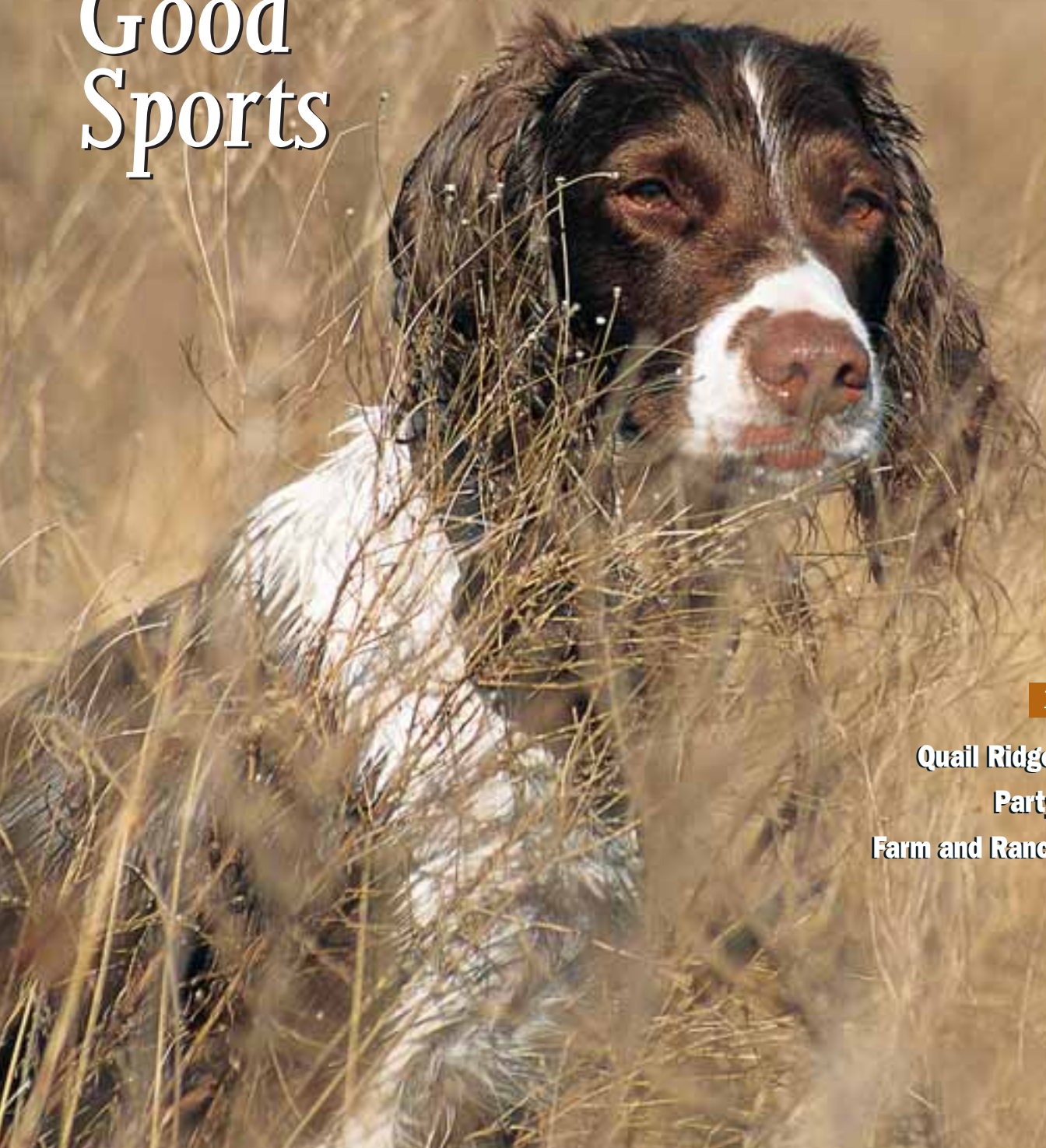


TEXAS CO-OP POWER

Good
Sports

PLUS:

**Quail Ridge Ranch
Party Foods
Farm and Ranch Show**





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

BEST OF CO-OP COUNTRY STUDENT CONTEST	
Class or School Project: students from middle and high school may nominate one of the following:	
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; min-height: 30px;">Best Town To Live In</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; min-height: 30px;">Best Texas Writer</div>
<p><i>Students must explain in writing why their choice is best. Quantity and quality of nominations will be judged. Teachers and parents are not allowed to write or edit the submissions. The winning school will receive a prize of \$1,000.</i></p>	

Your Name _____	Co-op _____
Address _____	City/Zip _____
Telephone Number _____	

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

TEXAS CO-OP POWER

A MAGAZINE ABOUT TEXAS LIVING

Hunting Issue

Friends Indeed

If you're looking for a good friend with whom to tramp the fields and meadows, writer/photographer Russell A. Graves recommends a well-trained hunting dog. He says they have all the characteristics you want in a human friend—loyalty, understanding, a sense of humor, and a heady zest for life.

We always had beagles—they are classic hunting dogs and make great pets for families with children. We got Skip the same year we got our boat. ("Skipper"—get it? Corny, I know—I was only ten at the time!) He lived to be 13 and died on Thanksgiving Day. It was the worst Thanksgiving I ever had.

You'll see a great photograph of a beagle climbing a tree in this issue.

Our second feature is also related to hunting and the natural world. It describes how a retired physician is improving ranchland near Glen Rose. The hunting ranch is also a sanctuary for endangered birds, thanks to federal "safe harbor" regulations. They encourage voluntary habitat protection and restoration.

The recipe topic for November is party foods. The recipes were fun to test and among our choices you're bound to find something you'd be proud to take to a party. Our high-lighted festival is the Amarillo Farm and Ranch Show.

Peg

Peg Champion
Vice President, Communications/
Publisher

Hunter Bill Perkins scans the horizon with Sax, a yellow Lab, and Gunner, a chocolate Lab puppy.



RUSSELL A. GRAVES



Cherokee County EC member Marvalee Henderson sent this photo of her mother, Bethel Trawick, who harvested these beautiful purple-topped turnips in her vegetable garden. At 83 years young, Mrs. Trawick hasn't lost her green thumb. For more farm-related photos, turn to page 45.

FEATURES

Good Sports 6

Story and Photos by Russell A. Graves

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.

The Healer of Quail Ridge Ranch 12

By Jim Anderson, Photos by Wyman Meinzer

A retired physician is helping nature to cure a played-out parcel of land near Glen Rose. Quail Ridge Ranch offers luxury accommodations not only for hunters but also for two endangered species, the black-capped vireo and the golden-cheeked warbler.

DEPARTMENTS

Texas Living 30

Indulge your friends with party foods. Check out the Farm and Ranch Show in Amarillo.

Focus on Texas 45

See what's happening on the farm.

Texas, USA 46

By Linda Allen

Thanksgiving Pearls, Wimberley.

WRAP IT UP!

*With 128 pages of mouthwatering recipes,
Texas Co-op Power cookbooks
make great gifts for friends and family.*



RECIPE FOR A HAPPY HOLIDAY

Once again *Texas Co-op Power* is making it easy as pie for you to simplify your holiday gift giving. Simply fill out the form below, get it to us before November 19 along with payment, and we'll giftwrap and ship the *Texas Co-op Power Cookbook: Recipes From Co-op Kitchens* for you at no additional charge!

Order before November 19, 2004, and we'll guarantee delivery by Christmas.

Order Form

- ☐ Giftwrap my order
☐ Do not giftwrap my order

Mail to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Mail to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

From: (for giftwrapped orders only)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Make checks payable to:
Texas Electric Cooperatives

Send \$18.75 for each cookbook to:
TCP Cookbooks
2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704

Although every attempt will be made,
free giftwrapping offer with Christmas
delivery is only guaranteed on orders
received before November 19.

TEXAS CO-OP POWER

VOLUME 61 NOVEMBER 2004 NUMBER 5

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

TEXAS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Debbie Robinson, Quitman, Chair
Audie Morris, Decatur, Vice Chair
John Herrera, Mercedes, Secretary-Treasurer
Charles Castleberry, Tulia
Gerald W. Lemons, Itasca
Mark Rose, Giddings
Carl Thompson, Roby

PRESIDENT/CEO
Mike Williams, Austin

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Rick Haile, McGregor, Chair
John Q. Adams, Bellville
Barron Christensen, Douglassville
Bill Harbin, Floydada
Kim Hooper, Bluegrove
Larry Oeffinger, Hondo
Roland Witt, Coleman
Audie Morris, Decatur, Board Liaison

COMMUNICATIONS STAFF

Peg Champion, Vice President, Communications/
Publisher

Kaye Northcott, Editor
Carol Moczygemba, Managing Editor
Suzi Sands, Art Director
Martin Bevins, Advertising Director
Louie Bond, Copy Editor/Writer
Andy Doughty, Production Artist
Sandra Forston, Communications Assistant
Jo Jochenning, Production Assistant
Karen Nejtek, Production Coordinator
Shannon Oelrich, Food Editor/Proofreader
Heather Thompson, Communications Coordinator
Cheryl Tucker, Field Editor
Issue Designers: Andy Doughty, Jan Milstead

Texas Co-op Power (USPS 540-560) is published monthly by Texas Electric Cooperatives (TEC). Periodical Postage Paid at Austin, TX and at additional offices. TEC is the statewide association representing 75 electric cooperatives. Texas Co-op Power's website is www.texascoopower.com. Call (512) 454-0311 or e-mail editor@texas-ec.org.

Subscription price is \$3.72 per year for individual members of subscribing cooperatives. If you are not a member of a subscribing cooperative, you can purchase an annual subscription at the non-member rate of \$15. Individual copies and back issues are available for \$3 each.

POSTMASTER Send address changes to Texas Co-op Power (USPS 540-560), 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704. Please enclose label from this copy of Texas Co-op Power showing old address and key numbers.

ADVERTISING Advertisers interested in buying display ad space in Texas Co-op Power and/or in our 30 sister publications in other states, should contact Martin Bevins at (512) 486-6249.

Advertisements in Texas Co-op Power are paid solicitations. The publisher neither endorses nor guarantees in any manner any product or company included in this publication. Product satisfaction and delivery responsibility lie solely with the advertiser. Questions or comments about advertising in this publication should be directed to Martin Bevins, Advertising Director.



© Copyright 2004 Texas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. Reproduction of this issue or any portion of it is expressly prohibited without written permission. Willie Wiredhand © Copyright 2004 National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.



Texas Electric Cooperatives

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

Reading Texas Writers

Several library patrons of the Chico Public Library in Wise County brought their copies of the *Texas Co-op Power* article ["Mystery—Whodunit in Texas," June 2004] and asked for some of the books. We were able to provide some and the idea for a special project grew from our inability to provide all.

A grant proposal to the North Texas Book Festival earned the library a grant of \$750 to purchase as many books as possible for our special project called "Texas Writers for Texas Readers."

Phyllis Herskowitz
Board President, Chico Public Library

Our 'Best' As Well

We have always enjoyed *Texas Co-op Power* but your September issue is the best ever—great, cover to cover.

I loved the Round Top Antique Fair being compared to "Brigadoon" ["Best of Co-op Country 2004," September 2004]. Three friends and I will be there just one month from today, my second time at the fair.

I was happy you agreed that the chicken-fried steak at the Blue Bonnet Cafe in Marble Falls ranked with the



best in Texas. Mama's Pot Roast is another favorite there. And their pies ... well, they are so great that I have four that tie for first place: fudge pie (warmed and topped with ice cream), German chocolate (loaded with coconut), banana cream, and coconut (with the tallest meringue ever).

Can't wait to make the trip to Liberty Hill to find the Hobo Depot.

Thank you so much for a great read.
Jane Markley
Pedernales EC

The Pleasure Was Ours

On behalf of all of the employees at the Hobo Depot in Liberty Hill, we send a big "Thank you!" to you and your staff for such a wonderful write-up ["Best of Co-op Country 2004," September 2004]. We would also like to give a heartfelt "Thank you!" to our

customers and to all the new friends we've made. It is truly a pleasure to serve such wonderful people.

Becky Child
Hobo Depot

Too Much Pie?

Love the (pecan) pie recipe ["Best of Co-op Country 2004," September 2004]; thanks for publishing it. However, the recipe's ingredients are too much for one pie. At least, it didn't work for me. Readers might want to adjust.

Thanks to Threadgill's for sharing their "good stuff." Wish some of the rest of "Best of Texas" would share theirs. Thanks for a great magazine.

Linda Hagen
San Bernard EC

Editor's response: Too much pie filling sounds like a delicious problem to us! We suggest purchasing a deep-dish shell if you're using store-bought crust, which can vary in size.

On the subject of pies, many readers wanted a recipe for the peach pie on the cover of the September issue. The pie—with the ribbon we designed—was simply to inform readers that the "Best of Co-op Country" winners were in the issue. The pie, prepared by Austin caterer Mary Nell Phillips, was not baked for its flavor but for its appearance.

Here's how Phillips makes a pretty crust: Brush the pie lightly with a mixture of cream and one egg yolk (for color) and sprinkle with turbinado sugar before baking. A little milk or cream on the brush adds crispness.

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.

SAFE LIVING

Teach Your Children To Be Safe And Aware

Did you know that family members abduct 350,000 children every year? That more than 4,600 children are abducted each year by non-family members? Or that 450,000 children run away each year?

Children should be taught:

- To know their full name, as well as their parents' name, address and telephone number. Children should also know how to use the telephone.

- Never to say they're alone when answering the phone—instead, they should offer to take a message or say their parents will be right back.
- Never to answer the door if they're home alone.
- Never to invite anyone into the house without the permission of a parent or babysitter.
- Never to take candy or gifts from strangers or anyone else without asking a parent first.

- Never to play in deserted buildings or isolated areas.
- To move away from cars that pull up alongside them if they don't know the driver.
- To know that no one should touch any part of their body that a bathing suit would cover.
- To know they can talk to you and call you to pick them up at any time.

Source: National Child Identification Program, www.childidprogram.com

GOOD SPORTS



STORY AND PHOTOS BY
RUSSELL A. GRAVES



Walking into an all-you-can-eat seafood joint in Hendrix, Oklahoma, I cannot wait to get inside and escape the sultry, early July heat. I grew up about 20 miles from here, on the northern edge of the Texas Blackland Prairie, and was once accustomed to the area's humid summer days. After college, though, I moved to the Texas Panhandle and soon acclimated to the semi-arid landscape of the top of Texas.

When I open the restaurant's door, the rush of cool, refrigerated air is exhilarating. I scan the patrons and see Mike Bardwell sitting at a small table. I met Mike, who lives north of Bonham, a few years ago while working on a book about hunting dogs. We exchange pleasantries and ask



Left: Crossfire the coon dog won't let a tree slow him down; he just climbs right up. Above: Nash still hunts although he has only three legs.

about each other's families. Soon, and predictably, the conversation turns to a past duck hunt we shared on a broad, flooded timber slough near my boyhood home in the middle of Fannin County.

To this day I remember the determination of the dog he had retrieving for us. Even then, Nash, a black Lab, was a seasoned veteran of the duck marsh. He was everything that anyone would want in a gun dog—or a friend, for that matter. Nash had a great personality, a strong work ethic, a dedication to task, and an attitude that made him excel at his job. In our group that morning were four hunters and Nash. Shotgun blasts downed bird after bird and Nash retrieved our

limit of mallards and wigeons from the frigid water.

When we first unloaded the gear from the truck that day, the sky was still black. As the sun lit the pond, I noticed that Nash had a withered leg. Mike said the dog had never recovered from ligament surgery.

Watching Nash work a downed bird, you'd never guess he was injured. He moved skillfully and effortlessly through the water without regard to his injury. On the land, though, Nash had a bit of a hobble. He kept the nearly useless leg tucked against his rear flank. Despite his disability, Nash persevered.

Mike and I relive the hunt against the bustle of the restaurant's muffled voices and clanging dishes. He tells me

that Nash is still going strong despite having his bad leg amputated.

"He still hunts," Mike says with a grin. "Having only three legs doesn't slow him a bit."

Nash wears a flotation vest with extra padding to help him paddle along with only three legs. The vest, made from camouflaged neoprene, also helps him stay invisible in the blind.

Nash has traits that some would consider uniquely human. He has drive, ambition, tenacity, and a litany of other adjectives that describe his (no pun intended) dogged determination. Although physical injury may slow him a bit, pain can't dampen his spirit.

For the past five years or so, I have been recording the special bond



between hunting dogs and their owners. The fruits of my labor amount to thousands of photographs and a book about the beauty of hunting dogs and their connection to their owners (*Hunting Dogs—A Photographic Tribute*, Krause Publications).

Hunting dogs range from pointers to retrievers, from coon hounds to flushing

dogs. Each of these dogs is born with innate abilities, but someone must work diligently to channel those instincts.

I remember sitting with Jason Wolf of Childress in the shade of a mesquite tree, waiting for doves to zip by. His 10-year-old black Lab, Cisco, was alert, watching attentively each time Jason shifted to get more comfortable just in case his master was about to fire his shotgun.

Jason's eyes drifted toward the horizon as he spoke of Cisco as a pup. "Training him was pretty easy," he said. "Dogs like Cisco already have the instinct to retrieve or point. My challenge was to get him to retrieve when I wanted him to.

"I'd work with him to try to teach him what specifically to retrieve. When we'd go bird hunting, he might bring back a stick instead of a dove. He'd retrieve just about anything he could get his mouth around."

Jason worked with Cisco daily until the dog figured out the hunting game. One trick he used was to conduct the training when the pup was interested. "When he wanted to retrieve, we'd retrieve," Jason recalled. "As soon as he showed signs of boredom, I'd quit. I think dogs are like kids and can get burned out if you push them too hard."

Once a dog is trained, hunter and dog are a wonder to behold. Several unforgettable pairs stand out in my memories.

I think of guide Scott Sommerlatte, who fishes and hunts Matagorda Bay and hauls his yellow Lab, Sonny, everywhere he goes. He treats the dog like a sibling.

I think of young Jonathon Burpo, first training beagles to hunt rabbits and later becoming a master of the antebellum sport of coon hunting. On a hunt with him one night, we followed a dog named Crossfire through

Above: Pointing comes naturally to this young German shorthaired pointer.

Below: A black Labrador carefully retrieves a duck.



muddy bottomlands in search of a raccoon. Before long, Crossfire was barking anxiously at the base of a huge oak tree at a raccoon staring meekly down at us. We walked away and Jonathon turned Crossfire loose to find yet another coon. For this pair, the sport is finding coons, not shooting them.

I also think back to a West Texas quail hunt where I first met Jerry Robinson and his old dog, Prissy. At the time, Prissy was 13 and had a hard time getting around. Her age didn't deter her from nosing through the brush for bobwhites, though. Jerry knew the dog was past her prime, but his loyalty and love for her wouldn't let him leave her behind.

Hunting dogs have also had a significant impact on me. Growing up in rural Texas, I came to love all things wild. I spent day after day roaming around the wooded draws close to home in search of anything I could find. I'd dig for fossils, look in tin horns (road drains) for critters like raccoons or minks, and turn over old boards and tin roofing to search for snakes, rats or other vermin. It was simply a mission in discovery.

As a teenager, I spent countless days trailing my friend Garry's rag-tag bird dogs. Garry lived in nearby Dodd City and would drive to my house with his dogs so we could hunt. Our arrangement was simple: Garry provided the dogs and I supplied the land on which to chase quail.

In retrospect, I think we were actually searching for more than quail. We



Right: Amy Rogers with Archie.

Below: These boots aren't a fashion statement; they protect the dog's paws in rough terrain.



were searching for our identities and ourselves. The long conversations we shared as we followed his two pointers laid the groundwork for a 25-year friendship and helped shape the men we are today. And Garry's dogs were with us every step of the way.

Collectively, hunting dogs are humankind's bridge to the natural world. They understand nature's nuances where we cannot. They go into nature's most dangerous places where we will not. They work hard whether asked to or not, and they do so without pay or complaints.

In return, hunting dogs help us see a gentler side of ourselves. They love us for who we are and withhold judgment unless judgment is due. A good hunting dog has all the same qualities

you look for in a best friend: loyalty, understanding, a sense of humor, and a heady zest for life. For many who hunt, their dog is their best friend. I can see why.

I am forever transformed by the relationships I've seen between humans and their dogs. When you see a well-trained dog and a handler who respects his animal, you are witnessing precisely what God had in mind when he granted humans dominion over the animal kingdom. By treating them with the dignity canines deserve, people can transform hunting dogs. Or is it the hunting dogs that transform us?

Russell A. Graves is a professional photographer and an agriculture science instructor in Childress.



Above: Four-year-old Bailee Graves bonds with Cisco, a 10-year-old black Lab, on a recent hunting trip.

Below: The hunters may train these fine dogs, but it's hard to say who learns the greater lesson.



ONLY CRACKPOTS TAKE SHOTS

Transformers

It doesn't take a crack shot to hit an electric insulator or transformer, just a crackpot. During hunting season, careless shooters taking pot shots at electric equipment can cause major problems for your electric company.

Here's why:

- You are inconveniencing your fellow member-customers whose electricity has been disrupted.
- It could even be a matter of life and death to someone on a life-support system or to someone who is hit by a stray shot.
- Damage to electrical equipment is very expensive to repair. Lines may be cut or weakened from a shot, and they may sag or break, becoming a severe hazard for anyone who comes in contact with the line.
- Broken insulators can cause power outages that are hard—and expensive—to find. An insulator cracked by a bullet can remain on line for a long time before it finally fails.

Enjoy your sport, but be a responsible hunter. Teach your children to respect power lines, electrical equipment and guns so that they, too, will be responsible hunters.



**Texas Electric
Cooperatives**

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

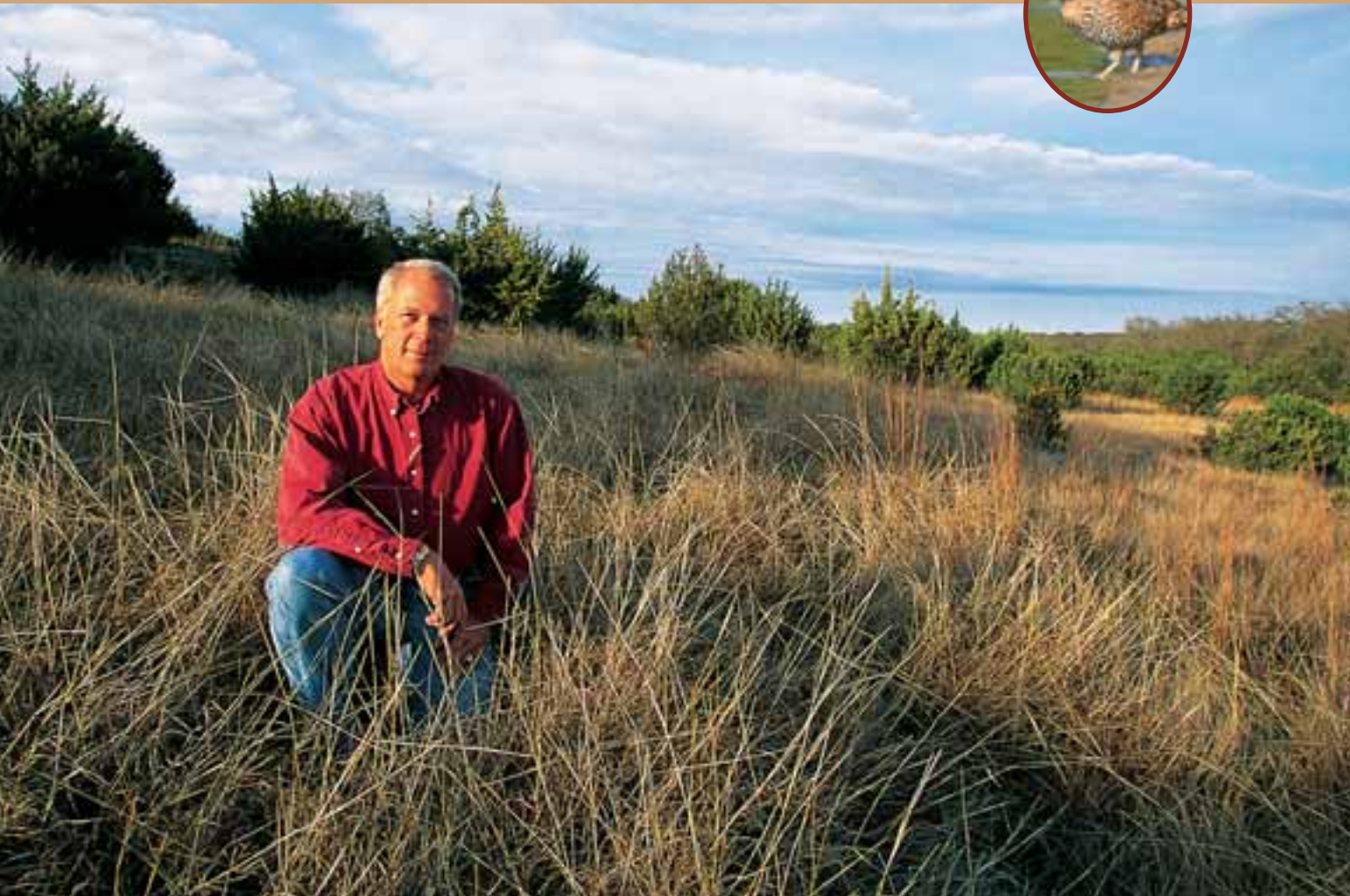
This public service message is brought to you by your local electric cooperative. For more information, visit your local co-op.

The Healer of

BY JIM ANDERSON, PHOTOS BY WYMAN MEINZER

We all hope to find our place and purpose in the world. Dr. Rickey Fain has been fortunate enough to find his twice—once as a healer of people, then as a healer of land.

QUAIL PHOTO BY KATHY ADAMS CLARK



Quail Ridge

Fain's first career was as a successful family practitioner in the Dallas area, but by the early 1990s the strain of his work began to have a physical impact. He noticed a numbness in his hands and was diagnosed with three ruptured disks in his neck. Faced with major surgery, a year in rehab and a permanent stiff neck, Fain called a timeout. After much soul-searching, he prescribed an alternate treatment for himself: He retired from his practice and set out to find a new life. (He has managed to dodge the surgeon's knife for over 10 years now. At 48, he's gray on top but otherwise hale as a sapling.)

Fain found his new purpose among the limestone mesas west of Glen Rose on a worn-out hardscrabble ranch at the end of a winding chalk road. He bought 1,600 acres of stony ground overtaken and sapped dry by an impenetrable thicket of ashe juniper, commonly called mountain cedar (among other names, some unprintable). Then he wondered what he'd gotten himself into.

These old places have a way of burying hope alongside the rusting pieces of homesteader wagons, but Fain's hope was based on the miraculous and very real capacity of depleted land to heal itself with wise stewardship. What in lesser hands could've become "Fain's Folly" was painstakingly transformed into Quail Ridge Ranch, a model of holistic land healing to benefit the resident wildlife, livestock and people.

Fain had his work cut out for him. "There's an old saying, 'The best thing

you can put on your land is footprints,' but 75 percent of the place was covered in cedar so dense you couldn't walk through it," he recalls. "We couldn't even tell what we had."

While he had given up his medical practice, Fain hadn't retired his scientific mind. "One of the most important things I learned studying medicine was observation. It's fascinating what you can learn when you stop and look closely. My kids used to think I was nuts because I'd get down on the ground and scratch around. If somebody buys a piece of land, I tell them, 'The first thing you should do is ... nothing.' Most people will start throwing money or work into it before they understand what they've bought. You need to observe where the wet and dry places are, which way the wind blows at what time of the year, what the soil is like, the natural history of the landscape."

A key feature in the natural history of Fain's property, as with most Texas farm and ranch land, can be summed up in one word—grass. Big bluestem, little bluestem, switchgrass, Indian grass, sideoats grama—these and other native grasses once grew as high as a saddle horn, a standing reserve of ideal livestock forage waving in the breeze. (Native grasses contain about 20 percent protein, while the modern cattleman's darling, introduced coastal Bermuda, has only about 13 percent.) But overgrazing spells doom to grass and boon to weeds and brush. It's an old story.

Although it's generally feared and misunderstood, fire is actually the old-

est steward of the land. Fain has learned how to use fire as his primary management tool. "Native grasses respond favorably to fire and the less desirable grasses don't," he explains. "Once you start emulating nature, the land begins to heal itself. Good things return, bad things decline. Native grass seed can lay dormant for a hundred years under the

Just so happens, the black-capped vireo and the golden-cheeked warbler both like the same kind of habitat, and it's also ideal for quail, turkey and deer.



GOLDEN-CHEEKED WARBLER PHOTO BY KATHY ADAMS CLARK

wrong conditions, then a fire will trigger germination. We haven't planted a single seed; our native grasses are coming back naturally."

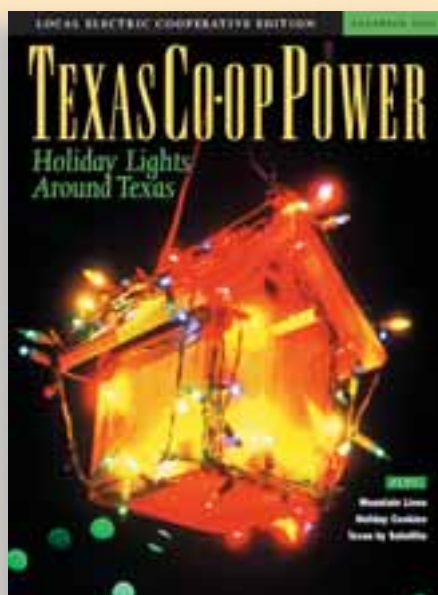
To overcome the imposing army of cedars, Fain chose a gradual, low-impact approach. Rather than wholesale bulldozing and windrowing, he takes it by segments, using a "push-and-go" technique, bulldozing the biggest cedars and leaving them where they lie. Then he returns on a humid, windless, cool-season day for a "cool

COMING IN THE DECEMBER ISSUE OF

TEXAS CO-OP POWER

our

HOLIDAY ISSUE



Christmas Lights

Photographer Christina Patoski started snapping holiday yard displays more than three decades ago. We bring you some of our favorites from across Texas.

Living With Mountain Lions

These secretive and solitary cats live under the radar screen of most Texans, but they still roam vast reaches of the state.

Plus:

The best holiday cookies; Annual Christmas Boat Lane Parade in the Clear Lake Channel; School Play photos; Nighttime Texas by Satellite.

burn,” which consumes the downed cedars while scorching the young standing cedars enough to make them vulnerable for a future burn. He spares the shinnery oaks and live oaks needed for wildlife habitat. Fain has learned that a wet fall day is the best time for bulldozing; the machine’s muddy treads will pick up oak acorns and “plant” them along its path.

Fain follows nature’s lead, always asking himself, “How would God do it?” (If God had the occasional help of a bulldozer, presumably.) He even sees a purpose for the despised fire ants: “No question they do some harm to ground-nesting wildlife, but I’ve noticed they’re pretty good farmers. They’ll move into an old pasture that’s been packed down by cattle for years into kind of a surface hardpan and dig mounds every three feet or so. What do they leave on top? Loose, fluffy soil. And guess what, grass seeds will blow into that loose soil and germinate. Eventually, most of the ants will move on to another pasture because they’ve done their job. They’re probably here to stay, so we might as well accept them. Fire ants aren’t the main problem for wildlife; it’s loss of habitat. Good nesting cover will offset a lot of the fire ant threat.”

You might disagree with him about fire ants, but you can’t argue with Fain’s overall results. He’s a businessman, not a hobbyist; the land has to provide a living and meet the mortgage payments. Although he admits it’s a lifetime project, he’s made remarkable progress in just over 10 years. He’s doubled the grazing capacity and intends to improve it further, but wildlife has proven to be his most valuable asset.

Two years ago Fain built a handsome limestone lodge on a breezy hilltop and outfitted it with first-class accommodations. He offers guided quail hunts, some turkey and deer hunting, corporate retreats, ecotourism, habitat study, and bird watching—complete with delicious meals and gracious hospitality. Thanks to his work, the ranch now supports hundreds of bobwhite quail, ample turkey and deer, and is a valuable nesting site for two endangered songbird species—



Birders and nature enthusiasts enjoy the ranch each spring, and fall brings hunters.

the black-capped vireo and the golden-cheeked warbler. Again, Fain lets the rhythms of nature work to his advantage—hunting season begins while the migratory songbirds are wintering down south and ends just before the birds return to begin nesting.

He smiles at the neat integration of it all: “Just so happens, the black-capped vireo and the golden-cheeked warbler both like the same kind of habitat, and it’s also ideal for quail, turkey and deer. The warbler likes cedar bark for nest material and the vireo likes to hide and nest in the

shinnery oak thickets. Both bird species are attracted to burned areas.”

Most landowners used to dread the discovery of an endangered species on their property, fearing government intrusion, but “safe harbor” regulations adopted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1997 encourage voluntary habitat protection and restoration and provide federal regulatory flexibility for qualified landowners, while minimizing on-site meddling. Although the regulations do

not require the land to be protected from development, they do require landowners to commit to management practices that benefit the species for a 10-year period, and then allow them or their heirs to reconsider the agreement at a future date.

Other federal, state and private assistance programs are also available. (See sidebar for specifics.) Fain is quick to praise and credit several of these programs for help with his land restoration. He has a special regard for Environmental Defense and their Texas-based Landowner Conservation





Here's a partial list of sources for information, programs and/or financial assistance for landowners committed to land preservation, rehabilitation and/or habitat restoration:

First-class accommodations in this hilltop limestone lodge await hunters, birders and other visitors to Quail Ridge.

FEDERAL:

- ◆ **Endangered Species Program**
P.O. Box 1306
Albuquerque, NM 87103
<http://ifw2es.fws.gov/EndangeredSpecies>
(505) 248-6911

- ◆ **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**
500 Gold Ave. SW
Albuquerque, NM 87102
www.fws.gov/
1-800-344-WILD

- ◆ **National Resources Conservation Service**
P.O. Box 2890
Washington, DC 20013
www.nrcs.usda.gov/
(202) 720-7246

STATE:

- ◆ **Texas Parks & Wildlife Department's Landowner Incentive Program**
4200 Smith School Rd.
Austin, TX 78744
www.tpwd.state.tx.us/conservation/lip/
1-800-792-1112, ext. 9+4799
- ◆ **Texas Forest Service** (for re-establishing native hardwoods):
301 Tarrow, Ste. 364

College Station, TX 77840-7896
<http://txforests.tamu.edu>
(979) 458-6606

- ◆ **Texas A&M University**
College Station, TX 77843
www.tamu.edu/
(979) 845-3211

PRIVATE:

- ◆ **Environmental Defense**
257 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10010
www.environmentaldefense.org
(212) 505-2100

- ◆ **National Wildlife Federation**
11100 Wildlife Center Dr.
Reston, VA 20190-5362
www.nwf.org
1-800-822-9919

- ◆ **American Farmland Trust**
1200 18th St. NW
Washington, DC 20036
www.farmland.org
(202) 331-7300

- ◆ **The Nature Conservancy**
4245 North Fairfax Dr., Ste. 100
Arlington, VA 22203-1606
<http://nature.org>
1-800-628-6860

Assistance Program, which is also lauded by both the Texas Farm Bureau and the Central Texas Cattleman's Association. Environmental Defense is an excellent example of a new spirit of cooperation between traditional agricultural organizations and environmental groups, protecting endangered species while honoring the landowner's basic rights and financial needs. Fain says Environmental Defense not only assisted him in obtaining state and federal funds, the group also provided invaluable on-site technical support and guidance.

On a mild afternoon in early March, with Fain at the wheel of his pickup, we followed a meandering two-track road for a firsthand look at the fruits of his labor. One of the most dramatic benefits of reducing cedar and promoting grass is surface water retention. Cedars guzzle a phenomenal amount of water from the soil, more than twice the demand of native grasses. As cedars are evergreens, it's a year-round drain. However, Fain doesn't plan to completely eradicate the thirsty junipers, as they prevent erosion on steep slopes, serve the golden-cheeked warblers' nesting requirements, and provide food for wildlife.

Even with only partial removal of cedar, water is returning to the soil. Due to new grass cover, the property can now absorb a 6-inch rain with minimal surface runoff. The groundwater table has risen dramatically and surface seeps have reappeared. Soon springs will begin to trickle again for the first time in many decades.

Fain stopped at the foot of a broad, gently sloping hillside, and we dismounted to walk. Here was an example of his methods come full-circle: The cedars were in retreat and grasses were retaking the field. As an experiment, he had dug a trench across the lower end of the grade and about 6 inches of clear water had welled up—dramatic proof of a recharged water table and a sure sign of land on the mend.

It's unlikely this place was ever a completely pristine tallgrass landscape, even when the ancient nomadic hunters followed the bison herds here. (The legendary unbroken oceans of tallgrass prairie lay farther to the north.) Most likely this land always had its cedar draws and upland oak groves, but grass was the predominant vegetation. And so it will be again as Fain steadily works his healing programs.

You would think such a careful observer and man of science would have a detailed long-range plan. But Fain finds that idea amusing: "You can draw up a 10-year plan but you're going to rewrite it every year. You'll know more next year than you did this year, sometimes discovering things you never expected. We've had the privilege of making mistakes and learning from them. All I knew for sure was that I wanted to take it back to the way it was, the way it should be. Land management is truly a lifetime deal. The way I look at it, a lot of what I'm doing is for my grandchildren."

We drove on, following the rise and fall of the land, stopping here and there to walk other fields in transition. The native grasses still wore their late winter colors, from straw yellow to auburn to faded pink. Three turkey hens scurried across the trail ahead and a red-tailed hawk cruised on thermal currents above. Occasional volleys of shotgun fire in the distance meant the quail-hunting clients were having a fine afternoon.

Presently we turned onto a spur trail and angled up the shoulder of a high mesa toward an observation deck Fain had built atop a skeet-shooting station. On the summit we parked and climbed the deck steps to take in the big picture. It's the highest point on the 1,600 acres and offers a grand perspective. Laid out below like a topographical model is work completed, work in progress, and work yet to be done. The man who is seldom at a loss for words to express his vision fell

silent for a moment. The view spoke for itself.

For more information on hunting and birding (or even weddings) at Quail Ridge Ranch, call (254) 897-3618 or check it out online at www.quailridgeranch.com.

Quail Ridge Ranch is served by United Cooperative Services.

Jim Anderson lives in Austin and is a frequent contributor of both articles and illustrations to Texas Co-op Power.



Ice Storms

Although much of the state is unaccustomed to snow and ice, temperatures can fall below freezing even in South Texas. Wet snow and ice snap tree branches and cause electric lines to sag.

To make our families safe and comfortable during a winter power outage:

- Report any outages.
- Turn off electrical appliances that were operating at the time the power went off, including your heating system. Leave one light on so you'll know when service has been restored.
- Keep warm by closing off rooms you don't need and use only safe sources of heat, like a wood stove. Do not burn charcoal indoors—it releases carbon monoxide, which is deadly. If you operate lanterns or fuel-fired cook stoves or heaters, make sure that you have adequate ventilation to keep harmful fumes from accumulating.
- Don't drive unless absolutely necessary until road conditions improve. If you must drive, go slowly and pump your brakes to stop.
- Be extra careful not to slip on treacherous ice.



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.

AUTOMATIC SET-BACK THERMOSTATS SAVE ENERGY

Some heating unit installers are still telling customers that setting the thermostat back before leaving the house or going to bed won't save any money because the furnace will use excess fuel when they crank it back up.



They're wrong.

Years of testing have shown that the energy you gain by cooling your home down is equal to what you use when you warm it back up—and you

save energy while the house is at a lower temperature.

Investing in a thermostat that automatically lowers the temperature at times when you won't be home or when your family is sleeping, the research shows, will save you money in the long run.

An automatic set-back thermostat will never forget to lower the temperature when it's supposed to. Most units cost from \$30 to \$100 and pay for themselves in energy savings within four years.

Before buying a set-back thermostat, make sure it will be compatible with your home's wiring.

If you have a heat pump and want to install an automatic set-back thermostat, you'll need to buy one that's designed specifically for heat pumps. Lowering the thermostat of a heat pump can, indeed, cause it to operate

inefficiently, which cancels out any savings. Choosing a moderate setting on a heat pump and leaving it there all day and night is the best way to save money.

TAKE WINTER BY STORM

It's hard to predict the weather, but it's easy to prepare for it. Plan ahead for power outages that can accompany winter storms.

- Listen to weather forecasts every day so you'll know when high winds or ice/snow are on the way. That kind of winter weather is most likely to topple power lines and leave you temporarily in the dark (and cold!).

- Prepare an outage kit that contains: a battery-powered radio, fresh batteries, a flashlight, candles, matches, a wind-up clock, bottled water, paper plates and plastic utensils.

- Keep a stock of canned food in your cupboard, along with a manual can opener. Consider buying a camp stove and fuel that you can use (outdoors only, please) if you can't cook on your electric stove.

- Tape your electric cooperative's phone number onto your refrigerator so it will be handy when it's time to report an outage.

- Pile a few extra blankets and sweaters together so you can easily find them if the heat goes off. To stay warm, dress in layers.

- Teach children to stay away from fallen power lines. They could be energized and dangerous, even if the power is out.

Just in case the weather doesn't spare your neighborhood from outages this winter, it's better to be prepared than to shiver in the dark.

BUY THE RIGHT FIRE EXTINGUISHER FOR THE JOB

It's important to keep a fire extinguisher in the kitchen. It's also important to buy the right kind for the type of fire it's likely to fight.

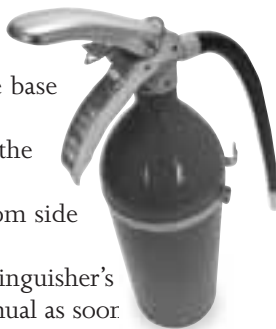
In fact, using the wrong kind of fire extinguisher can be worthless or even make the fire worse.

The most common extinguishers are suitable for fires started by a variety of materials and bear some combination of the letters A, B and C.

Class A extinguishers are for fires involving wood, paper, plastic, cardboard and some fuels. Class B extinguishers fight fires started by liquid fuels, such as gasoline, kerosene, grease and oil. Use class C extinguishers on fires involving electrical equipment.

To operate a fire extinguisher, remember the acronym PASS:

- **PULL** out the pin.
- **AIM** at the base of the fire.
- **SQUEEZE** the handle.
- **SWEEP** from side to side.



Read the extinguisher's instruction manual as soon as you bring it home from the store. It's too late to learn how to operate the extinguisher when there's already a fire in the kitchen.

Buy metal—not plastic—fire extinguishers from National Association of Fire Equipment Distributors member dealers. Your local fire department can help you choose the right kind for your home.

CLEAN THE TURKEY, CLEAN THE OVEN

More fires occur between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day than at any other time of the year—and half of them start in the kitchen.

One easy way to prevent a kitchen fire while you're counting your blessings this Thanksgiving is to clean your oven before you start baking that bird.

OK, so it's not that easy.

If you don't have a continuous-

cleaning or self-cleaning oven, pull on your rubber gloves and get ready to scrub. Open a window to ventilate the kitchen, and follow the directions on the oven cleaner.

Many oven cleaners work overnight. Spray the oven before you go to bed. After six to eight hours, wipe the oven clean, using as much elbow grease as you need.

Don't forget to clean the inside of the oven door. Scrub it with a cleanser and spray window cleaner on the oven window.

Rinse all signs of the cleansers from the oven; you don't want any residue in the oven when you fire it up to roast your Thanksgiving turkey.

Most new ovens are equipped with a continuous-clean mode. If you're in the market for a new appliance, do yourself a favor and buy

one that cleans itself.

Still, it's important to maintain the cleanliness of the oven's interior—even if the appliance is self-cleaning. Here are some suggestions:

- Wipe up all spills as they happen before they get baked on.

- To save on cleanup time when you know you are cooking something that could overflow, cover the bottom of the oven with aluminum foil or place a cookie sheet on the lowest rack. The foil should not touch the electric element.

- Sponge the outside of the oven door and the stove top each time you use it.

- Soak burner racks in warm, soapy water.

- Clean your oven once a month so it's not such a chore the next time you do it!

A clean oven is a healthy oven. Excessive spills can cause smoke, offensive fumes and even fires.



WARNING LABELS RANGE FROM CRITICAL TO CORNY

Appliances come with lots of useful safety instructions—and some really funny ones.

A Lucent Technologies telephone instruction manual tells owners to “dial the desired number” if they wish to make a call.

Some Nintendo GameCube manuals warn users not to put their heads inside the machine because they might get injured.

A few air conditioner manufacturers strongly urge owners not to drop their units out of windows.

A warning label on a Dremel electric rotary tool reminds people the device was not designed to be used as a dental drill.

The label on a Komatsu floodlight says, “This floodlight is capable of illuminating large areas, even in the dark.”

An RCA remote control warning sticker says the device is “not dishwasher safe.”

So, when you buy new appliances, check out the warning labels. They could make your day by making you laugh.

And, of course, they could save your life.



— — —
YOUR LOCAL

ELECTRIC

COOPERATIVE

WILL BE CLOSED

THURSDAY AND FRIDAY,

NOVEMBER 25 & 26,

IN OBSERVANCE OF

THANKSGIVING.
— — —

Freethinkers on the Texas Frontier

BY IRA KENNEDY

The Texas frontier of the 1840s would seem an unlikely place to find utopian communes with a passion for literature, philosophy, music and Latin. But exist they did, though the tale begins with two men who cared little for such refinements.

Henry Francis Fisher and Burchard Miller received a land grant located between the Llano and San Saba rivers from the Republic of Texas in 1842. The contract stipulated that Fisher and Miller colonize the area by 1847 or forfeit their claim. The two men were nothing if not resourceful. In 1844 they convinced the Verein, or Society

bach wrote. "The territory set aside for settlement was more than 300 miles from the coast, more than 150 miles outside of all settlements, and in the undisturbed possession of hostile Indians. The government had promised no aid to take it out of the hands of the Indians. It had to be conquered—by force or by treaty."

With the deadline fast approaching, John Meusebach accomplished the impossible. In January 1847, surrounded by a few thousand Comanches, Meusebach entered their encampment along the banks of the San Saba River and ordered his small

New England journalist Frederick Law Olmsted toured the state in 1854 and subsequently wrote *A Journey Through Texas*. On his way to Fredericksburg, Olmsted visited Sisterdale, also known as the Latin Settlement due to the desire of residents in the community to make Latin their official language.

Olmsted was entranced with the civilized society he found in this wild land. He wrote that his host would rather teach his sons self-reliance than to be dependent on others, and that a primitive education learned free from prejudice and pre-formed conclusions could prove to be far more valuable than any formal training.

"After supper," Olmsted recalled, "there were numerous accessions of neighbors, and we passed a merry and most interesting evening. There was waltzing, to the tones of a fine piano, and music of the highest sort, classic and patriotic."

But due to the remote location of the settlements, their inexperience as pioneers and the withdrawal of all financial support from the Verein (on which they were totally dependent), the communes failed after the first year. Among the first settlements in the Fisher-Miller Grant, only Castell remains today, although it was moved to the south bank of the Llano River.

Meusebach and his wife settled in Loyal Valley between Castell and Fredericksburg and, being Freethinkers at heart, frequently visited their friends who had helped form the communities of Sisterdale, Boerne and Comfort, where they shared their fondness for the arts, sciences and Latin.

Meusebach built a trellis-shaded structure for bathing out of native stone and cement with a fresh coating of whitewash. After bathing, Meusebach would recite verses in Latin. His tombstone carries the Latin inscription *Tenax Propositi—Texas Forever*.

Ira Kennedy has been an artist, writer and photographer for more than 30 years. He lives in Llano.



John Meusebach (right) and a map of the Fisher-Miller Grant purchased by the Society for the Protection of German Immigrants.

for the Protection of German Immigrants in Texas, to fork over \$9,000 for land that cost them nothing. Apart from retaining a portion of the property and other financial considerations, Fisher and Miller would receive an additional \$14,000 if the Germans failed to colonize the grant. What the two men kept to themselves was the fact that the land was occupied by hostile Comanche Indians and had been for 150 years.

Fisher and Miller probably thought the \$14,000 was as good as made. But they didn't envision the energy and determination of John Meusebach, founder of Fredericksburg (May 1846), whose assessment of the situation was clear. "With the buying of that grant the doom of the [immigration] company was sealed," Meuse-

party, numbering less than 50 souls, to discharge their guns into the air, leaving them defenseless. This display of courage and peaceful intent inspired the Comanches to sign a treaty and induct Meusebach into the tribe. Now all that remained was to occupy the grant.

An elite group of young professional men from Germany's cultured classes, known as the "The Society of Forty," established the communes of Castell, Schoenburg, Bettina and Leiningen in 1847 on the north bank of the Llano River—barely inside the land grant. More commonly referred to as the Freethinkers, these early settlers attempted to establish cooperative communities based on self-reliance, brotherly love and good will, which they believed could replace civil law.

Toasters Are For Toast

Well, now we know why D-Wayne is such a dumb bunny. He got it from his momma! Doesn't she know that you should never put anything gooey, like cheese, in your toaster? What a stinky mess that would make. If it burns, that could easily start a fire. You know how dangerous and destructive a fire in your home could be. Let's see: stinky, messy, dangerous; it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that this is a no-no, does it?

And what about sticking anything metal, like D-Wayne's momma's toaster-tongs, right into the toaster? No way! It could be more dangerous than putting gooey stuff in one. Here's why: Metal is an excellent conductor of electricity. If you're holding a metal object, like tongs or any other kitchen utensil, and you stick it into the appliance (a toaster, in this case), you could get zapped by electricity. And electricity can shock or burn you, or even cause death! Nope, we'd say D-Wayne's momma has got to be slower than a herd of turtles when it comes to using her head and playing it safe.

While we're talking about the dangers of sticking weird things into an electric toaster, we'd like to remind you that it's always a good idea for your parents to read the instructions for any electric appliance before you use it for the first time.

Never ever stick anything except a plug into an electric outlet. And never plug more than two plugs into an outlet at a time. That's all they're designed for. More than two plugs could overload the circuit and cause even worse problems than D-Wayne's momma's toaster. Use your head and stay 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.



Cutting a Swath of History

A one-man, one-machine reenactment of the 1944 Harvest Brigade, a colossal effort that helped feed America during World War II. Five hundred of the first self-propelled Massey-Harris combines cut 1,019,500 acres from Texas to Canada.

Lenwood G. Holo, a suntanned mechanic from Eau Claire, Wisconsin, started the cherry-red combine as smooth as glass. He drove it into a wheat field outside Tulia as farmers and reporters jogged before the machine into the thigh-high grain.

This was no ordinary wheat harvest. Holo and his fully renovated Massey-Harris No. 21A combine were launching their one-man, one-machine reenactment of the 1944 Harvest Brigade, a colossal effort that helped feed America during World War II.

The scene could have been 1944 except that farmers in straw hats and overalls were pointing digital cameras and video recorders at the combine as it lumbered forward. Intently looking into his viewfinder, one fellow with a white moustache held a leash as well as a camera. Every now and then a fluffy white tail would bob and weave near him. It was his shih tzu, Bubba, hopping merrily below sightline in the waving grain.

The gathering consisted of about 20 people and an assortment of trucks, plus a modern-day John Deere 9600. The John Deere loomed over the smaller machine, but there was no question that the vintage Massey-Harris—the first self-propelled combine—was the star of the show. Before this innovation, horses or tractors pulled threshers. An efficient self-propelled combine came just in time to help the war effort.

Although defense contractors had first claim on critical materials such as steel, feeding the troops and the home folks was also a major priority. But each manufacturer of farm equipment was limited to only 20 percent of its total sales for 1940 or 1941, whichever was larger. The bigger manufacturers were occupied with munitions and combat equipment and didn't contest their production limitation, but smaller companies had no such war contracts and wanted to get behind the war effort. Joe Tucker, vice president and sales manager of Massey-Harris, figured out a way for smaller manufacturers to produce more than their allotted quota of harvesters.

Authorities permitted Massey-Harris to build 500 more than the company's quota of harvesters for 1944. In exchange, Massey-Harris agreed to sell the combines only to experienced operators who would take delivery at the southern edge of the grain belt. Each operator had to commit to harvest at least 2,000 acres. The U.S. War Food Administration set a goal to harvest 1 billion bushels of wheat.

The operators, known as the "Harvest Brigade," cut a swath across the West and the Great Plains and reached Canada by September 1944. According to *Farm Collector* magazine, the 500 Massey-Harris combines cut 1,019,500 acres yielding more than 25 million bushels of grain, while saving 333,000 man-hours and 500,000 gallons of fuel.

This massive effort on the home front is all but forgotten today. That's why Holo, 66, decided to dedicate 2004—the 60th anniversary of the Harvest Brigade—to reminding the agricultural community of their history. It was only natural for Holo to begin his reenactment in Tulia, in the Texas Panhandle, because the original Harvest Brigade originated there. In addition, Tulia was the first home of the U.S. Custom Harvesters, a professional association.



Swisher Electric Cooperative enthusiastically sponsored his visit. Area residents ended up contributing a 1944 grain deflector to replace one that had broken on the trip south and also the authentic running lights that Holo hadn't been able to find.

"I think Holo's stop in Tulia was of interest to many of our co-op members. Many of them do their own harvesting or they hire custom harvesters," said Mike Ferguson, member services advisor for Swisher EC.

For the sake of comparison, Delwin Adams of Tulia drove his modern John Deere 9600 next to the old combine after its ceremonial harvest in Tulia. The Massey-Harris 21A looked like a pretty toy. The vintage machine holds about four to five bushels of wheat, compared to modern harvesters that hold up to 200 bushels. The 21A cost approximately \$3,500 in 1946, compared to the modern behemoth with driver's cabin, air conditioning and two bucket seats, for a sticker price of \$300,000 to \$500,000 (with all the bells and whistles).

"Be thankful you're here instead of then," commented one farmer who shook his head at the pretty but comparatively puny '40s thresher.

Holo began his quest to restore a vintage harvester—using parts from as many models as necessary—in fall 2001. His first find was a No. 21 in Kindred, North Dakota. It was good for some parts. Next he came across a 1947 No. 21 in Peever, South Dakota, and bought it for its engine. Another model from South Dakota disintegrated as he washed it. Finally, he located a 1949 No. 21A in Martel, Nebraska. Restoration work started in May 2002.

Holo raised money from Massey-Ferguson, the U.S. Custom Harvesters and many small agricultural businesses to finance his one-man tour of the grain belt. He used a '40-something Dodge to pull the combine south, stopping along the way at farm equipment franchisers and parts suppliers to show off his immaculately groomed machine and tell passersby about the Harvest Brigade.

The first official harvest took place in Tulia June 1, 2004. During the three-month return trip Holo posted occasional updates on his "Custom Combine Tribute" website (<http://customcombinetribute.tripod.com>). His last official stop was in Langdon, North Dakota, but he was still on the road in early September.

Our update comes from Judy Horsch of Andale, Kansas. Somewhere along the line, Horsch heard about Holo's adventure and she was electrified. Her grandfather was Joe Tucker, the sales genius who figured out how to get the bonus combines built in 1944. Horsch had her grandfather's papers but she had never studied them. She met Holo at various stops along his route (Garden City, Kansas; Grand Island, Nebraska; Watertown, South Dakota; and Elixir, Minnesota), and mined him for information about the Harvest Brigade. Soon she became his unofficial spokeswoman, returning Holo's telephone calls as he kept on truckin' in early September.

"The combine has performed flawlessly, and the old Dodge truck is doing fine," she says. Holo was last heard from as he headed toward the Le Sueur County Power Show in Minnesota.

Back in June in the Tulia wheat field, Holo confessed, "I

Holo's Route From Texas to Canada



was questioning my sanity a few times when I left Nebraska with the old truck. But I'm the sort of person who does what he sets out to do."

Holo initially said he would drive the route of the World War II combines only once, but Horsch said he is now considering a repeat performance.

Kaye Northcott is editor of Texas Co-op Power.

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



Cooper's Mail Order BBQ

"Voted #1 Texas BBQ Joint" by the *Texas Highways* Reader Poll. *Ride Texas* named Cooper's #1 "Best in Texas Road Food & Coffee." Now you can get the great taste of Texas delivered to your door! Corporate discounts available.

1-877-533-5553
www.coopersbbq.com



Texas Trivets™

Our Texas-shaped trivets are made of Corian® solid surface. They're non-porous and easily maintained. Use as a cutting board, serving dish, cold plate, conversation piece and more. Excellent gift! \$24.95 plus S/H.

(325) 829-8977
trivets@kaytongroup.com



Texas State Capitol 2004 Ornament

Ninth in the series, this collectable ornament depicts the impressive interior dome of the Texas capitol rotunda, reflecting the highly detailed coffering surrounding the beloved Lone Star. The cost is \$16.00 (plus S&H).

1-888-678-5556
www.TexasCapitolGiftshop.com



Laura's Cheesecakes The Sampler

Featuring three slices each of six fabulous flavors, the sampler is the ultimate gift for the discriminating cheesecake connoisseur. Triple chocolate delight, apple streusel, classic, raspberry, turtle & marble brownie swirl. Serves 18. \$39.95

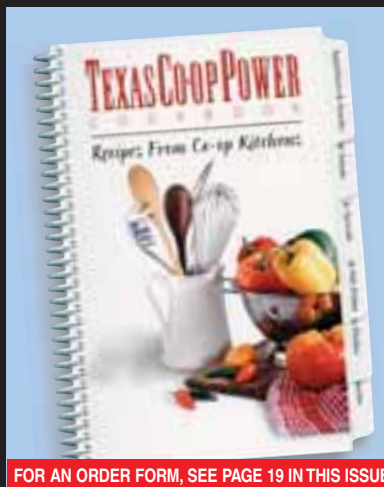
1-800-252-8727
www.laurascheesecakes.com



Thompson Rio Pride Citrus Groves

Give a gift everyone will enjoy this holiday season. Our tree-ripened, hand-picked & packed oranges and grapefruit are the sweetest in the world! Mention ad for discount. (Citrus trees available.)

1-800-864-7728
www.RioPride.com



Texas Co-op Power Cookbook

Is there a cook in your family? Give them a copy of the *Texas Co-op Power Cookbook: Recipes From Co-op Kitchens* and leave the wrapping to us (for orders placed by November 19).

(512) 486-6247
www.texascooppower.com

FOR AN ORDER FORM, SEE PAGE 19 IN THIS ISSUE.



Sacandaga Herbalist 'Go Texan' Skincare

Rejuvenating herbal skin creams blend Texas aloe vera & concentrated herbal extracts. Dr. Wendy's Wrinkle Warrior is a marvelous moisturizer & Balm Squad is an all-purpose healing salve. \$10 ea.

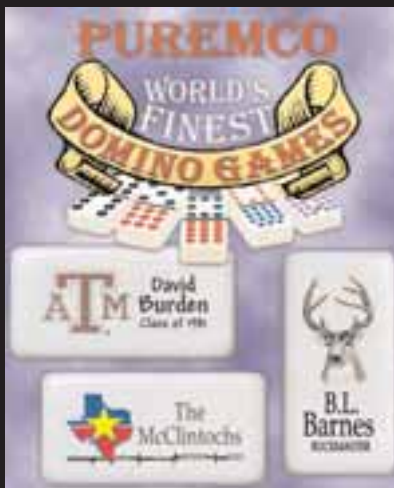
1-866-264-4932
www.WendyTheHerbalist.com



Wildseed Farms Market Center

A spectacular experience with Mother Nature & a shopping paradise await you just minutes east of Fredericksburg! Wildflower seeds, live plants, beautiful gifts, ladies' apparel, specialty foods & more!

1-800-848-0078
www.wildseedfarms.com



Puremco Texan to the Bones®

The fun gifts that all Texans love! Personalized dominoes and the hot games of Chickenfoot®, PIP™, Mexican Train, Spinner®, Moon, 42, CARDominoes®, Number Dominoes® and accessories. Free catalog.

1-800-725-7060
www.dominoes.com



Texas Ruby Red & Rio Grapefruit!

Direct from the Rio Grande Valley. A gift in good taste or treat for yourself. Sweet Valley oranges, 1015 onions, smoked meats, jellies, nuts, vine-ripened tomatoes, homemade chocolates & coffees.

1-800-580-1900
www.crockettfarms.com



TexasInABox.com Ships Texas

Our mouthwatering Texas entrées, complete meals, and unique Texas gift baskets always delight lovers of Texas, no matter where they live! Free shipping – order for the holidays now!

1-877-987-3324
www.texasinabox.com



West Pecan Farm

We grow and sell our own pecans! We offer the best quality and variety of paper shell pecans. Grown in the Red River Valley, an area ideal for growing pecans. Free shipping on orders over \$35.

1-866-500-8904
www.westpecan.com



Bear Creek Smokehouse

Offering traditional smokehouse favorites to Texans (and those who wish they were) for more than 60 years. We do the work and you get the applause! Our meat is slowly cured and smoked over hickory embers from wood cut right here on our farm, for irresistible flavor.

1-800-950-BEAR
www.bearcreeksmokehouse.com



Texas Co-op Power Magazine

Do you have a friend or loved one who doesn't receive *Texas Co-op Power* magazine? Give them a gift subscription for only \$15 a year. For details, give us a call, or see our ad on page 39.

(512) 486-6247
www.texascooppower.com

Let's Party!

A party happens when we celebrate something—a birthday, anniversary, promotion, graduation, holiday or some other special event. Sometimes the best parties happen almost spontaneously, when we impulsively invite friends or family over for a barbecue or—better yet—when friends or family invite us over for a last-minute get-together. When this happens, I check the refrigerator and pantry to see what I can whip up in a hurry to take along to a last-minute party. There's always fruit or nuts or that reliable party standby, chips and dips. For something quick and "homemade," I like to prepare deviled eggs. If all the ingredients are handy, they can be ready to go into the refrigerator or cooler in less than 30 minutes!

Here's a new recipe for deviled eggs with a little more "zip" than usual from the folks at the American Egg Board, followed by tips for cooking

and peeling hard-cooked eggs, as well as improving their appearance.

Firecracker Deviled Eggs

6 hard-cooked eggs
1/3 cup mild salsa
3 tablespoons reduced-fat sour cream
3 tablespoons minced green onions
1 tablespoon chopped black olives
1 teaspoon lemon juice
Green onions, red pepper strips or parsley, optional

Cut eggs in half lengthwise. Remove yolks and set whites aside. In small bowl, mash yolks with fork. Stir in remaining ingredients until well-blended. Refill whites, using one heaping tablespoon yolk mixture for each egg half. Chill to blend flavors. Garnish with green onions, red pepper strips or parsley, if desired.

Serving size: 1 egg. Per serving: 47 calories, 3 grams protein, 3 grams fat, 1 gram carbohydrates, 112 milligrams sodium, 108 grams cholesterol

Hard-Cooked Eggs

1. Place eggs in single layer in saucepan. Add enough tap water to come at least 1 inch above eggs.

2. Cover. Quickly bring just to boiling. Turn off heat.

3. If necessary, remove pan from burner to prevent further boiling. Let eggs stand, covered, in the hot water about 12 minutes for medium eggs (15 minutes for large, 18 for extra large).

4. Immediately run cold water over eggs or place them in ice water until completely cooled.

5. To remove shell, crack it by tapping gently all over.

6. Roll egg between hands to loosen shell.

7. Peel, starting at large end. Hold egg under cold running water or dip in bowl of water to help ease off shell.

To avoid a harmless, but unsightly, greenish ring around hard-cooked yolks, avoid overcooking, and cool the eggs quickly after cooking by running cold water over them or placing them in ice water (not standing water) until they've completely cooled. The ring is caused by sulfur and iron compounds naturally reacting at the surface of the yolk. It's usually brought on by overcooking or a high amount of iron in the cooking water. Once the eggs have cooled, you can refrigerate them in their shells until use.

Deviled Egg Shortcut

A great shortcut for preparing deviled eggs comes from Karen Nejtek, TCP's production coordinator. She and her two very active sons like to take deviled eggs along on their weekend camping and fishing trips, but she doesn't like the hassle of transporting those slippery snacks or the messy clean-up. Karen, with her usual ingenuity, came up with a perfect solution—whether you're camping or in your own kitchen.

After cooking, peeling and halving the eggs, place the yolks with remaining ingredients of your choice (mayonnaise, relish, etc.) into a large, zippered plastic bag. Zip the bag tightly closed and knead the contents until thoroughly mixed. Refrigerate until ready to use. With scissors, snip off a corner of the bag, and then squeeze the yolk mixture into the egg halves.



February's recipe contest subject is Brownies and Bars. Quick to make, brownies and bars are great for after-school snacks or an easy dessert. Please send your recipes for Brownies and Bars by November 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 winning recipe this month is Crawfish Cornbread, submitted by Panola-Harrison EC member Claire Evans. Claire says, "So many times, we are invited to parties during the holiday season, and I don't want to take the usual chicken casserole dish. Crawfish Cornbread is an unusual holiday offering, but I've found that once it is tasted, everyone wants the recipe. Even people who don't especially like crawfish love this casserole. I double this recipe to take to a party or for a family dinner." She 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.

Crawfish Cornbread

2 eggs, beaten
1 package cornbread mix, preferably Pioneer
8 ounces shredded Cheddar cheese
1 can cream style corn
1/2 small onion, chopped
4-6 jalapeños, chopped
1/4 cup canola oil
1 pound pack crawfish tails

Pour all in an 8x8-inch pan, stir well, and bake at 350 degrees for 40 minutes or until center is set. Serves 9.

Serving size: 1 square. Per serving: 273 calories, 16 grams protein, 17 grams fat, 13 grams carbohydrates, 380 milligrams sodium, 122 milligrams cholesterol



Black-Eyed Pea Dip

3 cans black-eyed peas, drained
2 tablespoons margarine
Chopped jalapeños to taste (I use 1/4 cup)
1/2 cup chopped onions
Garlic powder to taste
2 cups shredded sharp American cheese
1 can chopped green chilies

Mix in crock pot. Turn on high to melt. Turn to low to simmer and serve. Makes a crock pot about half full. Double for a large crowd. Serve with corn chips. Serves 10-12.

Serving size: 1/2 cup. Per serving: 233 calories, 14 grams protein, 8 grams fat, 27 grams carbohydrates, 299 milligrams sodium, 18 milligrams cholesterol

PAT RICE, Central Texas EC

Ann's Quick Chocolate Turtles

144 small pecan halves
36 caramels
2/3 cup chocolate chips
2/3 cup white chocolate chips

Arrange pecans in groups of 4 on greased baking sheet. Place a caramel on each cluster. Bake at 325 for 6-8 minutes. Do not let caramel melt completely. Flatten caramel over pecans with buttered spatula. Place on

wax paper. Melt chocolate chips and white chips in top of double boiler or in microwave. Swirl over turtles. Let stand until set. Makes 3 dozen.

Serving size: 1 turtle. Per serving: 115 calories, 1 gram protein, 7 grams fat, 13 grams carbohydrates, 29 milligrams sodium, 1 milligram cholesterol

ANN INGRAM, Sherman

Vegetable Dip

1 cup low-fat mayonnaise
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon paprika
2 tablespoons instant minced onion
1/2 tablespoon chopped chives
1/2 teaspoon curry powder
1/2 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
1 container (8 ounces) fat-free sour cream
Green onions, chopped (optional)

Combine all ingredients except green onions; mix well and chill. Garnish with green onions and serve with fresh vegetables. Serves 8-10.

Serving size: 1/4 cup. Per serving: 99 calories, 2 grams protein, 8 grams fat, 5 grams carbohydrates, 297 milligrams sodium, 13 milligrams cholesterol

SHARON CHILDERS, Comanche EC

AROUND TEXAS

November

2. Brush Country Music Jamboree, **Three Rivers**, (361) 786-3334
5. Fish Fry, K of C scholarship fundraiser, **Dripping Springs**, (512) 894-4470
- 5-6. Christmas Bazaar, **Lometa**, (512) 752-3363
- 5-7. Fall Festival of Roses, **Independence**, (979) 836-5548
- 5-7. Old Mill Trade Days, **Post**, (806) 495-3529 or www.oldmilltradedays.com
6. Market Day, **Wimberley**, (512) 847-2201
6. Ole Time Music, **Pearl**, (254) 865-6013
6. North Texas Skywatch Amateur Astronomer's Star Party, **Mineral Wells**, (940) 328-1171
6. Arts & Crafts Day, **Kyle**, (512) 396-2054
6. Cove Country Opry, **Copperas Cove**, (254) 547-5966 or www.covecountryopry.com
6. Biggest Little Fair in Texas, VFD benefit, **Bloomburg**, (903) 728-5597

6. Victorian Gala, **Calvert**, (979) 364-2935 or www.calverttx.com
6. Mistletoe & Holly Arts & Crafts Show, **Childress**, (940) 937-2567
6. Market Day, **Dripping Springs**, (512) 858-9912
6. Cash Country Opry, **Greenville**, (903) 461-0555 or cashopry@argontech.net
6. Art Show & Sale, **Tuleta**, (361) 375-2558
- 6-7. Kiwanis Trade Days, **Bonham**, (903) 640-1972
- 6-7. Live Oaks & Dead Folks Cemetery Tour, **Columbus**, (979) 732-3392
- 6-7. Quilt Guild Show, **Port Lavaca**, (361) 785-6081 or www.community.victoriaadvocate.com
- 6-7. Civil War Reenactment, **Hemphill**, (409) 787-4953
- 6-7. Flamin' Hot Car Show, **Beaumont**, (409) 880-3927
7. Corsicana Opry, **Corsicana**, (903) 872-8226
7. American Legion Post 93 Annual Fundraiser, **Mission**, (956) 585-1167

- 10-14. Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival, **Harlingen**, 1-800-531-7346 or www.rgvbirdfest.com
11. Veterans Day Parade, **San Marcos**, (512) 392-2001 or www.sanmarcoscharms.com
- 12-13. Books on the Bosque, book festival, **Clifton**, (254) 675-3724 or www.bosqueconservatory.com
- 12-13. Festival of Trees, **Waxahachie**, (972) 93-TEACH
- 12-13. Community Fall Bazaar, **Lone Camp**, (940) 659-2141
- 12-14. Trade Days, **Livingston**, (936) 327-3656 or www.cityoflivingston-tx.com/tradedays
- 12-14. Trade Days, **McKinney**, (972) 562-5466 or www.tmttd.com
- 12-14, 26-28. Chicken House Flea Market, **Stephenville**, (254) 968-0888
- 12-14, 26-28. Flea Market Days, **Jewett**, (936) 348-5475

FESTIVAL OF THE MONTH BY JIM GRAMON

Amarillo Farm and Ranch Show: November 30–December 2, 2004

The holiday season is the slow time of the year for festivals, as other types of events take over our schedules. Things have also quieted down on most farms and ranches in Texas. It is during this time that farmers and ranchers look toward spring, making plans for crops, herds and equipment they might need. The Farm and Ranch Show in Amarillo, one of the largest in the nation, is a great place to get new ideas for next season.

Many folks have never stopped to consider how products magically appear in their local grocery store. Most items originated on a farm or ranch, where a great deal of skill and lots of hard work are needed to grow tons of safe, nutritious produce every year.

I was fortunate to have grown up in a couple of rural Texas communities, with wonderful memories of time spent on Uncle James' ranch between Cumby and Commerce. Farmers and

ranchers are some of the hardest-working folks you will ever meet. Surprisingly, they are also some of the biggest gamblers, betting their livelihood every year against the risk of bad weather and disease. It's not an occupation for the faint-hearted.

The Amarillo Farm and Ranch Show provides an opportunity for over 30,000 visitors to see the newest products and equip-

ment available from more than 700 exhibitors, with even more educational opportunities at the farm/ranch symposium. These programs are designed to help producers stay abreast of current production practices, trends and technologies.

Even if you aren't a farmer, this show is very interesting and informative. There are presentations regarding the safest techniques for the use of our valuable natural resources, especially water conservation. Many of the earliest conservationists were people who made their living off the land.

Events are held at the Amarillo Civic Center, located at 3rd and Buchanan. For more info, call (800) 827-8009 or (806) 378-4297, or visit www.amarillo-chamber.org, www.farmshows.com, or www.visitamarillotx.com.

P.S. While you are in the Amarillo area contemplating natural resources, you might want to take the time to visit the majestic Palo Duro Canyon State Park, which is nearby.

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



The Amarillo Farm and Ranch Show provides a hands-on look at the latest farm equipment and products.

13. Market Days, **Georgetown**, (512) 868-8675 or www.discovergeorgetowntx.com
13. Art & Craft Show, **Burnet**, (512) 756-0834
13. Lone Star Equine Rescue Horse Festival, **Brenham**, www.lser.org
13. Market Days, **Georgetown**, (512) 868-8675
13. Holiday Craft Fair, **Dayton**, (936) 258-8231
13. Community Craft and Trade Day, **El Campo**, (979) 543-3510
13. Soap-Making Demonstration, **West Columbia**, (979) 345-4656
13. Craft and Gift Bazaar, **Boerne**, (830) 249-2565
13. Mu Tau Arts & Craft Festival, **Ennis**, (903) 878-5310
13. Market Trail Days, **Castroville**, (830) 741-3841
13. Hunter Appreciation Dinner, **Childress**, (940) 937-2567
13. Wild Game Dinner, **Mason**, (325) 347-5758 or www.masontxcoc.com
13. Heritage Syrup Festival, **Henderson**, (903) 657-4303 or 657-2119
13. Trade Days, **Conroe**, (936) 756-5282 or www.conroedowntown.com
- 13-14. Arts & Crafts Fall Show, **Kingsland**, (325) 388-6159 or www.kingslandcrafts.com
- 13-14. Pecan Fest, **Seguin**, (830) 379-6382
14. Saddle & Buckle Play Day, **Wills Point**, (903) 848-7777
19. Country Opry, **Victoria**, (361) 552-9347
- 19-20. Settlers Day Celebration, **Milam**, (409) 625-3155
- 19-20. Hill Country Home for the Holidays, **Wimberley**, (512) 847-6260
- 19-21. Trade Days, **Fredericksburg**, (830) 990-4900 or www.fbgtradedays.com
- 19-21. Trade Days on the Avenue, **Port Neches**, (409) 722-4023
20. Holiday Market & Trade Day, **Wellborn**, (979) 690-0613
20. Pineywoods Pickin' Parlor Concert, **Mineola**, (903) 569-8037 or www.pineywoodspickinparlor.com
20. Indian Springs VFD Chili Cook-Off, between **Livingston** & **Woodville**, (936) 327-3544 or 563-4420
20. Lord's Acre Dinner & Auction, **Mulberry Canyon**, (325) 846-4422
20. Night Parade, Art & Craft Show, **Hondo**, (830) 426-3037
20. When Friends Get Together Craft Show, **Rocky Branch**, (903) 897-5920
20. Christmas in Crockett, **Crockett**, (936) 544-2358 or www.crockettareachamber.org
20. Aviation Art Show, **Castroville**, (830) 931-9215
20. Hometown Holidays, downtown lighting, **Brenham**, 1-888-273-6426
20. Macaroni Fest, **Victoria**, (361) 573-5277
20. Nacogdoches Lights Up Christmas, **Nacogdoches**, 1-888-OLDEST-TOWN
20. Little Lights Festival, **Kountze**, (409) 246-5155
20. Benefit Auction, **Winnsboro**, (903) 342-3666 or www.winnsboro.com
- 20-21. Old Town Harvest Festival, **Pasadena**,

- (713) 475-2632
- 20-21. Holiday Heritage Home Tour, **Brenham**, (979) 836-1690
25. Thanksgiving Festival, **Pep**, (806) 933-4696
26. Lighting of the Star on Gail Mountain, **Gail**, (806) 756-4391
- 26-27. Hill Country Christmas Festival, **Fredericksburg**, (830) 997-5655
- 26-27. Stars in the Village, 1800s Christmas decorations, **Gonzales**, (830) 672-2157
- 26-28. Homestead Heritage Craft & Children's Fair, **Elm Mott**, (254) 829-2981 or www.homesteadheritage.com
- 26-28. Texian Thanksgiving Weekend, **Fredericksburg**, (830) 997-6523
27. Tree Lighting & Trail of Lights, **Wimberley**, (512) 847-6969 or www.emilyann.org
27. Light Up Our Town Festivities, **Mason**, (325) 347-5758 or www.masontxcoc.com
27. Christmas on the Square, **Leakey**, (830) 232-5222 or www.friocanyonchamber.com
27. Trade Day, **Coldspring**, (936) 653-2009
27. Christmas Market, **Hico**, 1-800-361-HICO
27. Bluegrass Show, **Quitman**, (903) 763-4411 or www.quitman.com
27. Christmas in Olde Ballinger, **Ballinger**, (325) 365-2333 or www.ballingertx.org
27. Downtown Wassail Fest, **Nacogdoches**, 1-888-OLDEST-TOWN or www.nineflagsfestival.com
27. Old Time Christmas, **Bertram**, (512) 355-2197
27. Christmas in the Park, **Kirbyville**, (409) 423-1599 or www.kirbyville.org
27. Strolling the Square, library benefit, **Mason**, (325) 347-6472
29. Centennial Celebration Ceremony, **Conroe**, (936) 760-4608 or www.cityofconroe.org
30. Country Christmas, **Liberty-Dayton**, (936) 336-5736

December

1. Tree Lighting Ceremony, **Kyle**, (512) 268-5341
- 2-4. Sights & Sounds of Christmas, **San Marcos**, (512) 393-8430
3. Country Christmas, **De Leon**, (254) 893-2083
- 3-4. Market Days, Christmas Express, Christmas Ball, **Rockdale**, (512) 446-2030
- 3-4. Christmas in **Goliad**, (361) 645-8767
- 3-4. Christmas Festival and Chili Cook-Off, **Brookshire**, (281) 375-5050 or www.cityofbrookshire.com



November is the perfect time to visit flea markets across the state to pick up collectable Christmas gifts.

- 3-5. Weihnachten, Christmas festival/market, **Fredericksburg**, 1-888-997-3600 or www.fredericksburg-texas.com
4. Christmas Ball, **Rockdale**, (512) 446-2030
4. Ole Time Music, **Pearl**, (254) 865-6013
4. Christmas Memories Parade, **Paris**, (903) 785-7971 or www.rvvfair.org
4. Cove Country Opry, **Copperas Cove**, (254) 547-5966 or www.covecountryopry.com
4. Christmas Open House, **West Columbia**, (979) 345-4656
4. Winter Wonderland, **Beaumont**, (409) 838-6581
4. Market Day, **Wimberley**, (512) 847-2201
4. Corsicana Opry, **Corsicana**, (904) 872-8226
4. Christmas Parade & Bazaar, **Avery**, (903) 684-3562 or (903) 684-3825
4. A Pioneer Christmas, **Independence**, 1-888-BRENNHAM
4. Xmas Cruise for Kids Open Car Show, **Kerrville**, (830) 634-2698
4. Old Fashion Christmas, **Castroville**, 1-800-778-6775 or www.castroville.com
4. Holiday Coin Show, **Tuleta**, (361) 375-2558
4. Christmas Tour of Homes, **Buna**, (409) 994-5586
- 4-5. Budafest, 25th anniversary, **Buda**, (512) 694-3413
- 4-5. Christmas Tour of Homes, **Hamilton**, (254) 386-3529
- 4-5. Historic Homes Tour, **Gonzales**, 1-888-672-1095
5. Christmas Tour of Homes, **Jacksboro**, (940) 567-2636
5. Polka Fest, **Ellinger**, (979) 378-2311

Join Our Readers on the Farm

We hoped “On the Farm” would be a popular topic for our Texas Co-op Power shutterbugs—and we were right. Entries overflowed our Focus in-box, so we had to commandeer a big cardboard box to hold the bulk of the submissions. Our judges had a wonderful time viewing life on the farm through our readers’ eyes.

The topic for January is “First Car.” Send photos of that special vehicle (car or truck)—with your name, address, daytime phone, co-op affiliation and a brief description—to First Car, Focus on Texas, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704, before November 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. Please allow 4-6 weeks for your photos to be returned.



Can you see the striking similarity between the photos Rita Blanca EC member Harletta Carthel used for her Christmas cards in 1986 and 2003? At branding time 17 years later, Kiki, Kade and Justin are still at it, although we suspect a different bovine was used!



After “Papa” taught his grandson, 8-year-old Coleman DuCharme, how to drive the old Ford tractor, he just couldn’t resist having the occasion documented. His outstretched arms prove that Coleman is indeed driving solo. Papa and Nana, otherwise known as Pete and Sharron Gelmeier, are members of Bluebonnet EC.

“One of our kids’ favorite things to do is throw scratch to the chickens and ‘exercise’ them by chasing them around the chicken yard,” said James and Yolanda Sturrock of Sam Houston EC. Eighteen-month-old Lane is delighted when it’s his turn to throw a handful of scratch.



“Moooooove over, Bob!” Fayette EC member Bonnie Baker says, “Cow #4 is in love with my husband. She always runs up to the truck for a rub and, hopefully, a ‘cow cookie.’”



UPCOMING in Focus on Texas

Issue	Subject	Deadline
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
June	Picnics	April 10



Thanksgiving Pearls

I looked up last week and noticed we'd used up all the sparklers from the Fourth of July. The back-to-school clothes bought in September had holes in the knees, and my son had already consigned his latest pair of shoes to that black hole that claims so much of his footwear. The Halloween candy was gone; no one had put on a costume in weeks; and the Veterans Day poppy had fallen off my coat.

Outside the window of my Wimberley home, the cypress trees had rusted bare, sifted their dry feathers down to the surface of the creek where they gathered in still pools of winter water. I scraped ice off my car window the other morning. The phone is ringing with questions about cooking Thanksgiving dinner.

Is it Thanksgiving already, and when did it come? I guess if you're a passenger in a car and so busy looking at the road map that you never look outside the window, you can chart the course and never see the passage.

So today I'm going to look up for a moment, catch the patchy blue overhead, listen to the quiet. I'm going to reflect on the moments lived to a slower music, on the flavors held in the mouth long enough to remember, on the steady heartbeat of good and lasting memories. I am going to string those moments like melting moons of freshwater pearls on a necklace, and I am going to wear them for Thanksgiving.

I have a recipe file that has become something of a joke in my kitchen. Written on index cards and stuffed inside a box, the best, most-used recipes are almost illegible at this point. Weathered through use and spillage, they are out of order and must be riffled through frequently to find the errant measurements for Southwestern Cheesecake, or Jonnie's Rolls, or Mom's Carrot Cake. But for all the chaos associated with that file box, I love it. It has become the recep-

tacle of more than recipes. It has become the arbor of memories.

I can pull out the yeast roll recipe and think of the friend who gave it to me, asking only that I give her credit when they came out good. The rolls are fluffy like the pillows dreams are made of, and they taste faintly sweet and wondrously buttery. My friend Jonnie walked me through the recipe the first time. Covered with flour, she patted the very soft dough and told me to treat it as I would a lover, treat it with a feather touch. Otherwise, she cautioned, the dough will toughen and turn on you, like a lover spurned.

My mom's carrot cake recipe is so dog-eared, the yellow card has more the texture of doeskin than paper. I am not, by nature, a competitive person, but I know I make the best carrot cake around. I'll bake up a pan of the dark, rich cake, studded in raisins and pecans and the round, deep baritone of the cinnamon voice. I smooth it with cream cheese and butter and snowdrifts of powdered sugar, and I watch my friends' eyes widen in disbelief. "Where," they want to know, "did you find this piece of heaven?"

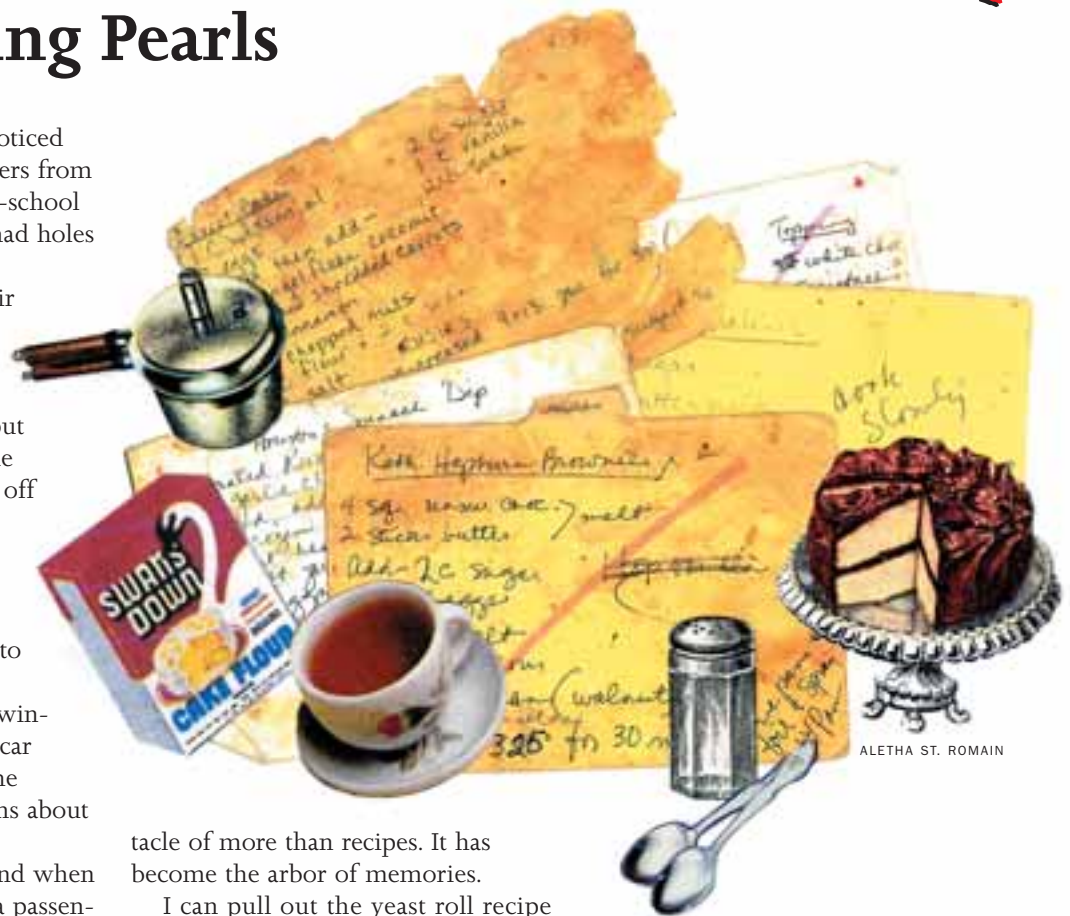
Cooking can be hurried, but it teaches the value of a loving pace. That which is tended to as if it matters has a better chance of turning out right than food that is thrown into a pot without the memories attached. The disorganization of my card file may serve to slow me down just enough to remember the taste of the foods I have grown to love, the memories I have chosen to keep.

This Thanksgiving will have its share of disorganization leading up to the turkey on the table. I know it will. In my life, there is no other way. People will wander through the juggling act of the kitchen and say, "How do you do it?"

I will adjust my pearl necklace and say, "You don't want to know."

Wimberley is served by Pedernales EC.

"Thanksgiving Pearls" is excerpted from the essay, "Thanksgiving," in Wimberley caterer/writer Linda Allen's book, *Freshwater Pearls*, available from Eakin Press. 1-800-880-8642 or www.eakinpress.com.



ALETHA ST. ROMAIN