

NINEPIN BOWLING

THE DUKES OF DUVAL

TEXAS CO-OP POWER

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Honor the Old, Embrace the New for Home Savings

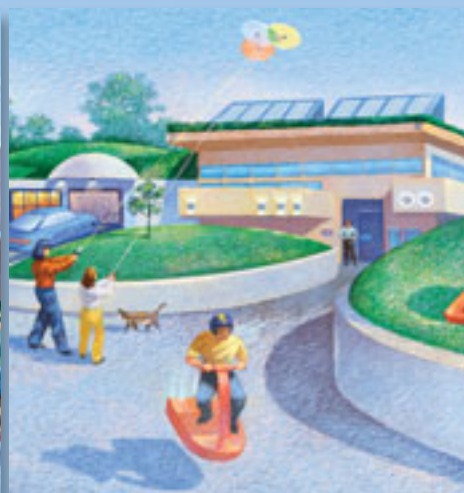
1909: porches • deep roof overhangs • awnings • curtains • deciduous trees **2009:** double-pane windows • energy audits • insulation • energy-efficient appliances • CFLs • solar screens • programmable thermostats **20??:** advanced metering devices • smaller homes • LEDs • smart windows • solar electricity • thermo-reflective walls • wind electricity • and, no, we probably won't have robot butlers



1909



2009



20??

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FEATURES

6 Energy Efficiency for Home Savings

By Jody Horton

Illustrations by Gil Adams

Old or new, untried or true, energy management tips in this issue offer lessons from the past, best practices of the present and technical advances in energy efficiency that will come to pass in the not-too-distant future.

12 Ninepin Bowling

By Joe Nick Patoski

Photos by Wyatt McSpadden

In Central Texas, one can still find ninepin bowling alleys, a direct connection to a time when rural social clubs functioned as community centers.

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POWER TALK



EXPERTS SAY ...

Low-Hanging Fruit

Some energy savings are just there for the picking. The lowest of the low-hanging fruit (in energy conservation) is commercial lighting, says Omar Siddiqui, project manager of a study for the Electric Power Research Institute. The technology now exists to slash the amount of energy used to light U.S. office buildings, hotels, hospitals and malls by a grand total of 90 billion kilowatt-hours a year by 2030, he says.



Forgo the Dispensers

If you're shopping for a new refrigerator, select a model without through-the-door features, such as ice/water dispensers. These features are expensive, and they take up space that would otherwise be used for insulation. The refrigerator door is the area of least insulation and greatest amount of leakage, so its efficiency is already lower than the rest of the insulated cabinet.

letters

'THE STRUTTERS' ARE GREAT, TOO

Clay Coppedge's article on the Kilgore Rangerettes in the February 2009 issue ("Sweethearts of the Gridiron") was great reading. I kept waiting to see the name of Barbara Tidwell mentioned in connection with ex-Rangerettes doing well. She will be honored in October for the 50th anniversary of a drill team she organized many years ago called the Texas State Strutters from Texas State University in San Marcos, formerly known as Southwest Texas State University. They have had fame under her direction to match the Rangerettes.

NELDA DUNN
San Marcos

MORE SERVINGS, PLEASE

There are lots of great articles in your magazine. It is "clipped to pieces" after we finish reading it! We prepared the Sauerkraut Potato Salad from the March 2009 issue and loved it! The only change I recommend is that the recipe serve even more than 12, because everyone wants seconds. Thanks to B.J. Willis for sharing it.

SUSAN WILSON
Cherokee County
Electric Cooperative



RAINWATER HARVESTING

The resurgence of rainwater harvesting ("Make the Most of Rainy Days," March 2009 issue) brings back the joy and pleasure of a shower in rainwater; or a cold glass of pure "cloud juice"; or that hot cup of morning coffee with no hint of chlorine from treated water or hardness from the well water.

Having now relied on cap-

tured rainwater for all our indoor—and much of our garden—water needs for 10 years, you could not pay us to go back to that hard, hard water we can pump from underground.

DAVE COLLINS

Pedernales Electric Cooperative

HOEING GOT US THROUGH HARD TIMES

I enjoyed reading the story "A Hard Row to Hoe" by Camille Wheeler (March 2009 issue). Growing up southwest of Lubbock on a dry-land cotton farm, my two sisters and I had some of the same memories of summertime: getting up and in the field at 7 a.m., home at 12 for Mom's lunch, then back to the field from 1 to 6 p.m.

We learned the same lessons of contributing to the family, getting along with each other and helping each other out when we got to the "flat" and the end of the row. Lessons that have been applied all through our lives.

It was in the summer of 1968 that hoeing helped our family

deal with the unexpected death of our father, Boots Cozart. We stayed in the field longer than usual so that when we went to bed we would be too tired to think of our loss. Mom, who before sometimes hoed with us, went out with us every day that summer. Even our brothers, who drove the tractors, joined us in the field at the end of the day.

Sometimes I still go out and hoe in our cotton fields, but I am truly thankful for the modern-day miracle of chemical-friendly cotton.

PAT STEPHENS

Lyntegar Electric Cooperative

We want to hear from our readers. Send letters to: Editor, *Texas Co-op Power*, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701, e-mail us at letters@texas-ec.org, or submit online at 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.

H A P P E N I N G S



Rosin up your bow for the fifth annual **WHITEWRIGHT FIDDLE FEST**, where fiddlers of all ages compete for bragging rights and cash prizes.

The fest, set for May 23 in the Whitewright Civic Center, draws competitors from across the United States to this North Texas town and consists of four age divisions: 15 and younger, 16-29, 30-59 and 60 and older. The top two fiddlers in each division advance to a playoff, and the final four contestants then compete in the Louis Franklin Championship, named for the famous Whitewright resident who served on the original board of the Texas Old Time Fiddlers' Association in the early 1970s.

No pressure, y'all, but Franklin, who won seven world championships during his fiddling career, will be watching while you try to play your way to the top.

The event starts at 10 a.m. and ends when the fiddling's done. For more information, call (903) 364-2000 or go to www.whitewright.org.

A PRIMO SOUTHERN ESCAPE

On the sandy shores of South Texas, surrounded by St. Charles and Aransas bays, bird lovers can relax in a 321-acre paradise.

Goose Island State Park is home to more than 300 varieties of bird species, and the endangered whooping crane migrates to Texas every winter to feed off the local berries and blue crabs found in the coastal wetlands around the park. One of the most notable features of Goose Island is the famous state champion coastal live oak, the "Big Tree," 44 feet tall with a crown spread



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of 90 feet. It is estimated to be more than 1,000 years old. Aside from its wonderful natural attributes, Goose Island provides visitors with several activities including picnicking, boating, fishing, nature studies, guided tours and hikes. The campsites are large and offer both RV and tent camping by the bay or in a secluded wooded area. However, this bayside beauty doesn't allow for swimming because the shoreline is composed of concrete bulkhead, oyster shell reef, mud flats and marsh grass. For more information, call (361) 729-2858 or go to www.tpwd.state.tx.us/spdest/findadest/parks/goose_island.

FUTURE TALK

Because it is so expensive to run electric lines to remote areas, the Texas Department of Transportation is taking advantage of the ever-blowing Panhandle wind and has installed four wind turbines to help power flashing caution lights on major roads in Carson and Randall counties.

Two turbines power flashing red and yellow lights on U.S. Highway 60 between Amarillo and Pampa. The other two turbines power flashing red lights atop stop signs on frontage roads beside Interstate 27

at McCormick Road. The small turbines cost about \$700 each and will end up costing taxpayers less than they would have had to pay to bring electric lines to the sites.

Wind will power the lights about 99 percent of the time, according to Paul Braun, a TxDOT spokesman. The turbines will be backed up by small solar panels, but there will be no monthly payments for electricity.

Braun said if the wind/solar combos are successful—and they seem to be working fine—they would probably be used in other rural areas.

WHO KNEW?



AN AGITATING DEVELOPMENT

If you passed by a **Laundromat** today, you likely wouldn't give it a second thought. But 75 years ago, the self-serve, pay laundry was a brand-new concept—one that was born in Texas. On April 18, 1934, the world's first washateria was launched in Fort Worth. Depending on which source you believe, credit for the laundrette, which charged by the hour, belongs to either J.F. Cantrell or C.A. Tannahill. Whoever developed the idea of pay-for-spray, the world is a cleaner place because of it.

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ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Honor the Old, Embrace the New for Home Savings



BY JODY HORTON • ILLUSTRATIONS BY GIL ADAMS

Some home improvement investments—the ones that reduce your utility bills—are more important than ever. It's pretty clear to see that the age of excess is over. We are all on our way to becoming smart energy users—if not outright misers. Our aim here is to provide a brief overview of projects, designs and products for increasing home efficiency and comfort. We'll look at old and new ideas as well as some emerging technologies that we hope to see in the market in the near future.

Some investments pay off better than others. It may not be cost-effective to spend the money for window replacements. They are expensive, and many other improvements can be made more affordably. The first step in deciding what's feasible for your home is to get an energy audit or learn to perform an audit yourself. We'll say it again: Get an energy audit. Many cooperatives do energy audits or will guide you to other professionals who do them. Audits vary in scope, but their primary intent is to identify your problems and come up with solutions. Often, some of the greatest savings involve relatively low-cost repairs. This especially is the case with older homes. For expenditures of \$2,000 or less on weatherization, some households can save more than \$1,000 annually on electricity costs, experts say.

Before beginning weatherization or any other improvement project, check with your co-op, city conservation officials and the state energy office. They can provide advice on local contractors and suppliers and information on incentives and rebates available in your area.

ONLINE RESOURCES:

Comprehensive home energy savings: www.energy.gov/yourhome.htm; http://apps1.eere.energy.gov/consumer/your_home

Overview of home energy usage with links: www1.eere.energy.gov/consumer/tips/home_energy.html

Online home energy audit calculators: www.energyguide.com/audit/haintro.asp

Designing and renovating for energy savings in warm, humid climates: www.fsec.ucf.edu/en/consumer/buildings/homes/priorities.htm

Designing and renovating for energy savings in cold climates: www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/co/renoho/refash/refash_006.cfm
www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/co/renoho/refash/refash_007.cfm

Ratings for appliances, fixtures, building products, etc.: www.energystar.gov

Climate information, including historical data: www.ncdc.noaa.gov

Jody Horton, an Austin-based freelancer, specializes in writing about green building.

SOME THINGS OLD

Your grandparents and great-grandparents knew what they were doing. The design and orientation of their homes was crucial in creating a comfortable living space before the advent of centralized heating and cooling. Thanks to the current trend in green building, attention has again been placed on these time-tested methods. Homes designed around the conditions in which they are built not only use less energy, but they also are more comfortable. Consider some basic principles of design and orientation from the following examples:



- 1 Homes designed for warmer regions**—where the majority of energy consumption is spent on cooling—emphasize shading and passive ventilation. They are long and narrow, minimizing exposure from the east and west where the sun is most direct.
- 2 Windows are minimal on these sides** for the same reason.
- 3 Porches and deep roof overhangs** offer protection against the harsh summer sun.
- 4 Awnings** shade windows and walls. **Curtains** are drawn during the summer heat and winter cold.
- 5 Deciduous trees** shade the east and west walls. In winter, when trees lose their leaves, the house benefits from the sun's warmth.
- 6 Higher ceilings** allow heat to rise above occupants.
- 7 Light exterior colors** reflect the sun's heat.



1 Sealing and insulating are not exactly new, but they remain the most important step in improving a home's efficiency. Use weatherstripping around windows and doors and caulk and spray foam around window frames, pipes, fixtures and other gaps. Attic floor insulation is typically the most cost-effective investment whether you do it yourself or hire someone to do it for you.

Don't forget to seal and insulate ductwork as well. For the benefit of your health, consider using sealants that are low in volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and a form of formaldehyde-free insulation. VOCs are emitted as gases from certain solids or liquids and include a variety of chemicals, some of which may have short- and long-term adverse health effects.

2 Compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) are profoundly more efficient than traditional incandescent lightbulbs, which waste up to 90 percent of the electricity they consume in creating heat. An estimated \$25 to \$45 can be saved per CFL over its lifetime.

The newest generation of CFLs is finally coming of age and even

includes dimmable bulbs. Stick with 2700K (Kelvin) lights—Kelvin, a unit increment of temperature, measures the color temperature of light sources—for interiors to best match the warmth of incandescent bulbs.

3 Programmable thermostats offer one of the easiest and most affordable ways to save energy at home. They can save almost \$200 per year by reducing household heating and cooling at times when it's not needed.

4 Tankless water heaters save energy by operating only when hot water is needed. They have the added benefit of taking up much less space, allowing homeowners to partly reclaim closets taken up by bulky, traditional tanks. A low-cost alternative is to add a tank "blanket" to existing water tanks so they will lose less heat.

5 High-tech double- and triple-pane windows with low-emissivity (low-E) coatings—virtually invisible layers of metal or metallic oxide that reduce the amount of heat that passes through the glass—are vastly more efficient than single-pane windows. For this reason, replacing windows is

often a top choice when considering major renovations. Such windows are very expensive and should be much lower on your priority list than good old caulking and insulation. For a low-cost alternative, apply a low-E film to existing windows. It is effective both in reflecting unwanted heat in summer and in retaining heat in winter and is widely available as a do-it-yourself kit. Solar screens are still another choice and are particularly appropriate for large, scenic windows. Exterior applications are far more effective in blocking heat.

6 Advanced direct-vent, sealed-combustion stoves have revolutionized fireplaces in homes. Unlike conventional fireplaces, which can actually lose more energy than they generate by drawing interior air up the chimney, this new breed of stoves reaches about 90 percent efficiency.

Since the stoves are vented directly to the outside through a hole in an exterior wall, there is no need to construct a chimney or run a free-standing flue above the roofline. These stoves are available as inserts for existing fireplaces and can be fueled by gas, wood or pellets.



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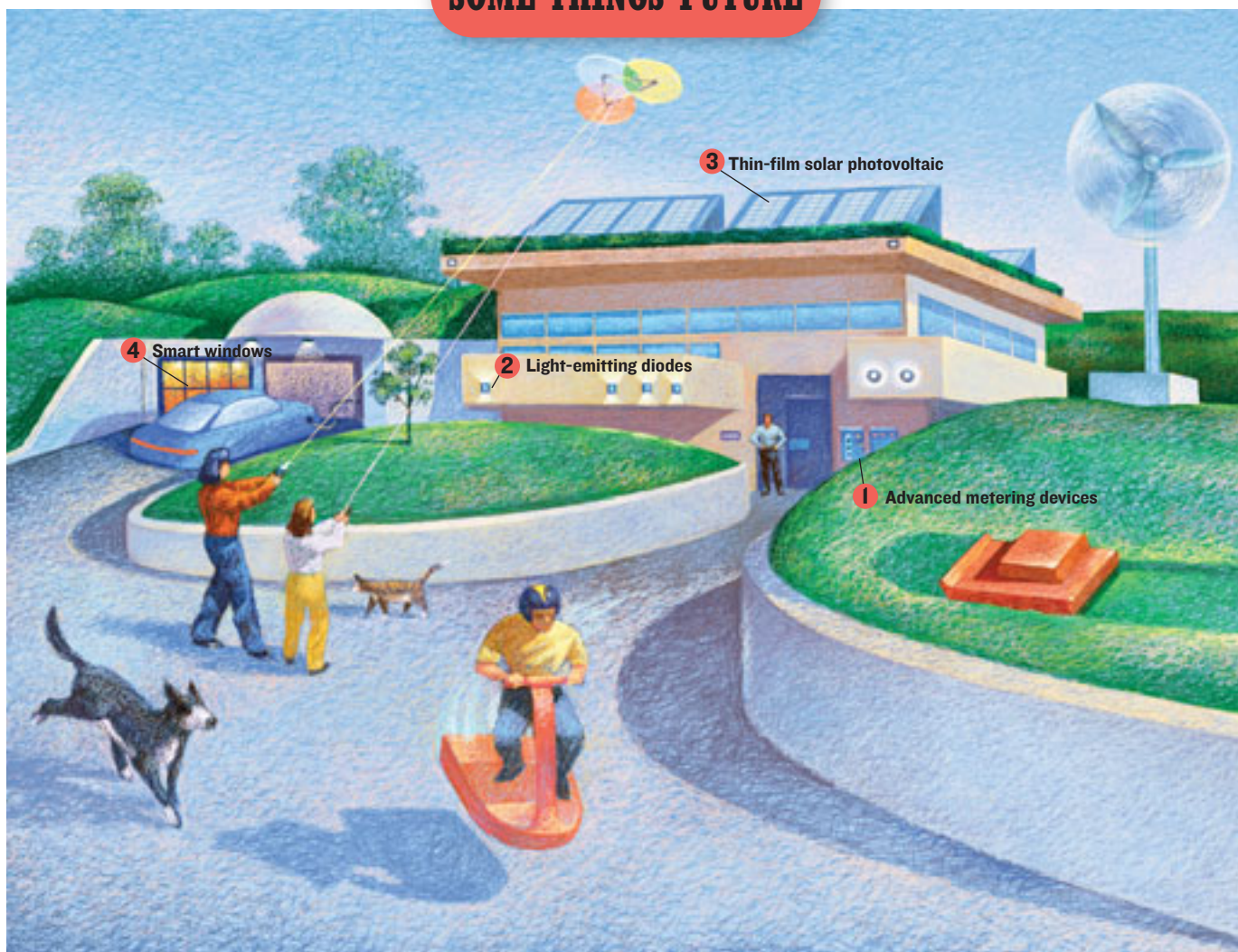
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1 Advanced metering devices—Many co-ops currently use digital metering to record electricity use and locate problems on lines. Some meters have two-way communication. In the future, such electronic communication tools will be more sophisticated so customers can determine when they use the most electricity and where they might reduce consumption. Time-of-day metering or rebates will probably be in effect to discourage electricity use during peak hours. Appliances will be programmable for use in non-peak hours.

2 Light-emitting diodes (LEDs)—Home applications of LEDs now are found mainly in flashlights and task lights. With a lifespan of approximately 60,000 hours—as compared to CFLs' 10,000 hours and incandescent bulbs' 1,500 hours—LEDs are a product with a great future. The market is waiting for costs to decrease.

3 Thin-film solar photovoltaics (PVs),

like conventional PVs, convert sunlight into electricity. They improve on conventional PVs by being lightweight, flexible and, most importantly, far cheaper to produce. Expect to see a variety of home-related products from several manufacturers in the next two to three years.

Many believe that the greatest advancements in future solar technology will involve the use of quantum dots—tiny semiconductors that use the unique light-harvesting properties of nano-sized crystals. The science is complicated, but the result is a theoretical doubling in efficiency (estimations are as high as 65 percent) for quantum-dot solar cells—as compared to today's most efficient cells. Preliminary experiments suggest that quantum dot cells could be produced with relatively low material costs.

4 Smart windows work a lot like those funny eyeglasses that tint in the sun and then change back to clear

indoors. In the case of electrochromic windows—electronically tintable glass that can be switched from clear to darkly tinted, and vice versa—the glass responds to an electrical current that can be controlled by a switch, light sensors, thermostats or even a motion sensor.

New designs—including ones that use integrated solar cells to produce power—promise greater efficiency. Thermo-reflective windows are activated only by heat, and, according to the manufacturer, they are superior in stopping heat from entering a building. Because they respond only to heat, the windows let in more heat (and light) in cold weather and block it in warm weather. The manufacturer uses a similar approach toward managing heat with an advanced thermo-reflective wall or cladding technology that can be “programmed” at the time of manufacture to reflect heat at a specific temperature.



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STILL STANDING AFTER ALL THESE YEARS

The kingpin still rules in Comal, Bexar and Guadalupe counties

BY JOE NICK PATOSKI
PHOTOS BY WYATT McSPADDEN



Left to right, pin boys Dakota Cooper, Nathan Rhynes and Colton Cooper wait to reset bowling pins at Rogers Ranch Bowling Club between Lockhart and Niederwald.

IT'S SATURDAY AFTERNOON AT THE Fischer Bowling Club, a humble building beneath shady oaks on a two-lane county road in the Hill Country with a red-wood storefront exterior made distinctive by eight white bowling pins arranged in a circle on the wall around a red pin in the middle.

Inside, it feels like a long time ago. Four teams of bowlers are keeping the pin boys at the end of the alley under the Willkommen zum Fischer sign busy, setting up a new diamond-shaped rack of pins whenever all the old rack of pins are all knocked down, or the red pin in the middle, also known as the kingpin, is the only one left standing. The bowlers sit in the rooster benches—as the three rows of bleachers are called—waiting their turn to roll, exchanging pleasantries and small talk, while the team captain records the team scores on the chalkboard by the side of the lanes and calls up the next team bowler.

After rolling balls and knocking down

pins for a while, on cue, everyone takes a break, with half of the bowlers going outside to stretch and the other half heading to the bar, popping open \$1.50 beers and 50-cent sodas, keeping tabs on the honor system, firing up the jukebox or flipping through the pages of the bowling club scrapbook on the counter while three kids scamper beneath them. After a few minutes' respite, a petite, gray-haired lady blows a whistle, and everyone goes back to bowling.

Step inside any of the 19 ninepin bowling clubs clustered around Comal, Bexar and Guadalupe counties, and step into Texas as it used to be. Ninepin bowling is one of the last Old World traditions that Germans brought with them when they settled a broad, fertile swath of Central and South-Central Texas in the mid-to-late 18th century. Ninepins were the most popular form of bowling in the early United States, but since the 1930s, when the game was outlawed in several states for its associations with gambling and other shady

activities, Texas has been the only place where ninepins remains popular.

Tenpin bowling replaced ninepin, and its popularity was sealed in the 1950s when pinsetters were automated. But ninepin, along with the kids who "set 'em up," never lost favor in Texas. Today, the tri-county ninepin clubs are the last place in America where bowling is done like this.

Ninepin bowling has a direct connection to a time when social clubs functioned as community centers for German immigrant farmers and others working the fields. It was often the only social option outside the church. Annual memberships under \$25, a night of bowling for about \$6 and beers under \$2 are reminders of how fun used to be a whole lot cheaper and simpler. All one needs to do is commit to bowl one or two nights a week and (for the better bowlers) be willing to travel to "roll-offs" against other clubs.

The functional exteriors of the buildings, ranging from cinder block to lime-

stone to modern metal siding; their low-frills, full-service interiors with tables, chairs, ballrooms, bar and jukebox; and their locations at the edge of cultivated farmland, at crossroads or in oak-canopied oases, are testament to the industriousness and values of the clubs' founders. The current members, who revel in the old ways despite encroaching cities and suburbs, are testament to the staying power of ninepins.

The specter of the Target sign hovering above the horizon marking yet another power-center mall going up within eyeshot of the Freiheit Bowling Club in New Braunfels does not diminish what the club and the corrugated tin-sided Freiheit Country Store next door symbolize. In the here and now, ninepin bowling clubs not only still function as they were intended to when they were established more than a century ago, they're cool.

You don't have to bowl or even go inside to appreciate nuances such as the sign out front of Solms Bowling Club, just south of New Braunfels and just west of Interstate 35, that spells out "Solms Bowling Club 100 Years" in horseshoes. For all the intrusions that

so-called progress brings, most bowling clubs have enough land for bar-becue pits, shaded pavilions and horseshoes on the side or around back to get away from it all.

One such example is the eight-lane Mission Valley Bowling Club west of New Braunfels at the crossroads of State Highway 46 and FM 1863. The newbie of ninepin clubs, established in 1943, it remains a surviving slice of countryside in a rapidly developing area. Similarly, it may take some rooting around to find the Bulverde Community Center Bowling Club behind the Bulverde Community Center and next to a school on Ammann Road. Even the Spring Branch Bowling Club on busy U.S. Highway 281 conveys that feeling of refuge. Go around back where the pit and pavilion await under a thicket of oaks, and it still feels like country.

The presence of a ninepin bowling club means a drinking establishment or dance hall is in close proximity, often as not. The Bexar and Germania bowling clubs outside Loop 1604 east of San Antonio are within walking distance of the Double Ringer Lounge (known locally as "Teddy's") at the crossroads of

Zuehl as well as a public shooting range. The Barbarossa, Bracken and Freiheit bowling clubs are all adjacent to classic beer joints.

The 120-year-old Freiheit Country Store and dance hall has a rep for its griddle-cooked hamburgers, shuffleboard, jukebox and a sign out front that says, "Gun Owners Parking Only, Violators Will Be Shot." The Fischer Bowling Club, operated by the Agricultural Society of Fischer, which dates back to the 1870s, is adjacent to a 100-year-old dance hall also operated by the society that is available for private functions. The six-lane Blanco Bowling Club is most famous for the Blanco Bowling Club Café in front of the alleys, world-renowned for its truckstop enchiladas and lemon and chocolate meringue pies.

People are perhaps the most crucial ingredient of all that makes ninepin what it is. There's a lilt in the accents of many bowlers who act like they've known each other since they were kids. This may well be the case, since some bowlers go back three or four generations. Listen close, and what you thought was pronounced "bear" for



The Fischer Bowling Club, operated by the Agricultural Society of Fischer, dates back to the 1870s.



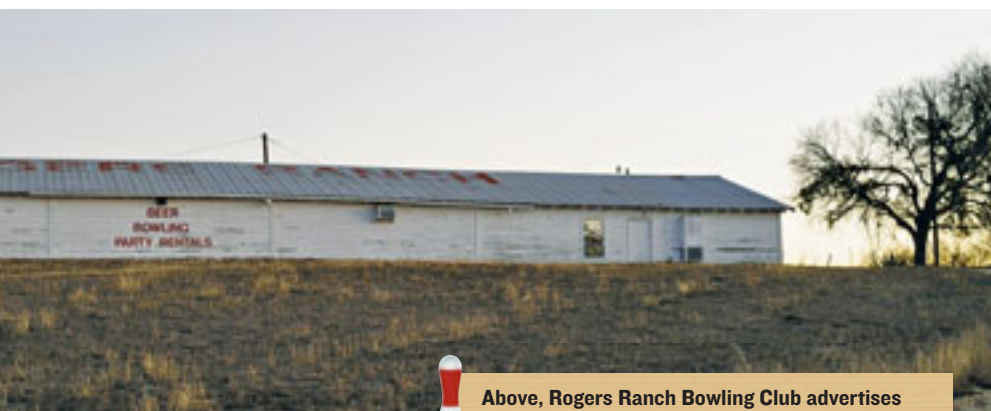
Bexar is referred to as “becks-are” by ninepin bowlers.

Folks at one club seem to know folks at other clubs, as was the case with Kendra, who ran the Freiheit Country Store next to the Freiheit Bowling Club, who said to say hi to Alvin Seiler at the Barbarossa Trough next to the Barbarossa Bowling Club; and with Sharon Coker, the manager at the Laubach Bowling Club, who showed off the bowling pin-themed curtains she redid and gave a brief history of the club founded by the San Geronimo Harmonie as Dean Martin crooned

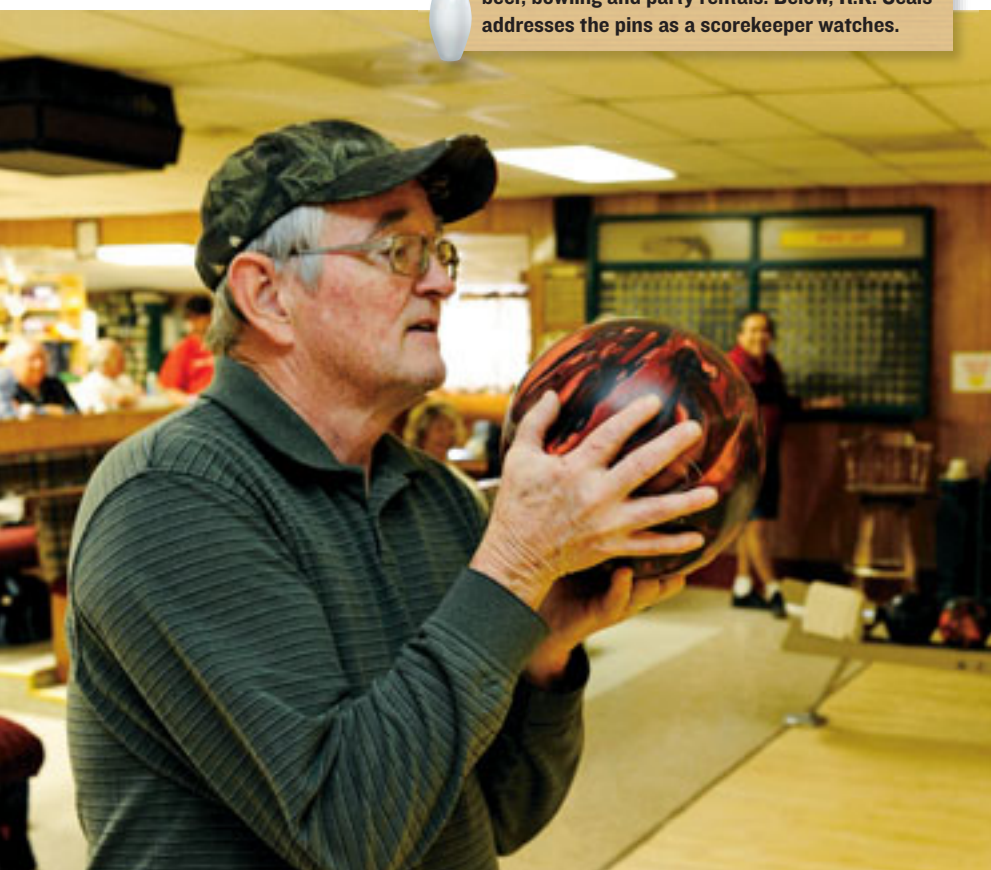
“That’s Amore” on the jukebox. She reckoned that the bowlers in Marion were tougher competitors to go up against in a roll-off than the bowlers over at the Bexar, Germania and Cibolo bowling clubs.

As long as there are good people like Coker, the balls roll, and the pins are reset manually (don’t forget to tip your pinsetter), ninepin remains the only way to bowl in at least one part of Texas that’s like nowhere else in the world.

Joe Nick Patoski’s latest book is Willie Nelson: An Epic Life.



Above, Rogers Ranch Bowling Club advertises beer, bowling and party rentals. Below, R.K. Seals addresses the pins as a scorekeeper watches.



WHERE TO FIND KINGPINS

Barbarossa Bowling Club, 4007 FM 758 (between Zorn and New Braunfels), New Braunfels, (830) 625-2034

Bexar Bowling Alley & Social Hall, 15681 Bexar Bowling Club Road, Marion (1.5 miles south of Interstate 10 off Trainer Hale Road, east of San Antonio), (830) 420-2512

Blanco Bowling Club, 310 Fourth St., Blanco, (830) 833-4416

Bracken Bowling Club, 18397 Bracken Drive (off FM 2252, north of Evans Road), Bracken, (210) 651-6941

Bulverde Community Center Bowling Club, 1747 E. Ammann Road (west of Bulverde Road and FM 1863), Bulverde, (830) 438-3065 www.bulverdebowlingclub.com

Cibolo Bowling Club, 601 N. Main St. (north of FM 78), Cibolo, (210) 658-2248

Fischer Bowling Club, Fischer Store Road (off Ranch Road 32), Fischer, (830) 935-4800

Freiheit Bowling Club, 2145 FM 1101 (at FM 483, 1 mile east of Interstate 35), New Braunfels, (830) 625-0372

Germania Bowling Club, 1826 Zuehl Road, Zuehl (near Bowling Club Road, 1.5 miles south of Interstate 10 off Trainer Hale Road, east of San Antonio), (830) 420-2675

Highland Social Club, 2929 S. W.W. White Road, San Antonio, (210) 333-4567

Laubach Bowling Club, 1986 Laubach Road, (1.5 miles east of State Highway 123), Seguin, (830) 379-9033

Marion Bowling Club, 111 W. Krueger (north of the railroad tracks by the Catholic church), Marion, (830) 420-2205

Martinez Social Club, 7791 Saint Hedwig Road (at FM 1516), San Antonio, (210) 661-2422

Mission Valley Bowling Club, 2311 W. State Highway 46, New Braunfels, (830) 629-0028

Rogers Ranch Bowling Club, 1651 Rogers Ranch Road (County Road 223 off FM 2001, 1.5 miles east of State Highway 21 between Lockhart and Niederwald), Lockhart, (512) 398-2809

Solms Bowling Club, 175 N. Solms Road (1 mile west of Interstate 35), New Braunfels, (830) 608-9691

Spring Branch Bowling Club, 12830 U.S. Highway 281 (less than a mile south of FM 306), Spring Branch, (830) 885-4611

Turner Bowling Club, 120 Ninth St., San Antonio, (210) 227-4412, www.turnerclub.org

Zorn Bowling Club, 12000 State Highway 123, Seguin (south of Zorn), (830) 379-5247

The Peanut Sun-Times

May 2009

A publication of the Texas Peanut Producers Board

Retail peanut butter still a safe, nutritional snack



The Texas Peanut Producers Board is still encouraging consumers to purchase retail brand peanut butter, because it remains a safe, nutritious snack packed with energy.

“Texas peanut farmers and shellers take producing an abundant, safe and nutritious food product very seriously,” said Shelly Nutt, TPPB executive director.

“Peanut Corporation of America used about 2.5 percent of the peanuts processed each year in the United States,” Nutt said. “While more than 4,000 retail products were recalled, the overwhelming majority of peanut products were not affected. We have stressed over and over that major national brands of peanut butter available in the grocery store are still safe and not affected by the recall.”

Nutt said peanut butter is still one of the most nutritious snacks available and it’s still a product Texas peanut producers will stand behind and promote to consumers. Since the salmonella outbreak, TPPB directors and staff have been actively engaged with the local, state and national media to help spread the message that major brand peanut butter is still safe to eat.

“America loves peanut butter,” Nutt said, “and we’re not going to stop promoting it as one of the most nutritious food sources available to consumers.”

Peanut butter is an excellent source of 30 vitamins and minerals and is proven to reduce the risk of heart disease and diabetes. For more information about Texas peanut production, go to www.TexasPeanutBoard.com.

Recipes

Double Peanut Breakfast Bars

Ingredients: 1 1/2 cups whole grain flake cereal, 1 cup whole grain “O” shaped cereal, 1/2 cup chopped dry-roasted peanuts, 1/2 cup dried fruit, 1/3 cup honey, 1/3 cup packed golden brown sugar, and 3 tbs. peanut butter

Directions: Stir together cereals, peanuts & dried fruit. Combine honey, brown sugar & peanut butter in saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring constantly. Pour over cereal mixture & stir until well coated. With back of oiled spoon, press mixture into lightly greased 8-in square pan. Cool. Cut into 9 pieces.

Go to www.texaspeanutboard.com for nutritional information for this recipe



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They don't make western heroes like John Wayne anymore. When Duke rode into town, you never had to wonder what side he was on. We loved the confident way he carried himself in and out of danger. But most of all, we admired the way he stood for something decent and heroic.

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Now the timeless hero rides across the western landscape once more in a new collectible clock specially issued to commemorate the 100th anniversary of John Wayne's birth in 1907. The larger-than-life personality and strength of Duke shines brightly here, captured in full color on luminous stained glass that is softly lit from behind. The illuminated stained-glass treatment adds an amazing richness to the portraits, and offers eloquent proof that a legend this great is only enhanced by time.

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Duke's replica autograph in 22-kt gold graces the face of the quartz clock which is framed by walnut-stained wood. Strong demand is expected for the limited edition wall clock. So act now to reserve yours at the issue price of \$125.00*, payable in four installments of \$31.25 each, and backed by our 365-day money-back guarantee. Send no money now. Mail the Reservation Application today!

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MAY IS NATIONAL ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH

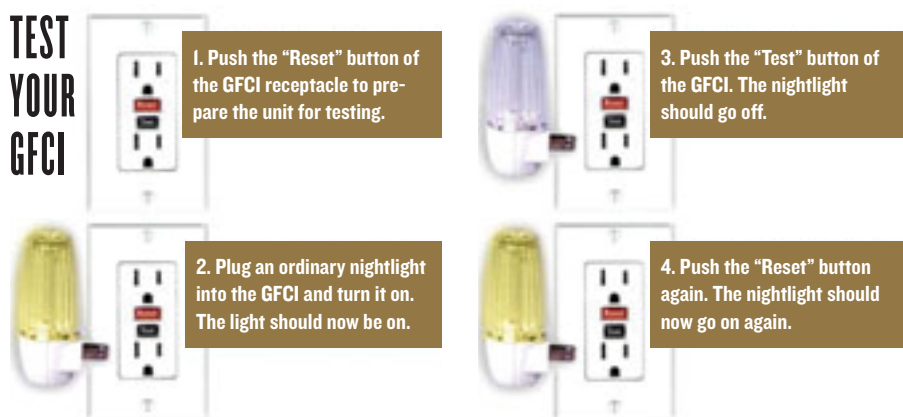
Protect Your Home and Family from Fires and Electrocution

Electrical problems in older homes account for nearly 55,000 fires every year. These blazes cause more than 500 deaths, injure more than 1,400 and rack up \$1.4 billion in property damage.

The risk of such fires is significant since half of all homes in the United States were constructed and wired prior to 1973, according to the U.S. Census Bureau—before the advent of garage-door openers or home computers. Even more telling, one-third of U.S. homes were built before hair dryers or electric

Over the past three decades, ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) have saved thousands of lives and prevented many more injuries. A GFCI is a special type of outlet designed to trip before a deadly electrical shock can occur. GFCIs constantly monitor electricity flowing in a circuit. If the electricity flowing into the circuit differs by even a slight amount from the electricity returning, the GFCI will quickly shut off the current flowing through that circuit. The advantage of using GFCIs is that they can detect even small varia-

TEST YOUR GFCI



The nightlight should go out when the "Test" button is pushed. If the light does not go out, the GFCI may have been improperly wired or damaged and does not offer shock protection.

can openers were even invented!

Owners of older homes can upgrade their electrical systems with newer fire prevention technology, such as arc-fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs). These advanced circuit breakers detect dangerous conditions in a home's wiring and cut off power before a fire starts.

Additionally, those living in older homes with children can install tamper-resistant receptacles. These devices look like normal electrical outlets, although they have a built-in shutter system that prevents children from inserting foreign objects into the slots. Use of tamper-resistant receptacles would prevent most of the 2,400 burns suffered by children each year.

tions in the amount of leakage current—leakage too small to trip a fuse or circuit breaker.

A GFCI should be used in any area where water may come in contact with electrical products.

- Put a GFCI between your electric power source and your electric product.
- Test your GFCI monthly and after every major electrical storm.
- If you have a home without GFCIs, consult a qualified, licensed electrician about adding this important protection; purchase plug-in units or a portable GFCI to provide individual receptacle or load protection.

For more information on National Electrical Safety Month and safety tips, visit www.electricalsafety.org.

NEW TAX CREDITS FOR ENERGY-EFFICIENT HOME IMPROVEMENTS

Even though money is tight, this might be a good time to make some home improvements.

You could qualify for up to \$1,500 in federal tax credits if you trade your old windows, furnace, roof or water heater for an energy-efficient model.

The tax credits are part of President Obama's economic stimulus bill and are good for energy-efficient improvements you make in 2009 and 2010.

You could get a tax credit for 30 percent of the cost of the improvement, up to \$1,500, on windows and doors, insulation, metal and asphalt roofs, heating and air-conditioning systems, non-solar water heaters (but not tankless or electric storage water heaters) and biomass stoves. For these items, the credit does not include installation.

Another 30 percent is available—with no upper limit through 2016—for geothermal heat pumps, solar panels, solar water heaters, small wind energy systems and fuel cells. For these items, the credit includes installation. But make sure you talk with your cooperative before having any supplemental energy devices installed.

Do some research before you buy any of these products to ensure they qualify for the tax credit. To claim your credit, you will need a manufacturer's certification that the product qualifies. You usually can find that on the manufacturer's website.

You can claim the tax credit by filling out IRS Tax Form 5695 (2009 version) when you file your 2009 taxes next year.

For more information about the energy-efficiency tax credit, visit www.energystar.gov. Click on "tax credits for energy efficiency."

KEEP ELECTRICITY FROM GOING DOWN THE DRAIN

Water use and electricity go hand in hand. Heating water can account for 14 to 25 percent of the total energy consumed in a typical home. What's more, systems used to clean public water supplies and deliver it to homes require large amounts of electricity. If your home receives water from a well or spring, the pump also draws power. So when we use water, hot or cold, we're also using energy.

Techniques for reducing water use in your home are surprisingly simple. For one, you can significantly reduce hot water consumption by simply repairing leaks in fixtures—faucets and showerheads—or pipes. A leak of one drip per second can cost \$1 per month.

You can also reduce water heating costs in a matter of seconds by lowering the thermostat setting on your water heater. For each 10 degrees of reduction in temperature, you can save between 3 percent and 5 percent in energy costs. Reducing the setting also



slows mineral buildup and corrosion in your water heater and pipes.

Although some manufacturers set water heater thermostats at 140 degrees, most households usually only require them to be set at 120. However, if you have a dishwasher without a booster heater, you may require water temperature within a range of 130 to 140 degrees for optimum cleaning.

Adding insulation to your water heater can save 4 to 9 percent in costs. To determine whether you need to insulate your water heater, touch it. A tank that's warm to the touch needs additional insulation.

Insulating your water heater tank is fairly simple and inexpensive and will pay for itself in about a year. You can find precut jackets or blankets available from around \$10 to \$20. Choose one with an insulating value of at least R-8. In addition, don't set the thermostat above 130 degrees on an electric water heater with an insulating jacket or blanket—the wiring may overheat.

Installing insulation on gas- and oil-fired water heaters is more difficult. For these appliances, it's best to have a qualified plumbing and heating contractor perform the work.

For more tips on decreasing water use in your home, including pipe and water heater insulation techniques, visit www.energysavers.gov.

Safety First Under the Sun

Sunshiny spring days are an invitation to head outdoors—sometimes for fun, sometimes for chores. Either way, your local electric cooperative offers these tips to keep you safe:

Products like tillers, lawnmowers, mulchers, hedge trimmers, leaf blowers and chainsaws can cut, burn and even blind when directions are not followed. Study each product's manual for safe operation rules and always follow them.

Outdoor electrical appliances and power tools should ALWAYS BE:

- Plugged in and turned on only when in use.
- Stored indoors (with a few exceptions such as electric barbecue grills, which can be covered to remain outdoors) and away from water and

excessive heat.

- Used only when all safety guards are in place. Sharp blades and rapidly moving parts can cut off a finger or a toe.

Outdoor electrical appliances and power tools should NEVER BE:

- Left unattended, even when you leave temporarily. If there is a key, remove it. Put the product where no curious child or unqualified adult can misuse it.
- Plugged in while the switch is in the "on" position or while being carried or moved.
- Carried by their cords.
- Used while wet or close to water.
- Used near sharp edges or in conditions that can damage the product, its cord or its plug. Loose and broken wires are both shock and fire hazards.



- Repaired by anyone who is not a licensed electrician, authorized by the manufacturer or trained to repair the particular product.

The Road Almost Taken

'I had a secret mission in mind.'

BY JOE HOLLEY

I was 5 years old that summer afternoon when my brother and I set off on our daring adventure. Kenny was 3.

Our prairie schooner, our Pinta-Niña-Santa Maria, was our little gray wagon. It used to be a little red wagon, but it had gotten so scarred and dented after a couple of years of rough treatment—running it into concrete-block back-porch steps will do that to a wagon—that we begged Daddy to paint it. He did one Saturday afternoon, but the only paint he had around the house was gray primer, which he swabbed on with a brush. So now our wagon was a dull, monochromatic gray.

“Take this list up to Miss Andrews’ (store),” Mama said that weekday afternoon. I could read by then, the summer before first grade, so I knew what we needed to get. Mama handed me a folded \$5 bill. “Put it in your pocket and don’t lose it,” she said.

Kenny and I had taken grocery runs before; the little neighborhood store was only a block and a half away. This time, though, I had a secret mission in mind. For months, weeks—who knows how a 5-year-old measures time?—I had yearned to branch out, to explore the next street over. Why? Because it was there, I suppose. That’s all I remember about motive.

But the next street over was off-limits—too close to the busy Dallas Highway, Mama said. So Kenny and I stayed on our street, Strickland, where all the neighbors knew us and looked out for us. We made the occasional foray up to Miss Andrews’ store on Parrish, but never went any farther.

On this day, though, my devious 5-year-old mind had concocted a plan. I’m not sure whether I shared it with Kenny, but he rarely questioned anything his big brother told him, so he would go along, regardless. I was excited, so I probably did tell him about the big adventure I was planning.

My blond-haired little brother sat cross-legged in the wagon. I flipped the handle back to him so he could steer while I pushed from the back. We rattled down our dirt driveway and onto the street—actually a potholed road with gravel shoulders and no curbs. In my mind’s eye, I can still see us on that long-ago afternoon: two little boys in shorts beneath a glaring summer sun, both of us dusty and sweat-streaked, shirtless and barefoot.

We passed the light green house of our retired neighbors, the Wills, and their corn patch in the empty lot between our houses, the stalks yellow and withered. We passed the Beards’ neatly kept white frame house. Mr. Beard, a quiet man, was

a bus driver and custodian at the school where I'd be starting in a few weeks. We passed Mrs. Rachle's house and looked for Rosie, our playmate and best friend. She stayed with her grandmother during the day while her parents worked. She would probably be up for an adventure, but we didn't see her. She might have been taking her afternoon nap.

Head down and bent over almost double, keeping a sharp eye out for painful goathead weeds that had snaked onto the shoulder of the road during the hot Central Texas summer, I pushed Kenny to the intersection with Parrish, a slightly busier street than Strickland. We looked both ways, twice, as we had been taught, and then scurried across the street and turned left for the half-block stretch to Miss Andrews' store.

A bell jingled as we pushed open the screen door and walked into the small store, its wooden floor smelling of the oily red powder Miss Andrews used for sweeping. We picked up the items on our list—probably a loaf of bread, maybe a stick of butter for something Mama was fixing for supper—and set them on the counter, which was about eye-high for me. Mr. Byford, Miss Andrews' son-in-law, rang them up. As we waited, I kept thinking about our secret adventure. I was excited, nervous, worried.

We hurried back outside. Kenny settled himself in the wagon, and I had him turn the handle toward the unknown. Soon we were trundling down the forbidden street, houses on one side, and, across a weed-choked bar ditch on the other, the back of gas stations and other businesses along the highway. As I pushed, I looked up occasionally, but I couldn't enjoy the new sights. I was feeling too guilty.

We were passing a vacant lot, and through the gap I could see our house on Strickland. That meant, of course, that anybody who happened to be looking could see us, as well. I couldn't stand it. "Turn around," I muttered to Kenny. We retraced our path back to Parrish. Passing the store, I saw Mr. Byford leaning out the door. He was beckoning to us.

I knew what had happened. Mama had seen us through the vacant lot and had called him. I could imagine what she said: "If those boys come back by, Mr. Byford, tell 'em I said they better get home this minute!" I knew we were in trouble. I hoped it wasn't trouble big enough that she'd tell Daddy when he got home from work.

I pushed the wagon through the bottle cap-strewn gravel in front of the store.

Standing in the sun, I squinted up toward Mr. Byford, who stared down at me, the hint of a smile on his face. "You boys forgot your groceries," he said, holding out the brown paper bag.

I took the bag from him and put it in the wagon behind Kenny. We headed straight home, where Mama was blissfully unaware of her sons' errant adventure.

I went outside and sat on the front-porch steps, chin in both hands, elbows on my knees. Behind the Thomases' house across from ours, I could see the other road—the road almost taken. Maybe I'd try again someday. Maybe when I was 6.

Joe Holley, former editor of Texas Co-op Power, reports for The Washington Post.



AUSTIN

Rejuvenating the Prairie

*Prescribed burns
mimic nature.*

By Mary Lance



Minutes before the brushfire is lit, research scientist Mark Simmons kneels on the ground at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, whipping a psychrometer around like a slingshot to measure the humidity and air temperature. He raises a hand to test the wind speed and direction. It's a go for burning. He speaks into a walkie-talkie to his eight-member burn team and says, "Ignite."

Safely clad in yellow fire-retardant shirt and pants, one member of Simmons' team traces a thin black line of fire across the grass, holding a gas and diesel drip torch like a paintbrush. The fire creeps slowly into the southward wind.

Snowflake-like bits of gray ash fly skyward above the brushfire. I stand only 20 feet from the fire as it hisses and crackles and takes on a life of its own. And though I feel the heat, smell the acrid smoke and stare right in the face of a soon-to-be-roaring brush fire, I don't feel fear, only awe—a wonder that a deliberately set fire is so controlled.

Setting "prescribed fires" is a frequent happening at the 279-acre Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, part of the University of Texas at Austin, which since 2001 has been conducting these carefully prescribed burns on its grounds southwest of Austin. The aim of the Hill Country Research Project is to observe burning in multiple-weather seasons and demonstrate the amazing efficiency of a burn to restore native ecology.

"Prescribed fire is an ideal solution to the environmental problem of invasive species," says Simmons, the "burn boss" for this day's fire. "Fire is just copying nature," he notes, referring to times when fires, lit by lightning, roared across the Texas landscape. Sometimes, Native Americans deliberately set the blazes. The result was verdant new growth for the buffalo that munched and grew fat off local grasses. "Native grasses are like ice cream to cattle today," Simmons says.

Other yellow-suited team members patrol the perimeter of the fire to stamp out small fires creeping out of the fire line. They swat at the fire in a mopping-like motion using truck mud flaps attached to broom poles. Meanwhile, Simmons circles the acreage in a four-wheeler, calling to his crew on the walkie-talkie. He instructs the fire line to be laid from the northeast to the southeast corner and then another line counterclockwise on the other side of the acreage—fire goes with the wind toward the center of the acreage where it will whoosh up in a big convection fireball.

This acre-and-a-half burn is done on land representative of the Texas Hill Country—a field of short grasses (both native and non-native), forest-green Ashe junipers (mountain cedar), live oaks with grapevines streaming downward, ubiquitous scrub brush, agarita and, finally, the ever-present prickly pear cactus.

Prescribed fires are but one method used to restore the native ecology of the land—and they are a more economical and effective way than either the use of pes-

ticides or tilling to destroy invasive plants, both non-native and native, that have, thanks to overgrazing, farming and encroachment of suburbia, almost destroyed native prairies. Less than 1 percent of historic tall-grass prairie remains in Texas.

Burn researchers at the Wildflower Center were pleasantly surprised to learn that summer burns are especially effective for killing off King Ranch bluestem, a Eurasian native that chokes out native grasses. The natives have a higher protein content prized by ranchers for their cattle.

There's a larger effect from a prescribed burn—a direct effect on global warming.

“Native grasses, like forests, act like lungs, filtering out carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and putting oxygen back into the air,” explains Steve Windhager, director of landscape restoration for the center. Studies have shown that the new grasses absorb much more carbon dioxide than what a burn emits. “So there is not as much going up in smoke as you might think,” he says.

In addition, he says, “A burn is one part of proper land management, which helps native plants filter out pollutants from rainwater before it flows into nearby streams and aquifers.”

Center staff frequently are asked, how can prescribed burns be safe? “Because they are conducted with military-like precision,” Simmons explains. “There are no second guesses; all factors have to be exact.” Indeed, as the designated burn boss, Simmons files a burn prescription with the Austin Fire Department specifying that temperature, humidity, vegetation moisture and wind speed will fall within a prescribed range.

“A prescribed fire is safer than driving a car,” Simmons says. And, besides, the team has a 200-gallon water tank truck on standby—and because this burn is inside the city limits, the fire department, at no cost to the center, parks a red fire truck by the site, ready—although it has never been needed.

And what of the uncontrolled wildfires that are so predominant in some dry years, particularly in California? Windhager says, “Ecologically, the fires in California are not catastrophic. The real problems there come from property damage, which prescribed fires also minimize.”

Lady Bird Johnson never got to see a burn at her beloved center, but Windhager, who knew the former first lady (she co-founded the center with actress Helen Hayes, a friend, in 1982), believes Johnson would have delighted to see ash and smoke soar upward, fulfilling her dream for research about one more method with which to restore and preserve native plants to all of America.

Mary Lance is a writer based in San Antonio.

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Color	"D" Colorless	"D" Colorless
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BY KAYE NORTHCOTT
AND CLAY COPPEDGE

The Dukes of Duval County

The recent scandal in which the governor of Illinois was accused of trying to sell a U.S. Senate seat just goes to show that Texas is not the only state where politics sometimes goes out of bounds. But for sheer audacity, we'll put historic Duval County boss rule in South Texas up against anything Chicago or New York ever dreamed up. The reign of the dukes of Duval from 1906 through 1975 was a brush-country saga of graft, shootouts, unsolved murders, arson and the infamous case of the ballot box from Precinct 13.

Archer Parr, the first duke, and George B. Parr, the second duke, were Anglos who gained their power through patronage of the impoverished Mexican-American majority who toiled on area farms and ranches. In contrast to the Anglo landowners who preceded them, they at least took the time to learn Spanish, and they helped people in need—as long as the people stayed within their flock. It was said that Duval County was their milk cow. The Parrs skimmed off the *crema* (cream) for themselves and left the *leche flaca* (skim milk) for their followers.

Archer Parr was first elected to the county commissioners court in 1898. In 1912, his side stole the ballots in the county seat, San Diego, triggering a gunfight in which three local officials were killed, according to *The Handbook of Texas*. At its height, the regime controlled several counties and all county jobs and contracts. The machine oversaw the selective distribution of poll taxes (that had to be paid for the privilege of voting), distributed marked ballots to illiterate voters, posted intimidating armed guards at election sites and, on occasion, tampered with returns.

Opponents' best recourse was the courts. They pushed for Duval County's first financial audit in 1914. The preliminary report revealed 14 types of illegal activity. That's the point at which a mysterious fire destroyed the courthouse and most of the remaining evidence. The investigation turned to cin- ders, and Archer Parr won election to the Texas Senate.

The Parrs were frequently brought up on charges of unpaid back taxes, mail fraud and perjury. In 1936-37, George Parr served a term in federal prison for income tax evasion.

Fast-forward to 1948 when Lyndon B. Johnson was in a close contest against Coke R. Stevenson to represent Texas in the U.S. Senate. *The Handbook of Texas* says, "With Stevenson the apparent winner, election officials in Jim Wells County, probably acting on Parr's orders, reported an additional 202 votes (in Precinct 13) for Johnson a week after the primary runoff and provided the future president with his 87-vote margin of victory for the whole state." The voting lists from Precinct 13 disappeared, leaving Stevenson's

supporters to allege that many of the late votes were so well organized that they were cast in alphabetical order in the same handwriting using green ink. People even voted from the great beyond.

George Parr controlled elections and freely accessed public funds for personal and public use. He built county roads with his own road company and a racetrack at his ranch. Always willing to do his part, Parr would pitch in and do a stint as county judge or sheriff when the need arose. That he was able to hold public office after serving time for income tax invasion was due to a presidential pardon he received from Harry Truman in 1946.

In the 1950s, George Parr and his ring members were indicted more than 650 times, but Parr survived the indictments. With such a history of crawling intact from the wreckage of various investigations and charges, Parr might have decided, with some justification, that he was invincible. Former federal prosecutor John E. Clark wrote in his 1995 book *The Fall of the Duke of Duval* that Parr "settled down to an uninterrupted decade of running the county for fun and profit. Not until 1972 would the empire be challenged again." Clark managed to win a five-year sentence against Parr for income tax evasion.

But George Parr had no intention of going back to prison at the age of 74. His family heritage was as bloody as any spaghetti Western. He drove to a favorite part of his Los Harcones Ranch and put a bullet through his head. On the day of his funeral, 150 cars slowly followed the coffin from the ranch house to the family cemetery where hundreds of still-loyal followers ringed the wrought-iron fence to watch interment and weep.

Kaye Northcott is editor of Texas Co-op Power, and Clay Coppedge is a frequent contributor.



Enjoy This Versatile, Abundant Summer Treat

BY KEVIN HARGIS It's the time of the year when backyard gardens are reaching their zenith, and if you planted zucchini, yellow or pattypan squash—perhaps even all three—an avalanche of the sweet, tender vegetables likely awaits.

I've only had luck with summer squash a couple of times in my gardening career, the failures coming from too little rain or too much or those pesky bugs that munch on the stems and rob the plant of nutrients. But when the squash crop came in, it came in a flood, and it became a fixture at many meals and a gift to many friends.

It's a good thing that squash is such a versatile ingredient, because there's so much of it.

Luckily, inventive cooks have created summer squash dishes suitable for breakfast, lunch and supper, and yet, sometimes that's not enough to use it all. Family, friends and co-workers are next in line to receive the bounty of the garden.

But even if you don't have a garden or know a gardener, summer squash is available year-round in this part of the country.

One of my favorite ways to fix squash is to slice it in a pan with an onion, garlic and a few tomatoes and let it simmer until it's soft. My wife introduced me to the joys of yellow squash boiled in a little water, a little sugar and a touch of butter. And squash is also great sliced in half, brushed with olive oil and dusted with herbs and placed on the grill alongside chicken or steak.

I'd never thought about making soup with summer squash until I ran across this recipe. It comes from the book *300 Sensational Soups* (Robert Rose, 2008) written by Carla Snyder and Meredith Deeds. The authors not only deliver a variety of traditional soups that span the globe, they also provide recipes for interesting accompani-

ments and some unusual soup flavors.

Among the broths featuring ingredients as varied as melon, peanuts or cauliflower is this one showcasing two types of summer squash.

PATTYPAN AND SUMMER SQUASH SOUP

- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 large onion
- 1 stalk celery, diced
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- 1½ pounds pattypan squash (about 2), diced
- 1½ pounds summer squash (about 4), diced
- 1 sweet potato, peeled and diced
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 6 cups chicken or vegetable stock
- ¼ cup whipping cream
- Pinch cayenne pepper
- Black pepper to taste

In a large pot, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add onion, celery and cumin; sauté until onion starts to soften, about 2-3 minutes. Add pattypan and summer squash (zucchini, yellow squash or both); sauté until they start to soften, about 5 minutes. Add sweet potato, wine and salt; cook until liquid has evaporated, about 3 minutes.

Add stock and bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer until vegetables are tender, about 20 minutes. Stir in cream, cayenne and black pepper. Ladle into bowls; top with Avocado and Grape Tomato Salsa and garnish with croutons, if desired.

Serving size: 2 cups. Per serving: 214 calories, 3.4 g protein, 11.1 g fat, 20.3 g carbohydrates, 1,230 mg sodium, 6 mg cholesterol.

AVOCADO AND GRAPE TOMATO SALSA

- 1 avocado, diced
- 1½ cups halved grape tomatoes
- ¼ cup minced cilantro
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- Black pepper to taste
- Juice of 1 lime

Combine ingredients in bowl. Taste and adjust salt and pepper, if necessary. Serve immediately or cover and store up to 2 hours in refrigerator.

Serving size: 2 tablespoons. Per serving: 62 calories, 1.1 g protein, 4.7 g fat, 5.2 g carbohydrates, 101 mg sodium, trace cholesterol.




VIRGINIA BAROSH *Wharton County Electric Cooperative*

 Prize-winning recipe: **Zucchini Chocolate Orange Cake**

The Summer Squash recipe contest brought a bumper crop of entries. But the winner was not hard to pick. It may sound incongruous, but this chocolate cake is packed with zucchini. It's rich, moist and full of flavor and was a clear favorite among our taste testers.

COOK'S TIP

Most of the nutritional value in summer squash lies in the peel.

ZUCCHINI CHOCOLATE ORANGE CAKE

- 2½ cups all-purpose flour
 - ½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
 - 2½ teaspoons baking powder
 - 1½ teaspoons baking soda
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - 1 teaspoon cinnamon
 - ¾ cup butter, softened
 - 2 cups sugar
 - 3 eggs, beaten
 - 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
 - ½ cup milk
 - 3 cups grated zucchini
 - 1 tablespoon orange zest
 - 1 cup chopped walnuts or pecans
- Glaze

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour Bundt pan or spray with cooking spray. In a medium bowl, sift flour, cocoa, baking powder, baking soda, salt and cinnamon. Set aside. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar until fluffy. Blend in eggs, vanilla and milk. Stir in dry ingredients and mix until well incorporated. Fold in zucchini, orange zest and nuts.

Pour into Bundt pan. Bake 50 to 60 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in center of cake comes out clean. Allow to cool, invert on serving plate then drizzle with glaze.

GLAZE

- 1¼ cups powdered sugar
- ¼ cup orange juice
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Mix all together, adding a few more drops of juice if needed for correct consistency. Serves 16.

Serving size: 1 slice. Per serving: 360 calories, 5.4 g protein, 14.2 g fat, 53.8 g carbohydrates, 2.2 g fiber, 360 mg sodium, 63 mg cholesterol.

CRISPY ZUCCHINI

- 1 cup light mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

- ½ teaspoon dried basil
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 4 medium zucchini
- 1 cup finely crushed whole wheat cracker crumbs
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- Paprika (optional)

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Line two baking sheets with foil and lightly spray with cooking spray. In small bowl, mix mayonnaise, mustard, basil, oregano, salt and garlic and set aside. Scrub zucchini and remove tips. Cut into half-inch thick slices. Combine cracker crumbs and cheese on plate. Dip each zucchini slice into herbed mayonnaise, then roll in crumb mixture. Place a half inch apart on foil-lined baking sheets. Bake 15-20 minutes or until slices are browned and crisp. Sprinkle with paprika, if desired, and serve immediately.

Serving size: 1 cup. Per serving: 162 calories, 8.8 g protein, 4.9 g fat, 20.9 g carbohydrates, 2 g fiber, 478 mg sodium, 11 mg cholesterol.

DORIS DUPREE

Wise Electric Cooperative

BAKED PEPPER-CHEESE SQUASH

- 2 pounds summer squash
- 8 slices bacon
- 1 large onion

- 8 ounces shredded jalapeño or pepper jack cheese

½ to 1 cup dried bread crumbs

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Boil squash until tender. Fry bacon until crisp and remove from pan. Peel onion and slice into rings. Brown onion in portion of bacon drippings. Crumble bacon. In 9-by-9-inch baking pan, layer half of squash, then bacon, then onion, then cheese. Repeat layers and top with bread crumbs. Bake 40 minutes. Serves 10.

Serving size: 1 cup. Per serving: 182 calories, 10.6 g protein, 9.5 g fat, 12.5 g carbohydrates, 1.7 g fiber, 350 mg sodium, 27 mg cholesterol.

MICHELE GAHAN

Sam Houston Electric Cooperative

WHAT ELSE?

Anyone who has grown squash successfully knows there's always too much. Here are some easy ways to use it up:

- Julienne small sticks of yellow or zucchini squash for filler in meatloaf and meat sauce.
- Throw squash slices on the grill along with the burgers. Baste with olive oil.
- Use with dips. One simple dip is mayo with garlic and lemon to taste.
- Grate squash finely and add to potato pancakes. Serve with low-fat sour cream.
- Make squash blossom soup.
- Use squash blossoms for salad.
- Purée for baby food.
- Make tempura squash.
- When all else fails, give it to the neighbors.

SQUASH BLOSSOMS: THE DELICATE DELICACY

As vegetables go, squash usually doesn't command the same respect as its more aristocratic garden companions such as asparagus or snow peas. But when it comes to announcing itself, the squash is virtually peerless. Its extravagant golden blossom unfolds in floppy billows as if a ball gown were being born.

More and more cooks are realizing that squash blossoms are also an edible treat. But once they're harvested, they expire quickly. In fact, few supermarkets keep them in stock. Fortunately squash is pretty easy to grow, so home gardeners can easily take advantage of the many creative ways to prepare and serve this delicacy. For more information and several squash blossom recipes, go to www.seasonalchef.com/recipe0805b.htm.

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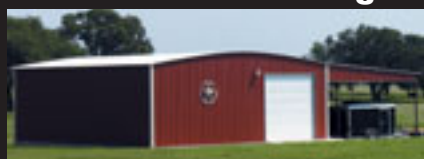
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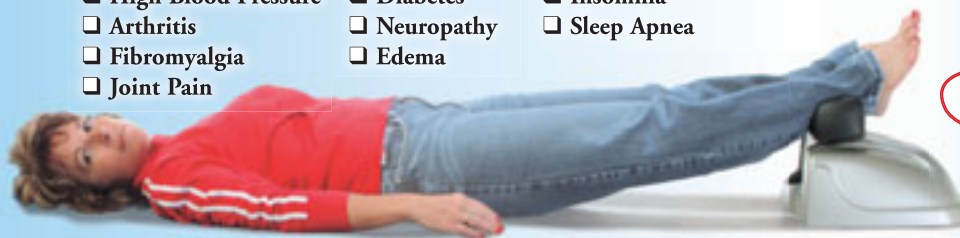
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I have had such lower back pain that I could hardly stand it. I saw your ad two years ago and thought it wouldn't help me. But, I ordered one anyway. I have used it for four months now. I have very little back pain, am more regular, and I sleep much better thanks to the Exerciser 2000.—C. Cordes

I am 97 years old and have edema in my left foot and leg. My daughter saw the Exerciser 2000 in an ad and encouraged me to try it. It is helping a lot and I feel alive again. Thank you!—Grace R.

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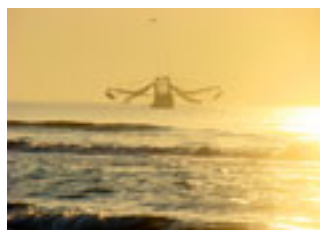
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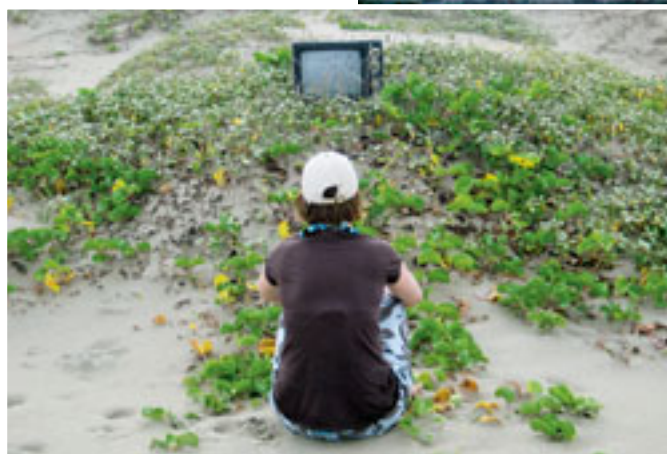
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▲ **Liliana Osborn** truly enjoyed getting down and dirty on her first trip to the coast on July 4, 2008. Parents and Pedernales Electric Cooperative members **Julia** and **David Osborn** took Liliana, then 11 months old, to ill-fated Crystal Beach on the Bolivar Peninsula, which was slammed by Hurricane Ike just a little more than two months later.



▲ This shot of a shrimp boat in Matagorda Bay came courtesy of United Cooperative Services member **Arnetta Clements**. "I was in Bay City for my dad's funeral and escaped to the beach for some alone time," she said.

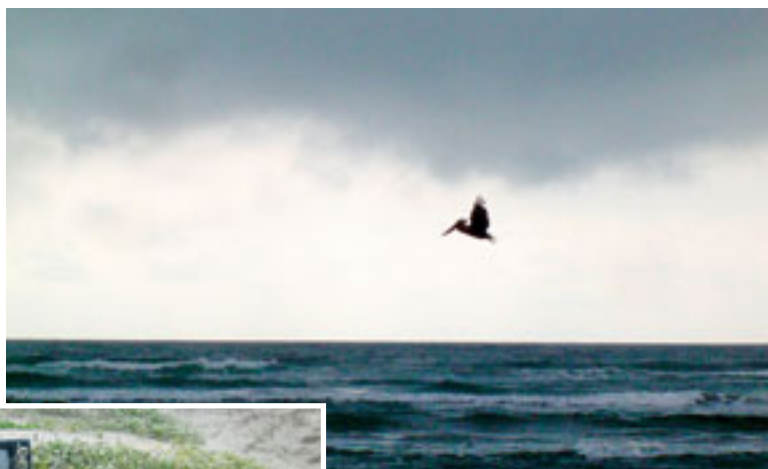


◀ When Pedernales Electric Cooperative member **Lea Brimberry** saw this TV set in the dunes near Little Shell Beach on North Padre Island, she decided to have a little fun and had her sister, **Lisa Brimberry**, take this funny and unique shot.

AT THE (TEXAS) BEACH

Texas is as diverse as it is large: It has deserts, valleys, rivers, lakes, hills, mountains and mesas ... and, of course, 367 miles of general coastline. Each month, thousands of Texans make the long or short trek to the seashore to get away. We received more than 200 photos of fun in the sand and sun, as well as some grim reminders of how hard 2008 was to our beaches. Here are just a few of our many favorites. —ASHLEY CLARY

▼ A week after Hurricane Ike hit, this hungry pelican searched for a snack just before sunset on the Mustang Island beach at Port Aransas. **Keith Axler** of Pedernales Electric Cooperative sent us this photo, which he says reflects the actual color of the sky and water before a storm moved in.



► This beautiful, yet desolate photo was sent in by **Sarah Williams**, who snapped it at Jamaica Beach on Galveston Island the first morning residents were allowed to go back home to view the post-Hurricane Ike damage. Her parents are members of Bandera Electric Cooperative.



Upcoming in Focus on Texas

ISSUE	SUBJECT	DEADLINE
Jul	Vacation Photos	May 10
Aug	Sisters	Jun 10
Sep	Texas Skyscapes	Jul 10
Oct	Cowgirls	Aug 10
Nov	Daredevils	Sep 10
Dec	Roughin' It	Oct 10

VACATION PHOTOS is the topic for our **JULY 2009** issue. Send your photo—along with your name, address, daytime phone, co-op affiliation and a brief description—to Vacation Photos, Focus on Texas, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701, before **May 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.texascoopower.com.

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Each entry **MUST** include your name, address and phone number, plus the name of your Texas electric cooperative, or it will be disqualified. Send entries to: *Texas Co-op Power*/Holiday Recipe Contest, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. You can fax recipes to (512) 763-3408 or e-mail them to recipes@texas-ec.org. E-mails must include "Holiday Recipe Contest" in the subject line and contain only one recipe (no attachments). Up to three entries are allowed per person/co-op member. Each should be submitted on a separate piece of paper if mailed or faxed. For official rules, visit www.texascooppower.com.

Visitors mill around the gift shop at the Spoetzl Brewery in Shiner, sipping fresh-brewed beer from tiny paper cups and smacking their lips.

Moments before a free tour of the brewery begins, a couple of starry-eyed 23-year-olds—Shane Bowles of Dallas and Michelle Mercurio of Houston—gush about the famous Texas brew.

“We’re nuts,” he starts, “about Shiner,” she quickly finishes.

You’ll be nuts about this 31-mile trip from Schulenburg to Shiner, which showcases the century-old brewery, historic painted churches, savory Southern cooking and charming bed-and-breakfasts.

It’s a beautiful drive through the rolling countryside of south-central Texas as you jog west on U.S. 90, then head south on State Highway 95.

SCHULENBURG

Schulenburg is a busy town of about 3,000, where the restoration of the 115-year-old Sengelmann Hall (a dance hall, café and beer garden) is helping bring the historic downtown area back to life.

Founded in 1873, Schulenburg proudly displays its German and Czech heritage in the painted Catholic churches that rim the outskirts of town in the tiny communities of Ammansville, Dubina, High Hill and Praha.

It’s a delightful drive to the churches, with rolling hills, windmills, farmhouses, cattle and big round hay bales decorating the landscape.

These church interiors offer an overwhelming feast for the eyes with stained-glass windows, statues too numerous to count, multispired altars and ornate, stenciled artwork that covers seemingly every inch of the structures.

The drive yields other wonderful surprises: There’s the **ITSY BITSY BURRO COMPANY** north of town (call for directions and to arrange a visit) where miniature donkeys are raised; and nearby, about five miles northeast of Schulenburg, on Company Field Road, you’ll find **2S CLYDESDALES**, a breeding farm where the big horses graze within

SCHULENBURG to SHINER

Painted churches, Spoetzl Brewery leave visitors spellbound.

BY CAMILLE WHEELER



easy viewing distance.

Back in town, check out the **STANZEL MODEL AIRCRAFT MUSEUM**, named for two brothers who for decades made model airplanes at the now-closed Victor Stanzel Company.

As for your dining options, no one’s a stranger at **MIK’S CAFE & CATERING**, where owner John Mikulik and his staff greet customers by name. At **FRANK’S RESTAURANT**, an institution that started modestly in 1929 with four chairs, eight counter stools and jumbo hamburgers for 10 cents, you just never know when you’ll run into someone famous, such as National Baseball Hall of Fame pitcher Nolan Ryan.

Weary after a full day of sightseeing? Set your suitcase down at the **GUS CRANZ MANSION BED & BREAKFAST**, an 1874 Victorian house that dazzles with beveled glass windows and a crystal chandelier from the original Rice Hotel in Houston. **Chamber of Commerce**, 1-866-504-5294, www.schulenburgchamber.org

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SHINER

German and Czech farmers first settled here, where a post office called Half Moon paved the way for the railroad town of Shiner, named for landowner Henry B. Shiner in 1888. Then in 1909 came the biggest thing to ever hit this bustling little burg: the opening of what would become the **SPOETZL BREWERY**, named for Bavarian brewmaster Kosmos Spoetzl.

If you want to see Texas’ oldest independent brewery up close—free tours are held Monday through Friday, at 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.—get there early. The parking lot and gift shop, where the tour starts, fill up fast. After sampling free beer (each person of legal drinking age is limited to four 7-ounce cups), visitors get a quick history lesson and then head upstairs to the brewhouse. From there, it’s on to see thousands of bottles being washed, filled and crowned, marching along conveyer belts like little glass soldiers.

The brewery is definitely the hottest tourist draw in town, but take time to see the magnificent, castle-like **SAINTS CYRIL AND METHODIUS CATHOLIC CHURCH** that features elaborate artwork, statues, Bavarian stained-glass windows and a larger-than-life mural of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Also be sure to check out the **EDWIN WOLTERS MEMORIAL MUSEUM** that preserves Shiner’s history. You won’t walk away hungry from **KLOESEL’S STEAKHOUSE** in Moulton, 10 miles north of Shiner on State Highway 95, and back in Shiner, you’ll wake up rested at the **OLD KASPER HOUSE BED & BREAKFAST**, which features a spacious 1905 Victorian home.

Chamber of Commerce, (361) 594-4180, www.shinertx.com

Spoetzl Brewery, 1-800-574-4637, www.shiner.com

Camille Wheeler is staff writer for Texas Co-op Power.

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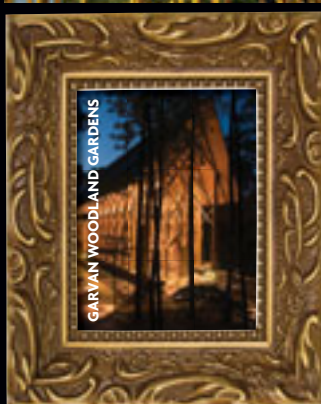
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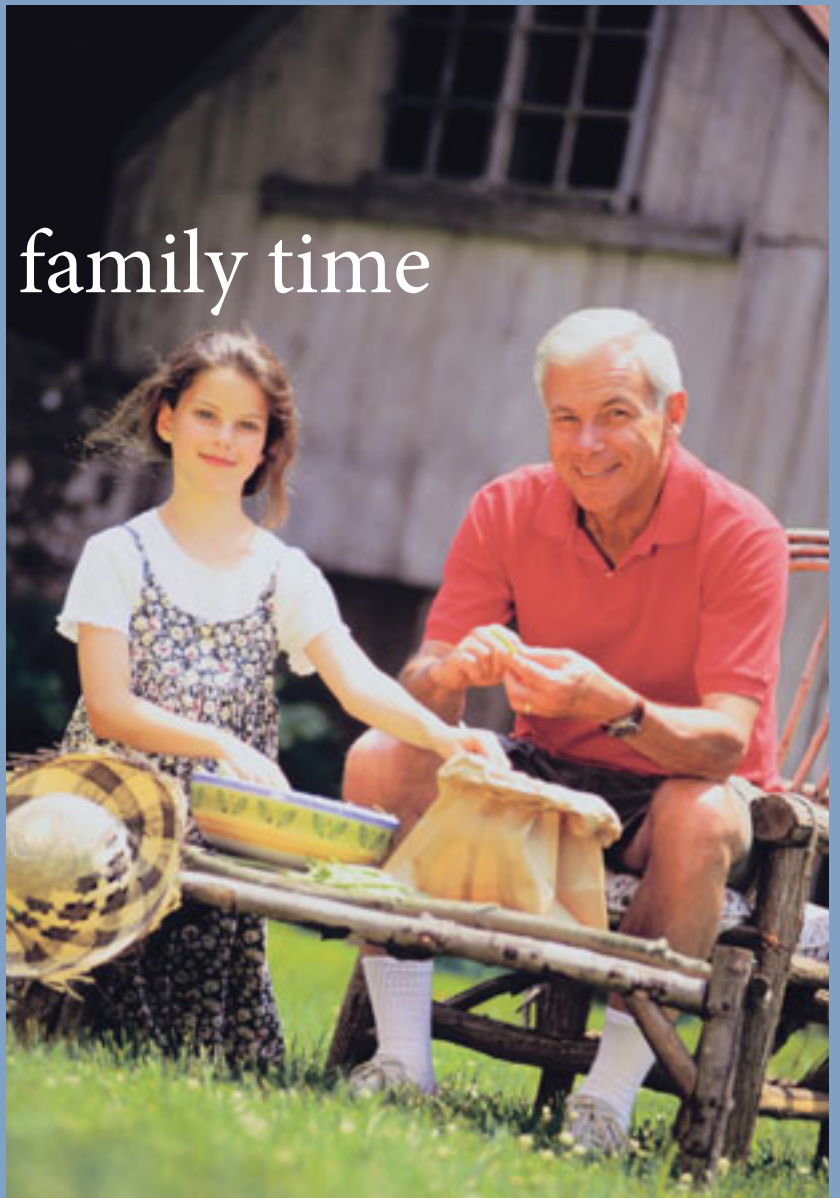
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