

# TEXAS CO-OP POWER

## Little Horses, Big Hearts

PLUS:

**Texas Mystery Writers**

**Peach Season's Here**

**Victoria Bach Festival**



# COOL SUMMER SAFETY TIPS

## Swimming

**Don't be all wet.  
Remember these rules  
for safe pool-time fun  
this summer:**

- Keep electric radios, TVs, clocks, barbecues, lights and other electrical appliances at least 10 feet from a pool and wet surfaces. Use battery-powered appliances whenever possible.
- Electric appliances should not be used outdoors unless they are equipped with a heavy-duty cord and three-prong plug.
- Swimming pools should be well away from electric wires to avoid the risk of hitting the wires with long-handled cleaning equipment.
- All outdoor electrical outlets should be weatherproof and equipped with a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI). This is especially important in damp locations where more protection is necessary.
- Check with your electric co-op before you dig to make sure you know the location of buried electrical lines.
- Label power and light switches for pool, hot tub and spa equipment.
- If you think you are being shocked while in the water, move away from the source of the shock. Get out of the water, if possible, without using a metal ladder.

**Stay safe this summer.  
Don't swim with shocks!**



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# TEXAS CO-OP POWER

A MAGAZINE ABOUT TEXAS LIVING

## Comfort Creatures

**L**ittle did Jim Ball know when he agreed to write an article on miniature horses that it would involve transporting the little Samaritans in his own SUV. He helped Veronique Matthews take some of her animals to visit young and old people with illnesses and disabilities. As you will see from some of the photos, these compassionate minis think of themselves as “lap” horses.

We also feature Texas mystery writers and their fictional detectives. Central Texas couple Susan Wittig Albert and Bill Albert tell what it's like to write about murder and mayhem all day long. There's also a list of other Texas mystery writers who are worth checking out. And Editor Kaye Northcott writes a short essay about why she's hooked on mystery series.

Peaches are the subject of our Home Cooking contest this month. Here's hoping for a good crop this year! Jim Gramon recommends a visit to the Victoria Bach Festival in his column. Water towers is the Focus on Texas topic. We also take a trip back in time to San Antonio's chili stands during the Great Depression.

Enjoy!

Peg Champion  
Vice President, Communications/  
Publisher

**Veronique Matthews  
contends with a  
backseat driver.**



Jim Ball



Luling's water tower, painted to resemble a watermelon, is one of Texas' most photographed. Bluebonnet EC member Mary Sanders submitted this photo and reminds us that Luling's 51st Watermelon Thump is the last weekend of this month. For more water towers, turn to page 37.

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By Kaye Northcott, Illustration by Aletha St. Romain

A sampling of Texas mystery writers and their sleuths.

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By Sheryl Smith-Rodgers, Photos by Geno Esponda

Author Susan Wittig Albert and her partner/husband, Bill Albert, share an idyllic country life, tending their gardens and plotting one murder mystery after another.

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By Jim Ball, Photos by Ave Bonar

Miniature horses seem to be one of nature's most compassionate animals. That's why Veronique Matthews takes her charges to visit nursing homes and other places where a warm nuzzle is appreciated.

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Peach season's here. Victoria's Bach Festival.

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Water towers are part of the rural and urban Texas landscape.

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Chili Stands, San Antonio.

# TEXAS CO-OP POWER

VOLUME 60 JUNE 2004 NUMBER 12

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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Texas Co-op Power is published monthly by Texas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., the statewide association that represents 75 electric cooperatives. Texas Co-op Power's website is [www.texascoopower.com](http://www.texascoopower.com). Call (512) 454-0311 or e-mail [editor@texas-ec.org](mailto:editor@texas-ec.org).

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## LETTERS

### TCP Prompts Family Discussions

Thank you for providing a quality publication. I enjoy the articles and photography in *Texas Co-op Power*. My children use the articles as references for their Texas history projects. The letters from your readers often add to the articles. Esther Lehmann's letter in the April 2004 issue is a prime example. My mother-in-law saved the January 2004 issue ["The Last Big Herd"] and brought it back out for discussion after reading Ms. Lehmann's letter. The discussion led to other historical events in our area.

Sharon Hinton, Lighthouse EC

### Recipes Are Great Resources

My wife and I own a bed-and-breakfast near Kerrville. We serve a large, full breakfast to our guests and are always looking for new recipes. Your recipe feature each month is a great resource. Many of the recipes can be adjusted just a bit to turn them into

tasty and unusual breakfasts. One of our regular customers even brought us a recipe page torn out of your magazine and wanted that for their next day's breakfast. Thanks for the great ideas.

David and Desiree Farrar,  
Trails End Guest House, Central Texas EC

### Texas' Enticing Trails

Your April issue was wonderful and featured a lot of places that I am looking forward to riding to this summer. The Panhandle Plains Wildlife Trail looked really interesting as did the East Texas Forest Trail. Guess I did not realize there were so many national parks in Texas and want to try and camp out at some of them. Thank you for a great magazine.

Linda Ashton, Big Skies Roadriders,  
Concho Valley EC

### A Ray of Sunshine

Finding an issue of *Texas Co-op Power* in my mailbox is always a ray of

## SAFE LIVING

### Prevent Heat Stroke

**P**lay it cool in Texas' sizzling heat this summer. Approximately 175 heat-related deaths occur each year. Summer's higher temperatures create higher risks for heat stroke.

Here are some tips to help avoid this dangerous—but preventable—illness:

- Stay indoors in air-conditioned areas when possible.
- Drink plenty of water before starting an outdoor activity. Drink extra water all day. Drink less tea, coffee and alcoholic beverages, which can lead to dehydration.
- Wear lightweight, loose-fitting, light-colored clothes.
- Schedule vigorous outdoor activities for cooler times of the day.
- Protect yourself from the sun by wearing a hat or using an umbrella.
- Increase the time you spend in daily outdoor activities slowly and gradually.
- Don't spend time outdoors during the hottest hours of the day.

- During an outdoor activity, take frequent breaks and drink water or other fluids every 15 to 20 minutes, even if you don't feel thirsty.
- If you have a chronic medical problem, ask your doctor about drinking extra fluids and about your medicines.

**Frequent signs and symptoms of heat stroke are:**

- Skin that is hot, dry and flushed, but not sweating
- High body temperature
- Rapid heartbeat
- Confusion
- Loss of consciousness.

If you are with someone with heat stroke-related symptoms, cool the person rapidly. Remove his or her clothes, then help cool the person with cold, wet sheets or a cool bath. Arrange for transportation to the nearest hospital—this is an emergency.

—Texas Medical Association

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.

sunshine for me. Not only do you keep members informed about the co-op, but you print so many good and enjoyable articles. The April edition was especially enjoyable reading. "Drive Yourself Wild" by Elaine Robbins was filled with great photos and information. Stephan Myers' "Into the Woods" was a good way to visit East Texas while sitting in my easy chair. The article that really rang a bell for me was Ruby Mayhew's "I Remember Avery." I also wanted to document a place that leaves nothing but memories for my grandchildren, because their childhood is so different than mine. When I grew up in Hindes, there was a hotel, a bank, a depot, two stores, a lumberyard, a two-story brick school building and some very interesting characters. There is nothing left now where this place existed.

Keep on giving us this good material. You are appreciated!

Sugie Barrow, Medina EC

### Love the Focus on Texas Choices

How exciting to receive the Texas Co-op Power magazine with our pictures in it! My husband and I loved your other Focus on Texas choices also and are looking forward to the future issues on animal friends. We love animals and have some good pictures of those also.

I want to submit a recipe in one of your issues but haven't gotten around to it, but it's on my "to-do" list.

Thanks for such a down-home wonderful publication you send. My very best wishes to all of you.

Jane Waldrop, Bryan Texas Utilities

### Hats Off to UIL Participants

I enjoyed Louie Bond's article on the "Noble Scholars of the UIL" [May 2004]. From a parent's viewpoint, I can attest that there is little fanfare and the only cheerleaders for the University Interscholastic League student competitors

are the parents and teachers themselves.

My son competed in UIL at Flower Mound High School, and in 2002 he won the UIL State 5A Championship in computer science, second place in number sense and fourth place in mathematics. To place in any UIL event at the state level is a tremendous achievement for any student; however, to place in three separate events at

the state level is very rare.

In contrast, my son received more media attention as a varsity soccer player for his high school team.

Thank you for recognizing some of the hardworking and under-appreciated students who participate and compete in the UIL. My hat is off to all of them and to the teachers who coach them.

Robert D. Little, CoServ Electric

## ON BOARD WITH BOATING SAFETY

### Boating

Did you know that people who hunt or fish from boats have one of the highest boat fatality rates? Or that more people die from falling off small boats (16 feet and under) than larger ones?

### Safety Rules for Boating:

- Be weather wise. Bring a portable radio to check weather reports.
- Bring extra gear you may need. A flashlight and extra batteries, matches, map, flares, first aid kit, sunglasses and sunscreen should be kept in a watertight container or pouch.
- Tell someone where you're going, who is with you, and how long you'll be gone.
- Ventilate after fueling. Open the hatches, run the blower, and carefully sniff for gasoline fumes in the fuel and engine areas before starting your engine.
- Anchor from the bow, not the stern. Use an anchor line at least five times longer than the water depth.
- Know your boat's capacity. Don't overload it or put an oversized motor on it.

Have fun on the water.  
Boat safely!



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# MYSTERY

## WHODUNIT IN TEXAS

### I Am a Plot Junkie

BY KAYE NORTHCOTT

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALETHA ST. ROMAIN

I HAVE FRITTERED AWAY MANY MONTHS OF MY LIFE READING MYSTERY NOVELS. MYSTERY SERIES ARE THE BEST. YOU KNOW THAT WITH EVERY NEW RELEASE YOU WILL RETURN TO FAMILIAR TERRITORY, BUT IT IS NEVER THE SAME. THERE'S A NEW CORPSE OR A NEW PROBLEM THAT KEEPS YOU RIVETED UNTIL THE MYSTERY IS SOLVED.

Take Englishman Dick Francis and his novels based in the seamy underworld of British horseracing. His heroes always have to endure a little physical torture, which I could do without, but along the way one learns fascinating tidbits about the horse industry. Francis' heroes are practical problem solvers. Speaking of solving problems, no one is better at it than my current favorite detective, Mma. Precious Ramotswe, founder of the No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency of Botswana. There's nothing better than a short trip to Africa in the "traditional-sized" embrace of the matronly Ramotswe. The series is written by Alexander McCall Smith.

Texas-based mysteries cater to almost every interest and taste—from the semi-autobiographic tales of raunchy raconteur Kinky Friedman to the chilling depiction of upper-class Houstonites by David Lindsey. Friedman sometimes writes at his ranch in Bandera Electric Co-op territory. Happily, writing novels is something you can do as well from your country hide-away as you can from an office in Houston or Dallas. After all, Agatha Christie typed her tales at the kitchen table.

Listed at right are a sampling of mystery novelists based everywhere from El Paso to the Sabine River, from Galveston to Dallas. As for their characters, in addition to the traditional array of detectives, deputies, DAs and lawyers, librarians, chefs, musicians, birdwatchers, a waitress, a forensic chemist and an Episcopalian priest are busy figuring out "whodunit" in Texas.

Kaye Northcott is editor of Texas Co-op Power.

### A Sampling of Texas Mystery Writers (and their sleuths)

**Susan Wittig Albert** Hill Country herb store owner China Bayles is featured in several titles, including *Thyme of Death*, *Hangman's Root*, *Chile Death*, and *An Unthymely Death*.

**Nevada Barr** This real-life employee of the National Parks Service has written one Texas novel in her series based on her knowledge of national parks. *The Track of the Cat* takes place in Guadalupe Mountains National Park.

**Nancy Bell** Biggie and her 13-year-old grandson solve crime in the East Texas town of "Job's Crossing." Titles include *Biggie and the Mangled Mortician*, *Biggie and the Meddlesome Mailman*, *Biggie and the Quincy Ghost*, and *Biggie and the Devil Diet*.

**Jay Brandon** Brandon uses his experiences as a lawyer to create courtroom suspense novels based in San Antonio. Titles include *Fade the Heat*, *Rules of Evidence*, and *Angel of Death*.

**Christopher Cook** In Christopher Cook's first novel, *Robbers*, a Texas Ranger tracks two drifters on a crime spree from Austin to the Piney Woods.

**Bill Crider** The prolific Crider has penned dozens of mysteries, most set along the Texas Gulf Coast. Series protagonists include P.I. Truman "Tru" Smith, Sheriff Dan Rhodes and English professor Carl Burns. Titles include *Winning Can Be Murder*, *The Prairie Chicken Kill*, *A Ghost of a Chance*, and *A Knife in the Back*.

**James Crumley** Novels by this acclaimed literary crime writer play out against the vast landscape of the American West. Crumley makes use of West Texas settings in *The Mexican Tree Duck*, *Bordersnakes*, and *The Final Country*.

**Kinky Friedman** Mysteries starring outrageous country-musician-turned-private-eye Kinky Friedman often draw him from his home base in Greenwich Village back to his old stomping grounds in Central Texas. Titles include *A Case of Lone Star*, *Armadillos and Old Lace*, *Road Kill*, and *The Prisoner of Vandam Street*.

# ES



**Nancy Herndon** This El Paso author's Elena Jarvis mysteries are set in the fictional town of Los Santos, Texas. Titles include *Acid Bath*, *Casanova Crimes*, and *C.O.P. Out*.

**Rolando Hinojosa-Smith** The works of the dean of Texas Chicano literature include two mystery novels set in the Lower Rio Grande Valley: *Partners in Crime* and *Ask a Policeman*.

**Joe Lansdale** Nacogdoches resident and acclaimed horror/fantasy writer Lansdale has created a Deep East Texas mystery series featuring Hap Collins and Leonard Pine. Titles include *Two-Bear Mambo*, *Bad Chili*, *Rumble Tumble*, *Captains Outrageous*, and *The Bottoms*.

**Geoffrey Leavenworth** Leavenworth is the author of *Isle of Misfortune*, a psychological thriller set in Galveston and based on personal experience.

**David L. Lindsey** The 13th book in Lindsey's series featuring Houston high-society homicide detective Stuart Haydon was published in April. Titles include *A Cold Mind*, *Heat From Another Sun*, *Spiral*, and *Absence of Light*.

**Allana Martin** Marfa resident Martin's series features amateur sleuth Texana Jones, who runs a trading post in the Big Bend area. Titles include *Death of a Healing Woman*, *Death of a Saint Maker*, and *Death of the Last Villista*.

**D.R. (Doris) Meredith** The Texas Panhandle is often the setting for mysteries by this former librarian. Meredith's series features Sheriff Charles Matthews and reference librarian Megan Clark. Titles include *The Sheriff and the Branding*

*Iron Murders, The Sheriff and the Panhandle Murders, Murder by Reference*, and *Murder Past Due*.

**Ben Rehder** Game Warden John Marlin, Sheriff Herbert Mackey and absurd humor are featured in *Buck Fever* and *Bone Dry*.

**Clay Reynolds** Crime novels by this native Texas author include *Rage* (originally published as *Agatite*), which tells of a crime spree in a small town west of Wichita Falls, and *Players*, a Dallas-based thriller that has been described as "Tarantino meets McMurtry."

**Rick Riordan** San Antonio P.I. Tres Navarre has a Ph.D. in medieval studies and an enchilada-eating cat. Titles include *Big Red Tequila*, *The Widower's Two-Step*, *The Last King of Texas*, and *Cold Spring*.

**Steven Saylor** In *A Twist at the End*, O. Henry solves a series of murders that actually took place in Austin about the time the storyteller lived here and was tried for embezzlement in the 1880s. Author Steven Saylor divides his time between Austin and Berkeley, California, and pens a series of so-called "ancient historical" mysteries titled "Roma Sub Rosa."

**Aileen Schumacher** Petroleum engineer Schumacher writes page-turning mysteries featuring El Paso detectives David Alvarez and Scott Faulkner. Titles include *Framework for Death*, *Affirmative Reaction*, and *Engineered for Murder*.

**Doug Swanson** Offbeat Dallas detective Jack Flipppo stars in Swanson's wry series. Titles include *Big Town*, *96 Tears*, *Dreamboat*, and *House of Corrections*.

**Mary Willis Walker** Tenacious Austin crime reporter Molly Cates writes for "Lone Star Monthly" and gets mixed up in murder. Titles include *The Red Scream*, *Under the Beetle's Cellar*, and *All the Dead Lie Down*.

**Anne Wingate** Japanese-American police chief Mark Shigata solves murders from Bayport. Wingate also writes under the pseudonyms of Lee Martin and Martha G. Webb. Titles in the Shigata series include *The Eye of Anna*, *The Buzzards Must Also Be Fed*, and *Yazuka, Go Home!*

Most of this information came from the Southwestern Writers Collection at Texas State University. For the full bibliography, go to [www.library.txstate.edu/swwc/exhibits/mystbib.html](http://www.library.txstate.edu/swwc/exhibits/mystbib.html).



# MURDER,

## THEY WRITE

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS

PHOTOS BY GENO ESPONDA

THE BUMPY, CALICHE ROAD WINDS PAST ROCKY, CEDAR-COVERED SLOPES AND SEVERAL FENCED PASTURES WITH HORSES MUNCHING LAZILY ON HAY BEFORE IT DEAD-ENDS AT MEADOW KNOLL, AN IDYLIC ENCLAVE OF HERB AND ROSE GARDENS, SHADED FOOTPATHS BY A RUNNING CREEK, AND A SMALL MENAGERIE OF ANIMALS, BOTH FURRED AND FEATHERED.

AH, BUT DON'T LET THE PEACEFUL SETTING FOOL YOU. MURDERS HAPPEN HERE ON A REGULAR BASIS.

**F**iguratively speaking, that is. Meadow Knoll, secluded somewhere east of Bertram in Burnet County, is where author Susan Wittig Albert and her partner/husband, Bill Albert, share life, tend their gardens and plot one murder mystery after another. Susan is the author of the popular China Bayles herbal mystery series based in Central Texas. Under the pen name of Robin Paige, she and Bill together write a Victorian-era whodunit series.

"We think we have the nicest place in the universe," says Susan, standing on the couple's back deck that overlooks a grassy field and rolling hills in the distance.

Like the Alberts, a number of Texas-based mystery writers weave intriguing tales as diverse as the places they live. Readers may find themselves scouring for clues in the Big Bend area, questioning suspects in a small town on the





Gulf Coast, or tracking a vicious killer in downtown San Antonio.

Some authors write in graphic, grisly detail of the murder and mayhem that unfolds in their psychological thrillers, chillers and mysteries. Not the Alberts. Their books fit a genre called “cozies,” where violence and sex stay off the pages, and characters only swear now and then. Cozies especially appeal to women readers, who often relate to the heroine and her outlook on life.

China Bayles, Susan’s ongoing character in the herbal series, exemplifies the strong, fiercely independent woman whom many readers admire. Fed up with stress and traffic jams, China quits her high-paying job as an attorney in Houston and opens Thyme and Seasons Herb Company in Pecan Springs, a fictional small town located between Austin and San Antonio. So far, she’s avoided marriage; then she meets Mike McQuaid, a good-looking former cop with a young son. Ruby Wilcox, her flamboyant best friend, runs the New Age shop housed in China’s century-old stone building. Though they all live, as China observes, “an ordinary life in an ordinary town,” the trio still manages to stumble upon a murder now and then.

“These aren’t sentimental books, by any means,” Susan says. “Sometimes they challenge conventional assumptions of law and justice, but they are charged with compassion and caring.”

Not surprisingly, Susan’s life as a writer started almost as abruptly as China’s herbal endeavor.

“I was writing nights and weekends because I knew I didn’t want to stay there and do academics any more,” she says of her former position as vice president of academic affairs at Southwest Texas State University (now Texas State University) in San Marcos. “So in 1984, I started writing. I bought an armload of young adult books, read them, and thought ‘I can do that.’ I wrote three chapters and a plot outline and sent them off to a publisher. An editor called me later and said, ‘You’re not going to believe this, but I’m going to buy your book.’”

It wasn’t long before Susan quit her job and started writing full-time. In 1986, she met Bill Albert, a programmer and systems analyst, through a video dating service. They married a few months later. “It didn’t take long to figure that one out,” Susan says with a laugh.

She also quickly discovered that Bill had a penchant for concocting devilishly intricate plots so she recruited him as a writing partner. Together, they wrote nearly a dozen young adult novels a year between 1986 and 1991, including books in the Nancy Drew and Hardy Boys series.

To supplement their income, Susan enrolled in a wreath-making class at the Herb Bar in Austin. For two years, she made and sold herbal wreaths, along with other herbal crafts. The hobby led to whole new chapter in her writing career. “China came out of my interest in herbs and leaving my career,” Susan recalls.

Her first China Bayles mystery, *Thyme of Death*, came out in 1992. Her 12th book in the series, *Dilly of a Death*, was released earlier this year. Each novel features information and lore about a specific herb. Most of the books also feature recipes.

“I always start with a title,” Susan says. “I can’t write a book without a title. And I like titles that have something a little ominous about them. *Chile Death* and *Dilly of a Death* turned out funny, actually. *Blood Root* was a wonderful book, but it was set in Mississippi. *Blood root* doesn’t grow in Texas. I don’t like to manufacture things, so I went to Vicksburg and got interested in that area.”

Susan and Bill also regularly travel to England, a favorite destination, so they can research and develop more plots for their Victorian-era mysteries that now number 10 (*Death at Hyde Park*

was published this year). Susan also embarked on a new project this year—a series of mysteries featuring the beloved children’s author/illustrator, Beatrix Potter.

“We live in a world of books being written and being completed, thought about and hoped for,” Susan says.

“And promoted,” Bill adds with a wry grin.

Which translates to lots of publicity tours that take them away from home, the place they always prefer to be. “We enjoy our life here,” Susan says simply.

Typically, a day together at home starts at 7:30 a.m., when the Alberts walk across Meadow Knoll with their two black Labs, Zach and Lady, to feed four Barbados sheep, their “mowing machines.” Shadow, their black cat, sticks close to the house, as do a small flock of ducks and geese led by a domineering Toulouse goose named Major Gander.

From 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Susan writes in her office with only a break for lunch and chores. Each day, she strives to add at least another 1,500 words to her current manuscript. (Novels average 90,000 words in length.)

Bill has his own office in the modest doublewide home they share. Their married life began in a nearby mobile home they now use for crafts and storage. “Bill asked me what kind of house I wanted, and I said, ‘instant,’” Susan says. “We paid cash for it. I wanted to write and have no mortgage. We crammed ourselves into it and had a crash course in intimacy.” Susan

## Chili Queen Chili

(a traditional Texas chili recipe from the Institute of Texan Cultures)

2 pounds beef shoulder, cut into 1/2-inch cubes  
1 pound pork shoulder, cut into 1/2-inch cubes  
1/4 cup suet  
1/4 cup pork fat  
3 medium onions, chopped  
6 cloves garlic, minced  
1 quart water  
4 ancho chiles  
1 serrano chile  
6 dried red chiles  
1 tablespoon comino seeds, freshly ground  
1 tablespoon Mexican oregano  
Salt to taste

Place lightly floured beef and pork cubes with suet and pork fat in heavy chili pot and cook quickly, stirring often. Add onions and garlic and cook until they are tender and limp. Add water to mixture and simmer slowly while preparing chiles. Remove stems and seeds from chiles and chop very finely. Grind chiles in molcajete (mortar and pestle). After meat, onion and garlic have simmered about one hour, add chiles. Grind comino seeds in molcajete and add oregano with salt to mixture. Simmer another 2 hours. Remove suet and skim off some fat. Serve.

—From Susan Wittig Albert’s *Chile Death*



## FOUR STAR FARE *for the* LONE STAR STATE

★★★★

*Mouthwatering  
recipes from  
the heart of Texas.*

### WAFFLE IRON CORNBREAD

1 egg  
1 cup milk  
1 cup flour  
1 cup cornmeal  
¾ teaspoon salt  
2 tablespoons sugar  
4 teaspoons baking powder  
2 tablespoons melted fat

Beat egg together with milk. Add dry ingredients, mixing well. Stir in melted fat. Cook in pre-heated, lightly greased waffle iron just as you would regular waffles.

Cindy Walton, *Big Country EC*



### ORDER FORM

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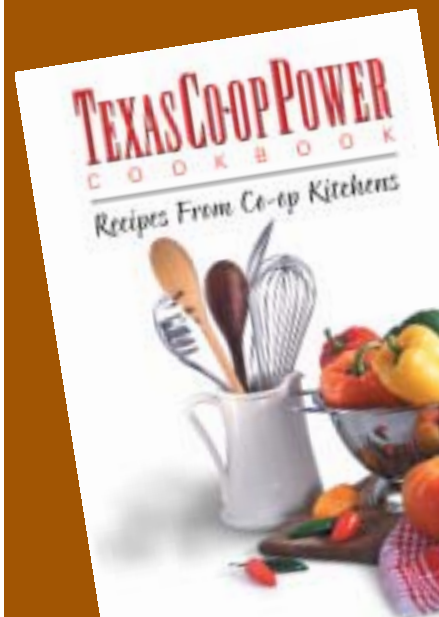
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laughs. "We wrote 60-something books for young adults and seven adult mysteries in there. Bill used to call it the book factory."

In their spare time, Bill tends to his woodworking hobbies and pecan orchard, Susan to her many gardens. "They're cottage gardens," she says. "They're not formally kept. They're a heap and a jumble—rosemary growing next to southernwood next to marigolds. We also have a lot of old roses. They're not as persnickety. We grow anything that will grow here and be happy."

The Alberts are content to live, write and plot one murder after another at Meadow Knoll.

"Any normal human being would be thinking of retirement next year and not the next book in the series," Bill grumbles good-naturedly.

"China will go on for a long time," Susan promises. "I've got a whole list of titles!"



Pedernales Electric Cooperative serves Burnet County.

Sheryl Smith-Rodgers lives in Blanco. A frequent contributor, she has written about baseball in Weimar, "Greater Tuna," and volunteer fire departments for Texas Co-op Power.



# SMOOTH SAILING

Don't let a safety accident spoil your boating fun. Remember these important rules and make sure that others observe them, too:

## Safety Rules for Sailing:

- Before you put your boat in the water, take time to visually survey your marina or favorite launching area. Note any overhead wires and share the information with others.
- Stepping your mast or sailing anywhere near an overhead power line is dangerous! Masts, fishing poles or tall radio antennae could contact overhead wires.
- Make a habit of looking up to check for lines before moving or rigging your vessel.
- Check navigation charts for the location of any underwater cables, and don't take the chance of disturbing these cables by anchoring your boat near them.

And always stay out of the water—whether boating or swimming—during a storm. If you're already in the water when a storm threatens, get out as quickly, and safely, as possible.

Follow these rules when boating and you'll always have more fun.



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# big little horses hearts

BY JIM BALL PHOTOS BY AVE BONAR AND JIM BALL



Photos this page: Jim Ball

Each visit involves hours of preparation and travel, but the effort pays off with big smiles from a nursing home resident.

A small cloud of doubt interrupted the spring sunshine at the Hearts and Hooves horse ranch as I gingerly loaded four horses through the tailgate of my SUV. “They love it,” my host, Veronique Matthews, assured me as she loaded five horses into her own vehicle. “Just drive carefully and don’t ask them for directions. They know we’re going somewhere, but they don’t know where.”



She parked Charlie, her standard poodle, in my front seat. "Charlie will make them behave if he has to," Veronique said. We were headed for a nursing home some 20 miles away from the Central Texas ranch. I drove carefully, only distracted when Prince Willie, a registered Miniature American Paint Horse, persistently snacked on my straw hat. Charlie seemed mildly amused and meted out no discipline at all.

The horses may not have known where they were going, but they sure knew what to do when they got there. They jumped out onto the lawn at the

down and held on for dear life, with my hair just flying in the wind." Transported by her memories, she held on to Petey, a beautiful miniature with a Thoroughbred look, and he seemed to understand what she meant. "That was a great day for a horse ride," she said. She smiled at her fellow residents and family, and they all smiled back.

### special work for special horses

These miniature horses' job is to spread cheer to the elderly and kids with disabilities or illness. Matthews trains them, but she learned the technique from the tiniest miniature of them all,

and he might never have been able to stand up, let alone have any fun. The vet considered putting him down, but Matthews took him in. She found that healing Toby took her mind off her own troubles. Toby, in his way, took care of her, too. Toby was Matthews' soft, warm pillow when she was flat on her back with illness. There, she got the idea that this little horse could help other people with similar troubles, so she founded Hearts and Hooves, a nonprofit herd of little horses that kicks up clouds of laughter, healing and gentle understanding wherever they go.



Jim Ball



Ave Bonar

**Left: Veronique gets help taking the horses for a visit. Right: Daniel Gutz, 9, a student in the Elementary Independence Weekend program at the Texas School for the Blind, gets a fond nuzzle from one of the minis.**

nursing home and walked right inside where most of the residents were eagerly awaiting their appearance.

Some of the miniatures walked all around the room and let everybody say hello and pet them. Some of the horses picked a resident and stayed put, quiet and loving.

"This one's my favorite," said one of the patients. "He reminds me of my horse when I was just a girl. One sunny day we were riding down the lane and the dog spooked my horse. I hunkered

Toby, who stands just 22 inches and will be 3 years old next January.

Back in 2002, Matthews was down and almost out. Her marriage of 12 years had ended, and she was undergoing painful cancer treatment. Along came Toby, an infant miniature buckskin with some characteristics of a birth defect known as dwarfism. Well-bred minis are scaled-down, tiny replicas of recognized full-sized breeds. Toby's legs were too short and weak for his body, his feet were malformed,

Matthews still suffers from pain, but she doesn't dwell on it much. She's too busy with horses to clean, hooves to trim, and even horseshoes to make. She fashions custom horseshoes with plumber's putty so Toby (or any other horse with deformed feet) can stand and walk like a miniature champion. Matthews figured out that the putty shapes easily, sets hard, and can be worked with farrier's tools like a hoof knife and rasp handle. Toby always sports customized, full-dress miniature horseshoes.

## a herd of blessings

Most days, Matthews and her minis get up early and get themselves ready to visit young and old people. Destinations are children's hospitals, special schools, rehab facilities, nursing homes and hospices—all places where the miniatures can ensure that folks will have a much better day than they usually do.

The ever-helpful Charlie herds the horses into the garage for their morning shampoo. The minis—Toby, the dwarf buckskin; Calvin, a registered bay; Joey Ramone, a mahogany bay; Petey, Willie, LuLu, MiniMe, Chester

trailer and five or six more into her recently donated van. Toby often rides up front—wearing his seatbelt, of course.

## horse sense—it works

The doctors, therapists and nurses who see these amazing horse parties appreciate their therapeutic value. Dogs have long been trained for therapeutic and assistive work, but miniature horses have lately been strutting their stuff. The minis are, by nature, longer-living and more relaxed than dogs.

Karen Sams, a recreational therapist who works with patients of all ages, watches contentedly as her patients inter-

Horse therapy certainly worked for Linda Mulligan's mother. "She suffered terribly from a condition that was like a combination of Parkinson's and Alzheimer's," says Mulligan. "Then along came these wonderful little horses and a joy came to my mom that never left her. She would show everybody pictures of little Toby sleeping in her lap and would squeal happily to anyone who would listen, 'That's my horse! That's my pet! That's my little Toby!'"

Matthews, who apparently "speaks horse," knows exactly what the animals are doing when they clomp lightly up to a troubled patient. "They know instantly



Photos this page: Ave Bonar

**Left:** Anthony Gonzales, a freshman in Crockett High School's Life Skills Class, helps run the little horses on Veronique's ranch. The class donated \$200 to Hearts and Hooves from sales in their school canteen. **Right:** Marguerite Annis, surrounded by family and friends, is visited by Veronique, Duck and Maverick, a dwarf horse.

and whoever else is going to work that day—stand patiently while Matthews washes them from head to hoof.

They range in height from 22 to 29 inches at the withers, in age from 1 to 10 years old, but most of them are just 2- and 3-year-olds, and they act like it. They're excited and playful, enjoying being lathered up before their big show.

Before you know it, the sun's full up and it's time to feed 'em, load 'em and move 'em out. Matthews can fit at least 10 minis in a recently donated horse

act with the horses. "These little horses bring them sweet memories, unconditional love and a safe, comfortable kind of excitement," Sams says. "Every time they show up, our patients get motivated toward wellness and success."

Knoel Babin, a nurse who works with older adults, says, "The horses seem to work on whatever patients need. Just their presence lifts depression, a condition that seriously affects older folks. The research shows that pet therapy works."

how you feel, and they love you unconditionally," she says, "because most of my minis were rescued from miserable lives to do a real job that needs doing."

Miniature horses were first bred 400 years ago to entertain the children of royalty, and today's kids still get a royal thrill from playing with them. On a Friday afternoon visit to the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, the little horses stand patiently while children run their hands over their backs, pat their



noses or smooth their manes. Before long, the children are animated and smiling widely.

A.J., a once suicide-prone teenager who now does motivational speaking to other teens with emotional problems, sometimes comes along with Matthews. "I talk to kids who are upset and resentful like I was," he says. "The horses communicate with the kids and then the kids start communicating with each other. Kids like me get upset and depressed, but being around animals gives us a break from ourselves. All of a sudden, we forget our problems and we start having fun."



Jim Ball

**After a long day, ready for a good night's sleep.**

Matthews still lives every day with pain that would knock a horse down. "My mind has this huge agenda every day for what my body is going to accomplish," she says. "Some days, my body says 'no way.' But I've got volunteers, a strong board of directors, generous supporters and, most of all, I've got these little horses with places to go and people to see; and we're going to do it. All over Texas, if we can."

Thanks to recent donations to Hearts and Hooves, a registered nonprofit

501(c)(3) organization, Matthews doesn't run low on gas money as often. In addition to the donated van and horse trailer, the minis recently received a beautifully cared-for motor home. Hearts and Hooves can now travel farther and help more people discover what all the fuss is about.

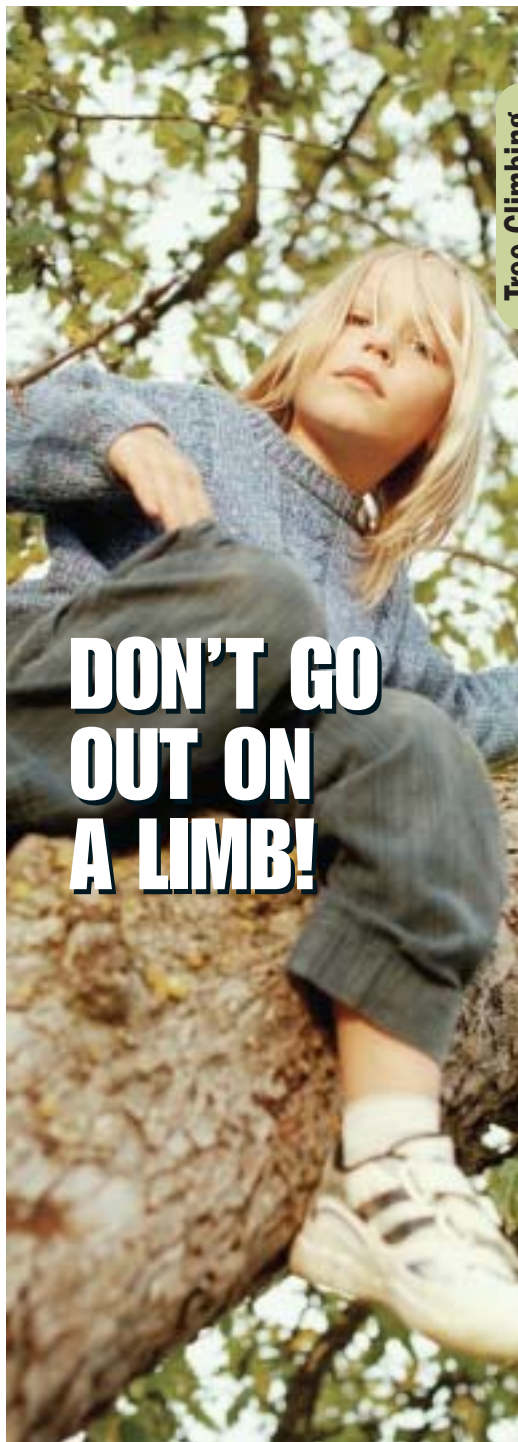
Hearts and Hooves still needs a pole barn, more veterinary services, volunteers around the ranch, and good old tax-deductible cash. It's more like a dream than a master plan, but it seems to be coming together at a gallop.

**To find out more about these loving little horses in the heart of Texas, visit their website at [www.heartsandhooves.org](http://www.heartsandhooves.org) or contact them at their e-mail address: [heartsandhooves@austin.rr.com](mailto:heartsandhooves@austin.rr.com). Matthews can train animal lovers to do this work wherever they live.**

Hearts and Hooves gets its power from Bluebonnet EC.

Jim Ball writes from Austin where he also works to help publish The Texas Observer magazine.

Ave Bonar is an award-winning photographer who lives in Austin.



**Tree Climbing**

Your safety is a top priority at your electric co-op. And it's even more important when it comes to our kids. It's up to all of us to watch out for their safety.

### **Safety Rules for Trees:**

- Don't plant trees or install tall playground equipment under or near power lines.
- Don't build tree houses in trees near electric lines.
- Don't allow children to climb trees growing near electric lines.
- Teach your children always to look up to check for power lines before climbing trees or any tall objects.
- Keep children away from ladders, poles or work equipment that may be near power lines.
- Set a good example by following these rules yourself.

And the Number One safety rule for everyone to remember is this: Don't touch a power line or anything that's touching the power line. No one can tell simply by looking at a line whether it is energized or not, and contact with a power line can be deadly. Look up and live!



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# SAFETY UNDER THE SUN

The warmth of sunshine invites many of us outside for recreation and chores. But don't let that sunshine soothe you into ignoring electric safety rules. Always observe the following:

☀ If yard work is the task for the day, be sure all appliance and extension cords are in good repair and sized and grounded properly.

☀ If you have a backyard swimming pool, or even a wading pool for the kids, never allow electric appliances near the water. You should

also avoid handling electric appliances if you are wet.

☀ Fly kites only in open fields free of electric lines. Overhead electric lines are not insulated and are extremely dangerous.

☀ Make certain any "climbing" trees are also clear of electric lines. The branches can conduct electricity, creating a deadly hazard for the climber.

☀ If you like sailing, keep it enjoyable by always looking up to be sure there are no power lines in the

area when launching your boat or raising masts. And when out on the water, avoid areas where overhead power lines are present.

☀ Camping and outdoor cooking also present potential hazards. Be sure all electric cords are in good repair and properly grounded. And check the location of overhead lines when setting up tents, television antennas, etc.

Sunshine and electricity can be good companions—but only if you take the time to be safe.

## TRELLISES FOR SUMMERTIME SHADING

Trellises can help reduce the cost of air conditioning for homes in hot climates by providing shade where you need it the most. Trellises should be installed on the east, west, or south side of your home, outside the rooms that tend to overheat during the hot days of summer.

Owners of manufactured homes in the Southwest have developed some very creative uses for trellises. Some mobile-home owners on sun-drenched sites build trellises combined with overhangs to create shaded walkways or porches along the walls of their homes. Many homeowners also use trellises to shade their decks.

Trellises can be covered with vines, but others provide shade all by themselves. Some of the most popular trellis vines include morning glory, clematis, pinwheel jasmine, wisteria and grape. Consult your agricultural extension agent or local nursery about the characteristics of locally available trellis vines.

Ask these questions when choosing trellis vines:

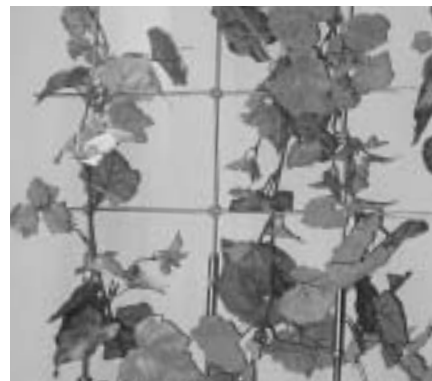
- How heavy is the full-grown vine?
- What type of fruits and flowers will it produce?
- How deep will its roots grow?
- Is the vine evergreen in winter?

• How long will it take for the vine to cover the trellis?

• How much litter will it produce?  
Be sure to consider how an improperly designed trellis could damage your home.

If you live in a wet climate, don't install a trellis against your foundation where it could cause moisture problems. And don't install a plant-covered trellis over foundation drainage systems that could be clogged by plant roots.

Full-grown vines can be quite heavy, so you should design your trellis to support the mature weight of the vine you choose. You can build a trellis yourself out of rot-resistant wood,



steel or plastic materials. There are also many manufactured trellises for sale at nurseries and home centers.

Source: John Krigger, Saturn Resource Management, [www.residential-energy.com](http://www.residential-energy.com)

*Happy  
Father's  
Day*

SUNDAY, JUNE 20





# SUMMER COMFORT: THE HUMAN FACTOR

**Y**ou can help reduce your cooling bills if you understand how humans stay cool. Your body prefers to remain at a constant temperature of about 98 degrees, and it releases heat in three ways to do this.

The first way your body cools itself is by giving up heat to the air rising off your skin. This convection takes place when your body warms the surrounding air, causing the air

to rise and allowing cooler air to move against your skin.

The second type of heat loss takes place when your warm skin loses heat to surrounding cooler objects such as walls and furniture. If these objects are relatively cool, this process of radiation allows your body to lose a lot of unwanted heat. If the objects are warm they will accept less of your heat.

The third type of heat loss is the evaporation that occurs when you sweat or douse yourself with water. If you create more body heat than you can lose through convection and radiation, you begin to sweat and evaporation takes place. If you then stand in front of a fan, your skin will cool rapidly. This is because water carries heat away as it evaporates from your skin.

Room fans and ceiling fans circulate air within an occupied room to increase convection and evaporation from your skin. These circulating fans can help you avoid the use of expensive air conditioning when the weather is only moderately hot. They also work well when used in conjunction with air conditioning by



allowing you to set your cooling thermostat higher. Be sure to leave your windows closed when you run your air conditioner.

You can help heat radiate from your skin by installing energy conservation measures that keep your home's walls, ceiling and floor cooler. Plant trees around your home, install awnings or window shades, install attic insulation, or apply a reflective coating on your roof to stop heat before it enters your home.

Source: John Krigger, Saturn Resource Management, [www.residential-energy.com](http://www.residential-energy.com)

## METER TAMPERING CAN KILL

**T**ampering with your electric meter can cost you your life.

No, the crime won't land you on death row when the electric cooperative—whose technicians are trained to spot electricity theft—reports you to the police. In that case, you'll be charged with theft, possibly sent to jail, and definitely slapped with fines of about triple the money you thought you could save by rigging your meter.

But an attempt to bypass or alter an electric meter can result in shock, fire, explosion or electrocution. And if you're lucky enough not to get hurt, you'll still leave the tampered meter in a state that's dangerous to others, including the electric cooperative employee who reads or maintains it.

Plus, you're driving up electric costs for your neighbors, just as shoplifters force department stores to inflate the price of their clothes to cover the thefts.

The cooperative does not have to catch you red-handed to turn you over to police. In fact, the law assumes that a person who benefits from the use of stolen electricity has tampered with the meter.

Your electric cooperative can also disconnect your service.

## SMALL APPLIANCES, CORDS MOST LIKELY TO ELECTROCUTE

**T**he U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission aims to reduce the death rate from consumer product-related electrocutions by 20 percent by the end of this year. You can help.

Extension cords and small appliances, including microwave ovens and battery chargers, are the most frequently reported group of consumer products involved in electrocutions. Large appliances, such as air conditioners, pumps and generators, are next, followed by power tools, including saws, drills and pressure washers.

Installed household wiring, lamps and light fixtures account for many electrocutions, as do antennas and ladders that come into contact with power lines.

Many of the accidents stem from misuse of the products.

It's important to use electrical products only as directed by the manufacturer; to keep them away from water; to plug them into outlets equipped with ground-fault circuit interrupters; and to discard or repair them if they're damaged or if their cords are faulty.

# What Law There Was, West of the Pecos

BY JUDDI MORRIS

In the early days of the United States, most Texans believed in the cowtown motto: "There's more law in a Colt pistol than in all the law books." Judge Roy Bean of Langtry, who was known as a "rope necktie judge," bore out the truth of that statement.

Bean had a shady past, but by posting a thousand-dollar bond, he was appointed justice of the peace for Pecos County, where he was touted as "the Law West of the Pecos," with a jurisdiction extending 400 miles.

This may sound like a penny dreadful about a fictional Texas character, but according to the Texas State Historical Association, the judge actually held court in his saloon, the Jersey Lilly, named after an English actress, Lily Langtry, whom he had never met but idolized. Langtry's pictures papered the walls of the bar, and anyone who hoped to gain favor with Bean had only to admire her voluptuous beauty and talent.

Bean could barely read and knew only a smattering of law out of the 1879 edition of the revised *Statutes of Texas*. The judge used other law books sent to him by the state either to light his stove or as "paper" for his outhouse. Laws that he disliked, he ignored.

Texas authorities basically left him alone until a federal judge heard that Bean was granting divorces. Almost any grounds for a split met with Bean's approval as long as the complainant had 10 dollars. State officials sent word that the judge could perform marriages, but not grant divorces. Bean's reputed reply was "Well, I married 'em, so I figure I've got the right to rectify my errors."

The judge opened his court by saying, "Gents, this Honorable Court is now in session, an' if any of you gander-eyed galoots wants a snort afore we start, let him step up to the bar and name his brand." Once court

was in session, he told the jury what decision it should hand down. Jurists who failed to agree with Bean left the saloon with lighter wallets from trumped-up fines levied by the judge. In a frayed straw hat and a dirty shirt gaping open over his large belly, he fleeced defendants and accusers alike, and plundered any unlucky traveler who turned up.

The astute Bean had built the Jersey Lilly a few feet from the Southern

six-gun country as "sissy," but if a cowboy came in complaining about a belly ache, Bean would mix him up a glass of Grizzly Bear's Milk—a shot of whiskey laced with milk and a touch of sugar. Old timers often hobbled into the Jersey Lilly for a hot toddy to warm their old bones and get the day started.

During his reign as "the Law West of the Pecos," Bean was feared and hated. "Hang 'em first, try 'em later," was his motto. On the flimsiest evidence, he sentenced supposed horse thieves and cattle rustlers to death. Offenders were quickly strung up to the nearest stout limb. Their horses were slapped from under them, and the victims/culprits were left twisting in the dusty Texas wind. Five minutes later, Bean would saunter back into the bar, dust his hands and ask customers, "Well, boys, what's yer pleasure, beer or whiskey?"

Contrary to several books and movies, Bean was not gunned down. He died of natural causes after a night of drinking in Del Rio. In an ironic twist of fate, after Bean's death, the Jersey Lilly herself came to visit. The judge had been telling folks for years that she would give a concert in Langtry. So great was his belief she would come that he had built himself a new house, which he called the Opera House. Around 10 months after Bean's death, the actress, on tour in America, stepped off the Southern Pacific at Langtry. She had decided to accept the judge's invitation. "It was a short visit," she later wrote in her memoirs, "but an unforgettable one."

The Jersey Lilly Saloon is preserved at the Judge Roy Bean Visitor Center in Langtry. [lytic@dot.state.tx.us](mailto:lytic@dot.state.tx.us)

Juddi Morris of Paso Robles, California, has written about such historical subjects as *Teddy bears* and *Harvey Girls* for *Texas Co-op Power*.



Aletha St. Romain

Pacific railroad tracks where incoming trains stopped to take on water. As the train stopped, passengers scrambled out of the hot, dirty cars and stampeded into the saloon to quench their thirst. To their dismay, they found that beer sold for an unheard of dollar a bottle. Anyone foolish enough to complain or ask for change from a larger bill was ignored. The judge pretended to be too busy to handle the money more than the one time it took to shove it into the till. When the train whistles blew and customers asked for their change, Bean slapped them with a fine of the exact amount. Nobody wanted to be left in the godforsaken little burg, so passengers raced across the tracks and scrambled aboard.

Although there was no ice for drinks at the Jersey Lilly, Bean would drop a lump of glass into a tumbler of whiskey and stir as if it were ice. Mixed drinks were frowned on in

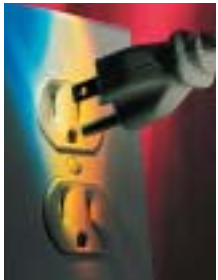


# Electrillo Encounters Dr. Voltäge

**W**e can only hope that future episodes of Electrillo will explain what drove the evil Dr. Voltäge to the dark side. There may be a clue if you look at the crafty bovine's nostrils. They look suspiciously like an old-fashioned two-prong plug that doesn't have a grounding pin.

New appliances have a third pin—a grounding pin that protects you from getting an electric charge when you insert a plug into an outlet. Two-prong plugs are proper for appliances that do not rely on grounding to provide protection from shock, such as “double-insulated” power tools.

The third prong has an important function. If a hot wire comes loose



inside an ungrounded metal case, and the loose wire touches the case, anyone who touches it will get a shock. With a third prong, electricity from the hot wire

flows straight to the ground, and trips the fuse or breaks the circuit. The appliance won't work, but it won't kill you either.

Sometimes people cut off the grounding pin of a three-prong plug to try to fit it into a two-pin outlet. That's a very dangerous thing to do. Did someone try that on Dr. Voltäge? Did such a reckless act frizzle his hair and fry his brain? Only cartoonist Keith Graves knows, and he's not telling—not yet.

When there's a three-pin appliance and a two-pin plug in your house, your parents have a couple of choices.

1. Use an adapter, or
2. Call an electrician to have your outlets updated.

It's important to pay attention to such details because plugs and cords are involved in about 20 percent of all home electrical wiring system fires each year, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

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*, *Uncle Blubbafink's Seriously Ridiculous Stories* and *Loretta: Ace Pinky Scout*.



# Going Back to Panna Maria

*On a rainy Sunday morning in April, I pack a map, notebook, pens, bottle of water, and stack of historical books and pamphlets and head south from Austin to Panna Maria. The tiny village doesn't even rate a dot on my slick, laminated Texas map. But I know I won't get lost. Once I get to Wilson County, then Karnes County, I'll be home free.*

My first memory of Panna Maria was another April Sunday: Easter 1952, to be exact. I was 5 years old, accompanying my grandparents to mass at the small, white church where my grandmother was baptized—the church that still serves as spiritual heart and civic nerve center for more than 70 families. It's the mirror image of a church in the centuries-old hamlet of Pluznica, my family's ancestral home in the southern part of Poland once known as Silesia.

Stories of Panna Maria were as much a part of my childhood and adolescence as Golden Books and Nancy Drew mysteries. But the Panna Maria stories kept me awake at night. A ghost who played the church organ at midnight. Fires in the cemetery that left neither hint of cause nor trace of ash. A headless priest come back from the dead to fulfill a promise not kept. Jackrabbits as big as kangaroos.

Then there were the stories of the early settlers, their landing by ship in Galveston, their long walk to Indianola, and from there the exhausting journey by foot and ox cart to what they believed would be fertile, rolling farmland, but turned out to be hard, flat scrublands of cactus and mesquite. "Oh, child, they had it hard," my grandmother would say, shaking her head from

side to side in sympathy.

Father Leopold Moczygamba was a young Franciscan missionary serving the German Catholic settlers in New Braunfels in 1852 when he wrote to his five brothers in Pluznica telling them about the tremendous opportunities for economic and social advancement in Texas. His letters described the flourishing farms around the Guadalupe River and the prosperity of the German farmers. He selected a parcel of land near New Braunfels, christened it Cracow, and urged his brothers to come. When the land deal didn't materialize, Leopold scrambled to find an alternative site.

That four of the five Moczygamba brothers decided to leave their home in 1854 on the strength of a few letters was an unprecedented event. But more startling still was the fact that they would make the journey with more than 100 compatriots. As the emigrants traveled through Berlin, the press noted, "On the 26th of September, 150 Poles from Upper Silesia arrived by train [on their way to] Bremen, from where they plan to go by ship to Texas (to America). This is worth mentioning because, as is known, Slavic people are so attached to their native land that emigration among them is extraordinary."

The immigrants arrived at Panna Maria on Christmas

Eve and gathered under the live oak tree that still stands next to the Church of the Immaculate Conception. Father Moczygamba said mass for the bedraggled lot of travelers and broke the news that they were pretty much on their own. Leopold had purchased a small amount of land, not enough to provide each family with their own parcel. Other land was available, but at a high cost.

Within two years, the story goes, some of the original settlers were so distraught they threatened to lynch or drown Father Leopold. Outcast by their English-speaking neighbors, scorned for their traditional peasant dress, frustrated in their attempts to farm the anemic land, they felt angry and betrayed. Father Leopold wisely accepted an assignment elsewhere and finally wound up in Detroit.

Eventually, the settlers' fortunes turned. They built their church, constructed wood and rock houses, worked the land, raised families, and established themselves as citizens of Texas. Panna Maria was only

the first of a cluster of Polish communities around the juncture of the San Antonio and Cibolo rivers.

*I'm thinking about all these things when I turn onto Highway 81 East, recently named the Father Leopold Moczygamba Memorial Highway. Panna Maria actually forgave Leopold a long time ago. In 1974, the church parishioners agreed it was time to bring him home. His body was disinterred from a Detroit cemetery and reburied under the live oak tree where he said that Christmas Eve mass. There was a big celebration.*

I pass an abandoned cotton gin and feed mill with Witamy (Welcome) painted in red on a large cylindrical storage bin. I drive past the remains of the little rock house where my grandmother was born. I park my car and stand in the churchyard. I hear birds chirping and a dog barking in the distance. Occasionally a few raindrops fall from the live oak's leaves. The rest is silence. The fields are deep green from recent heavy

*I drive past the remains of the little rock house where my grandmother was born. I park my car and stand in the churchyard. I hear birds chirping and a dog barking in the distance. Occasionally a few raindrops fall from the live oak's leaves. The rest is silence.*





1987—Schoolboys practice for an upcoming track meet on the grounds of the now closed Panna Maria elementary school.

rains. I can almost sense my grandmother's hand cupping my elbow to hurry me into church.

Over time things have changed—a little. A few new houses have been built; a one-story brick school building, once a public school staffed by Felician Sisters, is now empty; the former convent is now a bed-and-breakfast; the old St. Joseph School is a museum. The big, white, wooden parish hall looks the way it did several decades ago when I attended one of Panna Maria's legendary two-day Polish weddings. ("Attend" really doesn't do justice to the level of guest participation in those exuberant feasts of food, music and dance.) The Pilarczyk grocery store, built when my grandmother was a girl, is now the center for the Panna Maria Historical Society. I go inside and take notes as local historian Elaine Moczygomba

tells me about upcoming events celebrating Panna Maria's 150th anniversary.

I have one more stop before I leave. I ask Elaine for directions to the farm where a friend from my youth has come home from California in the wake of her husband's death. I haven't seen her in 15 years, and she's not expecting me.

I wonder if her mother—now 90 and very frail—will remember me. I drive along the county road, thinking about my friend and her family, taking in the wildflowers, the young wheat, the expanse of farmland. I get distracted. I get stuck. My tires sink in several inches of soft, thick mud. No amount of gunning the engine will get me out.

I'm almost glad when this happens. It frees me. I can walk through the fields to my friend's house. I see it from the road.

After sloshing my way through an acre of tall grass and wildflowers, I reach dry ground and the farmhouse. It looks about the same as I remember. I expect the dogs to bark, but they are quiet. I reach the screened-in porch off the kitchen, knock on the door and enter. My friend is busy at the stove. Her brother sees me and tells her to look around. There is no faltering for the right words or the right thing to do. My friend and I hold each other tight. We don't need to speak.

Within minutes, I'm washing dishes as she fusses over the beans, takes the cakes from the oven, and tells her brother how to barbecue a beer-can chicken. I feel right at home.

Panna Maria is served by Karnes Electric Cooperative.

Carol Moczygomba is managing editor of *Texas Co-op Power* magazine. Father Leopold Moczygomba is her great, great, great, great uncle.

**P**anna Maria is historically significant as the first permanent Polish settlement in the United States. 2004 marks the 150th anniversary of its founding. Special events throughout the year mark the occasion, including a December 11 celebration open to the public, with invited guests from around the world.

The Homecoming Turkey Dinner, an annual event, is the community's largest fundraiser. This year's dinner is scheduled for October 10.

Stay overnight in Panna Maria at the Convent Bed & Breakfast. For reservations, call 830-789-2003.

For more information about Panna Maria events, contact Loretta Niestroy at 830-780-2650, or [http://pannamariatx.com/anniversary150\\_1.html](http://pannamariatx.com/anniversary150_1.html)

## Peach Season Is Here

**I**t's a great time to be a Texan—time to hit the Hill Country with your bushel basket and pick your own ... peaches, that is! There's nothing like picking these juicy jewels fresh off the tree and then heading back to the comfort of your air-conditioned home to can, freeze or bake up your favorite peach dishes. This month's recipe offerings are both delicious—one is about as easy as it gets; the other is more involved.

Easy Peach Cobbler is a recipe from my personal recipe box. Baked Country Peaches With White Peach Sorbet Over Sweet Shortcrust is from The Westin La Cantera's Executive Pastry Chef Henry Wesolowski. This is a version of his restaurant original that you can make at home. There are a lot of steps, but the final product is worth the work.

### Easy Peach Cobbler

1 stick butter  
1 cup sugar  
1 cup flour  
1/8 teaspoon salt  
3/4 cup milk  
3 cups peeled and sliced fresh peaches

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Melt stick of butter in a warm 8x8-inch casserole dish. Mix together sugar, flour and salt. Add to the butter and stir, adding milk. Lay peaches over batter. Do not stir. Bake for 1 hour.

Serves 9.

Serving size: 1 piece. Per serving: 264 calories, 3 grams protein, 11 grams fat, 40 grams carbohydrates, 144 milligrams sodium, 30 milligrams cholesterol

### Baked Country Peaches With White Peach Sorbet Over Sweet Shortcrust

**White Peach Sorbet**  
4 cups peaches, peeled and chopped  
3/4 cup sugar  
3/8 cup corn syrup  
1/4 cup fresh lemon juice

Place peaches in a saucepan, add sugars and bring to boil. Remove from heat and add lemon juice. Purée in



Rick Patrick

blender. Then place in ice cream machine and follow manufacturer's instructions for freezing.

#### Baked Peaches

4 ripe peaches  
1/2 cup sugar  
1/4 cup melted butter  
3 twigs lemon thyme

Preheat oven to 275 degrees. Place peaches in saucepan in barely simmering water. After 3-4 minutes, take them out and carefully peel them. Cut in half, removing seeds. Place peaches on a buttered baking sheet (with lip). Brush with melted butter and dust with sugar. Surround with thyme twigs. Bake until peaches turn amber, then add a small amount of water to the baking sheet and baste peaches with this juice. Cook till golden in color but still firm.

#### Sweet Shortcrust

2 cups bread flour

2 tablespoons baking powder  
1 3/8 cups butter  
1 3/8 cups sugar  
4 egg yolks

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Sift the flour and baking powder. In separate bowl, cream butter and sugar. In another bowl, whisk egg yolks. Add flour mixture to creamed butter, then add yolks. Mix and roll out on a sheet pan to rest. Once rested, cut 8 round "cookies" approximately a quarter-inch thick and a little larger in diameter than a baked peach half. Bake till light golden in color (10-15 minutes).

To assemble, place warm peach on shortcrust and top with a scoop of peach sorbet. Use the juice from the baked peaches as a sauce for the plate. Serves 8.

Serving size: 1 cookie with peach half and sorbet scoop. Per serving: 842 calories, 7 grams protein, 41 grams fat, 119 grams carbohydrates, 770 milligrams sodium, 207 milligrams cholesterol



September's recipe contest subject is Low-Carb Meals. It seems like everyone I know is on a low-carb diet these days. If you've found a tasty low-carb recipe while dieting, please send it in by June 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).

Peaches are simply the taste of summer in Texas, so of course we received some fantastic recipes. The winner is Rhonda Kay Smith, a member of Central Texas Electric Cooperative. Her Fredericksburg Peach Pound Cake has appeared in one of the Peach Tree Tea Room's cookbooks, but she's happy to share it here with us as well. She will receive a copy of the Texas Co-op Power Cookbook.

### Fredericksburg Peach Pound Cake

1 cup butter, softened  
3 cups sugar  
6 eggs, room temperature  
2 teaspoons vanilla  
3 cups flour  
1/4 teaspoon baking soda  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/2 cup sour cream  
2 cups ripe peaches, peeled and chopped  
Sweetened whipped cream and cinnamon for garnish

Grease and flour a 10-inch tube pan. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add the eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Add the vanilla. In a small bowl, combine flour, baking soda and salt; add to the creamed mixture. Fold in sour cream and chopped peaches. Pour into prepared pan. Bake for 1 1/4 to 1 1/2 hours, or until a toothpick comes out clean. To serve, top each slice with sweetened whipped cream with a dash of cinnamon on top. Serves 12.

Serving size: 1 piece. Per serving: 510 calories, 7 grams protein, 20 grams fat, 78 grams carbohydrates, 305 milligrams sodium, 139 milligrams cholesterol

### Berry Peach Crisp

2 cups blueberries  
3 peaches, peeled and sliced  
2 tablespoons sugar  
2 tablespoons cornstarch  
1/4 cup butter  
1/2 cup flour  
1/2 cup uncooked oatmeal  
3/4 cup brown sugar

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Mix blueberries, peaches, cornstarch and sugar in an 8x8-inch pan. Combine remaining ingredients and mix until crumbly. Spread crumb mixture on top of fruit and bake for 35 minutes.

Serve with vanilla ice cream.  
Serves 9.

Serving size: 1 piece. Per serving: 183 calories, 2 grams protein, 6 grams fat, 33 grams carbohydrates, 59 milligrams sodium, 14 milligrams cholesterol

Marlene Bulloch, Magic Valley EC

### Fresh Peach Pie

1 pie crust (9-inch), baked and cooled  
1 cup sugar  
3 tablespoons cornstarch  
1 cup water  
4 tablespoons dry peach gelatin mix  
1/2 cup sugar  
1 package (8 ounces) softened cream cheese  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
4-5 fresh peaches, sliced  
1 small carton Cool Whip

Mix first 3 ingredients in a saucepan. Boil until thick and clear, then add the gelatin mix. Let cool. Meanwhile, mix together sugar, cream cheese and vanilla. Cream until smooth and spread in the bottom of the cooled pie crust. Combine the sliced peaches with the cooled gelatin mixture. Place on top of cream cheese mixture. Cover all with Cool Whip and refrigerate a few hours before serving. Serves 8.

Serving size: 1 slice.  
Per serving: 526 calories, 5 grams protein, 23 grams fat, 74 grams carbohydrates, 262 milligrams sodium, 31 milligrams cholesterol

Nancy McClendon,  
Greenbelt EC

### Fresh Peach Cake

1/2 cup vegetable oil  
1 1/2 cups sugar  
2 eggs  
2 cups flour  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
1 1/2 cups mashed peaches  
1/2 cup chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Combine oil and sugar; beat well. Add eggs; beat well. Combine flour, soda, salt and cinnamon; mix well. Gradually add to creamed mixture, mixing just until blended. Stir in pecans and peaches. Spoon batter into greased and floured 13x9x2-inch baking pan. Bake for 40-45 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean. Serve with fresh peach slices and whipped cream or peach glaze (as follows). Serves 18.

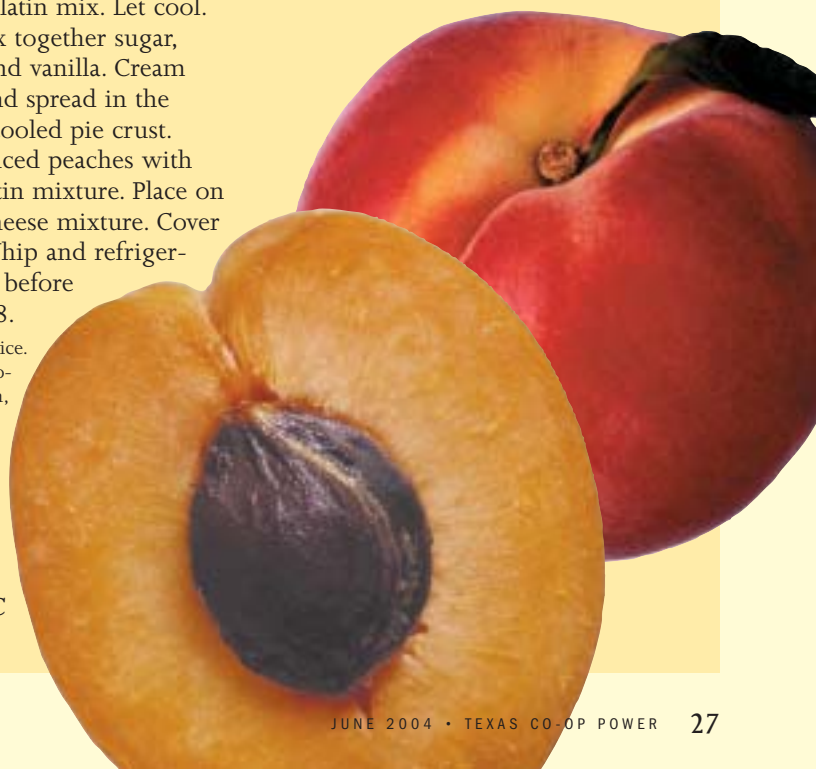
### Peach Glaze

1/2 cup peeled peaches, pureed (or canned peach nectar)  
1 teaspoon cornstarch

Cook and stir until thick and becomes clearer. Spoon and smooth over cake.

Serving size: 1 piece. Per serving: 209 calories, 2 grams protein, 9 grams fat, 31 grams carbohydrates, 196 milligrams sodium, 21 milligrams cholesterol

Donna Siebman, South Plains EC



## AROUND TEXAS

## June

1. Brush Country Music Jamboree, **Three Rivers**, (361) 786-3334
- 1, 15, 29. Abendkonzertes, **Boerne**, (830) 249-3543
- 3-5. Texas State Bluegrass Festival, **Brownwood**, (325) 643-8011

- 3-5. Texas Music Nation Festival and Chili Cook-Off, **Glen Rose**, [www.texasmusicnation.org](http://www.texasmusicnation.org)
4. Battle of Midway Anniversary, **Fredericksburg**, (830) 997-4379
4. School Reunion and Homecoming, **Avery**, (903) 684-3825
- 4-5. Fiestas Juan Seguin, **Seguin**, (830) 372-3151
- 4-5. Reunion & Homecoming, **Avery**, (903) 684-3562

- 4-5, 11-12. Star of the Hills outdoor historical drama, **Wimberley**, (512) 847-6969 or [www.emilyann.org](http://www.emilyann.org).
- 4-6. National Cow Calling Competition, **Miami**, (806) 868-2202
- 4-6. Shrimporee Festival, **Aransas Pass**, (361) 758-2750 or [www.aransaspas.org](http://www.aransaspas.org)
- 4-6. Stars Over Abilene Quilt Show, **Abilene**, (903) 684-3562

## FESTIVAL OF THE MONTH

BY JIM GRAMON

## Victoria Bach Festival: Victoria, June 1-5, 11, 20-21



Frank Tilley, Victoria Advocate

Some folks back East harbor the strange notion that Texans fail to properly appreciate classical music. Actually the opposite is true—Texans appreciate all kinds of music. Although Bach didn't come from Texas, he wasn't from Boston, either.

Music aficionados from across the nation will gather in Victoria this month for one of the premier classical music festivals in the nation, the Victoria Bach Festival. Prefer other classical composers? The Bach festival also includes works by Beethoven, Haydn, Strauss, Mozart, Mendelssohn and others. Educational programming and free public concerts, held outdoors or in intimate settings at historic sites around the city, complement evening programs throughout the Bach Festival week.

For years, National Public Radio has selected Bach Fest shows for broadcast on "Performance Today," and has hailed the festival as "a Texas treasure." The Texas Commission on the Arts has named the festival one of the "Top Ten Hot Summer Events."

Led by Artistic Director Craig Hella Johnson, the Victoria Bach Festival offers a varied repertoire of orchestral music, choral works and chamber concerts by baroque, classical, romantic and contemporary composers, and features

performances by nationally acclaimed artists in a casual and fun atmosphere. Boots are welcome!

The 2004 Victoria Bach Festival season runs from June 1-5, 11 and 20-21.

**Schedule:**

June 1-5: 29th Annual Bach Festival, various venues. Orchestral, chamber and choral works and daily free "Around the Town" concerts

June 11: "From Bach to Beethoven" traces the legacy of classical composers from Bach to Beethoven. This concert is a bridge between festival week and Beethoven's "Missa Solemnis."

June 20-21 (Sunday, June 20, 7 p.m., at Jones Hall in Houston; Monday, June 21, 7 p.m., in Victoria): Ludwig van Beethoven's monumental "Missa Solemnis," a collaboration with Houston Masterworks Chorus. Soloists: Linda Mabbs, soprano; Emily Lodine, mezzo-soprano; Karl Dent, tenor; John Cheek, bass.

For more information, call (361) 570-5788 or check the festival website at [www.victoria-bachfestival.org](http://www.victoria-bachfestival.org).

Jim Gramon is the author of FUN Texas Festivals and Events. [Jim@JimGramon.com](mailto:Jim@JimGramon.com), [www.JimGramon.com](http://www.JimGramon.com).

Trumpet player David Kuehn.

Right, an unidentified child enjoys the music.

Maestro Craig Hella Johnson.



Tony Yarbrough, Courtesy Victoria Bach Festival



- (325) 235-9722  
 4, 11, 18, 15. Brazos Nights, **Waco**,  
 (254) 750-5781 or www.brazosnights.net  
 5. Bat Flights at Stuart Bat Cave, **Brackettville**,  
 ((830) 563-2342  
 5. Ole Time Music, **Pearl**, (254) 865-6013  
 5. Arts & Crafts Day, **Kyle**, (512) 396-2054  
 5. National Trails Day, **Quanah**, (940) 839-4331  
 5. Classic Car Show, **Hico**, 1-800-361-HICO

5. Annual Garage Sale, **Paige**, (512) 253-6607  
 5. Market Day, **Wimberley**, (512) 847-2201  
 5. Kids All-American Fishing Derby, **Jasper**,  
 (409) 384-5231  
 5. Corsicana Opry, **Corsicana**, (904) 872-8226  
 5. Market Day, **Rockdale**, (512) 446-2030  
 5. Cove Country Opry, **Copperas Cove**,  
 (254) 547-4226

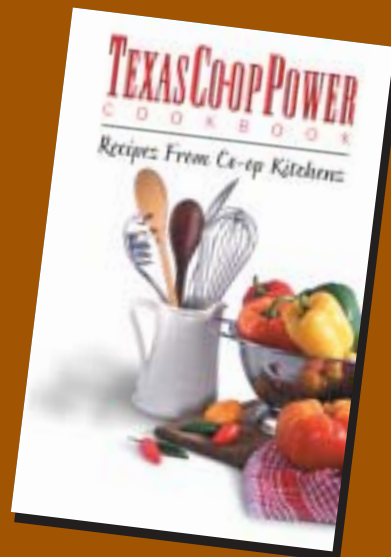
Continued



Tony Yarbrough, Courtesy Victoria Bach Festival

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AROUND TEXAS

Continued

- 5. Friends of the Starr Home Croquet Tournament, **Marshall**, (903) 935-2121
- 5. Golf Tournament, **Comanche**, (254) 893-2083
- 5. AIA Sandcastle Competition, **Galveston**, (713) 520-0155 or [www.aiasandcastle.com](http://www.aiasandcastle.com)
- 5-6. Farm & Ranch Expo, **Rio Grande City**, (956) 488-0047
- 5-6. Gingerbread Trail Historic Home Tour,

- Waxahachie**, (972) 937-0681
- 5, 12, 19, 26. Country Music Hayride, **Carthage**, (903) 622-4390
- 6. Ice Cream Social, Sam Bell Maxey House, **Paris**, (903) 785-5716
- 6, 13, 20, 27. Main Street Central Park Concert Series, **Seguin**, (830) 401-2448
- 11. Family Fun Festival, **Waxahachie**, (972) 93-TEACH



Hot Weather

# COOL TIPS FOR HOT WEATHER

## Keep cool—you could save a life

- Take frequent cooling-off breaks in the shade or air conditioning.
- Drink plenty of water before starting any outdoor activity, and drink water during the day. Drink less tea, coffee and alcoholic beverages.
- Wear lightweight, loose-fitting, light-colored clothes.
- Limit your physical activity during the hottest part of the day.
- Kids, cars and heat make a deadly combination. Never leave a child—or pet—in a vehicle, even for “just a few minutes.” That’s long enough for a closed vehicle to heat up to dangerous levels, even on a 60-degree day.

If someone has heatstroke-related symptoms—nausea, fatigue, muscle cramps, confusion, dizziness—act rapidly: Remove excess clothing and lower the person’s temperature with cold, wet sheets or a cool bath. Call a doctor immediately and transport the person to the nearest hospital—this is an emergency. This summer, don’t sweat it. Keep cool.



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The Tomato Fest is set for June 12 in Jacksonville.

- 11-12. Texas Blueberry Festival, **Nacogdoches**, 888-OLDEST-TOWN or [www.texasblueberryfestival.com](http://www.texasblueberryfestival.com)
- 11-12. Delta County Jamboree, **Cooper**, (903) 395-4314
- 11-13. Flea Market Days, **Jewett**, (936) 348-5474
- 11-13, 25-27. Chicken House Flea Market, **Stephenville**, (254) 968-0888
- 12. Kolache-Klobase Festival, **East Bernard**, (979) 335-7907
- 12. Bodacious Day, **Clarksville**, (903) 427-2645 or [www.red-river.net](http://www.red-river.net)
- 12. Tomato Fest, **Jacksonville**, 1-800-376-2217 or [www.jacksonvilletexas.com](http://www.jacksonvilletexas.com)
- 12. Trade Days, **Conroe**, (936) 788-5652
- 12. Market Trail Days, **Castroville**, (830) 741-5887
- 12. Travis Peak Wine & Music Festival, **Lago Vista**, (512) 293-6329 or [www.travispeakwineandmusic.com](http://www.travispeakwineandmusic.com)
- 12. Texas Country Music Show, **Kirbyville**, (409) 423-5744
- 12. Picnic in Smetana, **Bryan**, (979) 822-0626
- 12. Market Days, **Georgetown**, (512) 868-8675
- 12. Gulf Coast Jam, **Port Arthur**, (409) 722-3699
- 12. Texas Water Safari, **San Marcos**, (512) 357-6863
- 12-13. Antique Tractor & Engine Show, **Mesquite**, (214) 341-4539
- 12-13. Antiques Show, **Brenham**, (979) 251-9455



- 17-19. Rodeo & Parade, **Coleman**, (325) 625-2163
18. Country Opry, **Victoria**, (361) 552-9347
18. Bluegrass Show & Jam Session, **Cleburne**, (817) 373-2541 or [www.geocities.com/ntbbbluegrass](http://www.geocities.com/ntbbbluegrass)
- 18-19, 25-26. Whispers in the Wind, **Woodville**, (409) 283-2632
- 18-20. Rod Run, **Atlanta & Queen City**, (903) 796-0205
- 18-20. Trade Days, **Livingston**, (936) 327-3656 or [www.cityoflivingston-tx.com/tradedays](http://www.cityoflivingston-tx.com/tradedays)
- 18-20. Trade Days on the Avenue, **Port Neches**, (409) 722-4023
- 18-20. Trade Days, **Fredericksburg**, (830) 990-4900 or [www.fbgtradedays.com](http://www.fbgtradedays.com)
19. Moseley Log House Country Lunch, **Eustace**, (903) 451-2278
19. Juneteenth Celebration, **Brenham**, [www.brenhamtexas.com](http://www.brenhamtexas.com)
19. Classic Car Show, **Belton**, (254) 778-4666
19. Chisholm Trail Days, **Decatur**, (940) 627-2741
19. Ranch Dance, **Lipscomb**, [www.ranchdance.com](http://www.ranchdance.com)
19. Possum Walk, **Possum Kingdom**, (940) 779-3205
19. Dairy Fest, **Stephenville**, (254) 965-2406
19. Juneteenth Celebration, **Jasper**, (409) 383-5461
19. Garden Reception, **West Columbia**, (979) 345-4656
19. Juneteenth 2004 Celebration, **Port Arthur**, (409) 983-2667
19. A Celebration of Freedom, **Brenham**, 1-888-BRENHAM or [www.brenhamtexas.com](http://www.brenhamtexas.com)
- 19-20. Market Days, **Merkel**, (325) 928-5722
- 21-27. World Congress of Poets, **Plainview**, (806) 889-3533
24. Swedish Mid-Summer Festival, **Elgin**, (512) 281-2174
- 24-27. Watermelon Thump, **Luling**, (830) 875-3214 or [www.watermelonthump.com](http://www.watermelonthump.com)
25. Trade Day, **Coldspring**, (936) 653-2009
25. Old Time Fiddlers Contest, **Driftwood**, (512) 276-7543
- 25-26. Jim Bowie Days, **Bowie**, 1-866-872-1173 or [www.jimbowedays.com](http://www.jimbowedays.com)
- 25-27. Texas' Last Frontier Rodeo/Bufalo Soldier Encampment, **Morton**, (806) 266-5484
- 25-27. Big Skies Roadrunners Motorcycle Rally, **Ballinger**, (325) 655-2809
26. Old Chevy Day, **De Leon**, (254) 893-2083
26. Polski Dzień (Polish Day) Festival, **Bremond**, (254) 746-7636
26. Fireworks Display, **Ballinger**, (915) 365-2333 or [www.ballinger.tx.org](http://www.ballinger.tx.org)
26. Cow Creek Country Classic Bike Rally, **Waxahachie**, (972) 938-9617
26. Texas Genealogy & Family History Fair, **Huntsville**, (936) 594-2908
26. Hunter Road Market Days, **New Braunfels**,

- (830) 708-8878
26. Cow Creek Country Bike Rally, **Waxahachie**, (972) 938-9617
26. Barrington Living History Farm's Country Fair, **Washington**, 1-888-BRENHAM or [www.brenhamtexas.com](http://www.brenhamtexas.com)
26. Indian Artifact Show, **Bowie**, 1-866-872-1173 or [www.jimbowedays.com](http://www.jimbowedays.com)
26. Old Chevy Day, **DeLeon**, (254) 893-2083

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). It must be submitted by the 10th of the month two months prior to publication. E.g., August submissions must be received prior to June 10. Events are listed according to space available. We regret that we cannot return photos.



# SEVERE WEATHER! ARE YOU READY?

## Lightning

Lightning strikes kill more Americans than tornadoes or hurricanes. Don't take chances with this deadly force of nature.

### Lightning Safety Rules:

- Move to low ground.
- Avoid open fields.
- Do not seek shelter under a tree. Trees are targets for lightning.
- At the beach or in a swimming pool, get out of the water.
- Go inside a building and stay away from windows and doors.
- Stay away from metal objects.
- Avoid electric appliances and metal plumbing.
- Get off the phone.
- Do not touch metal objects, such as golf clubs or bicycles.
- Inside a car is relatively safe, but don't touch interior metal.
- If your hair stands on end, you may be a target. Crouch low on the balls of your feet and try not to touch the ground with your knees or hands.

Stay aware and play it safe during thunderstorms. Don't be a lightning rod.



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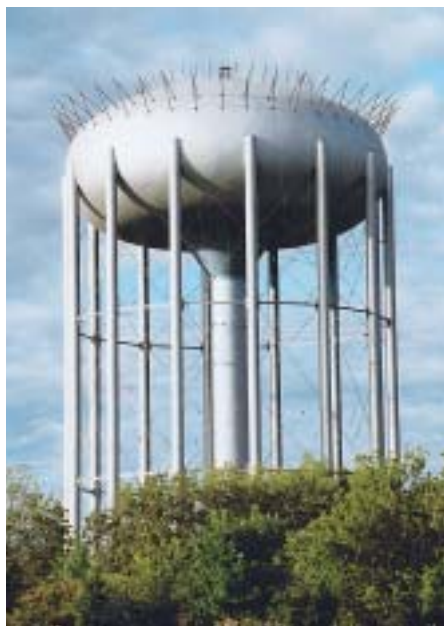
## Water, Water Everywhere

**W**ater towers are common in Texas. In rural areas, many of the smaller water towers have disappeared over the years, or else have been replaced by modern mammoth towers. However, new generations are finding water towers to be attractive and functional buildings. Here are a variety of towers photographed by our readers.

The topic for August is "Fish Story." Send your best fishy photos with your name, address, daytime phone, co-op affiliation and a brief description to Fish Story, Focus on Texas, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704 before June 10. For digital photo requirements and e-mail instructions, go to [www.texas-ec.org/tcp/faq.html](http://www.texas-ec.org/tcp/faq.html). We regret that we can no longer return photos that are not accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope, so if you'd like your photo back, please enclose one.



Kim Rutledge's photo of her husband, Chris, "holding" one of Decatur's two water towers delighted us. She snapped this photo while the couple was traveling home from Grandma's house and their first Christmas together. The Rutledges belong to Bryan Texas Utilities.



"This Bryan water tower appears to have a spikey hair-do while waiting for a facelift, or a fresh paint job," writes Bryan Texas Utilities member Minnie Foltermann.



This water tower in Hico is believed to have been built around 1925 and is located at Bluebonnet Country Club. The club's secretary/treasurer and United Cooperative Services member, Joy Munden, sent the photo.



This old water cistern stood on the home place of Preacher Karnowski in the community of Meador Grove near Moody. The photo, taken 20-plus years ago by Kim Cosper for a 4-H photo contest, was submitted by McLennan County EC members Johnny and Kim Cosper.



This sunset photo of the old Pleasanton water tower was taken by Karnes EC member Billy Joe Shannon, who reports that the old tower was replaced about six months after the photo was taken.

### UPCOMING in Focus on Texas

Subject	Issue	Deadline
Fish Story	August	June 10
Animal Friends	September	July 10
Chow Time	October	August 10
On the Farm	November	September 10
School Plays	December	October 10
First Car	January	November 10





# A Trip to Mexican Quarter Chili Stands, San Antonio

During the Great Depression, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) hired writers to chronicle American life. Among their projects was *America Eats*, an unpublished book about food. In this edited excerpt titled “Mexican Quarter Chili Stands,” we get a vivid picture of what it must have been like to eat a “combination plate” at a San Antonio chili stand. Since the chili stands disappeared in the early 1930s, the mythic experience described here would probably be typical of the 1920s.

**N**o tourist in San Antonio has seen the city until, at night, he has visited the chili stands on Haymarket Plaza.

One follows his nose past the Municipal Market in search of the source of an aroma—the fragrance of burning mesquite wood. He turns the corner and runs squarely into Old Mexico. Tables are spread outdoors along the whole block and behind them women and girls tend fires and charcoal braziers above which Mexican foods are stacked. Three Mexican minstrels, brave in embroidered costumes and high-peaked straw hats, pluck their guitars tentatively, ready to serenade.

A Mexican family, plainly in modest circumstances, sits at the first long table, giving itself a night out. He wears his Sunday best and his wife her best rebozo (shawl), one end of it thrown gracefully across her shoulder. There are patches on the clothes of the three small children, but the general effect is one of being scrubbed and starched. The waitress comes to take the order, but only after a long conversation that covers the balminess of the air, neighborhood news, the high cost of living, and remedies for colds.

The children have tacos, tasty favorite of shine boy and banker alike—a tortilla folded and fried crisp and stuffed with seasoned meat and chopped greens. After much deliberation the parents fix upon enchiladas—

tortillas dipped in chili sauce, covered with chopped onion and grated cheese and done up jelly roll style. And now the husband—this obviously is an occasion for special celebration—glances significantly at the expectant musicians. They come to stand close behind the family. Plaintive tenors blend with plaintive guitars in a song about a little princess who, from all accounts, was deeply in love.



Chili Stands, Military Plaza, San Antonio, circa 1880.

Now there is a new note—a sort of suppressed excitement. Tourists are approaching and here they come, a party of five. The three serenaders look at them a bit wistfully; had they waited a little longer they would have caught these rich folk. But the newcomers are not to lack for music. As they seat themselves, two small boys—the elder cannot be ten years old—pop up from nowhere. Their costumes are stunning, their guitars almost as large as themselves. Two serenades go on at once, so softly that they complement each other.

One of the party of five—the bellwether of this flock—is an elderly gentlemen cut on the pattern of New York and points East.

“No chili con carne,” he says. “We ate that in Kansas City.”

The waitress looks a bit injured. In the hands of its friends, chili con carne is a soul-warming dish, but in

Kansas City, St. Louis, New York, New Haven and Hartford, it may be only a soupy gravy, wholly without any convictions of its own and sometimes even containing such foreign matter as spaghetti. The Easterner’s attention is upon a fire from which floats lazily the fragrance of mesquite mingled with what seems to be the spice of the Indies.

“Some of that,” he points out, “and that—and that.”

Some of that and that and that turns out to be two tacos, two enchiladas, and two tamales on each plate, the whole buried under chopped salad greens.

Other tourists are arriving, some of whom will try the food although most of them will only look on—and usually add to the receipts of the serenaders, whose groups increase on especially balmy and busy nights. But all of them who patronize the stands

will probably depart as soon as they have eaten, which is a matter not wholly understood by the Mexican customers. Neither to them or the

proprietors of the chili stands does it seem reasonable that even Yanqui customers, whose ways are strange, should hasten to be on their way as soon as they have spent their money. Women are now in a mood for gossip, men for reminiscence. Eating is a social affair, and time is not the all-important thing in life.

— Texas Writers’ Project, WPA

Food writer Robb Walsh unearthed this forgotten gem for his new offering, *The Tex-Mex Cookbook: A History in Recipes and Photos* (Broadway Books), which will be published June 15, 2004. Reprinted with permission. © 2004 by Robb Walsh.

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