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18 Holiday Lights Extravaganza

COVER STORY When the sun goes down, the holiday lights come on—and these families do it in style. See some displays that would make the Griswolds jealous.

30 The Giving Season

For so many organizations, giving is a year-round mission. When people are in need, these groups are up for the challenge.

38 STEM Teachers SOAR

Dozens of teachers graduate from program highlighting science, technology, engineering and math.

ON THE COVER This time of year, the Lashbrook family home in Owensboro features more than 250,000 lights and 420 figures—and has even been featured on ABC's *The Great Christmas Light Fight*. Photo: Adam Paris/AP Imagery

DEPARTMENTS

- 4 KENTUCKYLIVING.COM
- 6 YOUR COOPERATIVE COMMUNITY
Kentucky Electric Cooperatives
- 7 COMMONWEALTHS
Midway Christmas novel, My Old Kentucky Home Dinner Train, Veterans of the Year, co-ops helping co-ops during Hurricane Michael and more

ON THE GRID

- 10 FUTURE OF ELECTRICITY
The blockchain tech trend
- 12 CUTTING COSTS
Keep warm air inside
- 14 CO-OPS CARE
Making dreams come true and saving lives
- 15 ENERGY 101
Downed and dangerous power lines
- 16 GADGETS & GIZMOS
An electronic Christmas
- 28A LOCAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE NEWS

KENTUCKY CULTURE

- 28 UNIQUELY KENTUCKY
Santa's workshop
- 40 WORTH THE TRIP
The sounds of Christmas
- 44 EVENTS
Christmas in Williamstown, a book benefit, a holiday at the fort, gallons of burgoo and more
- 46 GARDEN GURU
Fir for Christmas
- 47 GREAT OUTDOORS
Floating on snow
- 48 SMART HEALTH
Is it sadness or depression?
- 49 CHEF'S CHOICE
Kentucky raised
- 50 KENTUCKY MARKETPLACE
- 52 SNAP SHOT
- 53 KENTUCKY KIDS
- 54 BYRON CRAWFORD'S KENTUCKY
Christmas tree

Multicolored memories

I can so identify with the folks in "Holiday Lights Extravaganza" (page 18). For me, Christmas decorating is not fun until it's December. The day it turns cold as blue blazes is when I lug out the outside lights. With holiday tunes and hot chocolate, I decorate in darkness, so when I blur my eyes, it turns into a Christmas Wonderland.

I am not an all-white-lights kind of person, as growing up we always had colored lights. So, the shrubs near the house receive white miniatures while the huge pine tree, which sits proudly in the center of the yard, is layered with multicolored lights.

As the tree approached 30 feet, I had to devise a plan. I joined two small 10-foot PVC pipes (similar to what I saw used in Vail, Colorado) with duct tape, then added a brass crook at the end to drop strings of lights vertically onto the tree. Some drops worked better than others. I'm sure the neighbors were watching (and laughing), as was my husband.

At 40 feet, the pine tree now sits bare, but I treasure the memories.

Wishing you a colorful Christmas!



THOM WHITTINGHILL



ANITA TRAVIS RICHTER, EDITOR

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SHINE ON

LIGHT IT UP

Share your holiday decorations with us

Do you take decking the halls to the next level? If so, join other readers in a conversation on our Facebook page and share photos of your Christmas décor! For starters, read our feature story on page 18, then visit our website to see even more submissions.



HO-HO-HOLIDAY

FILL UP YOUR CALENDAR

Pack up the car for a Kentucky Christmas

Flip to page 40, and read about holiday concerts planned this month across the state. Find even more events beginning on page 44 and on the events calendar at KentuckyLiving.com. If you want to take in the Bluegrass state this holiday season, plan your stops with us.

ALL THE TOYS



PLAYFUL ATMOSPHERE ToyBurg fosters fun work culture

Let us introduce you to ToyBurg—where the toys are fun, and so is the workplace. See the story on page 28, then visit our website for more photos and details.

NEW RECIPES

UPDATE YOUR MENU

Feast on a variety of dishes

Whether you're looking for a new side dish for Christmas dinner—Spicy Southwest Bean Salad, anyone?—or hoping for a healthier alternative, like Beanie Sweet Potato Burritos, we've got suggestions to add into your mix at KentuckyLiving.com/recipes.

Kentucky Living

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YOUR COOPERATIVE COMMUNITY

United we stand

Statewide association for electric cooperatives updates name

Kentucky Electric Cooperatives is the new identity of our statewide association, which represents and supports all 26 electric co-ops in the Bluegrass State. These locally owned co-ops provide power to more than 1.5 million people across 117 of the state's 120 counties.

Our services to your local co-op include safety and management

co-ops has remained constant since we formed 75 years ago, every generation has had to adapt to its own unique circumstances and make careful and conscientious choices.

We continue to evolve, just like your local electric co-op. Kentucky Rural Electric Cooperatives Corporation (KRECC) was officially incorporated in 1948, and in 1974

KENTUCKY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

training, communications support led by our flagship publication, *Kentucky Living*, and public advocacy before the state legislature and state agencies.

We work to ensure that legislation and regulations won't adversely affect your local co-op's ability to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity. That's why we need your help to speak up for your co-op to your local elected leaders.

Our new name reflects the unity and collective strength of Kentucky co-ops. When we work together and present a unified front, our co-ops can achieve much more than we can as separate entities. This is an important collaboration to help your local co-op continue to efficiently and effectively serve you.

Though the commitment of the statewide association to its member

we became Kentucky Association of Electric Cooperatives (KAEC).

At Kentucky Electric Cooperatives, each co-op brings its unique experience to the table. Your co-op was built by, belongs to, and is led by people in its home communities. Yet one of our principles is cooperation among cooperatives, and our unity has never been more important than in this era of co-op history.



CHRIS PERRY
 President/CEO



KENTUCKY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

Hometown Christmas

Midway, located midway between Lexington and Frankfort, is a treasure trove

AUTHOR

of boutiques, antiques and great food that belies its tiny size. Like most small towns, the sense of community is strong, and neighbors help one another out. Author Bob Rouse captures this perfectly in his collection of Christmas short



BOB ROUSE

stories, *Christmas in the Bluegrass: Hometown Holiday Stories*, (Butler Books,

\$24.95), all set in his beloved hometown where he and his wife, Mary Beth, still live.

Stories such as “Getting Past Christmas,” about a widower and his daughters receiving a supernatural Christmas gift or “Merry Christmas Kitty,” about a classroom effort to comfort a lonely and beloved teacher will warm the reader’s heart. Other stories such as “The Bad Shepherd,” about the judgments of a curmudgeon or “Will Work for Toys,” about a reformed Christmas Scrooge might produce a little introspection while entertaining the reader with their colorful characters. “I’ve been in Midway every Christmas for nearly six decades, and with each story I write,” Rouse explains, “I walk through our town in someone else’s shoes.”

Ten stories in all make up Rouse’s first published book, each one originating with a morsel of truth, a good bit of humor, and his love for the town in which he grew up. Midway artist Susan Tucker provides the stories’ illustrations. Those familiar with the town will enjoy the mention of Midway hot spots such as the Corner Grocery and may even recognize the blending of local names into new ones. “The characters are wholly fictitious,” Rouse notes, “but the emotion, the drama ... and the revelation are real.”

Rouse also serves as the editor of *Courier*, the official magazine of the National Tour Association, and while previously working for the *Lexington Herald-Leader*, his serial children’s stories



were nationally syndicated. Around town, Rouse often reads aloud one of his stories at local events, making him somewhat of an eagerly anticipated celebrity. He can usually be found observing and writing at one of Midway’s many eateries, perhaps crafting plots from the lively goings-on he witnesses.

—Penny Woods

tip energy efficiency

Heading out of town for the holidays? Remember to unplug electronics that continue to draw energy. Some gadgets, like TVs, gaming consoles, chargers and DVD players use energy when plugged into an outlet—even when they’re not in use.

PHOTO: STOCKATNAT



“How come every time YOU feel cold, I gotta put on a sweater?”

Co-op lineworkers restore power following Hurricane Michael

More than 100 lineworkers representing 16 Kentucky co-ops were part of a massive restoration effort in several southeastern states after October's Hurricane Michael. Most of the Bluegrass contingency aided Mitchell and Grady electric cooperatives in south Georgia.

COOPERATIVES

Each co-op decides if it has workers to share, as the first commitment is to its own consumer-members. If so, the co-op "releases" the workers, who then become temporary employees and are paid by the co-ops they assist.

Along with fatigue and their unfamiliarity with the extensively damaged territory, workers endured heat in the upper 80s, along with fire ants and gnats, and sleeping on cots.

"Kentucky crews are typically a hot commodity," says Robert Thornton, Kentucky Electric Cooperatives' Safety and Loss Prevention storm coordinator. "Kentucky linemen are known for getting the job done in a safe, efficient and timely manner."

We are proud of our Kentucky lineworkers, who personified the spirit of cooperatives by helping others.



Warren RECC lineworkers Mike Lindsey, left, and Cody Sullivan help Grady Electric Membership Corporation, near Cairo in southern Georgia, restore power to thousands of co-op members after Hurricane Michael made landfall in the Florida Panhandle in mid-October. Photo: Thom Whittinghill

Honoring Veterans of the Year

Jeremy Harrell of Shelbyville was recently named the 2018 Male Kentucky Veteran of the Year by the Epilepsy Foundation of Kentuckiana.

In 2017 Harrell founded Veteran's Club, which is among the organizations featured in "Nature Nurtures," *Kentucky Living's* November cover story about veterans and mental health. Harrell arranged for the group of veterans to receive equine therapy at the Waddy farm that is shown in the story.

An Army veteran, Harrell says there are approximately 640 members in Veteran's Club, which serves all branches of the military. The

organization offers veterans cost-free equine therapy and horsemanship, shares resources and works to rebuild camaraderie among veterans.

Harrell's goal is to ensure that other veterans get the timely help they deserve. It took him six years to receive help following combat in the Iraq War.

"The majority of our veterans are from Louisville, Spencer County and Shelby County, but I would like to get the whole state involved," says Harrell. For more information, go to Facebook: Veteran's Club.

Megan S. Karr of Team RWB Louisville was named the 2018 Female Kentucky Veteran of the Year. Team RWB (for Red White and



Jeremy Harrell, founder of Veteran's Club, featured in the November issue of *Kentucky Living*, was named the 2018 Male Kentucky Veteran of the Year by the Epilepsy Foundation of Kentuckiana. Photo: Thomas Hart Shelby

Blue) connects veterans to their community through physical and social activity. To locate RWB veterans events and learn more

about the organization, go to TeamRWB.org, and click on "Chapters" to search for Louisville and other Kentucky chapters.

CREATING MEMORIES ON MY OLD KENTUCKY DINNER TRAIN

R. J. Corman's My Old Kentucky Dinner Train in Historic Bardstown is more than fine dining on the rail. It is a nostalgic trip back in time. Celebrating 30 years, My Old Kentucky

ATTRACTION

Dinner Train treats its guests to high-quality cuisine and exceptional service while on a scenic, 37-mile ride through Kentucky's countryside.

Operating year-round, the train offers lunch, dinner and a variety of specialty runs such as Murder Mystery excursions, bourbon tastings, the North Pole Express for kids and adults, and a New Year's Eve run. You can also treat Mom to a Mother's Day lunch or your significant other to a romantic Valentine's Day dinner. Seats sell out quickly, so plan in advance.

Roughly 15,000 guests ride the train each year. Lunch is served in three courses, while dinner has four. "Our signature dinner entrée, prime rib served with a baked potato and chef's



vegetables, is the highlight of our menu," says Barry Corman, the train's general manager. "For lunch, comfort foods like the Kentucky Hot Brown or pot roast are hard to beat. Don't forget to leave space for our amazing dessert menu. Between the great

flavors and large portions, you will leave satisfied and ready for a nap."

The historic 1860 depot—the last remaining dry-laid limestone depot in Kentucky—is at 602 North Third Street, Bardstown. Ticket prices vary, starting at \$69.95 for adults, \$44.95 for children; reservations are required. Visit www.kydinnertrain.com to reserve online or call (502) 348-7300. Group rates also are available.



R. J. CORMAN MY OLD KENTUCKY DINNER TRAIN

Carousel Florist & Gifts in London

In the Uniquely Kentucky column, "Upscale farm food," (November 2018, *Kentucky*

Living) the Open Table Project in September was held at Carousel

FACT CHECK

Florist & Gifts, which is located in London, Kentucky, not in Corbin.



CONGRATULATIONS

Karen Nielsen of Elizabethtown, a Nolin RECC consumer-member, won the Weekend for Four in Horse Cave. Thank you to Horse Cave-Hart County Tourism for providing this exciting prize package for *Kentucky Living* readers.

Tech trend to watch: blockchain

Disruptive technology may change the way electronic transactions are processed

KALEY LOCKWOOD

We are living in the age where the pace of innovation and disruption is getting faster and faster. As a result, keeping up with the latest-and-greatest technologies is becoming increasingly difficult, not to mention expensive. It seems that as soon as we upgrade our smartphone, a new model with a bigger screen and cooler features is released.

One word that comes with a lot of hype and confusion is “blockchain.” Because this technology is completely digital, thereby intangible, it’s tough to truly grasp exactly what it is.

Electric cooperatives know that with any new technology, they must view it from every angle and consider

THE FUTURE OF ELECTRICITY

how it will ultimately improve their services. With blockchain, that means recognizing its potential and limitations, both for Kentucky’s electric co-ops and the energy industry as a whole. It also means asking whether blockchain truly benefits our consumer-members.

Let’s take a look at how blockchain works.

What is blockchain, exactly?

In simplest terms, blockchain is a digital, shared ledger that records transactions between buyers and sellers. The transaction records, or

blocks, are linked together in a time series, or chain. When a new transaction is completed, a new block is added to the chain.

Electric co-ops make numerous transactions daily, such as billing, contracting with vendors and purchasing power, and even though we have secure, well-functioning systems already in place to handle these types of transactions, some see this as a potential application for blockchain and electric utilities.

What makes blockchain unique?

When a transaction takes place, it’s recorded on a network of computers, also known as nodes. The chain is shared and synchronized among all participating nodes in the blockchain network, making it very difficult to alter the chain without the interference being detected.

Another important characteristic of blockchain is that it’s decentralized. As noted before, a blockchain is distributed across the systems of all participating parties, rather than residing within a single institution, like a bank. This particular feature is why some consider the technology disruptive. Someone in Kentucky can send money to someone in Japan directly, without needing to go through a third party. This feature makes it transparent and eliminates the need for the trusted third party.

DOES BLOCKCHAIN HAVE A CO-OP FUTURE?

Blockchain was created to provide a verifiable and secure means of tracking digital transactions between different parties.

Though electric cooperatives are constantly seeking innovative ways to serve consumer-members, blockchain does not appear to be needed at this time.

Cooperatives are involved in many transactions: billing and receiving payments from consumers; contracting with vendors; and

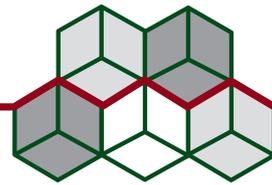
purchasing power through contractual arrangements with generation and transmission co-ops, other power generators or on the energy markets.

Co-ops have well-functioning systems in place to deal with transactions and have established integrity in managing them.

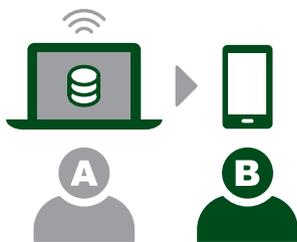
“They are the trust agent. They’re a reliable, trustworthy agent and our members express that fact,” Craig Miller, NRECA chief scientist says.

HOW DOES BLOCKCHAIN

WORK



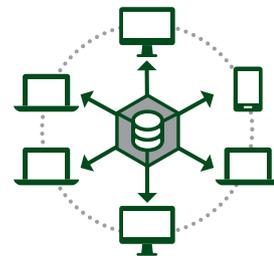
1 Person A wants to send money to Person B.



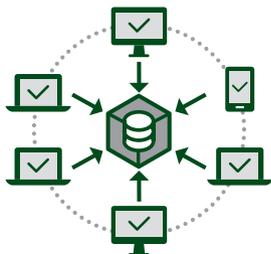
2 The transaction is represented online as a "block".



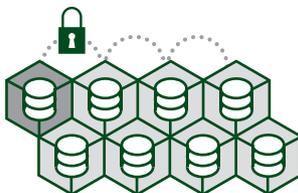
3 The block is broadcast to every party in the network.



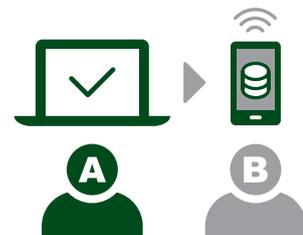
4 Those in the network approve the transaction is valid, preventing fraud.



5 The block then can be added to the chain, which provides an indelible and transparent record of transactions.



6 The money moves from Person A to Person B.



What are some real-life examples and applications of blockchain technology?

Currently, blockchain works best when the product being bought or sold is virtual rather than physical. If the transaction involves a material product, whether it be a new home thermostat or a jumbo jet, some trusted agent usually is required to certify that the physical transfer actually takes place.

Eventually, this technology may even start to intersect areas of your life

when recordkeeping and processing requires security, efficiency and connectivity. In the coming years, experts see potential for blockchain technology in the fields of health care, supply-chain management, finance and lending, and more. Blockchain could even change the way we prove our identity, as well as issue and maintain birth, wedding and death certificates.

Blockchain, like all software, is a means to an end that will provide different solutions to different needs, and determining its impact starts

with understanding what the technology is and how it works.

Time will tell if blockchain proves useful for electric utilities in the future, but for now, they are keeping an eye on this technology trend. Their top priority will always be to provide consumer-members with the safe, reliable and affordable energy they depend on. **KL**

KALEY LOCKWOOD writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

How to prevent heat from going up the chimney

We use a heat pump but want an efficient, wood-burning fireplace/insert for extra heat and emergencies. Our masonry fireplace seems to chill the house. What should we look for?—Paul

JAMES DULLEY

Using an open masonry fireplace can cool your house and result in higher overall heating costs. Heated indoor air is drawn into the fireplace and lost up the chimney, and cold outdoor air is drawn into your house through windows, doors and gaps. While you may feel comfortable by the fireplace, your heat pump or furnace can run up to 10 percent more to warm the rest of the house.

Efficient wood-burning fireplaces or inserts have tight-sealing glass doors to minimize loss of heated room air. A 42-inch wide, EPA-certified wood-burning fireplace can produce from 8,000 to 60,000 Btu per hour, some with overall efficiency as high as 77 percent.



If your old fireplace is large, you may be able to fit a new insert inside it, saving hundreds of dollars. If you plan to install a fireplace elsewhere, installing a zero-clearance model is best, as the double-walled design with insulation can be safely placed against wood wall studs.

A heating-circulating type of fireplace is a must for the best efficiency and more heated air output. Many designs operate without a fan and rely on natural flow of room air around the superhot firebox. As the air gets hot, it becomes less dense and naturally flows out into the room through an upper vent. This pulls cooler room

The decorative airtight doors on this heat-circulating fireplace improve efficiency and reduce room air loss up the chimney. Photo: Kozy Heat

air into a lower inlet to be heated.

For the greatest efficiency and least drafts indoors, install an outdoor combustion air kit before you install the fireplace, as a duct is required. Installation is simpler with a raised hearth. A register with at least 12 square inches of net free vent area should be adequate to run it under the floor to the front of the firebox. **KL**

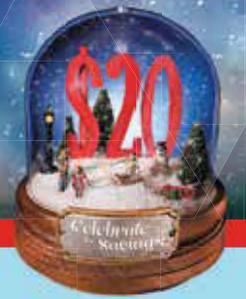
JAMES DULLEY is a nationally syndicated columnist who writes on energy efficiency and do-it-yourself energy topics.

BLOWING HOT AIR

Push warm air out into the room

For more heat output and better control of the flow of heated air, install an optional blower kit. The better ones have thermostats and variable-speed controls. Select one with at least 100 cfm (cubic feet per minute) air flow. Each fireplace manufacturer offers its own specially designed blower kit. A blower kit can usually be added by the homeowner after the fireplace is installed.

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Making dreams come true and saving lives

DEBRA GIBSON ISAACS

Holiday traditions

HENDERSON

Traditions are an essential part of the holidays, and that is certainly true at the Pendergraft home in Henderson.

Each Thanksgiving the Pendergrafts savor a big meal and then pull out their lists. It's time to go shopping—for some 600 children.

Larry Pendergraft, his brother Richard and their siblings are the heart of the Henderson Goodfellows, a local organization that for 57 years has provided children with clothes, toys and a party to celebrate Christmas.

They get the names of needy children from local schools and the

money to care for their needs from local people—mostly in the form of \$5, \$10 and \$20 donations, which “although small, really add up,” according to Larry.

“When I was very young, a little girl was sitting on the steps of the school crying because she had never gotten anything from Santa,” Larry recalls. “I was able to pick out a tea set from our stock and give it to her. I’ve never forgotten how happy it made her.”

Larry has joined in every holiday season since, raising funds then making Christmas dreams come true for local children ages 4–11.

Family of firefighters

EWING

Before the days of 911 in Fleming County, the community of Ewing had a phone tree for emergencies. One person called the next until everyone got the information. Young boys such as Grover Money grew into men by watching their forefathers collectively handle emergencies. They saw lives rescued and homes saved from ruin.

When he matured, Money began volunteering for the Ewing Volunteer Fire Department, and at 61, he is still a volunteer firefighter.

“Nationwide, 85 or 95 percent of firefighters are volunteers,” notes



“We owe the Ewing Volunteer Fire Department’s success to the people who donate to us and support us at fundraisers, along with the great fire department, law enforcement officers and EMS who work with us,” says Grover Money, shown with son, Sam. Photo: Fleming-Mason Energy

Money. “We are the first line of help available. Saving someone’s life is the No. 1 priority, and saving property is second. Many of our neighbors don’t have insurance, so it is rewarding to save their belongings as well.”

Money is also in the business of saving lives in his job for Fleming-Mason Energy. He has worked at the co-op since May 2, 1977, currently as the safety coordinator and staking engineer.

Money’s work ethic and volunteer spirit will live on another generation. Son Sam, 28, is a professional firefighter with Florence Fire EMS and also volunteers in Ewing with his dad. **KL**



Larry Pendergraft starts shopping for Christmas toys in October. Pendergraft is a procurement and contracts materials technician at Kenergy Corp. Photo: Kenergy Corp

ENERGY 101

Downed and dangerous

If you see a downed power line, always assume it is energized and dangerous. Avoid going near it or anything in contact with the power line.



Downed power lines can energize the ground up to 35 ft. away - so keep your distance.



Never drive over a downed line or through water that is touching the line.



If you see a downed line, notify the local authorities immediately.



Never try to move a downed power line, even if you think the line is deenergized or if you're using a non-conductive item- this will not prevent injury or death!

KENTUCKY ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVES

Source: ESFI.org

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GADGETS & GIZMOS

JAYNE CANNON and DAVID NOVAK

Have yourself an electronic Christmas

Remember the good old days, when a handful of plastic Army men and a broomstick horse could make a kid happy for hours? Today, the toys are a bit more complicated but just as much fun. Here are some electronic gifts to bring smiles to the kids on your gift list.



KA-CHING! Little ones can work on math and reasoning skills with the Pretend Electronic Cash Register, which comes with play bills and coins, food, a basket, and even a bank card for make-believe spending. A working calculator tracks prices, and the cash register lights and sounds will help keep it real for your tiny merchant. \$30, (800) 462-3966, www.bedbathandbeyond.com.



BLAZING TABLET Tired of sharing tablet time with your child? Here's the Fire HD 10 Kids Edition Tablet, a kid-oriented computer that's not a toy. It includes access to games and educational content. You can even add Netflix, but don't worry—the tablet has parental controls and a kid-proof case. \$160, (888) 280-4331, www.amazon.com.



WATCH THIS The VTech Kidizoom Smartwatch DX lets your little one be part of the smart watch craze at an age-appropriate level. The watch features a camera for photos and videos, plus special effects, a calculator and a calendar. It comes in a variety of bright, fun colors. \$55, (888) 280-4331, www.amazon.com.



GAME ON! AtGames brings the classic video games of the '70s and '80s back to your living room with the Atari Flashback Blast! line of products. Each mini console features an HDMI dongle that plugs directly into your TV, a wireless controller and a selection of your favorite games. Who's up for Missile Command? \$20, (310) 286-2222, www.walmart.com



MR. ROBOTO Finally—a loyal companion for your child (ages 5-10) that doesn't require feeding or daily walks. Meet Cozmo Robot, a tiny computer that syncs to a phone or tablet, plays games, expresses emotion and evolves as you get to know him. With the included Code Lab, your child can customize Cozmo into a perfect sidekick. Short charge time. \$180, (888) 280-4331, www.amazon.com.

Product inclusion on this page does not imply endorsement; product availability and prices are subject to change.

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More and more Americans are reaching the age where mobility is an everyday concern. Whether from an injury or from the aches and pains that come from getting older—getting around isn't as easy as it used to be. You may have tried a power chair or a scooter. The **Zinger** is NOT a power chair or a scooter! The **Zinger** is quick and nimble, yet it is not prone to tipping like many scooters. Best of all, it weighs only 47.2 pounds and folds and unfolds with ease. You can take it almost anywhere, providing you with independence and freedom.

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Holiday li **EXTRAV**





ghts

AGANZA

Families fill their houses and yards to the brim with Christmas cheer

BY KATHY WITT

"250 strands of lights, 100 individual bulbs per strand, for a grand total of 25,000 imported Italian twinkle lights!"—Clark W. Griswold, *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation*

Each year homeowners around Kentucky get into the spirit and onto the roof to create holiday displays in celebration of the Christmas season, all strung with thousands of twinkling lights and free for the looking.

Pile the family into the "old front-wheel drive sleigh" and head to these lit-up labors of love.



■ Previous page and above, the Lashbrook family home in Owensboro even has a separate meter from Kenergy Corp. to power the visual theatrics. Photo: Adam Paris/AP Imagery

The Griswolds' more over-the-top cousins live here

Here is a holiday light display that would send Clark W. Griswold back to the exterior illumination drawing board: Over 250,000 lights; 427 figures, including snowflakes, toy soldiers, rocking horses and candles; 12 trees—all real—trimmed to their tips; 58 bedecked bushes; a herd of reindeer flying 20 feet in the air; a passel of snow people, including a custom-designed, 20-foot-tall snowman; eight different holiday vignettes, including Toy Land, Nativity, Mr. and Mrs. Claus, Train Station and more. And one separate meter from Kenergy Corp. to power the works.

The Lashbrook family home in Owensboro is so bedazzled with the spirit of the holidays that it was once featured on ABC's *The Great Christmas Light Fight*. That was in 2014—and the display has only gotten bigger, and brighter.

"We try and add something new every year," says Jessica Lashbrook Fisher of the family's quest to outdo itself. This has included adding an enormous Santa sleigh with reindeer that flies





over Toy Land, redoing holiday figures, converting to all LED lights and—the biggest project yet—creating the 20-foot snowman for the 2018 season.

Work begins in October with a goal of completing the display just after Thanksgiving. The home, owned by Jeff and Connie Lashbrook, is in Owensboro’s Stonegate community, known as one of the best neighborhoods to drive through during the holiday season due to the abundance of homeowners giddy with the decorating bug.

The Lashbrooks don’t stop at the pulling of the light switch. The family annually hosts Christmas in Stonegate, a three-day event in December that includes Santa Claus stopping by to hand out candy canes and hot chocolate, and donations collected to support local charities.

“We get compared to the Griswolds every year,” says Lashbrook Fisher. “I think we have surpassed them now!”

Neighbors give light seekers two-for-one

One might get the idea that a toe-to-toe tinsel throwdown is what’s happening in Hopkinsville, but nothing could be further from the truth. Next-door neighbors Kevin and Lisa Brasher and Jack and Velma Crawford, consumer-members of Pennyrile Electric, are all about spreading Christmas joy—and their dueling displays simply double the holiday fun.

“We’ve been doing this for I don’t know how many years and everybody looks forward to it,” says Velma Crawford. “I just love Christmas lights and I could look at them all year long. I can’t wait to get them up every year.”

For Lisa Brasher, the idea of carrying on her late mother’s holiday traditions is the motivating force behind outdoor decorations that have scored wins in several holiday light competitions.

“My mother always decorated the house inside and out for Christmas,” she says. “Every year we would make a point to drive around town to see everyone’s lights and decorations, and I still do it to this day with my family.”

Both yards are lit up for the holidays with thousands of lights, with one key difference: The Crawfords string all white lights; the Brashers opt for multicolor.

“I encourage them to light up everything they’ve got in the

■ Jack and Velma Crawford’s home, far left, and Kevin and Lisa Brasher’s home, below, are next to each other in Hopkinsville. The Pennyrile Electric members don’t compete—they just work to spread twice the holiday joy. Photos: Crawford and Brasher families



HOW TO HOLIDAY

Creating ohh-and-ahh-worthy holiday light displays isn't for the faint-hearted. Brandon Congleton admits the road to illuminated Christmas cheer is paved with hard lessons waiting to be learned.

"Where do I start?" he asks. "Probably with this: A choreographed light show is much harder than you can even imagine. Just programming the software takes at least one hour per every one minute of music."

Also, once a homeowner starts creating amazing holiday light displays, expectations develop that it's going to continue.

"You can't just skip a year," he cautions. "Because it's something the community now also looks forward to."

Congleton offers his top three tips for DIYers who would like to mount their own holiday light spectacular:

1. Utilize LEDs to save on electricity consumption. Knowing how to convert volts to watts is key to ensure you don't overload a circuit. You must first know what's already on the circuit if it's shared with other resources. Safety first.
2. Think about how water, snow and ice will affect your display.
3. Build your own display to save money; for example, use upside-down tomato cages to make mini trees.

front yard if they can," says Crawford, who has shared both lights and advice with the Brashers.

Says Brasher: "She always lets me know if I have something out of place or if a bulb has gone out, plus (the Crawfords) are able to give me plenty of recommendations and help me find the source of burnt bulbs."

The Crawfords begin decorating in October, doing a little at a time; the Brashers face it head-on, usually the Friday after Thanksgiving, with both Kevin and Lisa working non-stop the whole day to complete it.

For both sets of neighbors, the payoff is the enjoyment the displays bring to others.

"That's why we do it," says Brasher.

Lights set to music

Brandon Congleton can relate. He and his wife, Olivia, Salt River Electric consumer-members, began decorating their Shepherdsville home, now aglow with more than 100,000 lights during the holidays, just to see the excitement on the faces of their kids: Landon, now 7; Ezra, 6; Arabella, 3; and Lincoln, 9 months old.

"They are now getting to the age where they really enjoy helping set up the display and it's creating a tradition for our family," says Congleton, noting positive community response has grown right along with the show, as he calls it.

These days, the show covers 2 acres and includes about 50 hand-built props, including a waving Santa, leaping arches, both mega and mini trees, stars and a giant cross. It also references the granddaddy of do-it-yourselfer holiday light displays with a scene captured from *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation*—that of Clark lighting the house.

A sign at the end of the drive alerts visitors to the station to tune their radio to for music choreographed with the lights. They can pull up and experience the display from the warmth of their car.

New for 2018 is a singing Christmas tree and—pending approval of the local fire department—a chimney with fire shooting out of it.

>>CONTINUED ON PAGE 26



■ If Brandon Congleton, a Salt River Electric consumer-member from Shepherdsville, had to choose a theme for his home's holiday light display, it would be "Crazy Christmas," he says. Photo: Brandon Congleton

ONLINE **Kentucky Living.com**

Share your décor

Do your holiday decorations rival the Griswolds, too? Share photos of your lavish lights with us on Facebook! Also, visit KentuckyLiving.com to see even more holiday light submissions.



ChristmasTime
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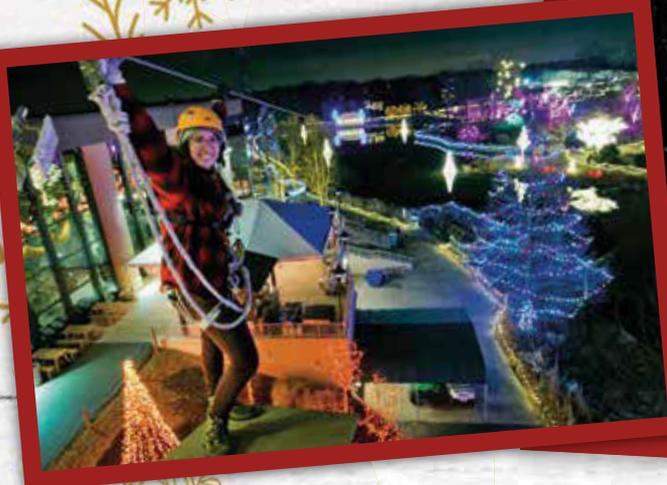
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CREATION
MUSEUM
(west of Cincinnati airport)





Attractions aglow with holiday lights

Tens of thousands of dazzling lights and lots of free holiday activities await visitors at two holiday destinations in northern Kentucky, through December 30. The Ark Encounter (www.arkencounter.com) in Williamstown presents ChristmasTime, where visitors can stroll decorated grounds, view the ark exterior with its stunning new colorful computer-controlled LED lighting, and visit the zoo and gift and fair-trade store. Parking: \$10. A special after 5 p.m. admission of \$32.99 includes a buffet dinner and access to the inside of the ark and its three floors of exhibits.

New this year at Ark Encounter is the nation's largest Glice rink, a synthetic ice-skating rink measuring nearly the length of a football field. Stay warm sipping hot chocolate around the fire

while listening to carolers. Admission: \$5 (includes skate rental).

Visit the free outdoor ChristmasTown at the Creation Museum (www.creationmuseum.org) in Petersburg, featuring the Garden of Lights, petting zoo and traditional live nativity. Parking: \$5; special after 5 p.m. \$14.99 price includes admission to the museum, collectable souvenir mug, entrance to the new children's Fun Zone and the museum's brand-new 4D Special Effects Theater.

Mega Cavern Lights Under Louisville (www.lightsunderlouisville.com) is, as its name suggests—mega, massive, millions: 850-plus lit characters with more than 3 million points of light enchant visitors on a 30-minute ride through 2 miles of passageways on what is the world's

only fully underground drive-through Christmas light show. New this year is the Christmas Express, an open-air tram ride through the light show available during daylight hours. Admission: \$27 per standard vehicle. (See website for downloadable \$5 off coupon.)

The family-friendly Southern Lights Holiday Festival (www.khpfoundation.org, search "Southern Lights"), through December 31 at the Kentucky Horse Park, has 3 miles of illuminated holiday displays to enjoy from the comfort of your car, plus local crafts, model trains and mini train rides, visits with Santa, pony and camel rides, an exotic petting zoo and more at the Holiday Festival. Tickets: \$17 per car Monday-Thursday; \$27 per car Friday-Sunday.





■ ChristmasTime at the Ark Encounter offers guests the opportunity to stroll the beautifully decorated grounds, visit the zoo and view the massive ark aglow—all for the price of parking. Photo: Answers in Genesis

■ Below, Ark Encounter is showcasing the nation's largest Glice (synthetic ice) rink. Photo: Answers in Genesis. Bottom and left, made for a mega jaw drop, it's the Louisville Mega Cavern transformed into an underground wonderland. Photos: Louisville Mega Cavern



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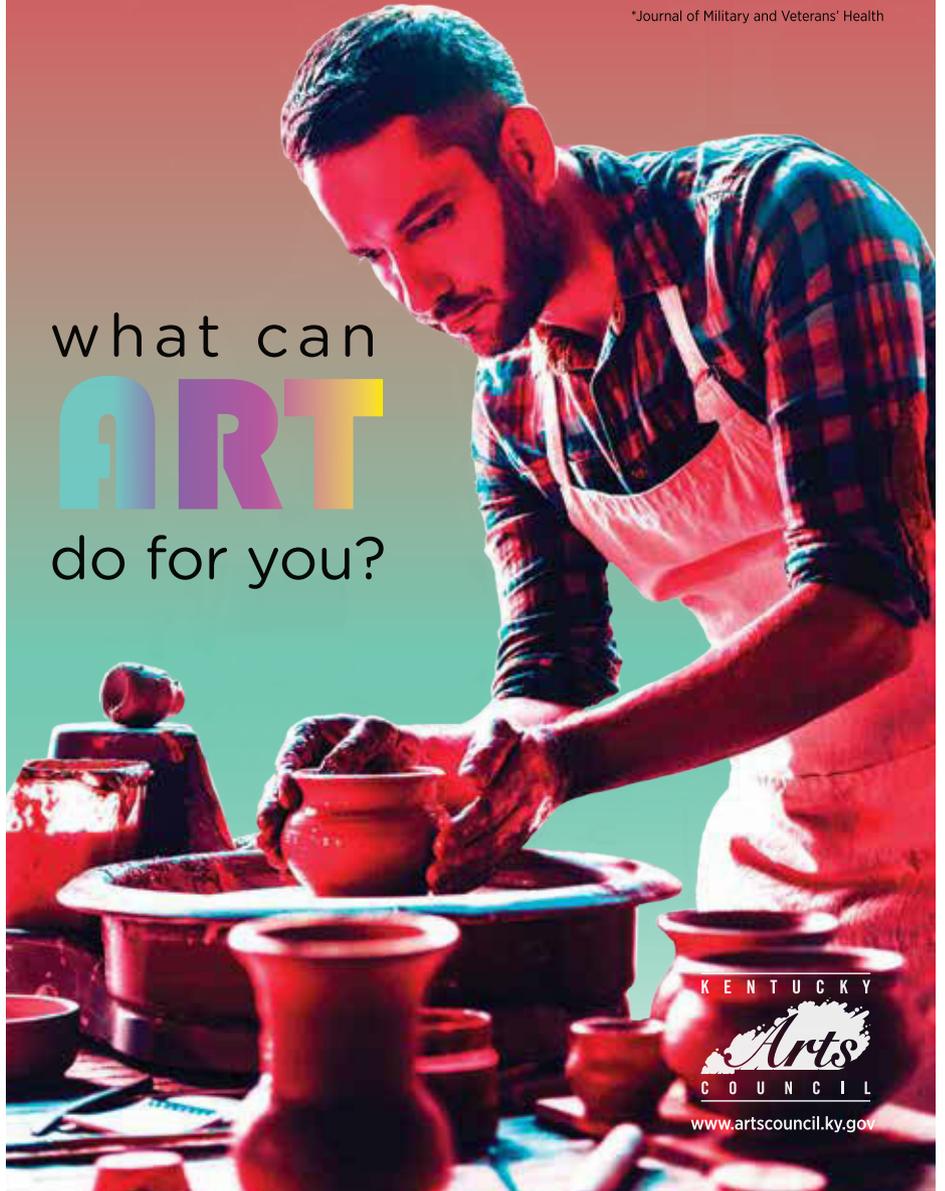


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■ Ruley's Holiday Light Show in Loretto has grown from a hobby to an annual holiday tradition. Photo: Visit Lebanon



■ The late Paul Ruley, shown several years ago, trimming a tree in preparation for Ruley's Holiday Light Show. Photo: Ashley Gootee

>>CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

A Christmas promise kept

The holiday display at one home in the St. Francis community of Loretto has gotten so elaborate and over-the-top that it is hard to believe it began as a hobby to show off some beloved collectibles and souvenirs from a couple's travels.

But Ruley's Holiday Light Show is a much-anticipated holiday extravaganza spread over 2 acres that includes more than 1 million lights and dozens of vignettes featuring some 250 characters—trains, Christmas stars, giant wreaths, the Grinch—plus charming exhibits of cookie jars and the Happy Holidays series of Barbies that date back 30 years to 1988 when it was introduced by Mattel.

"You wouldn't believe the joy doing this has brought to my husband, Paul, and me," says Darnell Ruley, who lost her husband on September 8, 2016, after 51 years of marriage. "Keeping Ruley's Holiday Light Show was my promise to him."

Work gets underway in September to have the display ready to open around Thanksgiving. It is a full-on holiday spectacular that actually feels more like a festival with its Christmas village and collectibles on display in the 4,000-square-foot viewing garage Paul Ruley built. It includes hot chocolate by the firepit; souvenirs for sale, including shot glasses, hoodies and hats; photo ops with Santa (\$5); kids' barrel rides (\$3) and more.

"Kids just love the barrel rides," says Ruley. "They tell their parents, 'One ride isn't enough—I want to go more.'"

The show operates from 5 p.m. until midnight through New Year's Day. There is no admission; however, donations are welcome. **KL**

HOLIDAY AND WINTER SAFETY



WHEN IT'S COLD OUTSIDE, KEEP SAFETY IN MIND

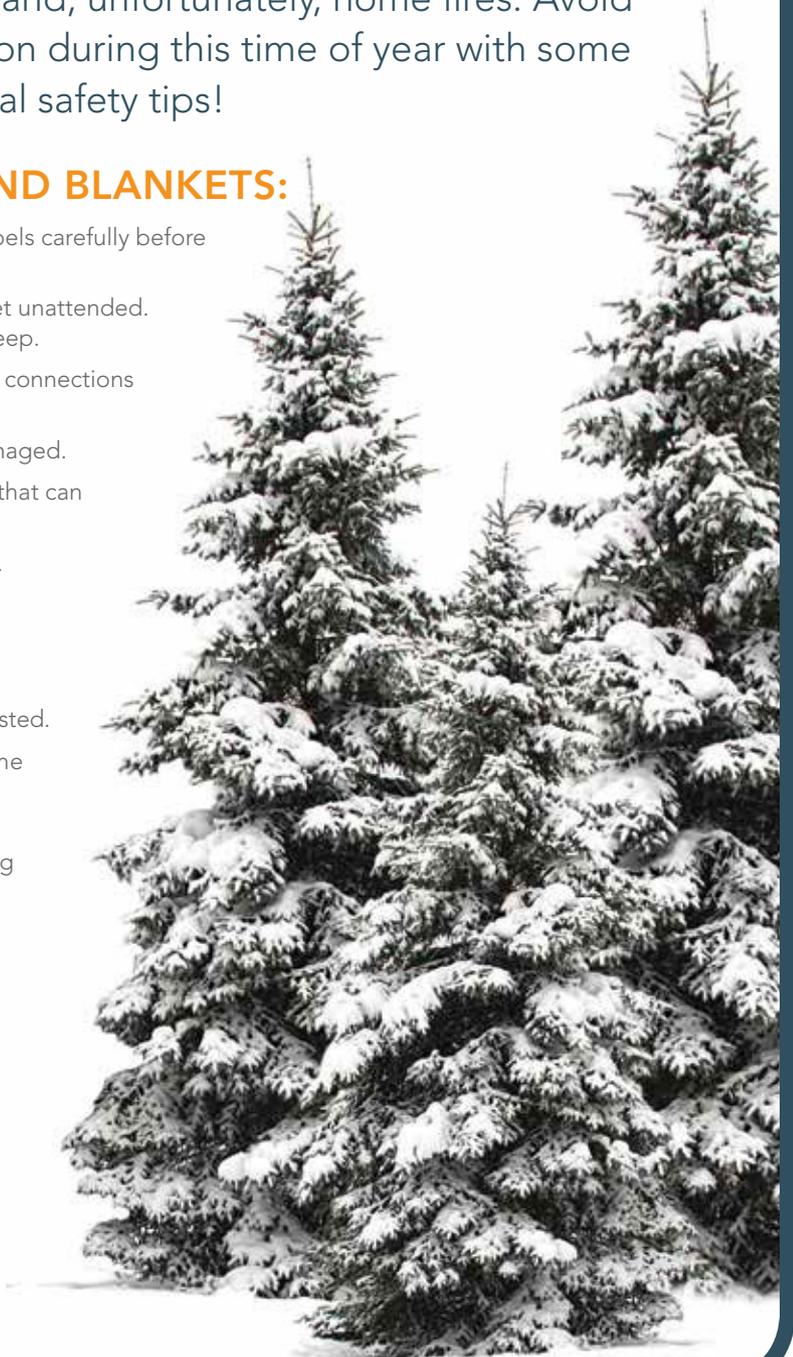
Winter is full of holiday festivities, and, unfortunately, home fires. Avoid the hazards that are all too common during this time of year with some helpful holiday and winter electrical safety tips!

ELECTRIC SPACE HEATERS AND BLANKETS:

- Read the manufacturer's instructions and warning labels carefully before using a space heater or electric blanket.
- Don't leave a space heater or electric heating blanket unattended. Turn it off when you're leaving a room or going to sleep.
- Inspect heaters for cracked or broken plugs or loose connections before each use.
- Don't use the heater if plugs are frayed, worn or damaged.
- Keep heaters at least three feet away from anything that can burn, including papers, clothing and rugs.
- Don't use an electric blanket if it is charred or frayed.

HOLIDAY DECORATIONS

- When shopping for lights, electric decorations and extension cords, purchase only the ones that are UL-listed.
- Choose decorations that are flame resistant or flame retardant.
- If you're planning to decorate outdoors, make sure the decorations are suitable for outdoor use. Putting indoor-only products outside in the weather can result in electric shock and fire hazards.
- Outdoor electric lights and decorations should be plugged into circuits protected by ground fault circuit interrupters.
- Exercise caution when decorating near power lines. Keep yourself and your equipment at least 10 feet from power lines.
- Always turn off all lights and decorations before going to bed or leaving the house.
- When hanging up festive lights and decorations, use clips, not nails, to hang lights so the cords do not get damaged.





Uniquely KENTUCKY

Santa's workshop

Employees at a fast-growing, Lawrenceburg toy company toil away finding, selling and shipping hard-to-find toys, putting Santa and his helpers to shame.

Steven Seeberger founded ToyBurg in his garage in 2006 when he was in his 20s after successfully spending a few years selling toys and other items online with wife Jessica.

The company mainly sells in-demand yet discontinued or under-produced toys that are no longer in stock at most stores—Legos, Nerf and AquaDoodle for example.

Story: Shannon Clinton

ToyBurg hit \$1 million in online sales in 2007 and hasn't slowed down. Based in an industrial property that has undergone several expansions, their employee roster is kept small—35 friends and family members.

The work environment is casual, and most times of the year employees set their own schedules, with ample vacation time besides. They're served daily free lunches on-site, as well as dinner in busier seasons.

Employees embark on free company cruises—next year a trip to Mexico—and receive sizeable employee bonuses from

annual profits. Predictably, turnover is scant and open positions are rare.

Meanwhile, Seeberger semi-retired two years ago and the acting CEO, Jon Linwick, tackles many day-to-day responsibilities.

"The success of the company now is the success for my friends, so I'd like to see it succeed for their benefit," Seeberger says. "...The amount of personal sacrifice that these people have put in have made it what it is. ... Everybody sacrifices for each other."

Go to KentuckyLiving.com to see more photos and read more about ToyBurg.

Photo: Tim Webb

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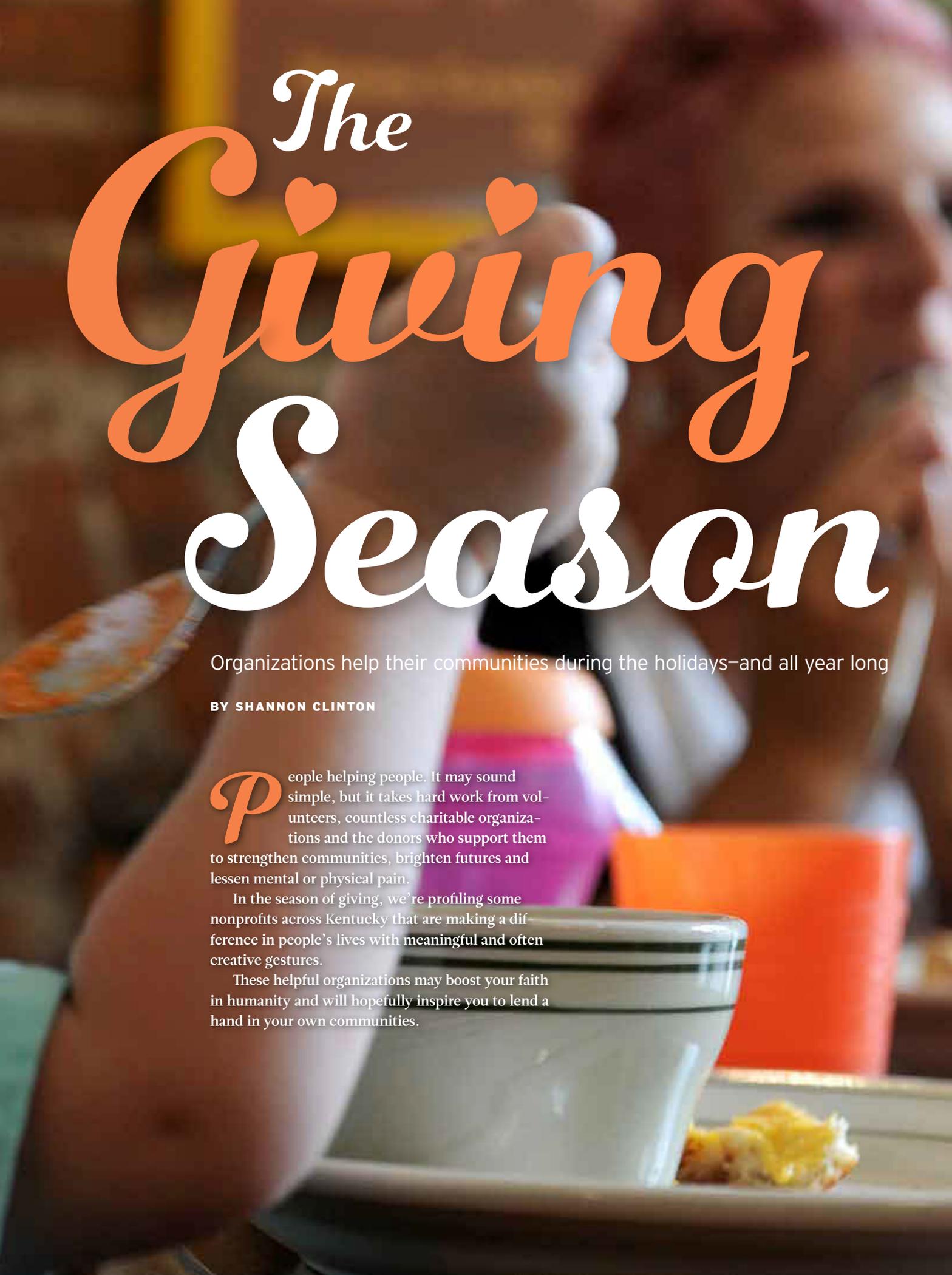
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■ Lucy is a regular at Grace Café, a pay-what-you-can restaurant in Danville. Photo: Nick Lacy



The Giving Season

Organizations help their communities during the holidays—and all year long

BY SHANNON CLINTON

People helping people. It may sound simple, but it takes hard work from volunteers, countless charitable organizations and the donors who support them to strengthen communities, brighten futures and lessen mental or physical pain.

In the season of giving, we're profiling some nonprofits across Kentucky that are making a difference in people's lives with meaningful and often creative gestures.

These helpful organizations may boost your faith in humanity and will hopefully inspire you to lend a hand in your own communities.



Grace Café, Danville

At first glance, Grace Café in Danville mimics its traditional counterparts—it's cheerfully decorated and welcoming, with healthy, locally sourced food, attractively plated and served with a smile.

A key difference is this community café opened in 2015 to combat food insecurity, its founder and executive director Rochelle Bayless says. The café and about 55 others nationwide are affiliated with the organization One World Everybody Eats, or OWEE, (www.oneworldeverybodyeats.org) designed to help ease hunger at the community level with a pay-what-you-can model.

Food insecurity, Bayless explains, is when someone is worried about having enough food for themselves or their families to eat, while hunger is defined as missing meals entirely.

"We want to make sure that we are an access point for a healthy, local sourced meal every day for anybody who needs it, so we can prevent hunger from happening in the first place," she says.

■ Above, Grace Café's Head Cook/Kitchen Manager Monarlea Wyatt preps dishes with summer kitchen intern Loren Weber, a Bonner Scholar from Berea College, class of 2019.

■ Volunteers Dashannica Jones and Jasyia Richards, left, work alongside Anna Bushong, a café intern, and Christina Smith. Both Bushong and Smith are Bonner Scholars from Centre College, class of 2021. Photos: Nick Lacy

With 10 employees, Grace Café is open daily for one three-hour meal service with an ever-changing menu. Some constants are Taco Tuesdays, and Fridays bring comfort food like meatloaf and mashed potatoes. With the help of partnering local farmers, there's an emphasis on healthy, locally sourced ingredients.

There are suggested donations for meals, but with no proof of income requirement, patrons pay as they're able to or can even "pay it forward" and donate toward others' meals.

During a recent three-hour period, Grace Café served 137 meals, Bayless says, though the average is about 70 per day. The café seats 65.

Harrodsburg resident Amy Cox says she frequents Grace Café and especially enjoys the tacos and burgers.

"It's not expensive," she says. "It's whatever you can pay. ... The workers are friendly people and they make you feel welcome."





About 60 percent of Grace Café’s funding comes from diners’ donations and the remainder from individual donations, corporate sponsorships and grants, Bayless says. Other community partners include Centre College, communities in Boyle and surrounding counties, and the city of Danville.

Future goals include launching a food truck.

Bayless has worked as a chaplain and in the nonprofit sector and though the café isn’t religiously affiliated, she says her work there is spiritually satisfying.

“I also love to eat, and I love good food and I love community, and this seems to be a really good fit for me ... it’s a really joyful mission,” she says.

Another OWEE-affiliated community café, a farm-to-table eatery called The Table, is in Louisville (www.tablecafe.org) and one called Spark is slated to open in Versailles in December, its organizers say. Visit www.sparkcommunitycafe.org for details and updates.

Shoes 4 the Soul

The caring and humble Biblical act of foot washing is recreated on the campus of University of the Cumberlands in Williamsburg each fall during Shoes 4 the Soul.

During this event, the university’s incoming freshmen, faculty and staff members wash the feet of participating children, providing them with new socks, shoes, a backpack full of school supplies and a few hours of fun activities.

More than 2,100 local children have been served since the program’s 2011 inception, with a current goal to serve 500 children per year.

Emily Coleman is vice president for Student Services and Jasmine Newport is director of Appalachian Ministries at the university. Both are involved with Shoes 4 the Soul, which they say originated with the women’s basketball team.





BY THE NUMBERS—HELPING KENTUCKIANS

- 65** The number of patrons Danville's Grace Café can seat.
- 137** Number of meals Grace Café recently served in a three-hour meal service.
- 19** Number of months it took from planning to opening Grace Café.
- 1888** The Year University of the Cumberlands was founded. The University has a Shoes 4 the Soul program that gives children new shoes, socks and school supplies each fall.
- \$30** The amount it takes to sponsor a child for the Shoes 4 the Soul program.
- 2,100** The estimated number of local children Shoes 4 the Soul has helped to date.
- 1,511** The number of gowns or wraps God's Littlest Angels volunteers have made for parents of newborns who passed away as of fall 2018.
- 24** The number of hospitals that receive gowns or wraps from God's Littlest Angels.
- 25** The number of God's Littlest Angels volunteers.
- 3** The number of days a week Friends of Paint Lick opens its doors to help people in the community.
- 1988** The year Friends of Paint Lick was founded.
- 8** Number of volunteers that Friends of Paint Lick have working on a daily basis.

■ The Shoes 4 the Soul program at the University of the Cumberlands provides children with new socks, shoes, a backpack full of school supplies—and a day of making memories.

■ The Cumberlands' Men's Wrestling team give high-fives to everyone who walks into the university's intramural gym for activities. Photos: Bill Turner/University Communications

■ Bottom right, a locket is attached to a gown for a baby who passed away after being delivered at eight months, the grandson of a seamstress at the ministry. Photo: Lisa Brooks

Students, faculty and staff, alumni, community members and others sponsor children each year for \$30 each.

Newport says it's great to watch the older students and children interact.

"Some students get really reverent with it, but most of the students just take the time to build relationships with those kids," she says.

Coleman says this year one boy proudly showed off his new shoes to her, saying he could tell they made him jump higher and run faster than ever before.

"He kept saying, 'My feet feel SO good!'" she says. "It's those little moments that are so exciting."

God's Littlest Angels

When a family suffers the heartbreaking loss of a newborn, a group of caring Owensboro volunteers offers a handmade and heartfelt gesture of sympathy through God's Littlest Angels.

Tammy Boardman and Mary Fogle, both of



Owensboro, met in a doctor's office in 2014 and began chatting. Fogle is a retired seamstress and mentioned wanting to use her skills to start a new ministry.

Boarman, a pharmaceutical representative, said that she couldn't sew but could help with promotions, and soon their idea took flight. They use donated wedding and prom dresses that volunteers fashion into infant wraps or gowns for newborns who have passed away.

Donated formalwear comes from as far away as California and Florida. So far, more than 1,500 dresses have been made and distributed among 24 participating hospitals, Boarman says.

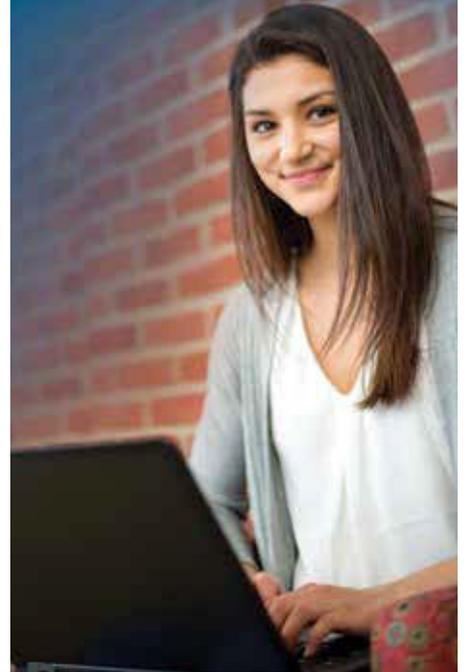
The group occupies space in Owensboro Christian Church, and community volunteers take on different roles in the process as their time and abilities dictate, retrieving donations from drop-off points, disassembling donated dresses or cutting out patterns. Others sew the finished garments, which are then delivered to participating hospitals.

Overhead is low, Boarman says, but the group receives some monetary donations. God's Littlest Angels has even helped other locations start similar ministries, including one in Bowling Green.

Volunteers save unused beads for bracelets that local youth make to include with each gown. The gowns also are affixed with tiny angel charms.

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BEREA COLLEGE



HOW YOU CAN HELP

FRIENDS OF PAINT LICK collects donated items to redistribute to people who need them regardless of income, and its expenses are funded by volunteer donations. To learn more about this group and how you can help, go to Facebook: Friends of Paint Lick Inc.

GOD'S LITTLEST ANGELS, Owensboro. Spokeswoman Tammy Boarman says the group can always use donated wedding gowns for their ministry, and sometimes prom gowns, depending on the fabric. Prom dresses that can't be used for baby gowns are donated to an organization that helps lower-income girls attend prom by furnishing them with a donated gently used prom dress and other necessities. For more information about God's Littlest Angels, go to Facebook: God's Littlest Angels (@gotslittleangels).

GRACE CAFÉ, Danville. Founder and Executive Director Rochelle Bayless says Grace Café relies on the help of volunteers and conducts fundraising for about 40 percent of its operating budget. Individual donors and corporate sponsors are accepted and if you're in the area, you can eat there seven days a week during its three-hour meal service—donations are accepted as you can afford to pay.

For meal hours and more information, visit www.gracecafe.org and click on "How You Can Help."

SHOES 4 THE SOUL, Williamsburg. \$30 will sponsor one child for University of the Cumberlands' annual fall event, which provides shoes, socks and school supplies, as well as games and fun activities, for area children in need. The university has set an annual goal of helping 500 children a year with this initiative. For more information about Shoes 4 the Soul and how you can help, including how to make donations online, visit www.ucumberlands.edu/shoes4soul.

■ These gowns were made from used wedding gowns for infants who passed away. Photo: Lisa Brooks

■ Below, Rickie Collette and Linda Caldwell, Friends of Paint Lick, organize and fold the donated clothes by size and gender and sort children's clothes by age. Photo: Loraine Todd

All the work is performed at no cost to recipients. "We hope that dress brings comfort and we expect absolutely nothing in return," Boarman says.

Friends of Paint Lick

When you need help, it's nice to know that your friends will assist with no strings attached.

Likewise, the Friends of Paint Lick, a community service organization, is open three days a week to connect people's donated items with other people who need them, board president and volunteer Linda Caldwell says.

The nonprofit was founded in 1988 by then-middle schooler Kevin Brown, who was pursuing a community volunteer project and tapped local go-getter Dean Cornett, who Caldwell says was known for helping people. In no time, the two had cooked up a concept for Friends of Paint Lick.

Soon the group began offering GED classes and collected and distributed items like clothes and small household items, regardless of recipients' income.

"(Cornett) always wanted it to be for everyone," Caldwell says. "It didn't matter how rich you were or how poor you were, if you wanted something it was yours, so we operated on that idea."

Eventually Cornett's health declined, and she passed away, Caldwell says. After a period of inactivity, community members rebooted the group in her memory about 15 years ago. Around eight volunteers help daily, she says, most hailing from Blue Grass or Inter-County electric cooperative households.

Local churches help with the effort, and along with others donate financially to help defray operating costs.

Caldwell says she still feels elated when she is able to provide the very thing someone was searching for.

"I think we all feel really privileged to be able to do that and feel blessed to have the strength to keep going," she says. **KL**



Eye Doctor Helps Tennessee Legally Blind To See

High Technology For Low Vision Patients Allows Many To Drive Again



For many patients with macular degeneration and other vision-related conditions, the loss of central visual detail also signals the end to one of the last bastions of independence: driving.

A Lebanon optometrist, Dr. John Pino, is using miniaturized telescopes that are mounted in glasses to help people who have lost vision from macular degeneration and other eye conditions.

“Some of my patients consider me the last stop for people who have vision loss,” said Dr. Pino, one of only a few doctors in the world who specialize in fitting bioptic telescopes to help those who have lost vision due to macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, and other debilitating eye diseases.

Imagine a pair of glasses that can improve your vision enough to change your life. If you’re a low vision patient, you’ve probably not only imagined them, but have been searching for them. Bioptic telescopes may be the breakthrough in optical technology that will give you the independence you’ve been looking for. Patients with vision in the 20/200 range can many times be improved to 20/50 or better.

Macular degeneration is the leading cause of blindness and vision loss in people over 50. Despite this, most adults

are not familiar with the condition. As many as 25% of those over the age of 50 have some degree of macular degeneration. The macula is only one small part of the retina; however, it is the most sensitive and gives us sharp central vision. When it degenerates, macular degeneration leaves a blind spot right in the center of vision, making it difficult or impossible to recognize faces, read a book, or pass the driver’s vision test.

Nine out of 10 people who have macular degeneration have the dry form. New research suggests vitamins can help. The British medical journal BMC Ophthalmology recently reported that



A scene as it might be viewed by a person with age-related macular degeneration.

56% of patients treated with a high-dose combination of vitamins experienced improved vision after six months. TOZAL Comprehensive Eye Health Formula is now available by prescription from eye doctors.

While age is the most significant risk factor for developing the disease, heredity, smoking, cardiovascular disease, and high blood pressure have also been identified as risk factors. Macular degeneration accounts for 90% of new legal blindness in the U.S. While there is currently no cure, promising research is being done on many fronts. “My job is to figure out everything and anything possible to keep a person

functioning, especially driving,” says Dr. Pino.

When Elaine, 57, of Kingsport, TN, came to see Dr. Pino she wanted to keep her Tennessee driver’s license and was prescribed bioptic telescopic glasses to read signs and see traffic lights farther away. Dr. Pino also prescribed microscope glasses for reading newspapers and menus in restaurants.

As Elaine puts it, “My regular glasses didn’t help too much – it was like looking through a fog. These new telescopic glasses not only allow me to read signs from a farther distance, but make driving much easier. I’ve also used them to watch television so I don’t have to sit so close. I don’t know why I waited to do this; I should have come sooner.”

“Bioptic telescopes can cost over \$2,000,” said Dr. Pino, “especially if we build them with an automatic sunglass.”

“The major benefit of the bioptic telescope is that the lens automatically focuses on whatever you’re looking at,” said Dr. Pino. “It’s like a self-focusing camera, but much more precise.”

To learn more about bioptic telescopes or to schedule a consultation with Dr. Pino, give us a call at 1-855-405-8800. You can also visit our website at:

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John M. Pino, O.D., Ph.D.



STEM SOAR TEACHERS

64 eastern Kentucky teachers graduate with STEM expertise

BY NICK COMER

Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives are celebrating the graduation of 64 teachers from an innovative program that lays the groundwork for creating a Kentucky workforce trained in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

Through the Shaping Our Appalachian Region (SOAR)-STEM initiative, 100 K-12 teachers will return to local school districts in eastern Kentucky prepared to educate children in STEM fields.

"SOAR-STEM is a bold, unique initiative to develop the world's largest workforce trained in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), and centered in Kentucky," says Rodney Hitch, director of Economic Development for Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives.

Graduates not only will implement STEM education in their classrooms, but will help train additional educators to teach STEM-related topics.

Each SOAR-STEM graduate completed a three-year curriculum to achieve a Teacher Leader master's degree and certifications from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and the Project Lead The Way STEM curriculum.

In addition to the degree and certifications, each graduate received:

- A laptop computer, presented by Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives.
- An iPad and VEX Robotics Kit, from the Toyota Foundation, Appalachian Research Commission and Kentucky Department for Local Government.

Lead providers are Morehead State University, University of Pikeville and Union College. Other partners include the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education and the Kentucky Department of Education. Another 18 teachers are on track to graduate next year.

"The degree that I received has made me more proud than any accomplishment in my education career," says Megan Bond, a teacher at Clay County's Manchester Elementary, which is served by Jackson Energy Cooperative.

"I actually presented to my administration a proposal to increase our attendance," Bond says. "That pilot carried out throughout the

■ **Left, Rodney Hitch, economic development director for Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, welcomes Wolfe County teacher, Amy Phipps, who spoke at the event. Below, teacher graduates of the SOAR-STEM program celebrate at the Salyersville ceremony, along with sponsor representatives who helped make the program possible. Photos: Steve Craycraft/Spectrum Photography**





■ Students built robots in a STEM education camp in Salyersville. Photo: Steve Craycraft/Spectrum Photography

entire year and our attendance increased in my school, and we saved our district over \$100,000.”

Kentucky’s Touchstone Energy Cooperatives helped to develop the SOAR-STEM project, identifying and engaging partners to fund and implement the program. The cost is covered by funding partners. Teachers must commit to remain with their school district for three years.

SOAR is a nonpartisan economic development agency that works to expand job creation; enhance regional opportunity, innovation and identity; improve the quality of life; and support all those working to achieve these goals in eastern Kentucky. **KL**

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100 W. Broadway, Frankfort, KY 40601
Visit history.ky.gov/events for complete schedule



KENTUCKY CULTURE

The sounds of Christmas

Enjoy a holiday concert in a city near you

BY TRACEY TEO



Do you hear what I hear? Holiday productions catering to a variety of musical tastes are being staged around Kentucky, so whether you prefer fun, feel-good songs with a danceable beat or sacred music in a sacred space, it's easy to find a performance that sparks that Christmas spirit.

Variety! Christmas Extravaganza, a Branson-style musical revue at Badgett Playhouse in Grand Rivers, is like a bulging Christmas stocking;

WORTH THE TRIP

it's loaded with an assortment of goodies. Some numbers are as familiar and comforting as your favorite childhood candy, while others are delightful surprises, like finding an exotic fruit from a foreign land in the toe of that stocking.

The family-friendly show is packed with professional vocal talent driven by an eight-piece

orchestra. An audience favorite is *Dig that Crazy Santa Claus*, a kick-up-your-heels big band number. Chuck Berry fans sway to the beat of *Run Rudolph Run*, the rollicking Christmas song recorded by the late rock legend in 1958.

For Bill and Sara Minihan, the husband-and-wife team that produces the

The Paducah Symphony Orchestra blends old and new tunes in its Christmas Celebration. Photo: Paducah Symphony Orchestra



Choir members from more than 20 churches fill the Living Christmas Tree during performances in Taylorsville. Photo: *The Spencer Magnet*

dazzling holiday spectacle, the opportunity to stage that first show back in 2005 felt like nothing short of a Christmas miracle.

“The city wanted a theater but didn’t have anybody to run it; we wanted a theater but didn’t have one to run,” Bill says.

The Minihans were promptly hired. They got busy putting together a breathtaking premiere holiday performance and haven’t looked back.

“What touches us the most is we have people that come back year after year,” Bill says. “We have become part of their Christmas tradition.”

A key component of that tradition is the grand finale, a poignant rendition of *Oh, Holy Night*.

“It’s a fun, high-energy show, but we keep the message of Christ in Christmas,” Bill says. “That’s important to our audience.”

Living Christmas Tree

That message is being broadcast loud and clear at the First Baptist Church in Taylorsville through the 33rd annual Living Christmas Tree choral concert. A specially constructed floor-to-ceiling Christmas tree adorned with thousands of ever-changing colored lights serves as a tiered stage for choir members from more than 20 regional churches. Their shimmering vocals backed by a high school orchestra and a bell choir radiate throughout the church like the warmth from an inviting holiday fire.

“Once Upon a Silent Night” is the theme this year, a tribute to the bicentennial of the Christmas classic composed by Austrian Franz Gruber.

Silent Night was originally sung in German, but over the years, it has been translated into dozens of languages, and now it’s one of the world’s most recognized Christmas carols.



December

- 1-31 Marty Justice Photography Exhibit
- 1-2 A Christmas Carol, The Musical
CK Kids & Youth
- 2 & 14 Santa Clause, City Hall, 4-6pm
- 7-9 James Bond III Film Festival Christian Edition
- 8-9 The Beautiful Music of Christmas
Mid-Kentucky Arts, St. Catharine Hall
Saturday 7:30pm, Sunday 3pm
- 15 Christmas Ice Skating, FREE, downtown
- 25 Christmas Day

January

- 1 New Year’s Day
- 11-20 My Way, A Music Tribute to Frank Sinatra
- 21 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

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Variety! Christmas Extravaganza

Dec. 1-28, Fridays and Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.; Dec. 4, 5 and 13 at 2 p.m. The Badgett Playhouse, 1838 JH O'Bryan Ave., Grand Rivers, (888) 362-4223, www.badgettplayhouse.com

Living Christmas Tree

Dec. 1-2, 5:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. each night. First Baptist Church, 115 W. Main St., Taylorsville, (502) 477-8197, www.taylorsvillefbc.com

A Christmas Story

Dec. 1-2, show times vary. The Kentucky Center, 501 W. Main St., Louisville, www.kentuckycenter.org

BJO's Kentucky Opry Christmas

Dec. 1-15, show times vary. Mountain Arts Center, 50 Hal Rogers Dr., Prestonsburg, (606) 886-2623, www.macarts.com/events

Pam Tillis Christmas

Dec. 1, 7 p.m., Renfro Valley Entertainment Center, 2380 Richmond St., Mt. Vernon, (800) 765-7464, www.renfrovalley.com

Paducah Symphony Orchestra Christmas Celebration

Dec. 8, 7:30 p.m. The Carson Center, 100 Kentucky Ave., Paducah, (270) 444-0065, www.paducahsymphony.org

Hope Starts at Home Christmas Concert

Dec. 11, 7 p.m., United Methodist Temple, 395 S. Main St., Russellville

Christmas with Exile

Dec. 13, 7 p.m., Center for Rural Development, 2292 S. Hwy 27, Somerset, (606) 677-6000, www.centertech.com

A Charlie Brown Christmas Live On Stage

Dec. 19, 7 p.m., RiverPark Center, 101 Daviess St., Owensboro, (270) 687-2770, www.riverparkcenter.org, click on "Upcoming Events"

A Christmas Evening with Jason Crabb

Dec. 19, 6-10 p.m., Kentucky Music Hall of Fame and Museum, 2590 Richmond St., Mt. Vernon, www.eventbrite.com, search "Christmas with Jason Crabb"

CENTER STAGE

Need more Christmas cheer? Check out these events.

Christmas in the Park

Dec. 1-Jan. 1. This free drive-through Christmas light extravaganza is in Freeman Lake Park. 212 Freeman Lake Park Road, Elizabethtown, (270) 769-3916

Children's Tea Time with Mrs. Claus

Dec. 1, 8, 15 and 22. Noon-5 p.m. Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill, 3501 Lexington Road, Harrodsburg, (800) 734-5611, www.shakervillageky.org

A Christmas Carol: A Live Radio Play

Dec. 1, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.; Dec. 2, 2 p.m. A community theater performance at Palace Theatre, 119 N. Main St., Greenville, (270) 338-7165, www.mctiky.org

Christmas Tour of Homes

Dec. 8, 1-8 p.m. Tour festive privately-owned homes in Bardstown and the surrounding area. Includes a candlelight tour of My Old Kentucky Home house museum. Tickets available at the Bardstown Visitor Center, 1 Court Square, Bardstown, (502) 348-4877, www.visitbardstown.com

Sara Minihan sings with Santa during a performance of *Variety! Christmas Extravaganza*. Photo: Badgett Playhouse

Mrs. Julia Beckham's Christmas Tea at Wickland

Dec. 8, noon, Dec. 9, 4 p.m. Enjoy a Victorian tea with Julia Wickliffe Beckham, the only woman in the world to be the mother, sister and daughter of a U.S. governor. She shares memories of her life at Wickland at the turn of the 20th century. 550 Bloomfield Road, U.S. 62 E, Bardstown, (502) 507-0808, www.historicwickland.com

Princess Tea Party with Elsa

Dec. 8, 11:30 a.m. A *Frozen*-themed children's tea at Expressions Tea and Gifts, 2835 S. Hwy. 27, Somerset, (606) 677-4068, ext. 1119. For reservations, email glstephens@bluegrass.org. A Christmas Tea party, an annual event for grown-up palates, is Dec. 13 at 5:30 p.m.

Dickens of a Christmas Small Business Saturday

Dec. 15. The Smedley Artisan Market in the LowerTown Arts District showcases the talent of local artists and artisans. Smedley Yeiser, 533 Madison St., Paducah, (270) 709-3119, www.smedleyyeiser.com



destinations



Dana Poulson performs in *Variety! Christmas Extravaganza* at Badgett Playhouse in Grand Rivers. Photo: Badgett Playhouse

The one-hour performance opens with a moving arrangement of *O, Come All Ye Faithful*, setting a reverent tone.

Music director Joy Thompson is the driving force behind the concert. For seven years, it's been the highlight of her Christmas season.

"It's a great blessing to have music tell such a wonderful story and to have people (choir members) who really enjoy telling that story and hoping that it will be a blessing to others," she says.

The production culminates with Handel's hallowed but jubilant *Hallelujah Chorus*, leaving the audience filled with the joy of the season.

Paducah Symphony Orchestra

In Paducah, it's beginning to look (and sound) a lot like Christmas.

The Paducah Symphony Orchestra, conducted by artistic director Raffaele Ponti, is gearing up for a Christmas Celebration, a choral performance that promises a mix of the old and the new, the religious and the secular.

Ponti looks forward to bringing the joy of the season to the community year after year, despite the fact the popular

pops concert is the most difficult performance of the season to program. He says that's because there must be a careful balance between beloved Christmas classics and uplifting but less familiar works.

"It's like planning a dinner menu," Ponti says. "You want to serve something you know people will like, but you also want to enhance the experience by introducing new things they may like."

To satisfy "comfort food" cravings, *Joy to the World* and *It's Beginning to Look Like Christmas* are on the menu, but tantalizing, unexpected flavors also await.

To mix things up, the concert features two distinctly different orchestrations of *Gloria*.

Vivaldi's bold and charming Baroque version is introduced early in the show, but during the second half, the audience is treated to Randol Alan Bass's equally arresting, but contemporary arrangement.

"It's a festive, joyful time and a great way to start the holiday season," Ponti says. **KL**

TRACEY TEO lives in Indiana, but loves writing about her home state of Kentucky, and contributes to newspapers and magazines nationally.

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Bourbon Balls

EVENT CALENDAR

► **COUNTRY CHRISTMAS** Join the community gathering in downtown Williamstown December 1 to celebrate "A Country Christmas." The list of family activities includes a parade, live nativity, arts and crafts, live music, magic show, wagon rides, tree lighting and children's activities. Enjoy the free pancake supper, see Santa and laugh it up at the Ugly Christmas Sweater Contest. New this year: An iceless "skating rink" and Frosty's Fun 5K run/walk. Hours: 4:30-7:30 p.m. Free admission. For details, call (859) 824-3322 or go to Facebook: Grant Co Country Christmas.



▼ **CHRISTMAS PAST** Celebrate an 18th Century Christmas at the Fort, December 7-8 at Fort Boonesborough. See living history interpretations of holiday traditions of various ethnic groups and nationalities. Period music and dancing by candlelight, and bonfires add to the atmosphere. Hours: 6-9 p.m. Friday; 1-4 p.m. Saturday. Admission, which includes refreshments: \$8 adults, \$5 children 6 to 12; under 6 free. For more information call (859) 527-3131 or go online to <https://parks.ky.gov> and click on "Parks."



▲ **BURGOO BLAST** Got burgoo? Some 300 gallons are cooked and sold at A.B. Chandler Elementary School's annual Burgoo/Craft Fair Sale, December 8 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at the school. Over 60 arts and crafts vendors, photos with Santa and an auction also are on tap. Proceeds go toward updating the Henderson County school's library. For more information call (270) 533-1760 or go to Facebook: A.B. Chandler PTA.



◀ **BOOK BENEFIT** Pick up a handmade Christmas gift, enjoy tasty treats and support a local library in Logan County at the same time by going to the Books To Go Library's Christmas Bazaar. The December 8 all-day event starts at 8 a.m. at the Old City Hall building in Lewisburg. Items include arts and crafts, wreaths and other holiday decorations, homemade cakes, fudge and more goodies. Proceeds benefit the library. For more information, call (270) 755-4011 or go to Facebook: Books To Go Library.



SOUTH CENTRAL



SAT DEC 1 Old Glory Schoolhouse Christmas Marketplace, (606) 305-0136, Monticello

SAT, DEC 1 The Polar Express Train Ride, thru 22nd, (606) 657-9491, Big South Fork Scenic Railway, Stearns

FRI DEC 7 C of C Christmas Parade, (606) 348-3064, Downtown Monticello

SAT DEC 8 Books To Go Library Christmas Bazaar, (270) 755 2423, Lewisburg

THU DEC 13 Christmas with Exile, Center for Rural Development, (606) 677-6000, Somerset

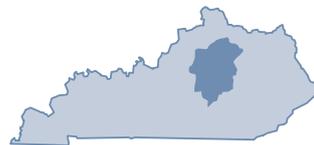
FRI DEC 14 Christmas Downtown, (606) 307-4848, Monticello

FRI DEC 21 3rd Friday Folk Coffeehouse at the Carnegie, (606) 305-6741, Carnegie Community Arts Center, Somerset

SAT DEC 22 Kentucky Christmas Gift Show, thru 23rd, (270) 590-6070, Glasgow National Guard Armory

TUE JAN 1 New Year's Day Trail Rider Long C Trails, Scottsville

BLUEGRASS



SAT DEC 1 Lawrenceburg Christmas Parade, Downtown Lawrenceburg, (502) 598-3127

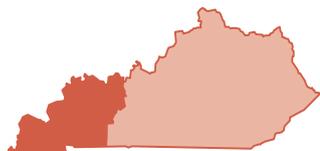
SAT DEC 1 Harrodsburg Historical Society Christmas Tea Room, (859) 734-5985

SAT DEC 1 27th Annual Holiday Homes Tour by Harrodsburg Historical Society, (859) 734-5985

SAT DEC 1 Holiday History Train, thru 30th (Saturdays and other select days), (502) 564-1792, Thomas D. Clark Center for Kentucky History, Frankfort

SAT DEC 8 13th Annual YMCA Reindeer Ramble 5K/10K Fun Run and Walk, (859) 254-9622, Keeneland Race Course, Lexington

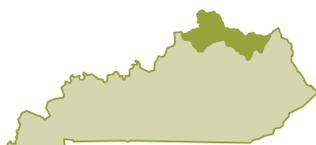
WESTERN



SAT DEC 1 Christmas Bazaar, (270) 522-6237, Cadiz United Methodist Church

SAT DEC 8 ABC PTA 5th Annual Burgoo & Craft Fair, (812) 629-6609, A.B. Chandler Elementary School, Corydon

NORTHERN

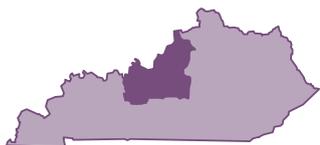


SAT DEC 1 A Country Christmas, (800) 382-7117, Williamstown

SAT DEC 1 ChristmasTime at Ark Encounter, thru 30th (closed 24-25th), (855) 284-3275, Williamstown

SAT DEC 1 ChristmasTown at The Creation Museum, thru 30th (closed 24-25th), (800) 721-2298, Petersburg

NORTH CENTRAL



SAT DEC 1 Moscow Ballet's Great Russian Nutcracker, Louisville Memorial Auditorium

SUN DEC 2 Santa Clause, 14th, (859) 336-5412 x1, City Hall, Springfield

THU DEC 6 Bardstown Kiwanis Christmas Parade, (502) 507-5478, Broadway

FRI DEC 7 Christmas at Castle Hill Haven, thru 8th, (270) 862-5968, Rineyville

FRI DEC 7 The Nutcracker, thru 9th, 14-16th, (270) 321-0218, Kentucky Classic Arts, Lebanon

SAT DEC 8 The Beautiful Music of Christmas, thru 9th, (859) 336-5412 x1, St. Catharine Hall, Springfield

EASTERN



SAT DEC 1 Appalachian Arts and Craft Fair, (606) 783-2204, Laughlin Health Building on MSU Campus, Morehead

SAT DEC 1 Corbin Christmas Parade, (606) 528-8860

THU DEC 13 Cirque Musica Holiday, (802) 255-1826, Eastern Kentucky Expo Center, Pikeville

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Fir for Christmas

Nordmann fir can thrive in Kentucky climate

SHELLY NOLD

The winter holiday season always brings evergreens such as pine, spruce and fir to the forefront of my mind. Filling front porch containers with small evergreens or evergreen boughs somehow makes the cold and often dreary winter more palatable. If you decorate a fresh-cut Christmas tree for the holidays, you may be familiar with the Fraser fir, often called the “Cadillac of Christmas trees.” This fir makes an excellent cut tree with its soft but rigid needles, and its boughs are perfect to use in decorating your containers.

ONE WORD OF ADVICE: Don't try to grow a Fraser fir in a Kentucky landscape because they do not like our climate. They prefer to grow in the mountains. Not to worry, if you have always dreamed of having a living Christmas tree in your landscape, there is one fir that will grow here, and it is the Nordmann fir, *Abies nordmanniana*. While this fir can also be grown and cut as a Christmas tree, it is best known for its beauty and stately presence in the landscape.

NORDMANN FIR HAS AN ELEGANT, PYRAMIDAL SHAPE and retains its shape even with age. In Kentucky, it can grow 35 to 60 feet tall and 15 to 25 feet wide, but prefers a specific growing environment. Plant it in full sun to part shade in an area with moist but well-drained soil. This is not the plant for a site with heavy clay soil. Fortunately, the Nordmann fir is much more tolerant of heat and a wider range of soil pH than most other firs, so it will grow in Kentucky.

IF YOU CHOOSE TO PLANT ONE, make sure to place it in a location where it has room to grow to its mature size. The Nordmann fir is also beautiful when decorated with lights during the winter, but as it grows, it can become more difficult to hang lights on it. You may have to hire a professional or simply enjoy its winter beauty as is. It looks even more beautiful when it snows.

THE NORDMANN FIR CAN BE HARD TO FIND, but it is definitely worth the search. I have long admired the beautiful Nordmann fir planted at my friend, author and botanist Pat Haragan's home. Haragan planted her Nordmann fir, shown above, about 15 years ago and it inspired me to plant one at new my home six years ago.

SHELLY NOLD is a horticulturist and owner of The Plant Kingdom. Send stories and ideas to her at The Plant Kingdom, 4101 Westport Road, Louisville, KY 40207.



SHELLY NOLD

ASK THE GARDENER

Q Can you give me some advice on growing moss and ferns? –Gina Dowell

A Moss and ferns are both part of any woodland garden. Kentucky is home to many native ferns; some are evergreen, and others are not. If you are wondering specifically about growing a combination planter with ferns and moss outdoor year-round, you will want to choose hardy, evergreen ferns. Growing perennials in containers is something I do in my garden. It does put them more at risk from winter damage because they are more exposed to the elements, so it is important to help insulate with mulch.

A combination planter of evergreen ferns with different colors and textures underplanted with moss would be lovely. Christmas fern (*Polystichum achrostichoides*), Japanese holly fern (*Cyrtomium falcatum* 'Rochfordianum'), and tassel fern (*Polystichum polyblepharum*) are all options. I have also had success growing autumn ferns (*Dryopteris erythrosora*) in containers. Some years I have more success than others. Mother Nature has a lot to do with this.

ANGIE OAKLEY



HAVE A GARDENING QUESTION?
Go to www.KentuckyLiving.com, click on Home & Garden, then “Ask the Gardener.”

Floating on snow

Try a pair of snowshoes for exercise this winter

DAVE SHUFFETT

When I told a friend I was thinking about buying a pair of snowshoes, he asked me if I was moving out of state. “Nope,” I replied. “I’m going to use them right here in Kentucky.” He got a laugh out of that one.

Snowshoeing is not practical in 2 or 3 inches of snow, but if history is any indication, we will occasionally get a foot or more of snow dumped on us. On March 4–5, 2015, 1 to 2 feet of snow fell across the northern half of Kentucky. That was my first experience hiking in snowshoes. Without them, I would have plowed my way through the knee-deep snow, worn out in nothing flat.

Snowshoes have been around for thousands of years. Sometimes

you see these antiques, made of bentwood and rawhide bindings, hanging on the walls of cabins. Today, they are lighter and made of aluminum frames. Your weight is distributed over a large surface, enabling you to travel over the snow without sinking in.

Snowshoeing is an inexpensive winter sport and a great way to exercise. You’ll burn more calories wearing snowshoes than walking or running the same distance.

They come in three varieties—recreational for flat or gently rolling terrain, fitness/aerobic for running, and backcountry/mountaineering. I’m not ready to climb one of the Rockies in snowshoes. I prefer the “kinder, gentler” terrain. For southerners who have little or no experience snowshoeing, I recommend the first variety—recreational. Put on a good pair of waterproof hiking boots, strap on the snowshoes and head on out. You’ll quickly gain confidence. As they say in this sport, “If you can walk, you can snowshoe.”

Snowshoe sizes are measured in weight, not length as in regular shoes—and gear is included in the weight. So, for a woman weighing 120–200 pounds with gear, a 25-inch snowshoe would be appropriate. For men weighing 170–250 pounds with gear, a 30-inch snowshoe is a good choice. They’re



MARC BRUXELLE

made in children’s sizes as well. You can buy a good pair of adult snowshoes for \$100–\$200.

I hiked in my snowshoes for about a mile through the rural countryside that day in March 2015. The heavy snow deadened sound, making it so quiet you could hear a twig drop. Not a person or even an animal was in sight. They’d all holed up somewhere, except for me. There are times when being alone and reflecting on one’s life is a good thing and I did just that on this peaceful, solitary day—made possible by a pair of snowshoes. **KL**

DAVE SHUFFETT is an outdoorsman, public speaker, television host, writer and author of *My Kentucky Life*.

INSIDER TIPS

- For a beginner’s guide to snowshoeing visit www.snowshoemag.com and search for “first timer.”
- Wait for a 6- to 8-inch snow accumulation before going snowshoeing.
- Consider purchasing trekking poles as snowshoeing accessories.
- Snowshoes are available at Amazon.com and other online retailers.

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KENTUCKY CULTURE

SMART MOVES

Is it sadness or depression?

Reduce the stigma by supporting family and friends

TERESA GEVEDON

Depression is an illness affecting about 16 million people in the U.S. each year. While effective treatments are available, unfortunately, the stigma of being seen as weak, inadequate or broken prevents many from seeking care. Family and friends of those experiencing depression can reduce that stigma with education and support as loved ones seek treatment.

Depression, the illness, differs from sadness that is a normal part of life. It is biologically based and mediated by neurotransmitters including serotonin and stress hormones like cortisol.

SIGNS OF DEPRESSION

Depression is a serious issue that requires medical attention. Common symptoms of depression include:

- A heavy or "dark" mood
- Guilt and/or anxiety
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Changes to appetite
- Lack of energy
- Inability to concentrate
- Frequent crying spells
- Thoughts of self-harm

If you or a loved one experience these symptoms, make an appointment with a doctor to rule out any underlying medical issues. If there are suicidal thoughts, seek medical attention immediately.

SMART HEALTH

Depression can drain the enjoyment out of life and disturb sleep, appetite, energy, concentration and functioning. The person may feel that life does not seem worth living and consider suicide.

When someone is depressed, listen and be respectful. It's important not to be dismissive of his or her concerns. Avoid using phrases like "get over it" or "what do you have to be depressed about?" Approach depression the same as you would if the person had another illness.

Be supportive if the depressed person seeks treatment by being encouraging, positive and interested. It's important to respect privacy, but you can express a willingness to help if needed—run errands or provide transportation. Optimizing sleep schedules, good nutrition and regular exercise are important as well. Being respectful of time needed for appointments, supporting healthy eating habits and joining a loved one at the gym or on a walk are other ways to support their mental health.

By reducing the stigma of being diagnosed with depression and supporting those seeking treatment, you can help your friend or family member lead a healthy, happy life. **KL**

DR. TERESA GEVEDON is an associate professor of psychiatry in the University of Kentucky Department of Psychiatry.

CHEF'S CHOICE

Kentucky raised

Bluegrass is good for growing kale and kids

SARAH FRITSCHNER

The story is familiar: **JENNY HOWARD OWEN**, shown with son Birch, and her husband, Jacob, were living in Maryland and working in Virginia when they learned they were going to have a baby. They decided to move back to central Kentucky to be near family.

But there was another reason to come home. Jenny, a Blue Grass Energy consumer-member whose career has always been in environmental education, wanted to raise her child "close to the

land, having places to run and explore and play, (and providing) healthy ways to get his energy out."



JACOB OWEN

Birch, now 5, has grown up on 8 acres in Anderson County where the couple gardens and keeps small livestock. "I've always had a garden of my own, even if it was just a couple of plants outside my doorstep," says Jenny.

So, it makes sense for family get-togethers, Jenny uses ingredients she raises, including for her baked eggs

recipe. "It's a simple dish that doesn't require a



JOHN ROTT

whole lot of ingredients, and I can bring them from my farm," she says.

"Kale has been consistently one of the easiest things to grow," says Jenny. "I mix it into everything. I chop it up really fine and put it in muffins, green drinks, soups and salads." She also parboils and freezes extra kale to use through the winter.

Baked Eggs

- 10 eggs
- 1/4 C cream or whole milk
- 1/2 tsp each salt and pepper
- 2 1/4 C packed fresh kale, washed and finely chopped
- 8 oz ground sausage, cooked and drained
- 1 C sharp cheddar cheese, grated

Preheat oven to 400°. Lightly grease a 9x13-inch oven-safe casserole.

Beat eggs with milk, salt and pepper. Spread 2 cups kale in casserole dish. Pour in eggs. Sprinkle sausage over the eggs, followed by remaining kale and cheese. Bake for 20 minutes. Serves 8.

SARAH FRITSCHNER, founder of Grow Kentucky, works to increase farm-to-table sales throughout the state.

SAUCY SWEET

Hot Fudge Sauce

Recipe by Sarah Fritschner

- 4 oz unsweetened chocolate
- 3 Tbsp butter
- 2/3 C water
- 1/3 C sugar
- 1/3 C (light) corn syrup
- Pinch of salt
- 1 tsp vanilla

In a small bowl, heat chocolate and butter in microwave for 1 minute. Stir to blend and heat 15 seconds more if necessary (chocolate chunks should be small or nonexistent). Meanwhile, heat the water to boiling in a small, heavy saucepan. Slowly pour chocolate into water, stirring briskly to blend. Stir in sugar, corn syrup and salt. Allow mixture to remain just at the boiling point for 9 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove and cool, then carefully stir in vanilla. Keeps for months in the fridge. Reheat in microwave. Makes about 1 1/2 cups.

Go to KentuckyLiving.com and click on "Cook" for more recipes and cooking tips.

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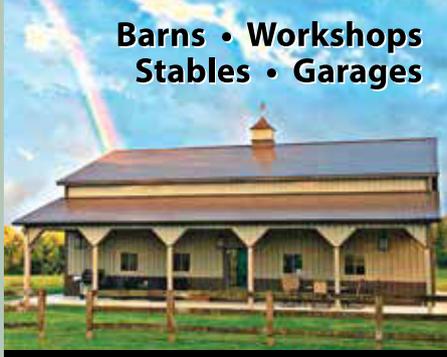
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SNAP SHOT



▲ **GOOD READS** Bo catches up on Kentucky happenings while his owner does the laundry. Photo: Teresa Kindred, Farmers RECC consumer-member, Summer Shade

◀ **CATCHING SNOW** Erin Westerfield, Eastview, enjoys a beautiful snowfall. Photo: Elizabeth Westerfield, Nolin RECC consumer-member

▼ **MADE FOR SNOW** Fratty frolics in the snow in her backyard in Bowling Green. Photo: George Gootee, Warren RECC consumer-member



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SUBMIT YOUR SNAP SHOTS monthly at WWW.KENTUCKYLIVING.COM by clicking on "CONTESTS."

KENTUCKY KIDS

Sleep Smart

During your break from school, remember to keep your regular sleep schedule and bedtime routine.



Green Team Tip

Making your own cleaning products can save money, time and packaging. Talk to your parents about cleaning with simple ingredients like baking soda, vinegar, lemon and soap.

Tip submitted by Aurora Mckiddy, age 2



Got a Green Team Tip?

Send us your Green Team Tip, and if it gets printed, we'll send you a surprise gift! Submit your best tip for conserving energy, in 50 words or less, online at KentuckyLiving.com:Magazine/Submissions.

USING ADJECTIVES

An adjective is a word that is used to describe things. Can you find the word from the list that best describes each candy cane in this group?

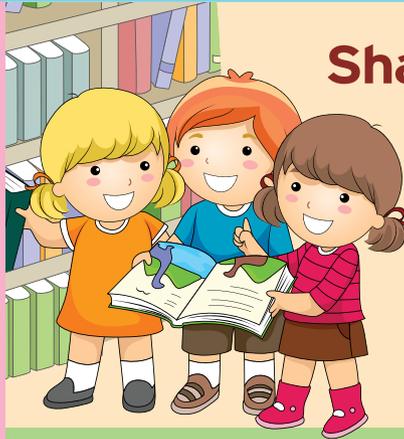
- 1) THIN
- 2) SHORT
- 3) TALL
- 4) BLUE



Answers: 1:B 2:A 3:C 4:D

Sharing stories

Winter is a good time to catch up on reading some books. Share the fun by reading picture books to younger siblings or friends.



Evergreens

Evergreens are trees or shrubs that do not lose all of their leaves at the same time during cold or dry seasons. Some evergreens have foliage that is gold or pale blue in color.



Did You Know?

Cardinals do not migrate, so they can be seen and heard in Kentucky year-round.



It's a JOKE!

Submit your favorite joke to KentuckyLiving.com:Magazine/Submissions. If it gets printed, we will send you a free gift!

Why couldn't the pony sing a lullaby?

He was a little hoarse.

Submitted by Peyton Harris, age 3



BYRON CRAWFORD'S KENTUCKY

Christmas tree

What story leads to this lonely highway décor?

BYRON CRAWFORD

Somewhere beneath the tangled tinsel of a Christmas past lies hidden the story of the loneliest Christmas tree in Kentucky.

That's what I call the Eastern red cedar standing all alone on a grassy ribbon of roadside along the eastbound lanes of the Bluegrass Parkway in Nelson County.

I first noticed it as a blur out the SUV window while passing at 70 miles an hour two or three summers ago.

Had I just seen a Christmas tree all by itself stirring in the mid-summer breeze—strung with tinsel and ornaments—virtually in the middle of nowhere?

There was no time for a double take, and I was still about 2 1/2 miles from the U.S. 31E exit near Bardstown. But I promised myself I'd give the tree a closer look if it was still there when I passed that way again.

So back in August on one of those rare, lazy, white-cloud-and-blue-sky-days when time itself seems at rest, I pulled to the shoulder and studied the tree for a while, then got out and walked over beside it. I guessed it to be between 15 and 20 feet tall and maybe 8 feet in diameter at the base.

Though not a very pretty cedar as live Christmas trees go, someone had dolled it up with half a dozen or more strands of red and silver tinsel and upward of 80 nice ornaments, counting several that had blown off and were on the ground. (You don't want to linger too long beside a busy highway, counting Christmas ornaments on a cedar tree in the middle of August.)

Some of the red, silver and blue ornaments were as large as a grapefruit and hanging as high as a tall person



could reach. At least three solar lights were suspended from branches above the decorations.

There wasn't a building in sight; nothing but woodlands and a long grassy meadow beyond the right of way that fell gently away to a creek.

A clerk at the convenience store a few miles away said she was pretty sure she'd first noticed the tree at least five years ago, but maybe longer.

Who decorated it, and why? Perhaps someone overwhelmed with the Christmas spirit? Maybe someone whose car—loaded with Christmas decorations—broke down near the tree one Christmas Eve. Or a lovesick young man or woman whose sweetheart often passed the tree. We may never know.

And while the lonely old cedar may never see pretty packages under its tired branches and faded ornaments, there is wrapped in its shadow the simple gift of a Christmas memory for a homesick traveler who, in the blink of an eye, may be carried back to warm thoughts of a distant Christmas past before vanishing out of sight in the fast lane.

Merry Christmas to you—whichever you are—for decorating the loneliest Christmas tree in Kentucky. And Merry Christmas to all of you from *Kentucky Living*. **KL**



BYRON CRAWFORD is Kentucky's storyteller—a veteran television and newspaper journalist known for his colorful essays about life in Kentucky. Contact Byron at KentuckyLiving.com: About/People.

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