

A place named the Garden of the Gods should have at least a little trouble living up to its billing.

It should, but it doesn't. In fact, having once walked around the recreation area and feasted on this particular example of nature's majesty, one might well imagine it as a place where the Gods would establish a latter-day Eden.

The Garden of the Gods recreation area is located in the northern part of the Shawnee National Forest approximately 15 miles southeast of Harrisburg in Saline County. Power for the area is provided by Southeastern Electric Cooperative, Inc., Eldorado.

Although the history of the Garden as a recreation area is only a little more than 12 years old, its history as a spectacular and beautiful area far predates the advent of man. The unique, picturesque rock formations the area is noted for were formed about 200-million years ago as the land underwent a geological uplifting and went through subsequent wind and water erosion.

Even man, a late arrival, has been able to partake of the Garden's beauty for the past few thousand years. Garden of the Gods and the Shawnee National Forest have also been his home for 10-thousand years.

But man also gradually let the area fall in disrepair. The vegetation became overgrown, the rich soil was washed away and the streams were clogged with sediment.

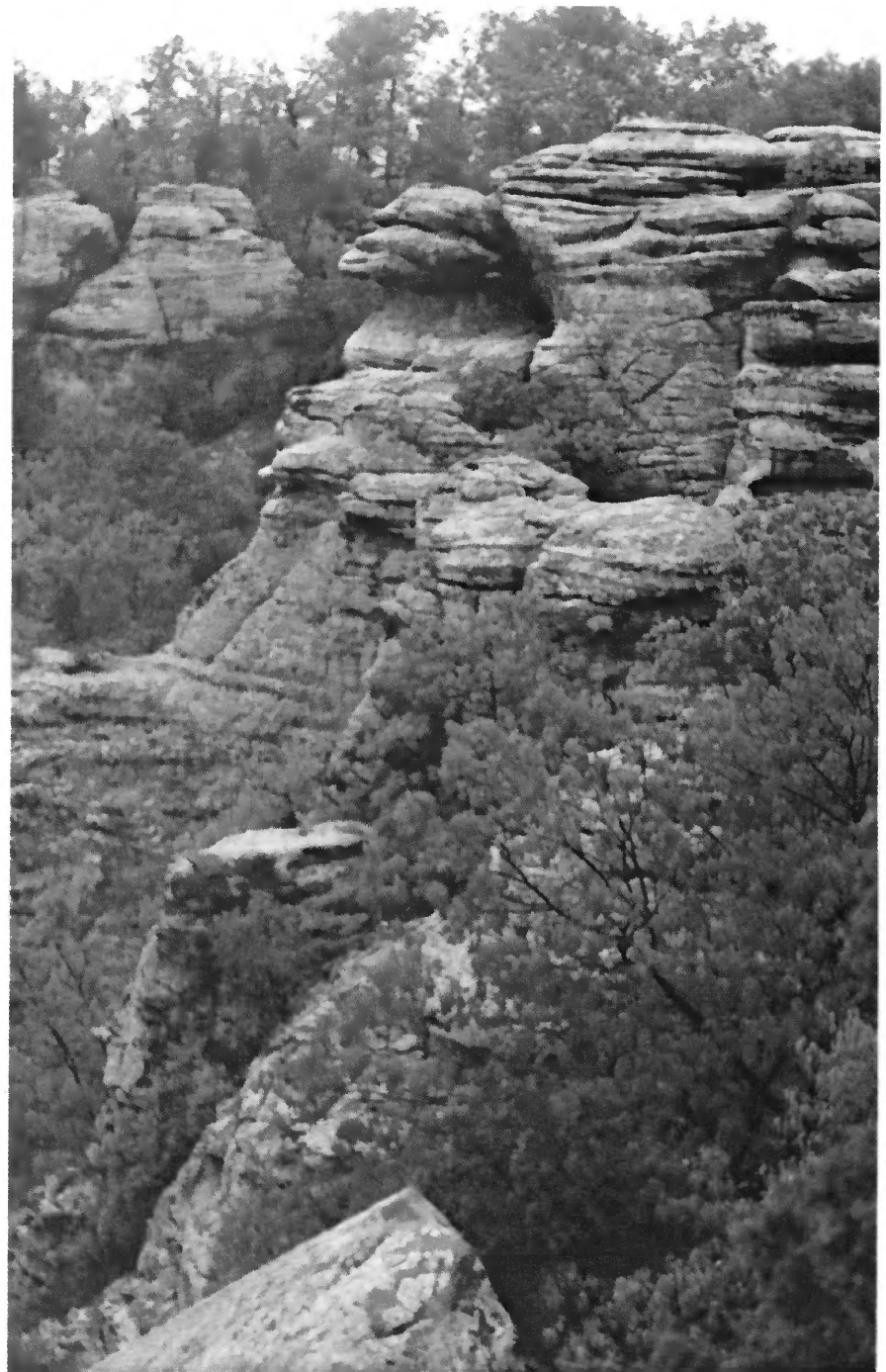
In 1963 the recreation area was revitalized by the Elizabethtown District of the Shawnee National Forest with help from the Job Corps.

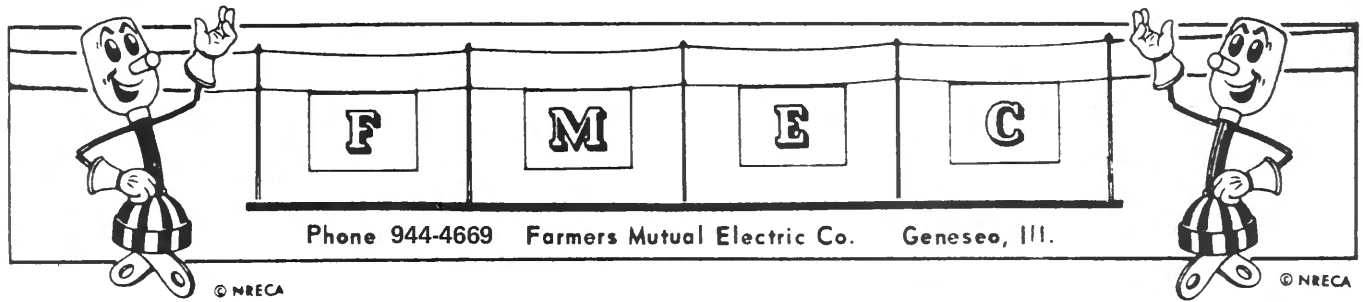
The stars of the Garden of the Gods are the rock formations. But you have to have imagination and take the time to study them.

Some of the more picturesque and interesting formations are Cathedral Rock, Woman's Cave, Fat Man's Squeeze, Anvil Rock, Mushroom Rock and Camel Rock, one of the most impressive.

Without man, the Garden of the Gods became a beautiful place. And now, with his help, it should remain a beautiful place for many years to come.

GARDEN OF THE GODS





Rate Increase Explained at 39th Annual Meeting

More than 200 people attended Farmers Mutual's 39th annual meeting held recently at the Masonic Temple in Geneseo. Because some of our members were unable to attend, we thought a center section in the *Illinois Rural Electric News* might provide some highlights of the meeting.

It was first of all a meeting when the board of directors had the distasteful duty of explaining the reasons for a 10-percent increase in the electric service charges effective March 1.

According to Manager Morris Deul, the increase in member assessments was caused by increased fuel costs passed on to the cooperative by its wholesale power supplier, Illinois Power Company.

"We anticipate our new rates will take us through 1975," Deul said. "By 1976, we will probably be in negotiations with Illinois Power on new rates for our contract. If things continue as they have, this will no doubt result in another increase in wholesale power cost."

Deul said that over the years, Americans have been able to brag about electricity being a cheap commodity. "Today," he added, "the trend of decreasing electric rates is a thing of the past. Unless we launch a dedicated effort through our elected officials to get the energy crisis under control, to make environmental requirements reasonable and to relax the procedures for the siting of nuclear power plants, we can expect the cost of electricity to continue to rise indefinitely."

"The new rate increase may seem drastic to some, but I can assure you that it has been carefully and

thoughtfully studied by your directors and management," Vice President Donald R. Plumley of Geneseo reported. "With the cost of gas, oil and coal rapidly spiraling, it is a sure thing electric costs would also have to increase."

Plumley also called for more reasonable environmental regulations. He pointed out 40 percent of the cost of a new generating plant goes strictly for environmental control equipment.

Secretary-Treasurer James Holevoet of Atkinson said the cooperative faced a 43-percent increase in wholesale power cost in

1974. Wholesale power cost, he added, accounted for 45 percent of last year's total expenses. Taxes paid by the cooperative during 1974 totaled more than \$22,000. The cooperative listed total assets of nearly \$1.2 million.

During the business session, members reelected Robert Hannon of Geneseo, Holevoet and Wayne Colter of Geneseo to the Board of Directors for three-year terms.

Other members of the Board are Donald R. Plumley, Donald Knudston, Paul Mallinson, Darwin Mann and Edward Storm, all of Geneseo.

During the reorganizational meeting the board reelected Eldon Larson of Geneseo, president; Plumley, vice president; and Holevoet, secretary-treasurer.



OPPOSITE: More than 200 people attended the annual meeting and registered for prizes. RIGHT: Members reelected, from left: Wayne Colter of Geneseo, James Hoelvoet of Atkinson and Robert Hannon of Geneseo to three-year terms as directors. BELOW: Manager Morris Deul explained the necessity for a rate increase to members at the meeting. BOTTOM: Entertainment was provided by the Notables, a barber shop quartet who are members of the Elks Chanters.



ILICA



Albert J. Cross



Dale Knuppel

dedicated to soil and water conservation and improvement of the environment

by John Temple
former editor, Illinois Rural Electric News

Seventeen years ago a group of land improvement contractors around Trivoli in Peoria County decided the time had come to organize. They recognized an organization could provide services, promote the welfare and protect the interests of individual contractors in a manner they could not do alone.

The result was the formation of the Illinois Land Improvement Contractors Association, Inc. (ILICA) with Ed Williams of Trivoli as its first president.

Subsequently, the Illinois Land Improvement Contractors Association became the Illinois Chapter of the Land Improvement Contractors of America (LICA). The LICA has offices in Brookfield, Ill., with Paul A. Bucha as executive secretary.

Land improvement contractors are dedicated to soil and water conservation and improvement of the environment. They construct grass waterways, build ponds and engage in other water diversion activities, construct terraces, install tile for better drainage and work on pasture improvement and land rehabilitation. In addition, a number of the contractors are active in farming and engage in other construction programs.

A land improvement contractor must be a good businessman and a skilled worker. The occupation requires a large investment in expensive machinery and equipment, and the work must meet high standards. Contractors work closely with representatives of the U.S. Soil Conservation Service, county soil and water conservation districts, the Illinois Department of Agriculture, the general farm organizations in Illinois and all organizations and agencies established to serve the rural people of the state.

Since its inception the ILICA has received invaluable assistance from Prof. Ralph C. Hay and Prof. Car-

roll J. W. Drablos of the University of Illinois, Department of Agricultural Engineering. Drablos now serves as educational adviser to the ILICA. Since Hay retired from university service he has continued to serve as a consultant to the state organization.

Some of the more important activities of the Illinois Chapter, LICA, throughout the years have included:

1. Members have conducted five soil and water conservation demonstrations in Illinois. The purpose of the demonstrations was to show the most up-to-date practices in soil and water conservation.

2. Each year members have participated in several conservation workshops in cooperation with the Department of Agricultural Engineering, University of Illinois, and the U.S. Soil Conservation Service.

3. An annual meeting is held where members obtain information on the latest soil and water conservation practices and procedures.

4. The ILICA has an active and effective state legislative program. From 1968 through 1974 the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) worked with members of the ILICA to provide this service. During this period the ILICA gained recognition as one of the responsible rural organizations in the state. According to Dale Knuppel of Mackinaw, ILICA president, "Tom Moore, the AIEC board of directors, the organization's staff and membership deserve our deepest thanks for what they have done to help us grow and develop, not only with a strong legislative program but with publicity, organization and management and in numerous other areas."

5. Frequent conferences with departments and agencies of the state have been held on problems affecting land improvement contractors.

The ILICA has received numerous national honors. Two members, Ed Williams and Max H. Norris of Polo,

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