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# Illinois Country Living

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800-593-2432 • aieinfo@aiec.coop

**For address changes contact your  
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## President/CEO

Duane Noland

## Chairman of the Board

Kevin Logan

## Editor

John Lowrey

## Assistant Editor

Valerie Cheatham

## Advertising Coordinator/

## Graphic Designer

Sandy Wolske

## Graphic Designers

Jennifer Danzinger, Kathy Feraris,  
Chris Reynolds

## Circulation Coordinator

Connie Newenham

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## Let's change how we make state budgets

### Illinois can't keep kicking the budget can down the road

The state budget is in a terrible mess. According to the Fiscal Futures Project, Illinois has a growing gap between sustainable revenues and projected spending levels and the largest unfunded pension liability in the nation. However, tax increases, spending cuts and aggressive pension changes alone are not enough to fix Illinois' problems permanently.

In May 2014, the General Assembly was in turmoil as they debated next year's budget (FY 2015). They debated whether to extend the previously increased income tax rates and how much they could spend while balancing the budget.

The Fiscal Futures Project (FFP) estimated that Illinois was starting from a deficit of roughly \$1 billion in last year's budget (FY 2014) and that the deficit would steadily deteriorate and reach \$14 billion in Fiscal Year 2025. This chronic condition — a structural deficit — predates the recession and constrains our state government's ability to function properly.

On May 30, 2014, the General Assembly approved the FY 2015 budget. On June 30, Governor Pat Quinn signed the budget into law effective July 1. So, what did the Governor and General Assembly do?

The new budget did not extend the income tax rates that will begin phasing out January 1, 2015 and did not cut spending. As a result, there will not be enough revenue to pay for the operating expenses. Instead, the budget authorizes borrowing from next year's budget (FY 2016) and shifting revenue from last year's budget (FY 2014) to cover this year's operating expenses (FY 2015).

The Governor and the General Assembly adopted a deficit budget and put off the tough decisions to

balance the budget. On July 3, the Illinois Supreme Court signaled it will likely declare recently enacted pension reforms as unconstitutional. Kicking the can down the road just got more costly in the long-term in the face of having to redo pension reform. The pressure for a more comprehensive solution to the state budget and pensions will be intense.

As a former state legislator, I have seen the complex budgeting process firsthand and the odds are oftentimes stacked against making sound financial decisions.

We need to fundamentally restructure the way we do budgeting in this state. For too long, complex budgetary processes have obscured a true and full description of how and where the state gets revenue and spends its resources. This has allowed — intentionally or not — the state to overpromise public goods and services to its residents while failing to fund them adequately.

I believe we can help solve the budget mess by improving the budgetary process. The following ideas for statutory change are recommendations developed by the Fiscal Futures Project.

- 1) **Clarity of process.** We should clearly spell out the timetable for each step of the budget process and the parties responsible.
- 2) **Use long-term budgeting.** We need a budget process that makes it possible to develop longer-term budget plans for the people of Illinois by adopting state budgets for at least two years instead of year-to-year. We need to establish priorities in the context of multi-year forecasts of sustainable revenues for a broad-based and consistently defined budget.

- 3) **Open up the budget process.** We should open up the budget process for independent review and analysis. We need accurate, easily understood and consistent budget reports without political bias. The budget reports should be ready and accessible for independent review and analysis before the budget becomes law.
- 4) **Consolidate reporting of general and special funds.** We should stop limiting our focus on so-called general revenue funds (GRF) budgeting, rather we should consolidate reporting of general and special funds. There would be less confusion than now exists from fund transfers or from shifting expenditure items into and out of the general funds budget from one year to the next.

By making the state budget process more open, reliable and straightforward, good legislators will be able to do what is best for people of Illinois. Moreover, as the legislature and Governor balance the budget, it will bring back confidence in our state government and make it better for democracy. Into the bargain, the state of Illinois will be more likely to return to sound fiscal policy in the long term. ■

Richard J. Winkel, Jr. is the Director of the Office of Public Leadership, Institute of Government and Public Affairs at the University of Illinois. He assists and promotes the Fiscal Futures Project, whose research team is dedicated to informing the public and policy-makers about state budget transparency and long-term budget concerns.





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## Book to feature Illinois Centennial and Sesquicentennial Farms

The publisher of an upcoming book honoring historic family-owned farms in Illinois says initial response to their publicity campaign has been overwhelming, but a large number of farm owners still haven't heard about the project.

The coffee-table book, "Illinois Historic Farms: Honoring the State's Enduring Heritage of Family-Owned Farms," will feature histories of family-owned farms that have been certified by the Illinois Department of Agriculture as Centennial or Sesquicentennial Farms, as well as photos and stories documenting the history of agriculture in the state.

Editor Charles Francis of Acclaim Press says, "Submissions from those who want their farm histories included in the book have been pouring in." But a large number of the promotional mailings have been returned undelivered to the publisher, and they are hearing from local sources that many Centennial and Sesquicentennial Farm owners haven't gotten a brochure.

Because of the mailing issues, the publisher mailed out

an updated brochure in July with the submission deadline extended to August 31.

Any Centennial or Sesquicentennial Award-winning farm that hasn't received a promotional mailing should call Acclaim Press at (877) 427-2665 to request a brochure. There is still time for farms that meet the criteria to complete the Illinois Department of Agriculture's certification process and be included in the book. Call IDOA Centennial and Sesquicentennial Farms Program Coordinator Delayne Reeves at (217) 524-9129 or go to the program's website, [www.agr.state.il.us/centennial-sesquicentennial-farms/](http://www.agr.state.il.us/centennial-sesquicentennial-farms/) for details on the program. For more information visit [www.acclaimpress.com](http://www.acclaimpress.com). ■



## Co-op commitment to community in action

Members of the Menard County Fair Board are more confident about the smooth operation of at least one large part of the fair this year thanks to the completion of a major electrical system upgrade. The fairgrounds is unique from most in that it owns and operates its own electrical system, which was purchased from a military base and installed at the grounds in the early 1950s.

Fair Board Member Ben Hollis says, "We had trouble with different parts of the electrical system over the years, but between our electrician and help from Menard Electric Cooperative, we were able to keep things going. It came to the point though where we weren't wondering if something would fail, but when it would fail. Fortunately, we don't have to worry anymore."

The new system is safer as well as more dependable and efficient. Hollis says the secondary system

replacement was completed by Edge Electrical Solutions and he thanks Daniel Edge for his donation of a portion of his time and equipment.

"The primary system rebuild required all new poles, transformers,



primary conductor, hardware and more," says Hollis. Several employees from Menard Electric Cooperative have worked closely with Hollis and volunteered their efforts for the past several years, and again this year, to complete the project. "We can't thank the linemen from Menard Electric enough. If it weren't for them, this project wouldn't have ever been possible," says Hollis.

Menard Electric Leadman Brandon Blair worked on the project and says, "They needed the work done. The co-op was generous to let us use the equipment and we donated our time. It was as simple as that."

Menard Electric Cooperative General Manager Lynn Frasco says, "This is a great example of when all the members of a community work together, a much needed project can be completed to benefit the community." ■



# Record attendance for 50th NRECA Youth Tour

Seventy-five Illinois students recently returned from the annual “Youth to Washington” Tour, held June 13-20. This event, sponsored by the electric and telephone cooperatives of Illinois since the late 1950s, is an introduction to our democratic form of government and cooperatives for rural youth.

This year Illinois celebrated its 55th year of the tour. NRECA’s Youth Tour turned fifty.

The annual event continues a tradition that began following a speech by then-Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson, D-Texas, at the 1957 National Rural Electric Cooperative Association’s (NRECA) Annual Meeting in Chicago. The future president urged electric cooperatives to send their young people to the nation’s capital to remind members of Congress that electric co-ops are more than just poles and wires, they are people.

On this special anniversary of the tour, students met with their Congressional representatives and joined more than 1,644 young leaders from across the country — a number topping any previous tour. In addition to the Capitol, they also visited Arlington National Cemetery, the Washington National Cathedral, several Smithsonian Museums, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the World War II

Memorial, memorials to Presidents Lincoln, Jefferson, Washington and Roosevelt, the National Archives, the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, the Newseum and a number of other historical sites.

During the trip, Wyatt Reid, from Rock Energy, was chosen by his peers to represent Illinois on the Youth Leadership Council (YLC) of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. The YLC is a year-long appointment and Reid will represent all Illinois cooperatives at national and state meetings and events in the year ahead.

“The Youth Tour is the highlight of the summer for many students, and for some a life-changing trip,” said Kristin Banks, Coordinator of Youth Programs for the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives. “These students gain a first-hand understanding of the legislative process and make connections with others from across the country and state that will last a lifetime. Our youth are our future, and we need to give them these learning experiences.”

For more information about the Youth to Washington Tour and more pictures go to [www.aiec.coop](http://www.aiec.coop) and click on Youth at the top of the page. ■

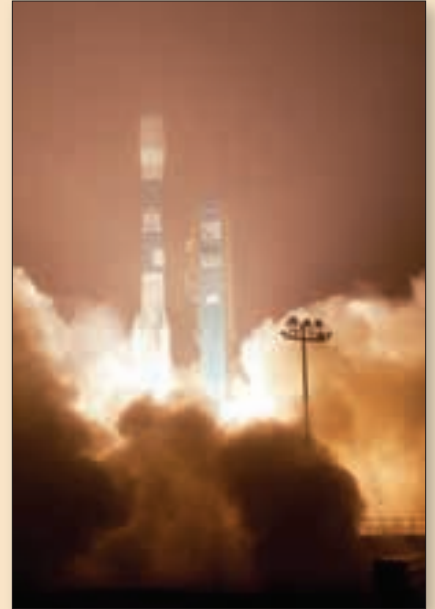




## Orbiting Carbon Observatory-2 to monitor Earth's vital signs

The Orbiting Carbon Observatory-2 (OCO-2), NASA's first mission dedicated to studying carbon dioxide in Earth's atmosphere, lifted off from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California on July 2. The two-year mission will help scientists unravel key mysteries about carbon dioxide and produce the most detailed picture to date of natural sources of carbon dioxide, as well as their "sinks" - places on Earth's surface where carbon dioxide is removed from the atmosphere. The observatory will study how these sources and sinks are distributed around the globe and how they change over time.

OCO-2 is the second of five NASA Earth science missions to be launched this year. NASA monitors Earth's vital signs from land, air and space with a fleet of satellites and ambitious airborne and ground-based observation campaigns. NASA develops new ways to observe and study Earth's interconnected natural systems with long-term data records and computer analysis tools to better see how our planet is changing. ■



## Bipartisan effort could expedite river navigation improvements

U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL), U.S. Senator Mark Kirk (R-IL), U.S. Representative Cheri Bustos (D-IL) and U.S. Representative Rodney Davis (R-IL) today introduced bipartisan, bicameral legislation to improve the nation's water infrastructure - including locks and dams along the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers - through public-private partnerships that would expedite projects and save taxpayers money.

The Water Infrastructure Now Public-Private Partnership Act would create a pilot program to explore agreements between the Army Corps of Engineers and

private entities as alternatives to traditional financing, planning, design and construction models. The Army Corps of Engineers estimates a \$60 billion backlog of outstanding projects that will take decades to complete without outside investment.

"Over five years ago, I worked with my colleagues to authorize a program to ensure safer, more reliable and more efficient navigation along the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers by expanding and modernizing the locks and dams," said Durbin. "Unfortunately, the first benefits of this modernization won't be felt until 2047 - and that was the prediction before sequestration. It's clear we need a new model - one that speeds up the process of planning and constructing projects and brings to the table greater private investment."

"The Illinois and Mississippi rivers are the lifeblood of the Midwest's economic engine," said Senator Kirk. "At a time when the Army Corps of Engineers is facing severe funding shortfalls and a growing backlog of authorized projects, we need to explore new ways to bring private support to our public assets. This legislation allows important lock and dam and flood control projects the opportunity to engage in a public-private agreement for project management, keeping costs down and speeding construction." ■







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**TOGETHER WE SAVE**

# Life in The **Sandwich** Generation *Crushed between two worlds*

by Nancy McDonald



**I**t was the 90s. Divorced, and living in a two-bedroom upstairs apartment with her then six-year-old daughter, Ashley, the youngest of her three children, Marsha Satorius of Petersburg suddenly found herself a parent of yet another child—her mother, Dorothy Kemper, a woman in her mid-70s with early-stage dementia. Although Satorius worked as a fulltime nurse, she took her mother in, never imagining the roller coaster she'd ride for the next nine years.

When her mother was no longer able to climb the stairs to the apartment, Satorius purchased a three-bedroom home. She was able to leave her mother at home while she worked until full-blown dementia set in, then things got tricky. She would make lunch for her mother before she left for work, and her younger brother who worked nearby would check on her at noon. When leaving her mother alone all day became dangerous,

Satorius hired her good friend, Joyce, who was a Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) to sit with her for six hours each workday. But, that left her mother alone for one or two hours at the end of each day.

Satorius remembers one particular day well. As usual, she was in a rush to get home from work. She came in the door expecting to see her mother waiting for her. But, she wasn't there! Panic stricken, she began frantically looking for her. Suddenly Satorius heard a strange noise coming from the kitchen. She realized in horror that the door to the basement was open. As she peered through the doorway, she could see her mother's frail frame banging her walker against the wall, as she tried to maneuver down the stairs to the basement. Satorius shouted in a panicked voice, "What are you doing?" Her mother answered weakly, "Oh, there you are. I was looking for you." Although her mother laughed about

the incident, Satorius' knees nearly buckled as she realized how disaster had been averted, and the many "what-ifs" ran through her mind. Her mother was OK—this time, but she was worried and exhausted, and just wanted to scream. She still needed to fix dinner for her mother and Ashley, and there would be clean up and laundry to do. She prayed that her mother wouldn't be in "a mood" so she could get her to bed quickly. At midnight, feeling like a small tarp stretched across a football field, Satorius finally collapsed into bed, knowing that things would be just as hard, if not harder, the next day.

If this sounds familiar, you're part of the "Sandwich Generation," a growing number of primarily middle-aged women who are still raising children while caring for their elderly parents. You never imagine that at age 50 you'll be working and parenting your parents, your children and maybe



even your children's children. With this scenario, someone is bound to be neglected, and chances are it is you. Crushing guilt is the new norm because there's no way you can spread yourself thin enough to be everything to everyone all the time.

So, why is this the new reality? In the past, families weren't as mobile. They cared for their elderly or disabled relatives until they died at home. And neighbors also watched out for the elderly in their communities. But today in many households, both parents work, and with improved health-care, people are living longer. The price of long-term healthcare continues to escalate, while the need for long-term care facilities and home healthcare workers, especially in rural America, is struggling to keep up with demand.

Since it can be hard to find reliable people who can provide in-home care, Satorius is thankful that Joyce was

able to watch her mother. Although she paid Joyce, the cost was considerably lower than if she had hired a service to send someone out, especially to an outlying area. She says, "In our local paper, I see ads all the time for a family needing help Monday through Friday, four hours per day, for elderly person in their home. So there are people still reliant on the right kind of people with good intentions and are willing to take care of older people in their homes."

Holding down a fulltime job, raising a young daughter and coming home every night to chaos related to someone with severe dementia was overwhelming. Although Satorius worked as a nurse, it was difficult for her to separate the person she was at

work and the person she was at home. She explains, "Clinically I got it. This is her dementia and this is what's going on. But the daughter in me really struggled because Mom would

**At midnight, feeling like a small tarp stretched across a football field, Satorius finally collapsed into bed, knowing that things would be just as hard, if not harder, the next day.**

have times when she'd be very angry. I found myself angry at her and angry at my life. I'd ask myself, 'Why am I doing this?'" On the really bad days, she cried herself to sleep. She reached out to her brothers, who were helpful, but the lion's share of her mother's care continued to fall on her.

Unless this is your reality, you can't imagine the emotional stress of watching a loved one who lives with you deteriorate both mentally and physically. Satorius' mother would drift between the real world and a world she created from her imagination, and the reality of living in a place that bore no resemblance to the home she was forced to leave when her husband died. As her cognition declined, she became more and more confused and at times, angry. She would sometimes think a man she saw on TV was her son. Satorius would say, "Mom, we have my brothers, David and Dennis." But her mother would get angry, and say, "No, it's the other one." Sometimes her mother would hear people singing and imagine that she saw children. Satorius would ask her what the children looked like and were wearing and what music the people were singing. She was relieved that her mother was hearing hymns. At least it wasn't music she hated.

Ashley was a real trooper during the years her grandmother lived with them. Although Satorius and Ashley discussed the situation a lot, Ashley sometimes wished her Grandmother



*Marsha Satorius, who is now the Director of Nursing at Concordia Village Care Center in Springfield, takes a moment to chat with resident Robert Rhoads while checking his blood pressure.*

wasn't there so she could have her mother all to herself. "We talked about that, and she felt guilty for feeling that way. I said, 'You can't feel bad about that. It is all consuming sometimes taking care of Grandma.'" There were times when Ashley would go and stay with her friends just to have a desperately needed break away from the situation, and Satorius felt guilty because she was jealous that her daughter was able to escape the mayhem at home, and she couldn't.

Circumstances eventually forced Satorius to put her mother into the care center where she worked at the time. Some people might question why she hadn't done that sooner. Satorius explains that she didn't come from a wealthy family so money was tight, but she always thought she'd be able to care for her mother. She thought, "I'm a nurse, I'm a mother and I'm a daughter. I'm all these things to all these people and I need to continue to do that, and what's wrong with me that I can't do this?" Only someone in that situation could understand that her body had kicked into survival mode just to get through each day. There was no time or energy to look realistically at the situation.

Rarely will anyone say they want to go into assisted living or a nursing home, and that makes it hard for their children, especially if they haven't had a conversation with their parents about long-term care and end-of-life decisions. Time slips away, and before anyone realizes it, their parents could become physically or mentally disabled, they may not be comfortable discussing financial decisions with family members, or could be in denial about what will come next. Or worse, they might think that everything will just work out. By then, there are fewer options and assets that could have been protected to support them in their later years are no longer available.

**"I'm a nurse, I'm a mother and I'm a daughter. I'm all these things to all these people and I need to continue to do that..."**

Springfield-based Elder Attorney David Edwards says that estate planning is a must. "Some people may think of estate planning as what someone like Bill Gates does." But an estate can represent any amount of money or personal property. Edwards advises, "We have to plan ahead so the people who come after us know what to do and have the authority to do it."

Most people know about wills and to name beneficiaries for their financial assets, but they may not be clear about things like long term care insurance. Edwards says, "Long term care insurance is the best way to protect yourself. It opens up a lot of other opportunities because with a good policy, you can have in-home care, or care at any facility-assisted living or nursing home. Medicaid is a lot more restrictive when it comes to where you can go and Veterans Administration also has some limits." Hybrid policies that are life insurance policies with long-term care riders have become increasingly popular. Edwards explains, "The nice thing about the hybrid policies is you have a life insurance policy, and if you need long term

care assistance, you can draw it down. If you don't need it, or pass away before you use it, you can pass it along to your kids because it isn't a 'use it or lose it' plan."

Satorius agrees that having a long-term care and financial plan, as well as a conversation about end-of-life wishes with loved ones, is crucial. She is in the process of working on her own plan and is starting the conversation with her children. But it's difficult because no one really wants to face their own, or their parents', mortality. But the earlier that discussion begins, the better the future outcome will be.



*Art and Dorothy Kemper, Marsha Satorius' parents, lived in rural Petersburg until Art passed and Dorothy moved in with Marsha.*

What advice does Satorius give to people who are sandwiched between two generations? She says, "Having a good friend who will love and listen to you is crucial." She says that keeping a sense of humor will allow you to accept that you're not perfect. And journaling has been helpful for her. She explains, "I learned what a flash drive was. I put one in and just started journaling because I needed to pour all that emotion out." She's told her daughters about it and hopes they'll read it and that it will be helpful for them in the future. And finally, she recommends relying on your faith for strength.

Does Satorius look back at the years her mother lived with her with regret? "No, while trying to juggle a career, my family and my mother, I really felt that I was part of the Sandwich Generation," she explains. "But looking back, I wouldn't do anything any differently. I did the best that I could, and I'm glad I did it."





## Helpful resources for overstressed caregivers:

- **A Place for Mom:** ([newsletter@aplaceformom.com](mailto:newsletter@aplaceformom.com)) An e-newsletter that provides senior care resources, appropriate senior housing options, information regarding symptoms of dementia and Sundowner's symptoms, and articles from a variety of experts who offer up-to-date guidance for caregivers.
- **Senior Helpline:** (1-800-252-8966, M-F, 8 am to 5 pm) A toll-free number that provides a range of services to anyone who is 60 years of age, or older. Suspected elder abuse can also be reported here.
- **Eldercare locator:** (1-800-677-1116, M-F, 8 am to 7 pm) Helps friends and families easily access information about community services for older people.
- **Elder attorneys:** Attorneys who specialize in areas of law that involve representing, counseling, and assisting seniors, people with disabilities, and their families in connection with a variety of legal issues, from estate planning to long term care issues.
- **Potential tax benefits:** Search on the Internet for the words "turbotax, elderly dependents." There, you'll find sites that will provide information detailing potential tax benefits you could receive for caring for your elderly parent, or paying for their medical costs. The benefits may be applicable regardless of whether they live with you, or not.
- **Free tax preparation for elderly and low income families:** ([www.revenue.state.il.us/individuals](http://www.revenue.state.il.us/individuals)) Once you bring up the page, in the search box in the upper right corner of the page, type in the words "free tax preparation for elderly." This will bring up a listing of locations in Illinois where the service is available.

## Grounding is basic to safe electrical systems

### Ungrounded wiring in older homes could be hazardous

Each year, household wiring and lighting cause an estimated average of 32,000 home fires. On average, these fires result in 950 injuries, 220 deaths and nearly \$674 million in property damage, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

If you have an older home, you may have tried to plug in an electronic device or appliance, only to find you have a plug with three prongs and an outlet with just two holes. This probably means the outlet, and possibly the entire home's electrical system, is not grounded. Having ungrounded outlets or an electrical system that is not properly grounded can be dangerous and not up to local code.

Electricity naturally flows to the earth, or ground, and will do so through anything that will conduct current. That third prong on the plug is there to provide a path for the electricity to travel to ground if there is a fault in the electrical device. This often trips a breaker or blows a fuse and cuts off the electricity to that circuit, saving the appliance or electronic device—and you—from damage.

As Executive Director of the Energy Education Council and its Safe Electricity program, I want you to know that ungrounded electrical systems provide little or no protection from faults which could lead to damaged electrical equipment or injuries. Don't forget that even household current can kill.

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) there are two kinds of grounding: 1) Electrical circuit or system grounding, which is accomplished when one conductor of the circuit is connected to earth to protect the circuit, and 2) Electrical equipment grounding or equipment grounding. This is accomplished

when all metal frames of equipment and enclosures containing electrical equipment or conductors are grounded by means of a permanent and continuous connection or bond. This provides a path for dangerous fault current to return to the system ground should an insulation failure take place.

If you believe the outlets in your home are not properly grounded, one sure fix to the problem is to rewire the entire home. Other fixes, like installing Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) may allow the outlet to work, and actually be up to code, but do not supply the safety testing feature of a grounded outlet. In addition, the next homeowner may think the outlet is grounded, when in fact it is not. Your best bet is to discuss all of your options with the help of a professional electrician. In the meantime, here are some safety tips to keep in mind:

- ❗ Never remove the third grounding prong on an appliance plug. The plug is there to conduct voltage to ground in the event of a short circuit in the electrical device.
- ❗ Adapter plugs should only be used on a temporary basis. When using these devices, make sure the small metal circle on the bottom contacts the screw in the middle of the outlet.
- ❗ Do not try to install a grounded outlet in an ungrounded receptacle.
- ❗ If you have invested in costly, sensitive electronics (i.e., a computer, a high-definition TV), keep in mind that power surges carry a greater risk with older, ungrounded wiring. To protect your



*This improperly wired overhead lamp switch reveals a potential home danger. Electrical code requires wire nuts for connections, but these connections have been taped. The wires could become exposed and touch the lamp's metal base, resulting in electrical shock.*

equipment, talk to a professional electrician about wiring upgrades and surge protection.

The National Electric Code states, "Grounding is to ensure that the electrical system is safe against electric shock and fires by limiting the voltage (from) lightning, line surges, or unintentional contact with higher-voltage lines and....ground-fault."

The safety of you, your family, and your expensive appliances and electronics could be at risk if your home is not properly grounded.

Make sure your home is safe. For more electrical safety information, go to [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org). ■

**Molly Hall is Director of Safe Electricity. E-mail [molly-hall@SafeElectricity.org](mailto:molly-hall@SafeElectricity.org). Safe Electricity is a public awareness program of the Energy Education Council. [www.EnergyEdCouncil.org](http://www.EnergyEdCouncil.org)**





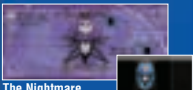
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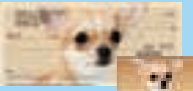


The Nightmare Before Christmas - 00531  
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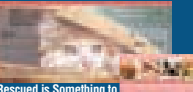
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Faithful Friends - Chihuahua w/verse "You look at me with eyes of love" - 00309 One image. Leather Cover and Labels - 00309



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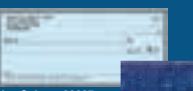
Comical Cats w/verse "Blossoming with Purr-sonality!" - 00570  
Leather Cover and Labels - 00570



Reflections - 00125  
Leather Cover and Labels - 00125



Chevron Chic - 00678  
Fabric Cover and Labels - 00678



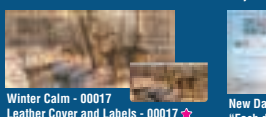
Blue Safety - 00027  
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Cowboy Round Up - 00380  
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Lena Liu's Flights of Fancy - 00007  
Leather Cover and Labels - 00007



Winter Calm - 00017  
Leather Cover and Labels - 00017



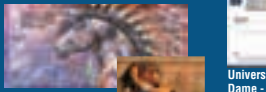
Faith, Hope, Christ - 00633  
Fabric Cover and Labels - 00633



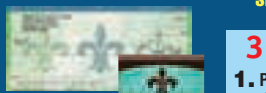
Best of Thomas Kinkadee - 00590  
Eight images. Leather Cover and Labels - 00590



Seasons of the Owl - 00739  
Leather Cover and Labels - 00739



Painted Ponies - 00600  
Leather Cover and Labels - 00600



Fleur de Lis - 00589  
Leather Cover and Labels - 00589



Spirit of the Wilderness - 00024  
Leather Cover and Labels - 00024



Imperial - 00165  
One image. Leather Cover and Labels - 00165



Parchment - 00612  
Burgundy Leather Cover - 00030-004  
Labels - 00032-008



Live, Laugh, Love, Learn w/verse "Life is not measured by the breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away" - 00332  
Leather Cover and Labels - 00332



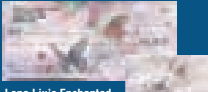
New Day w/verse "Each day brings hope!" - 00447  
Leather Cover and Labels - 00447



Challis & Roos  
Awesome Owls - 00337  
Leather Cover and Labels - 00337



Autism: Imagine - 00374  
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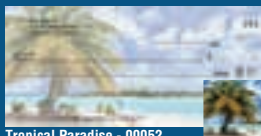
Lena Liu's Enchanted Wings - 00026  
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University of Notre Dame - 00706  
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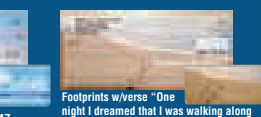
Chicago Cubs - Major League Baseball - 00145  
Leather Cover and Labels - 00145  
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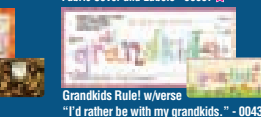
Tropical Paradise - 00052  
Leather Cover and Labels - 00052



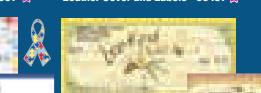
America's National Parks - 00055  
Leather Cover - 00151  
Labels - 00055



Footprints w/verse "One night I dreamed that I was walking along the beach with the Lord." - 00667  
Fabric Cover and Labels - 00667



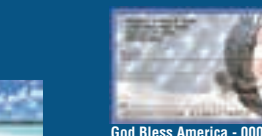
Grandkids Rule! w/verse "I'd rather be with my grandkids." - 00437  
Leather Cover and Labels - 00437



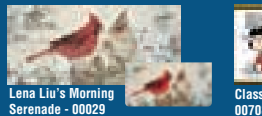
Just Bee w/verse "Bee Kind" - 00386  
Leather Cover and Labels - 00386



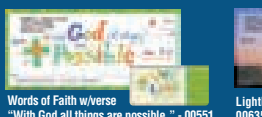
Fashion Safari - 00537  
Leather Cover - 00452-004  
Labels - 00537



God Bless America - 00006  
Leather Cover and Labels - 00006



Lena Liu's Morning Serenade - 00029  
Leather Cover and Labels - 00029



Words of Faith w/verse "With God all things are possible." - 00551  
Leather Cover and Labels - 00551



Vintage Tractors - 00753  
Leather Cover - 00937  
Labels - 00753



American Heartland - 00237  
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## The trouble with tomatoes

By L. A. Jackson

**I**dylic is the tomato harvest of perfectly round fruits shining in a glow of flawless red. But in the real world of vegetable gardening, such a crop is not always the case because many tomatoes will be scarred, marred and otherwise look down right ugly.

Why?

Disease! It must be a disease! So out comes the sprayer, and you spray and spray with a fungicide. But it doesn't work.

Insects! The dastardly disfiguring must be the work of insects! So out comes the sprayer again, and you spray and spray with an insecticide. But it doesn't work either.

What caused your once-promising tomato crop to look so terrible? Rather than diseases or insects always being the usual suspects, there are several physiological problems that can also produce less-than-pristine fruits, and knowing what they are now will help prevent them at harvest time. Listed below are four of the most common disorders and tips on how to deal with these problems. For a tomato patch closer to perfection this summer, study them carefully.

**Blossom End Rot.** This ugly dark brownish blotch on the bottom of an otherwise flawless fruit stems from stress put upon the plant due to finicky Mother Nature — in particular, wildly fluctuating rainfalls creating extended periods of wet-dry-wet-dry conditions. A 3- to 4-inch mulch and regular watering when the rains don't come will help stabilize the ground moisture supply and prevent such ugliness from occurring. In addition, a shot of calcium will also inhibit this



*For better looking tomatoes, understand your plants' physiological needs.*

Source: L.A. Jackson

problem, especially in gardens with acidic soil. Powdered lime is a good source of calcium, but it reacts slowly with the soil. For quicker results, spray tomato leaves with a diluted solution of calcium chloride (available at most lawn and garden centers).

**Sunscald.** It first appears as a yellowish, discolored spot on top of a tomato, and then eventually turns the afflicted area about as ugly as a bad case of blossom end rot. True to its name, the cause of this blemish is Ol' Sol — too much sun is the culprit. Sunscald usually happens on tomatoes that ripen on the upper branches of plants. With less shade, these fruits easily become overexposed to relentless sun rays. However, conservative pruning (especially in the top branches) and using a light covering such as cheese cloth over the plants will help prevent the sun from doing such damage to ripening 'maters.

**Cracking.** This condition is marked by concentric, unappetizing rings circling the stem or vertical splits along the sides of the fruits. It is the result of tomatoes growing too fast and literally bursting out of their skins. This problem usually occurs when a big rain falls after a long dry spell. Too much water too soon becomes too much of a good thing, and it causes the tomatoes to crack. Mulching the plants will help steady the moisture supply, and a regular watering schedule when the rains don't come will also prevent this disorder. In addition, if this seems to be a persistent problem in your garden, there are varieties available that are resistant to cracking.

**Catfacing.** Have any disfigured or deeply scarred tomatoes? They are probably the victims of catfacing. Don't take the name too literally and think rogue cats are the cause. No, "catfacing" is just a descriptive term used to describe this disorder. With a lot of imagination, you can sometimes see cat faces formed by the disfigurements. This problem starts early in the development of fruit. Cool weather can cause abnormal growth in young tomatoes that magnifies as they get bigger, meaning early spring plantings are usually more susceptible to catfacing. So, if your first crop of tomatoes show signs of this problem, don't worry — any fruit that follow should be free of this disorder as temperatures rise during the growing season. ■

L.A. Jackson has been a garden editor, lecturer and writer for over 20 years and has led many tours overseas through the great gardens of Europe. He lives in North Carolina.



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Sangria Punch

### Sangria Punch (above)

- 1 qt. cold cranberry juice cocktail
- 1 c. cold orange juice
- 1 T. fresh lime juice
- 3/4 c. Country Time Lemonade or pink lemonade drink mix
- 2 oranges, sliced
- 2 limes, sliced
- 3 c. Club Soda

Mix cranberry juice cocktail, orange juice, lime juice and lemonade mix in a large pitcher until drink mix is dissolved. Refrigerate until ready to serve. Stir in Club Soda and sliced fruit. Serve over ice.

### Fresh Peach Pie (below)

- 1 c. sugar
- 2 T. cornstarch, rounded
- 1 c. water
- 3 T. peach Jello
- 3 drops yellow food coloring
- 6-8 fresh peaches, skinned and sliced
- 1 baked pie crust
- Cool Whip

Mix sugar and cornstarch in a pan. Gradually add water and cook until thick and clear. Stir in peach Jello and yellow food coloring. Cool. Add sliced peaches to a baked pie crust. Pour cooked mixture over the top. Put in refrigerator to set. Serve with Cool Whip.



Fresh Peach Pie

### Bob's Favorite Grilled Burgers

- 6 bacon strips, diced
- 1 c. chopped fresh mushrooms
- 3 thin onion slices, diced
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 T. Worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 tsp. seasoned salt
- 1/2 tsp. black pepper
- 1/2 tsp. prepared horseradish
- 1-1/2 lbs. extra lean ground beef
- Sliced American cheese, or shredded cheese
- Hamburger buns

In a skillet, cook bacon until crisp. Remove to paper towels to drain. Saute' mushrooms and onion in the drippings until tender. Transfer to a bowl and add the bacon. In another bowl, combine the egg, Worcestershire sauce, seasoned salt, pepper and horseradish; add beef and mix. Shape into six 1/4 inch thick patties. Divide bacon mixture among three patties. Top with cheese. Place remaining patties on top of each and seal edges. Grill, uncovered, over medium-hot heat for 12-14 minutes or until meat juices run clear, turning once. Serve on buns. Yield: 3 servings.

### Zucchini Bake

- 1 c. buttermilk baking mix
- 1/2 c. grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 T. chopped parsley
- 3/4 tsp. seasoned salt
- 1/2 tsp. marjoram
- 4 eggs, slightly beaten
- 1/2 c. salad oil
- 3 c. thinly sliced zucchini, about 2 lbs.
- 1/2 c. minced onion
- 1 garlic clove, minced

Preheat oven to 350 degrees; grease a 9x13" pan, set aside. In large bowl combine buttermilk baking mix, cheese, parsley, salt and marjoram. With fork, stir in eggs and oil until just mixed. Fold in zucchini, onion and garlic. Spread batter into pan; bake 20-25 minutes or until golden brown. Cool in pan 10 minutes before cutting. May reheat at 300 degrees for 20 minutes or if frozen, 300 degrees for 40 minutes.





Sliced Tomato Salad

## Congerville School Centennial Cookbook

**Who:** Congerville School PTO

**Cost:** \$20 includes shipping

**Details:** soft-backed, spiral bound

**Pages of recipes:** 305

**Send checks to:** Congerville PTO, c/o Jill Gudeman, 310 E. Kauffman St., Congerville, IL 61729 or call 309-831-6001.

### White Chocolate-Raspberry Fondue (below)

- 1/2 c. heavy whipping cream
- 1/2 c. white chocolate chips
- 1/2 c. semi-sweet chocolate chips (Ghirardelli)
- 1/2 c. seedless raspberry jam

In small saucepan, heat cream until bubbles appear. Remove from heat and whisk in chocolate chips until smooth. Stir in jam. Keep warm (preferably in a fondue pot) and serve immediately with pineapple chunks, strawberries, meringue cookies, sliced bananas, apples, pretzels or marshmallows.

### Ranch Salad Dressing

- 1 sm. garlic clove, minced
- 3/4 c. real mayonnaise
- 1/2 c. buttermilk
- 1 tsp. parsley flakes
- 1 tsp. onion powder
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. pepper

Combine all ingredients. Chill at least 30 minutes.

### Calling all cookbooks!

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Recipes prepared, tasted and photographed by Valerie Cheatham. For more recipes and photos go to [www.icl.coop](http://www.icl.coop). Questions? Email [finestcooking@aiec.coop](mailto:finestcooking@aiec.coop).



### Sliced Tomato Salad (above)

- |                                |                                |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 6 lg. tomatoes, thickly sliced | 1 lg. clove garlic, minced     |
| 1/4 c. finely chopped onion    | 2 tsp. salt                    |
| 2 T. chopped basil leaves      | 1/2 tsp. freshly ground pepper |
| 1/4 c. wine vinegar            | 1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce    |
| 3/4 c. vegetable oil           | 1 T. sugar                     |

Layer tomatoes in a 9x13" pan. Mix all other ingredients together and pour over tomatoes. Chill in refrigerator for 2 to 3 hours.

### Crispy Potato Chicken

- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 3 to 4 lbs. boneless, skinless chicken breasts | 1 tsp. garlic salt                    |
| 2 eggs, beaten                                 | 1 tsp. salt                           |
| 2 T. water                                     | 1 tsp. pepper                         |
| 1 T. Parmesan cheese, grated                   | 1-1/2 c. instant mashed potato flakes |
| 1 tsp. paprika                                 | 1/2 c. melted butter                  |

In a 1-gallon sturdy Ziploc bag, add eggs, water, Parmesan cheese, paprika, garlic salt, salt and pepper. Mix well. Put potato flakes in shallow pie pan or similar bowl. Pour melted butter into a 9x13" baking dish. Dip chicken in bag, then dredge in potato flakes until coated. Arrange evenly in baking dish. Bake at 375 degrees for 30 minutes. Turn chicken over and bake 30 minutes longer or until juices run clear.

*What do you feed your farmers as they harvest?*  
Send your recipes to [finestcooking@aiec.coop](mailto:finestcooking@aiec.coop).



White Chocolate-Raspberry Fondue

## Get smart about making energy savings easy

By B. Denise Hawkins

**S**top. Look around your room. More than likely there is a programmable thermostat on the wall, a plug strip on the floor and a light bulb in your lamp. These are three of the most common products you can use to help reduce daily household energy costs. The trick is figuring out how to make them work for you.

With a little savvy consumer shopping and research, choosing and correctly using programmable thermostats, replacement bulbs and plug strips can be easy to do.

### Programmable thermostats

Shopping for a programmable thermostat? There are plenty of brands and types to suit your home and lifestyle. But one thing you won't find today is a programmable thermostat that carries the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) familiar blue Energy Star seal. The EPA dropped the label from these products in 2009. Why?

Programmable thermostats can potentially save buyers up to \$180 a year on heating and cooling costs, according to ENERGESTAR.gov, but many customers miss out on savings by failing to correctly install and use their new thermostats.

"Most people failed to use the programmable capabilities. They didn't know how or didn't want to," says Brian Sloboda, a program manager specializing in energy efficiency for the Cooperative Research Network (CRN), the research and development arm of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

This led to poor EPA consumer surveys, and ratings drops and the loss of the Energy Star seal for most products.

Enter smart thermostats, which are intended to be an easier-to-use alternative. They come with motion sensors that help do the work of detecting and setting the temperature in your home. Nest is one example of a smart thermostat.

"Sensors will start to turn the thermostat up or down, depending on the season," Sloboda says. Within a few days of installing the device,



*Did you know that an un-programmed thermostat can waste at least 20 percent of your heating and cooling bill? This smart thermostat from Nest is among a new generation that does the programming for you.*





Source: Nest

*With many new programmable thermostats, you don't have to be at home to change the temperature. Apps like this one from Nest let you connect to your thermostat from a smartphone.*

he says the system will begin to learn your schedule, automatically dialing your thermostat back when you're not home.

The addition of phone and iPad apps, are other smart thermostat features helping to make temperature control easy, Sloboda adds. "Using an app interface should be more intuitive than the old-fashioned programmable thermostat."

### Residential interior lighting

By now you know that Thomas Edison's incandescent light bulb has evolved. January 2014 began the phase out and replacement with more energy efficient options. Currently, there are only three consumer choices — halogen-incandescents, CFLs and LEDs. With new light bulb standards in place in the U.S., the Department of Energy estimates consumers will save between \$6 billion and \$10 billion a year in lighting costs. But to get the energy savings and lower electric bills you want, you'll have to pay more up front.

Sloboda warns as a new generation of lighting technology evolves, the brand you choose will matter.

"There is a whole lot of junk out there. You can buy name-brand LEDs for around \$10 and more expensive

ones from not-so-reputable companies," he adds. But don't take chances on your lighting or waste your money. Lighting experts recommend sticking with brands you know and trust.

GE and Sylvania have been longtime consumer lighting choices, but Sloboda says don't overlook the lesser-known Cree lighting products. Cree has been a leader in the development of LED lighting. A 60-watt (800 lumens) Cree replacement bulb can cost about \$10 at a big box store and is guaranteed to last at least a decade or more. Just spend some time reading the "lighting facts" on the back of the bulb box, Sloboda urges. It will come in handy when you want to narrow your lighting choice by temperature and color, which has nothing to do with the wattage. It means whether you want your bulbs to have a warm or cool tone when lit or have the look of "daylight" or "soft white."

If you've been light shopping lately, you've probably noticed that smart devices have even come to the light bulb aisle. Manufacturers like LG, more known for their appliances, and light bulb giant Philips are among those turning out LEDs that can be controlled by your cell phone and change colors to suit your mood.

"Today's lighting is really starting to become part of a home's entertainment system," Sloboda said. With smart lighting, many come with software packages, he added. "You can do things like create a party mode, a romantic mode, a reading mode or a mode for watching TV."

### Power strips

They are usually trapped behind a desk or your TV, but traditional power strips work hard to affordably expand the number of electrical outlets in your home. Unfortunately, their convenience can encourage you to leave electronics plugged in all the time — and many devices keep drawing power even when you're not using them. This so-called phantom or vampire power drain can waste electricity and be costly.

Smart power strips can help. They're bigger, color-coded and designed to reduce usage by shutting down power to products that go into standby mode.

Most feature three outlet colors, each with a unique task. The blue outlet serves as a control plug, and is ideal for a heavily used device like a TV or computer. Anything plugged into red outlets stays on making them perfect for satellite boxes or other appliances that need constant power.

The remaining outlets, generally neutral or green in color, are sensitive to current flowing through the blue outlet, so turning off the TV or computer cuts power to them as well. With added occupancy sensors and timers, some smart power strips can be even more efficient. Costing about \$20, these products can determine when to cut power to various devices. Sloboda says you can start to see a payback on your investment in about a year. ■

**B. Denise Hawkins writes on energy efficiency issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.**

# EPA regulations to raise bills and cost jobs

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently released regulations to limit carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions at new and now existing power plants that will lead to more expensive electricity for members of electric cooperatives. As not for profit, member-owned cooperatives we are concerned about the impact this will have on the price of electricity and our members' bills. And we're concerned the EPA's new proposed regulations will also cost our economy and cut jobs.

For example, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Institute for 21st Century Energy released a report that estimated the regulation could cost the economy \$51 billion and 224,000 jobs a year through 2030.

The Boilermakers union has also stated, "Across the nation, thousands of good-paying jobs are disappearing and the communities that depend on them are withering as scores of coal-fired power plants shut their doors. Energy generated from coal has long been the driving force behind our manufacturing strength and our prosperity as a nation. Recent decades have witnessed remarkable strides in reducing the environmental impact of coal emissions, and our field construction members have been at the forefront of those achievements. The truth is that every energy source, including coal, natural gas, nuclear, wind, solar, thermal, hydro and tidal, carries certain limitations and environmental considerations. Even the new darling of electric power — natural gas derived from shale — has its own environmental issues, including the release of methane, a much more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide. Demonizing coal or any other energy source is not the answer."

United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) International President Cecil E. Roberts said, "The proposed rule issued today by the Environmental Protection Agency will lead to long-term and irreversible job losses for thousands of coal miners, electrical workers, utility workers, boilermakers, railroad workers and others without achieving any significant reduction of global greenhouse gas emissions.

"Our initial analysis indicates there will be a loss of 75,000 direct coal generation jobs in the United States by 2020. Those are jobs primarily in coal mines, power plants and railroads. By 2035, those job losses will more than double to 152,000. When a U.S. government economic multiplier used to calculate the impact of job losses is applied to the entire economy, we estimate the total impact will be about 485,000 permanent jobs lost.

"The UMWA has not and does not dispute the science

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The Administration is reversing course: ditching our All-of-the-Above energy strategy for an All-But-One approach that bans new coal plants.

**2. TECHNOLOGY GAMBLE**  
New regulations essentially require technology that's not commercially viable and prohibitively expensive — leading to higher bills down the line.

**TOP 4 FACTS**  
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**4. HISTORY REPEATS: ALL-BUT-ONE DOESN'T WORK**  
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regarding climate change. Our dispute is with how our government is going about addressing it, and on whom the administration is placing the greatest burden in dealing with this challenge. Coal miners have been asked for 150 years to provide the means to energize America and make our nation the strongest on earth. We have always answered that call. We have done what our nation asked of us. But under this rule, our reward is to be kicked to the curb, hopefully out of sight and soon forgotten."

Our rural economy needs jobs and affordable electricity. That's why we're asking everyone to send comments to the EPA through [www.Action.coop](http://www.Action.coop). This easy-to-use online tool directly sends your thoughts to Washington so regulators understand the potential harm these regulations could cause.

In case you're wondering whether the EPA actually will read these comments, consider this: by law the EPA is required to ask the American public how a proposed rule would affect costs to consumers, the quality of life and the economic future of their communities. Let your voice be heard and go to [www.Action.coop](http://www.Action.coop) today.





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## Don't fear the cloud

Just the other day I was having a conversation with a friend over “cloud” computing, and her expressed fear of the technology surprised me. After we talked a bit, it became evident her biggest concern was simply not understanding what the “cloud” was, or how it functioned. After all, the news is quick to point out any instances of data breaches at large companies, all the while using the words “cloud computing” with no real explanation of what that means. So, let’s spend a few moments and discuss a few reasons why you don’t have to be afraid of the cloud.

First, you’re probably already using it! Do you have a Hotmail, Gmail, Microsoft, Yahoo, or other online e-mail account? Well, then your information is being stored in the cloud. By that I mean, your information is being stored somewhere other than under your own direct control. But cloud computing is more than that. Basically, the term “cloud” has come to mean the sum total of the hardware and software used to store, manage and process data at a distance.

And, there are actually two distinct varieties of clouds. One is a private cloud, meaning that it is a closed system utilized by, and for, a specific company. The other is a public cloud, meaning that it is usually offered as a service by a specific company for use by other companies or individuals. Most of the time, when someone talks about the “cloud” they are referring to a public cloud, like the ones mentioned above. Of course, when that information is no longer under your direct control, some concerns are bound to arise, bringing us to my second point.

Cloud systems are inherently more reliable than anything you at home, or in a small business, are likely to be able to afford. You can think about it in this way: Microsoft and Google have tons of assets tied up in ensuring the

reliability of their data centers. And, more than that, companies running a cloud computing resource co-locate data. That means your data is stored across multiple sites to ensure it’s not lost. If you’re truly worried about losing files such as photos, e-mails and other important documents, then are you spending the money to be sure that data is located in more than one place, both physically and digitally? If not, then storing that information in the cloud may be the way to go. Of course, there is always the issue of security.

Finally, we are constantly hearing about breaches in security at large companies these days. Just do a quick search for “cyber-attacks on large companies” and you’re bound to see enough material to keep you reading the rest of your days. Alternatively, if you were to count the number of times a home computer has been compromised, the number isn’t even calculable. The chances of your home computer being “hacked” are exponentially greater than the chances of your

cloud data being compromised. Except in extreme cases, for a security breach involving a cloud resource, most of the time you will probably just end up having to change your password.

And, periodically changing your password is something you should be doing anyway!

### Reply Online

**Have a technology issue and want some advice? Visit [www.icl.coop](http://www.icl.coop) and click on Powered Up to respond. Your response might even be included in a future column.**

Ed VanHoose is the  
EVP/GM at Clay Electric  
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# Gifts from the land & water

By *Joe Zentner*,  
retired professor  
and wild food enthusiast

I have long been fascinated with wild food foraging. Helping family members learn about wild edibles has developed into a hobby that has allowed us to experience, to a degree, how our ancestors lived off the land.

Foraging for plants and hunting wild game are ancient patterns of human subsistence. For thousands of years, people survived in this manner. In 1972, Richard Mabey published the book *Food for Free*; and soon, the world began looking at “weeds” differently. The phrase “if you can’t beat ‘em, eat them” reflected peoples’ desire to cut costs and conserve. Today, as global resources run low, Mabey’s sentiments have taken on new meaning.

To survive, wild plants must cope with herbivores and climatic changes. They’ve evolved to become species that contain high concentrations of carbohydrates, fats and proteins.

Many of the tastes we appreciate, such as sourness, sweetness and saltiness, are adaptations plants have developed to discourage herbivores. Many renewable herbs, greens, fruits, berries and seeds thrive in backyards. Although we can easily incorporate these tasty resources into meals, many people destroy them as weeds.

“Up until World War II, people ate ‘weeds’ regularly,” notes Peter Gail, author of *The Dandelion Celebration*. “Dandelions, lamb’s-quarters---all sorts of wild plants---were part of daily diets. The bias against wild edibles came after World War II, in part because of pesticide company advertising.” Gail continues, “The pesticide industry convinced consumers they should value green lawns, and the way to get a lawn green was by ridding it of weeds.”

Today, concern over the health risks of pesticides and preservatives in commercially-prepared foods make wild edibles increasingly appealing. As an added bonus for consumers concerned with protecting the environment, many wild edibles are naturally-renewable food resources that thrive



under difficult growing conditions.

Only recently has a broader awareness of native food developed. This is a cuisine from people whose food supply has oftentimes been whatever they could find, wherever they found it.

In addition to blueberries, black cherries, crabapples and grapes, native foods include seeds. Living off the land as wild animals (did) do, man ate seeds that were nutritionally appealing. Nuts are seeds. The great advantage to man of nut-bearing trees is that, unlike animals, they can't run away. The energy expended by humans in gathering nuts is much less than the energy spent obtaining similar caloric value from hunting. Ground into flour, chestnuts pack a nutritional wallop and contribute to such savory dishes as nutty-tasting crepes.

Fruits contain a variety of cancer-suppressing chemicals. Blueberries, wild cherries and dandelions are among my favorite wild foods. Long ago, native peoples collected wild blueberries from along riverbanks. Packed with antioxidants, blueberries can be eaten fresh or baked into muffins.

Dandelions taste great when added to salads. They contain minerals and vitamins, along with health-enhancing bioflavonoids (substances that nourish blood vessels). Dandelion flowers are sweetest when picked young and have a honey-like flavor. Young dandelion leaves taste great when steamed.

Cattails grow in marshy ground most anywhere. Cattail roots can be ground into flour that's ideal for making muffins, biscuits and pancakes.

Species of the genus *allium* include onion, garlic, chives, ramps, leeks and shallots. All members of the genus are edible.

One good way to look for wild foods is to go with an experienced forager who can demonstrate which plants are edible. Should you go it alone, start with one plant. Of course, you should be able to identify any plant you plan to eat with certainty.



Follow a few safe plants through the seasons and study them carefully, gradually adding new ones to your bring-home-and-eat list.

Other foraging tips provided by Robert Henderson, author of *The Neighborhood Forager* are:

- \* Spit the pits. Many fruit pits, including apricots, enclose a poisonous substance (think cyanide), so it's best to avoid them altogether.
- \* Always observe the first-try protocol. After you have positively identified a plant and its edible parts, taste it and then wait to see how your

body reacts before consuming more.  
\* Eat wild foods only when they're in season.

Consuming wild foods is an excellent way to add variety to your meals, boost your health and learn about the environment. As a collector of wild edible foods, I have developed a keener appreciation of where and how my food grows. The closer to home you find your food, chances are it is better for your pocketbook, your health and the planet. Enjoy, but please exercise prudence.





**4-6 9th Annual Trains, Planes & Automobiles**, Geneseo. Join Gen-Air for a fly-in luncheon from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. on Thursday at Gen-Air Park, 1650th St. off U.S. Hwy. 6W. Friday cruise the Hennepin Canal at Lock 24 off of Grange Road. Saturday the downtown streets fill up with vintage cars from all eras, train engines, airplanes, food and more. 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Free admission. [www.geneseo.org](http://www.geneseo.org) or 309-944-2686.

**5-6 Traditional Music Festival**, Lincoln's New Salem, Petersburg. Performers from all over the Midwest will entertain on such instruments as mountain and hammer dulcimers, concertinas, bones, autoharps, fiddles, banjos and guitars. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. 217-632-4000 or [www.LincolnsNewSalem.com](http://www.LincolnsNewSalem.com).

**5-6 Macomb Balloon Rally**, Vince Grady Field, 400 University Dr., Macomb. Enjoy 30 hot air balloons. There is a mass ascension on Friday evening, a fly-in to Vince Grady Field on Saturday morning, and a flight Saturday evening along with a balloon glow at dusk. [www.makeitmacomb.com](http://www.makeitmacomb.com) or 309-299-6810.

**13 McLean County Barnkeepers 9th Annual Tour**, Weston-Wates Township, Saybrook. Self-guided tour of great barns, inside and out. \$20 per carload. Registration from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. and tours run til 4 p.m. Rain or shine. [www.barnkeepers.org](http://www.barnkeepers.org) or 309-475-6951.

**13-14 Prairie Celebration**, Rock Springs Conservation Area, 3939 Nearing Lane, Decatur. Tour an encampment of trappers and traders as they demonstrate their skills, crafts and

techniques for creating goods and services during the 1700s and 1800s. There will be items for sale, wagon rides and games for children. Noon-4 p.m. Free admission. [www.macon-countyconservation.org](http://www.macon-countyconservation.org).

**20 Railroad Days**, Monticello Railway Museum, 992 Iron Horse Place, Monticello. Come ride the vintage passenger and freight trains on the former Illinois Central and Illinois terminal trackage. One of the trains will feature the steam locomotive #401. All-day tickets, as many rides as you want. Food tent also. Trains run 10 a.m.-5 p.m. \$18 for adults, \$10 for children 2-12, under 2 free. [www.myrym.org](http://www.myrym.org) or 217-762-9011.

**20 Riverside Blues Festival**, 2460 W. Riverside Park Rd., Murphysboro. Enjoy a day of blues music with 7 different bands at the historic band shell in Riverside Park. Food and beverages available. \$12 in advance; \$15 day of event. [www.siblues.com](http://www.siblues.com) or 608-684-6421.

**20 Annual HarvestFest**, Petersburg. Saturday features a huge parade, activities, street vendors, fresh food, live music and an antique car, truck and tractor show. 10 a.m.-midnight. 217-415-4378 or [www.VisitMenardCounty.com](http://www.VisitMenardCounty.com).

**26-27 National Public Lands Day**, sponsored by the U.S. Forest Service. Free camping at non-reserved campsites on Friday and Saturday night. Shawnee National Forest campgrounds included in the fee waiver are: Garden of the Gods, Pounds Hollow, Camp Cadiz, Pine Hills and Johnson Creek. Concessionaire-operated campgrounds are not included in the fee waiver.

**27 Wayne City Bean Days**, Wayne City. Sponsored by the Ruritan Club, it celebrates 45 years of Ruritans in Wayne City. Includes ham and beans, flea market and crafts, parade, live music, 5k run, remote air show, firemen's water fight, rodeo and much more. 618-895-2215.

**27 59th Annual "Fall Old Market Day,"** Old Market House Historic Site, 123 N. Commerce St., Galena. Sponsored by Jo Daviess County Assn. for Home and Community Education. Typical turn-of-the-century outdoor market, ladies in early 1900s costume will offer items for sale, plus see heritage skills demo. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. 815-858-3392.

**27 Appleknocker Arts & Science Festival**, Flora High School, Flora. Annual walk and run held prior to festival. Sponsored by the Flora Academic Fdn., includes family fun, food, free admission and entertainment, free parking and shuttle service from football field. Lawn chairs and strollers welcome. NO pets please. Tickets are purchased on-site for food and enrichment activities. 618-676-5558, 618-662-8894 or <http://floraschools.com/> and use link to Flora Academic Foundation.

**27-28 National Alpaca Farm Days**, Timberview Alpacas, 7910 White Oak Rd., Clinton. See, pet and feed alpacas. Also see fiber spinning, felting and carding demos. Hay rack rides and more. Projects for sale made from fleece of our alpacas. 10 a.m.-6 p.m. 309-275-4027. Not available, call to arrange a farm visit.



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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:** July 21 for October events. **Mail to:** Illinois Datebook, PO Box 3787, Springfield, IL 62708. E-mail to: [datebook@aiecoop.org](mailto:datebook@aiecoop.org).





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