

Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

Claverack REC

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Monday through Friday

7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Jeff Fetzer, CCC, Local Pages Editor

From the President & CEO



Don't fall victim to scammers this holiday season

By Bobbi Kilmer

UNFORTUNATELY, in today's world, scams are inevitable. Scammers can threaten you with everything from legal action involving the IRS to turning off power to your home.

Utility scams often involve an individual or group posing as an employee of your electric cooperative. The scammer may use threatening language in order to frighten you into offering your credit card or bank account information.

Don't fall victim to these types of scams. Understand the threats posed and your best course of action:

- ▶ If someone calls your home or cell-phone demanding you pay your electric bill immediately, gather as much information as you can from that individual, hang up the phone and contact the local authorities. Scammers often use threats and urgency to pressure you into giving them your bank account number or loading a pre-paid credit or debit card. Claverack will never ask you to offer personal financial information over the phone. If you have any doubts about your utility bill or the status of your account, contact our office 24 hours a day at 1-800-326-9799.
- ▶ Claverack employees will not come to your home to collect money. In fact, our employees are instructed not to take payments in the field.
- ▶ If someone comes to your home claiming to be an employee of Claverack and asks to inspect parts of

your property, ask them to provide proper identification. If in doubt, call us to verify they are, in fact, an employee. If they are not, call local authorities for assistance and do not let the individual into your home.

There are other types of scams consumers should watch out for:

- ▶ Government agencies like the IRS will never call to inform you that you have unpaid taxes or other liens against you. You will always receive this type of information in the mail. If someone calls claiming to be the IRS, hang up immediately.
- ▶ If you receive an email from an unknown sender, an email riddled with spelling errors and typos, or an email threatening action unless a sum of money is paid, do not click any links provided within the email, and do not respond to the email. Simply delete the email or send it to your spam folder.
- ▶ If someone calls your home claiming to have discovered a virus on your computer, hang up. This caller's intent is to access personal information you may be keeping on your computer.

We want to make sure you avoid any and all types of scams that could put you or your financial information in jeopardy. Scammers can be very convincing and our elderly members can be especially vulnerable.

Wishing you and your family a happy and safe holiday season! 

A passion for paper crafting

By Jeff Fetzer

CLAVERACK member Lisa Brown doesn't paper over the notion that she gets carried away with her hobbies.

"Whenever I do anything I like, I kind of obsess," she says.

Back in the 1980s, her indulgence was ceramics.

"I made so many ceramics I had to take them to craft shows and sell them to get them out of the house," she says.

When paraphernalia related to her present passion, paper crafting, began to overrun the living room of her Bradford County farmhouse, she took a different tack. She built an addition onto her home along French Asylum Road and opened a business, The Craft Shack, which has been catering to the paper-crafting crowd for just over three years.

Located along a lightly traveled road in Asylum Township about 7 miles southeast of Wysox, The Craft Shack doesn't see a steady flow of foot traffic from customers. And that's OK with Brown. In fact, the business owner doesn't maintain set store hours and notes she sells more crafting products through her website than across the counter.

"Just to have a retail store here would not have been an option," says Brown, who advises those wishing to visit the shop to call ahead to confirm she will be available. "It was the fact we could bring crafters together here and have a good time and forget the rest of the world for a few hours. For the most part, it's all fun and games here."

While three rooms of The Craft Shack are chock-full of paper-crafting products — from papers, paints and punches to inks, stamps and dies — it's the crafting room that is the heart and soul of the operation.

There, five or six times a month, Brown and her crafty cohorts, Towanda-area residents Lou Ann McGuire, Diane Zechman and Mary Ann Hicks,



CRAFTY BUSINESS: Claverack member Lisa Brown displays a shadow box made during one of the classes at her business, The Craft Shack. The retired banker opened the shop in October 2014 to provide area residents with paper-crafting workshops and supplies.

conduct various crafting classes for up to eight participants. Recent workshops have featured art journaling, Bible journaling, recipe cards, technique tag — Tim Holtz style, ATC (artist trading card), light-up greeting cards, and altered art and other crafty stuff.

During the workshops, which typically last two hours and take place on weeknights or Saturdays, participants receive all materials and instruction necessary to complete the project at hand. The classes are rotated regularly and are advertised on The Craft Shack's Facebook page.

"Our classes are not only for learning but to enjoy friendships and have a lot of laughs in the process," says Brown, noting the motto for her business is "Craft — Shop — Giggle."

A native of Monroeton and a grad-

uate of Towanda High School and the Elmira Business Institute, Brown's interest in paper crafting began when she attended a Stampin' Up party with longtime friend McGuire about a decade ago.

Stampin' Up is a home-based party business that sells rubber stamps for popular paper-craft projects like creating greeting cards and scrapbooking. Brown says she was hooked immediately.

"I bought a couple of stamp sets, some ink and some paper, came home and started stamping," she says. "The next month, I had to go to another Stampin' Up party. They had other products, and I had to buy those — I am a good buyer! And then the next month, I went to another one, and on and on."

As Brown's interest in stamping grew, so did her collection of materials neces-

sary to support her new-found hobby.

“Because the nature of the beast is to accumulate stamps and inks and dies and all the things that go with paper crafting,” she says, “I went from just using a desk, to using part of a room, to using a whole room. So my husband and I built on to the house to accommodate all of my crafting materials.”

Once the addition was finished, Brown decided her new craft room would make an ideal gathering spot for her local paper-crafting friends, an informal group of 12 to 18 local women who called themselves “the Gigglers.” So she began holding classes and crafting parties there for the group about five years ago.

“A bunch of us would get together and craft and have a good time,” says Brown, noting the Gigglers still get together once a month at a local restaurant to exchange birthday cards and talk about their current paper-crafting projects.



PARTNERS IN PAPER: Lisa Brown, owner of The Craft Shack, left, and Lou Ann McGuire of Towanda, who introduced Brown to paper-crafting about 10 years ago, stand at the entrance to the paper-crafting shop. Located on French Asylum Road in Bradford County's Asylum Township, the shop offers a wide array of products and classes for paper crafting, mixed media and jewelry making. Both Brown and McGuire lead some of the crafting classes held in the business' craft room each month.



TAGS – YOU'RE IT: Tag making has emerged as one of the most popular forms of paper crafting. These seasonal tags shown above were created during one of the tag technique classes held at The Craft Shack. The tags can be given away like Christmas cards or used as a home decoration.

In 2012, not long after she had added the craft room to her home, Lisa retired from a 37-year career with a local bank. With more time on her hands, she veered away from the “cute-sy” projects of Stampin' Up and began exploring different paper-crafting styles. She particularly liked the shabby chic and grunge platforms offered by Melissa Frances and Tim Holtz. The problem was, she says, you couldn't find those products locally.

“When people do paper crafts and you live where we do, you have to go an hour away to Elmira, Binghamton, Scranton or Williamsport to get supplies,” she said. “So I decided I wanted to have supplies here.”

Brown and her husband, Rick, discussed opening a store in their home. Rick, a former dairy farmer who now works as a crop insurance adjuster, was very supportive of the idea, she says.

So the couple converted three additional rooms in their Civil War-era home into floor space for inventory, and on Oct. 5, 2014, The Craft Shack opened for business.

While running the business and hosting classes has cut into her personal crafting time, Brown says she's having fun sharing her pastime with the local community.

“For me just to have the store here would not be fun,” she says. “Doing the classes, getting together with friends and doing something fun is a huge part of the reason I am doing this.”

She notes that while paper-crafting allows people to explore their creativity, they don't need to be artistic to be able to create attractive items out of paper, paints and inks.

“If you can follow directions, you can do this,” she says, “because the projects we do in the classes are already designed.”

Brown says people are drawn to paper-crafting because it's a relaxing way to create items that can be used for decorative purposes in the home or given to family and friends as a personalized keepsake. And, she says, area crafters appreciate having a local shop where they can explore new crafting techniques and find a large selection of materials to support their hobby.

“Independent paper crafting stores are the coolest places to go,” says Brown. “We carry unique products for paper crafting, mixed media and jewelry-making that the big box stores like Michaels or AC Moore don't carry or don't carry in big supply.”

The Craft Shack carries supplies for card-making, altered art, Bible and art

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Passion for paper crafting

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journaling, tags, scrapbooking and more, and most items are available at 20 percent below the retail price.

Some of the featured brands carried include Tim Holtz, Paper Loft, Memory Box, Prima, Graphic45, Melissa Frances, Gabriella Pollacco and Mosaic Moments.

For additional information, contact The Craft Shack by calling 570-506-2646 or 570-265-9424, visiting online at thecraftshack.biz or following The Craft Shack on Facebook. 🌟



Holiday closings
Claverack's offices will be closed for the holidays on the following days:
Monday, Dec. 25, and Tuesday, Dec. 26 — Christmas
Monday, Jan. 1 — New Year's

Season's Greetings from all of us at Claverack

PRESIDENT AND CEO:

Bobbi Kilmer

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Operation Round-Up

MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS

With today's higher energy costs, more and more cooperative families struggle to keep up with their energy bills.

You can help some of your neighbors in need by participating in Claverack's Operation Round-Up program.



This voluntary program allows you to assist members of the cooperative who are experiencing difficulties paying their electric bills. Participating in the program is inexpensive – less than \$1 a month – and allows you to help make a difference in a neighbor's life.

CONTRIBUTING IS EASY

The concept is simple. Claverack rounds up your monthly electric bill to the next dollar amount. The difference between the round-up amount and your actual bill amount goes into our member assistance fund.

For example, if your electric bill is \$100.32, then you would pay \$101. The extra 68 cents goes into our member assistance fund for needy families of the cooperative.

In addition to being a great way to help neighbors in need, participating in the program can also make balancing your checkbook easier.

A FEW PENNIES CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Each year, hundreds of Claverack members receive energy assistance in the form of government money. That financing is often targeted in congressional budget cuts, so help for needy families is never certain. That's why we began Operation Round-Up – to help more members.

BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR

If you would like to help others, Operation Round-Up is an easy way to do so. An average yearly donation is about \$6. And if you change your mind and decide to quit, just call the office and ask to stop.

The choice is yours. Sign up today to start helping others by calling us at 1-800-326-9799. You can also sign up through our website, www.claverack.com, by clicking on Operation Round-up under the "Your Bill" drop-down menu at the top of the screen.



SAW SAFETY: Claverack linemen Rich Herman, left, and Greg Wilcox discuss chainsaw safety during the Women in the Wilds event at Mt. Pisgah State Park near Troy in August while a participant puts on protective chaps prior to trying her hand at running a saw. The linemen volunteered to conduct chainsaw safety demonstrations during the event, which brings together more than 250 women annually for a day of hands-on conservation education, outdoor exploration, and arts, crafts, and culinary demonstrations.