

JUNE 2025

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There are nearly 200 dairies
in the Shenandoah Valley.

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VIEWPOINT

Summertime, Graduates and Fun Times

June marks the start of summer when students have graduated and get a chance to enjoy some sun and fun with their friends and family. We are blessed to live in an area that is a short drive away from the mountains, beach and a wide range of amazing attractions. As you plan out your adventure, be sure to check out our Fairs & Festivals Guide that is included in these pages.

This issue's Cooperative Focus feature is about a "cheese ministry" in the Shenandoah Valley that helps local farmers use surplus milk by making it into cheese that is then distributed to area residents in need. This story is a fitting way to recognize National Dairy Month.



We also have a feature about WWII veterans who will get together in Stephens City, Va., this month to celebrate their military heritage.

Of course, we need to recognize Father's Day, which is celebrated on the 15th of this month. It is such a blessing to be a father, and it seems that the older I get, the more I appreciate it. I'm sure it has nothing to do with my children being old enough to be out of the house.

To help assist this year's cooperative-member graduating students, our Education Scholarship Foundation awarded a record \$124,500 in scholarships. Congratulations to the class of 2025 and we pray you have many more milestones to celebrate in the years ahead! ●

Brian S. Mosier

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

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WWII Army Veteran Jack Einstein, right, chats with some WWII reenactors during Military Appreciation/Living History Day.

PHOTO COURTESY P.M. FRAVEL

Honoring Veterans

Military history museum holds appreciation celebration

by Gregg MacDonald, Staff Writer

JACK EINSTEIN, A DISTANT RELATIVE OF ALBERT EINSTEIN, WAS BORN IN RADFORD, VA., IN 1924. This was the same year that J. Edgar Hoover became the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the first Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade was held in New York City. Today, Einstein — a WWII Army veteran who will turn 101 next month — is still going strong and frequently takes part in the annual Military Appreciation/Living History Day at the American Military Heritage Museum in Stephens City, Va. "I always enjoy talking to youngsters who ask me all sorts of questions about WWII," he says.

Now, in its 12th year, this year's event will take place on Saturday, June 7. "It all started in 2014 to celebrate the 70th anniversary of D-Day," says historian P.M. Fravel, who owns the museum and has seen annual event attendance grow threefold, from 400 people in its first year to 1,200 people last year. He says the event allows veterans to get together and reminisce. "To me, the best compliment we ever get is when veterans' family members come up and say, 'This is the most granddad has ever spoken about his service.'"

The free event will be held rain or shine from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. It will include an expansive museum display of original artifacts depicting America's involvement during WWII, as well as displays on the Civil War, World War I, Korea and Vietnam.

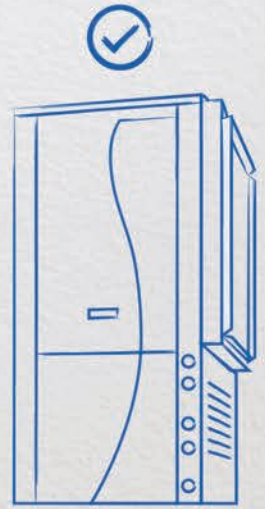
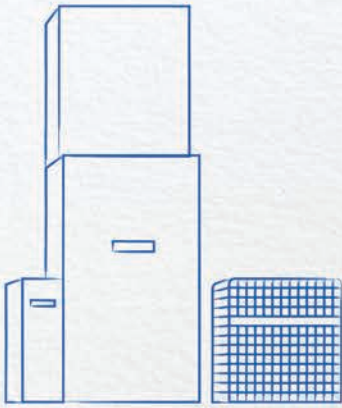
Reunions for military veterans will start at 10:30 a.m., followed by a group photograph at 11:30 a.m. All veterans who register as they enter will also receive a full BBQ luncheon at noon. The museum encourages local veterans to spread the word about the event and spend the day there.

"A variety of military history reenactors will provide numerous 'living history' displays and interpretations throughout the day," Fravel says. "Two U.S. Military tanks, including an operational WWII Stuart tank, will be on display. A military dress-up area for children will also be available, as well as free WWII Jeep rides throughout the day." ●

▶ *The American Military Heritage Museum is located at 811 Fairfax Pike, 1.5 miles east of Stephens City, Va. For more information, visit facebook.com/ambmuseum or contact P.M. Fravel at fravel@clemson.edu.*

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Got a restaurant
for Peggy to review?
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Berlin's Blacksmith is a Hot Destination

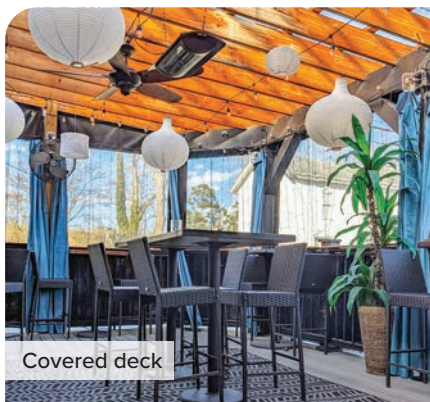
Maryland restaurant did not disappoint

by Peggy Hyland, Contributing Columnist

With beach season finally here, we headed east, stopping in Berlin, Md., to check out Blacksmith Bar & Restaurant. The covered deck was filled with patio tables that could be expanded to accommodate parties of various sizes, perfect for the summer crowd. We settled in to peruse the menu, which featured a dizzying array of specials, from seafood fritters to ribeye. Chef Justine Zegna rotates the specials based on availability and demand. Crowd favorites are likely to make repeat appearances, especially their mac and cheese (Brie, Gruyere and Gouda) topped with a tempura-fried lobster tail.

We decided to sample our way through some of the regular offerings, starting with the deviled eggs, which were fried to crispy perfection, filled with lump crab and sprinkled with Old Bay. They were truly stellar. We then turned our attention to the seafood fritters. They were made from shrimp, crab, lobster and halibut. The outside was light and crispy, and the filling was incredibly silky. They were served with a fantastic house-made ranch dressing. Ranch is never my go-to, but my ranch-loving companion and I happily topped our fritters with it.

As a seafood and fresh pasta fan, I could not resist the hand-cut pappardelle pasta with shrimp and lump crab. The tarragon-truffle cream had a beautiful garlicky herb finish, and everything went harmoniously with the delicate shrimp and lump crab. As much as I love crab and shrimp, the pasta was so good I would happily eat it plain. My companion chose the boneless short ribs with shrimp and stone-ground



Covered deck



Espresso martini



Ribs with shrimp



Bananas Foster cheesecake

polenta. The polenta was incredibly creamy, and the shrimp were cooked to perfection. The bourbon and bacon cream sauce was tangy, perfect for the tender short ribs. It was nothing short of inspired.

We were full but could not resist dessert. My companion chose the bananas Foster cheesecake, a cannoli shell topped with toasted coconut. The texture of the filling was divine, and the cannoli shell was crispy and golden. I am a sucker for bread pudding, and the butterscotch and salted caramel bread pudding was outstanding. It was served over freshly whipped cream and had a salted caramel icing. It was enormous, definitely big enough to share. They also had an espresso martini with the same butterscotch toffee topping and ice

cream as the bread pudding did.

The wine list is reasonably priced, and several regional beer offerings are available, including one made in Berlin. The service was delightful and attentive. Berlin is about 20 minutes from Ocean City, without the crowds and hustle found closer to the beach. It is a great place to stop on your way to or from Ocean City. They are closed on Sundays, so plan ahead to ensure you do not miss them. Berlin is a charming town, and Blacksmith is good enough to make it a destination in its own right. ●

Blacksmith Bar & Restaurant

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Are You Eating Healthy?

How science rewrites the rules of what and how we eat

by Vanessa LaFaso Stolarski, Contributing Columnist

How and what we eat constantly evolves, reflecting not only new science but also culture, technology and society's collective aspirations for health. From the low-fat craze of the 1980s to today's macronutrient-mapped plans, our dietary beliefs and habits have shifted dramatically. Here's a look at some common nutrition trends, how they've changed and what the latest research reveals.

FAT: ENEMY OR ESSENTIAL?

Then: In the 1980s and 90s, dietary fat was demonized. Supermarket shelves filled with low-fat cookies, skim milk and fat-free salad dressings became standard. The belief was simple: Fat makes you fat and leads to heart disease.

Now: Today, fats — especially the unsaturated kind — are widely recognized for their health benefits. Avocados, nuts, olive oil and fatty fish are celebrated for supporting brain function, hormonal balance and reducing inflammation.

The Research: A landmark study in the British Medical Journal showed no significant link between saturated fat intake and heart disease. More recently, the Mediterranean diet, rich in healthy fats, has been shown in studies to reduce heart disease and increase longevity. Moreover, we now understand that fat is an essential nutrient. In other words, the body does not produce fatty acids on its own, so it must get them from food. Eating some fat is not only beneficial but required for long-term health.

CARBS: FOUNDATION OR FOE?

Then: Traditional food pyramids put bread, pasta and grains at their base, suggesting they should make up the bulk of a healthy diet. Carb-loading was common for everyone, not just athletes.

Now: Carbohydrates are scrutinized with growing awareness about refined sugars and white flour and their link to obesity and diabetes. Whole grains, complex carbs and a focus on glycemic index are emphasized in low to no-carb diets such as Ketogenic, Atkins or Paleo, which are applauded for their positive effects on body composition.

The Research: A 2022 literature review found



COURTESY: PICKPIK.COM

that reducing refined carbohydrate intake and opting for whole grains leads to better glycemic control and weight management. However, extremely low-carb diets aren't necessary or even beneficial.

PROTEIN: SUPPLEMENT TO SUPERFOOD

Then: Protein was viewed primarily as a concern for bodybuilders or growing teens. Average adults rarely gave it much thought and protein intake was rarely monitored by healthcare providers.

Now: Protein has become a star macronutrient for satiety, weight management and muscle maintenance, especially in aging populations. No longer taking second stage to carbohydrates, protein should make up half a person's plate or be portioned according to a person's body weight.

The Research: A 2020 meta-analysis in the journal *Nutrients* concluded that higher protein intakes support weight loss and muscle maintenance. Recent research also supports the benefits of diversified protein sources including plant-based, which are linked to lower cardiovascular risk.

MINDFUL EATING: PERSONAL OR TOO MUCH?

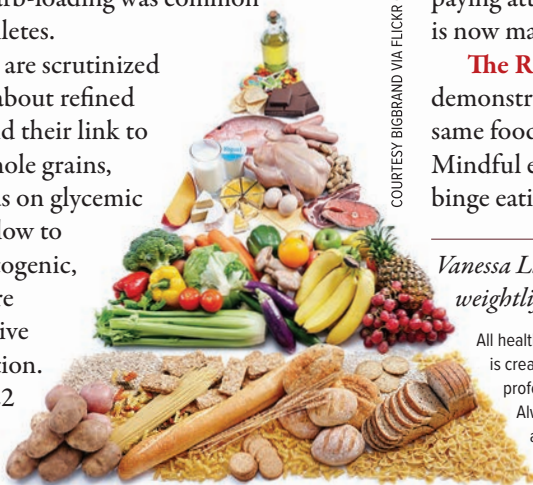
Then: Diet advice was mostly a one-size-fits-all paradigm, with broad guidelines and little attention to individual variation. Variables such as lifestyle, fitness regimen, activity level and family history were not considered.

Now: Genetics, gut microbiome profiles and personalized meal planning apps are ushering in the era of personalized nutrition. Mindful eating, which includes paying attention to hunger cues, emotions and food quality, is now mainstream.

The Research: A 2021 PREDICT health study demonstrated that individuals respond differently to the same foods, supporting the push for precision nutrition. Mindful eating practices have shown benefits in reducing binge eating and improving weight outcomes. ●

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

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COURTESY: BIGBRAND VIA FLICKR COMMONS

2025 Guide TO Fairs & Festivals



It's that time of year when long, sunlit afternoons and twilight-filled evenings come alive as family and friends gather to make memories while experiencing all the sights, sounds and tastes the commonwealth has to offer. Across Virginia, these fairs, festivals and travel destinations are putting out the welcome mat ... and you're invited!

SALEM FAIR | SALEM, VA

July 2-13

Come experience the fun and excitement of the Salem Fair, which takes place in the heart of the Roanoke Valley on the grounds of the Salem Civic Center Complex. There will be rides, music, competitions, food and games. Fees apply for rides, food and games.

For more information, visit salemfair.com.

MADISON COUNTY FAIR | MADISON COUNTY, VA

July 16-19

The Madison County Fair promises to be a good time, with something for everyone to enjoy! Fairgoers will be able to enjoy musical performances by Dark Hollow Band, Melissa Quinn Fox, Austin Boggs, Hurt Hollow Bluegrass Band and James Tamelcoff. There will also be axe throwing, a hypnotist, wrestling, livestock shows, exhibits, a bull-riding rodeo, a demolition derby and more. *For more information, visit madisoncountyfairva.com.*

VIRGINIA LAKE FESTIVAL | CLARKSVILLE, VA

July 18-19

Explore Clarksville, Va., on the largest lake in Virginia at the 48th annual Virginia Lake Festival. The festival includes a multitude of events open to the public at no charge. Activities for all ages (including helicopter rides) and live bands all weekend! There will be music by the Fastlane Band. At nightfall, boats gather on the lake and festivalgoers gather at the shoreline to see the extravaganza fireworks show.

For more information, visit clarksvilleva.com.

SHENANDOAH VALLEY MUSIC FESTIVAL | ORKNEY SPRINGS, VA

July 18-19, July 25-26, Aug. 15-16, 30-31

Escape to the foothills of Great North Mountain and enjoy great music under the stars. Coming this summer: Grand Funk Railroad, The Bacon Brothers, Shenandoah, Gaelic Storm, Big Damn Band and more! Package deals include discounts on tickets and lodging at historic Shrine Mont.

For more information, visit musicfest.org.

DISCOVER HOPEWELL, VIRGINIA

Visit Hopewell, Va., located just 20 minutes south of Richmond at the convergence of the James and Appomattox rivers. Come take in a show at the historic Beacon Theater. Explore the water on foot or kayak at the Hopewell Riverwalk. Browse the shops in historic downtown, then break for coffee or lunch at one of our cafés or restaurants. Visit historic Weston Manor and Appomattox Manor to walk in the footprints of the nation's founders. Enjoy drinks and dinner at the Boathouse at City Point overlooking the James River.

For more information, visit hopewellva.gov.

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Fairs & Festivals Guide

(continued from page 7)

CHINCOTEAGUE BLUEBERRY FESTIVAL | CHINCOTEAGUE ISLAND, VA

July 24-26

The 37th annual Chincoteague Island Blueberry Festival, the opening act for the world-famous Pony Swim, will happen on July 24-26 at the beautiful Chincoteague Center. There will be delicious food, nonstop live music, talented artists and crafters, and blueberries in their many forms. *For more information, visit chincoteagueblueberryfestival.com.*



DINOSAUR KINGDOM II

Weekends through October

Check out the wild and wacky roadside attraction that the Washington Post called, "Amazing! Brilliant! Hilarious!" Dinosaur Kingdom II will transport visitors to an alternate reality filled with lifelike fiberglass dinosaurs along a wooded, walking adventure. Young visitors can discover dinosaur bones, experience a triceratops bullfight or mine for fossils. *Buy tickets online at dinosaurkingdomii.com or on site at the ticket booth.*

HAUNTING TALES

Weekends through October

Walk through dark streets and alleyways and in the very footsteps of Stonewall Jackson, Robert E. Lee and his beloved horse, Traveler, as you listen to entertaining, enlightening and eerie tales told to you by professional tour guides. Experience the nightly phenomena in the heart of the famous Stonewall Jackson Memorial Cemetery. *For more information, visit ghosttourlexingtonva.com.*





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THE CHEESE MINISTRY

Rockingham County ministry provides for both dairy farmers and people in need

by Preston Knight, Contributing Writer

Struggling dairy farmers needed a plan. Former Rockingham Cooperative's Keith Turner offered something more. Hope.

"Hope is a powerful motivator," he says. "We all need hope."

In the fall of 2017, the Shenandoah Valley's dairy industry, mirroring that of the commonwealth and the nation, was ripe for a boost of any kind. It was then that one farmer in Rockingham County, the top-producing dairy county in Virginia, invited Turner to his kitchen table; and a common tale of fear and foreclosure emerged.

And so did a new concept — The Cheese Ministry.

"If we could take milk off the market and buy that cheap surplus milk and get it made into cheese," says Turner, the feed division manager at Rockingham Cooperative at the time, "that extra demand for milk helps underpin the market, and by making cheese to give to people in need, we're helping to feed people who normally never would be able to afford cheese."

"Helping farmers and feeding people

at the same time: that's the uniqueness of The Cheese Ministry."

June is National Dairy Month, and no one need look any further than the positive impact of Turner's program as a reason to celebrate it. Through donations and a corporate partner, Rockingham Cooperative, a chain of retail farm and consumer products stores based in Dayton, Va., The Cheese Ministry incurs minimal cost in supporting local dairy farmers who might be facing financial burdens.

Farmers, in turn, get to do what they do best: supply the rest of us with high-quality sustenance. "A co-op should be people helping people," says Turner, who now works in business development at the co-op. "If you get it right, that is."

'SOMETHING SPECIAL' GOES ON

Turner calls purchasing power a "core competency" at Rockingham Cooperative to lower its members' costs. The co-op has about 5,200 members, many overlapping as members of Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative. This purchasing concept gives The

Cheese Ministry a better chance to succeed. Turner says that donated funds are used to purchase cheese in large volumes to lower the cost and multiply the benefits to people in need.

"I am a big picture thinker," he says. "We strategically purchase cheese using excess milk to lower the cost of the cheese produced." Cheese is sourced from Lanco-Pennland, a dairy cooperative with a cheese plant in Hancock, Md., that donates part of the production cost as a charitable contribution. Several local dairy farmers are members of Lanco-Pennland, with their milk shipped to the cheese plant.

It takes 10 pounds of milk to produce one pound of cheese. Turner says a 40,000-pound trailer load of cheese currently costs about \$110,000 to

DAIRY IN VIRGINIA

Virginia is home to about 68,000 dairy cows, producing an average of 7.9 gallons of milk per day. In 2024, about 170 million gallons of milk were produced.

Source: Virginia State Dairymen's Association

deliver. Volunteer drivers and donated equipment cover virtually all expenses to get the cheese from Maryland, except for the price of diesel fuel.

The Cheese Ministry's partnerships with farmers extend well beyond Rockingham County. One such farmer is Mercer Vu Farms, a Rappahannock Electric Cooperative member in Clarke County. Mercer Vu Farms delivers milk to Lanco, buys cow feed from Rockingham Cooperative and delivers cheese to distribute to its local food bank. "I think The Cheese Ministry is a win-win for everyone," says Rod Hissong, one of the family operators of Mercer Vu. "It helps the farmer by moving product and helping consumers. And it helps the underprivileged by providing high-quality protein and nutrition from dairy products."

Regardless of where the milk for the cheese originates, adding demand for cheese incrementally helps to support milk prices, Turner explains. This is not lost on those who keep watch on the industry at a broader level. "The work The Cheese Ministry has done is

simply incredible," says Eric Paulson, executive secretary of the Virginia State Dairymen's Association, which is also based in Rockingham County. "They ensure that dairy producers receive a fair price for the milk, which helps the local dairy industry, and then uses that cheese to help support the local community."

"For dairy producers, there's something special about seeing the milk they worked hard to produce turned into cheese, then distributed to provide a nutritious meal to someone who truly needs it." The cheese, which is mozzarella, is natural with no additives or color agents, Turner says. The milk used to produce the cheese is full-fat whole milk, which results in a higher-fat cheese, he adds.

Food pantries tell Turner that cheese

is one of their most requested foods. Cheese arrives twice a year for dispersal across area churches and food cupboards at Hope Distributed, a large nonprofit operation serving more than 34,000 people a year in Rockingham County and the surrounding area.

"We want to give the best to people in need," Turner says. "A number of the immigrants, refugees and low-income people we deliver cheese to come from backgrounds where cheese is not part of their diet. Many of the people we have given cheese to really like the cheese. Their children love the cheese. In a small way, this creates more demand for real cheese."

That impact is invaluable. And it can be just as meaningful to the dairy farm community.



MINISTERING HOPE

Ten years ago, 640 dairies operated in Virginia, and today, the number is down to 339, Paulson says. He calls the Shenandoah Valley the "heart of the dairy industry," with 165 dairies in Rockingham County, 25 in Augusta County and eight in Shenandoah County. When combined, those three counties alone make up over half of Virginia's dairies.

"One of the big challenges dairy farmers face is that they can't control the price they receive for their milk," Paulson says. "We often say they're price takers, not price makers. Because milk is perishable, it gets shipped off to market right away, and the farmer won't know what they earned for it until the milk check arrives a month later. That lag time

makes planning tough and adds to the rollercoaster of milk price volatility."

With decades of experience, Turner has endless stories of working alongside farmers, many in the Amish and Old Order Mennonite communities, to assist them in keeping their operations running. He advises the importance of running the family farm as a business and having a strategic plan.

"Milk markets are volatile, and it can be difficult for the average farmer to navigate," Turner says. "It all can fall on one set of shoulders, especially a family farm."

The Cheese Ministry alone does not save dairy farmers involved in the process. But it at least provides a form of relief. The ministry falls under a larger nonprofit also started by Turner, The Farm Ministry, which also distributes pork and beef. It was recently the recipient of a salary donation from Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin and first lady Suzanne Youngkin.

Turner first envisioned adding cheese to the portfolio after meeting with a struggling dairy farmer in November 2017. The initial shipment arrived within weeks, and to date, cheese totaling nearly \$800,000 in market value has been handed out ever since.

"I would encourage other co-ops to get involved. Co-ops are here to help people," Turner says. "The Cheese Ministry gives farmers hope in the fact that somebody's making an effort to try to help them, to help their financial situation. When you're below break-even, and you're a dairy business, it's a seemingly hopeless, helpless situation — one that's very difficult. Sitting there and looking in the eyes of somebody whose family is fearful of losing the family farm, that's where the concept came up. It was just like flipping a switch. People ready to give up and walk away found a glimmer of hope."

"We're a ministry of hope." ●

► For more information, visit thefarmministry.org/cheese-ministry.

Tiny Spaces, Big Impact

Unique groundcovers that will amaze you

by Beth Burrell, Contributing Columnist

Looking for a groundcover that stands out from all the rest? Here's a selection that's adaptable, worthy of foot traffic and will enhance your landscape's aesthetics. These hardy perennial living carpets are robust enough to endure foot traffic, making them perfect for walkways, narrow paths and rock gardens. Their compact size also adds a finishing touch to the landscape, offering a harmonious blend of aesthetics and functionality.

In my woodland garden, the first spring standout is Creeping Speedwell (Veronica 'Georgia Blue'), with brilliant blue flowers blanketing its evergreen foliage in April. Despite its delicate appearance, this six-inch gem is resilient, thriving even in rocky, dry soils. Planted close by is Dwarf Sweet Flag (Acorus minimus aureus), boasting small golden grass-like leaves in a tight swirling mat. This colorful sweetie enjoys boggy conditions yet will tolerate clay soil and is deer resistant.

Creeping phlox (Phlox subulata 'Violet Pinwheels'), a native cultivar, offers one of the most vibrant purple-blues available. It forms a lush evergreen mat, reaching a height of only four



Vivid gold teardrop leaves on Ajuga 'Cordial Canary' are covered in deep purple spike flowers in April.



Veronica 'Georgia Blue' is covered in delicate sky-blue flowers in April which compliments the dwarf gold Acorus grass tucked into the next stepping stone. Both are evergreen and love part-shade.



Phlox 'Violet Pinwheels' is an intense display of purple-blue on semi-evergreen foliage in early spring.

inches, and is less aggressive, thriving best in full sun. A quick shear after flowering will keep it tidy and promote new growth. Its semi-evergreen leaves will shed a few during winter, but fresh growth appears in spring.

Bugleweed (Ajuga 'Cordial Canary') produces an impressive three-inch-tall mound of narrow, vibrant yellow-gold leaves that expand beautifully, showcasing striking blue-lavender flowers in spring. This unique variety thrives in morning sun to partial shade and prefers slightly moist soils, often hard to find in typical garden centers, so ordering online is the key to snagging this beauty.

Miniature Stonecrops are ideal, and I love mixing several varieties to enhance texture and color as they blanket the ground. A standout combination includes Sedum 'Blue Carpet' with its light grey foliage and Sedum 'John Creech' with tiny shell-shaped leaves blooming pink early in summer. These deer- and rabbit-resistant sedums fit perfectly into small crevices or between stepping stones, beautifully complementing larger perennials.

While a moist area in the garden can be a challenge, I've discovered a



Strawberry geranium is extremely versatile and adaptable to both moist and very dry soil conditions once established.



Creeping Jenny (Lysimachia 'Aurea'); is inviting, but be warned that it spreads in the garden with unyielding stamina and is almost impossible to remove once established.

groundcover that thrives in part-shade, damp conditions and is one of the most drought-tolerant options available: Strawberry geranium (Saxifraga stolonifera). It spreads through runners, quickly filling challenging spots. I absolutely adore the airiness of its light pink starry flowers that rise six inches above silvery green leaves — a real delight in the late spring garden.

One groundcover to watch out for is Creeping Jenny (Lysimachia 'Aurea'). Its eye-catching chartreuse foliage is tempting, but be warned that it grows and spreads with relentless vigor. Once established, it's almost impossible to remove, as its roots and runners delve deep into the soil.

The impact of groundcovers is incredible — many can be walked on and are adaptable to various site conditions, making them ideal for filling gaps between pavers, tiny nooks and walkways. These "green mulches" will spread around the garden, bringing your landscape to life for you to enjoy. ●

Beth Burrell holds degrees in landscape design and ornamental horticulture. Her family gardens have been featured on the TV show Home Grown.

PHOTOS BY BETH BURRELL

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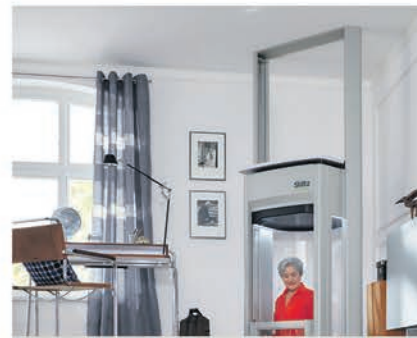


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2025 Guide TO Fairs & Festivals

▶ **OUR READERS LOVE EVENTS! MAKE PLANS TO SHARE YOURS IN OUR:**

▶ **Fall Fairs & Festivals Guide**

Publication: Sept. 1, 2025

Space Reservation Deadline:
July 25, 2025

▶ Don't miss this chance to have your biggest attendance ever! *Cooperative Living's* special Fairs & Festivals sections are coming up in our September issue.

Each issue of *Cooperative Living* reaches over 600,000 homes and businesses throughout Virginia and Maryland — that's more than 1.8 million readers and potential visitors to your festival or special event.

CONTACT: SONJA KINNEY
skinney@vmdaec.com | 804-297-3429



Calling All Photographers!

ODEC wants your images for the 2026 Energy Efficiency Calendar! We're looking for photos of your favorite landscapes, people, wildlife and flora in our beautiful region, as well as your patriotic pride.

Submission Requirements:

- High resolution (3,000 pixels)
- No editing
- Landscape (horizontal)
- Location required

Send submissions to EnergyTips@odec.com



KEEPING COOL AS SUMMER HEATS UP



The calendar tells us summer officially begins June 20, even though the rising thermometer may have already let us know. As we start thinking about fun plans for the warmer weather, I encourage you to have a safe and enjoyable time whether you're here in Virginia or planning a getaway out of town.

Summer power consumption increases as we turn on the fans and air-conditioners that make modern life more comfortable. While we're doing everything we can to keep the power costs affordable, there are also some steps you can take to reduce your home and business use when the demand for power is at its peak.

In this issue, you'll find information on NOVEC's load management program, an easy way to lower your bill during the hot, humid summer weather. And there's more advice available on our website for you to check out any time you like. Just visit novec.com and click the "ways to save" tab for practical cost-saving strategies.

Meanwhile, we'll be hard at work for you at NOVEC, of course, just as we are 365 days a year. NOVEC is here to make sure the lights stay on and to restore power quickly and safely when summer storms sometimes lead to power outages. NOVEC is committed to reliability and works every day to ensure we are prepared for whatever Mother Nature might throw at us. Our teams are busy year-round with projects designed to improve reliability and resiliency of the grid, from high-tech monitoring to removing potential physical hazards near our lines. It's all part of our efforts to minimize service disruptions before they happen.

Together, we'll help you stay cool and comfortable all summer long.

Best Regards,

Kristen Senechal

NOVEC'S VISION

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

NOVEC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

ENERGY TIP OF THE MONTH

Cut down your shower time. Heating water for a 10-minute shower uses roughly 3,000 watt-hours of energy, and most households spend between \$400 and \$600 annually just on heating water.



June 2025 • Cooperative Living • 15



First Class Line Technician Anthony Kestner will be the first NOVEC lineworker to compete in the Gaff-n-Go Rodeo's drone competition.



Apprentice Lineworker Evan Bache practices for a climbing event.



Line Technician First Class Anthony Helsley uses an expandable fiberglass pole to assist a team member high up on a pole.

It's About Time, But It's Also About Safety

By Robin Earl

Because lineworkers from all over the region spent May 17 scrambling up and down electrical poles under a ticking stopwatch, the Gaff-n-Go Rodeo lineworkers competition might have looked like a race. But “it was never designed to be a speed trial,” said NOVEC’s Kevin Bowling, manager of quality assurance.

Bowling, whose 10-person department ensures that all NOVEC’s power lines and poles are safe and operational, has attended 13 of the last 14 Gaff-n-Go Rodeos in Doswell, Virginia. He said that the rodeo coordinator, the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives, designs the challenges to judge how well lineworkers work safely on the poles. “All these challenges simulate work in the field,” he said. As a first-time member of the event committee, Bowling drafted the illustrations that outlined each event.

At the Gaff-n-Go Rodeo, apprentices perform individually; more experienced journeymen work in teams. Points are deducted if a lineworker slips while climbing or drops a piece of equipment, so safety trumps speed. Of course, if they don’t finish under the mean time, they lose points, and if they

stray past the “drop dead” time, they are disqualified. But whether it’s hurtman rescue challenges, climbing skills events, or an obstacle course using a mini-excavator, they have to balance their skills against the clock.

For the first time, NOVEC participated in the Rodeo’s drone competition. Lineworker Anthony Kestner navigated a drone successfully through a pre-established course, snapped sharp pictures with the drone’s camera and landed on a target. “They were judged on the clarity of the photos, and on time,” Bowling said.

Kestner recently completed a 40-hour class to earn credentials as an FAA commercial drone pilot. He said he’s participated in the Gaff-n-Go Rodeo for about eight years, but “I wanted to try something different.”

He has been flying drones on his own for a while and is excited about NOVEC’s fledgling drone program. “Drones are fun to fly, and they can do a lot of good for the Co-op. We can use them to inspect poles and circuits, quickly and safely.”

See the July edition of *Cooperative Living* for full coverage of the 2025 Gaff-n-Go Rodeo.

Nomination Period Begins for the NOVEC Board of Directors Election

NOVEC is accepting nominations for candidates to represent Districts 3 and 6 on its Board of Directors. Any NOVEC member in good standing who lives in either district may run for a four-year board term; the Co-op's bylaws require nominees to reside in the district where they are petitioning to serve. View the district map below, or at novec.com/bod.

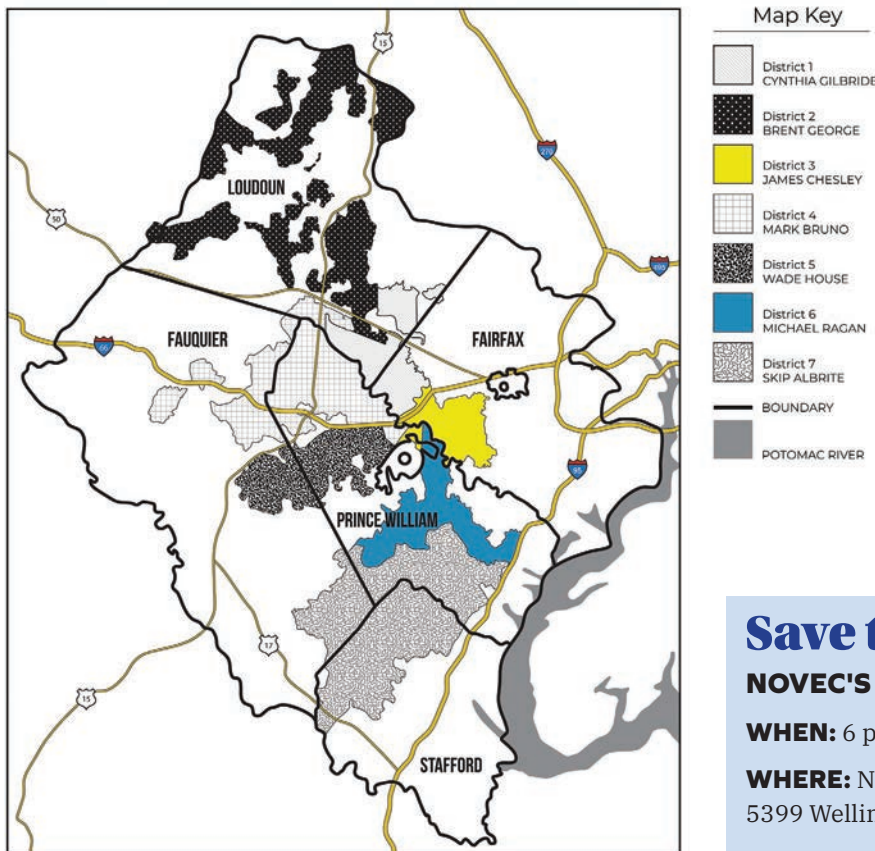
The bylaws also state (Article IV, Section 7) nominations must include the signatures of 15 current NOVEC members who live in the district and be received by the office of the President and CEO "not less than 70 days before the next annual meeting." The 2025 annual meeting is Wednesday, Sept. 10, so nominations must be received by

4 p.m., Wednesday, July 2 this year; nominations are not accepted at the annual meeting.

Nominees "may not be employed by or have a financial interest in a competing enterprise of a business selling electric energy to NOVEC" (Article IV, section 5). When a NOVEC membership is held by two people, one, but not both, may be elected for a position on the board.

An independent firm conducts background checks on all candidates and provides results to the NOVEC Board of Directors and the Nominees Evaluation Committee.

Profiles of board candidates will be published in the August edition of *Cooperative Living*. More information about the candidates will also be posted on novec.com/annualmeeting. In addition, a packet of information about the election and the annual meeting will be mailed to members.



Save the Date: Sept. 10

NOVEC'S 2025 ANNUAL MEETING

WHEN: 6 p.m., Wednesday, Sept. 10

WHERE: NOVEC Gainesville Technical Center,
5399 Wellington Branch Drive Gainesville, VA 20155

TO SUBMIT A NOMINATION

To obtain a nomination petition:

Email annualmeetingLK@novec.com.

Deadline: All nomination petitions must be received by 4 p.m., Wednesday, July 2.

(NOVEC Lomond Business Center office is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Offices will be closed Friday, July 4.)

Mail completed petitions to:

President and CEO
Kristen Senechal
NOVEC Executive Office
P.O. Box 2710
Manassas, VA 20108

Or hand-deliver petitions to:

NOVEC Lomond
Business Center
Executive Office
10323 Lomond Drive
Manassas, VA 20109

Farmers Market Season in Full Swing

By Robin Earl

As the summer gets off to a running start, our appetite for fresh-from-the-garden produce ramps up too. You can grow your own, of course, but for those less agriculturally inclined, our area is bursting with farmers markets.

Support local farmers while exploring the delights of heirloom tomatoes, exotic varieties of lettuce, dozens of different peppers, and zucchini — lots of zucchini.

Most local farmers markets operate from late spring to early fall, although a few operate year-round. Each venue is a little different. Within a few miles you might find delicate figs, the last of the season's asparagus, peppery arugula, organic microgreens, or grass-fed beef and fresh flowers. Take a drive and find the fresh.



Logan Russell of Fireside Farm in Purcellville helps a customer at a market in Leesburg.



Myrna Marrero-Bradley and her son, Chris Perkins, of La Bori Empanadillas Artesanales, fry some empanadillas at the Warrenton Farmers Market.



Gray Gatling performs at the Warrenton Farmers Market. She said she also sings at the Haymarket Farmers Market.

CLIFTON

Clifton Farmers Market

Sundays, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.; 12644 Chapel Road, Clifton

FAIRFAX COUNTY

Fairfax Farmers Market

Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.; 10500 Page Ave., Fairfax

Mosaic Farmers Market

Sundays, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. (open year-round);
2920 District Ave., Fairfax

FAUQUIER COUNTY

Archwood Green Barns Farmers Market

Sundays, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; 4559 Old Tavern Road,
The Plains

Buchanan Hall Farmers Market

Wednesdays, 4:30 to 7:30 p.m.; 8549 John S. Mosby
Highway, Upperville

Marshall Farmers Market

Second Friday of the month, 5 to 8 p.m.; 8374 Main St.,
Marshall

Remington Farmers Market

Thursdays, 3 to 7 p.m.; 105 E. Main St., Remington

Warrenton Farmers Market

Saturdays, 8 a.m. to noon; parking lot A at Lee and Ashby
streets, Warrenton

LOUDOUN COUNTY

EatLoco Brambleton Market

Sundays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. (year-round); Olympia Dr.,
Brambleton

Leesburg Farmers Market

Saturdays, 8 a.m. to noon (open year-round); 30 Catoctin
Circle SE, Leesburg

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY

Dale City Farmers Market

Sundays, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. (open year-round);
14090 Gemini Way, Dale City

Gainesville Farmers Market

Sundays, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; 13710 Milestone Ct.,
Gainesville

Haymarket Farmers Market

Sundays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. (market will be closed July 6,
Aug. 17 and Oct. 19); 15000 Washington St., Suite 100,
Haymarket

Historic Manassas Farmers Market

Thursdays, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.; 9116 Prince William St.,
Manassas (In late summer, the market will move next door
to the Harris Pavilion, 9201 Center St., Manassas, after
renovations there are complete.)

Saturdays, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.; 9024 Prince William St.,
Manassas

Manassas Park Farmers Market

Saturdays, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.; 100 Park Central Plaza,
Manassas Park

Nokesville Farmers Market

Saturdays, 8 a.m. to 12 noon; 13005 Fitzwater Dr.,
Nokesville

STAFFORD COUNTY

Long Sunday Market

Sundays, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.; 163 Staffordboro Blvd., Stafford



NEED MORE VEGGIES? GROW YOUR OWN.

If you are willing to get your hands dirty, your reward will be fresh vegetables and smaller bills at the grocery store this summer.

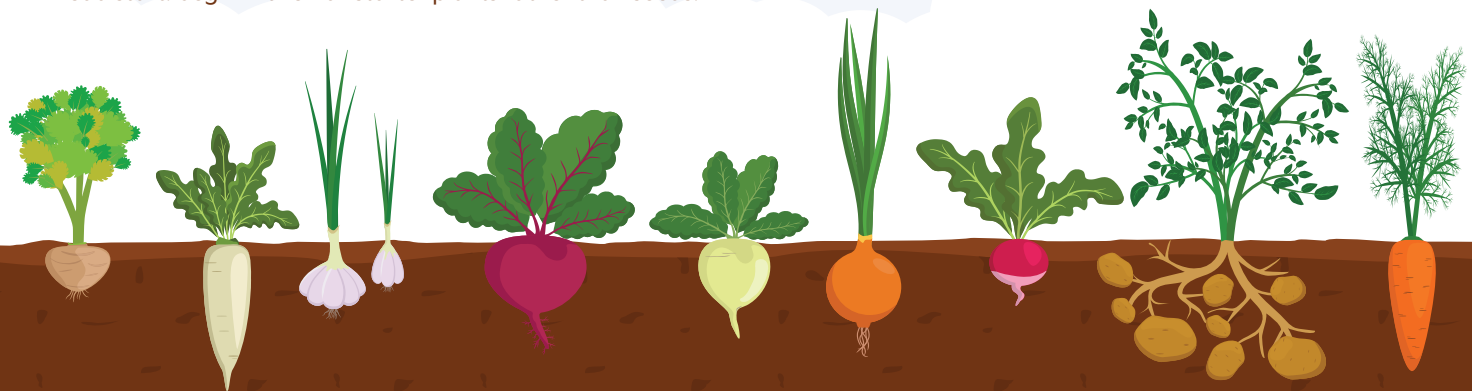
Plant what you like:

If you enjoy adding herbs to your culinary creations, plant your favorites. Most annual and perennial herbs grow best in six to eight hours of full sun; they can thrive alongside vegetables or in individual pots.

Do you love tomatoes? Are spicy peppers your thing? Are you a zucchini fan? Find varieties that work for the space you have and your table. If you are new to gardening, give yourself a head start: begin with small starter plants rather than seeds.

Plant smart:

According to resources available through the Virginia Cooperative Extension (ext.vt.edu/lawn-garden/home-vegetables), "vegetables grow best in a level area with loose, well-drained soil and at least six hours of sun (eight to 10 hours is ideal)."



Gardening tips:

- ✓ Avoid planting vegetables in windy locations.
- ✓ Locate the garden near an easily accessible supply of water.
- ✓ Choose a garden location near your home so it is convenient to work in the garden when you have a few minutes. Pick weeds consistently, when they are still tiny, so they don't overwhelm your patch.
- ✓ Avoid planting near trees and shrubs; they compete for nutrients and water and may cause excessive shading.

If you don't have a yard, plant in a pot by the back door or even in a window box. At a recent Grow Your Own event at the Warrenton Farmers Market, Master Gardener Dr. Diane King suggested using a large shallow pot for a "grow your own salad" project. "I like to use small amounts of different kinds of lettuce. It gives you a nice variety and it's easy to put together."

The normal growing season in our part of the Virginia Piedmont is 182 days, starting with the last spring frost (usually between April 20 and 30) and ending with the first fall frost, usually between Oct. 20 and 30. The Prince William County Master Gardeners website includes a chart that shows exactly when you should plant and harvest dozens of different vegetables between March and October. Visit mgpw.org to find resources on gardening in our area.



Pictured: Dr. Diane King and Lois Sutphin display the "grow your own salad bowl," a prize awarded during the Grow Your Own event at the Warrenton Farmers Market. King and Sutphin are volunteers with the Master Gardeners.

Help NOVEC Beat the Peak

When demand for energy is highest, the price of electricity increases. NOVEC can reduce its total wholesale power costs by reducing the amount of power consumed during these peak periods. Reductions or increases in these expenses are passed directly on to customers each month, so when NOVEC cuts costs, customers benefit.

DAILY TIPS FOR REDUCING ELECTRICITY WHEN DEMAND IS HIGHEST:

- In the summer, you can turn the thermostat up to 78 or 80 – or turn it off – when you know that no one will be home. A programmable thermostat can make these adjustments automatically.
- Use ceiling fans to keep cooled air circulating; turn them off when you leave the room.
- Run the dishwasher and washing machine only in the late evening or early morning. Heating water uses a lot of energy.
- Turn off all unnecessary lights, appliances, and electronic devices. Unplug them to eliminate waste that happens when some devices are not in use but are still pulling some power through the outlet.

Load Management Program Lowers Costs, Relieves Stress on the Grid

By Robin Earl

NOVEC's voluntary electric load management program allows customers to partner with the Co-op to keep their energy costs down, while at the same time alleviating stress on the regional power system when demand is highest.

Those who enroll in the program allow NOVEC to adjust how their water heaters and air conditioners handle peak demands. The majority of NOVEC customers never notice the change; their homes remain comfortable and they have all the hot water they need. During NOVEC's peak demand hours – which can vary throughout the year – a switch attached to the water heater may cycle the unit on and off for up to two hours. Air conditioners can employ the same technology – a load management switch can cycle the compressor on and off for 10 minutes out of every half-hour.

Peak loads are monitored every day; NOVEC will cycle the power only on days when energy demands require it. NOVEC performs load control throughout the year, rather than just the hottest or coldest days of the year.

NOVEC has installed approximately 54,000 load management switches in homes.

Customer benefits

In exchange for their voluntary participation in the load management program, customers get a same-day electric water heater checkup and/or an air conditioner service evaluation at no cost.

NOVEC will send a service representative to your home for a free evaluation if your air conditioner is not working properly.

If your water heater is the problem, eligible malfunctioning electrical

parts on the device will be fixed for free, for a value of up to \$425. These parts could include thermostats, elements, reset buttons/breakers, and fuses. (Replacing a leaking water heater is not covered, since that is a plumbing problem, not an electrical problem.) These perks are available as long as you are signed up for the load management program.

Help hold down power costs

Anyone who joins the load management program is helping NOVEC hold down the cost of providing power.

To volunteer for the load management program, call NOVEC Customer Care at 703-335-0500. You'll be asked a few questions, and then a contractor will call to set up a switch-installation appointment, which usually takes less than an hour.

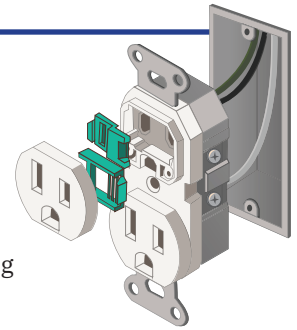
Keep Curious Kids Safe

A study by Temple University in Pennsylvania found that 100% of all 2- to 4-year-olds were able to remove one type of plastic outlet cap within 10 seconds. You can better childproof your outlets by installing tamper resistant receptacles.

A tamper resistant receptacle is an electrical outlet with specially designed “shutters” inside that block any object

that is inserted into only one side of the outlet. Electricity will only flow when a two-pronged plug is inserted into the outlet.

If a curious child inserts anything — like a paper clip or a butter knife — into one of the openings of the outlet, the child will be better protected from electric shock.



Where to install

All 15A-20A, 125v, and 150v outlets in the following areas must be tamper resistant:

- Kitchen
- Dining room
- Bedroom
- Living room
- Hallways
- Family rooms
- Laundry areas
- Bathroom
- Garage
- Outdoors

Exceptions

- Outlets located more than 5 ½ feet above the floor
- Outlets that are part of a luminaire (a complete lighting fixture or its housing, like a table lamp, floor lamp, ceiling light, or chandelier)
- Outlets dedicated to appliances that cannot be moved easily, like a refrigerator, oven, clothes washer, or dryer

Tamper resistant receptacles are required in these new and renovated locations

- Childcare facilities
- Hotel and motel guest rooms
- Preschools and elementary education facilities
- Gyms, skating rinks, auditoriums, and places of waiting
- Offices, corridors, waiting rooms, and similar rooms in clinic, medical and dental offices, and outpatient facilities

Source: Electrical Safety Foundation International

STAY COOL. STAY EFFICIENT.

We're here to help you beat the summer heat. Take advantage of our efficiency programs and energy-saving recommendations designed to help you stay comfortable and cut costs all summer long.



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RESOURCE CENTER. LEARN WHERE YOUR
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SACRED STONE OF THE SOUTHWEST IS ON THE BRINK OF EXTINCTION



Centuries ago, Persians, Tibetans and Mayans considered turquoise a gemstone of the heavens, believing the striking blue stones were sacred pieces of sky. Today, the rarest and most valuable turquoise is found in the American Southwest—but the future of the blue beauty is unclear.

On a recent trip to Tucson, we spoke with fourth generation turquoise traders who explained that less than five percent of turquoise mined worldwide can be set into jewelry and only about twenty mines in the Southwest supply gem-quality turquoise. Once a thriving industry, many Southwest mines have run dry and are now closed.

We found a limited supply of turquoise from Arizona and purchased it for our *Sedona Turquoise Collection*. Inspired by the work of those ancient craftsmen and designed to showcase the exceptional blue stone, each stabilized vibrant cabochon features a unique, one-of-a-kind matrix surrounded in Bali metalwork. You could drop over \$1,200 on a turquoise pendant, or you



could secure 26 carats of genuine Arizona turquoise for **just \$99**.

Your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed. If you aren't completely happy with your purchase, send it back within 30 days for a complete refund of the item price.

The supply of Arizona turquoise is limited, don't miss your chance to own the Southwest's brilliant blue treasure. Call today!

Jewelry Specifications:

• Arizona turquoise • Silver-finished settings

Sedona Turquoise Collection

A. Pendant (26 cts)	\$299 *	\$99 +s&p	Save \$200
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Complete Set**	\$747 *	\$249 +s&p	Save \$498

**Complete set includes pendant, chain and earrings.

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B.

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A Blue Ribbon Event

Show off your hobbies, skills at the State Fair of Virginia

by Alice Kemp, Virginia Farm Bureau Federation

Do you know how to bake a delicious pie that disappears in seconds? Do you grow roses that are the envy of neighbors? Now's your chance to celebrate your skills and earn a coveted blue ribbon.

Each year, hundreds of bakers, gardeners, cooks and crafters from across the commonwealth enter the arts, horticulture and culinary competitions at the State Fair of Virginia. Competition guides, deadlines and category descriptions for this year's fair (held Sept. 26 through Oct. 5) are available at statefairva.org.

"The State Fair of Virginia has a competition for everyone," says Sarah Jane Thomsen, the fair's manager of agriculture education and strategic programming partnerships. "From livestock competitions and various artistic expressions to preserved foods, culinary favorites and homegrown produce — get involved and try to win your own blue ribbon."



Open to both adults and youth, the fair's contests welcome beginners and seasoned pros. While some categories award small cash prizes, the real rewards are bragging rights and celebrating your work.

ENDLESS OPPORTUNITIES

Have a green thumb? Gardeners and growers can vie for top prizes in horticulture and field crops competitions spanning fruits, vegetables, row crops, flowers and succulents. There are even categories for fairy gardens, hanging baskets and terrariums.

Culinary creatives can showcase their breads, cakes, cookies, jams, sauces, syrups, pies and more. New this year are fun twists like protein balls or bites, a picnic potluck recipe contest and a special milkshake challenge.

Just as creativity is limitless, so are the categories for the state fair's arts competitions. Artists can show off their skills in countless media, with new categories like amigurumi crochet, slow stitch quilting, blown glass, punch needle, hat burning and more.

Have a Virginia Farm Bureau antique or interesting object? You can display that too. This year's fair also introduces fresh new youth categories. Young artists can create masterpieces with their pets, while budding chefs can whip up chocolate or crockpot candy, gluten-free snacks or after-school treats.

A STATE FAIR TRADITION

Longtime knitter and quilter Mary Kay Beasley has been entering fair competitions for over 25 years and has the ribbons to prove it. She's won over 20. "I try to enter at least four or five



No matter your hobby, you can show off your skills in one of the State Fair of Virginia's hundreds of competition categories.

items every year," Beasley says. "My whole reason for doing it is to show that knitting and quilting can still be interesting and cool. It's allowed me to keep the crafts in front of people's eyes."

It's also an opportunity to connect with old friends and fellow fiber enthusiasts.

"We're all like, 'What do you have in the fair?' And we'll walk around to see what items we've entered. It's a really nice thing" she says. Last year, Beasley entered a Wizard-of-Oz-themed quilt made for a neighbor expecting her first baby — whose nursery was inspired by the film. After winning a ribbon, she gifted the quilt to the new mom. "It's one of my very best memories!" she exclaims. ●

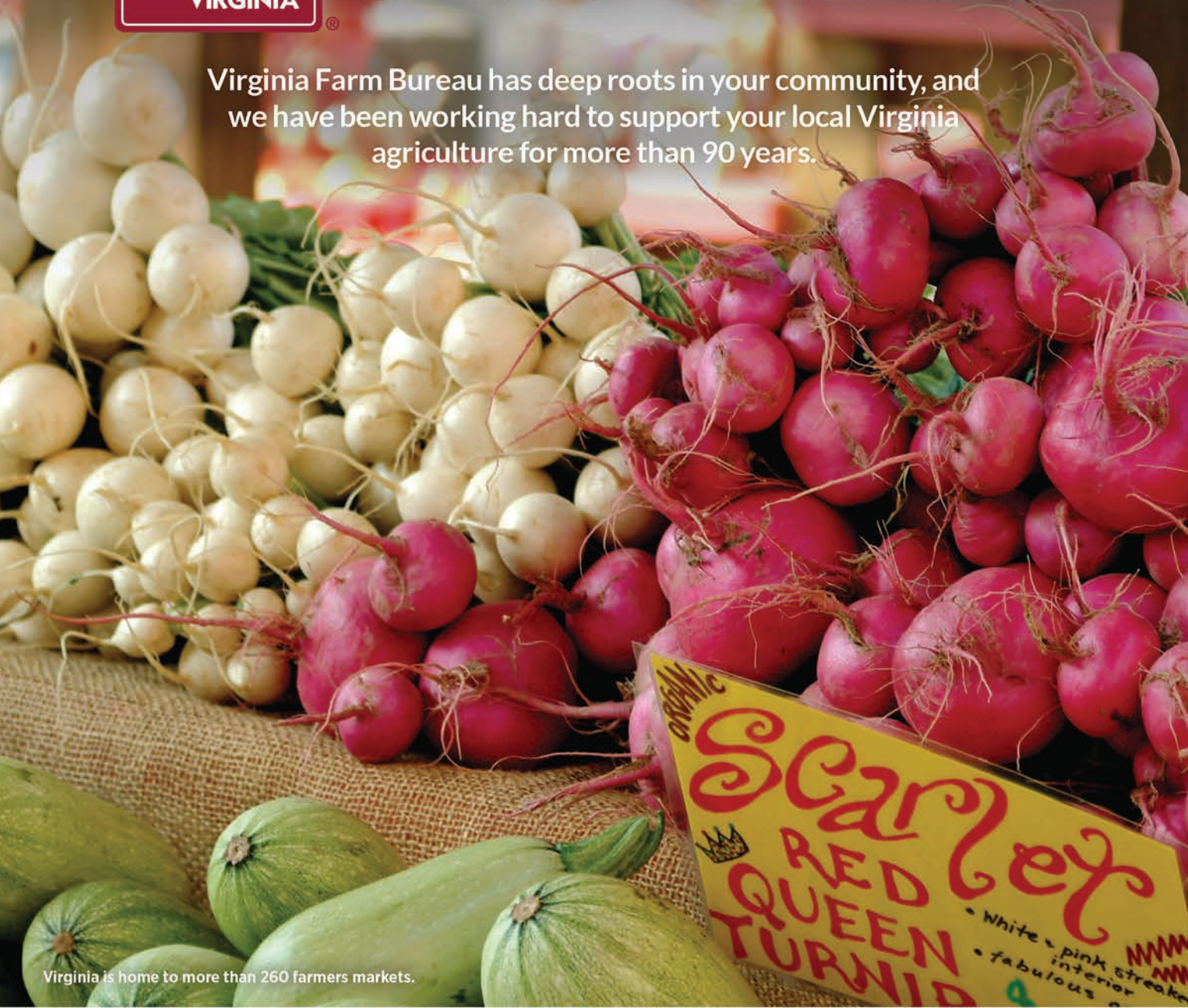


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Back in **the Saddle Again**

Guided horseback trail rides in the Shenandoah Valley

by Amanda S. Creasey, Outdoors Writer



The white barn is nestled at the foot of Graves Mountain in Syria, Va. When my husband and I walk up, we're greeted at the gate by an exuberant dog, who we later learn is named Cinch. He has a merle coat. Another couple and a woman on her own are already here, wearing their helmets and milling around in the sun while our guides prepare the horses, which stand nearby, stamping their hooves and swishing their tails.

Casey Haynes, one of the owners of Circle H Equine at Graves Mountain Farm & Lodges, offers us helmets, sunscreen and bug spray. As Ashley, one of our guides, gives a basic rundown of how to steer and stop, a second dog trots out of the barn. Callie, a kelpie/blue heeler mix, stretches out in the shade of the mounting block, squinting up at us.

For a 90-minute guided trail ride, Circle H will accommodate up to eight riders. There are five of us today, plus two guides. The horses include Harley, a large, dark brown Fresian; Sam; John, a brown Quarter horse; Kate the mule; a buckskin named Diablo; Lucy and Thunder. One at a time, Ashley and Devon, our second



PHOTOS COURTESY AMANDA S. CREASEY

guide, lead a horse up to the mounting block and match it with the right rider.

Harley for the man up front. Sam for his wife. The woman mounts John. A shot of nerves courses through my body when Devon stops Diablo at the block and beckons me over. Thankfully, the gentle horse does not live up to his name, though Devon tells me he used to. My husband ends up on Kate, while Ashley rides Lucy in the front with Devon in the back on Thunder.

Although I grew up around horses, it's been nearly two decades since I sat astride one. That's a lot of time since I viewed the world from this vantage point, the rhythm of another animal's stride rocking beneath me, ears pricked forward, mane falling to one side of his neck. But muscle memory is long, and my body settles naturally into the old, familiar position, heels automatically shifting downward in the stirrups, thighs and knees slightly gripping the saddle, right hand resting on right thigh, left hand holding the reins. It's like I never dismounted.

Once we're all mounted, Cinch enthusiastically leads the way down a stony dirt path toward the hillside apple orchards. Circle H hosts these guided trail rides year-round, canceling only for heat advisories, thunder, lightning or dangerous conditions due to flooding or ice. Fortunately, none of these concerns plague us today, and we head out between the apple trees, mountains sloping up to either side,

under a gorgeous blue sky brushed with high, thin clouds and dotted with faster-moving, cotton-ball clouds, their shadows drifting over the mountainside.

A horse whinnies to us from the other side of the fence as we meander by, kicking up reddish brown dust that drifts away in the gentle breeze. We flush dozens of blue jays out of a stand of trees along a small stream, the sun gleaming off their bold, blue plumage.

About halfway through the ride, my knees ache, and I wish I'd followed some of my fellow riders' examples and stretched. I try hard not to let the discomfort define the ride, focusing instead on the bright yellow of the flowers blooming along the trail, the sound of the stream rushing over its rocky bed, and the nostalgic smell of horses and leather — spicy, warm and musky. And before I know it, we're back at the barn, our 90-minute trail ride over. I dismount stiffly, patting Diablo's shoulder and thanking him for the ride. For one sweet moment, he tucks his velvety muzzle into the crook of my arm as if in farewell, and then he's led away.

A two-hour drive later, my husband and I arrive home. My sit bones are sore. But achy and sore as I might be, I'm glad I got back on a horse. And I don't plan to let another 20 years go by before I find myself back in the saddle again. ●

► For more information, visit www.gravesmountain.com.



Salmon

Get hooked on these tasty salmon dishes!

Feta Roasted Salmon and Tomatoes

recipe courtesy of Family Features/Milk Means More

Ingredients:

nonstick cooking spray	½ teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper, divided
3 cups cherry tomatoes, halved	1 ½ lbs. salmon or halibut fillets, cut into four serving-size pieces
2 teaspoons olive oil	1 cup (4 oz.) crumbled feta cheese
1 teaspoon minced garlic	
½ teaspoon dried oregano or dried dill weed	
¼ teaspoon salt	

Directions:

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Line 18-by-13-by-1-inch baking pan with foil. Lightly spray foil with nonstick cooking spray. Set aside. In medium bowl, toss tomatoes, olive oil, garlic, oregano or dill weed, salt, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Place fish pieces, skin side down, on one side of prepared pan. Sprinkle with remaining pepper. Lightly press feta cheese on top of fish. Pour tomato mixture on other side of prepared pan. Bake, uncovered, 12-15 minutes, or until fish flakes easily with fork. Place salmon on serving plates. Spoon tomato mixture over top. Serves 4.

Honey Mustard Crunch Salmon

recipe courtesy of Family Features/
North Coast Seafoods

Ingredients:

1 bag (1 lb., 3 6-oz. portions) salmon
salt and pepper, to taste

Honey Mustard Glaze:

⅓ cup honey
¼ cup whole-grain mustard
2 tablespoons smooth Dijon mustard
2 tablespoons mayonnaise



2 teaspoons horseradish
1 teaspoon smoked paprika
Crunch:
¾ cup panko breadcrumbs
2 tablespoons dried parsley
2 tablespoons olive oil

Directions:

Thaw salmon and pat dry. Arrange on oiled baking tray. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. **To make glaze:** In small bowl, combine honey, mustard, Dijon mustard, mayonnaise, horseradish and paprika; mix until well combined. Chill glaze until ready to use. **To make crunch:** In bowl, combine breadcrumbs, parsley and oil; mix well. Reserve. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Top each salmon portion with 1 tablespoon glaze and spread evenly over fish. Press crunch evenly onto glaze. Bake 15-17 minutes until fish is cooked through. Serve with drizzle of remaining glaze.

Salmon Marsala

recipe courtesy of Family Features

Ingredients:

4 Alaska salmon fillets (4-6 oz. each)
salt and pepper, to taste
2 cups flour
½ cup olive oil
1 cup Marsala wine



2 cups mushrooms, sliced
2 cups chicken stock
2 teaspoons fresh thyme
2 tablespoons cold butter
4 fresh thyme sprigs, for garnish

Directions:

Season salmon fillets with salt and pepper, to taste. On plate, season flour with salt and pepper, to taste. Dredge both sides of each salmon fillet in seasoned flour, shaking off excess. Heat large sauté pan and add olive oil. Then place each piece of salmon in pan. Cook for 2-4 minutes, turn fillets over and cook until almost done. Remove fillets from pan; set aside. Off heat, add wine to pan, scraping bits off the bottom. Return pan to heat and add mushrooms. Season with salt and pepper, to taste, and cook for 1 minute. Add stock and thyme, and let liquid reduce by half. Return salmon fillets to pan. Cook, while basting fish, until fillets are heated through. Remove fillets to 4 serving plates. Return pan to heat, add cold butter and swirl until incorporated and sauce slightly thickens. Remove from heat and divide sauce evenly over salmon fillets. Garnish each plate with 1 thyme sprig, if desired.

GOT A
TASTY TREAT
TO SHARE?

Email your favorite **side dish and quick dish recipes** to cooperativekitchen@co-opliving.com, or mail to Cooperative Kitchen, c/o Cooperative Living, 4201 Dominion Blvd., Suite 101, Glen Allen, VA 23060. Include your email address. You can also submit them online at co-opliving.com/cooperativekitchen.

Because of volume we cannot guarantee publication of all recipes. Reader recipes are submitted in good faith. Cooperative Living cannot warrant results.

Maximize comfort and savings



Top tips for thermostat and A/C efficiency



According to the U.S. Department of Energy, air conditioners use about 6%* of the average home's energy use. To mitigate the cost, set your thermostat as high as possible in the summer, preferably no lower than 78. The smaller the difference between indoor and outdoor temperatures, the lower your overall cooling bill will be.



Also, use a ceiling fan when in the room. Fans can help you feel cool while using your air conditioner less. You can raise the thermostat temperature a few degrees and still feel comfortable.



Finally, don't forget to have your HVAC system professionally maintained. Regular maintenance ensures that your system is operating efficiently.

*U.S. Department of Energy

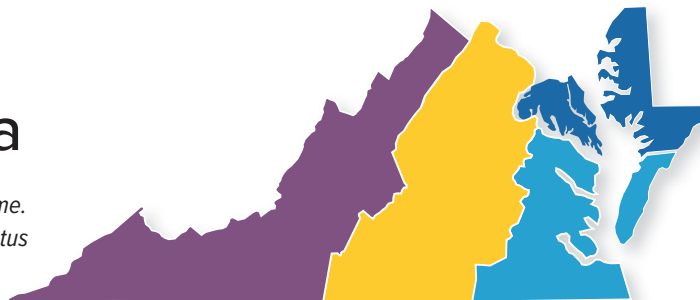
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Events Around the Area

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



BLUE RIDGE WEST

JUNE

20 WINCHESTER. 3rd Annual Kernstown Battlefield Golf Classic. Rock Harbor Golf Club. 7 a.m.-2 p.m. Kernstownbattle.org.

23 WINCHESTER. Lions Club Annual Golf Outing: Swing for a Cause. Winchester Country Club. Check-in at noon. Whlionsclub@gmail.com. birdease.com/whlgolfouting.

JULY

2-13 SALEM. Salem Fair. 1001 Roanoke Blvd. Salemfair.com.

4 MIDDLETOWN. July 4th Celebration. Historic Main Street and Middletown Park. 540-869-2226. Middletownva.gov.

10 STAUNTON. Jazz in the Park Concert Series. Gypsy Hill Park. 7-9 p.m. Every Thursday through Sept. 4. Facebook.com/jazzintheparkconcerts.

PIEDMONT

JUNE

14 FREDERICKSBURG. Flag Retirement Ceremony. Memorial Park. 10 a.m. 540-681-1486.

19 HOPEWELL. Downtown Hopewell Farmers Market. Library St. Every Thursday through Sept. 25. 7-9 p.m. Hopewelldowntown.com.

21 CUMBERLAND. Juneteenth Celebration. Bright Hope Center. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. 804-909-0049.

25-28 AMISSVILLE. Amissville Volunteer Fire and Rescue Company Carnival. 14711 Lee Hwy. 6 p.m. Amissvillevr.org.

28 HOPEWELL. Fireworks on the Appomattox. Downtown Hopewell. 7-9 p.m. events. 9:30 p.m. fireworks. Hopewelldowntown.com.

JULY

5 MANASSAS. 50th Anniversary Parade. City of Manassas Park. 9 a.m. Cmwg@manassasparkva.gov. Manassasparkva.gov.

11 MANASSAS. ARTfactory's Actors Theatre presents Cabaret. 9419 Battle St. 7 p.m. Info@virginiaartfactory.org. Insidenovatix.com/events.

12 GORDONSVILLE. Horton Vineyards Nebbiolo Vertical Tasting. Horton Vineyards. 11:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Facebook.com/events/209644107445471.

TIDEWATER

JUNE

21 CAPE CHARLES. Concerts in the Park: Can U Dig It. Cape Charles Central Park. 7 p.m. Citizens4centralpark@gmail.com. Capecharlesvirginiasscape.com.

28 CAPE CHARLES. Concerts in the Park: Celeste Kellogg. Cape Charles Central Park. 7 p.m. Citizens4centralpark@gmail.com. Capecharlesvirginiasscape.com.

JULY

10-12 PARKSLEY. Christmas in July. Grace United Methodist Church. Times vary. 757-442-0708. Wrlaw@msn.com.

MARYLAND

JUNE

28 SNOW HILL. Summer Music Series: The Stringbuzzards. 3816 Old Furnace Rd. 5-8 p.m. Furnacetown.org.

JULY

6 SNOW HILL. Artisan Day. 3816 Old Furnace Rd. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Furnacetown.org.

12 SNOW HILL. Summer Music Series: Lauren Glick. 3816 Old Furnace Rd. 5-8 p.m. Furnacetown.org.

12 ST. MICHAELS. Cars & Coffee: European Invasion. 102 E. Marengo St. 9 a.m.-12 p.m. 443-309-9829.

PRINT DEADLINES: July 1 for Aug. 15-Sept. 15
Aug. 1 for Sept. 15-Oct. 15

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June is Inspirational

Rural graduations bring smiles

by Margo Oxendine, Contributing Columnist



It's June, which I like to think of as Rural Celebration Month.

This month is traditionally associated with weddings and graduations. There's much to celebrate, many gifts and cards to buy, plenty of cake to eat, and lots of dancing.

I've reached the age where weddings are pretty much off my radar now. But I can't forget the days when I had to acquire ghastly bridesmaid dresses for one-time use. (Only once did I ever get to wear one twice.) At least, misery loves company, and I wasn't the only girl in an orange gown with puffy sleeves and — heaven forbid — a peplum.

Graduations are now the only celebrations on my June calendar. And there aren't too many of those anymore, either. Nowadays, they are usually the graduations of the grandchildren of folks I knew in high school or college.

But as a small-town newspaper reporter and photographer, I love

attending graduations at our local rural high school. Although I have never had children, I can live vicariously for a while and cheer with everyone else.

I take more photos at graduations than at any other event. I like to capture groups of friends straightening each other's caps, laughing and goofing about before the ceremony.

Since the stage is so dark, I have difficulty taking good photos with my small camera. But I try. I aim to capture the obligatory photo of the grads spraying Silly String around the stage and onto their teachers and principal.

Afterward, I race out of the auditorium ahead of most everyone, because that is where the "magic" happens. Buddies and girlfriends hug and cheer with joy, while parents, siblings and grandparents try to join in the fun. I capture the very best photos after the ceremony. I see them in the newspaper later that week, and I know they're something that will be clipped out and saved for posterity. That makes me smile.

One oddball thing I also enjoy about

graduation is that the girls wear fabulous heels or, maybe, glittery sneakers. Meanwhile, many of the boys don boots that you know they wear around the farm every day, perhaps usually paired with faded blue jeans. They clomp or mince across the stage, providing glimpses into their personalities.

Our lovely auditorium has around 800 seats. They are never close to being filled, except during graduation. Then, I swear, there are people standing along the ends of the aisles against the wall. The place is packed.

Most folks bring the whole family: babes in bunting, toddlers and active small children — they're all there, audibly wondering what is going on. It's a happy free-for-all.

Here's the best thing about graduation at our rural high school: Years ago, the graduating class decided against having guest speakers. As you probably know, graduation speakers can tend to ramble on and on. Instead, the school now has the valedictorian and salutatorian give their own personal speeches, which are often quite amusing and encouraging.

Then, diplomas are handed out, Silly String is sprayed, and with much pomp and circumstance, the grads leave the auditorium to start their new lives. It's positively inspirational! ●

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



[SCENE IT!]

PHOTO BY MELISSA HILDEBRAND, ANEC MEMBER



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

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I guess I was a little bored. For the past hour, I'd been on the phone with Daniele, the head of my office in Italy, reviewing our latest purchases of Italian gold, Murano glass and Italian-made shoes and handbags.

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DEADLINE: June 5 for July issue; Publisher reserves the right to designate classification or reject any ad. No personals, please.

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- (2) fax: 202-690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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American Beech

A beautiful and versatile tree

by Steve Carroll, Contributing Columnist

Beech wood is susceptible to splitting, so it's not often used for construction or furniture.

of other species. When these overstory trees die, beech can reach for the sun and form the new canopy. Beech is noticeably absent from urban and suburban sites, though — a result of its shallow roots, intolerance of compacted soil and eventual large size.

Beech flowers are wind-pollinated and inconspicuous. They are either male or female, and both types are on the same tree. If female flowers are successfully fertilized, the resulting fruit is a prickly husk enclosing one to three nuts. These nuts tend to be especially abundant every two to three years or more, resulting in a mast crop gorged on by wildlife.

The leaves are 2 to 6 inches long, toothed and tapered at the tip. In the fall, they turn yellow to tan. The plants host more than 125 butterfly and moth caterpillars.

BEAUTY AND VERSATILITY

One of beech's most distinctive characteristics is its smooth, gray bark, which, unfortunately, entices admirers into carving initials, declarations of love and other sentiments — all bad news for the tree. One well-known example was Daniel Boone's creatively spelled declaration

on a beech outside Jonesborough, Tenn.: "D. Boon cilled a bar in year 1760."

Beech wood is medium-heavy and hard, and susceptible to splitting; therefore, it is not often used for construction or furniture. However, because it's odorless and tasteless, it can be used for food-related items such as barrels and butcher blocks. In the right location, a large beech makes a grand addition to the landscape. Speaking of large, Virginia Tech's Big Trees website informs us that the National Champion American beech is located on private property in New Kent, Va.

Beech is a critical part of our eastern forests. Unfortunately, it's susceptible to diseases, two of particular concern: beech leaf disease, caused at least in part by a nematode, and beech bark disease, which results when a native fungus invades after a tree is fed on by an introduced scale insect. Foresters and conservationists are greatly concerned about these diseases since a significant loss of beeches would alter our forests forever. ●

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



Beech fruit and bud.

Beech leaves.

Smooth, gray beech bark.

Mature American beeches draw attention no matter the season. Before the leaves unfurl, long, sharply pointed buds are prominent. As the buds open, bright spring-green leaves emerge and expand. Fast-forward to season's end: the leaves turn yellow-tan, while the distinctive fruits open and drop their protein- and fat-rich nuts to the ground, where a host of mammals and birds seek them out. Beeches hold onto their dead, dry leaves in winter as if to resist the coming season. And no matter the time of year, the distinctive smooth, gray bark stands out.

American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) is the only beech in North America and is closely related to oaks and chestnuts. It's native from Canada's maritime provinces west to Wisconsin, and south to east Texas and northern Florida. In the mid-Atlantic, it's more common in the Piedmont and along the coastal plain than in the mountains.

AN IMPORTANT TREE

Beech is a large, slow-growing tree. It favors well-drained soil and tolerates both sun and shade, the latter of which helps make it one of the most important trees of eastern forests. Because it tolerates shade, it can grow slowly under a canopy

FRAMED & Fabulous

by Laura Emery, Staff Writer

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FELINE FABULOUS ▶

Sebastian looks specs-tacular and he knows it. PHOTO SUBMITTED

BY KATHRYN COPPAGE



LEGEN-DAIRY ▲

This cow may have had a beef with its shades at first but is milkin' it now. PHOTO SUBMITTED BY TERESA MINNICK



◀ THROWING SHADE TO THE WIND

UV got to admit, Mocha looks doggone good in his shades. PHOTO SUBMITTED BY DÉBORA BURK

▼ I GOAT YOU, BABE

Who's a cool kid now? Hurley is. PHOTO SUBMITTED BY LELE MULLINS



LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON ... LIKE GRANDSON ▶

John, Johnathan and Bo are ready for some fun in the sun.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY KATHY HUDSON





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