

The school buses are rolling and excited children are on their way to and from classes. It's time to start thinking about back-to-school safety!

Safety Comes First:

- Look left, right, then left again before crossing the street.
- Take directions from crossing guards.
- Cross in front of the bus only after the driver signals it's OK to do so.

Riding the school bus:

- Find a safe place for your child to wait for the bus, away from traffic and the street.
- Teach your child to stay away from the bus until it comes to a complete stop and the driver signals that it's safe to enter.
- When your child is dropped off, make sure he/she knows to exit the bus and walk 10 giant steps away from the bus and to be aware of the street traffic in the area.

Riding a bike:

- Mind traffic signals and the crossing guard.
- Always wear a bike helmet.
- Walk the bike through intersections.
- Ride with a buddy.
- Wear light-colored or reflective material.



This public service message is brought to you by your local electric cooperative. For more information, visit your local co-op.

Texas Co-op Power

A MAGAZINE ABOUT TEXAS LIVING

The 'Bests' Just Get Better

Reviewing readers' nominations for Best of Co-op Country is one of our yearly highlights. Communications Assistant Tracy Paccone registers each vote according to category and assembles a binder with your comments. The project provides ideas for future articles and suggestions about what to enjoy and where to eat across the state. It also gives us an opportunity to check out co-op country at its finest. Thanks so much for your participation.

On page 15, you will find information on a new 2005 contest for middle and high school students. Students from Utopia High School gave us the idea with their impressive outpouring of appreciation for the Utopia Volunteer Fire Department, which won Best VFD. Topics for the 2005 Student "Best of" contest are "Town To Live In" or "Texas Writer."

Chicken-fried steak is highlighted in both the "Best of" article and in a separate article because it is such an important part of our state's culture. Production Artist Andy Doughty was dispatched to make sure that the winning chicken-fried steak restaurant deserved its honor. Andy was so taken with the restaurant, Hobo Depot in Liberty Hill, that he insisted on several follow-up visits.

In the Texas Living section we offer low-carb recipes and a rundown on this month's festival, the Texas Gatorfest in Anahuac. The terrific "Animal Friends" photos in Focus on Texas were very hard to select. All the submissions were endearing. Enjoy!

Peg Champion
Vice President, Communications/
Publisher

Best of Co-op Country Issue

Blanco County Courthouse



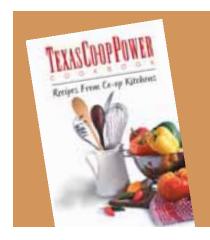
Geno Esponda



Rusk County EC member Mayre Drennan's pool pal pups, Coco and Max, are enjoying the "dog days" of summer. For more photos of animal friends, turn to page 45.

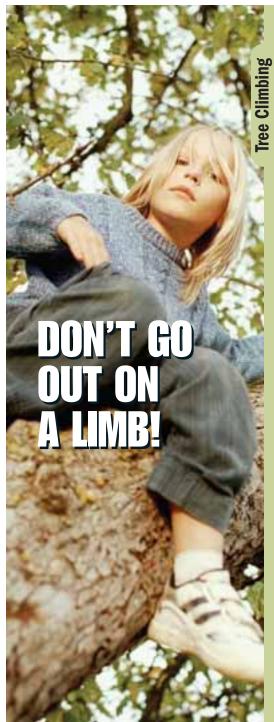
Best of Co-op Country 2004 6 By Texas Co-op Power Staff
The National Dish of Texas
Texas Living
Focus on Texas
Texas, USA

COVER PHOTO BY GENO ESPONDA. FOOD STYLING BY REBECCA WALLACE.



Four Star Fare for the Lone Star State

See page 32 to order your copy of the Texas Co-op Power Cookbook today!



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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Texas Co-op Power

DLUME 61 SEPTE

SEPTEMBER 2004

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

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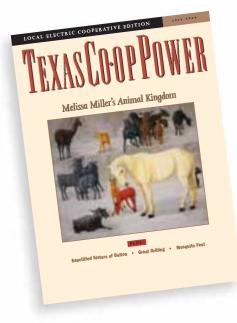


Most Welcome Information

I am writing to let you know that I very much enjoyed the article in the July 2004 issue of Texas Co-op Power magazine concerning Melissa Miller's paintings. Thank you very much for including that in your magazine. It was truly informative, delightful, beautiful and well presented. More of that type of information is most welcomed.

Joanne Chambers, Comanche EC

Editor's Response: To enjoy more of Melissa Miller's work, visit the Betty Moody Gallery in Houston, (713) 526-9911, www.moodyartgallery .com, and Dunn and Brown Contemporary in Dallas, (214) 521-4322, www.dunnandbrown.com.



Child-Sized Memories

I thoroughly enjoyed your July magazine. I really liked Melissa Miller's paintings and William Jack Sibley's article, "Died and Gone to Lichtenstein's," took me back to WWII days when my dad worked at the Naval Air Base in Corpus Christi.

I was about 4 or 5 and my mother and I would ride the bus into town. We always visited Lichtenstein's. I don't remember the Tea Room or the toy department-maybe Mother was smart enough to never take me up there! What I remember is the restroom, which I always made sure we visited. The thing I remember most is the child-sized commode! I wish I could have gone back before it closed to make sure I didn't dream up that little potty. I've never seen another one like it since. Thanks for the memories.

Marianne Taff. Central Texas EC

Snow Bird Invasion?

As a resident of Corpus Christi during most of the '60s, I read Jack Sibley's "Died and Gone to Lichtenstein's" with great interest. My wife was a dedicated customer and we both mourned its closing. The picture on the familiar old Lichtenstein's corner caught my eye. What was going on at Christmas 1941 in downtown Corpus Christi? The picture shows what looks like a long caravan of travel trailers being pulled down the street by a fleet of passenger cars. Was this an invasion of snow birds or just another sales promotion?

Chet Lummen, Bandera EC

Editor's Response: If any of our readers know, please write us. We'd like to know also.

Readers Rabid About Their Authors

I really enjoyed the article on Susan Wittig Albert ["Murder, They Wrote," June 2004]. She is one of my favorite mystery writers. I think you overlooked a couple. In the Austin area is Susan Rogers Cooper. She is half fivegeneration Texan and half Yankee, so maybe she doesn't qualify. Her books are the E.J. Pugh series, Not in My Backyard, etc. There's also Jeff Abbott (Cut and Run), and from the Houston area, Leann Sweeney with Pick Your Poison and The Yellow Rose series. Maybe you could add them to your list. The gals who read the "cozies" are really rabid about their authors. My family enjoys the recipes [from the magazine] and I pass along interesting articles to my sister, who's a temporary Californian. Keep up the good work.

Cynthia Bach, Waco

Start From the Back

I have been a member of Hamilton County Electric Cooperative for 21 years. I look forward to getting our issue of Texas Co-op Power. I read it from

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.

cover to cover, but I always start from the back. Focus on Texas is my favorite—I save that page from month to month to enjoy them [the photos] over and over.

Brenda Schloeman, Hamilton County EC

More Pleasure Than Any Other

Three years ago, my husband and I were transplanted from Southern California to the Dallas area. It was a scary move for us. We soon found we had worried needlessly, because we have loved Texas from the day we arrived here and now wouldn't consider living anywhere else. I get several magazines a month, but wanted you to know that none gives me as much pleasure as yours. We have made several trips here in Texas based upon the places we read about in your magazine and have never been disappointed. We especially enjoyed going to Jefferson and riding on the Caddo Lake paddlewheeler, a trip we will never forget! My congratulations to everyone on your fine Communications staff.

Debbie Miller, CoServ Electric

Texas Co-op Power in Ethiopia

We share our magazine with a young man that I sponsor in the Wonchi Project of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. His name is Milion Bogale and he's 14 years old. We've been corresponding for just over one year. I'm limited as to what I can send him, as whatever I send has to fit into a 6"x9" envelope. I was so lucky to find that the Texas Co-op Power magazine fits perfectly when folded in half into the envelope. Milion and his family and community can learn all about Texas from the wonderful stories and pictures. Thanks for the great publication. Keep up the good work.

Teresa Wonnelle, Trinity Valley EC



ONE THING WE CAN SAY ABOUT OUR READERS—YOU'RE NOT AFRAID TO SPEAK YOUR MINDS. AND HOW YOU'VE SPOKEN OUT THIS YEAR! CO-OP MEMBERS FROM THE RED RIVER TO THE RIO GRANDE NOMINATED THEIR FAVORITES. THE VOTES ARE COUNTED, AND HERE ARE THE WINNERS.

Pecans once again won Best Product; beef was a distant second. Other nominations included Texas people, good-looking Texas cowboys, Texas women, Shiner Bock beer, and electricity provided by Texas cooperatives.

Because Garner State Park was such a strong contender for Best State Park, we have given this second-place designee a write-up, along with the winner, Caprock Canyons State Park. Due to the growing popularity of the contest, Texas Co-op Power is raising the bar for Best of Co-op Country 2005. Petitions will no longer be accepted. Each entry must be mailed separately or e-mailed to coopcountry@texas-ec.org.

There is one exception to the petition rule. On our ballot (page 15) is a new category for middle school and high school students—Best Town to Live In or Best Texas Writer. Student petitions are allowed in this category, but the entries will be also judged on the strength of the students' written presentations. Thus, the contest is more than a numbers game. The winning school will receive a prize of \$1,000.



HOBO DEPOT

Liberty Hill

rorth of Austin, a bit west of Georgetown, right next to the railroad tracks on FM 1869 in Liberty Hill, the Hobo Depot whips up an incredible chicken-fried steak that measures a whopping foot across.

Owner Alice Cowan opened what she dubbed "the little shack by the railroad track" in a former gasoline depot building about eight years ago. Her daughter, Becky Child, along with husband, Chris, have primary responsibilities for the place now. The original building features a long bar, a jukebox, a pool table and a few dining tables, including a couple of big round ones where locals congregate. There's also a newer dining room with more tables and a few booths nestled against a wall featuring a large mural of a train passing the Depot, complete with local characters.

On a Saturday afternoon visit, we began with an appetizer of fried jalapeño and onion strips. They were big and crisp in tasty breading, properly cooked, not greasy. We were tempted by the chicken-fried ribeye, but instead we jumped in headfirst, ordering the classic chicken-fried steak with mashed potatoes.

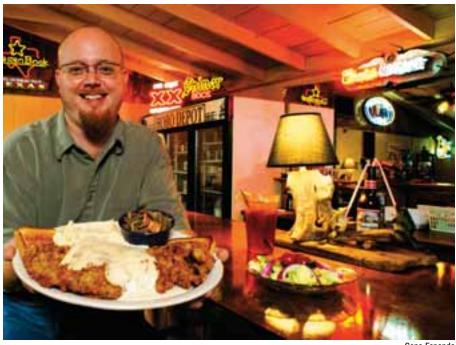
What arrived at the table was almost unbelievable in size, quality and value. The Depot uses 8-ounce cube steaks which, when breaded and fried, easily fill the large platter. It's a nice, thick steak, more tender than cubed steak has a right to be, cooked to the perfect crunch, with a minimum of grease and lots of good gravy-pretty much the exact opposite of the bland, thin, tough, overly breaded throwaway dish found at national restaurant chains. It's as fine an example of the species as I've ever enjoyed. And the mashed potatoes tasted like people in the kitchen were peeling, cooking and mashing actual potatoes—which, of course, they were.

Other highlights include hand-cut fries, hand-breaded onion rings, thick and juicy burgers, huge breakfast tacos, and all-you-can-eat catfish on Friday nights. The catfish is another real winner-fresh, perfectly coated, crisp and hot from the fryer, as good as any I've ever had.

The Hobo Depot is located at 3000 FM 1869 in Liberty Hill. You'll want to make a note of the hours: Monday through Thursday 7 a.m.-2 p.m., Friday 7 a.m.-9 p.m., Saturday 8 a.m.-9 p.m., and Sunday 8 a.m.-2 p.m. (512) 515-5021.

Pedernales EC serves the Hobo Depot.

Andy Doughty, Production Artist



Andy Doughty finds the Hobo Depo isn't stingy when it comes to chicken-fried steak.







Utopia

Be it fire, flood or medical emergency, the citizens of Utopia know they can count on their crackerjack volunteer fire department to be on top of the crisis. That's why Utopia residents—particularly students at Utopia High School-mailed in enough ballots and petitions to make the Utopia VFD our handsdown winner. The Kendalia VFD was runner-up. Residents of both towns are to be commended for sending so many impassioned letters and essays about their volunteer heroes.

In Utopia, a community of only a few hundred people, the VFD has 20 members, including several professional firefighters who work in San Antonio. The on-call team includes six first responders, four emergency technicians and one paramedic.

Today the department is wellequipped, but it wasn't always so. When the VFD was organized in 1948, volunteers had to rely on a 1937 Ford pumper that ran hot and had to be stopped every 2 miles to cool down. Next, volunteers rigged a water tank for use on a 1951 school bus, which reached a top speed of 37 miles per hour on emergency calls.

In addition to many letters from individual Utopia residents, Texas Coop Power received letters, comments and petitions from the Utopia High School junior class, the Utopia High School algebra II class and the Utopia High School calculus class.

Bandera EC serves Utopia.

Kaye Northcott, Editor



Aletha St. Romain



Round Top

ound Top is a Texas antique lovers' "Brigadoon." In the Broadway musical, the Round lop is a rexas anique lovers. Engagement of the mists for a single day every enchanted village of Brigadoon emerged from the mists for a single day every 100 years. Fortunately, Round Top (population 84) in Fayette County really exists, and it transforms itself into an antiquer's fantasy destination twice a year—on the first full weekends of April and October—rather than once every 100 years.

Founded by Emma Lee Turney, the Round Top Antiques Fair is regularly ranked as one of the top antiques venues in the United States, and there are many offshoots and supplemental sellers. For some dealers, the event has swelled to as long as two weeks. Fairgrounds and auction houses spread along a goodly stretch of State Highways 159 and 237 between U.S. 290 and La Grange (on State Highway 71). Or the hunt for treasures can encompass an even larger territory in the surrounding area. There's no way to see it all.

Those who shun crowds may shop at their leisure or attend smaller fairs, arts and crafts shows, and antiques auctions in Round Top, Carmine, Warrenton and Shelby throughout the year. But if you want to participate in a true antiques marathon shopping event and see the most of the most and the best of the best, the bi-annual Round Top Antiques Fairs with their 400 dealers are the way to go.

Fayette EC serves most of Fayette County.

Kaye Northcott, Editor



Briscoe County

ur readers chose Caprock Canyons State Park, home of the Texas State Bison Herd, as the 2004 Best State Park. Located 100 miles southeast of Amarillo, it is the third-largest state park in Texas. The park opened in 1982, but it is so remote that interest in the park has built slowly.

The park consists of 15,313 acres of jagged sandstone peaks and canyons, a terrain that supports a variety of activities. The 64-mile, 1,200-acre Caprock Canyons Trailways System is the product of a rail-to-trail conversion. Open to hikers, mountain bikers and equestrians, the trail stretches into the Red River Valley and traverses three counties, 54 bridges and Clarity Tunnel, the last active railroad tunnel in the state.

Other activities at the park include: camping, fishing, picnicking, swimming, rock climbing and sightseeing. Caprock Canyons is home to the annual National Trails Day Celebration every June, with activities that include a hotair balloon launch, chili cook-off, races and music. Each October the park hosts Quitaque (pronounced kit-a-KWAY) Quest, a National Off-Road Bicycle Association-sanctioned mountain bike race. Bat-viewing tours are conducted from mid-August to mid-September.

For more information: Visit www.tpwd.state.tx.us. Caprock Canyons State Park is 3.5 miles north of State Highway 86 in Quitaque on FM 1065.

Caprock Canyons State Park is served by Lighthouse EC.

Cheryl Tucker, Field Editor

Caprock Canyons State Park is a trip on the wild side.





Garner State Park offers a cool summer escape.

Texas Parks & Wildlife Department

RUNNER-UP

GARNER STATE PARK

Uvalde County

lthough Caprock Canyons State Park received more votes than any other park, A Garner State Park was a close second, and the votes came from across the state. Where Caprock State Park is best known for its remote grandeur, Garner has carved a place in the state's social psyche.

So strong are its visitors' ties that Garner alumnae from the '60s and '70s created their own website, www.garnerpark60sstyle.com, where reminiscences and memories are shared, reunions planned, and old dance partners located (if you remember the "Whip," you may want to visit). For the past six decades, countless hearts have been set aflutter while two-stepping across the pavilion's slippery slab at nightly jukebox dances. (See Texas, USA, page 46, for more on the Garner State Park dance scene.)

For nearly 70 years, generations of Texans have escaped the cloying summer heat by taking a dip in the clear, chilly water of the aptly named Frio River (the word frio means "cold" in Spanish) at Garner State Park. It's one of the most heavily visited parks in Texas, and you can see why when you visit its 1,400-plus acres of tree-covered hills and rock bluffs hugging the Frio in northern Uvalde County.

Today the park offers more than 500 RV and tent campsites, shelters and cabins, a miniature golf course, grocery store and concession rentals. There are timeless experiences here, enjoyed by many generations: the cold-water shock of the cypress-shaded river for swimming, tubing, canoeing or paddle boating, and the hike way up to the forehead of Mount Baldy for spectacular 360-degree Hill Country views and back to the river to cool off again.

Garner State Park is 31 miles north of Uvalde, 9 miles south of Leakey, and 8 miles north of Concan; from U.S. Highway 83, turn east on FM 1050 for .2 miles to the park entrance. For more information, visit www.tpwd.state.tx.us.

The park is served by Bandera EC.

Cheryl Tucker, Field Editor



Johnson City

he Blanco County Courthouse sits like a sturdy limestone monument to history, justice and human enterprise, the centerpiece of Johnson City's town square. From the second-floor windows of the refurbished 1920s-era courtroom, you can see the old rock jail that's still in use. Designed by San Antonio architect Henry T. Phelps, the classical Revival-style courthouse, with its Doric columns and domed cupola, was built in 1916 of limestone hauled by mule teams from nearby Deer Creek. Johnson City citizens approved a \$30,000 bond to finance the building. Scottish stonemason James Waterson, who worked on the Capitol building in Austin, supervised the masonry work. Remarkably, the building was finished in 11 months and came in \$1,000 under budget.

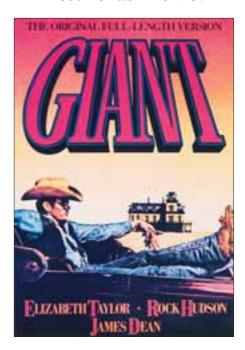
Christmas is the courthouse's show-off time. Beieweled with hundreds of thousands of colorful lights, it draws visitors from near and far. Pedernales Electric Cooperative, which serves Johnson City, lends bucket trucks and crews to string the holiday decorations each year.

Carol Moczygemba, Managing Editor



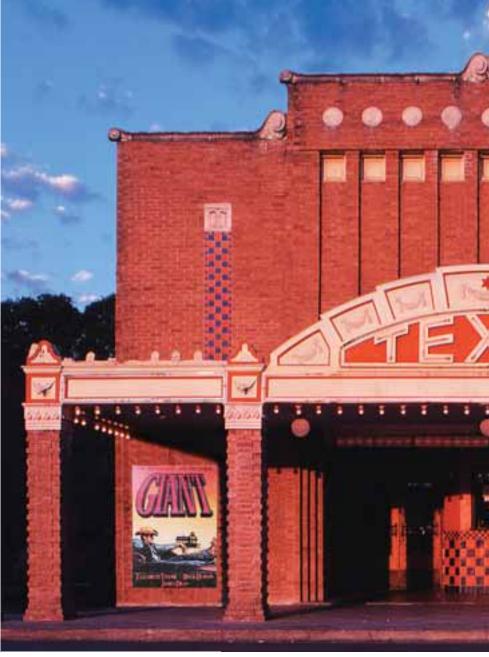
TEXAS MOVIES

'The Alamo' and 'Giant' Tied for Best Texas Movie.



n the long-ago summer of 1955, Hollywood's brightest stars descended upon a small town high in the mountains of Texas' Chihuahuan Desert. Elizabeth Taylor, Rock Hudson and James Dean were in Marfa to shoot the film adaptation of "Giant," Edna Ferber's Texas-sized saga of the cattle ranching Benedict family and their 500,000-acre Reata Ranch.

During that hot summer, no one talked of the weather, cattle or cotton prices. No, the talk across the Trans-Pecos from Big Bend to Balmorhea was all about "Giant." Taylor, Dean, Hudson and over 250 other Hollywood film people were living and working in tiny, isolated Marfa (population then 3,600). With a major motion picture being filmed, the normal rhythm of life ceased, and Marfa basked in the reflected glow of the stars.



Texas movie theater in Seguin.

My grandparents, who lived just 97 miles away in Pecos, were not about to miss out on the action. They climbed aboard their air-conditioned, twotoned Buick Roadmaster and headed to Marfa. Long before I got to see the film, I heard their stories.

I heard about Liz Taylor eating enchiladas, the stars carousing in Ojinaga (across the border in Mexico), and which lucky locals were extras. I learned that the Reata was the King Ranch, and Jett Rink (the James Dean

character) was Glenn McCarthy, "King of the Wildcatters."

The one person I wish I had seen for myself was Dean. "Giant" was Dean's last film. Two weeks after the movie's wrap party, James Dean died in a car crash while driving his Porsche to a race in Northern California. At the age of 24 and with only three starring roles in films, Dean passed into history as an icon for rebellious '50s youth. Even Warner Brothers producer Jack Warner conceded: "That kid Dean ... gave us a

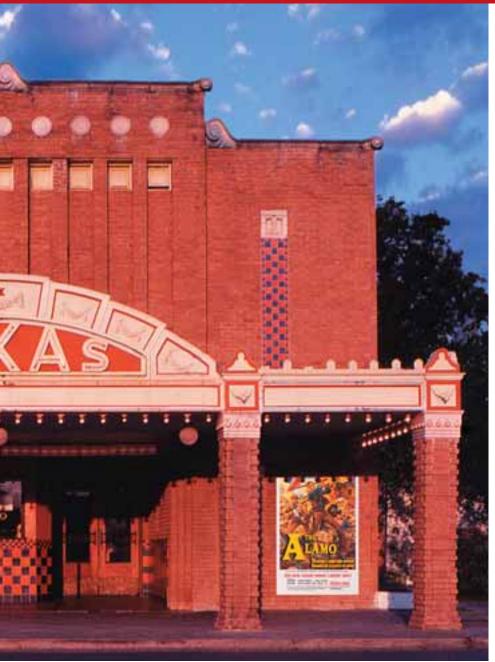


Photo and photo manipulation by Rick Patrick

lot of trouble, but it was worth it. He was surrounded with stars in 'Giant,' but we believe he was 25 percent responsible for the success of the picture." Even 50 years later as I watch "Giant" on DVD, I regret I did not have the opportunity to see him up close and real.

No other film showed post-WWII Texas the way the world knew it to be-untamed, rich, prejudiced and waiting to be civilized by the East Coast. Of course, there was always more to Texas than cows and oil, but

big ranches, big money and big spenders made "Giant" irresistible at the box office.

Today, not much of "Giant" remains in Marfa. The house that served as the ranch headquarters has fallen down. The oil derricks are gone. But the 75year-old Hotel Paisano, headquarters for the "Giant" film crew, has been restored and will host a 50th anniversary party for "Giant" in July 2005. For information, call 1-866-729-3669.

Suzi Sands, Art Director



■or most Texans, the best "Alamo" movie is the 1960 version and the best Davy Crockett was John Wayne. Sure, Fess Parker was good as the 1950s Disney Davy, and he sold truckloads of coonskin caps, but the real Davy Crockett of the Alamo was a former U.S. congressman pushing 50. The Duke seemed a natural for the part.

No doubt John Wayne is the most beloved honorary Texan of all time. During his long career he played dozens of Texas characters, always with just the right combination of humility and bravado, saunter and drawl, squint and grin. The former Marion Morrison of Winterset. Iowa. showed Texans how to be Texans. But "The Alamo" wasn't just another acting job for Wayne; it was also his debut as a director, an act of immense bravery in itself. He couldn't possibly have picked a tougher assignment. "The Alamo" was to be the most ambitious and expensive movie shot in the United States at the time. (It was subsequently nominated for the "Best Picture" Oscar.)

Facts about the siege are hard to come by, and historians don't agree on exactly what happened at the old abandoned church in San Antonio de Béxar in March of 1836. We know Texas was fighting Mexico for its independence, we know Sam Houston needed some-

body to distract Generalissimo Santa Anna and his army while Houston trained a proper rebel force, and we know that task fell to 187 brave but unlucky men, including Colonel William Travis, Jim Bowie and Davy Crockett.

John Wayne's movie leaves little room for chin-stroking or secondguessing. These were heroic men of heroic deeds, end of discussion. Blustery speeches were made, whiskey was drunk, cigars were smoked, and señoritas were courted, but in the end the men of the Alamo fought to the death.

In the first reel, Crockett says to Travis: "Republic ... I like the sound of the word. It means people can live free, talk free, go or come, buy or sell, be drunk or sober, however they choose. Some words give you a feeling. Republic is one of those words that makes me tight in the throat."

The movie portrays the defenders as rowdy but good-hearted frontiersmen who were skilled at guerilla tactics. One night, a detail sneaks out to disable a large Mexican cannon, and another night to rustle Santa Anna's cattle for fresh meat. Jim Bowie (played by Richard Widmark) argues that they could accomplish their mission for Houston by just such guerilla actions, what he calls "cut, slash and run," leading Santa Anna on a chase and chipping away at his army along the way. Colonel Travis, played by Laurence Harvey as a stiff-necked aristocrat, will have none of it. As we know, the plot requires them to be surrounded and slaughtered.

So the volunteers, to a man, somehow decide to stick with Travis, and the rest is history, or some version thereof. Besieged from all sides by a vast army, they fought for 13 days, taking down a couple thousand Mexican soldiers with them before they were overwhelmed and killed. Scholarly theories may vary. What we know for sure is, the men were all volunteers, they stayed, they fought, and they died. Houston went on to defeat Santa Anna at San Jacinto and Texas became an independent republic. And the story never fails to make us tight in the throat.

Jim Anderson is a longtime contributor to Texas Co-op Power. As a child, he never had a coonskin cap.



Pecans won the Best Texas Product for the second year. There's no better way to celebrate the winner than with a great recipe for pecan pie from Threadgill's restaurant in Austin.

Threadgill's Pecan Pie

1 9-inch pie shell 1 1/2 cups brown sugar 4 tablespoons butter, melted 2 1/2 tablespoons flour 5 large eggs

1 1/3 cups light corn syrup 1/4 cup molasses

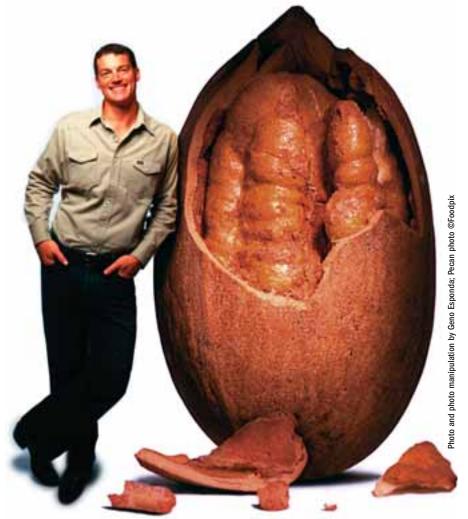
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla

2 1/2 cups pecan pieces

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Combine sugar, butter, flour and eggs in a bowl and whisk together. Add the

syrup, molasses and vanilla. Whisk until smooth. Arrange the pecan pieces in the unbaked 9-inch pie shell and pour liquid mixture over the nuts. They will rise to the top while the pie is baking. Bake for 50 to 60 minutes at 350 degrees or until filling is completely set in the center. Cool on a rack for about an hour before serving. Makes 8 servings.

From Threadgill's: The Cookbook by Eddie Wilson. Available online at www.threadgills.com or by calling (512) 458-5704.



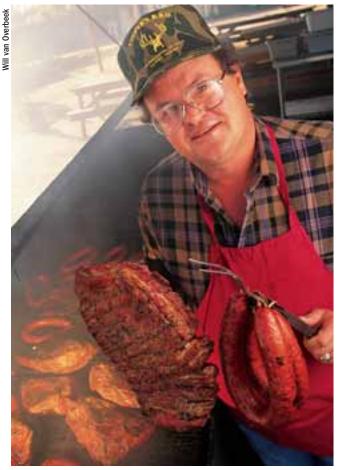
The nut on the left is Martin Bevins, Texas Co-op Power advertising director.



COOPER'S OLD-TIME PIT BAR-B-QUE

Saturday dawned a sunny, cool, perfect day for a motorcycle ride, so we headed to Llano to sample what our readers voted as the best barbecue in Texas. We were reminded of the popularity of Cooper's barbecue when we learned that they begin serving as early as 10 a.m. on weekends.

Cooper's is a popular riding destination for motorcycle enthusiasts such as my husband and I. Along the way, we were treated to a spectacular show of wildflowers on Highway 71—even the prickly pear were blooming. After riding approximately 70 miles west, we reached Llano, which is situated on a massive dome of pink granite. We turned on Highway 21; from there we could



Cooper's smokes with mesquite wood.

see the restaurant sending us smoke signals. Five steel smokers slow-cook the meat that makes Cooper's so famous.

The line of people outside the restaurant can seem daunting, but it moves quickly. On an average weekend day, Cooper's may serve 2,000 people, but on a really busy weekend, the staff will serve up to 6,000 people per day. On these peak days the smokers burn as many as four cords of mesquite wood. Mesquite gives the meat its distinctive flavor

At the outdoor serving pit, we were greeted by pit master Bo Phillips, who offered us pork chops, pork loin, pork ribs, regular and jalapeño sausage, beef brisket, beef ribs, T-bones, ham, and even cabrito. A thin vinegar sauce is kept on the corner of

the serving pit, so if you like, your meat selection can be dipped in the sauce for the full flavor experience.

Cooper's is all about the meat. That's what keeps patrons coming back. But if you're not only a carnivore, you may add a side of homemade slaw, potato salad or beans, then top it off with ice cream and cobbler. You will probably not be able to finish one of Cooper's hefty meals, so use the huge roll of aluminum foil provided for wrapping meat to go. On your way out the smoke-scented building, pick up bags of their special seasoning for home smoking.

There are several other restaurants with similar names in other cities, but Texas Co-op Power readers voted for Cooper's in Llano, 401 West Young St. Call (915) 247-5713.

Central Texas EC serves much of Llano County.

Sandra Forston, Communications Assistant



Becky Moser and some of her enthusiastic pie patrons.



Lake Fork

The patrons of Moser's Restaurant at Lake Fork must really like their pie. They inundated us with nominations for best pie. Their reasons are explained in a letter that accompanied a huge pile of nominations.

Becky Moser baked more than 3,000 pies last year, and that doesn't count the scores of cakes and fried pies that round out the restaurant's dessert menu. Her supporters wrote that she arrives every day at 4 a.m. to do her baking and still has a smile on her face when the restaurant opens.

"Many [who voted for Moser's] mentioned they now want to vote on which pie is the best," the patrons' letter explained. "Some say the strawberry pie, others the fudge nut, many the banana ice box, more the coconut pie, and the list goes on. I guess you will need to visit for yourself to put your vote in. Just get here soon; the pies don't last long!"

The letter was signed, "Those who sleep, dream and shout, 'My O My the Pie."

Moser's is located at Lake Fork Marina, 271 CR 1558, Alba. Call (903) 765-2087.

The Lake Fork area is served by Wood County EC.

Kaye Northcott, Editor





Gruene Hall is the state's oldest and most beloved dance hall.

Rick Patrick

You put your foot a little.

Pedal steel and fiddle, fillin' the floor.

They're dancin' brim to brim.

He's holdin' her to him.

That's what dancin's for.

They're a couple.

Every dance is taken.

They get so impatient

when the band is breakin'

'Cause they want to be dancin'

once more.

—The Lovers' Waltz, by Steve Fromholz It's simply no contest. Our readers overwhelmingly told us again this year that their favorite spot to two-step and Cotton-Eyed Joe is the scuffed hardwood dance floor at Gruene Hall, the state's oldest and most beloved dance hall. So many votes came in from across the state for this Hill Country treasure, we've decided to officially retire the category.

Relative newcomer Billy Bob's, the "world's largest honky tonk" in Fort Worth, came in a distant second. Rounding out the field were a handful of stately old-timers like London

Hall in London, Floore's Country Store in Helotes, Luckenbach Dance Hall, and Schroeder Hall in Schroeder (second oldest), all originally established more than a century ago.

What makes Gruene reign supreme over its venerable sisters? Perhaps it's the location, a stone's throw away from the Guadalupe River and an easy walk from any point in the charmingly restored town of Gruene. Maybe it's the eclec-



Gruene's front room is for listening, not dancing.

tic mix of music, some gleaned from nearby Austin and some brought in from around the world. Where else can you hear Cajun zydeco one night, '50s and '60s rock-and-roll the next, then round out your weekend with hard-core country?

If you can't make it to Central Texas, you can vicariously enjoy the historic dance hall from your couch by renting the 1996 feature film, "Michael." Angel John Travolta (wings and all) steps out in a line dance shot on location at Gruene Hall, renamed "Tom's" for the sake of the movie.

For more information, call (830) 606-1281 or visit gruenehall.com, which also features a gallery of performer photos. To read about other fine Texas dancehalls, go to www.honkytonktx.com/dancehalls.

Louie Bond, Copy Editor/Writer



BEST OF CO-OP COUNTRY CONTEST 2005

We invite you to participate in our third Best of Co-op Country contest. Print your choices, along with the location and phone number where applicable, in whatever categories you wish. Provide your name, address, telephone number and co-op. Mail this page or a copy to "Best of Co-op Country," 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704, or download the webpage from the September issue at texascooppower.com or e-mail to coopcountry@texas-ec.org.

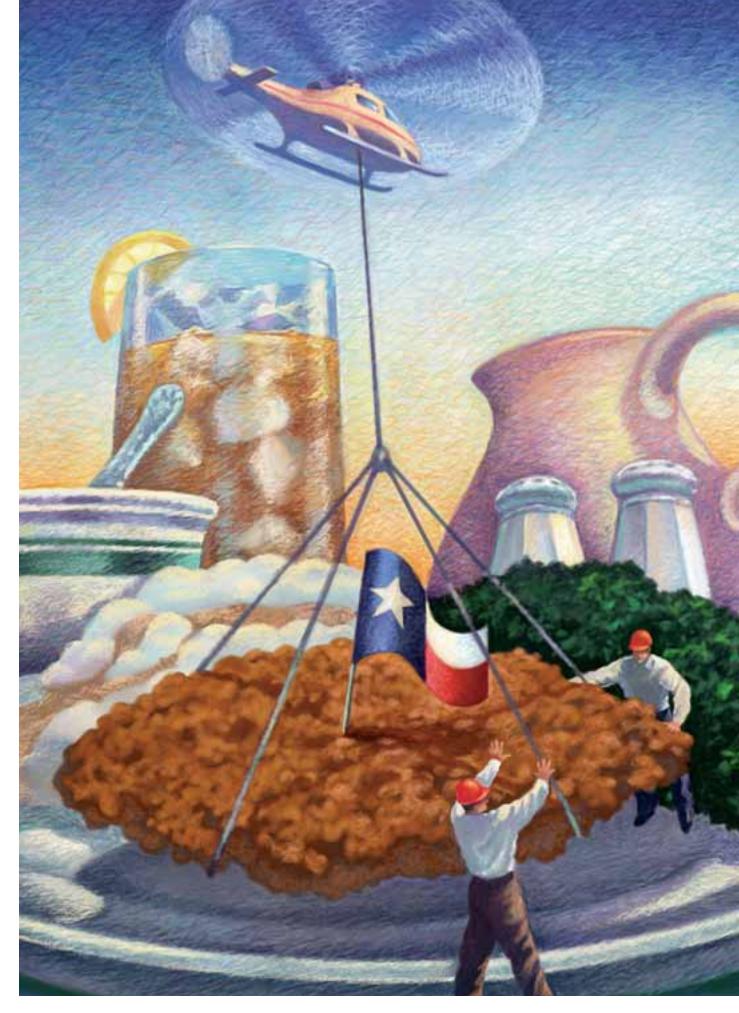
Entries will be judged on the number and persuasiveness of nominations received. You don't have to explain your nomination, but comments might help us choose a winner. Photographs are also useful.

Because the volume of "Best" nominations has increased, we are changing the rules. Petitions are not allowed. Each nomination must be sent separately by mail or e-mail—except in the new student contest described below.

BEST OF CO-OP COUNTRY GENERAL CONTEST CATEGORIES			
1. Place to Take the Kids	5. Hamburger		
2. Romantic Getaway	6. Scenic Bridge		
3. Historic Site	7. Golf Course		
4. Summer Camp	8. Dining Worth the Drive		

BE	ST OF CO-OP COUNTRY STUDENT CONTEST
Class or School Project: st	udents from middle and high school may nominate one of the following:
Best Town To Live In	Best Texas Writer
_	vriting why their choice is best. Quantity and quality of nominations will be judged. owed to write or edit the submissions. The winning school will receive a prize of \$1,000.
I *	0 / 1 / 10

The deadline for submitting nominations is January 15, 2005. The results will be published in the September 2005 issue of Texas Co-op Power.



"satisfyin' Texans since the 1880s"



It is late on a fall Saturday afternoon, but neither the hour nor the fact that this is Texas-OU weekend has kept people away from Babe's Chicken Dinner House in Roanoke in Denton County. The rest of the world might be huddled around their TV sets or enjoying the unseasonably warm weather, but the hundred or so customers who have filled most of the tables at Babe's have just one thing on their mind.

Chicken-fried steak.

Teenaged girls bring huge platters of chicken-fried steak, with large bowls of mashed potatoes, plates of biscuits, and smaller bowls of cream gravy to tables where no one seems to be worried in the least about fat, cholesterol or a low-carb diet. When it arrives, the chicken-fried steak is as good as it possibly can be—crusty without the least bit of greasiness, hot and fresh-tasting, and tender in the way that only frying can make something tender.

Chili gets more publicity and barbecue attracts more controversy, but chicken-fried steak is most likely to be recognized as the national dish of Texas than anything else. Just ask a Texan. "You can eat it for dinner. You can eat it for lunch. You can eat it for breakfast. What else do you need?" asks John Bratcher, who grew up eating chicken-fried steak in West Texas. "People used to say a certain food is good for sick people. Well, we used to say, 'Chicken-fried steak is good for well people."

OUT OF THE PAST

Chicken-fried steak, like so much else in Texas, has a historical and legendary past. The standard account is that in 1911, a diner cook in Lamesa (Dawson County) combined two orders for fried chicken and steak into one order for deep-fried battered beef. Sounds nice, but it's kind of like the story that Caesar salad was invented by a Roman emperor instead of a chef in Tijuana.

In fact, today's chicken-fried steak is at least six or seven decades older than that, and its roots go back even farther. A Texas oil man named C.D. Roper, as recounted by oil patch historian Robert L. Gaston, says he remembers his grandmother talking about preparing battered and breaded beef when she was a

WRITTEN BY Jeff Siegel

ILLUSTRATION BY Gil Adams

young girl in the 1880s. In addition, Roper says he once saw a recipe for something called Battered and Pan-Fried Beef Steak in an 1883 Hill Country cookbook. That recipe called for the cut of meat to be soaked in buttermilk and then tossed in a seasoned flour mixture and pan fried.

Varying accounts should not be surprising, says Stephen Johnson, who cooked at The Mansion on Turtle Creek and today teaches breakfast cookery at the Culinary Institute of America in

Hyde Park, New York. There is a long tradition in European cuisine of breading meat and frying it, whether it's the Austrian wiener schnitzel, the Italian veal Milanese, or the Spanish veal Milanesa. There's also a French technique called franchaise that calls for pounding a piece of beef or veal flat, coating it with an egg batter, and then pan frying it.

So much for the Lamesa story. Actually, the historical approach makes perfect sense. Texas' early European settlers brought recipes with them that called for ingredients they couldn't get in their new homes. So they adapted, substituting beef for veal. It's the same process that turned the Spanish puella into the Cajun jambalaya (not much saffron in south Louisiana, after all). Remember, too, that these first settlers were poor, scratching out a living from farming or ranching in what was essentially a wilderness. Who had time to milk-feed a calf to turn it into veal? They had longhorns, so they made do.

UNDERSTANDING THE BASICS

Still, it's often difficult for Texans to understand why others don't hold chicken-fried steak in the same regard.

"I suppose, if you don't know any better, it does sound kind of icky, kind of like deep-fried hamburger, but it gets a lot of respect here [in Texas]," says Debbie Morgan, one of the managers at the 23-table Café 290 in Manor, east of Austin.

Indeed it does. Dallas' Melissa Grove says one of the biggest hurdles her Canadian husband had to overcome when the two were dating was to accept chicken-fried steak as part of the good life. But she prevailed.

The trick is to avoid the cafés and diners that serve frozen patties covered with soggy breading that's never cooked correctly or national chains that cover their misdeeds with pools of greasy, tasteless gravy.

Café 290 is a mecca for chicken-fried steak aficionados, a mandatory stop on the chicken-fried trail, along with places like Threadgill's in Austin, Vern's Place in Dallas, Massey's in Fort Worth, Ouisie's Table in Houston, the Bluebonnet Café in Marble Falls, and the Rockett Café in Ellis County. There are far too many to mention. It is a testament to what's good and noble about the Texas character.

At Café 290, chicken-fried steak is the most popular item on the menu, and they sell almost 400 orders a week (not including the buffet). They offer chicken-fried steak for breakfast (with two eggs, grits and biscuits), chickenfried steak for lunch (check out the Wednesday buffet, served with two vegetables), and chicken-fried steak for dinner, served in two sizes—large and twice as large.

Morgan is probably correct about



Have you taken steps to prepare for severe storms before they strike? Why not put together an emergency supply kit now?

Here's what your kit should include:

- First-aid kit
- Cash (banks and ATMs may be unavailable in a power outage)
- · Battery-operated radio
- Flashlight (and extra batteries)
- Important documents and records, photo IDs, proof of residence
- Three-day supply of nonperishable food
- Three gallons of bottled water per person
- Coolers for food and ice storage
- · Fire extinguisher
- Blankets, sleeping bags and extra clothing
- Prescription medications, written copies of prescriptions, hearing aids and other special medical items
- Eyeglasses and sunglasses
- Extra keys
- Toilet paper, clean-up supplies, duct tape, tarp, rope
- Can opener, knife, tools



This public service message is brought to you by your local electric cooperative. See your local co-op for details.

chicken-fried steak's image problem. One reason that those unfamiliar with the dish tend to shy away from it is that it doesn't sound like what it is—a piece of beef, double-dipped in egg wash and flour, then deep fried until crisp, probably no more than two or three minutes.

Though there is agreement on this basic outline, there are almost infinite variations. Some insist the egg wash should be made with buttermilk or evaporated milk instead of water. Others argue that true chicken-fried steak should never see a deep-fat fryer, but should be pan fried on top of the stove in a cast iron skillet in just enough fat, either lard or vegetable oil. That's how Morgan makes hers at home, and she says it tastes better than deep-fried. Besides, it's easy to throw a couple of tablespoons of flour in the drippings, stir, and then add just enough milk to make the gravy.

Or there is the advice of one longtime Dallas newspaperwoman, who advised dipping ahead of time and allowing the beef sit in the refrigerator for 30 minutes or so to set up.

Cube steak is the most commonly used cut of meat; others insist on round steak (beaten senseless, of course, with a cast iron skillet) or even sirloin. Johnson says that when he cooked in upstate New York at a fancy restaurant called Bois D'Arc (owned by an East Texan), they made chicken-fried steak with tenderloin. Professional chefs being what they are, they have battered and fried all sorts of meat, from elk (very nicely done at Matt's No Place in Dallas) to tuna.

ON THE SIDE

There is much less controversy about what to serve with chicken-fried steak. Cream gravy, of course. Mashed potatoes, certainly, and none of that boxed instant stuff, either. By the way, don't add too much butter or milk to the potatoes, because they'll be too rich for the taste of the gravy. Biscuits should not be thin hockey pucks, but ones so light and high that they almost taste like they need to bake a couple more minutes.

At Babe's, they serve a very impressive cream-style corn, with fresh kernels scraped off the cob, but that's really too much for this kind of meal. Sadly, we've all suffered through bad side dishes like overcooked fried okra,

soggy French fries or gummy rice.

Which brings the discussion to the side dish that makes the chicken-fried steak experience sublime. It's greens, cooked with a piece of pork bone and a little onion and garlic until as tender as possible, no matter how long it takes. No less an authority than Houston's Robb Walsh—food writer, cookbook compiler and chicken-fried raconteur—advocates mustard greens as the perfect accompaniment, properly doused with pepper sauce. In his new book, Are You

Really Going to Eat That?, he carries on for paragraphs about the interplay of greens, potatoes, gravy and meat.

It's enough to make you want to order dinner. Especially if it's chickenfried steak.

Babe's Chicken Dinner House is located at 104 North Oak in Roanoke, (817) 491-2900. Roanoke is served by CoServ Electric.

Jeff Siegel is a Dallas-based food writer.



We love our trees, but when branches are too close to power lines, they can cause power outages, fire hazards and safety concerns.

Here are some rules to follow:

- If a tree or a large branch is touching or falls on an electric line, call your electric cooperative immediately. Tree sap is an excellent conductor of electricity, so a downed branch on a line is an electrocution hazard as well as a fire hazard.
- Never trim trees that grow close to power lines; that is a job for professionals. Call your electric co-op for assistance and guid-
- Don't allow children to climb trees or build tree houses close to power lines.
- When planting a tree, plan ahead. A tiny tree may eventually grow large enough to damage power lines and possibly interrupt power during storms. At maturity, your trees should not be within 10 feet of a power line.
- Plant appropriate distances from all power lines—those along the street or right-of-way, as well as those running to your home and outbuildings.



This public service message is brought to you by your local electric cooperative. See your local co-op for details.

PROTECT YOURSELF WITH SURGE PROTECTORS

urge protectors are not iust for your computers or to be used as glorified extension cords. They save our sensitive home components from becoming toast.

Electrical surges can be caused from nearby lightning or from sudden changes in power needs. An electrical surge from lightning is able to travel through phone, electrical and cable lines up to a half-mile and still cause harm. The majority of surge-related damage is caused by downed power lines, changes in seasonal energy demands, or the usage of high-powered appliances like refrigerators, electric dryers and air conditioners.

> A good way to protect yourself is to get a surge protector to fit your needs, whether it is to protect the whole house or a few appliances.

> > Normally, a surge protector allows the electricity to flow through it to the appli-

ance. Once a higher voltage is detected, the surge protector diverts excess voltage to a ground

wire. The better surge protectors are able to divert the voltage quicker, within a nanosecond.

Whole-home surge protectors are available. The system, which costs about \$200, should be hardwired into your electrical system by a licensed electrician. Separate suppressors are recommended for your cable and phone lines to protect your phones, TVs and fax machines.

Plug-in surge protectors come in three different categories: power strip, power station and uninterruptible power supply. The power strip provides basic protection and is able to buffer 400 volts or less. The power station is able to protect plug-in appliances as well as phone lines and coax-

ial cable. It is able to protect up to a 330volt surge. An uninterruptible power supply is able to supply non-fluctuating power, courtesy of a battery. The battery backup allows for extra time to save data on a computer.

Before buying a plug-in surge protector, make sure it follows these criteria:

- UL 1449 rating.
- Absorbs at least 600 joules of energy.
- 400 or less clamping voltage (the amount of electricity needed to trigger the surge protector to divert the voltage to the ground line).
- Protects all three incoming lines: hot, neutral and ground. Look for "L-N, L-G, N-G" (line to neutral, line to ground, neutral to ground) on the product's spec sheet.

If its circuits are damaged from a surge, the surge protector will stop working and should then be replaced with a new one.

Source: This Old House Magazine, www.thisoldhouse.com

LOOK FOR SECRET PLACES WHERE AIR LEAKS HIDE

racks around windows and doors were once considered to be the home's most prominent air leaks. Then building specialists started measuring air leakage with a device called a blower door. As a result of that research, we've learned that caulking small cracks and weather-stripping doors and windows isn't very effective at reducing air leakage.

The biggest air leaks are lurking in the attic, around the foundation, and where utilities pass through the building's outer shell. When you have large hidden air leaks, sealing the little ones doesn't reduce your heating costs much.

Find a specialist in your region who performs energy audits and blower-door testing. The blower door could tell you whether or not air leakage is a problem in your home. If your energy audit shows that air leakage is an energy and comfort problem, go looking for large openings in your home's shell. You'll

often find large air leaks under bathrooms and kitchens where pipes and wires are installed. Go into your attic, too, and note where pipes, wires, recessed light fixtures and chimneys penetrate your ceiling. Follow the plumbing and wiring and you'll be on the right track.

When you find openings that allow air to leak into and out of your home, seal them with durable materials. Don't worry about cracks smaller than 1/4 inch. For cracks between 1/4 inch and 1 inch, use liquid foam that comes in a can, or stuff Fiberglas tightly into the opening. For larger openings, use rigid foam board or plywood, and seal the edges with more liquid foam. If you seal around chimneys, be sure to use fireproof materials such as sheet metal. Every opening you seal will reduce the amount of heated air you lose next winter.

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

MAN VERSUS MACHINE: THE DISHWASHING DECISION

recent study at the University of Bonn, Germany, concluded that although automatic dishwashers are far more efficient than washing dishes by hand—using less water, energy, detergent and human working time—manual dishwashing techniques could be developed that would come close to the efficiency of automatic dishwashers.

In the test, two automatic machines were run five times each on two different cycles using a widely accepted European test for dishwasher performance—140 pieces of china, glassware and cutlery soiled with dried-on food. Using this same standard, 113 people from seven European countries participated as dishwashers. Their performance was compared to the two automatic dishwashers. Two sinks with hot and cold tap water, a variety of cleaning tools, and 22 dishwashing liquids from different countries were available to the hand-washers.

The results revealed that a machine used about 4 gallons of water and consumed about 1 kWh of electrical energy for a standard cycle. In contrast, hand washers used an average of 27 gallons of water (one person used 118 gallons of water!) and 2.5 kWh of water-heating energy.

Researchers noted that the efficiency of hand-washing varied greatly from washer to washer and concluded that "best practices" could



be developed (with more research) to improve the efficiency of manual washing. Tips for efficient manual dishwashing include:

- Large food scraps should be removed from the dishes with a spoon or fork.
- Start washing dishes soon after the meal as hand-washing dried-on food is much more difficult.
- Do not pre-rinse dishes under running tap water whether doing dishes by hand or using an automatic dishwasher.
- Use two sinks for manual dishwashing if possible—one with hot water and dish detergent and the other with cold water for a quick rinse.
- A newer model automatic dishwasher is best if you can afford one. It cleans better and has less environmental impact than washing dishes by hand.

Source: HOME Energy magazine



YOUR LOCAL
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
WILL BE CLOSED
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 6,
IN OBSERVANCE OF
LABOR DAY.

It's TIME TO WINTERIZE

A utumn is almost here, and it's not too early to winterize your home. A winterized home will keep you out of the cold and leave a few extra dollars in your pocket.

- Most heat loss in homes is due to poor attic insulation, which drives up energy bills. If you can see the joists in your ceiling, you don't have enough attic insulation.
- Make sure to seal any cracks in your home that could let cold air in.
 Use standard caulking to seal leaks around windows, electrical sockets, pipes and ductwork. Keep an eye out for cracked or peeling caulk.
- Check your basement foundation for cracks, and repair any you find with heavy caulk or ready-mix cement.
- Keep your heating system running efficiently with a professional inspection.
- Changing or cleaning filters will improve the air quality in your home and keep your heating system from overworking. Replace Fiberglas filters, which are less effective once they're cleaned and reused.
- Insulate your water heater and pipes to prevent heat loss through the plumbing.
- Consider investing in an automatic thermostat that will lower the temperature in your home slightly when no one is around and bring it back up when people return. It's less expensive to raise and lower the temperature of your home than it is to keep it constant throughout the day when no one's around.
- Close the fireplace flue when you're not using it. Reopen it before you make the season's first cozy fire. A closed flue prevents heat from escaping up an open chimney.

The U.S. Department of Energy says it costs about \$1,400 per year to heat the average home. When you stop heat from leaking through cracks and holes in the building, you cut that price.

Cowboy Journal

By Lonn Taylor

am sometimes asked to name my favorite book about cowboys, and I always get a puzzled look when I reply that it is J. Marvin Hunter's The Trail Drivers of Texas. "What?" someone will invariably ask, "Not something by Will James or Zane Grey?" "Nope," I reply, "The Trail Drivers is the real thing."

The book was the project of George W. Saunders, a San Antonio livestock dealer who in 1915 founded the Old Time Trail Drivers Association, which might be called the Daughters of the American Revolution of the cowboy world. You had to have participated in a trail drive to Kansas or points farther north before 1896 to get in. Saunders asked the members to write about their experiences on the trail and published the results in 1920. The Trail Drivers of Texas went through several printings in the 1920s and was reprinted by the University of Texas Press with a new introduction by Western expert Byron Price, in 1985.

These men were realists to whom moving cows north was both a business and the greatest adventure of their lives. G.O. Burrows of Del Rio wrote, "Some of my experiences were going hungry, getting wet and cold, riding sore-backed horses, going to sleep on herd and losing cattle, getting cussed by the boss, scouting for gray-backs [lice], trying the sick racket now and then to get a good sleep."

Others wrote about the terror sparked by storms, stampedes and swollen rivers. An astonishing number of cowboys devoted as much space to describing the train ride home as they did to the drive north.

As Jack Potter said of his first drive, "I was a boy not 17 years old, two thousand miles from home. I had never been on a railroad train, never slept in a hotel, never taken a bath in a bath-house." Forty years later, he still could not get over the fact that he could check his trunk on a train in Greeley, Colorado, and have it reappear on a railroad platform in San Antonio.

A cowboy named J.D. Jackson tells one of the best stories in the book,

about a Big Bend man, D.G. Knight. In the summer of 1887, Knight was managing a ranch in Presidio County for some absentee owners in Kentucky, and Jackson was working for him. The owners had a young nephew who wanted to be a cowboy, and they sent Indians. After everyone had climbed into their bedrolls, some of the boys sneaked off into the brush, tied grass around their heads, and armed themselves with sotol stalk lances. About midnight, Knight awakened the young Kentuckian and told him to help move



Photo tinting by

him out to Marfa to learn the ropes from Knight.

Jackson says: "He was a very talkative young man and often told us of the good times people in high society had in Kentucky. ... He was quite free to state that he did not think we would know how to act in such high society, and while we knew that this was perhaps true, we did not care to hear it." As Jackson puts it, "The boys immediately started in to show him how they did things in high cow-camp society." First they slipped the cinches off his saddle so that when his horse stopped quickly, he flew off his horse with the saddle. He just thought it was an accident and kept on talking about Kentucky.

After a couple of other mild pranks, Knight organized the grand finale. One night when they were camped about 60 miles south of Marfa, Knight and his men spent the early part of the evening sitting around the campfire telling about narrow escapes from the horses nearer to camp so the Indians wouldn't get them. While they were kneeling down undoing the hobbles, the other boys came charging up on horseback, shooting and waving their lances. Knight fell over and yelled that he was killed.

The frightened boy jumped on his horse and lit a shuck out of camp. The other cowboys thought that they could stop him and reveal the joke, but he was too fast for them and rode 60 miles to Marfa, where he told the citizens that he was the only survivor of a dastardly attack.

When he found out what had really happened, he took the first train east.

A version of this article ran in the (Alpine) Desert-Mountain Times.

Lonn Taylor retired to Fort Davis two years ago after serving as a historian at the Smithsonian Institution and as director of the University of Texas Winedale Historical Center.

Utility Poles Are Not for Play

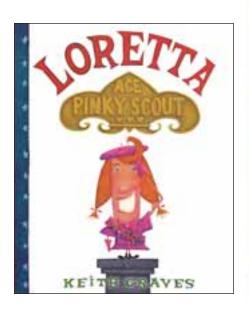
arvin ought to know that only electrical workers should use utility poles. They are not playthings. Falling off a pole could really hurt. Just sliding down a pole could give you enough splinters to keep your mom busy with the tweezers all afternoon.

Nor should poles be used for posting lost-pet fliers, garage sale announcements, political messages or any other unofficial purposes.

Marvin was lucky that the only nails he came upon were on the bottom of his shoes. Real linemen are often injured by old, rusty nails and tacks that never should have been hammered into poles in the first place. The nails can rip their pants, their arms and legs, or their safety gloves. Even a teensy hole in a lineman's glove can be extremely dangerous for him—even life-threatening!

For your own safety, declare utility poles OFF LIMITS.

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. He lives in Austin with his wife, Nancy, and the twins. Max and Emma.





Miller Photo Courtesy, Fort Worth Star-Telegram Photograph Collection, University of Texas at Arlington Libraries, Arlington, Texas

Hanging Out With J.X.

J.X. Miller invented the clothespin bag in 1944 with a bent clothes hanger and a piece of canvas. By 1949, he and his wife owned the Miller Manufacturing Company in Fort Worth.

s a young guy in search of a job in the 1960s, I Awas no stranger to the cold shoulder and its various applications when I hired out as a fireman on the Texas & Pacific Railroad. But these railroaders seemed to have lowered the temperature of frosty receptions down to somewhere between lime sherbet and Amarillo in January. Nobody would talk to me.

A fireman's job on a diesel locomotive wasn't complicated or difficult, but you were expected to know how to switch its controls from one end to the other. turn it on the turntable, fuel and sand it, and be prepared to relieve the engineer, if necessary.

Learning these things posed a problem when no one would talk to you.

But there's always someone who will extend his hand to a newcomer, and in this case it was James Xerxes (J.X.) Miller, a veteran engineer in khaki trousers, bluechecked shirt and fedora hat. He had worked a switch-engine job on the second shift for many years.

"You shouldn't be too downhearted if railroaders ignore you," he said. "They're the best people in the world but kind of like old cowboys. They expect you to earn your spurs. When you prove yourself

and get over the hump, they'll cuss you, and borrow money from you, and ask you to go on their note, and generally treat you like a friend."

y only experience for the first few weeks had been as the lowliest of hostler helpers, removing engines from incoming trains and replacing them with freshly fueled engines from the roundhouse, then washing and refueling them. As soon as I could, I got with J.X. on the evening switch-engine shift.

The first thing we did was pick up a line of cars and shove them into a siding for disposition later. By this time, I had been at the controls of passenger and freight engines. I learned a few things by watching and listening, but running a switch engine and switching out boxcars wasn't one of them. As we sat and waited for the switchman's signal, J.X. pointed to the instrument panel and said, "Son, this lever is forward and reverse. The throttle is here, and this one is the brake. Take over, it's been a hard day."

That's the way he was, I learned later—a believer in self-reliance. That night I also learned he was a believer in giving others a chance to learn on their own by the total immersion method. But turning a 30-ton, 1,500-horsepower switch engine over to a kid to switch out lines of boxcars, some of them fully loaded, seemed to me to display a tad too much confidence in my abilities.

J.X. sat in the fireman's seat and drank his coffee calmly while I fiddled with the controls in a desperate attempt to get them coordinated before the signal to move appeared out in the dark. Despite a few rough couplings here and there, I did fine, and coworkers would eventually count me as a railroader.

fter work one night, J.X. asked me to follow him Aa little way off my route home. He wanted to show me something. In Fort Worth's Poly area, he stopped beneath a factory sign that said, "Miller Manufacturing Company." Then I understood why he'd had a hard day. He and his wife, Lillian, were the proprietors of a nationwide company that produced 2,500 clothespin bags per day. Lillian's hard work was responsible for much of the company's success.

J.X. invented the clothespin bag in 1944. Before J.X. had his brainstorm, women hanging out clothes on outdoor lines carried their clothespins in their apron pockets or in a dishpan that they shoved along on the ground with their foot. J.X. thought this was a pretty primitive method, so he dumped the nails out of a syrup bucket, put the clothespins in it, and hung it over the clothesline by its bail. He improved his system by fashioning a denim bag and sewing it over a wire frame made from a clothes hanger. He bent the wire on one side to form a

hook that attached the bag to the clothesline.

This was the first clothespin bag.

Te gave me a personal demonstration that night **L**of how to make a clothespin bag with modern assembly line equipment. He also loaded me down with oven mitts for my wife. Obviously such an operation brought in lots of money, so I asked him why he kept working his engineer's job. "I guess I hang onto it because railroading is such a part of me that I couldn't give it up even if I wanted to," he said. "Just the smells and the sounds of the train yards at night always make me feel good, and feeling good is not something you ever want to give up."

For the first few years after J.X.'s invention, the Miller family made clothespin bags at home and sold them to friends and neighbors. But by 1949, the postwar economic boom made credit more available and J.X. soon had a patent, a building for the factory, and 10 employees. The succeeding decade was a heyday for the clothespin bag. It was such an important part of everyday life, it's hard to believe it is now almost unknown to the under-40 generation. The one he gave me that night in his factory hangs in my closet, but only as a reminder. We haven't used it since 1968, when we got our first electric clothes dryer. The widespread availability of the dryer, beginning in the 1960s, ended the era of the clothespin bag and the sweet-smelling, sun- and wind-dried clothes that cost nothing in dollars or energy consumption.

J.X. died in 1969 at the age of 64. The company

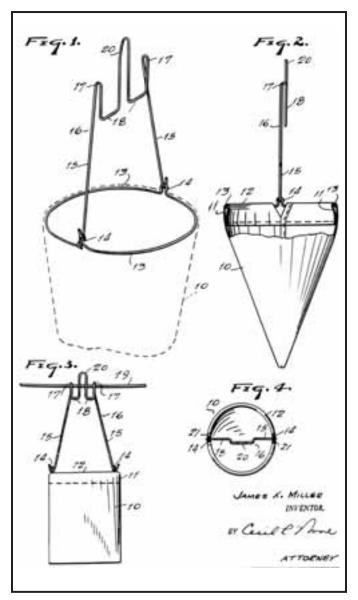
shifted production to potholders, aprons, insulated oven mitts and other kitchen items, and by the 1990s, the company had 50 employees.

I drove over to Fort Worth for a nostalgic visit recently. The Texas & Pacific no longer exists. It is now called the Union Pacific. The substation where we switched boxcars is still busy, but railroaders standing on the ground with remote controls operate many of the engines that engineers used to run. The sign over J.X.'s original building is gone, bought by

an antique dealer, and an entrepreneur uses the factory building as a storehouse for his furniture business across the street.

J.X. and his simple but important contribution to Americana are mostly forgotten now, but his willingness to extend a warm hand with nothing to gain in return was also a valuable contribution, something we should not allow to go the way of sun-dried clothes and the clothespin bag.

Tom Dodge is an essayist and National Public Radio commentator who lives in Midlothian.



The original patent drawing for the clothespin bag.



Low-Carb Lifestyle

ens of millions of Americans are currently on a low-carbohydrate diet. There are a number of popular low-carb diets, but one complaint common to all their devotees is: "I'm sick of scrambled eggs and bacon (or steak and broccoli or chicken and salad)." Finding a variety of good lowcarb recipes can make or break your diet willpower. Perhaps you'll like some of the recipes in this issue well enough to add them to your repertoire.

The recipe for Mexicali Pork Chops comes to us courtesy of the National Pork Board. (For more information about "Pork: The Other White Meat." visit their website at www.otherwhite meat.com.)

Mexicali Pork Chops

- 4 boneless pork center loin chops, 1 1/2-inch thickness
- 4 ounces canned green chilies, chopped
- 2 teaspoons oregano
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 4 tablespoons cider vinegar
- 2 teaspoons oil

In blender container, place chilies, oregano, garlic, cumin and vinegar. Puree until smooth. Marinate chops in mixture 4-24 hours, refrigerated.

Heat oil in heavy skillet. Remove chops from marinade, pat dry, and brown 7-8 minutes on each side. Serves 4.

Serving size: 1 chop. Per serving: 162 calories, 22 grams protein, 7 grams fat, 1 gram carbohydrates, 38 milligrams sodium, 55 milligrams cholesterol

Lettuce wraps are a great low-carb substitute for sandwiches or tacos. Try a leaf of iceberg lettuce filled with your favorite chicken salad recipe. Or, make

taco meat with your favorite taco seasoning and serve it "make-your-own" style with lettuce leaves, sour cream, cheese, chopped tomatoes, guacamole and salsa. If you don't already have a favorite taco seasoning, here's a recipe for Turkey Taco Filling from the National Turkey Federation (www.eatturkey.com).

Turkey Taco Filling

- 1 pound ground turkey
- 2 tablespoons minced dried onion
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper

In a large skillet over medium-high heat, combine turkey, onion, chili powder, paprika, cumin, oregano, salt, garlic powder and pepper. Cook for 7 to 8 minutes or until turkey is no longer pink. Serves 5.

ecember's recipe contest subject is Holiday Cookies. I know many of you have been to holiday cookie swaps and have surely come away with some recipe "treasures." Please share them with us by September 10, and we'll publish our own cookie swap in December. 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@texasec.org.

If you're on a low-carbohydrate diet, you might find it hard to get all the vegetables you need. This month's winning recipe, Squash Casserole, may help you. It's a tasty dish with a little crunch and protein provided by pecans. Jill Hampton, a Pedernales EC member, submitted the recipe. She will receive a copy of the Texas Co-op Power Cookbook. Remember, not all "low-carb" dishes are created equal. If you are just beginning a low-carb diet, the cheesecake below may have too many carbs for you. However, if you're in the maintenance phase of a low-carb diet, it may be just the thing for dessert.

Squash Casserole

1 tablespoon butter

1 roll (1 pound) Italian sausage, browned

1 pound yellow squash

1/2 cup mayonnaise

1/2 cup chopped onion

1/4 cup chopped green bell pepper

1/2 cup pecan pieces

1/2 cup shredded Cheddar cheese

1 large egg

Parmesan cheese

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease bottom and sides of casserole dish with butter. Brown sausage. Slice squash. Mix together mayonnaise, onion, bell pepper, pecans, cheese and egg. Add squash and browned sausage. Put mixture in casserole dish. Top with Parmesan cheese. Bake 40-50 minutes. Serves 8-10.



4 boneless chicken breasts, cut into quarters

16 cubes Cheddar or Swiss cheese

32 slices jalapeño

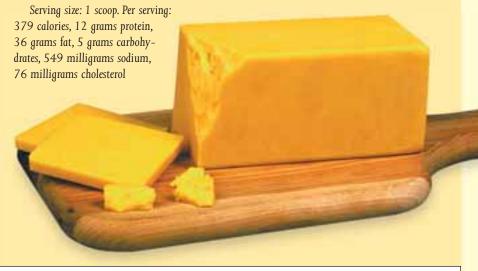
8 slices bacon, cut into halves

1 cup Italian dressing, any brand Toothpicks

Butterfly each chicken breast quarter and stuff with 1 cube of cheese and 2 jalapeño slices. Wrap a half-piece of bacon around the chicken and secure with a toothpick. Marinate in Italian dressing for 20 minutes. Cook about 20 minutes on an outdoor grill or 45 minutes in a 350-degree oven. Serves 8.

Serving size: 2 pieces. Per serving: 244 calories, 34 grams protein, 10 grams fat, 4 grams carbohydrates, 267 milligrams sodium, 89 milligrams cholesterol

SUSIE BUTLER, Bandera EC



SAFE

LIVING

Plug Into Electrical Safety Before Heating Season Starts

hen fall arrives, it's time to have a qualified professional check and service your heating system. No matter what kind of system you have, a heating system check-up will ensure that it's operating efficiently and safely before the first cold days arrive.

A heating safety check should also include any portable heaters that you may be using.

To help prevent injuries or fire:

 Make sure the cord to your portable electric heater is in good condition and all the switches and controls are working properly.

■ Space heaters should be placed at least 3 to 4 feet from flammable material such as curtains, furniture or newspapers. Extension cords should not be used with space heaters. Even if your electric heater is equipped with an automatic shut-off device (if knocked over), portable heaters can still cause fires or serious burns with residual heat. Make sure your heater has a three-prong

grounded plug and is used in a grounded wall outlet.

Fuses and circuit breakers are safety devices located in your electric panel. Use the correct size fuses; replacing a fuse with one of a higher rating can be a fire hazard.

If you use a fireplace or wood stove during the winter, have the chimney cleaned and the flues checked out. Taking these simple steps now can help you stay comfortable—and safe—this winter.



FOUR STAR FARE for the LONE STAR STATE

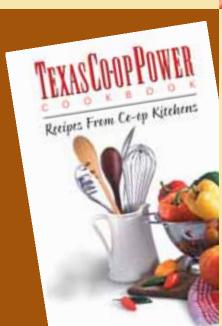
Mouthwatering recipes from the heart of Texas.

WAFFLE IRON CORNBREAD

- 1 egg
- 1 cup milk
- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup cornmeal
- ³/₄ 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



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Low-Carb Sausage Dressing

- 2 large onions, finely chopped
- 3 stalks celery, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 pound sausage, seasoned
- 1 teaspoon sage (or your favorite dressing seasonings)

Salt and pepper to taste

- 1 head cabbage, finely chopped
- 15 ounces canned chicken broth (at least)
- 3 eggs, beaten

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Sauté onion and celery in butter. Add sausage and brown, crumbling the sausage finely. Let oils and butter brown on the bottom of the pan. Add seasonings. Add cabbage and continue cooking. Add chicken broth to moisten as dish starts to get dry. (Depending on the size of the head of cabbage, you might need more than one can of broth.) Cook until cabbage is tender. Put in a 3-4 quart baking dish and stir in beaten eggs. Bake 20-30 minutes. Serves 10-12.

Serving size: 1 scoop. Per serving: 207 calories, 7 grams protein, 19 grams fat, 3 grams carbohydrates, 587 milligrams sodium, 78 milligrams cholesterol

> **IRENE BARNES,** United Cooperative Services and Navarro County EC

Low-Carb Cheesecake With Pecan Crust

Crust:

- 1 1/2 cups chopped pecans
- 4 tablespoons Splenda
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted

Combine above ingredients. Press into a prepared 9-inch pan. Bake 10 minutes at 400 degrees. Cool.

Filling:

- 3 packages (8 ounces each) cream cheese, room temperature
- 3 eggs
- 1 cup Splenda
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Beat all ingredients until creamy. Pour into prepared pan. Bake 35 minutes or until golden brown. Serves 12.

Serving size: 1 slice. Per serving: 333 calories, 7 grams protein, 33 grams fat, 5 grams carbohydrates, 201 milligrams sodium, 114 milligrams cholesterol

AMY JARRETT, Central Texas EC

Chili Burgers on Portobello "Buns"

- 4 portobello mushroom caps
- 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling
- 1 1/2 pounds ground sirloin or turkey
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 seeded and chopped jalapeño
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 2 tablespoons dark chili powder
- 1 tablespoon steak seasoning blend (Montreal Steak Seasoning)
- 8 ounces smoked white Cheddar or Gouda, sliced

Optional:

- 2 roasted red peppers, drained
- 2 tablespoons chopped cilantro or flat-leaf parsley

Grind roasted red peppers with cilantro or parsley in a food processor, if using.

Preheat grill pan or large nonstick griddle pan over medium-high to high heat. Wipe mushroom caps with damp towel to clean them. Scrape away gills with spoon. Combine Worcestershire sauce and vinegar and whisk in 2 tablespoons of oil. Brush mushrooms with the dressing. Grill mushrooms on hot grill pan for 3 to 4 minutes per side, until tender. Transfer to a plate and cover to keep warm.

Combine meat in a bowl with onion, garlic, jalapeño, tomato paste, chili powder and steak seasoning blend. Form into 4 large patties (1 1/2 inches thick). Grill meat 4 to 7 minutes per side for medium rare to well done. Melt cheese over burgers during last minute or two of cooking. A loose foil tent will help the cheese melt faster.

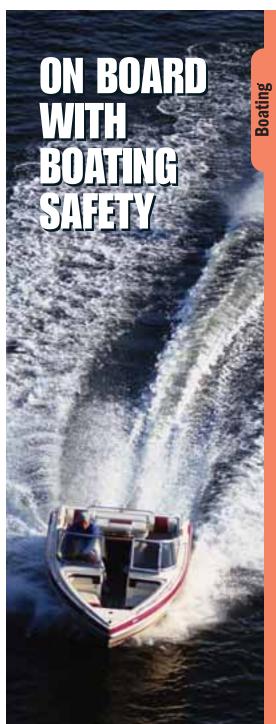
To assemble, place a portobello, cap side down, on a plate. Spread a spoonful of the ground roasted pepper mixture into the cavity (if using). Top with a chili cheese burger and serve. Serves 4.

Serving size: 1 burger. Per serving: 762 calories, 50 grams protein, 56 grams fat, 16 grams carbohydrates, 1,623 milligrams sodium, 177 milligrams cholesterol

JUDI GIANGIULIO, Hamilton County EC

Discover what's new in the market. Gift-giving is a cinch when you choose to use this handy guide for your holiday shopping. HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

COMING IN THE NOVEMBER ISSUE OF TEXAS CO-OP POWER



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!



This public service message is brought to you by your local electric cooperative. See your local co-op for details.

AROUND

F E X A S

September

- 3-5. Laborious Day Horse Show, **Conroe**, (713) 964-2642
- 3-6. Celebrate **Bandera**, dance, cattle drive/parade, reenactments, rodeos, trail ride, 1-800-364-3833 or www.celebratebandera.com
- 4. Ole Time Music, Pearl, (254) 865-6013
- 4. Market Day, Wimberley, (512) 847-2201
- 4. Cultural Music & Dance Festival, **Rockdale**, (512) 446-2030
- 4. Cove Country Opry, **Copperas Cove**, (254) 547-4226 or www.covecountryopry.com
- 4. Corsicana Opry, Corsicana, (904) 872-8226

- 4-5. Antique Tractor & Farm Machinery Show, tractor races, parade, kiddie pedal tractor pull, demonstrations, **Lindsay**, 1-800-689-7861 or (940) 665-6823
- 4-5. Frontier Days, rodeo, dance, fiddler's contest, **Harper**, (830) 864-4050
- 4-6. Fiesta 2004, San Marcos, (512) 353-8969
- 5. St. Joseph's Homecoming & Bazaar, **New Waverly**, (936) 344-6104
- Brush Country Music Jamboree, Three Rivers, (361) 786-3334
- 9-10. Community Garage Sale, **Kirbyville**, (409) 423-5827
- 9-11. Memories in Stitches Quilt Show, **Caldwell**, (979) 567-0126
- 9-12. GrapeFest, **Grapevine**, 1-800-457-6338 or www.grapevinetexasusa.com

- 9-12. Colorado County Fair, antique tractor pull and show, music, carnival, **Columbus**, (979) 732-6201 or www.coloradocountyfair.org
- 10-11. Go Texan Cook Off & Cotton Pickin' Fair, **Hillsboro**, (254) 582-2481 or www.hillsborochamber.org
- 10-12. Fabric of Our Cultures Quilt Show & Fiber Art Exhibit, **Victoria**, (361) 572-ARTS
- 11. Annual Garage Sale, **Ballinger**, (325) 365-2333 or www.ballingertx.org
- 11. 19th Century Candlemaking, Varner-Hogg Plantation, **West Columbia**, (979) 345-4656
- 11. Market Days, Georgetown, (512) 868-8675
- Patriot's Day, candlelight vigil commemorating 9/11/01, LBJ National Historical Park, Johnson City, (830) 868-7128 or www.nps.gov/lyjo

FESTIVAL OF THE MONTH

BY JIM GRAMON

Texas Gatorfest: September 10-12, Anahuac

In the swamps and bayous halfway between Houston and Beaumont, Anahuac hosts one of the Lone Star State's most unusual festivals, the Texas Gatorfest! This is only fitting since Anahuac is the Alligator Capital of Texas, a designation bestowed on the city by the State Legislature. Why? Because the alligators outnumber the humans there almost 3 to 1!

Historic Fort Anahuac State Park, at the mouth of the Trinity River and overlooking Trinity Bay, provides the perfect site for the festival. In the Great Texas Alligator Roundup, the premier event of Gatorfest, alligator hunters compete for cash prizes based on the size of their catch. The festival coincides with the opening of the 20-day alligator season in Texas, and an average of 10 percent of the alligators harvested from the wild in Texas annually are caught during the roundup. Previous years' trophy winners have been more than 13 feet long!

In the Alligator Education Tent, visitors can learn more about the alligator and its wetlands habitat from a variety

of displays. In fact, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department provides alligator displays throughout the festival grounds. This is the perfect opportunity to meet some of these fascinating reptiles.

There are adult carnival rides, kiddie rides, a petting zoo, airboat rides, arts and crafts booths, and three stages with continuous entertainment including rock, country, rhythm and blues, zydeco, folk and gospel music. Street dances are held Friday and Saturday night. And more than 25 food and drink booths offer diverse fare, including alligator prepared in a variety of ways.

Anahuac is 45 miles east of Houston and 45 miles west of Beaumont. Take exit 810 on Interstate 10, then Texas Highway 563 some 8 miles south to Anahuac. Fort Anahuac State Park is also easily reached from the Trinity River by boat. Watch for marker 15 on the east side of the river. Transportation to and from the county airport is provided on Saturday.

For more information call (409) 267-8354 or (409) 267-4190 or check www.TexasGatorfest.com.

Jim Gramon is the author of FUN Texas Festivals and Events. Jim@JimGramon.com, www.JimGramon.com.

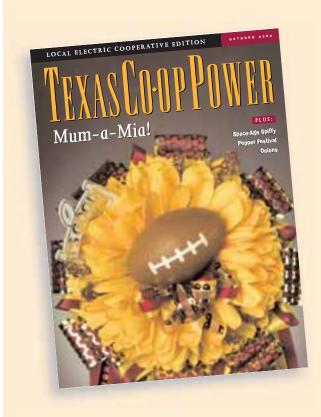


Catch an exciting and educational airboat ride at the Texas Gatorfest.



Antique farm machinery will be on display in Columbus and Lindsay this month.

- 11. Red River County Stew Cook-Off, **Clarksville**, (903) 427-3867 or www.red-river.net
- 11. Trade Days, **Conroe**, (936) 756-JAVA or www.conroedowntown.com
- 11. Motorun Car, Bike & Truck Show, **Schroeder**, (361) 578-7711
- 11. Texas Old West Bronc Riding Championships, chili cook-off, **Killeen**, (512) 627-1129
- 11. Arts & Crafts and Bluegrass Festival, **Mountain Springs**, www.mt-springs.com
- 11. Heritage Days Festival, rodeo, chuck wagon cooking, dance, **Blanco**, (830) 833-5708
- 11-12. Apple Butter Festival, **Idalou**, (806) 781-1753 or www.applecountryorchards.com
- 12. Germanfest, meal and dance, **DaCosta**, (361) 578-6658
- 12. Open Bass Tournament, **Ballinger**, (325) 365-2333 or www.ballingertx.org
- 14. Hay Show, **Mineola**, (903) 569-2087 or www.chamber.mineola.com
- 15-18. Washington County Fair, **Brenham**, 1-888-BRENHAM or www.brenhamtexas.com
- Estimating Your Hidden Treasures, Cotton Museum, Greenville, (903) 450-4502 or www.cottonmuseum.com
- 16-18. Pioneer Reunion, parade, historic jail museum, barbecues, rodeos, arts and crafts, **Henrietta**, (940) 691-6811



COMING IN THE OCTOBER ISSUE OF

Texas Coop Power

Mum-a-Mia

Flashy, gaudy, outrageous—there's no such thing as too much on a Texas homecoming mum.

Space-Age Spiffy

The sophistication of plastics is saluted in a ranch-style home on a quiet street in Temple.

Plus:

Onion recipes; The "hottest little festival in Texas"; "Chow Down" reader photo contest; and more!

- 16-19. Pickin' in the Pines, **Pine Mills**, (903) 857-2253 or www.t-roymiller.com
- 17. Third Friday Bluegrass Show & Jam, Cleburne, (817) 373-2541 or www.geocities.com/ntbbluegrass
- 17. Country Opry, Victoria, (361) 552-9347
- 17-18. Lone Star Heritage Quilt Show, **Sulphur Springs**, (903) 994-2570
- 17-19. Historical Re-enactment, gunfights, demonstrations, Longhorn cattle drive, Native American village, Fort Griffin, (325) 762-3593
- 17-19. B-17 Gathering and Big Bird Fly-In, **Monaville**, (281) 498-7935 or (979) 764-9067

- 17-19. Trade Days, **Fredericksburg**, (830) 990-4900 or www.fbgtradedays.com
- 17-19. Antique Alley and 15-Mile Yard Sale, **Grandview** to **Cleburne**, (817) 866-3987
- 17-19. Shades of Texas Quilt Show, **Killeen**, (254) 554-2674
- 17-19. Trade Days, **Livingston**, (936) 327-3656 or www.cityoflivingston-tx.com/tradedays
- 18. Buffalo Stampede, Buffalo, (903) 322-5810
- 18. Junior Texas Water Safari, **San Marcos**, (512) 357-6863
- 18. Fiesta de Anyo, Victoria, (361) 575-2500
- 18. Car-Truck-Cycle Show, **Lewisville**, (817) 430-8962



Any time a hurricane approaches the Texas coast, you're likely to be reminded to take precautions. But the time for planning should begin well before hurricane season arrives.

Follow these tips to prepare yourself and your home for hurricanes:

- Remove weak and dead trees and tree limbs on your property.
- Know whether your home is in a zone that could be flooded.
- Have a "grab and run" bag ready with important papers (like your homeowner's insurance policy) and prescription medicines in the event you have to evacuate.
- Have a plan in place for where you will go if you evacuate, the route you will take, and how others can contact you.
- Have a survival kit ready with nonperishable food, water, a first-aid kit and other things you may need.
- Keep a battery-powered radio handy. And don't forget the extra batteries.

Keep this information readily available in case of the threat of a hurricane.



This public service message is brought to you by your local electric cooperative. See your local co-op for details.



Dutch Nance, a cowboy who frequented Fort Griffin in the 1880s, strikes a pose. Visit the state park August 17-19 for a Wild West re-enactment.

- 18. Guys & Gals Car Show, **Jacksboro**, (940) 567-6530
- Rose-Ted Pepper Fest, cooking contest, music, food, Independence, (979) 836-5548 or www.weareroses.com
- 18. Ables Springs VFD Annual Fish Fry, **Terrell**, (972) 571-8032
- 18. Kite Fest, **Kyle**, (512) 268-5341 or www.cityofkyle.com/parks
- 18-19. Antique Show, Huntsville, (936) 436-0265
- 18-19. Hobie Daggerboard Regatta, **Lake Tawakoni**, (903) 447-3020
- 19. Holy Trinity Bazaar & Live Auction, **New Corn Hill**, (512) 863-3020
- 19. VFD Celebration, **New Ulm**, (979) 992-3373
- 22-25. Red River County Fair, **Clarksville**, (903) 427-3867 or www.red-river.net
- 23-25. Country Fair, Alba, (903) 765-2573
- 23-Oct. 3. Antique Fairs in **Washington County, Warrenton, Round Top, Burton**, 1-888-BREN-HAM or www.brenhamtexas.com
- American Music in the Texas Hill Country, Fredericksburg, (830) 997-2835 or www.pioneermuseum.com
- 24-25. Busy Bee Quilt Show, **Post Oak**, (940) 567-2771
- 24-25. Civilian Conservation Corps Reunion, Caddo Lake State Park, **Karnack**, (512) 389-4665 or www.tpwd.state.tx.us /park/admin/ccc.htm
- 24-25. Lonesome Dove Fest, dove cook-off, parade, chuck wagons, shooting events, **Karnes City**, (830) 780-2471
- 24-25. Library Barbeque & Chili Cook-Off Fundraiser, **New Waverly**, (936) 322-2198
- 24-26. Celebrate the Adventure Quilt Show, **Austin**, (512) 448-5152 or www.aaqg.org
- 24-Oct. 3. Antique Fair, **Carmine**, (979) 278-3412
- 25. Trade Day, **Coldspring**, (936) 653-2009
- 25. VFD Barn Dance Benefit, **Telico**, (972) 878-2083

Aficionados will find model airplane heaven in Monaville September 17-19.

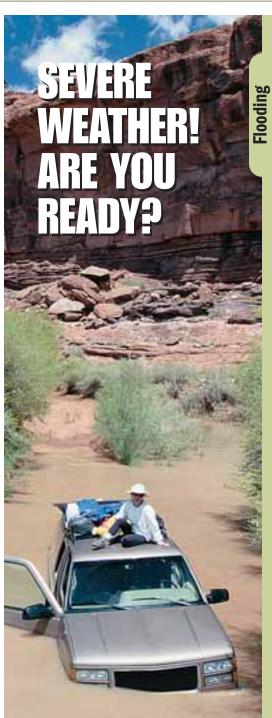
- 25. Conquer the Coast Bicycle Ride, 65- and 25-mile courses around the Bay of Corpus Christi, **Port Aransas**,
 - www.conquerthecoast.com
- Canine Caucus, dog agility contest, pet parade, pet/owner look-alikes, **Hillsboro**, (254) 582-2481 or www.hillsborochamber.org
- 25. Saturday in the Park, 5K run, chili cook off, ice cream contest, softball, **DeKalb**, (903) 667-3177
- 25. Kenefick VFD Annual Kenefick Kaper, **Dayton**, (936) 258-3319
- 25. Claiborne Kyle Log House Chicken Dinner, **Kyle**. (512) 268-9981
- Cowboys of Color Rodeo, **Conroe**, 1-877-763-3648
- Cajun Festival & Great Gumbo Cook-Off, Medina Lake, 1-800-364-3833 or www.cajunfestival-medinalake.com
- 25. Bluegrass Show, **Quitman**, (903) 763-4411 or www.quitman.com
- 25. Last Chance Chili Cook-Off, **Rockne**, (512) 321-7346
- 25-26. Old Time Fiddlin' Fair, **Georgetown**, 1-800-436-8696
- 25-26. Pumpkin Festival, Montalba, (903) 549-3161 or www.geocities.com/hiddenoaks pumpkinfarm/farm.html
- 25-Oct. 2. Waller County Fair, **Hempstead**, (979) 826-2825
- 26. Boerne Village Band 144th Anniversary Celebration Concert, **Boerne**, (830) 249-3543
- 30-Oct. 2. Antiques Show, **Fayetteville**, (512) 267-4836

October

- 2. Round-Up, fall festival, historical tours, music, food, **Tarkington**, (281) 592-6135
- 2. Pioneer Days, Wheelock, (979) 828-4627
- 2. Ole Time Music, Pearl, (254) 865-6013
- 2. Market Day, **Wimberley**, (512) 847-2201
- 2. Historical Society Fall Bazaar, **Clarksville**, (903) 427-2266
- 2. Cove Country Opry, **Copperas Cove**, (254) 547-5966 or www.covecountryopry.com
- 2. Corsicana Opry, Corsicana, (904) 872-8226
- 2. Horseshoe Pitching Tournament, **Buffalo**, (903) 322-3558
- 3. Freyburg United Methodist Church 125th Anniversary, **Schulenberg**, (979) 263-5630
- 5. Brush Country Music Jamboree, **Three Rivers**, (361) 786-3334

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@texasec.org. It must be submitted by the 10th of the month two months prior to publication. E.g., November submissions must be received prior to September 10. Events are listed according to space available. We appreciate photos with credits but regret that they cannot be returned.





Don't mess with floods. Flooding is the leading cause of weather-related fatalities in Texas. The simple decisions you make can mean the difference between life and death.

Flood Safety Rules:

- Never drive through water on a road. It can be deeper than it appears. Floodwaters can damage roadways.
- Quickly leave your car if it stalls in water. It takes only 2 feet of water to push a 3,000-pound car downstream.
- Don't attempt to walk through rapidly running water. As little as 6 inches can knock adults off their feet.
- Keep an emergency kit in your car, including a flashlight with extra batteries, drinking water and a battery-operated radio.
- If you have a cell phone, program the number for police or fire department rescue.

Take the high road when it comes to flood safety. Your life depends on it.



This public service message is brought to you by your local electric cooperative. See your local co-op for details.



Brutus, a Great Dane, was adopted as a 2-year-old by McLennan County EC Member D.J. Ortman. This photo was taken nine years later. Ortman writes, "Brutus has an incredible bond with our son, Kristofer, age 2 1/2."



Little Taylor Nicole and her best friend, Bruiser, share a special moment in a field of bluebonnets. Taylor's (and Bruiser's) parents, Mindy and Jason Diebel, and grandparents, Sandy and Kenneth Diebel, are all members of San Patricio EC.



Two heads are better than one. Two-year-old Kellyn Gail loves playing with her best buddy, Zsa Zsa. Kellyn even helps with bottle-feeding the orphaned calf. Darden and Shannon Hervey, Kellyn's parents, belong to Bluebonnet EC.



While visiting his grandparents, Cooke County EC members Rex and Judy Rue, 9-month-old Austin quickly found a best friend in their Boston terrier, Pooh. Austin's parents are Brad and Rebecca Rue.

Our Animal Friends

ritish author Samuel Butler wrote, "All animals, except man, know that the principal business of life is to enjoy it." Maybe that's why pets make such great friends. From hundreds of entries, our judges have selected these photos for your viewing pleasure.

The topic for November is "On the Farm." Send your favorite farm photos—with your name, address, daytime phone, co-op affiliation and a brief description—to "On the Farm," Focus on Texas, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704, before September 10. For digital photo requirements and e-mail instructions, go to www.texas-ec.org /tcp/faq.html. We can no longer return photos unless a stamped, self-addressed envelope is included with your entry.



Good friends, like miniature donkeys Raymond, left, and Luke, share their toys. "With these guys," says Maggie Smart, "it can be a stick, their ball or part of an old water hose—they each get a mouth-to-mouth grip on the item and walk around for the longest time with whatever they have chosen." Maggie and Larry Smart belong to Grayson-Collin EC.

UPCOMING in Focus on Texas					
Subject	Issue	Deadline			
November	On the Farm	September 10			
December	School Plays	October 10			
January	First Car	November 10			
February	Romance, Texas-Style	December 10			
March	Insects & Bugs	January 10			
April	Gardens/Gardening	February 10			



Dance Fever at Garner State Park

everal years ago, I was surprised to learn that a dance we called the Whip is still popular. I thought it had died with those of us who stopped going to Garner State Park in the midand late '60s.

During the '60s (and probably the '70s as well), several of us were very serious dancers at Garner. Many of the "Whippers" were from Houston, Baytown, San Antonio, Leakey and Uvalde, with a few (like me) from Corpus Christi. Garner was THE central meeting place for learning to Whip. Most of us did anything (legal) we could to raise money to go to Garner during the summer. I lost track of how many lawns I mowed. I would make three to four trips a summer, each lasting a week or longer.

Our biggest objective was to learn as many steps as we could and perfect our technique. Of course, we always managed to find some good-looking partners along the way. An added benefit was the great entertainers who would come to Garner. B.J. Thomas was a regular visitor. His band, The Triumphs, recorded the song, "Garner State Park," sung by Don Drackenberg, which played on the jukebox for years. Gene Thomas, Johnny Winter, J. Frank Wilson, Johnny Rodriguez, Roy Head and too many others to mention also played regularly at Garner. Often after the dance, we would go to someone's campsite to listen to them jam.

I remember one girl's family in particular. The Zimmermanns had one of the best campsites in the park. They came to Garner every summer and spent a full month there. The Zimmermanns were the "parents" of many kids like myself who would come to Garner without adult supervision. As long as we behaved ourselves, we were welcome. Their daughter, Carol, taught me many great steps.

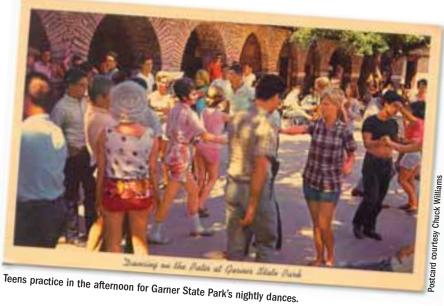
During the day, we would meet at the pavilion and practice, practice, practice. The "slick slab" was a section of concrete on the pavilion floor that

was usually dominated by those who practiced spinning. We would perfect our spin there so that in the evening, when the pavilion was crowded, we had the technique down well enough to spin without the benefit of a slick surface.

I can't remember clearly when the style of the Whip changed to the Push, but it was really controversial.

house (Jane Jones, no relation to Bill), practicing. She and I spent hours practicing steps and working on technique.

We returned to Garner the summer of 1963 where we were finally recognized as great dancers. That year, I met a girl from Baytown, Judy Roush, whom I nicknamed "Popcorn." Her family owned and operated a dance studio in Baytown. Judy



The traditional style looked more like the Swing, but the Push brought on stiff arms, shorter steps and spinning. During my era, the pavilion was crowded with kids either learning to Whip or perfecting their steps every night of the week.

The competition was serious, but strangely enough, we never had a dance contest that I recall. The best dancers were just well known. I regarded Bill Jones as "the king." He was smooth as silk, moving from one step to another without a flaw. I studied every one of his moves and committed them to memory, so I could practice them later.

At home during the school year, if I wasn't dancing with my bedroom doorknob or the window blind drawstring, I was at my Whip partner's

was an awesome dancer and could Whip like an expert. She taught me so many steps, spins and techniques that I thought I had died and gone to "Whip heaven."

The Heart of Texas Whip Dance Club says the most popular story about the Whip's origin is that it was popularized by GIs returning from WWII. It started on the West Coast as the "Western Swing," later known as the "West Coast Swing." But in South Texas, the most popular music was slower rhythm and blues. Texas dancers began doing more body movements and sways to fill the music.

Displaced Texan Chuck Williams created the Garner Park '60s Style website. Go to www.garnerpark60sstyle.com.