

Along these **LINES**

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2021

Where It All Began: Audubon State Historic Site

Illustrations for John James Audubon's 'Birds of America' series started in Louisiana's Feliciana parishes

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Powering On As a Beacon of Light and Hope



CEO Jeff Arnold

At this time last year, we were all excited to see how the '20s would come roaring into our lives. Instead, 2020 brought a pandemic that led to business and school shutdowns, sheltering-at-home, social distancing, face masks, shortages of household goods, canceled concerts, sporting events with virtual fans and a record-setting hurricane season! Our country also faced a very tumultuous election year.

When I wrote this column, there was still a significant amount of uncertainty heading into 2021. Everyone seems to be worn down and disgruntled by 2020's events. However, I can't help but count and be grateful for the small blessings 2020 brought us.

There has been more time to spend with our families. While you may have been forced to cancel vacations, it certainly made us more creative as to how we could

keep our families entertained. We spent more time at home. Projects that were put off because they could not be squeezed into our fast-paced lives were completed.

Hopefully, you took the time to complete some of those home energy-efficiency improvements you had been trying to finish.

We all had to step up our game when it came to school and work, learning how to join meetings or classes via video conferences. At the Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives, we hosted our annual meeting using video conferencing for the first time in the history of our organization. I couldn't have been prouder of our team at ALEC for accepting the challenge and of our members for accepting the new way of conducting business.

When the hurricanes hit our coastline, I was truly humbled by our cooperatives and partners across the country that came to our aid by donating to our Hurricane Relief Fund, assisting 49 cooperative employees who sustained significant home damage or total home loss from Hurricanes Laura and Delta.

Through our mutual-aid agreements, ALEC member cooperatives received assistance from fellow cooperatives across the United States. Cooperatives from 13 states sent more than 3,000 men to Louisiana to help with restoration efforts.

According to our Director of Loss Control Aaron Graham, this is the first time in his tenure at ALEC that he has had to provide mutual aid for hurricanes and an ice storm at the same time.

Your love, support and assistance were gratefully appreciated.

This year, I have witnessed our Louisiana electric cooperatives join together to battle through one of the most uncertain, challenging times in our history. Our member cooperatives have stood shoulder to shoulder, helping each other in their times of need. They have also remained focused on their commitment to you, the member-consumers, to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity.

Although, I cannot predict what 2021 has in store for any of us, I do know your Louisiana electric cooperatives will remain a beacon of light and hope in your communities as we continue to power on. ■

Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives Inc.

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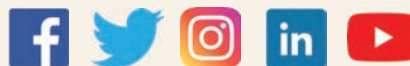
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Birds of a Feather


Louisiana is a haven for hunters and bird-watchers alike

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Mission

DEMCO is focused on enhancing the quality of life for members by providing safe, reliable and competitively priced energy services.

Volume 36, Issue 1

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Manager's Report

Randy Pierce
CEO & General Manager

Happy New Year! I know we can all agree 2020 will go down in history as a year we will never forget and don't want to repeat. Our way of life has changed in so many ways, but one thing will never change—and that is how much we love this community and serving you, our co-op members. At DEMCO, our mission is to enhance the quality of life for our members by providing safe, reliable and competitively priced energy services. Equally important is our commitment to stimulating the economic growth and prosperity of our area through ethical conduct and sound business principles.

Our mission, vision and values are part of a five-year strategic plan developed by the DEMCO board and management team. They are central to the way we operate as a cooperative. While our mission drives our overall work, our vision focuses our efforts on what we want to become during the next five years: to be an industry leader by being a trusted services provider for our members, an employer of choice and a respectable business partner that puts the community at the heart of everything we do. Our values serve as the organizational foundation that guide our decisions and direction: Safety, Our People, Integrity, Member Focused, Innovation, and Process Excellence.

In 2019, my column provided information about the Seven Cooperative Principles that are shared around the world and by which all co-ops generally operate: Voluntary and Open Membership; Democratic Member Control; Members' Economic Participation; Autonomy and Independence; Education, Training and Information; Cooperation Among Cooperatives; and Concern for Community.

These principles—along with our mission, vision and values—chart our path and guide our actions every day. As the CEO and general manager of your electric cooperative, I want to share information with you about our goals and how we are working to meet them. I will talk more about these topics in this column throughout the year.

In working to enhance our quality of life, supporting our young people through educational programs and opportunities remains a high priority for DEMCO. Since 1978, January signals the launch of the DEMCO Youth Tour Essay Contest that invites participation from 11th-grade students at high schools throughout our seven-parish service territory. Twelve semifinalists are selected and invited to present their essays at an awards banquet in March. Customarily the prize for the winners is a free pass to the NRECA Rural Electric Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. Although this year's trip has been cancelled, the prize will be a comparable scholarship award to the four winners selected. Entries are due by January 22, 2021 (see page 17).

Another annual program that commences in January is the DEMCO Scholarship Program for member-students attending or planning to attend a Louisiana public college or university. This year marks the 28th round of one-year scholarships awarded in a random drawing at the DEMCO annual membership meeting in May. Students are eligible for an award of \$1,250 for two consecutive semesters. Applications for the DEMCO Scholarship are accepted January 1 through May 1, 2021 (see page 5).

On behalf of everyone at DEMCO, we welcome 2021 and look forward to a prosperous and joyful new year.

**DEMCO BOARD ELECTION
DIXIE ELECTRIC MEMBERSHIP CORPORATION
CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**2021 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
Saturday, May 15, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.**

**LOCATION OF MEETING
DEMCO Headquarters Facility, 16262 Wax Road, Greenwell Springs, LA 70739**

February 15, 2021 – March 8, 2021

Publish the Calendar of Events in the official journal of each Parish, including the date, time, and place of the meeting of the Nominating Committee.

March 16, 2021 – March 18, 2021

Pre-qualification period. Members interested in seeking a position on the board of directors are required pursuant to DEMCO bylaws to appear in person between these dates to determine eligibility as prescribed in the corporation's bylaws. Candidates not pre-qualified will not be eligible to seek a position on the board of directors.

March 18, 2021

DEMCO Board Meeting at 6:00 p.m., at DEMCO Headquarters. The Committee on Nominations will be appointed at this meeting.

March 18, 2021

The Nominating Committee meeting begins at 6:05 p.m. at DEMCO Headquarters, 16262 Wax Road, Greenwell Springs, LA, with results of the meeting to be posted March 19, 2021.

March 25, 2021

DEMCO Governance Committee will meet at 4:30 p.m. on this date, if needed, to determine eligibility of director candidates who have pre-qualified. Only candidates who have pre-qualified will be considered.

March 26, 2021

This is the Record Date for the 2020 Annual Membership Meeting. A final list of those members eligible to vote in DEMCO's 2020 Annual Membership Meeting will be prepared.

March 29, 2021

Beginning on this date, pre-qualified director candidates may obtain a petition to run for a seat on the board of directors. DEMCO bylaws require 50 valid signatures for the petition to be validated.

April 8, 2021

Petitions must be returned to DEMCO headquarters office by 4:30 p.m. and received by the CEO and General Manager's office.

April 15, 2021

The Governance Committee, will meet at 4:30 p.m. on this date if needed, to validate each petition and post the results as required by the corporation's bylaws on this date.

April 20, 2021 – April 30, 2021

The Official Notice of the 2021 Annual Meeting will be mailed to all members of the cooperative during this time.

April 21, 2021

Ballots for the 2020 Annual Meeting will be mailed to members of the cooperative on this date. Members should receive their ballots by Saturday, April 26, 2021 — VOTE and mail your ballot immediately.

May 7, 2021

The deadline for receiving ballots for the 2021 Annual Membership Meeting is 4:30 p.m. on this date — **DO NOT DELAY — VOTE**

May 10, 2021 – May 12, 2021

Ballots will be counted during this period by the certified public accountants selected by DEMCO to conduct the annual meeting. Candidates will be advised as to the time and place that the ballots will be counted.

May 15, 2021

Annual meeting and election results announced at 10:00 a.m., at 16262 Wax Road, Greenwell Springs, LA 70739.



 What is the DEMCO Scholarship Program? | →

One-year scholarships of \$1,250 for each of two consecutive semesters awarded to member-students in a random drawing at the DEMCO annual membership meeting each May.

For eligibility requirements and to enter, visit DEMCO.org.

DEADLINE is May 10, 2021



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Birds of a Feather

Louisiana is a haven for hunters and bird-watchers alike

By Pamela A. Keene

With the country's fifth-longest coastline, Louisiana's location along the Mississippi Flyway makes the state one of the best places for birding. More than 400 species of migratory birds use the popular path to head south for the winter from Canada to South America.

"Migrating birds come through Louisiana by the hundreds of thousands," says Anne Klenke, tourism director for Lake Charles. "With our many coastal and wildlife refuges, our state is rich with hundreds of species of birds—from waterfowl to songbirds—some who travel through here and others who are yearlong residents."

Perhaps best known because it is along both the Mississippi and Central flyways, the Creole Nature Trail All-American Road loops more than 180 miles through Louisiana's Outback.

With plenty of space for ecotours and individual exploration, it includes 26 miles of natural beaches of the Gulf of Mexico and has been rated one of the top 10 birding locations in the country.

"Our area has two of the three species of pelicans—brown and white—plus snowy plover and black-bellied plover, willets and

the beautiful roseate spoonbills, whose plumage is colored pink

by their diet of crustaceans and shrimp," Anne says. "This is a bird-watchers' paradise any time of the year because it's so rural—almost a hidden treasure."

Anne says the area is a hunters' destination as well—especially with the large population of mallards and whistling ducks.


"Hunting, fishing and crabbing are important to our economy during their seasons, and it's a way of life for us as well," Anne says. "Although we're still recovering from Hurricane Laura and Hurricane Delta, we are opening back up our lodging for visitors and are hopeful that 2021 will hold good news for us."

As for shorebirds, beginner and seasoned bird-watchers can expect to see great blue herons, various species of sandpipers, terns, six species of egrets, three types of ibis and more than a half-dozen varieties of gulls. In the spring, hummingbirds make their way back from Central America and Mexico; ruby-throated hummers are the most common, but rufous hummingbirds also make an appearance nearest the Gulf. Flycatchers' migration peaks in September, with multiple species using the Mississippi Flyway as their north-to-south route.

"One of the reasons this area is so good for birding is our combination of beaches, shoreline, marshes, swamp and prairies," Anne says. "With this diverse ecosystem, we can provide a wide variety of food and shelter sources for birds. During migration times in the fall and spring, this is an ideal place for the birds to stop off to feed and sometimes even to breed."



Snow geese congregate along the Creole Nature Trail. The dark ones are juveniles. PHOTO COURTESY OF LAKE CHARLES SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU



National Audubon has two volunteer-managed chapters in the state: Baton Rouge Audubon Society and Orleans Audubon Society.

Both support conservation, education and bird-watching activities, field trips, classes and newsletters.

“Louisiana offers myriad diverse habitats for both migratory and resident birds,” says Jane Patterson, president of Baton Rouge Audubon Society. “Because the state is located on the largest river in North America—the Mississippi—the birds can use it as a physical landmark to make their migrations.”

Baton Rouge Audubon owns and manages the 40-acre Peveto Woods Sanctuary in Cameron Parish. With a large population of live oaks, the sanctuary has been preserved to shelter migratory birds. Over the past 40 years, the organization has expanded the land through donations and fundraising.

“Peveto Woods is an ongoing restoration project to protect wildlife, particularly birds,” Jane says. “We welcome bird-watchers, butterfly-watchers and photographers to come to Peveto and learn about the work we are doing to support migratory birds and conservation.”

The wood stork population has been growing along the Louisiana coast, particularly in shallow rice and crawfish ponds. A viewing tower in the Sherburne Wildlife Management Area offers bird’s-eye views of many wading birds, including wood

storks, egrets and roseate spoonbills.

One of the most well-known birding events in the country, the Great Louisiana Birdfest, is in St. Tammany April 1-5. Hosted by the Northlake Nature Center near Mandeville, the event brings birders together to look for seasonal and migratory birds. Guided birding trips on foot or by boat, photography workshops and other bird-related activities draw beginners, amateurs, hobbyists and serious ornithologists.

Scarlet tanagers, indigo bunting, ruby-throated hummingbirds, raptors, orioles and many waterfowl species populate the area on their spring migration. Sightings of resident birds include some of the eight species of woodpeckers, plus great blue herons, white ibis, great and snowy egrets and hawks.

“Attending a birding event is a good way to get a jump-start on learning about birdwatching,” Anne says. “However, if you want to start gradually, just start looking around your own backyard or plan a hike in a nearby park or nature preserve. No matter whether you’re a casual bird watcher or a serious birder, Louisiana is an excellent place to spot all kinds of birds. I will warn you, though. Once you start paying attention to the birds around you, you will probably be hooked.” ■

See related stories, page 14.

Keep Pets and Energy Bills Comfortable

Save energy while caring for your furry friends

Will a pet door affect my energy bill?

Pet doors are convenient for pet owners and pets, but they can affect energy bills. A poorly made or improperly installed pet door creates unwanted drafts that increase energy bills and reduce the overall comfort level of your home. The wrong type of door also may be pushed open during high winds. (Account No. 80124595001)

Consider installing a pet door certified by the Alliance to Save Energy, or one that has a double or triple flap. These types of pet doors can reduce energy loss and make life easier for you and your furry friends.

The best solution may be a high-quality electronic door activated by a chip on your pet's collar.

It's difficult to undo a pet door installation, so do your

homework before taking the leap.

How much heat and cold can my pet handle?

Cats and dogs can handle the cold better than humans. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, which regulates facilities that house cats and dogs, requires facilities to keep temperatures above 50 F.

Some exceptions are allowed for breeds accustomed to the cold or if some form of insulation is provided for the animals. Your pet's tolerance really depends on the breed and coat thickness.

A report by the Purdue Center for Animal Science says Siberian huskies can tolerate temperatures below freezing, but some short-haired dogs require temperatures of 59 F



Learn to control costs while maintaining your pet's comfort.

or warmer. Older animals may require warmer temperatures than younger ones.

During summer, cats and dogs handle the heat in different ways. Cats clearly enjoy warmer temperatures more than dogs, and do a good job reducing their activity level as temperatures climb. But both cats and dogs can overheat.

The USDA says room temperatures in facilities housing dogs or cats should not exceed 85 F for more than four hours at a time.

Is it OK if my pet sleeps in the garage overnight?

USDA rules suggest this should be fine if your garage temperature stays between 50 F and 85 F.


Pets might be able to handle a lower temperature if they have a warm, insulated bed.

Heating or cooling your garage for your pet is not recommended. This could lead to extremely high energy bills. An uninsulated garage could easily cost more to heat than a home. A better solution is a heated pet house, which you can buy from multiple retailers. If you're willing to spend a little more, you can find climate-controlled pet houses that include heating and cooling options.

You can also buy heated beds for cats and dogs. Some beds use as little as 4 watts of electricity, so they won't drain your energy bill. ■



This column was co-written by Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen of Collaborative Efficiency. For more energy tips, go to www.collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips.



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Expanding rural broadband is key to building an infrastructure to support students, businesses and travelers. ADOBE STOCK PHOTO BY MTRLIN

Closing the Gap

High-speed internet brings a world of opportunity to rural communities

By Drew Woolley

As the 2020 spring semester approached and the scope of the pandemic became clear, faculty at Washington State University accepted they would not soon return to typical campus life.

They needed a new plan.

Their first idea was to give students access to online courses at WSU Extension

locations across the state. But just as a strategy formed, a statewide “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” order prohibited such gatherings.

Soon, the essential nature of internet access would become even more evident—particularly in rural communities, where Pew Research estimates one in five Americans lacks

access to high-speed internet services. It was a realization already playing out across the nation. While health services, businesses, school systems and others increasingly depend on internet access, the pandemic emphasized its importance.

“We needed a Plan B,” says Monica Babine, senior associate at WSU Extension’s program for digital initiatives. “We began

exploring the idea of taking our internet access from inside the building to outside.”

Rural Washington libraries had long offered internet access in their parking lots. Extension worked with the libraries and the Washington State Broadband Office to open opportunities to join with more than a dozen private and nonprofit organizations

throughout the state.

The result was more than 600 drive-in Wi-Fi hot spots. Community libraries hosted about half the locations, allowing students and the general public free access to high-speed internet.

“What started as an emergency response has become so important that the Broadband Office is asking for more funding to expand it next year,” Babine says. “We’ve heard from students who wouldn’t otherwise be able to take classes, entrepreneurs who are using hot spots to conduct business and telehealth appointments that are opening medical access to providers whose doors are closed.”

A Class of Their Own

Traditionally, the “homework gap” has been a concern for students who have access to the internet in the classroom, but not when doing schoolwork at home. However, research by the Quello Center at Michigan State University indicates performance gaps extend even further.

The center’s report finds rural middle school and high school students without reliable internet access are less likely to pursue a college degree, score lower on standardized tests, and tend to have less interest in careers related to science, technology, engineering and math.

High-speed internet not only can help boost students’ performance, it gives them access to educational opportunities their local school district might not have the resources to provide.

“People are taking their job or business idea and moving out to where they can take advantage of the quality of life and safety, and get away from the health challenges of big cities.”

— MONICA BABINE

“One of the things we have heard in our research is how important high-speed internet is to students in small, remote school districts when it comes to accessing classes,” says Anna Read, an officer for the Broadband Research Initiative at The Pew Charitable Trusts. “They can take advanced placement classes or get technical training that their school district couldn’t offer on its own.”

The 21st Century Economy

The same is true for small businesses that can use the internet to tap into the global economy from a small town or even their own backyard. In fact, a lack of service hamstrings many rural businesses before they even have a chance to get off the ground.

“We heard so many stories about high-speed internet helping businesses participate in the 21st century economy,” Read says. “Without that service, it is very challenging for rural businesses to grow or even retain the business they have.”

As access to high-speed internet expands in rural areas, these communities are quickly becoming attractive alternatives to major cities.

For existing businesses looking to establish a satellite

office, gig workers in need of affordable homes or startups searching for locations, rural America can provide a better quality of life with less overhead.

“I could start a business in a rural community for a lot less than downtown Seattle,” Babine says. “If you watch migration out of rural communities, it was huge for many years, but we’re starting to see it reverse.”

People are taking their job or business idea and moving out to where they can take advantage of the quality of life and safety, and get away from the health challenges of big cities.”

No Going Back

The coronavirus pandemic has highlighted the importance of connectivity across the board. But few areas show the need as acutely as health care.

For many rural Americans, a trip to the nearest hospital can take hours, meaning remote access to specialized care is often the difference between life and death.

Across the country, telehealth has helped connect patients to the care they need. In McKee, Kentucky, a virtual living room program allows veterans to consult with Veterans Affairs health care providers from the comfort of a private room in their local

library. Throughout Minnesota and North Dakota, Essentia Health’s telestroke program makes it possible to diagnose and begin treating stroke patients on their way to the hospital.

In the past, helping patients accustomed to in-person visits with their doctor become comfortable with new telehealth options has been a challenge. But with the pandemic forcing many Americans to adapt to remote work, that transition may no longer be as much of a hurdle.

“In early March, I was still selling the idea of remote work and telehealth,” Babine says. “We’re not selling it anymore.”

The pandemic has made telehealth very global and very personal. I think the reality is that we’re not going back. The norms have changed, and people will say, “Why do I have to go to the doctor 50 miles from here when I could just get on the phone with them?”

While the past year has made the internet gap between rural and urban America clearer, Babine is optimistic about bridging it. Between shifting norms and the partnerships WSU has developed with organizations across Washington, Babine sees a bright future ahead for high-speed service in rural communities.

“Even when I worked for one of the major telcos in this state in the ’70s and early ’80s, I never saw such tremendous collaboration between providers and stakeholders,” Babine says. “I’ve been doing this a long time, and I have to say I have never been so hopeful.” ■

SMALL BITES,

Big Flavors

Small in size but big on taste, sliders hit the spot throughout the day

Parmesan Meatball Sliders

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 pound ground beef (85% lean) | yellow onion |
| ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese | 14.5-ounce can diced tomatoes, undrained |
| ¼ cup chopped fresh Italian parsley | 1 cup tomato sauce |
| 1 egg, slightly beaten | ½ teaspoon dried oregano |
| 3 teaspoons finely chopped garlic, divided | ¼ teaspoon salt |
| 1 tablespoon olive oil | 12 mini sandwich buns |
| ½ cup finely chopped | 6 1-ounce slices part-skim mozzarella cheese, cut in half |

Heat oven to 375 F.

Combine beef, Parmesan cheese, parsley, egg and 1 teaspoon garlic in a medium bowl. Divide mixture into 12 portions. Shape into meatballs and place on a shallow baking pan lined with aluminum foil. Bake for 15 minutes or until meat reaches 160 F.

Meanwhile, heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion. Cook for 3 minutes or until tender, stirring occasionally.

Add the remaining 2 teaspoons garlic. Cook for 1 minute more or until fragrant. Stir in undrained tomatoes, tomato sauce, oregano and salt. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes or until sauce has thickened, stirring occasionally.

Place open buns on the baking sheet. Spoon sauce on bottom of each bun. Place one meatball on each bun and more sauce, if desired. Top each with mozzarella cheese. Bake for 5 minutes, or until cheese melts and bun tops are lightly crisped.

Courtesy of Ready Set Eat

Beef & Black Bean Sliders

- | | |
|--|---|
| ½ cup low-sodium black beans, drained and rinsed | ½ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce |
| 1 pound lean ground beef | ½ teaspoon salt |
| ¼ small sweet onion, finely chopped | ¼ teaspoon pepper |
| 1 clove garlic, minced | 8 whole wheat slider buns |
| 2 tablespoons whole wheat breadcrumbs | 4 slices lowfat cheddar cheese, cut in half |

Mash black beans in a medium bowl. Add beef, onion, garlic, breadcrumbs, Worcestershire, salt and pepper. Combine well, and form into eight mini patties.

Spray a skillet with nonstick cooking spray. Heat over medium heat. Add patties and cook 3 to 4 minutes per side, or until desired doneness. Top with cheese and let melt.

Serve on buns with condiments of your choice.

Courtesy of Produce for Kids

Ham and Avocado Biscuit Sliders

- | | |
|---|--|
| 2 cups plus 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour, divided | ½-inch slices |
| 1 tablespoon baking powder | 1 cup buttermilk, divided |
| 1 teaspoon salt | 1 medium sweet potato, boiled, peeled and mashed |
| ¾ teaspoon sage | Spinach leaves |
| ¼ teaspoon smoked paprika | Deli ham |
| ½ cup cold butter, cut into | 1 avocado |

Heat oven to 425 F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

In large bowl, whisk 2 cups of flour, baking powder, salt, sage and paprika. With a pastry blender, cut in cold butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs.

In a medium bowl, whisk ¾ cup buttermilk and mashed sweet potato. Stir into the flour mixture.

Use the remaining flour to prepare a work surface. Knead until dough forms. Roll dough to ¾-inch thickness. Using a 2-inch round cutter, cut dough into 18 biscuits. Re-roll and cut out dough until all is used.

Place biscuits on the prepared baking sheet. Brush each biscuit with remaining buttermilk. Bake for 11 to 13 minutes, or until golden brown. Cool completely.

Split biscuits in half. Top bottom half of biscuit with spinach leaves, deli ham and an avocado slice. Replace biscuit top and serve immediately.

Courtesy of Culinary.net



Pepperoni Pizza Sliders

1 package slider rolls
½ cup pizza sauce
½ cup mini pepperoni
1½ cups shredded, low-moisture, part-skim mozzarella cheese
¼ cup butter, melted

1 teaspoon parsley flakes
½ teaspoon dried oregano
½ teaspoon garlic powder
½ cup shredded Parmesan cheese
Nonstick cooking spray

Heat oven to 350 F.

Keeping rolls connected, cut sheet of rolls horizontally, separating tops from bottoms. Place bottom halves of rolls in a baking dish. Spread pizza sauce evenly over the bottom halves. Sprinkle pepperoni over the sauce. Sprinkle mozzarella over the pepperoni, and cover with top halves of rolls.

Mix melted butter with parsley flakes, dried oregano, garlic powder and Parmesan cheese. Spoon evenly over sliders.

Cover baking dish with aluminum foil sprayed with nonstick cooking spray to keep the cheese from sticking. Bake for 20 minutes. Remove foil and bake an additional 5 to 10 minutes, or until Parmesan is melted and golden brown. Cut sliders and serve immediately.

Recipe and photo courtesy of culinary.net

A rosette spoonbill with waterfowl. PHOTOS
COURTESY OF LAKE CHARLES SOUTHWEST
LOUISIANA CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU



A 'Wizard of Oz' Opportunity

By Pamela A. Keene

When Jane Patterson decided to get into birding in 2005, she didn't kid around. Less than two years later, she was recruited by Baton Rouge Audubon Society to become the organization's education chairperson.

"At the time, my now 30-year-old son was really into video games, as most of his generation was, so I was looking for a way to find more outdoor activities for him—something he could also do with his friends," says Jane, who now serves as president of Baton Rouge Audubon and continues to teach classes. "Bird-watching can be a gateway to enjoying nature for people of all ages and interests."

Jane's birding experience took hold quickly and intensely as she began teaching and leading birding hikes, which she still does. She says casual birders and hobbyists can realize the same sort of joy in spotting a new bird in the area.

"I call it a 'Wizard of Oz' moment, like when life changes from the black and white of Kansas to the full color of the other side of the rainbow," Jane says. "Once you start looking for birds, you'll find them everywhere, and if you're in a migration path, it's not usual to see many non-resident birds, even in your own backyard."

Jane teaches at least four classes each year in Baton Rouge, including KidsWhoBird, which has gone virtual to encourage youngsters to become bird-watchers.

"Over the past 13 years, I have fledged more than 500 new birders into the world," she says. "In our KidsWhoBird program, we have 20 kids signed up. We meet via Zoom and did have one in-person field trip recently to the Capitol Lakes in Baton Rouge."

To start, Jane suggests setting up some feeders in the yard to attract local birds.

"However, it's not just about feeders," she says. "Once you start being aware of birds, you'll see them in the trees, shrubs and grasses nearby as well."

Common backyard birds that live in most areas of Louisiana all year include

Be a Part of the Great Backyard Bird Count

Presidents' Day weekend is also the Great Backyard Bird Count—a chance for people to become citizen-scientists and help gather information about bird populations and migration in their local area.

This year's event is February 12-15.

"It's a chance for people around the world, no matter where, to take notice of birds for as little as 15 minutes, then report what they're seeing on a bird checklist of your area," says Jane Patterson. "You'll be helping with research."

Begun in 1998 as an initiative of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society, the four-day event is designed to be easy and fun. Instructions, checklists and help identifying birds are available through the website, www.birdcount.org.

The annual count helps track bird populations and their habitats. It also factors into identifying the rise and fall of various species.

cardinals, blue jays, warblers, Carolina wrens, Carolina chickadees, tufted titmouse, and red-bellied and downy woodpecker.

"Investing in a pair of 8x42 binoculars can really make a difference in your bird-watching experiences," Jane says, "especially if you plan to take part in birding trips, hikes and club activities. A point-and-shoot camera with a good zoom is also a great tool for learning birds."

Birding is a good way to connect with other people of similar interests. It also gets you back to the outdoors for exercise and fresh air. Best of all, it can be done anywhere, anytime.

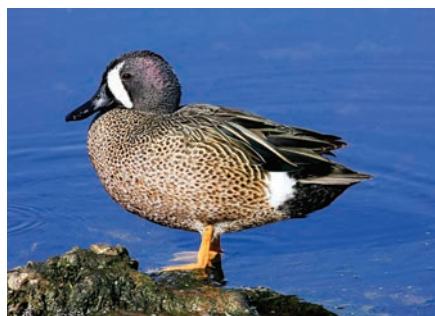
"Birding can take you all over the world," Jane says, "and it's an easy pursuit to take with you, requiring little preparation."

"Birders are friendly folks who love to share. The best way to learn is at the elbow of someone who knows more than you. Find local events or a birding pal and get outside. Every day is a new experience." ■

See page 16 for birding resources.



Royal tern



Blue-winged teal



Hooded warbler



Ferruginous hawk



Photographers take aim at a rosette spoonbill during a bird-watching trip near Lake Charles. PHOTO BY YVETTE CARDOZO

Louisiana Birding Locations

These are a few places in the state to see birds

Atchafalaya National Heritage Area, south-central Louisiana

www.atchafalaya.org

Bayou Teche National Wildlife Refuge, Franklin

www.fws.gov/refuge/Bayou_Teche

Creole Nature Trail All-American Road, southwest Louisiana

www.visitlakecharles.org/creole-nature-trail/attractions/birding

Pintail Wildlife Drive, Cameron

www.fws.gov/refuges/profiles/index.cfm?id=43612

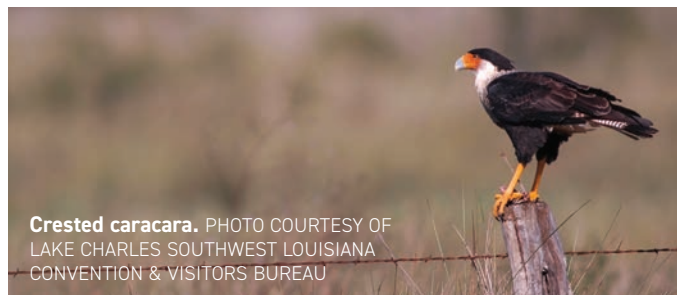
Red River National Wildlife Refuge, Bossier City

www.fws.gov/northlouisiana/redriver

Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge, inland Louisiana

www.fws.gov/refuge/tensas_river

To help identify area songbirds, consider getting a printed field guide or download an app, such as eBird, the Merlin app or the Audubon app. These help identify birds by allowing you to input the bird's color, habitat, size, and wing and tail shape.



Crested caracara. PHOTO COURTESY OF LAKE CHARLES SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

Birding Resources

A Birder's Guide to Louisiana (maps, birds found in particular locations)

www.atchafalaya.org/birding

National Audubon, <https://audubon.org>.

Audubon Louisiana, <https://la.audubon.org>.

Baton Rouge Audubon Society, braudubon.org.

Orleans Audubon, <https://jjaudubon.net>.

Great Louisiana Birdfest, www.louisiananorthshore.com/events/annual-events/great-louisiana-birdfest.

Birding clubs and events, birdlouisiana.org.

Birding trails, www.louisianatravel.com/louisiana-birding-trails.

Keeping track of birds, ebird.org.

Free bird identification program, merlin.allaboutbirds.org.



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Entries due by January 22nd.

For rules and information, visit DEMCO.org

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Congratulations to these winners: Accounts #5106401001, #80276846002, #80006305002 and #80289684001.

It's easy to sign up and be eligible to win: Sign up for bank draft at DEMCO.org or call 1-844-MyDEMCO (1-844-693-3626).

Lucky Account Number Contest

Four lucky co-op members will win \$25! Your account number is listed on your mailing label, but to win you must also find it in the pages of the magazine.

If you find it, call 225-262-2160 to claim your prize.

DEMCO

Achievable Resolutions

By Allison Goldberg

If it feels like the new year speeds by as fast as resolutions are forgotten, you are not alone. Setting large, difficult goals and making strong initial progress that fades as the weeks go by happens to everyone. Don't worry: Small changes can have big impacts and be easier to maintain.

Here are some reasonable resolutions to help you make healthy, positive changes.

Nutrition

If you want to eat better, try making more nutritious choices one at a time.

- Add an extra serving of nutritiously prepared vegetables every day, such as steamed or roasted veggies as a side, salsa instead of butter on your baked potato or adding mushrooms to ground beef.
- Cut both sugary and artificially sweetened soft drinks to one a week. Don't deny yourself, but make it a special treat!
- Replace sugary or refined snacks and breakfast foods with fruits, nuts and whole grains. Healthy options that are delicious and nutritious include fresh fruit and nuts or nut butter; avocado on whole-grain toast; lightly sweetened granola in plain yogurt; and steel-cut oats with berries. (Account No. 20000412001)
- It's always a great idea to incorporate more physical activity into your days. Find a mobile app that works for you to stretch, walk or workout. Set an alarm to remind you to carve out 10 to 30 minutes to exercise.
- Try a resolution accountability app that attaches monetary value to your dedication.
- Make working out more social with fitness social media apps or support groups on social networks.
- Do what moves you, literally and figuratively.

Organization

If you resolved to get organized but find yourself still living in clutter, running late or not getting enough sleep, tackle organization with small tasks.

- Section by section, put things away, dust or disinfect. Do not allow yourself to re-clutter a cleaned area. Invest in attractive storage solutions and clean one section each evening until you finish every section.
- Make a rule that if you pick up an object, you must put it down in its proper place.
- Use your phone's calendar to track every appointment and block out time. Set reminders to provide enough time to get out the door and on the road. You can also use it to remind yourself to go to bed early, give your pet its medication or spend a few minutes tidying at the end of each day.
- Say no to unnecessary or unimportant requests that stretch your time and patience, to which you cannot give your full attention or do not sound enjoyable. Prioritize the people and activities you care about most, including yourself. ■



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Top Acid Reflux Pill Quietly Slows Premature Aging, Users Report Big Health Boost

Clinical research shows an active ingredient that restores GI health without shots, prescription, or side effects can slow the aging process; studies find the pill helps protect users from metabolic decline, cardiovascular issues, and serious conditions that accompany premature aging.

Seattle, WA – A new study on a leading acid reflux pill shows that its key ingredient relieves digestive symptoms while suppressing the inflammation that contributes to premature aging in men and women.

And, if consumer sales are any indication of a product's effectiveness, this 'acid reflux pill turned anti-aging phenomenon' is nothing short of a miracle.

Sold under the brand name AloeCure®, its ingredient was already backed by research showing its ability to neutralize acid levels and hold them down for long lasting day and night relief from bouts of heartburn and, acid reflux, gas, bloating, and more.

But soon doctors started reporting some incredible results...

"With AloeCure, my patients started reporting, better sleep, more energy, stronger immune systems... even less stress and better skin, hair, and nails" explains Dr. Liza Leal; a leading integrative health specialist and company spokesperson.

AloeCure contains an active ingredient that helps improve digestion by acting as a natural acid-buffer that improves the pH balance of your stomach.

Scientists now believe that this acid imbalance could be a major contributing factor to painful inflammation throughout the rest of the body.

The daily allowance of AloeCure has shown to calm this inflammation through immune system adjustments which is why AloeCure is so effective.

Relieving other stressful symptoms related to GI health like pain, bloating, fatigue, cramping, acid overproduction, and nausea.

Now, backed with new scientific studies, AloeCure is being doctor recommended to help improve digestion, and even reduce the appearance of wrinkles – helping patients look and feel decades younger.

FIX YOUR GUT & FIGHT INFLAMMATION

Since hitting the market, sales for AloeCure have taken off and there are some very good reasons why.

To start, the clinical studies have been impressive. Virtually all participants taking it reported stunning improvement in digestive symptoms including bouts of heartburn.

Users can also experience higher energy levels and endurance, relief from chronic discomfort and better sleep, healthier looking skin, hair, and nails.

A healthy gut is the key to a reducing swelling and inflammation that can wreak havoc on the human body. Doctors say this is why AloeCure works on so many aspects of your health.

AloeCure's active ingredient is made from the famous healing compound found in Aloe Vera. It

is both safe and healthy. There are also no known side effects.

Scientists believe that it helps improve digestive by acting as a natural acid-buffer that improves the pH balance of your stomach and helps the immune system maintain healthy functions.

Research has shown that this acid imbalance contributes to painful inflammation throughout your entire body and is why AloeCure seems to be so effective.

EXCITING RESULTS FROM PATIENTS

To date millions of bottles of AloeCure have been sold, and the community seeking non-pharma therapy for their GI health continues to grow.

According to Dr. Leal, her patients are absolutely thrilled with their results and are often shocked by how fast it works.

"For the first time in years, they are free from concerns about their digestion and almost every other aspect of their health," says Dr. Leal, "and I recommend it to everyone who wants to improve GI health before considering drugs, surgery, or OTC medications."

"All the problems with my stomach are gone. Completely gone. I can say AloeCure is a miracle. It's a miracle." Another user turned spokesperson said, "I started to notice a difference because I was sleeping through the night and that was great. AloeCure does work for me. It's made a huge difference."

With so much positive feedback, it's easy to see why the community of believers is growing and sales for the new pill are soaring.

THE SCIENCE BEHIND ALOECURE

AloeCure is a pill that's taken just once daily. The pill is small. Easy to swallow. There are no harmful side effects and it does not require a prescription.

The active ingredient is a rare Aloe Vera component known as acemannan.

Millions spent in developing a proprietary process for extracting acemannan resulted in the highest quality, most bio-available levels of acemannan known to exist, and it's made from organic aloe.

According to Dr. Leal and leading experts, improving the pH balance of your stomach and restoring gut health is the key to revitalizing your entire body.

When your digestive system isn't healthy, it causes unwanted stress on your immune system, which results in inflammation in the rest of the body.

The recommended daily allowance of acemannan in AloeCure has been proven to support digestive



"ACCIDENTAL" ANTI-AGING BREAKTHROUGH: Originally developed for digestive issues, AloeCure not only ends digestion nightmares... it revitalizes the entire body. Some are calling it the greatest accidental discovery in decades.

health and manage painful inflammation through immune system adjustments without side effects or drugs.

This would explain why so many users are experiencing impressive results so quickly.

REVITALIZE YOUR ENTIRE BODY

With daily use, AloeCure helps users look and feel decades younger and defend against some of the painful inflammation that accompanies aging and can make life hard.

By buffering stomach acid and restoring gut health, AloeCure's ingredient maintains healthy immune system function to combat painful inflammation...reduce the appearance of wrinkles and help strengthen hair and nails ... maintains healthy cholesterol and oxidative stress... improves sleep and energy.... and supports brain function by way of gut biome... without side effects or expense.

Readers can now reclaim their energy, vitality, and youth regardless of age.

Research shows a daily dose helps with:

- Immune support
- Cardiovascular
- Relief from Bowel Discomfort
- Acceleration of wound healing
- Joint Health
- Strength of Skin, hair, and nails

HOW TO CLAIM A FREE SUPPLY TODAY

This is an exclusive offer for our readers. And so, AloeCure is offering up to 3 FREE bottles and FREE S&H with their order. While supplies last you may also receive a FREE book on Aloe Vera health benefits.

A special hotline number has been created for all residents. This is the best way to try AloeCure with their 100% satisfaction guarantee, and any free gifts are yours to keep no matter what.

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Important: Due to a surge in sales supplies are not guaranteed beyond the next 48 hours. Call now to not lose out on this offer.

Where It All Began: Audubon State Historic Site

Illustrations for John James Audubon's world-famous 'Birds of America' series started in Louisiana's Feliciana parishes

By Cheré Coen

It was an opportune assignment for American ornithologist and artist John James Audubon when, in 1821, he was hired to tutor young Eliza Pirrie at the Oakley Plantation in Louisiana's Feliciana parishes.

Audubon—who had spent most of his life above the Mason-Dixon Line—was amazed by the area's wildlife and created 32 bird illustrations during his four months at Oakley.

It was the beginning of his now world-famous "Birds of America" series.

Audubon not only tutored Eliza in languages, math and art, among other subjects, he roamed the Feliciana countryside studying Louisiana's species of birds, both migratory and resident. He would shoot the birds and remove plants they frequented to create a bird scene in its natural habitat.

These early drawings consisted of charcoal and colored wax, says Daniel Wilcox, a Louisiana park ranger at Audubon State Historic Site outside St. Francisville, where Audubon lived and taught. (Account No. 80237528416)

"He wasn't a conservationist; he was a naturalist," says Daniel, who notes sometimes Audubon would kill several birds of a species to make his drawings as accurate as possible.

Audubon's wife, Lucy Bakewell, served as governess to other plantation owners near St. Francisville, so even after Audubon was dismissed from Oakley, he remained in the area north of Baton Rouge between 1821 to 1828, adding to his bird portfolio.

"He was in the area on and off," Daniel says. "He created 72 bird illustrations altogether in the Felicianas."

Visitors to the Audubon State Historic Site can tour the circa-1806 Oakley House, where Audubon lived on the home's ground floor. The house contains period antiques from the Pirrie family as well as some of Audubon's personal belongings.

The property was acquired through a Spanish Land Grant in 1795 by Ruffin Gray, and the land was cleared for cotton production. Ruffin's widow, Lucretia Gray, later married James Pirrie from Scotland. They built the West Indies-style home in



LEFT: Artifacts from when John James Audubon lived and taught at the Audubon State Historic Site outside St. Francisville.

PHOTO BY CHERÉ COEN

phases. (Account No. 80297348001)

The family sold the house to the state in 1947. After restoring the rooms in the late Federal Period style, when Audubon lived at Oakley, Louisiana opened the house and grounds as a historic site in 1956.

An impressive collection of Audubon “Birds of America” originals line the walls of the center’s auditorium. The center’s prints range from popular species such as the roseate spoonbill and the mockingbird to the American woodcock and belted kingfisher.

All the species exhibited visit Louisiana today, except for the Carolina parrot, which went extinct from overkilling due to being a nuisance to cotton plantations, Daniel says.

“The rest of these species roam the park today,” he adds.

The house is surrounded by 100 lush acres with a 1-mile hiking trail, two ponds and areas for picnicking.

Tours of the Oakley House are available with social distancing. The visitors center contains a museum with period artifacts, and a timeline of the plantation and Louisiana history.

Visitors to the Audubon State Historic Site range from Audubon enthusiasts to plantation and/or historic home lovers and birders in the spring and fall. The site offers special historical events throughout the year. On February 20, Audubon presents “The War of 1812 Living History Encampment” with reenactors, artillery demonstrations, cannon firings and historical lectures. ■

For more information, call 225-635-3739 or 888-677-2838 toll-free, or visit www.lastateparks.com/historic-sites/audubon-state-historic-site.

IF YOU WANT TO VISIT:

Audubon State Historic Site is at 11788 Highway 965 in St. Francisville. It is open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$8 for senior citizens, \$5 for students ages 4-17, and free for children ages 3 and younger. For those who wish to visit the grounds alone, the fee is \$5 for ages 4 and older.



ABOVE: The house, restored in the late Federal Period style, and its grounds have been part of the Audubon State Historic Site since 1956.

TOP: The Oakley Plantation house in the late 1800s.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF AUDUBON STATE HISTORIC SITE



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