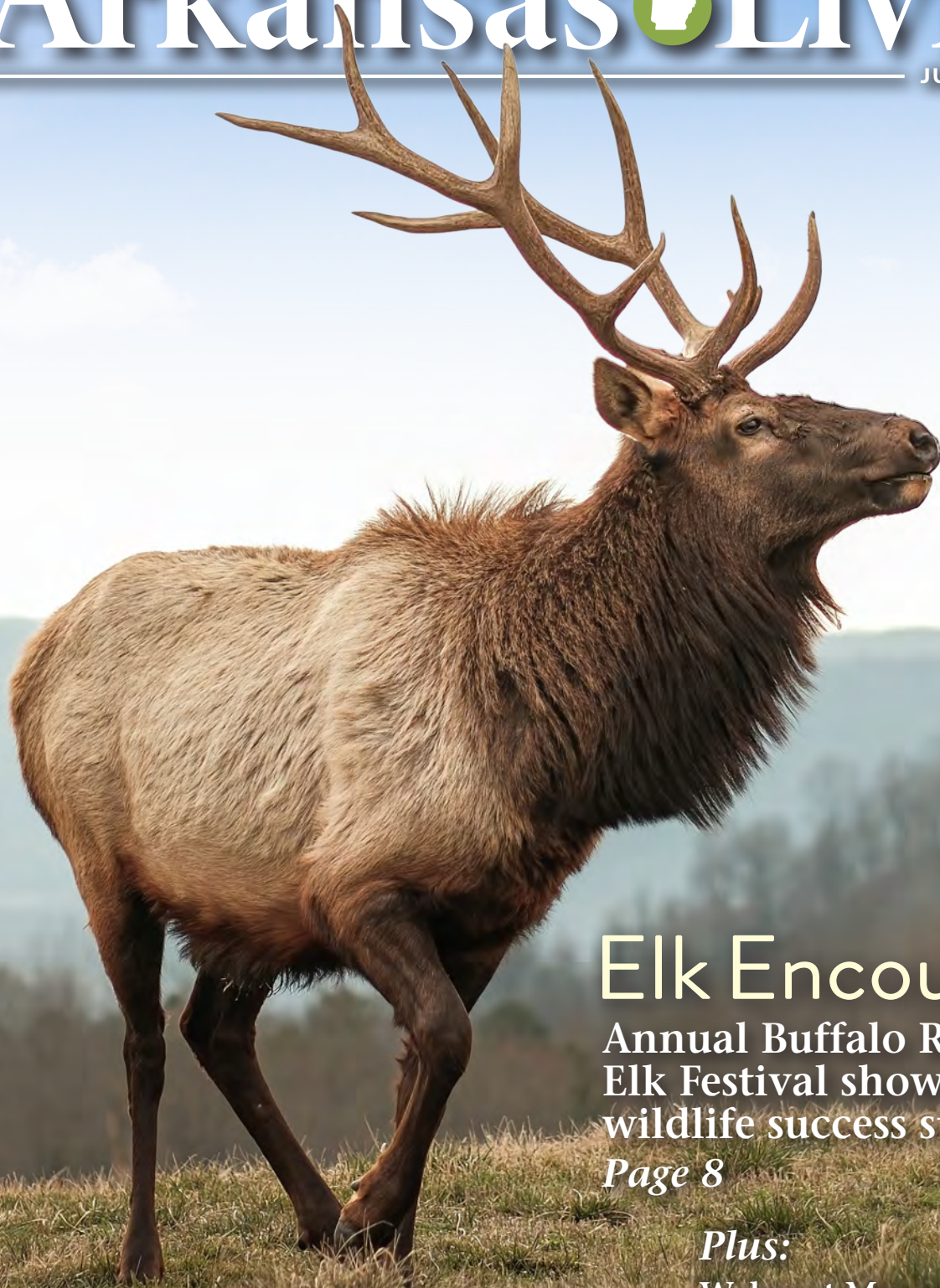


Arkansas Living

JUNE 2025



Elk Encounters

Annual Buffalo River
Elk Festival showcases
wildlife success story

Page 8

Plus:

Walmart Museum Makeover

Cat Cafés

Kayaking Basics

Summer Eats, Treats



Family Focus: Help your child get ready for kindergarten!

Written by Kelli Hilburn, Better Beginnings Program Administrator

Being ready for kindergarten doesn't mean having the right supplies and clothes. Kindergarten readiness means your child has the academic and social skills for school success.

Whether your child or grandchild will start kindergarten this fall or a year from now, it's time to focus on helping them get ready.

It's a big job, but we're here to help

Your family set the foundation for your child's early learning through talking, stories and play in their first days at home.

Coupled with the foundation for learning your family set, children in high-quality early care settings have been preparing for school all their lives.

But now they need more.

Your child needs your extra focus in the important months before starting school. We're here to help.

Your early education partners

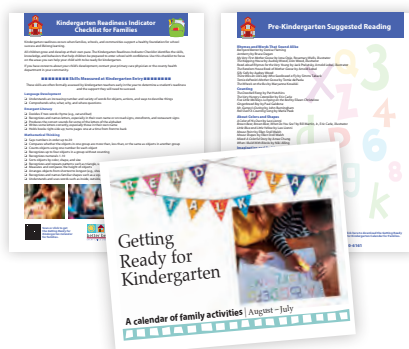
Better Beginnings star-rated early educators partner with families to help you identify and strengthen areas where your child may need more support before starting school.

Kindergarten readiness tools

Online tools include the readiness indicator, reading suggestions and the Getting Ready for Kindergarten



Scan the code or click **Kindergarten Readiness** in our website footer for the tools to get started.



Calendar – a year-long, week-by-week guide to fun activities that can help improve your child's academic skills.

Suggested reading helps your child learn to deal with change and develop problem-solving and social skills.

Most importantly, your child learns with you, on your schedule, through play and interesting activities.

The calendar runs from August through July, but families can begin the activities and reading right away to help your child start school with confidence.

Looking for your early education partner?

Click the orange banner on our homepage to find star-rated quality early educators that help children get ready for school through positive learning experiences.

Better Beginnings is administered by the Arkansas Department of Education.



better beginnings
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ON THE COVER

Standing tall in a field in Boxley Valley, this Rocky Mountain Elk is a testament to successful wildlife restoration efforts showcased at the annual Buffalo River Elk Festival in Jasper.

Photo by Justin Smith

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Clued In

BY JENNIFER CHRISTMAN CIA



We continue our Arkansas Living contributor Q&A series with our crossword creator, Victor Fleming (see page 38). The Mississippi native and former Little Rock district court judge has spent decades honing his craft as a crossword puzzle creator. After law school at UALR's William H. Bowen School of Law and practicing law for nearly two decades, he retired from the bench in 2024. Now, he continues to write puzzles while mentoring aspiring cruciverbalists and practicing law part time. He is the author of two books and has had more than 1,500 crossword puzzles published in various venues, including Arkansas Living.

What's the most creative excuse you heard as a traffic court judge? In the late '90s, a lady charged with going 111 miles per hour on I-630 pled guilty. I asked, "What were you thinking?" She replied, "It was a new car." I asked, "So?" She said, "Well, Judge, I thought there was a law that says if you have a new car, you get one chance to see how fast it will go."

What sparked your interest in crossword puzzles? My mother encouraged me to solve crosswords when I was 12. She said, "It's good for the brain." ... In my early 20s, I started solving the New York Times puzzles, thinking, "If that person can write a crossword, I ought to be able to." I toyed with writing them in 1977, but it was so time-consuming, I decided to defer the activity until personal computers and the internet were invented.

How did it feel to have your first puzzle published in the New York Times? Of my 47 published Times puzzles, 25 are collaborations with other authors. In 2005, I had two Times crosswords published about a month apart: The first I'd submitted 14 months earlier, the second 14 days earlier. The second was based on a current event (election of a pope). Having waited for over a year for the first puzzle, it felt really good to have a second one run shortly thereafter.

How long does it take to create a crossword puzzle? My average time on an Arkansas Living puzzle is about three hours.

How do you balance making the puzzles challenging but still accessible for a wide range of solvers?

I try to write easy clues for the Arkansas Living crosswords. And I always make a few clues about Arkansas. ... People love being able to finish a puzzle and see answers that are people, places and things they're familiar with.

In addition to crossword puzzles, what other puzzles do you enjoy? Other Times puzzles, including Wordle, Spelling Bee, Connections, Letter Boxed and The Mini.

With the rise of digital puzzle games and apps, are people still passionate about traditional crosswords? Yes indeed, more so than ever, in my opinion.

Happy solving, and no speeding,



Victor Fleming

Jennifer

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Arkansas' Political Power

BY VERNON "BUDDY" HASTEN

President and CEO of Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. and Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation



Every April, all the nation's electric cooperatives coordinate with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) to develop consensus on key legislative issues that are important to rural America.

This year, representatives from the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas joined over 2,000 other electric cooperative leaders in our nation's capital to advocate for 1.) Permitting reform to streamline overly bureaucratic federal processes that cause delays and increase costs; 2.) Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulation reform to address power plant rules that jeopardize grid reliability; 3.) Support for rural and lithium industry infrastructure; 4.) Wildfire prevention; and 5.) Disaster recovery and supply chain stability. It truly demonstrates one of our cooperative principles — Cooperation Among Cooperatives — and is highly effective at concentrating political influence on the issues we care about.

Electric cooperative members meet with their members of Congress to highlight and emphasize these national issues as well as specific state priorities. We are fortunate in Arkansas that all our congressmen are very supportive of the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas.

While we meet with our congressional delegation every spring as a part of this process, this year was quite special and historic. Arkansas' current congressional delegation in the 119th Congress (2025-2027) holds significant influence, with all six members — two senators and four representatives — either chairing full committees or holding key leadership roles.

Sen. John Boozman chairs the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry; Sen. Tom Cotton chairs the Senate Intelligence Committee and serves as the Senate Republican Conference Chair; Rep. French Hill chairs the House Financial Services Committee; Rep. Rick Crawford chairs the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence; Rep. Steve Womack chairs the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development; and Rep. Bruce Westerman chairs the House Natural Resources Committee.

This is the first time in history that all six members of our delegation hold chairmanships of significant committees or subcommittees. This is quite possibly the highest concentration of political power in Arkansas' history, especially since it is an all-Republican delegation during a Trump administration and with Republican control of the House and Senate.

Arkansas has a population of about 3 million, and the total U.S. population is about 331 million, so we represent about 1% of the nation's population. However, with five chairmanships out of 36 committees, we hold about 15% of the leadership positions in this Congress, which is amazing.



Arkansas' congressional delegation — (from left) Rep. Bruce Westerman, Rep. Steve Womack, Sen. Tom Cotton, Sen. John Boozman, Rep. Rick Crawford and Rep. French Hill — hold gavels and influence in Washington, D.C.

The chairmanship of a congressional committee is a powerful and influential position. The chairman leads the committee and sets the agenda, influencing legislative priorities and policy decisions. The chairman also has oversight authority of the executive branch and other governmental agencies, and can initiate investigations, hold hearings and subpoena witnesses and documents. Chairmen are also very influential in how bills are drafted and which ones move forward in the political process. They are true leaders and play a key role in negotiations and building coalitions to support political priorities.

You must go all the way back to the 1960s and 1970s, under Democratic control of Congress and, at times, the presidency, to find a period when Arkansas had anything close to this much influence. It was during this period that Arkansas had three members simultaneously ➤

POLITICAL POWER continued on page 6

Cooperatives push rural priorities in D.C.

Representatives from the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas joined industry leaders in Washington, D.C., for the 2025 National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Legislative Conference, held April 27–29, to champion rural energy and engage with federal lawmakers.

The annual event brings cooperative leaders from across the country together to align policy priorities and advocate for the needs of electric cooperatives.

General sessions opened the conference with federal policy updates and a focus on grassroots advocacy. Attendees received briefings from NRECA and policy experts.

The Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas delegation toured the U.S. Capitol with Rep. Bruce Westerman, gaining an up-close look at the legislative process. They also met with members of the state's congressional delegation to address critical energy and infrastructure issues, including reliability, affordability and federal regulations. Sens. John Boozman and Tom Cotton, and Reps. Westerman, Rick Crawford, Steve Womack and French Hill participated in the discussions.

The meetings emphasized the essential role of electric cooperatives in rural development and the importance of strong relationships with lawmakers to advance energy solutions.



Sen. John Boozman



Sen. Tom Cotton



Rep. Bruce Westerman



Rep. Rick Crawford



Rep. Steve Womack



Rep. French Hill



Representatives from the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas tour the U.S. Capitol.

POLITICAL POWER *continued from page 5*


chairing major committees, during the tenure of Rep. Wilbur Mills, Sen. John McClellan and Sen. J. William Fulbright.

Mills chaired the House Ways and Means Committee from 1958 to 1974, a powerful position given the committee's jurisdiction over tax policy, Social Security and Medicare. McClellan served as chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee from 1972 to 1977 and the Senate Government Operations Committee (later renamed the Committee on Governmental Affairs), where he led high-profile investigations. Fulbright chaired the Senate Foreign Relations Committee from 1959 to 1974, shaping U.S. foreign policy and gaining national prominence for his opposition to the Vietnam War. Arkansas also held significant political power during the Clinton presidency (1993-2001), when Sen. Dale Bumpers and Sen. David Pryor held senior roles but not always chairmanships.

The fact that Arkansas currently has this supersized level of influence over the legislative process and is positioned to provide significant leadership that shapes the future of our country is due to good politics right here in The Natural State. For far too long, we have heard voices from both parties from predominantly rural states asking for common-sense policies that ensure that rural and middle-class Americans are not left out of the plan for

the nation's future.

Arkansas is one of those states, and the candidates we supported and who have gone to D.C. with good, common-sense leadership and policies have been able to gain the respect of their colleagues. I have personally met each of our congressmen, and it is clear to me why they are respected not just at home but also in D.C. The fact that we had the sense to re-elect them multiple times so that they would have the respect and seniority needed to be chosen for these leadership positions is a key reason Arkansas is uniquely positioned to have a historically significant role in this Congress. I think that Rep. Womack said it best when meeting with us in D.C. saying, "Arkansas is punching way above its weight" because all six members of our delegation hold the gavel of leadership in this Congress.

I have a bit of experience with leaving family and heading off to a distant place to serve the nation. It is not an easy job, and it requires a lot of sacrifices, especially when it comes to family. I truly respect all six of our congressional delegates and the sacrifices they make to represent the Arkansas way of life in the bigger national political picture. I pray for their continued wisdom and success, and wish them the very best as they do their best for us. 

Hasten backs reliable power at White House event

On April 8, President Donald Trump signed executive orders to support coal plants and other crucial generation sources.

AECC/AECI President and CEO Vernon "Buddy" Hasten was among nine electric cooperative leaders invited to the White House for the announcement.

Hasten said, "This was my first ever visit to the White House and first time in the presence of the president. I think it is amazing that this memorable experience coincided with the announcement of a shift in federal energy policy to support a more balanced approach to our national electric power supply."

Reflecting on his career, Hasten added, "I retired from the nuclear Navy in 2007 and entered the electric utility business as coal plant manager in rural Iowa. ... Every announcement, new rule or regulation from the federal government for the last 18 years has been a continued assault on reliable and dispatchable generation resources that power America. President Trump's executive orders are the first good news in a long time, like a nice soaking rain after a drought."



Vernon "Buddy" Hasten (right of center) joins electric cooperative leaders at the White House in April.

Where Is It?

Welcome back to our hidden object contest, "Where Is It?"

In last month's issue, we hid a cookie for Chocolate Chip Day/World Baking Day, both celebrated in May. One correct reader joked it appeared in the headline of a recipe contest announcement: "Well, bowl me over, the cookie crumbles on the top of page 27!"

Winners selected in our drawing to receive an insulated Arkansas Living grocery tote were:

Christy Medlin, Decatur (Arkansas Valley Electric Cooperative)
David Huddleston, Doddridge (Southwest Arkansas Electric Cooperative)
Gracie Smith, De Queen (nonmember)
Michael Jones, Cove (Rich Mountain Electric Cooperative)
Susan Brewster, Wilburn (First Electric Cooperative)

For June, we're hiding this flamingo pool float. You're sure to be pumped up if you find it.

For a chance to win a tote, enter by June 15 via the "Where Is It?" link on the homepage of arkansaslivingmagazine.com, or go directly to arkansaslivingmagazine.com/where-is-it-contest/.

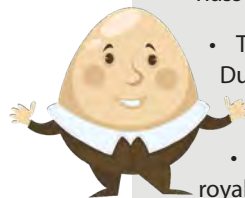
Or mail in entries to: Where Is It, Arkansas Living, P.O. Box 510, Little Rock, AR 72203.

Include your name, address and electric co-op (nonmembers also are eligible), plus the correct page number.

** If your magazine arrives after the deadline, submit your entry by the 15th of the following month. We'll send a prize to a randomly selected latecomer. April's winner was: Shirley Wolf, Midway (North Arkansas Electric Cooperative).*



- You can't sneeze while sleeping.
- Father's Day was officially recognized as a holiday by presidential proclamation in 1966, while Mother's Day was made official in 1914.
- Humans are born with only two innate fears: the fear of falling and the fear of loud sounds.
- Plastic bottles require approximately 10 times more water to produce than the bottle itself can hold.
- Military fatigues have a backward flag patch so the star field always faces the front to mimic a flag blowing in the wind as soldiers charge into battle.
- Arkansas' first roadside rest stop is located on Scenic Byway 7 in the Ozark National Forest. It was founded in the 1930s by the Rotary Anns, a ladies auxiliary group of the Russellville Rotary Club.



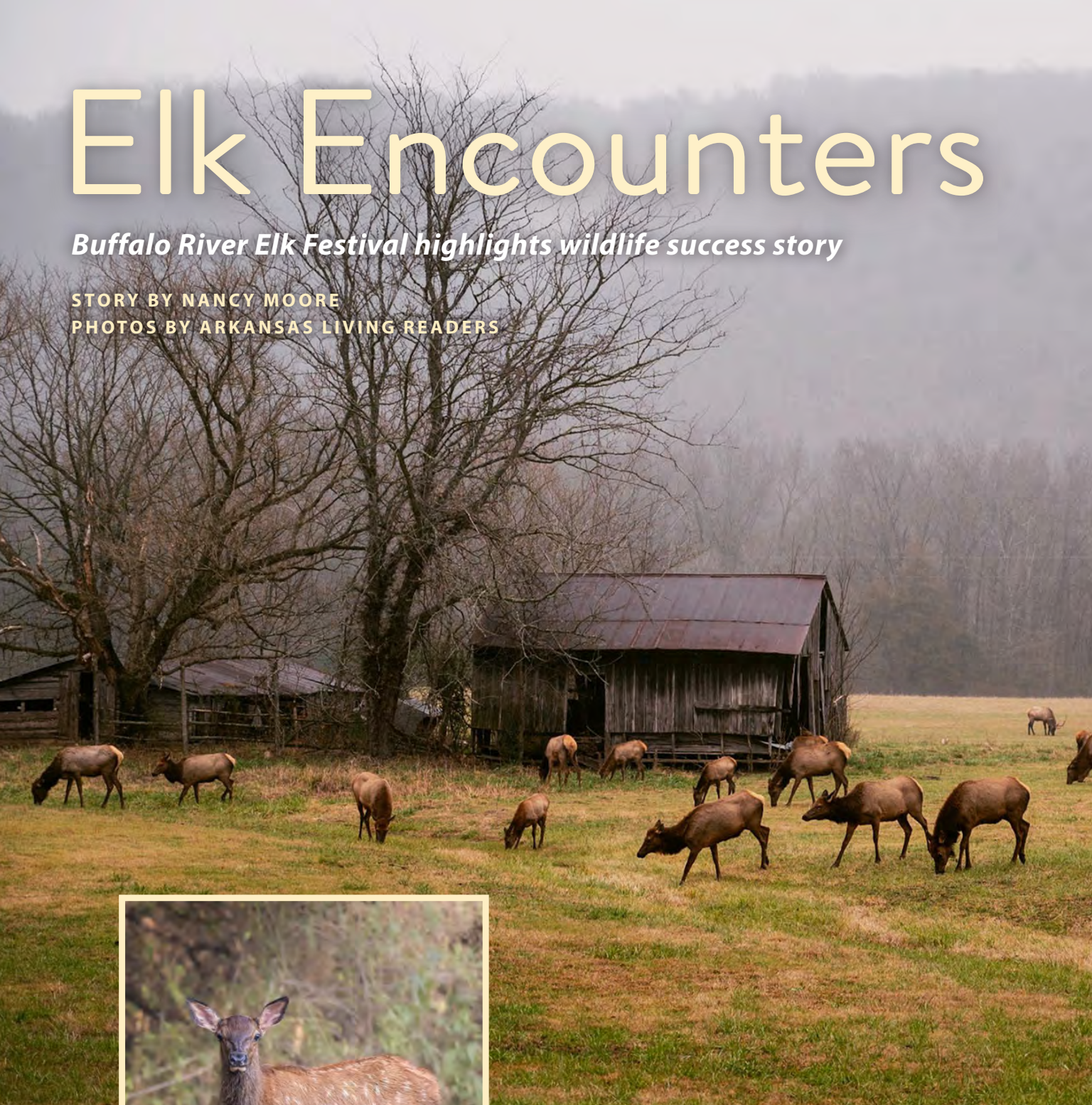
- The story of "Humpty Dumpty" never states he was an egg.
- The odds of getting a royal flush in poker are 1 in 649,740.
- Sunflowers follow the sun as it moves across the sky. Moonflowers bloom after nightfall in response to the moon.
- Baby elephants suck their trunks for comfort.
- "A father carries pictures where his money used to be."
— Steve Martin, actor and comedian

Elk Encounters

Buffalo River Elk Festival highlights wildlife success story

STORY BY NANCY MOORE

PHOTOS BY ARKANSAS LIVING READERS



MICKEY ARLOW

Renowned for its natural beauty, Arkansas boasts a unique wildlife treasure — the Rocky Mountain Elk. This majestic animal, once absent from the state, has made a remarkable comeback, captivating residents and drawing visitors from far and wide.

The reintroduction of elk will be celebrated at the 26th annual Buffalo River Elk Festival, to be held June 27-28 in Jasper, with a variety of attractions, including the Arkansas State Championship Elk Calling Contest, a kids fishing derby, a



LESA OTTEN

Conservation pride

Tammy Casey, vice president of the Buffalo River Elk Festival, has been involved since the event's beginning in 1998. The festival has grown considerably over the years, from its humble beginnings organized by the Newton County Chamber of Commerce.

"The kids fishing derby is a popular event. Those banks along the Little Buffalo River at Bradley Park are fully packed," Casey says. "There are so many kids that come for that because we have so many great prizes." ➤

ABOVE Once eradicated in Arkansas, Rocky Mountain Elk now thrive along the Buffalo National River in Newton County.

LEFT A young Rocky Mountain Elk is spotted in Boxley Valley.



Dutch oven cook-off and the popular, on-site Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) elk hunting permit drawings.

Native return

Eastern Elk were native to Arkansas until the 1840s. However, unregulated hunting and habitat loss led to their disappearance from the state.

"In 1981, the AGFC initiated a reintroduction program, bringing in 112 Rocky Mountain Elk from Colorado and Nebraska and releasing them along the Buffalo National River," says Wesley Wright, AGFC elk program coordinator.

Today, the elk population is carefully monitored through annual aerial surveys. Wright says that the latest survey counted 468 elk, indicating an increase from the previous year of 389.

"That's a minimum population," he clarifies. "We know that there are probably more elk than that, but we can say that there are at least that many."



A bull elk looks as if he's reading the "No Pets" sign along the road in Boxley Valley.

KAREN BRUCKS

Another major highlight is the Dutch oven cook-off, a culinary competition that celebrates old-fashioned cooking.

"Competitors come and set up their own fire," she says. "Everything has to be cooked outside, as if you were in the 1800s with no electricity. There are three categories — bread, main dish and dessert. The public can pay \$1 to sample and vote for the People's Choice Award."

But at its heart, the festival is about celebrating and protecting the elk population.

"They are almost like our children in a way," Casey expresses with pride. "We have been entrusted with protecting them. It's about

conservation. Let's keep elk the way they're supposed to be, even if it's just on a 100-mile stretch of the river."

Elk impact

The elk's impact extends beyond just the festival. It's a significant economic driver for the Newton County area.

The elk viewing area in Boxley Valley on the Buffalo National River attracts tens of thousands of visitors each year, particularly during the fall rutting season. This influx of tourists significantly benefits local businesses.

"It is a benefit to the state, the county and the city of Jasper specifically for the elk to be here. It is a big tourism draw that we have," ➤



SHARON PRISLIPSKY

A bull elk in Boxley Valley bugles during the fall rut season.

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KAREN BRUCKS

Safe Sightings

Follow these tips for respectful and safe elk viewing:

Best Location: Boxley Valley elk viewing area along Arkansas 43, south of Ponca.

Best Times: Early morning near dawn and dusk to late evening offer the best viewing opportunities.

Fall Rut: Late September through October is the prime time to witness the elk's rutting activity, when the bulls bugle and battle for herd domination.

Respect Private Land: Be mindful that much of the land where elk reside is privately owned. Do not cross fences or trespass.

Maintain Distance: Avoid getting too close to the elk to ensure both your safety and theirs. Never try to feed elk.

Use Designated Areas: Use the designated pull-off areas along the highway to view elk safely and avoid obstructing traffic. Watch for elk crossing the highway.

Wright says. "Boxley Valley is a prime location for elk viewing. The fall season, especially during the rutting activities, is a peak time for tourism. People enjoy viewing the elk and hearing them bugle at that time of year, but especially when you have the fall colors that are going on."

But elk can be seen year-round. Wright adds, "Throughout the summertime, you can also see the elk. They're not visible as long because when the temperatures get hot, they have a tendency to leave the fields quicker."

The AGFC Ponca Nature Center in Ponca (agfc.com/things-to-do/nature-centers/ponca) has living habitat exhibits, multimedia presentations and elk experts on staff to educate visitors and share the latest sightings.

The presence of elk in Arkansas is a unique and valuable resource. "When most people think of elk, they think of western states. But a lot of people don't know that there are elk in (other) states. And Arkansas is one of those.

We pride ourselves on this herd," Wright says.

For more information on the Buffalo River Elk Festival, visit buffalo-riverelkfestival.com. To learn more about the elk, visit agfc.com. 



JAYDEN LYDICK



JAYDEN LYDICK

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP Thanks to conservation efforts, Rocky Mountain Elk now number more than 468 in Arkansas.

The Dutch oven cook-off celebrates old-fashioned cooking at the Buffalo River Elk Festival.

The Little Buffalo River at Bradley Park is lined with participants at the festival's kids fishing derby.



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Cat-puccinos and Cuddles

Cafés allow feline fans to caffeinate with furry friends

STORY AND PHOTOS BY KAT ROBINSON

What could be cozier than a cup of coffee and a cat on your lap? For feline fanatics, several Arkansas cafés let you sip your favorite brew while relaxing with adoptable kitties.

These cat cafés serve a dual purpose — giving guests a spot to enjoy coffee and dessert in the company of cats, while also helping those furry companions find their “fur-ever” homes.

Feline fun

One of these cafés is in Paragould. Step into Something Sweet, a bakery and coffeeshop in the downtown area, for a cup of coffee and a cupcake or brownie. Then, for a small fee, you’re admitted to Something Pawsitive, the adjacent cat-filled space, where you can enjoy time with a selection of furry friends.

Tracy Mothershed, the owner of both businesses, says it’s something she started to think about when the boutique next door went out of business.

“So, the building was available for rent,” she says. “I talked with the landlord, I did some research, and I thought I could make it work.”

Mothershed consulted with the Arkansas Department of Health, which let her know that the cats could not be in the same space where the food was served (with some exceptions for service dogs, etc.). The solution? Offering admission at the bakery, where you can get your food and beverage if you like before spending time with the cats. Admission is \$4 for 15 minutes, \$6 for 30 minutes and so on. All ages are allowed to visit, but children under 12 must have a guardian with them.

The cats are here thanks to Ozzie’s Legacy, a not-for-profit organization that handles adoptions and medical care. Before the cats are brought to Something Pawsitive, they’re health screened, vaccinated and spayed/neutered. While admission fees cover the operating expenses and food for Something Pawsitive, adoption fees and donations to Ozzie’s Legacy cover their medical bills and fostering costs.

Mothershed says these kitties are all ready for placement with their future families.

“If they’re babies, we start holding and cuddling them to get them used to people,” Mothershed says. “We may place them with a foster to get them ready to come here, until they’re ready to socialize. We want them all to be comfortable with being around people.”

There have been more than 400 cats adopted through Something Pawsitive since it was opened about five years ago.



ABOVE Third Space Coffee is located inside Best Friends Animal Sanctuary in Bentonville.

LEFT Third Space Coffee is also one of the state’s only vegan restaurants.

BELOW A drowsy tuxedo cat lounges at Something Pawsitive in Paragould.



Purr-fect brew

Lauren Clingenpeel, an Ozarks Electric Cooperative member, is the executive director of The Smitten Kitten NWA, a non-profit cat café that works with several cat rescue operations in the area to provide this space where humans can enjoy unlimited tea or coffee with kitty friends for as long as they like during operating hours, for \$12 a person.

Visitors must be at least 6 years old and are allowed to bring in their own food and drink. Clingenpeel previously operated Purr, a cat café in Fayetteville open from 2015 to 2019, before going to work for a national operation. The Smitten Kitten debuted in 2024. She says this café functions as a gateway for those cats who are more difficult to place.

“We have worked with our rescues for many years, so between us, we find a good mix of who might make sense with the current cats,” Clingenpeel shares. “We like to focus on harder-to-adopt cats, so oftentimes we take the shy ones, or seniors, ones who may struggle in a different adoption environment.”

While Purr placed 700 cats during its tenure, The Smitten Kitten has already found homes for more than 140 during its short time span. It also offers a “Happy Meowers” from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. each Wednesday and Friday, when visitation is free.



COUNTERCLOCKWISE FROM TOP Third Space Coffee in Bentonville allows visitors to interact with cats in a designated play space.

Something Pawsitive in Paragould has helped over 400 cats get adopted.

Enjoy a treat and a kitty cuddle at Something Sweet bakery and coffeeshop in Paragould.

For a small fee, Something Sweet customers can visit the furry friends next door at Something Pawsitive.



Lattes and lap cats

Bentonville's version of a cat café is one of the state's only vegan restaurants, housed within a large, new animal rescue facility. Third Space Coffee offers beverages, light breakfasts and lunches and desserts inside Best Friends Animal Sanctuary. Here, the cats are separated from the café by a glass wall. During early hours of the day, customers can drop in for a drink and a bite and watch the cats interact with each other in a custom-designed cat play space. Later in the day, the playroom is opened to potential adoptive families for interaction time with the felines.

Another cat café can be found in Conway at Gibson's Cat Café, a facility on Dave Ward Drive where patrons can enjoy coffee and cuddles with cats along with nights devoted to trivia, bingo and reading to cats.

If you're considering adopting a feline friend, a cat café is a great start to that relationship, where you can “test-drive” the kitty of your choice in a calm and comfortable atmosphere. Even if you don't or can't have cats in your abode, these warm places offer a chance to enjoy the company of furry friends. 

'Fur' more information

Something Pawsitive (Paragould)
[SomethingPawsitive.com](https://www.somethingpawsitive.com)

The Smitten Kitten NWA (Fayetteville)
the-smittenkittennwa.square.site

Third Space Coffee and Best Friends
Animal Sanctuary (Bentonville)
tinyurl.com/nwathirdspace

Gibson's Cat Café (Conway)
gibsons-2.dudasites.com



Go with the Flow

Oar-some kayak adventures await!



STORY AND PHOTOS BY CARLTON AND LEIGH WING

If you have never experienced the silky-smooth feel of cutting through the calm water of a lake in the summer, you must look for an opportunity to kayak!

Kayaking on one of Arkansas' lakes offers serene, calming views while enabling independence on the water. Armed with a single paddle, you can maneuver yourself around with little sound. The cadence and rhythm of paddling brings you close to nature in a soothing, meditative way.

If you'd like to try kayaking with little financial risk, 17 Arkansas state parks rent kayaks. On the western side of the state, we have Devil's Den, Lake Dardanelle, Lake Fort Smith, Cossatot River, Lake Ouachita, Lake Catherine, Daisy, DeGray Lake state parks, and in the southwest corner, Millwood State Park. On the eastern side, we have Lake Frierson, Lake Charles, Lake Poinsett and Mississippi River state parks. In the southeast, visit Moro Bay, Cane Creek and Lake Chicot state parks. And all the way in the north, we have Bull Shoals-White River State Park.

Prices for rental kayaks range from \$20 for a few hours for a single-seater, to \$80 for full-day tandem kayaks.

Check with the parks for specific pricing and availability.

Beginner kayak tips

1. Always wear a Personal Flotation Device (PFD). PFDs are literally lifesavers! This takes the drama out of falling in the water.

2. Kayak in calm water. When you are beginning, you just need to learn to get comfortable in your kayak; don't add unnecessary degrees of difficulty.

3. Don't paddle alone. Have a buddy nearby, someone who can help, or call for help if needed. Keeping a signal whistle with you is also a good idea.



Kayaking offers serene, calming views while enjoying one of Arkansas' many beautiful lakes.



Stay safe kayaking by always wearing a Personal Flotation Device and floating in calm water.

4. Practice re-entering your kayak from the water. In case you fall out, you need to know how to get back in! Do this from shallow water.

Stay along the edges in a larger lake to avoid speeding motorboats. On smaller lakes, that's not a problem, of course. It's nice to go the first time with a guide who can help you, but if that's not an option, study up, start shallow and slow. There's a feeling of accomplishment in discovery!

Next month, we will show what to look for when you're in the market to buy a kayak and share tips on the different options available.

Carlton and Leigh Wing host the "Arkansas' Great Outdoors" weekly television series. Visit facebook.com/arkansasgreatoutdoors/.

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Rollback to the Future

Renovated Walmart Museum brings history — and Sam Walton hologram — to life

BY JACK SCHNEDLER PHOTOS BY MARCIA SCHNEDLER

Sam Walton would be a likely front-runner in any vote to name the most influential Arkansan of all time. That's thanks to the global shopping revolution he spurred and the economic boom he created in Arkansas' northwest corner.

This remarkable story is told with added digital wizardry at the enlarged Walmart Museum, recently reopened on Bentonville's downtown square after a 28-month renovation. One striking novelty is a life-size hologram of Walton, seated on a tall stool and programmed to answer questions from visitors.

The two-story museum with an adjoining gift shop and Spark Café & Soda Fountain covers 14,000 square feet at the site of the Walton 5-10 he opened here in 1950. That was 12 years before his first Walmart debuted in nearby Rogers.

A short video message from Walmart CEO Doug McMillon greets guests. He sets the museum's laudatory tone by praising Walton as "an unpretentious leader" who "believed in making heroes out of people" and was "an illustration of the American dream."

Exhibits portray Walton as a down-to-earth leader, even after he became fabulously wealthy. The largest single object on display is his red 1979 Ford half-ton truck, "which came to symbolize Sam's own humble nature." The vehicle's keys and his last Arkansas driver's license are also shown.

A posted quote from Walton echoes his unpretentious qualities: "Why do I drive a pickup truck? What am I supposed to haul my dogs in, a Rolls-Royce?"

Exhibits proceed in mainly chronological order from the first to second floors. The earliest work-related object is a well-worn door from the Ben Franklin store Walton operated in Newport for five years before his 1950 move to Bentonville. An even earlier artifact is the dress his bride, Helen, wore in 1943 at their wedding.

A highlight preserved during the renovation is Walton's office, displayed behind glass as it looked when he died in 1992. Workers later photographed and removed the contents,



The two-story museum with an adjoining gift shop and Spark Café & Soda Fountain covers 14,000 square feet at the site of the Walton 5-10 that Sam Walton opened here in 1950.



Excerpts from Walmart founder Sam Walton's autobiography, "Made in America," can be heard through a hologram.



Helen Walton's wedding dress from 1943 is on display at the museum.

including the carpet and wood paneling. Papers stacked and scattered on the carpet give a sense of how devoted to work he was.

Months before his death, Walton received an honor that gave him great pride. That is evident from the wall-size exhibit that shows President George H.W. Bush presenting him with the Presidential Medal of Honor. He served as an Army captain during World War II, stationed stateside because of a heart condition.

The exhibit “Flying With Sam” recounts Walton’s 1953 purchase of his first airplane, a two-seat Ercoupe Model 415-C that cost \$1,850. Instead of “scouting solely from ground level, Sam flew to get a bird’s-eye view of towns and find the best locations for his new stores.”

Walmart’s semi-trucks get a floor-to-ceiling display that focuses on the scope of the company’s operations. The Walmart Private Fleet employs more than 15,000 drivers, who travel more than 900 million miles each year. That equals 5,700-plus trips from Earth to the moon.

Dolly Parton’s longtime association with Walmart is celebrated in a colorful display.

She and her foundation have donated \$2 million for Hurricane Helene relief in conjunction with the Walmart Foundation’s \$6 million contribution.

On the second floor, Sam Walton’s hologram voice is said to sound remarkably like the man himself.

That’s thanks to technology that mimics comments from his “Made in America” autobiography and other recordings in the company’s archives.

One questioner on opening day asked what message Walton would give to workers at the company’s more than 10,000 stores around the world.

The hologram responded: “It’s very important to smile at customers, look them in the eye and greet them. Those customers are the reason for our being.”



Visitors can use interactive exhibits to see Walmart’s worldwide impact.



Sam Walton’s famous red pickup truck symbolizes the Arkansas founder’s humble nature.

A Scoop of Sam

One more fact about Sam Walton’s life can be savored at the Spark Café & Soda Fountain next to the Walmart Museum: His favorite ice-cream flavor was butter pecan, which is always on the café’s menu.

Walton began selling Yarnell’s ice cream at his Ben Franklin store in Newport in the late 1940s.

It remains the brand used in Spark’s ice-cream cups, cones and sundaes. Prices are pleasantly lower than most other ice-cream venues.

Near the café is the Walton 5-10 gift shop, where Walmart caps and T-shirts are among the bestselling souvenirs. Other popular items include stuffed animals that evoke Walton’s beloved bird dog, Ol’ Roy. Moon Pies are prominently for sale.



Walmart Museum

Where

105 N. Main St., Bentonville

When

10 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Thursday,
10 a.m.-10 p.m. Friday-Saturday,
Noon-6 p.m. Sunday

Admission

Free

Contact

(479) 273-1329
walmartmuseum.com





Peak Power Pause

Simple ways to reduce energy during high-demand hours

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE

Q: What does “beat the peak” mean, and why should I care about it?

A: When your electric cooperative talks about “beat the peak,” it is a call to action for energy consumers to reduce electricity use during periods of highest demand. Using less energy during peak times can ease the strain on the electric grid, benefit your cooperative and sometimes lower your electric bill.

Electricity generation and energy supply must match consumption in real time to ensure safe, reliable power. Every moment of every day, an entire workforce monitors energy use, adjusting power plant production up or down as needed to keep the grid balanced.

As energy demand grows, all of us can do our part to use less. To put this in perspective, peak electricity demand is expected to increase by 38 gigawatts over the next four years, according to the Energy Information Administration. That’s like adding another California to our nation’s power grid.

Peak time varies for each electric cooperative but typically occurs in the morning when people get ready for the day and in the evening when they return home from work and school. During these times, we turn on lights, cook, adjust the thermostat, run the dishwasher and do laundry — to name just a few energy-consuming activities.

Typically, the wholesale price of power increases when demand is higher. Reducing your electric use during peak times can help lower market prices for everyone and lessen stress on the electric grid.

As a general rule, I try to spread out my use of equipment and appliances. For example, I avoid washing dishes and clothes and cooking all at the same time. Running a lot of hot water will cause your water heater to use more energy, too.

Increasing the energy efficiency of your home can lower



MARK GILLILAND, PIONEER UTILITY RESOURCES

Consider running large appliances, such as your washer and dryer, during off-peak hours.

its impact on the grid. Weatherize windows and doors and add insulation to improve the comfort of your home. You can also consider upgrading to energy-efficient appliances or using energy-saving features on your existing appliances.


If you haven’t already, switch your incandescent lighting to LEDs, which use at least 75% less electricity and last up to 25 times longer, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. There are many affordable options on the market.

Schedule your dishwasher run time. My dishwasher, which is several years old, has a “delay start” button. This is also handy if your dishwasher is loud. Setting it to start after you go to bed shifts that energy consumption to off-peak hours, and you don’t have to hear it.

Running your washing machine and dryer during off-peak hours can help, too. If you’re in the market for a new washer or dryer, look for a model with a high Integrated Modified Energy Factor and a low Integrated Water Factor to save water and energy.

Also, consider switching your charging habits for all devices to off-peak hours. If you have an electric vehicle, use the scheduled charge settings. You’ll plug in your vehicle when you get home, and it will start charging automatically during the off-peak hours you choose.

Small changes at home can make a big difference to the energy grid. Incorporate these energy-wise habits into your daily routine.

Miranda Boutelle writes on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing nearly 900 electric co-ops. 



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Cooking outdoors lets you avoid using the stove and oven, which heats up your home and leads to higher energy use.

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Olde Crow General Store

A local gem for fresh foods and homemade treats

Nestled in the corner of Highways 9 and 5 in Benton, sits Olde Crow General Store, family-owned and operated since October 2015. Jeff and Caesi Holt purchased the Olde Crow General Store from Caesi's brother in January 2020. Shortly after Caesi retired from the Little Rock Police Department, she was ready to start a new adventure, and the idea of keeping the business in the family and exploring new opportunities for it was exactly where the adventure began.

Olde Crow specializes in locally raised, all-natural beef, poultry and pork. They carry different types of jellies, jams and spices. An entire wall is dedicated to various honeys, relishes, barbecue sauces and pickles. If you are in the mood for something sweet, you must try their freshly made, delicious homemade pies. From German Chocolate to coconut cream and everything in between, there is something for everyone!

In the mood for a sit-down meal? Olde Crow also has the perfect menu and space for just that. They offer 10 famously fresh made sandwiches, such as Reubens, Grilled Cheese, Clubs and more! When asking Caesi what she enjoys about Olde Crow, her answer was truly an example of what a family-owned business is all about. "The customers become family. They know my kids and what they are doing in their lives. They ask about them, and that means the world to me," she said.

Next time you travel, be sure to add Olde Crow to your plans, have your own "one-stop shop" experience, and meet the family behind it all!



Jeff and Caesi Holt own the Olde Crow General Store in Benton, which sells a variety of specialty items and offers homemade pies and sandwiches.



Annual Meeting scheduled for June 26

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of the members of First Electric Cooperative will be held on Thursday, June 26, in the office of the cooperative at 1000 South J.P. Wright Loop Road, Jacksonville, Pulaski County, beginning at 10 a.m. for the following purposes:

- To pass on reports for the previous fiscal year;
- To elect one (1) director for the cooperative to serve a term of six (6) years; and,
- To transact such other business as may properly come before the meeting.

This will be a business session only. Any member planning to attend the Annual Meeting with special needs is asked to contact the co-op at 800-489-7405 before the Annual Meeting for assistance.

Respectfully,
Karissa Rushing, Secretary/Treasurer

.....

Nominating Committee selects board candidate

On Thursday, March 20, the Nominating Committee of First Electric Cooperative met at the cooperative's office in Jacksonville. The purpose of the meeting was to review and select First Electric members as nominees for election to the cooperative's board of directors to serve a six-year term.

The committee selected David Luebke of Scott as the nominee for the Jacksonville district, which mail-in ballots will decide. Ballots will be mailed to all members on June 2.

Committee members present during nominations: Cody Calhoun of Benton; Dearn Dixon of Austin; Tommy Majors of Jacksonville; Dick Hoffman of Alexander; Mark Sandage of Keo; Jimmy Hawkins of Mount Vernon; Daniel Sanders of Rose Bud; and Bryan Houghton of Humphrey.

*At press time, this was the candidate selected by the Nominating Committee for a vote by the members.

.....

Luebke nominated for First Electric board

First Electric members are asked yearly to vote for representatives to serve on the cooperative's board of directors. The nine-member board sets policy and guides the President/CEO.

One director position will be confirmed this year to represent the Jacksonville district. The Nominating Committee selected David Luebke as the candidate.

He is a semi-retired farmer, a former Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation board member and a member and deacon of Toltec Baptist Church in Lonoke County. Luebke and his wife, Mary Jo, also have seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Luebke said he enjoys serving on the board and collaborating with fellow board members and staff to provide First Electric members with the best service and the lowest rates possible.

He is a Director Gold Credential and has completed his Credentialed Cooperative Director training and received his Board Leadership Certificate. He plans to continue training by taking courses on a state and national level annually.



David Luebke



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Stuttgart District

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**Our offices will close for
Independence Day on
Friday, July 4.
Crews will be on hand in
the event of an outage.
To report an outage,
please call 800-489-7405.
For internet outages,
please call 833-411-2234
(Option 2).**

DIP INTO FALL!

RECIPE CONTEST



Arkansas Living is on the hunt for the most delicious, creative and downright dippable recipes in The Natural State!

In honor of football food season and all things tasty, we're thrilled to announce our **Dip Into Fall Recipe Contest** — where your favorite dip could be the MVP of our September cover story!

Categories to dip into!

Bring your A-game and enter (no more than two entries per person!) our crowd-pleasing categories. Here are some examples.

Cheese Dips (white or yellow queso, fondue, queso fundido, beer cheese, pimento cheese)

Creamy Dips (ranch-style, spinach, artichoke, jalapeño popper, dill pickle)

Meat & Seafood Dips (buffalo chicken, crab, seven-layer taco)

Salsas & Fresh Dips (vegetable/fruit salsas, black bean dip, pico de gallo, guacamole, hummus)

Sweet Dips (chocolate, cookie dough, s'mores, caramel apple)

Wildcard Dips (anything unexpected and dip-tastic — surprise us!)

Dip rewards await!

Winning entries will be featured in our September 2025 issue — just in time for tailgating, game days and cozy fall gatherings. One grand-prize winner will be chosen by the staff of Arkansas Living to receive a new Ninja Foodi PossibleCooker PRO Multicooker. This versatile cooker can replace 14 cooking tools and appliances and offers cooker-to-oven-to-table functionality.

Deadline for entries: July 6

Think your dip is touchdown-worthy?

Submit your recipes to: arkansaslivingmagazine.com/dipcontest.

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Policy Form #GWL2001 or GWLA001

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Cutting-Edge Gardening

How to grow new plants from existing ones

BY GEORGE WEIGEL

Many landscape plants can be reproduced at little to no cost by taking cuttings from the tips of a parent plant and planting them in moist potting mix.

The process causes plants to send out roots from the cut ends, resulting in a new “baby” plant that’s an exact copy of the parent.

This is one of the main ways that growers produce new plants, and it’s easier than you might think.

Start by snipping a 4- to 6-inch section off the branch tip of a parent plant. Then pinch off leaves from all but the top set or two.

Plant the cut end into a pot of a light-weight soilless potting mix so that at least one — and preferably two or three — sets of the leaf pinch-off points (“nodes”) are buried.

A good mix is half coarse sand and half vermiculite, perlite and/or light-weight potting mix.

Keep the potting mix consistently damp, and within a few weeks, new roots should grow out from the buried nodes. A good sign is when tiny new leaves start growing out of the cutting’s tip.

Dipping the cut ends in a powdered rooting hormone before planting them sometimes encourages rooting. These inexpensive powders are available in small containers in most garden centers and catalogs.


Misting two to three times a day or installing a plastic-wrap “tent” over the pots are ways to help keep the potting medium moist until rooting occurs.

Many tropical, annual and perennial flowers can be reproduced by tip cuttings. And many trees, shrubs and evergreens also can be reproduced by the same process. Some of the easiest are roses, boxwoods, hollies, junipers, elderberries, azaleas, dogwoods, gardenias, hydrangeas and forsythia.

With woody plants, timing is a key variable. Some root best from young or “softwood cuttings” taken in late spring to early summer, while others root best from mature or “hardwood cuttings” taken in fall.

If you don’t get rooting on your first try, try again at a different time of year.

Increase success with cuttings by growing the young plants in a shaded or similar protected area in pots until the rootballs have matured to sizes similar to what you’d find in store-bought plants.

Even if you get just one cutting to root, that’s one free plant you didn’t have before. 



GEORGE WEIGEL

Many plants will produce “babies” by inducing tip cuttings to root.

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Snapshots from our readers



Kes at the farm during kidding season.
Cathy Messer, Austin.



Riggs with his donkeys Melvin and Moe.
Jordin Head, Houston.



Drew giving Lila a much-coveted strawberry.
Cindy Allwine, Sherwood.



Wade checking bees for the first time with his daddy. Lilly Herring, Waldo.



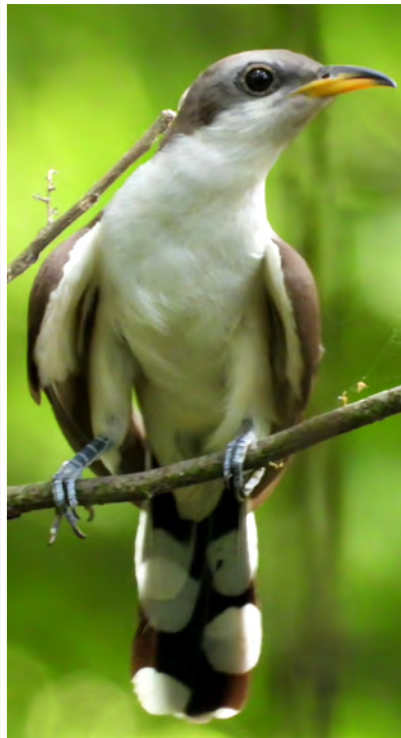
Mammoth donkeys, Sofie and Nacho.
Cheryl O'Brien, Warm Springs.



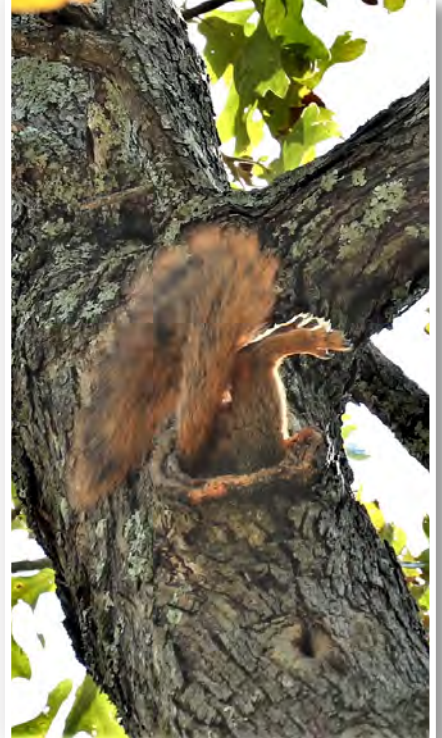
Layla and Nettie Ray are intrigued by the water hose.
Keeli Gay, Calamine.



Ella found a huge berry!
Morgan Hawley, Salt Box Farm, Benton.



That's what a cuckoo bird looks like!
Lori Sitton, Russellville.



Maybe I shouldn't have eaten ALL the birdseed. Holly Hipple, Cabot.

Share your photos with your fellow Arkansas Living readers! Please submit high-resolution photos with detailed information about the pictures (who took it, where, who is in it, etc.) to: arkansaslivingmagazine.com/submit-a-photo.


Tropic like it's Hot

Grow wild with colorful tropical blooms



BY JANET B. CARSON

Conditions in summer in Arkansas tend to mimic those of tropical climates, so what better plants to grow than tropical flowering plants? They thrive in heat and humidity, can take the sunlight and, with ample moisture, can give you blooms from now through a killing frost.

Tropical flowering plants can be grown in containers or planted in the ground for seasonal color. In containers, they will need more water and fertilizer. The more you water, the quicker you leach out the nutrients. You have plenty of choices and, with minimal care, you can have explosions of color all season long. While most won't survive our winters, you can overwinter indoors or in protected sites. 

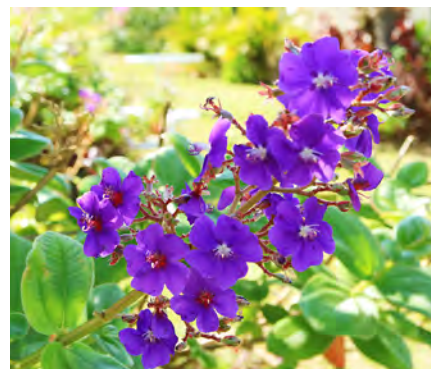
PLANT	CHARACTERISTICS	COLORS
Bougainvillea	Full sun is best. Vining plant that has small thorns on the leaves. Blooms best if slightly pot-bound. The true blooms are the small, white flowers in the center, surrounded by colorful bracts (modified leaves).	Comes in shades of red, pink, white and yellow.
Brugmansia (Angel's Trumpet)	Large trumpet-shaped blooms that hang down on a woody plant. Prefers a little afternoon shade. Can overwinter in mild winters. Usually starts blooming in mid-summer through fall. Poisonous plant.	Most flowers are singles, but double forms are available. Colors range from white to shades of yellow and pink.
Hibiscus	The most popular tropical flowering plant. Trumpet-shaped blooms on woody stalks. Flowers on new growth. Each flower usually only lasts a day or two, but with fertilization and water, will bloom from frost to frost.	Single or double blooms. Red, pink, yellow, orange and white with bi-color forms. Also available with braided trunks.
Ixora	Bushy, waxy foliage with clusters of small blooms, 3-4 feet in height. Prefers full sun. Can bloom from early summer until frost.	Clusters of small blooms in shades of orange, yellow and red.
Mandevilla and Dipladenia	Very similar plants and often labeled interchangeably. True Mandevilla tend to be vining, while Dipladenia is bushy in growth habit. If plant tag says it is bushy, it will not vine. Vining plants will need a trellis to grow on. Both will bloom from frost to frost.	Most common color was shades of pink. Today, there are red, white, yellow, salmon and now orange varieties. The more sunlight, the better.
Tibouchina (Princess Flower)	Slightly hairy foliage with velvety blooms on a woody plant. Grows to be 6 feet tall. In mild winters, could overwinter in south Arkansas. Blooms from frost to frost in full sun to partial shade.	Showy deep purple velvety blooms appear from red flower buds. Blooms are usually 4-6 inches in diameter.



Brugmansia (Angel's Trumpet)



Ixora



Tibouchina (Princess Flower)

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RECIPES AND PHOTOS
BY JULIANA GOODWIN

Whoopee for Whoopie Pies!

Feel-good, handheld treats worth hollering about

Whoopie pies are not something I grew up with, but I saw them online and wanted to try them. This New England dessert traditionally features chocolate cake-like layers with creamy marshmallow filling. I whipped up a batch using cake mix for simplicity and created a peanut butter marshmallow filling. They were such a hit, I decided to dedicate an entire column to fun whoopie pie variations. Aside from being delicious, they are easy enough that kids can make them this summer.

Tips: For easy filling, freeze pie layers before you fill them. They can be frozen up to a week in advance (just add filling the day you serve). Also, all these recipes make big pies. If you want smaller ones, drop batter by the tablespoon and make mini pies. Try to make them as uniform in size as possible because you must pair them to make sandwiches. Refrigerate leftovers.



Whoopie pies are a fun summer treat easy enough for kids to make.

Mocha Hazelnut Whoopie Pies

Makes 12 large pies.



Pies

- 1 (15.25-ounce) box devil's food cake mix
- 1 (3.4-ounce) box chocolate pudding mix
- 3 eggs
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 3/4 cup water

Filling

- 1/4 cup boiling water
- 1/4 cup instant coffee granules (must be instant)
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 cup whipped cream cheese, at room temperature
- 1/3 cup chocolate hazelnut spread
- 1 cup powdered sugar

For pies: Heat oven to 350. In a large bowl, whisk together cake and pudding mixes. Beat in eggs, oil and water until combined. Line baking sheets with parchment paper (this is a must or pies will stick). Using an ice cream scoop, fill scoop about halfway with batter and drop onto baking sheets, keeping 2 inches between each. (I had 6-8 pies on each sheet.) Bake for 11-12 minutes. Cool

completely.

For filling: In a medium bowl, use an electric mixer to beat together boiling water, instant coffee and sugar until peaks form (about 7-10 minutes). Beat in whipped cream cheese, chocolate hazelnut spread and powdered sugar until well-combined. Spread filling on one pie layer, topping with another to make a sandwich, and repeat.

White Almond Strawberry Whoopie Pies

Makes 12 large pies.

Pies

- 1 (15.25-ounce) box white cake mix
- 1 (3.4-ounce) box French vanilla pudding mix
- 3 eggs
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 3/4 cup water
- 1 teaspoon almond extract

Filling

- 7 ounces marshmallow fluff
- 8 ounces strawberry cream cheese, at room temperature
- 2 tablespoons strawberry jam
- 1/4 cup powdered sugar



For pies: Heat oven to 350. In a large bowl, whisk together cake and pudding mixes. Beat in eggs, oil, water and almond extract until combined. Line baking sheets with parchment paper (this is a must or pies will stick). Using an ice cream scoop, fill scoop about halfway with batter and drop onto baking sheets, keeping 2 inches

between each. (I had 6-8 pies on each sheet.) Bake for 11-12 minutes. Cool completely.

For filling: In a medium bowl, beat or whisk together all filling ingredients until smooth. Spread filling on one pie layer, topping with another to make a sandwich, and repeat.

Easy Chocolate Peanut Butter Whoopie Pies

Makes 12 large pies.



Pies

- 1 (15.25-ounce) box devil's food cake mix
- 1 (3.4-ounce) box chocolate pudding mix
- 3 eggs
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 3/4 cup water

Filling

- 1 (13-ounce) jar marshmallow fluff
- 1/4 cup smooth peanut butter
- 1/2 cup powdered sugar
- 3/4 cup whipped cream cheese, at room temperature

For pies: Heat oven to 350. In a large bowl, whisk together cake and pudding mixes. Beat in eggs, oil and water until combined. Line baking sheets with parchment paper (this is a must or pies will stick). Using an ice cream scoop, fill scoop about halfway with batter and drop onto baking sheets, keeping 2 inches between each. (I had

6-8 pies on each sheet.) Bake for 11-12 minutes. Cool completely.

For filling: In a medium bowl, stir together all filling ingredients until well-combined. Spread filling on one pie layer, topping with another to make a sandwich, and repeat.



This month's web exclusive recipe:

Pistachio Lemon Whoopie Pies

More recipes on our website:
arkansaslivingmagazine.com

Juliana Goodwin is a food columnist, cookbook author and avid traveler. If you have a question, email julianalovesfood23@gmail.com.

From Orzo to Elbow

Summer pasta salads steal the show

Easy Italian Orzo Pasta Salad

Dressing

- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar or apple cider vinegar
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon honey
- Salt and pepper to taste

Salad

- 2 cups orzo pasta (cooked according to directions, rinsed and cooled)
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1/2 cup cucumber, diced
- 1/4 cup red, yellow, orange and green bell pepper, diced

- 1/4 cup red onion, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup kalamata olives, pitted and sliced
- 1/4 cup green salad olives with pimentos
- 1/4 cup fresh parsley, chopped or 1 tablespoon dried parsley
- 1/4 cup fresh basil, chopped
- Pinch oregano, fresh or dried
- Pinch red pepper flakes
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/4 cup feta cheese crumbles
- 1/4 cup Romano cheese, grated

For dressing: In a large bowl, whisk together all dressing ingredients.

For salad: Add all salad ingredients (except cheeses) to same large bowl and toss with dressing thoroughly, gently folding in cheeses last. Cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes or overnight before serving.

Notes: This colorful dish is a delightful side for brunch, lunch, dinner or cookouts! Add rotisserie chicken and crusty bread to make a delicious full meal!

Pauline E. Rodriguez-Dantin, Cherokee Village



JENNIFER CHRISTIAN CIA

Pasta Salad

Dressing

- 1-1 1/2 cups mayonnaise (adjust to your taste)
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1/2 tablespoon white vinegar
- Salt and pepper to taste

Salad

- 1 pound small shell macaroni (cooked)
- 1 (2.25-ounce) can sliced ripe black olives
- 1 medium red onion, diced
- 1 cucumber, seeded and diced
- 1 dill pickle, diced (surprise!)

For dressing: In a large bowl whisk together all dressing ingredients.

For salad: Add all salad ingredients to the same large bowl and toss with dressing thoroughly. Chill until serving.

Note: My favorite pasta salad from my sister, Willene.

Kathy Adams, Swifton

Chicken Pasta Salad

Dressing

- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 cup sour cream
- 3 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 4 teaspoons sugar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper

Salad

- 1 pound elbow pasta (cooked according to directions, rinsed and cooled)

- 3 cups cooked chicken, chopped (rotisserie chicken is absolutely the best)
- 6 slices cooked, crisp bacon, chopped
- 2 celery stalks, chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped
- 2 green onions, chopped
- 2 carrots, grated
- 2 cups cheddar cheese, shredded
- 10 cherry tomatoes, halved

For dressing: In a large bowl, whisk together all dressing ingredients.

For salad: Add all salad ingredients to the same large bowl and toss with dressing thoroughly. Chill for at least 1 hour before serving.

Teresa Juneau, Shreveport, Louisiana

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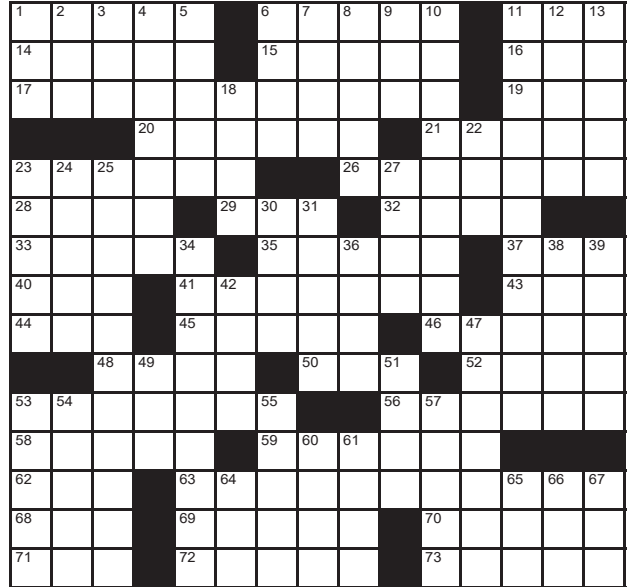
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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Seasonal Phraseology *By Victor Fleming*

ACROSS

- 1 Celebrity queue
- 6 "___ on a true story!"
- 11 Lust or gluttony, e.g.
- 14 "Rescue Me" actor Leary
- 15 Integra maker
- 16 Article in Arles
- 17 "Last Dance" singer
- 19 "Little Women" girl
- 20 Black Sea peninsula
- 21 Original Fiesta Bowl site
- 23 Put a value on
- 26 Comcast offering
- 28 ___-of-the-moment
- 29 "Big Blue"
- 32 "Chinatown" film genre
- 33 New York ___
- 35 Gossip
- 37 ___-à-___
- 40 "Green" band
- 41 Outdoor, as a market
- 43 "Monsters, ___" (2001)
- 44 ___ Miss
- 45 Man of fables
- 46 Arkansas ___ (what Chicot, Desha and 13 other counties comprise)
- 48 Seasoned
- 50 "Coffee or ___?"
- 52 Snow glider
- 53 "Pulled" piece of trickery
- 56 2001 NBA champs
- 58 At the ready
- 59 Five-time MLB All-Star Jason
- 62 Words of union
- 63 When June occurs ... or a whimsical description of an abacus
- 68 "Hold on a ___"
- 69 Baseball Razorback Robinette
- 70 Dry Italian wine
- 71 Shaming tongue-cluck
- 72 Function in the role of
- 73 John Brummett piece



DOWN

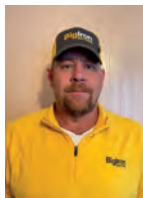
- 1 Calculate column totals
- 2 "War and Peace" author Tolstoy
- 3 Hostel
- 4 Earnest
- 5 Autocrats of old
- 6 L. Frank ___ (creator of Oz)
- 7 Wile E. Coyote's vendor
- 8 "Poison" plant
- 9 "Prior to," palindromically
- 10 Sight at Little Rock's Rack Um
- 11 South Carolina town northwest of Charleston
- 12 All thumbs
- 13 Beersheba's desert
- 18 Redundant Acapulco assent
- 22 Yale student, informally
- 23 "___ Lounge" (Smash Mouth album)
- 24 Barker's pitch
- 25 Theatrical presentations often staged outdoors
- 27 Hardly pro
- 30 Ciao, adios, etc.
- 31 Forget-___
- 34 "Days of Our Lives," for one
- 36 A shirt tag may tickle it
- 38 Bury
- 39 A ton
- 42 Ball-___ hammer
- 47 "... folks dressed up like ___"
- 49 Call ___ day
- 51 Old-fashioned charity
- 53 Palm off
- 54 Llama locale
- 55 "Snowy" bird
- 57 Bad treatment
- 60 "Casablanca" character
- 61 "The ___ have it!"
- 64 Former nuclear agency, for short
- 65 "___ o menos"
- 66 "Loco-Motion" singer Little ___
- 67 Either "Curious George" author

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Mix-ing it Up

Grumpy's Getaway makes taste buds happy in Rose Bud



STORY AND PHOTOS
BY ROB ROEDEL

How does a 29-year career educator manage to teach and operate two successful restaurants? To discover the secret, go see Angie Mix at Grumpy's Getaway in Rose Bud.

Mix began working in the restaurant business about 20 years ago and fell in love with it. Eventually she bought another restaurant, sold it, then opened another. About four years ago, she and her husband, Tom (also known as Grumpy by his grandchildren), opened Grumpy's Getaway. The restaurant features a large space that is tastefully decorated and has a friendly atmosphere. The



Building strong connections with their loyal customers is a passion for Grumpy's Getaway owner Angie Mix (second from left) and her dedicated team.

THE EATING ESSENTIALS

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vibe is complemented by the very attentive staff.

Grumpy's serves as a local gathering place for fundraisers and other community events. During my visit, the parking lot was full, and the restaurant was packed with a variety of patrons, from church groups to retirees to business professionals.

"I have a tremendous staff of dedicated employees," Mix said. "We love watching our employees grow and succeed. We have built some strong relationships with our customers. Many of them are just like family."

Only the freshest, top-quality food is served. According to Mix, she won't skimp, as her customers deserve only the best. I can attest to her commitment based on my visit.

I was served an appetizer platter of delicious, golden-fried Southern goodness featuring Bang Boom Shrimp, Fried Green Tomatoes and Fried Mushrooms. Each item was fresh, not frozen, and was coated with her secret breading recipe. The homemade dipping sauce was a nice complement for each option.

Grumpy's only serves USDA pond-raised catfish delivered from a longtime supplier in Mississippi. Mix said that the quality of the fish is very important. I didn't try fish on this visit, but I have it on my list for my next visit.

The Chicken Fried Chicken



The Chicken Fried Chicken at Grumpy's Getaway, smothered in homemade cream gravy and served with real mashed potatoes, broccoli and a yeast roll, is a country comfort classic.

featured a huge boneless, skinless chicken breast coated in another breading recipe. Homemade cream gravy was layered atop the piping hot chicken that was served with "real" mashed potatoes, broccoli and a yeast roll. Each bite of the chicken was pure joy. The chicken was fresh, and I could taste the difference. The chicken, potatoes and gravy were pure heaven to a country-raised man like me.

The burgers at Grumpy's feature hand-patted, freshly ground beef. I tried the Rodeo Burger, a half-pound, ground beef burger topped with American cheese, a housemade tangy



Kick off your meal at Grumpy's Getaway with a fantastic trio of Bang Boom Shrimp, Fried Green Tomatoes and Fried Mushrooms.

A white plate containing a fried chicken sandwich, a large portion of french fries, a side of pickles, and a slice of bread. The sandwich is made with a fried chicken patty, lettuce, tomato, and pickles on a bun. The fries are golden brown and crispy. The pickles are sliced and served on the side. A slice of bread is also present on the plate.

A fun twist on a favorite, the Twisted BLT features crispy bacon and fried green tomatoes between Texas toast.

I sampled the restaurant's take on Possum Pie. This version included an Oreo crust, chocolate pudding, coconut filling, cream cheese filling with whipped topping and pecans. During my 23 years with the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas, I have sampled several versions of Possum Pie, and this one was one of the best. Nikki Adcock, the pie artist, deserves an award for sure.

Unfortunately, my visit didn't provide a chance to sample cake master Karen Walden's culinary creations, but like the catfish, they are on my list for next time. Available cakes and pies vary from day to day but, judging by the tables around me, they are all winners. 🍌

Dining recommendations? Contact Rob Roedel at rob.roedel@aecc.com.

CROSSWORD ANSWERS
for puzzle on page 38

D	A	L	I	S	T	B	A	S	E	D	S	I	N
D	E	N	I	S	A	C	U	R	A	S	U	N	E
D	O	N	N	A	S	U	M	E	R	A	M	P	E
A	S	S	E	S	S	C	A	B	L	E	T	V	
S	P	U	R	E	I	B	M	N	O	I	R		
T	I	M	E	S	Y	E	N	T	A	R	V	I	S
R	E	M	E	O	P	E	N	A	I	R			
O	L	E		A	E	S	O	P		D	E	L	T
				R	I	P	E	T	E	A	S	L	E
F	A	S	T	O	N	E				L	A	K	E
O	N	T	A	P	G	I	A	M	B	I			
S	D	O		E	A	R	L	Y	S	U	M	E	R
S	E	C		R	E	E	S	E		S	O	M	A
T	S	K		A	C	T	A	S			E	S	A

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Calendar



Arkansas Country Music Awards

COURTESY OF ARKANSAS COUNTRY MUSIC AWARDS



Bentonville Film Festival

COURTESY OF BENTONVILLE FILM FESTIVAL



Rose Bud Summerfest

COURTESY OF THE CITY OF ROSE BUD



Red, White & Blue Festival

COURTESY OF RED WHITE AND BLUE FESTIVAL

June 2

Arkansas Country Music Awards

Conway, arkansasmusic.org

June 6-7

Delta Arts Festival

Newport, deltaartsfestival.com

Lum & Abner Music & Arts Festival

Mena, facebook.com/LumandAbnerFestival

Lowell Mudtown Days

Lowell, lowellarkansas.gov

River Cities Dragon Boat Festival

Maumelle, rivercitiesdragonboatfestival.com

June 6-8

Arkansas Free Fishing Weekend

Statewide, agfc.com

June 7

World Cheese Dip Championship

North Little Rock, littlerock.com/events/annual-festivals-events/world-cheese-dip-championship/

World Championship Running of the Tubs

Hot Springs, hotsprings.org

June 7-8

Arkansas Highland Games

Mount Vernon, arrenfest.com

June 11-14

Petit Jean Swap Meet & Auto Show

Morrilton, museumofautos.com

June 13

Downtown Juneteenth

Russellville, mainstreetrussellville.com

June 13-14

Bradley County Pink Tomato Festival

Warren, pinktomatofestival.com

June 14

Surf the Bay

Fairfield Bay, visitfairfieldbay.com/events/surf-the-bay

June 15

Father's Day at the Little Rock Zoo

Little Rock, littlerockzoo.com

June 16-22

Bentonville Film Festival

Bentonville, bentonvillefilm.org

June 19-21

Rose Bud Summerfest

Rose Bud, facebook.com/cityofrosebud

June 20-21

Poultry Festival

Rogers, thepoultryfederation.com

June 21

Juneteenth in Da Rock

Little Rock, arkansasheritage.com/mosaic-templars-cultural-center

Freedom Festival

Springdale, musicmovesar.com/freedom-festival

June 23-24

Arkansas Lavender Festival

Hot Springs, arkansaslavenderfestival.com

June 27-28

Buffalo River Elk Festival

Jasper, buffaloriverelkfestival.com

Red, White & Blue Festival

Mountain Home, redwhitebluefestival.com

June 27-29

Arkansas Anime Festival

Bentonville, arkansasanimefestival.com

Find more events at arkansaslivingmagazine.com/around-arkansas.
Submit events at arkansaslivingmagazine.com/submissions/submit-an-event.



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Vicki Stephenson

BELLA VISTA

Scott Comiskey

BENTON

Todd Matthews

BERRYVILLE

Tonya Williams

BOONEVILLE

Jerald Baker

BRYANT

Laryssa Calley
Matt Steele

CABOT

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