

Manager's Comments

December 2007

The holiday season is here.

Thanksgiving came and went and now homes are sparking with Christmas lights all over Southwest Alabama.

Whimsical yard decorations and the pride that goes into stringing all those lights on homes, can bring a smile to your face on an ordinary drive home from work.

The best cooks around pull out their family's traditional recipes and work hard all December to make each meal a special one for their loved ones.

It is a special time and a busy time as we travel from homes, to parties, to church programs and all the other activities that are offered this time of the year.

While we are out searching for the perfect gift for that person on our list, it is so easy to get overwhelmed with all the work that has to be done to make the holidays special. I encourage you to take a step back and remember your blessings and enjoy your friends and family.

The birth of Christ is why we

celebrate this season. His gift to the world which came in such a humble and serving manner, is the same love we should show to our family, our friends and even our enemies. Everyone has a reason to celebrate. It would be a loss to ourselves if we didn't offer that joy to all of those around us.

With all the hustle and bustle I urge you to be active in making sure your home is safe from the chance of a fire. Residential fires are most common during the months of November and December.

Clarke-Washington EMC employees and I, wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Stan Wilson

is the General Manager/CEO of Clarke-Washington Electric Membership Corporation

Home for the holidays

Clarke-Washington EMC's employees will be home for the holidays and both of our offices will be closed Dec. 24 and 25 as well as Jan. 1. Should you lose your power or severe weather hit our areas, CWEMC has our employees on call to assist your electrical needs and emergencies to make sure you stay safe and warm at your home during the holidays.

Call 1.800.323.9081



Clarke-Washington EMC

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251-246-9081 (local)
1-800-323-9081 (toll free)

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**To report
a power
outage, call
1-800-323-9081.**

Cooperatives



Local Pages Editor,
Anna Wright

Local Christmas Parades



The Christmas song says, "It's the most wonderful time of the year..." and what better memory is there this season than to be on the street gathering candy and waving at the bundled up children, majorettes marching, and firemen and police officers riding in the Christmas parades.

Below is a list of Christmas parades held in our area this month.

- **Chatom:** Saturday, Dec. 1 at 10 a.m., begins at Washington County High School
- **Coffeerville:** Saturday, Dec. 8
- **Grove Hill:** Thursday, Dec 6 at 3:15 p.m., Church Street
- **Jackson:** Friday, Dec. 7 at 5 p.m., Downtown
- **Millry:** Saturday, Dec. 8 at 11 a.m., begins at Millry High School
- **Thomasville:** Saturday, Dec. 1 at 10 a.m., Downtown

Clarke-Washington EMC employees ride as Grand Marshall in the 2004 Chatom Christmas Parade. The Town honored them because of the work they did restoring power after Hurricane Ivan. Pictured are CWEMC employees Mrs. Betty Joyce Etheredge, Allison Taylor and David Anderson.

Holiday cooking tips

You have to applaud those audacious cooks who attempt to make a holiday meal for the very first time. If the food is burned or too salty to swallow, just remember that they gave of their time and burned fingers to try and make your holiday special.

Thank goodness for those who can cook a ham with finesse and fill a table with an abundant feast. They have mastered the art of cooking delicious holiday foods that make our holiday memories complete.

Whether you are a first timer or a seasoned veteran the following is a list of Web sites with helpful tips for holiday cooking.

- Butterball Turkeys - www.butterball.com
- Honeysuckle White turkey products - www.honeysucklewhite.com
- The National Turkey Federation - www.eatturkey.com
- Crisco - www.crisco.com
- USDA Food Service - www.fsis.usda.gov
- National Chicken Council - www.eatchicken.com
- National Cattlemen's Beef Association - www.beefitswhatsfordinner.com





He slides down the chimney, but **Santa** can't prevent house fires

Facts on Holiday Fire Prevention from the U.S. Fire Administration

Each year fires occurring during the holiday season injure 2,600 individuals and cause over \$930 million in damage.

According to the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), there are simple life-saving steps you can take to ensure a safe and happy holiday.

By following some of the outlined precautionary tips, individuals can greatly reduce their chances of becoming a holiday fire casualty.

PREVENTING CHRISTMAS TREE FIRES

Special fire safety precautions need to be taken when keeping a live tree in the house. A burning tree can rapidly fill a room with fire and deadly gases.

SELECTING A CHRISTMAS TREE

Needles on fresh trees should be green and hard to pull back from the branches, and the needle should not break if the tree has been freshly cut. The trunk should be sticky to the touch. Old trees can be identified by bouncing the tree trunk on the ground. If many needles fall off, the tree has been cut too long, has probably dried out, and is a fire hazard.

CARING FOR YOUR TREE

Do not place your tree close to a heat source, including a fireplace or heat vent. The heat will dry out the tree, causing it to be more easily ignited by heat, flame or sparks. Be careful not to drop or flick cigarette ashes near a tree. Do not put your live tree up too early or leave it up for longer than two weeks. Keep the tree stand filled with water at all times.

DISPOSING OF YOUR TREE

Never put tree branches of needles in a fireplace or wood burning stove. When the tree

becomes dry, discard it promptly. The best way to dispose of your tree is by taking it to a recycling center or having it hauled away by a community pick-up service.

HOLIDAY LIGHTS

MAINTAIN YOUR HOLIDAY LIGHTS

Inspect holiday lights each year for frayed wires, bare spots, gaps in the insulation, broken or cracked sockets, and excessive kinking or wear before putting them up. Use only lighting listed by an approved testing laboratory.

DO NOT OVERLOAD ELECTRICAL OUTLETS

Do not link more than three light strands, unless the directions indicate it is safe. Connect strings of lights to an extension cord before plugging the cord into the outlet. Make sure to periodically check the wires – they should not be warm to the touch.

DO NOT LEAVE HOLIDAY LIGHTS UNATTENDED

HOLIDAY DECORATIONS

USE ONLY NONFLAMMABLE DECORATIONS

All decorations should be nonflammable or flame-retar-

dant and placed away from heat vents.

NEVER PUT WRAPPING PAPER IN A FIREPLACE

It can throw off dangerous sparks and produce a chemical buildup in the home that could cause an explosion

ARTIFICIAL CHRISTMAS TREES

If you are using a metallic or artificial tree, make sure it is flame retardant.

If you do use them, make sure they are in stable holders and place them where they cannot be easily knocked down. Never leave the house with candles burning.

CANDLE CARE:

NEVER PUT LIT CANDLES ON A TREE

Do not go near a Christmas tree with an open flame – candles, lighters or matches

Finally, as in every season, have working smoke alarms installed on every level of your home, test them monthly and keep them clean and equipped with fresh batteries at all times. Know when and how to call for help. And remember to practice your home escape plan.

Save the 7UP for holiday refreshments

You've added bleach, aspirin, soda, syrup or sugar to your Christmas tree's water to help the evergreen last longer. Did they work?

Tree experts say they don't.

It seems like they would: The common blend of 7UP and bleach seems like it would, indeed, make the tree's water more acidic and help the tree take in more moisture and food. The sugar in the soda, it seems, would help feed the tree. The disinfectant in the bleach would prevent mold, fungi and algae from forming.

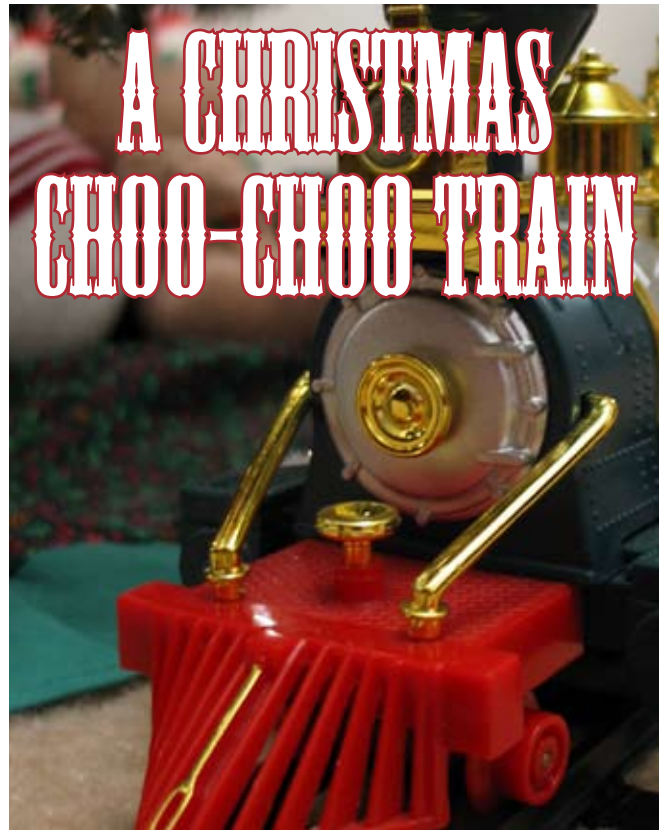
So it seems. Yet it's an urban myth, and it's not true.

Adding acidity to the water doesn't help the tree take in moisture. Sugar acts as a nutrient; in fact, the tree doesn't need food. It just needs water. And sugar can cause bacteria to grow in the water and make it smell bad.

Although some believe bleach may help prevent bacteria like mold, it's more likely to kill the plant tissue with its hydrochloric acid.

The best way to keep your tree healthy and smelling good is to make a fresh cut on the tree trunk right before you dunk it into a tree stand filled with fresh water.

Check the water daily to make sure the cut is covered and never exposed to air. Once it's exposed to air, the trunk will start foaming a cap that will prevent the tree from soaking up the water it needs to last all season.



Model trains have been chugging along under Christmas trees and in store displays around the world for more than 89 years.

Joshua Lionel Cowen, inventor of the Lionel model train, is the man behind the toy most associated with Christmastime.

Cowen created his first miniature train in 1900 to carry items around store display windows. However, the trains proved to be more popular than the items they carried, so Cowen decided to devote all his resources to making the trains.

During World War I, he convinced several department stores to use his trains in their Christmas tree displays. The rest is history.

Here's how to keep your little electric locomotive chugging along smoothly and safely this Christmas:

- Keep the track you're running your train on clean and corrosion-free. Fine-grained sandpaper will remove rust from the tracks, and rubbing alcohol will clean off dirt and grime.
- Lionel trains are generally sturdy, so even a very old locomotive can often be coaxed back to health with a bit of light machine oil on its axles and some light grease on its gears. Avoid lubricants like WD-40 on these delicate parts.
- The train's cars need upkeep too. Apply a drop of WD-40 from the tip of a toothpick to each wheel. A well-oiled train will run quieter.
- Keep all the trains' cords plugged into one power strip so you can turn the train on and off with a single switch.



*High school seniors,
give your parents a late
Christmas present ...*

Are you a high school senior who is graduating this spring?
Are you a dependent of a member of our local cooperative?

If so, you are eligible to apply for a scholarship from the Electric Cooperative Foundation. Clarke-Washington EMC, your local electric cooperative, has joined other cooperatives throughout the state of Alabama to create the Electric Cooperative Foundation. This spring the Foundation will be awarding scholarships across Alabama for students to continue their education at post-secondary and vocational schools.

For more details about these scholarships, obtain a copy of an Electric Cooperative scholarship application from your high school guidance counselor, pick one up at either Clarke-Washington EMC offices in Chatom or Jackson, download it from our Web site www.cwemc.com, or call:

Anna Wright
CWEMC
1.800.323.9081

Don't wait; applications with all
required attachments
must be received no later than
March 2008.



