

TEXAS CO-OP POWER

**Texas
Children's
Literature**



PLUS:

**Fuel Woes
Buttermilk Recipes
Eagle Fest**

DON'T FUEL THE FIRE!

Wildfires

Prevention:

- Take care with flammables.
- Mow grass short. Rake leaves. Clear away refuse.
- Keep hay bales and firewood away from structures, electric lines and rights-of-way.
- Allow your co-op to keep power lines and rights-of-way free of trees and shrubs.
- Trim dead or dormant shrubbery close to houses and barns.
- Make a family evacuation plan. Have an inventory of home valuables in fireproof box.

If Fire Is Reported Near Your Community:

- Place photos, vital records and small items of value in your car. Park your car facing the direction of escape.
- Clear a fire break around buildings.
- Shut gas off at meter. (Only a qualified professional can safely turn the gas back on.)
- Turn off propane tanks.
- Leave the electricity on, especially if it powers a well.
- Turn on sprinklers. Wet down shrubs close to structures.
- Wet down roof and above-ground fuel tanks.
- If advised to evacuate, do so immediately. Choose a route away from the fire hazard, and be alert to changes in the speed and direction of fire and smoke.



**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.

TEXAS CO-OP POWER

A MAGAZINE ABOUT TEXAS LIVING

This month in *Texas Co-op Power* we report on a topical issue near and dear to our electric cooperative hearts—energy!

Shortfalls in domestic supplies—a result of this year's devastating hurricane season and an ever-increasing worldwide demand for fossil fuels—are driving energy costs higher and higher.

But co-op members will not be hit as hard as most consumers, according to Mike Williams, president and CEO of Texas Electric Cooperatives—the statewide association to which your cooperative belongs. That's because co-ops have done a good job diversifying their fuel mix and because they are not as dependent on the spot market as some other utilities. Electric co-ops work hard to get the best energy prices for their members every day.

As this issue goes to press, devastating wildfires are sweeping across the state and the threat continues. Please read the tips for prevention and response in the Texas Co-op Principles in Action section located in the front of the magazine.

In our second feature, we learn that Texans love Texas (no surprise to us)! While researching her children's literature feature, Managing Editor Carol Moczygemba discovered that Texas children are keen on tales about Texas. And why not? There are some pretty exciting true-life stories about the history of this great state!

Buttermilk? It's a "new" ingredient for many contemporary cooks. But Food Editor Shannon Oelrich shows us that it is a necessary component in these delectable desserts.

Enjoy!

Peg Champion
VP, Communications/Publisher



Little **BRENNA ELIAZ** may need some cleaning up herself after helping her sisters, **LILLY** and **CLAIRE**, wash the family car. Her mother, **BRIGID**, is a Pedernales EC member. For more car wash photos, turn to page 37.



GREG SMITH

Children check out books at the Uvalde library.

FEATURES

Once Upon a Time in Texas: Children's Literature With a Texas Twist 6

By Carol Moczygemba, Photos by Rick Patrick
Texas children especially enjoy stories about their home state. We offer some great book suggestions.

The Rising Cost of Doing Business 12

By Reed Karaim, Illustration by Gil Adams
Fuel prices and global competition contribute to the cost of electricity.

DEPARTMENTS

Texas Co-op Principles in Action 5

Co-op chairman gives wildfire prevention tips.

Texas Living 26

Buttermilk, the baker's friend, and Eagle Fest in Emory.

Focus on Texas 37

At the Car Wash

Texas, USA 38

By Judy Alter
Edom On My Mind

Cover Photo: Eight-year-old Baxter Austin holds *Texans, The Wild West in American History* series, by Gail Stewart, Rourke Publishing Group, 1990, and *Texas Facts and Symbols* by Emily McAuliffe, Capstone Press, 1998. Photo by Greg Smith taken at El Progreso Memorial Library in Uvalde.

TEXAS CO-OP POWER



SHARE THE POWER!

Texas Co-op Power is the Texas living magazine with a rural, suburban and small town focus. Each month you will read entertaining articles about Texas people, Texas history, Texas nature, Texas travel and Texas food.

And, in every issue we feature a personal look at chosen towns in "Texas, USA" along with "Around Texas," featuring selected events around the state.

For just \$15 a subscription, you can share *Texas Co-op Power* with friends and family members who live far away or in big cities!

Please send a 12-month gift subscription to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Gift subscription sent by:

Include a \$15 check for each subscription made out to *Texas Co-op Power*. Mail to Subscriptions, *Texas Co-op Power*, 2550 South IH-35, Austin, TX 78704

TEXAS CO-OP POWER

VOLUME 62 FEBRUARY 2006 NUMBER 8

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

Audie Morris, Decatur, Chair
John Herrera, Mercedes, Vice Chair
Greg Jones, Jacksonville, Secretary-Treasurer
Charles Castleberry, Tulia
Gerald W. Lemons, Itasca
Mark Rose, Giddings
William "Buff" Whitten, Eldorado

PRESIDENT/CEO

Mike Williams, Austin

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Roland Witt, Coleman, Chair
Barron Christensen, Douglassville, Vice Chair
Bill Harbin, Floydada
Kim Hooper, Bluegrove
Billy P. Jones, Corsicana
Larry Oefinger, Hondo
Mark Rose, Giddings

COMMUNICATIONS STAFF

Peg Champion, Vice President, Communications/
Publisher

Kaye Northcott, Editor
Carol Moczygmba, Managing Editor
Suzi Sands, Art Director
Martin Bevins, Advertising Director
Louie Bond, Copy Editor/Writer
Andy Doughty, Production Designer
Sandra Forston, Communications Assistant
Jo Johnenning, Production Assistant
Karen Nejtek, Production Coordinator
Shannon Oelrich, Food Editor/Proofreader
Tracy Paccone, Communications Assistant
Patti Przybylinski, Communications Project Coordinator
Alex Sargent, Production Artist
Ellen Stader, Proofreader
Cheryl Tucker, Field Editor
Issue Designer: Clark Bystrom
Interns: Sarah Bond, Jessica Muhlstein

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 \$3.84 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, 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.

Direct questions or comments about advertising to Martin Bevins, Advertising Director.



© Copyright 2006 Texas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. Reproduction of this issue or any portion of it is expressly prohibited without written permission. Willie Wiredhand © Copyright 2006 National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.



Texas Electric Cooperatives

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

State Co-op Chairman Gives Wildfire Prevention Tips



GLEN E. ELLMAN

As this issue of *Texas Co-op Power* goes to press, nearly 260,000 acres of Texas are either in flames or charred black by storms of wildfires. Almost four-fifths of the state's counties are under a burn ban, and the threat continues.

Many co-op members have suffered significant damage to pasture and farmland, loss of livestock and homes, and—most tragic—loss of life. The co-ops' role in their respective communities is never more pronounced than in times of great need.

The scores of co-op employees who give their time and energy as volunteer firefighters immediately come to mind. During the past several weeks, these men and women have willingly put themselves in harm's way in the service of their neighbors.

Audie Morris, a director with Wise EC and chair of the Texas Electric Cooperatives (TEC) board of directors, is a professional firefighter who deeply understands the consequences of carelessness. Morris fully supports cooperatives' safety mission in their communities. "Your local co-op is

constantly concerned with members' safety. At a time like this, these messages of prevention and precaution are even more important," he said.

Here are tips on preventative and emergency measures to take during this unusually hazardous season:

PREVENTION

- Take care with cigarettes, matches and other flammables.
- Mow grass short. Trim grass from fence lines. Rake leaves. Clear away refuse.
- Keep hay bales and firewood away from buildings, electric lines and rights-of-way.
- Allow your co-op to keep power lines free of tree branches.
- Keep shrubs and trees out of power line rights-of-way.
- Trim dead or dormant shrubbery close to houses or barns. In highly vulnerable areas, firefighters recommend removing shrubs within 15 feet of a residence.
- Make a family evacuation plan. Have an inventory of home valuables in a fireproof box.

IF FIRE IS REPORTED NEAR YOUR COMMUNITY:

- Place photos, vital records and small items of value in your car. Park your car facing the direction of escape.
- Clear a fire break around buildings.
- Shut gas off at the meter. (Only a qualified professional can safely turn the gas back on.)
- Turn off propane tanks.
- Leave the electricity on, especially if it powers a well.
- Turn on sprinklers.
- Wet down shrubs within 15 feet of houses or barns.
- Place lawn sprinklers on the roof and near above-ground fuel tanks. Wet down the roof.
- Close windows, vents, doors, blinds and nonflammable window coverings. Remove flammable drapes and curtains.
- Close interior doors and windows to prevent drafts.
- If advised to evacuate, do so immediately. Choose a route away from the fire hazard, and be alert to changes in the speed and direction of fire and smoke.



Once Upon a

C h i l d r e n ' s

“Once Upon a Time ...”

Those four simple words conjure some of the warmest memories of my childhood, times when my mother would hoist me on her lap and read me a story. Later, when I had grown past easy lifting, she would take me to the library, where I made a beeline to the children’s section to sit on the floor for hours in front of shelves full of adventure, fantasy and exotic characters. I delighted in the feel of the clothbound covers and the thick, ivory-colored pages. Each book was a new place where I could travel unhindered by reality.

Today’s children are so bombarded with activities and distractions—not to mention ever-more enticing computer games—it’s surprising they would care a fig about books. But apparently, they do. Witness the Harry Potter phenom-

enon, for example. Bring to mind the blocks-long lines of children and their parents waiting for the midnight release of Potter’s latest adventure at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

Judging by bookstore sales and library checkouts, Texas children especially enjoy stories about their home state. Along with an increasing interest in Texas children’s literature, there is a growing cadre of publishers, writers and illustrators who have jumped on the wagon.

Jean Holland, youth librarian at the Austin Public Library, believes youngsters are intrigued with Texas themes because of glamorous ideas about cowboys, the ranching life and Texas folk tales. “Texas books give them an opportunity to learn about their culture and place them in their world,” she says.

In the following pages, we offer a small sampling of children’s and young adult titles inspired by the people, places, legends, history and tall tales of Texas. Suggested reader ages are approximate. Even if certain titles are not available at local libraries, patrons can obtain them through the nationwide interlibrary loan program.

BY CAROL MOCZYGEMBA • PHOTOS BY RICK PATRICK

Lilah, 6, and West Bevins, 3, of Austin sit in their chair-for-two by the fireplace. Lilah has been reading since she was 4. West loves to listen.



Time in Texas

L i t e r a t u r e W i t h a T e x a s T w i s t

PICTURE BOOKS

Toddlers to Beginning Readers

BLUEBONNET GIRL ▼

Michael Lind, Illustrator Kate Kiesler
Henry Holt, 2003

This is a beautiful version of how a Comanche girl sacrificed her doll to save her people from a terrible drought. The doll had a little bonnet made of blue jay feathers. After she gave up her favorite possession, the rains came, bringing spring flowers. "And still every spring come the showers that bring bluebonnets to prairies again. And where they appear, it is said, you can hear the laugh of a child in the wind."



TEXAS ALPHABET ►

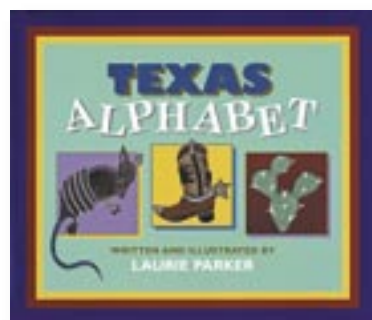
Laurie Parker, Writer/Illustrator
Quail Ridge Press, 2000

Parents get a break on this one. The rhymes go trippingly off the tongue as children learn their ABCs. "C," for example, "is for COWBOYS on grid-iron and saddle, COTTON BOWL, CACTUS, COYOTES and CATTLE."

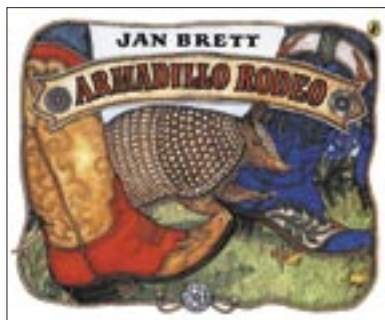
ALAMO ACROSS TEXAS

Jill Stover, Writer/Illustrator
Lothrop Lee & Shepard, 1998

During a drought, Alamo, a slightly goggle-eyed alligator, starts off across Texas in search of a suitable watery place to live. The bright



pastel illustrations show the landscape of the area and the exotic creatures that inhabit it. Young listeners will join in the chorus of "He walked and he walked and he walked" as Alamo makes a circuit of the state.



◀ ARMADILLO RODEO

Jan Brett, Writer/Illustrator
G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1995

A young armadillo strays from his mother and brothers and winds up following what his poor eyesight tells him is a red armadillo. (It's really a red cowboy boot.)



HISTORY

JOHNNY TEXAS

7-10 years

Carol Hoff,
Illustrator Bob Meyers

Hendrick-Long Publishing
Company, 1992; originally
published in 1950 by Wil-

cox and Follett Publishing
Johnny emigrates
from Germany to
Texas to start a
new life in a farm-

ing community

outside Houston.

The Texas Revolution begins, and Johnny proves himself steadfast and inventive.



It's spring of 1878 on the Rockin' W in South Texas, and 14-year-old Hallie embarks on the adventure of a lifetime along the Chisholm Trail.

◀ GALVESTON'S SUMMER OF THE STORM

10-14 years

Julie Lake

Texas Christian University Press, 2003

A young girl, Abby Kate, is enjoying an extended visit

with her grandmother in Galveston in September of 1900 when the nation's worst hurricane hits. We follow Abby through the terror of the storm and learn how she saves herself and how the citizens of Galveston regroup to heal their city.



family farm outside Bastrop urging volunteers to join Sam Houston's army after the fall of the Alamo. She joins the Runaway Scrape and follows Houston and his army to San Jacinto, confident that he will save Texas.

COMANCHE SONG

12-16 years

Janice Shefelman, Illustrator Tom Shefelman
Eakin Press, 1999

Tsena Naku ("He Who Hears the Wolf"), a Comanche boy who was 16 in 1840, is granted a vision and special powers that enable him to survive great hardships and become a leader of his people. He must learn how to live in the world the Texans are making.

TALES FROM THE HOMEPLACE, ADVENTURES OF A TEXAS

FARM GIRL

9-12 years

Harriet Burandt and Shelley Dale
Henry Holt and Company, 1997

Nine compelling stories based on the childhood memories of Irene Hutto, who grew up in the 1930s on a cotton farm around Robstown.

GET ALONG LITTLE DOGIES, THE CHISHOLM TRAIL DIARY OF HALLIE LOU WELLS

9-12 years

Lisa Waller Rogers

Texas Tech University Press

SAM HOUSTON IS MY HERO

12-16 years

Judith M. Alter

TCU Press, 2003

Fourteen-year-old Cat Jennings rides across South Texas from her

◀ THE STORY OF TEXAS

12-16 years

John Edward Weems and Ron Stone
Illustrator Tom Jones

Shearer Publishing, 1986

The Story of Texas distills historian John Edward Weems' highly readable adult work into a quick trip through Texas history from prehistoric times to the Texas Revolution to the 20th century. One-stop shopping for great moments in Texas history.

SPANISH AND ENGLISH

THE DAY IT SNOWED TORTILLAS/ EL DÍA QUE NEVARON TORTILLAS

4-adult

Joe Hayes, Illustrator

Antonio Castro Lopez

Cinco Puntos Press, 2003

These 10 folktales told in Spanish and English are from West Texas and eastern New Mexico. The perfectly cadenced prose and witty verses tell stories that are sly, wise, funny and sometimes nicely creepy. Hayes has

performed these stories until they are as polished as stones in a creek.

FAMILY PICTURES/CUADROS DE FAMILIA ▶

6-adult

Carmen Lomas Garza, Writer/Illustrator

Children's Book Press, 1990

These stories of the author's girlhood in Kingsville explore Hispanic-American traditions and culture from curanderas to homemade tamales to the custom of Las Posadas.





ALAMO

INSIDE THE ALAMO ▼

9-12 years

Jim Murphy, historic photos and illustrations
Delacorte Books for Young Readers, 2003

This account of the 13-day siege is based on historical research. Full-page profiles with photographs of the major figures, such as Jim Bowie and Davy Crockett, appear throughout the book. Long-told stories, such as Travis's drawing a line in the sand, are gently examined for inconsistencies.



SUSANNA OF THE ALAMO

6-10 years

John Jakes, Illustrator Paul Bacon
Voyager Books, 1990

Based on the true story of Susanna Dickinson, who survived the battle of the Alamo along with her 15-month-old daughter. Susanna becomes personally involved in the Texas battle for independence as she meets first with General Santa Anna, then General Sam Houston. Her courage and determination help save the citizens of her hometown of Gonzales from Santa Anna's advancing army.

I REMEMBER THE ALAMO

9-13 years

D. Anne Love
Yearling, 2001

Eleven-year-old Jessie is aghast when her impetuous father informs the family that he is moving them from Kentucky to Mexican Texas to fight for Texan independence and claim their future in a "brand-new country." Pa and Jessie's older brother, Yancy, join the Texan army of Colonel Fannin, and Jessie, her younger brother and their mother take refuge in the Alamo.

VOICES OF THE ALAMO

6-10 years

Sherry Garland, Illustrator Ronald Himler
Pelican Publishing Company, 2004

Sixteen historical/fictional characters from General Santa Anna and David Crockett to a contemporary boy recount their impressions of the Alamo. Includes lengthy background information and a glossary of Spanish words and phrases.

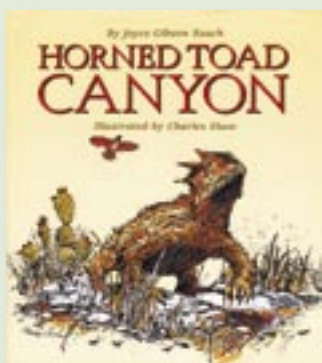
ANIMALS

HORNED TOAD CANYON ▶

3-6 years

Joyce Gibson Roach,
Illustrator Charles Shaw
Bright Sky Press, 2003

Nip, Tuck, Beam, Shine, Digger and Shorty are horned toads who live on the Southwestern Prairie, where they spend a lot of their time keeping out of the way of hawks, rattlesnakes and the like. It's safe to say that this is the only story ever written in which a thundering cattle stampede is told from the viewpoint of small reptiles.



Included is a natural history guide that is a good basic introduction to the Western habitat.

OLD YELLER

10-14 years

Fred Gipson
HarperCollins Children's Book Group, 1990

A beloved, classic coming-of-age story. Originally published in 1957, the book is elegantly written and full of hard-scrabble wisdom. A young boy is left in charge of his pioneer family's Texas farm while his father is away. His first protective act is to get rid of an old

yellow stray dog. That old dog is now legend. A heartwarming and heart-wrenching story of relationship, love and courage.

HANK THE COWDOG SERIES

9-12 years

John R. Erickson, Illustrator Gerald L. Holmes
Puffin and Viking Children's Books

West Texas author John Erickson's Hank the Cowdog books are set on a sprawling ranch inhabited by a cast of cowboys and animals. Hank, the narrator, sees himself as the suave and fearless Head of Ranch Security, but sometimes he's just the head of ranch screw-ups. The series includes 45 volumes.



NATURE, WILDFLOWERS

THE LEGEND OF THE BLUEBONNET

3-8 years

Tomie dePaola, *Writer/Illustrator*

G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1983

This is another version of the legend of the orphan Comanche girl whose touching sacrifice to the Great Spirits brought fields of bluebonnets and an end to the famine and drought that had claimed so many of her people's lives.

MISS LADY BIRD'S WILDFLOWERS ▼

7-10 years

Kathi Appelt, *Illustrator Joy Fisher Hein*

Harper Collins, 2005

The story of Lady Bird Johnson, from her childhood in the Piney Woods to her life as First Lady in the White House. Mrs. Johnson's love for wildflowers translated into her vision for beautifying the roadsides of the United States and the creation of the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin.



LEARN ABOUT TEXAS BIRDS ▶

7-11 years

Mark W.

Lockwood

Texas Parks and

Wildlife Press, 1997

This learning and activity book can serve as a child's initiation to birding. It's packed with information and has a coloring poster.



LEARN ABOUT TEXAS DINOSAURS ▶

7-11 years

Elena T. Ivy

Texas Parks and

Wildlife Press, 2001

Another great learning and activity book on a subject of wonder to every child—chock full of facts with a coloring poster.



If you can't find the book you're looking for at your local library or bookstore, there are several ways to obtain a copy.

TEXSHARE PROGRAM

Find out whether your library participates in TexShare. This state-funded program provides several services, including the TexShare Card program and databases. Participating libraries can issue a TexShare borrowing card that allows a library patron to use any other participating library across the state. This means you can visit another public or academic library, browse the shelves, and check out materials immediately. To find out if your library, or a library you want to use, participates in the TexShare Card program, visit www.texshare.edu.

NATIONAL INTERLIBRARY LOAN PROGRAM

Through the federally funded Interlibrary Loan (ILL) program, your librarian can help you obtain books that may not be on the shelves of your local library. ILL is a statewide network of academic, public and special libraries throughout Texas. Frequently this service is used to locate unusual or out-of-print items, including articles from old magazines and newspapers. The process takes from four to six weeks, and the service is usually free to the borrower. (Some lending libraries charge a fee or require special handling for rare or fragile items, which is then passed on to the borrower. Some libraries also recoup the cost of postage to return the item to the lending library.)

INTERNET RESOURCES

Two reliable Internet sources are www.abebooks.com and www.amazon.com. Abebooks is a good source for out-of-print or hard-to-find titles. Amazon handles used books as well as new.

SEVERE WEATHER! ARE YOU READY?

Flooding

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


Flood Safety Rules:

- Never drive through water on a road. It can be deeper than it appears. Floodwaters can damage roadways, creating invisible sinkholes or washed out bridges.
- Quickly leave your car if it stalls in water. Water displaces 1,500 pounds of weight for every foot it rises. It takes only 2 feet of water to push a 3,000-pound car downstream.
- Don't attempt to walk through rapidly running water. As little as 6 inches can knock adults off their feet.
- Keep an emergency kit in your car, including a flashlight with extra batteries, drinking water and a battery-operated radio.
- If you have a cell phone, program the number for police or fire department rescue.

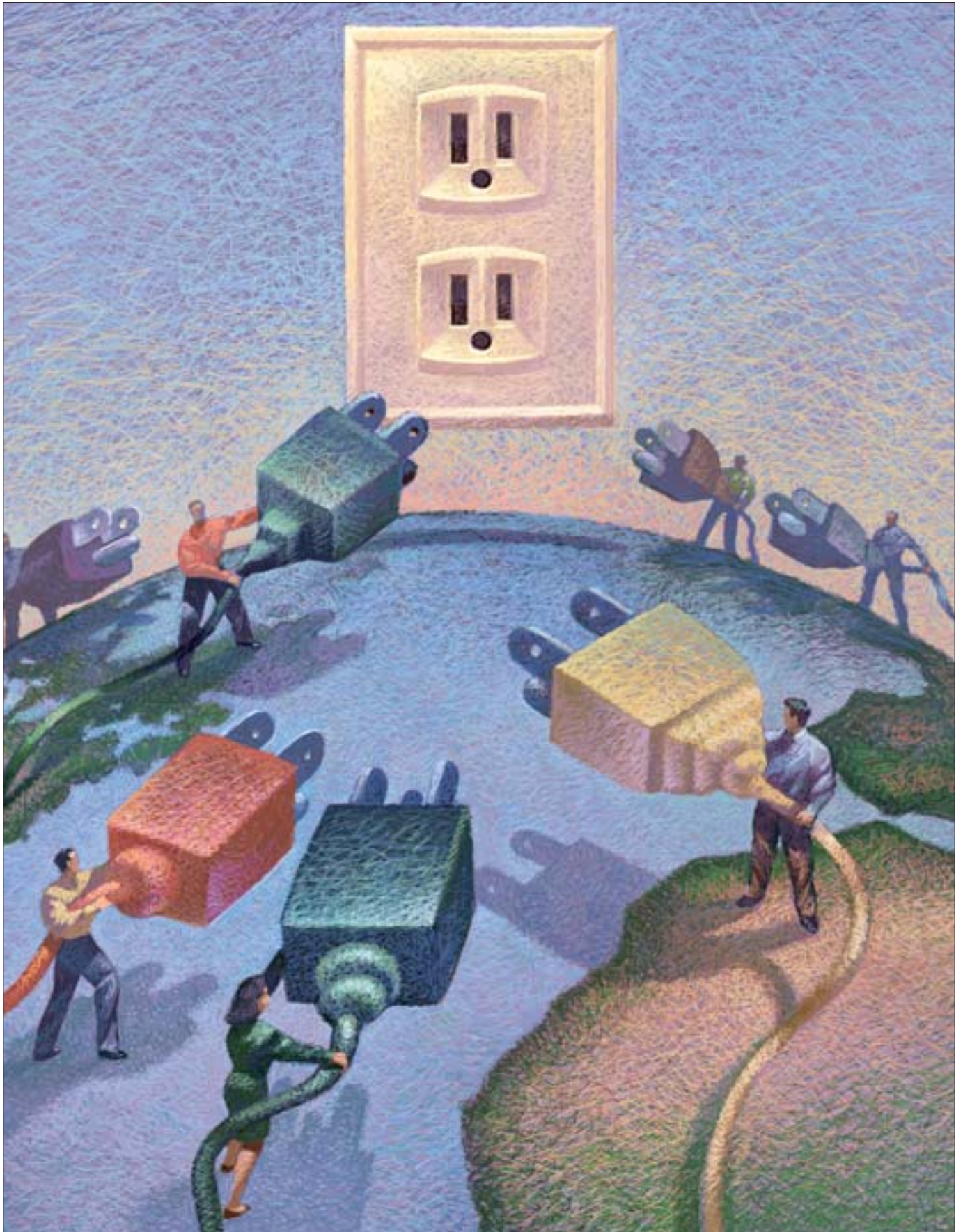
Take the high road when it comes to flood safety. Your life depends on it.



**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.



Worldwide electricity use could nearly double in the next two decades alone.

THE RISING COST OF DOING BUSINESS

Fuel prices and global competition contribute to the cost of electricity.

BY REED KARAIM • ILLUSTRATION BY GIL ADAMS

Gasoline prices have soared and natural gas prices are taking flight. The last thing consumers want to hear is more bad news about their energy costs. But, despite the best efforts of electric co-ops to hold the line, monthly electric bills may also be on the way up for many Americans.

The good news for co-op members is the increases they may experience shouldn't be as severe on average as those at the pump. The bad news, most analysts agree, is there could be several years of upward pressure on electric rates.

There are steps the power industry, the government and every consumer can take to help keep costs down. But a large part of the problem is simply that the world faces a new era of increased global competition for limited energy and other resources.

The new reality starts with much higher costs for natural gas, which will make it more costly for Texans to stay warm in the winter and cool in the summer. Natural gas is the fuel used to generate more than 70 percent of the electricity in Texas.

Almost all of the new power plants built during the last decade in the United States burn natural gas to generate electricity. The reason is simple: When the plans for those plants were on the drawing board, natural gas was

one of the great energy bargains, costing about \$2 per million Btu as recently as 2002.

The United States and Canada produced almost all the natural gas they



Several nations that used to export natural gas have started importing as their needs have grown.

used, so—unlike oil—the supply seemed less dependent on the whims of world markets and, in particular, the ups and downs of Middle Eastern politics.

But in 2005, natural gas went as high as \$14 per million Btu. That was a spike, but analysts project that prices will stay at least in the \$6 to \$8 range,

an increase of as much as 400 percent in only a few years.

The problem is the fuel that seemed to be a bargain was always subject to the basic laws of supply and demand. The United States and Canada now use all the natural gas they can pump out of the ground and more, leaving no slack in the system.

"We've been living on this razor's edge where any change in supply, any change in demand—any significant weather event—makes a difference," says Chris McGill, managing director, policy analysis for the American Gas Association. "We had a summer this year [2005] that was 19 percent warmer than normal. That's a huge deviation."

And 2005's devastating hurricane season will dampen the outlook for oil and gas production well into 2006. In a tight market, that can send prices skyrocketing.

To make up for shortfalls in domestic supply, the United States has imported natural gas from Canada and Mexico, as well as a small amount of liquefied natural gas, or LNG. Several nations that used to export natural gas—including the United Kingdom and China—have started importing as their needs have grown. Efforts are underway to expand LNG import capability on a dramatic scale, but competition for it has also increased.



Co-ops have long been industry leaders in finding innovative ways to hold down costs.

Countries such as India, China and Brazil are rapidly industrializing, and their needs are changing. World energy consumption is projected to increase by 57 percent from 2002 to 2025, according to the Energy Information Administration.

Worldwide electricity use is expected to grow even faster. It could nearly double in the next two decades alone, the agency projects in its study, "International Energy Outlook 2005."

Leading this charge is China, which recently announced another year of sharp economic growth above 9 percent. When David Mohre, executive director of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's energy and power division, toured China recently, he learned that one out of every five construction cranes currently in use is in the booming Shanghai region. The Chinese economic juggernaut, Mohre points out, means more competition for everything from oil to the steel and cement used to build power plants.

Here in the United States, which still uses the most power of any nation in the world, the demand for electricity is growing more modestly. Rising natural gas costs here could be partially offset by an increased investment in nuclear or coal-fired plants—although both face regulatory and environmental hurdles—and by

increased conservation by consumers.

Smart homeowner choices, along with more investment in alternative energy sources such as solar and wind generation, can all help reduce dependence on world energy markets.

The Energy Information Administration's forecast shows energy costs falling back from last year's highs, but not to previous lows, and then increasing more slowly over several years.

Luckily, rising energy costs don't look as bad for co-op members as for most consumers. "The generation and transmission cooperatives that supply much of the power to the co-op network have done a good job of diversifying their fuel mix to help mitigate increases in one fuel type," said Mike Williams, Texas Electric Cooperatives CEO.

Most also are highly rated by Wall Street. This means they can raise money for needed improvements more affordably than many utilities, according to Williams.

Cooperatives have tended to take a long-term view and build solid systems that provide stability for their consumer-members. They've long been industry leaders in finding innovative ways to hold down costs.

Adjustments in rates are part of the new reality. Electric cooperatives, however, hold one final advantage. They're owned by the people they serve. As Mohre puts it: "Co-ops are not for profit. They don't try to get the highest price from their members, but the lowest price for their members."

Arizona-based Reed Karaim writes frequently on electric co-op issues.

RESOURCES

Air-Conditioning and Refrigeration Institute, www.ari.org

The Alliance to Save Energy, www.ase.org

American Architectural Manufacturers Association, www.aamanet.org

American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, www.aceee.org

American Society of Landscape Architects, www.asla.org

American Solar Energy Society, www.ases.org

Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers, www.aham.org

Cellulose Insulation Manufacturers Association, www.cellulose.org

Efficient Windows Collaborative, www.efficientwindows.org

Energy Star, www.energystar.gov

Federal Trade Commission, Bureau of Consumer Protection, www.ftc.gov

Insulation Contractors Association of America, www.insulate.org

National Arbor Day Foundation, www.arborday.org

National Association of Home Builders, www.nahb.org

National Association of State Energy Officials, www.naseo.org

National Insulation Association, www.insulation.org

North American Insulation Manufacturers Association, www.naima.org

Polyisocyanurate Insulation Manufacturers Association, www.pima.org

Rocky Mountain Institute, www.rmi.org

Solar Energy Industries Association, www.seia.org

Solar Rating and Certification Corporation, www.solar-rating.org

Texas Electric Cooperatives, www.texas-ec.org

U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy portal, www.eere.energy.gov

Window and Door Manufacturers Association, www.wdma.com

Tips To Avoid an Electrifying Experience

Most deaths and injuries caused by electrical hazards are preventable, according to the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI). Founded in 1994, ESFI is North America's only non-profit organization dedicated exclusively to promoting electrical safety in the home, school and workplace. It is funded by leading electrical manufacturers, internationally recognized testing laboratories, electrical unions and associations, utilities and consumer groups.

ESFI offers these tips to help you avoid problems with electricity:

- Insulation is a primary protection against electric shock, but it can get worn or cracked. Inspect it regularly.
- Replace damaged electrical equipment or have it repaired at an authorized repair center.
- Replace frayed cords, broken plugs or cracks that could cause hazards; cut and throw out damaged cords. Look for frayed cords on power tools.
- Plug grounded (three-wire) tools only into grounded outlets.
- Don't pick up power tools by their power cords.
- Read and obey all signs and posted warnings. Don't let these important sources of information become an unnoticed part of the landscape.
- Don't work with electricity in the rain. Use ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protection when working where water is near electricity, in areas such your kitchen, laundry room, bathroom or outdoors, to protect against electric shock.
- Leave technical, complicated or confusing tasks involving electricity to electricians and other specialists.

THE MOST TASTEFUL OF GIFTS!

*With 128 pages of mouthwatering recipes,
the Texas Co-op Power Cookbook
makes a great gift for friends and family.*



RECIPE FOR A HAPPY YEAR

Fill your year with lots of tasty treats from your favorite magazine in the *Texas Co-op Power Cookbook*. It's also a great gift for a friend or neighbor, so they can share a year full of fun and flavor!

Order Form

Mail to:	Mail to:
Name _____	Name _____
Address _____	Address _____
City _____	City _____
State _____ Zip _____	State _____ Zip _____
Mail to:	Mail to:
Name _____	Name _____
Address _____	Address _____
City _____	City _____
State _____ Zip _____	State _____ Zip _____

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

MAKE YOUR HOME MORE ENERGY EFFICIENT, GET A TAX BREAK



If you're planning to upgrade your thermostat, buy Energy Star-approved windows, or install a highly efficient central air conditioner, save your receipts. You could qualify for a tax credit in 2006 or 2007.

Starting January 1, consumers can receive tax credits of up to \$500 on home improvements that help stop energy waste.

That includes up to \$200 for exte-

rior windows and up to \$300 for energy-efficient central air conditioners, heat pumps or water heaters.

The Energy Policy Act of 2005, which Congress adopted over the summer, also allows energy-wise homeowners to take one-time credits of up to:

- 30 percent of the cost (up to \$2,000) of installing solar-powered hot-water systems that do not heat a

swimming pool or hot tub.

- \$150 for installing of a highly efficient furnace or boiler.

- 10 percent of the cost of an advanced main air-circulating fan.

- The energy bill also allows a limited number of buyers of hybrid cars to take tax credits ranging from \$1,700 to \$3,000.

But the offer is good only between January 1, 2006, and December 31, 2007. It may not be applied to energy-efficient improvements made in 2005.

The Internal Revenue Service will soon issue guidelines for claiming the credits. It's likely taxpayers will fill out an extra form when filing income taxes that shows how much they spent on specific energy improvements.

Tax advisers are cautioning homeowners that the credits come with lots of limitations and requirements, so it's best to consult a professional when filing 2006 and 2007 taxes.

The Alliance To Save Energy estimates the new tax credits will save consumers more than \$1 billion and, because they encourage people to purchase energy-efficient devices, reduce America's energy use by up to 2 percent.

STAY WARM WITHOUT GOING BROKE

It's going to cost more to heat your home this winter, but the price hike doesn't have to freeze your budget.

Save money—and energy—by wisely managing your energy use while the weather is cold. To get the most from your energy dollar:

- Add attic insulation and weatherstripping around doors and windows. Both keep the cold outdoors and the heat indoors.

- Trade your old thermostat for one you can program to turn the heat

down a bit when you leave for work or go to bed. Programmable thermostats also allow you to warm up the house just before you get home for the day or wake up in the morning.

- Replace inefficient incandescent light bulbs, which waste energy by producing more heat than light, with long-lasting compact fluorescent bulbs.

Just a few inexpensive changes around the house can help keep your electric bills a bit lower during a season of rising energy costs.



Installing attic insulation is an energy saver.

FIREPLACE ALTERATIONS CAN INCREASE EFFICIENCY, SAFETY



Picture your family gathered around the fireplace enjoying the crackle and character a fire can bring to a room. Now picture your electric bill, and be prepared to cringe.

While traditional fireplaces have such a warm place in people's hearts that builders find it difficult to sell homes without them, wood-burning fires actually have negative efficiency. They emit little or no warmth. And fireplaces are drafty, so they send warm air up the chimney.

Wood-burning fires also can create particles that pollute the air indoors and outdoors and could poison the house with carbon monoxide.

Before you decide to close up your fireplace, try improving the efficiency and safety of your beloved hearth:

- Close the fireplace damper when you're not burning wood. This will cut down on the loss of warm room air through the chimney.
- Cover the front of the fireplace

with tempered glass doors or fireplace covers, which seal the fireplace opening and prevent room air from escaping through it.

- Install a heat exchanger, which will circulate the fire's warmth throughout the room.

- Hire a professional to sweep your chimney and clean and maintain the fireplace.

- Use artificial manufactured logs, which reduce pollutant emissions by almost 80 percent.

- Replace wood with electric "logs" that you can insert into the fireplace, or plug in an electric fireplace instead of burning wood.

- Install an advanced wood-combustion fireplace. This design can be retrofitted into an existing fireplace and involves the use of airtight doors and an insulated outer casing. It almost entirely eliminates pollutants, while raising fireplace efficiency to almost 70 percent.

FOR HEART-HEALTHY COOKING, TRY AN ELECTRIC GRILL

Before you give your heart to someone this Valentine's Day, make sure it's healthy.

February is the American Heart Association's National Heart Month, and to make sure you're keeping your heart in tip-top shape, the association recommends lowering your fat intake by choosing alternatives to frying foods like baking, steaming and especially grilling.

But when freezing weather and lack of time prevent you from firing up the barbecue, consider an indoor electric grill for fast, easy and healthy cooking.

Indoor grills emulate the flavor and style of outdoor grilling, and help

reduce fat because the nonstick surfaces don't require greasing and the ridges drain fat away from meat.

Indoor grills are available in several styles. The popular two-sided contact grill offers faster grilling and locks moisture in while allowing fat to drip off through the grill ridges. Flat, one-sided grills—which can be electric or stovetop—allow for crispy food that is as close to real grilling as you can get, and still whisk away fatty juices to the outside of the cooking surface.

Try these tips to make indoor grilling simple and healthy:

- Choose a grill that is the right size for your family's cooking needs. They range from small personal grills

to large ones that can cook up to six burgers at a time.

- Look for a model with wattage between 1,200 and 1,700 for the best grilling power.

- Cook anything and everything! Grills aren't just for meat; try grilling vegetable kabobs and throw in some pineapple for juicy flavor.

- Trim excess fat off chicken before grilling and remove the skin.

When shopping for foods to grill, look for the American Heart Association logo—a red heart with a white check mark—which tells you those foods are heart healthy. Visit <http://checkmark.heart.org> for more information.

Who Was Etta Place?

BY SHANNON LOWRY

Etta Place, who may or may not have hailed from San Antonio and who may or may not have been a prostitute, was perhaps the prettiest young woman ever associated with known outlaws.

Place showed up at Robber's Roost, an impregnable outlaw hideout in southwestern Utah, in the fall of 1896 in the company of the Sundance Kid (real name: Harry Longabaugh). That's where the facts went to die, it seems. According to one source, Place may have gone to the hideaway to renew an old romantic relationship with Butch Cassidy. Others insist that Sundance had always been her love interest.

One well-recounted story indicates Place was actually cattle rancher/rustler Ann Bassett, who owned land near Robber's Roost and was known to socialize with the Wild Bunch, Butch and Sundance's gang. But the dates surrounding Bassett's hiatus from Utah don't quite square with the time when Place, Sundance and Butch high-tailed it to South America. A photograph of Bassett taken in her later years, however, shows a remarkable resemblance to Place.

Etta probably wasn't a school teacher as the wildly popular 1969 film that starred Katharine Ross as Place, Robert Redford as Sundance and Paul Newman as Cassidy, recounts. Place may have been a high-priced prostitute from San Antonio. Investigators with the Pinkerton Detective Agency determined that Etta Place first met Sundance at Fannie Porter's infamous San Antonio pleasure palace.

Five years after she allegedly showed up at the Utah camp, Place and Sundance turned up together, supposedly as man and wife, at his family's house in Pennsylvania, where he'd gone to get treatment for a gunshot wound to his leg that wouldn't heal. Of course, in keeping with the enig-



Historians believe this is a wedding photo of Harry Longabaugh, aka the "Sundance Kid," and the beautiful Etta Place. The photo was taken in New York City at DeYoung Photography Studio shortly before Place and Sundance struck out for South America with Butch Cassidy in 1901.

matic theme, a marriage license has never been found for the pair under their names or any assumed names they were known to use. The medical attention Sundance received for his wound did occur just before the threesome took off for Argentina in 1901.

Shortly before they departed, Sundance and Place posed for what many believe was a wedding picture at the DeYoung Photography Studio in New York City. The pair apparently returned to the States several times for visits from 1901-05. Cassidy stayed behind in South America and wrote one brief letter home during his isolation in which he called himself, Sundance and Place "our little family of three." This phrase has given rise to endless speculation about a possible ménage à trois.

Since a beautiful woman causes a sizeable wake wherever she goes, Place did not go unnoticed in South America. She was described by South American neighbors and ranchers who met her as elegant, a skilled horsewoman and pistol shot, and as having far more intelligence than her outlaw husband and his "brother." (Cassidy wasn't Sundance's brother, but offered that information as part of his alias.)

Pinkerton's offer of \$10,000 for Place, dead or alive, went ignored. Reportedly, at least one admirer in South America rode to warn her when detectives drew too close for comfort.

Butch and Sundance robbed a small bank in Rio Gallegos, Argentina, of about \$100,000 in early 1905. Place was thought by some to be with them at the time. Another bank hundreds of miles north was robbed later that same year and "los banditos Americanos" became the objects of an intense manhunt.

Most historians agree that Butch and the Kid were shot to death in San Vicente, Bolivia, in 1908, in possession of a stolen mule. They were allegedly buried there in an unmarked grave.

One off-the-wall tale indicates Place died alongside Sundance and Cassidy in that final gunfight, her pistol blazing away, but most historians don't give credence to that fanciful ending. Place may have eventually returned to the States after the outlaws' deaths or she may have married a South American rancher and spent the remainder of her life riding and roping in a foreign land. According to J. Lee Butts, author of *Texas Bad Girls: Hussies, Harlots and Horse Thieves*, Etta Place simply vanished and "no one—let me repeat that—no one knows what happened to her."

Shannon Lowry wrote "Fred Gipson and Old Yeller" in the June 2005 *Texas Co-op Power*.

SCHOOL SAFETY ABCs

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

Safety Comes First:

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

Riding the school bus:


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

Riding a bike:

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



**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.

IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU



BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS • ILLUSTRATION BY A.J. GARCES

For a long time, I kept a mangled screw on my kitchen windowsill as a reminder. Maybe even as a memorial. I wanted to remember the afternoon I tackled my first home repair job—installing a door spring—and succeeded.

I've since lost that screw, but not the confidence that I can live on my own and survive.

In the beginning, though, I feared being single. After 20 years of marriage, I doubted whether I could earn enough on my own to pay bills. I froze at the thought of handling my own insurance—health, car, house. I worried that whatever issue or problem arose, I'd make a bad decision. Or worse, that I wouldn't be able to

handle the situation at all.

Those internal fears kept me trapped until I broke free and started a new life. Nearly four years later, I can truthfully say that, yes, I've made bad decisions along the way (like agreeing to a tree-trimming job that ended up in small-claims court—that was fun). But my good decisions far outnumber the poor ones, and I know I'm stronger for having made them all.

As a former married person turned single, I'm not rare. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 41 million Americans in 2000 were widowed, divorced or separated. The bureau also found the second most common type of household consisted of people living alone (the majority of homes are

maintained by married couples).

That means a lot of women—and men—are learning to live solo, maybe for the first time.

As someone who's made the journey and remains on the path, I'd like to share what I've learned. Becoming self-reliant is not nearly as hard as I imagined it to be. Not at all. I worried for nothing because—as I've discovered for myself—living independently can be a personally fulfilling experience if you let it. Honest.

LIVE IN THE PRESENT

The car's making a funny noise. The kitchen sink is draining slowly. The electric bill comes due tomorrow. Sometimes everything seems to happen at once. Handle matters one at a time. Keep a list, and definitely keep your sense of humor handy. Life happens.

At times you may wonder if you're going to make it through the coming year. Sure, you have to think about the future, but sometimes looking (and worrying) too far ahead can be overwhelming. To keep steady and calm soon after my life dramatically changed, I'd tell myself: "One day at a time." I still repeat that mantra whenever I feel myself slipping.

THOSE BILLS

Throughout my marriage, I balanced the checkbooks, and my husband paid the monthly bills. He also took care of all our insurance. Now and then, I'd organize and file the paperwork, but that was the extent of my involvement in our financial affairs. Taking care of our home and two children plus working part-time kept me busy enough.

On my own, I quickly realized that my earlier fears of inadequacy were unjustified. Handling the finances wasn't difficult. In fact, I actually enjoyed being in control of all the bookkeeping and filing. Here's basically how I keep my financial matters organized:

- I open mail right away and recycle what I don't want. I pull out bills (along with each return envelope), mark the due date on the left side, and stick them in a metal holder on my kitchen counter. Then I pay each one as it comes due, allowing sufficient extra days for mail delivery.

- Paid bills, bank statements and

other records get tossed on a pile in a closet; every few weeks, I sort through the papers and file them in marked folders and envelopes.

- Health insurance premiums are automatically drafted from my bank account. Personally, I chose to pay car and house insurance premiums quarterly, so I keep those due dates in a calendar.

- I keep my checkbook constantly updated so I never overdraw from my account. I also enter all my personal and business finances on my computer in Quicken®, an accounting software program that's easy to use. Quicken categorizes expenses, which makes tax time less of a headache.

HOUSE REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

First, buy a good home repair manual and ask around for the name of a reputable handyman.

I whooped with joy the afternoon I finally installed a new spring on my back door. A few months later, I learned how to fix a leaky faucet, clean out traps under sinks, and unplug clogged toilets. Then one afternoon, I got overzealous and attempted to replace a broken switch on the light over my kitchen sink. For more than an hour, I stood on the counter with my head bent at an unnatural angle as I struggled with pliers and wires. Finally, I flipped the circuit breaker back on, pulled the light chain ... and—voilà!—the house went dark.

Moral of this story: Don't mess with electrical repairs. Hire a professional.

Also, don't forget routine maintenance chores around the house, such as changing air conditioner filters, cleaning refrigerator coils, and even running vinegar and water through the coffeepot. I take my car to a local lube shop for oil changes, filter replacements and tire rotations (refer to your vehicle's manual for appropriate maintenance intervals).

GET HELP

Don't be afraid or ashamed to ask for help when you need it. Adjusting to a life alone can also mean dealing with the loss of a long-term marriage or the death of a spouse. I've sought advice, help and consolation from relatives, friends and professionals. By far, the majority has always been more than

willing to help. Besides, that's how you learn and heal—by talking about your grief and pain, asking questions, and being proactive about your affairs.

NEVER LIFT ANYTHING BIGGER THAN YOU ARE

Among the most frustrating limitations for the small or aged are trying to move heavy furniture or dig huge holes for new trees in rocky soil. That's when your ability to lure people over with homebaked goodies or a bottle of wine comes in handy. Physical labor may be harder to get than advice, but if you need it, ask for it.

AND GET OUT

Don't isolate yourself. Make new friends and nurture special friendships. Don't lean on just one person; learn to seek support from several people. True friends can become like family. Attend church, join social groups, visit nursing homes, mentor at a local school, start an exercise program, learn a new hobby. The more you focus on others and less on your loneliness, the better and more alive you'll feel.

THE BEST MEDICINE OF ALL

As I mentioned earlier, hang onto your sense of humor. When something goes wrong around the house or someone tests your patience, vent in a healthy way (scream in a pillow or walk around the block), then stand back from the situation and find the light side.

After asking my handyman for instructions, I tackled a clogged drain in my tub one Sunday afternoon. With screwdriver in hand, I carefully turned the bolts—crusted with soap residue, minerals and 45 years of use—on the overflow plate. I made a few counter-clockwise turns, just like he told me ... and the bolt broke off. So did the second one. I laughed. What else could I do? Then I snaked the drainpipe, called my handyman with an urgent SOS ... and threw away the bolts.

That's because I don't need reminders or memorials any more. I know I can survive on my own just fine ... no matter what life brings my way.

Sheryl Smith-Rodgers, who lives in Blanco, frequently contributes to Texas Co-op Power. She wrote about Barth's Restaurant in the November 2005 issue.

Buttermilk: Baker's Friend



LAURIE SMITH

My grandma and grandpa both enjoy a big glass of buttermilk from time to time, but if you're like me, you can't stand the stuff! As a kid, I couldn't understand why anyone would even keep it around. As an adult, I've discovered that buttermilk has a place in my kitchen. It makes biscuits light and fluffy, it gives cakes that certain tang that balances the sweet, and it makes pies smooth and creamy. Buttermilk is a baker's friend.

For those of you who, like me,

won't drink the leftovers, there's a wonderful way to keep buttermilk in the house at all times: powdered buttermilk. Available at the grocery store (or online at www.sacofoods.com), it is pure convenience. It's made from real churned buttermilk and comes with a handy conversion chart on the canister. I think powdered buttermilk is a good alternative to souring milk yourself—as cooks often do in a pinch—because it doesn't leave any lingering flavor of vinegar or lemon.

When using powdered buttermilk, remember to mix it with the dry ingredients, then add water (in the amount of buttermilk called for in the recipe) to the wet ingredients. Works like a charm!

Buttermilk is an oft-used ingredient in Rebecca Rather's pastries. Rather has a beautiful cookbook called *The Pastry Queen: Royally Good Recipes From the Texas Hill Country's Rather Sweet Bakery & Cafe*. She is the Pastry Queen of the title, and if you can't get to Fredericksburg to sample her delectable wares, get a copy of her book so you can bake them in your own kitchen. The book's color photographs will make your mouth water, as the photos of her Tuxedo Cake on these pages will testify. Make this cake for your sweetie this Valentine's Day and you're sure to get some good lovin' in return.

Tuxedo Cake Cake

- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter
- 2 cups water
- 1 cup canola oil
- 4 cups sugar
- 1 cup high-quality unsweetened cocoa powder
- 4 cups all-purpose flour
- 4 large eggs
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1 tablespoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract

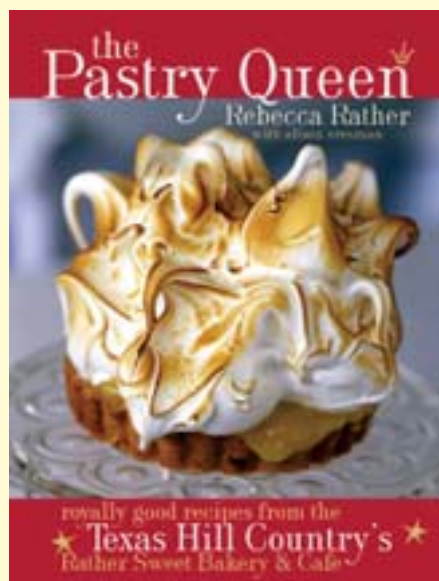
Whipped Cream Frosting

- 4 cups chilled heavy whipping cream
- 1¼ cups powdered sugar

Chocolate Glaze

- 4 ounces high-quality bittersweet chocolate, chopped into small pieces
- ½ cup heavy whipping cream
- ¼ cup Lyle's Golden Syrup*
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

To make the cake: For a 3-layer cake, place one baking rack one-third from the bottom of the oven and the second two-thirds from the bottom. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Line the bottom of three 9-inch or two



10-inch pans with parchment paper rounds, grease with butter, and dust with flour (or spray with Baker's Joy).

Combine the butter, water and canola oil in a medium saucepan set over medium heat. In a large bowl, stir together the sugar, cocoa and flour. Pour the butter mixture into the sugar mixture and whisk until smooth. Whisk in the eggs, one at a time, then whisk in the buttermilk. Whisk in the baking soda, salt and vanilla all at once. Transfer the batter to the prepared pans. For a 3-layer cake, stagger the cake layers on the oven racks so that no layer is directly over another. Set two layers on one rack and the third on the other. For a 2-layer cake, stagger the layers on the middle rack with one placed more toward the front of the oven and one toward the back. Bake for 35 to 40 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the middle of each layer comes out clean. Monitor the layers carefully for doneness; each one may be done at different times.

Remove the cakes from the oven and cool on racks for about 15 minutes before inverting onto baking racks. Cool the cakes completely, at least 2 hours, before frosting.

To make the frosting: Using a

mixer fitted with a whisk attachment, whip the cream in a large bowl on high speed until soft peaks form. Add the powdered sugar and whip until thoroughly combined.

Place one cake layer on a platter and spread some of the frosting over the top. Top with the remaining layers, thickly coating the top and sides of each with frosting. Refrigerate the cake until the whipped cream frosting has stabilized, at least 1 hour.

To make the glaze: Place the chocolate in a medium bowl. Heat the cream in a small saucepan over medium heat until it is very hot and just beginning to steam. Pour the hot cream over the chocolate and stir until it has melted completely. Stir in the syrup and vanilla. Pour the glaze into a medium pitcher or measuring cup and let cool for 10 minutes. Do not let the glaze sit longer because it will stiffen and become difficult to pour over the cake. Slowly pour the glaze over the cake, ensuring that it covers the top of the cake entirely, but make sure some of the cream frosting shows through the drizzles on the sides. (If the glaze doesn't flow easily over the edge of the cake, don't be afraid to add an extra tablespoon or two of Lyle's Golden Syrup.)

Refrigerate the cake until the glaze is set and the whipped cream frosting is firm, at least 1 hour. Slice the cake with a long serrated knife, dipping it in a tall glass of hot water between each slice. The refrigerated cake will keep for about 2 days. Yield: 12 to 14 servings.

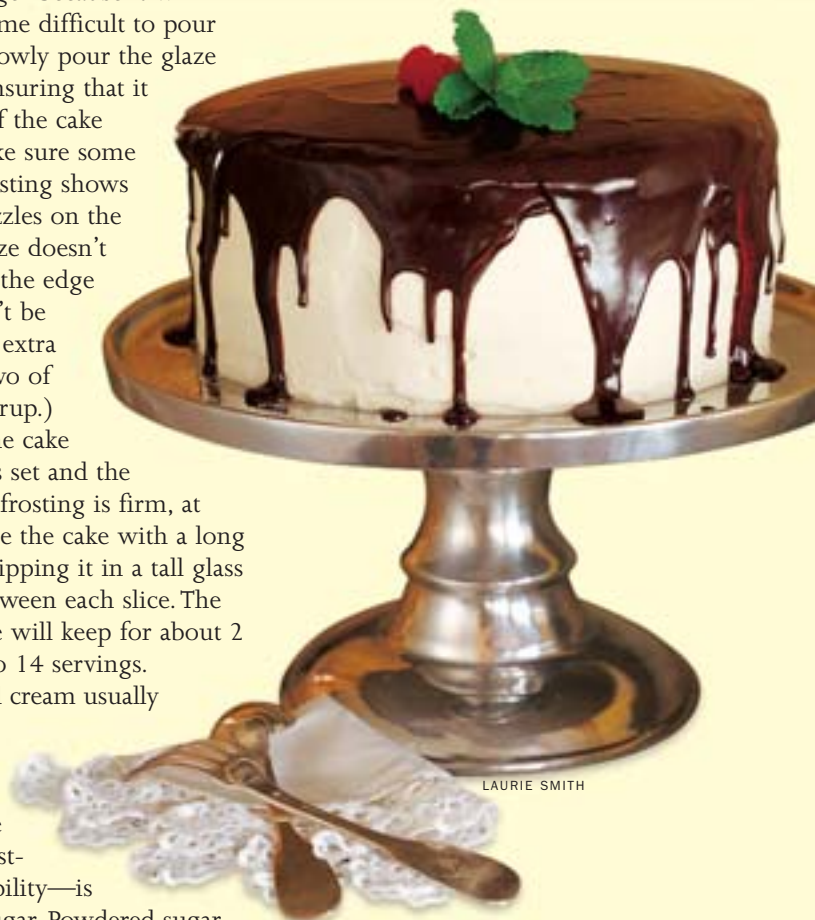
Tip: Whipped cream usually begins to separate shortly after it has been beaten. The secret to this frosting—and its stability—is the powdered sugar. Powdered sugar

has added cornstarch, which stabilizes the cream. This cake sat on my counter on a warm spring night for more than 20 minutes and still looked as good as it had just after icing.

*Lyle's Golden Syrup, imported from Britain, is a pure cane sugar syrup with a mild caramel flavor. It is widely available in grocery stores or online at www.englishteastore.com. You may substitute light corn syrup.

Serving size: 1 slice. Per serving: 1,014 calories, 10 grams protein, 64 grams fat, 109 grams carbohydrates, 555 milligrams sodium, 194 milligrams cholesterol

Reprinted with permission from *The Pastry Queen: Royally Good Recipes from the Texas Hill Country's Rather Sweet Bakery & Cafe* by Rebecca Rather. Copyright 2004, Ten Speed Press, Berkeley, CA. www.tenspeed.com



LAURIE SMITH

Buttermilk Recipe Contest Winners



JACK ANDERSEN/FOODPIX

I know what you're going to say: "It's February. It's freezing out. Why are you giving me a recipe for sherbet?" Well, friends, because it's the winner, and because it's delicious. **SUSIE MULLINS**, a member of CoServ Electric, sent in a number of buttermilk recipes including the winner and a runner-up, Buttermilk Brownies. Way to go, Susie! These will both be additions to my recipe box at home.

Blackberry Cream Sherbet

3 quarts frozen unsweetened blackberries, thawed and preferably sieved to remove seeds
 3 cups sugar
 Juice of 1 large lemon
 2 cups buttermilk
 1 quart half-and-half
 $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon cinnamon
 1 package (3 ounces) berry-flavored gelatin dissolved in 2 cups boiling water, then cooled
 12 ounces lemon-lime or grapefruit flavored soda

Combine all ingredients and freeze in a 6-quart electric ice cream freezer according to manufacturer's instructions. Makes about 5 quarts.

Serving size: 1 cup. Per serving: 270 calories, 4 grams protein, 6 grams fat, 53 grams carbohydrates, 59 milligrams sodium, 19 milligrams cholesterol

Buttermilk Brownies

1 cup butter
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup unsweetened cocoa
 1 cup water
 2 cups unbleached white flour
 2 cups sugar
 1 teaspoon baking soda
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
 2 eggs
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup buttermilk
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons vanilla extract

In saucepan, combine butter, cocoa and water. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Set aside. In large bowl, stir together flour, sugar, baking soda and salt; stir in eggs, buttermilk and vanilla. Add cocoa mixture; mix until blended. Pour into greased 15x10-inch pan and bake at 375 degrees for 20 minutes. Prepare Cocoa-Buttermilk Frosting while brownies bake. Immediately pour frosting over brownies and spread evenly. Sprinkle toasted pecans over frosting. Cool and cut into bars.

Cocoa-Buttermilk Frosting

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup butter
 3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa
 4 tablespoons buttermilk
 $2\frac{1}{4}$ cups sifted powdered sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons vanilla extract
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped pecans, toasted for 5 minutes in a 350-degree oven

Stir butter, cocoa and buttermilk in saucepan and bring just to a boil. Remove and beat in sugar and vanilla. Spread over warm brownies and sprinkle toasted pecans on top. Makes 20.

Serving size: 1 brownie. Per serving: 299 calories, 3 grams protein, 14 grams fat, 42 grams carbohydrates, 248 milligrams sodium, 50 milligrams cholesterol

Texas Ruby Red Grapefruit Buttermilk Pie

1 9-inch pie crust
¼ cup flour
¾ cup sugar
¼ teaspoon salt
⅛ teaspoon ground nutmeg
4 eggs
1 cup buttermilk
Juice of 2 Texas red grapefruits
Zest of 1 Texas red grapefruit

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line pie crust with parchment, fill ¾ full of dried beans, and bake for 15 minutes (crust should be just turning golden in spots). Remove from oven, remove beans and parchment; set crust aside to cool.

In a small bowl, combine flour, sugar, salt and nutmeg. In a large bowl, beat eggs until slightly foamy. Start adding other ingredients by alternating dry with wet; add ⅓ of the flour mixture, beat just until mixed, and then add ½ of the buttermilk. Add more flour, and then add grapefruit juice. Add the last of the flour, then add remaining buttermilk, and grapefruit zest. Beat just until mixed well. Allow to sit for several minutes, skim off any foam, and pour into pre-baked pie crust.

Lower the oven temperature to 300. Place pie on baking sheet and bake for 20 to 25 minutes, or until the top of the pie has just a bit of jiggle left and is slightly puffed. Remove from oven and cool completely. Refrigerate until ready to serve. Serves 10-12.

Serving size: 1 slice. Per serving: 161 calories, 4 grams protein, 6 grams fat, 24 grams

carbohydrates, 182 milligrams sodium, 63 milligrams cholesterol

JUANITA GARCIA, Pedernales EC

Buttermilk Pralines

2 cups sugar
1 teaspoon baking soda
Pinch of salt
1 cup buttermilk
2 tablespoons butter
2 cups pecan halves or pieces
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

In 4- or 5-quart saucepan, combine sugar, soda, salt and buttermilk. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly, until sugar is dissolved. Add butter. Over medium heat, bring mixture to boil. Cook, stirring often, until mixture reaches soft-ball stage, or 236 degrees on candy thermometer. Remove from heat. Add pecans and vanilla. Beat until mixture begins to thicken and loses its shine. Drop by tablespoon onto waxed paper or lightly buttered baking sheet. Let stand until firm. Store in tightly closed container. Makes about 2 dozen.

Serving size: 1 praline. Per serving: 138 calories, 1 grams protein, 7 grams fat, 19 grams carbohydrates, 79 milligrams sodium, 3 milligrams cholesterol

DOROTHY ARNOLD, Karnes EC

Buttermilk Pie

1⅓ cups coconut
3 eggs
1½ cups sugar
½ cup butter
⅓ cup buttermilk
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3 tablespoons flour

¼ teaspoon salt

2 pie shells

Toast coconut at 350 degrees on a cookie sheet. Check often; stir till all coconut is light brown. Beat eggs until fluffy; add remaining ingredients in order listed. Bake 1 hour at 300 degrees, or until crust and top are golden brown. Serves 10-12 per pie.

Serving size: 1 slice. Per serving: 154 calories, 2 grams protein, 7 grams fat, 22 grams carbohydrates, 132 milligrams sodium, 23 milligrams cholesterol

ARTIE ELLEN MONTAGUE, Pedernales EC

TEXAS CO-OP POWER COOKBOOK

The perfect gift for any season!

Our cookbook features 250 recipes from Texas co-op members and makes an affordable gift. 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.



MAY RECIPE CONTEST

The subject for May's recipe contest is **Tex-Mex**. We're not looking for authentic Mexican recipes; we want recipes that reflect that happy blend of down-home Texas and border cuisines. What's your favorite Tex-Mex dish? You may send recipes to Home Cooking, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704. You may also fax them to (512) 486-6254 or e-mail them to recipes@texas-ec.org. Be sure to include your name, address and phone number, as well as the name of your electric co-op. The deadline is February 10. The top winner will receive a copy of the *Texas Co-op Power Cookbook* and a selection of spices from Adams. Others whose recipes are published will also receive a selection from Adams.



AROUND TEXAS

February

- 1-26. Heritage Quilt Show, **Shiner**, (361) 594-3044
2. Trivia Contest Fundraiser, **Little Elm**, (214) 975-0430 or www.littleelmfol.org
- 2-5. Old Mill Marketplace, **Canton**, (903) 567-5445 or www.oldmillmarketplace.com
3. Fish Fry, **Dripping Springs**, (512) 894-4470
- 3-5. Old Mill Trade Days, **Post**, 1-866-433-6683 or www.oldmilltradedays.com

- 3-19. Stock Show & Rodeo, **San Antonio**, (210) 225-5851 or www.sarodeo.com
4. Ole Time Music, **Pearl**, (254) 865-6013
4. Citywide Market, **Sinton**, (361) 364-2307
4. Art Talk, painter Milbie Bengé, **Marble Falls**, (830) 693-6632 or www.riverbendfineart.com
4. Market Days, **Elgin**, (512) 376-6115 or www.elginchurch.com
4. Winter Arts & Crafts Fair, **Del Rio**, (830) 775-3551
- 4-5. Rocky Raccoon 100-Mile Endurance Run,

- Huntsville**, www.hillcountrytrailrunners.com
9. Golden Dragon Chinese Acrobats, **Kerrville**, (830) 896-9393
- 9-12. Midessa Boat, RV, Sport & Gun Show, **Odessa**, (432) 381-3324
- 10-11. Texas Traditions Quilt Show, **Cleburne**, (254) 694-2873
- 10-12. Through the Looking Glass Needlework Show, **Austin**, (512) 858-1506 or www.austinstitchers.org
11. Hill Country Doll Show & Sale,

FESTIVAL OF THE MONTH

BY JIM GRAMON

11th Annual Eagle Fest: Emory, February 11-12



John Karger of Last Chance Forever with a golden eagle.

EARL HILL, RAINS COUNTY LEADER

Eagles have been respected by many cultures for their beauty and bravery, lightning reflexes and majestic flight. We all recognize the bald eagle as a national symbol of the United States, but did you know that Texas has nesting areas for bald eagles, as well as other birds of prey?

The Eagle Fest in Emory started as an educational effort to expand our knowledge of nature and our heritage with educational displays, exhi-

bitions and lectures, Native American art and performances, live music and nature tours.

For this year's 11th celebration of Eagle Fest, visitors will be treated to magnificent demonstrations of birds of prey in flight, thanks to two famous bird rehabilitation organizations, On the Wing Again and Last Chance Forever. Visitors can first examine the birds up close; then the birds are released to fly over the

heads of the awestruck audience. In the exhibit area, guides will teach about these wonderful animals, their unique features and abilities, and their interaction with humans and the environment.

There will be bus tours of the nearby Lake Tawakoni area, which boasts large populations of shore birds and many species of migratory fowl. If you have additional time, check out some of the self-guided tours in the area on www.eaglefest.org.

Eagle Fest 2006 will also feature great food, arts and crafts

booths, nature books and videos.

Farmers Electric Cooperative serves Emory, which is located in Rains County, about 75 miles east of Dallas, between Lake Tawakoni and Lake Fork Reservoir. For more information on the Eagle Fest schedule, local history, places to stay and other things to do, go to www.eaglefest.org or call 1-800-561-1182.

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

- New Braunfels**, (830) 606-5868
11. Quilt Show, **Brenham**, (979) 826-8307
 11. Mystery Mayhem Games, **Bastrop**, (512) 303-1996
 11. Hug-In, **Luckenbach**, 1-888-311-8990 or www.luckenbachtexas.com
 11. Museum Open House, **Mineola**, (903) 569-2087 or www.mineolachamber.com
 11. Painting Workshop, **Athens**, (903) 677-1010
 11. Centenary College Choir, **Kerrville**, (830) 257-5727 or www.kpas.org
 - 11-12. Chicken House Flea Market, **Stephenville**, (254) 968-0888
 - 11-14. Sweetheart Paddle, **Willis**, (936) 203-2697 or www.northlakeconroe paddlingco.com
 13. McDade Jamboree, **McDade**, (512) 273-2307
 - 16-26. Stock Show & Rodeo and Carnival, **San Angelo**, (325) 653-7785 or www.sanangelorodeo.com
 - 17-19. Trade Days, **McKinney**, (972) 562-5466
 - 17-19. Trade Days, **Livingston**, (936) 327-3757 or www.cityoflivingston-tx.com/tradedays
 18. Rotary Club Shrimp Boil, **Port Aransas**, (361) 749-6222
 18. Texas Bluegrass Show, **Linden**, (903) 756-9934 or www.musiccitytexas.org
 18. Pineywoods Pick'n Parlor Concert, **Mineola**, (903) 569-8037 or www.pineywoodspicknparlor.com
 18. Chili Supper, **Sanger**, (940) 458-7565
 - 24-25. Best Little Quilt Show in Texas, **La Grange**, (979) 968-6352
 - 24-25. Preston Kyle Shatto Golf Tournament, **Columbus**, (979) 732-8385 or www.columbus-texas.org
 - 24-26. Gypsies, Tramps and Thieves, **Jefferson**, (903) 746-5824 or www.mardigrasupriver.com
 25. North Texas Farm Toy Show, **Gainesville**, (940) 759-2876
 25. Antique Appraisal Affair, **Weimar**, (979) 725-9511
 25. Bluegrass Music Show, **Quitman**, (903) 763-4411 or www.quitman.com
 - 25-26. Chicken House Flea Market, **Stephenville**, (254) 968-0888
 - 25-26. Snake Roundup and Show, **Oglesby**, (254) 470-2245
 26. Crighton Foundation Ozark Jubilee, **Conroe**, (936) 441-7469 or www.crightontheatre.org
 26. Philharmonic Symphony, **Pasadena**, (713) 941-3332
 - 26-27. Young Artist Showcase, **Kyle and Dripping Springs**, (512) 858-0324 or www.starlightsymphony.org
 28. Mardi Gras on Main, **Kerrville**, (830) 792-8343 or www.kerrville.org/mainstreet

March

2. General Sam Houston's Birthday & Texas Independence Celebration, **Huntsville**, 1-800-289-0389 or www.huntsvilletexas.com
- 2-5. BorderFest, **Hidalgo**, (956) 843-2734 or www.borderfest.org
- 2-5. Old Mill Marketplace, **Canton**, (903) 567-5445 or www.oldmillmarketplace.com

3. Fish Fry, **Dripping Springs**, (512) 894-4470
- 3-4. Quilt Show, **Lampasas**, (512) 556-2224
- 3-5. Old Mill Trade Days, **Post**, 1-866-433-6683 or www.oldmilltradedays.com
- 3-5. Antiques Show, **Longview**, (830) 426-7015
4. Citywide Market, **Sinton**, (361) 364-2307
4. Ole Time Music, **Pearl**, (254) 865-6013
4. Market Days, **Elgin**, (512) 376-6115 or www.elginchurch.com
4. Symphony Concert, **Waxahachie**, (972) 938-0404

Event Submissions

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



SEVERE WEATHER! ARE YOU READY?

Lightning

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

Lightning Safety Rules:

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

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



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.

PHOTO ©ALAN MOLLER

At the Car Wash

This month's topic is **Car Wash**, and while we expected to see other modes of transportation getting spiffed up, we certainly didn't anticipate getting a photo of a horse at the car wash! Our readers are always surprising us with their ingenuity as well as their talent. Enjoy this month's selections.

Bluebonnets is the topic for our April issue. Send your photos—along with your name, address, daytime phone, co-op affiliation and a brief description—to Bluebonnets, Focus on Texas, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704, before February 10. A stamped, self-addressed envelope should be included if you want your entry returned (approximately six weeks). Please do not submit irreplaceable photographs—send a copy or duplicate. We regret that Texas Co-op Power cannot be responsible for photos that are lost in the mail or not received by the deadline. If you use a digital camera, e-mail your highest-resolution images to focus@texas-ec.org. (If you have questions about your camera's capabilities, please check the operating manual.)

"Grrrr!" Two-year-old ZOEY MILLER found squeezing all that soapy water out of the sponge the toughest part of helping her brother wash the family van. LEANN MILLER, a member of CoServ Electric, submitted the photo. ▶



Pedernales EC member PETESIE LEE writes: "My father, ARTHUR GUERRA, had one of the first car washes in San Antonio (notice the 1952 license plate). My brother, ARTIE, worked at the station while he was in



school. He told me that most Saturdays they would wash 120 cars in a 10-hour period, and that included cleaning them inside and drying them with a chamois. When you drove up to Dad's station, one man would check your tires, one would clean your windshield, one would check under the hood, and another would fill your gas tank ... quite a departure from the 'service station' of today!"



After taking photos of Hurricane Rita's damage in East Texas, Jasper-Newton EC members LINDA LOU JONES and LES HORNER couldn't resist snapping a happier shot of this horse getting washed by his owner. "The horse even let the guy wash his face," said Linda. "He loved it!"



Five-year-old COOPER ANDERSON doesn't help wash just any old car—he helps his dad's crew clean up the pumper truck at the fire station! His parents, STEVE and CINDY ANDERSON, have belonged to McLennan County EC for 20 years. Steve is the engineer at Waco's Fire Station 3.

UPCOMING in Focus on Texas

ISSUE	SUBJECT	DEADLINE
April	Bluebonnets	February 10
May	School Projects	March 10
June	Summer Fun	April 10
July	Close Calls	May 10
August	Classic Vehicles	June 10
September	Murals	July 10



Edom On My Mind

Edom, with a population hovering around 300, is so hidden away in East Texas' Van Zandt County that you might not find it unless you went deliberately looking. My family and I go deliberately, and each trip is a step back 25 years to when the children were young. We eat at The Shed, which sits right on FM 279, Edom's Main Street. The talk is always full of "Remember when ... ?"

We used to visit Reva and Charles Ogilvie at nearby Arc Ridge Ranch. No matter that "Aunt" Reva was a terrific cook and I'm no slouch myself in the

the "air" was spun with sugar and that he had to count the calories in the lemon custard base, that usually kind and gracious gentleman said, "Shut up, Judy!" But I once ordered chicken salad there—and realized that it was just like store-bought. No, it's not just the food that draws us to The Shed.

Recently, six of us and one grandchild were at Arc Ridge after a nephew's wedding in nearby Tyler. We had a huge breakfast at The Shed—eggs and bacon, potatoes, grits, pancakes, all the trimmings. Then, son-in-law Christian, on his first visit, wanted to drive

with bone and were particular friends of Charles and Reva, and there were jewelry makers and potters. But back then you didn't go to Edom to shop.

Today, the craft fair has moved to the art museum in Tyler; a pity, it seems to me. Now there are more craftsmen in Edom, though, and folks, including me, do go there to shop. There's a good-sized store that sells trendy women's Western-style clothes. There's also a nursery with lovely native plants and a new restaurant. Once a month, a chef from Dallas comes in on Friday night and offers a gourmet meal—a bit of unexpected sophistication. The area has begun to draw people from Houston and Dallas, and huge homes have sprung up across land once dotted with modest farmhouses. Bed-and-breakfasts abound in the area, and attractions like Blueberry Hill Farms (pick your own) and Roseland Plantation (a former cotton plantation open to the public) draw tourists. More and more people are deliberately looking for Edom.

I appreciate progress as much as anyone. I'm glad Edom is growing and, as its own advertisements say, it is no longer unknown. But a huge part of me longs for the days when it was quiet and my children were young. I don't want Edom ever to get big enough for a spotlight.

Reva is gone now, and Charles has shut down guest operations at the ranch. But we're invited back the first weekend in October and most of us will go—three young couples, three grandchildren, and me. And we'll surely eat at The Shed—look for us at that table in the back room on Saturday night when catfish is all-you-can-eat, and listen for those cries of "Remember when ... ?"

Life sure is sweet when you're in Edom.

Trinity Valley and Wood County ECs serve portions of Van Zandt County.

Judy Alter is director of TCU Press. Her most recent book, *Sam Houston Is My Hero*, is a novel for young adults.



GENO ESPONDA

kitchen, the kids clamored to go to The Shed. The name fits the rough wooden building. The front porch accommodates those on the waiting list—particularly long just after church on Sunday—and inside, chrome tables sometimes have oilcloth covers and sometimes not.

The menu is strictly down-home—fried catfish, chicken-fried steak, fried chicken, mashed potatoes, black-eyed peas—pretty much what you'd expect. The pies are world-class. I remember "Uncle" Charles eating a lemon meringue pie and rhapsodizing that it had no calories. "It's all spun air," he claimed. When I reminded him that

around Edom to see if he could find his grandmother's house, which he'd visited often as a child. He was sure he'd recognize it. "How long can this take?" I thought. Longer than I expected, I discovered as we drove up one street and down another—they all cross FM 279 like branches on a tree. We never did find it, but later his grandmother confided to me that her house is right next door to The Shed.

In the 1970s, when we first began to eat at The Shed, craftsmen had just begun to move into Edom, drawn to a small, quiet community where nothing ever happened. There were Zeke and Marty, craftsmen who worked