

# Leisure Life

A guide to parks, museums,  
cultural arts and recreation  
opportunities offered by  
Cookeville Leisure Services

**COOKEVILLE**  
LEISURE SERVICES

Spring | Summer  
2017

## Leisure Life



On the  
Cover

Phoebe MacNaught, 4, reaches for the rings at the Heart of the City Playground, the latest addition to Dogwood Park.

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*Leisure Life* is a semiannual magazine published by the City of Cookeville Department of Leisure Services and Public Facilities. This is our sixth issue. Look for our fall and winter issue in October.



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## Director's Take

**T**hirty years and counting. Thirty years of providing quality leisure time events, activities, programs, facilities and open spaces for the citizens of Cookeville and the entire Upper Cumberland region. Thirty years sounds like such a long time, but as one who has been here through it all, it sure doesn't seem long to me, and it sure has been a wonderful adventure.



As you read through this edition of *Leisure Life* you will see that we have changed and grown so much in our 30-year history. Our growth and success is attributable to the talent, creativity, dedication and commitment of the outstanding staff members who work diligently to create quality leisure time opportunities. They work hard so you can play! And they do a terrific job!

I must also recognize the important role our citizens have had in the development and growth of our department. As you will read in the pages that follow, it was a citizens' committee that led to the creation of Leisure Services 30 years ago, and that community involvement continues to be strong today in so many ways.

As just one example, consider Dogwood Park as evidence of community participation. The beautiful rose garden was created by and is still maintained by the Rose Society; the gazebo was donated and built by the Homebuilders Association; the lamp posts were donated by individuals and families through a City Scape program; hundreds of trees have been donated and planted in honor and/or memory of loved ones through the memorial tree program; the Dogwood Performance Pavilion was funded primarily by public donations; the park expansion was designed with input from a citizens' committee; the Heart of the City Playground was conceived by, funded by and physically constructed by private citizen volunteers.

That is just one park and many examples of the tremendous impact community involvement has had in our progress. There are many similar examples throughout our department. Citizen input and participation continues to be vital to our success and future growth.

This edition of *Leisure Life* looks back at our history and also provides a glimpse of what is planned throughout this spring and summer. We also offer a tear-out center section with a map and descriptions of our parks and facilities. I hope you enjoy the "Leisure Life" and that you will continue to participate in our many programs and offerings for the next 30 years and beyond!



Rick Woods, Director, Cookeville Leisure Services

# Leisurely beginning

## Leisure Services celebrates 30 years

**S**plashing in the fountain at Dogwood Park. Feeding the ducks at Cane Creek Park. Climbing aboard the red caboose at the Cookeville Depot Museum. Watching a show at the Cookeville Performing Arts Center.

The list goes on and on — and keeps getting longer.

And don't forget the many special events that have become engrained in so many family traditions — Father-Daughter Date Night, Depot Christmas Open House, Dogapalooza, Shakespeare in the Park and Nature Fest, to name a few.

They're the sort of activities that have come to define what it means to be a Cookevillian. And it may surprise some to know that one city department plans and coordinates them all — Cookeville Leisure Services, which is celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Back in the mid-1980s, the citizens had spoken, and city officials listened. And took action.

"The number one priority across the board was to develop a well-rounded recreation program," said Dwight Henry, mayor of Cookeville at the time, who recalls that nearly a dozen citizen work groups had been developed, each with different focus areas, as part of an initiative known as "Cookeville To-



**The Dogwood Park fountain is a favorite summertime play place for area children.**

morrow: A Design for Change."

"We were at kind of a crossroads in our community," Henry said. "So we decided to reach out to the citizens and say, 'Here's where we are. Where do you want us to go and how do you want us to get there?'"

For weeks, the work groups delved into topics like community image,

## Where we were

Cookeville Leisure Services was established July 1, 1987, through a citizens' initiative to bring more recreational and cultural arts opportunities to Cookeville.

education, healthcare, external impact... and recreation. The chairmen of each group served on a Cookeville Tomorrow steering committee tasked with considering all the work group recommendations — well over 100 of them.

They then turned to the public through a computerized voting system. When the votes came in, recreation was number one on the list.

"It took me aback a little bit," Henry said. "I was happy about it, but surprised. I think most of us were."

It meant the city would need to form a new department, Leisure Services. It also meant hiring a director — someone skilled in public relations, fundraising, event planning and grant writing; someone who loved parks, festivals, athletics, history and cultural arts; someone who recognized the value of wide-ranging programs to enhance the quality of life in Cookeville.

Enter Brad Chambers. The 31-year-old Knoxville native had held the same position in Athens, Tenn., and looked forward to overseeing Cookeville's parks and facilities — destinations like Cane Creek Park, Park View Park, Cookeville Depot Museum and Cookeville Drama Center (now Cookeville Performing Arts Center).

He also looked forward to developing new ones. In a 1987 article in *Horizons*, a special publication by the *Herald-Citizen* newspaper, Chambers said Cookeville had a "curious sort" of recreation program, one that included major facilities like the drama center, but few-

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**An early vision of Leisure Services was to develop more small parks throughout the city, including Dogwood Park, above.**

er smaller touches that other programs typically had. "It's like we're running in some respects before we've learned to crawl," he said.

Chambers, who would serve as director for 13 years, felt locals needed more small parks throughout the city — places they could enjoy quiet time, have lunch or explore nature. He also envisioned concerts in parks and more festivals. He said the 1980s had been a time when the public's attitude about recreation was changing. "People are wanting more healthy lifestyles," he said. "Governments are being asked to provide parks and facilities for them."

Of course, that was the case in Cookeville. And Henry, who continues to serve as a city councilman, is glad about that.

"Leisure Services has come to be such a great benefit to our community," he said. "We've seen wonderful things at Dogwood Park. We've also seen the enhancement of Cane Creek Park, which now has a mountain bike trail and a recreation facility.

"To have watched all of this from its embryonic status has really been a delight." ■

# Staffers witness ‘fun’ department blossom

**C**ookeville’s citizens had spoken: They wanted a Leisure Services department. The year was 1987, and Mildred Garrett remembers it well — recalls how the budding department blossomed into an integral part of Cookeville life, offering numerous recreational events and activities in its parks and public facilities.

After all, she was one of Leisure Services’ first employees. And she loves her job.

“It is work, but you get to have fun,” she said.

Garrett coordinates special classes, programs and events — everything from tai chi to photography — at the Cane Creek Recreation Center.

Programming is something she’s been doing quite a while, even before becoming part of Leisure Services. In 1979, she was hired by Putnam County Parks and Recreation in a joint venture with the city to coordinate arts, crafts and other activities at the West End Community Center, which burned in the late 1980s and is now the site of West End Park.

By 1983, the county and city had split, and Garrett became a city employee. She continued her work at the community center four years before joining the newly formed Leisure Services department, which also included its first director, Brad Chambers (who served through 2000); administrative assistant Janice Myers (who retired in 2014); current director Rick Woods, who at that time directed the Cookeville Drama Center (now Cookeville Performing Arts Center); Marilyn Brinker of the Cookeville Depot Museum; and four maintenance crew members.

The department has since grown to a staff of 40 full-timers, five part-timers and 36 seasonal workers.

*(Continued on page 6)*

Roses bloom next to the Dogwood Park gazebo.

## Where we are

Leisure Services is Cookeville's leading provider of recreational and educational programs, classes and events, many of which are free. The department maintains 10 city parks and 11 facilities, including the Cookeville Performing Arts Center; Cane Creek Recreation Center, Gymnasium and SportsPlex; and the Cookeville Depot and History museums. To learn more, visit [www.cookeville-tn.gov/lc](http://www.cookeville-tn.gov/lc).

Garrett said she's amazed at the longevity of the department — and the fact that she's been around to witness it all.

"Being part of a leading, cutting-edge program is something I'm proud of," she said.

Woods, another Leisure Services longtimer, is also pleased with the department's success.

He had been director of the Cookeville Drama Center, which opened in 1979, for nearly two years before it and the Cookeville Depot were taken under the Leisure Services umbrella. He was also part of the cultural arts work group during the city council's Cookeville Tomorrow initiative that led to the development of Lei-



**Patrick Mannle, Matthew Wilson and David Johnson perform at the Cookeville Performing Arts Center, which is part of the Cookeville Leisure Services department.**



**This 1913 steam engine is among the rolling stock at the Cookeville Depot Museum.**

sure Services.

"The term 'leisure services' was a relatively new buzz word for the parks and recreation industry," he said. "It seemed to be more encompassing, I think, of what we had to offer in Cookeville since the drama center and depot museum weren't necessarily traditional recreation facilities."

Woods, who assumed the Leisure Services directorship in 2000, said he looked at the formation of the department as a positive thing for the cultural arts community.

"There was energy and excitement about it," he said. "Plus, as separate organizations, the drama center and depot were struggling to make ends meet. This was a real opportunity for growth."

As for the depot, it was built in 1909 and became a museum in 1985, the same year it was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

Beth Thompson, manager of both the depot and Cookeville History Museum, said she's proud to have the opportunity to help preserve Cookeville's history while also providing numerous free family programs.

"We in Cookeville are so lucky to have a department like Leisure Services to focus on such varied points of interest as theater and culture, sports

## Where we're going

A skate park is on the horizon for Cookeville Leisure Services. The department is also looking into the possibility of adding a family aquatics facility.

and recreation, history and preservation, as well as parks and green spaces," she said. "Our citizens have many of the same opportunities and experiences as those in larger cities."

Chad McDonald, cultural arts superintendent at CPAC, agrees, having been involved in countless theater productions, concerts, School of Dance recitals and events.

"The department as a whole is very important to the quality of life in this community," he said. "Open spaces, dedicated facilities, special events, programs and recreational advocacy are some of the reasons Cookeville is a great place to live and raise a family."

On the recreation side, superintendent Cara Sheets noted the popularity of the Cane Creek Recreation Center, which opened in 2005.

"We've gone from being a new facility not many people knew about to a busy hub of Leisure Services," she said. "It's a go-to place for programs and classes, and Cane Creek Park visitors use it to break up their biking and walking."

The SportsPlex softball/baseball fields, which came along in 1997, and Cane Creek Gymnasium, 2008, are hot spots for sports enthusiasts.

"Our tournaments have grown to more than 25 per year," Jim Crea, athletics superintendent, said of the SportsPlex. "They attract teams not only from Tennessee, but several surrounding states."

At the time Leisure Services was



**Young basketball enthusiasts shoot hoops at the Cane Creek Gymnasium.**

developed, Cane Creek Park was relatively new. Other parks included West End Park, Cinderella Park and the Park View park, pool and baseball fields. Now the city has 10 parks, as well as 11 facilities, all of which are maintained by Leisure Services.

One of the most popular parks — with its interactive fountain, performance pavilion and new Heart of the City Playground — is Dogwood Park. Woods remembers when it was just an empty lot in the middle of downtown.

"The city acquired the property because it was next to the police department and drama center and developed a plan to build a small park," he said. "It's been fascinating to see the growth, and so much of it was initiated by community involvement and support."

And more growth is on the horizon — including a skate park at the site of the old Park View Pool. An aquatics facility is a possibility later on.

"The skate park came out on top in our most recent land use plan," Woods said. "We continue to look at our community's needs in terms of recreation and spaces we have that can accommodate those needs." ■



## Cane Creek Park a fun, peaceful destination for all

“Not every city has a park like this.” That’s what Dennis Woolbright said about the park he’s managed for 25 years — Cane Creek Park.

And he’s right. Where else in the Upper Cumberland can a person go disc golfing, mountain biking, dog walking, duck feeding, fishing — and much more — all in one stop?

“It’s a place where you can have a picnic and let your kids play on the playground,” he said. “We’ve also got volleyball and basketball courts.”

The 262-acre park is the largest of 10 parks maintained by Cookeville Leisure Services, which is celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

As a longtimer with the department, Woolbright has witnessed many changes through the years.

“We used to have concerts here,” he said of the Sunday in the Park series, the forerunner of Dogwood Park’s Third Thursday summer concerts.

He remembers a small stage where bands played before crowds on the grass beside the lake.

Woolbright also recalls a couple of Fourth of July fireworks shows, complete with food vendors and live music.

**Cane Creek Park offers a peaceful setting for fishing, hiking, biking and much more.**



**Dennis Woolbright has been Cane Creek Park manager for 25 years.**



**Paddleboating is a popular pastime at Cane Creek Park.**



**Jessica Palfreyman and dog Lance, along with Brooklyn Cherry and Whitney Rogers, enjoy a leisurely spring walk at Cane Creek Park.**

“There would be thousands in the park then,” he said.

And in the mid-1990s, Cane Creek Park hosted a couple of Halloween events — a Haunted Forest, as well as an Enchanted Kingdom for the kids, both of which drew huge crowds.

Another event that started more than a decade ago was Nature Fest, a free family event that happens again April 22 from 7 a.m.-5 p.m. at Cane Creek Park and continues from 6-10 p.m. at Dogwood Park.

As for park activities, Woolbright said he was pleased with the addition of an 18-hole disc golf course in 2004.

“It draws people from other states,” he said. “They’ll hear about our course and come and play.”

Cane Creek Park even hosts two Professional Disc Golf Association tournaments a year.

A mountain bike trail, added in 2016, enhanced the park even more.

Paddleboats are available the first weekend of April through the last weekend of October.

Also available to rent are golf discs, volleyballs, basketballs and fishing poles.

The 56-acre lake offers a variety of

## Park hours

Cane Creek Park is open 7 a.m.-9 p.m. through Memorial Day. In the summer, it’s open until 10 p.m. After Labor Day, it goes back to closing at 9 p.m. until Oct. 30. Then it is open until 6 p.m. through Daylight Saving Time.

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fine catches, including rainbow trout, large-mouth bass, bluegill, crappie, carp, brim and catfish. Fishermen may try their luck from the bank, fishing piers or a boat with a trolling motor or paddles. Children 12 and under may fish without a license.

Play equipment is scattered throughout the park.

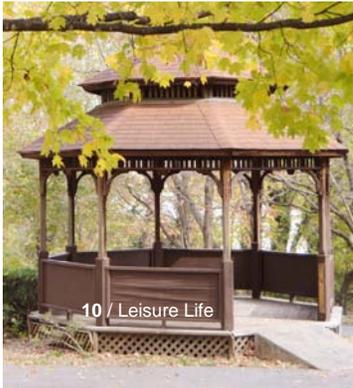
The boat ramp is another popular attraction, not only for the park’s feathered inhabitants, but for those who delight in tossing bread crumbs their way.

Parkgoers may also rent picnic shelters.

To make a reservation or for any other information about the park, call Leisure Services at 931-520-4386 or visit [www.cookeville-tn.gov/lis](http://www.cookeville-tn.gov/lis). ■



Exploring Dogwood Park's Heart of the City Playground, above left, are Hethe Dyer and daughters Allison, 2, and Olivia, 5. Above right, Connor Keylon, 3, glides along the cable walk. At left, West End Park awaits visitors on its play equipment. Below, from left, are the gazebo at Walnut Park, a little one swinging at Cinderella Park and a goose waddling on the shore of the Cane Creek Park lake. The Cookeville Leisure Services department maintains 10 city parks.



# Parks

## 1. Cane Creek Park

201 C C Camp Road

Cookeville's largest park features play equipment, several scenic walking trails, basketball and volleyball courts, 18-hole disc golf course, mountain bike trail, a concession stand and paddleboat rentals (April through October) and a lake for fishing. Picnic shelters may be rented by calling the Leisure Services office at 931-520-4FUN.

## 2. Capshaw Park

560 E. Stevens St.

This park, on the corner of South Maple, Stevens Street and Elm Avenue, is a natural area with trails and picnic tables. It is adjacent to Capshaw Elementary School.

## 3. Cinderella Park

700 Cinderella Lane

Cinderella, one of the city's oldest neighborhood parks, features play equipment, a small picnic shelter, basketball court and restrooms. Located at the end of Mitchell Avenue, it is next to the Tennessee Central Heritage Rail Trail.

## 4. City Lake Natural Area

Bridgeway Drive

This 35-acre natural area is a favorite among fishermen, kayakers and hikers. Cookeville's first water treatment facility was constructed on the site.

## 5. Dogwood Park

30 E. Broad St.

This downtown oasis, with its interactive fountain that flows throughout spring and summer, is a great place for picnics and leisurely walks. The park also features a performance pavilion and Heart of the City Playground.

## 6. Ensor Sink Natural Area

670 Clover Hill Road

A beautiful park in the heart of town, Ensor Sink features picnic tables, two walking trails, a small amphitheater for lectures and educational uses, stone council ring for scout meetings and nature groups and a gazebo with an informational kiosk about the city's sink hole system.



**Kylie Gallagher, 4, climbs on the Spider Web at the Heart of the City playground, the latest addition to Dogwood Park.**

## 7. Franklin Avenue Park

550 N. Franklin Ave.

Franklin Avenue Park, located at the corner of Franklin Avenue and 6th Street, features play equipment and a picnic shelter.

## 8. Park View Park

570 Scott Ave.

This park features play equipment, a picnic shelter with tables and nearby baseball fields.

## 9. Walnut Park

186 S. Walnut Ave.

This park, nestled behind the Cookeville Senior Citizens Center, has a gazebo, walking trail and picnic tables.

## 10. West End Park

609 West End St.

This neighborhood park has volleyball and basketball courts, play equipment, picnic tables and restroom facilities.

Use our new map on the opposite page to help navigate your next park adventure.

[www.cookeville-tn.gov/ls/city-parks](http://www.cookeville-tn.gov/ls/city-parks)

# Facilities

## A. Administrative Office

45 E. Broad St., 931-520-4FUN (4386)  
Visit the Leisure Services office in the Cookeville Municipal Building, across from Dogwood Park, to learn more about the city's parks and facilities.

## B. Cane Creek Recreation Center

180 C C Camp Road, 931-526-7393  
This facility, located near Cane Creek Park, hosts our fitness program, special classes and events, youth camps and the Leisure Services School of Dance.

## B. Cane Creek Gymnasium

180 C C Camp Road, 931-526-9767  
The gymnasium hosts special tournaments, league play, basketball, soccer, volleyball, pickleball and camps. Open gym times are offered daily. Admission is \$1. The gym is also available for rentals.

## C. Cane Creek SportsPlex

2200 W. Jackson St., 931-520-5224  
This softball/baseball complex includes four adult fields and four youth fields and hosts many major tournaments.

## D. Cookeville City Cemetery

241 S. Walnut Ave., 931-372-8086  
Located between Walnut and Scott avenues, the cemetery is owned and operated by the Leisure Services Department. The office is open Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

## E. Cookeville Depot Museum

116 W. Broad St., 931-528-8570  
This facility is dedicated to the preservation of the area's heritage, in particular the Tennessee Central Railroad's impact on the Upper Cumberland. The museum hosts family-friendly events throughout the year. Hours are Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Admission is free.

## F. Cookeville History Museum

40 E. Broad St., 931-520-5455  
The museum continually hosts new exhibits of local interest. Along with the Upper Cumberland Heritage Foundation and Friends of the Museum, the staff collects artifacts, memorabilia and photographs of Cookeville, Putnam County and the surrounding area. Hours are Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Admission is free.



**Kayla French leads a yoga class at the Cane Creek Recreation Center.**

## G. Cookeville Performing Arts Center

10 E. Broad St., 931-528-1313  
CPAC features local award-winning shows, as well as productions by regional and national touring companies. Call the Box Office for ticket information.

## H. Dogwood Performance Pavilion

30 E. Broad St., 931-520-5296  
This pavilion in Dogwood Park is the site of many concerts and special events. It is also available to rent.

## I. Heart of the City Playground

30 E. Broad St., 931-520-4386  
Located inside Dogwood Park, this 12,000-square-foot playground facility was designed so that all children, no matter their ability or mobility level, could play together.

## Parks Maintenance

544 Scott Ave., 931-528-2605  
The parks maintenance crew is housed near the Park View Park baseball fields and maintains those fields and the city's 10 parks.

## General Maintenance

790 E. 15th St., 931-520-5257  
The general maintenance crew takes care of all the city's buildings and is in charge of many of the department's major projects.



**A crowd gathers for a free concert at the Dogwood Performance Pavilion in Dogwood Park.**



**Beth Thompson and Ashley McKee of the Cookeville History Museum show their excitement for the 1980s in a special exhibit.**



**Shelia Barnes leads a chair yoga class at the Cane Creek Recreation Center. Numerous fitness and wellness classes for all ability levels are offered at the center through the Cookeville Leisure Services Department.**



**Cane Creek Gymnasium regulars Daniel Turpin, Bobby Dillon, Sheryl Vorst, Eugene Turpin, Silvia Turpin and Carol Ann Gaw pause after a pickleball match.**

## Employee Spotlight

# Jen Webb

Cane Creek Recreation Center Special Programs Coordinator

### A day's work: It's more than 'building biceps'

**T**he moment Jen Webb slips on her headset microphone at the Cane Creek Recreation Center, a different persona emerges.

Music blares, bodies move, and her upbeat voice can be heard above it all — an essential part of the group fitness package.

“You take on a character,” she said. “But it’s not about you at all. It’s about the people who come to our classes. You’re completely focused on them

“It’s about the people who come to our classes. You’re completely focused on them getting a great workout.”

— Jen Webb

getting a great workout.”

As special programs coordinator, Webb is over the Leisure Services fitness program, which draws well over 800 participants a

month to the recreation center. She works with all the fitness instructors, who offer around 32 classes a week — everything from yoga to Zumba. Webb



**Jen Webb prepares for a cycling class at the Cane Creek Recreation Center.**

herself instructs Spin 30, a cycling class, and STAC, which is strength training and conditioning.

“I try to keep good, interesting classes on our schedule,” she said.

It’s a different line of work from what the Cookeville native envisioned upon graduating from Tennessee Tech University with a degree in housing and design in 2005. As it turned out, Webb, who had been with Leisure Services as a day camp counselor since 2001, decided to stay put when the special pro-



**Jen Webb and son Owen pause during an “oopey gooepy” activity at summer day camp.**

grams coordinator job came open the same year she graduated.

“I was offered a commercial design position in Chattanooga but decided I really liked Leisure Services,” she said. “I enjoyed the different tasks associated with special events and all the other things going on. So I chose to stay.”

That’s not to say Webb’s design skills haven’t been beneficial in this role. “I get to use my crafty side in event planning,” she said.

She’s also happy that working at the recreation center gives her the opportunity to stay fit.

“When I first started, I ran a little, but fitness wasn’t my thing,” she said. “I hadn’t really attended any group exercise classes.”

She filled in as a substitute from time to time before becoming a certified group fitness instructor in 2010.

“I just fell head over heels in love with it,” she said. “I so enjoy leading classes and seeing people’s excitement as they grow stronger. It’s very re-

warding, and it makes me exercise when I might not normally. It holds me accountable.”

Another part of Webb’s job is organizing fall, spring and summer camps at the recreation center for kids in kindergarten through age 12. She trains camp counselors and plans various activities and outings, including swimming and going to Cane Creek Park.

When she isn’t at work, Webb enjoys spending time with sons Owen, 6, and Ben, 4, and being a “project junkie” at home with husband David, whom she married in 2008.

She said she’s happy to be able to witness all the positive transformations that take place among those she encounters through her work.

“It’s a lot more than just building biceps,” she said. “Some are going through trials in their lives, are coming back from injuries or are about to go into various things, and it can be very emotional. There are a lot of friendships and camaraderie in these classes. It really is amazing.” ■



# Just walking

Cane Creek Park regular Charles Denning walks along a trail as spring blossoms emerge.

For 30 years, Cookeville Leisure Services has enriched countless lives through its parks, events and programs. Some find creative outlets. Others find ways to keep active. Charles Denning, retired *Herald-Citizen* editor, is one of those people. He walks almost every day at Cane Creek Park – has for 18 years. So we asked him what it means for a city like Cookeville to have a leisure services department. But he turned the question around. “What would it be like *not* to have it? Leisure Services is so engrained here. It is so vast.” Read on for Denning’s observations from a recent leisurely stroll in the park:

**B**eside one of the trails in Cane Creek Park is a slender tree overlooking the lake. Early each spring, when most of the park is still sleeping through the last days of winter, all a picture of dull gray and lifeless brown, that tree comes suddenly alive. Its tiny blossoms unfold in the purest shade of pink. It’s like those tall, colorful banners you see waving in the wind along the fringes of car lots. It’s a joyful smile on a face that for months has rested in retreat from cold rain and ice and snow.

That delightful pink is not the first



**Denning**

notice of spring. That’s up to the shy daffodils that pop up and open in vivid yellow as soon as a beam of warm sun reaches beneath the dark cedars where they live — too early sometimes, and their eager heads are forced to bow beneath the weight of a wet snow.

I don’t know when the earthen dam was built and the lake and park created, but it was probably Chuck Womack, a former Cookeville mayor and current



**Cane Creek Park's feathered inhabitants are a common sight on the lake shore.**

councilman who loves the out-of-doors, who suggested to me that it was a good place to walk.

Although it had been right there under my nose for quite a while, my first time out, according to a “walking journal” I keep, was Monday, June 1, 1998, when, relatively speaking, I was a young 65. Then, there was one paved trail. It ran from the big pavilion on the hill, down through the woods, across the dam, beside the lake on the north side and ended at one of the inlets where a chiming little stream flows into the lake.

Today, there's a network of trails, from fairly easy to slightly strenuous, something for everybody — walkers, runners, bicycle riders, babies in strollers, dogs on leashes (once I saw someone trying to lead a cat on a leash, not too successfully). I've seen unicycle riders a couple of times, Dallas Smith, Cookeville's exemplary long-distance runner out for his regular morning jaunt (if running 12 miles can be considered a jaunt) and Monte Lowe, who used to ride his elliptocycle out there.

Beyond the trail, I can see paddle-boaters, kayakers and canoers on the lake, along with fishermen casting from their boats or the shoreline.

Cane Creek is a family park, and it's wonderfully democratic — young and

old, from near and far, a mix of races and ethnicities. Wildlife, too — especially waterfowl. Ducks paddle about, as do Canada Geese, sometimes by the hundreds, as the seasons change. Occasionally you'll see a Great Blue Heron, Green Heron or Kingfisher squawking and flying low across the water. Last summer I made a picture of a pair of Canada Geese and five fluffy baby geese toddling about beside the trail.

Sometimes I'll see a bullfrog grunting from the edge of the water. Sometimes a snake, sometimes a skunk. They leave me alone; I leave them alone.

In my 18 years of Cane Creek Park-going, trails have been added, a recreation center and gymnasium have been built, and a mountain bike trail has opened.

I've walked in sweat-drenched summertime; in winter when snow came halfway to my knees. I've gotten soaking wet a few times when caught by a rainstorm. But when it's raining, I sometimes go to my basement and plug in my treadmill.

I don't like that treadmill.

Nothing is more boring, unless it's watching most TV or waiting seven hours at an airport when you race half a mile but miss your connecting flight.

Cane Creek is never boring. Not to me, it isn't. ■

# Spring & Summer Dates to know

## History Hikes

Cookeville Depot  
and History museums  
Second Saturday each month  
April-October

Explore downtown's rich history with a stroll between the Cookeville Depot and History museums. Start at either museum between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Different themes and prizes are offered during this free monthly event.



## Nature Fest

Cane Creek Park, Dogwood Park  
April 22

Nature Fest is a celebration of the great outdoors presented free by Leisure Services, the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, Tennessee Tech University Biology

Department and Nature Fest organizing committee. It opens at Cane Creek Park from 7 a.m.-5 p.m. and concludes at Dogwood Park from 6-10 p.m.

## World Tai Chi Day

Cane Creek Recreation Center  
April 29

Take part in a free Tai Chi demonstration beginning at 10 a.m. Cookeville will be joining people around the world in learning more about this Chinese martial art.

## Storyfest in the Park

Dogwood Park  
April 22

Cookeville's fourth annual Storyfest in the Park is a free family-friendly event from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. that features storytellers from across the region, including Bil Lepp, Charlie McCain and Elizabeth Rose. Come listen for a while under the big tent in Dogwood Park behind the Cookeville History Museum.

## Dogapalooza

Dogwood Park  
May 6

Cookeville's eighth annual Dogapalooza is a free event from 1-4 p.m. for dogs and the people who love them. It features an off-leash play area, pet-related vendors, demonstrations, adoptable pets and a kids' dog show.



## Softball Leagues

Cane Creek SportsPlex  
Spring through Fall

Spring co-ed recreation and church league play begins April 3 and 4. Fall co-ed recreation and men's league play begins Aug. 1 and 7. For registration information and tournament schedules, call 931-520-5224 or visit [www.cookeville-tn.gov/lscsportsplex](http://www.cookeville-tn.gov/lscsportsplex).



### Summer Camp

Cane Creek Recreation Center  
**Begins May 22**

Leisure Services' summer camp is for children who have completed kindergarten up to age 12. The recreation center is open to campers Monday through Friday, 6:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

Part-time and full-time rates are available. Registration opens April 15, and space is limited.

For details, call 931-526-7393 or visit [www.cookeville-tn.gov/ls/camps/summer-camp](http://www.cookeville-tn.gov/ls/camps/summer-camp).

### Red, White and Boom!

Dogwood Park and Broad Street  
**July 1-4**

Cookeville's Independence Day celebration includes SlideCKVL, a 1,000-foot water slide on Broad Street, July 1 and 2. For tickets, call 931-528-1313. Free evening concerts will be held at Dogwood Park July 1-3. Festivities conclude with a parade at the Courthouse Square and, at the Putnam County Fairgrounds, a flea market, cruise-in, music, food and fireworks. For more details, see the SlideCKVL Facebook event page.

### Community Band Concerts

Dogwood Performance Pavilion  
**May 29, June 12, 26, July 3, 10, 24**

The Cookeville Community Band performs free concerts at Dogwood Park at 7:30 p.m. from Memorial Day through the first Monday in August, including a patriotic concert July 3.



### Third Thursday Concerts

Dogwood Performance Pavilion  
**May 25, June 15, July 20, Aug. 17**

Come to the performance pavilion at Dogwood Park to enjoy free concerts the third Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m., May through August.

A different band is featured each month, covering a variety of music genres.

### Movies in the Park

Dogwood Park  
**June 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30**

The After Dark Movies in the Park series brings family-friendly movies to Dogwood Park each Friday night in June. Movies begin 30 minutes after dusk. Admission is free.

### Depot Summer Cinema

Cookeville Depot Museum  
**July 7, 14, 21, 28**

Bring a chair or blanket and enjoy a full-length classic film under the stars Friday nights in July on the west patio of Cookeville's historic Depot Museum. Movies begin at 8 p.m. Bring the whole family for this free, fun event. Popcorn and drinks will be available to purchase.

For movie details, call 931-528-8570.

# Spring & Summer **Dates** to **know**

## Kids Fishing Derby

Cane Creek Park

June 10

This event for kids 15 and under, hosted in conjunction with the Tennessee Tech Fisheries, takes place on Tennessee's Free Fishing Day beginning at 7:30 a.m. at Cane Creek Park. Prizes are awarded for catches in various categories.

## Big Band Sound Concerts

Dogwood Performance Pavilion

Aug. 7, Sept. 4

Enjoy lively Big Band Sound orchestra concerts in the beautiful setting of Dogwood Park at 7:30 p.m. Dancing is encouraged. Admission is free.



## After Dark Race for the Park

Dogwood Park

Aug. 11

Proceeds from this annual race go toward events and improvements at Dogwood Park.

Running times are 7:30 p.m. for kids (one mile) and 8:08 p.m. for adults (8K).



## Backstage at CPAC

Cookeville Performing Arts Center

Aug. 25, 26, 29, Sept. 1, 2

Don't miss the next season of the award-winning Backstage series at 7:30 p.m. Productions are selected especially for presentation in the intimacy of the backstage theater setting. For ticket information, visit [cpactn.com](http://cpactn.com).



## Night at the Museums

Cookeville Depot and History museums

Sept. 23

What happens when the lights go out and the doors are locked at the museums? Find out in this free, fun and educational event from 7-9 p.m.

## Bryan Symphony Orchestra

Dogwood Performance Pavilion

Sept. 3

Enjoy a free concert at 7:30 p.m. in Dogwood Park. BSO concerts are a collaborative effort of the Bryan Symphony Orchestra Association and Tennessee Tech's Department of Music and Art.

## Train Tales

Cookeville Depot Museum

Friday

Join the fun every Friday morning at 10:30 a.m. for a train story and talks about our railroad friends. This free activity is geared toward preschool-age children.



### Shakespeare in the Park

Dogwood Park

Sept. 29, 30, Oct. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7

Shakespeare's "King Lear" will come to life during this free event in Cookeville's Dogwood Park. Shows begin at 7 p.m. each night.

### Brown Bag Lunch Concerts

Cookeville Depot Museum

Oct. 6, 13, 20

This free concert series, held three Fridays in October, brings a variety of music to the Cookeville Depot patio from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

### Chair Yoga

Cane Creek Recreation Center

Monday, Wednesday, Friday

This yoga class is for people with chronic pain and physical challenges, who spend the majority of the class seated. The poses are gentle, range-of-motion movements and stretching combined with breathing exercises and meditation. Cost is \$2 on Monday and Wednesday with an instructor and free on Friday with a video. The class is held from 11 a.m.-noon.

### Fitness Classes

Cane Creek Recreation Center

Daily

Cookeville Leisure Services offers group fitness classes daily for \$3 per visit, with no membership fee or contract required. Classes include Zumba, Dance2Fit, yoga, cardio sculpt, strength training, step aerobics, cycling and many more. See a full monthly schedule and class descriptions at [www.cookeville-tn.org/lis/fitness](http://www.cookeville-tn.org/lis/fitness). Looking to recharge during your lunch break? Lunch Express classes start at 11 a.m. each week day and are divided into 30-minute sessions for \$2 each or \$3 for both sessions. A \$30 Fitness Card allows 11 visits for the price of 10. Childcare is available during some day classes.

### Bend and Tai Chi

Cane Creek Recreation Center

Ongoing

Bend, a fusion of ballet, gymnastics and yoga, targets specific muscles for gaining flexibility while building strength and endurance. Cost is \$3. Tai Chi, described as "meditation in motion," is \$30 per six-week session. For class times, visit [www.cookeville-tn.gov/lis/classes-programs](http://www.cookeville-tn.gov/lis/classes-programs).

### Open Gym

Cane Creek Gymnasium

Daily

Cane Creek Gymnasium activities include basketball, volleyball, soccer, pickleball, cornhole and league sports. Open gym is available any time the facility is not programmed or rented. Admission is \$1. Gym passes are \$30 for 35 visits. The gym is open Monday through Saturday from 8 a.m.-10 p.m. and Sunday from 1-6 p.m. See daily activity schedules at [www.cookeville-tn.gov/lis/ccgym](http://www.cookeville-tn.gov/lis/ccgym).

### Traditional Dance

Cane Creek Recreation Center

First and third Friday each month

This class, offered the first and third Friday each month from 6:30-8 p.m., focuses on English Country and American Contra dancing. Neither experience nor a partner is required. Cost is \$1.



CITY OF  
**COOKEVILLE**  
LEISURE SERVICES

**Celebrating 30 years**

