

EMPIRE ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

Echoes of the Empire

SEPTEMBER 2019



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MAKING FULL CIRCLE ON YOUTH TOUR

BY BOBBE JONES MEMBER SERVICES MANAGER



BOBBE JONES

A sense of pride radiates from Clint Rapier when he talks about going on Youth Tour, the state and national co-op program that takes high schoolers to Washington, D.C., for a week every June. Rapier was selected as one of three students from Greenlee County, Arizona, in 1991 to attend the Youth Tour, sponsored by Duncan Valley Electric Cooperative in Duncan, Arizona.

Fast forward 28 years and Rapier is the system engineer at Empire Electric Association. Remembering how important the trip was to him as a youngster, and now working at a rural electric cooperative, sparked his interest in returning to the Youth Tour as a chaperone.

“I want to pay it forward,” Rapier said. “When I attended as a student, I hadn’t been anywhere in my life. I came back with a fluorescent pink Hard Rock Cafe T-shirt, which was the most important thing to me at that time.”

He notified the director of member services and education, Liz Fiddes, at the Colorado Rural Electric Association and was placed on the volunteer list. Rapier’s co-op life came full circle when he and his wife, Alicen, chaperoned the Colorado and Wyoming group in June for the 2019 Youth Tour.

“I enjoyed it more as an adult. I had more appreciation for the memorials, particularly the Holocaust Museum, which wasn’t there when I was a kid,” he recounted. “We had 52 students from Colorado and Wyoming and even when they were supposed to be quiet, they would talk and socialize. But when you walk into the Holocaust museum, it’s almost sacred. You’d expect an adult to understand it, but even the youth picked up that solemn feel, if you will, seeing how bad and how good humans can be.”

“My best memory as a student was the Smithsonian aerospace and the art



 The Colorado students travel as a group during the Youth Tour.

museums. You could spend days and not see all of it,” he recalled. “I’d never been away from home or away from my twin brother. My birthday was during the tour and I called my brother. He was all mopey because he was home, and I was not. When I got off the phone, I found the other kids and chaperones out in the hall with a cake they bought to celebrate with me.”

Rapier was impressed with this group’s punctuality, accountability and openness. A “speed-dating” exercise on the bus as they traveled assisted with personal connections for the students. While on the tour bus, everyone switched seats every 3 minutes and introduced themselves to everyone else. Rapier revealed they shared some personal stuff with others they just met, and he didn’t

recall having that type of in-depth openness with others when he attended in his youth.

“One thing that really sticks with me is that the youth of today are genuinely decent people, they are thoughtful and do some nice things,” he reported. “Sometimes, I focus on the negativity associated with youth, but in a situation like the tour, I realized how many good kids are out there. We are going to be all right.”

Co-ops across the nation offer this opportunity for young people to help them further develop their leadership skills and receive firsthand knowledge about the legislative processes. During the tour, a day is set aside for meeting and interacting with several Colorado legislators. The students are asked to develop questions for the representatives that impact them and their communities.

“They asked some heartfelt questions,” Rapier said. “We spent more time with the state representatives than I recall from my tour, and the questions the students asked were awesome. The future is just as bright with these kids as it was with ours. These students were probably a little bit deeper and more engaged in the world because of the internet. When I was young it all seemed so far removed from my life.”

New to the tour this year was the Gettysburg Civil War Battlefield. Rapier noted that all the individual decisions influenced the outcome of the Civil War. The struggles were not only between the Union and Confederate armies, but internally among the armies’ leaders and between different groups.

“We think of our military forces as cohesive groups with definitive objectives and tactics, when in reality it’s a whole lot of people making a whole lot of little decisions that can make or break an engagement,” Rapier said.

Each year, the Kennedy theater is on the agenda, because seeing a live performance



▲ (Left to right) Alicen Rapier, Cassie Gatlin and Clint Rapier at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C.



▲ The group visits some Washington, D.C., memorials after sunset.

is a first-time experience for most of the students. When Rapier attended as a youth, he was in awe of the special effects during “The Phantom of the Opera.” Although not much of a musical person, he was impressed with the enthusiasm and how appreciative the students were at this year’s “Hello, Dolly!” venue.

The tour has a special way of bringing together high-caliber students who develop long-term relationships with each other. Rapier kept in touch with both students from his area who attended with him 28 years ago and even dated a girl he met on the tour.

For Rapier, the main difference between attending the tour as a student and as an adult was that his age and experience changed his perspective. He was more reflective during visits to the memorials and thought more about what they represented. He stated that the tracing of family members’ names at the Vietnam memorial made it even more real and personal. He discovered that relatives lost during the Vietnam War were also related to Cassie Gatlin, the Youth Tour participant from Dove Creek High School.

“This time, it was about making memories and having a deeper understanding of the memorials,” he said. “Especially at dusk

Photo Contest Winner for September



 Fall by Scott Twilley

when the sun is going down, it’s quiet and you can have deep thoughts and emotional moments.”

Before returning home, Rapier shared his hope for the future with the group.

“I hope they will consider being a chap-erone when they are adults,” he said, “and pay it forward.”



NEED HELP MANAGING RUSSIAN OLIVES OR SALT CEDARS (TAMARISK)?

Montezuma County Noxious Weed Department (MCNWD) has a crew available for private landowners for the treatment of Russian olives and Salt cedars. Both species are non native to the United States and have proven to be damaging to our ecosystems. Please contact MCNWD for more information about this crew.

Since May 1st the crew has treated 4,524 Russian olives and 212 Salt cedars, resulting in a water savings of 12,510,810 gallons.

Montezuma County Noxious Weed Department
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MY CO-OP ADVANTAGE

Five Area Students Attend Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp

Five students were selected to represent EEA at the 43rd annual Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, from July 13-18. Joining their peers from across Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma and Wyoming, approximately 86 youth learned about the cooperative principles at the weeklong educational retreat.



▲ CYLC students from EEA (left to right) Maya Powell, Magdalena Halls, Jessica Begay, Brooklyn Holt and Kasey Wallace enjoy the camp at Glen Eden Resort outside of Steamboat Springs, Colorado.



▲ CYLC students from EEA (left to right) Kasey Wallace, Jessica Begay, Maya Powell, Brooklyn Holt and Magdalena Halls wear their camp shirts while touring Fish Creek Falls.



September 2019

Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

COOKWARE EFFICIENCY TIP:

Copper-bottomed pans heat faster on the stove. In the oven, ceramic and glass dishes are better than metal. With ceramic and glass dishes, you can turn the oven down about 25 degrees and your meal will cook just as quickly.

Source: energy.gov

Are you a high school junior who likes to learn, meet new people and tour great places?

Next summer brings a perfect opportunity to make new friends from other co-ops that share your interests, to learn more about electric co-ops and have a ton of fun!

FREE trips are available to Washington, D.C., and Steamboat Springs!

If your parent or guardian has an active EEA membership and you are a high school junior, you can apply. These trips focus on education and leadership skills, and are a great addition on your college application.

Applications and information are available at www.eea.coop or call Denise at 970-564-4458 for details.



Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. - June 18-25, 2020
Youth Leadership Camp to Clark, CO - July 11-16, 2020
Application Deadline is December 13, 2019