Blindness can’t stop Pascal Benson. He still golfs, fishes and dances every chance he gets.
ascal Benson always seemed larger than life. For starters, he’s the only high school athlete in Kentucky history to be named to three All-State teams in one year. Pascal, a 1956 Henderson City High School alum, excelled at baseball, football and basketball.

Fast forward 60 years. Pascal is still a powerhouse. He golfs and fishes weekly during summer. He enjoys ballroom dancing. And, until this year, he hunted any wildlife in season.

What makes this astonishing: Pascal is blind. Nearly four years ago, doctors diagnosed him with optic neuropathy, perhaps from all the knocks on the noggin during his high school and college sports career.

Pascal’s left eye is completely blind now. Vision in his right eye is down to 20 percent. His peripheral vision is so poor it’s like looking through a straw, which would make a sport like golf seemingly impossible.

“He amazes me,” said Tom Youngblood, who golfs with Pascal at Bent Creek Golf Course in Henderson. “He’s as likely to make a long putt as anyone.” Pascal’s wife of 54 years, Elaine, credits much of his activity to many friends. “If it weren’t for them, he couldn’t play golf,” she said.

Golf buddies line him up for his drive down the fairway, keep track of his ball after the swing and stand behind the hole when he putts. Laughter roars when Jim Buley recalls the time he asked an already-blind Pascal to drive his golf cart to the next hole. Pascal mowed down a post, broke off five more and tore off across the green dragging about 25 feet of rope behind him.

It never occurred to Pascal to use blindness as an excuse. For the most part, Pascal’s health is excel-
Quick Hoppin’ John Soup

1 lb sage pork sausage
1 (6 oz) package uncooked long grain and wild rice mix with seasoning packet
2 (15 oz) cans black-eyed peas, drained
2 (14.5 oz) cans diced tomatoes, with liquid
2 (14 oz) cans chicken broth
2 c water
Salt to taste

Crumble sausage into a skillet over medium heat and cook until evenly brown. In a large pot, mix the cooked sausage, rice mix with seasoning packet, black-eyed peas, tomatoes, broth and water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low, cover and simmer 20 minutes or until rice is tender. Season to taste with salt.

Kenergy will conduct a residential member survey this month. The survey’s purpose is to collect information needed to plan for the future. A sample of members will be randomly selected. Your participation is very important, so please consider completing the survey. We know your time is valuable, and we appreciate your input.

This month marks the anniversary of the dreaded Ice Storm of 2009, which caused millions of dollars in damage to Kenergy’s system.

About 50,000 member-owners lost power. Some lived up to three weeks without electricity in the dead of winter.

After the storm, the Kentucky Public Service Commission asked electric cooperatives and emergency management agencies to step up efforts to educate the public about survival techniques. Kenergy came up with a public-service program that has been adopted by other cooperatives across the nation.

Named the First 72 Is on You, this program reminds members to plan ahead for natural disasters -- floods, earthquakes and storms -- that can strike with little warning. The program’s message: Be prepared to spend at least 72 hours without electricity and other essential services.

Build a survival kit in a duffle bag or unused piece of luggage. Add to it water, nonperishable foods, flashlight, battery-operated radio, batteries, medical kit, extra medications and cash, among other items.

A good place to store this kit is under your bed. Check the kit at least twice a year. Change out food, water and batteries that pass expiration dates.

Finally, if someone in your home requires electricity for a life-saving device or can’t live for days without heat and air conditioning, plan ahead for an alternative place to stay or invest in a generator.

For more details and offerings, visit kenergycorp.com or pick up a list at any Kenergy office.
Golfer
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lent. He never needed surgery until a few years ago when he had a knee replaced.

“He did so well and liked his new knee so much that he had the other one done,” said Tracy Benson, Pascal and Elaine’s son. “I believe he was back dancing within three to four weeks after the second knee replacement.”

Tony Royster of Henderson is Pascal’s fishing buddy. Both own property at Buzzard Rock near Kut-tawa. During summer, they go out on the lake one or two times every weekend.

The two go out about three to four hours at a time. Pascal’s line gets tangled from time to time. Royster lets Pascal try to fix his line, but helps when asked.

Pascal can’t dress fish anymore, so Royster takes care of it.

“Fishing is therapy for both of us,” Royster said. “… Good friendships are good therapy.”

Text us when the lights go out! To start, just text the word KENERGY to 85700 and follow the prompts. An overnight wait is required for the system to work, so don’t wait until the day of an outage to text KENERGY to 85700!

Save Energy This Winter!

A programmable thermostat allows you to set a scheduled time for operation according to when you are at home. Kenergy offers $30 rebates to members who install programmable thermostats. Call 1.800.844.4832 or go to kenergycorp.com for details.