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COVER STORY



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Discover new and exciting ways to find your passion. Wm. David Champion, Jr., President/CEO of Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative, found his hiding behind a puff of blue clouds.

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Touchstone Energy®

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ILLINOIS COUNTRY LIVING™

August 2004 Volume 62 Number 4

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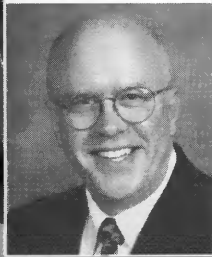


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August brings many wine festivals in Illinois. Visit the various wineries in Illinois and pick your favorite.





Gary Davis

A Gold Mine of Knowledge Next Door

Twenty-five years ago, Americans could make a good living by combining initiative with a high school diploma. Today, however, 85 percent of the jobs that support a middle class lifestyle require more than a high school education.

That's why Illinois has a love affair with its 48 community colleges. Located within easy driving distance of every resident, Illinois community colleges provide an affordable path to employment in the new millennium.

More than 100 years ago, visionaries at Joliet Junior College (JJC) foresaw the need for affordable postsecondary education in Illinois. When they opened JJC they started a movement that has led to the creation of more than 1,200 community and technical colleges throughout the United States.

Today, Illinois boasts 48 colleges. Every high school district is attached to one or more public community colleges. The colleges offer the first two years of a baccalaureate degree. They also offer programs that prepare students to enter the workforce after only a few months or years of training.

The economic impact of Illinois community colleges is nothing short of startling. Each year the colleges add more than \$30 billion to the state's total economy. Community college students earn an average of 23 percent on the time and money they invest in their classes. In

their lifetimes, community college graduates earn \$345,000 more than if they had never attended college.

Because community colleges' alumni get better jobs, they pay more taxes. Those additional tax revenues more than match what taxpayers originally pay to operate the college. In fact, taxpayers get their community college investment back at the rate of 13 percent per year.

Because they are located where we live, community colleges give us a chance to return to school whatever our age might be. The average Illinois community college student is 31 and many of us are on the far side of 50. My last community college class was in PowerPoint. It was affordable, convenient, and it was offered at a time that fit my schedule. Moreover, my instructor gave me her name and number and when I had a follow-up question last week, she helped me get the answer I needed. Now that's service!

In addition to offering pre-baccalaureate and vocational courses, community colleges prepare students to study at the college level. They offer "enrichment" courses that improve the quality of life of persons who don't happen to live in a university town. By teaching English as a second language, community colleges move immigrants into productive jobs.

Using newly acquired economic data, community colleges hire only the professors

that they will need. As a result, their productivity is unmatched in American higher education. Many community college professors work in the profession they teach. For example, instead of studying law from a professor who has spent all of his life doing research, community college students study law from practicing attorneys.

As a strategic planning consultant to several rural electric cooperatives (RECs) in Illinois, I see the strong ties between RECs and community colleges. If you have a suggestion on how this natural partnership can be strengthened, I would be glad to hear from you. I meet regularly with members of Illinois community college boards, and I'll be glad to convey your messages to them. You can reach me at (800) 454-2282, or email gdavis@communitycolleges.org, or Illinois Community College Trustees Association, 401 E. Capitol Avenue, Suite 200, Springfield, IL 62701. Or look for me at www.communitycolleges.org.

Gary Davis has been the Executive Director of the Illinois Community College Trustees Association since 1986. He grew up on a north-west Iowa hog and cattle farm served by an electric cooperative.

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.



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before my exciting discovery. What started out as simple

aching from corns and calluses grew into full-blown, incapacitating misery only a few other foot pain sufferers could understand.

“Believe me, I tried all the so-called remedies I could get my hands on (and feet into), but none of them really worked. It wasn’t until my wife and I took a trip to Europe that I discovered a remarkable invention called Flexible Featherspring® Foot Supports. Invented in Germany, these custom-formed foot supports absorb shock as they cradle your feet as if on a cushion of air.



Harvey Rothschild,
Founder of Featherspring Int’l.

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Cow Power Grants Turn Waste Into Electricity

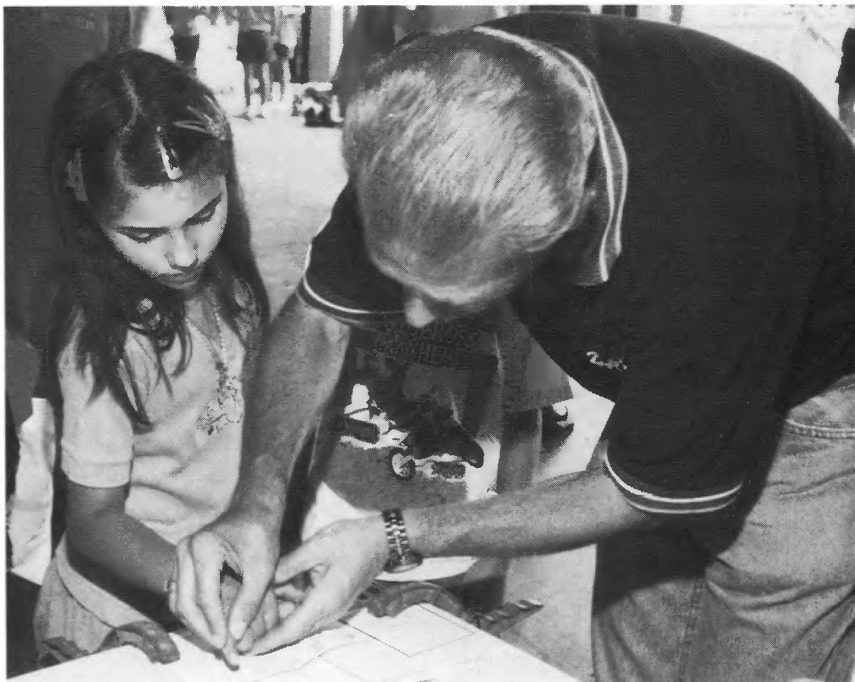
The first Cow Power grants were given to a pair of Stephenson County farms that will turn animal waste into electricity. A \$225,000 Opportunity Returns grant is going to Scheidairy Farms in Freeport, while Hunter Haven Farms in Pearl City will receive a grant of almost \$225,000.

Anaerobic digesters will be used to produce methane gas from livestock waste that can then be used to generate electricity. Each farm will produce enough power for 60 homes. Because digesters eliminate odor problems associated with livestock, they can also help the livestock industry be a good neighbor.

"It is my hope that other dairy owners from across the state, and around the nation, will visit these facilities and take this state-of-the-art, environmentally beneficial technology back to their farms," said Governor Rod Blagojevich. The grant funds are through the State of Illinois' Renewable Energy Resources Program administered by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO).

After the digestion processes, the effluents are more bio available than the typical lagoon dairy waste. "This Opportunity Returns grant is a necessary part of pursuing our family farm's goal of building a methane digester to produce electricity and bedding fiber for ourselves and others," said Doug Scheider of Scheidairy Farms.

Beyond producing electricity from a renewable energy resource with a value-added end product, these projects also present a positive solution to one of agriculture's growing problems — odor complaints.



Child ID Kits Available

Touchstone Energy® cooperatives are sponsoring the Child I.D. kits National Child Identification Program, which is dedicated to providing parents and guardians with a tool they can use to help protect their children. Inkless fingerprint I.D. kits are used to record the child's fingerprints and physical characteristics on a card, which is kept at home. Call, or pick up Child I.D. kits at your local Touchstone Energy co-op.

Energy Technology Part of New Economy

Former President Bill Clinton and President George Bush agree that energy technology has the potential to be a driving force in a new economy.

Former President Clinton said, "If I were running for president as a Democrat I would be saying we need to create a new energy economy and we're going to create a million jobs with it." President Bush said, "Our entire economy depends on steady affordable supplies of energy, encouraging conservation, promoting efficient technology, modernizing our electricity grid, and increasing energy production here at home."

Renewable energy sources are a hot topic both politically and in the financial community. The investment sector is starting to view alternative energy as a new global profit center. Investment in alternative energy has tripled. Investment in U.S. renewable energy companies totaled \$21 billion in 2002. Investors put \$3 trillion into socially responsible funds in 2002, a 400 percent increase since 1995.

New technology, combined with new money, has come together to take renewable energy technology from wind to biomass energy from new-age dreams to real world possibilities. Some see high-tech, clean energy companies as the Microsoft investment of the future. With the growing demand for energy worldwide, and the Middle East in constant turmoil, there is no greater need than sustainable, flexible, clean, and cost efficient new energy technology.



Entrepreneur Help in Western Illinois

Western Illinois University and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) are partnering to create the Western Illinois Entrepreneurship Center Network, with entrepreneurship centers in Macomb, Galesburg, and Quincy.

The centers, and their combined resources through their partners, including the regional economic development organizations, the Small Business Development Center, and other Western Illinois University resources will provide entrepreneurs and existing businesses with the expertise and tools they need to translate their ideas into successful business ventures and help existing businesses grow.

Each center will link clients with resources and expertise, and on a competitive basis will offer \$5,000 Business Enhancement Awards for startup and business expansion. For more information, or for assistance, contact Sadiq Shah at (309) 298-2205, Quincy Center Manager Charles Bell at (217) 223-4313 or Galesburg Center Manager Richard Johnson at (309) 341-2001, or visit www.wiuec.org.

New Organization Dedicated to Strengthening Rural America

The 80-55 Coalition (www.8055.org) is a growing nonpartisan group of advocacy, policy, and research organizations dedicated to strengthening rural America. The term 80-55 is derived from federal statistics showing that rural America represents approximately 80 percent of the nation's landmass and is home to about 55 million Americans. Member organizations are working together to identify strategies for change, and educating policy makers and key decision makers on rural issues.

One of the key goals of the coalition is to ensure that the myths associated with rural America are dispelled. For example, it is a myth that poverty is just a big city issue. Rural poverty has been higher than metro poverty for the last 40 years.

Economic development, health care, transportation, education, and infrastructure are just some of the issues that are important to all Americans. But the 80-55 Coalition says national policies cannot be addressed by "one-size-fits-all" solutions. A single policy can have different, unintended effects on rural areas.

Source: www.8055.org.

Kill-A-Watt Energy Efficiency Tester

If you are thinking about replacing an appliance because it's old and not energy efficient, a new efficiency tester may help you make the decision. The Kill-A-Watt appliance efficiency tester measures electricity consumption by the kilowatt-hour and displays it on a large LCD display. All you have to do is plug in your appliance. Other options with the tester allow you to figure your electrical expenses by the hour, day, week, month, and even the year. Visit <http://www.p3international.com/products/special/P4400/P4400-HG.html> for more information.



The Kill-A-Watt appliance energy-efficiency tester measures electricity consumption by the kilowatt-hour, and displays it on a large LCD display.

Touchstone Energy® Co-ops Highly Rated in Survey

Some employees at Southern California Edison rigged customer satisfaction surveys by changing the phone numbers of customers to those of friends and family members. The employees apparently were trying to ensure their department would meet year-end goals and get maximum payouts.

Touchstone Energy cooperatives didn't have to rig an independent survey to outscore the rest of the industry in customer satisfaction. In the third and fourth quarters of 2003, Touchstone Energy co-ops scored 80 out of a possible 100 points in the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), while the industry average dropped from 73 to 72.

The University of Michigan Business School manages the survey.

Homework Club Helps Students Succeed and School Budgets Survive

Students were struggling and budgets were stretched to the limit. Something had to be done and retired schoolteacher Eula Durstan had an idea. In February 2001, with the support of the First Presbyterian Church of Witt, she formed the Homework Club.

Since its inception, the club's network of teachers from the Nokomis and Witt school districts has helped more than 500 children in need of tutoring. The First Presbyterian congregation reimburses the schools for the teachers' time through an endowment, ensuring that the program is cost-free to the children and the schools. Children are recommended for tutoring by their teachers to the school principal. After receiving the names of referred children, the principal pairs them with volunteer teacher-tutors for help.

For more information about the Homework Club, you can reach North Elementary School principal James Rupert at (217) 563-8521.

Find Answers at New Government Science Web Site

Looking for that lifeline to help answer a million-dollar science question? Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham has a suggestion. Go to the recently launched Web site www.Science.gov 2.0, the next major step in government science information retrieval.

Science.gov is the gateway to reliable information about science and technology from across federal government organizations. Science.gov 2.0 offers groundbreaking, user-friendly technology enhancements to the interagency science portal. It is for the educational and library communities, as well as business people, entrepreneurs, agency scientists, and anyone with an interest in science.

The Science.gov Web site provides the unique ability to search across 30 databases as well as across 1,700 Web sites. Hosted by the Department of Energy's Office of Scientific and Technical Information, Science.gov is made possible through a collaboration of 12 major science agencies.

Enough Power But Transmission Questionable

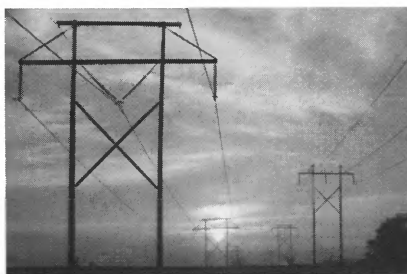
Electricity generation is expected to keep pace with growing North American demand over the next few years, but the wholesale transmission system might not, experts said in a forecast of electric reliability.

Those responsible for delivering bulk power must closely follow reliability standards to keep the system dependable, said the North American Electric Reliability Council in its 2003–2012 reliability assessment.

Consumers will require an additional 67,000 megawatts (mw) over the next three years, which will be met easily by a projected 89,000 mw of additional generation in the same period, the council said.

The report painted a less rosy picture for transmission, saying, "Some portions of the grid will not be able to transmit the output of all new generating units to their target markets."

Source: Electric Co-op Today, Bill Pritchard



While the grid, overall, is expected to perform with reliability in the near future, portions are nearing their reliability limits as demand drives an increasing flow of power.

Support For Safe Electricity Grows

More than a thousand people are killed, and tens of thousands injured each year in electrical accidents and fires. The vast majority of electrical accidents can be prevented.

Safe ElectricitySM, a safety education initiative of the Illinois Electric Council, was created through a cooperative effort of Illinois electric cooperatives, investor-owned electric utilities, municipal electric utilities, the University of Illinois, and others. Now Safe Electricity is pleased to announce a sponsorship from Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange to support safety awareness outreach activities. Federated is the leading provider of property and casualty insurance for roughly 700 rural electric utilities in 40 states.

"We are delighted to have Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange as the largest sponsor of the program," said Molly Hall, Director of Safe Electricity. "Federated's support and involvement will help us to improve and expand outreach efforts beyond Illinois' borders to help educate consumers in other parts of the nation."

"We have been very pleased with the Safe Electricity program in Illinois," says Earl Struck, President and CEO of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives. "It's been a well-received public education effort that we believe really makes a difference."

For more information and teacher resources go to www.SafeElectricity.org.

Household Energy Consumption Expected To Increase

Given larger homes with greater energy needs and an increasing number of consumer electronics, residential energy use is projected to increase by 25 percent between 2002 and 2025, according to the Annual Energy Outlook 2004 released by the Energy Information Administration. Most of the projected growth is related to increased use of electricity.

According to the Energy Outlook, sustained growth in housing with almost all new homes using central air conditioning, is an important part of the national trend. Newly-built homes are on average 26 percent larger than existing homes with greater needs for heating, cooling,

and lighting. Residential energy use per square foot has gone down, however, due to more stringent building codes and appliance standards. Home office equipment and security systems are also part of the expected increase in electricity use.

Natural gas use in the residential sector is projected to grow by 1.5 percent per year from 2002 to 2010 and 0.9 percent per year to 2025, maintaining a constant share of total residential energy consumption. To view Energy Outlook 2004, visit www.eia.doe.gov/oiaf/aeo.

Source: Energy Information Administration



Students Learn About Our Nation's Past, Present, and Future at Youth Tour 2004

More than 1,400 students from 43 states descended on the nation's capitol in June for the 40th anniversary of the National Youth Tour. Sixty-four outstanding young leaders from throughout Illinois joined the tour this year. The students wrote essays, filled out applications, or were personally interviewed by representatives of their local electric and telephone cooperatives for selection for the trip.

The participants saw some amazing sites in Washington, D.C., including Gettysburg; the Smithsonian Museums; memorials of Lincoln, Jefferson, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the Vietnam War, the Korean War and World War II; the Washington National Monument and National Cathedral; an Iwo Jima Parade and Pageant; the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery; the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia; and the Memorial Holocaust Museum.

In addition to these sites that gave the students a feel for their country, its wars, its presidents and its history, the students toured the Capitol, saw a debate in action in the House Gallery, and met with their local congressman and Senator Dick Durbin to discuss current events and what young

voters can do to change their country for the better. Durbin discussed the current situation overseas, education and health care issues, current bills affecting energy prices, and other issues important to the students.

In addition to watching democracy in action, the students practiced democracy by voting for an Illinois representative to the National Youth Leadership Council. Max Nash-Howe of Macomb, sponsored by McDonough Power Cooperative in Macomb, was selected, and will represent Illinois students at events throughout the year.

The students also learned about the democratic principles of a cooperative. They selected a board of directors, co-managers, and employees for a chip n' pop co-op. The board of directors (voted on by the members) held an annual meeting, and determined pricing of items, membership fees, salaries of employees, and capital credit returns for members. All of the students who paid the \$.50 membership fee, and purchased from the co-op, received capital credits before going home. The chip n' pop co-op taught the students all the basic workings of a cooperative.

The Illinois students also joined the other 42 states for a

National Youth Day Assembly. At the event the students learned about Touchstone Energy®, the Rural Utility Service, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) and cooperatives' roles in politics. Glen English, CEO of NRECA, encouraged the students to ask their congressman questions and become involved in their local communities as well as their state and national government. The keynote speaker was four-time Paralympic Medalist Mike Schlappi, who encouraged the large crowd with his inspirational, touching and humorous stories. His primary message was "If you can't stand up, stand out!"

In addition to learning about cooperatives, our nation, and how to make a difference, the students learned about themselves. They formed friendships with students from across the state as well as meeting with students across the nation. They learned what issues were important to students in other communities, and how their rural area may be different from others. For some students, this was their first major trip anywhere beyond Illinois' borders. For others, it was one of many. But one thing that everyone had in common was the feeling that this was the trip of a lifetime, one that could not

be duplicated even if the students are fortunate enough to return to the nation's capital.

Additional photos and information about the trip are available at www.aiec.coop. Contact your local electric cooperative for information on how an outstanding youth in your life can participate in this "trip of a lifetime."



By Catrina McCulley

Passion, or boundless enthusiasm. When any feeling or emotion completely masters the mind, that's passion. Unlike a hobby or an interest, a passion is something that lifts your spirit. It's an uncontrollable craving for something so deep that it runs hot through your blood, day and night. And once you find that passion, you realize that you can never live without it.

He didn't know he was about to stumble upon it. His entire life was about to change. He had no idea that this would be the first invigorating day of the rest of his life. On that beautiful day in August of 2000, Wm. David Champion Jr., President/CEO of Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative, found his passion. It was up floating silently just below the clouds.

It all started at a Touchstone Energy® hot air balloon festival. Dave says, "I was fortunate enough to get to ride in the Touchstone Energy hot air balloon with Pilot Cheri White. And that's all it took. I was hooked. I knew right then that I wanted to know all there was to know about hot air ballooning."

"He just came home one day and told me he wanted to be a balloon pilot. I thought he was crazy, I really did," says Dij Champion, Dave's wife.

But from that one moment, his life was different – exhilarating – new. Dave's whole outlook on life changed. He finally had something different to look forward to. By

November of 2000, he became half owner of his first balloon. By April of 2001 he had earned his commercial hot air balloon pilot's license.

"I virtually spent all winter studying so I could be ready to go out in April. It typically takes someone two years to be able to get enough flights in with an instructor and pass all the tests, but I was so excited that



Wm. David Champion, Jr., President/CEO of Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative says ballooning changed his life.

Finding Your Passion

I couldn't wait that long. I called Mike Bauwens, a pilot and instructor with Balloon the Rockies Hot Air Balloon Training Facility in Utah, for some one-on-one training," Dave remembers. He spent 20 straight days with Bauwens. He flew every day and studied hard every night.

And today, equipped with his license and his balloon Starburst, he has a constant eagerness to get off the ground. He takes every opportunity he can to fly. Dave and Dij travel from state to state seeking out balloon competitions. They've gone everywhere from Kentucky to New Mexico. "I've definitely gotten to travel more since Dave took up ballooning. And when we retire, we plan to fly in every state in the United States," Dij says.

"It's really become a family passion," says Dave. "My whole family has been very supportive. Dij is my crew chief. She helps out with everything on the ground. She's the person I put all my trust in. Even our two grown daughters, Teri and Becky, their husbands, Jeremy and Scott, and our grandchildren, Cale and Emma, come and help out. We all have a good time together," says Dave.

And when he's not competing, Dave charts his balloon for paid rides. "I have 50 people on my waiting list right now for paid rides. I've had some unique experiences. I remember this one young man who wanted to propose to his girlfriend. He insisted we had to go up on one particular date – their anniversary date. It was too windy in Champaign that day, and I told him we wouldn't be able to go up, but he insisted we had to find a way. I told him we could go to Danville

and try it, but that I couldn't make any promises. In Danville, the wind was steadier, but still not perfect. We did end up going up, though. He proposed and I got a picture of the newly engaged couple. It was an honor to be a part of their special day.

"When I retire, I hope to continue giving paid rides while I'm in good health. It's wonderful to have something I'm passionate about that I can share, while making a little

money on the side."

But for Dave, ballooning isn't about making money. "I really just like to share the experience with others. I've given away quite a few rides. And I like to donate my services to two charity events per year," he says. Recently, he donated a ride for two to the Gibson City Hospital Association. "I happened to be at the event when the ride was being auctioned off. When the ride got up to \$450, one of the bidders dropped out of the auction. After they dropped

*"My passion
for ballooning
is so intense
that I could
literally do it
all the time."*



(L-R) Dave Champion; Cheri White, Touchstone Energy Balloon Pilot; and Greg Nieman, Business Performance Coordinator at Continental Cooperative Services, prepare, for a flight in the Touchstone Energy Balloon.

out, I said, 'If you would also be willing to pay \$450, I will donate another ride.' And they did, so I helped raise \$900 for that event," Dave says.

"Ballooning has made a tremendous change in Dave's life," says Dij. "Before, he really only lived for work. He didn't have much of a social life. But when he started ballooning, he just started relaxing more. He's still a hard worker, but now he has something more to look forward to. He's really laid back now and I think he's going to live longer," Dij laughs.

"My passion for ballooning is so intense that I could literally do it all the time. I have to make sure that I am not shorting my job or my family. I always seem to find a

good balance though," Dave says.

"It's funny, before I found ballooning, I never really knew anything was missing in my life. Things always seemed normal. But when I found it, I never wanted to give it up from that moment on. I'm a happier person now," he says.

There is nothing like the feeling you get when you are passionate about something. "But you just can't wake up one day and decide 'this is the day I'm going to find my passion.' You have to be willing to go out and try new things...experience all life has to offer. And you never know, along the way, you just might find something you are passionate about, too," says Dave.

Eight Ideas to Help You Find Your Passion

1. Find time to pursue both what you must do for sustenance and what you must do to develop what you really love to do.

Don't quit your day job while you get in touch with your true desires.

2. Ask 10 people who know you well what they can see that you really love doing.

Treat this as a survey—do not judge or critique what they say. Simply look for the common thread.

3. Take time to identify your talents.

Provide yourself with "creative time." Give yourself time to be alone with your thoughts.

4. Ask yourself, "What is important to me in a career? In my personal life?"

Keep asking until you have nothing else that comes to mind. These are your values. Now, ask yourself, "What jobs can I hold that will allow me to live these values?"

5. Ask yourself, "Am I overlooking anything that could be an opportunity for me to explore my passion?"

Follow that with, "Am I discounting anything in my life right now that demonstrates my true talents?"

6. Pay attention to moments when you lose track of time and keep mental notes about what you are doing at those moments.

Who surrounds you in these moments? This helps you to identify your talents and the types of people who will benefit from your talents.

7. Be willing to put yourself in a pinch for both time and money to make your passion work.

The most successful people are those who have dared the Universe to tell them they couldn't accomplish their dream.

8. Don't be afraid to try new things.

If you're resisting activities that may be out of your comfort zone, you're creating negative energy and thoughts. This will not be beneficial to you in the long run.

For more tips and information on finding your passion, visit Coachville Resource Center at <http://topten.org/public/BA/BA120.html>.



Dave Champion prepares for a flight in Danville. His son-in-laws Jeremy Jordan (left), and Scott Quinlan (right) help him crew.

Pursue Things That Catch Your Heart

During this year's Youth to Washington Tour, 64 students representing cooperatives throughout Illinois joined students from across the nation at the annual National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Youth Day. Students heard from a variety of speakers on subjects of leadership and cooperatives.

The keynote speaker at the event was Mike Schlappi, four-time Paralympic Medalist. Schlappi shared how his attitude towards life has made him successful and happy after the accidental shooting that confined him to a wheelchair at 14 years old. His message of "just because you can't stand *up*, doesn't mean you can't stand *out*," was humorous, touching, and inspiring. The audience hung on every word he spoke.

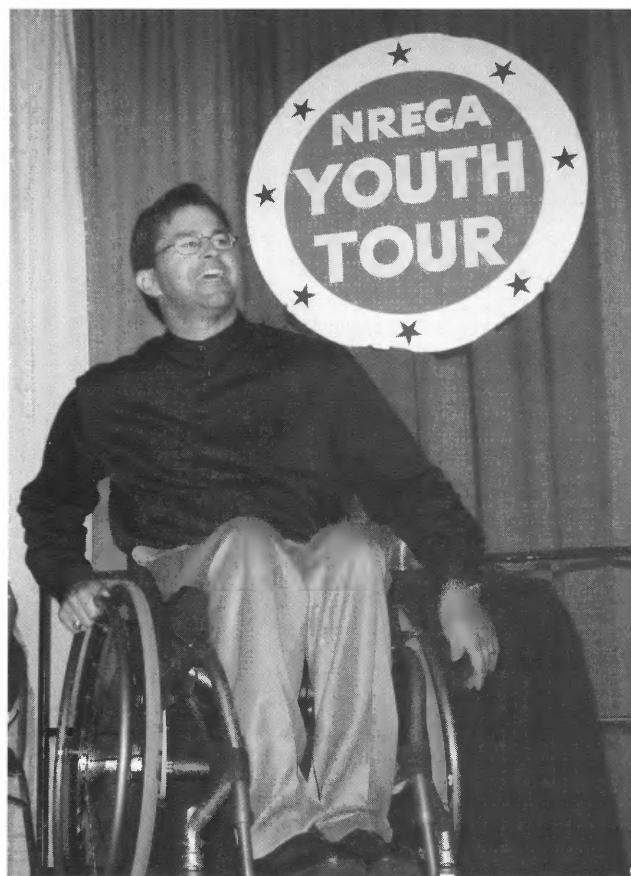
Below is an excerpt from an article Schlappi wrote.

Many things in life will catch your eye, but only a few will catch your heart - pursue those.

Why? Because your odds of success are greatly increased when you put your time and energy towards things that matter most. These wants or goals (I call them passions) are personal and are generally something we look forward to doing or having. Often times we are willing to sacrifice things in the moment for these things that we want most in the future. They are the motivators behind our thoughts and actions. For my father it is hunting and fishing. For my wife, Tami, it is a game of Rook or a bar of chocolate. For our son Joseph it is building cool things out of Legos. What is it for you? What do you think of when you are idle and can dream?

We all need things that give us a reason to live. We need things that help us find happiness and put a bounce back in our step as we wade through the muck of everyday life.

As human beings we always seem to wonder how we are going to do this, or how we are going to accomplish that. We seem to be human "doings" rather than human "beings." We get very busy going through the motions, and chasing our dreams without even asking ourselves "why." Always ask yourself why you want to have or do something. Is it a good cause, and will it have a positive benefit?



Mike Schlappi encouraged more than 1,400 Youth Tour participants to find a passion in their lives.

If there is a great enough "why" we will almost always figure out the "how."

Following my accident as a teenager, I looked forward to the day when I turned 16 and could drive a car with hand controls. I thought I would be happy when I could drive - and I was. Then I felt I would be happy when I graduated from High School - and I was.

I have concluded that we think we are going to be happy "when." When we get married. When we have kids. When we are rich. Or, when we retire. It is important to look forward and be happy "when," but equally as important we need to learn to be happy "then" - right then and there. Right now!

Look inside. Check your passions and motives. More important, make sure you have some. Having something to look forward to is a key to happiness.

Would You Like to Visit Washington, D.C.?

If you, or a student you know, would like to attend next year's Youth to Washington Tour, contact your local electric cooperative, or Linda Comstock at the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives at (217) 529-5561 or lcomstock@aiec.coop. For more information go to www.aiec.coop and click on Youth Programs.





Jananne Finck

Canning or Freezing Tomatoes Safely

Tomatoes are a popular vegetable, especially those grown in our Illinois gardens. As a result, many consumers preserve tomatoes by canning or freezing so they can enjoy the flavor and taste year round.

To freeze tomatoes, the National Center for Home Food Preservation (NCHFP) recommends using firm, ripe tomatoes with deep red color. The next step is to decide if you want to freeze them raw or cooked.

To freeze raw tomatoes, wash with cold water then dip in boiling water for 30 seconds to loosen skins. Core and peel. Freeze as whole tomatoes or in pieces. Pack into freezer containers, leaving 1-inch headspace. Seal, label, and freeze. Use only for cooking or seasoning as tomatoes will not be solid when thawed.

For freezing cooked tomatoes, remove stem ends, peel, and quarter ripe tomatoes. Cover and cook until tender, about 10 to 20 minutes. Place pan containing tomatoes in cold water to cool quickly. Pack into containers, leaving about 1-inch headspace. Seal, label, and freeze.

If canned tomatoes are desired, be sure to follow the most current recommendations from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

In the summer of 1988, USDA made some major changes in the processing times for home-canned tomato products. The major USDA recommendation on all home-canned tomato

products is to acidify them prior to processing.

USDA research shows common garden bacteria break down the acid in a jar of tomatoes as the bacteria multiply. This bacteria, *Bacillus licheniformis*, survives the old processing times. While the bacteria itself is not harmful to us, the bacteria breaks down the acid within the jar and botulism spores may begin to grow. It is critical to avoid this growth, as botulism is a deadly form of food poisoning. The frightening aspect of botulism is there is no change of color, taste, or odor.



Acidification of tomato products is accomplished by adding 2 tablespoons of bottled or frozen lemon juice or 1/2 teaspoon citric acid per quart. For pints, add 1 tablespoon of lemon juice or 1/4 teaspoon citric acid.

Tomatoes can also be acidified with vinegar. Unfortunately, this gives a taste that is objectionable to many. For this reason, the University of Illinois Extension suggests using bottled lemon juice or citric acid, as this is less likely to be tasted.

If vinegar is added, a quart requires 4 tablespoons. A pint needs 2 tablespoons. Add the acid

directly to the jar to be sure you have enough acid in each jar.

Canning salt is recommended in home-canned tomatoes, but may be omitted if desired.

Tomatoes used in home canning shouldn't be green or over-ripe. Don't use decayed, softened, or freeze-damaged fruit either.

Boiling water bath is the recommended canning processing method for tomatoes.

Processing time for raw packed tomatoes is 85 minutes for pints and quarts in a boiling water bath canner. To reduce this time, hot pack the tomatoes before canning. By boiling the tomatoes for 5 minutes before canning, the boiling water bath time is reduced to 35 minutes for pints and 45 minutes for quarts. Note, acidification is still needed.

But, they may be processed in a pressure canner. The processing time for pressure canning is 25 minutes for raw packed pints and quarts at 11 pounds for dial gauges and 10 pounds for weighted gauges. Raw packed pints and quarts may also be processed for 40 minutes at 5 pounds with weighted gauge or 6 pounds pressure with a dial gauge canner.

For more information on freezing or canning tomatoes and tomato products, visit the National Center for Home Food Preservation Web site at: <http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/>.

*Jananne Finck, MS, RD,
Nutrition and Wellness
Educator, University of Illinois
Extension Springfield Center.*



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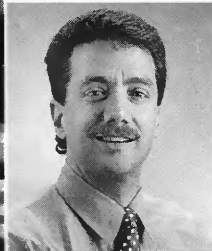
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David Robson

A Roundup of Rabbit Defense Ideas

Give Bugs Bunny a yard, and he would strip it bare before even flopping his ears and spouting "What's Up, Doc?" Then there is Peter Cottontail and Peter Rabbit, both irrepressibly cute and cuddly. What can one do but smile.

Maybe you're not smiling if their not-so-kind relatives happen to forage in your yard and garden.

There are few plants that grow that don't seem to be magnets to rabbits. Occasionally, you can happen upon an *Acanthus* or *Echinops* that will test their fortitude. But face it; if the plant looks like a thistle, most creatures will bypass it.

In the vegetable garden everything seems to be fair game, not just the carrots and lettuce that Peter Rabbit thoroughly enjoyed.

Fortunately, by summer the nibbling has centered on more tasty things such as clover, dandelion, and a few other wild plants or weeds behind the garage, in the alley, or someplace else. There seems to be enough soft succulent plants to keep their energy and reproducing abilities up. There is even enough material to keep teeth whittled down.

Rabbits have plagued me on and off for 15 years. Without any plants in the yard, the rabbits thumbed their paws at my yard. Over the years, a couple rabbits decided there actually were a couple things worthy of investigation and nibbling. Soon, the word spread.

Then I received new neighbors, and with them came cats.

The indoor/outdoor cats seemed to relish in chasing the rabbits, and especially scoping out the nests. Soon the problem was no more, though the felines preferred to sharpen their hunting and killing abilities, but not their discarding efforts. You never knew where you'd find the furry remains of baby Bugs.

Those neighbors left and took the cats. Now, the rabbits are attempting to repopulate the



neighborhood. Fortunately, other neighbors have dogs that chase the rabbits around. Since the rabbit brain is about the size of a pea, they tend to think that all yards are filled with barking and running dogs. Good, so far.

One of the best defenses, besides a predator, is a fence. This might be practical in some cases, and not in others. A good friend has chicken wire cylinders around choice plants, with a couple inches of the fencing buried to prevent the creatures from digging under. The best fencing I've seen

is two to three feet high, buried six inches, and bent toward the outside to make it harder to dig around.

There are as many home remedies for control, ranging from those that are definitely illegal in most communities, but put food on the table several centuries ago, to those that have some levels of success.

Things that don't work well include dried blood, bone meal, and mothball crystals. All have some degree of success, but require large quantities, and the lack of rain for an extended period.

Concentrated fox and coyote urine, found in hunting supply catalogs and stores, also work. It's one of those things you can try, but just don't tell other people, sort of like hair coloring.

Few plants repel rabbits. They'd eat anything if they got hungry enough. Most of the tomato and squash family members seem unappealing, but if there is nothing around, they still are susceptible.

And don't forget the dogs and cats. Nature's predators are still some of the best methods for rabbit control.

David Robson is an Extension Educator, Horticulture, at the Springfield Extension Center, University of Illinois Extension, P.O. Box 8199, Springfield, IL 62791. Telephone: (217) 782-6515.

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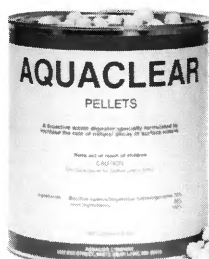
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James Dulley

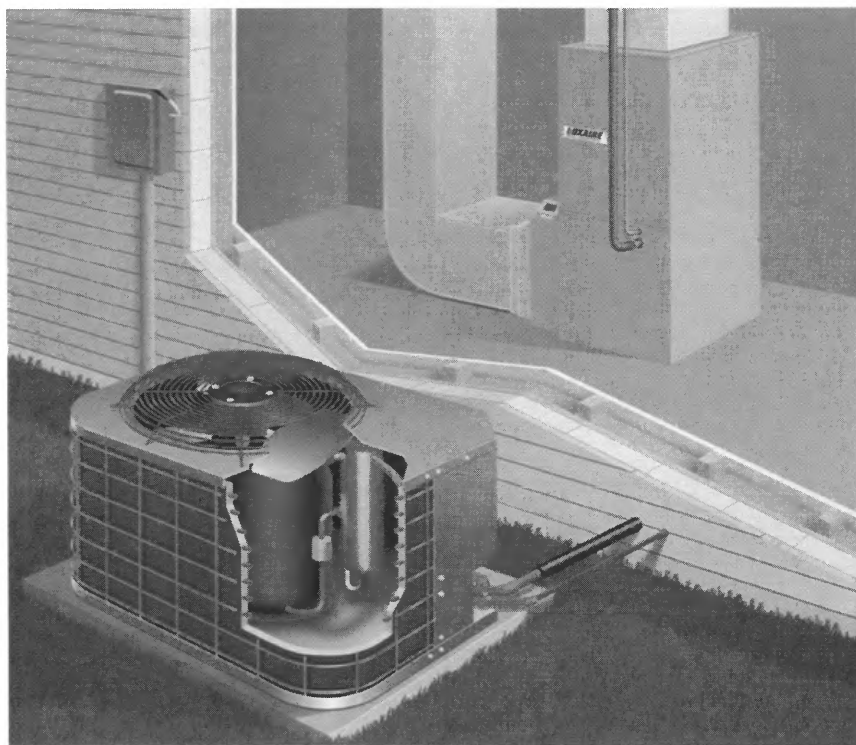
Keeping it Cool With New Air Conditioners

Q: *Dear Jim: I am ready for a new, quieter, and more efficient central air conditioner. My old one doesn't always keep the house comfortably cool. It feels clammy sometimes. What should I look for in new models? - Ronnie L.*

A: Dear Ronnie: You have picked a good year to replace your central air conditioner because there have been some significant changes and improvements in the most efficient and comfortable models for 2004. Also, operating sound levels have been seriously addressed and some of the new models are much quieter, both indoors and outdoors.

If you have electric resistance heating, before you decide on a new central air conditioner (cool only) model, consider installing a heat pump model instead. All of the central air-conditioning units that I will discuss have corresponding heat pump models for both heating and cooling your house year-round. A heat pump model will cost about \$350 to \$500 more initially because of some additional controls and valves. They look identical on the exterior.

This year, the cooling efficiencies (SEER - Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio) for central air conditioners have skyrocketed to more than 19 and the comfort level is much improved. The SEER relates the amount of cooling (Btu) to the amount of



electricity consumed (watts). The highest-efficiency models can cost substantially more initially, so have your cooling contractor do pay-back analyses on models in several efficiency ranges.

If your existing air conditioner is older than 10 years, installing a new one will cut your cooling electric bills by more than 50 percent. Depending upon your climate and summer air-conditioning load, it can provide an excellent economic payback. A higher-efficiency model will also reduce the peak electricity demand on the hottest summer afternoons. Reducing the peak demand can help control long-term electricity rates.

The highest-efficiency models use a two-stage compressor design

to provide the best comfort, particularly in very humid climates and during the milder weather of early and late summer. These are the times when you often sense that clammy feeling. Your old standard air conditioner can adequately cool the indoors during the mild weather, but it does not run long enough to also adequately dehumidify the indoor air.

Using a two-stage compressor, these models vary the cooling output to the instantaneous cooling needs of your home. During mild weather, they operate in the super-efficient stage with reduced cooling output. In this longer running low-stage cycle, the indoor air is better dehumidified as it slowly passes over the cooling coils of the blower



unit in the basement, utility room or attic.

There are several effective designs of efficient reciprocating piston two-stage compressors that have been used for many years. Some vary the cooling output depending on which way the motor is rotating. Another design uses a two-speed compressor that always turns in the same direction, while some other models use two small compressors and run both compressors only when it is very hot outside and your house needs extra cooling.

The newest, and one of the best designs, is a two-stage scroll compressor, which several manufacturers have begun using. A scroll compressor has very few moving parts and operates quietly. Instead of using reciprocating pistons and valves, the two scrolls rock together to produce a continuous compression process. This new two-stage scroll compressor uses an ozone-friendly R410A refrigerant.

A scroll compressor produces enough cooling and airflow at the low-output stage to ensure adequate cool, dehumidified air reaches all the rooms in your house.

The new models with reciprocating-piston or scroll compressors that use R410A instead of freon R-22 tend to operate quietly. The R410A requires higher operating pressures, so the tubing and materials must be made stronger, which lowers the sound frequency, making it less noisy. Many other new soundproofing design features and materials are incorporated into the new models. Old compressors using freon will gradually be phased out of production by law by 2010.


Whether you choose a super-efficient two-stage or a lower-priced one-stage model, consider replacing the indoor coil and blower unit with a variable-speed blower. This will increase the efficiency and comfort level with

much less indoor noise year-round even if you use an oil or gas furnace during the winter. Installing one of the new thermostats (compatible with variable-speed blowers) can also control the blower speed to enhance dehumidification and comfort.

Write for (instantly download - www.dulley.com) Utility Bills Update No. 533 - buyer's guide of the 19 most efficient one- and two-stage central air conditioners listing cooling outputs, SEER's, comfort features, warranties, and a savings chart. Please include \$3 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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Members of Shiloh United Methodist Church in Shiloh, IL. submit their cookbook, *A Taste of Shiloh*. The book is hard-backed, three-ring-binder style, and contains 140 pages of delicious recipes. To order, send \$7, plus \$2 shipping to Margaret Tinges, 16197 E. 1000 North Road, Fairbury, IL. 61739. For more information, call her at (815) 692-2852.

Lemon Thyme Tea Bread Rose Seten

1 (3-oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened
3 T. butter, softened
2/3 C. sugar
1 egg
1 C. plus 2 T. all-purpose flour
1-1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/2 C. milk
1 T. snipped fresh or dried lemon thyme
1 tsp. finely shredded lemon peel
Lemon Glaze:
1/2 C. sifted powdered sugar
1/2 tsp. finely shredded lemon peel
Lemon juice or milk

Grease and lightly flour and 8x4x2-inch loaf pan. Set aside. In a medium bowl, beat cream cheese and butter with mixer at high speed until light and fluffy. With mixer on medium speed, gradually add sugar and mix well. Add egg and beat until combined. In a small bowl, stir together flour, baking powder, and 1/4 tsp. salt. Add to creamed mixture alternately with milk. Stir in lemon peel and lemon thyme. Spread batter into prepared pan. Bake in a 350° oven for 45-50 minutes or until tested done. Cool in the pan on a wire rack for 10 minutes. Remove and finish cooling. **Glaze:** Stir powdered sugar and lemon peel together, then add lemon juice or milk, just enough to make a drizzling consistency. Drizzle over top of cooled loaf.

Visit www.icl.coop to see an archive of past Illinois Country Living recipes.

Cheeseburger Soup Lisa Krall

1/2 lb. ground beef
3/4 C. onion, chopped
3/4 C. carrots, shredded
3/4 C. celery, diced
1 tsp. dried basil
1 tsp. parsley flakes
4 T. butter, divided
3 C. chicken broth
4 C. potatoes, peeled and diced
1/4 C. flour
8-oz. American cheese, cubed
1-1/2 C. milk
1/4 C. sour cream
Salt and pepper, to taste

In a 3-quart saucepan, brown beef, drain, and set aside. In same pan, sauté onion, carrots, celery, basil, and parsley in 1 T. butter until vegetables are tender, about 10 minutes. Add broth, potatoes, and beef. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover. Simmer 10-12 minutes until potatoes are tender. In a skillet, melt remaining butter. Add flour; cook and stir until bubbly. Add to soup, bring to a boil. Cook and stir for 2 minutes. Turn to low. Add cheese, milk, salt, and pepper. Cook until cheese melts. Remove from heat. Add sour cream. Makes 2-1/2 quarts.

Low Fat Rotini With Lemon Sauce and Dill Deborah Taber Evans

8-oz. rotini
1 C. 2% milk
1/8 tsp. salt
3 T. fresh lemon juice
1 tsp. caraway seeds
2-inch strip of lemon zest
2 T. fresh dill or 2 tsp. dried dill
1/4 C. dry white wine (opt.)

Put milk, salt, wine, caraway seeds, lemon juice, and zest in a large non-stick skillet. Bring to a boil, then simmer 3 minutes. Add rotini and water to almost cover them. Cover skillet and cook over low heat; stirring occasionally until rotini is al dente and 1/4 of sauce remains (about 15 minutes). Remove lemon zest. Stir in chopped dill and serve immediately.

Swedish Jam Shortbread Judy Hardwick

Crust:

1 egg
1 pkg. Pillsbury Plus butter recipe cake mix
1/2 C. finely chopped nuts
1/4 C. margarine or butter, softened
1 (10-oz.) jar raspberry preserves or jam

Glaze:

3/4-1 C. powdered sugar
3 tsp. water
1/2 tsp. almond extract
1/2 tsp. white vanilla (opt.)

Mix in a bowl, the dry cake mix, nuts, softened margarine, and egg. Mix at low speed until crumbly. Spread in a 9x13-inch pan that is prepared, greased, and floured, or use a cooking spray. Spread a 10-oz jar of preserves or jam over the crust. Bake in a preheated oven at 350° for 20-25 minutes or until edges are lightly brown. **Glaze:** Mix together powdered sugar, water, and extracts. More water may be added to get a smooth consistency. Drizzle over warm shortbread. Cool completely and cut into bars. Makes approximately 36 bars.



Members of Trinity Lutheran Church in Chenoa, IL submit their cookbook, *Feeding the Flock*. The book is soft-back, comb-bound, and contains 50 pages of wonderful recipes. To order, send \$5, plus \$4 shipping to Judy Hardwick, 2872 County Road 200 E., Fisher, IL. 61843. For more information, call her at (217) 897-1436.



Crabmeat Fettuccini Carolyn Elliott

½ C. butter
1 clove garlic, minced
8-oz. crab meat
¾ C. whipping cream
½ C. Parmesan cheese
½ tsp. pepper
1 T. parsley
12-oz. fettuccini noodles, cooked

Melt butter in a medium skillet over medium heat. Add garlic. Stir in crab meat, whipping cream, cheese, and pepper and salt to taste. Pour sauce over cooked fettuccini in a large serving bowl. Sprinkle with parsley.

Grasshopper Pie Thelma Winterland

Crust:

1-1/2 C. Oreo cookies, crushed
2 T. butter, melted

Filling:

2 T. crème de menthe
2 T. cream de cocoa
1 C. whipping cream, whipped until stiff
2/3 C. half and half
24 lg. marshmallows

Crust: Combine crushed Oreos and butter. Press into the bottom of a pie pan.
Filling: Combine crème de menthe, cream de cocoa, and whipping cream in a bowl. Melt marshmallows in a saucepan with half and half. Cool. Combine marshmallows with other ingredients and mix well. Pour into pie shell and refrigerate until firm. Sprinkle crushed Oreos on top.

Calling all cookbooks!

Is your church or community organization selling its own unique cookbook filled with favorite recipes of cooks in your area? If so, send your cookbook to Catrina McCulley, Illinois Country Living, P.O. Box 3787, Springfield, IL 62708. Please include the price of your cookbook, plus postage costs and the name, address, and telephone number of the cooperative member we should contact for more information.

Shrimp Jambalaya Marian Brown

1 lb. peeled shrimp, chopped
4 C. cooked rice
2 T. tomato paste
1 tsp. sugar
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 C. chopped onion
2 C. water
½ C. chopped celery
½ C. bell pepper, chopped
¼ lb. margarine
½ tsp. cornstarch
½ C. green onion and parsley, chopped
Salt, black pepper and cayenne pepper, to taste

Melt margarine and add onions, celery, bell pepper, and garlic to heavy pot. Cook, uncovered, over medium heat until onions are wilted. Add tomato paste and cook, stirring constantly for about 15 minutes. Add 1-1/2 cups water. Season to taste. Add sugar and cook 40 minutes, stirring occasionally or until oil floats to the top. Add shrimp; cook another 20 minutes. Dissolve cornstarch in ½ cup of water and add; cook another 5 minutes. Mix ingredients with cooked rice. Add onion tops and parsley. Mix again. Serves 8.

Strawberry Mushroom Salad Verna Rhonda

Dressing:

¼ C. cider vinegar
1/3-1/2 C. sugar
1 tsp. poppy seeds
¼ tsp. paprika
½ C. vegetable oil
2 T. sesame seeds
1-1/2 T. chopped green onion
¼ tsp. Worcestershire sauce

Topping:

2-4 T. sugar
1 C. sliced almonds

Salad:

2 heads romaine lettuce
4 (8-oz.) mushrooms, sliced
1-2 pints strawberries, sliced

Mix dressing ingredients in a jar one day ahead. Shake well. Store in the refrigerator. Heat topping ingredients in a non-stick pan until sugar melts and almonds brown. Stir constantly and remove immediately from heat when done. Pour onto a plate to cool. Store in an airtight container. Toss salad ingredients together with dressing and topping ingredients. Serve immediately.

Photos by Catrina McCulley



The Beating of Angels' Wings

Medical Flight Services for Rural Residents

By Tina Farmer

Your child has been diagnosed with a medical condition requiring specialized treatments that are only available at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis. You received a call that your mother in Florida is critically ill and you need to be with her. Panic sets in. Your anguished mind has one thought, "How will I get there?" Fortunately for the rural residents of Illinois, help is literally in the skies.

Donation-supported Lifeline Pilots was founded in 1980 by Wanda Whitsitt, a private pilot who wanted to make a difference in the lives of the people of Illinois. Completing five missions its first year, the organization now covers an area of 15 Midwest states and relies on a network of 500 volunteer pilots to fly an average of 30 to 40 missions per month. Their goal is to fly 1,000 missions in 2005.

With a generosity of spirit that is often sadly lacking in our world, the pilots not only volunteer their time, but also all flight expenses. With each mission costing an average of \$300 to \$800, that is no small allowance. There is never a cost to the flight recipient and the pilots will not accept proffered payments. "Our pilots say that helping these people is the most satisfying thing they do," says Whitsitt.

To qualify for the program's help, flight requestors must complete financial and medical paperwork demonstrating need. Recipients must be medically able (without life support) to withstand a flight in a non-pressurized aircraft while in an upright position with seatbelt restraint.

Lifeline Pilots is not an air ambulance and is not suitable for medical emergency use. The flight

coordinators request three days from the completion of qualifying paperwork to the actual day of flight so that a volunteer pilot and plane may be retained.

An opportunity for Lifeline Pilots to exercise their emergency response capabilities presented itself during the September 11 tragedy. All commercial aircraft were grounded, but the private pilots in the Lifeline network were able to fly.

Due to their efforts, blood and skin tissue samples that were critical to the victims of the attacks were delivered to their respective destinations. Although the organization cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet an emergency deadline, it tries to accommodate requests whenever possible.

But what if your situation is an emergency, an every-second-counts emergency? One that requires a five-minute launch time after your call is received, 10 minutes or less spent at the scene, and a hospital transport time of 20 minutes or less? Since 1985 Air Evac Lifeteam has provided such service to more than 71,000 people in need of critical care.

The organization serves rural areas in 12 states including Illinois, where it has bases in Effingham, Marion, Mt. Vernon, Quincy, and Springfield. Each base covers a 70-mile immediate response radius.

Each air ambulance is equipped with life-saving equipment, and a medical team that includes a registered nurse and a paramedic. They respond both to life- and limb-threatening critical situations including trauma scenes, and also



make hospital-to-hospital transfers when necessary. The bill for just one flight in an air ambulance can be as much as \$7,000. Fortunately for Air Evac Lifeteam subscribers, there is no bill.

For a small annual fee, members may use the service as many times as is necessary without additional costs. Single members currently pay \$40, couples pay \$45, and households with three or more people pay \$50. Lifetime memberships are also available. The money spent is well worth it. "Air Evac Lifeteam not only transports patients quickly to hospitals with the best facilities, but their on-board medical expertise could save a life as well," says Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative Director of Member and Public Relations Dana Smith.

For more information about the Lifeline Pilots program, or to donate time, resources (like printing or computer services), or money, visit their Web site at www.lifelinepilots.org, or call them at (800) 822-7972.

Air Evac Lifeteam may be reached at (800) 793-0010, or consult their Web site for membership information at www.air-evac.com.

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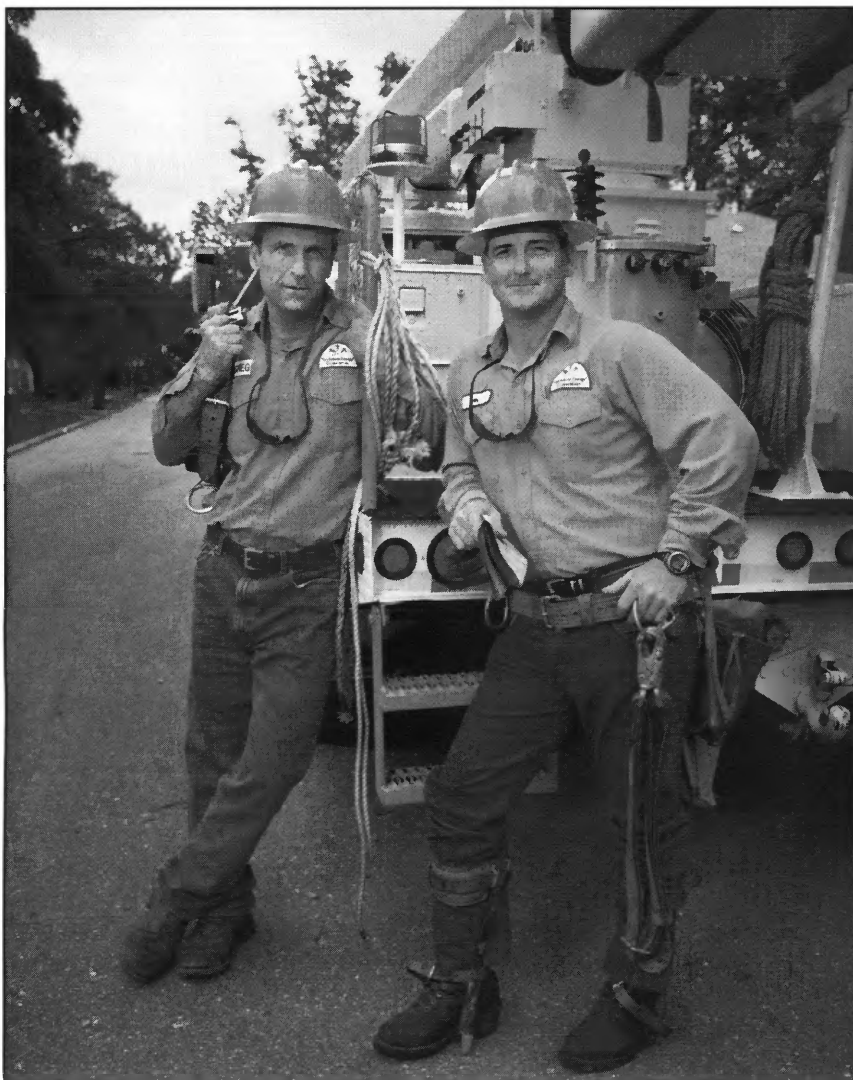
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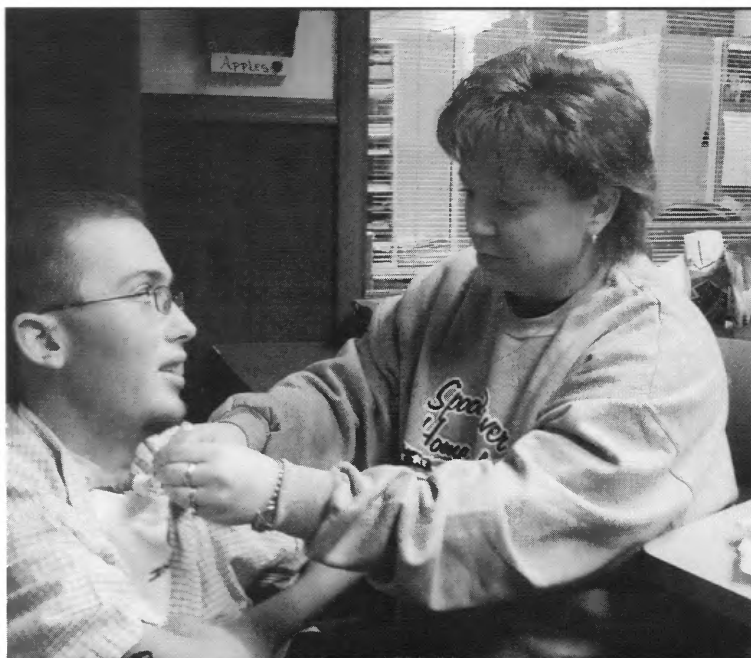
There's No Place Like Home When You're Sick

The familiar adage "there's no place like home" is especially true when one is recovering from an illness, accident, or surgery. Most anyone would rather be at home in their own familiar surroundings than institutionalized during recovery. Caring for people in their own homes is, after all, the oldest form of health care. However, for a number of years, formalized home health was available only in the urban areas where a visiting nurse served the community. Hospitals began to offer home health as an extension of their services but limited their service areas to the metropolitan regions closest to the hospital.

About 12 years ago, as the effectiveness of home health in urban areas became evident, it also became apparent that there was a need for home health service provision in the rural areas. Agencies committed to serving rural communities, farm families, and persons in remote locations began to pop up throughout the countryside. Spoon River Home Health in Farmington, Illinois is an agency that was started by a group of nurses with that very kind of commitment - serving the rural population around West Central Illinois. It has grown to more than 100 employees and 300 clients, giving credence to the need and desire for home health services in the rural area. While the majority of patients are elderly, home health services are also provided to infants, children, and adults of all ages.

Through the technological advancement of home health medical equipment and procedures, home health agencies can provide chemotherapy, intravenous medication, parenteral nutrition, wound treatment, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, special beds, and other equipment or procedures as needed. Many medical services that were once available only in a large urban hospital setting are now conducted in the patients' homes.

Home healthcare services can include nurse aide assistance with personal care and daily activities. Many persons require personal assistance for a period of time when returning home after a hospital stay injury. The needs of an ill or injured person may be more than the spouse or family member can comfortably provide. Patient safety is a primary concern of home health services. Whatever services are provided, the patient's needs must be managed safely in the home setting.



Spoon River Home Health Nurse, Susie Platt, administers tracheotomy care to Travis, a young rural client.

Home healthcare nurses coordinate all services with the patient's physician. They manage each individual case by coordinating pharmaceutical needs, equipment needs, therapies, and other skilled services with the physician's orders. They often become very bonded with their patients and the patient's family. Like the U.S. Postal Service employees, they make their visits in all kinds of weather and road conditions, to areas that may be remote. They deal with family pets and environmental challenges. For the home health worker, every day brings something new.

Among the advantages for the home health client is that they often improve and recover more quickly in their own homes. Home healthcare is more cost-effective than other options and is a benefit offered not only by Medicare but by many health and long-term care insurance policies and other governmental medical assistance programs.

Who isn't anxious to get home when hospitalized? Now, even in the rural areas, home health services can assist patients in continuing to recover from an illness, accident, injury or surgery right in their own home. And there is no place like home.

Julane Fowler is the Director of Operations at Spoon River Home Health. You can reach her at (309) 645-3386 or (309) 221-1213.



AUGUST DATEBOOK

6, Tie Dye Day at Children's Discovery Museum in Bloomington. \$1 for each item you would like to tie-dye. (310) 829-6222.

7 and 28, Highland Street Art Festival on the Historical Downtown Square in Highland. (618) 654-3721.

7, Farmers Market at the Westowne Mall parking lot in Carbondale. Area farmers, gardeners, and crafters sell their produce, plants, crafts, and home-made baked goods. Free admission. 8 a.m.-12 p.m. (618) 893-4281 or http://www.southernillinoisan.com/external/farmers_market/.

7, WIGPAC Annual Vineyard Tour in Nebo. Vineyard industry guest speakers speak about grape varieties in west central Illinois. Wine tasting, grape stomping, live entertainment, food, and more. (217) 285-4114.

7-8, Sandy Pine Elk Farm and Gift Store's Grand Opening in Deer Grove. This one-of-a-kind farm offers visitors an opportunity to see some of the largest elk in the country. Guests can take a wagon ride up to the elk habitat to view these magnificent creatures. Enjoy a seven-acre "corn maize," and other special activities. (815) 946-2108 or (815) 973-2032.

9-10, Southern Illinois Ethnic Festival in Carbondale. The second annual Ethnic Festival will be a two-day event including a parade on Saturday. Includes ethnic foods, music and performances, and artist and craft vendors. For children there will also be ethnic-related crafts. (618) 549-2146, info@carbondale.chamber.com or www.carbondalechamber.com.

10-11, Cat Fancy Association Cat Show at the Carbondale Civic Center in Carbondale. Approximately 225 cats representing more than 25 breeds will

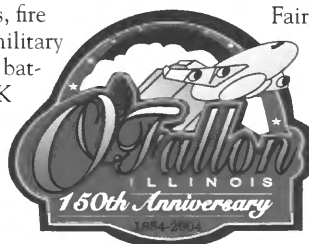
be presented and judged during this six-ring show event. Saturday 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Admission-Adults \$5; Seniors and Children under 12-\$4; Children under 5 free. (800) 526-1500, (618) 625-6136 or rkman@mychoice.net.

10-14, St. Clair County Fair at the Belle-Clair Fairgrounds in Belleville, (618) 235-0666.

13, End of the Summer Bash at Children's Discovery Museum in Bloomington. A huge party. Scoop Dreams will be available with hot dogs, popsicles, and ice cream sandwiches for sale. (309) 829-6222.

13-15, Antique Tractor and Engine Show at the Crawford County Fairgrounds in Oblong. Tractor pull, farm toy show, and more. Admission \$3. Parking is free. (618) 592-4139.

13-15, Sesquicentennial (150 years) Celebration at Community Park in O'Fallon. Parade, carnival rides, laser light show (Saturday and Sunday nights), moonlight bike ramble, period artisans, model train display, antique cars, fire trucks, police and military vehicles, Civil War battle re-enactment, 5K run, 3 on 3 basketball tournament, and a chuckwagon pancake breakfast. (618) 624-4500 or www.ofallon.org.



14, Hooray For Homicide at the Collver Family Winery Murder Mystery dinner theater in Barry. \$31.95 per person, includes dinner, show, and first glass of wine. (217) 335-3279.

19, Victorian Porch and Lawn Party at the Quincy Museum in Quincy. (217) 224-7669.

20-22, K of C Barbecue on the K of C Grounds in Quincy. Famous BBQ sandwiches, games, carnival rides, and other activities. Free (217) 222-1000.

27-29, The 31st Annual Lincoln Art and Balloon Festival in Lincoln.

Thursday night, come and enjoy the kickoff party with free food and entertainment. Watch the skies as hot air balloons fly over the city for a sneak preview. Friday night, the hot air balloon launch will begin at 6 p.m. While you are there, visit food concessions, a craft show, a petting zoo, grandstand entertainment, a DJ, and a carnival. Saturday come back for more fun and entertainment, plus a balloon glow at dusk, and a fireworks display following. Sunday visit the flea market, a quilt show and more. www.lincolnilinois.com/balloonfest/.



27-29, Midwest Salute to the Masters Festival of Fine Art at Longacre Park in Fairview Heights. (618) 632-1102.

28, Sparta Bluesfest at the Sparta Fairgrounds in Sparta. (618) 443-2145.

28, Guided Farm Tours and 4-H Country Breakfast in Elizabeth.

Explore farm country in scenic northwest Illinois by enjoying guided bus tours of dairy and beef farms, a horticulture operation, and a vineyard and winery. (815) 858-9100 or www.jdcf.org.

28-29, Art of Wine in downtown Lincoln. Sample wine from Illinois wineries for a fee. Relax and enjoy music under a tent and bid on your favorite "Who Let the Dogs Out?" dog art and much more. (217) 732-2929.

29, Sunset Concerts on the steps of the Shryock Auditorium in Carbondale. Grab your lawn chairs and enjoy music under the stars. The concert begins at 7 p.m. Admission is free. (618) 549-4222.



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.





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Celebrex	100 mg	100	\$77.22	\$182.06	\$168.68	58%
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Flonase	nasal spray		\$32.76	\$64.99	\$62.89	50%
Glucophage	850 mg	100	\$37.55	\$145.99	\$130.39	74%
Metformin	850 mg	100	\$29.35	\$85.99	\$46.76	66%
(gen) Zocor	20 mg	100	\$142.63	\$509.79	\$402.41	90%
Lipitor	10 mg	90	\$165.87	\$348.42	\$297.07	52%
Lumigan	3ml	1	\$41.53	n/a	\$111.55	63%
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Prozac	20 mg	100	\$181.35	\$440.80	\$n/a	59%
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Serevent	Inhaler		\$62.09	\$98.99	\$80.78	37%
Singulair	5 mg	30	\$51.88	\$95.99	\$83.45	46%
Tamoxifen	10 mg	250	\$51.34	\$297.99	\$215.97	83%
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