



Extreme Compassion

Country Lines

by Dean C. Young

At some point in our lives, many of us figure we are deserving of something good happening to us but later on see that certain people really *are* more deserving of great goodness happening in their lives. This is the story of a woman who gave to others from her heart and reaped an unexpected reward. The characters in this story may be you and your neighbors, businesses and people from far away, and even your local Richland Electric Cooperative.

Once upon a time there was a teacher, who, as all teachers, gave of herself to her students to guide them on their journey to learning, social interactions, and manners. She and Gary had a family of five children to take care of on their farm in the country, where they enjoyed the antics of their goats and other pets. But, her children's father died unexpectedly of a heart attack in his early 40s, so that only his memory

would be able to share in the rest of the story.

This teacher had been giving her free time after school for more than 10 years volunteering as an adult literacy tutor. She had also helped coordinate a Big Buddy program with other teachers from the high school. When her job was finished each day, she would finally be able to attend her children's school events. While she was busy thinking of others, her house showed more and more

signs of old age and decrepitude as well as various vermin that had moved in during the years.

By chance, the teacher's principal suggested she apply for a new house from a TV show called "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition," which specialized in building a house each week for people with exceptional needs. "No, I am not sure that my kids are ready to go through something like that," she thought. By the end of April 2008, she decided to try it. She would not be able to make the necessary renovations on her own so it was worth a shot. She and



Richland Electric Operations Manager Larry Hallett explains features of the electrical service to homeowner Shelley Anders.



Beautiful gardens were added to the grounds surrounding the home, and native prairie plantings were added.

her family put together a video as an application where they commented on getting used to the old house with the critters in it.

There was no time to lose as the video needed to be sent by the weekend, but even after driving all the way to Madison to FedEx it, the video couldn't go out until Monday. The family used their ingenuity and applied at the last minute online. It didn't take long before Shelley (Rochelle) Anders learned her family was one of 30 families accepted for the final phase in acquiring a house.

Now secrets were made and had to be kept. Some members of the community were contacted to "check out" Shelley's home while the family was out. This included Larry Hallett, operations manager for the Richland Electric Cooperative, who became involved on the ground level since electricity was critical to the success of building a house in a week.

"It was a miracle that no one in the county said anything to tip Shelley off," Larry told me. "That would have nullified the show considering Shelley's home for a makeover."

It truly was amazing how much preparation went on without Shelley and her family finding out until that fateful day of Thursday, July 24, 2008, when the crackling, shrill microphone sounded from the Anders' front yard beckoning them to come on out!

The family — Shelley, Reid, Tyler, Drew, and Tess (the eldest, Alex, was away from home) — pushed away from the breakfast table and piled outside surrounded by TV cameras all pointed at them. Shelley laughs here as she recalls having to do the "coming out" scene more than once just to get other angles of the shot.

Now swept up in a whirlwind like Dorothy in Oz, the Anders-Beatty family had only until that afternoon to be out of the house. They were picked up by a limousine, taken to a hotel in Madison for a short night, got up at



3:30 a.m. to fly to Calgary, Canada, and finally climbed aboard a huge private bus to Oz (okay, it was Bampf).

Here the family enjoyed a new venture daily: the Colombian Ice Field (glacier), pristine lakes, horseback riding, canoeing, hiking and biking, and generally keeping busy while the unimaginable happened at home.

Back at the farm, by Friday evening, plants had been dug and saved, furniture was packed, electric power was cut off, a shed was taken down and carted away, and the road was prepped. Larry Hallett told me the main electric pole needed to be loosened for an easy extraction the next day, but the weeds around it still had to be kept intact. He also had to recruit an REC crew to trim trees to the farm so a 16-foot satellite tower could pass.

At 6:30 a.m. Saturday, a multitude of volunteers, some from the area and many from long distances, converged wearing blue shirts for a Braveheart entrance through a field and over a hill to descend on the Anders-Beatty house. By noon a tape of the house demolition

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A covered walkway was added from the garage to the house.

Welcome Aboard, Nathan

Richland Electric Cooperative would like to welcome a new lineman to the crew, Nathan Friedenfels. Nathan grew up on the family farm of his parents, Tony and Roxie. He graduated from Owen-Withee High School in 2006 and then from Chippewa Valley Technical College in May of 2008 with a degree in Electrical Power Distribution.

He has two older brothers, Calvin and Andy, and one younger sister, Sam. In his spare time, Nathan enjoys water skiing, hunting, fishing, motocross, and all sports.

When you get a chance, be sure to welcome Nathan to Richland Electric Cooperative. ■



Load Management Test for Dual Fuel Members Set for November 19

Each year, a test of the load management system is conducted for members of the Dual Fuel program. This year, the test will take place on Wednesday, November 19. The electric heat will be turned off at 5:00 p.m. and will be turned back on starting at 8:05 p.m., with everyone's electric heat scheduled to be back on by 11:15 p.m.

The test is done each year to ensure that your back up system to the electric heat is working properly and also to make sure the cooperative's load management equipment is working properly. We would appreciate it if all Dual Fuel program participants would check their systems on November 19 during the test times and let the cooperative know if their electric heat does not turn off.

Also, please contact us if you have any questions about the test, the load management equipment, or the Dual Fuel program. Thank you for your cooperation. ■

Did your cost for heating fuels increase this year? Looking for an alternative? If you are not yet a Dual Fuel member and would like to take advantage of the low-cost electric heat rate available to help protect you against the higher costs of L.P. gas and fuel oil, contact our office for more information.



Richland Electric Bylaws

Article IV, Section 3 Nomination and Election of Directors

Nominations for directors shall be made by a committee of the members selected by the board of directors no later than 60 days prior to the date of the annual meeting or by petition of at least 15 members or by nominations from the floor at the annual meeting. Election of directors shall be by the largest number of votes cast for any position at the annual meeting.

If you are interested in learning more about the election of directors, please contact any REC board member. ■

Extreme Home Makeover

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was on its way for the Anders-Beatty family to view, accompanied by Ty Pennington reading a story about a big dozer and little dozer to make the events more exciting (as if that were possible!). Meanwhile, a new basement was dug.

On Sunday at 10 a.m., the basement was in place, the first floor walls were up, and the major landscaping had been completed. As if everything were in fast motion, the last truss was on the roof and the well dug by evening. Siding was nearly finished by 8 a.m. on Monday. Richland Electric had to push to get the electrical connections set to bury the line across a field to the house because of the setback of hitting an old house foundation that no one knew was there. Larry said, "It was just like ants around here with all the people." A double electric line, buried and overhead, went to the house so the critical electricity was never lost at any time as the overhead was eventually removed.

Tuesday brought finishing touches, native prairie planting, and sod laid out. Wednesday was designer day and final conclusion before Shelley and her children were escorted blindfolded in a limo with the windows blackened to view their new home Thursday. Shelley told me with a satisfied tone, "We met awesome people who were just great. Everywhere we went there were producers, Disney guides, and other production people."

Shelley Anders' home was rebuilt with many different "green" elements, including blocks of Evergreen renewable energy donated by Richland Electric during construction. Other environment-friendly features that were added to the home include the rain barrel pictured here.



A large wrap-around porch was added to the side of the home.

More was done to "green up" the extreme house besides green building materials and recycled mulch, and Richland Electric Co-op had a big part in it. The co-op donated blocks of Evergreen energy from wind, solar, and other renewable resources to provide power for the construction of the house. You now have that same opportunity to purchase renewable power. The REC also provided the Anders-Beatty home with Wild Blue, a satellite connection for areas that do not get conventional Internet service. Just go to www.rec.coop or call the REC at 608-647-3173 to learn more. Best wishes to Shelley and family on their Extreme Home! ■

Do you know of an interesting business or hobby under the REC lines? Contact the REC business office or e-mail me, Dean Young, at dad@mwt.net.



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