

LOCAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE EDITION

DECEMBER 2007

TEXAS CO-OP POWER

TEXAS COUNTRY REPORTER

Miles and Miles of Texas and Millions of Viewers



P L U S

**Little Nuclear House
on the Prairie**

Holiday Recipe Contest

**Hit the Road:
Hico to Dublin**

WISE MEN STILL

FOLLOW THE STAR.

MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM BOB PHILLIPS & FIRST AG CREDIT.




FIRST AG CREDIT

PART OF THE FARM CREDIT SYSTEM



The stars seem brighter when seen from your own place. That's why I had First Ag Credit help me with a loan to get my personal slice of heaven. Let the folks at First Ag Credit help you, and you'll see why wise men still follow the star.

Agribusiness Loans | Home Loans | Farm & Ranch Loans | Operating, Equipment & Livestock Loans | Recreational Land Loans

1.800.687.5261 | agmoney.com | 

Texas-Born 1916

December 2007

VOLUME 64 NUMBER 6



FEATURES

6 He's Seen Miles and Miles of Texas (AND TAKEN MILLIONS OF VIEWERS ALONG FOR THE RIDE)

By Sheryl Smith-Rodgers
Photos by Wyatt McSpadden

Bob Phillips, host of television's long-running, folksy "Texas Country Reporter," has logged some 2 million miles and produced more than 2,700 half-hour shows.

12 Little Nuclear House on the Prairie

By Staci Semrad

Larry Sanders hopes someday his gutted Atlas missile silo will become the first 20th century addition to the Texas Forts Trail.

FAVORITES

- Footnotes By Carlton Stowers *Burning in the Wind* 29
Home Cooking *Holiday Recipe Contest* 30
Focus on Texas *Holiday Decorations* 35
Around Texas *Local Events Listings* 36
Hit the Road By June Naylor *Hico to Dublin* 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.

TEXAS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES BOARD OF DIRECTORS: **Greg Jones**, Chair, *Rusk*; **Ray Beavers**, Vice Chair, *Cleburne*; **Darren Schauer**, Secretary-Treasurer, *Gonzales*; **James Calhoun**, *Franklin*; **Steve Louder**, *Hereford*; **Gary Nietsche**, *La Grange*; **William "Buff" Whitten**, *Eldorado*

PRESIDENT/CEO: **Mike Williams**, *Austin*

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE: **Roland Witt**, Chair, *Coleman*; **Bill Harbin**, Vice Chair, *Floydada*; **Roy Griffin**, *Edna*; **Kim Hooper**, *Bluegrove*; **Steve Young**, *Hamilton*; **Robert A. Loth III**, *Fredericksburg*; **Melody Pinnell**, *Crockett*

COMMUNICATIONS STAFF: **Martin Bevins**, Sales Director; **Carol Moczygomba**, Executive Editor; **Kaye Northcott**, Editor; **Suzi Sands**, Art Director; **Karen Nejtek**, Production Manager; **Andy Doughty**, Production Designer; **Sandra Forston**, Communications Assistant; **Melissa Grischkowsky**, Communications Coordinator; **Kevin Hargis**, Copy Editor; **Shannon Oelrich**, Food Editor; **Dacia Rivers**, Field Editor; **Emily Stewart**, Intern

letters

THE THRILL OF DISCOVERY

Your article in September ("A Failed French Foothold") was much appreciated. We had the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to volunteer on the La Belle excavation project.

We devoted most of our weekends over four months traveling to and from Palacios to be a part of history. Most of our time was spent water-screening bucket after bucket of Matagorda Bay mud-silted artifacts. How thrilling it was to realize that we were the first to touch these objects in more than 310 years!

One day, we uncovered olive seed pits and fish bones—remains of a meal someone had enjoyed on the ship.

Our favorite artifacts were the two small wooden buttons covered in two different-size crochet threads still bearing the thread that had attached them to a garment.

MIKE AND KAREN FULGHUM
Lakehills
Bandera Electric Cooperative

CLIBURN WAS ENGAGING

Your article on Van Cliburn in the October 2007 issue brought back many memories for me. I met Van the day he returned from the piano competition in Moscow. We were both living in Kilgore and attended the same church where his mother, Rildia Bee, was my Sunday School teacher.

Van was a soft-spoken, engaging, down-to-earth young man. I visited their unassuming little frame home several times.

CATHERINE TSCHIRHART
Hondo

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. Read additional letters at www.texascooppower.com.

POWER TALK

GOING GREEN IN FREDERICKSBURG

Going green is not only possible, it is rapidly becoming a necessity.

That's the message heard by hundreds of people who attended the Eighth Annual Renewable Energy Roundup and Green Living Fair in Fredericksburg at the end of September. The roundup, which included a series of seminars on energy-efficient building, renewable electricity resources, organic food and gardening, and alternative vehicle power, also included scores of vendors and exhibitors demonstrating and selling the latest in wind and solar electricity systems, sustainable building materials and other "green living" products.



Climate change, increasing global population and growing energy demands, coupled with the Earth's finite resources, prompted many of the presenters to warn that soon we could see supplies dwindle and prices increase.

In the realm of electricity production and reducing energy demand, emphasis was given both to rediscovering methods used for hundreds of years, such as building to take advantage of natural heating and cooling, and to modern technologies, including improved wind generator designs and photovoltaic arrays.

One presenter showed how, using off-the-shelf plumbing products and a black plastic storage tank, homeowners could relatively easily build a system to collect and store rain runoff from their roofs to use for landscape irrigation. Others talked about using solar energy to power water heaters.

Attendees of one session received an important message in the face of some sobering problems: How to sustain hope for the future. The answer included having faith in human resilience and seeking spiritual guidance, whatever form it takes.



BRUCE PARTAIN



SAVE ELECTRICITY, SAVE MONEY

Two recent reports suggest that many of Texas' growing electric power needs

could be met by energy efficiency measures and renewable energy sources rather than by building new power plants.

The studies by the Washington-based American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy argued that most of the savings could be achieved at the local level by municipalities either adopting stricter building codes or encouraging homeowners to invest in energy-efficient structures. The reports were produced on behalf of Environmental Defense.

If typical new homes were just 15 percent more energy efficient than they are currently, the reports concluded, homeowners in the Houston/Galveston and Dallas/Fort Worth metropolitan areas could save \$360 a year on electric bills.



H A P P E N I N G S

The **NACOGDOCHES NINE FLAGS FESTIVAL** offers a three-week-long holiday extravaganza starting November 16 in one of the most historic and picturesque towns in Texas. The festivities culminate December 7 and 8. On Friday, visit Millard's Crossing Historic Village for a 19th Century Old Fashioned Christmas. During Saturday's Tour of Homes, which benefits Historic Nacogdoches, you can see the president's home at Stephen F. Austin State University and other beautifully decorated mansions. For more information, call 1-888-653-3788 or go to www.nineflagsfestival.com.

CORYELL COUNTY COURTHOUSE BRIDGES PAST AND PRESENT

Builder Tom Lovell left his stamp on the still-functioning Coryell County Courthouse when he constructed it in 1897. His signature symbol, an owl, marks the building's east entrance

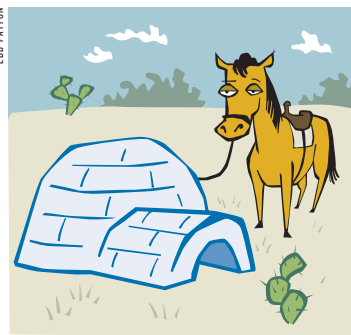


even today. The courthouse was constructed of limestone and sandstone precut into precisely sized blocks at a nearby quarry and then brought into town by horse-drawn wagons. Architect W.C. Dodson designed the building in Beaux-Arts style with some Romanesque details. The courthouse is a National Register Property.

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

WHO KNEW?

EDD PATTON



CHILLY TEXAS

Sure, we get some Blue Northerners, but to liken a town in Nueces County to Santa's home is stretching things ...

NORTH POLE

Nueces County

RIO FRIO

Real County

COLDSRING

San Jacinto County

WINTERS

Runnels County

SNOW HILL

Titus County

FROST


Navarro County

Texas Co-op Power (USPS 540-560) is published monthly by Texas Electric Cooperatives (TEC). Periodical Postage Paid at Austin, TX and at additional offices. TEC is the statewide association representing 74 electric cooperatives. *Texas Co-op Power's* website is www.texascoopower.com. Call (512) 454-0311 or e-mail knorthcott@texas-ec.org.

Subscription price is \$3.84 per year for individual members of subscribing cooperatives. If you are not a member of a subscribing cooperative, you can purchase an annual subscription at the nonmember rate of \$7.50. Individual copies and back issues are available for \$3 each.

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

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

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

© Copyright 2007 Texas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. Reproduction of this issue or any portion of it is expressly prohibited without written permission. Willie Wirehand © Copyright 2007 National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

CHECK IT OUT

MY OH MY, AIN'T WE GOT PIE?

With cool weather here, it's time to check out the Nutty Brown Café's Frito Pie.

This marvel of real beef, real cheese and real Fritos is just too big for the traditional bag. This dinner plate-sized Texas concoction wins over even delicate Texans with a yearning for heart-healthy veggie fare. Few can resist the dish's savory, dusky chili flavor. Just right—not too hot for the kiddoes but not too bland for the rest of us.

Nary a bean graces this Texas-true dish. But you can get your vegetables by ordering your pie with a liberal sprinkling of fresh onions. And you are set—maybe for two or three meals. The only point of contention when *Texas Co-op Power* edi-

tors checked out the dish was what one considers to be the golden mean of chili to Frito.

Served by Pedernales Electric Cooperative, the Nutty Brown Café is located at 12225 W. Highway 290 between Austin and Dripping Springs. Call (512) 301-4648 or visit online at www.nuttybrown.com.

Nutty Brown Café Frito Pie





**BOB PHILLIPS HAS
SEEN MILES AND MILES
OF TEXAS**

(and taken millions of viewers along for the ride)

Everyone's quiet as trainer Lynn Rorke Reardon gently urges Sonny, a retired thoroughbred racehorse, to trot faster around the pen. Leaning against the metal fence, photographer Dan Stricklin balances a bulky black Betacam on his shoulder and shoots the action.



SHERY SMITH-RODGERS

Behind him, Bob Phillips—host of television's long-running, folksy "Texas Country Reporter"—waits to chat with Reardon about her efforts to find homes for retired Texas racehorses. Since 2003, she's placed more than 500 horses with new owners through her adoption ranch near Austin called LOPE (short for LoneStar Outreach to Place Ex-Racers).

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS • PHOTOGRAPHY BY WYATT McSPADEN

From inspirational people such as Reardon to offbeat stops, country cafés and even a few amazing animals, Phillips finds all kinds of stories as he explores the state's highways and back roads. "Hop in and travel with me," he warmly invites viewers each week as he takes off on yet another installment of "Texas Country Reporter." On the air since 1972, Phillips so far has logged some 2 million miles and produced more than 2,700 half-hour shows.

At the moment, though, it's his turn to distract Richie Cee, an overly friendly chestnut gelding at LOPE who insists on poking his nose into Stricklin's camera. "You got yourself a horse there, Bob," Reardon quips as Phillips rubs Richie's long, brown mane.

Phillips is perfectly relaxed with the pushy horse. He's been in front of the camera long enough to know a few things: expect the unexpected, go with the flow, and—oh, yeah—don't ever be shy.

Guts—that's what landed Phillips in the business in the first place. Fresh out of high school, encouraged by a journalism teacher to keep writing, the Dallas native enrolled in a local junior

college in 1969. One day, Eddie Barker—the respected Dallas news anchor who announced the death of President Kennedy shortly before Walter Cronkite—visited Phillips' journalism class.

Following the lecture, Phillips, then 18, walked up to Barker and asked him for a job at his television station. Barker gruffly agreed. "He told me later that he hired me 'cause I had the guts to ask for a job," Phillips recalls. "I said, no, it was 'cause I'd needed a job!" At the CBS-affiliate station, Phillips worked his way up from gofer to news cameraman and then reporter. While still working full time, he earned his bachelor's in journalism and broadcast-film-art, and a master's of liberal arts at Southern Methodist University.

In 1972, he worked as photographer with "4 Country Reporter" and soon became host. Similar in format to Charles Kuralt's popular "On the Road" series, Phillips traveled the region's rural roads in search of unique stories.

"I did small-town features, but they had to have a newsy side, too," he says during an off-camera break at

Reardon's horse ranch. "Gradually, though, I started asking less hard news questions. Finally, in Forney (east of Dallas), I asked two ranchers, 'How does a cow stand up? With its front legs first or its back legs?' Those two guys got into an argument right there. Viewers wrote in and called the station, saying how much they loved it. After that show, the bosses let me go and do whatever I wanted."

Fun and upbeat, "4 Country Reporter" aired twice weekly until 1986, when new management canceled the show. However, the station agreed to give Phillips the program's copyright, which allowed him to keep the same name and format. Later that year, he started Phillips Productions and syndicated "Texas Country Reporter."

Nowadays:

"Texas Country Reporter" airs on 24 Texas stations and the RFD-TV network. "Our ratings indicate that we reach 1.3 million people a week on



Phillips and crew interview Peggy Green, a seashell artist in Navasota.

Texas broadcast stations and a million nationwide on RFD,” Phillips says.

Unbeknownst to most viewers, a lot of behind-the-scenes work and time goes into producing just one of a half-hour show’s three stories, such as today’s visit with Reardon and her horses at LOPE.

“Typically, we don’t do a lot of research,” Phillips explains while Stricklin—along with producer Ryan Britt and production assistant Mike Synder—film Reardon riding a horse across a grassy meadow. “We’ll look at someone’s website ahead of time, but a lot of people don’t have one. So we talk to them on the phone. Viewers don’t know these other people are here spending 18 hours with one person to get a six-minute story. They think I drive around and talk to people all by myself.”

On this spring morning at LOPE,

gray skies threaten overhead. Phillips just shrugs.

“We always hope for beautiful skies,” he says, “but we shoot in everything. We shoot people’s lives, and that’s sometimes in the rain.”

Annually, Phillips and his staff produce 78 stories.

“Most come from viewers,” he says. “We get hundreds of e-mails every day. We also get ideas from traveling around; people will tell us about someone else. Plus we read lots of Texas magazines and newspapers. Dan found this story [LOPE] in the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*. We’re pretty blatant about reading something in a publication and then doing the story, but we give it a different twist.”

After 35 years on the road, Phillips instinctively recognizes stories worth telling.

“Lynn’s got so much passion for her horses that that makes this story,” Phillips says. “We don’t care about what they’re doing as much as why they’re doing it. If people care, it’s a good story. Our stories range from deeply moving, passionate stories about people’s lives to places where people can go to visit or eat. We do ‘ain’t that neat’ stories, too, like a cemetery in Paris, Texas, where there’s a statute of Jesus wearing cowboy boots. Oh, yeah, we got a lot of responses on that one!”

So did a story on Skidboot, a blue heeler trained and loved by Quinlin farrier David Hartwig. The dog’s amazing ability to perform intricate tricks wowed such celebrities as Oprah Winfrey, Jay Leno and David Letterman. Sadly, Skidboot died at age 14 last March. (See Phillips’ video on Skidboot online at www.youtube.com/texascountryreporter.)

Festival In the fall, Bob Phillips hosts the “Texas Country Reporter” Festival in Waxahachie. Next year’s 13th annual bash—set for Saturday, Oct. 25—will feature artists, chefs, live music, food, games, autographs and “everything Texas Country.”

For more information, call the Waxahachie Chamber of Commerce at (972) 938-9617 or visit www.texascountryreporter.com or www.waxahachiechamber.com.

Escondida Tucked away in the hills near Kerrville, Phillips’ resort offers 10 guest suites, a state-of-the-art spa, swimming pool, hot tub, hiking trails, gourmet meals and lots of solitude. For rates and information, call 1-888-589-7507; www.escondidaresort.com.

DQ Dude “Texas Country Reporter” was syndicated in 1986, thanks to its first statewide sponsor—Dairy Queen. In return, Phillips touted

burgers and ice cream for 13 years in numerous DQ commercials. One featured him in a parka, yelling into a snowstorm.

“I introduced the Blizzard to people when it was new,” he says. To demonstrate how, he cups his hands over his mouth and hollers, “Blizzzzzzard!”

To this day, people still ask him to “do the Blizzard thing!”

And he does.



Phillips at Escondida.



Phillips with Richie and Deemed Ready.

Needless to say, Phillips knows Texas well. When the town of Clark changed its name to DISH, Phillips headed to North Texas and asked why (folks now have a decade's worth of free satellite TV service). In Colleyville, he watched as Bob Wilder flew rubber-band airplanes in a school gym with his cronies. In Amarillo, he rubbed elbows with Bob Flesher, who makes (and plays) upright bass instruments from wash-tubs, and, in Corpus Christi, he shared a table with Bill and Lois Patillo, who serve delicious “dishes”—scrambled eggs, hamburgers, yams, key lime pie and more—made entirely from rocks.

On the personal side, Phillips, 56, says little—he's been single since 40, no children. When not on the road or teaching at private Amberton University in Dallas, he relaxes at either his Dallas home, another in Beaumont or his Hill Country resort called Escondida (which is served by Bandera Electric Cooperative).

“I think I'm hard to live with,” he reflects. “I mean, this is what I want to do so I'm on the road a lot. Charles Kuralt and I were friends; we met when I was very young. We'd share story ideas and chicken-fried steak. He told me once that he missed a lot of birthday parties.”

Back on camera with Reardon, Phillips asks a few more questions, then hops into his black Expedition and heads west. Stricklin, Britt and Synder—who drive the show's red-white-and-blue “flag” truck—stay a few more hours to wrap up the interview. In a few days, they'll edit, write and produce the story at the production studio in Dallas.

“I have to say I'm happy with how my life turned out,” Phillips says before leaving. “I do for a living what most people do for vacation. And, hey, I'm not gonna gripe about that!”

Epilogue:

Phillips got himself a horse, all right. Actually, make that two. Shortly after his interview with Reardon, he adopted Richie and Deemed Ready, another chestnut gelding. The pair now reside at Escondida.

Sheryl Smith-Rodgers, who lives in Blanco, is a frequent contributor to Texas Co-op Power.

LONESTAR MARKET

Discover what's new in the market.
Gift-giving is a cinch when you
choose to use this handy

HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE



COOPER'S MAIL ORDER BBQ

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

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



HAND-PAINTED "TEXMAS" ORNAMENTS

Original hand-painted "True Texan" ornaments on blown glass signed by award winning artist Pattilu Bowlsby. Perfect for anyone who thinks Texas is special. Send \$16 each (indicate Boot or State) or \$25 for both to:

Ornaments, 10901 Yucca Dr.,
Austin, TX 78759
ornaments@austin.rr.com



TEXAS RUBY & RIO RED GRAPEFRUIT

Juicy red grapefruit and sweet oranges from the Rio Grande Valley. Tree-fresh, hand-selected gifts delivered nationwide. Texas 1015 onions, tomatoes, smoked meats, nuts and candies. FREE BROCHURE. Mention code TXCP for discount.

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



NATURAL SKINCARE FROM AGGIELAND

Rejuvenating herbal skin creams blend Texas aloe vera & concentrated herbal extracts. Dr. Wendy's Wrinkle Warrior is a powerful moisturizer and Balm Squad is an all-purpose healing salve. Improved formula! More natural than ever! \$10 each.

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



WESTERN GENERAL STORE.COM

Texas Waffle Maker. Texas shaped waffles, 7" from El Paso to Texarkana. Powerful 800 watts, no-stick grids, sleek stainless steel, one-year limited warranty, UL approved. (Texas, Western and Lodge Gifts and Decor also available.)

1-866-48-HAPPY
www.WesternGeneralStore.com



TEXAS TRIV-BOARDS™

Our Texas-shaped Triv-Boards are made of Corian solid surface. They're non-porous and easily maintained. Use as a trivet, cutting board, serving dish, conversation piece and more. Excellent gifts! \$26.95 plus S&H. Dealers welcome.

(325) 829-8977
www.kaytongroup.com



REED LANG FARMS GIFT FRUIT

TEXAS grown Lula Avocados, Navel Oranges, Ruby and Rio Red Grapefruit, orange blossom honey. **FREE UPS SHIPPING.** Request **FREE BROCHURE.**



P.O. Box 219
Rio Hondo, TX 78583.
(956) 748-2354
(956) 748-2888 fax
reedlangfarms@yahoo.com

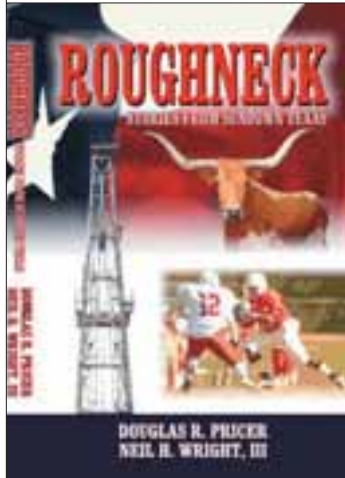


HEARTLAND HAM

"Home of the legendary spiral sliced honey glazed ham." Hams, turkey, smoked meats shipped nationally. Holiday orders accepted now!



(903) 581-2802
www.honeybham.com
www.heartlandham.com



A GREAT BOOK ABOUT SMALL-TOWN TEXAS

"... a positive account of a proud community and school ... symbolic of any small town in Texas!" - Gary Gaines (former head football coach, Odessa Permian). Send \$24.95 to:

"Roughneck", 3857 Birch St., #164,
Newport Beach, CA 92660
(714) 315-2548
www.roughneckthebook.com



ST. LUCIA BREAD CO.

Send the gift everybody loves (and nobody returns).
• All natural ingredients
• No preservatives
10 delicious flavors, all hand-crafted in our Dallas bakery from scratch—for over 20 years. All breads shipped in a commemorative Texas tin.

1-888-839-2771
www.texasbread.com



RATTLESNAKE RANCH TEXAS TREATS

Treat your family and friends to the most delicious pecans and candies in Texas. **Try our new pecan flavors:** Honey Crisp, Sugar-Free Chocolate and White Chocolate, and Cajun Roasted. Call today for our gift catalog, or visit our website and order online.

1-888-PECAN75
www.rattlesnakeranchpecans.com



CAGLE STEAKS, LUBBOCK

Send 'em Rib-eyes for a holiday, a "thank-you" or a "howdy y'all." 4-pack or 6-pack includes our Good Character Seasoning. 2-day delivery. Order online.

(806) 795-3879
www.caglesteaks.com



2007 CAPITOL COLLECTIBLE ORNAMENT

Twelfth in a series of annual collectible ornaments, the 2007 capitol ornament features the capitol doors. The ornament sells for \$18 plus S/H.

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




G AND S GROVES ORGANIC CITRUS

We grow, harvest, sell and ship fresh Texas certified organic citrus, Rio Red grapefruit and navel oranges as holiday gifts directly to our customers.

(512) 246-0778
www.gandsgroves.com

LITTLE FISHHOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE



BY STACI SEMRAD

In the darkness of a cold winter night, we follow our guide and the beam of his flashlight through a short stretch of rocky, weedy, West Texas prairie to the spot where his treasure lies buried.

Abilene city lights twinkle in the distance, and the silence of this open terrain is broken only by howling coyotes and our soft chatter and pitter-patter.

We stop at the edge of a 54-foot-diameter disk of cement.

Our guide, Larry Sanders of Abilene, explains that it is the cap covering his 185-foot-deep nuclear missile silo—an \$18 million relic of the Cold War he is acquiring for \$54,000 through a lease-to-own economic development agreement with the city of Lawn.

He is turning it into a historical preservation center at the cost of up to another \$200,000. And he plans to continue collecting revenue from visitors who already rent the facility for business meetings and catered dinners. He believes the center will become the first of its kind in the country and the first 20th century addition to the 19th century Texas Forts Trail.

The Cold War is raw enough in our collective memory that few Americans see its trappings as historic sites worthy of tourist visits. But it's possible to imagine people 50 and 100 years from now being drawn to the site as they are to the state's eight historic frontier forts.

That the Atlas ICBM was never launched against an

enemy does not make Texas' role in the Cold War less significant, Sanders says. To have fired an Atlas at an enemy at any time during its deterrent life "would have spelled the ultimate failure of the system," he says.

Many historians agree that American and Soviet fears of mutually assured destruction from nuclear weapons, including the Atlas, kept the superpowers from direct warfare for more than 40 years.

Sanders' silo in Lawn was one of 13 Atlas ICBM F-series silos built in Texas—12 of them near Dyess Air Force Base (in Abilene, Albany, Anson, Bradshaw, Clyde, Corinth, Denton Valley, Lawn, Nolan, Oplin, Shep and Winters) and one north of Vernon along the Texas-Oklahoma border. Other F-series silos were based at Schilling AFB, Kansas; Lincoln AFB, Nebraska; Altus AFB, Oklahoma; Walker AFB, New Mexico; and Plattsburg AFB, New York.

The F-series was America's first missile to assure survival of a first-strike nuclear attack through retaliating second-strike capacity. During the Cuban Missile Crisis at the height of the Cold War, the silo housed a missile 85 feet tall and 10 feet wide. "It would have reached Russia in about 30 minutes," Sanders says.

At the center of the cap are two flat concrete-and-steel doors, each 45 tons and more than 2 feet thick. At the press of a button, those doors would have opened in seconds, allowing

Opposite, clockwise from top left: 'Duck and cover' drills were common during the Cold War era. Air Force airmen inside an active silo in the 1960s. Cuban refugees look on as President Kennedy speaks to the nation during the Cuban Missile Crisis. A '60s-era missile control panel.





JENNIFER WIGBOLDUS

Larry Sanders climbs through a hatch inside the silo.

since Sanders' initial days there working with flashlights, camp lanterns and a portable gasoline-powered generator.

"Believe me, almost anything is better, and probably much safer, than underground life with a kerosene lantern," he says.

He plans to add electrical wiring, heating and running water within the next year.

During the tour, he talks with excitement about his plans to turn the place into a museum-type center filled with Cold War relics.

"What safer place for the artifacts?" he asks with a smile.

Sanders' grassroots effort to restore the facility has been fueled almost entirely by his own money and sweat. While some men tinker with lawn mowers, Sanders passes Saturday afternoons working on his missile silo. Shortly before our visit, he had been painting the walls of the stairwell and hallways. It's the latest of his labors of love, which began in 1999 when he, his family and friends removed knee-deep water, organic material and trash from the launch control center entry stairwell using pumps and water hoses.

We descend another stairwell to the launch control center, then down one more flight to a short tunnel connecting the control center to the silo—the now hollow colossal former home of the missile.

We step onto a railed stairwell platform and into the darkness, where our voices and the sound of dripping water echo. Sanders points his flashlight to the opposite wall 52 feet away, then up toward the ceiling 45 feet above our heads.

He then points down below us where the stairwell descends 50 feet to a yellow raft floating on the surface of water 90 feet deep.

"This site will vastly outlive the pyramids," Sanders says. "Thousands of years from now, scientists will look at this and say, 'What was that about?'"

During its disuse, the abandoned silo became a popular hangout for area high school and college kids, who would sneak into it for weekend adventures and leave their marks with graffiti on the walls, Sanders says.

Sanders, a graduate of Abilene Christian University, was among those who used to explore the nearby Oplin silo, so he understands how kids managed to get in. But he has yet to figure out how one particular marking made it onto a spot high on the wall inside his missile chamber.

He points his flashlight up toward the ceiling to the barren wall, where 75 feet above the water, "BUD" is painted in red letters. The sight of it with nothing nearby to climb on is chilling.

I ask how Bud got up there.

"I don't know and don't know if he ever made it down safely," Sanders says, pointing back toward the water.

The possibility of human remains lurking in the pool below is one reason Sanders won't scuba dive there just yet, even though he has done so in other missile silos. (Dive Valhalla, another missile site some 20 miles southwest of Abilene, is used by experienced divers.)

On that note, I head for the exit.

the missile to roar into the sky.

We proceed to view the rest of Sanders' treasure as he leads us about 25 yards away to his underworld abyss's grand entrance—a concrete structure resembling a little outhouse on the prairie. It stands about 10 feet tall between a power pole and a willow tree.

The smell of fresh paint greets us as we proceed through the entry portal's hinged door and descend two stories down a well-lit stairwell into the launch control center.

The silo was only in use from 1962 to 1965, when newer technology prompted the U.S. Air Force to terminate the Atlas ICBM mission. The military sold the Lawn silo in the late 1960s to the nearby town, which bought it for use as a public shelter.

By the time Sanders took possession of the silo in 1999, it was in such disrepair that murky water with dead critters had risen to the fourth stair, making the place reek like a fish market.

We continue trailing Sanders through a steel entrapment door and two blast-proof doors, then down a hallway lined by Christmas lights. They're connected by an extension cord to an electric panel powered by Taylor Electric Cooperative. Though the facility has not yet been rigged with permanent fixtures for electricity, the power source is a vast improvement

Read more about the Lawn Atlas Missile Base at www.atlasmissilebase.com.

Staci Semrad is an Austin-based freelance writer and member of Pedernales Electric Cooperative.

GOING THE EXTRA MILE. AND NOT JUST BETWEEN FILL-UPS.

Going above and beyond for your friends and neighbors is the Texas way. That's why RVOS does whatever it takes to respond quickly, honestly and fairly to our members' insurance needs. And, since we're just down the road – and have been for more than 100 years – we're experts at matching the unique requirements of Texans like you with great coverage and competitive rates. To learn more about just how far we'll go for you, give us a call or visit us online.

1.800.381.0867



rvos.com/co-op

**MAKES
A GREAT
HOLIDAY
GIFT!**

60 YEARS OF

Home Cooking

Six Decades of Texas' Favorite Foods, Fads & Facts

*Full Color, Hardbound, More than 600 Recipes
From 60 Years of Texas Co-op Power*



ORDER NOW!

Mail _____ copies to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____ Phone _____

Also available at www.texascooppower.com

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.



The Largest Tractor Package Dealer in the USA![®]



**All New
5003 Series
now available
with 4WD! Only
\$119 more a
month!¹**

5103 Package = \$21,998 or \$373/mo with \$0 DOWN!
45HP 2WD Tractor, 512 Loader with Grille Guard & Joystick, 6' Rotary Cutter, 6' Box Blade, Post Hole Digger, Insulated Canopy Top & 20' HD Tandem Trailer with ramps & brakes.



5203 Package with \$0 DOWN!
\$23,498 or \$399/mo¹

- 5203 56HP Tractor & Insulated Canopy Top
- 512 Loader with Grille Guard & Joystick
- 6' Cutter & Box Blade, Post Hole Digger
- 20' HD Tandem Trailer w/ramps & brakes



5303 Package with \$0 DOWN!
\$24,998 or \$424/mo¹

- 5303 64HP Tractor & Insulated Canopy Top
- 512 Loader with Grille Guard & Joystick
- 6' Cutter & Box Blade, Post Hole Digger
- 20' HD Tandem Trailer w/ramps & brakes



5403 Package with \$0 DOWN!
\$27,498 or \$467/mo¹

- 5403 74HP Tractor & Insulated Canopy Top
- 512 Loader with Grille Guard & Joystick
- 6' Cutter & Box Blade, Post Hole Digger
- 20' HD Tandem Trailer w/ramps & brakes



Hockley, TX
(888) 869-6202
www.tractorpackages.com



EASTEX FARM & HOME
Liberty, TX
(888) 502-1888
Beaumont, TX
(877) 301-0111

**WE DELIVER
NATIONWIDE!**

www.JohnDeere.com

Offer ends 12/31/2007. See dealer for complete details. Option for 4WD is \$119 more per month for each package. Example: 5103 2WD package is \$373 per month or \$492 per month for 4WD package. Taxes, freight, set up and delivery charges could increase the monthly payment. Price, payment, and financing subject to change without notice. Offer ends 12/31/2007. Subject to approved credit on John Deere Credit Installment Plan. Example: based on a purchase of \$21,998 with \$0 down payment, monthly payment of \$373 at 6.99% APR for 72 months. Taxes, freight, set up and delivery charges could increase the monthly payment. Price and model availability vary by dealer. Price, payment, and financing subject to change without notice. Offer ends 12/31/2007. Subject to approved credit on John Deere Credit Installment Plan. Example: based on a purchase of \$23,498 with \$0 down payment, monthly payment of \$399 at 6.99% APR for 72 months. Taxes, freight, set up and delivery charges could increase the monthly payment. Price and model availability vary by dealer. Price, payment, and financing subject to change without notice. Offer ends 12/31/2007. Subject to approved credit on John Deere Credit Installment Plan. Example: based on a purchase of \$24,998 with \$0 down payment, monthly payment of \$424 at 6.99% APR for 72 months. Taxes, freight, set up and delivery charges could increase the monthly payment. Price and model availability vary by dealer. Price, payment, and financing subject to change without notice. Offer ends 12/31/2007. Subject to approved credit on John Deere Credit Installment Plan. Example: based on a purchase of \$27,498 with \$0 down payment, monthly payment of \$467 at 6.99% APR for 72 months. Taxes, freight, set up and delivery charges could increase the monthly payment. Price and model availability vary by dealer. Price, payment, and financing subject to change without notice. John Deere's green and yellow color scheme, the leaping deer symbol, and JOHN DEERE are trademarks of Deere & Company.

H74CUBD0802-HOU7x51201TCP-4C-00210641



THERE'S ONLY ONE WATER HEATER AS FAITHFUL AS THE MARATHON.

Old Faithful and Marathon provide hot water dependably, year after year, without worry. But one is owned by the government and located in Wyoming; the other is available through many of the Texas Rural Electric Cooperatives. So now you can have your very own "Old Faithful" efficiently providing hot water for a lifetime.



For information on buying a Marathon high efficiency, electric water heater with a lifetime tank warranty, call:

1-866-390-4832

Buy now and save before January 2008 price increase.



Texas Electric Cooperatives
Utility Supply & Service Division

OFFICIAL MILITARY CAPS AND RINGS

VETERAN SERVICE CAPS - "I SERVED WITH PRIDE"

You'll be proud to wear the service cap dedicated to every veteran who served in every branch and war of our Armed Forces.



Air Force



Army



Marines



Navy



Stars and Stripes

ONLY \$7⁹⁵ 2 FOR ONLY \$14⁹⁵
4 FOR ONLY \$24⁹⁵

Richly Embroidered Scrambled Eggs Add \$4^{ea.} (shown above)

30 DAY MONEY BACK GUARANTEE (Less S&H)

Send To: Rush Industries, Inc. Dept. 573GF
263 Horton Highway, Mineola, NY 11501

Please indicate style, quantity, and ring size: Stars and Stripes

	Air Frc.	Army	Marines	Navy	Stripes
Caps(s)					
Caps(s) w/ Eggs					
Military Service Ring					N/A

Ring Size (: 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15)
For Caps please Add \$2.95 S&H plus \$1.50 per each extra cap.
For Rings please Add \$3.95 S&H. Any two Rings Add \$5.95 S&H.
Enclosed is check or money order for _____ Add \$5.00 for express service

Or Charge my: VISA M.C. AMERICAN EXPRESS DISCOVER

Account # _____ Exp. Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

ORDER BY PHONE: (516)741-0346
or Online at: www.RushIndustries.com/573GF

© Rush Industries, Inc 2007

MILITARY SERVICE RINGS



Army



Navy



Marines



Air Force

Any Ring \$59⁹⁵ LIFETIME WARRANTY
Only

PROUDLY MADE IN THE USA



Rush Industries, Inc.
Quality Products Since 1977

Our richly crafted pure white rhodium rings with 18K gold plated insignias Perfect for gift giving
Your military ring will be a treasured keepsake for generations to come.

SPECIAL: ANY 2 RINGS FOR ONLY \$99! ORDER NOW!

Install Carbon Monoxide Detectors Near Sleeping Areas

If you heat your home with a gas furnace or use other gas appliances at home, you must install carbon monoxide detectors.

You can't see or smell carbon monoxide, which is a potential byproduct of burning fossil fuels.

Your home should have at least one carbon monoxide detector to alert you of the presence of gas. Follow these safety guidelines:

- If you install only one carbon monoxide detector, put it near the bedrooms so it can alert your family to wake up in case levels of the gas become unhealthy. Better: Place a detector on every floor of the house.

- Keep your detectors at least 15 feet away from a gas stove or oven, which may emit a small amount of carbon monoxide on startup.

- Detectors don't operate properly in humid areas like the bathroom.

- Replace the batteries in your alarms twice a year.

- Properly maintain your gas appliances, including the furnace and stove. Same goes for devices that use gasoline.

- Know the warning signs of too much carbon monoxide in the house: stuffy, stale air; condensation on windows; yellow burner flames on the stove; and fluttering or extinguishing pilot lights.

- If you see these signs or your alarm sounds, turn off gas appliances, open doors and windows, and call a natural gas contractor to inspect the equipment. Even better: Get out of the house.

- If your garage is connected to your house, avoid idling your car. Car exhaust is a source of carbon monoxide.



SAFE TOYS MEAN HEALTHY, HAPPY KIDS

December isn't just the month when you buy the most toys and gifts. It's also Safe Toys and Gifts Month.

Buy toys that are age appropriate so your gift won't be the one that turns a child's holiday into a nightmare.

Here is a checklist for buying safe toys:

- Check the minimum age recommendation on the package. Buy a gift that suits a child's age, ability and interest level.

- Supervise children while they are using electronic toys. Put the toys away afterward in a dry



area out of smaller kids' reach.

- Explain to the child how to use the toy. If it plugs in to the wall, teach an older child how to safely use electrical outlets. Demonstrate how to unplug by pulling on the plug itself, not the cord.

- Look for the letters "ASTM," which mean the toy meets the American Society for Testing and Materials' safety standards.

- Avoid buying toys from thrift shops or garage sales; second-hand toys may not adhere to newer safety standards and could be dangerous.

- Keep an eye out for toy recalls online at www.cpsc.gov.



Best Wishes for a Joyful Holiday Season

FROM

Your Electric Cooperative

Electric Fireplaces Heat Up

If you've always wanted a fireplace but never needed the hassle, it could be time to buy an electric version.

Electric fireplaces can help heat a room and add a bit of ambience. And they look much nicer than a simple space heater.

Because electric fireplaces require only floor space and a power outlet, they're a great option for apartments or condos.

If you're in the mood for faux fire, consider:

- If you move frequently, an electric

fireplace could be a good investment. Most are portable and are relatively easy to move.

- The look of the "flames" in an electric fireplace is much more natural than it used to be. Still, don't expect too much. The "fire" is created by special light bulbs that simulate flickering flames, but even fireplace sales reps say there's no comparison with the real deal.

- Because electric fireplaces don't produce actual flames, they usually have a separate heating system built in. Most models allow you to turn the heater off if you want ambience without heat, which means you can even use your fireplace in the summer. Some models come with a built-in thermostat, so they automatically turn off the heat when the room reaches a certain temperature.

- Unlike their wood-burning counterparts, electric fireplaces can't be used as a backup heat source during a power outage.

- The price of an electric fireplace starts at around \$200.



CHRISTMASTIME CONSERVATION

The house with the most lights used to be the "best." But times have changed and so have Christmas lights. Here are some great ways to have festive decorations without feeling "bah humbug" about your electric bill.

- If you're buying new Christmas lights, there are many new energy-efficient lights available, often at a comparable price. These energy-efficient bulbs deliver the same amount of light as their higher-wattage counterparts, at lower cost, as well as being easier on the environment. They also give off less heat, making your lights safer. A 100 mini-light string will typically use less than 20 watts.

- For maximum energy savings, try new LED Christmas lights. LED (Light Emitting Diode) Christmas lights use up to 90 percent less energy than larger, traditional Christmas bulbs and last up to 100,000 hours when used indoors. (Most can also be used out of doors—check the manufacturer's instructions.) LED lights also emit significantly less heat than conventional lights. As an added bonus, if one of the LED lights burns out, the rest of the strand will stay lit.

- Over a 30-day period at Christmas, allowing for lights to be on for eight hours a day, three sets of 100 mini-lights would cost half as much to burn as a similar number of traditional lights.

- To save energy and money, use fewer light strands on your tree. The more lights you use, the more power you'll use. But whether you use only one light string or many, you'll be rewarded with a lower power bill if you use energy-efficient lights.

SAVE 7-UP FOR HOLIDAY DRINKS

You've added bleach, aspirin, soda, syrup or sugar to your Christmas tree's water to help the evergreen last longer. Did they work?

Tree experts say they don't.

It seems like they would: The common blend of 7-UP and bleach seems like it would, indeed, make the tree's water more acidic and help the tree take in more moisture and food. The sugar in the soda should help feed the tree. The disinfectant in the bleach should prevent mold, fungi and algae from forming, right?

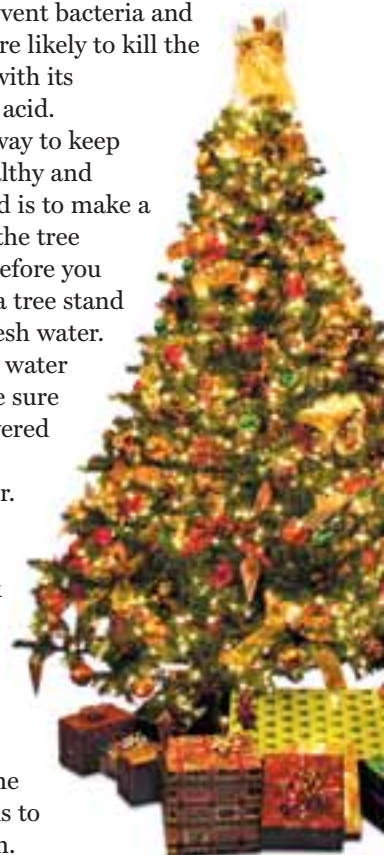
So it seems. Yet it's an urban myth, and it's not true.

Adding acidity to the water doesn't help the tree take in moisture. Sugar does act as a nutrient, but the tree doesn't need food. It just needs water. And sugar can cause bacteria to grow in the water and make it smell bad.

Although some believe bleach may help prevent bacteria and mold, it's more likely to kill the plant tissue with its hydrochloric acid.

The best way to keep your tree healthy and smelling good is to make a fresh cut on the tree trunk right before you dunk it into a tree stand filled with fresh water.

Check the water daily to make sure the cut is covered and never exposed to air. Once it's exposed to air, the trunk will start forming a cap that will prevent the tree from soaking up the water it needs to last all season.



Silver Star

Handmade years ago, the star that tops our tree is nothing fancy, but to me, it's just heavenly!

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS

C

ut from posterboard, covered with silver glitter bought from a dime store, the same five-pointed star has topped my Christmas trees for years and years.

I can still remember as a teenager, sitting for hours at our kitchen table and cutting out dozens just like it. Lucky me—I'd volunteered to help make table decorations for our high school prom. For the evening's theme, we'd chosen "Starry, Starry Night." Against my parents' druthers, I went with the boy I liked a bunch. After the dance that night, I snatched a star from the candlelit arrangement at our table and stuck it in my evening bag. Later, I tucked the memento away in a drawer.

Then, I promptly forgot about it. The boyfriend fizzled as well.

Everything changed in 1981 when, as newlyweds, my husband and I picked out our first Christmas tree. It was a small, green, artificial one purchased from the same dime store. Among its rigid branches, we hung glass balls and strung colored lights. When it came time for a tree topper, I remembered my star, which I found after a quick search through my bureau. *Will this work?* I asked, holding it out for his inspection. Secretly, I hoped he wouldn't notice my star's sloppy shape, not to mention three sliced-off points and a downright ugly wire attached to its backside.

Heck, what was I thinking? My so-called star ranked right up there with refrigerator art and kindergarten masterpieces.

But in spite of its flaws, my husband nodded his approval.

For the 20 years we were married, that star faithfully crowned every tree we decorated as a couple and, in subsequent years, as a family. *Here's the star!* the kids would exclaim as soon as they found it in the box of ornaments. They, too, knew Mom's star just naturally claimed the highest point of honor on our tree.

After the marriage ended, my daughter and I moved into a home of our own. For our first Christmas, we bought a white artificial tree from the local dollar store. Among its sparse branches, we hung glass balls and strung white lights. From a plastic bag of Christmas decorations my ex-husband sent, I was surprised and happy to find my star. Somehow, the holidays in this new place felt more complete with it attached to the top of our straggly tree.

Four years later, I fell madly in love with a man I unexpectedly met at the grocery store where I'd been shopping for years. We married five months later. When Christmas arrived, the three of us put up the huge, pink artificial tree that friends

had given to my daughter and me. Among its thick branches—prelit with white lights—we hung glass balls and strung colored beads.

As I'd done for so many years, I found my star stashed away carefully in a box of holiday trinkets. It had aged. (*Good grief, hadn't we all?*) Years of use had worn off a bit of glitter here and there. But amazingly, it still held its sloppy shape quite nicely.

Smiling, I climbed up a stepladder, then fastened the star to our tree's lofty top branch. For a few moments more, I stood there and marveled at my star's stubborn will to survive. I also realized how that simple, homemade decoration had come full circle through the years. How it miraculously connects me to James, the man whom I love so deeply.

You see, he and I both danced and laughed at that very same prom, though not together. He hung out with his senior-class gang; I was just a junior. So we never talked that night. We probably didn't even exchange glances.

Several months after we married, I thumbed through an old high school yearbook out of curiosity and found two black-and-white prom photos on facing pages. *Isn't that you?* I asked my husband, pointing to a long-haired boy wearing a black tuxedo. Yes, he nodded. The other pictured me at a table, seated next to a star-studded table decoration and leaning toward my date, both of us deep in conversation.

Goodness, who'd have *ever* guessed on that "Starry, Starry Night" so long ago that James and I would meet again some 30 years later and fall in love? That we'd find a kind of happiness and peace that could only be described as heavenly? More than a year into our marriage, we're still rather amazed ourselves.

And you know what? As corny as it sounds, I think our love was written not only in the stars but also *on* one: a little five-pointed star, hand-cut from posterboard and covered with silver glitter.



Sheryl Smith-Rodgers writes frequently for Texas Co-op Power. She wrote about life as a single woman in the February 2006 edition.

Sheryl's high school yearbook, with her in the photo at left and James in the photo on the right.



SONORA

An Underground Jewel Box

Thousands of gleaming formations beckon visitors to the family-run Caverns of Sonora.

By Sheryl Smith-Rodgers



Gerry Ingham will never forget that terrible day in November 2006 when a tour guide burst into her office and blurted out the horrifying news: “The Butterfly’s been broken!”

Delicate and beautiful, the winged crystalline formation for decades had starred as the premier formation at the Caverns of Sonora, her family’s spectacular show cave in West Texas. Within a matter of seconds, though, someone on a tour had covertly snapped off the right wing and left with the piece. Law officials later shrugged off the incident—listed as a misdemeanor—and blamed the damage on an “accidental” bump.

More than a year later, the wing remains lost, and no one’s been charged. Even a \$20,000 reward offered by Ingham and her brother, Seco Mayfield, has failed to turn up any information. (If returned, experts could use the wing to repair the formation.)

From the family’s loss, though, has come good. In June, the Texas Legislature upped the penalty for vandalizing a Texas cave from a Class A misdemeanor to a state jail felony. “That was a victory for *all* of our state’s caves,” Ingham says.

More so, the new law further solidifies what Ingham considers her mission in life: to care for and protect a precious natural treasure that also replenishes the vital source of water beneath her oft-dry land, the Edwards Aquifer.

Ever since she can remember, Ingham, 64, has been indelibly connected to the Caverns of Sonora, once called Mayfield Cave. Sometime after the turn of the century, her grandparents bought a 5,000-acre cattle ranch in Sutton County. Little did they know that beneath the gently rolling, grassy slopes—then dotted with live oak, mesquite and cedar—stretched an astonishing cavern with magnificent formations. In the 1940s, Ingham’s parents, Stanley and Elizabeth Mayfield, moved to Mayfield Ranch.

As a child growing up in the early ‘50s, Ingham and her friends would slip away and scamper inside the cave’s mouth. “We used to get in trouble,” she recalls with a smile. “Mother would always know where we’d been ‘cause we’d have cave mud on us.”

“Numerous legends account for the cave’s discovery, said to have been found around 1900. But nothing was actually ever recorded,” Ingham says. “The story I heard growing up was that a shepherd’s dog found the hole. Later, when the entrance became publicly known, my dad gated it to protect people who wanted to go inside.”

In 1955 a team of explorers ventured across a narrow ledge deep into the cavern’s interiors and saw—for the first time—thousands of gleaming stalagmites, stalactites and other formations. That expedition and many others produced seven miles of mapped passageways on four different levels.

“They brought back color slides of what they’d seen,” Ingham recalls. “I was 11 or 12 years old at the time. I remember them showing the slides to us in our living room. We were all awed and amazed. After having played in the inactive section of the cave near the entrance, it was amazing to see the pretty parts.”

Soon thereafter, cave developer Jack Burch and a partner leased Mayfield Cave with the intent of opening it for commercial tours. In July 1960, after months of construction, guides escorted thousands of eager visitors through the Caverns of Sonora along a new 1,800-foot trail. In 1961, the partners added another 1,700 feet of trails. A visitors' center and campgrounds were constructed, too. In 1965, the Caverns of Sonora were named a National Natural Landmark.

These days, Ingham rarely treks through the caverns. She's too busy manning the cave's day-to-day operations, conferring with her ranch foreman about her cattle and other livestock, *and* keeping up with three grandchildren.

"I always think I'm going to walk in the cave and look at this or that," she says. "I'd like to use a distance-measuring device that my son gave me and measure each segment of our tour more accurately. But that never happens because as soon as I get to the visitors' center, I've got too much paperwork to do. On busy days, I run a register, too."

Those busy days normally come in the summer. To handle the increased number of visitors, Ingham hires extra employees to give tours and work in the gift shop, which stocks souvenirs, snacks and the shop's popular fudge.

When they can, other family members work at the caverns, too. Seventeen-year-old grandson Colton Moore conducts tours. Ingham's nephew Ed Mayfield, 25, mows the grounds and leads tours, too. Granddaughters Steely Ingham, 17, and sister Stella, 13, help in the gift shop.

Although ranching is also a huge part of her life, Ingham is bonded more deeply to the caverns she knows and loves so well. "We have a wonderful cave," she says. "It's gorgeous. Our caverns are one of the most highly decorated caves in the country. Here, tours are an intimate experience because they're kept small at 12 people or less, and everything is so close up."

Breathtaking best describes the cavern's numerous rooms and passages, each filled with something different—delicate "soda straws" (long, slender tubes that hang from ceilings), helictites (crystalline shapes, such as "the Butterfly," that grow from walls, ceilings and floors), or coral (formations that resemble undersea coral).

Two sealed entrances—both equipped with double doors—maintain the cavern's humidity at a constant high level, moisture that's needed to ensure the continued dripping that gradually creates formations. "By keeping the air flow out, we're seeing brand new active growth," Ingham says.

These days, guided tours at Caverns of Sonora still pass by the Butterfly. Though disfigured, its fragile beauty continues to awe those who stop and linger for a longer look. Some even cry.

"We decided that rather than bypassing it, we needed to make people aware of what happened," Ingham explains. "It took thousands of years for the Butterfly to form, and now it's been stolen from future generations." She pauses briefly, then adds sadly, "And it happened under my watch."



HALO LAKE

GETTING THERE

The Caverns of Sonora are eight miles west of Sonora. From Interstate 10, take Exit 392 and turn south on RM 1989.

Cavern entrance is six miles on left.

Hours: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily. Tours are led continually all day. For more information, call (325) 387-3105 or visit www.caverns.ofsonora.com.

Southwest Texas Electric Cooperative serves the Caverns of Sonora.

Why do so many people own the acclaimed Bose® Wave® music system?

- Stephen Williams of *Newsday* says it “makes the music special” and “is simplicity itself – and simply terrific.”

- Setup is easy: Just plug it in.

- No large speakers. No towering rack of electronics. No wires running around your room.

- Jonathan Takiff of the *Philadelphia Daily News* calls it “an extraordinary performer.”

- It's less than 15 inches wide, so you free up lots of space.

- Fits elegantly on your living room end table, kitchen countertop or bedroom nightstand.

- No knobs or dials. The audio fine-tunings are automatically done for you.

- Play CDs, MP3 CDs or CD-R/RWs. Whichever you like.

- You can order it together with the optional Multi-CD Changer to enjoy hours of music without interruption. And you'll save \$50 if you order them today.

- The changer is designed exclusively for the Wave® music system. Together they stand just 6½ inches high.

- The slim remote controls every feature.



Wave® music system shown in Graphite Gray.

- You can connect your TV or MP3 player and enjoy them with noticeably better sound.
- It has six FM and six AM presets. So you can quickly find your favorite stations.
- It reproduces even deeper notes than the renowned original Wave® radio/CD. Instruments are clearer and better defined.
- Play your favorite song and hear what you've been missing.
- *Forbes FYI* says “you'll think you're listening to a...system that costs five times more.”
- The breakthrough waveguide speaker technology behind the room-filling sound was invented by Bose, and only Bose has it.
- You may find yourself turning off the TV and rediscovering music.

- Wayne Thompson of the *Oregonian* calls it “one-of-a-kind...my choice for product of the year.”

- It's made by Bose, the most respected name in sound. So you know it's of high quality.

- Awarded the coveted “best of the best” at the international Red Dot awards for outstanding design and innovation.

- It's a gift you feel confident in giving, knowing it will be used and appreciated every day.

- Use it to replace a much more expensive multi-component stereo, and appreciate the value.

- There's a clock, and an alarm with gently rising volume to soothe you into your day.

- Rich Warren of the *News-Gazette* says “the Wave Music System will flat out seduce you.”

- Hearing is believing. Use the 30-day Excitement Guarantee to try it in your home – risk free.

- Move it from room to room: The backup memory system stores your settings without batteries.

- Choose Platinum White or Graphite Gray to match your décor.

- Even the financing is convenient. Use your own major credit card to make **12 easy payments**, with no interest charges from Bose.*



Shown with optional Multi-CD Changer.

SAVE \$50 when you order the Wave® music system with our Multi-CD Changer by December 31, 2007.

To order or learn more:

1-800-925-9738
ext. TL360
www.Bose.com/WMS

BOSE®
Better sound through research®

*Bose payment plan available on orders of \$299-\$1500 paid by major credit card. Separate financing options may be available for select products. See website for details. Down payment is 1/12 the product price plus applicable tax and shipping charges, charged when your order is shipped. Then, your credit card will be billed for 11 equal monthly installments beginning approximately one month from the date your order is shipped, with 0% APR and no interest charges from Bose. Credit card rules and interest may apply. U.S. residents only. Limit one active financing program per customer. ©2007 Bose Corporation. Patent rights issued and/or pending. The Wave® music system's distinctive design is a registered trademark of Bose Corporation. Financing and reduced pricing on Multi-CD Changer package not to be combined with other offers or applied to previous purchases, and subject to change without notice. If the Wave® music system is returned, the Multi-CD Changer must be returned for a full refund. Offers are limited to purchases made from Bose and participating authorized dealers. Offer valid November 1, 2007, through December 31, 2007. Quotes reprinted with permission: Thomas Jackson, *Forbes FYI*, Winter/04.

LONESTAR MARKET

TOWN & COUNTRY

THOMPSON BARN
 "We Do It Right - We Do It All"
 Full Construction to Clean Up
 Heavy Duty 'Beam' Construction
CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED
TEXAS PROUD • 800-583-8632

MANUFACTURED HOME OR PIER & BEAM HOME INSULATED CEMENT SKIRTING
 3 designs & 11 colors to choose from!
 Replace your vinyl skirting with STONECOTE.
1-888-724-1504
www.stonecote.com



American Metal Components
Pre-Fabricated All-Steel Building Kits
 "Many Options and Financing Available"
 Portables-Shops-Garages-Barns-Offices-Warehouses
 24x25x10=\$3,695.00 30x40x12=\$6,295.00 26-gauge galvalume roof and walls with 25-year warranty.
 24x30x10=\$4,195.00 40x60x15=\$10,995.00
1-866-424-2534 www.amcbldg.com

Stilwell Construction
 BARN, SHOPS, GARAGES, SHEDS, STALLS, ETC.
1-866-211-8902
www.stilwellconst.com




FLOATING FISHING PIER
 On your pond or lake, with or without roof.
 All sizes—installation available.
45 YEARS' EXPERIENCE
Call for Free Information • 1-800-310-1425
www.ellisonmarine.com • Ellison Marine, Franklin, TX.




CJ'S BARN BUILDERS
SPECIAL: 30 x 50 x 10
INCLUDES ALL MATERIAL, CONSTRUCTION, DELIVERY
 Galvalume metal put on with screws • One pre-hung door
 One 10' or 12' sliding door • 6 skylights, factory trusses
 One-year warranty on labor and materials
 Colors and other sizes available • Call us for a brochure
1-877-710-7297 8:00 to 5:00 Mon.-Fri.

America's Oldest & Largest Rare Breed Hatchery.
Free Color Catalog. Over 140 varieties of Baby Chicks, Bantams, Turkeys, Guineas, Peafowl, Game Birds, Waterfowl. Also Eggs, Incubators, Books, Equipment and Medications.
Call 1-800-456-3280 (24 Hours A Day)
Murray McMurray Hatchery
 C 122, Webster City, Iowa 50595-0458
 Website: <http://www.mcmurrayhatchery.com>



USED CONTAINERS
Equipment Storage Service
1-866-377-2289
 Selling for Less at ESS for over 20 years!



BRUSH SHARK
 Skid Steer mounted shear.
 1/2" to 6" diameter trees and brush.
 Perfect for cedar, shin oak, persimmon, mesquite.
512-263-6830 • www.brushshark.com



KODIAK STEEL HOMES
140 MPH wind rating! Bolt-together red iron, optional steel roof and horizontal lap siding.
Resists mold, termites and fire.
kodiaksteelhomes.com
800-278-0888




TIRED OF SPRAYING?
The Original Root Grubber
for over 36 years
QUALITY CONSTRUCTION
100% SATISFACTION GUARANTEED!

- Kills tree by cutting roots 6" to 8" underground
- Effective on mesquite, juniper, cedar, huisach and other brush problems
- 3-point category I, II or III with reversible blade for clearing fence rows

Blade Width	Cat	HP	WT	Delivered Price
18"	I	20-40	230 lb.	\$ 740
27"	II	40-80	285 lb.	\$ 920
36"	II or III	80-180	390 lb.	\$1,225
16" Skid-Steer	Universal	30-100	380 lb.	\$1,335

JONES MACHINE
 Machining, welding, fabricating, manufacturing since 1944.
(800) 919-4949 • Fax: (940) 552-6362
 P.O. Box 1577, Vernon, Texas 76385 • www.dallasweb.com/jones



AMERISTALL
*** MAINTENANCE FREE GALVANIZED STEEL FRAMING**
*** 26 GAUGE 40 YEAR WARRANTY ROOF, WALL, & TRIM**
*** HORSE BARN KITS, STALLS, & STALL COMPONENTS**
888.234.BARN(2276)
www.ameristall.com



High Rates On 1-Year CDs
TEXAS TOLL-FREE 1-800-359-4940
BLAKE MATTSON, CFP™
 Signal Securities, Inc.
 5400 Bosque, 4th Floor, Waco, TX 76710
"Serving Customers All Over Texas"

All CDs are insured to \$100,000 per institution by the FDIC. All CDs are subject to availability. Securities offered through Signal Securities, Inc. Member FINRA/SIPC. 700 Throckmorton, Ft. Worth, TX 76102 (817)877-4256.

Attractive and Affordable greenhouses

- FREE delivery on all greenhouses!
- Large variety of sizes and styles.
- Full-length hanging rods and built-in bench frames.

The Greenhouse Catalog
 3740 TX Brooklake Rd NE
 Salem, OR 97303
FREE sample and catalog, call...
1-800-825-1925
www.greenhousecatalog.com/tx



Accessible Buildings Co.
FAST BOLT-UP CONSTRUCTION
SAVE! BUILD YOURSELF!

40 x 50 x 10 = \$8,437.00
 40 x 60 x 12 = \$9,362.00
 50 x 100 x 12 = \$16,832.00
 60 x 80 x 14 = \$16,956.00
 100 x 150 x 14 (M-1) = \$45,824.00
 ALL SIZES MINI-STORAGE!
1-800-509-4949
www.accessiblebuildings.com

COMMERCIAL • INDUSTRIAL • SHOP • BARN
CALL TODAY FOR BUILDING QUOTE!

**MID - AMERICA
POLE BARN COMPANY**
30X50X10 SPECIAL
Galvalume. Material, Delivery, and const.
Factory trusses and screws.
TOLL FREE 1-866-456-0959

M&W BUILDERS
CUSTOM BUILT POLE BUILDINGS
BARNs • SHOPS • GARAGES
ALL SIZES AVAILABLE
FOR FREE ESTIMATES CALL
1-800-457-2088

CIRCLE T BARN BUILDERS
QUALITY POST FRAME BUILDINGS
DELIVERED AND ERECTED ON YOUR PROPERTY
• CALL 1-888-837-0638 •
25 YRS. EXPERIENCE

FUTURE STEEL BUILDINGS
Do-It-Yourself Steel Buildings

Ideal For:

- Recreational Use
- Boat Storage
- Bunkie
- Equipment Storage
- Garage/Shop
- PWC/Snowmobile

- 30-year perforation warranty
- Full technical support from start to finish
- Fully customized to meet your needs
- Factory-direct savings

Our building consultants are ready to take your call
Call Toll Free Today for a **FREE!** INFORMATION PACKAGE
1-800-668-5111 Ask for ext. 91

HERITAGE BUILDING SYSTEMS®
Established 1979
A Legacy Built To Last

30' x 40' x 10' \$5,975
40' x 60' x 12' \$10,294
60' x 100' x 16' \$25,886

Since 1979 Heritage Building Systems' focus has been to provide the industry with the finest quality, best looking pre-engineered steel structures at the lowest possible price.

1.800.643.5555
www.heritagebuildings.com

W.D. Metal Buildings
Instant Quotes Online www.wdmb.com

ADVANTAGE STEEL BUILDINGS
Quality Buildings at Affordable Prices

30' x 50' x 10' \$6,290
40' x 60' x 12' \$8,975
50' x 75' x 14' \$13,547
80' x 120' x 16' (M-1)..... \$32,133

Minis - 30' x 100' with 20 10' x 15' units - \$10,529

1.877.657.8335
www.advantagesteelbuildings.com

**WIN THE BRUSH WAR WITH
TREE TERMINATOR**

- 3 models cut 20", 12" and 5" trees in one bite
- Hitches to fit most tractors and skid steer loaders
- Built to last with a 24 month warranty
- Swivel hitch, sprayer and grapple options

For a free color brochure call or visit our website
(417) 458-4350 • www.treeterminator.com
Grace Manufacturing • Plato, MO

Farm • Industrial • Commercial

30' x 50' x 10' \$7,999
40' x 60' x 12' \$10,600
60' x 100' x 16' \$24,985
80' x 100' x 16' \$32,250
100' x 150' x 16' \$55,485

Based in Texas

PRICES INCLUDE COLOR SIDES & GALVALUME ROOF

25 Year Warranty on Roof & Walls
Prices F.O.B. Mfg. Plants; Local codes may affect prices;
Seal Stamped Blue Prints; Easy Bolt Together Design.

Arena Special (roof & frame)
100' x 100' x 14' ...\$32,490

FREE BROCHURE • CONSTRUCTION VIDEO

VISIT OUR WEBSITE **RHINO** VISIT OUR WEBSITE
STEEL BUILDING SYSTEMS

Fax: 940-484-6746 email: info@rhinobldg.com
Website: http://www.RHINOBLDG.COM
Toll Free **1-888-320-7466**

OCEAN FREIGHT CONTAINER SALES
SECURE STORAGE
Water-Tight/Rodent Proof
LARRY SINGLEY
CALL 1-866-992-9122
(817) 992-9122

BUILT TO LAST AND PRICED TO SELL...
Compare our everyday price for our 25'x30' building:
\$3,990 END WALLS OPTIONAL
• **EASY DO IT YOURSELF**
• **30-YEAR WARRANTY**
• **100% USEABLE SPACE**
• Many sizes, shapes & applications! • Tough, rugged building – lasts! • Heavy gauge Galvalume steel • Easy to finish trussless interior • Totally maintenance free!

STEEL BUILDINGS GO FACTORY DIRECT
PIONEER 800-668-5422
www.pioneersteel.com 27 YEARS OF REPUTATION BUILT OF STEEL

WATER PROBLEMS ??

NO MORE IRON! **NO MORE SULFUR!**
NO MORE HARDNESS! **NO MORE BACTERIA!**

**PROBLEMS SOLVED WITH
NO SALT & NO CHEMICALS**

FREE BROCHURE~1-800-392-8882
MONEY BACK GUARANTEE!
www.waterproblems.net

“Building Solutions”
Call for our special ...with integrity!

☆ Professional service, quality products
☆ Painted metal and many sizes available
☆ Kits available
☆ Fully insured for your protection
☆ Major credit cards are accepted

Supplying a variety of quality buildings designed to meet Your needs. Call for a FREE brochure and estimate, today!

NATIONAL BARN COMPANY™

1-800-582-BARN (2276)

nationalbarn.com
Log On! For Pricing, Photos, Brochure, FAQ...



BCI BARN BUILDERS

Price includes material delivery, construction, 1 pre-hung door, 1 sliding door, factory trusses that meet the new 90+ mph wind load requirement, 6 skylights and warranty on labor and materials.

Ask for our brochure. Prices may be higher south of College Station & west of Abilene.

30x50x10 GALVANIZED ENCLOSED	40x60x12 WITH 15X60 SHED GALVANIZED
\$7,595⁰⁰	\$13,395⁰⁰

BBB A+ Rating

COLOR AND OTHER SIZES AVAILABLE

VISA 8:00 to 5:00 Mon. to Fri.
8:00 to 12:00 Sat. CST

1-800-766-5793
www.bcibarns.com
e-mail: barn@azalea.net



WATER STORAGE TANKS.



★ Suitable for Ranch and Well Water Storage, Rainwater Collection and Fire Fighting Water Storage.
★ 10 year written warranty.
★ NSF-61 certified for potable water applications.
★ 10,000 to 65,000 gallon tanks in stock now.
★ Sizes available up to 700,000 gallons.
★ Assembled for you on site by local distributor.

CALL US FOR A QUOTE!

Pioneer Water Tanks
"Built Stronger To Last You Longer."

Toll Free: 1-866-984-4040
sales@pwtusa.com www.pwtusa.com

MOBILE HOME ROOF PROBLEMS?

PERMA-ROOF
from Southern Builders®
The Mobile Home Roofover Specialist Can Help!



24 YEARS!

LIFETIME WARRANTY
ONE FOOT OVER-HANG
NO MORE ROOF RUMBLE
COMMERCIAL GRADE STEEL
2"or 3" FOIL BACKED INSULATION

CALL FOR A FREE ESTIMATE!
www.roofover.com
1-800-633-8969

LOWEST COST
Term Life Insurance

Issue ages through 90

AGE	\$100,000	\$250,000
45	12.78	22.75
55	16.19	31.28
65	31.06	68.47

Rates figured on monthly cost for female non-tobacco users.

RAMLET & ASSOC, INC.
(800) 933-6354

TALIC FORM NO. 1-32207-198



Custom Built on your Land
No Down Payment
Low Interest Rates
No Payments for 6 Months
Our Plan or Yours
Land Payoff Available

United-Bilt Homes
More Than a Builder®

Request a free brochure:
Dallas Sherman
Texarkana Beaumont
Tyler Houston Austin
1.800.756.2506
www.ubh.com

PREMIER BUILDING SYSTEMS

1-800-882-5150
(770) 239-2085

PBS

The more you look, The better we look!

30x40x10.....	\$6,229
50x60x12.....	\$11,305
60x100x12.....	\$19,995
100x150x16.....	\$59,475

All sizes available & mini-storage units.
26 ga., 20 yr. roof & walls.
Codes and market may affect prices.
Visit us at: www.premierbuildings.com

USA BARN

"Proudly serving rural America"

Log on for 24 hour information:
www.usabarn.com

"SPECIAL" 30x50x10
Call for "Special's Price" in your area!

40x50x12 w/ 15' shed

Fully insured for your protection.

"Guaranteed Professional Service from start to finish."

Built to fit your needs, Any size or design.
Call and speak with one of our knowledgeable associates today!

NFBA

We accept: 

Office Hours: Mon-Fri 8-5 * Sat 8-12 Central
1-877-872-2276 Fax: 918-686-5512
1-877-USA-BARN



We Accept
All Major
Insurance
Plans

YOU
ARE
COVERED

Everyone is welcome at Scott & White

We believe the name on your insurance card shouldn't keep you from seeing some of the top names in health care. That's why we're now accepting all major insurance plans. That means you can be thankful that Scott & White's world-class doctors, specialists and facilities are available to more individuals and families than ever before. So, live your life. And breathe easier. No matter what name is on your insurance card.



For more information or to schedule a visit call

800-792-3710

www.sw.org

Burning in the Wind

BY CARLTON STOWERS

The historical landscape of West Texas is littered with colorful tales of remarkable deeds and doers, the rise of down-and-outers to mega fortune, local folks who have gone on to celebrity status in endeavors ranging from White House politics and movie stardom to evildoers and the lawmen who pursued them.

By best account, however, there's been but one book burning.

It is said to have occurred in 1925 after a gifted and gentle Texas author and educator named Dorothy Scarborough wrote a novel that on one hand earned her national applause and on the other received scathing response from the community leaders of the town in which her book was set.

First published anonymously, *The Wind* told of a teenage orphan from Virginia who arrived in Sweetwater in the drought-plagued 1880s to live with her cousins, only to be slowly driven to insanity, murder and finally suicide by the bleak, wind-blown world into which she'd settled. As the Mount Carmel-born Scarborough wrote: "The wind was the cause of it all. The sand, too, had a share in it, and human beings were involved, but the wind was the primal force ..."

So powerful and successful was the novel that it was judged one of the best that year and was later made into a well-received silent film starring the legendary Lillian Gish. None of this impressed the folks in Sweetwater, where Scarborough had spent several years of her childhood.

Reacting to the fact the book had been published anonymously, the first wave of local outrage suggested that some ignorant Eastern hack had written the melodramatic novel. Angry letters were sent to the publisher and newspapers throughout Texas, blasting *The Wind* and its author who apparently had lacked the courage to assign his or her name.

Leading the assault was Judge R.C. Crane, a Sweetwater civic leader and founder of the West Texas Historical Association. He insisted that its author had fallen woefully short of an honest portrayal of his hometown and its history—not to mention that the wind hardly blew as much as the book suggested.

And then, angered locals who had purchased the book gathered in front of the Nolan County Courthouse and set their copies aflame.

You can't buy that kind of publicity. And releasing the book without the author's name had worked like a charm. Sales boomed, and a second printing was soon ordered. This time, however, the book bore Dorothy Scarborough's name.

Well before the second printing, she had written a firm, polite response to Crane. According to an article written by Dr. Sylvia Grider in the 1986 *West Texas Historical Association Year Book*, Scarborough methodically refuted the judge's criticisms, finally asking, "Has the West Texas wind got on your nerves, Mr. Crane, and the sand blinded

you to the difference between a novel and a historical treatise?"

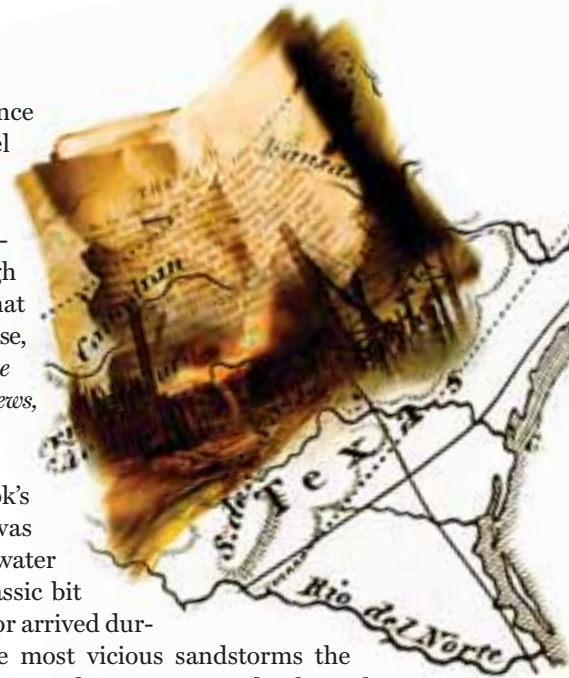
Grider, a long-time Scarborough scholar, writes that the author's response, published in *The Dallas Morning News*, was an ice-breaker. At the height of her book's success, she was invited to Sweetwater to speak. In a classic bit of irony, the author arrived during of one of the most vicious sandstorms the region had experienced in years. And when she accepted Crane's invitation to tour the countryside, they were caught in a blue norther so severe that it made their return to town difficult. If Scarborough hadn't already won her battle with the judge, she did so when she presented him a signed copy of *The Wind*. By trip's end, Grider writes, "Scarborough's visit to Sweetwater turned out to be a triumphal tour."

Though still considered by many scholars as one of the premier Texas novels ever written, *The Wind* is now but a whisper on the literary landscape. Its last publication was a paperback edition 20 years ago. (It's available online on sites such as Alibris.com.) Yet there is little question Scarborough pointed the way for the modern-day likes of Larry McMurtry and Cormac McCarthy.

She taught literature and creative writing at Baylor University, where she'd earlier earned her bachelor's (and later an honorary doctor of literature degree), and at Columbia University, where she earned a doctorate. She also studied at Oxford University. And though none of her other books created the stir of *The Wind*, she continued to write. The theme of her fiction and nonfiction, short stories and poetry, generally focused on the plight of early day Texas women.

Although she called New York home in the years before her death in 1935, Scarborough made one final trip back to Texas. She is buried in Waco's Oakwood Cemetery, where, it is said, the wind only gently blows.

Carlton Stowers is a frequent contributor to Texas Co-op Power. Two of his nonfiction best-sellers, To the Last Breath and Careless Whispers, won the Mystery Writers of America's Edgar Allan Poe Award.



Holiday Recipe Contest

SPONSORED BY PIONEER BRAND

BY SHANNON OELRICH I'm proud, once again, to introduce you to the winners of our annual Holiday Recipe Contest. Each of these women found a creative and delicious way to use Pioneer Brand products in an original recipe, perfect for holiday entertaining. Our grand-prizewinning recipe is from Susan Riley, who was a runner-up in the two previous contests. She was beginning to get that "always a bridesmaid" feeling, but this year she came out in front. I hope you'll try her easy but elegant Holiday Hazelnut Raspberry Chocolate Linzertorte. Chocolate with the tart taste of raspberries and the nutty flavor of hazelnuts is a winning combination.

I want to thank all of our testers, who cooked, ate and gained a few pounds to find our winners. Thanks also to our sponsor, Pioneer Brand, and the folks in their Research and Development kitchen who assessed and tested recipes as well. Happy holidays!



GRAND PRIZEWINNER: Susan Riley Grayson-Collin Electric Cooperative

Susan got her degree in food and nutrition from Oklahoma State University but never pursued a career in that field. She married an Air Force man and started

moving around. But she loves to experiment with food and has entered many contests; she was a finalist in the 2005 *Southern Living* Cook-Off and won the 2006 Mix It Up with Betty! Cookie Mix Recipe Contest.

Susan says that of her three kids—Katherine (15), Zachary (13) and Jennifer (8)—son Zachary is the one who'll try anything she cooks up. He especially likes it when she combines berries and chocolate, so this is one of his favorites.

HOLIDAY HAZELNUT RASPBERRY CHOCOLATE LINZERTORTE

- 1/2 cups chopped hazelnuts
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup butter (1 stick), softened
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/2 cups Pioneer Original Biscuit & Baking Mix
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 cup seedless red raspberry jam
- 1/2 cup semisweet chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Toast hazelnuts 8 minutes on cookie sheet. Let cool. Chop nuts very finely. (I use a food processor.) Set nuts aside.

In medium bowl, cream sugar and butter with electric mixer on medium for 2 minutes. Add 1 egg and vanilla and beat to combine well. Add biscuit mix, hazelnuts, cinnamon and cloves. Beat on medium until dough forms. Roll out half of dough between two sheets of waxed paper until it is a 9-inch circle. Place on cookie sheet, with paper still on, and refrigerate. Press other half of dough into bottom and sides of a greased (or sprayed) 9-inch tart pan with removable bottom. Bake crust for 15 minutes.

Take crust out of oven and spread bottom of crust with jam. Sprinkle chocolate chips evenly over top. Remove other half of crust from refrigerator and remove top layer of waxed paper. Cut in 1/2-inch wide strips (I use a pizza cutter). Pull strips off waxed paper and, using a metal spatula, lay strips in a lattice pattern (crisscrossed but not woven) on top of torte. (If some crust is left, bake and eat as a yummy cookie.)

Beat remaining egg and brush on top of crust (some egg will be left). Bake 20 minutes or until browned. Cool completely or eat warm. May be served with whipped cream or ice cream. Raspberries and chocolate curls may be used as a garnish. Powdered sugar may be sifted over top, if desired. Makes 8-12 servings.

RUNNER-UP: Joni Todasco Pedernales Electric Cooperative

Joni had never had bread pudding until a trip to San Antonio's La Cantera resort.



She vowed then and there to learn to make it. She found that Pioneer pancakes make the perfect base for her rich custard, and almonds and cranberries give the dish that holiday touch she was looking for.

A former deli owner, Joni loves to cook for her family. She, her husband, 8-year-old daughter and 19-month-old son live near Johnson City, just down the road from Pedernales Falls State Park, which Joni says is "a great place to raise a family."

cinnamon, dried cranberries and almonds.

In mixing bowl, mix eggs, sugar, vanilla and salt; then add milk. Mix and pour over dish. Let soak for 10 minutes. Bake 50–60 minutes, until knife inserted comes out clean. Serve warm or cold with Vanilla Crème Sauce.

VANILLA CRÈME SAUCE

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup powdered sugar

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup butter, softened

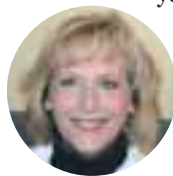
$\frac{3}{4}$ cup whipping cream

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

In 1-quart saucepan, beat powdered sugar and butter until creamy. Stir in whipping cream and vanilla. Heat to boiling, stirring constantly until thickened. Chill 1 hour.

RUNNER-UP: Donna Deteau Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative

Donna, who was a runner-up in last year's contest, wanted to develop a recipe that was creamy and crunchy to go with Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner. She went through five versions of her casserole before hitting on the perfect combination.



The finance director for the Children's Advocacy Center in Bastrop, Donna works with a group that's as close as family. They say they all gained 10–20 pounds for this contest, as they had to eat all of Donna's "experiments." Donna lives in Paige with her two cats and two dogs.

DOUBLE CORN CASSEROLE

1 cup chopped red onion

1 cup chopped red bell pepper

1 cup shredded carrot

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup butter (divided)

2 large cloves garlic, minced

1 package (16 ounces) frozen corn, thawed and drained

1–2 jalapeños, minced (optional)

1 package (2.75 ounces) Pioneer Country Gravy Mix

$2\frac{1}{2}$ cups half-and-half or whole milk (divided)

$2\frac{1}{2}$ cups grated sharp Cheddar cheese (divided)

2 egg whites, whipped stiff

Salt and pepper to taste

1 package (6 ounces) Pioneer Yellow Cornbread or Sweet Yellow Corn Muffin Mix

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup hot or mild jalapeño jelly (optional)

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. In large cast iron or ovenproof skillet, sauté in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter over medium heat onion, bell pepper, carrot and salt for 5 minutes or until crisp-tender. Add garlic, corn and jalapeños and cook 2 minutes.

Mix Pioneer Country Gravy Mix with 2 cups half-and-half or milk, whisking to blend, and add to skillet. Bring to boil and then turn off heat. Add $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups cheese and stir until combined. Fold in whipped egg whites. Adjust seasonings.

In small saucepan, bring $\frac{1}{2}$ cup milk and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup butter to boil. Add cornbread mix and stir until blended. Add 1 cup cheese. Drop cornbread mixture by teaspoons on top of corn mixture (leaving space between dollops). Bake for 30 minutes or until cornbread is lightly browned on top. Let sit for 10–15 minutes before serving. Heat jelly in microwave and drizzle over casserole, if desired. Serves 8–10.



CRANBERRY-ALMOND BREAD PUDDING BREAD PUDDING

1 package (6 ounces) Pioneer Complete Buttermilk Pancake & Waffle Mix

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup packed brown sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cinnamon

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup dried cranberries

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup almond slivers

4 eggs

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar

1 tablespoon vanilla extract

Dash of salt

$2\frac{1}{2}$ cups milk, scalded

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Make pancake mix as directed on package. Make four large pancakes, using up all batter. Tear them into bite-size pieces and put them in a well-buttered 2-quart casserole dish. Sprinkle with brown sugar,



RUNNER-UP: Dallas Kennedy Bryan Texas Utilities

Dallas was looking to make a dish with Tex-Mex spiciness that was healthy without sacrificing taste. This



dish is a great combination of flavors and textures, with its crunchy cornbread topping and spicy filling. Plus, she added some ground flax

seeds for their health benefits.

You might not expect someone with a background in human and veterinary immunology to also be a great cook, but Dallas isn't your ordinary person. She's got interests as varied as organic gardening, edible landscaping, building koi ponds, teaching, editing and writing. She lives in Bryan with so many animals that she says her vet gives her a "herd discount."

CORNBREAD-CRUSTED TEXAS TURKEY

- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup thinly sliced onions
- 1/4 cup thinly sliced celery
- 1/4 cup minced red bell pepper
- 1/2 cup corn kernels
- 1 can (14.5 ounces) diced tomatoes
- 1–2 pounds roast turkey, cubed
- 1 package (1.25 ounces) Pioneer Taco Seasoning (divided)
- 1 package (6 ounces) Pioneer Yellow Cornbread Mix
- 1 cup Pioneer Buttermilk Biscuit & Baking Mix
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 cup finely ground flaxseed meal
- 2 eggs, well-beaten
- 1/4 cup 2 percent milk

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. In large, heavy skillet, heat olive oil. When a water droplet sizzles in oil, add onions, celery and red bell pepper and sauté until browned. Add corn kernels and tomatoes, bring to a boil and then remove from heat. Add turkey and taco seasoning (reserving 1 tablespoon of seasoning). Allow mixture to stand for about 5 minutes, stirring once before pouring it into a pie or quiche dish. (It is important that the meat mixture fills the dish no more than half full, which allows



room for the cornbread crust.) Once filled, spray the exposed sides of the dish with cooking spray to prevent the cornbread crust from sticking.

In medium bowl, combine cornbread mix, baking mix, the reserved tablespoon of taco seasoning, baking powder, baking soda and flaxseed meal and mix well. Add eggs and milk and stir to combine. Spread gently on top of turkey mixture. Bake 20–25 minutes or until crust is golden brown.

Note: To make flaxseed meal, grind flaxseeds in a clean coffee-bean grinder.

RUNNER-UP: P.J. Jones

Navarro County Electric Cooperative

P.J.'s niece told her about a recipe for enchiladas that used gravy in it, so she set out to create some of her own. She worked this up on the first try, and liked it so much that she made a pan for herself and her husband, a pan for her 91-year-old mother, and one more for that same niece. One



taster happily described these as "truck-stop enchiladas," those elusive, rich and spicy creations one usually finds only while on the road.

Originally from San Diego, P.J. has called Texas home for 37 years. The Joneses live outside Corsicana.

TURKEY ENCHILADAS

- 6 cups shredded, cooked turkey
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 can (19 ounces) chili without beans
- 1 package (1.61 ounces) Pioneer Brown Gravy Mix
- 1 can (10 ounces) enchilada sauce
- 12 corn tortillas
- 1/2 cup shredded Cheddar cheese
- 1/2 cup shredded Monterey jack cheese
- Sour cream (optional)
- Sliced avocado (optional)

Put turkey in a large mixing bowl. In skillet, sauté onion and garlic in butter until clear. Mix with turkey and set aside.

In saucepan, prepare gravy per directions on package. Stir in chili and enchilada sauce. Heat until warm, stirring occasionally.

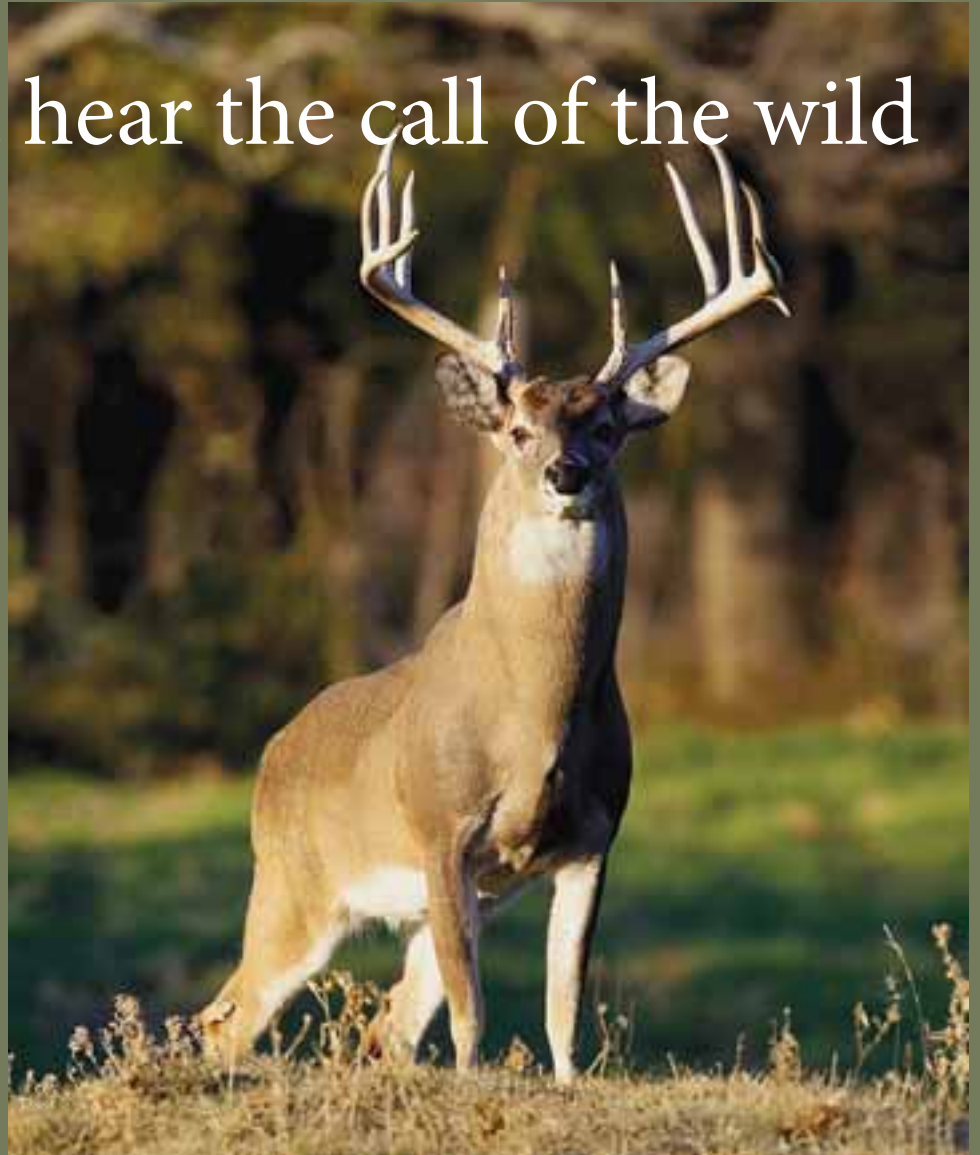
Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Put a small baking dish near the stovetop. Dip tortilla in gravy mixture and lay in baking dish, fill with turkey, and roll up; repeat for each tortilla, putting rolled tortillas side by side. Pour remaining gravy mixture over enchiladas. Top with mixed cheeses. Bake for 30–45 minutes or until sauce is bubbling. Serve with sour cream and avocado slices, if desired.



RECIPE CONTEST

The recipe contest topic for April is **MAKE IT WITH SOUP**. Submit favorite recipes that use canned or packaged soup as an ingredient. Send your recipes to Home Cooking, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704. You may also fax them to (512) 486-6254, e-mail them to recipes@texas-ec.org, or submit online at www.texascoopower.com. Please include your name, address and phone number, as well as the name of your electric co-op. The deadline is **DECEMBER 10**. The top winner will receive a copy of *60 Years of Home Cooking* and a Texas-shaped trivet. Runners-up will also receive a prize.

When you hear the call of the wild



We're the answer.



*Buy hunting land.
Enjoy nature.
Improve habitat.*

No matter what you want to do, we can finance it. And Capital Farm Credit also shares its earnings — we've returned more than \$100 million to our borrowers.

FINANCING FOR

Rural Land • Country Homes • Farms and Ranches • Livestock and Equipment • Operating Capital



Part of the Farm Credit System

capitalfarmcredit.com

877-944-5500



T E X A S ' L A R G E S T R U R A L L E N D E R

SURPRISE SANTA THIS YEAR
WITH A NEW
Metal Roof from Mueller.



Give Santa a great landing spot for years to come, with a beautiful new metal roof from Mueller. These roofs offer the perfect combination of style and durability, with their 26 gauge "hoof" resistant panels. This year, don't let Santa pass you by - bring Mueller home for the holidays.

CALL NOW FOR A FREE BROCHURE!

877-2-MUELLER (877-268-3553)

www.MuellerInc.com





HOLIDAY DECORATIONS

The holiday season is here, and as shown in this month's photo submissions, folks across Texas are dragging boxes down from their attics and decking the halls. Tiny, twinkling lights seem to be an essential for the holidays. They brighten the winter night sky, perhaps reminding us to stop and take a moment to enjoy the peacefulness and beauty of the season.

—DACIA RIVERS



▲ **Martha Tsihlas** snapped this photo on a family trip to Johnson City to see the Christmas lights. "When I saw the horse walking in front of the lights, I was hoping to capture the moment, and I did," said Tsihlas, a member of Pedernales Electric Cooperative.

◀ **Denise Fisch**, a member of Pedernales Electric Cooperative, sent in this photo of her then 4-month-old grandson, **Ethan Posey**, enjoying his first Christmas on the lap of her daughter **Emily**.



▲ Navarro Electric Cooperative members **Willie Kriska** and **Geraldine Kubin** sent in this photo of a yard decoration that meshes the electric cooperative spirit with the essence of the holidays. Kriska's son, **Mike**, a lineman for Brazos Electric Cooperative, built the display.

▼ Pedernales Electric Cooperative member **Susan Horn** took this photo of a uniquely decorated yard on 37th Street in Austin, a strip known for its annual holiday light displays. "This 'Austintacious' yard was my favorite for the 2006 Christmas season," Horn said.



Upcoming in Focus on Texas

ISSUE	SUBJECT	DEADLINE
Feb	Landscapes	Dec 10
Mar	Typically Texan	Jan 10
Apr	Smiles	Feb 10
May	Cowboys	Mar 10
June	Courthouses	Apr 10
July	Underwater	May 10

LANDSCAPES is the topic for our **FEBRUARY 2008** issue. Send your photo—along with your name, address, daytime phone, co-op affiliation and a brief description—to **Landscapes, Focus on Texas, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704**, before **December 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.org or submit on our website at www.texascooppower.com.

AROUND TEXAS AROUND TEXAS

DECEMBER

01 BULVERDE
Living Christmas Drive-Through,
(830) 980-2813

COLUMBUS
Holiday Extravaganza,
(979) 732-2427

CORSICANA [1-2]
Christmas Tour of Homes,
(903) 389-5888

FRISCO
Nativity Exhibit,
(972) 347-0242,
www.frisconativity.com

GONZALES [1-2]
Historic Homes Tour,
1-888-672-1095,
www.gonzalestexas.com

HUBBARD
Victorian Christmas Celebration,
(254) 576-2521

01 JACKSONVILLE [1-14]
Old Fashioned Christmas Activities,
1-800-376-2217

JEFFERSON [1, 6-8]
Candlelight Tour of Homes,
(903) 665-7064,
www.historicjeffersonfoundation.com

LAKE DALLAS
Holiday Lighting Celebration,
(940) 497-2226, ext. 132,
www.lakedallas.com

MARLIN
Christmas Tour of Historic Homes,
(254) 803-3331,
www.marlinoldhomesclub.com

MARSHALL [1-31]
Wonderland of Lights,
1-800-953-7868,
www.marshalltxchamber.com

01 NACOGDOCHES [1-8]
Nine Flags Festival,
(936) 564-7351,
www.nineflagsfestival.com

PILOT POINT
Christmas on the Square,
(940) 391-1438

ROSENBERG
Christmas in Rosenberg,
(832) 595-3525,
www.visitrosenberg.com

ROUND TOP
Christmas Tour of Homes, (979) 249-3042

RUNGE [1-8]
Christmas Tree Forest,
(830) 239-4192

02 CRANFILLS GAP
Authentic Norwegian Lutefisk Dinner,
(254) 597-1515,
www.cranfillsgapisd.com

CROCKETT
Tour of Homes,
(936) 655-2920

02 DEL RIO
Wild Game Dinner,
1-800-889-8149,
www.drchamber.com

ELLINGER
Polka Fest,
(979) 378-2311

06 CANYON LAKE [6-8, 13-15]
North Pole Village,
(830) 964-2324,
www.crrcofcanyonlake.org

07 BURNET [7-9, 14-16]
Main Street Bethlehem,
(512) 556-3307

POST
Old Mill Trade Days,
(806) 495-3529,
www.oldmilltradedays.com

RICHMOND [7-8, 14-15, 21-22]
Campfire Christmas,
(281) 343-0218

SAN ANGELO
Christmas at Old Fort Concho, (325) 481-2646



LULLABIES

~ FOR ALL GOD'S CHILDREN ~

These lullabies, which far surpass the boundaries of relationship and age, are a great gift idea for the loved ones in your family. Order your CD today in time for Christmas or just as a special gift for someone dear to your heart.

\$20 (includes tax & S/H).

(979) 690-0248
www.habitationstudios.com

DEPARTS MAY, JUNE, JULY, AUGUST & SEPTEMBER 2008

Do You Need A Vacation?

Starting at **\$1148**
Includes taxes, fuel, and more starting at \$200.

SPACE FILLING
TOP FAST!

Canadian Rockies Tour

Join other Farmers for the most "heavenly" sightseeing in the most pristine and beautiful countryside in North America

There's more than just the Canadian Rockies on this popular vacation. You'll spend a week in the Canadian Rockies and another week across the border in the American Northwest. First fly into Sioux Falls, South Dakota for a scenic three-day drive to Calgary, Alberta. In route, you'll visit Fargo and Bismarck, North Dakota, then north to Saskatchewan where you'll visit the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Academy. Your time in the Canadian Rockies will include daily sightseeing. Highlights include Lake Louise, Banff National Park, Hoodoo, Bow Falls and Cascade Gardens; a SnoCoach ride over the Columbia Ice Fields; Canmore, Alberta; Kananaskis Country; Waterton Lakes National Park and more! Back in the U.S. you'll visit Helena and Billings, Montana; Custer's battlefield at the Little Big Horn; Black Hills National Forest; Wild Bill Hickock and Calamity Jane's Deadwood; Mt. Rushmore and Crazy Horse National Memorial; legendary Badlands National Park and more! We include motor-coach transportation, 13 nights hotel accommodations, we'll meet you upon arrival, handle your luggage and take you on some of the most beautiful sightseeing with unsurpassed scenery in North America. Prices start at \$1148 per person, double occupancy including taxes. Airfare extra, starting at \$600.

For brochure, information & reservations call:
'YOUR MAN' TOURS
1-800-888-8204
Providing premiere vacations since 1967!

Home Sweet Home

Lone Star Ag Credit can help you buy or build the country home of your dreams. We make loans for homes, home construction and rural land.

Building lifetime relationships through financial solutions



1-800-530-1252
www.lonestaragcredit.com

member-owned cooperative
patronage dividends



Part of the Farm Credit System



AROUND TEXAS AROUND TEXAS

08 BULVERDE
Christmas Bazaar,
(830) 885-5653

CHAPPELL HILL
Holiday Home Tour &
Teddy Bear Parade,
(979) 836-6033,
www.chappellhill
museum.org

COMANCHE
Lighted Parade and
Santa Pictures,
(325) 356-3233,
www.comanchechamber
.org

CORSICANA
Concerts for Charities,
(903) 872-8226

DEVINE
Community Center
Artists' Series,
(830) 663-5289

PALESTINE
Christmas Parade of
Lights, (903) 723-3014,
www.visitpalestine.com

08 PORT ARANSAS
Carolers Afloat and Boat
Lighting Contest,
1-800-452-6278,
www.portaransas.org

ROCKPORT
Caroling at Fulton
Mansion,
(361) 729-0386, ext. 23

SPRING BRANCH [8-9]
Living Nativity,
(830) 885-5805

WASHINGTON
Candlelight Christmas,
(936) 878-2214,
www.birthplaceoftexas.com

WHITEHOUSE
Kris Kringle Mart,
(903) 894-3564

09 MASON
The Journey to
Bethlehem Drive Through
Christmas Luminary,
(325) 347-5582

ROCKSPRINGS
Christmas Tour of
Homes, (830) 683-7582

09 ROUND TOP
Christmas at Winedale
(979) 278-3530

SAN SABA
Garden Club Christmas
Tour of Homes,
(325) 372-3955

11 LIBERTY
Tree of Angels for Crime
Victims, (936) 258-2891

14 HARPER [14-15]
The Reason for the
Season, (830) 864-4246

15 ANDICE [15-16]
Crafters Fair,
(254) 793-9438

BROWNWOOD
Free Dutch Oven Cooking
Class, (325) 641-0526,
www.brownwood.com

LITTLE ELM [15-16]
Live Nativity Journey,
(972) 292-3628

16 UNCERTAIN
Floating Christmas
Parade on Caddo Lake,
(903) 789-3443,
www.cityofuncertain.com

22 LUCKENBACH
Cowboy Christmas Ball,
1-888-311-8990,
www.luckenbachtexas.com

31 FULTON
Oceanwaves New Year's
Eve Square Dance,
(361) 729-2388

Event information can be mailed to **Around Texas**, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704, faxed to (512) 486-6254, e-mailed to aroundtx@texas-ec.org, or submitted on our website at www.texascooppower.com. Please submit events for February by December 10. Events are listed according to space available; see the full list- ing at www.texascooppower.com.



INN ON BARONS CREEK

Spa & Conference Center



Luxurious Lodging in the Texas Hill Country
Fredericksburg • Texas

CHRISTMAS IN THE HILL COUNTRY

Nutcracker Suite Package includes:


- Two nights in one of our King, Jacuzzi Suites
 - Or a romantic Creekside King Suite
- A hot breakfast buffet will greet you each morning in the Harvest Room
- A Christmas basket filled with Cranberry Chianti Wine, assorted chocolates, a miniature nutcracker and the Nutcracker CD by Tchaikovsky
- A culinary delight at the Cotton Gin Restaurant, one of Fredericksburg's finest restaurants

Call Toll Free For Details and Fredericksburg Happenings
1-866-990-0202
www.InnOnBaronsCreek.com



Discover Denton.

Scenic horse country and exquisite equestrian venues surround this unique county seat. Horse country driving tours, history, music, shopping and culinary offerings delight the discoverer in us all. There is so much for the senses, it's hard to know where to start!




DENTON Convention & Visitors Bureau
Denton, TX 76201
and all that jazz! 800/381-1818 www.discoverdenton.com



Rambling from Hamilton to Erath counties can provide an interesting mix of offbeat history and a significant challenge for your sweet tooth. From outlaws to baked goods to ice cream floats, this is a retreat to the past you don't want to miss. Your route is a fraction longer than 35 miles, so slow down and enjoy the day. From Hico, you'll drive north on U.S. 281 for 21 miles to Stephenville. Then it's just 14 miles southwest on U.S. 67/377 to Dublin.

HICO

This little Hamilton County burg would have gone quietly into oblivion as another cotton-cattle town on the old Texas Central Railroad had it not been for a terrific rumor regarding one of the most notorious, nefarious characters known to the Wild, Wild West.

The legend around Hico holds that Billy the Kid—also called William Bonney—did not die in New Mexico at the hands of Sheriff Pat Garrett but instead lived to be an old man, calling himself Ollie L. “Brushy Bill” Roberts when he lived in Hico, dying there in 1950. The arguments for and against the story are detailed inside the **BILLY THE KID MUSEUM**, which has brought plenty of traffic to town over the years.

Just a few steps away in the hamlet's restored downtown, there's the **WESTERN OTTER**, a funky little boutique in a renovated Western Auto store, selling cool vintage cowboy boots, jewelry made by Texas artists and Mexican imports.

Hankering for a treat? You've come to the right town. Plan to stop in either at **WISEMAN HOUSE CHOCOLATES** for a box of handmade truffles or at the **KOFFEE KUP FAMILY RESTAURANT**, known far and wide for superb pies topped with “mile-high” meringue. Trust me, you can't find better coconut or caramel pies.

Hico Chamber of Commerce, 1-800-361-4426, www.hico-tx.com

HICO to DUBLIN

Pack your appetite for the short drive through these three cities—you'll need it.

BY JUNE NAYLOR



STEPHENVILLE

The seat of Erath County has seen remarkable growth in recent years, thanks to the burgeoning enrollment and new programs at Tarleton State University. For my money, though, the best reason to spend time in this town is to satisfy a demanding appetite.

Your first stop should be the throw-back coffee shop called **JAKE & DOROTHY'S**, opened in 1948 and changed little since. The hamburger steak with grilled onions and brown gravy is hard to beat, as are the old-fashioned burgers with waffle fries, but be sure to leave room for the stunning cream pies.

Later on, you'll make your way to the **HARD EIGHT**, a barbecue joint where pork chops, ribs, brisket and chicken are slow-smoked over mesquite in the old German tradition famous in Central Texas. Between meals, walk off the calories while roaming around the **STEPHENVILLE MUSEUM**, a complex of 10 wonderful local homes and buildings, all from the 19th century.

Stephenville Chamber of Commerce, (254) 965-5313, www.stephenvilletexas.org

DUBLIN

This humble town can be credited with giving the world two of Texas' greatest products: the late, renowned golfer Ben Hogan and one of the most popular soft drinks in history, Dr Pepper. Although the soda pop was invented in Waco, Dublin distinguishes itself as having the oldest Dr Pepper bottler in existence. And the reason you'll see stores all over the state boasting its stash of Dublin Dr Pepper? It's the only bottler that still makes the stuff with Imperial Pure Cane Sugar, according to the original formula.

When you hit town, waste no time getting to **OLD DOC'S SODA SHOP** at the Dr Pepper bottling company, where you can slurp an old-fashioned Dr Pepper float and rummage through the gift store. Somebody you know is just yearning for a Dr Pepper hat or t-shirt, as well as Dr Pepper Cake Mix or a clock, stadium blanket, glassware and playing cards bearing varied logos from Dr Pepper's long history.

Plan to return in June, when Dublin celebrates the 1891 founding of the Dr Pepper plant, which came just six years after the drink was created.

Dublin Dr Pepper, 1-888-398-1024, www.dublindrpepper.com

June Naylor wrote Texas: Off the Beaten Path.

Anywhere In
TEXAS

got land?



Get \$0 Down On A Beautiful New Home

Can't find a builder for your land? Still trying to save up a down payment?

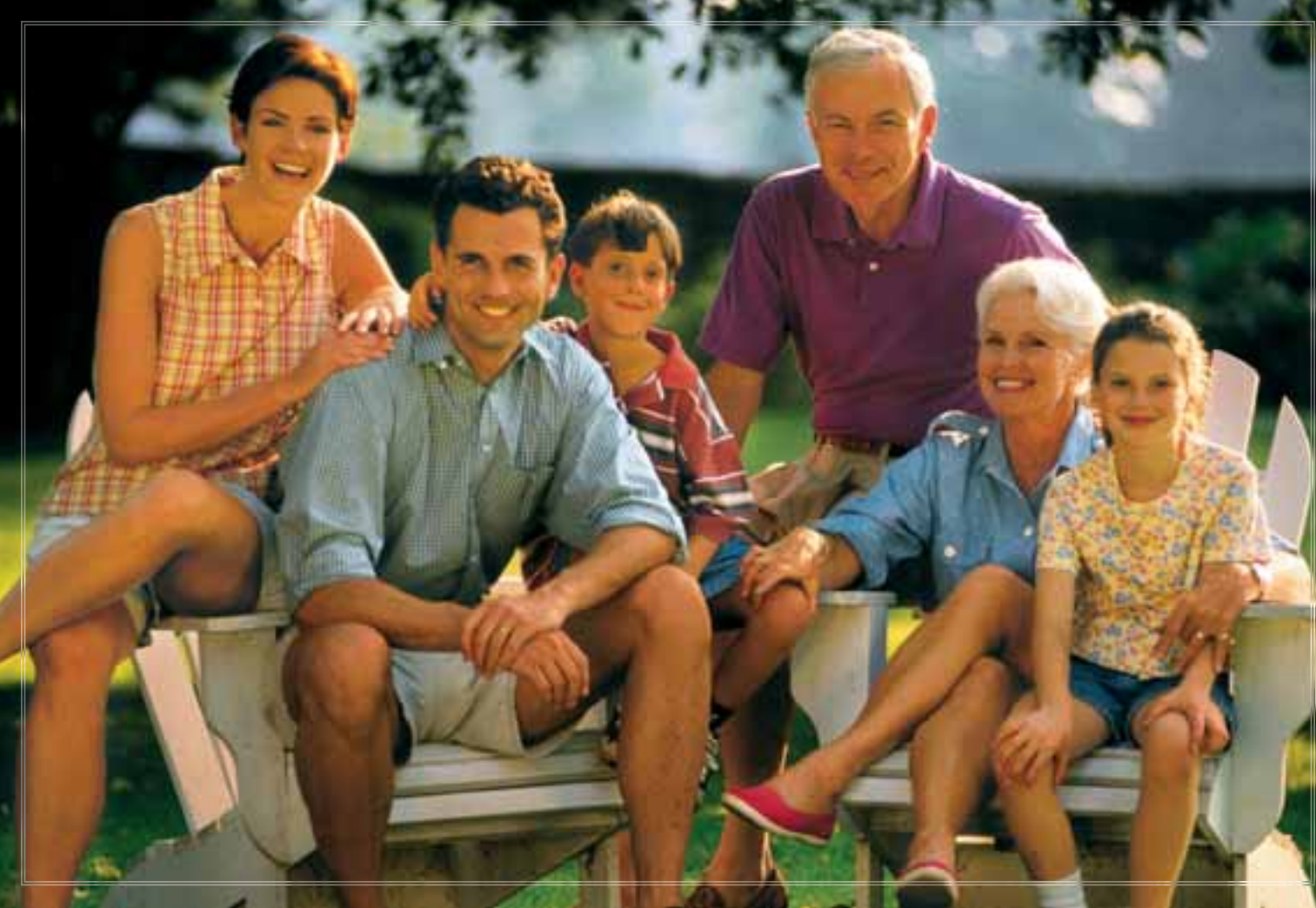
Qualified landowners can now own a beautiful custom Palm Harbor home without a down payment. That's right - \$0 down! Which means you can move into a new home sooner than you ever thought possible.

Palm Harbor specializes in high-quality, affordable, on-your-lot construction. Our homes are energy efficient and offer a wide variety of custom features and options. If you own land, this is your chance to build the home of your dreams for less than you ever imagined. Call us today and let us show you how Palm Harbor Homes delivers more home for your money.

Call Toll Free: 1-866-55-0-DOWN

(1-866-550-3696)

For a free informational DVD visit www.palmharbor.com/free



Germania: For Generations...

For more than 110 years Germania has been the insurance Texans trust. Whether it's home, auto or life coverage, generations of Texans have discovered the difference having a responsive, local insurance company makes.

Ask your family, friends and neighbors why *they* trust Germania Insurance. Find out why Germania is a tradition handed down, for generations...

- Competitive rates
- Multiple discount options
- Exceptional, responsive claims service 24/7
- Serving Texas since 1896



The Insurance Texans Trust

HOME • AUTO • LIFE

1-800-392-2202

www.GermaniaInsurance.com