

# THE *Southwestern*

A SOUTHWESTERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBER MAGAZINE

SEPTEMBER 2024 • VOLUME 76 • ISSUE 9



**ANNUAL MEETING**

**RECYCLING DRIVE**

**CYBERSECURITY**

**READER  
CONTEST**

**CAREER DAY**

**FIRE SAFETY**

**HIDDEN SPRINGS**

## *Net Gains*

**PICKLEBALL IS HERE TO STAY**

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St. Jacob Office  
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St. Elmo Distribution Center  
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Southwestern Electric Cooperative reserves the right to re-print member comments and correspondence in its cooperative educational and promotional materials.

The Southwestern (USPS 612-500) is published monthly by Southwestern Electric Cooperative, Inc. Periodical postage paid at Greenville, IL. Subscriptions cost \$10.67 per year. Comments or questions regarding material in this publication may be mailed to Joe Richardson, editor of The Southwestern, c/o Southwestern Electric Cooperative, Inc., 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246, or e-mailed to [joe.richardson@sweci.com](mailto:joe.richardson@sweci.com).

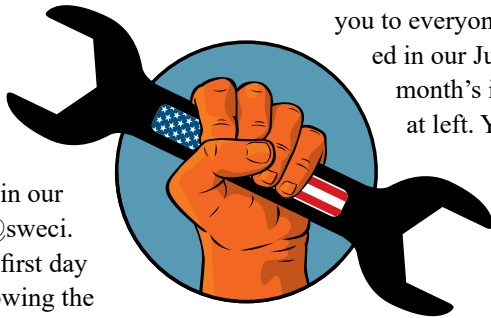
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# Reader Contest

**W**e've hidden an image of a hand holding a wrench in your magazine. Your job is to find it. The actual image may be larger or smaller than what you see below. We may change the color or reverse or alter the image we've hidden to make the contest more challenging. If you find the hand holding a wrench, email us or send a postcard with your name, address, phone number, and the page number where you found the image. Please email us at [thesouthwestern@sweci.com](mailto:thesouthwestern@sweci.com) or send your postcard to The Southwestern Magazine, Southwestern Electric Cooperative, 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246.

Entries must be postmarked or in our [thesouthwestern@sweci.com](mailto:thesouthwestern@sweci.com) inbox by the first day of the month following the



month of publication. For our September contest, we'll need your entries in our inbox or postmarked by October 1, 2024.

We'll choose one winner in a random drawing. Our winner will receive a \$25 credit on an upcoming electric bill. We'll publish the name of this month's contest winner in the November issue of The Southwestern.

## JUNE WINNER

Congratulations to Gary and Jan Goossens of Edwardsville. As the winner of our June Hide & Seek contest drawing, Gary and Jan will receive a \$25 credit on an upcoming electric bill. Thank you to everyone who participated in our June contest. This month's image appears at left. You'll find Hide & Seek rules below.

## RULES TO PLAY BY

- One entry per membership per month.
- A membership can only win once per calendar year.
- No phone calls, texts, social media posts, walk-in traffic, carrier pigeons, singing telegrams or other clever means of communication that may occur to you.
- Please respond *only* by emailing us at [thesouthwestern@sweci.com](mailto:thesouthwestern@sweci.com) or by sending a postcard to The Southwestern Magazine, Southwestern Electric Cooperative, 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246.
- Entries submitted by other methods will be disqualified.
- Entries emailed to other Southwestern Electric email addresses will be disqualified, deleted, then disqualified again, just to be safe.
- Entries mailed to other departments or included with other correspondence will likely never find their way to the editor. If they do, they'll be disqualified. Also, he'll add you to his list of people who can't follow instructions. It's a long (and growing) list and not one you care to be part of.
- September contest entries must be in our inbox or postmarked by October 1.
- We'll never hide the image on the front or back cover or on the page where we list the rules.

## ON THE COVER

Violet Dust, 77, of Montrose, prepares a return shot during a game of pickleball at Effingham's Lake Sara. Our story on the growing game begins on page 10.



## CO-OP REMINDERS

- Sept. 2** Offices closed for Labor Day.
- Sept. 7** Southwestern Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting.
- Sept. 9** Payment processing systems will be unavailable from midnight to 4 a.m., while we perform system maintenance. No payments will be processed during this time. We will resume processing payments at 4:01 a.m.



## FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



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# Job (Fore)shadowing

Southwestern Electric Participates in Lincoln Land Community College's Career Day

“What do you want to be when you grow up?” It’s one of the most important questions anyone will have to answer in their lives, and Southwestern Electric Media Specialist Nathan Grimm recently helped some local high school students try to find their own answers to the question — to the extent that any of us knows the answer, at least — at the Montgomery County Career Day held at Lincoln Land Community College in Litchfield.

Close to 300 students from Litchfield, Hillsboro, Nokomis, Mt. Olive and Lincolnwood high schools attended the May 3 event, which let students choose the sessions that interested them most. Grimm, who majored in journalism at the University of Illinois and works as part of Southwestern’s three-person Communications Department, presented with other professionals from across the media spectrum to the breakout groups of students who cycled through the classroom throughout the morning and afternoon.

“I think back to when I was their age, and I had absolutely no idea about all the different career paths that existed — let alone which one I wanted to walk down,” Grimm said. “I jumped at the chance to participate in the career day not just to tell the kids about my job at Southwestern, but to make sure they knew that whatever it is that interests them, there’s a career for it.”

Jessie Blackburn, director of the Litchfield LLCC campus, said the career day provided students the opportunity to learn about a variety of careers in a way that “really makes the possibilities for their future come to life.”

“Students were able to ask questions and learn about the education and skills needed, the responsibilities and experience of different positions, and the growth and job outlook of each career,” Blackburn said. “We hope students were inspired by the career day, discovering all the ways in which LLCC can support their educational and training goals, and feeling motivated to build careers and lives in their local communities.”



## HAVE YOU HEARD?

The Southwestern Electric Cooperative podcast, that is, *Wireside Chat* is a monthly podcast aimed at delivering insight into your electric co-op in an entertaining and easily digestible way. The show is available on all major podcast-hosting platforms.



## YOUR SPARE CHANGE CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE THROUGH OPERATION ROUND UP

**Ready to get started?** To join ORU today, just check the enrollment box on your electric bill or online, or contact Southwestern Electric Cooperative at (800) 637-8667. For more information about Operation Round Up, visit [sweci.com](http://sweci.com).



Small change.  
**Big difference.**

See You September 7th!

# American Farm Heritage Museum Venue for 86th Annual Meeting of Members

**S**outhwestern Electric Cooperative's 86th Annual Meeting of Members will be held Saturday, Sept. 7, at the American Farm Heritage Museum, 1395 Museum Avenue, Greenville, IL 62246.

Parking will be available on the museum grounds.

The meeting will begin at 8 a.m. We'll be serving coffee and donuts. Members may vote from 8 a.m. - 10 a.m. You'll find more information about voting and the related bill credit below and on the next page.

Throughout the morning, linemen will offer live line demon-

strations. They'll discuss electrical safety, illustrate the dangers of live wires, and address steps for safely removing yourself from a live-wire situation.

The business meeting will begin at 10 a.m. Following the business meeting, Southwestern will provide sandwiches and bottled water to-go.

Questions or comments regarding the meeting may be directed to Vice President of Member Services Susan File. You can reach Susan by email at [susan.file@sweci.com](mailto:susan.file@sweci.com) or call her at 800-637-8667, ext. 5924.



***Redeem Registration Card on Back Cover of July or August Magazines for \$30 Bill Credit***

**T**o ensure you received the 2024 voter registration card in time to claim your \$30 bill credit for voting in this year's election, we included a card in both the July and August issues again this year. The cards are identical. You only need one card to register and vote, and you may register and vote only one time.

To expedite voting, please bring the registration card printed on the back cover of the July issue or August special edition of The Southwestern to one of Southwestern's voting locations. You'll earn a \$30 bill credit by presenting the preprinted registration card when you vote in this year's election of directors. Our voting schedule appears on the next page.

# Updated Voting Schedule

With this year's election uncontested, your co-op anticipates lower turnout at the polls. Consequently, we've opted to abbreviate our evening voting hours. There'll be no evening voting Aug. 27-29. The updated voting schedule appears below. We apologize for any inconvenience and look forward to seeing you soon.

\$30 bill credit with your pre-printed registration card, \$20 bill credit without your pre-printed registration card.

Bill credit to be applied on the October bill — same credit amounts offered for early and day-of-meeting voting.

St. Elmo warehouse, 2117 East 1850 Avenue, St. Elmo  
Sept. 3 from 4 to 7 p.m.

St. Jacob warehouse, 10031 Ellis Road, St. Jacob  
Sept. 4 from 4 to 7 p.m.

Greenville office, 525 US Route 40, Greenville  
Sept. 5 open to 7 p.m.

American Farm Heritage Museum, 1395 Museum Avenue,  
Greenville, IL 62246.....Sept. 7 from 8 to 10 a.m.

Members may also vote at Southwestern Electric's Greenville office Aug. 23 – Sept. 6, weekdays from 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. We are closed Monday, Sept. 2, in observance of Labor Day.

## Commercial & Inactive Memberships

### Commercial Memberships

Commercial (business) members are advised that any representative wishing to vote will be asked to present satisfactory evidence that this person has been assigned to act as an agent of the business. A commercial member, like any other, is entitled to a single vote in cooperative elections.

### Inactive Memberships

Only active members of the co-op are eligible to vote in the election.

Southwestern Electric Cooperative's 86th Annual Meeting of Members will be held at the American Farm Heritage Museum, 1395 Museum Avenue, Greenville, IL 62246.

Questions regarding the annual meeting may be directed to Susan File, vice president of member services, at 800-637-8667 or [susan.file@sweci.com](mailto:susan.file@sweci.com).



# Cooperative hosts Sept. 28 recycling drive in Greenville

Southwestern Electric will host an e-cycling drive at its Greenville office on Saturday, Sept. 28. Collection begins at 9 a.m. and ends at noon or when the truck is filled — whichever comes first. Electronics collected during the drive will be e-cycled by an EPA-approved recycling center.

Southwestern Electric's Greenville Office is located at 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246.

We can help you recycle a variety of electronics, including:

- Computers, printers, cables and peripherals (keyboards, mice, etc.)
- Fax machines, scanners, digital converter boxes, cable receivers, satellite receivers.
- Video game consoles, digital video disc player/recorders, portable digital music players.
- Networking equipment, server, telecommunications, phones, cell phones and clocks.
- VCRs, stereos, and audio/video equipment (including cable/satellite).
- Electrical, cabling, communication machinery, and equipment.
- Home electronics, blenders, toasters, irons, etc.



### Please Note

- Rechargeable batteries (NIMH, Li-ion and NICD) will be accepted for a fee of 50 cents per pound.
- CRT TVs, console TVs, projection TVs and monitors will be accepted for a fee ranging from \$5-\$35 depending on their size and model. Please bring cash or check for payment.
- Light bulbs, DVDs, CDs, and VHS and cassette tapes and hazardous materials will not be accepted.

E-cycling — electronics recycling — is the process of refurbishing, redistributing and reusing electronic devices and components, rather than discarding them. It extends the lifecycle of electronics and lowers their overall environmental impact.

Questions regarding e-cycling or recyclable items and fees may be directed to CJD E-Cycling at 618-414-9209 or [info@cjdrecycling.com](mailto:info@cjdrecycling.com). CJD E-Cycling is a family-owned recycling business with offices in East Alton and Edwardsville. You can learn more about CJD E-Cycling and the materials they recycle at [www.cjdrecycling.com](http://www.cjdrecycling.com).

# Intravaia Program at NRECA Security Conference Illustrates Need for Vigilance

Words by Joe Richardson | Photos by NRECA Sr. Multimedia Producer Denny Gainer

It's shortly after 2 p.m. and more than 70 cybersecurity specialists gathered in a Hyatt Regency outside Washington, D.C., have just learned their conference room is bugged. It promises to be an engaging afternoon.

Fifteen minutes earlier, Thaddius Intravaia, Director of Information Technology for Southwestern Electric Cooperative, planted a pair of listening devices under two of the room's tables. The devices don't listen to people. They listen to technology. One is designed to decipher passwords. The other intercepts Wi-Fi traffic. Either device can enable adversaries, as Intravaia calls them, to access private data. Together they can be catastrophic.

"At the beginning of my session, I asked the question, 'How many people here are connected to the Wi-Fi?' A bunch of hands went up. I said, 'If you're connected through a VPN, put your hands down.'" A lot of hands remained in the air. "I said, 'Let me show you something.'" He revealed the devices. "I knew showing would be more effective than telling," he said, noting that, for security purposes, he didn't

activate the devices. "This was a way for me to show how something small can be powerful."

The demonstration was part of a custom-crafted presentation Intravaia delivered to cybersecurity professionals at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) 2024 Co-op Cyber Tech Conference in Arlington, Va. The conference, which took place June 11-13, was developed for NRECA members and supporting organizations. Presentations highlighted co-op cybersecurity and provided opportunities for professional collaboration, skills development and technical advancement.

Intravaia's program focused on tactics adversaries use to gather information from openly available sources, and how they use that intel to leverage attacks. "I used a real-life consulting scenario that illustrated steps I took to infiltrate a network using publicly accessible information," he explained. As a contract employee for a security agency, Intravaia infiltrated a company's security network and established an in-person, on-site presence that went undetected for 10 days. His final report highlighted

weaknesses in the company's procedures, facilities and network, and offered improvement protocols.

## HELP ME DEFEAT YOU

Intravaia's NRECA program began a day before he entered the conference room. "I created a sticker that said, 'Attending Co-op Cyber Tech? Scan Me.'" The sticker included a QR code. He seeded stickers in the conference area, leaving them on vendor tables, near water coolers, by drink carts and in gathering areas. He scattered cards equipped with NFC (Near-Field Communication technology) tags in other high traffic areas. "They basically read as if the person who found the card had won a prize," he said.

When a conference attendee scanned either the card or the code, they were directed to a website. "The page had a message that said, 'You just allowed me to install malware on your device.' I was making a point," he said. "I instilled a bit of fear. Then the site immediately told them, 'I'm not really doing that — but I could have. If you want to learn more, see my presentation. 'Cause I'm gonna tell you how this is done.'"



Thaddius Intravaia, Director of Information Technology for Southwestern Electric Cooperative, explains spear phishing strategies during NRECA's Cyber Tech Conference in Arlington, Va.



At a conference for cybersecurity professionals, 18 people took the bait. “If it’s that easy for me to social engineer people who already have a level of security consciousness,” he said, “imagine how easy it would be for me to do that to somebody who doesn’t.”

## SOCIAL NETWORK

Intravaia’s message and means of delivery hit home. “For me, the highlight of the presentation was the reception of the presentation itself,” he said. “It’s an interesting feeling to stand in front of 70-some people and have them laugh when they’re supposed to laugh, when you’re cracking that joke. After my session, for the remainder of the conference, I wasn’t able to make it to any destination unencumbered. Somebody was stopping me. They wanted to discuss my experience, they wanted to know about things I did while I was within this facility, they wanted to know how I would breach their facilities. There were all kinds of questions,” he said. “It was great. I love stopping and talking to people. It was overwhelming.”

Conversations about industry issues large and small arose at impromptu gatherings throughout the weekend. “The overall highlight with any conference is networking with other people,” he said. “We get insight into the struggles other people are having and how they’re tackling those problems. Oftentimes, it ends up being an exchange of solutions, which gives us resources for our co-ops. We get a chance to learn from each other — from our mistakes and our successes — and then improve on them.”

During one discussion, conversation turned to another conference being held in the same hotel. “We talked about how easy it would be to gain access to that conference, which in and of itself is nothing. It’s just a conference. But that allows me a very easy in with these people — an easy way to start making contacts within their industry.”

A series of small, seemingly innocuous events can allow an adversary to compromise even a diligent company’s defenses, he said. “We have a saying in the security field: Our adversaries only have to get it right once. We have to get it right every single time. And it’s true. That’s how this field works.”

## FUTURE FACING

Since joining Southwestern Electric’s Information Technology Department in 2015, Intravaia has instituted new security protocols and delivered numerous cybersecurity presentations to employees, including a version of his Arlington program. “At work, I always get somebody who comes in after the fact to say, ‘I just want to let you know, I saw *this*, and what you said was helpful. You saved me.’ I think that means more to me than anything.”

The June conference marked Intravaia’s latest pairing with NRECA. In February, he was invited to serve on the NRECA Cybersecurity Member Advisory Group (CS MAG). CS MAG membership consists of cybersecurity professionals from cooperatives across the country. The primary mission of CS MAG is to advance cybersecurity capabilities of NRECA members through research, development and education.

In March, he earned Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP) certification from the International Information System Security Certification Consortium. Globally recognized as one of the most valued certifications in the industry, CISSP signifies the highest standards of knowledge and competence in the field of cybersecurity, including a comprehensive understanding of risk management and asset and operations security.

Intravaia’s Cyber Tech experience drove home a point he’s often expressed during NRECA advisory meetings. “My biggest takeaway was how much more we need to do as co-ops to prepare,” he said. “I think for a lot of smaller co-ops and even some medium sized co-ops, it’s missed, how big of a target we actually are. Nation-state actors are targeting co-ops like us because we’re the low hanging fruit. We don’t have multi-million-dollar security budgets,” he said. “There’s a delineation between, ‘We have a dedicated security professional,’ versus, ‘We have an engineer who also does our IT stuff, who’s trying to learn about security,’ and we need to be clear about making it. As an industry we need to do better.”

In general, Intravaia’s security advice to co-op members mirrors what he tells industry professionals. “Be careful and



*“Nation-state actors are targeting co-ops like us because we’re the low hanging fruit.”*

pay attention. Especially whenever it comes to your social media. If you don’t know somebody, don’t add them. You don’t know what they’re looking for and you don’t know if they’re legitimate. They very well may be, but there are so many scammers and digital criminals out there, you just don’t know. It’s not worth the risk.”

In July, Intravaia accepted a cybersecurity position with a St. Louis law firm. His last day at Southwestern Electric was slated for Aug. 8. “I want to remind everyone to continue to practice good cyber practices,” he wrote in his farewell. “I won’t be around to hassle you about phishing emails or discuss my latest experiments with online scammers. I am proud of the hard work and diligence each one of you has shown during my time here and the tremendous strides that you have all made to keep our data secure. If you ever need cyber advice, I want to express that you should feel free to reach out to me,” he wrote. “I’m always happy to lend a hand.” **S**

# NET GAINS

**PICKLEBALL CRAZE IS SWEEPING THE REGION – AND IT’S HERE TO STAY**

Story by Nathan Grimm | Photos by Mike Barns

“It’s not a real sport.”  
“It’s a game for old people.”  
“It’s a fad that won’t last.”  
Critiques of pickleball are easier to find than the rules of the nebulous game itself. And yet, even as the general population struggles to come to terms with it, pickleball continues to pop up in more and more places — at local parks, in school gyms, possibly even at the Olympics — as time goes on.

Is it a real sport? Is it a game not meant to be played by the younger generations? Will it burn hot and bright before fizzling out once the newness wears off? Only time will tell, but for now, there doesn’t seem to be anything that can stop the game from spreading across the country — Southwestern Illinois included — like wildfire.

“Anybody that has a facility and the space,” said Family YMCA of Fayette County CEO Ben Frazier, “is thinking about pickleball.”



## ***‘IT’S NOT A REAL SPORT’***

Callie Trettenero disagrees.

On an unseasonably temperate Thursday morning in early August, Trettenero and her friend Bonnie Burcham are locked in an intense back-and-forth affair at the Plummer Family Park in Edwardsville. They’re not

playing for keeps — though Trettenero admits to being a “very competitive individual” — but there’s no doubt the level of physical exertion rises to that of other sports.

“Oh, it’s for sure a sport,” Trettenero, 27, said. “My husband and I have both ran a marathon before, and this, I would argue, is a better alternative form of exercise in the sense that it gets our heart rate up, but we don’t have to run 15 or 20 miles to get the benefit of a workout.”

The game, commonly described as a mix of table tennis, tennis and badminton, is played on a court the same size as a doubles badminton court. The court is striped similar to a tennis court and played with paddles roughly the size of racquetball rackets and a ball similar in shape and size to a Wiffle ball.

Pickleball has actually been around for more than half a century after being invented by Congressman Joel Pritchard and businessman Bill Bell at Pritchard’s

Callie Trettenero, left, and Bonnie Burcham volley back and forth during a game of pickleball at the Plummer Family Park in Edwardsville.





Family YMCA of Fayette County CEO Ben Frazier stands inside the future home of the YMCA's second gymnasium, which will include a pickleball court.



home on Bainbridge Island, Washington, in 1965. The United States Amateur Pickleball Association was organized in 1984 to perpetuate the growth and advancement of pickleball on a national level, and the first rulebook was published in March of that year.

More than its dictionary definition and decades-old roots, though, the increasingly widespread acceptance and embrace of pickleball nationally and internationally is as good a sign as any that the game is for real.

*Continued on next page* ▶



► *Continued from page 11*

“I wouldn’t be surprised if in a few years you see it as a school sport in Illinois,” Effingham Park District Executive Director Jeff Althoff said. “I could see it overtaking tennis, eventually.”

The appeal extends beyond state and national borders as well. With the recently completed Summer Olympics highlighting some of the obscure and niche corners of the sports world, ESPN reporter Michele Steele wondered when pickleball might make its way to the Olympics, too.

“I know for a fact that the IOC is very interested in pickleball,” Seymour Rifkin, president of the World Pickleball Federation, told Steele in a piece published on ESPN.com on Aug. 8. “That is an absolute fact. The IOC, like any big international business, is interested in thriving and continuing to be the epitome event in sports.”

### ***‘IT’S A GAME FOR OLD PEOPLE’***

Deborah Muchow disagrees.

“My oldest son, he’s a paramedic specialist in the Air Force. He started

***“IT GOT TO BE WHERE WE NOTICED THAT IT WAS ALL PICKLEBALL PEOPLE OUT THERE PLAYING ON THE TENNIS COURTS AND NO TENNIS PLAYERS.”***

—Effingham Park District Executive Director Jeff Althoff

playing pickleball,” Muchow, 57, of Altamont, said. “We have a house in Florida. Last November, he decided we were a pickleball family.”

The fastest-growing sport for the third-straight year, the game is most popular among the 18- to 34-year-old demographic, according to Pickleheads.com. Of the 36 million-plus pickleball players in the United States, 28.8 percent of them fall within that age range, the site reported this past March.

Frazier has seen the same phenomenon in Vandalia.

“Absolutely,” Frazier said. “The age demographics have widened. It’s not just a snowbird sport. Everybody is playing it.”

The sport’s astronomical growth hasn’t yet made it the preferred sport over tennis, as Althoff alluded to, but that may be a reality before long.

Althoff has had a front-row seat to the transition in Effingham. Just a stone’s throw from the district’s offices sits what used to be the Hendelmeyer Park tennis courts. It started, Althoff said, with a request for pickleball lines to be taped on one of the courts. Then, permanent lines drawn, and a few portable nets made available for use.

“It got to be where we noticed that it was all pickleball people out there playing on the tennis courts and no tennis players,” Althoff said.

That’s when, two years ago, the four



Deborah Muchow, right, hits a return shot as her mother, Violet Dust, waits.



Muchow and Dust meet at the net and bump paddle handles in honor of a game well played.

tennis courts were converted to 10 pickleball courts. Other tennis courts still exist in Effingham for the game's enthusiasts, but the message is clear — pickleball has a wider appeal than just the retirement community.

That includes Muchow's "pickleball family." Along with her children, Muchow's 77-year-old mother, Violet Dust, plays the game as well. The pair play most Monday and Wednesday mornings at Lake Sara's pickleball courts, after which they walk the trails. Dust also cleans houses part-time, noting that keeping busy — pickleball matches included — keeps her spry.

"Otherwise," Dust laughs, "I'll be old."

### ***'IT'S A FAD THAT WON'T LAST'***

Dale Miller disagrees.

Miller, 70, is the current president of the One More Game (O.M.G.) Pickleball Club in Madison County. When it was established in 2012, O.M.G. had 60 members; today, the club is approaching 500.

"It's been pretty steady for us," Miller said. "Every year we think, 'Oh my gosh, we're not going to be able to grow again,' and we keep growing."

The pickleball courts at Plummer Family Park in Edwardsville were constructed in 2020, but supply couldn't


meet demand. As such, another 13 courts are currently under construction with hopes of being ready for play in 2025.

That's the issue Frazier ran into at his Vandalia-based YMCA as well. With 60,000 people coming through their doors every year, expansion has become a necessity. The current gymnasium does not have a designated pickleball court, and with the project being completed in phases, a second gym — this one with markings for pickleball — became the top priority.

"What we had to assess was, what part of that project would bring us the highest return? What would be used the most. What's going to increase our efficiency?" Frazier said. "It was that second gymnasium for a multitude of reasons, pickleball included."

Frazier said they hope to have the gymnasium completed and open this fall.

In Effingham, more than 100 people have joined their pickleball league, and the park district just hosted the third annual "Effing Paddle Battle" pickleball tournament last month. If the game is nearing the end of its 15 minutes of fame, as some critics suggest, that's news to Althoff.

"It's something I don't see going away anytime soon," he said. "I think it's only growing." 



***"I KNOW FOR A FACT THAT THE IOC IS VERY INTERESTED IN PICKLEBALL."***

—World Pickleball Federation president Seymour Rifkin

# BE WINTER WISE & *Weatherize*

## IT'S TIME TO BUTTON UP YOUR HOME'S WINTER COAT

**A**utumn will soon arrive, bringing relief to overworked home cooling systems across Southwestern Illinois—and winter will be here before you know it. Fortunately, a few simple and inexpensive tasks can help prepare your home for the coming cold.

**Plug the Leaks.** Sealing leaks with caulk and weather-stripping will keep more warm air inside when it's cold outside. Leaks are most commonly found around window and door frames, recessed lighting installations, pipes, vents and electrical outlets.



**Clean Out the Gutters.** In winter, clogged gutter drains can form ice dams, which cause water to back up and potentially seep into your house. After trees have shed most of their leaves, make time to clear your gutters. Start by removing leaves and debris, then rinse out the gutters with a hose.

**Check the Furnace.** Before winter sets in, make sure your furnace is



working properly. You'll have better luck scheduling service before temperatures drop and you're competing with your neighbors for an appointment. Even if your furnace seems to be in good working order, it's a good idea to have it serviced annually. Stock up on furnace filters and plan to change them regularly so your heating system can operate efficiently.

**Work on the Windows.** Don't let warm air escape through your windows. If you have drafty windows, consider replacing them before cold weather hits. If window replacement isn't in your budget, pick up an inexpensive window insulator kit to provide temporary coverage through the coldest months. Autumn is also a good time to replace temporary window screens with storm windows, which provide an extra layer of protection and warmth.

**Protect the Plumbing.** Protect your pipes from freezing (and possibly bursting) by turning off the water at the shut-off valve, then turning on your

outdoor faucets to let them drain. If you haven't already done so, drain any outdoor hoses and bring them inside. If your home has uninsulated pipes that pass through unheated spaces, wrap them with pre-molded foam rubber sleeves. Not only are outdoor faucets vulnerable — pipes that run through attics, crawl spaces and exterior walls have the potential to burst in subfreezing weather as well.

**Reverse the Fans.** It may seem strange to run your ceiling fans when there's frost on the ground, but this technique can save money on your heating bills. Most ceiling fans have a small switch that reverses the rotation of the blades, creating an updraft. The updraft pushes warmer air near the ceiling down into the room.

Southwestern Electric Cooperative offers many ideas to help you improve the energy efficiency of your home. For more information, contact Julie Lowe, energy manager, at (800) 637-8667 or [julie.lowe@sweci.com](mailto:julie.lowe@sweci.com).



# Weather Stripping Seals In Energy Dollars

If you're like most people, half of your household energy budget goes to heating and cooling. Fortunately, there are a number of ways you can cut down on energy loss. Weather stripping is an easy, inexpensive way to keep out the cold while you seal in savings. There are a variety of materials you can use, ranging from rubber to foam to metal. Weather stripping also comes in varying depths and widths. Most stripping is simple to apply, but adhesives vary. Review the instructions on the weather stripping package to make sure the product you're buying will serve your needs.

Calculating how much weather stripping you'll need for a project is pretty straightforward.

- Measure the perimeter of the doors and windows you plan to weather strip (measure twice for accuracy).
- Total your numbers.
- Add 10 percent to your total to account for error.

Before you begin applying your stripping, make sure the surfaces you're working with are clean and dry. When you're measuring the stripping, the carpenter's adage applies: Measure twice, cut once.

## Here are a few other tips:

- Weather stripping should be applied in temperatures above 20°F.
- Apply weather stripping firmly against the door or window and the frame. The stripping should compress when the window or door is shut.

## Weather Stripping Doors

- Buy quality sweeps and thresholds for your doors.
- Weather strip the entire door jamb.
- Apply one continuous strip along each side.
- Make sure the stripping seals well at the corners.
- Choose a thickness that compresses tightly when you close the door, but doesn't make your door difficult to shut.

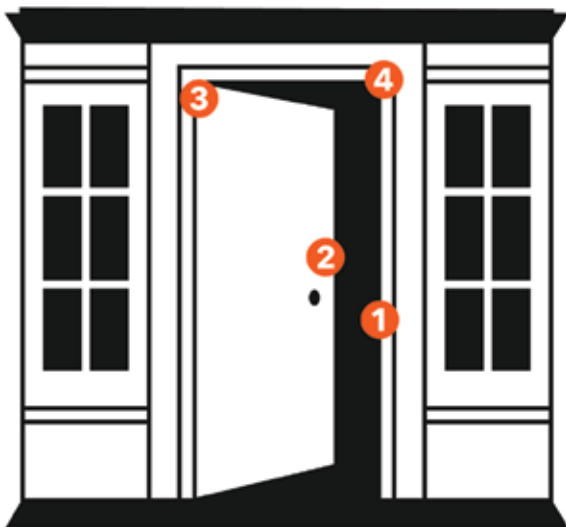
## Weather Stripping Windows

- Apply stripping between the sash and the frame. As with your doors, you want the material to compress, but not interfere with the operation of your window.

## WEATHER STRIPPING DOORS

Capturing Energy Savings by Sealing Air Leaks

Save energy and seal air leaks by weather stripping exterior doors. How do you know if you need to weather strip? If you can see any amount of light between the door frame and the floor, weather stripping should be applied to eliminate energy waste. This DIY energy-saving project is relatively easy and inexpensive depending on the type of materials selected. The most common weather stripping material is self-adhesive foam strips, although rubber, vinyl, metal, or a combination of materials may also be used.



**1 CLEANING SURFACES** - Clean the door and door jamb to be weather stripped. For best results, weather stripping should be applied to clean, dry surfaces above 20°F.



**2 MEASURING DOOR & DOOR JAMBS** - To ensure greater accuracy, measure your space twice before cutting the material. It is best to plan for one continuous strip for each side of the door and door jamb.



**3 CUTTING FOAM** - Cut long pieces of self-adhesive weather stripping material (foam, vinyl, etc.) for each side of the door jamb and door.



**4 APPLYING WEATHER STRIPPING** - Peel back the self-adhesive foam. Apply one continuous strip of material snugly along each side. Make sure the weather stripping meets tightly at the corners and is pressed firmly onto the door and door jamb. The material should compress tightly between the door and door jamb, without making it difficult to shut.

SOURCE: Department of Energy

# College Campus Fire Safety

College students living away from home should take a few minutes to make sure they're living in a fire-safe environment. Educating students on what they can do to stay safe during the school year is important and often overlooked.



## CANDLE CARE

Burn candles only if the school permits their use. A candle is an open flame and should be placed away from anything that can burn. Never leave a candle unattended. Blow it out when you leave the room or go to sleep.

## SMOKING SENSE

If you smoke, smoke outside and only where it is permitted. Use sturdy, deep, non-tip ashtrays. Don't smoke in bed or when you've been drinking or are drowsy.



## FACTS

- Fires in dormitories are more common during the evening hours, between 5–11 p.m., and on weekends.
- Roughly five out of six fires in dormitories are started by cooking.

## SAFETY TIPS

- Look for fully sprinklered housing when choosing a dorm or off-campus housing.
- Make sure you can hear the building alarm system when you are in your dorm room.
- If you live in a dormitory, make sure your sleeping room has a smoke alarm, or your dorm suite has a smoke alarm in each living area as well as the sleeping room. For the best protection, all smoke alarms in the dormitory suite should be interconnected so that when one sounds, they all sound.
- If you live in an apartment or house, make sure smoke alarms are installed in each sleeping room, outside every sleeping area, and on each level of the apartment unit or house. For the best protection, all smoke alarms in the apartment unit or house should be interconnected so that when one sounds, they all sound. Test all smoke alarms at least monthly.
- Never remove batteries or disable the alarm.
- Learn your building's evacuation plan and practice all drills as if they were the real thing.
- If you live off campus, have a fire escape plan with two ways out of every room.
- When the smoke alarm or fire alarm sounds, get out of the building quickly and stay out.
- Stay in the kitchen when cooking.
- Cook only when you are alert, not sleepy or drowsy from medicine or alcohol.
- Check with your local fire department for any restrictions before using a barbecue grill, fire pit, or chimenea.
- Check your school's rules before using electrical appliances in your room.



# Don't Wait — Check the Date!

Replace Smoke Alarms Every 10 Years



**Fire Prevention Week  
Oct. 6-12, 2024**

Age matters when it comes to your smoke alarms.  
Check the manufacture dates on your smoke alarms today!

**1**

Remove the smoke alarm from the wall or ceiling.

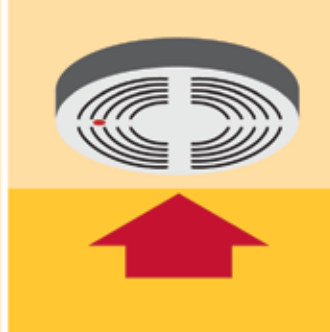


**2**

Look at the back of the alarm for the date of manufacture.

**3**

Smoke alarms should be replaced 10 years from the date of manufacture.



**4**

Put the alarm back on the ceiling or wall if it is less than 10 years old.



A closed door may slow the spread of smoke, heat and fire.



Test smoke alarms at least once a month by pushing the test button.



If the smoke alarm sounds, get outside and stay outside. Go to your outside meeting place.



Install smoke alarms in every sleeping room and outside each separate sleeping area. For the best protection, make sure all smoke alarms are interconnected. When one sounds, they all sound.



Call the fire department from a cellphone or a neighbor's phone. Stay outside until the fire department says it's safe to go back inside.

For more information about smoke alarms, visit [usfa.fema.gov](http://usfa.fema.gov) and [firepreventionweek.org](http://firepreventionweek.org).

U.S. Fire Administration



FEMA



# Hidden Springs

## STATE FOREST

Words by Joe Richardson | Photos by Mike Barns

**O**n Illinois' official highway map, Hidden Springs is an archipelago — a pinch of broken green adrift in an ocean of white an inch or so below Lake Shelbyville. Put the map in your car and your car on a Shelby County road that doubles as the west approach to the forest, and you get a sense of scale.

From a distance, among bright fields Hidden Springs looms like a dark island. And then you're driving through heavy shadows of oak and hickory, negotiating banks and curves, moving past lines of pine and wooden park signs with place names that promise adventure: Quicksand Spring, Sassafras Pond, Possum Hollow, Rolling Meadows.

That's when you remember why you made the drive. Which is reassuring, because an hour in, you may wonder.

At 1,120 acres, Hidden Springs is easy to find — which isn't to say it's easy to reach.

From Greenville, Google sent me east on Highway 40 to Vandalia (I-70 construction made 40 the better bet). From Vandalia I followed Route 51 north to

Ramsey, where I turned east to follow a county road to Herrick, turned at a mural, followed a blacktop to Cowden, turned at another mural, and followed another county road, this one passing near Thompson Mill Covered Bridge, which is worth a detour if you haven't seen it. Another turn took me out of the fields and into the forest.

It was a 70-mile drive that, with ag traffic, took 90 minutes.

From the heart of Southwestern's service area, I could commute to any number of parks — The Nature Institute in Godfrey, Patriots Park in Greenville, Bremer Sanctuary in Hillsboro and Eldon Hazlet State Park north of Carlyle readily come to mind — and find similar hikes in half the travel time.

But that's precisely what sets Hidden Springs apart.

The country road connectors and point-to-point small-town slalom make Hidden Springs a less obvious choice for a half-day hiking trip. But the weave and wander route may make Hidden Springs a *better* option for you, depending on who you are, why you're on the trails,

and what you hope to find on the hike.

At the height of summer on a blue-sky day with tolerable humidity, in five hours I met two families, total. Both were on short outings, both were near trailheads. I've encountered more people in 10 minutes during any given hour and in every weather on trails in Bond, Clinton, Montgomery and Madison counties.

On this day, so silent was the forest that when I paused for a drink, I was startled by the sound of water bottle sweat striking dead leaves. A few minutes past the parking areas, I saw no one and heard no one. No glass-rattling bass escaping from the Audi two lanes over, no hum of heavy machinery, no sanitation truck back-up warning tones, or cell phone chimes or air conditioning exhalation or distant dogs barking. No voices on the trails. Just the sound of my thoughts, until, somewhere in the forest, those too went silent.

In a day when solitude is vanishingly rare, at Hidden Springs you're likely to find the one thing that may elude you on every other hike in our part of Illinois.

Peace.





## GETTING THERE

From most of Southwestern's service area, you'll follow I-70 east to Effingham, where you'll take Exit 160 onto IL-32 N/IL-33. Look for IL-32 to veer north after you've passed the Dollar General and Phillips 66 service station. You'll follow 32 North about 11 miles, past Stewardson and Stewardson-Strasburg High School, to County Road 700 N. Turn left (west) onto 700 N. Follow it for four miles to Hidden Springs.

Or you can see more of America and follow a course plotted by GPS as it tracked a frightened rabbit. That puts you driving Route 40 east to Vandalia, where you'll take Highway 51 north to Ramsey. In Ramsey, turn east onto E Main St, which becomes Country Road 2800N. Follow 2800N six miles to N 1400 St. Take 1400 north, through the dogleg where it becomes 1450 E, then north again (you're now on N 1450) to Herrick. In Herrick, turn right at the First Christian Church onto County Hwy 22/E 3300 Ave/County Line Rd/County Rd 3300 N (locals probably call it by yet another name). Follow the road east and when it curves north, follow it north into Cowden. At this point you may feel you've driven far enough and want to turn around and go home. Hang in there — you've almost made it. In Cowden, turn right onto East Locust Street/County Highway 11. This will lead you on a merry chase through the countryside, becoming 1975 E, 400 N, 2050 E, 700 N, 675 N, 2375 E, and 700 N again (Your GPS may see a difference in these roads, but you will not.), and eventually deposit you at Possum Hollow Nature Trail.

## POSSUM HOLLOW INTERPRETIVE NATURE TRAIL

Possum Hollow Nature Interpretive Trail is a mile loop under heavy canopy. Take a stick (or a friend) to clear spider webs that span the trail. Watch for mushrooms. On my hike, they were plentiful and colorful, coming in red, white and blue.

The trail is narrow at points, but well marked and well maintained. Posts mark interpretive points on the trail, but the literature rack at the trailhead kiosk was empty when I visited and I didn't find an online pdf. You can stop by the park office before your hike for a trail guide.

You *will* find a pdf for Hidden Springs State Forest online. It offers useful information about the trails and park, and a map that will help you orient yourself and navigate from site to site.

Make it a point to step off the loop and into the pine forest. It opens into a clearing around a pond and a picnic area. The scent alone makes the walk worthwhile.

## ROCKY SPRING NATURE TRAIL

This is the best marked, best maintained trail I've hiked in Illinois. It's a three-mile loop, broad enough in most places to accommodate a family of four walking side by side. The terrain is moderately difficult, with gentle banks along the hilltops.

Prescribed burns have cleared out the underbrush leaving clear views of the hills. On my visit, butterflies frequently traveled knee-high down the trail. Like

Possum Hollow, Rocky Springs was peppered with colorful mushrooms. Near the trailhead, look for a fernery on the hillside under a large oak.

At a mile in, Rocky Springs Trail descends to Richland Creek, where it narrows and hugs the bank before widening and climbing away. This stretch may be steep for some (far easier than Pere Marquette, by comparison), and I'd be hesitant to hike it after a hard rain. I suspect you'd slide down the hills and fight your way up them.

The view of Richland Creek is striking. The stream is broad with a sandy bottom broken now and then by slabs of stone. Water pools in the bends and runs lively through the cuts.

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources reports seven springs in Hidden Springs State Forest. Rocky Spring is near the head of this trail. At the risk of being proven wrong by saying you can't miss it, you can't miss it.

## TRAIL NOTES

- I wore sturdy sneakers and had no trouble with the terrain. Hiking boots would also be appropriate.
- I wore a cap and insect repellent to fend off ticks and mosquitoes. On Possum Trail, the stick I found to sweep away webs kept spiders off my shirt. Rocky Spring was wide and open enough that webs weren't an issue.
- While the spray worked against things with stings, it did nothing to keep gnats

*Continued on page 25* ►



## WHO • WHAT • WHERE

In August, we broke from our usual format to bring you Southwestern Electric's annual report. As we've noted in the past, our report is filled with people, places and things — but as most are identified, naming them isn't difficult. The person in the portrait on the opposite page should prove more challenging. If he were here today, he might say:

- I was born in New Palestine, Ohio, in 1862. My father served in the Union Army and fought at the Battle of Gettysburg.
- My family moved to Shelbyville, Ill., where I developed an interest in music and literature. I graduated from high school in Shelbyville in May 1881.
- During the Black Hills Gold Rush Era, I ran a general store in the Dakota Territory. After my store and home were destroyed by a tornado, I moved to California, where I became business manager of the Grand Opera House in Los Angeles.
- In 1886, I played a key role in presenting the first significant operatic production in Los Angeles. I organized the city's first symphony orchestra and managed it for 18 years.
- I brought many famous artists, orators, writers and entertainers to Los Angeles, including Sarah Bernhardt, Enrico Caruso, Lily Pons, John Philip Sousa, Anna Pavlova, Mark Twain and James Whitcomb Riley.
- I was elected an officer of the Academes Beaux Arts of Paris in 1907.

Any thoughts on our historical figure? We'll share your solutions to this month's puzzle in our November issue. We look forward to hearing from you.

Meanwhile, we hope you enjoy the responses to our June mystery item. Our June puzzle was provided by Southwestern member Bill Craft of

Edwardsville, Fort Russell Township.

"We inherited this from my wife's grandparents farm house in Fort Russell Township," Bill said. "It may have been left there by earlier residents from many decades ago — we found something tucked into a cellar beam dated from 1895!"

Bill and his wife also recovered this item from the cellar. "At first I thought it was a cider (apple) press but when we tried to use it as such it failed," he said. "Recently, I was watching a PBS show, *A Chef's Life*, and the main character was trying to go back to her roots and was invited to a whole hog butchering at a South Carolina farm. They cut the skin from the hog into chunks and put it in a large fryer. The skin would lose its fat as it cooked down. When enough time had elapsed, they would put these oil-soaked chunks into this contraption and squeeze the last drops of melted fat out of it, not wanting to waste anything!"

"I did some sleuthing on my own and found the exact same tool and it was listed as three things: sausage stuffer, pork skin lard press, and fruit press."

Many of you included childhood



memories with your responses. Thank you for sending your stories! We're pleased to share them in this issue. And thanks to everyone who submitted a response — and as always, thank you for spending time with *The Southwestern*.

The picture on page 21 of the June Southwestern is a sausage press. We used one when we butchered hogs on the farm when I was a child. My grandmother used to clean the intestines of the hog and then use them for casing. Thank you for bringing back a wonderful memory of my childhood.

—Gale Meseke, *Shobonier*

The picture on page 21 of the June 2024 edition of *The Southwestern* is of a cast iron sausage stuffer. The one missing part is a spout connected to the hole at the base onto which casings would be placed. As the crank is turned, the ground meat would be pressed out into the casings and twisted by hand into links. The process required two people.

My father, Kenny Goldacker, owned Franzen's Mercantile, a small grocery store in Mount Olive, Illinois. Every week he would grind pork with seasonings to be used in making links then sold as fresh or smoked pork sausage. The recipe was passed down from my father's grandfather, Frank Franzen.

—Frank Goldacker, *Maryville*

The item pictured is a sausage stuffer. Our family had one when I was a youngster. It was carried up from the basement and cleaned up at butcher time, which was a family gathering. We had a hand-cranked grinder which was converted to belt-driven electric. After the meats were "chunked," dad ground them, and then stuffed the summer sausage which was hung and liquid smoked.

He always added some pork to our

**Who-What-Where** is a contest that challenges your knowledge of people, places and objects in and around Southwestern Electric Cooperative's service area. Here's how it works: Each month, we run a photo. Your job is to tell us who's pictured, what we've photographed, or where we shot the photo. You can email your response to [joe.richardson@sweci.com](mailto:joe.richardson@sweci.com) or send it by mail to Joe Richardson, Southwestern Electric Cooperative, 525 U.S. Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246. Please include your name, mailing address, and hometown. If you have a story about our photo topic, include that as well—we love these! The puzzle solution—possibly accompanied by a few words from you—will appear in a future issue of *The Southwestern*.

hamburger, for flavor and to keep it from being too dry. At that time, casings could be ordered from Sears.

We also used it to render lard. The fat from butchered hogs was cooked in a giant cast iron kettle and then pressed in the stuffer, which had a perforated insert lined with cheesecloth for this operation.  
—Mike Mollet, Sorento

The picture on page 21 of the June 2024 “The Southwestern” is of a sausage stuffer which was used to stuff casings full of summer sausage or pork sausage or any other kinds of sausage by farmers when they butchered.

I loved butchering day when I was growing up on the farm. My dad or brothers would bring in samples of the sausage for my mom to fry up on the cook stove so they could tell if it was seasoned right.  
—Mrs. Vernon R. Reinacher (Barbara), Troy

The object pictured is a sausage stuffer and lard press. Although I never got to use one as a sausage press, I got to help my wife’s family press lard lots of times. They also used it as a sausage press many times, but that was before I was part of the family. Their sausage stuffer/lard press was owned by the entire family — my father-in-law and his two brothers and all their kids. Probably anyone who wanted to use it only had to ask. It is still in the family somewhere, but I don’t know how much use it gets these days.  
—Robert Ridenour, Dorsey

Your “What Am I” in the June 2024 issue is a very versatile piece of kitchen equipment — a must-have piece in the late 1800s. It had a very wide range of uses. First of all, it was sold for a lard press and sausage stuffer. It may also be used as a meat press, juice press or even your random “duck crusher.” I believe the one pictured is a tabletop model that was also used as a fruit press for preserves. This one, cast iron, weighed in at over 26 pounds. It was far from the portable model!  
—Mac McCormick, Holiday Shores

The June picture is a fruit, lard and sausage press, manufactured by Enterprise Mfg. Co. The company was founded

in 1864. Enterprise Manufacturing Co. remained in business until 1956 when it was bought by Sylex Co.  
—Scott Fischer, Staunton

June 2024 What am I? is an Enterprise cast iron fruit/wine press and sausage stuffer. Picture had lots of clues and looks to be in good shape for 1895! My husband guessed it was an apple press. I found several different types on eBay.  
—Vicki Babic, Alhambra

June 2024 item is an Enterprise sausage stuffer. If it has the insert with holes, it was used as a lard press. I still use one every year to make our deer sausage.  
—Kyle Monroe, Edwardsville

The picture is a meat stuffer. I remember using one when I was a kid, with my family, when we butchered.  
—Delmar Korsmeyer (submitted by Janice Korsmeyer), Alhambra

The June issue shows a press most commonly used for making sausage links that could be used for fruits as well. Some of them were also used to make lard. And it wouldn’t be a stretch to see that they might be used for soaps. It’s from about the 1880s up to the 1950s.  
—Anne Cicero, St. Jacob

Sausage rope press — makes me hungry to see!  
—Dennis Reilly, Edwardsville  
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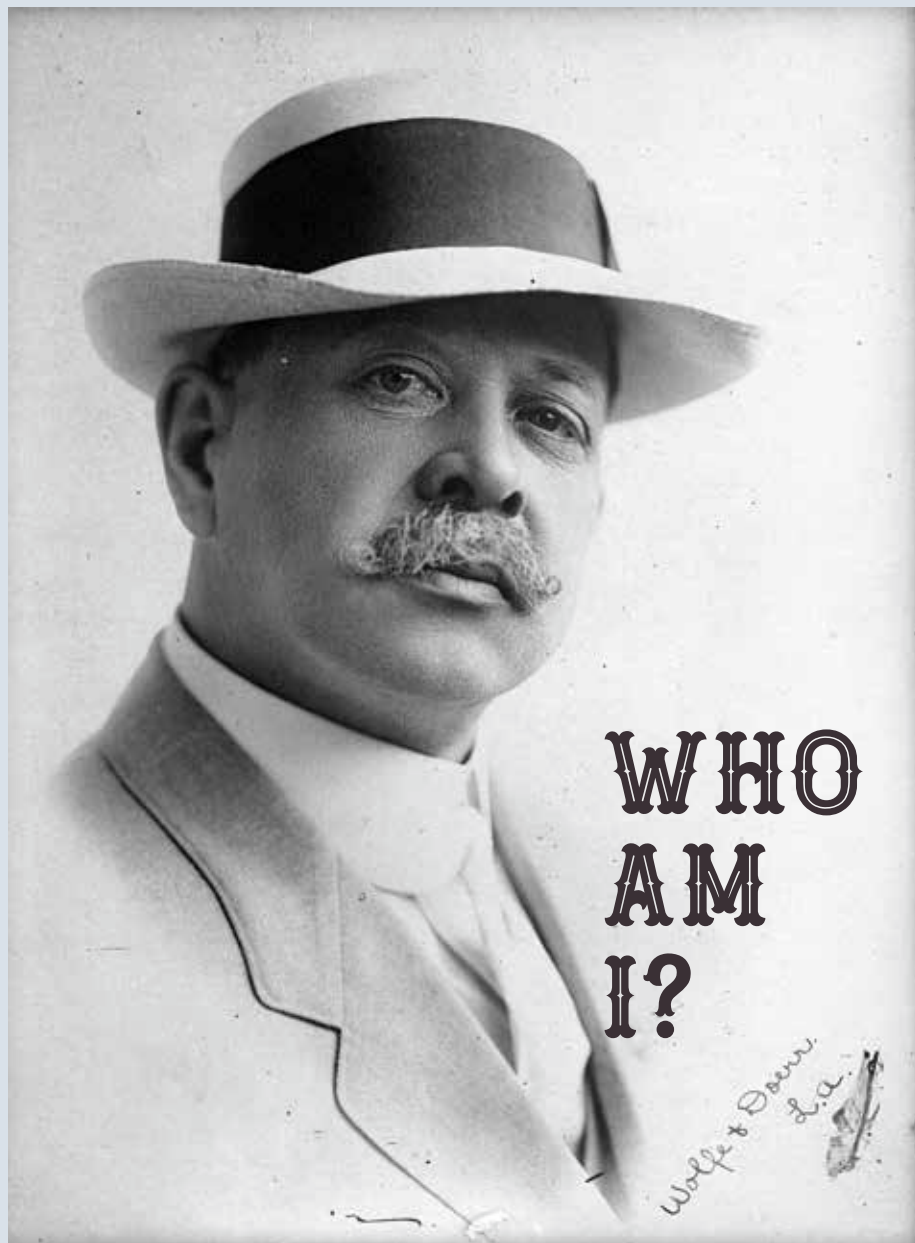


PHOTO COURTESY LOS ANGELES TIMES PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE, UCLA LIBRARY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

CO-OP KITCHEN

# CHOW LINE



## CHICKEN KABOB SKEWERS

### Ingredients

- 1 package of wooden skewers
- 1½ pounds chicken breast cubed
- 2 bell peppers cut into chunks
- 2 medium zucchini cut in half lengthwise and cut into thick chunks
- 2 tablespoons olive oil

### Salad & Dressing Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons Caesar salad dressing
- 2 tablespoons barbecue sauce
- 2 cups arugula
- 1 bunch green onions sliced ½ inch thick

### Directions

1. Thread chicken onto skewers, alternating with peppers and zucchini.
2. Brush with olive oil and grill over medium heat 10-15 minutes, turning frequently until chicken is cooked and vegetables are tender.
3. Mix together Caesar dressing and barbecue sauce until well blended.
4. Toss arugula and green onions together and blend in dressing.
5. Serve skewers on bed of the salad.

## BEEF SHISH KABOBS

### Ingredients

- 1 package of wooden skewers
- 1 sirloin steak sliced 1½ inches thick cut into 1½ inch cubes
- 1 small package of fresh mushrooms
- 2 medium zucchini cut in half lengthwise and cut into thick chunks

### Marinade Ingredients

- 12 ounces beef broth
- ½ cup salad oil
- 1 clove garlic
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt

### Directions

1. Whisk together marinade ingredients and pour into resealable plastic bag.
2. Add beef cubes, squeeze out excess air, seal bag and marinate in refrigerator 4-5 hours.
3. Pour the marinade into a small saucepan, bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium-low and simmer for 10 minutes. Set aside for basting.
4. Thread pieces of beef onto skewers, alternating with zucchini and mushrooms.
5. Grill on high heat, turning frequently and brushing generously with the marinade until nicely browned on all sides and beef is no longer pink in the center (about 15 minutes).

### GRILLING TIP

If you're using bamboo or wooden skewers, soak them in water for at least one hour to prevent burning.

Chicken Kabob Skewers

Prepared & photographed by Mike Barns

## CURRENT EVENTS

**September 7 KICKS ON 66 CAR SHOW & CRUISE**, Edwardsville. See cars, trucks, and motorcycles from all eras. 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Car cruise starts at 2 p.m. Ray M. Schon Park, across from Glen Carbon Village Hall on North Main Street. Visit [kickson66.org](http://kickson66.org).

**September 8 NATURE / CULTURE HIKE**, Collinsville. Join SIUE Archaeology Professor Julie Zimmermann for our fall nature/culture hike and learn about the natural environment of Cahokia Mounds and how it shaped the Mississippian culture. Wear appropriate clothing (i.e., sturdy shoes, hat/sun visor), bring water, sunscreen, bug spray and snacks. Event is free. Meet in front of the Interpretive Center about 15 minutes before start of hike. 1 - 4 p.m. Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site, 30 Ramey Street. Call (618) 346-5160 or visit [cahokiamounds.org](http://cahokiamounds.org).

**September 10, 24; October 8, 22 HEARTLAND PRAIRIE HIKE**, Alton. Join the Nature Institute at the Heartland Prairie at Gordon Moore Park. Walks will focus on identifying native plants and birds. Be sure to wear comfortable shoes and bring water, binoculars and a plant identification book. 5:30 - 7 p.m. Event is free. Heartland Prairie, 4550 College Ave. Visit [thenatureinstitute.org](http://thenatureinstitute.org).

**September 13 SUMMER CONCERT SERIES**, Litchfield. Enjoy live music by a different band each month. Food truck will be available. 6:30 - 9:30 p.m. Admission is free. Walton Park, 10207 Niemanville Trail. Email [tourism@cityoflitchfieldil.com](mailto:tourism@cityoflitchfieldil.com) or call (217) 324-9075.

**September 13-15 SUMMER SUNDOWN MUSIC FESTIVAL**, Effingham. The festival's mission is to bring together music makers and music lovers to celebrate the rich and eclectic music scene that thrives in our region. Event will feature songwriter circles, a youth showcase, campfire jams, local food and craft vendors, swimming, beach yoga and camping. Weekend pass is \$90. Friday 4 p.m. - midnight; Saturday 1 p.m. - midnight; Sunday 11:30 a.m. - 6 p.m. Gates open 30 minutes before show time. The Stage at Lake Sara, 8724 East Marine Road. Visit [summersundownfest.com](http://summersundownfest.com).

**September 13 - October 26 GREAT GODFREY MAZE**, Godfrey. Come on out and get lost in the maze, ride the hay wagon and cow train, jump on the jumping pillow and bounce houses. After dark each visitor is required to have a flashlight to help navigate the twists and turns. Concession stand on site. Due to uneven surfaces within the maze, it is not fully wheelchair accessible. Maze may close during inclement weather. Fridays 6 - 10 p.m.; Saturdays 11 a.m. - 10 p.m. Admission fees vary. Glazebrook Park, 1401 Stamper Lane. Visit [godfreyil.org](http://godfreyil.org).

**September 14 COMMUNITY BAND PERFORMANCE**, Maryville. Enjoy the sounds of the Troy Community Band. 7 - 8:15 p.m. Bring lawn chairs or a blanket. Kettle Corn will be available for purchase. Firemen's Park, 300 North Donk Avenue. Call (618) 223-8965, email [parksandrec@maryville-il.us](mailto:parksandrec@maryville-il.us) or find us on Facebook at Troy Community Band.

**September 14 WINE ON THE LAWN**, Altamont. Enjoy Illinois wines, beer and live music on our beautiful 5 acre property. Food available also. For a donation, guests receive a commemorative wine glass and samples of wine and beer. Bring lawn chairs and plan to enjoy a fun day in support of the Dr. Charles M. Wright House. The house will be open for tours. No outside alcohol allowed. 2 - 9 p.m. Music by Dakota Danielle 2:30 - 5:30 p.m. and Sheafor & Simes 6 - 9 p.m. Dr. Charles M. Wright House, 509 North Main Street. Call (618) 483-6397 or visit [wrightmansion.org](http://wrightmansion.org).

**September 14 & 15 ARCHERY SHOOT**, Altamont. Noncompetitive shoot consisting of thirty 3D targets throughout the beautiful trails at Ballard Nature Center. Starts at 8 a.m. both days. 5253 East U.S. Hwy 40. Visit [ballardnaturecenter.org](http://ballardnaturecenter.org).

**September 20 & 21 ITALIAN FEST**, Collinsville. Celebrate the Italian culture and heritage that the city was built on with food, drinks, and family fun. Enjoy live music and numerous events throughout both days. 11 a.m. - 10 p.m. both days. Admission is free. 221 West Main Street. Visit [italianfest.net](http://italianfest.net).

**September 20-22 HILL'S FORT RENDEZVOUS**, Greenville. Experience canon firing, bullet molding, vendors, blacksmiths, fife and drum corps, rope making, Illinois Territorial rangers, black powder blanket shoot, War of 1812 and colonial reenactors. Noon - 11 p.m. Free. American Farm Heritage Museum, 1395 Museum Ave. Visit [hillsfort.org](http://hillsfort.org).

**September 20-22, 26-29 ALTON LITTLE THEATER: MAKING GOD LAUGH**, Alton. A warm family comedy by the Alton Little Theater Company. Thursday - Saturday at 7:30 p.m.; Sunday at 2 p.m. Alton Little Theater, 2450 North Henry Street. For tickets, visit [altonlittletheater.org](http://altonlittletheater.org).

**September 21 MISSISSIPPI EARTHTONES FESTIVAL**, Alton. A celebration of the Mississippi River through art, music, and conservation. Local artisans will offer their wares, music will fill the air, and food and beverages will be available. Noon - 10 p.m. Liberty Bank Alton Amphitheater, 1 Riverfront Drive. Visit [facebook.com/EarhtonesFestival/](http://facebook.com/EarhtonesFestival/).

**September 21 STREET ART FEST**, Highland. Watch as talented artists create artwork of amazing color, depth and complexity with chalk. There will be lots of food and beverage choices, live music, bags tournament, makers market, and a Kreative Kids Korner. 11 a.m. - 8 p.m. Downtown Square, 1216 Main Street. Visit [highlandillinois.com](http://highlandillinois.com).

**September 21 THE COMPLETE HISTORY OF AMERICA (ABRIDGED) - ELECTION EDITION**, Lebanon. The Reduced Shakespeare Company (RSC) returns with 600 Years of History in 6000 seconds. The three cultural guerillas take you on a ninety-minute rollercoaster ride through the glorious quagmire that is American history. 7:30 p.m. Admission fees vary. The Hett Center for the Arts, 400 North Alton Street. For details visit [thehett.com](http://thehett.com).

*Continued on page 26* ▶

### Call to Confirm

Listings are provided by event organizers or taken from community websites. We recommend calling to confirm dates, times and details before you make plans. All are subject to change.

### Submissions

To submit an event for consideration in our calendar, email your event information to [joe.richardson@sweci.com](mailto:joe.richardson@sweci.com). Please use our Current Events format (as seen on these pages) to write your submission. Include a contact number or email and submit your listing at least two months prior to your event.



► *Who~What~Where*

*Continued from page 21*

It is a sausage stuffer — one just like this made many a link of pork sausage for my family when dad butchered.

—*Dorothy Hachman, Wood River*

The June 2024 “What am I?” puzzler is a vintage sausage stuffer/fruit press circa late 1800s. These were produced by Enterprise Manufacturing Company in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The company was founded in 1864 and specialized in hardware products including food choppers, cherry pitters, apple peelers, and coffee mills. They advertised as “The Cook’s Right Hand.” Enterprise remained in business until 1956.

—*Bill Malec, O’Fallon*

This one’s easy. It’s a sausage stuffer. We have one just like it that we’ve used to make sausage in the past. I remember the ritual of making sausage from my youth. My dad would butcher several hogs at once. We’d have to scrape the intestines to clean the casings for the sausage. My favorites were pork sausage links and, of course, summer sausage. Yum!

Thanks for this feature — look forward to it every month.

—*Jane Dapkus, Pocahontas*

I believe that is a cast iron sausage stuffer/fruit press. My late husband had one that I think belonged to his father. Not sure where it ended up. I think they’re pretty rare.

—*Rhonda Lorenz, Worden*

It is a lard press. My husband and I butchered at home and rendered fat on the stove. We put the cracklins in from frying fat and rendering lard.

—*Jessie P. Ward, Vandalia*

The item is a lard/sausage press or fruit press. It was used to render lard or extract juice from fruit or vegetables.

Manufactured in 1905.

—*Valarie Mueth, Maryville.*

The “What am I?” in the June issue is a sausage press. While I never used one, I’ve seen them in use long ago.

—*Jeff Shields, Glen Carbon*

► *Hidden Springs*

*Continued from page 19*

from my eyes. I wore sunglasses with interchangeable lenses (sounds extravagant, I know, but I bought them for a song online and I’ve used them almost daily for six months) and popped in the nearly-clear, amber shades. I could see and my eyes remained bug-free.

• Unless your intentions are to escape civilization, I’d recommend you take a friend. I felt more isolated here than I do on trails closer to home and my cell signal was dodgy. Carry your phone — but don’t count on it. Let someone know when you’re leaving and when you plan to return. Absent that option, or along with it, you can check in at the Hidden Springs park office, ask for a Possum Trail interpretive guide, and let them know your plans for the day.

- Take plenty of water and pack a lunch.
- I wouldn’t visit Hidden Springs after a hard rain. I drove across at least one bridge with a sign warning the area was impassable during high water, and I suspect the trails turn to mud. You’d likely be fine to hike after a brief, gentle rain. After a toad-strangler or days of steady precipitation? Find a trail close to home that doesn’t melt to sludge, on high ground that doesn’t flood.
- Learn more about Hidden Springs State Forest by contacting the site superintendent at R.R. 1, Box 200, Strasburg, IL 62465, faxing 217-644-3109, calling 217-644-3091, or visiting the Hidden Springs website at <https://dnr.illinois.gov/parks/park/hiddensprings.html>. Hearing impaired? IDNR’s TTY number is 217-782-9175.



You can’t miss the spring on Rocky Spring Nature Trail. Signs of prescribed burning (top) are almost as evident as the mushrooms that flourish in Hidden Springs State Forest. *Pages 18-19:* Sturdy wooden bridges span gaps on Possum Hollow Interpretive Nature Trail and out-of-the-way benches invite quiet reflection.

► *Continued from page 24*

**September 21; October 19** CLASSIC FLICKS FOR CONSERVATION, Godfrey. Watch a classic movie on our giant inflatable screen. All movies this year will feature an episode of the 1939 movie serial “The Phantom Creeps” as a pre-film short. Bring your own lawn chairs or blankets, as well as your own snacks. No alcohol is permitted. Parking is limited, so arrive early. September movie at 7:15 p.m.; October movie at 7 p.m. Event is free but donations are welcome. The Nature Institute, 2213 South Levis Lane. Call (618) 466-9930 or visit [thenatureinstitute.org](http://thenatureinstitute.org).

**September 22** APPLE FESTIVAL, Grafton. Festivities include apple wine tasting, warm apple pie, crafts, live music, fresh produce and kids’ activities. Bring a pumpkin or buy one to decorate and take part in the pumpkin roll at 2 p.m. Fastest pumpkin wins a free night’s stay at our lodge. 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. Free. Pere Marquette Lodge & Conference Center, 13653 Lodge Blvd. Call (618) 786-2331 or visit [pmlodge.net](http://pmlodge.net).

**September 22** CONCERT IN THE PARK, Maryville. Friends of Bluegrass will perform from 3 - 5 p.m. Bring lawn chairs or a blanket. Kettle Corn will be available for purchase. Firemen’s Park, 300 North Donk Avenue. Call (618) 223-8965, email [parksandrec@maryville-il.us](mailto:parksandrec@maryville-il.us) or find us on Facebook at Troy Community Band.

**September 22** SYMPHONY CONCERT SERIES, Edwardsville. Family-friendly free concerts performed by the Edwardsville Symphony. This season’s theme is “The Color of Music” linking tone, color, timbre and art to music. Free children’s activities during each concert. Bring your own lawn chair or blanket. Pre-concerts by local dance schools and artists at 6:30 p.m.; symphony starts at 7 p.m. Edwardsville City Park, 101 South Buchanan Street. Visit [edwardsvillemunicipalitysymphony.com](http://edwardsvillemunicipalitysymphony.com).

**September 27 & 28** BALLOONS OVER MARINE FESTIVAL, Marine. Event will feature balloon launches on Friday and Saturday evening, a sunrise launch on Saturday morning and a balloon glow on Saturday evening. Aviation activities and displays will be available for attendees, to enjoy; as well as, food, drinks, a bounce house, and more. The proceeds of the event will be used to help victims of human trafficking and other charities. Village Park, 155 North Duncan Street. Visit [bomarine.org](http://bomarine.org).

**September 27-29** ART FAIR, Edwardsville. Featuring the original works of approximately 100 accomplished artists and local food and drink. A three-day opportunity for the family to see art, make art, and buy art. City Park, 101 South Buchanan Street. Friday 5 - 9 p.m.; Saturday 11 a.m. - 9 p.m.; Sunday 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. Admission is free. Call (618) 655-0337 or visit [edwardsvilleartscenter.com](http://edwardsvilleartscenter.com).

**September 28** FALL FESTIVAL, Elsah. Set in the epic colors of autumn on the Mississippi, the festival will highlight historic Elsah’s charm. Businesses and buildings will be open and vendors will be set up throughout the village. Listen to live music, stroll the streets, admire stone houses and support small businesses. 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Downtown at 26 LaSalle Street. Visit [escapetoelsah.com](http://escapetoelsah.com).

**October 2** TELESCOPE NIGHT, Godfrey. Want to look at the universe through a telescope, but don’t own one? Come out to the Talahi Lodge on the night after a full moon and we will have some set up. Bring your own telescope and we can help you use it. We will talk about how telescopes work and look at the moon and other night sky objects. 7 - 9 p.m. Free for members; \$5 for non-members. Space is limited, registration required. The Nature Institute, 2213 South Levis Lane. To register, visit [thenatureinstitute.org](http://thenatureinstitute.org).

**October 4-6** LIVING HISTORY DAYS, Madison County. Three days of discovery and fun at numerous locations across Madison County. Enjoy music, vintage baseball, performances, crafts, displays, a Chautauqua, quilting, antique cars and more. For details and locations, visit [madcohistory.org](http://madcohistory.org).

**October 5** CABIN DAY, Glen Carbon. Learn about early Glen Carbon and the Goshen Settlement, check out the Yanda Cabin, and shop with our local craft and food vendors. 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Admission is free. Yanda Cabin, 148 S. Main Street. Call (618) 288-7271.

**October 5** CONCERT IN THE PARK, Maryville. Flip the Frog will perform from 7 - 8:30 p.m. Bring lawn chairs or a blanket. Kettle Corn will be available for purchase. Firemen’s Park, 300 North Donk Avenue. Call (618) 223-8965, email [parksandrec@maryville-il.us](mailto:parksandrec@maryville-il.us) or find us on Facebook at Troy Community Band.

**October 5 & 6, 12 & 13** VINTAGE VOICES, Alton. Step back in time on these guided, gentle-walking tours and meet a controversial publisher, war heroes, and prominent persons from Alton’s rich history portrayed by local actors. Noon - 2:30 p.m. Tours will leave from the main gate of the City Cemetery at 5th and Vine Streets. For tickets, call (618) 531-6641 or visit [facebook.com/vintagevoicestours](http://facebook.com/vintagevoicestours).

**October 8** FAYETTE COUNTY HOSPITAL BINGO, Vandalia. Join Friends and Families of Sarah Bush Lincoln Fayette County Hospital for an evening of bingo to win great prizes and support Fayette County Hospital initiatives. Doors open at 4:30 p.m.; early bird bingo starts at 5:30 p.m. \$10 for 10 regular bingo games. Come for the fun, play for the cause. Vandalia Moose Lodge, 328 South 3rd Street. For tickets, call (618) 283-5401 or (618) 283-5446.

**October 11 & 12** CHILI COOK-OFF, Belleville. Features the culinary creations of individuals, local organizations and area businesses. Event includes more than 60 food vendors, live music and adult beverages for purchase. Friday 11 a.m. - 10 p.m.; Saturday 9:30 a.m. - 9 p.m. Admission is free. Veterans Memorial Fountain and along Main Street. Visit [bellevillechili.com](http://bellevillechili.com).

**October 12** GOING GOLD KIDS FEST, Edwardsville. Liberty Apple Orchard will host the popular “Going Gold Kids Fest” to benefit pediatric cancer research by the American Cancer Society. The afternoon features face painting, a petting zoo and pony rides (1 - 3 p.m.), touch-a-truck, a scavenger hunt and more. Food will be available for purchase. All proceeds benefit childhood cancer research and initiatives through the American Cancer Society. Noon - 3 p.m. \$10 per child 2 years of age and older. 8308 Kuhn Station Road. For more information, visit [facebook.com/libertyappleorchard](http://facebook.com/libertyappleorchard), email [j5fourj@gmail.com](mailto:j5fourj@gmail.com) or call (618) 659-9217.

**October 12** HARD ROAD CAR CRUISE, Marine. A celebration car cruise of the 100th anniversary of the hard road between Marine and St. Jacob. We would like to register any car or pickup truck that was made between 1924 and 2024. Registration is free. Lineup at 11 a.m. Cruise will begin at noon with vehicles from newest to oldest, drive to St. Jacob to old Route 40, go around the block and then back to Marine where participants are welcome to showcase their vehicle for the afternoon. Village Park, 155 North Duncan Street. To register, call Dennis at (618) 491-4842 or email [mhscruise@marinehistoricalsociety.org](mailto:mhscruise@marinehistoricalsociety.org).

A bumble bee  
goes for gold,  
pollinating  
thistle at  
Godfrey's  
Nature Institute.



**THE FINAL FRAME**

