

**Valley  
Rural Electric  
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Pennsylvania and  
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Valley Rural Electric  
Cooperative, Inc.  
10700 Fairgrounds Road  
P.O. Box 477  
Huntingdon, PA 16652-0477  
814/643-2650  
1-800-432-0680  
www.valleyrec.com

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FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

**Co-op power: keeping it reliable, affordable  
and environmentally responsible**



by **Wayne Miller**  
President & CEO

**AT** Valley Rural Electric, we have three top priorities: to provide you with safe, reliable access to electric power; to offer that service as affordably as possible; and to do both of those things in a fiscally and environmentally responsible way.

Because Valley is a local, not-for-profit organization, we are in a great position to make any necessary investments in your electric distribution system that will ensure you continue to receive dependable electric service. However, fulfilling our commitment to environmental stewardship in a fiscally responsible manner has become more challenging.

Today, many environmental laws adopted by Congress decades ago are being used by federal agencies and the courts to address issues for which they were never intended.

For example, the federal Clean Air Act is now 40 years old and was last amended in 1990 — more than two decades ago. Much has changed in the intervening years, including technology, the electric utility industry and our understanding of the environment.

Today, officials with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency — often under court order — are trying to modify the Clean Air Act to fit new circumstances. And we fear these modifications will negatively impact our co-op consumers at the end of the line. Without a doubt, these new EPA rules being issued will wind up back in the courts — and lengthy litigation will ensue.

Reasonable people can and will disagree over how to find a balance between protecting the environment, guaranteeing a reliable supply of power and keeping electric bills affordable.

Under the right circumstances, Congress eventually will have to revisit the Clean Air Act and update it to fit the needs of the 21st century. In the meantime, we will keep you updated on our efforts to encourage lawmakers and regulators to strike the proper balance on these concerns. 



**RAYSTOWN HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT:** Valley Rural Electric Cooperative receives part of its power supply from the Raystown Hydroelectric Project at Raystown Dam near Huntingdon.

# Expressions *of* Nature

## Co-op consumer's Japanese technique gives floral arrangements unique flair

BY SUSAN R. PENNING  
*Director of Member Services*

**TWO OF** Keppy Arnoldsen's greatest passions in life are artistic design and community outreach. In December, the Valley Rural Electric Co-op consumer was able to combine both by helping to host a free "lunch-and-learn" session in Huntingdon centered on the Japanese art of floral arrangement called ikebana.

Keppy was chosen to be a presenter at the event because of her long list of

credentials in floral and landscape design as well as her years of experience advising her husband, Ron, in his co-opserved landscaping and floral design business, Green Thumb Services.

"I wanted to showcase ikebana (for the lunch-and-learn session) because of its unique and simple, yet elegant design," Keppy says. "Ikebana is nothing like your typical 'roundy-moundy' floral arrangements. It is so much more artistic. You put your feelings into it, so the piece you create develops tremendous meaning."

### Natural connection

The Japanese attitude toward floral arrangement is deeper and more spiritual than the Western approach to floral design, according to instructors in Asian horticulture. Ikebana arrangements strive to express the wonders of nature, on a smaller scale. The word "ikebana" actually means "live flowers" or "giving life to flowers."

Ikebana is a disciplined art form in which nature and humanity are brought together. Contrary to the idea of floral arrangement as a random collection of colored blooms, ikebana often emphasizes other areas of the plant, such as its stems and leaves, and draws attention toward shape, line and form. Though ikebana is a creative expression, it has certain rules governing its form. The artist's intention behind each arrangement is shown through a piece's color combinations, natural shapes, graceful lines and the implied meaning of the arrangement.

In her ikebana-inspired holiday floral arrangements, Keppy used three significant, main elements.

**IKEBANA:** Japanese flower arranging typically involves three lines created by tall, medium and short stems. The proper placement of these stems creates a three-dimensional, triangular framework.





**ABOVE:** Keppy uses evergreen sprigs and candles to give this ikebana-inspired centerpiece some holiday flair.



using a low, shallow container and flower holder. It is a relative newcomer in the evolution of ikebana art, but has become increasingly popular. The older, nageire style uses a taller, upright container without a flower holder.

Fundamental to almost all schools and styles of Japanese flower arranging are three lines created by tall, medium and short stems. Originally symbolizing



**SEASONAL HANDIWORK:** Keppy Arnoldsden displays her holiday arrangements while offering floral design tips to guests at a lunch-and-learn workshop in December, provided by local non-profit organizations and businesses.

heaven, man and earth, today the proper placement of these stems in an arrangement creates a three-dimensional, triangular framework. Additional stems provide a focal point, depth and filler.

Keppy says the thoughtfulness that goes into each ikebana arrangement is what makes the art form so special and fun for her.

“I love working with natural elements to create something new and unique; it is so relaxing for me,” she points out.

Keppy and her husband have long shared a deep love for nature and their land. Keppy wants to continue creating arrangements and sharing her design and horticulture expertise. For more information on upcoming workshops from the Arnoldsens, visit their updated website in March at [BluemingGardens-Farm.com](http://BluemingGardens-Farm.com). 🌻

**FUNDAMENTALS:** This display follows more of the traditional nageire style of ikebana, which involves a taller, upright container. The hand-made vase gives the piece additional significance, which is important in ikebana design.

“The greenery symbolized the earth; the large white flower(s) signified heaven; and the red flower(s) represented man — or, more specifically, the blood of man,” Keppy explains.

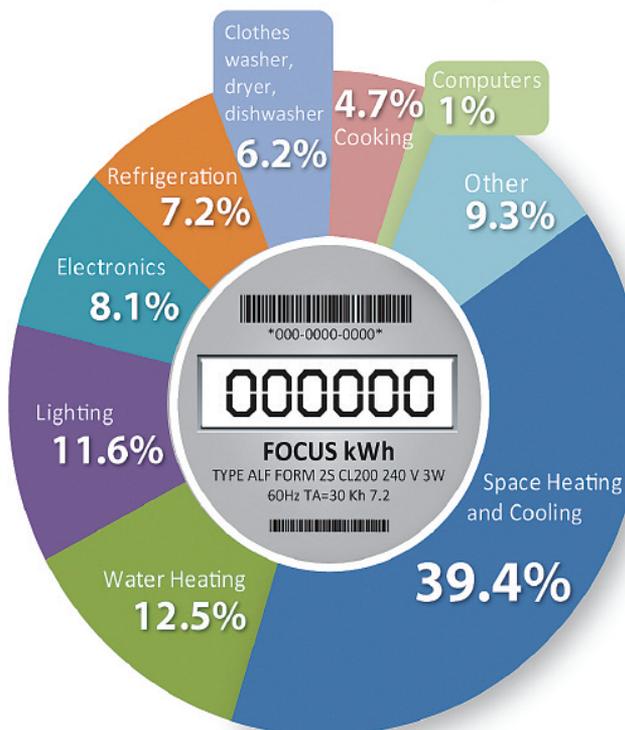
Two important philosophies of ikebana are that the arrangement must fit the environment in which it is displayed; and that the individual arranger’s emotions and character are to be expressed in the arrangement.

“Very few things are actually used in an ikebana arrangement, which makes the pieces fairly inexpensive,” Keppy notes. “But everything must work together and have meaning. Even the container should be significant. For example, I might use one of my own hand-thrown pots in an arrangement, so my hard work and ‘spirit’ are in it.”

## Timeless style

Ikebana is noted for its mastery of proportional harmony between the flowers, vase and setting. The origin of the art form stretches back over 500 years. There are two basic styles: the “moribana” and “nageire.” Moribana involves

### How Your Home Uses Electricity



Source: 2009 Buildings Energy Data Book, U.S. Department of Energy, Table 21.5. Represents an all-electric home. Updated February 2011.



PHOTO BY SUSAN PENNING

### Substation upgrade

A contracted crew from C.W. Wright sets a steel beam during an expansion project at Valley Rural Electric's Route 30 substation this fall. The improvements at this facility will increase service reliability for co-op members in the Harrisonville, Fulton County, area.

# SAVE THE DATE

## 2012 Valley Rural Electric Co-op District Nominating Meetings

District 2 ..... 6 p.m. Feb. 6

*Newton Wayne Banquet Hall*

District 4 ..... 6 p.m. Feb. 7

*Three Springs Fire Hall*

District 6 ..... 6 p.m. Feb. 9

*Freedom Township Fire Hall*

Don't miss the opportunity to choose candidates for Valley REC's board of directors and to share a meal with your fellow co-op members.



Return your reservation card today.

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