

RECIPES

ORGANIZE ENERGY

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# WISCONSIN ENERGY

*Cooperative*

January 2021

NEWS

**TRACKING DOWN**  
WINTER FUN



**Richland Electric  
Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



# LET'S CONNECT



When we say that we live in a “connected” world, most of us think about technology, like our smart phones and other devices and gadgets. But when you’re a member of an electric co-op (that’s you!), there’s so much more to being part of our connected co-op community.

As a member of Richland Electric Cooperative (REC), you help to power good in our local community through initiatives like Youth Leadership Congress, REC bottled water program, tree planting, and other programs that help the most vulnerable in our community.

We depend on you because you power our success, and when REC does well, the community thrives because we’re all connected.

We greatly value our connection to you, the members we serve. And we’d like to help you maximize the value you can get from us through a variety of programs, products, and services that we offer our members. For example, we can help you save money on your energy bill through our Smarthub app and rebates found on our website. When you download our Smarthub app, you can monitor and manage your home energy use, pay your bill online, and access a menu of additional options for potential savings and more.

When you follow REC on social media, you can stay up to date on power restoration efforts, tree trimming planning, co-op director elections, giveaways, and more. You’ll also see photos of our line crews in action and our employees helping with community service projects—and who doesn’t enjoy seeing good things happening in our community!

By connecting with us, you can get real-time updates from your co-op. That’s why we want to make sure we have your most current contact information on hand. If we can’t connect with you on these platforms or in person, you could miss out on potential savings or important information.

We rely on data for nearly every aspect of our operations, and up-to-date contact information from our members helps ensure that we can provide the highest level of service that you expect and deserve.

Updated contact information can even speed up the power restoration process during an outage. That’s because when you call to report an outage, our automated system recognizes your phone number and matches it with your account location. Accurate information helps our outage-management system predict the location and the possible cause of an outage, making it easier for line crews to correct the problem.

We hope you will connect with us whenever and wherever you can—whether that means attending our annual meeting, providing feedback on a recent visit or call with our employees, or simply downloading our app.

REC exists to serve our members, and when we’re better connected to you and our local community, we’re better prepared to answer the call.

To update your contact information or to learn more about co-op products and services that can help you save, visit [rec.coop](http://rec.coop) or call 608-647-3173.

We look forward to connecting with you!







# FIVE WAYS TO STAY COZY THIS WINTER

**B**aby, it's cold outside! When you're feeling chilly at home, there are several budget-friendly ways you can keep comfortable without turning up the thermostat. Here are five easy ways to stay cozy this winter.

1. Whether you're experiencing extremely cold winter temps or you simply "run cold," **an electric blanket can deliver quick warmth** like a



regular throw or blanket cannot. Electric blankets can include a variety of features, like timers and dual temperature settings (if your cuddle buddy prefers less heat). This winter, consider an electric blanket instead of turning up the heat, and your energy bill will thank you.

2. One of the easiest ways to stay cozy at home is to **keep your feet warm**. Our feet play a critical role in regulating body temperature, so when your feet are warm, your body automatically feels warmer. Try a pair of comfortable wool socks or house slippers to stay toasty.
3. On winter days when the sun is shining, take advantage and **harness natural warmth from sunlight**. Open all curtains, drapes, and blinds in

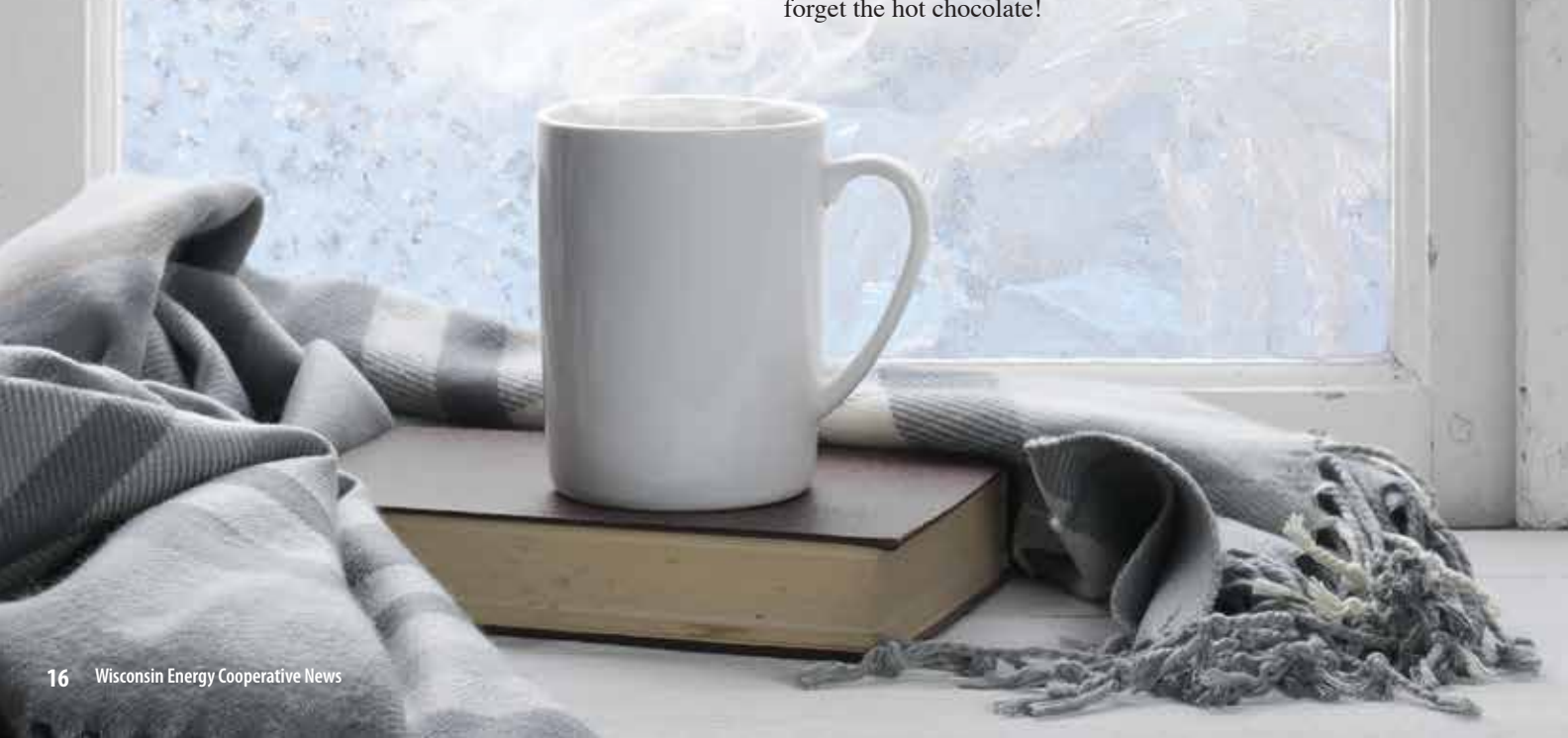
your home to let the sunshine in—you'll be able to feel the difference.

4. Another way to make your home cozier is to **use a humidifier**. Cold air doesn't hold water vapor like warm air, so by adding humidity inside your home, you can feel a little warmer. A favorable level of humidity inside your home can also help clear sinuses, soften skin, and improve sleep.



5. Beyond adding visual appeal to your home, **area rugs can also provide extra insulation and a warm surface for your feet** on cold winter days. Use large area rugs in rooms where you spend the most time. You'll enjoy the new colors and textures of the rug, and the additional warmth will help keep your home comfortable.

These are just a few ways you can stay cozy this winter without turning up the thermostat. Don't forget the hot chocolate!





# HOME HEATING FIRE PREVENTION TIPS



Heating equipment is a leading cause of fires in U.S. homes, with space heaters the type of equipment most often involved.\* But space heaters are safe to use, as long they're used safely.

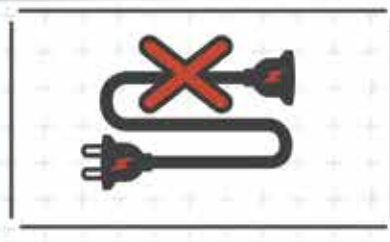
Keep anything that can burn at least **3 feet** from heat sources.



**NEVER** leave a space heater **unattended**. Turn off when leaving a room or sleeping.



**NEVER** plug a space heater into an **extension cord**.



**NEVER** use a cooking stove to heat your home or dry clothes.



Place heaters on level, flat surfaces **ON THE GROUND**.



Have a **qualified service professional** inspect your heating system **annually**.



Install and maintain **carbon monoxide alarms**.



Never use a space heater or any appliance with a **damaged cord**.



\*According to the National Fire Protection Association





# CHRISTMAS MEMORIES

**On the weekend before Christmas, Pa, my brothers, and I**

**hiked out to the pine patch west of the buildings to search for just the right Christmas tree. When we came to some agreement of what was a decent tree, Pa cut it down with his ax. We dragged the tree home and placed it in its base in the dining room. There it would stand, filling the room with its woody fragrance, until an evening a couple of days before Christmas when we would decorate it.**

Our decorations were quite simple. We had no electric lights as we didn't have electricity. Ma had collected ornaments of various shapes and colors and we hung them on the tree—very carefully, for if we dropped one it would shatter into a hundred pieces. And although Ma would never say anything if one broke, you could see the hurt in her eyes. Then Pa placed the star on the top of the tree, and the job was finished. While we stood there admiring the decorated tree, Ma made popcorn on the kitchen woodstove. It was a fun evening.

We attended church on Christmas Eve. On Christmas morning, when we had finished milking the cows and did the barn chores, we ate breakfast and then looked for presents under the tree. I found a package for me containing a new blue sweater and I opened it. Then I found a package the size of a book. It just had to be the book I'd wished for, "Fun for Boys." I tore it open and looked at the beautiful green, white, and brown cover filled with images of boys lifting weights, pulling rabbits out of hats, and looking upward at airplanes flying overhead. I would spend many hours in the months to come poring over this special book. (I still have it, its cover faded a bit, its pages yellowed and occasionally rolled at the edges.)

Darrel opened a package and discovered the toy he had wished for, a cash register with a little bell that dinged when the cash drawer slid open. He immediately fancied himself a storekeeper.

Donald had asked for and received a toy called a Crow Shoot. It consisted of a little cork-shooting gun and a metal fence with a lineup of crows attached. If you shot straight and the cork hit a crow, the bird tipped over. Donald, forever trying something new and often attempting something he shouldn't, became bored at tipping over the little black crows. Searching for new targets. Donald spotted Pa sitting by the dining room stove, reading the paper and smoking a cigarette. Donald carefully took aim at the cigarette. Pop. The cork flew straight and the cigarette flew from Pa's mouth. He immediately jumped and dropped his newspaper. Donald stood frozen, his cork gun in his hand, expecting the worst. For what seemed like an eternity, Pa searched for the lighted cigarette. He found it and turned to Donald, Darrel and me, watching and waiting, curious what awful punishment our brother faced even though it was Christmas morning.

Then Pa, with a smile on his face, said, "That was a pretty good shot." He picked up his newspaper and began reading once more. Donald went back to shooting at his crows. Darrel and I were certain that he had gotten away with what he had done only because it was Christmas. But we also knew he'd better not try it again. (See "The Quiet Season" for more Christmas stories)



Go to [www.jerryapps.com](http://www.jerryapps.com) for more information about Jerry's work, or contact him at [jerryappsauthor@gmail.com](mailto:jerryappsauthor@gmail.com).

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