

LOCAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE EDITION

NOVEMBER 2006

TEXAS CO-OP POWER



BIG *bucks*

The Business of Breeding
Trophy Whitetail Bucks

PLUS

Salsa

Texas Mailboxes

Hit the Road: San Angelo to Sonora

ONLY CRACKPOTS TAKE SHOTS

Transformers

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- Broken insulators can cause power outages that are hard—and expensive—to find. An insulator cracked by a bullet can remain on line for a long time before it finally fails.

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TEXAS CO-OP POWER

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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letters

LOVE THAT WILLIE!

In September you featured Willie Nelson as "Best Musician."

Here's a guy, an accomplished musician, songwriter, a world celebrity, with plenty of money (if he's recovered from the IRS thing), and look at him: Leaning up against his '90ish Dodge pickup that I bet has a Cummins diesel engine in it, with Willie's Biodiesel for fuel, that he got at Carl's Corner Truck Stop on I-35 between Waxahachie and Hillsboro. He's in his bib overalls and checkered shirt, topped off with his straw hat and that Willie Nelson grin.

Now that guy knows what's important in life.

Love his down-to-earth music.

MARK TOMEX

Fannin County Electric Cooperative

PASS IT ON

Pass on to your readers that it's a good idea to use the clothes-line for sheets, jeans and work clothes. It saves your dryer and electricity bill.

PAT AND WALLY WALTERS

Pedernales Electric Cooperative

HURRAH FOR SPA

After reading "Best of Co-op Country" in the September issue, I am driven to bring another more-than-worthy spa to your attention. We have a world-class spa in north Austin. Check out the Crossings Wellness Center and Spa.

KANDIS HILL

Pedernales Electric Cooperative

We receive many more letters than we can fit in the magazine. Visit www.texascoopower.com to read a sampling of those.

We want to hear from our readers. Send letters to: Editor, *Texas Co-op Power*, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704, or e-mail us at letters@texas-ec.org. 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.

POWER TALK



THIEVES PILFER WIRE

Some Texas electric cooperatives have started stamping their copper and aluminum wire with their identification to deter theft. Soaring metal prices, including a 363 percent per-pound increase in the price of copper since 2003, have prompted thefts across the state. Copper and aluminum are the primary components of electric distribution lines. Their theft translates into higher costs of doing business and could affect system reliability. Stolen wire is commonly brought to recycling centers and traded for cash. While state law requires recycling centers to keep records of transactions, enforcement can be difficult. Without identifying marks, stolen wire is hard to track and is rarely recovered.

Thieves may not understand that they are risking their lives by taking copper from substations, which step down high transmission voltage to a lower current for distribution lines. All the lines have a potentially deadly charge.

If you have any information regarding stolen cooperative property, please call your local cooperative.

WHAT WOULD YOUR LIFE BE LIKE WITHOUT ELECTRICITY?



"I don't think I'd do anything. I couldn't use my computer, watch TV or play videos. I'd be cold—I might freeze. I'd like it in some ways. There wouldn't be any air conditioning at school, and the teachers keep it too cold. It would be cool to study by candlelight, but it would be hard to do a lot of other stuff. Mom would have to grow our fruits and vegetables."

Seth Carson, II, Perryton, North Plains Electric Cooperative
Son of NPEC Member Services Specialist Bill Carson



SAFELIVING

Electricity 101

True or false: It is safer to leave an extension cord out in the open than it is to run it under a rug.

True. If a cord runs under a rug, you cannot inspect it for damage, and an overheated cord can ignite the floor covering.

True or false: Power lines are insulated and safe to touch.

False. Most electric lines are bare. Overhead power lines and lines from a pole transformer to your home may be partially insulated, but even those are dangerous to touch. Stay away from them.



True or false: A car is a safe place to be in an electrical storm because it has rubber tires.

False. Although an enclosed metal car is a safe place to be, the tires do not protect you. They would have to be about a mile thick and made of solid rubber to afford you adequate protection. The metal that surrounds you affords the protection. Lightning—like all forms of electricity—will travel only on the surface of enclosed metal objects.



H A P P E N I N G S

Every year the Marine Military Academy in Harlingen holds a **PARADE COMMEMORATING THE RAISING OF THE AMERICAN FLAG AT IWO JIMA**. One of the most famous war photos of all time was taken after members of the 3rd, 4th and 5th Marine Divisions stormed the tiny Pacific island of Iwo Jima in February 1945. The flag raising was captured by Associated Press photographer Joe Rosenthal, who passed away earlier this year. Later, sculptor Felix de Weldon made a larger-than-life model of the heroic moment. The bronze monument stands in Arlington Cemetery, but the Marine Military Academy has the original (left) from which the Arlington monument was cast. Check out the monument and the parade November 4 on the Marine Military Academy Parade Grounds, 320 Iwo Jima Blvd. in Harlingen, (956) 423-6006, extension 235.

CONRAD SLEPT HERE

New Mexico native Conrad Hilton originally came to Cisco, Texas, to buy a bank in 1919. He wanted to cash in somehow on the booming Texas oil business. But the bank he wanted cost too much, so he bought the Mobley Hotel, the first in his long career in the international hotel business. The Dallas Hilton, which opened on August 2, 1925, was the first of many hotels to bear his name. He formed the Hilton Hotel Corporation in 1946. The company has expanded into credit cards, car rentals and other travel services.

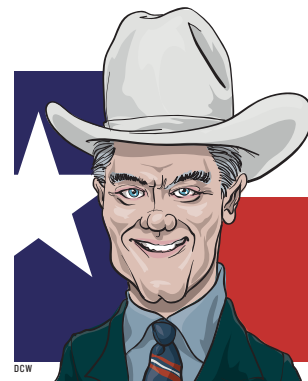
Hilton sold the Mobley Hotel to his mother in 1924. J.M. Radford of Cisco bought it in 1931. It was vacant for many years until the Hilton Foundation put up \$1.2 million for restoration. The building, shown at left, is now used as a museum and community center for civic organizations.

COURTESY THE CONRAD N. HILTON MEMORIAL PARK AND COMMUNITY CENTER



WHO KNEW?

THESE FOLKS ARE NATIVE TEXANS



Actor Larry Hagman
(1931) Fort Worth

Actor Mary Martin
(Larry Hagman's mom)
(1913) Weatherford

Outlaw Bonnie Parker
(1910) Rowena

Outlaw Clyde Barrow
(1909) near Tellico

Hollywood Producer Aaron Spelling
(1923) Dallas

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CO-OP PEOPLE

SOUND THE ALARM!

More than 363 smoke detectors have been purchased and installed in homes throughout Victoria County, thanks to the initiative of Christopher and Kelley Wood, son and daughter of South Texas Electric Cooperative Chief System Operator Henry Wood.

A January fire in a Victoria home left a family, including four children, dead. In a presentation to Victoria School District students, Victoria County Fire Marshall Stuart Sherman explained that the children's deaths could have been avoided if the family had owned a fire detector. Christopher was surprised to learn there were families who could not afford to buy a smoke detector. Christopher (13) and Kelley (9) responded by starting Sound the Alarm! The program distributed 120

smoke detectors from April through June. The First English Lutheran Church began participating in July, adding another 243 to that total.

Christopher and Kelley received the KAVU Channel 25 Home Town Heroes award. Christopher also earned the Victoria 4-H Leo Anderson Caring Heart award; the program is to be adopted by the Texas 4-H for statewide use this year.



Christopher (left) and Kelley Wood select smoke detectors for Sound the Alarm!

BIG BUCKS



the BUSINESS of BREEDING TROPHY WHITETAIL BUCKS

BY JIM ANDERSON • PHOTOS BY RUSSELL GRAVES



IT WAS BOUND TO HAPPEN. RANCHING and deer hunting have been two essential elements of life in Texas since the days of longhorns and long rifles. Combining the two into a thriving industry seems as inevitable as gravy on biscuits.

Currently there are approximately 2,500 registered scientific whitetail breeders operating in the state. That's a lot of economic hopes hanging on the future of big racks.

And big racks are definitely the objec-

tive. Antlers that is, not horns, technically speaking. Horns, as on cattle or bison, are grown from the same bodily material as hooves and remain in place throughout the life of the animal. But antlers are grown from the same calcium and minerals as bones, and are shed and re-grown every year, gaining in mass and size annually until reaching their full size, usually in the sixth or seventh year.

Biologists haven't yet determined precisely why bucks have evolved to shed their antlers every year. Perhaps

the cumbersome headgear would be an extra liability during stressful late winter months, or maybe shedding allows bucks to blend in with the herd in the off season, improving their odds against predators. Or maybe it simply gives them a break from the pressure of competing for dominance.

In any case, antler material is among the fastest-growing bone tissue known in the animal kingdom. In turn, the amazingly strong tissue that holds the antlers to the animal's skull deteri-



orates very quickly when shedding time arrives in late winter.

New antlers begin growth in early spring, shortly after the old ones are shed. They continue growing through the summer, developing inside a soft covering called velvet, a living sheath packed with nourishing blood vessels. By early fall, the velvet's purpose is done; it withers and dries and is rubbed off as the buck polishes his new rack against saplings or branches.

The majestic results of that mysteri-

ous annual cycle are the inspiration for a multi-million dollar industry. (The Texas Deer Association even sponsors competitions and presents awards for biggest antlers.)

DEER BREEDING IS CURRENTLY in a boom phase and, like any booming industry, the inevitable shake-out period will come. But in contrast to previous short-lived wildlife breeding trends, such as emus and ostriches, the deer

business promises to endure because it produces a readily marketable product, target animals for hunting ranches, in addition to breeding stock and semen. Bucks are sold to private hunting ranches at handsome prices, ranging up to several thousand dollars depending on the size of the rack and its trophy rating. In the case of bucks for sale, measurements are taken from shed antlers. Once released into large hunting preserve habitats, bucks resume their full range of wild

instincts and are seldom easy targets.

"The big thing is the big antlers," says Jeff Duebner, herd manager for Diamond D Whitetail Trophy Ranch in West Texas' Runnels County. "In order to get there, it takes you five to six years. You've got to keep them alive and healthy. It's not a very quick turnaround."

Jeff and his wife, Aaron, oversee one of the top scientific breeding and custom hunting operations in the state. "You really can't accurately judge the antler size earlier than age 3," says Jeff. "If the antlers aren't that great at 3, they probably won't ever be that great. On the other hand, if it's a spectacular 3-year-old, he's going to be even better as a 5- or 6-year-old."

Aaron Duebner, with a background in veterinary technology, looks out for the health of the animals, both physical and, interestingly enough, mental. "We pay attention to their mental health. I know it sounds silly, but they are wild animals," she says. "If we're going to keep them inside a fence, we'll do our best to be good stewards." Diamond D employees work quietly, careful not to spook the animals, and they occasionally hang fresh fruit from tree branches to help keep the deer contented and mentally engaged.

A serious health risk for all whitetail deer, both managed and wild, is a disease called Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) caused by the bite of a

tiny midge fly. The disease often results in a fatal fever.

At 5P Farms, in East Texas near Jacksonville, where the does enjoy spacious pens carpeted with lush Bermuda grass, owner Billy Powell has designed a timer-regulated fogger system. The system works by periodically spraying a pesticide mist to control the midge problem. He has developed his own vaccine against EHD, which is also greatly improving mortality rates. And his custom-designed electronic system adds precise amounts of dietary supplements and beneficial digestive-tract bacteria to the animals' drinking water.

Powell keeps prime breeder bucks inside a large, open greenhouse, also of





his own design, protecting them from disease while allowing the sunlight to play its natural role in their hormonal cycles. The weather is about the only thing at 5P Farms left to chance, and inside the buck shelter, even that is controlled.

Powell has developed one of the foremost buck lines in the state, but he has a theory that the distaff, or female, side of the equation bears 65 to 75 percent of the responsibility for producing trophy bucks. "If I breed an outstanding buck to a typical wild doe, her genes will usually dominate and the buck offspring tends to be ordinary," he says. "But if I do the opposite—breed an outstanding doe to a run-of-the-mill buck—the buck offspring are usually better than the sire." If Powell can accumulate enough evidence to support his theory, he will have greatly enhanced the market value for select breeder does.

MOST ESTABLISHED BREEDERS in Texas began with a combination of native Texas whitetails and northern whitetails, which are generally larger deer. But state law now prohibits interstate traffic in live deer, so artificial insemination (AI) is currently the only way to introduce the northern genetics. AI is common practice in the business. Semen from top bucks sells for hun-

dreds of dollars per "straw," the ¼- or ½-cubic-centimeter container used for frozen semen. Consequently, the business has evolved its own universe of famous bloodlines and famous sire names, similar in principle to the breeding of thoroughbred horses.

Powell is proud of a high-scoring buck ironically named "Shorty." Among Diamond D's roster of big breeder bucks are "Looking For Trouble," "Billy White Shoes" and "Ghost." A routine Internet search, using the phrase "whitetail deer breeding," reveals a wide world of such names, but more interesting are the photos of regal bucks with huge, elaborately branched and curved racks. Some are in velvet and others are burnished like fine hardwood.

Like ancient hunters who decorated their cave walls with pictographs honoring their antlered quarry, today's hunters covet a record-book rack for the den wall. Thanks to the burgeoning deer breeding business, there will be plenty of trophy bucks to go around. But the privilege of sighting one in the crosshairs of a rifle scope won't come cheap.

Jim Anderson, a frequent contributor to Texas Co-op Power, divides his time between East Texas and Montana. He is a member of Lamar County Electric Cooperative.

Boone and Crockett Club

Over a Century of Conservation and Sportsmanship

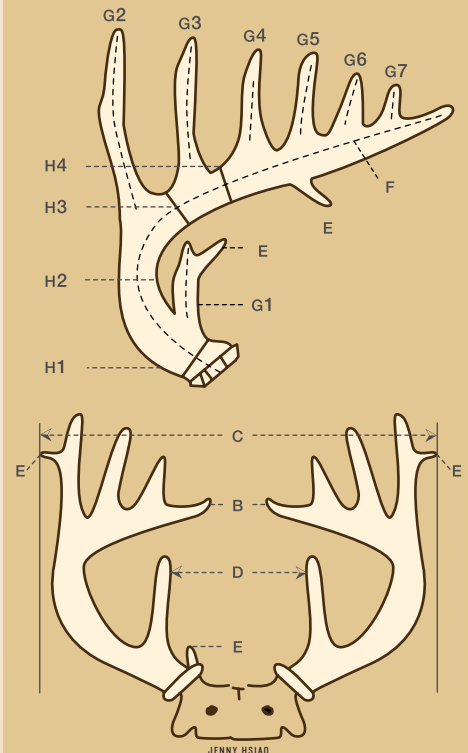
In 1887, decades before he became the 26th U.S. President, Theodore Roosevelt founded the Boone and Crockett Club. An avid hunter and conservationist, Roosevelt named the organization for two of America's most revered frontiersmen, Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett.

The Boone and Crockett Club survives to this day as an advocate of laws and land management practices that protect wildlife. Headquartered in Missoula, Montana, the nonprofit group has been instrumental in protecting Yellowstone, Glacier and Denali national parks from overdevelopment. It is the oldest group in North America to advocate Fair Chase, which promotes pursuing and taking free-range wild game in a way that does not give the hunter an unfair advantage.

The National Collection of Heads and Horns at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, Wyoming, has been maintained by the club since the 1920s.

The Boone and Crockett Club is perhaps best known for establishing official standards to measure and score game trophies. A version of the original standards, modified in 1950, is used in today's competitive scoring practices.

For more information about the Boone and Crockett Club, visit www.boone-crockett.org.



For scoring forms necessary with the complex Boone and Crockett measuring system, go to www.boone-crockett.org/bgrecords/bc_scoring.

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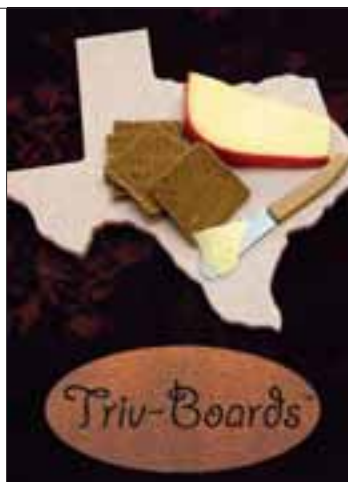
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SALSA

The Condiment of Aztec Kings Conquers New York City

BY JEFF SIEGEL • ILLUSTRATIONS BY LARRY MCENTIRE

Burton Gilliam has worked with Peter Bogdanovich and Mel Brooks and done a television series with Burt Reynolds. But ask the Dallas actor what people say when they meet him, and it's not a line from *Paper Moon* or *Blazing Saddles* or a question about Reynold's legendary social life.

"It's 'New York City,'" says Gilliam with a laugh, drawing the phrase out like he did 20 years ago in the Pace Picante Sauce commercial, when he played a cowboy who discovered that his salsa wasn't made in San Antonio. "That's the one thing that everyone wants to talk about. Pace had done commercials before, but nothing ever took off like that one did."

And, with it, salsa. Today, what seems like the most Texan of condiments is everywhere, even New York City. By one measurement, it's more popular than ketchup; and there are some 1,200 hot sauces and salsas available in this state alone. Yet, before Pace's commercial caught the public's attention, salsa was mostly a regional item, even in Texas. In fact, it was possible to grow up in the 1960s and '70s and never see it on the dinner table or in a grocery store. And what might be even more amazing to anyone weaned on Gilliam's solution to less than authentic salsa ("Git a rope!"), its heritage is more Mexican than cowboy, stretching back thousands of years to pre-Aztec civilization.

The one constant? It has always tasted good.

ON THE SIDE

When the Spaniards landed in central Mexico in the first part of the 16th century, the Aztecs served them a condiment made with chile peppers and tomatoes, mixed with a mortar and pestle called a *molcajete tejolote*. According to Rhett Rushing, the folklorist for the Institute of Texan Cultures in San Antonio, it was served as an accompaniment to meat, fish and chicken, as well as by itself, often with a flat corn bread called *tlaxcalli*. The Aztecs also had wild onions, cilantro and garlic, and while there is no direct evidence that they put them into the pepper-tomato mixture, they may well have done so, says Rushing.

But the Aztecs almost certainly were not the first culture to eat salsa (which is the Spanish name, appearing in 1571; no one seems to know what the Aztecs called it). There is also evidence, says Rushing, that the two civilizations preceding the Aztecs, the Toltecs and the Olmecs, likely combined peppers and tomatoes in much the same way. Both were advanced, highly sophisticated cultures with agriculture-based economies.

Much of what we know about salsa comes from a Spanish priest named Bernardino de Sahagún, who came to Mexico shortly after the Conquest and chronicled many of the native customs and mores that were quickly disappearing under Spanish rule, compiling the first Spanish-Aztec dictionary in the process. The priest also recorded the uses of moles and avocados (appar-

ently, the Aztecs made something like guacamole).

The Spanish had seen condiments. They date to the beginnings of recorded history, whether in Europe or Asia. The Romans, for instance, used mustard, and the spice trade with China and the East Indies (where Columbus was headed, after all) was quite lucrative. But the Spanish had never seen anything quite like salsa. In fact, de Sahagún was shocked and appalled that the Aztecs enjoyed their pepper-tomato concoction, since the Spanish thought that the tomato was poisonous.

By the early 1700s, according to Rushing, salsa had spread north and south from central Mexico, following the Spanish into South America (Chileans eat a tomato salsa with flat corn bread called *chancha en piedra*) and across the Rio Grande into the ranchos of colonial Texas. Salsa was always served fresh, made daily, and appeared on the table at mealtime. This distinction, more than anything else, shows why salsa couldn't have been a cowboy trail drive staple. The chuck wagon didn't have refrigeration, so using fresh tomatoes and chilies was out of the question.

MOVING INTO THE MAINSTREAM

Fast forward to modern times ... 1947 to be precise, when an ex-GI named David Pace started bottling something he called picante sauce in a rented room in the back of a San Antonio liquor store. Despite its success locally, Pace was sold in just five states by 1969

and would remain a regional brand for more than a decade. That meant salsa was still served mostly fresh and mostly at Mexican restaurants.

It wasn't unusual for people not to know about salsa at all back then, says Tom Garbett, who runs Tex-Mex Gourmet, a company that bottles hot sauce, salsa and spaghetti sauce. Garbett's family used to own several Mexican restaurants in Houston, to which people from as far away as Victoria would regularly travel to get

chips and salsa. "Unless you were looking for salsa, it could be hard to find," he says.

Then, in 1982, Pace sold the company to his son-in-law, Kit Goldsbury. Dallas marketing executive Dave Mullen says the ad campaign that followed, which imprinted salsa in the public consciousness, is one of the all-time classics.

"They made it quite clear that there was no better place for salsa to come

from than the Southwest, and that's a believable proposition to consumers," says Mullen, the managing director of Hawkeye/FFWD. "In fact, Pace took it one step further by stating that if a salsa comes from anywhere else, it's a joke."

It was no joke to Pace, which controlled more than one-quarter of the U.S. salsa market just 10 years later and was sold to Campbell's, the soup company, in 1997 in a multi-billion-dollar deal. Lou Rasplicka, who worked for Goldsbury as plant manager and vice president of quality control research and development, explains that the credit for the company's success—and the ad campaign—belonged to Goldsbury and to Marketing Vice President Rod Sands.

"Kit saw Pace was in a great position to get in on the Mexican food craze, which was just starting," says Rasplicka, who worked for Pace from 1981 to 1995. "He also believed in promotional advertising, and the need to do all the things that make a company grow. And in Rod Sands he had a great marketing guy."

No one anticipated that the campaign, which ran for 12 years, would be so effective. Gilliam, who was one of several hundred actors to audition for the part, says the ad executives who saw him read weren't sure the cowboy should be so Texan, and told him to tone down his performance. Fortunately, the director disagreed with them, and the rest is history.

But a food craze does not survive on great marketing alone. This year, salsa became the most popular condiment by sales because people liked the way it tasted, says Jack Gilmore, who runs 10 Z"Tejas restaurants in Texas and the Southwest. (Ketchup is still used more often, in about 3 percent of meals compared to 1 percent for salsa, according to the NPD Group.)

"People who had thought it was too spicy are now looking for spicy foods," he says. "They are looking for something that is fresh tasting and different. And chefs love it because you can do so much with it. There are no boundaries when it comes to salsa."

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Today, fruit salsas, like mango or raspberry-chipotle, are very trendy, as are beyond-tomato salsas, like Maui onion salsa. There are even seafood salsas, like the one made by Carol Borge, who runs the annual Houston Hot Sauce Festival.

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.



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She makes her shrimp salsa with boiled shrimp, fresh tomatoes, garlic, onions, Cajun seasoning, cilantro, lime juice and a little sugar.

Salsa seems to be everywhere these days. Al Wagner, a Texas A&M professor and expert on the salsa business, says entrepreneurs are infatuated with the product. He gets hundreds of calls each year from people who want to start a salsa company. Jacques Pepin, the classically trained chef who cooked for the presidents of France before immigrating to the United States, has two salsa recipes in his latest cookbook. A California-based website, www.salsa2u.com, offers a salsa-of-the-month club.

"In the end, salsa just has more flavor and texture than ketchup or mustard or mayonnaise," says Rushing. "It has chunks in it—tomatoes and onions—and it's made with vegetables. Just for that, it makes people feel better to eat it."

Still, people may not be sure what to call it. Salsa goes by a variety of names, including pico de gallo or picante sauce. There are no hard and fast rules, say the experts, but typically salsa includes everything in the category, while picante sauce is usually bottled, and may have smaller pieces of tomato and onion. Pico de gallo, however, is always fresh and chunky. In fact, says Rushing, the discussion should not center around what salsa is called but whether it's fresh or cooked. Neither is worse or better, he says—just different.

The other two key salsa questions involve cilantro and spiciness. It's a matter of taste given the passions surrounding cilantro, but there does seem to be a consensus that salsa should not be hot just for the sake of searing your tastebuds. After all, it's not a hot sauce, says Nancy Howard of La Grange, who makes four Howards Yummies salsas, including a peach-mango-habanero salsa called "Jump Up & Kick Yo Butt." "Flavor is the first thing," she says, "and it's all about adding flavor to what you're eating. There's a slow burn in our product, but it's just a slow burn."

Best of all, it's not made in New York City.

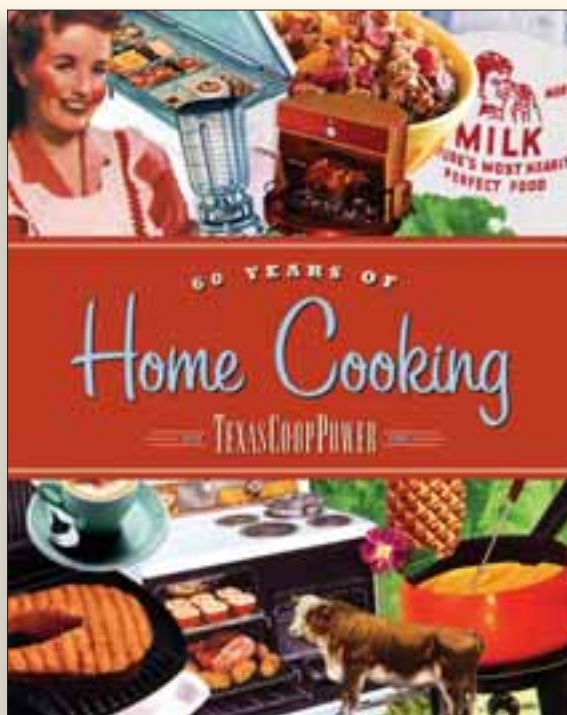
Jeff Siegel, who lives in Dallas, wrote the quintessential essay on chicken-fried steak in our September 2004 issue.

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Efficient Holiday Lighting

BY JAMES DULLEY

DEAR JAMES: I told my children we would use fewer holiday lights to save energy, but they threw a fit. Are there any efficient large lights I can get and do you have any tips for decorating efficiently? —*Becky B.*

DEAR BECKY: It definitely is fun for families to decorate their homes during the holiday season, both indoors and outdoors, but it can increase your electric bill much more than most people realize. Including the cost of the bulbs, the five-year expense (typical life of many bulbs) for using standard colored bulbs during the holidays can be as high as \$150.



A string of LED bulbs like this uses less than 5 watts of electricity and lasts for more than 50,000 hours.

When you compare standard holiday colored lights at the store, you will see designations such as C9, C7 and mini-bulbs. C9 bulbs are the largest ones, and each bulb can use up to 10 watts of electricity. C7 bulbs are slightly smaller and typically use about 5 watts per bulb. The mini-bulbs use just a fraction of a watt, but they are not nearly as bright as C9 or C7 bulbs.

The newest technology in energy-efficient lighting is an LED (light emitting diode). This is a device that does not create light by heating an element inside the bulb. Most of the electricity used ends up as light instead of heat, unlike standard incandescent bulbs.

To create energy-efficient, larger, colored holiday bulbs, several LEDs are mounted inside one bulb. This bulb has a standard base to screw into your existing holiday fixtures. A colored C7 bulb with three LEDs inside of it will be as bright as a standard C7 bulb, but it will use only 0.15 watts of electricity.

These colored C7 LED bulbs have the same shape as regular holiday lights, so you cannot distinguish them from standard colored bulbs. In addition to the electricity savings, the colored shell is made of durable plastic instead of glass. Also, with LED technology, they do not get very hot so they are safer around children and on a real tree.

The only drawback to these colored LED bulbs is their initial higher cost. You can purchase individual bulbs and screw them into an existing string or purchase ready-to-use string and bulb sets. With a life of more than 60,000 hours, you will likely never have to replace them in your lifetime. Considering this long life and the electricity savings, they should pay back their higher initial cost.

Another efficient option is using mini-bulbs, either standard or LED, wherever possible. Both use much less electricity than larger colored lights and are relatively inexpensive to buy.

The best energy-efficiency tip is to use fewer bulbs and light them for a shorter time period each night. Perhaps you can negotiate with your children for a two- or three-hour time period for the lights to be on each night. Plug them into a timer so you don't forget to turn them off. Check the maximum wattage rating of the timer so you do not exceed it.

Another good idea is to use as many reflective ornaments as possible to multiply the effect of fewer lights. Decorating around mirrors and hanging mirrored globe ornaments near lights on a tree are particularly effective.

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WINTER WINDOW IMPROVEMENTS

You have two choices for making your windows more energy efficient for winter: improve your existing windows or buy new ones. Improving the windows you already have is usually preferable, unless they are so deteriorated that you can't repair them. New windows are very expensive, however, and it may take a long time to return your investment based on energy savings. Consider the following ways to improve your existing windows.

Exterior storm windows can help improve your winter comfort dramatically. They also can protect the primary window from weather, reducing maintenance and helping the window last longer.

Storm windows are fastened to the outside of the window frame. On fixed (non-opening) windows, you can install fixed storm windows. If you have horizontal or vertical sliding windows, you'll need operable storm windows so you can still use the window for ventilation or fire escape.

For casement or awning windows (windows that swing out), you can attach glass panels to the movable sashes of the primary window. These glass panels have a narrow aluminum frame that is affixed to the sash of the primary window with screws or with rotating clips.

You can also warm up your windows with thermal shades. These shades do a better job of keeping heat in your home than standard curtains. Most thermal shades roll up to store above the window, and an edge seal provides air-sealing benefits that you won't get from standard curtains. Thermal shades are thicker than most curtains, too, so they do a better job of keeping heat inside your home.

Plans are available for making your own thermal shades, or you can buy the popular quilted shades sold under several brand names.

Source: John Krigger, Saturn Resource Management (www.srmi.biz)

Keeping Winter Warm Calls for Fire Safety

The lower the temperature dips, the higher your chances for a fire in your home.

Nearly one-third of residential fires occur during the winter, the National Fire Protection Association reports. Several culprits mar the holidays with fires: Space heaters and woodstoves are obvious threats, but candles and overloaded outlets are guilty as well.

Prevent holiday fires by decorating carefully and paying a bit of extra attention to fire safety this winter. Some tips:

- Have the chimney cleaned and inspected each year before winter use. Keep a tight-fitting screen on the fireplace.

- Burn only dry, well-seasoned wood in woodstoves. Do not burn trash inside, as it can start a chimney fire. Clean your fireplace or woodstove safely by putting ashes in a closed



metal container and disposing of them outdoors.

- Electric space heaters may help you stay cozy when it's cold, but they can be dangerous. Replace your old heaters with newer models that have automatic shut-off protection. Keep

them away from curtains and other flammables; never put clothes or towels on an electric heater to speed drying or warm them up. Most important, teach your children to steer clear of the heaters.

- Don't overload outlets or extension cords for holiday lights.

- Extension cords are designed for temporary use, so pack them away when the season is over. Do not put extension cords under rugs or in walkways. Not only can they trip someone, but the wear on the cord could cause it to fray and become a fire hazard.

- Candles are a classic holiday decoration, but also a potential fire starter. If you use candles as part of a centerpiece, enclose the candle in a glass holder to protect the surrounding decorations. Keep candles off coffee tables, where they easily can be knocked over. Never leave a burning candle unattended.

THE POWER OF ONE

- Several of our states, including California, Idaho, Oregon, Texas and Washington, became states by just ONE vote.
- In 1948, Lyndon B. Johnson, our 36th president, became a U.S. senator by a ONE-vote margin.
- In the 1960 presidential election, ONE additional vote per precinct in Illinois, Missouri, New Jersey and Texas would have denied John F. Kennedy the presidency and put Richard M. Nixon in office eight years earlier.

We encourage you to exercise your right and privilege to vote and participate in the November 7 election.



Veterans Day

*For a brief, shining
moment, one war
became more than
some sentimental
Hollywood scene.*

BY MELISSA GASKILL

N

ovember 11 is one of those obscure holidays, like Labor Day and Columbus Day, that seem to have lost meaning over the years. It's just another day off for many people—if that. There are few special Veterans Day events and no traditional meal, gifts or greeting cards. It simply isn't part of important holiday traditions for most families, mine included. At least until a few years ago.

My father, a notorious pack rat, stored his war memories in the garage of our family home. There were pages and pages of yellowed, crumbling letters, and odds and ends like a silk map, logbook, invitation to a military banquet, clippings and photos. Like other veterans of World War II, he had come home, packed these things away, and gone on with life without making a fuss about what he had done.

I discovered the cache during college, and the fact that my father had saved these items spoke volumes to me. I realized how important the experience had been to him and how much it had shaped him. Those dusty, bug-gnawed mementos brought a historic time to life, and made me realize that my father belonged to a generation of heroes. This epiphany was shared by much of the country about a decade later. (Thank you, Mr. Brokaw, for writing *The Greatest Generation*.) My new appreciation of my father and his generation came to a head with the construction of the World War II Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

Ground was broken for that memorial on November 11, 2000, the first remarkable Veterans Day of my life. I went to Washington for the celebration with my father, then 81, and my son, Collin. My hope was to honor my dad and to put him in the middle of something meaningful. My hope was for my son to get it.

My kids knew the bare facts: How Grandpa arrived in the South Pacific in 1942, one of 17 newly minted first lieutenants, flew 57 missions to places with infamous names like Rabaul and Guadalcanal, and was one of only three of that 17 to return home. We won the war, but there is so much more to it than that, and I wanted Collin, who was 9 at the time, to understand.

We joined about 12,000 people that day on the windy, chilly hillside between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial. Some were famous—the President of the United States, former Senator and veteran Bob Dole, actor Tom Hanks—but most were simply ordinary Americans, veterans of WWII and conflicts since, their spouses, children and grandchildren. Thousands were like my father, remnants of a generation that lately has been called great and noble. They wore old uniforms and medals, caps with the names of outfits, ships and squadrons.

A high school student passed out hand-made thank you notes; my father carefully tucked his in a pocket. Tom Hanks read a dispatch from the late war correspondent Ernie Pyle, and his voice carried over a silence I wouldn't have thought

possible in such a large crowd. Senator Dole asked veterans to stand, if they were able to. The applause was long and heartfelt. Bands played, a color guard carried flags snapping in the wind. In the distance we could see the White House and the Capitol. The day was everything I had pictured, and surpassed my hopes.

Later, when we were in line at the Washington Monument, a park ranger glanced at Dad's battered 13th Air Force cap (one of many he collected at annual reunions) and said, "Thank you." The wind must have blown just then, because my father's eyes watered. I tried to recall if I'd ever said those words out loud, and then it really hit me how this day had been neglected. I decided that from then on, Veterans Day would be noted at our house. We'd hang the flag, bake a cake, and say, "Thank you."

Before that trip, my son thought war meant movies like *Twelve O'clock High*, *Patton* and *The Sands of Iwo Jima* (oh yes, we've watched them all); patriotic songs at the school Veterans Day assembly (bless you, Ms. Jeffrey, for having one every year); and a few of his grandfather's stories. But for a brief, shining moment, one war became more than some sentimental Hollywood scene, something beyond fancy duds or big jeeps, more alive than sentences in a textbook. It was real—real people in a fight for their lives and our freedom. A generation, standing all around us, gave just about all it had so we could have all we want.

Sixteen million Americans, men and women, served in World War II, and more than 400,000 gave their lives in it. Today fewer than 4 million remain; their average age is over 80, and each year, another 400,000 die. My father became one of those in March 2004, two months to the day before we were to return to Washington for the long-overdue opening of the World War II Memorial. I went anyway, with Collin and his little sister, Bridget. This time it was Memorial Day, May 29, 2004, and some 250,000 people turned out for a weekend-long "Tribute to the Greatest Generation." We left a small container of Grandpa's ashes, a photo, and a shell from the South Pacific next to the words "New Guinea" on the South Pacific end of the stunning memorial. I'll always cherish the memory of that day and the other one, four years before. Even better, I know my father's grandchildren will, too.

I hope and pray my children will never know the experience of war as their grandfather did. But I want them to know and remember that he did, to appreciate what his generation of brave, unselfish men and women did, and what veterans from subsequent generations continue to do. I want them to believe that our country and our freedom are worth such sacrifices, that ordinary people who do what is right without thought of personal gain are the real heroes. And I want them to celebrate Veterans Day, this year and every year. You can, too.

Melissa Gaskill wrote "Bad Sports" in the April 2005 issue of *Texas Co-op Power*.



Top: A commemorative t-shirt with an image of the author's father, Lt. Col. Carl E. Pitts, from the "Tribute to the Greatest Generation" celebration on Memorial Day 2004. Above: Melissa Gaskill with children Collin (right) and Bridget (left) at the 2004 event.

Texas' Designing Women

*These co-op ladies
are commanding
international
acclaim for their
high-style
Western wear.*

by Susan L. Ebert



THE STEEL MAGNOLIA

Pat Dahnke, with her long blonde tresses and million-candle power smile, radiates femininity. But beneath the delicate demeanor lays a steel-strong spirit, forged in a crucible of heartbreak, survival and sheer will.

"I try to do the unusual," says Dahnke, bustling about her factory, housed in a stable on her Rainbow's End Ranch in Waller. "I believe the cowgirl should be feminine, and many of my designs cross over from Western into mainstream fashion."

Dahnke, a San Bernard Electric Co-op member who's been plying her craft for 38 years, designs everything herself, and the garments are sewn by a bevy of workers in part of her horse barn converted into seamstresses' studios.

Life is good. Especially since it wasn't always so.

In 1985, Dahnke's 2-year-old son, Kent, succumbed to a rare, fatal form of neuroblastoma. To make matters even worse, her marriage was crumbling. She decided to leave Houston with surviving children Kirk and Tara, and forge a new life.

Dahnke, who had operated dress shops, turned to designing feminine fashions. "I even changed my own look from a serious business look to a softer style," she says. "I guess I thought if I could make myself look happy on the outside, that the inside would match."

She found a piece of land where she could produce her garments, keep her beloved horses, and raise her children. "I knew I'd found the right spot, when on the first day of production, a brilliant rainbow arced overhead. I felt it was my son's spirit guiding me, and that's why I named it Rainbow's End Ranch."

CHIC HIPPIE CHICK

As a child in Philadelphia, this designer festooned her walls with postcards from Texas. "It was always all about Texas," grins the greyhound-sleek Patricia Wolf. "I always knew I was meant to be here."

She entered the convent right after high school, where she remained for several years. "It just wasn't me. I took off, as far as I could go, and found myself on a beach in San Pedro, California, where I met surfer/leathercrafter Sam Wolf. Sam was an art student and I was a seamstress, so we combined our talents and made denim jackets with leather trim, shearling coats, belts and other garments."

Heading up the coast to San Francisco, the couple bought a school bus, which they outfitted with two treadle sewing machines, kerosene lamps and their living quarters. "We lived on the bus for the next six years," says Wolf. "One of my two sons was born on the bus. We traveled from Seattle, through Canada, to New Hope, New Jersey, to New York City, crafting apparel on the bus and selling it at renaissance festivals, art shows and fairs. I first was doing hand embroidery on our leather garments, but found painting on the leather to be much more organic."

Their journey brought them to Texas for the second year of the Texas Renaissance Festival in Magnolia, and in 1976 they fell in love with Smithville,

where they operate a sunny factory/studio on the town's charming Main Street. "We found, of all the places we'd traveled, we love Bastrop County the best," says this Bluebonnet Electric Co-op member.

Wolf incorporates silks, cottons and stretch knits into her offerings, creating contrasts of texture that showcase the stunning hand-painted leatherwork that has become her signature. Country star Reba McEntyre appeared on the cover of *TV Guide* in a Patricia Wolf creation.

COWTOWN COWGIRLS

The two partners who run Sage West Designs had no idea their lives would become so intertwined. "She's my angel," says Marsha Wright of her partner, Brandy Hawkins.

Orphaned at 21, when both her parents perished in a plane crash, Wright found nurture and inspiration from her mother's best friend, Barbara McPherson, who became her surrogate mother.

After admiring a pricy hand-decorated T-shirt for toddlers, she decided she could do something equally good with her sewing machine, some trim and creativity. "So I made a handful of shirts, and took them to the Dallas Apparel Market." In her first foray into the fashion world, Marsha signed \$17,000 of orders for her hand-decorated shirts.

THE "WOW FACTOR" IS SOMETHING ALL THESE TEXAS DESIGNING WOMEN HAVE IN COMMON, ALONG WITH THE INDOMITABLE SPIRIT THAT'S THE SIGNATURE OF A LONE STAR LADY.

BMW Designs—a play on McPherson and Wright's initials—was founded, but McPherson developed leukemia and quickly succumbed. Having, in effect, lost her second mother, Wright immersed herself in work, rounding up friends to help fulfill the orders she'd taken. "I have a degree in interior design from Texas Tech, so even though the garment industry was new to me, I had design sense. We set up in the back of my husband's dry cleaning business, making jackets and broomstick skirts."

In 1998, Wright sold BMW Designs to Western-wear company Scully and after her five-year noncompete contract expired, started Sage West Designs in 2003. At a National Cowgirl Hall of Fame function that year, she and Brandy Hawkins, who was modeling Western fashions for Billy Bob's of Fort Worth, found they had much in common. The two agreed there was a void in Western fashion—the traditional pearl-snap shirts and embroidered jackets of Western wear's heyday were missing from the contemporary lineup. A partnership was forged. "We're pure Fort Worth," says Wright. "Sage West Designs reflects Fort Worth and everything we love about Texas."

Hawkins leveraged her talents from her retail buying experience at Billy Bob's and her TCU communications and marketing degree to work on the business end of Sage West Designs. "I know what the retailer is looking for, as I've walked in their boots," says Hawkins, a Tri-County Electric Co-op member. "What we have is touchable, wearable art. We want someone who's not 'Western' to see it and say, 'Wow!'"

And judging from the admiring glances one attracts when stepping out in Pat Dahnke, Patricia Wolf or Sage West Designs, the "wow factor" is something all these Texas designing women have in common, along with the indomitable spirit that's the signature of a Lone Star lady.

Susan L. Ebert is a frequent contributor to Texas Co-op Power and the former publisher and editor of Texas Parks & Wildlife magazine.

CLOTHING DESIGNS, FROM TOP:

PAT DAHNKE/DESIGNS BY PAT, www.designsbypat.com, 1-800-728-7376.

PATRICIA WOLF, www.patriciawolf.com, 1-800-728-9653.

SAGE WEST DESIGNS, www.sagewestdesigns.com, 1-817-847-5288.



Because many pieces of farm equipment reach heights of 14 feet or higher, always remember to look up when entering fields and barn lots to make sure there is enough room to pass beneath electric lines. Electric contact accidents can result in loss of limbs or even death.


Farm Safety Rules:

- The number one electrical farm hazard is the potential contact from a grain auger to a power line. Always look up before raising or moving an auger.
- The same is true of metal irrigation pipe, often stored along fence lines under an electric line. Never raise or move irrigation pipe without looking up. A few seconds of caution can mean the difference between life and death.
- Be sure hand tools are in good working order and use them according to manufacturers' instructions.
- Ensure that the wiring in your workshop is adequate to handle your tools. And never operate any electric tools near water.
- Read labels and handling instructions carefully and follow them when using chemicals and herbicides. Never leave chemicals where children or animals can get into them; store them in a locked cabinet if possible. Safely dispose of containers.

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Gail Borden, Revolutionary Milkman

BY JUDY ALTER

Elsie the Cow a Texas symbol? Sort of. Gail Borden Jr., the inventor of condensed milk, lived in Galveston when he experimented with ways to extract water from milk, which is 87 percent water. Some say he stumbled onto condensed milk because he left a pot of milk on the stove until it turned into a thick, sticky substance. Others say he wanted to remove the water to preserve milk for children making long journeys on ships or wagon trains. He tried various condensation methods and finally patented a process involving vacuum pans in 1856.

Borden, who played a key role in Texas' independence, was known as an eccentric—a tall, thin, stooped man with enormous energy who liked causes, gadgets and inventions that rarely worked. While living in Galveston, he invented a cure for yellow fever that involved lowering patients' body temperatures; by the time his huge refrigerators arrived, he had moved on to the terraqueous (literally "land and water") machine, which could travel on land or water. On its trial run, it reached a good speed on land but dumped its passengers in the Gulf when it hit water.

The meat biscuit was next. Borden thought travelers to the gold fields, people on sailing ships, and so forth, could safely use a dried-meat cake. He boiled meat until he extracted heavy syrup, mixed that with flour, and baked it. The biscuits, which could be fried, baked or made into pudding, were never a success in the United States, though they attracted international attention. Borden lost \$60,000 on meat biscuits, although he eventually produced a beef extract that was the forerunner of today's bouillon cubes. But it was condensed milk that made his fame and fortune.

It also took Borden out of Texas. He established plants in Connecticut and bought a horse and wagon to sell his milk in New York City. The New York Condensed Milk Company eventually became Borden Inc., which today includes Borden Chemical, producer of high performance resins, adhesives and coatings. But the Borden Company is still best known for dairy products. And who doesn't know Elsie the Cow? This brown Jersey has been mascot of the Borden Company since 1947.

The road to international success took Borden a long way from his Ohio farm boyhood. He first moved to Louisiana in search of a better climate for his weak lungs. He served as a teacher there and found a wife. They moved to Stephen F. Austin's Texas colony in 1830, near others of Borden's family. When he failed at farming, his brother, Tom, surveyor for the colony, appointed Gail a deputy.

Gail Borden became a hero of the Texas Revolution almost in spite of himself. In the early 1830s, when Texians sent peti-

tions to Mexico City urging the government to declare Texas a separate province, Borden helped write the proposed constitution for an independent state. When Austin was held in a Mexican jail for two years, Borden took over his duties governing the colony.

But Borden's most important contribution came in 1835 when he and Tom established a newspaper, the *Telegraph and Texas Registers*. The newspaper kept Texians informed about the war.

When General Sam Houston led his troops east, away from Mexican General Antonio López de Santa Anna, the Borden brothers hauled their press from San Felipe to Harrisburg. Issue No. 22 was to appear April 14, 1836, but the brothers fled the oncoming Mexican army. Three printers stayed behind and issued six copies of the paper. Nobody knows the fate of the printers, but those copies survived to become important historical documents. After the Texians captured Santa Anna at the Battle of San Jacinto, the Borden brothers reactivated their newspaper but consistently lost money and finally sold it.

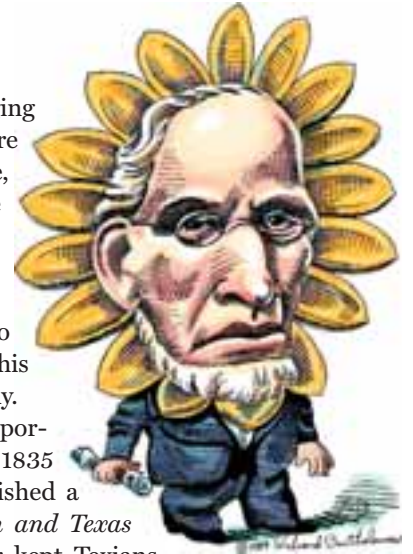
During Sam Houston's two terms as president of the Republic of Texas, Gail Borden was tax collector for the port of Galveston. In his second term, he disagreed with Houston and resigned, but stayed in Galveston. It was then that he invented condensed milk.

After he moved east and developed his milk business, Borden missed Texas and his family. He returned in 1867, reuniting with his children, meeting his grandchildren, and visiting friends. In his last years, he summered in the Catskills and wintered in Texas. He died at Borden, Texas, January 11, 1874, and is buried in New York City. His grave marker reads:

*I tried and failed,
I tried again and again, and succeeded.*

The town of Borden, west of Houston, where Gail Borden established the Borden Meat Preserving Company, is a ghost town today. Borden County in the Panhandle honors his work during the Texas Revolution. The county seat is Gail.

Novelist Judy Alter of Fort Worth is a frequent contributor to Texas Co-op Power.



Orphans' Thanksgiving

BY SHANNON OELRICH The phenomenon of "Orphans' Thanksgiving" used to be the province of university towns like Austin, where lots of people are away from their families during holidays. But as our society becomes more nomadic, the idea is becoming more widespread, and the new traditions more familiar: Those who can't be "home for the holidays"—whether for work, school or other reasons—gather at a friend's house for a potluck. Some are huge, come-one-come-all affairs, and others are small, intimate gatherings. For a small gathering of friends, a turkey might be too much meat and too much trouble, so consider roast duck instead. I chose a recipe for duck and a great accompanying stuffing from our new cookbook, *60 Years of Home Cooking*, to share with you.

To use the Gala Glaze for Roast Duck, first preheat your oven to 425 degrees. Next, prepare a 5- to 6-pound duck by washing it, cutting off the excess fat, and pricking the skin all over with the tip of a knife. Season duck liberally, inside and out, with salt and pepper. Place in a shallow roasting pan with a rack and cook for 30 minutes. Take it out of the oven and drain the fat, if necessary. Turn oven down to 300 degrees and continue to cook for 1 hour (add 20 minutes if duck is closer to 6 pounds or is stuffed). Internal temperature should reach 165 degrees on a meat thermometer.

GALA GLAZE FOR ROAST DUCK

- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon caraway seeds
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 bottle (7 ounces) 7-Up
- 1 cup halved, seedless white grapes

Thoroughly mix brown sugar, caraway seeds, salt and 7-Up in a saucepan. Stir in grapes. About half an hour before meat has finished baking, spoon on the glaze. Baste meat once or twice with sauce as it finishes baking. Serves 4 to 6.

Serving size: 2 small slices. Per serving: 174 calories, 17 g protein, 6 g fat, 10 g carbohydrates, 87 mg sodium, 58 mg cholesterol

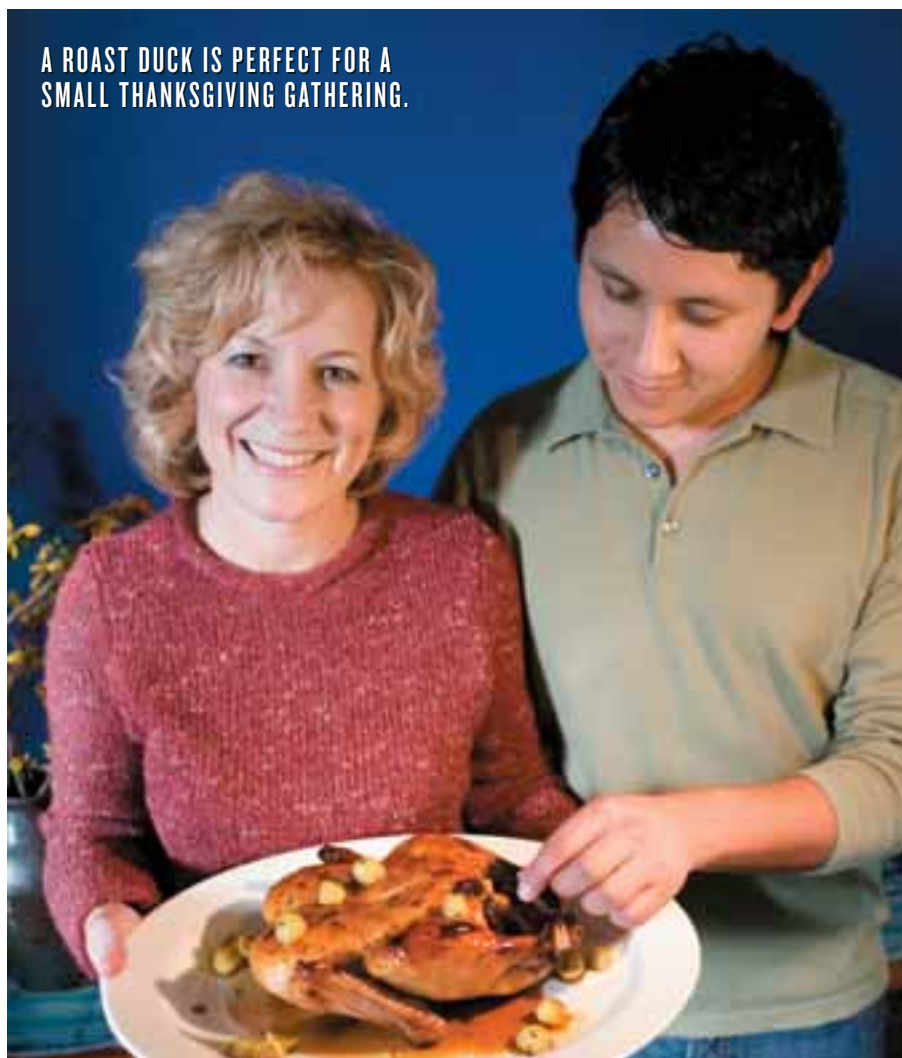
PECAN STUFFING FOR WILD DUCK

- 1 cup finely chopped celery
- 1 cup finely chopped onion
- 1 cup seedless raisins
- 1 cup pecan meats, chopped
- 1/2 cup cooked crumbled bacon
- Fresh ground pepper
- 4 cups soft bread crumbs
- 1/2 cup milk, scalded
- 2 eggs, beaten

Mix together all but milk and eggs. Add hot milk to the beaten eggs and then to the dry mixture. Toss lightly. Bake with fowl or in separate greased baking dish at 325 degrees for about 1 hour. Serves 6 to 8.

Serving size: 1 large serving spoonful. Per serving: 290 calories, 8 g protein, 16 g fat, 31 g carbohydrates, 270 mg sodium, 55 mg cholesterol

Cook's Quip: **Barbara Baronas**, member of **Central Texas Electric Cooperative**, sent us a funny story about dressing: "While I won't include a recipe for the stuff you put in the turkey, I thought you might like to hear what my grandfather, Owen Yoder, always said about it: 'If you have one helping, it's called *dressing*. Your second helping is called *filling*, and your third helping is called *stuffing*!'"



A ROAST DUCK IS PERFECT FOR A SMALL THANKSGIVING GATHERING.


MARY JO MCCARTY *Grayson-Collin Electric Cooperative*

Prize-winning recipe: Crock Pot Dressing

This month's winning recipe is very, very tasty, and incredibly easy to prepare. As long as your Thanksgiving crowd can live without the crusty corners you get from cooking your dressing in a pan, then this simple Crock Pot Dressing is a time-saving wonder.

CROCK POT DRESSING

- 1 package cornbread mix
- 8 slices toast
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 4 eggs
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons sage
- 2 cans chicken broth
- 2 cans cream of chicken soup

Mix all ingredients in crock pot. Cook for 2 hours on high or 4 hours on low.

Serves 8.

Serving size: 1 large serving spoonful. Per serving: 210 calories, 8 g protein, 7 g fat, 28 g carbohydrates, 958 mg sodium, 96 mg cholesterol

CORNBREAD DRESSING

- 1 pan cornbread (see below)
- 4 cups croutons from toasted bread (6 slices)
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 oranges, sectioned, chopped
- 2 apples, cored, pared, chopped
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup dried cranberries (or raisins)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup parsley
- 2 teaspoons sage
- 2 teaspoons fresh marjoram leaves (or 1 dried)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon dried thyme leaves
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon black pepper
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon dried oregano leaves
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon nutmeg
- 2 eggs, slightly beaten

- 1 can 99% fat-free chicken broth
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ cup melted margarine
 - 1 tablespoon chicken bouillon granules
- Break cornbread into pieces in very large bowl. Add croutons, vegetables and fruits. Distribute seasonings over the bread mixture. Add eggs, broth and margarine by distributing liquids over bread mixture. Bouillon can be added dry or mixed with a little water. With large spoon, mix all ingredients well, turning dressing over so that seasonings and liquids become evenly distributed.

Pile loosely into greased baking pan(s); gently press down the top layer to make a semi-smooth surface. Bake at 400 degrees for 45 minutes or until top is golden brown. Note: Small amount of chicken broth may be added during baking if dressing becomes too dry. Serves 12 to 14.

CORNBREAD

- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup yellow cornmeal
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 4 teaspoons baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup skim milk
- 1 egg
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup canola oil

Mix dry ingredients together. Add milk, egg and oil; stir to mix. Pour into greased skillet or pan. Bake at 425 degrees for 25 minutes or until top is golden brown.

CAROL CARPENTER

Pedernales Electric Cooperative

Serving size: 1 large serving spoonful. Per serving: 259 calories, 6 g protein, 12 g fat, 32 g carbohydrates, 506 mg sodium, 40 mg cholesterol

CORNBREAD STUFFING

- 12 cups cubed day-old cornbread (1 large pan about 1-inch thick)
- 4 tablespoons olive oil (divided)
- 2 tablespoons dried thyme
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 pounds bulk sausage
- 4 cups chopped onions
- 4 cups chopped celery
- 2 tablespoons finely minced garlic
- 2 tablespoons dried sage leaves, crumbled
- 2 tart apples, coarsely chopped
- 1 cup dried cherries or cranberries
- 1 cup pitted prunes, halved
- 2 cups chicken broth

In large bowl, toss cornbread, 2 tablespoons olive oil, thyme, salt and pepper. Put on baking sheets in single layer and toast in 350-degree oven for 15 minutes.

Brown sausage in pot over medium heat, breaking up clumps; remove to bowl using slotted spoon. Blot excess grease from sausage with paper towels.

Place remaining olive oil in pot; cook onions, celery, garlic and sage over medium-low heat for 20 minutes. In large bowl, combine cornbread, sausage, cooked vegetables and fruits. Drizzle with broth to moisten as desired; toss well.

Let cool before stuffing turkey. To cook separately, put stuffing in pan, cover, and bake in preheated 350-degree oven until heated through, about 20 to 30 minutes. Serves 10 to 12.

PATRICIA GARRETT

Pedernales Electric Cooperative

Serving size: 1 large serving spoonful. Per serving: 586 calories, 8 g protein, 19 g fat, 62 g carbohydrates, 930 mg sodium, 115 mg cholesterol

RECIPE CONTEST

February's recipe topic is **DARK CHOCOLATE**—a fitting tribute to the month of Valentines because not only is it a delicious treat for your beloved, it's good for the heart!

Send in recipes that use dark chocolate as an ingredient 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. Please include your name, address and phone number, as well as the name of your electric co-op. The deadline is November 10. The top winner will receive a tin filled with Pioneer products. Runners-up will also receive a prize.



PACK YOUR EMERGENCY KIT NOW!

Emergency Kit

Have you taken steps to prepare for severe storms before they strike? If you put together an emergency supply kit now, you and your family will be ready for almost anything.


Here's what you should include in your kit:

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

(Information from the Division of Emergency Management, Texas Department of Public Safety)



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Cooperatives**

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



NEITHER RAIN, NOR WIND, NOR SLEET ...

As a kid growing up on a farm, the mailbox and telephone were my connections to the “real” world, and I made great friends with our mail carrier—but not so much with the five families who shared our telephone party line. Now that I’m a city dweller, I wax nostalgic about those days and wonder if mailboxes still hold that magical association for others. With today’s e-mails and text messages, there’s seldom a letter in my parents’ old mailbox—but always plenty of bills! Many of our readers’ mailboxes are special in other ways, as you’ll see in these photos. —CHERYL TUCKER

◀ In the '80s, the Harrises hid a remote camera in their mailbox and got this great photo of **Jimmy Harris** checking his mail. If you look closely, you may be able to see that *Texas Co-op Power* is on top of the stack of mail; back then the publication was a black-and-white newsprint tabloid. Jimmy and **Doris Harris** belong to San Bernard EC.



▲ Comanche County EC member **Donah Stricklin** is a mail carrier and likes to take photos of unusual mailboxes. The Stricklins found this hammer-shaped mailbox (would that make it a “toolbox”?) on Galveston Island.



▲ No, it's not pony express! “Sixgun Sallie can do it all,” says Bluebonnet EC member **Denise Fleming**. “She’s a show horse, reiner and even checks the mail for the occasional prize check.”



▲ Jackson EC members **LeRoy** and **Anna Cessor** get plenty of looks with their high-flying “mailbox.”



◀ **Glen** and **Carolyn George**’s 3-year-old granddaughter, **Jorja Bessonett**, asks so many questions, they joke that they need to mail her to someone who knows the answers. Their grandson, **Nathan George**, 10, took this photo as a 4-H photography project and placed first in district competition. The Georges belong to Farmers EC.

Upcoming in Focus on Texas

ISSUE	SUBJECT	DEADLINE
Jan	Extreme Weather	Nov 10
Feb	Gates	Dec 10
Mar	Snapshots	Jan 10
Apr	Inspirational	Feb 10
May	Barbecues	Mar 10
June	Inventions	Apr 10

EXTREME WEATHER is the topic for our January 2007 issue. Send your photo—along with your name, address, daytime phone, co-op affiliation and a brief description—to Extreme Weather, Focus on Texas, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704, before November 10. A stamped, self-addressed envelope must 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. Please note that we cannot provide individual critiques of submitted photos. If you use a digital camera, e-mail your highest-resolution images to focus@texas-co-op.org. (If you have questions about your camera’s capabilities and settings, please refer to the operating manual.)

► “You never know what you will find—or where—on a farm,” says **Mable Wilke**. After putting up a larger mailbox, this one was moved to a post near her front garden gate. “Last year it became a bird’s nest, and this spring, we heard a kitten meowing, but couldn’t find it until we looked inside the mailbox,” the Central Texas EC member said.



AROUND TEXAS AROUND TEXAS

NOVEMBER

03 DRIPPING SPRINGS
Knights of Columbus Fish Fry, (512) 894-4470

HUNTSVILLE [3-5]
Church Bazaar,
(936) 295-8159

WHEELOCK [3-4]
100 Years of Quilts,
(979) 828-3721

04 DEVINE Fall Festival
(830) 663-2739,
www.devinecoc.org

ELDORADO
Game Dinner & Drawing,
(325) 650-9559

HARLINGEN Iwo Jima
Parade, (956) 423-6006,
ext. 235

HEBBRONVILLE
Vaquero Festival, (361)
227-4481, www.jimhogg
countyvaquero festival.com

04 LIVINGSTON Christmas
Bazaar, (936) 327-4468

MARSHALL [4-5]
Model Train Show,
(903) 934-8687

MONTGOMERY
Farmer's Market, (936)
597-4566, www.historic
montgomerytexas.com

ONALASKA First
United Methodist Church
Bazaar, (936) 646-5859

PALACIOS [4-5] Seafood
Festival & Motorcycle
Rally, 1-800-611-4567,
www.texasfishermens
festival.com

PEARL Ole Time Music,
(254) 865-6013,
www.pearlbluegrass.com

ROSEBUD 100+ Garage
Sales, (254) 583-7979

SAN ANGELO
Wiener Dog Races,
(325) 949-1475

04 UTOPIA
Arts & Crafts Guild Fall
Fair, (830) 966-3359

06 WALBURG Wurstbraten,
(512) 863-3065,
www.zionwalburg.org

10 FREDERICKSBURG
[10-12] Art Past Dark,
1-888-997-3600,
www.fredericksburg-
texas.com

LONE CAMP [10-11] Fall
Bazaar, (940) 659-2141

WIMBERLEY [10-11]
Art League Holiday Show,
(512) 847-3510

11 AUSTONIO Fire Dept.
Fish Fry, (936) 624-2079

BRIARCLIFF Fundraiser
Poker Tournament,
(512) 264-7367

BUCHANAN DAM
Arts & Crafts Fall Show,
(512) 793-2858

11 BURNET Arts & Craft
Show, (512) 756-0834

COLLEGE STATION
Holiday Market,
(979) 690-0613

DAYTON Holiday Craft
Fair, (936) 258-8231

HAMILTON Anvil Shoot,
(254) 386-5407

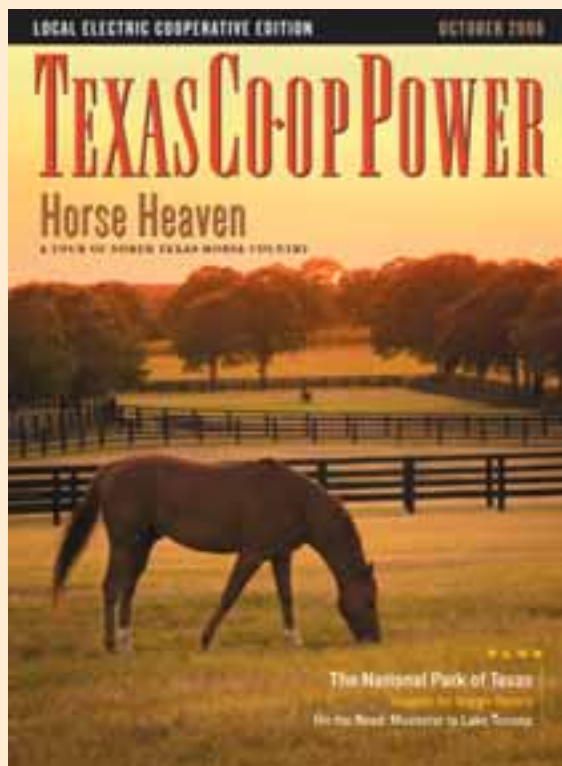
HENDERSON
Heritage Syrup Festival,
(903) 657-4303

HONDO Wild Game
Dinner, (830) 426-3037

KINGSLAND [11-12]
House of Arts
& Crafts Fall Show,
(325) 388-6159,
www.kinglandcrafts.com

MANCHACA [11-12] Craft
Show, (512) 282-7274

SAN MARCOS WW II
Veterans Day Dinner &
Dance, (512) 396-1943,
www.realtime.net/centex



TEXAS CO-OP POWER

**EACH MONTH, WE BRING YOU THE
VERY BEST TEXAS HAS TO OFFER!**

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.

AROUND TEXAS AROUND TEXAS

11 SCHULENBURG Banjo Fest, (979) 743-4388

SHEPHERD Fiddle Contest, (713) 503-9632

12 MCALLEN Old Car Festival & Benefit, (956) 618-3844

16 BEEVILLE Holiday Extravaganza, (361) 358-1550

HICO [16-18] Art Walk, (254) 796-4251

18 BANDERA Trail Ride & Silent Auction, (830) 589-2400, www.horseadoption.net

KERRVILLE Holiday Lighted Parade, (830) 792-8395, www.kerrville.org/mainstreet

LAKEHILLS Christmas Bazaar, (830) 612-2817

MARBLE FALLS [18-1/1] Walkway of Lights, www.marblefalls.org

18 NORTH ZULCH Homecoming Festival, (936) 399-3501

RED ROCK Holiday Arts & Crafts Fair, (512) 923-7845

VANDERPOOL St. Mary's Catholic Church Festival, (830) 966-2165

22 MARSHALL Wonderland of Lights, (903) 935-7868

24 BOERNE [24-25] A Hill Country Christmas, (830) 816-2176, www.ahillcountrychristmas.com

ELM MOTT [24-26] Homestead Craft Fair, (254) 754-9600, www.homesteadcraftfair.com

FREDERICKSBURG [24-26] Knife & Tomahawk Competition & Thanksgiving Celebration, (830) 997-9895

24 GAIL Lighting of the Star, (806) 756-4391

JEFFERSON Christmas Lighting Ceremony, (903) 665-2672, www.jefferson-texas.com

25 ANDERSON Holiday in Historic Anderson Festival, (936) 825-6600

HICO Christmas Craft Market, 1-800-361-HICO

KIRBYVILLE Christmas in the Park, (409) 423-1599

LEXINGTON Christmas Bazaar, (512) 273-2551

30 PEP Thanksgiving Festival, (806) 933-4696

POTTSBORO [30-12/03] Birding & Nature Festival, 1-888-893-1198, www.redriverbirding.com

DECEMBER

01 TABLE ROCK [1,2,8,9] A Christmas Carol, (254) 947-9205

02 SHELBY Nighttime Lighted Christmas Parade, (936) 598-3377

07 JEFFERSON Christmas Parade [7] and Candlelight Tour of Homes [7-9] (903) 665-7064, www.jefferson-texas.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. Please submit events for January by November 10. Events are listed according to space available; see the full listing at www.texascooppower.com. We appreciate photos with credits but regret that they cannot be returned.

60 YEARS OF

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Make checks payable to Texas Electric Cooperatives.
Send \$29.95 (\$24.95 plus \$5 tax, shipping and handling) for each cookbook to Cookbook, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704. Also available in many co-op lobbies throughout the state or online at texascooppower.com.
Allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery.

A lonely area in near West Texas, the southwestern corner of the Texas Forts Trail commands respect. When you wander this solitary route, you can't help

1

Fort Concho National Historic Landmark, San Angelo, (325) 481-2646, www.fortconcho.com



but admire those frontier families who toughed out adversities of man and nature in order to forge a life here. Not only does this rough-edged, sparsely populated part of the world offer excellent opportunities for history lessons, it's a terrific place to get doses of Native American heritage, secluded scenery, wildlife, ranch life, underground magic and delicious beef.

Begin in San Angelo, headquarters of Concho Valley Electric Cooperative, and wind up in Sonora, barely 65 miles away. You'll follow U.S. Highway 277 south from San Angelo to Christoval and Eldorado and Sonora, making the optional side trip along the way.

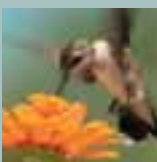
SAN ANGELO Fort Concho National Historic Site is where resident ghosts are said to inhabit some of the beautifully restored buildings. If one of the living history programs is offered during your visit, take advantage of the rare opportunity to visit with a buffalo soldier, as Fort Concho was one of the premier homes of these valiant warriors.

Take a side trip eastward on U.S. Highway 67, then south to Concho County to eat a sensational steak at the vintage Lowake Steak House and to take a boat tour on the Concho River to see prehistoric pictographs near Paint Rock.

CHRISTOVAL Head south from San Angelo on U.S. 277 about 18 miles to

2

Brown Ranch, Christoval, (325) 255-2254, www.hummerhouse-texasgems.com



HOWARD CHECK

SAN ANGELO to SONORA

Take in the history, nature, food and foolishness along this month's trail.

BY JUNE NAYLOR



the Brown Ranch, a popular summertime residence among black-chinned hummingbirds. Thousands of these miniature creatures come to breed on the South Concho River. Once the babies are flying, they feast on the sugar water that Dan and Cathy Brown provide in feeders. Stay a spell in one of the Browns' three private cottages, or take a picnic on your trip south to enjoy at a lovely roadside park just outside of Christoval. It's one of the surviving 41 parks of the original 674 built by the WPA during the Depression.

ELDORADO This sheep- and goat-ranching town in Schleicher County is headquarters for Southwest Texas Electric Cooperative. The Eldorado



Contact the Eldorado Chamber of Commerce for details on the Elgoatarod and other local events, (325) 650-9553, www.eldoradotx.com.

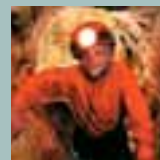
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Chamber of Commerce sponsors the annual April Fool's Day Elgoatarod, a spoof of the Alaskan Iditarod. Goats don't exactly mush like huskies; they have to be pulled down the street.

The X Bar Ranch (1-888-853-2688) is a nature retreat with cabins that indulges your every whim for mountain biking, hiking, bird-watching and star-gazing. At the main lodge, there's a swimming pool and seasonal barbecue parties with entertainment by singers and cowboy poets.

Some 30 miles east, just off U.S. Highway 190, historic Fort McKavett is another cavalry-era fort that begs exploration. Sitting over the headwaters of the San Saba River, its tableau includes a mix of restored and stabilized ruins.

SONORA Most everyone coming to this Sutton County hamlet does so for the magnificent Caverns of Sonora, described by some experts as the world's most beautiful. You can see the exquisite underground world, which is 71 degrees year-round, on walking tours throughout the day. Just don't overlook the Eaton Hill Wildlife Sanctuary, with its cactus landscape and abandoned rock quarry, nor town sites like the lovingly restored county courthouse and timeworn but handsome rock



Caverns of Sonora, (325) 387-3105, www.cavernsof-sonora.com

4

school and jail. In summer, make plans to chow down at the Covered Wagon Dinner Theater, where entertainment includes cowboy poet Biscuits O'Bryan.

June Naylor wrote Texas: Off the Beaten Path.