

# Lights Out

*What we did when we lost electrical power*

Everyone agrees that power outages cause considerable inconvenience. Your Touchstone Energy cooperative does its best to reduce the frequency of power interruptions and outages, and to restore power as efficiently and safely as possible after an outage. Cooperatives maintain rights of way to protect poles and lines. They continually upgrade facilities and equipment to ensure the highest quality power distribution. And they dispatch well trained crews who know how to rebuild systems damaged by storms or accidents. Most of you seem to know this, and as a result you respond patiently after an outage. Your cooperative's employees appreciate your understanding.

The key to enduring an extended power outage is preparation. You should stock batteries, flashlights, a radio, a non-electric phone, water, food and other essential supplies in case of a sudden outage.

Many of you remember experiencing some power outages when you learned something about your family, your neighbors or your ability to cope. Here are some stories of those experiences.

Thanks to everyone who sent us a tale of "what we did when the power went out." You can see more on our Web site at [www.carolinacountry.com](http://www.carolinacountry.com)

Next month we'll publish thoughts by teenagers and others about "Being a Teenager Today." [Deadline was April 15.] See the remaining themes and guide for submissions in our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series on page 19.

— *Michael E.C. Gery, editor*

## WHEN TV WAS YOUNG

Growing up in the 1950s on the coast of North Carolina, there was one thing we could be sure of every summer: hurricanes would come and we would lose power.

When word came of a hurricane approaching, Mama would get out the old oil lamps, fill them with kerosene and have them ready. She would start cooking and would prepare enough food to last a couple of days. We ate really well during those storms: fried chicken, biscuits, fried ham and lots of vegetables. Daddy would go down to the country store and buy a loaf of bread, a package of bologna and a large can of pork and beans.

Without TV to watch, we would play games like "I Spy" or checkers. At night we would tell ghost stories. It was exciting to sit in the near darkness of the oil lamp and listen to ghost stories. Daddy would always tell us stories about how it was when he was growing up and all the mischief he got into as a boy.

But we were really glad when the power came back on so we could watch our favorite TV shows, such as "Howdy Doody" and "The Lone Ranger."

*Connie Morton  
Monroe  
Union Power Cooperative*



## WITH THE SOCK MONKEYS

When the power goes out, we go on vacation. We pack up our two little girls (1 and 4 years old), enough clothes to last us all two or three days, lots of toys and our Yorkshire terrier. We pile into the car and head to my parents' house 15 minutes away.

We invade my parent's home, tracking in snow and noise, and we begin to unpack. My dad already has the generator humming, and so begins the numbing headache that will last longer than the snow. My mom has



homemade soup bubbling on a camping cooker. And the TV, VCR and one lamp are ready for action and will become the center of our brief retreat.

We spend our days warming ourselves by the propane logs, eating soup, consuming dozens of mugs of coffee and hot chocolate and watching favorite movies we know by heart. After the girls go to bed, we "big kids" play games like "Noosh" and "Spades." And when we can no longer keep our eyes open, we search for our beds with our flashlights.

We wake up to coffee and cereal and little girls eager to go sledding. We put my dad's big socks over the girls' shoes and hands up to their knees and shoulders to keep them warm and dry outside. When the "sock monkeys" go for a nap, so do we adults.

Before we know it, the lights are popping back on and our daily routines return. But while the power is out, we have an excuse to take a vacation from our busy lives and just enjoy each other.

*Jeniffer Patterson  
Littleton  
Halifax EMC*

## COOKING ON GAS LOGS

When the power goes out things can get really tough, unless you have given some thought about how to prepare for it. We have all been told about having batteries on hand, candles, extra water ready and all this.

But how do you cook and make that hot cocoa for the grandchildren? Having gas logs in the fireplace, I moved the back log further back in the fireplace, placed a metal stand with heavy wire rack on top of it over the gas burner. This makes the perfect place to set pots, frying pans and an old-timey coffee pot.

Setting an old cast iron skillet on this, we battered chicken placed in the hot oil. The chicken cooked to a golden brown, crispy and delicious. A pot of pinto beans simmering filled the house with that aroma that makes you think of the olden days and brings back some fond memories. We even made bread and baked potatoes.

When we finished riding the four-wheelers and building the snowman, we had hot cocoa ready to drink.

Then, as always out at our house, lots of snow-cream.



Marie Kidd  
Seagrove  
Randolph EMC

## COOLING OFF IN THE ICE CHEST

During the storm of Isabel, we all found that we could survive without power. Not that we enjoyed it, but we survived. Thanks to everyone that came to Gates County's rescue.

Most people had windows open because of hot days with no air conditioning. Two of my grandsons found their own ways of keeping cool. The 1-year-old, Chase Matthews, and his 3-year-old brother, Robert Jr., found fun in a mud puddle when Mom turned her back. Chase thought the ice chest was the cooler spot. While Grandma cleaned it to refill it with ice, he just climbed in and sat down.

Mary Piland  
Coraspeake  
Roanoke Electric Cooperative



Judith A. Cook  
Taylorsville  
EnergyUnited

## ICE CREAM FOR EVERYONE

In the mid-1940s and 1950s we lived in an old two-story farmhouse in a clearing in the middle of the woods. This house had no electricity. There were eight of us 14 children still at home. In the summer we used an oak icebox for perishables, and in the winter we used the wide window sill in the large unheated pantry. We had a wood stove in the kitchen for cooking and heating. There was a fireplace in the living room, and the rest of the house was heated with a huge coal furnace in the basement. For lights, we used kerosene lamps in the early morning and evening hours. I remember when Pop brought home a Coleman lantern for use in the kitchen. The first time it was lit, it was so bright that it hurt my eyes. Evening entertainment consisted of my father playing the accordion and us kids singing. Sometimes we would wind up the Victrola and listen to music on 78 rpm records.

When the weather was especially stormy, Pop would hook up the home-made radio. When the news reported that the electricity was off in town, we would jump up and down with excitement. Not because schools were closed, because they never were. You see, my father's dear friend owned a small country store in town, and if the electricity stayed off long enough, Mr. Hornbeck would give my father all the half melted ice cream for us children to enjoy. The next day, my father would go into town and bring us back the best treat in the world!



# Send us your best Earn \$50

Here are the themes in our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series. Send us your stories and pictures. You don't have to be the best writer. Just tell it from your heart.

### JULY 2004 "Our Money Pit"

What was the biggest waste of money you remember?

Deadline: May 15

### AUGUST 2004 "Was I Wrong?"

Lessons you learned the hard way.

Deadline: June 15

### SEPTEMBER 2004 "My Favorite Photo"

North Carolina people and places. Digital ones must be 300 dpi and printable size.

Deadline: July 15

### OCTOBER 2004

"If I Were Governor of North Carolina"

What would you do?  
Deadline: August 15

### NOVEMBER 2004 "Mama's Cooking Was Always the Best"

Send a recipe, if you have one, and photos.

Deadline: Sept. 15

### DECEMBER 2004

"Meeting Your Grandparents"

Something you never knew about a grandparent.

Deadline: Oct. 15

## The Rules

1. Approximately 200 words or less. We retain reprint rights.
2. Only one entry per household per month.
3. Photos are welcome. Digital photos must be 300 dpi and actual size.
4. E-mail 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.
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: [carolina.country@ncemcs.com](mailto:carolina.country@ncemcs.com). Or through the Web: [www.carolinacountry.com](http://www.carolinacountry.com)