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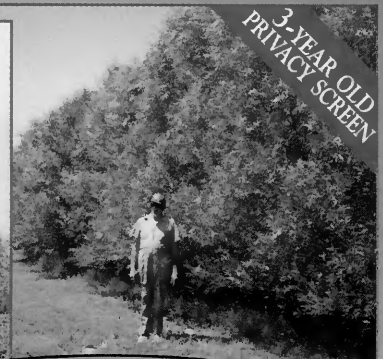
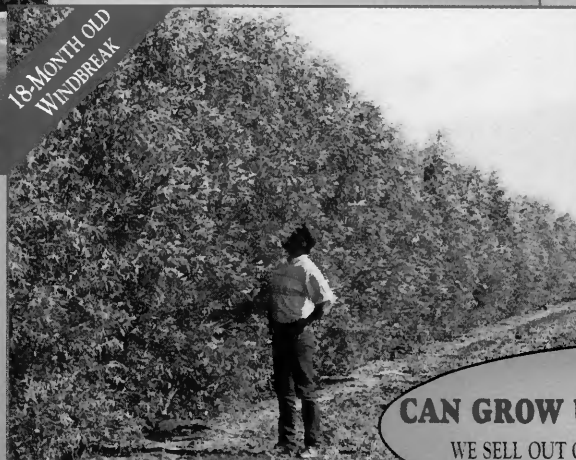
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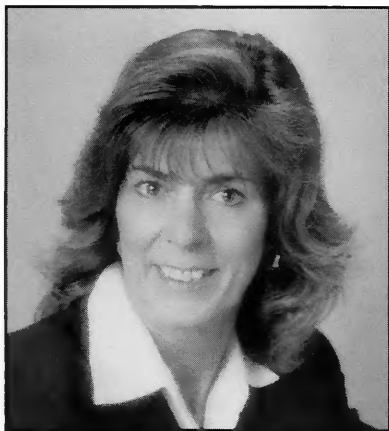


Illinois COMMENTARY

Good things come in small packages

Illinois' rural hospitals are at a precipice, forced to change or perish.

The insured population has fled leaving an older and poorer population overall. Rural hospitals, doctors and clinics are in a fragile financial condition due to a high dependency on government-sponsored patients. Fifty-five to 60 percent of Illinois rural hospitals' business is Medicare and Medicaid, and for some institutions, the number is closer to 80-90 percent. The average operating margin of Illinois rural hospitals with



Barbara B. Dallas

under 50 acute beds is -3.5 percent. The cost of underpaid and under-compensated patients has shifted to patients with insurance, a capability that is not a long-term possibility because of the managed-care movement. Advancements in medical technology are good news for consumers, but

hospitals lack capital dollars for technical equipment and physical plant reconfiguration.

In addition, thanks to technology, in-patient care business is disappearing. In 1983, 4.2 beds were needed per thousand population; last year only 1.5 beds were needed.

Public perception continues to be a problem. Bigger is not necessarily better. Routine procedures are performed just as well by our local providers, and the care is more personal. While the public would like emergency rooms, local access beds and specialty services, many hospitals cannot meet the cost. All of us must make the mind-shift from thinking about our health care system as taking care of sick people and start

thinking of it as a system to keep people healthy. And, yes, when they're sick, take care of them.

The historic Balanced Budget Act (BBA) passed last year will force most of the country's health care delivery systems into restructuring as providers cope with the bill's provisions. The plan cuts Medicare spending by \$116 billion over the next five years. Medicaid takes a \$14 billion hit.

Small rural hospitals have been transitioning for years by making operational and staffing cuts and bed reductions, entering into shared service and networking arrangements, entering into contract management relationships, consolidating, affiliating and merging. Some have not survived. In Illinois, 11 small rural hospitals have closed in as many years.

Non-hospital health care options now include rural health clinics, ambulatory surgery treatment centers, long-term care facilities, nursing homes, skilled care facilities, facilities associated with the freestanding emergency room and recovery center pilot projects, physician offices, and various other options. But none offer what rural residents want — 24-hour-a-day emergency services and the convenience of overnight acute care beds.

Several transformational models are emerging. Other new ones will be fueled by the Medicare rural hospital flexibility plan, passed in the BBA. The Illinois Hospital and HealthSystems Association (IHHA) is working with the Illinois Department of Public Health's Center for Rural Health to develop a rural health plan, as required by the new law.

I believe telemedicine, which includes everything from telephone systems, facsimile transmissions, teleradiology, and interactive teleconferencing, will be a vital, if not indispensable, component in health care delivery in rural America. It will improve quality by bringing specialists via an electronic signal to hospital emergency rooms and even into the homes of patients. It will help provide continuing education and address many other administrative and operational needs.

The future of the rural hospital will, in many respects, ultimately be tied to other, in most cases, larger facilities. The technological changes will warrant both financial commitments and expertise that are not available in rural hospitals.

So, what's the small rural hospital vision? Some already have begun to move toward consolidation, alignments with other providers, elimination of certain

Barbara B. Dallas is senior director of rural hospital services for the Illinois Hospital and HealthSystems Association. Based in the association's southern regional office in Carbondale, she lives in Murphysboro and represents more than 90 small rural hospitals in Illinois.

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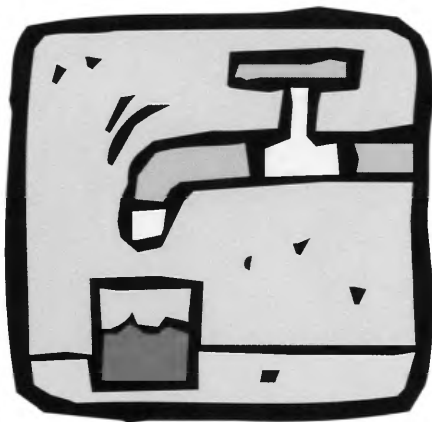
President Clinton has signed an appropriations bill including \$577 million for Water 2000, an initiative to provide safe water to many rural American homes still without.

At least 2.5 million rural residents, including 60,000 in Illinois, have problems with drinking water availability, quality or dependability, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimates.

The amount represents a 2 percent increase in funding over last year for the program, administered through the USDA's Rural Utilities Service. Water 2000 projects are funded primarily through USDA programs that since 1940 have loaned more than \$15 billion for safe drinking water and sanitary sewer systems in rural America. The program boasts a pay-back rate of 99.9 percent, meaning that less than \$1 is written off for every \$1,000 loaned.

"Any increase in what we can invest in meeting critical, water-related public health needs is a victory, especially during these times of necessary budgetary restraints," said Wally Furrow, state director.

In the fiscal year that just ended, almost \$26 million was made available in Illinois for high priority drinking water projects under its Water 2000 commitment to provide save water to more than 2,767 rural households and businesses.



Dates of note

Feb. 3-5, Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism, Springfield, sponsored by the Illinois Bureau of Tourism. "History in the Making," is this year's theme. A session on Feb. 3 will provide an overview of the Illinois Bureau of Tourism programs. On Feb. 4, demonstration sites for the Illinois Heritage Tourism program will be identified. Call (800) 690-4805 for reservations and info.

Feb. 19, Mining for Grants & Loans, sponsored by the Department of Commerce and Community Affairs at 18 sites statewide. Satellite workshops will provide information on financial assistance and grant and loan programs available for infrastructure improvements. Call (217) 785-3263 or point your browser to DCCA's website at www.commerce.state.il.us/dcca for site info.

Avez-vous vin de Illinois?

The new Illinois Grape and Wine Resources Council thinks it would be peachy if Illinois restaurants served Illinois wine.

"Since I've become chair of the Illinois Grape and Wine Resources Council, I ask if they have Illinois wines whenever I go into restaurants," said James M. McGuire, dean of the College of Agriculture at Southern Illinois University's Carbondale campus. "Most of them don't, so we have a job to do. That's a priority for me."

McGuire said boosting the grape and wine industry (see *Illinois Country Living*, January, 1998) could be of enormous benefit downstate where many mining jobs have been lost.

John W. McFarland, president of the Illinois Grape Growers and Vintners Association, can testify to that. He started growing grapes ten years ago after losing his job at Old Ben Mine No. 24. Now he sells his grapes for about \$700 a ton, or more than \$4,000 an acre.

"I don't care how many bushels of corn you put in. You're not going to get \$4,000 an acre," McFarland said. Illinois grape growers now produce less than half the amount of grapes needed to support the Illinois wine industry at its present size.

"There's a real opportunity here," McGuire said. Oh, and by the way, the next time you visit a restaurant, ask for Illinois wine.

Rebuilding communities

A new book written by the president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation showcases many small communities that have refused to let their downtowns die.

The 261-page book, *Changing Places: Rebuilding Community in the Age of Sprawl*, is written by Richard Moe, the trust's president, and Carter Wilkie and is published by Henry Holt and Company. The book has chapters on neighborhood revitalization, Main Street revivals, the reinvention of downtown, and the role/future of preservation. It contains examples and case studies.

It costs \$25 and is available from the trust at (202) 588-6219.

Illinois Commentary

(continued from page 4)

services, and diversification into more outpatient and community services. Others are only beginning to look at their options. Still others may be able to realign their services and survive as independent institutions. Each hospital will respond to profound changes in its own unique way. The sooner health care leaders examine options and plan for the future, the greater their ability to create the most appropriate approach for the future.

The next generation of rural providers will be financially lean and technologically linked. They will emphasize the appropriate kinds of care for their rural community and efficient operations to ensure that care. The rural hospital of the future may well be small in size, but bigger in capabilities. It will guarantee not only access to care, but also quality, efficiency, and effectiveness, which people in rural Illinois deserve.

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by Murry L. Broach - Staff Writer

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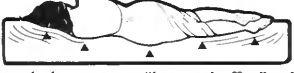
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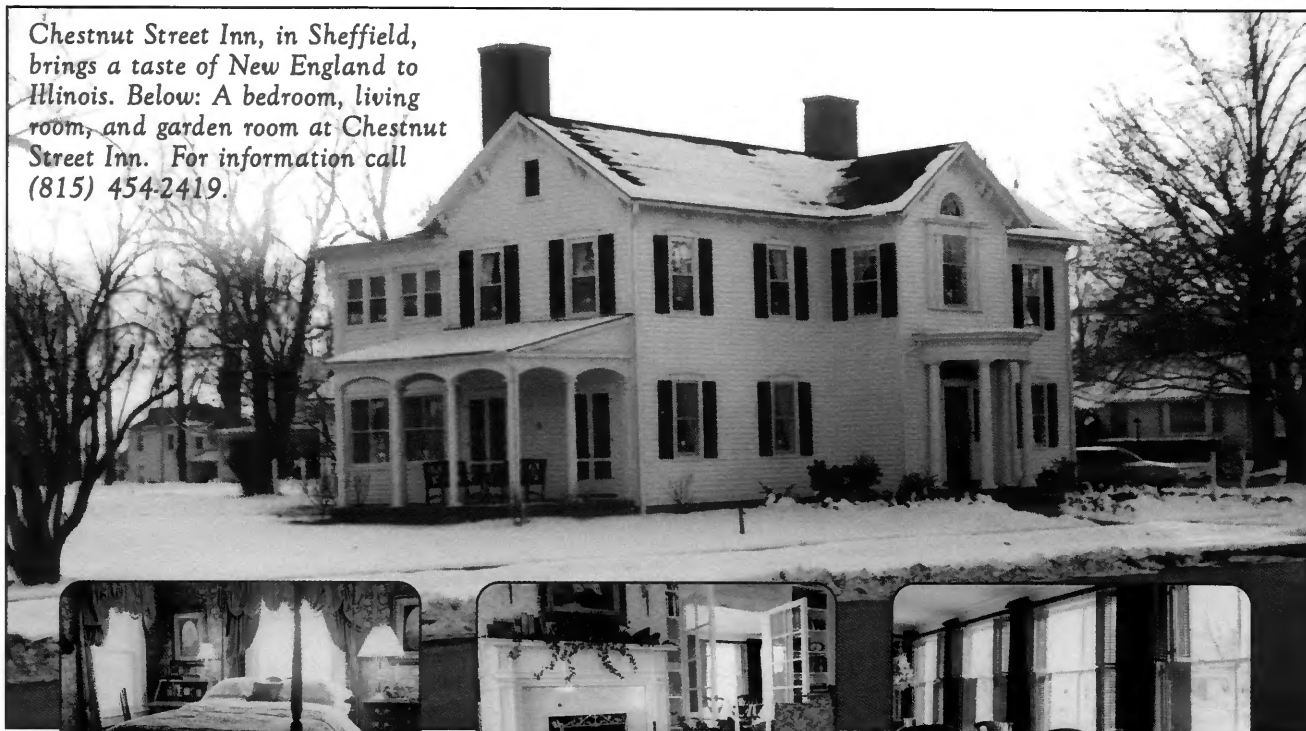
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Breakfast inn bed

A cottage industry grows up in Illinois

Story and photos by Joseph W. Richardson

"I break every rule that's ever been written about a successful Bed & Breakfast," Gail Bruntjen says over a hot cup of hazelnut coffee. "You don't want to put it where I put it, you don't want to have as few bedrooms as I do, and you certainly don't want to do this as a start-up business." It's late afternoon in mid-December and the sun is burning red and gold through the windows of the Chestnut Street Inn, riding ripples in the plate glass before spilling the same colors, diluted, onto a polished hardwood floor. "All those things aside, I think if you do anything really, really well, to some extent, you can make it successful."

To a large extent, Bed & Breakfast owners around the state are

proving her right.

For the uninitiated, B&Bs are the cottage industry alternative to mass market motels. The basic concept is simple: homeowners let out a room or rooms and include a morning meal with each night's stay. But refine the idea to reflect 150 years of Illinois architecture, pepper it with the vision, tastes, and eccentricities of over 125 innkeepers, then toss attitude and economy into the mix, and you begin to get an idea of the shapes, sizes, and colors they come in. From cabins to cottages to pseudo-European spas, Illinois inns run the gamut. And all with an average of just under four guest rooms.

"There's a whole industry set up for aspiring innkeepers," says



Gail Bruntjen, owner of the Chestnut Street Inn, prepares the dining room for an evening dinner party. The dining room table has served as the room's centerpiece for over 100 years.

Bruntjen. "You can go to seminars all over the country on how to operate Bed & Breakfasts successfully. And in all of those you will hear all of the don't-do's I've done. I've paid big bucks to know how wrong I'm doing things," she says, laughing. Which is ironic, considering the pains she took to do things right.

As an aspiring innkeeper, Bruntjen began her search by contacting 1,600 Bed & Breakfasts in the Midwest. She sent each B&B a postcard requesting brochures from owners interested in selling. "I got a cardboard box full of them, literally, from small three- and four-room Bed & Breakfasts in little towns just like mine. And I smugly said, 'I'm not going to put myself in this trap where I'm doing a little business in a place that won't make me a living, and what has been my dream for so long is going to become a nightmare.'"

That's when a realtor sent her information regarding something in Sheffield. The perfect floor plan built into an historic, stately home sitting on a quiet corner lot. Some-

thing that resembled a New England inn. Something Bruntjen had been looking for. "So I looked at it and that's the end of the story. I just dropped all the rational stuff

I'd learned in the seminars and fell in love with the house."

Ironically, modern technology may be one of the primary forces driving people to seek out businesses based in historic homes.

"The more we proceed into a high-technology civilization, the more we need high-touch to counterbalance that," Bruntjen says. "And a good B&B is high-touch."

Along those same lines, the unassuming town which failed to meet the tourist traffic numbers Bruntjen initially had in mind has also turned out to be an asset.

"When you get off work on a Friday night, it's not necessarily the most fun thing to do, spending five or six hours in a car driving to a wonderful tourist place, where you meet how many other thousands of people that have done the same thing. If you're looking for more

in your weekend getaway than caramel corn and T-shirts, then this is a wonderful location."

A doorbell chimes and Bruntjen leaves the room.

The sun fades behind a

neighboring house and the colors in the window change and grow cold. Quiet, excited voices carry from the next room: guests seeing
continued on page 12...



Brant and Carolyn Hansen of Champaign share a quiet moment at Country Dreams Bed & Breakfast.



Bluffdale Vacation Farm, north of Eldred, combines a home steeped in early Illinois history with newly constructed cabins to provide the perfect getaway. After a day of hiking, canoeing, or horseback riding (all included), guests can retire to their cabins to soak in a spacious hot tub, then warm the fireplace with the touch of a button. For information call (217) 983-2854.

Recipe for a successful B&B

Take several rooms, mix in one well-made meal, a pinch of atmosphere, add a dash of tradition for spice, market thoroughly and — voila' — instant B&B. If only it were that easy. In truth, an inn's chances for success rely heavily on its keeper.

"So many try and choose not to continue," says Gail Bruntjen, owner of Chestnut Street Inn, in Sheffield. On average, the relationship between keeper and inn in Illinois lasts about three years. Why such a high turn-over rate?

"People underestimate the investment of money, and they underestimate how much work it is," says Bruntjen, who's already bucked the average. She suggests aspiring innkeepers ask themselves the following questions: "Are you in good health? Because the physical demands are pretty big. Are you financially stable; do you have an additional source of income? And do you enjoy people? Do you place a high value on service?"

Bottom line — can you make a living from running a Bed & Breakfast?

"You can," Bruntjen says. "But it's exceptional that someone makes a living at it."

If you're (still) an aspiring innkeeper, talk to people established in the trade. Ask them what they wish they'd known before they started. Then contact the Illinois Bed & Breakfast Association. For \$25 they'll send you a starter's kit which explains the rules, regulations and standards of innkeeping. Another \$10 will buy you an apprentice membership, which includes the starter's kit, a subscription to the IBBA newsletter, plus entrance to regional and annual meetings.

For more information contact La Verne Waldbusser, association administrator, Illinois Bed & Breakfast Association, PO Box 82, Port Byron, IL 61275, or call (888) 523-2406.

Breakfast inn Bed
continued from page 11...

the inn for the first time. The last light of the day drains from the glass, leaving it filled with winter.

"Sometimes it doesn't matter so much where you are, but what

you're getting away from," Bruntjen said before leaving. "When people seek out a Bed & Breakfast, they're not necessarily so concerned about the location. What they want to do is break their routine. They want to have

time that they don't have in their normal lives. They want to have the experience of connecting with people that are important to them. It doesn't really matter where you are to do those things," she said. "Just so you do them."

Electronic Ledger Domain

You're thumbing through a listing of Illinois Bed & Breakfasts, all inspected, all approved, and in the absence of a well-timed phone call — all a mystery. What do you do?

Simple. Search your engines.

With its capacity for updates, downloads, sound, video, and quick correspondence, the Internet is a B&B booker's dream come true. Or should be. In truth, relatively few Illinois innkeepers are using the Internet to their full advantage. So while queries fed through the magnificent seven of search engines churn out pages of B&B directories, actual owner websites are pretty scarce.

Ralph and Kay Muhs, owners of Country Dreams Bed & Breakfast, a new inn east of Springfield, are among the few rural innkeepers showing cyberspace market savvy. "When you're new, you're not in any guide books or magazines. You're an unknown," Ralph Muhs says, defining a problem common to fledgling businesses. "And people have to find you to know about you."

Enter the 'Net. "Our website has just been a god-send to us. Without it, we probably would have

closed the doors and given up," Muhs noted a few weeks before Christmas. At present, closing the doors doesn't seem to be an option; several guests were relaxing in the living room during our mid-week interview, and the inn was booked for the following weekend.

Muhs attributes the inn's penchant for netting younger travelers to the Country Dreams website, which mixes trendy technology with small town charm to communicate the true flavor of the inn — elegant country.

Their website reflects a similar style. Photographs, background information, a map and contact numbers — all backed by sparing, well-placed graphics — combine to create a website both functional and user friendly. Country Dreams online also includes what may be the biggest boon to innkeeping since the telephone: e-mail.

"We started e-mailing two or three weeks before I came here," said Darlene Hollinan, of Cobden, a frequent traveler and favored

guest at Country Dreams. Hollinan went online to search for accommodations that would provide a more homey feel than the typical motel. "I knew I'd feel safe, comfortable here," she said. "I felt like I knew the place before I ever set foot in it."

To meet the Muhs and tour Country Dreams Bed & Breakfast, visit their online site at <http://www.softfoundry.com/countrydreams>. For further online listings, access "Along the Way" — an electronic guide to Midwest Bed & Breakfasts, at <http://www.flinthills.com/~atway/index.html>, or try the TravelASSIST inn directory at http://travelassist.com/reg/reg_m_us.html. For a listing of inns approved by the Illinois Bed & Breakfast Association write to the IBBA at PO Box 82, Port Byron, IL 61275. or call (888) 523-2406.



Ralph Muhs, co-owner (along with wife Kay) of Country Dreams Bed & Breakfast, steals a rare minute alone by the fire. Country Dreams strikes a successful balance between informal and elegant by choosing pieces that accentuate, rather than dominate the living area. Light colors, a cathedral ceiling, fine fixtures and dormer-room window seats complement the open, airy house design that Ralph Muhs, a builder by trade, customized to create the inn.



Kay Muhs (left) serves the morning meal at Country Dreams Bed & Breakfast. The inn, which opened last year, is located near Rochester. For information call (217) 498-9210.

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AROUND YOUR HOME

Disaster survival depends on preparation

Most of us don't think much about natural disasters on a daily basis. Yet, Illinois continues to rank high from risks like tornadoes, floods, winter storms, fires and earthquakes. In fact in the past 26 years, Illinois has received 24 presidential declarations due to naturally occurring disasters.



Barbara Cooper

Are you and your family prepared to cope with potential disasters? Being well prepared can save lives and property losses.

Late winter and early spring can bring storms that knock down power lines and disrupt service. If a disaster interrupts your electric service, immediately contact your electric cooperative. Then take steps to protect your

property. When the power is off, unplug any appliances with electronic components — those with computer chips like the new touch-pad appliances. This helps to eliminate damage from voltage surges when electricity is restored. Even after the electricity comes back on, wait a few minutes before turning these appliances back on.

If you find downed power lines during a power outage, don't go near them. Stay away. Let qualified staff from the power supplier handle them.

Dangerous situations also arise when basements or crawlspaces flood. Never wade into a flooded basement unless the electricity supplying sump pumps, freezers and other appliances submerged in the water has been disconnected. If the power is restored while you are wading in the water, the current would go to the appliances and, ultimately, to you.

Cold weather power outages are a special concern when heat is lost. Keep warm by wearing several layers

of clothes and staying dry. Layered clothing provides better insulation. If the power might be off for an extended length of time, move to a single room in the home. Ideally, that room would have an alternate heat source such as a fireplace or wood-burning stove. Keep auxiliary heating sources in good working order and operate them with proper ventilation. Keep curtains closed unless the sun is shining on the window.

Disaster experts recommend that families assemble a disaster supply kit. This kit can be used at home or taken to another location if you are forced to leave. It should include drinking water, nonperishable food and a non-electric can opener. Also needed are first-aid supplies, a battery-operated radio and flashlight with extra batteries. Candles, matches, extra dry clothing and blankets or sleeping bags should be part of the kit, too. Don't forget to include special needs that are specific to your family, such as medications or baby care supplies.

Keep the kit in a convenient place known to all family members. Change your stored water supply every six months and rotate stored food every twelve months so it stays fresh. Rethink your kit and your family needs at least once a year. Replace batteries and update clothes at this time.

Families need to work together to prepare for a disaster. Discuss the kinds of possible disasters that could strike your area and how to react. Identify an escape route out of the house and determine a meeting place once outside. In contrast, you also need to find the safest place to go inside the home in case a tornado is coming.

Identify an out-of-state contact to phone if family members are separated and unable to return to their residence after a disaster. During a local disaster, placing calls to other states is easier than calling locally.

Have emergency phone numbers posted near the phone. Help children understand how and when to call for help. Each family member needs to know how to turn off gas, electricity and water at the main switches. Make sure a working ABC type (a multi-purpose) fire extinguisher is in the home and everyone knows how to use it.

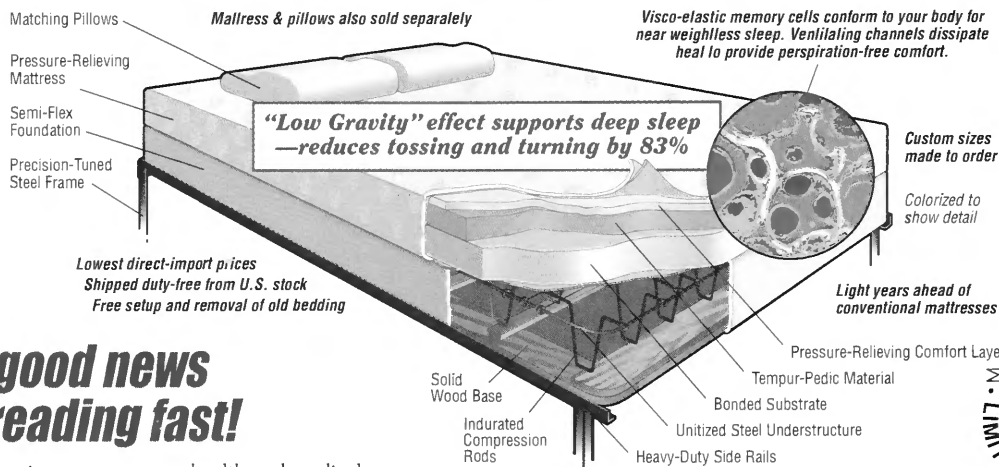
For more information about disasters, talk to your local Emergency Services Disaster agency. The Illinois Cooperative Extension Service also maintains a Disaster Resources web site at <http://www.ag.uiuc.edu/~disaster/> that can be used by individuals with computer access to the Internet.

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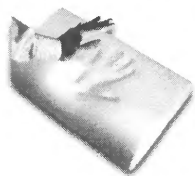
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Your YARD AND GARDEN

Structures in the landscape

Walls, fences and baffles usually are used on the sides of property to provide protection, security or just to separate yards. Seldom are fences or walls used in the front of the property. However, there may be cases where a low wall, fence or baffle could be used to provide some privacy.



Dave Robson

For example, if you have a large picture window, a fence could be used, provided it is of similar texture and style to the house and doesn't compete with the home's architecture, to create a small garden court that provides interest from inside while allowing some privacy. Most structures should be neutral in color; definitely avoid white as it

will call attention. Another situation may involve screening a parking area or side entrance.

Make sure you landscape both sides of the wall, fence or baffle to soften its harshness. Choose plants that vary in height, color, form and texture to create an interest. Using the same plants in front of the wall tends to call attention to the plants and wall and divert attention from the overall landscape and house.

The best fence is of living plant materials — shrubs, evergreens or a row of small trees. Plants provide seasonal change with flowers, fruit, foliage changes and bark color through the year, though evergreens do this to a lesser extent. Plant materials can create fences three to four feet in height all the way up to 10 feet.

Some of the best plant materials for living fences include:

- Barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*) — 4-6 feet with similar spread. Red and green forms; small thorns. Avoid the dwarf forms for fences. Deciduous.

- Viburnums (*Viburnum* spp.) — many different forms. Vary in height from 4 to 15 feet tall. Good flowers, many with fruit, pest-resistant. Deciduous.
- Burning Bush (*Euonymus alatus*, E.a. 'compactus) — Standard and dwarf forms. Standards to 15-20 feet, dwarf to 6 feet. Great fall color. Deciduous.
- Arborvitae (*Thuja* spp.) — Height variations. Forms include: "Emerald" (10-15 feet), "Holmstrup" (5-10 feet), "Nigra" (10-15 feet) "Techny", sometimes called "Mission" (10-15 feet but broader base than "Emerald"), "Rosenthalii" (less than 10 feet), "Wintergreen" (20-30 feet, 3 feet wide; one of the best). Evergreen.
- Yews (*Taxus* spp.) — Lots of height variations. Make sure you chose an upright form instead of a prostrate form. Select plants for height and shape. Evergreen.

Many other shrubs can be used, often mixing different plants to achieve different flowering and fruiting habits. However, do not piece together a living fence like a crazy quilt. Choose two or three plants at the most and group them in clumps. For example, you could have three plants of type A, two of type B, three more of type C, two more of type B, and two of type A. Individual plants can be used if they don't compete with the blooms, fall color, or other interesting characteristics of surrounding plants.

You can also create a fence by using taller, thin trees such as alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), Birch (*Betula* spp.) or amur maple (*Acer ginnala*) with some shrubs in front. Many of the old European hedges use oaks and beeches, though some of their hedges are actually 30 feet high.

Plants to avoid, if possible, as living fences include Forsythia (*Forsythia*), Lilac (*Syringa*) and Privet (*Ligustrum*). These three generally require more maintenance and have less outstanding landscape features.

Lombardy poplars also are poor specimens, often plagued with canker diseases as they mature. Likewise, the Austree is a type of willow that develops weak wood that breaks easily in Illinois winds, snows, ice storms and tornadoes. If you do plant the Austree, consider it a temporary specimen of no more than five years while another plant becomes established.

David Robson is an Extension Educator, Horticulture, at the Springfield Extension Center, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Illinois. You can write to Robson in care of Illinois Country Living, P.O. Box 3787, Springfield, IL 62708. Telephone: (217) 782-6515. E-Mail: robsond@idea.ag.uiuc.edu

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Today's

TECHNOLOGY AND YOU

Safe and efficient landscape lighting is easy to install

Q: *I am not an electrician, but I want to add high-quality landscape and security lighting. How effective and efficient are new do-it-yourself fiber optic and all-metal low-voltage lighting kits? - S. R.*

A: New residential fiber optic and high-quality low-voltage (12-volt) outdoor light kits are efficient and are ideal for the do-it-yourselfer. Low-voltage lighting kits range from the inexpensive plastic sets sold at almost all hardware stores to high-quality ornate cast metal ones designed to literally last a lifetime.

Do-it-yourself fiber optic lighting is the newest type of kit for home use. Fiber optics are efficient and simple to install (no heavy electric wire to handle). It is also extremely safe because there is no electricity flowing to each light fixture in your yard. Instead of running heavy copper wire to a small bulb in each outdoor fixture, thin durable (plastic) fiber optic cable is used.

Only one efficient light bulb is needed in the main unit. For the best efficiency, Lumenyte offers kits with a high intensity discharge light bulb (metal halide) in the main unit. The light travels along the small plastic fiber optic cables to each of the outdoor fixtures. Fiberstars offers a typical kit that includes six-pathway or four-flood fixtures with a main unit.

With fiber optic lighting kits, there are no electrical connections to get dirty and only one bulb to replace. First determine where you want the light fixtures to be located in your yard. Cut the plastic fiber optic cable to the correct length. Using glue included in the kit, glue on the end cap and slip the fiber optic cable into the light fixture.

Contour fiber optic kits are ideal for marking a pathway or lighting around a pool where electricity is a hazard. These kits use special 18-strand side-glow fiber optic cables. The entire length of the cable glows. For a unique effect, for pools or gardens, install a slowly rotating color wheel in the main unit.

There have been many improvements in do-it-yourself outdoor low-voltage lighting kits over the past several years. There are many more high-quality

all-metal designs, automatic timers, dimmer controls and literally hundreds of new decorative styles.

If you ever tried to install a low-voltage lighting kit from several years ago, you will appreciate how easy the new fixture connectors are to attach. If you live in an area that is damp, select a kit that uses sealed connectors so that they will not become corroded or need cleaning. With only 12 volts, just a slight amount of corrosion can reduce the light output.

The highest quality low-voltage light kits use all-metal construction — some with real frosted and cut glass for attractive and efficient lighting. Some also have durable polycarbonate (bulletproof glass) lenses — great around children. Inverted glass tulip-shaped lights with a thin curved post (stem) and metal leaves are ideal for accenting flower gardens. Some taller decorative lights have planters built into the base.

Choose fixtures with tiny halogen bulbs and built-in reflectors (MR codes) for bright directional accent lighting. Halogen bulbs produce a very white light similar to natural sunlight. Small standard incandescent or super-efficient 5-watt fluorescent bulbs are good for pathway or area lighting.

To edge a sidewalk or driveway, Argee offers low-voltage lighted plastic brick kits. The snap-together bricks have built-in connectors so no extra wiring is needed. The swivel connectors are colored and designed to look like real brick mortar joints. Also available are real concrete interlocking bricks and blocks with built-in low voltage lights for retaining and decorative walls.

To light a deck, Idaho Wood makes real red cedar mini-low-voltage lighting kits. There are various sizes and styles designed to mount on the deck, rails or steps. Also available are mini-light kits that are mounted flush with the deck and can handle the weight of a person. The kits include templates to saw the correct size opening in the deck. There are similar brick-type kits for patios and driveways that can actually support a car.

Write for Utility Bills Update No. 571 — buyer's guide of 15 fiber optic and low-voltage lighting and brick kits, styles (25 shown), features, prices, sample layouts and landscape lighting tips. Please include \$2 (with checks payable to Jim Dulley) and a business-size SASE. Mail to: Jim Dulley, Illinois Country Living, P.O. Box 3787, Springfield, IL 62708. For instant download, go to <http://www.dulley.com>.

James Dulley is a mechanical engineer who writes on a wide variety of energy and utility topics. His column appears in a large number of daily newspapers.

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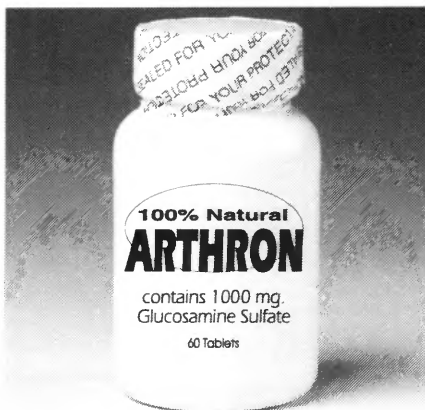
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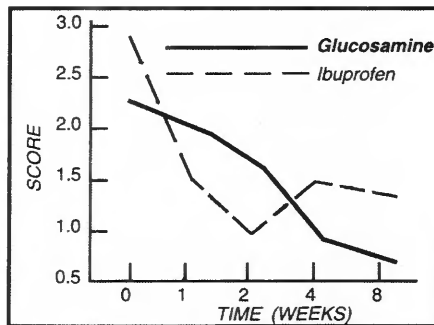
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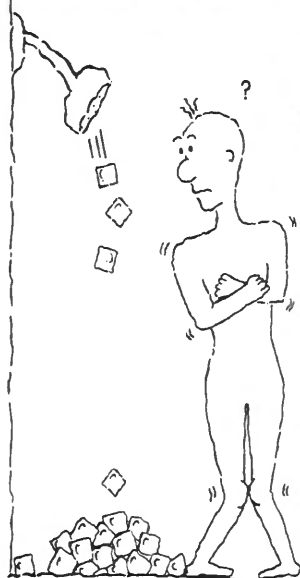
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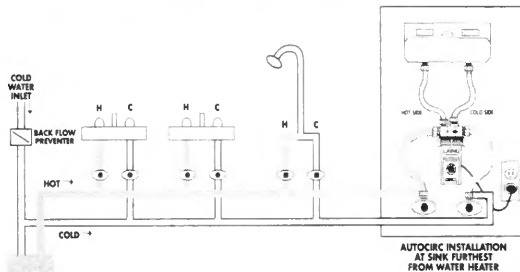
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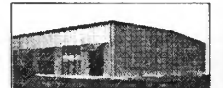
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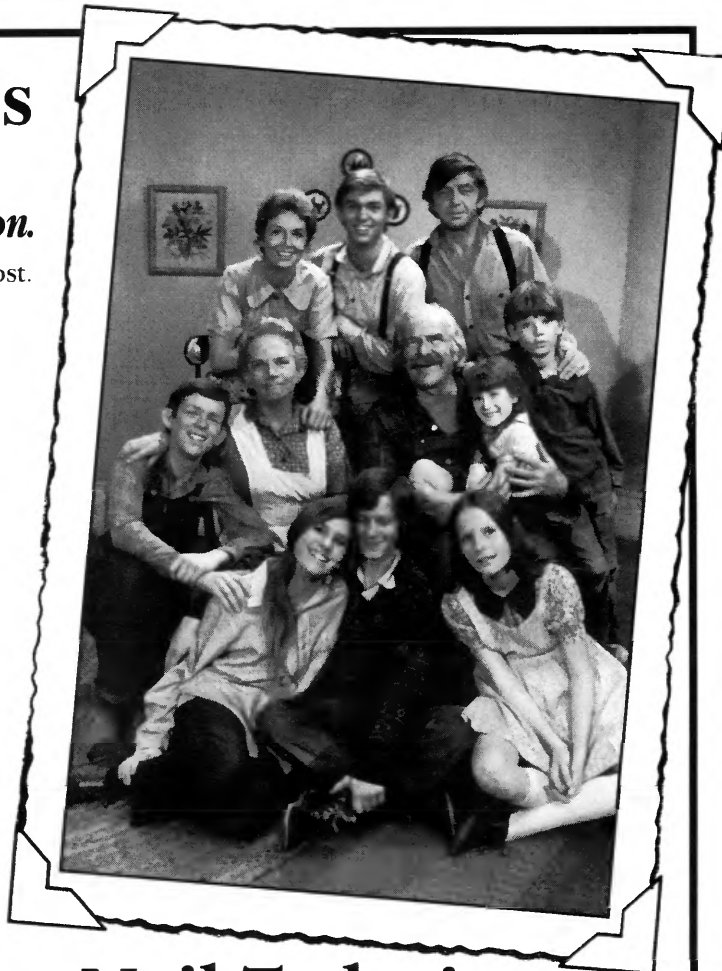
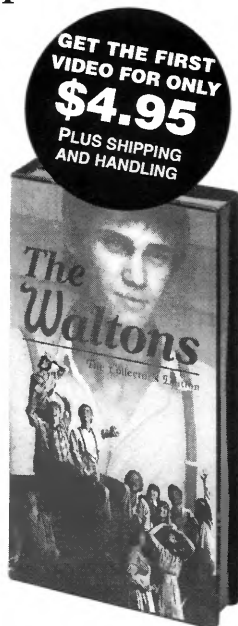
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The Maroa Public Library District produced a cookbook in 1993 to raise money to help build a new library in Maroa. The cookbook is spiral-bound and has 178 pages in it. Purchase the book for a total of \$7 from Janice Leach, Maroa Public Library District, P.O. Box 627, Maroa, IL 61756 or call her at (217) 794-5111.

Champaign County Farm Bureau Women's Committee provides 450 recipes in the cookbook published in December 1995. It is also spiral-bound and has many helpful information pages. The cost of the cookbook is \$11.50. Contact Becky Webb, 1713 Springfield, Champaign, IL 61826 or call her at (217) 352-5235 to order.

Maroa Public Library

CHILI CON QUESO

Maroa Public Library

1 (15 oz.) can chili con carne without beans
1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened

chopped green chilies to taste (optional)
corn or tortilla chips

Combine chili con carne, cream cheese and optional green chilies in small saucepan and heat, stirring until blended. Serve hot as a dip with corn or tortilla chips. Serves 8 to 10.

FRUIT DIP

Julie Austin

2 (8 oz.) cream cheese, softened
2 big T. Tang®

1 large jar marshmallow cream

Soften cream cheese and stir in marshmallow cream. Add Tang and stir until blended. Serve with fresh fruit such as strawberries, peaches, grapes, nectarines, bananas or with little cookies such as vanilla wafers or use as icing on white cake.

PARTY CHICKEN

Marge Hill

6 chicken breasts, boned
3/4 C. chopped onion
6 stalks celery, chopped
3 cans cream of chicken or celery soup or both

1 C. mayonnaise
1 pkg. herb stuffing mix
1/4 lb. oleo
3 eggs

Chop chicken in small pieces. Saute in 1 T. oil. Set aside. Saute onion and celery in same pan. Add soup and mayonnaise. Mix until heated. Layer chicken pieces on bottom of pan. Pour onion mixture over chicken. Mix eggs, stuffing mix and oleo. Mix well and pour on top of chicken. Bake 350° for 45 minutes, covered with foil and 15 minutes without foil.

CHUCK ROAST TERIYAKI

Carol Brown

3 to 4 lb. chuck roast
1 clove garlic
1 T. brown sugar
1/2 tsp. pepper

1 T. oil
2 T. water
1/4 C. soy sauce

Sprinkle roast with tenderizer as bottle directs. Pierce deeply with fork and let stand at room temperature for 1 hour. Cut into bite size cubes and marinate in ingredients for 2 hours. Turn occasionally. **To prepare marinade:** Mash garlic with sugar to firm pulp. Mix with pepper, oil, water and soy sauce in shallow dish (large enough to hold meat). Do not salt! Best if cooked on charcoal grill. Only takes about 10 minutes to cook.

SWEET POTATOES IN ORANGE SHELLS

Barbara Rose

3 oranges
1 (16 oz.) can sweet potatoes, undrained
2 T. butter or margarine, melted

1/2 tsp. salt
3 T. packed brown sugar
1/4 C. flaked coconut
6 miniature marshmallows

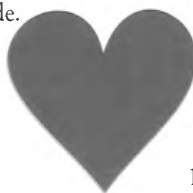
Cut oranges in half. Squeeze oranges; save juice. Remove membranes from orange shells. Mash sweet potatoes. Blend 3 T. orange juice, butter, brown sugar and salt. Stir in coconut. Spoon this mixture into oranges shells; place in shallow baking pan. Bake at 350° for 20 to 30 minutes, until lightly browned. Top with marshmallows. Bake about 5 minutes longer to melt and brown marshmallows.

HEALTHY MUFFINS

Michele Vieweg

2 eggs, beaten
1/2 C. yogurt
2/3 C. warm milk
1/3 C. honey

1/3 C. oil
2 C. whole wheat flour
1 tsp. baking soda



Mix eggs, yogurt and milk; beat. Add honey and oil. Add dry ingredients. Grease 18 muffing cups. Fill each cup about 2/3 full. Bake at 425° for 15 minutes. Add raisins or chopped nuts, if desired.

CHOCOLATE ICE CREAM SAUCE Shirley Oakes



2 C. sugar 1 (13 oz.) can Milnot®
1/2 C. cocoa pinch of salt

Stir sugar, cocoa and salt in top of double boiler. Add Milnot and stir until mixture starts to thicken. Remove from heat. It thickens more as it cools.

ECLAIR DESSERT

Linda Unlan

1 C. water
1 stick margarine
1 C. flour
4 eggs
3 C. milk

11 oz. cream cheese
2 small pkg. instant vanilla pudding
12 oz. Cool Whip®, thawed chocolate syrup

Bring water and margarine to a boil in a saucepan. Remove from heat. Add flour. Stir until ball forms. Beat in eggs, one at a time until smooth. Spread dough in a greased 9x13-inch pan. Bake 375° for 30 to 40 minutes; cool.

Filling: Blend milk and softened cream cheese. Mix in dry pudding mix until thick. Spread over crust. Spread whipped topping over pudding mixture. Drizzle with chocolate syrup. Refrigerate until serving time.

Champaign County Farm Bureau Women

RUBEN ROLL

Dee Stierwalt

1 tube pizza dough 6 oz. thin corned beef
1 C. Swiss shredded cheese

Roll out dough. Lay in greased 14x10-inch pan. Sprinkle with 1/2 cheese, add beef then rest of the cheese. Roll from short side. Bake 15 minutes at 425°. This is very easy and delicious. Kids love it.

ALOHA BUTTERFLIES

Randy Youngren

4 thick cut butterfly chops
Marinade:
1 cup honey 1/2 C. brown sugar
1 C. teriyaki sauce 1 tsp. garlic
1 small can crushed pineapple and juice 1 tsp. sesame seeds

Marinate overnight. Grill slowly until done.

CHICKEN WITH DUCK SAUCE

Kathryn Dohme

chicken parts 2 envelopes onion soup mix
8 oz. Russian® dressing 8 oz. jar apricot jam

Wash chicken and pat dry. Place in foil-lined shallow roasting pan. Mix all other ingredients and blend. Spread over chicken. Bake 2 hours, uncovered, at 300°.

DIET PIE CRUST

Marie Herriott

1 1/2 oz. Rice Krispies® 4 tsp. honey
6 T. peanut butter

Mix together in pie pan, then make a diet pudding and pour into crust.

DIET BANANA SPLIT PIE FILLING

Marie Herriott

1 1/2 C. dry milk 8 T. pineapple juice
4 to 6 packages Equal® 1 C. crushed pineapple
4 tsp. Weight Watchers® oleo 1 medium banana, sliced into crust

Mix milk, Equal, pineapple juice, margarine and 1 C. of crushed pineapple and spread over banana sliced in crust. Top with Cool Whip®.

BROCCOLI SUPREME

Annetta Busing

4 T. margarine 1 (20 oz.) package frozen broccoli, separated (7 to 8 cups)
1/2 C. chopped onion 1/4 C. toasted slivered almonds (optional)
1/2 C. (4 oz.) Pasteurized process cheese spread 1 can cream of mushroom or celery soup
1/8 tsp. garlic powder
3 C. Rice Chex®

Melt margarine in large saucepan. Remove 3 T. of the margarine and toss with Chex. Sauté onion in remaining margarine, about 5 minutes or until tender. Add soup, cheese and garlic powder. Heat and stir until cheese is melted and mixture is smooth. Remove from heat, stir in broccoli and almonds and 1 C. Chex. Spread in shallow 1 1/2 quart baking dish. Crush remaining Chex and sprinkle on top. Bake at 350° for 35 minutes or until bubbly and crumbs are toasted.

RASPBERRY CAROUSEL SALAD

Louise Karr

1 (3 oz.) package Jell-O® raspberry gelatin 1/4 C. chopped walnuts
2 C. boiling water 1 (3 oz.) package lemon gelatin
3/4 C. cranberry juice cocktail 1 (4 1/2 oz.) container Cool Whip® (1 3/4 C.)
1 C. diced apple 1/2 C. Kraft® real mayonnaise
1/4 C. sliced celery

Lightly grease (with liquid shortening) a 6-cup ring mold. Dissolve raspberry gelatin in 1 C. boiling water. Add 3/4 C. cranberry juice and chill until slightly thickened. Fold in apple, celery and nuts. Spoon into the 6-cup ring mold and chill until set. Dissolve lemon gelatin in remaining boiling water. Chill until slightly thickened, about 45 minutes. Combine whipped topping and mayonnaise. Stir into gelatin until thoroughly mixed. Spoon into mold. Chill until firm. Unmold. Garnish.

APPLE BUTTER (CROCK•POT®)

Gertrude Henry

12 C. apple sauce 1/4 C. vinegar
6 C. sugar 2 T. cinnamon
1/4 C. red hots 1/2 tsp. allspice

Mix ingredients together, cook uncovered part of the time. Stir often. (Ed.: Cook several hours until right consistency.) Can or freeze.



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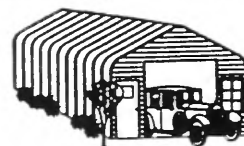
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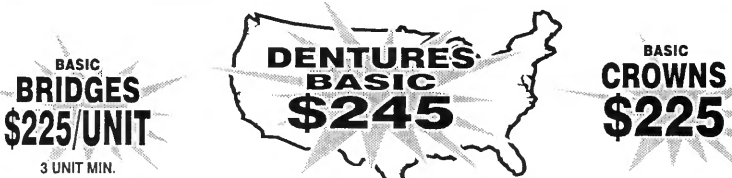


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February DATEBOOK

3-4, 10-11, Bald Eagle Watch Tours, Crab Orchard Wildlife Refuge, Marion. (618) 997-3344.

6, President Reagan's Birthday, Tampico. Cake, punch and coffee to celebrate the native son's birth here on this date, 1911. Tampico boasts two museums, the Ronald Reagan Birthplace and the Tampico Historical Museum, both in the same block on Main Street. (815) 438-6175.

7, Lincoln's Birthday Open House, Mt. Pulaski. (217) 732-8930.

21-22, 28-3/1, Maple Syrup Time, Lincoln Memorial Garden, Springfield. (217) 529-1111.

13-15, Midwestern Herb Show, Times Square Mall, Mt. Vernon. (618) 756-2271 or (800) 252-5464.

14, Chocolate Trail, Main Street, Stockton, (815) 947-3360.

22, Artifact Identification Day, Dickson Mounds Museum. The public is invited to bring their native American artifacts, animal bones, and fossils to be identified by museum archaeologists and other experts. This year's annual program features Illinois rock art and a slide presentation on "Native American Prehistoric Rock Art of Illinois." There will be flintknapping and rock art demonstrations and activities for children. (309) 547-3721.

19-21, WIU 25th Anniversary Jazz Festival, Macomb. (309) 833-1315.

21, Stewardship Saturday, Cache River Wetlands, volunteer work day from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Meet at Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge on Shawnee College Campus. (618) 634-2231.



14-15, Living History Weekend, Fort Massac State Park, Metropolis. A historical visit with the Massiac Marines, along with crafts and other displays of interest. (618) 524-9321.

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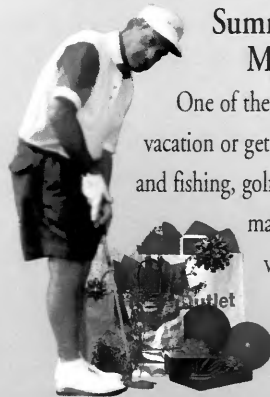
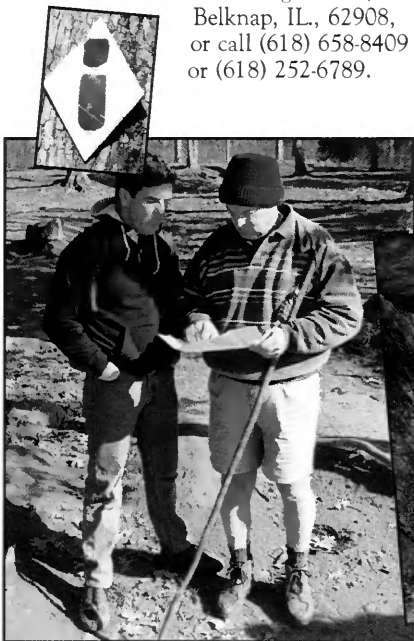
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21, River To River Trail Society Hike, Southernmost Illinois. A guided and interpreted hike from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., rain or shine. Hikers should pack a lunch and bring some water. \$10 per person. Obtain details by email at bridges@accessus.net or call (618) 658-8409.

28-3/1, Blackhawk Chocolate Fest, Carroll, Ogle, Lee, and Whiteside counties, in northwest Illinois. Follow the Chocolate Trail to candy stores, general stores, bed and breakfasts, cafes, bakeries, gift stores, and old-fashioned soda fountains as they put out their chocolate best. There will be plenty of samples, workshops by chocolate artists, games and prizes (chocolate, of course.) (800) 678-2108.

28, River to River Trail Workday, Southernmost Illinois. Trail maintenance from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., tools provided. Bring work gloves and water. Obtain details by email at bridges@accessus.net or call (618) 658-8409.

The River-to-River Society, now about 1,500 members strong, supports the 175-mile trail that winds through forest, across high vistas, and down into valleys from Battery Rock on the Ohio River to Grand Tower on the Mississippi River. The third Saturday of each month is trail maintenance day, and the United States Forest Service lends tools to build water bars and clear brush. On the fourth Saturday of each month the society hosts a hike. To hike the entire trail would take two to three weeks, so the society promotes shorter day hikes. The society publishes a guide map and a topographical map may be purchased from the Forest Service. Membership in the society is \$15 per year and may be sent to the River-To-River Trail Society, 425 Bridges Lane, Belknap, IL, 62908, or call (618) 658-8409 or (618) 252-6789.



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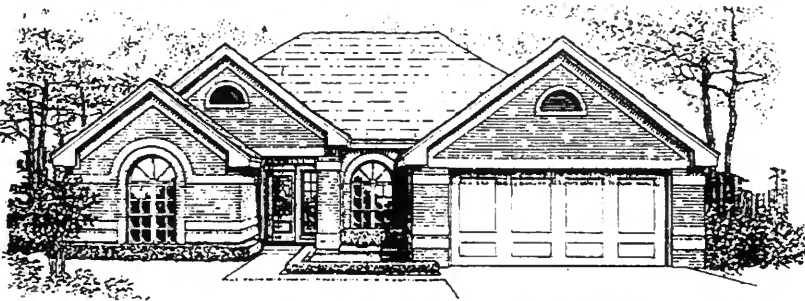


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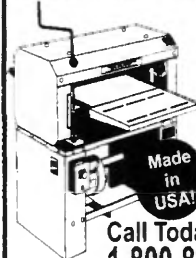
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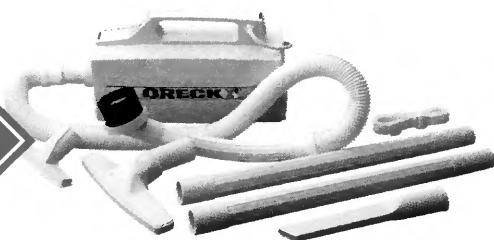
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