

DECEMBER 2023

Illinois Country Living

THRILLS AND CHILLS

HISTORY
Dome sweet dome


FINEST COOKING
Soup for the soul

GARDENWISE
Waste not, want not

+

CO-OP
NEWS

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Illinois Country Living

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A gift that keeps on giving



AS MANY EAGERLY ANTICIPATE the holidays, I, for one, can be a bit of a Grinch. While I'm certainly not going to steal presents from children or tear down decorations, I do cringe when I see Christmas items for sale in early fall. I try to tune out the holiday music playing in stores far too early, and when I see people put up their Christmas trees on Nov. 1, I have to laugh knowing that in the past my own Christmas tree was put up and placed back into storage within a 24-hour period.

However, I'm trying to change my ways. Although I doubt my heart will grow three sizes, my goal for this holiday season is to take some time to reflect on the past year and appreciate the blessings I have in my life.

For one, I find myself lucky to be a part of this electric cooperative family. It is a group of people who truly care for the communities they serve. Whether it is through volunteering, donations, safety demonstrations or just telling people how to use less electricity, electric co-ops are all about community. And I'm

grateful to be a part of that.

In fact, I wouldn't be doing what I am today if it wasn't for a Christmas gift I received as a teenager. The Bradford side of my family never celebrated Christmas on Christmas Day. We celebrated when we could due to my dad's busy and unpredictable work schedule on the railroad.

Both of my grandparents were excellent cooks, and every year I looked forward to the hors d'oeuvres, desserts and chili served (though I always passed on the oyster stew). If I ever went home hungry, it was my own fault.

This particular Christmas, I opened a gift I didn't know I needed. It was a small Canon PowerShot digital camera. To be honest, while I appreciated the gift, I was a little confused by it. I hadn't shown much interest in photography since preschool, when my friend and I went to my front yard and photographed literal dog poop. (I would like to point out that my friend is now a professional photographer.) You can imagine my mother's surprise when she developed the film.

Despite my confusion, I was still excited to try out my first digital camera. I loved exploring my rural community in Fulton County with the camera, and I found that I started seeing the world in frames. I didn't expect my hobby to later turn into something I'd use in my career.

Working at Illinois Country Living magazine has given me the opportunity to share all the great parts of Illinois with readers just like you. I'm honored to help tell the stories of people, places and electric co-ops from across the state. And all of this is thanks to that little package I opened in my grandparents' living room all those years ago on that non-Christmas day.

During the holidays this year, I will hold on to those memories with my Grandpa Peewee and Grandma B, as they were lovingly called by all their grandchildren. The two passed away this fall a mere three weeks apart, but their memories live on.

In this time of reflection, I find myself beyond grateful for my wife, my family and my co-op family. I cherish all the memories from the past and look forward to making many more, and I hope you do the same. So, whatever holiday you celebrate during the merriest of times, try not to be a Grinch, enjoy time with your loved ones, and have the happiest of holidays. 📷



Colten Bradford is the editor of Illinois Country Living magazine.

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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*30% through 2032, 26% through 2033 and 22% through 2034

DECK THE HALLS

For decades, electric cooperatives have been lighting up the homes of rural America for the holidays.

Season's greetings to you and yours with our wishes for a bright and beautiful future.



Touchstone Energy[®]
Cooperatives



DECEMBER CHECKLIST

Prepare for winter travel.

Keep a winter emergency kit in your car.

This should include an ice scraper, a shovel, blankets, tire chains, and sand or cat litter for traction. Go to [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) for a complete list.



Donate.

Spread good cheer during the holidays by donating to local charities, whether



it's money, food, clothes, toys or time.

Give them space.

Keep flammable items

like clothing, furniture and bedding a safe distance

from space heaters.



Tip of the month.

Did you know small countertop appliances like slow cookers



and air fryers are more energy efficient than the oven or stovetop?



This fall, 15 students across Illinois began their college careers with a little help from Illinois' electric cooperatives. Morgan Klaas of Illinois Electric Cooperative, Erik Keeton of Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative, Hayden Habermehl of Monroe County Electric Cooperative, Sophie Trainor of Shelby Electric Cooperative, Lucas Dotson of Adams Electric Cooperative, Isaac Vahling of Norris Electric Cooperative and Abigail Meyer of Tri-County Electric Cooperative were able to attend the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperative's annual meeting this past summer to accept their \$2,000 scholarships.

Scholarship application deadline approaching

The deadline is quickly approaching to apply for statewide academic scholarships through the Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives Memorial Scholarship program. The 17 \$2,000 scholarships will be awarded in 2024 to financially assist deserving students in the electric co-op family.

"Once we ring in the New Year, that also means we will no longer accept applications for 16 of the 17 scholarships," said Brooke Gross, member services manager and youth programs coordinator for the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives. "College is expensive, and I don't want any student to miss out on this great opportunity."

Ten scholarships will be awarded to high school seniors whose parents are Illinois electric co-op members. Five scholarships are reserved for high school seniors enrolling full-time at a two-year Illinois community college whose parents are Illinois electric cooperative members or co-op employees.

Additionally, the Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship will be awarded to a student who is the child of an Illinois electric cooperative employee or director. The deadline to apply for these 16 scholarships is Dec. 31, 2023. Go to aiec.coop/iec-scholarship to apply.

The final scholarship, the LaVern and Nola McEntire Memorial Lineworker's Scholarship, helps pay for costs to attend lineworker school conducted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in conjunction with Lincoln Land Community College, Springfield. The deadline to apply for this scholarship is April 30, 2024. To apply, go to aiec.coop/lavern-and-nola-lineworkers-scholarship.

The fund has grown from initially awarding two \$1,000 scholarships in 1996 to now offering 17 \$2,000 scholarships. The Illinois Community College System Foundation administers the IEC Memorial Scholarship Fund. For more information regarding the scholarships, contact your local electric cooperative or go to aiec.coop/iec-scholarship. 💡

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.

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

IL ENTERTAINMENT CORNER

The spirit of Christmas is all around us as holiday tunes play from our car radios and in shopping centers. A fun fact, a couple of those classic Christmas songs



you sing along to every December were originally performed by one of Illinois' very own.

Burl Ives, born in 1909 in Hunt City, Ill., narrated the 1964 movie classic "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" as Sam the Snowman, and he performed the age-old Christmas songs "Silver and Gold," "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" and "A Holly Jolly Christmas" in the television special, which are enjoyed to this day. Nearly 60 years after its release, "A Holly Jolly Christmas" reached number 89 on Billboard's Hot 100 Songs list on its year-end chart for 2022.

Ives had a long career as a musician, actor and author, and even won a Golden Globe and an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor for his portrayal of Rufus Hannassey in the 1958 film "The Big Country." As a young man, he attended Eastern Illinois State Teachers College, now known as Eastern Illinois University. Ives died in 1995 and was brought back to Jasper County, Ill., for his burial. 💡

Home heating costs to remain flat or decrease, EIA projects

Some Americans will get a break in home heating costs this winter, depending on what fuel they use and where they live.

Residents using natural gas to heat their homes will get the biggest break, the Energy Information Administration said in its 2023 Winter Fuels Outlook. EIA expects those households to spend about \$600 on average this winter, a 21% drop from last winter.

Higher inventories are contributing to lower natural gas prices this winter. EIA expects natural gas inventories to be 6% higher than the five-year average going into the winter heating season, which started in November.

"Natural gas prices this year have been consistently lower than in 2022. Even if this winter is colder than forecast, we still expect households heated by natural gas to pay less for heat this winter," said EIA Administrator Joe DeCarolis.

Most Americans use natural gas or electricity to heat their homes. Roughly half (46%) use natural gas, and the share of those using electricity has grown to 42% from 38% a decade ago, according to EIA. Households heating with electricity are expected to see their costs remain flat at \$1,060 this year, according to the report.

EIA forecasts that natural gas will provide 42% of electric generation in 2023,

compared to nearly 40% in 2022, largely because of lower prices this year, continued retirement of coal-fired plants and the addition of 5 gigawatts of high-efficiency, natural gas-fired generators coming online this year.

Renewables will continue to grow as a share of electric generation, according to EIA projections, comprising about one-quarter of production. An increase of 25 GW of new solar capacity and 8 GW in new wind capacity is driving much of that growth, the report said.

EIA forecasts that 40 GW of solar and wind generating capacity will come online in 2024, "an increase of 16% from this year, leading to the share of electricity provided by renewables rising from 22% in 2023 to 25% in 2024."

EIA's Winter Fuels Outlook is published each October. 💡

Victoria A. Rocha, NRECA

Social Security benefits to increase in 2024

More than 71 million Americans will see a 3.2% increase in their Social Security benefits and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments in 2024. On average, Social Security retirement benefits will increase by more than \$50 per month starting in January.

Federal benefit rates increase when the cost of living rises, as measured by the Department of Labor's Consumer Price Index (CPI-W). The CPI-W rises when inflation increases, leading to a higher cost of living. This change means prices for goods and services, on average, are higher. The cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) helps to offset these costs.

COLA notices will be mailed throughout the month of December to retirees, survivors, disability beneficiaries, SSI recipients and representative payees. If you want to know your new benefit amount sooner, login to your Social Security account at ssa.gov/myaccount. Information can be accessed in early December. Learn more about the 2024 COLA at ssa.gov/cola. 💡

Sheri Richey, Social Security Administration



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. McDaniel, 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



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

condition. As many as 25% of those over the age of 50 have some degree of macular degeneration. The macula 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. McDaniel. "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 a call. You can also visit our websites.

www.mascoutaheycare.com

1-618-566-8899

Office located in Mascoutah, Illinois
Marianne McDaniel, O.D.



Where is it?

The winners of the October hidden object contest were Anne Youakim of Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative and Mrs. Willis Rodenberg of Monroe County Electric Cooperative. Congratulations! Your ICL Tervis tumblers have been sent.

November's boot prints were hidden on page 26 in the Christmas cacti. 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 Ugly Christmas Sweater Day on Dec. 16, be on the lookout for a Christmas sweater. 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 (nonmembers 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. 💡



How using more electricity can save money and improve quality of life

Of all the world's changes during the past 30 years, few are as significant as how we use energy.

In the 1990s, new drilling techniques brought a boom in natural gas production. That increase in supply cut prices so much that natural gas started replacing coal power plants, which used to generate half of the country's electricity. Concern for the environment grew, and now renewable energy produces more of our electricity than coal.

Major changes to the ways we use energy have also come into our homes. If you go to the movies and forget to turn off your kitchen lights, you can switch them off from an app on your phone. If you're returning from a vacation, you can adjust your thermostat from anywhere, so the temperature of your home is comfortable when you get back.

Every vehicle manufacturer is racing to build electric models. Last year, Ford even started producing an electric version of their bestselling pickup truck. And the F-150 isn't just being promoted as better for the environment. The ads show it running power tools on a remote job site. That approach to showing the benefits of an electric vehicle highlights a whole new way of thinking about energy.

For example, instead of going out and buying a new pickup truck, you or a business could think about the advantages of electric options. A traditional gasoline-powered model would be best for long trips, but how many miles a day does the truck really travel? What would it be

like to plug it in overnight and never have to visit a gas station again? What if it could also power home appliances during a power outage?

There's a name for that kind of thinking — beneficial electrification. Although that phrase doesn't easily roll off the tongue, the idea is catching on because it's basically a way to get things done better and more cheaply.

There's even an organization called the Beneficial Electrification League. The group aims to improve the nation's economy by making broader use of electricity, from heating and cooling homes and businesses to using electric school buses and replacing diesel motors on farm irrigation systems with more efficient electric models.

The benefits of electrification, says the League, are money savings, less impact on the environment, improved quality of life and smoother operation of the nation's increasingly internet-connected electric grid.

One of the clearest effects of switching from fossil fuel to electricity is the environmental impact. Natural gas, coal and oil all produce greenhouse gases. Electricity uses some fossil fuels to generate power, but it is increasingly made with renewable energy. So, switching from an internal combustion engine to an electric vehicle, for example, will reduce the burning of fossil fuels.

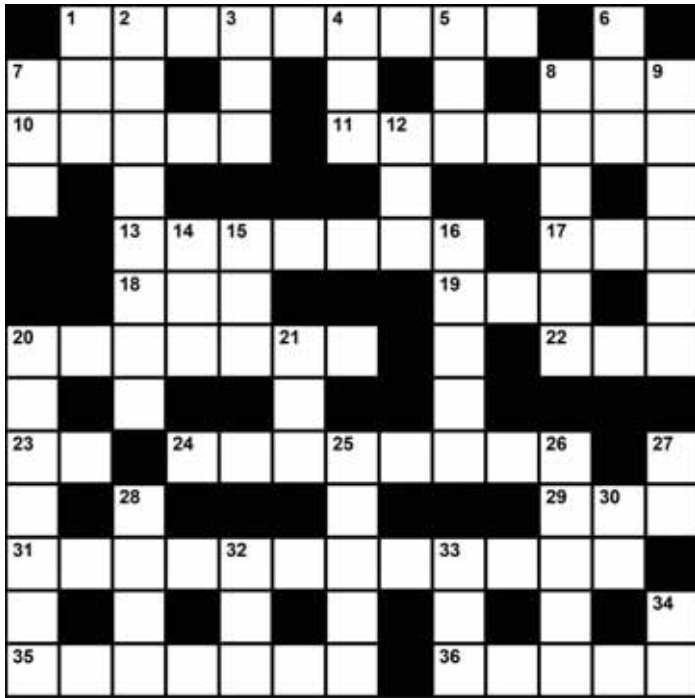
Consumers can consider beneficial electrification for the home to see how electric options might improve quality of life. Replacing lawnmowers, leaf blowers and other yard tools with battery-powered versions would reduce noise and could get all the gas and oil cans out of your garage.

You might love your gas stove and heating system, but do you like it enough to pay for two forms of energy, with both gas and electric bills coming due even when you're on vacation? Add to that the continual improvements in electric heat pumps that will both heat and cool your home with an incredible 300% efficiency.

And if you're concerned about power outages, battery backup systems are getting increasingly powerful and efficient. Compared to a gasoline generator, a battery wouldn't need to be "started up" and wouldn't emit poisonous carbon monoxide.

You may not be ready to make the switch to all-electric. These shifts can take time as technology advances and costs become more competitive. The notion of beneficial electrification offers a new way to evaluate the tools we depend on for everyday life. 💡

Paul Wesslund, NRECA



Across

- 1 Father _____: present giver
- 7 Cry of discovery
- 8 Dry as wine
- 10 Once-a-year visitor
- 11 Reindeer who came into his own on one "foggy Christmas Eve"
- 13 Annual celebration of African-American culture
- 17 Bartender's "rocks"
- 18 White wine aperitif
- 19 Husky, for one
- 20 One of Santa's reindeer
- 22 Letters on a bathroom towel perhaps
- 23 Motorhome
- 24 Gifts
- 29 Choose
- 31 Traditional Christmas carol, 3 words
- 35 Kids' outdoor winter project
- 36 Habitat for humanity

Down

- 1 Dance, when doubled
- 2 Eight day Jewish holiday in December
- 3 Savings account, abbr.
- 4 Driveway material
- 5 Give a hand
- 6 Energy
- 7 Request
- 8 Annual carrier of toys
- 9 Santa's are rosy
- 12 Patriotic chant
- 14 Victory
- 15 Rainbow shape
- 16 Decorate
- 20 Christmas events
- 21 First woman in the Bible
- 25 Shine
- 26 Clean form of energy
- 27 Alien too good for earth
- 28 It resounds
- 30 Beatles song: "____, I Love You"
- 32 Turkey
- 33 Wonder
- 34 Expression of delight

Solution on page 33.

ELF ON THE SHELF AND OTHER

HOLIDAY STRESSORS



Feeling overwhelmed this holiday season? If so, you are not alone. According to a survey of 1,000 Americans 18-65+ years old:

50%

say that holiday shoppers cause them the most stress

27%

with children begin to feel stressed by early November

TOP TWO THINGS THEY WOULD REMOVE IF THEY COULD



Black Friday

OR

Elf on a Shelf



Dislikes aside, the holiday season can cause added stress for many people

TIPS TO COMBAT HOLIDAY STRESS



Identify negative self-talk and replace it with more positive messages



Maintain a healthy eating and exercise regimen



Keep your distance from toxic or negative people



Use positive affirmations and take the time to pamper yourself

Here's to finding some quiet time this holiday season

Survey Source: Total Brain

DECEMBER Datebook

LET'S GO!

2

A December to Remember

PANA

View more than 150 holiday displays with a computerized light show at Kitchell Park

2

Holiday Market and Holiday Housewalk

GALENA

Tour beautifully decorated homes and purchase gifts from local vendors and artisans

3

Gym Bob's Jamboree Christmas Show

BIBLE GROVE

Enjoy classic Christmas music at the live opry-style show

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



Dickins on the Square

DECEMBER

1-2

Located throughout Macomb's historic downtown, the 29th annual event will be complete with all of the holiday favorites, including horse-drawn trolley rides, living windows, the festival of trees, children's shopping mall, Santa visits, strolling carolers, Victorian characters and much more. This year's event will also feature live reindeer sleigh rides for children and a holiday light show in Chandler Park.

Dec. 1-2, 2023: all day

● Downtown Macomb Square, Macomb

Admission: free

309-575-3015 or cityofmacomb.com

Winter Nights at the Museum

DECEMBER

2-23

The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum will join the fun of downtown Springfield's Holiday Walks for Winter Nights at the Museum with ballet performances, craft tables for children, amazing lights and special effects, and free admission during special hours.

Dec. 2, 6, 9, 13, 16, 20 and 23, 2023: 4-7 p.m.

● Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum, 212 N. 6th St., Springfield

Admission: free

217-558-8844 or presidentlincoln.illinois.gov



Night of the Luminaria and Living Windows

DECEMBER

9

Galena will be glowing with more than 5,000 candlelit luminarias on streets, steps and sidewalks. The luminarias will be lit from 5-9 p.m. From 4-7 p.m., Main Street comes alive with animated living windows. During the event, many businesses will offer extended hours.

Dec. 9, 2023: 4-9 p.m.

● Galena Downtown Business Association, North Main Street, Galena

Admission: free

815-281-0673 or visitgalena.org

Lewis and Clark Arrival Weekend

DECEMBER

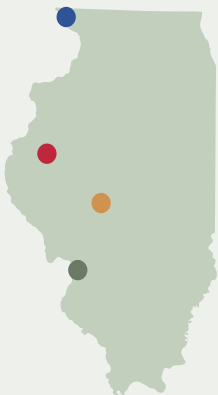
9-10

On Dec. 12, 1803, Lewis and Clark arrived at what would later become Camp River Dubois. Celebrate the anniversary at this annual event. Be entertained by reenactors and demonstrators and enjoy displays of vintage tools and firearms, and rocks and minerals. Visitors will also learn about early Christmas traditions as well as how the soldiers in the Corps of Discovery lived.

Dec. 9-10; 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

● Lewis and Clark State Historic Site, 1 Lewis and Clark Trail, Hartford

618-251-5811 or campdubois.com



If your tired, achy legs and feet are preventing you from moving easily...

Now, a prickly herb has been discovered to....

BOOST BLOOD FLOW TO YOUR LEGS, FEET, AND HANDS WITH A 95% SUCCESS RATE VERIFIED BY CLINICAL STUDY

A re-discovery from the 1600s is causing a frenzy within the medical system. A weird herb has been shown in six clinical studies (and by thousands of users) to be very effective for leg and feet pain, burning and numbness – with no side effects – at low cost – and with no doctor visit or prescription needed.

This weird herb comes from a 12-foot tall tree that grows in Greece and other countries in Europe. In the old days, people noticed that when their horses who had leg and feet problems ate this herb – it was almost like magic how quickly their problems got much better. They called it the “horse herb”. Then somehow with Europe’s ongoing wars, this herbal secret got lost in time.

“It works for people who’ve tried many other treatments before with little or no success. Other doctors and I are shocked at how effective it is. It has created a lot of excitement” says Dr. Ryan Shelton, M.D.

Its active ingredient has been put into pill form and improved. It is being offered in the United States under the brand name Neuroflo.

WHY ALL THIS EXCITEMENT?

Researchers have found an herb originally from Greece that has been shown in six placebo-controlled medical studies (543 participants) to be effective and safe. This natural compound strengthens blood vessel walls and reduces swelling to stop the pain and suffering.

95% Reduction in LEG SWELLING, Verified in Clinical Study

Says Dove Medical Press & Development and Therapy

... meaning, discomfort, water retention, leg swelling, tiredness and circulation improved in 95% of test subjects



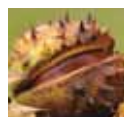
Swollen legs are a warning sign. They mean blood and fluid is forced out of the blood vessels into the surrounding tissue. This causes non-stop pain. This is where Neuroflo’s active ingredient is such a big help.

Poor blood flow in the legs and feet is one of the common problems that develops as we age. Millions of Americans suffer from neuropathy and chronic venous insufficiency (CVI), edema, and other leg/feet problems – millions have these but are undiagnosed.

Today’s treatments don’t work for a high percentage of people – and they have side effects that make them hard to tolerate or that people do not want to risk. This includes prescription drugs, over the counter pain pills, surgery and compression.

HOW IT WORKS

Here’s why you have pain now: Your arteries have weakened. Your arteries can’t carry enough blood, nutrients and oxygen down to your legs and feet. This damages your nerves and causes your burning, tingling and numbness.



The herbs in the pill Neuroflo strengthen your arteries that carry blood, nutrients and oxygen to your feet and legs. It improves your circulation so oxygenated blood goes to the nerves and repairs them. This makes your nerves grow stronger so your pain fades away and your legs and feet feel much younger again.

Katerina King from Murrieta, California says, “I had hands and feet tingling and snapping and burning feeling. It made my life very uncomfortable. I had a hard time walking, my legs felt like they each weighed 50 pounds. Once I got in my car and my feet felt so heavy I couldn’t even drive the car. With Neuroflo I have no more tingling, cold or burning painful legs and feet. It went away.”

WHAT DOCTORS ARE SAYING

“Now I finally have a natural solution I can recommend to my patients who suffer from leg and feet problems and pain. I’m delighted because previous treatments were not effective, but Neuroflo has worked for every one of my patients with no side effects” says Dr. Eric Wood, N.D.

Dr. Ryan Shelton, M.D. says “This is new and different. It works for people who’ve tried many other things before. It is natural with no side effects. Don’t give up hope for your leg and feet pain, burning, tingling and numbing. This pill is working for countless people after other treatments have failed them. I highly recommend it”

“Neuroflo is a terrific choice for people with leg and feet issues. The clinical trials



WORKS IN AMAZING WAY: A prickly plant was used in Europe in the 1600s to revitalize ailing legs. Lost over the centuries, it is now making a comeback as US doctors rediscover its impressive results – sending relief to thousands of users with:

- Burning, Tingling, • Painful Legs
- Numbness & Feet
- Swollen, Achy Feet • Varicose Veins

in support of this herb show it is very effective for safe and fast relief,” said Dr. Wood, a Harvard trained doctor who has appeared on award winning TV shows.

Now you can get a good night’s sleep - peaceful, restful sleep – with no pain, tingling, zinging, itching or zapping. Improve your balance and coordination. No side effects – safe to take with other medications. Enjoy your favorite activities and hobbies again. Be more active, have more fun, enjoy life more. Don’t risk irreversible damage to your feet and hands. Don’t get worse and wind up in the hospital or a nursing home.

Neuroflo is GUARANTEED to work for you – or you will get full refund with a 90-day unconditional money-back guarantee. It is NOT sold in stores or online. No prescription or doctor visit is required.

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This is the official release of NeuroFlo for readers of Illinois Country Living. Therefore, everyone who calls within the next 10 days will receive 50% OFF their first order. A toll-free hotline number has been set up for local readers to call for this 50% OFF savings. The number will be open starting at 7:00 am today and only for the next 10 days.

All you have to do is CALL TOLL FREE 1-888-250-8570 and provide the operator with the special 50% OFF discount approval code: NEF158.

Important: Due to Neuroflo’s popularity and recent media exposure on ABC, CBS and FOX NEWS, phone lines are often busy. If you call and do not get through immediately, please be patient and call back. Those who miss the 10 day deadline for 50% OFF will have to pay more for Neuroflo.

Make happy memories this month

YET ANOTHER YEAR HAS nearly passed, and it's time again to decorate homes, wrap gifts and prepare feasts for friends and family (unless you're like me and lack any skill in the kitchen whatsoever). Christmas music has already been playing on



the radio for maybe a little too long, and many of us are ready to take some well-deserved vacation time.

As we look forward to family traditions and general merrymaking, let's make sure the memories we make are happy ones. With that in mind, here's a list that you may also want to check twice.

O Christmas tree

- For those who prefer live trees, make sure the one you choose is fresh and green. Water it regularly to keep it from drying out and acting as kindling should something spark.
- If you opt for an artificial tree, make sure it is labeled fire-resistant. Remember, fire-resistant isn't the same as fireproof.
- Whether it's real or fake, position it in an area free of fireplaces, vents and radiators.



Lisa Cherry is the Assistant Editor of Illinois Country Living magazine.

Deck the halls

- Avoid lights that haven't been approved by an independent testing laboratory. If you're not sure, err on the side of caution and purchase new ones.

- Check the strands to ensure they are intact and aren't giving off heat.
- Replace any strands that show damage, including broken bulbs, bare or frayed wires or loose connections, to prevent electric shock or fire.
- Don't overload electrical outlets.
- Make sure the lights on the tree are off when you're asleep or away.

Baby, it's cold outside

- When decorating outdoors, steer clear of power lines and utility poles.
- Only use decorations rated for outdoor use.
- Make sure to plug lights and other decorations requiring an electrical connection into outlets with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). Portable GFCIs can be purchased online.

- Use plastic hooks to hang lights — it is not safe to use staples or nails.

Here comes Santa Claus

- Check age range recommendations before purchasing gifts for children. They are there for a reason.
- Caution kids about electrical safety if they receive a product that requires electricity.
- Review instructions and safety guidelines prior to use.

Something's cooking in the kitchen

- Check your small appliances and their electric cords. Don't use if cords are cracked or frayed.
- Read the instructions before operating a new appliance.
- If purchasing new cooking appliances, opt for UL-listed models with an automatic shutoff feature.
- Refrain from plugging more than one high-wattage appliance into a single outlet.
- Ensure outlets near the kitchen sink are equipped with a GFCI.
- Keep a working fire extinguisher in the kitchen.

Just a few simple steps taken as you prepare for the holidays have the potential to keep your loved ones safe and sound this season. Give yourself a gift this year — the gift of peace of mind. There's a bonus with this one: It doesn't cost a thing.

All of us at Illinois Country Living and the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives wish you a safe and happy holiday season. 💡



Introducing the lightest folding power chair in the world

The Journey Air Elite features the latest carbon fiber technology for the ultimate in portability and performance

Mobility issues affect over 1 in 5 Americans. These individuals, and their loved ones, know how decreased mobility can result in loss of independence, pain and falling hazards. They are often stuck at home, missing out on a variety of activities, in a vicious cycle that diminishes their quality of life. In the past, mobility devices like scooters and power chairs were too heavy and bulky to transport easily. Now, carbon fiber material invented for the aerospace program has been used to create the ultimate mobility device. It's called the Journey Air Elite ... and there's nothing else like it on earth.

At only 26 pounds*, the Journey Air Elite combines lightweight portability with world class performance. It's simple to use joystick and powerful dual-motor drive system enables you to zip around quickly and safely. It's easy to maneuver, never tips, fits easily through doorways, and can go right up to a table or desk.



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87001

How energy efficiency contributes to a better grid

“BEAT THE PEAK” HAS become a unified message among electric cooperatives as the demand for electricity grows year after year. Your electric co-op must deliver

interconnection has regional balancing authorities, which are organizations that ensure electricity supply constantly matches electricity demand.

morning, as we start our day, and in the evening, when we return home.

The demand for power increases every year. The U.S. Energy Information Administration projects residential consumption of purchased electricity will increase between about 14% and 22% from 2022 to 2050. Industrial, transportation and commercial consumption is also projected to experience increased demand.

As generation, transmission and distribution utilities work to increase production and maintain and protect our grid, it’s important for all of us to take steps to use less energy every day. In turn, it will help you save on your monthly electric bill.

Think about how you can use less energy in the morning and evening. Start with the area that uses the most energy by adjusting your thermostat during peak hours, either up or down a few degrees, depending on the season. A smart thermostat can do this for you automatically.

Are there certain appliances or devices you can wait to run until after peak hours? For example, start the dishwasher or dryer before you go to bed. If you have an electric vehicle, program it to charge overnight instead of right when you return home in the evening. Smart power strips ensure your devices are not pulling power when they are turned off. These devices work well for TVs and gaming devices. Also, consider replacing appliances 10 years or older with new ENERGY STAR-rated appliances.

By embracing energy conservation, we can all make small changes that have a big impact on our community and the intricate system that powers our lives. To learn more about your local peak times and how you can use less energy, contact your electric co-op. 💡

The interconnections are powered by electric generation in various sources, including hydropower, nuclear, coal, gas, wind, solar and more. Some of these generation sources can supply power constantly or be ramped up or down depending on demand, while others supply intermittent power. The energy produced by these sources connects to the grid and moves along transmission lines that allow power to travel long distances.

Your electric co-op is known as a distribution utility, which operates the power infrastructure connecting transmission lines

to the distribution power lines that bring electricity to your home.

This whole system and the more than 2 million people who operate it are continually working behind the scenes so we can take advantage of a 24/7 supply of electricity at the flip of a switch.

Throughout the day, demand for power supply fluctuates. If supply and demand fall out of balance, local or widespread blackouts can occur. To maintain reliable power, especially during peak times, there must be enough power supply to equal demand.

Due to supply and demand, the cost to buy power is higher during peak times. Peak times vary across the country but are typically in the

around-the-clock electricity to power your life. To understand why it is so important for everyone to use less energy when there is high demand for electricity, known as peak times, let’s start with the complex system that delivers electricity to your home.

The U.S. power grid is considered one of the largest machines in the world. Some could argue it is our country’s greatest achievement, because reliable electricity has become essential to our daily lives and our economy.

The U.S. has three main interconnected power grids: the Eastern Interconnection, the Western Interconnection and the Electric Reliability Council of Texas. Each



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARK GILLILAND

How can you use less energy during peak times? Consider waiting to run large appliances, such as your washer and dryer, until off-peak hours.



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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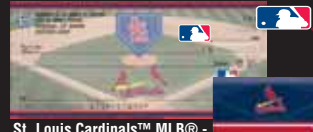
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Wilderness - 00024
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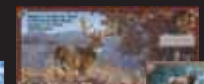
Great Outdoors -
00552 Leather Cover
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Lightning Strikes -
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Tropical Paradise -
00052 Leather Cover
and Labels - 00052 ★



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



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



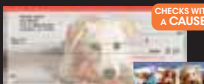
Glitter Sparkles -
01327 Fabric Cover
and Labels - 01327 ▲



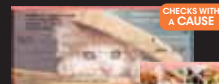
Thomas Kinkadee's Faith
for All Seasons w/verse "Believe all things
are possible with God" - 00105
Leather Cover and Labels - 00105 ★



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



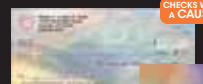
Rescued is My Bread
of Choice - 00379 Leather
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Rescued is Something
to Purr About - 00525 Leather
Cover and Labels - 00525 ★



On the Wings of Hope -
00304 One image. Leather
Cover and Labels - 00304 ★
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breast cancer.



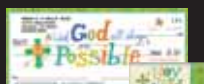
Coping Together -
01327 Leather Cover -
00125 and Labels - 01397 ★
A portion of the proceeds will be donated to
the American Nurses Foundation.



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



Mountains - 01287
Leather Cover and
Labels - 01287 ★



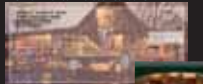
Words of Faith w/verse
"With God all things are possible." - 00551
Leather Cover and Labels - 00551 ★



Cowboy Boots - 00434
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Labels - 00017 ★



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



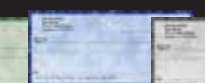
Ohio State University -
00513 Leather Cover
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Cover - 00030-004
Labels - 00032-008 ▲



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Leather Cover and
Labels - 00167 ▲



5th Avenue - 00155
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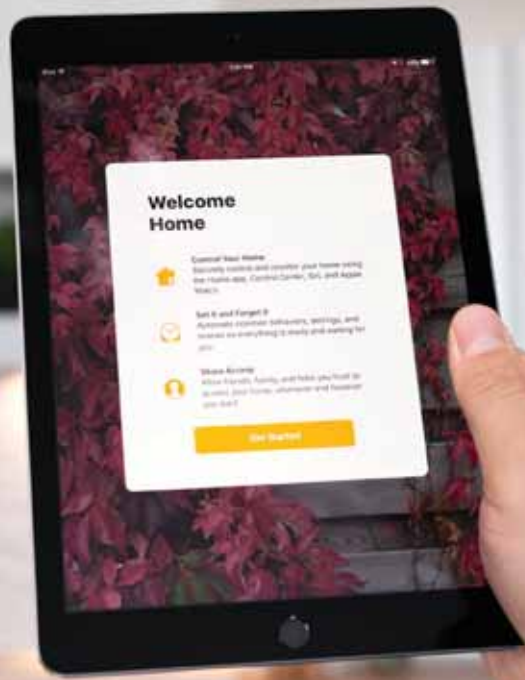


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Tips to integrate smart home tech

ONCE SOMETHING PURSUED BY only the most tech-savvy of consumers, smart home technologies that enhance convenience, comfort and safety at home are becoming increasingly common.

Smart technologies have proliferated as the “Internet of Things” has grown to include home security and safety systems, lighting, entertainment, HVAC systems and even appliances.

Consumers are interested in a variety of technology combinations for their homes, but regardless of the applications, here are three key tips to keep in mind when integrating smart technologies into your home.

Ensure that various devices can talk to each other

This might seem like a no-brainer, but ensuring compatibility is vital to ensuring that convenience is not overcome by annoyance. One way of ensuring compatibility is choosing a single brand for as many applications as possible. Those pursuing several smart technologies

might also look into investing in a central hub to coordinate and control various devices.

Many of the hubs available today offer additional features of their own, doubling as speakers, routers or displays. One major requirement for all these technologies is a fast and reliable internet and Wi-Fi connection.

Enable all security measures to prevent hacking

Adding smart devices to your home can increase the surface area that bad actors can use to hack equipment, increasing the importance of common-sense cybersecurity measures. Choosing smart devices with built-in security features and ensuring that these features are all turned on reduce these risks.

It is also important to replace default usernames and passwords with strong unique versions, enable dual and/or biometric authentication and keep your device software up to date through patches. Finally, if you are controlling your home devices from your phone, tablet or

laptop, do not do so while using unsecured public Wi-Fi networks.

Look for technologies to help control and manage home energy use

Smart home technologies can be a great way to control and manage home energy use. If you are looking into home automation, devices like smart thermostats, grid-controllable water heaters and schedulable or motion-controlled indoor and outdoor lighting can be smart ways to save money on your electric bill.



When used wisely and efficiently, smart home technologies can add great convenience to everyday life. Keep these tips in mind as you integrate smart devices into your home. 💡



Michael Leitman 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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E38501


THRILLS AND CHILLS

Family vacations aren't limited to warmer months

By Valerie Cheatham

ONCE THE HOLIDAYS ARE behind us and cold weather settles in, it is easy to become a bit stir-crazy as we crave fresh air and outdoor activity. However, we don't have to hibernate for the rest of the season. There are plenty of opportunities to enjoy the great outdoors in Illinois. Whether you prefer to watch majestic eagles soar overhead, the thrill of waterfall ice climbing, or family sledding and ice skating, winter activities may be closer than you realize.





A hiker enjoys the frozen waterfall views in Saint Louis Canyon at Starved Rock State Park.

Starved Rock State Park

There is something to be said about the serenity of winter. If outside early, there is a certain amount of tranquility that comes from being in nature in the crisp morning air. Starved Rock State Park in Oglesby offers the peaceful moments you may be craving.

If observing bald eagles or partaking in a winter hike is up your alley, then Starved Rock is just what you need. Skirting the Illinois River, the park contains 13 miles of trails and seven active waterfalls, depending on rainfall. Overlooks can be found at Sac and Wildcat canyons, along with Lover's Leap, Eagle Cliff and Starved Rock.

Winter beauty at its best can be found on guided 3-mile hikes December through March, which begin at the lodge. Hikes run from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays and are \$18; reservations are required. Spot bald eagles soaring high above and view majestic frozen waterfalls, some reaching 80 feet tall. Be sure to bring winter hiking gear, such as poles or picks, and don't forget your camera and binoculars. Please note, the canyons are glacier-cut, so you must be able to handle steps. Yaktrax ice cleats are suggested and available for purchase at the lodge.

For the thrill-seeker, scaling ice falls is an option. Climbers must sign in at the reservation desk, show proof of climbing certification and climb at their own risk.

The park also offers bald eagle trolley tours on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays during January and February. The trolley leaves at 11 a.m. and returns at 2:30 p.m. Stop at the Illinois Waterway Visitor Center to enjoy eagle viewing and an education program. Lunch is included. Adult tickets are \$34 and \$29 for children 10 and under. Eagle Watch Weekend is Jan. 27-28.

After a chilly day of hiking, gather by the large stone fireplace in the rustic, 1930s log-built Starved Rock Lodge, set among the tall pines of the park.

Lengthen your stay by making reservations to stay at the lodge, or consider renting one of the authentic log cabins built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the '30s.

Several food options are available on the grounds, including the rustic Main Dining Room and the Back Door Lounge — both serve up plenty of comfort food. After dinner, the kids can splash in the indoor pool.

All activities can be booked by calling 815-220-7386 or online at starvedrocklodge.com. For overnight accommodations, go online or call 815-667-4211.

Eagle Ridge Resort & Spa

The rolling green hills of northwestern Illinois contain spectacular overlooks of valleys and farms, but as summer turns to fall and winter follows, the landscape changes. Eagle Ridge Resort in Galena, well-known for its verdant green golf courses in warmer weather, transforms as Old Man Winter takes hold.

The General Golf Course is modified to host a variety of family-friendly cold-weather activities at its Nordic Center in the Highlands Complex. Toboggans, snowshoes and ice skates are available for rent, but you are welcome to bring your own.

Grab your winter gear and whoosh down the toboggan run located on the 10th hole of the golf course. Enjoy the winter chill while sliding from the tee area down the fairway and experience amazing views of the valley below.

According to Colin Sanderson, director of sales and marketing at Eagle Ridge, it's a steep hill and "we see all kinds of sleds going

PHOTO COURTESY OF KATHY CASSTEVENS



Snowshoeing at Eagle Ridge Resort is an annual tradition.

down that hill, and I think that the moms and dads love it more than the kids.”

If ice skating interests you more, a 40-by-80-foot ice rink can be found in the parking lot. A large bonfire helps take the chill off frosty fingers and toes after sledding and skating. Concessions are available with the popular hot chocolate and hot dogs. And for those who prefer being indoors, the golf simulator is popular.

“It’s not uncommon to see a dad or mom on the golf simulator while the other parent is out watching the kids sled,” says Sanderson.

If you prefer to work harder, strap on snowshoes and enjoy seven miles of groomed trails or bring your own cross-country skis and follow the golf courses.

Sanderson says heated igloos are also available for rent for 45-60 minutes. Rental includes beverages and light hors d’oeuvres, comfortable chairs, couches and music to enjoy while warming up and watching the outdoor activity.

The Nordic Center’s most popular annual event is the 3-day Winter Carnival, which occurs

Friday to Sunday every Presidents Day weekend (Feb. 16-18, 2024). Additional activities are available all weekend long, including a fire and ice show involving hot air balloons and night glows. The Sasquatch Shuffle is a 5K walk/run on snowshoes and includes participants in Bigfoot costumes.

The weekend is always a sellout, so don’t hesitate to make reservations if interested. The lodge has 80 rooms, and an additional 200-plus rental homes, ranging in size from one-bedroom condos to eight-bedroom homes, are available. All reservations are made through the Eagle Ridge website at eagleridge.com. Eagle Ridge Resort & Spa is located at 444 Eagle Ridge Drive, Galena; call 800-892-2269 for reservations.

Historic downtown Galena is a few short miles to the west and offers a variety of unique shops and restaurants.

Great River Eagle Days

Occurring the last weekend of January each year, the Standing Bear Council, Quincy, honors Native American traditions of celebrating the American Bald Eagle

at its Great River Eagle Days and Native American Intertribal Pow Wow. Held at the Oakley Lindsay Civic Center, 300 Civic Center Plaza, Quincy, the event includes a variety of activities for all ages. The 2024 event happens Jan. 27-28 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days. Admission is \$7 for adults, \$5 for seniors and 12 and under are free.

At Lock and Dam 21, on the Mississippi River, rangers will be available with scopes to view the eagles in their natural habitat.

Immerse yourself in Native American culture while watching the highly anticipated Gray Cloud Singers, along with two world-champion hoop dancers and flute players. A full-size tipi will be set up indoors, as well as Native American arts and crafts vendors. Birds of prey from the Treehouse Wildlife Rehab Center will be available for up-close education about the birds. Be sure to try the ever-popular Native American fry bread and fry bread tacos, along with other items for purchase.

The traditional Blessing of the Eagles Ceremony will occur on Sunday, Jan. 28.

Eagle viewing in Illinois

Other than Alaska, Illinois has the second-largest state population of wintering eagles. Thousands of majestic bald eagles winter near the Illinois and Mississippi rivers in 27 counties of Illinois.

Drawn by the turbulent waters below the locks and dams, eagles feast upon the fish that are churned up by the waters and roost in the bluffs overlooking the river. While eagles can be spotted between mid-December and March, the best time is during January and February. As the temperatures rise, the eagles fly north to nest.

Many locks and dams along the Illinois and Mississippi rivers hold special eagle-watching events in January. Go to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers website and search for a location in your area.

Pere Marquette State Park Bald Eagle Days, Grafton — Overlooking the Illinois River

and offering miles of trails for winter hiking, you can drive up the park's scenic bluffs and observe eagles for yourself. Informational programs are available from January to March and begin at the park's visitor center (13112 Visitor Center Lane, Grafton) at 8:30 a.m. Reservations are required. For information or reservations, call 618-786-3323.


Alton-Audubon Eagle Ice Festival — Eagle watching kicks off with a free family-friendly festival that celebrates eagles and features ice-themed activities, including up-close looks at bald eagles, ice putt-putt golf and ice sculptors creating their masterpieces. 



PHOTO COURTESY OF JACKI MUSSER

OTHER WINTER ACTIVITIES

Matthiessen State Park, Oglesby

Glide along 6 miles of cross-country skiing trails. Ski rental is available on weekends.



Morton Arboretum, Lisle

Whether you want a short hike or a long trek, Morton Arboretum contains 16 miles of looped trails among 1,700 acres of trees and an evergreen forest. After 4 inches of snow, rent snowshoes or cross-country skis and traverse 3.5 miles of groomed trails.



Chestnut Mountain, Galena

With slopes for all levels of skiers and snowboarders, Chestnut Mountain has a 475-foot vertical drop with 19 runs from beginner to expert. With plenty of lifts, you'll have no trouble getting up for your next run. Snowboarders can enjoy their own playground with 25 rails and its own lift. Equipment rental is available. Go to chestnutmountain.com for more information.



Shawnee National Forest, Little Grand Canyon Trail, Harrisburg

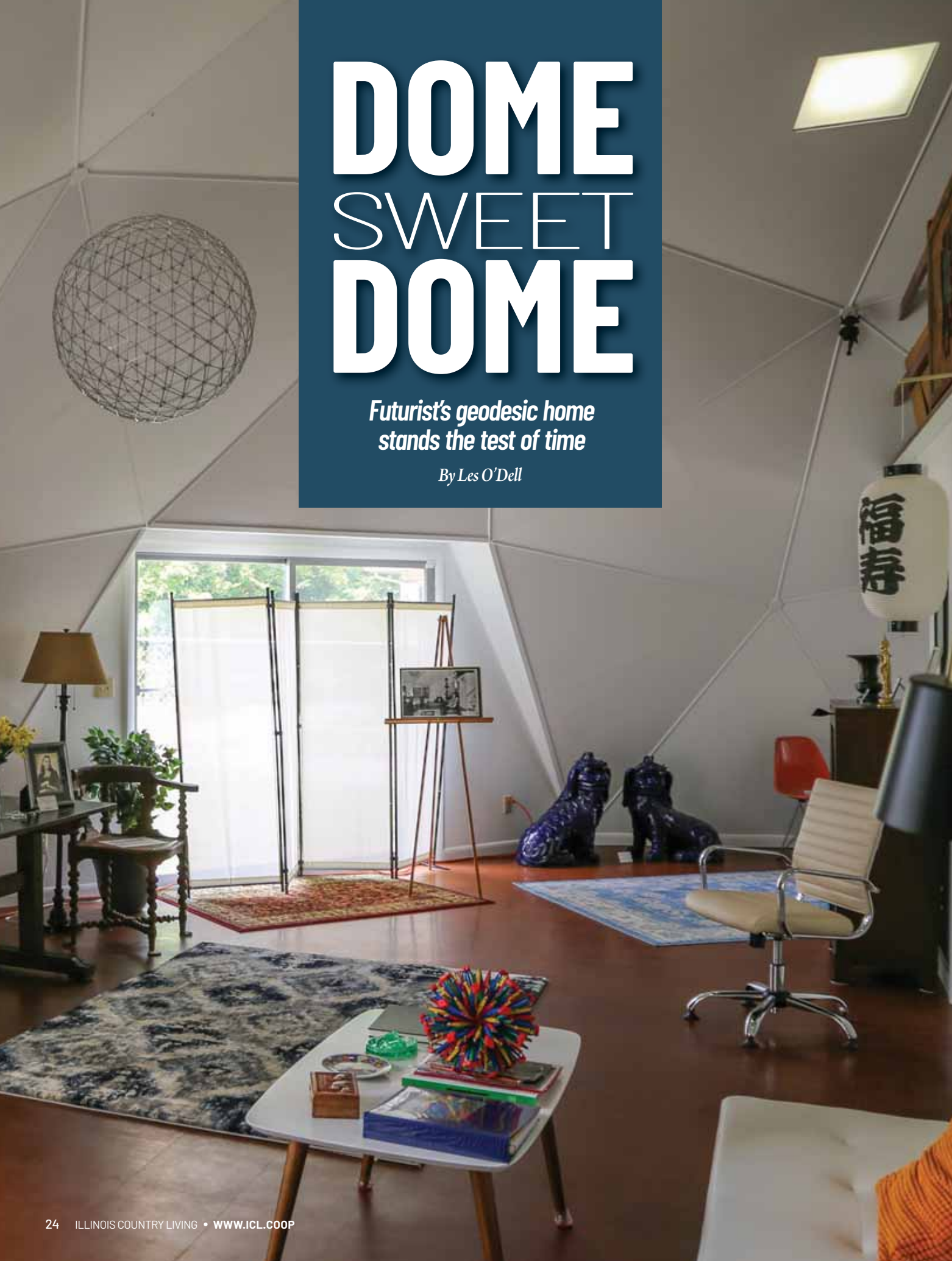
Strap on your ice cleats or spikes for a 3-mile hike. Steep stairs carved into the rock will give you a workout as you wander through sandstone overhangs and snow-covered sycamores.



DOME SWEET DOME

*Futurist's geodesic home
stands the test of time*

By Les O'Dell



ON A QUIET RESIDENTIAL street, not far from the Southern Illinois University Carbondale campus, sits a small home. It is not particularly fancy or elaborate, yet it is quite different than the other houses in the neighborhood.

Certainly, the home's gleaming white spherical roof makes the house unique, but what truly sets this house at 407 S. Forest Ave. apart is the man who envisioned it, designed it and lived in it — noted architect, inventor, designer and futurist R. Buckminster Fuller (1895-1983).

Today, the fully restored geodesic dome dwelling — known as the R. Buckminster Fuller and Anne Hewlett Dome Home — stands as a testament to Fuller's vision and his time in Illinois, which many consider to be the most productive of his long career.

Fuller held 28 U.S. patents, wrote more than 30 books, coined popular terms including "Spaceship Earth" and "synergetics," and invented the Dymaxion automobile. He is perhaps best known, however, for his work in fine-tuning and promoting the geodesic dome — a spherical collection of triangular elements that, when connected to one another, make a dome-shaped structure able to not only support its own weight but also withstand heavy loads.

Recruited to be SIU's first (and only) "World Fellow in Residence" in 1956, Fuller was given latitude by university leaders to teach in any department and on any subject, as well as to maintain his schedule of worldwide travel, writing, research and creation. He soon told the local press, "This will be my home base; I'm putting down roots in southern Illinois." To do that, Fuller (who had rented everywhere else he had lived as an adult) chose to construct a geodesic dome home of his own.

The 1,400-square-foot home — consisting of 60 prefabricated isosceles triangles produced by Pease Woodworking Company of Ohio (a company Fuller partnered with to make dome homes available to the masses) — went up in about seven hours on April 20, 1960, thanks to a small construction crew and hundreds of onlookers. The home cost about \$3,700 to build, which is \$60,000 in today's dollars.

The finished home, a modest one-bedroom, features about 1,000 square feet on the first floor and a second-story 400-square-foot loft, which served as Fuller's home study. Upon entering the home, gently curved walls and ceilings usher visitors into a large living area, punctuated by large windows and a narrow stairway to the study. Follow the curve around the structure, and you find yourself in a galley-style kitchen on the way to the bathroom and bedroom.

"The home was much bigger when I walked into it than I thought it would be," says Tovia Black, manager

of the Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Center for Spirituality and Sustainability, an outreach organization also housed in a Fuller-designed geodesic dome. Black recently led a tour of Fuller structures throughout southwest Illinois, culminating with the Carbondale location, the only dome Fuller ever personally owned and lived in. "It was very cozy and very surprising how you could divide a space without actually putting up walls."

Fuller and his wife Anne lived in the dome from its construction until the early 1970s, when he relocated to the university's sister campus in Edwardsville. They sold the home, and in the years to come, the iconic dome would become a rental home for dozens of SIU students and eventually fall into disrepair. Still, some in the community felt the need to preserve both the home and Fuller's legacy.

A Carbondale resident, the late Bill Perk, purchased the home in 1999, with an eye on preservation. He was instrumental in the establishment and growth of the R. Buckminster Fuller Dome Not-For-Profit organization, and its simple, yet broad vision to preserve the original dome home and legacy of R. Buckminster Fuller. This went on to include the development and operation of a museum to chronicle the years during which Buckminster Fuller and his wife Anne lived there.

To do that, a volunteer board of directors, working with local architect Thad Heckman, set out on the monumental task of returning the dome to its original luster.

"It has been a labor of love," says Heckman, who remembers sitting in on some of Fuller's lectures at SIU. "Frankly, the dome back in its day wasn't



The fully restored R. Buckminster Fuller and Anne Hewlett Dome Home in Carbondale is open for tours. It is the only dome Fuller ever owned and lived in.





top-quality construction, and that's not an indictment on Bucky. It was more of an experiment for him to live in his own experiment, so to speak, but it had become a dilapidated mess."

Heckman says the effort — which is chronicled in "Bucky's Dome," a book he co-authored — took nearly a decade and tens of thousands of dollars, but the result has been unbelievable.

"The home is very nearly 98% preserved and just 'dead-on' accurate," he says. "I think it is at a level of accuracy that is exceptional for historically preserved structures. We're really pleased with the design and work that everybody has put forward."

Fuller's heirs have donated many of the original furnishings, as well as much of the futurist's personal library, which was returned to the same shelves in the study. A trip into the dome is both a step back in time and a journey into Fuller's world.

"I think the dome now is prepared; it is safe and secure to pass on to the next generation," Heckman says. "It's not the dome itself, but what the dome represents in Fuller's innovative and groundbreaking thinking. The dome represents all of that."

The home was named a Carbondale Historic Landmark in 2003 and placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2006. Benjamin Lowder, director of the Center for Spirituality and Sustainability at SIUE and a member of the Fuller Dome organization's board of directors, says the home is iconic for its role in Fuller's life and work, as well as for the region.


"The area from St. Louis to Carbondale is the most important region in the world for built structures that

relate to Bucky's legacy," he explains, mentioning both the Carbondale and Edwardsville domes, as well as the Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House's Mary Brown Center and the Union Tank Car Company dome in Wood River. "These are really important cultural assets that speak to the whole legacy of innovation and design science."

The cutting-edge nature of Fuller's legacy continues with a new visitor center now under construction alongside the dome home in Carbondale. The new building, which will be a meeting space, will house museum exhibits and serve as a depository for Fuller-related archival materials. It is being built from 3D-printed panels.

"I think using 3D printing for the new visitor center would have been right down Fuller's alley of 'OK, here's a new technology, and we're applying it,'" Heckman says. As for what the home's most famous resident would think of the efforts to preserve it, Lowder believes he would have had mixed emotions.

"I think he would have had conflicting thoughts about it," Lowder says. "He was not a backward-looking guy. He was a futurist, and so the idea of preserving something he later went on to improve might not have appealed to his ideas of futurism, but he would have loved getting recognition and being celebrated for things honoring his legacy. I think he would appreciate it all."

The new visitor's center is expected to be completed in early 2024. Information on the home, tours and how to support efforts to preserve Fuller's legacy is available on the nonprofit's website at fullerdomehome.com. 



R. Buckminster Fuller's heirs have donated many of the original furnishings, including much of his personal library, which was returned to the same shelves in the study.

SACRED STONE OF THE SOUTHWEST IS ON THE BRINK OF EXTINCTION



Centuries ago, Persians, Tibetans and Mayans considered turquoise a gemstone of the heavens, believing the striking blue stones were sacred pieces of sky. Today, the rarest and most valuable turquoise is found in the American Southwest—but the future of the blue beauty is unclear.

On a recent trip to Tucson, we spoke with fourth generation turquoise traders who explained that less than five percent of turquoise mined worldwide can be set into jewelry and only about twenty mines in the Southwest supply gem-quality turquoise. Once a thriving industry, many Southwest mines have run dry and are now closed.

We found a limited supply of turquoise from Arizona and purchased it for our *Sedona Turquoise Collection*. Inspired by the work of those ancient craftsmen and designed to showcase the exceptional blue stone, each stabilized vibrant cabochon features a unique, one-of-a-kind matrix surrounded in Bali metalwork. You could drop over \$1,200 on a turquoise pendant, or you

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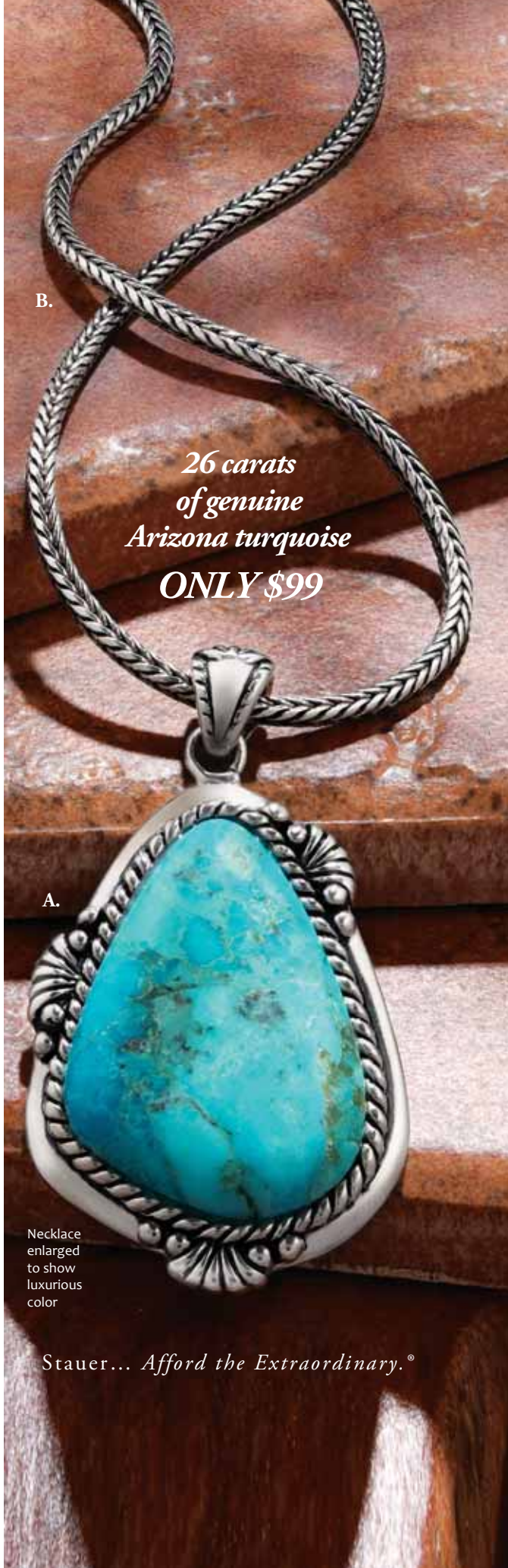
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RICHARDS FARM RESTAURANT

Mike and Jamie Richards, directors of operation, are the son and daughter-in-law of the original owners.



Down on the farm

By Kayla Adkins

CASEY, ILL., IS A small town with big things. Home to the World's Largest Mailbox, rocking chair, wind chime and more, the town is a prime tourist attraction on I-70. It is also where visitors can find Richards Farm Restaurant, located next to the World's Largest Pitchfork.

The Richards' family home was like any other farm in the area during the 1900s. Gary and Diane Richards married in 1972 and bought the house where Gary grew up. In 1976, the couple decided to use the 1930s barn on the property to build a business. Although he had no restaurant experience, the bank granted Gary a loan, and Richards Farm Restaurant was born.

"That was the early to mid-'70s. A local banker was crazy enough to loan him some money," says Gary's son, Mike. "Probably wouldn't do that today, [loaning money to] a 25-year-old guy who had zero restaurant experience."



The World's Largest Pitchfork is displayed outside Richards Farm Restaurant.

It took a little remodeling to get the working barn restaurant-ready. The couple's vision was to keep the rustic farm look. Local farmers agreed to let Gary tear down their old barns and keep the wood. "He tore down seven barns to get wood to put together the interior so that it actually looked like old barn wood," Mike says.

The dining area is broken up into various rooms decorated with antiques, each with creative names like the Corn Crib, the Back Forty and the Haymow.

Another, the Willow Room, is a banquet area that seats up to 300 people.

Mike grew up working in the family restaurant and took over managing it after Gary's passing. He also manages two other restaurants in Indiana, alongside his wife Jamie.

"I grew up in the business. I worked out here through high school and college. I swore I would never be in the restaurant business," he says. In addition to Mike and his

wife, their son, nieces and nephews work for the restaurant. “We’re hoping the next generation will continue it.”

In the last 50 years, Richards Farm Restaurant has become a staple in Casey. “We have strong local support, but especially over the last five, six years, the big things in Casey have brought a lot of people, and we’re so thankful for that,” Mike says.

In addition to the 1-pound pork chop the restaurant is known for, locals and tourists alike enjoy its steak, pasta, burgers, seafood and more. Monday through Saturday during lunch, patrons can enjoy the soup, salad and bread bar and a hot bar, which includes two entrees and two hot sides that vary daily. On Sundays, there is a special buffet from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., and lunch plate specials are available daily from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Richards say their beef is a cut above, which they attribute to marbling (for flavor) and aging (for tenderness). All entrees come with two sides or the soup, salad and bread bar. Most items on the salad bar are made in-house daily, including the bread, which can be spread with strawberry jam, whipped butter or sweet butter. Sides include basics like French fries and mashed potatoes, as well as (but not limited to) sweet potato fries, mac and cheese and farm salad. Bread pudding, a chocolate cake sundae, fruit cobbler, pecan pie and peanut butter pie are all options for dessert.

Mike says the menu has remained consistent in the nearly 50 years the restaurant has been open. “We have a dish called Town House Chicken, which has been a mainstay since at least the ’80s. The fried catfish and barbecue pork loin have been on the menu basically forever,” he says. “We’re thankful to be approaching 50 years because most restaurants don’t last this long. [We’re] thankful to all the people who come and enjoy eating here. We’re always striving to give everybody a great experience. ... It’s nice, because a town this size, a lot of times they just fade away, and there’s no reason to go there. It’s a good time to be living here. I hope people keep growing it and keep appreciating it.” 🍴

One-pound pork chop with broccoli and baked sweet potato



Rumpelstiltskins (fried potato skins topped with cheese, bacon and chives), served with ranch and sour cream



An assortment of toppings on the salad bar

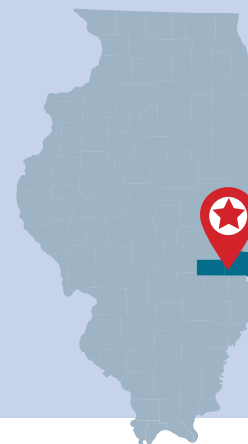
LET'S EAT!

Richards Farm Restaurant

607 NE 13th St., Casey, IL
217-932-5300
richardsfarm.com

HOURS

Sun-Thu: 11 a.m.-8 p.m.
Fri-Sat: 11 a.m.-9 a.m.



Soup for the soul

WHEN TEMPERATURES DROP, THERE'S something comforting about sitting down to a nice bowl of hot soup. It can soothe the body and the soul. If you need to chase away the winter chill, here are some soup recipes to try, and share with family and friends. 💡

WE NEED RECIPES!

Upcoming recipes

Dinner for two

Citrus

World foods

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.



SAUSAGE PIZZA SOUP

Sausage Pizza Soup

Submitted by Donna Davis, Jo-Carroll Energy

Servings: 12

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 pound Italian sausage, browned | 1 small zucchini, chopped | 2 teaspoons parsley |
| 1 large onion, diced | 1 cup carrots, sliced | 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning |
| 3 cloves garlic, chopped | 1 15-ounce can tomato sauce | 1 teaspoon basil |
| 1 green pepper, chopped | 1 15-ounce can Italian tomatoes | 1 teaspoon oregano |
| 1 cup celery, chopped | 5 cups beef broth | 4-6 drops hot sauce |
| 1/2 cup mushrooms, diced | 1 cup water | Salt and pepper, to taste |

In a large pot over medium heat, saute sausage, onion, garlic and green pepper until onions are translucent. Add remaining ingredients. Bring to a boil and simmer for about 40 minutes, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are tender. Serve.

Nutrition information: 176 calories; 11.6g fat; 998mg salt; 7.3g carbohydrates; 10.8g protein.



ONE POT ZUPPA TUSCANA

Taco Soup

Submitted by Rosemary Wiley, Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative
Servings: 12

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 pound ground beef | 2 14.5-ounce cans Rotel tomatoes |
| 1 onion, chopped | 2 15-ounce cans pinto beans |
| 1 package ranch-style dressing mix | 1 15-ounce can black beans |
| 1 package taco seasoning mix | 1 15-ounce can cream style corn |
| 1 cup water | |

Over medium heat in a medium-sized cook pot, brown beef and cook onions. Drain excess grease. Add remaining ingredients and simmer for 20 minutes before serving. Serve with cornbread or corn chips. Nutrition information: 473 calories; 3.9g fat; 562mg salt; 74.3g carbohydrates; 35.3g protein.

Beef/Vegetable/Barley Soup

Submitted by Francine Anderson, Corn Belt Energy Corporation
Servings: 16

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 3 pounds chuck roast | 1/4 teaspoon whole allspice |
| 4 quarts water | 1 bay leaf |
| 1 14.5-ounce can diced tomatoes | 1 cup barley, rinsed |
| 2 cloves garlic, minced | 4 potatoes, diced |
| 1 onion, chopped | 1 14.5-ounce can mixed vegetables |
| 2 carrots, diced | |
| 2 stalks celery, chopped | Optional |
| 2 tablespoons salt | Beef bouillon |
| 1 teaspoon black pepper | Parsley |

Put chuck roast into a large pot with 4 quarts of cold water. Bring to a boil, uncovered over high heat. Reduce heat to low and skim off the foam from the top. Then add tomatoes, garlic, onion, carrots, celery and spices. Continue to bring to a boil and simmer slowly for 2 hours. Then add barley and cook for 45 minutes. Add potatoes and mixed vegetables and simmer until potatoes are tender. Remove the meat to cool, and then break apart into pieces and return to soup. For additional flavor, add beef bouillon and parsley. Nutrition information: 282 calories; 282g fat; 1,006mg salt; 21.3g carbohydrates; 31.2g protein.

One Pot Zuppa Toscana

Submitted by Caitlin Gayheart, Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative
Servings: 16

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 medium sweet onion | 48-64 ounces chicken stock/broth |
| 1 tablespoon garlic, minced | 1 cup heavy whipping cream |
| 1 pound hot Italian sausage, ground | 1 bunch fresh kale |
| 5 pounds yellow potatoes | Salt and pepper, to taste |

Dice and saute a medium onion in a large stockpot over medium heat. Add garlic and cook until aromatic. Add one pound of Italian sausage and cook until browned. Clean and slice potatoes into 1/4-inch rounds, leaving the skins on. Add potatoes to the pot. Add pepper to taste and salt heavily. Mix well to evenly distribute meat and onion among the potatoes. Add at least 48 ounces of chicken stock or broth — enough to cover the potatoes by at least a half inch. Bring to a boil and cover for 15 minutes or until potatoes are fork tender. Lower heat to medium-low and stir in a cup of heavy whipping cream. Simmer for a few minutes. Wash and dry the kale before removing stems and chop leaves into big pieces. Add kale to the pot and stir until wilted and bright green. Serve with shredded Parmesan. Nutrition information: 190 calories; 11.4g fat; 648mg salt; 13.1g carbohydrates; 9.2g protein.



TACO SOUP

Ham and Potato Corn Chowder

Sherry Reuter, Egyptian Electric Cooperative Association
Servings: 10

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 3 tablespoons butter or cooking oil | 1/4 cup flour | 8 ounces ham, diced |
| 1 onion, diced | 2 cups chicken broth | 1 cup corn |
| 2 carrots, chopped | 2 cups milk | Salt and pepper, to taste |
| 2 stalks celery, chopped | 1-1/2 pounds potatoes, diced | |

Heat butter or oil in large pot over medium-high heat. Add onions, carrots and celery and cook until tender. Mix in flour and cook until flour is lightly browned. Slowly stir in broth and add milk and potatoes. Bring to boil, reduce the heat and simmer until potatoes are tender. Add ham and corn and cook until heated. Season with salt and pepper. Nutrition information: 181 calories; 7g fat; 863mg salt; 21.8g carbohydrates; 8.6g protein.



HAM AND POTATO CORN CHOWDER

Waste not, want not

Easy ways to reduce food loss

'TIS THE SEASON FOR ... potlucks? That's what it feels like during the holidays. Here's the thing about potlucks — there's always way too much food, and you must try everything. To top it off, I throw out all the rules

remember that many of our fellow global citizens, including one in eight American households, have little to no access to food now and throughout the year. Yet, when we look at the production of food

often buy far more than they will eat and send the leftover food to the landfill. Restaurants account for 33% of food loss in America, while households are the biggest source of food waste at 44%.

The biggest impact of food waste is losing nutritious ingredients that could feed families in need. Food is also the largest component in landfills, generating methane, which is a major greenhouse gas and contributor to climate change. You also must account for all the land, labor, water, pesticides and fertilizers that go into producing food that is never eaten.

There are actions you can take to help prevent food loss. They follow the familiar mantra of reduce, reuse, recycle.

We can reduce the amount of food we purchase by budgeting our trips to the store or thinking out meals in advance. This is ranked as the most preferred option by the USDA to avoid food loss.

We can reuse food by working with local food recovery programs that take uneaten food from restaurants, farmers and grocers to shelters or food pantries.

We can recycle food through composting. In my home, we have a worm composter, where we put leftover vegetable scraps, bread, coffee grounds, eggshells and much more into a bin for worms to turn into fertilizer for our garden and houseplants.

I hope this holiday season leaves everyone with full bellies and much joy. Even with the problem of food waste, the solution lies in Illinoisans each taking a few small actions to improve the situation. Now, time to get ready for my next potluck. How will I make this salad taste amazing? Ah, yes — bacon should do the trick. 💡



when it comes to making food for others to enjoy. I use lots of butter, salt and lard (if the recipe calls for it). And, I imagine, lots of other potluck-goers do the same.

We are lucky to live in a time and place where food is in such quantity that we often don't think twice about throwing away uneaten food. Garbage bags become overburdened with half-eaten casseroles, hams, turkeys, salads and so much more. I should know. I'm usually the one carrying out the trash, praying the bag holds together long enough to get it into the garbage can.

Even as we celebrate the holidays and surround ourselves with an abundance of family, friends and food, it's also important to

in the United States, there should be more than enough to feed all Americans. So, where's the food?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimates that 30-40% of the food supply in the U.S. is never eaten. Food loss comes from multiple causes. It begins on the farm, where insects or diseases infect a crop, causing failure in the field. "Ugly fruit" are crops that a farmer cannot sell because of superficial qualities that don't affect the taste, but people won't buy an ugly veggie. Spoilage can occur in transport from farms to grocers or during processing. Then, food sits on well-stocked grocery shelves, without being purchased, and eventually gets tossed. Finally, consumers



Chris Enroth is a horticulture educator with the University of Illinois Extension, serving Henderson, Knox, McDonough and Warren counties. This column also appears in the "Good Growing" blog at go.illinois.edu/GoodGrowing.

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1



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March 14 marks the annual celebration of the mathematical term Pi. Pi Day is also a great excuse to indulge in the beloved dessert — pie. In honor of Pi Day, enter Illinois Country Living's pie recipe contest. Any dessert pie recipe is welcome. It could be a recipe passed down for generations or one of your own.

You may only enter one recipe, and it must include instructions for both crust and filling. After recipes are reviewed, finalists will be selected for baking, and pies will be tasted by a panel of judges. Winning entries will be printed in the March 2024 issue of Illinois Country Living. All entries will be included on the magazine's website at www.icl.coop.

 **Enter online at www.icl.coop/contest**

Each entry MUST include your name, address and phone number, PLUS the name of your Illinois electric cooperative, or it will be disqualified. You may also mail entries to Illinois Country Living Recipe Contest, 6460 S. 6th St. Frontage Road East, Springfield, IL 62712.

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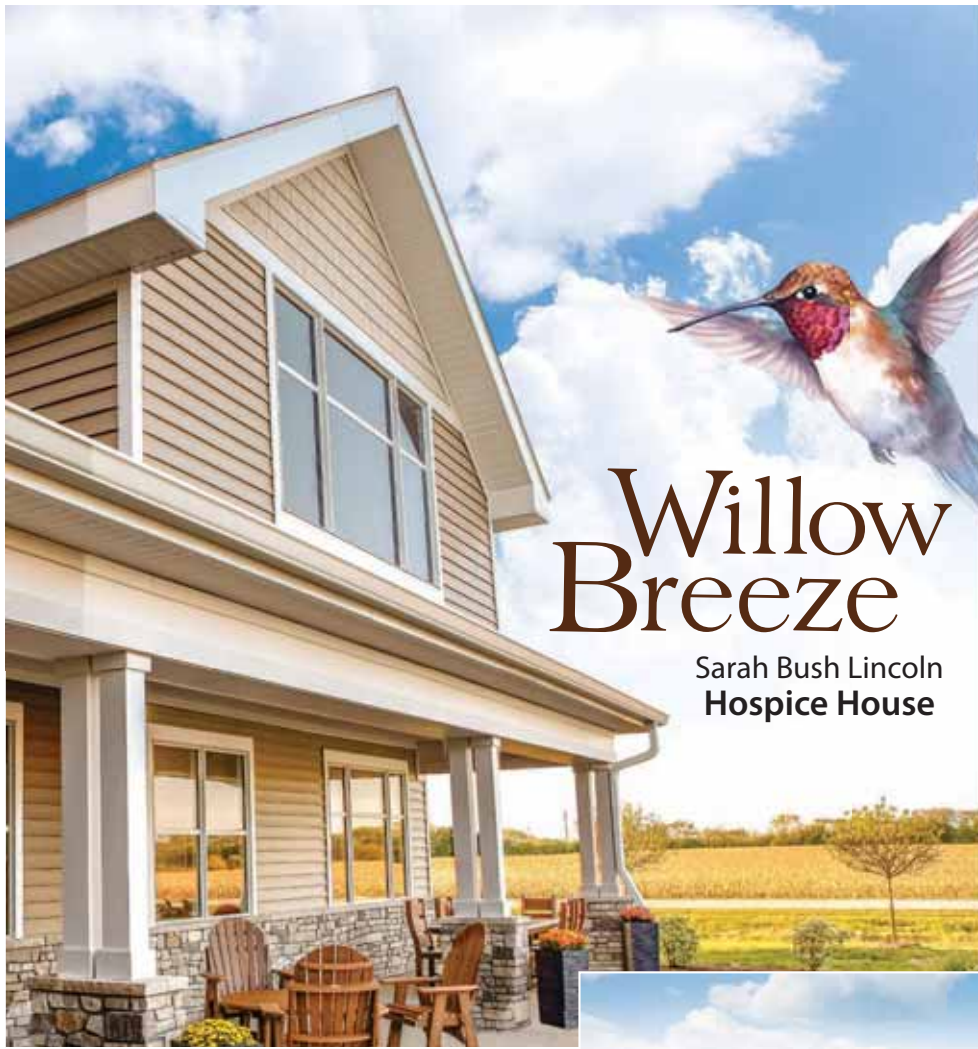
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