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Illinois Country Living

JULY 2016 • ICL.COOP



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On the cover, paratriathlon competitor Ashley Eisenmenger (left) and guide Caroline Gaynor complete the Life Time Chicago Triathlon last year.


Photo Courtesy of Life Time Chicago Triathlon and All Eriqin Photography

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Setting the record straight on pork production

As a fifth generation family farmer and proud owner of a CAFO (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation), I want to set the record straight on the often distorted views of my farm and other farms like mine.

The term “CAFO” is often used to scare people into believing that these farms are bad. CAFO is a term used by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for farms that house animals inside buildings. In fact, the majority of CAFOs are family farms like mine.

The size of farms has grown, but that doesn't mean we've lost sight of the values that have always guided Illinois farmers—safe food, quality animal care and protection of our land, air and water. Advances in technology and science allow farmers to grow more food using fewer resources than ever before.

Although hog farms have gotten larger and more specialized, the vast majority in Illinois operate year-round without disrupting the neighborhood or the community, and with no negative environmental impact.

The majority of pigs today are raised inside barns. My family has raised pigs since the 1940s and our pigs have been raised both outside and inside. There are definite advantages to raising pigs inside, such as protecting them from extreme weather conditions. By raising pigs inside barns, I am also better able to protect them from diseases and predators. I can also better control the valuable manure by applying as needed to my crops as a natural fertilizer source in a sustainable way.

Today's farms employ modern technology and innovations that allow us to capture and recycle our valuable nutrients better than we did just a generation ago. Manure from



animals raised inside buildings is required to be completely contained in manure handling structures such as concrete pits, which are built based on engineering standards established by land grant universities.

Properly applying manure to crop land provides valuable nutrients from an organic source. It is part of a sustainable nutrient cycle that is beneficial to soil health and part of an environmentally sound system. Farmers use nutrient management plans to balance the nutrients in the manure with the nutrient needs of the crops. Hog manure is typically injected 6-8 inches into the soil to prevent runoff and reduce odor.

The Livestock Management Facilities Act (LMFA) governs the siting, construction and certain operating aspects of livestock farms in the state. It ensures that livestock farms will be sited on scientific, objective criteria, and the rules are applied uniformly throughout the state. Since its implementation, the law has provided a balanced approach in protecting the environment and allowing farmers the ability to continue to raise livestock on their farms.

Caring for my animals is my family's livelihood and our ethical obligation. Animal health and well-being is every farmer's top concern. Veterinary care and appropriate housing address animals' needs. Antibiotics are used carefully

according to veterinary oversight and FDA withdrawal requirements. This ensures that antibiotics are not present in the meat of the animal. Farmers want to give animals the best quality care, knowing that's what it takes to provide the best quality meat for all of our families.

Both rural electric cooperatives and agriculture have deep roots in our state and benefit

our rural communities. Agriculture provides employment and economic stability to our local economies. CAFOs have helped many farm families bring the next generation back to the farm and have given many young people the ability to remain in our rural communities.

The pork industry is very important to the Illinois economy. According to a recent study conducted by Dr. Peter Goldsmith of the University of Illinois, the pork industry contributes \$1.8 billion and 10,533 jobs of total economic impact to the state's economy in addition to providing \$170 million in total taxes. The pork industry is important to Illinois agriculture as it consumes more than 69 million bushels of corn and 24 million bushels of soybeans each year.

Illinois hog farmers, many of which are classified as CAFOs, are committed to doing what is right to protect our natural resources, care for our animals, support our local communities and produce safe, nutritious food. 🙏



Curt Zehr is the owner of Zehr Farms and is the President of the Illinois Pork Producers Association. He lives in Washington, Ill.

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Got electricity? Thank a lineman

Despite improvements, line work remains a dangerous job.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics puts electric utility line work among the nation's top 10 most hazardous professions, according to the agency's most recent census using 2014 data. Electric line technicians recorded a 19.2 fatality rate per 100,000 workers, ninth on the list. While the number of lineworker fatalities has declined since 1994, about three million nonfatal incidents were reported in 2014. Those employed as loggers, fishermen, aircraft pilots and flight engineers led the rankings, with logging notching a fatality rate well above 100. ♡



USDA interest-free loan helps expand rural jobs

Global demand for high-quality, American-made products is well established, and expanded rural exports have the potential to support additional jobs and growth in rural America. On June 3, Sam Ridders, USDA Rural Development Administrator for Rural Business Services, was able to share that message from the production facility of IHI Turbo America, a manufacturing company based in Shelbyville, Ill. that continues to expand production and jobs.

“It’s exciting to see the success that IHI Turbo America is experiencing,” said Ridders. “Rural Development helps connect rural business with the full landscape of available federal resources and ensure they have the support they need to access international markets.”

IHI Turbo America (ITA) designs and manufactures a full range of diesel, gasoline and natural gas turbocharger products and accessories for the agricultural, industrial, marine, commercial truck and military markets.

An interest-free Rural Economic Development Loan (REDL) of \$1 million, provided to Shelby Electric Cooperative to then loan to ITA, supports an expansion project in excess of \$3 million that is expected to create more than 20 new jobs.

“The use of Rural Development program funding by ITA through Shelby Electric is exactly what we want to see more companies and cooperatives doing in rural Illinois,” said Colleen Callahan, Rural Development Director for Illinois. ♡



With a \$1 million interest free USDA loan through Shelby Electric Cooperative, IHI Turbo America will add new jobs and production to its Shelbyville facility. From the left are Mary Warren, Business Programs Specialist–Rural Energy Coordinator, Rural Development USDA; Samuel Ridders, Administrator Rural Business–Cooperative Service USDA; Josh Shallenberger, President/CEO, Shelby Electric Cooperative; Colleen Callahan, Illinois Director USDA; IHI Turbo America employees John Schuessler, Director and General Manager; Robert James, Manufacturing Engineering Manager; Karen Logan, Human Resources Manager and Mike Price, Controller.



Illinois pioneers of rural electrification

Earl W. Struck

Earl W. Struck joined the AIEC in 1979 as a public affairs representative in the Legal and Public Affairs Department. He became director of that department in 1983, and in 1994 became the third CEO of the AIEC, replacing the retired Thomas H. Moore.

Struck was known as a master at building alliances and consensus and was an integral part of House Bill 2936, which allowed electric and telephone cooperatives to preserve invested capital for their members.

He served as president/CEO during the time when the initial Illinois electric utility deregulation law was being written. It advocated a single co-op/municipal utility position that all decisions related to entry into a deregulated marketplace be left to the governing bodies of each individual co-op or municipal. The law passed and was signed in 1997.

Struck exemplified the cooperative spirit and its principles. He understood that cooperation was a powerful force for progress.

In celebration of the AIEC's 75th anniversary, this is seventh in a series of profiles on Illinois' rural electric pioneers.

Agriculture Secretary announces Open Prairie Rural Opportunities Fund

In May, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the launch of a new private investment fund with the potential to inject \$100 million into small food and agriculture businesses across rural America. The fund is known as the Open Prairie Rural Opportunities Fund.

“Like their counterparts in urban areas, innovative small businesses throughout rural America need access to capital in order to grow and create jobs,” Vilsack said. “At USDA, we are working hard to reenergize the rural economy, and we are enlisting more and more private sector partners to help achieve that goal. Open Prairie has been a great partner in this effort.”

The Open Prairie Rural Opportunities Fund will invest in companies with high-growth potential across the food and agribusiness value chain and rural America, including those in the crop protection, agricultural production and processing, precision agriculture, and information and data management sectors.

Open Prairie, founded in 1997 by agribusiness entrepreneur Jim Schultz, is a multi-faceted private equity management firm, with roots in rural America and its headquarters in Effingham, Ill. The new fund was formed under the USDA's Rural Business Investment Program (RBIP). USDA is utilizing RBIP to license funds to invest in enterprises that will create growth and job opportunities in rural areas, with an emphasis on smaller enterprises. For more information, go to www.openprairie.com. ☺

State agencies pledge to share data to provide better services

Illinois is in the midst of an IT transformation to modernize its systems to provide state services more quickly and at a lower cost. Due to aging systems that cannot communicate with each other - particularly in the case of human services agencies - residents must call multiple agencies to find information or sign up for services. Often they will fill out a paper form, travel to the offices of another agency, and then fill out another paper form with identical information. The current system is a tremendous waste of taxpayer time and money.

Thirteen state agencies, which are members of the State's Health and Human Service enterprise, announced the signing of an Enterprise Memorandum of Understanding (eMOU) for inter-agency data sharing. The eMOU will correct the many problems that arise from a lack of information sharing by state agencies.

“While many people interact with multiple health and human service agencies in Illinois, our current “siloes” data structure means that each agency only sees the customers’ use of services for their particular programs,” DHS Secretary James Dimas said.

“This eMOU is a major step forward in providing better services to the taxpayers of Illinois,” said Hardik Bhatt, State Chief Information Officer and Secretary-designate of the Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT). “More than a dozen agencies agreeing to share data to improve services for taxpayers while creating a more efficient work product is historic, and to have done this in only seven months is equally significant.” ☺

Electric cooperatives add 100 megawatts of wind power

Hoosier Energy Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc. and Wabash Valley Power Association have entered into a 20-year purchase power agreement that will add 100 megawatts (MW) of wind energy.

The wind power agreement with EDP Renewables North America (EDPR NA) is for 100 MW from the Meadow Lake V Wind Farm located in northwest Indiana. Under the terms of the agreement, Hoosier Energy and Wabash Valley Power, which supply power to 41 rural electric distribution cooperatives in Indiana and parts of Illinois and Missouri, will share the 100 megawatts of renewable energy.

“Electric cooperatives are focused on providing cost-effective energy for their member systems through a variety of resources including renewables,” said Steve Smith, Hoosier Energy President and Chief Executive Officer. “This agreement adds more wind resources to our “all-of-the-above” portfolio, which includes coal, natural gas, wind, hydro, landfill methane and coalbed methane generation.”



“As a cooperative, we do not exist for the benefit of shareholders, or even customers, but for members. In that spirit, we’ve come together to increase our buying power and deflect the risks associated with supplying electricity. Adding wind generation further diversifies our power supply mix. And a diversified strategy helps reduce both expense and risk for our members,” commented Jay Bartlett, CEO of Wabash Valley Power. ☺

Staying and planting roots in Southern Illinois

There’s been much hand wringing of late about people fleeing Illinois as the political climate here sours. Even before that, the rural “brain drain” – a phenomenon of the best and brightest leaving rural America in droves – has taken its toll. Only New Jersey outstrips Illinois in terms of the rate at which young people are leaving the state. In 2012, Illinois experienced a net loss of 16,563 students, according to the National Center for Educational Statistics.

But even among the troubling trends, there are still many bright students who plan to stick around, who still see a bright future for small map-dot communities across the region, and are willing to make a go of a career in rural Illinois.

Dalen Treat is just one example. He is a graduating senior at Dongola High School who loves farming, hunting, fishing and the simple, country life. So it probably comes as little shock that he loves southern Illinois.

Treat and his family are

members of Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative where his father is an employee. Treat is heading off to



Dalen Treat received certificates of achievement from The Southern Illinoisan Publisher John Pfeiffer at the 46th Annual Southern Illinois Society of High School Achievement Banquet in May at the SIU Carbondale Ballroom.

college this fall at Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo. But, unlike some in his senior classmates who say they hope to leave southern Illinois behind, Treat says he’s looking forward to getting through school and coming home to plant roots.

“I’ve heard people say they want to go as far away as possible. I don’t understand all that,” Treat said, momentarily shutting down his tractor.

Treat was accepted into the high school early acceptance program for Southwest Baptist’s doctoral of physical therapy program. Treat will start school with about a semester behind him, as he’s already earned 15 credit hours from Shawnee Community College.

Treat said that after graduation he hopes to be hired on at Southern Illinois Healthcare. He got interested in physical therapy watching his mom, who works as a physical therapist assistant at SIH. ☺

Source: Molly Parker The Southern Illinoisan <http://thesouthern.com>



With parades, watermelon, hot dogs, and swimming under the hot sun, followed by the “oohs” and “aahs” from stunning fireworks, Independence Day is a time for celebration – but also a time to thank those who have fought for, and continue to fight for our freedom as Americans.

Illinois’ Touchstone Energy cooperatives will be closed on Monday, July Fourth, to celebrate 240 years of independence!

God bless past and current servicemen and women, and God bless America!



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RUNNING HER OWN RACE

BLIND SINCE BIRTH, ASHLEY EISENMENGER LETS NOTHING STAND IN THE WAY OF COMPETING IN TRIATHLONS.

By Valerie Cheatham

It's all a matter of perception. Sight is something most of us take for granted, but what if it was stripped away? Would you languish or excel? What if you never had sight to begin with?

Twenty-year old Ashley Eisenmenger, the oldest of triplets born to Amy and Matt Eisenmenger of Tolono, entered the world at 27 weeks, 2 lb. 1 oz., and legally blind. Her sister Emily's vision is good enough to drive but Kailey's, while better than Ashley's, is still impaired enough to prohibit driving. Ashley has no vision in her right eye and only large object perception in her left eye. It's all she's ever known, and she is making the most of it.

Growing up, Ashley was always very active. She played basketball in sixth grade, and in a special recreation league all through high school. She counted her steps on the floor, always knew where she was and practiced shots from the perimeter. However, during an awkward freshman

transition into high school she felt like she really needed a new challenge in something that she could control, because so much of her life involved things in which she had no control. She needed something she could latch onto and that's when she discovered her true passion – running. She ran a 5K (3.1 miles) race with a guide and found her niche.

Very competitive by nature, Ashley loved the idea of an individual sport where she could continually strive to set new personal records. "What's really cool," she says, "is I take an individual sport like running and make it a team sport, because I am literally tied to someone else. Even if I lost the rest of my vision today, tomorrow I could run."

Ashley found many of her early guides through a running club to which she belongs. Now, she works closely with Delta Gamma sorority on the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign campus where one of her first guides, Katie Donnewold, was a member.

Donnewold contacted the running club to express her interest in helping a blind runner and they put her in touch with Ashley. Since then several of her guides have come from the sorority.

In the summer of 2014, Ashley was encouraged by a friend to tackle a triathlon, which consists of swimming, biking and running. The length of each leg of a triathlon varies depending on the type of race. Initially, she wasn't sure about taking it on. The first hurdle was to find a tandem bike, because they're not very common. Fortunately, a couple of days later, her friend called and had found one. Ashley recalls thinking: "Alright, I guess I'm doing a tri!"

A blind athlete uses a guide for the entire race. They are tethered at the waist or thigh for swimming, ride a

tandem bike, and are tethered again at the waist for running. An 18-inch tether is used for running, but it's much more involved than that. Her guide is essentially another piece of equipment that enables her to race. "When I race, it's my race," explains Ashley. "They are there to see that I am able to race safely and complete it as quickly as possible."

Ashley knew how to swim but had never really done distance swimming. Her competitive spirit provided the momentum during the competition. "I did the tri, and loved it! It was one of the most fun experiences I'd ever had in racing," she says. "It was a new challenge and exciting to find one more thing I could do with others. Typically,

"I WOULDN'T BE WHERE I AM NOW, COMPETING ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL AS A PARATRIATHLETE, IF I HADN'T BLINDLY TRUSTED SOME RANDOM CHICK THAT I READ ABOUT ONLINE."

when people race they are alone. I'm lucky to do it tied to someone I would consider one of my best friends. So, for me, it goes further than swim, bike and run."

In September, Ashley decided that she would do another race in the spring if she could find a tandem – the previous one was a loaner. In January 2015, her search for a tandem began, with no luck. Being a "generally impatient person" she did research because she figured she couldn't be the only blind person that wanted to do this. She discovered there weren't many others, but they did exist. She came across an article about Caroline Gaynor, who almost exclusively races as a guide.

Ashley found Caroline on Facebook and sent her a personal message asking if she might be able to help her find a tandem. It never crossed Ashley's mind

that Gaynor might guide her, just that she really needed that tandem bike.

Much to her surprise, Caroline responded quickly, a close friendship resulted, and they began racing together. She also introduced Ashley to an entire network of coaches, guides and other athletes. Meeting this group of different people with varying abilities has helped her slowly grow her network, which helps in her search for guides that do triathlons.

Learning to do a triathlon has been a long process for her. She had taken swimming lessons as a child, in order to learn to survive, but to say she was a swimmer was far from the truth. "I'm getting faster and learning to fine tune my stroke. If anything, the biggest challenge is being underwater. Because of the water, the other athletes can't see, but I can't see anyway," she explains. "But with the waves and the water, it takes away my ability to hear. For a blind athlete, when you can't see or hear anything, it's tough."

According to Ashley, "Trust is paramount. And, blind trust is putting faith in someone you might not know, which isn't always smart. However, I have blindly trusted people to get me from point A to point B more times than I can count, and it has taken me to places I never thought I'd go. When I'm out, I have a white cane. I'm completely in control of where I go and what I do. When I'm tethered to a guide or on a tandem, it's all on somebody else to make decisions, and I have to trust them. But, there is a reverse to that. They have to trust that when they give me a direction, I'm going to do what they say. Without trust, I can do nothing.

"Oftentimes I train with guides I've never met before. Caroline and I got into the pool and onto a tandem within hours of meeting each other for the first time," she remarks. "Of course, 'blind trust' is a pun here because I am blind, but it's real, too. I wouldn't be where I am now, competing on the



▲ LINDSEY COOK PILOTS THE TANDEM DURING THE SECOND LEG OF THE TRIATHLON.

national level as a paratriathlete, if I hadn't blindly trusted some random chick that I read about online."

Through the Dare2Tri triathlon club, based out of Chicago, Ashley has had the opportunity to hone her skills. The club is for youth, adults and injured service members. The coaches and staff are trained to work with athletes with varying disabilities from beginning level all the way to those who are going to compete at the elite level. Ashley now competes as a member of the Dare2Tri Paratriathlon Development Team.

This past January, Ashley and Caroline competed in the Houston Marathon, a first for Ashley. She had two guides for that race due to the large number of participants – 24,000. The other guide cleared a path in the more congested areas, and grabbed aid or assistance at the stations along the

path in order to help avoid the bottlenecks that can occur there.

Ashley doesn't think a marathon could have gone any better. Even though it was her first, and she had nothing to compare it to, everything fell into place. She didn't really start to feel bad until mile 21, and then it got worse by mile 23, but she feels fortunate that it was that far into the race before she "hit that wall." Her body was really telling her to quit, but about mile 23 her friend Amanda surprised her by being at the race running alongside the course and encouraging her. And, her time qualified her to compete in the Boston Marathon next spring.

Competitive in the classroom as well, Ashley recently graduated from Parkland College in Champaign with high honors. She was asked to give the commencement address but had to turn down the offer. She had been

invited to the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo., to the tandem cycling development camp for a week of tandem-specific training with USA Paracycling and the United States Association of Blind Athletes. She wouldn't miss that opportunity.

Eight teams of 16 athletes attended the camp. Ashley and her pilot, Amanda Leibovitz, hadn't ridden together before the camp. Both are triathletes, but according to Ashley, "Cycling, while a component of triathlon, requires a different skill set in racing than it does in triathlon. It immediately pushed both of us out of our comfort zones but we grew both as a team and as individuals. We found a love of track racing and time trials and learned to overcome issues with communication and bike handling."

With the racing season in full swing, Ashley's family doesn't see much of her

unless she is competing within driving distance. She has a large number of races scheduled including a couple of triathlons, a half-Ironman in Indiana, and nationals in California, and her goals change with the type of race. In August, she will compete in a sprint triathlon at the Paratriathlon National Championship. “My goal is to go as fast as I possibly can in every single portion of the race,” she explains, “with absolutely nothing left in the tank when I cross that finish line.”

Additionally, she will be attending North Central College in Naperville in the fall as a communications major. Ashley will be a part of the women’s

varsity triathlon team. Triathlon is new to the NCAA and she will be the first blind triathlete to compete at that level. They are still working out the details, but the NCAA will allow her to have a guide that is not a student of the college.

What does the future hold? The triathlon is debuting at the games in Rio De Janeiro this summer. Ashley would like to see how she would stack up on a world stage and sees herself competing for the U.S. in the 2020 Paralympic Games in Tokyo, Japan.

Ashley has always been very upfront about her feelings in dealing with her lack of vision. She says, though,

that if given her vision tomorrow, she wouldn’t take it.

“I feel like you’re dealt a certain hand in life and I’m making the most of what I’ve got. Honestly, at this point, I can’t imagine seeing what you see,” she explains. “I think it’s great, because I need others to be my eyes, but I’m doing just fine without much vision. A lot of people think there’s things I’m missing out on, but because of who I am, I’m headed to the Olympic Training Center! So, no, I wouldn’t take it. I’ve taken what I’ve got and run with it – literally!

BLIND TRUST

What does it take to be a guide? Communication is key. Ashley’s guides need to be faster runners than she is, so they can be comfortable with the pace she is setting and put their focus on being her eyes. Uneven pavement, potholes, sticks and low-hanging branches are all things she can’t see. Her safety depends on them clearly communicating in terms she can understand. Another trait she looks for is personality compatibility. “I’m literally tied to someone for an hour or more, depending on the kind of race I’m doing. There is a very emotional connection I form with my guides. When you are working with a guide, you are feeding off of, and need to be able to work with, each other.

“A guide also has to be verbal,” says Ashley. “She is acting as my eyes and has to tell me to go left, go right, and take sharp or gradual turns. She can’t tell me to watch out for the pothole because I’m never going to see it. The directions need to be direct and concise. It’s funny sometimes because they will say, ‘did you see that?’ Of course I didn’t and I just have to laugh!”

Before a race, Ashley prepares herself mentally and checks her gear. One of the most important components of her preparation is talking with her guide and going through the race plan together. There is a lot of verbal communication, but she “sees” through touch. Her guides can use her hand to draw out the course for her.



LINDSEY GUIDES ASHLEY OVER THE UNEVEN TERRAIN AS THEY EXIT THE LAKE.

Avoid hazards with grain bins and power lines

Electrical power is an indispensable part of modern agricultural operations. In fact, electricity is such a commonplace part of a farm operation that it can all too easily become a part of the scenery and its hazards overlooked. One often overlooked safety consideration is the power line clearance required for grain bins. Safe Electricity provides tips on avoiding electrical hazards around the farm, including the construction of grain bins.

“Electrical hazards include large equipment and farm structures near overhead power lines,” says Richard McCracken, Safe Electricity Advisory Board member. “The best way to avoid problems is to keep equipment and new construction a safe distance from power lines.”

Equipment and vehicles, such as augers and grain trucks, around grain bins are particularly at risk of coming into contact with overhead power lines. It is important that bins be built a safe distance from power lines to help ensure the safety all farm workers.

The National Electric Safety Code sets minimum clearances around grain bins. It requires that any high-voltage power lines (over 600 volts) be at least 18 feet above the highest point on a grain bin. Additionally, the Code sets the minimum distance that power lines must be from grain bins, depending on the bin’s height. For instance, a



bin that is 15-feet tall must be at least 55 feet from power lines on its loading side, and a bin that is 50-feet in height must be at least 143 feet from power lines on its loading side.

Your state and utility may have additional requirements. If planning on constructing a new grain bin, contact your local utility before any construction begins. They can help you determine minimum safety requirements.

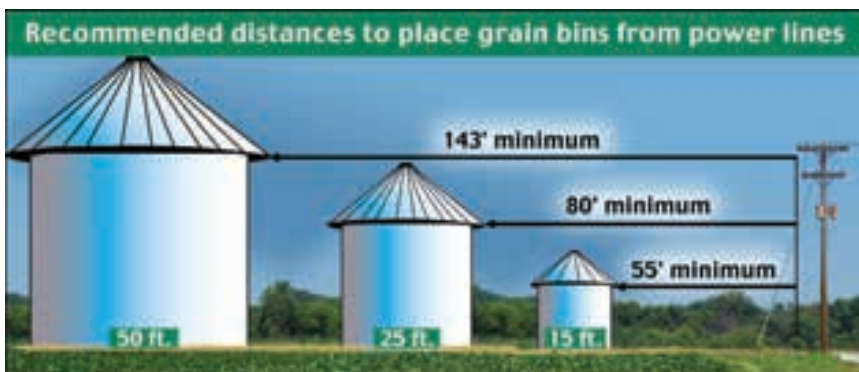

Keep these additional safety tips in mind anytime you are operating large farm equipment around power lines:

- ◆ Keep equipment at least 10 feet from lines—at all times, in all directions.
- ◆ Inspect the height of the farm equipment to determine clearance.


- ◆ Always remember to lower extensions when moving loads.
- ◆ Use a spotter when operating large machinery near lines.
- ◆ Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.
- ◆ If a power line is sagging or low, contact your local utility.

If equipment does come into contact with a power line, remember, stay on the equipment until the utility has arrived to de-energize the lines. Warn others to stay away, and call the local utility provider immediately. The only reason to exit is if the equipment is on fire. If this is the case, jump off the equipment with your feet together and without touching the ground and vehicle at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, “bunny hop” away to safety.

For more electrical safety information, visit SafeElectricity.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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How to give your plants a measured drink

July is my least favorite month. It's usually hot, really hot. The outside temperature has the electric meter spinning faster due to the air conditioner running overtime.

And then there's the humidity approaching tropical conditions with dew points just as high. Okay, purely from a professional viewpoint, the summer conditions are really good for some plants like orchids and ferns.

Unfortunately, the fact is many plants just seem to tolerate the conditions, and that's it. They sit there like the proverbial bump on the log. Or they turn brown and go dormant, like most of our unwatered lawns. That being said, it's a good thing for cool-season grasses to move toward dormancy.

Don't get me wrong. As an intermediary month, there's always August and September on the horizon with memories of May and June still bouncing around in the brain.

Tomatoes languish on the vine, though most vines are bushes these days. Still, the plants produce oodles of flowers, but the flowers don't set much fruit when the temperatures exceed 90 degrees F. Other spring-planted vegetables seem to mature overnight into inedible specimens.

Sweet corn does ripen, but quality diminishes quickly in the heat. But you should be eating, preserving or giving it away so it doesn't go to waste.

And don't get me started on the zucchinis that are perfect as 1-inch diameter, 6-inch tubes in the morning and ginormous baseball bats by nightfall.



Many of the annual flowers bloom but seemingly half-heartedly with flowers bleached out by the sun and only half size due to the heat and lack of moisture. At least the daylilies appear immune to any conditions. Whether it's hot or cold, wet or dry, those flowers last one day or one night if you have the night-blooming daylilies, which seems oxymoronic but isn't.

Sure, you can water. And water and water. That's great if you have a water source, but many have wells and you have to decide whether a shower and clean dishes are on the same or higher level than plants. If you are blessed with a continuous water source, you need to decide if the dollars and time are worth it. And if truth had to be told, I'd probably opt for the plants

over the shower and the dishes.

In all honesty, I have a continual water source and the plants get watered through a drip irrigation system during weekly, early morning waterings, so the moisture goes to the plant instead of the atmosphere. Early morning means 6 a.m. to 6:30 a.m. starts. Mulching also helps conserve the water. Container-grown specimens get the every-other-day waterings, or daily if the temperatures approach triple digits.

If you're going to water make it count, and measure. Most lawns, vegetables and flowers need 1-inch per week. To determine water flow rate, set your sprinkler in an open area and turn on the water. Place a small tin, such as a tuna fish or cat food can, approximately

three-quarters of the distance from the sprinkler to the outer edge of water discharge. Most of these food cans are an inch high. When the can is full, check the time.

To measure drip irrigation or soaker hoses, allow them to soak for a half hour and then test the soil surrounding them. An inch of water will wet the soil an average of 6 to 15 inches, depending on soil type. If the soil isn't moist that deep, continue soaking. 💡



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



Bullion or Numismatics: Which Makes More Sense For You?



Although rarity adds to a coin's appeal, it is amazing how people shy away from buying antique coins due to their commonly big premiums over bullion metal. While we make no claim to be an investment counseling service, our many years in the collectible coin business have left our team of numismatic experts with a unique ability to identify the most opportune time to buy specific gold coins due to their historical trending in the collectible markets. People are seeing the wisdom of owning antiques because it outweighs the cost average of simply buying the metal as close to spot as you can. People are giving collectible coins a hard look, evidenced by the surge in sales of collectible gold coins.

Is The Cost As A Whole Reasonable?

Bullion may initially appear to be a better value than collectible coins since it carries a lower premium above melt value than the premium over melt of most collectible coins. And while this might seem to be a sound perspective, if this were the sole deciding

factor, there are numerous collectible coins whose premium over melt isn't much greater than that of bullion.

When you consider other factors, such as being able to own something that not everyone else owns or the ability to reap the benefits of a finite supply, that slightly higher premium doesn't amount to as much as you might think. Unlike bullion, collectible coins are prized for factors apart from their intrinsic gold value: memories, rarity, historical importance, and family legacies, just to name a few. Just imagine owning a 1909 \$20 Saint-Gaudens or a 1908 Bella Pratt \$2.50 coin that will never be minted again. Scarcity drives their value more than the metal they are made from. Conversely, gold mining and smelting companies constantly produce more gold, all of which is indistinguishable. This gives collectible coins twice the protection if gold metal takes a dive.

Collectible gold coins also offer many people nostalgic pieces of art from a time they hold

dear, or from a time they might wish to see society return. Whether based in reality or an unrealistic assessment of times past makes no difference; the appeal is still there. This is why many collectors are willing to pay more for a 100-year-old piece of history than a chunk of metal.

Why VF, XF or AU?

We take our concierge approach to our clients' accounts very seriously. Our job is to recommend the best purchases for our clients and not our pocket books. Currently the best bargains come from the many coins in the lower grades, such as VF, XF and AU, or the higher grades, starting with MS 64 and higher – and we are advising our customers to grab them up.

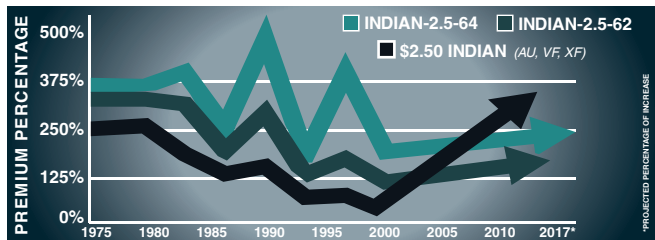
Coins in lower grades, such as VF, XF, or AU, represent great bargains to those who can time it right. We noted earlier that there are numerous collectible coins whose premium over melt isn't much greater than bullion. This is truer than ever in the lower graded antiques. XF, VF and AU gold are selling at a very low premium over melt, unlike their mid-range graded counterparts (MS 60-63), which means that even if purchased for the value of their gold alone, they aren't significantly more expensive than bullion. Because of this, they represent a great

opportunity for many Americans looking to buy reasonably priced gold that has value and worth whether the base metal is going up or down. For those people seeking a safety net, these lower grade coins offer the opportunity to acquire precious metals at a low percentage over melt.

Take advantage and buy coins that are in the current "best buy" categories that you find appealing, and it will add to the pride of ownership that is a significant element in any collection, without putting undue strain on your budget. And as all collectors know (but some refuse to admit), the excitement of buying new pieces and integrating them into your collection is priceless.

Last but not least, you may rest assure that we will be here to give you the best possible numismatic advice, to do our best to guide you, whether you are just beginning to put together a collection, expanding an existing one, or putting together a "go-bag" as a hedge against future economic turmoil. To paraphrase a series of baby food commercials from generations past, "Numismatics is our business; our only business!" We look forward to being a trusted partner and helping you grow more familiar with the world of collectible coins that we love.

US Fractional Indian Gold: History of the \$2.50 Indian Head



We've heard the saying, "Good things come in small packages." That's true when talking about US gold coins. One of the most fascinating and undervalued gold pieces from the early 20th century is also the smallest: the American Quarter Eagle, a \$2.50 piece that was an innovative and daring work of art. As is the case with many daring works of art, it had its share of critics back in the day.

The dawn of the 20th century saw four different US gold coins in circulation; all had gone without a major design change for more than fifty years (which, to put things in perspective, was longer than the average American life expectancy). In the early 1900s, Theodore Roosevelt had ambitions to revamp the image of the US for the new century. He believed one way to improve the country's image was to redesign its coins.

Roosevelt commissioned Irish-born sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens to redesign all of the US coins. Unfortunately Saint-Gaudens died of cancer in 1907 after only completing design work for the \$10.00 (Eagle) and the \$20.00 (Double Eagle) gold pieces. Soon one of Saint-Gaudens' most gifted students, Bela Lyon Pratt, was commissioned by Roosevelt to redesign the \$2.50 (Quarter Eagle) and \$5.00 (Half Eagle) denominations. Pratt came up with an identical design for both coins, the only difference being their

sizes. The Quarter Eagle had a diameter of 18 millimeters, while the Half Eagle's was 21.6 millimeters. The obverse (heads) depicts an Indian brave in a warbonnet, circled by the date, thirteen stars, and the motto, LIBERTY. On the reverse (tails) is an eagle perched on a sheaf of arrows and an olive branch, symbols of preparedness and peace. Four noticeable inscriptions accompany this image: UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, E PLURIBUS UNUM, IN GOD WE TRUST, and the statement of value.

However, Pratt's coins caused a heated debate in the numismatic community and the general public when they were released in November of 1908. Unlike all other US coinage before or since, the features on the Pratt coins were incuse, or recessed into the surface, rather than raised. Philadelphia coin dealer Samuel Hudson Chapman and others thought these designs would be easier to counterfeit, and could lead to illness and disease, as the recessed areas could harbor germs. Chapman found the designs aesthetically unpleasing as well; in a letter to President Roosevelt he groused that the Indian looked "emaciated" and its outlines were "crude and hard." More-over, he thought that the eagle (a replication of Augustus Saint-Gauden's eagle) more closely resembled a golden eagle, which is indigenous to Europe, than the American bald eagle.

Controversies aside, production went full speed ahead – sort of. The Philadelphia mint produced the majority of the \$2.50 Indians with sporadic production from the Denver Mint in 1911, 1914, and 1925. There was little demand for the coins in everyday commerce, but production increased to meet the demand for Christmas gifts. By late January, however, most of the Indian Head Quarter Eagles had found their way back into the Sub-Treasury vaults. Between 1916 and 1924, production of the Quarter Eagles was suspended, and many were melted in 1916 as unsold. Production resumed in 1925, and continued for five more years before they were suspended for good in 1929, the same year the economy collapsed. It was the end of an era in more ways than one: not only the end of the prosperity and excesses of the Jazz Age, but also the demise of the American \$2.50 denomination. Pratt's Indian Head was the last American Quarter Eagle.

The good news is that this series has a mere fifteen different date-and-mint combinations (twelve issues from the Philadelphia Mint and three from Denver), making it one of the smallest in U.S. coinage. This means a complete set is attainable for many collectors despite the relatively high cost of buying anything made of gold. Its affordability is increased by the fact that only one coin – the 1911-D – is markedly scarce. Only 55,680 were struck, making it the only coin with a mintage of less than 240,000. The Denver mintmark appears on the reverse, to the left of the arrowheads. In addition, relatively small numbers of matte proofs were made in every year from 1908 through 1915, though not in the final five years. The American Quarter Eagle – the small coin that once caused such a big uproar – is a worthy addition to any coin enthusiast's collection.

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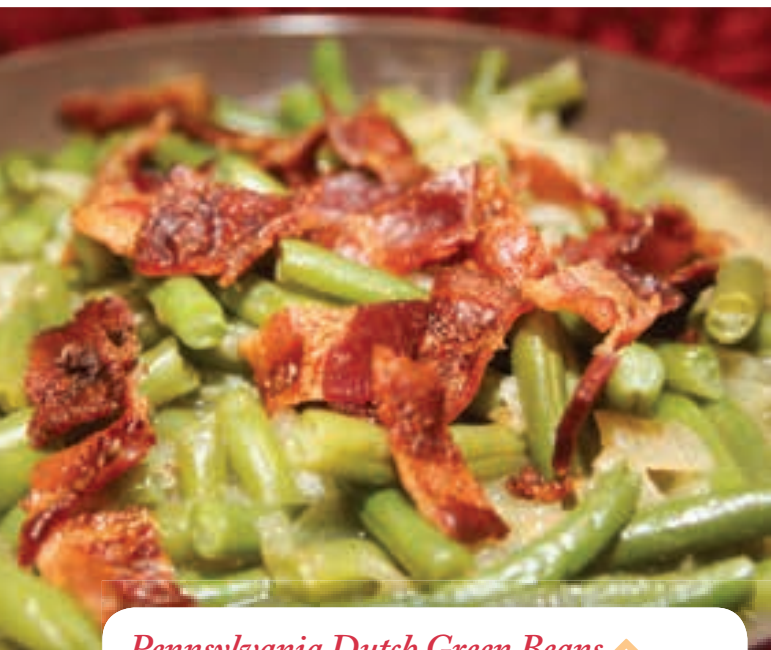
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St. Paul Lutheran Church Cookbook

Who: St. Paul Lutheran Church
Cost: \$18.80 includes shipping
Details: Hard-backed, ring bound

Pages of recipes: 205

Send checks to: St. Paul Lutheran Church, Attn: Nina Hubert, 116 N. Thomas St., Gilman, IL 60938 or call 815-265-4837.

◀ **Chicken Fajitas**

- 4 T. canola oil
- 2 T. lemon juice
- 1-1/2 t. seasoned salt
- 1-1/2 t. dried oregano
- 1-1/2 t. ground cumin
- 1 t. garlic powder
- 1/2 t. paprika
- 1/2 t. crushed red pepper
- 1-1/2 lbs. boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into thin strips
- 1/2 med. red bell pepper, julienned
- 1/2 med. green bell pepper, julienned
- 4 green onions, thinly sliced
- 1/2 c. chopped onion
- 6 flour tortillas

Toppings: shredded cheddar cheese, taco sauce, salsa, guacamole and sour cream

In a large resealable plastic bag, combine 2 T. oil, lemon juice and seasonings; add chicken strips, seal and turn to coat. Refrigerate 1-4 hours. Sauté peppers and onions in remaining 2 T. oil in a large skillet until crisp tender. Remove from skillet and set aside. Discard marinade. Cook chicken in skillet over medium high heat 5-6 minutes until no longer pink. Return peppers and onions to skillet and heat through. Serve with tortillas and toppings. Yield: 9 cups.

Mom Hanson's Delight

- 1 qt. heavy whipping cream
- 1 - 10 oz. pkg. miniature marshmallows
- 2 - 20 oz. cans crushed pineapple, drained
- 2 lbs. red or black seedless grapes, whole

Whip cream until very stiff. Add marshmallows, grapes and pineapple. Stir well. Best if made 18-24 hours before serving.

Pennsylvania Dutch Green Beans ▲

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 lb. fresh green beans, cut into short lengths and cooked | 1 t. salt |
| 6 slices bacon | 1/2 t. dry mustard |
| 2 med. onions, chopped | 1 T. brown sugar |
| 4 t. cornstarch | 2 T. vinegar |

Drain beans and reserve 1 cup of the water beans were cooked in. Set aside. Fry bacon until crisp and drain on paper towel. Sauté onions in bacon fat until golden brown. In small bowl, mix cornstarch, salt, mustard, brown sugar and vinegar. Add cup of reserved water from beans and beat until smooth, then add mixture to bacon fat and onions in pan and boil until thickened slightly. Add beans and stir well. Crush bacon and sprinkle on top. Serves 8.

Peanut Butter Cheesecake Minis

- 1-1/2 c. graham cracker crumbs
- 4 T. sugar
- 1/4 c. butter, melted
- 24 bite-size peanut butter cups

Filling:

- 2 - 8 oz. pkgs. cream cheese, room temperature
- 1 c. sugar
- 1/4 c. flour
- 1 t. vanilla or almond extract
- 2 eggs

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place a paper cupcake liner in each cup of 2 standard muffin pans. To make the crust, in a bowl, combine graham cracker crumbs, sugar and melted butter until crumbs are moistened. Press crust into bottom of each muffin cup. Put 1 peanut butter cup into center of each crust. Beat cream cheese with a hand-held mixer until fluffy. Add sugar, flour and vanilla, beating well. Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating well after each addition. Spoon cream cheese mixture over peanut butter cups and graham cracker crusts. Bake until just set, about 20 minutes. Allow to cool completely before serving.



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



35th Anniversary Cookbook

Who: Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

Cost: \$15 includes shipping

Details: Hard-backed, ring bound with stand

Pages of recipes: 148

Send checks to: Yvonne Richert, ORL Cookbook, 708 Horizon Dr., Marion, IL 62959 or call 618-751-0052.

Bacon Cheese Cucumber Slices

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 – 8 oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened | 1/2 c. chopped green onions |
| 6 slices bacon, cooked crisp and crumbled | 1/2 t. Italian seasoning |
| | 2 lg. cucumbers |

In medium bowl, combine cream cheese, bacon, green onions and Italian seasoning; blend well. Cut ends off cucumbers. Using long, thin serrated knife, hollow out inside of each cucumber, removing all seeds; drain. Using small spoon, firmly fill each cucumber with cream cheese mixture. Refrigerate at least 2 hours or overnight. To serve, cut into 1/4 inch slices.

Spinach Frittata with Salsa

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2 T. olive oil | 1 c. Egg Beaters, Southwestern-style |
| 1 sm. onion, diced | 1 c. shredded mozzarella cheese |
| 2 cloves garlic, diced | Salsa |
| 2 eggs | |
| 1/3 c. sour cream | |
| 1 – 10 oz. pkg. frozen chopped spinach, thawed and well drained | |

Heat oil in nonstick skillet over medium heat and add onions and garlic; cook until tender and stir in the spinach. Reduce heat to medium low for 3-5 minutes. In large bowl, beat the eggs, Egg Beaters and sour cream until frothy. Pour over spinach and mix well; cook until egg mixture is cooked on bottom and almost set on top. Sprinkle with cheese. Place in oven to broil on low until cheese melts. Remove from oven, cut into wedges and serve with salsa on the side.

Blueberry Salsa

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1/2 t. salt | 2 seeded and minced jalapeno peppers |
| 1/3 c. diced red bell pepper | 1/3 c. fresh lemon juice |
| 1 c. whole blueberries | 3 T. chopped fresh cilantro |
| 2 c. coarsely chopped blueberries | |

Mix together all ingredients. Can eat immediately or chill and eat later. Serve with flat bread or tortilla chips. It's really good on grilled fish.



Smoky Grilled Corn

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| 2-1/2 T. butter, melted | 1/2 t. salt |
| 1/2 c. honey | 1/4 t. pepper |
| 2 lg. garlic cloves, minced | 1/4 t. paprika |
| 2 T. hot pepper sauce | 6 ears sweet corn |

Mix all ingredients, except corn, until blended. Brush on ears of corn. Coat grill rack with oil. Grill 10-12 minutes over medium heat, turning and basting. Serve corn with remaining butter mixture.

Calling all cookbooks!

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

Geothermal and air source heat pumps

In your years as a homeowner, you have probably bought and sold a few homes and maybe even built one or two. When it came time to replace your outdated furnace and air conditioner, or you had to decide on what kind of heating and cooling system to put in your new home, I'll bet geothermal or air source heat pumps came up in the conversation.



As you may know, geothermal draws heat from the earth to heat your home while an air source heat pump gets its heat from the outside air. The one thing they have in common is both are heat pumps. According to Webster's Dictionary, the definition of a heat pump is: *"an apparatus for heating or cooling (as a building) by transferring heat by mechanical means from or to an external reservoir (as the ground, water, or outside air)"*. In fact, everyone reading this article has a heat pump in their home. By definition isn't a refrigerator a heat pump? Does it not move heat from one place to another using a mechanical means? Yes, it does. The difference is the refrigerator does not have a reversing valve, so it cannot move heat from your home and put it into the refrigerator.

All heat pumps work thanks to the second law of thermal dynamics that states, "Heat always flows from high to low, never in reverse." Even though it's winter and cold outside, when you expose a refrigerant coil to the even

colder outside air, heat will flow from the cold outside air to the even colder refrigerant (remember the second law of thermal dynamics). This heat absorbed by the refrigeration cycle is then pumped into your home.


Now that you know the operating principles of a heat pump, which system is best, geothermal or an air source heat pump? The earth has a more consistent heat sink than the outside air. According to the Department of Energy, "ground source heat pumps have efficiencies of 300- 600 percent on the coldest winter nights, compared to 175-250 percent for air source heat pumps on cool days."

How can something be more than 100 percent efficient? If you heat your home with gas, you get about \$.60 to \$.95 of heat for every dollar you spend on gas – \$.05 to \$.40 went out the flue. With a geothermal heat pump, for every dollar you spend on electricity to operate the system, you get \$3 - \$6 worth of heat that comes from the earth. You can apply this same

logic to the air source heat pump.

A word of caution – if you are looking to install a heat pump into your home because you have high monthly utility bills and comfort issues, please look at how your home is performing first. A heat pump cannot make your cold floors warm and stop drafts. Have an energy evaluation done on your home first.

A qualified professional can look at your insulation and perform a blower door test. Then, air seal and insulate your home as needed before having the heat pump installed because your installer will be sizing your heat pump to the heat loss of your home. Making the improvements to your building shell may save you money on the geothermal installation.

For more information on geothermal and to learn more about the 30 percent Tax Credit go to www.gaoi.org (Geothermal Alliance of Illinois) or call 217-241-7973 and talk with my good friend John Freitag to answer all of your geothermal questions. You do not want to have your system installed by someone still learning about geothermal. The GAOI website lists all of the GAOI accredited contractors in Illinois that have one, or all three, GAOI accreditations: Installer Technician, Service Technician or Loop Installer. 

Illinois Renewable Energy Conference includes geothermal

The Illinois Renewable Energy Conference on July 21 at Illinois State University will feature presentations on geothermal and renewable energy technology. Breakout session tracks will focus on policy, technology and case studies specifically for wind, solar, biomass, geothermal and energy efficiency. Visit www.RenewableEnergy.ilstu.edu for more information.



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



Vinegar, Better than Prescription Drugs?

If you want to lose weight and keep it off -- hate dieting and are tired of taking pills, buying costly diet foods or gimmick "fast loss" plans that don't work-- *you'll love the easy Vinegar way to lose all the pounds you want to lose. And keep them off!*

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- Help build the immune system, to fight arthritis and disease
- Speed the metabolism to use natural thermogenesis to burn fat

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LETTERS

Dentist Recommends Vinegar

I have some useful advice that others may be interested in. When I got my Dentures several years ago, the Dentist told me use vinegar to get the plaque off them. So - about once a week I soak them in the wonder liquid and Presto - they sparkle.

I have since gotten implants - Since I am not fond of the hygienist scraping the posts for cleaning - I clean them with Vinegar before going for my check-up. On my last visit to her, she couldn't believe how clean they were and praised me for it!

I then asked the Dentist that put the implants in if the vinegar would harm the metal posts and he informed me it is OK to use it.

- D. L., *New Braunfels, Tx.*

Vinegar Heals Ear Ache in 2 days.

I have been plagued with an itchy ear for several months. It then developed into an earache. I was able to cure both the itch and earache in two days.

- J. D., *Jacksonville, Fl.*

Vinegar Diet helps mother of the Bride

This is kind of embarrassing, but here goes. My name is Sarah Pierce. I am 58 years old, and through the years (in my mind's eye) I always thought I looked pretty decent.

Especially so when our second daughter was married. I really considered myself a rather 'smashing' Mother of the Bride.

That is, until the wedding pictures came back. I just couldn't believe it.

Here I am, definitely portly - not lean and svelte like I thought. Unfortunately the camera doesn't lie.

Since then, I heard about Emily Thacker's Vinegar Diet and decided to give it a try. What surprised me most was how much I could eat yet I was losing weight and inches. It was like I was getting thin, thinner and thinner yet with the Vinegar Diet. I just thought you should know.

- S. P., *N. Canton, Oh.*

NEWS & RESEARCH

Simple Vinegar used to reduce cervical cancer deaths by 31%

The latest study about vinegar, shows it will prevent an estimated 72,600 deaths from cervical cancer each year.

This according to a study released at the American Society of Clinical Oncology annual meeting in Chicago, IL.

The results were based over a 12 year period tracking 150,000 women in Mumbai, India, between the ages of 35-64 years.

The conclusion, a simple vinegar test significantly reduces cervical cancer deaths. Immediate plans are to implement this simple and successful screening test in developing countries.

The study had been planned for 16 years, but after the results were analyzed and found to be conclusive it was stopped at 12 years.

Vinegar has always been used for its versatility in home remedies, cooking and cleaning. And now scientific and medical findings are showing its a simple, low cost, non-invasive and safe for the patient.

Scarlett Johansson confesses her apple cider vinegar beauty secret

When celebrity beauty Scarlett Johansson needs to keep her skin looking beautiful and glowing one would think she would turn to high priced beauty creams.

Not so, according to an article in the February 2013 issue of Elle UK. She uses simple apple cider vinegar and its natural pH balancing properties to keep her skin looking amazing.

Traveling with grandchildren – *a new generation; a new experience*



Photo by Tom Foster

By Marilyn Jones

I became a grandmother January 12, 2015 when Ainsley Hazel Moore arrived. One of my dreams for this sweet little girl is for her to enjoy the excitement and adventure of travel like I do and I think she has a pretty good start. She visited eight states her first year!

As a travel writer, for the better part of three decades, my own children certainly saw the world; great practice for this time in my life. I also talk to other grandparents and travel experts, taking note of some of the ways I can make vacations with my granddaughter into wonderful and positive multi-generational experiences.

This is what I learned.

Talk to the Parents

Who else knows their children better? What they like to do, their current interests, and sleeping and eating habits. Parents will also know if their child is ready to be away from home without them.

To make sure children are ready, many grandparents take their grandchildren on a close-by weekend adventure. Nancy Humphrey, a grandmother of five – ages five to 17 – started by having each child spend the

night at her house followed by long weekends at attractions and hotels to see how it went. “I took them places they had never been before making sure I stayed within 100 miles of their home,” she says. “After the test runs I knew when each child was ready for a longer trip away.”

Humphrey also says each child is different. Some are ready at a much younger age.

This “trial run” also helps grandparents find out about their own limitations. Children have seemingly endless energy. If you have trouble keeping up on a short trip – even if everything else goes well – you may want to wait until the child is older for a longer vacation.

Road Trips

Your road trip experience doesn't have to be all “are we there yet,” if you plan right. In the planning stage of a vacation, order road maps (yes they still make them), brochures and area guides. They are free and easy to order online from city convention and visitors bureaus or from state tourism boards.

Show where you're going on the map, ask where the child might want to stop. When traveling with



*A break in the fun at Six Flags Great America.
– Photo courtesy Six Flags Great America*

grandchildren it will end up being more about them than you anyway, so plan accordingly.

If you have a portable DVD player, bring it and ask your grandchildren to bring along their favorite movies. Or other activities — even the old standby coloring books and crayons are all some children need to pass the time.

Bring food that they like, but that won't make a mess. And search on the internet for games to play in the car. Of course, this all depends on the child's age. Older children seem to adapt better to long trips than smaller children.

Stop often. It's good for children and adults.

You're the Guardian - Be Prepared

During a vacation, you are responsible. Always have the children's proper identification—photocopies of birth certificates should be fine for all needs if staying in the United States, medical histories, and health insurance cards including prescription cards, dental insurance cards and secondary

insurance cards. Carry contact information, recent photos and notarized authorization from their parents in case they need medical attention.

Some countries do not allow entry of minors not accompanied by both parents unless the children have written notarized permission from the absent parents. The

rules vary from country to country, so it's best to always be prepared.

Passports are essential for any international travel. And, it is always a good idea to purchase travel insurance. So plan, prepare and have a great time.

For more information: <http://www.enjoyillinois.com/>.

ILLINOIS

The Kid-Friendly State!

By Marilyn Jones

You don't have to go far to have a fantastic vacation. Illinois has a lot to offer multi-generational travelers.

Want the big city experience? Take in Chicago, the nation's third largest city. Stroll along Michigan Avenue; soar to the top of the 1,450-foot high Willis Tower for an unprecedented view of the city and surrounding area, enjoy a Chicago River cruise and a Chicago White Sox baseball game, or take in Navy Pier with its amusement rides, museums and gardens.

If your grandchildren are interested in history, introduce a few new history lessons. In addition to the many Abraham Lincoln-related sites, make the trip to Dickson Mounds Museum in Lewiston that offers the opportunity to explore the world of Native Americans and 12,000 years of human experience in the Illinois River Valley. Or visit Chaplin Creek Village. The living history museum depicts a mid-19th century community.

Round out the week with a day at Six Flags Great America, one of the state's many water parks, or a day of outdoor fun hiking, canoeing or biking.



Six Flags Great America is always a favorite family destination. – Photo courtesy Six Flags Great America



Historic destinations are often favorites with children. At Skokie Historical Center they can tour an 1847 log cabin and 19th century fire house. – Photo courtesy Illinois Office of Tourism



A day at U.S. Cellular Field watching the Chicago White Sox or another sporting event are always fun for multigenerational fans. Photo by Chris McGuire – City of Chicago



Dixon Mound Museum explores the rich Native American history in Illinois. – Photo courtesy Peoria Journal Star

Wearables

Fitbit, Apple Watch, Jawbone Up, Moov Now, Pebble, and the list of wearable technology goes on and on. What do they do? Why would I want one? Can they really help me live a better, healthier lifestyle? These are all questions that I hear asked when the topic of smart watches or fit bands come up. I would like to take a moment and share with you why I believe these devices are great tools, and why I think they are here to stay.

Now, it goes without saying that strapping one of these devices to your wrist does not magically turn you into Richard Simmons, or any other highly motivated fitness guru for that matter. I believe this concept is the main reason a lot of people are not inclined to take advantage of this new technology. At first glance, it can be hard to understand how wearing a piece of technology such as a Fitbit can actually help you achieve results. Let's be honest, how is counting my every step going to motivate me to be more active than I already am.

Data, the key to achieving results, lies in the information that is gathered. I was sharing with someone just the other day about an app I use called Sleep Cycle, which monitors the quality of your sleep. I was explaining that I use the information gathered, such as total steps, calorie and carb intake, standing hours, heart rate, weight, and barometric pressure, to correlate what helps me get a good night's sleep. Over a period of time, you start to paint a picture of your habits, good and bad, that are contributing to

the state of your health. Most of us that are out of shape already know that, right? Simply knowing you are out of shape usually isn't enough to motivate you to start changing your habits. When you track the data associated with those bad habits, you now have something to attack. You have a choice and can direct your attention to those areas that will make a difference.

All too often we focus on the results. Getting on the scale every morning and checking your weight doesn't help you lose weight. Focusing your attention on exercise, calorie intake, eating the right foods, and getting quality sleep, is what yields results that display on your bathroom scales.

These new wearable accessories are data gathering devices. They allow us to effortlessly collect information on a daily basis that can later be reviewed and compared in order to help us make informed decisions that will impact us the most.

One way to get a holistic view is to choose apps that work together. The Apple Health app, for example, is compatible with many of the popular wearables and the apps associated with them. This is very helpful

because you can see all of your data in one app, which makes it easy to correlate trends.

One benefit that is often overlooked is the ability to interact socially with your wearable tech. This has many advantages, but the most notable is accountability. Having others invested in your progress has been shown to help people stick to long term fitness plans. The competitive nature of interacting socially can also make achieving goals more fun!

A fitness tracker is just a tool, not a magic wand, and it's not a replacement for your desire to improve your health. Just like that weight bench you bought last year, or the treadmill that sits in your basement, if used correctly, can have a positive impact on your health. Wearables in conjunction with tracking apps are intended to motivate you by providing data that helps you make informed decisions and set realistic, personal goals that will produce results.



 [Comment on this column](#)

Visit id.coop and click on Powered Up to respond. Your response might even be included in a future column.

Hi, my name is Dan Gerard and I have served as IT Manager for the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperative since June of 2014. I previously served in many IT roles such as Information Security Officer, Systems Administrator, and Systems Analyst. With over 16 years of IT experience, I have extensive knowledge in IT process management, server management, PC troubleshooting, networking design, and cyber security. I would like to thank Ed VanHoose for bringing a wealth of knowledge to this column and I look forward to bringing you relevant technical tips, as well as new and emerging technologies.



Dan Gerard, CISSP, is the IT Manager for the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in Springfield.

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Election season is in full swing. Some of it can drive you crazy - the commercials, the robo calls, etc. But as candidates head out to engage voters in their communities, it's vital they know that millions of electric cooperative members will cast their ballots in 2016. That means you need to register to vote, understand the issues, and then vote. Let's remember that a lot of good men and women fought and died to protect our freedom and right to vote. It's the least we can do to exercise that right.

To that end, America's electric cooperatives have launched Co-ops Vote, a program dedicated to informing, engaging, and educating co-op voters across the nation. You can join this non-partisan effort today by taking the pledge by first registering to vote if you haven't, and then showing up at the polls to vote. Visit www.vote.coop to take the pledge now.

At www.vote.coop, you can find out how to register to vote, prepare for key voting dates and locations, learn more about issues affecting rural America and take the pledge to become a co-op voter.

When was the last time you voted?

As member-owned electric cooperatives, voting is already in our DNA. It's how we maintain an electric utility that is responsive to the consumers it serves. But voting also plays a crucial part in our representative democracy.

Yet in places all over America, too many citizens aren't exercising that right. In the 2012 national elections, voter turnout dropped overall, but the decline in rural counties was 18 percent — twice that of the nation as a whole.

Jeffrey Connor, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Interim CEO says, "We're investing in Co-ops Vote to build a strong, new model of civic engagement to match the change in our political systems. At some point, our national politics will recover. Electric cooperatives will be there when

that happens. We will help make it happen. Elections matter. They belong to the people, but they're about ideas. With our full participation and the full participation of our neighbors, we can guarantee that those ideas come from us."

We used to say, "all politics is local." But today's politics often seem disconnected from the reality in our local communities. "You have to be up close and personal with someone to get that sense of what's in their heart," says Connor. "But that's hard to do, and in national elections at the end of this grueling process, less than half of eligible voters actually show up to vote."

Washington has lost people's trust, he adds. "We can't count on political institutions to deliver the progress we need in our communities. But we can count on electric cooperatives. We can make politics 'local' again. We can demonstrate our concern for community through participation in our democracy. We can organize voter registration and drive voter education. That effort involves everyone at your co-op, in your family, at your coffee shop, your church, your book club. Your colleagues at work and your friends at Rotary and the VFW."

Elections matter

Elections are not just about personalities. Let's remember they are about key issues where we work and live, making our communities resilient against natural disasters. Co-ops are expanding broadband service and creating economic opportunities for new job creation in rural areas. And for co-ops in particular, it is about being able to continue to provide access to safe, reliable and affordable electricity.

Phil Carson, NRECA Board Vice President, is also a board member for Tri-County Electric Cooperative Association in Mt. Vernon, Ill. He says, "If we do not allow our voice and our vote, which is a powerful message, to be heard and counted, we've missed



out on making sure our rural issues are addressed. Co-ops Vote gives you the opportunity to understand what tools are available to you — to understand how to register, what district you are in, etc. It will also give you a broad spectrum of issues impacting rural America and educate and inform you on that front."

Carson says he appreciates that the voter education program is non-partisan. "It is not pro Republican or Democrat. It shows you issues and positions that are pro rural and gives you the tools so you can make an informed choice when you step into the voting booth."

Rural issues worth voting for

Reliable electricity, access to rural broadband and the quality of our healthcare system are just a few issues we all care about. Still, they only become political priorities if enough people show elected officials they are paying attention.

Duane Noland, Association of Illinois Electric Cooperative's President/CEO, is a former Illinois state senator and he understands the power of voting and involved citizens. He also understands the power of the cooperative principles. "When we go to the polls with the cooperative principle of 'Concern for Community' in mind, we instantly improve our political system. It's a system

designed to produce a government 'of the people, by the people and for the people,' as Lincoln said."

One of the large issues for rural America is fresh young leadership and opportunities for our young citizens. Noland points out that in addition to concern for community, cooperatives are concerned for the future of our young people and helping develop young leaders.

Speaking to co-op members who might be the parents or grandparents of these young citizens, Noland says we need to set the right example. "How can we expect the future of rural Illinois to improve if we don't set the right example for our children and grandchildren, and show them how important it is to be involved citizens," he says. "If you haven't registered, do it today. And come November be sure to vote."

Visit the Co-ops Vote website, WWW.VOTE.COOP. The website will give you information on your elected officials and candidates, the voter registration process, election dates and locations, and background about eight key co-op issues we want our elected leaders to understand, like rural broadband access, hiring and honoring veterans, low-income energy assistance, cybersecurity, water regulation, rural health care access, affordable and reliable energy, and renewable energy.

JULY 3, 2016 @ 1 P.M.



Gym Bobs Jamboree Show

WHERE: Gym Bobs
44 Apostle Rd., Louisville, IL 62858
CONTACT: Mike Porter – 615.481.7418
EMAIL: Mikeporteronline@msn.com

This Branson style music show features Classic Country as well as 50s and 60s oldies for the whole family to enjoy. Each show features a special guest, and the July show will be featuring the fantastic country singer Everett Cessna who hails from Bridgeport. Reservations are accepted but not required and can be made by calling 618.665.3956. More information regarding the show can be found online at www.gymbobs.com or www.mikeporter.com. Please note, the show is held in the village of Bible Grove, but has a Louisville zip code.

JULY 10, 2016 @ 10 A.M.

World's Largest Catsup Bottle Festival, Birthday Party and Car Show

WHERE: Woodland Park
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Collinsville, IL 62234
EMAIL: catsupbottle@mac.com

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JULY 17, 2016 @ 4 P.M.



Northwest Illinois Art Fest

WHERE: Stockton Memorial Park
540 N. Rush St.
Stockton, IL 61085
COST: \$25
CONTACT: Stockton Strong – 815.947.2878
EMAIL: nwilartfest@yahoo.com

Celebrate the Arts. The Fine Art Festival will be showcasing the most talented artists in the areas of ceramics, clay/porcelain, jewelry, photography, drawing, metal, painting, printmaking, fiber/textiles, leather, mixed media, lawn art, paper, graphics and woods. The festival also includes area craft breweries, wineries and distilleries for tastings.

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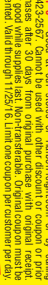
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SCISSOR SUPER COUPON

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LOT 60537 show

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SAVE 43%

comp at \$89



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SCISSOR SUPER COUPON

1-1/4 GALLON HOME AND GARDEN SPRAYER

LOT 61280/63124/6345

Customer Rating

95892 show

SAVE 33%

comp at \$14.97



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SCISSOR SUPER COUPON

NON-CONTACT THERMOMETER WITH LASER TARGETING

LOT 69465 show

Customer Rating

69465 show

SAVE 64%

comp at \$69.99



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SCISSOR SUPER COUPON

1 TON CAPACITY FOLD-AWAY SHOP CRANE

LOT 69457 show

Customer Rating

69457 show

SAVE \$189

comp at \$729



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SCISSOR SUPER COUPON

US + GENERAL 26 1/8 DRAWER ROLLER CABINET

LOT 61609/67831 show

Customer Rating

1000 lb. capacity of 5000 in.

SAVE \$823

comp at \$92.99



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SCISSOR SUPER COUPON

STEP STOOL/WORKING PLATFORM

LOT 62515/66911 show

Customer Rating

350 lb. capacity

SAVE 60%

comp at \$58.55



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SCISSOR SUPER COUPON

4-1/2" ANGLE GRINDER

LOT 95578

Customer Rating

69456/60625 show

SAVE 40%

comp at \$70.26



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SCISSOR SUPER COUPON

20" RAPID PUMP 3 TON HEAVY DUTY STEEL FLOOR JACK

LOT 61282 show

Customer Rating

73 lbs.

SAVE \$85

comp at \$169.99



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SCISSOR SUPER COUPON

16 OZ. HAMMERS WITH FIBERGLASS HANDLE PITTSBURGH

LOT 69906

Customer Rating

60715/60714

SAVE 77%

comp at \$17.99



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SCISSOR SUPER COUPON

1650 PSI PRESSURE WASHER

LOT 69488

Customer Rating

1.3 GPM

SAVE \$70

comp at \$149.99



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Chicago Doctor Invents Affordable Hearing Aid

New nearly invisible digital hearing aid breaks price barrier in affordability

Reported by J. Page

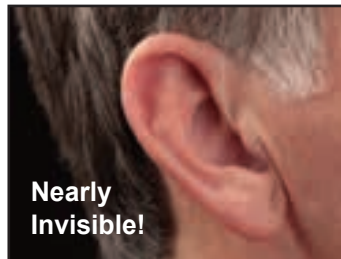
Chicago: Board-certified physician Dr. S. Cherukuri has done it once again with his newest invention of a medical-grade, **ALL-DIGITAL, affordable hearing aid.**

This new digital hearing aid is packed with all the features of \$3,500 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.**

Digital Hearing Aid Outperforms Expensive Competitors

This sleek, fully programmed, light-weight, 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-grade 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 and most private health insurance plans.



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 accommodate most common types of hearing loss even in challenging listening environments

The doctor evaluated 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 domes 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 the National Institute on Aging 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 the Best Digital Value!”

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

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



MDHearingAid® >>> AIR

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FREE Batteries for a Full Year!

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