

Flood aid

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Year of change

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REN

ILLINOIS RURAL ELECTRIC NEWS

JANUARY 1994

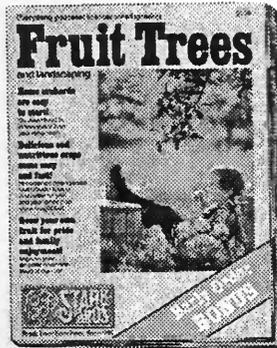


**Elk
on the
prairie**

See page 6

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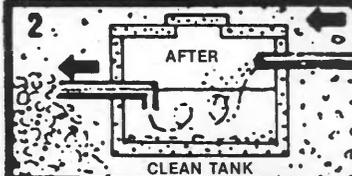
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MISSING



ANDREA GAIL PARSONS

LAST SEEN: 07/11/93 EYES: Hazel
FROM: Port Salerno, FL HEIGHT: 4'11"
DOB: 05/12/83 WEIGHT: 80
WHITE FEMALE HAIR: Brown



STEPHANIE CRANE

LAST SEEN: 10/11/93 EYES: Blue
FROM: Challis, ID HEIGHT: 4'2"
DOB: 09/28/84 WEIGHT: 75
WHITE FEMALE HAIR: Brown

If you can identify these or any other missing children, call The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at:

1-800-843-5678

(sightings only)

This message is brought to you as a public service by Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives, in cooperation with National Child Safety Council.

-Safety Tip of the Month-

Make a mental note of the clothes your child wears EVERY DAY. Avoid putting your child's name on clothes or books. Children may respond to a stranger who calls them by name.

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If you want to personally help end this national tragedy, or need additional information, please call:

1-800-222-1464

Illinois Rural Electric News

Helping electric cooperatives serve even better

Proposals in Washington, D.C., to enable electric cooperatives to have access to loans for water and sewer projects fit in well with what has been going on in Illinois for a number of years.

When the electric cooperatives sprang up to allow rural people to have central station electric power, the broader objective was to enhance, through electrification, the social and economic condition of those in rural areas. The electric cooperatives, as self-help organizations, quickly became more than electric utilities. They became leading citizens in their communities, involving themselves in many community betterment endeavors.

Over the years, the electric cooperatives have been leaders in rural economic development, including water projects. A number of years ago, employees of Adams Electrical Co-Operative spearheaded a movement to establish a water distribution cooperative. That effort was successful, and the organization is working on a second phase of construction to provide a quality water supply to more rural people.

A few years ago, a group in Effingham and Jasper counties, led by a Norris Electric Cooperative director, envisioned a rural water system to

assure rural residents a supply of quality water. They turned the tap a few months ago, and there are plans to expand. Last spring, Shelby Electric Cooperative took a leading role in bringing various interests together to discuss getting a quality supply of water to rural residents in a wide area of central Illinois. Very recently, Clay Electric Cooperative hosted a meeting of people in its area who want quality water. There was agreement that the electric cooperative was an excellent organization through which to launch such a project. Southwestern Electric Cooperative has in recent months been working with people in its service area to bring about development of a water project.

These aren't the only examples of how electric cooperatives are helping to provide such services, but they represent recent electric cooperative involvement and leadership in community efforts to assure rural dwellers of adequate supplies of quality water.

Allowing electric cooperatives access to loan funds for such worthwhile projects is testimony to their proven record of contribution to their service areas and an important step toward even greater utilization of their central role in the rural community.

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REN

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**Member of the
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Cover: Scott Ault was looking for a way to diversify his McDonough County farming operation. After considering several options, he chose to add elk to his livestock and grain farm. See article beginning on page 6.

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Wes Ehrecke (left), executive vice president of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, presents a check to Illinois electric cooperative officials as Illinois' share in the REC Flood Relief Fund. The Iowa organization acted as a receiving point for contributions. Right from Ehrecke are William Griswold of Rockbridge, president of Illinois Rural Electric Co. and Illinois director on the board of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association; Morris L. Bell of Chandlerville, a director of Menard Electric Cooperative and president of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC); and Thomas H. Moore of Springfield, executive vice president of the AIEC.

Eight Illinois electric cooperatives share in REC Flood Relief Fund

Illinois has received its share of more than \$72,000 donated to the REC Flood Relief Fund by electric cooperative and cooperative support organizations and their employees from throughout the United States. The fund was divided equally among cooperatives in Illinois, Missouri and Iowa to help affected cooperative members recover from the flooding on the Illinois and Mississippi rivers last summer. Eight Illinois electric cooperatives had more than 2,000 members displaced by the record flood waters.

The Illinois funds were divided on the basis of the number of member-owners flooded. Funds were distributed to Adams Electrical Co-Operative, Camp Point; Egyptian Electric Cooperative Association, Steeleville; Jo-Carroll Electric Cooperative, Elizabeth; Illinois Rural Electric Co., Winchester; Monroe County Electric Co-Operative, Waterloo; M.J.M. Electric Cooperative, Carlinville; Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative, Dongola; and Western Illinois Electrical Coop., Carthage. The eight cooperatives planned to dis-

tribute their shares of the funds to local relief agencies to help rural residents in their service areas recover from the floods.

Thomas H. Moore, executive vice president of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives, said, "We express our sincere appreciation to all of these friends from throughout the nation who contributed to this voluntary fund to assist in the continuing efforts to assist member-owners of the electric cooperatives recover from the tremendous losses suffered as a result of these floods."



Somewhere in that herd of curious cows is a hungry bull elk. Scott feeds them a ration of oats, corn and protein twice a day, and notes that elk eat less than cattle.

Elk on the prairie

Hunting trip sparks diversification idea

Scott Ault has a crop and livestock operation on his farm near Good Hope, in McDonough County. He runs 200 head of

stock cows and farms 80 acres, which he rotates in corn and alfalfa.

But there's more. The

McDonough Power Cooperative member also raises elk and deer.

"I got into raising elk because of several hunting trips I took out west," he says with a chuckle, "and I decided that if I couldn't get one that way, I'd have to figure out something else. When I found out that you could legally own deer and elk, I decided to buy some."

While less-than-successful hunting trips played a part in Scott's decision to buy elk, the desire to diversify played a part, too.

"It was in 1980 that I really set out to get into the business," he says, "and things were rough for farmers. I'd talked to hunting guides and others in the trade, and I knew that some of them stocked their hunting areas with elk from farms. And I knew they



Scott pets "Fireball," one of the more tame of the 50 or so deer he has on his place north of Good Hope.

Scott's herd bull stands with his impressive rack of antlers. Still only a young one, this bull already has a rack that could well be in the record books.



paid a pretty good price for them, too."

With a plan in mind, he set out to find a place to buy animals of his own and found that there was a good-sized operation not all that far away: in Peoria. He knew he'd need tall fences to keep the graceful critters from making a leap for freedom, and he didn't want to spend a great deal of money. He visited with the folks at McDonough Power and found that he could get some good used utility poles to use as fence posts, and he went to work building an enclosure.

"I wanted to keep costs down every way I could," he says, "so I converted an old corn crib into a barn. I put in several stalls and was ready to go."

He notes that the tall fences are necessary more for the deer than the elk. "Deer are skittish," he explains, "and if they get out, they'll take off. If you treat them right, elk are fairly tame and docile and will just kind of stick around if they get out. The fences are required by law, though, so I have to have them anyway."

Raising both cattle and elk (which are members of the deer family) enables Scott to comment on both, and he says there are differences. Cattle will tend to bunch up in a pen more than elk will. Cattle will cluster in a corner, and they will all try to get out a gate at the same time, piling up like a log jam.

"Elk are different," he says, "in that they'll file out the gate singly, one after the other. There's no crowding or jostling."

While there are bucks, does and fawn deer, elk are called bulls, cows and calves. Like other members of the deer family, male elk lose their antlers every year, about in March, and get new and bigger ones later on. When the new antlers grow in, they're soft and velvety, Scott says, and harden to bone as time goes by.

"When their horns come in and get hard it's time to separate



This young buck was one of the more approachable members of the herd.

the bulls," he says, "because they'll fight. The dominant bull will kill the younger ones if he can. I've lost a few that way."

Elk are considerably larger than their whitetail or mule deer cousins, and a good bull will tip the scales at about 1,000 pounds when they're full-grown at six to eight years of age. For those who want to eat elk, a 1,000-pound elk will dress out to 500 pounds of meat, which is low in cholesterol. "It's sold in stores overseas," Scott says, "and there are some places where you can buy it in the U.S., too. It sells for about \$7 a pound.

There's an irony in the elk business, Scott remarks, in that while some of the Rocky Mountain states are famous for their herds of elk, some Western hunting preserve owners buy from him. Some of his better clients are from Colorado and Montana.

"It's not as odd as it sounds, though," he says, "because elk were prairie animals and were native to the Illinois area. They moved to the mountains when settlers took over the prairie. Fortunately, elk can adapt to new climates better than any other member of the

deer family."

Elk are a little like people, he says, in that, left to their own devices, they'll eat foods that are bad for them. "That makes it hard for them to survive for long in the wild. Add the rigors of nature, other animals and the natural selection process, and they really have a rough life."

He feeds his animals a mixture of oats, corn and protein twice a day, and he says they don't eat a great deal. "They don't eat as much as cows," he says, "and they seem to be healthier and more disease resistant, too."

The North American Elk Breeders Association was formed in 1989, and Scott is one of the early members, with a registry number of 19. He was the first member of the organization to sell an elk through the group's satellite sale. The bull brought \$4,500.

Scott remarks that getting started in the business was a little more difficult in the past than it is now, partly because many people were unaware that it was legal to own "wild" animals, and partly because there were so few places to buy them.

"Elk breeding is a growing business now," he says, "and I think it'll be a big thing before this decade's out. But animals are still hard to come by, because people want to keep them for breeding. I have 16 bred cows now, and I'd like to have twice that, or maybe as many as 50. In all, there are some 20-30 other elk producers in Illinois, and some 17,000 elk in captivity all over the country."

While the learning process was rough for him, it's easier now. "I did a lot of learning through trial and error," he says, "but there are workshops and seminars that you can go to now. I think elk breeding offers a good opportunity for some farmers who would like to diversify. I know it can be profitable now, and I think it'll get more profitable as time goes by."

BRIEFLY

Farmers get good news on taxes

New taxes adopted by Congress earlier this year will bypass most rural taxpayers, according to a U.S. Department of Agriculture report. And farmers and other rural people could benefit from tax incentives intended to boost farm investment. "Agricultural Outlook," published by USDA, says that because a large number of rural residents have low-to-moderate incomes, the new taxes won't touch them. The 4.3 cents-per-gallon increase in gasoline taxes won't affect on-farm use because such use is exempt from the tax. And low-income rural households could benefit from the expanded Earned Income Tax Credit, the report said. The credit will be phased out for families with incomes between \$11,000 and \$23,760. At the same time, it will be expanded to include low-income workers without children and will be bigger for qualifying households. About 10 percent of all farmers can take advantage of an increase in the tax deductions allowed for investments in farm machinery and other big-ticket property over \$10,000, the report said.

Clinton chooses North Dakota manager for REA

President Clinton's choice to fill the top slot at the federal Rural Electrification Administration (REA) envisions a broader role for the U.S. Agriculture Department agency. Wally Beyer says a broadened role for REA would put "a much larger focus on rural America, on assisting and developing infrastructure — not only electric and telephone, but water and sewer." Beyer, manager of Verendrye Electric Cooperative in Velva, N.D., was confirmed in November by the Senate to take over as administrator of the 58-year-old agency. REA, which lends money to rural electric and telephone cooperatives, is expected to be folded into a new federal Rural Utilities Service that will provide loans for utility and other rural development projects. Beyer would be its chief. Beyer, manager of the co-op since 1963, said he is "honored and excited, and ready to join the Clinton administration." "With his many years working to provide electricity to rural America in North Dakota, (Beyer) is exactly the type of person we need at the helm at REA," Clinton said as he made the nomination. Beyer replaces Republican James Huff, who became REA's 11th administrator in 1992. Beyer takes over an agency facing some of the most dramatic changes in its history. Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy has proposed to reorganize his department to merge its rural development activities. And major legislation to revamp the agency's loan program cleared Congress in October. Beyer has endorsed the

Rural people are more like urban

Rural life isn't so different from city life, says the U.S. Census Bureau. A new report, Housing Characteristics of Rural Households, shows that there are more similarities than differences. "Many rural households tend to be located next to or inside metropolitan areas and have some characteristics closer to those of urban dwellers than of farmers," says Jan Tin, the report's author. She looked at homes that are considered to be "rural metropolitan." The median ages of rural metropolitan and urban dwellers are almost the same: 46 and 45 years, respectively, she said. That's about nine years younger than the median age of 54 for farmers. Urban homes are worth a median \$87,900; and rural metropolitan homes are worth a median \$85,400. By contrast, the median value of a farm home is \$62,300. Twenty-seven percent of farmers completed less than 12 years of school. But just 19 percent of urban and 20 percent of rural metropolitan dwellers didn't finish high school, Tin said. There still are some striking differences between urban and rural people, however: 81

percent of rural people own their homes, while just 58 percent of urbanites buy; 11 percent of rural owners are in low-income households, compared to 7 percent of urban homeowners; 45 percent of rural homeowners and 45 percent of rural renters rate their neighborhoods a "10" on a 10-point scale. Just 33 percent of urban owners and 23 percent of urban renters give their communities such a high score.

Government ends farm census

With the news that farmers make up just 1.9 percent of the national population, the U.S. Census Bureau announced it will stop the farm census. At the turn of the century, 40 percent of the population made its living from the land. When the first census was conducted in 1790, 95 percent of Americans lived in rural areas, and most of them were farmers. Today's farmer is more likely to live away from the farm, so a survey of farm residents isn't a reflection of the characteristics of farm life, Census Bureau representatives say. The final farm report was released in October. It showed that there are 4.6 million farmers, down from 6 million in 1980, when farmers made up 2.8 percent of the population. The report also noted that nearly a third of farm managers and almost 90 percent of farm workers do not live on

changes. "I think it's a very good, long-term fix for the program," he told a North Dakota newspaper. **Bob Nash, who as under secretary for rural economic and community development is the Agriculture Department's official in charge of REA's division, said Beyer will inherit the planned new utilities service.**

Clay Electric takes lead to develop rural water district

Municipal, rural and county leaders have laid the groundwork for development of a Clay County rural water district. **More than 25 local officials and county leaders met with Congressman Glenn Poshard in October at Clay Electric Cooperative's headquarters in Flora to determine the level of interest in the project. The group followed that meeting with a large-scale gathering at the Clay County Courthouse in Louisville on November 13. Representatives of the Rural Development Administration, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Corps of Engineers, Farmers Home Administration, Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs and others attended the public meeting. Jim Campbell, manager of Clay Electric Cooperative, organized these initial meetings, working with municipal leaders from Xenia, Flora and Louisville and Clay County board officials. According to news reports, Congressman Poshard recommends that Clay Electric play a "considerable" role in creation of the water district. "They have experience in governing a large region and are well suited through their management structure," Poshard noted.**

the farms where they work. "The farm as the homestead seems to have less cultural

validity than it once did," said Calvin Beale, a U.S. Department of Agriculture demographer.

Government to open rural health offices

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services plans to add eight new state offices of rural health, so there will be one in every state. HHS Secretary Donna Shalala said the federal government would award \$2.5 million in matching grants for new offices in Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Tennessee. "Many rural communities are facing crises of health care financing as well as provider shortages," Shalala said, adding that the state offices link local communities with government and private sector resources. In response to growing health care shortages in rural America, Congress authorized the State Office of Rural Health grant program in 1990. When the program began a year later, there were only nine state rural health offices in the nation. Under the program, state offices help rural areas collect and share information, recruit health care providers and find government funds for rural health.

Automakers offer efficiency, not electricity

Car manufacturers have offered to build more efficient cars that spew less pollution into the air if the

federal government will convince northeastern states to quit promoting electric cars. Some northeastern states have adopted standards that would require all cars sold there to meet clean-air standards developed by California. The standards would require manufacturers to build and sell electric vehicles and force oil refiners to produce ultra-clean gasoline for the region by the end of the century. It would also require some redesign of car engines to use cleaner gasoline. Industry officials have proposed a trade-off in which they would develop alternative-fuel vehicles—fueled by natural gas, methanol, and other gasoline substitutes—in exchange for an easing of the standards. The regulations are costly, automakers say. They want the Environmental Protection Agency to discourage the spread of the standards.

Electricity sales up

Sales of electricity climbed with the thermometer over the summer, according to the Energy Information Administration. Its statistics show that electric sales for 1993—through July—were up 3.6 percent over the same period in 1992. Residential use was highest, up 6 percent over 1992, followed by commercial sales, which were up 3.3 percent. Industrial sales were up by just 1.7

Financial Aid Awareness Month set

February has been designated as Financial Aid Awareness Month in Illinois, and many activities are planned to provide higher education information to Illinois families. The theme for the month is "Finding and Funding College." A toll-free "Helpline" will be available during the week of February 7-11 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. to answer questions about financial assistance for college or technical school. Questions about how to choose a post-secondary institution will also be answered. The Helpline number is 1-800-628-7939. Parents and students are encouraged to call the Helpline with their questions, regardless of the age of the student—from pre-schooler to returning adult. Last year, 4,068 callers received information during the week-long, toll-free phone program. College financial aid administrators, high school counselors, college admission professionals and lenders will staff the Helpline phones and provide information to callers. This is the fifth anniversary of the Helpline. Since its inception, more than 11,100 calls have been received. The Helpline and other activities during Financial Aid Awareness Month are sponsored by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission, the Illinois Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, and the Illinois Association of College Admission Counselors.

percent, reflecting a continued weakness in the economy. Residential sales for July 1993 were way up because of the Eastern and Southern heat wave. The report shows that coal continues to be the cheapest source of energy, with its price actually dropping 2.2 percent while the price for natural gas fuel

increased 28 percent. Use of coal as a fuel source rose 6.3 percent in 1993. Comparatively, the use of water power was up 18.8 percent from 1992; gas generation was down 9.7 percent; oil generation was down 4.8 percent; and geothermal, wood, wind, waste and solar energy were down 6.4 percent.

Co-op director recognized for environmental stewardship

Sandoval farmer Ken Heinzmann, a director of Clinton County Electric Cooperative, is the recipient of one of four Illinois Commodity Conference Environmental Stewardship Awards. Heinzmann was selected to receive the recognition by the Illinois Soybean Association (ISA), one of four commodity groups participating in the conference and the awards program. Heinzmann, who farms with his family as part of Heinzmann Farms, Inc., is chairman of the Illinois Sustainable Agriculture Committee, created in 1990 by Governor Jim Edgar. Heinzmann has been a speaker at the No-Till Conference, sponsored by the ISA to educate growers on no-till methods and technology. Heinzmann was selected to receive the award because of his persistent efforts to employ and educate others about no-till and reduced tillage methods and other conservation techniques, according to David Erickson, ISA president. "The Illinois Soybean Association wanted to recognize Ken's progressive approach to farming and his efforts to make environmental stewardship an integral part of his operation," Erickson said. This is the first year the commodity groups have presented the Environmental Stewardship Awards.

CRAFTS to SEW

7121

5147

7121: Topsy-turvy doll flip flops from waking to sleeping. She will delight kids and collectors. Transfer pattern pieces & directions for doll & clothes.

5147: An adorable couple to decorate your home. Boy or girl doll stand 20" tall and come complete with printed patterns and fully illustrated instructions for clothes and doll.

ITEMS SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY

CRAFTS to SEW

475

5139

475: Grandmother's Fan quilt to make of country pigs for great effect. Patch patterns, directions for single and double size.

5139: A couple of country pigs dressed for a Saturday evening square dance. Perfect home accent or gift. Printed pattern, directions for 13" pig and clothes included.

ITEMS SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY

CRAFTS to SEW

5143

950

5143: Colorful cat clowns are the perfect home accent or gift for a child and are fun to decorate. Directions, printed pattern for 24" tall cat and clothes included.

950: Sew this French influenced Pierrot clown and his authentic outfit. Directions, pattern tissue for 20" doll and clothes included.

ITEMS SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY

CRAFTS to SEW

5138

5138: Whimsical, country cows are dressed to delight farm animal lovers of all ages. Printed pattern, directions for 13" cow and clothes included.

ITEMS SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY

5536

5536: Increase your fashion options with this four piece wardrobe. Blouse, skirt, jacket and pants are all easy to sew. Misses' Sizes 8 to 18 are included in pattern.

ITEMS SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY.

5681

5681: Join us as we celebrate 65 years of Fashion & Value. Elastic waist dress has purchased lace collar. Misses' Sizes. State HH(6-8-10-12) or RR(14-16-18-20) when ordering. Special Anniversary Pattern only \$1.65 + \$1.30 s/h. Total price \$2.95.

ITEMS SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY

PATTERNS to SEW

FASHIONS & CRAFTS

5557

5736

5557: Sophisticated styling in two pieces. Easy to sew pullover top and trumpet skirt look great together or separately. Misses' Sizes 8 to 18 are included in pattern.

5736: Wrap blouse choices: with or without collar and cuffed or uncuffed sleeves. Misses' Sizes 8 to 18 are included in pattern.

ITEMS SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY

PATTERNS to SEW

FASHIONS & CRAFTS

5744

5744: Nightwear choices: long, dress length or short with panties. Misses' Sizes. State SM(10-12), MD(14-16) or LG(18-20) when ordering.

5711

5711: Simply essential dresses: pullover, long sleeved chemise and V-neck or button-front, short sleeve chemise. Misses' Sizes 8 to 18 are included.

5697

5697: Easy elegance for weekdays and weekends. Raglan sleeved dress has an elastic waist and long or short-flared sleeves. Misses' Sizes. State N(10-12-14) or U(16-18-20) when ordering.

5697

ITEMS SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY

PATTERNS

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I have enclosed \$ _____ (\$4.50 per pattern — cash, check or money order accepted) for the following patterns (please allow four weeks for delivery):

Print Name _____	Pattern No. _____	Size _____	Pattern No. _____	Size _____
Address _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
City _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
State _____ Zip _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Baking tradition

Some traditions never go out of style, like sharing the gift of home-baked treats while bringing in donations for your organization.



APPLE BUTTER OAT BRAN MUFFINS

1 cup apple butter
 1/2 cup vegetable oil
 1/2 cup raisins
 3 tablespoons skim milk
 2 large egg whites

2 teaspoons molasses
 1 cup unbleached all-purpose flour
 1 tablespoon baking powder
 1/2 cup oat bran

Preheat oven to 400°. Grease muffin pans or line with paper. Blend apple butter, oil, raisins, milk, egg white and molasses. Sift and mix flour and baking powder; add oat bran. Add dry ingredients to apple butter mixture, stirring until blended. Divide batter evenly among pans. Bake 15 minutes or until cake tester inserted in center comes out clean. Serve warm. Freeze extra muffins in a tight-sealing food container and preheat in the microwave oven if desired. Yields: twelve 2" muffins.

APPLE BUTTER COOKIES

2 tablespoons butter or margarine,
 room temperature
 1/2 cup sugar
 1 egg
 1/2 cup apple butter

1 cup all-purpose flour
 2 teaspoons baking powder
 1/4 teaspoon salt
 1 1/2 cups rolled oats (oatmeal)
 3/4 cup chopped, toasted pecans

Preheat oven to 375°. Grease baking sheet. Cream butter, sugar and egg. Add apple butter and stir. Sift and mix flour, baking powder and salt. Add dry ingredients to apple butter mixture. Drop by rounded teaspoons onto greased baking sheet. Bake 8-12 minutes or until lightly browned around edges. Yields: 2 1/2 dozen cookies. After cooling, store in a tight-sealing food container.

APPLE BUTTER CAKE

1/2 cup shortening
 1 cup sugar
 3 eggs
 1 1/2 cups apple butter
 2 1/2 cups flour
 3 teaspoons baking powder
 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
 1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
 1 cup sour milk (add 1 tablespoon lemon juice or vinegar to 1 cup, minus 1 tablespoon, of sweet milk. Let stand 5 minutes before using.)

Preheat oven to 350°. Grease two 9" round cake pans. Cream together shortening and sugar; beat in eggs, one at a time. Stir in 1 cup apple butter. Sift and mix flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon and nutmeg. Add dry mixture to creamed mixture alternately with sour milk. Divide between 2 greased pans. Bake for 30-35 minutes and let cool. Spread one layer of cake with remaining 1/2 cup apple butter and your favorite white frosting. Top with second cake layer. Frost sides and top of entire cake with remaining frosting. Swirl apple butter on frosted top to give marbled effect. Yields: 9" 2-layer cake.

APPLE BUTTER SPICE BREAD

1/2 cup butter, room temperature
 3/4 cup sugar
 2 eggs
 2 cups all-purpose flour
 2 1/2 teaspoons baking powder

1 teaspoon salt
 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
 3/4 teaspoon allspice
 1/2 cup apple butter
 1/2 cup chopped, toasted walnuts

Preheat oven to 350°. Grease 8 1/2" x 4 1/2" x 2 3/8" loaf pan. Cream butter and sugar; add eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Set aside. Sift and mix flour, baking powder, salt, baking soda and allspice. Add to creamed mixture, alternating with apple butter and stir in nuts. Pour into greased loaf pan. Bake 60-70 minutes or until wooden toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Remove bread from pan; cool thoroughly before slicing. Variations: Add 1/2 cup chopped raisins, toasted coconut or dates. Top with mixture of apple butter and cream cheese.

CHEESY DROP BISCUITS

8 cups all-purpose flour
 1/4 cup baking powder
 1/4 cup sugar
 1 teaspoon salt
 1 1/3 cups shortening

4 cups milk
 1 cup shredded extra-sharp Cheddar cheese
 Apple butter

Preheat oven to 450°. Sift and mix flour, baking powder, sugar and salt. Cut in shortening until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Stir in milk and cheese until soft dough forms. Drop dough by 1/3 cupfuls. Place 1" apart onto three large ungreased cookie sheets. Bake 10-12 minutes or until golden. Serve with apple butter. Yields: 32 biscuits.

ENGLISH MUFFIN CASSEROLE BREAD

1 pkg. yeast
1 1/4 cups water (warm)
2 1/2 to 3 cups flour

Dissolve yeast in warm water. Mix in other ingredients. Add enough flour to make a soft dough. Cover and let rise about one hour. Grease 1 1/2-quart casserole; sprinkle with cornmeal. Let rise about 45 minutes to one hour. Bake at 400 degrees for 40 to 45 minutes.

NEW METHOD CUSTARD PIE

4 eggs
3 cups milk
3/4 cup sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
1/8 teaspoon salt

Beat eggs slightly. Add sugar, milk, vanilla and salt. Place over low heat, stirring constantly. When steam shows remove from heat and pour into 9-inch unbaked pie shell. Sprinkle with nutmeg. Bake at 450 degrees for 10 minutes, then at 350 degrees for 15 minutes or until firm. (This custard pie never gets watery or soaked crust.)

SPANISH DELIGHT

1 lb. ground beef
2 tablespoons chili powder
1 large onion, chopped
1 bell pepper, chopped
1 pkg. med. noodles
1 can drained, whole kernel corn
1 can mushroom soup
2 cans tomato sauce
1/2 lb. grated cheese

Brown meat, onion, pepper. Add tomato sauce, soup and chili powder. Simmer. Cook noodles and drain. Mix with meat and add corn. Place in casserole dish. Sprinkle with cheese. Bake 30 minutes at 350 degrees.

CHOCOLATE COOKIE SHEET CAKE

2 cups flour
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 cups sugar
1 stick oleo
1 cup water
1/2 cup shortening
3 tablespoons cocoa
2 eggs
1 teaspoon soda
1/2 cup buttermilk
1 teaspoon vanilla

Stir flour, sugar and salt together. In a saucepan put oleo, water, shortening, cocoa and bring to a boil. Do not cool. Pour over flour mixture and mix well. In another bowl beat eggs well with soda, buttermilk and vanilla. Combine all ingredients, mix well and pour into a greased and floured cookie sheet with at least 1-inch sides. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

Icing:

1 stick oleo
6 tablespoons cocoa
1 box powdered sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
1/2 cup nuts

Start icing last 5 minutes of baking time, using same saucepan. Melt oleo and stir in cocoa. Do not boil. Pour over powdered sugar, vanilla and nuts. Stir well and ice cake as soon as it is taken from the oven.

OVEN-FRIED DRUMSTICKS

1/2 cup flour
1 1/2 teaspoons seasoned salt
1 1/2 teaspoons black pepper
1 egg
1/4 cup milk
1 1/2 cups bread crumbs
1 1/2 medium drumsticks (about 3 lbs.)
1/2 cup butter or margarine

Mix flour, salt and pepper. In a shallow dish use a fork to beat egg and milk until well mixed. Place bread crumbs on a sheet of wax paper. Coat with bread crumbs. Melt butter in a large roasting pan. Arrange drumsticks in single layers in the melted butter. Bake in a 400 degree oven. When chicken has baked for 30 minutes turn with a pancake turner to loosen chicken from pan if needed. Turn chicken, bake 20 minutes longer or until chicken is golden brown and fork tender. Arrange drumsticks on paper towel lined platter. Keep warm until served.

ENCHILADA CASSEROLE

1 1/2 lbs. ground beef
1 onion, diced
1 can cream of mushroom soup
1 can cream of chicken soup
1 cup milk
1 can enchilada sauce
1 (7 oz.) pkg. Fritos or tortilla chips
1 lb. Velveeta cheese

Cook meat and onion until done. In saucepan, mix soups, milk and enchilada sauce. Drain meat and add other ingredients. Place chips in greased casserole dish. Cover with meat mixture and Velveeta cheese. Alternate layers and bake 30 minutes at 325°.

FRIDAY NIGHT SPECIAL

2 cups diced cooked turkey or chicken
3 cups cooked rice
1 cup cooked mixed vegetables
1 cup finely chopped onions
1 can (10 3/4 oz.) condensed cream of chicken soup
1 teaspoon each poultry seasoning and celery salt
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
1/2 cup chicken broth
1 cup grated Cheddar cheese

Combine all ingredients except cheese; mix well. Pour into a buttered shallow 2-quart casserole dish. Bake at 350° for 20 minutes. Sprinkle with cheese and bake 5 minutes longer.

BROCCOLI CASSEROLE

2 (10 oz.) pkgs. frozen broccoli, cooked
2 cups rice, cooked
1 cup chopped onion
1 cup chopped celery
Salt & pepper to taste
1 (8 oz.) jar Cheez Whiz
1 cup oleo
1 can cream of chicken soup
1/2 cup milk

Place rice and broccoli in 2-quart casserole dish. Stir in half the cheese. Melt butter in skillet (I use less than 1 cup). Add onion and celery; cook until tender. Stir in soup and milk. Season to taste. Pour sauce over broccoli-rice mixture; mix well. Top casserole with remaining cheese. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes.

CALAS

2 cups cooked rice
2 tablespoons sugar
2 cups Bisquick
1/4 cup evaporated milk
2 eggs
1/2 teaspoon vanilla

Mix all ingredients together and drop by small teaspoonfuls into hot oil. Fry until golden brown. Drain on paper towel. Roll in powdered sugar or cinnamon and sugar. May be made the night before.

HOMEMADE EGG NOODLES

3 eggs
1 teaspoon salt
Water to equal eggs
Flour to make stiff dough
Mix very thick and roll very thin. Cut into long strips. Let lay to dry for a while. Cook in meat broth for about 20 minutes. Broth can then be thickened if desired.

RICE RING

2 cups long grain rice
4 cups chicken broth
1/2 cup diced green pepper
1/2 cup diced pimiento
1/4 cup minced onion
2 teaspoons salt
Combine ingredients and bring to boil. Reduce heat to simmer and cook 15 minutes. Pack into a well oiled ring and let cool a few minutes. I use my Angel Food cake pan to mold this.

MARINATED CARROTS

2 lbs. fresh carrots, sliced thin
1 onion
1/2 green pepper, sliced thin
1 10 3/4 oz. can tomato soup
1/2 cup vegetable oil
1/2 cup vinegar
1 1/2 cups sugar
Cook carrots until tender but crisp. Drain and mix together with onion and green pepper. Heat tomato soup, oil, vinegar and sugar to boiling point. Pour over vegetables. Refrigerate several hours or overnight. Drain and serve cold.

CHICKEN & RICE DISH

6 chicken breasts
1 cup uncooked rice
1 can cream of celery soup
1 can cream of chicken soup
1 can cream of mushroom soup
3 cans of water
Mix rice, all soups and water together, lay chicken on top. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour in covered dish.

MEXICAN CORNBREAD CASSEROLE

2 cups self-rising corn meal
1 1/2 cups milk
2 eggs
2 tablespoons bacon drippings
1 No. 303 can yellow cream-style corn

1 lb. ground beef
1 teaspoon salt
1 large onion chopped
1/2 lb. cheese, grated
4 jalapeno peppers, chopped
Mix first 5 ingredients for batter. Let stand. Brown meat, add salt and drain. Chop onions, grate cheese and add chopped peppers. Pour 1/2 of batter (first 5 ingredients) into greased skillet. Add cheese, onions, meat and peppers. Pour remainder of batter over this. Bake at 350 degrees for 40-45 minutes. Must be baked in well-greased skillet or Teflon pan.

CHICKEN LASAGNE

2 cups diced chicken
1 small onion browned in 2 tablespoons butter
1 can mushroom soup
1 large can of milk
1/4 teaspoon oregano
1/4 teaspoon celery salt
2 large pimentoes, chopped
2 cups broth from chicken
1 box lasagne noodles, cooked
1/2 cup grated American cheese
1/2 cup grated sharp cheese
Brown onion in butter. In a large sauce pan combine mushroom soup, milk, onion, chicken broth, celery salt and oregano. In a large bake dish layer lasagne, cheeses, chicken, pimentoes, and soup mixture. Repeat and top with cheese.

ALMOND CRUSTED CRANBERRY APPLE BREAD

1 pkg. Cranberry Quick Bread Mix
1 cup fresh or frozen, thawed cranberries, halved
1/2 cup chopped, peeled apple
1 cup apple juice or water
1 tablespoon oil
1 egg
1 teaspoon almond extract
1/3 cup sliced almonds
Apple Jelly

Grease and flour bottom of 8 x 4 or 9 x 5 inch pan. In large bowl, combine all ingredients except sliced almonds and jelly. Stir 50 to 75 strokes by hand until dry particles are moistened. Pour batter into greased and floured pan. Sprinkle with almond slices. Bake at 350° for 55 to 65 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool loaf in pan on cooling rack 15 minutes; remove from pan. Cool completely. Store refrigerator. Just before serving brush with warm apple jelly.

FRESH APPLE CAKE

1 1/2 cup margarine or oil
2 cups sugar
2 large eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 1/2 cups flour
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon soda
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 cup chopped pecans
3 cups chopped apples
Chop apples and set aside. Measure oil into large bowl, add sugar, eggs and vanilla. Beat until creamy. Sift flour, salt, soda and baking powder together, add small amounts at a time to creamed mixture. Fold in pecans and apples. Bake in 9 x 13 pan for 55-60 minutes at 350 degrees.

Caramel Frosting:

1 stick butter
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons evaporated milk
1 cup dark brown sugar, packed
Confectioners sugar, sifted
Put butter, salt, milk and sugar into sauce pan; heat just to melt butter. Mix until sugar dissolves. Add enough confectioners sugar to make right consistency to spread. The cake may be frozen without icing.

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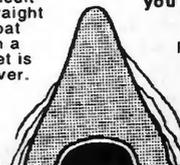
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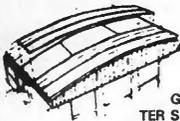
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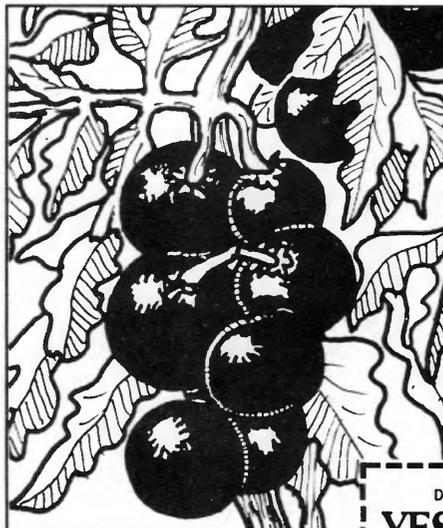
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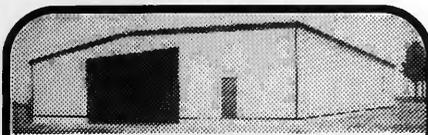
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Jeani Stark works on a painting in her rural Danvers studio. Here, she blends a nephew and a nature scene, while working on an easel she built herself.

Variety of interests drives this artist

Jeani Stark's home west of Bloomington is a multimedia treat. However, it's not a mixture of audio, video and such. She does all different kinds of art, ranging from pen-and-ink to oils to sculpting and working in bas-relief.

Like many creative people, the Corn Belt Electric Cooperative member is multi-talented. In addition to her artistic skills, she's an avid historian and cook.

Some two decades ago, she presented Corn Belt Electric Cooperative with a sculpted rendition of "Willie Wiredhand," the "mascot" of the rural electrification program, and she has been doing art work ever since.

Jeani and her late husband, Lyle, lived in a pastoral setting where she did her art work and he ran an excavating business. Jeani notes that her art is really a spare time thing, since she works as a switchboard operator, too.

She's proud of her studio, but admits that it sometimes has served as a "put it there" room. "You know," she says with a laugh, "if you can't find a place for something, you 'put it there.'" The room is paneled with oak from a barn that was some 150 years old when it was torn down, she says.

The bas-relief is one of her favorites, in which a slab of

plain, ordinary urethane insulation is carved in such a way that the subject seems to stand out.

"I got the idea of doing this entirely by accident," she says. "I was working at a museum, making little bases for mineral displays. That gets tiring after a while, so I sat down to have a cup of coffee and relax a little.

"Anyway," she continues, "I was working with a nail file and emery boards, and there was a little scrap piece of foam sitting there. Before I knew it, I was working with it, turning it into a work of art."

As time went by, she perfected her technique and developed a finish to make the rigid foam look

like aged bronze. "It's a simple everyday thing," she says, "but I'll never tell what it is."

She has done several pieces, including one of Gordon Ropp, a former state representative. Not surprisingly, relatives receive "the treatment" too. A nephew, a singer and actor of some talent, features prominently in one of her works, a combination of foam and pen-and-ink. In the foam, he's portrayed belting out a song, while the other half shows drawings of him in the roles he's played in various school stage productions.

Another work, a combination of the nephew and his girlfriend, carries the theme of "Two heads are better than one." Jeani notes that she likes to think of it as a "bi-headual" work. "You have to be kind of nutty to understand me," she chuckles.

Another of her favorite works is taken from a 65-year-old picture postcard her father and uncle brought back from Yellowstone National Park. "They drove clear out there in their old Model T, when they were just kids," she says, "and they brought back a lot of photographs and picture postcards. I



A sampling of Jeani's work shows several different talents. The piece on the left points out that "two heads are better than one," and features a nephew and his girlfriend. The pen and ink drawing is of Boxcar Willie, a performer who was at a cultural event nearby.

liked one in particular where the moonlight is shining across a lake, and there are a couple of trees in the foreground."

She broke out the knives, emery boards and other hardware, and before she knew it, she had a work of art. It won "Best of Show" in a local com-

petition, and Jeani gave it to her mother. When she needed to borrow it back later, Mother said, "Loan out my prize-winning work of art? Never! You'll have to rent it," she said.

Those works take up part of Jeani's time, but she's deeply into painting, too. "I built my own easel," she says with a pardonable trace of pride, "and I sit out here with my nephew's recordings going and really have a good time. I still take painting classes, too, and I really enjoy them."

Like most of us, Jeani is looking for a way to make her "hobby" pay off, and has started a line of greeting cards featuring pen-and-ink drawings of pets. She has one on her wall, of a dachshund wearing a bowler hat. "I think it's really cute," she says, "and I've approached several people. I tell them that if they'll let me do a sketch of their pet for my cards, that I'll give them the original. I've had some interest, and I think the arrangement would be good for me and for the pet owner. Everyone comes out ahead. You can't beat that!"



Gordon Ropp, former state representative from Bloomington, holds a bas-relief of himself that Jeani did for him. It's carved on a sheet of insulating foam and treated to resemble bronze.

Co-ops come full circle in 1993

Rural electric systems help bring about program changes

The year 1993 began with a stunning televised announcement by President Clinton that rural electric cooperatives would take a hit in his effort to rein in the federal deficit.

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As Clinton took office in

“REA is a necessary component of our nation's policy to provide universal electric service, no matter where you live or travel.”

January, co-op leaders advised him to consider rural America as he plotted his administration's economic strategy.

The Rural Economic Coalition — a group of rural service organizations — pointed to the need for federal funds to refurbish the rural infrastructure. Improvements to the country's roads, bridges, and basic services are needed, the group said, in order to create jobs.

That appeal was followed by near-weekly reminders to the

president by rural advocates and small-town governments, hoping to position rural areas alongside cities for economic recovery.

Meanwhile, there were several harsh and prominent attacks on the federal Rural Electrification Administration (REA) — the government agency that lends money to co-ops. In January, ABC's Prime Time Live held up REA as an example of wasteful government spending, a charge that the co-ops refuted with statistics that show they serve sparser populations than investor-owned utilities and so must charge higher rates to their consumers.

Others — including the Mobil Corp., the conservative Heritage Foundation, the Wall Street Journal, and a few members of Congress — jumped on the kill-REA bandwagon during the year. Detractors argue that because most rural homes have electricity, REA loans are no longer needed. Co-ops disagree, however, saying that rural service costs more and should be subsidized to help assure that all Americans have access to affordable electricity.

Clinton's newly appointed Secretary of Agriculture defended the REA. Mike Espy told Congress in January that REA's mission could be expanded, citing three independent studies that recommended a more aggressive role for the U.S. Department of Agriculture agency.

Then, during Clinton's State

of the Union address, the president used REA as an example of programs that could be cut back.

“Many of these programs were justified in their time and a lot of them were difficult for me to recommend reductions in,” Clinton said in the speech.

Co-op officials responded by saying the REA is necessary to the continued well-being of the co-ops. And co-ops, they said, are important to rural America.

“REA is a necessary component of our nation's policy to provide universal electric service, no matter where you live or travel,” Bob Bergland, executive vice president of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), wrote to



the president. NRECA is the co-ops' Washington, D.C.-based service organization.

Bergland and others said co-ops receive less federal assistance — through loans and loan guarantees — than electric utilities owned by cities or investors.

Yet they agreed that the co-ops would do their fair share to help reduce the deficit. J.C. Roberts, a Lubbock, Texas, co-op manager and the president of NRECA, explained: "We want to do our part," he said in March. "We do not, however, want to be sacrificed so the other segments of the electric utility industry can receive even more subsidies."

Clinton's number-crunchers fashioned a plan that would boost the interest rate on REA loans from 5 percent to the government's cost of money, which currently is about 7 percent. Only co-ops serving the poorest rural areas would be eligible to apply for a small pool of 5 percent loans.

Members of Congress balked at that plan, however, saying such a jump in interest rates could force some small co-ops to hike their consumers' electric

bills by as much as 20 percent.

And they began to come up with alternatives. Rep. Tim

"We want to do our part. We do not, however, want to be sacrificed so the other segments of the electric utility industry can receive even more subsidies."

Johnson (D-S.C.) wondered aloud at a House hearing whether co-ops could get federal loans pegged to the interest rate that city-owned utilities pay on tax-free municipal bonds.

As the talk of money intensified, the idea of expanding REA's role to include lending to co-ops for rural water and sewer projects surfaced. A springtime NRECA survey showed that nearly 200 co-ops planned to seek REA development loans or grants to provide or improve local water and sewer service. And Bergland suggested to Espy — by this time considering a major USDA reorganization —

that he consider an expanded role for the co-ops.

Espy was receptive. Co-ops, he said, "have done their jobs well. They put a state-of-the-art electrical system in place. On the other hand, water is a major problem. . . . Let's put the staff of REA borrowers together with the Farmers Home Administration and the Rural Development Administration and deliver water to rural people."

Thousands of rural Americans still must haul their water to their homes from wells. Some drink untreated water.

By late May, the House approved the changes. Members passed legislation to eliminate REA's authority to make 5 percent loans except in "hardship" cases, and instead offer loans at the same interest rate that municipal utilities pay on their tax-free bonds. That rate is currently around 5½ percent.

Altogether, REA would be allowed to lend \$725 million to co-ops in fiscal year 1994, which began in October 1993.

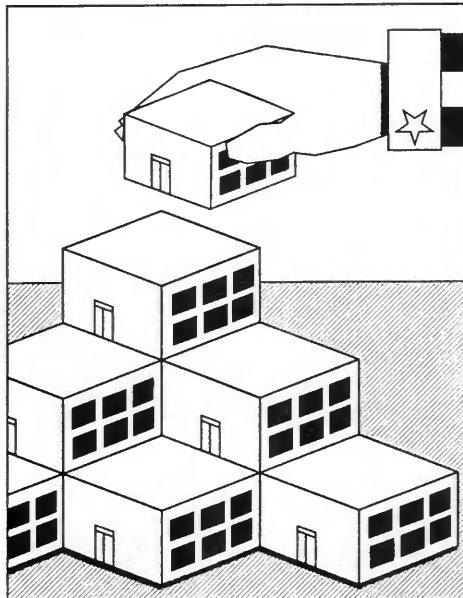
By the time the legislation reached the Senate — which also had to pass it before it could become law — Espy assured REA employees that their agency would remain a fixture in rural communities.

"I'll fight anybody who wants to dismiss the viability of REA in this century and beyond," he said.

And after several months of legislative delays, the Senate adopted the bill to revamp the REA loan program.

The Senate action came as cooperative leaders participated in their autumn series of regional business and policy meetings. Completing the circle for the year, the meetings borrowed the theme of early 1993. The vitality of rural America depends on a strong economy, participants said. And in crafting an economic agenda, Clinton should consider that need.

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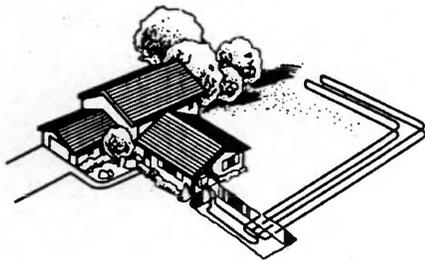
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