Last summer, there were several programs available to residents to try out (if you haven't already) compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) in their homes.

Our 130-year association with the incandescent light bulb is ending. Under federal law, incandescent bulbs are being phased out beginning next year when American manufacturers no longer will be allowed to make 100-watt bulbs. This, according to msnbc.com, by Jan. 1, 2014, the only incandescent left on the market will be three-way bulbs, plant lights and appliance lights.

Our light bulbs will soon become a novelty item. What would Edison be thinking?

If you're using, or are going to try the CFLs, you'll notice a couple of things right away. The first time I put them in my kitchen ceiling fixture, which uses four, I thought something was wrong with my eyesight. Starting out very dim, suddenly they brightened, all at once. It's a bit disconcerting, but can be pretty slick when you're making a midnight bathroom stop, and the dim lights help soften the shock of lights in your eyes.

The light from CFLs also is not the same as our warm, amber incandescents. It's a cold, harsher light.

I used the free packages of CFLs that were being given out this summer as I routinely replaced light bulbs throughout the house. But, when the chandelier-base bulb in my ceiling fan went out, I decided to check out the CFLs for that. Yikes! A package of two was almost $15. I bought the incandescent, which were "only" about $6.99 for two.

Understand, however, that the CFLs and the LEDs, which are even more expensive, and not too well known yet, use 80 percent less energy and last up to 10 times as long, so a typical household could save $10 to $50 a month by switching all incandescent to CFLs or LEDs, according to the msnbc.com report.

And, there is the issue of cutting greenhouse gases—according to greenzer.com, a shopping site for the environmentally conscious—if every American home replaced just one incandescent bulb with one CFL, the emissions would equal the amount of pollutants produced by more than 800,000 vehicles.

Edison patented the light bulb in 1880, and it has remained essentially unchanged since. There is no one alive who has not lived without the light bulb. With all the astounding changes in other technology, it's amazing we still look forward to turning that switch and illuminating our homes with the ol' light bulb.

That won't change—in fact, I'm becoming kind of used to that little lapse in light while the CFL bulb jumps into action.

This week, I read an article in American Photo that highlighted "the final roll of Kodachrome," and the final processing of our favorite slide film.

Say a fond farewell. We'll move on!

--Marian Volek