



United Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

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Guest Column



2019 Youth Tour

'Elevate Yourself. Your Co-op. Your Future.'

By Kristy Smith

OVER 1,800 of rural America's outstanding high school students traveled to Washington, D.C., in June to interact with their elected officials, see history up close and learn more about electric cooperatives. The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) Youth Tour has been a tradition for 55 years, although its roots go back even further. From June 16 – 21, delegates, chaperones, and staff from 42 states were in Washington, D.C., to hear from NRECA speakers and lawmakers, as well as have guided tours of America's historical sites. United Electric Cooperative chose five outstanding students from our territory to represent our cooperative: Sydney Barto, Elizabeth Blake, Gauge Gulvas, Camille Hanzely, and Airen Kelso.

the native Haitians didn't have power, "everyone was happy regardless of their situation. We as Americans take for granted the power of electricity." From this, he learned to "always be willing to lend a hand with a smile on your face."



PHOTO BY KRISTY SMITH

MEMORIAL VISIT: United Electric's five outstanding students at the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial during Youth Tour. They include, from left: Gauge Gulvas, Elizabeth Blake, Sydney Barto, Camille Hanzely and Airen Kelso.

Youth Day

June 17 was Youth Day for all attendees with the theme of "Elevate Yourself. Your Co-op. Your Future." Youth Day features engaging speakers and state-to-state socialization not only by talking, but by students exchanging their state pins and stickers.

NRECA CEO Jim Matheson spoke about NRECA's position on politics, saying, "We lobby on both sides of the political fence because we care about our communities."

Next up was Bobby Von Bokern, spokesperson for NRECA International. Von Bokern is a lineworker for Owens Electric in Kentucky who travelled to Haiti twice to help electrify small villages in the north and the south regions of the island. He noted that even though

National Youth Leadership Council (YLC) spokesperson Wallace "Bubba" Bass from Mississippi also gave a presentation. Selected as spokesperson from other YLC candidates from across the nation to represent NRECA's youth, Bass spoke at NRECA's annual meeting this year. He encouraged everyone to make changes without tearing others down, saying, "We need leaders to stand on the shoulders of the founding fathers."

Students also heard from two-time Paralympic medalist Mike Schlappi, who discussed the shooting accident committed by his best friend that left

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2019 Youth Tour

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him without the use of his legs.

His message was, “If you create change, even the smallest change, then you have succeeded in life.”

Schlappi, a regular Youth Tour speaker, stresses to all the students every year that their voice matters, saying, “Even if you can’t stand up, you can stand out.”

Events

Following Youth Day, Pennsylvania and New Jersey students were treated to arcade gaming, good food, and co-op-themed scavenger hunts at Dave & Buster’s. This provides the students some time to get acquainted since the Pennsylvania/New Jersey group has grown so large. Prizes were awarded to the top three teams, and all of the students seemed to be more comfortable with each other following this event. Throughout the week, the Pennsylvania/New Jersey students visited Arlington National Cemetery, the Smithsonian museums, the Holocaust Museum, the Udvar-Hazy Space Center, and various monuments and memorials. Also on the itinerary was a visit to the Washington National Zoo, Union Station, and a new trip to the Newseum sponsored by NRECA for a Wednesday night treat of dinner, dancing, and touring.

In addition to touring our nation’s capital, students also got to meet with their congressmen and women and/or a representative from his/her office. For the first time in many years, U.S. Rep. Glenn “GT” Thompson (R-15th) was unable to reschedule a prior commitment, but all of United Electric’s students met with Chris Mulcahey, legislative aide. Student questions included, “How do I become an aide for a congressperson?” and “Can you tell me what happens in a typical day for Congressman Thompson?”

Opportunities

More than 53,000 students from all over rural America have participated in NRECA’s Youth Tour program. NRECA began sponsoring the program in 1964, although the Youth Tour’s



PHOTO BY KRISTY SMITH

CONGRESSIONAL VISIT: Youth Tour participants stand outside of the office of U.S. Rep. Glenn Thompson (R-15th). Students living within Thompson’s district represent United Electric Cooperative, REA Energy Cooperative, Valley Rural Electric Cooperative, Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative, Central Electric Cooperative, New Enterprise Rural Electric Cooperative, Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative and Warren Electric Cooperative.

roots date back to 1957 when then-Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson, speaking at an NRECA meeting, encouraged cooperatives to set up a program to send teenagers to Washington, D.C., as an educational experience. What grew out of that suggestion eventually evolved into today’s Youth Tour.

Students in Pennsylvania who have attended the Youth Tour are eligible every year they are in a system of higher education to apply for the Jody Loudenslager Scholarship offered through the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association. Loudenslager was a 1995 Pennsylvania Youth Tour participant from Trout Run, Pa. She was among the 230 passengers killed on July 17, 1996, when TWA Flight 800 exploded after takeoff from New York. She was committed to higher education, whatever form it takes, and believed that Youth Tour instills the importance of electric cooperatives and the values they represent to the next generation of leaders.

Meet the students

Sydney Barto attends Brookville Area High School and is the daughter of Marc and Laurie Barto of Sigel. Sydney participates in swimming, choir and band, and track. She has also participated in school musicals, as well as Camp Friendship. Sydney plans to pursue a career in speech pathology.

Elizabeth Blake attends West Branch

High School and is the daughter of John and Svetlana Blake of Morrisdale. Elizabeth participates in band and runs lights and sound during events in the school auditorium. She is also involved with her local church, ice hockey and chess club. Elizabeth would like to pursue a career in computer science.

Gauge Gulvas attends DuBois Area High School and is the son of Todd Gulvas and Jodi Coccimiglio of DuBois. Gauge is actively involved in wrestling, baseball, cross country and National Honor Society. He also enjoys umpiring Little League Baseball. Gauge would like to explore a career in pharmacology or another medical field.

Camille Hanzely attends the Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School. She is the daughter of Thomas and Stacy Hanzely of DuBois. Camille participates in boxing, as well as Camp Friendship. She is also involved in her local church and attended Camp Confidence. Camille would like to explore a career in food science, possibly becoming a dietitian.

Airen Kelso attends Brookville Area High School and is the son of Corey and Lisa Kelso of Brookville. Airen participates in football, track, band and National Honor Society. He also is heavily involved with the Boy Scouts of America, earning his Eagle Scout rank. Airen would like to pursue a career in either biology or psychology. 🌟

Rustic Views

Both old and new have value

By Glenn Schuckers

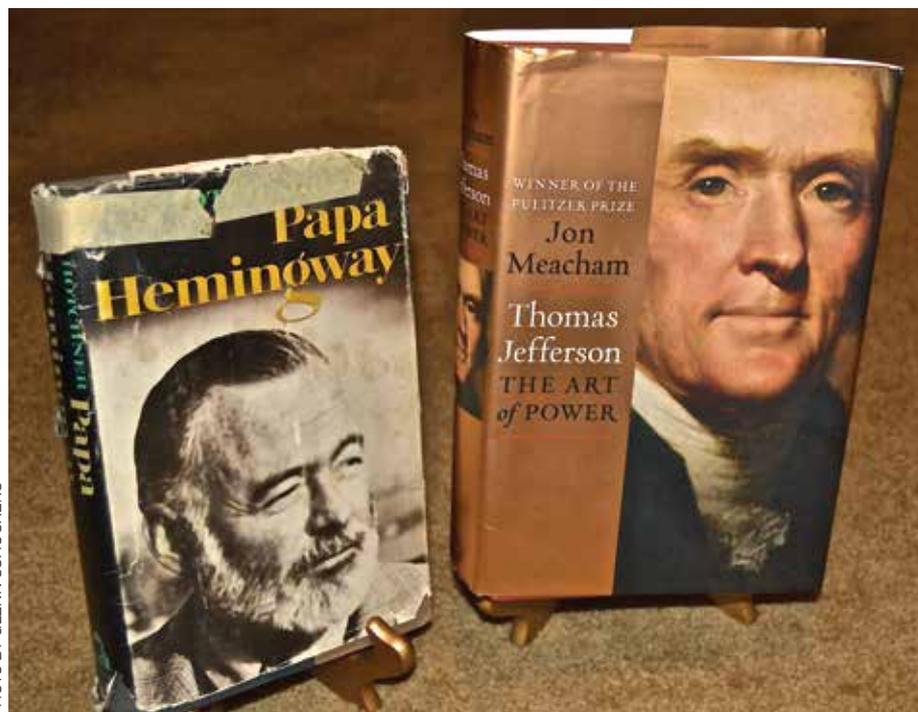
I HAVE never been a fan of the “newest and latest” when it comes to a lot of things. In the last century when I taught writing and literature, I always stressed that certain things from the past were worth learning, and that just because something was brand new did not necessarily mean it was good. I always added that just being new did not necessarily make it “bad.”

My point was that some qualities exist and some standards can be applied to everything that we see, hear, smell, read, or taste, regardless of its age. The same standards exist whether we try to judge literature, music, chocolate cake, green beans or sweet corn. More about corn soon.

Having taught every grade of high school, I had the opportunity to introduce kids to such diverse authors as Hemingway, Emerson, Sophocles, Aristotle, Thoreau, Shakespeare, and Huxley, and stories like “The Odyssey” by Homer. (The kids always got a kick out of that, saying they didn’t know Homer Simpson wrote a story.)

My answer to the inevitable question, “Why do we have to learn about this stuff?” was simply, “Those writers and their stories have been around for a long time and have been read by a lot

PHOTO BY GLENN SCHUCKERS



BOTH HAVE VALUE: These are two books from our bookcase. The one on the left was written in 1950 and given to me by two boys from the class of 1990 to replace a copy I had lost. The one on the right was written two years ago, and I enjoy them both. One old and one new, both valuable for what the authors wrote.

of people and maybe someday, somewhere, someone will make a reference to something in them, and their opinion of you will go up if you know what they are talking about.”

The other answer was that even though they may be decades or even centuries old, they still deal with problems, events, and situations we all face today. When we read Shakespeare’s “Julius Caesar” for example, I would ask the kids who they would prefer as a friend, the ultimate pragmatist Marc Antony or the ultimate idealist Brutus? Brutus stabbed his friend Julius Caesar because he feared Caesar might become an emperor, while Antony felt justified in doing whatever it took to achieve an end, that end being to carry out revenge for Caesar’s murder.

When it came to having a friend, they almost always chose Brutus because they said they could always depend on him doing what he believed in. When I asked them who they would

choose to help them get a great job, they usually chose Antony. Those are issues we all face in our lives today.

Another quality I liked to stress was that some things have stood the “test of time.” Things like the music of the Beatles have been popular with a few generations, just like Simon and Garfunkel, Woody Guthrie, Bob Dylan and Joan Baez, to name just a few.

One of my most favorite lessons was to play “The Sound of Silence” and then give the class 25 minutes to write three paragraphs about their reaction to that song. Needless to say, the opinions varied widely, and that was great.

Now, much the same goes for gardens.

There are always the old standards and the “newest and best” when it comes to varieties of plants and trees, and methods of growing them.

Every year, the seed and nursery companies’ catalogs feature the newest variety of everything from asparagus to zucchini. And, of course, each new variety has been “tested and approved” by master gardeners all across America. I should know by now that it’s all about

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Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Routinely replace or clean your air conditioner’s filter. Replacing a dirty, clogged filter can reduce your air conditioner’s energy consumption by 5 to 15 percent.

Source: energy.gov



Rustic Views

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 their effort to sell more seeds.

For probably the past 20 years, I had planted and grown a variety of bush beans called "Bush Blue Lake." They produced well, were vigorous, and we liked the beans. Then last year, I decided to try one of those new and improved varieties in the catalog.

I planted two rows of them, but they did not fill in the rows as well as the seeds I used in the past. Most of them came up and grew and had beans in the advertised time, but when I picked them and we had a "mess" for supper, the taste was not as good as in past years. I accept that last year may not have been a good year for gardens, so the comparison may not have been fair, but this year I went back to the Bush Blue Lake I had planted for years.

I am not necessarily against all progress, though.

Three years ago, we decided our address, "Schuckers Orchard Road" needed a new orchard. My sons and I planted a dozen fruit trees and put up a fence to discourage the deer. So far, they prosper.

Along with the old favorite apple trees like Cortland and Pippen, I also planted two new varieties, a Honeycrisp and a Jonared. And in the cornfield along with Silver Queen, which I have planted since "Buck was pup," I now plant some of the super-sweet and sugar-enhanced varieties that have just come along in the past few years.

Newest and best?

My car, a 2006 VW, will hopefully last me as long as I care to drive. It only has 135,000 miles now and I see no reason to replace it. We live in a 7-year-old home only because the one built in 1856 where we lived for 42 years was destroyed by fire. Until a year ago, my 1985 Massey Ferguson tractor did all the plowing, harrowing and mowing I

wanted to do. My cellphone is not very "smart" since it is about 7 years old, and our dog is about as old as I am ... in dog years.

I am not addicted to the newest and best in most things, but I'm willing to be open minded.

A lot of us seem to be, and I am sure there are enough people to keep the economy humming. I have no issue with them. I have not bought a "new" car since about 1968 when I bought a new Dodge Charger. That was when I was very young and did not care about something called depreciation. But someone has to buy the new ones right

off the assembly line so people like me can buy a used one.

Just being "new" does not have to mean better, just as being old does not mean inferior. Whether it is sweet corn or beans, poetry or novels, bourbon or zinfandel, I try to judge things on their merits, not their age. ☀



Glenn Schuckers, a longtime member of United Electric, operated Schuckers' Orchard in Luthersburg until the mid-1990s. He is a retired high school teacher and a contributing writer for *The Courier Express*.

We are pleased to have Glenn provide our *Penn Lines* readers with his take on rural life.

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OFFICE CLOSING
 United Electric's office will be closed Sept. 2 to celebrate Labor Day