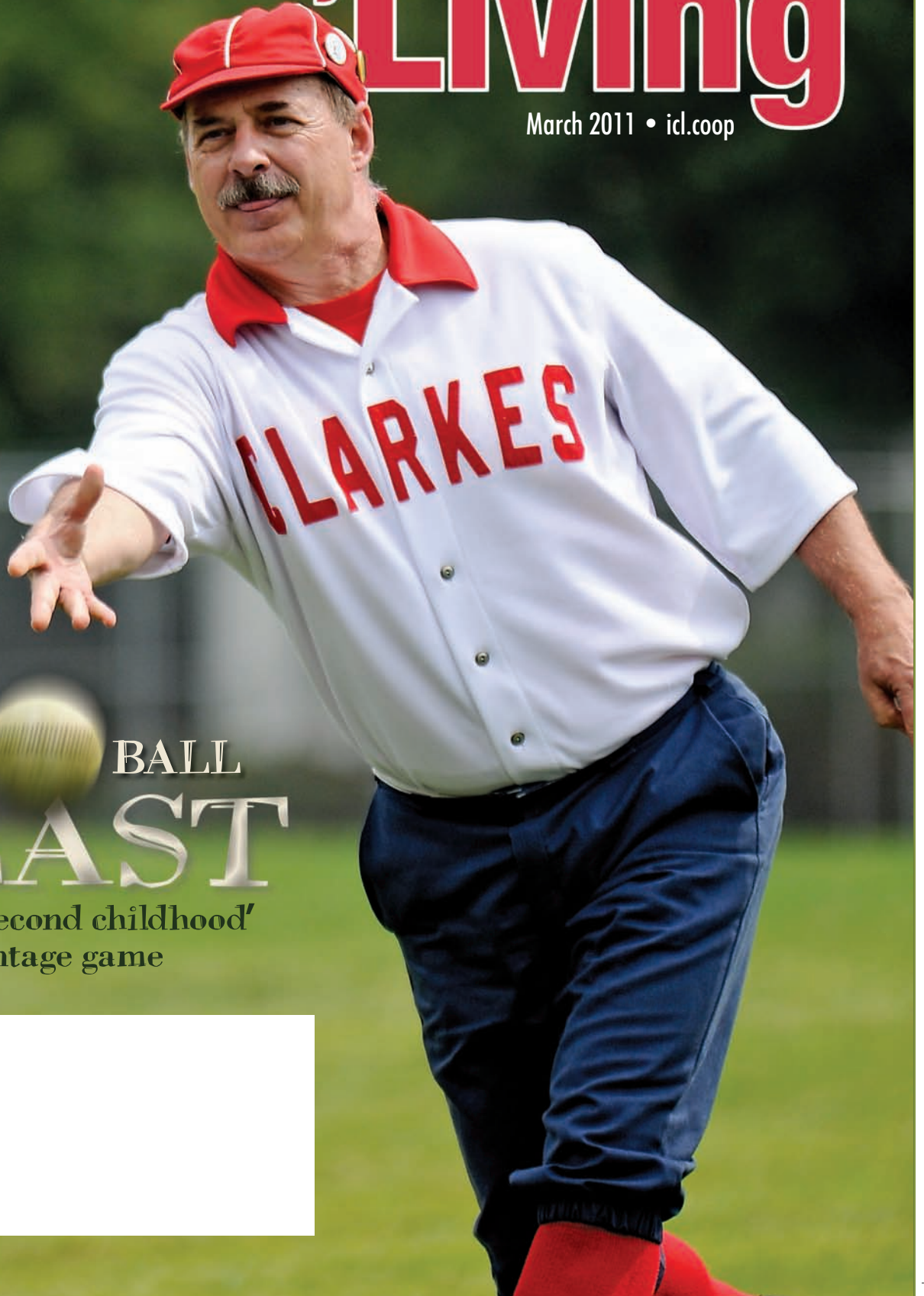




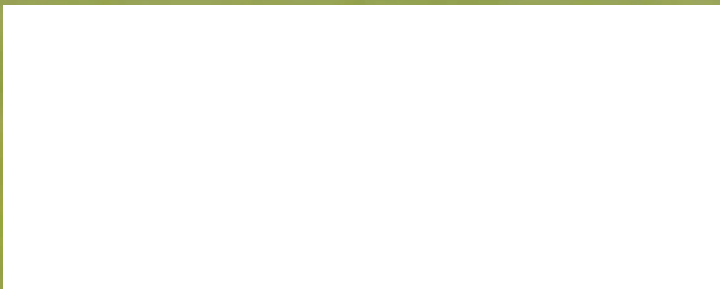
Illinois Country Living

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BASE BALL BLAST

Men find 'second childhood'
in vintage game





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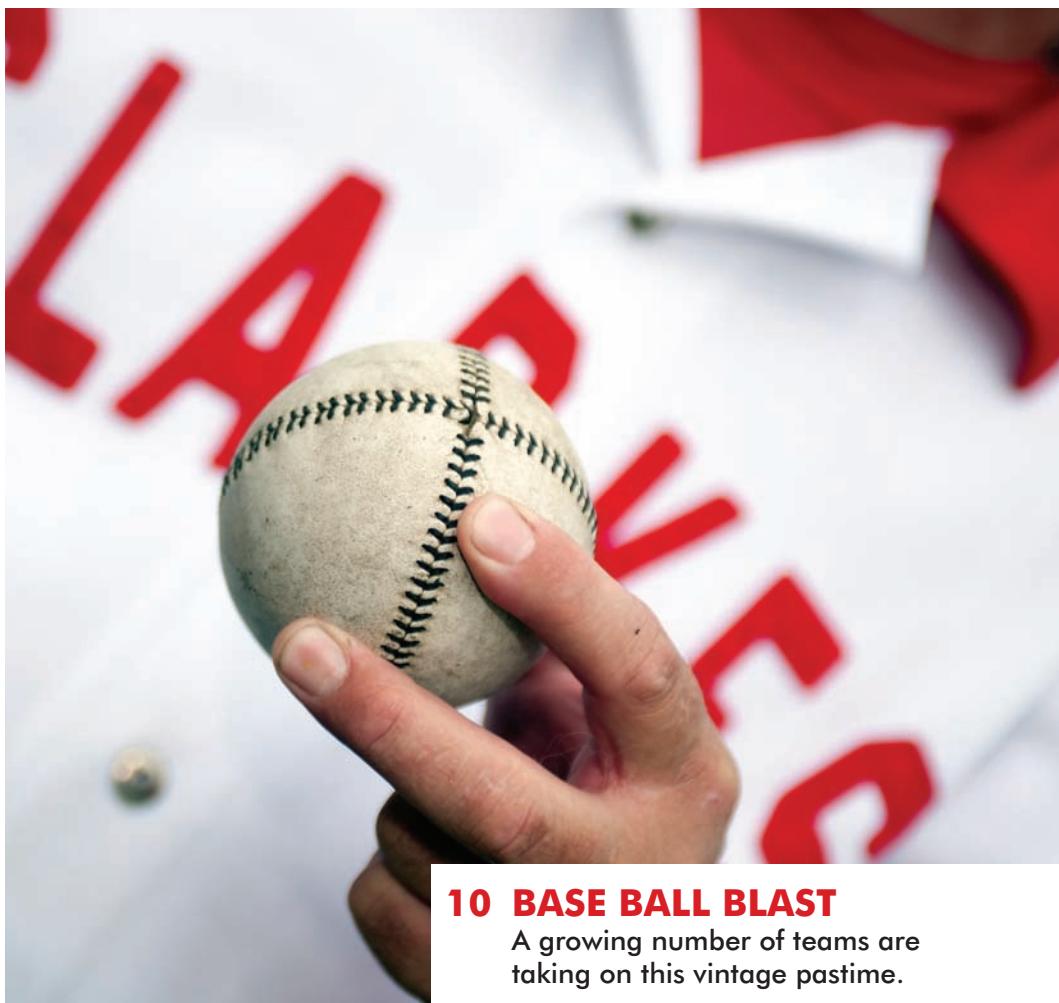
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Growing a connection with consumers

Farm organizations ramping up consumer education

One in four Illinois workers is tied to the agricultural industry. Illinois agriculture contributes more than \$6 billion to the national economy. And while recent research shows consumers care about who produces their food, they are misinformed about the Illinois farmers who raise it. As members of the Illinois rural community, we can all do our part to change that.

The Illinois Soybean Association (ISA), through soybean checkoff funding, is addressing this issue in 2011. We have projects underway at the association level and as part of a coalition of farm organizations that includes the Illinois Beef Association (IBA), Illinois Corn Marketing Board (ICMB), Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB) and Illinois Pork Producers Association (IPPA).

The goal is to capitalize on the favorable farmer image the state-wide poll found, while also tackling unfavorable farming practices perceptions. The poll was conducted by GfK Roper on behalf of these Illinois farm organizations with more than 1,100 non-farm adults. The poll was supervised by Milwaukee-based Morgan & Myers, and placed heavy emphasis on gathering opinions from moms and other influencers, especially from the Chicago area.

Respondents acknowledged that they hold Illinois farmers in substantial esteem. However, consumers shared a mistrust of modern farming practices and doubts about food production that stem from concerns about food safety and animal welfare on so-called “factory farms.”

Not surprisingly, consumers were unable to clearly define what they consider to be “factory farms,” even though they believe those are the

“... think about how you can communicate the positive messages of Illinois agriculture.”

types of farms that dominate Illinois agriculture. Respondents said, on average, that 54 percent of Illinois farm products come from “corporate farms,” versus 46 percent from family farms. The reality, based on USDA statistics, is that individual family farms and partnerships represent 94 percent of Illinois farms.

I am encouraged that seven out of 10 consumers in the poll said they felt more positive about farming when told the facts about the percentage of family-operated farms in the state. That provides opportunity for us to get the positive message out about Illinois agriculture.

Consumers are willing to listen. It’s time we look for every chance to engage in meaningful dialogue, and become the trusted source of information about how our food is grown and raised.

ISA is working on consumer education projects in 2011 that will target Illinois consumers with accurate information about soybean production and the farmers who raise soybeans. On a broader scale, the coalition plans to use social media, conventional advertising, special events and personal communications to more widely share facts and facets about family farming.

Last August, the coalition used combined resources at the Illinois State Fair to address image issues by defining for consumers a “farmer’s look.” Large-scale banners around

the fairgrounds portrayed true photos of farm men, women and children. The feedback was positive, and the coalition is working on other opportunities to showcase actual farmers and their families.

I challenge everyone living in rural Illinois to think about how you can communicate the positive messages of Illinois agriculture. Research indicates that first-hand experiences with farmers, even at a young age, make a lasting impression and cause people to view farmers more positively. Sure, taking time away from our never-ending “to-do” list to host a school field trip or talk to a school or civic group isn’t always what we want to do. But that is the type of activity that each of us can plan to do to help educate consumers about family farming.

Consumers want to know that farmers care about producing healthy, environmentally friendly food. They want to know why farmers make the decisions we do about production agriculture.

American family farmers should be the most trusted food-producing people in the world. Many of us still farm together as families or live in the same rural areas where we were raised. Often, we are on the same land as our previous generations. It’s time we share more of that good information with the consuming public. Won’t you join us in getting the word out?

Ron Moore is chairman of the Illinois Soybean Association and a soybean farmer from Roseville, Ill. Moore is a member of the McDonough Power Cooperative.



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Illinois co-ops slammed by snow and ice storm

From New Mexico to Maine, 30 states were impacted by a massive early February ice and snow storm. Here in Illinois the National Guard was called out and many county roads and some interstates were closed. The worst damage to power lines was caused by a band of ice that paralleled I-70. Almost every Illinois electric co-op had outages caused by the storm.

Ice and wind are the worst combination for power lines. Ice buildup of one-half inch can add 1,000 lbs. to a span of line. Add wind and lines begin to “gallop” up and down. Poles snap, and cross arms and lines fall.


Illinois electric co-ops worked together to repair the damage and they called in help from other states. To warn members and to keep them updated, many of the co-ops

sent out news releases, updated websites and even used Facebook and Twitter.

At Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative, Auburn, President/CEO David Stuva used all of the above along with direct messages to members served by substations impacted by the storm. In one message he told members, “As of 6:30 p.m., Tuesday evening February 1, Ameren is unable to keep their transmission lines energized, due to ice buildup on the lines and the wind causing them to gallop.”

Other co-ops also experienced transmission outages. Norris Electric Cooperative, Newton, even had a complete melt down of its Verizon telephone, cell phone and Internet service. Even its backup Internet service went down. For a period of time the co-op had only one cell phone from CellularOne to call out on.

Rick Polley, Manager of Field Services for the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives, was in charge of organizing help through the Illinois Electric Cooperative Emergency Work Plan. Polley said, “I had a conference call the first morning with about 12 statewide electric co-op associations ranging from Georgia to the Carolinas to Kentucky and Tennessee down to Louisiana and Mississippi. This was a massive storm that required a lot of help. Fortunately, we have a great co-op network to call on, and best of all to my knowledge we didn’t have any accidents during this storm.” ■



Shelby Electric Co-op's linemen get a helping hand from linemen from Jackson Purchase Energy, a co-op headquartered in Paducah, Ky.
Photo by Kevin Bernson.

Meredosia site to be upgraded to FutureGen 2.0

FutureGen is back on the charts as FutureGen 2.0. FutureGen is an industry alliance intended to demonstrate a major breakthrough in clean coal technology. After years of hurdles and cost-cutting measures, a plan that was originally intended to create a new facility in Mattoon, Ill. is expected instead to take an existing plant and retrofit it.

The new plan calls for a morphed version, taking an Ameren's 200 megawatt Meredosia coal plant and making it more cost efficient. A new boiler will create oxycombustion and steam will be piped through turbines. It will serve as the "world's first coal-fired power plant capturing carbon at a rate greater than 90 percent and be fully integrated with a pipeline and CO2 storage hub," said Kenneth Humphreys, CEO of the FutureGen Alliance.



The revised version, down from \$2.4 billion to \$1.4 billion, would supposedly be financed through multiple means with the U.S. government providing \$1 billion in stimulus funds, FutureGen Alliance supplying \$250 million and Ameren, Babcock & Wilcox and Air Liquide Process & Construction spending \$150 million to redesign and retrofit the plant.

The Meredosia project will create about 750 jobs for constructing the plant and pipelines and 125 permanent jobs to run it. The site will also include a crafts training center that will prepare workers in welding and iron work and electricians to handle the retrofitting of power plants to meet new EPA guidelines. In addition, the site will include an oxycombustion information center. ■

Source: *EnergyBiz Magazine* January/February 2011

Free food – come to 13th Illinois Products Expo – March 5-6, 2011

The "13th Illinois Products Expo ... A Food and Cooking Extravaganza" will be held on March 5-6, 2011, in the Orr Building at the Illinois State Fairgrounds in Springfield. More than 80 Illinois food companies (and a few non-food companies) will be exhibiting. Best of all the food companies will provide free food samples and most of these products will also be available to purchase at the Expo. The cost to attend is only \$5 (children 10 and under - free). Hours are from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday.

The "Illinois Wine and Cheese Garden" will once again be a featured attraction at the Expo. At least 20 Illinois wine companies will participate. They will sell wine samples (for a nominal fee) and they will sell their wine by the glass and by the bottle.

For more information contact Larry Aldag, 217-524-3012; e-mail – larry.aldag@illinois.gov. ■



How to add disaster proof home improvements

The Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS) is urging homeowners to integrate disaster-resistance into their remodeling plans this year. "Home improvements are a great way to increase a home's curb appeal and value," says Julie Rochman, President and CEO of IBHS. "However, those improvements won't mean much if the home is damaged or destroyed by a natural disaster."

"IBHS' web site, www.DisasterSafety.org includes extensive information for homeowners about the specific measures they can implement to strengthen their homes," Rochman said.

For example, you can take advantage of the opportunity re-roofing offers to strengthen your roof. For hail, wildfire and high winds, it is important to strip the old roof cover down to the sheathing. Most roofing products and particularly shingles resist hail impact best when they are installed on a smooth firm surface. In areas with a high hail risk, choose a Class 4 impact-resistant product.

If you are remodeling a portion of your house, look for ways to strengthen or protect that portion of your home so that you will have a stronger, safer area to go to if you are at home during a severe weather event. If you are remodeling a closet, consider turning it into a safe room. ■

Farmers and rural small businesses receive energy funding

Illinois Rural Development State Director Colleen Callahan announced 141 agriculture producers and small businesses in Illinois have been selected to receive a total of \$6.7 million to reduce energy consumption and utilize renewable energy. Funding is provided through USDA's Rural Energy for America Program (REAP), which was authorized by the 2008 Farm Bill.

"These guaranteed loans and grants will help farmers and rural small businesses use energy more efficiently," Callahan said. "When we reduce costs for farmers and rural small businesses, we are ultimately providing a boost to the local rural economy."

Prairie Power, Inc., with headquarters in Jacksonville, Ill., is receiving a \$98,000 grant to provide renewable energy development assistance for rural small businesses and agriculture producers. Prairie Power is a generation and transmission (G&T) co-op serving 10 Illinois distribution co-ops.

Southern Illinois Power Cooperative, with headquarters in Marion, Ill., was selected for a \$100,000 grant to perform energy audits. Southern Illinois Power is a G&T serving seven distribution co-ops. The grants to these cooperatives will assist farmers and rural small businesses evaluate their energy efficiency potential and assess renewable energy technologies and resources that can be incorporated into their operations.

For more information on the two G&T's renewable energy development and energy audit assistance, contact John Freitag, Vice President of Operations for the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives, 217-241-7973 or e-mail jfreitag@aiec.coop.

One of the other recipients was Big M Manufacturing

in Taylorville, owned by Melvin Repscher who serves on the Board of Directors for Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative in Auburn. Big M Manufacturing received a renewable energy grant to purchase a 20-kW wind turbine. Big M has been manufacturing and marketing biomass-fueled heating systems to more than 80 distributors in the U.S. since 1992. ■



Rural electric co-ops helped improve the work efficiency of farmers with electricity nearly 75 years ago. Now Illinois electric co-ops have received funding to help farmers and small rural businesses with energy audits and renewable energy project development.



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BASEBALL BLAST

Men find 'second childhood' in vintage game

By Les O'Dell

Forget about the multimillion-dollar contracts, the artificial grass, the video replay scoreboards and the designated hitter. Heck, you can even forget the gloves because a growing number of Illinoisans are taking the nation's pastime back in time.

They call the game vintage base ball, and while the modern compound-word sport is competitive and complex, the two-word version of the game is simple and subdued.

"It's all about the spirit of the game, not like baseball today," says Lee Slider, 76, of Decatur's Rock Springs Ground Squirrels Vintage Base Ball Club. "It is sandlot for adults, but we play by the rules of 1858 and use the language of the day."

Slider, who many refer to as "The Father of Vintage Base Ball in Illinois," arranged for the team's first exhibition as an educational program of the Macon County Conservation District in 1993. From there, more games and more teams followed.

"We've seen a number of clubs start," he says. "The appeal is having a good time with camaraderie and a chance to exercise just like they did in the old days. Sometimes former league players get upset that we're not more competitive."

That non-competitive spirit of the game attracts players, called ballists, of all ages.

“It’s a lot slower game and it’s more gentlemanly; it’s not nearly as intense as the majors,” explains Dan “Professor” Graber, 64, of Creston. Graber serves as pitcher – called hurler in 19th century vernacular – for the local club, the Regulators.

“The game appeals to me at my age because I can still play,” he adds.

As a retired history teacher, he says the way the game harkens back to a previous time also is a draw for him.

“We try to use the uniforms from the era. I love the history of it. This is the game as it was started. We only have 14 or 15 rules and as you play by them, you understand why they were changed.”

Ah, the rules. It takes a while for first-time spectators to understand the nuances and terms of the 1858 game. Hurlers must pitch underhanded after the batter (known as the striker) indicates where and how he would like the pitch. Balls and strikes are not called, outfielders must play straight-away for all batters and basemen – called base tenders – cannot play more

than two steps away from their bases before the ball is hit. The shortstop is called the rover and can position himself anywhere he feels is beneficial.

There are no stolen bases, batted balls that land just in front of home plate and spin into foul territory are considered fair and players are not allowed to overrun first base.

Additionally, balls caught on the first bounce are outs. This one-bounce rule is popular with players, since gloves weren’t invented yet.

“Gloves defeat the whole purpose,” says the Ground Squirrels’ Bob “Droopy Drawers” Sampson, 61. “Otherwise, you’re playing modern baseball in funny uniforms.”

The lack of hand protection causes players to approach the game a little differently.

“Being able to catch it on one bounce really helps,” he says. “Sometimes, too, you’re just better off ducking on line drives, especially at my age.”

Broken fingers and jammed digits are common. Most teams boast several players who have had some sort of hand surgery from catching the ball, which is a little bigger and just

slightly softer than a modern baseball. Sampson says vintage base ball is every orthopedic surgeon’s favorite sport.

Lance Russell, who serves as first base tender for the Murphysboro Clarkes, says throbbing and painful hands following a game led to his vintage base ball nickname: Thumbs.

It’s an unwritten rule that all players have nicknames.

“The nicknames are something that vintage base ball clubs have latched on to from the early game,” explains Jim “Weed Eater” Knoblauch, 55, of the Vermilion Voles club from Danville. “Many of the players from that era had a nickname, so now you either come self-equipped with a nickname or you earn one out on the field.”

Knoblauch’s alias came from the way he quickly found a ball that had rolled into the weeds. Todd Daniels, 31, of Springfield’s Long Nine team, goes by “Pig,” a moniker his brother gave him at age 4. And what about “Droopy Drawers” Sampson? He says the name comes from an “unfortunate anatomical incident” during batting practice, and he bemoans the fact that players don’t get to choose their own nicknames.





Graber says that it's common for players to know other teams' players by nicknames while having no idea of their real identities. The nicknames add to the on-field banter between the teams – “not braggadocious, off-putting or upsetting to the other team,” Slider says – and adds to the entertainment level of the throwback sport. In fact, applause and calls of “Well played, sir. Well played,” come from both teams' benches after a good play.

Even the umpire gets into the spirit of the game. Called an arbitrator in vintage matches, he is formally dressed (including top hat and cane), stands off to the side of the field instead of behind the catcher, who is referred to as, well, a behind. If necessary, the arbitrator will consult players or spectators before making a call. Most often, the ballists make

their own rulings, so the role of the arbitrator is more of a facilitator for the match.

“The arbitrator is sort of a master of ceremonies and helps explain to the audience what is going on,” Knoblauch explains. “He’s got to be a bit of a showman and entertain the fans between innings.”

Arbitrators have the ability to fine players or fans for ungentlemanly conduct or language. They can even levy fines of up to as much as a quarter for a bad play.

“It’s all in fun like a good-natured family get-together,” Slider adds. “Those who are too serious get frustrated because it’s not the game they’re used to playing. We have, in a sense, recreated the attitude of the 1850s before it became more of a professional game.”

Leaving the professionals to the well-manicured stadiums, vintage games can often be found in city parks, historic districts or any open field.

“No two fields are the same,” Jeffrey “Dawg” Wright, 44, of the Murphysboro Clarkes says. “Every place has its own unique characteristics. It could have a huge tree in left field, a valley in center or just be a horse pasture.”

The vintage base ball family includes both male and female players ranging in age from their teens to their 70s.

“I like the fact that it’s a type of the game that I can still play,” Knoblauch says. “All ages can be involved in the

game; our team has had as many as three father-son combinations



play, so that's a neat aspect."

Vintage base ball teams have been formed by historic districts, area museums or simply by people interested in playing. Often, one team helps another get its start by sharing suggestions and resources. Currently, squads are required to travel several hours for games, sometimes even to neighboring states. In keeping with tradition, home teams treat visitors to a meal following a match.

Many of the ballists say the game reminds them of their own days gone by.

"When you get out there and play ball it harkens back to your youth; it's just fun," Wright says. "You spend time with great guys and everyone has a good time. During the game, I feel like I'm 24 and then the next morning I feel like I'm 54. Eventually the pain goes away and by the next Saturday, you're ready to play again."

Sampson calls playing vintage base ball "a second childhood."

"I'm still playing this game that I've played since I was 6, but now I'm not trying to make some team or having a coach scream at me," he says. "In some ways it's like being 10 years old for 20 years. It's all about having fun playing the game."

Knoblauch says some players enjoy playing their childhood game; some are drawn to the historical aspects, and others like the gentlemanly nature of the game. Many, like Wright, enjoy everything about vintage base ball.

"It takes the game back to its roots; the way base ball was created in the first place. It's like going back to the past, grabbing a piece of that, and bringing it to the present day."



A Vintage Base Ball Lexicon

The vintage game has its own vocabulary, much of it as unique as the game itself. Here are some examples:

"The striker, a muckle, hit a daisy cutter to the center scout. The cranks shouted 'Huzzah' as the ace was tallied."

Translation: The batter, a power hitter, hit a sharply hit ball along the ground to center field. The fans yelled 'Hurrah' as a run was scored.

"After a ginger by the rover, the striker said, 'on the square, the behind tagged me.'"

Translation: "After an enthusiastic play by the shortstop, the batter said, 'to be truthful, the catcher tagged me.'"

"The apple was caught on the bound by the basetender. 'Two hands!' called the arbitrator."

Translation: "The ball was caught on one bounce by the infielder. 'Two outs!' called the umpire."

For more information go to The Vintage Base Ball Federation website www.vintagebbf.com.



Winter weather creates hidden dangers

Downed power lines, emergency generators and icy roads can be deadly

In our earliest recollections as children, we are told to stay away from electric cords and plug-ins. Then we get a little older and venture outside and are warned to stay away from power lines outside the house. We are also called inside during lightning storms and told not to stand beneath trees. We generally comply, but don't necessarily understand the complexity of the conductivity we are avoiding. So, let's break down the process a bit.

Is water a conductor or an insulator? If you think it's such a great conductor, understand this. When it rains, and it turns to ice on all of the lines and transformers, why then does the electrical system not burn up and fall down because of the conductivity of water?

Here's the reason.

Pure H₂O is technically an insulator and when God gives us the rain, for the most part it's pretty clean water.

When it rains and water falls on the ground, however, it sucks in minerals and chemicals like a sponge or magnet. That's what makes most of our water conductive. In fact, the difference in well water from one home to another may vary in its conductivity, purely on the basis of iron content. One home has a lot, the other has very little.

In winter, snowy conditions add another layer of complexity to the equation.

Now, what color is snow? It's white. Whenever there is snow or ice on the ground and one of our co-op lines falls down, that line has even a higher chance of being energized on the ground than normal. Why? Because it's insulated by the snow or the ice from making contact with the ground. It may not be arcing, it may however,



be very much alive and difficult to detect in the snow.

You can't hear it. You can't smell it. You can't see it. You never know if a line is energized until it's too late. So the best thing to do is stay clear of it.

Having been a lineman, I know the best thing for the homeowner to do following an ice storm where power is affected, is to wait inside until the electric co-op restores power.

Don't assume that because you don't have power that the lines are not energized. Your individual service could be down or it could be a three-phase line in front of your home.

While waiting, be very careful about using generators during outages. A generator must be installed properly with the proper transfer switch.

Besides caring for the well-being of others, think about this. If you kill somebody from generator backfeed, do you have insurance? Many insurance policies say you must be complying with codes in order to be covered. A wrongly wired, deadly generator would be in violation of the national electric code.

What about plugging a heater or some lights into the generator to help you get through the down time? As

long as you don't tie the main from your house into your own generator, you're okay. And remember fueling and ventilation safety when using a generator. Carbon monoxide from it will kill you.

To help prevent major and minor outages your co-op must have a good tree-trimming program and maintain thousands of miles of right of way. In addition to preventing outages tree-trimming also has a safety aspect.

Let me explain. If you'll notice, a tree that's touched a power line will have burn marks. That means there is current flowing into the tree and into the ground. If you are touching the tree that is bumping the line could you be electrocuted? Absolutely.

Another thing to keep in mind in winter: Roads are slippery. Should you slide off the road in your vehicle and strike a pole, the best thing to do is wait for professional assistance to arrive. Unless your car is on fire, stay put and warn passersby to stay away. Downed lines may be present.

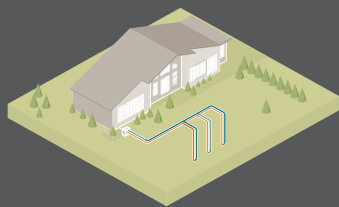
If you must exit the car due to fire, jump away from the vehicle, landing on both feet and bunny hop to safety to prevent a pathway of current from passing through your body. Don't shuffle. Don't separate your feet. If at all possible, just stay put. Call for help.

For more information contact your local electric co-op, or go to www.safeelectricity.org. ■

Kyle Finley, who worked for Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative, now farms and provides safety demonstrations to schools, companies and emergency response employees across the state. Live Line Demo, 217-474-7916, KFinley@livelinedemo.com, or go to www.livelinedemo.com.

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Working the ground

Help Mother Nature along with soil enrichment

Spring will arrive sometime this month with any luck. Experience tells us it will. We can only hope.

And with spring comes thoughts of getting into the garden as soon as possible for those with true green thumbs. For others, procrastination is the first order.

It all comes down to the soil. If it's dry and the temperatures are right, we can plant. If either condition isn't acceptable, planting is a waste of time and money. Plants and/or seeds can just sit there rotting or becoming worm and bird fodder.

The ideal soil will allow you to plant early. It warms up faster and drains quickly enough that you can till it without worrying about destroying the structure.

Does anyone have the ideal soil? Few.

Woodland soil isn't ideal. Old prairie grass soils are probably the closest to the ideal. Old, in this case, is thousands of years.

If you live in a home that's been built in the last 50 years, your soil is

Yet, you need both clay and sand, coupled with silt, to make a great soil.

also far from ideal. Even the shallow organic woodland soil is better than an urban soil.

Two important aspects about soil are organic matter and texture.

Texture refers to how much clay, silt and sand is in the soil. Sand gives the soil its gritty feeling, while clay is smooth. Sandy soils warm up fast and drain fast. They are the ideal spring soil, though they have an abundance of large pores, which makes them harder to stay moist.

Clay on the other hand holds more water than a sponge. It's hard for warmth to penetrate; rotting is a constant battle.

Yet, you need both clay and sand, coupled with silt, to make a great soil. Sadly, though, you just can't add one to the other and call it done.

Most gardeners wouldn't think about adding clay to a sandy soil. Instead, they just water more often and add organic matter.

On the other hand, those with clay soil think you can just dump a little sand in the clay and it's magically better. However, and this is a super-big however, you need to add 8 parts of sand for every part of clay. In other words, you need to mix in 8 inches of sand for each inch of clay, or 8 feet of sand for a foot of clay.

The reason is that clay will fill

in between the sand particles and you end up with something close to concrete.

That's where organic matter comes in. Organic matter is the tie that binds particles together. Add some to clay soil and it forces the clay particles a part. Added to sand, it fills in without causing a concrete-like hardness. And you don't have to go with an 8 to 1 ratio. Generally, 4 to 6 inches of organic matter tilled in is enough. Compost and composted manures are the best sources.

However, (and I emphasize this), organic matter doesn't last forever and ever like sand and clay. It will break down over time and you're left with your sand and clay again.

Breakdown speed depends on the initial quality of the soil and weather conditions. Generally though, most organic matter is broken down within a year. You might be able to find about a quarter-inch of your organic matter a year later. That's why you sometimes need to lift up the perennials you planted every three to five years and add more organic matter.

You could start by adding more organic matter in the first place, but realize it's not always the best growing media and it can be difficult to till in, though if you are intent on doubling the organic matter, do so in smaller amounts, making several tilling passes over an area while adding the material. ■

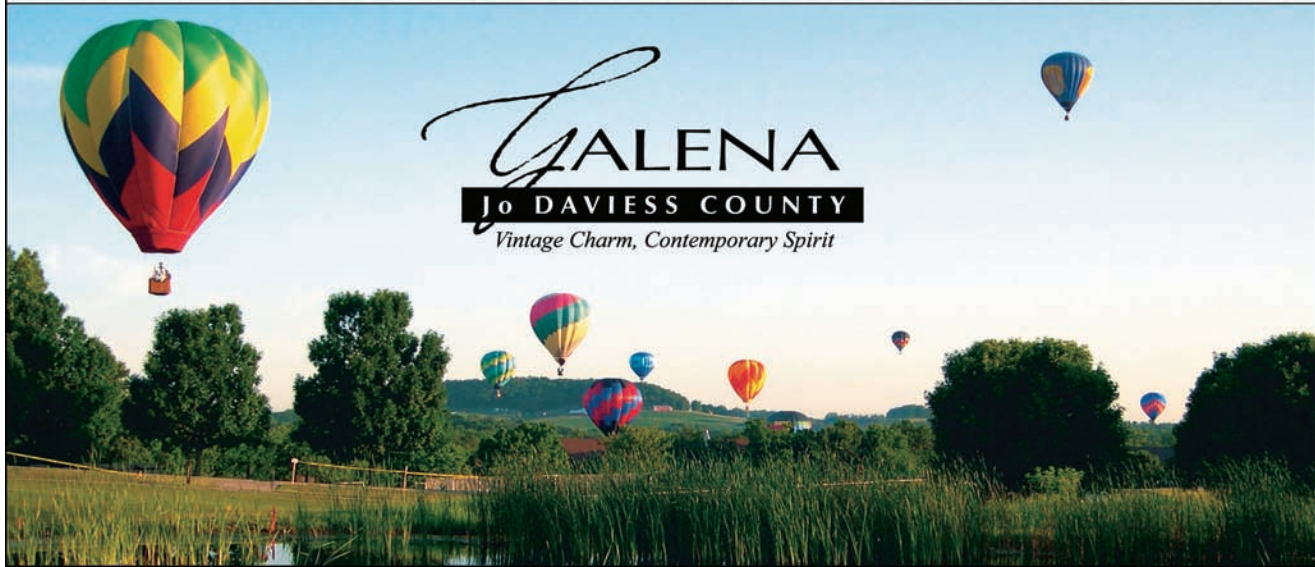


David Robson is Extension Specialist, Pesticide Safety for the University of Illinois. drobson@illinois.edu





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Bite on this tidbit for all seasons

GeoSpring heat pump water heaters deliver top-rated efficiency

May I wish you a happy springtime? Soon, we'll have warmer weather, pretty flowers, biting fish and it seems we are all more cheerful.

Those of you who read this column and listen to our "Home Remedies" radio program probably think that Professor Tom and I are greatly excited about the General Electric Hybrid water heater (now called GeoSpring) and you are right. Why are we excited? Because rarely does a new product come along that actually performs as well as advertised and is feasible, as well as good for the consumer.

Tom and I have been in the energy efficiency field for a combined 50 years and we have seen many so-called miracle products come and, mostly, go. We have seen the magic black boxes, the many different room heaters, the unbelievable sheets of aluminum foil and many others. In my opinion there are individual cases where these products may actually help, but almost never will they perform at the advertised 30, 40, or 50 percent savings.

I believe that the GeoSpring heat pump water heater will perform exactly as we wrote about in last month's column. By the way, that column drew a big response from you, the readers. The most often asked questions were, "What is the price?" and "How can it be 200 percent efficient?" Well, you can call your local electric cooperative or dealer for the current price and I will handle the efficiency question.

The engineering term that is used

"The COP of a properly installed heat pump is about 2.5 or about 250 percent efficient at 40 degrees or warmer."



to state the efficiency is "coefficient of performance" or "COP." I like to say that the "COP" tells us how efficient the product converts a unit of electricity to heat. Here are three examples.

As you try to move electricity through a metal wire it meets resistance. In some metal coils the resistance is so great that the coil glows red hot. You would recognize this in a toaster, a hair dryer, some electric room heaters and in an electric furnace. Most electric heaters have a COP of 1.00 or an efficiency of 100 percent. One unit of electricity in and one unit of heat out.

A heat pump is totally different. It uses a compressor to move heat from one location to another and it does it at higher efficiencies. Think of your refrigerator. As the compressor

runs it takes the heat out of the milk and puts that heat in the kitchen from the back of the refrigerator. A refrigerator is a "heat pump." It is just pumping heat out. The COP of a properly installed heat pump is about 2.5 or about 250 percent efficient at 40 degrees or warmer. One unit of electricity in and 2.5 units of heat out.

A geothermal heating system has a COP of about 4.00 and one model has a COP of 5.00. One unit of electricity in and 4 or 5 units of heat out. Wow, what do you think of that?

When someone asks me how a heat pump works, I usually just say "really good."

Gas water heaters do not have COP ratings because they are not electric.

They have an Annual Fuel Utilization Efficiency (AFUE) rating. The AFUE rating of most gas water heaters is 57 percent or less. That simply means that about 43 percent of the gas heat goes straight up the flue to the sky above.

I honestly believe that the GeoSpring heat pump water heater will deliver your hot water at over 200 percent efficiency. It's your choice.

That's it for this month. See you in April when the crappie are really biting. ■

Doug Rye, the "Doctor of Energy Efficiency—the King of Caulk and Talk" can be heard on several different Illinois radio stations.



LAST CHANCE TO NOMINATE

Honor a mother in your life to become ... Illinois Country Mother of the Year

What will the
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Two years ago, Doyne Miller of rural Dennison, Ill. became our first-ever Illinois Country Mother of the Year award winner. Her family nominated her for all the wonderful life-long commitments she had made to them and the obstacles she had overcome. Now, you have a chance to nominate a deserving mother for the title. If your mom or another mom in your community is an extraordinary, loving and deserving woman, nominate her for the title. Tell us in 500 words about that special mom, what she does and why she deserves to win.

Plus complete the following form and send it along with your essay. If sending your essay by e-mail, just include this information, also.



Her Name

Address

City

State

Zip

In which Illinois electric cooperative territory she resides

Organizations to which she belongs

Person nominating her

Relationship to the nominee

Your phone number with area code

Nominee's phone number with area code (we would contact her only if she wins)

Rules: The contest is open to any mother served by an Illinois electric cooperative. No purchase is necessary. The winner will be selected by committee, and featured in the May edition of the Illinois Country Living magazine.

All nomination letters submitted will be published in May on Illinois Country Living's Website at www.icl.coop.

Illinois Country Living

**DEADLINE TO SUBMIT: Entries must
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A Taste of Tradition

Who: Country Health, Inc. of Gifford, IL
Cost: \$10, including shipping
Details: hard-backed, three-ring-bound
Pages of recipes: 81
Send checks to: Barbara McFadden,
 PO Box 310, Gifford, IL 61847
 or call 217-568-7839.

Lemon Pudding Dessert

- 1 stick butter, softened
- 1 C. flour
- 1/2 C. chopped pecans
- 2 sm. ctns. Cool Whip
- 3 C. milk
- 1 (8-oz.) pkg. cream cheese
- 1 C. powdered sugar
- 2 sm. pkgs. lemon instant pudding
(can use any flavor)

Mix butter, flour and pecans together. Press into a 9x13-inch pan. Bake at 375 degrees for 20 minutes. Cool. Beat 1 carton Cool Whip, cream cheese and powdered sugar. Spread over crust. Beat pudding with milk for 2 minutes. Spread over other layers. Top with remaining carton of Cool Whip. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

Lemon Pudding Dessert

Fruited Spinach Salad

- 1 (11-oz.) can mandarin oranges
- 1/4 C. olive oil
- 3 T. raspberry fruit spread
- 1 T. red wine vinegar
- 1 (10-oz.) pkg. baby spinach
- 1 red apple, chopped
- 1 C. pecans, toasted

Drain oranges, reserving 1/2 C. juice. In a jar with a tight lid, combine oil, jam, vinegar and reserved juice; shake well. In a large salad bowl, toss oranges, spinach, apple and pecans. Serve with the dressing.

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

Asparagus Casserole

- 4 C. freshly cooked asparagus
- 2 hard-boiled eggs, chopped
- 4 T. butter or margarine
- 4 T. all-purpose flour
- 2 C. milk
- 12 Ritz crackers or 1 C. crushed potato chips

Make a white sauce by melting butter. Add flour, stir until the flour and butter are well combined. Pour in milk, stirring constantly as it thickens. Add salt and pepper to taste. Remove from heat, add chopped eggs. Mix and then gently fold in asparagus. Place crushed crackers or chips on top. Dot with butter. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. Options – Add cheddar cheese to the white sauce after you remove the sauce from heat. Broccoli or carrots can be substituted for asparagus.

Cherry-Coconut Bars

- 1 C. flour
- 1/2 C. margarine, softened
- 3 T. powdered sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 C. sugar
- 1/4 C. flour
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1/2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 3/4 C. chopped nuts
- 1/2 C. flaked coconut
- 1/2 C. maraschino cherries, drained and chopped

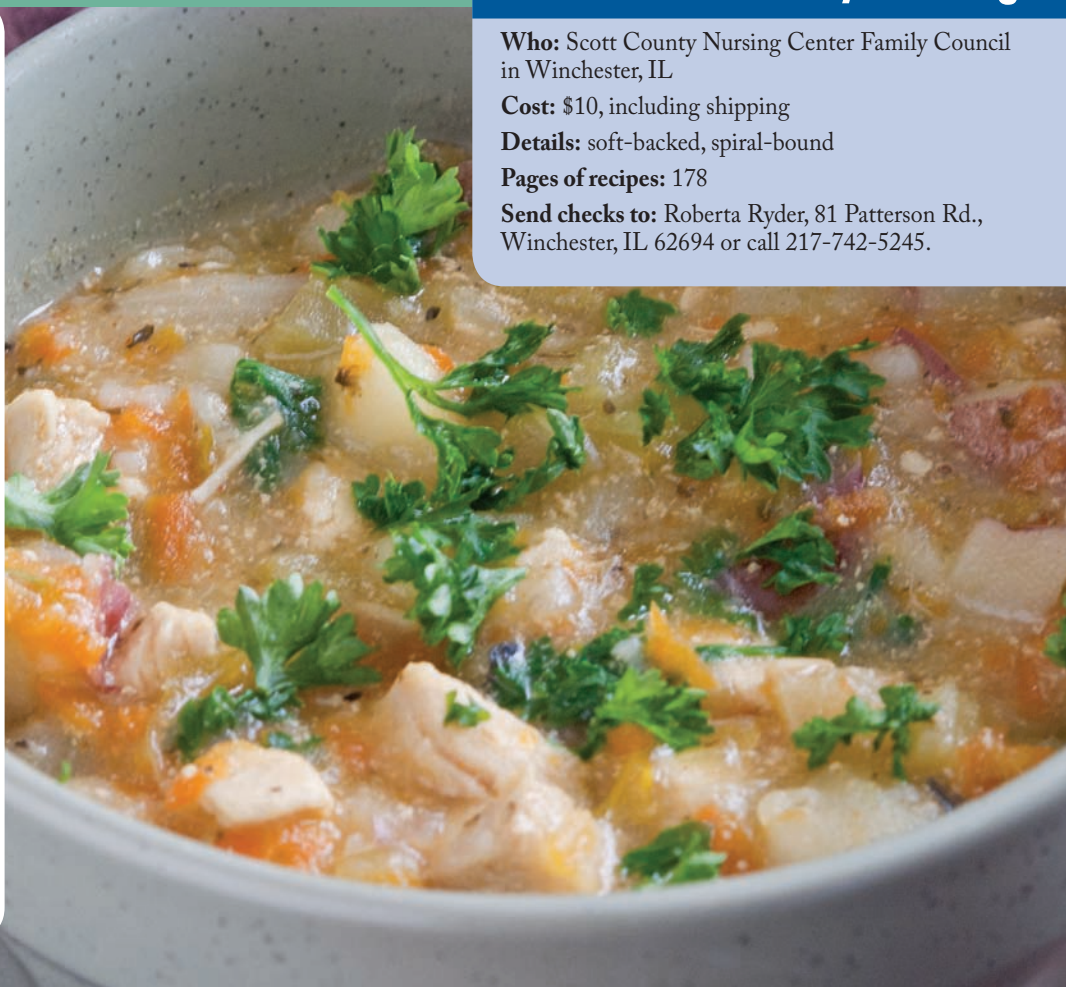
Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix 1 C. flour, margarine and powdered sugar together. Press into a greased 8x8-inch or 9x9-inch baking pan. Bake 10 minutes. Beat eggs, stir in sugar, flour, vanilla, baking powder, salt, nuts, coconut and cherries. Spread over baked layer. Bake until golden brown, 25 to 30 minutes. Cool. Cut into bars.

Down Home Family Cooking

Chicken-Vegetable Soup

1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into cubes
6 C. chicken broth, divided
1 tsp. Italian seasoning
3 garlic cloves, minced
1/4 tsp. paprika
4 sm. red potatoes, cut into 1-inch pieces
3 sm. carrots, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
5 celery ribs, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
1 med. onion, cut into wedges
2 T. chopped celery leaves
2 T. all-purpose flour
2 T. minced fresh parsley
1-1/2 tsp. lemon juice

In a large saucepan, combine chicken, 5-3/4 cups broth, Italian seasoning, garlic and paprika. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 10 minutes. Add potatoes, carrots, celery, onion and celery leaves. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 20-25 minutes, or until vegetables are tender. In a small bowl, combine flour and remaining broth until smooth; add to pan. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened. Stir in parsley and lemon juice.



Who: Scott County Nursing Center Family Council in Winchester, IL

Cost: \$10, including shipping

Details: soft-backed, spiral-bound

Pages of recipes: 178

Send checks to: Roberta Ryder, 81 Patterson Rd., Winchester, IL 62694 or call 217-742-5245.

Chicken-Vegetable Soup

Oatmeal-Apple-Raising Muffins

1 egg
1 C. raisins
1/2 C. oil
1 C. quick oats
3 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. nutmeg
3/4 C. milk
1 apple, chopped
1 C. flour
1/3 C. sugar
2 tsp. cinnamon

Beat egg; stir in raisins, oil, oats, baking powder, nutmeg, milk, apple, flour, sugar and cinnamon. Mix just until moistened. Pour into 12 greased muffin cups until 3/4 full. Bake at 400 degrees for 15-20 minutes. Serve cooled or hot with butter.

Crunchy Oven-Fried Chicken

1/4 C. butter
5 C. corn flakes
1 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper
2 tsp. paprika
1 (3 to 3-1/2 lb) cut-up broiler-fryer chicken

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Melt butter in a jellyroll pan in the oven and pour into a shallow dish. Place corn flakes, paprika, salt and pepper in a blender. Cover and blend on medium speed until mixture is a fine crumb. Pour crumbs into a shallow dish. Dip chicken into melted butter, then coat evenly with corn flake mixture. Place chicken skin side up, in jellyroll pan. Bake, uncovered, 45-60 minutes, or until juice is no longer pink when center of thickest pieces are cut.

Wacky Cake

1-1/2 C. flour
1 C. sugar
1/3 C. oil
1 T. vinegar
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. baking soda
1/4 C. cocoa
1 tsp. vanilla
1 C. cold water

Sift flour, sugar, salt, baking soda and cocoa together in a 8 or 9 inch square pan. Make three holes in dry mixture. Pour oil into one hole, vinegar into another and vanilla into the last hole. Pour cold water over all and mix in the pan. Bake at 350 degree for 30 minutes. This can be doubled for a 9x13-inch cake.

Photos by Catrina McCulley Wagner





Help! I've got a computer virus!

So there you are surfing the web, looking at the video of a cute puppy playfully attacking a mop when suddenly your screen flashes a warning: "Your computer is infected with a virus! Click here to remove it." You follow the prompts and install what you believe is a virus removal program.

Only the problem gets worse. Now, every time you boot up your computer, you are greeted with a screen telling you that you must activate the software in order to protect yourself. And, your computer won't do anything else until you do.

Oh no! You have inadvertently installed a malware/virus on your computer. What do you do now?

How do I remove a computer virus?

A fast way to check for viruses is to use an online scanner, such as Microsoft Security Essentials. Security Essentials is a free online service that helps you identify and remove viruses, clean up your hard disk and generally improve your computer's performance. Keep in mind that it won't work for every operating system. Also, Microsoft's scanner isn't the only one out there. Most major antivirus companies have something available for a free scan. However, they're not all free.

Once infected, your computer may or may not connect to the Internet. If you can connect to the Internet try the following steps:

- Go to http://www.microsoft.com/security_essentials/default.aspx
- Click the Download Now button.
- Follow the prompts to install the software.
- Allow the software to run a scan when prompted.

If you have difficulty installing Microsoft Security Essentials, click the Installation video link to watch a full download and install.

If you can't connect to the Internet, try restarting your computer in safe



mode with networking enabled by following these steps:

- Restart your computer.
- When you see the computer manufacturer's logo, press and hold the F8 key.
- On the Advanced Boot Options screen, use the arrow keys to highlight Safe Mode with Networking, and then press Enter.
- Log on to your computer with a user account that has administrator rights.

You should now be able to access the Internet to follow the steps above to install Security Essentials. However, there are viruses that prevent Internet access even after restarting in safe mode. In that case, it may be time to consult a professional who can try to remove the virus manually. Removing a virus manually can be a technical process that you should only undertake if you have experience with the Windows registry.

There are other tools out there that can help you remove viruses and malware. One common tool used in the industry is called Malwarebytes (www.malwarebytes.org.) Even if you can't access the Internet on your computer, you can download a copy of Malwarebytes on another computer and then run it without the need for the Internet.

There is no one way to guarantee your computer will be safe from viruses, and you may find yourself in over your head. When that happens, make sure to seek out a technical professional, and please make sure to do regular backups!

Doing regular backups on your files can help you avoid data loss if your computer becomes infected again. Oh! And by the way, here's a link to a video of a puppy attacking a mop: <http://bit.ly/bi7YLM>

Everybody has technical issues. Some are interesting. Some aren't. If you have an interesting technical problem that you want answered in a future edition of Powered Up, please drop me an e-mail. (I might even answer some of the uninteresting ones too.)

Ed VanHoose is the Digital Communications Administrator / IT Manager for the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in Springfield. He is a specialist in the IT field with over 12 years of experience working in leadership roles for technology based projects in Illinois and Missouri.



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Vacation cabins-Ohio River, Shawnee National Forest, Elizabethtown, IL. Cedar Hill River Cabins, Ohio River National Scenic Byway, www.cedarhillriverresort.com. 217-652-4257.

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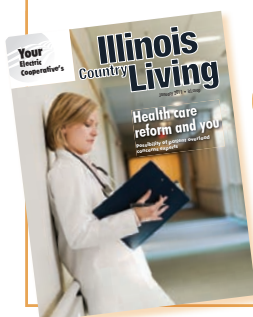
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- 2) Count words. Cost is \$30 for up to the first 20 words. \$1.50 each additional word. Ads with insufficient funds will not be printed.
- 3) Prepayment is required. Include check or money order with ad for amount due. Also include address label 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: May issue - March 21;
June issue - April 20.

We reserve the right to reject any advertisement. Ads postmarked after the deadline will be placed in the next available issue.



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A rural what?

Yes, you belong to an electric cooperative

What are rural electric cooperatives? If you've recently moved into a rural part of Illinois and this magazine shows up at your door, you might very well be asking this question.

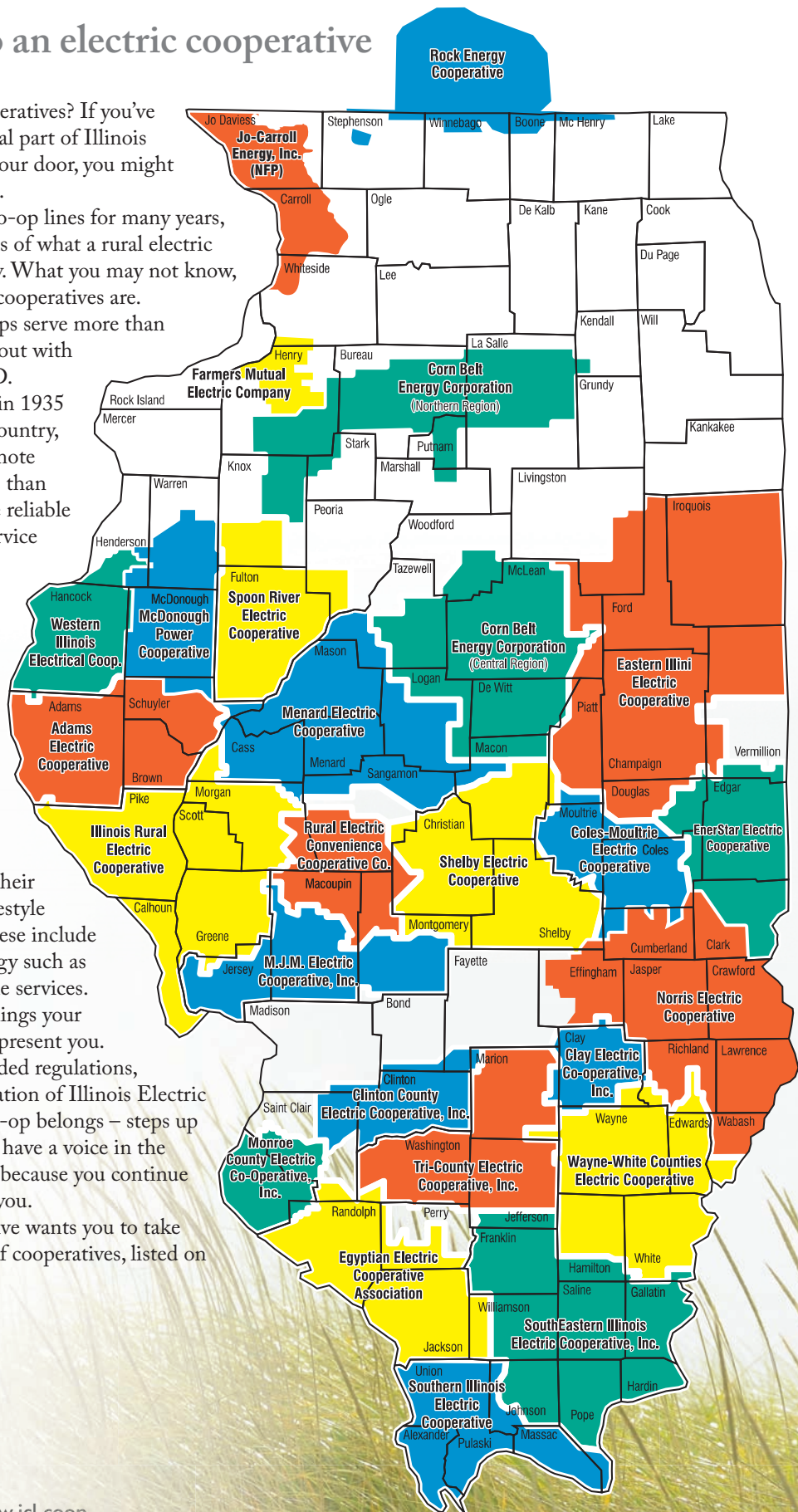
If instead, you have lived on co-op lines for many years, you have at least some basic ideas of what a rural electric cooperative is intended to supply. What you may not know, is just how wide-spread electric cooperatives are.

In Illinois, alone, electric co-ops serve more than half-a-million people. It started out with as an act by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to establish the REA in 1935 and has grown throughout the country, taking electricity to the most remote parts of the country. Today more than 900 electric cooperatives provide reliable and technologically advanced service to 42 million Americans. And it's those members who own the cooperatives and make the decisions for operating them – a successful business model by any estimation.

What's developed throughout the years, however, are much more diverse services. While providing affordable and reliable electricity continues to be each cooperative's main purpose, co-ops have expanded their operations to bring improved lifestyle services to members. Some of these include lifeline rescue and new technology such as enhanced Internet and cell phone services.

One of the most important things your cooperative continues to do is represent you. When legislators propose unfunded regulations, your cooperative and the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives – to which your co-op belongs – steps up to speak out on your behalf. You have a voice in the state and a voice in Washington because you continue to employ people who work for you.

The AIEC and your cooperative wants you to take a look at your statewide family of cooperatives, listed on the following page.



Electric Cooperative	Headquarters	No. of meters serviced	Miles of Line
Adams	Camp Point, Ill.	8,491	2,223
Clay	Flora, Ill.	3,236	951
Clinton	Breese, Ill.	5,855	1,041
Coles-Moultrie	Mattoon, Ill.	9,520	1,988
Corn Belt	Bloomington, Ill.	33,806	5,299
Eastern	Paxton, Ill.	13,731	4,522
Egyptian	Steeleville, Ill.	14,562	2,254
Enerstar	Paris, Ill.	5,352	1,517
Farmers	Geneseo, Ill.	1,519	357
Illinois Rural	Winchester, Ill.	10,555	2,935
JoCarroll	Elizabeth, Ill.	18,673	2,064
McDonough	Macomb, Ill.	5,175	1,412
M.J.M.	Carlinville, Ill.	9,233	1,722
Menard	Petersburg, Ill.	10,488	2,582
Monroe	Waterloo, Ill.	7,037	1,199
Norris	Newton, Ill.	18,996	4,048
Rock	Janesville, Wis.	27,000	1,259
RECC	Auburn, Ill.	5,779	1,345
Shelby	Shelbyville, Ill.	9,918	2,244
Southeastern	Eldorado, Ill.	23,585	3,526
Southern	Dongola, Ill.	11,658	2,120
Spoon River	Canton, Ill.	4,984	1,259
Tri-County	Mt. Vernon, Ill.	15,945	3,364
Wayne-White	Fairfield, Ill.	13,684	3,377

- 1-23, Tuesdays with Morrie/ Steel Beam Theatre** in St. Charles. 630-587-8521 or www.steelbeamtheatre.com.
- 2-30, Sonata Coda: An Exhibition of Keyboard Instruments** in Freeport. 815-235-9755, collections@freeportartmuseum.org or www.freeportartmuseum.org.
- 3, Mad Science: Star Trek Live** at Effingham Performance Center. 800-745-3000 or www.theEPC.org.
- 6, David Sedaris** in Waukegan. 847-782-2366 or www.geneseetheatre.com.
- 9, The Wonder Bread Years**, at Effingham Performance Center. 800-745-3000 or www.theEPC.org.
- 9, Beauty and the Beast** in University Park. 708-235-2222 or www.centertickets.net.
- 9-10, Fever River Railroad Spring Open House** in Freeport. 815-239-2354, stephcvb@aeroinc.net or Web site: <http://www.feverriver.org>.
- 10, In The Mood** in University Park. 708-235-2222 or www.centertickets.net.
- 10, Midwest Round-up** in Freeport. 815-235-2918.
- 11, Disney's Beauty and the Beast** in Waukegan. 847-782-2366 or www.geneseetheatre.com.
- 14, "Extra! Extra! Read All About Your Ancestors."** River Bend Senior Center, 815-589-3160.
- 15-17, President U.S. Grant's Birthday Celebration** throughout Galena. 815 777-9129 or www.galenahistory-museum.org.
- 15-17, Antique and Garden Fair** in Glencoe. 847-853-5440 or www.chicagobotanic.org.
- 15-17, Morel Mushroom Festival** in Jonesboro. 618-833-8697, ttlsr@midwest.net or www.trailoftears.com.
- 16, The Hoppers** in Waukegan. 847-782-2366 or www.geneseetheatre.com.
- 16, Rhonda Vincent & The Rage, at Effingham Performance Center.** 800-745-3000 or www.theEPC.org.
- 16, Mississippi Adventure Day** by Fever River Outfitters in Galena. 815-776-9425 or www.feverriveroutfitters.com.
- 16, Mississippi River Clean Up 2011** starts at 8 a.m. at the the Ferry Landing Boat Launch in Galena. 815-858-9100 or www.jdcf.org.
- 16-17, Stitches in Time Quilt and Needlework Show** at Quincy Senior High School in Quincy. 217-224-7763.
- 22-23, Spores N More Mushroom Festival** in Shelbyville. 217-774-2244, morel@lakeshelbyville.com or www.lakeshelbyville.com.
- 23, Ecumenical Easter Egg Hunt** at Washington Park in Quincy. 217-228-8696.
- 23, Spring Fashion Show and Luncheon** at the Apple Canyon Lake Clubhouse in °Apple Canyon Lake. 815-492-2238 or www.applecanyonlake.org.
- 26, All Community Read: The Luck of the Irish: Our Life in Country Clare**, www.cityoffulton.us or 815-489-4545.
- 29-30, US Grant Pilgrimage in Galena.** 815-397-0210 or www.usgrantpilgrimage.org.
- 29-5/1, Long Grove Chocolate Fest** in Long Grove. 847-634-0888.
- 30-5/1, Dogwood Festival** in Quincy. 217-222-7980 or www.quincychamber.org.
- 30, Cache River Nature Festival** in Cypress. 618-634-2231 or www.cacherivernaturefest.org.
- 30, Party for the Planet** at Cosley Zoo in Wheaton. 630-665-5534 or www.cosleyzoo.org.

To be considered for inclusion, please submit events in the format used above. Preference is given to events sponsored by non-profit entities. Submitting an event is not a guarantee of publication. Photos are welcome, but will not be returned unless a self-addressed and stamped envelope is provided. Events are subject to change, so please contact the event sponsor for confirmation.

Deadline: March 15 for June Events. **Mail to:** Illinois Datebook, PO Box 3787, Springfield, IL 62708. E-mail to: Lrigoni@aicc.coop

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