



# United Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

**United Electric Cooperative, Inc.**  
 Post Office Box 688  
 DuBois, PA 15801-0688  
 Customer Service: 888-581-8969  
 www.unitedpa.com  
 Outage: 800-262-8959  
 Office Hours: M - F 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Chairman

**Stephen A. Marshall, District 5**  
 1030 Donahue Rd.  
 Luthersburg, Pa. 15848  
 814-583-7320

### Vice Chairman

**Timothy D. Burkett, District 6**  
 5059 Hamilton Markton Rd.  
 Punxsutawney, Pa. 15767  
 814-938-7991

### Secretary/Treasurer

**Eileen Pisaneschi, District 2**  
 1964 River Hill Rd.  
 Frenchville, Pa. 16836  
 814-263-4491

## DIRECTORS

**Shanelle Hawk, District 1**  
 502 Pine Run Rd.  
 Mayport, Pa. 16240  
 814-365-5646

**Arden E. Owens, District 7**  
 505 Trout Run Rd.  
 Shawville, Pa. 16873  
 814-765-6458

**Richard Petrosky, District 3**  
 P.O. Box 612  
 DuBois, Pa. 15801  
 814-371-8672

**David W. Walker, District 4**  
 631 Olanta Rd.  
 Olanta, Pa. 16863  
 814-236-3321

**President & CEO**  
 Brenda Swartzlander

**Consumer Advocate**  
 Debra Horner, ext. 8508

**Richard Heverley, Editor**

## Guest Column



# Have you been 'SMiShing' lately?

By Corey Kelso, IT Manager

ALTHOUGH most people are unfamiliar with the term “SMiShing,” if you own a mobile phone, you’ve likely been SMiShed at least once already in 2021! That’s because SMiShing is one of the fastest growing methods of fraud in our digital world today. It’s growing so fast that cybersecurity firm Proofpoint reports a 328% increase in SMiShing attacks between the second and third quarters of 2020 alone.

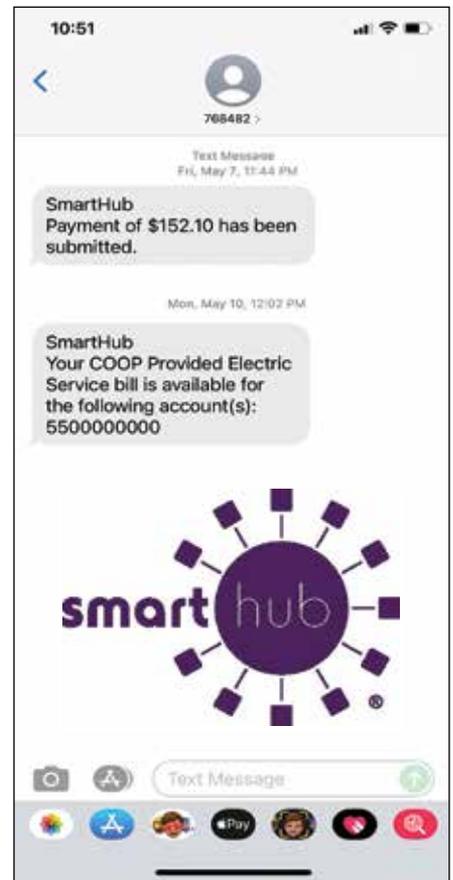
So what is it? Most people today recognize SMS (or Short Messaging Service) as text messaging. SMiShing is a not-so-fun contraction of text messaging and scamming designed to steal your personal information or money by text. With 81% of Americans having at least one smartphone now, hackers are keenly exploiting the security weakness of texts for profit.

Here’s how the scam works — a SMiSher sends you a fake text, one that you weren’t expecting. They lure you in by saying they’re from the IRS, Amazon, Cabelas or even United Electric. Because texting has limited security, they entice you into revealing personal information — or worse, clicking on a malicious web link.

Through SmartHub, United’s interactive website and app, our members can enroll to receive SMS texts for several billing and outage notifications. But, for your security, we do not include hyperlinks in SMS messages.

Here are a few simple tips to keep from getting SMiShed this summer:

- ▶ **When in doubt, chicken out:** If you’re unsure about whether an



SMS message is real or not, don’t reply to the sender’s texts! Never open short links arriving in unexpected SMS messages.

- ▶ **Don’t reply to unknown phone numbers:** Replying to unknown SMS senders simply gives them your phone number. Once a scammer has your phone number, rest assured you’ll get many more junk SMS messages and malicious voice phone calls (called “vishing”).

(continues on page 14c)

Rustic Views

# July is the month to celebrate

By Glenn Schuckers

WHEN MOST of us think of July, we think of Independence Day, the Fourth of July, firecrackers, barbecues, hot dogs and patriotic parades. Those are all things that happen this month; they are important, and we should all take the time to think about them.

Maybe at the top of the things we should think about is one of the country's most important documents: the Declaration of Independence. It's right up there with the Magna Carta and the Mayflower Compact. Although it contains no force of law, we have always thought of the Declaration of Independence as a statement of American ideals — a statement of what America is all about. I have always thought that the real date to celebrate should be March 4, 1789. That is the date when the U.S. Constitution became effective. It is the date when America was born — the date when the ideals set forth in the Declaration of Independence became the law of the land.

As a matter of fact, it took the delegates writing the Constitution five months to write that particular document, and that did not include the 10 amendments added later that we know as the Bill of Rights, the part of the Constitution that gives Americans the rights we live by.

But out here in the country, we live by a different calendar. July is the month when sweet corn planted in late May will be ripe. We all wait for the first taste of corn-on-the-cob, a delicious reward for the time, work and patience it took to grow it. My dad and his brother-in-law used to compete to



PHOTO BY GLENN SCHUCKERS

see who could pick the first sweet corn since the first corn brought the best price on the market.

But along with corn, a lot of vegetables start to reward us for our work this month. String beans are a little earlier. They are usually ripe about 60 days after planting, which means I can start picking them in late June. We like to get a lot of green beans in the freezer, so I plant a couple of rows every two weeks, which makes the season last over a month. When we can tomato sauce, we need a couple of bushels of tomatoes, but since we did about a two-year supply last year, this year's crop will be a lot smaller, just enough for slicing and eating fresh.

Along that line, I have to admit that some of the tomatoes we grow never make it out of the garden. There is nothing that compares with the taste of a ripe tomato, right off the vine, eaten right there in the garden. And if there's

a little dirt on it, so what? My mother used to say that everyone needed to eat a pound of dirt a year to be healthy.

In fact, there will be a lot of fruits and vegetables that will be ready to harvest this month. Strawberries will be finishing up, blueberries will be coming on, and garden crops like cucumbers and eggplants will be ready to pick. People who live a little south of "the mountain" will be able to enjoy early peaches and here, early apples like Lodi and Transparent will be ready.

So, after three months of waiting for the snow to melt and ordering seeds from catalogs, two months of enduring chilly days and frosty nights, a month of hectic plowing, spading, and planting, all the work in fields and orchards will start to pay off.

And what a payoff it is! If there have been no late frosts, hail storms, attacks of grasshoppers, and all that nature throws at farmers and gardeners, we



**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.

have the rewards of our hard work and good fortune.

And make no mistake about it, even the best farmer and gardener knows there is an element of faith and luck in his or her harvest. We have no control over a hail storm or other events in nature. When we had the orchard in production, we had one year when a late frost destroyed the apple crop. That was tough, but survivable since we could cut way back on expenses. Another year, we had a violent hail storm in late July that marked just about every apple in the orchard. That was barely survivable since we had already spent a lot of money taking care of that year's crop.

But there is nothing a farmer can do about things like that. Gardeners can replant things probably as late as the end of June, but once fruits like apples and peaches are ruined by hail, as happened to a lot of peaches in the southern part of our state last year, there is almost nothing that can be done. Some people don't mind damaged fruit, but the fact is that once the skin is broken, fruit will not last long.

In so many ways we are lucky, both as farmers and gardeners and Americans. We live in the nation we celebrate this month, which was designed by men who worked for some three years to give us the country we have. Let's not forget how they signed the Declaration of Independence that we celebrate this month: "And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor."

Had the Revolutionary War ended differently, and in 1776 there was no guarantee it would be successful, the men who signed the Declaration of Independence would have been condemned as traitors to Great Britain. They took a big risk, as does every farmer when he puts seeds in the ground or plants trees and bushes. So, as we celebrate our liberty, as we celebrate our successful crops, we should never forget that while we had a hand in the success, ours was not the only hand in the success. 🌱

## Guest Column

(continued from page 14a)

- ▶ **Try to avoid SMS messaging:** SMS is mostly unauthenticated. Try using another chat application (like Apple's iMessage) that doesn't rely on SMS or requires other authentication. This defense is tough to do because nearly the whole world uses SMS, but decreasing your reliance on SMS decreases your risk.
- ▶ **Don't post your personal telephone numbers:** Most rogue SMS messages started because an attacker knew someone's personal phone number. The online world is just too dangerous for people to be publicly posting their phone numbers anymore.

Several states offer resources and advisories to protect yourself from technology scams like phishing, vishing, SMiShing and pharming. In Pennsylvania, go to [attorneygeneral.gov/protect-yourself](http://attorneygeneral.gov/protect-yourself) for the latest scams circulating the Commonwealth, so you'll be prepared next time you hear your smartphone notifications. 🌱

# SHOP LOCALLY, SAVE LOCALLY

The One Card That Does It All.®  
**Connections.coop**

Co-op Connections® Card  
**United Electric**  
COOPERATIVE, INC.  
A Touchstone Energy® Partner

# Students receive awards for science projects

By Glenn Schuckers

IT WOULD seem that anyone you talk to today believes that students lack ambition or an interest in science. They have clearly not met two students who are members of the DuBois Area High School (DAHS) Science Club.

Melina Petrick, a senior at DAHS, and Leah McFadden, a sophomore, both recently won awards in the regional competition of the Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science (PJAS).

Petrick's project, "How Prescribed Fires Promote Growth," won the first-place award in the regional competition and went on to state competition. Her parents, Julia and Joseph Petrick Jr., are members of United Electric.

McFadden's project, "Prism Lens Therapy in Combating Rising Myopia in Children," won a second-place award. Both projects were presented virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Both students are members of the DAHS Science Club whose adviser, Douglas Brennen, has been teaching chemistry at the school for the past 37 years. Membership in the extracurricular activity has declined the past year due to the interruptions caused by the coronavirus, but in normal years as many as 20 to 30 students have been members. The goal of the club is to boost interest in science and provide a way for students to carry out activities outside of regular classroom instruction.

Petrick said she has been interested in science for as long as she can remember, sparked by her dad who took her out to explore the natural world. She credits her fourth-grade teacher, Mr. Smiley, with giving her curiosity some direction when she built a model of the water cycle as a class project. The recent news about forest fires led her to explore ways that wildfires might be avoided, and her research led her to the practice of prescribed fires.

Working with Rick Conrad and



PHOTO BY GLENN SCHUCKERS

WINNERS: High school senior Melina Petrick, left, chemistry teacher Douglas Brennen and sophomore Leah McFadden go over project information. Petrick and McFadden were recently recognized for their science projects.

Joseph Polaski, foresters with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources at S.B. Elliot State Park, Petrick put together a presentation showing how controlled, prescribed fires can help species of vegetation that are beneficial to both forest growth and wildlife. Her presentation included many photographs of how these areas have been improved by prescribed fires, as well as a detailed description of the process. The project showed how forest areas can be improved for the benefit of all.

McFadden's project came about through discussions with a local eye doctor, Wendy Strouse Watt. The student learned that today's children spend so much time looking at electronic devices that normal eye movements and development are impaired, sometimes leading to myopia. Prism lens can be used to overcome this condition, and her project describes the process in detail.

Both students said working on these projects taught them the value of research and that learning new things in the areas they chose was a lot of fun. They emphasized their interest in science taught them to apply the lessons

of the value of exploring new information in all their subjects, especially during a pandemic.

Both also have active lives outside of their interest in science. Petrick played varsity volleyball and keeps statistics for the baseball team. After she graduates this year, she plans to attend college leading to a career in the field of dental hygiene.

McFadden is also an active athlete who plays soccer and runs track. As a sophomore, she has not thought about her plans after high school, but wants to take physics when she is a junior and continue her pursuit of a possible career in science.

Although much has been said about promoting "STEM" (science, technology, engineering and math) classes for young women, both of these students provide evidence that girls are both interested in and good at science. Their enthusiasm about the projects they completed and their knowledge about what they discovered confirm a belief that the future of science is in very good hands. ☀

(EDITOR'S NOTE; Melina Petrick won a first-place award in the state PJAS research project presentations held in May.)