

TEXAS CO-OP POWER

Mum-a-Mia!

PLUS:

**Space-Age Spiffy
Pepper Festival
Onions**



TAME YOUR TREES

Tree Trimming


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TEXAS CO-OP POWER

A MAGAZINE ABOUT TEXAS LIVING

In This Issue

Gimme an 'M!'

Art Director Suzi Sands and I had great fun gathering mums, models and outfits to illustrate this month's cover article on homecoming mums. When we were in school, the flowers were real and decorated modestly with pipe cleaners and a streamer or two. Today they are silk, bold and brassy—individualized with masses of trinkets, toys and stuffed animals.

Our models were Lena Esponda (daughter of photographer Geno Esponda), Rachel Long and Joel Nuñez-Smith. We appreciate their patience and willingness to attend a lengthy shoot on the first evening of the school year. The over-the-top mums were designed by Yvonne Castro of Town Lake Florist and Bridal in Austin.

The Wilson House in Temple offers a second feast for the eye. The delightfully retro home is the youngest structure on the National Register of Historic Places. Writer Ellen Stader makes her debut in the magazine with this story.

The recipe topic of the month is the versatile sweet onion. Jim Gramon visits a hot pepper festival in Palestine. And Focus on Texas highlights "chow hounds" of various species, including our own.

Enjoy!

Peg Champion
Vice President, Communications/
Publisher

The Wilson House
in Temple displays not only laminate countertops but also laminate walls, floors and doors.



COURTESY WILSONART INTERNATIONAL



Above: Girls give boys spirit ribbons for high school homecoming. Boys give girls a variety of mums in matching school colors. **Below:** Mums for the wrist and finger are just the tip of the iceberg in homecoming fashion.

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By Sheryl Smith-Rodgers, Photos by Geno Esponda
Flashy, gaudy, outrageous—there's no such thing as too much on a Texas homecoming mum.

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LONESTAR MARKET

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

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TEXAS CO-OP POWER

VOLUME 61 OCTOBER 2004 NUMBER 4

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Stop Topping the Mesas

I was interested to see the article in your August issue about the windmills near McCamey [“Renewable Texas”] and the intention to top even more mesas with these eyesores. For years I was a visitor to West Texas and Big Bend and traveled I-10 into Fort Stockton from Ozona. One of the most impressive sections of the journey involved mile after mile of mesas forming our impressive, even spectacular, skyline. In the last few years, they have been decorated with these windmills, turning the landscape into what looks more like a child’s birthday cake. This wonderful West Texas view has been trivialized. Why on earth couldn’t they have been sited on, say, Padre Island—not a particularly beautiful site and, God knows, the wind never stops blowing there. In addition, it’s close to a population center and you wouldn’t have the transmission problems.

Philip Kane, Bryan Texas Utilities

Windmill Brought Cattle, Cowboys

It was such a thrill to see a picture of the old windmill in the August 2004 issue [“The Windmill Farm”]. It brought back a lot of happy memories of when I lived in South Texas (near Corpus Christi) in the 1950s. The windmill was the only water supply on the farm.

I can still hear the water being pumped into the cement tank. The cattle came to drink from it. Cowboys from a nearby ranch would often stop for a cold drink of water or to fill their water jugs. I would often climb the wooden ladder on the windmill to check on neighbors. It was always cool near the top.



When the wind became strong, it was my job to chain the handle and stop the windmill. One time, when I was home alone, a storm came up and the wind blew harder and harder. I pulled as hard as I could on the handle to stop the windmill. After a struggle and some tears, I chained the handle down.

In the 1950s, there was a terrible drought and the windmill began to pump salt water. The well was cleaned and the sucker rod was put in even deeper. After more tears and prayers, we

once again had cold water from the windmill. Each morning, we checked the windmill first thing. We knew how important the windmill was in our lives.

Dorothy Poole, FEC Electric

Pulling Sucker Rods

I enjoyed the story on “The Windmill Farm” [August 2004]. It reminded me of helping my dad pull the sucker rods when I was a young girl.

We used a tractor to pull the many sucker rods from our deep well in Cleburne. I would pull the tractor forward until the next connection came up. My dad would catch it with a hook and unscrew and lay side by side each rod until we reached the last one which held the pump with a leather cup attached. We replaced the leather cup and reversed the procedure. Then the rods were reattached to the windmill and we had water again.

I often think of how much faith my dad had in a young girl.

Peggy Pirkle, HILCO Electric

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.

S A F E L I V I N G

Do You Know What To Do During a Power Outage?

Americans have become so accustomed to an uninterrupted supply of electricity that we are usually unprepared when this supply is cut off by storms or other accidents.

Here are some rules to follow when the power goes out:

- Don’t panic! Check to see if your neighbors still have electricity. If they do, the problem could be inside your home. Check your main fuses or circuit breakers to see if they have blown or tripped. Replacing a fuse or resetting a circuit breaker may restore your electricity.
- Keep in mind that many farms have a centralized metering location that has additional fuses or circuit breakers that could be blown or tripped. Keep a supply of extra fuses. Do not replace a fuse with one of a larger amperage rating—it could result in a fire.
- If you determine that the power failure has not been caused by a problem in your home, call your electric co-op. Someone will be dispatched as quickly as possible. Your co-op should also be able to tell you if it will be an extended outage.

To prevent appliance and electronic damage, unplug appliances with electronic components, such as microwaves, televisions and VCRs. This will help eliminate damage to your appliances from voltage surges when the electricity is restored. Wait a few minutes before turning on these appliances after power is restored. This will help reduce the sudden demand on your co-op’s electrical system and help prevent additional outage problems.

If you are experiencing frequent, unexplained outages, you should call your electric co-op.





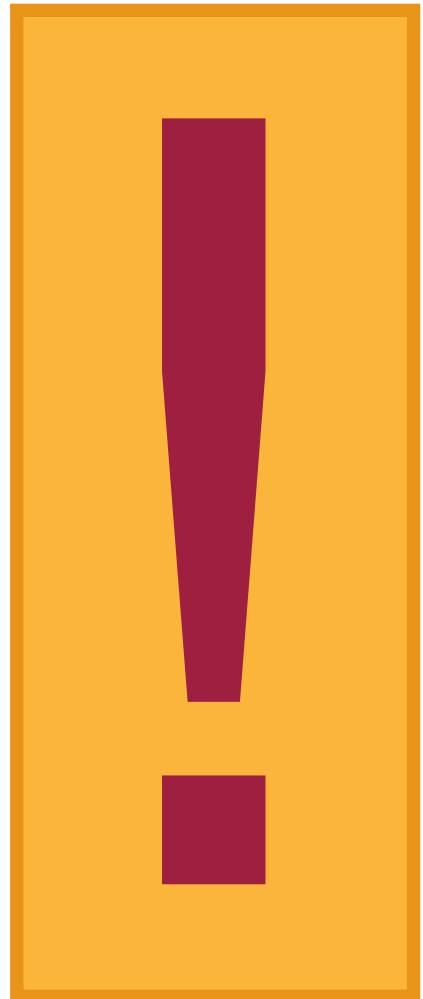
Fall 1977. Homecoming night at Calallen High School in Corpus Christi. No date for the dance. Which also means I won't be among the cheerleaders and other popular girls wearing homecoming mums at Friday night's football game. But so what? We're only talking one fresh white flower topped with a pipe cleaner "C" and stapled with four or five maroon and white streamers. No big deal.

Twenty-two years later, I'm in the local flower shop with my 13-year-old son. He's searching for the perfect homecoming mum to bestow upon the young lady of his affections.

"You want to spend HOW MUCH?" I exclaim as we browse through the selections of ready-to-go mums adorned with cute teddy bears, panther heads with teeth bared, oodles of plastic trinkets, huge bows, and yards and yards of ribbons. They cost \$40, \$50 and beyond. WAY beyond. I am stunned.

Apparently something happened on the way to high school football stadiums across Texas since the '70s, and homecoming mums haven't been the same since. Gone are lone white blossoms delicately pinned to bodices. They have been replaced by bodacious, mind-boggling fabrications that blanket the chest, meander over the shoulder, and reach down to the knees and beyond.

"It's definitely a contest to see who can get the biggest, prettiest mums with the most outrageous stuff on them," says Amanda Lohmar, who has a home-based business called Mandi's Mums in Wylie. "It's crazy."





Two beribboned mums linked by chains indicate that this girl is a VIP—possibly homecoming queen.

“The gaudier, the better,” says Kim Pape at the Flower Company in La Grange. “Everyone wants an original. The more items on them, the better. So they tend to get a little top heavy.”

A little? It’s a minor miracle that some of the girls don’t keel over from the sheer weight. Sometimes girls need harnesses to hold them up.

ONLY IN TEXAS—REALLY

Today’s typical mum has three to seven silk mums welded into a pillow of ribbons and bows and topped with a stuffed mascot, then hitched to yards of braids and streamers (most stamped with names), all punctuated with dozens of gewgaws, such as footballs, helmets, megaphones, band instruments, bells, whistles, boots, even Sponge Bob and hunting gear.

Did I mention miniature blinking lights with miniature battery packs?

Why not? Flashier is better in the world of Texas homecoming mums. Expect to fork out \$125 to \$150 for a really impressive one.

“Texas is our strongest market,” confirms Michael Landers, general manager of ACI Distributing and Manufacturing, a Fort Worth-based company that wholesales a dizzying array of homecoming mum accessories, including stamped ribbons, plastic trinkets and assorted novelty items. “Other states do homecoming mums, but nowhere near as much as Texas. It’s a phenomenon here that has grown right along with high school football.”

In the ‘50s, homecoming mums consisted of one flower with a bow on it, traditionally presented by a young man to his ladylove.

“That was in Austin at The University of Texas, where they were very popular at the time,” recalls Bob Glodt of Glodt Flowers in San Angelo.

After that, Glodt says, florists added flowing ribbon to the cardboard collar and later contrasting colors of ribbon. Then came trinkets, and a football player’s jersey number or the school’s initials were glued in the center of the mum.

“They kept adding and adding trinkets, and that weighed the mums down so that it was difficult to put them on. Girls wanted a double mum on two collars, then a third mum,” Glodt says. “So then florists went from fresh to silk flowers so they were lighter and easier to pin on. Fresh mums are practically extinct now for a football mum.”

Although boys continue to give mums to girls, parents—particularly mothers—began



Truly fit for royalty, this West Texas-style mum trails ribbons so long they must be draped over the arm.

buying them for their daughters, fueling their popularity. Girls even give each other smaller “friendship” mums.

Moms started asking hobby shops to make mums, and some began making them at home. Today many florists won't make homecoming mums. “There's too much labor involved, and it gets expensive keeping an inventory of trinkets. We still do some, but not like we used to,” Glodt says.

MUMS ACROSS TEXAS

Some florists still keep their tradition alive. One is Patrick's Cleburne Floral in Cleburne, which has been in business since 1916.

“It's not a huge moneymaker for us,” says third-generation owner John Patrick. “At least making mums doesn't have the stress level that it used to have, thanks to the advent of silk flowers and glue guns. And because we use silk flowers, we can start making them in July; then the kids come in before homecoming and add to them.”

Kathleen Schlinder at Kathleen's Decorative Service and Florist, Inc. in Columbus says, “We try to stay within the \$25 to \$50 price range. In this town, it's a little different because the kids just like a basic mum.”

In Northeast Texas, the homecoming season never ends at Sweet Expressions in Quitman.

“I have a blast doing mums,” says florist Judy Embry. “I make 1,000 or more at least. I look for homecoming stuff all year long and leave my inventory up all the time. I have the largest selection in East Texas—about 20 feet of bins filled with homecoming trinkets.

“Mums promote a lot of school spirit, and the kids get excited about their school and homecoming,” continues Embry, whose customers drive from nearby Mineola, Alba, Gilmer, Winnsboro, Emory and Hawkins.

“Last year, there was a 10-year-old boy who saved his money and wanted to buy a really nice mum for his girlfriend,” Embry says. “He paid \$25 for the mum at another floral shop, and it only had bells on it. He was so disappointed that he cried. So his grandmother came in here, and we made him a really nice one for the same price.”

Fifth graders wear homecoming mums? Yep. So do Pee Wee football players and cheerleaders. Even babies.

“Parents come in and buy little mums for infants still being carried. If they're all going to the game, they're all gonna wear something,” says Gloria Morrison at Gloria's Flowers and More in Kerrville.



When one mum doesn't make enough of an impression, wear matching mums front (above) and back (opposite).

Austin florist Yvonne Castro points out that the pendulum is beginning to swing back toward live mums—at least in some areas.

WHY ALL THE FUSS?

Folklorist Julie Ardery of Austin believes there are several reasons for the enduring popularity of homecoming mums.

“Texas gals have the reputation of being brassy and bold, and the mum is an expression of that,” she observes. “Also, teenagers are striving to stand out and fit in. The mum is a good vehicle for accomplishing both goals. Since most everybody wears mums, they’re obvious ways to say, ‘I’m part of the pack. I belong.’ But because the mums are now personalized, they’re also status symbols and emblems of identity.”

Ardery, who’s writing a book on Texas floral customs for the University of Texas Press, has studied the homecoming mum culture since the ’80s when she lived in Smithville. “The cheerleaders there would look like many-breasted goddesses with three or four of them planted on their chests,” she says with a laugh.

As for the trinket designs that girls choose for their mums, Ardery has discovered that some teens stay ... well ... mum about why. “The trinkets stand for interests and secrets,” she says. “The mums speak in a secret code teenager to teenager. Mums can say obvious things about the wearer: little megaphones for the cheerleaders or silver notes for members of the band. Other decorations are more private—Batman insignias and quirky nicknames written out on ribbon. These are ways that mums speak in code to the teenager’s circle of closest friends. Having a secret language like this—‘I know something that you don’t know’—gives people a sense of excitement and power.”

Whatever the reasons for wearing mums, it’s high time Texas girls had their share of attention.

“In Texas high schools, it sometimes seems that from the first day of school through Thanksgiving, everybody’s focused on the football team and the coaches,” Ardery says. “Thank heaven that girls have found a way to steal some of the thunder! With these elaborate mums everywhere, it’s clear that what’s going on in the stands is much more interesting than what’s happening on the field.

“But wouldn’t you know it—boys are starting to wear mums, too!”

Freelance writer Sheryl Smith-Rodgers lives in Blanco and frequently contributes to Texas Co-op Power. Geno Esponda has a photography studio in Austin.



Space-Age

S P I R F Y

BY ELLEN STADER

PHOTOS COURTESY WILSONART INTERNATIONAL

Something unexpected lies in a quiet neighborhood of tidy, brick, ranch-style houses in Temple. From outside, the houses look just the same, but venture inside 1417 South 61st Street and, lo, you're time-warped back to the 1960s!

Nearly every surface of the house is covered with colorful laminate, the material that topped every kitchen counter in my '70s childhood. The Ralph Sr. and Sunny Wilson Historic House Museum (commonly called the Wilson House) stands as a monument to an era when technology was king and plastics began to fill the American house.

Ralph Wilson spent decades dedicating himself to the production, testing and use of laminate. In the early 1950s, he owned a company in California called Lamin-Art, which supplied laminate for school furniture. In 1956 Wilson and his wife decided to retire to Texas, although the couple hardly settled down; soon the Ralph Wilson Plastics Company and Wilsonart International were born, and Ralph began testing the company's product in the most personal way. Completed in 1959, the Wilson House would serve not only as a residence for Wilson and his wife, but also as a venue for entertaining guests and clients and displaying the company's products.

Fashion was moving toward the slick, clean artificiality of the '60s. Wil-



son Plastics provided the sleek lines and colorful surfaces that defined a “modern” house.

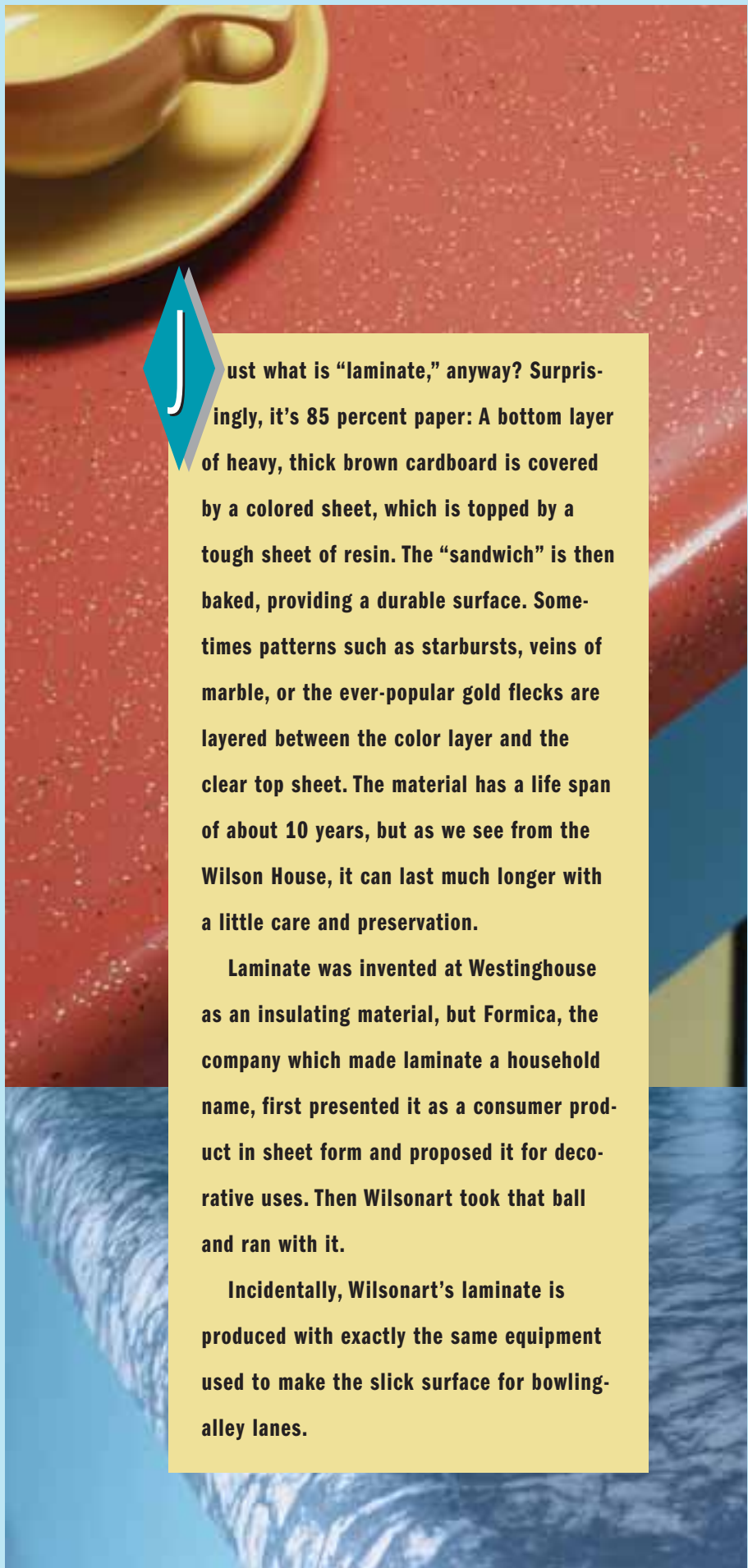
In many ways, Wilson’s model house was typical of the times: A free-standing fireplace of stacked stones separates the living room from the kitchen, and large sliding-glass doors provide access on three sides to the huge patio and nicely landscaped backyard. But even the house’s basic construction tested the potential uses of laminate, as most of the walls were constructed without drywall; instead, panels of special-grade laminate were nailed directly onto the wall-studs in every room but the master bedroom.

And, of course, Wilson tested his company’s materials by covering surfaces in his new house with various models and grades. Soon laminate sheathed not only tabletops and counters but almost everything: doors and floors, shower stalls and walls—even the insides of cabinets and drawers. Laminate on many of the walls was scored to look like paneling, and Wilsonart’s first custom design, the prominent and characteristic geometric-shapes pattern on the living room wall, was created by Wilson’s daughter, Bonnie McIninch. The entrepreneur even used the garage to test the effects of weather conditions on laminate.

These days, the house is open for tours. People visit the Wilson House from all over the world. There are corporate clients of Wilsonart Laminate (a Wilsonart subsidiary), students of mid-century design, and simply people with a healthy curiosity. Brenda White, public relations coordinator for Wilsonart Laminate, regularly gives visitors not only the grand tour, but also a more recent history of the house.

Ralph Wilson died in 1972, and his wife, Sunny, eventually redecorated, obscuring much of the house’s original character (after all, a person can’t live in the Space Age forever). The shiny, slick walls were papered over and the house filled with antiques. The distinctive structures in the kitchen—the white leather ban-

Among the Wilson House’s innovations were diamond-shaped wall decorations (left) and sleek kitchen surfaces (right), including countertops with curved edges.



Just what is “laminate,” anyway? Surprisingly, it’s 85 percent paper: A bottom layer of heavy, thick brown cardboard is covered by a colored sheet, which is topped by a tough sheet of resin. The “sandwich” is then baked, providing a durable surface. Sometimes patterns such as starbursts, veins of marble, or the ever-popular gold flecks are layered between the color layer and the clear top sheet. The material has a life span of about 10 years, but as we see from the Wilson House, it can last much longer with a little care and preservation.

Laminate was invented at Westinghouse as an insulating material, but Formica, the company which made laminate a household name, first presented it as a consumer product in sheet form and proposed it for decorative uses. Then Wilsonart took that ball and ran with it.

Incidentally, Wilsonart’s laminate is produced with exactly the same equipment used to make the slick surface for bowling-alley lanes.



The freestanding stone fireplace (above) is one of the few non-laminated surfaces, dividing a colorful kitchen from the living room in more muted colors. Note the unique dining room lighting fixture (right).

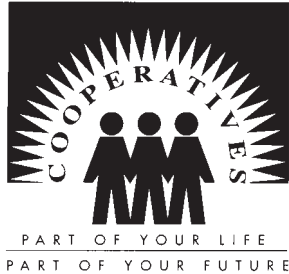


OCTOBER IS CO-OP MONTH

Your electric cooperative is just one of about 1,000 similar utilities around the country. And they're all celebrating Cooperative Month.

Electric cooperatives are unique because they follow the cooperative business model. That means the utilities are owned by the local consumers who buy electricity from them, rather than by shareholders who might live far away.

All cooperatives are owned by their consumers. That includes credit unions and farm, food and transportation cooperatives.



One large cooperative is the Associated Press, the world's oldest and largest news organization, which is owned by its member-subscribers—thousands of newspapers, radio and television stations and online publications.

Another is Ocean Spray, an agricultural cooperative owned by more than 800 cranberry growers and 126 grapefruit growers in the United States and Canada.

You and your neighbors own your electric cooperative, so October is your month to celebrate!

PREVENT A FIRE

October is Fire Prevention Month. Here are some tips to keep the electricity in your home from starting a fire:

- Don't overload the circuits in your home with electronics. If your lights flicker or dim when you turn on an appliance, the load on your circuit is too high.
- If a fuse blows or a breaker trips frequently, you have too many appliances on that circuit or the fuse needs replacing.
- Exchange blown fuses with appropriately sized replacements. Using higher amperage fuses than you need is a fire hazard. A penny is not a safe substitute for a fuse.
- Avoid overloading outlets with multi-prong adapters or extension cords. Use extension cords only temporarily, and make sure they're not frayed or worn.
- Cords should not hide under rugs. Never twist them around nails or hooks or staple them to the wall or floor.
- Do not plug space heaters into extension cords.
- Buy outdoor appliances, outlets and cords that are rated for use outside.
- Equip outdoor outlets—and those in kitchens, bathrooms and laundry rooms—with ground-fault circuit interrupters. Test them regularly.
- Keep dust from building up on appliances. Give electronics likely to generate heat—TVs, stereos, toaster ovens and lamps, for instance—enough room to “breathe.”
- Use light bulbs with wattages that are recommended for your lamps.
- Choose electronic appliances that bear an Underwriters Laboratories label.
- Don't fold or roll an electric blanket while it's plugged in. Turn off your electric blanket or heating pad after 30 minutes. Set an alarm to remind you if you're likely to fall asleep.

TIGHTEN UP YOUR FIREPLACE

That comforting, crackling fire in your hearth may be costing you a fortune in heating bills. Most fireplaces are less than 10 percent energy efficient.

Even with the flue closed, warm air can get sucked out of the house through the chimney in the winter, and cold air can leak out in the summer.

To save money on your electric bill, isolate the room your fireplace is in by closing doors, if possible. Otherwise, if nobody is using the home's other rooms while you're cozying up to the fire, turn the thermostat down to about 55 degrees in the rest of the house.

Some other tips for a more efficient fireplace:

- Install tight-fitting glass doors on your fireplace. This will decrease the amount of air that leaks through the chimney, but it won't stop it altogether. Open glass doors while the fire is burning at its hottest; close them as the fire dies down. Glass doors also greatly reduce the risk of accidental fires caused by burning



embers popping out of the fireplace.

- Equip the fireplace with an outdoor air intake. This allows your fire to draw air from the outside instead of using the heated air inside the home as fuel. An alternative: station air inlets as close to the fireplace as possible.
- Buy a fireplace insert to increase energy efficiency. Inserts are available in a range of sizes and styles and have strict air controls to prevent leaking.
- Close the fireplace off if you don't use it at all. Plug the flue and use caulk to make a tight seal. Let everyone know not to start a fire in the sealed-off fireplace!

IT'S TIME TO UPGRADE YOUR BATHROOM FAN

Heating and air conditioning experts are recommending that homeowners equip their houses with ventilating systems that run all the time.

The American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers is urging building code officials to require homebuilders to install some form of continuous mechanical ventilation in every new home.

That could include, for instance, a super-quiet, continually running bathroom fan vented to the outdoors or a heat-recovery ventilator.

The group also says each bathroom and kitchen should have an exhaust fan vented to the outside for spot ventilation.

The reason for the recommendation: Modern, energy-efficient homes are so airtight that fresh air can't penetrate in the quantities needed for healthy indoor living. Occupants of

homes with stale, dirty air complain of maladies ranging from asthma to allergies, and their homes are at risk for damage from mold.

Manufacturers have designed new, continuously running fans that are so



quiet, homeowners are willing to run them around the clock. Older models are noisier, so users tend to turn them off except when they're in the bathroom or kitchen.

SET YOUR CLOCKS BACK; CHANGE ALARM'S BATTERIES

The time on your clocks isn't the only thing you need to change when Daylight Saving Time ends on Sunday, Oct. 31, this year.

It's appropriate that Daylight Saving Time ends in October, which is Fire Prevention Month, because when you change the time on your clocks, you should also change the batteries in your smoke detectors.

The most common reason smoke detectors fail to function during a house fire is because the batteries are dead. Changing the batteries twice a year when you set your clocks to "spring ahead" or "fall behind" is an easy habit to form.

A 78-year-old Benjamin Franklin

introduced the idea of "saving daylight" by joking about it in an essay after seeing a demonstration of new oil lamps in Paris. Franklin deemed a 6 a.m. sunrise an incredible waste of light, and suggested changing the hours on clocks to save candles in the evening.

It wasn't until World War II, however, that Americans embraced the practice (after dabbling in it during the prior World War).



REMEMBERING A PIONEER

October brings Halloween and National Cooperative Month. It's also the anniversary of the death of an electricity pioneer, Thomas Alva Edison, who died Oct. 18, 1931.

The "wizard of Menlo Park" was born Feb. 11, 1847, into a middle-class family in Milan, Ohio. He didn't learn to talk until he was nearly 4 years old. From that moment, he had an insatiable curiosity about the world around him.

Edison, who was home-schooled, developed a solitary approach to the study of electricity, testing ideas himself rather than accepting what others told him about it. He opened his first laboratory in Newark, N.J., in 1871, and invented the electric filament lamp, for which he is most famous, in 1879. The first bulb remained lit for 40 hours.

During the same year, he improved the method of generating and distributing electricity. He also invented the first electric motor—which is still operable.

By the time he died, Edison had 1,093 patents. A few days after his death, lights across the country were dimmed for one minute to honor the great inventor.

Flying 'Coffins' During WWII

BY SARAH BOND

One pilot compared flying a World War II glider to “flying a stick of dynamite directly into the gates of hell.” Most people would have been scared off by the 35 percent casualty rate—a percentage that didn’t even include training deaths.

Still, thousands of young men volunteered as glider pilots during World War II, putting their lives on the line to deliver troops and supplies to areas other modes of transportation couldn’t reach. Between 1942 and 1945, final training for almost 4,800 of the 6,000 glider pilots took place at the South Plains Army Air Field in Lubbock.

Glider pilots soared unarmed into the heat of combat. A tow plane would carry the gliders to their targets before they were released to maneuver their way to a landing. Even gliders that survived this process were usually abandoned; with no engine, there was no way to return them to the sky.

Many glider pilots’ reminiscences were collected by the National World War II Glider Pilots Association and are housed in the Silent Wings Museum in Lubbock. In one, an unnamed pilot described the experience of flying a glider. “Imagine flying a motorless, unarmed, fabric-covered aircraft,” he said. “You are violently bouncing along at the end of a 1-inch diameter rope, and 300 feet behind the wildly bucking C-47 tow plane. Prayerfully, you look back at your load of anxious infantrymen. Some are vomiting, most are praying. You are surrounded by a cargo of highly explosive ammunition, gasoline or TNT.

“Your glider rocks, jerks and sways in the turbulent slipstream of tow planes. You hedge-hop along at treetop-level. Instinctively, you jump in your seat when you hear small arms fire pierce your glider. You want to duck each murderous barrage of heavy flak that bursts around you, but there is no way around it. There was no armor on gliders. You hit the release lever and glide earthward. You level off and frantically dodge the flooded areas. You



PHOTO BY LOUIE BOND



PHOTO COURTESY OF JANICE FERGUSON

Above: WWII gliders in the Silent Wings Museum are bare-bones structures of steel, plywood and canvas. Right: Glider pilot trainer James E. Ferguson of Pharr graduated from the South Plains Army Air Field during World War II.

miss a big tree, jump ditches, hedgerows, and miss the anti-glider poles that are strung with deadly explosives. After what seems a lifetime, your glider comes to a controlled crash in a small field.”

Despite its hazards, many pilots respected and even liked the aircraft. One former pilot, Michael Samek, defended the gliders against accusations of flimsiness. “Flimsy doesn’t fly very well,” he said. “These were well built.”

Not everyone was as convinced as Samek of the glider’s quality. After riding in one, newsman Walter Cronkite remarked that “riding a combat glider behind enemy lines is a sure cure for constipation.”

Even training courses presented immense danger to the pilots. During these courses, several of which were held at bases around Texas, trainees would have to land while flying over trees 60 feet tall and often less than 200 yards from large tree stumps that spelled death to anyone unlucky enough to hit them.

Though they went unrecognized for many years, the accomplishments of the pilots of what were referred to

as “flying coffins” were not small. In the European Theater, American glider pilots managed to deliver 25,000 troops, 3,500 vehicles and pieces of artillery, and more than 3,200 tons of supplies that included ammunition and medical supplies. Today, helicopters handle the job.

At least 650 American glider pilots died in World War II, and, like all veterans of that war, the population of those who did manage to survive is dwindling. The Silent Wings Museum, which opened in October 2002, will tell their story even after the last pilot is gone.

The Silent Wings Museum is located at 6202 N. I-27 in Lubbock. Admission is \$4 for adults, \$3 for visitors over 60, and \$2 for children under 11. Admission for World War II glider pilots and museum members is free. For more information, call (806) 775-2047 or visit www.silentwingsmuseum.com. The National World War II Glider Pilots Association will hold a reunion at the museum October 14-16.

Sarah Bond is a junior writing major at St. Edward’s University (Austin) and editor of *Hilltop Views*, the campus newspaper.

Underloaded Brains, Overloaded Circuits!

Marvin, Marvin, Marvin. You and D-Wayne must be dumber than a box of rocks! Even if time travel were possible, which it isn't, at least not yet, you'd need a lot more power than provided by a single outlet in your garage.

That puny little plug probably can't even handle the Christmas lights you put outside for the holidays. And look how your cord has a dangerous worn spot in it. Don't you know that overloaded plugs spell D-A-N-G-E-R?

Never overload your electric circuits by trying to draw too much electricity from an electric plug. Overloaded circuits get hot and blow fuses—if you're lucky. When a fuse blows and your house lights go out, it's a sign of danger. The line has either been overloaded, or there's a break in the wires somewhere in the line, in an appliance cord, a switch, or inside the wall.

In the worst case, an overloaded circuit can cause a fire.



Kids, take a look at the overloaded plug pictured above. If you see anything like this around your house, tell your parents that they might be risking overloaded circuits just like Marvin and D-Wayne. If your house doesn't have enough electric outlets, your parents should hire a certified electrician to install more. That's the smart way to be safe.

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.



Faith in Fitness

BY BEVERLY BURMEIER

Cinda Brooks shoots straight, runs fast, and keeps a cool head. Almost daily she pushes her personal boundaries to keep her body in top shape for competition with the world's best peace officers.

Brooks, who works full-time instructing cadets at the Game Warden Academy of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, has won gold at the World Police and Fire Games since she first entered the biennial competition in 1993. She earned her sixth gold medal as Women's Biathlon Champion in the 2003 games held in Barcelona, Spain, last summer, adding to top honors garnered in 1993 in Colorado Springs, 1995 in Melbourne, 1997 in Calgary, 1999 in Stockholm, and 2001 in Indianapolis. She will defend her title in 2005 in Quebec.

Fiercely competitive, Brooks trains a little harder every year. Being 43 means it takes more preparation to keep up with younger competitors. However, she prepared so intensely for last summer's games that if she hadn't won, she said, the victory would have been "taken from me, not given away."

Six days a week, she trains at a friend's ranch near Spicewood in Central Texas. As fast as husband Stanley loads her ammunition, Brooks readies



Cinda Brooks' skill and competitive spirit have made her a champion in the World Police and Fire Games.

a Smith and Wesson 686 revolver and takes aim. Or her exercise session could include logging a number of 6 1/2-minute miles, paced by Rusty, her Rhodesian Ridgeback.

A modest woman of intense faith, she wasn't always so confident of her skills. The first time she competed, fear of failure kept her from telling anyone about her goal. "Like most people, I wanted to stay in my comfort zone," Brooks says, "but with prayer and mental focus, I've learned to manage fear." Now, the ability to perform

under pressure is one of her greatest assets. "I may not be the fastest runner or best shot, but I can put it together and control anxiety."

Brooks' love of exercise and physical activity was instilled early in life. Raised by missionary parents in Tanzania and Kenya, Brooks' family enjoyed hiking, biking and camping. Watching her parents work—her father was a doctor and her mother a nurse—and helping them in medical clinics gave her compassion and a can-do attitude. With three brothers as competitors and a twin sister as best friend, Brooks learned to take her knocks and also learned to love the outdoors.

"We climbed Mount Kilimanjaro when I was in sixth grade," she says. "I just thought everybody did stuff like that." In high school in Kenya, she went to nationals in track. Later, she chose to skip her high school senior trip to the coast—too tame for her athletic tastes—and instead went glacier climbing on Mount Kenya. Not satisfied with just participating, Brooks has always competed in something, whether it was running, racing motorcycles, or participating in triathlons.

For Brooks, the motivation to use her inherent talents comes from within. With great deliberation, she

says, “When you have a mission—as well as shoes, gun, health, support and ammunition—the rest is up to you. No worries and no excuses.”

That’s the attitude she took to the World Games where more than 10,000 fire and police athletes from 50 countries competed in 50 different events. In the biathlon, Brooks’ specialty, competitors must run 1 mile and fire 12 rounds of ammunition at a range of 25 meters, then repeat the sequence two more times—all combined for a final score. Brooks outscored 60 other women in the biathlon and then won another gold medal with Rolando Cruz of McAllen for the mixed team biathlon. She placed third in her age group running cross-country, which helped Team USA win the gold in the women’s team cross-country event.

“These accomplishments give me credibility when I teach cadets mental and physical skills,” says the slender 5-foot-5-inch woman. “Cadets see that if they take care of themselves and stay in shape, they can perform well at any age. Staying active and cool under pressure is good training for officers.”

Brooks spars with cadets—first with words and then with weapons. She teaches “verbal judo,” a means of getting compliance with the least amount of force possible. For occasions when that doesn’t work, she gets physical and demonstrates defense tactics using a baton, pepper spray or firearms.

During drill time, Brooks repeats the mantra “I will survive” until the thought becomes ingrained in cadets’ minds. Because many people confronted by game wardens are armed as well as under the influence of fear, drugs or alcohol, Brooks teaches cadets to manage fear with a positive mindset, to keep thinking and keep fighting.

“Lieutenant Brooks leads by example,” says her supervisor, Chief Randy Odom. She trains with cadets—running, doing strength and flexibility exercises, and maneuvering through obstacle courses. To teach water survival skills, Brooks plunges into water in darkness—wearing full uniform, including an 11-pound gun belt.

Brooks becomes the adversary in “scenario training.” Donning protective gear, she poses as a hunter or tres-

passer, exchanges angry words and initiates a physical confrontation to test a cadet’s reactions under stress.

Although Brooks trained in college to be a nurse, she learned after a few years that she preferred helping people stay healthy rather than treating their illnesses. She earned a master’s degree in Health Promotion from the University of Texas and was hired to teach a wellness program at the Game Warden Academy. The active outdoor life fit her perfectly, so she went through the academy as a cadet herself and became a game warden in 1990. “Now I have one foot in law enforcement and one foot in nursing, since I also teach wellness, first aid and CPR,” she says.

Ask Brooks about her training regimen, and she goes off on a tangent about her love of life and exercise. But competition is serious business, and her eyes flash with the focus that has led her to win. Coached by her husband, also a game warden, she trains year round. However, training steps up six weeks prior to a competition, when Brooks alternates shooting with cross-training (bicycle or elliptical trainer), although running continues to dominate. “I was meant to run, so I run,” she says simply.

But it’s beyond work and competition that Brooks’ true passion surfaces. Her successes have opened doors for her to do what she loves best:

Scouts and women’s groups how to develop the mind of a champion through self-esteem. She also conducts workshops sponsored by Texas Parks and Wildlife called “Becoming an Outdoors Woman,” where she stresses maintaining “a positive attitude and the ability to manage and channel emotions to help rather than hinder your performance.” Developing a champion mindset requires finding a balance—nurturing the mind, body, social bonds and spiritual life, Brooks teaches. “Many think developing champion skills such as shooting involves hours of mindless practice. Actually it takes more mind practice than physical practice.”

Brooks is a world-class athlete, but her daily motivation comes from her love of people: “My job is to bring out the champion in others whenever I



Above: Brooks practices shooting six days a week.



Left: Brooks displays some of her medals from international competition.

motivating young women to “go for it—do whatever they want to do.” Feror swells in her voice when she describes developing “the champion within each of us.” Brooks teaches Girl

can. I want people to love life and love what they do.”

Beverly Burmeier is an Austin-based freelance writer who frequently writes about fitness.

Onions— Layers of Flavor

Ieat a lot of things to write this column, but this month I get to eat crow. A diligent reader informed me that 1015 Onions are named for their preferred planting date, not their harvest season as I stated in July's issue. I confirmed this with the nice folks at Texas A&M University, who also told me that its official name is the Texas 1015 SuperSweet Onion and it was developed by Dr. Leonard Pike, a horticulturist at A&M. He spent a decade perfecting the sweetest, juiciest onion you can find. However, the 1015 is harvested in springtime, so you'd have a hard time finding it right now. My apologies. Just get the biggest, sweetest onion you can find and try out these recipes

from the National Onion Association. And when spring rolls around, if you'd like to try some recipes for 1015s from Dr. Pike himself, go to <http://vic.tamu.edu/>, click on Fun Facts and Trivia, then on Recipes.

Pizza Del Giorno

5 cups halved, sliced yellow or red onions (about 1 1/2 pounds)
 8 ounces fully cooked spicy smoked sausage, sliced
 1 tablespoon olive oil
 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
 1 Italian bread pizza shell (12-inch)
 1/4 cup broken walnuts, toasted
 8 ounces mozzarella, sliced
 1 tablespoon chopped fresh oregano
 2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme
 1/2 cup roasted red bell pepper or pimiento strips

Sauté onions with sausage in olive oil in large skillet for 8 to 10 minutes or until tender. Add vinegar and mix. Turn onion-sausage mixture onto pizza shell. Top with walnuts, cheese,



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chopped herbs and bell pepper. Bake at 400 degrees for 15 minutes or until hot throughout. Makes 1 (12-inch) pizza or 6 servings.

Serving size: 1 slice. Per serving: 671 calories, 34 grams protein, 36 grams fat, 54 grams carbohydrates, 1,490 milligrams sodium, 70 milligrams cholesterol

Best Ever Onion Rings

3 large onions (about 9 to 11 ounces each), peeled and trimmed
 1 cup flour
 1 teaspoon paprika
 3/4 teaspoon salt
 1/4 teaspoon pepper
 1 cup nonalcoholic or regular beer
 Vegetable oil

Cut onions crosswise into 1/2-inch slices; pull apart into rings. (Refrigerate broken or end pieces for other uses.) Combine flour, paprika, salt and pepper in large bowl. Stir in beer, beating with wire whisk until foam is gone.

Heat at least 2 inches oil in deep-fryer for 5 to 10 minutes or according to fryer directions. (If fryer has a temperature adjustment, set it at 375 degrees and heat until light goes out.) Drop batter-coated onion rings into hot oil (about 10 to 20 at a time). Fry 2 to 4 minutes or until crisp. Drain on paper towels before serving. Makes 6 servings.

Per serving: 242 calories, 4 grams protein, 13 grams fat, 29 grams carbohydrates, 5 milligrams sodium, 0 milligrams cholesterol



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January's recipe contest subject is Beans. Versatile, inexpensive and always available, beans are a perennial favorite for family meals. Please send in your recipes for beans by October 10. The top winner will receive a copy of the *Texas Co-op Power Cookbook* and a gift pack from Adams Extract. Others whose recipes are published will also receive a gift pack from Adams Extract. Be sure to include your name, address and phone number, as well as your co-op affiliation. Send recipes to Home Cooking, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704. You can also fax recipes to (512) 486-6254 or e-mail them to recipes@texas-ec.org.

The staff let me know in no uncertain terms that it's a lot more fun to test a number of pie recipes than to test six or seven onion recipes at one time. Nonetheless, there were some clear winners. The favorite recipe was Cheryl Morgan's

onion dip. Cheryl, a McLennan County EC member, will receive a copy of the *Texas Co-op Power Cookbook*. She will also receive a gift pack compliments of Adams Extract, as will the other winners whose recipes are published below.

Andrea's Baked Onion Dip

2 cups chopped onions
3 packages (8 ounces each) cream cheese, softened
2 cups freshly shredded Parmesan cheese (do not substitute the processed cheese off the shelf)
1/2 cup mayonnaise

Mix all ingredients and put in casserole dish. Bake in oven at 325 degrees until bubbly. Serve hot with chips, crackers or bread, or use as a topping on vegetables or meat. Serves 18-20.

Serving size: 1/3 cup. Per serving: 197 calories, 6 grams protein, 19 grams fat, 3 grams carbohydrates, 268 milligrams sodium, 45 milligrams cholesterol

Gourmet Onions

4 cups onions, sliced (about 3 large)
5 tablespoons butter
2 eggs
1 cup sour cream
2/3 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
Salt and pepper

Sauté onions in butter until transparent. Place in 1 1/2- to 2-quart flat casserole dish. Beat eggs until light; add sour cream, salt and pepper. Pour over onions and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Bake at 425 degrees for 20-25 minutes. Serves 8 as a side dish. Great with roasts, steak and ham.

Serving size: 1 scoop. Per serving: 202 calories, 6 grams protein, 16 grams fat, 8 grams carbohydrates, 362 milligrams sodium, 84 milligrams cholesterol

JEANNIE THORNTON, FEC Electric

German Onion Pie (Zwiebelkuchen)

4 thick slices bacon, diced
2 cups peeled and chopped yellow onions
2 eggs, well beaten
1 cup sour cream
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 9-inch pie shell, unbaked

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Sauté bacon just until fat is transparent. Drain most of fat from pan. Add onions and sauté until they are clear. Do not brown them. Set aside to cool. Beat the eggs and sour cream together in a medium-sized bowl. Sprinkle flour over the top and beat it in. Stir in the salt and pepper. Prick bottom of pie shell several times with a fork. Spread the onions and bacon over the dough in the pie pan. Pour the sour cream mixture over the top. Bake for 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 350 degrees and bake another 15 minutes or until the pie is nicely browned. Serve hot. Serves 12.

Serving size: 1 slice. Per serving: 144 calories, 3 grams protein, 10 grams fat, 10 grams carbohydrates, 240 milligrams sodium, 41 milligrams cholesterol

GABRIELLE RENDON, Karnes EC

AROUND TEXAS

October

- 2. Ole Time Music, **Pearl**, (254) 865-6013
- 2. Market Day, **Wimberley**, (512) 847-2201
- 2. Auction/BBQ, **Kempner**, (512) 932-3993
- 2. Western Heritage Jubilee, **Graham**, (866) 549-0401
- 2. Fire Hose Festival, **Briarcliff**, (512) 264-7367
- 2. Cove Country Opry, **Copperas Cove**, (254) 547-5966 or www.covecountry-opry.com
- 2. Opry, **Corsicana**, (904) 872-8226
- 2. Horseshoe Pitching Tournament, **Buffalo**, (903) 322-3558
- 2. Fiesta De Le Paloma, **Coleman**, (325) 625-2163
- 2. Dogtown Days, **Tilden**, (361) 274-3331
- 2. Fall Fest, **Jasper**, (409) 384-2762
- 2. Fall Garden Fair, **Dublin**, (254) 445-4900
- 2-3. Fair on the Square, Mountain Bike Race, **Huntsville**, (936) 295-8113
- 2-3. Pumpkin Fest, **Wimberley**, (512) 847-0050
- 3. Trade Days, **Conroe**, (936) 597-6860
- 5. Brush Country Music Jamboree, **Three Rivers**, (361) 786-3334
- 8-9. Frisco Storytelling Festival, **Frisco**, (972)-335-5510
- 8-9. Heritage Days, **Coldspring**, (936) 653-2009
- 8-9. Peanut Festival, **Grapeland** (936) 544-7499
- 8-9. Oil Festival, **Hawkins**, (903) 769-4482
- 10. Homecoming Turkey Dinner, **Panna Maria**, (830) 780-4471 or www.pannamariatx.com
- 8-10. Threads of Texas Quilt Show, **Stephenville**, (254) 445-1784

- 8-10. Choo-Choo, Chili & Beans Fest, **Mineola**, (903) 569-2087
- 8-10. Cajun Catfish Festival, **Conroe**, 1-800-324-2604
- 8-10, 22-24. Chicken House Flea Market, **Stephenville**, (254) 968-0888



October is prime quilt season with shows in Stephenville, Hilltop Lakes and Goldthwaite.

- 8-16. Heart O' Texas Fair/Rodeo, **Waco**, (254) 776-1660
- 9. Quilt Show & Sale, **Hilltop Lakes**, (936) 855-1711
- 9. Sausage Supper, **Quihi**, (830) 426-3735
- 9. Pumpkin Patch Bazaar, **Bonham**, (903) 583-3128
- 9. Brazos Writers Book & Arts Festival,

- College Station**, (979) 777-2729
- 9. Richmond Pecan Festival, **Richmond**, 1-800-890-1188
- 9. Classic Car Show, **Canton**, (903) 567-6763
- 9. Crazy Water Festival, **Mineral Wells**, (940) 325-0966
- 9. Fall Fest, **Kirbyville**, (409) 423-2865
- 9. Homecoming, **Grove**, (254) 986-3438
- 9. Market Days, **Georgetown**, (512) 868-8675
- 9-10. Bonham Kiwanis Trade Day, **Bonham**, (903) 640-1972
- 9-10. Uvalde Animal Shelter Holiday Craft Show, **Uvalde**, (830) 278-2846
- 10. Homecoming, **Westphalia**, (254) 584-4701
- 13-16. County Fair, **Bonham**, (903) 583-4811
- 14-16. Fair & Livestock Show, **Rockdale**, (512) 446-2030
- 15. Country Opry, **Victoria**, (361) 552-9347
- 15-16. Art & Music Festival, **Boerne**, (830) 229-5188
- 15-16. Fair on the Square, **Kyle**, (512) 268-5341
- 15-16. Texas Mushroom Festival, **Madisonville**, (936) 349-0742
- 15-17. Trade Days, **Fredericksburg**, (830) 990-4900 or www.fbgtradedays.com
- 15-17. Trade Days, **Livingston**, (936) 327-3656
- 16. Quilt Show, **Goldthwaite**, (325) 648-2660
- 16. Old Ford Day, **De Leon**, (254) 893-3773
- 16. Fall Festival, **Kerrville**, (830) 257-6767
- 16. Fall Festival, **Ennis**, 1-888-366-4748 or www.visitennis.org
- 16. Best Little Art Show in Texas, **La Grange**, 1-800-524-7264 or www.lagrangetx.org

FESTIVAL OF THE MONTH BY JIM GRAMON

The Hottest Little Pepper Festival in Texas: October 23, Palestine

Having attended hundreds of different festivals, I have learned several rules for a successful life.

One is: Never try the food till you have a cold drink handy.

This rule is appropriate for this month's festival, known as "the hottest little festival in Texas," and for good reason. It's the Palestine Hot Pepper Festival.

Pepper—Few words have a wider variety of meanings. But all of the meanings share something in common. Whether you are talking about a poblano or serrano, a fast ball or a person's personality, pepper means HOT. And you'll get the chance to see some

brave souls eat some of the hottest peppers around in the Macho Pepper Eating Contest.

But bring the whole family because there are plenty of cooler things to do. The day starts with the 5K Hot Chili Chase. Next comes a parade, and all day long there will be arts and crafts for sale, a quilt show, a car show, and, of course, plenty of food. There is also live music, including a street dance in the evening.

Come and enjoy the fun ... but remember to have a cold drink handy if you're going to try the peppers yourself!

For more information, visit the

Palestine Convention and Visitors Bureau's website: www.visitpalestine.com/hpf2004.html, or call (903) 723-3014.



Have a cool drink if you want to participate in the Pepper Eating Contest.

16. Tour d' Cotton Bike Run, **Childress**, (940) 937-2197
16. Arts/Crafts Show, Market Days, **Victoria**, 1-800-926-5774
16. Llano County Heritage Festival, **Llano**, (325) 247-4158
16. Cotton Fest, **Waxahachie**, (972) 938-9617
16. Pre-Holiday Craft Show & Sale, **Boerne**, (830) 995-2310
16. Butterfly Flutterby, **Grapevine**, 1-800-457-6338 or www.grapevinetexasusa.com
- 16-17. Comfort Village Fall Antiques Show & Sale, **Comfort**, (830) 995-3670
- 16-17. Pumpkin Fest, **Austin**, (512) 280-9898
- 16-17. Moving Waters Pow-Wow, **Canyon Lake**, (830) 964-3613
- 16-17. Elegant & Depression Glass Show & Sale, **Waxahachie**, (817) 545-5856
17. Oktoberfest, **Violet**, (361) 387-4434
- 18-24. Scott & White Senior Games, **Temple**, (254) 298-5414
22. Gem & Mineral Show, **Victoria**, 1-800-926-5774
- 22-23. Fall Fest, **San Marcos**, 1-888-200-5620
- 22-24. Heritage Days, **Crockett**, (936) 544-2359
23. Greyhound Jamboree, **Georgetown**, (512) 450-1460
23. Bluegrass Show, **Quitman**, (903) 763-4411
- 22-23. Sweet Potato Festival, **Golden**, (903) 765-2444
- 23-24. Mesquite Daze, **Anson** (325) 823-3259
- 23-24, 30-31. Great Pumpkin Hunt, **Elgin**, (512) 281-4833
27. South Texas Farm & Ranch Show, **Victoria**, 1-800-926-5774
- 29-30. Christmas In October, **Hughes Springs**, (903) 639-1318
- 29-30. Haunted Jail, **Coldspring**, (936) 653-2009
- 29-31. Halloween Spooktacular, **Mineola**, (903) 569-2087
30. Texas Bluebird Society Annual Convention, **Ding Dong**, (512) 268-5678 or www.texasbluebirdsociety.org
30. Market Days, **Canyon Lake**, (830) 964-3003
30. Halloween Carnival on the Square, **Kyle**, (512) 268-5341
- 30-31. Ranch Heritage Weekend, **Bandera**, (830) 796-4413
- 30-31. Key to the Hills Antique Show, **Boerne**, 1-888-842-8080
- 30-31. Arts Round-Up, **Spicewood**, www.spicewoodarts.com
31. Halloween in the Park, **Montgomery**, (936) 597-4400
31. Fall Festival, **Alba**, (903) 765-3278

Event information can be mailed to Around Texas, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704, faxed to (512) 486-6254, or e-mailed to aroundtx@texas-ec.org. It must be submitted by the 10th of the month two months prior to publication. E.g., December submissions must be received prior to October 10. Events are listed according to space available. We appreciate photos with credits but regret that they cannot be returned.

TEXAS CO-OP POWER

COMING IN THE NOVEMBER ISSUE:

Good Sports

Russell A. Graves has spent much of the past five years recording the unique working relationship between hunters and their dogs. He believes our devoted hunting companions are humankind's bridge to the natural world.



SEVERE WEATHER? TUNE IN!

NOAA Weather Radio

Do you have a battery-operated NOAA weather radio at your home or workplace? If the NOAA broadcasts reach your area, the radios can be invaluable. Here's why:

- NOAA provides continuous broadcasts of the latest weather information directly from the National Weather Service offices. When severe weather threatens your area, the broadcast activates an alarm and turns on the radio so you can hear critical, potentially life-saving messages.
- NOAA weather radios can take advantage of an even greater tool: the "all hazards" radio network. These broadcasts provide warning and post-event information for a host of other threats.
- NOAA weather radios can also receive broadcasted AMBER alerts for missing children.
- The NOAA weather radio network is expanding in coverage and capability, making it an invaluable tool. For as little as \$20, most Texans can have access to potentially life-saving emergency messages.

Call your local electric cooperative or visit www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/index.html for more weather radio information.



Texas Electric Cooperatives

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

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

Who Doesn't Love Chow Time?



Kasey Lane Brooks, whose mother works at Pedernales EC, provided this photo she's titled "Pasty Yankee takes a bite out of Texas."



Meet Gator the dog. Owner Ed Bundy says, "Tonight Gator is praying for a big T-bone steak to appear in her bowl." Let's hope Gator's prayers are answered! Bundy belongs to Pedernales EC.

With a topic like "chow time," we knew our readers would come up with some doozies. We weren't disappointed! Some of the photos that weren't selected provided topics for conversation. They included a vegetable-eating pooch, an army of hungry kitties, and a couple of dogs with identity problems (both thought they were cows!). We also looked at enough photos of messy eaters that we were tempted to grab a napkin ourselves.

The topic for December is "School Plays." Send your favorite theatrical photos—with your name, address, daytime phone, co-op affiliation and a brief description—to "School Plays," Focus on Texas, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704, before October 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.



Rebecca Kendall's grandson had such a good time "testing" the frosting for a cake that she couldn't help but laugh out loud—and grab the camera. "He kept insisting that the frosting was not quite right and that it needed to be tested and tasted again ... and again," the Pedernales EC member said.

"I got mine. Where's yours?" When Billy Joe Shannon fed a round bale of hay to some of his herd, this cow got her share and then some. "Kids aren't the only ones who play in their food and get nutrition by osmosis," said Shannon, a member of Karnes EC.

UPCOMING in Focus on Texas

Subject	Issue	Deadline
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
May	Caught Napping	March 10



Electric Memories, Dawson County

My family's dry-land cotton farm in the southernmost part of Dawson County was within two miles of getting electricity when construction of rural electric projects was suspended because of World War II. It wasn't until 1947 that construction resumed and electricity came to the Moss farm.

No selling job on the part of Lyntegar Electric Cooperative was required; by this time we had been to visit our neighbors who were fortunate enough

from room to room (all four of them) switching the lights on and off. What a treat it was that night to do my homework by the light of a 40-watt light bulb instead of the Aladdin oil lamp.

The first purchase we made after getting electricity was an electric iron. This made a big impact on my mom, but was just as exciting to me and my brother, the last of six boys living at home. With all those sons, my mom never understood that boys are not sup-

17th of the month. So on the morning of the 17th, first thing after breakfast, my dad read the meter, day of the week notwithstanding. One time we were going to visit relatives in Oklahoma and were going to be gone over the 17th; Dad left the meter reading card with a neighbor with explicit instructions that the reading was to be taken on the morning of the 17th. I think his strict adherence to this date was to show his appreciation for having electricity.

I appreciated the improvement in my lifestyle as much as a teenager could, but I certainly did not foresee the effect that rural electrification would have on my adult life and career. After graduation from college and a two-year tour of military duty, I went to work in January 1959 for Bolinger & Segars, an accounting firm in Lubbock. Our client base included several electric cooperatives and a telephone cooperative. I was introduced to the accounting profession and to the rural electric and telephone industries, and the most enjoyable career I could imagine was begun.

Since the day Lyntegar built the lines to the Moss farm back in 1947, I have seen this story repeated all over America. I've had the opportunity to work with a number of these cooperatives all over the state of Texas and from Florida to California.

I could not have known at the time I was watching the Lyntegar co-op linemen work that what was going on would someday be such a large part of my professional career. To have been able to experience first-hand the improvement in lifestyle that electricity affords and to have had the opportunity for a career in the electric industry must be what the phrase "best of both worlds" means.

Jack Moss is a certified public accountant and partner in Bolinger, Segars, Gilbert & Moss, L.L.P., which serves some 70 electric cooperatives across the nation, including Lyntegar Electric Cooperative in Tahoka.



By laying electric lines, Lyntegar Electric Cooperative workers helped retire oil lamps and gas irons.

to have "pre-war" electricity. We had seen electric service, and we wanted it!

We used the butter and egg money to come up with the \$5 membership fee, and when the crews came to our house with the poles and wire, my mom served them lemonade and cookies. My brother and I were the self-appointed foreman's assistants. We learned that after the poles, wire, transformer and meter were all in place, the installation wouldn't be complete until the wire from the transformer was connected to the service wire to the house. And for that, we had to wait.

Finally, one day in October I got off the school bus and looked at the service pole. Sure enough! We were connected. I ran into the house and went

posed to wash dishes, scrub floors, clean house and iron. When we got past about 7 years old, she taught each of us to iron with our old Coleman gas iron, or with flat irons from the stove. We happily mastered the electric iron, especially considering that just about everything worn in public needed ironing.

Next we replaced the old gasoline motor on the Maytag washer with an electric motor. This was probably the greatest improvement of all; I don't know how many times mom's washing was interrupted by the old gasoline motor dying. She'd have to wait until my dad or one of us boys came in from the field or from school to get the motor going again.

Lyntegar sent out meter cards that requested the meter be read on the