

TEXAS CO-OP POWER

GAINESVILLE

TOWN OF

1,000 TRAPEZES

HUMAN BUTTERFLY

 SUSPENDED Only By Her **TEETH**

SUN ID

Beautiful BALLET of Circus Queens

BUDDY

 High-wire **WALKING DOG**

PLUS
 San Juan Basilica
 Contra Dancing
 Bean Recipes

The FAMOUS Hind-Leg HORSE






Electric Heaters

Space heaters are meant to provide supplemental heat, not to replace your home's heating system. In fact, if used incorrectly, space heaters can pose fire and burn risks.

Safety rules when using your portable electric heater:

- Read and follow the manufacturer's warnings and the use and care guidelines before using a space heater.
- Space heaters need space. Keep them at least 3 feet away from any combustible material such as bedding, clothing, draperies, furniture and rugs.
- Never use space heaters around unsupervised children and pets.
- Always turn the heater off and unplug it when leaving the room or going to sleep.
- Plug space heaters directly into an outlet; do not use an extension cord.
- Electric space heaters use a lot of electricity. Plug your heater into a circuit with as little else on it as possible.
- Space heaters should be used only for supplemental heat. Don't use them to dry clothing, cook food, thaw pipes, or warm bedding.

BE COOL WITH ELECTRIC HEATERS



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Cooperatives**

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TEXAS CO-OP POWER

A MAGAZINE ABOUT TEXAS LIVING

Come to the Circus!

Between 1930 and 1958, at least 1,500 citizens of Gainesville in North-east Texas took part in performances of their town's amateur circus before 500,000 spectators. Folks kept their day jobs and tended to their homes and children, donning their spangled costumes for evening performances in town or in nearby cities. It was one of the most unique and ambitious civic endeavors on record. We think the spirit of the Gainesville Circus exemplifies your local electric cooperative's sense of community today.

Our second feature takes us to the Basilica of Our Lady of San Juan in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. A pilot crashed his plane into the roof of the San Juan church in 1970. No one inside was injured, and the pilot was the only fatality, but the building was destroyed—except for a small image of the Virgin of San Juan. Today, a grand shrine on the site is dedicated to the statue, and thousands of pilgrims visit each year.

January is a good month to get back to basics and to give the pocketbook a breather. Texas Living provides thrifty and delicious bean recipes. The festival subject is contra dancing, a precursor to the square dance. Focus on Texas spotlights a favorite rite of passage—your first car. And Texas, USA, travels back in time to Cuero, 1906, when a resourceful little girl got the last laugh on her bully of a cousin.

Enjoy!

Peg Champion
Vice President, Communications/
Publisher



Trinity Valley EC member Bob Robinson paid \$35 for his first car—an early '30s Ford coupe. "It was in this car that I dated Vera Jayne Peers," he writes. Later on, Vera married his friend Paul Mansfield; the couple moved to Hollywood, California, where the new bride became screen siren Jayne Mansfield. For more first car photos, turn to page 37.

COVER PHOTO AND CIRCUS WAGON PHOTO (RIGHT) COURTESY OF MORTON MUSEUM OF COOKE COUNTY. COVER ILLUSTRATIONS AND DESIGN BY ALETHA ST. ROMAIN. ACT TITLES FROM 1940 GAINESVILLE COMMUNITY CIRCUS PLAYBILL.

In This Issue



This small statue attracts pilgrims to the San Juan Basilica.

BOB DAEMMRICH

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By Juddi Morris

Photos courtesy of Morton Museum of Cooke County

What if you could join the circus and stay home at the same time? Approximately 1,500 Gainesville area residents did.

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By Karen Hastings, Photos by Bob Daemmrich

The Basilica of Our Lady of San Juan is one of the most-visited Catholic shrines in the nation.

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By Sheryl Smith-Rodgers

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TEXAS CO-OP POWER

VOLUME 61 JANUARY 2005 NUMBER 7

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

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Texas Electric Cooperatives

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LETTERS

Sweat and Blood

I read with great pleasure the article, "The Healer of Quail Ridge," about Dr. Rickey Fain [November 2004]. Dr. Fain and I have similar histories although I am a little older and still practice family medicine. About six years ago, my wife and I bought approximately 200 acres in Lampasas County, the land being in similar condition to Dr. Fain's land. This has been a work of sweat and blood, but also of great pleasure in bringing the land back to the way it was before Anglo-Americans nearly destroyed it. We are working to bring the wildlife habitat back, including the golden-cheeked warbler, the black-capped vireo, as well as native game. This gives us a great sense of accomplishment so that we can return to our family practice with a renewed sense of energy and purpose.

JAMES M. MERRILL, Hurst, Texas

Pardon Our Latin

Congratulations on another great issue of Texas Co-op Power, November 2004. I would like to point out, however, that in the article, "Freethinkers on the Texas Frontier," Mr. Kennedy incorrectly translates *Tenax Propositi*, the inscription on John Meusebach's tombstone, to mean "Texas forever." The *Handbook of Texas Online* more accurately translates it as "steadfast of purpose." My Latin-to-English dictionary confirms this.

Keep up the good work—we really enjoy your magazine.

DAVID NORTH, Belfalls EC

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

Memorable Issue

We received your November 2004 issue of Texas Co-op Power. I enjoyed the article, "The Healer of Quail Ridge," about a retired physician buying an aging ranch, sight unseen, and allowing the land to initiate self-reclamation with all types of grasses. His ranch is beautiful and will be a role model.

In the article, "Freethinkers on the Texas Frontier," I salute Herr Meusebach and 50 of his followers for risking their lives and entering a camp of a thousand Comanches for peace talks to formulate a treaty to last forever.

Kaye Northcott's article, "Cutting a Swath of History," was astonishing—small combines harvesting millions of acres of grain to feed our armed forces. This article illustrates the profound and concrete unity between agriculture and our armed forces. Were it not for food and fiber, our troops could not perform their duties on combat missions.

We enjoyed your Focus on Texas, "On the Farm." All the photos reminded us of our childhood. The picture that stands out the most is the three adults at the squeeze chute with a bovine in it. The young lady I shall christen the "grand prize cowgirl," and her adult brothers, the "genuine cowboys of the cattle range." I salute all three for staying in ranching.

FRED SCHLADOER, Bandera EC

Just Listen to the Wind

I wanted to share my story regarding the windmill article I recently read in the August 2004 issue ["The Windmill Farm"]. I grew up in Duval County. I used to work on my father's ranch near San Diego, Texas, during some 100-degree summers. I used to go up to my favorite secluded place on the ranch, climbing the 15- to 20-foot windmill ladder to overlook the area and just listen to the wind. From there, I could fall into the Texas-sized tub of cool well water.

SAUL GARCIA, CoServ 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.

Working Together, Co-ops Build Strength

Electric cooperative members have the best of both worlds. They receive a key service from people in our local community while benefiting from a statewide alliance that helps keep costs down and efficiency up.

“Aggregation” is the word for our combined activities. We work together to build strength for all. Aggregation has been a vital component of the electric cooperative business from the beginning, when rural citizens banded together to bring central station electricity to the countryside. As a group, these common folks had the power, quite literally, and they got the ball rolling.

On the right side of this page is a map of Texas showing the 241 counties in which electric cooperatives serve. The green areas represent areas served by co-ops. White areas are not served by co-ops. As you can see, cooperatives cover vast reaches of the state. Combined, the state’s electric co-ops serve more than 1.65 million meters and maintain more than 286,000 miles of line.

What does this mean to cooperative member-consumers? For one thing, it means that instead of simply sending you a bill stuffer or a newsletter about your co-op’s operations, the 60 cooperatives that subscribe to *Texas Co-op Power* send you a monthly feature magazine with a central section dedicated to local cooperative news. *Texas Co-op Power* prints separate editions for each co-op. The cost is less than that of a

four-color brochure produced and mailed in smaller quantities.

We can produce the magazine so inexpensively because of economies of scale. *Texas Co-op Power* is distributed to 1 million residences and businesses in Texas, making it the magazine with the largest circulation in the state. We can afford to pay top-notch artists and writers because the cost of their work is divided among so many different cooperatives. We also receive paper and publishing discounts because of volume.

The magazine is just one example of aggregation as practiced by Texas Electric Cooperatives (TEC), the statewide association of cooperatives, and individual member co-ops. Among the statewide services provided by TEC are:

- Bulk buying and electrical equipment repairs. Sales reached \$33 million in 2004. Co-ops share space for regional warehouses.
- Manufacturing of approximately 145,000 utility poles for co-ops and municipal utilities annually.
- Providing three safety-training facilities for line workers across the state.
- Coordinating cooperatives’ communications with the Texas Legislature on energy issues.
- Overseeing a political action committee that promotes the interests of electric cooperatives



and their members.

- Providing a full array of communications services from education to advertising, for both co-ops and co-op members.
- Training for co-op employees and management—84 programs given in 2004.

Yearly co-op highlights include the Government-in-Action Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., for high school students; the East Texas Rural Electric Youth Seminar, promoting good citizenship; and the Lineman’s Rodeo, promoting safety.

By working together, cooperatives achieve savings in money, manpower and time. All co-ops and their members benefit from aggregation.

SAFE LIVING

Disconnected? Don’t Make a Deadly Mistake

We don’t like to do it, but sometimes your cooperative must disconnect a consumer’s electric service for nonpayment of their co-op account.

If your service is disconnected, please don’t try to reconnect it yourself. It’s dangerous and illegal for

anyone except authorized cooperative personnel to restore electric service.

If your service is disconnected, contact your cooperative to find out what you need to do to have it restored. Although your co-op must protect its financial health for the benefit of the membership at large,

co-op employees will work with you as best they can to resolve problems and restore your service.

And remember, too, that you should call your co-op when you must make a late payment or if you are having problems with your electric bill, so we can all work together.

GAINESVILLE

THE TOWN OF A THOUSAND TRAPEZES

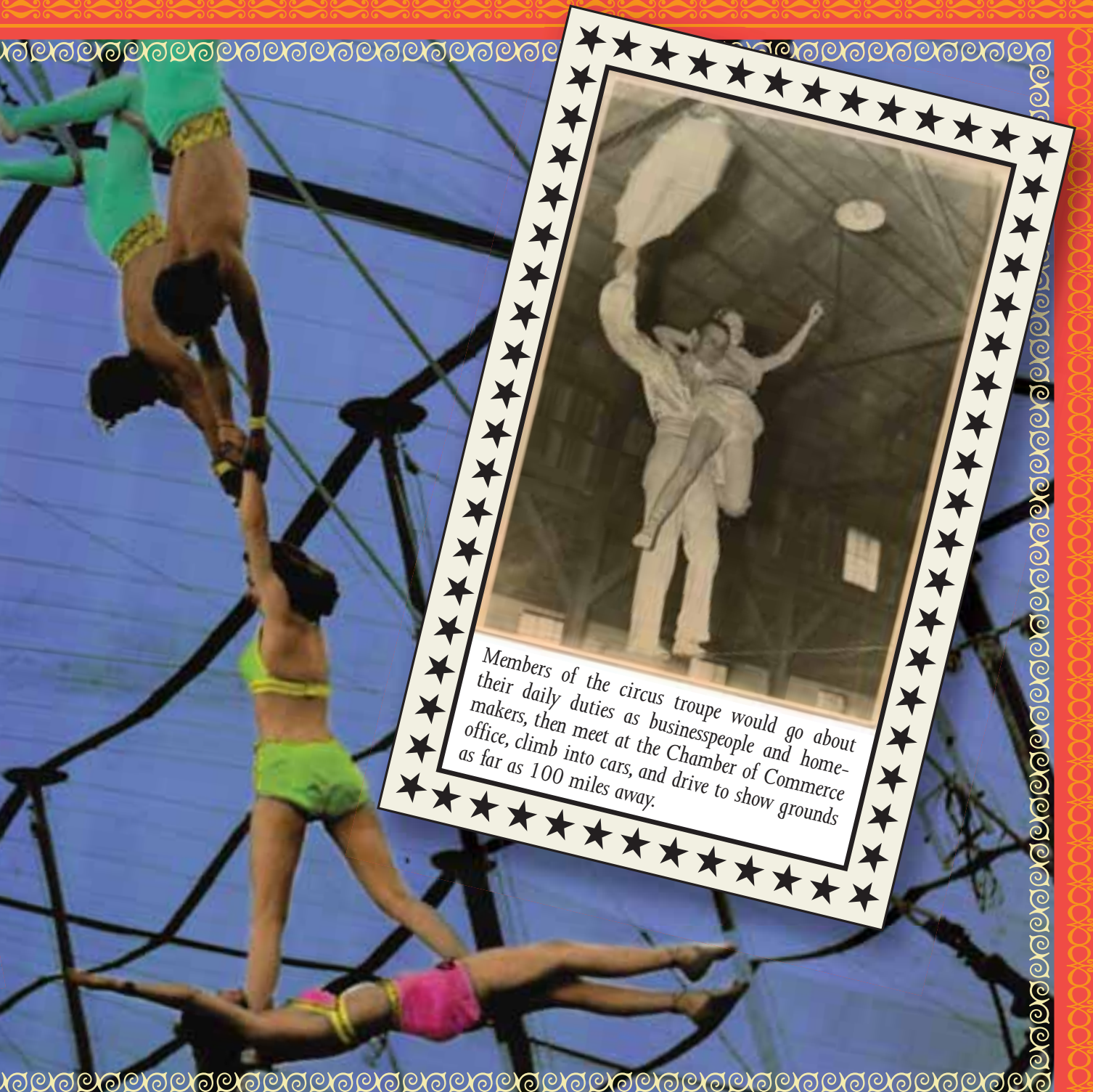
BY:
JUDDI MORRIS

*Photos Courtesy of
Morton Museum
of Cooke County*

The season of 8 to 10 shows ran from late April until mid-September. One magazine said, "It's a wow, a pip and would do ... credit to three-fourths of the truck shows trouping."

Strangers may think of Gainesville as just another pretty town if they aren't aware of its colorful and quirky history. For instance, this little Cooke County burg once produced a world-class circus. The Gainesville Community Circus, a sawdust show founded in 1929, was so fabled that in 1952 the Circus Fans Association of Amer-

SWITZER



Members of the circus troupe would go about their daily duties as businesspeople and homemakers, then meet at the Chamber of Commerce office, climb into cars, and drive to show grounds as far as 100 miles away.

ica held its national convention in this little Northeast Texas town. This ambitious community effort was about as likely in 1929 as Alice's tea party for the Mad Hatter. We're talking about a circus performed by local folks—starry-eyed schoolgirls in leotards, housewives garbed in satin and sequins, and businessmen cavorting as clowns. 🐾

This circus was born when the Gainesville Little Theatre was trying to scrape together enough money to pay rent on their building.

Local theatre could not compete with the new talking motion pictures, and the group had fallen on hard times. One of its members, A. Morton Smith, city editor of the *Gainesville Daily Register*, suggested that they put their Shakespearean costumes in mothballs and stage a circus to raise revenue.

Smith, in his book, *The First 100 Years in Cooke County*,

had dreams of running away to join the circus. Setting the opening show for the 1930 Cooke County Fair, folks flew into action.

Citizens conducted auditions and constructed circus props from makeshift materials. They salvaged two-ton tension wire from a wrecked railroad boxcar for a tightrope and transformed the junked frame of an old Chevy into a smart ticket wagon. Discarded gas pipes became trapezes. Smith used the axles of wrecked cars for tent stakes, built grandstands

trapeze flyers, clowns, dogs, ponies and an elephant, followed.

Dorthea Cox, billed as “The Human Fly,” dangled by her heels from the dome of the huge canvas tent and, to the amazement of the crowd, walked upside-down, too! More trapeze artists swung across the Big Top, exchanging bars—all without the protection of a net!

Mrs. Gerry Murrell—weighing in at 98 pounds—walked the tightwire and later returned to leap through a ring of fire on her white horse. Local children performed amazing acrobatics on horseback. An intrepid dog dove from a 40-foot platform into a small net below; other canines “sang” for the crowd.

In the ensuing years, professional circus entertainers passed through or spent the winter in Gainesville but, according to *The Handbook of Texas*, “The circus was presented entirely by amateurs who had full-time jobs and were residents of Gainesville.”

Eventually the circus grew to three rings with trained animals including lions, chimpanzees, an elephant and Shetland ponies. Road shows to nearby towns such as Denton and Wichita Falls involved transporting seven tents, a Big Top that covered 22,000 square feet and had seats for an audience of 2,500, six ornamental tableau wagons, hundreds of costumes, and a calliope.

Betty Brewer, just out of high school, was a member of a high-wire act in the Gainesville Community Circus. “There was nothing rinky-dink about any of that circus,” she recalls.

Although she can’t remember any serious accidents, she had one big scare: “I fell and hit my back. I was sure it was broken, it hurt so bad. They got me back into a dressing room and I heard someone say, ‘You can’t come in here, clown, we’ve got somebody hurt.’ The clown shouldered his way in anyhow. It was a

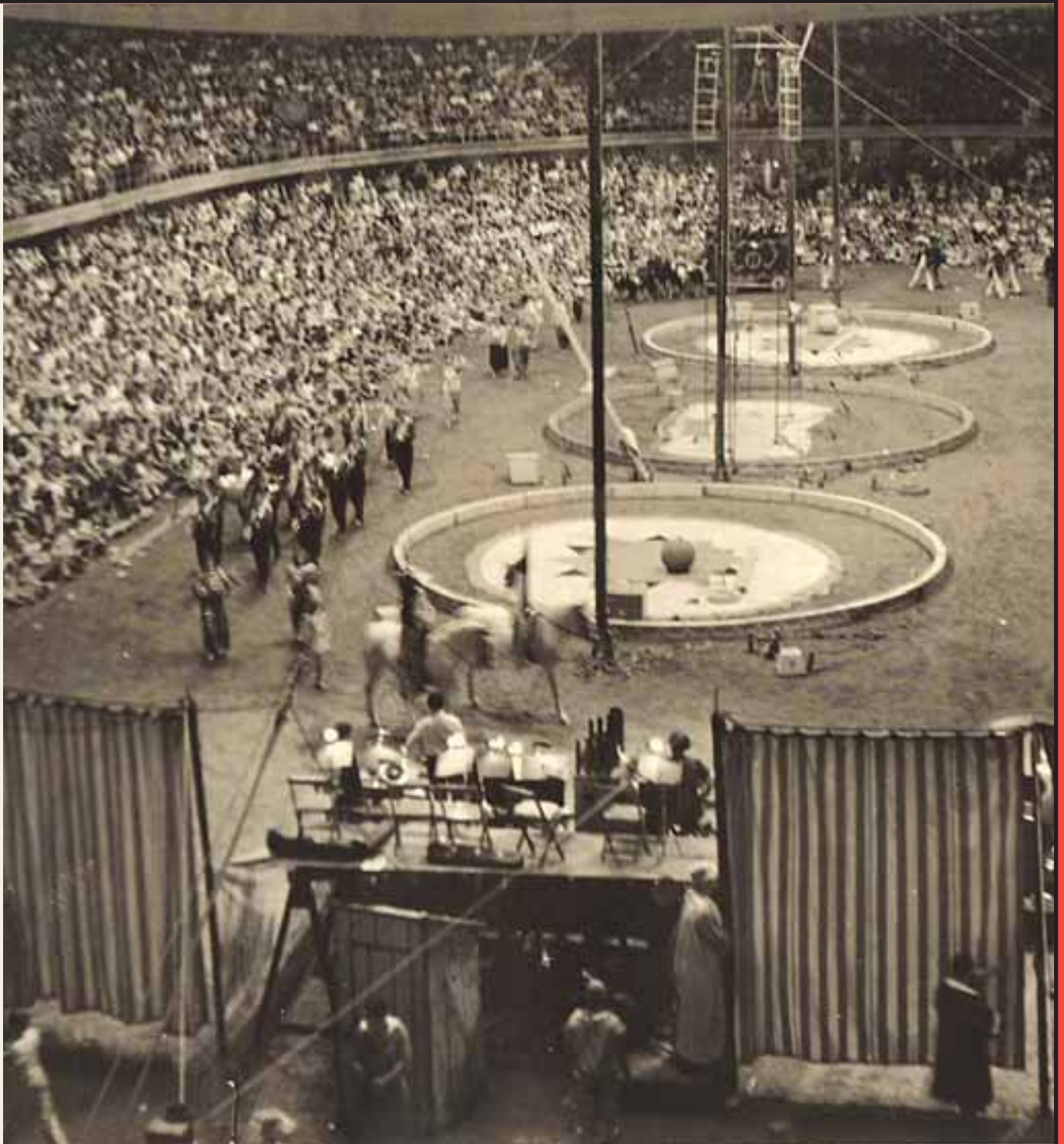


explains he had always held Walter Mitty-like dreams of traveling with a circus. He had constructed models of the world’s most famous circuses and collected circus memorabilia. He even imagined himself as a wild animal trainer, holding only a chair and a whip, with a lion seated on a stool in front of him.

Smith’s zeal for forming a circus spread. It seemed that others, too,

from discarded lumber, and even constructed a calliope from scrounged material.

The circus opened to a sold-out crowd. Mrs. Norman McArdle led the Grand Parade into the Big Top as the band blared “Barnum and Bailey’s Favorite.” She was decked out in spangles and ostrich feathers and rode a prancing stallion. A cavalcade of performers, including a sheik in purple astride a black charger, tumblers, tightrope walkers,



The circus performed before a crowd of 11,000 at Kyle Field in College Station in 1936, and a total of 27,000 people in Will Rogers Memorial Coliseum during two shows in 1938. If appearances were more than 100 miles away from Gainesville, performers and equipment traveled by rail at night, missing as little work as possible.



**In Gainesville, Texas, all over town / You'll find a bareback rider or a clown.
Trapeze performers in any store / And circus actors by the score.**

**—Gainesville Community Circus song by Joe Siegrist, aerialist
Over the years, the circus expanded to include eight tents. The Big Top
covered 22,000 square feet and seated 2,500 customers.**

doctor, of course, who was playing a clown.”

Fortunately, Brewer’s back was not broken; her hip had slipped out of its socket.

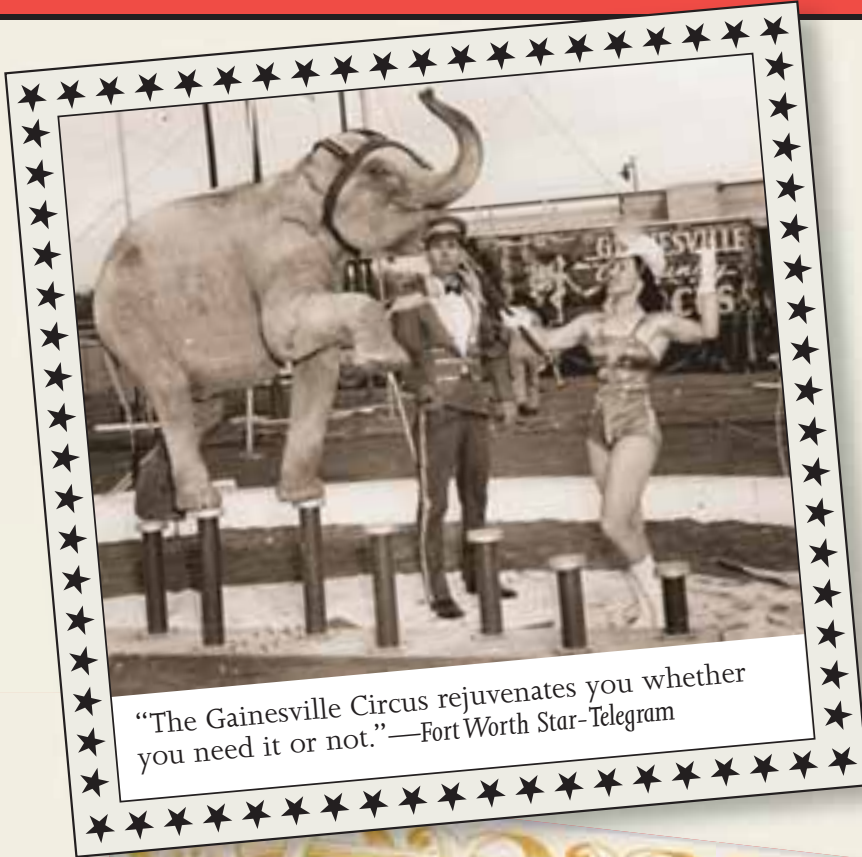
“Funny, I still remember that when I was falling, it was important to me to fall gracefully—I pointed my toes and all,” she says.

By 1936, the Gainesville Community Circus had become so

famous that the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Reader’s Digest* and other national magazines wrote about it. Major motion picture studios filmed newsreels at performances. Billy Rose, the famous theatrical producer, blew into town and caught one of its shows. Nowhere, people claimed, was there a finer circus.

During World War II, many of the performers joined the armed forces,

so the show was suspended until they came home. The final performance was in 1958. By then, fast cars, television and air conditioning had taken their toll on not only the Gainesville Community Circus but circuses across the United States. Still, for a while, an entire town had the opportunity to join the circus—without having to run away from home!



“The Gainesville Circus rejuvenates you whether you need it or not.”—Fort Worth Star-Telegram

The Morton Museum in Gainesville has photos and memorabilia of the Gainesville Community Circus.
Morton Museum of Cooke County
210 South Dixon Street
P.O. Box 150
Gainesville, Texas 76240
Website: www.mortonmuseum.org
Hours: Tues. through Fri., 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Cooke County Electric Cooperative serves the area surrounding Gainesville.
Juddi Morris, who lives in Paso Robles, California, writes about history. The subjects she has covered for Texas Co-op Power include the Harvey Girls (August 2001) and the history of the Teddy bear (December 2001).





San Juan Basilica

BY KAREN HASTINGS, PHOTOS BY BOB DAEMMRICH



undown at the Basilica of Our Lady of San Juan in this small South Texas border town, and a middle-aged man with thinning hair enters, shuffling on his knees, past huge brass doors.

It's a typical last Saturday of the month, when this sprawling national shrine holds its popular healing service. A raucous place on these nights, the sanctuary is bursting with applause and brass music. A standing-room-only audience chants, masking many quiet stories of private pain and gratitude.

Children chase each other up a stairway to the balcony. A line forms beneath a sign offering confessions in eight languages. Mariachi musicians in red and silver launch into a rousing rendition of "Alabare á Mi Señor" (Praise to My Lord).

The man with the thinning hair continues his slow journey around the cavernous fan-shaped sanctuary and past the milling crowds, pausing occasionally as his wife wipes his brow. His goal is the soaring space behind the altar where thousands of petitioners come each year to kneel beneath a tiny statue of Nuestra Virgen de San Juan del Valle to light candles and pray for miracles.

Raised literally from the ashes, built with coins and crumpled bills tossed in collection boxes, the Basilica of Our Lady of San Juan is now one of the

most-visited Catholic shrines in the nation. More than a million pilgrims and tourists a year—20,000 each weekend by local count—come from all over the United States and Mexico to tell the Lady of San Juan their troubles and to give thanks when things go well.

"If you come to South Texas at all, you've got to go to Mexico, South Padre Island and the shrine—those three. When we have all the Winter Texans around, the mariachis play the state song from every state and they

get a big kick out of that," says Monsignor Patrick Doherty, vice rector of the basilica and a South Texas resident for 50 years. "We get a lot of requests to go out and bless vehicles in the parking lot, but we don't do that—because we'd be at it all day."

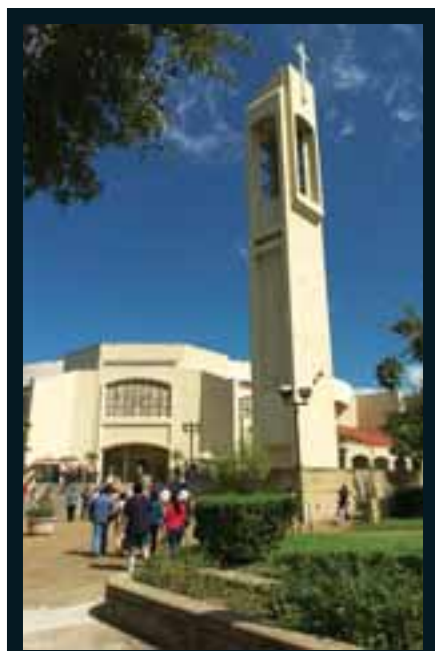
One of only three Roman Catholic edifices in Texas designated as a "minor basilica," the National Shrine of Our Lady of San Juan has its roots in a little mission church established in 1920. Many see its growth as a miracle for this tiny town.

Modern in architecture, the shrine today rises like an ocean liner along the highway through San Juan, a modest border community of manufactured housing outlets, convenience stores and immigrant neighborhoods, just east of more upscale McAllen. Like this entire region at the southern tip of Texas, it is heavily Hispanic and predominantly Catholic.

The shrine complex includes 14 life-size, bronze and oak Stations of the Cross depicting the crucifixion story and a 121-foot tower holding bells cast in Paris. There's also a spacious gift shop, nursing home, cafeteria and a parking lot that doesn't do justice to the crowds who come here each Sunday for six regular services.

A 45-foot mosaic mural of "Christ Presents His Mother" looks out over busy U.S. Highway 83 where cars whiz past.

Inside, the altar is dominated by a massive ceramic wall sculpture featur-



EXTERIOR OF BASILICA



PI PILGRIMS PRAY FOR MOTHER MARY'S PROTECTION.

ing migrant farm workers, the elderly, the sick and others believed to be under Mary's protection. In the center, set like a jewel, is a tiny doll-like statue in the characteristic garb of Our Lady of San Juan. It was brought to San Juan more than 50 years ago by Father José Maria Azpiazu, who died last July at the age of 100.

"In the Hispanic culture, the mother is very important. She is the glue that keeps the family together," says Monsignor Doherty, explaining the icon's—and the basilica's—popularity. "There are also people who are on the fringes, who don't feel they belong to any other place. There's nothing demanded of them here, no commitment that they make. They can come and go as they please."

One of the most compelling features of the shrine is its *Milagro*, or Miracle, Room. Here, countless college diplomas, wooden crutches and

hospital-room photos hint at the many pilgrims who come to Our Lady of San Juan with their petitions. Display boards sparkle with tiny *milagritos* shaped like legs, hearts and other body parts, symbolizing an appeal for good health, each selling for \$1 in the basilica gift shop.

Some come here to make and fulfill *promesas*, or promises: A grateful mother leaves behind a silky length of baby's hair, left uncut for years in fulfillment of a bargain with the Virgin. Wedding dresses and graduation gowns tell of events prayed for, celebrated, and then commemorated with these tangible mementos of thanks.

"Lord, please help me do better in school and stay out of trouble," says one note scribbled on a basilica envelope. It is

signed by "Brenda, 4th grade."

So many come and leave behind uniforms, prom dresses and other items that the church is forced to bundle up the items and give them to charity every six months or so, says Monsignor Doherty.

These days, photos of servicemen and women on duty in the Middle East cover several large bulletin board displays. Two American flags stand nearby, pinned with military ID tags and yellow ribbons. "Mother, I ask that you take care of these men here that left for Iraq back in March. May they be safe and come back safely," reads a note signed "Inez."

Retired Bishop John J. Fitzpatrick, who served the Diocese of Brownsville during construction of the shrine, says the *Milagro* Room is a place where believers leave demonstrations of their faith.

"Something happened to these

people because they went to the shrine," he explained. "People who are cured of blindness or lameness recognize these things come from God and leave their crutches behind to tell other people."



any consider the shrine's story miraculous as well.

According to church history, missionary priests first built a wooden chapel in San Juan in 1920. Attempting to encourage local religious devotion, church leaders looked to a more famous San Juan in the Mexican state of Jalisco. According to popular church tradition, a statue of Mary from San Juan de Los Lagos is credited with bringing a young girl back from the dead in 1623.

In 1949, Father Azpiazu commissioned a copy of the distinctive San Juan of the Lakes statue—complete with real human hair and elaborately embroidered gown—for his wood-frame church in San Juan of the Valley.

The journey to acquire the statue quickly spawned myth and legend. According to one who actually made the trip, there was a minor automobile accident in the mountains. Afterward, the travelers met a ranch family who gave them needed gas for their journey, as well as a donation to the shrine in San Juan de los Lagos. When the travelers paused on their return trip to say thank you, they could find neither the family nor their ranch, and chalked it up to the Virgin's miraculous intervention.

In gratitude, Azpiazu went on in 1954 to raise a fittingly majestic memorial in Mary's honor, dedicated to the Virgin of San Juan. With its marble altars and hand-carved statues, this original shrine was already a popular pilgrimage site 16 years later when tragedy struck.

On October 23, 1970, a man with what was described as resentment against organized religion dove his rented single-engine airplane into the sanctuary roof. According to the Texas State Historical Commission, 20 minutes earlier the pilot had radioed a warning that all Methodist and Catholic churches in the area should be evacuated. The pilot was killed, and the shrine's elaborate

stained glass windows and giant murals were ruined by the resulting fire. But no one else—not the 50 priests who happened to be celebrating a special mass inside, nor the dozens of children nearby in the cafeteria—was injured. Even the tiny, 3-foot statue of the Virgin escaped unscathed.

Margot Martinez, now a secretary with the Diocese of Brownsville, was a high school senior on that terrible day. “I remember walking out of classes to see the black smoke. The sky was as black as can be,” says Martinez, who is now a frequent volunteer at the basilica. “It was a sad day.”

Yet the disaster seemed only to add to the shrine’s reputation. Ten years later, after a prolonged fundraising effort, a larger \$5 million structure was dedicated to replace the original.

“Not a penny came from on high,” says former Bishop Fitzpatrick, now retired in Brownsville. “People used to come from all over the United States and leave donations. ‘Pilgrim money,’ I call it. Nobody sent out any big pleas for money. The shrine was there, the people were grateful for whatever they received from the shrine, and they left their \$5.”



The new Shrine of Our Lady of San Juan was dedicated on April 19, 1980. In 1998, the U.S. Conference of

Catholic Bishops named it a national shrine, recognizing that its impact and influence extends beyond South Texas. A year later, the Pope added the title of minor basilica, a designation honoring a church’s popularity, antiquity, beauty or historical impact. There are now more than 50 basilicas in the U.S.

Today, the Basilica of Our Lady of San Juan is a place for pilgrims. No baptisms or weddings are celebrated here, but there are at least three masses each day. A deacon is on hand hourly to talk with visitors—and he’ll even bless your car keys.

“To me, if we go to our parish church, it’s like going to a house and having a family meal,” says Margot Martinez. “But when you go to the basilica, I feel it to be a sacred, holy place. You can come in a happy or confused state of mind. It’s always

there. It’s such a beautiful feeling—when I go in there, I walk out feeling a lot better than when I walked in.”

Bishop Raymundo Peña calls the basilica “the jewel of South Texas.”

San Juan Mayor Roberto Loredó, whose parents were married in the original San Juan chapel, is delighted to have this massive tourist attraction in a town that usually celebrates nothing grander than a new fast-food restaurant or budget department store.

“For religious purposes, it is a destination for many people throughout this country,” says Loredó. “We know that those 20,000 people who visit every weekend are going to stop and shop or dine in San Juan or even stay overnight. Oh man, we love it.”

On the last Saturday of each month, the parking lot is filled with cars and tour buses from Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Carolina and California—not to mention states in Mexico. The 3,500-seat sanctuary is full and cameras flash from the balcony.

Evangelical in flavor, the service combines audience participation, personal testimonials and, of course, the mariachis. Diminutive Monsignor Juan Nicolau, the basilica’s media-savvy rector (with his own CDs and local television show), is a star attraction. He sprints along the pews, dispensing hands-on blessings to people in wheelchairs and singing along with the band.

His sermon, in snatches of Spanish and English, is about the *basura*—physical and emotional garbage—that afflicts his audience. When Nicolau invites those with cancer to join him



ON AVERAGE, THE BASILICA HOLDS 25 MASSES A WEEK.

at the altar, 60 to 70 step forward, some in headscarves that attest to their chemotherapy.

“*Madrecita*, little Mother, tell Jesus that I am sick,” he prays with the crowd. “*Saname*. Heal me.”

Candles lit and private prayers delivered, the man with the thinning hair walks out arm-in-arm with his wife, through the crowds and into the hot South Texas twilight.

The Basilica of Our Lady of San Juan is located just off U.S. Highway 83 at 400 N. Virgen de San Juan Boulevard in San Juan. Call (956) 787-0033 or visit www.sanjuanshrine.com for more information.

Magic Valley Electric Co-op serves some of the basilica’s facilities.

Freelance writer Karen Hastings lives in Harlingen. She previously wrote “*Ranchos Viejos: Preserving a Family Heritage*” for *Texas Co-op Power* (March 2004).

Stay Warm and Safe

Tips for Safe Use of Electric Blankets and Space Heaters

An electric blanket and a space heater can keep you toasty-warm on the coldest winter nights. But use them safely.

Follow these tips to stay safe and warm:

- Place heaters at least 3 feet away from anything flammable and keep them off furniture. Steer portable heaters clear of water; they're not safe for use in bathrooms.

- Extension cords are not meant for long-term use, especially with heaters. If you must use one with a space heater, check that its power rating is at least as high as the heating unit's. Cords with lower ratings may melt or catch fire.

- Neither electric space heaters nor electric blankets are meant for overnight use. Pile on cotton blankets and turn off your electric warmers before you go to sleep.

- If you buy a new electric space heater, choose one with a switch that turns the unit off automatically if it falls over.

- Don't fold or roll electric blankets that are plugged in. Heat will build up in the wires and could set fire to the bed.

- For extra safety, replace the batteries in your smoke detectors at least once a year.



Resolved:

Throw Wasteful Energy Habits Out for 2005

Your smoking habit and those extra pounds aren't the only things you should vow to lose in 2005. Resolve to waste less energy around your house. It's actually pretty easy:

- Turn off lights and appliances when you leave a room, even if you're coming right back.

- As you replace your old appliances, choose new ones that sport the Energy Star label, which attests that they are energy-efficient.



- Install low-flow showerheads.
- Set your water heater temperature to 120 degrees. Higher temperatures waste energy and can lead to scalding.

- Set your thermostat to a lower temperature before you leave the house for work or go to bed.



Restoring Power: A Step-By-Step Process

When the power goes out, your electric cooperative rushes to hospitals, fire stations, police departments and public safety buildings first.

They also send crews to get downed power lines—which could be energized and extremely dangerous to anyone who touches them—out of reach.

Restoring residential power is important. But the utility's first step during an outage is to make sure power gets to critical places and to handle life-threatening situations.

Next, your cooperative restores the

transmission lines and distribution centers that serve the most customers—so as many people as possible will get their lights back on quickly.

Then, the crews visit individual neighborhoods, homes and businesses.

While you're waiting for your power to come back on, know your electric cooperative is working to keep the community safe, and also that its crews have your comfort in mind.

You can help by letting your electric cooperative know when your neighborhood blacks out or if you find a fallen line.

Hi-Tech Help for 2005

One common New Year's resolution involves keeping in touch with family and friends. Increasingly, says the Consumer Electronics Association (CEA), Americans will keep that promise by using computers and cell phones.

In a CEA survey, those who made resolutions identified the technologies that will keep them on the right path:

- Computer: 22 percent
- Cell phone: 11 percent
- High-speed Internet connection: 11 percent
- Financial planning software: 11 percent
- Personal digital assistant: 8 percent

\$12 Device Makes Home 'Smarter'

A fancy home automation system that lets you control everything from lights to appliances to the lock on the front door can cost \$10,000. But for as little as \$12, you can get a taste of the Jetsons' way of life.

For about that price, you can buy an "automation module," a device that can control an appliance from another part of the house.

The devices operate on X10 technology, which uses the wires that are already in your home's walls to allow you to remotely control—or to program—the coffee pot or the stereo to flip on at a certain time. The X10 transmitters send signals to the modules, which in turn trip the appliance.

To use them, just plug them into an outlet.

Start with one and add more as you can afford them.

Some X10 gadgets are available at electronics stores and through websites that advertise X10 devices.

- Digital camera: 7 percent
- The survey participants said they will use the technology to:
- Get better organized: 44 percent
 - Use time more wisely: 42 percent

- Be more productive: 41 percent
- Learn new things: 35 percent
- Arrive on time for appointments: 16 percent



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.

Please Pass the Biscuits, Pappy

BY BILL CRAWFORD

Long before California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger muscled his way from show business to politics, W. Lee O'Daniel, in his time the most popular radio personality in Texas, crooned his way into the Texas Governor's Mansion and later the United States Senate.

With a hillbilly band and a radio show, he celebrated darling children, devoted mothers and hardworking Texas families well before he became a professional politician. He was known to everyone as "Please Pass the Biscuits, Pappy" or just plain "Pappy."

In the early 1930s, the Kansas-born Wilbert Lee O'Daniel was a snappy salesman for the Burrus Mill and Elevator Company in Fort Worth, makers of Light Crust Flour. O'Daniel's Light Crust Doughboys radio band included a young musician from Turkey, Texas, by the name of Bob Wills.

After a short time, the hard-partying Wills conflicted with the all-business O'Daniel and split from the Doughboys to form the Texas Playboys.

O'Daniel himself left Burrus Mills in 1935 to found his own company, the W. Lee O'Daniel Company, makers of Hillbilly Flour. He also formed his own Western swing band, the Hillbilly Boys, and won the hearts of millions with the down-home homilies and melodious songs that seemed to flow effortlessly from the tip of his flour-dusted pen—songs like "Million Dollar Smile," "Beautiful Texas," and the Hillbilly Boys' theme song with the signature line, "Please pass the biscuits, Pappy!"

In 1938, Pappy shocked his listening audience by declaring his candidacy for governor of Texas. "Don't do it, Pappy!" wrote one of his most ardent fans, "You're too good for the job."

O'Daniel persisted, even though he had never even voted in a Texas elec-

tion. Heck, Pappy wasn't even registered to vote.

Pappy's campaign motto was the Golden Rule; his platform was the Ten Commandments. His campaign slogan was "Less Johnson grass and politicians—more smokestacks and businessmen." O'Daniel got the loudest cheers when he explained that he was running for governor for one reason and one reason only—to sell more flour!

Propelled into office with a record number of votes, "Please Pass the Biscuits, Pappy" O'Daniel became the 33rd

died shortly after arriving in Washington, O'Daniel faced Congressman Lyndon Baines Johnson in a contest for the U.S. Senate that *Time* magazine called "the biggest carnival in American politics." The carnival ended in a victory for O'Daniel, and the only electoral defeat of Johnson's career. According to one of Johnson's strategists, "[O'Daniel] stole more votes than we did, that's all."

Although he was a great campaigner, O'Daniel was an ineffective legislator. After winning the U.S. Senate seat in 1942, he did not run again in 1948. Instead, Lyndon Johnson beat former governor Coke Stevenson for O'Daniel's Senate seat in a race so close and controversial it earned the future president the satirical nickname "Land-slide Lyndon."

Although the hit film "O Brother, Where Art Thou?" celebrated a fictional "Please Pass the Biscuits, Pappy," the real Pappy O'Daniel was caught on film by photographer Joe Tisdale and others working for the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS). Governor O'Daniel never missed a photo op. In 1940, he traveled across the state,

having his picture snapped with each member of the Texas House and Senate in their hometowns. Some of the DPS photos as well as other selections are newly available in *Please Pass the Biscuits, Pappy: Photos of Governor W. Lee "Pappy" O'Daniel*. The images, such as the one on this page, celebrate the rise of one of America's first mass media celebrities to cross the line from entertainment to political office and record the last era of unscripted, flamboyant politics in beautiful, beautiful Texas.

Bill Crawford of Austin wrote the text for a photo collection, *Please Pass the Biscuits, Pappy: Photos of Governor W. Lee "Pappy" O'Daniel*, published in 2004 by the University of Texas Press.



O'Daniel (at the microphone) and his sons make a campaign stop in San Antonio on June 29, 1938.

governor of the Lone Star State.

After winning reelection in 1940, Governor O'Daniel threw a barbecue for the entire state on the lawn of the Governor's Mansion. He even hunted down a buffalo for the occasion. Although the governor told his radio audiences that he took part in "possibly the last great wild buffalo hunt of this century," a film of the hunt shows Pappy standing in a pen and shooting into a herd of tame buffalo from almost point-blank range.

After the death of Texas U.S. Senator Morris Sheppard in 1941, Governor O'Daniel appointed 87-year-old Republican General Andrew Jackson Houston, the son of Sam Houston, to fill the vacant seat. When Houston

Hooray for D-Wayne

D-Wayne may have gotten himself frozen. But—bless his little pea brain—at least he didn't touch the power line that was down on the ground.

Even a bunny as dumb as D-Wayne can have some safety sense. Before doing something stupid, he listened for that little voice that told him: "Wait a durn minute!"

Before you do something that might be dangerous, search the quiet part of your brain. Listen for the little warning bell that signals you're about to do something you'll regret. Think of your mother or father and what they would tell you if they were there.

And now, here's a little lesson on downed lines:

Even if downed power lines don't make noise, spark or "dance," they can be dangerous. Very, very dangerous—they can carry an electric current strong enough to cause serious injury or even death!

Follow these rules:

- If you see a downed power line, move away from the line and anything touching it.
- The proper way to move away from the line is to shuffle away with small steps, keeping your feet together and on the ground at all times. That reduces your chances of getting electrocuted.
- If someone is in direct or indirect contact with the downed line, do not touch the person. Call 911 or have an adult call right away.
- Don't try to move a downed power line or anything in contact with the line by using another object such as a broom or stick. You could still get shocked!

Whenever you are around electricity, use the smart part of your brain.

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* and *Loretta: Ace Pinky Scout*. He lives in Austin with his wife, Nancy, and the twins, Max and Emma.



CATFISHIN' ON

BY SUSAN L. EBERT

Jane Gallenbach deftly maneuvers her Tacoma pickup down the narrow ribbon of sandy loam through the verdant Sabine River bottomlands and pulls to a stop by a small pond. Actually, it's more like a large mud hole.

"There's no telling how many crawdads Tom and I have pulled from this hole," Gallenbach says as she picks up an empty bleach bottle and hoists the rope attached to it. Sure enough, up comes a wire mesh trap with an abundance of skittering crawdads, which Gallenbach empties into her waiting bait bucket. She repeats the process with another trap, then back to the

truck to go check the perch traps her husband, Tom, a Texas Parks and Wildlife game warden, had set out the evening before.

"We use the crawdads and perch to catch catfish, and then, after cleaning the fish, use the remains to feed and catch more crawdads and perch," she says. She pauses, then unleashes her characteristic sunny laugh. "I guess you could say it's the ultimate recycling within the ecosystem."

Gallenbach is one of those timeless women one is fortunate to meet, whose water-cascading-over-rocks laughter, merry eyes and youthful exuberance belie her years. Tom Gallenbach, tall and

angular, has a droll, East Texas wit and entertains me with some recent game warden escapades. "I found a local politician in violation of creel limits," says Tom. "He asked me if I could overlook this, and I gave him my standard response, 'Press hard, three copies.'"

I first met the Gallenbachs along this isolated and majestic stretch of the Sabine River the last weekend in February when I came to sample the prolific white bass run upward from Toledo Bend reservoir. "I had never thought of being a fishing guide until a few years ago," Jane told me. "Since [people] were coming to me for advice, I thought I'd try my own hand

TOM'S EASY TROTLINE

Instead of a classic trotline, which has a heavier main line with lighter line to suspend the hooks, Tom Gallenbach uses an easy-to-assemble trotline constructed of one line of #18 or #21 braided nylon, #3 swivels and #2 hooks (open eyes of hooks and attach swivels, then close eyes of hooks), and assorted weights (which can be large bolts or any other scrap metal).

Step 1. Allow yourself 10 feet or so of line, before doubling a 4-foot section to 2 feet, then tying a simple loop knot at the top, so a 2-foot loop hangs down.

Step 2. At the bottom of the 2-foot loop, pass the point of the loop through the top of the swivel and then around the hook itself, drawing the loop tight.

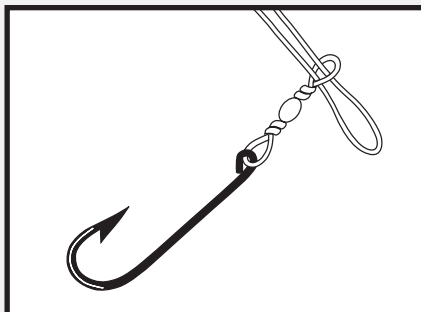
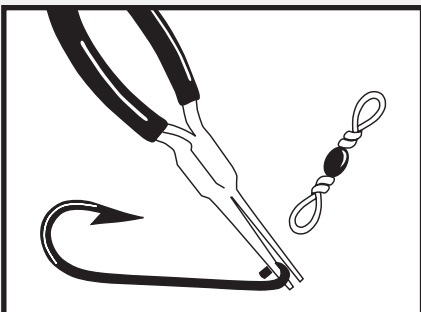
Step 3. Measure at least 3 feet before repeating the process; hooks must be at least that far apart.

Step 4. Every six or so hooks, double a 5-foot section to 2 1/2 feet by the same process, and attach a weight. You'll want the weight to dangle about 2 inches below the hooks, to keep them off the river bottom.

Leave enough line at the end of the completed trotline to tie it off.

You can legally attach up to 50 hooks on one trotline, or a total of 100 hooks on two or more trotlines. The main line length cannot exceed 600 feet. Metallic stakes are not allowed, nor are fishing lines or attached hooks and stagings placed above the water's surface.

Freshwater trotlines must have a valid gear tag, with the name and address of the user and the date, attached within 3 feet of the first hook at each end of the trotline. Trotlines are valid for 30 days after the day they are set out.



THE SABINE

at being a fishing guide. This past spring, I ran 39 guided trips and boated 2,800 white bass.”

This trip was all about catfishing.

I haven't trotlined since I was a child, at the knee of wise, khaki-clad men such as my Papaw Dorsey Watkins. Papaw was a “noodler,” too, and grabbed catfish in their hidey-holes after stripping down and diving in to pull cats from their underwater lairs.

“You'll love this,” exclaims Jane, as we launch her 15-foot AlumaWeld and plow upstream through the thick, chocolaty current. “I take out men and women of all ages. Trotlining can be demanding, so I think about 10 to 12

years old is a good age to introduce a child to this.”

This morning, with our crawdads and perch, we hope to attract channel cats, fat blue cats and humongous Opelousas catfish that swirl in an everlasting dance of birth, life, death and renewal in the nutrient-rich Sabine.

I run the trotline, as generations of my family have before me, rebaiting empty hooks and feeling the swirl and tug of life beneath the surface as I run the main line, hand over hand. One fat blue catfish after another comes to our gunwales.

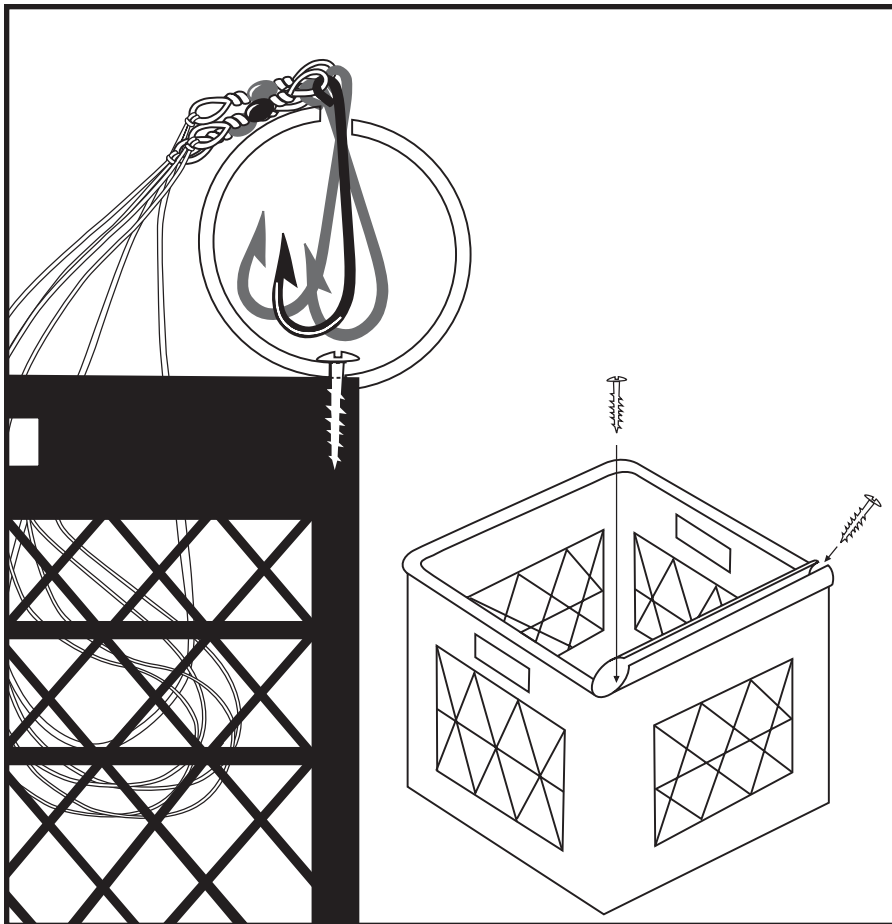
We disgorge our morning's catch into a live box tied to a tree near the

boat launch, and return to the river at dusk to run our trotlines once more. Fireflies glimmer in the riverine forest, as frogs croak and a lone blue egret skims down the rivercourse. We've not seen another soul on the river today.

“I know how lucky I am,” says Jane softly. “The Sabine is my sanctuary.”

River Ridge is located at 529 PR 831, between Tenaha and Carthage on FM 669. Call (903) 693-4441 or visit www.riverridgetx.com for more information.

Susan L. Ebert, a lifelong outdoorswoman, is publisher and editor of Lone Star Outdoor News, a weekly outdoor newspaper.



JANE'S EASY TROTTLING BASKET

You'll need: one milk crate, a section of 3/4-inch PVC pipe slightly longer than one side of the crate, a hacksaw, two woodscrews and a screwdriver.

Step 1. Cut the PVC pipe to the length of one side of the milk crate, cutting one end on the diagonal so that it's slightly shorter on top, to allow the line to expend easily. Open up the length of the pipe with the hacksaw.

Step 2. Screw PVC pipe to top of one side of the milk crate, using a wood screw at each end, with slit opening on top.

Step 3. Put hooks one by one into slot, letting line feed into bottom of milk crate.

Step 4. Tie off one end of your trotline to a tree, and start paddling across the river, feeding the line and hooks out of the milk crate.

Full of Beans

It's a good time of year to have a pot full of something tasty bubbling on the stovetop or in the oven. Beans are the perfect ingredient for such a pot—they're inexpensive, healthy, filling and delicious. Below

saucepan, about 5 minutes. Add chicken and thyme; cook over medium heat until chicken is lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Stir in flour and cook 1 minute longer. Stir in chicken broth, beans, broccoli and zucchini; heat to boiling. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, until vegetables

1 1/2-quart casserole. Bake, covered, at 350 degrees for 1 1/2 hours; then bake, uncovered, for 30 minutes. Microwave instructions: Cook on medium-high 45 minutes to 1 hour. Makes 12 side-dish servings.

Serving size: 1/2 cup. Per serving: 320 calories, 22 grams protein, 3 grams fat, 89 grams carbohydrates, 1,206 milligrams sodium, 3 milligrams cholesterol



© AMERICAN DRY BEAN BOARD

are some recipes from the American Dry Bean Board. Their tips for cooking dry-packaged beans follow.

Kitchen Garden Bean Soup With Chicken

- 1 cup sliced carrots
- 1/2 cup sliced green onions and tops
- 1/2 cup chopped red bell pepper
- 1/2 cup sliced celery
- 1 tablespoon butter or margarine
- 12 ounces boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into 3/4-inch pieces
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme leaves
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 3 cups reduced-sodium, fat-free chicken broth
- 1 can (15 ounces) dark kidney beans or 1 1/2 cups cooked dry-packaged black beans, rinsed, drained
- 1 cup broccoli florets
- 1 cup chopped zucchini
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon white pepper
- 1 to 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 1/2 cup whipping cream, whipped

Sauté carrots, green onions, bell pepper and celery in butter until almost tender in Dutch oven or large

are tender, 10 to 15 minutes. Stir in salt and pepper; season to taste with lemon juice. Stir in whipped cream just before serving. Makes 4 servings.

Serving size: 1 1/2 cups. Per serving: 398 calories, 33 grams protein, 17 grams fat, 29 grams carbohydrates, 964 milligrams sodium, 117 milligrams cholesterol

Pineapple Baked Beans

- 3 slices bacon, chopped
- 3/4 cup sliced green onions and tops
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 cans (15 ounces each) Navy or Great Northern beans or 6 cups cooked dry-packaged Navy or Great Northern beans, rinsed, drained
- 1 can (8 ounces) crushed pineapple, undrained
- 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon minced jalapeño pepper
- 1/2 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1 cup pineapple or apple juice
- 2 tablespoons Dijon-style mustard
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper

Fry bacon in small skillet until crisp; drain bacon thoroughly on paper towels. Discard all but 1 teaspoon bacon fat; add onions and garlic to skillet and sauté until tender, 4 to 5 minutes. Mix all ingredients in

Soaking Dry-Packaged Beans

Before cooking, soak dry-packaged beans to help soften them and to reduce cooking time. Most beans triple their dry size, so be sure to start with a large enough pot.

• Preferred Hot Soak and Quick Soak Methods: Hot soaking helps dissolve some of the gas-causing substances. For each pound of beans, add 10 cups hot water; heat to boiling and let boil 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat, cover and set aside for at least one hour (Quick Soak), or up to 4 hours (Hot Soak).

• Traditional Overnight Soak: For each pound (2 cups) of dry-packaged beans, add 10 cups cold water and let soak overnight, or at least 8 hours.

Cooking Dry-Packaged Beans

• Drain soaking water and rinse beans; cook in fresh water. In general, beans take 30 minutes to 2 hours to cook, depending on variety. Check bean packaging for specific cooking times and instructions.

• Spice up beans while they cook. Seasonings such as garlic, onion, oregano, parsley or thyme can be added to the pot while beans are cooking. Add acidic ingredients, such as tomatoes, vinegar, wine or citrus juices, only at end of cooking, when beans are tender.

• Add salt only after beans are cooked. If added before, salt may cause bean skins to become impermeable, halting the tenderizing process.

• To test for doneness, bite-taste a few beans. They should be tender, but not overcooked. When cooling, keep beans in cooking liquid to prevent them from drying out.



Foods You've Never Heard Of is the recipe contest subject for April. Is there a little-known delicacy in your recipe box? Perhaps you inherited a family recipe from "the old country" or have just discovered a modern dish none of your friends know about. Let's get the secret out! Send it to us before January 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 an Adams Extract gift pack. 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.

I was out on maternity leave when the staff tested bean recipes this month, but I hear it was a gas! I'll spare you any more juvenile jokes, but suffice it to say that with nine bean dishes to eat, there were plenty of them. My thanks to Sandra Forston, our communications assistant, for

coordinating this recipe testing for me. Ever thoughtful, she even brought a bottle of Beano to the lunch table. The favorite recipe was Hobo Bean Casserole from **SUSAN MARTIN**, a Grayson-Collin EC member. 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.

Hobo Bean Casserole

1 pound ground beef
6 slices bacon, chopped into 1-inch pieces
1 onion, diced
1 green pepper, diced
1 cup diced celery
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/4 cup ketchup
1/2 cup barbecue sauce
1 pound can lima beans, drain off half the liquid
1 pound can kidney beans, drain off half the liquid
1 pound can pork and beans with tomato sauce
1 cup grated Cheddar cheese

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Brown ground beef. Fry and drain bacon. Sauté beef, onion, green pepper and celery in skillet when bacon is done. Add sugar, ketchup and barbecue sauce. Cook 3-5 minutes. Put beans in 2 1/2- or 3-quart casserole dish and mix. Pour beef mixture over beans and stir. Top with cheese. Bake 1 1/2 hours. Serves 8-10.

Serving size: 3/4 cup. Per serving: 409 calories, 22 grams protein, 19 grams fat, 40 grams carbohydrates, 461 milligrams sodium, 55 milligrams cholesterol

The Best Pinto Beans

4 cups dry pinto beans
3/4 cup chopped onions
3/4 pound salt pork
3 cloves garlic, chopped
3/4 cups chopped bell pepper
1 jalapeño, chopped
2 teaspoons celery seed
2 teaspoons cumin powder
Salt to taste
1 or 2 cans (8 ounces each) tomato sauce (optional)

Clean beans; put in pot large enough to cover with 2 inches of water; bring to boil. Add onions, salt pork and garlic. After this has cooked for 30 minutes, add the rest of the ingredients. Cook until beans are soft. When adding water, always use hot water to keep beans from splitting. Serves 8-10.

Serving size: 3/4 cup. Per serving: 536 calories, 19 grams protein, 29 grams fat, 53 grams carbohydrates, 845 milligrams sodium, 29 milligrams cholesterol

HENRY STIEGLER, Medina EC
(continued on page 28)



Texas Co-op Power Cookbook: THE PERFECT GIFT FOR ANY SEASON!

The cookbook features 250 recipes from Texas co-op members and makes an affordable gift. Order one today for your favorite cook. The cookbook is available at most local cooperatives. Or, send name, address and phone number, along with a check or money order for \$18.75 (\$15 plus tax/S&H), to: Texas Co-op Power Cookbook, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704. Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.

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Make checks payable to: Texas Electric Cooperatives. Send \$18.75 for each cookbook to: TCP Cookbooks, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704.

(Continued from page 27)

Red Bean and Bacon Dip

- 3 slices bacon, diced
- 1 can (8 ounces) red kidney beans, drained
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 tablespoon chopped green bell pepper
- 1 teaspoon instant minced onion
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- Tortilla chips

Place bacon in 1 1/2-quart microwavable casserole dish. Cover with paper towel and microwave on high 3-4 minutes, stirring after 2 minutes, until crisp. Stir in beans; mash with fork. Cover tightly and microwave 2-3 minutes or until hot. Stir in remaining ingredients (except tortilla chips). Cover tightly and microwave about 1 minute or until hot. Serve with tortilla chips. Makes 1 1/2 cups.

Serving size: 1/4 cup. Per serving: 229 calories, 11 grams protein, 10 grams fat, 25 grams carbohydrates, 164 milligrams sodium, 20 milligrams cholesterol

Caffeine Beans

- 1 pound dried small white beans
- 2 cups brewed coffee
- 3 cups water
- 1/2 pound bacon, cooked and crumbled
- 3/4 cup light brown sugar
- 3/4 cup ketchup
- 1 tablespoon dry mustard

Salt, pepper and liquid hickory smoke seasoning
Place beans in a heavy saucepan. Add coffee and water and bring to a boil. Boil 2 minutes and remove from heat. Cover and set aside 1 hour.

Return beans to boil. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, 1 hour. Skim off any foam. Stir in bacon, brown sugar, ketchup and mustard. Preheat oven to 275 degrees. Transfer beans to oven-proof casserole dish with lid. Cover and bake 2-3 hours, stirring occasionally and adding more water or coffee if dry. Season to taste with salt, pepper and hickory seasoning. Serves 8-10.

Serving size: 3/4 cup. Per serving: 431 calories, 22 grams protein, 15 grams fat, 54 grams carbohydrates, 1,004 milligrams sodium, 24 milligrams cholesterol

PATTI SCOTT, Pedernales EC
(submitted both recipes above)

January

1. Polar Bear Swim, **Kyle**, (512) 268-5341 or www.cityofkyle.com/parks
1. Corsicana Opry, **Corsicana**, (903) 872-8226
- 4, 18. Brush Country Music Jamboree, **Three Rivers**, (361) 786-3334
7. Knights of Columbus Fish Fry, **Dripping Springs**, (512) 894-4470
8. Candle Making Demonstration, **West Columbia**, (979) 345-4656 or www.tpwd.state.tx.us
8. Happy Birthday Elvis opry, **Grapevine**, (817) 481-8733 or www.grapevinetexasusa.com
- 8-9. Antiques Show, **Brenham**, 1-888-BRENHAM or www.BrenhamTexas.com
- 11-12, 18-19. Chicken House Flea Market, **Stephenville**, (254) 968-0888
- 13-14. Community Garage Sale, **Kirbyville**, (409) 423-5827
14. American Music in the Texas Hill Country concert, **Fredericksburg**, (830) 997-2835 or www.pioneermuseum.com
- 14-16. Trade Days, **Livingston**, (936) 327-3656 or www.cityoflivingston-tx.com/tradedays
15. Burns Night Dinner, honoring poet Robert Burns, **Austin**, (512) 327-3377 or www.scotsfoaustin.org

15. Coastal Bend Doll Show & Sale, **Corpus Christi**, (830) 606-5868
15. Children's Fishing Event, **Castroville**, (830) 931-2133 or www.tpwd.state.tx.us
15. Pineywoods Pickin' Parlor Concert, **Mineola**, (903) 569-8037 or www.pineywoodspickinparlor.com
15. Kids' Discovery Fest, **Victoria**, (361) 485-9140
21. Country Opry, **Victoria**, (361) 552-9347
- 21-22. Woodcarving Show, **McAllen**, (956) 581-2448 or www.iidbs.com/riogrand
- 21-23. "Windblown," world premiere of play, **Conroe**, (936) 441-7469
22. McMullen County Junior Livestock Show, **Tilden**, (361) 274-3323
22. Bluegrass Show, **Quitman**, (903) 763-4411 or www.quitman.com
23. Motorcycle Swap Meet, **Conroe**, (254) 687-9066 or www.texascooter.com

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., March submissions must be received prior to January 10. Events are listed according to space available. We appreciate photos with credits but regret that they cannot be returned.



Young bluegrass phenomenon Sarah Jarosz performed at a 2004 American Music concert in Fredericksburg. The 2005 concert series begins January 14.

February

1. Brush Country Music Jamboree, **Three Rivers**, (361) 786-3334
4. Knights of Columbus Fish Fry, **Dripping Springs**, (512) 894-4470
5. Corsicana Opry, **Corsicana**, (903) 872-8226

FESTIVAL OF THE MONTH BY JIM GRAMON

Bayou Bedlam: January 14–16, 2005, Houston

This month the Houston Area Traditional Dance Society (HATDS) will be hosting its annual Bayou Bedlam Contra Dancing event.



DALE REMPERT

Contra dancers in Dallas are enjoying a zesty "swing."

Contra was the most popular dance of the 1800s. Like square dancing, contra dancing is an American folk dance in which the dancers form sets of two parallel lines that run the length of the hall. Each dance consists of a sequence of moves that ends with couples having progressed one position up or down the set. As the sequence is repeated, a couple will eventually dance with every other couple in the set.

Many of the basic moves in contra dancing are similar to those in square dancing (swings, promenades, do-si-dos, allemandes), but whereas a square dance set comprises only four couples, the number of couples in a contra dance set is limited only by the length of the hall.

If you have never danced contra before, fear not; each dance is taught by the caller before it is danced, and most are easy to learn. Most of the tunes are jigs, reels and hornpipes

from Scots-Irish traditional music.

Bayou Bedlam events are held at Sokol Hall, located at 1314 W. Patton in Houston. Patton is a few blocks west of Interstate 45, about halfway between Loop 610 and Interstate 10.

So put on your dancin' shoes, and we'll see you there. For information on Bayou Bedlam, contact Mike Head at michead@sbcglobal.net or Alice Bohlae at (713) 861-4185 or www.hatds.org.

If you live in another area of the state, contra dances are held in Austin, Bryan-College Station, Dallas, Denton, Huntsville and San Antonio at least once a month. There are lots of contra dance websites—try www.contradancelinks.com or <http://blake.prohosting.com/austinbd/contratx>.

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

First Car

Although we enjoyed viewing the photo submissions for First Car, the stories that accompanied the photographs stole the show—they were delightful, comical or poignant by turns. There aren't many groups who get more attached to their vehicles than Texans. Thanks to everyone who shared their stories and photos. We've selected a few of the more memorable for this page.

The topic for March is "Insects and Bugs." Send your best photos, along with your name, address, daytime phone, co-op affiliation and a brief description to Insects and Bugs, Focus on Texas, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704, before January 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.



When her grandfather offered 16-year-old Laura Beal his 1966 Dodge one-ton truck, it had an electrical problem and wouldn't start. She asked, "Does it have power steering?" The answer was no. "Does it have an automatic transmission?" Again, no. "Does it have air conditioning?" No. "Does it have a radio?" No. "Well," she asked, "just what does it have?" Her father told her that it had a single-speed windshield wiper and a heater. She thought about it and said, "OK!" The Beals added an AM/FM radio and painted it blue. Laura, a petite teenager, handled the truck well and never had an accident in it, although she wondered why cars meeting her on the road to school would move over to give her ample room. Her parents, longtime Cherokee County EC members Wayne and Elaine Beal, said, "Everyone on campus knew her; maybe not her name, but she was 'the girl who drove that big blue truck.'"



After a wedding, Adolph Noak would take the newlyweds for a ride down the old Grassyville-Paige Road in his first car—a 1912 Buick. Bluebonnet EC member Billy DeMent, Noak's grandson, submitted the photo of his grandfather's car, decorated for a matrimonial drive along the then-unpaved roads.



Pretty in pink, little Miss McKenzie Taylor Massey takes a drive in her "first car" on Easter Sunday at her grandmother's house. Her grandmother ("Gommy" to McKenzie) is Joyce Bausch, a Trinity Valley EC member.



Leon and Betty Rodgers show off their first car, a 1938 Chevy coupe, gray with red-stripe trim. The Rodgerses are members of Trinity Valley EC.

UPCOMING in Focus on Texas

Issue	Subject	Deadline
March	Insects & Bugs	January 10
April	Gardens/Gardening	February 10
May	Caught Napping	March 10
June	Picnics	April 10
July	Water Gardens & Ponds	May 10
August	Those Were the Days	June 10



The June Bug Caper of 1906

A stout ceramic pitcher, slightly chipped but glazed with sweeping strokes of hazel, turquoise and olive green, sits high on a shelf in my kitchen. Years ago, my Great Aunt Irma Arnold regularly filled it with sweet iced tea and kept it near her elbow at the dining table so she could handily replenish her guests' glasses.

She died a childless widow with countless nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews. Many of us spent a day in her beloved, well-kept home in Wimberley, dividing her furniture and personal belongings among the families. Young and barely married three years, I asked for her tea pitcher. To me, that simple container represented Aunt Irma and all the good qualities I hoped I'd have someday.

Feisty and outspoken, yet warm and generous, not to mention a first-class cook who could gracefully turn out a lavish meal in just a few hours, Aunt Irma was a true Southern woman. Despite her petite stature (she wasn't even 5 feet tall), thinning gray hair and thick bifocal glasses, Aunt Irma stubbornly stood her ground on any issue that came her way. Woe be to anyone who dared go crosswise against her.

Even as a child, Aunt Irma exhibited qualities of the strong woman she would ultimately become, as proven by a favorite family story my father loves to tell. He calls it "The June Bug Caper of 1906."

On a spring afternoon in rural Cuero, 6-year-old Irma Schwab scrambled up a tree not far from her family's home. It wasn't long before an older, tomboy-bully cousin discovered her high among the branches and decided that's where she'd stay awhile. Thus, every time Irma tried to shimmy down, the cousin would swat her bare legs with a willow switch, and back up Irma would go.

This continued for two or three hours, giving Irma a substantial amount of time to think. And plot. The cousin would not go unpunished. Irma would get her revenge.

Finally, someone shouted a call for supper. The cousin sprinted away, and Irma escaped from her lofty prison.

Later that evening in the yard, Irma caught the biggest June bug with the sharpest claws that she could find. Then she found some string and made sure it reached a precise length she had in mind. One end she tied securely around the June bug.

On this particular night, the screens around the sleeping porch had been taken down for repairs, so all the children, including Irma and her mean cousin, were sleeping on cots covered with mosquito netting. Patient and determined, Irma waited until she was sure everyone in the house was asleep. Then she tiptoed to the cousin's cot, lifted the netting and released the June bug. Stealing back to bed, Irma firmly clutched the string's other end.

Eventually, the June bug crawled on bare skin, which immediately triggered a loud scream and much thrashing from the cousin's cot. Irma quickly reeled in her six-legged accomplice and hid it beneath the sheets.

She and everyone else in the house, including stern Mrs. Schwab, converged on the cousin, demanding to know what had happened. The distraught girl explained that a monstrous bug in her bed had attacked her! Mrs. Schwab searched the bedclothes and netting, and even peered beneath the cot. Nothing.

It must have been a nightmare, Mrs. Schwab said before ordering everyone back to bed.

When Irma felt sure all were asleep once again, she quietly tiptoed back to the cousin's cot and slipped the June bug under the netting. To her satisfaction and great delight, her cousin gave an outstanding repeat performance. Quickly, Irma reeled in the beetle.

By this time, the irritated mother had had enough. The next time the cousin screamed and woke the household, Mrs. Schwab vowed she'd dunk

the girl in a tub of cold water.

Little Irma's well-plotted scheme went according to plan because the next time the June bug was put to work, it found a nose. Naturally, the cousin couldn't refrain from screaming in horror. This time, when no reasonable explanation could be made for the ruckus, the cousin was promptly immersed in a tub filled with cold water.



JOHN WILSON

Smiling to herself, Irma untied her June bug friend and released it through an open window. Then she fell asleep. As for the cousin, she lay awake all night, nervously awaiting the next attack. Which, of course, never came.

In our family, we all love that age-old story. Obviously feisty and strong-willed from the start, outspoken yet so gracious in her older years, Aunt Irma was the ultimate Southern woman who never backed down or gave up. I still hope to be like her someday. Especially every time I serve guests from one chipped but cherished iced tea pitcher.

Sheryl Smith-Rodgers is a frequent contributor who lives in Blanco.