

# TEXAS CO-OP POWER



BIRTH  
*of a*  
BOOT

PLUS

Handmade Quilts

Blue Ribbon Recipes

Hit the Road:  
Boerne to Castroville

# ON BOARD WITH BOATING SAFETY

## Boating

Did you know that people who hunt or fish from boats have one of the highest boat fatality rates? Or that more people die from falling off small boats (16 feet and under) than larger ones? Here are some tips for accident-free boating:


### Safety Rules for Boating:

- Be weather wise. Bring a portable radio to check weather reports.
- Bring extra gear you may need. A flashlight and extra batteries, matches, map, flares, first aid kit, sunglasses and sunscreen should be kept in a watertight container or pouch.
- Tell someone where you're going, who is with you, and how long you'll be gone.
- Ventilate after fueling. Open the hatches, run the blower, and carefully sniff for gasoline fumes in the fuel and engine areas before starting your engine.
- Anchor from the bow, not the stern. Use an anchor line at least five times longer than the water depth.
- Know your boat's capacity. Don't overload it or put an oversized motor on it.

Have fun on the water.  
Boat safely!



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## FEATURES

### 6 Birth of a Boot

By Sandy Sheehy

Photos by Glen Ellman

*Customers are willing to wait 10 months for a pair of boots by M.L. Leddy's because of the maker's painstaking measures to ensure the boots' fit, comfort and style.*

### 12 Stitches in Time

By Kaye Northcott

*Nothing speaks of home like a quilt, especially one with a family history.*

## FAVORITES

Footnotes By Clay Coppedge *Texas' White Gold* 31

Recipe Roundup *Blue Ribbon Savvy* 32

Focus on Texas *Off to the Races* 35

Around Texas *Local Events Listings* 36

Hit the Road By June Naylor *Boerne to Castroville* 38



## TEXAS CO-OP POWER

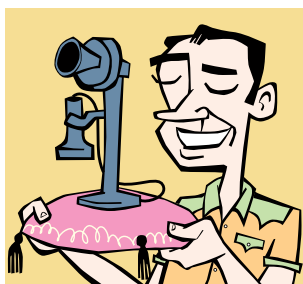
*Texas Co-op Power* is published by your electric cooperative to enhance the quality of life of its member-customers in an educational and entertaining format.

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EDD PATTON

## RINGING ENDORSEMENT

A long-running joke in Fannin County involves the small town of Telephone, featured in your May "Who Knew?" Good thing it has a landline phone, because there is no cell phone service in Telephone. If you lose your phone there, you can't call it to hear the ring and locate it. Many a Telephone resident can be seen parked along the high spots of FM 273, trying to get a signal. Some cell phone company could get some serious publicity if they managed to sell cell phone service in Telephone.

**AMY MARTIN**  
Bonham

## TROPICAL NORTH TEXAS

If you would like to see real energy saving, you should visit my 30x60-foot greenhouse heated by solar heat, not panels but 55-gallon barrels, filled with water and sealed. No energy required except a small 1,500-watt heater for a few hours when the temperature is 15 degrees. True solar heat.

I grow grapefruit, oranges, limes, lemons and tangerines in my greenhouse here in North Texas. I have fruit year-round.

**JESS RUSSELL**  
Caddo Mills

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](mailto: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. Read additional letters at [www.texascooppower.com](http://www.texascooppower.com).

# POWER TALK

## GAS FROM UNIQUE GRAIN

Texas Agricultural Experiment Station scientists continue to investigate the use of a special sorghum as a possible biofuel source. The sorghum could be ready for farmers' fields in a matter of years.

The Experiment Station at Texas A&M University is looking at alternatives to using crucial corn supplies to produce ethanol. The cellulose material of a high-yielding, drought-tolerant sorghum has great potential as a source of biofuel. It also has promise in being converted directly into electricity. And because there's little waste involved in the conversion process, it's better for the environment than many alternatives.

"With the yields that are being forecast, with the continual growing season in certain parts of Texas and in particular the lower water usage, it offers great promise," said Texas Agriculture Commissioner Todd Staples after a recent visit to A&M.

Scientists working on the sorghum think it could help revitalize farming towns in the Panhandle, Central Texas and Coastal Bend regions. Along with other biomass material, it could be converted into fuel using a MixAlco process developed by engineering researchers at Texas A&M.

MixAlco, though not tested on a commercial scale, can convert a wide variety of biomass material into mixed alcohol fuels.

Though breeding and field and laboratory research continue, the drought-tolerant sorghum, capable of reaching 10 feet tall and producing 15 to 20 dry tons of biomass per acre, could be ready for farmers "in a few years rather than a decade," said Dr. Bill Rooney, Experiment Station sorghum developer.

Title VII of the new federal farm bill is expected to include up to \$50 million in funding for a bioenergy/bioproducts initiative, with research and development conducted among select land-grant and other universities. Considering Texas contributes 26 percent of domestic oil and 29 percent of natural gas to U.S. supplies, the Lone Star State could once again become a major contributor when it comes to biofuel production.



## LOWER THE HEAT ON YOUR BILL

Putting a timer on your electric water heater, along with a cover for the heater, can provide noticeable savings on your electric bill.

I think the initial cost of the timer and the cover cost can be recovered possibly on your first bill after the installation. My thinking is during the night when you are asleep and during the day when most of us are at work, there is no need for hot water. Therefore the heater does not have to be cycling on, reheating water over and over again.

Just my two cents worth,  
**RANDY WORKMAN**  
Trinity Valley  
Electric Cooperative

This Energy Tip earned Mr. Workman a *Texas Co-op Power* gimme cap. Do you want one, too? Submit your tip of 100 or fewer words to *Texas Co-op Power Tips*, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704, or e-mail to [letters@texas-ec.org](mailto:letters@texas-ec.org). Give us your name, address and co-op as well. If your tip appears in the magazine, we'll send you a cap.



# H A P P E N I N G S



Considered by some to be miniature works of art, useful and unique buttons have been in existence since the dawn of time. In 15th century France, the wealthy decorated themselves with gold buttons embellished with precious stones or hand-painted with portraits of the wearer's mistress, horse or hunting dog. Louis XIV is rumored to have had an enormous button-buying habit that cost France more than \$5 million, helping send the country into debt.

It's said that both Jacqueline Onassis and Charles de Gaulle collected classic French buttons. In fact, buttons are one of the most popular collectibles in the world.

This year, the **NATIONAL BUTTON SOCIETY CONVENTION, SHOW AND SALE** will be held August 16-18 at the InterContinental Hotel in Addison. Buttons from many eras will be on display and for sale in all price ranges for enthusiasts, collectors and crafters. For more information, call (214) 373-8526 or visit [www.texasbuttonssociety.com](http://www.texasbuttonssociety.com).

## GOLIAD COUNTY COURTHOUSE RESTORED TO ORIGINAL SPLENDOR

Designed in the Second Empire architectural style by E.M. Guidon of Giles and Guidon, the Goliad County Courthouse was built in 1894 using stone from the former county courthouse. A hurricane in 1942 severely damaged the building, destroying the soaring clock tower and turrets that had dominated the courthouse. In a 2003 restoration, the tower was replaced and the original interior wainscoting and staircase were refurbished. Now a recorded Texas Historic Landmark, the courthouse is surrounded by the nine flags that have flown over Goliad. Guadalupe Valley Electric Co-op serves much of Goliad County.



—From *The Courthouses of Texas*, Texas A&M University Press, second edition, 2007

# WHO KNEW?



## SWEET AND SAUER

Author Fred Tarpley writes in *1,001 Texas Place Names* that many a thirsty soul has passed up the cool, sweet water in Sour Creek (Comal County), "not realizing that it was named for early settlers who were members of the Sauer family."

# COOL PLACES

## IN HILLSBORO, A PRIMO PASTA PLACE

What do you do if you're barreling north on I-35 and your favorite highway eatery takes a day off? If you're lucky, you head farther up the road to Hillsboro and happen upon a great place on the courthouse square.

In a part of the country where blue-plate specials are more the luncheon norm stands Frenke's Pasta & Pizza, authentic Italian fare. Hailing from Kosovo, Franki Misini opened the restaurant in 2002. There was a Mexican restaurant nearby called "Frankie's," so he named his Frenke's. Situated in a building that housed The Majestic Theatre from 1890-1932, Frenke's offers a selection of handmade pastas ranging from old reliables such as lasagna and spaghetti with a variety of sauces to traditional Italian dishes such as cannelloni and mani-

cotti. Frenke's is no secret to employees of HILCO Electric Co-op, who say they have put on more than a few pounds eating Chicken Cremora there. We recommend Capellini Frenke's, a simple pasta with garlic, capers, chopped tomatoes and Parmesan cheese in olive oil.

Frenkie's, at 57 W. Franklin St. in Hillsboro, is open Monday through Thursday 11-9, Friday and Saturday 11-10, and Sunday 11-3. Call (254) 582-1230.



Franki Misini at the entrance of Frenke's.

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# BIRTH

*of a*

# BOOT

*Many ranchers, farmers, oilmen, barrel racers and cutting-horse champions—not to mention lawyers, surgeons, car dealers and football coaches—consider boots by M.L. Leddy's to be the best boots in Texas.*

**BY SANDY SHEEHY • PHOTOS BY GLEN ELLMAN**

**P**ETE BONDS CAN REMEMBER when he took out his first loan to buy cattle (he was 16), but he can't remember when he ordered his first custom-made pair from legendary bootmaker M.L. Leddy's. "As a kid, I never went barefoot," he explains, settling himself into the elevated fitting chair at the landmark store on North Main in Fort Worth's Stockyards Historic District. "I have real tender feet and ill-shaped toes. Leddy's boots fit well, and they hold up."

Throughout its 85-year history, Leddy's has been owned and run by the same family. In 1918, M.L. Leddy left his parents' cotton farm to work for a saddle and bootmaking business in the little West Texas town of Brady. He bought the business in 1922, then moved it 50 miles west to San Angelo in 1936. He opened his flagship store in the booming Fort Worth Stockyards in 1941.

To get from the front of the store to the boot department, customers have to pass

through two rooms of high-end Western wear, hand-tooled belts and saddles, and cases displaying silver and gold belt buckles. But Pete Bonds isn't distracted. He is here for one thing: to order a pair of what many ranchers, farmers, oilmen, barrel racers and cutting-horse champions—not to mention lawyers, surgeons, car dealers and football coaches—consider the best boots in Texas.

At 55, Bonds is physically substantial, well over 6 feet tall and sturdy. He wears a once cream-colored, sweat-stained cowboy hat with four toothpicks tucked strategically in the band. His operation has grown from 400 cows in 1968 to 8,000 head grazing from Uvalde, Texas, to Creighton, Nebraska. Spreading his ranches north to south offers a hedge against untoward meteorological events; a blizzard or a tornado might hurt, but it won't wipe him out. At his main place west of Fort Worth, he gets his electricity from Tri-County Electric Co-op.

Boot-fitter Gene Reynolds shakes Bonds' hand. "I bet it's been five years since I've seen you," he says.

"That's how long a pair of Leddy's boots lasts," Bonds replies. Durability helps buffer the sticker shock. Although the company will make a pair for as little as \$598, the average runs \$1,100 to \$1,300. Exotic leathers and fancy inlays can double or even triple the tab.

Reynolds, who resembles a lanky Old West sheriff, pulls off Bonds' boots. They're caramel-colored oil-tanned calf with red calfskin tops. Pinned inside the top is Bonds' customer number, corresponding to his entry in one of the tall ledgers that pack several bookcases. More than 2,500 pairs of sketched soles fill those pages. The customer books are arranged by geographic area: Fort Worth, Fredericksburg, Houston—even Las Vegas, where Leddy's takes a booth at the National Finals Rodeo. Crowding a bookcase in a corner of the boot room are the oldest books, dating back to the



1940s. One contains only celebrities.

Reynolds takes down a customer book and opens it to a pair of pages featuring outlines of Bonds' feet. As Bonds places first the right and then the left within the outline, Reynolds bends down to examine them. Unfurling a tape measure, he has Bonds cross his right leg over his left and wraps the tape around first the ball and then the instep of his foot.

Measuring is the most important part, Reynolds explains. It's the reason customers are willing to wait 10 months for a pair of custom-made boots instead of choosing one of the couple of hundred ready-made pairs that line Leddy's shelves. Some of these are elegantly plain black or brown calf, some are fashioned from ostrich or alligator, and some feature fancy inlays, such as white stars or pink roses on green stems. One pair in purple calf sports "TCU" on the right top and a ferocious-looking horned frog on the left. Because every pair of Leddy's boots is handmade, off-the-shelf pairs cost the same as ones made to order.

To get an idea of the proper placement and height of the arch, Reynolds normally has a custom-fit customer try

on several pairs off the shelf, but Bonds' feet are too distinctive for that to be useful.

"I think that bunion might have grown a bit," Reynolds observes. Bonds nods affirmatively. Reynolds continues: "How are the pair you're wearing now doing for you? What you should feel in a pair of boots is nothing."

"They feel fine," Bonds reports. "But the pegs on the left one are loose." Reynolds hands the boot to an assistant to reset the lemonwood pegs that fine bootmakers use on the arch to allow the boot to breathe.

Bonds places his order: He wants boots exactly like those he wore into the store. He prefers pull-holes to tabs, which can break when wet. He also likes the classic Leddy's stitch pattern for the tops, parallel rows of white stitching forming feathery wings. Stitching looks pretty, but its main purpose is function: It helps the tops stand up, even when the boots are wet or worn. He gets a fairly tall heel, because he works on horseback. "I damn sure don't want to get hung up," he says.

"I almost always get the same boots," Bonds explains. "For the first few years, they're my dress boots. Then, when they

get worn, they're my work boots." He carries two pairs of work boots in his truck—one for walking, the other, with the spurs already strapped on, for riding.

Despite his loyalty to oil-tanned calf, a ring of alligator samples catches Bonds' eye. As he fingers the surprisingly soft reptile skins, he listens as Reynolds tells him that they've been tanned in Lafayette, Louisiana, using a French process. "A friend has invited me to come hunting on his place near Anahuac," Bonds says. "When I get my gator, how much will you charge me to make it into a pair of boots?" About \$1,000, Reynolds says, advising him to make it a big animal, so that the patterns in the hide will match up nicely.

Bonds' boot order, with all its distinctive specs, goes to Leddy's bootmaking facility in San Angelo. A thousand rolls of leather in more colors than a giant-sized box of Crayolas stuff shelves and cardboard bins—from oil-tanned calf for work boots to eel, alligator, Italian-tanned kangaroo and a butter-soft Texas sheepskin. Calf dominates, but close behind is ostrich, which has greater resistance to "barnyard acid," a euphemism for the mix of manure and urine that cracks and digests leather.



## Boot-fitter Gene Reynolds: 'What you should feel in a pair of boots is nothing.'



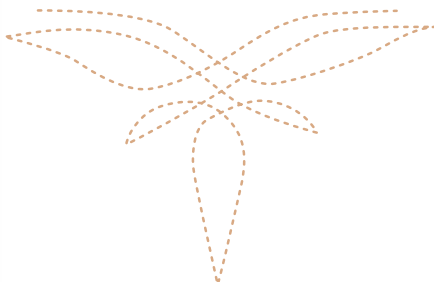
**1** Pete Bonds, left, discusses his new boots with boot-fitter Gene Reynolds.

**L**EDDY'S COMPLETES ONLY 10 pairs of boots a day, which explains the 10-month wait. Production manager Judy English, a trim woman with shoulder-length blond hair, oversees a process that hasn't changed much in 85 years. Each of the 17 workers she supervises has a specific task, but this is no mechanized production line. The process begins with the slick wooden or plastic Leddy's last, built out with fittings to accommodate individual differences, such as Bonds' bunion. Famous for their arch support, all the basic lasts were designed by Arch Baird, one of the original Leddy's bootmakers. The last is essential to each part of the process, for shaping and drying, so that every custom Leddy's boot fits the individual customer's feet.

One bootmaker cuts out the vamp, with the distinctive Leddy's narrow triple-scallop tongue, and crimps it to give the boot shape and prevent stretching with wear. Another applies the single bug and wrinkle—the stitching that protects the leather from cracking when the toes flex—another hallmark of a Leddy's boot. Another craftsman builds the soles, which another sets and still another trims. One of the most delicate procedures is inserting the only manmade components of a Leddy's boot: lemonwood



**Pete Bonds: 'I almost always get the same boots. For the first few years they are my dress boots. Then, when they get worn, they're my work boots.'**



**2 Gene finds Pete's previous measurements in the customer books.**



**3 The tracing of the customer's foot will remain on file at Leddy's.**



**4 More measurements are taken.**



# COOL SUMMER SAFETY TIPS

## Swimming


**Don't be all wet.  
Remember these rules  
for safe pool-time fun  
this summer:**

- Keep electric radios, TVs, clocks, barbecues, lights and other electrical appliances at least 10 feet from a pool and wet surfaces. Use battery-powered appliances whenever possible.
- Electric appliances should not be used outdoors unless they are equipped with a heavy-duty cord and three-prong plug.
- Swimming pools should be well away from electric wires to avoid the risk of hitting the wires with long-handled cleaning equipment.
- All outdoor electrical outlets should be weatherproof and equipped with a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI). This is especially important in damp locations where more protection is necessary.
- Check with your electric co-op before you dig to make sure you know the location of buried electrical lines.
- Label power and light switches for pool, hot tub and spa equipment.
- If you think you are being shocked while in the water, move away from the source of the shock. Get out of the water, if possible, without using a metal ladder.

**Stay safe this summer.  
Don't swim with shocks!**



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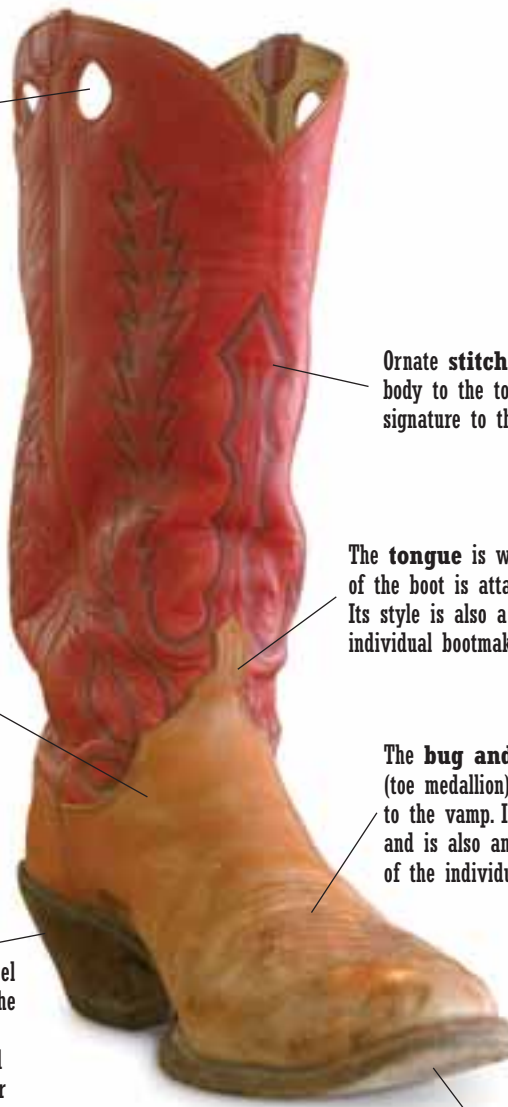
**5** Leddy's offers an impressive assortment of leather options.

## PETE BONDS' OLD BOOT

**Pull straps or pull holes** (shown) are used to "pull" the boots on. Pull holes eliminate the bulk between the leg and the saddle when riding.

The **vamp** at the foot of the boot can be made of many different leathers.

**Heel design** is for style and function. This riding heel is designed to help catch the stirrup on a saddle so the foot can't slide through and get hung up. A lower, flatter heel is popular for walking or dancing.



**Ornate stitching** helps add body to the top and adds a signature to the boot.

The **tongue** is where the vamp of the boot is attached to the top. Its style is also a signature of individual bootmakers.

The **bug and wrinkle** (toe medallion) adds structure to the vamp. It is decorative and is also another signature of the individual bootmaker.

**Sole**

pegs (the wood comes from Germany) and tiny finishing nails, plus a 3-inch-long 40d common nail, essential to arch support, in the shank.

Working on an ancient-looking black Singer sewing machine, Maria Reyes, a dark-haired woman with the intense focus of an artist, produces the inlaid tops—Lone Star and U.S. flags, college and corporate logos, floral patterns worthy of a rodeo queen. Other seamstresses make the stitched tops, many with patterns that have been popular since before Bob Wills hit the airwaves in 1934.

Caressingly soft leather lining and an all-leather heel—tall for riding or medium for walking or dancing—complete the components. For the final step, the boots go to the finish room, which is separate from the main production room, to keep dust from interfering with the painstaking cleaning of all the crevices, sanding of the soles and polishing with Meltonian, a leather cream Leddy's swears by.

Pink order slips bearing the names, numbers and specs of customers travel with each boot from start to finish. Affixed to one last, I notice a slip marked "Nolan Ryan."

**O**FFICIALLY, LEDDY'S KEEPS CUSTOMERS' names confidential, but San Angelo sales manager and unofficial company historian Sammy Farmer apparently takes "name" literally. "We've made boots for several presidents, including one that's sitting now," he says proudly. "And we just shipped a pair for the former president of Texas A&M. It's got the Aggie logo and everything. He doesn't want his feet to hurt up there in Washington."

That would be Secretary of Defense Robert Gates.

When the finished boots arrive at the Fort Worth store, Leddy's calls the customer, who'll either come in or have them sent. Leddy's has shipped boots as far as Switzerland, even to Kuwait City. Shipping is part of the service; and service, from measuring an instep to resetting loose pegs, is ultimately what sets a fine custom bootmaker apart.

*Sandy Sheehy is author of Texas Big Rich and Connecting: The Enduring Power of Female Friendship.*



**DON'T GO  
OUT ON  
A LIMB!**

Your safety is a top priority at your electric co-op. And it's even more important when it comes to our kids. They don't always know—or remember—what can be dangerous, so it's up to all of us to watch out for their safety.


## Safety Rules for Trees:

- Don't plant trees or install tall playground equipment under or near power lines.
- Don't build tree houses in trees near electric lines.
- Don't allow children to climb trees growing near electric lines.
- Teach your children always to look up to check for power lines before climbing trees or any tall objects.
- Keep children away from ladders, poles or work equipment that may be near power lines.
- Set a good example by following these rules yourself.

And the Number One safety rule for everyone to remember is this: Don't touch a power line or anything that's touching the power line. No one can tell simply by looking at a line whether it is energized or not, and contact with a power line can be deadly. Remember, electricity always seeks the easiest path to reach the ground, and, unfortunately, human beings are good conductors of electricity. Look up and live!



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# STITCHES

BY KAYE NORTHCOTT

NOTHING SPEAKS OF HOME LIKE A QUILT, ESPECIALLY ONE WITH a family history. There's something about the patching and stitching and padding that gives one comfort and joy.

A book, *Texas Quilts and Quilters: A Lone Star Legacy*, to be issued in October by Texas Tech University Press, has some wonderful stories about the roles quilts play in family life. Primary author Marcia Kaylakie, a quilt appraiser and collector, said her research has enlightened her to "how much Texas heritage is hidden away in closets, attics and trunks."

While reading the book, I was especially taken with the stories of Osceola Dyer Woodruff, who spent most of her life

in Red River County, and her daughter Zella Woodruff of Abilene. Osceola quilted out of necessity, saving tiny scraps of material and piecing them together because that's the way things were done in her day. "Use it up, wear it out, make it do or do without," the saying goes.

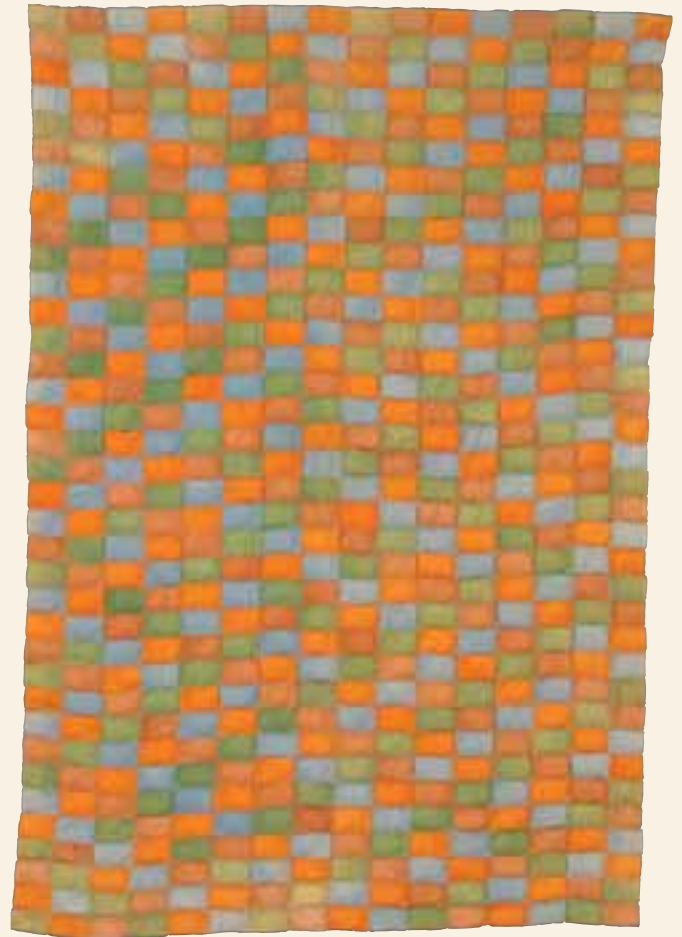
Kaylakie chose Osceola's Dutch Doll quilt for presentation in this beautiful coffee table book. The Dutch Doll is a common pattern using a series of little calico figures in broad A-shaped dresses and sunbonnets (see quilt below). Osceola handed the quilt down to Zella, whose children called it "the sick quilt." "When they were sick, Zella would sit beside



DUTCH DOLL

c. 1935 65" x 84"

Osceola Dyer Woodruff, owned by Zella Woodruff



TOBACCO SACK PUFF QUILT

c. 1935 59" x 80"

Effie Roe, owned by Kathleen McCrady



# ❖ I N ❖ T I M E

them, making up stories about the little Dutch dolls, entertaining her children to keep them quiet,” writes Kaylachie. “These Dutch dolls went on great adventures while little fevered children listened to their mother’s soft voice soothing them, her cool hand testing their foreheads, settling them into the sheets so they could rest and be well. ... This quilt made by a loving grandmother became a mother’s book of stories told during her children’s illnesses.”

After Osceola’s death in 1982, Zella discovered the true scope of her mother’s work, unearthing dozens of quilt tops she had never seen. Years later Zella took some of the tops to

a shop to be quilted, and the staff encouraged her to learn to quilt them herself. “Zella found that quilting her mother’s quilt tops helped fill a void she’d felt since her mother’s death and also created lasting bonds with other quilters,” Kaylachie writes. As Zella said, “It soothed me to work on the quilts and helped give me comfort and ease my grief.” Comfort. Again, that word comfort.

Zella shared a great talent with her mother. “She decided she would make a quilt that would have special meaning,” according to Kaylachie. “She joined a quilt block exchange group, the Prairie Star Quilters. Each member contributed a block to



**GONE WITH THE WIND**  
c. 1963 65" x 83"  
Ethel Cox Hargrove, owned by Virginia Lucas



**JACK'S BRAND QUILT**  
c. 1945 72" x 87"  
Gertrude Alnora Robertson Roberts, owned by Jack Roberts





PRECIOUS MEMORIES  
c. 1999 81" x 98"

Zella Woodruff and members of the Prairie Star Quilters, in the collection of the quilt maker





PRECIOUS MEMORIES  
*Detail*

Zella's Precious Memories quilt. It includes many of Zella's fabrics and her mother's pieces of tatting discovered among the quilt tops and other needlework. "Precious Memories" (pages 14–15), with its pieces of silk, satin and velvet and heavy embellishments of lace, tatting, buttons, embroidery, ribbons and beads, was a finalist at the International Quilt Festival in Houston in 1999.

Quilt contests such as the one Zella entered didn't start until the 19th century, and in the 20th century came the acknowledgement that the very finest are works of art. In the past couple of decades, as handmade products from China flooded the American market, it looked as if American quilting and quilt collecting might fall on hard times. But foreign imports can't provide recreation and fellowship. Jean Yarborough of Jean's Corner in Livingston says people flock to her store for lessons, material patterns and simply to exchange ideas. "The business is booming. People aren't making quilts to sell. That would be too costly. They are made as art," she says.

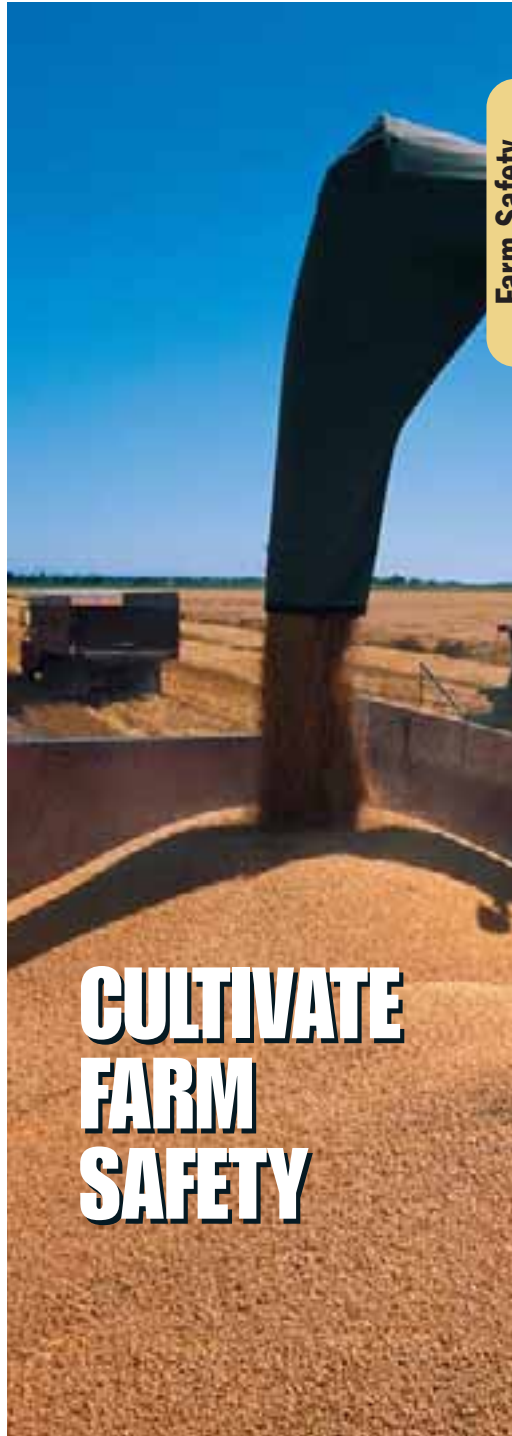
The specimens in *Texas Quilts and Quilters* represent a rich variety of handiwork. Predictably, quilts made from clothing scraps and flour sacks abound. But there are also tobacco-pouch quilts, with tiny pouches stuffed

with cotton balls to make a "puff" quilt (page 12), also known as a biscuit quilt. In addition to traditional designs—such as the Lone Star, the Irish Chain, Four Tulips, Star, Dutch Dolls, Rainbow, Butterfly and so forth—the book also highlights unique quilts, including free-style "crazy" quilts. Several quilts have a cattle-brand motif (page 13), several have the signatures of high school classmates or church members, and one depicts characters and scenes from

"Gone With the Wind" (page 13).

In addition to exhibiting beautiful photographs of 34 quilts taken by Jim Lincoln and his wife, Judy, the book, edited by Janice Whittington, provides histories of or interviews with the quilt makers and their descendants. The earliest quilts pictured are from the 1870s; the newest from 2003.

*Kaye Northcott is editor of Texas Co-op Power.*



Farm Safety

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.



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## Remodel Your Kitchen To Save Money and Energy

**DEAR JAMES:** We are in the planning stages of remodeling our kitchen and we want to make it convenient to use, yet energy efficient. Do you have some tips for an efficient kitchen?

—Marjorie H.

**DEAR MARJORIE:** In most homes, the kitchen area is a big energy user, but creating an efficient kitchen does not require any sacrifices and can actually make it more convenient to use.

The four primary components are design, appliance selection, appliance usage and general efficiency habits. Even if you are not going to completely remodel a kitchen, you can still incorporate some of the same concepts to help manage energy use.

Start with the kitchen design layout and location of major workstations. The most accepted kitchen design utilizes the concept of a “kitchen triangle.” The goal is to have no more than eight feet between the center of any two of the range, refrigerator and sink. They should also be located in a fairly even triangle for the most convenient use, resulting in less time in the kitchen, less lighting, less hot water running down the drain and more efficient cooking. Also consider the traffic patterns through your kitchen so you are not trying to dodge children as you are cooking or cleaning.

Refrigerator/freezers require adequate air flow through the condenser coils to operate efficiently. Also avoid locating the refrigerator in direct sunlight.

The range can be located almost anywhere to create the desired kitchen triangle. If you use natural ventilation from windows during summer, avoid locating the range near a window.

Once you have your kitchen layout completed, you should select energy-efficient appliances. The refrigerator is most important because it runs constantly. A side-by-side model may be the most convenient to use, but it is the least efficient design. Models with the freezer on the bottom are the most efficient with top-freezer models not far behind.

Now that you’ve selected the best appliances for your kitchen, use them in an efficient manner. Check temperatures in the refrigerator and freezer portions—they should be about 40 degrees and 0 degrees respectively. Periodically clean dust off the condenser coils. Use your dishwasher only for full loads. For just a few dishes, wash them by hand. Cover pots when you are boiling water and use small countertop ovens and appliances instead of the range oven whenever possible.

—James Dulley  
© www.dulley.com

## WHIP UP HOMEMADE ICE CREAM WITHOUT THE RISKS



Few treats please a crowd like delicious homemade ice cream, which is easy to churn using an electric ice cream maker.

But hundreds of people get sick every year from salmonella from raw or undercooked eggs used in homemade ice cream, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

To avoid the problem, replace the eggs in your recipe with egg substitutes or store-bought pasteurized eggs.

Egg products are typically liquid or frozen and have been pasteurized with a heat process that kills salmonella without cooking the egg. Egg substitutes are the same, except they are made with egg whites only, leaving out fat and cholesterol. You can use egg substitutes in any recipe that calls for eggs.

If buying pasteurized products is a hassle, you can cook your eggs at home before making the ice cream, the FDA says. Mix the eggs and milk into a custard, then cook in the oven to an internal temperature of 160 degrees. Chill the custard before freezing, then follow the ice cream recipe.

If you’re still leery, look for ice cream recipes that don’t call for eggs.

### SAFETY AND THE FAMILY PETS

Your family pet can turn just about anything it finds into a chew toy. Let's make sure your pets don't add electrical devices to their toy chest.



Keep electrical cords away from puppies and kittens so they don't chew on them and receive a severe shock. If you have difficulty getting your pet to stop chewing on the cord, you can paint it with a bitter-tasting polish or wrap the cord in a thick plastic sleeve.

Make sure nightlights and appliances are completely plugged into wall outlets. Partially exposed prongs are a hazard for curious children, puppies and kittens.



# INCLUDE HOME ENERGY SAVINGS IN VACATION PLANS

For consumers going on vacation this summer, the nation's electric utilities advise them to make sure their home's energy use takes a vacation as well. Simple tips can save consumers money while they are away.

**AIR CONDITIONING** Set the thermostat to 85 degrees. If it is a programmable thermostat, use the "hold" or the "vacation" setting to keep it at that temperature.

**ELECTRONICS** Computers, CD/DVD players, TVs, and VCRs—these and other electronic appliances use electricity, even when they are not turned on. Unplug them before leaving.

**LIGHTING** Consumers can improve their energy savings, and their home's security, by using timers to operate lights each night. And by installing compact fluorescent bulbs, or CFLs, in

those lamps, consumers will be saving more energy, up to 66 percent for each lamp, and the bulb will last approximately 10 times longer than a regular incandescent bulb.

**WATER HEATING** Turn the water heater's temperature to the lowest setting. Many water heaters have a "vacation" setting for this purpose. Leave a reminder to turn it back up when you return home.

Pool owners should shorten the operating time for the pool filter and automatic cleaning sweep (if applicable). A pool cover can save energy, too. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, up to 70 percent of pool water loss is by evaporation.

**REFRIGERATOR** Adjust the refrigerator control to a warmer setting. If going on an extended trip, consider

emptying the fridge and turning it off. If you do so, remember to leave the door open to prevent mildew.

For more information on how to use energy efficiently this summer, and all year round, contact your electric cooperative.



## Did you know ...

The cost of a Sunday newspaper is approximately the same price as providing electricity to the average home for eight hours?

## Electricity. A good value.



## KNOWING THE TRUTH CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE

Electricity is a wonderful product that most of us wouldn't dream of doing without. It is the hardest-working, cleanest and safest form of energy available to us today.

But keeping electricity safe requires knowledge—knowledge of when electricity is safe and when it isn't.

**X FICTION:** The fuse continues to blow; maybe I need a larger one.

**✓ FACT:** If a fuse is blowing repeatedly (or a circuit breaker is tripping), the circuit should be checked by an electrician. Replacing a fuse with one of a higher amperage could result in a fire.

**X FICTION:** It is safe to work on a machine or appliance if it is turned off.

**✓ FACT:** Power to the appliance should be disconnected completely—by unplugging it or turning off the circuit breaker—before any maintenance or repair is done.

**X FICTION:** Low voltage, such as household current, cannot hurt me.

**✓ FACT:** Low voltage can kill you. Normal household current has many times the minimum amperage necessary to render the heart and/or lungs inoperative.

**X FICTION:** The wire on the ground is dead if it isn't moving, arcing, sparking or popping.

**✓ FACT:** Wires may give every indication of being dead when the opposite is true. Do not try to move any wire using rope or wood. Stay at least 10 feet away and send someone to notify your electric cooperative immediately.

**X FICTION:** I can work around electricity safely if I wear rubber boots.

**✓ FACT:** Common rubber boots are almost no protection at all. Most rubber boots contain lampblack, which is a conductor of electricity.

The folks at your electric cooperative know the facts—and the fiction—about electric safety and want you to know, too.

# In Celebration of Fiery Locks

# W

‘Ruadh gu brath!’—

*Scots gaelic for*

*‘Redheads forever!’*

BY KAREN HASTINGS

hen old acquaintances ask what I’ve been “doing” since leaving an exciting newspaper career for home-based work and motherhood, I sometimes flash a snapshot of Lauren, Molly and Maclain. “I’ve been doing my part,” I tell them, “to increase the world’s supply of redheads.” Little did I know how important my life’s work would be.

Redheads, gingers, carrottops, copperheads—they’re all apparently going the way of the dinosaur. According to a report by the Oxford Hair Foundation, an “independent hair institute” in England, natural reds will fade from the population by the year 2100.

The reasoning: Only about 4 percent of the world’s population is blessed with the red hair gene. And it’s recessive, so it takes two parents with this special genetic marker—and a little bit of reproductive luck—to produce a red-haired child. As more red carriers cozy up to the dominant brown-hair gene, the possibilities for red sink further into the genetic melting pot.

And what an international tragedy that would be! The dire predictions from England made headlines all the way over on this side of the pond. My two younger redheads brought the bad news home, straight from their alert science teachers. The BBC recently aired a documentary called “The Ginger Gene” to explore this calamity.

Accurate or not, reports of red hair’s impending demise certainly are an excuse to celebrate this rare and wonderful human trait.

In her own soon-to-be published work, *Redheads*, flaming orange-headed author Anne Daniel, a professor of literature at The New School university in the Big (red) Apple, also writes about famous redheads and the popular stereotypes surrounding this hard-to-miss segment of the population. Daniel says her ginger epiphany came in a visit to the Sistine Chapel in Rome’s Vatican City. In viewing Michelangelo’s famous ceiling frescoes, she was struck by the redheaded serpent tempting a mousy-haired Eve. But she was almost literally floored by the portion of this masterpiece depicting Adam and Eve’s expulsion from Paradise.

“There she was (on her way out of Eden). ... Eve is covering her face in shame, and her hair is the color of the serpent’s. ... After the Fall, she is a redhead!”

Inspired to research, Daniel found that redheads (usually women) in art and literature are often portrayed as hot-tempered, lusty and stubborn in the face of authority. Redheaded men, conversely, are often portrayed as immature or clown-



ish. Yet, she came away admiring the ability of many famous redheads—like the quirky and offbeat Katharine Hepburn—to turn negative stereotypes into something positive. “They took something that targeted them as different and were able to parlay it into something that marked them as special,” Daniel said in a recent interview. “She turned it into solid gold!”

Whatever ambivalent stereotypes exist out there (at least there are no “redheaded moments!”) you will find that parents of redheads are a fiercely proud bunch. As Savannah Sachs, president of Princeton’s Redhead Society, told me recently: “I got a tattoo and piercings, but my mother would never allow me to dye my hair.”

Long before personally rolling the genetic dice, I had pictured myself as the mother of a spunky freckle-faced child, wild and beautiful, with hair to match. As a teenager, I came to appreciate and embrace my red hair and freckles as something that made me feel different and unique.

Both my husband and I claim solid ginger credentials, although the years have taken their toll (he was a red-bearded strawberry blonde before the gray took over, and a college boyfriend used to call me “Red,” but no one does these days). There are redheads on either side of our family: twin cousins on my mother’s side, and our old painting of my husband’s Aunt Betty, the world traveler, speaks redheaded volumes.

Still, what were the chances of having three little carrottops of our own?

Apparently, pretty good: Lauren has her father’s strawberry waves. The youngest, Maclain, is called “Lucky” at school, as in the cereal box leprechaun. And my middle child’s thick curls declare, “Here comes Molly!” in a radiant shade that regularly draws stares. As a toddler, she would growl from the depths of the supermarket cart, fed up with all the matronly shoppers who stopped by to praise and touch.

I remember a day, years ago, when the proprietor of a Harlingen flower shop spotted me and my three little ones getting into our car outside her shop. She came out holding three fabric-sculpture ornaments and wearing a sheepish grin. “I have redheaded grandchildren, and I just couldn’t resist,” she explained.

Every Christmas when I hang those ornaments on my tree, I know exactly how she feels.

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*Karen Hastings wrote “Princess for a Day” in the July issue of Texas Co-op Power.*



The Hastings family, from left: Lauren, James, Maclain, Karen, Molly.

LYFORD

# Aloe: The Valley's Versatile Crop

*No longer simply known as the burn plant, the aloe's fresh leaf plays a part in everything from facial tissue to fabric for clothing, and from cosmetics to food and beverages.*

by Soll Sussman



Mark Simon, farm manager at Hilltop Gardens in the rural Lower Rio Grande Valley community of Lyford, can testify to the unexpected advantages of living and working close to 40 acres of aloe vera plants. “I burned my hand once, getting off of a piece of machinery,” he recalled, almost flinching at the memory of slipping and grabbing a hot exhaust pipe by mistake. With aloe close by, Simon pulled his knife out and cut open a leaf to get at the natural gel with its soothing texture inside.

The medicinal qualities of aloe vera—known as the “burn plant” during centuries of human use—propelled it into a reliable fixture of Lower Rio Grande Valley agriculture and made the region a worldwide center of activity for the aloe industry.

Simon, a husky 36-year-old native of Harlingen, lives in the original house on the 100 acres that Lee Ewald acquired in 1939. Ewald and her daughter, chemist Phyllis Schmidt, helped pioneer the commercial production of aloe vera and its use in a variety of cosmetics. South Korea-based Aloecorp bought the farm in 1988, and a more modern corporate-owned house was built nearby along with a manufacturing and processing facility.

Much of the agricultural growth of aloe vera has moved south to Mexico—Aloecorp has 1,200 acres near Tampico on the Mexican Gulf coast. But about 1,000 acres remain in cultivation throughout the Valley. It is by no means simply the burn plant anymore. The fresh leaf is sold in grocery and health food stores; spin-off plants called “pups” are taken for commercial nurseries; and the soothing plant juice in gel or concentrate form plays a part in everything from facial tissue to fabric for clothing, and from cosmetics to food and beverages.

“I drink it once a day,” Simon said. He believes it helps promote a sense of well-being. “I usually mix it with orange juice or cranberry juice.” Most commercial aloe beverages mask the neutral taste with citric or other flavors.

The main drive to Hilltop Gardens cuts through the 40 acres of aloe vera, 20 acres neatly planted on each side. They bloom in the spring, sending up large central spikes with golden blossoms. “It likes a sandy, loamy soil, and it needs very little water,” Simon said as he took a visitor on a tour in his Chevy Silverado pickup. “People think aloe is a cactus or a succulent, but it’s actually in the lily family.”

The current aloe fields are young, planted about a year and a half ago, and are entirely made up of aloe barbadensis, the variety used for commercial production. “It’s the commonest,” Simon explained. “It also produces the bigger leaves; it’s more economical to harvest.”

Two to four leaves are harvested from each plant every 60 days, and for commercial purposes, each plant lasts five to seven years. The off-shoots that crop up regularly adjacent to the plants are sold to retail outlets.

Inside Aloecorp’s adjacent plant, metal pasteurizing tanks are ready behind glass walls to process the aloe vera gel brought in from the company’s fields in





Mexico. They produce cosmetic-grade and food-grade aloe concentrate here, and a laboratory tests products onsite.

Other producers have adopted similar strategies of siting additional aloe vera fields in Mexico and processing plants in the Valley. Dr. Yin-Tung Wang, a specialist at the Texas Agricultural Experimental Station in Weslaco, said aloe was grown on 3,000 to 4,000 acres in the Valley before a 1983 freeze—and another in 1989—prompted growers to locate additional fields in Mexico. Although significant expansion is not expected, he described the local industry now as healthy and developed.

“I feel like the Valley will continue to be the dominant factor in the continental United States,” John Sigrist, a 30-year veteran of the industry at Southern Fields Aloe near Mercedes, said. “A handful of us still exist.”

His Farm Fresh label focuses on producing the fresh leaf for health food and grocery stores and potted plants for nurseries. “We’ve been successful at climbing the ladder and finding our niche market,” he said.

Lily of the Desert has a 9-acre facility in Mercedes, where 60 to 90 employees produce a full range of products for health food stores and the mass market. “The Valley leaf is great. I wish we could produce all of our product in the Valley,” said Don Lovelace, the company’s president. The majority of his production is now based in Mexico because of the more temperate climate.

Lovelace said he was especially excited about recent studies that indicate that drinking aloe vera when taking vitamins improves their absorption into the system. He said that one of the industry’s main challenges is to educate people—including entrepreneurs selling a variety of aloe products—that aloe vera is a dietary supplement and not a drug. Among the aloe products readily available on the health and beauty aisles are shampoo, face and body wash, moisturizing cream, soap and bubble bath, lip balm, shaving cream, sunblock, and ointment.

At Hilltop Gardens, Simon showed off a tangled spot full of aloe plants with a range of curlicues and spikes that ultimately will be an aloe garden of more than 100 species. “We’re in the process of building the garden,” he said. Forty-five species of the plant native to southern Africa are already collected. “Our goal is to create a healing garden.”

The garden will be the centerpiece of a business plan to open the farm to tours for school groups and tourists, with a multimedia room, café and gift shop. “We’re hoping to be open by 2008,” Simon said.

That’s a short time to wait, after all, for a plant whose documented use in beauty and therapeutic products dates back centuries to ancient cultures.

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*Hilltop Gardens is served by Magic Valley Electric Cooperative.*

*Soll Sussman is a writer living in Austin. He is a past contributor to Texas Co-op Power.*

# COOL TIPS FOR HOT WEATHER

It's time for another hot Texas summer. Time to enjoy all the outdoors has to offer. Take a little extra time to take precautions so you and your family can enjoy every day.


## Keep cool—you could save a life

- Take frequent cooling-off breaks in the shade or air conditioning.
- Drink plenty of water before starting any outdoor activity, and drink water during the day. Drink less tea, coffee and alcoholic beverages.
- Wear lightweight, loose-fitting, light-colored clothes.
- Limit your physical activity during the hottest part of the day.
- Kids, cars and heat make a deadly combination. Never leave a child—or pet—in a vehicle, even for “just a few minutes.” That’s long enough for a closed vehicle to heat up to dangerous levels, even on a 60-degree day.

If someone has heatstroke-related symptoms—nausea, fatigue, muscle cramps, confusion, dizziness—act rapidly: Remove excess clothing and lower the person’s temperature with cold, wet sheets or a cool bath. Call a doctor immediately and transport the person to the nearest hospital—this is an emergency. This summer, don’t sweat it. Keep cool.



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# Texas' White Gold

BY CLAY COPPEDGE

Aside from the soldiers and supplies that Texas provided to the Confederacy, the state's most important contribution to the Civil War might have been the salt processed at the Swenson Salines in Lampasas County, near Lometa. While the Confederacy lasted, the place was one of several across the country known as the Confederate Salt Works. Before it was the Swenson Salines, it was known as Salt Creek, one of around a dozen so-named creeks in the state.

This matter of salt might not seem so important in a world where we buy it by the box. But salt was an important commodity in the Civil War, right up there with ammunition. The Civil War is sometimes called The War Between the Salts. The North had plenty of salt; the South did not. The North won the war.

"Salt is eminently contraband, because of its use in curing meats, without which armies cannot be subsisted," Union General William Tecumseh Sherman wrote in 1862.

The South could not be subsisted, as the general would have it. By 1865, when the Southern cause was clearly lost, the *Confederate States Almanac* had this bit of advice for its soldiers: "To keep meat from spoiling in the summer, eat it early in the spring."

Civil War soldiers, horses and mules all depended on salt. So did the livestock. If an army travels on its stomach, as the saying goes, that army better have plenty of salt. Salt was also used as a disinfectant. Napoleon lost many soldiers to otherwise simple wounds because his army had run out of salt.

Salt was one of the world's earliest precious commodities. The world's earliest trade routes were established in response to a demand for the stuff. Almost 10,000 years ago, Jericho was a salt-trading center. Salt was literally worth its weight in gold during the Middle Ages, traded weight for weight. The English word "salary" comes from the Latin word "salarium," which was a soldier's pay in salt. A good soldier or hired hand was said to be "worth his salt." Homer called it a "divine substance."

Not that Texans ever needed to be convinced of salt's importance. The Chisholm Trail zigzagged like it did not only to find watering holes but to take advantage of salt licks. Before there was the "black gold" of the oil boom, there was

the "white gold" that salt represented. The people of San Elizario and other villages along the Rio Grande near El Paso used a salt basin in northeastern Hudspeth County as a road to transport salt. When Anglo politicians claimed ownership and tried to levy fees, war broke out—that old taxation without representation thing again.

The Swenson Salines became important to the Confederacy after a series of Union raids on salt works in Florida and Louisiana depleted Confederate supplies. Before the creek and springs were enlisted for the war effort, Indians used Salt Creek for hundreds of years, most likely as an infirmary and crude sort of day spa.

The Confederate Salt Works in Lampasas County operated in a manner common to France and Germany but almost unheard of in the South. Water was pumped from springs at the site into a trough placed on a 40-foot high scaffold by means of a horse-drawn rotary lift. The water was

spread over cedar boughs where it was allowed to evaporate a bit before the briny remains dropped from the trees into two rows of vats, 25 to a row, situated under the trees. A rock chimney provided the draft. In such a manner, the Confederate Salt Works produced about a bushel of salt for every 50 bushels of brine. A bushel sold for about a dollar.

The Confederate Salt Works continued for a few years after the war. Cyrus James, William Kea and Thomas Seale were operating a salt works there as late as 1870, but it was abandoned soon after that.

The site of the old salt works is on private property now, along with three graves that are believed to be those of a man, woman and child who used to live near the works.

A historical marker commemorating the salt works is located about half a mile west of the junction of U.S. Highways 183 and 190.

As innocuous as the marker might be, a case could be made that the most important battle of the Civil War on Texas soil was the struggle to produce salt at the Swenson Salines.

In the end, the Union salted away the Confederacy.



*Clay Coppedge frequently writes history pieces for Texas Co-op Power.*

# Blue Ribbon Savvy

**BY SHANNON OELRICH** The county fair is a showcase, and sometimes show-down, for home cooks, who nervously pit their loftiest meringue pies and tastiest jams and jellies against their neighbors' year after year. To earn one of the coveted blue ribbons, you need not only a sure-fire recipe and great technique but also a knack for eye-catching presentation. Here are some tips, plus two award-winning recipes, from Texas Certified Home Economist **LINDA SANDERSON MOORE**, who has garnered a basketful of prizes and spent 12 years as a fair judge.

## THINK LIKE A JUDGE

Judges are selected because they have some type of specialized culinary training. Each category requires a minimum of two judges and often three judges. What one judge might miss, another will surely catch.

Remember that people judge with their eyes first. A fluffy white cake with a cloud of coconut may have our mouths watering before the first bite. Judges are no different. Go all out. Present your entry as if it were being photographed for a food magazine.

## CHOOSING A RECIPE

First, decide what recipe you want to use. Select a recipe you have used many times before, that you have had compliments on and would take somewhere to share with others. Don't use Aunt Betty's cake recipe if your only experience with it has been eating it.

Check the fair book to make sure the recipe you have chosen fits into one of the categories set by fair officials. Read and follow all fair guidelines carefully.

## INGREDIENTS AND COOKING TIPS

Always use quality ingredients! Even if the recipe calls for margarine, use butter instead. An experienced judge can tell.

If using eggs, break them one at a time into a separate bowl. Examine each egg before adding it to the other ingredients. Discard eggs with a blood spot and always remove the "curly white stem" that is connected to the egg yolk (when it is subjected to heat, it can become gristly). Do not use jumbo eggs in your recipes unless specified.

When your recipe calls for nuts, be generous. In most cases, use nut halves or large pieces. If your recipe has nuts sprinkled on the top or will be rolled in nuts, toast the nuts first. A lightly toasted nut will enhance the flavor greatly.

Never grease and flour the sides of your baking pan; only do so on the bottom. As the product rises in the pan, the dough will slide down the sides of a greased pan, causing a "rolled effect," and then pull away from the sides, often causing a space between the dough and the pan itself. On untreated sides, the dough will cling to the sides of the pan and allow a more even surface on the top. Bread is the exception to this rule but grease the sides very lightly. Also, don't over-grease your pan. An overgreased pan will not only cause your crust to be too brown but also will make the crust tough. Lightly brush the top of your loaf and rolls with butter before placing them in the oven. Bread with a powdered flour top is less appealing than that with a shiny, buttered top.

When you are baking a chocolate



**LINDA SANDERSON MOORE SHOWS OFF HER BLUE RIBBON YEAST ROLLS.**



# RECIPE ROUNDUP

item and your recipe calls for a greased and floured pan, substitute cocoa for flour. Flour looks unattractive on the bottom of a chocolate product, but cocoa will not. As a judge, I often turn over a brownie or piece of cake to examine the bottom.

Always use the correct measuring cups. Measure dry ingredients in a standard dry measuring cup (without a spout). Measure liquid ingredients in a standard liquid measuring cup (with a spout). Be precise in your measurements. Level dry measurements with a straightedge and be certain the entire amount has been emptied from the cup when adding it to other ingredients. When measuring a liquid ingredient, get down to eye level with the mark to make sure you have the exact amount.

Make certain your oven is calibrated accurately. Many ovens are as much as 25 degrees off. An appliance technician can check and calibrate your oven. Most hardware stores sell temperature gauges for ovens, if you want to check it yourself.

Check the recipe's cooking time carefully. If the recipe calls for an 18 to 20 minute baking period, be watchful at 14 minutes. Overcooking will certainly cost you a ribbon.

Browning bread or rolls is critical. The year I won my blue ribbon for yeast rolls, I literally pulled a chair up to the oven window and watched the browning process. Although my family would never turn down a dark-topped roll at my table, dark brown is too close to burnt from a judge's viewpoint.

## ON THE DAY OF THE FAIR

When you show up at the fair, think of yourself as already being a winner! Arrive dressed like a winner. If you come clean and well-groomed, you'll feel better—and you'll be ready when it's time to take winners' photos.

Don't fall for the misconception that if the product is still warm from the oven the judges will pick it. Not so! Baked products need time to "stand" and become firm. Warm cakes are usually crumbly and have no body. Warm cakes do not support icing well, either.

When cutting your product to enter, cut a generous serving. Cut the pieces so they are all uniform and exact in size. Never enter a corner piece. Pick big cookies and big pieces of candy as close to the same size as possible.

Once your product has been entered—leave. When all of the judging is over, go back to see how you did. Don't be disappointed with a third-place ribbon or even an honorable mention! These awards often pushed me into thinking about next year's plans.

Be sure to take your fair book with you to view the entries. Make notes of the categories that do not have many entries and consider entering that category next year. Make notes about special effects or garnishes that you like and about the winners in the categories you entered.

You won't get rich off the winnings from the fair, but the odds are better than the Texas Lottery! Start feeling lucky, get out the recipes and get organized!

## YEAST ROLLS

- 2 cups lukewarm water
- 1 package dry yeast
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 egg
- 6 tablespoons sugar
- 3 tablespoons melted butter

## 6 cups flour

Combine all ingredients in large mixing bowl. Let dough rise 1 hour or until double in size. Punch down. Form into rolls and let them rise for 1 hour in a lightly greased pan.

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Brush tops of rolls lightly with melted butter and bake for 10–15 minutes. Makes 3 dozen rolls.

Serving size: 1 roll. Per serving: 95 calories, 2 g protein, 1 g fat, 18 g carbohydrates, 71 mg sodium, 8 mg cholesterol

## UN-ICED BROWNIES

- 4 eggs
- 2 cups sugar
- 1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> cups flour
- 2 sticks butter, softened
- 4 tablespoons cocoa (plus extra for pan)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup pecans (optional)

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Grease bottom only of 9x13-inch pan, then sprinkle cocoa in pan and shake to cover, as if you were "flouring" the pan.

In large mixing bowl, combine all ingredients except pecans and beat until smooth. Fold in pecans and spread batter into prepared pan. Bake for 25–30 minutes. Makes 20 brownies.

Serving size: 1 brownie. Per serving: 215 calories, 3 g protein, 10 g fat, 29 g carbohydrates, 105 mg sodium, 62 mg cholesterol

## ANNA GINSBERG'S WINNING WAYS

Texan Anna Ginsberg has won many contests, from *Texas Co-op Power's* own Holiday Recipe Contest to the million-dollar Pillsbury Bake-Off. Here are a few of her top tips for winning:

- 1. New recipes generally evolve from old ones, so take a recipe you really like and add your own special twist.** Have a great chocolate cake recipe? Why not add some cinnamon, ancho chile powder and/or dulce de leche and give it a South American spin? Start with one or two changes, and you will probably find yourself adding even more changes to accommodate the first few.
- 2. You will probably need to proofread your recipe** at least six times. After you've proofed it, have a friend look it over to make sure your directions are clear.
- 3. Use easy-to-find, widely available ingredients**—things that you could find in a regular grocery store. The point of a winning recipe, aside from tasting good, is that it can and will be easily replicated by other cooks.
- 4. Don't give up.** I worked on one recipe for two years. The first version was good, but it took me that long to find a contest for which it fit ... and it ended up winning the top prize. If your new creation doesn't quite fit a current contest, make a folder and file it away until the perfect contest comes your way.

1<sup>st</sup>**RON SMITH** *Wood County Electric Cooperative*

Prize-winning recipe: Snazzy Peach Cake

Ron Smith of Grand Saline worked at Wal-Mart for 10½ years, during which time two of his recipes were chosen from thousands of others submitted for a nationwide employees-only contest. We loved this moist and zippy-tasting cake!

**Cook's Tip:** This cake is even better the day after baking it, if you can wait that long!

**SNAZZY PEACH CAKE**

- 1 can (15.25 ounces) sliced peaches in light syrup
  - 1 cup sugar
  - ½ cup peach schnapps (or orange juice)
  - ¼ cup orange juice
  - 1 package (2-layer size) yellow cake mix
  - 1 package (4-serving size) vanilla instant pudding and pie filling
  - 4 eggs
  - 1 cup chopped pecans
  - ⅔ cup vegetable oil
  - 1½ cups sifted powdered sugar
- In glass jar or bowl, combine undrained

peaches, sugar, peach schnapps and orange juice. Cover and let stand at room temperature for 24 hours.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour a 10-cup fluted tube pan. Set aside. Drain peach slices, reserving liquid. Chop peach slices.

In large bowl, combine cake mix, pudding mix, eggs, pecans, oil, chopped peaches and ⅓ cup reserved liquid. Stir together until well combined. Pour into prepared pan. Bake for 40–45 minutes or until a wooden toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool in pan on wire rack for 10 minutes. Remove from pan.

Meanwhile, in small bowl, combine powdered sugar and ¼ cup reserved liquid. Drizzle over warm cake. Cool completely. Serves 12–16.



Serving size: 1 slice. Per serving: 398 calories, 4 g protein, 19 g fat, 54 g carbohydrates, 318 mg sodium, 47 mg cholesterol

**Correction:** The baking time for June's *Crawfish Pie* should have been 35–40 minutes.

**TEXAS CO-OP POWER****3rd Annual Holiday Recipe Contest****\$5,000 in Total Prizes!**

Time is running out!  
Contest deadline  
September 10!

SPONSORED BY



**GRAND-PRIZE WINNER TAKES HOME \$3,000. FOUR RUNNERS-UP WILL EACH WIN \$500.**

Once again, we're looking for the best original recipes from your holiday celebrations. All recipes must include a Pioneer product such as Pioneer Brand Flour, Pioneer Brand Gravy Mixes or the new Pioneer Brand Microwaveable Gravies, Pioneer Brand Biscuit & Baking Mixes, or Pioneer Brand Pancake Mixes. Winners will be announced in our December issue.

Up to three entries are allowed per person. Each should be submitted on a separate piece of paper. Entries MUST include your name, address and phone number, plus the name of your electric cooperative, or they will be disqualified. All entries must be postmarked by September 10, 2007. Send entries to: Holiday Recipe Contest, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704, or fax to (512) 486-6254. To enter by e-mail (recipes@texas-ec.org), you must include "Holiday Recipe Contest" in the subject line and submit one recipe per e-mail (no attachments). For official rules, visit [www.texascoopower.com](http://www.texascoopower.com) or send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the address above.





**OFF TO THE RACES**

Whether behind the wheel, in the saddle or on foot, some people are born with a need for speed. This month's photo submissions show that many Texans, from kids to canines, share a desire to be the first one to cross the finish line. DACIA RIVERS

◀ **Corie Wyrick**, Wood County Electric Cooperative member and employee, sent in this photo he took of his son, **Brian**, during a bicycle race. "He was on a solo break and was checking to see how much of a gap he had built," Wyrick said. "You can see the other riders cresting the hill."



▶▶ **Boyd Dreyer** of Buda took two photos that truly illustrate the spirit of racing. One was taken at the Buda Country Fair and Wiener Dog Race, the other at the Great American Jackass Race in Mason. Dreyer is a member of Pedernales Electric Cooperative.

▶ **Shelby Herrmann**, daughter of **Lori** and **Booger** of Nueces Electric Cooperative, rides her horse Pokey at a youth rodeo. At 11 years old, Shelby has been on the rodeo circuit for four years and has won numerous prizes.



▶ Five-year-old **Ethan Perez** lines up at the starting gate at his first motocross in Canton; he went on to place second in the 50cc beginner class that day. Ethan and his family, mom **Sandy**, dad **Daniel** and sister **Laney**, are members of Cherokee County Electric Cooperative.



**Upcoming in Focus on Texas**

ISSUE	SUBJECT	DEADLINE
Oct	Hats and Caps	Aug 10
Nov	Hunting w/a Camera	Sep 10
Dec	Holiday Decorations	Oct 10
Jan	Little Helpers	Nov 10
Feb	Landscapes	Dec 10
Mar	Typically Texan	Jan 10

**HATS AND CAPS** is the topic for our **OCTOBER 2007** issue. Send your photo—along with your name, address, daytime phone, co-op affiliation and a brief description—to **Hats and Caps, Focus on Texas, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704**, before **August 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-ec.org](mailto:focus@texas-ec.org). (If you have questions about your camera's capabilities and settings, please refer to the operating manual.)

# AROUND TEXAS AROUND TEXAS

## AUGUST

**02 SAN MARCOS** [2, 9]  
Summer in the Park  
Concert Series,  
1-888-200-5620,  
www.toursanmarcos.com

**03 CANYON** [3-5] Palo Duro  
Western Film Festival,  
(806) 651-2235

**LEAKEY** [3-5]  
U.S. Hang Gliding &  
Paragliding National  
Fly-In, (830) 486-8031

**SAINT JO** [3-4] 50th  
Rodeo, (940) 995-2930

**MCKINNEY** [3-5] Lazy  
Dragon Relaxicon  
Benefit, (972) 948-3320,  
www.lazydragon.com

**04 BELLVILLE** Market  
Days, (979) 865-3407

**HARLINGEN** Jackson  
Street Market Days,  
(956) 423-4933

**04 MONTGOMERY**  
First Saturday, (936)  
597-4566, www.historic  
montgomerytexas.com

**NEWCASTLE**  
School & Community-  
wide Homecoming,  
(940) 846-3730

**WIMBERLEY**  
Market Day,  
(512) 847-2201

**05 FERRIS**  
Motorcycle Rally  
& Barbecue,  
(972) 842-2800

**07 DELEON** [7-11]  
Peach & Melon Festival,  
(254) 893-6600,  
www.deleonpeachand  
melonfestival.com

**SAN ANGELO** [7-8]  
West Texas Deer Study,  
(325) 655-0877

**08 ABILENE** [8-11]  
Wild Horse & Burro  
Adoption, (325) 677-4376

**08 FORT DAVIS** [8-11]  
Davis Mountains  
Hummingbird & Nature  
Festival, (432) 364-2499,  
www.cdri.org/DMHB  
Festival

**10 HITCHCOCK** [10-11]  
Good Ole Days,  
(409) 986-7420

**JEWETT** [10-12]  
Flea Market Days,  
(903) 536-7689

**10 NAVASOTA** [10-11]  
Blues Festival, 1-800-  
252-6642, www.nava  
sotabluesfestival.org

**11 BASTROP**  
Second Saturday  
Salebration,  
(512) 303-0558,  
www.bastropdba.org

**BRENHAM** [11-12]  
Fireman's Fiesta,  
(979) 337-7300



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hosts the U.S.  
Hang Gliding &  
Paragliding  
National Fly-In.

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# AROUND TEXAS AROUND TEXAS

- 11 BROWNWOOD**  
Family Services Center  
Open Bass Tournament,  
(325) 646-5939,  
[www.familysc.org](http://www.familysc.org)
- CHAPPELL HILL**  
Lavender Fest,  
(979) 251-8114, [www.chappellhilllavender.com](http://www.chappellhilllavender.com)
- CORSICANA**  
Concerts for Local  
Charities, (903) 872-8226
- GOLIAD** Market Days,  
1-800-848-8674
- HENDERSON** [11-12]  
East Texas Sacred Harp  
Musical Convention,  
(903) 863-5379,  
[www.texasfasola.org](http://www.texasfasola.org)
- 12 WEIMAR**  
St. Michael Harvest Fest,  
(979) 725-9511
- 13 ALVARADO** [13-18]  
Pioneers & Old Settlers  
Reunion, (817) 790-3503

- 16 ADDISON** [16-18]  
National Button Society  
Convention, (214) 373-  
8526, [www.texasbutton  
society.com](http://www.texasbutton<br/>society.com)
- 17 CARTHAGE** [17-18]  
Country Music  
Celebration Weekend  
Festival, (903) 693-6634
- 18 GRUENE** [18-19]  
Old Gruene Market Days,  
(830) 832-1721, [www.gruenemarketdays.com](http://www.gruenemarketdays.com)
- MELISSA**  
Community Expo &  
Classic Car Show Benefit,  
(972) 816-6907,  
[www.impactweek.org](http://www.impactweek.org)
- PALESTINE**  
Dogwood Jamboree  
Country Music Concert,  
(903) 723-6291
- 25 BERTRAM**  
TARA Ranch Rodeo,  
(512) 868-0001,  
[www.rodeotexas.org](http://www.rodeotexas.org)

- 25 KERRVILLE** Market  
Days, (830) 792-4655,  
[www.kerrmarketdays.org](http://www.kerrmarketdays.org)
- WICHITA FALLS**  
Hotter'N Hell Endurance  
Ride, (940) 322-3223,  
[www.hh100.org](http://www.hh100.org)
- 26 MARAK** Homecoming  
Picnic, (254) 593-3021
- 27 STONEWALL**  
LBJ Ranch Wreath-  
Laying & Fee Free Day,  
(830) 868-7128, ext. 244,  
[www.nps.gov/lyjo](http://www.nps.gov/lyjo)
- 30 ODESSA** [8/30-9/16]  
Southwest Shakespeare  
Festival, (432) 580-3177,  
[www.globesw.org](http://www.globesw.org)
- 31 ABILENE** [8/31-9/2]  
LULAC Labor Day  
Softball Tournament,  
(325) 695-1868
- BANDERA** [8/31-9/2]  
Celebrate Bandera,  
(830) 796-4447,  
[www.celebratebandera.com](http://www.celebratebandera.com)

## SEPTEMBER

- 01 BEAUMONT**  
Labor Day Music Festival,  
(409) 951-5400,  
[www.fordparktx.com](http://www.fordparktx.com)
- PLAINS**  
Watermelon Roundup,  
(806) 456-3566
- WINTERS** Dove Fest,  
(325) 754-5210,  
[www.winters-texas.us](http://www.winters-texas.us)
- 02 HUNTSVILLE** Saint  
Joseph's Catholic Church  
Bazaar Labor Day  
Sunday, (936) 344-6104

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](mailto:aroundtx@texas-ec.org). Please submit events for October by August 10. **Events are listed according to space available; see the full listing at [www.texascooppower.com](http://www.texascooppower.com).**



## 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.

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Congratulate yourself if you resisted spending those big bucks to fly to Europe this summer. You can take a handy little European tour in the Texas Hill Country, traveling through German, Polish and French towns just outside of San Antonio. And it won't cost even a fraction of your mortgage. Your route starts in Boerne (say it "burn-ee"), follows Texas 46 and Texas 16 west to Bandera, then FM 470 and FM 462 south to Hondo (stop here if you need to play nine holes on the municipal course or bowl at the local alley), and then east along U.S. 90 to Castroville. It's about a 95-mile journey, and you won't need a passport.

## BOERNE

See the native limestone for which the Hill Country is famous on magnificent display in this downtown from another era. If you wander into the heart of this village on a Tuesday or Wednesday, you're likely to have the sidewalks to yourself. If it's the weekend, all bets are off—this repository of German heritage is a popular weekend haunt. Either way, make sure you stroll Main Street at leisure, ducking into galleries and shops. Allow plenty of time to explore the Boerne Public Library in the historic Joseph Dienger Building, erected in 1884. In the History Research Room, you can see a rare 1614 Low German Bible and learn about the Boerne Village Band, still playing nearly 150 years after its founding. Oh, and ask the library staff about the resident ghost. Two blocks away, Ye Kendall Inn is a beautiful hotel that opened in 1859 as a stagecoach stop for travelers heading west from San Antonio. It offers 34 rooms, suites and cabins as well as a fitness center.

**Boerne Convention and Visitors Bureau**, 1407 S. Main St.; (830) 249-7277 or 1-888-842-8080; [www.visitboerne.org](http://www.visitboerne.org)

**Ye Kendall Inn**, 128 West Blanco Rd.; (830) 249-2138 or 1-800-364-2138; [www.yekendallinn.com](http://www.yekendallinn.com)

# BOERNE to CASTROVILLE

*This corner of the Hill Country retains its European flavor.*

BY JUNE NAYLOR



## BANDERA

The depth of rich cultures in this town never ceases to amaze. For starters, it's one of the oldest Polish communities in the nation, settled circa 1855; you can see the foundation of this heritage at the handsome St. Stanislaus Church, built in 1876. Just a few blocks away, there's a vast collection of Old West relics at the Frontier Times Museum; a trip through this treasure trove is like rummaging around a rich, eccentric aunt's attic—but it gives you a good idea of how deep the Wild West roots run here. And as you meander past the myriad honky-tonks and stores selling Western wear and cowboy decor, you'll understand how utterly tethered to the cowboy society Bandera is. But understand that it doesn't call itself "The Cowboy Capital of the World" because of the wealth of dude ranches in and

around town; instead, it's that a significant number of championship rodeo cowboys come from Bandera or call it home today. In fact, you can catch rodeos at Bandera at least twice a week between Memorial and Labor days. On hot afternoons, grab an inner tube or kayak and float down the Medina River, which wraps around the town.

**Bandera Convention and Visitors Bureau**, 1-800-364-3833; [www.banderacowboycapital.com](http://www.banderacowboycapital.com)

**Frontier Times Museum**, 510 13th St.; (830) 796-3864; [www.frontiertimesmuseum.com](http://www.frontiertimesmuseum.com)

## CASTROVILLE

If you're not prepared, this town—called the Little Alsace of Texas—will throw you for a loop with its intense European feel. Settled in 1844 by Henri Castro, a Jewish Frenchman of Portuguese heritage who had served in Napoleon's guard, Castroville grew from a group of Alsatian colonists. Sitting within a scenic bend in the Medina River, the town features several Old World-style cottages among the 50-plus historic structures. While

you're there, stop at one of the handful of Alsatian restaurants, where you're likely to overindulge. If that's the case, you'll be glad you called ahead to book a room at the Landmark Inn, a state historic site and one-time stagecoach stop right on the river. You can fish, roam the gardens in search of birds and butterflies, borrow bicycles to ride around town, explore the old gristmill, relax in a rocking chair on the porch—or take a nap in your quiet room and dream in foreign languages.

**Castroville Area Chamber of Commerce**, 802 London St.; (830) 538-3142 or 1-800-778-6775; [www.castroville.com](http://www.castroville.com)

**Landmark Inn**, 402 East Florence St.; (830) 931-2133; [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/spdest/findadest/parks/landmark\\_inn](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/spdest/findadest/parks/landmark_inn)

*June Naylor is the author of Texas: Off the Beaten Path (Globe Pequot Press).*