

# Fuel, fish, fans and featherbeds

*How we saved energy and learned to love it*



## Sun, wind and vegetable oil

This is a picture of some of my husband's many energy saving projects.

We use the sun and wind. Our whole house is hooked up.

We have changed all light bulbs in the house to compact fluorescents. Maurice even has all appliances set up where he can turn them off at the switch at night and when we are not at home.

If there is a lot of wind he wants me to wash extra clothes and run the dishwasher. He says, "Let's not waste this free energy." Our children call him the "Energy Detective."

Let's not forget the road. We have two hybrid vehicles, and now he is working on turning used vegetable oil into biodiesel fuel.

*Teresa Manning  
Liberty | Tideland EMC*



*Thanks for sending us stories about souvenirs.*

*See more on our Web site. Next month we'll publish your favorite summer camp stories. (Deadline was April 15.) For more themes and rules of our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series, go to page 27.*

## The road trips

Our daddy was a truck driver, our mother was a cotton mill worker, and there were three girls and two boys in our family. We lived in Durham.

After lunch on Sundays our daddy, who had been driving all week, would say, "Everybody in the car. We're going on a trip."

How we loved to hear those words! Off we would go in our 1927 Chrysler touring car—all five of the children in the back seat. Daddy would tell us our destination. He would point out road marks. We played games and sang songs. Those road trips were precious to us, a great time of family togetherness.

Our trip was about 1½ hours long. There wasn't any wear and tear on the tires, and no gas or oil were used. No mileage was added to the odometer. My daddy never put his foot on the gas pedal or the brakes. The car never left the driveway.

The love we shared during those road trips was not imaginary as our trip was. We children didn't realize we were saving energy, we were just having fun.

*John Waller, Told to Deanna R. Yearwood  
Durham | Blue Ridge Electric*

## Insulate ceiling openings

A simple, inexpensive insulation box placed over attic stairs, ceiling access entries and whole-house fan installations will save energy consumption. Most of these areas are under insulated or not insulated at all. It is equivalent to leaving a window open all year.

Building an insulation box is a simple do-it-yourself type project that will pay for itself quickly. Make a box with 4-by-8 rigid insulation board, duct tape and batt insulation on the inside of the box. Tape all joints inside and out for strength. Place the finished box three inches over the edge of the opening it covers on all sides.

*Michael Allen  
Indian Trail | Union Power Cooperative*



## Rationing gasoline

During World War II gasoline was scarce, plus you had to have stamps issued by the government to be able to purchase it. If you used your stamps

before the next booklet was issued, you rode the bus, the trolley or stayed home.

My parents' family lived in Waynesboro, Va., and we lived in Baltimore, Md., so our visits had to be very carefully planned by my father.

My father's way of saving fuel was to post me in the back window of the car, looking for police, as he put the car in neutral and drifted down each hill to save gasoline. The speed limit was only 35 mph at that time, and I wasn't a very good lookout. A policeman sneaked right behind my father and he got a ticket. That ended my career as a lookout.

*Ona Deane  
High Point | EnergyUnited*

### Bathroom fan timers

In order to conserve energy in my house, we installed timer switches for our exhaust fans in our bathrooms. The timers conserve in two different ways. First and most obvious, this 10-minute interval timer automatically shuts off the fan based on which setting you press. In the past I have left the house in the morning or gone to sleep at night with that 120-volt, 0.700-amp fan running for up to eight hours unattended. With this switch, the maximum is one hour.

The second function helps with water conservation, especially in the summer months. You can set the timer to help guide the length of your morning shower. Sometimes on a chilly morning, a 45-minute warm shower is not uncommon. I can now set the timer to 10 or 20 minutes, save a few gallons of water, and also make sure I'm not late for work!

*LaSheree Howell*

*Concord / Union Power Cooperative*

### Remembering the fish

Growing up, I used to watch "Sesame Street" on TV. I remember, in one episode, a little boy left the water running in his bathroom sink after he had finished brushing his teeth. Then the phone rang. The boy answered, and he realized it was an aggravated fish calling from a nearby lake who complained that the boy was wasting energy and water. The moral: don't waste resources and energy, and do your part to conserve.

This story stuck with me. When I shower, brush my teeth, wash my hands or face, I remember to regulate the amount of water that I use. I don't let the water run while I'm lathering my hands or face with soap, I don't let the water run while I brush my teeth, and I don't take long showers.

Every one of us needs to save where we can. And I'm scared to get a phone call from an angry fish complaining that I'm drying up his lake.

*Sara Odell*

*Butler High School / Matthews*

### Use only what you need

Eat less. You won't have to cook or buy as much. Don't go shopping so often. That would save energy by trucks hauling less, farmers consuming less fuel to plant, care for and harvest food. If you eat less, you won't have to work out at the gym as much.

Use only what you really need. You'll see a huge trickle-down effect which really adds up. Lower the temperature on your water heater a little. Turn your heat down a couple or so degrees cooler in winter and the air conditioning up a couple of degrees. Close the drapes on the sunny side in summer, open in winter. Plant deciduous trees in select locations around your home.

Walk whenever possible. Park a little farther away. Combine more trips and share shopping trips with a friend.

Do manual labor in your garden. Use a hoe and save the tiller. Posthole diggers work wonders. Use your old newspapers and paper bags to cover the ground around your plants. That saves digging weeds and also the fuel to run an irrigation pump. Put out some rain barrels to use for some of your watering.

*Nancy Stanley*

*Roaring River / Surry-Yadkin*

### Little things add up

Being on a fixed income of \$623 per month, saving energy is important to me. But it's not easy with kids. I always say, "Close the door! Cut the light out!"

I've made sure that air flow is blocked from coming into my home. I've placed strips and caulk around windows and doors to keep cold air out and heat inside. I've also insulated under my home.

I make sure electric things like iron, lamps, etc., are cut off or unplugged when we're not using them. I wash and dry clothes at night, make sure I have a full load, and put up a clothes line to dry clothes (and I clean the lint vent each time I use the dryer). These things really help save energy.

*Vereda Bowen*

*Riegelwood / Four County EMC*

### Tried and true

In the 1940s, we bathed in a pan of water warmed on top of the wood heater in the living room. We took turns. We heated blankets beside the heater with flat irons on top.

At bedtime, we wrapped in a warm blanket and jumped into a cold feathered mattress, where were laden down with heavy homemade quilts. The warm blanket heated the quilts and the feathered mattress. Mom wrapped an iron in a towel and placed it at our feet under the quilts.

Later we had electricity, an oil circulator and a window fan. The fan was placed in a central window and turned so it drew air out of the house. All inside doors were opened. In each room one window was raised just a few inches. The fan then would draw a breeze through each room.

And we walked everywhere. 📍

*Carolyn Fox*

*Washington / Tideland EMC*

## Send us your best Earn \$50

Here are the themes in our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series. Send us your stories and pictures about these themes. If yours is chosen for publication, we'll send you \$50. You don't have to be the best writer. Just tell it from your heart.

### July 2007 Before Farmers Markets

Your stories of buying and selling farm products in the old days. *Deadline: May 15*

### August 2007 The Class Prank

What's the best one you ever heard? *Deadline: June 15*

### September 2007

#### My Favorite Fair Photo

From a North Carolina fair or festival. Tell us when and where. *Deadline: July 15*

#### The Rules

1. Approximately 200 words or less.
2. One entry per household per month.
3. Photos are welcome. Digital photos must be 300 dpi and actual size.
4. E-mailed or typed, if possible. Otherwise, make it legible.
5. Include your name, electric co-op, mailing address and phone number.
6. If you want your entry returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. (We will not return others.)
7. We pay \$50 for each submission published. We retain reprint rights.
8. We will post on our Web site more entries than we publish, but can't pay for those submissions. (Let us know if you don't agree to this.)
9. Send to: Nothing Finer, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27616  
Or by e-mail: [finer@carolinacountry.com](mailto:finer@carolinacountry.com)  
Or through the Web: [www.carolinacountry.com](http://www.carolinacountry.com)