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Southside Electric
Cooperative CFO Carly
Bullock with her daughter
Kaylee Lynn, who has
authored her first book.

PHOTO BY AARON ROGERSON

PIGLET POWER

PAGE 10



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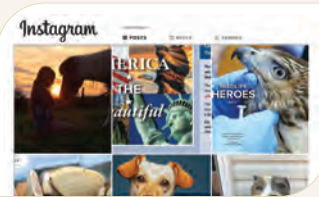
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VIEWPOINT

Honoring Moms and the Military

May brings spring into full swing, with longer days, warmer weather and everything in bloom. It's a beautiful season that coincides with Mother's Day on the second Sunday of the month.

Our Cooperative Focus article showcases the story behind a published children's book written by the 9-year-old daughter of Carly Bullock, chief financial officer of Southside Electric Cooperative. The book narrates the adventures of a piglet born on a farm in Southside Virginia. It's a fascinating story, told from a child's perspective.

May is a time to honor all those who serve — or have served — in the U.S. armed forces with the recognition



of National Military Appreciation Month and Memorial Day.

We will be holding our 21st annual Gaff-n-Go Rodeo this month, where more than 400 lineworkers participate in multiple events on May 16 and 17. It's an opportunity for family, friends and the general public to see some of what our lineworkers do to keep the lights on. You can check out the schedule and all the activities at gaff-n-go.com, and please come out and join us in person at Meadow Event Park. It is incredible to witness and truly awe-inspiring when you realize they typically perform these dangerous activities in the worst weather imaginable. ●

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

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PHOTOS BY GREGG MACDONALD AND JAY NORTH

Concern for Community

Luray's Hawksbill Trading Company is a local treasure

by Gregg MacDonald, Staff Writer

WHEN JAY NORTH WANTED TO START A CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION IN LURAY, VA., HE USED THE SEVEN COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES AS HIS BLUEPRINT.

"I learned about them from the Shenandoah Valley Small Business Development Center," he says. "I was interested in addressing our community's needs, not just economic concerns, so the cooperative principles resonated with me."

For We The People, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to community building and development, offers business training classes and retail space at the Hawksbill Trading Company. This retail store and business incubator program is designed to provide resources for small business development and a brick-and-mortar environment for entrepreneurs seeking to start a small business but who may need training before taking that crucial first step.

"We look forward to teaming up with the SBDC to host classes available to the public at large in the near future," says North, a member of Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative.

The store is situated in downtown Luray, in a building owned by the Page Cooperative Farm Bureau. The co-op was established in 1921 by a group of farmers who chose to pool their resources to competitively purchase farm supplies. The building currently housing Hawksbill Trading Company was built circa 1949 and was used for hardware, farm supplies and a grocery store. Page County Cooperative operated out of that building until 2003 when they relocated to a new building on Route 211.

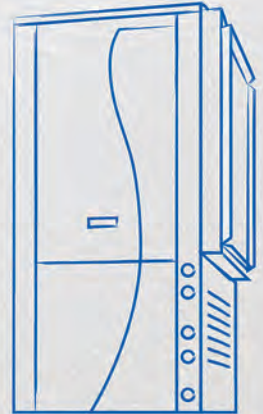
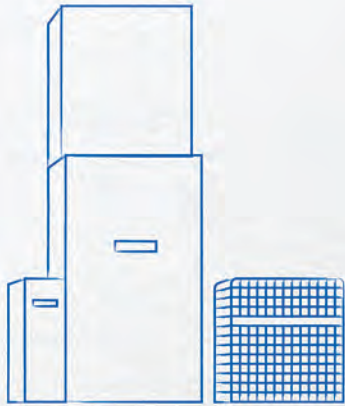
Since its inception nine years ago, the Hawksbill Trading Company business incubator program has served more than 100 entrepreneurs, ranging in age from 16 to 96. So far, they have added more than \$2 million to the local economy.

"Today, in addition to helping develop small businesses, Hawksbill Trading Company has merchants who sell antiques and collectibles, manufacture soaps, candles, jewelry and more," says North, "continuing the Shenandoah Valley tradition of creative innovation born of necessity." ●

► For more information, go to hawksbilltradingcompany.org.

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The Other Side of the Meter

Electrician changes paths following career camp

by Jim Robertson, Staff Writer

Chessa Trimble, a journeyman electrician well into her chosen career path had driven daily past the Electric Cooperative Training Center near her home in Palmyra, Va., and wondered if the utility industry would better suit her career goals.

Trimble was intrigued by a social media post about a one-day career camp for high school students. Although well past her high school years, Trimble contacted the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives to inquire about attending its second annual Girl Power Camp in Palmyra, Va., just up the road from her home.

Nervous and worried about standing out from the others who were much younger, Trimble embraced the opportunity. “I’ve always been somewhat of a risk-taker,” admits Trimble. “I’m usually the one willing to go first, so I feel like I may have also had a positive influence on some of the students at the camp.”

Two people left lasting impressions on Trimble during that cool December day. “I was so inspired by her energy and enthusiasm for her career,” says Trimble of Joy Yount, director of splicing services for S&N Communications.

Todd Butcher, then manager of safety training for VMDAEC, says, “Chessa immediately stood out from other attendees with her questions and the way she presented herself.”

Trimble made her move to the other side of the meter earlier this year and joined Butcher’s new team at S&N Communications as a job site superintendent.

“It takes men like Todd Butcher believing in women like me to enact lasting change in this industry,” says Trimble. “I’m super grateful.”

Previously, Trimble was working on the residential side of the meter. In her new role on the other side of the meter, she plays a critical role in overseeing electrical field services, ensuring projects are completed safely, efficiently and to the highest standards. With strong leadership and technical expertise, she coordinates crews, manages job sites, and upholds quality and safety protocols. Her dedication and skill set highlight the essential contributions of women in the construction industry. ●

Trimble served as a mentor at a recently held Girl Power camp in North Carolina.

**POWERFUL
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PHOTO BY JIM ROBERTSON

Pushing the Panic Button

Understanding anxiety and anxiety relief

by Vanessa LaFaso Stolarski, Contributing Columnist

Anxiety is a common response to repeat or chronic stress, but for many people, it can become an overwhelming problem that permeates daily life. Understanding the triggers of anxious thoughts and their physiological effects can be the first step in managing this common mental health challenge.

WHY IT HAPPENS

Believe it or not, anxiety is essential. Under appropriate circumstances, anxiety is our body's natural alarm system designed to protect us from potential threats. When we perceive danger, our brain triggers a cascade of physiological responses known as the "fight-or-flight" reaction. This response evolved to help our ancestors survive immediate physical threats, but in our modern world, it can be activated by a wide range of stressors from work deadlines to social interaction.

While occasional anxiety is normal, past experiences, especially childhood trauma or neglect, can shape our nervous system to be more reactive to stress than the situation demands. Current life situations, such as financial pressures, relationship difficulties or health concerns, can trigger anxiety. However, it's important to note that certain personality traits and genetic predispositions may make some individuals more susceptible to anxiety disorders. Chances are, if your mom was a nervous person while you were growing up, you are likely to model those same behavior patterns later on.

WHAT HAPPENS

Anxiety can significantly impact both mental and physical health. The constant activation

of the stress response takes a toll on the body over time. Your body and brain do not know the difference between a car accident and a bad day at work. Your physiological events will be the same — increased heart rate, elevated blood pressure, rapid breathing, glucose spikes, redirected blood flow to vital organs and digestion delays all occur when our bodies sense "danger," aka experience stress.

Physiologically, chronic stress keeps the body in a state of high alert. While this response is helpful in short-term danger situations, its prolonged or repeated activation can lead to a host of health problems, including cardiovascular disease, digestive distress and weakened immune function, including autoimmune disorders.

HOW TO MANAGE IT

Practice Deep Breathing: When anxiety strikes, focusing on your breath redirects the attention away from the brain's activity and toward the body, inviting it into a parasympathetic

nervous system state, or rest-and-digest.

Place your hand on your belly and take slow, deep breaths,

feeling your hand rise and fall with each exhalation.

Use Grounding Techniques: If you're prone to anxiety attacks, carry a meaningful object around with you such as a worry stone or other trinket. Play with it and notice all the sensations you feel in your hands. Again, directing attention away from the narratives of your brain and centering yourself on the present moment.

Shaking, Tapping, Rubbing: Wake the body up by shaking your arms, hands and/or legs. You might even try standing and shaking everything at once if the situation is appropriate. Tapping on your pulse points while repeating a calming mantra can also help your body regulate. Rub your arms and legs in a soothing motion to offer comfort to your body when you feel stressed.

Keep in mind that anxiety is often triggered by worrying about the future. Conversely, depression often arises from thinking too much about the past. Staying present helps mitigate all the stories your brain likes to tell you. Your brain needs to feel like it's doing its primary job — keeping you alive. Breathe easy, focus on the here-and-now and try thanking your brain for being so helpful. Then tell it to take a break — because you're doing just fine. ●

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

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36	9.21	8.31	10.35	9.51	15	13	22	18	59	31.60	23.51	55.57	39.88	101	71	190	129
37	9.21	8.58	10.54	9.93	15	14	22	20	60	34.14	24.28	61.26	42.99	113	76	209	140
38	9.21	8.71	11.69	10.25	17	14	24	21	61	37.60	25.65	66.80	47.11	126	86	238	157
39	9.46	8.86	12.35	10.66	18	15	25	22	62	41.49	27.91	74.28	51.33	141	95	267	172
40	9.63	9.10	12.94	11.08	18	16	27	24	63	44.70	34.39	85.55	59.60	157	104	288	190
41	10.05	9.22	13.66	11.83	20	17	30	27	64	48.23	38.53	93.16	64.38	173	114	327	212
42	10.48	9.26	14.21	12.67	22	19	33	29	65	53.18	41.15	101.79	70.36	191	127	361	234
43	10.98	9.50	14.74	13.52	25	20	39	31	66	59.15	44.62	115.13	75.41	213	139	398	258
44	11.58	9.84	15.80	14.36	27	22	43	34	67	65.66	49.09	130.13	83.65	235	152	443	284
45	12.25	10.17	17.07	15.20	29	24	48	38	68	74.33	59.65	145.11	112.92	262	174	491	322
46	12.84	10.65	18.09	16.18	31	25	51	40	69	82.98	65.91	161.68	129.33	293	188	548	352
47	13.43	11.16	19.18	17.07	33	27	56	44	70	93.20	73.30	181.25	148.72	330	204	615	387
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Five of a Kind

Shenandoah Valley bluegrass band has been entertaining for 45 years

by Laura Emery, Staff Writer

When you've been in one of the Shenandoah Valley's most popular bluegrass bands — Five of a Kind — for 45 years, it's inevitable that people will approach you to ask things like, "Do you remember when you played at that party for me 30 years ago?"

Jimmy Drummond, the band's leader and a founding member, says with a laugh, "When people say those things, I usually think to myself, 'I can't even remember what I did yesterday!'"

The band started in 1980 when a group of friends started having "jam sessions" in a garage in Strasburg, Va.

Drummond played guitar, Doug Arthur played bass, Charlie Nicholson played banjo, Gene Stokes played mandolin and Richard Kleese played resonator guitar.

"Word got out, and soon people were asking us to play at birthday parties, reunions and other small events," Drummond, the group's guitarist and

lead vocalist, explains. But, he notes, the group wasn't "official" until they were chosen to play during Winchester's Apple Blossom Parade.

"At that point, we didn't even have a name for the band," he says. The group decided to call themselves Five of a Kind. "It was the 80s," Drummond says. "The bluegrass bands were always dressed alike, so we made sure to do the same.

We were Five of a Kind — and we wanted to look the part!"

The band's popularity grew quickly. Drummond says, "I always say that we went from back doors to front porches. It snowballed quickly."

Spend five minutes talking to the other members of Five of a Kind — Steve Spence, Jamie Thomas and D.G. "Del" Purkey — and you'll soon discover that Drummond is the band's "anchor." "Our success and longevity is due, in large part, to Jimmy's perseverance," says Spence, the band's bass player since 2021.



1980

From left, D.G. "Del" Purkey, Steve Spence, Jimmy Drummond and Jamie Thomas

Drummond has forged on with the band as other members have come and gone, quite simply, because music runs in his blood. He picked up his first guitar at 7 years old after watching his father create beautiful music, singing and strumming rhythm on his guitar.

"I've always liked bluegrass music. My favorite band is The Country Gentlemen. They not only played music, but they entertained," Drummond says. "And that's what we try to do."

"When we get in front of a crowd, we try to entertain the crowd. It makes it fun for us when the crowd is smiling and singing along with us," says Purkey, the band's banjo player since 2022. Purkey lives in Alexandria, and has a second home in Woodstock, where he receives electric service from Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative. He says, "When I get the *Cooperative Living* magazine, I read it from cover to cover."

It was mere hours after he retired from a 45-year career as a pipe fitter when Purkey got the call. "It was Steve [Spence] and the first thing he said was, 'Wanna play the banjo? Our banjo player left and I told the rest of the band that I know a guy,'" Purkey recalls.

But Purkey is not just any player. He's followed in the footsteps of his father, Bob Purkey, who played on live radio with former Grand Ole Opry performers at the age of 15. In 1970, also at the age of 15, Purkey played the banjo in his first live radio show.

In addition to having "a leader as good as Jimmy," Purkey explains that

(continued on page 8)

Five of a Kind

(continued from page 7)

it's important to have dedicated band members.

The band plays at county fairs, bluegrass festivals, club dates, car shows, summer municipality events and more. Spence estimates that the band played 23 performances in 2024.

"We perform traditional bluegrass songs that people know, but we also do songs that are older and not a lot of people have done," explains Spence, a retired contractor.

Spence lives in Strasburg and is also a member of SVEC. He started playing the banjo at 12 years old as a part of his family's band, The Grass Reflection. The family quartet performed at bluegrass festivals all across the commonwealth.

The Five of a Kind players are "like extended family," according to Spence.



He describes rehearsals where the wives chat or prepare a meal, and the men practice their sets. "Then we all sit down and eat and socialize together," he says. "It's a lot of fun."

Jamie Thomas, the band's fiddler since 2016, says with a laugh, "I look at the guys I'm playing with and I'm still wondering how I got here." Thomas has always had an ear for music — he can actually play by ear — and an affinity for all kinds of musical instruments.

Thomas got an early start making music when he was a teenager and discovered an old fiddle that his aunt

had given him. After performing with a band from West Virginia during the summer of 1981, he stopped playing.

Thirty-five years later, in 2016, Thomas dusted off his fiddle and did a few on-the-spot performances. His talent caught the attention of Drummond. Thomas says, "Jimmy called me and said, 'You can consider yourself one of Five of a Kind.' And I've been with the band ever since!"

Drummond is proud this summer to be reaching the milestone of 45 years of entertaining audiences throughout the Shenandoah Valley. The band is grateful to have such a loyal fan base. He says, "We have people who have been following us for 20 or 30 years. It makes us feel good."

With a laugh, he adds, "And, hopefully, it means we're doing something right!" ●

► For more information, visit fiveofakindbluegrass.com.

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The Little Pig That Could

Electric cooperative CFO's daughter, 9, writes debut book

by Mark Thomas, Contributing Writer



PHOTO BY JANET ELEY



When young Kaylee Lynn Bullock met Esme, a spirited black piglet with a soft pink snout, it was love at first sight.

Esme was born at the farm next to Kaylee's grandparents' home in Amelia County, Va. Captivated with Esme, Kaylee visited her often, holding her and feeding her milk through a bottle.

It was this special bond that inspired now-9-year-old Kaylee to author a children's book titled "Esme's Adventure on Dusty Hill Farm." Based on true events, it is a warm, tender story about a brave piglet who faces a big challenge and overcomes it, thanks to the loving care of Bethany Stranick, who, along with husband Joe, owns Dusty Hill Farm in Jetersville — the farm where the story is based in the book. There is also an educational aspect to the book, as it includes fun facts about pigs and a quiz at the end to test readers' recall of the story.

Kaylee is the daughter of Joe and Carly Bullock. "I am inspired by Kaylee's eagerness to learn and her confidence in navigating through book edits and conversations with her editor," says Carly, chief financial officer at Southside Electric Cooperative, headquartered in Crewe. "Watching her through this process has taught me that with enough grit and determination you can do whatever it is you set your mind to."

Kaylee has an older sister, Jazz, and an older brother, Carter. She also has

a chocolate labrador named Bitsy.

On a cloud-free, warm afternoon in mid-March, Kaylee, accompanied by her mother and grandmother, Janet Eley, visits Dusty Hill Farm, only 10 minutes from her home in Amelia. Kaylee, who has brown hair past her shoulders, is wearing a favorite pair of boots for her special day at the farm. She is there to see Bethany and Joe, and to talk about Esme and her first published book. Before relaying Esme's story, she tosses marshmallows to some of the pigs. The

carries the fragile piglet, who only weighs a couple of pounds, into her house for a warm bath and a bottle of milk. Using a dog crate, clean towels and straw, she makes Esme a comfortable place to sleep in her guest bathroom. Esme likes living in what is called the "Big House" in the book, grunting when Farmer Bethany talks to her and enjoying playing in her water bowl. However, Kaylee writes that Esme misses her family. Since her legs have not healed, she is unable to live with her family in the pigpen.

Knowing they cannot keep Esme, "Bethany and Joe decided she needed to go to a farm that rescues injured animals," Kaylee tells readers. They found a farm and, although sad, Bethany and Joe "knew it was the right thing to do."

The book then goes on to describe the next part of Esme's journey being about making new friends and discovering the joy of belonging. She joins "a new family of pigs that had also been injured." In the book, Kaylee explains that while Esme misses Bethany and Joe, she "knew she was

finally home." She closes the story by telling readers that "Esme lived happily ever after."

Now a third grader at Amelia Academy, Kaylee says she thought about writing a children's book while in kindergarten. "I love to read. One time in kindergarten, I thought it would be cool to write a book, but I never thought it would be published," Kaylee says.

The book was published by Prime Publishing Studio and became available on Amazon in November 2024. The 28-page book, which contains plenty of pictures of Esme, has so far sold about 400 copies, including many last Christmas.

(continued on page 12)



From left, Carly Bullock, Kaylee Bullock, Janet Eley, Farmers Bethany Stranick and Joe Stranick.

16-acre farm is also home to chickens, cows, turkeys, goats and dogs.

Esme, a cross between the Red Wattle and Hampshire breeds, was one of a litter of 10 piglets born in October 2023. In the book, Kaylee tells us that Esme "could walk and run like piglets should." But just a day or two later, Esme's mother, April, who weighed 800 pounds, accidentally rolled over on Esme, injuring her back legs and leaving her unable to walk or nurse. Unfortunately, Joe says, that is "part of farm life."

Farmer Bethany, as she is called in the book, loves all the animals on the farm and comes to Esme's rescue. After picking Esme up out of the mud, she

The Little Pig That Could

(continued from page 11)

Besides reading and writing, the new author lists art as her favorite subject at school and donuts as her favorite food. She plays softball, makes bracelets, camps with her family and likes hanging out with friends. She is also learning to crochet.

Her grandmother, Janet Eley, was Kaylee's coach for the book; however, she quickly says that she did not tell Kaylee what to write. "It was fun to watch Kaylee be creative," Eley says. According to Eley, Kaylee would get off the school bus with her notebook and look up pig facts and write a few sentences. The research and writing took less than a year.

"Grandma, can we write some more in the book?" Eley says Kaylee would ask.

It was a special time for grandmother and granddaughter. "My grandmother did a lot to create memories with me," Eley says. "That is what I am doing with Kaylee."



Farmer Bethany feeds Esme.

Kaylee says her friends tell her it is "cool" to have a published book. She figures she has autographed about 15 copies so far. The book is dedicated



Kaylee Lynn signing a copy of her book, "Esme's Adventure on Dusty Hill Farm."

PHOTO BY JIM ROBERTSON

to her classmates: Jackson, Owen, Levi, Luke and Turner; a friend, Avery; and her school librarian, Mrs. Berry. Some book signings are in the offing.

"I am really excited about her book. It has gotten me and some students excited about writing a book of our own. Kaylee is a good student, good reader and writer, and is usually always happy and positive," says Karen Berry, Amelia Academy librarian. Berry also points out that Kaylee was the school's Author of the Month in March.

Copies of the paperback book are available in the library at Amelia Academy, as well as at Amelia County's James L. Hamner Public Library.

Kaylee hopes readers will learn something from the book. "I want them to know they should always help animals," she says.

A couple of takeaways from the book that her mother, Carly, hopes will resonate with readers: "Kaylee is 9 years old. It shows that you can do anything you set your mind to," she says. Carly adds that everyone, even underdogs like Esme, need

a little lifting up in life.

"Esme's Adventure on Dusty Hill Farm" may well be the first of many books for Kaylee. Keeping to the same theme of helping and loving animals, she is already working on a second story about a group of friends who raise money for animals that were hurt during Hurricane Helene in North Carolina last year. And a third book, currently just in the idea stage, will feature a cow named Tiny Hermione who lives on Dusty Hill Farm.

Kaylee has already gotten some of an author's key equipment: a laptop and printer. She says, "I think it is fun to write books." ●

► For more information, search the book title, "Esme's Adventure on Dusty Hill Farm," on Amazon.

Mark Thomas is senior community relations coordinator for Southside Electric Cooperative, headquartered in Crewe, Va. SEC is a not-for-profit, member-owned electric distribution company with more than 59,000 active services across 18 counties in central and southern Virginia.



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DISCOVER HOPEWELL

Discover Hopewell, Virginia, 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 Theatre. 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 on the deck of the Boathouse at City Point overlooking the James River.



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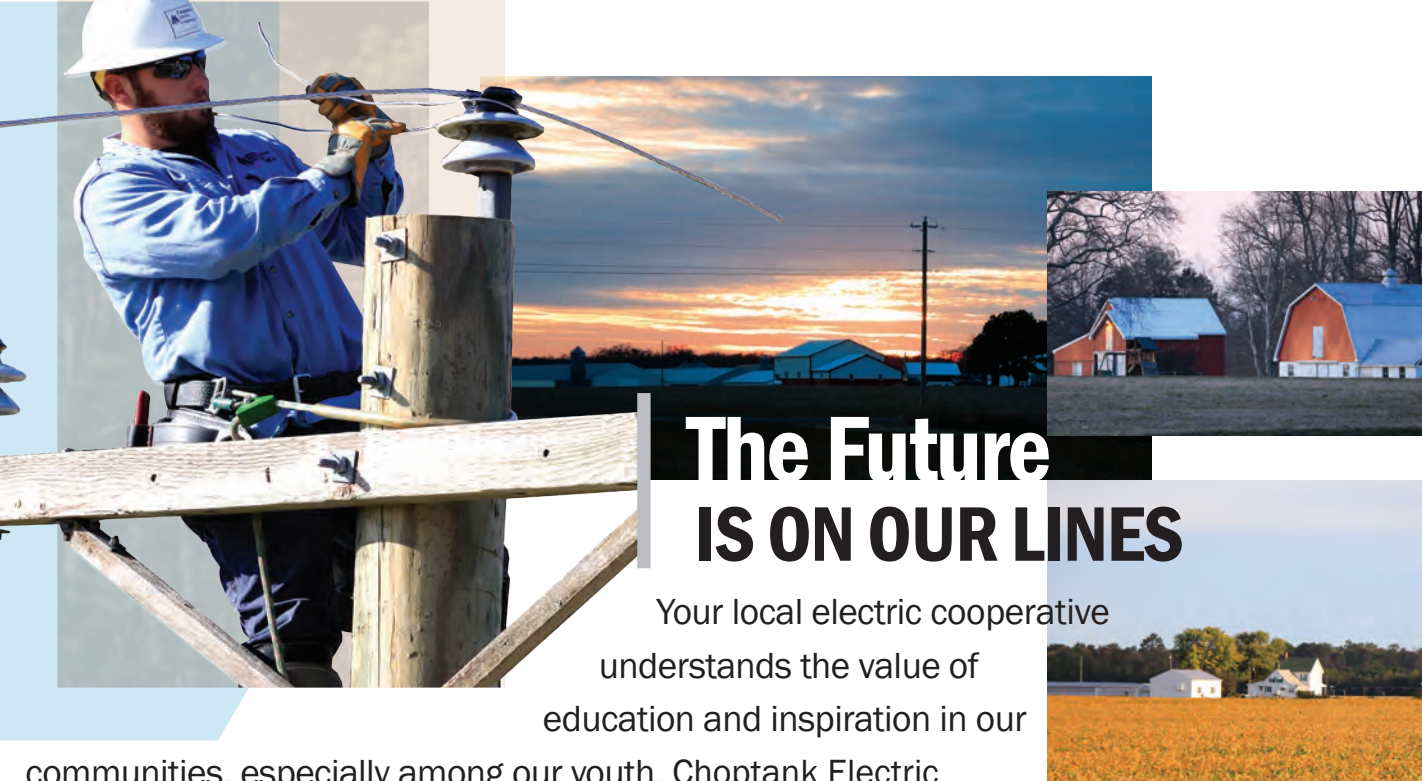
Breathe easy with a fresh filter this Spring

Time to check your HVAC system filters. A dirty filter slows down air flow due to the buildup of dust and dirt, and makes the system work harder - wasting energy. Build up can also lead to system failure and expensive maintenance. Replace filters monthly for more efficient heating and cooling.

Looking for more energy saving tips?
Visit ee.odec.com

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The Future IS ON OUR LINES

Your local electric cooperative
understands the value of
education and inspiration in our

communities, especially among our youth. Choptank Electric
participates in many engagement activities *to connect with our future leaders.*

Through these events and tours, we teach electric and power line safety, about careers in the utility and broadband industries, how power gets to homes and businesses and provide hands-on interactions and demonstrations. Concern for Community and Education, Training and Information are two of the seven Cooperative Principles that we follow; both of which are modeled by our youth outreach efforts.

The future of our community and industry lies within the next generation, so we are investing resources to keep them prepared here on the Eastern Shore. Turn to the next page to see photos from our recent youth engagements and visit www.choptankelectric.coop to learn more about how we



Sincerely,
Mike Malandro,
President and CEO
Choptank Electric Co-op



**Choptank Electric
Cooperative**

A Touchstone Energy[®]
Cooperative



**Choptank
Fiber**

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Member Service Center: 1-877-892-0001

Automated Member Service: 1-844-975-2746

Electric Outage Reporting: 1-800-410-4790 and select option 1

Fiber Outage Reporting: 1-800-410-4790 and select option 2

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WWW.CHOPTANKELECTRIC.COOP



Choptank Electric Cooperative and Choptank Fiber participated in the Junior Achievement Inspire Career Fair in Salisbury with over 4,500 local middle school students. Participants tried their skills at a pole-top hot stick switch, tabletop glove challenge and fiber splicing. This opened the conversation with students about careers in the electric utility, broadband and IT fields and how they are necessary and relevant in our area.





Choptank Electric Cooperative employees volunteered their time at the Perdue Henson Junior Achievement Center for a takeover day in March to lead Salisbury Middle School students through the JA Biztown program to learn about financial literacy and community economic development.



The Caroline County Public School's Next Gen Scholars visited our District building in Denton to learn about careers at the Co-op, see the various equipment and materials used in the utility industry, and watch a hotline demonstration.





Plug Into Safety

By McKayla Kiernan, Communications Specialist

May is National Electrical Safety Month. According to the Electrical Safety Foundation, each year thousands of people in the U.S. are critically injured and electrocuted because of electrical fires, accidents and electrocution in their own homes. Many of these accidents are preventable. At Choptank Electric Cooperative, safety is our No. 1 priority. This is not empty talk. Over

Following leading national safety standards

Working with electricity is an inherently dangerous job, especially for lineworkers. Choptank Electric Cooperative has a safety team whose focus is keeping employees and the community safe around electricity. We established and follow safety protocols based on leading national safety practices

As importantly, we encourage all our crews to speak up and hold each other accountable for safety. By cultivating a culture of openness and transparency, we promote problem-solving regarding safety. We examine the information and data gleaned from accident reports to discern patterns and use safety metrics to improve in those areas where we have fallen short. As appropriate, we brief contractors on our safety protocols and set expectations for their engagement.

Keeping the community safe

Because we live and work in the community we serve, we care about our neighbors. We strive to educate and inform our members on electrical safety so they are prepared year-round. We conduct electrical safety demonstrations in schools, at community events and share safety tips in our digital and printed publications.

There are several things you can do to keep yourself and your community safe around electricity. Don't attempt electrical DIY projects or overload your outlets. Report downed power lines, unlocked substations or padmount transformers that look amiss. Pause and take the extra time to plug into safety to keep you and those around you safe. Visit www.choptankelectric.coop for additional electrical safety tips.



MDOT staff receive training from Choptank at Salisbury University

time, Choptank Electric Cooperative has created a culture of safety by putting our employees' safety and that of the community above all else. At its essence, Choptank Electric Cooperative's mission is to provide safe, affordable and reliable electricity for our members. But equally as important, we want to return our workers home safely to their loved ones. Doing so requires ongoing focus, dedication and vigilance.

for the utility industry. We require our lineworkers to wear specialized equipment when working next to or with power lines. There are specific protocols that our lineworkers follow when dealing with electricity. Our safety team has regular meetings where they discuss upcoming projects from a safety perspective. They monitor and track near-misses of accidents to understand them, share "lessons learned," and improve in the future.

Save Money by Reducing Electric Use During Peak Periods

Sign up for Choptank Electric's Load Control Rider program

Cooperative members can receive credit for controlling their electric load during certain peak periods through our voluntary Load Control Rider program. Members billed under the General Service — Irrigation (FI) rate or a rate that includes a demand component (outlined below) can enroll in this free program. There is no penalty for not curtailing your use during the designated peak periods — but a big benefit if you can control your electric load!

Members will receive a \$6 payout for each kW curtailed during each PJM 5-High peak and a \$15 payout for each kW curtailed during the Transmission peak. Notice of peak periods will be issued by Choptank Electric via text message (members may opt in through SmartHub) and our website under “Your Power.”

LOAD CONTROL RIDER (LC)

- Can be paired with rates that include a demand component: Small Power (S), Medium Power

(M), and Primary (P) rates

- Must have a curtable load of at least 50 kW

LOAD CONTROL RIDER – Irrigation (LC-FI)

- Can be paired only with General Service — Irrigation (FI) rate
- Must have a curtable load of at least 25 kW

If you would like to enroll in the Load Control Rider program, give us a call at 877-892-0001.



\$3.5 Million Returned to You

A record-breaking capital credit retirement

By Katie Luckett, Director of Marketing, Communications & Education

We are proud to announce the capital credit general retirement this spring is the largest in Choptank Electric Cooperative's history, totaling \$3.5 million issued to our members.

The amount received during a capital credit retirement is based on the amount of electricity a member purchased during the retirement years; in this case 1995, 1996 and 2023. Eligible active members will not receive a check — you will be able to view the credit as a line item on your May bill that is either mailed to you or made available through Choptank's SmartHub portal or mobile app.

The average capital credit issued

will be \$79.89 per member. Newer members who were not served by Choptank Electric in 1995, 1996 or 2023 will also eventually receive capital credit, but it will take a few years.

“Your board of directors and the employees at Choptank Electric take the management and operation of the Cooperative very seriously,” shared Doug Scott, Chairman of the Board. “Members’ Economic Participation is one of the 7 Cooperative Principles we are dedicated to fulfilling. It is our goal to operate efficiently enough to have positive margins to retire to our stockholders.”

Capital credits are a return on the



investment in YOUR Co-op. Each month you pay your electric bill, you are contributing not only to the purchase and production of power, but improvements to the system that keep your lights on. The immediate payback is in the form of increased reliability and low rates.

Visit > www.choptankelectric.coop/capital-credits to learn more about our capital credit retirement process and the benefit of your membership in Choptank Electric Cooperative.

Choptank Welcomes New Employees



Kim Behre
HR Specialist, Headquarters

Experience: Benedictine Programs and Services

Hobbies: Spending time with her children, online shopping, watching football, eating and traveling

Looking Forward To: Getting to know the team and culture at Choptank while contributing to an organization that gives back to the community



Zachery Christ
Transportation & Equipment Mechanic, Denton District

Experience: Town of Easton

Hobbies: Hunting, racing and fishing

Looking Forward To: Working and building good relationships with new co-workers



Congratulations to Craig N. Mathies Sr., our Board Member from Somerset County, for receiving his Gold Certification from NRECA. The Director Gold certificate demonstrates a director's ongoing commitment to advancing their knowledge and performing their fiduciary duty to the best of their ability. We appreciate your dedication to our Co-op, Craig!

AND CONGRATULATES Employee Promotions!!!

Tyler Parker

Apprentice Lineman 2nd Class

Brody Bennett

Apprentice Lineman 2nd Class

Brian Postles

Apprentice Lineman 3rd Class

Austin Peet

Apprentice Lineman 2nd Class

Scott Diem

Journeyman

Tyler Blackiston

Apprentice Lineman 2nd Class

Matt Breeding

Director of Operations

Nick Newnam

Manager of District Operations in Denton

Wayne Daubach

Manager of Operating Services



OUT IN THE FIELD

Choptank Electric crews repaired major damage to power lines and poles from a fallen tree caused by high winds on March 5. These lines go directly to the Ocean Pines substation, causing a large outage to our members during the storm. Thanks to the diligent work of many employees bringing materials, equipment and their skills in the heavy rain, power was restored to all quickly and safely.



Congratulations to our Management Program Graduates

Congratulations to Choptank Electric Cooperative employees Tiffany Trautman and Matt Breeding for graduating from NRECA's Management Internship Program (MIP). This is an intensive six-week program for emerging senior leaders to gain hands-on experience in all departments across electric co-ops, mentorship and strategic insights.

Tiffany is the Director of Finance and Accounting at Choptank Electric and completed the program in May of 2024. She participated to build leadership skills and get ideas for improving her department and the Cooperative.

"During my time in the MIP, I gained valuable knowledge of each facet

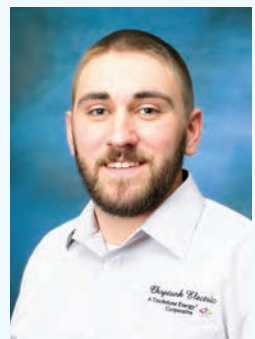
of electric cooperatives," said Tiffany. "The leadership and problem-solving methods taught in the program are extremely beneficial to my role here at Choptank Electric, and the networking is essential to staying informed so we can best serve our members."

Matt is the Director of Operations at Choptank Electric and completed the program in February of 2025. He participated to broaden his knowledge in every aspect of the Cooperative and learn best practices and leadership skills from other co-op employees.

"The networking was great, and I built a lot of close friendships,"



Tiffany Trautman
Director of Finance & Accounting



Matthew Breeding
Director of Operations

shared Matt. "My classmates were from all over the country and each had their own unique challenges and obstacles at their home co-ops. With everyone's different experiences and backgrounds, the conversations in class were very constructive and informative. I am confident that these are people I can reach out to if Choptank comes across a challenge."

MEMBER'S NOTES

Our members are the reason Choptank Electric Cooperative exists. Whether on social media, by phone or through handwritten letters, we appreciate when members let us know that we are doing a good job! **Thank you, all!**

Dear Choptank,

Kudos — we were experiencing power failure to a mechanical system that a contractor advised this afternoon was a Choptank issue. I called Choptank around 4:20 to report the issue and TJ arrived about 15 minutes later. While TJ confirmed our meters were functional and the issue was, in fact, ours, I appreciated him showing up promptly, communicating clearly, as well as his interaction while on site.

*Thank you,
Matt Deeley*

Choptank Electric Trust Awards



The Choptank Electric Trust is a 501(c)(3) charitable foundation funded by Operation Round Up donations from members of Choptank Electric. Funds from the Trust are distributed in all nine counties of MD's Eastern Shore.

To apply, or to find out more about this program:

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

February & March

• Talbot Humane	\$2,500
• Assateague Coastal Trust	\$365
• Cecil County Ag Education	\$2,000
• Critchlow Adkins Children's Center	\$3,800
• TidalHealth Cancer Centers	\$1,400
• Horizons of Kent and Queen Anne's County	\$4,850
• Wiersberg Warriors Foundation.....	\$1,000

The total of approved applications for February and March was \$36,071, including \$20,156 for individual home and medical expenses.



Choptank Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy[®] Cooperative

Choptank Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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

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Choptank Fiber

Choptank Fiber, LLC

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



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Our brand new craftsman model!



Double front doors for a grand entrance into this open floor plan. 3br, 2ba. 2 car garage includes a mudroom and covered front porch. This model can be built on a conditioned crawl space or basement. **Visit our website or give us a call to see if we build in your area.**



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Submitted by Vicky Blosser

Submitted by Rob Pellicot

We want to see your photos!

To have your photo(s) considered for inclusion in our reader-photo column, please email image(s) to saycheese@co-opliving.com with caption info.

If your photo is published as part of the Say Cheese column in *Cooperative Living* magazine, we will send you a \$20 Amazon gift card!

Submitted by Tammy Edwards

Submitted by Daniel Bertorelli

2025 YOUTH ART CONTEST

AMERICA ★ THE ★ Beautiful

23rd Annual Cooperative Living Youth Art Contest

Through your artwork, show us what you think makes the United States of America beautiful.

The contest is open to all K-5 students. **The deadline for submission is Friday, May 9.**

The entry judged best in show from all categories will receive a **\$100 Amazon gift card!**

For rules and details, visit co-opliving.com/contests/youth-art.

Scan this code for more information.

Virginia is home to nearly 39,000 farms spanning 7.3 million acres.

Applauding Agriculture's Influence

Celebrating the daily impact of Virginia farmers

by Christina Amano Dolan,
Virginia Farm Bureau Federation

As spring harvests bring beauty and abundance to communities across the commonwealth, the far-reaching impact of Virginia agriculture shines.

When venturing to farmers markets for flowers, greens, strawberries and other seasonal favorites this month, take a moment to appreciate the vast selection — and the hardworking farmers who make it all happen.

Virginia is home to nearly 39,000 farms spanning 7.3 million acres, with a majority owned by families or individuals, according to the 2022 Census of Agriculture. As the state's largest private industry, agriculture touches the lives of all Virginians daily with an economic impact of \$82.3 billion annually, according to the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

Combined with forestry, the two industries have an economic impact of over \$105 billion and provide more than 490,000 jobs. Every one job in agriculture and forestry also supports 1.6 additional jobs elsewhere in Virginia's economy, making up 9.3% of the state's total gross domestic product.

Whether it's beef cattle in Southwest Virginia, wine grapes in Northern Virginia, apples in the



Shenandoah Valley or potatoes on the Eastern Shore, the state's varying topography, soil and climate make up one of the most diverse agricultural landscapes in the country.

Many Virginia commodities and products rank in the top 10 among all U.S. states. In 2023, the commonwealth ranked third nationally for the production of tobacco and seafood landings, sixth for apples and turkey production, eighth for peanuts and tenth for broiler chicken production, according to the U.S. Department of National Agricultural Statistics Service.

Virginia agriculture's impact crosses international borders, with the state's agricultural and forestry exports reaching \$3.6 billion in 2023. According to Global Trade Information Services Inc., Virginia's top three export markets were China, Canada and the United Kingdom.

Agriculture also offers numerous intangible benefits, such as supporting



recreation, tourism, wildlife habitats, biodiversity, flood mitigation, improved water quality and soil stabilization. Virginia's wine grape sector alone contributed over \$6 billion to the state in 2022, considering wages, tourism dollars and other indirect impacts, according to an industry impact study.

Leading the way in sustainability, Virginia farmers have voluntarily enrolled over 416,000 acres across more than 2,500 farms in conservation easement programs, thereby protecting the land from development, according to the 2022 Census of Agriculture. Many farms also employ practices such as minimal-till and no-till planting, along with cover crops to prevent soil displacement and erosion while retaining nutrients.

Celebrate Virginia-grown products this spring by shopping local selections. Go to vdacs.virginia.gov/vagrown to find a farm store or farmers market near you. ●

**FARM
BUREAU**
VIRGINIA

MADE FOR VIRGINIANS

Virginia Farm Bureau has deep roots in your community, and we have been working hard to support your local Virginia agriculture for more than 90 years.

Virginia-grown winter wheat is planted in October or November and harvested in late May through June.

Get the Membership Advantage — enjoying valuable benefits and savings while helping Virginia farmers.



We advocate for Virginia farmers in the halls of government, which helps provide a reliable food supply.



Our county boards invest in future leaders through our Young Farmers programs and annual scholarships.



We help farmers attain grants for cutting-edge technology that helps create more sustainable farms.



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



Become a Friend of the Farm® today. Visit one of over 100 local offices or join online at vafb.com.

— THE POLLINATORS —

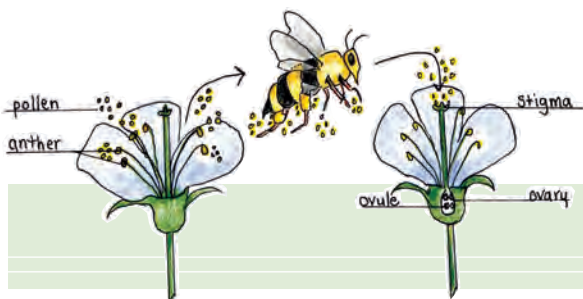
Nature's Heroes

story and artwork by Anne M. Dellinger, Contributing Columnist

The next time you enjoy an apple snack or a chocolate candy bar, you might want to take a moment to thank a pollinator. After all, some form of wildlife was helpful in producing that tasty treat you are chewing on.

It is very easy to take for granted the service these special agents provide because most pollinators are small, quiet and simply overlooked. Unless you have done some gardening, you probably have never noticed a pollinator going about the business of pollination.

As it pops in and out of flowering plants looking for food, its wiggles and jiggles cause bits of pollen to stick to its body. This hungry, pollen-coated critter will continue visiting many flowers and, unknowingly, transfer the special pollen grains needed for plant reproduction all along the way.



The flower visitor is totally unaware that by moving sticky pollen around, it is playing a vital part in food production.

Scientists estimate that one out of every three bites of food a person eats is made possible by these unwitting pollinators.

In other words, **pollinators help ensure the world eats!** And that makes them some of nature's best **heroes**, even though they are clueless about their celebrity status.

POLLINATOR SUPERSTARS

Bees usually come to mind first when thinking about pollinators.

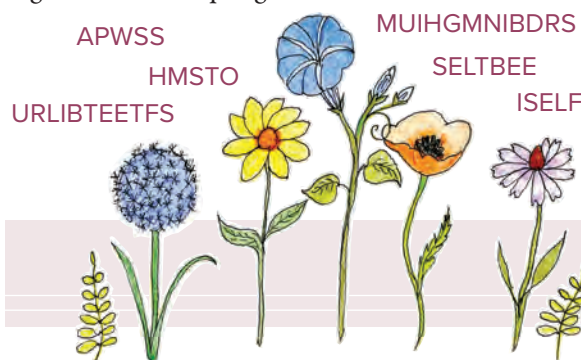
With approximately 20,000 species in the world, bees are the most abundant and most recognizable pollinators. The U.S. has the greatest number of native bees with over 4,000 species.

However, there are also other members of this diverse group of superstar pollinators that keep



food products and crops growing.

Unscramble their names and be on the lookout for these celebs as they stop by the flowering plants in your neighborhood this spring.



These food production heroes help keep everything from avocados to zucchini available in the grocery store. However, the modern world has created some serious challenges for this vital, elite group.

POLLINATORS ARE IN TROUBLE

There are several threats endangering pollinators.

HABITAT LOSS — housing development, new roadways and intensive agriculture are destroying the pollinators' homes.

PESTICIDES — the improper use of chemicals is deadly to pollinators.

CLIMATE CHANGE — rising temperatures, along with the mismatched timing of blooming plants and the arrival of pollinators looking for food, can lead to death.

Survival is not easy for pollinators. Faced with the danger of fewer places to feed/breed, hazardous substances and fickle weather patterns, they could use some help.

And while this is a challenging problem to tackle, there are some easy things you and your family can do to support these hardworking heroes.

MAKE A BEE BATH — Bees need a place to drink water and cool off. Put small stones in a shallow container, add water and place in an area where bee activity has been observed. Change water every few days to deter mosquitoes.





MAKE A BUTTERFLY MUD PUDDLE

— Butterflies require water, minerals and salts. Fill a shallow container with a mix of sand and soil. Add some flat rocks for perching. Pour enough water to moisten the soil and add a pinch of table salt on the surface. Place overripe fruit along the edge. Keep moist but no standing water ... remember, mosquitoes are not welcome!

SWITCH TO ORGANIC PESTICIDES — There are a variety of recipes online for homemade pesticides using household items such as vegetable oil, liquid soap, garlic and chili pepper.

PLANT A POLLINATOR GARDEN — Choose a variety of flowers in different shapes, sizes and colors that will bloom at different times throughout the season.



CREATE A MEADOW-LIKE LAWN — Dandelions are the first food for the bees emerging in the spring. Create a temporary no-mow zone in a portion of your yard that will allow dandelions, as well as clover, to grow. It may have a wild, messy look but the bees will love it!

After carrying out some of these suggestions, you will never take a pollinator for granted again. In fact, you may feel like a certified “pollinator protector!”

By taking an active role, you are helping keep a process in motion that is essential to human survival. Guess that makes you one of nature’s heroes, too! ●



ANSWERS TO SCRAMBLED POLLINATORS:
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CALLING ALL Super Sleuths

Every bite of chocolate that you eat starts out as seeds in a pod on a tree called *Theobroma cacao*. Its name translates to “food of the gods.” The white flowers of the tree are small and complex. There is only one tiny pollinator that can work its way into the flowers and cause pollination.

Hay Seed and City Slicker are big chocolate fans. After seeing a picture of the intricate cacao flower, they want to learn more about the teeny pollinator responsible for making chocolate happen!

Help them by doing some research and answering the following questions:

- Find the insect responsible for pollinating the cacao tree hidden in this magazine, giving the page number. It is very tiny, so look carefully.
- Give the name of the insect.
- How large is this pollinator?
- In what parts of the world are the cacao trees and its pollinators found?
- What is your favorite chocolate candy?

For a chance to win a **\$25 Amazon email gift card**, enter online at co-opliving.com/super-sleuth or send answers with name, address and phone number to:

Cooperative Living Super Sleuths
4201 Dominion Blvd., Suite 101
Glen Allen, VA 23060

Kids Korner submissions are for children under the age of 16.

MARCH Super Sleuths

The **March Super Sleuths** was about the “moody” month of March. For a chance to win a **\$25 Amazon email gift card**, kids were asked to find and name the two constellations hidden in the issue and give the page number. They were also asked to observe and record March’s weather at the beginning of the month and at the end of the month, and then explain their findings using the lion and lamb analogy.

The winning answers are:

- Leo and Aries, page 35
- “The first part of March was very windy with roaring winds, such as a roaring lion. The second part of March was calm and gentle, like a lamb.”

OUR WINNER IS ROZLYN.

Congratulations, Rozlyn!



"Tomato, Tomahito"

Don't call the whole thing off!
Try these juicy tomato recipes!



Stuffed Cherry Tomatoes

recipe courtesy of Family Features/Culinary.net

Ingredients:

24-48 cherry tomatoes
1 package (8 oz.) cream cheese, softened
2 tablespoons mayonnaise
1 medium cucumber, peeled and diced
3 green onion stalks, diced
2 teaspoons minced dill
fresh dill, for garnish

Directions:

Cut thin slice off top of each tomato. Scoop out pulp. Invert tomatoes on paper towel to drain. In medium bowl, mix cream cheese and mayonnaise until smooth. Stir in cucumber, green onion and dill. Spoon mixture into tomatoes. Top with fresh dill. Refrigerate until ready to serve.



Delicious Tomato Pie

recipe courtesy of Cynthia Johnson

Ingredients:

1 1/4 lb. plum tomatoes (about 5 large),
cut in half-inch slices
9-inch pastry shell, baked
1/2 cup green onions, sliced thin
2 tablespoons fresh basil, minced
1/4 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon pepper
1/2 cup reduced-fat mayonnaise
1/2 cup shredded reduced-fat cheddar cheese
2 bacon strips, cooked and crumbled
2 tablespoons Parmesan cheese, shredded

Directions:

Place half of the tomatoes in pastry shell. Top with onions and remaining tomatoes. Sprinkle with basil, salt and pepper. Mix mayonnaise and cheddar cheese; spread over tomatoes, leaving 1 1/2 inches around the edge. Sprinkle with bacon and Parmesan cheese. Serves 8.



Tomato & Red Onion Salad

recipe courtesy of Wendy Lankford

Ingredients:

1 medium red onion, sliced
1/4 cup sugar
1/2 cup cider vinegar
3/4 teaspoon salt
3/4 teaspoon pepper
8 cups tomatoes (about 3 lbs.), cut up

Directions:

In medium bowl, combine 4 cups ice cold water and 2 teaspoons salt. Stir to dissolve salt. Add onion slices and stir gently to separate rings. Let stand 20 minutes; drain. For dressing, in a small bowl whisk together, sugar, vinegar, salt and pepper. In extra bowl combine onions and tomatoes. Add dressing and gently toss to coat. Let stand about 5 minutes. Serves 6-8.

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.

Plug into safety

Prevent electrical hazards with these simple tips:



Using a higher wattage bulb than recommended in a light fixture can cause overheating and potentially lead to a fire. Always follow the manufacturer's guidelines for bulb wattage to ensure safety.



Avoid overloading outlets. If needed, have additional circuits or outlets added by a qualified electrician.



Only plug one heat-producing appliance into a receptacle outlet at a time, such as a coffee maker or toaster.



Major appliances like refrigerators, washers and dryers should be plugged directly into a wall receptacle outlet.



Use ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) to reduce the risk of shock. They should be installed inside the home in bathrooms, kitchens, garages and basements.



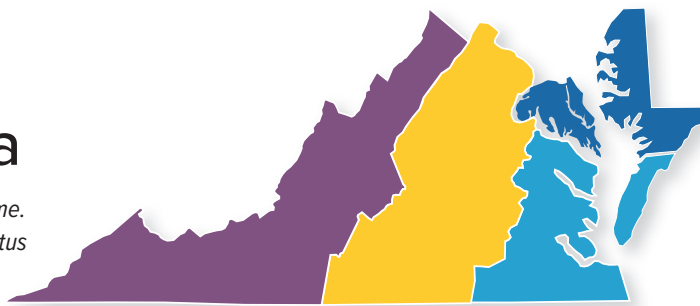
For more electrical safety tips, visit [esfi.org](https://www.esfi.org)



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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

MAY

17 LURAY. Garden Lover's Day. Birdsong Pleasure Garden. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. 540-743-9389. Birdsongpleasuregarden.info.

17 CLIFTON FORGE. Alleghany Highlands Triathlon. 10 a.m. Starts at Sharon Community Center. Cliftonforgemainstreet.org.

17-18 WINCHESTER. Arts Chorale of Winchester Spring Concerts. Grace Lutheran Church and Shenandoah University. Artschoralewinchester.org.

23 FRONT ROYAL. Sherando Band Charity Golf Tournament. 134 Golf Club Circle. Golf.sherandoband.org.

26 MIDDLETOWN. Wreath Laying Ceremony. Middletown Veterans Memorial. 1 p.m. Middletownva.gov.

JUNE

7 MIDDLETOWN. Belle Grove Plantation Garden Fest. 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Bellegrove.org.

PIEDMONT

MAY

16-17 DOSWELL. Gaff-n-Go Rodeo. Meadow Event Park. Gaff-n-go.com.

24-25 UPPERVILLE. Hunt Country Stable Tour. Trinity Episcopal Church. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. 540-592-3343.

JUNE

13-14 MANASSAS. "Lend Me A Soprano." 9419 Battle St. 7:30 p.m. More dates online. 703-330-2787. Info@virginiaartfactory.org. Insidenovatix.com.

14 AMELIA. Juneteenth Festival. 8701 Otterburn Rd. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Russellgrovenews.com.

14 CHESTERFIELD. Inaugural Flag Day Car Show. Southside Church. 9 a.m. Rick@vettrack.org. Vettrack.org.

TIDEWATER

MAY

17 CAROLINE CO. "Sweet Caroline" Historic Home Tour. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Carolinehistory.org.

17 STRATFORD. Preservation Tour: Behind the Scenes at Stratford Hall. 483 Great House Rd. 10:30 a.m. Stratfordhall.org.

JUNE

13-15 CAPE CHARLES. ESVA UkeFest. The Oyster Farm Seafood Eatery. Times vary. Esvaukefest.com.

MARYLAND

MAY

31 SNOW HILL. Summer Music Series: The Folk Villains. 3816 Old Furnace Rd. 5-8 p.m. Furnacetown.org.

JUNE

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

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

Email: happenings@co-opliving.com
Send to: Happenings, 4201 Dominion Blvd., Suite 101, Glen Allen, VA 23060
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gaff-n-go.com

Urgent: Special Summer Driving Notice

To some, sunglasses are a fashion accessory...

But When Driving, These Sunglasses May Save Your Life!

Drivers' Alert: Driving can expose you to more dangerous glare than any sunny day at the beach can... do you know how to protect yourself?

The sun rises and sets at peak travel periods, during the early morning and afternoon rush hours and many drivers find themselves temporarily blinded while driving directly into the glare of the sun. Deadly accidents are regularly caused by such blinding glare with danger arising from reflected light off another vehicle, the pavement, or even from waxed and oily windshields that can make matters worse. Early morning dew can exacerbate this situation. Yet, motorists struggle on despite being blinded by the sun's glare that can cause countless accidents every year.

Not all sunglasses are created equal. Protecting your eyes is serious business. With all the fancy fashion frames out there it can be easy to overlook what really matters—the lenses. So we did our research and looked to the very best in optic innovation and technology.

Sometimes it does take a rocket scientist. A NASA rocket scientist. Some ordinary sunglasses can obscure your vision by exposing your eyes to harmful UV rays, blue light, and reflective glare. They can also darken useful vision-enhancing light. But now, independent research conducted by scientists from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory has brought forth ground-breaking technology to help protect human eyesight from the harmful effects of solar radiation light. This superior



Slip on a pair of Eagle Eyes® and everything instantly appears more vivid and sharp. You'll immediately notice that your eyes are more comfortable and relaxed and you'll feel no need to squint. The scientifically designed sunglasses are not just fashion accessories—they are necessary to protect your eyes from those harmful rays produced by the sun during peak driving times.

lens technology was first discovered when NASA scientists looked to nature for a means to superior eye protection—specifically, by studying the eyes of eagles, known for their extreme visual acuity. This discovery resulted in what is now known as Eagle Eyes®.

The Only Sunglass Technology Certified by the Space Foundation for UV and Blue-Light Eye Protection. Eagle Eyes® features the most advanced eye protection technology ever created. The TriLenium® Lens Technology offers triple-filter polarization to block 99.9% UVA and UVB—plus the added benefit of blue-light eye protection. Eagle Eyes® is the only optic technology that has earned official recognition from the Space Certification Program for this remarkable technology. Now, that's proven science-based protection.

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That's two pairs to protect your eyes with the best technology available for less than the price of one pair of traditional sunglasses. You get a pair of Navigators with stainless steel black frames and the other with stainless steel gold, plus one hard zipper case and one micro-fiber drawstring cleaning pouch are included. Keep one pair in your pocket and one in your car.

Your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed. If you are not astounded with the Eagle Eyes® technology, enjoying clearer, sharper and more glare-free vision, simply return one pair within 30 days for a full refund of the purchase price. The other pair is yours to keep. No one else has such confidence in their optic technology. Don't leave your eyes in the hands of fashion designers, entrust them to the best scientific minds on earth. Wear your Eagle Eyes® Navigators with absolute confidence, knowing your eyes are protected with technology that was born in space for the human race.



Studies by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) show that most (74%) of the crashes occurred on clear, sunny days



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Making the Best of May

Watching things growing as I walk by is about my speed

by Margo Oxendine, Contributing Columnist



Isn't it amazing what a little warm spring weather can do to one's psyche?

There's an extra hour or two of daylight. The sun is

finally shining, and you can get out and get your hands in the dirt, planting all sorts of pretty flowers, herbs and other plants. Many of you have already started, I'll bet.

I have not. And sadly, I will not. Unlike my mother and sister, I do not have a green thumb. Even perennials seem to wither under what might be called my "care."

I wasn't always this way. I used to plant flowers and herbs that actually grew. But then my knees began to give out, and it became simply too difficult. I remember the last time I tried to plant things. I spent the day getting all sweaty and getting my hands dirty (which I do not like, by the way). Then, I went up on the porch, looked out at all the plants, and shouted: "You're on your own!"

My dear, late mother had glorious gardens. My sister still does. She seems to be able to grow things even in the dead of winter. My mother kept roses, among other things. She could be seen outside every morning in a big sun hat, pumping something from a spray canister onto them. And boy, they thrived.

Mom even had what she called "the church's garden." It was in a raised bed and featured glorious gladiolas, purple flowers that may have been lupine (what do I know?) and lots of colorful zinnias. Every Saturday, she'd go out to the church's garden, make her selections, and then create at least two lovely bouquets for the altar. My sister does the same thing. I feel rather ashamed of my laziness and lack of skill when it comes to planting.

I am also somewhat afraid of the water hose. Yes, I used to have a hose on a reel that I would drag around the front, back and sides of the house to water the plants. It was always kinking, and I did not like using it.

I also discovered that hornets build nests underground to ambush those of us who are simply trying to make things grow.

There was once a fellow who showed up to help with the yard.

Right off the bat, he got stung.

Do I need to mention that he hasn't been back?

Myself? I am happy to have warmer, sunnier weather, which makes my daily walk through the woods so pleasant. All sorts of flowers, trees and bushes appear like clockwork. I look forward to that.

May is my favorite time of year to walk because those danged gnats are not yet out in full force. The ticks are present, sure, and I detest them, but they're not quite as pesky in May as they are later in the season. I try to avoid walking on the grass, but I have a sneaky suspicion that ticks can also lurk in the trees and drop down on you.

For now, I will just continue to do what I hope you are all doing: enjoying the merry, merry month of May! ●

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!]



PHOTOS BY KATHRYN SAUFLEY, SYEC MEMBER



WHEREZ IT?

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 **May 20**. The winner will receive a \$25 Amazon email gift card.

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FUNDRAISER

PLANTS, POTS AND THINGS WORKSHOP. Ruther Glen, Va. — Sat., May 3, 9 a.m. — 1 p.m. Explore and shop for beautiful plants, herbs, trees, and shrubs. Enjoy a garden auction, bake sale, live entertainment with music, unique flowerpots, crafters, and garden and yard supplies. Sit-down lunch available. 8063 Ladysmith Rd. Ruther Glen, Va. Call 302-436-2034.

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RATES: Non-business: \$100 per 25-word block plus \$5 per word over 25; OR "Mini" ad — \$5 per word (max. 10 words). Business, agent and broker ads: \$150 per 25-word block, plus \$5 per word over 25. Display Real Estate: \$350 per block.

DEADLINE: May 5 for June 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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A Time for Trees

Throwing positive shade onto summer gardens

by Scott Burrell, Contributing Columnist

I'm a pushover for great small trees. They create microclimates, providing cool shade where there was once only hot, blazing sun. They also serve as focal points, specimens and accents. Over 60 cultivars of our native redbud (*Cercis canadensis*) showcase traits often remarkably different from those observed in nature. These include cultivars with mango, purple, white-frosted or yellow heart-shaped leaves; others with a strong weeping habit; semi-dwarf varieties that reach only 12 feet instead of the typical 20 to 30 feet; and cultivars that outshine the species' magenta flowers with electric pink, soft pink or clear white blooms.

Although redbuds, like other small trees, are commonly found growing in the understory, overshadowed by mixed hardwoods, they thrive best in full sun. Redbuds are tolerant of various soils, ranging from sandy to clay-based, but they do not perform well in poorly drained or wet soils. While fungal

and insect issues — such as fungal canker and scale insects — are infrequent, loose, organically rich and well-drained soil can help maintain the health of your small tree. When planting, position the tree higher — 1 to 4 inches above ground level — to ensure proper drainage.

Now, let me suggest two wonderful gold-foliaged cultivars: 'Hearts of Gold' and 'Rising Sun' (with 'Golden Falls' as the weeping form). I've planted these many times, from college campuses to residential landscapes. 'Silver Cloud' redbud is one of the white and green variegated foliage cultivars I admire. It "pops," as my wife would say, and captures the eye — it's a natural focal point. Its "cousin," 'Floating Clouds,' features a weeping habit — making it a great



PHOTO BY JOAN CACCIATORE MAZZA

Virginia Fringetree (Zones 3-9) is a relative unknown in home landscapes. Native and easy to grow, it accommodates itself to many soil types.



PHOTO COURTESY SCOTT BURRELL

Ashe magnolia begins blooming at 3 to 4 years old. It features incredible plate-sized, soft green leaves that reveal beautiful silver undersides.

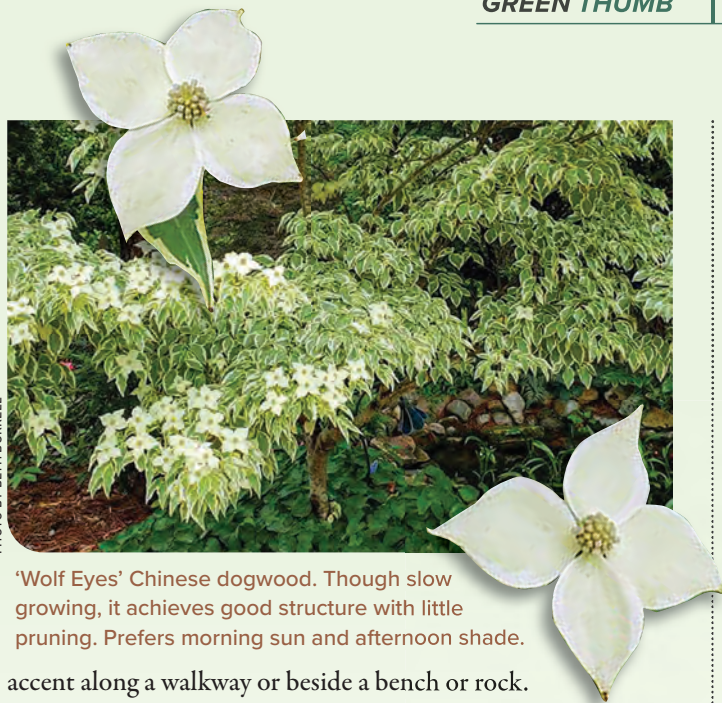


PHOTO BY BETH BURRELL

'Wolf Eyes' Chinese dogwood. Though slow growing, it achieves good structure with little pruning. Prefers morning sun and afternoon shade.

accent along a walkway or beside a bench or rock. Like the other "weepers," expect this redbud to reach a maximum height of 8 to 10 feet, and be ready to invest some time in training it.

Most people are familiar with Virginia's native dogwood, (*Cornus florida*). Additionally, we have four other species native to the Virginia-Maryland-Delaware area. Chinese dogwood (*Cornus kousa*), an Asian relative, produces edible fruit and is resistant to the dreaded dogwood anthracnose. With over 80 cultivars available, there's bound to be one for your garden. *C. kousa* 'Wolf Eyes,' a semi-dwarf variety that grows slowly to 12 feet, is a visual standout in the garden. Only our Asian evergreen dogwood (*C. angustata* 'Empress of China') receives more accolades.

The Ashe magnolia is the rarest of North American magnolias. Native to the Florida panhandle, it thrives as far north as Zone 6. Ours, now 15 years old, began producing large, 8-inch fragrant white flowers in late spring at the young age of 3 years and 24 inches tall. Endangered by development and habitat loss in its native areas, its bold 25-by-25-foot presence deserves a spot in larger gardens. All of these are small trees of extraordinary merit that will provide a fresh direction for those taking the road less traveled. ●

'Rising Sun' redbud. The soft lavender flowers appearing on bare branches in April give way to bright gold foliage in May.



Scott Burrell is a certified horticulturalist who served as the horticulture director for the Virginia Historical Society for nearly 30 years.

Hello, Yellow!

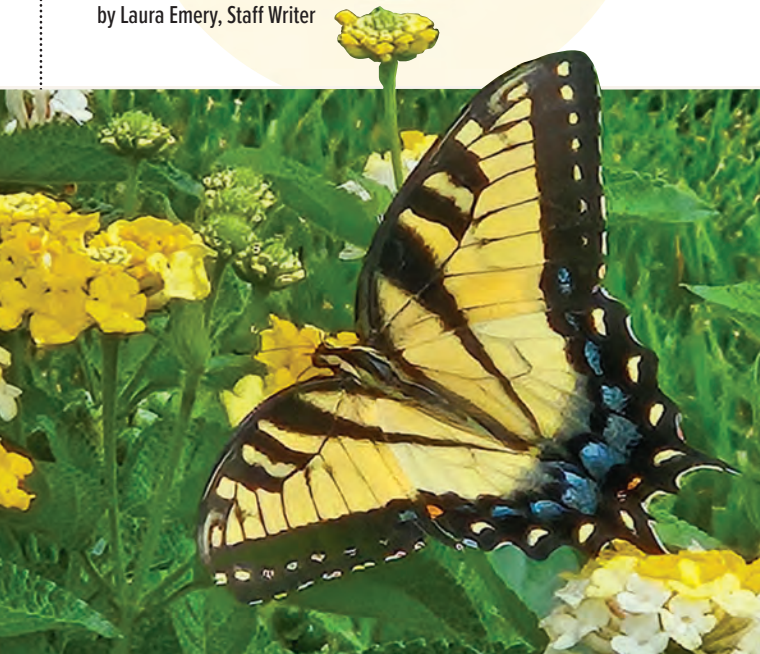
by Laura Emery, Staff Writer

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YELLOW FELLOW ▶

A sunshine-yellow bird alights on a flower stem.

PHOTO SUBMITTED
BY MILLIE MARSH



▼ BEE HAPPY

So much yellow ... a bee-utiful sight.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY JEAN BUSBY



▲ YOU GIVE ME BUTTERFLIES

Butterflies love the Lantana.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY MARGARET DIERDORFF

‘ELLOW THERE! ▼

Oatmeal dons his new yellow bandana.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY SALLY MOORE



MELLOW YELLOW ▼

This happy little guy is enjoying his great-great-grandfather's '79 Ford Ranger.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY
SADIE LOCKWOOD



The most lightweight and stylish folding mobility scooter is redefining independence



Whether exploring abroad or handling your daily routine, the ATTO SPORT keeps you moving.

Everyday Freedom

Mobility scooters keep you independent, making daily life easier and more enjoyable. From errands to visiting friends, they help you stay active and connected. Mobility scooters open new opportunities and let you enjoy life your way.

Life Without Limits

Folding mobility scooters offer a lightweight, compact design that fits in car trunks, on planes, and cruises. They are easy to store and perfect for travel and everyday use. Whether exploring new places or handling errands, folding scooters provide convenience, independence, and the freedom to go anywhere.

The ATTO SPORT folding travel scooter delivers a perfect blend of style, innovation, and performance. It is designed for those who value independence and sophistication

Compact Convenience

The ATTO SPORT transforms effortlessly from a full-sized scooter to a compact trolley in seconds, making it perfect for travel, quick storage, and easy transport wherever life takes you.

Effortless Portability

The ATTO SPORT's innovative design separates into two lightweight parts, with the heaviest weighing only **37 lbs.** It's easy to lift, store, and transport in the trunk of a car.

Unmatched Comfort

The ATTO SPORT has an ergonomic and adjustable seat and handlebars, crafted to ensure a smooth ride every time, even on longer journeys.

Sleek and Stylish

The ATTO SPORT redefines mobility with a sporty, elegant design that looks as great as it feels. Its modern aesthetic and 3-wheel agility let you navigate tight spaces, and it is equipped with **electronic stability control for added safety on descents and turns.**

Airline Approved Battery

The ATTO SPORT is equipped with a TSA-approved battery. Its compact size and optional split mode make it the only mobility scooter that can fit in the aircraft's overhead compartment.

Reliable for Every Adventure

With a driving range of up to **12.5 miles** (extendable to **25 miles** with the XL battery), a **6.2 MPH top speed**, a **weight capacity of 300 lbs.**, flat-free, shock-absorbing tires, and **4-inch ground clearance**, it is ideal for air travel and outdoor exploration and built for longevity.

Front and Rear Lights

ATTO SPORT's powerful front and rear LED lights enable riding in dark conditions.

It's Never Too Soon

Time waits for no one, so why should you? There's no better time to reclaim your mobility and make the most of every moment.

Don't wait! Call now and buy your ATTO SPORT and receive a free front/rear basket and phone holder, a \$184 value.

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