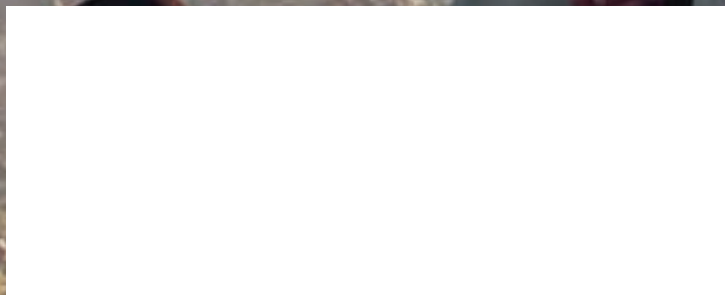


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The Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives and 24 Illinois electric cooperatives are members of Touchstone Energy, a national alliance of 740 electric cooperatives. Touchstone Energy cooperative employees adhere to four core values — integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community.



10 MAKING THE PAST PRESENT

Civil War reenactments offer observers the opportunity to pull back the curtain of time.



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Five things I've learned about saving energy

Some of the best investments pay you back in energy savings

It wasn't long ago we were in the throes of below zero weather. While your heating bills this winter probably weren't as bad as the ones we all experienced a few years back when fuel prices spiked, it is ALWAYS a good thing to plan a bit ahead and consider improving your home's energy efficiency.

Weather sealing and insulation might not be exciting improvements, but they are ones that will PAY YOU BACK month after month. The new granite countertops or marble floors won't do that!

Here are a couple of common sense ideas I've learned that might help you.

- 1 Check your door and window weatherstripping and caulking.** If you feel the drafts, you likely have the equivalent of an open window or two. Weather sealing around doors and windows is simple and cost effective. Start here.
- 2 Check the amount of insulation in your attic.** Unless you built your home in the past few years or just added insulation, odds are that you could save greatly by adding some insulation. If you need it, hire a trained competent local insulator. Ask them if they are Building Performance Institute (BPI) certified. They know their business. If needed blow in cellulose insulation.
- 3 Check your heating and cooling systems.** Like your car, which won't last long if you don't change the oil, your HVAC maintenance is important. Clean filters are essential.
If you have a gas furnace, when is the last time a trained

technician did a tune up? With fuel burning appliances, especially gas furnaces and water heaters, it's vital for your family's safety that your system be vented properly or the results could be DEADLY. There is a reason for that carbon monoxide monitor in your home. Thirty years ago I owned an old home with a gas water heater. I noticed the pilot kept going out. Finally, after getting angry about it for the final time I checked the flue and found about 15 dead starlings in the flue, plugging up the vent.

If you have a traditional central air system, when was the last time you had it checked? Is the outside unit blocked by leaves and debris and overgrown bushes?

- 4 Do you have a fireplace?** There is nothing that feels better than a toasty warm fire on a cold night. Unfortunately, many fireplaces waste more energy than they save, particularly if they are not vented to provide outside air for the fire (no matter if it's a wood or gas fireplace).
- 5 Consider replacing your vintage heating and cooling equipment.** While not cheap, think of it as an important investment that will pay dividends.

I ALWAYS suggest that folks consider a geothermal heat pump. Geo might not be for you for various reasons, but in most homes it is a "no brainer." I've had a geothermal system in my house for 15 years now. No mechanical breakdowns, great comfort and I take the savings to the bank every month. And with a 30 percent



federal tax credit at least through 2016, now is the time for geothermal. The new equipment will get you 500 percent efficiency versus the 96 percent of the best gas furnaces.

Lastly, I encourage you to read Brian Kumer's Energy Solutions column each month in this magazine. I've known Brian for more than 20 years and there is NOBODY better on residential energy efficiency. He is absolutely the most knowledgeable guy I know on this subject. Brian is the expert who trains the experts. Take his advice to the bank.

I'm not in the same league as Brian but I'm always glad to help folks with suggestions. And if I don't know the answer, I know the folks to ask. Feel free to contact me at jfreitag@aiec.coop. Finally, I urge you to call upon the energy efficiency experts at your local co-op. ■

John Freitag is the Executive Director of the Geothermal Alliance of Illinois and Vice Pres. of Operations for the Assn. of Illinois Electric Cooperatives.



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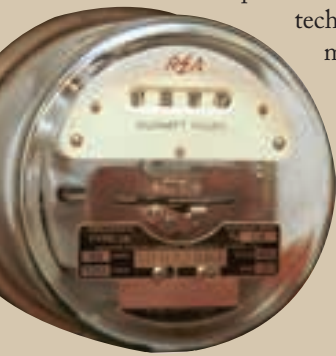
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Illinois Rural Electric Cooperative upgrading to new generation of smart meter



Just like the Apple watch is replacing the old windup pocket watch of your grandfather's, smart meter technology is replacing old mechanical meters like this old REA meter. And while some utilities are just beginning to roll out smart meters, Illinois Rural Electric Cooperative, Winchester, one of the first in the state to install smart meters, is already upgrading to a new hybrid system that uses both power line carrier (PLC) communications and a wireless 220MHz-900MHz system.

Tantalus, provider of the TUNet® hybrid 220MHz-900MHz wireless network says it is designed to provide reliable system-wide coverage over widespread and challenging terrain while effectively extending the useful life of

the old power line carrier system. This provides a cost-effective migration option.

“As an early adopter of power line carrier for automated meter reading, we have seen a great deal of change in the industry,” says Sean Middleton, Manager of Engineering for Illinois Rural Electric Cooperative. “In nearly two decades with PLC, we found that while reliable, the inherent data delivery limitations of one-way technology hindered our ability to adopt advanced applications such as demand management, dynamic pricing, and real-time outage notification. As a cooperative utility, finding an affordable option for moving from automated meter reading to an advanced metering infrastructure like TUNet is a plus. It reliably delivers real-time information in support of advanced applications and has been the key for us to address rising peak demand and ultimately, keep rates low for our members.” ■

Video contest challenge for high school students

The Energy Education Council (EEC) and Illinois Broadcasters Association (IBA) have launched a new contest to help raise awareness about outdoor electrical safety in Illinois.

The program, called the “Safe Electricity High School Challenge,” gives high school students the opportunity to create video content for an EEC educational campaign. Teams or individuals are to design and produce a short video — no shorter than 6 seconds and no longer than 60 seconds, including the option to produce a 30 or 60 second television public service announcement (PSA).

Through a collaboration with the IBA, the contest entries will be judged and the winning entry may air on television stations statewide, the SafeElectricity.org website or on their social media channels as part of EEC’s latest educational efforts in Illinois.

Students or teams of students must have a faculty sponsor and register on the website by 5 p.m. on May 15, 2015 to participate in the contest. The students have until noon on June 12, 2015 to submit their creations.

“This is a great opportunity to build a resume, get statewide exposure for their work, and earn money to help pay future college expenses – all while promoting a great cause, safety around electricity,” says Dennis Lyle, IBA’s president and CEO.

Up to five winning entries will be named. The creators of each winning entry will share a cash prize of \$500, and the sponsoring high school will receive \$500. Funding for the contest, video and television placements is provided by Illinois’ electric utilities.

Questions can be directed to iba@ilba.org or 618-985-5555. ■

High School Video Contest!

Safe Electricity Challenge

Deadline to Register: May 15, 2015

Create a video (6 to 60 sec.) to help raise awareness about outdoor electrical safety in Illinois.

Pre-register by 5 pm on May 15, 2015.
Submit video by noon on June 12, 2015.

Up to five winning entries with cash prizes.
Funding provided by Illinois' electric utilities.

For more details visit:
<http://bit.ly/hsChallenge>

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Rural grocery store startup guide available

A new edition of the “Rural Grocery Store Start-Up and Operations Guide” has been released by the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs (IIRA) at Western Illinois University. The guide is available for free download, according to Fred Iutzi, who manages IIRA’s outreach to the food and agriculture sectors.

“This guide is a valuable resource for Illinois entrepreneurs and community leaders interested in starting up, expanding or transitioning a grocery store in their rural communities,” he explained.

According to the IIRA’s Sean Park—lead author of the new edition and a former grocery store manager—the new edition is greatly revised and expanded and reviews best practices for successfully operating a rural grocery store in the current retail environment.

“Readers will find answers on a range

of basic questions about starting up a grocery store and making it succeed, from market analysis to equipment to inventory to cash flow,” Park said.

Three new supplements focusing on cooperative grocery stores, business succession issues and indoor farmers’ markets accompany the guide, he added.

Download the guide at the IIRA’s rural grocery store resource page at www.value-added.org/food-agriculture/rural-grocery-stores/.

In addition to the new guide, IIRA has a variety of services available to businesses and/or community leaders



concerned about access to a grocery store in their rural communities, including programs in community strategic visioning, applied economic analysis and small business start-up.

“We also emphasize the community ownership option for starting up a new grocery store, or as a succession plan for an existing business,” Iutzi added. Free technical assistance

on using cooperatives, as well as other mutually owned business structures, is available from the Illinois Cooperative Development Center at IIRA.”

For more information about IIRA publications, technical assistance and other resources, contact Iutzi at (309) 298-1453 or visit the IIRA online at www.iira.org. ■

Copper thieves cut co-op poles

Copper thieves have come up with a new and costly way to get what they want from an Illinois electric cooperative: cutting down poles.

“It began with just a couple of isolated poles, and then it began to spread throughout our territory into parts of three different counties. Before we knew it, we had more than 25 poles that were cut,” said Randy Olson, Director of Communications at Wayne-White Counties Electric Cooperative in Fairfield.

Whoever did it avoided poles on roads or near homes.

“They would do this in isolated areas such as behind barns, behind grain bins or trees,” said Olson. “They were never doing it in high-visibility areas and they left behind a huge bill for co-op members—in excess of \$25,000.”

Wayne-White members are also feeling the pinch. “Anything on a member’s side of the meter, of course,

they’re responsible for. And these people are stealing copper on their side of the meter, too,” Olson said. “It’s costly for everyone.”

That led the Wayne-White board of directors to authorize a reward.

A reward for \$6,500 was offered. The co-op put up \$5,000 and the Illinois Farm Bureau and Crimestoppers kicked in \$1,500. “Now that the reward has been offered the thefts have stopped,” Olson said.

Wayne-White and other electric co-ops across the state have been working with county sheriffs as well as recyclers to try and put a stop to copper theft, but members can help too. If you see suspicious activity in and around electrical utility installations notify your local law enforcement office immediately.

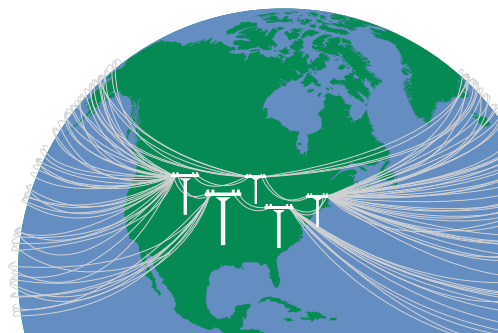


A new Illinois House bill would create the Recyclable Metal Theft Task Force. The Illinois secretary of state would oversee the 18-member task force. “Criminals committing copper thefts are victimizing residents and local businesses alike,” said Rep. Jay Hoffman, D-Swansea, the bill’s sponsor. “This problem is not going to go away on its own. We need to come together to find an effective long-term solution before more damage is done.” One seat would go to a representative of the state’s electric co-ops. ■

America's Electric Cooperatives. #WeKeepTheLightsOn

America's Electric Cooperatives keep the lights on for 42 million Americans across 47 states. That's more than 18.5 million businesses, farms, and homes. All told, cooperatives maintain 2.5 million miles of electric distribution lines - enough to stretch around the world 100 times. ■

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CIRCLE THE GLOBE
100 times.



AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES
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Touchstone Energy Co-op volunteers rebuild community homes

In the end, the bricks turned out just fine. They had JoAnn Reddick concerned for a spell. Red bricks wrapped around the lower third of the front of her small, 55-year-old home and she was a little hesitant about letting some unknowns from out of town perform a beige paint-over. JoAnn and Benjamin Reddick's house was one of 30 targeted Feb. 21 for tender, loving and intensive improvements during the seventh annual Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives Community Service Project.

More than 100 co-op volunteers from across the country worked in conjunction with Rebuilding Together Orlando, a nonprofit dedicated to revitalizing communities. Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives Marketing Administrator Nancy McDonald was one of the volunteers. McDonald says, "Participating in the Touchstone Energy service project was incredibly rewarding. We all worked together so well, and I believe the effort was truly

life-changing for the homeowner. It was the epitome of Touchstone Energy's 'commitment to community' core value, and I plan to participate in the future."

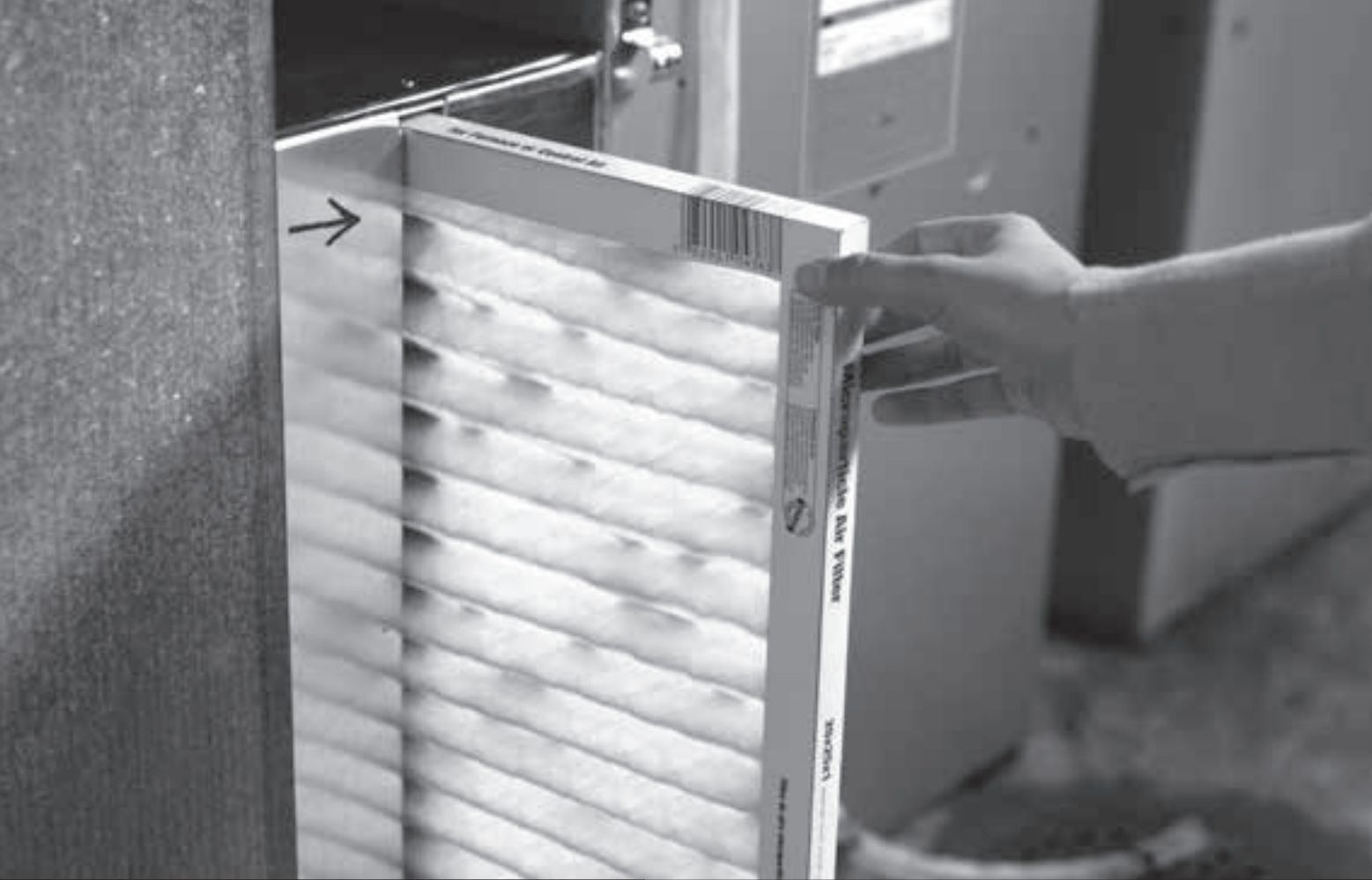
Commitment to community is one of the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives' values and a guiding principle for all cooperatives. "This is what cooperatives are all about," said Mary McLaury, interim COO of Touchstone Energy®. "They're committed to the people back home. But when they come into a new community, they're willing to help out people in need."

The wave of helping hands knocked more projects off Rebuilding Together Orlando's lengthy waiting list than the group might accomplish in a month, according to Executive Director Ed Green.

Volunteers embarked on major repairs at four homes, including flooring, weatherization, roof and handrail replacements, and accessibility modifications. ■

Photo by Luis Gomez





Revamp your spring cleaning, and save!

Is your idea of spring cleaning to replace winter clothes in your closet with summer clothes and dust the cobwebs off the ceiling fan? Just a little extra effort could put a jingle in your pocket. Make sure your list includes changing out your furnace filter, clearing dust from the dryer vent and hose and refrigerator grill, clearing debris away from the air conditioner or heat pump and making sure your air ducts are clean. It will be the first time spring cleaning has ever paid you back.

Find out how simple things you do to save energy can add up at www.togetherwesave.com.



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Making the past present

By Jerry McDonald

Among the smoke and din of the cannon fire, the rattle of musketry, men in Union blue advance, leaning into the gunfire from the gray-clad men behind the stonewall as if they were walking into a strong wind. As some pitch forward or slump, struck by enemy fire, their comrades step over them, closing ranks. On command, they halt, aim and fire a single volley before letting loose a tremendous shout and with flashing bayonets, break into a charge that carries the wall routing their foes.

Then amid the sound of applause from the spectators in shorts, sandals, t-shirts and sundresses, the gray clad troops stop, rejoin the victors, the “dead” and “wounded” rise, dust themselves off and chatting amicably they all walk off the field. Another civil war battle reenactment is over, but for a brief moment the reenactors have pulled back the curtain of history and given their audience a glimpse into 1863.



In the beginning

The tradition of re-enacting battles is not new. Romans attending the coliseum were often entertained by the spectacle of battles re-enacted by slaves, convicts or prisoners for the amusement of the masses. Knights in medieval tournaments would often stage mock combat with a Roman or Greek theme. In the Nineteenth Century, wealthy and titled Englishmen influenced by Sir Walter Scott's historical romance novels, such as *Ivanhoe*, began to reenact medieval tournaments and events on a large scale.

Even during the Civil War, troops, especially Union soldiers, would often stage mock battles for the edification and/or amusement of their hometowns, or visiting dignitaries.

During the Grand Reunion in July 1913, a gathering of some 55,000 Civil War Union and Confederate veterans at Gettysburg, there was a reenactment of Pickett's Charge. Popular lore would have us picture old men in their 70s scrambling over the sacred ground, waving their canes and shouting the battle cries of their youth in reedy voices. In truth it was not the veterans who provided the spectacle, but a 1,500-member contingent of the

Army and Marines instructed to fight as if it were 1863.

Today, military reenactors portray most periods of American history, French and Indian War, the Revolutionary era, the war of 1812, the Mexican War, World War I and II, but for most of the American public, the word "reenactor" conjures up images of the Civil War and the clash of men in blue and gray.

Modern civil war reenacting really began around 1961 as America commemorated the centennial of the Civil War and it continued to grow in popularity during the 1980s and 90s.

In 1998, the 135th anniversary reenactment of the battle of Gettysburg, which took place near the actual field (due to National Park regulations, no battle reenactments are allowed at actual battle sites) is widely believed to be the largest ever held with between 30,000 and 40,000 participants, and perhaps as many as 50,000 spectators.

Reenacting today

Current numbers are difficult to come by, but several sources estimate there are currently about 30,000 active reenactors here in the United States

and several thousand more overseas. Civil War reenacting is very popular in several European countries, especially Germany. Ironically, while most German-Americans fought for the Union, the majority of German reenactors prefer to portray Confederates.

For the visitors to a Civil War reenactment, the draw is usually the battle or skirmish reenactment. It offers drama and action, the roar of the cannon, rattle of musketry and the sight of troops advancing and clashing in hand-to-hand combat. It also offers the opportunity to better understand the tactics of the time and get a glimpse of what soldiers faced in battle. Except for the absence of casualties, attending a Civil War battle reenactment can be like stepping back in time.

Battle reenactments are fun, but there is more to Civil War reenacting than just fighting.

Veteran reenactor David Kuhn of Jacksonville says, "If you go to a reenactment, don't just go to see the battle, go to the camp. See how the soldiers lived, ask questions; make it an interactive experience."

Encampments are a big part of understanding the world of the

soldiers who fought that war - canvas tents are pitched in neat rows, coffee brews and food cooks over an open fire. The sounds of conversation, and sometimes music, drifts over the camp as soldiers in various stages of dress mend garments, clean weapons or gear, play cards, and read a dog-eared book or letter from home. Some encampments may include a medical tent where displays of equipment for amputations and other surgery make visitors thankful for 21st century medicine.

“Reenactments are not only entertaining,” explains Kuhn. “They are great teaching tools because, unlike books, they engage all five senses.” Kuhn can speak with authority as he is co-founder of Jacksonville’s popular Grierson Days and has for almost two decades portrayed legendary Union General Benjamin Grierson. Grierson, a Jacksonville music teacher prior to the war, commanded an 1863 cavalry expedition through Confederate territory that helped Grant win the Battle of Vicksburg and became the inspiration for 1959 John Wayne movie “The Horse Soldiers.”

What it takes

Reenacting is an activity that requires a substantial investment of time and money. A reenactor must know the history of the unit of which he, or she (there are female reenactors), will participate. They must learn to drill and fight like an 1860s soldier. If they are portraying a particular soldier, perhaps even an ancestor, they must know as much as they can about that individual. Many will perfect specialties, like learning how to “die,” in a particular manner, such as a shot to the head or succumbing to cannon fire or how to simulate a wound during battle.

Then there’s the cost of equipment. The average infantryman, Union or Confederate, will pay \$1,500 to \$2,000 for uniform, rifle and related gear. For an officer, the price increases. For example, a private’s coat costs as little as \$55 to \$60, while an officer’s frock coat runs from \$225 to nearly \$500, depending on the fabric and other details. For the would-be cavalryman, private or officer, add the cost of a horse, tack and feed, not to mention 21st century transport to and from events. And for those who want to reenact artillery, a serviceable

cannon will cost around \$6,000. If you include the never-ending cost of powder and materials to maintain leather gear and keep brass shiny, it becomes evident that being a reenactor requires commitment.

An entire industry has sprung up to supply the reenacting community. These businesses ranging from mom and pop operations that specialize in a single item or deal with custom orders only, to enterprises such as Fall Creek Suttlerly in Indiana or C&C Sutlery in Idaho that can supply uniforms, weaponry, insignia, camp gear - basically anything needed on the battlefield or in the encampment. While no one has conducted studies to see the impact on the gross national product (GNP), best estimates are that Civil War reenacting is a multi-million dollar industry.

Why reenacting?

So what attracts people to reenacting? For Lee Shafer of Athens, “It’s an opportunity to give back; to honor the men and women who have served in all of our wars.” Shafer is a member of the 114th Illinois Infantry, a reenactment unit which conducts a



flag ceremony at Lincoln's Tomb every Tuesday evening June through August.

Jeff Fouste, a South Carolina resident who grew up in Arthur, says his interest blossomed when he attended Eastern Illinois University "My professor, Robert Sterling, inspired me with a love of history, and several years after graduation, when I moved to South Carolina, I became a member of a local unit. As a reenactor I was able to better understand the history of the period." And he adds with a smile in his voice, "I had the opportunity to be involved in several movies, one being the 1999 television movie 'The Hunley'."

Fouste's experience is one that has been afforded many reenactors, the opportunity to be a part of putting history on the screen. The Ted Turner-produced epics, "Gettysburg" and "Gods and Generals," are the best examples of movies that benefited from the enthusiasm and knowledge of reenactors. In Gettysburg over 13,000 reenactors took part in recreating the battle for the big screen. Actor Sam Elliot, one of the many stars in the picture was quoted as saying,

"I think we're very fortunate to have those guys involved. In fact, they

couldn't be making this picture without them; there's no question about that. They come with all the accoutrements, but they also come with the stuff in their heads and the stuff in their hearts."

It is worth noting that most of those involved paid their own way and provided their own uniforms for the chance to relive one of the seminal moments in American history and share with others the history they love. Union or Confederate in sympathy, young or old, no matter whatever the reasons, a love of history is at the core of what motivates reenactors. David Kuhn is a case in point. As General Grierson, Kuhn has participated in more than 125 reenactments and over 100 presentations at schools and symposiums. He and his wife instituted Civil War Day at a local junior high to heighten student awareness of the war, and instill in them a better understanding, if not love, of history.

Educating is also at the heart of Shafer's commitment. "In addition to the flag ceremony, the 114th Illinois Infantry holds encampments and speaks to groups. I love the questions we get from students and the public." Shafer

adds with a smile, "In summer one of the most common questions is, why do you wear such heavy wool clothing?"

The future of reenacting

With the Sesquicentennial of the Civil War drawing to a close, some reenactors wonder about the future of reenacting groups, and indeed numbers have fallen over the last several decades. But, while a visit to websites of several units shows a lot of gray heads and grizzled faces, there are also teenagers, twenty-somethings and women.

Women portraying 19th century combat troops? Even in this age of growing gender equality that may seem to be a little odd, but Civil War documentation proves that more than 250 women disguised themselves as men and participated in virtually every major battle of the war. So whatever the future holds for Civil War reenacting, the inclusion of women simply means the community is one step closer to an accurate portrayal of those who fought the war that both divided and reunited our nation 150 years ago. ■



Want to attend a Civil War reenactment?

Here are several that will be held across the state in 2015.

May 1-3, The Sesquicentennial Reenactment Honoring the Life and Legacy of President Abraham Lincoln in Springfield. This two-day event commemorating the 150th anniversary of President Lincoln's funeral includes funeral train arrival, procession to downtown, reenactor encampments, a candlelight vigil and funeral procession to Oak Ridge Cemetery. The event will include thousands of reenactors and period carriages. Visit www.lincolnfuneraltrain.org for details.



May 16-17, Civil War Days at Naper Settlement in Naperville. This 12-acre history museum in the western suburbs of Chicago hosts battle reenactments, famous figures of the past and a sutlers' row. Battles are at 2:30 p.m. both days. See www.napersettlement.org for more details.

May 30-31, Delavan Civil War Days at Delavan. This year's battles will feature events of 1865 including a recreation of the surrender of C.S. General Lee at Appomattox. For details go to www.battledelavan.com.

June 20-21, General Grierson Days in Jacksonville. Events at the 62 acre Community Park include displays of cavalry, infantry, artillery, medical corp plus vintage baseball played according to 1860 rules. For details go to www.griersonsociety.com.

August 14-16, Galesburg Heritage Days in Galesburg. This living-history festival in Lake Storey Park includes a Civil War component with two battle reenactments, appearances by President Lincoln and a sutlers' row, military ball and pie and cake auction. Visit www.visitgalesburg.com/annual-events/galesburg-heritage-days for details.

Consider safety when planting trees

This Arbor Day plant the right tree in the right place

It has been more than 141 years since the first Arbor Day was observed in Nebraska. It has since become a national observance that takes place on the last Friday in April in most states and recognizes the importance of trees as well as tree selection, planting and care. A properly selected and planted tree can add beauty and energy efficiency to your landscape. A poorly selected and planted tree can become high maintenance, dangerous and short-lived. Even digging the hole to plant your new tree can pose a hazard. The Energy Education Council has advice to help you select the tree that is best for your yard.

This is an excellent time of year for tree planting. With some research and preparation, your tree will be a healthy and beautiful addition to your home for years to come. But before planting your tree do your homework.

One of the first considerations is the purpose of your tree. Will it be needed for shade, a windbreak, or beauty? These considerations will affect what tree is suitable for you, and where it should be planted. Dense evergreens provide a good wind block, while leafy deciduous trees provide shade in the summer.

No matter what purpose the trees will serve, it is always best to choose native trees. They require less maintenance and will live longer. You can get more information about native growing trees from a regional university extension office or a state department of natural resources. In addition, the Arbor Day Foundation has a free tree wizard tool that will help you select the best tree for your needs. It is available at www.arborday.org/shopping/trees/treewizard/intro.cfm.

The next step is to decide where to plant your tree. For a windbreak, plant trees to the north, northwest and west. For shade, plant trees to the east and west of your home. Remember that fast-growing trees are more brittle and likely to be damaged in a storm. Plant these trees farther from your home to protect your home from damage.

If you live in an area that is prone to wildfires, there are additional considerations to help keep your home and community safe. It is recommended that you limit the flammable vegetation and material around your home for at least 30 feet on all sides. Contact your local fire department for more information.

Be sure to select planting locations

that will not interfere with utility lines or power poles. Power outages or interruptions occur when trees and branches come into contact with overhead lines. Electrical arcing and sparking from a wire to a nearby branch can cause fires.

Also consider the safety of children. Several years ago a young girl climbing in trees planted too close to power lines was electrocuted. Electricity can travel through live tree branches.

Tall growing trees with a mature height of greater than 40 feet should be planted 50 feet away to avoid future pruning. A mature height of less than 25 feet is recommended for trees planted near power lines. Keep in mind that trees should never be planted directly under power lines, near poles, or too close to electrical equipment.

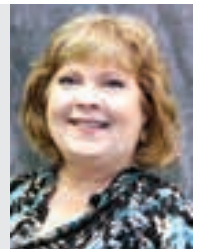
Tall growing trees near power lines must be pruned to maintain a safe distance from the wires. If you have trees that are growing into power lines, contact your electric cooperative. Never try to prune them yourself.

Before planting, take proper precautions to stay safe. Be sure to call 8-1-1, the national "Call Before You Dig" number, a few business days before you want to plant. It is a free service that gets your public underground utilities located and marked, so you can dig safely away from them.

For more tips on energy efficiency and safety, visit EnergyEdCouncil.org. ■



Molly Hall is Director of Safe Electricity. E-mail molly-hall@SafeElectricity.org. Safe Electricity is a public awareness program of the Energy Education Council. www.EnergyEdCouncil.org



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More on how to properly prune

Don't be afraid to give your fruit trees and bushes a healthy trim

Continuing last month's pruning topic, it's come to my attention that folks are scared of pruning wrong. To that I say, go by the three-beer pruning method. Drink three beers, and then go out and prune, making sure you do NOT use the chainsaw.

As you're pruning, you will realize how fun it is, and you don't care if you snip the wrong branch or not.

Just don't drive a vehicle for several hours afterwards.

(And of course, you could go the three glasses of Chardonnay or Bordeaux or whatever fermented grape beverage you enjoy. Or if fermented grains are your choice, go that route.)

This really isn't to be flippant. Well, not totally.

Most people are scared of pruning the wrong branch and destroying their tree, especially when it comes to fruit trees. But pruning is a little like raising a baby. The first one scares you to death and you overcompensate. By the time the third or fourth one comes around, you don't worry about every burp, rash or cry.

Pruning is the same way. The more you do it, the easier it becomes. And you realize that the one big problem is if you drop the tree on its head. Oops, I meant cut it at ground level.

And like kids, plants tend to be tougher than we think.

When it comes to fruit trees, smaller trees such as crabapples, dogwoods and redbuds, and flowering shrubs, "doing it wrong" is more akin to losing flowers and fruit and not the plants.

Like shade trees, there are a few tips to follow when pruning the smaller plants:

- ∞ Try to maintain the natural shape of the plant as much as possible.



Sadly, plants don't have all the same natural shape, much like people. Sure they look the same when small, but as they get bigger, they can be tall and narrow or short and wide.

Think balanced or symmetrical. If you were 25 feet above the plant, it should look circular. If there is a limb going to the east, nearby should be a limb going to the west. Of course, this falls apart if the plant is shaded, as every limb will reach toward the light. As you are pruning, try to balance out the plant. It doesn't make a difference what type.

- ∞ The more light you provide to the branches, the better they'll grow. For many fruit trees this means pruning so the center of the plant is more open than dense. This is why fruit trees look so different in the orchard. Allowing more light produces more flowers and more fruit.

That's why hedges shouldn't be pruned into squares but the old trapezoids, with the top much

narrower than the base and the sides flaring out.

- ∞ Prune to direct growth outward instead of inward. You do this by cutting to an outward pointing bud. (Buds grow the way they point. If you prune to a bud on the underside of the branch, the limb will grow that way.)
- ∞ Branches shouldn't really cross or rub against each other. Prune the weaker ones out. If that's too hard to determine, just go with the technical eeny-meeny-miny-moe.
- ∞ Anything that is diseased or dead should be removed. Anything causing problems with safety should also be pruned out.
- ∞ Don't worry if you prune too much. The plant may respond by growing too much. But these young shoots are easier to prune to the correct direction.
- ∞ And if you prune and remove all the flower buds, which is why spring pruning occurs AFTER the plant has bloomed, don't worry. You haven't killed the plant. It will still leaf out and grow; you'll just have to wait another year for the flowers.
- ∞ There's no need for anything to seal the pruning cut. They make you feel good but do little for the tree. Save your money for liquid refreshments the next time you prune. ■

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



An Ounce of Hydrogen Peroxide is Worth a Pound of Cure

(SPECIAL) - Hydrogen peroxide is trusted by every hospital and emergency room in the country for its remarkable ability to kill deadly germs like E. coli and the swine flu virus. In fact, it has attracted so much interest from doctors that over 6000 articles about it have appeared in scientific publications around the world.

Research has discovered that hydrogen peroxide enables your immune system to function properly and fight infection and disease. Doctors have found it can shrink tumors and treat **allergies, Alzheimer's, asthma, clogged arteries, diabetes, digestive problems, migraine headaches, and arthritis pain.**

Smart consumers nationwide are also discovering there are hundreds of health cures and home remedy uses for hydrogen peroxide. A new book called *The Magic of Hydrogen Peroxide* is now available that tells you exactly how to use hydrogen peroxide by itself... and mixed with simple everyday kitchen items... to make liniments, rubs, lotions, soaks and tonics that treat a wide variety of ailments.

It contains tested and proven health cures that do everything from relieving **chronic pain** to making **age spots** go away. You'll be amazed to see how a little hydrogen peroxide mixed with a pinch of this or that from your cupboard can:

- **Relieve the pain of arthritis, rheumatism and fibromyalgia**
 - **Treat athlete's foot**
 - **Clear up allergies and sinus problems**
 - **Soothe sore throats**
 - **Fight colds and flu**
 - **Help heal boils and skin infections**
 - **Whiten teeth without spending a fortune**
 - **Destroy harmful dental bacteria and heal gingivitis**
 - **Help heal cold sores and canker sores**
 - **Clear up foot and nail fungus**
 - **Relieve the sting and pain of insect bites**
 - **Soothe sore feet**
 - **Relieve ear aches**
 - **Soothe muscle aches**
 - **Enable minor wounds, cuts and scrapes to heal faster**
 - **Refresh and tone your skin**
 - **Clear up acne, rashes and age spots**
 - **Help heal yeast infections**
 - **And much more**
- Besides killing E. coli and the swine flu virus, hydrogen peroxide also destroys botulism, salmonella and other harmful organisms. It works by making viruses and bacteria self-destruct on the cellular level. Amazingly, for something so powerful, hydrogen peroxide is safe. That's because after it makes germs self-destruct, hydrogen peroxide breaks down into harmless water.
- The Magic of Hydrogen Peroxide* book is a valuable health improvement treasure that also shows you how to make tons of household cleaners that work better and more economically than expensive store-bought products. It's a safe powerful alternative to harsh chemical cleaners. Discover easy-to-make formulas that:
- **Kill germs on kitchen counters and surfaces**
 - **Sterilize dishes, cups and kitchen utensils**
 - **Make a powerful scouring powder that works wonders on kitchen sinks, refrigerators and ovens**
 - **Disinfect and deodorize coffee makers, tea pots, blenders and food processors**
 - **Sanitize wood cutting boards and wooden spoons**
 - **Clean out and disinfect clogged drains**
 - **Make hardwood floors, tile floors, grout and linoleum gleam**
 - **Get rid of harmful bacteria on fruits, vegetables and meats with this safe and effective food rinse**
 - **Eliminate nastiness from toilet bowls, bath tubs, showers and shower curtains**
 - **Sterilize and purify toothbrushes and dentures**
 - **Clean and disinfect pet stains**
 - **Remove mold and mildew from basement walls, roofs and other surfaces**
 - **Disinfect diapers, pacifiers and baby toys**
 - **Remove wine, ink and blood stains from clothing, carpets and furniture**
 - **Boost laundry detergent power and restore brightness and color to fabrics**
 - **Streak-free-clean your windows and mirrors**
 - **Clean and deodorize your car**
 - **Eliminate skunk stench on pets and foul odors from litter boxes, old tennis shoes, etc.**
 - **Rid pets of parasites and bacteria**
 - **Make indoor and outdoor plants flourish with a surefire fertilizer and insecticide all rolled-into-one**
 - **Keep hands germ-free without expensive hand sanitizers**
 - **And much more**

The Magic of Hydrogen Peroxide contains many more amazing health remedies, cleaning formulas and gardening mixtures. In addition, it also gives you a list of qualified physicians who use hydrogen peroxide in their practices to treat serious ailments. Also included FREE with each book are useful tips and home remedy formulas using vinegar, garlic baking soda and teas.

To get your copy of *The Magic of Hydrogen Peroxide* direct from the publisher at the special introductory price of \$19.95 plus \$3.98 shipping and handling (total of \$23.93, OH residents please add 6.5% sales tax) simply do this:

Write "Hydrogen Peroxide" on a piece of paper and mail it along with your check or money order payable to: James Direct, Inc., Dept HP576, 500 S. Prospect Ave., Box 980, Hartville, Ohio 44632.

You can charge to your Visa, MasterCard, Discover or American Express by mail. Be sure to include your card number, expiration date and signature.

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LETTERS

Hydrogen Peroxide Knocks Out the Toughest Cases of Athlete's Foot

When I read, treat athlete's foot, I had to try it. I have been fighting with this for four months. I tried every kind of salve from the drug store with no luck. But when I put hydrogen peroxide on my feet it has started to go away. So now I need two books on hydrogen peroxide. One for my best friend. They are like having a doctor in your home.

- M. R.

Sun Prairie, WI

NEWS & RESEARCH

Hydrogen Peroxide: the First Responder of the Immune System

New research conducted at Harvard Medical School and University of Wisconsin - Madison has offered exciting clues as to how our bodies fight off infection and disease. It's been common knowledge in medical circles that our bodies produce hydrogen peroxide, but new studies of human and animal cells are shedding new light on the critical role hydrogen peroxide plays in immunity, wound healing and even tumor biology. This new data shows that hydrogen peroxide is the catalyst to the body's effective fight against disease and infection.

This is one more brick in the wall of evidence supporting hydrogen peroxide's safety and power. Readers are urged to pick up *The Magic of Hydrogen Peroxide* without delay to begin harnessing the power and saving money without delay.

To get this valuable book direct from the publisher a special introductory price of \$19.95 has been arranged plus \$3.98 shipping and handling (total of \$23.93, OH residents please add 6.5% sales tax) and write "Hydrogen Peroxide" and mail it with a check or money order payable to: James Direct, Inc., Dept HP576, 500 S. Prospect Ave., Box 980, Hartville, Ohio 44632.

Want to save even more? Do a favor for a relative or friend and order 2 books for only \$30 postpaid.

*Testimonials are atypical, your results may be more or less.

Cooking

Strawberry Cheesecake



Strawberry Cheesecake (above)

1-1/4 c. graham cracker crumbs	1 T. cornstarch
1/4 c. sugar	3 – 8 oz. pkgs. cream cheese, softened
1/3 c. butter or margarine, melted	14 oz. can sweetened condensed milk
2 – 10 oz. pkg. frozen, sweetened strawberries, thawed	1/4 c. lemon juice
	3 eggs

Combine graham cracker crumbs, sugar and butter. Press into the bottom of an ungreased 9" springform pan. Refrigerate for 30 min. In a blender or food processor, combine strawberries and corn starch; cover and process until smooth. Pour into a saucepan; bring to a boil. Boil and stir for 2 minutes. Set aside 1/3 cup of strawberry sauce; cool. Cover and refrigerate remaining sauce for serving. In a mixing bowl, beat cream cheese until light and fluffy. Gradually beat in milk. Add lemon juice; mix well. Add eggs, beat on low just until combined. Pour half of the cream cheese mixture over crust. Drop half of the reserved strawberry mixture by 1/2 teaspoons into cream cheese layer. Carefully spoon remaining cream cheese mixture over sauce. Drop remaining strawberry sauce by 1/2 teaspoons on top. With a knife, cut through top layer only to swirl strawberry sauce. Bake at 300 degrees for 45-50 minutes or until center is almost set. Cool on a wire rack for 10 min. Carefully run a knife around edge of pan to loosen; cool one hour longer. Refrigerate overnight. Remove side of pan. Thin chilled strawberry sauce with water if desired; serve with cheesecake. Store in refrigerator.

Five-Hour Stew

2 lbs. stew meat or roast cut into 1" pieces	2 T. tapioca
1 tsp. salt	4 potatoes, cut into chunks
4 small onions, chopped	3 carrots, cut into 1" chunks
3 stalks celery, cut into 1" chunks	1 large can diced tomatoes

Mix all ingredients together and put into a roaster pan with a tight lid (or use a slow cooker for about 8 hours.) Set oven at 250 degrees. Do not open for 5 hours.

Recipes from Our Home

Who: Calhoun Nursing and Rehabilitation Center

Cost: \$15 includes shipping

Details: soft-backed, comb bound

Pages of recipes: 143

Send checks to: Barb Ledder, Calhoun Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, 1 Myrtle Ln., Hardin, IL 62047 or call 618-576-2278.

Hearty Breakfast Skillet

1/2 lb. (8 oz.) bulk sausage
2 c. frozen, shredded hashbrown potatoes
1 – 10 oz. can Rotel diced tomatoes and green chilies, drained
1/2 lb. (8 oz.) Velveeta cheese, cut up
6 eggs

Brown sausage in large nonstick skillet, drain. Add potatoes and tomatoes and cook 5 minutes. Top with Velveeta. Beat eggs and 2 T. water with wire whisk. Pour evenly over ingredients in skillet. Cover, reduce heat to low, cook 10-12 minutes or until egg mixture is set in center and cheese is melted. Uncover, let stand 5 minutes before cutting into wedges with a nonstick spatula. Serves 6.

Creamed Spinach

5 T. butter or margarine, divided
1/4 c. flour
1/4 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper
1 dash ground nutmeg
1 c. half and half
4 oz. cream cheese (low-fat is ok)
1 small onion, minced
3 cloves garlic, minced
2 – 10 oz. pkgs. frozen, chopped spinach, thawed
1/4 c. water
1/4 c. grated Parmesan cheese

Melt 3 T. butter in a 2 qt. saucepan over medium-low heat. Stir in flour, salt, pepper and nutmeg. Slowly whisk in half and half. Stir in cream cheese. Increase heat to medium, whisk mixture constantly until thick and smooth. Remove from heat and set aside. In a skillet over medium-high heat, cook onions and garlic in remaining butter until transparent. Stir spinach and water into pan. Reduce heat to medium-low and cover. Simmer for 8 min. stirring occasionally. Stir spinach mixture into creamy mixture and return to medium-high stirring often until warmed through. Remove from heat and fold in Parmesan cheese.



Sweet Potato and Cabbage Slaw

Country Goodness

Who: Maeystown Clovers 4-H Club

Cost: \$13.50 includes shipping

Details: soft-backed, spiral bound

Pages of recipes: 121

Send checks to: Maeystown Clovers, c/o Lisa Schwarze, 3010 Long Lake Rd., Valmeyer, IL 62295 or call 618-830-5019.

Blue Cheese Stuffed Buffalo Chicken Meatloaf

- 1 tsp. olive oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 4 ribs celery, finely chopped
- 3 carrots, peeled and finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 lb. ground chicken breast
- 1 c. buffalo wing sauce
- 1 egg
- 1 c. plain dry bread crumbs
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. pepper
- 1 c. crumbled Blue Cheese
- 1/4 c. honey
- Sliced green onions (for garnish)

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Place a large skillet over medium-high heat. When hot, add olive oil then add onion, celery and carrots. Cook, stirring frequently for 5 to 8 minutes until onion is translucent. Add garlic; cook, stirring frequently for 2 minutes. Let cool slightly. In a medium mixing bowl, combine ground chicken, 1/2 cup of wing sauce, egg, bread crumbs, salt and pepper. Add cooled vegetables. Mix gently but well. Coat a rimmed baking sheet with non-stick cooking spray. Place half of the chicken mixture on the baking sheet, patting into a rectangle. Top evenly with cheese. Add the rest of the meat, covering all of the cheese to seal edges and forming a loaf. Stir together the remaining 1/2 cup of wing sauce and honey. Brush half of it over the meatloaf. Bake for 1/2 hour; brush with the remaining sauce and bake another 1/2 hour or until cooked through. Let cool slightly before slicing. If desired, sprinkle with green onions for garnish. Serves 6.

Correction: The contact phone number for those interested in the *Taste of Tradition* cookbook from the April issue should be 309-778-8611. We apologize for any confusion.

Recipes prepared, tasted and photographed by Valerie Cheatham.
For more recipes and photos go to www.icl.coop.
Questions? Email finestcooking@icl.coop.



Sweet Potato and Cabbage Slaw (above)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 T. canola oil 1 T. lime juice 1-1/2 tsp. toasted sesame seed oil 1/2 tsp. salt 3 c. thinly shredded napa or savoy cabbage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 c. coarsely grated and peeled sweet potato (about 1 large) 4 scallions, trimmed and thinly sliced 1 tsp. finely minced serrano or jalapeno pepper with seeds (optional) |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Whisk canola oil, lime juice, sesame oil and salt in a large bowl. Add sweet potato, cabbage, scallions and peppers (if using); toss to combine. Serve immediately. Makes 6 servings.

Neapolitan Cupcakes (below)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 pkgs. brownie mix 1 c. vegetable oil 4 eggs 1/2 c. water 1 pkg. strawberry cake mix 1 c. water | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 eggs 1/3 c. vegetable oil 1-1/2 c. unsalted butter, room temperature 1 - 16 oz. box sifted confectioner's sugar 1/2 tsp. vanilla |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Stir both brownie mixes with 1 cup vegetable oil, 4 eggs and 1/2 cup water in a large bowl. In a separate bowl, mix strawberry cake mix with 1 cup water, 3 eggs and 1/3 cup vegetable oil. Beat with a mixer on medium for 2 minutes. Prepare muffin tins for 48 cupcakes. Spoon 2 tablespoons of the brownie batter in the bottom of each muffin cup. Top the brownie batter with the strawberry cake batter until the cup is 2/3 full. Bake for about 20 minutes. Cool in pans for 10 minutes and then move to racks. Beat butter with a mixer on medium-high speed until the butter is pale and creamy (about 2 minutes). Beat confectioner's sugar into the butter, about 1/2 cup at a time. After each addition, mix and continue until smooth. Beat in vanilla extract. Spread cooled cupcakes with the frosting.



Neapolitan Cupcakes

Building a new home?

What the Energy Code means to you

If you have started the process of building a new home, you may have heard about the new Illinois energy code. All homes permitted after Jan. 1, 2013 must meet the 2012 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) for energy efficiency. Just what does that mean to you, the person paying to have your new home built?

The first question you might have is, "Will the energy code affect me even if I am 20 miles from a major city?" The answer is yes. All homes built in Illinois must meet the minimum energy code requirements. By the way, all codes are a "minimum" standard; you can always build to a higher standard if you so desire. There has been an energy code for about 10 years, but there was little education or enforcement. The 2012 energy code is different because it is an Illinois law. Other neighboring states are slowly adopting the code. In my experience, inspections vary across the state, however it is important to note that according to the law, your home should still be built to the energy code standards.

So what are the energy code requirements? I have included some of the most noteworthy energy efficiency upgrades:

- **Exterior walls** - 2x6 construction with R20 cavity insulation, or 2x4 construction with R13 cavity insulation and R5 continuous foam sheathing on the exterior of the wall (13+5)
- **Attic** - R49 attic insulation or R38 if you use raised heel trusses
- **Basement** - insulated to an R10–R19 depending on your location within the state.
- **Mandatory blower door test** - all homes must pass a Blower Door test of 5 ACH (air changes per hour)

- **Water heating** - insulate hot water pipes
- **Ducts** -if you have a forced air heating and/or cooling system, all ducts must be sealed and, if there are ducts outside of the conditioned space (a cold crawl-space or attic), the system must be pressure tested
- **Mechanical systems** - the heating and cooling equipment shall be sized to the load using Manual S based on building loads calculated using Manual J. Basically, your HVAC contractor needs to calculate the heating and cooling loads of the home and size the equipment within 15% of the heating load and 10% on cooling load.

Historically, oversizing of heating and cooling systems is common and has been the reason for some of the comfort or moisture problems in some homes. Bigger is not better!

Now let me put all this information into perspective for you. Your first priority when building your new home is the building shell, next the heating and cooling equipment correctly sized to the shell, then sealed ducts and finally, good ventilation strategy. The building shell is what us energy geeks call the "thermal and pressure boundaries." This is the part of the building that is between the heated and cooled space and outdoors. Simply put, the better your building shell performs, the less energy you will use to stay warm and cool. This includes insulating the basement walls.

What about indoor air quality? You want a healthy home right? Now that we have a tightly constructed and Blower Door tested home, we need to make sure we do not have a build-up up of moisture and indoor



pollutants. Mechanical ventilation such as properly installed kitchen and bath fans can do the job. This is called local ventilation and gets rid of the moisture and pollutants at the source. I have one request; please duct your kitchen range hood to the outside. If you have a gas oven it can produce a tremendous amount of carbon monoxide when cooking and this should be removed.

The energy code is a good road map for a comfortable home with affordable utilities. The cost of these energy upgrades are usually reasonable and about the same as your granite counter tops. You will spend more on the upgrades on your next new vehicle than you will on your home.

You can get a copy of the 2012 IECC from www.iccsafe.org or from Amazon ranging from \$44 for the paperback to \$32.99 for a Kindle download. ■

Have questions? Brian Kumer can be contacted at brian_kumer@yahoo.com.



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The worst Civil War tragedy few remember

By John Lowrey

A lot of family trees have a fork connected in some way to the Civil War. My family tree's connection was my great-great grandfather, Captain Deming Norton Lowrey and a disaster on the Mississippi River you've probably never heard about. The story includes some mystery, scandal and even some Illinois politics and wartime corruption.

Capt. Lowrey didn't die during the war. He died along with an estimated 1,800 other returning Union prisoners of war in the worst maritime disaster in American history, worse than the Titanic. You've probably never heard about the sinking of the SS Sultana, a side-wheel steamboat, on the Mississippi River because it happened at the very end of the war when prisoners were being exchanged. The war had hardened the public to the news of death and destruction. But mostly the disaster was overshadowed by one of the worst days in our nation's

history. It happened on April 27, just 12 days after President Lincoln died.

In fact the Sultana, a boat that regularly traveled from St. Louis to New Orleans, was tied up at Cairo, Ill. the morning of April 15, 1865 when news reached the city that President Lincoln had been assassinated. The captain of the Sultana, J. Cass Mason took an armload of Cairo newspapers with him and spread the news of the assassination as he travelled south, knowing the telegraph lines were almost totally cut off because of the war.

Reaching Vicksburg, Miss., Mason talked to Lt. Col. Reuben Hatch of Illinois, who was chief quartermaster for the Union Army at Vicksburg. This is where the tragedy of the Sultana starts. Colonel Hatch had a deal for Mason and it probably just required a little kickback.

Thousands of Union prisoners who had been held at the prison camps

of Cahaba, near Selma, Ala. and Andersonville, south of Atlanta, Ga., had been shipped by train to a camp outside of Vicksburg awaiting release to the North. The U.S. government was ready to pay steamboat captains \$5 for the transportation of each enlisted man and \$10 for officers.

Colonel Hatch knew Mason and knew he needed the money. He said he could guarantee Mason a full load of 1,400 prisoners. Mason readily agreed to the deal.

The Sultana left Vicksburg and Mason continued to spread the news of Lincoln's assassination on the way to New Orleans. On the way back up river to Vicksburg one of the four boilers on the Sultana sprang a leak that had to be repaired. But to do the job right it would have taken too much time and Mason would have lost his chance to take on the profitable human cargo. So instead a minor patch was made to the boiler.

Above: The explosion and fire on the SS Sultana killed an estimated 1,800 Union prisoners of war making it the worst U.S. maritime disaster, tragically an event history has nearly forgotten.

Although the Sultana had a legal capacity of 376, it was packed with approximately 2,100 newly-released and half-starved prisoners of war, even more than Hatch had promised Mason. What was amazing is there were two other steamboats docked at Vicksburg that could have taken some of the soldiers north.

With this large number of people the Sultana was totally overloaded and Mason worried about the boat being top heavy and listing from side to side. It is said he told one soldier that he would give all the interest he had in the boat if it safely landed in Cairo.

After three days traveling upstream and fighting the current of spring flooding that had widened the river to three miles, the Sultana's boilers exploded. The cause was probably because of low water levels in the boilers and listing too far to one side causing the water levels to change drastically in the boilers. It was around 2:00 a.m. on April 27, 1865, just seven miles north of Memphis, Tenn., when the boilers exploded like a huge bomb tearing through the decks flinging men, wood, live coals and scalding water. The fire quickly spread and those who weren't killed by the initial explosion had a choice of jumping into the icy water or being burned alive.

In the Civil War memoir of Harvey Hogue, who served with my great-great grandfather, he wrote, "It is said of Captain Lowrey that he remained on the sinking craft to the very last, throwing boards and such things as would be of use to those struggling in the water, when he might have saved himself by leaving earlier."

Many of those who jumped into the icy water would drown or die of hypothermia. About 700 survived, but 200 of the survivors died later from their burns and exposure.

In spite of the huge disaster, and several inquiries, no one was really ever held accountable. Although there were several who it could be said reasonably shared in the blame, Col. Hatch seemed to have played a central role in the overcrowding that caused the listing of the boat, which in turn

Captain Deming Norton Lowrey survived the Civil War but died on his way home along with 1,800 other soldiers on the SS Sultana.



The Sultana docked briefly at Helena, Ark. Word quickly spread among the passengers that a photographer was setting up his camera on the west bank of the river. Soldiers moving to the port side of the boat caused the Sultana to list dangerously. This is the last picture of the Sultana and those on board.

caused the unequal pressure in the boilers leading to the explosion.

In an episode of PBS's *History Detectives* that aired on July 2, 2014, they found that Hatch had a long history of corruption and incompetence, but was able to keep his job and avoid court martial because of Illinois political connections back to Lincoln.

Earlier in the war while serving as an assistant quartermaster in Cairo, Hatch was arrested for taking kick-backs for the purchase of military supplies. The evidence was overwhelming. However, thanks to his brother Ozias Hatch, who was Secretary of State for Illinois and financial backer of Lincoln, plus the support of Illinois Governor Richard Yates and State Auditor Jesse Dubois, a letter from Lincoln to the judge advocate in Cairo spared Hatch from a court martial tribunal. His political connections would save his career several times,

and even get him promoted.

After the sinking of the Sultana, Hatch was ordered to appear before another court martial tribunal. But, a request by the prosecutor to the Secretary of War for Hatch's arrest went unanswered. Instead of having to answer to the charges, he was relieved of his duties as chief quartermaster. Weeks later he was carrying \$14,490 in government money on a northbound steamer, the Atlantic. The safe on the Atlantic was robbed, but the thief was caught as the boat reached St. Louis. All but \$8,500 of the government funds Hatch said he placed in the safe were recovered. Hatch's career predictably ended in more scandal.

There isn't a national monument to honor this forgotten tragedy. There is only a small monument in the Mount Olive Baptist Church Cemetery in Knoxville, Tenn., dedicated by the survivors in 1916.

DropBox to the rescue

Electricity and water don't mix. Pretty basic, I know. And, I bet you already knew that. I had the "opportunity" to know it from more than just an academic standpoint recently. After a day trip to Springfield, we returned home to find more than five inches and twenty-five hundred gallons of water in our basement.

Guess where our family keeps the computer room? You're right! They are stored in the basement.

Now, we are not a typical family. Everyone has their own computer, all networked together so we can interact together for a variety of different things. So, there were a total of five computers down there. Some were on desks, but two were actually submerged, which brings me back to my original point: electricity and water don't mix. In particular, computer components don't do well being submerged, and they really don't do well when they are connected to a live power source at the time.

Warning - never step into a flooded basement if there is a chance that flood waters may be in contact with outlets or electrical cords.

After turning the water off to the house, and calling the insurance company, our next concern was for the data stored on the computers. You see, computers are easily replaced but the countless family photos, school projects, and videos of the children could have been lost forever.

Except, of course, we had everything backed up online.

We use an online file storage. There are many available and they all have varying levels of security, but having something like this in place certainly saved us from data loss. My family uses DropBox.

DropBox does have some security professionals on edge because of the levels of sharing it offers. Additionally, when installed on a business network running Windows Server, DropBox



can add some network traffic as it seeks to update files to the newest versions across devices with shared folders. That type of traffic can look to some network administrators like a breach in their security. In fact though, I've found it to be fine.

But, for personal use, I think DropBox is fantastic. It allows for the creation of a file system that mimics the way your operating system stores files. That way you can save your photos and files seamlessly the way in which you are already accustomed.

Even better, once you install the DropBox application on other devices, and connect them to the Internet, your file system, along with the accompanying files are automatically synced to the new device. Then, once you make changes, those changes are universal.

The biggest benefit is that you're no longer tied to one device. Your files now exist anywhere you have an Internet connection. When the connection is no longer available for whatever reason, you still keep the version of the file you were last working on as your current version. Then, when you reconnect, your files all resync again.

Another big positive for this kind of system is versioning. Say I have shared a folder with my wife so that we can both work on our family tree document together. If she accidentally makes a mistake in adding information, and

then saves the mistake in the file, normally that would overwrite my original file and it would take extraordinary measures for me to revert back. With DropBox, I can simply log in to the website and see all the previous versions of the file (within a certain date range), thus allowing for recovery of the original file. You can even recover deleted files in this manner.

I would encourage you to do some of your own research into online cloud storage for backup purposes. If nothing else, you could set up a Windows backup routine and point it toward the online storage. Then, if your basement floods like mine did, you can easily recover your important files.

Reply Online

Have a technology issue and want some advice? Visit www.icl.coop and click on Powered Up to respond. Your response might even be included in a future column.

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The Devil's web: Life on the Reverse Underground Railroad

By Nancy Rhoads McDonald

*P*anting, he scurried through the brush, his tattered clothes and bloody feet evidence of the harrowing journey he'd endured since escaping days earlier. As the sound of men's voices and baying hounds grew louder, he knew he'd soon be captured, and the brutal whippings on his already scarred and bloodied back would resume.

Such was the fate of many runaway slaves. They were hunted like dogs, treated inhumanely and sold like livestock. Prior to the Civil War, the Underground Railroad, a network of secret routes and safe houses throughout Illinois and other states that bordered slave states, helped slaves escape to northern free states, and Canada. However, the lesser-known Reverse Underground Railroad, which also operated then, revealed a more sinister side of the U.S. slave trade. This network of stations was used to hold and transfer kidnapped free blacks or runaway slaves, who would be sold to the highest bidders.

Since stories involving the Reverse Underground Railroad can vary widely, there is a blurred line between fact and fiction. But one truth cannot be denied; life for the poor souls caught up in this trafficking operation was brutal and tragic.

In the early to mid-1800s, John Hart Crenshaw was one



of the most prominent businessmen in Illinois. He leased, and eventually purchased thousands of acres of salt tracts from the government in Southern Illinois. Work in the salt mines was grueling, attracting only the most desperate free men. The result was a labor shortage. Since salt was a necessity for preserving food and for nutrition, Crenshaw was allowed to use slave labor in the operation, thus increasing his wealth exponentially.

The stately mansion Crenshaw built in the 1830s on Hickory Hill near Equality for his wife, Sina, and their children, was a showplace. The first two floors served as the family's living quarters and a place to entertain wealthy visitors and politicians. However, hidden behind this tranquil "mask" was a third-floor attic that contained 12 tiny, barred stalls believed to have served as an illegal "jail" encased in thick walls.

Legend says that Crenshaw employed bounty hunters who pursued runaway slaves and unwary free blacks. Those captured were transported by boat from the Ohio River to the Saline River, or by carriage. A separate entrance in the back of the house and a hidden tunnel to the river provided direct access to the attic. Free blacks' freedom papers were destroyed, and they were tortured until they reluctantly changed their status to "slave." The prisoners were chained, and some were held until they were sold, some labored in the salt mines, and others were used for "breeding" to feed the slave trade's voracious appetite. The mansion became known as "The Old Slave House."

Since the Crenshaws were pillars of the community, most locals turned a blind eye to the illicit slave trading practices, and people from the outside were unaware of it. In fact, according to Southern Illinois Author, Historian and Blogger Kenneth Dwain Harrelson, even Abraham Lincoln once visited the Crenshaw house when he was on the campaign trail in 1840, possibly for William Henry Harrison. He says, "Both my Great-Great Grandmother Jeniza (Gates) Harrelson and her twin sister Juliza (Gates) Haley Burns danced with Lincoln at the Crenshaw house at a party given in honor of his visit there. They rode a mule together side-saddle [to the ball] and were 13 at the time." Based on Harrelson's family lore, Lincoln, "The Great



The lovely Crenshaw Mansion was the perfect cover for unspeakable slave-trading activity. Photo courtesy of Kenneth Dwain Harrelson.

Emancipator," may have spent that night there. Such irony.

Crenshaw was eventually sued but never convicted in some free black kidnapping cases, but revenge can be exacted in other ways. Legend says that after savagely beating some female slaves one day, male slaves attacked him and severed his leg with an axe. He was later photographed holding a crutch, which some say lends credence to the story.

The Old Slave House (now closed) is the only station in the country left standing on the Reverse Underground Railroad. Throughout history, many of the home's visitors have reported paranormal activity, and hauntedhouses.com lists it as one of the most haunted houses in the country.

The lurid activity on the Reverse Underground Railroad ceased long ago, and the Old Slave House is now shuttered, but tales of slavery and the part Illinois played in this terrible chapter in history will live on for generations to come.

Underground Railroad sites (Illinois):

- Owen Lovejoy House-Princeton (*tours available*)
- John Hossack House-Ottawa (*private residence*)
- Dr. Richard Eells House-Quincy (*tours available*)
- Beecher Hall-Jacksonville (*on campus of Illinois College. Tours are available when school is in session*)
- Rutherford House-Oakland (*tours available*)

Reverse Underground Railroad site:

- Old Slave House-Equality (*closed to visitors*)

- 1-2 Dutch Days Festival**, in Fulton. From 9 a.m.-7 p.m. enjoy films and slides on Holland, Dutch Folk Art, and a style show of traditional Dutch clothes. There will be many food vendors that travel from all over the region and a parade with authentic Dutch costumers, bands, floats and many other entertaining units, including an outdoor band. For more information contact <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Fulton-Dutch-Days-Festival>.
- 1-3 Whirlwind Soccer Tournament**, 109 Valentine Lane, Marion. Recreational league tournament with over 100 teams competing at the Marion Soccer Complex; games for children of all ages, face painting, concessions, and many more activities to keep everyone busy and having fun. www.marionsoccer.com/whirlwind or 618-993-3770.
- 2 Shearing Day at Timberview Alpacas**, 7910 White Oak Rd. Clinton. See skirting, carding and spinning demonstrations. Watch the shearers removing the fleece. Beginning at 9 a.m.-3 p.m. For questions contact Elizabeth, 309-275-4027.
- 7 Midwest Medical Center Auxiliary Spring Bake Sale**, Midwest Medical Center, Galena. Homemade baked goods and gift basket raffles; all proceeds benefit the hospital. Beginning at 7:00 a.m. until items are sold out, 815-777-6056.
- 9 Cache River Nature Fest**, held at the Cache River Wetland Center, 8885 St. Rt. 37, Cypress 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Activities include guided field trips, canoe tours, live

bird demonstrations, and various exhibits. The Cache River Wetland Center will be open throughout the weekend and features a 12-minute video as well as many interactive exhibits, 800-248-4373 or www.cacherivernaturefest.net.

- 16 Native Wildflower Sale**, Town Square Pavilion, 100 North Illinois, Carbondale. Large selection of plants native to Southern Illinois – hardy, beautiful, pollinator friendly, and low maintenance. Come early for best selection! Opening at 10 a.m. For more information contact Ruth Kelley at The Sierra Club, Shawnee Group, 618-684-2196.
- 16-17 Lusk Creek BBQ Festival**, Downtown Golconda. Entertainment will include bands and beer tent; teams will be competing for awards. For more information call Pope Co. Historical Society at 618-683-9702 or 618-683-6246.
- 18-25 HerrinFesta Italiana**, One North Park Avenue, Herrin. Voted Illinois' Best Event or Festival in

2014. Located in Downtown Herrin, this weeklong celebration of Italian heritage includes a grape stomp, "Bigga Nose" contest, a carnival and concerts by many world famous recording artists, www.herrinfesta.com or 618-942-5055.

- 23 Riverside Art & Wine Festival**, Riverside Park, Murphysboro. Ten Illinois wineries, dozens of fine arts vendors, food, music; must be 21 or over. Tickets are \$12 Advance/\$15 Gate/\$15 non-drinker. www.murphysborochamber.com.
- 28-30 Illinois State Quartet Convention**, 800 Tower Square Plaza, Marion. This three-day event is one of the most significant southern Gospel singing events in the entire state of Illinois. Quartets, duets and even soloists show off their talents at this annual event held each year at Marion Cultural and Civic Center, www.marionccc.com or 618-997-4030.



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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.

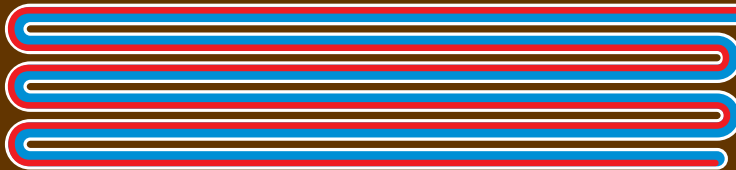
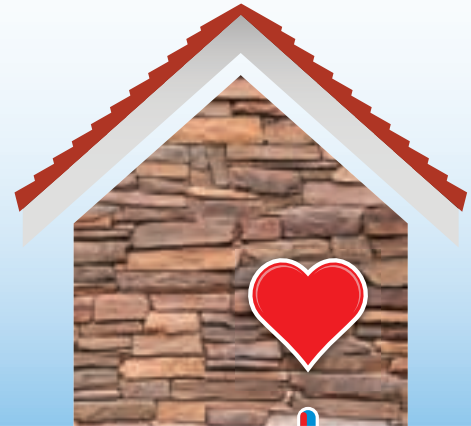
Deadline: April 21 for July events. **Mail to:** Illinois Datebook, PO Box 3787, Springfield, IL 62708. E-mail to: datebook@aicc.coop.

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How a Chicago Doctor **Shook Up** the Hearing Aid Industry with his **Newest Invention**

New nearly invisible digital hearing aid breaks price barrier in affordability

Reported by J. Page

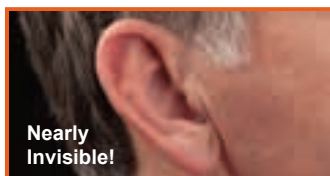
Chicago: Board-certified physician Dr. S. Cherukuri has done it once again with his newest invention of a medical grade **ALL DIGITAL** affordable hearing aid.

This new digital hearing aid is packed with all the features of \$3,000 competitors at a mere fraction of the cost. **Now, most people with hearing loss are able to enjoy crystal-clear, natural sound — in a crowd, on the phone, in the wind — without suffering through “whistling” and annoying background noise.**

New Digital Hearing Aid Outperforms Expensive Competitors

This sleek, lightweight, fully programmed hearing aid is the outgrowth of the digital revolution that is changing our world. While demand for “all things digital” caused most prices to plunge (consider DVD players and computers, which originally sold for thousands of dollars and today can be purchased for less), the cost of a digital medical hearing aid remains out of reach.

Dr. Cherukuri knew that many of his patients would benefit but couldn't afford the expense of these new digital hearing aids. Generally they are *not* covered by Medicare or most private health insurance.



Nearly Invisible!

SAME FEATURES AS EXPENSIVE HEARING AID COMPETITORS

- ✓ Mini Behind-The-Ear hearing aid with thin tubing for a nearly invisible profile
- ✓ Advanced Noise Reduction to make speech clearer
- ✓ Feedback Cancellation eliminates whistling
- ✓ Wide Dynamic Range Compression makes soft sounds audible and loud sounds comfortable
- ✓ Telecoil setting for use with compatible phones, and looped environments like churches
- ✓ 3 Programs and Volume Dial to accommodate most common types of hearing loss even in challenging listening environments

The doctor evaluated all the high priced digital hearing aids on the market, broke them down to their base components, and then created his own affordable version — called the MDHearingAid® **AIR** for its virtually invisible, lightweight appearance.

Affordable Digital Technology

Using advanced digital technology, the MDHearingAid® **AIR** automatically adjusts to your listening environment — prioritizing speech and de-emphasizing background noise. Experience all of the sounds you've been missing at a price you can afford. **This doctor designed and approved hearing aid comes with a full year's supply of long-life batteries. It delivers crisp, clear sound all day long and the soft flexible ear buds are so comfortable you won't realize you're wearing them.**

Try It Yourself At Home With Our 45-Day Risk-Free Trial

Of course, hearing is believing and we invite you to try it for yourself with our RISK-FREE 45-Day home trial. If you are not completely satisfied, simply return it within that time period for a full refund of your purchase price.

Can a hearing aid delay or prevent dementia?

A study by Johns Hopkins and National Institute on Aging researchers suggests older individuals with hearing loss are significantly more likely to develop dementia over time than those who retain their hearing. They suggest that an intervention—such as a hearing aid—could delay or prevent dementia by improving hearing!

“Satisfied Buyers Agree AIR is Best Digital Value!”

“I am hearing things I didn't know I was missing. Really amazing. I'm wearing them all the time” —Linda Irving, Indiana

“Almost work too well. I am a teacher and hearing much better now” —Lillian Barden, California

“I have used many expensive hearing aids, some over \$5,000. The AIRS have greatly improved my enjoyment of life” —Som Y., Michigan

“I would definitely recommend them to my patients with hearing loss”

—Amy S., Audiologist, Munster, Indiana



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