

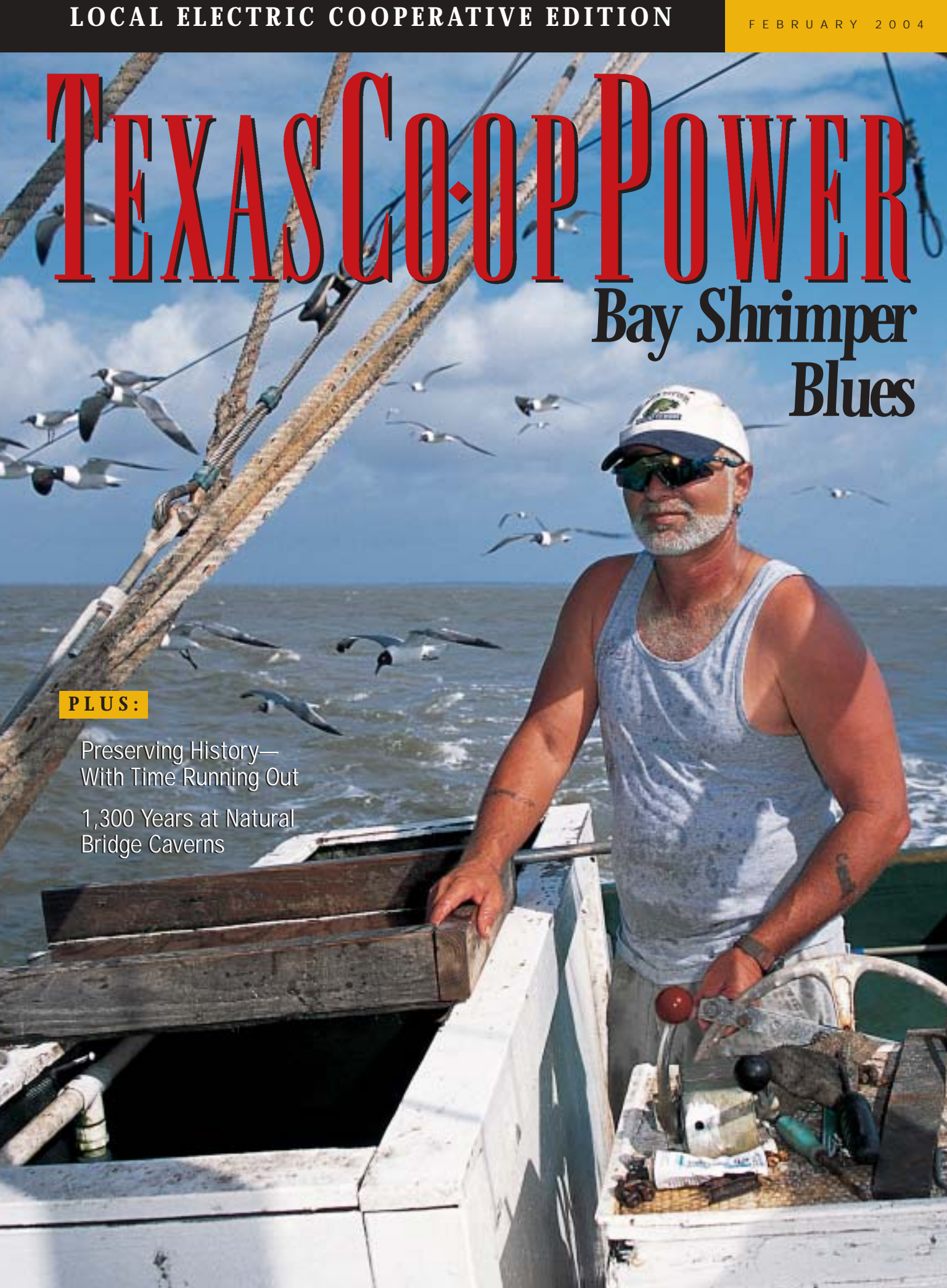
# TEXAS CO-OP POWER

## Bay Shrimper Blues

**PLUS:**

Preserving History—  
With Time Running Out

1,300 Years at Natural  
Bridge Caverns





# TEXAS CO-OP POWER

A MAGAZINE ABOUT TEXAS LIVING

## Shrimper, Schools, Freezer Foods, Festival

**A**shrimper's life is hardly lyrical. It's tough—broiling days in the summer, little work in the winter. As shrimper Mark Gilbert puts it, "Add and subtract it all: I'm making minimum wage." But Christopher Cook's writing always sings, so a gritty day and a poor catch turn poetic when he tags along.

This is Black History Month, so we present a photo essay on the Rosenwald schools, a public/private cooperative effort that raised the very low standards of black education during this country's segregated past. We're hoping that our readers will help historians identify additional Rosenwald schools in Texas so their legacy can be preserved. Refer to the article for a contact number.

A rescue by co-op employees is highlighted again in Co-op Principles in Action. We wrote about two rescues last September. Look on page 4 for the saga of Hub and Kooter and the four-wheeler.

Readers submitted some great "Freezer-Friendly Meals" this month. Food Editor Shannon Smithson discusses the idea of getting together with friends and preparing a month's meals for the freezer. How's that for efficiency? Also check out Festival of the Month; there's no better time than Texas Independence Day to visit Washington-on-the-Brazos.

Enjoy!



Peg Champion  
Vice President, Communications/  
Publisher

As the day begins, the Stingaree 2 passes from its home canal across the Intracoastal Waterway on its way to Galveston Bay.



Randy Mallory



Courtney Miller is surprised by Shane Goswick, who offers his sweetheart a single flower from a nearby flowerpot. The Goswicks belong to Panola-Harrison EC. For more sweetheart photos, turn to page 35.

## Bay Shrimper Blues . . . . . 6

By Christopher Cook, Photos by Randy Mallory

Bay shrimpers like Mark Gilbert sing the same blues as independent farmers—no benefits, no retirement, shifting government regulations, foreign competition and unpredictable harvests. But his father was a shrimper and so was his grandfather. It's the only life he knows.

## Preserving History— With Time Running Out . . . . . 12

By D'Ann Johnson, Photos by Alan Pogue

The all-but-forgotten Rosenwald schools improved black education before segregation was declared unconstitutional. The founder of the program was Julius Rosenwald, president of Sears, Roebuck & Company. In 1932 there were 527 Rosenwald buildings in Texas. Historians have identified 30 of those that remain.

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Freezer Favorites, Texas Independence Day at Washington-on-the-Brazos.

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February is for smooching.

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Natural Bridge Caverns, by Laura Barton and Judy Wilder.

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# Concern for Community Sometimes Takes a Dramatic Turn

BY TONY CUMMINGS

The easiest way to tell this story is to start with cooperative member and Oakland resident Hub Taylor. Hub, as he insists upon being called, lives in East Texas on County Road 1701, surrounded by acres and acres of pastures and woods.

It was November 25—deer season—and around 8:20 a.m., he decided to take his number one companion and best friend, Kooter, hunting. Kooter is Hub's dog. Hub loaded his deer rifle and Kooter on his four-wheeler and set out to find a deer.

Everything was going as planned until Hub took his four-wheeler down an embankment, as he had many times before. This time was different. As he began down the rutted path, his rifle slid off the seat. Instinct took over, and Hub reached for it. When he did, the heavy four-wheeler went up on one side and turned over, pinning him and his rifle. Kooter's reaction was faster: He jumped to safety.

Hub was in a real fix. The rifle barrel was next to his face, and he could move only the upper portion of his right arm. Still, he was able to pull his knife out of his pocket and do the only thing he knew to do—he started carefully digging out the ground around his face.

It's now 9:30 a.m. Cherokee County



Hub Taylor and Kooter.

Electric servicemen Terry Jones and Glen Vess have finished a job and are going north on County Road 1701.

"I was going slow and looking at the pasture," Jones said. "Glen had his head down looking for the map location of our next job. I looked over and my heart stopped. There was a four-wheeler upside down, and I could see a man's leg sticking out from under it. The leg was not moving at all."

Jones stopped and backed up. Vess flew out of the truck and went to the man's side.

"Sir, are you OK?" he asked.

"Yes, get this thing off of me," the man pinned under the four-wheeler said. Vess lifted the vehicle enough

Continued at far right, opposite page

## SAFE LIVING

### 'Power surges, spikes and interference only enter my home on electrical lines.'

That's the myth; the truth is to the contrary. Electronics and appliances can be damaged by surges, spikes and interference from phone lines and cable television lines, too.

Surge protectors can be used to protect your electronics, but the protector must have cable and phone line connections as well. Keep in mind that many satellite television units are equipped with phone lines that can carry surges.

Surges, spikes and interference are also created by other home equipment. Power tools, furnaces, air conditioners and even vacuum cleaners create disturbances that can damage your electronics.

## Tamales Tasted Great

We truly enjoy your magazine. I just made some tamales—some with leftover Thanksgiving turkey (the Lola Peacock recipe) and some venison à la Gramma Rosie [Home Cooking, December 2003]. They're both great. I just happened to have some turkey and venison, but I'll surely do the pork later.

There's always at least one great addition to the family recipe file in each edition. I clip and send the recipes around the country to our kids in California and Florida. Thanks!

Janet Phipps, FEC Electric

**Editor's response:** We had a couple of requests to verify the ingredients in Gramma Rosie's tamales. Everything is correct, but you may scale back the amount of chili powder used to suit your taste. There were also concerns about the lack of lard or shortening and the amount of liquid used in the masa dough. We assure you that those amounts are correct—just don't defat your pork broth. There's plenty of fat in it to firm up the dough when the tamales cook.

## Right Up There With the Best of Them

I take lots of expensive magazines: *Martha Stewart's Living*, *Architectural Digest*, *National Geographic*, *Fine Cooking* and *Smithsonian*, to name a few. But your little *Texas Co-op Power* is, considering its field of interest, right up there with the best of them!

I really look forward to its arrival in our office every month. I am keeping a file of your travel articles because you tell us about places lots of people don't know about and don't see in Texas. The writing is fine, the editing good, the photos are great, the topics interesting, and I love the "homey" feel of pictures and recipes straight from people's families.

Barbara Fisher, Rollingwood

## Not About a Make-Believe Elf

I've just read Louie Bond's article, "Believe ... Just in Case," in the December 2003 issue. While I rejoice with you at the generosity of your friends, I am concerned about your insistence that an elf had anything to do with it. Your friends obviously know that the birth of Jesus Christ is the real reason for Christmas. We must tell this truth

to our children, not lie to them about a make-believe elf. When children discover their trusted parents have lied to them about Santa Claus, it will be logical for them to reason, "If Santa Claus is a lie, Jesus Christ must be a lie also!" I will always be grateful that my parents taught me the true meaning of Christmas.

Dan Stanford, United Cooperative Services

**Editor's response:** The article referred to in this letter did not appear in all local editions of *Texas Co-op Power*. Read these and other articles you might have missed on our website, [www.texascoopower.com](http://www.texascoopower.com).

## Fond Memories of Reyes Café

A very special thank you to William Jack Sibley for his article "Ode to Reyes Café, Alice" [December 2003]. I worked in Alice in 1957 and had a roommate. We went our separate ways after that year, with no further contact. He called me after reading the article.

I have many times thought of the good food at the café and the price they charged me. I paid \$9 a week for three meals a day. If I were working during one of the meals, they would fix me a lunch. What a deal! I am sorry the café closed, but as the saying goes, "All good things must come to an end."

Edwin D. Knight, Cooke County EC

## Sparky Strikes Again ... and Again

Although I don't always look forward to my electric bill with the same eager anticipation as my copy of *Texas Co-op Power*, I am grateful to have a forum to express appreciation for the 24-hour service of Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative. Twice last month my power went out. I live in a heavily wooded neighborhood, and there are lots of squirrels. Unfortunately, some sacrifice their lives for the pleasure of training to be high-wire artists! On both occasions, squirrels tripped the transformer and I lost my power. I believe your workers fondly refer to these particular squirrels as "Sparky." Anyway, I just wanted to say thanks for the extremely prompt, efficient and polite service I received on both occasions. It makes writing that check for my electric bill a little less painful each month!

Candra A. Huston, Bluebonnet EC

We want to hear from our readers. Send letters to: Editor, Texas Co-op Power, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704. 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.

## TEXAS CO-OP PRINCIPLES

Continued

for Jones to remove the gun. Then they righted the vehicle and freed Hub, who told his rescuers he was fine. "I've been through worse than this in my life," he said.

Jones called Hub's grandson, Nathan Taylor, and explained that his grandfather was scratched up, bruised and pretty sore, but he was fine. Indeed, Hub had been through worse. When I interviewed him, he told me that when he was in the Navy in the South Pacific, a typhoon sank his ship and he spent a day and a half in the water.

"I finally washed up on the coral of Okinawa and was rescued," he said.

He's also gotten into some tight spots working as a pipe liner all over the world.

"I knew on that Tuesday, under the four-wheeler, that God had gotten me out of a lot of situations, and He



Servicemen Glen Vess, left, and Terry Jones.

would help me again," Hub said. "Meeting Terry and Glen, hearing that beautiful beeping noise of Terry and Glen's truck reversing, having them rescue me, was just one more example of how the Lord looks after me. I cannot thank the Lord and these guys enough. They are welcome at my home anytime."

Tony Cummings is member services coordinator of Cherokee County Electric Cooperative.

# Bay Shrimp

## BLUES

BY CHRISTOPHER COOK, PHOTOS BY RANDY MALLORY

**An hour before dawn, the time of deepest silence, when all the world still seems to be dreaming Mark Gilbert is down in his engine room amid the grease with a wrench, adjusting valves, checking gears, wiring oil. The yellow glow of his work light creeps up the ladder, falls over the moist deck, casting the winch and ropes looped over pin rails in flickering shadow.**

**Overhead, beyond the upstretched outriggers, low coastal clouds chase a glossy half-moon past stars over the**

**Bolivar Peninsula. A warm southeast breeze carries the salty tang of sea, of surrounding bay and fertile marsh, of rank organic decay procreating new life.**

**With a quick jab, Gilbert punches the starter button on the wall and the V-6 diesel growls, grumbles, awakens. The deck of the Stingaree 2 vibrates, the low**

**rumble rolls over the dark water; and Gilbert comes up the ladder wiping his hands on a towel, an expression of satisfaction on his face. Time to undo the mooring lines. Time to hit the bay. Time to chase those shrimp.**

Stingaree 2 pulls nets out of the water by 2 p.m. and docks at the bait shop/marina beside the Stingaree Restaurant.

Opposite page, Gilbert waits out a passing storm before starting his day on the bay.

Gilbert has been pursuing mudbugs since he was a boy. His father was a shrimper, and so was his grandfather. In the pilot house, he lights a cigarette and sips black coffee, reflects for a moment on his own life at age 42. No benefits, no retirement, imports pushing down shrimp prices, fuel costs rising, eternal boat maintenance, state regulations in chronic flux, hard labor, long hours, blazing summer heat, almost starving in wintertime. And unpredictable shrimp.

Otherwise, it's a cushy occupation.

Gilbert laughs loudly, a machine gun discharge, a cheerful affirmation of life's small ironies. Then, as if summing up, adds, "Only you don't have to kiss up to nobody like on a 9-to-5 job."

He hits the throttle, turns the wheel. The 40-foot trawler advances slowly along the narrow canal past darkened dockside homes on pilings and covered boat stalls, past the Stingaree Marina with its boat ramps and bait shed—all silent, not even the first gull's cry of a new day yet—then crosses the Intra-coastal Waterway, heading north through a slender cut past Goat Island into open water, the shallow East Bay.

The bay, with an average depth of only 2 to 6 feet, is part of greater Galveston Bay, the northernmost in a series of five major bay systems along the 400-mile arc of Texas Gulf coastline. The bays, along with their barrier islands and marshes and wetlands, form complex estuarine systems where fresh river water meets sea water. The commingling creates a salinity gradient influenced by upland

droughts and floods, and by how much precious river water is removed upstream by people: city dwellers, farmers, industries. That, in turn, determines the quality and quantity of thousands of species of marine life that breed and grow in the fecund estuaries. Too little fresh water flowing in and the bay ecosystems will collapse. If that happens, then no more shrimp, no more oysters, no more crabs, no more ... well, the intricate web of nature is woven tight, and the consequences affect much more than just the bays.

Gilbert nudges the wheel, gazes eastward. The sky is



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TEXAS  
BAY SHIP  
774

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STINGAREE-2



Seagulls and brown pelicans stay close to the boat when shrimp are brought aboard and unwanted fish tossed back.

breaking open with a rosy flush of dawn over the marsh. The first black-headed laughing gulls whip past, then several brown pelicans glide in close formation over the surface, enormous bills thrust forward. Pesticides almost drove these regal birds to recent extinction. Now on the rebound, they are still listed as threatened.

The wind has shifted and picks up. The waves on the bay become choppy, churning the water, a condition Gilbert prefers. "I like it rough and muddy," he observes. "When the water's clear, shrimp can see the net coming. They scoot away."

He falls silent and slows the boat, one eye glued to the depthfinder perched on the dash next to his GPS (global positioning system). Moments later, he explains his worry.

The bottom here is especially shallow since last winter when a drilling company pushed two rigs several miles up East Bay to Frozen Point.

"They needed 8 feet of draft but had 3 feet of water," Gilbert says disgustedly. "They plowed up the bottom. Destroyed two acres of oyster beds, left a hill of mud down each side of a false channel. And never came back to clean it up. Seems like there'd be a law."

Did they find oil?

"Naw, they didn't." He shrugs, in no mood now for laughter, and guns the throttle, rotating the wheel to bear west toward Hannas Reef and Port Bolivar, about six miles away, where East Bay opens into the main bay.

"Let's go for deeper water."

Gilbert is a short, sturdy man with a beard permanently trimmed in a three-day growth, his hair cut to a gray burr. His skin is sun-burnished, wind-whipped; his keen eyes are crinkled from the relentless bright light. His gimmees read: "Commercial

Fisherman, Endangered Species." He does not think his own son, Patrick, will become a shrimper. Or his daughter, Claudia.

Nor does he want them to.

**H**an hour later, Gilbert steps onto the back deck and lowers the portside otter trawl. At its tip hangs the try net, a small net used for locating shrimp during 10-minute test drags (or "tries").

He puts out the try net, and when he hauls it back in shortly, a dozen shrimp spill out. They flip and vault over the deck, tiny legs treading air along the transparent shells. Several are sizable. Gilbert quickly winches out the main net (the otter trawl), moving from transom to cathead to pin rail, tying and untying ropes, lazy line and cables, stepping in a familiar dance with the gear.

Woven of green nylon cord with a 1 3/8-inch mesh, the otter trawl is 90 feet long and 38 feet wide at the bottom, 32 feet wide on top. The net precisely conforms to state regulations limiting mesh and net size for the bay for this time of year. In the Byzantine universe of commercial fishing regulations, if this was September instead of June the net could be larger, but so must the mesh. That is, if he's shrimping on his bay license instead of his bait license.

Gilbert watches the long net trail backward in the frothy wake, then finally drops the boards, two large slabs of steel. He shoves the throttle forward, the engine roars and vibrates, the prop boils up mud as the doors veer outward in the water like twin rudders spreading the mouth of the

Gilbert is a one-man fishing machine on deck—alternately steering and working the ropes to move nets in and out of the bay.

net. A long tickler chain connecting the boards bumps over the bottom mud where shrimp are burrowed down, causing them to leap upward for the net to scoop them inside.

The drag will last about 45 minutes, so Gilbert returns to the cabin and settles into the pilot's chair for breakfast, a pint of chocolate milk and a packet of small sugar donuts. Not exactly healthy, but easy to prepare. Meanwhile, he steers the boat along a serpentine route and listens to chatter on the marine band radio.

Working a boat alone, as Gilbert does, is unusual. It's dangerous—fall overboard and it's a long swim or a slow drowning—but deckhands are famously unreliable. They bum cigarettes and food, tend to drink and show up hung over, when they show up at all.

"Plus I'm cheap," he adds with a chortle. "I like to keep what I make."

Even with a deckhand, the long hours on a boat in open water are isolating. The marine channel stays busy. If other shrimpers are coming up empty, they readily share the news; if they're hitting shrimp heavy, they probably won't mention it. Not even the most sociable want to share paydirt with a crowd.

After scarfing the final donut, Gilbert talks briefly on the radio, sympathizing with a fellow shrimper a mile away. He takes a call on his cell phone from his wife, Chris. The Gilberts recently leased the North End Bait Camp at Rollover Pass. Chris manages it and needs more live bait shrimp ASAP; he says he's working on it. Hanging up,





he describes the bait camp as an effort to diversify the family economy.

"I'm getting old, pardner. I can't see working this boat when I'm 60. I need to think ahead."

The Gilberts also bought a home with an attached duplex apartment they rent short-term to sportfishermen. A little here, a little there, he reasons, and it adds up. A shrimper covering his bills learns to scrabble.

He stubs out a cigarette, says, "Let's haul in that net. I'd sure like to catch some and go in. Man, I'm still tired from yesterday."

**B**y noon, Gilbert is finishing his fifth drag and the trawler is broiling beneath a white-hot sun in a pale, blanched sky. The heat seems unyielding. The boat rocks, the engine drones, the pungent reek of fish and sour mud and diesel hangs over the slick deck. Even the shallow bay water registers 85 degrees Fahrenheit.

A sweating Gilbert winches in the trawl and raises the bag, loosens the bulging pocket over a tank. The catch falls with a whoosh and a splash. The pocket is retied, the net winched back out, the doors plunge beneath the surface for another drag.

Wiping his face with a forearm, Gilbert squints upward hoping for a cloud. *Nada*. He dips into the drop tank and lays part of the catch on the culling board: mullet, shad, silver ribbon fish with sharp teeth, small jellyfish ("sea wasps"), croaker, cigar minnows, crabs, robinfish, a mean-looking sting ray ... and shrimp.

He slides the by-catch offboard into the bay, a thick flock of gulls screech and spar for anything dazed enough to float. Sleek black cormorants dive for what sinks, pelicans loaf for what's overlooked, and magnificent pterodactyl-like frigatebirds circle high above, primed to dive-bomb unsuspecting gulls and pirate away a prize. For foraging birds, a shrimp trawler is a water-borne cafeteria.

The shrimp, unlike the by-catch, go into a second tank, then a third and a fourth, if necessary. Tank pumps circulate bay water in an effort to keep them alive. Live bait shrimp bring in twice the money of dead shrimp.

Gilbert keeps careful watch on his course while culling, steering the boat from a second wheel by the tanks, avoiding the crab traps marked with

small white buoys dotting the bay. "A crab trap tearing up the net can sure ruin a day," he allows.

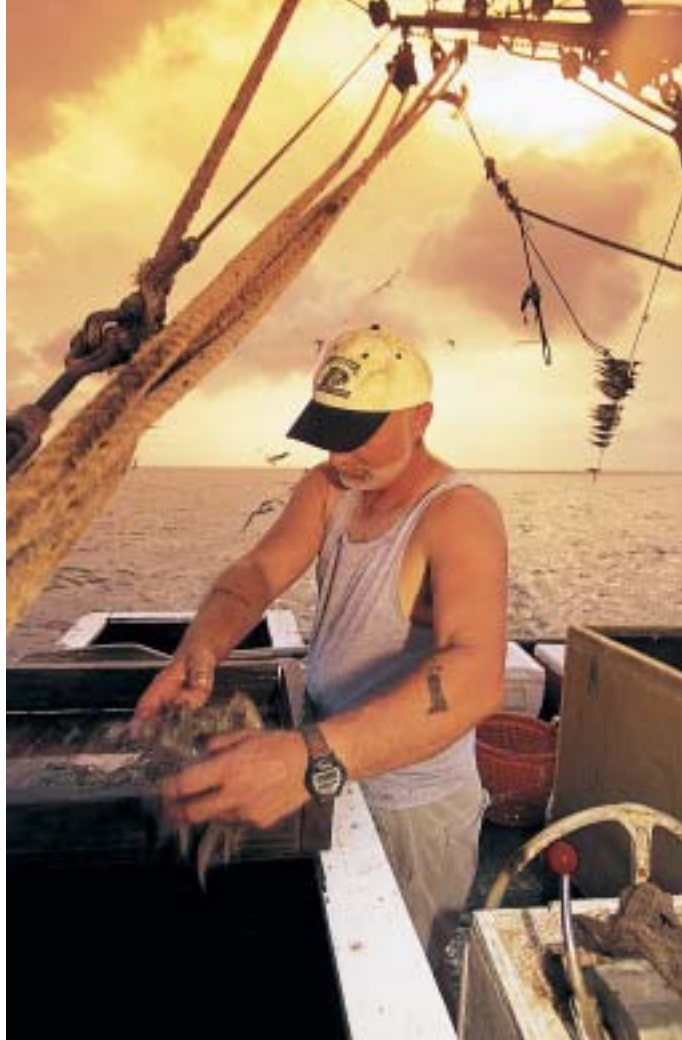
He culls quickly, expertly, while commenting on the varieties of shrimp and their behavior, and the man-made laws governing shrimpers. None of it is simple.

Take the matter of spawning. Shrimp grow and thrive in the estuarine bays and marshes but they aren't born there. Brown shrimp (*Penaeus aztecus*) spawn offshore in the Gulf in about 400 feet of water during winter months, while white shrimp (*Penaeus setiferus*) spawn in about 35 feet of Gulf water in the spring. (A third variety, the pink shrimp, isn't found much this far north; it prefers the saltier water found in Texas bays farther south.)

Once spawned, the larvae of all shrimp work their way back into the bays and marshes to grow. They are omnivores, feeding on smaller organisms living among the rich sediments and nutrients of the estuary. The brown shrimp then migrate en masse back into the Gulf during spring and summer, the whites wait until several months later. These differing spawning and migratory patterns result in complicated—and increasingly restrictive—regulations on when and how shrimpers work, aimed in part to ensure annual spawns aren't disrupted.

Following the regulatory scheme, Texas bay shrimpers landed about 9.4 million pounds of shrimp in 2001. Almost half of that came from Galveston Bay, the most productive estuary in Texas and easily one of the most productive in the nation. Gilbert's boat was one of 132 shrimp boats working Galveston Bay on May 15 last year, the opening day of spring bay season; a total of 182 boats were working other Texas bays.

On the other hand, Texas Parks and Wildlife figures show about 1,200 bay licenses currently in effect, and another 1,200 bait licenses. With a bait license there's no closed season but the bag limits are much smaller and half the



While his boat trawls ahead for another catch, Gilbert sorts through what's already on board. He tosses bait shrimp in proper tanks and desirable fish in others. The rest go back in the bay.

shrimp must be kept alive. Almost all bay shrimpers carry both licenses so they can work year-round, though winter takes are small.

The numbers indicate most bay shrimpers, unlike Gilbert, are part-timers holding other full-time jobs. A license is tied to the boat, not the shrimper, and the state is issuing no new ones. In fact, the state is buying back bay licenses—25 percent of them have been "retired" since 1995—to increase each remaining shrimper's slice of the total pie. At least theoretically.

Gilbert shrugs, grins, offers his machine gun laugh. In his view, there are still too many bay boats. And the shrimp are being depleted. Though it isn't the shrimpers' fault, he says. Estuary degradation caused by loss of wetlands to developers—the Houston Metroplex now overruns the northern and western stretches of Galveston Bay—as well as urban runoff, industrial pollution, and agribusiness pesticides and herbicides all conspire to hurt the shrimp.

And what hurts the shrimp hurts the shrimpers.

Still, unregulated global trade is putting the biggest economic hurt on Texas shrimpers, including offshore Gulf shrimpers who annually land three times the catch of bay boats. Imported pond-raised shrimp from cheap labor markets in Asia and South America are, says one Parks and Wildlife official, "killing our shrimpers." The imports don't taste as good as wild shrimp, and some have been found laced with animal antibiotics

detrimental to human consumption, but about 85 percent of the shrimp consumed in the U.S. is imported. Some argue it all should be imported. Texas shrimpers feel beleaguered from every side.

"Personally, I think they'll close the bays to commercial shrimping within 10 years," Gilbert observes. "They're already trying. They'll make sportfishermen go to artificial bait. Right now, if you aren't selling live bait, you can't make a living. Price on food shrimp barely covers your operating costs."



Gilbert moves live bait shrimp out of the tanks and weighs them to fill the bait shop's order.

**B**y 2 p.m., the trawl net on the *Stingaree 2* is out of the water, pursuant to state regulations for bay shrimpers from May 15 to July 15.

Gilbert is beat. The wind has died, the sun is a searing torch, the pilot house has become a sauna. Gilbert is cruising homeward to off-load the day's catch: six gallons of live shrimp, about 40 pounds of dead. It's not even close to a limit.

"An average day," he observes, "which ain't good. Haven't had a really good day in a while. We've had three, four bad years in a row."

Once docked, he'll do some maintenance, repair a clutch seal. He lights a cigarette, leans back in the pilot's chair—the captain's chair, really—and pops the tab on a cold soda. He closes one eye, calculating.

"Add and subtract it all," he finally announces, "I'm making minimum wage."

He wags his head and lets go. The laughter rockets through the small cabin: a working man's commentary on the absurdity of it all—chasing those shrimp, trying to catch them, what happens when you do, or don't, in a world mostly beyond your control.

*Christopher Cook, a former editor of Texas Co-op Power, is the author of Robbers and Screen Door Jesus & Other Stories. He lives in Prague, Czech Republic.*

*Photographer Randy Mallory collaborated with Christopher Cook on "The Graceful Ghost of Caddo Lake" in the September 2003 issue.*



# *Preserving History With Time Running Out*

**D**uring the days of segregation, the Rosenwald program helped Southern black communities pay for better schools, teachers and libraries for their underprivileged children. Today, many of the buildings sit unidentified on country roads as the vines and vandals slowly destroy their significant legacy. In an attempt to save these dying landmarks, the National Trust for Historic

*Sagging with age, defaced with graffiti, and all but forgotten amid the weeds and rubble, stand the Rosenwald schools.*

*Once a symbol of pride and hope in communities established by*

*slaves,*

*the last vestiges of a philanthropist's*

*amazing dream are quietly vanishing across*

*Texas and the nation.* BY D'ANN JOHNSON, PHOTOS BY ALAN POGUE



Homer and Shirley Williams from Lockhart Vocational/Carver High School; C.L. Jones, who attended Hopewell School; Karen Riles, Austin History Center; Thaddeus McDonald and Gene



Places added Rosenwald schools to its list of 11 Most Endangered Places last year.

Julius Rosenwald was a philanthropist (and high school dropout) who ran Sears, Roebuck & Co. in the 1920s and '30s. To commemorate his 50th birthday in 1912, Rosenwald gave \$25,000 to Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute for a pilot program to build schools for blacks in rural

5,000 schools and related buildings in rural black communities across the South. At their peak, Rosenwald schools educated one-third of the black children in 15 Southern states. Of the more than 500 Texas schools in 78 counties built under the Rosenwald program between 1920 and 1931, approximately 30 of the buildings have been identified, 22 of which



The interior of the Hopewell School (pictured at left). All Rosenwald schools were built to convert into one large room for community meetings. Often there were removable walls, blackboards or partitions that could be opened to make a large room. The flue for the gas stove to heat the building is visible.



McDonald, former Hopewell School students. Thaddeus' grandparents, Winston and Sophia McDonald, donated the land for both the school and Hopewell Primitive Baptist Church in 1919.

Alabama. Washington had built Tuskegee into a major black college by soliciting funds from Northern industrial leaders. Bolstered by the ensuing success of the Alabama program, Rosenwald initiated a challenge grant that led to the construction of more than

are actual schoolhouses.

The Rosenwald program offered school construction plans to public entities and citizens, black and white, but donated seed money mostly to black schools, which had to meet certain criteria. Blacks had to contribute land to the public



The Rosenwald Fund also helped pay for teachers' homes. This former home is falling rapidly into disrepair.

school system and maintain the buildings. Volunteers provided additional contributions of money and labor. By 1932 the Rosenwald Fund had donated \$4.3 million to build schools and related buildings. Blacks had contributed \$4.7 million to the effort, local governments chipped in \$18.1 million, and whites, \$1.3 million. Cash was scarce for these black communities, so residents raised the needed money by selling an extra acre of cotton or an additional hog

The Rosenwald Fund attacked the most immediate and visible problem facing schools for blacks—standard school buildings. Before the town of Lockhart got a Rosenwald school, for example, the older students had

to meet in a funeral parlor and the younger ones in the Masonic lodge or a local church.

During this period, Sears, Roebuck & Co. was selling mail-order construction kits for standardized private homes. The schools also followed standardized plans, drawn by two black architecture professors at Tuskegee. The state-of-the-art designs included floor plans for 17 schools, ranging from one-teacher to seven-teacher plans. There were also floor plans for teachers' houses and sanitary privies. The designs included specific color schemes, site location, blackboard height and landscaping. Some 15,000 white schools were also built from the same standardized plans.



Above, while posing in front of their high school, Homer and Shirley Williams broke into their old school song: "Oh Carver High, we love you so, you mean so much to us."

Left, Lockhart Vocational High School in Lockhart was renamed Carver High School in 1947. The Caldwell County edifice is the only remaining Rosenwald building in Texas that was designed for six teachers. It was built using salvaged materials from the former school for white children of Lockhart—the Ross Institute. The building contains six classrooms, a principal's office, and an upstairs auditorium that spans the width of the building. This stairway for boys is matched by another for girls on the opposite side going up to the second floor. The building was used for Head Start programs in the mid-1960s, but is now vacant and subject to vandalism.

typically had movable partitions that could be arranged to create a larger room, often with a stage for performances and speeches. This configuration was frequently used for community gatherings.

**T**he Rosenwald plans made a huge difference for black schools. According to a 1934 report titled "The Development

and Present Status of Negro Education in East Texas," other schools for blacks at the time lacked libraries, desks, window shades, blackboards and other necessary equipment. Perhaps as important as the buildings themselves was the collaboration between blacks and whites, private citizens and corporations, poor and rich, which was the

Because rural communities often lacked electricity, the designs maximized natural light with large banks of windows. Floor

plans arranged seating with windows on the children's left side, so their right arms would not cast a shadow on their classwork. Schools



Right, a blackboard and desk at Lockhart Vocational High School (renamed Carver High School).

backbone of the program.

Later, the Rosenwald Fund offered other incentives to rural communities, promoting the development of libraries, providing school buses for transportation, and lengthening the school year. The Rosenwald Fund also provided incentives to increase teacher salaries—in 1933, black teachers were earning 58 percent of white teachers' salaries. In its waning years, the Rosenwald Fund began giving scholarships to promising black thinkers like Ralph Ellison, who wrote *The Invisible Man* on a Rosenwald Fellowship.

Rosenwald eschewed the limelight, so few schools bore his name. His contributions went beyond education, as the philanthropist gave grants to 100 counties across the country to hire extension



agents, helping launch the Department of Agriculture's enduring rural program.

Even before the U.S. Supreme Court outlawed segregated schools in 1954, Rosenwald schools were beginning to disappear. With the advent of integration, black schools were left

empty as their former pupils transferred to white schools. Many more closed in the 1960s as rural schools were consolidated. No one knows exactly how many Rosenwald school buildings remain

because the communities that fed the schools often disappeared as well. Some of the remaining Rosenwald buildings are owned by nearby churches; others are used as community



Above, Sweet Home, just outside of Seguin in Guadalupe County, had a four-teacher school with a kitchen, two privies, a library, a two-room shop and an adjacent teacher's house. The school closed in 1963, but the building and land were purchased for \$1,000 by the Sweet Home Baptist Church (across the street) and now serve as a center for church and community functions.

At right, James E. Ussery, son of one of Sweet Home's builders and a graduate of the school in 1948. Sweet Home was built in 1924 by master carpenter Henry Singletary and his assistant, Jesse C. Ussery.



centers. A school in Brazoria is a black history museum.

From their humble two-room schoolhouses, with bead-board walls and ceilings, and a gas stove in one corner, students of Rosenwald schools gained pride in their achievements and a chance for a better life. Like the former Rosenwald pupils shown in these photographs, they also gained a strong belief in the power of a community pulling together for the common good.

The Fisk University library in Nashville, Tennessee, has a special collection of Julius Rosenwald Fund Archives, including the Rosenwald schools. A wealth of information can also be found at:

[www.rosenwaldplans.org](http://www.rosenwaldplans.org) or  
[www.rosenwaldschools.org](http://www.rosenwaldschools.org).

*D'Ann Johnson's grandmother, Rose Marguerite Johnson, was a teacher in a one-room school in Cat Creek, Wyoming. Johnson and photographer Alan Pogue live in Austin.*



**A**rkanas, Georgia and North Carolina have initiated programs to inventory and refurbish Rosenwald schools. Texas has not yet provided funding to preserve these historic buildings.

Historian Karen Riles conducted an initial inventory and researched Rosenwald schools across Texas for the Texas Historical Commission. Of the 527 schools built, she could locate only 30 existing buildings, 22 of which are actual schoolhouses. Since much of the information on Rosenwald schools rests with the now elderly former students and teachers, the identification and protection of these historic buildings is a race against time.

If you have information on a Rosenwald school in Texas, please contact: Karen Riles, Austin History Center, (512) 974-7390, [Karen.riles@ci.austin.tx.us](mailto:Karen.riles@ci.austin.tx.us).

The following are Rosenwald schools or associated buildings that have been identified in Texas.

School Name	County
Hopewell School*	Bastrop
St. Mary's School	Bastrop
Lott-Canada School	Bee
Garland School Teacherage*	Bowie
Lockhart Vocational High School*	Caldwell
Pleasant Hill Community School*	Cass
Linden School	Cass
Sweet Union	Cherokee
Yoakum School	DeWitt
Mount Vernon	Franklin
West Point	Gregg
Anderson	Grimes
Sweet Home Vocational School*	Guadalupe
Dayton School	Liberty
Mt. Pilgrim School	Matagorda
Davila School	Milam
Kerens School	Navarro
Prairie Grove School	Rains
Calvert School	Robertson
Sagamore Hill	Tarrant
Littig School	Travis
Pilot Knob School	Travis
El Campo School	Wharton
Wharton County Training School	Wharton
Coupland School	Williamson
Hopewell School	Williamson

*\*Indicates buildings that are either listed on the National Register or are in the nomination process.*





## Protect Pets From Cold Weather

You're not the only one who needs to bundle up against winter's frosty temperatures and chill winds. Even with their heavy fur coats, Fido and Fluffy need help keeping warm and safe in the winter, too. Some tips:

- Indoors, cats and dogs love to snuggle up to space heaters. But keep an eye on them when they do—your pet could chew the cord, burn itself on the heater, or knock it over and start a fire.

- Buy a heated pet bed. Plug-in models emit slight amounts of heat under the pet but don't get hot enough to burn the animal.

- Keep a screen around the fireplace or wood-burning stove to keep the pet at a safe distance from flames.

- Consider buying a self-warming water dish. A metal dish can freeze, and your pet's tongue can get stuck to it.

- If you walk the dog in cold weather, bundle it up in a sweater and don't venture too far from home. Avoid spending prolonged periods outdoors when it's cold.

- Dry your dog's paws after walking outdoors.

- Never let a cat sleep outdoors in cold weather.

- If your dog sleeps outdoors, ele-



vate its house and keep it dry. Place a flap over the opening to prevent drafts. Keep drinking water fresh and make sure it doesn't freeze.

- Feed outdoor dogs more in the winter.

- Keep all animals away from anti-freeze—even the drops of it that may leak from a car onto the driveway. It tastes sweet to animals but is fatal.

## Home Workshops Need Heavy-Duty Wiring

Is the wiring in your home workshop up to the job?

To prolong the life of your power tools—and for your own protection—conduct a safety audit of your home workshop's electrical wiring system and correct any problems. This is particularly important if your circuit breakers frequently trip.

Here's what to look for:

**Service panel:** Circuit breakers supplying the workshop should be 20 amp. Two 20-amp circuits dedicated to the workshop should be adequate. You may want to consider installing a separate sub-panel if you frequently run more than two stationary power tools at the same time, or if your shop is far away from the main service panel.

**Branch circuits:** If your workshop is in an unfinished room, make sure the exposed wiring runs along structural members and is securely stapled to exposed studs to protect the wiring from potential damage. Wiring should be 12 gauge for a 20-amp circuit.

For an extra measure of safety, put the lights in your workshop on a separate dedicated circuit so if a power



tool trips a circuit breaker, the lights will still be on.

If you can run two separate circuits for your power tools, install the wiring with both circuits next to each other so you can run two tools at the same time. Using two circuits also minimizes the chances of a momentary (start-up) overload tripping the circuit breaker.

Consider running a 220-volt circuit in the shop for power tools with motors rated for 220 volts because they draw less current.

**Outlets and receptacles:** Because outlets and receptacles could be damaged by flying debris or large pieces of work banging into them, use industrial-grade devices, which withstand more abuse than ordinary residential-grade devices. For the workbench area, install outlets every 2 to 4 feet.

**Extension cords:** Avoid using extension cords as permanent wiring. In cases where extension cords must be used, it's a good idea to regularly

inspect the entire length of the cord. Replace, rather than repair, damaged extension cords.

Always use an extension cord rated for the tool. The owner's manual will indicate the proper wire gauge and maximum length for extension cords.

A coiled extension cord with a heavy load may build up heat, creating a potential fire hazard. It's best to make a regular habit of uncoiling all extension cords before using them.

**Personal protection:** Install a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) receptacle as the first outlet in any circuit so it will provide personal protection from electrical shock along the entire circuit.

When an extension cord is required for outdoor use and cannot be connected to a GFCI-protected outlet, use a GFCI cord set with the extension cord.

**Surge protection:** Each time powerful motors are switched on or off, voltage surges could be generated that can sneak back into the house wiring. By installing a panel-mounted surge protection device on the branch circuits feeding the workshop, voltage surges can be reduced.

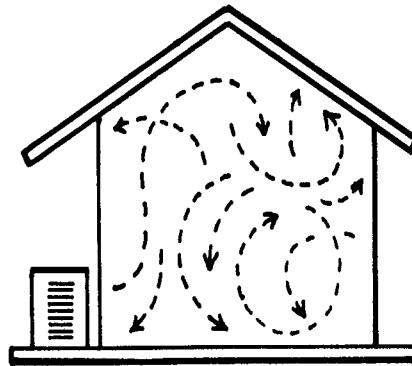
## Plug Air Leaks, Save Money

**A**ir leaks around the home can add 10 percent to your heating bill. Find the leaks in your house and plug them. Some places to look:

- **Windows.** On a windy day, light a stick of incense and hold it near the window. If the smoke travels horizontally, your window is leaking. Seal, caulk or weatherstrip it.

- **Entry points for wiring.** Check ceilings, floors and soffits over cabinets for tiny holes in the home's exterior that were drilled to let wiring pass into the house.

- **Doors, dropped ceilings, recessed lights, attic entrances, sill plates, water and furnace flues, and chimney flashing.** Don't overlook any place where cold air has an easy way to enter the home.



- **Ducts.** They're hidden in walls, floors and ceilings, so you can't see them. But holes in ducts can cost you a lot of money. Use electrical tape to repair and seal minor holes in your ducts. Call a professional for major repairs.

## Invest in Energy Efficiency

**S**pending a little extra this winter on energy efficiency can save you money on heating bills every year—starting now. Some good investments:

- If you are refinancing your home to get a lower interest rate, consider financing the cost of a few energy-efficient home improvements that will more than pay for themselves in coming years.

- Buy appliances that bear the Energy Star label, the government's symbol for energy efficiency. The label can be found on energy-efficient heating and cooling systems, major kitchen appliances, lighting, windows and home electronics. Energy Star appliances use up to 30 percent less electricity than other devices.

- Call a professional to thoroughly maintain your

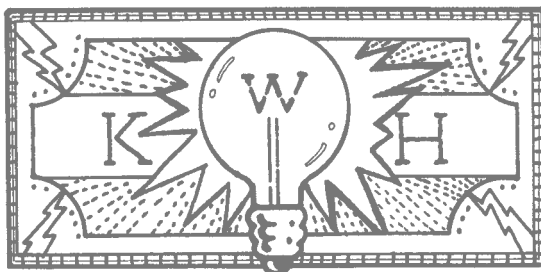
cooling and heating systems every year. Between "tune-ups," change filters every month.

- If you need new windows, buy double-pane models with low-emissive coatings. They let in less outdoor air to mingle with the conditioned air indoors.

- Install a programmable thermostat that will automatically coordinate your home's temperature with your daily routine. You can stop paying for unnecessary heat while nobody's home during the day, and never wake up to a chilly bedroom in the morning.

- Put timers on indoor lights so your house is never dark when it's

empty. And install motion detectors on exterior lights to improve home security.



## Take Control of Stress

**S**tress is the way that we react physically, mentally and emotionally to the challenges, changes and demands in our lives. Not all stress is bad, but when we feel overwhelmed and believe we can't cope with the demands in our lives, that stress becomes negative.

If negative stress continues for too long, the body and the mind begin to break down under the strain. Serious health problems, both mental and physical, can arise.

Signs of stress include high blood pressure, frequent headaches, fatigue, sleeping problems, nausea and other stomach problems, susceptibility to illness and accidents, loss of appetite or overeating, and depression.

### Dealing with Stress

- Identify the factors in your life that cause you stress. Develop a plan to deal with them.

- Schedule quiet time every day.

- Exercise. Physical activity is one of the best stress remedies around!

- Practice time management. Do essential tasks and prioritize others. Keep in mind that not everything is essential!

- Eat healthy foods and get enough sleep.

- Talk with friends, family or a counselor about what is bothering you.

- Volunteer. Helping others can help take your mind off your problems.

- Tackle one thing at a time.

- Build time into each day to have some fun—this is essential.

- Learn to laugh at your mistakes; we all make them.

- Focus on your good qualities and accomplishments.

# Namely Texas

BY SPIKE GILLESPIE

**Ding Dong!—Edna and Henrietta, the happy, humble twin sisters, drop off Avon cologne.**

Except for the words “and”, “the” and “off”, the above sentence is entirely composed of the names of Texas towns. Yes, that includes Ding Dong As with naming new babies, folks here sometimes chose hastily, sometimes mulled for a good long spell, and sometimes tried variations before deciding on acceptable names for their settlements. And in at least one case, they never did figure out what to do.

Although many places here bear the names of their founding “fathers” and “mothers,” plenty more of the 75,000+ locations in Texas have quite unique names (to put it mildly) and unusual stories to go with those names. At least two books document some of the more curious: Fred Tarpley’s out-of-print *1001 Texas Place Names*, and the recently released *Texas Towns From Abner to Zipperlandville* by Don Blevins (Republic of Texas Press).

It’s fun to peruse these books, boiling the list down to the strangest of

**Looneyville**

all, coming up with a handful of names that are sort of like those magnetic poetry kits you use to turn your refrigerator into fake literature. Elbow, Eureka, Fair Play, Grow, Grit, Happy (aka The Town Without a Frown), Impact, Java, Lively, Loving, Needmore, Snap, Scratch Eye, Seven Sisters, Wink, Uncertain, Eminence, Little Hope, Lariat, Buck Naked, Art, Splendora, Teacup, Welfare, Thrift, Dime Box, Radiance, Sublime, Utopia, Crush, Comfort, Choice, Black Ankle and Poetry are among the most notable monikers.

With some names, guessing the origin is virtually impossible. Why, for instance, Ding Dong? Well, the name dates back to a sign painter with a sense of humor. He painted a sign for

a store owned by a couple of cousins named Bell. There were two bells on the sign, with the words Ding Dong painted in between. Apparently that was good enough for the locals, who decided to name the community after the sign.



Some names are misleading. Lover’s Retreat evokes a mental image of a passionate young couple’s tryst, right? Wrong. This Palo Pinto County town was christened instead for a man named Lover who beat a hasty retreat from some Indians, going to heroic lengths to do so. And so the area was named to honor his flight.

Though you will find oil in Iraan, Texas, this place is not named (nor misspelled) in honor of the Middle Eastern country. The origin is much simpler—Ira and Ann Yates were local ranchers whose names were combined for the town’s moniker. Drunkards Branch is yet another misleading name. Not a stick to whip the intoxicated into shape, Drunkards

Branch was a spot in a stream where pioneers stopped for a (booze-free) drink of water.

Although many names have a humorous bent, darker influences were also a source of inspiration. Dead Man’s Well in Burnet County was named for what Tarpley describes as “a convenient disposal system.” He writes, “Beginning about 1860, an elm tree growing over the well opening was used as a hanging tree, with the convenience of a seemingly bottomless well to receive the bodies when they were cut loose.”

Legend has it that once upon a time in Montgomery County there was a preacher who really had a way with the local ladies. Tarpley reports, “When the charges were made at a church meeting, the

men ran to wagons and buggies to get knives and rifles to cut and shoot.” Thus the town name: Cut and Shoot.

Coincidence is fun to consider after the fact of some namings. Looneyville (which was named for a reasonably sane pioneer family with an unfortunate last name) is located near Loco (Spanish for “crazy”) Creek. Telephone is located between Bells and Dial. Point Blank plays into the stereotype of Texas as a gunslinger’s paradise but the title is a misnomer. It was actually supposed to be Blanc Point, or White Point, a name given by a Frenchwoman. Only

## Lover’s Retreat

when someone turned that around and anglicized the spelling did the gun reference surface.

And then, epitomizing the difficulties of selecting the perfect name is the town of Nameless, founded in the mid-1800s. Tarpley writes, “In 1880 the town applied for a post office, and after authorities rejected six names, the citizens replied, ‘Let the post office be nameless and be damned.’” Apparently only the first half of that wish came true.

The strange town names in this story can be found listed by county on our website, [www.texascoopower.com](http://www.texascoopower.com). Click on this month’s cover. For further reading, there’s an informative story about almost every community in Texas in *The Handbook of Texas*, which is available in an online, searchable format at [www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online](http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online).

**IRAAN**

Spike Gillespie’s second book of essays, *Surrender (But Don’t Give Yourself Away)*, was published in the fall by the University of Texas Press.

# Stay Away From Power Lines

**W**hat were Marvin and D-Wayne thinking when they went fishing for buzzards sitting on a power line? Maybe they weren't thinking at all, because power lines are never safe to touch with your hands or anything you are holding. The lines can burn, or even kill!

It's important to know that when power lines fall to the ground, they may not jump and spark like they do in movies or on television. Sometimes they look like they might be OK to touch, but don't do it! Power lines should never, ever be touched by anyone except trained professionals, like linemen who work for your electric co-op.

Here are some important rules to remember about power lines. Share these rules with your friends and you may save someone's life.

- Never climb power poles.
- Don't play near power lines or electrical equipment, and stay away from areas marked DANGER: HIGH VOLTAGE.
- Never throw anything at wires or power poles.
- Check for nearby power lines before climbing a tree. Never climb a tree close to a power line.
- If a power line falls, stay far away! Warn your friends to stay away, too. Have someone call your electric cooperative right away.
- Remember to fly kites only in dry weather and in open spaces, far away from power lines.
- If a kite does get caught in the lines, leave it alone! Don't try to climb and get it, and don't try tugging at it—you could pull live wires to the ground! Get help from an adult or call your electric cooperative.

Electricity is very important and useful, but only when we respect it by obeying safety rules.

Cartoonist Keith Graves is a popular artist and author of children's books. Among his greatest hits are *Frank Was a Monster Who Wanted to Dance*, *Pet Boy* and *Loretta: Ace Pinky Scout*. He lives in Austin.



**Texans have always had a knack for catching the rest of the world's attention through various amazing feats. But in 1931, Abilene resident Plennie L. Wingo set out to impress folks with his amazing feat.**

BY SPIKE GILLESPIE

**2**tarting off in Fort Worth, Wingo began hoofing it across the country, heading north and east, aiming for New York with an eye set on crossing the Atlantic to continue his

# Backwards around the world Plennie Wingo walked



Photos Courtesy The University of Texas at Arlington, University Libraries, Special Collections Division

walk around the world. Merely walking thousands of miles might not be particularly notable, but Wingo was using his rear to steer. Yup, you read right—that long walk of his was under-

taken in a fashion that came to be dubbed reverse pedestrianism. Put plainly, the guy was walking backwards.

What possesses a mortal to undertake such an odd goal? Well, for one, his res-

taurant had failed. Beyond that, the man himself wasn't even certain of his motives until after his trek concluded. In his book, *Around the World Backwards*, Wingo theorized that perhaps it was the Great

Depression that drove him. "With the whole world going backwards," he wrote, "maybe the only way to see it was to turn around."

Around the country folks were curious, to say the least, when the backwards walking man came strolling through their neck of the woods. Wingo's walk was reported on page 4 of the *St. James Leader* in St. James, Missouri, on June 4, 1931:

"Plennie L. Wingo ... stopped in St. James long enough to get some new toe taps for his shoes. This was the fourth pair he had wore out. ... He wears periscopic eyeglasses, fastened over his ears like regular spectacles, which enables him to see where he is walking. He will continue on 66 to St. Louis then on hi-way 40 to New York where he will secure passage to Europe. Wingo expects to complete the trip in about four years. He depends entirely on the sale of postcards for his expenses. He averages about 20 miles per day."

And *The Delphos Herald*, the paper of record in Delphos, Ohio, reported his progress a month later:

"Many Delphos people were interested Sunday in seeing a man walking backward on the streets here. He came from the west on the Lincoln Highway and stopped at a local hotel for the night. The man ... has traveled approximately 1,500 miles on his journey around the world. He ... declines 'lifts' as some local people learned when they saw him on the highway and offered to bring him to Delphos. He ... left Monday morning for Mansfield, enroute to New York where he will embark for England. He has two specially arranged rear-view mirrors with which he views approaching traffic 'ahead' of him or 'back' of him, as you wish. He pays his way

by selling pictures and by advertising stunts. He states that he intends to write a book telling of his experience. He expects to take three years to make his trip."

**T**hough selling postcards was important financially, Wingo had to remind himself to keep up the pace and curtail conversations with passersby lest he get behind (or, perhaps, forward?) in his goal. Ultimately, though, it was not prolonged conversation with pleasant people that thwarted his efforts. After managing to traverse the United States and much of the continent, it was the Turkish police who proved his undoing—they arrested Wingo numerous times and tossed him in the *esuoh gib* (actually, that's not Turkish, it's just "big house" spelled backwards). Perhaps they were terrible sports. Or maybe the whole concept was just simply too nutty for them.

Given that the word "Turkey" lends itself so nicely to a rhyme, it may have been in the country's better interest, from a historical perspective, to have glorified Wingo instead, in a poem such as:

**There once was a man from Abilene  
With a yearning for reverse quite keen  
Over in Turkey  
He was deemed extra quirky  
As he strolled in a way they'd not seen.**

Wingo, underappreciated in Istanbul, boarded a ship for California. (Although no records can be found confirming this, it is strongly believed the ship traveled full steam ahead, not behind.) Upon returning to the United States, he resumed reverse walking, returning to Abilene via California and the Western



states in between there and here, eventually logging a whopping 8,000 miles on his tired dogs by the time he finished, just over 15 months after starting. That

Nonetheless, Johnny Carson was suitably impressed, inviting Wingo to appear on "The Tonight Show" and purchasing one of his postcards.

Wingo was last seen walking backwards where he began, in Fort Worth. The sighting occurred 20 years ago when the then-88-year-old was in town to promote his book, which had just been published even though he'd begun writing it decades prior. Plennie Wingo seems to have disappeared into the ether after that, with very few traces left behind, and none at all left in front.

Spike Gillespie, who lives in Austin, is a frequent contributor to *Texas Co-op Power*. She has written two books of essays published by the University of Texas Press.

# Freezer-Friendly Meals

Tara Wohlenhaus loves to cook, but her best friend, Nanci Slagle, hates to cook. “The wretched thing about dinner is that it happens every day,” Nanci says sadly. These two busy women put their heads together and came up with a way to prepare and freeze delicious, fresh-tasting and nutritious meals for an entire month in one day. They found that preparing meals ahead of time decreases the stress before mealtime and allows them more time with their families. They call their program The 30 Day Gourmet, and have a successful website ([www.30daygourmet.com](http://www.30daygourmet.com)), books and even a software program that helps you “make friends with your freezer.” Here are their tips for starting your own monthly meal plan:

**Find a Partner.** Ask a friend to join you in bulk cooking and determine each other’s strengths and resources. Tara hosts the cooking day at her house. Nanci does the grocery shopping, budgeting and tracking of expenses. “A friend can keep you organized and on task,” says Tara. “You can share cooking utensils and recipes, and split bulk items bought from the grocery or food co-op.” Plan to spend the entire day cooking together.

**Planning and Shopping.** Take inventory of what you have and clean out your refrigerator and freezer. Decide which recipes you will use. Nanci and Tara usually choose 8-10 recipes, making 6 of each and splitting them evenly. Each goes home with 24-30 entrées for a month of family dinners. Their website and cookbooks multiply each recipe for up to six meals that feed 4-6 people each. Remember to buy in bulk and use generic brands. Purchase items such as frozen diced potatoes and onions to save on prep time later.

**Prep Work.** There are many jobs that each cook can do ahead of time to be ready for cooking day. Clean off your counters the night before and get



© FoodPix

## Parsley Parmesan Chicken

Meals (each serves 4-6):	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Ingredients:</b>						
Italian salad dressing	1/4 c.	1/2 c.	3/4 c.	1 c.	1-1/4 c.	1-1/2 c.
fresh fryer parts	2-3 lbs.	5-6 lbs.	8-9 lbs.	11-12 lbs.	14-15 lbs.	17-18 lbs.
grated Parmesan cheese	1/2 c.	1 c.	1-1/2 c.	2 c.	2-1/2 c.	3 c.
dry bread crumbs	1/3 c.	2/3 c.	1 c.	1-1/3 c.	1-2/3 c.	2 c.
parsley flakes	2 T.	1/4 c.	1/3 c.	1/2 c.	2/3 c.	3/4 c.
paprika	1/2 t.	1 t.	1-1/2 t.	2 t.	2-1/2 t.	1 T.
salt	1/2 t.	1 t.	1-1/2 t.	2 t.	2-1/2 t.	1 T.
pepper	1/4 t.	1/2 t.	3/4 t.	1 t.	1-1/4 t.	1-1/2 t.

Serving size: 1-2 pieces. Per serving: 351 calories, 36 grams protein, 10 grams fat, 63 grams carbohydrates, 579 milligrams sodium, 137 milligrams cholesterol

**Containers:** 1-gallon freezer bags for chicken.

**Assembly directions:** Pour salad dressing in a large bowl. Add the chicken parts to the dressing, coating well. Cover and chill about 4 hours or overnight. Turn chicken in the dressing occasionally. Combine parmesan cheese, dry bread crumbs, parsley flakes, paprika, salt and pepper in a shallow bowl. Roll chicken one piece at a time in the crumbs, then place chicken in a greased 9x13-inch baking pan or on a cookie sheet. Spoon excess dressing over chicken. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour or until thickest piece is done.

**Freezing and cooking directions:** Remove from oven and cool. Put baked chicken pieces into a freezer bag. Label and freeze. To serve, place chicken in baking dish. Warm in 400-degree oven for 10 minutes or until warmed through.

Recipe reprinted with permission from The Freezer Cooking Manual from The 30 Day Gourmet.

out the pots, pans and utensils you will need. A large, plastic dishpan can be used for mixing all of the beef recipes, with hot soapy washings

between each recipe. Long-sleeved rubber gloves and long-handled spoons and spatulas are recommended for mixing mass ingredients.



**Cooking and Assembly.** Decide if what you're making should be pre-cooked or just prepped for future cooking. Pre-cooked recipes make for fast entrées, which save time on busy evenings. Save time and avoid confusion by dividing tasks and recipes. Assemble the recipes one at a time and then do enough for both families. You can begin the time-intensive recipes in the morning and do simpler ones later. Try to do the on-your-feet work early, so that you can sit and make hamburger patties or stuff pasta shells in

the afternoon. As each recipe is completed, cool if needed, and then place into a freezer-quality bag or container. Label each entrée with a permanent marker, including cooking directions.

**Many Rewards.** Instead of shooing their kids out of the way before supper-time, Tara and Nanci have time to read to them or hear about their day at school. No matter how many activities might get packed into their afternoons, both women resist the fast food, drive-through temptation. They know a healthier alternative waits at home.

Quantity cooking also benefits others. Freezing fruit salads and breads along with your entrées allows for last-minute company or potluck dinners. Instead of spending all day preparing a meal for a sick friend or a family with a new baby, you can grab a meal for them from your freezer.

So, if you dread the dinner hour and are eager for a new solution, consider trying bulk cooking. It could forever change the way you view the dinner hour.

## HOME COOKING

### RECIPE CONTEST WINNERS

**M**ay's recipe contest subject is Shrimp. What a great, fresh resource we have with our Texas shrimp. What's your favorite way to prepare these jewels of the Gulf? Send in your recipes by February 10. The winner will receive a copy of the *Texas Co-op Power Cookbook*. Be sure to include your name, address and phone number, as well as your co-op affiliation. Send recipes to Home Cooking, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704. You can also fax recipes to (512) 486-6254 or e-mail them to [recipes@texas-ec.org](mailto:recipes@texas-ec.org)

This month's recipe contest winner is a real dream come true! This Apple Pound Cake is not only delicious, it freezes and thaws beautifully. We have Billie J. Greenhill, a member of FEC Electric, to thank for it. She will receive a copy of the *Texas Co-op Power Cookbook*. Bake a couple up and put them in the deep freeze, then pull one out when you have guests coming. It'll thaw in about two hours, and doesn't need reheating. We put a simple glaze on it (1 cup powdered sugar mixed with 1-2 tablespoons water) after it thawed, but you could serve it with fresh whipped cream or no accompaniment at all.

### Apple Pound Cake

3 cups sliced, peeled apples  
2 cups sugar  
2 eggs, beaten  
1 cup vegetable oil  
3 cups flour  
1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda  
1 1/2 teaspoons salt

1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla  
1 cup chopped pecans

Pour sugar over sliced apples and let set 15 minutes. Add eggs to apple and sugar mixture. Blend oil into mixture. Sift flour, soda and salt, then add slowly to apple mixture and mix well. Add vanilla and nuts. Pour into a greased bundt pan. Bake at 350 degrees for one hour or until brown. Yield: 12 servings.

Serving size: 1 slice. Per serving: 498 calories, 5 grams protein, 26 grams fat, 63 grams carbohydrates, 434 milligrams sodium, 31 milligrams cholesterol

### Denver Biscuits

1 cup shortening  
1/2 cup sugar  
1/2 cup honey  
1 quart milk (scalded)  
4 cups wheat flour  
2 packages yeast  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
1 teaspoon salt  
1/2 cup warm water  
5-6 cups all-purpose flour

Cream shortening, sugar and honey. Add milk and wheat flour to make dough. Make sure dough is cool enough (77-85 degrees), then add yeast. Let rise covered in large bowl or pan for 2 hours. In a cup, dissolve baking powder, baking soda and salt in 1/2 cup warm water. Add to dough; punch down dough. Add enough flour to make dough stiff (5-6 cups). Roll out and cut with biscuit cutter. Place on cookie sheets and freeze until firm, then store in plastic bags. Take out of freezer 1 1/2 hours

before baking. Bake at 350 degrees until lightly browned, 10-13 minutes. Yield: 45-50 biscuits.

Serving size: 1 biscuit. Per serving: 154 calories, 4 grams protein, 5 grams fat, 24 grams carbohydrates, 98 milligrams sodium, 3 milligrams cholesterol

Rita Davenport, Bandera EC

### Chicken Squares

3 ounces cream cheese  
2 tablespoons melted margarine  
2 cups cooked, chopped chicken  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1/8 teaspoon pepper  
1 tablespoon chopped onion or chives  
1 tablespoon chopped pimiento (optional)  
1 package (8 ounces) crescent rolls  
1 tablespoon melted margarine  
3/4 cup seasoned croutons, crushed

Mix the first seven ingredients together. Roll crescent rolls into four rectangles on floured board, sealing perforations. Place one large spoonful of the chicken mixture in center of each dough square. Pull each corner of the dough to center to meet. Pinch together openings. Brush top with melted margarine and dip in crushed croutons. Freeze individually on a cookie sheet for 10 minutes to prevent sticking. Place together in a freezer bag. When ready to use, thaw for 30 minutes. Bake for 20-25 minutes at 350 degrees on an ungreased cookie sheet. (You can double or triple the recipe easily for more guests.) Yield: 4 squares.

Serving size: 1 square. Per serving: 335 calories, 25 grams protein, 22 grams fat, 8 grams carbohydrates, 498 milligrams sodium, 83 milligrams cholesterol

Karen Andrews, Pedernales EC

# February

- 1-8. "Horses: The Story of Equus," Omni Theater, **Fort Worth**, (817) 255-9408
- 1-29. "Coral Reef Adventure," IMAX at the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum, **Austin**, (512) 936-4600
- 3. Ernest Tubb Tribute Show, **Live Oak County** Coliseum, between George West and Three Rivers, (361) 786-3334
- 5-8. Midessa Boat, RV, Sport & Gun Show, **Odessa**, (432) 381-3324
- 6-8. Needlework Treasures Show, **Austin**, (512) 388-0761 or www.austinstitchers.org
- 7. Preservation Society Gala, **Kerrville**, (830) 895-2265
- 11. Thomas Edison Birthday Celebration, **Beaumont**, (409) 981-3089
- 13-14. Cupid Bar-B-Que Cookoff, **Lake Bastrop**, (512) 321-2315
- 13-15. Polka Fest, **New Braunfels**, (830) 625-9288
- 13-15. Trade Days, **Livingston**, (936) 327-3656 or www.cityoflivingston-tx.com/tradedays
- 14. Stories of the Spirits, Magoffin Home State Historic Site, **El Paso**, (915) 533-5147
- 14. Valentine Dinner/Auction for Bosque Animal Rescue Kennels, **Clifton**, (254) 675-7712
- 14. Hill Country Doll Show & Sale, **New Braunfels**, (830) 606-5868
- 14. Bluebird House Day, Sam Bell Maxey House State Historic Site, **Paris**, (903) 785-5716
- 14. 5K Sweetheart Run, **Athens**, (903) 677-2001
- 14, 28. Simple Sounds Concert, Longhorn Caverns, **Burnet**, 1-877-441-2283
- 15. Matagorda Island Whooping Crane Bus Tour, **Port O'Connor**, (361) 983-2215
- 15. Free Pruning and Rose Training Seminar, **Independence**, (979) 836-5548 or www.weareroses.com
- 19. Side Street Strutters Jazz Band, **Lake Conroe**, 1-877-4-CONROE or (936) 441-7469
- 20-22, 27-29. "The Last Ball," Globe Theatre, **Odessa**, (432) 580-3177 or 332-1586
- 21. Skeletons of Winter Tree Identification Tour, Cedar Hill State Park, **Cedar Hill**, (972) 291-3900
- 21. Mardi Gras Festival & Parade, **Orange**, (409) 883-3536
- 21-22. Rio Grande Valley Quilt Show, **Pharr**, (956) 425-4082
- 24. Fat Tuesday Mardi Gras Party, **Port Arthur**, (409) 722-4233
- 26-29. Homier-Tool Sale, **Lake Conroe**, (260) 359-6691
- 27-28. Women in the Outdoors Event,

## FESTIVAL OF THE MONTH

BY JIM GRAMON

# Texas Independence Day: Washington-on-the-Brazos, February 28-29

**Independence is declared; it must be maintained.**  
—Sam Houston, Washington-on-the-Brazos, March 2, 1836

Today, with the distance of time, it is easy for us to assume that the existence of the Republic of Texas was inevitable. But in early 1836, there was no certainty that the Texas rebels would win independence from Mexico.

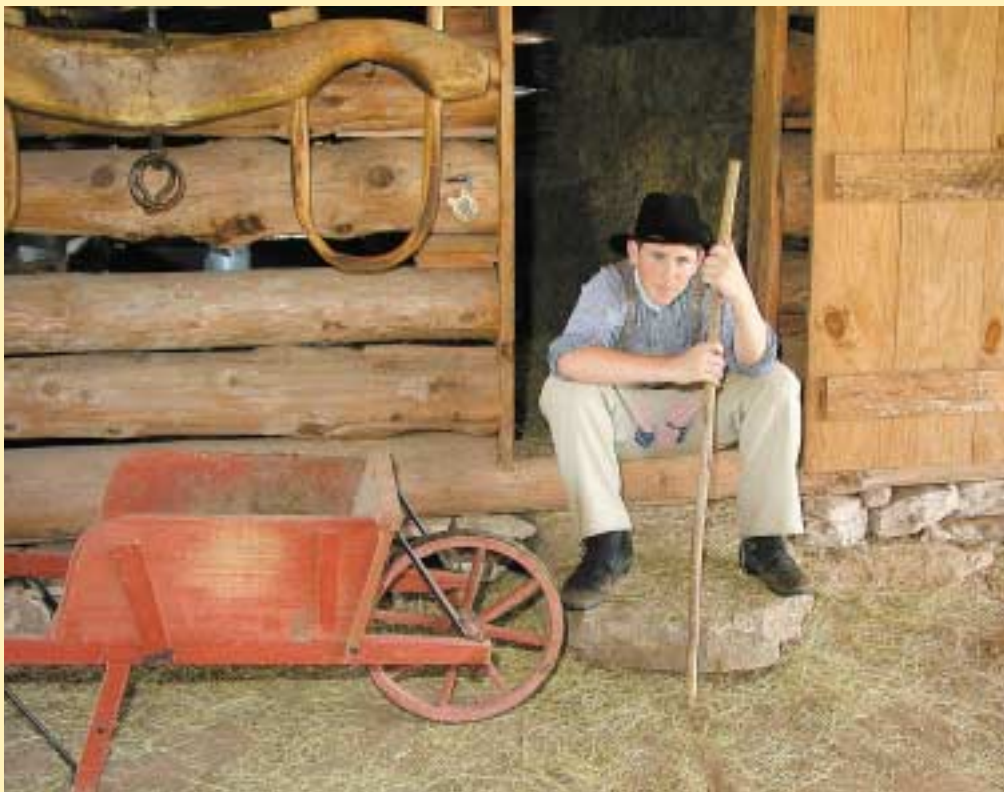
In December 1835, General Sam Houston made the small town of Washington his military headquarters. The rough-hewn town of about a hundred residents had sprung up only a few years earlier around a ferry landing on the Brazos River.

Businessmen in Washington offered the use of a large assembly hall for the Convention of 1836. On March 2,

the convention delegates declared that Texas was independent from Mexico, and the town of Washington became the birthplace of the Republic of Texas.

In 1842, Washington became the official capital of Texas, and other nations began setting up embassies. The town was the site of peacemaking negotiations between President Houston and several Indian tribes in the summer of 1844. In Washington, the Republic of Texas Congress approved annexation to the United States in 1845. About that time, to avoid

Travel back to the days of Sam Houston and Davy Crockett at the Texas Independence Day Celebration.



Washington-on-the-Brazos State Park Association

- College Station**, (979) 412-1869
28. Farm Toy Show, **Gainesville**,  
(940) 759-2876
28. Astronomy, Mission Tejas State Park,  
**Grapeland**, (936) 687-2394
28. Flatlanders in Concert, **Lake Conroe**,  
(936) 539-1467 or (936) 788-5652
- 28-29. Texas Independence Day Celebration,  
**Washington-on-the-Brazos**,  
1-888-BRENHAM (273-6426)

*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](mailto:aroundtx@texas-ec.org). All information must be submitted by the 10th of the month two months prior to publication. E.g., April submissions must be received prior to February 10. Events are listed according to space available.*

confusion with Washington, D.C., the town began to be known as Washington-on-the-Brazos.

Each year on the weekend closest to March 2, Washington-on-the-Brazos hosts a giant party celebrating Texas' birthday. Thousands of visitors celebrate the signing of the Texas Declaration of Independence. Festivities sponsored by the Washington-on-the-Brazos State Park Association include traditional crafts and music demonstrations, living history presentations and historical encampments.

At the celebration, you can travel back in time to the days of Sam Houston and Davy Crockett, shake hands with actors dressed as historical figures, and observe the daily activities on a mid-19th-century plantation. Save time to tour the beautiful Star of the Republic Museum.

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Washington-on-the-Brazos is located between Navasota and Brenham, just off Highway 105.

Washington-on-the-Brazos State Park Association, (936) 878-2461, ext. 234 or [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/washingt/activity.htm](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/washingt/activity.htm).

Jim Gramon is the author of several books on Texas festivals and storytellers. [Jim@Jim-Gramon.com](mailto:Jim@Jim-Gramon.com), [www.JimGramon.com](http://www.JimGramon.com).

## Gettin' Sweet With Sweethearts

**W**ith Valentine's Day smack dab in its middle, February is a time for expressing love. That's why we're highlighting co-op sweethearts. We received so many photos of folks sharing a kiss that we could have subtitled this month's contest "smooches." Enjoy these sweethearts, and give your own sweetie some special attention this month!

The topic for April is big hair. Texas seems to be the home of grand bouffant coiffures. Send your favorite large hairdo photo to "Big Hair," Focus on Texas, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704. Digital photos will also be accepted at focus@texas-ec.org. Image files should be high resolution (at least 300 pixels per inch or ppi) or very large low-resolution images (72 ppi, minimum size is 8x10 inches). All entries must include name, co-op name, daytime phone, mailing address, and description or story. Please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you'd like your photo returned.



Pedernales EC member Rebecca Kendall had this to say about her photo submission, snapped after a recent wedding: "The ring bearer's animal magnetism was too much for these two flower girls, taken away with the romance of the moment." Her grandson, Isaiah Christopher Wood, is the smackee and Charisma Rodriguez and Julia Harper are the smackers.



Coleman County EC member Roy Bodine would travel 50 miles a day to the nursing home to visit his sweetheart, Addie. "They were married for 72 years," says their daughter, Carol. She and her husband, Gib, are also Coleman County EC members.



"Just lean on me," Maggie seems to have told "sweetheart" Lucy, snapped in the act last Valentine's Day by Pedernales EC member Mark Oliveaux. Lucy belongs to Mark, while Maggie belongs to Fran Sala, another PEC member.



Jacob Young, 5, steals a kiss from Curry Carothers, 6. Jacob's mother says, "The two have been an 'item' since Curry's mother kept Jacob as an infant." He is the son of Hamilton County EC members Doug and Marion Young.

### UPCOMING in Focus on Texas

Subject	Issue	Deadline
Big Hair	April	February 10
Best Friends	May	March 10
Water Towers	June	April 10
Family Fun	July	May 10
On the Farm	August	June 10
Caught Napping	September	July 10



# Natural Bridge Caverns

**A**n autumn chill permeates the air. Flames lick the deer carcass as fat liquefies, hissing onto the hot embers. Tendrils of smoke curl away from the fire, rising skyward, up past the overhang of the cavern's entrance. A clan member snugs an animal skin around her shoulders as she tends the fire, moving roots from an earthen pot onto the sizzling hot rocks.

Light from the cooking fire, built on a pit of limestone rocks, falls off quickly toward the rear of the cavern

and covering up to a thousand miles in the course of a month. For these nomads, survival required a constant cycle of hunting, gathering and moving on to the next area, driven by the most basic of needs—food.

All but the youngest and oldest members of the clan have spent the day roaming an area within a 10-mile radius of the mouth of the sinkhole, making their way through the lush, knee-high grasses in search of prey and gathering tubers and acorns for the clan's dinner.

They move warily, keenly aware of their own vulnerability to bears, mountain lions or other ferocious predators.

This stone grotto nestled among hardy oaks in the heart of the Hill Country may have sheltered these nomads several different times during the course of a year. It was not a permanent home—more of a timeshare. The clan would move on after a month or two, once the food sources started to wane.

Knowledge of this prime shelter,

a limestone cave, was handed down from generation to generation, according to Dr. Steve Tomka, an archaeology professor from the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA), who reckons that the mouth of the cave hosted humans for many millennia. Now it is the site of one of the premier show caves in Texas—Natural Bridge Caverns, 30 miles north of San Antonio.

The caverns, a series of underground, interconnected chambers that spans miles beneath ranch land, boast some rooms that are as vast as a football field. Long ago, the entrance ceiling collapsed, creating the eponymous “natural bridge,” the caverns' 60-foot-span namesake.

Where a Toyah clansman once may have sat industriously flaking off pieces of flint to form an arrow point, Tomka and an assistant labor over large boulders that were once part of the cavern ceiling. The UTSA professor gently guides the excavation. The archeological dig is a mere 60 feet from the current public cave entrance. Nike-clad feet walk around the prehistoric living room of a tribe that existed some 1,300 years ago.

Tomka, palming a collection of prehistoric weapons and tools, excitedly explains the archeological significance of this site, which—based on artifacts recovered—sheltered human visitors for more than 7,000 years.

Due to the natural protection of the cavern and the fact that the area is virtually undisturbed, the site offers a sort of “layer cake” of archeology. Dig down a prescribed depth and you've punched through to yet another century, where different types of projectiles and spear points are entombed. The preserved stratification will greatly assist archeologists in determining the geological history of the area—such as when the cavern collapsed, forming the bridge—and will offer insights about the climate and long-extinct plants and animals.

Joy Wuest, Natural Bridge Caverns' chief financial officer, labors alongside Tomka, UTSA students and several volunteers. “It's such a thrill for me to cradle that arrowhead or dart point in my hand and think about the person who made it,” she explains. Her family has long owned the 1,400 acres encompassing the enormous caverns. “You reach out across thousands of years and touch the life of someone who lived here and called this place home long before I did.”

Natural Bridge Caverns is open daily from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. From Memorial Day through Labor Day the cavern is open until 7 p.m. Tours leave every 30 minutes. For information, visit [www.naturalbridgecaverns.com](http://www.naturalbridgecaverns.com).

Writer, photographer, filmmaker Laura Barton lives in Oak Hill. She and partner Judy Wilder shoot photographs for a number of publications.



Barton Wilder Custom Images

Graduate student Bruce Moses works on an ancient fire pit while Joy Wuest and Steve Tomka observe his progress.

some 60 feet back where a sinkhole leading to yet another deeper chamber is nearly buried by a collapsed section of the ceiling.

The 20 or so adults and children within the cave gather close, drawing heat from the fire pit. Several members sit near the fire, hunched over their work, crafting tools. Striking stones together in short swift movements, they send flakes of hardened flint sailing away. A woman concentrates on whittling out a bird point, used to pierce the hide of bison, antelope and smaller prey, such as rats and rabbits.

The group, known as the Toyah people, traveled south from the plains, following migratory herds of bison