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TODAY

IN MISSISSIPPI

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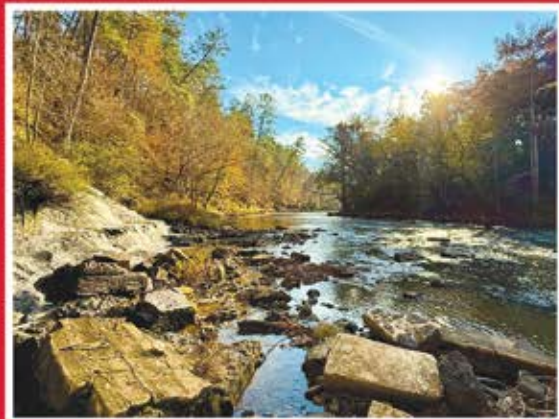
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250 years of opportunity

Happy birthday, United States of America! The big 250! That's right — two and a half centuries old, and still somehow younger than half the furniture in Europe.

I remember the 200th birthday celebration. I was in second grade, and we all got to dress up for the bicentennial. I went as Davy Crockett, complete with buckskin coat, coonskin hat, and wooden musket. Yes, you could bring toy guns to school in those days, and nobody called a press conference. I did get aggravated, though, because people kept calling me Daniel Boone. There I was, eight years old, already learning one of life's great lessons: history is important, but apparently hats are confusing. I remember the 225th, too. I was married with two kids and in the second year of my first term as a public service commissioner. Chances are I will not be around for 275, unless medical science gets a lot better or somebody figures out how to preserve me in sweet tea.

Now, the folks in Europe may scoff at this accomplishment and say, "We have buildings twice as old as that." Well, good for them. We have gas stations with better bathrooms. But don't listen to them. Two hundred and fifty years ago, you were something totally different and earth changing. In a world full of kings, queens, and hereditary monarchs, no one thought that a government of the people, by the people, and for the people would ever last. I'm sure the betting lines in London had the over-under on your demise sometime before 1800. But look at you now — from humble beginnings to the greatest country in the world, with 50 states, one Constitution, and approximately 900 different opinions on how to cook barbecue.

Now, I'm not saying you are the greatest because you are the wealthiest nation or because you have the mightiest military the world has ever seen. And yes, you do have some

problems. You've had some rough patches, made some mistakes, and occasionally acted like a family reunion where everybody got into politics after the second helping of banana pudding. But you are still the greatest because you are the land of opportunity — the country where a person can change his or her stars. That is why people from all over the world risk life and limb to come to your shores. As Lee Greenwood once sang, "If I had to start again with just my children and my wife, I'd thank my lucky stars to be living here today, 'cause the flag still stands for freedom, and they can't take that away."

So show off. Make a big production of the big 250. Shoot the fireworks, wave the flags, fire up the grill, and eat something that your doctor would probably prefer not to know about. And if the Europeans roll their eyes and remind us how old their castles are, just smile politely, mention World War II, and say, "You're welcome."

Happy 250th birthday, America. You may be loud, messy, stubborn, opinionated and occasionally impossible to get along with—but you are ours. And for all your flaws, you are still the place where freedom has a home, where hope still packs a suitcase, and where a second-grade Davy Crockett can grow up believing that anything is possible. So here's to you, old girl. Happy Birthday and may God Bless the USA!!!! 



by Michael Callahan

Executive Vice President/CEO
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TODAY

IN MISSISSIPPI

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Vol. 79 No. 7

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On the cover

Kayakers enjoy traveling the Pascagoula River.

Photo provided by the Pascagoula River Audubon Center

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NRECA CEO Jim Matheson talks about the “tremendous, rich legacy” of the Rural Electrification Act at a May 27 event marking the law’s 90th anniversary at the USDA’s headquarters in Washington, D.C. (Photo By: Erin Sutherland/NRECA)



90 years of electric co-ops

NRECA and electric cooperative leaders joined officials recently from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the Rural Electrification Act (REA), the law that helped deliver power across rural America.

The REA was a new Deal Era effort to provide low-cost federal loans for building electric distribution systems in rural areas, part of efforts to revive America’s economy in the wake of the Great Depression.

The law drove the creation of electric cooperatives throughout the U.S. and laid the foundation for the USDA’s Rural Utilities Service (RUS), which provides financing for co-op infrastructure to this day. That support is crucial as co-ops gear up to meet growing demand while maintaining reliable, affordable service for households and businesses.

The work of co-ops together with RUS “is the best of us, and that is what will keep America strong and the American dream available for all moving forward,” U.S. Agriculture Brooke Rollins said.

That partnership “is more important today than it’s ever been. These investments in rural America still matter greatly,” NRECA CEO Jim Matheson said. “They’re critical to promoting reliability, affordability, economic opportunity, and quality of life in rural America.”

The REA, which was signed into law on May 20, 1936, was one of the most impactful pieces of President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal reforms.

When the REA was enacted, only 10% of U.S. farms and rural homes had electricity. Today, about 99% of the nation’s farms have electric service.

The law helped transform the Rural Electrification Administration — the forerunner to the modern-day RUS — from a relief agency to a lasting program to provide loans for rural electrification, supporting the creation and growth of co-ops.

The REA “allowed us to truly stitch our country together,” Agriculture Deputy Secretary Stephen Vaden said.

“It was our quick adoption of electric power throughout rural America that helped to create the innovation and the great economic growth that our country experienced throughout the 20th century.”

Today, over 900 electric co-ops are operating across the country and modernizing their systems to improve cost and reliability for the 42 million Americans they serve. About 200 electric co-ops are also building or operating broadband networks to deliver high-speed internet access to rural America.

In 1994, Congress reorganized the Rural Electrification Administration into RUS, which delivers on the REA’s original mission through three core programs to support electric, telecommunications, and water infrastructure.

“Investment in rural utility infrastructure is as important to rural life and the national economy today as it ever was,” said Chris McLean, assistant administrator for the RUS Electric Loan Program. “I dare say that few federal programs have been as successful as the Rural Electrification Act.”

Some co-ops have been RUS borrowers since the 1930s, but the agency is also serving first-time borrowers, including some of the newest co-ops in the country, McLean said.

“Today we not only celebrate our history; we also celebrate our bright and shining future,” he said.

Even with the strides co-ops have made to power rural America, the partnership between RUS and co-ops remains essential, attendees said at the USDA event.

The RUS electric loan program ensures co-ops can build and upgrade the infrastructure needed to power a changing rural America while keeping rates affordable. The program is also a good deal for the federal government, with co-ops repaying the loans with interest.

“Let’s celebrate the past 90 years, but let’s also celebrate the fact that this partnership between electric co-ops and RUS is incredibly well positioned to continue this meaningful work for the future,” Matheson said. — **NRECA**

*Gardens thrive
with no-fuss
Cheyenne Spirit
coneflowers*



Growing Cheyenne Spirit coneflowers is like having an entire bouquet living out in the garden.

Certain plants earn a permanent place in gardens not just for their beauty, but for the way they show up year after year without fuss.

Echinacea coneflowers fall squarely into that category for me. They bring a dependable splash of color, attract pollinators by the dozens, and carry an easygoing charm that fits right in with a Southern landscape.

I've grown coneflowers for years, and they've never let me down. They stand tall and bloom with enthusiasm through heat, humidity, and the occasional dry spell. Watching their blooms sway gently while pollinators move from flower to flower is a simple pleasure that never gets old.

Among the many varieties available today, one that has truly impressed me is the Cheyenne Spirit coneflower. If you've never grown it, you're missing out on a real showstopper.

This variety produces a vibrant mix of colors ranging from rich reds, warm oranges, sunny yellows, and soft pinks to creamy whites. Growing Cheyenne Spirit coneflower is like having an entire bouquet living out in the garden.

Take a closer look at those colors, and you'll see just how much personality each bloom brings.

The deep reds are bold and velvety, often with dark, prominent cones at the center that seem to anchor the flower with a bit of drama. The oranges range from glowing tangerine to a deeper, burnt copper tone, catching the sunlight in a way that makes them appear to shimmer in the heat.

Opposite page: Cheyenne Spirit coneflower comes in a variety of colors, bringing personality to each bloom.

The yellows are bright and cheerful. Some have a clear golden hue while others are softened with hints of amber. Then there are the pinks, which can shift from a soft, blush to a richer rose color, sometimes with subtle gradients that fade toward the petal tips. These blooms feel delicate, adding a gentle contrast to the bolder shades.

The creamy whites offer a clean, refreshing look, often surrounding a golden or greenish cone that gives them a classic, daisy-like appeal.

When all these colors grow together, the effect is dynamic, with no two clusters looking the same.

Another thing I appreciate about Cheyenne Spirit is its toughness.

This coneflower handles our summers with ease and keeps right on blooming when other plants begin to fade. The flowers rise on sturdy stems, creating a natural, slightly wild look that feels right at home in both formal beds and more relaxed, cottage-style plantings.

Last year, I had the pleasure of watching a new generation of gardeners get their hands in the soil when the Pearl River County 4-H Junior Master Gardeners created a pollinator garden at my office. It was a special project full of enthusiasm and learning, and I was especially glad to see them include Cheyenne Spirit coneflowers in their design.

I'm happy to report that those coneflowers didn't just survive, they thrived.

Right now, they're putting on a beautiful display in the pollinator garden with bright, cheerful blooms that seem to glow in the sunlight. Even better, they're doing exactly what they were meant to do — draw in bees, butterflies and other pollinators that bring the whole garden to life.

Coneflowers like Cheyenne Spirit remind me why I garden in the first place.

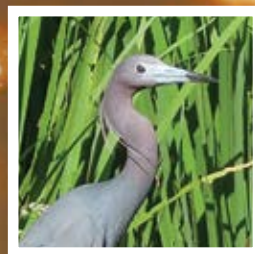
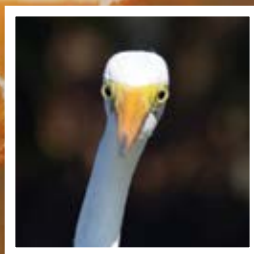
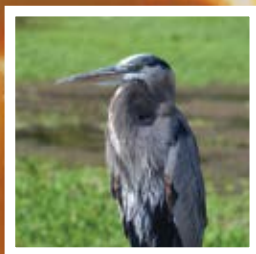
They're reliable, colorful and full of life, and when you see them thriving in a space created by young hands, it makes them even more special. 🌻



by Dr. Eddie Smith

Southern Gardening columnist Dr. Eddie Smith, a gardening specialist and Pearl River County coordinator with the Mississippi State University Extension Service, is an internationally certified arborist, Produce Safety Alliance certified trainer, and one of the developers of the Mississippi Smart Landscapes program that encourages the use of native plants in the landscape.

COMPOSING GOOD outdoors photos



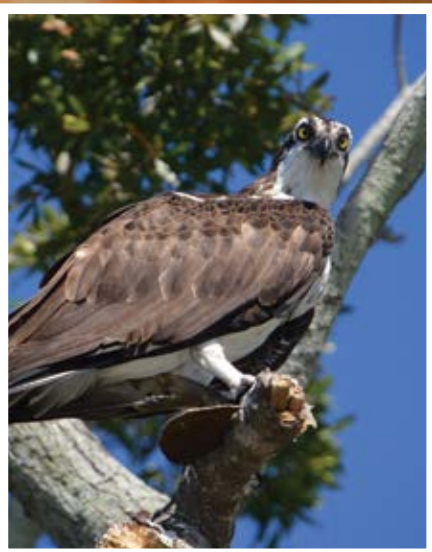
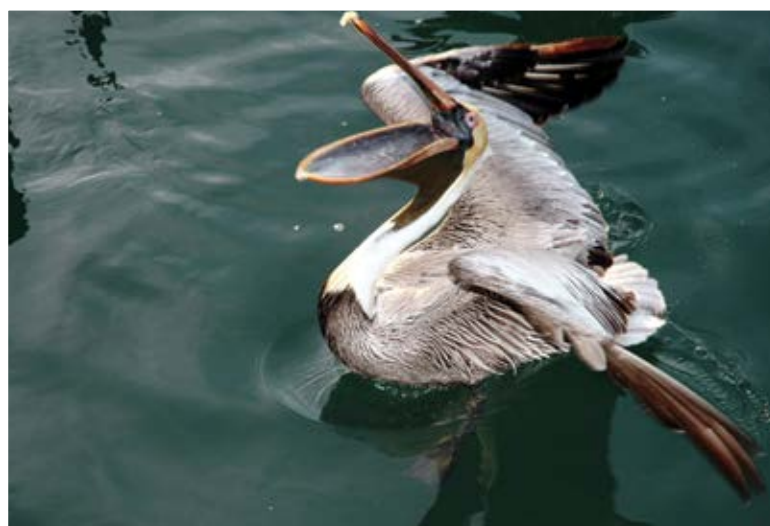
Today, practically everyone carries a camera at all times. From the Gulf beaches to the Tennessee state line, photographers can find incredible scenery, diverse habitats, and wildlife that create fantastic photographic opportunities.

True confession, my business card says “photographer” on it, and I sell hundreds of photos each year, but I’m more of a writer who shoots pictures. I do know what a good photo should look like, so I bought a great smart camera. I compose the photos and let the camera figure out all the technical stuff.

Many smart phone cameras can take excellent photos within limitations. Any quality camera can take great photos, but the lens does the real work. A mediocre camera with a high-quality lens takes much better photos than an outstanding camera with a poor lens. The lens does the work of focusing and capturing the image. To shoot great photos, buy the best lens with the highest quality glass you can afford. The better the glass, the sharper the image.

“

From the Gulf beaches to the Tennessee state line, photographers can find incredible scenery, diverse habitats, and wildlife that create fantastic photographic opportunities.



With good equipment in hand, look for interesting subjects. Fill the frame with the most important elements. For example, if shooting a photo of a colorful bird on a fence, use a telephoto lens or get as close as possible to the bird without frightening it. Fill the photo with the image. Keep a portion of the fence in the photo for scale and realism. Don't shoot a photo showing a small dot in the center that somewhat looks like a bird.

Before snapping, always pay strict attention to the background. A cluttered background takes away from the subject. Shoot from an angle or zoom in to avoid unnecessary clutter or anything in the background that could distract from a good photo. Also, watch for people or animals doing inappropriate things in the background. Look for any objects in the background that could appear to be going through a person's head.

Sometimes, the background is the most important subject, like when walking along a beautiful Mississippi beach at sunrise. The soft golden glow of early morning or before sunset makes the best light for beautiful photography.

Never fight the sun. No camera flash can ever overpower the sun. Always shoot with the sun behind the camera or off to one side. When inside, don't shoot toward windows with the sun shining through it. Compose photos so the sun illuminates the most important aspect of the subject, like a person's face. Instead of always shooting at eye level, try different heights and angles with and without flash.

Perhaps the most common mistake people make, especially with smart phones — not shooting vertical subjects vertically and horizontal subjects horizontally. For instance, to photograph a tall heron standing on a post, hold the camera vertically. When shooting a duck swimming across a pond, turn the camera horizontally.

With digital equipment, photographers can shoot unlimited photos without cost. Shoot every subject or pose multiple times. Experiment with different camera settings. Keep the best images and delete the rest. 🌸



by John N. Felsher

John N. Felsher is a professional freelance writer, broadcaster, photographer, and editor who lives in Alabama. An avid sportsman, he's written more than 3,300 articles for more than 170 different magazines on a wide variety of outdoors topics. Contact him at j.felsher@hotmail.com.



BUILDING HIS WORLD:

THE VISIONARY STORYTELLING OF JOHN JENNINGS

by Steven Ward

Artist and storyteller John Jennings had three library cards when he was growing up in Flora, Mississippi.

“My mother encouraged me to read a great deal. We would frequently go to multiple libraries. I fell in love with the bold images in comics; and not just superhero comics. I love the medium,” Jennings told *Today in Mississippi* recently.

The formative experience for Jennings stuck.

Jennings grew up to become a New York Times bestselling graphic novelist, Harvard Fellow, and Hugo and Eisner Award-winning artist.

Jennings, who worked on Marvel Comics’ Silver Surfer series, has also had work featured at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, appeared on “CBS Sunday Morning,” and been part of multiple Marvel Comics documentaries.

Between now and March 27, 2027, Mississippi residents will have a chance to experience Jennings’ creative worlds at The Mississippi Arts + Entertainment Experience (The MAX) in Meridian.

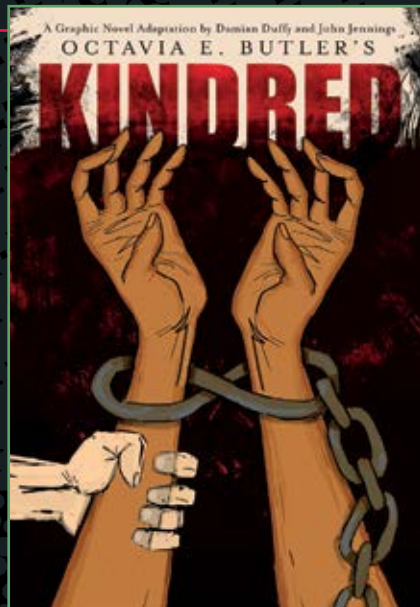
The “John Jennings: Build Your World” exhibit opened June 20.

The exhibit uses sketches, storyboards, and finished art to demonstrate how creators of color use the medium of comics to reclaim history and design the future.

The exhibit will feature creative projects that explore how Jennings imagines richly layered settings that center Black characters and Mississippi culture.

Those four projects are “Silver Surfer: Ghost Light,” where Jennings reinvents a forgotten Black character as a cosmic guardian using African American culture; “Blue Hand Mojo: Hard Times Road,” a solo piece conceived, written, and drawn by Jennings blending history and folklore; a new coming-of-age Southern Gothic horror graphic novel called “Kenny Dreadful and the Hainted Hoodie,” and Jennings’ graphic novel take on legendary science fiction author Octavia Butler’s novel, “Kindred.”

Jennings said there’s not an art work that’s he’s been involved in that doesn’t touch on his upbringing in Mississippi.



"The effect of Mississippi on my work is pretty immeasurable. It's so odd that, when you're growing up, you long to leave a place and no one tells you that home goes with you. So, my heritage and culture directly shaped not only how I move through the world as a Black southern artist; it shaped my ethos and process directly," Jennings said.

Born in Brookhaven before moving to Flora, Jennings grew up with his mother and grandparents.

"Flora is a small agricultural town. It's now almost become a suburb of Jackson since it's so close. My mother was a literature major at Alcorn State University. My love for reading and art stemmed from her. She bought me my first comics. My grandmother worked as a domestic until she retired. My grandfather was a professional caretaker and would hire his services out to local landowners," he said.

Jennings said he was curious about everything when he was a child.

"I collected insects and folklore like an anthropologist."

Jennings graduated from Jackson State University in Jackson. He later taught at JSU and created the school's graphic design program.

"Being a JSU alum gave me a sense of pride, belonging, and self-confidence that I didn't know I needed. To this day, I am friends with classmates who have become something closer to family. Teaching at JSU was a honor; being able to give back to a space that helped shaped who I am...I can't tell you how much that means to me. It's one of the most important things that ever happened in my life. I love JSU and I still try and give my time and expertise there whenever I can," Jennings said.

Today, Jennings is a professor of Media and Cultural Studies at the University of California at Riverside.

He is also the co-founder and organizer of the Schomburg Center's Black Comic Book Festival in Harlem, the NorcalMLK Foundation's Black & Brown Comix Arts Festival in San Francisco, and SÖL-CON: The Brown and Black Comix Expo at The Ohio State University.

Comics storytelling was always a powerful touchstone for Jennings.

"It sort of called to me. I'm a storyteller and I think the immediacy and power of the medium speaks to me," he said. 🌸

**FOR MORE INFORMATION
ABOUT JENNINGS AND THE EXHIBIT,
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Randy Smith



Q *To avoid power outages during bad weather, why don't co-ops just place all the power lines underground?*

A When major storms hit, it's natural to ask why all power lines aren't placed underground. On the surface, it seems like burying power lines would prevent outages. The reality is more complex.

First, the cost. Installing underground distribution lines can cost anywhere from five to upwards of 10 times more than overhead construction. As a member-owned cooperative, we don't have shareholders absorbing that expense. Those costs would ultimately be paid by our members through higher rates. We work hard to keep electricity affordable while still maintaining reliability.

Second, restoration. While underground lines are protected from wind, they are not immune to damage. When an overhead line is damaged, crews can often see the problem immediately and begin repairs. When an underground line fails, many times the issue is hidden. Crews must first locate the fault using specialized equipment, then excavate, repair or replace the line, and restore the site. That process can take significantly longer.

Also, it's not uncommon for people to think that underground construction means that everything is buried. It's not. Pad-mounted transformers and sectionalizing equipment are located

above ground, making them as susceptible to being damaged by vehicles as poles are. Underground cables can be susceptible to damage from nearby trees being uprooted during storms or high winds as well as from excavation activity on clear days. The cost, as well as the length of time, to repair underground cable and equipment can be significantly more than for overhead lines.

There's also the matter of scale. At Dixie Electric, we serve over 42,000 meters across a largely rural footprint and over 5,000 miles of line. Converting an entire system to underground construction would require an extraordinary financial investment and years of construction.

That doesn't mean underground has no place. In certain subdivisions, new developments, or specific high-density areas, underground construction can make sense. We evaluate those opportunities carefully. But systemwide, overhead construction remains the most practical and cost-effective way to serve a rural cooperative territory.

Our responsibility is to balance reliability, affordability, and speed of restoration. No system is storm proof, but we continuously evaluate how to strengthen ours in ways that are responsible to the members who own it. ❄️

Have a general question

about the world of electric cooperatives that all members around the state would like to hear the answer to? Email your question to news@ecm.coop and look for the answer in a future issue.



Safety matters in summer water fun

by Jennifer Johnson

It's summertime, and the Mississippi heat is upon us. Outdoor water activities offer the opportunity to refresh and have some fun in the process. But water and electricity can be a dangerous combination. **PEPA wants to help you play it safe while having a great time. Let's dive into these tips.**

- If you are putting in a new pool or hot tub, make sure the wiring is performed by an electrician who is experienced in those types of installations. Special safety requirements are involved.
- Make sure the electrician shows you how to turn off all the power in the event of an emergency.
- Build pools and decks at least five feet away from all underground electrical lines and at least 25 feet away from overhead electrical lines.
- Any electric outlets within 20 feet of a pool should have ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). These are designed to protect against electrical shock and electrocution.
- Handle pool skimmers and other long-handled tools as close to the ground as possible.
- Do not put electric appliances within 10 feet of a swimming pool. When possible, use battery-operated appliances and equipment.

- Unplug a device that has fallen into the water before retrieving it.
- Ensure hands and feet are dry while using electrical devices.
- Never touch electrical appliances until you are dry. Never touch electrical appliances when you are wet or standing in water.

If you plan to be around a larger body of water, like a lake, keep these tips in mind.

- Check for the location of power lines before fishing. You want to make sure you are casting your line far away from power lines.
- If your boat contacts a power line, never jump out of the boat into the water. The water could be energized.
- Never swim near boats plugged into shore power or docks with electrical service.

Water is a perfect conductor of electricity. Water reduces the skin's resistance to electricity, making it easier to pass through and damage deep to the internal organs. Don't take a chance. Be safe as you cool down during your summer fun!



Westmoreland earns Journeyman Lineman

Pontotoc Electric Power Association employee Walker Westmoreland has completed the skills training, book work, and on-the-job training necessary to earn the rank of Journeyman Lineman. The process takes up to around seven years to complete. PEPA is proud to recognize Walker's hard work and dedication.

Celebrating

PONTOTOC EMPLOYEE ANNIVERSARIES

5
YEARS



Lori Harmon
cashier



Lethan Walker
*right-of-way
trimmer/laborer*

10
YEARS



Brandon Jenkins
assistant foreman



Walker
Westmoreland
journeyman lineman



Brandon Williams
journeyman lineman

20
YEARS



B. J. Farmer
*right-of-way
assistant foreman*



Jeanna Sorto
*director of accounting
and finance*

25
YEARS



John Fleming
Bruce line foreman

35
YEARS



**Michal
Pennington**
general accountant

40
YEARS



Sandra Clark
Bruce head cashier



Lavonia Lackey
*manager of
customer accounts*



Anthony Staten
*data entry/
processing clerk*

Happy Birthday *America!*

Celebrating is always better with great food. Check out these patriotic treats to make your party one to remember!



Crispy star pops

- 8 cups mini marshmallows
- 6 tablespoons butter, cubed
- 12 cups crispy rice cereal
- 12 wooden pop sticks
- 1 cup white baking chips
- ½ teaspoon shortening
- Red, white, and blue sprinkles

In Dutch oven, heat marshmallows and butter until melted. Remove from heat, stir in cereal and mix well. Press into a greased 15 x 10 x 1-in. baking pan. Cut with a three-inch star cookie cutter. Inset wooden pop stick into side of each star. Place on waxed paper.

In a microwave, melt white chips and shortening and stir until smooth. Spread over stars. Decorate with sprinkles.

Fourth of July punch

- 32 ounces white Gatorade or other sports drink
- 32 ounces red Gatorade or other sports drink
- 32 ounces blue Gatorade or other sports drink
- 2 liters lemon-lime soda
- 8 maraschino cherries

Take three ice cube trays and fill one with white sports drink, one with red sports drink, and one with blue sports drink. Allow to freeze until completely hard, or at least four hours.

To serve, add red, white, and blue ice cubes to glass or plastic cups. Fill with lemon-lime soda and top with a maraschino cherry. Add a decorative straw if desired.

Summer flag salad

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 2/3 cup extra virgin olive oil | 1/2 cup julienned fresh basil |
| 1/3 cup white balsamic vinegar | 1/4 cup julienned fresh mint leaves |
| 2 minced garlic cloves | 2 teaspoon Dijon mustard |
| 1 teaspoon sea salt | 1 teaspoon sugar |
| 1 teaspoon pepper | 2 cups cherry tomatoes |
| 8 cups fresh arugula | 8 ounces fresh mozzarella cheese pearls, drained |
| 2 medium peaches, sliced | 6 ounces thinly sliced prosciutto, julienned |
| Additional mint leaves | |

In a bowl, mix the extra-virgin olive oil, basil, balsamic vinegar, mint, garlic, Dijon mustard, sea salt, sugar, and pepper. Add tomatoes. Let mixture stand while preparing salad.

In another bowl, combine arugula, mozzarella, peaches, blueberries, and prosciutto. Pour tomato mixture over top. Toss to coat. Garnish with additional mint leaves. Serve immediately.



WARNING - WARNING - WARNING

If Your Hands, Arms, Feet, or Legs Are Numb - If You Feel Shooting or Burning Pain or An Electric Sensation - You Are at Risk Don't Let Creeping Nerve Death Ruin Your Life

Get The Help You Need - Here's What You Need to Know...

Purvis, MS - If you experience numbness or tingling in your hands, arms, legs, or feet or if you experience shooting or burning pain, this is important. Please read this carefully.

Peripheral Neuropathy is when small blood vessels in the hands, arms, feet or legs become diseased and tiny nerves that keep the cells and muscles working properly shrivel up and die.

Early-warning symptoms include tingling and numbness, mild loss of feeling in your hands, arms, legs or feet, inability to feel your feet, which increases your risk of foot-injury and falling.

More Advanced Symptoms Include...

- Loss of coordination & dexterity, which puts you at increased risk of accidents.
- Inability to feel clothing like socks and gloves.
- High risk of falling, which makes walking dangerous, and makes you more dependent on others.
- Burning sensations in your arms, legs, hands or feet that may start mild, but as nerves and muscles die, may feel like you're being burned by a blow torch.

Ignore the early warning signals long enough and you risk progressive nerve damage leading to muscle wasting, severe pain, loss of balance and a lot of staying at home wishing you didn't hurt.

When every step is like walking on hot coals, sitting still may be the only thing you feel like doing. But there's little joy in sitting still all day long.



Without treatment, nerve degeneration that begins with slight tingling or numbness may lead to a hot burning sensation and intense pain. Without treatment muscle wasting, loss of mobility and loss of independence is often the next step.

Now here's the scary part....

- Nerve damage CAUSES cell damage.
- Cell damage SPEEDS UP nerve degeneration

Without treatment this can become a DOWN-WARD SPIRAL that accelerates.

The damage can get worse fast. Mild symptoms intensify. Slight tingling, numbness or lack of feeling can turn into burning pain.

Before you know it, damage can become so bad you hurt all the time.

Unless this downward spiral is stopped and nerves return to proper function - the damage to nerves and cells in the affected area can get so bad your muscles begin to die right along with the nerves and cells. And that sets the stage for weakness, loss of mobility, disability, and dependence on others.

If you have early warning signs of peripheral neuropathy, (tingling &/or numbness, loss of feeling or pain) it's CRITICAL you get proper treatment.

It's critical, because with proper treatment you can improve your symptoms. Without it, you are playing Russian Roulette with your health.

Once your nerve loss reaches 85%, odds are there's nothing any doctor can do to help.

The most common method your doctor may recommend to treat neuropathy is prescription drugs



Drugs like Gabapentin, Lyrica, Cymbalta, & Neurontin are often prescribed to manage the pain. But, damaged nerves and dying cells do not heal on their own.

Pain pills do not restore healthy nerve function. They just mask the pain as the nerves continue to degenerate and cells and muscle continue to die.

Taking endless drugs and suffering terrible side effects that may damage your liver & kidney and create even more problems, is not a reasonable path. You deserve better.

Three things must be determined to effectively treat neuropathy. 1) What is the underlying cause? 2) How much nerve damage has been sustained? 3) How much treatment your condition will require?

With proper treatment, shriveled blood vessels grow back & nerves can return to proper function. How much treatment you may need depends on your condition.

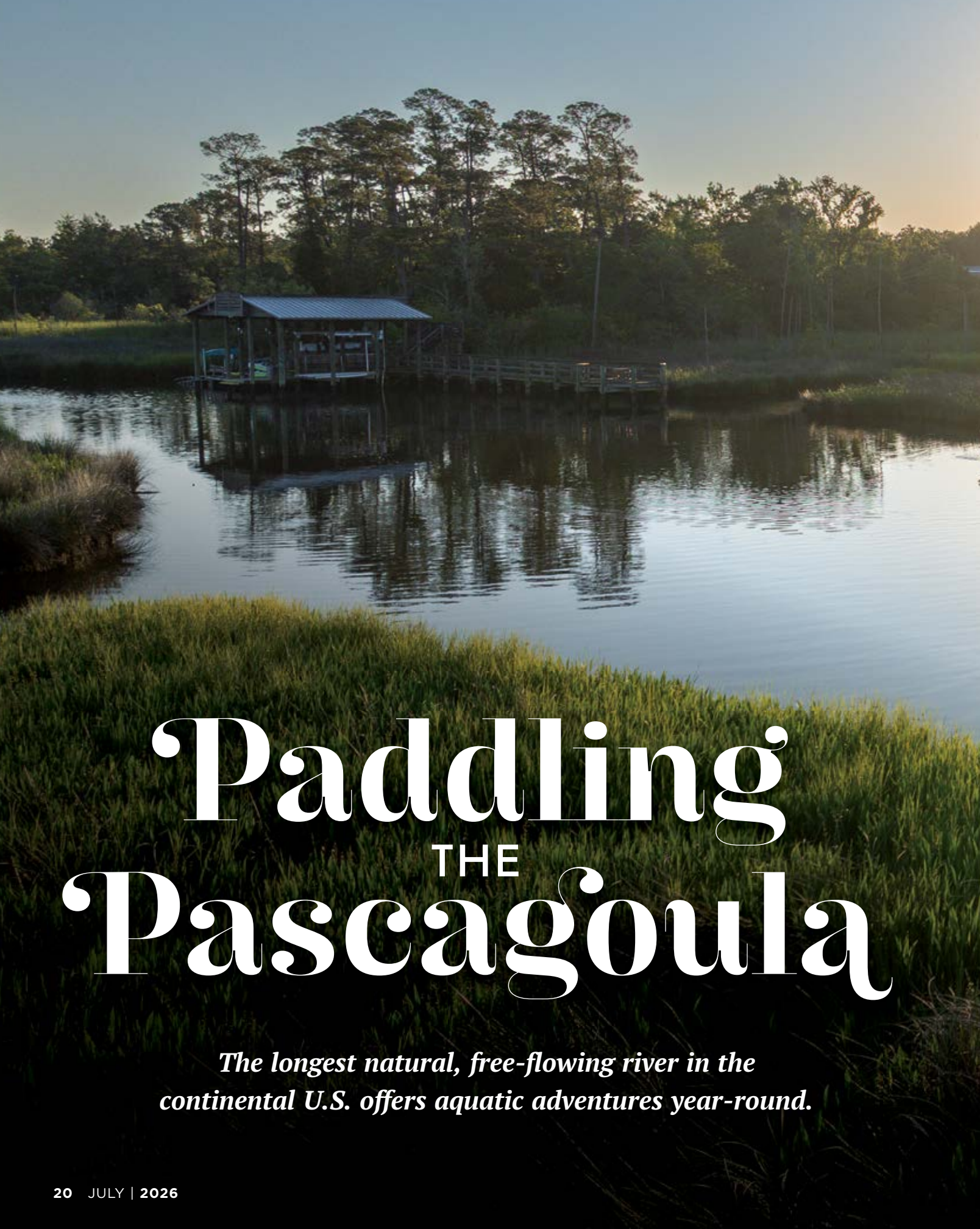
At **Purvis Chiropractic** we do a complete neuropathy sensitivity exam to determine the extent of your nerve damage. The exam includes a detailed sensory evaluation, extensive peripheral vascular testing, & a detailed analysis of the findings.

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Paddling THE Pascagoula

*The longest natural, free-flowing river in the
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by Jim Beaugez

Only 100 miles separate the terminuses of the Mississippi and Pascagoula rivers, the watercourses framing the Mississippi Gulf Coast culturally if not politically. But they couldn't be further apart beneath the surface.

Since the days when Mark Twain's fictional Huck Finn would have floated it, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has endeavored to tame the Mississippi River with levees, locks, and spillways as it drains 40% of the continental U.S. and nearly bisects the lower 48 into halves. A mighty river, indeed.

In contrast to this massive, meticulously engineered artery, the Pascagoula River spans a modest 80 miles in length from its headwaters at the confluence of the Leaf and Chickasawhay rivers in northern George County. Its importance, instead, is measured by how untouched it remains as the longest free-flowing waterway and last unimpeded major river system between Canada and Mexico.

Eric Richards, a 72-year-old Pascagoula native, has paddled most of it over the past 20 years, camping on the sandbars of the upper river, rowing past the bluffs near Vancleave, and maneuvering a paddleboard through the slow, serpentine bayous of the lower section. Today, he lives on Krebs Lake, one of many meanders encircled by marsh grasses near its mouth at the Mississippi Sound, and is still a regular on the river.

"We've paddled pretty much all the waterways," Roberts said of his experiences with friends in the Pascagoula Paradise Paddlers group, a loose fraternity that has organized monthly voyages on the river — sometimes drawing as many as 100 paddlers — as well as multi-day overnight trips and competitions.

The Pascagoula River Basin covers 9,600 square miles, or 20% of the state, beginning in Kemper and Neshoba counties at its northernmost point, extending west nearly to Jackson, and pulling in streams over the Alabama state line. The watershed narrows as the river splits into the East and West Pascagoula rivers just north of Potticaw Landing, then winds into broad, wandering bayous across a marshy coastal plain ranging from four to six miles wide.

"It doesn't look like a typical river where you go from point A to point B," said Mary Rodgers, a master naturalist who manages the Pascagoula River Audubon Center in Moss Point. "It's extensive and free flowing with bayous, and that creates more habitat. The area serves as an estuary for plant and animal growth."

As a wild river, the Pascagoula is home to an ecosystem teeming with diverse flora and fauna, including more than 22 threatened and endangered species and hundreds of plant species. It's also located on the Mississippi Flyway, a major migratory pathway used by 45% of America's birds as they travel between the North and South American continents, using the river and its marshes as a place to rest and refuel.



“

The bird life is fabulous.
We see ospreys and owls
along the shoreline,
cormorants and waterbirds,
and also backyard birds.

“The bird life is fabulous,” Rodgers said. “We see ospreys and owls along the shoreline, cormorants and waterbirds, and also backyard birds. And because it’s a flyway, we have different birds throughout the season during spring and fall migrations.”

The most commonly seen bird populations include brown pelicans, great blue herons, sandhill cranes, and other shore and inland birds that frequent the Pascagoula marshlands, Rodgers said, among more than 300 species of birds that can be found here. That fact attracts birdwatchers from across the region and even overseas — she says couples from as far away as Germany are annual visitors.

For kayaks, canoers, and paddleboarders, that means every launch into the tannin-stained watercourse is a new adventure. They may see large, wading birds like herons and egrets roam the marshes looking for meals at low tide, while ospreys hover overhead and dive into the deeper channels to catch fish. Red-winged blackbirds are a highlight for birdwatchers, and Richards has also seen swallow-tailed kites on the river.

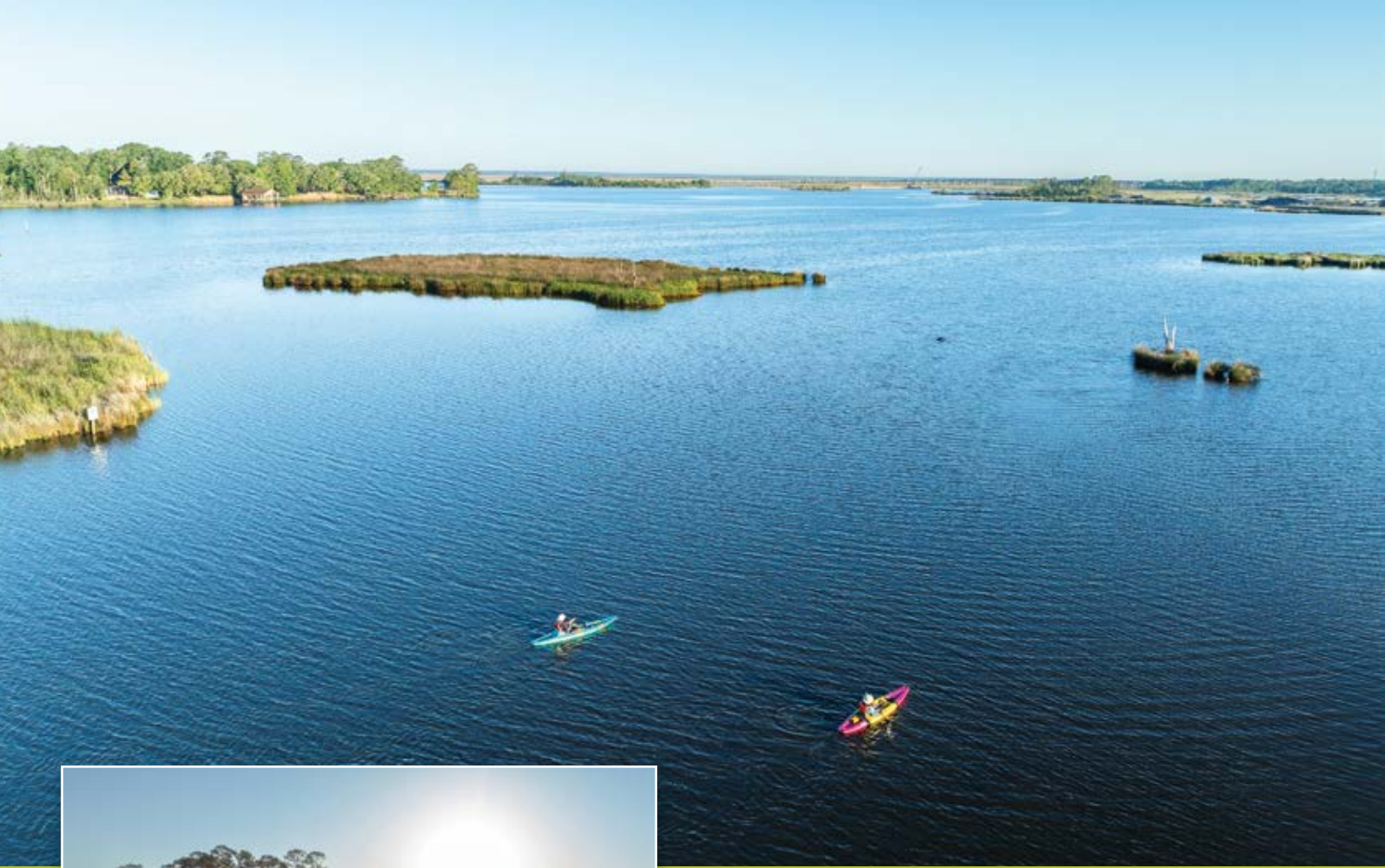
After the Deep Horizon oil spill in 2010 compromised the region’s animal and plant life both offshore and onshore, the National Audubon Society decided to place a center near the Pascagoula River that would encourage people to visit the river and learn about its importance and biodiversity. The center itself, built as a green facility, is a model of environmental stewardship.



Instead of letting the average 60 to 65 inches of rain the region gets every year wash into the bayou, a network of channels and gutters redirects a portion of the rainwater from the roof into an underground cistern every time it rains. Rodgers said that enables them to keep their raised beds hospitable for the moisture-loving plants hummingbirds prefer, such as coral honeysuckle, as well as aster and blueberry bushes for larger birds. The concrete on the campus is even permeable, allowing the ground to absorb water and mitigating flood potential.

Named after the Pascagoula River, nearby Singing River Electric in Lucedale participates annually in the Renew Our Rivers cleanup of the lower portion of the river. The electric co-op has also awarded several of its Neighbors Helping Neighbors Community Grants to the Audubon Center over the years.

As the Audubon Center attracts birdwatchers and paddlers year-round for its guided kayak tours, Roberts also takes excursions on the river at all of its phases and through all four seasons, paddling past eagles, otters, alligators, and occasionally a deer swimming from one bank to the other. But if he had to pick, he says he's partial to rowing through the cypress swamps upriver.



“The old-growth cypress trees are just phenomenal,” he said. “They’ll be 12 feet in diameter, which is 30, 40 feet in circumference. It’s an otherworldly feeling when you go through these swamps and you’ve got massive trees and thousands of cypress knees,” which grow several feet high. The autumn, he said, is his favorite time to visit them, when “everything turns copper on the cypress trees.”

But don’t overlook late summer, another ideal time to catch the magic of the river. The Pascagoula River Audubon Center’s annual Hummingbird Festival, scheduled for Sept. 25-26, welcomes birdwatchers just as thousands of the migratory birds pass through the area. Rodgers said the birds congregate around feeders and the trumpet vines covering the canopy. “We’ll see 5, 10, 20 hummingbirds at a time diving into the different treetops, and then they sit up there in their perch.”

The Pascagoula Paradise Paddlers will host the Pascagoula River Paddle Battle on Oct. 3. During the 10th edition of this 12-mile kayak race, paddlers will race from Little River Marina in Moss Point and end in Pascagoula at the LaPointe-Krebs House and Museum on Krebs Lake, the oldest structure in the state, built in 1757.

For Richards and many other paddlers who frequent the Pascagoula, the river’s rewards are evident throughout the seasonal shifts. “One of the appeals of kayaking or any boating, anything that takes you away from your normal life, is that you see things that are just otherworldly.” 🌿

For more information

on the Pascagoula River Audubon Center,
visit audubon.org/pascagoula-river

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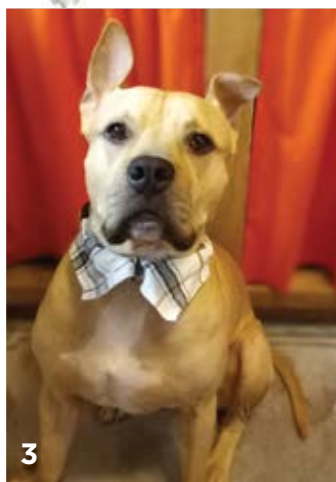
Canine companions



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1. **Nichole Clinkscales** of Biloxi; Coast Electric member.

2. **Sharon Pipkins** of Beaumont; Singing River Electric member.

3. **Sandi Brown** of Ocean Springs; Singing River Electric member.

4. **Kristin Usherwood** of Vancleave; Singing River Electric member.

5. **Martha Withrow** of Laurel; Dixie Electric member.

6. **Brad Sharp** of Wiggins; Pearl River Valley Electric member.

7. **Patricia Hutchinson** of Hazelhurst; Southern Pine Electric member.

8. **Martha Gadd** of Byhalia; Northcentral Mississippi EPA member.

9. **Keaton Jenkins** of Meridian; East Mississippi EPA member.



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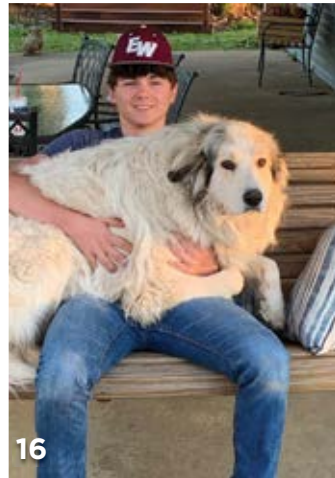
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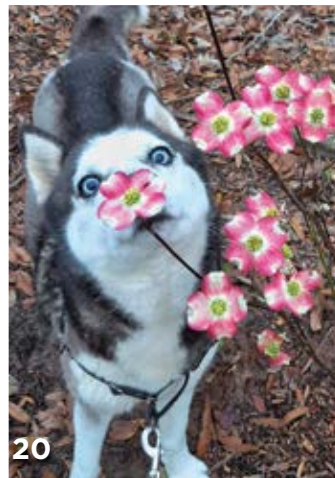
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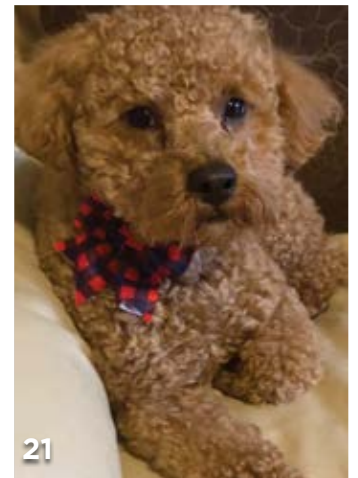
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10. **Shane Morrow** of Sumrall; Cooperative Energy member.

11. **Stephanie May** of Olive Branch; Northcentral Mississippi EPA member.

12. **Florence Hardigree** of Mendenhall; Southern Pine Electric member.

13. **Angela Bean** of Brandon; Southern Pine Electric member.

14. **Patsy Stewart** of Carthage; Central Electric member.

15. **Joni H. McCulloch** of Ackerman; 4-County Electric member.

16. **Griff Misso** of Maben; 4-County Electric member.

17. **Haynes Haselmaier** of Carriere; Coast Electric member.

18. **Bethany Abdul-Hadi** of Summit; Magnolia Electric member.

19. **Stacie Ponthier** of Carriere; Coast Electric member.

20. **Olivia A. Andrews** of Lucedale; Singing River Electric member.

21. **Vivian Wilson** of Greenwood; Delta Electric member.

THE FARMHOUSE KITCHEN

with Vicki Leach

Summertime is grilling time

I think every season has a fragrance. Fall smells of leaf litter, bonfires, and football games; Christmas, of magic and gingerbread; spring, of freshly cut grass and rainy days. Summer — summer smells like a combination of watermelon, shimmering lake water, sun-dried beach towels, and grilled hamburgers. The air is so heavy during Mississippi summers that the fragrance of anything you cook on the grill lingers for hours after the last charcoal brisket burns out. What's not to love? I put anything I can on the grill. I've even been known to throw something as simple as a couple of flour tortillas filled with nothing more than shredded cheese on the flames and call it lunch.

This month, I hope you christen your grill with things ordinary, and just a touch extraordinary. Stuff a hamburger with a little bacon, a little blue cheese, and season it up well and enjoy the magic of an ordinary day. And, how about the perfect marriage of lemons and rosemary to marinate a spatchcocked chicken that's marinated over night? If you can buy a small bird (3 pounds or so) you'll find the chicken will have more flavor and cook much quicker. Likewise, thinner patties on your burgers also cook quicker and, in my opinion, taste better. End the meal with the simplest summer dessert in my stash of easy recipes — a trifle. Manipulate it with your choice of fillings. Just make sure you build it in a beautiful clear bowl, so your guests — should you care to share — can see that you've saved the best for last! 



by Vicki Leach

Vicki Leach is a full-time chef/culinary instructor at Mississippi State University in the Department of Food Science, Nutrition, and Health Promotion. She teaches Science of Food Preparation, Foodservice Organization, and Quantity Food Production. She lives in a 130-year-old farmhouse that speaks to her old soul.

Black and Blue Burgers

Makes 8 hamburgers

INGREDIENTS

- 4 pounds lean ground beef, chuck or round
- 6 slices bacon, cooked and crumbled, dripping reserved
- 1 large onion, and cooked in bacon drippings

- 1 cup crumbled blue cheese
- 1 tablespoon Cajun seasoning
- 8 hamburger buns

Heat a grill to medium high heat. Lightly oil the grates.

Form beef into 16 patties of equal size, placing on a parchment lined baking sheet as completed. Sprinkle with salt and pepper, (and a touch of garlic and onion powder as desired).

Combine crumbled bacon, cooked onion, blue cheese and Cajun seasoning in a small mixing bowl, tossing together to combine. Place 1 tablespoon of cheese mixture onto each of 8 hamburger patties. Top each

patty with a remaining beef patty. Lightly pinch the edge of the burgers, sealing in the cheese mixture.

Place stuffed hamburgers onto hot grill and cook to desired temperature, 5 minutes per side, turning only once.

Remove from grill and keep hot until ready to serve. Serve with desired condiments.

Ground beef should be cooked to an internal temp of 165 degrees.

I do these inside on a flat cast iron griddle pan if I can't get to the grill. Before you turn them, make sure they are nicely seared, and flip once. The burgers are thick, so I usually just turn off the cooktop and cover with a lid for a few minutes to let the residual heat finish them off.



Roasted Rosemary Chicken

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

- 1 frying chicken, ideally about 3 pounds
- 3 lemons, juiced
- 3 sprigs fresh rosemary
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- generous dashes salt and pepper

Cut backbone out of chicken, flip and with the heel of your hand, press down on the breastbone until you have broken the breastbone; it will lie flat this way. Place chicken in a flat 9x13 glass casserole. Sprinkle chicken with salt and pepper liberally. Mix lemon juice, rosemary, and olive oil. Pour over chicken in the dish. Place a piece of plastic wrap over chicken, then weigh down with a plate topped with several heavy cans, or wrap a couple of bricks in foil and place on chicken. Marinate for several hours or overnight.

Roast at 425 degrees, or grill over direct heat to brown, then place on top rack of grill over indirect heat until completely done (165 degrees in the thigh portion).

Trifle

Serves 12

Who doesn't like a pretty dessert? A quick summer take-along, or a light addition to your summer outdoor gatherings.



INGREDIENTS

- 1 angel food cake
- 1 large box instant vanilla pudding mix
- 1 can pie filling — cherry, strawberry, peach, or blueberry
- 2-3 bananas, sliced thinly
- 1 large can pineapple chunks, drained
- 1 large tub Cool Whip, thawed (or as much as needed)

Prep your ingredients: Pinch the cake into small pieces. Make the pudding according to package directions. Slice the bananas thinly. Drain pineapple chunks.

In a pretty trifle bowl, or another glass serving bowl, layer half the cake chunks. Top with half the pudding mix spreading evenly. Plop the pie filling around the outside edges, and fill the center area with half the bananas and pineapple chunks. Top with half the Cool Whip. Repeat layers. Cover and chill for a couple of hours or overnight.

Events open to the public will be published free of charge as space allows. Submit details at least two months prior to the event date. Submissions must include a phone number with area code for publication.

Email to news@ecm.coop.
Events are subject to change.

Calhoun County Sacred Harp Singing

Convention. Aug. 8. Vardaman. Shape note singing from the 1991 Sacred Harp Book, and also the 1911 edition. Hosted at Mt. Herman Primitive Baptist Church 132-154 Hollis Switch Rd (CR247), approximately two miles north of Highway 8. Singing will begin at 10 a.m. with potluck in the fellowship hall at noon. Singing will continue in the afternoon. Details: Text 662-507-9434.

Friends of Crosby Memorial Library

Annual Book Sale. Aug 10 to Aug 15. Picayune. The book sale is the library biggest fundraiser of the year. From 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Friday and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday. 900 Goodyear Blvd. The prices of the used books are very reasonable. Details: 601-798-5081 or 601-798-4191.

Mississippi Sacred Harp State Singing

Convention. Aug 23 and 24. Forest. Hosted at Antioch Primitive Baptist Church, 6931 Miss Hwy 21, north of Forest. Singing will begin at 10 a.m. each day with lunch in the fellowship hall at noon. Singing will continue each day after lunch. Songbooks used are the 1991 Sacred Harp, BF White Sacred Harp (Cooper revision), 2010 Christian Harmony, and the 1911 Sacred Harp. Loaner books will be available. Details: email marksdavis19@gmail.com.

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HAPPY 250TH!

Are there things you've heard in passing that stuck with you for no reason? People you talk to all of the time — your parents or brothers and sisters — even someone like your pastor who perhaps, of the tens of thousands of other words, said one thing that lodged in your mind?

Bobby Williamson was a friend of mine who was a pastor at Park Place Baptist in Pearl. I would video his Sunday sermon so he could replay it on cable later in the week. One morning he told a story about a lady who was upset with her pastor because he used the word “britches” in his sermon that day. She told him pants or trousers would have sounded more polite. Her pastor asked her, “Well, what did I say right *before* I said britches?” She admitted she didn’t recall. “Well, what did I say right *after* I said britches?” Embarrassed, she said she didn’t remember that, either. To which the preacher replied, “Then it’s a good thing I said ‘britches’ or you wouldn’t have gotten a thing out of the sermon this morning!”

I never told Bobby, but out of all of his great sermons (and he was a good preacher) that story is the only *specific* thing I really remember him saying.

I bring that up because as we celebrate the 250th birthday of our nation, I recall something one of my schoolteachers told us decades ago. Not to insult the teacher, but I don’t even remember who said it. But it stuck with me.

It was in the 1960s, so World War II had only ended a little over 15 years earlier. The air base was still in Greenville and our house was a “home away from home” for airmen who went to Northside Baptist Church with us. One time mama made us kids quit popping firecrackers outside. She whispered that one of our guests that day had been “shell-shocked.” Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD is what we’d call it today. The vet probably served in Korea. He was too young for World War II.

Back to my teacher, he (or she) told us that “No republic had ever lasted over 300 years.” Back then, that bothered me no more than telling me the sun won’t last but another 5 billion years. But that comment on the potential longevity of our country stuck with me.

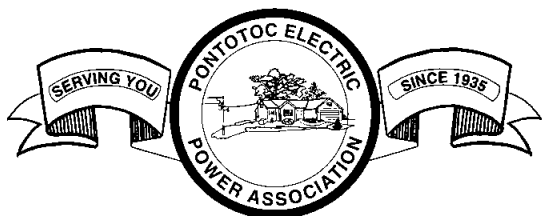
In 1976 amidst the revelry of the Bicentennial, those words took on a little more weight because that meant we only had a 100 years left. Now, a half century later, at the nation’s 250th anniversary, if that teacher’s off-hand remark were to come to pass, our downfall could happen during the lifetimes of my grandkids and great grandkids. So now, that observation is way more than just the answer to a test question; it’s personal.

Let’s make sure our kids know what all *has* “come before” in our history that brought us to this day, so there will be a 300th celebration 50 years from now. 



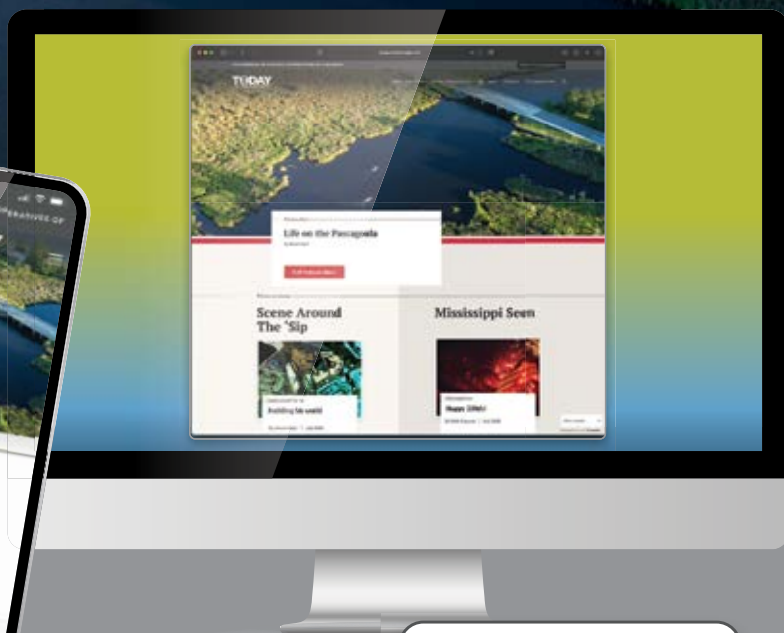
by Walt Grayson

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