

Second Front

Boone Life | Enjoying the comforts of Boone County



One of the residents of Coyote Hill tries some soft words and a gentle pat on Roy the horse's head in an effort to stop his stubbornness and get him to go for a walk during a session of horse therapy. Coyote Hill is a Harrisburg foster home for abused and neglected children set on a 155-acre farm.

My size pony

Photo and story by Zachary Siebert

HARRISBURG — “C’mon, Roy. Move! Please!” she pleads with the old horse. The young girl tries tugging hard on the reins, but Roy is simply much too big a beast for her to move. Then she shifts her tactic and starts petting him behind the ears and cooing sweet encouragements. After a few minutes of this, she persuades Roy to turn around in circles until eventually the old, stubborn horse decides that it might not be such a bad idea to go for a stroll with the exuberant young girl. The look of pride and pleasure that flashes across her face is unmistakable.

The sign out front reads: “Coyote Hill: A Place to Be a Child.” Coyote Hill, just outside Harrisburg, is a professional home for abused and neglected children established 17 years ago by Larry McDaniel and his wife, who had a lifelong desire to help children. Not long thereafter she died of cancer, but Larry kept the place thriving and growing. Today the home sits on more than 150 acres of idyllic countryside property set up to make the lives of its residents fun and positive. Coyote Hill serves as home to about 20 children amongst three differ-

ent houses on the property. The foster home could accommodate higher numbers, but the focus is on quality relationship building rather than quantity. “We anticipate good things for the kids,” McDaniel says. “We’re excited about the future. I tell the kids that there’s nothing we can do about the past, but we can work with the future.”

One way McDaniel and the other professionals at Coyote Hill work at relationship building is through a technique known as horse therapy, where children learn to work and handle horses on their own with the guidance of a therapy professional.

“The horses are participants in helping us give examples to show the kids. They model all kinds of different behavior that we have in real life with the kids,” McDaniel says. “The kids can watch them and with a little instruction they see that there are things that the horses are going through and dealing with that they (the kids) have to deal with as well in the home setting or with their biological parents. Like when Roy was stubborn today and didn’t want to move. There are all kinds of teaching moments like that.”



Boone Life is a photo column that explores the jobs and vocations of the people in Boone County. If you have suggestions, please contact Catalin Abagiu at cacm4@mizzou.edu or 882-5732.

MORE ONLINE: For additional Boone Life photos, go to ColumbiaMissourian.com and click on “Lifestyles.”

LIFE STORIES

Sherre L. Harding

Sherre L. Harding, a former bakery and deli manager and wedding cake designer for more than 30 years, died in her home Saturday, Feb. 7, 2009. She was 62.

Her favorite pastimes included attending family gatherings, spending time with her friends, gardening, cooking, baking, fishing and taking care of her pets.

She was born April 10, 1946, in Mount Pleasant, Iowa, to Glen “Buster” and Betty Lee Mason Smith.

She is survived by Gail Wolff of the home; her daughter, Julia of Tyler, Texas; her son, Jonathan of Columbia; two grandsons, Jackson Earl and Joseph William Harding of Columbia and her extended family.

Her parents, her grandparents, including Jack Mason and Earl and Wilma Veach, who raised her, died earlier.

Visitation will be from 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesday at Parker Funeral Service, 22 N. Tenth St. Services, conducted by the Rev. Darrell Draper, will be held at 1 p.m. Wednesday at Parker Funeral Services. Entombment will be held in Memorial Park Cemetery, 1217 Business Loop 70 W.

Memorial contributions may be sent to the Chemotherapy Lab at Missouri Cancer Associates, 1705 E. Broadway, Suite 100, or the Central Missouri Humane Society, 616 Big Bear Blvd.

Condolences may be sent to the family at parkerfuneralservice.com.

— Mallory Gebbie

About 17,000 still without electricity

Residents of southeast Missouri care for others while waiting for power.

By CHERYL WITTENAUER
The Associated Press

KENNETT — A no-frills office building next to agricultural rice paddies has become the nerve center for efforts to restore power to three of the hardest-hit counties in southern Missouri’s worst ice storm in memory.

Here, receptionists at the Pemiscot-Dunklin Electric Cooperative field phone calls and walk-in visits from some of the 8,600 customers who have been without power for 14 days, and face two more weeks of the same.

Down the hall, inside the “war room” of the cooperative that sprang from rural electrification in 1937, the mood is intense.

A Jan. 26-27 ice storm wiped out entire systems for transmitting and distributing electricity across a wide swath of southern Missouri. About 17,000 people still remain without electricity. The high was 100,000.

Besides the immediate pain of getting communities back online, utility officials in some of the state’s poorest

counties wonder where they’ll get the millions of dollars they estimate they’ll need to virtually rebuild their entire networks.

“I honestly can’t say,” said Charles Crawford, Pemiscot-Dunklin’s general manager. “We will handle it somehow. We’ll have to survive for our members.”

Pemiscot-Dunklin, which serves the so-called Missouri Bootheel counties of Pemiscot, Dunklin and New Madrid, was the hardest-hit of five Missouri electric cooperatives affected by the storm. Eighty percent of the cooperative’s 1,500 miles of lines and poles were destroyed, Crawford said.

Also left in the dark were southern Missouri customers of St. Louis-based utility giant AmerenUE, and the municipal utilities of various small towns.

As they reconstruct distribution lines and poles, their mother sources of electric transmission are rebuilding their own networks. It’s only

when the two marry that power can be restored to customers like 80-year-old Marietta Walker, who relies on a gas generator and stove to heat her home.

“I guess I’ll make it,” she said. “Lord, they forgot about us back here.”

Walker lives in one of the nicer homes of impoverished Hayti Heights, a virtual ghost town of unelectrified and abandoned wooden hovels, untended dogs, junked cars and shanties whose front doors are propped closed with wood stumps.

Walker is old enough to remember the days before rural electrification, when her husband stayed awake stoking a stove as the family slept.

On Friday, wrapped in a pale-pink robe and slippers, she took pity on a small stray that let himself in from the cold the night before.

Crawford, who has been without power since the first day, says he still turns on the TV out of habit.

“I’ve got to laugh about it so I don’t

cry,” he said.

Crawford expects it will take two weeks to restore power to all his customers. But much depends on the transmission provider, Poplar Bluff-based M&A Electric Power Cooperative, which lost 2,400 poles and 180 miles of line.

“This was a massive, massive hit,” said John Farris, M&A’s chief executive and general manager. “I’ve been doing this work since 1963 and never seen anything like this. There were 10,000 pounds of ice on each pole. They’re not designed for that.”

Farris said it will cost \$80 million to rebuild its infrastructure, and that customers will pay for it in the end, even if Missouri succeeds in getting federal disaster funds.

Still, some are finding reason to cheer.

Pemiscot-Dunklin outfitted motels in Steele and Marston with generators so they could house their loaned linemen.

The popular eatery “Shorty’s” in Holcomb got the same in order to cater two hot meals and a bag lunch every day. The linemen dine on ribs, fried chicken, country-style coleslaw, baked beans, corn on the cob, and fresh fruit cobbler or cream pies topped with 2-inch meringue.

“This was a massive, massive hit. I’ve been doing this work since 1963 and never seen anything like this.”

JOHN FARRIS
M&A Electric Power Cooperative’s chief executive and general manager on the severity of the most recent winter storm