

SOUTHEAST ELECTRIC Cooperative



PO BOX 369, EKALAKA, MT 59324 • PH 406-775-8762 • WWW.SEECOOP.COM

SCHOLARSHIPS

NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR SEVERAL SCHOLARSHIPS

S**SOUTHEAST** Electric Cooperative promotes the fifth Cooperative Principle of Education, Training and Information. Southeast has awarded more than \$75,000 in scholarships in the last 15 years. We consider it an investment in the future of our cooperative. RM

BASIN ELECTRIC POWER

\$1,000: Sponsored by Southeast Electric Cooperative Inc. and Basin Electric Power Cooperative. This scholarship will be awarded to a student who is enrolled or planning to enroll in a full-time graduate or undergraduate course of study at an accredited two-year or four-year college, university or vocational/technical school.

MECA Memorial

\$500 (Regional competition): Sponsored by Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association (MECA) will award \$500 to a student from either Goldenwest, Mid-Yellowstone, Southeast, Tongue River or Yellowstone Valley Electric who is a high school graduate planning to enter college/Vo-Tech in the Fall of 2022 or who is currently in a college undergraduate program.

Southeast Electric ESSAY

\$1,000: This scholarship is intended for a graduating high school senior planning to attend a full-time college or Vo-Tech, or currently enrolled full-time at a college or Vo-Tech school.

Deadline for the above scholarships is Monday, January 19.

Vernon Emery Memorial Lineman Scholarship

\$1,500: Southeast Electric Cooperative, Inc. periodically awards a \$1,000 scholarship to a deserving person planning to enroll in a powerline construction and maintenance curriculum at an accredited tech school. \$500 has been added by the family of Vernon Emery for a scholarship totaling \$1,500. Applications are reviewed on an as-needed basis.

SOUTHEAST ELECTRIC SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

- BASIN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE SCHOLARSHIP
- MECA SCHOLARSHIP
- SOUTHEAST ELECTRIC ESSAY SCHOLARSHIP
- VERNON EMERY MEMORIAL LINEMAN SCHOLARSHIP

The Southeast Electric Scholarship Program offers support and resources to help you on your road to success.

Go to www.seecoop.com for more information



A JOURNEY THROUGH THE WILD

Column by **TEGAN WILLIAMS** | For Southeast Electric Cooperative

IN September Tegan Williams went on a trip of a lifetime. Tegan is a 17 year old who attends home school in Ekalaka. She is the daughter of Raquel Williams and her grandparents are Greg & Rita Williams. Rita does material management, accounting, and many other things at Southeast Electric. Greg and Rita have made many hunting trips to Africa and Russia but this time they asked Tegan to go. Below Tegan recalls her journey through the wild.

AT 17 years old, I had the opportunity of a lifetime. In the fall of 2022, my Grandpa told me I was going to Africa with him and Grandma in September of 2023. I hear this, and I don't even believe it will happen. I don't like to get too excited about trips just in case they don't happen. So, for the next six months, I put it out of my mind and focused on the present.

But in April of 2023, we got documents from the travel agency that BOTH parents must sign for a minor to travel to Africa. I only have ONE parent to sign the document. So, for the next



Tegan Williams and her grandfather Greg Williams chat while making their way through the African wild. Tegan is a 17-year-old from Ekalaka, who had the opportunity to go to Africa with her grandparents to hunt. | **COURTESY PHOTO**

five months, I thought, "I am not going to Africa."

A month before the trip, my mother swallowed her pride and contacted my paternal grandmother through Facebook. My mom asked her to talk with

my biological father to sign the papers, but he said no. I was despondent; I am not going to Africa. But a week before the trip, a miracle happened! My biological father had a change of heart. And my Grandma met him in Rapid



ABOVE: Tegan Williams, left, stands with her grandparents Greg and Rita in the African wild. Rita is a material manager at Southeast Electric Cooperative.

RIGHT: A momma and baby calf elephant pair shuffles through the brush. | **COURTESY PHOTOS**



City, where he signed the papers.

On September 14, we started our extensive journey to Mozambique, Africa. We had to take FIVE flights to get to our destination. On September 18, we finally landed in the small village of Marromeu, Mozambique. This village is near the Zambezi River, so the weather was sweltering and humid. Here, we met our professional hunter, Fabian. Fabian drove us to the camp at Coutada 14.

Our hunting excursion started on September 19th, with Fabian leading us to the first success of the journey, when Grandpa got his prized cape buffalo he was hoping for, an “old dagga boy.” The next day, we packed our clothes and said goodbye to the wonderful people at Coutada 14. Fabian, Grandpa, Grandma, lead tracker Santos, and I drove for SEVEN hours on the bumpiest road in the world! As we drove to the next camp, we witnessed some of Africa’s incredible animals in the wild: warthogs, kudu, sable, eland, impala, baboons, lichtenstein’s hartebeest and so many more.

Santos is a local Mozambican who has TWO wives and eight children. In Mozambique, their official language is

Portuguese. In their culture, men often have more than one wife and many kids. Also, women marry and have babies early, sometimes as young as 12 years old!

As we traveled over the rugged land, we drove through many villages. While going through the villages, I saw many little kids running around. When we were driving by, the kids waved and yelled at us. For the little kids, cars and travelers are their TV; to them, it’s truly their only entertainment. I also saw children carrying chairs on their way to school because the schools don’t provide chairs. If they left their chairs at school, they would never see them again. Plus, some have to walk a tremendous distance to get to school or anywhere.

Some women I saw working walked to get water from a well. Others were washing clothes and bathing children in the river, which is dangerous because of the crocodiles. I also saw women walking through the villages,

balancing baskets full of produce on their heads. I also saw young girls doing the same thing. I saw women or little girls carrying an infant with a baby wrap. People were walking and riding bicycles carrying bundles of sugar cane on their backs. The city of Tete was filled with markets and people selling all sorts of items, from purses to clothes, furniture, fruit, vegetables, shoes, phones and more. The roads in the city were jam-packed, and you also have to drive on the opposite side of the road. Luckily, none of my family had to drive. You need to be an experienced driver to drive in Tete!

As we were driving through the rough country of Africa, we spotted the most stunning male lion lying behind the branches of these massive trees. He’s staring at us with his big orange eyes and golden mane. I took many pictures to capture this stunning moment. Being face to face with a crea-

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ture that could kill you in minutes is something you can't explain. He stared at us for a good 10 minutes, got up, and sauntered away with his tail flicking back and forth.

Every day, the cooks prepared lunch to take on the hunting excursion. Today, as we were driving, Fabian handed me a sandwich. I took my first bite and thought, "This is really good!" As I was enjoying my sandwich, I overheard Fabian and Grandpa talking about Eland tongue, and I was instantly intrigued by their conversation. As I was chewing another bite of the sandwich, I noticed tiny bumps on the meat hanging out of my sandwich. Upon closer inspection, I realized they were TASTE BUDS! Alarmingly, I say, "IS THIS TONGUE?" "Yes, it's Eland tongue," said Fabian. In disgust, I slowly chewed as I imagined the taste buds mingling with my own. After what felt like an eternity, I was finally able to swallow. As I threw the meat out the window, I said, "I will NEVER eat tongue again!"

On September 22, we were up again before the sun. During the morning of the hunt, we saw a variety of animals. We walked through parched and flat land. There were no animals until we walked by a pride of lions, who growled at us to make their presence known. Since we found nothing in the dry area, we moved onto a dam, where we saw lots of game. We walked around the corner and saw a warthog worthy enough for me. We got a little closer, and we set up the sticks and waited for it to turn broadside. I was also shooting over the water. When the warthog approached the water, I knew this would be a perfect shot. I squeezed the trigger, and he went down instantly. I loaded another bullet, just in case. As I turned around, Grandpa was laughing hysterically and smiling from ear to ear. Then we walked down and went around the water and came to the



Tegan Williams stands over her Kudu bull kill. | COURTESY PHOTO

warthog. The blood was the brightest red I have ever seen. The warthog tusks measured 13 inches in length, long enough to tear the flesh from a hunter's leg. During and after the hunt, I was extremely calm; it almost scared me.

We got up at 4:25 a.m. on September 28. On this day, we would try a new strategy to find my kudu bull, since I had not had any luck since the warthog. We drove to the same dam where I shot the warthog. Fabian made a blind with sticks and branches between two trees. He set up three chairs, and the shooting stick behind the blind. We waited for what felt like an eternity. We watched sable, kudu cows and warthogs come to the water. Finally, Fabian spotted an old kudu bull in the bushes. I stealthily stood up and got my rifle on the sticks, ready to shoot. While waiting for the kudu to emerge from the bushes, I noticed a small red ant crawling on the barrel. I kept trying to flick the ant off, but he was too fast. At one point, I thought he was going to crawl inside the barrel, and I imagined him riding the bullet as I shot the kudu. I was able to ignore the ant and stay calm while we waited five minutes for the kudu bull to come to the water's edge. When he finally went to the water, he was weaving between kudu cows. As he put his head down to drink, I started getting nervous and shaky because I was afraid I would only wound him, and he would run off, only to suffer a tragic death. I was looking

through the scope, and some grass was in my line of sight. I tried to stay calm and steady my breath because I knew it was now or never. I focused on the front shoulder, and I gently pulled the trigger. BOOM! He fell and lay thrashing in the water. We walked over to him and got pretty close, and I shot him again to end his suffering. His horns measured 51 inches from base to tip.

Per usual, Grandpa hadn't given me any specifics. When we arrived at camp, I had no idea what I would be hunting. So, I would never imagine leaving Africa with two beautiful trophies. We left the wild country of Mozambique on October 1st, and began our long journey back home. I am forever grateful to my Grandma and Grandpa for giving me this fantastic opportunity.

When visiting with Tegan about the kudu, I told her she is going to have to build a house with a high ceiling to display that animal. She laughed and said it will be going in Grandpa's trophy room. I asked about her favorite part of her journey to Africa, and she said, "The people, seeing the male lion, watching the sunset on the mountain and sitting by my prize kudu with my grandparents." I also asked her if she would go back and she jokingly said, "I didn't want to come home, but my mom made me." 📷