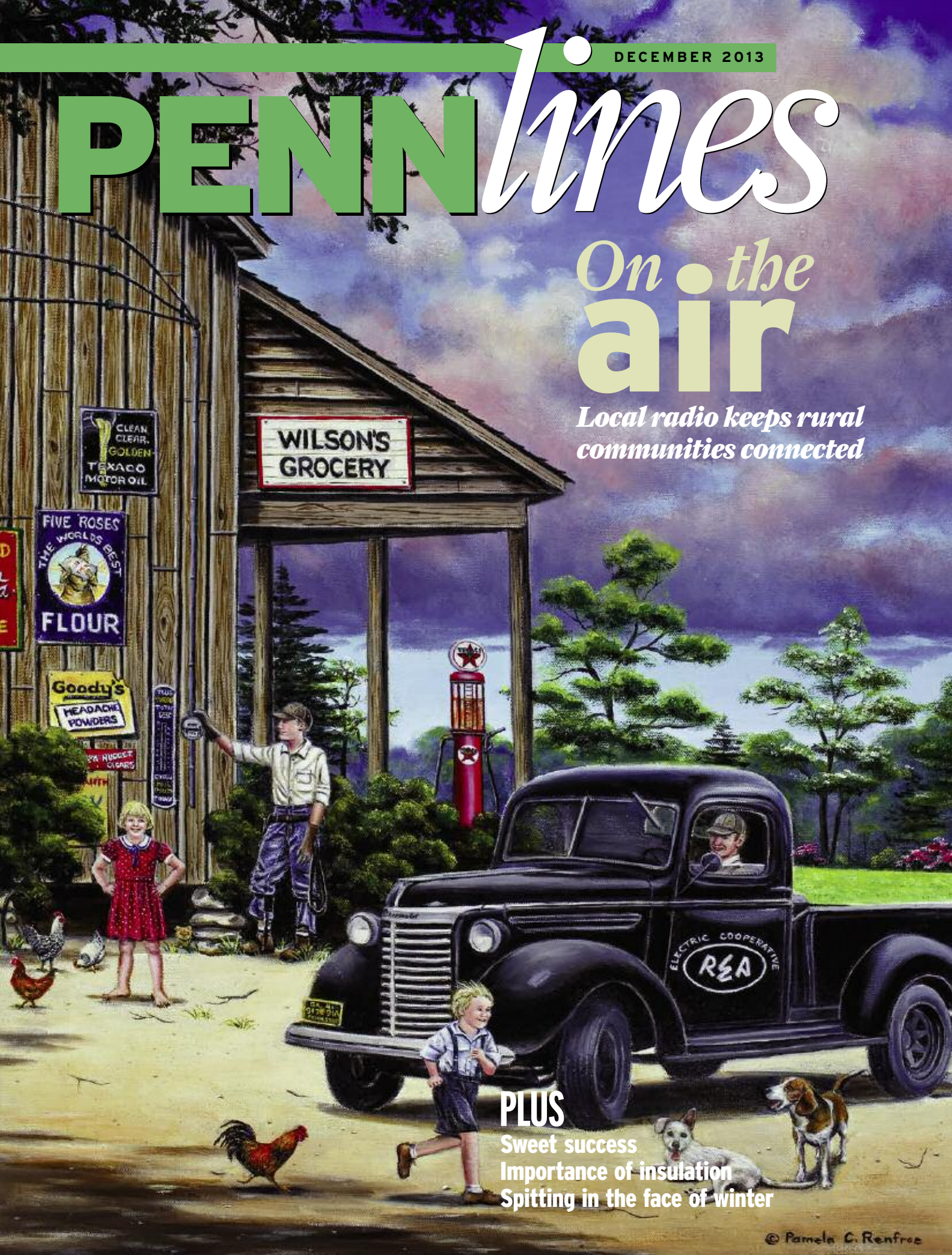


DECEMBER 2013

PENN *Lines*

*On the
air*

*Local radio keeps rural
communities connected*



PLUS

Sweet success
Importance of insulation
Spitting in the face of winter

PENN *lines* DECEMBER

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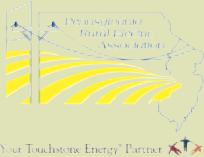
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ON THE COVER

This limited edition print, "Measure of Power," is available for \$60 unframed - \$15 S & H; \$275 framed - \$40 S & H, from: The Renfroe Collection of Fine Art, 916 Holly Hills Road, P. O. Box 867, Hartwell, GA 30643-0867. You can also reach the gallery by phone at 706/376-5707 or email, renfroart@comcast.net. Website is www.pamelarenfroe.com. All prints are fully guaranteed and major credit cards are accepted.



KEEPING *current*

Work underway to save 'witness trees'

National Park Service staff members are working with the U.S. Forest Service to save the hemlock "witness trees" at the crash site at the Flight 93 National Memorial in Somerset County. The hem-

lock grove adjacent to the 9/11 crash site is being treated to suppress the spread of the hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA), a destructive pest that poses a major threat to the Eastern hemlock and the Carolina hemlock.



GROVE IN DANGER: The hemlock grove adjacent to the Flight 93 crash site is being treated for a hemlock woolly adelgid infestation in an effort to save the historic site.

Hemlocks stricken by HWA frequently shift to a grayish-green appearance rather than the dark green of healthy hemlocks. Several different treatment methods are being used to maintain the aesthetic and ecological values of the area where the hemlock witness trees are growing. Over the next three years, workers will treat 1,351 mature trees, as well as many seedlings/saplings, with a combination of soil-buried tablets, soil injection, low-pressure tree injection, bark spray and horticultural oil spray.

lock grove adjacent to the 9/11 crash site is being treated to suppress the spread of the hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA), a destructive pest that poses a major threat to the Eastern hemlock and the Carolina hemlock.

Maine, causing widespread mortality of hemlock trees. As of 2007, 50 percent of the geographic range of Eastern hemlock has been impacted by HWA.

Farm conservation tax credits still available

The state Resource Enhancement and Protection program, which provides tax credits to agricultural producers who install best management practices or make equipment purchases that will reduce erosion and sedimentation that could impact Pennsylvania streams and watersheds, still has \$3.5 million in tax credits available.

Farmers who have completed a qualifying project — or have a proposed project — may submit applications to the

Pennsylvania State Conservation Commission. Projects are considered on a first-come, first-served basis until funds are depleted.

Tax credits are available for up to \$150,000 per agricultural operation for 50 to 75 percent of the total project cost. Common projects approved include: purchase of no-till planting equipment, construction of waste storage facilities, manure management plans, and protecting heavy animal use areas like barnyards.

Since the Resource Enhancement and Protection program began in 2007, tax credits have been awarded to more than 2,700 projects, totaling more than \$34 million. The approved projects have helped reduce an estimated runoff of nearly 12 million pounds of nitrogen, 879,000 pounds of phosphorus and 882,000 tons of sediment.

Tax credit forms are available at www.pda.state.pa.us/REAP (under forms) or by calling Joel Semke at the Pennsylvania State Conservation Commission, 717-787-8821.

Mentored Youth Fishing Day to expand statewide

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission has announced it will expand its popular Mentored Youth Fishing Day program across the state in 2014.

Launched as a pilot program in 2013 on the Saturday before the regional opening day of trout season, the Mentored Youth Fishing Day brought out more than 3,700 adult anglers who registered 5,100 kids for the fishing opportunity. The kids and their mentors reported fishing more than 7,750 hours, releasing 4,400 trout and harvesting nearly 1,200 trout.

In 2014, the event is scheduled for March 22 in 18 southcentral and southeast counties and April 5 in other areas of the state. The locations for the event will be announced in late December. 🌟

The 'smart grid' grows up

BY REED KARAIM

WHEN you're young, lots of careers look appealing. It's hard to sort out what makes the most sense to pursue. In many ways, the idea of a "smart grid" was like that in its earliest days: so many possibilities, so much to explore.

Today, the advanced technologies that make the smart grid possible have been around for a while. The smart grid is maturing, and its future is becoming clearer.

In the beginning, many experts felt the smart grid would revolve around enhancing consumer efficiency. There was talk about smart chips in every home appliance enabling the devices to control themselves in response to changing conditions on the power grid, and real-time monitoring systems would encourage homeowners to save power. Today, the picture looks different.

"Obviously, home energy efficiency had a large role in the smart grid as it was originally envisioned," says Craig Miller, chief scientist for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), which represents more than 900 not-for-profit cooperatives nationwide. "Now, that's not seen as a particularly challenging area. Appliances hitting the market are much more efficient—you can't buy a new, inefficient appliance anymore."

As a result, the brightest possibilities have moved out of the household and onto distribution and even transmission lines, according to Miller.

"Across the nation, utilities are modernizing electric distribution systems by deploying advanced communications and automation technologies — includ-

ing two-way digital meters — to improve reliability, increase efficiency, and help control electricity costs for consumers," Miller remarks.

In substations, for example, the ability to switch quickly and efficiently between feeder lines, which carry power to consumers, can maintain system stability, reducing outages and costs.

"Automatically controlled smart feeder switching is a big area," Miller notes.

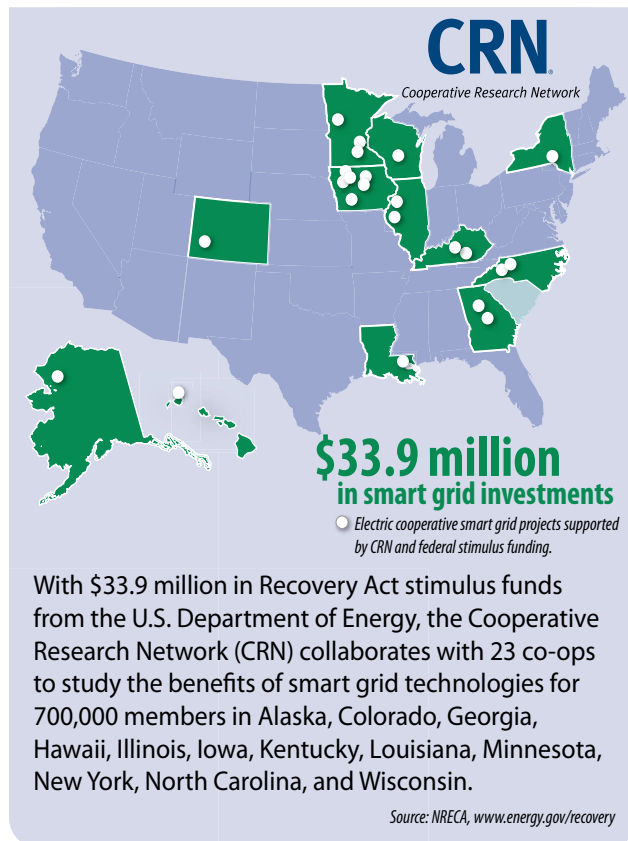
Electric cooperatives are finding innovative uses for those capabilities.

Snapping Shoals Electric Membership Corporation, based in Covington, Ga., employs smart switching to prioritize the flow of power to critical accounts like hospitals, and fire and police stations following service interruptions, such as those caused by a storm.

Automated equipment also lets co-ops cut line losses through efficient management of voltage levels from the beginning to the end of a line.

"Basically, every volt reduced at a substation translates into a 1 percent reduction in peak demand — the electric utility industry's equivalent of rush-hour traffic, when power costs run the highest," Miller explains. "It's just one way the smart grid helps co-ops meet rising consumer expectations regarding reliability and costs — bolstering the

Cooperatives Building a Smarter Grid



CRN TESTS TECHNOLOGY: This map shows the 12 states where the Cooperative Research Network is testing smart grid technologies.

commitment to service that's at the heart of the member-co-op relationship."

Smart technology is also making America's transmission lines more efficient. Transmission cables are sized to carry a certain amount of energy, but that can be affected by a variety of factors, including weather.

To be safe, transmission systems assume the lowest capacity on any line. But through dynamic line rating, utilities can look at what the real capacity is at any given moment and adjust accordingly.

(continues on page 15)



On the

Local radio keeps rural communities connected

BY KATHY HACKLEMAN
Senior Editor/Writer

PENNSYLVANIA holds a unique role in the history of radio. In 1920, the company founded by businessman and inventor George Westinghouse aired the first licensed commercial radio broadcast — the results of the Harding-Cox presidential election — on KDKA in Pittsburgh.

Since then, radio waves have reached across the Commonwealth to hold a special spot in the lives of many Pennsylvanians, including Bedford County resident John Cessna.

Cessna's fascination with radio started early on, back when he was a boy in the 1940s. His first memories are of himself as a preschooler hunkered down beside the radio, where he could listen to the latest amazing adventures of his heroes, the crime-fighting Lone Ranger and his sidekick, Tonto, or the hilarious antics of comedian Jack Benny.

"When I was just a little sprout, I was fortunate enough to get in on the end of the Golden Age of Radio (the period between the 1920s when radio proliferated until television use became common in the 1950s)," recalls Cessna. "Radio back in the 1940s was like (what) television became in the 1960s and 1970s. The primary radio format that we know today of music and news didn't start until the late 1950s. Before that, there were programs, lots of comedy and adventure programs."

Cessna remembers listening to those old radio programs with fascination. When the disc jockey era started, he played "radio station" at home, pretending to be Dick Biondi, a nationally known disc jockey he listened to on a New York station, spinning records on a tiny record player.

Today, Cessna is the co-owner of Cessna Communications in Bedford

County, and is now in the seventh decade of his continuing fascination with radio stations. Although he claims to be "semi-retired," he still shows up daily at the second-floor, downtown Bedford office that serves as the hub of the company's two AM and two FM stations, which are served by Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative. Cessna is the program director, supervising programming for all four stations, and also books shows and edits the daily log to make sure everything is running smoothly.

His younger brother, Jay Cessna, a member of Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative, is the second co-owner of Cessna Communications. Although he wasn't bitten by the radio bug quite as early as his older brother, Jay also has a long history with radio. Like John, Jay worked at a local station as a youth, and he also earned a degree in broadcast journalism from Penn State University. Jay now serves as the company's business manager and sales/advertising manager, as well as the afternoon on-air personality.

Radio business

In the early 1970s, the two Cessna brothers decided to take their love of radio and turn it into a business venture. They first tried to buy a local, existing station, but the owner wasn't in a selling mood.

"We spent considerable time thinking about (starting a radio station)," John explains. "When you are young, you are very sure of yourself. We were born and raised here and were well-known; it wasn't like we were total strangers. I had been involved in the radio business since high school and was one of the co-founders of the first FM station in Bedford in 1966, so when it came time for Jay and me to start a business, I already had battle scars."

air

They jumped into the market with a new start-up AM station — WAYC AM 1600 — in August 1974, believing there was enough business that their share of the pie would make them a modest income doing something they loved.

With a laugh, Jay says of the young underdogs, “We were the Davids in the business.”

Given the opportunity to stay close to their roots in Bedford County, the Cessna brothers flourished. They added WAYC 107.5 (an FM station now known as WBVE or B-Rock 107.5) in 1988.

When the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) relaxed ownership regulations in 1993, the brothers purchased another set of Bedford County AM and FM stations (the original stations they had tried to purchase back in the 1970s), now known as WBFD 1310 and Star 100.9.

The Cessnas take what they see as their company’s role of providing community service, entertainment and news seriously. Instead of simulcasting (airing the same programming on multiple stations), they run separate programming on each of the four stations.

“One station can’t cover the musical tastes of everyone, as well as talk radio and news, so we try to give people a choice,” John explains. “The only thing we don’t do is country music.”

Through the years, the Cessnas have seen major changes in the broadcasting business. The company has fallen from 12 full-time employees 10 years ago to six today (including the two co-owners). Even as they have chosen to rely heavily on

syndicated or outside sources for programming on all four radio stations so they can do more with fewer employees, they remain steadfastly committed to their local community.

“Radio gives us the opportunity to help local organizations that are helping the community, and that is very satisfying,” Jay notes. “We keep listeners informed about local, national and international news. We are the only source for play-by-play local sports. These are all reasons that radio and the internet are the only media growing in users.”

Local media, he adds, has endured for so long and survived several dire predictions for its coming demise — at the advent of television, then eight-tracks, and later, the internet — because of its close connection to its listeners.

“(Local radio is) the only source of what’s happening locally,” John adds. “No nationally produced service is capable of bringing the information that the local PTA is going to have a chicken barbecue next week, or tell about a meeting of the retired teachers of Bedford High School.”

Local connection

Just a few miles west, that same connection to community is what

makes Somerset County radio station owner Roger Wahl stick to a brutal schedule of rising at 2:30 a.m. daily to drive to his Meyersdale radio station (WQZS 93.3 FM, branded as QZ-93). He’s at work long before the sun rises so that when his listeners tune in at 6 a.m., they have the latest in weather news with special attention to road conditions



and school closings, as well as up-to-date news about what happened overnight. He covers southwest Pennsylvania and northern Maryland, so he has local news from two states to report, as well as national and international news.

Wahl, who worked in broadcasting in the 1970s in the Altoona and Tyrone areas, went on the air with his new station on Oct. 26, 1992. He had returned to Somerset County with his family in the late 1970s to care for his ailing father. After kicking around in a number of local jobs — none in radio — he found himself working as a regional manager for a beer distributor out of Maryland. One of his accounts owned a radio station, and one conversation about radio stations led to another. One day, the

FOR THE LOVE OF RADIO: John Cessna, left, and his brother, Jay Cessna, co-owners of four radio stations in Bedford County, are spending their lives doing what they love. John's first memories of himself as a child include the family's radio. They are members of Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative.

Maryland radio station owner told Wahl the FCC was opening a window that would permit an FCC license for a new station in the Meyersdale area. Wahl filed for the permit on Aug. 8, 1988 (8-8-88), but it would be 1991 before the FCC paperwork would be approved.

In the more than two decades since he first went on the air, Wahl has provided hours and hours of music for his listeners, but his focus remains on local news, and how it affects the area he calls home.

"I am local," he states proudly. "I'm here every day. I'm covering the guy who goes over the embankment, the Amish guy who had his tools stolen. Those are the things people tune in to hear on local radio. They want to hear the local news and weather, if the local school is closing early. Unless something really bad happens, we don't get national radio, television or newspaper exposure."



Twice in his years as an independent broadcaster — a position he calls a "dying dinosaur" — he's assisted national news crews who have found their way to Somerset County for a major breaking news story.

On Sept. 11, 2001, Wahl had heard about the three airliner crashes at the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon near Washington, D.C., and he was busy providing updates on the air.

"Then I heard county control dispatch to an airplane crash outside of Somerset," Wahl recalls. "I first thought it was a small plane that had crashed at the Somerset airport. Then someone who had seen the crash called me and said it was a large airliner, and it had crashed near Shanksville. I headed over there and was on the scene within an hour of the crash."

Along with reporting live from the scene, Wahl was able to assist national news reporters with background so





KEEPING CONNECTED: Cindy Ford, general manager, and Scott Donato, operations manager, of WGET AM, branded ESPN Radio 1320, and WGTY FM, branded Great Country 107.7, in Adams County, believe their local connections and live reports are the reason they are No. 1 in their market. The station is served by Adams Electric Cooperative.

they could provide accurate information about the area. It was a role he would find himself replaying less than a year later when, on July 24, 2002, nine miners were trapped for four days in the Quecreek Mine near Somerset. In full view of the glare of the news cameras, all nine would eventually be pulled alive from their underground trap.

"I was the first broadcaster in the country giving live reports from the mine by cellphone," he recalls. "Geraldo

Rivera put me on Fox News Live."

While not on the level with 9/11 or the Quecreek Mine disaster, Wahl has had his share of other major breaking stories. Among his hidden stacks of awards — brought out after much cajoling — Wahl has several recognizing his coverage of the 1998 Salisbury tornado, including a Certificate of Congressional Recognition presented by the late U.S. Rep. John Murtha (D-12th).

Despite the honors, Wahl is quick to downplay his role in covering the event: "I was on the air telling people where the tornado was."

Community circle

Most of Wahl's days are more mundane. On a typical day, he's on the air from 6 to 10 a.m. The remainder of the day's air time is filled

through computerized programming set up with his own mix of oldies and classic country, interspersed with local commercials and news items. He retains the ability to interrupt that scheduled programming with breaking news. While his station is providing music via computer, Wahl is out hustling, looking for advertisers, as well as news.

"Local businesses really support the local radio station," he reports. "Our livelihood depends on our advertisers and our listeners. The listeners have to support the businesses that advertise or they won't advertise. It's a circle."

Wahl also believes it is the role of the local radio station to provide public service announcements. Nowhere is that philosophy more evident than in his

commitment to Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative's Youth Tour program.

According to Carline Mitchell, Somerset REC director of marketing and member services, Wahl interviews a Youth Tour participant live on the air each day the Somerset County youth are in Washington, D.C., on the weeklong educational tour.

"They're all hometown kids," Wahl explains. "They get on the air and relay how they are having the time of their life. ... People love to hear what the kids are doing."

A specific subset of people — the parents of those Youth Tour participants — is especially pleased to hear the daily reports. Lisa Hoyman, also a member of Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative, tuned in every day during the 2013 Youth Tour to hear what her daughter, Brianna, and her fellow tour participants were doing because they were often too busy to call home.

"When you listened to the kids, it sounded like you were right there with them," Hoyman reports. "They told about how much fun they were having. You could tell they were enjoying themselves and learning a lot. ... It's nice for them to let the kids speak. The kids get a real kick out of being on the radio. It's



ON THE AIR: Roger Wahl, owner of WQZS (branded QZ-93) in Meyersdale, left, visits on air with Matthew Glessner, Somerset County Fair King, about his experiences at the fair. Matthew is the son of Doug Glessner, Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative manager of outside operations.

like they are a celebrity.”

Bianna, who was 17 when she was on the Youth Tour, recalls talking about her meeting with her congressman, U.S. Rep. Bill Shuster (R-9th), and how much Somerset County residents appreciated his assistance with the Route 219 reconstruction project.

“Being on the radio was a blast,” she recalls with enthusiasm. “The whole trip moved me, and I was pleased to be able to express that on the radio.”

While much larger than either the Bedford or Somerset stations — ranking 107th in the national market and No. 1 in their own market — two of Adams County’s local radio stations (WGET AM, branded ESPN Radio 1320, and WGTY FM, branded Great Country 107.7) continue to focus on the local connection to their listeners.

The station’s management includes

employees. They are live on the air except for midnight to 5:30 a.m., when they use voice tracking (a DJ from another location who voices shows across the state or country).

“We are one of the very few stations, especially on the FM side, that still has live personalities every day,” Donato explains. “We have a one-on-one connection with our listeners that we don’t want to lose. ... We believe staying live and local directly affects our ratings, which directly affect advertising sales.”

Ford adds, “We listen to everyone. If we don’t have an answer to a question, we will get it. We always try to explain what we are doing, the changes we are making.”



the non-profit agency where the concert is held.

Changing world

The Gettysburg station employees work to keep relevant in a changing world. In addition to traditional news and entertainment, mixed with public service spots, the stations must keep on top of changing technology.

“It’s a much more streamlined process now,” Donato explains. “We are digital- and internet-based. We stream on the internet and we have an app for smartphones. We have to keep up in the digital age. We have to give our audience options. We have 5,000 unique individuals who stream us every month through phone or internet. I was in the Bahamas recently and I listened to our station while I was there.”

Ford adds, “We have a lot of people from our area who go away for the winter, but they continue to listen to us. We have servicemen and women from this area who are listening to us overseas. We bring a bit of home while they are away from home.”

As for the future?

“Right now, the future is at our fingertips,” Donato emphasizes. “Every year there is something new. ... We’ve stayed on top so far and our philosophy is that whatever the next social media thing is, we want to get involved in it. ... Sales have

also evolved. We offer banner ads, we sell the website. There are so many new ways to sell advertising in addition to 60-second spots.”

Much has changed in the decades since the Westinghouse employees aired that first licensed commercial broadcast from Pittsburgh. But across Pennsylvania, local radio station owners and operators continue to reach listeners, touching lives and keeping communities connected. 🌟



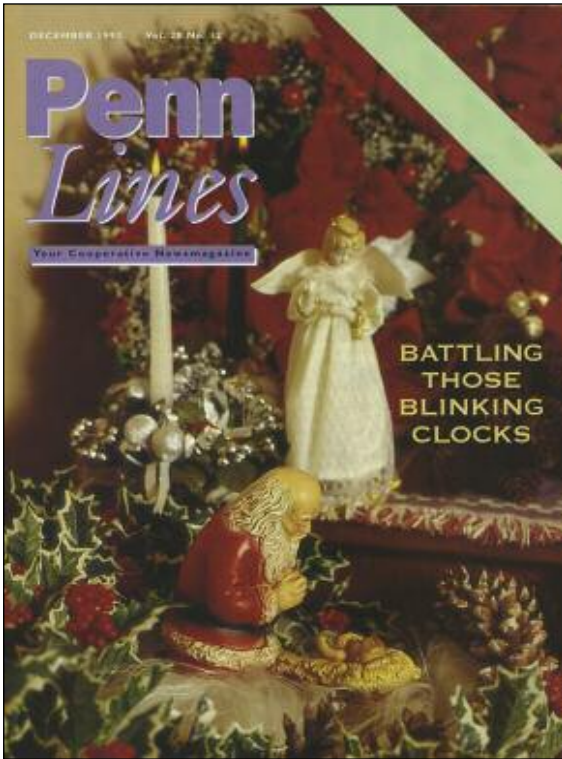
LIVE AND LOCAL: Roger Wahl, owner of WQZS (branded QZ-93) in Meyersdale and a member of Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative, takes his role as a community journalist seriously as he strives to inform residents of the latest news, as well as entertain them.

Cindy Ford, general manager, and Scott Donato, operations manager. The stations, members of the Gettysburg-based Adams Electric Cooperative, are owned by the grandchildren of founder M.C. Jones, and have 35 full- and part-time

Sometimes those changes (such as when the AM station went to sports talk) bring complaints, but Ford notes that if something isn’t paying for itself, you can’t continue to do it.

One thing they do that doesn’t make money, but helps out their community, is their regular benefit concerts. They set up and hold the concerts at a location — such as a school, college or festival — and conduct the advertising. Ticket proceeds, however, are given to

1993

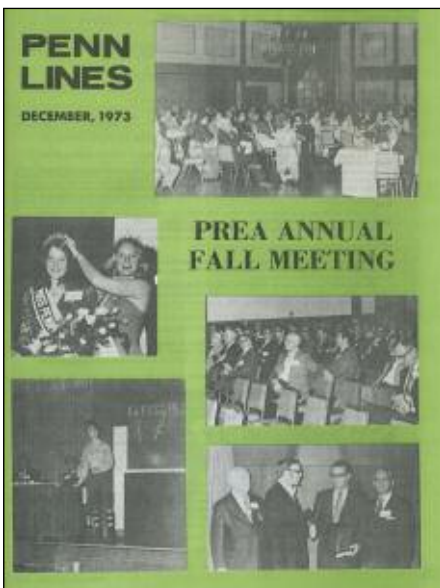


ENERGY efficiency isn't a recent concept. Twenty years ago, *Penn Lines* focused on ways to conserve energy, especially for the millions of Pennsylvanians who are approaching retirement and those who are already retired. The focus is on that group of residents because they are the ones most likely to be living on a fixed income. Also, retirees are most likely spending more time at home, which could result in increased energy consumption (and bills).

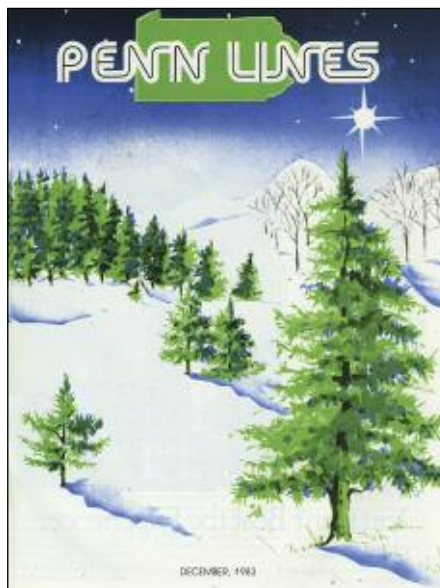
Many of the ideas offered 20 years ago are still relevant today: keep the thermostat as low as possible and dress in layers to stay warm; close vents in unused rooms; keep vents and radiators clear of furniture; open shades and curtains during the day to let in sunlight, and close them at night to prevent heat loss; and cook several items in the oven at one time or prepare smaller meals in a microwave.

While these suggestions save energy and money over time, people living on a low or fixed income often need more assistance. In 1993, there were a number of assistance programs offered through rural electric cooperatives, non-profit groups, and the state and federal government.

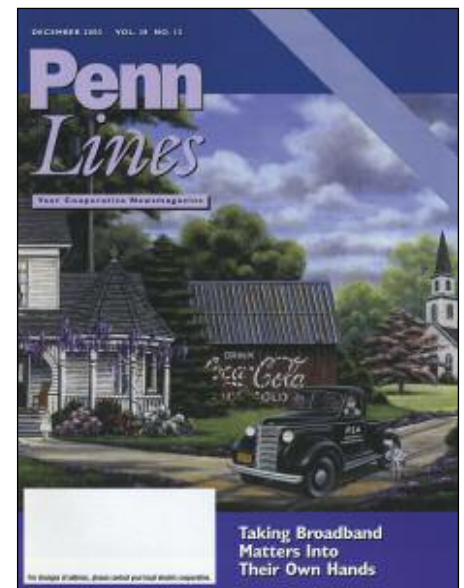
Many of those programs continue today for persons who are having difficulty paying their electric bills. Contact your local rural electric cooperative to find out what member assistance programs may be available. On a larger scale, assistance may also be available through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), a federal program administered by the state that helps low-income residents pay their utility bills.



1973 The Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association holds its 31st annual meeting, where attendees hear reports about the energy crisis and how to ensure the problem is not compounded.



1983 Pennsylvania's rural electric cooperatives participate in a national pilot program to provide information linking cooperative members who need help with a network of community services.



2003 Realizing the vital role high-speed broadband access plays in community development, rural residents tap local resources to operate affordable networks of their own.

ENERGYmatters

(continued from page 6)

"This offers tremendous potential to make the nation's grid more efficient and reliable, saving consumers billions of dollars down the road," Miller comments.

A national push to get smart

In 2009, the federal government made a big push to expand the smart grid by handing out grants through the \$821 billion stimulus bill. As always, electric cooperatives, long recognized as industry trailblazers in crafting cutting-edge ways to boost service and reliability while keeping electric bills affordable, led the way.

More than 50 cooperatives and public power districts in 15 states captured \$215.6 million in smart grid investment and demonstration grants, amounts that were matched with local funds. In a key effort, the Cooperative Research Network (CRN), an arm of NRECA, was awarded \$34 million for half of a \$68 million ground-breaking, coast-to-coast initiative under which 23 cooperatives in 12 states are studying more than 225,000 smart grid components.

Results are coming in, according to Tom Lovas, a CRN contractor. Even though final conclusions won't be ready for a few months, some insights are already clear.

One is the critical role played by two-way communications in smart grid schemes. Cooperatives have found handling the vast amounts of data being generated — as much as 10,000 times more — necessitates a careful reworking of their communication networks.

"Every smart grid project has, at its heart, a communications project," Miller stresses.

Another significant finding concerns the prepaid metering systems some cooperatives have implemented. These programs, by allowing members to pay for electricity in advance, requires them to track power consumption on a home display and adopt wiser energy use patterns to avoid going over the prepaid amount.

"That's been really surprising, the popularity of prepaid offerings," Miller


says. "I think you're seeing the smart grid, in that mechanism, reaching into behavior and producing more knowledgeable consumers."

Moving to a smarter future

One of the stimulus-funded projects Miller sees as the most interesting was launched by Great River Energy, a generation and transmission (G&T) cooperative based in Maple Grove, Minn., and two of its North Star State member distribution cooperatives, Lake Region Electric Cooperative in Pelican Rapids, and Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative in Jordan.

In 2012, the three cooperatives were awarded a \$2.5 million grant that makes it possible for Great River Energy to monitor individual household meters, fostering a new level of demand response and load control.

"You see distribution cooperatives and their wholesale power suppliers starting to share data in real time," Miller points out. "That's tremendously exciting."

It's all part of an evolving smart grid, a process that Miller argues will only accelerate as time goes on. To stay abreast of the latest smart grid developments visit www.smartgrid.gov. 

*Sources: Cooperative Research Network
Reed Karaim writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.*



As the research and development arm of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, CRN pursues innovative solutions that help Pennsylvania electric cooperatives deliver safe, reliable, and affordable power to their consumer-members.

What is the smart grid?

Although there are hundreds of ways to describe what constitutes a smart grid, all center around technologies and tools that help electric utilities better meet consumers' needs reliably and affordably. This is chiefly accomplished by allowing utilities to more effectively monitor demand and system conditions on a near real-time basis.

The smart grid combines digital meters and automated equipment, software applications, and two-way communications that help utilities to track the flow of electricity with great precision; pinpoint outages; identify voltages out of permitted ranges; and transmit messages to transformers, capacitors, circuit breakers, and other distribution equipment to initiate diagnostic or corrective (self-healing) actions that can isolate, reroute power around, or even remotely repair the cause of a power interruption. Utilities can also monitor electric use in various time intervals, and provide consumers with hourly or more frequent power pricing information so they can respond to changing electricity needs.

The U.S. Department of Energy lists seven functions of a smart grid: enabling informed participation by consumers; accommodating all generation and energy storage options; creating new products, services, and markets; delivering power quality for the range of needs in the 21st century; optimizing asset utilization and operating efficiency; addressing disturbances — automated outage prevention, containment, and restoration; and operating resiliently against physical and cyber attacks and natural disasters.

Sweet success

WE DON'T know who first determined that candy and the holidays are synonymous, but we owe that person a big, sugar-coated thank you. Throughout the month of December we indulge in sweets without feeling too much guilt, because we know that January, with all its resolutions and dreary deprivations, is just a few fleeting weeks away.

Christmas gatherings seem incomplete without sweets. Some homemade candy, such as Holiday Bark, is easily assembled with a minimum of ingredients. Other homemade candy, such as Old-Fashioned Peanut Brittle, is extremely time and labor intensive. "Almond Joy" Drops fall somewhere in the middle of the candy-making spectrum — easily made but with multiple steps.

This holiday season, try your hand at candy making. May you taste sweet success! 🌟



A trained journalist, **JANETTE HESS** focuses her writing on interesting people and interesting foods. She is a Master Food Volunteer with her local extension service and enjoys collecting, testing and sharing recipes.

HOLIDAY BARK

- 1 package (11 or 12 ounces) white "chocolate" chips or wafers
- 8 chocolate sandwich cookies with vanilla filling, broken into pieces
- 1 cup broken pretzel sticks
- 1/3 cup broken candy canes (small canes broken into very small pieces)



Line cookie sheet with parchment paper. Melt chips in double boiler or microwave oven, according to package instructions. When just melted, stir in cookie pieces and broken pretzels. Turn hot mixture onto parchment paper and use spatula to spread to desired thickness. (Mixture will not fill pan.) Sprinkle with peppermint pieces; press down. Chill. When set, carefully break into serving-size pieces. Makes approximately 24 pieces.

OLD-FASHIONED PEANUT BRITTLE

- 2 cups white sugar
- 1 16-ounce bottle light corn syrup
- 1 cup hot water
- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter
- 20 ounces raw peanuts
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 heaping teaspoons fresh baking soda



Mix sugar, syrup and water in large, heavy pan. Allow mixture to boil and thicken over medium to medium-high heat. When mixture reaches 240 degrees, add butter and allow it to melt. Add peanuts. Cook and stir at medium-high heat until peanuts are cooked and mixture reaches 300 degrees. Add vanilla. Bring to 305 degrees (mixture may smell slightly burned), remove from heat and quickly stir in baking soda. Quickly pour onto 2 warm, greased cookie sheets. Do not spread out. When peanut brittle is cool, break into pieces. Store in an air-tight container.

For best results, do not rush. The entire cooking process may take more than an hour. Use baking soda from a freshly opened box. Measure it out in advance, and make sure it has no lumps.

ALMOND JOY DROPS

- 1 1/2 cups flaked coconut
- 1 cup sliced almonds
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) butter
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup quick-cooking oats
- Whole, unsalted almonds for garnish



Spread coconut and sliced almonds on non-stick, rimmed cookie sheet. Toast in preheated 350-degree oven for 8 to 10 minutes, or until coconut and almonds begin to brown. Stir once or twice during toasting, and watch closely to make sure coconut doesn't burn. Set aside. In large pot, melt butter over low heat; add sugars, cocoa and milk. Bring to rolling boil and boil for 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in toasted coconut, almonds, oats and vanilla extract. Drop by spoonfuls on cookie sheets lined with parchment or waxed paper. Press whole almond into top of each drop, if desired. Chill until serving time. Makes 24 large drops or 36 smaller drops.

Lessons learned

THIS PAST year, I moved to a new place where I have been squarely humbled. Humbled by the ability of old, neglected, workhorse plants to revive with the tiniest bit of attention, humbled by the sheer brilliance of young plants thriving, and humbled by the weeds.

I know plants are programmed to grow if given half a chance. This explains my optimism as a gardener. It also explains why weeds can be so ... consternating. They are just doing their job; it's not their fault they are persistent survivors.

I know the first year in a new garden is the most difficult. Because the gardener has not yet made her own mark, and has yet to learn the ins and outs of the land, its micro-climates, its soil differences, its drainage pattern, its trouble-prone areas, and its weed history.

For instance, in my old garden, I knew to keep an eye out for nutsedge in the spot where a load of compost accidentally



BARBARA MARTIN, who says she began gardening as a hobby "too many years ago to count," currently works for the National Garden-

ing Association as a horticulturist. A former member of Gettysburg-based Adams Electric Cooperative, her articles appear in magazines and on the internet.

introduced it many years ago. I knew where top growth would re-emerge each spring from the root of the wicked porcelainberry vine, a beguiling but dangerous exotic I planted before gardeners learned how invasive it would become. I knew just where to be vigilant for the knotweed seedlings. But in a new garden, you can be blindsided as the soil seedbank sends you "gifts" of unexpected weeds and unanticipated legions of volunteers.

This summer, I tried to develop routines for preventing, scouting and controlling emerging weed problems. To some extent, I succeeded. Some areas got mulched, some got a sheet-composting treatment where I layered organic materials over brown paper or newspaper, while some spots were happily populated with desirable plants.

Yet on too many days, it seemed like I no sooner turned around than yet another unspeakable weed had somehow eluded my vigilance.

All of which is to say that I am duly humbled, and I feel great compassion for anyone starting a new garden from scratch or reclaiming a neglected one or attempting to expand a cultivated area. This is no game for sissies!

Here are a few of the lessons reinforced for me this past season:

Errant English holly seedlings are bigger and meaner (spinier) and harder to remove later in the season



than early on.

Same goes for English ivy seedlings, except they don't have spines and they root along their trailing stem given half a chance.

It's worth taking the time to go get the long, skinny, dandelion-digger tool and dig out the entire root when you pull up a dandelion; otherwise you will definitely see it popping up again soon.

The dreaded, seed-propelling oxalis may cause me to lose my mind.

Sturdy garden gloves are essential, as are long, armored gloves (to fight multiflora roses, wild blackberries, vining poison ivy and the like) and take it from me, those gloves with waterproof fingertips are a terrific invention. They keep your fingers relatively dry and comfortable and enhance your grip when weeding in damp soil. Weeding when the soil is damp makes it easier to pull up roots.

STOCK UP ON COMPOST: The liberal use of compost will help gardeners raise plants robust enough to survive when weeds try to take over.

Make peace and get comfortable dancing with your scuffle hoe; you will be spending time together. Also give a little love to your compost set-up. Compost is your secret weapon for raising plants robust enough to out-compete those weeds.

Mulch is your new best friend. Your wheelbarrow or garden cart is your other new best friend. And a helper to help you spread that mulch is absolutely priceless.

Complaints and rants aside, as the year winds down, I am genuinely pleased to note the gardening progress I did make, and I look forward to plenty more next season — weeds or no weeds. I hope you have had a splendid gardening year, and I wish you a great and, dare I say, weed-free 2014. 🌱

Importance of insulation

Save on energy with the right insulation

IT IS generally understood that adding insulation to the walls or ceiling will reduce monthly utility bills. The savings for each home depends upon the current level of insulation, your climate, efficiency of your heating/cooling system and your utility rates.

The current level of insulation is perhaps the most important factor in deciding whether or not to add more and how much. For example, doubling the amount of insulation in your attic will typically cut the heat loss through the room ceiling by about half. Your contractor can help you determine the payback from the savings as compared to the installation costs.

If you double that amount again, it will cut the original heat by only another 25 percent (half of half). This diminishing return is important to keep in mind when determining the amount of insulation to add.

Various types of insulation can be used to reduce conductive heat loss and/or radiant heat loss. Standard fiberglass batts, blown-in fiberglass, cellulose, rock wool and foam all are used to block conductive heat loss. This is the kind of heat transfer that travels through materials, such as drywall, studs, bricks, etc.

Radiant heat transfer is the way the sun heats the Earth or how you feel heat standing next to a raging fireplace. Your house also loses heat to the cold outdoor air and nighttime sky by this method. Radiant barrier types of insulation, often an aluminum foil film, are effective for blocking this heat loss. Some standard insulation batts include a foil facing to



reduce both types of heat loss.

Insulation will also make you feel more comfortable. If you are in a room at 70 degrees with little wall insulation, you may still feel chilly. This is because the exterior walls are cold and your body is losing its warmth by radiant heat transfer to the walls.

There really is not one “best” insulation to use in all locations. For example, some effective attic insulation will settle if it is used in vertical walls. Even if there is just a slight amount of settling, the relatively small uninsulated void in a wall will lose a lot of energy.

What is important when selecting insulation is its installed R-value, not just its thickness. Some types of insulation have twice the R-value per inch thickness as others. Also, blown-in insulation can be fluffed up when installed, not necessarily intentionally, resulting in less true R-value. Make sure your insulation contract specifies the final insulation value, not just the thickness.

You might consider an environmentally friendly insulation made of recycled materials. One good insulation is made from scrap blue jean material production. It is treated for fire safety and has an insulating R-value similar to fiberglass batts.

Fiberglass is made basically from sand so there is a plentiful supply. Some manufacturers use 25 percent recycled glass. Rock wool insulation is made primarily from waste products. It and fiberglass have an insulation value of about R-3 per inch thickness.

If the amount of space available for the insulation is limited, as in a masonry wall, injected foam is a good option. Some polyurethane foams have an R-value twice that of fiberglass, so only half the thickness is needed. The closed cell foam also creates its own vapor barrier and stops air leaks.

Another option to minimize voids is the blown-in-blanket method. First, a special film is stapled up over the wall studs. Next, loose-fill insulation is blown into the wall cavity to eliminate all voids. Then it is smoothed out through the film and the drywall is nailed over it. Another similar system adds some binders to the insulation to reduce settling over time. 💡



Have a question for Jim? Send inquiries to **JAMES DULLEY**, Penn Lines, 6906 Royalgreen Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45244 or visit www.dulley.com.

Spitting in the face of winter

DANDELIONS take advantage of the on-again, off-again nature of temperatures at this time every year to remind me that they still deserve their reputation as the Kahn of the plant world.

Remember Kahn? He was the crazed, vengeful nemesis of Admiral James T. Kirk in the second Star Trek movie, “Star Trek II: The Wrath of Kahn,” the second of the 12 Star Trek movies, released June 4, 1982. Ricardo Montalban played him, both in the movie and in his first appearance on the Star Trek television series, Episode 22, “Space Seed,” which aired Feb. 16, 1967.

Basically, then-Capt. Kirk and his crew, in the television series, battled Kahn and his gang of genetically improved humans for control of the Enterprise, eventually marooning Kahn and the other baddies on a remote planet that is devastated a year later when a nearby planet explodes. The movie picks up



MARCUS SCHNECK is outdoor and nature writer at PennLive.com, the website of The Harrisburg, Pa., *Patriot-News*. He also writes for a range of magazines and websites, and has written more than two dozen books. For more of his writing, visit www.marcusschneck.com.



15 years later with Kahn taking control of another starship to have his revenge on Kirk. However, besting Kirk and the Enterprise is never as easy as the space villains assume, and this time Kahn is killed when his commandeered starship explodes.

His dying words, snarled over starship-to-starship video link, are: “From hell’s heart, I stab at thee. For hate’s sake, I spit my last breath at thee.”

That last sentence sums up the defiance that a few remaining dandelions seem to exhibit for the approaching winter every year at this time. While nearly all other plants have withered, browned and dried up, a few dandelions wait for their chance on those sunny days when temperatures rise just a bit to spit out their final blooms of the year, trying to generate enough growth to generate some new seeds. A small number of them even manage a full-

on, butter-yellow flower.

That kind of “spit my last breath” attitude is just one of the things to admire in a plant that so many lawn-care fanatics despise. You see the same zest for life and survival in dandelions forcing their way up through hairline cracks in our sidewalks and persisting in even the most heavily herbicided acreages.

Boosting the esteem that some of us have for the “weed” even higher is the fact that every part of the plant is edible. This late in the year, most of those parts are rather bitter and chewy, but I usually manage to find enough younger leaves for a meal or two of hot bacon dressing over dandelion leaves over boiled potatoes. That’ll take the edge off a cold evening in late fall or early winter.

Equally nice during the cold, dead period of the year is a coffee-like drink brewed from ground dandelion and chicory root I gathered, dried,

BATTLING THE ELEMENTS: Dandelions are among the hardiest of plants, as well as the most delicious.

ground and jarred over the summer. It’s a smooth — smoother than coffee — reminder of a warmer, gentler season that will be back almost soon enough.

Most who know that any part of the dandelion is edible think first of those golden yellow flowers and the wine that can come from them, but those blossoms also make a fantastic jelly, can be dipped in batter and fried up into a delicious fritter, and can be added to salads. They can be a tad bitter, except when plucked from young plants as soon after opening as possible.

Most parts of the plant pack a wallop in antioxidants, vitamins A and C, and potassium.

Dandelion: to boldly grow where no plant has grown before. ☀

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Thoughts from Earl Pitts, UHMERIKUN!

Earl has a beef with the way government is operating today



Social commentary from Earl Pitts — a.k.a. **GARY BURBANK**, a nationally syndicated radio personality — can be heard on the following radio stations that cover electric cooperative service territories in Pennsylvania: WANB-FM 103.1 Pittsburgh; WARM-AM 590 Wilkes-Barre/Scranton; WIOO-AM 1000 Carlisle; WEEO-AM 1480 Shippensburg; WMTZ-FM 96.5 Johnstown; WQBR-FM 99.9/92.7 McElhattan; WLMF-FM 103.9 Kane; and WVNW-FM 96.7 Burnham-Lewistown.

I heard about this new poll they got out there the other day. It said despite our troubles, despite our differences, that 86 percent of Americans today are still proud of their country. But at the same time, about half of us said our founding fathers would be disappointed in our government today.

Disappointed? Honestly? Lemme tell you somethin'. At this point, George W. Washington is spinnin' in his grave so fast you could put him on a lathe an' carve him down to a rockin' chair spindle.

Fact is, if our foundin' fathers was alive today, they'd all be on the Maury Show where they'd be beggin' for paternity tests.

I mean, how did we get to this? How did we get from honest-to-God giants, visionaries, pillars among men who created a country with their bare hands, an' the idea of freedom with their bare brains? How did we get from that to the back-slappin', low-life weasels we got runnin' things today?

How is that even possible? That would be like Henry Ford turnin' over the Ford Motor Company to the Three Stooges. That would be like when Steve Jobs was gone an' they turned over Apple to Miley Cyrus. Who in their right mind would let that happen?

The problem is, your Publicans an' your Democrats a' today — they hate each other. They refuse to work with each other. They'd rather call each other names than get anything done. I got news for you, the foundin' fathers hated each other, too. Heck, Aaron Burr was the vice president of the United States when he SHOT Alexander Hamilton. That would be an indication to me that they did not like each other. But they still worked together creatin' America. I mean, up to the point Burr killed him.

Wake up, America. To all you brain-dead idiots in Washington, listen to a regular American. It's time to pull up your big-boy pants an' start workin' together. Leave the name-callin' to professionals like me.

Let's jist go ahead an' say it. America used to be a country that could send a man to the moon, and bring 'im back. Now, we can't even get him to the doctor.

You know what America is inventin' right now? We are workin' on a car that will drive down the road, and park, all by itself. Nobody's in the car! That blows my mind. We invented the lightbulb, the movie. We invented the computer, football, the pace-maker, the Sham Wow. We invented the Oreo cookie, for cryin' out loud. An' yet, we can't invent a stupid web-site to sell insurance. This is embarrassin'.

Think about it — that little pig, Maxwell, gets on the computer an' talks to his insurance company all the time. But 320 million humans can't.

How in the heck does something like this happen? It ain't like we're not familiar with computers. Computers is what America does. America computes! We got computers in our houses. We got computers in our cars. We carry around little telephones that got computers in 'em. We got computer tablets. We got books on computers. We got computers to play games. They even got watches with little computers in 'em. So America not bein' able to build a stupid computer web page to sell some cockamamie insurance is a little hard to believe.

This genius Cathy Syllibus, the gal that's runnin' the health care website, she says makin' a web page that can take hundreds of thousands of visitors a day is almost impossible to build. I don't know if that's true. Maybe we should ask YouTube or Amazon or eBay or Expedia or FaceBook or Twitter or Travelocity, Google, Craigslist, Yahoo. Yeah, they probably haven't been able to figger it out either. What's that?

Wake up, America. So my question is, how come all them companies built complex websites visited by millions of people a day an' our government can't? Because them companies ain't run by idiots. It's pretty obvious, ain't it? If they can't figure it out, maybe they should give me a call. I think I could do better than this.

I'm Earl Pitts, Uhmerikun. 🌟

RURAL reflections

Winter's grip

DECEMBER brings the first official day of winter, but most of us have already experienced the season's first snowfall. The changing of the seasons brings with it new activities and new outdoor scenes, along with the opportunity to get creative and shoot some great photos.

Our 2013 "Rural Reflections" photo contest has ended and the winning photos in the categories of most artistic, best landscape, best human subject, best animal and editor's choice will be printed in next month's issue of *Penn Lines*. Winners will receive a \$75 prize.

It's time to submit your photos for the 2014 "Rural Reflections" contest. To be eligible, send photos (no digital files) to: *Penn Lines* Photos, P.O. Box 1266, Harrisburg, PA 17108-1266. On the back of each photo, include your name, address, phone number and the name of the electric cooperative that serves your home, business or seasonal residence.

Our publication deadlines require that we work ahead, so send spring photos before mid-January, summer photos before mid-April, fall photos before mid-July and winter photos before mid-September. Photos that do not reflect any specific season may be sent at any time. Please note: 2013 photo entries will be sent to you in January if you provided a self-addressed, stamped envelope of the appropriate size to return your entry. ☀



Thomas Cagle
Northwestern REC

Cyndi Horner
Adams EC



Alice Foster
New Enterprise REC



Anne Anderson
Northwestern REC

