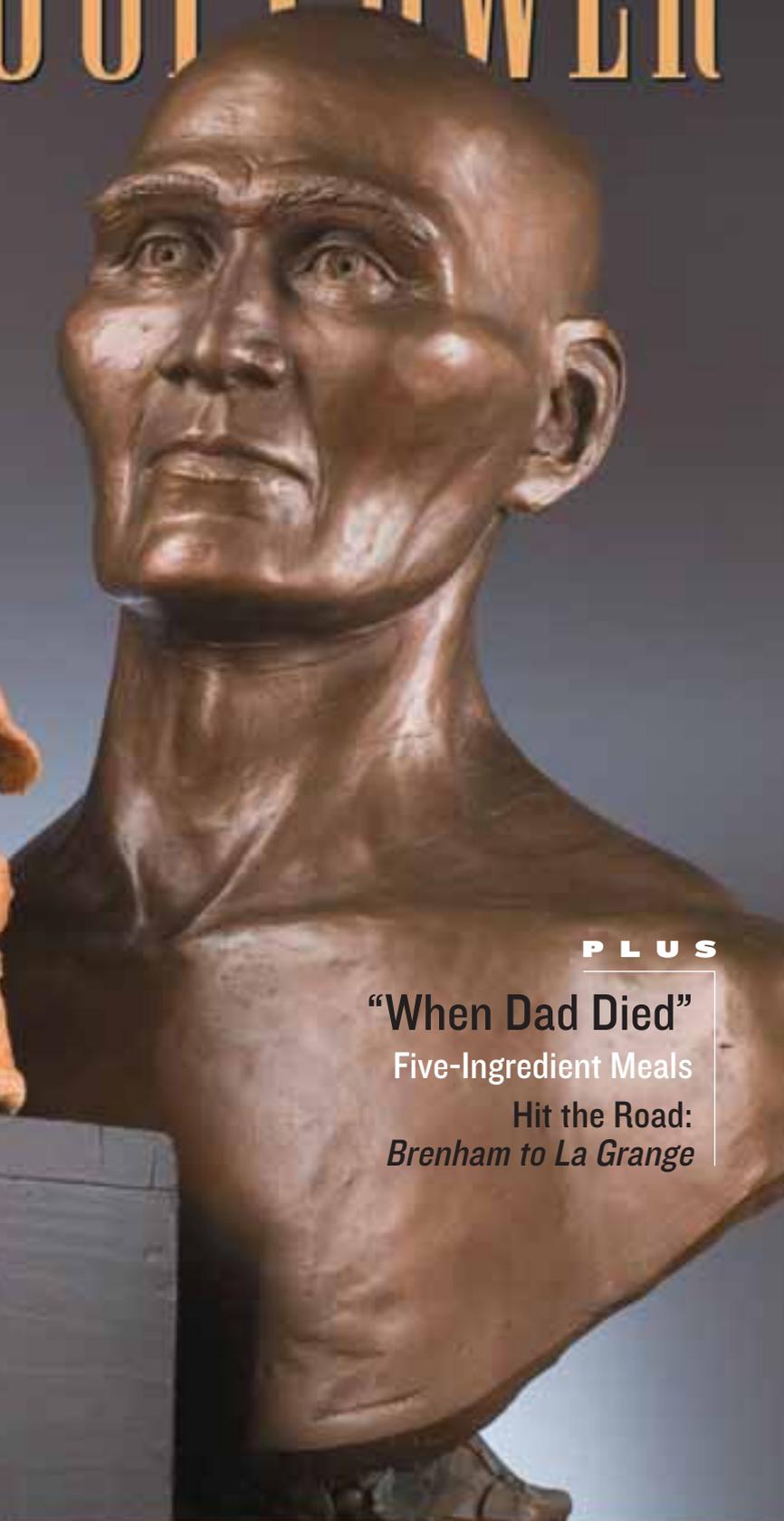


TEXAS CO-OP POWER

The
FACE *of*
ANCIENT
TEXAS



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WYATT MCSPADDEN

FEATURES

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By Gail Folkins

The Bosque Memorial Museum in Clinton exhibits replicas of the oldest human remains found in Texas.

14 When Dad Died

By Jim Comer

Illustration by Mary Close

Jim Comer, who has provided us excellent advice on coping with aging parents, relates the last days of his father's life.

FAVORITES

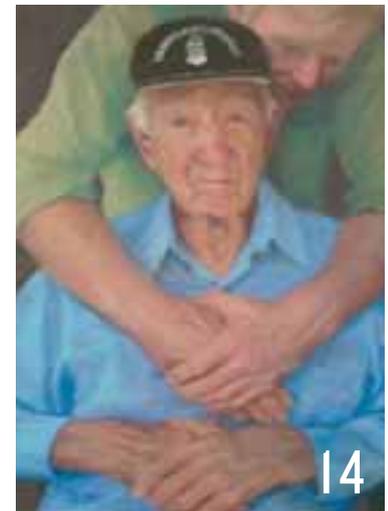
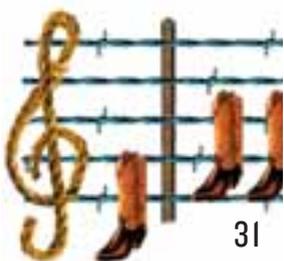
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TEXAS CO-OP POWER

Texas Co-op Power is published by your electric cooperative to enhance the quality of life of its member-customers in an educational and entertaining format.

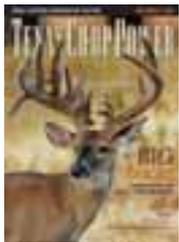
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letters



We neglected to say in the November cover story on "Big Bucks" that the magni-

ficent animals photographed came from Premier Ranch outside of Mason in the Hill Country. To learn about the ranch, go to www.premier-ranch.com. —Editor

A SALSA MYTH

Regarding folklorist Rhett Rushing's statement in Jeff Siegel's article on salsa in your November issue: Cilantro and garlic were introduced to the Western Hemisphere by Europeans such as Cortez. It's no surprise that "there is no direct evidence that they put them into the pepper-tomato mixture." So I suppose that part of the story is just folklore.

JOHN EAST

Fayette Electric Cooperative

SPORT HUNTING INHUMANE

Killing animals for sport is an inhumane practice. We are generations past the time when we should have outgrown the atavistic impulses of indiscriminate slaughter without purpose, of exterminating innocent animals and calling it "sport."

Life is one thing. It's precious. Stop killing it.

RICHARD MAXWELL

South Plains Electric Cooperative

We receive many more letters than we can fit in the magazine. Visit www.texascooppower.com to read a sampling of those.

We want to hear from our readers. Send letters to: Editor, *Texas Co-op Power*, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704, or e-mail us at letters@texas-ec.org. Please include the name of your town and electric co-op. Letters may be edited for clarity and length and will be printed as space allows.

POWER TALK

THE FUTURE(GEN) IS HERE!

Someday in the future, the United States will produce energy from its own reserves without relying on foreign resources. The coal-fired energy-generation plant will produce electricity and hydrogen with no emissions. Carbon dioxide waste will be captured and used to produce more oil from existing wells.

Sound like a fairy tale?

FutureGen, a \$1 billion government/industry collaboration introduced in 2003, is an initiative to build the world's first combined-cycle coal-fired plant with near-zero emissions. Carbon dioxide emissions, considered one of the primary causes of global warming, would be safely captured underground and used for beneficial purposes. Hydrogen and other byproducts of the power generation process would be "recycled" for use by other industries.

Energy demand is rising, not only in the United States, but also in the global marketplace. While fuel coal is abundant in the U.S.—and costs less than other energy sources—environmental concerns about emissions have hampered new plant siting and construction. FutureGen technology would eliminate those concerns, facilitating the use of a secure U.S. energy resource. FutureGen advanced technologies will be "appropriately shared" within the energy industry throughout the world.

Two of the four sites being considered for the plant are in Texas: Jewett, midway between Houston and Dallas-Fort Worth; and Penwell, just southwest of Odessa. After studies are completed, a final site selection will be made in the latter part of 2007, with the plant going online in 2012.



MODEL OF GENERATION PLANT.

SAFELIVING

ID Theft: Protect Your Identity

How can you prevent or reduce the possibility of identity theft happening to you? Here are some basic tips:

Don't carry more than one credit card with you during your daily activities.

Report the loss or theft of any credit cards to the issuers immediately.

Avoid using your debit card for online purchases—your credit card is better protected against fraud. (If your credit card is used without your authorization and you've reported the theft, you're only responsible for the first \$50 in charges.) Check with your card's issuing bank to find out what kind of protection you may have.

Install and update virus protection software and install a firewall on your home computer if you use the web at home.

Keep photocopies of your credit cards, debit card and driver's license in a secure place.

Don't give out personal information such as credit card numbers over the phone, unless you have initiated the phone call to a trusted company.

Avoid throwing away your receipts in public trash containers.



H A P P E N I N G S

Those zany folks in Eldorado who call themselves the Eldorado Olympic Bid Organizing Committee are at it again. In addition to the April Fool's Day Elgoatarod (during which humans pull goats down the street), they have a January event sure to cure your post-holiday blues.

On Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 27-28, the town spoofs the worldwide Elvis impersonation craze with their **ALL THE KING'S CLONES** festival. The West Texas burg claims to have more Elvis impersonators per capita than any city in the world.

In addition to the faux Elvii, people compete to see who looks the most like Priscilla, Lisa Marie and Col. Tom Parker. Contact eoboc@hotmail.com or call (325) 853-3678 for details. Eldorado is between San Angelo and Sonora on U.S. Highway 277.

WHO KNEW?



Porfirio Diaz: Mercedes' husband?

MERCEDES, headquarters of Magic Valley Electric Cooperative, might or might not have been named after a woman named Mercedes, who might or might not have been married to Mexican President Porfirio Diaz. The story is that townspeople were trying to butter up Diaz in hopes he would curtail banditry across the border.

Several history books say unequivocally that the town was named after the president's wife. But *The Handbook of Texas* maintains there is no record that Diaz, Mexico's ruler from 1876 to 1911, had a wife named Mercedes.

A BRIGHT IDEA THAT STILL WORKS 98 YEARS LATER



EDD PATTON

"Few light bulbs can 'hold a candle' to the lone, 13-candlepower bulb that was placed above the stage door vestibule in the Palace Theater in Fort Worth on Sept. 21, 1908, by state electrician Barry Burke," according to the *1978 Tomlinson Lone Star Book of Texas Records*. When the building was torn down in 1977, the bulb—still working—was moved to the home of property owner George Dato, who later bequeathed it to the Stockyards Museum in Fort Worth.

Some electrical experts attributed the hand-blown lamp's longevity to the fact that its handmade filaments are the size of a coat hanger, rather than the thin filaments of today. In 2006 the bulb celebrated its 98th anniversary of operation.

TEXANS SHINE AT LINEMAN'S RODEO

Few people outside the utility business have heard of this spectacle, but the yearly International Lineman's Rodeo and Expo recognizes the absolute best of the best in pole-climbing and rescue. Instead of a bucking bronco, the competitors climb atop poles staked out in a field. They have learned their trade while working daily with high-voltage wires, which can kick a lot harder than a high-spirited animal.

For the second straight year, a journeyman team from Guadalupe Valley Electric Cooperative (GVEC) maintained its world title in the cooperative division competition. GVEC, based in Gonzales, is home base for one of Texas Electric Cooperatives' three lineman training facilities. (Both men and women who climb poles and repair electric

lines are called "linemen.")

The event culminated Oct. 7 in Overland, Kan., when another Texas standout, James "Chick" Herrin of Bryan Texas Utilities, was inducted into the inaugural class of the International Lineman's Hall of Fame before a dinner audience of 4,000.



Guadalupe Valley Electric Cooperative employees Scott Brown, Robbie Coldeway and Greg John are part of the winning Lineman's Rodeo team.

CO-OP PEOPLE

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The
FACE *of*
ANCIENT
TEXAS

BY GAIL FOLKINS



ALONG THE BRAZOS RIVER IN SOUTHEAST BOSQUE COUNTY, ALBERT REDDER'S PATIENT DIGGING UNCOVERED THE SMALL SKULL OF A JUVENILE IN THE EARTH OF A ROCK SHELTER. REDDER AND HIS FRIEND FRANK WATT, AVOCATIONAL ARCHEOLOGISTS WHO LIVED NEAR WACO, HAD BEEN EXCAVATING THE SITE ON WEEKENDS SINCE 1967. DURING THE SUMMER OF 1970, THEY MADE THE KIND OF DISCOVERY OF WHICH ARCHEOLOGISTS DREAM.

One of the shells found in the site, which had to have come from hundreds of miles away and was probably used in trade.



The oldest known Texas resident can not be classified as American Indian, European or Asian.



FROM THE CARE

TAKEN AND THE NUMBER
OF ITEMS BURIED WITH
HIM, HE WAS SOMEONE
OF SIGNIFICANCE.

Within the burial site re-creation, the museum included replicas of elements found at the site. A third figure attending the two bodies was added.



WATT/MCSPODEN

Once they'd found the skull, Redder and Watt decided to return during a three-day weekend with friend and helper Robert Forrester, who camped near the site. The three knew it was important to finish recovering the remains before looters had a chance to pillage.

"It took us three days to excavate the burial site," Redder recalled. "We were cleaning up the first skull and realized, hey, there's another skull; it was two burials!"

The smaller skeleton was curled around the back of an adult male. And there was more. Three turtle shells rested under the man's head; another under his pelvis; and a fifth shell covered his face. Other findings included claws from Swainson's hawks and a

badger, along with coyote teeth, antler tools, shell beads, and 19 slabs of limestone resting on top.

Redder knew the burial site they'd uncovered was old, but exactly how old? Radiocarbon tests showed that the shelter was about 11,200 years old. This was a significant Paleo-American site and one of only three discovered sites in America found containing burial goods.

"This burial occurred before Greek civilization, pyramids, China. Before any known history, we tack on another 4,000 years, and it boggles the mind," says Dr. George Larson, director of the Bosque Memorial Museum in Clifton. "History here is much older than you ever imagined."

The significance of the site is

emphasized by the fact that a National Geographic Society TV documentary on the Horn Shelter will be aired in the next few months.

Frank Watt continued to work the site until he was 90, three years before he died in 1979. Redder carried on alone into the 1990s. During their 26 years of excavation, they removed 60 boxes of artifacts.

Redder always wanted to share this historic discovery with Bosque County. Money from Museums for America, a grant program of the Institute of Museums and Library Science, and donations from many friends of the Bosque Memorial Museum in Clifton have culminated in the opening of a new Horn Shelter exhibit in October.

An Ancient Waterhole's Menagerie Surfaces at a West Texas Ranch

Covered by a tarp that flutters under a hot July sun, a half-dozen men and women, most of them graduate and undergraduate students at Texas Tech University, huddle in a cavity of West Texas earth that was once an ancient watering hole. In pairs or singly, the students scrape small areas of dirt, each about a square meter and separated by string. One woman's careful brushstrokes reveal tortoise leg bones.

Roland Springs Ranch, located in Scurry County and owned by Big Country Electric Cooperative members Robert and Tina Roland, hosts a zoo of potentially 400,000-year-old animal bones, including remains of coyotes, small horses, birds, fish, frogs, lizards and toads. The

couple's first inkling they'd found something special was a large tortoise shell uncovered by erosion and helped along by their own pocketknives and pens. "We stabbed and jabbed at first," before calling in an expert, Tina says.

According to Dr. Eileen Johnson, director of the Lubbock Lake Landmark, a unit of the Museum of Texas Tech University, the numerous Roland Springs findings, which she tentatively places in the Middle Pleistocene epoch, are significant.

"It's very rare," Johnson says. "There are only a handful of these published finds across the country."

Tina directs members of the crew to doughnuts under a mess tent and welcomes a neighbor-

ing family who stops by, joining them to admire the large cat tooth Johnson displays. Tina hopes it's from a saber-toothed tiger, but Johnson says it's too soon to tell. For Tina, the excitement of this four-week dig outweighs any inconvenience.

"It's really just a small part of the ranch," Tina says, pointing to the 5-by-8-foot plot. "And how can it be an intrusion when it has so many benefits?"

The enjoyment and education are two of the main advantages, she says. Tina and Robert plan to donate the findings to the Museum of Texas Tech University, with replicas going to the Scurry County Museum, so others can enjoy and learn from them.



Left, Dr. Eileen Johnson displays an artifact found at Roland Springs Ranch. Right, Texas Tech students excavate for fossils.

Riverbank Yields a Layered Village

In 1995, Frank Sprague retired as a wildlife biologist and looked forward to spending time with his wife, Evelyn, on their land north of Hamilton. "I always had a historical interest in the area," Frank said. He expected to find arrowheads from the past few hundred years or so, but erosion along the banks of the Leon River soon exposed far older surprises: burnt rock from cooking fires and ancient tools used thousands of years ago.

The Spragues enlisted help from experts at the Texas Historical Commission who sent several stewards, volunteer archeologists trained in field techniques and members of the Tarrant County Archeological Society. Their findings along the riverbank included abundant mussel shells, charcoal, scrapers and knives, all indicating early villages along the river. Ancient, earthen ovens were also found eroding from the

bank, along with a pair of hand-sized grinding stones, or "manos." Archeologists determined that the findings went deep, at least 12 feet below the modern surface.

"There were several levels of occupation," says Sprague, who is a member of Hamilton County Electric Cooperative. "One group would leave their stone tools, and another group would come in."

The Spragues have loaned some items for display in the local museum; they will retain ownership of the artifacts, a choice all landowners have, Frank explains. The age of the artifacts spans thousands of years. Charcoal samples have yielded two dates: 800 B.C. and 2,000 B.C. Animal bones retrieved from the site help determine what was available for ancient peoples to eat.

"There were mussels and fish, buffalo and

antelope, and pecan and oak trees," Sprague said. "They had many resources here; it was a good place to be."

The Spragues enjoyed working with the Texas Historical Commission's archeological stewards so much that Frank became an active member of the Hamilton County Historical Commission and a steward in 2001. He encourages other landowners to get involved.

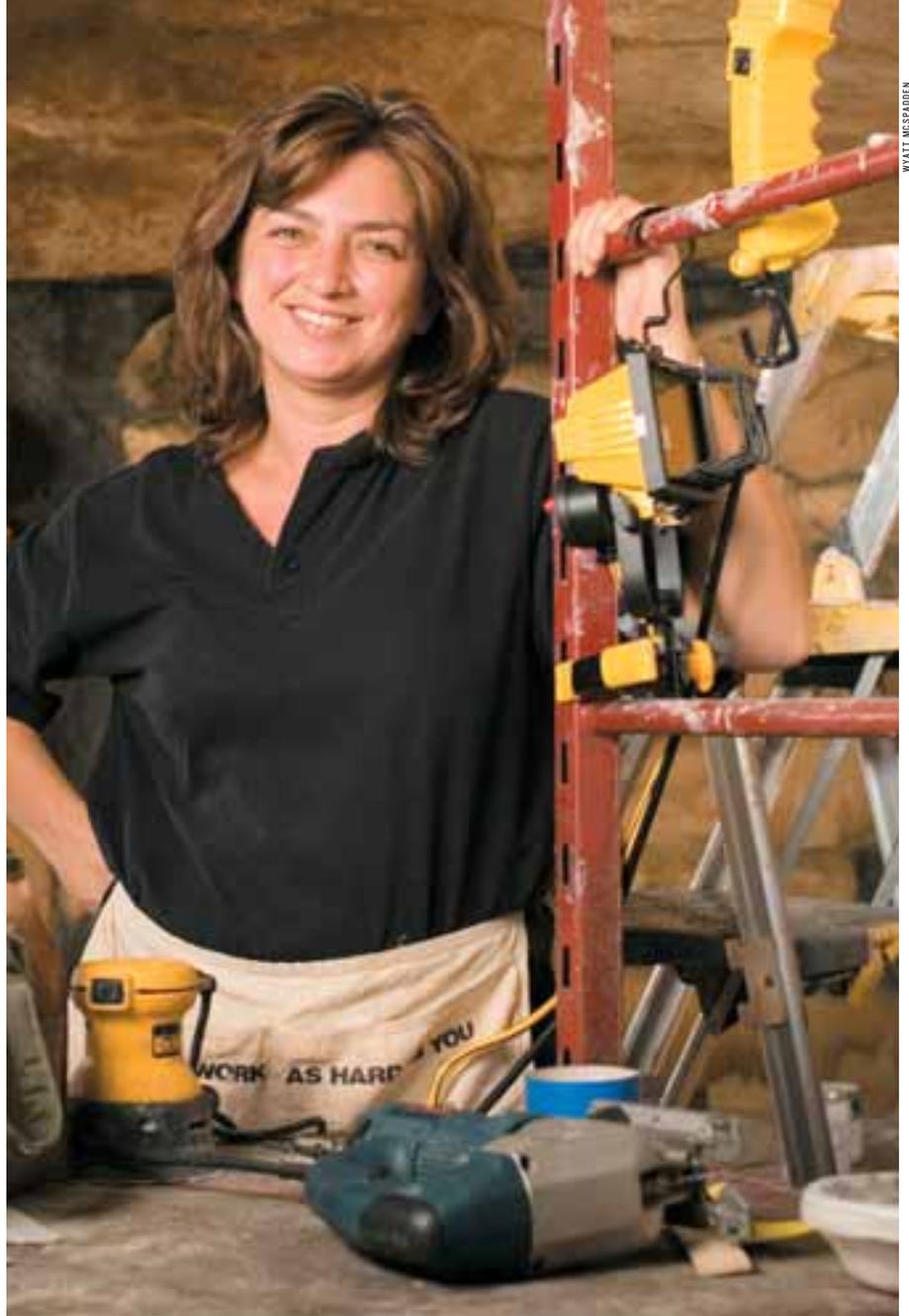
If you find you have a real interest in the preservation of our past, check into the Texas Archeological Society, www.txarch.org. The semiannual publication *Current Archeology in Texas* (a free publication) is accessible on the Texas Historic Commission website, www.thc.state.tx.us, or contact the magazine at (512) 463-6096.

— Gail Folkins



**DANNING, ARTIST
AND ENVIRONMENTAL
EXHIBITOR, CREATED THE
BUST IN CONSULTATION
WITH THE SMITHSONIAN
MUSEUM OF NATURAL
HISTORY.**

Shown here with some of her tools, Danning named the bust “Sam,” or Son of America, because he can’t be easily classified. Opposite page, the original skeletal remains found in the Bosque River cave.



WATT/MCSPODEN

The findings and exhibit were named after landowners Adeline and Herman Horn, who gave permission for the artifact hunters to cross their property in order to have access to the river caves.

On the recommendation of Dr. Doug Owsley, renowned physical anthropologist and curator for the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History, the Bosque Museum arranged to re-create the face of the adult male skeleton and manufacture replicas of artifacts from the shelter.

The bust of the county’s oldest-known resident, in fact, the oldest-known Texas resident—a handsome fellow—stands at the entry of the museum.

Amanda Danning, artist and environmental exhibitor for the Horn Shelter exhibit, created the bust in con-

sultation with Owsley. She calls the figure “Sam,” or Son of America, because he can’t be easily classified. “We can’t say he’s American Indian, European, Asian; he’s part of an ongoing study of who lived here,” she says.

Owsley believes that this skeleton, a strong example of a Paleo-American, might be a member of an ancient people called the Anai.

Sam, who scientists estimate was in his 40s when he died, was probably a person of significance given the intricacy of his burial process, from the carefully placed turtle shells around his face and body to the shell beads Redder and Watt found, which had to come from several hundred miles away and probably were considered valu-

able. Such funeral offerings indicate a care and concern for the dead and could imply that the Paleo-Americans believed in an afterlife.

“Someone took a lot of time putting these two together,” she said, referring to the man and child found curled around him. “From the care taken and number of items buried with him, he was someone of importance.” Danning guesses the ancient man might have been a healer or a storyteller.

The younger figure found was around 9 or 10 years of age at the time of death. Scientists haven’t determined whether the two remains are genetically related.

As a result of unceasing labor by avocational archeologists and strong support by area residents, Bosque

Museum visitors can experience the Horn Shelter as it appeared 11,200 years ago, when the Brazos River spread a mile wide and swirled into a confluence that helped create this cave-like shelter.

“We were very pleased to have the community support,” Larson said. “Over half of this support came from local residents; we didn’t have to twist arms, they gave.”

Within the burial site re-creation, the museum has included replicas of elements found at the site, from badger claws to small tools. In a nod to the significance of the burial, Danning added a third figure to the exhibit, a person attending to the two bodies

The Horn Shelter site and the findings within it give both scientists and residents a new glimpse into a period

BOSQUE MEMORIAL MUSEUM



that is on the frontier of anthropology. To Redder, who still occasionally helps at different sites, such detective work also adds to our knowledge of the area. Larson agrees and thinks there are additional places to learn from.

“There are probably more sites in Texas,” Larson said. “It’s just a matter of finding them.”

Gail Folkins wrote “Texas Dance Halls” for the January 2006 Texas Co-op Power.

The Bosque Museum is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays. For more information, visit bosquemuseum.org.

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T E X A S ’ L A R G E S T R U R A L L E N D E R

Finally, a Shine That Lasts

Miracle Polish Ends Struggle With Tarnishing Metals By D.H. Wagner



Lately, I have noticed quite a few newspapers and magazines praising a polish formulated by a homemaker. The articles report that Donna Maas grew frustrated with rubbing and scrubbing her silver, brass and other metals only to see them quickly become dull and tarnished again. Determined to put an end to her constant battle with tarnish, Donna formulated a metal cleaner and it's transforming the industry.

Anita Gold, nationally syndicated columnist and expert on the restoration of antiques calls MAAS (named after its inventor) "The best and most amazing polish in the world." Ms. Gold wrote in her column, "A truly miraculous polish referred to as "miracle polish" that'll turn the most disastrous pieces into the most de-bright-ful is MAAS Fine Polishing Creme For All Metals, which cleans, restores, preserves and polishes to perfection any brass, copper, chrome, silver, stainless steel, aluminum, gold or any other metal with amazing results - no matter how badly stained, spotted, discolored, flood-damaged, weathered, dirty, dingy, drab, or dull they may be."

Since I had an old brass lamp in desperate need of restoration, this journalist decided to put MAAS to the test. The lamp had been stored in the garage and was in far worse condition than I remembered. I was flabbergasted as I watched the polish wipe away layers and years of tarnish. Never have I used anything so easy. The lamp actually looks better than when I purchased it. Better yet, months later it's still glowing!

The polish worked so effortlessly, I decided to refurbish my mother's antique brass and copper cookware. The badly stained pots and pans developed black spots that had been impossible to remove. MAAS wiped away years of built-up residue even from the most discolored pieces. While polishing, I noticed MAAS applying a shine on the stainless steel sink. WOW! The shine is unbelievable and although I wash dishes every day, the shine keeps-on-shining. And it's no longer covered with ugly water spots, water just rolls off the protective finish and down the drain.

A consumer study of 28 metal polishes reports, "MAAS Polishing Creme has no equals in all around polishing performance..." MAAS retained its shine longer than every polish tested. The Miami Herald says, "Polishing product can renew old silver." The Chicago Tribune headline sums it all up by saying "One Amazing Polish Is The Best At Everything."



How did a homemaker come up with something the industry's experts couldn't? The reporter in me had to find out.

During our interview Donna explained, "I enjoy the warmth that beautifully polished metals add to a home. However, not the hours it took to keep them tarnish free. The harsh cleaners left my hands dry and burning - one instant silver dip smelled so bad I felt sick. That's when I became determined to find a better way to care for the metals in my home."



And that she did. Her formula developed with a chemist friend quickly restores and leaves a deep, rich one-of-a-kind luster beyond anything I've ever seen. "To my surprise," Donna reveals, "the formula far exceeded my original goal. MAAS restores glass fireplace doors, clouded crystal vases, fiberglass, linoleum even plastic. The restorations were so remarkable everyone suggested that I sell my invention on television".

Donna sent samples of her polish to televised shopping channels and both QVC and Home Shopping Network asked Donna to personally appear on TV to demonstrate her product. 17,000 viewers called during MAAS' debut and encore performances brought a million dollars in record-breaking sales.

Leona Toppel, was about to throw away a brass chandelier. "No amount of elbow grease could shine it up. With very little effort (a big plus since I suffer from arthritis) MAAS made that chandelier look like new. It's been years and to everyone's surprise it's still glowing."

Boeing and McDonnell Douglas tested and approved the polish for use on jet aircraft. The U.S. Air Force, Army, Navy, Coast Guard and Department of Defense worldwide have ordered MAAS.

"MAAS outperforms every polish I've tried," Donna beams with satisfaction. "So if you're as tired as I was of cleaning metals just to see tarnish reappear a few weeks later, MAAS it!"

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Finally, you can restore every metal and more to it's original beauty with MAAS easy wipe-on, wipe-off, no-wait polish. Just send \$12.95 plus \$2.95 S&H for one large 4 oz. tube of MAAS. Save when you order two tubes and receive a FREE polishing cloth (total value \$33.85) for only \$19.95 plus \$4.95 S&H. IL residents please add 7.75% sales tax. Mail your order to:

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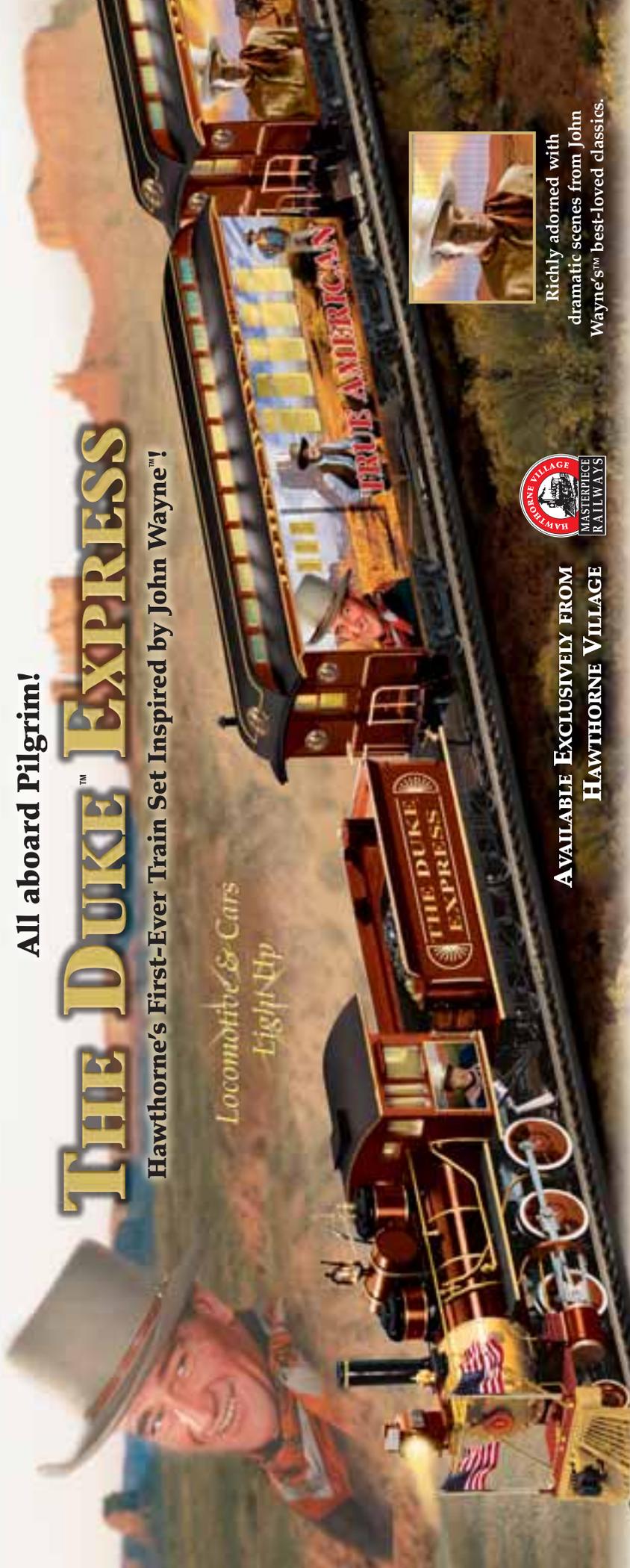


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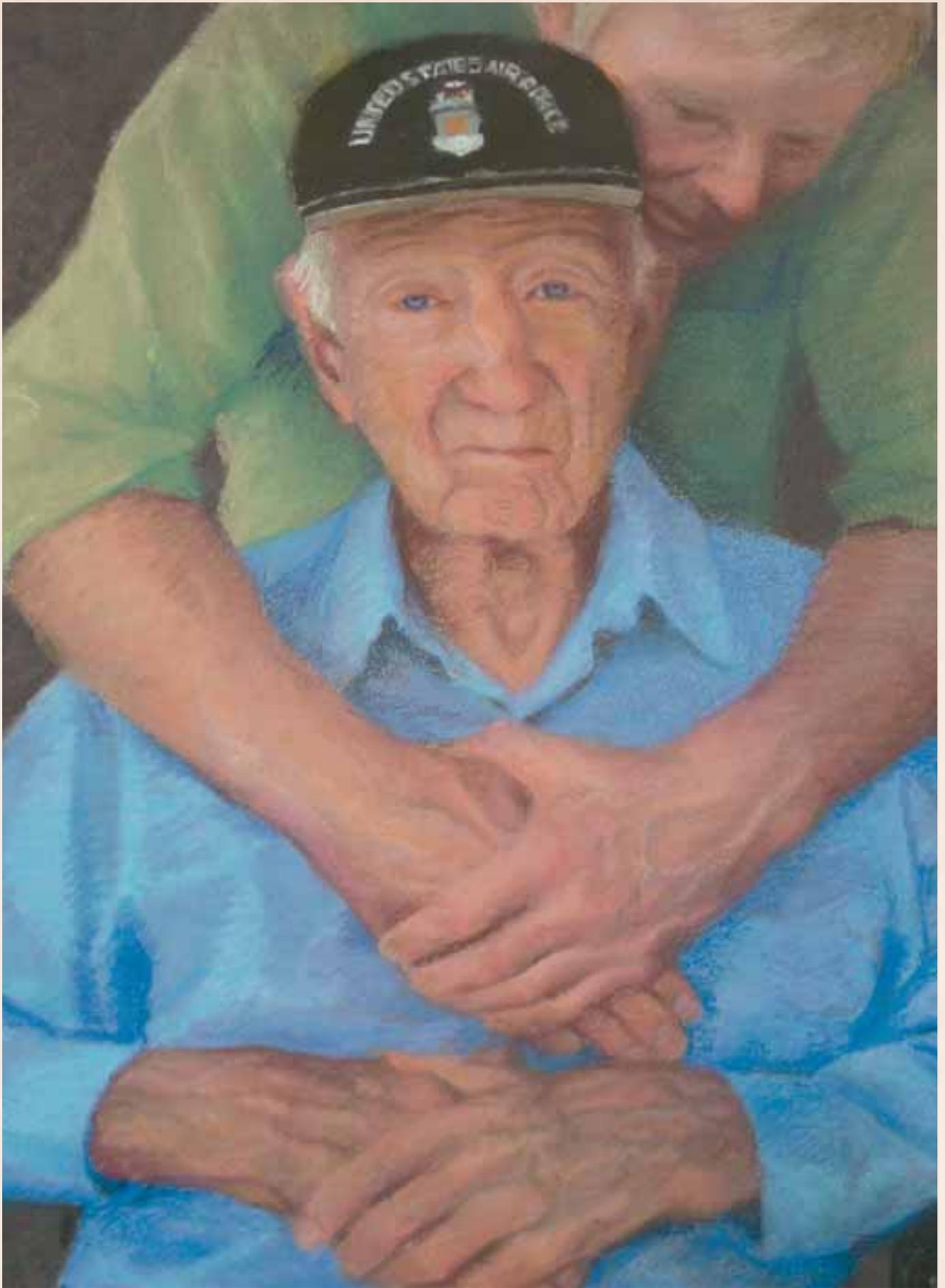
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When Dad Died

BY JIM COMER • ILLUSTRATION BY MARY CLOSE

Austinite Jim Comer wrote about caring for his parents, Anne and John, in the July 2005 issue of Texas Co-op Power. His original book, Parenting Your Parents, has since been expanded and reissued by Hampton Roads Press and titled When Roles Reverse. This compassionate and practical account of one man's experience with his parents is available at bookstores everywhere. In this excerpt, Comer's parents are in the same nursing home but living separately. His mother has Alzheimer's.

This is the chapter I didn't want to write. A few months after his 95th birthday, Dad's health began to fail.

In the summer of 2005, something happened. I wish I could be more precise, but the doctors and nurses were equally baffled. Was it dementia or the onset of actual Alzheimer's? Had he experienced a series of subtle strokes? Whatever physiological shift occurred, it led to shouted symptoms.

Dad began to cry out, "Help me, help me! Please, help me." He repeated that plaintive plea over and over from wheelchair, bed and toilet seat. Like a child screaming for attention, he was relentless and unyielding. He might say the phrase several hundred times in one day. While his emotions spun out of control, his vocal cords lost none of their strength. "Help me, please!"

When I walked into the nursing home, often I heard him in the lobby 50 yards down the long hall from B-Wing. When he saw me, his eyes widened, and the volume increased. I would give him a hug, but I was never able to reassure him.

An internal burglar alarm had been activated. None of us—doctors, nurses or administrators—had the correct code to disable it.

Although I knew the nonstop cries were not my father's fault, they were—as the months dragged on—maddening. More than once, I heard myself saying, "Dad, you're OK. There's nothing wrong. Everything is fine."

What a stupid thing to say. Everything was not fine. Of course he was agitated, anxious and depressed. I would have called for help, too. Only I wouldn't have said "please."

The staff remained amazingly patient. The nurses' aides would hold his hand, give him hugs, and offer orange juice or his beloved vanilla ice cream. Mostly they gave him their attention, providing far more than our money's worth of kindness and affection, even though Dad was just one of many needy residents.

Dad's doctor requested permission to give him medication for anxiety and depression. I told him to do anything that would relieve my father's fears but not leave him drugged and half-asleep.

Sunday December 18

One week before Christmas, I stopped by the nursing home after church and found Dad slumped over in his wheelchair. He often snoozed in that chair but never slumped. He looked more fragile than I'd ever seen him. I had the nurse call the doctor and let her know there had been a marked change in his condition.

Monday, December 19

After a 6:45 a.m. Toastmasters meeting, I had three messages on my cell phone. The nursing home and both cousins had called to say that Dad had taken a sudden turn for the worse, was on oxygen and might have to go to the emergency room. By the time I got to the nursing home, the administrator, head nurse and social worker were at his bedside. Two doctors arrived and told me that Dad was dying.

Although I took in the words, they did not fully register. Other people died, but not my dad. Didn't those doctors know he'd flown 76 combat missions over Germany during World War II and lived? Couldn't they see those portraits of B-17s on his wall? This man was a survivor. Last week he was rolling himself down the corridor raising a ruckus. Now he had "a day or two to live."

Instead of moving him to the hospital, we agreed to keep him in the nursing home, where his surroundings were familiar. My cousins said they would help me take turns staying with him, and we made out a schedule.

By noon everyone had left the room, and I was sitting alone with my father. Suddenly Dad roused himself and started trying to get out of bed. He managed a feeble, "Help me, help me." For the first time that phrase sounded good to me.

At 5 o'clock, one of his favorite nurses' aides, Jackie, determined that Dad would eat something. Even though he said "No," she would not be deterred. She coaxed, persuaded and demanded that he take "just one spoonful" and then another. I watched her feed him, bite by grudging bite. She held the spoon 1 inch from his lips, willing him to open his mouth.

Tuesday, December 20

Dad's oxygen level had stabilized, and his color had improved. The doctors said their previous day's prediction was wrong. Dad might last a week or two. They called Hospice Austin, and 45 minutes later I got a call. Hospice wanted to know if they could send a social worker to the hospital for an intake interview. I said, "Sure. What day will they come?"

"In an hour."

"An hour?"

"Is that too soon?"

"No, that's amazing."

While Dad slept, I remembered that I needed to check on Mother. I walked 30 seconds down the hall to the dining room where the annual nursing home Christmas party was in full swing. The laughter, music and energy of life stood in stark contrast to the room I'd just left.

The staff had worked for weeks to transform the large dining area with colorful decorations. I found Mother at the back of the room and sat down next to her. Since there was chocolate cake on her plate and two cute children visiting a grandmother at the next table, she was in excellent spirits.

Mother didn't recognize me, but her social skills were faultless.

"Where's your cake, Honey?"

Good question. I walked to the front of the room to get my sugar fix when suddenly the holiday spirit overtook me—or maybe I just lost control. Two guitars were playing a catchy Latino tune. Without plan or warning, I started dancing around the middle of the room, making up moves as I went along. Soon there was clapping, so my steps got bolder. I recruited an unsuspecting staff member as a partner, and we began improvising across the floor. I'm sure we looked like failed reality show contestants, but a little dancing was just what the party needed.

The administrator handed me a microphone and said, "You've got to sing." I looked at the elderly pianist and said, "How about 'O Holy Night'?"

"What key?"

"Your guess is as good as mine. I don't read music!"

"Don't worry, I've heard it all. We'll fake it."

As I belted out "O ni-ight di-vine" I saw that Mother had been wheeled up front and was smiling at me. When I finished the song, I went over to her. A woman standing next to her said, "When your mother heard the first line of your song, she said, 'That's my boy singing!' So I brought her up close so she could see you."

Mom hadn't known who I was for a year, but she recognized my singing voice from a hundred feet away. That was the best Christmas present I could get; I received the gift of recognition. Her temporary moment of memory restored my perspective. Dad might be terribly ill down the hall, but Christmas was coming, full of joy, possibility and hope.

Wednesday, December 21

The hospice nurse arrived promptly, checked Dad's vitals, talked with the doctor, and arranged for morphine to be administered orally when needed. I began to understand

why so many friends had told me how hospice care had been a blessing to their families.

The most powerful image of Dad's last week was the time I spent alone with him, by his bed, forced to face the fact of his impending death. I'd never kept watch by the bedside of a parent. This was new territory for me.

Thursday, December 22

Dad had stopped talking, though his presence remained powerful. Lying there, eyes wide open, he gazed intensely at the ceiling. As I stood above his bed and looked down, he stared through me at a landscape beyond my range of vision. I held his hand, amazed by the strength of his grip, and told him loudly that I loved him. I wanted to believe that he heard me, though I doubt he did. Dad was focused on only one thing: his next breath.

Sunday, December 25

As I walked down the hall of B-Wing, I could see bright boxes being opened and families gathered around beds doing their best to import joy. At the nurses' station, lights were twinkling, decorations glistened and the atmosphere was resolutely cheerful. As I walked into Dad's room, I realized that for the first time since grade school, I had no present for my father. This year my gift was being there.

I sat with him for hours, thinking of Christmases past: the time he couldn't get my electric train set up and the year of the yapping puppy hidden in the basement. I recalled long trips in big cars crowded with presents. I wondered what Dad was thinking, or if he was thinking at all.

Monday, December 26

As Dad slept peacefully, I went to get Mother so she could visit the husband she no longer knew. When I brought her into his room, the nurse was bending closely over Dad's face, checking his breathing. I walked over to the bed. The nurse checked his pulse. Half a minute went by and she said, "I think your Dad just took his last breath."

Dad had died seconds after Mom and I walked into his room. We had no warning. Nothing dramatic happened. There was no gasping for breath or sound of a struggle. He simply stopped breathing and tiptoed out of our lives.

I'd never seen anyone die, much less my father. I stood there looking at him, trying to take in what had just happened.

I put my arms around Mom's shoulders.

"Mom, Dad has gone to heaven."

"He has?"

"Yes, he's not sick any more."

"That's good."

She seemed to have no trouble with the concept of death for the few seconds she considered it. As we headed back to her room, she had forgotten the news before we passed the nurses' station. Part of me envied her.

Mary Close, who lives in Lakeville, Connecticut, is an oil and pastel painter whose subjects are often elderly couples or elderly people with their families.



World's Most Valuable Timepiece Disappears

Back in 1933, the single most important watch ever built was engineered for a quiet millionaire collector named Henry Graves. It took over three years and the most advanced horological technique to create the multifunction masterpiece. This one-of-a-kind watch was to become the most coveted piece in the collection of the Museum of Time near Chicago. Recently this ultra-rare innovation was auctioned off for the record price of \$11,030,000 by Sotheby's to a secretive anonymous collector. Now the watch is locked away in a private vault in an unknown location. We believe that a classic like this should be available to true watch aficionados, so Stauer replicated the exact Graves design in the limited edition Graves '33.

The antique enameled face and Brugnet hands are true to the original. But the real beauty of this watch is on the inside. We replicated an extremely complicated automatic movement with 27 jewels and seven hands. There are over 210 individual parts that



27 jewels and 210 hand-assembled parts drive this classic masterpiece.

are assembled entirely by hand and then tested for over 15 days on Swiss calibrators to ensure accuracy. The watches are then reinspected in the United States upon their arrival.

What makes rare watches rare?

Business Week states it best... "It's the complications that can have the biggest impact on price." (*Business Week*, July, 2003). The four interior complications on our Graves™ watch display the month, day, date and the 24 hour clock graphically depicts the sun and the moon. The innovative engine for this timepiece is powered by the movement of the body as the automatic rotor winds the mainspring. It never needs batteries and never needs to be manually wound. The precision crafted gears are "lubricated" by 27 rubies that give the hands a smooth sweeping movement. And the watch is tough enough to stay water resistant to 5 atmospheres. The movement is covered by a 2-year warranty.

Not only have we emulated this stunning watch of the 1930s but just as surprising, we've been able to build this luxury timepiece for a spectacular

price. Many fine 27-jewel automatics that are on the market today are usually priced well over \$2,000 dollars, but you can enter the rarified world of fine watch collecting for under \$100. You can now wear a millionaire's watch but still keep your millions in your vest pocket. Try the handsome Graves '33 timepiece risk free for 30 days. If you are not thrilled with the quality and rare design, please send it back for a full refund of the purchase price.



The face of the original 1930s Graves timepiece from the Museum of Time.

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Will Using an Electric Blanket Save Energy?

DEAR JAMES: I set the furnace thermostat lower at night, but my family complains it feels cold. Will using an electric blanket save energy overall? What are the most efficient ones, and are there other tips for staying comfortable? —*Sandi M.*

DEAR SANDI: Setting back the furnace thermostat at night can cut your utility bills significantly during the winter. Depending upon your climate, you can reduce your heating bills by 1 to 2 percent for each degree you lower the thermostat setting at night.

The best method to have a comfortable temperature setback at night is to install a programmable clock thermostat. Program it so it does not

change.

Using an electric blanket or heated mattress pad is an excellent method to stay comfortable all night long. My computerized thermostat always lowers the temperature at night, and I have used an electric blanket for years. Recently though, I have switched to a dual control (one for each side) electric mattress pad. I prefer feeling the warmth from beneath my body and less weight on top of me.

My queen-size mattress pad uses only 220 watts, and it cycles on and off to maintain a steady temperature. The average electricity usage is less than 100 watts, about as much as a standard light bulb uses. When you compare this to cutting your heating bills by up to 10 percent, the overall electricity savings are significant.

The key differences among various brands and models of electric blankets and mattress pads are the controls and the heating wires. The best, but more expensive, models use digital ambient temperature controls. This circuitry senses room temperature throughout the night and automatically increases the heat output to compensate for steady comfort. Better blankets also use longer-lasting fabrics.

Better controls have a preheat setting and also provide nearly silent operation. Cheaper electric controls make a quiet click when the internal thermostat switches them on and off throughout the night. If you cannot fall asleep easily, the clicking can become quite annoying.

Select a blanket or mattress pad with PTC (positive thermal coefficient) heating wire. Its resistance changes as the temperature changes. Where the blanket or pad is resting tightly over or under your body, and therefore warmer, its heating output decreases. This maintains a more constant sleeping temperature near your body.

© 2007 James Dulle



This heated mattress pad has dual ambient controls so each side of the bed can be a different temperature.

start to lower the temperature until just after you are in bed and then raises it just before you awake in the morning. If you manually set a standard thermostat lower at bedtime, the entire house will be very cold when your family awakes in the morning. The earlier you can set the thermostat lower, the more you will save, so experiment with earlier times as your family adjusts to the tempera-

ELECTRICITY & YOU— WHAT TO DO FOR ...

ELECTRICAL FIRES

- Get out.
- Notify 9-1-1. Tell the dispatcher it is an electrical fire.
- Stay away.

ELECTRICAL SHOCK

- Do not touch anyone or thing you think might have been electrically shocked. The victim may still be in contact with the electricity.
- Call 9-1-1. Tell the dispatcher the incident involves electricity.
- Keep other people away from the continued danger.
- Understand that electrical shock may cause internal injuries. The person needs to be seen by a doctor, even if you don't see any burn marks.

DOWNED POWER LINES

- Move quickly away even if you do not see sparks.
- Call 9-1-1.
- Stay away from anything that might touch the wire: a fence, a tree, a building, a car.
- Wait for help.

POWER LINE TOUCHING THE CAR YOU ARE IN

- Stay in the car.
- If people move toward the vehicle, motion for them to stay away. Have someone call 9-1-1.
- Stay in the car until help arrives.

POWER OUTAGES

Build a kit to help be more comfortable in the event of a power outage.

Basics might include:

- Flashlights for each member of the household
- Battery-powered radio
- Extra batteries for each item
- Canned food and can opener
- Prepackaged foods
- Bottled water for drinking and cleaning
- First-aid kit
- Essential medications
- Toiletry items
- Books and games to pass the time

Copper Attracts Thieves to Electrical Substations

If there is an electric utility substation near where you are standing, and there are warning signs that read “DANGER—KEEP OUT,” what is your first inclination? Like many of us, you think “safety first” and walk in the opposite direction.

However, some people are gambling with their safety and lives by trespassing in substations in the pursuit of copper. Once an inexpensive metal, copper has doubled in value in recent years. Thieves are cutting through substation fencing to take copper reels, and copper products have also been stolen from utility trucks, transformers, work sites and storage facilities. The metal is then sold to scrap dealers.

Complaints of copper thefts have dramatically increased, causing concern for member safety. This is a growing problem across the country, as substation intruders in Texas, Virginia, Kentucky and Florida have been electrocuted while attempting to steal copper.

Your electric cooperative cares about the safety of our members. Here is some advice that will go a



Thieves are ignoring warning signs such as this and endangering themselves, co-op employees and our members.

long way in securing your safety and the safety of others:

- If you see any unusual activity in or around substations, towers, utility poles, storage sites or other electric utility property, report it to your local electric co-op immediately.

- No one should ever climb substation fences, utility poles or towers. People must also stay away from substations and transformers. Activity such as this is hazardous and can result in severe injury and, in some unfortunate cases, death.

Source: North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives and NRECA

ENSURE REFRIGERATOR EFFICIENCY WITH SIMPLE MAINTENANCE

You probably use your refrigerator more than any other appliance, so take care of it. Here are some tips to keep your fridge in good working condition:

- Vacuum the condenser coils in the back or bottom of the refrigerator every three months. This will keep it working at peak efficiency.

- Door gaskets should be snug to keep cold air in. Check the door seal and replace or adjust it if necessary.



- Do not store uncovered liquids in the refrigerator. They give off vapors that make the unit work harder.

- Allow hot foods to cool before placing them in the refrigerator, but don't leave perishables unrefrigerated for more than two hours.

- When cooking, remove all of your refrigerated ingredients at once so you don't have to keep opening the refrigerator door.

- Don't put a second refrigerator in the garage unless the unit is specifically built for that use. The temperature changes in an unheated space can damage the appliance or make it work too hard. *Photo courtesy The Home Depot*

WE'LL BE THERE IF YOU NEED US ... EVEN IF IT'S A HOLIDAY!

Our goal, as your electric cooperative, is to ensure that our members will have the electricity they need each and every day. However, should power to your home be interrupted, even if it's New Year's Day, you can rest assured that a co-op crew will be available to restore your service as quickly as possible.

YOUR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE FAMILY WISHES YOU AND YOUR FAMILY A JOYFUL AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Climbing Ladders

“You’ve got the ladder upside down,” one of the volunteers told me. “And you’re pretty lucky you hung up there at the side of the roof.”

BY ISABEL
BEARMAN BUCHER

O

ur family has a little wooden cabin by a stream in northern New Mexico. When people say “aw,” and I watch their eyes fill with desire for this spot on earth that surely must be heaven, I counter with, “You have absolutely no idea ...” adding the eye squint and curled lip of a veteran who’s been paying with the same 10 pounds of flesh per year for 22 years. That’s what I lose on the never-ending “work in progress.”

Pictures of memorable projects flicker through my mind like old black-and-white movie clips. I watch as a circular floor sander throws me against the Franklin stove, which bends the chimney. Shortly thereafter, it pitches me out the screen door. I see myself during another project bawling my eyes out, blubbering, “I’m too old and too small,” while another glob of wet ceiling plaster lands on my head.

Last year, before I knew it, we were staining the outside of the cabin. The color of the 40-year-old part, a varnished yellow pine, never matched the redwood stain of the new part, and for eight years, when the sun went down in the Rocky Mountain west, instead of inspiring poetry, it lit up the difference like a zapping, brassy Las Vegas neon sign. So, I decided to “just see” whether the new stain on the old part would work. To my husband Bob’s huge disappointment, it did.

With cheap paintbrushes at the ready, we started the staining project at opposite ends, working our way around to each other—something akin to the way long marriages take care of business. At night we nursed our aching necks and backs. Finally, I got to the point where I needed to use the extension ladder to finish the 30-foot peaked front porch.

We folded the extended part of the ladder flat on top of the roof, and I climbed onto the pitch. Then, I overreached to get at the corners, jiggling the ladder in the process. I turned over onto my rump, and the ladder failed. The rung clamps worked loose, and I slid down like a freight train to the lip of the roof. My feet were trapped at the ankles, sandwiched between the extension and the bottom part of the ladder. I shouted for Bob, and he ran, but in trying to lift the ladder, he succeeded in freeing it to take a tighter, more excruciating bite. I screamed for him to call 9-1-1, and fortunately for us, the Taos Ski Valley volunteers responded in 5 minutes, lifted the ladder, pushed up the top part and freed my legs.

“You’ve got the ladder upside down,” one of the volunteers told me. “And you’re pretty lucky you hung up there at the side of the roof.”

“You’ve got to tie any ladder off, so it won’t fail,” said another one. “And you placed it way too shallow. It’s got to be a 70-degree pitch, not a 40, like you’ve got it here. Those clamps jiggled loose when you overreached.”

I felt this cold fist in the bottom of my stomach.

“Somebody was hanging Christmas lights on their cabin a couple of years ago,” said yet another volunteer, “and slid down two stories, broke both ankles, had multiple surgeries, spent a year in a wheelchair, more in walking casts, and is still using a cane.”

My stomach lurched.

I felt sick as more lessons in ladder safety were told Aesop’s fables-style. As the reality of what could have happened sank in, I blessed the day I was not alone on this job, as I had been on most other projects. We hired Edwardo, our jack-of-all-trades who’s rescued us more than once, to finish the staining. He rented scaffolding for 22 bucks and finished the job.

The Consumer Products Safety Commission estimated in 2004 that there are more than 164,000 ladder-related accidents in the United States each year requiring emergency room visits. Major causes for the accidents are slippery shoes or rungs, overreaching, stepladders that “rack” (teeter on one leg excessively, producing only three-leg contact), or, as in my case, failure of rung locks because of jiggling and shallow angle placement.

In the realm of total folly are falls that occur because people drop stuff, hitting the ladder’s legs and knocking them off. But the topper has to be those pitched off from a high position while they tried to “walk” a ladder to another spot. Unfortunately, most people don’t even know how or why they fell.

“If you have no flat ground, or a bad slope of land, the straight or extension ladder can slide out from under you. Faulty rung locks are another issue,” says Dr. Irving Ojalvo, a retired senior scientist from Columbia University. His company, Technology Associates (www.technology-assoc.com), is a consulting forensic engineering firm that provides accident reconstruction and analysis.

“Some stepladders have a propensity to twist easily,” he said. “You place one foot on the first rung, then you pull your body up with the opposite hand to get the second foot up. When doing this, one of the rear ladder legs comes up off the ground, and later you can be thrown off if you lean toward that raised leg. Then there’s the issue of ‘tying off’ the upper end of an extension ladder. More often than not, there’s nothing to ‘tie off’ to at the top. I’m not a fan of extension ladder upper tie-offs. They present a tremendous problem. What happens when you come down? You’ve got to undo the ties.”

Ojalvo likes European-design ladders, which look like an upside-down letter Y and have no top caps. There are also stabilization bars for making extension ladders safer. The use of small, hand-held paint sprayers instead of brushes can minimize the kind of movement that makes ladders unstable.

The cabin is now finished, and it looks beautiful. I figured out that I could attach brushes to a painter’s extension pole for the hard-to-reach places and single-sided razor blades for scraping paint splotches from windows. No ladder needed because, no matter how you look at it, being up there is just plain unsafe.

No more cha-cha routines for this do-it-yourselfer, and when I squint up and inventory all the missed spots, Bob is wont to say, “Don’t look up. Life, limb and prevention are above price to me, Sweetheart.”

“Are you speaking about mine, or yours?” I ask.

He just smiles.



Isabel Bearman Bucher has written about her Rio Grande River rafting trip and a childhood Christmas for Texas Co-op Power.

FRITCH

Chips Off the Old Rock

Thousands of years ago, Panhandle flint quarries were a center of prehistoric tool production.

by Katherine Kelly



Standing on a red bluff overlooking the Canadian River in the Texas Panhandle, I can feel them around me: the spirits of those who had walked this land for thousands of years before. I hear their whispers in the wind. “Learn from us,” they seem to say. “Respect the land, honor the earth as you would your mother who gave you life and provides for your needs.”

The wind blows most days on top of the bluff; today the weather is warm and the wind is gentle, welcome. Colorful stones litter the ground—large chunks and small, sharp slivers—residue of centuries of quarry work at a place likened by writer Ed Syers to the Pittsburgh of prehistoric America, where tool-makers crafted the necessities of life out of rock uniquely suited to the purpose.

This area, which is now the Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument in Potter County, is the only such site in Texas. The 1,079 acres making up the monument were set aside in 1965.

The variegated stone found at Alibates is sometimes referred to as having “bacon-marbling” because it resembles a slice of bacon. This is a marking distinctive to Alibates. Alibates stone embodies the color qualities of a Texas sunset: blue, grey, white, yellow, pink, maroon, red, orange-gold and a deep purplish-blue. While we may call these pieces of stone “flint,” Dr. Eileen Johnson, Director of Lubbock Lake Landmark, an archaeological and natural history preserve, says that is a misnomer.

“The material is not flint but chert, and more specifically an agatized dolomite. The process to determine whether a specific piece of chert is Alibates is basically one of visual identification and comparison with known pieces,” Johnson says.

Huge outcroppings of colorful stone can be found near the depressions that mark the Alibates quarry pits. These surface stones were not suitable for mining since they were exposed to the weather, and the quality of tools made from them would be poor. Below ground, the chert was of a higher quality. Much of the rough work on a quarried stone was done on-site, since every piece had to be carried back down the hill, where it would be turned into a finished tool (a knife, scraper or spear point) for personal use or for trade with other native peoples along the Canadian River.

The chunks of stone had to be knapped, broken into smaller pieces and shaped into a useable tool. Two separate functions are involved: *percussion*, striking flakes from the core; and *reduction*, further shaping the stone by pressing small pieces away with a soft tool, usually the tip of an antler. Flintknappers are artists; they bring a vision, a mental image of the tool inside, to their work.

In much the same way as a diamond cutter, a flintknapper strikes the first blow with a rock that is much harder than the chert—and the blow must be precise. The stone is further refined by swift strokes with the rock. Working quickly and skillfully, the knapper then sculpts the stone with an antler tip or other tool, chipping off flakes until the desired shape appears.

It is thought by many that people whose ancestors crossed a land bridge from

Siberia to Alaska first inhabited the Southern Plains during the last Ice Age. While we cannot know some things for certain, generations of archeologists, anthropologists and geologists examined the evidence, and like a jigsaw puzzle, put together their collective knowledge to make a picture of history.

Evidence from ruins near the Alibates quarry site and elsewhere along the Canadian River valley suggests that the Antelope Creek people, who built their homes close to springs or near the river where they cultivated crops on a small scale, moved there about 1,000 years ago. While hunting and gathering were still a major part of their lives, mining the quarries for the precious stone was of primary importance. As the people became more settled, they could exchange Alibates chert and bison products for pottery, jewelry, pipes and other items from groups in the southwest and the north.

The remains of two of the villages of the Antelope Creek peoples still exist within the confines of the monument area. Artifacts discovered at the site indicate that the villagers disappeared around 1450. Much like the ancient Maya culture of Mexico and the pueblo dwellers of New Mexico, they just vanished.

Wes Phillips of the Hutchinson County Historical Museum in Borger says, "While we don't know for certain why they left, we do have some clues. We know that some of the houses burned about the time the people left here. There may also be indications of a drought in the 1400s."

Projectile points and other tools made of Alibates stone have been found as far away as Montana, Central Mexico and the Mississippi River. Archeologists have pondered over this wide dispersement, and while it may have been generally due to trading activity, we cannot forget the mobility of the far-ranging, horse-borne Plains Indians.

Activity at the quarries can be dated as far back as 12,000 years, the National Park Service says, and appears to have ended around 1870 when most of the Plains Indians had been removed to Oklahoma.

That colorful piece of flint you found after a dust storm might have come from the Alibates quarries. Johnson believes that recording where an artifact (arrowhead, piece of flint, etc.) is found is important information that should be preserved. Anyone finding such material can report it to the Texas Historical Commission in Austin. Make an accurate note of where you found the artifact(s) and take a photo, if possible (include an object to indicate scale). Remember that it is unlawful to remove an artifact from any national park or monument as well as any property belonging to the State of Texas.

Katherine Kelly, a member of South Plains Electric Cooperative, is a Lubbock-based freelance writer.

GETTING THERE

Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument is about 35 miles north of Amarillo (P.O. Box 1460, Fritch, TX 79036, (806) 857-3151, www.nps.gov/alfi). The park contains petroglyphs and house ruins, but they are in remote locations not normally available to visitors. Special "Ruins Tours" are held in October each year and must be prearranged. The site boasts a new interpretive center that opened in November 2006.

Lubbock Lake Landmark is an archaeological and natural history preserve on a meander of Yellowhouse Draw, an ancient valley. The summer field research season runs from June to August and is open to volunteers. Lubbock Lake Landmark is located at 2401 Landmark Dr., Lubbock, TX 79415, (806) 742-1116, and on the web at www.museum.ttu.edu/lll. Dr. Eileen Johnson is the director.

The Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum on the campus of West Texas A&M University in Canyon houses many artifacts from the quarries. You may contact the museum at (806) 651-2244; on the web at www.panhandleplains.org (entrance fee required). The chief curator for archeology and paleontology is Jeff Indeck.

The Hutchinson County Historical Museum at 618 N. Main St. in Borger also has examples of Alibates flint. Wes Phillips at the museum has led many guided tours at the Alibates National Monument. Contact the museum at (806) 273-0130, www.hutchinsoncountymuseum.org.





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As a member of the community of jewelers, I have the opportunity to frequently visit Antwerp, Belgium, the Diamond Capitol of the World. All of the most renowned jewelers buy their best diamonds here. My 5th generation Belgium gem broker is at the top of his trade and enjoys finding a special gem with a certain size, shape, color and clarity—he doesn't trade in what is available on the local market. Recently he was excited to discover a hoard of the most sought after diamonds today: Canary and Fancy Yellow diamonds. Many people find yellow diamonds more desirable than any other color due to their inherently warm optic color.

During our visit, he proudly displayed a brilliant round-cut Canary diamond, explaining that natural yellow color diamonds are 10,000 times more rare than their brilliant white, colorless counterparts. Turning the stone in the light, he said the intensity of color is of paramount

importance, and clarity increases the inherent value of a high-quality color diamond. He said this fine Canary Yellow gemstone, framed by two white diamonds, should retail for at least \$10,000. As my broker admired this treasure, I decided now was the time for a little amusement.



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 Color rating: G-H
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 Setting: Platinum and 18K gold

As he glanced away, I placed a similarly colored lab-created DiamondAura yellow stone next to the natural mined diamond. My broker thought he was seeing double. I asked him to choose the mined diamond, but he said he could only guess. After close examination he was astonished—the faultless, lab-created stone was so visually similar in almost every way! He started to wonder about the future

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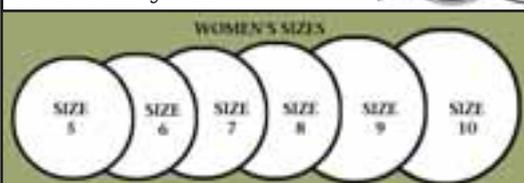
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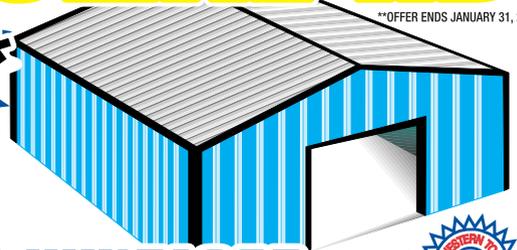
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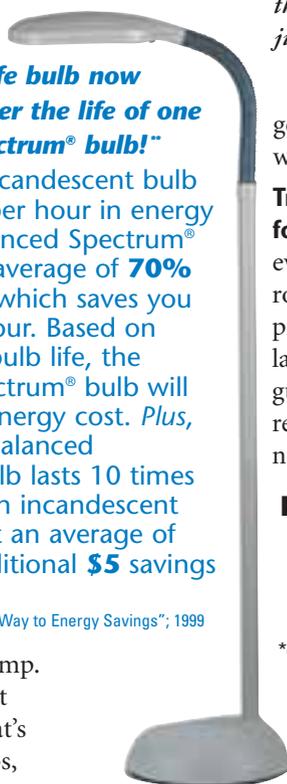
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BY LARRY TRITTEN

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Given that opening, almost any schoolchild in the state knows what comes next: Enthusiastic, rhythmic clapping and the hearty chorus “... deep in the heart of Texas!”

That lively tribute to the Lone Star State’s wailing coyotes, blooming sage and the wide prairie sky, a rowdy counterpoint to the state song “Texas, Our Texas,” makes a fitting de facto state song of Texas. The official song, “Texas, Our Texas,” is appropriately reverential, but the tone is sober and pious, fitting the moods of school gatherings and political rallies, whereas “Deep in the Heart of Texas” is a robust tune suited for parties and campfires.

Most state songs are to music what a civics class is to history, and many have not aged well. “Deep in the Heart,” originally a popular U.S. chart-topper, which was exported all over the world during World War II, provides more upbeat public relations for Texas than any tourism organization ever could.

“Texas, Our Texas,” written in 1924, was adopted five years later, the year of the great stock market crash. “Deep in the Heart of Texas” came out the year Pearl Harbor was attacked and became ingrained in the national psyche. Here’s a test: Without looking it up, how much of “Texas, Our Texas” can you sing, versus “Deep in the Heart of Texas?” Likely, you could remember more of the popular song immortalized in records and movies than the official anthem.

“Deep in the Heart of Texas,” written by June Hershey and Don Swander, was initially recorded by Perry Como two days after Pearl Harbor. It became an immediate hit, spending five straight weeks atop Your Hit Parade in 1942, and quickly became a popular culture staple. Within the year, Hollywood latched on to its popularity with a movie that included the title tune sung by Tex Ritter. Gene Autry also sang it in the film “Heart of the Rio Grande,” which also came out in 1942, and that version is considered the definitive recording.

I remember hearing the song for the first time while seeing a movie. I think it was being sung by a group of soldiers on a train. It was a lively and festive scene that imprinted on my youthful mind, which is the power of the song with its montage

of colorful imagery punctuated by loud clapping.

The song was popular in Hollywood and showed up in many film scores, predictably in a passel of Westerns. However, its pop culture power has also been displayed in films as varied as “The Teahouse of the August Moon” and “Pee-wee’s Big Adventure.” In that movie, which involved the title character traveling to the Alamo on a quest to recover a stolen bicycle, one scene emphasizes the song’s identity with the state. To prove to a friend on the telephone that he is indeed in Texas, Pee-wee sings the first verse, and, sure enough, passers-by respond with four claps and an enthusiastic chorus of “... deep in the heart of Texas.”

Jay Johnson recorded a version that features acoustic guitars, congas, chimes and softly brushed drums, and some attempted poetic chutzpah in the revised lyrics:

“Deep in the heart of Texas a campfire whispers softly in the dawn morning coming on.

Footsteps of the fawn falls behind his mother in the quiet of the trees.

And deep in the heart of Texas, there’s shelter in the breeze.”

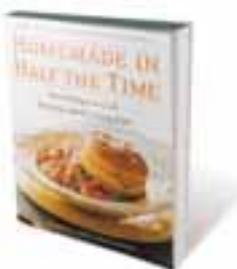
Personally, I’ll take my original Texas song lyrics neat, and hold the congas.

Any number of factors account for why some songs hit the target with the public and others miss the mark, but it is interesting to note that before Hershey and Swander wrote “Deep in the Heart of Texas,” they wrote two songs about Albuquerque — “Ridin’ Down the Trail to Albuquerque” and “Albuquerque,” both showcased in movies, and neither came within a West Texas mile of doing for that town what “Deep in the Heart of Texas” has done for the Lone Star State. How a song titled “Deep in the Heart of New Mexico” might have fared is anybody’s guess.

Larry Tritten, who lives in San Francisco, wrote about the National Museum of the Pacific War in Texas Co-op Power’s April 2006 issue.



Fewer Ingredients, More Flavor



BY SHANNON OELRICH As a busy mom, I find easy-to-prepare meals a must. However, I don't want to sacrifice the flavor and complexity of a take-your-time homecooked meal. That's what makes *Homemade in Half the Time* a treasure. This new cookbook by Shea Waggoner (Rodale, 2006) has more than 200 delightful recipes, and a quarter of those use only five ingredients. Waggoner includes helpful resources for busy cooks as well, such as information on organizing your kitchen space for efficient cooking and mastering quick-cooking techniques.

Many recipes use "shelf-ready shortcuts" in unexpected ways. For instance, the two recipes included here use an Asian sauce to add flavor to a hearty meal. If you don't usually visit the Asian section of your grocery store unless you're going to cook a traditional Chinese dish, try snooping around the shelves the next time you're there. You'll be surprised at the ways you can combine premade sauces with your favorite ingredients to come up with your own easy, flavorful meals.

ROASTED CHICKEN AND TURNIPS IN PEANUT SAUCE

- 1½ pounds turnips, peeled and cut into walnut-size chunks
- 4½ pounds skinless chicken thighs
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 cup bottled Thai peanut sauce

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Place the turnips in an 8x8-inch microwavable baking dish. Add enough water to come ¼-inch up the sides of the dish. Cover with plastic wrap, leaving a small corner

vent. Microwave on high power for 5 minutes, or until partially cooked. Drain and set aside.

Coat an 11x17-inch baking pan or other large shallow baking pan with cooking spray. Place the chicken in the pan, overlapping slightly if necessary. Scatter the turnips in the pan. Sprinkle with the salt. Drizzle with oil.

Bake for 45–50 minutes, or until it is sizzling, the chicken is no longer pink, and the juices run clear. Drizzle the sauce over the chicken and turnips. Stir to coat

well. Turn on the broiler and place the chicken approximately 6 inches from the heat source for about 4 minutes, or until browned. Makes 6–8 servings.

TURKEY AND KALE IN CHINESE BLACK-BEAN SAUCE

- 4 tablespoons vegetable oil, divided
- 1 tablespoon preminced, oil-packed garlic
- 1 bag (1 pound) kale leaves
- 1 pound turkey breast tenderloin, cut into walnut-size chunks
- ¼ cup jarred Chinese black-bean sauce with garlic
- ¼ cup water

In a large skillet or wok, heat 2 tablespoons of the oil and the garlic over medium-high heat until sizzling. Add the kale. Stir to coat with the oil. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, for 2 minutes, or until wilted. Remove to a plate and set aside.

Heat the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil in the skillet or wok set over medium-high heat. Add the turkey. Cook, stirring frequently, for 4 minutes, or until the turkey is browned. Return the reserved kale to the pan. Add the black-bean sauce and the water. Stir to coat the turkey and kale with sauce. Simmer over medium-low for 3 minutes, or until the turkey juices run clear. Makes 4–6 servings.



ROASTED CHICKEN AND TURNIPS IN PEANUT SAUCE

1st **BLISS HELPERT** *McLennan County Electric Cooperative*
Prize-winning recipe: Pizza Meatloaf

You want easy, fast and good? We've got it with this month's winners. Bliss Helpert's Pizza Meatloaf will please kids and adults alike. It's got the down-home goodness of meatloaf with that pizza-parlor taste.

PIZZA MEATLOAF

- 1 package (8 ounces) shredded mozzarella cheese (divided)
- 1 jar (14 ounces) pizza sauce (divided)
- 2 pounds hamburger meat
- 1 cup seasoned bread crumbs (or seasoned croutons, crushed)
- 2 large eggs

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Reserve 1/2 cup shredded cheese and 1/2 cup pizza sauce for topping later. In large bowl, mix remaining cheese and pizza sauce with ground beef and bread crumbs (or croutons) and eggs. In a 9x13-inch baking pan, shape meat mixture into loaf. Bake meatloaf 30 minutes.

Pour reserved pizza sauce over top of loaf. Bake 30 minutes longer, sprinkling with shredded cheese during last 10 minutes of baking time. Serves 6-8.

Serving size: 1 slice. Per serving: 495 calories, 30 g protein, 34 g fat, 16 g carbohydrates, 919 mg sodium, 158 mg cholesterol

Cook's Tip: Serve a slice of Pizza Meatloaf over spaghetti tossed with olive oil and a little garlic salt, plus a salad tossed with Italian dressing for an easy, tasty dinner.

BARBECUPS

- 3/4 pound ground beef
- 1/2 cup favorite barbecue sauce
- 1 tablespoon instant minced onion
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 can refrigerated biscuits

In large skillet, brown beef; drain. Add barbecue sauce, onion, brown sugar. Separate biscuit dough into 12 biscuits. Place one in each of 12 ungreased muffin cups, pressing dough up sides to edge of cup. Spoon meat into cups. Bake at 400 degrees for 10-12 minutes until golden brown. (You may use fresh diced onion. Just put it in before you brown the meat. I prefer to use a can of Cheddar cheese biscuits.) Serves 6.

PATRICIA DAVIS

Magic Valley Electric Cooperative

Serving size: 2 Barbecups. Per serving: 195 calories, 11 g protein, 13 g fat, 8 g carbohydrates, 266 mg sodium, 43 mg cholesterol

PORK CHOP AND RICE BAKE

- 6 pork chops
- 1 cup uncooked white rice
- 1 small can (4 ounces) mushrooms, liquid reserved
- 2 ounces canned, diced pimientos, undrained
- 2 envelopes onion soup mix
- 2 cups boiling water

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Put rice in 9x13-inch oven dish. Drain mushrooms, reserving liquid in a 2-cup or larger measuring cup. Scatter mushrooms, pimientos and 1 envelope of soup mix over rice. Lay pork chops on top. Sprinkle chops with remaining envelope of onion soup mix. Add boiling water to the mushroom liquid to amount to 2 cups. Slowly add liquid at the side of the dish, being careful not to pour on pork chops. Cover and bake 45 minutes to 1 hour. Remove cover, bake 10 minutes more if there is excess liquid. (If you like spicy, add red pepper, cayenne or chopped jalapeño to taste when you add mushrooms and pimientos.) Serves 6.

JOYCE MOORE

Grayson-Collin Electric Cooperative

Serving size: 1 pork chop with rice. Per serving: 389 calories, 27 g protein, 16 g fat, 33 g carbohydrates, 1,306 mg sodium, 74 mg cholesterol

HAM AND POTATO GRATIN

- 4 potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1 cup cubed ham
- 1 carton (8 ounces) French onion dip
- 3 cups shredded Cheddar cheese

Layer ingredients in order given in greased casserole dish. Bake, covered, at 300 degrees for 1 hour. Remove cover and bake 30 more minutes. Serves 4-6.

SUSAN REDKEY-MUELLER

Pedernales Electric Cooperative

Serving size: 1 large serving spoonful. Per serving: 420 calories, 21 g protein, 29 g fat, 19 g carbohydrates, 860 mg sodium, 79 mg cholesterol

RECIPE CONTEST

In keeping with the Mother's Day tradition of making Mom breakfast in bed, May's recipe contest topic is **OMELETTES AND FRITTATAS**. Send your special morning egg recipes to Home Cooking, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704. You may also fax them to (512) 486-6254 or e-mail them to recipes@texas-ec.org. Please include your name, address and phone number, as well as the name of your electric co-op. The deadline is January 15. The top winner will receive a tin filled with Pioneer products. Runners-up will also receive a prize.



60 YEARS OF

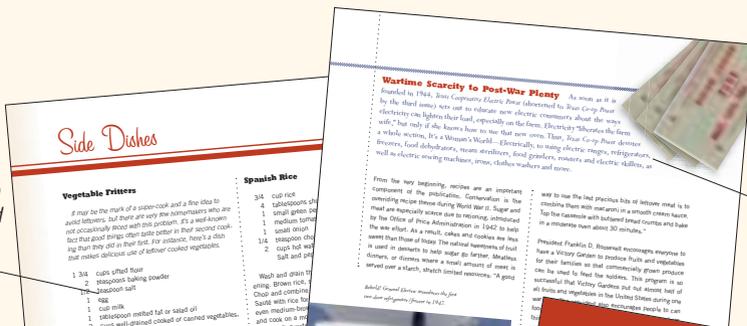
Home Cooking

1940 TEXAS CO-OP POWER 2000

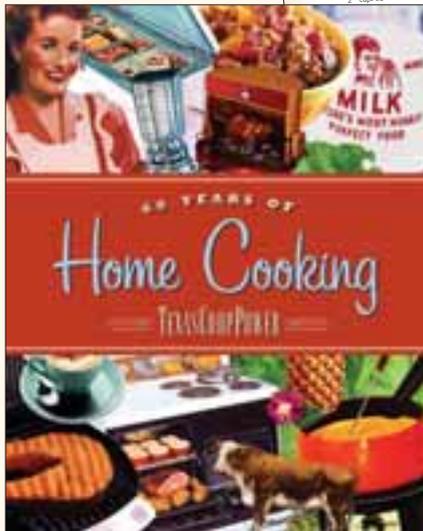
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Make checks payable to Texas Electric Cooperatives. Send \$29.95 (\$24.95 plus \$5 tax, shipping and handling) for each cookbook to Cookbook, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704. Also available in many co-op lobbies throughout the state or online at texascooppower.com. Allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery.



▲ After a 13-inch rain—in one day!—Buna Junior High coach **Marci Anderson** and science teacher **Eric Ford** moved all the school's staff members' cars to higher ground so they wouldn't be damaged. Photographer **Wendy Strange** belongs to Jasper-Newton Electric Cooperative.



▲ Grayson-Collin Electric Cooperative member **Vickie Buckwalter** snapped this shot of a pair of mama longhorns with their babies in the snow. The little brown calf (in the foreground) was named Valentino to commemorate his Valentine's Day birth earlier that day.

Upcoming in **Focus on Texas**

ISSUE	SUBJECT	DEADLINE
Mar	Snapshots	Jan 10
Apr	Inspirational	Feb 10
May	Barbecues	Mar 10
June	Inventions	Apr 10
July	Brothers	May 10
August	Off to the Races	June 10

SNAPSHOTS is the topic for our **MARCH 2007** issue. Send your photo—along with your name, address, daytime phone, co-op affiliation and a brief description—to **Snapshots, Focus on Texas, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704**, before January 10. A stamped, self-addressed envelope must be included if you want your entry returned (approximately six weeks). Please do not submit irreplaceable photographs—send a copy or duplicate. We regret that **Texas Co-op Power** cannot be responsible for photos that are lost in the mail or not received by the deadline. Please note that we cannot provide individual critiques of submitted photos. If you use a digital camera, e-mail your highest-resolution images to focus@texas-ec.org. (If you have questions about your camera's capabilities and settings, please refer to the operating manual.)

EXTREME WEATHER

Extreme weather in Texas? You betcha! You know what they say about our weather: If you don't like it now, just wait 20 minutes. Seeing visual evidence of the extreme weather conditions that can—and do—happen, I have renewed respect for our electric cooperatives' outside employees who must work in these conditions (and for the inside employees who man the phone lines!) to keep our power flowing. Thanks to their dedication, we're all a bit more comfortable when extreme weather strikes.

—**CHERYL TUCKER**



▲ This lightning storm blew in quickly, reports Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative member **Mike Mallory**, who took this photo behind his house. "I had to be very careful shooting the lightning storm because it was blowing towards me," he said.

◀ Just looking at this photo made our judges shiver! Thanks to **Baru Spiller**, member of Taylor Electric Cooperative, who submitted this chilly—and beautiful—photo taken after an ice storm.



◀ Pedernales Electric Cooperative member **Dulen Lee** took this photo in the north Austin area on May 27, 1997, the same day an F5 tornado destroyed a large section of Jarrell, Texas.

AROUND TEXAS AROUND TEXAS

JANUARY

- 01 ATHENS** [1-31]
Trout Harvest, (903) 676-2277
- 02 ABILENE** [2-13]
Cutting Horse Show, (325) 677-4376
- 05 BOWIE** [5-7]
Second Monday Trade Days, (940) 872-1173, www.bowietxchamber.org
- POST** [5-7]
Old Mill Trade Days, 1-866-433-6683, www.oldmilltradedays.com
- 06 BELLVILLE**
Market Day on the Square, (979) 865-3407, www.bellville.com
- HARLINGEN**
Jackson Street Market Days, (956) 423-4041

- 06 MONTGOMERY**
Farmer's Market, (936) 597-4566, www.historicmontgomerytexas.com
- NEW BOSTON**
Trade Day, (903) 628-2581, www.newbostontradedays.com
- PORT ARTHUR**
Mardi Gras Party, (409) 962-9860
- SAN ANGELO**
First Saturday at Old Chicken Farm Art Center, (325) 653-4936
- SULPHUR SPRINGS** [6, 20, 27]
Four State High School Rodeo, (903) 866-2711
- WESLACO** Resolution
Solution: New Year's in the Park, (956) 565-3919
- 07 BOERNE** [7, 12-13]
Junior Livestock Show, (830) 249-2948

- 09 SAN BENITO** [9-10]
Gospel Fest, (956) 399-5800
- 10 NEW BRAUNFELS**
Comal Country Music Show, (830) 629-4547
- 12 JEWETT** [12-14]
Flea Market Days, (936) 348-5475
- LIVINGSTON** [12-14]
Trade Days, (936) 327-3656, www.cityoflivingston-tx.com/tradedays
- QUANAH** [12-13] FFA & 4-H Members Project Show, (940) 663-6301
- 13 BASTROP**
Second Saturday Celebration, (512) 321-6600, www.bastropdba.org
- BOERNE** [13-14] Market Days, (830) 249-7277, www.visitboerne.org
- BRENHAM** [13-14]
Antiques Show, 1-888-273-6426

- 13 LIBERTY**
La Bahia Market, (936) 336-5736
- LLANO**
Llano River Pet Day & Parade, (325) 247-5354, www.llanochamber.org
- MISSION** [13, 25-28]
Texas Citrus Fiesta, (956) 585-9724, www.texascitrusfiesta.net
- SEGUIN**
MLK Celebration, (830) 303-3020
- STEPHENVILLE** [13-14, 27-28]
Chicken House Flea Market, (254) 968-0888
- 15 GAINESVILLE**
Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration, (940) 665-2831
- GRAND PRAIRIE**
Martin Luther King Jr. Day Parade, (972) 264-7670



Have you or someone you know been diagnosed with RECURRENT PROSTATE CANCER?

The Scott & White Cancer Research Institute in Temple, TX, is currently seeking individuals with recurrent prostate cancer to participate in a Phase I clinical trial. To qualify, you must be 18 or older and have been previously treated for prostate cancer with either external beam radiation or brachytherapy. The study is being overseen by renowned cancer researcher, Dr. Arthur E. Frankel. The study is sponsored by Protox Therapeutics, Inc. with principal investigator K. Scott Coffield, MD.

To receive more information on this study or find out how to participate in the trial, interested persons may call the research coordinator, Nancy Bowman, toll-free at 1-800-882-4366, or email her at nbowman@swmail.sw.org or log onto our website at <http://yyprotox.sw.org>



SCOTT & WHITE
CANCER RESEARCH INSTITUTE

AROUND TEXAS AROUND TEXAS

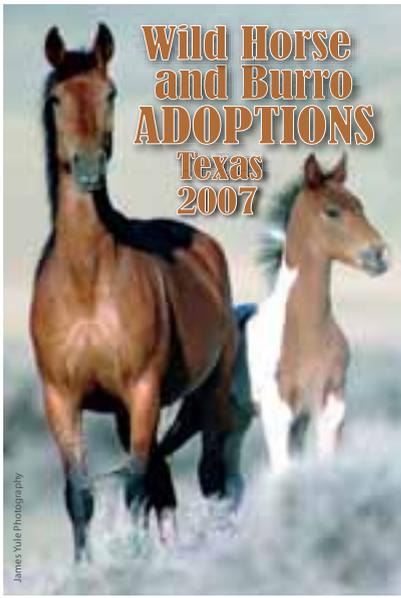
- 15 SEGUIN**
Youth Livestock & Homemakers Show, 1-800-580-7322
- 17 COLUMBUS** [17-21]
Student Rodeo Art Exhibit, (979) 732-8385, www.columbus-texas.org
- 20 SAN ANGELO**
Biggest Buck Contest, (325) 658-4737
- 21 NEW BRAUNFELS**
Dinner with the Arts, (830) 625-4248
- 26 JEFFERSON** [26-28]
"Quilts on the Bayou," (903) 665-7311, www.jeffersonquiltshow.com
- LAREDO** [26-28]
International Sister Cities Festival, 1-800-361-3360, www.visitlaredo.com
- LLANO** [26-28]
Riverbank Gospel Fest, (325) 247-5354, www.llanochamber.org

- 27 ABILENE** [27-28]
Kennel Club AKC Dog Show, (325) 677-4376
- ELDORADO** [27-28]
All the King's Clones, (325) 853-3678
- FREDERICKSBURG**
Indian Artifact & Collectible Show, (830) 626-5561
- GORDONVILLE** [27-28]
WinterFest: Eagle Quest 2007, (903) 523-5982, www.texomawestend.org
- NEW BRAUNFELS**
Cancer Society Black Tie Fundraiser, (512) 919-1825
- QUITMAN**
Bluegrass Show, (903) 763-4411, www.quitman.com
- SAN ANGELO**
Gospel Bluegrass Show, (325) 653-8761

- 28 TRINITY**
Church Ladies Guild Spaghetti Dinner, (936) 594-1776
- ## FEBRUARY
- 03 HUNTSVILLE**
100-Mile Endurance Run, (512) 895-6100, www.hillcountrytrailrunners.com
- 10 LUBBOCK**
Chorale Valentine's Concert, (806) 794-1054, www.lubbockchorale.org
- NEW BRAUNFELS**
Hill Country Doll Show & Sale, (830) 606-5868
- STEPHENVILLE** [10-11, 24-25]
Chicken House Flea Market, (254) 968-0888

- 16 JEFFERSON** [16-18]
Mardi Gras Upriver, (903) 665-3733, www.jefferson-texas.com
- 17 SULPHUR SPRINGS**
Mystery Man Quartet in Concert, 1-800-525-3171
- 22 BRENHAM** [22-25]
Library Benefit Used Book Sale, (979) 337-7201
- 24 GAINESVILLE** Farm Toy Show, (940) 759-2876

Event information can be mailed to **Around Texas**, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704, faxed to (512) 486-6254 or e-mailed to aroundtx@texas-ec.org. Please submit events for March by January 10. Events are listed according to space available; see the full listing at www.texascoopower.com. We appreciate photos with credits but regret that they cannot be returned.



Wild Horse and Burro ADOPTIONS Texas 2007

Victoria	Jan. 18-20
Belton	Mar. 22-24
Mercedes	April 19-21
Conroe	May 10-12
Nacogdoches	June 21-23
Abilene	Aug. 9-11
Fort Worth	Sept. 22-23
Wichita Falls	Oct. 11-14

866-4MUSTANGS  U.S. Department of the Interior
wildhorseandburro.blm.gov Bureau of Land Management
Wild Horse and Burro Program



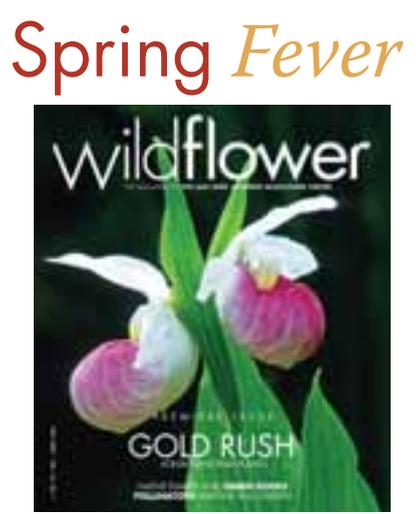
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Spring Fever

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wildflower

It's only about 40 miles, but oh, the places you'll go—and the vast historical ground you'll cover—when you make a day trip from Brenham to Round Top and La Grange. In truth, you'll probably want to dawdle a day or two in each of these heritage-rich burghs to immerse yourself in the culture that has sprung from some of Texas' deepest roots. To wander this route is to better understand where we came from, the price some paid to give us this home, and how this legacy is celebrated today.

On this route, you'll depart Brenham on U.S. Hwy. 290 West and drive 15 miles to the Texas Hwy. 237 exit; follow 237 about 7 miles to Round Top. Upon leaving Round Top, continue south on 237 until you pick up Texas Hwy. 159 South, which will carry you right into La Grange.

BRENHAM

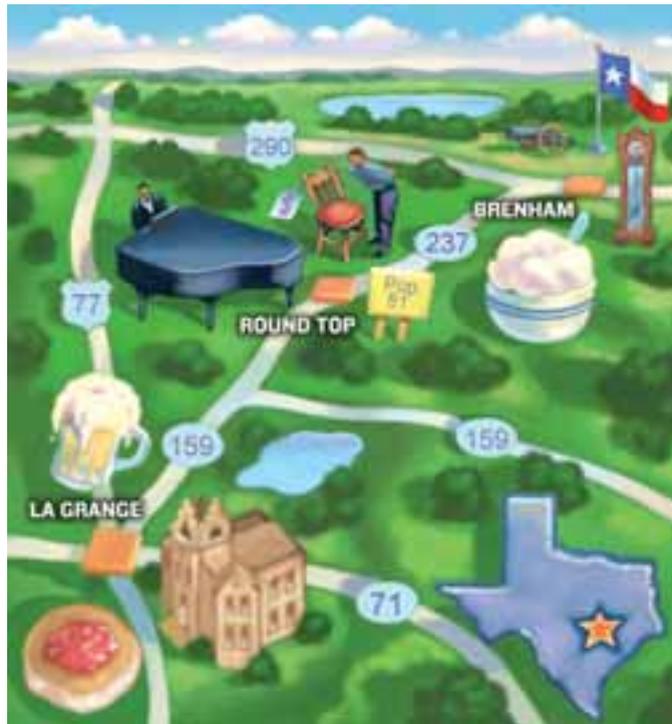
Just 14 miles north of this sweet old town is **WASHINGTON-ON-THE-BRAZOS STATE HISTORIC SITE**, the best place to launch a journey into our legendary past. Deep in the cotton-rich Brazos Valley, the town of Washington served as the temporary capital of the Republic of Texas, and it's where the Texas Declaration of Independence was signed and the republic's constitution drafted, both in 1836. I like to wander around the park's Star of the Republic Museum time and again to read the stories of the republic's creators and Texas' journey to statehood.

Also on the outskirts of Brenham is the state's answer to the nation's sweet tooth, the **BLUE BELL CREAMERY**. Home of the world's best ice cream, it's a delightful place to get a glimpse of how 20 million gallons are produced each year and to taste the freshest version of the frozen gold. In town, I while away an entire afternoon popping into the boutiques and antique stores stashed away in the vintage downtown buildings. At night, I'm pampered beyond reason at the lovely **ANT STREET INN**, with its exqui-

BRENHAM to LA GRANGE

Take a week and you still won't have time to see all this trip's attractions.

BY JUNE NAYLOR



site interior renovations and spectacular breakfast the next morning.

Washington County Chamber of Commerce, 314 S. Austin St., Brenham; (979) 836-3695. www.brenhamtexas.com

Blue Bell Creameries, 1101 South Blue Bell Road, Brenham; 1-800-327-8135 www.bluebell.com

Ant Street Inn, 107 W. Commerce St., Brenham; 1-800-481-1951, www.antstreetinn.com

ROUND TOP

The moment I wheel onto the square of this minute village—population 81 and holding—I'm reminded that time can, in fact, stand still. I park and roam around **HENKEL SQUARE** and the adjacent **BYBEE SQUARE**, two collections of restored buildings from the hamlet's earliest days. Whereas Henkel gives me a look at life a century and a half ago, Bybee houses all sorts of fabulous art galleries

and gift shops in period houses. In fall and spring, antique hunters descend on town by the thousands for one of the biggest fairs in the south.

The pace is much more civilized during the classical music weekends at **FESTIVAL HILL**, an internationally renowned arts institute evoking European scenes. For another Central Texas history lesson, the **WINEDALE HISTORICAL CENTER** has a visitor's center, a complex of restored historic structures, and a log barn converted for theatrical performances.

Round Top Chamber of Commerce, 102 E. Mill St., Round Top; 1-888-368-4783; www.roundtop.org

Festival Hill, (979) 249-3129; www.festivalhill.org

Winedale Historical Center, (979) 278-3530

LA GRANGE

Some of the most beautiful historic buildings in the state are here in the Fayette County seat, headquarters of Fayette Electric Cooperative. I start with the magnificent **FAYETTE COUNTY JAIL**, built in 1883, and continue with the remarkable 1891 county courthouse, which starred with John Travolta in the movie *Michael*. Also on the square is the

Hermes Drug Store, the state's oldest still in business, built in 1856. I like stopping in one of the many shops selling kolaches, that favorite among Czech pastries, before heading just south of town on scenic U.S. Hwy. 77 to the breathtaking Monument Hill and Kreische Brewery State Historic Sites. From the brewery, I hike to the dramatic monument that tells a tragic story of Fayette County soldiers. Well before sunset, I'm apt to continue on 77 to Schulenburg to see the dear little painted churches with exquisite detailed artwork by craftsmen who came from the old countries a century ago.

La Grange Area Chamber of Commerce, 171 S. Main St., 1-800-524-7264, www.lagrangetx.org

June Naylor wrote Texas: Off the Beaten Path.

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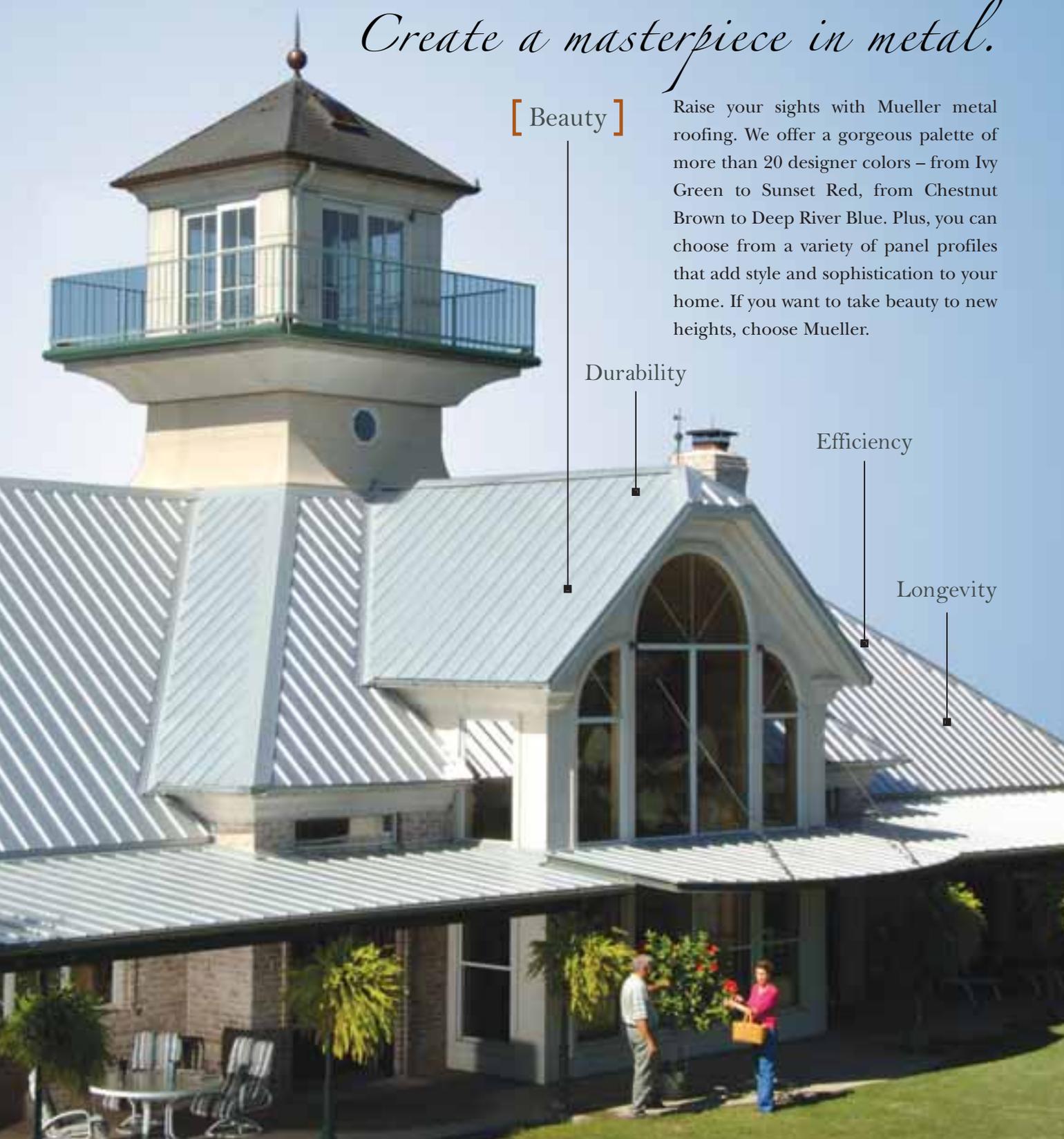
[Beauty]

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Palm Harbor specializes in high-quality, affordable, on-your-lot construction. Our homes are energy efficient and offer a wide variety of custom features and options. If you own land, this is your chance to build the home of your dreams for less than you ever imagined. Call us today and let us show you how Palm Harbor Homes delivers more home for your money.

Call Toll Free: 1-866-55-0-DOWN

For a free informational DVD visit www.palmharbor.com/free