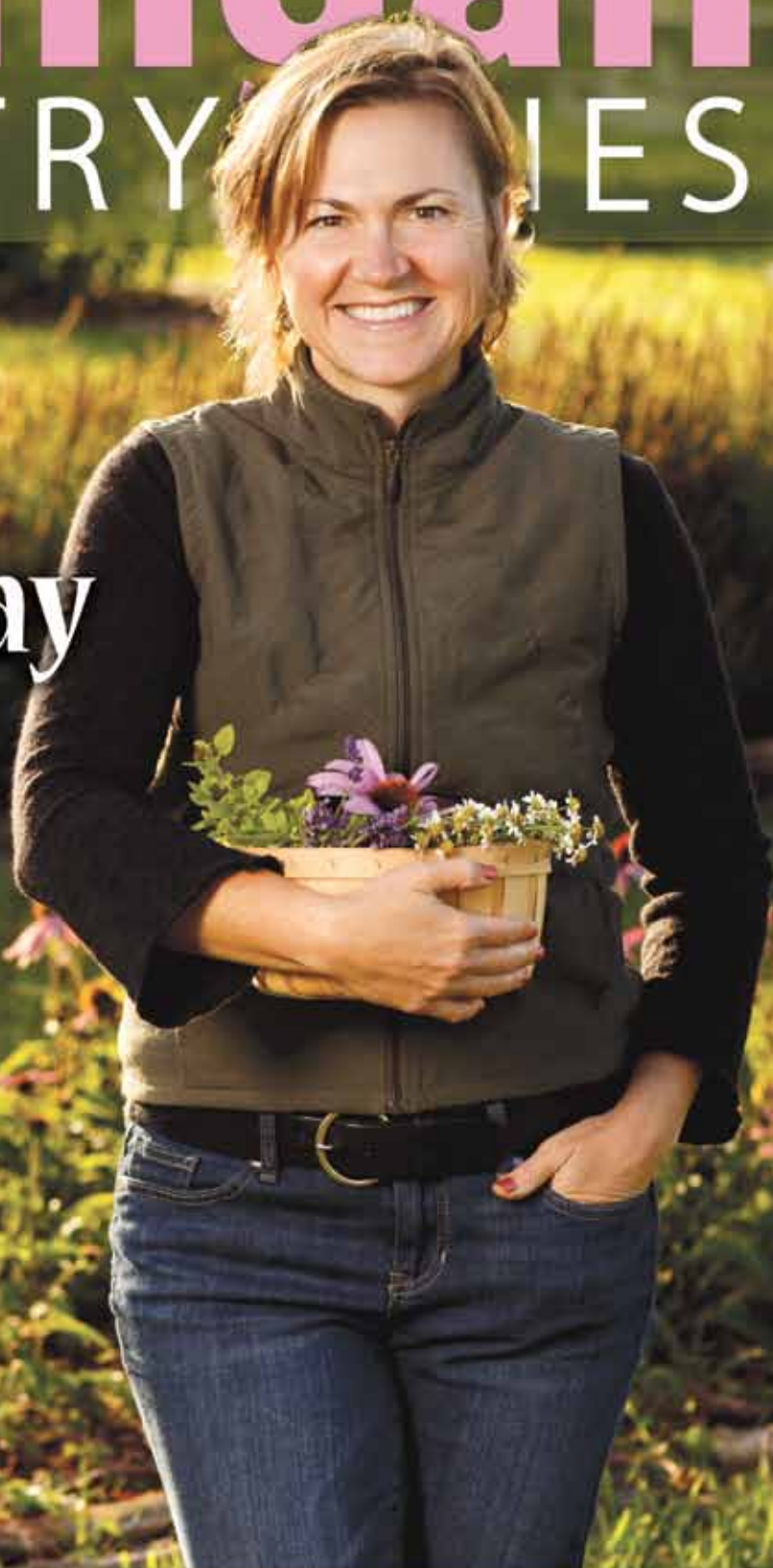


A Service of **HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative**

October 2013

# Michigan COUNTRY LIVES

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Connections



If the only thing bigger than your propane bill is your propane tank...



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**Change of Address:** Please notify your electric cooperative. See page 4 for contact information.



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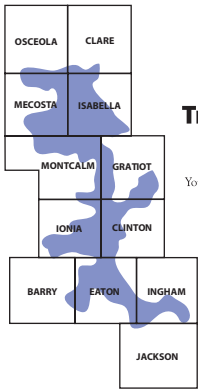


Michigan's Electric  
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countrylines.com

## On the Cover

A Cherryland Electric Co-op member, Angela Macke, owns the unique Light of Day Organic Farm & Tea Shop near Traverse City.

Photo – Beth Price Photography/bethpricephotography.com



## Tri-County Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

### Blanchard office:

3681 Costabella Avenue

Blanchard MI 49310

Open 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday

### Portland office:

7973 E. Grand River Avenue

Portland, MI 48875

Open 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday

### Electric bill/account questions:

517-647-7556 or 1-800-562-8232

### Pay by phone, anytime:

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## MANAGER'S MESSAGE

# Member Leadership Needed, Here and In Election Cycles



In May, our staff travels from district to district throughout our service area, hosting an evening of information (and supper) for all members who choose to attend. We reach about 1,300 people at these seven meetings. It's a busy two weeks for us, but we enjoy getting to see everyone again.

If you've attended your district meeting, you know that you're asked to attend the annual meeting in August. If you agree, you become a delegate, representing 100 of your neighbors. At this meeting, member-delegates approve reports, such as the financial statements and the board of directors election results.

Another purpose for the annual meeting is to allow the delegates to consider and vote upon any resolutions, bylaw amendments, or other actions brought up by the members at the May district meetings. Although these types of actions don't come up very often, the democratic process framework is there for you to use in controlling the co-op you own.

We also asked the members present to consider supporting the Action Committee for Rural Electrification (ACRE) through the Co-op Owners for Political Action program. For as little as \$2.08 monthly, you can help make sure there is a voice speaking on your behalf in Washington, D.C., and in Lansing.

ACRE truly is a grass-roots political action committee; the average contribution per member is just \$41. There are about 32,000 ACRE members across the USA,

including electric co-op members who serve on their local electric co-op boards, as well as co-op employees.

We have pointed out that every good business needs a business plan to be successful long-term, and in these days of increasing government regulations, we need to have a political plan to make sure our interests are considered when laws are passed or regulations written.

In the past, many of you have sent postcards to Congress on behalf of your electric co-op and its interests. Now we're asking you to take another step to help keep your electricity affordable and reliable. On the next page, you'll find a form you can use to join with us. Also, visit [Action.coop](http://Action.coop) to learn even more about issues affecting America's electric cooperatives and what you can do to help.

Your voice is more important than ever in these politics-packed times. Will you speak with us?

Mark Kappler  
General Manager



Join the conversation at  
[facebook.com/HomeWorks.org](https://facebook.com/HomeWorks.org)



☒ **Yes!** I want to help keep the voice of rural electric cooperatives heard in the political process by participating in ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action.

Please add the following amount to my monthly HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative electric bill:

- ☐ REGULAR MEMBER: \$2.08 per month (\$25 per year)
- ☐ CENTURY CLUB MEMBER: \$8.33 per month (\$100 per year)
- ☐ PRESIDENT'S CLUB MEMBER: \$41.66 per month (\$500 per year)\*
- ☐ OTHER: \$\_\_\_\_\_ per month
- ☐ I would like a complimentary ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action lapel pin.

I affirm that my contribution has been made with non-corporate funds:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Federal election law requires the following information for contributions exceeding \$200:**

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

The Action Committee for Rural Electrification (ACRE) of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association qualifies as a multi-candidate political committee and is registered with the Federal Election Commission.

*Contributions to ACRE/ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action are strictly voluntary. Contributions to federal and state political action committees are not deductible for tax purposes. Consumer-owners have the right to refuse to contribute without reprisal. Contributions may be stopped at any time upon notification to the cooperative. The contribution guidelines are suggestions only. You may contribute more or less than the recommended amount.*

Please mail your completed form to:

HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative  
7973 E. Grand River Ave.  
Portland, MI 48875

**Thank You!**





## White Deer Spotted in Great Lakes Energy Service Area

Rob Nielsen, assistant vegetation management supervisor at Great Lakes Energy (GLE), took these photos while working near Irons after an August storm caused 23 broken poles (left) and power outages to over 10,000 of the co-op's members. "I was patrolling line and bird-dogging a line crew from our Kalkaska service center when the white deer casually crossed the road in front of us. My co-worker slowed the truck so we wouldn't scare it, and I had enough time to get my phone and take a few pictures. I had seen a white deer in this area a few years ago, so maybe it was the same one."

After GLE posted the deer photo on Facebook, a few members noted seeing one in the same area, and an employee commented that a white deer is good luck. It did bring good luck, as all members had power restored the next day and Nielsen and the crews worked safely, but GLE hopes the luck continues through this winter, as last year brought two very large storms—causing the worst damage in decades—that resulted in nearly \$4 million in restoration costs.

## Teaching Students About Electricity...

► *There's an app for that!*



From nuclear power plants to solar powered homes, a free app called "Tesla Town" allows young students to explore and learn about different energy sources used to make electricity.

Named after Nikola Tesla, a Serbian-American engineer and inventor best known for his contributions to the alternating current (AC) electrical supply system, the app is aimed at teaching students in third through eighth grade about electricity generation and delivery.

Tesla Town, created by the Trustworthy Cyber Infrastructure for the Power Grid, is available for the iPad from the iTunes App Store or for use online at [tcpig.mste.illinois.edu/teslatown](http://tcpig.mste.illinois.edu/teslatown).

## Energy Efficiency *Tip of the Month*

Properly installed shades can be one of the most effective ways to improve windows' energy efficiency. Lower them during summer; in winter, raise during the day and lower at night on south-facing windows. Dual shades, with reflective white coating on one side and a heat-absorbing dark color on the other, can be reversed with the seasons and save even more energy. Learn more at [EnergySavers.gov](http://EnergySavers.gov).

Source – U.S. Department of Energy

**HOW TO CHANGE YOUR MAILING ADDRESS** Please call or mail information directly to your electric co-op, as they maintain the mailing list. See page 2 for your co-op's contact information.

# How We're *Special*

**E**very October since 1930, nonprofit cooperatives of all kinds have recognized National Cooperative Month as a way to educate the public about how co-ops work and to appreciate their many member-owners.

This year, we highlight the seven guiding principles of co-ops. But why should this interest you? Because these concepts lead electric co-ops—like the local one where you're an actual owner and it provides your electricity—to operate in a better way each day. Here are real-life examples of how these guides affect your co-op.

## 1 Voluntary & Open Membership

Co-ops are voluntary organizations, open to any person (in the case of electric co-ops, anyone who moves into their service area) willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination. In Michigan, and nationwide, annual or district meetings serve as a way for members to get to know the people who run their co-op and get updated on business matters.

## 2 Democratic Member Control

"Democratic Member Control" means members control their co-op (in most, by one member, one vote) by actively participating in decision-making and setting policies. This happens by voting for other members to represent them on a board of directors that governs the co-op and is accountable to all members.

Annual or district meetings serve here as the forum for electing directors, or some co-ops use mail-in ballots. Some also have member advisory groups or hold regular luncheons and focused meetings by inviting a small number of randomly chosen members to meet one-on-one with co-op staff, board members, and managers.

## 3 Members' Economic Participation

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the co-op's capital by allocating any surpluses for the following: developing the co-op, possibly by setting up reserves; benefitting members in proportion to their transactions with the co-op; and sup-

porting other member-approved activities.

Because electric co-ops are owned by their members, they do not create profits for distant shareholders. Any excess revenue ("margins") is allocated back to the members as capital credits, or patronage capital. Capital credits are "retired" and paid back to members based on their electricity purchases. Margins are used as working capital for a time, and as financial conditions allow, are paid back to members.

Allocating and retiring revenue that is

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TRUSTED.  
SERVING  
YOU.™**

above operating and maintenance costs to members helps distinguish co-ops, and they are proud to support their communities by putting money back into the pockets (and local economy) of the people they serve.

Nationally, electric co-ops have retired \$11 billion in capital credits since 1988, and \$768 million in 2012 alone.

## 4 Autonomy & Independence

Electric co-ops form a vast network across 47 states, and their power lines cover 42 percent of our nation's land mass. Those in Michigan (nine distribution and one generation and transmission co-op) serve over 50 percent of the state's land in providing power to over 700,000 people through 42,000 miles of line.

But what's unique is that each co-op is an autonomous, independent business.

And while they work "cooperatively" with neighboring co-ops, their members are the sole governors, and member-elected directors approve policies that mold the way they do business. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure the members' control and maintains the co-op's autonomy.

## 5 Education, Training & Information

Co-ops have a charge to keep their members informed—not just about co-op business and industry issues, but topics like energy efficiency, safety and community contributions.

For example, *Michigan Country Lines* magazine is one way your co-op keeps you updated on relevant news (you can also visit [countrylines.com](http://countrylines.com) and choose your co-op's name under the "My Co-op" menu), and some are present on Facebook and other social media. Plus, all Michigan electric co-ops offer Energy Optimization programs that help save money on your energy bills, plus youth programs that help the next generation learn about leadership, co-op careers, and other benefits.

Co-ops also train directors, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to co-op development. They also inform the general public, particularly young people and opinion leaders, about the nature and benefits of cooperation.

## 6 Cooperation Among Co-ops

While co-ops are independent entities, they still rely on one another to share resources, information and, in some cases, manpower. They have a long history of helping each other restore power after severe weather emergencies. Called "mutual-aid agreements," when your co-op needs extra hands after a storm or other disaster, co-ops from neighboring towns and states help get the power back on that much faster.

A Michigan example is the raging winter 2012 storm that swept nearly the entire northern lower peninsula and a good swatch of the U.P. Mutual aid among co-ops here and from other states brought the lights back on.

Co-ops serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-op movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

## 7 Concern for Community

Possibly the most visible principle of all is the last, as it drives electric co-ops to be good stewards of the communities they serve. While keeping member service foremost, co-ops undertake a variety of community projects—from food drives or charity fundraisers to school electrical safety demos and economic development efforts.

Even if there was no "concern for community" principle, every person who works at your electric co-op "lives there, too" — they're your friends and neighbors first.



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Cooperative**

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**By Phone:**

- ◆ Dial 1-877-999-3395
- ◆ Select "Make Payment" Option
- ◆ Key in Account Number, followed by #
- ◆ Listen to your Current Balance
- ◆ Key in Amount to Pay
- ◆ Key in Payment Information
- ◆ Wait for Payment Confirmation  
*(Make a note of your confirmation number)*

▶ Average time to pay: 2 minutes, 45 seconds



**By Internet:**

- ◆ Go to [homeworks.smarthub.coop/PayNow.html](http://homeworks.smarthub.coop/PayNow.html)
- ◆ Key in Amount to Pay
- ◆ Select "Pay Now"
- ◆ Select your Payment Option
- ◆ Select "Make Payment"
- ◆ Key in Payment Information
- ◆ Select "Continue"
- ◆ Wait for Payment Confirmation  
*(Make a note of your confirmation number)*

▶ Average time to pay: 1 minute, 50 seconds

**Pay Bill Now**  
*No registration required.*

Also at HomeWorks.org: Click on the **SmartHub** logo to log-in and view your energy use and account history.

**AutoPay Sign-up**



To sign up for recurring monthly payments from your financial institution, complete this form and return it to HomeWorks Tri-County, 7973 E. Grand River Ave., Portland, MI 48875. HomeWorks reserves the right to revoke an AutoPay subscription if bank approval is denied. Please continue to pay your bill until notified on your statement that AutoPay is active.

**Yes!** I authorize HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative and/or HomeWorks Tri-County Propane to charge my checking or savings account for any accrued balance on the account(s) listed:

Electric Account(s) # \_\_\_\_\_ Propane Account(s) # \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Checking Account (attach a voided check) ☐ Savings Account (attach a voided deposit slip)

Name on account: (please print) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Signature is required to activate autopayments. Phone and email is needed if we have questions regarding your AutoPay subscription)*

Save time and postage with any of these easy payment options. You can go one step further—choose to stop receiving a paper bill and download your statement as a pdf document from SmartHub at [homeworks.org](http://homeworks.org). Save your co-op money while reducing waste—it's easy!

☐ Checking this box authorizes us to stop mailing you a paper bill.



## Your Board In Action

### Meeting at Portland Aug. 19, your board of directors:

- Adopted a resolution in support of the ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action program.
- Reviewed members' evaluation comments from the August 17 Annual Meeting of the Delegates, held in Mt. Pleasant.
- Heard strategic planning presentations on the cooperative's strategic information technology plan and succession planning.
- Reviewed the July-August safety report, listing employee training as well as employee and public incidents.
- Read and approved Board Policy 114 – "Member Attendance at Board Meetings."
- Learned there were 137 new members in July.

### Time Set Aside for Members to Comment Before Board Meetings

The first 15 minutes of every board meeting are available for members who wish to address the board of directors on any subject.

Upcoming board meetings are set for **Oct. 28 and Nov. 25 at Portland**. Members who need directions to either office, or who wish to have items considered on the board agenda, should call 517-647-7554.

## Meter Tampering Is Illegal

**M**eter tampering is not only a personal safety issue, it is an unacceptable practice that will result in discontinuation of service and possible criminal prosecution.

It is the co-op member's responsibility to use reasonable diligence to protect the co-op's facilities located on the member's premises, and to prevent tampering or interference with such equipment. If the meter or wiring is tampered with or altered in any manner that results in theft of power, the co-op may discontinue service. In order for service to be restored, the member must agree to pay for the energy used, all costs of discovery and investigation (including rewards for discovery), and make provisions and pay charges for an outdoor meter installation or other metering changes as may be required.

If you suspect anyone of meter tampering and/or theft of power, please call HomeWorks Tri-County immediately at 517-647-7556.



**Wilson Centennial Farm** – The Wilson family farm began in 1899 when George and Carrie Bailey Wilson bought their first 40 acres in Ferris Township, Montcalm County, from Carrie's father, Sam. They built a temporary log cabin on that land, planting grapevines and apple trees, before building the house in 1904 and the barn in 1906.

Third generation Wilsons, grandchildren of George and Carrie, are from left: Yvonne and Richard Wilson, Carla Heinlein, James R. (kneeling) and Dianne Wilson; fourth generation: Karen Waldron, Brenda Wilson, James T. Wilson and Connie Wilson (current owners); and fifth generation: Andrew (sitting), Emma, and Ashley Wilson.

### Public Act 295: The Clean, Renewable and Efficient Energy Act 2012 Annual Energy Optimization Report HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative MPSC Case Number U-16687

HomeWorks Tri-County has contracted with the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association (MECA) to administer its Energy Optimization efforts in order to comply with P.A. 295. MECA filed a 4-year Energy Optimization plan with the MPSC on Aug. 1, 2011, as required by P.A. 295. This EO plan was approved by the MPSC on Nov. 10, 2011, and we began implementing the plan Jan. 1, 2012. The Wisconsin Energy Conservation Corporation (WECC) was selected to implement all Residential, Commercial and Industrial Programs, and the Energy Optimization website [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org). WECC has subcontracted with JACO, Michigan Energy Options, Franklin Energy, Morgan Marketing Partners, and Honeywell to assist with the implementation of the EO programs. MECA contracted with KEMA as the independent third party evaluation contractor for the certification of kilowatt-hour savings.

In 2012 HomeWorks Tri-County collected \$553,704 through the Energy Optimization Surcharge and spent \$378,650, resulting in an over-collection of \$175,054, which will be applied towards the 2013 EO Program delivery expenses and goal achievement. HomeWorks Tri-County achieved 2,483.1 megawatt hours of energy savings in 2012. The full report can be obtained at [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org) or [efile.mpsc.state.mi.us/efile](http://efile.mpsc.state.mi.us/efile).

# Shale Shock: Natural Gas May Edge Out Coal as Nation's Primary Power Source

This is fourth in a series on how electricity is generated. The others covered clean-coal technology, nuclear and wind power. Watch future issues for stories about renewables and other fuel sources.

Over the past decade, the North American natural gas industry has experienced a dramatic renaissance due to a combination of horizontal drilling and a shale fracturing technique called “hydraulic fracking.” With this technology, previously unrecoverable gas reserves located in shale formations deep underground are now flooding the market and it’s expected to continue for several decades.

This “shale gas revolution” promises to have a major impact on our nation’s energy future, particularly in shifting reliance from burning coal for power generation. The U.S. will overtake Russia as the world’s largest

gas producer by 2015, according to International Energy Agency Chief Economist Faith Birol. She notes the resulting cheap domestic supply should lead electric utilities toward a heavier reliance on natural gas for generating power.

Given the fact that consumption of natural gas for producing electricity has increased every year since 2009, Birol’s predictions appear to be under way. The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) reports that the natural gas share of U.S. electric power generation will increase from 25 percent today to 28 percent by 2035, with renewable energy’s share growing from 10 to 15 percent, and coal falling from 48 to

38 percent. However, early 2012 numbers indicated that pace may be accelerating.

When it comes to electricity, natural gas is most commonly used to fuel peaking plants—power stations that operate for brief periods during times of high electricity demand—and intermediate plants—those whose output changes daily in response to changes in electricity demand. Today, gas accounts for about 15 percent of the power produced by generation and transmission co-ops and 16 percent of all electric co-op power requirements nationwide.

Over the past two years, the relatively low price of gas combined with increasing federal and state regulation of power plant

This map shows shale gas “plays” across the 48 lower U.S. states. The term “play” is used in the oil and gas industry to refer to a geographic area that has been targeted for exploration.



Source – U.S. Energy Information Administration based on data from various published studies. Updated: May 9, 2011



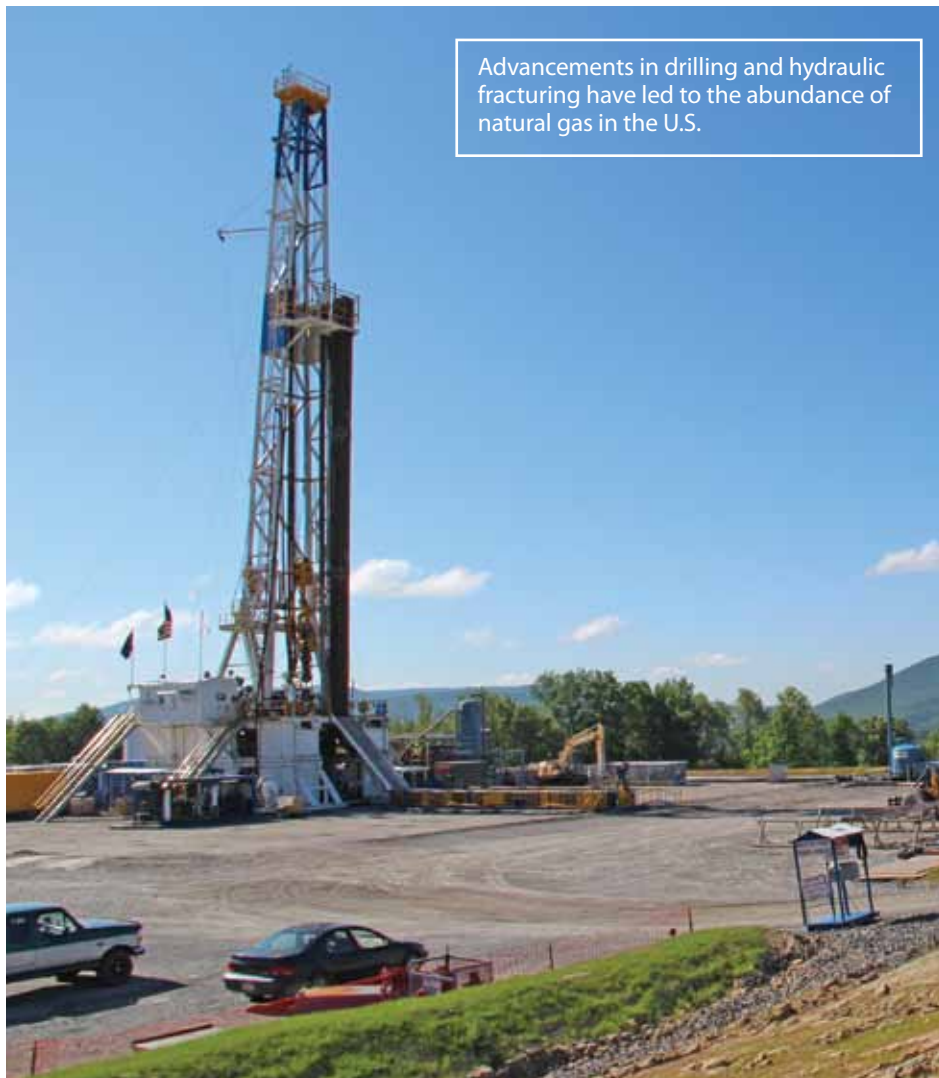
emissions have led to natural gas-fired plants being run for longer periods, while many older coal-fired baseload power plants—those providing dependable electric power year-round at a low cost—are being shut down or converted to gas operations. In fact, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has proposed a New Source Performance Standards (NSPS) rule that aims to curb the release of carbon dioxide and six other greenhouse gases blamed for contributing to climate change from new fossil fuel-fired power plants. The rule could also be expanded at some point to cover existing generation. The EPA is proposing an emissions cap of 1,000 pounds of carbon dioxide per megawatt-hour—a nearly impossible standard for coal-fired power plants, which average over 1,800 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions per megawatt-hour, to achieve.

“The only way to meet it is with carbon capture and storage [CCS] technology, which is prohibitively expensive and years away from being commercially viable,” David Hudgins, member and external relations director at Old Dominion Electric Cooperative (ODEC), a generation and transmission co-op based in Glen Allen, VA, told the U.S. House Subcommittee on Energy and Environment in June 2012. “No company will take the risk to invest billions of dollars in a power plant in the hopes that CCS will be developed.”

The new standards, as outlined, will push power plants away from coal and toward natural gas baseload generation because most newer combined-cycle gas facilities produce emissions within range of the new limit. But natural gas prices are more volatile than coal, making the fuel a dicey option.

“Historically, natural gas prices have varied widely, making reliance on gas as the sole fuel to provide affordable future baseload power risky at best,” says Rae Cronmiller, environmental counsel for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the trade organization representing over 900 electric co-ops in the U.S. “These risks are significantly enhanced because the cost of electricity derived from natural gas is largely driven by cost of the fuel itself. This differs from coal power, which is driven by capital costs. Also, natural gas in quantities necessary to provide year-round baseload generation is unavailable in some geographic areas.”

Despite this, utility experts believe that natural gas production will continue to increase and that the “blue flame” will surpass coal as the nation’s leading source of electric energy.



Source – Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association

### *Keeping it in perspective...*

Many shale formations are so large that only a limited portion has been extensively tested for its natural gas potential. The availability of large quantities of shale gas should enable the United States to produce more natural gas than it consumes for decades to come.

- According to Penn State University, Marcellus Shale—a shelf of black porous rock stretching from southwestern New York across northern and western Pennsylvania into eastern Ohio and down through West Virginia—could become the second largest natural gas field in the world, with a potential of over 500 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.
- Barnett Shale covers at least 24 counties in north Texas. It is one of the most active shale plays in the U.S., and estimated to contain nearly 26 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.
- Primarily in Louisiana and Texas, Haynesville Shale could contain as much as 251 trillion cubic feet of recoverable resources.
- Antrim Shale covering much of Michigan and Eagle Ford Shale in Texas are the latest examples of the still-emerging wealth of North American natural gas supplies.

Source – U.S. Energy Information Administration



# Tea at the Light of Day

Angela Macke has made her business of growing and producing teas a mission to make the world a better place.

1

**W**hen we think of tea, it is often in reference to afternoon tea, or a soothing drink to sip on a chilly day. Usually, it's just dropping a tea bag into boiling water and maybe adding a little milk or honey. At the Light of Day Organic Farm and Tea Shop in Leelanau County, it is so much more. They embrace the whole tea culture, including everything from the seeds to preparing and brewing "the perfect cup."

Angela Macke, an RN and mother of two, started Light of Day Organics because of her own personal experience with tea. "I love tea, and have experienced healing from this miracle of agriculture that decreases inflammation, and am continually intrigued by the people and culture that surround the practice of tea worldwide."

In fact, Macke has successfully managed

her own Crohn's disease, rheumatoid arthritis and lupus by incorporating tea into her daily life. She says even the name for the business she created came from a spiritual place for her, as "All good things good are from the light."

## Leaves of Wellness

Plenty of good things are definitely growing and brewing in the light at this impeccably maintained, 25-acre farm located just 8 miles west of Traverse City. Step inside the charming, cozy tea shop, and immediately you are met with wonderful aromas and a warm atmosphere. This is a no-pressure place.

Of course, they are in the business of selling tea, but Macke's mission is more about nurturing the body and soul and helping customers find the tea that not only suits their taste buds but helps bring wellness and balance to the body. "Every day I get emails

of testimonials on how tea has improved the quality of someone's life," she adds.

According to Macke, it's a four-day labor of love for each pound of tea. "Full-leaf tea is harvested by hand to ensure a high-quality, full leaf," she says. "It takes 70,000 tea leaves, chamomile blossoms, rose hips, clover tops, lavender, and others petals for one finished pound of tea."

While "true" tea is made with *Camellia sinensis* leaf, the tisanes Light of Day offers are made from blending components such as herbs, spices, seeds, bark, fruit and other ingredients. Tisane teas are caffeine-free.

## Balance and Harmony With The Earth

Light of Day isn't your ordinary farm in other ways, too. It is a Green America partner, which means they strive to be as paperless as







### Light of Day Organic Farm & Tea Shop

**Website:** [LightOfDayOrganics.com](http://LightOfDayOrganics.com)

**Email:** [Orders@LightOfDayOrganics.com](mailto:Orders@LightOfDayOrganics.com)

**Phone:** 231-228-7234

**Tea Shop:** 3502 E. Traverse Hwy., Traverse City; Noon – 5 p.m.

- (1) Angela Macke, a member of Cherryland Electric Cooperative, owns and operates the Light of Day Organic Farm and Tea Shop.
- (2) Light of Day Organics is a honey bee sanctuary and has four thriving hives.
- (3) Camellia sinensis tea leaves. Tea is the most labor intensive crop. 70,000 buds picked locally by hand are used for 1 pound of tea at Light of Day Organics.
- (4) Harvesting herbs—lemon balm, feverfew, echinacea, lavender.
- (5) Ceremonial grade matcha green tea is enjoyed in smoothie form.
- (6) Employee Susie McConnell packages the loose leaf teas.

possible, use only environmentally-friendly inks, and recycle everything they can.

Another exemplary attribute is they are Michigan's only Demeter-certified biodynamic farm. "These farms, including ours, abide by standards that exceed that of the National Organic Program and produce some of the most tasty, nutrient-dense food possible," Macke explains. The criteria for this international certification aren't easily met, but that didn't sway her from pursuing it. "It is a preventative approach and I believe it to be the kindest, most holistic practice that one can do for our planet."

The farm first had to be certified organic with the National Organic Program for three years. This involves following a Lunar calendar for growing, harvesting and seed collection, providing on-farm fertility, and using homeopathic remedies throughout the

growing season to support the plants' growth and development.

In keeping with her philosophy of balance and harmony with the earth, solar panels are used to help lower their electric bills, as the irrigation system and food dryers use a lot of energy. Plans for 2014 include expanding their solar array and adding an architecturally-designed functional stand to hold the panels and create a shaded area that visitors can sit under and enjoy their teas during a visit.

### Fruits of Labor

Managing a farm, employees and family is no easy task, but Macke's family pitches in

when they can. Her 12 and 14-year-old boys have been helping since they were toddlers. "They are excellent botanical harvesters, planters, preparation helpers, weeders, and assist with mowing, apple coring, packaging up bags and labeling tins. They have done it all," she says proudly.

About her role on the farm, Macke says, "This is the most meaningful and hardest work I've ever done."

*Lisa Marie Metzler is a certified trainer and freelance writer specializing in health and fitness. Her articles have appeared in magazines such as Healthy & Fit, IDEA Fitness Journal, Positive Thinking, Hope for Women, and more.*



# What's for School (or Your) Lunch?

School lunches can include local food, and be healthy and waste-free too!

**S**chool is back in swing, and lunches may have already become repetitive and limited. But there are many healthy, locally-available foods that can add zing to school or other lunch options.

Choosing an exciting, varied menu from local foods for “brown bag” lunches doesn’t have to be challenging, either. Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) offers an availability chart to help you track what’s available-when, and there’s a lot of fruits and veggies that are still in season. And, farmers’ markets aren’t the only place to find fresh fare—many local grocery stores or chains also take pride in offering locally-grown, produce. Many locally-made artisan foods are offered, too, including breads and bakery items, cheeses, deli meats, salsas, sauces, pickles, jams, and jellies.

## Fruits, Veggies Still In-season

Fresh broccoli, cauliflower, bell peppers, zucchini, cucumbers, carrots and raw green beans

can all go into a lunch as crunchy vegetable sticks. Including a dip or peanut butter adds one more thing kids love to eat and do.

Fresh fruits include apples, peaches, plums, pears, raspberries and grapes. Second plantings of lettuce, onions, celery, spinach and other greens are also be found. Paired with a protein of cheese or meat slices, or a nut-based spread on crackers or bread, you have easily increased your menu options.

## Don't Forget Pumpkins!

Besides the fun of carving them, make your family smile by preserving and drying pumpkin and its seeds, and making pumpkin preserves.

A how-to fact sheet from MSU Extension called “Michigan Fresh: Using, Storing and Preserving Pumpkins,” includes suggested varieties, a yield chart and processing times,

plus storage and food safety tips for choosing them and avoiding cross-contamination. Find this and other fact sheets on various topics at [msue.anr.msu.edu/program/info/mi\\_fresh](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/program/info/mi_fresh), and more will be featured throughout the new growing season.

## More Quick Tips

Cutting up vegetables and fruits in advance and pre-packaging them in small lunch-sized containers can save lots of time when you are packing lunch, and serve as fast after-school snacks that kids can help themselves to with minimal fuss.

Involve your kids in helping to package items for the week’s lunches. Research cited recently in *Science Daily News* shows that kids who are involved in food preparation are more likely to eat healthier foods.

— Beth Clawson

# Schools to Serve Michigan Fruit

**S**tarting this fall, public school students in 114 districts will enjoy Michigan-grown fruit, thanks to a partnership with growers, Cherry Capital Foods, and Chartwells School Dining Services.

“This may be the largest farm-to-school project to date in the country,” says Kelly Lively, special projects and school liaison for Cherry Capital Foods.

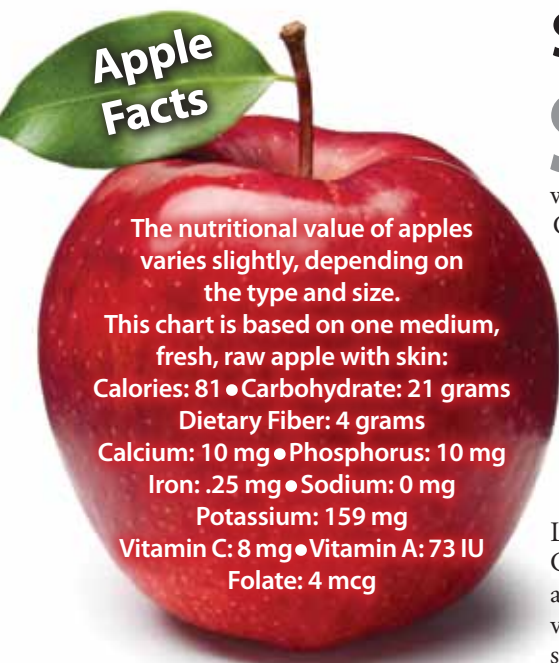
The Traverse City food distributor will gather, store and coordinate the transportation of apples to districts statewide, including parts of the Upper Peninsula. Growers such as Friske Orchards, a Great Lakes Energy Co-op member in Antrim County, Gavin Orchards in Coopersville, and dozens of other farms, will provide many varieties throughout the year, in different sizes specialized to the ages of students in

each school. Educators at MSU Extension and other regional experts expect a bumper crop this year.

“Through our partnership, we’re able to provide fresh, local foods that are at the height of their nutritional value to Michigan students,” explains Brain Casey, Chartwells’ regional vice president. Because supplies allow it this year, peaches and possibly pears will also be available to schools.

Cherry Capital is also hosting a statewide event called “Michigan’s Apple Crunch!” that encourages people of all ages to bite into an apple on Oct. 24. It’s part of Food Day, a national promotion of healthy, affordable and sustainable food. For more information, visit [cherrycapitalfoods.com](http://cherrycapitalfoods.com) or call Kelly Lively at 231-943-5010.

— Kendra Wills



Find an Extension expert in your area by calling 888-MSUE4MI (888-678-3464) or visit [expert.msue.msu.edu](http://expert.msue.msu.edu)



# Top 10 Myths About Geothermal Heating, Cooling

*(with apologies to David Letterman)*

**10.** *Geothermal heat pumps can only be installed in rural areas.* About 15 years ago, the first McDonalds (at Ford and Hix Road in Westland, MI) to have an energy efficient geothermal system was installed, and it made CNN news. Later, a geothermal system was installed at CanField Lofts in downtown Detroit. Both are very urban areas.

**9.** *It is too cold in Michigan to use geothermal heat pumps.* Geothermal heat pumps have been installed north of the arctic circle and 1 degree from the equator and everywhere in between (of course then, including Michigan).

**8.** *You need a well to install geothermal.* There are three types of geothermal systems—open, ground source, and closed loop. Closed loop geothermal systems do not use a well.

**7.** *Geothermal units blow cold air (as opposed to me, who is full of hot air).* Old, less-efficient furnaces blow very hot air at around 130 degrees, then shut off. The house gets hot and then cold, and then repeats that cycle. Geothermal units are designed to run more continuous (like cruise control), blowing air at around 100 degrees. This way, a house stays consistently far more comfortable. When compared with an old furnace it does feel a bit colder, but 100 degrees is more than enough to maintain a comfortable house.

**6.** *Geothermal units have a bigger carbon footprint than gas or propane furnaces.* A large engineering study done for the Michigan Public Service Commission showed that geothermal units either have the same carbon footprint as gas furnaces or a 5 percent less carbon footprint. Because geothermal units run on electricity that is generated from coal it is not as clean as natural gas, but they are so much more efficient that it balances out to a smaller carbon footprint.

**5.** *Geothermal units are more expensive than other furnaces.* The first cost of a

geothermal unit is higher than a gas or propane unit. But when you add the operating cost over the geothermal unit's lifetime, it will usually come out less expensive than gas, and significantly less than propane. Think about a car, for example. One costs \$10,000 and gets 10 miles per gallon. The other costs \$20,000 and gets 40 miles per gallon. When you calculate the total expense over the next 200,000 miles, the car that gets 40 miles per gallon is cheaper. Besides, the same geothermal unit can serve both as a furnace for heating and provide air conditioning in the summer, which helps save even more energy and money.

**4.** *You must put a geothermal heat pump in the basement.* A geothermal unit does not have a flame, therefore it requires no venting and can be placed anywhere.

**3.** *A geothermal unit eliminates the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.* A geothermal unit has no flame, so it produces no carbon dioxide. However, you may have other gas appliances, such as a gas dryer, fireplace, stove or gas water heater that could cause a gas leak.

**2.** *I was elected executive director of the Michigan Geothermal Energy association because of my good looks and incredible intelligence.* Anyone who knows me knows better.

**1.** *You say you can't afford a geothermal system.* If you're building a new home or looking to replace your existing heating and air conditioning system and plan on staying in your house more than five years, I say you can't afford not to go with a geothermal system. Geothermal can provide a potential of 30 percent or more savings vs. gas, and 60 percent or more vs. propane.

Larry Kaufman is executive director of the Michigan Geothermal Energy Association.



The Michigan Geothermal Energy Association (MGEA) was formed in 1993 by geothermal contractors, manufacturers, distributors and electric utilities to promote high quality geothermal energy systems that meet the comfort, efficiency and environmental needs of customers. Earthcomfort.com, MGEA's informative site for consumers, is the best place to learn about geothermal energy and find a geothermal contractor.



# Eat Together

How to reclaim the tradition of eating together at the family table.

**T**hese are busy days and most are over-scheduled with family members headed in different directions. Families are likely to eat only a meal or two together each week. Are we missing out if we don't eat together?

The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University conducted a 2011 study that showed families who have fewer dinners (less than a few nights a week) together had teens who were four times more likely to use tobacco, twice as likely to use alcohol and two-and-a-half times more likely to use marijuana. But a more recent study in the *Journal of Marriage and Family* (June 2012) suggests the benefits of family dinner aren't as strong or lasting as previous studies suggested. After doing interviews with middle or high school adolescents, and again between ages 18 and 26, the study suggests the *extent* of parental involvement in their kids' daily lives—not just at the dinner table—is most important.

But the dinner table is still a time-honored tradition that offers a great way to connect that is unlike any other. Neil Kosofsky, a marriage and family therapist at the Relationship Institute in Royal Oak, MI, says gathering for dinner is an opportunity to feel connected and strengthen a sense of security and attachment to parents and loved ones. Simply eating dinner at the same table every day, he adds, doesn't guarantee families will grow more emotionally attached or kids will have a stronger feeling of security. "What *is* essential is the time spent together, sharing an experience, engaging, and speaking and listening to each other."

## Make a Reservation

"Create family rituals. Schedule a weekly Friday night or a Sunday brunch," Kosofsky suggests. Make it something everyone looks forward to, and connect it to something meaningful—like visiting grandparents, or a fun, family game night.

Teens may not relish family dinners at first, but strive for at least one night a week and let them pick a favorite dinner to make or bring home. Younger kids may enjoy theme dinners or picnics in the living room. Get the whole family involved with prep, and keep



Photo Courtesy - Dodie Ferguson

When the Ferguson family, members of Cherryland Electric Cooperative, eats together it's a chance to discuss their day and what's on their minds. Mom Dodie also says it's a good time to talk about friends or family who are in need of prayer and find out how everyone is doing in school.

the mood light. The food doesn't have to look perfect. Help create regular memories they will later cherish.

"It is certainly hard to get everyone together and have a healthy dinner at night," agrees Dodie Ferguson, a Michigan parent of five. "My 15-year-old son has found that he really enjoys cooking and we love the help. Some days dinner can be a little 'different', but it's always fun and its worth having the extra hand."

Kids may not appreciate the rituals now, but as they grow into adulthood, they will treasure those times and model them for their own families, Kosofsky adds.

## Be Fully Present

"The most important thing our kids want from us is our time and attention," says Karen Friend Smith, author of "Reclaim Dinner." If you come to dinner fully present, your kids will look forward to it because they know they have your attention, and it provides time to learn table manners, listen, and take turns in a conversation.

Here are some conversation starters:

❗ If you could be an animal, what animal would you be?

❗ If you could pick your own name, what would it be?

❗ If you could have any super power, what would it be and why?

❗ What was your high point of the day and low point of the day?

❗ If you won \$1,000, what would you spend it on?

❗ Do you have a recurring dream?

❗ If you had free lessons for a year, what would you want to learn?

❗ What kind of music are you listening to?

## Take the Challenge!

A website called [reclaimdinner.com](http://reclaimdinner.com) offers a free, 30-day challenge to raise awareness about the benefits of family dinner and is a stimulus to get started. You simply make the pledge to eat dinner at home more often. A daily email is sent to keep you motivated with ideas, conversation starters, recipes, and more.

"Some days will be magical. Others will be a disaster," Smith says. "But collectively, over time, you will be amazed at what this one simple practice does for you and your family."

*Lisa Marie Metzler is a freelance journalist who's written over 200 articles for magazines such as Healthy & Fit, Positive Thinking, and Families First.*





# Mute Swans Are Crowding Other Species

**S**wans have a special place in art and literature. Youngsters are told about the ugly duckling—a young bird that is ostracized by the others until it grows into a beautiful swan. Swans also figure prominently in several major operas and Tchaikovsky's famous "Swan Lake" is among the most-performed of all classical ballets.

But, as with any species, there can be a downside. In Michigan, mute swans are the largest and most numerous, and have become a nuisance.

Why? There are just too many. Mute swans are often overly aggressive toward other waterfowl and humans. They are not native to Michigan and are crowding out other wildlife, doing considerable environmental damage to wetland habitats, and at times creating a public safety hazard.

Among the largest waterfowl in the world, mute swans can measure up to 5 feet long and weigh over 30 pounds, with a wing span of nearly 10 feet. So named because they make little sound—except for hissing when they're agitated—they contrast dramatically with the aptly named trumpeter swans, which are a native species on Michigan's threatened list.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has partnered with other conservation groups for over a decade to increase trumpeter swan populations here. Although the effort is beginning to bear fruit, there is evidence that mute swans are getting in the way.

Mute swans were brought from Europe in the mid-1800s to adorn parks and private estates. The first Michigan pair was introduced in Charlevoix County in 1919, and we now have the largest population of them in the United States.

The DNR estimates breeding mute swan numbers at about 15,500—three times the number a decade ago—and expanding at about 10 percent a year. Long-lived (close to 20 years) birds capable of producing five cygnets per pair annually, they have few natural enemies.

Numerous mute swan attacks on small boaters (canoeists, kayakers, jet skiers) have been documented, some resulting in injury, and in one case death (in another state), when an angry bird capsized a canoeist. These birds will attack people on land who wander too close to their nests or young and drive other waterfowl—ducks, geese and other swans—



Mute Swan



Trumpeter Swan

from suitable habitat. For example, a nesting colony of black terns (also a species of concern) on the Michigan shore of the U.P. declined when mute swans nested nearby and drove them away. Black tern counts have been depressed in the area ever since.

Mute swans congregate in huge flocks and can inflict significant damage on aquatic habitat, feeding heavily on vegetation that is food and cover to fish and other wildlife. Anglers complain that swans virtually wipe out weed beds in some lakes.

But population-control efforts can bear fruit, as removal of mute swans has resulted in other species moving back into the habitat. At Crow Island State Game Area (near Saginaw), a pair of trumpeters took up residence after the mute swans were removed.

The DNR has long removed mute swans from game areas, where protecting native wildlife is the goal. But as the mute swan population continues to grow, the DNR has increased efforts to reduce them to 2,000 by 2030.

"If we didn't do anything to reduce mute swan populations, we could have 24,000 in

five years," explains Barbara Avers, waterfowl and wetlands specialist with the DNR's Wildlife Division. "If we allow this to happen, Michigan's wetlands and wildlife would suffer and there would be unacceptable levels of conflict with people."

Many conservation groups—including the Michigan Audubon Society, Ducks Unlimited and the Kellogg Biological Station of Michigan State University—are on board with the DNR's goals.

The DNR dispatches aggressive mute swans that cause conflicts with humans and issues permits for private property owners to remove them or their nests or eggs. In the case of commonly held private property—such as a private lake—the DNR has rules to make sure a majority of the landowners agree before these permits are issued.

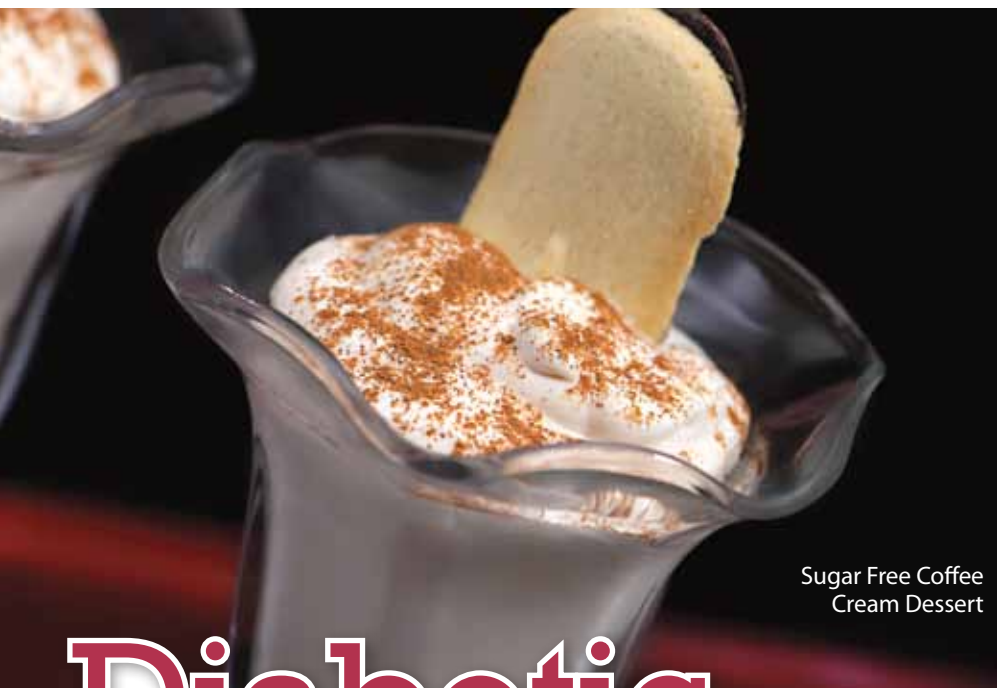
Adult mute swans are easily identified by their orange bills. Native species—trumpeter and tundra swans—have black bills.

The DNR has a long way to go in bringing mute swans within their management goals, but considers it an important step in maintaining other native waterfowl populations, such as ducks, geese, and even other swans.

*Bob Gwizdz is an avid outdoor writer featured in many hunting and fishing publications.*







Sugar Free Coffee Cream Dessert

Photos – 831 Creative

# Diabetic Favorites

Diabetic dishes don't have to be bland. These diabetic-friendly recipes allow you to have the flavor without all the guilt.

## Sugar Free Coffee Cream Dessert

8 ozs. cream cheese, softened  
1 c. strong coffee, cooled  
1/2 c. lowfat milk  
1 1-oz. box white chocolate sugar free pudding  
8-oz. tub sugar free Cool Whip®  
graham cracker crumbs, dash of cinnamon,  
Nilla wafer or Milano cookies, optional  
Beat first four ingredients together and fold in the Cool Whip. Spoon into Sunday cups. Top with 1 tablespoon crushed graham crackers and a sprinkle of cinnamon or stand a Nilla wafer cookie in the top.

Nita Ringler, White Cloud

## Baked Tilapia or Flounder With Peppers and Tomatoes

4 6-oz. flounder filets  
1/4 t. salt  
freshly ground pepper, to taste  
2 bell peppers, red and yellow  
cooking spray  
1 sweet onion, chopped  
3 large garlic cloves  
2 tomatoes, seeded and chopped

1 T. minced fresh tarragon or 1 t. crushed dried tarragon  
1 T. balsamic vinegar

Preheat oven to 375°F. Place the filets in an oven-proof baking dish; sprinkle with salt and pepper and set aside. Char the bell peppers using either a gas range burner or the broiler. Quickly place in a paper bag to steam. Remove when cool enough to handle. Remove the skin and seeds; chop. Coat a non-stick skillet with cooking spray. Sauté the onion and garlic until onions are transparent; add the bell peppers and tomatoes and cook stirring over high heat for 3 minutes. Stir in the tarragon and vinegar. Spoon the vegetable mixture over the fish fillets; bake for 15 to 18 minutes until the fish is just opaque. Serve immediately.

Carole Buskirk, Dowagiac

## Dieters Raspberry Torte

1-lb. box graham crackers  
1 23-oz. jar natural applesauce  
1 large (6-oz.) box sugar free raspberry (or strawberry) gelatin  
1 large carton frozen light whipped topping

Line a 9 x 13-inch pan of whole graham crackers. In medium bowl, stir together the applesauce and dry gelatin powder. Mix well. Spread 1/4 of apple sauce mixture in a very thin layer over crackers. Cover with a layer of whipped topping. Repeat layers 3 times. Refrigerate 3 to 4 hours before serving.

Marcella Sturm, Byron Center

## Low Fat Gravy

1/2 c. finely chopped onion  
1/2 c. finely chopped mushrooms  
2 T. chopped, fresh parsley  
2 c. reduced beef or chicken broth, divided  
2 T. cornstarch  
pinch of pepper

Sauté onion, mushrooms and parsley in a 1/4 cup of broth. Combine pepper, cornstarch, and 1/2 cup of broth; stir until smooth. Add to pan with remaining broth. Bring to boil and cook for 2 minutes, stirring occasionally. Makes 2 cups.

Norma Francel, Edwardsburg

## Cream Puff Dessert

1 c. water  
1 stick butter  
1 c. flour  
4 eggs  
8 ozs. cream cheese (softened)  
3 1/2 c. milk  
2 small pkgs. sugar free instant pudding mix  
8-oz. carton sugar free Cool Whip  
Bring water and butter to a boil over medium heat. Add flour all at once and stir until smooth ball forms. Remove from heat and let stand for 5 minutes. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Spread into greased 9 x 13-inch pan and bake at 400° for 30 to 35 minutes or until puffed and brown. Cool completely. Beat cream cheese while gradually adding milk. Add pudding mixes and blend until smooth. Spread over puff and top with cool whip. Keep refrigerated.

Karen Muir, Niles

## Fettuccine Alfredo

2 t. margarine  
3 cloves garlic, chopped  
4 1/2 t. all-purpose flour  
1 1/2 c. fat-free milk  
1/2 c. grated Parmesan cheese  
3 1/2 t. Neufchâtel cheese  
1/4 t. white pepper  
4 ozs. fettuccine

1/4 c. chopped fresh parsley  
Melt margarine in medium saucepan. Add garlic; cook and stir 1 minute. Stir in flour; gradually stir in milk. Cook until sauce thickens, stirring constantly. Add cheeses

and pepper; cook until melted. Cook fettuccine without salt, drain; top with sauce and parsley. Serves 4.

*Amy Breimayer, Westphalia*

## Diabetic Chocolate Pudding Cake

1 box reduced sugar Pillsbury® Devil's Food cake mix  
1 1/4 c. water  
1/2 c. oil  
3 eggs  
1 large box sugar free chocolate pudding, prepared as directed

Set oven to 350°. Prepare cake as directed on box in a 9 x 13-inch pan. Bake for 31 to 35 minutes or until a toothpick inserted comes out clean. After cake is done and still warm, poke holes throughout the cake with a knife and spread the prepared pudding over the top. The pudding will soak into the cake making it super moist. Top with whipped topping and refrigerate immediately.

*Laura Russman, Portland*

## Bottomless Chicken Pot Pie

1 can condensed cream of chicken soup  
1/4 c. fat free milk  
3 c. cooked chicken, cubed  
16-oz. bag frozen mixed vegetables, thawed and drained  
pepper

1 prepared pie crust

Preheat oven to 425°. Mix together soup, milk, chicken, vegetables and pepper and place into deep dish pie pan. Cover with pie crust, sealing it to the side and cut slits for steam vents. Place on baking sheet to catch boil-over and bake for 40 to 45 minutes. Let sit for a few minutes; cut and serve. Without the bottom crust and by using a small serving, this is only 22g carbohydrates per serving. Add a salad and you have a healthy meal. Serves 8.

*Lois Phelps, Stanwood*

## Peach Tapioca

1 c. reduced-fat milk  
1 1/2 T. quick cooking tapioca  
1/2 egg lightly beaten  
3/4 c. peaches, peeled and coarsely chopped  
1 1/2 T. no-sugar-added apricot spread  
few drops vanilla extract

Combine milk, tapioca and egg in 1-quart saucepan; let stand 5 minutes. Stir in peaches and apricot spread. Cook and stir over medium heat until mixture comes to rolling boil; cook 1 minute more. Remove from heat; stir in vanilla. Cool slightly; stir. Place plastic wrap directly on surface of pudding;



Diabetic Chocolate Pudding Cake

chill. Makes 2 servings (about 1/2 cup per serving). If fresh peaches are not in season, use frozen peaches and add 1 to 2 packets sugar substitute to milk mixture.

*Julie Ann Bentz, Scottville*

## Tuna Melt

2 whole wheat english muffins, halved  
1 6.5-oz. can tuna in water, drained  
3/4 c. coleslaw mix  
1 1/2 T. light mayonnaise  
1 T. dijon mustard  
1 T. dried dill weed  
1 green onion, chopped  
1/3 c. reduced fat cheddar cheese, shredded  
pepper to taste

Mix mayonnaise, mustard and dill weed in a medium bowl. Add drained, flaked tuna, coleslaw mix and green onion. Mix well. Lightly toast english muffins. Put tuna mixture on each half, dividing cheese among the 4 halves. Broil 4 inches from heat until cheese is melted.

*Vicki Blaauw, Vanderbilt*

## Texas Caviar

2 t. olive oil  
1 small eggplant, peeled and chopped  
1 c. onion, chopped  
1 jalapeño pepper, seeded and finely chopped (optional)  
1 15-oz. can salsa-style chunky tomatoes, undrained  
1 15-oz. can black-eyed peas, drained and rinsed  
1 t. ground cumin  
1/2 c. minced fresh cilantro  
Baked fat-free tortilla chips

Coat large nonstick skillet with cooking spray and heat oil over medium heat until hot. Add eggplant, onion and jalapeño pepper; cook and stir 10 minutes. Stir in tomatoes, black-eyed peas and cumin. Cook 5 minutes, stirring frequently. Remove from heat; stir in cilantro. Serve with tortilla chips.

*Amy Breimayer, Westphalia*

## Sugar Free Creamsicle Cake

1 pkg. sugar free yellow cake mix  
2 small boxes sugar free orange jello  
1 small box sugar free vanilla instant pudding  
1 c. 2% milk  
2 t. vanilla

1 tub sugar free whipped topping

Bake cake as directed in 9x13-inch pan. Cool completely. Poke holes in cooled cake (with a meat fork). Mix 1 box sugar free orange jello with 1 cup boiling water. When dissolved, add 1 cup cold water and mix well. Pour over cake. Cover and refrigerate for 4 hours. Mix sugar free instant pudding with cold milk, other box of jello and vanilla. Beat with whisk until thick. Fold in whipped topping. Frost cake with pudding mix.

*Chris Gonnering, Hawks*

## Healthy Eating Tips

- Pay attention to labels. Look for heart healthy ingredients, such as whole wheat flour and oats.
- Avoid unhealthy ingredients, such as hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oil.
- Look at total carbohydrates, not just sugar.
- Divide up your plate. Fill half with vegetables, one quarter with a lean protein such as fish, beans or tofu, and the other quarter with a whole grain, such as brown rice, quinoa or whole wheat pasta.

**Submit your recipe!** Contributors whose recipes we print in 2013 will be entered in a drawing to win a prize: Country Lines will pay their January 2014 electric bill (up to \$200)! The 2013 winner will be announced in the January 2014 issue.

Thanks to all who send in recipes! Please send in your favorite **"Baked Goods"** recipes by **Nov. 10** and **"Cooking For One"** recipes by **Dec. 10**.

Mail to: Country Lines Recipes, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864; or email [recipes@countrylines.com](mailto:recipes@countrylines.com).



Visit recipe editor Christin McKamey's new website, **veggiechick.com**, for healthy, vegetarian recipes and info!

# Fight Vampire Power

There's a scary character lurking in your home. It's vampire power and it's out to get your energy. Many electronics in your home continue using power even when turned off, and this continuous draw is known as "phantom" or "vampire" power.

Because appliances, electronics and lighting account for the second largest portion of your energy bill, and most people have about 40 different electronics plugged in at all times, vampire power adds up quickly. As much as 10 percent of your bill—or \$100 per year—may be going toward needless energy use.

## What Sucks Energy?

Some of the most common vampire power offenders are appliances or electronics with light-up displays that stay on when the device is off, including cell phone chargers, TVs, DVD players, DVRs, cable boxes, desk/laptop computers and monitors, wireless routers, and speakers.

## Defend Your Sockets

Here are some proven ways to reduce vampire power-related energy waste:

- Unplug appliances and electronics when

## Smart power strip in action



you're not using them.

- Purchase ENERGY STAR® qualified appliances and electronics (they use the least amount of power in standby mode).

- Unplug battery chargers as soon as batteries are fully charged.

- Use a wattmeter. Plug electronics into this device to see how much energy is being used.

## Automatic Savings With a Smart Power Strip

Using a smart power strip is a convenient way to fight off vampire power. It's similar to conventional power strips, however, it can sense when a main or master electronic device—such as a TV or computer—is turned off, and automatically shut down

other devices associated with it (DVD player, gaming device, cable/satellite box). By completely shutting down these devices, vampire power is destroyed.

A smart power strip can reduce your energy use by 5 to 10 percent. It uses about 1 watt of electricity when turned on, and 0 watts when the control outlets are off. Plus, you can receive a \$10 Energy Optimization rebate when you buy a qualifying smart power strip.

## Savings for Everyone

Not only can HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative help you fight vampire power, but we have more ways to help residents, businesses and farmers save energy. See our current incentives at [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org) or call 877-296-4319 for details.

# TRICK OR treat



## Beware of vampire power

Did you know that when many appliances are turned off they still use energy? That's a bloody waste. Defend yourself against vampire energy drain without having to wear garlic. Simply plug your electronics into a smart power strip to truly turn them off, eliminating vampire energy waste for good. **Start saving today—buy a smart power strip and get a \$10 Energy Optimization rebate.**

**ENERGY TIP: Smart power strips automatically use 5-10% less energy and are ideal for TV and computer equipment.**

ONLINE: [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org) PHONE: 877.296.4319



Energy  
Optimization



Tri-County Electric  
Cooperative

Energy Optimization programs and incentives are applicable to Michigan service locations only. Other restrictions may apply. For a complete list of participating utilities, visit [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org).



## Information For All Customers of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric

Your cooperative offers a program called the Tri-County Electric People Fund, which is funded through the voluntary rounding up of your monthly utility bill to the next whole dollar amount. An all-volunteer board of directors appointed by the member-elected board of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative is charged with distributing the funds throughout the Cooperative's service area to support charitable efforts in and around the communities we serve.

Funds from the People Fund have been distributed to educational programs, fire departments, medical emergency groups, recreational organizations, senior organizations, numerous local charities, and many local families and individuals. A copy of the People Fund's annual report detailing contributions is available and has been highlighted in previous issues of *Country Lines* magazine. All grants made are also listed at our website at [homeworks.org](http://homeworks.org).

Your participation in the Tri-County Electric People Fund is VOLUNTARY. If at any time you wish to discontinue participation in the People Fund, please let us know and we will be happy to remove your account.

If you are participating, your monthly bill is rounded up to the next whole dollar amount. If your bill is \$78.42, it would be rounded up to \$79. The 58 cents would then be contributed by HomeWorks on your behalf to the People Fund, to be used as explained above. A customer's average annual contribution is approximately \$6. Your annual contribution to the People Fund is tax deductible and is reported on your monthly statement in January of the following year.

For additional information regarding the Tri-County Electric People Fund, you can contact the cooperative office by mail, or call 1-877-466-3957, menu option one.

## Save With Your Card at These Local Businesses

Use your Co-op Connections® Card to save on local goods and services, national products, even your prescriptions.

These area businesses offer discounts when you present your Co-op Connections card:

■ **Abbott Furniture**, 3355 N. Woodruff Rd., Weidman, 989-644-3360, [abbottfurniture@yahoo.com](mailto:abbottfurniture@yahoo.com). *5% off all regularly priced items.*

■ **Accent Hardwood Floors**, 6735 Divine Hwy., Portland, 517-202-9046. *10% off sanding and finishing.*

■ **Always in Bloom**, 10034 Buchanan Rd., Canadian Lakes, 231-972-0308, [alwaysinbloom@gmail.com](mailto:alwaysinbloom@gmail.com). *20% off all regularly priced items.*

■ **Geldhof Tire Service**, 643 W. Lincoln Ave., Ionia, 616-527-1101. *10% off labor.*



■ **Jerry's Tire**, 1413 2nd St., Lake Odessa, 616-374-8892. *10% off any labor related purchases; 5% off on all car, light truck and/or two purchases.*

■ **Kubin's Furniture and Mattresses**, 101 N. Mill, St. Louis, 989-681-5043, [kubins@live.com](mailto:kubins@live.com). *We will pay your 6% sales tax, excludes hot buy, best buy, clearance, and iComfort mattresses.*

For more information about national and pharmacy discounts, visit [homeworks.org](http://homeworks.org) and click on the Co-op Connections card.

## People Fund Helps Eagle Village

**The Tri-County Electric People Fund met Aug. 14 and made four grants totaling \$6,201.41, including:**

- \$2,500 – Eagle Village in Hersey, to update youth center audiovisual equipment;
- \$1,000 – Basic Needs Center of St. Johns, for food pantry items;
- \$781.41 – Isabella County family, for a new stove and property taxes; and
- \$1,920 – Mecosta County family, to install a new furnace.

"These grant applications show the variety of needs in our communities. On behalf of the People Fund board, I'm very pleased we could show support for the youth and families in need here in mid-Michigan," said Richard Palermo, board chairman.

### How To Apply For a Grant

Write to 7973 E. Grand River Avenue, Portland, MI 48875. We'll send you an application form, grant guidelines, and other helpful information. You'll also find details and application forms at [homeworks.org](http://homeworks.org).

**Note:** Applications must be received by Oct. 28 for the Nov. 6 board meeting, and by Dec. 10 for the Dec. 19 board meeting.

## Notice of Member Access to Rules and Rates

As a member-customer (member) of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative (cooperative), the following information is available to you from the cooperative, upon request:

- 1.) Complete rate schedules;
- 2.) Clear and concise explanation of all rates that the member may be eligible to receive; and
- 3.) Assistance from the cooperative in determining the most appropriate rate for a member when the member is eligible to receive service under more than one rate.



## Severe Storm Preparedness Kit Checklist

- ☐ **Water** – fill up bathtubs and containers with water for washing, and also stock up on bottled water for consumption.
- ☐ **Food** - at least enough for 3 to 7 days, non-perishable packaged or canned food, juices, foods for infants or the elderly, snack foods, non-electric can opener, cooking tools, fuel, paper plates and plastic utensils.
- ☐ **Blankets, Pillows and Seasonal Clothing Items**
- ☐ **First Aid Kit / Medicines / Prescription Drugs**
- ☐ **Special Items - for babies and the elderly**
- ☐ **Toiletries / Hygiene items / Moisture wipes**
- ☐ **Flashlight / Batteries**
- ☐ **Radio and Clock** - Battery operated, also consider purchasing an NOAA weather radio
- ☐ **Telephone** - Fully charged cell phone with extra batteries and a traditional (not cordless) landline telephone
- ☐ **Emergency Numbers** – Keep a list of emergency telephone numbers including the local utility company
- ☐ **Cash (with some small bills) and Credit Cards** - Banks and ATMs may not be available for extended periods
- ☐ **Keys**
- ☐ **Toys, Books and Games**
- ☐ **Important documents** – (in a waterproof container or bag) insurance cards, medical records, bank account numbers, Social Security card, birth certificates etc.
- ☐ **Tools** - keep a set with you during the storm. Some items include duct tape, screw drivers, work gloves, safety goggles, etc.
- ☐ **Vehicle fuel tanks filled**
- ☐ **Pet care items** - ample supply of food and water, proper identification, immunization records, medications, a carrier or cage, muzzle and leash.
- ☒ **Keep family and friends out of flooded basements to avoid electrical shock.**
- ☒ **Keep family and friends away from all downed power lines during or after a storm.**
- ☒ **Be sure to follow all manufacturers' recommendations when using a generator to avoid tragedy. Never plug it into a wall outlet or directly into the home's wiring.**

For additional safety information, please visit:





# Gadgets Help Save Water, Energy

Low-flow showerheads and other low-cost devices use less water and heat.

**Q:** *Both my energy and water bills are increasing, so I plan to install low-flow showerheads. I tried them before, but my family didn't like them. Are they any better now, and how do I pick a good one?*

**A:** Bathing uses a lot of water for most families, and hot water drives the monthly cost up. Low-flow showerheads can help cut down on both.

For years, all showerheads sold in the United States have been limited to a maximum water flow rate of 2.5 gallons per minute (gpm) at a water pressure of 80 pounds per square inch (psi), as mandated by federal energy efficiency standards. Some older showerheads may use as much as 5 gpm without even providing an adequate, forceful water flow.

Many of the new low-flow showerheads provide good water flow using even less than 2.5 gpm. There are also significant differences in showerhead sprays for ones with identical flow rates. The most efficient units are as low as 1.5 gpm, and the savings in water and energy use can pay back their cost in just a few months.

There are a number of factors determining how much water and energy will be saved. Water savings is affected directly by the gpm rating for the showerhead, while energy savings is determined by both the gpm rating and how much hot water has to be mixed with cold for a comfortable shower.

The type of spray pattern chosen has an affect on how warm the water feels on your skin. Showerheads with larger water droplets feel warmer because the droplets have a lower percentage of surface area, so they cool down less before reaching your body.

Some needle-type, low-flow showerheads create tiny water droplets. These may lose more heat as they move through the air. If this happens, people tend to set the faucet

handle to a greater percentage of hot water and may actually end up using more hot water—and more electricity—than before. Some showerheads also add air to the spray for more force, but this might also cool the water spray.

It's easy to distinguish a narrow needle-spray design because they are usually small. For a fuller spray, look for ones with many holes across a larger face. Some may appear to have a large face with many spray holes. If they have adjustable patterns, not all the holes are used simultaneously so they may actually create a needle spray if you desire that at times.

A handheld adjustable showerhead is very effective. Some models have four spray settings selected by rotating the head, and water flow can be directed where you want it, which saves water.

There are also two inexpensive add-on devices that can help reduce water use on any showerhead. One is a tiny push/pull trickle valve (also called a lathering valve) that's mounted between the shower arm and showerhead. When you don't need water, push the button to slow the water to a trickle without having to readjust the temperature at the faucet each time.

Another water-saver is a Lady Bug valve by ShowerStart (also called Evolve). People often turn on the hot water and walk away while they're waiting for the water to heat, which can waste gallons of water before getting into the shower. With the Lady Bug, when the water temperature reaches 95 degrees, the flow is automatically slowed to a trickle so very little goes down the drain. When you're ready to get in, pull the string on the handle to return the full flow.

Send inquiries to James Dulley, *Michigan Country Lines*, 6906 Royalgreen Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45244 or visit [dulley.com](http://dulley.com).

Source - ShowerStart



This showerhead uses only 1.59 gallons per minute and produces a full spray pattern. The attached "Lady Bug" slows water flow to a trickle once hot water reaches the showerhead. Pull the string to start the shower flow.

This hand-held showerhead has four spray patterns by turning the head. Notice the add-on push-button trickle valve.



Source - James Dulley

Source - Delta Faucet



This 1.6 gpm (gallon per minute) showerhead produces larger water droplets to make the shower water feel warmer when it reaches your skin.

This low-flow shower spray swirls to create the sense of much more water flow.



Source - Delta Faucet

## More showerhead info...

[deltafaucet.com](http://deltafaucet.com)

800-345-3358

[moen.com](http://moen.com)

800-289-6636

[pricepfinder.com](http://pricepfinder.com)

800-732-8238

[evolveshowerheads.com](http://evolveshowerheads.com)

480-496-2294

[speakmancompany.com](http://speakmancompany.com)

800-537-2107

*James Dulley is a nationally recognized mechanical engineer writing about home energy issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.*



# Stay Safe and Warm!

**Never** place a space heater close to a water source. While there are waterproof electric heaters, many models are not intended for use in bathrooms, so be sure to check the manufacturer's safety instructions.

Source – SafeElectricity.org

## Tips for Using Space Heaters, Electric Blankets

**D**on't let your efforts to stay warm put your safety at risk. Space heaters and electric blankets can be efficient ways to warm up, but they can also be dangerous. We encourage you to understand the dangers of heating devices before you use them.

"Space heaters and electric blankets are not appropriate for all people or all situations," explains Molly Hall, executive director of the Energy Education Council. "However, in the right circumstances, space heating can save energy and money."

Try these tips for using space heaters and electric blankets safely:

- Read and follow all safety instructions for each unit.
- Cords should not be frayed, brittle or cracked, and the blanket should not have any charred or dark areas.
- Turn them off when not in use.
- Look for a space heater that has guards from heating elements and automatically shuts off if tipped over.
- Choose a unit with a safety certification (look for the UL®, ETL, or CSA mark, which means the product has been safety-tested).
- One of the biggest causes of fires is the most easily avoidable. Many fires start when flammable products are placed too close to heating devices. Keep space heaters at least 3 feet from blankets, clothing, paper and other flammables.
- Place space heaters out of high-traffic areas and on a level, hard, nonflammable floor surface—NOT on carpets, furniture, or countertops.
- Never allow pets to sleep on top of electric blankets, and the wires should never be bent or tucked under a mattress.
- Do not try to warm your entire home with space heaters. They are useful in small areas, such as a study or living room. For large areas, however, your heating system will do the job more efficiently.

Visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org) to learn more about avoiding all electrical hazards.

## Help Prevent Electrical Fires

**E**ach year, electrical failures and malfunctions cause 43,900 home fires, resulting in 438 deaths, 1,430 injuries, and \$1.47 billion in property damage. Many home electrical fires can be prevented by understanding basic safety principles and practices:

▶ Use a licensed electrician to perform all electrical work in compliance with local and national safety standards.

▶ Consider replacing circuit breakers with arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs), which provide enhanced fire protection by detecting dangerous arcing conditions.

▶ Make sure all electrical panel circuits are properly labeled. Always replace fuses or circuit breakers with the correct size and amperage.

▶ Keep the area around the electrical panel clear so you can easily shut off power in an emergency.

▶ Use the TEST button monthly to check smoke alarms and make sure that ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) at outlets and AFCIs are working properly.

▶ Be aware of warning signs, such as outlets and switches that are warm or make crackling, sizzling or buzzing noises.

▶ Regularly check cords, outlets and switches, and do not use damaged electrical devices.

▶ Do not use extension cords on a permanent basis, and never use them with space heaters or air conditioners.

▶ Avoid overloading outlets.

▶ Do not use lightbulbs that exceed the recommended wattage of the light fixture or lamp.

▶ Install smoke alarms in each bedroom, outside each sleeping area, and on every level.

▶ Create a family fire escape plan that includes two ways out of each room.

▶ Pick an easy-to-find meeting place outside, a safe distance from your home.

▶ Practice your escape plan by having at least two fire drills a year. One should be at night while your family is sleeping.

▶ If anyone in your household is deaf, or if your own hearing is diminished, consider installing a smoke alarm that uses a flashing light or vibration to alert you to a fire emergency.

Visit [esfi.org](http://esfi.org) for more electrical safety information and Fire Prevention Week (Oct. 6-12) resources.





## The Center of Customer Engagement



### Tri-County Electric Cooperative



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# Inspired By Todd

**T**wenty seven seasons of attending the National Trout Festival in Kalkaska, MI, has provided me with a cherished collection of memories. I've enjoyed it all, but browsing at the flea market and craft show is my favorite activity. I've met many interesting people whose handcrafted works bring joy, sometimes inspiration, to others.

Beth Donahue, of Johannesburg, is one such person. She made her Festival debut this year by selling sun catchers—those shimmering, eye-catching ornaments one might find dangling from the back porch or the low branches of a tree. Her creations, which include elegant silk flower arrangements, are beautiful. But even more beautiful is the story of how these wonderful creations came to be.

Beth's son, Todd, was diagnosed with Jeune's syndrome not long after his birth in 1982. It's an aggressive disease that attacks specific vital organs. In Todd's case, his kidneys were severely damaged and by age four, he was undergoing frequent dialysis. By the time he was a teenager, he had endured several unsuccessful kidney transplants, but he kept a positive outlook towards better things to come.

In his personal life, Todd excelled in nearly everything he did. He was fair-minded, well-liked and approached everything with a positive attitude. When he graduated from high school in 2000, his entire class gave him a standing ovation. He responded by waving his diploma in the air, first running, then jumping across the stage, rock-star style.

On Jan. 10, 2003, Todd died. For Beth, life seemed suddenly empty.

"I thought I could get through the grief on my own," she said. "But I couldn't." She sought counseling, and then reached out to good friends she hadn't seen since before Todd was born. Through these friends, Beth met Kevin Donahue, fell in love, and got married.



Beth Donahue and Todd.



Eventually, the couple moved from Berkley to Johannesburg, making it difficult to visit and place fresh flowers regularly on Todd's gravesite. So, Beth began making silk floral wreaths that would last indefinitely. It wasn't long before she was making wreaths and flower arrangements for friends, as well.

One day, Beth was sitting on the porch, looking at a wind chime. A glint of light bounced off the mirrors attached above the chimes. She thought it would be interesting to attach beads, instead of chimes, to the tiny mirrors. And she thought of Todd. She said it was as if he was sending her a message: 'You can do it, Mom.'

It didn't take long for the idea to come alive, and with it came the beginning of a small business.

"I've never created anything," Beth said. "I spent 34 years at the phone company. I was a businesswoman, not an artist...but I wanted to do it."

In the beginning, Beth was thinking about naming the business Suncatchers, Etc. But then a friend suggested that she spell Suncatchers with an 'o' instead of a 'u' in honor of her son, Todd. Soncatchers, Etc. was born.



Photos Courtesy - Beth Donahue

Beth works from home now, creating sun catchers and floral arrangements to sell at local craft shows. She also does custom orders for events such as weddings, graduations and funerals.

"I've never had artistic abilities," she said. "Flower arranging...me? But I gave it a try and it took off."

As for the sun catchers, Beth said the ideas just keep flowing.

"Todd's inside me, somewhere. I know he is. And he keeps on telling me, 'Mom, you can do it!'"

Todd's strength of character, and the love his mom has for him, will always be a precious memory of love and inspiration for me, too, not only because I acquired two of his mom's sun catchers at this year's Trout Festival, but for a more personal reason: Todd is my husband's son. He's my son's older brother. And, yes, he's my stepson. He'll always be loved. And he'll never be forgotten.

Rock on, Todd. We miss you.

*Margaret Thompson and Beth Donahue are both members of Great Lakes Energy Cooperative. Margaret is a freelance writer and retired nurse, and Beth is in the midst of starting a home business featuring her Michigan-made products—especially sun catchers and silk floral arrangements and wreaths. Find Beth at: SONCATCHERS, ETC., 586-557-5488, beth4u2c@gmail.com.*





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