

LOCAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE EDITION

JANUARY 2009

HATS OFF TO COWTOWN

HEALTHY TAILGATING

TEXAS CO-OP POWER

HURRICANE IKE DIARY



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January 2009

VOLUME 65 NUMBER 7



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By Stephen W. Williams
and Eddie Albin

Our guys on the ground recount what East Texas cooperatives were doing while members' lights were out.

12 Hats Off to Cowtown: Nation's Oldest Stock Show and Rodeo Remains True to its Roots

By Thomas Korosec

The Fort Worth stock show started in 1896, with the nation's first indoor rodeo following in 1918. The Cowtown event also claims these firsts: bull riding competition, live radio broadcast and live national TV coverage.

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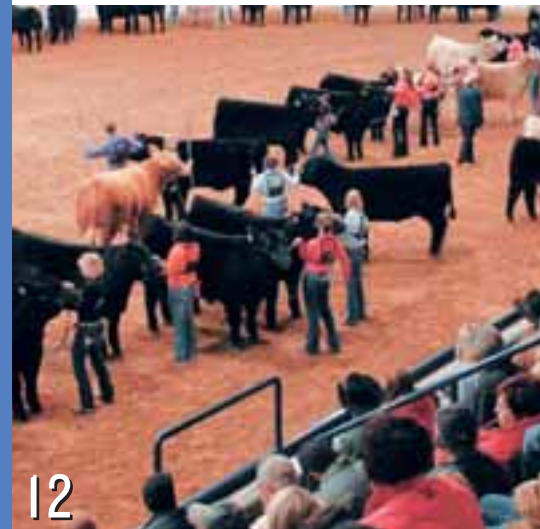
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TEXAS CO-OP POWER

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

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letters

WONDERFUL MAN AND WONDERFUL SCHOOL

The article about the Texas School for the Deaf (October 2008, "Texas School for the Deaf: Building Bridges") was very informative and highlighted one of the wonderful special schools in our state. Thanks for informing the general public on the education of these deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

On page 10, there is a picture of a very special gentleman, a 1948 graduate of TSD, visiting with a current student. Lloyd Williams was a member of the Concan Church of Christ for many years. He was such an inspiration to all of us who knew him. He had a wonderful sense of humor. Lloyd traveled from his home in Concan to Austin twice monthly to preach at the Church of Christ for the hard of hearing. Lloyd died suddenly at his home on August 30, 2008. We miss him in our little community, but will always remember him. He is truly a testament to TSD.

NORMA AND SONNY GAYLE
Bandera Electric Cooperative

WOLF BRAND CHILI STILL A STANDOUT

It's too bad you didn't mention Wolf Brand Chili in the October 2008 article "A Bowl of Red: Texas Chili as Hot as Ever."

I still think it is the best-made chili, homemade or otherwise. I was disappointed when the big guys bought the company out and moved it out of Corsicana.

DALE TAYLOR
Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative

We want to hear from our readers. Send letters to: Editor, *Texas Co-op Power*, 1122 Colorado, 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701, 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



WANTED: A SPECIAL BREED OF PROFESSIONAL

Electric linemen are hard-hat hometown heroes who brave ice storms, windstorms and pelting rains to get the power back on when the weather goes bad. And when they aren't riding to the rescue in a storm, they often brave scorching heat and bone-chilling cold to build and maintain the lines that keep power flowing to homes and businesses.

Electric cooperative linemen's rapid response to areas hard hit by Hurricane Ike in September showed these brave souls at their best. "Linemen are special people for whom I have tremendous respect," said Ray Beavers, chairman of Texas Electric Cooperatives (TEC) board of directors. "It takes someone who is not afraid to work, who believes in team effort and is committed to the job—day and night—whenever the call comes."

The skills of linemen, right-of-way workers and other employees who feel at home in a hard hat are in demand. There is growing concern among power providers in Texas and elsewhere that there may be shortages of experienced linemen in the next few years.

"It is definitely something that co-ops and other utilities need to address," said Beavers, who also serves as chief executive officer and general manager of United Cooperative Services, a Cleburne-based electric cooperative. The biggest hurdle right now is what Beavers calls the anniversary-date issue—a growing number of linemen nearing retirement. For example, about 10 percent of the linemen at his co-op will be ready for retirement in the next few years, he said.

Fortunately, community colleges are stepping forward to offer one semester of basic training, after which graduates can move to the top of cooperative hiring lists. Kilgore College and South Plains College

have programs in place. Three other colleges—Tyler Junior College, The Victoria College and Western Texas College—are developing programs. And the Southeast Lineman Training Center based in Georgia is building a campus in Rockwall County.

"Training is absolutely crucial," said Tiffin Wortham, TEC vice president, member services. He is in charge of providing additional training once a Texas cooperative hires an aspiring lineman.

Wortham oversees TEC's Loss Control schools held across the state, usually at co-op facilities. In 2008, there were 35

schools covering transformers, troubleshooting, basic and advanced pole climbing, underground line construction, overhead line construction and metering. Schools were held in Fredericksburg, Merkel, Gonzales, Quitman, Tahoka, San Augustine, Livingston, Levelland, Henderson, McGregor and other locations so applicants and workers working on

advanced skills do not have to travel long distances to receive training.

"It takes about five years of training and apprenticeship for a lineman to get to the level of journeyman and able to handle a variety of duties," Beavers said. "Electric cooperatives have some advantages in attracting qualified people interested in a career as an electric lineman. Besides being stable employers, electric co-ops are family-oriented and employee-oriented, and they offer good pay and benefits.

"For the right person, it is a great career, and clearly it is one that makes a difference in people's lives," Beavers said.

Anyone interested in a career as a lineman should contact his or her local electric cooperative or Tami Knipstein in the Member Services Department of TEC at tknipstein@texas-ec.org or visit the TEC website: www.texas-ec.org.

WILL VAN OBERBEK



KEITH DIXON
Apprentice lineman, Victoria EC

H A P P E N I N G S



Remember the life of Anson Jones, the last president of the Republic of Texas, January 10-11 at the **BARRINGTON LIVING HISTORY FARM**. The farm is located at the Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site off State Highway 105 on FM 1155 between Navasota and Brenham.

See the mourning customs of the 1850s while paying homage to Jones, a controversial political figure who helped guide Texas to annexation as the 28th state in the Union. Jones, sometimes called the Architect of Annexation, committed suicide in 1858.

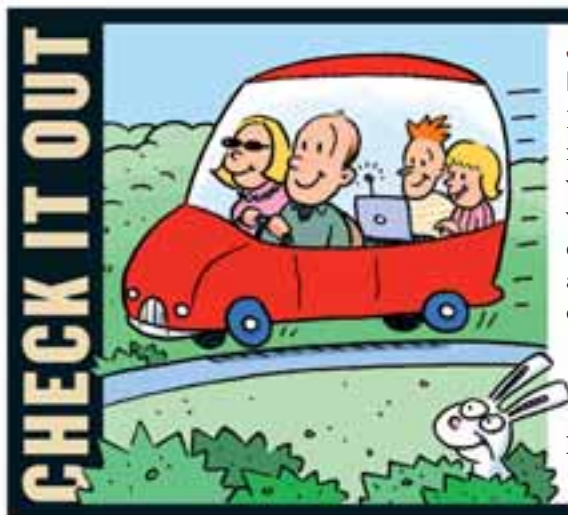
Event hours are 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. each day. For more information, call (936) 878-2213 or go to www.birthplaceoftexas.com.

PALM TREES AND GULF BREEZE

On the very tip of Texas, before you reach the Queen Isabella Causeway to South Padre Island, travelers can find respite at the once-private **Yacht Club Hotel** of Port Isabel. Don't be misled by the name. This two-story facility may once have served the high and mighty—Charles Lindbergh, Andrew Carnegie and members of the Rockefeller family are said to have stayed here—but today guests range from hunters, birders and motorcyclists to winter Texans. The kitchen now serves only catered events. But visitors may sit on the second-floor veranda or strike up conversations around the pool, in the lobby, or in the adjacent sitting area, which has two fireplaces.



—From *Historic Hotels of Texas: A Traveler's Guide*, Texas A&M University Press, first edition, 2007



JUST DON'T TELL THEM IT'S EDUCATIONAL

Parents and teachers should take note of the Texas Education Vacation website for tips on combining trips with fun education opportunities for children. Many of the attractions and events supplement public school curriculum.

Go to www.texaseducationvacation.com to peruse upcoming featured events or click on various parts of the state for information on regions you are planning to visit.

WHO KNEW?



GRACE KELLY AND TEXAS


What could the two have in common? Neiman Marcus, of course. When the actress, a longtime customer, became engaged in 1955, she tapped store president Stanley Marcus to create her bridesmaids' dresses. Marcus commissioned six frothy, pale yellow organdy frocks from Priscilla of Boston. In addition, Prince Rainier asked Neiman Marcus to create a perfume for his fiancée. The scent, *Fleurissimo*, remains a steady seller today.

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D HURRICANE IKE DIARY

BY STEPHEN W. WILLIAMS
PHOTOS BY WILL VAN OVERBEEK

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Outside linemen are dispatched to help repair their sister cooperatives' lines as soon as possible after a major disaster. Following Hurricane Rita three years ago, cooperatives expressed a need for volunteer assistance with communications as well. They deal with the media and document damage to assist in applying for disaster repair grants. So for the first time ever, Texas Electric Cooperatives asked communicators around the state to join a task force. Many volunteered. Immediately after Hurricane Ike hit the northern Texas coast Saturday, September 13, two volunteers were dispatched—Eddie Albin of Southwest Texas Electric Co-op to Deep East Texas Electric Co-op and Stephen W. Williams of Bandera Electric Co-op to Sam Houston Electric Co-op. Williams sent us daily updates, which we think provide an eloquent account of cooperation among cooperatives.*

SUNDAY, 9/14/08

Crews Arrive

THE CONTRACT RIGHT-OF-WAY AND repair crews began to arrive today. There were well over 200 trucks and 400 to 500 men when I was last at the staging area. The co-op is expecting another 200 trucks before morning. Some other co-op crews are coming, too. It was amazing to watch. Most of these crews were in Louisiana and have not been home in weeks.

Today I was out getting pre-repair photos and videos to help document the hurricane damage at Sam Houston EC, which everyone here calls "SHECO." The two tent cities that were to go up today were delayed because of logistical issues. Monday will be a big day as we will re-energize the hospital here in Livingston.

As I drove around I saw the impact of no gasoline. I saw only one store equipped to sell gas because it had generator power. There were three police officers keeping the line moving that stretched four or five blocks.

By the tent city location in Coldspring there was a Cowboy Church meeting, and I was able to go and ask

them to pray for the linemen as they come to do this dangerous work. They were glad to do so.

Well I best get some sleep, as tomorrow will be a long day that will start early.

MONDAY 9/15/08

Power Out to 99 Percent of Meters

AS OF 10:30 A.M. MONDAY, SIGNIFICANT progress has been made in removing trees and rebuilding power lines. More than 1,000 additional personnel are in the field

today assisting with the effort. By Tuesday, the total work force will be 2,500.

The Entergy Texas transmission grid, which delivers electricity to Sam Houston EC's distribution system, was severely damaged. As Sam Houston EC works to clear trees and repair distribution lines, Entergy is doing the same on their transmission system. At this time, 99 percent of Sam Houston EC's members are without power. Progress is steady. However, some severely damaged areas could be without power for three weeks.

TUESDAY NIGHT 9/16/08

The Goodness of Rural People

WHEN I WALKED UP TO THE OFFICE THIS afternoon there was a sound absent that I had come to expect. The old generator was not running. The biggest news of the day for me was that the office where I have been sleeping now has full power so the A/C is working. Also, a very small section of Livingston and a few other limited locations got power.

Utility crews were busy today. When they are working on a section of line they mark it with an orange tag hang-



ing off the ground jumpers. Those orange tags were dangling from the wires all over the place.

As I drove around, I saw long lines at the few gas stations that had power. Lines were also long at the “PODs.” POD stands for point of distribution. It is where the Federal Emergency Management Agency is giving out ice, food and water. Ice is like gold.

I also saw the goodness of rural people as I watched volunteers hand out ice, MREs (meals ready to eat) and water at the Coldspring POD. Coldspring is a small rural community. One of the workers there told me people would just show up and start pitching in to load the stuff into grateful residents’ vehicles. Many of them were local teens who felt compelled to help. This is where “love your neighbor” becomes more than words for them.

It’s also interesting to see that folks are still being friendly at the traffic signals, which are now four-way stops. Occasionally someone who has not been to town will sit at the light not sure what to do. A good deal of the daily traffic is utility trucks or support vehicles with poles, transformers and other equipment.

Sam Houston EC is putting up several hundred crew members at Lake Tomahawk, a Baptist summer camp. It overlooks a nice lake with a cross that reflects in the water at dusk. Some of the crews were out after work playing basketball like they were first-week campers. I don’t know how they found the energy. The camp manager had his extended family there to help feed and host the crews. They were a very welcoming bunch. It felt like family.

The media and co-op members continue to be kind and understanding. Sam Houston EC’s years of fostering trust and good member relations is paying off.

WEDNESDAY EVENING, 9/17/08

Dinner with a Song

THIS ASSIGNMENT HAS BEEN FILLED with the unexpected, and I never know when the best jewel of the day will occur. Today it came as the sun was going down. I came dragging in about 7:30 p.m. and went to the feeding area in the very back of Sam Houston EC’s main office.

I sat down with my lasagna in a



Construction crews work feverishly to replace damaged poles at Sam Houston EC.



Weary after a long day's work, crew members line up for a hot meal.

room filled with about 200 workers, all eating and talking about the day. A tall, slim, older man walked to the end of the serving line and said, “Can I have your attention please?” The room fell silent, and he broke into song. “There ain’t no woman like the one I got ...”

He had a delightful voice and sang with conviction. At the end, he said, “This was for you ladies,” and he gestured to the Sam Houston EC employees who have been busting their tails to keep the workforce fed. The room erupted in applause. The ladies totally broke down and cried in each other’s arms.

I later learned that the singer was a preacher. He was hired as a contract

employee to run the gas pump attached to a tanker truck. I had seen the man first thing this morning when I drove my truck to have it filled with gas. He was incredibly cheerful so early in the morning.

All Sam Houston EC employees were called to pull a heavy load with this Ike storm. It also brought the same havoc in their personal lives as it did to all members. Some employees were dealing with holes in their roofs, canceled weddings and damaged property at the same time they were expected to do things they had never done and work more hours than ever.

As for progress in the hazardous and

difficult job of restoring power, the army of 3,000 line workers made a huge dent in getting the Sam Houston EC system operational. The lights are on in some places, but there is still so much to do.

Well it's late and I best clean up and get some rest.

THURSDAY EVENING 9/19/08

The Assignment of a Lifetime

I'M HEADING HOME IN A FEW MINUTES. I have taken about 600 still photographs, a couple hours of video and talked with countless employees, contractors and members. I will have logged close to 1,600 miles on my Bandera Electric Cooperative pickup, and most of that in the Sam Houston EC service area.

This was the assignment of a lifetime for me. I have learned how this kind of trial pulls people together. I have a number of fast friends I have lived with during the past six days and I will miss them. It has also been rewarding to see the employees of Sam Houston EC at their best. It is amazing what they are doing here.

But, it will be good to finally take an actual shower, plus have a bed that does not leak air. Each night it was almost a ritual for me to carry my air mattress outside so I could air it up with the compressor I plug into the cigarette lighter in the truck. About the time all the air would leak out, it was time to get up. It was a kind of alarm clock.

Well I best head west now.



Still smiling after all that toil.

COOPERATIVE MUTUAL AID IS ESSENTIAL

BY EDDIE ALBIN



The 64 distribution co-ops in Texas have mutual aid agreements temporarily committing workers and equipment to co-ops in distress. 260 cooperative linemen from around Texas helped restore service to seven electric cooperatives in East Texas after Hurricane Ike ravaged the area.

WHEN LINEMAN DICKIE CLOYD pulled out of Lighthouse Electric Cooperative's yard in Floydada on Monday morning, September 15, he knew it was going to be a long day. Six hundred fifty miles and 12 hours later, he drew a sigh of relief when he arrived at the headquarters of Deep East Texas Electric Cooperative (DETEC) in San Augustine. After a short night's sleep, the first-class lineman reported to duty at 5 the next morning.

Cloyd joined 260 cooperative linemen who helped restore service to seven electric cooperatives in East Texas after Hurricane Ike tore down power lines, uprooted trees and caused an estimated \$10 billion to \$20 billion damage in the Houston, Galveston and greater East Texas area.

The 64 distribution co-ops in Texas have mutual aid agreements temporarily committing workers and equipment to co-ops in distress. Cloyd and other Lighthouse Electric Co-op linemen joined 113 DETEC employees, workers from 18 other cooperatives and five contractor crews to get the East Texas co-op up and running as quickly as possible.

DETEC Director of Administration Gina Evett said the co-op now prepares for such disasters using experience gained from coping with Hurricane

Rita in 2005. "I had already established a relationship with the suppliers of tents, portable showers and restrooms" for incoming linemen, she said.

General Manager Larry Warren oversaw all aspects of the Hurricane Ike repair at his co-op. "We had conference calls at 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. every day with all our neighboring cooperatives and emergency operations staff located in Austin," he said. "Additionally, we are updating the Public Utility Commission daily on our restoration status."

Besides overseeing the various departments, Warren fielded calls from members, local newspapers and local radio stations.

Cooperatives helping cooperatives is not an uncommon event. It happens after ice storms, prairie fires, tornadoes, hurricanes and floods. One can never tell when nature will next threaten our well-being, but there's no doubt cooperatives will confront the challenge together.

Eddie Albin, member services supervisor at Southwest Texas Electric Cooperative, traveled to San Augustine to help with communications at Deep East Texas Electric Cooperative following Hurricane Ike.



Top left to right: Houston County EC construction crew foreman Mike Lane; Taylor EC lineman Scotty Shipman; Pedernales EC construction supervisor Dennis Thompson.

Center left: Youngsters Alana Meshell, Shelby Francis and Allie Meshell help distribute MREs, ice and water to hurricane victims at the Apple Springs Volunteer Fire Department near Lufkin.

Center right: Lyntegar EC lineman Les Dockery

Bottom: Perry Little of Houston County EC discusses strategy with David Nerada and two other crew members from Victoria EC.

Found! The Last Morgan Silver Dollars

Amazing Discovery Hidden in Midwest Farm Cellar

Indiana. A farmer in America's heartland recently cashed in his long-forgotten savings, hidden away for decades in a dusty crate in his cellar—a hoard of the last Morgan Silver dollars minted by the U.S. Treasury before they ceased production for good, in 1921.

Originally purchased from a local bank for face value, the farmer had tucked them away for his retirement. Now these glittering chunks of nearly uncirculated silver history, are being released to the public by GovMint.com. While they last, you can acquire these brilliant, lustrous silver coins for as low as \$29.50 apiece. Twenty-coin Bankers rolls and 10-coin Half Rolls are available.

Survival Against All Odds

By all rights these silver dollars should have been destroyed decades ago. Government silver melt-downs, including the 1918 Pittman Act, which alone destroyed 270 million Morgans, have decimated supplies. Millions more were called in by the government and melted for their silver content between 1921 and 1965. Today private hoards account for virtually all the surviving coins. And of those, only a fraction survive in the Virtually Uncirculated condition so coveted by collectors.

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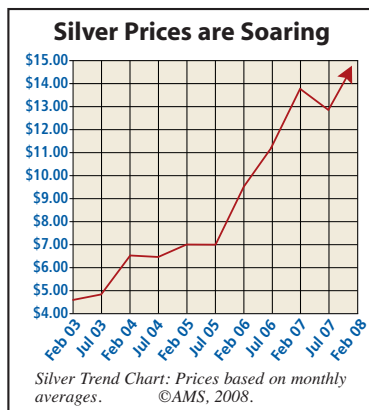
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Hats Off TO Cowtown

NATION'S OLDEST STOCK SHOW AND RODEO
REMAINS TRUE TO ITS ROOTS

BY THOMAS KOROSCEC PHOTOS BY GLEN ELLMAN

WITH 113 YEARS UNDER ITS saddle-tooled belt, the Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo is a big part of Cowtown's past. Less obvious, though, is how deeply the show is rooted in the lives of many present-day participants, the people you bump into as you wander among the yellow-brick barns or knock on the doors of the rodeo caravan trailers parked behind the Will Rogers Memorial Coliseum.

From the cattle and swine barns, to the rodeo arena, to the exhibits hall and executive offices, the 24-day event—scheduled from January 16 through February 8—is filled with people whose attachments go back years, often decades.

“It’s like being married to the Mafia. Once you’re in you never get out,” joked Paul Riggs, who manages a string of 64 flashy and pampered saddle horses ridden by flag carriers, dignitaries, pickup riders and others during the show’s 30 performances of professional rodeo and six nights of other rough stock riding and specialty rodeo events.

The stands at the Will Rogers Memorial Coliseum arena are packed not only for the rodeo but also for the judging of prime livestock.



Oldest in the Nation

BEGUN IN 1896 WHEN A GROUP OF North Texas cattle raisers got together for a one-day event on the banks of Marine Creek near the city stockyards, the Fort Worth stock show is the oldest in the nation, although not the largest. That distinction belongs to Houston.

The Fort Worth show has been interested from the start in attracting a crowd with the latest and newest. The Texas Fat Stock Show, as it was first named, brought in a Wild West show in 1916 and two years later held the nation's first indoor rodeo. Show promoters named it with the word that Mexican vaqueros used for cowboy contests—ro-DAY-o—and are said to be the first to have Americanized the pronunciation to RO-dee-o. The first one featured junior steer riding and bronc riding for ladies and men, with contestants vying for a total purse of \$3,000. An estimated 23,000 people saw the inaugural rodeo's 12 performances.

Over the years, stock show boosters introduced the first bull-riding contest and side-release chutes, the first live radio broadcast of a rodeo in 1932, the first rodeo to include an entertainer (cowboy singer Gene Autry in 1944), and the first live national television coverage in 1958. That TV broadcast, featuring performances by Roy Rogers and Dale Evans, as well as George "Gabby" Hayes, drew an audience of 8 million viewers.

The broadcast is one of stock show chairman Ed Bass' earliest memories of the event. "Having spent the previous nine days at the stock show with real cowboys and cattlemen, I sure thought those guys (performers) were some kind of Hollywood dudes," said Bass, who has been chairman since 2001 and is not exaggerating when he describes the post as "for life."

Bass, an oil and gas heir who, along with other members of his family, has been instrumental in revitalizing the city's downtown and cultural district, has long ridden in the show's horse-powered opening day parade and attends every rodeo performance. He judges every one of its 30 calf scrambles and shakes hands and poses for photographs with each of the 240 winners. "How many other rodeo or stock



Paul Riggs rides herd over the rodeo's saddle horses during the Fort Worth rodeo's 30 performances.

show chairmen in America can say that?" he asks.

'We Like Being Cowboys'

RIGGS' HISTORY WITH THE FORT WORTH event also goes way back. He and his wife, Sherry, met at the show in 1973, and he bought their wedding rings at a jewelry store downtown with winnings from a wild horse-riding event the following year. An integral part of the rodeo's backstage operations, the couple and their cow dog, Lulu, live through the run of the show in their voluminous horse trailer, which last year was set between Punkintown the rodeo clown's trailer, and another used by Whiplash the border collie-riding monkey. During the rodeo, the Riggsses convert their trailer into living quarters—an office and a bedroom.

Sherry and the Riggsses' two daughters have all ridden in the show's grand entry, during which 12 palominos

thunder into the darkened arena carrying cowgirls and the six flags of Texas.

Paul Riggs, who goes to work in spurs, and his crew of 15 are busy from the 7 a.m. horse feeding until well past 10 p.m., when the evening show ends and the "hot" horses are walked, brushed and put up in stalls behind the arena.

"Nobody's making Silicon Valley money here," the 54-year-old Riggs said, explaining how his crews eat from a camp grill and bunk in two cramped dressing rooms under the arena. "We're here because we like being cowboys."

During the day, and between afternoon and evening performances, his guys help load and unload some of the 750 bucking horses, 450 bulls and more than 600 roping cattle that are used in the rodeo, the fresh stock trucked in twice daily from holding pens in nearby Parker County. During



Corbin Crenshaw is a veteran stockman at the age of 15.



A proud winner is interviewed by the media.

performances, Riggs conducts what he calls “air traffic control” on the horse traffic backstage and tries not to get kicked with all the animals moving around in the cramped alleys.

“I got kicked the other day, full-out double clutch, so this leg is all black, blue and green,” he said. “We get some wrecks out back, not that you’d ever see it in the performance.”

OVER IN THE SHOW BARNS, 15-YEAR-old Corbin Crenshaw from Levelland described his own longtime connection with perhaps the next-most prominent event, the junior steer show.

“I’ve been competing since I was 9,” said Crenshaw, who likes the stock show best for “all the people here,” including friends from home and—yes, the teenager allows—girls.

His first year in the show ring he was so nervous he couldn’t control his steer, which was disqualified after it got loose three times, he recalls. He has placed high enough every year since to make the show-ending auction, where local businessmen and other show supporters buy the school-aged contestants’ high-placing entries at handsome prices.

Crenshaw’s shorthorn steer, which his younger sister named Mater, fetched \$5,000 after placing third in its class.

“I have friends who get mad if they

don’t do well, but I’m here for the fun,” said Crenshaw, who is saving his winnings in his college fund. Crenshaw works while he wins money; he helps feed cattle on the family ranch, plus there’s the daily grooming and clipping of his show steer, a ritual that keeps the animal’s coat full and growing.

Crenshaw’s father, Matt Popelka, said he sold some cows at the 2008 show to help pay the bills because showing can get expensive. “There are a lot of cattlemen here, and I like that,” Popelka said, explaining that the show gives him a chance to match his herd against current standards and keep up with the business.

IN THE EXHIBITS HALL, SELLERS OF fencing, livestock chutes, trailers, boots, fudge, fruit, knives, pickup trucks, baseball gloves, tack, saddles, hot tubs, silver jewelry, pots and pans, leather goods, Western art, and front-end loaders vie for attention. Peter Bros. Hats, which has been in business since 1911 on Houston Street in downtown Fort Worth, claims to go back longer than anyone else in the room.

“We started at the 1933 show,” said owner Joe Peters Sr. “Back then, the exhibitors were outside, and my grandfather used to tell me how he’d wrap his feet in rags to try to keep ’em

from freezing when the cold weather would blow in.”

Peters, who has been selling hats at the show since 1972, said he’s usually too busy in his booth, which is decorated with some odd-shaped antique hat-making equipment, to do much more than escape to his favorite restaurant on the grounds for some tenderloin tamales.

Always the salesman, Peters said you need not have grown up on a ranch to get in touch with your inner cowhand. “I just finished handling a double order from a Norwegian tourist in a big black duster,” Peters said. “He bought an 1880s-style cowboy hat with a 10-inch crown and a second one just like Garth Brooks’”

Fort Worth remembers its Western heritage and remains true to its roots primarily because of the stock show, Bass said. “It’s how we teach each generation of kids what the traditions of the American West are all about,” he said. “It’s how I learned and how my daughter has learned to be proud that Fort Worth is known as Cowtown.”

For more information, go to www.fwssr.com or call (817) 877-2400.

Thomas Korosec is a freelance writer living in Dallas. He attended his first Fort Worth stock show and rodeo in 1985.

Truly Unique



Time travel at the speed of a 1935 Speedster?

The 1930s brought unprecedented innovation in machine-age technology and materials. Industrial designers from the auto industry translated the principles of aerodynamics and streamlining into everyday objects like radios and toasters. It was also a decade when an unequaled variety of watch cases and movements came into being. In lieu of hands to tell time, one such complication, called a jumping mechanism, utilized numerals on a disc viewed through a window. With its striking resemblance to the dashboard gauges and radio dials of the decade, the jump hour watch was indeed "in tune" with the times!

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True to Machine Art esthetics, the sleek brushed stainless steel case is clear on the back, allowing a peek at the inner workings.

actual jumping complication). The stainless steel 1 1/2" case is complemented with a black alligator-embossed leather band. The band is 9 1/2" long and will fit a 7-8 1/2" diameter wrist.

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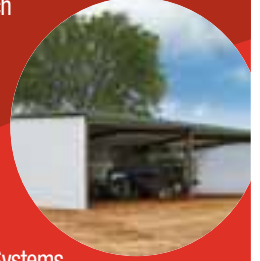
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Electric Safety and You

Why should you be concerned about electric safety? Unfortunately, when electricity is misused serious injury or even death can be the result. Even a small nightlight with a 6-watt bulb draws enough current to be fatal under certain circumstances.

Following is information to help you better understand how electricity works and why you should always exercise caution around it.

- Electrical current will not flow unless it has a complete path (circuit) that returns to its source (battery, transformer).

- Current flows through you and other conductors, such as metals, earth and concrete.

- Current can harm you when it flows through your body (electric shock).

- Insulators resist the flow of electricity. Insulating materials are used to coat copper conducting wires and are used to make electrical work gloves. Insulators help protect humans from coming into contact with electricity

flowing through conductors.

- Just as there is pressure in a water pipe even with no water flowing, there is voltage at a receptacle even if current is not flowing. The electric current is essentially waiting for an opportunity to flow—to power an appliance or turn on the TV. But given the chance, it will just as quickly pass through you.

If current passes through your body, three types of injury are likely to occur:

1. Burns.

2. Physical injuries (broken bones, falls and muscle damage). When electrocution occurs, muscles often clamp on to whatever the person is holding.

3. Nervous system effects (stop breathing, heart twitching or stopping).

The heart is often damaged because it is in the path of the most common routes electricity takes through the body:

- Hand to hand

- Hand to foot

Your electric co-op encourages you to stay safe around electricity.

New Year's Resolution: Save \$75

The New Year often brings a resolve to save more and spend less, and that could be especially true during these difficult economic times. It's a resolution you can keep.

How? Replace one major home appliance with an Energy Star appliance, and you can save \$75 this year on your energy bills.

You may have heard that home appliances carry two price tags.

The first is the price you pay to buy the appliance. The second is the amount you will pay every year over the life of the appliance for the energy and water needed to operate it.

Energy Star appliances are designed to use 10 to 50 percent less energy and water than other models. The Energy Star

label is part of the U.S. government's effort to encourage energy conservation.

Though Energy Star appliances may cost a little more to buy than other models, you will reap the savings in operating costs over the life of the appliance.

The most energy-efficient clothes

washers, dishwashers, refrigerators, air conditioners and water heaters have earned

the Energy Star label.

Another label to look for when you shop for a new appliance: the yellow Energy-Guide. This label tells you how much energy the appliance uses every year and compares that number to similar models. The lower the operating cost, the more you'll save on your monthly energy bill.



SAVE ENERGY NOW. IT'S SIMPLE

Want to start saving energy at home today? Do this:

1. FILL UP YOUR REFRIGERATOR AND FREEZER. Your refrigerator operates more efficiently when it's full because it can recover more quickly from the cold lost when the door is opened. Fill in empty spaces with water bottles or bags of ice, but leave enough room between items for the air to circulate freely.

2. TURN DOWN THE HEAT—on your water. Many water heaters are set to 140 degrees, which is hotter than necessary for showers and clothes washing. Water that hot also poses a scalding hazard for children. Reduce the temperature by 10 degrees, and you'll save up to 5 percent on your energy costs.

3. SET YOUR THERMOSTAT BACK when you leave for work. For every degree you turn down the heat for at least eight hours, you can save as much as 1 percent a year on your heating bills.

4. SHUT DOWN YOUR COMPUTER if it won't be in use for more than two hours. Keeping it on is like leaving lights on in an empty room.

5. VACUUM YOUR REFRIGERATOR COILS twice a year. If the coils are exposed (look on the back of the unit), they can get dirty or dusty and force your fridge to work inefficiently. If you have a newer model, remove the kick plate or grill to access the coils.



Winterize for Savings and Safety

The coats have been cleaned, the mittens and scarves found and the sweaters have been pulled out of the attic. Old Man Winter has settled in across Texas. Your wardrobe is ready, but what about your house—is it ready for winter? A small investment of time to review your home for safety and efficiency weak spots can pay big dividends toward making your home safer, more energy efficient and, ultimately, reduce electric bills this winter.

Energy dollars pour out of homes through drafty doors, windows, attics, walls and floors without even being noticed. Taking time to winterize and check heating equipment now can be a worthy investment, saving you money on your monthly bill and ensuring your home is safe as well.

It's important to have a professional inspect and service your furnace to make sure it is in good working order before turning the heat on this winter. An efficient heating system means greater comfort at a lower cost.

Regularly clean or replace furnace filters monthly during winter use, and check ducts, flues and chimneys. Ensure the chimney is clean, clear of bird and animal nests, and that there is no blockage in high efficiency furnaces that vent through the wall. Keeping heating equipment clean and in good repair will ensure peak effi-

ciency and safety.

Consider installing a programmable thermostat to automatically raise and lower home temperatures for energy savings day and night. Set your thermostat to lower temperatures while



you're asleep or away from home.

Make sure attics and flooring, especially above unheated spaces such as crawl spaces and garages, are properly insulated. A quick rule of thumb is to check the attic—if you can see the ceiling joists, you don't have enough insulation. Ceiling joists are usually at most 10 to 11 inches, and insulation should be a minimum of 12 inches. Find air leaks in homes by moistening fingertips and running them around doors or window frames to feel a draft. Check around outlets and look for

gaps near the dryer vent, chimneys and faucet pipes. Seal them all with caulking or weatherstripping.

Weatherstripping and caulking are inexpensive and among the simplest, most effective ways to boost efficiency and cut energy costs year-round.

Another way to save energy is by replacing screens with storm windows and doors. Double-pane windows with low-e coating can reduce heating bills by 34 percent in cold climates compared to uncoated, single-pane windows. If you have older or leaky windows that you cannot replace, consider temporary fixes, such as plastic film kits that create the effect of an interior storm window.

Consider replacing regular incandescent lightbulbs with energy-efficient compact fluorescent lightbulbs. CFLs use one-fourth of the energy consumed by a regular bulb and can last 10 times as long or longer.

During cold weather, don't overlook simple energy-saving steps such as opening curtains to let sunshine warm your home and reversing your ceiling fans to a clockwise rotation to recirculate and force the warm air downward. Also, make sure fireplace dampers are closed when not in use. These are effective energy-saving tips that cost you nothing.

Source: www.SafeElectricity.org

As you take steps to winterize your home, use the opportunity to check for electrical hazards. The dry winter air is a perfect environment for electric shock and fire. Use this electrical safety checklist to eliminate hazards:

- Check outlets and make sure they are not overloaded or warm to the touch.
- Examine electrical cords for cracks, frays and damaged plugs.
- Check that lightbulbs are the proper wattage and securely screwed in light fix-

tures so bulbs don't overheat and ignite curtains or nearby furniture.

- Outlets related to frequent circuit breaker trips or blown fuses should be inspected by a professional. Dimming lights and shrinking pictures on TVs and computer monitors are also electrical warning signs that merit an inspection.

- Make sure bathroom, laundry room, kitchen and outdoor outlets have ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs), and test and reset them monthly. If these outlets do

not have GFCIs, have them installed.

- Test your smoke detector batteries and replace them every six months.
- If an electric space heater is used, make sure the wiring is adequate. Don't place a portable heater in high-traffic areas and never use extension cords with electric heaters.

Taking these simple steps helps reduce the risk of fire, shock, injury or death. We want everyone to stay safe and warm this winter.

Memory's Sweet Scent

My grandmother's cedar chest has become part of my story

BY MARY O. PARKER

T

he flirty smell of cedar never fails to deliver me to the sun-speckled walls and dancing window sheers of my grandparents' bedroom.

It transports me to special Saturdays where, after a morning spent playing dress-up, I'm sitting at the edge of my grandmother's cedar chest brimming with a sense of adventure. I'm wearing a pair of her shoes and her pink shell necklace with matching earrings.

Together, my grandmother and I are about to unearth the chest's contents and become wayfarers through time and mutual heritage.

As she lifts the lid, the sweet fragrance wafts up and sweeps me into its arms. There, at the very top, is a quilt made by my grandfather's mother, who died when he was 3. We spread it across our laps and take in the mishmash of patterns. Soldiers live on many of the triangles, attired in purple and blue, the words "Position at parade rest" in red underneath them. Other triangles sport polka dots and gingham patterns, and one even has what looks like a ship's blueprint with all its parts labeled. My grandmother explains that the fabric came from flour sacks and that in the early part of the 20th century many a thrifty Texas farm wife used the sacks to make a variety of items, from underpants to quilts.

She sifts through the chest's contents until she can lift out a stack of papers and photographs. "This was my little sister, Bessie," she says handing me an item she's culled. "It's the only photo ever taken of her."

I know of an Aunt Dot, an Aunt Gradie and an Uncle Sherman, but an Aunt Bessie? Yes, my grandmother nods, and then tells me she died at 7 of malaria. At the word "malaria" I somehow feel as if my family has crossed paths with the exotic, and I am secretly thrilled.

The pink shell earrings are beginning to pinch, but when she pulls out the next item I am so enamored that I become oblivious to their irritation. Against her, she holds a dress of turquoise blue with curtain-like fabric, and it animates her. She's no longer simply my grandmother, but also a beautiful lady sitting beside me on the hardwood flooring. "The first time I put this dress on," she shares, "I finally felt all grown up."

My sore ears hear this strangely for, in spite of now being able to conjure her in a different light, I cannot envision her as anything other than grown-up. She sees this in my eyes and puts a marriage certificate into my hands, pointing to the space

where it lists the bride's age as 16. I steal a look at the groom's age of 23 and audibly inhale.

"That's part of why my parents weren't too happy when I eloped with your grandpa," she explains. "He was also a little bit of a troublemaker." It is during this beside-the-cedar-chest interlude when I first learn that my grandfather has a scar across his abdomen from a knife fight. The vision is tough to reconcile with the man who at his troublemaking worst teases us grandkids by telling us, "If y'all don't quit that spattin', the blue goose is gonna get you!"

From the stack she pulls a picture of him in his Civilian Conservation Corps days. He is seated on a rock and is incredibly handsome, fresh and undaunted.

Later, as an adult, I learn that in Texas, many of those in the CCC were taught woodworking skills and often made cedar chests. It was then I realized that, in spite of all the childhood moments spent with my grandmother taking in that sweet scent and the stories of what resided within, I didn't know the story of the chest itself.

It turns out that my grandfather didn't make the chest in the CCC. The real story is more romantic. Knowing how much she'd always longed for a cedar chest (her poor cotton-farming family couldn't afford one), he'd bought it for her as a 19th birthday surprise.

The story of my grandmother's cedar chest has become part of my story and now that she's no longer living, it lives with me. There have been additions in the course of my own journey, among them the multicolored afghan my grandmother crocheted. If you lift up the afghan to let that memory-inducing aroma come out to play, you'll find a pink shell necklace with matching clip-on earrings lying underneath.

Mary O. Parker is a freelance writer who lives in Smithville with her husband, Jeff (and her grandmother's cedar chest).



CANYON LAKE

Canyon Lake Gorge

A gorgeous creation

by Suzi Sands



It was the perfect storm. During one week in the summer of 2002, more than 35 inches of rain fell in the upper watershed of the Guadalupe River, setting off a torrent of floodwater that carved a perfectly fascinating geological wonder—the Canyon Lake Gorge—out of the earth.

A flood of biblical proportions roared through the Hill Country northwest of New Braunfels, tearing away soil, ripping up huge trees, crumpling houses and sending a rush of water from swollen Canyon Lake over its spillway for the first time since the reservoir was completed in 1964.

The historic flood sliced open the ground below the spillway, creating a gigantic 64-acre gorge and exposing ancient, crustaceous limestone, fossils and even dinosaur footprints 110 million years old.

Here's how it happened:

JUNE 28, 2002: A low-pressure system moved east from Mexico and met another weather system coming south over the Hill Country. The heavens broke apart, and for the next week rain fell and fell, with the 35 inches-plus deluge almost equaling the Hill Country's average yearly rainfall.

Floodwater from myriad creeks and rivers raced down to fill Canyon Lake. As the lake rose, soggy holiday campers were evacuated, and parks were closed. Still the rain came.

JULY 4, 2002: At 3:30 p.m., a seemingly endless wall of water began blasting over the spillway, tearing out truck-sized boulders, the road, full-grown oak trees and everything else downstream from the spillway. Imagine if you can an avalanche of water flowing at the rate of 67,000 cubic feet per second, pushing huge chunks of limestone downstream. The water that flowed over the spillway—about 185 billion gallons in total—would've filled the lake 1½ times at its normal level. The flood crested at 11 a.m. on July 6, and for the next six weeks, water flowed over the spillway, scouring through sedimentation and gouging out so much rock and dirt that the debris would have created a 30-story-tall building the size of a football field.

AUGUST 2002: What was once a gentle depression covered with a tangle of oaks, cedars and native brush is now a gorge roughly 1,000 feet wide and 45 feet deep.

It is a textbook example highlighting Hill Country geology and the exposed Trinity Aquifer, clearly showing faults, fractures and seeps in the limestone. Limestone layers created from an ancient sea are visible, and visitors admire waterfalls and springs where the aquifer is exposed.

The gorge is a real-life classroom in which visitors learn how the aquifer's underground permeable rock cavities soak up and store the rainwater that San Antonio and other cities depend upon for drinking water.

Geologists and oil company representatives come to study the faults and fracturing of the gorge's limestone.



Above: the Canyon Lake Gorge; top right: water spilling out of limestone; bottom right: pristine fossils.

And the gorge gives hikers an opportunity to explore dinosaur tracks and perfectly preserved fossils, exposed for the first time in millions of years. Fossilized sea urchins are so perfectly preserved that one can see the spines and the minute seams along the creatures' bodies. One can even see fossilized ocean ripples in the limestone.

2005: After the revelation of this geological phenomenon, local residents banded together to preserve the gorge and its wonders. In 2005, they formed the Gorge Preservation Society (GPS) and partnered with the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to safeguard the gorge and spread the word.

SUMMER 2008: The nonprofit GPS and its volunteers are in full swing. The society's dedicated members hack away at invasive plants, patrol for litter, sweep out dinosaur tracks and protect fossils revealed by the flood.

Regular tours are conducted by knowledgeable volunteers who are eager to identify native plants, such as a blooming river primrose, or the track from a sauropod (dinosaur). Starting at the spillway and progressing deeper into the gorge, the tour is exclusively for energetic and fit hikers. Patient guides carefully point hikers to the safest routes, but visitors still scramble up and down rocks and boulders and along ledges as the tour descends into the gorge.

Along the way, the guides point out the tracks of the acrocanthosaurus, a predator cousin of the T. rex, and its prey, the sauropod. It's life-and-death drama preserved in stone. More fossils are identified. Countless lentil-bean-sized fossils of shelled protozoa are observed.

Visitors spot fish, tadpoles, frogs and crawfish in aqua-blue, spring-fed pools. A lush field of river fern grows beneath the ubiquitous ashe juniper, aka the Hill Country scourge, the pollen source for cedar fever. One feels far removed from 21st-century life.

Water seeps through cracks in limestone and provides an excellent view of how water is transported through the aquifer system. Perhaps this is the most important lesson of the gorge: We must protect the aquifer as the precious resource that it most assuredly is.

Suzi Sands is art director for Texas Co-op Power.



TOURING CANYON LAKE GORGE

The gorge is open to the public for guided tours only; the cost is \$10.

Tours are offered each Saturday, with many weekday tours available as well. The tours typically last about 3 hours.

Tour participants must wear sneakers or hiking boots and should bring water.

The hiking is physically demanding and is not recommended for young children or people with health problems.

For more information, call (830) 964-5424, e-mail Jaynellen Ladd at jladd@gbra.org or visit www.canyongorge.org.

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Similar rough diamonds sell elsewhere for thousands! Please compare the size and price of our raw diamond in the Stauer Raw Diamond Necklace with those at your local jewelry store.

plus uncut diamonds at a spectacular price from our Belgium dealer. Major gemstone experts across the globe have commented that rough diamonds will be the fastest growing trend on "the red carpet" this year and our long love affair with flawless cut white gemstones may have some competition. All one has to do is flip

through the world's most exclusive catalog to find that "rough is all the rage." Our luxury retail friends in Texas recently featured a raw solitaire for \$6,000, but they buy in such small quantities that they cannot compete with us on price. You see, Stauer is one of the largest gemstone buyers in the world and last year bought over 3 million carats of emeralds. No regular jewelry store can come anywhere close to that volume.

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Old Whip: A Headstrong Texas Hero

BY MARTHA DEERINGER

A cantankerous black stallion named Old Whip might be one of the great, unsung heroes of the Texas Revolution. The big horse was a tall, muscular half-thoroughbred that belonged to Allen Vince, a gentleman from Missouri. Vince came to Texas as part of Stephen F. Austin's colony. We can only speculate on why the horse was named Old Whip, but it seems possible, given the stories about the horse's independent nature, that his owner was forced to resort to the whip occasionally to modify the stallion's behavior.

Vince owned a farm east of the Brazos River where he raised cattle and some fine stock horses. In April 1836, Gen. Antonio López de Santa Anna, president of Mexico, swept through the Fort Bend area with his troops during the Texas Revolution. Fresh from victories at the Alamo and Goliad, the confident Mexican army crossed Buffalo Bayou at Vince's Bridge. Vince fled, leaving some of his livestock behind, and Santa Anna appropriated the horses for his soldiers. He took the magnificent black stallion for himself.

Then Santa Anna led his troops onward toward Washington-on-the-Brazos. Before they had gone far, a scout caught up with them and informed the general that Gen. Sam Houston and the Texians were approaching from the rear. Wheeling Old Whip about, Santa Anna galloped back along the line of soldiers, shouting, "The enemy is coming! The enemy is coming!" Careening wildly down the lane, Old Whip crashed into soldiers and pack mules, knocking some of them to the ground in tangles of flailing arms, legs, hooves and tails. The general finally got the fractious horse under control and returned to the head of the line.

A few miles farther on, Santa Anna got word that Houston's army had set up camp on Buffalo Bayou. It was early afternoon, but the general ordered his soldiers to put up his tent so he could take a siesta.

While El Presidente slept, the Texian army crept to within 200 yards of the Mexican camp and charged. Caught by surprise, the Mexicans sought safety in retreat. Santa Anna stuck his head out of his tent and saw that his army was suffering a humiliating defeat. Wearing only a linen shirt, white silk underwear and red slippers, the general sprang aboard Old Whip and dug his heels into the horse's flanks.

Instead of carrying the general to safety, away from the Texian army and toward Gen. Manuel Fernández Castrillón, who was approaching with reinforcements, Old Whip made a dash for home. When he got near his beloved barn, the mighty horse discovered that Vince's Bridge, the only place to cross Buffalo Bayou without getting wet, had been destroyed by Sam Houston's army. Buffalo Bayou was a boggy quagmire.

Old Whip launched into the water and stuck fast in the mud. Santa Anna abandoned the horse and hid.

A handful of Texian soldiers searching for fleeing Mexicans noticed some deer that appeared to be frightened by something in the tall grass. They investigated. Crouching in the grass was a Mexican soldier dressed in a pair of tattered uniform britches (he had scavenged some pants along the way) and a fine linen shirt. The Texians marched the prisoner back to camp, but soon the barefooted man's feet were so sore he could go no farther. One of the Texians took pity and pulled the Mexican soldier up behind him on his horse. None of them knew the man's identity until they passed the spot where the Mexican prisoners of war were guarded.

"El Presidente! El Presidente!" the captives called, saluting the barefooted prisoner.

Had Santa Anna not stolen Old Whip, things might have turned out differently. A more disciplined horse might have carried the Mexican president to the main body of his army. Instead, the captured general agreed to the Treaty of Velasco, sending his army back to Mexico. Old Whip just might have helped Texas secure its independence.

Martha Deeringer wrote about the first French consul to Texas in the May 2008 issue of Texas Co-op Power.



Sack the Fat, Calories

BY KEVIN HARGIS You, there, wearing the Cowboys jersey! Drop that cookie! Back away from the cheese! Keep those wings OUT of the deep fryer.

Watching a football game doesn't have to be a contact sport for your digestive system or your abdomen. Some fans would argue that eating tasty (and high-calorie) foods before, during and after a game is at least half the fun. I subscribed to that philosophy 50 pounds ago, but as I ease into middle age, with the accompanying battle of the bulge, the subject of my long-term health is beginning to loom larger.

My challenge is to make food that my guests and I can enjoy while leaving out the things that, while delicious, are not so good for me. I'm not giving up my game-day staples, just modifying some of them so they are a little less weighty. I guess instead of Healthy Tailgating, I could think of it as "Healthier" Tailgating.

There are ways to lessen the body blows delivered by traditional tailgate staples. Start with substitutions. Low-fat versions of cream cheese and sour cream, sugar substitutes and reduced-sodium products are all widely available and can be virtually indistinguishable from their fully loaded counterparts when added to a dish. Try replacing fattier cuts of meat—use instead skinless chicken, ground turkey breast and super lean ground beef.

Plan more dishes featuring fruits and vegetables. Add spices, salsa or citrus to punch up flavor without piling on calories. Forgo prepared foods for things you make yourself—that way you know exactly what you are getting. If you use something store-bought, look at the nutrition labels and understand what they mean.

The fight for waistline supremacy can be waged in small steps. You can still enjoy yourself and your food without regretting it later.

One of my favorite game-time foods is a bowl of chili. Here's a recipe I like that features ground turkey and green chilies that chops the calorie and fat content of a full-blown bowl of Texas red.

WHITE CHILI

- 1 pound lean ground turkey
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cans (15 ounces each) navy beans
- 1 can (4 ounces) green chilies
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 1 teaspoon white pepper
- 3 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch

In a small pot, brown turkey in olive oil. Add beans, chilies, spices and broth, bring to a boil, then remove from heat. Remove a half cup of broth and add cornstarch, stirring until lumps dissolve. Pour back into chili. Serve with chopped green onion and cilantro. Add jalapeño pepper sauce if you desire a spicier dish.

Serving size: 1 cup. Per serving: 258 calories, 22 g protein, 5 g fat, 31 g carbohydrates, 668 mg sodium, 44 mg cholesterol.

With its boatload of veggies, Hill Country Salsa pairs perfectly with White Chili and baked tortilla chips to make a relatively virtuous pigskin party.



1st **CHERYL MCINTOSH** *Jasper-Newton Electric Cooperative*
 Prize-winning recipe: **Soya Chicken Wings**

This simple recipe adds a spicy-sweet Asian kick to an appetizer that is lower in calorie and fat content than traditional deep-fried buffalo wings.

SOYA CHICKEN WINGS

- 5 pounds chicken wings
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon ground ginger
- 1 tablespoon garlic salt
- 2 tablespoons MSG (Accent)
- 2 cups brown sugar

Put chicken in a large frying pan. Mix oil, soy sauce and spices and pour over wings. Cook on medium heat for about 20 minutes, turning after 10 minutes. Sprinkle brown sugar over wings and cook another 20 to 30 minutes, stirring often, until wings get a candied texture.

Serving size: 1 wing. Per serving: 111 calories, 6 g protein, 6 g fat, 6 g carbohydrates, trace fiber, 227 mg sodium, 24 mg cholesterol.

TEXAS TODAY CAKE

- 1 box lemon or yellow cake mix
- 1 package Mexican style corn muffin mix
- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
- 4 large eggs
- 1/2 cup bitter orange juice (substitute: juice of one orange and one lime)
- 1/2 cup nectar, mango
- 1/2 cup carrot, finely grated and chopped
- 1 medium avocado
- 1 small sweet potato
- 1 small banana
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon cilantro, dried
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon dried orange peel
- 1 teaspoon mint, dried
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon ginger
- 1/4 cup coconut, flaked
- 1/4 cup mixed nuts, chopped
- 2 ounces beef jerky, chopped

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour bundt pan (rose or standard design). Put mixes, oil, eggs, juices, vegetables, fruits, vanilla and spices in bowl and mix for 2 minutes on medium speed. Add coconut, nuts and jerky, and mix another 2 minutes. Put in bundt pan

and bake for 1 hour or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool for 10 minutes in pan, then turn onto cooling rack or plate. If desired, mix 1/4 cup mango nectar and 1/4 cup bitter orange juice and pour over cooled cake. Serves 24.

Serving size: 1 slice. Per serving: 197 calories, 3.7 g protein, 9 g fat, 25 g carbohydrates, 1.7 g fiber, 226 mg sodium, 37 mg cholesterol.

MOLLY HEJL
Pedernales Electric Cooperative

Cook's Tip

This mélange of ingredients produces a very moist cake with a complex sweet/sour/spicy flavor that keeps well in the refrigerator.

HEART-HEALTHY GARLIC RICE

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons celery, chopped
- 2 tablespoons onion, chopped
- 1 green onion, chopped
- 2 tablespoons red bell pepper, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 cups long-grain brown rice, cooked
- 2 tablespoons herb and garlic seasoning
- 1 tablespoon basil
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- 2 tablespoons cranberry juice

Sauté vegetables in olive oil for 3 minutes on medium-high heat. Reduce heat to low and add rice, seasonings and cranberry juice. Simmer for about 5 minutes.

Down! Set! Health!

Looking to throw a leaner, meaner football party? Here are some tips from the American Dietetic Association that might help:

- Increase the amount of vegetables in dishes such as soup, stew, pasta, casserole and homemade pizza.
- Add dry beans to dishes to bulk them up and increase nutritional benefits.
- Trim excess fat off any meat before cooking and pull the skin off chicken.
- Drain grease from browned meat before adding it to dishes.

Serving size: 1/2 cup. Per serving: 180 calories, 3 g protein, 7.5 g fat, 2.3 g fiber, 25.5 g carbohydrates, 589 mg sodium.

DIANE KREJCI
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HILL COUNTRY SALSA

- 1 can (15 ounces) black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 can (11 ounces) sweet kernel corn, drained
- 4 large tomatoes, chopped
- 1 avocado, peeled and chopped
- 1 large green pepper, chopped
- 6 green onions, chopped
- 1 large jalapeño, diced
- 1/4 cup fresh cilantro, chopped
- 1/4 cup fresh lime juice
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin

Combine all ingredients in a large bowl and toss gently. Cover and chill. Serve with baked tortilla chips.

Serving size: 1/2 cup. Per serving: 113 calories, 4 g protein, 4 g fat, 5 g fiber, 16 g carbohydrates, 315 mg sodium.

ANGIE SHRIVER
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RECIPE CONTEST

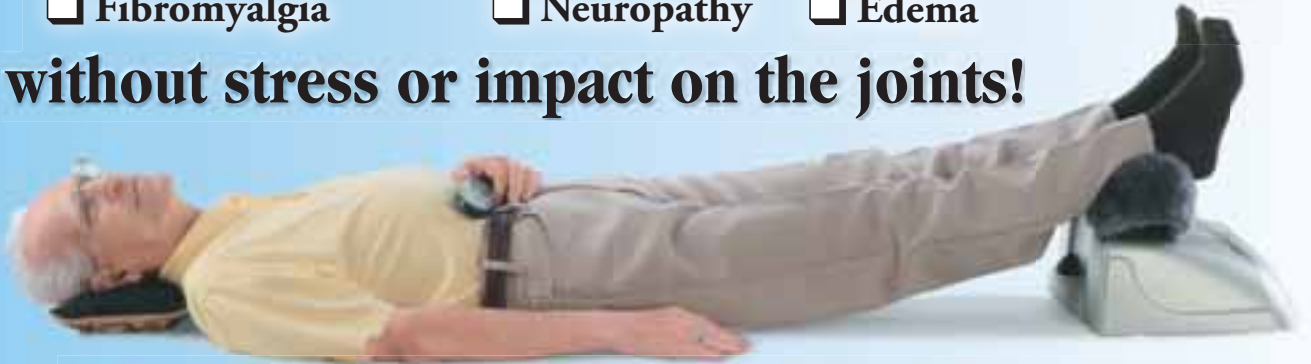
May's recipe contest topic is **SUMMER SQUASH**. The fresh and tender vegetables start appearing in early spring. What's your favorite way to use them? The deadline is **January 10**.

Send recipes to Home Cooking, 1122 Colorado, 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. You may also fax them to (512) 763-3408, 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 top winner will receive a copy of *60 Years of Home Cooking* and a Texas-shaped trivet. Runners-up will also receive a prize.

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What people are saying about the Exerciser 2000 Elite™

I have had pain in both of my knees since I had them replaced in 2000, 6 months apart. My husband purchased one of your Exerciser 2000 Elite™ machines. I use it when I first get up in the morning and the last thing at night before I go to bed. I put two pillows under my knees for support and use the lowest speed for a few minutes. After a couple of days I worked up to a full 16 minute session. What a blessing! I have no pain, can walk better, keep my balance better and am so grateful, at 77, to lead a normal life again. I thank you so much. —Gwen S.

I want to tell you and everyone how much I like the Exerciser 2000 Elite™. I had such lower back pain that I could not stand it. I saw your ad in the American Legion magazine two years ago. At that time, I thought it wouldn't help. But, I ordered one anyway. Up to the time I received the Exerciser 2000 Elite™, I still had doubts if it would work. I was wrong. I have used it for four months now. Now I have very little back pain, am more regular, and I sleep much better thanks to the Exerciser 2000 Elite™. I would not ever part with it. It is the greatest thing I ever bought. —Clifford C.

I had been spending my days just waiting when I saw your ad in Guideposts for the Exerciser 2000 Elite™. I had edema of my left foot and leg, two bad falls and a fear of falling which made me inactive. I'm 97 years old. Could it really help me? My daughter encouraged me to try it. I did. It's working! I feel alive again and have a new zest for life, thanks to you. —Grace R. P.S. My daughter loves it too!

This is just a note to thank you for the rebate check. I am more grateful to you than ever – and I was already grateful because I am getting so much good out of my Exerciser 2000 Elite™, far more than I expected. I am 76 years old, heavy, stiff with arthritis and a leukemic for the past nine years. Using your machine twice a day has made me feel ten years younger. I am far less stiff and my thinking is clearer. I also have a great deal more energy. When you say that your company is in the business of “helping people feel better”, it is no fib! —Kate B.

Little did I know when I ordered the Exerciser 2000 Elite™ that it would prove valuable to my wife of 62 years. I got it for the stiffness in my legs and it works perfectly to get me loosened up after playing tennis in the morning. When I come home I immediately get on the Exerciser 2000 Elite™ for ten minutes and I feel great! My wife suffers from restless leg syndrome at night. Instead of walking the floor for a long period of time, she just gets on the Exerciser for ten minutes and the syndrome subsides. After wrestling with restless legs for a long time she is all smiles in the morning. Happy days are here again! Just thought you would like to know. —Dick P.



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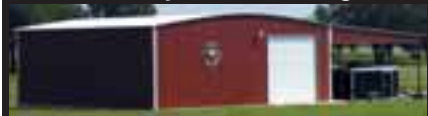
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February 12-14 - Victoria, TX
Victoria Community Center

March 19-21 - Navasota, TX
Grimes County Fairgrounds

April 23-25 - Abilene, TX
Traylor County Expo Center

July 16-18 - Lubbock, TX
Pantamache Plains Fairgrounds

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▲ **Sherry McAlexander** of Wood County Electric Cooperative sent us this photo of what we later learned is a hay rake. Originally, our best guess was some sort of tricked-out clothes hanger.

▼ While this was one of those entries confusing “old” with “odd,” we still thought it was strange enough to include as one of our favorite picks. This machine, looking like a hybrid of train engine and tractor, was spotted by **Elise Westfall**, the daughter of **Kyle** and **Joan Westfall**. The Westfalls are members of Bryan Texas Utilities.



Upcoming in Focus on Texas

ISSUE	SUBJECT	DEADLINE
Mar	Caught in the Act	Jan 10
Apr	Bridges	Feb 10
May	At the (Texas) Beach	Mar 10
June	Stained Glass Windows	Apr 10
July	Vacation Photos	May 10
Aug	Sisters	June 10

CAUGHT IN THE ACT is the topic for our MARCH 2009 issue. Send your photo—along with your name, address, daytime phone, co-op affiliation and a brief description—to Caught in the Act, Focus on Texas, 1122 Colorado, 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701, before January 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, or submit them on our website at www.texascooppower.com.

ODD FARM EQUIPMENT

This month’s topic was confusing for many, as we received many more entries for “old” farm equipment rather than “odd” farm equipment. In the end, we chose the ones that we had the most trouble identifying and picked one that’s a common sight on a farm—but has an unusual, colorful twist.

—ASHLEY CLARY

▼ There were very few guesses on what this contraption is. Is it a one-row cultivator? Or is it a rare torture device? **Linda Brannen** of Pedernales Electric Cooperative didn’t have any guesses for us when she submitted this photograph.



▼ Holy pink tractor, Batman! Thank you to **Patricia** and **Paul Roy** of Pedernales Electric Cooperative for sending us this photo of a farm’s daily worker—with a makeover.



AROUND TEXAS AROUND TEXAS

JANUARY

04 BOERNE
Junior Livestock Poultry Show, (830) 249-2948

09 ROCKPORT
Gospel Music Festival, (361) 790-1105

10 KERRVILLE
Bluebirds, (830) 257-4837



4 BOERNE
Junior Livestock Poultry Show

10 BRENHAM
Winter Antiques Show



10 MILLICAN
Cowboy Chili Supper, (979) 680-1099

10 BRENHAM [10-11]
Winter Antiques Show, (979) 865-5618

BOERNE [10-11]
Market Days, (210) 844-8193

15 COMANCHE [15-17]
American Ex-POWs Mid-Winter Convention, (325) 356-3233, www.comanchechamber.org

16 KERRVILLE [16-17]
Drumline Live, (830) 896-9393, www.kpas.org

COLEMAN [16-20]
Stock Shows & Sale, (325) 785-4291

17 FREDERICKSBURG [17-18]
Hill Country Gem & Mineral Show, (830) 895-9630, www.fredericksburgrockhounds.org

17 PORT ARTHUR
Cavoilcade Parade, (409) 983-1009

FRISCO [17-18]
Winter Games of Texas, 1-877-463-7472, www.taaf.com

ROUND TOP [17-18]
Winter Antiques Show, 1-888-368-4783, www.roundtoptexasantiques.com



17 FREDERICKSBURG
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AROUND TEXAS AROUND TEXAS



20

SAN ANTONIO
Pat Dews Watercolor
Workshop

19 **KERRVILLE** [19-22]
Singles in Agriculture
Convention,
(817) 598-1322,
www.singlesinag.org

20 **SAN ANTONIO** [20-23]
Pat Dews Watercolor
Workshop, (210) 710-0222

20 **KERRVILLE** [20-24]
Hill Country District
Junior Livestock Show,
(830) 634-7749

24 **KERRVILLE**
Star Party,
(830) 257-4837

JOHNSON CITY [24-25]
ARTS Encounters at
Beninis, (830) 868-5244

31 **FREDERICKSBURG**
Indian Artifact Show,
(830) 626-5561

LUCKENBACH
Blues Festival,
1-888-311-8990,
www.luckenbachtexas.com

FEBRUARY

14 **ROUND TOP**
Guitar Festival,
(979) 249-3129,
www.festivalhill.org



14
ROUND TOP
Guitar Festival

20 **KATY** [20-21]
Threads of Time Quilt
Show, (281) 373-0072

24 **PORT ARTHUR**
Fat Tuesday Mardi Gras
Party, (409) 962-9860

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our website at www.texascoopower.com. Please submit
events for March by January 10.

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Be sure to set aside a full day (or maybe even two) for this 95-mile trip from Decatur to Wichita Falls. There are plenty of museums and monuments that you will surely want to see, plus places where you might want to stay for the night. From Decatur, home of Wise Electric Cooperative, take U.S. Highway 380 and State Highway 114 west to U.S. Highway 281 and then follow it northwest to Windthorst (pronounced WIND-HORST). Stay on U.S. Highway 281 north to Wichita Falls.

DECATUR

Judging by all the new buildings springing up, you can see why this place is one of the state's fastest-growing cities. Experts have called the **WISE COUNTY COURTHOUSE**, a pink granite structure built in 1896, "architecturally perfect." Interiors include Vermont marble, original woodwork and beautiful iron staircases. Tours can be arranged on weekdays.

Across the street, book a room at **ABBERCROMBY PENTHOUSE SUITES**, a quaint Victorian-era bed and breakfast. Ask for the City Slicker suite, which sports floor-to-ceiling western decor. In the morning, go to the **CLASSIC ANTIQUE REVIVAL** shop downstairs for your hearty breakfast. Try some java from the **DECATUR COFFEE COMPANY**, which also operates out of the same shop.

Other shops in the square are worth visiting, as is the **WISE COUNTY HERITAGE MUSEUM**. Tucked in the building that once housed the state's first junior college, Northwest Texas Baptist College, see the area's pioneers as well as an entire room devoted to the Texas Lost Battalion: men of the 2nd Battalion, 131st Field Artillery, 36th Division (Texas National Guard) who were Japanese prisoners of war for more than three years without the government even knowing—until World War II ended.

Wise County Courthouse, (940) 627-5743, www.decaturnx.org/history.html#courthouse
Abbercromby Penthouse Suites, (940) 627-7005, members.aol.com/txabby/home.htm

DECATUR to WICHITA FALLS

Relax and take your time while taking in historical attractions.

BY ASHLEY CLARY



Wise County Heritage Museum, (940) 627-5586, www.wisehistory.com

WINDTHORST

There are more than dairy farms in this little town of 474 people once famed as the **DAIRY CAPITAL OF NORTH TEXAS**. Just off U.S. Highway 281 is a treasure of Texas history. **ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH**, originally erected in 1893 with the present structure built in 1925, is tucked away in a corner by the Windthorst schools. Before you walk up the steps to the redbrick building, take a moment to pause in the separate half-dome grotto, which houses a statue of the Virgin Mary cradling the infant Jesus. Green stalactites hang above, and rows of candles flicker in the breeze. The grotto is made of sunstone and holds bits of glass and shiny rocks that glitter in the sunlight. Hanging inside the granite-floored dome is a framed needlepoint of

stars containing 56 blue and eight silver—the number of World War II veterans from the town who sent part of their military pay home to build the grotto.

Pause to light a candle and then make the short trek up to the church itself, admiring the well-manicured garden along the way. Once inside, bask in the glow of the magnificent stained glass windows and gaze upon the high, uniquely vaulted ceilings.

St. Mary's Catholic Church, (940) 423-6687, www.stmary-stboniface.org

WICHITA FALLS

Stay the course, and it will take you directly to this culture-filled city situated between the South Plains and the Piney Woods. Downtown, you'll find the **WORLD'S SMALLEST SKYSCRAPER** that stands only 40 feet tall. According to local legend, an oil man/promoter drew up the plans to lure investors, not telling them it was scaled in inches instead of feet. He raked in \$200,000 in that misrepresentation. Access to the skyscraper is through an antique shop called the **ANTIQUE WOOD**.

Also downtown are plenty of museums to check out. Go to

the **KEMP CENTER FOR THE ARTS**, the center of the art community for the Wichita Falls area. Originally built in 1917, the center features an outdoor sculpture garden and frequent arts performances.

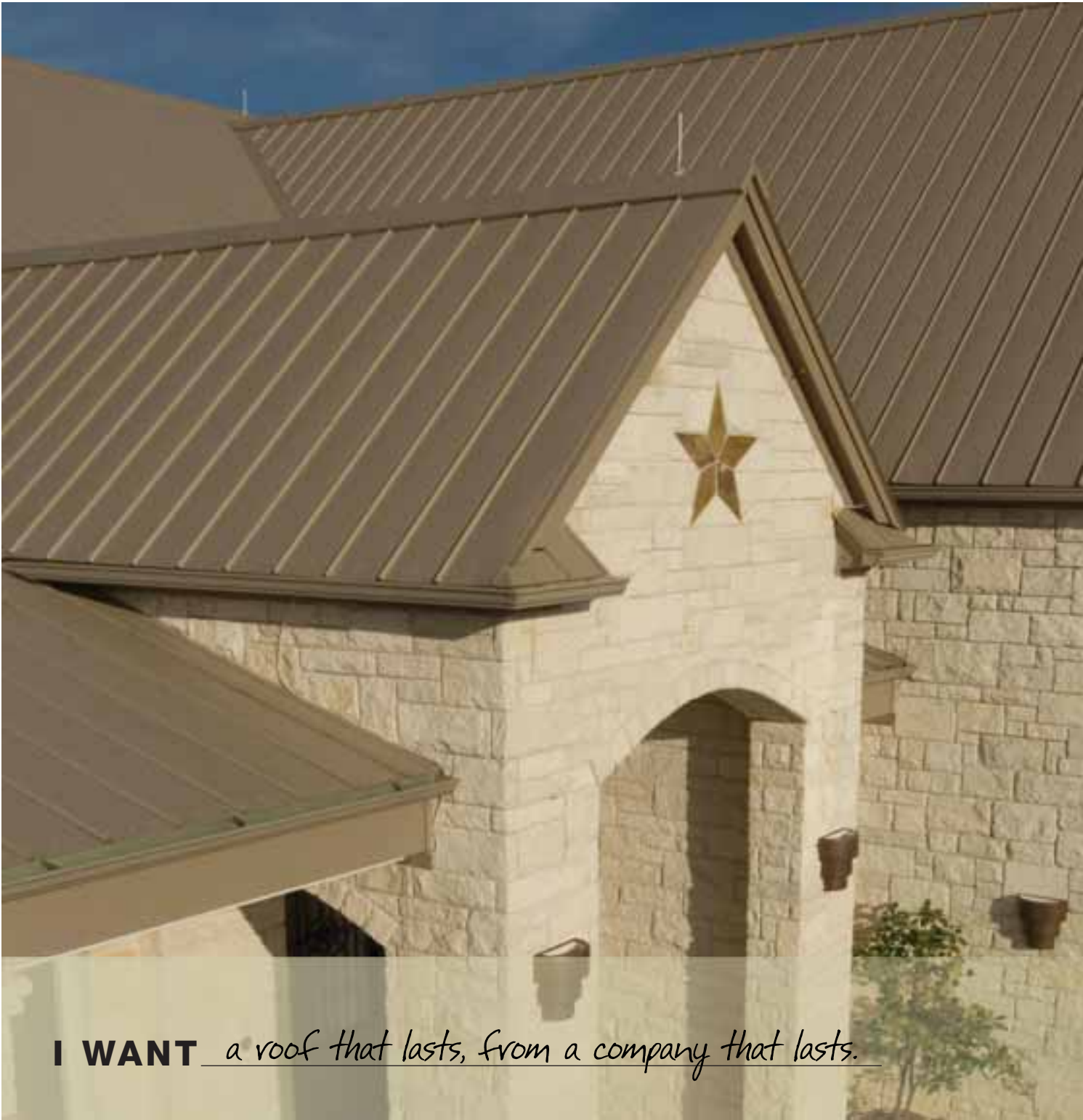
If it's a hot day, cool off at the **WATERFALL**. Completed in 1986, this 54-foot manmade falls replaced the original falls that washed away long ago. Stand in the mist for a while and then enjoy the miles of landscaped and lighted all-weather walking trails. The trails lead to the 170-acre **LUCY PARK**, which has pavilions and the Lucy Land playground.

The Littlest Skyscraper (McMahon Building), (940) 851-7800, www.wichitafalls.org

Kemp Center for the Arts, (940) 767-2787, www.kempcenter.org

The Waterfall, Lucy Park, (940) 716-5550, www.wichitafalls.org

Ashley Clary is field editor of Texas Co-op Power.



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