

Join us May 9th

Mark your calendar for TUA's annual celebration of National Drinking Water Week this May!

For more than 40 years, the American Water Works Association and its members, like TUA, have celebrated Drinking Water Week to recognize the vital role clean water plays in our daily lives.

Join us on May 4 for an afternoon of free food, drinks and fun from 3 to 5:30 p.m. and take a spin on the prize wheel!



Rural Route 4 Mailboxes

When I was a sprout growing up on Rural Route 4, I loved going to the mailbox to get the mail. I would run as fast as I could, hoping there might be something addressed to me. But the only mail I received was a package holding my Golden Book. It arrived monthly.

Years ago, folks used whatever they had to use as a mailbox, and letter carriers found themselves stuffing mail into a hodgepodge of items, like food containers and wooden boxes nailed atop poles. But after hundreds of complaints the federal government issued specifications for both mailboxes and the posts holding them, mandating that posts had to be "buggy high."

Our mailbox was like a lot of others scattered across the countryside in north Alabama. At one time it had been silvery and shiny, but through years of Mother Nature's weather it had become rusty and a bit unsteady. The "RR4" that had been stenciled on it was a black blur, and the door creaked when you opened it.

Daddy Grand had attached our mailbox to a locust post that wasn't used when we had fenced-in several acres of pastureland. It wasn't very pretty but it was functional. Our Rural Route 4 mailman ran early in the morning, sometimes as early as 8:30 a.m. He came down the dirt road from New Hope Primitive Baptist Church in a cloud of dust. Over time his car had worn a path in the grass close to the mailbox.



Phillip Burgess

(Continued on back)

Arbor Day Foundation Names TUA a Tree Line USA Utility

The Arbor Day Foundation has once again recognized TUA for its dedication to proper urban forest management.

Tree Line USA, a partnership between the Foundation and the National Association of State Foresters, recognizes public and private utilities for pursuing best practices that protect and cultivate America's urban tree canopy. In addition, Tree Line USA promotes delivering safe and reliable electricity while maintaining healthy community forests.

TUA achieved the Tree Line USA recognition for the 12th straight year by continuing to meet five program standards: quality tree care, annual worker training, tree planting and public education, a formal tree-based conservation, and a sponsorship of or participation in an Arbor Day celebration.

National Arbor day is celebrated on the last Friday in April, but many states observe Arbor Day on different dates based on best tree-planting times. In Tennessee, Arbor Day is officially celebrated on the first Friday in March.

(Continued from front)

Mailboxes and the folks delivering mail to rural areas years ago have evolved. Then, you could buy a postage stamp from the mailman for a nickel, and if you were busy or not at home you could leave your letter in the mailbox with a nickel, and he would paste a stamp on it.

And although he had miles to cover and hundreds of pieces of mail to deliver, the mailman always had time to chat about politics or the latest happenings on Sand Mountain. Sometimes Daddy Grand would leave him a mess of okra or purple hull peas in a paper bag inside the mailbox.

When I was a freshman and enrolled in a vocational agriculture class I decided to make a new post for our mailbox. Daddy Grand bought the lumber and carried me to school with it in the back of his truck. Every fifth period I worked on it, using only hand-held tools. It took about three weeks to build and when finished I had a sturdy wooden post painted white. The mailbox was supported by two braces, and down the side of the post I had stenciled our name. Near the top of the post I had also added FFA (Future Farmers of America) to let everyone know that an FFA member lived at our house.

I think Daddy Grand liked it, although he never said much about it. Folks today seldom use locust posts. I can't remember the last time I saw one. It has also been a long time since I saw an FFA post, too.

I guess it's easier to go to the hardware store or home improvement center and buy one. There are all kinds. Fancy ones made of wrought iron and painted black. Or less expensive ones made of plastic.

As for mailboxes, my favorite is a realistic looking bass with a big mouth you open to get your mail.

But I think a better one would be a big bass that wouldn't let the mailman stick bills into its mouth!

Burgess' book, "Rural Route 4, The Good 'Ol Days Were Never Better" is available on Amazon.

Spring Planting?



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