



arkansas **living**

OCTOBER 2017

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Blues festival, cultural center tell Delta story

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ARKANSAS STATE FAIR

on the cover

This painting of an iconic photo of legendary bluesman Sonny Boy Williamson is part of the Levee Wall Blues Mural in Helena-West Helena.

Photo by Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism



TARA DICKSON

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BY SHEILA YOUNT

October in Arkansas is a delightful time with cool temperatures, colorful leaves and football games. In the Arkansas Delta town of Helena-West Helena, it's also "King Biscuit Time," when thousands of blues fans gather to celebrate the region's rich blues history at the King Biscuit Blues Festival, set for Oct. 5-7.

John Lyon, a Little Rock-based writer and blues fan, recently visited the site of the festival and the Delta Cultural Center, located in downtown Helena-West Helena. He provides an update on this year's line-up, along with its history and other interesting facts about the area in this month's cover story, starting on page 8.

If you drive north from Helena-West Helena along the Mississippi River, you will reach another special Delta town focused on tourism — Wilson, population 903. Jenny Boulden, Arkansas Living's associate editor, recently took a trip there and writes about it in the "Worth the Drive" feature, starting on page 20. One of the town's special draws is the Wilson Cafe, which you can read about in the "Let's Eat" feature on page 44.

October in Arkansas is state fair time as well, and we are pleased to once again provide a preview of the fair, as well as a coupon for \$2 off of admission (page 18). We are

sharing the coupon with you as part of the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas' sponsorship of the fair.

In keeping with the historic theme this month, North Little Rock-based freelancer Rob Moritz is back with a feature on the Ozark community of Arlberg, which was once a booming Ozarks railroad town (page 16), while former Kentucky Living Editor Paul Wesslund provides a review of a new book about the role of the electric co-ops in the Vietnam War on page 26.

To learn more about what's going on at your local electric co-op, be sure to check out your local co-op's pages (pages 24-25), marked with a green "My Co-op" tab to help you locate them more easily. You receive this magazine as part of your electric co-op membership. The electric co-ops' business principles call for keeping members informed about issues related to the electric co-ops and the electric utility industry. In addition, we show our commitment to our communities, another co-op principle, by promoting all things Arkansas!

Until next month, get out and travel Arkansas and listen to some blues as you drive down the highway.

Happy reading!

Sheila Yount
editor@aeci.com



Hurricane heroes

Arkansas electric co-ops help restore power in Irma's aftermath

BY DUANE HIGHLEY

One definition of a hero is a person who, when there is trouble, runs toward it rather than away from it. Last month, 174 electric co-op lineworkers from Arkansas did just that, volunteering to travel to Florida, South Carolina and Georgia to help restore power following Hurricane Irma.

These lineworkers endure some pretty tough conditions, often with very limited support. They go in with their own tools and equipment, food and water, prepared to stay for an indefinite period. They work long days in difficult conditions, and when they finally get rest, they sometimes have to sleep in their trucks because there are no better facilities available to accommodate them.

I'm glad that Arkansas' electric co-op employees are eager to help their neighbors in need. After all, in 2009, when a devastating ice storm turned off the lights for tens of thousands of Arkansans, workers in other states mobilized to help us.

It is a measure of today's society and its near-complete dependence on reliable, affordable electric power that most press reports from the hurricane disaster led with two facts: first and foremost, the human cost in terms of lives lost due to the storms, and second, the number experiencing the loss of electric power. Think about that: No. 1, lives lost; No. 2, power lost. Our society cannot function without electric power. This is a huge responsibility for all of us in the electric power business, and one we take seriously.

In times of trouble, heroes across our nation rush to help. I was in Dallas at the onset of Hurricane Harvey, and there I saw hundreds of first responders staged and ready, impatient for the storm to abate so they could roll in to begin their rescue work. Seeing their enthusiasm and eagerness to help gave me a new pride in humanity.

In both Harvey and Irma, our federal government at the highest levels engaged in daily calls with utility leaders to coordinate the restoration of electric service. In both events the electric utility sector had a direct line to the president's cabinet, and every request, be it for fuel, or travel permits, or aerial inspections was met with immediate response. Their concern was gratifying, but their prompt action was most impressive and undoubtedly saved lives and reduced outage times.

No one wants disasters, but disasters can give us a glimpse of the best of humanity. Michael Novak, an American Catholic philosopher, journalist, novelist and diplomat, said, "Love is not a feeling of happiness; it is a willingness to sacrifice." Through their actions, our brave linemen have shown us the truest measure of their love. ■

Duane Highley is president and CEO of Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., (AECI) and Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation (AECC). AECI, a statewide service co-op, and AECC, a wholesale power supply co-op, are owned by Arkansas' 17 local electric distribution co-ops, which provide retail electric service to more than 1 million members.



Forgot your password?

Expert tips for remembering the keys to your computer

Setting complex passwords and changing them often may be a top cybersecurity recommendation, but how do you keep track of the darn things?

Spend some time finding a way that works for you, suggests a panel of cybersecurity experts at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). They don't offer one perfect solution. It's more important, they say, to use a technique that works for you. Here are a few ideas to consider.

Make the password something you can remember, like the initials to a familiar phrase or a line from a favorite poem or song. To change the password every few months, move to the next line or verse. Add a memorable number to make the password more complex. Software applications are available to keep track of passwords, but you'll need a password to access that app. For that master password, you could use a feature being offered by more and more devices — using your fingerprint instead of a password. Here are some other tips to make sure you are cyber-secure.

- **Keep software updated**

Notices of updates don't just add flashy features to your apps — they often add security patches to protect against new security threats. Updates usually come automatically from the software company, whether it's for the computer, mobile device operating system, one of the many functional apps (like Facebook) or a link to your favorite sports team. But take a level of caution on updates as well. You can check regularly for updates either from your device or by going to the application's website.

- **Don't click on any link or attached files unless you know where it will take you**

A lot of the computer hacking problems you hear about in the news result from people clicking on links or attached files that infect their computers or your mobile devices. An email can even be disguised to look like it's coming from your best friend, so simple diligence can be extremely beneficial. Take a moment and move your cursor over a link to reveal the full address before clicking it. You'll see a lot of confusing symbols, but you should also be able to recognize the name of the legitimate source. If you don't, find another way to verify the link.

- **Install and use virus protection**

Buy your anti-virus software from one of the major recognized companies, and make it a subscription-type service that regularly sends automatic updates.

- **Don't use flash drives**

Those little thumb drives or jump drives you insert into your USB port may be handy ways to share lots of photos or other large documents, but as your mother might say, you don't know where they've been. These portable memory devices have been another common way computers get infected with damaging software. Instead, learn to use Dropbox or other software solutions for transferring large files.

- **Back up your devices**

Make sure you have a current copy of everything on your computer or mobile device. Every few weeks, transfer your contents to an external storage system that you then unplug from your computer. You can buy an external hardware drive or online storage designed just for this purpose. To learn more, visit www.staysafeonline.org.

Source: National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

Cyber Hygiene Checklist

Clip and save this cybersecurity checklist to keep your computer and devices secure.

- Passwords are complex, using a mix of upper and lower-case letters and special characters.
- All software is up to date. *(Check for automatic updates.)*
- Anti-virus software is installed and up to date.
- All devices are backed up to an external storage system. *(Back up devices every few weeks.)*
- Preset passwords on all internet-connected devices, like smart TVs and fitness bracelets, have been changed to passwords only I know.
- Parental controls have been set on hardware and software to keep kids safe while browsing the internet.

October is
National Cybersecurity Awareness Month.
For more cybersecurity tips, visit
www.staysafeonline.org.



Arkansas co-op crews help restore power after Hurricane Irma

In true co-op fashion, Arkansas' electric co-ops sent crews to help their sister co-ops in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma last month. Arkansas' co-ops dispatched 174 linemen to assist electric cooperatives in Florida, South Carolina and Georgia with major power outage restoration efforts.

Eventually, about 5,000 line crews from 25 states helped restore power in the face of more than 1.4 million outages in the three most negatively impacted states, with Florida bearing the brunt of the damage.

Kevin Riddle, who coordinates mutual aid assistance arrangements for the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas, said he worked closely with cooperatives in Florida, South Carolina, Georgia and other affected states, as the hurricane approached. He coordinated the effort for Arkansas electric co-op crews once the storm passed.

As of press time on Sept. 20, most Arkansas co-op crews had completed their missions, while 45 men of the Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., (AECI) Construction Department were still assisting members of Florida Keys Electric Cooperative with power restoration.

Arkansas electric cooperative crews that assisted in the restoration efforts included linemen from: Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., of Little Rock; Carroll Electric Cooperative of Berryville; C & L Electric Cooperative of Star City; Clay County Electric Cooperative of Corning; Craighead Electric Cooperative of Jonesboro; First Electric Cooperative of Jacksonville; North Arkansas Electric Cooperative of Salem; Ouachita Electric Cooperative of Camden; Ozarks Electric Cooperative of Fayetteville; South Central Arkansas Electric Cooperative of Arkadelphia; Southwest Arkansas Electric Cooperative of Texarkana; and Woodruff Electric Cooperative of Forrest City.



Two special Marathon, Florida, residents at the Dolphin Research Center express their gratitude to Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., (AECI) linemen Micah Curtis, Payton Duncan and Mike Matty for their work to restore service to Florida Keys Electric Cooperative members.



Electric cooperative linemen from 13 Arkansas electric cooperatives assisted in power restoration efforts in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina.

trivia

- Returning from the moon, Apollo astronauts Neil Armstrong, Michael Collins and Buzz Aldrin had to fill out U.S. Customs forms, just like any other traveler. The items they declared included moon rocks, moon dust and other samples.
- German engineers have successfully created sideways elevators that work by magnetic levitation rather than cables.
- On Oct. 25, 1863, Union Col. Powell Clayton's garrison at Pine Bluff was attacked by Confederate Brigadier Gen. John S. Marmaduke's cavalry. The attack, known as The Action at Pine Bluff, failed to capture the garrison. Marmaduke later reported, "My troops performed well. The Federals fought like devils."
- Despite widespread internet claims that flamingo egg yolks are the same pink color as their plumage, experts assert that this is false. Flamingo egg yolks are yellow-orange, similar to other birds' eggs.
- About the size of a football, the liver is a human's second-biggest organ, and it can completely regenerate from as little as 25 percent of its original mass.
- In the town of Green Bank, West Virginia (population 145), it is illegal to use electronic devices including garage openers, micro-waves, televisions, internet connections or smartphones. This is because those radio waves interfere with the readings of the nearby National Radio Astronomy Observatory's 17 million-pound telescope, which searches for distant radio waves from space objects and possible lifeforms.
- "I'm so glad I live in a world where there are Octobers."
— L.M. Montgomery, "Anne of Green Gables"



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Blues musician Robert Finley performs on historic Cherry Street during the 2015 King Biscuit Blues Festival.



It's 'King Biscuit Time'

Blues festival, cultural center tell Delta story

BY JOHN LYON

In 1986, at the first King Biscuit Blues Festival in Helena, the first artist to take the stage was CeDell Davis. Accompanying him on clarinet was Little Rock native Robert Palmer, a blues producer and journalist.

Though no one knew it at the time, Palmer's presence was a lucky break for the festival.

"The next thing we know, in about two or three weeks there was a big article in The New York Times about this festival," recalls Bubba Sullivan, one of the event's founders, in a recent interview at the festival's office in downtown Helena-West Helena.

"We didn't know Robert Palmer was a music critic for The New York Times, but he was. And that's really the thing that kind of spread the word about this festival," he says.

The annual festival takes its name from the "King Biscuit Time" blues radio show that has been broadcast in Helena since 1941. In 2005, the event's name was changed to the Arkansas Blues and Heritage Festival after lawyers in New York objected that the organizers didn't have rights to the "King Biscuit" name, but a deal was reached to restore the name beginning with the 2011 fest. ➤



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND TOURISM



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ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND TOURISM

This year's festival, the 32nd, is set for Oct. 4-7. Tickets are \$80 and allow access to a fenced-in area around the main stage, which faces a gently sloping Mississippi River levee where the audience can sit.

Sullivan says \$80 is "pretty cheap to hear at least 55 bands in three days," but he also notes that there is no charge to view performances on secondary stages, and the music from the main stage can be heard without buying a ticket.

Over the years, the event has drawn blues greats like Albert King, B.B. King, Robert Lockwood Jr. and Pinetop Perkins. The headliner for this year's fest is Gov't Mule. Other performers will include Paul Thorn, Tab Benoit and JJ Grey & Mofro.

Delta Cultural Center

It was the popularity of the festival, which averaged about 50,000 visitors a year in its first decade, that helped Helena, now Helena-West Helena, become the home of the Delta Cultural Center (DCC), which opened in the fall of 1990 in the town's restored 1912 train depot.

The DCC, an agency of the Department of Arkansas Heritage, interprets and preserves many different aspects of the region's cultural heritage, from the Delta blues to the Civil War to agriculture.

It's the museum's unique approach to music history that has made it a destination for musicians and music lovers from around the world. Visit at the right time of day and you can not only view exhibits on blues, gospel and rockabilly genres and artists, but you can also see a live broadcast of "King Biscuit Time," the longest-running daily radio show in

American history, hosted by "Sunshine" Sonny Payne.

"Sonny is easily our biggest attraction," says Thomas Jacques, DCC's assistant director. "He's a piece of living history himself."

"King Biscuit Time" was first broadcast by KFFA Radio in 1941 and has been hosted by Payne since 1951. Originally a program of live music, the show now features recorded music selected and introduced by the 91-year-old Payne in a broadcast booth in the DCC's Visitors Center. When "King Biscuit Time" debuted, Payne was working at KFFA Radio, doing things like sweeping the floor and cleaning records. Payne left for a stint in the Army in World War II — he lied about his age to enlist — and returned to KFFA in 1951, becoming the host of "King Biscuit Time" that year.

The show was a natural for Helena because of its status as a blues mecca. Located about 80 miles southwest of

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT The King Biscuit Blues Festival continues to draw large crowds, in its 32nd year.

The restored train depot in downtown Helena-West Helena houses many of the Delta Cultural Center's exhibits.

One of the most popular exhibits at the Delta Cultural Center focuses on Delta music and local musicians such as the late Levon Helm of Marvell, a member of the rock group The Band.

"Sunshine" Sonny Payne opens the KFFA radio show "King Biscuit Time," the longest-running American daily radio show, with "Pass the biscuits, 'cause it's King Biscuit time!"

Bubba Sullivan, one of the founders of the annual King Biscuit Blues Festival, remains passionate about promoting the blues.



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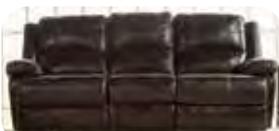


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From left to right, Joe Willie Wilkins, Joe "Pinetop" Perkins, Sonny Boy Williamson, original announcer Hugh Smith, James "Peck" Curtis and Houston Stackhouse perform on the King Biscuit Time radio show at KFFA radio station circa 1942.

Major figures in rock history have visited Payne's show.

"Robert Plant's been by, and even got interviewed by Sonny, who did not

immediately know who Robert Plant was. Elvis Costello's been in a couple times," Jacques says. "Sonny loves having guests on the show, loves bringing fans, travelers, onto the program and asking them questions about where they're from, what they're doing on their trip, and what their interest in blues music is."

"King Biscuit Time" airs live on radio station KFFA from 12:15-12:45 p.m., Monday through Friday, and is streamed on DCC's website, deltaculturalcenter.com. The Visitors Center is closed to the public on Sundays and Mondays, although museum workers have been known to let visitors in on a Monday to see Payne host his show.

Why does Payne still host the show after all these years? "It's my job," he says. In an interview with the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism in 1996, Payne said he continued to do the show because "it's part of my life. Why do you eat? To live. I do it to live. No, I live to do it."

During each year's King Biscuit Blues Festival, the DCC also presents a free concert, the Front Porch Blues Bash, at the Miller Annex a block from the main stage. The musicians perform on an indoor stage designed to look like a front porch.

"One of the reasons that our Front Porch Blues Bash is so popular is because we tend to have what most people consider more authentic Delta blues," says museum spokeswoman Paula Oliver.

Another annual music festival that draws crowds to Helena is the Arkansas Delta Family Gospel ►



The mournful sounds of the harmonica is a blues staple.

Memphis, Helena in the 1930s was filled with juke joints and cafes where bluesmen played all night to packed houses. Among those bluesmen were Robert Lockwood Jr. and Sonny Boy Williamson, who approached KFFA management about creating a blues show where they could perform. After securing the local Interstate Grocer Co. as sponsor, the show was named "King Biscuit Time" in honor of the company's King Biscuit Flour. The show was a huge hit, and sales of the flour soared. Soon thereafter, Sonny Boy Cornmeal was also being sold.

By the early 1950s, the show had become hugely influential. It not only was broadcast by KFFA in Helena but also by WROX in Clarksdale, Miss., where its listeners in the 1940s included Muddy Waters and B.B. King.

As a youngster, legendary rock musician Levon Helm, who was born in 1940 to cotton-farmer parents in Phillips County, would listen to the show and sometimes go to the station to watch the band play. Drummer James "Peck" Curtis occasionally let Helm play drums on the air, and in later years Helm would cite Curtis as one of his favorite drummers.

In the 1970s, the show transitioned from live to recorded music, although Payne is still happy to let visiting musician friends play live on the air. Payne is a beloved figure among musicians who play or have been influenced by Delta blues.

"Charlie Musselwhite was here yesterday," he says. "We've been friends for about 20 years."

Does Payne miss the days when the show featured live music?

"Oh, yeah. We all do," he says.

The show went off the air in the early 1980s but was revived in 1986 as part of an effort to attract blues-related tourism and highlight the region's musical heritage. In 1992, the program began broadcasting from a restored train depot that serves as one of the Delta Cultural Center's two museum buildings, and in 2000 the program moved to the museum's nearby Visitors Center.



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The Helena-West Helena Bridge on the Mississippi River.

Fest, held in May. Among that festival's better known past performers is Mavis Staples.

Other perspectives

The DCC is located in what was the city of Helena before Helena and West Helena consolidated in 2006. Helena sits just west of the Mississippi River and just east of Crowley's Ridge. On July 4, 1863, Union forces that had occupied the city took the high ground to defend against attacking Confederate troops during the Battle of Helena.

"I would say our second biggest attraction and reason people come to Helena is because of our Civil War heritage," Oliver says. "About 10 years or so ago, the city started what we call the Civil War Helena initiative, and that is an effort to interpret the Union occupation of Helena for four years in a more comprehensive way. It's a unique project that's different from a lot of other communities because we're trying to tell the story from different perspectives."

At Battery C Park, which is maintained by the DCC, visitors can stand on Crowley's Ridge and see a reproduction of a Civil War cannon aimed in the direction from which Confederate soldiers would have charged the Union battery — though now the only thing advancing on the spot is kudzu. During the battle, fewer than 300 men armed with two cannons and firearms held the battery for several hours against 3,000 Confederates. The Confederates took the battery but ultimately lost the battle and had to retreat from the ridge.

At the south edge of town, the DCC maintains Freedom Park, where displays including interpretive panels, kiosks, life-sized silhouettes, a cannon and a bronze statue of a black soldier illustrate various ways black people in the Delta experienced the Civil War.

In downtown stands a reproduction of Fort Curtis, another museum property.

Shortly after Union forces captured the city in July 1862, engineers began working on a fortification of earth and timbers that was completed the following October by escaped slaves. It was named after the city's first Union commander, Gen. Samuel Ryan Curtis. During the Battle of Helena, the Confederates attacked Fort Curtis after capturing Battery C, but they failed to take the heavily armed fort.

A reenactment of the Battle of Helena is planned for April 13-15, 2018, to commemorate its 155th anniversary.



NOAH NHOOT

River port

The DCC also tells the story of Helena as an important river port. Steamboats began traveling the Mississippi River in the early 1800s, which further fueled the growth of Helena's then cotton-based agriculture and the surrounding Delta region.



NOAH NHOOT

TOP A reproduction of a Civil War cannon at Battery C Park.

ABOVE A bell that hung from the roof of The Pelican, a steamboat that ferried trains across the Mississippi River from 1902 until the late 1950s, sits on display at the Depot, a restored train depot owned by the Delta Cultural Center.

The Depot, the Visitors Center and the Civil War sites are open to the public at no charge. The museum also maintains some properties that are open only by appointment or for special events. Across the street from Fort Curtis is the Moore-Hornor House, a two-story home built in 1859. Downtown also features Beth El Heritage Hall. Built in 1916 as Temple Beth El, the neoclassical structure with imposing Ionic columns was donated to the DCC in 2006 by the remaining members of the Jewish temple.

For more information on the DCC, visit: deltaculturalcenter.com. More information about this year's festival, including the complete schedule and ticket information, is available at kingbiscuitfestival.com. ▀

John Lyon is a Little Rock-based writer. Sheila Yount, Arkansas Living editor and a former travel writer for the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism, also contributed to this article.



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Memories of Arlberg

Once-booming railroad town has faded into history

Train depot and workers at old Arlberg.

JAMES K. MACKRELL COLLECTION, UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ARKANSAS ARCHIVES.

BY ROB MORITZ

At the bottom of Angora Mountain, two miles off Arkansas 110 in southwest Stone County, are the remains of Arlberg, a nearly forgotten settlement from a time long past.

Near the end of Angora Mountain Road, not far from where the gravel runs into the Middle Fork of the Red River, stand worn concrete piers — each one just a few feet in the air. The piers, barely visible from the road because of large trees and overgrown vines and other vegetation, once held the water tower that quenched the thirst of Missouri & North Arkansas (M&NA) Railroad locomotives. The trains stopped at Arlberg to pick up passengers, as well as drop off goods or pick up timber as they steamed through the area.

A few yards down the narrow road, on the right, stands the crumbling shell of a rock building that was once the canning kitchen for an orphanage that was located in the town for a time. The roof is gone and the tops of the four walls have fallen, leaving the outline of a window in one of the walls.

Arlberg, like Lydalisk, Elba, Barnett and several other timber communities that grew up along the M&NA Railroad in north Arkansas in the first half of the 20th century, have virtually vanished, reclaimed by the dense woods.

Timber town

In the early years of the last century, according to the Boone County Historical and Railroad Society, the small



COURTESY OF H. GLENN MOSENFELDER

The Missouri & North Arkansas (M&NA) Railroad was the lifeblood of Arlberg and surrounding communities.

community of Leslie in Searcy County was home to H.D. Williams Cooperage Co., the largest manufacturer of whiskey barrels in the world. The plant covered 68 acres and produced 3,000 to 5,000 barrels a day, according to the Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture. To provide the timber needed to make the oak barrels and kegs, dozens of small settlements sprang up along the M&NA, whose tracks cut across north Arkansas connecting Joplin, Missouri, to Memphis. The railroad had a depot in Leslie.

Tommy Simmons, 89, lived as a boy not far from Arlberg. Today, he recalls that the once-bustling timber settlement had about 150 residents in a half-mile radius. There was a general store, hotel, a blacksmith shop and a post office.

"It had ... all the things to support the timber industry that was there," he said, adding that, for a time, Simmons attended school in Arlberg while his father worked for the railroad.

"When I was a kid, I'd go down with my father to Arlberg and the whole bottom down there would be covered with cross ties, stave bolts and pilings where people had brought their timber in," Simmons said. "There was a spur off the railroad, an extra line ... and it ran about a quarter-mile long, and they would set off cars to be loaded."

The train was vital, Simmons said. "North, south, either way, our only transportation was the train, unless you rode in a wagon or walked."

Simmons, who served as mayor of Mountain View in the late 1960s and was later the first director of the Ozark Folk Center in Mountain View, said his first memory of Arlberg is from 1934, when he got to ride into town in a wagon



ROB MORITZ

The crumbling shell of a rock building that was once the canning kitchen for an orphanage still stands.

and his father “bought me my first pocket knife from J. B. Thompson General Mercantile. Paid 5 cents for it.”



ROB MORITZ

Tommy Simmons recalls his childhood growing up in Arlberg.

Regular stops

Arlberg and Elba were regular stops for the M&NA Railroad, delivering goods to the community or picking up timber. In Barnett, just upriver from Arlberg, there was a grocery store, and some residents discovered coal. The coal mine only stayed open a few years, Simmons said, because the vein was on a 45-degree angle “and once they got in there 25 to 30 feet, water began to accumulate and they didn’t have the means to keep it pumped out.”

Also, just up the tracks from Arlberg, the Ormond brothers opened a rock quarry. “During the early ’30s they sold rock to the federal government for bank stabilization along the Mississippi River,” he said. “They were rebuilding the levees after the big ’27 flood over there.”

Fire damaged Williams Cooperage in 1912, and the company declared bankruptcy three years later and was reorganized as Export Cooperage Co. In 1921, about 500 men worked for the company, according to an article on the Boone County Historical & Railroad Society website.

Then Prohibition, competition and a workers’ strike all took their toll; Export Cooperage closed in 1923 and the M&NA finally stop running through the communities in 1946.

“Once the railroad left it was just like turning the water faucet off in those little communities,” Simmons said. “Having lived through it ... it’s even astonishing. It’s vaporized, evaporated, gone.”

Rob Moritz is a North Little Rock-based freelance writer.

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The Arkansas State Fair is the 'Natural State of Fun'

Historic changes coming to the fair, set for Oct. 12-22

With the theme "The Natural State of Fun," the 2017 Arkansas State Fair is guaranteed to be not only fun, but historic as well. This year's fair is scheduled for 11 consecutive days, beginning Thursday, Oct. 12. This marks the first time the fair has ever opened on a Thursday. For the past 48 years, the Arkansas State Fair has opened on a Friday for a 10-day run. Prior to 1969, the fair was a six-day event.

The other historic development concerns a change in carnival companies for 2017. North American Midway Entertainment (NAME) of Farmland, Indiana, will provide the carnival this year. NAME is the largest and most prestigious traveling outdoor amusement park in the world.

The company entertains more than 15 million people in 20 states in the U.S. and four Canadian provinces on an annual basis, and operates over 250 state-of-the-art rides, custom-designed food concessions and family-oriented games. NAME provides the carnival for 12 of the 50 largest fairs in North America, including the Indiana State Fair, Illinois State Fair, Mississippi State Fair, Miami-Dade County Fair and Expo, Kentucky State Fair, South Carolina State Fair, Canadian National Exposition and Calgary Stampede.

According to the fair's General Manager Ralph Shoptaw, NAME will bring a new level of quality family entertainment to Arkansas.

"NAME has an outstanding reputation for top-of-the-line rides, games, food, personnel and, most importantly, standards of safety and operation. I know our patrons are going to really appreciate the enhanced experience NAME will bring to the fair, including at least a dozen rides that



ARKANSAS STATE FAIR



Clockwise from left, bacon-wrapped corn; the midway at dusk; the Banzai ride.

we've never had at the Arkansas State Fair," said Shoptaw.

Fair officials invite all Arkansans to come experience the fun, food, thrills and excitement at the 78th Arkansas State Fair. Patrons can enjoy a variety of free concerts, great food, livestock competitions, various creative arts contests, interesting attractions, a professional rodeo and much more.

The 2017 Arkansas State Fair offers an assortment of special values to ensure that everyone has a great time at an affordable price. According to Shoptaw, Arkansans can find money-saving deals every day of the fair.

Regular daily admission at the gate is \$10 for adults, \$5 for children (ages 6 to 12) and senior adults (ages 60 and over) and free to children under six. Fairground parking is \$10 per vehicle.

The Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas are major sponsors of the fair, and as part of that sponsorship, a coupon for \$2 off of admission is provided here (left) for Arkansas Living readers. ■



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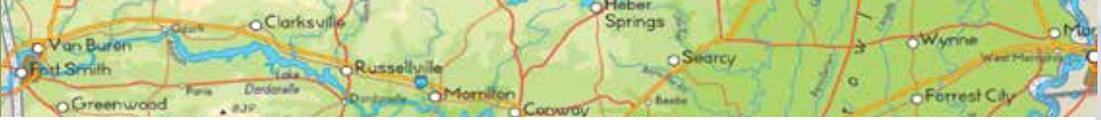


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Our Town, Reinvented

Tourism drives new vision for Wilson

BY JENNY BOULDEN

Earlier this year, when musician Holly Williams, granddaughter of country music legend Hank Williams, Sr., opened a third location of her wildly successful Nashville store, White's Mercantile, in the northeast Arkansas farming community of Wilson, population 903, some people scratched their heads. But a visit to Wilson would assure anyone that she was onto something big.

Heading into town along the famous "Blues Highway 61," handsomely painted signs atop the industrial rooftops welcome you to Wilson and advertise its historic, signature business, Lee Wilson & Co.

A company town with an English twist

An abbreviated history might help you understand the context for this town. Brian Dempsey, Wilson's director of communications and brand strategy, provided background.

Lee Wilson, later known as "Boss Lee," in the late 19th century inherited 400 acres of timberland from his father Josiah Wilson, who settled here before the Civil War. Boss Lee had a vision and a knack for seeing the larger picture.

His timber business led to establishing the Mississippi County drainage districts so that the arable land could be farmed for cotton. Then he worked with the government to get a railroad spur built to transport cotton and timber out. He built other diversified businesses and services to serve the hundreds of tenant farmers who worked the land. A company town was born.

Dempsey said, "Boss Lee systematically built what became one of the largest cotton operations in the nation — 57,000 acres — in the first third of the 20th century." The family even had their own mint to print Wilson's company "scrip" the local tenant farmers could use exclusively at the Wilson-owned businesses. Dempsey explained company towns were a common economic system at the time, for better or worse, but this was never an average town because this was never an average family.

The Wilsons had their own eccentricities and passions, including being rampant Anglophiles. So they built themselves a British-looking Delta town full of Tudor Revival architecture. The Wilsons hosted friends, including members of the royal family, at their mansion, entertaining them with formal fox hunts and polo matches across their green manicured lawns, surrounded by cotton fields.

Time changes everything, however. After 125 years of stewardship, the Wilsons put their still-considerable cotton business up for sale. The catch

Lee Wilson & Co. is the company around which the company town of Wilson was built.



A couple from the Wilson family honeymooned in England, and brought Tudor architecture home.

Already, the town has your attention, but then you notice the Wilson Town Square looks much more like "Jolly Olde England" than Mississippi County, and it suddenly has your curiosity, too. What exactly is this place?

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Once one of the largest cotton operations in the nation, agriculture in Wilson remains strong today.

KYLE RIPLEY



KYLE RIPLEY

White's Mercantile is popular enough in Nashville that it doesn't have to advertise. The Wilson location opened in May.

was the buyer must also purchase and care for the town that was the family legacy.

That buyer in 2010 turned out to be The Lawrence Group, a multi-industry family business heavily rooted in agriculture. "Gaylon Lawrence, Sr. and Gaylon Lawrence Jr. weren't in the town reinvention business initially," Dempsey said, "but they saw the possibilities and accepted the challenge." Since their multimillion dollar investment in the town, they have been saturating the place with energy and ideas and bringing the best people they could find to Wilson to partner on the progress.

White's Mercantile

Holly Williams was the most recent of those partners who visited Wilson and caught the spirit. Her store's managers, Kerri Snead and Taylor MaHarrey, are two more: Memphis-transplanted millennials living their dream in the tiny Delta town. Both were working for a floral design shop in Memphis when they worked some events in Wilson and immediately got inspired. "We thought even back then, wouldn't it be great to get away from Memphis and have a place of our own in Wilson?" MaHarrey said. "We even talked about how we'd love to open up something along the lines of a White's Mercantile here — and now we are in Wilson running an actual White's Mercantile! It's so cool."

So, what's so special about this store named for Williams' maternal grandparents, Warren and June White?

"We call it 'a general store for the modern day tastemaker,'" Snead said, explaining that Williams' style merges classic country sensibilities with fresh and modern products, often made by Southern artisans and designers. The store is in a converted historic gas station, a beautiful red brick structure with large windows, and the furnishings combine industrial elements ➤



JENNY BOLDEN

Owner Holly Williams stocks White's Mercantile with well-made, timeless items she loves.

with antique in a classic general store layout of wooden shelves and assorted displays of unique products, artfully displayed. These are products that Williams has selected intentionally to last generations.

A glance around shows coffee table books, engraved barware, rich-blend cotton “Y’all” T-shirts, hand-crafted jewelry, poured candles, charming toys, pet products, regional jams and cooking mixes, classic dinnerware, cozy wraps, puzzles, printed flour-sack towels, throw pillows in bright prints, artistic cards and an infinity of interesting trinkets and doodads. Acrylic, ink and charcoal works by Williams’ husband, artist Chris Coleman, line the top of a wall.

Snead said “We’re just different. I don’t feel like there are other stores like this anywhere around. There are so many different products here, but it all has a cohesive feel and style.”

All part of the plan

A few yards away is the stylish Wilson Cafe (see Let’s Eat, p. 44), an elegant, yet down-home, can’t-miss place run by three Memphis-trained chefs who elevate country cooking to a whole new level. Among their secret ingredients is produce sourced as locally as possible —

from the conscientiously farmed Wilson Gardens across the street, another of Wilson’s long-term projects. Led by Leslie Wolverton, a master agronomist who serves as farm director. Wilson Gardens pursues sustainable farming methods. A farmer’s market operates inside an event center called The Grange there on the premises of Wilson Gardens.

Next to the cafe is a historic theater to be restored, then several other locally owned shops and boutiques, a



Wilson Cafe feeds the town and visitors, who come from many miles around for the country cooking.

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KYLE BIRREY

Part of the focus of Wilson Gardens, which supplies several Memphis eateries, is education about nutritious eating and sustainable farms.

grocery, the public library, offices of The Lawrence Group, a bank (also being restored), the local post office and the site of the Hampson Archeological State Park's new museum. Expected to open next summer, the museum will showcase a singular collection of Pre-Columbian artifacts from the local Mississippian culture, such as effigy pots and masks recovered from a nearby site.

Wilson is located just 13 miles away from the home where Johnny Cash grew up, along the "Blues Highway" that runs to the Mississippi Delta, and it takes its music seriously. The Wilson Music Series concerts held throughout the year bring major talents like Phil Vasser, Sammy Kershaw, Grace Askew and John Oates to the tiny town.

Down the road, Wildwood Mansion is a former Wilson family home now used as the administration building (complete with a Hogwarts-lookalike dining hall) for The Delta School, which has a fascinating story in itself. The town's independent school is built around the core concept of teaching to each child's particular strengths, whether they're artists, growers or makers. Even at a visual level, its modernist campus, carefully maintained gardens (managed by schoolchildren), Wonderspace playground and Tudor Revival mansion set it apart from any other school in the state.

All of this is to say that what's most exciting today is not Wilson's storied past, but its inventive energy now. Backed by its investors and guided by



The Delta School features technology-intensive makerspaces, art studios, gardens and more, and offers scholarships to local students.

KYLE BIRREY



JENNY BOULDER

The Grange, a multi-use event center on the grounds of Wilson Gardens, is also home to a farmer's market of the garden's produce.

savvy leadership, the town's citizens have an optimism and "Why not?" spirit that is positively contagious.

"Sometimes I do get frustrated that there isn't more here yet," admitted MaHarrey, who lives in a small apartment complex with "a bunch of other young Memphis hipsters" who ended up in Wilson. "I have to remind myself that this is a 30-year master plan, and we're just getting started here. It's exciting." ■



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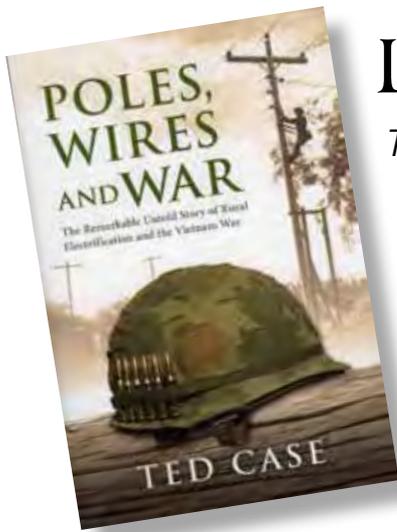







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Lighting up a war zone

The audacious story of electric co-ops in Vietnam

BY PAUL WESSLUND

During one of the hardest chapters in American history, electric co-ops volunteered to win the war in Vietnam.

They didn't win the war, but in his new book "Poles, Wires and War,

The Remarkable Untold Story of Rural Electrification and the Vietnam War," author Ted Case tells a riveting story of how they tried. He argues that the success electric co-ops had in the conflict that divided our nation just might have helped that southeast Asian nation recover more quickly by demonstrating the value of bringing electricity to the countryside.

Case brings authority to the book as executive director of the Oregon Rural Electric Cooperative Association. But he also makes good use of his masters degree in fiction writing to tell a compelling story of an audacious offer from Arkansas native Clyde Ellis, the head of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), to President Lyndon Johnson. Give the South Vietnamese electricity, said Ellis, and you'll win their hearts and minds in the fight against communism.

What followed was a classic battle of enormous personalities, foreign and domestic political and military maneuvering, and a determined band of people who brought electricity to the American countryside, fighting the odds to bring light to a war zone halfway around the world.

Case creates a fast-paced narrative as the crews race the collapsing war to pass bylaws, organize the co-ops and tangle with corruption, bureaucracy, in-fighting, and oh yes, Viet Cong soldiers determined to destroy what they were creating. In the end, in less than four years, three electric co-ops were bringing electricity to more than 8,000 members.

It was a service the South Vietnamese villagers valued and owned. They even felt strong enough to literally fight for it, in a doomed battle against an assault from Viet Cong armored tanks. Case recently talked about the book and what the history of electric co-ops means for their member-owners.

Question: How did you end up writing about electric co-ops in the Vietnam War?

Ted Case: It came out of my first book and the chapter on President Lyndon Johnson. In 1965, he received a letter from Ellis saying that NRECA could help win the war by putting electric co-ops in Vietnam. I was intrigued by that bold claim. Since Johnson was such an early and strong supporter

of rural electrification in Texas, he embraced Ellis's proposal fully. Learning about that story led me on this quest to track down some of the men and women who had worked on it.

Question: Did NRECA start co-ops in Vietnam?

Ted Case: It was a really good effort. Just 20 men went over there in a five-year period. These were the most difficult co-ops to establish in the history of the electric co-op program. The Viet Cong soldiers that were fighting against the South Vietnamese tried to cut down the co-op lines and chop down their poles and blow up their dams and they did all those things. The people trying to start the co-ops faced rampant corruption and an inability to get poles and other materials. They got three co-ops up and running and brought light to thousands of villagers. But the program ended and they had to leave and the communists overtook the country.



Ted Case is a co-op historian, author and executive director of the Oregon Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Question: What lessons did you learn from researching the book?

Ted Case: The support the U.S. co-op workers got from the Vietnamese villagers was not unlike the support from the farmers who started electric co-ops in the United States in the 1930s. The Vietnamese villagers wanted a radio. They wanted an iron and lights to read. Toward the end of the war when the communists were rolling through the country in 1975, they came to a town that was one of the co-ops' headquarters. The militia in the town rose up and fought against the communists in one of the most heroic battles of the war. They were fighting for their electricity. They were fighting for what they had built.

To order Case's book, visit: TedCaseAuthor.com. ■

Paul Wesslund writes on cooperative issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.



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Crews help with power restoration after Irma

First Electric dispatched linemen and equipment to assist electric cooperatives in Georgia and South Carolina with power outage restoration efforts caused by Hurricane Irma.

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(From left to right:) Hayden Gilmore, Travis Galloway, Danny Carlton, Flan Fife, Hugh Starkey, Geoff Perry, Bryce Hipp, Anthony Gardner, Kenny Cornett, Jacob Taylor, Matt Deckard, Richard Stark and Nathan Sutterfield dispatched on Sept. 10 to assist Pee Dee Electric Cooperative in Darlington, SC with power restoration.

President/CEO Don Crabbe said. “We are always ready to assist our fellow cooperatives in their time of need.”

First Electric was one of 11 cooperatives in Arkansas participating in the mutual aid efforts.



(From left to right:) Robby Pennock, Justin Parker, Shawn Hammonds, Reuben McMillen, Jason Cates, Lloyd Scifres, Evan McKay, Matt Anderson and Toby Fife left on Sept. 11 to assist Central Georgia Electric Membership Corporation in Jackson, GA who experienced more than 35,000 member outages.

Kiosks provide another easy way to pay electric bill

PaySite kiosks provide members – especially those who pay with cash – with another convenient way to pay their electric bills.

Members can pay at kiosks with cash, check, debit and credit card (Visa, MasterCard and Discover) by using a touch screen and following the on-screen and spoken instructions. The automated system has both English and Spanish instructions. The fee to use a PaySite kiosk is \$1.50 for cash or check payments and \$3 for debit or credit card payments.

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PaySite kiosks locations:

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- The Country Store at 6699 Heber Springs Road North in Drasco

- Dodge's Chicken Store at 209 W. 22nd St. in Stuttgart
- Dude's Place at 3811 Arkansas 38 in Austin
- Harps at 1515 Arkansas 5 North in Benton
- Harps at 801 North Second Street in Cabot
- Harps at 100 South St. Joseph St. in Morrilton
- Harps at 2525 W. Beebe-Capps Expressway in Searcy
- Harps at 112 Houston Avenue in Perryville
- Phillips 66 Southbend at 4071 Arkansas 294 in Jacksonville



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ELECTRIC CO-OPS AT A GLANCE



There are 900 electric cooperatives located in 47 states.



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Electric cooperatives serve 56 percent of the nation.



Arkansas' electric co-ops serve more than 1 million members.



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First Electric owns & maintains:

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- 199,945 power poles



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Snapshots from our readers

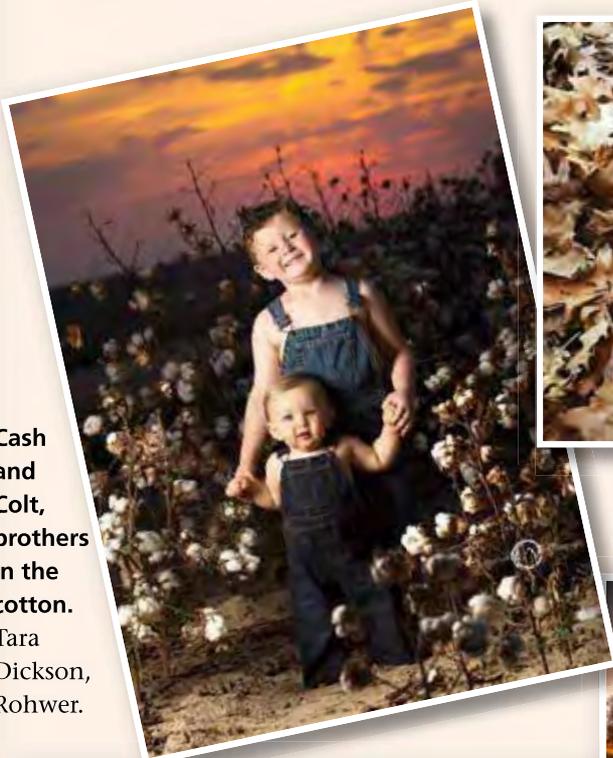
Reflections



Jonathan likes his pretty fall pumpkin. Lisa Stinson, Ratcliff.



Addie, in the fall leaves. Ann Whitten, Cotter.



Cash and Colt, brothers in the cotton. Tara Dickson, Rohwer.



Hagan and his sweet baby sis, Mila. Brian and Jennie Atchley, Lincoln.

Isaac is the "fire holder." Shay Standard, Drasco.



Levi, feeding chickens at Nana Parsons' house. Christy Parsons, Rogers.



Noah, nestled in amongst the beautiful fall decor. Wathenia and Henry McCauley, Grannis.



Lauren, loving fall leaves. Angie Durham, Ashdown.



All ready to go trick-or-treating! Rachael Henderson, Scott.



Twins, Kase and Tate, waiting on a ride. Patsy Quinton, Prairie Grove.



Christopher, with some of his adoring fans. June Weeks, Mountain Home.



Elena, Tamara, Jamie, Samuel and Juan. Kamilah Hawkins, Carthage.



Owen is pleased with the cotton crop. Tricia Rogers, Clarendon.

Share your photos with your fellow Arkansas Living readers! Please send high-resolution photos with detailed information about the pictures (who took it, where, who is in it, etc.) to: Dixie.Rogers@aeci.com

Or mail to:
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50-54	\$11.50	\$9.70	\$18.50	\$15.50	\$36.00	\$30.00	\$88.50	\$73.50
55-59	\$14.20	\$11.95	\$23.00	\$19.25	\$45.00	\$37.50	\$111.00	\$92.25
60-64	\$17.20	\$13.30	\$28.00	\$21.50	\$55.00	\$42.00	\$136.00	\$103.50
65-69	\$20.50	\$16.00	\$33.50	\$26.00	\$66.00	\$51.00	\$163.50	\$126.00
70-74	\$27.40	\$21.40	\$45.00	\$35.00	\$89.00	\$69.00	\$221.00	\$171.00
75-79	\$37.00	\$30.10	\$61.00	\$49.50	\$121.00	\$98.00	\$301.00	\$243.50
80-85	\$50.50	\$42.55	\$83.50	\$70.25	\$166.00	\$139.50	\$413.50	\$347.25

The rates above include a \$12 annual policy fee.

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Not available in all states. In NY, during the first two years, 110% of premiums will be paid. Website unavailable for NY residents. EASY WAY Whole Life Insurance is underwritten by United of Omaha Life Insurance Company, Omaha, NE 68175, which is licensed nationwide except NY. Life insurance policies issued in NY are underwritten by Companion Life Insurance Company, Hauppauge, NY 11788. Each company is responsible for its own financial and contractual obligations. *Age eligibility and benefits may vary by state.

**In FL policy is renewable until age 121.

Clean those gutters

BY BRET CURRY

Autumn has officially arrived. Now is the time for tuning up heating systems, adding attic insulation where necessary, sealing out unwanted air infiltration and removing or winterizing window air conditioners. If you'd like a refresher in these areas, previous Smart Energy Tips columns can be found online at www.arkansaslivingmagazine.com/article-categories/smart-energy-tips/.

Furthermore, if your house has rain gutters, fall is the time to inspect, clean and perhaps even consider some type of cover that eliminates gutter clogs. You may be wondering what gutters have to do with energy efficiency. Properly installed and performing gutters help channel away unwanted water away from the home — water that not only can damage the home, but affect energy efficiency.

We can thank many folks who came long before us for gutters. History reminds us that people in the Middle East were using clay drainage gutters around 3,000 to 1,500 BC. Also, the Romans had several uses for gutters from 27 BC to around 50 AD. In 1240, the Tower of London is believed to have had gutters and the first downspout to protect its whitewashed walls. Fast-forward to the 1960s and seamless gutters became popular in the United States due to the light weight, durability and strength of aluminum. Today, aluminum gutters are installed on nearly 70 percent of all homes in America.

The job of your gutters is to drain rainwater from your roof and relocate it to a place where it will not pool around the home's foundation. Gutters are an important component for longevity of the home and do require periodic maintenance. Regrettably, they are often overlooked, and trouble can silently be in the making. Even gutters that have various protective covers can and do become clogged.

Clogged gutters can create a host of problems. Over time, if gutters are not maintained, water can saturate the fascia board, which connects rafters, soffit and the outer wall. Wood materials that remain saturated over time will rot and eventually fail. Gutters that remain full of debris and water may cause the gutters to sag. When they are finally cleaned, water may not drain properly. Water-filled gutters also provide a breeding ground for mosquitos.



Water cannot reach the downspout of this gutter because it is filled with leaves and sticks.

In worst-case scenarios, protracted water ponding in gutters may eventually wick, or reach the outer wall. When this happens, stains may be visible from inside the home. Furthermore, and out-of-sight, the wall insulation can absorb the water. Once this happens, the wall insulation becomes less effective and even ceases to provide a thermal barrier. With winter on the horizon, we'll want our insulation to be nice and dry so it can do its job to help keep us warm in the winter and keep our electric bills manageable.

If you have gutters without a debris cover, be sure to safely clean them twice per year, or as needed. Hire it done if ladders and heights are not your thing. Also, consider proven gutter-debris covers. Online search engines are full of products, and I suggest researching their reviews before deciding on a product.

If you are in doubt about whether your gutters are working properly, have them inspected. A simple do-it-yourself method is to watch the downspouts during a rainfall, or use a garden hose and spray water up on the roof to make sure water is freely flowing from the downspout. Lastly, make sure rainwater is draining away from your home's foundation, and ensure that landscape projects have not created water dams next to your home.

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Bret Curry is the residential energy marketing manager for Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation (AECC), which supplies wholesale electricity to the state's 17 electric distribution co-ops.

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20 VOLT LITHIUM CORDLESS 1/2" COMPACT DRILL/DRIVER **SAVE \$79**

- 576 in. lbs. of torque
- 2.5 amp hour battery
- Weighs 3.6 lbs.

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

NEW

Compare \$179 **\$99⁹⁹**

ITEM 63381

11198368

LIMIT 3 - Coupon valid through 2/1/18*

CENTRAL PNEUMATIC **SUPER COUPON**

6 GALLON, 1.5 HP, 150 PSI PROFESSIONAL AIR COMPRESSOR

Customer Rating **★★★★★** **SAVE \$47**

- Air delivery: 2.5 CFM @ 90 PSI, 3.4 CFM @ 40 PSI

Compare \$147.29 **\$99⁹⁹**

ITEM 62511/62894/62380/68149/67696 shown

11203769

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 2/1/18*

SUPER COUPON

FREE WITH ANY PURCHASE

PITTSBURGH

1" x 25 FT. TAPE MEASURE

\$6⁹⁹ VALUE

ITEM 69030/69031 shown

11187189

LIMIT 1 - Cannot be used with other discount, coupon or prior purchase. Coupon good at our stores. HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Offer good while supplies last. Shipping & Handling charges may apply if not picked up in store. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 2/1/18. Limit one FREE GIFT coupon per customer per day.

SUPER COUPON

20% OFF ANY SINGLE ITEM

11187018

LIMIT 1 - Coupon per customer per day. Save 20% on any 1 item purchased. *Cannot be used with other discount, coupon or prior purchase. Coupon good at our stores. HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Offer good while supplies last. Shipping & Handling charges may apply if not picked up in store. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 2/1/18. Limit one 20% OFF coupon per customer per day.

SUPER COUPON

TWO TIER COLLAPSIBLE EASY-STORE STEP LADDER

Customer Rating **★★★★★** **SAVE 50%**

Compare \$39.99 **\$19⁹⁹**

- 225 lb. capacity

ITEM 67514

11205700

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 2/1/18*

PREDATOR **SUPER COUPON**

6.5 HP (212 CC) OHV HORIZONTAL SHAFT GAS ENGINE

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

Compare \$329.99 **\$119⁹⁹**

ITEM 60363/69730 shown, CALIFORNIA ONLY

11207137

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 2/1/18*

PITTSBURGH Automotive **SUPER COUPON**

ATV/LAWN MOWER LIFT

Customer Rating **★★★★★** **SAVE \$100**

Compare \$249.99 **\$179⁹⁹**

- 300 lb. capacity

ITEM 60395/62325 62493/61523 shown

11208881

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 2/1/18*

CENTRAL PNEUMATIC **SUPER COUPON**

3/8" x 50 FT. RETRACTABLE AIR HOSE REEL

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

Compare \$229.99 **\$79⁹⁹**

ITEM 69265/62344/93897 shown

11214014

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 2/1/18*

HaulMaster **SUPER COUPON**

12 VOLT MAGNETIC TOWING LIGHT KIT

Customer Rating **★★★★★** **SAVE 71%**

Compare \$34.95 **\$9⁹⁹**

ITEM 63100

11243165

LIMIT 6 - Coupon valid through 2/1/18*

WARRIOR **SUPER COUPON**

29 PIECE TITANIUM DRILL BIT SET

Customer Rating **★★★★★** **SAVE 83%**

Compare \$60 **\$9⁹⁹**

ITEM 62281/61637 shown

11244060

LIMIT 9 - Coupon valid through 2/1/18*

CENTECH **SUPER COUPON**

12 VOLT, 2/10/50 AMP BATTERY CHARGER/ENGINE STARTER

Customer Rating **★★★★★** **SAVE 57%**

Compare \$69.99 **\$29⁹⁹**

ITEM 60581/60653 shown

11244632

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 2/1/18*

PITTSBURGH **SUPER COUPON**

32 PIECE SCREWDRIVER SET

Customer Rating **★★★★★** **SAVE 56%**

Compare \$13.67 **\$5⁹⁹**

ITEM 61259/90764 shown

11247038

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 2/1/18*

PORTLAND **SUPER COUPON**

7 AMP ELECTRIC POLE SAW 9.5" BAR

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

Compare \$99.98 **\$64⁹⁹**

ITEM 68862/63190/62896 shown

11260841

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 2/1/18*

SUPER COUPON

10 PIECE SOLAR DRAGONFLY LED STRING LIGHT

Customer Rating **★★★★★** **SAVE 76%**

Compare \$25.06 **\$5⁹⁹**

ITEM 62689/60758 shown

11265485

LIMIT 7 - Coupon valid through 2/1/18*

SUPER COUPON

37" TO 80" FULL-MOTION TV WALL MOUNT

Customer Rating **★★★★★** **SAVE \$160**

Compare \$199.99 **\$39⁹⁹**

ITEM 64037/63155 shown

11280010

LIMIT 3 - Coupon valid through 2/1/18*

CENTRAL MACHINERY **SUPER COUPON**

8", 5 SPEED BENCHTOP DRILL PRESS

Customer Rating **★★★★★** **SAVE \$50**

Compare \$99.99 **\$49⁹⁹**

ITEM 62520/60238 shown

11300441

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 2/1/18*

HARDY **SUPER COUPON**

MECHANIC'S GLOVES **SAVE 75%**

SIZE	ITEM
MED	62434/62426
LG	62433/62428
X-LG	62432/62429

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

YOUR CHOICE **\$3⁹⁹**

Compare \$16.12

Item 62428 shown

11302014

LIMIT 6 - Coupon valid through 2/1/18*

CHICAGO ELECTRIC WELDING **SUPER COUPON**

170 AMP MIG/FLUX CORED WELDER

Customer Rating **★★★★★** **EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO WELD**

Compare \$499.99 **\$169⁹⁹**

ITEM 61888/68885 shown

11303904

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 2/1/18*

drillmaster **SUPER COUPON**

4-1/2" ANGLE GRINDER

Customer Rating **★★★★★** **SAVE 60%**

Compare \$24.98 **\$9⁹⁹**

ITEM 69645/60625 shown

11304526

LIMIT 2 - Coupon valid through 2/1/18*

PITTSBURGH Automotive **SUPER COUPON**

2 TON CAPACITY FOLDABLE SHOP CRANE

Customer Rating **★★★★★** **SAVE \$120**

- Boom extends from 41" to 61-3/4"
- Crane height adjusts from 73-5/8" to 89"

Compare \$299.99 **\$179⁹⁹**

ITEM 60388 69514 shown

11321562

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 2/1/18*

U.S. GENERAL SUPER COUPON

30", 5 DRAWER TOOL CART

- 8100 cu. in. of storage
- 704 lb. capacity
- Weighs 120 lbs.

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE \$980

~~\$179.99~~ Compare \$1150

\$159.99

ITEM 61427/63308/69397/95272 shown

11322765

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 2/1/18*

PITTSBURGH SUPER COUPON

#1 SELLING JACKS IN AMERICA

RAPID PUMP® 1.5 TON ALUMINUM RACING JACK

- 3-1/2 Pumps Lifts Most Vehicles
- Lifts from 3-1/2" to 14-1/8"
- Lightweight 34 lbs.

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE \$50

~~\$79.99~~ Compare \$109.99

\$59.99

ITEM 68053/62160/62496/62516/60569 shown

11324121

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 2/1/18*

PREDATOR SUPER COUPON

4000 MAX. STARTING/3200 RUNNING WATTS 6.5 HP (212 CC) GAS GENERATOR

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE \$1709

~~\$2899.99~~ Compare \$1999

\$3299.99

Wheel kit sold separately.

ITEM 69676/69729/63080/63079 shown

ITEM 69675/69728/63090/63089, CALIFORNIA ONLY

11325450

LIMIT 3 - Coupon valid through 2/1/18*

HaulMaster SUPER COUPON

TRIPLE BALL TRAILER HITCH

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE 53%

~~\$319.99~~ Compare \$42.98

\$199.99

ITEM 61914

11333358

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 2/1/18*

CHICAGO ELECTRIC SUPER COUPON

12" SLIDING COMPOUND DOUBLE-BEVEL MITER SAW

- Laser guide

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE \$169

~~\$109.99~~ Compare \$299

\$129.99

Blade sold separately.

ITEM 61969/61970/69684 shown

11335569

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 2/1/18*

CHICAGO ELECTRIC SUPER COUPON

HEAVY DUTY FOLDABLE ALUMINUM SPORTS CHAIR

SAVE 50%

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

~~\$299.99~~ Compare \$39.99

\$19.99

ITEM 62314/63066/66383 shown

11341166

LIMIT 7 - Coupon valid through 2/1/18*

HaulMaster SUPER COUPON

3/8" x 14 FT., GRADE 43 TOWING CHAIN

- 5400 lb. capacity

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE 67%

~~\$399.99~~ Compare \$60.95

\$199.99

ITEM 60658/97711 shown

11342759

LIMIT 7 - Coupon valid through 2/1/18*

PORTLAND SUPER COUPON

1750 PSI PRESSURE WASHER

- 1.3 GPM
- Adjustable spray nozzle

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE \$99

~~\$99.99~~ Compare \$179.33

\$199.99

ITEM 63255/63254 shown

11348775

LIMIT 3 - Coupon valid through 2/1/18*

HaulMaster SUPER COUPON

MOVER'S DOLLY

- 1000 lb. capacity

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE 59%

~~\$109.99~~ Compare \$19.97

\$7.99

ITEM 61899/62399/63095/63096/63098/63097/93888 shown

11354913

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 2/1/18*

COVER PRO SUPER COUPON

10 FT. x 10 FT. PORTABLE SHED

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

NEW

SAVE \$96

~~\$236.89~~ Compare \$159.99

\$139.99

ITEM 63297

11363676

LIMIT 6 - Coupon valid through 2/1/18*

PITTSBURGH SUPER COUPON

9 PIECE FULLY POLISHED COMBINATION WRENCH SETS

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE 59%

YOUR CHOICE \$5.99

~~\$7.99~~ Compare \$14.97

SAE METRIC

ITEM 69043 63282/42304 shown

ITEM 69044/63171

11368156

LIMIT 7 - Coupon valid through 2/1/18*

THUNDERBOLT solar SUPER COUPON

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For spring flower displays, plant bulbs now

BY JANET B. CARSON

Spring-blooming bulbs are one of the easiest ways to add color to the landscape with the least amount of effort. You can dig a hole, drop in a bulb, then sit back and wait for spring flowers. Fall is the ideal time to plant, so get out your shovel and start planting.

By definition, a true bulb is a modified leaf bud, consisting of a basal plate, short thick stem and fleshy scales. The bulb contains all plant parts and serves as a storage organ. While not all spring-blooming bulbs are true bulbs, most underground storage organs, including rhizomes, corms, tubers and pips are collectively called “bulbs.” If you plant it in a dried, bulbous state, and wait for the leaves and flowers to appear, we can give it the name “bulb.” When purchasing bulbs, keep in mind that the bulb you buy at the nursery already contains everything that the bulb needs to flower for that season — leaves, roots, stems and flowers. When choosing bulbs, look for large ones, which are firm and blemish-free. The size of the bulb determines the size of the flower next spring. Bargain bulbs

may not end up being quite such a bargain if they are too small. Whether your bulbs bloom the next year will be determined by which bulbs you are growing and

the care they get during the period immediately after bloom. Once its seasonal cycle is complete and the foliage dies back, everything is set for the following season.

Bulbs are usually sold in their dormant or dry state. When planted, they begin to initiate roots, and the stems inside the bulbs begin to grow. The plants utilize their stored food reserves, and the shoots begin to emerge. When they begin flowering, the storage organ, or bulb, is empty of food. After bloom, they need to replenish the storage organ for the upcoming dormancy. Spring-blooming bulbs need to go through a chilling process in order to reach their full potential. Typically a minimum of 12 to 16 weeks of temperatures between 35 and 50 degrees are required for the bulbs to stretch and elongate a stem and leaves. Without natural chilling outdoors or forced chilling in the refrigerator, the bulbs rarely exceed a couple of inches in height and shatter their blooms.

When planting your bulbs, you can dig individual holes for each bulb or mass plant. It is often easier to dig a larger planting area, scatter your bulbs in and then fill the soil back in. A general rule of planting depth is to plant two to three times the size of the bulb, deep in the ground. Small bulbs are planted shallow, while big

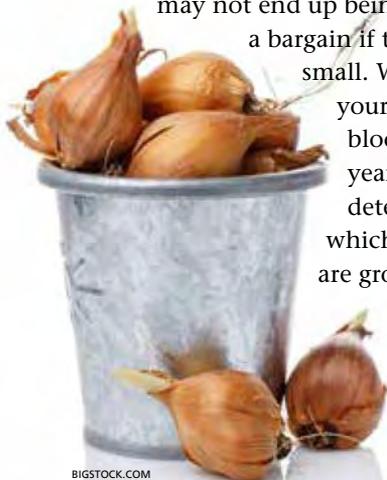


Grape hyacinth in the spring garden.

bulbs need a deeper hole. You can layer different bulbs in the same planting area. Choose a site with good drainage.

When planting bulbs, grouping them together in clusters will make a stronger impact than a single row of bulbs. A mass planting will make a huge impact in the spring, and they can easily be planted under your winter annual plantings of pansies, violas and dianthus. The bulbs will come up around them and add to the seasonal color display.

All spring-blooming bulbs require a minimum of six to eight weeks following bloom for the foliage to grow and manufacture food to replenish that bulb for the next season. To ensure the nutrition is there for the bulbs, fertilize them when you see the flower bud emerging from the leaves. Fertilize with a general complete fertilizer such as 13-13-13 or 10-10-10. You can allow the foliage to die back on its own after flowering, or simply wait six to eight weeks after flowering and cut the leaves off. Research has shown that the bulb has completed its life cycle six to eight



Bulbs, ready for planting.

weeks following bloom. Avoid braiding or twisting the foliage after bloom, which can hinder the leaf's ability to manufacture food and may impact next year's blooms.



BISTOCK.COM

Alliums make an unusual display.

Spring bulbs are in the stores now. Although you can always add to your collection of daffodils or hyacinths, consider some of the more unusual bulbs like alliums and snowdrops.

Most daffodils are long-lived, and provided they get some sunlight following bloom, will re-bloom year after year. Crocus bulbs may not stop traffic because of their demure stature, but they are a reliable performer year after year. Give crocus room to spread, because they will multiply. Hyacinths are one of the most fragrant spring-bloomers with clusters of pink, purple or white flowers. They also will re-bloom with ease for many years, if you fertilize annually when the flower buds are emerging.

Tulips are the showstopper in the garden, but most gardeners treat them as annuals, replanting new bulbs each year. Tulips are usually one of the last of our spring-blooming bulbs to flower. Late-spring temperatures can get quite warm in Arkansas and warm temperatures during bloom time can cause the flower display to pass quickly and the foliage to die back.

Whether you are adding to your collection or starting from scratch, you have lots of options. Fall planting is easy — the hard part is the wait. ■

Janet B. Carson is an extension horticulture specialist for the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service.

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THE ARKANSAS CORNBREAD FESTIVAL

For October, we are happy to bring you recipes from Sunflower Flour, sponsor of the Arkansas Cornbread Festival, to be held on South Main Street in Little Rock Oct. 21. The annual festival brings thousands of visitors to the SoMa district of Little Rock to sample the cornbread goodness from teams of cooks competing for a \$1,000 prize in the amateur and professional categories. For full festival information visit arkansascornbreadfestival.com.

Sausage Biscuits

- 2 cups Sunflower Self-Rising Flour
- 3 well-rounded tablespoons shortening
- 3/4 cup milk
- 1 pound of uncooked sausage

Preheat oven to 450 F.

Cut or rub shortening into the flour, add milk a little at a time to make soft dough. Turn dough out on a well floured board and knead lightly about 30 seconds.

Roll into long rectangle about 1/4 in. thick; spread sausage all over. Roll up dough like a jelly roll and slice into rounds. Place on a baking sheet and bake



Sausage Biscuits

for about 10 minutes. Makes 12-16, depending on thickness.

Ham and Greens Pot Pie with Cornbread Crust

- 4 cups chopped ham
 - 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
 - 3 tablespoons Sunflower Plain Flour
 - 3 cups low-sodium chicken broth
 - 1 (16 oz.) package frozen diced onion, red and green bell peppers and celery
 - 1 (16 oz.) package frozen chopped collard greens
 - 1 (16 oz.) can black eyed peas, rinsed and drained
 - 1/2 teaspoon dried crushed red pepper
- Cornbread Crust Batter (recipe follows)

Preheat oven to 425 F.

Sauté ham, in batches, in hot oil in a Dutch oven over medium-high heat 5 minutes or until lightly browned. Return ham to Dutch oven; add flour, and cook, stirring constantly, 1 minute. Gradually add chicken broth, and cook, stirring constantly, 3 minutes or until broth begins to thicken.

Bring mixture to a boil; stir in frozen onion, peppers, and celery and collard greens. Return to a boil; cover and cook, stirring often, 15 minutes. Stir in black-eyed peas and red peppers, and spoon hot mixture into a lightly greased 13x9 inch baking dish. Pour Cornbread Crust Batter over hot mixture.

Cornbread Crust Batter

- 1 1/2 cups Sunflower Self-Rising White Corn Meal Mix
- 1/2 cup Sunflower All-Purpose Flour
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 1/2 cups buttermilk

Combine first 3 ingredients (corn meal mix, all-purpose flour and sugar); make a well in center of mixture. Add eggs and buttermilk, stirring just until moistened. Bake at 425°F for 20 to 25 minutes or until cornbread is golden brown and set. Serves: 8-10.

Cheesy Bacon and Onion Cornbread

- 5 slices bacon
- 1/2 large onion, chopped
- 2 cups cheese, grated
- 1 large egg
- 1 1/2 cups regular milk or buttermilk
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 cups Sunflower Self-Rising Corn Meal Mix



Cheesy Bacon and Onion Cornbread

Preheat oven to 425 F.

Cook bacon in skillet until crisp. Remove bacon and cook chopped onion in leftover grease until translucent.

In a large bowl, beat one egg. Stir in milk and oil. Add Sunflower Self-Rising Corn Meal Mix and stir briefly until smooth. Stir in cheese, bacon and onion.

Pour batter into hot skillet and bake for 25 minutes, or until done. Cornbread will be a little heavier than plain cornbread because of all the inclusions.

Corn Sticks

- 2 cups Sunflower Self-Rising Corn Meal Mix
- 1 1/4 cups sweet milk or fresh buttermilk
- 1 or 2 eggs
- 2 tablespoons melted fat

Preheat oven to 425 F - 450 F.

Mix all ingredients well. Bake in hot greased corn stick, skillet, or muffin molds, about 15 min.



Orange
Marmalade
Cake

Orange Marmalade Cake

- 1/2 cup vegetable shortening
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 2 cups Sunflour Self-Rising Flour
- 1 cup milk
- 1 teaspoon flavoring of your choice (vanilla, orange, almond, lemon)
- 2 eggs
- Peel of 3 mandarin oranges, chopped
- 16 ounces of orange marmalade

Preheat oven to 350 F. Prepare 2 - 8" round cake pans by greasing the sides and lining the bottom with parchment paper.

Cream sugar and shortening, mix in flour. Add milk and flavoring, mix until no dry spots (200 strokes if by hand, about 1 minute on medium using an electric mixer). Add whole eggs and chopped orange peel, mix for another minute. Batter will be thin. Pour into the 2 prepared 8" round cake pans and bake for 30-35 minutes, or until done.

Allow layers to cool in pans for 5 minutes before turning out onto cooling rack. Heat marmalade in small saucepan until it liquefies. Place first layer on cake plate and spread a thin layer of marmalade on top. Place second layer on top, then pour rest of marmalade onto top layer. Spread around with a knife. It is okay if the marmalade runs down the sides a bit.

You may serve like this, or top with a dollop of whipped cream and some orange segments, or whatever you find attractive.

Sunflour flour and Sunflower cornmeal, both produced by the company and available at Arkansas grocers.

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Awesome Scones

- 2 cups flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup rolled oats
- 1 stick butter, cut into pieces
- 1 cup fruit of choice (dried cranberries, dried apricots, blueberries, or blackberries)
- 1 cup buttermilk

Spray cookie sheet with nonstick spray. Preheat oven to 425 F.

Mix flour, baking powder and soda in a large bowl. Stir in oats. Using a pastry blender, cut in butter until course crumbs. Add fruit, then stir in buttermilk to make soft dough.

Turn out onto lightly floured surface. Roll out and cut with a biscuit cutter, or by hand, to make approximately 1 dozen. Bake for 15 minutes.

Immediately top with icing when out of oven.

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 teaspoon almond extract
- 1/4 cup cream cheese, softened
- 2 cups powdered sugar

Mix together the butter, vanilla, almond extract, cream cheese, and one cup at a time of the powdered sugar, until stiff spreading consistency using a whisk.

These are really good!

Jana L. Barnes, Mountain Home

Sweet Potato Chili

- 1 pound cooked ground hamburger or turkey
- 1/2 onion, chopped
- 1 teaspoon garlic
- 1 29.5 oz. can tomato sauce
- 2 cans diced tomatoes
- 1-3 cups chicken or beef stock
- 3 large sweet potatoes, chopped
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 cup carrots, chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon thyme
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon oregano
- dash red pepper flakes
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1-2 tablespoon chili powder

Sauté onion with garlic for about 10 minutes. Add all the rest of the ingredients, bring to boil, then simmer until carrots and potatoes are done.

Joyce Kerr, Gravette

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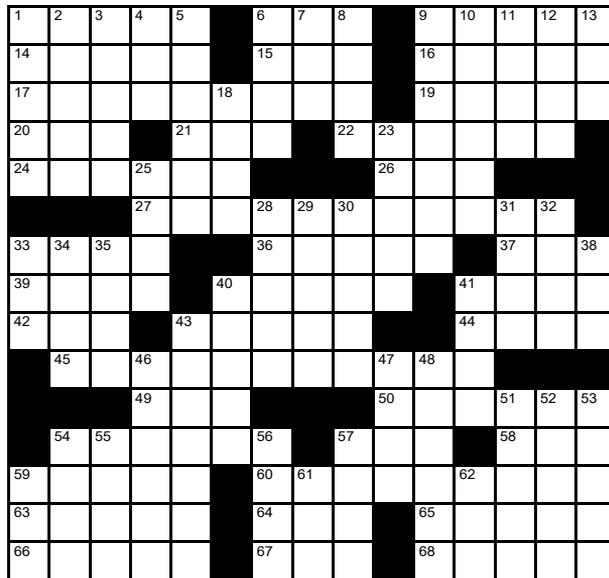


crosswordpuzzle

BY JULIE K. COHEN

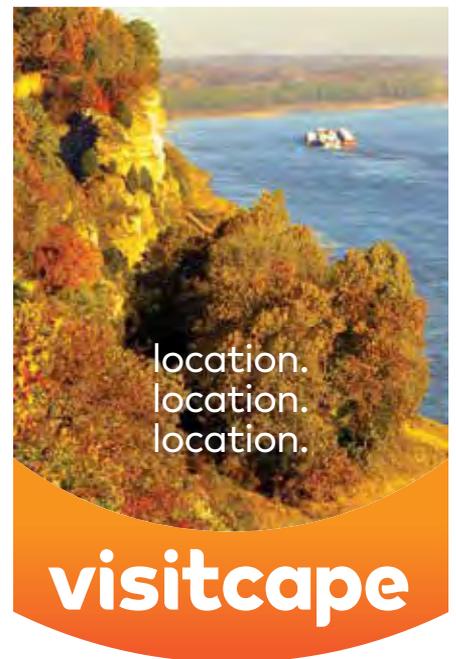
Across

1. "M*A*S*H" setting
6. Striped shirt wearer
9. Parody
14. George ____, second territorial governor of Arkansas
15. Entirely
16. Pantyhose shade
17. Old name for a tomato
19. Cut again
20. Arkansas Nuclear ____
21. "____ Milk?"
22. Fortune
24. Detected
26. "Thanks a ____!"
27. Murder a politician
33. Carpet type
36. Diplomacies
37. "Say what?"
39. Mountain lion
40. "Animal House" party wear
41. Often used in White and North Fork rivers (e.g. scud or wooly bugger)
42. Way back when
43. Better
44. Fragrance
45. Arkansas celebration with bier
49. Color
50. Devil's Den and Mount Magazine outlooks
54. Arkansas ____, annual film festival
57. Fish part
58. Wine barrel type
59. University of Central Arkansas' Poetry Journal (or 'bias')
60. Eureka Springs' Music Festival
63. A pirate's cry
64. Alias
65. "The Boy Who Cried Wolf" writer
66. Historic colony in



- Mississippi County
67. Bumped into
68. Pilotless plane
- Down
1. Metric weights
2. Protective layer (or Johnson County community)
3. Bird statue along Highway 63
4. "Able was I ____"
5. Words to live by
6. Awestruck
7. Building add-on
8. Piloted
9. Overworks
10. Spanish dish
11. Depose
12. Colorful fish
13. Small number
18. Purplehull Peas storage containers?
23. Gives off (e.g. 44 Across)
25. Heroic tale
28. Do penance
29. More wise
30. Winter accessory
31. Impact sound
32. German money
33. Luxury retreat in Arkansas
34. Science fiction award
35. Run ____ (go wild)
38. Part of H.M.S.
40. Dalai Lama's land
41. Parcels of land
43. Quarters
46. Beachwear
47. Bad to the bone
48. "Arabian Nights" sailor
51. Body
52. Hitter of 755 home runs
53. Video chat format
54. Murder
55. Arkansas ____ Scramble motorcycle racing
56. Deception
57. Sharp County's county seat, Ash ____
59. In a funk
61. Eisenhower
62. Always, to a poet

Crossword answers on page 43



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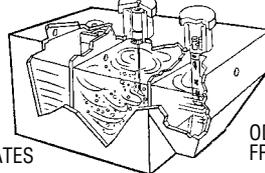
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crossword answers

for puzzle on page 42

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Wilson Cafe wows with wonderful ingredients

BY JENNY BOULDEN

When asked by the Lawrence investment group, Wilson's new owners, what they'd most like to see added or brought back to their town, Wilson's residents said reopening the historic Wilson Tavern, the town's main eatery, was at the top of their wish list. The group recruited a talented Memphis couple, chefs Joe Cartwright and Shari' Haley, who each had spent years in the kitchens of several top Memphis restaurants. The Cartwrights, the cafe's owners and chefs, opened the restaurant as Wilson Cafe in December 2013 and permanently moved to Wilson the following spring.



Owner/chefs Shari' Haley and Joe Cartwright.

"It took us a couple of months to decide to accept the offer, but we are proud of this place," Joe said.

"And our customers keep coming back."

Before we even get to the food, the restaurant is beautiful. Built in the town's signature Tudor Revival style, the spacious main dining room is bright and airy, running the length of a long, Carrera marble bar set off by arrangements of the

puffy cotton sprigs that made Wilson an agricultural empire years ago. Huge windows, rich wood tables, drop lights from the high ceiling and oversized black and white photographs of Wilson in its 1930s heyday complete the look. The bar room at the end of the dining area is darker, befitting a cozy tavern, and several small meeting spaces flow from both areas.

It's a place you'd expect to see in Memphis or Little Rock rather than in a tiny Delta farming community. At lunchtime, the place is packed with people from miles around, more than a few making a detour to Wilson just for the food.

Joe described the menu above all else as approachable. "This is not a place for avant-garde-style cuisine. This is a place for recognizable elegance. It's definitely Southern-inspired food, but we are very conscious about the ingredients we're using and



The bright and airy cafe is filled daily with happy patrons who come back again and again.

how we are putting it on a plate for you to eat."

The Cartwrights and another chef they recruited from Memphis, Jon Sawrie, start by ordering the very best ingredients to be found. And by best, I mean the beef is certified Angus, the steaks are USDA Prime cuts, the produce is sourced locally (often from Wilson Gardens across the street), the catfish comes from Mississippi instead of Vietnam, the seafood is overnighted from the deep, cool oceans of Hawaii and the amazing bacon that comes on a



Wilson Cafe is built in the same charming Tudor Revival style as the rest of the iconic town square.

the eating essentials

WILSON CAFE

2 North Jefferson Street
Wilson
870-655-0222
www.eatatwilson.com

Hours of Operation

Lunch: Monday - Sunday, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Dinner: Wednesday - Saturday, 5 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

burger costs the cafe \$1.30 a strip. They don't skimp on using the highest quality ingredients they can find, Joe said, because that's part of their philosophy.

"If you start off with garbage, it's hard to make something nice out of it. But if you start with a great quality product, it's kind of hard to screw it up. We get the best food available and let it shine."

Not that they don't enhance it along the way. Their pork porterhouse — available on the dinner menu — is as Southern a pork chop as you can imagine, brined for a day and a half in bourbon and sweet tea before hitting the grill. Likewise, the pork loin used in several dishes is smoked for eight hours just outside the kitchen, giving it a complex, rich flavor they often pair with a blueberry gastrique.

Joe said one of Sawrie's creations, a dinner appetizer called Greens & Cornbread, is his favorite dish he's had on any menu in his career. "It's little griddle-fried hoecakes with this bubbling casserole of collard greens, cream cheese, pepperjack

and bacon that you smear on the cornbread," he described. "I had nothing to do with the creation of it, but it's one of my favorite things I've ever eaten."

Wilson Cafe's dinner features mainstays like steaks, catfish, pasta and Scampi & Grits, while the lunch menu revolves around plate lunches, salads, burgers, sandwiches and a fixings-filled Grilled Cheese of the Day. My Firebird sandwich was their spin on a buffalo chicken sandwich. The seasoned crust on the deep-fried chicken breast was crisp and savory, set off by a smoky-sweet buffalo sauce, tangy dill pickle slaw, tomato and onion. Even the bun was ridiculously good.

Personally, I'm drawn to the vegetable plates. Wilson Cafe's is exceptional, whatever combination you choose. The pinto beans we tried had an appealing smokiness; the lima beans were cooked just right without being soggy; the dense scoop of cheese grits had a baked-grits texture and an intense cheddar flavor, and the real, skins-on mashed potatoes could make you believe in love again.

Nothing in their kitchen comes from a boxed mix; even their dressings are handmade.

Joe explained that they see every ingredient as almost sacred. "Everything on a plate gave its life for you, whether it's a potato or a green bean or a cow. It gave its life for you



Hand-cut French fries accompany the bestselling and heat-packed Firebird Chicken sandwich.



This Vegetable Plate of mashed potatoes, lima beans, cheese grits, a roll and purple hull peas, is all made from scratch, often using local produce.

to enjoy," he said. To that end, they teach kitchen staff to respect the ingredients as they're cooking them and as they plate them, so diners can then respect the experience of eating them. "Once you start thinking that way, it adds a whole new dimension to cooking and eating," he said.

As for Shari', her particular genius is the desserts menu. And I assure you, diet or not, skipping dessert at Wilson Cafe is folly. Daily options vary, usually including a warm, donut bread pudding, cakes and a strawberry shortcake in

a quaint mini-Mason jar, but her homemade pies are worth the drive on their own. The crusts, made with shortening and the ice-cold water, are everything a pie crust should be. On his first visit in June, my husband tried the buttermilk pie and declared it one of the single best things he had ever tasted. He hasn't stopped talking about it since. Shari' is modest about them, but trust me, they're a Best of Arkansas kind of thing.



The blueberry pie, made by Shari', has a dense and creamy texture bursting with flavor.

Next time you're anywhere near Wilson, make a detour for lunch or dinner, or even just pie. This is Arkansas living done right.

For complete menus, including the current daily special, be sure to check out www.eatatwilson.com.

Dining recommendations? Contact Rob Roedel at rroedel@aecc.com

Calendar



BIGSTOCK.COM

Sep. 23 - Oct. 29

Pumpkin Patch

Wye Mountain Flowers and Berries, Wye

Choose your own pumpkin. Visit the animals in the barnyard petting area. Fridays - Sundays, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. www.wyemountain.net.

Sep. 23 - Oct. 31

Ozark Corn Maze

McGarrah Farms, Springdale

Three mazes, pony rides, pick-your-own pumpkin patch, concessions. Saturdays and Sundays. www.ozarkcornmaze.com.

16th Annual Forest Of Fright

Pumpkin Hollow Farm, Piggott

Fridays and Saturdays, 6:30 - 10 p.m. www.horrorinthehollow.com.

Oct. 1

Hobbs State Park Fall Festival

Hobbs State Park Visitor Center, Rogers

Activities and fun for the entire family. www.friendsofhobbs.com.

Oct. 4-7

32nd Annual King Biscuit Blues Festival

MainStage, Helena-West Helena

Leading blues musicians perform. See story, page 8. www.KingBiscuitFestival.com.

Oct. 6-7

Timberfest

Grant County Courthouse, Sheridan

Lumberjack competitions, games, crafts, 5K, a parade. www.grantcountychamber.com.

20th Annual Junkfest 2017

Downtown Park, Bradley

Largest garage sale in south Arkansas. 8 a.m. - 8 p.m. 870-894-3935.

Oct. 6-15

26th Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival

Hot Springs

Come for more than 100 of the best international features and shorts the documentary world has to offer. www.hsdfi.org.

Oct. 7

7th Annual Fall Festival and Silent Auction

Clinton City Park, Clinton

1 - 6 p.m. www.clintonfallfestival.com.

Arkansas Goat Festival

Perryville City Park, Perryville

Bring your goat and a chair to enjoy a day of music, food and fun. Goat costume contest, goat parades, goat products. 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. www.arkansasgoatfestival.org.

Oct. 7-8

7th Annual Arkansas Paranormal Expo

MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History, Little Rock

www.arkansasparanormalexpo.com.

Oct 13-14

Cabotfest

110 South 1st Street, Cabot

Festival fun for the whole family.

35th Annual Wild Duck Festival

16179 Pecan Grove Road, Trumann

Carnival, barbecue contest, petting zoo, hayrides, Strut Your Mutt competition, clay target shoot. www.trumannchamber.org.

Oct. 14

10th Annual Augsburg Fall Fest

Zion Lutheran Church, London

German heritage festival. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. 479-331-3483.

Oct. 19-21

Bella Vista Arts and Crafts Festival

1991 Forest Hills Blvd., Bella Vista

Artists and crafters, all items handmade. 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. www.bellavistafestival.org.

War Eagle Craft Fair

War Eagle Mill, Rogers

The "granddaddy" of all craft fairs! www.wareaglemill.com.

Oct. 21

6th Annual Barn BOO!

Fair Haven Farms, Trumann

Family friendly event with a costumed petting zoo, concessions, hayrides. 870-483-5077.

Pedestal Rock Ride and Lick Fork Gravel Grind

Begins and ends at Witts Springs

www.pedestalrock40ride.com.

22nd Annual Hillbilly Chili Cook-Off and Festival

Bull Shoals-White River State Park, Bull Shoals

Chili tasting, live music, crafts vendors, boat and car show, karaoke contest. 870-445-3629.

2017 Arkansas Cornbread Festival

South Main Street, Little Rock

Sample cornbread and vote for your favorite! Food trucks, music and a kids corner. 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. www.arkansascornbreadfestival.com.

54th Annual Wiederkehr Weinfest

Wiederkehr Village

Dance the polka, stomp some grapes, tour the cellar and vineyard. www.wiederkehrwines.com.

Oct. 27-28

15th Annual Boo on the Bayou

Governor Mike Huckabee Delta Rivers Nature Center, Pine Bluff

Games, inflatables, trail of terror, scary maze, food, a prize for every child. 6 - 9 p.m. www.deltarivers.com.

Oct. 28

Trick or Treat at Village Creek State Park

Village Creek State Park, Wynne

Family-friendly event for all ages. 6 - 8:30 p.m. 870-238-9406.

Arktoberfest

Downtown Arkadelphia

Craft Beer Festival and Caddo Valley Catfish Cook Off. 12 p.m. - 10 p.m. www.arktoberfest.org.

For an extensive listing of events around Arkansas, visit www.arkansas.com/events

To submit a listing for consideration go to: www.arkansaslivingmagazine.com

or mail to: Arkansas Living, P.O. Box 510, Little Rock, AR 72203.

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