

SOUTHEAST ELECTRIC Cooperative



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*Tough times never last,
but tough people do.*

— Robert H. Schuller



Manager's Notes - By Jack Hamblin

Turn out the Lights

How many of you remember the old Monday Night Football broadcasts with Howard Cosell and Don Meredith? Keith Jackson was also there, but not many remember him. That was back in the good old days when I still enjoyed watching pro football. Toward the end of each game, Don Meredith would launch into his musical prediction of the final winner by singing (and I use that word lightly) "Turn out the lights, the party's over." I, along with millions of others, always got a kick out of that. To me, that little tune became my personal slogan. That was also in an era when I still competed in many sporting events such as softball and city-league basketball. Later on, it was bowling. I always thought I was much better than I really was, and "Turn out the lights" so imbedded itself in my psyche that I would regularly sing it during the competition to intimidate my opponents, hoping that tune would somehow do something my apparent lack of physical talent couldn't. It never worked.

My dad used those same words on his large family in an effort to keep the power bill down while we were growing up. Maybe it was because he was around before electricity was available, or maybe it was because he lived through the depression, but he reminded us kids time after time to "turn out the lights." He, unlike Don Meredith, meant it literally. To him, it seemed wasteful to have the lights on in a room if no one was there. Strange, huh? I could never figure out why he would ask us to go to the extra effort of flipping the switch off when we left the room and flipping it back on when we came back in. Why not leave it on and

save us the trouble was my question. I sometimes felt Dad had a double standard about this when I would occasionally see him after midnight, sleeping soundly and snoring loudly in his livingroom recliner, an open book on his lap and the overhead lamp burning brightly. I never had the heart (or the courage) to say, "turn out the lights."

Dad also thought it wasn't necessary for any of us kids to lounge in the shower while that expensive hot water was running. I come from a large family where many daily showers were taken and our electric water heater worked overtime most days. "You can get just as clean in five minutes as you can in 20," he would say. I heard that so many times I later found myself saying those exact words to my kids. I'm not quite as intimidating as my father was, so instead I found myself walking through the house turning off lights in vacant rooms instead of begging my kids to do it themselves. And they never ever, ever got the "five-minute shower" message.

Nowadays it's the television and the computer, and even the cell phone chargers, that get left on too much. I still get after Miss America if she leaves the oven on a millisecond after the food is taken out. If a window is left open and precious heat or cool air escapes, I get...put out. And I still

grumble when showers take too long or the lights are left on when no one is in the room. I came home from work the other day to see the little light on over the stove and nobody was even in the kitchen. I even ruined a perfectly good shirt crawling under my house on my back to unplug the heat tapes protecting my water lines. I felt they were beyond a freezing threat for a few months. I think my father has cursed me.

Electricity is really a great value, and we get so much for what we pay for it. But that certainly shouldn't mean we need to waste it. Each of us can find ways to conserve this precious commodity that helps make our lives so much better, and we should. That electric meter outside records every single kilowatt-hour of electricity we use, and maybe we can all find ways to save a little. It could be as easy as making that extra effort to "turn out the lights."

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Trick-or-Treat

By Vicki Fix, Member Services

Come fair weather, fire, rain, sleet, or snow . . . trick-or-treating at Halloween holds great memories. It seems that in the early years, it is more treat than trick. As kids, our mom usually made our costumes, but as we got older we were encouraged to use our imaginations and create our own. I don't remember having store-bought costumes. 5:30 p.m. could not come fast enough on most Halloweens, as we had to wait until Mom got home from work. We usually had to eat supper before we could go out and fill up on candy. That was torture! It was exciting when you got to the age you could go with your friends. We would start with small, cute Halloween bags and end up with a pillow case for our loot!

We always got orders to make sure that we stopped at our aunt and uncle's, and didn't forget Herb and Linda and Chet and Bev. We had to go to Grandma Dean's because she had to take pictures of every trick-or-treater. Kup and Lona Quade gave out 50-cent pieces, so that was usually our first stop! Ila Mader's was next because she made the best popcorn balls. When you got home, you had to hide those popcorn balls BEFORE your parents got them.



Tricking — now that is a whole other story. I must say we did a bit of that during my high-school days. Eggs and rotten tomatoes were our ammunition, and one another were the targets. These activities usually took place on Halloween Eve, otherwise known as "Gate Night". I was told we were actually supposed to steal gates, but my momma taught me not to steal, and I only remember one gate in town — and it was on Main Street under a street light. A good game of Hide -n- Seek was usually played before our 10 p.m. curfew!

I hope my children have fond memories of Halloween. They didn't celebrate Halloween Eve (Gate Night) or play a good game of Hide-n-Seek (that I know of). They missed out on Ila Mader's popcorn balls, but they have an awesome Grandma Peggy that makes the best caramel corn! They also have the memory of the big Halloween Fire in 1999, when Ekalaka was evacuated. That was probably the scariest Halloween to date!

We had a lot of fun memories from

when I was a kid. And while kids today can still have fun, parents have to be ever mindful of safety. Let safety fall into place this Halloween with these tips from Southeast Electric Cooperative.

- Walk against traffic.
- Drive slowly, anticipate heavy pedestrian traffic and turn your headlights on earlier in the day to spot children from greater distances.
- Avoid Masks: Masks make it difficult to breath and see well.
- Make sure costumes are not too long to avoid slipping
- Dress in layers — sometimes it is pretty cold out there!
- Decorate costumes and bags with reflective tape or stickers and, if possible, choose light colors.
- Have kids carry glow sticks or flashlights to help them see and be seen by drivers.
- Comfortable shoes are a must!
- Popular trick-or-treating hours are from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. so be especially alert of kids during those hours.
- Small children should have adult supervision.
- Kids should trick-or-treat in groups and stick to familiar houses that are well lit.
- All children should share their candy with their parents. Parents will make sure to throw away all candy that is not in its original wrapper.

Youth Tour essay contest

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., welcomes more than 1,500 high school students to Washington, D.C., each year. Students learn about the history of this country and the role electric cooperatives played in that history. They have the opportunity to meet with their representatives and talk about their concerns.

Montana sends more than 25 students to participate in the Youth Tour at NO COST to those students. Southeast Electric Cooperative encourages sophomores and juniors who are dependents of members to apply for this unbelievable all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C. This trip is something they should not pass up. Students are rewarded with a fun-filled educational week in Washington, D.C., at no cost to them (other than personal sou-



venirs). They see monuments, attend a professional baseball game and visit the National Aquarium. They get to dance on a historic riverboat and visit the Smithsonian Museum and the Capitol. They will make new friends from all over Montana and North Dakota, and other states.

To apply the student must write an essay answering the following question: *Electric cooperatives offer various opportunities to young people, such as scholarships, job shadowing, electrical safety programs and sponsorships. What are some innovative ways your electric cooperative can connect with young people, especially with children and teens?*

I urge all sophomores and juniors who are dependents of Southeast Electric Cooperative members to take the time to write the essay. This is an incredible experience!

Don't be left out in the cold!

Southeast Electric Cooperative Inc. offers energy assistance in conjunction with Action for Eastern Montana (AEM) LIEAP program. Applications are available at our office, the County Senior Coordinator office and propane providers. If you received assistance last year, you should have already received the application form directly from Department of Public Health and Human Services in Helena. Qualified applicants, who are members of Southeast Electric Cooperative, receive credit to their winter electric bill. Applications are accepted from Oct. 1 – April 30.