

# TEXAS CO-OP POWER

## COUNTRY DOCTORS

**P L U S**

**Hereford's Backyard  
Ferris Wheel**

**Mad for Muffins**

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Llano to Junction**

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# February 2008

VOLUME 64 NUMBER 8



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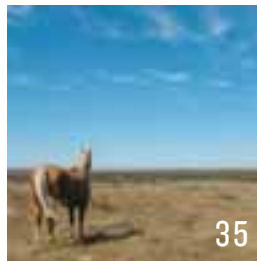
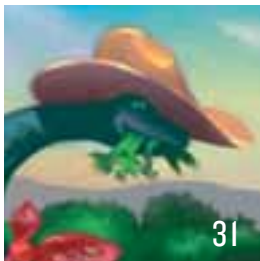
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## TEXAS CO-OP POWER

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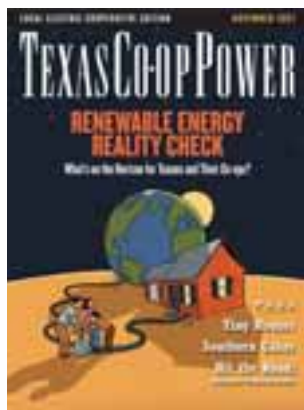
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# letters

## HOORAY FOR 'REALISTIC ASSESSMENT'

I was happy to read your article "Energy Reality Check: Green Power" in the November issue of *Texas Co-op Power*. It was the first time that I have read a realistic assessment of the contributions that green power can make to our energy problems in a publication that is devoted to energy.



Most of what one reads about alternative energy resources in the newspapers and nature publications is of the feel-good variety, lacking real technical understanding and often expounding unrealistic and unachievable goals for future developments.

Take for instance wind energy. Your article lists the basic shortcomings of this development, the points you mention: variable wind or lack of wind; the fact that wind power capacity has to be backed up by conventional generating capacity (which in effect makes wind power installation wasteful); challenges for grid stability and grid management. The fact that these points are rarely mentioned is disingenuous, if not outright dishonest, because society has to pay these costs, which only profit the developers.

The minuscule contributions of wind energy become

# POWER TALK

very obvious when one does some calculations based on real numbers.

**FRITS DE WETTE, Austin**

## CONVENTIONAL POWER NEEDED NOW

We need major research and development efforts for our long-term energy needs, but we need to build additional conventional generating capacity now to avoid electric shortages that will damage our economy and limit our freedom to make the right choices.

**WILLIAM E. SPARKS JR.,  
Coldspring**

*Sam Houston Electric Cooperative*

## TIRED OF EXCUSES

As I tried to implement a solar panel system for my house, I have learned that all the power generators in Texas, except for Austin Energy, do not really want to deal with small producers.

Texas power companies have no incentives to promote renewable energy. They give the excuse it will penalize those who do not install renewable power. They say renewable is not reliable. They say it costs too much. They say it is dan-

gerous. Excuse, excuse, excuse.

Big power producers and distributors, when will you start to think beyond the status quo? Make an effort to extend our resources while promoting and creating new ones.

**MARK J. RASMUSSEN, Forney  
Farmers Electric Cooperative**

## WINDMILLS AREN'T EYESORES

In regards to the use of wind and sun power, the belief that turbines would be an eyesore is an excuse. Remember how beautiful the lighthouses on the East Coast are and the windmills of the Dutch! I'm sure something could be done to enhance their appearance.

**PATRICIA N. TERLING, San Marcos  
Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative**

## PLUG-IN CARS LONG WAY FROM REALITY

Many things are possible, but batteries for plug-in electric cars are the weak link now. Gasoline and diesel are very powerful and easy to store and use. Hydrogen is possible and easy to use, but it is very hard to store in liquid form, and the pressures are high. I am not in the fuel business, but we need

to be realistic about the possibilities. Some day there will be a breakthrough. I hope it is soon, but if you want to be able to drive away from the house, don't be too hard on gasoline and diesel at this time.

**JIM BELL, Quitman**

*Wood County Electric Cooperative*

## WHAT ABOUT NET METERING?

There was no mention in your "Energy Reality Check" of net metering, a process where the co-op actually buys electricity from, as an example, a homeowner who installs solar or wind generation but can't use all that he generates. I know Grayson-Collin Electric Co-op has approved net metering. Even though it is insignificant today, I see it as having huge potential.

In the section on solar, the article mentioned that "large amounts of it can't be stored." If enough people were able to generate their own electricity and sell it back to the co-op, wouldn't the grid act like a pipeline storage that could be used to offset new electric generation?

**TONY MANASSERI**

*Grayson-Collin Electric Cooperative*

*Editor's note: The grid can use solar and wind power only as it is produced. The grid cannot store electricity. Other kinds of power plants must provide electricity for times when the wind is not blowing and the sun is not shining. And conventional power plants can't just be turned off when the renewables are available and on when they are not. It takes minutes to start a natural gas peaking plant and days to start a coal-fired plant.*



A. J. GARCES

We want to hear from our readers. Send letters to: Editor, *Texas Co-op Power*, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704, e-mail us at [letters@texas-ec.org](mailto:letters@texas-ec.org), or submit online at [www.texascoopower.com](http://www.texascoopower.com). Please include the name of your town and electric co-op. Letters may be edited for clarity and length and are printed as space allows. Read additional letters at [www.texascoopower.com](http://www.texascoopower.com).



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## HAPPENINGS

You're invited to "whoop it up" at the **12TH ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF WHOOPING CRANES AND OTHER BIRDS** in Port Aransas, February 22–24. Port Aransas is home to hundreds of permanent and visiting species. This gathering celebrates the conservation of the endangered whooping crane, which winters in the area in late February. Tom Stehn, whooping crane conservationist for the Aransas Wildlife Refuge, says a record 261 cranes completed the migration this year. Lectures, boat tours, bus tours, exhibits and workshops are among the offerings, as is a free Nature Trade Show at the Port Aransas Civic Center. For more information, visit the Port Aransas Chamber of Commerce website at [www.portaransas.org](http://www.portaransas.org) or call toll-free, 1-800-45-COAST (452-6278).

### RENOVATION UNEARTHS BEAUTIFUL AND HISTORIC COURTHOUSE ARTWORK

While restoring the Maverick County Courthouse in Eagle Pass, workers from the Texas Historical Commission discovered a hidden treasure lost in time—a gorgeous mural. Careful repair revealed that, concealed under years of decay, the walls in the district courtroom are decorated with hand-painted cobalt blue stencils and exquisite fluted pen-



dants. Wooden wainscoting and ceiling coves frame the work of art. A paint analysis showed the painting was created in 1925 during a restoration to the 1885 courthouse. Art experts believe the artwork is a magnificent example of the Mexican Art Nouveau style. The structure, built by pioneer builder William Hausser, exhibits a modified Gothic architectural style with a Spanish fortress appearance.

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

### CRAB CAKES IN LLANO

In a turn-of-the-century limestone building on the Llano town square, where a succession of dry goods stores and a millinery once served the household and fashion needs of local citizens, the Acme Café on the Square is building a culinary reputation. Sisters-in-law Maurie and Ann Beasley opened the café in 2005 on a whim. Attracted by the building's original brick walls, tin ceilings and wooden floors, they decided to give their café a distinctly old-fashioned feel. But a glance at the menu reveals some palate-pleasing, up-to-date offerings. The house specialty is crab cakes, made fresh daily and served with homemade remoulade sauce. "We don't put anything on the menu that doesn't meet unanimous



approval of the entire staff," says Ann. Hours are 11 a.m.–3 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Sunday brunch, including pancakes, crepes, quiche and soup, is served from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

*Acme Café on the Square, downtown Llano across from the courthouse, (325) 247-4457.*

## WHO KNEW?



EDD PATTON

### ANIMAL CAPITALS

From the Chili Capital to the Gingerbread Capital, many Texas towns boast titles that make them stand out from the pack. During various sessions, the Legislature has officially designated the following towns as the state capitals of some of Texas' unique animal populations.

**ANAHUAC**—Alligator

**HAMILTON**—Dove

**KENEDY**—Horned Lizard

**LONGVIEW**—Purple Martin

**MAURICEVILLE**—Crawfish

**MIDLAND**—Ostrich

**WEST TAWAKONI**—Catfish


**WILLS POINT**—Bluebird

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# COUNTRY DOCTORS

THE COUNTRY DOCTOR IS ALIVE AND WELL      BY SANDY SHEEHY      PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICK PATRICK

*The trim, 96-year-old woman with neatly coiffed gray hair looks up from her hospital bed at the 6-foot-4-inch blond man bending over her. Patting his white sleeve, she says, 'It feels strange to have a doctor whose stroller you used to push.'*

**B**UT FOR A PHYSICIAN IN WEIMAR, population 2,100 or so, the experience isn't that unusual. Robert Allen Youens was born and raised here. His grandfather Willis set up practice in Columbus in 1907. Robert's father, Willis Jr., and his Uncle Thomas moved the practice 17 miles west to Weimar in 1947. Residents of Colorado, Fayette and Lavaca counties call him "Dr. Robert" to distinguish him from the now-deceased Dr. Willis and Dr. Thomas. Staff members, some of whom have been with the Youens-Duchicela Clinic for decades, call him "Dr. Bobby." Except for the three years it took him to earn his bachelor's degree from the University of Texas, an accelerated three-year program at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston and a residency at Brackenridge Hospital in Austin, Youens has spent his life in this Czech-German community midway between Houston and

San Antonio, where he gets his electricity from Fayette Electric Co-op.

Youens asks the woman in the hospital bed whether she's still feeling dizzy. Dizziness and macular degeneration have led to a series of falls, including the latest one, which resulted in a nasty gash on her leg and a concussion. She wants to go home, at least to San Antonio with her daughter, who stands across the bed from Youens. "Would you be comfortable taking care of her wounds?" he asks the daughter, who nods. Then he makes eye contact with the patient, addressing her as "Mrs." and her surname. Youens' patients above the age of 20 are "Mister," "Mrs." and "Miss," just as he is "Doctor" to them.

"I'm going to let you go home, but I want to determine two things first," he explains with a comfortable hint of Central Texas twang as suited to discussing the price of crops at the feed store as to addressing a meeting of the

Texas Academy of Family Practitioners, of which he's incoming president. "First, are you still anemic? Second, can you get up and down?"

Then Youens turns to one of the three residents standing at the foot of the bed. "Dr. Schneiderman, you have a primary interest in geriatrics. What's the main issue in geriatrics?"

David Schneiderman is stumped, so Youens answers his own question congenially: "Function. We have to determine whether she can be up and around enough to go home."

Despite hailing from Lima, Peru, with a population of more than 8 million, Schneiderman is firm in his plans to practice in rural Texas. So are his fellow residents, Geraldo Garcia, from Monterrey, Mexico, and Jaime Ruiz-Perez, from Mexico City.

"People like to have the doctor be part of the community," Garcia says when asked why he wants to be a coun-





**Dr. Robert Youens, right, one of only three physicians practicing in Weimar, visits with Maurice Kaspar, left, and Johnny Kaspar at their meat market.**



**Youens and colleagues Dr. Jorge Duchicela and Dr. Olga Duchicela run Weimar's medical clinic.**

try doctor. “Dr. Youens goes shopping with them, goes to church with them. That’s what I want to do.”

For 15 years, Youens has been teaching residents and medical students as clinical assistant professor in the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Texas-Medical Branch (UTMB). When newly minted M.D.s and D.O.s enter the three-year program that provides real-world training in birth-to-death care, UTMB family medicine residents can opt for the rural residency track, spending four months in the second year and three in the third away from the Galveston campus in a small-town practice. Texas Tech’s Health Science Center has a similar program, as does the University of North Texas’ medical school. At Texas A&M, the Brazos Family Medicine Residency requires residents to spend four weeks out of each of their three years working with physicians in towns

with populations under 9,000. A&M also offers a one-year rural practice fellowship for family practitioners who have completed their residencies and want to experience the realities of country doctoring.

“These programs are important because most of Texas is rural,” explains Dr. Lisa Nash, director of the UTMB program. “A lot of counties have only one doctor. If that doctor gets ill, what does that community do?”

In fact, 21 of Texas’ 254 counties have no doctor at all.

According to the Texas Department of State Health Services, while the number of primary care physicians (family practice, general internal medicine, obstetrician-gynecologists and pediatricians) dropped in 56 rural counties, it rose in 105 between 1995 and 2005. Rural residency programs can take some credit for the improvement, but people living in large,

sparsely populated areas of West Texas still face the prospect of driving 100 miles or more to see a doctor. When asked what he’d do if one of his workers broke an arm, a Panhandle rancher replied, “Call the vet.”

AS A COUNTRY DOCTOR IN THE 21ST century, Robert Youens practices differently from his father and uncle, let alone his grandfather. He doesn’t carry a black bag, and he makes house calls only occasionally—for instance, to check on a patient with a broken hip who insists on staying at the farm rather than recuperating at the nursing home next to Youens’ clinic.

Youens holds a master’s degree in medical management, earned online, from the University of Southern California’s Marshall School of Business. He and his partners totally computerized their practice, switching patient records to a secure electronic

*For a full year in 1989, Robert Youens practiced solo, seeing as many as 70 patients a day but not much of his wife and three children. Then, in 1990, Jorge Duchicela came and stayed.*



The Duchicelas, who are brother and sister, and Youens meet with the clinic’s staff.



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With no other medical help nearby, small-town doctors are expected to know, and do, it all. Jorge Duchicela examines Joshua Venghaus.

*A few rural physicians are surgeons, but most are family practitioners, which necessitates keeping up with developments in diagnosis and treatment of virtually every human disease.*

database. As of 2002, only 5 percent of family medicine physicians in Texas had done likewise. Electronic medical records check automatically for drug interactions and give the physician access to the patient's chart even when he or she is out of the office. Although it incorporates 21st century advances, Youens' approach to rural medicine rests on the time-honored "Four As of Medical Practice": to be available, affordable, affable and able.

**Y**OUENS' DAY BEGINS AT 7 A.M. WITH rounds at the 38-bed Colorado-Fayette Medical Center, the community hospital his father and uncle founded in 1949. Then, skirting the parking lot, he strolls to the 18,000-square-foot clinic for appointments with patients. Some he's known all their lives. Others have known him all his. One he introduces as "The Quilter of Weimar." Another bakes the best kolaches in

town. A third was the clinic's X-ray technician for 37 years. Altogether, Youens and his partners see about 40 people a day. Although half are on Medicare, the doctors also treat a lot of children and young and middle-aged adults for everything from diabetes and heart disease to fractures from farming accidents.

A few rural physicians are surgeons, but most are family practitioners, which necessitates keeping up with developments in diagnosis and treatment of virtually every human disease. That presents a special challenge: how to stay current. Family medicine was the first specialty to require physicians to get recertified periodically. A country doctor with partners can get away to prepare for and take board exams, attend professional conferences and stay abreast of research and new treatments that could help his or her patients. If a family emergency or a

wedding or college graduation comes up, leaving town is a simple matter of shifting patients to a partner, who also knows them. A solo doctor either has to close the practice temporarily or call in a *locum tenens*—a physician who makes his or her living covering for others.

Youens has experienced the challenges of solo practice directly. He joined his father immediately after completing his residency in 1979. After a stroke in 1982 forced Dr. Willis to retire, Dr. Robert retained a national search firm to help recruit a replacement. But as enthusiastic as candidates seemed during the first months, the new physicians didn't stay long. Asked why, Joan Prihoda, the clinic's office manager, who grew up in Plum and La Grange, explains, "Honestly? The wives weren't happy. There's not much shopping, and you have to go to Katy to see a movie. It's only 50 minutes away, but



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it feels far. It takes a certain kind of person to want to live in a small town.”

For a full year in 1989, Robert Youens practiced solo, seeing as many as 70 patients a day but not much of his wife and three children. Then, in 1990, Jorge Duchicela came and stayed. A native of Ecuador who attended the University of Wisconsin on a soccer scholarship and then stayed on for medical school, Dr. Jorge, as he’s known in Weimar, speaks fluent Spanish, as does his sister, Dr. Olga Duchicela, who joined the Youens-Duchicela Clinic in 2000. That fluency is a plus in rural Texas, where many agricultural workers are Hispanic. In fact, patients from Lee County drive past the medical practices in La Grange to see Dr. Jorge and Dr. Olga.

ONE THING THAT DISTINGUISHES family medicine, wherever it’s practiced, from other specialties is that

family physicians treat patients in their psychosocial context. If a woman comes in complaining of stomach pain, a gastroenterologist is inclined to order an endoscopy right off. A family doctor will sit down with the patient, ask, “Was anything unusual going on in your life at the time the pain started?” and listen.

Even if the patient says no, a small-town doctor will often be aware of the daughter’s divorce, the husband’s three arrests for DWI, or other stressors a suburban practitioner might have no way of knowing about.

After 28 years in practice, Youens sees patients at 68 whom he first saw at 40, and patients he first saw at 60 who are now 88. For a rural physician, observing the same patient over decades imparts a powerful personal message.

“You watch these people through the continuum of their lives, and your own mortality becomes very real,” he says.

And today’s country doctors, like generations before them, observe their patients in the full context of the small community where both live. The frail woman in the nursing home isn’t only an 85-year-old lady with Alzheimer’s and chronic lung disease; she’s the retired postmistress.

In an urban or suburban practice, the relationship often goes one way. The patient is the patient, and the doctor is the doctor. But in a rural practice, the relationship is reciprocal. The patient is both the patient and the man who fixes the doctor’s lawnmower or the woman who teaches her children, and the doctor is both the doctor and the regular customer or the member of the PTO.

“On a Saturday morning if I’m not seeing patients, I’ll go down to M-G to buy bedding plants, and then I’ll stop in at the Screen Door, a boutique,” Olga Duchicela says. “The people who work

*And today’s country doctors, like generations before them, observe their patients in the full context of the small community where both live.*



Youens and his wife, Linda, spend a quiet moment on their front porch.



Olga Duchicela speaks to teens in a wellness program she founded.



in those stores are our patients. So is the guy who does weightlifting at the fitness center."

That familiarity cuts both ways. A resident of a small town might not want someone she runs into at the supermarket and high school football games to know the details of her battle with colitis. That's why some Weimar residents go to doctors in Columbus, and vice-versa.

Occasionally, the rural physician, too, needs some privacy. To relax, Youens and his wife go to Austin—for the restaurants, for the shops, but also for the anonymity.

"I'm a very public person here," he explains.

Nash says access to a larger urban area, with museums, shopping malls, performing arts and a commercial airport, is one of the main factors that keep today's rural physicians content with their lives. Facilities at the local hospital are another. (Does it have its own lab for bloodwork? Does it have an MRI machine?) But the most important factor is the lifestyle—not the idealized fantasy of country life, but an appreciation of the pleasures and responsibilities of being fully embedded in a small community.

As one of the most educated and worldly people in town, a rural physician holds a position of exceptional influence. Youens served on the school board. Jorge Duchicela is chairman of SWIFT (Schulenburg and Weimar in Focus Together), a nonprofit dedicated to improving local health and education. Olga Duchicela founded Healthy High, a group promoting health among Weimar and Schulenburg teens.

"You get a lot of respect in a community this size," Youens observes. "That respect comes from my father and from my grandfather, from generations of doctors who spend their days and nights taking care of people. But you have to earn it for yourself again and again."

*Sandy Sheehy learned about rural residency programs through her day job as a development officer with the University of Texas Medical Branch-Galveston. Her last story for Texas Co-op Power was "Birth of a Boot" in the August 2007 issue.*



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

# HEREFORD'S BACKYARD FERRIS WHEEL

BY JILL NOKES

A few years ago, Tim Gearn designed and built a large puppet playroom for the children at his Panhandle church. It was such a success that soon he began looking for another project. "I just got to thinking, 'You know, why can't adults have something that's fun? You know, I got a big yard!'"

He soon found an outlet for his energy and creativity—one that would turn his backyard, about 5 miles from Hereford, into a local landmark. A traveling carnival came to town for a Lions Club fundraiser, and inspiration struck.

After researching different kinds of carnival rides, Tim decided to buy a used Ferris wheel. He eventually found one from a defunct amusement park in San Antonio.

*When I was a kid, they had models that they moved all over the country. This particular type of wheel fell out of favor because it takes a lot of labor to*

*put up. The new ones now are almost self-erecting, but they're very expensive. The older stationary types were more affordable.*

After collecting the dismantled Ferris wheel, Tim spent months rebuilding all the seats and refinishing the wheel before it was ready to set up. He even bought a sewing machine and learned how to make the covers for the seats.

It took five people 10 hours to erect the magnificently refurbished Ferris wheel, but once it was up, it was installed to stay and quickly became a recognized feature in the minimalist Hereford skyline. "Everybody knows about the Ferris wheel," says Tim's wife, Keith Ann.

*You can see it from the football stadium. We light it up when we win, and oh gosh, people love to come out here. We had a group of women come out here who had been in this little club for 25-30 years. And some of them were in*

*their 70s, and a few were younger, but you could just tell when they walked in that they were all great friends. Well, we put them on the Ferris wheel, and they became little girls again. And before long, they were at the top going, 'Wooo!' raising their arms and giggling and laughing. They were probably the rowdiest bunch we've had out here, and that includes the time we had 80 teens over for a party.*

It was obvious from the first that folks were going to have a ball riding that Ferris wheel, but despite all the thought they put into it, even the Gearn's couldn't have predicted how a simple ride could have such a profound effect on people. "When you get on the Ferris wheel, something happens," ventures Keith Ann.

*I've had some of the hardest businessmen out here, you know, because we work with oil fields, cattle, mining, and*





It was obvious from the first that folks were going to have a ball riding that Ferris wheel, but despite all the thought Gearn put into it, even he couldn't have predicted how a simple ride could have such a profound effect on people.



RUSSELL GRAVES

so when they come out for dinner or for business, we always get them out here for a ride. And I'll ride with them or Tim will take them round, and pretty soon these old guys soften up and they start saying things like, 'Well, I remember back when I was with my dad, and he took me on my first Ferris wheel ride.' You can't quite get a hold of what it is, but something changes and they're better when they leave.

Keith Ann and Tim didn't anticipate the transformative power a simple ride on a Ferris wheel would have for people, but it's become the best part of having the carnival rides in their back yard. Tim adds,

*At first when people get on it, they'll be a little apprehensive, and then it's kind of lullabies you; it's kind of like rocking in a cradle. It's very soothing and relaxing, especially at night when you can see all the lights. It adds a lot to*

*life to enjoy a machine that's not built to do anything except to be fun.*

Tim later designed, built and installed a carousel companion to the Ferris wheel in the old caliche pit on their property.

When you're on the Ferris wheel, you get a panoramic view of the whole Panhandle landscape: the huge feedlots, the endless fields of milo sorghum, the high school stadium, and the town of Hereford, home of Deaf Smith Electric Cooperative. When you're on the Ferris wheel, the bright red tent of the carousel beneath you is nestled in the grassy embrace of the rehabilitated pit, and on the hill behind, an old wooden windmill companionably rotates in its own squeaky rhythm. Time seems to slow down, and you begin to hope your turn will last forever. Tim describes the joy of sharing fun for the sake of fun:

*It's not about trying to make money; it's not about trying to impress anyone.*

*It's just, 'Hey! Come over to my house and play with my toys!' It's just fun. There are a lot of pressures in life and there aren't a lot of things that are just for fun. I wanted something that was right here at home, where we could interact with the community, and something that little kids would like.*

But Keith Ann puts it best:

*It's not the big moments, but the series of little moments that matter when you're turning your place into what really matters: peace, hospitality, goodness and welcome.*

What goes around, comes around.

*This article is excerpted from Yard Art and Handmade Places: Extraordinary Expressions of Home by Jill Nokes, an author, conservationist and landscape designer. The book was published in November by the University of Texas Press.*

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## Don't Get Burned

**A**s you warm yourself and your family indoors during the cold winter months, don't get burned.

Stay safe around heaters, stoves and other hot objects. Some tips:

- Keep your space heater several feet away from yourself, your furniture and your draperies while it's turned on. And never leave a child alone in a room with an operating space heater.

- Don't try to balance a child in one arm and hold a cup of hot coffee or tea with the opposite hand.

- Avoid loose clothing while cooking or tending to the fireplace. Throw on a short-sleeved shirt to cut your risk of catching your clothes on fire.

- Turn pot handles away from the edge of the stove to avoid knocking the pots over.

- Puncture microwavable plastic bags and keep containers slightly ventilated while they're in the microwave oven. This prevents buildup of scalding steam.

- If you have a grease fire, don't try to move or touch the pan. Instead, turn



**Distractions in the kitchen can be dangerous.**

off the heat and cover it with a lid.

- Place fireplace ashes in a metal container outside by themselves. This gets them out of the house and isolates them from flammable materials.

- Teach kids respect for fire: Let them know that it's dangerous and not something to play with or around.

## KEEP THE COLD AIR OUTSIDE THIS WINTER

**D**on't let your hard-earned money blow away through drafty doors and windows or uninsulated attics, walls and floors. As we stay indoors to stay warm this winter, save your money and reduce your utility bills by following these tips:

- Find air leaks inside and around the exterior of the home. Check around fixtures that penetrate walls, such as exhaust fans and electrical outlets. Look for unfilled gaps and cracks near dryer vents, chimneys and faucet pipes.

- Seal leaks between moving parts with weather stripping, such as between a door and its frame. Caulk

cracks between windows and walls, as well as around door frames.

- Replace your screens with storm windows and doors. If you have older or leaky windows that you can't replace, consider doing temporary fixes, such as using plastic film kits that create the effect of an interior storm window.

- If you are shopping for new windows, doors or skylights, look for ones with the Energy Star label.

- Make sure attics and flooring above unheated areas, such as crawl spaces and the garage, are properly insulated.

- Have your furnace checked by a professional to make sure it's operating safely and at its optimal level—and change your furnace filters monthly.

- Have a programmable thermostat installed to automatically raise and lower home temperatures for energy savings by day and night.

## HOW MUCH ENERGY DOES IT REALLY USE?

**I**f you're trying to decide whether to invest in a more energy-efficient appliance or you'd like to determine your electricity loads, you can estimate appliance energy consumption.

You can use this formula to estimate an appliance's energy use:

Wattage × hours used per day × days used per year ÷ 1,000 = kilowatt-hour (kWh) consumption per year

For example:

Personal computer (120 watts) and monitor (150 watts):

(120 watts + 150 watts) × 4 hours per day × 365 days per year ÷ 1,000 = 394 kWh/year

Then, calculate the annual cost to run an appliance by multiplying the kWh per year by your electric co-op's rate per kWh consumed.

394 kWh × \$0.104 (current national average) = \$40.98 per year

You can usually find the wattage of appliances stamped on the bottom or back of the appliance, or on its nameplate. The wattage listed is the maximum power drawn by the appliance. Since many appliances have a range of settings, the actual amount of power consumed depends on the setting used at any one time.

Here are some examples of wattages for various household appliances:

APPLIANCE	WATTS
Clothes washer	350–500
Clothes dryer	1,800–5,000
Dishwasher	1,200–2,400
Microwave oven	750–1,100
Personal computer	
CPU—awake/asleep	120/30
Monitor—awake/asleep	150/30
Laptop	50
Refrigerator (16 cubic feet)	725
Televisions	
27-inch	113
36-inch	133
53- to 61-inch projection	170
Flat screen	120
Water heater	4,500–5,500



Contrary to a common myth, leaving your office equipment running won't save energy.

## ENERGY USE: MYTH AND FACT

As electricity costs continue to rise, we're all looking for ways to reduce energy use. Although there are a lot of good ideas out there, there are also a lot of misconceptions about what is really effective. Here is one of the most common myths and the facts to set you on the right path.

**MYTH:** Computers, monitors and other office equipment will use less energy and last longer if they are left running all of the time.

**FACT:** Turning equipment off overnight does not shorten its life, and the small surge of power that occurs when some devices are turned on is much smaller than the energy used by running equipment when it is not needed. In fact, leaving computers and other office equipment on overnight and on weekends wastes significant amounts of energy and also adds to the wear and tear on the equipment.

In general, turn off equipment you are not using or make sure that energy-saving features are enabled. Some office equipment, including printers and scanners, features small transformers that use energy even when the equipment is turned off. Plug all such devices into a power strip so they can be shut down completely with one flick of the switch.

## MAKE YOUR HOME LIGHTER—NOT YOUR WALLET

Try lighting your home differently and your wallet might get a little heavier.

Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs)—the twisty ones that last up to five years—use about two-thirds less energy than incandescents. That energy savings translates into lower energy bills.

You can save \$30 over the lifetime of each CFL you use in place of a traditional incandescent bulb. CFLs may last for 6,000 or more hours before they burn out.

As a bonus, a CFL doesn't put off much heat when it burns, unlike the incandescent light bulbs you're probably using now. The result: The CFL doesn't add heat to the air in a room that you're trying to cool when it's hot outside. Less added heat means your air conditioner doesn't have to work so hard. That can save you even more.

The latest CFLs are much improved from those slow-to-turn-on, pale-white bulbs of the past. If you tried CFLs a long time ago and didn't like the color or the delay, try them again. The light and performance of the latest CFLs are

much closer to what you're used to.

It's true that CFLs cost more than incandescents—from around \$2 to \$10 per bulb compared with less than \$1 per incandescent bulb. But you'll more than make up the difference by paying lower electric bills.

### WHICH CFL EQUALS MY OLD 60-WATT BULB?

Choose a compact fluorescent light bulb between 13 watts and 15 watts if you want it to light your room about as brightly as your traditional, 60-watt incandescent light bulb.

Most manufacturers include "product equivalency" numbers on the package, so you might see a label that says "soft white 60" or "60-watt replacement."

Here's a guideline for CFLs that replace incandescent bulbs of other wattages:

INCANDESCENT	CFL
40 watt	7-9 watt
60 watt	13-15 watt
75 watt	18-20 watt
100 watt	23-25 watt

## TEST YOUR POWER LINE SAFETY KNOWLEDGE

**TRUE OR FALSE?** Power lines are insulated for contact.

**False.** While power lines may have a covering to protect against weather, they are not insulated for contact. Birds can sit on power lines unhurt because they don't represent a path to the ground. You and your ladder do.

**TRUE OR FALSE?** I should keep myself and any equipment I'm using at least 10 feet away from any power lines.

**True.** You don't need to contact a power line to be in danger; electricity can jump, or arc, from a

power line to a worker who gets too close. The best insulator is lots of space. You should keep yourself and any equipment you're using a minimum of 10 feet away from power lines, but far greater distances are recommended.

**TRUE OR FALSE?** I can be electrocuted by a power line even if I am wearing gloves and rubber boots.

**True.** Work gloves and rubber boots offer no protection against contact with a power line. Once again, space, and lots of it, is the best insulator.



# Piercing Moments

*Today's parents  
simply can't fathom  
why a child would  
want to pierce  
her belly button.*

BY SHERYL  
SMITH-RODGERS

W

henever the question came up, I'd take a deep breath and play dumb. In the scheme of life, I know it's always best to handle issues head-on, not tiptoe around them and act like everything's fine. But in this particular case, I couldn't help but break the rule.

"Mom, can I get my belly button pierced? That's all I want for my 16th birthday. Please?" Then she'd smile at me, flash those pretty teeth and wait for an answer.

Welcome to the current generation gap. And it's a wide one, folks. Sometimes, I have no clue.

As a teenager, I was grateful when my parents allowed me to pierce my ears—one hole in each ear.

Enter my daughter, Lindsey, who had her ears pierced at age 7. For her 14th birthday, she requested a second pair of holes in her lobes. What's more, she encouraged her mother to do the same ... me, a 40-odd-year-old fashion queen who wears high-waisted jeans in public and fuzzy socks in bed.

Just a few weeks before, I'd visited with a childhood friend who had double-pierced ears. Jenette's tiny diamond studs coupled with modest hoop earrings looked pretty. Why not, I thought? So when the day came for Lindsey's ear piercing, I had mine done, too.

For her next birthday, Lindsey wanted a THIRD pair of piercings in her lobes, and I signed the parental paperwork once again.

This newest birthday wish really befuddled me, though. A belly button ring? Whatever for?

"I just want one," Lindsey answered matter-of-factly.

But why?

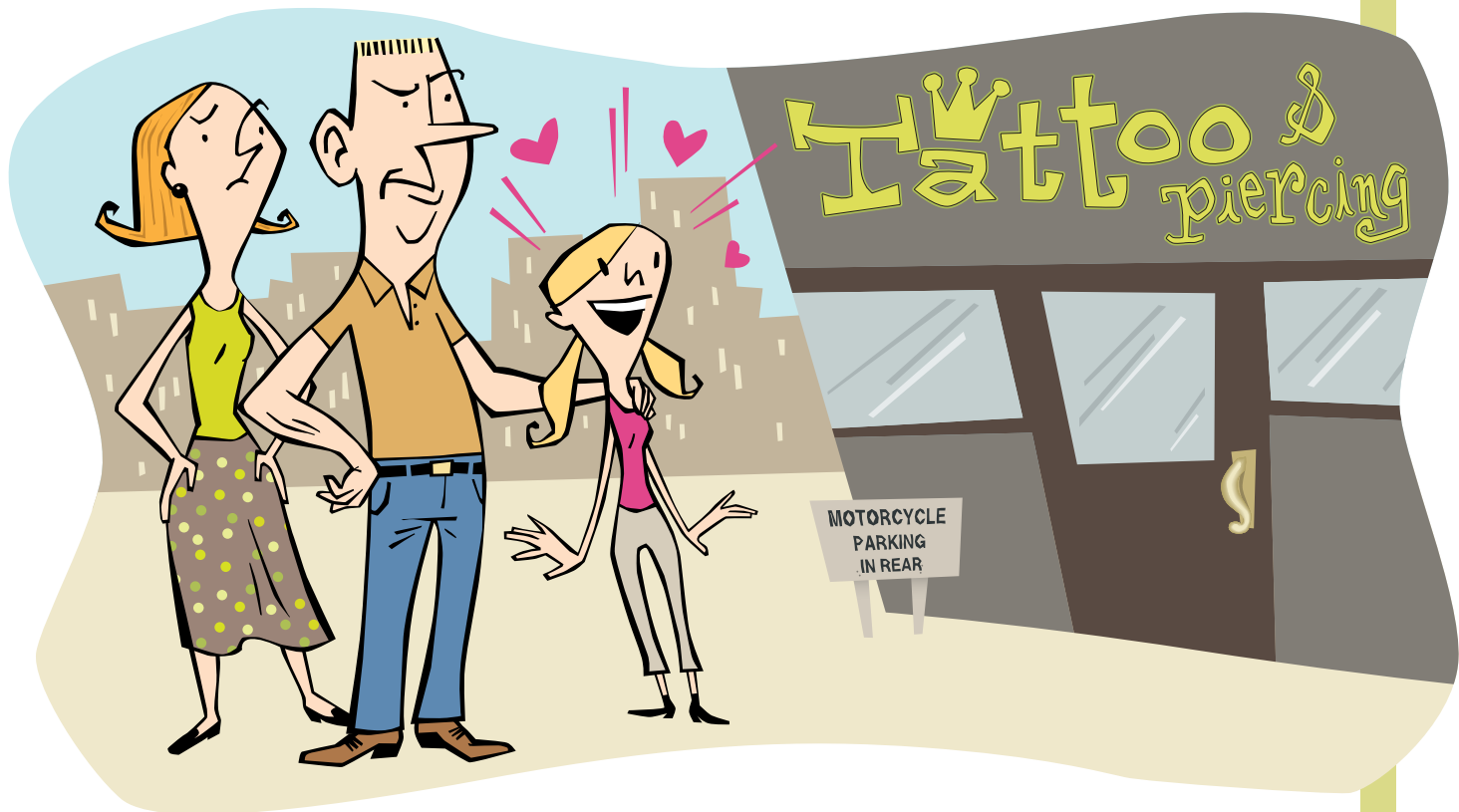
"Just 'cause," she shrugged.

Later, during parental talk time in bed, James, her stepfather, helped put the issue in perspective.

"It's a teenage-girl thing," he whispered in the dark. "And it's just a little hole that'll grow back. We've told her she has to pass chemistry first, then maybe she can get it done. I don't see anything wrong with it. She's not asking to pierce her eyebrow or lip. And remember, it's NOT A TATTOO."

To this day, I'm still not sure how she managed, but Lindsey passed her chemistry class by one point. Naturally, I shared her relief—no more chemistry class.





I also felt a bit of dismay ... now I had to shop for a TATTOO PARLOR.

Shortly after dark on the appointed day, we pulled in front of a glass-fronted business dubbed as the town's "best tattoo parlor." Surreptitiously, I glanced over my shoulder as we trooped through the door. Heaven forbid that anyone see us here.

Inside, rock music blared. Fish swam in murky aquariums. Models on a video showed off their assorted bodily piercings. A glass display case featured jewelry for piercees while numerous books touted designs for tattoo candidates. For several minutes, James and I just stood there, trying not to gape.

"It's not too late—you don't have to do this," I told Lindsey. But she shook her head vigorously. There was no changing the girl's mind.

Finally, Corey—who'd been busy with a previous piercing job—led us to a brown vinyl-covered table, where he asked Lindsey to lie down. Throughout the procedure, he answered Lindsey's questions, stressed his use of a clean, never-before-used needle and patiently ignored the steady flashes of my camera.

In less than 10 minutes, Corey helped Lindsey sit up, then handed her a mirror. Her face immediately lit up with pure happiness. She'd gotten her wish.

More than a week later, I mentioned to a friend what Lindsey had wanted for her birthday. "Oh, I bet that was hard on you," he sympathized.

I smiled and nodded in return.

But really, I realized later, it hadn't been. I'd never felt adamantly opposed to the idea, just very puzzled. I simply couldn't fathom—and probably never will—the appeal of having a hole in your navel. But I don't need to understand. My mother didn't pierce her ears until she was well into her 40s. Her mother never did at all. Each generation chose their own way, and we all grew to be good, strong, true women.

That's what I've tried so hard to do with my daughter—allow her to find herself and be herself, to be independent and confident, wise and ambitious. It's been a rocky journey, and at times I've questioned my parental skills, especially during the years when black dominated her wardrobe.

But this I know—one way or another, Lindsey in her own way will knock out the world someday ... with or without a ring in her belly button.

*Sheryl Smith-Rodgers is a frequent contributor to Texas Co-op Power.*

## BASTROP

# Outlaw on the Air

*An 'outlaw' DJ  
and his tabby  
cat broadcast by  
satellite from  
home in Bastrop.*

**By Sheryl  
Smith-Rodgers**



The sun's not even up yet when Dallas Wayne slips on his earphones, boots up his computer and reviews eight or so pages of notes. A quick puff from a smoldering cigarette, followed by a gulp of strong coffee, then he's on the air.

"Howdy, folks, this is Big D here on the O.C., Sirius 63," Wayne drawls into a big, black microphone. Beneath his swivel chair, a tabby cat saunters by Wayne's bare feet and sniffs a nearby suitcase that's lying open on the floor. Downstairs, a telephone jangles, and breakfast dishes clatter in a sink.

Forget a fancy sound room at a big-city radio station, where most disc jockeys spin their albums. This laid-back guy broadcasts from home.

"A few years ago, if you'd told me I'd be sitting in my house in Bastrop County, doing a coast-to-coast show, I'd say no way," Wayne muses after finishing his country music program that broadcasts daily on Sirius Satellite Radio. "Working with the O.C. has turned into my primary job."

O.C. is short for Outlaw Country, one of more than 160 channels available to Sirius subscribers around the world who pay \$12.95 and up a month for the commercial-free service. Genres appeal to a wide range of tastes: rock, pop, classical, comedy, talk, sports, kids and Latin, to name a few.

On the country music side, listeners can choose from classic favorites, hits from the '80s and '90s, current hits and bluegrass. Outlaw Country dishes up a raw honky-tonk style made famous in the 1970s by Waylon Jennings and Willie Nelson.

"We play everything from Jimmie Rodgers, Milton Brown and Bob Wills all the way to the Marshall Tucker Band, George Jones and Dolly Parton," Wayne says in his rich, deep voice. "Our parameters for picking music are if it's real, we'll play it. NO Shania Twain! This channel is edgy!"

Wayne knows his music. That's because the Missouri native started in the business as a teen, when he learned how to play guitar and toured with a bluegrass band on summer breaks. "That was quite an education," he says. "Later as a young man, I dabbled in radio. I'd always liked radio because it was a conduit to the music I loved as a kid."

In the '80s, a move to Nashville furthered Wayne's professional career. In 1990, he released his first two albums. The next year, he toured Europe and signed on with a record company in Finland. The deal—which produced six albums—also inspired Wayne and his wife, Jo, to live in Scandinavia for four years.

In 2000, they returned home and settled in California. There he signed on with HighTone Records and toured with the Twangbangers, a popular honky-tonk band. When Wayne lost his booking agent and Jo lost her job, the couple decided to move to Austin, where he jumped back into the country music scene. Two years later, they moved a final time into a two-story house that's nestled among towering pines near Bastrop.

Meanwhile, Jeremy Tepper—founder of the Diesel Only Records music label and a music format manager with Sirius—invited Wayne to deejay for Outlaw Country from home. “We’re already playing your music,” Tepper pointed out.

Wayne, though, hesitated at first. “I was still touring a lot, and I was concerned that it would interfere with the radio work,” he recalls. “But Jeremy said my traveling around would make good radio. Then he showed me how to do my show from the road.”

At home, Wayne converted an upstairs bedroom into a studio for both his music and radio work.

“It’s fascinating technology,” he says, nodding toward his split-level desk outfitted with a computer keyboard, flat-screen display, dual speakers and sound-processing board. I record the show, then transmit it via Internet to New York.”

However, working from home is not without its frustrations. Lucky, the family cat, occasionally crawls on his keyboard. “I’m in trouble if he hits the ‘send’ button,” Wayne cracks. And every Tuesday morning, the garbage truck thunders by at precisely 9:15. “I’d better be done with whatever I’m doing because you can always hear it coming,” he says.

Taping while on the road sometimes calls for creativity, too. “I’ve done my show on Interstate 95 in my truck while driving through South Carolina,” he says. “I’ve done a show at 3 a.m. in a hotel room and taken the cushions off the couch to make a soundproof tent around the desk. I’ve even done a show in bed with room service bringing me breakfast. Radio is spontaneous. It’s a lot of fun.”

The love Wayne has for his work resonates in his on-air, down-home chitchat. He’s real and relaxed, ever the outlaw rebel. “Sometimes I get political, sometimes I get offensive,” he admits.

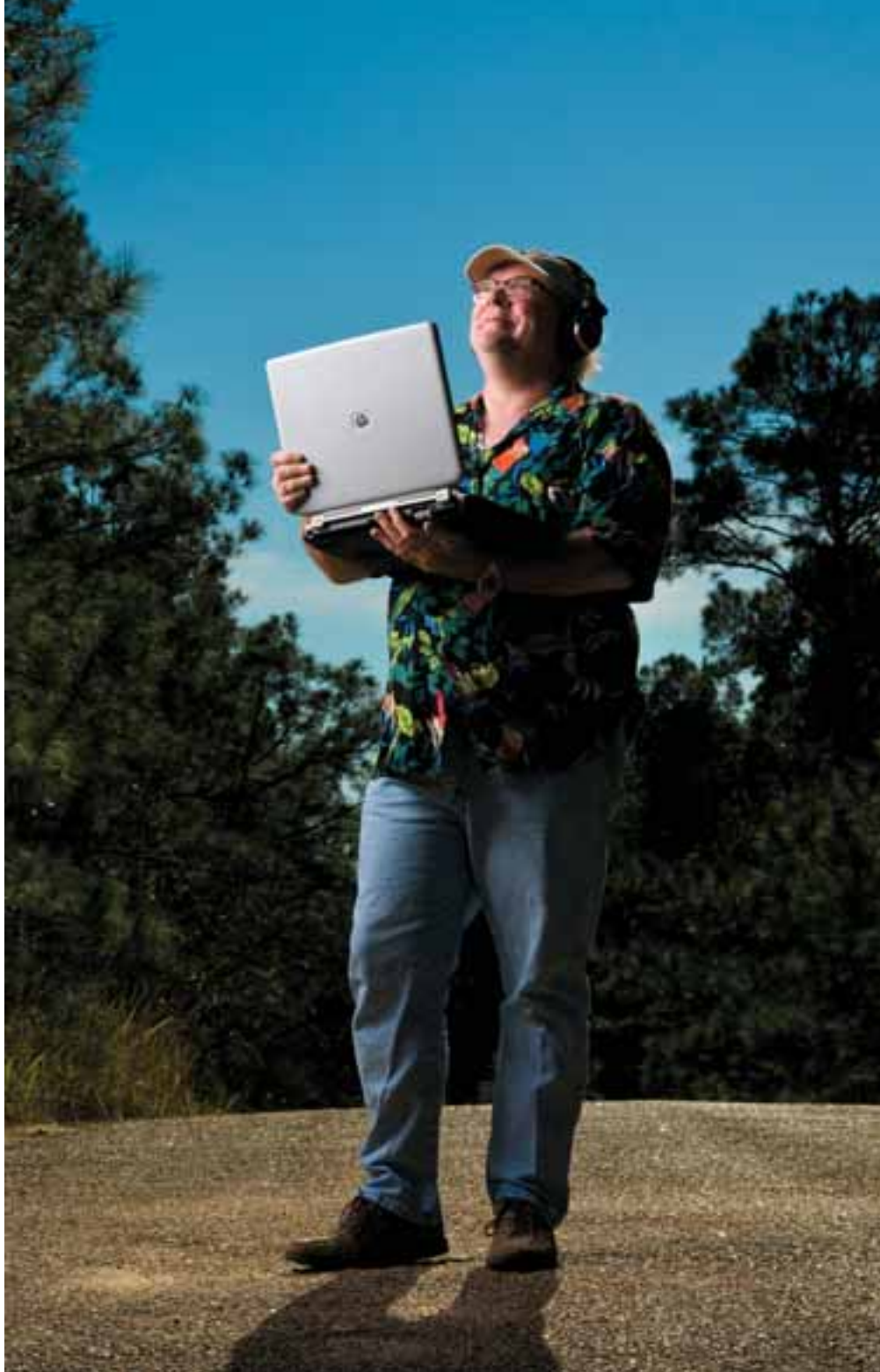
Mostly, though, he comes across like a neighborhood good ol’ buddy.

“Proud to have you here today on the O.C., folks,” he declares before sharing a recent happening in country music or maybe a news story with a moral. “Never use a shotgun to loosen a lug nut, no matter HOW tempted you are,” Wayne chuckles. “That’s what a man up in Washington state did the other day ...”

---

*Hear Dallas Wayne weekdays from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. on Outlaw Country (Sirius channel 63); “Deep in the Heart of Texas” runs Saturdays from 8 p.m.-midnight. On The Roadhouse (Sirius channel 62), Wayne airs weekends from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Check out his newest album online at [www.dallaswayne.com](http://www.dallaswayne.com). His broadcasts from home are powered by Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative.*

*Sheryl Smith-Rodgers writes essays and feature articles for Texas Co-op Power.*



**As a boy growing up, Dallas Wayne hated his first name. ‘I always wanted something normal, like Jim or Bob. But it sounds pretty good in my business,’ he says.**



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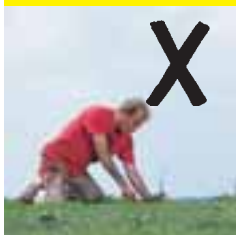
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# The Plight of the Pleurocoelus

BY CLAY COPPEDGE

We don't usually think of dinosaurs when we think of Texas. We might think about the state's officially designated large mammal, the Longhorn, or the state small mammal, the armadillo. We know that the state bird is the mockingbird, the state tree is the pecan and that the horned lizard (or horny toad, as most of us call it) is the state reptile. Rock hounds might even know that the state stone is petrified palm wood.

But seldom is heard a word, discouraging or otherwise, about the state dinosaur, the Pleurocoelus.

Whether or not Texas actually needs a state dinosaur is open to debate, but the Pleurocoelus (PLOOR-oh-SEEL-us) was so designated by the Legislature in 1997. It's our dinosaur, by golly, and we're Texans, so we're going to be proud of it, even if it wasn't what you might call ferocious.

Our dinosaur was a strict vegetarian. At least it was big—it was about 45 feet long and weighed in at about 10 tons. Paleontologists tell us that despite its size, our dinosaur was decidedly mild-mannered.

The Pleurocoelus (brachiosaur sauropod) hasn't been seen in these parts for, oh, about 65 million years. But we have proof set in stone that they lived here.

Near Glen Rose, at the appropriately named Dinosaur Valley State Park, on the banks of the Paluxy River and in the riverbed itself are some remarkably well-preserved Pleurocoelus tracks. These are some of the best dinosaur tracks in the world, which is why paleontologists have loved the park ever since Roland T. Bird of the American Museum of Natural History visited the site in 1938.

Bird realized that a set of double tracks showed an herbivorous sauropod—most likely the Pleurocoelus—being chased by a meat-eating carnivore. This was the first time sauropod tracks had been discovered anywhere in the world, which caused no small amount of excitement back in New York. A section of the Glen Rose tracks was duly sent to New York and displayed at the American Museum of Natural History, where it remains today.

Since the Pleurocoelus' trip across the riverbed that day, the fossilized tracks it left behind have been excavated and scattered hither and yon, to the Texas Memorial Museum in Austin and the private residences of many amateurs—or vandals, depending on how you look at these things.

It took a special set of circumstances to preserve the tracks for all these millions of years. Scientists believe that a violent storm blew across the shoreline a few days before the tracks were made and created a series of sand- and lime-laden mudflats. A herd of Pleurocoelus came ambling across



the sticky and still-wet mud in search of a primordial salad, followed in interested pursuit by the carnivores.

True to their nature, the Pleurocoelus tried to run away, but we don't know whether they won that particular footrace or not. No intact skeletal remains were ever found, just huge saucer-like depressions from their hind feet and smaller tracks, much like horseshoes, from the front. The primal struggle for food and survival was preserved when the seashore turned to stone, leaving behind the rocks we see in the park today, including the ones with the dinosaur prints.

Texas has had its fair share of fossilized dinosaur discoveries over the years due to a quirk of ancient geography dating back to when much of what is now Texas was an ancient sea.

As the sea level rose, the land was covered with ocean silt. Sediments on the bottom of the ocean preserved things that lived in the ocean. As sea levels dropped, traces of things that lived on land were preserved in sediments left in streams and rivers, like the Paluxy. As a result, dinosaur discoveries in Texas have included both the marine and terrestrial, along with the creatures that flew over both land and sea.

Having a state dinosaur prompts us to take official note of ancient Texas. And wildness is wildness, whether it's slinking across your pasture tonight or it lived millions of years ago and you're literally walking in its footsteps.

*United Cooperative Services serves Dinosaur Valley State Park.*

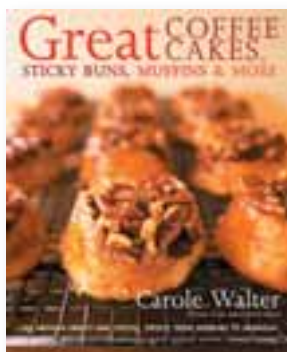
*Clay Coppedge is a frequent contributor to Texas Co-op Power.*



# Mad for Muffins

**BY SHANNON OELRICH** I have to admit, I don't make muffins very often. But whenever I do, it's like a revelation. They're so easy! Most can be made in one bowl. And, unlike a cake, you don't have to worry about appearance—those handy paper liners hem them in and make them easy to transport. I just love that there's such a small bit of fuss for a big payoff: the appreciation you'll get from those with whom you share them.

This fantastic recipe, from *Great Coffee Cakes, Sticky Buns, Muffins & More* by Carole Walter (Clarkson Potter, 2007), takes a little more work than most, but the results are worth it. Walter writes, "These blueberry muffins are absolutely heavenly. They are flavored with a hint of lemon zest and are topped with a thick layer of buttery streusel crumbs. To overcome the problem of the berries sinking to the bottom of the muffins, instead of folding the berries through the batter, I top the batter with a handful of berries. Then I cover the berries with a generous handful of streusel. The blueberry muffin lovers in your life are in for a real treat."



## ZACH'S BLUEBERRY BUTTERMILK MUFFINS WITH STREUSEL TOPPING

- 1 small recipe Carole's Favorite Streusel (see below)
- 1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour, spooned in and leveled
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 2/3 cup (1 1/3 sticks) unsalted butter, slightly firm
- 2 teaspoons finely grated lemon zest
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup buttermilk
- 1 1/2 cups fresh blueberries, washed and well dried

Prepare a small recipe of Carole's Favorite Streusel. Set aside.

Position the racks in the upper and lower thirds of the oven. Heat the oven to 375 degrees. Line 14 muffin cups with paper or foil cupcake liners.

In a large bowl, thoroughly whisk together the flour, baking powder, salt and baking soda. Set aside.

Cut the butter into 1-inch pieces and place in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. Add the lemon zest and mix on medium speed until smooth and lightened in color, about 1 minute. Add the sugar in a steady stream, then blend in the egg and vanilla, scraping down the side of the bowl as needed.

Reduce the mixer speed to low and add the flour mixture alternately with the buttermilk, dividing the flour into three parts and the buttermilk into two, starting and ending with the flour. Mix just until blended after each addition.

Portion half scoops of the batter into the prepared pans using a No. 16 ice cream scoop (1/4-cup capacity). [Editor's note: A half scoop would be 1/8 cup of batter.] Place a layer of blueberries evenly over the batter, then place a dollop of batter on top of the blueberries. It's OK for the berries to show. Take a handful of the streusel topping and crumble it over the batter and berries, completely covering the tops of the muffins with the crumbs. Press gently to adhere. Brush any stray crumbs from the top of the muffin pans using a small pastry brush.

Bake for 25–30 minutes, or until the streusel topping is golden brown. To ensure even baking, toward the end of baking time, rotate the pans top to bottom and front to back. Remove from the oven and place on a rack to cool.

Store at room temperature, tightly wrapped in aluminum foil, for up to three days. These muffins may be frozen. Makes 14 muffins.

## CAROLE'S FAVORITE STREUSEL (SMALL RECIPE)

- 6–7 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 cup all-purpose flour, spooned in and leveled
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped walnuts or pecans (optional)

Place butter in a 2-quart heavy-bottomed saucepan and heat until almost melted; remove from heat and cool to tepid.

Whisk together the flour, sugar, cinnamon, baking powder, salt and nuts if using. Add to the butter and stir with a fork until blended and mixture begins to form crumbs. Gently squeeze the mixture with your hand to form larger lumps, then break them apart with your fingertips. Before using, let the streusel stand for 10–15 minutes.



DIANE K. WINFIELD





## JUANITA WILLIAMS *Pedernales Electric Cooperative*

Prize-winning recipe: **Double Lemon Muffins**

These lemon muffins will brighten up a dull February day with their sunny flavor, which comes from using both the fresh zest and juice from lemons.

### DOUBLE LEMON MUFFINS

#### LEMON SYRUP

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 3/4 cup water
- 1/2 tablespoon lemon zest
- 1/4 cup lemon juice

In medium saucepan, combine sugar, water, lemon zest and juice. Bring to a boil, stirring to dissolve sugar. Cover and boil over medium heat for 4 minutes. Remove from heat and set aside.

#### BATTER

- 3 1/2 cups flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 1 cup whole milk
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tablespoon lemon zest
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 1 cup melted butter
- 18 teaspoons sugar

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. In large bowl, combine flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt and sugar. Stir well.

In small bowl, combine milk, eggs, lemon zest and lemon juice. Stir well. Add egg mixture and melted butter to dry ingredients. Stir quickly, just to combine.

Pour batter into 18 greased muffin cups, filling almost to top. Sprinkle each muffin with about 1 teaspoon sugar. Bake for 20 minutes, until rounded and golden. Remove from oven and place pans on wire rack.

With a thin skewer, poke 4–5 holes in each muffin. While muffins are still warm, spoon the Lemon Syrup over them. Makes 18 muffins.

Serving size: 1 muffin. Per serving: 300 calories, 3.6 g protein, 10.7 g fat, 46.7 g carbohydrates, trace fiber, 196 mg sodium, 51 mg cholesterol

**Cook's Tip:** Spritz paper muffin liners with nonstick cooking spray to make them even easier to remove.

### MIGHTY GOOD MUFFINS

- 3/4 cup raisins
- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup sesame seeds
- 2 cups carrots, finely ground or grated
- 1 cup green apple, shredded
- 1 cup rolled oats
- 1/2 cup sliced almonds
- 1/2 cup sweetened, flaked coconut
- 3 eggs
- 2/3 cup oil
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In small bowl, cover raisins with water and microwave 1 1/2 minutes. Let sit several minutes. Drain.

In large bowl, combine flour, sugar, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg, salt and sesame seeds. Add remaining ingredients, including raisins, and mix well

with spoon.

Fill paper-lined muffin cups level to the top. Bake for 25 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool on wire rack. Makes 22–24 muffins.

Serving size: 1 muffin. Per serving: 218 calories, 4.2 g protein, 9.7 g fat, 28.7 g carbohydrates, 2 g fiber, 175 mg sodium, 26 mg cholesterol

**DEANNA HASTEN**

*Farmers Electric Cooperative*

### BANANA-CRUNCH MUFFINS

- 3 cups flour
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 pound butter, melted
- 2 large eggs
- 3/4 cup whole milk
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 cup bananas, mashed
- 1 cup bananas, diced
- 1 cup pecans, chopped
- 1 cup granola
- 1 cup sweetened, flaked coconut

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In large bowl, combine flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Add butter and blend.

In medium bowl, combine eggs, milk, vanilla and mashed bananas, stirring until combined. Add to flour mixture and blend. Fold in diced banana, pecans, granola and coconut.

Spoon into muffin tins that have been sprayed with cooking spray. Sprinkle tops with banana chips, granola or coconut, if desired. Bake for 25–30 minutes. Makes 18 muffins.

Serving size: 1 muffin. Per serving: 468 calories, 6.2 g protein, 26 g fat, 52.2 g carbohydrates, 3 g fiber, 208 mg sodium, 51 mg cholesterol

**EUNICE ZUCKERO**

*Medina Electric Cooperative*

## RECIPE CONTEST

The June recipe contest topic is **SUMMER HARVEST**. How do you prepare those super fresh veggies plucked from the garden or purchased from the farmers' market? The deadline is **FEBRUARY 10**. The top winner will receive a copy of *60 Years of Home Cooking* and a Texas-shaped trivet. Runners-up will also receive prizes.

Send 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](mailto:recipes@texas-ec.org), or submit online at [www.texascooppower.com](http://www.texascooppower.com). Please include your name, address and phone number, as well as the name of your electric co-op.



DUANE K. WINFIELD

**More Muffins:** Look for a bonus muffin recipe February 1 at [www.texascooppower.com](http://www.texascooppower.com)!

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▲ Comanche Electric Cooperative member **Sandra McClure** took this picture on a camping trip on Pecan Bayou in Callahan County. “How can anyone live anywhere besides Texas?” McClure asked.

## LANDSCAPES

A state the size of Texas is sure to have a vast array of unique landscapes. From flatlands to Piney Woods and from swampland to rolling hills, the many faces of Texas landscapes offer their own distinctive beauty.

—DACIA RIVERS

◀ Magic Valley Electric Cooperative member **Sarah Barnett** snapped this photo on the edge of her property in Lyford after heavy thunderstorms. “We were doubly blessed as the sunset was reflected in the floodwaters, so we got to see the beautiful colors twice,” Barnett said.



▲ **Heather Zane** took this photo during a fishing trip on Lake Buchanan. Zane is a member of Bryan Texas Utilities.

▲ **Thomas Pesek**, San Bernard Electric Cooperative member, sent in this image of the Rio Grande taken from Santa Elena Canyon in Big Bend National Park. “The solitude of the Big Bend region is the Texas of movies and Western lore,” Pesek said.

▼ **Tabatha Tripp**, a Greenbelt Electric Cooperative member, took this picture of her horse, Strings Bright Echo, enjoying the view 4 miles east of Clarendon in Donley County. Echo is a double registered palomino quarter horse.



## Upcoming in Focus on Texas

ISSUE	SUBJECT	DEADLINE
Apr	Smiles	Feb 10
May	Cowboys	Mar 10
June	Courthouses	Apr 10
July	Underwater	May 10
Aug	Country Roads	Jun 10
Sep	Perfect Pets	Jul 10

**SMILES** is the topic for our **APRIL 2008** issue. Send your photo—along with your name, address, daytime phone, co-op affiliation and a brief description—to **Smiles, Focus on Texas, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704**, before **February 10**. A stamped, self-addressed envelope must be included if you want your entry returned (approximately six weeks). Please do not submit irreplaceable photographs—send a copy or duplicate. We regret that *Texas Co-op Power* cannot be responsible for photos that are lost in the mail or not received by the deadline. Please note that we cannot provide individual critiques of submitted photos. If you use a digital camera, e-mail your highest-resolution images to [focus@texas-ec.org](mailto:focus@texas-ec.org), or submit them on our website at [www.texascoopower.com](http://www.texascoopower.com).



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**02 HUNTSVILLE**  
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[2-3, 9-10, 16-17, 23-24]  
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Rocky Raccoon 100-Mile Run,  
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**02 CONROE**  
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**05 KERRVILLE**  
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**08 BRENHAM** [8-9]  
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**09 ANDERSON**  
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[www.birthplaceoftexas.com](http://www.birthplaceoftexas.com)

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[9-10, 23-24]  
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Eagle Fest, Emory,  
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**14 TEXARKANA**  
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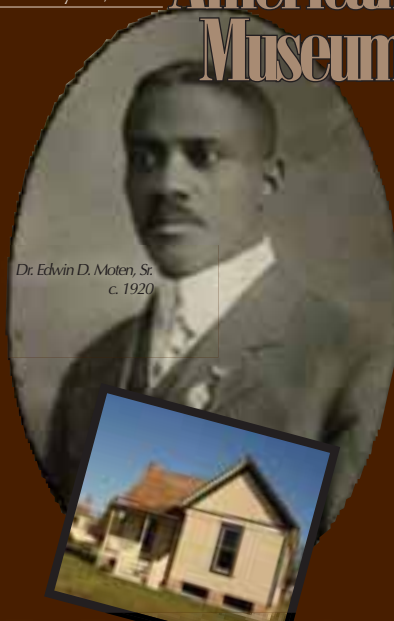
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Winter Festival,  
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[www.artfullyyours.org](http://www.artfullyyours.org)

**POINT**  
Rural American Music  
Revue, (903) 598-3809,  
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**22 ABILENE**  
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**25 ODESSA**  
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**28 PHARR**  
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Whenever you find yourself wondering why the world just had to go and change so much, you're clearly in need of a drive back in time. Your faith in what makes good, basic sense will be restored by a leisurely trek on roadsides that skirt the northwestern edge of the Hill Country. Follow Texas Highway 29 west from Llano 35 miles to Mason, then U.S. 377 southwest about 45 miles to Junction. The journey is only 80

# LLANO to JUNCTION

*Take a trip back in time with this jaunt along the Llano.*

**BY JUNE NAYLOR**

**Mason Square Bed and Breakfast**, (325) 347-6398 or 1-888-694-0111

**Coffee Mug n' More**, (325) 347-1600; [www.thecoffeemugnmore.com](http://www.thecoffeemugnmore.com)

## JUNCTION

Hold your breath for good weather because you will want a nice day for enjoying the beautiful **SOUTH LLANO RIVER STATE PARK**, sitting to one side of U.S. 377 after you drive through the



miles, but you're smart if you stretch it out over a couple of days.

## LLANO

A bucolic ranching town on the Llano River, Llano has long been a destination for hunters, nature lovers hoping for eagle sightings and folks in search of a great scenic drive. You'll do well to stop for a barbecue feast at the venerable **COOPER'S OLD TIME PIT BAR-B-QUE**, where you handpick your pork chop, steak, brisket, ribs, cabrito and sausage from the giant smokers just outside the restaurant entrance.

But if you're hoping for something with a tad more sophistication, check out the reopened **BADU HOUSE**. Opened as a bank in 1891, the handsome brick building became popular as a bed and breakfast. A recent and lavish renovation by a local rancher has turned it into a lovely place to dig into grilled quail or spinach and mushroom chile rellenos, with margaritas on the side. Check out the shops around the courthouse square, as well as the local history museum, near the old bridge over the pretty Llano River.

**City of Llano**, [www.llanotx.com](http://www.llanotx.com), (325) 247-4158  
**Cooper's Old Time Pit Bar-B-Que**, (325) 247-

5713, [www.coopersbbq.com](http://www.coopersbbq.com)

**Badu House**, (325) 247-4174, [www.baduhouse.com](http://www.baduhouse.com)

## MASON

If you are drawn to dramatic architecture with magnificent stone construction, you'll fall in love with Mason. Park on the courthouse square and just stroll around—you'll see one house, building and church after another crafted from the beautiful rock quarried right in the area. At the new **MUSEUM ON THE SQUARE**, learn about the ranching heritage and see the nation's largest blue topaz, the state gemstone. You can even hunt for your own gems at local ranches.

Book ahead for a stay at **MASON SQUARE BED AND BREAKFAST**, a three-room inn with private baths, a kitchenette, a sunroom and a balcony overlooking the town square, all above a law office. A few doors down, you'll find yourself wanting to while away a morning or afternoon at **COFFEE MUG N' MORE**, a great little bookstore with cool music on the satellite radio station, excellent cappuccinos, pastries and paninis.

**Mason County Chamber of Commerce**, (325) 347-5758, [www.masontxcoc.com](http://www.masontxcoc.com)

town of Junction. Out here on the western edge of the Hill Country region, the 524-acre park exemplifies everything one would desire in a nature refuge: a quiet place to drop a line for catfish or fly-fishing practice; clear, flowing water that's perfect for canoeing, tubing and swimming; great trails for hiking and mountain biking; plenty of pecan-tree shade for picnicking; rocky vistas that reach forever; and wonderful places to watch wild turkey roosting from October through March.

After your frolic in the park, head on into the peaceful town, and be sure to snap a souvenir photo downtown at the **DEERHORN TREE**—a sculpture crafted from hundreds of deer antler pairs. Then settle in for a BLT lunch or steak supper at **ISAACK'S RESTAURANT**, a genuine throwback that seems unchanged over 40 years or more.

**Kimble County Chamber of Commerce**, (325) 446-3190, [www.junctiontexas.net](http://www.junctiontexas.net)

**South Llano River State Park**, (325) 446-3994, [www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us)

**Isaack's Restaurant**, (325) 446-2629, [www.isaacksrestaurant.com](http://www.isaacksrestaurant.com)

*June Naylor wrote Texas: Off the Beaten Path.*



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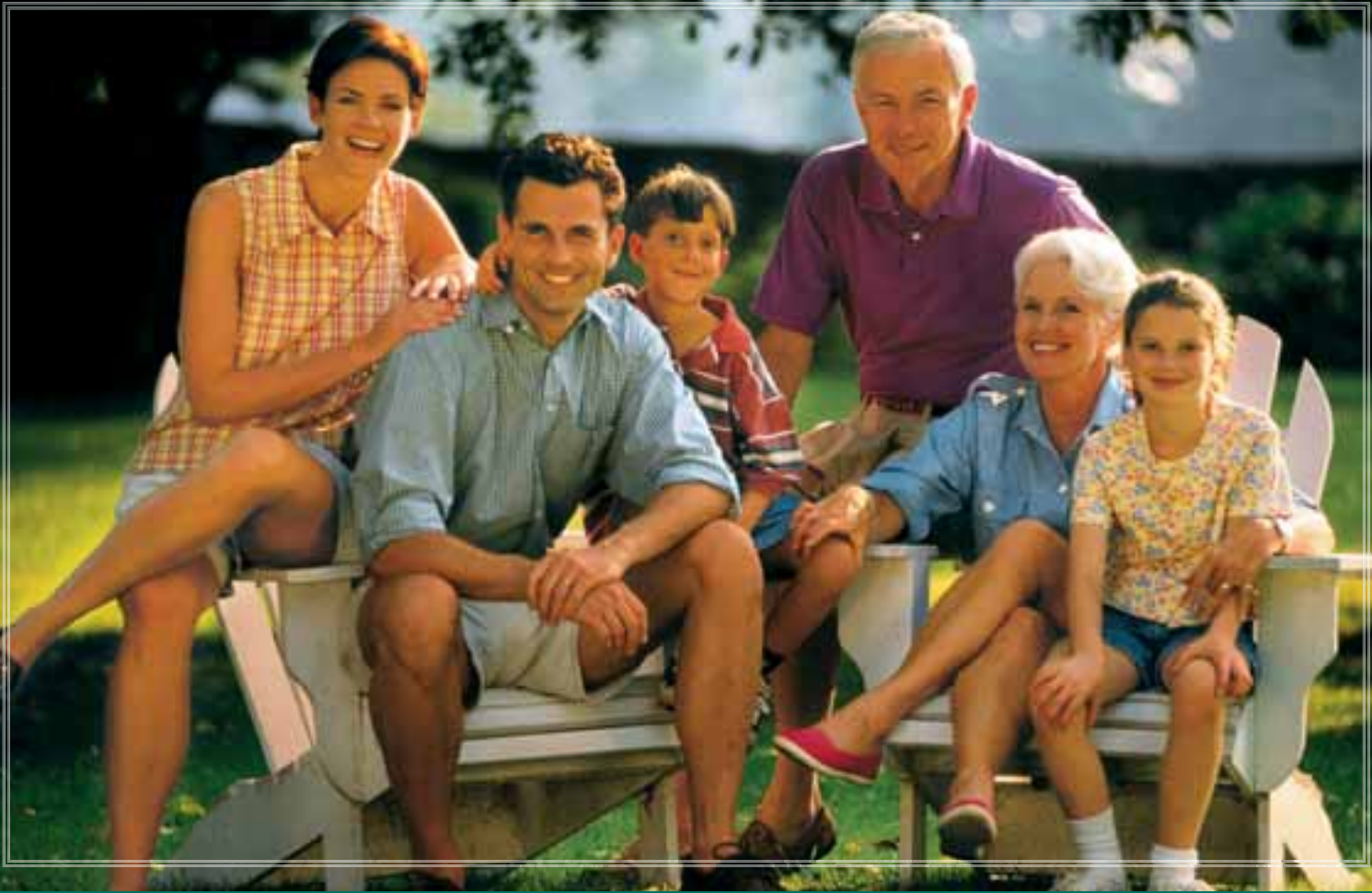
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