

Arkansas Living

SEPTEMBER 2025



DIP, DIP, HOORAY!

Reader recipe contest
delivers game day gold

Page 8

Plus:

Meet Miss Arkansas
Beatles at the Ridge
Horseshoe Canyon Climbing



Learning math concepts is a natural process in quality early care and education.

Find out how it works.

Written by Kelli Hilburn, Early Childhood Program Supervisor

Research tells us the most effective learning happens through play and positive interactions with family and educators.

Your family creates positive interactions when you hold your child and talk to them, play and read to them. When you focus your attention on your child, you help them learn and show them how important they are to you.

Quality early care and education uses research-based curriculum to help your child learn. Every activity is planned for learning.

Positive interactions and learning through play

"How is math play?" you ask. The answer is in the approach. Colors, shapes and sizes are learned through song and with toys.

Puzzles and blocks are tools for learning how things are different or the same. Differences and how things fit together are math concepts. See how easily it starts!

Words like *big*, *small*, *tall*, *short*, *heavy* and *light* lead to measuring. Using numbers to explain measurements helps to give meaning to numbers. Then comes counting!

Quality early learning lays the foundation for understanding the more complex concepts of math and other subjects to come.

Your child's quality early learning environment

Your child should enjoy warm, positive interactions with other children and staff. Quality early care teachers respond to your

child's needs. They play with, talk to and read to the children in their care much like you do at home.

The facility provides active play areas indoors and outdoors, and areas for quiet play and rest.

Interactions between your child and their teachers lead to a desire to learn more.

Be part of the experience. Ask your child's teacher what they learned today and how you can extend the learning at home.

Find your quality early care and education partner

Click the orange banner at ARBetterBeginnings.com to find star-rated quality early care and education providers who can help your child start school with confidence.

The first five years build the foundation for your child's future. Give your child the best start with Better Beginnings quality early care and education providers.

Scan the code to find your early care and education partner at Better Beginnings.



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COURTESY OF MATTHEW SEMELL PHOTOGRAPHY

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Easy Cheesy Chorizo Chip Dip turned up the heat as a spicy finalist in our reader Dip into Fall recipe contest.

Photo by Jennifer Christman Cia



CATHY OTTO

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ROB ROEDEL

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The Great Dip-bate

BY JENNIFER CHRISTMAN CIA

Whether we're rooting for the Razorbacks, the Red Wolves, the Reddies or our favorite high school and NFL teams, Arkansans can all agree on one thing: Football food is the best food.

That's why Arkansas Living hosted our Dip into Fall recipe contest, asking readers to submit go-to game day favorites in time for tailgate season. And y'all delivered with bacon, Buffalo chicken, Butterfingers (that last one served with Biscoff cookies — drool! — was my personal fav!) and everything in between.

We received more than 130 entries, ranging from spicy to sweet, hot to chilled and classic to completely out there. (Rotel and lime Jell-O and Miracle Whip ... huh?)

As a staff, we narrowed entries down to 11 finalist dips, donned our Arkansas Living aprons and got cooking. We asked co-workers to chip in for an official tasting. We loaded the conference room with slow cookers, labeled placemats, tasting cups and warming mats (you can win one of these in our next recipe contest; see page 27). There was a QR code and digital scorecard that ranked each dip from "Dip-aster!" to "Holy Guacamole!" It was cream-cheese-fueled chaos, a glorious mess of gooey greatness.

And the winner? Not what we expected. Among all the cheesy, meaty, smoky contenders, the top prize went to a sweet dip in a surprise play that paid off. Linda Fowler's MVP Lemon



MORGAN MANNING

ABOVE (From left) Summer intern Morgan Manning, Editor Jennifer Christman Cia, Editorial Assistant Rachel Blocker, Advertising Coordinator Lana McLeod and Associate Editor Nancy Moore prepare the dip recipe finalists for judging.

LEFT Scoop, score, repeat: The judging starts with an organized tray, dip cups and a digital scorecard.
BELOW Touchdown or turnover? These dips battle for the big win.



JENNIFER CHRISTMAN CIA



JENNIFER CHRISTMAN CIA

Cheesecake Dip was voted Scoop-er Bowl Champ. She'll be heading to the end zone with our grand prize, a Ninja Foodi PossibleCooker PRO Multicooker, in tow.

We hope you'll feel inspired to whip up a few dips this season, or even host your own mini dip challenge. Pick a few recipes (starting on page 8), and let the snacking — and smack talk — begin.

Dippin' out for now,

Jennifer

Jennifer Christman Cia
jennifer.cia@aeci.com

Labor Day: Protests to Picnics

BY VERNON "BUDDY" HASTEN

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



Labor Day weekend in America has come to signify the official end of summer, highlighted by students across the country returning to school, the kickoff of the NCAA football season and a wonderful three-day weekend full of barbecues,

picnics and one less Monday at work.

Growing up in Iowa, we usually returned to school on the Wednesday before Labor Day weekend, so we had a short week and then an immediate three-day weekend. I think that is a nice way to slowly transition away from the total freedom of summer break to the rigors of an academic school year. However, modern educators do not agree. My grandchildren, Logan and Lola Hasten, both started school on Aug. 13. I guess things really were better back when I was a kid.

Labor Day is one of 11 federal holidays, and it is recognized on the first Monday in September to celebrate “the social and economic achievements of American workers,” according to the Department of Labor. While Labor Day in modern times is associated with picnics and parties, it wasn’t always that way. Labor Day grew out of the labor movement and was a means to quell rising violent protests by American workers who were fighting for better hours, safer working conditions and better pay.

The Industrial Revolution was in full swing in the late 1800s; America’s primarily agricultural economy was being replaced with one of industry, and working conditions were harsh. The average worker was expected to work a 12-hour day, seven days a week, often in unsafe conditions with pay that barely allowed them to live. Child labor was also very common during this period.

In response, labor unions began to form, advocating for eight-hour

workdays, safer conditions and pay that allowed a better standard of living. To raise attention to these issues, they organized protests and strikes, which became increasingly violent.

One of the most infamous incidents was the Haymarket Riot. In May of 1886, a national strike for eight-hour workdays turned violent when police showed up to break up the protest and an unknown person hurled a bomb into the crowd. Seven police officers were killed and 60 others wounded with several civilian casualties as well.

In 1893, during a nationwide recession, George Pullman — maker of luxury railcars and founder of the company town bearing his name — laid off hundreds of workers and cut wages without reducing rents. In May 1894, workers walked out, and the Pullman Strike quickly spread, disrupting rail traffic nationwide.

To ease tensions, Congress passed legislation in June 1894 making the first Monday in September a federal holiday. President Grover Cleveland signed it into law. However, during a gathering to gain support for the strike, the crowd grew violent and burned railroad cars and derailed a locomotive attached to a U.S. mail car.

Interference with the delivery of the mail, coupled with the significant national economic impact of the strike, prompted Attorney General Richard Olney to issue a federal injunction against the strike. President Cleveland sent in federal troops. Strikers became even more violent and destructive in clashes with the federal troops. This resulted in the troops opening fire on the angry mob, killing as many as 30 protestors. Ultimately, the strike failed but it brought national attention to the issues that workers were protesting.

You might ask, what does this have to do with my electric cooperative? The same labor issues and lack of support for workers that were the catalyst for Labor Day are also the reasons that cooperatives were formed.

In 1844, a group of 28 weavers in Rochdale, England, formed the Rochdale Society of Equitable ►

LABOR DAY continued on page 6



CHANCE ALLMON

The Seven Cooperative Principles hang in President and CEO Vernon “Buddy” Hasten’s office as a daily reminder.

AECI board elects new officers

The Board of Directors for Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (AECI), the statewide service organization of Arkansas' electric co-ops and publisher of Arkansas Living, elected new officers at the AECI Annual Meeting on July 29. They are:

- **Chairman:** Larry Bright, general manager, Farmers Electric Cooperative
- **Vice Chairman:** Emory Austin, director, Ashley-Chicot Electric Cooperative
- **Secretary:** Brad Harrison, president/CEO, Mississippi County Electric Cooperative
- **Treasurer:** Scott Foushee, director, Farmers Electric Cooperative.



Larry Bright



Emory Austin



Brad Harrison



Scott Foushee

AECI/AECC



Cooperative game changers gather in Jonesboro

With a focus on transformation, innovation and resilience, the 2025 Directors' Summer Conference of the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas brought cooperative leaders from across Arkansas to Jonesboro's Red Wolf Convention Center, July 26-29.

United under the theme "Game Changers," the event tackled the electric industry's most urgent challenges — from surging load growth to grid reliability and cybersecurity threats.

The general session included a forward-looking address by Vernon "Buddy" Hasten, president and CEO of Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. and Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation. Drawing inspiration from innovators like Walmart CEO Sam Walton, Hasten outlined how the cooperatives must think bigger and lead boldly during a time of unprecedented change.

Hasten told cooperative leaders, "Honestly, we just want to be game changers for our members, and we want to be the best for you."



JENNIFER CHRISTIAN CIA

AECI/AECC President and CEO Vernon "Buddy" Hasten addresses conference attendees on how to be game changers.

LABOR DAY *continued from page 5*

Pioneers in response to low wages, long hours and exorbitant prices at the company store, where many of the products were being adulterated with impurities to cut costs and raise profits. These 28 men each contributed 1 British pound and formed a grocery cooperative so their families could get healthy and affordable food.

To govern their cooperative, they designed the Rochdale Principles, which are the foundational principles that electric cooperatives operate by. These principles are the "Cooperative Difference" and what separate the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas from other electric utilities: We put members first and not profits.

What are these principles? 1. Open and voluntary membership; 2. Democratic member control; 3. Members' economic participation; 4. Autonomy and independence; 5. Education, training and information; 6. Cooperation among cooperatives; and 7. Concern for community. These principles are so important to me that I look at them every

day. The photo used for this article is a picture of the wall directly in front of my desk — it is in my direct line of sight.

Electric cooperatives value members and our employees, who labor every day as a part of our cooperative system. It is because of their dedication and hard work that we can be Reliable, Affordable and Responsible for our members, and it is why I truly believe that we are all Better Connected, Together in this wonderful cooperative system.

No matter how you plan to enjoy your Labor Day weekend — whether it's watching fireworks on Lake Hamilton; or watching the Razorbacks battle Alabama A&M on opening day; or a medieval feast at the Renaissance Festival in Mount Vernon; or maybe just a backyard barbecue and enjoying a work-free Monday — I hope that you take just a moment to remember those who came before us, who advocated on behalf of American workers and their families to bring us this Labor Day weekend.

Cooperative interns help in fight against hunger

Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas interns traded their desks for donation bins at the Arkansas Foodbank on July 10.

Arkansas Foodbank Volunteer Operations Manager Neal Pumphrey said, "Arkansas is now No. 1 in the nation in food insecurity. One in four children and one in five adults don't know where their next meal is coming from."

Pumphrey said volunteers — like the two dozen interns who sorted food and packed boxes — save the foodbank more than \$1 million a year in staffing costs.

Legal Services Division intern Lauren Baser said, "Part of the reason why I went to law school is to render justice and service to my community, and when I saw that this was an opportunity ... I was ecstatic. I absolutely love giving back to my community. I'm from Little Rock, and this opportunity means the world to me."

Hayden Lay, electrical engineering intern, said, "Volunteering today means there will be fewer Arkansans hungry tomorrow."



Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas summer interns volunteer at the Arkansas Foodbank in Little Rock.

Where Is It?

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

In August's issue, we hid a Willie Wiredhand trading pin exchanged by Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas Youth Tour students. We thought we were sly by "sticking" it in plain sight out front, but you still spotted it! Wrote one unfazed reader: "The Youth Tour pin is on the front cover on Trace's shirt. It was almost too easy this month."

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

A. King, Fort Smith (Arkansas Valley Electric Cooperative)
Finn Radler, Fayetteville (nonmember)
Margaret Cigelman, Hot Springs Village (First Electric Cooperative)
Kimberly Granger, Star City (C & L Electric Cooperative)
Carlene Woodward Davis, Morrilton (Petit Jean Electric Cooperative)

For September, it's game time! We've hidden this football. Will you score a touchdown or fumble?

For a chance to win a tote, enter by Sept. 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 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. July's winner was: Alan Kilcrease, Texarkana (Southwest Arkansas Electric Cooperative).*



- On Jan. 15, 1919, a 2.3-million-gallon wave of molasses enveloped Boston. An insufficient storage tank burst, sending syrup in all directions at nearly 35 miles per hour. It was reported that for months after the cleanup, the fragrance of molasses remained.
- Mycorrhizae, the symbiotic relationship between fungi and plant roots, enables both to thrive. This partnership even allows mother trees to recognize their own seedlings and supply them with extra nitrogen and carbon, boosting their survival chances.



- A dentist created cotton candy.
- The word "dude" became popularized in the 1880s and was originally an insult toward poshly dressed men.
- President Theodore Roosevelt kept a host of peculiar pets in the White House, including a bear, a hyena, a badger, a one-legged rooster, an owl, a parrot, a rabbit, a pig, lizards, guinea pigs, a hen and a horse.
- In the Great Emu War of 1932, the Royal Australian Artillery and emus battled it out. Despite wielding machine guns, the military was no match for the giant birds that emerged victorious.
- "Remember that the happiest people are not those getting more, but those giving more."
 — H. Jackson Brown Jr., American author



DIP, DIP HOORAY!



MVP Lemon Cheesecake Dip

READER RECIPE CONTEST DELIVERS GAME DAY GOLD!

Arkansans know the real MVP of football food season — from tailgates to watch parties — is a great dip.

So, Arkansas Living launched a recipe contest devoted entirely to the dippable, the scoopable and the irresistibly shareable.

Readers sent in over 130 crave-worthy entries. After narrowing the field and taste-testing the finalists, our team selected 11 standout recipes to feature. What resulted was a mouthwatering collection of savory and sweet crowd-pleasers you'll want to prepare and pass around at your next party.

Ultimately, it was a sweet dip that scored the win: The luscious and aptly named MVP Lemon Cheesecake Dip by Linda Fowler of Holiday Island won in our official staff taste test.

Just in time for football season, we're serving up an all-star dip lineup that's perfect for game day snacking, whether you'll be cheering from the stands or the sofa.

WINNER



MVP Lemon Cheesecake Dip

Makes 6-10 servings.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened | 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice |
| 2/3 cup sour cream | Lemon zest for garnish |
| 1/2 cup powdered sugar | Assorted berries (strawberries, blueberries, raspberries), graham crackers, Lemon Oreos (crushed as topping or whole) for serving |
| 2 tablespoons half-and-half | |
| 1 teaspoon lemon extract | |

In a medium bowl, beat cream cheese until smooth. Add sour cream and beat until incorporated. Add powdered sugar, half-and-half, lemon extract and lemon juice; beat until smooth.

Refrigerate for at least 1 hour. Garnish with lemon zest. Serve with berries, graham crackers and/or Lemon Oreos.

Linda Fowler, Holiday Island

SAVORY DIPS

Bless Your Heart Bacon Pimento Dip

Makes 8-10 servings.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened | 6 slices thick-cut bacon, cooked and crumbled |
| 1/2 cup Duke's mayonnaise | 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder |
| 8 ounces sharp cheddar cheese, shredded | 1/4 teaspoon smoked paprika |
| 4 ounces pepper jack cheese, shredded | Pinch of cayenne, optional |
| 1 (4-ounce) jar diced pimentos, drained | Chopped green onions or chives for garnish |
| | Ritz crackers, celery sticks or toasted baguette for serving |

In a mixing bowl, combine cream cheese and mayonnaise until smooth. Stir in cheddar and pepper jack cheeses, pimentos, bacon, garlic powder, smoked paprika and cayenne. Chill for at least 1 hour.

Garnish with green onions or chives, and serve with Ritz crackers, celery or toasted baguette. Serve chilled. Or bake at 350 for 15-20 minutes (add garnish after cooking) for a hot, bubbly version.

Taylor Stimac, Fort Smith



Buffalo Chicken Dip

Makes 15 servings.

- | | |
|--|--|
| Nonstick cooking spray | 1 cup ranch dressing |
| 1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened | 1 cup Frank's RedHot Original Cayenne Pepper Sauce |
| 2 (12.5-ounce) cans white premium chunk chicken breast, drained and chopped, or 3 to 3.5 cups rotisserie/leftover chicken, chopped | 1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika |
| | 1 (16-ounce) bag shredded triple cheddar cheese |
| | Pita chips, garlic rounds, celery or chips for serving |

Heat oven to 375. Spray an 11x13 baking dish with cooking spray.

In a mixing bowl, combine all ingredients except cheddar cheese. Spread mixture into baking dish. Sprinkle cheese on top. Bake uncovered for 25-30 minutes.

Jean Fitzwater, Perryville



Creamy Bacon & Pepper Jelly Dip (Arkansas Sweet Heat)

Makes 8 servings.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened | Salt and pepper to taste |
| 1/2 cup sour cream | 6 slices thick-cut bacon, cooked and crumbled |
| 1/2 cup sharp white cheddar cheese, shredded | 1/4 cup green onions, finely chopped |
| 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder | 1/3 cup red pepper jelly (homemade or store-bought) |
| 1/4 teaspoon smoked paprika | Additional crumbled bacon, green onion and pepper jelly for garnish |
| Pinch of cayenne pepper, optional | Buttery crackers, pita chips or sliced bell peppers for serving |

In a mixing bowl, blend cream cheese and sour cream until smooth. Stir in white cheddar, garlic powder, paprika, cayenne (if using), salt and pepper. Fold in bacon and green onions (reserving some for garnish). Gently swirl in red pepper jelly, leaving streaks throughout.

Chill for at least 1 hour. Before serving, top with extra bacon, green onion and a light drizzle of pepper jelly.

Can be enjoyed cold or slightly warmed in the oven. Bake at 350 for 15 minutes for a hot version. Serve with buttery crackers, pita chips or sliced bell peppers.

Tim Walston, Hatfield



Down on the Bayou Dip

Makes 10-12 servings.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened | 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes |
| 1/2 cup mayonnaise | 1 teaspoon paprika |
| 2 cups Monterey Jack cheese, shredded | 1 pound cooked and peeled crawfish tails, divided |
| 1/2 red bell pepper, finely diced | 2 green onions, thinly sliced, divided |
| 1/2 lemon, juiced | Reserved crawfish tails and green onions for garnish |
| 1 clove garlic, minced | Chips or toasted crostini for serving |

Heat oven to 350. In a mixing bowl, combine cream cheese, mayonnaise, Monterey Jack cheese, red bell pepper, lemon juice, garlic, red pepper flakes, paprika and most of the crawfish and green onions (reserving some for garnish). Stir until well-combined.

Transfer to a cast-iron skillet. Top with reserved crawfish and green onions. Bake for 20 minutes. Serve with chips or toasted crostini.

Christie Howton, Palestine





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Easy Cheesy Chorizo Chip Dip

Makes 10 servings.

- 1 (2-pound) loaf Velveeta Mexican processed cheese, cubed
- 1 pound chorizo, browned and drained
- 1 (10-ounce) can Rotel tomatoes, puréed
- 1 (10.5-ounce) can Hormel No Beans Chili
- 2 tablespoons Sriracha sauce
- Chopped jalapeños, optional
- Tortilla chips for serving

Place Velveeta cubes in a crockpot. Add cooked chorizo, chili and puréed Rotel. Heat on low until cheese is melted. Stir well, then add Sriracha and jalapeños, if desired.

Serve with tortilla chips.

Marsha Kennedy Theobald, Kimberling City, Missouri

Fresh Corn Salsa with Lime Vinaigrette

Makes 8 servings.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 4 ears of fresh corn, cut off the cob, or 2 cups frozen corn, thawed | 2 limes, juiced or more to taste |
| 1 cup jicama, diced | 1/4 cup olive oil |
| 1 (10-ounce) container cherry tomatoes, quartered | 1/2 teaspoon salt or more to taste |
| 1 medium sweet onion, diced | 1/4 teaspoon freshly cracked pepper |
| 2-3 jalapeños, seeded and diced | 3 ripe avocados, diced |
| 1/2 cup fresh cilantro, chopped | Cantina-style tortilla chips for serving |

Combine corn, jicama, tomatoes, onion, jalapeños and cilantro in a mixing bowl. In a separate bowl, whisk together lime juice, olive oil, salt and pepper. Pour vinaigrette over corn mixture and stir well. Gently fold in avocado.

Make 1-2 hours before serving. Store in the refrigerator. Serve with cantina-style tortilla chips.

Notes: Adding avocado in last keeps it from getting too mushy. Leftovers? The dip is even better the next day!

June Dillard, Bella Vista



Moma Chitwood's Hot Cheesy Spinach and Artichoke Dip

Makes 10-12 servings.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 (1.4-ounce) packet Knorr vegetable soup and recipe mix | 4 garlic cloves, minced |
| 1 (12-ounce) bag frozen chopped spinach, cooked, drained and squeezed dry | 1/4 cup green onions, chopped (about 2 large) |
| 1 (14-ounce) jar marinated artichoke hearts, drained and chopped | 1 teaspoon onion powder |
| 1 (8-ounce) can water chestnuts, drained and chopped | 2 1/2 cups shredded Monterey Jack and mild cheddar cheese blend, divided |
| | 2 (8-ounce) packages cream cheese, softened |
| | 1 1/2 cups mayonnaise |
| | Fresh veggies, toasted French bread, crackers, pretzels or chips for serving |



Heat oven to 350. In a mixing bowl, combine all ingredients except 1 cup of cheese. Transfer to a 2-quart baking dish, and sprinkle reserved cheese on top.

Bake for 30-40 minutes, until hot, bubbly and lightly golden on top. Serve with fresh veggies, toasted French bread, crackers, pretzels or chips.

Mary Chitwood, Arkadelphia

Pizza Dip

Makes 12-15 servings.

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened | 1 cup pizza sauce |
| 1/4 cup sour cream | 3 ounces pepperoni, chopped |
| 1/4 cup mayonnaise | Pita bread, toasted |
| 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese, divided | baguette slices or Fritos |
| 1/2 cup shredded Parmesan cheese, divided | Scoops for serving |

Heat oven to 300. In a mixing bowl, combine cream cheese, sour cream, mayonnaise, 1/2 cup mozzarella cheese and 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese. Spread mixture into a 9- or 10-inch pie plate. Top with pizza sauce, remaining cheese and pepperoni. Bake for 20 minutes. Serve with pita bread, toasted baguette slices or Fritos Scoops.

Rose Throesch, Pocahontas



SWEET DIPS

Carrot Cake Dip

Makes 8 servings.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 2 tablespoons butter | 1 8-ounce package cream cheese, softened |
| 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon | 1/4 cup heavy cream |
| 2 cups shredded carrots, packed | 3/4 cup powdered sugar |
| 1/4 cup brown sugar, packed | 1 teaspoon vanilla extract |
| 1/3 cup raisins | 1/3 cup pecans, toasted |
| | 1/2 cup pineapple juice (or less) |
| | Apples, graham crackers, vanilla wafers or pretzels for serving |

Melt butter in a skillet. Add cinnamon, carrots, brown sugar and raisins. Cook until carrots are lightly caramelized, about 8 minutes. Transfer to a bowl to cool.

In a mixing bowl, beat cream cheese until smooth and fluffy. Add heavy cream, powdered sugar and vanilla; beat until light and fluffy.

Fold in cooled carrot mixture and pecans. Add pineapple juice, a little at a time, until desired consistency is achieved. Cover and refrigerate until chilled. Serve with apples, graham crackers, vanilla wafers or pretzels.

Julie Hansen, Bella Vista



Butterfingers Dessert Dip

Makes 30 (2-ounce) servings.

- | |
|--|
| 2 (8-ounce) packages cream cheese, at room temperature |
| 1/4 cup brown sugar |
| 1 (8-ounce) container Cool Whip, thawed |
| 5 (2.1-ounce) Butterfinger candy bars, crushed |
| 1-2 packages Biscoff cookies for serving |

In a mixing bowl, beat cream cheese and brown sugar until light and fluffy. Gently fold in Cool Whip and crushed Butterfinger bars (reserving some for garnish). Sprinkle a few bits on top.

Cover and chill for several hours or overnight before serving. Serve with Biscoff cookies.

Christi Strayhorn, Sherwood



From Co-op to Crown

Rural roots shape Miss Arkansas Kennedy Holland's values and vision

BY JENNIFER CHRISTMAN CIA

Kennedy Holland started the summer wearing an Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas intern badge and finished it wearing a sparkly crown.

Just three weeks into her internship at the cooperatives' Little Rock headquarters, the 20-year-old University of Central Arkansas student and Greenwood native was named Miss Arkansas 2025. A few weeks later, she returned to the cooperative world, this time as a featured speaker at the Directors' Summer Conference in Jonesboro.

It was a proud moment for Sean Holland, Kennedy's dad and director for Arkansas Valley Electric Cooperative, seated among his cooperative family — directors who had known Kennedy since she was a child.

"I'm a co-op kid, born and raised," Kennedy told the crowd of directors, adding, "My dad has served on the board of directors at Arkansas Valley for almost 15 years now, and we have had so many incredible experiences with the cooperative as a family."

She speaks of him with unmistakable admiration.

"My dad never went to college," she says. "He is a cattle rancher ... he's still one of the most educated men I've ever met in my life."

About him becoming a cooperative board member, Kennedy says, "It's because he wanted to learn about it, and he made a point to do so. ... You don't have to be an expert in a field to be a leader in that field. You can make a point to learn about (something) because you want to and because you care about the people that it affects." It's a lesson that Kennedy would carry forward, one that ultimately shaped her platform.

Pageants and purpose

A small-town spirit helped fuel her path into pageantry and passion for service. Kennedy spent years showing cattle at the Sebastian County Fair, where she later entered her first pageant.

"I thought it was the greatest thing ever," she says of her first crown, adding with a laugh, "Turns out I was the only one in my age division, and that's why I won. ... But I still fell in love with the pageant world."

After four years in the Miss Arkansas Teen program — and \$11,000 in earned scholarships — Kennedy moved up to the Miss Arkansas competition. Over three years, she rose from fourth runner-up to first runner-up, to the crown. She's now earned about \$80,000 in scholarships, enough for her to complete her bachelor's degree in communication and eventually a master's degree in nonprofit management completely debt-free.

Kennedy's platform, "Compassion Legacy," was inspired by a second-grade classmate named JJ, who used a walker and sometimes a wheelchair. When she volunteered to ride the accessible bus with him on a field trip, a friendship and a lifelong perspective began.

"I got to hear JJ's story," she says. "He was painfully aware of the looks that he got every single day ... being in a school district where he was the only kid with a disability that was visible. I got to hear the experiences of him going into public spaces and not being able to use any of the services in those spaces because of his mobility impairment. And that really sat



COURTESY OF MATTHEW SEWELL PHOTOGRAPHY



ABOVE
Kennedy Holland of Greenwood is the newly crowned Miss Arkansas.

LEFT
Kennedy Holland will compete in the Miss America competition Sept. 2-7 in Orlando.

COURTESY OF 25 MCKINBIRD PHOTOGRAPHY

with me as a 7-year-old.”

Today, she advocates for accessible play structures that support all children — including slide materials that don’t interfere with cochlear implants and surfaces safe for mobility devices.

“Fifteen percent of children have a disability that affects their ability to play,” she says. “And that’s such an important part of childhood development, whether it’s social development, emotional, cognitive (or) physical.”

Grit and grace

Kennedy will represent Arkansas at the Miss America competition in Orlando the week of Sept. 2-7. While the event won’t be televised, the finals will stream live — free to watch — at 6 p.m. Sept. 7 at [youtube.com/@MissAmericaOfficial](https://www.youtube.com/@MissAmericaOfficial).

More than the competition itself, she’s eager to build more relationships with other women driven to make a difference.

“That’s really what I’m so excited for at Miss America — is to meet 51 of America’s best and brightest and get to hang out with them for a week,” she says. “I mean, we’ve got physicists, we’ve got doctors, we’ve got lawyers, we’ve got people who are going to change the world that I get to call some of my very good friends over the next couple of weeks.”

Getting ready for the national stage, Kennedy says nothing could equip her better than the multifaceted job she already holds and the rural upbringing that taught her range and resilience.

“Really the best preparation I can get for Miss America is being Miss Arkansas,” she says. “Being Miss Arkansas is a full-time job. I get to meet different people every single day. For instance, last week, one day I was chasing a greasy pig at a festival, and the next day I was teaching an etiquette class to debutantes.” 🍷

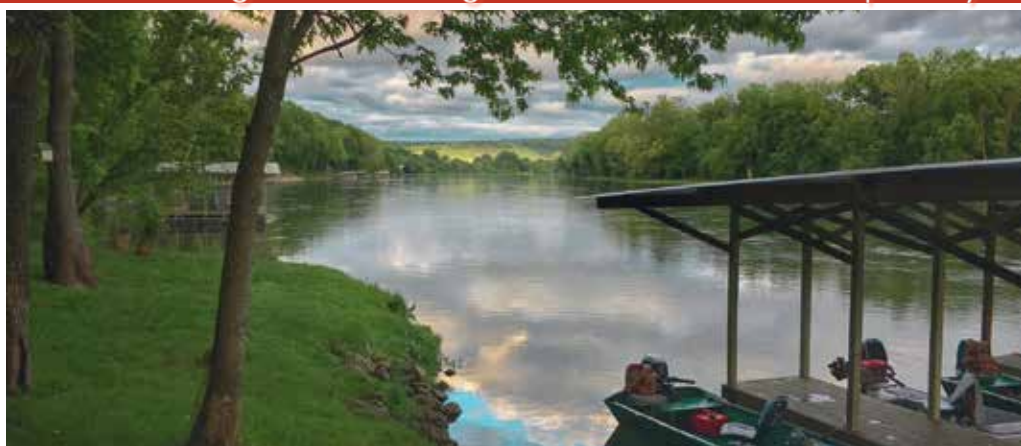


JENNIFER CHRISTMAN/CA

Miss Arkansas Kennedy Holland speaks at the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas Directors’ Summer Conference in Jonesboro.

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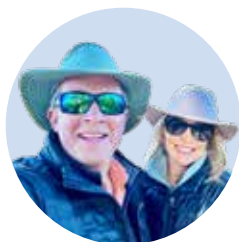
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Trail Tails

Happy hiking tips for canine companions



STORY AND PHOTOS BY CARLTON AND LEIGH WING

Man's best friend can also be a hiker's best buddy in the woods.

Here are some tips to help ensure happy, healthy hiking with your

four-legged friend.

1. Make sure your dog has all necessary shots and boosters. If your dog is used to life in your home or backyard, the wild world of the woods brings new bugs, bites, bacteria and more (think ticks!). Preparation will help prevent unwanted illness.

2. Keep your dog on a leash. This is not just to protect other dogs and humans, but to protect your dog as well. While your dog may be exceptionally well-trained in your normal routine, instinct can overwhelm training in a new woodsy environment. When other dogs or native critters enter the picture, control

of your animal is essential.

2a. Make sure your dog has identification. Despite the best planning, surprises on the trail can separate you from your dog. A dog collar with your name and number will make it easy to reunite. (Regarding item No. 1: Make sure the rabies tag is on the collar, too.)

3. Pick up after your dog. It can be part of the natural experience to identify scat of native animals while on a hike. It's not



Hiking paw-tners Carlton Wing and Bronco enjoy trail time in The Natural State.

as interesting to identify the remnants of someone else's Labrador — especially on the bottom of your hiking boot. Cleaning up after your dog is good stewardship of the trail.


4. Take breaks with your dog. This is especially important with puppies and with older dogs. Those little legs can get tired. Remember, dogs don't sweat to cool, they pant. A dog that is panting a lot, getting sluggish or vomiting may be overheated/overexerted and need to rest.

If hiking on asphalt, remember if it is too hot for your hand, it is too hot for a paw.

If a dog begins to overheat, cool gradually by pouring water over the head and paws. A dog can actually go from overheating to hyperthermia quickly!

4a. Bring water (and a water dish) for your dog; collapsible water dishes are widely available. During the hot Arkansas summers, a lot of liquid is essential for your dog and for you.

We love bringing our Bronco to enjoy new scenery. He absolutely loves the adventure and leaving his paw prints all over Arkansas' Great Outdoors!

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



Because wagging tails wander, keep your pup on a leash, and double-check collar tags.

A photograph of an older woman with short, white hair, wearing a light-colored turtleneck sweater. She is gently kissing a baby on the forehead. The baby is wearing a light-colored onesie and has its eyes closed. The background is a solid purple color with faint, stylized white lines.

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Rock Stars

Climbers conquer Horseshoe Canyon Ranch in annual competition

STORY AND PHOTOS BY BOB ROBINSON

Remember the thrill of climbing a jungle gym? Now imagine that multiplied exponentially across 630 rugged acres at Horseshoe Canyon Ranch (HCR) at Jasper, joined by 300 climbers. That's the essence of Horseshoe Hell (HH) — a grueling, exhilarating climbing competition in the scenic mountains of the Buffalo National River area.

Global gathering

Climbing magazine rated HH as one of “the most difficult endurance events in the nation.” Outside magazine referred to it as “the wildest rock climbing event in the world.” Over the years, climbers from the far corners of North America, Australia and Europe have traveled to The Natural State to compete in this totally original experience. Alex Honnold, of the Academy-Award-winning movie “Free Solo,” has even been enticed to join in this one-of-a-kind adventure.

When Andy Chasteen first organized the competition in 2006, he had no idea that some of the world's best climbers would participate in the event. The concept began innocently enough when he and a few of his buddies were climbing at HCR. One of them shared a thought, “I wonder how many routes a person could climb if they kept at it all day and all night.”

The seed was sown. After further discussion, they decided the event should be more than just a physical challenge. Their goal was to create an enjoyable, fun happening. A festival of like-minded individuals wanting to not only push their physical boundaries but also share camaraderie with fellow climbers.

Picking up on this “festive vibe,” competitors were showing up dressed in costumes. Wonder Woman, Batman and The Hulk became regulars, along with lean, muscular athletes attired in pink



More than 300 climbers from across the country and world are expected to compete Sept. 24-28 in the annual Horseshoe Hell competition at Horseshoe Canyon Ranch.



Started in 2006, the Horseshoe Hell rock climbing competition is known as one of the most difficult endurance events in the country.

tutus and colorful wigs. At some point, a barber became a fixture. Setting up a chair in the open lawn, he trimmed the heads of willing individuals, leaving creative designs with the remaining hair. And then there is “Hell Ink.” Keepsake tattoos to commemorate the event. All in the spirit of the HH celebration.

HH has expanded over the years into a five-day festival, taking place from Sept. 24-28 this year. In keeping with Chasteen's initial goal of offering something for everyone, in addition to the 24-hour challenge, there is a 12-hour competition, along with a Devil's Disco bouldering event.

Throughout the event, meals are provided, along with fun games, a slip 'n' slide, music and opportunities for socializing with both old and new friends.

Climbers' creed

The 12-hour HH and Devil's Disco are both fun and challenging competitions; however, Friday's 24-hour challenge is the premier event. On that morning, the levels of energy and adrenaline will be peaking as 300 athletes of all ages, dressed in costumes, wigs and colorful body paint, congregate in front of the Trading Post.

At the appropriate time, event director Jeremy Collins will climb onto the bed of a flatbed truck decked out as “Gordo the Great.” With a megaphone in hand, in loud, boisterous shouting, he leads the crowd in reciting the Climbers' Creed, a light-hearted yet somewhat serious reminder that partners hold one another's lives in their hands. Following this, at precisely 10 a.m., with a shotgun blast, 24 hours of Horseshoe Hell officially begins. With cheers and howling, teams of two

climbers will begin to disperse across the canyon.

Early in the competition, climbers scramble up the vertical walls like geckos. The tempo slows as the hours drag on. As the setting sun drops below the ridge, darkness envelops the surroundings. Competitors' circadian rhythm kicks in, and they must overcome the internal clock telling them to shut down. But they push on, knowing if they make it to sunrise, the adrenaline rush will carry them to the finish line.

"Honestly," explains event director Collins, "climbing our best and trying hard is great, but connecting with like-minded people from all over the country is what brings people back."

Spectator thrills

Even if you are not competing at HH, you can still join in the festivities by signing up as a volunteer or purchasing an event pass. Watching these world-class athletes scale sheer rock walls is truly a sight to behold.

When not watching the climbing competition, HCR offers a variety of other outdoor activities. First is

the natural wonder of the canyon itself. It is comparable to formations seen in western mountain ranges. The horseshoe-shaped abyss is surrounded on three sides by 300- to 400-foot bluffs, with a half-mile open gap on the fourth side. There is nothing comparable to the setting east of the Rockies.

Other avenues for exploration include 20 miles of professionally constructed mountain bike trails that weave a path among house-sized boulder fields and across the valley floor. If you didn't bring your bike, rent one at the Trading Post. Their choices even include e-bikes.

For a true bird's-eye view of the surroundings, HCR operates the longest zipline in Arkansas. For adventurers seeking a new experience, they offer two Via Ferrata courses, which combine hiking and climbing along secure routes, providing both excitement and safety. At day's end, sit back and enjoy an evening of stargazing.

Visit twofourhell.com for more information. 



Dressed as "Gordo the Great," event director Jeremy Collins recites the Climbers' Creed.

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Come Together

Twist and Shout at Walnut Ridge's annual Beatles bash

STORY BY JACK SCHNEDLER PHOTOS BY MARCIA SCHNEDLER

Although The Beatles never performed in Arkansas, their 1964 stop at Walnut Ridge's airport has inspired a yearly festival celebrating the world's most famous rock band.

Beatles at the Ridge, set for Sept. 20, will wrap up with a 7 p.m. show by the Liverpool Legends. The longtime tribute band has performed at New York City's Carnegie Hall and recorded at Abbey Road Studios in London.

"This year, we will have more music on our main stage, with five acts starting at noon and ending with the Liverpool Legends," says Peyton Tillman, co-chair of the festival committee with his wife, Amber. "There will also be more food, more vendors and more activities for the kids."

Festival admission is free. Activities take place along the blocks next to the downtown intersection of NW Second Street and W. Walnut Street. There are parking lots around the intersection.

Beatles at the Ridge began in 2011, Tillman explains, "as a lighthearted way for us to celebrate the Beatles' visit to our town, which was their only visit to Arkansas. It also salutes our other rich music history along Rock 'n' Roll U.S. Highway 67."

Unexpected arrival

On Friday night, Sept. 18, 1964, Polar Freeze diner owner Jack Allison heard a large plane approaching to land at Walnut Ridge Regional Airport, four miles northeast of town. After-dark landings back then were rare, so he sent three teenagers to see what was going on. They returned all excited an hour later to report The Beatles' astonishing arrival.

On their triumphant initial U.S. tour, the Fab Four were flying from Dallas to New York for their next concert. At Walnut Ridge, which had a runway long enough for the big tour plane, they changed to a smaller aircraft for a relaxing weekend at an upscale ranch in southern Missouri.

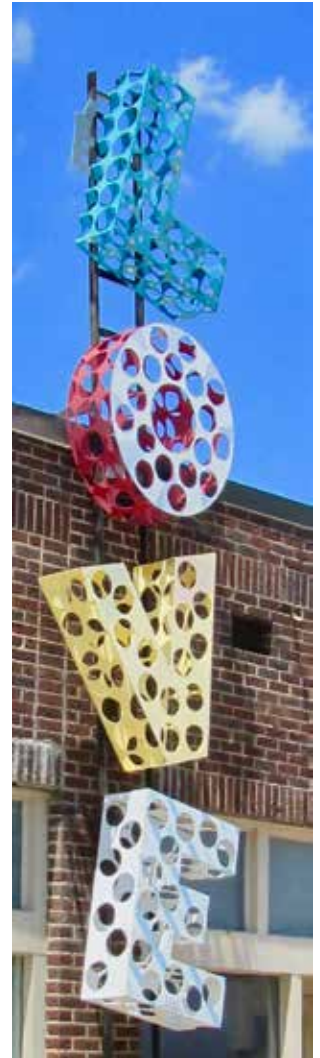
Word of their landing spread around Walnut Ridge by Sunday morning. About 300 locals were at the airport when The Beatles got back to fly to New York. John Lennon



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP Named after a Beatles' album, a yellow submarine sits on Abbey Road.

"All you need is love" for The Beatles in Walnut Ridge.

Visitors can walk like The Beatles in downtown Walnut Ridge.



Beatles at the Ridge

Where

Downtown Walnut Ridge

When

Sept. 20, 10 a.m.-10 p.m.

Admission

Free

Contact

(870) 886-3232

facebook.com/beatlesattheridge




and Ringo Starr returned here in a small plane, while George Harrison and Paul McCartney pulled up in a truck.

"We've found that folks from all over the country, and even from overseas, have connected with our town through the festival and our story," Tillman says. "Our residents are really proud of the way this festival has grown. Tourism and hospitality go hand in hand, especially in our area. Visits are not just limited to the festival. People show up all year long for our Beatles story." 📍

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Where Nature and History Meet: Potlatch Cook's Lake

Tucked deep in the serene woods of a small Arkansas County town lies one of The Natural State's most treasured retreats: Potlatch Cook's Lake Nature Center. Spanning 1,850 acres of forest, water and history, this haven is more than just a nature center — it's a living storybook of outdoor adventure, education and heritage. As a longtime member of First Electric Cooperative, the center is deeply connected to the local community it serves, both through its programs and the power that keeps it running.

The centerpiece of the property is a historic lodge that has stood witness to over 75 years of stories, from whispered local legends to nationally notable visits — including one from President George W. Bush and even a rumored overnight stay by actor John Wayne. With a classroom building, shooting range and access to the stunning Cook's Lake, this center offers an experience that is both deeply rooted and endlessly engaging.

One of just nine nature centers managed by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, Cook's Lake plays a vital role in connecting people to the outdoors. Whether it's fishing along the lake's banks, hunting

during carefully managed seasons or attending educational classes designed for learners of all ages, there's no shortage of ways to engage with the natural world.

Each winter, the center hosts both a youth hunt and a mobility-impaired hunt, ensuring that the thrill of the outdoors is accessible to everyone. For Lori Bailey, the facility manager, these moments are the heart of what makes Cook's Lake so special.

"Getting to watch the excitement fill a child's face when they catch their first fish, or see a disabled hunter get to sit in a deer stand again — it truly is so special," Bailey shared.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: A fishing pier is located at the Potlatch Cook's Lake Nature Center.

Lola White, daughter of Donnie and Brooke White, attends a Spring Break Kid's Archery class.

Hummingbird programs are offered each year.

A muscadine and dandelion jelly-making class is offered at the center.

A group of women participate in the "Becoming an Outdoor Woman" alternative kayak fishing class.



Beyond its scenic beauty and exciting programs, Potlatch Cook's Lake is a place of connection between generations, communities, people and the land. Whether you're looking for a quiet place to reflect, an adventure to share with your family or a hands-on learning experience, this Arkansas treasure invites you to come and write your own chapter in its ever-growing story.

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Planting with purpose: First Electric's tree planting guide

There's something incredibly satisfying about planting a tree, especially when you know it's going to shade your backyard, boost your curb appeal and help the planet for decades to come. But did you know that where and what you plant can also impact your electric service?

At First Electric, we love seeing our members go green — but we also want to make sure your trees don't interfere with power lines, service reliability or cause future headaches. Here's a guide to help you plant smarter, safer and more sustainably!



Pick the right tree

Not all trees are created equal — especially when it comes to height and root spread.

Before you dig, ask:

- *How tall will this tree get?*
- *Will it be near overhead or underground utilities?*
- *Will its roots mess with my driveway or water lines?*

Tree height zones

- **No to Low Zone:** Plant no trees in this area that

will grow to be 25 feet or higher. The low-height zone extends 15 feet on either side of the overhead wires. Plant only large shrubs and small trees with mature heights of 25 feet or less within this area.

- **Small Tree Zone:** To accommodate the width of taller trees, the small height zone begins at least 15 feet from all utility lines. Select trees that grow 25 to 40 feet or less for planting within this zone.

- **Medium Tree Zone:** The medium height zone begins at least 15 feet from all utility lines. Select trees that grow 40 to 60 feet or less for planting within this zone.

- **Tall Tree Zone:** The tall height zone begins at least 35 feet from buildings and at least 60 feet from utility lines. Trees that grow taller than 60 feet are suitable for planting in this area.

Stay away from the lines

Trees planted too close to power lines may look nice today — but fast forward 10-15 years, and suddenly your beautiful branches are a reliability risk. That's when First Electric has to step in for trimming ... or worse.

Call before you dig!

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- Photos can be vertical or horizontal.
- Photos can be from any time, not necessarily this year.
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- When uploading your photo, please select ONE topic category from the selection that best describes your photo.
- Please submit photos by **Nov. 1** to: arkansaslivingmagazine.com/2026-photo-contest/

Arkansas Living reserves the right to use submitted photos for the magazine, website, social media and other published pieces by the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas with photographer credit.



Eastern gray squirrel enjoying an early morning drink of water, Buffalo River — JAMI LINDER



Planting Ornamental Corn, Siloam Springs — REBECCA DRAKE



A baby raccoon is perched among the branches of our pear tree, stretching to grab a pear! Bryant — TIFFANY HARPER

New recipe contest: Winter Warm-Up!

Arkansas Living is giving away four roll-up electric food warming trays (24x16) that are perfect for holiday hosting and keeping dishes toasty while you toast the season.

To enter: Submit your favorite winter recipe (think holiday family favorites, snow-day comfort food, simmering soups, cozy casseroles, slow cooker staples and sweet seasonal bakes) by **Oct. 15** to arkansaslivingmagazine.com/submissions/submit-a-recipe.

BOWL US OVER CONTEST WINNERS ANNOUNCED

In our May issue, we announced the Bowl us Over Contest for a chance to win one of four 4-in-1 colander/bowl sets. To be entered in the drawing, readers submitted one favorite, personal recipe to ArkansasLivingMagazine.com.

The winners were:

- Karen Broederdorf, Mountain Home (North Arkansas Electric Cooperative)
- Debra Schneider, Van Buren (Arkansas Valley Electric Cooperative)
- Ed Spal, Bentonville (Carroll Electric Cooperative)
- Lisa English, Romance (First Electric Cooperative).



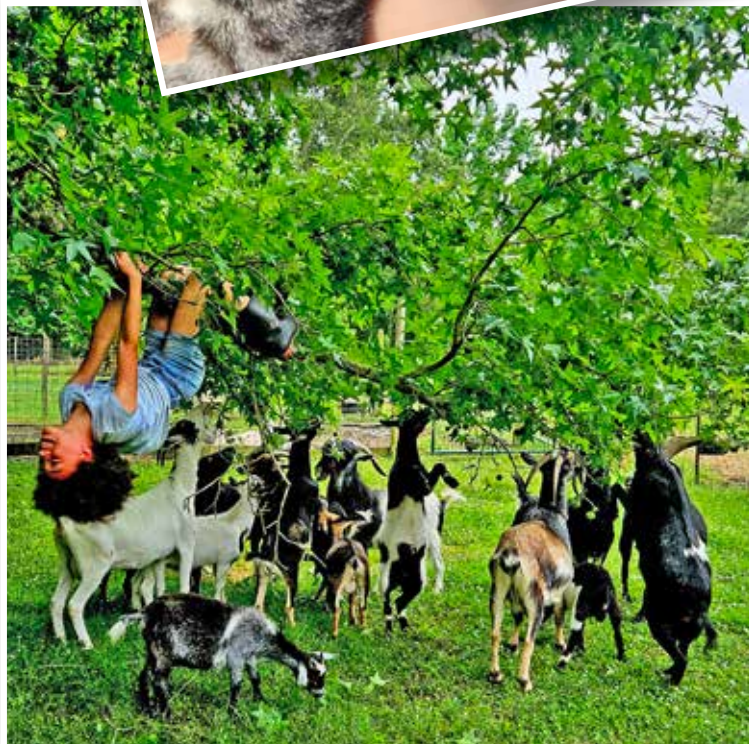
Snapshots from our readers



Tripp and his best buddy, Tiggy.
Cathy Otto, Booneville.



Sophie and Daisy enjoying a beautiful morning at Lake Catherine State Park.
Jessica Goldbach, Texarkana.



Kai finds a fun way to bring down sweet gum branches for hungry goats.
Cathryn Messer, Austin.



Ella giving some love to sweet little Sebastian.
Pagan Carricaburu, Little Rock.



"I have laid aside business, and gone a-fishing." Gena Carter, Conway.



Carol is still riding horses on her ranch with her granddaughters and friends at 80-years young. Rachel Byrum, Greenbrier.



Oaklee with his favorite chicken, Louise. Tammy Rogers, Sherwood.



Payton grew a sunflower measuring 12 feet, 10 inches! Samantha Polk, Greenwood.



Rylan has his frog primed and ready for the Johnson County Peach Festival Frog Jump. Vanessa Edgmon, Clarksville.

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.

Solid Gold

Bright bloom pleases with no sneezes


BY JANET B. CARSON



September marks the beginning of fall, even though the temperatures still feel a lot like summer. Gardeners often lose momentum after a summer of watering, weeding and surviving heat and humidity. If you are looking for plants that can take the heat, and survive the cold, plus provide a lot of color from now through frost, look no further than goldenrod.

Goldenrod, or *Solidago*, often discounted as a weed or the culprit behind hay fever, is actually a wonderful garden perennial, and has nothing to do with your yearly sneezes. Goldenrod's pollen is too heavy to fly, but its showy yellow flowers stand out. The true villain, ragweed, has green blooms.

Goldenrod is in the aster family, and there are a wide range of species and cultivars to choose from — most of them native to North America. In fact, Native Americans used goldenrod for many medicinal purposes. This perennial plant needs sun to do its best, but it is very forgiving about soil types and can survive dry conditions quite nicely, once established. It is a great pollinator plant for bees and butterflies.

While the variety you see on the roadsides, *Solidago canadensis*, is probably too vigorous and large for a home garden, there are plenty of smaller varieties to choose from. An added bonus: They are usually deer-resistant. 



Goldenrod, or *Solidago*, has vibrant color for the fall and is a great pollinator for bees and butterflies.

GOLDENROD TYPE	GROWTH RATE	CHARACTERISTICS
Golden Fleece	Slow-growing, dwarf plant — almost a groundcover. Only 18-24 inches tall and 3 feet wide.	Densely packed yellow blooms on arching spires; looks like yellow fleece.
Baby Sun	Low-growing, up to 24 inches.	Earlier bloomer, starting in July.
Golden Baby	About 18-24 inches tall; 1-foot spread.	Clump-forming plant with dense plumes of upright yellow flowers.
Wichita Mountains	About 2-3 feet tall; 2-3-foot spread.	Clump-forming, discovered in southwest Oklahoma. Very drought-tolerant.
Fireworks	About 3 feet tall at maturity, slowly spreading over time up to 4-5 feet. Creates a spectacular display.	Blooms are 18-inch-long spires of yellow, resembling fireworks.
Sweet Goldenrod	About 2-4 feet tall; 1-2-foot spread.	Anise-scented foliage. Branched plumes of small yellow flowers. Not aggressive.
Yellow Rockets	Very rigid, upright plant grows up to 5 feet; narrow 2-3-foot spread.	Long blooming season, with a tidy, upright habit. Makes a strong accent plant.

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A Pop of Pimento

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RECIPES AND PHOTOS
BY JULIANA GOODWIN

Potatoes with Bacon and Pimento Aioli

Makes 6 servings.

Aioli		1/2	teaspoon onion powder
1	large head garlic		Pepper
1	tablespoon olive oil	Potatoes	
	Salt	1	(1.5-pound) bag mini potatoes
3/4	cup mayonnaise		Salt and pepper
1	(4-ounce) jar pimentos, drained	1	pound bacon, cooked and crumbled
1/4	teaspoon salt or more to taste	2/3	cup sliced cherry or pear tomatoes to garnish (optional)

For aioli: Heat oven to 400. Slice top off garlic head to expose cloves inside. Drizzle with olive oil, and add a dash of salt. Wrap in aluminum foil, place in a pan, and roast in oven for 45 minutes. Cool completely before handling.

Squeeze garlic cloves out of skin and into food processor. Add mayonnaise, pimentos, salt and onion powder. Pulse until smooth. Add pepper to taste and add more salt if needed. Refrigerate aioli until time to serve.

For potatoes: When ready to serve, boil potatoes until tender, about 15 minutes. Once cool enough to handle, slice in half, season potatoes with salt and pepper. Spread aioli on a platter. Add potatoes to platter, and top with crumbled bacon and a few tomatoes, if desired. Serve.

Note: Aioli should be made at least 1 day in advance, but 2 days are even better. This can be served as an appetizer or side dish.



Easy Pimento Mac and Cheese

Makes 6-8 servings.

1 1/2	cups uncooked macaroni	2	cups half-and-half
5	tablespoons salted butter (divided), plus more for greasing pan	1	(4-ounce) jar pimentos, drained
2	tablespoons flour	1	(8-ounce) block sharp cheddar, freshly shredded (divided)
1/4	teaspoon salt	2/3	cup Mexican-style cheese, shredded

Cook macaroni according to al dente directions. Drain and stir 2 tablespoons butter into pasta. Set aside.

Grease a 9x9-inch pan with butter, and set aside.

In a large pot, melt 3 tablespoons butter over medium heat; add flour and salt. Stir for 3 minutes. Gradually stir in half-and-half, about 1/3 cup at a time, allowing mixture to thicken. Add pimentos, and stir constantly for 7-10 minutes until mixture thickens to a sauce. Add half the cheddar cheese, stirring until it melts, and add pasta to pot. Stir to thoroughly coat pasta.

Pour half the pasta into prepared pan. Top with Mexican cheese and half the remaining cheddar (save some for top). Add layer of pasta and remaining cheddar. Serve immediately.

Notes: It's important to grate the cheddar cheese yourself. The bagged variety will not melt as easily or have as much flavor. If you prefer macaroni baked, cover the top with extra cheese (either variety), and bake for 15-20 minutes at 325.





Cuban-Inspired Stew

Makes 4-5 servings.

2	tablespoons olive oil	1	tablespoon minced garlic
4	pounds skirt or hanger steak	2	cups chicken stock (more if needed)
	Salt and pepper	1	(15-ounce) can tomato sauce
1	red bell pepper, sliced	1	(6-ounce) can tomato paste
1	green bell pepper, sliced	1 1/2	cups baby carrots
1	very large yellow onion, sliced	2	large russet potatoes, sliced
2	teaspoons cumin	1	(4-ounce) jar pimientos, drained
2	teaspoons smoked paprika		Rice for serving
2	teaspoons oregano		Parsley or cilantro for garnish
3	bay leaves		
2/3	cup dry red wine		

In a Dutch oven, heat olive oil over medium-high heat. Season meat with salt and pepper, sear on both sides for a few minutes and remove. Add bell peppers and onions to pot. Cook for 5 minutes, reduce to medium heat, and add cumin, smoked paprika, oregano and bay leaves, and cook another minute. Add in red wine and deglaze pot.

Place meat back in pot, add garlic, chicken stock, tomato sauce, tomato paste, carrots, potatoes and pimientos, and bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Cover pot and reduce to a low simmer.

Cook for 3-4 hours or until meat is fork-tender. Check periodically and add more broth or a little water as needed. Shred meat with two forks, serve over rice and garnish with parsley or cilantro.

Notes: This recipe is inspired by "ropa vieja," a popular Cuban stew. It's so flavorful. This is an Americanized version with carrots and potatoes.



This month's web exclusive recipe: Pimento Chicken Salad

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.

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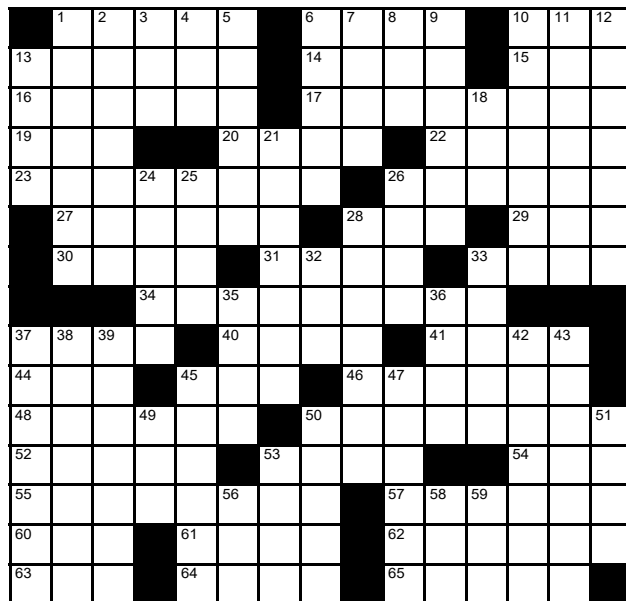
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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

34-Across By Victor Fleming

ACROSS

- 1 High-end German camera brand
- 6 Car horn sound
- 10 Foul caller
- 13 Half a dozen
- 14 Major leader?
- 15 D.D.E.'s WWII command
- 16 Affirm to be true
- 17 "___ [34-Across]" ('66 The Happenings hit)
- 19 Map abbr. until '91
- 20 Exit keys, for short
- 22 Utterly defeated, in video game lingo
- 23 [34-Across] ___ (infamous date in '01)
- 26 '55 A.L. batting champ Al
- 27 ___ Marcos (former Philippines First Lady)
- 28 Guy's partner
- 29 Add-___ (extras)
- 30 Dad, in Dijon
- 31 Actor ___ Julia
- 33 Online tech. news source
- 34 '78 Earth, Wind & Fire song
- 37 Spall of "Life of Pi"
- 40 Brief moments?
- 41 "Fat chance!"
- 44 "Be My Yoko ___"
- 45 Bachelor ___
- 46 Armed conflict
- 48 Channel between seas
- 50 [34-Across] ___ (alternative metal band since '09)
- 52 Like some coincidences
- 53 Yard's trio
- 54 Demand payment from
- 55 "___ [34-Across]" ('99 Kevin McDonald documentary)
- 57 '60s Nigerian separatist state
- 60 Hostel
- 61 Real estate



- 62 Has not been found
- 63 Back muscle targeted by bodybuilders, casually
- 64 Iowa city
- 65 Eminem's mentor

DOWN

- 1 Accidentally reveal
- 2 Superlative
- 3 Canaan suffix
- 4 These French folk?
- 5 Avoid being a no-show
- 6 Tampa's ___ Gardens
- 7 "___ Tu" ('74 Mocedades song)
- 8 England-to-Stuttgart dir.
- 9 Online money transfer company
- 10 Graduates' gathering
- 11 Saint-___ (French textile center)
- 12 Most enamored (of)
- 13 Business letter encl.
- 18 Bird that gives a hoot
- 21 Got going
- 24 "Jesus wept," e.g.
- 25 Gen. Robt. ___
- 26 Bernard or Marvin of journalism
- 28 Slangy sleuth
- 32 Old nuclear agency, in brief
- 33 Sovereign's headpiece
- 35 A lot of H.S. juniors take it
- 36 ___'acte (interlude)
- 37 Perfume ingredient
- 38 Insect feeler
- 39 To let, in other words
- 42 Suffered on account of
- 43 Certain medical pro
- 45 ___ mode
- 47 Go one further on eBay
- 49 Abet's partner
- 50 Darns, e.g.
- 51 Annoying flier
- 53 "OK, have it your way"
- 56 Candied tuber
- 58 Mideast map abbr.
- 59 N. Little Rock city council member

CROSSWORD ANSWERS ON PAGE 41

Email feedback to judgovic@gmail.com

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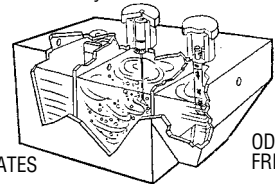
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Rolling Strong

Thirty years of Fayetteville's favorite comfort food



STORY AND PHOTOS BY ROB ROEDEL

The Northwest Arkansas region has experienced phenomenal growth over the past two decades and many new restaurants have popped up, but The Rolling Pin Café in Fayetteville remains a favorite of locals.

Travis and Devona Freeman are continuing the time-honored homemade culinary goodness offerings that Travis' mother, Gayle, began serving more than 30 years ago. They met while working together at



Travis and Devona Freeman carry on The Rolling Pin Café's tradition of serving the comfort food Travis' mother began offering over 30 years ago.

THE EATING ESSENTIALS

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The Rolling Pin Café, and the couple bought the establishment in 2007.

The all-day breakfast menu is a Southern breakfast lover's dream, that ranges from omelets to pancakes to homemade cinnamon rolls to platters to biscuits and gravy.

The John Wayne Omelet is one that the "Duke" would approve. It features bacon, ham, sausage, cheese, tomatoes, onions, green peppers, sour cream and jalapeños in a perfectly cooked egg blanket. Each forkful was a unique flavor experience. The omelets are served with hand-shredded hash browns, grits or biscuits and gravy. Mine came with freshly prepared hash browns with biscuits and chocolate gravy (sausage or cream options are available). The chocolate gravy was a treat and stirred up many wonderful childhood memories of enjoying this regional favorite with my family.

The cinnamon rolls are made from scratch daily. I enjoyed a cinnamon roll and an outstanding caramel pecan roll. I recommend eating one roll and getting a few to take home.

"We treasure the experience of watching children grow from eating in highchairs to going to college and getting married," Devona says. "We have served generations of customers who are now friends."

Plate lunches are offered daily at 11 a.m. Each plate includes "real" mashed potatoes and made-from-scratch gravy, two sides, a small salad and a roll or cornbread. The daily special



Turkey and dressing is one of the daily plate lunch offerings at The Rolling Pin Café.

on the day of my visit was turkey and dressing. Devona fixed me up with a plate that included black-eyed peas, potatoes and gravy and freshly sliced, locally grown tomatoes. The dressing was delicious, and the turkey was moist and very flavorful. The sides were made with love and were top shelf.

Devona says her team peels thousands of pounds of potatoes to meet the daily demands of customers. Travis and Devona prioritize sourcing items from local farmers. Thus, the outstanding tomato, that I enjoyed with the turkey and dressing.

The Chicken Fried Steak is hand-



The John Wayne Omelet and hash browns are part of the all-day breakfast menu.

breaded and cooked to order. I will attest to its freshness and southern-fried goodness.

A sandwich version is also available.

My cream gravy-coated steak was served with brown beans, fried okra, mashed potatoes and gravy. The Rolling Pin menu also offers hamburgers, sandwiches, homemade stew, homemade chili and additional selections.

I asked other diners what the best thing to eat at The Rolling Pin was, and the answer was unanimous — “Everything is great, but you have to try the homemade pies.”

My pie adventure included slices of peach, rhubarb and blueberry with two scoops of homemade ice cream. Try as I might to pick my favorite, I simply could not decide, so I just kept tasting each option. The made-fresh daily pies vary from day-to-day, but whole pies are available with a 24-hour or one business day notice. There are 27 varieties to choose from.

Devona said the feedback on the pies usually is, “This tastes just like my mama’s.” 🍷



The Rolling Pin’s cinnamon rolls are made daily from scratch.

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

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

for puzzle on page 38

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






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 Crystal Bridges
Museum of American Art





Calendar



Arkansas Renaissance Festival

COURTESY OF TYLER BITTLE



Jackson Farm

COURTESY OF JACKSON FARM



Arkansas Oklahoma State Fair

COURTESY OF ARKANSAS OKLAHOMA STATE FAIR



Spa-Con Pop Culture and Comic Convention

COURTESY OF SOUTHBOUND DESIGN



Main Street Food Truck Festival

COURTESY OF LITTLE ROCK CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

Weekends Aug. 30-Oct. 5

Arkansas Renaissance Festival

Mount Vernon, arrenfest.com

Sept. 4-6

Ozark Folk Festival

Eureka Springs, ozarkfolk.com/

Sept. 6

Whittlin' & Fiddlin' Festival

Leslie, tinyurl.com/WhittlinFiddlin

Sept. 12-13

Berryville Film Festival

Berryville, berryvillefilmfest.com/

Sept. 12-14

Arkansas Comic Con

Little Rock, arkansascomiccon.com

Arkansas Hot Air Balloon State Championship

Harrison, tinyurl.com/3kvekkv6

Sept. 14

From Forest to Table: Fall Foraging Basics

Fayetteville, onsc.us/events-1/fall-foraging

Sept. 19

A Night in Vegas

Little Rock, rmhcarkansas.org/event/a-night-in-vegas/

Sept. 19-21

Spa-Con Pop Culture and Comic Convention

Hot Springs, spa-con.org

Sept. 19-27

Arkansas Oklahoma State Fair

Fort Smith, arkansasoklahomafair.com

Sept. 20

Beatles at the Ridge Musical Festival

Walnut Ridge, facebook.com/beatlesattheridge

Cane Hill Harvest Festival

Cane Hill, historiccanehillar.org/festival

Weekends Sept. 20-Nov. 2

Jackson Farm Fall Festival

Black Rock, visitjacksonfarm.com

Sept. 21

Main Street Food Truck Festival

Little Rock, facebook.com/mainstreetfoodtruckfestival

Sept. 25-Nov. 1 (Thursday-Sunday)

Peebles Farm Fall Adventure

Augusta, peeblesfarm.com

Sept. 26-27

Big Steam Music Festival

Hot Springs, bigsteammusicfestival.com

Downtown Jonesboro BBQ Festival

Jonesboro, facebook.com/downtownjonesborobbqfest

Get Down Downtown

Searcy, getdowndowntown.com

Sept. 28-Oct. 5

Six Bridges Book Festival

Little Rock, cals.org/six-bridges-book-festival

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



Insure the Fun Stuff

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Randy Milam

ARKADELPHIA

Chad Kesterson
Jeremy Hughes

ASHDOWN

Joey Bailey

BARLING

Brandon Zimmerman

BATESVILLE

Vicki Stephenson

BELLA VISTA

Scott Comiskey

BENTON

Todd Matthews

BERRYVILLE

Tonya Williams

BOONEVILLE

Jerald Baker

BRYANT

Laryssa Calley
Matt Steele

CABOT

Paul Killingsworth

CARLISLE

Victor Seidenschwarz

CHARLESTON

Jim Milam

CLINTON

Jim Gilliam

CLARKSVILLE

Madison Nowotny

CROSSETT

Dan Pevy

DES ARC

Jason Jones

DUMAS

Stacy Berry

EL DORADO

Amber Myers

FARMINGTON

Griggs Covington

FAYETTEVILLE

Whit Hensman
Randy Hutchinson
Taylor Wethers

GLENWOOD

Simon Mack

GRAVEL RIDGE

Candice Alford

GREEN FOREST

Cody Qualls

GREENBRIER

Michael Ludwig

HAMPTON

Mark Hodnett

HARRISON

Joan Bell
Matt McKinney

HATFIELD

Kenny Miller

HEBER SPRINGS

Tim Brewer

HOPE

Trey Wright

HOT SPRINGS

Doug Bronsink

HUNTSVILLE

Andrea Honeycutt

IMBODEN

Denny Durham

LITTLE ROCK

Stefan Elmore
Steve Ferguson

MARSHALL

Jeff Jennings

MOUNTAIN HOME

Ryan Edwards

MULBERRY

Tiffany Newman

NASHVILLE

Steve Tate

NORTH LITTLE ROCK

Brian Cress
Monica Reiners

NEWPORT

Mark Manning

OZARK

Toby Hogan

PARAGOULD

Ty Sims

PARIS

Jimmy Pannell

PERRYVILLE

Baylor House

PIGGOTT

Tonya Coomer

ROGERS

Keri Earwood
Tony Putnam
Derek Wardlow
Walter Yockey

SEARCY

Richard Cargile
Frank Likert

SHERWOOD

Becky Bradley

SPRINGDALE

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VAN BUREN

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WALDRON

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Melody Abbott



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We're always comfortably right here. Waiting and ready when you are and with every resource we can deliver.

We're powering your *"connect this. Click that. And go"* every single day, right where you live. Delivered by your local electric cooperative. Each cooperative is unique, yet all are united. Our mission is to provide reliable, affordable and responsible power to every corner of Arkansas. And we're expanding to deliver fiber for a more connected world.

It's your local, hometown cooperative way, because **we're better connected, together.**



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