

SEPTEMBER 2023

Illinois Country Living

SEIZE THE CLAY

FEATURE

A lineworker's perspective

PRAIRIE TABLE

A meal with a view

SNAPSHOTS

Let there be light



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Illinois Country Living

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Illinois Country Living is a monthly publication serving the communications needs of the locally owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives of Illinois. With a circulation of more than 192,000, the magazine informs cooperative consumer-members about issues affecting their electric cooperative and the quality of life in rural Illinois.

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Better together

United, we see a future bright with promise

WHEN I THINK OF the words, “better together,” I think of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives’ (AIEC’s) mission statement, “To provide support, expertise and unity of purpose for our member cooperatives.” That third point, “unity,” allows the first two to happen. We need unity to be able to provide support. We need unity to be able to provide expertise. I see us “better together” in three ways — in the past, the present and the future.



Craig Sondgeroth is the President/CEO of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives.

Remembering the past

We were all better together back when rural electric cooperatives were formed. My family shares that history. It was 1939 on a farm in Mendota, Ill. My grandfather, Clifford Sondgeroth, was 7 years old and was one of eight children. My grandfather used to tell me they didn’t have much. They didn’t have shoes, they didn’t have enough chairs to eat at the table at the same time, and they didn’t have electricity.

My grandfather used to tell me how they used a kerosene lamp in the main room with a mirror behind it to spread the light. But, that farm family in 1939 scraped together \$5 to join the electric cooperative because it would change their lives. Years later, one of those Sondgeroth boys would end up serving on the board of the electric cooperative.

That farm is still in the Sondgeroth family and is still on cooperative lines today. My grandfather would be proud to think that 84 years ago when our family scraped that \$5 together to join an

electric cooperative, that I would be here today as the fifth CEO of the AIEC.

United in the present

Today, we are certainly better together. All 25 of Illinois’ distribution cooperatives are members of the AIEC. It has been great having Southwestern Electric Cooperative, which rejoined the AIEC last year, as a member again. That allows all of Illinois’ electric cooperatives to speak and advocate as one voice.

Looking toward the future

As far as the future is concerned, I don’t have a crystal ball, and I don’t know exactly what challenges we will face. However, I know that we share a noble purpose in providing electricity to rural parts of the state, where no one else would serve, and we do it on a not-for-profit basis.

I do know that we have an excellent staff at AIEC and will do everything we can to advocate for electric cooperatives and achieve good results. I do know that if we stay focused on providing safe, affordable and reliable power, our message will succeed with legislators and regulators.

Vince Lombardi aptly said, “The secret is to work less as an individual and more as a team.” The AIEC will continue to provide support, expertise and unity of purpose to our member cooperatives. But we need to focus on staying unified because, after all, we are all better together. 💡

This is an excerpt of Craig Sondgeroth’s CEO report presented during the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives’ annual meeting on Aug. 3, 2023.



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SEPTEMBER CHECKLIST

Be prepared. September is National Preparedness Month. Be sure your family has an emergency plan in the event of a natural disaster.



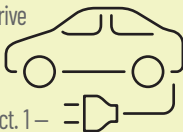
Register to vote.



Join thousands of Americans registering to vote during National Voter Registration Day on Sept. 19.

Test drive an EV.

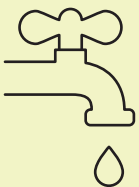
National Drive Electric Week is Sept. 22-Oct. 1 –



the perfect time to learn if an electric vehicle is right for you.

Tip of the month.

To save energy and money used for water heating, repair any



leaky faucets, install low-flow fixtures and insulate accessible hot water lines.

Illinois electric co-ops award three legislators for public service

During the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives' (AIEC's) annual meeting on Aug. 3-4, three elected officials were named recipients of Illinois Electric Cooperatives' Public Service Award. This year's recipients included State Representative Dave Severin, State Senator Doris Turner and Congressman Darin LaHood. The award is given in recognition of dedicated public service to all citizens of the state of Illinois and for outstanding contributions to the rural electrification program.



AIEC's President/CEO Craig Sondgeroth, Legal and Government Relations Coordinator Baylee Flowers and VP of Government Relations Nick Reitz present State Representative Dave Severin a 2023 Public Service Award.

"Representative Severin understands electric cooperative issues and is a tireless advocate on our behalf. It is refreshing to see such a smart, hardworking legislator with a common-sense approach," said Craig Sondgeroth, president/CEO of AIEC. "Electric cooperatives need great advocates like Representative Severin, so members have safe, affordable and reliable electricity."

Severin represents the 116th District and has served since 2017. His district includes the service territories of Norris Electric Cooperative, SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative, Tri-County Electric Cooperative and Wayne-White Counties Electric Cooperative.

"Senator Turner has shown that she understands utility issues and how important it is that policy does not get ahead of technology," Sondgeroth said. "I appreciate that

Senator Turner is always willing to meet with electric cooperatives with an open mind and works to understand our challenges and differences from other utility providers. She always tries to vote for the best interests of her constituents."



State Senator Doris Turner is a 2023 recipient of the Public Service Award.

Turner represents the 48th District and has served since 2021. Her district includes the service territories of Shelby Electric Cooperative, Menard Electric Cooperative and Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative.

"Illinois electric cooperatives are fortunate to have Representative LaHood in Congress," Sondgeroth said. "Since his days in the Illinois State Senate, Representative LaHood understands the noble effort and the difficulties of providing electricity in rural Illinois where populations can be sparse. He always takes the time to listen to our issues and has been a great advocate for electric cooperatives in Washington, D.C."

LaHood was unable to be in attendance and will accept the award at a later date. This is also a special achievement for the LaHood family as former Representative Ray LaHood received the same award in 1999.

LaHood currently serves the constituents of the 16th District of Illinois. He previously represented the 18th District from 2015 to 2023. Prior to Congress, LaHood served in the Illinois Senate 37th District from 2011 to 2015. His district includes the service territories of Corn Belt Energy, Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative, Jo-Carroll Energy and Rock Energy Cooperative. 💡

Sudoku

by Myles Mellor and Susan Flanagan

Complete the grid so every row, column and 3x3 cube contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusive with no repetition. Solution on page 33.

1				7	5		9	
4	9		8	2				
3			1	9		5		
7				8				
		8	9		2	7		
				4				9
		7		6	9			4
				5	7		8	1
	5		2	1				6



PHOTO COURTESY OF ARTUR ZUJON, UNSPLASH

What's new with wind

Wind energy is big and getting bigger, in more ways than one. In the U.S., wind generates twice the amount of electricity it did five years ago and provides 10% of the nation's electricity, and that's expected to grow to more than 25% by 2050.

If you've taken a road trip across the Midwest, or even down the road in rural Illinois, you've likely seen fields of wind turbines, with white rotor blades spinning lazily around. But they're not lazy at all, and that's another way wind energy is big — in physical size.

Wind turbine blades seem to circle slowly due to an optical illusion resulting from how big they are. The tips of those rotors are likely to be moving at more than 150 miles per hour.

There's a reason for the size. Wind turbines are getting bigger and taller to capture more wind. The average wind turbine height has increased from 190 feet in 2000 to nearly 300 feet today. During that time, the size of the rotor blades doubled, making a circle more than 400 feet in diameter. That size growth has tripled the amount of electricity a wind turbine can produce.

One wind turbine can generate enough electricity to power about 900 homes, and they're being installed at a rate of about 3,000 a year. Today, there are more than 72,000 turbines in the U.S., primarily located in the middle part of the country. But that's about to change.

Federal and state governments are encouraging developers to build wind turbines in the ocean, where winds are more constant and the rotors can be even larger.

Bigger sizes can cause problems, though, like transporting rotor blades that average more than 100 feet long. Delivering those monsters can cost more than \$30,000 in finding the right truck for the oversized load, planning the route, obtaining permits, checking clearances and recruiting escort vehicles.

Besides large onshore and offshore wind farms, wind turbines can be used as a distributed energy resource. With support from the U.S. Department of Energy, there have been significant innovations in smaller-scale wind turbines to integrate improvements seen in larger models, including longer blades to capture more wind and advanced composite materials. Smaller turbines can even be used to help power homes, farms, schools and businesses.

Across the U.S., several electric co-ops and other rural utilities have deployed one or more large-scale wind turbines in their service territories to supplement their wholesale power supply. These kinds of local resources can help boost resiliency, hedge or reduce power supply costs and support local economic development. 💡

Paul Wesslund, NRECA



IL ENTERTAINMENT CORNER

This past summer, Benton, Ill., became the unlikely location for a spinoff of "Real Housewives." "Real Housewives of New York City" reality personas Sonja Morgan and Luann de Lesseps appeared in "Luann and Sonja: Welcome to Crappie Lake."

In the series, which originally aired on Bravo this summer, the two join forces with Benton's mayor and city council members to help revitalize the community, which has struggled in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Along the way, Sonja and Luann become acquainted with fishing, monster trucks and a unique festival in the area. The show can be streamed on Peacock. 💡



DAILY THEMES:

- Monday, September 18
Equipment and Rural Roadway Safety
- Tuesday, September 19
Health and Wellness
- Wednesday, September 20
Priority Populations
- Thursday, September 21
Confined Spaces
- Friday, September 22
Brain Health

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Where is it?

The winners of the July hidden object contest were Sharon Heaton of Illinois Electric Cooperative and Barbara Waymire of Shelby Electric Cooperative. Congratulations! Your ICL Tervis tumblers have been sent.

August's shovel was hidden in plain sight in the Checklist section on page 7. Winners' names will be drawn, and they will be notified. Visit Illinois Country Living on Facebook after each month's deadline for a closeup of the object's location and winners' names.

It's time for a new hidden object search. In honor of National Coffee Day on Sept. 29, be on the lookout for a cup of coffee. The symbol can vary in size and will never be on this page, a lettered page or in an ad.

Entries must include your name, address, name of your electric co-op (non-members are also eligible), and the page number and location of the symbol. Visit icl.coop/hiddenobject and fill out the entry form (also found under Contact Us on the website) or mail a postcard to Illinois Country Living, Hidden Objects, 6460 S. 6th St. Frontage Road East, Springfield, IL 62712. We will NOT accept letters or entries via phone call. All entries for that month must be postmarked or received digitally by the 15th. Winners' names and the symbol's location will be published in each month's issue of Illinois Country Living. 💡

IBTA, AIEC announce broadband infrastructure partnership

The Illinois Broadband & Telecommunications Association (IBTA) and the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) announced a partnership focused on bringing broadband to homes and businesses lacking adequate internet service, many of which are in rural areas of the state.

State and federal officials have placed a priority on ensuring every home and business has access to broadband. To achieve that goal, broadband infrastructure grants have been established to create partnerships between the government and broadband providers that make it more economical to build high-speed networks in unserved areas.

The most recent broadband map from the Federal Communications Commission showed Illinois with 235,000 unserved homes and businesses lacking basic internet service and another 131,000 as underserved. Illinois has 3.1 million homes and businesses that meet the definition of "served," receiving internet speeds of 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload.

Many of the unserved and underserved are in rural areas where the cost to build networks to sparse populations is expensive with not enough customers per square mile to earn a return on the investment. Broadband grant programs help cover the financial gap.

The state of Illinois is seeking partners through the current round of the Connect Illinois broadband grant program, which has pledged \$350 million in grants to partner with eligible providers. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration announced the state allocations of the federal \$42.5 billion Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program, from which Illinois will receive \$1.04 billion for grants to expand broadband access. The BEAD program allocations to each state were based on a formula based on the number of homes and businesses lacking adequate broadband service.

IBTA member companies have experience building broadband networks and partnering with state and federal agencies to provide access to high-speed internet where service is lacking. Illinois' electric cooperatives have experience building electric distribution networks to serve rural communities, and several Illinois electric cooperatives have begun building fiber-optic broadband networks for rural customers as

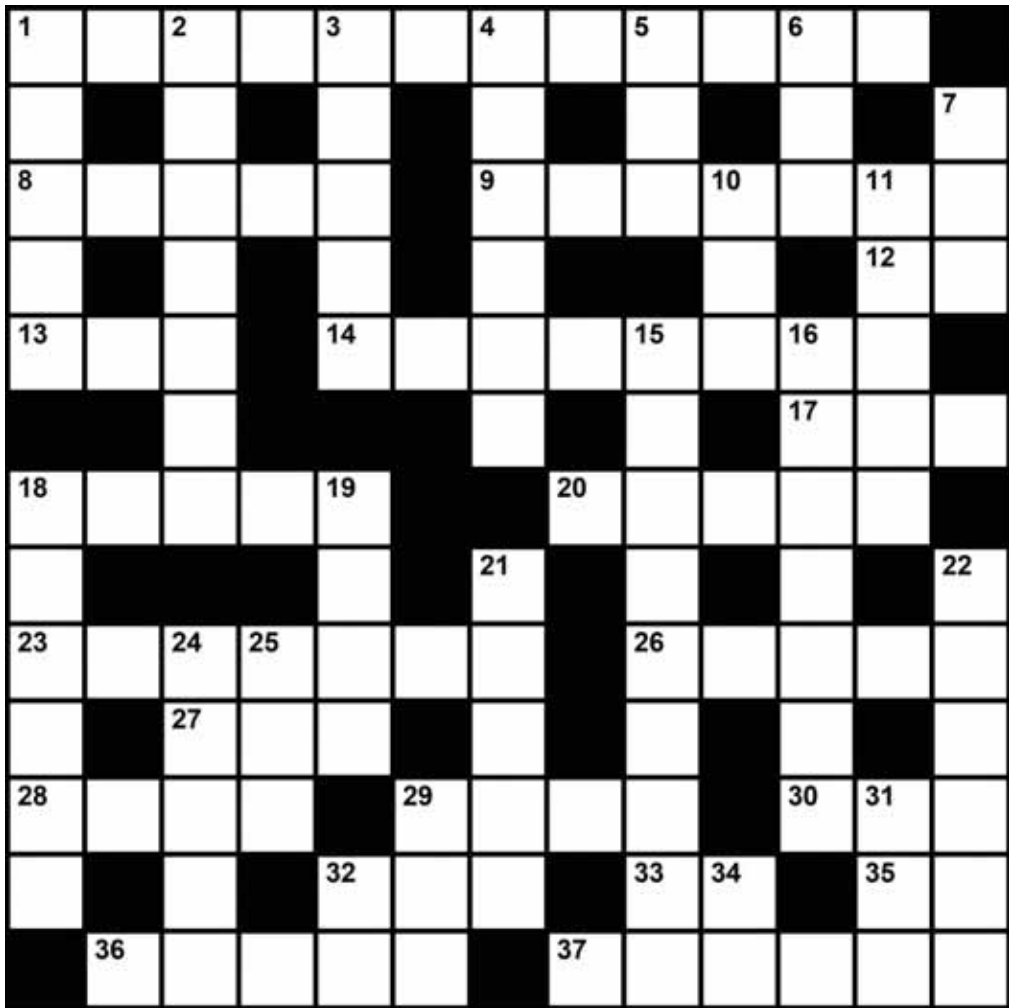


well. Together, the IBTA and AIEC member companies are positioned to establish partnerships and support to take advantage of these grant programs to expand broadband service throughout Illinois.

This partnership will allow for collaboration among IBTA and AIEC members to support projects and grants to bring broadband to homes, farms and businesses that lack the basic internet service necessary today. It will benefit AIEC's member cooperatives that are actively engaged as broadband providers, are interested in partnering with a current broadband provider or want to learn more about broadband.

The IBTA represents 40 broadband and telecommunications service providers throughout Illinois and 80 additional businesses that provide consulting, products and services to the Illinois broadband and telecommunications industry. The AIEC represents 25 electric distribution cooperatives throughout Illinois and 65 associate member companies that provide products and services. 💡

IBTA



Across

- 1 Fall features, 2 words
- 8 Fall leaf color
- 9 Insulated hot drink container
- 12 Prefix for mutual
- 13 Barley cousin
- 14 Cloudy, like some fall skies
- 17 Tail motion
- 18 Fog enshrouded
- 20 Precious stone
- 23 _____ spice
- 26 Spud
- 27 Equal
- 28 Great lake
- 29 Color similar to almond or beige

- 30 Fled quickly
- 32 Request
- 33 Trademark, abbr.
- 35 Club entry requirement
- 36 Sumptuous meal
- 37 Early fall flowers

Down

- 1 Like America's "waves of grain"
- 2 Gardening tools
- 3 Yellowish-red fruit
- 4 Coffee orders
- 5 Candle representation
- 6 The Liberty Tree, for one
- 7 Letters on a brandy bottle
- 10 Stranded cell stuff, for short

- 11 Of a group of eight
- 15 "_____ roasting on an open fire"
- 16 Cold weather wear
- 18 Trees that show off dramatic colors in fall
- 19 Oxen's harness
- 21 Nosh
- 22 Fern leaves
- 24 Pilgrim provender
- 25 Before
- 29 Superlative ending
- 31 Jordan's nickname
- 32 Great grades
- 34 Mountain, abbr.

Solution on page 33.



Honor those who served

Since 2017, the Gold Star 500, an annual endurance cycling event, has honored the service and sacrifice of servicemen and women from Illinois who gave their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan. Gold Star Mission hosts the event to preserve the memory of those fallen heroes.

On Sept. 19, a team of primarily veteran and service member bicyclists will begin a 500-mile journey through central and southern Illinois. The five-day event will take them through many of the communities where those fallen heroes lived and served.

On day one, riders will begin their journey in Springfield and travel to Jacksonville, Carlinville and Litchfield. Day two, they will ride to Scott Air Force Base, Freeburg, Red Bud and Sparta. Day three, their journey continues through Steelville, Chester, Carbondale and Harrisburg. Day four includes Fairfield and Effingham. The journey ends on Sept. 23 in Shelbyville, Taylorville and finally back to Springfield.

Gold Star Mission raises funds for scholarships that are named in honor of those servicemen and women, thus preserving their names forever.

Community members are invited to cheer on the riders during their journey. Learn more at goldstarmission.org.

Gold Star Mission

LET'S GO!

8-10 Bureau County Homestead Festival

PRINCETON
Enjoy live music, hot air balloons, a parade and a car show during this three-day event

9 McLean County Barn Tour

BLOOMINGTON
Pick up an informational book at Neuhaus Gardens and enjoy a self-guided tour of area barns

16 Nature Trails Day

HUDSON
Go geocaching, learn about bees and wildflowers, go on a guided hike, and much more

24 Flea Market

VIRDEN
Shop for antiques and collectibles at Virden Knights of Columbus' annual event

For more information, a complete listing of events or to submit an event, visit icl.coop/datebook.



Cache River Days

SEPTEMBER
7-10
The 28th Annual Cache River Days will feature a pageant, baby contest, 5K, flea market, food vendors, parade, children's train rides, bounce houses, softball tournament, cornhole tournament, entertainment and exhibits. Visit the welcome tent at the entrance of the ballpark to pick up a full event schedule. Bring your lawn chairs, have some good food and enjoy the weekend activities.

Sept. 7-10, 2023; times vary
● Ullin Ballpark, 611 Ullin Ave., Ullin
Admission: varies
618-845-3445 or Cache River Days, Ullin, Illinois on Facebook

Illinois Day of the Dozer

SEPTEMBER
9
During this annual event, kids will be in the driver's seat and operate dozers, excavators and other heavy equipment with a professional operator at their side. Additional farming, construction and emergency vehicles will be on exhibit, plus the world's largest sandbox and other kid-friendly activities. Food, refreshments and souvenirs will be available. Proceeds benefit the "Stay 4" Project, a local initiative that addresses the high school dropout crisis and helps low-income students.

Sept. 9, 2023; 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
● McLean County Fairgrounds, 1106 Interstate Drive, Bloomington
Admission: varies
309-828-3406 or dayofthedozer.net



Harvest of Quilts

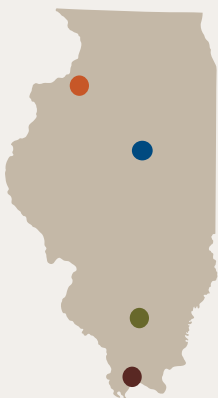
SEPTEMBER
15-16
More than 200 quilts will be on display during the Geneseo Quilt Guild's annual quilt show. There will also be a featured quilter, a beautiful raffle quilt, raffle baskets, vendors, bed turning, Quilters Treasures Boutique and quilt appraisals at the event. Lunch will be available.

Sept. 15, 2023; 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sept. 16, 2023; 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
● Geneseo Community Center, 541 E. North St., Geneseo
Admission: \$5
309-714-0510 or Geneseo Quilt Guild on Facebook

Wine and Art Festival

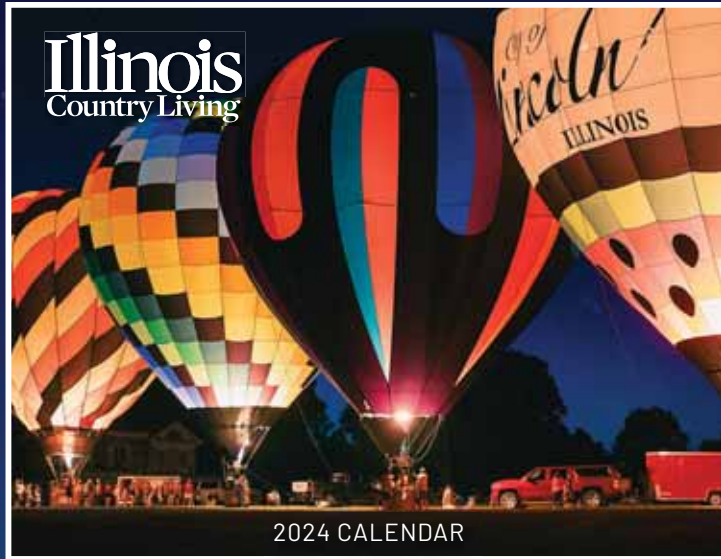
SEPTEMBER **30** - **OCTOBER** **1**
In beautiful southern Illinois, the Wine and Art Festival at Rend Lake is a showcase weekend for thousands of people to sample wine from local vineyards and to shop the many vendors displaying arts and crafts. This outdoor festival has live music each day, and there will be local food trucks to satisfy every craving.

Sept. 30, 2023; 11 a.m.-6 p.m. and Oct. 1, 2023; noon-5 p.m.
● Rend Lake Event Center, 14967 Gun Creek Trail, Whittington
Admission: \$10
618-439-4321 or facebook.com/wineandartfestivalatrendlake



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Sleep like a baby

Know your home is safe for little ones

PARENTS HAVE A LOT on their minds when preparing for the arrival of a new baby. There are the usual tasks to check off the baby-proofing list, such as putting chemicals and medications out of reach,

12 children die from these injuries every year.

Although many of today's newer or remodeled homes have AFCI (arc-fault circuit interrupter) and GFCI (ground-fault circuit interrupter) technology to help prevent electrical fires and shocks, parents cannot rely on that solely to protect their little ones. They aren't always a match for a toddler's schemes, and they need to be tested regularly to make sure they are always in working order.

Outlets and cords

The National Electric Code requires tamper-resistant outlets (TROs) in new homes built in 2008 and after. TROs feature slots that appear to be filled with plastic. The plastic serves as a type of spring-loaded shutter that only opens when pushed

at the same time (like when plugging something in). So, if a child attempts to stick an object in the outlet, the shutter prevents the object from entering, and no contact with electricity is made.

If your home isn't equipped with TROs, you could either hire a licensed electrician to install them or purchase outlet plate covers, outlet plugs or outlet caps.

These plugs and caps are great, but remember, babies grow into toddlers who can crack the code and remove them, and they are completely ineffective if adults

forget to replace them after short-term tasks, like vacuuming.

Also, be careful when using extension cords around crawling babies and toddlers. Put them away as soon as you are done with them. Check for long electrical cords that span the floor and secure them with cord covers to avoid trip/crawl hazards.

Other helpful items include power strip covers (or hide strips behind furniture and out of baby's sight), cord-shortening devices so cords do not have excess length or droop, and anti-unplug devices (a box-like outlet cover with one open side), so the baby can't unplug devices.

A toddler's viewpoint

Set aside time to consider electrical items in your home that could tempt inquisitive little ones. There are potential dangers in every room. You may think a room is fine at first glance, but consider getting down on your hands and knees to see it from a crawling baby's or toddler's perspective.

Look for unprotected outlets, hanging or dangling cords with excess length, surge protectors (anything on the floor is a toy, right?), and extension cords or long cords just asking to be tugged on. Various products are available to help cover outlet slots, reduce cord length, cover surge protector strips, and help prevent little ones from pulling out plugs from outlets.

If the thought of all of this overwhelms you, consider hiring a babyproofing professional to address all the potential hazards in your home. In short, look at your entire home through your crawling baby's or tottering toddler's eyes. Then take action to protect the little ones in your home.

For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.



securing tall furniture that could topple, and installing cabinet and toilet locks. As Baby Safety Month, September serves as a reminder to keep electrical dangers in mind when babyproofing your home.

Babies and children are naturally curious, but sometimes that curiosity can connect them with danger. According to the National Fire Protection Association, approximately 2,400 children suffer from shock and burns each year caused by items being inserted into the slots of electrical receptacles. Even more alarming is that on average,



As Executive Director at Safe Electricity, **Erin Hollinshead** has a profound passion for saving lives through education. She holds a master's degree in public administration from the University of Illinois and a grad certificate in management of nonprofit organizations.

Better than cannabis, better than CBD

New Joint-Supporting “Miracle Oil” Capsule Delivers Hip, Knee, and Shoulder Comfort in Just Days

Thousands of Americans are rediscovering normal freedom of movement thanks to a “miracle oil” capsule that’s outperforming hemp in promoting joint comfort.

According to the official figures from the CDC, more than 58 million Americans are living with joint discomfort. This epidemic has led to a search for alternative approaches – as many sufferers seek relief without the harmful side effects of conventional “solutions.”

Anti-aging specialist Dr. Al Sears is leading the way with a new formula he calls “the most significant breakthrough I’ve ever found for easing joint discomfort.”

The capsule is based on a “miracle oil” historically treasured for its joint health-supporting properties. Marco Polo prized it as he blazed the Silk Road. And to this day, Ayurvedic practitioners rely on it to promote optimal joint health.

Now, with a modern twist backed by science, Dr. Sears is making this natural solution for joint health available to the public.

Your Body’s Hidden “Soothing System”

Joint health research changed forever with the discovery of the endocannabinoid system (ECS) in 1992. Up until that point, research on cannabinoids focused on psychoactive effects. Now, scientists were looking at a new way to fight occasional aches and pains.

Your ECS serves as a central “signaling system” that tells your body how to react to things you do every day. It controls several critical bodily functions such as learning and memory, sleep, healthy immune responses – and your response to discomfort.

A recent study revealed a direct link between the ECS and creaky, sore joints. Researchers at the University of Edinburgh studied the aging of mice with endocannabinoid deficiencies versus “normal” mice.

As they aged, the deficient mice had a whopping 60% more joint degeneration than the mice with a healthy ECS.

As the name suggests, the ECS responds to cannabis. At the time it was discovered, scientists assumed that was the best way to support it. But thanks to Dr. Sears’ all-natural solution, you can power up your ECS without marijuana.

“Calling it the ‘endocannabinoid system’ was a misnomer from the very beginning,” Dr. Sears explained. “Modern research reveals that you don’t need cannabis to activate this incredible system. You don’t need to ‘get high’ to get joint relief.”

A scholarly review found that plants and herbs that don’t produce mind-altering effects can support the ECS and help it maintain its healthy functions.



The active ingredient in Mobilify soothes aching joints in as little as 5 days

This includes common foodstuffs, such as kava, chocolate, black pepper, and most significantly – the star ingredient to Dr. Sears’ own **Mobilify** formula - frankincense.

Modern scientists say this natural ingredient meets “cannabinoid tetrad” – the signs used to determine if something supports the ECS. While it doesn’t produce a “high” like cannabis does, it binds to the same receptors to support a healthy response to discomfort.

All the Benefits of CBD – Without Cannabis

Indian frankincense, the chief ingredient in **Mobilify**, has been shown to provide all the benefits of cannabis without any feelings of sluggishness or sleepiness.

And studies show that users don’t have to wait long for the comfort they’re looking for.

In a study published in the International Journal of Medical Sciences, 60 patients with stiff knees took 100 mg of Indian frankincense or a placebo daily for 30 days. Remarkably, Indian frankincense “significantly” supported healthy joint function and relieved discomfort in as little as five days.

Additional research linked regular use to lasting comfort.

In another study, 48 participants were given an extract made from frankincense for 120-days. When the results came in, researchers determined the extract strongly supported joint comfort – especially in the knees.

These results were all achieved without marijuana. Research continues to back up the idea that you can support smooth, strong, and healthy joints naturally – without tiredness or sluggishness.

Get Moving Again with Mobilify

Mobilify has already helped thousands of Americans stay on their feet and breeze through their daily activities with ease.

One user even reported getting results the

same day it was used.

“**Mobilify** really helps with soreness, stiffness, and mild temporary discomfort,” Joni D. said.

Larry M, another user, compared taking **Mobilify** to living a completely new life.

“After a week and a half of taking **Mobilify**, the discomfort, stiffness, and minor aches went away...it’s almost like being reborn,” he said.

Dennis H. said it helped him get back to his favorite hobby.

“I can attest to **Mobilify** easing discomfort to enable me to pursue my golfing days. Definitely one pill that works for me out of the many I have tried,” he said.

How to Get Mobilify

Right now, the only way to get this powerful, unique Mobilify formula that clobbers creaking joints without clobbering you is directly from Dr. Sears. It is not available in stores.

To secure your bottle of this breakthrough natural joint discomfort reliever, buyers should call with Sears Health Hotline at **1-800-342-0323**. “The Hotline allows us to ship the product directly to customers.”

Dr. Sears believes in this product so much, he offers a 100% money-back guarantee on every order. “Just send me back the bottle and any unused product within 90 days, and I’ll send you your money back,” said Dr. Sears.

The Hotline will be taking orders for the next 48 hours. After that, the phone number may be shut down to allow them to restock. Call **1-800-342-0323** to secure your limited supply of **Mobilify**. If you are not able to get through due to extremely high call volume, please try again! Call NOW to qualify for a significant discount on this limited time offer. To take advantage of this exclusive offer use Promo Code: **ICLMB923** when you call.

Don't throw money out the window

IF YOUR WINDOWS ARE old and drafty, think about replacing them. Upgrading or improving your windows is an important component of your home's energy efficiency.

There are several options for improving your windows, ranging from replacement windows to storm windows to budget-friendly repairs.

Several components can make windows more efficient. High-quality frame materials insulate and reduce heat transfer. Two or more panes of glass with space in between (filled with air or gas) improve the window's insulation capability. Warm edge spacers hold the panes of glass the proper distance apart and help insulate the edges of the panes. Low-emissivity coatings applied to the glass can reflect infrared light, keeping the heat in during the winter and out during the summer.

Window efficiency is rated in U-factor and Solar Heat Gain Coefficient (SHGC).

U-factor measures heat transfer through the window, which relates to how well it insulates. The lower the U-factor, the more efficient the window. The SHGC measures how effectively the window blocks heat from the sun.

If you want to replace your existing windows, shop for ENERGY STAR-certified windows. ENERGY STAR sets specific U-factor and SHGC requirements based on your geography, so you get the best fit for your location. Replacement windows offer additional benefits, like improved

operability and aesthetics. As with many industries, the window industry has been impacted by price increases over the past few years, so this can be an expensive upgrade.

Storm windows are a lower-cost solution for some homes. Traditional storm windows are made with clear glass. Low-emissivity storm windows have energy savings similar to replacement windows at about a third of the cost. Storm windows are mounted to the interior or exterior and are available in operable styles, so you can still open and close your windows.

If you want to maintain the historic architecture of your existing windows, low-e storm windows are a great option. Some companies can refit your existing window frames with custom double-pane glass and weatherstripping.

As with any home improvement project, be sure to get multiple quotes to compare pricing and scope of work. You may find additional savings with state or federal tax credits for window upgrades.

If new windows or storm windows are not in the budget, your best bet is to maintain your existing windows. Keep the paint and caulking on the exterior in good

condition. That will help prevent damage from the elements. Caulk around the inside trim, ensure sash locks are installed properly and seal tight when locked. There are

a variety of weatherstripping types for windows to keep drafts at bay.

Whether you replace or make improvements to what you have, adding efficiency to your windows will add year-round comfort to your home. 💡



According to the U.S. Department of Energy, heat gain and loss through windows account for 25% to 30% of residential heating and cooling energy use.

Start by identifying the kind of windows you have. Are they single- or double-pane? Looking closely at the window's edge, you can see the number of windowpanes. Are the frames metal, wood or vinyl? Some manufacturers etch the make and model numbers in a corner of the glass, so you can look up the manufacturer for more information.

Single- and double-pane windows with metal frames are the least energy-efficient. The lower the efficiency of your existing windows, the higher the potential for energy savings.



Miranda Boutelle is the director of operations and customer engagement at Efficiency Services Group in Oregon, a cooperatively owned energy efficiency company.

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From waste to energy wealth

A renewable energy source comes from unusual resources

BIOMASS ENERGY, WHICH CONVERTS animal, human and plant waste into energy, is gaining popularity as a renewable energy source. Biomass energy reduces waste and greenhouse gas emissions, generates electricity and provides additional advantages.

Creating energy from biomass requires several phases. First, the collection and transfer of waste to a processing plant where animal, human and plant waste are sorted. After sorting, the waste can be converted to energy through a variety of processes:

- Anaerobic digestion — breaking down organic waste without oxygen — is a frequent approach. Biogas can be burned to generate power or heat from this method.
- Incinerating biomass also generates energy. This involves a controlled burning of organic waste to generate power or heat.
- Pyrolysis is a third biomass-to-energy technique. Bio-oil, a liquid fuel used to generate power or heat, is produced by heating biological waste without oxygen.

Advantages of biomass energy

Since waste is constantly being produced, biomass energy is considered a renewable source. Farms and other agricultural enterprises produce animal waste every day, and crop harvesting generates plant waste. Human waste also provides energy-generating organic material.

Electricity generated from waste is environmentally sustainable and reduces landfill waste and greenhouse gas emissions.

Cost savings is another significant advantage of biomass energy. Additionally, biomass energy can

waste can be converted to energy, and certain waste materials are contaminated, therefore unsuited for biomass energy production.

Biomass energy production can also be costly when waste must be transported long distances to

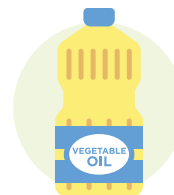
Types of Biomass Used for Energy



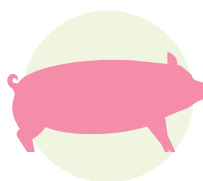
Crops and Agriculture Residues



Wood



Vegetable Oils and Animal Fats



Animal Manure



Sewage



Trash/Garbage

be produced locally, which reduces reliance on foreign energy sources, stabilizes energy prices and economic risks, and creates employment opportunities in waste management and energy.

Disadvantages of biomass energy

Even though there are major advantages to biomass energy, there are a few drawbacks. Not all organic

a processing facility. To address these issues, the cost and efficiency of biomass energy production are being improved, and new technologies are being developed to enhance anaerobic digestion and other biomass energy production methods.

Despite these challenges, biomass energy has the potential to become an important renewable energy source. 💡



Jennah Denney writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.

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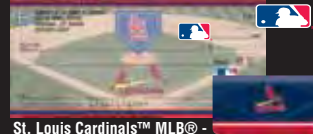
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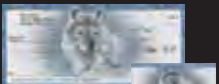
Faith, Hope, Christ -
00633 Leather Cover
and Labels - 00633 ☆



Sunflowers - 00334
Leather Cover and
Labels - 00334 ☆



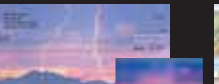
Classic Peanuts -
00708 Leather Cover
and Labels - 00708 ◆



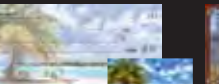
Spirit of the
Wilderness - 00024
Leather Cover and Labels - 00024 ☆



Great Outdoors -
00552 Leather Cover
and Labels - 00552 ☆



Lightning Strikes -
00178 Leather Cover
and Labels - 00178 ☆



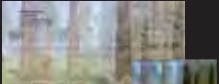
Tropical Paradise -
00052 Leather Cover
and Labels - 00052 ☆



North American
Wildlife - 00876 Leather
Cover and Labels - 00876 ☆



A Touch of Color II -
01370 Leather Cover
and Labels - 01370 ☆



Prayers of Serenity w/
verse "Trust in the Lord
with all your heart" - 00194
Leather Cover and Labels - 00194 ☆



Beach Escapes - 00743
Leather Cover - 00697
Labels - 00743 ☆



Nurses Rule! - 00542
Leather Cover
and Labels - 00542 ☆



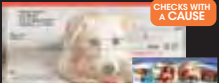
Glitter Sparkles -
01327 Fabric Cover
and Labels - 01327 ▲



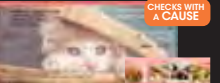
Thomas Kinkadee's Faith
for All Seasons w/verse "Believe all things
are possible with God" - 00105
Leather Cover and Labels - 00105 ☆



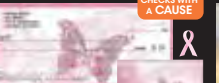
Footprints where "One
night I dreamed that I was
walking along the beach with the Lord." -
00667 Leather Cover and Labels - 00667 ☆



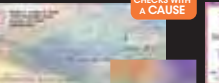
Rescued is My Breed
of Choice - 00379 Leather
Cover and Labels - 00379 ☆
A portion of the proceeds will be donated to a national no-kill animal shelter.



Rescued is Something
to Purr About - 00525
Leather Cover and Labels - 00525 ☆



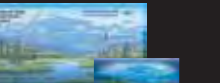
On the Wings of Hope -
00384 One Image, Leather
Cover and Labels - 00384 ☆
A portion of the proceeds will be donated to fight breast cancer.



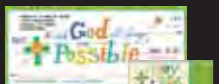
Coping Together -
01397 Leather Cover -
00125 and Labels - 01397 ☆
A portion of the proceeds will be donated to the American Nurses Foundation.



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



Mountains - 01287
Leather Cover and
Labels - 01287 ☆



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



Cowboy Boots - 00434
Leather Cover and
Labels - 00434 ☆



Mickey Loves Minnie -
00422 Leather Cover and Labels - 00422 ◆
Celebrating 90 Years of Mickey Magic!



Farm and Tractors -
00785 Leather Cover
and Labels - 00785 ☆



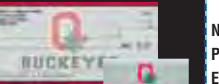
Black & White -
01393 Leather Cover
and Labels - 01393 ▲



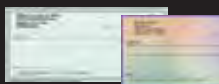
Winter Calm - 00017
Leather Cover and
Labels - 00017 ☆



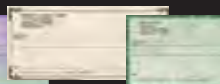
Nightmare Before
Christmas - 00531
Leather Cover and Labels - 00531 ◆



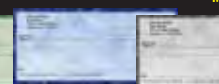
Ohio State University -
00513 Leather Cover
and Labels - 00513 ◆
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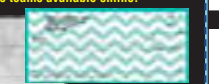
Blue Safety - 00027
One Image, Leather
Cover and Labels - 00155 ▲



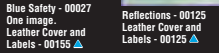
Reflections - 00125
Leather Cover and
Labels - 00125 ▲



Parchment - 00012
Burgundy Leather
Cover - 00030-004
Labels - 00032-008



Wall Street - 00167
Leather Cover and
Labels - 00167 ▲



5th Avenue - 00155
One Image, Leather
Cover and Labels - 00155 ▲



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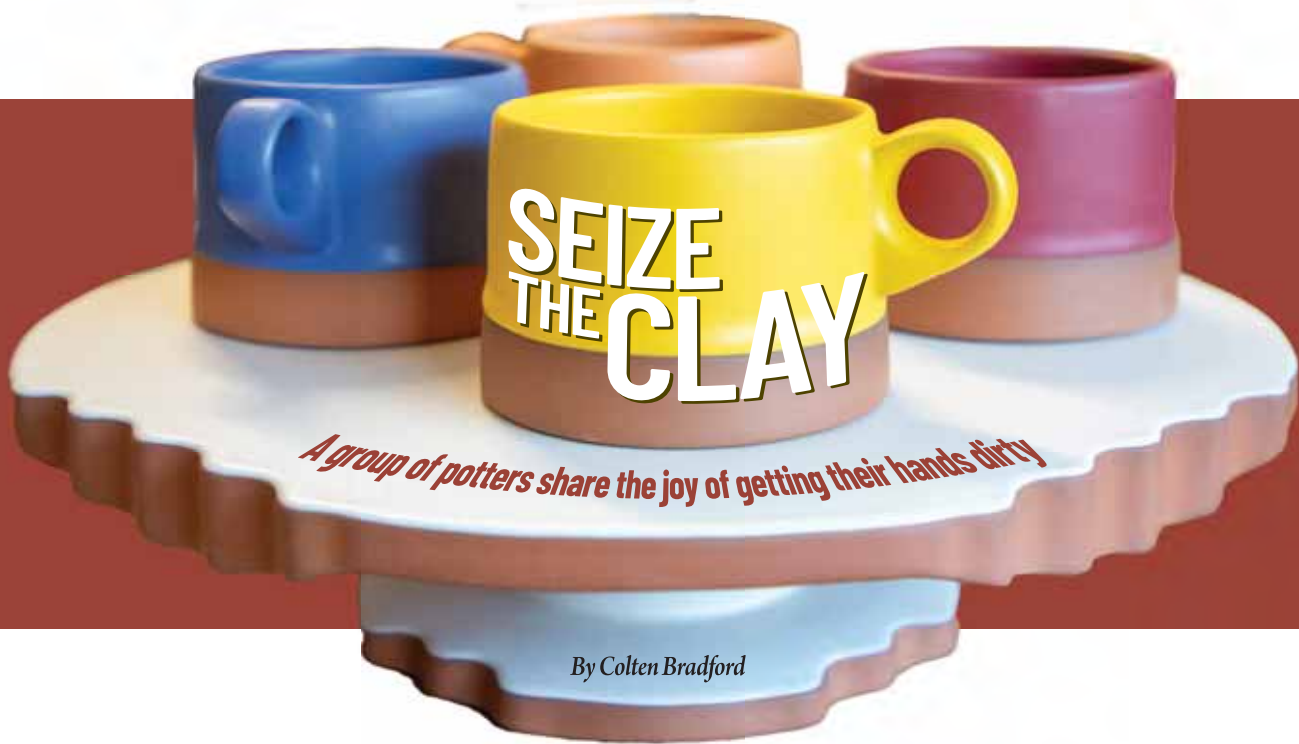
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THERE'S NO WAY TO create pottery without getting your hands dirty. For more than 20 years, potters around the tri-point border of Illinois, Iowa and Wisconsin have banded together through a group called Twenty Dirty Hands. Three of these potters, who are all consumer-members of Jo-Carroll Energy, are among the original founders of the group.

Eshelman Pottery

Paul Eshelman does pottery a little differently. He doesn't use a pottery wheel, nor does he form his pieces with his hands. "My process is unusual in the world of clay," he says. He creates molds out of plaster and pours in liquid clay — that he mixes himself from mud sourced from the Midwest — to make his carefully crafted designs.

"My process is more industrial but scaled down to a small studio," Eshelman explains.

Growing up in Ames, Iowa, he wanted to get away. After two years at the University of Puget Sound in Washington, he finished his degree at Trinity Western University in British Columbia, where he met his future wife and business partner Laurel. He went on to earn a master's degree in ceramics at the Rhode Island School of Design.

"In academics, you don't get business skills. I graduated in '81, and we didn't get started here until '88. It was a process to learn how to sell the work. My technique changed through producing the work, marketing and learning from my mistakes. We were both in it and dedicated to it."

Now married for 46 years, the Eshelmans moved to Elizabeth in the 1980s, opened the business in 1988 and moved to the current shop and studio, a former car dealership and later a print shop for the local newspaper, in 1990. They haven't looked back. Paul does the clay work while Laurel focuses on the business side.

Eshelman creates elegant dinnerware pieces with inspiration drawn from Japanese and Chinese ceramics, mid-century pottery, architecture, and industrial pieces like metal fittings, ductwork and corrugated metal.

"[My inspiration] feeds from a number of directions. My work is clean and finished very precisely," Eshelman explains. "I love doing careful craftsmanship. I take my time to do a good job and finish things the way I think they should be finished and finished well."

Eshelman has his own signature style. Each piece has a contrast in color with glazed areas and unglazed, unadorned sections, which highlights the color of the clay.

Over the years, the Eshelmans have traveled the U.S. going to shows and exhibitions.

"Pre-pandemic, we did a dozen to 15 shows throughout the year," Eshelman explains. "You pack up everything you've made, [drive] to an art show, unpack, set up the booth, and you're there for one to three days."

Eshelman estimates that he crafts thousands of pieces every year. "A lot of my work is cups," he says, adding that even if customers already have a full set of dinnerware, they will still buy a coffee mug because they are small and affordable.

"I love that I can do what I enjoy doing," Eshelman says. "I'm doing something I believe in and bringing joy to people's lives."

The Pottery

Steph O'Shaughnessy's first foray into clay was in the late '60s while on assignment for the local newspaper, the Galena Gazette. "I had never made pottery before, and I didn't know anything about it. I started reading about it and studying it, and I was just amazed," she says.



Paul Eshelman of Eshelman Pottery in his shop and studio in Elizabeth.

While researching about pottery that flourished in the Upper Mississippi Valley in the 1800s, she discovered that the materials used were sourced from the ground locally. She got in touch with an 80-year-old man who took her digging for clay along the banks of the Mississippi River.

“He starts digging and digging, and I don’t know what we’re looking for. But he’s digging this hole, and he finally unearthed this level of clay. He dug it up, filled a few buckets and I took it home.”

Although her husband had no experience with pottery either, he built her a pottery wheel out of an old door and a wooden chair. “Little by little, I started working with the clay. I was enchanted. I was quickly hooked on this magic material,” O’Shaughnessy says.

She admits her first attempts were not successful, but eventually, she made a few toothpick holders and shot glasses. A friend who was attending the Art Institute of Chicago as a pottery student saw the wheel and said he couldn’t believe she made such beautiful pieces on “that thing.” He eventually gave her a wheel that the school was throwing out, along with a pottery lesson.

O’Shaughnessy went on to earn a scholarship to Anderson Ranch Arts Center in Colorado, and there learned how to

work with all kinds of clay and kilns. She has worked with clay ever since.

She describes her pottery as functional. “My work tends to be simple, with occasional little exuberant scribbles on them. I do some sculptural objects, but along the way, it’s been important to pay the rent and get another bag of clay.” Because of this, she has done a lot of commission work over the years.

“Sometimes when I sit down at the wheel, I have a goal ... something specific I want to make. Oftentimes I succeed, but

sometimes the clay has a different idea. In that case, I have the choice of listening to the clay. I have to let go of that desire to stay on task and have fun.”

Today, O’Shaughnessy keeps busy working in her garage-turned-studio named The Pottery, where she also sells her work. It is open by chance or appointment. She also teaches pottery classes locally to people of all ages. Although she sources her clay out of Wisconsin, this past summer she got her hands back in Galena-area mud during her wild clay program, a children’s course featuring native clay.

“I think the more you teach, the more you learn,” she says. “When a student starts out thinking they’re not going to be good or becomes impatient, my desire is to encourage them. I want them to enjoy their first wonderful, wonky little pots they make.”

She recommends that everyone gets their hands dirty. “Once you get comfortable with the clay, it can be meditative in the quiet with your spinning wheel. [When you] sit at that wheel and start working with the clay, it’s just blissful. It takes you to a different place.”

O’Shaughnessy never expected to become a potter. She planned a career in writing. “To find a passion that you



Steph O'Shaughnessy of The Pottery in her garage-turned-studio in Galena.



homework and perfecting his craft. Upon graduating in 1984, a friend suggested they move somewhere and be potters. "It sounded like a good plan to me," Henderson laughs. The two then moved to Galena and rented a space for their studio.

Much like his studio today, the rented space got far too cold in the winter to work. Needing income during the freezing months, they became ski instructors at nearby Chestnut Mountain Resort. In 1991, Henderson was able to open his own studio at the current location, and he retired from being a ski instructor last year after 38 years.

Henderson describes his work as funky to functional. While much of his work is utilitarian — plates, cups and bowls that are both works of art and can be used daily — he also enjoys creating unique sculptures.

weren't seeking, and then to get nourishment from unexpected places throughout your life is just amazing. I'm so fortunate. I'm so blessed."

Galena Clay Works

In the summertime, Kent Henderson's pottery studio gets stifling hot as the sun beats down on the tin roof. What used to be an old carriage house in the 1800s is now home to Galena Clay Works. Just a short drive past Galena's Historic Main Street, the pottery shop is hard to miss with the American flag painted on the storefront. It stays open until the building literally freezes shut in the winter.

Henderson, who says he creates artifacts for the future, didn't intend to have a career in ceramics. Attending the University of Northern Iowa, he studied humanities, anthropology and art, and jokes that he majored in "unemployment." His life in pottery began in college as "a good way to not party too much," he says. "A few [classmates] flunked out right away. You just have to manage your social settings."

That's when he started taking ceramics. Instead of going out, he'd stay late in the pottery studio catching up on

"I like the fact that people can use my stuff all the time and [it] be part of their daily lives," he says. "It's inspirational that people are using them."

At the same time, he also has many customers who come for the funky pieces. He calls his ceramic sculptures "pencil sketches." He forms shapes with his hands and etches details and facial expressions with a pencil. His ghost figures are popular among customers, and he always has a bucket full of them in his store.

"I like messing around with clay," Henderson says. "It's pretty to unload the kiln. You kind of know what you're going to get, but there are times you're surprised with how great something turned out, or think, 'Wow, that didn't turn out like I thought it was going to.' But I think that's the nature of ceramics."

Galena Clay Works is open 9 a.m.-9 p.m. every day until Old Man Winter shuts down the operation. The shop is often-times unmanned and runs on the "honesty policy." Because of this, he's not always sure if visitors are new or have been customers for 20 years. Regardless, Henderson will greet customers with a friendly, "Welcome or welcome back."

Twenty Dirty Hands Tour Oct. 13-15

1. ESHELMAN POTTERY

238 N. Main St., Elizabeth, IL
Featuring Paul Eshelman and guests

2. GALENA CLAY WORKS

704 Dewey Ave., Galena, IL
Featuring Kent Henderson

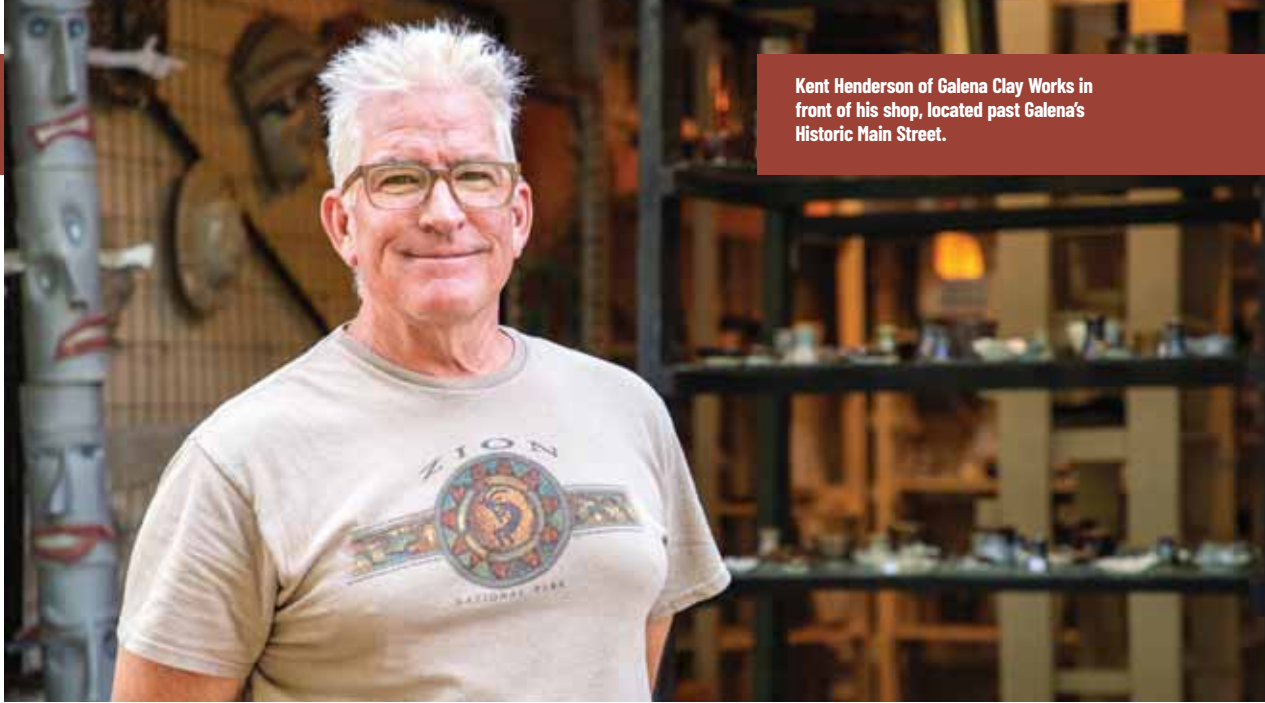
3. THE POTTERY

202 S. West St., Galena, IL
Featuring Steph O'Shaughnessy,
Scott Steder and guests

4. JOHN RICHARD

3573 Highway 11, Hazel Green, WI
Featuring John Richard and guests

Kent Henderson of Galena Clay Works in front of his shop, located past Galena's Historic Main Street.



Twenty Dirty Hands

While there are differing opinions on how the group's name came to be, there are not always 20 hands in Twenty Dirty Hands, but they are typically covered in clay. The number of members in the group has ebbed and flowed throughout the years. Currently, there are 12 members, as well as members on sabbatical and guest artists.

"We all lived around here, so we all knew about each other," O'Shaughnessy says about the formation of the group. "We'd get together and talk about clay. It was just a nice, bonding friendship. I think sometimes when there are people in the same art form, they feel competitive. We've never been competitive. Everybody's there for everybody else."

Eshelman agrees. "We don't feel like competitors, really. Our work is diverse. It is collaborative more than competitive."

The three say being part of this group has been a gift. "They're the people we can go to who can answer questions. We'll let each other know if there's a good show they might want to apply for. It's friendship," O'Shaughnessy says.

In the spirit of collaboration, the group hosts a pottery tour each fall inviting everyone to visit each participating location,

enjoy a variety of works with clay by member and guest potters, meet the artists and watch demonstrations.

"Everybody's got their own vision and their own uniqueness. So that's a bonus. Every stop has something different," Henderson says.

For example, at Henderson's location, visitors can expect Raku firing demonstrations. While a normal kiln firing process takes a couple days from firing up to cooling down, Raku is a rapid process that takes about an hour.

He explains that the Raku kiln has a short firing time, going from room temperature to 1,800 degrees Fahrenheit. The pots will then be removed from the kiln while still hot and placed into a bucket filled with sawdust, which immediately combusts. After that, it goes into water to clean it off. Then the pots are done and ready for sale.

The tour is self-guided and will be held Oct. 13-15 this year. Attendees are welcome to visit as many or as few of the seven locations as they want during the three-day event.

"I just feel like it's a magical experience going to all the different locations," O'Shaughnessy says. "The fall has beautiful weather, and the trees are changing color. The drive out here is beautiful." 💡

5. KEN BICHELL

595 W. 11th St., Dubuque, IA
Featuring Ken Bichell and guests

6. CRICKET HILL POTTERY

2910 Brick Mason Lane, Asbury, IA
Featuring Liz Robertson, Rich Robertson and Ron Hahlen

7. MISSISSIPPI MUD STUDIOS

403 Pershing Road, Maquoketa, IA
Featuring Gary Carstens, Tab Link, Jenni Brant and guests

Go to twentydirtyhands.com
for more information
and a tour map.



WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO GET THE LIGHTS BACK ON?

A lineworker's perspective

By Brandon Keese

“HOW LONG IS IT going to take?” Those are familiar words to all who work in the electric industry. It’s a phrase I’ve been asked thousands of times in my career. It’s the first thing people think when the lights go out. It doesn’t take long sitting in the dark to realize how dependent we are on electricity.

As a lineworker, it’s a good feeling to help people get those lights back on. I can remember times when I’ve been on storm or extended outages re-energizing neighborhoods and heard people in their homes cheering as their lights came on for the first time in days. No matter how tired I am or how long I’ve been working, that feeling will always make it worth it.

But what does it take to get those lights back on? Why does it sometimes take so long?

Your electricity travels a great distance and goes through several steps to get to your home. It starts with a power plant. A power plant produces voltages of less than 30,000 volts. That voltage needs “stepped up” so it can travel long distances. That process starts next door in the power plant’s substation and switchyard. In the

substation, a transformer will step the voltage up to 345,000 volts and send it out on transmission lines to another substation.

At the next substation, we get closer to the final destination. Here, a transformer will step the voltage down to 69,000 volts and send it to smaller local substations.

These substations are the last stop before electricity reaches your home. It is stepped down again with a transformer to the 7,200 or 14,400 volts delivered to the poles outside your home. Once it arrives outside your home, yet another transformer will step the voltage down to the 120/240 volts that operate the devices powering your life.

What I just described is hundreds of miles of line and thousands of poles. The system has breakers that help us reduce the exposure of the line and allow us to split our system into sections, limiting the size of outages. Ever wonder why your lights blink before going off? That’s the breaker. It operates a few times trying to give the fault a chance to clear the line before they open for good.

Now that the lights have blinked, your breaker has opened, and the power is off, what happens?

6:35 p.m.: Your local lineworker gets a call

When I receive an outage call, my first question is, “Is this an individual or a line outage?” A line outage is a large section of line and involves several people. An individual will be just a single transformer or pole. If it’s a line outage, my next question is, “What’s the lowest pole number?”

This is why you must report your outage. It verifies the outage and helps the lineworker know where to go. If the lowest reported outage is at pole 135, I’m sectioning the line in my head. I know a set of breakers is at pole 100. So, if the lowest member to call in is at pole 135, that tells me the breaker at pole 100 is likely open, and whatever caused the outage is past it. So, pole 100 is where I’m heading.

7 p.m.: The drive

An after-hours outage requires your lineworker to respond from home. Depending on where the outage is, the drive alone can take an hour.

7:45 p.m.: Arrival and line inspection

I often see people outside when their power is off, sitting on their porch or working in the yard. Sometimes I drive by several times. I often wonder what they are thinking when they see me driving by so often. The first time you see me, I’m likely driving to the breaker to verify that it’s open.

The second time, I’m visually checking the line for what may have caused the outage. It’s one of the more time-consuming steps we take, but also one of the most important. We can’t just simply flip a switch and restore the power. That can be dangerous for many reasons. The outage could be a downed line or equipment failure.

Re-energizing the line in those situations would be dangerous to the public and could cause more damage, extending the outage. So, it’s important to visually check the line before trying the breaker. I’m looking for fallen trees, tree limbs, old line repairs that have failed, car accidents, lightning, animals and equipment failure.

The terrain can also add time to line inspection. We try to put poles along the road, but that can’t always be accomplished. Electric co-op lines go where they are needed, and that might be in remote places. If it’s not along the road, the line must be checked on foot. If it’s dark, it can make this job more difficult and time-consuming, regardless of the location.

8:30 p.m.: Outage cause located, but safety first

Once we find the cause, there are necessary safety steps. These procedures take time, but they are vital. It’s how lineworkers are protected and go home to their families. The most important thing we must do is isolate and ground the line. One reason is to protect from back feed.

The transformer on your pole that drops the voltage down can also work in reverse. A home generator, if installed incorrectly, can back feed through your transformer and put primary voltage back on the line. To protect lineworkers from this, we install grounds close to the work location, on both sides. These grounds connect the neutral wire to primary wires, making them “grounded potential” and safe to work on.

The final step is the safety briefing. The job plan is discussed and explained, hazards are identified, and everyone is made aware of the grounds, their location and the location of the breaker.

9 p.m.: Work begins

For this outage, a tree fell through the line. It’s off the road, but it only broke a crossarm. The pole is still good, and while the wire isn’t broken, it is under the tree. We must cut up the tree to free the wire. Downed trees shift and roll while being cut. Here, you have power lines under tension, adding an extra element of danger. Sometimes the power lines must be tied down so they can be let up in a controlled manner once the tree is cut. While we work to clear the tree from the line, new material is on the way to replace everything that’s damaged.

10:30 p.m.: Tree has been cleared, and new material arrives

Because the pole is off the road, we can’t get a bucket truck to it. One lineworker must put on his belt and hooks and climb the pole. He’ll bring his tools with him. One thing he will take is a handline, a rope in a pulley long enough to go from the top of the pole to the ground in a loop. This will be used to lift materials to the lineworker. Once he gets to the top, he’ll remove broken material and inspect the top of the pole for damage not seen from the ground. Once he has it cleaned up, lineworkers on the ground start sending up material on the handline.

Once the new crossarm is installed, the wire will be lifted with the handline and placed on the arm. The wire ties will then be sent up, and the lineworker will tie in the wire. After completing the work in the air, the lineworker will send down the handline and climb down. He’ll then remove his belt and hooks, and the lineworkers will pack everything away. Last, the grounds are removed.

11:45 p.m.: Repairs are complete

If you’re still outside, you will see me drive by a third time. This is good news, because I’m heading to the breaker. Once there, I’ll call dispatch to get clearance to re-energize. I’ll tell them who is with me and if they are in the clear. They will check to make sure no one else is working on the line and give me clearance to try the breaker. I will close the breaker, and your power will be restored.

12:05 a.m.: Power is restored

This scenario took a little more than 5 hours, but not every outage is the same. Each varies in time of restoration.

1 a.m.: Lineworker safely returns home

We’ve become so dependent on electricity that every outage, short or extended, can be stressful. The longer it lasts, the more irritating it can become. Just know that your co-op and its lineworkers are doing their best to get the lights back on as quickly and safely as possible. 💡

Brandon Keese is a lineworker for SEMO Electric Cooperative in Sikeston, Mo. This article, originally published in Rural Missouri magazine, has been edited for space. To read the full version, go to icl.coop.



Beautiful bulbs beyond tulips and daffodils

Add variety to your spring flower garden

WITH SCHOOL BACK IN session and a fall chill in the air, gardens will soon be put to rest. This season offers a reminder to plant spring-blooming bulbs now for a colorful parade of flowers come spring.

tulips and daffodils, but a variety of bulbs with an assortment of shapes, sizes and bloom times are available to add more interest to your garden.

Crocuses are some of the earliest spring bloomers with yellow, pur-

When planted properly, bulbs offer a great return on investment (planting time and money spent). Follow basic planting tips and your bulbs will pay dividends in colorful blooms for years to come.

Plant bulbs in groups: Large drifts of color make a dramatic statement in the landscape. Mix them in with other perennials and shrubs to screen the foliage after blooms fade.

Provide full sun: Most bulbs need at least 8 hours of sunlight each day to develop the best blooms.

Know your soil: Plant bulbs in fertile, well-drained soil (unless otherwise noted) to prevent the bulb from rotting. Poorly drained soil can be improved by adding organic matter such as compost or peat moss. The material should be incorporated into the soil before planting. A balanced fertilizer (20-20-20) can be incorporated into the soil at the same time.

Check the depth: Plant bulbs two to three times their length. Bulb length is measured from the bulb base to the bulb tip. Bulbs are planted with the nose (bulb tip) facing upward and root plate (bulb base) facing downward. The planting depth is measured from the base of the bulb. Bulbs should be spaced 6-12 inches apart to allow space for bulbs to multiply by producing offshoots.

Water after planting: After covering the planted bulbs with soil, water the area well to settle the bulbs into the soil and to initiate root development. If the fall is unseasonably dry, water weekly until the ground freezes. A light, 2-inch layer of mulch added to the soil after planting will minimize soil temperature fluctuations in winter and conserve soil moisture. ☺



Plant snowdrop bulbs in the fall to enjoy the blooms in early spring.

A bulb is any plant that stores its complete life cycle in an underground storage structure. The nutrients in the bulb ensure the plant survives when it is not actively growing. Many bulbs are perennials, growing and flowering in the spring, then entering a dormancy period in summer when they die back to the ground and rest until fall, when new roots develop underground.

The best time to plant spring bulbs is in late September through October to allow sufficient time for a good root system to develop before winter. Spring bulbs need a cold period in winter to guarantee a spring bloom.

Depending on the location, each variety will bloom at a specific time between late February and late June. The most common bulbs are

ple or white cup-like flowers often appearing atop a blanket of snow. Flowers will close at night and on cloudy days.

Snowdrops appear from the ground in early spring, showcasing delicate white, drooping blooms that sit atop green, strappy foliage, which grows 6 inches tall.

Siberian squill has deep blue, bell-shaped flowers that appear from grassy green foliage. It will quickly naturalize in a garden by bulb offshoots and self-seeding.

Camas produce gorgeous blue, star-shaped flowers on 3-foot-tall spikes in May. The bulbs will tolerate wet soils and light shade.

Ornamental onion is one of the most stunning spring bulbs, with a large purple ball atop a four-foot green stalk. The blooms make good cut flowers for an inside arrangement.



Brittnay Haag is a Horticulture Educator for the University of Illinois Extension serving Livingston, McLean and Woodford counties. Her work focuses on youth horticulture education through school gardens and Jr. Master Gardener programs.

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Hand-breaded onion rings, fried pork tenderloin and catfish fritters

A meal with a view

By Lisa Cherry

DEBBIE BECKER WASN'T SURE what to do next after Louie's Kampsville Inn on the Illinois River closed and her time there came to an end. "I worked for Louie since I started in 1989. I took a hiatus and delivered mail for 10 years. [Then] I managed the inn for its last four or five years. When he passed away, I kept telling my husband, 'I don't know what I'm going to do.' He was a wonderful boss," she says. The answer would come in the wake of a flood.



Sometime prior, her husband Mark had offered to purchase Kampsville's former American Legion building just as it was about to be razed. Later, when the river once again threatened to breach its borders, he suggested she park her car in the pavilion they'd created from the structure. The next day when she came back to pick it up, she noticed she had an even better view than her former employer.

"We'd bought this three or four years before that. [Mark] finally one day asked me if I wanted to do this." Debbie admits she was a little reluctant at first, but later jumped on board. The couple, aware that flooding would continue to be an issue, got creative.

By making their kitchen and product mobile (both are housed in trailers), when weather threatens, they simply relocate the trailers to higher ground, leaving only tables and a few refrigerators to contend with. And because it's an open-air structure, mold hasn't been an issue following the two floods they've experienced since opening the establishment in 2019.

Another thing she's learned along the way: Don't leave packets of sweetener on the tables overnight. "The floor was just covered. I busted out laughing because [wildlife] went to every single table. Now we take everything off the tables at night."

The dining area is decorated with fun light fixtures and signs like “Fisherman, hunters and other liars gather here,” and “It’s 5 o’clock somewhere.” Seating includes a bar with 10 stools, several picnic tables under the pavilion and umbrella tables adjacent with a view of the Illinois River and the Kampsville Ferry. The restaurant, surprisingly cool on a hot day, is equipped with fans and heaters and a full bar.

The Beckers also own the nearby campground, affectionately named Becker’s Bottoms by her former co-worker. “We have the same campers all year, which is really a good choice, because I don’t have to deal with a lot of the paperwork that you have [with campers staying] by the night.”

Campers, locals and out-of-towners, many from Springfield, St. Louis and St. Charles, find some of the former inn’s popular menu items are still offered at the aptly named Pavillion, including catfish fritters. Debbie says the pork tenderloin, burgers and hand-breaded onion rings and dill pickles are also favorites. “I usually go through a 5-gallon bucket of dill pickles. They don’t last a week,” she says. She adds that in a typical week, they generally serve about 300-plus guests.

“I can tell you this. I couldn’t do it without my workers. I have got the greatest group of people. Some of them have worked for me since I opened, even with us being seasonal,” Debbie says. “I always tell everybody, nobody has ‘a’ job. If you see something that needs to be done, go ahead and do it. And they do. They are so good about that.” She employs 10 to 12 staff; six are full-time, and some work weekends.

Along with her staff, Debbie loves that kids don’t just sit on their phones. “That is my absolute favorite thing about here. Kids will get our little bicycles and ride them around,” she says. “The kids are definitely my favorite part.”

There are a few special events every season. There will be a fireworks display for campers around July 4 each year, and the town has a summer celebration in August. “The town will sell baskets here to raise money. I like that we all try to work together,” Debbie says.

Another is Old Settlers Day in October. “I don’t necessarily see them because I’m in [the kitchen], but we usually have people lined up out the door,” she says. “I will have a band on Saturday night or a DJ during the day. We usually have something like that for the special things.”

Seasonal open-air dining at the Pavillion usually runs around April 15 through the end of October. “Sometimes I’ll stay open [longer] if the weather is decent. I’ll stay for another week, but by then I’m ready to be done for a little bit,” she says.

Even off season, Debbie loves the area. “In the winter, it is so neat. I like to watch the eagles. They will float by on the ice and fight over fish. I will stand at the door for hours and watch.”

She admits that she would someday like to retire, but for now, there are no plans to do so.

“I mean, I enjoy it. I honestly do, most of the time. But like I said, I’ve got a great group of people who make my life a lot easier than it could be,” Debbie says. “I tell people all the time, I know I’m lucky.”



LET’S EAT!

The Pavillion

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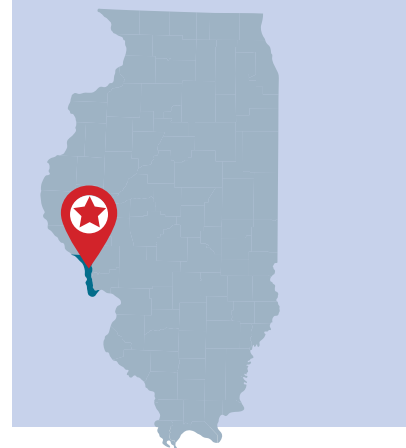
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The musical fruit

YOU KNOW THE RHYME. I first heard it from my great-grandma as a young boy when she tried to make me eat her baked beans. The song didn't work, but somehow she did manage to make me clean my plate and eat every last bean. Whatever she did worked, because I still eat all the baked beans I'm served while singing that song in my head, and I hope you do, too. It's a gas, after all. 🎵

WE NEED RECIPES!

Upcoming recipes

Pizza toppings

Sugar-free desserts

Dinner for two

Please email recipe submissions or questions to finestcooking@icl.coop or mail them to Finest Cooking c/o Illinois Country Living, 6460 S. 6th St. Frontage Road East, Springfield, IL 62712. Please include your name, address, phone number (for questions), and the name of your electric cooperative. Additional recipes can be found on our website at finestcooking.com.



Recipes are prepared, tasted and photographed by **Colten Bradford**, Illinois Country Living editor.



BARBECUE GREEN BEANS

Barbecue Green Beans

Submitted by Sarah Alexander, Jo-Carroll Energy

Servings: 12

2 quarts green beans, drained
4-6 strips bacon, chopped

1 medium onion, chopped
1 cup ketchup

1 cup brown sugar, do not pack

Preheat oven to 275 F. Grease a lidded casserole dish. Layer green beans, onion, bacon, ketchup and brown sugar in the dish. Cover and bake 3-1/2 to 4 hours. Nutrition information: 134 calories; 4g fat; 639mg salt; 19.9g carbohydrates; 4.7g protein.

Hugh's Black Bean Burgers

Submitted by Stanley Cunningham, McDonough Power Cooperative

Servings: 4

1 cup rolled oats
1/2 cup walnuts
1 teaspoon turmeric
1 teaspoon cumin
1 teaspoon smoked paprika
1 teaspoon onion powder

1 teaspoon garlic powder
1 15-ounce can black beans, drained and rinsed
1/2 cup mushrooms, chopped
1/4 cup chopped onions, fresh or pickled

3 tablespoons tahini
2 teaspoons soy sauce
2 teaspoons vegan Worcestershire
1 tablespoon ground flax seed

Preheat oven to 400 F and place a rack in the top slot. In a food processor, process the first 7 ingredients until a loose meal texture forms. Add remaining ingredients and process until well combined. You want it to have a texture similar to ground meat and not too smooth. If the mixture is too dry or won't come together, slowly add water 1 tablespoon at a time. Once processed, form into 4 equal patties. Place patties on a parchment-lined baking sheet and bake for 30-40 minutes, flipping halfway through. Nutrition information: 631 calories; 19g fat; 210mg salt; 88.1g carbohydrates; 32.6g protein.

Chilled Bean Bowls

Submitted by Vicky Stankus, Norris Electric Cooperative

Servings: 4

- 1 cup salsa
- 1 15-ounce can black beans, drained
- 1 cup cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1/2 cup light sour cream or Greek yogurt
- 4 tablespoons sliced black olives

In four small bowls or jars with lids, divide and layer each ingredient into the containers. There should be approximately 1/4 cup salsa, 1/4 cup beans, 1/4 cup cheese, 2 tablespoons sour cream and 1 tablespoon black olives in each. Cover and store in the refrigerator for 2-3 days. Eat straight from the bowl/jar or in a tortilla. Nutrition information: 565 calories; 17.9g fat; 659mg salt; 72.5g carbohydrates; 32g protein.



CHILLED BEAN BOWLS

Greg's Baked Beans

Submitted by Jean Alstat, Egyptian Electric Cooperative Association

Servings: 16

- 2 onions, finely chopped
- 4 slices bacon, cooked and diced
- 1 pound hamburger, browned and crumbled
- 1 53-ounce can pork and beans
- 1/2 cup molasses
- 1/2 cup ketchup
- 1/2 teaspoon dried mustard

Preheat oven to 375 F. Place diced onion in a microwave-safe dish with 1 tablespoon of water and cook on high for 2-3 minutes. Mix all ingredients, place in an oven-safe dish and bake for 30 minutes. Nutrition information: 222 calories; 5g fat; 545mg salt; 29.6g carbohydrates; 14g protein.



GREG'S BAKED BEANS

Bean Salad

Submitted by Brittany Cowan, Menard Electric Cooperative

Servings: 14

- 1 15-ounce can green beans, drained
- 1 15-ounce can wax beans, drained
- 1 15-ounce can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 15-ounce can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1/2 red onion, chopped
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2/3 cup white vinegar
- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper

In a large bowl, mix beans and onions together. In a separate bowl, whisk the sugar, vinegar, oil, salt and pepper together. Pour sugar mixture over the bean mixture and stir. Cover and refrigerate for at least 24 hours, stirring periodically. Nutrition information: 297 calories; 6g fat; 190mg salt; 48.4g carbohydrates; 14.3g protein.



BEAN SALAD



A squirrel of another color

MY WIFE HAD MY immediate attention when she said, “There is a small squirrel under the bird feeder.”

I rushed to the window, expecting to see a young fox squirrel or maybe a gray squirrel. Instead of just one squirrel, there were two tiny red squirrels snacking on fallen sunflower seeds under the feeder.

My rush to check out the current squirrel situation was due to a “Houdini” fox squirrel having recently gained access to the sunflower seed feeder.

For two or three years, the baffle on the feeder’s support pole had kept the squirrels at bay and protected the feeder. Now I find “Houdini” figured out how to climb the pole and jump from underneath the baffle to reach the bottom lip of the feeder. Time and time again, the wasteful little varmint would raid the feeder and dump all of the seeds on the ground.

Circumstances called for quick, decisive action. I called my daughter Jacqueline, and she promptly ordered an extension for the feeder pole.

Once the 14-inch extension to the shepherd’s hook was installed, “Houdini” could no longer jump from the pole below the baffle and reach the feeder. Problem solved. However, I did have to make a notched “gitchie stick” to bring

down or lift up the bird feeder since I could no longer reach the hook. I consider the slight inconvenience a small price to pay for sunflower seed security.

Identifying the squirrels in your neighborhood is not difficult. Start by sizing them.

The smallest is the ground squirrel or chipmunk. Its body is about 3.5-4 inches long and weighs about 4 ounces. The tail is almost as long as the body, but the tail isn’t bushy. When scampering about, the chipmunk generally holds its tail straight up.



Next in size is the red squirrel, also known as the “piney.” They are reddish in color and about twice the size of a chipmunk. Red squirrels have bushy tails and are continually on the move.

Then there is the eastern gray squirrel. It is twice the size of a red squirrel, weighing in at 1-1.5 pounds. It is gray in color, as the name suggests, and has a bushy tail.



Last, but definitely not the least, is the fox squirrel. Reddish brown

in color, the big boy can weigh in at well over 2 pounds and is North America’s largest squirrel.

There is also a variant among gray and fox squirrels, which produces a black squirrel. They are historically found in some northern states and Canada. I’ve seen them in southern Michigan, and they are striking.

Another exception to the coloration pattern of common squirrels is the piebald or white squirrel. Mostly found in eastern gray squirrels but sometimes in fox squirrels as well, there is a mutant gene causing parts of the hair on the squirrel or the whole squirrel to be white.

Native Americans considered the white squirrels to be “spirit squirrels” and held them in great reverence.

In my 70-plus years, I’ve had the pleasure of seeing two of these rare creatures. I will always treasure these outdoor encounters.

I’m not totally heartless when it comes to the welfare of our squirrels. Even though I ban the squirrels from easy access, every time I fill the bird feeder, I “accidentally” spill a large scoop of sunflower seeds on the concrete slab for our tree critters. 🐿️

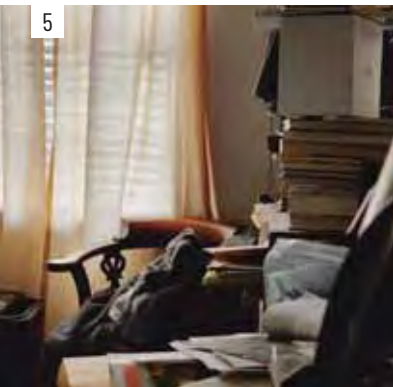


Jack Spaulding is an outdoors writer. Readers can contact the author by writing to this publication or email jackspaulding@hughes.net. “The Best of Spaulding Outdoors,” a compilation of 74 of Spaulding’s best articles written over the past 30 years, is available on Amazon.com.

Let there be light

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UPCOMING THEMES
 November – Tractors
 December – Architecture
 January – Animals in snow
 February – Pink



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Eye Doctor Helps Illinois Legally Blind To See

High Technology For Low Vision Patients Allows Many To Drive Again



For many patients with macular degeneration and other vision-related conditions, the loss of central visual detail also signals the end to one of the last bastions of independence: driving. A Mascoutah optometrist, Dr. Marianne McDaniel, is using miniaturized telescopes that are mounted in glasses to help people who have lost vision from macular degeneration and other eye conditions.

"Some of my patients consider me the last stop for people who have vision loss," said Dr. Weingart, one of only a few doctors in the world who specialize in fitting bioptic telescopes to help those who have lost vision due to macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, and other debilitating eye diseases.

Imagine a pair of glasses that can improve your vision enough to change your life. If you're a low vision patient, you've probably not only imagined them, but have been searching for them. Bioptic telescopes may be the breakthrough in optical technology that

will give you the independence you've been looking for. Patients with vision in the 20/200 range can many times be improved to 20/50 or better.

Macular degeneration is the leading cause of blindness and vision loss in people over 50. Despite this, most adults are not familiar with the condition. As many as 25% of those over the age of 50 have some degree of macular degeneration. The macula



A scene as it might be viewed by a person with age-related macular degeneration.

is only one small part of the retina; however, it is the most sensitive and gives us sharp central vision. When it degenerates, macular degeneration leaves a blind spot right in the center of vision, making it difficult or impossible to recognize faces, read a book, or pass the driver's vision test.

Nine out of 10 people who have macular degeneration have the dry form. New research suggests vitamins can help. The British medical journal *BMC Ophthalmology* recently

reported that 56% of patients treated with a high-dose combination of vitamins experienced improved vision after six months.

While age is the most significant risk factor for developing the disease, heredity, smoking, cardiovascular disease, and high blood pressure have also been identified as risk factors.

Macular degeneration accounts for 90% of new legal blindness in the U.S. While there is currently no cure, promising research is being done on many fronts. "My job is to figure out everything and anything possible to keep a person functioning, especially driving," says Dr. McDaniel.

"Bioptic telescopes can cost over \$2,000," said Dr. McDaniel, "especially if we build them with an automatic sunglass."

"The major benefit of the bioptic telescope is that the lens automatically focuses on whatever you're looking at," said Dr. Weingart. "It's like a self-focusing camera, but much more precise."

To learn more about bioptic telescopes or to schedule a consultation, give Dr. McDaniel or Dr. Weingart a call. You can also visit our websites.

www.mascoutaheyecare.com

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