experience hands-on farm fun at the petting zoo in Harvest Landing.

On the main stage, the fair will host a variety of performances for music lovers, starring Motown tribute Brencore Allstars Band, country legend John Anderson, new country artist Megan Moroney and more. The Crooked Road series also returns, featuring musicians from Virginia's Heritage Music Trail in Southwest Virginia.

After exploring the grounds and taking a spin on carnival rides, indulge in fair food cravings from traditional funnel cakes and turkey legs to new treats like crabcake eggrolls and dessert turtle beignets.

Interested in feasting on local fare? Check out the fair's first-ever "Taste of Virginia," a ticketed event for sampling Virginia foods and beverages prepared by chefs in the historic Meadow Hall. Ticket proceeds will benefit the fair's scholarship program and Virginia Agriculture in the Classroom.

And what would a fair be without a fun, educational peek into Virginia agriculture? Families can learn all about the state's largest private business sector at the commodities pavilion; see gargantuan pumpkins, watermelons and squashes in the horticulture tent; and witness all kinds of equine and livestock exhibits and competitions.

Mark your calendar and make it a fair to remember. ●

► For ticket and entertainment information, visit statefairva.org.

Additional live updates can be found by following the fair on Facebook at facebook.com/statefairva and Instagram at [statefairva](https://instagram.com/statefairva).

PHOTOS COURTESY FARM BUREAU



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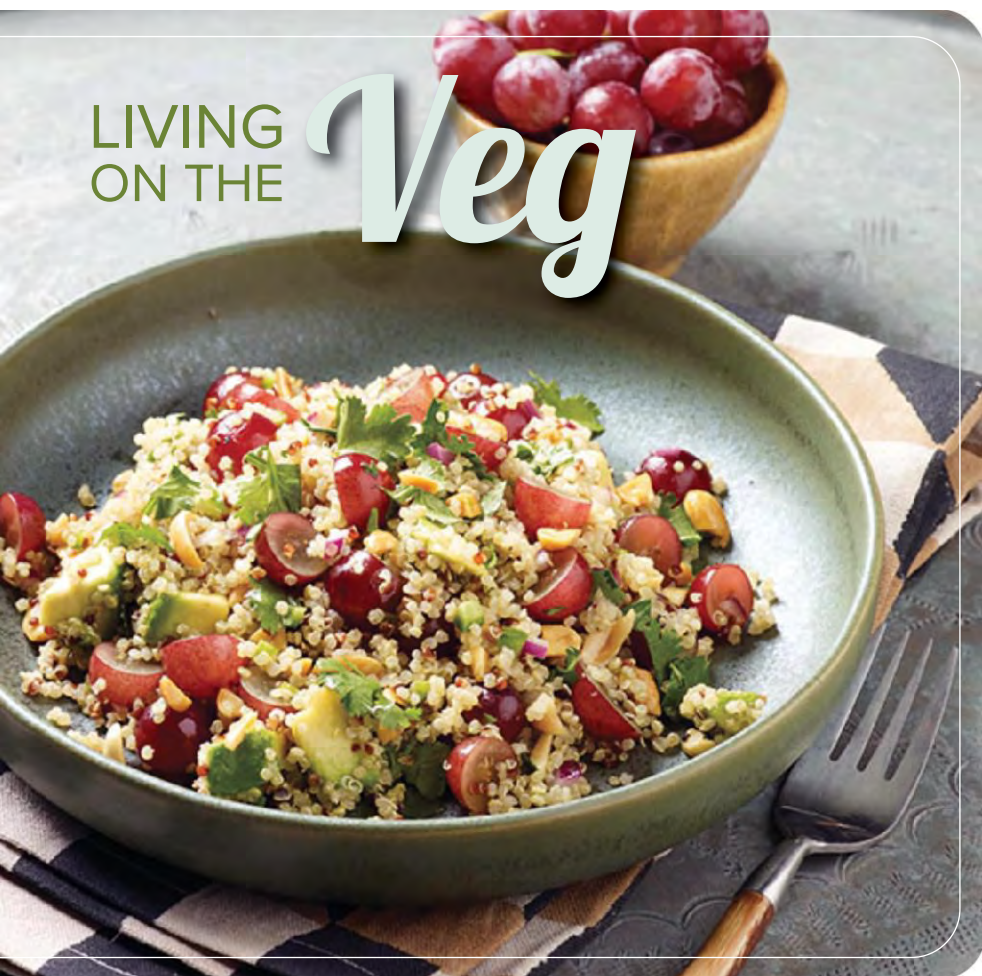
We support worthy causes like local Virginia food banks and the Agriculture in the Classroom program.

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LIVING
ON THE

Veg



Honey-Lime Quinoa and Grape Salad

Recipe courtesy of Culinary.net/grapesfromcalifornia.com

Ingredients:

Lime Vinaigrette:

½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
⅓ cup lime juice
2 tablespoons honey
¾ teaspoon sea salt
freshly ground pepper, to taste

Salad:

1 ½ cups quinoa
2 cups vegetable broth
2 cups grapes, halved
½ cup red onion, minced
¼ cup fresh cilantro, chopped
2 tablespoons jalapeno pepper, minced
1 large firm ripe avocado, peeled, pitted
and cut into bite-size pieces
½ cup peanuts, chopped (optional)



●●●●●●●● **To make lime vinaigrette:** In medium bowl, whisk all ingredients, to taste.

To make salad: In fine-mesh strainer, rinse quinoa; drain well. In medium saucepan, bring broth and quinoa to boil; reduce heat and simmer, covered, 12 minutes. Remove from heat and let stand 10 minutes, then fluff with fork and let cool. Transfer to large bowl. Pour vinaigrette over quinoa; stir well to coat. Add grapes, onion, cilantro and jalapeno pepper; cover and chill at least 1 hour. Lightly stir in avocado and transfer to decorative bowl. Sprinkle with nuts, if desired.

Notes: Salad may be prepared and refrigerated up to 2 days ahead without avocado and peanuts. Add avocado and peanuts just before serving.

Bow Tie Pasta Salad

Recipe courtesy of Wendy Lankford



PHOTO COURTESY
BOWL-ME-OVER.COM



16 oz. bow tie pasta	½ cup vegetable oil
1 green pepper	⅓ cup ketchup
1 red pepper	⅔ cup sugar
1 red onion	¼ cup vinegar
1 cucumber	1 teaspoon salt
2 tomatoes	½ teaspoon pepper
1 teaspoon paprika	

●●●●●●●● Cook pasta according to package directions; drain and cool. Chop veggies and put in pasta. Mix remaining ingredients and pour over pasta. Stir often as you marinate in refrigerator for several hours before serving.

Waldorf Salad

Recipe courtesy of Vicki Lewis

Ingredients:

⅓ cup light mayonnaise
¼ cup light sour cream
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 teaspoon honey
¼ teaspoon salt
3 apples, peeled and diced
1 rib celery, diced
½ cup walnuts, chopped
⅓ cup raisins



PHOTO COURTESY DOTTASH
MEREDITH FOOD STUDIOS

●●●●●●●● Mix the first 5 ingredients with whisk until blended. Combine apples, celery, walnuts and raisins. Pour mayo mixture over and stir to combine. Refrigerate until ready to use.

Got a tasty treat to share?

Email your favorite recipes to cooperativekitchen@co-opliving.com, or mail to Cooperative Kitchen, c/o Cooperative Living, P.O. Box 2340, Glen Allen, VA 23058-2340 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* 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.

Actions Speak Louder

Good Samaritan Award recipient earns praise for acts of kindness

by Preston Knight, Contributing Writer

Holly Roberts takes the stage for a photo, but before her camera-ready smiles come the cheerful greetings of another woman.

She wants Roberts to know how much she loves the new pair of tennis shoes just presented to her. They feel great, she reports, and to the untrained fashion eye, one could surmise she probably digs the green soles, too.

When Roberts later explains how her healing process is made easier because of what she learns from those she helps, it's apparent the stage chat was more than a tiny interaction in passing.

"[They teach me] happiness, joy, satisfaction, just love and care, and to know there is good in the community, good in people. It's not all bad," she says. "Just helping them a little, they're very appreciative for something we take for granted. It's so rewarding. Some of these people, this will be the new pair of shoes they get for the year."

Roberts, whose nonprofit organization, Love to NIC, provides meals and clothing — most notably, shoes — to homeless populations in Winchester and around the country, is the recipient of the 2023 Good Samaritan Award from the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives. Her home co-op, Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative, nominated her for the honor, which is described as recognizing someone's contributions as being a "gold standard" example of philanthropic community service.

Co-op officials surprised Roberts with the award in July as she was handing out food, socks and shoes at WATTS, the Winchester Area Temporary Transitional Shelter.



"This is amazing," she said among happy tears at the presentation. "This is absolutely perfect."

'ANGEL' AMONG US

Love to NIC stands for nurture, inspire and comfort, but also refers to Roberts' son, Nic, who died in a car crash in 2015. Nic suffered from schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. Roberts says the overwhelming number of homeless residents in Winchester with some form of mental illness led her to support this demographic through a nonprofit organization. It's always doubled as a way for her to heal from the loss of her son and carry on his spirit.

"She's the angel I never knew I needed," WATTS Executive Director Robyn Miller says.

Love to NIC's impact reaches beyond the Shenandoah Valley. Each year, Roberts and a small team of volunteers travel to a new major city to help homeless organizations, with food, new clothing and, of course, shoes in tow.

Roberts selects a city in conjunction with the Minnesota Vikings' away schedule around the time of Nic's birthday on Dec. 6. Nic was a diehard



PHOTO BY PRESTON KNIGHT

Holly Roberts, left, and volunteer Jessica Carver prepare a taco meal for visitors at WATTS, the Winchester Area Transitional Shelter.

Vikings fan, a trait passed down from his mother. This year, Love to NIC will head to Las Vegas.

At WATTS, Roberts says providing meals, socks and shoes is "the least we can do to help them." Her attention goes to one man nearby who she says approached her last year, saying he thought of her and her son. Once again, it quickly became clear this was no small, forgettable interaction.

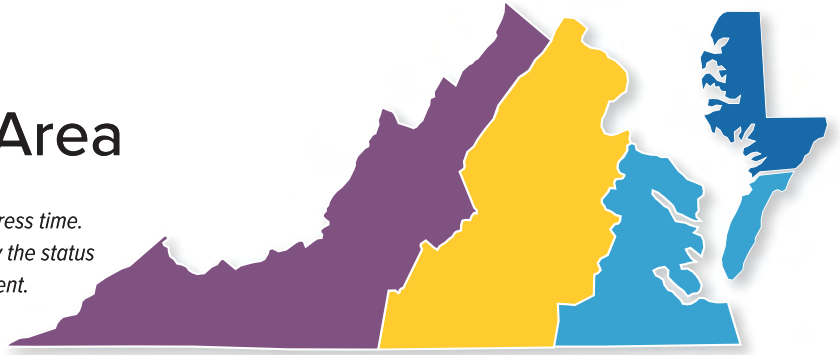
This sounded like a moment fitting of an award-worthy Good Samaritan. "He wanted me to know, 'I walk across the field and my feet are dry because I got winter boots that are waterproof,'" Roberts says. "It's the little things that make such a big impact on them. It doesn't take much to be kind to them." ●



► For more information, visit lovetonic.org.

Events Around the Area

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



BLUE RIDGE WEST

SEPTEMBER

16 LURAY. 2nd Annual Walk for Mental Health. Bulldog Field. 9 a.m.-12 p.m. (540) 742-8215.

16 LURAY. Car and Truck Show. Mount Carmel Christian Academy. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. (540) 743-5645. Thymey28785@mypacks.net.

21-23 CLEAR BROOK. 19th Annual Tri-State Antique Truck Show. Frederick County Fairgrounds. (540) 478 4389. Tri-state-antiquetruckshow.com.

23 FINCASTLE. Fall Festival. Town of Fincastle. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Lbolton5115@gmail.com.

30 MIDDLETOWN. FallFest. Richard's Fruit Market. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Nsvmg.org.

OCTOBER

6-8 HIGHLAND CO. Hands & Harvest Festival. Highlandcounty.org.

14 NEW CASTLE. Craig County Fall Festival. Main Street. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. (540) 864-7023.

PIEDMONT

SEPTEMBER

15-17 AMELIA. Field Day of the Past. 11404 Circle Drive. (804) 741-8468. Fielddayofthepast.net.

16 CHATHAM. Climax Sorghum Festival. 110 Climax Elementary Circle. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. (434) 432-9341.

16-17 CULPEPER. Culpeper Harvest Days Farm Tour. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Culpeperfarmtour.com.

23 KING GEORGE. Oktoberfest. St. Paul's Episcopal Church. 3-8 p.m. Stpaulskgva.org.

23 KEYSVILLE. Miss Janie's Sit & Sip Wine Festival-Barksdale Cancer Foundation. Osborne Street Park. 12-6 p.m. Barksdalecancerfou.wixsite.com/mysite.

23 CULPEPER. 4th Annual "Day of Giving" Giant Yard Sale. MinuteMan MiniMall. 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

30 SPOTSYLVANIA. 325th Anniversary of the Fredericksburg Dog Mart. 12400 Herndon Rd. 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Fredericksburgdogmart.com.

30 CHASE CITY. Jazz in the Garden – Theo Scott. MacCallum More Museum & Gardens. 3-6 p.m. (434) 372-0502.

30 SOUTH BOSTON. Harvest Festival. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. (434) 575-4208. Downtownsobo.com. Info@downtownsobo.com.

30 WOODVILLE. John Jackson Piedmont Blues Festival. Eldon Farms, 4432 Sperryville Pike. 11 a.m.-8 p.m. Facebook: John Jackson Piedmont Blues Festival.

OCTOBER

6 BOYDTON. First Fridays on the Porch: Sit and Sip. Boyd Tavern & Visitors Center. 5-9 p.m. Robbrawles@gmail.com. Boydtavern.net.

6-8 DINWIDDIE. Dinwiddie County Fair. Virginia Motorsports Park. Dinwiddieva.us.

7 FREDERICKSBURG. Fredericksburg Fall Fairy Festival. Revatone Farm. 11 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Fxbgfallfairydragonfestival.com.

7 MADISON. Friends of the Madison County Library Community Yard Sale. 404 N. Main St. 8 a.m.-12 p.m. (540) 948-4720.

7 MANASSAS. Craft/Vendor Show. Marshall Center. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Moorebzebal@aol.com.

7-11 CHANTILLY. Prelude to Fall at the Gardens. National Botanic Garden. 12-5 p.m. Nationalbotanicgarden.org.

14 MANASSAS. Manassas Chorale Fall Concert. Hylton Performing Arts Center. 4 p.m. Manassaschorale.org.

14 LOUISA. St. James Fall Festival. 102 Ellisville Dr. 8 a.m.-1 p.m. Stjameslouisia.org.

14 FARMVILLE. Antique Fire Apparatus Muster. 1623 W. Third St. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Odhfs.org.

TIDEWATER

SEPTEMBER

16 EXMORE. Exmore Fall Fest. Exmore Town Park. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Facebook.com/epworthumcexmore.

22-23 EMPORIA. Virginia Peanut Festival. (434) 634-9441. (434) 637-1739. Virginiapeanutfestival.com.

OCTOBER

7 CHINCOTEAGUE. 50th Annual Chincoteague Oyster Festival. Tom's Cove Park. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Chincoteaguechamber.com.

MARYLAND

SEPTEMBER

17 EASTON. Cars and Coffee. 355 Glebe Rd. (410) 463-0542. Djtrans100@outlook.com.

30 CRISFIELD. 2nd Annual Crisfield Heritage Festival. Somers Cove Marina and Tawes Museum. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Crisfieldheritage.org.

30-1 SNOW HILL. Furnace Town Renaissance Faire. Furnace Town Living Heritage Village. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Events@furnacetown.org.

OCTOBER

1 EASTON. Cars and Coffee. 355 Glebe Rd. (410) 463-0542. Djtrans100@outlook.com.

7 POCOMOKE CITY. Chesapeake Mermaid at Storybook Saturday. Delmarva Discovery Museum. 12-2 p.m. Delmarvadiscoverycenter.org.

14 POCOMOKE CITY. Shrimp Fest. Pocomoke City Elks Lodge. 6-11 p.m. (410) 957-9933.

PRINT DEADLINES: Oct. 1 for Nov. 15-Dec. 31
Nov. 1 for Jan. 15-Feb. 28

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and Bears, Oh My!

by Margo Oxendine, Contributing Columnist

Cool weather, grizzlies and men all needed in Southwest Virginia



I don't know what to write about this month. It's September and we have all just endured the hottest summer ever. As has the rest of the world.

Here in rural Southwest Virginia, I have tried not to complain much about the heat. Not when I see it may be 84 here, but 118 elsewhere in our country. Also, here we haven't been hit with tornadoes or, say, 8 inches of pouring rain in an hour. So really, I should have no complaints at all about the heat. And yet, I do.

At least the way my house is situated, it is cool inside most of the time. That's not so great in the dead of winter, but boy, has it been nice this summer. I don't have an air conditioner. Well, I do, but for me it requires the help of a man to lift it and insert it in the window. As I've said before, I keep waiting for a man to stop by, but that doesn't ever seem to happen.

I guess that's a good thing since if I'm

at home in summer, I am usually in my pajamas. I have lots and lots of pajamas, and they are the coolest clothes I have, in every way but the fashion sense. And who needs to be fashionable at home? Especially if no man is stopping by?

I am really glad to have ceiling fans in almost every room though, and a small fan on my screened porch. I make do with those, and my cool pajamas. (By the way, I don't wear the same pair day and night. There's no better feeling than a fresh pair of pajamas after a cool shower.)

I've found that if I don't take my walk by 10 a.m., I do well to wait until 7:30 p.m. It's still hot then, but at least the infernal sun isn't baking down on me at that hour.

Of course, the wildlife thinks the same way. It's about dusk when the bears and the deer also begin to venture out of the woods. I keep looking and looking, but I have not spotted one bear in more than a year. Where the heck are they? And do I honestly really want

to encounter them?

The other thing I was musing about writing this month is the whole "back to school" buzz.

I discovered this in Walmart last week, when

mother after mother pushed past me with carts heaped with notebooks, pens, crayons, markers, glue sticks and reams of lined paper. If I read the list of necessary school supplies in the newspaper correctly, it even includes Kleenex Wet Wipes and a change of clothing. Geez! No wonder these kids are weighed down with backpacks that seem to weigh as much as the children wearing them.

I understand that many teachers, tired of begging for supplies from school boards, simply throw up their hands and decide to buy the supplies themselves. That is a darn shame. But, as we all know, teachers are dedicated souls who care very much about their students. Sadly, they now have to foot the bill. It's especially sad considering the comparatively paltry salaries they're paid. Go, teachers!

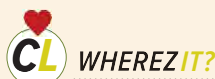
I've loved many of you over the years! Thank you for caring!

Now ... I only hope the local schools are air-conditioned. ●

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.



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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*, P.O. Box 2340, Glen Allen, VA 23058-2340 or go online at co-opliving.com under "Contests." Deadline is **Sept. 20**. The winner will receive a \$25 Amazon email gift card.

T ●●●●●●●●●● Longevity

by Peggy Hyland, Contributing Columnist



Stanton's Zynodoa stands the test of time

Nestled in historic downtown Stanton, Zynodoa Restaurant will transport you to another world. Stepping off the quaint city sidewalk next to the theater, diners enter a sleek, modern setting. The walls are decorated with local artwork, as well as a list of the farmers who provide the farm-to-table food that Zynodoa is known for.

The bar area is warm and welcoming, with imaginative cocktails and mocktails served up by staff with remarkable combined longevity. One bartender told me she has been there 11 years, which speaks volumes about the establishment and its clientele. The wine list is well-sourced, with a solid emphasis on Virginia vineyards.

The knowledgeable staff is happy to guide you through your options. We started with the bruléed cast-iron cornbread. I could happily make a meal out of that on its own. The top was crispy and the inside had the perfect texture, and it went beautifully with Concord grape jelly and European-style whipped butter, both from nearby farms. I love beets, so I moved on to the Van Deesel Farm beet salad, which had two kinds of beets and goat cheese (always a match made in heaven) with spicy arugula. My companion opted for the Virginia blue crab fritters, which were incredible. Their pillowy texture was enhanced by a spicy remoulade.

My main course was the Polyface Farm vinegar-braised chicken, which also featured Edwards Smoked Surrey Sausage. It was done in a style reminiscent of gumbo, so the flavors and spices shone without the vinegar taking over. The pickled fennel on top was a delight, and the entire dish was swoon-worthy.

My dinner companion went for the Burner's Beef tomahawk ribeye, which comes with a thorough provenance to the beef farm and their herd, dating back to the 1970s. The care given to the cattle is obvious with every bite, as this ribeye was some of the best beef I have ever eaten. The exterior had a flawless crust, the interior was melting without excessive marbling, and the black garlic steak sauce gave it all a smooth balance. It came with perfectly mashed potatoes and incredible zucchini that was almost caramelized.

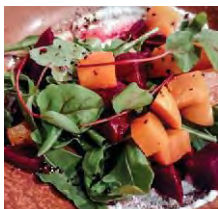
Stuffed from our meal, we debated skipping dessert. Our server talked us into the elephant heart plum and cheese tart, saying it was the perfect size to split. He was right, and it was just the right size to end the meal. Topped with fresh mint, the tart had the perfect crumble and was not too sweet.

While not specifically a gluten-free restaurant, Zynodoa has plenty of top-notch gluten-free options, as well as delicious vegetarian offerings. They also have pre-show seating times for the adjacent Dixie Theater. On weekends, the street is closed to vehicle traffic and outdoor seating is available. ●

Bruléed cornbread



Beet salad



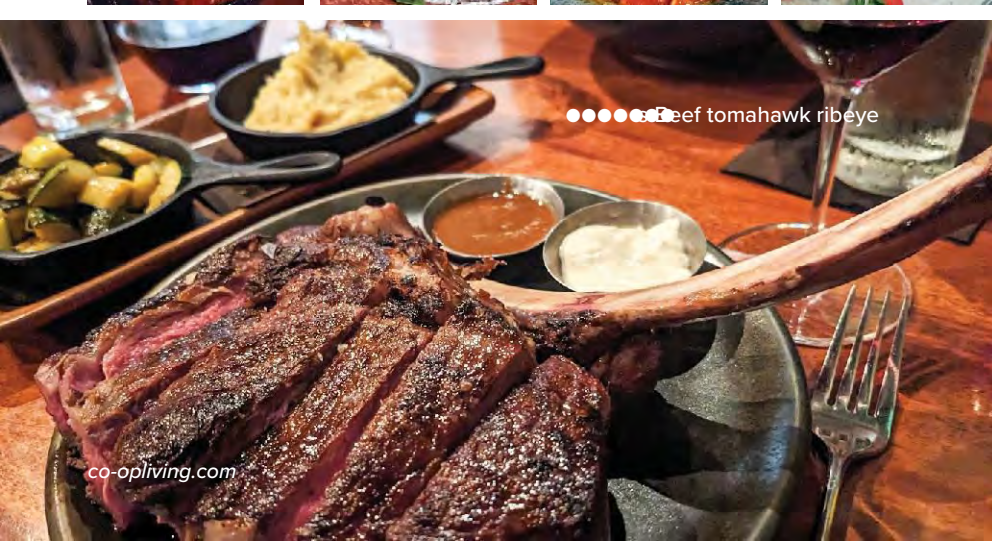
Vinegar-braised



Plum and cheese tart



●●●●●●●●●● Beef tomahawk ribeye



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ATTRACTIONS

DINOSAUR KINGDOM II. Natural Bridge – 5781 S. Lee Hwy. Fun for all ages. Weekends 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Get tickets at dinosaurkingdom2.com or on the website!

VENDORS NEEDED

FALL FESTIVAL. Fairfield's Methodist Church will host its 24th annual Fall Festival from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Oct. 28 on the church grounds, 14741 Northumberland Hwy., Burgess. The festival will feature collectibles, indoor yard sale (including furniture), homemade Brunswick stew and apple butter, baked goods and hot dogs/chips/drinks. Music, clowns and extensive promotion will be provided. For a vendor application, contact Dottie Longest at 804-370-0603 or dottielongest@atlanticbb.net.

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

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KEEPIN' IT REEL!

by Laura Emery, Staff Writer



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AN AMAZING CAST ▶

Three generations of Reed men enjoy fishing together, along with Gus, the dog.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY KAREN REED



◀ TOTALLY HOOKED

Stephanie is proud of her first catch.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY TRACY GREENWOOD



AIDING AND A-BAITING ▼

Grand-dogs Stella and Roy wait patiently for the big catch.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY ROYAL AND KATHRYN SAUFLEY



▲ THE RODFATHER

Emma enjoys fishing with her reely cool dad, Mark.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY LINDSEY MOHLER



◀ ANY FIN IS POSSIBLE

Chase caught his first catfish at Lake Wesley.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY JOHN AND KRISTEN ARGONIS



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