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## COUNTY WIRE

November 2003



**Love at first sight:**  
stories of adoption

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## COVER STORY



### Love at first sight: stories of adoption ..... 10

Three Illinois families found love at first sight when they met their adopted children. Here are their stories.

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# ILLINOIS<sup>TM</sup> COUNTRY LIVING

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Touchstone Energy®

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Lisa Madigan

# Rural Illinois in the eye of the meth storm

One of the greatest challenges that we face today is the rapid spread of methamphetamine through our rural communities, especially in southern and central Illinois. Meth has hit rural communities like a tornado – tearing families apart, endangering children, wreaking havoc on the environment, and overwhelming social service providers and law enforcement authorities alike.

All too often our farmers find themselves in the eye of the storm as meth makers steal their anhydrous ammonia (a key ingredient in the most common meth “recipe”), tampering with and even rupturing their anhydrous tanks in the process.

While there is no magic solution to the meth problem, there are many steps that we can take together to help stem the tide of meth manufacture and abuse. This past legislative session, my office drafted two pieces of legislation that were passed by the General Assembly and signed into law by Governor Blagojevich.

The first measure doubles the potential penalty faced by meth manufacturers who endanger children, sending meth makers a clear message that mixing meth and kids is a recipe for disaster. The second requires that meth manufacturers reimburse the government for the cost of securing and cleaning up drug labs.

Because meth makers need large quantities of cold medications containing ephedrine

or pseudo-ephedrine to produce the drug, retailers have an important role to play in slowing the spread of meth. That is why my office is working with law enforcement authorities and retailers to fashion an agreement limiting large sales of cold medications and training retail personnel to recognize and report suspicious purchases to local law enforcement authorities.

Now we are taking the next step – developing information and resources to help local communities fight the meth epidemic from the ground up.

For example, my office is working closely with agricultural leaders, farm supply stores, and law enforcement authorities to make it more difficult for meth makers to steal anhydrous ammonia. Among other precautions, we urge farmers to:

- Deliver nurse tanks to fields immediately before fertilizing and return the tanks immediately after;
- Park nurse tanks close to your house, next to a public road, or in some other highly visible location;
- Inspect tanks at least once a day for signs of theft or tampering, keeping in mind that anhydrous thefts typically occur at night or over the weekend;
- Use brightly colored plastic ties or wire seals on tank valves to help determine whether tampering has occurred;
- Remove hoses and store them away from tanks, bearing in mind that there may be enough

anhydrous ammonia in a standard decoupling hose to manufacture meth;

- Report any theft or tampering of propane tanks, which meth makers use to store anhydrous ammonia, and be aware that bluish or greenish colors on tank nozzles or other fittings may indicate that a tank has been used to transport anhydrous ammonia; and

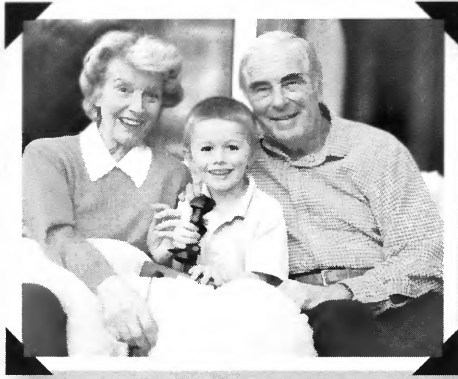
- Work with your local law enforcement authorities to enhance the security of your anhydrous tanks, encouraging them to increase nighttime and weekend patrols in your area.

Finally, attorneys in my office are always ready to step in and help prosecute meth cases when asked to do so by local state’s attorneys. My office also helped create a handbook on how to prosecute meth cases effectively.

By working together, we can target this epidemic on all fronts. I hope that you will join me, my colleagues in law enforcement, and other organizations and individuals as we combine forces to fight the spread of meth.

*Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan as a state senator worked to make communities safe from drugs and gang violence, and was a leading legislative expert on education.*

The opinions and views of guest commentators are their own and may not represent those of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives or the electric co-ops of Illinois.



Planning for the rest of your life  
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## Introducing a planning service made available by your electric cooperative

NRECA associate member Cooperative Care Planning Services (CCPS) has arranged a no-obligation long-term care planning program for co-op owner members. We hope that you will avail yourself of this valuable benefit.

In a way, planning for long-term care is no different than planning for a wedding, a first home or children. It takes some care and a desire to do what's best for your family.

Unless you're very wealthy, long-term care insurance is an effective way to pay for long term care costs. The only real risk is not doing anything about it.

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### About Cooperative Care Planning Services (CCPS)

Cooperative Care Planning Services was founded in 1998 to serve electric co-operatives and their member-owners by offering high-quality Long-Term Care benefits through its national network of community-based representatives.

Hundreds of member-owned co-operatives have made these services available to their employees, retirees, member-owners and directors, and the list of satisfied co-operatives grows nearly every day.

Cooperative Care Planning Services is an associate member of NRECA.

For complete details call  
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## Touchstone Energy® co-ops distributing child I.D. kits

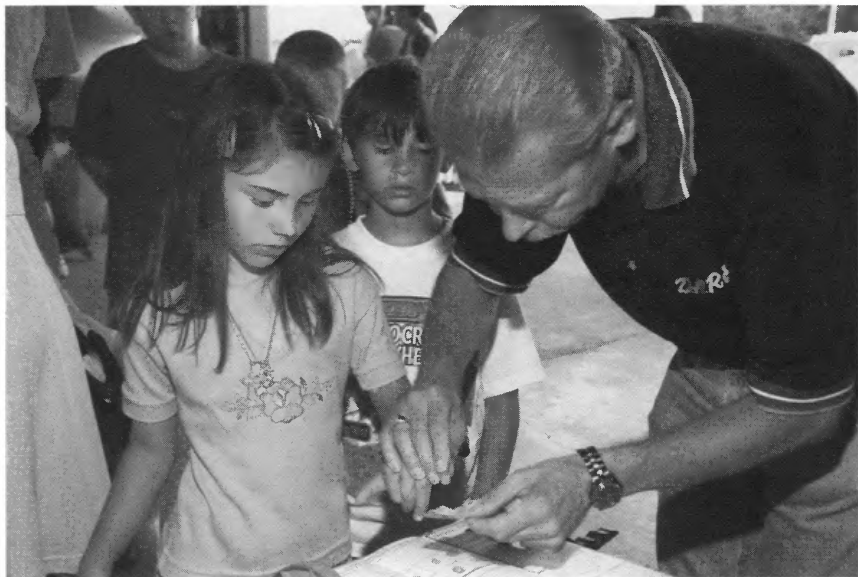
Touchstone Energy Cooperatives in Illinois and around the country are doing their part to keep children safe. The cooperatives, in conjunction with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the National Football Coaches Association, are working to distribute 60 million child I.D. kits through the National Child Identification Program.

Why should we fingerprint our children? The statistics say it all:

- 450,000 children run away each year,
- 300,000 children are abducted each year by family members,
- More than 58,000 children are abducted every year by non-family members,

That's more than 800,000 children in America missing each year - one child every 40 seconds. When the National Child Identification Program began, less than 2 percent of parents had a copy of their child's fingerprints to use in case of an emergency.

The National Child Identification Program is a community service initiative dedicated to changing these statistics. Touchstone Energy cooperatives are helping distribute inkless I.D. kits that assist parents in easily recording the physical characteristics and fingerprints of their children on identification cards that are then kept at home by the parent or guardian. If ever needed, this I.D. kit will give authorities vital information



*A child is reported missing every 40 seconds. Could you help authorities if your child was missing? Thousands of child I.D. kits were given away at Touchstone Energy co-op annual meetings across the state this summer, but you can get a free kit today by contacting your local Touchstone Energy co-op.*

to assist their efforts in locating a missing child.

Participating in the National Child Identification Program is just one way Touchstone Energy Cooperatives are demonstrating commitment to their communities — one of the four core values of the Touchstone Energy program.

For more information about the National Child Identification Program, call your local Touchstone Energy electric cooperative, or contact Nancy Nixon at the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives at (217) 529-5561, or at [nnixon@aiec.coop](mailto:nnixon@aiec.coop).

## Illinois Congressmen cosponsors biodiesel tax incentive bill

The Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) commended Jerry Costello (D-IL), Timothy Johnson (R-IL), Ray LaHood (R-IL), William Lipinski (D-IL), John Shimkus (R-IL) and Jerry Weller (R-IL) for their co-sponsorship of a bill that would provide a partial federal excise tax exemption for diesel blended with biodiesel, a cleaner burning fuel made from domestic resources like soybean oil. The House Bill is similar to a biodiesel tax provision found in S. 597, a comprehensive

energy bill introduced earlier this week.

"This bill would help Americans get more of their fuel from the Midwest rather than the Middle East," says Gary Appel, ISA President. "A biodiesel tax incentive would create significant economic stimulus in the form of domestic job creation, rural and urban economic development, and state and local tax revenues."

More than 300 major U.S. vehicle fleets already use the

cleaner-burning alternative fuel that works in any diesel engine with few or no modifications. Biodiesel can be used in pure form (B100), or blended with petroleum diesel at any level. It offers similar fuel economy, horsepower and torque to petroleum diesel. Biodiesel reduces emissions like unburned hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide, sulfates and particulate matter. Soy biodiesel reduces life-cycle carbon dioxide by 78 percent.



## Co-ops remain focused on protecting consumers

At a regional meeting in Springfield in late September, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Chief Executive Officer Glenn English told association members that the co-op program's greatest strength is its members' ability to recognize, accept and accommodate their regional differences while remaining focused on the protection of consumers who own electric co-ops. That sets electric cooperatives apart from other industry groups, he said.

At the same time Congressional leaders were debating national energy legislation, English said, "Although no two co-ops are alike, we have been able to set aside our differences and accommodate one another. We have been able to speak with one voice and in doing so have been heard clearly in the halls of Congress."

Addressing more than 600 locally elected directors and key staff from co-ops in Illinois, Iowa and Wisconsin, English said, "Our focus must remain on those issues which unite us: the protection of consumers and investors from unscrupulous business practices and market vagaries, the guarantee of fair and equal treatment for consumer-owned utilities, and the development of a truly national transmission grid to increase reliability and facilitate the development of wholesale power markets."

The Springfield meeting was the fourth of seven regional meetings convened each fall by NRECA. Locally elected directors and key staff from 84 cooperatives providing electric service to more than 1.5 million people in Illinois, Iowa and Wisconsin come to the meeting.

During the first week of October co-op leaders from Illinois and other states joined NRECA in visiting congressional leaders in Washington, D.C., urging the elected leaders to also remain focused on consumer protection during the energy legislation debates. The House-Senate Conference Committee included Illinois U.S. Representatives John Shimkus and Jerry Costello.

NRECA ([www.nreca.coop](http://www.nreca.coop)) is the national service organization that represents more than 900 electric co-ops serving 36 million people in 47 states.



*National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Chief Executive Officer Glenn English at a meeting of co-op leaders from Illinois, Wisconsin and Iowa said the co-ops' strength is the ability to overcome regional differences while remaining focused on consumer protection during the national energy legislation debate.*

## November is Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month

Ask almost anyone what they fear the most about getting older, and the answer is likely to be Alzheimer's disease. Approximately 10 percent of Americans over 65 have the disease, but after 85 the incidence climbs to 50 percent.

From the onset of symptoms, Alzheimer's disease runs its course in two to 20 years, with seven years being the average. Alzheimer's disease affects one out of every three families in the United States.

More than half of all nursing home residents have Alzheimer's disease or a related disorder. The annual cost for nursing home care in the U.S. ranges from \$35,900 to \$166,700, with the average being \$57,700. The care of an Alzheimer's patient, viewed as custodial care, is not covered by Medicare or most health insurance plans.

Up to 10 percent of all cases of Alzheimer's disease are believed to be familial (hereditary). In familial cases, often called early-onset Alzheimer's disease, symptoms can appear as early as age 40.

One of four currently available drugs can be used to delay the progression. You can also take steps now by controlling blood pressure, maintaining low cholesterol levels, taking antioxidant vitamins, and exercising your mind and body. Consult your doctor about non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs that have been shown to delay the onset of Alzheimer's disease, and cholinesterase inhibitors if you are experiencing memory problems.

For more information, write to the American Health Assistance Foundation 22512 Gateway Center Drive, Clarksburg, Maryland 20871, call (800) 437-AHAF, or visit [www.ahaf.org](http://www.ahaf.org).

## Are you a history buff?

In 1815, President Jefferson sold his personal book collection to congress for \$23,950 to help rebuild the Library of Congress collections after the British burned the Capitol. In 1848 the first Women's Rights Convention took place in Seneca Falls, New York.

If you didn't know these facts about America's past you're not alone. Many adults aren't even able to identify major historical figures.

If you're a history buff, or just curious, the Library of Congress can help. The largest library in the world, it houses historical films, photos, music and other interesting items. Now the Library's new Web portal, the "Wise Guide" at [www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov), makes learning about history easy.

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/s/John Lowrey

## Grant funds available to Illinois specialty growers

The Illinois Department of Agriculture has made available \$250,000 in grant monies for specialty crop projects. The funds will support efforts to open new markets for fresh produce grown in Illinois.

"Illinois fertile soil and favorable climate are good growing a wide variety of crops," Agriculture Director Chuck Hartke said. "While most people know Illinois ranks second in the production of corn and soybeans, many don't realize Illinois is the largest producer of pumpkins in the nation and ranks among the top 10 states in the production of specialty crops as asparagus, cauliflower, fresh cut herb peas, lima beans and mustard greens. These grants will help expand markets for this produce and maintain a viable industry for our specialty crop growers."

Specialty crop growers can apply for grants up to \$25,000. Their proposals should accomplish the following: identify one or more obstacles or opportunities impacting the Illinois specialty crop industry; develop a plan addressing these obstacles or opportunities; identify measures that can quantify the results of the proposal; and demonstrate how the proposal will improve the viability, sustainability and economic potential of Illinois specialty crop industry.

Application forms are available on the Illinois Department of Agriculture Web site at [www.agr.state.il.us](http://www.agr.state.il.us) or by calling Kim Janssen in the department's Bureau of Marketing and Promotion at (217) 785-5848. Applications are due no later than 5:00 p.m. on Nov. 14, 2003.

A new logo is also available to Illinois specialty growers for use on packaging and advertising. A similar branding program increased sales of Illinois processed foods by 20 percent.



## Remodeling for energy savings

Following these tips from the National Association of the Remodeling Industry [NARI] of Des Plaines can help you reduce your energy bills.

You can easily test your home for air leaks by holding a smoke stick next to closed exterior doors and windows, and places where plumbing or electrical wiring penetrates through exterior walls, floors or ceilings. Caulking, sealing or weather stripping can seal most gaps. Expanding foam can seal large gaps.

Storm windows can be installed over single-pane windows. For window replacement, consider specially coated double-pane windows designed to reflect heat back into the room.

Replacing the air filter once a month will maximize the efficiency of a heating system. You can also install a programmable thermostat.

Ducts running through attics, crawl spaces and garages should be sealed and insulated. It is not unusual to find improperly sealed joints leaking conditioned air.

Nothing is cozier than curling up next to a roaring fire on a blustery winter day, but a fireplace can send energy dollars up the chimney. Keep fireplace dampers closed when the fireplace is not in use. Install snugly fitting glass doors and close them to reduce heat loss while the fire burns itself out. The doors also protect the home from flying embers.

For more information go to NARI's Web site at [www.RemodelToday.com](http://www.RemodelToday.com), call (800) 611-NARI or contact your local electric cooperative.



# Geothermal heat pumps solution to high gas prices

Geothermal heat pumps are one of the most efficient ways to heat and cool a home and provide hot water. More and more homeowners are discovering the benefits of these systems, which tap the relatively constant temperature of the Earth a few feet underground.

## Why a geothermal heat pump?

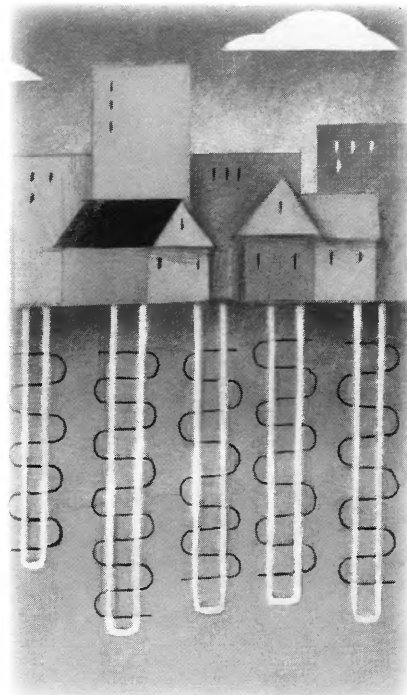
The installation of a heating or cooling system is a decision that will affect a homeowner's comfort—and pocketbook—for years to come. And a geothermal heat pump (GHP) is one of the most cost-effective and longest-lasting heating and cooling systems on the market. Plus, GHPs provide free hot water as a byproduct.

Also known as ground-source heat pumps or GeoExchange<sup>SM</sup> systems, GHPs provide many benefits to the homeowner in both new and retrofit situations. Surveys illustrate a high level of satisfaction with GHPs compared to conventional systems. In fact, more than 95 percent of all GHP users would recommend a similar system to their friends and family.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), GHP systems are the most energy-efficient, environmentally clean, and cost-effective space conditioning systems available (source: "Space Conditioning: The Next Frontier," EPA 430-R-93-004, April 1993).

Simply put, a GHP system moves the heat from the earth into the home in the winter, and pulls the heat from the house and discharges it into the ground in the summer. The underground (or underwater) piping loops serve as a heat source in the winter and a heat sink in the summer.

While many parts of the country experience seasonal temperature extremes—from scorching heat in the summer to sub-zero cold in the winter—a few feet below the earth's surface the ground remains at a relatively constant temperature. Like



a cave, this ground temperature is warmer than the air above it during the winter and cooler than the air in the summer. The GHP takes advantage of this.

## Cost effective

Geothermal heat pumps save money in operating and maintenance costs. While the initial purchase price of a residential GHP system is often higher than that of a comparable gas-fired furnace and central air-conditioning system, it is more efficient, thereby saving money every month. For further savings, GHPs equipped with a device called a "desuperheater" can heat the household water.

## Durability

Because they use fewer mechanical components, and because those components are sheltered from the elements, leaves, dirt, and possible vandalism, geothermal heat pumps are durable and highly reliable.

## Low maintenance

Geothermal heat pump systems have fewer maintenance requirements than most other systems. When properly installed, the underground components are virtually worry free. The components in the living space are easily accessible.

## Year-round comfort

Like the typical forced-air furnace or central air-conditioning system, a GHP system uses ductwork. A two-speed GHP system is so quiet inside a house that users do not know it is operating because there are no telltale blasts of cold or hot air.

## Quiet operation

With GHPs, there are no outside condensing units like air conditioners, so there's no concern about A/C noise near patio areas or decks.

## Geothermal heat pumps are highly efficient

A study by the Environmental Protection Agency (source: "Space Conditioning: The Next Frontier," EPA 430-R-93-004, April 1993) analyzed six locations representing major climate zones in the U.S. The study found GHP installations in both new and existing homes can reduce energy consumption 25 percent to 75 percent.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy - Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy <http://www.eere.energy.gov>

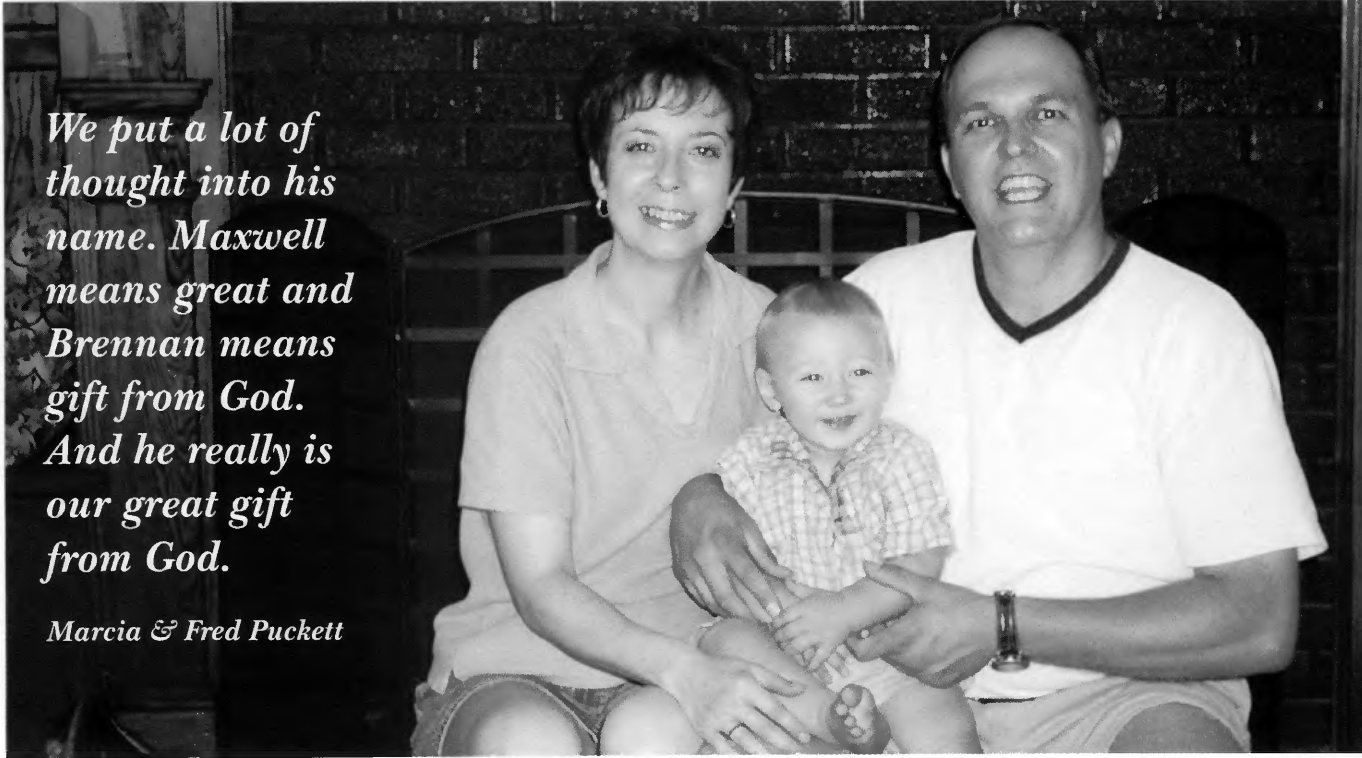


# Love at first sight: stories of adoption

By Michelle McNeal

*We put a lot of thought into his name. Maxwell means great and Brennan means gift from God. And he really is our great gift from God.*

*Marcia & Fred Puckett*



## “He is truly a gift from God”

### “Daddies.”

That’s what Fred Puckett, Allan Masterson and Sam Kessler are to four amazing, adopted children. Fred first met his son Maxwell the moment of his birth; Allan met his son Seth when he was 10 days old; and Sam met his daughters Jenny and Nicole when they were two and three years old. All three men took one look at their children and called them their own. It was love at first sight. They were Daddies.♡

**F**or Fred Puckett, Work Order Coordinator for Wayne-White Counties Electric Cooperative, the quest for fatherhood began long before he met his son. In 1997, after some fertility issues, he and his wife Marcia learned they were expecting twins. When the tiny boy and girl were born too early and lived only one hour, the grieving parents held out hope of one day caring for a child of their own. When the second pregnancy resulted in a stillborn child, the devastated couple kept their faith and tried again. After the third and fourth pregnancies miscarried, the Pucketts were emotionally exhausted and began looking for other options. “You have to make the decision that you’re not going to try anymore,” says Fred.

Fred and Marcia decided they would try adoption. And nearly

one year after they began the adoption process, their dreams came true. Maxwell Brennan Puckett was born September 20, 2002. “We put a lot of thought into his name. Maxwell means great and Brennan means gift from God. And he really is our great gift from God,” says Fred.

The adoption process began for the Pucketts with Internet research and adoption seminars. Next they met with Helen Quaid of Lutheran Child and Family Services. Quaid helped them qualify for adoption and start the process of finding a child. They also found an adoption lawyer to help them with the legal aspects of adoption.

To become qualified for adoption, you must first become a licensed foster parent. “A lot of the qualifying process is background

checks. They really look into your finances to be sure you can afford the child. We had to be fingerprinted by the FBI. And we had to attend a set number of hours of courses. The process is a little invasive; they're very thorough. I would tell people to just be patient, it just takes time," says Fred.

The home study is another aspect of qualifying. "A lot of people get scared when it's time for the home study, but it's nothing to be worried about. They're on your side. They want your house to be child friendly. They want to be sure you have room for a child," says Fred.

Once they were qualified, the Pucketts took some time to make presentation books for their agency and lawyer's offices. Fred says, "What you do is kind of sell yourself. It has pictures in it and tells a little about your family. And birth moms come in and literally choose you."

The Pucketts were chosen by a young woman and met her in her eighth month of pregnancy. "Our birth mom is such a sweet girl and I just love her to death. We are tied together in a special way now. Being a parent, I would think it's the hardest thing in the world to do, to give up a child, but it is also a great gift. They're putting the child's needs ahead of their own," says Fred.

A month after meeting the birth mother, a call came that she was going to have labor induced. Fred says, "She had told us she would like for us to come in during the birth so our son would know we were there when he was born. That was a great gift. At 6:30 a.m. he was born and I got to cut the cord like any other father can."

The cord had developed a loop that could have been fatal to the baby if he had tightened the knot or wrapped the loop around his neck. Fred says, "It was a blessing. It could have been a bad situation." But healthy Max was soon in his parents' arms.

"Some people have a problem with adoption because it's not of

their flesh, but once they put that infant in your arms, forget it. I just automatically wanted him and I was attached from the word go. An adoptive child doesn't make a difference. At first I thought it might, but it doesn't. The word adoption means everything to me and then again it means nothing. He's my world and he's not adopted in my eyes, he's my son.

"I can't stress enough that he is my child in every sense of the word. And he's Daddy's boy. The way he looks at me already - he puts me in a spotlight and I think, oh son, don't put that much pressure on me. It's amazing," says Fred.

The Pucketts would like to have another child, but aren't sure they can financially fund another adoption. Fred says, "Our adoption cost about \$17,000. You can't place value on your children because Max is worth a million dollars, but you still have to be smart.

"The nice thing is that two years ago the federal government began giving a \$10,000 maximum tax credit to help defray the costs. But you have to have the money up front and you can get the credit as a lump sum or deducted from your taxes. What we're going to do is get a lump sum for a start on Max's college," says Fred. ♡



*It took Allan and Peg Masterson  
12 years to meet their son Seth.*

## “He has a smile that can melt your heart”

Allan Masterson, Director of Member Services at Monroe County Electric Co-Operative, became a father seven years ago. It took he and his wife Peg 12 years to meet their son Seth. The decision to adopt came after eight years of infertility. “We weighed the option of continuing to finance medical treatments which might never work, or assuming the costs of adoption,” says Peg.

The couple contacted Catholic Social Services in Belleville, but were told the cutoff number of families waiting to adopt was 100, and they waited nearly a year to be put on the list. They went through the qualification process and waited another four years with no results. They then began investigating international adoption.

“We waited another year and

decided on Korea. We were about to send our first payment when Catholic Services called us,” says Peg. The Mastersons had been chosen for a six-month-old boy. But the adoption fell through when the birth father wouldn’t terminate his rights.

The devastated couple continued to wait, and just four days later, received a call that they had been chosen for a 10-day-old boy. They could pick him up at the agency that very evening. “We sat in the waiting room watching the clock. We were nervous, anxious and excited all at the same time,” says Peg.

When the couple looked at the tiny face peering up at them, they learned he was 3-4 weeks early and weighed only five pounds, 10 ounces. “His legs were like toothpicks and his nose

seemed to be his biggest feature. It was instant adoration,” says Peg. “Every motherly instinct I had surfaced. Once you hold your child, it’s like he or she is a real part of you.”

About four days after meeting their son, the Mastersons met with his birth mother. “She is a remarkable woman and we will forever be in her debt. We realized that one of the bravest things a mother could ever do is give up her own child for the chance of giving that child a better life,” says Peg.

Seth’s birth mother has chosen not to be a part of his life now, but Seth knows he is adopted. “He doesn’t fully grasp the whole concept, but we have a beautiful letter from his birth mother that we will share with him when he is a little older,” says Peg.♥

## “I’m proud of all my girls”



*From left are Jenny, Ruth, Sam, Samantha and Nicole Kessler.*

Fred and Marcia Puckett and Allan and Peg Masterson chose adoption after being unable to conceive children. Sam and Ruth Kessler took a different

approach. They chose adoption after conceiving two daughters.

“We decided that we could give something to someone else who wouldn’t have the opportuni-

ties we had. We went through the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and became licensed foster parents,” says Sam Kessler, Serviceman for Clay Elec-





tric Co-operative. He and his wife Ruth were hoping to adopt a boy between the ages of two and four. But when their daughters Samantha and Jennifer were 14 and 17, DCFS called wanting to place two young girls, Nicole, 3, and Jenny, 2. Though they had been hoping for a boy originally, Ruth says, "Evidently God wanted us to have girls and He knows what He's doing."

It took three years for the girls to be legally adopted by the Kesslers. The girls' birth father had to be found and had to agree to terminate his parental rights. In May, 1996, the girls were adopted, nearly nine years after the Kesslers began their journey. "Jenny was so proud, she even used her name for show and tell," says Ruth.

"One thing that's really surprising," says Sam, "we'd been parents for a long time before the girls came along, but the book we used to raise our first two - we threw that out the window with foster children."

*"We decided that we could give something to someone else who wouldn't have the opportunities we had."*

"They'd already come with their habits," says Ruth. "It takes a long time to change things and some things don't change. It was harder than we thought it would be. But that doesn't mean we have any regrets, because we don't."

"The number one thing you must have if you're going to foster a child is a strong marriage, because they'll test you against each other. And it's not because they're bad; it's because they've had a

tough life. They've been learning things on their own. Some things they should know, they don't, and some things they shouldn't know, they do," says Sam.

"When you first apply for your foster parents' license, they try to talk you out of it. And after the first two sessions of classes, at least a third of the class did quit. They just didn't know what they were getting into," says Sam, who suggests people talk to others who have fostered children before beginning the process.

Because the couple adopted through DCFS, the process cost them nothing. And they seriously considered fostering or adopting more children. "We even had the idea of building a big home with lots of bedrooms so each child could have his or her own room. Then you come down to reality and realize it's harder than you think and you need to be able to give the children you have what they need," says Ruth.♥

## **"More than 170 children are currently available"**

June Dorn, Statewide Post Adoption Administrator for DCFS, encourages persons interested in adoption to contact the Adoption Information Center of Illinois at (800) 572-2390 or [www.adoptinfo-il.org](http://www.adoptinfo-il.org). Dorn says, "They have helpful brochures on adoption and a listing of children currently eligible for adoption."

Dorn says the licensing and training process for foster care and/or adoption could take up to six months, but can be much shorter than that. Two licenses are available. An adopt-only license signifies that children coming into the home must have terminated parental rights. Less training is required for this license. The full foster care license, which most people choose, allows for placement of children whose parental rights have not been terminated.

"There are no costs with getting licensed. The entire process should not entail any fees if you are

interested in adopting one of our children," says Dorn. Many families are also eligible to receive subsidies after the adoption is complete. Subsidies can include financial assistance and counseling programs. "Most of our children were brought into the system for reasons of abuse or neglect," she says.

Dorn explains that although many children don't have issues now, they may develop an issue later. "If a child is exposed to prenatal drug abuse or something, they may develop an attention deficit disorder in the school age years. Those things are written into subsidies to help parents deal with that.

"We have a number of school age and teen children who are available and need a family who loves them - who will stay with them. We would love interested families to give us a call," urges Dorn. Call your local DCFS office or visit their Web site at [www.state.il.us/dcfs](http://www.state.il.us/dcfs).

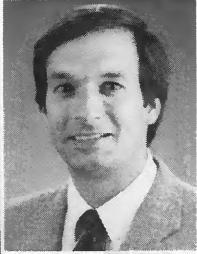
You may also want to try the following Web sites for more information: [www.abcaoptions.com/agencies/illinois](http://www.abcaoptions.com/agencies/illinois); [www.adoptivefamilies.com](http://www.adoptivefamilies.com); <http://illinois.adoption.com>; and [www.needykids.com/adoption/illinois](http://www.needykids.com/adoption/illinois).

### **Every child is a miracle**

If you would like to adopt a child, remember the advice of the families featured here. Learn about the process. Have a support group of people who have been through the process as well. Be pro-active. Don't wait too long before starting the process. And most of all, be patient. It will one day be love at first site for you and your child.♥







George E. Czapar

# Plugging abandoned water well hazards

Although the total number of abandoned wells in Illinois is unknown, estimates range from 50,000 to 150,000. Every year, many wells are abandoned when they are replaced with new wells or when homes are connected to community water systems. Abandoned wells pose an immediate threat to human safety and provide a direct route for contaminants to pollute a water supply. This is a hazard that affects both urban and rural residents.

The risk of accidents for humans or domestic animals is greatest with large-diameter or dug wells, but any abandoned or unused well poses a threat to groundwater quality. The upper layers of soil normally act as a filter that effectively removes contaminants. Abandoned wells allow pollutants to bypass this filtering process and provide a direct path from land surface to groundwater.

What if there is an abandoned well on your land, but you are not sure of the exact location? Since abandoned wells are not always clearly visible, it may be necessary to contact former property owners or neighbors who might remember well locations. In addition, local well drillers often have site records of previous installations. If old photos are available, they may show windmills, houses, barns or other buildings that have since been torn down, but where wells might be located.

Finally, the Illinois State Water Survey maintains a

database of well records. Their groundwater information office can be reached at (217) 333-9043.

Sealing an abandoned well is generally not an expensive process, but it must be done correctly, preferably by a licensed groundwater professional. Homeowners do have the right to seal their own wells, as long as they accept all responsibility for sealing the well in compliance with the Illinois Well Construction Code and all pertinent county codes.

Before beginning any work, you must report the project to the local public health department and have a well sealing plan approved. Notify the local health department at least 48 hours before you start the work. After the work is done, you must complete a sealing report and submit it within 30 days.

Information on well sealing is contained in a recent publication from University of Illinois Extension. The fact sheet, *Sealing an Abandoned Well* (Land and Water, July 2003, Number 4) is available from your local extension office.

In addition, the Illinois Water Well Sealing Coalition (IWWSC) is a broad group of agencies and organizations working to promote abandoned well sealing efforts statewide. For more information about this group, call (217) 782-5830 or visit the Illinois Abandoned Wells Web site at: <http://dnr.state.il.us/orep/inrin/eq/well/trial.htm>.

In 2003, the Illinois Department of Agriculture in cooperation with IWWSC and Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts expanded their cost-share program for sealing abandoned wells. The cost-share amount cannot exceed \$500 or 80 percent of the actual cost, whichever figure is less. For additional information, contact your local soil and water conservation district, which should be listed in the phone book under local government or under the Natural Resources Conservation Service in the federal government section.

If you are looking for a comprehensive water quality Web site, visit the Illinois Watershed Management Clearinghouse, [www.watershed.uiuc.edu](http://www.watershed.uiuc.edu). The site combines the resources of University of Illinois Extension, Illinois EPA, Illinois Department of Natural Resources and C-FAR to provide a one-stop location for those interested in Illinois watersheds and their management. It includes resource materials and water quality data, but users can also select from many different types of maps including water resources, soils, roads, land cover and aerial photography.

For a list of all Extension offices and other resources go to [www.extension.uiuc.edu](http://www.extension.uiuc.edu).

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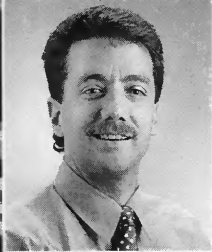
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David Robson

# Removing frosted and frozen fall foliage

November brings cold, warm, overcast and sunny days. The only thing predictable about the month is its unpredictability.

Trees are still changing colors, possibly rewarding us with a kaleidoscope of yellows, oranges, reds, purples and brown. Or maybe just brown. All I know in September is that fall colors can be forecasted, but like the weatherperson, just as unreliable.

November also brings the annual dilemma – should I remove all the foliage that gets nipped by frosts and freezes or should I leave it in place?

On one hand, frosted plants often dissolve into globular masses that look hideous. Most of the vegetable crops fall into this group. There is nothing like a soft, rotting tomato plant with a few green tomatoes hanging on. Or the squash and pumpkin vines that turn to slime as their cells burst with frozen water.

On the other hand, some plants just look lovely.

A few of my hostas turn a sharp brilliant yellow. A few peonies turn a purplish red, while others match the intensity of those hostas. Cutting them down at the first sign of death would mean the loss of this autumn display.

There are some plants that look good throughout the winter even though the leaves may be completely shot. Some of the hostas form interesting mounds during the winter. The old lilies stems stick out of the ground as a reminder of where the bulbs

will poke through with spring's onslaught of warm weather.

On the other hand, the sticks look rather funny during the winter and are easily broken over by an errant squirrel looking for a buried acorn, or a dog chasing an errant squirrel. Brown, dead foliage and stems during the dull gray winter months don't really add much in terms of winter color.

*Black-eyed Susans and purple coneflowers will attract the colorful winter birds*

Still, some plants do have some winter interest. The seed heads of the black-eyed Susans and purple coneflowers will attract the colorful winter birds as well as giving them some perching spots. The ornamental grasses provide vertical height when everything else has disappeared.

Many horticulturists will tell you that removing all the foliage is a great way of cutting down insect and disease problems for next year. That's the case with most peonies, though my plants seem to end up spotted next year no matter how much of the foliage is cut off, and old mulch removed and replaced with new chips and hulls.

Then again, when the snow does fall and ends up like a fluffy down comforter on the winter landscape, the little bumps and humps of this past year's growth sends an excitement chill up and down the spine as you remember last season's plants and dream of what will be in 2004. You can summon up the "Ah, yes. That's where the chrysanthemums are. And look over there; that's the cockscomb."

One advantage to leaving plant material is that it acts as a mulch for the winter, and an insulator in the spring to prevent plants from sprouting too early and getting nipped by a late frost.

On the flip side, there's not much to do in the fall in the way of gardening. So, besides raking leaves and planting a few spring-blooming bulbs, you can spend a few minutes and carefully use your clippers to remove all the dead foliage.

Of course, they won't decompose as fast on the compost pile as they would next spring when you start adding all the lush nitrogen-rich grass clippings as the lawn bursts forth.

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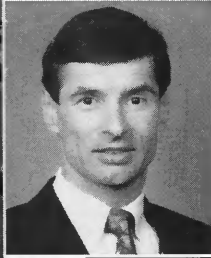
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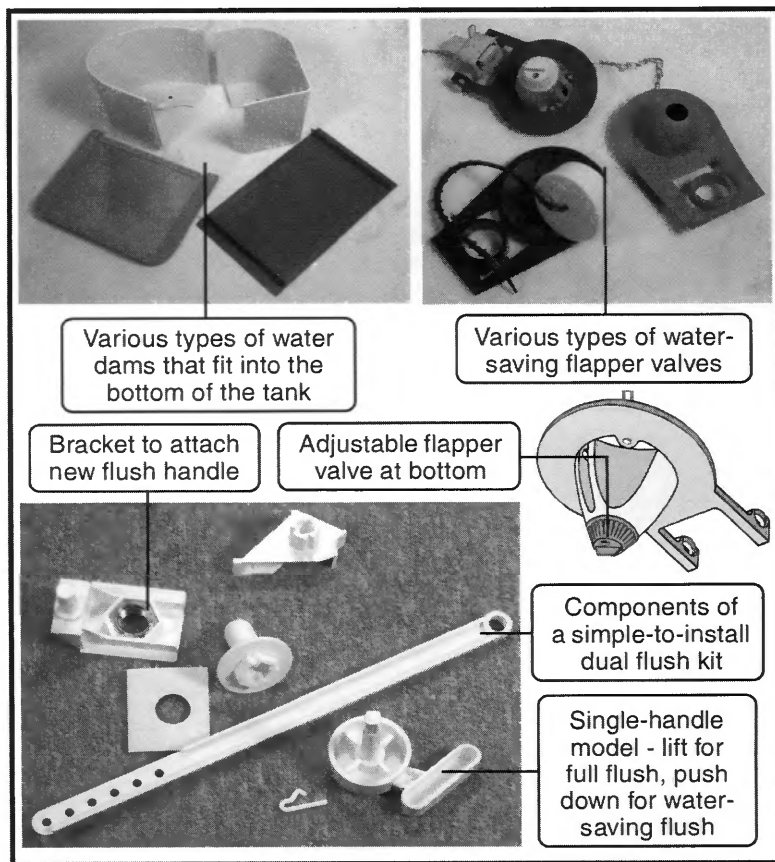
# Stop flushing your money away

**Q:** Dear Jim: I hear water running in my toilets sometimes, but I want to keep my old toilets that flush well. Are there toilet kits available that I can install myself to reduce the water usage per flush? Do they also save energy? - Don R.

**A:** Dear Don: Flushing of toilets is the major water consumption activity in most homes and typically accounts for 33 percent of the total water usage. This can cost the typical family up to \$200 per year. If you have toilet leakage problems that allow the water to continually run, the annual water usage expense can be substantially greater.

People don't often realize that excessive toilet water usage can also increase their energy bills. During the winter, the incoming water that fills the toilet tank is cold. As it rests in the tank, it draws heat from the bathroom air as the water warms to room temperature. This heat drawn from the indoor air requires the furnace or heat pump to run a little longer.

If you air-condition during the summer, there is a slight energy savings from the cooling effect of the water. Unfortunately, the incoming water temperature is warmer during the summer so the benefits are less than the energy costs during the winter. Also, a cold toilet tank during the summer often sweats and may damage the floor beneath it.



Simple-to-install flush kits save water

Many designs of do-it-yourself water-saving kits (prices start at only \$5) are available. Combining the water savings and the energy bill savings from installing these kits in your toilets can total up to \$100 per year.

Most of these kits also include new flapper valves, so installing one also often eliminates the water running problem. Most of them can be installed in about five minutes.

The basic types of water-saving flush kits are: dual-flush handles, flapper valves, water

dams, and diverters. Many of the kits are adjustable so you can vary the volume of water per flush. You probably won't be able to get it as low as the 1.6 gallons per flush on a new toilet, but your old toilet should flush well with 40 to 50 percent less water usage than now.

Dual-flush kits are one of the best methods to significantly reduce the water usage of any old toilet while still maintaining an effective flushing action. These kits are particularly effective because they provide two different water volume flushes: 1) a low-



water usage flush for liquid wastes and 2) a standard-volume flush for solid wastes. The simplest designs have only five parts to install.

One type of do-it-yourself dual-flush kit uses a single flush handle in place of the old handle and several different pieces inside the toilet tank. For a water-saving flush for liquids, you push the handle down as always. For a full-volume flush for solid wastes, you lift the handle. A simple flushing instructions label is included and it attaches under the handle.

Another dual-flush design uses two separate handles in place of the existing handle. One nests inside the other so it looks fairly standard. For a water-saving flush, you push the longer handle down. For a full-volume flush, you push the shorter handle down.

Inside the toilet tank, both designs work the same way. The water-saving flush only par-

tially lifts the flapper, so it closes quickly allowing less water to flow out. The full flush lifts the flapper the standard amount.

There are many designs of water-saving flapper valve kits. With most flapper valve designs, air trapped inside of them holds them open as the toilet tank empties. The water-saving ones allow the trapped air to empty quicker so the flapper closes sooner than normal before the tank totally empties.

You can fine-tune some of the flapper kits to get an effective flush with the least water usage. The required water usage varies with different toilet designs. These flappers have a tiny adjustable hole at the bottom. By varying the hole size, the trapped air and the flush water volume can be controlled.

Water dams fit in the bottom of the toilet tank and spring out to seal against the sides. They

effectively reduce the water volume in the tank without decreasing the water height or the flush pressure. Diverter kits divert some of the bowl water to the tank after each flush to save water.

Write for (instantly download - [www.dulley.com](http://www.dulley.com)) Update Bulletin No. 546 - buyer's guide of eight water-saving flush kit manufacturers listing design types, water savings, installation instructions, toilet trouble-shooting, and water-saving guides. Please include \$3.00 and a business-size SASE. James Dulley, Illinois Country Living, 6906 Royalgreen Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45244.

*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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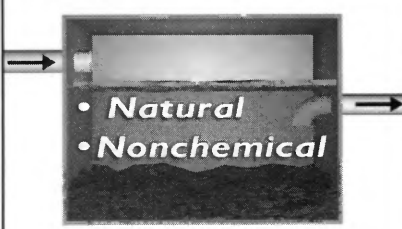
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# Foster care in Illinois

By *Catrina McCulley*

Families need to be together. But sometimes things don't go as planned, whether a single parent has to enter the hospital, a father loses his job and can no longer support his family, a family temporarily loses housing, or a family has lost their home or other access or ability to meet the child's basic needs. When these things happen, Illinois Foster Care families reach out to help those families through their difficult times and see them reunited as soon as possible.

Foster families are not intended to be a permanent living arrangement for the child, but are meant to serve as a place where the child can feel secure, nurtured and protected until the time he or she can go back to his or her parents, or until another permanent living situation is pursued. There are two types of Foster Care Programs available in Illinois – Specialized and Traditional.

## Traditional Foster Care

This program provides basic, temporary foster family care to abused and neglected children. Children served through this program are those who have been removed from their natural home and may exhibit minimal problems. A caseworker will visit with the child and family at least once a month, as well as facilitate regular visitation between the child and his or her natural family. Counseling is provided for the child to help him or her deal with past problems and traumas. This program focuses on the child's achievements and goals, with a return to the biological parents being the predominant goal for the child.

## Specialized Foster Care

Children served in a specialized foster care program are typically between the ages of

4 and 20-years-old. This program was developed to cater to problematic children and youth who have been abused and neglected, and who currently cannot be placed with their natural families, but who can be managed in a family and community-based setting.

The severity of behaviors exhibited by children and youth in this program are much more significant than those of children and youth in the traditional foster care program. The specialized foster care program provides intensive casework and clinical services to children and youth, and in collaboration with trained foster parents, provides a team approach as the vehicle of service delivery. The biological parents are also helped and counseled so that someday they may be reunited with their children.

## Becoming a foster parent

Foster families are just like any other family. They are good people who are willing to open their homes and their hearts to a child in need. "Everyone thought I was crazy," says Sue Barton of Rochester. "I already had four children of my own when I decided to take in four foster children." But Sue knows that she has made a big difference in the lives of the children in her care.

"It's not easy," Sue admits. "Foster parents welcome children into their home, love them and care for them, while preparing them for the day when they may return to their birth parents. It's very emotional. I've had one of my foster children since she was a baby, and now she is four and preparing to return to her biological mother ... that's very hard and rewarding all at the same time," Sue says.

Foster families must go through a home study and training process before becoming



*The Foster Care Program in Illinois involves placing a child in a temporary family home, group home or institution due to the biological parents' inability to give proper care.*

licensed as a foster family. If you are interested in learning more about becoming a foster parent, please contact one of the agencies listed on this page.

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of Foster Care  
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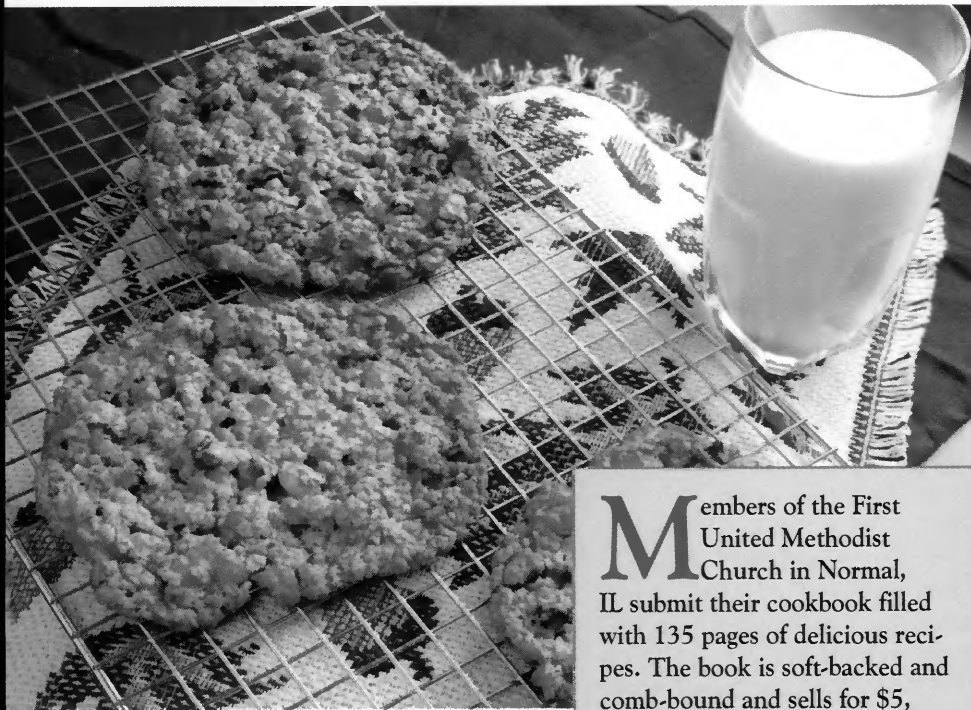
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# ILLINOIS FINEST COOKING



## Monster Cookies

*Kimberly Dowd and Christopher Plank*

- 12 eggs
- 4 C. sugar
- 2 lbs. brown sugar
- 16 C. oats
- 1 lb. butter or margarine
- 3 lb. chunky peanut butter
- 1 lb. plain M&Ms
- 1 lb. chocolate chips
- 8 tsp. baking soda
- 1 T. vanilla

Preheat oven to 350°. Cream together eggs, sugars, butter, peanut butter, baking soda and vanilla in a large bowl. Add remaining ingredients. Drop by ice cream scoop, 6 cookies per baking sheet. If using butter, flatten cookies slightly with a spoon. Bake for 12 minutes. They will look underdone.

## Chili

*Sue Agge*

- 1-1/2 lbs. ground beef
- 3/4 C. onion, minced (opt.)
- 1 (16-oz.) can Bush's baked beans
- 2 (10-3/4-oz.) cans tomato soup
- 1 tsp. chili powder
- 1 T. flour
- 1 tsp. sugar
- 3 T. water

Brown onion and beef together and drain. Add beans and cook for 10 minutes. Add soup. Make into paste and blend in the chili powder, flour, sugar and water.

**M**embers of the First United Methodist Church in Normal, IL submit their cookbook filled with 135 pages of delicious recipes. The book is soft-backed and comb-bound and sells for \$5, plus \$2.18 shipping. To order, contact Anna Marie Chrisman at 2104 Timberview Drive, Bloomington, IL 61701, or call her at (309) 827-3629.

## Bar B Q Beef

*Joann Tuttle*

- 1 lb. ground beef, browned
- 1 med. onion, chopped
- 1/4 to 1/3 catsup
- 1/2 can tomatoes
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Cook and drain beef. Add onion, catsup, tomatoes, salt and pepper. Simmer until thickened.

## Cajun Chex Party Mix

*Don Terrill*

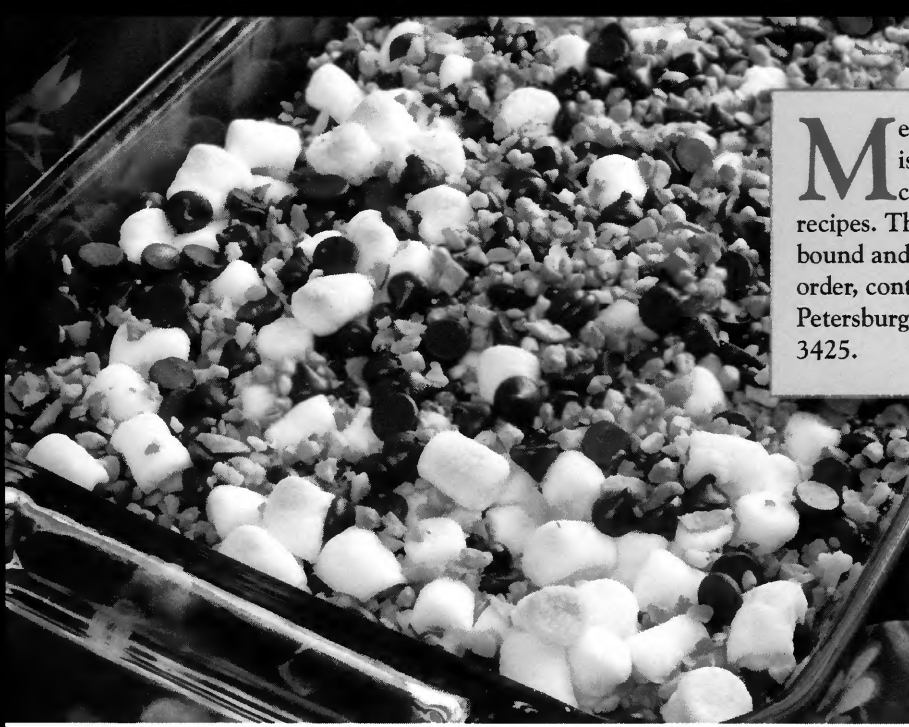
- 1/2 stick butter or margarin
- 1 T. parsley flakes
- 1 tsp. celery salt
- 1 tsp. garlic powder
- 1/2 cayenne pepper
- 4-8 drops Durkee Red Hot Cayenne Pepper Sauce
- 2-2/3 C. Wheat Chex cereal
- 2-2/3 C. Corn Chex cereal
- 2-2/3 C. Rice Chex cereal
- 1 (2.8-oz.) can French fried onions

Preheat oven to 250°. In an open roasting pan, melt margarine in the oven. Remove. Stir in parsley, celery salt, garlic, cayenne pepper and pepper sauce. Gradually add cereals, stirring until all pieces are evenly coated. Bake 35-40 minutes, stirring every 15 minutes. Add onions, mix well. Spread on an absorbent paper to cool. Store in an airtight container. Makes 9 cups. Keep Chex Mix on hand by storing it in the freezer. May be frozen for up to four months in an airtight container.

Visit [www.icl.coop](http://www.icl.coop) to see an archive of past Illinois Country Living recipes.







**M**embers of the Oakford United Methodist Church in Oakford, IL submit their cookbook filled with 382 pages of tasty recipes. The book is cardboard-backed and comb-bound and sells for \$10, plus \$3.95 shipping. To order, contact Shirley McCombs, RR 2 Box 45z, Petersburg, IL 62675, or call her at (217) 632-3425.

**S'mores Bars**  
*Michael Short*

- 8-10 whole graham crackers
- 1 (9x13-inch pan) pkg. brownie mix
- 2 C. mini marshmallows
- 1 C. semi sweet chocolate chips
- 2/3 C. peanuts, chopped

Arrange graham crackers in a single layer in a greased 13x9-inch baking pan. Prepare the brownie mix according to package directions. Spread over crackers. Bake at 350° degrees for 25-30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Sprinkle with marshmallows, chocolate chips and peanuts. Bake 5 minutes longer or until marshmallows are slightly puffed and a golden brown. Cool on a wire rack before cutting.

**Buffalo Wings**  
*Marilyn Whitley*

- 1/2 C. ketchup
- 1/2 C. lemon juice
- 1/4 C. honey
- 1/2 C. Soy Sauce
- Chicken wings

Mix sauce ingredients together and pour over wings. Let sit for 24 hours. Bake at 275° for 2 hours.

*Photos by Catrina McCulley*

**Vegetable Pizza**  
*Ruth Hemphill*

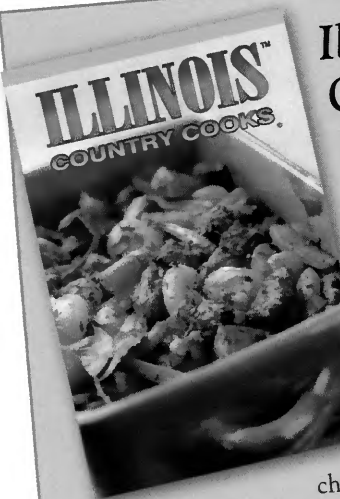
- 2 pkg. crescent rolls
- 2 (8-oz.) pkgs. cream cheese
- 1 sm. pkg. dry ranch dressing
- 1 C. mayonnaise
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 2 carrots, chopped
- 1 cucumber, sliced
- Cauliflower, chopped
- 1 bunch green onions, chopped
- 1/2 green pepper, chopped
- Ripe olives, sliced

Spread crescent rolls in a jelly-roll pan. Bake at 350° for 10-12 minutes. Cool. Mix cream cheese with the dry ranch dressing and mayonnaise. Spread onto the crescent roll crust. Mix all chopped vegetables together and sprinkle on top of pizza. Press slightly. Cover with plastic wrap until served.

**Horseradish Potatoes**  
*Virginia Winkelmann*

- 1/4 C. butter or oleo
- 1 T. prepared horseradish
- 2 tsp. lemon juice
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/8 tsp. pepper
- 12 sm. new potatoes

Place butter in a microwave-safe 1-quart dish. Microwave uncovered on high for 40 seconds or until melted. Stir in horseradish, lemon juice, salt, pepper and potatoes. Cover and microwave on high for 10 minutes, stirring once. Let stand 2 minutes. Stir before serving. Serves 4.



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- 1) Type or print ad neatly on separate sheet of paper.
- 2) Count words. Cost is \$25 for up to the first 20 words. \$1.50 each additional word. Ads with insufficient funds will not be printed.
- 3) Prepayment is required. Include check or money order with ad for amount due. Also include address label from *Illinois Country Living* or other proof of Illinois electric cooperative membership. Only members of Illinois electric cooperatives may place Marketplace ads.
- 4) Mail to: Illinois Marketplace, P.O. Box 3787, Springfield, IL 62708, by deadline.

**Deadlines: January issue - November 20;  
February issue - December 22.**

*We reserve the right to reject any advertisement. Ads received after the deadline will be placed in the next available issue. Non-members wishing to advertise should contact the Weiss Group at (480) 860-5394 for information about display advertising.*

BARBADOS SHEEP. Rams, weanlings. Hairbreed-non-shearing. (217) 832-3111.

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# Co-op's coal plant one of the 12 best in world

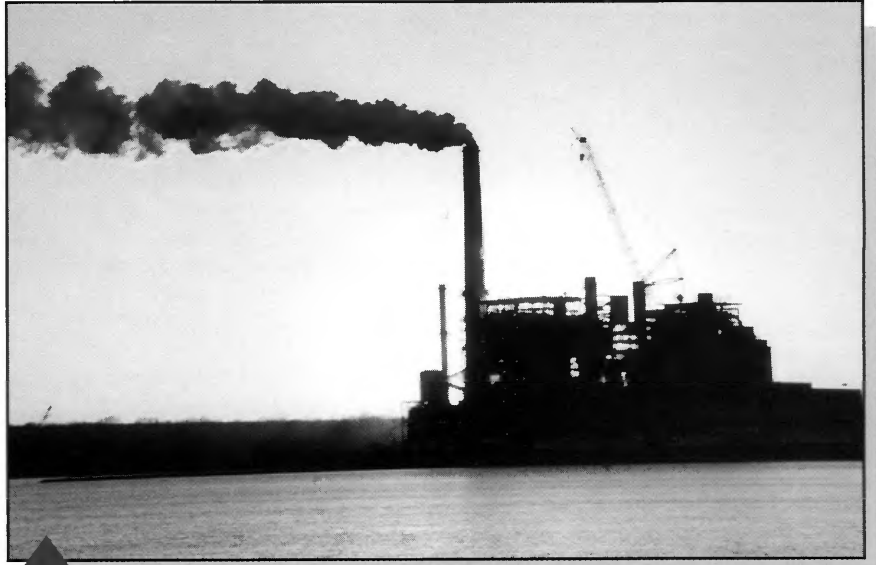
With the recent blackout in the Northeast, never ending unrest in the Middle East, and soaring natural gas prices here at home, Southern Illinois Power Cooperative's (SIPC) board of directors and management are committed to investing in energy reliability by using local energy resources. SIPC is one of the few Illinois utilities that has consistently been committed to generating electricity with Illinois coal.

Given current stringent environmental requirements, that commitment required a heavy dose of engineering ingenuity and financial backing to upgrade the co-op's plant using clean coal technology. Power Magazine recently honored SIPC for its efforts by naming the co-op as one of the top 12 power plants in the world in 2003.

The award is based on nominations from industry experts and recognizes pioneering deployment of new technology, environmental stewardship and use of innovative business practices.

Organized in 1948 to provide the wholesale power needs of three southern Illinois electric cooperatives, SIPC was challenged by aging coal-fired generation equipment, increased environmental requirements and growing demand for electricity from three new distribution co-ops.

More than 30 options were considered. The final plan called for three projects including a new 120-megawatt circulating fluidized-bed boiler to replace three outdated boilers, two 70-megawatt gas turbines for peaking power and adding new pollution control equipment to an existing 173-megawatt, coal-burning generator. The 173-megawatt unit, built in 1978, already had a scrubber for removing sulfur. The new pollution control equipment will reduce nitrogen oxide (NOx)



*Southern Illinois Power Cooperative's (SIPC) coal-fired power plant is one of the top 12 power plants in the world according to Power Magazine. Power plants were selected based on pioneering use of new technology, environmental stewardship and innovative business practices. SIPC was chosen because of its unique repowering and upgrade project that significantly reduced emissions by 75 percent.*

emissions from this unit. The new boiler will reduce both sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) and NO<sub>x</sub> emissions by 75 percent. SIPC now has a generating capacity of 423 megawatts.

"We believe that with this repowering and upgrade we will have one of the cleanest facilities in the state of Illinois," said SIPC President and General Manager Tim Reeves.

The cost of the project was \$230 million. SIPC received \$6 million in Illinois Coal and Energy Development Bond funds, an \$800,000 grant from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs (DCCA) Coal Infrastructure Program, and a \$1 million grant from the Illinois Clean Coal Review Board.

Reeves said the power cooperative has not had a rate increase in nearly two decades, but this project requires a wholesale power rate increase of 16 percent that is being

phased in over four years. The good news, he said, is that the project was completed at \$3 million under budget and with interest rates at 2 percent less than projected.

Although the use of high sulfur Illinois coal has been declining, the SIPC power plant will increase its coal consumption 40-50 percent. Also the SIPC plant is one of the few that will be able to burn reclaimed coal waste called carbon or "gob" and the only plant designed to burn 100 percent carbon. When compared to recent high natural gas prices the cost of the reclaimed coal waste is expected to be about 10 percent the cost of gas. The plant was also engineered so that it could burn wood refuse and tire-derived fuel.

SIPC provides power to some 75,000 co-op members in 24 southern Illinois counties, with more than 850 miles of transmission line.



## NOVEMBER DATEBOOK

**1, Annual Christmas Ideas Day and Health Fair** at the Benton Civic Center in Benton. (618) 439-4717.

**1, Holiday Bazaar** at Vine Street Christian Church in downtown Arthur. 8:30 a.m.

**1-2, Kane County Flea Market** at Kane County Fairgrounds in St. Charles. Admission is \$5 with

free parking. Food served all day. (630) 377-2252.

**1-2, The 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Heritage Festival** at Southeastern Illinois College, 5 miles east of Harrisburg. Crafts, handmade items, food and heritage crafts with more than 150 vendors. (618) 252-5400, ext. 3212.

**1-2, The 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Persimmon Party** at the Taylorville Museum in Taylorville. 12-4 p.m. Sample persimmon desserts, such as cookies, candy, fudge, cake, pie, pudding, breads and ice cream. Baked goods and a persimmon cookbook will be available for purchase. (217) 824-6922.

**1, "Who's Under Where?"** A comedy at White Owl Winery Dinner Theatre in Birds. Show includes an Amish buffet dinner, a glass of wine and souvenir glass. \$35 per person. Reservations required. (618) 928-2898.

**1-2, "Into the Woods"** at the Krannert Center in Urbana. An ambivalent Cinderella? A blood-thirsty Little Red Riding Hood? A philandering Prince Charming? They're all among the cock-eyed characters in this Sondheim/Lapine musical deconstruction of the Brothers Grimm. As a baker and his wife learn they've been cursed with childlessness by a witch who lives next door, they embark on a quest to break the spell, while swindling, lying to, and stealing from characters such as Cinderella, Rapunzel, and Jack (of the beanstalk). What begins as a lively fantasy becomes a moving lesson about community responsibility and the true meaning of the stories we tell our children. \$9-\$15. (800) KCPATIX or visit [www.krannertcenter.com](http://www.krannertcenter.com).

**7 and 29, "Horray for Homicide"** Murder Mystery Dinner Theater at Collver Family Winery in Barry. Murder at the Academy Awards! The investigation can't take nearly as long as the acceptance speeches – can it? \$31.95 per person. (217) 335-3279 or [www.collverfamilywinery.com](http://www.collverfamilywinery.com).

**20-22/28-30, "Scrooge The Comedy"** at White Pines Dinner Theatre in Mt. Morris. Although based on Dickens' immortal "A Christmas Carol," this loosely adapted version takes on a life of its own. (815) 946-3817.

**22, "Ho Ho Homicide"** at White Owl Winery Dinner Theatre in Birds. Show includes an Amish buffet dinner, a glass of wine and souvenir glass. \$35 per person. Reservations required. (618) 928-2898.



**2, Chris Cringle Craft Show** at the Assembly Hall in Champaign. Get into the Christmas Spirit with the Chris Cringle Craft Show! This annual craft show features 150 booths displaying a wide variety of handcrafted items by local and area artists. Admission Charge. (217) 359-2604.

**7-9, Holiday Market Place** in Menard County. Area businesses in Petersburg and Salisbury kick off the holiday shopping season. (217) 632-4154.

**8, Black and Whites and Magic Lanterns** at Early American Museum in Mahomet. 3-5 p.m. Family program, pre-registration required. Join the fun for a pot-pourri of activities as we continue to explore "moving pictures," special luminaries, movie shorts, flip books and moving images for an interesting afternoon. (217) 586-2612.

**8, The 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Altrusa Bazaar** at Macomb High School in Macomb. From 9 a.m.-4 p.m. (309) 836-7922.

**9, The 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Holiday Bazaar** at St. Joseph Catholic Church Hall near Elizabethtown. 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Vendors fill 30 tables with various handcrafted items, baked goods, candy, jelly and more. Delicious chili, sandwiches and desserts will be served for lunch. (618) 264-5794.

*Get Datebook information before the magazine hits your mailbox by visiting our Web site at [www.icl.coop](http://www.icl.coop).*

Illinois Country Living publishes event listings as space allows, giving preference to events of regional or statewide interest. Event listings are provided by the event sponsors and the Illinois Bureau of Tourism. The magazine assumes no responsibility for the accuracy of information submitted for publication and advises calling ahead to confirm dates and times. To be considered for inclusion, send listings and photographs (If sending photographs please include self-addressed stamped envelope) to Illinois Datebook, Illinois Country Living, PO Box 3787, Springfield, IL 62708-3787. The deadline for submission is 45 days prior to the publication date.

**19-13, Festival of Trees** at the Interstate Center in Bloomington. 2003 brings the Festival of Trees to its 10th year as a family centered fantasyland! It is created around the magic of beautifully decorated trees, wreaths, gingerbread houses, and holiday crafts. (309) 452-1170

**22-30, Memorial's Festival of Trees 2003** at the Orr Building located on the Illinois State Fairgrounds in Springfield. Admission: Adults - \$3; Children (ages 3-12) - \$1. (217) 788-3293.



**8, Colonial Cuisine** at Martin-Boismenu House at Colonial Cahokia State Historic Sites in Cahokia. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Volunteers in period dress will present a colonial cooking demonstration. The public will have a chance to talk with re-enactors about cooking methods of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and guests may also sample the traditional foods prepared over an open fire. (618) 332-1782.

**14-15, Little Station Co. Country Christmas Show** at Darrell and Fran Pfeiffer Farm in Forest City. Enjoy soups and sweets in the newly added tea room, and shop for those one-of-a-kind homemade crafts – candles, soaps, willow items, red-ware pottery, garden accessories and many baked good and home-canned specialties. Friday, 9 a.m.-7 p.m., Saturday 9 a.m.-4 p.m. (309) 597-2386.

**14-16, Country Treasures Folk Art and Craft Show** at the Oakley Lindsay Civic Center in Quincy. Homemade treasures featuring holiday items, including candles, ornaments, Santas, snowmen, wreaths, gourmet foods and more. Admission is \$3 for the entire weekend. (618) 539-3395.

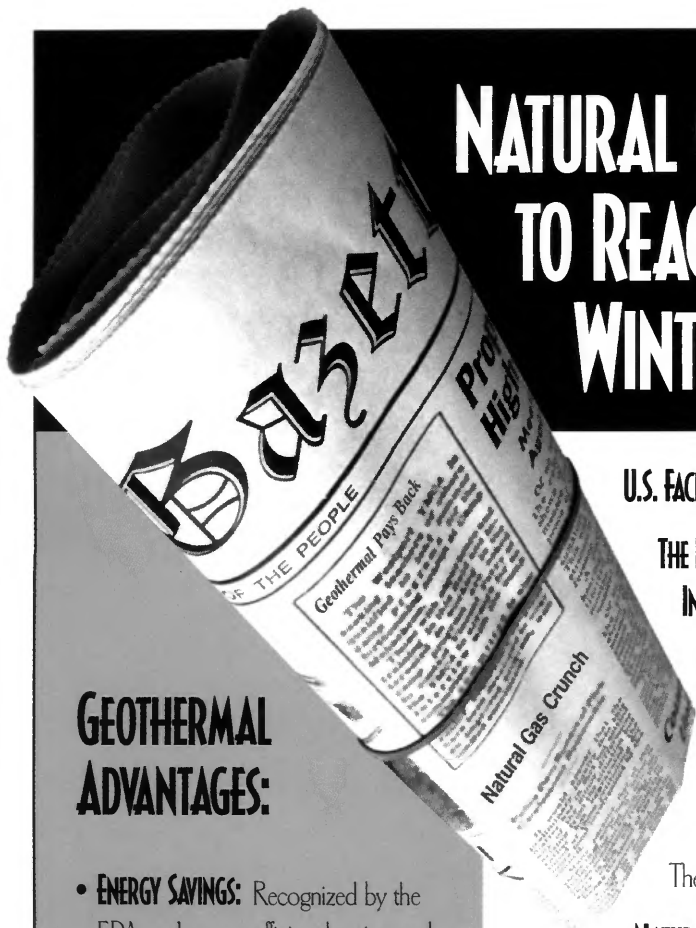
**21-23, Country Treasures Craft Show** at the Illinois Building main floor, located on the Illinois State Fairgrounds in Springfield. Admission: Adults - \$3; Children (12 and under) – Free. Fri.: 4 p.m. - 8 p.m.; Sat.: 10 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.; Sun.: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

**21, Annual Dwight Christmas Parade** in downtown Dwight. Parade features lighted floats and costumed characters, free carriage rides, visits with Santa Claus. Donations would be appreciated. (815) 584-2091.

**28, Yule Like Peoria** at the Peoria County Courthouse Plaza in Peoria. 6 p.m.-9 p.m. Holiday entertainment and decorations, costumed characters, ice carving contest and more. (309) 681-0696.

**29, An Afternoon With Santa** at Davis McCann Civic Center in Murphysboro. Refreshments, prizes and pictures with Santa Claus. (618) 684-5833.

# NATURAL GAS PRICES EXPECTED TO REACH RECORD HIGHS THIS WINTER



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- **FLEXIBILITY:** Fit any home - new construction or existing, large or small
- **ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY:** A geothermal installation is equivalent to planting 750 trees or taking 2 cars off the road.
- **SMART:** Cuts down on use of foreign oil
- **SAFE:** No carbon monoxide

**GeoComfort**

Geothermal information available at  
[www.geocomfort.com](http://www.geocomfort.com)

**U.S. FACING NATURAL GAS CRUNCH** CBS News.com (6/10/03)

**THE IOWA UTILITIES BOARD WARNS THAT NATURAL GAS PRICES COULD INCREASE BY 100% OR MORE THIS WINTER** Iowa Office of The Governor Press Release (8/5/03)

**GREENSPAN RAISES NATURAL GAS FEARS, RISING PRICES COULD AFFECT ECONOMY** USA Today (6/11/03)

**GREENSPAN PREDICTS HIGH NATURAL GAS PRICES INTO NEXT YEAR** The New York Times (6/10/03)

**NATURAL GAS PRICE CRISIS PREDICTED, LOCAL GAS STOCKS HAVEN'T BEEN REPLISHED** St. Paul Pioneer Press (6/11/03)

Designed to transfer the Earth's energy from the ground to your home, geothermal systems reduce your heating and cooling costs up to 60% when compared to conventional systems.

LET GEOCOMFORT KEEP YOUR INVESTMENT FROM GOING UP IN FLAMES!

FOR YOUR HEATING AND COOLING NEEDS, CALL YOUR INDEPENDENT GEOCOMFORT DEALER:

### DEALER INFORMATION SECTION

**Advantage Comfort Systems**  
 Paxton, IL, 217-379-6305

**Blakley Heating & Cooling, Inc.**  
 Taylorville, IL, 217-824-4684

**Bratcher Heating & Air Conditioning, Inc.**  
 Bloomington/Normal, IL,  
 309-454-1611

**Bryan's Heating & A/C**  
 Murphysboro, IL, 618-684-6002

**Climate Company, Inc.**  
 Breese, IL, 618-526-2135

**Davis Electric**  
 Rushville, IL, 217-322-6677

**Ernst Heating & Cooling**  
 Hamel, IL, 618-633-2244

**Fowler Heating & Cooling**  
 Marion, IL, 618-997-5288

**Garber Heating & Air Conditioning**  
 Morton, IL, 309-266-9372

**Henson Robinson Company**  
 Springfield, IL, 217-544-8451

**Jesse Heating and Air Conditioning**  
 Decatur, IL, 217-422-1744  
 Champaign, IL, 217-352-8511

**Knearem's Home Comfort Center**  
 Shelbyville, IL, 217-774-4933

**New Air**  
 Girard, IL, 217-965-5578

**R & H Plumbing & Heating, Inc.**  
 Altamont, IL, 618-483-6159

**South Side Hardware**  
 Greenfield, IL, 217-368-2705

**Stevens Heating & Air Conditioning**  
 Quincy, IL, 217-222-5220

**Weeke Sales & Service**  
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**Weidner Refrigeration, Inc.**  
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- Company cannot cancel your policy, reduce your benefits or raise your premium
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- Whole Life Insurance Policy\* underwritten by National Guardian Life Insurance, Madison, WI. National Guardian Life Insurance Company is not affiliated with The Guardian Life Insurance Company of America, a/k/a The Guardian or Guardian Life
- Not affiliated with any Rural Electric Cooperative

\*99SR-PROT, FEIDB2000-SR, ABL-08/03

### Most Health Conditions Accepted

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Issue Age	Male (non-smoker)	Female (non-smoker)
25	\$1.21	\$1.06
40	\$1.96	\$1.66
50	\$2.69	\$2.05
60	\$3.96	\$2.86
65	\$5.23	\$3.77
70	\$6.88	\$5.05
75	\$9.08	\$6.98
80	\$13.61	\$10.32

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