

LOCAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE EDITION

MAY 2010

A MOVEABLE FEAST

FIRST MONDAY TRADE DAYS

# TEXAS CO-OP POWER

Not for the Faint of Heart:

## DEVILS RIVER





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## FEATURES

### 10 Not for the Faint of Heart: Devils River

Story and photographs by Jody Horton

*The wild and remote Devils River melds diverse biological crossroads as it navigates some of the most rugged landscape in Texas.*

### 16 Simply A-mazing

Story and photographs by Jody Horton

*West of San Antonio, the Graff family offers an "agri-tainment adventure" via the South Texas MAiZE, a giant maze carved from a cane field.*

## FAVORITES

Footnotes by Gene Fowler *The Republic of the Rio Grande* 29

Recipe Roundup *A Moveable Feast* 30

Focus on Texas *Farmer's Bounty* 41

Around Texas *Local Events Listings* 43

Hit the Road by Ashley Clary *First Monday Trade Days* 46



## 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

## KEEP THE HISTORY COMING

I always enjoy reading Texas Co-op Power, but the March 2010 issue was my favorite. Moses Rose by Clay Coppedge (Footnotes in Texas History, "Moses Rose Didn't Budge") was great! Texas has so much history and myth, it was nice to hear this story. I need more!

**DAVID TOWNSEND**  
*Mid-South Synergy*

## TAKE IT SLOW ON RIVER ROAD

The March 2010 Hit the Road article "El Camino del Rio" only began to describe FM 170. Drive Presidio to Lajitas, then Lajitas to Presidio, and you will believe it is two different roads. It is some of the most amazing scenery, and the road signs mean exactly what they say. Take the time to go slow and soak in the majesty.

If time and daylight permit, consider driving FM 2810 through Pinto Canyon to/from Marfa to/from Ruidosa. It is an unpaved, rugged road through private property, so travel is at your own risk. Another interesting point is the Chinati Hot Springs resort, an oasis in the Chihuahuan Desert.

**STELLA LUNDY**  
*Wood County Electric Cooperative*

# POWER TALK

## PRAISE THE LORD, PASS THE PIMENTO CHEESE!

I smiled when I read the "Spread the News" pimento cheese article by Juddi Morris in the March 2010 issue. In the South, it's like having the family Bible on the coffee table. We put pimento cheese smack-dab in the middle of every celery stick. Praise the Lord, pass the pimento cheese celery sticks, please, and God bless Texas!

**KIM CORDES**  
*Little Elm*

*Editor's Note: This story did not appear in all editions of Texas Co-op Power. It is available on the website, [www.texascooppower.com](http://www.texascooppower.com).*

## DON'T RELY ON GOVERNMENT

Your March 2010 article "Count Me In!" about the 2010 census illustrates all that has become wrong with this country. Its main focus is using the census to extract money from the federal government. Hardin County residents

should have bought their own private insurance policies (for hurricane damage). Instead, they received federal disaster aid—in essence making the rest of us pay their claims.

**JAMES VAN DYKE**  
*Pedernales Electric Cooperative*

## I WAS A MIGHTY MITE

Thank you for printing the article covering the Masonic Widows and Orphans Home Mighty Mites ("The Mighty Mites: The Orphans Who Could," December 2009). I entered the home in March 1939, and I remember all of those pictured or mentioned in the article. I, along with all Masonic Home boys, was immediately immersed in the football culture. Upon advancing to high school age, we were then dubbed "Mighty Mites." We did our best to deserve that title.

**RICHARD W. OPPERMAN**  
*United Cooperative Services*

## CONTROVERSY IS OK

*A number of readers responded to a letter to the*

*editor in the March 2010 issue taking us to task for printing the December 2009 story "Borderline" about the fence being built along the Texas/Mexico border:*

It was very disturbing to read the criticism of printing the border fence article. If a reader wants to avoid controversy, he or she can always skip to the next article.

As far as the article being one-sided, it looked to me like the author was factual. Those facts indicate that OUR government implemented a reactionary, simplistic and terribly expensive solution to a very complex set of circumstances. This "quick fix" approach has had negative effects on many of OUR friends and neighbors and on the landscape and economy of OUR state without making much progress toward improving border security.

I applaud your occasional publication of any article outside the "feel good" realm that might make us more aware of the realities that affect OUR daily lives—keep up the good work!

**BOB FREE**  
*Deep East Texas Electric Cooperative*

Regarding the letter that advised Texas Co-op Power to stay away from controversy, I say, "If you don't stand for something, you will fall for anything." I have raised four college graduates. I inculcated this premise as they grew. They are all hardworking, red-blooded Americans who have earned the right to stand up against "political correctness" and protect our land.

**LES BAILEY, SGM, U.S. ARMY (R)**  
*Bartlett Electric Cooperative*

## MELDING THE VINTAGE AND THE MODERN



The March 2010 edition of Texas Co-op Power, which featured the cover story "Seeds of Change: Farmer Finds Niche," was especially meaningful to me. A Texas farmer with soil on his hands wearing jeans, a denim shirt, a gimme cap ... and a cell phone. Just like with electrification in the '30s, there is always a way to meld the modern world and the land, and the electric co-op does it every day!

**Kelley Stalder**, *Farmers 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, or e-mail us at [letters@texas-coop.org](mailto:letters@texas-coop.org). Please include the name of your town and electric co-op. Letters may be edited for clarity and length and will be printed as space allows. Read additional letters at [www.texascooppower.com](http://www.texascooppower.com).



## HAPPENINGS

Red-dirt music. Texas swing. The sweet sound of a bow drawn across strings. If country and western is your thing, then give those dancing boots a workout at the **CANADIAN RIVER MUSIC FESTIVAL**.

Set for May 8 near the top of Texas in Canadian—practically within shouting distance of Oklahoma, where red-dirt music got its name—the festival promises toe-tapping performances ranging from brash bluegrass to Western folk and dance hall twang.

The six-band lineup includes Jody

Nix and the Texas Cowboys. Nix is continuing the tradition of his father, the late Hoyle Nix, who patterned his West Texas Cowboys band after Bob Wills' Texas Playboys.

Festival headliner Stoney LaRue, a Texas native who cut his musical teeth on Oklahoma's red-dirt scene, delivers a powerful blend of country, blues and soulful rock.

Tickets are \$20 for ages 13 and older; children 12 and younger are admitted free. For more information, call (806) 323-6234 or go to [www.canadianrivermusicfestival.com](http://www.canadianrivermusicfestival.com).



## WHO KNEW?



The first edition of the Texas Almanac—whose slogan is “The Source For All Things Texan”—was published in 1857. The 2010-11 edition—the 65th since its first printing—is now available, and it's 736 pages long. Among this year's highlights are an article on Lady Bird Johnson and a history of Scandinavians in Texas. To order a copy, go to [www.texasalmanac.com](http://www.texasalmanac.com).

## CO-OP PEOPLE

*Lineman Rescues Paratroopers from Lost Pines*

Victor Vaña, a veteran lineman at Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative, was driving home on Saturday, January 23, when the call came over his truck's two-way radio.

A dispatcher asked Vaña if he could retrieve a Texas Army National Guard paratrooper stuck in the branches of a tree at the Camp Swift training site near Bastrop, east of Austin. Apparently,

paratroopers jumping from an aircraft during a training exercise were blown off course, and at least one found the Lost Pines—the towering loblolly pines for which Bastrop County is famous.

he reported that the straps on his equipment had cut off his blood circulation, causing his left side to go numb.

Vaña quickly backed his truck into position, put on his safety harness and raised the boom, lifting his truck's two-person bucket nearly to its full height—just a little over 40 feet. Within minutes, he assisted the paratrooper into the bucket, lowered the boom and watched as medical personnel attended to him on the ground.

As Vaña gathered his equipment and prepared to leave, Bastrop Fire Chief Henry Perry approached. “OK, now we can get the other one,” Perry said.

Vaña looked at him in disbelief. “Another one?” Sure enough, out of view about 100 yards away, a female paratrooper was clinging like a squirrel to a branch of another tree of similar height. Vaña repeated the process, safely retrieved her and then went home for the day.

Perry later presented Vaña a plaque recognizing him for the twin rescues.

Vaña, 50, shrugs off the fuss: “I don't want to sound like I'm humble or anything, but I just did what I had to do and went on.”

*Do you have a suggestion for a person we should feature in Co-op People? E-mail Associate Editor Charles Boisseau at [cboisseau@texas-ec.org](mailto:cboisseau@texas-ec.org).*



BILLY MOORE

VICTOR VAÑA

When Vaña arrived, he saw Bastrop and McDade volunteer firefighters and emergency and military personnel helplessly looking up at the paratrooper entangled in branches about 40 feet high. The ladder on the Bastrop fire engine was too short to safely reach the paratrooper. Moreover, he was in an awkward position, with one leg caught in a branch above his head, and

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# Plugging in, Hitting the Road

*Better batteries are a must.*

By Scott Gates

If electric vehicles are to become mainstream, small batteries must be improved. Thirteen co-ops in a dozen states are road testing plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs), and most of them are part of a project sponsored by the Cooperative Research Network (CRN) and the U.S. Department of Energy's Idaho National Laboratory.

"It's really great that electric cooperatives got involved in this technology early on," says Alan Shedd, principal, commercial and industrial business development for Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, who has logged thousands of miles driving a co-op-owned PHEV. "Participating co-ops deserve a lot of credit for getting out there and making this initiative happen."

PHEVs take traditional hybrid

cars—which typically supplement a gasoline engine with nickel-metal hydride batteries recharged by braking—a step further by using larger, more powerful lithium-ion batteries that can be charged overnight from a standard 110-volt outlet. Batteries alone power the cars over short distances; a gasoline engine kicks in for longer hauls. As a result, PHEVs can average from 120 to 150 miles per gallon on trips of less than 40 miles.

The Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), of which electric co-ops are members, recently noted that a dramatic increase in the number of plug-in hybrid electric vehicles on the road over the next 20 years could reduce total U.S. carbon dioxide emissions by 9 percent. The EPRI estimates that 100

million PHEVs would do the trick; there were 247 million registered vehicles on the road in 2007, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation.

However, research on batteries needs to be revved up. Lithium-ion batteries powering PHEVs are similar to what's used in cell phones and laptops, although they're not fully proven in cost-effective automotive applications. But there's good news: A report by the California Air Resources Board found that manufacturers were "making impressive technical progress worldwide," especially in improving longevity and safety.

What's more, General Motors is set to roll a plug-in vehicle onto lots late this year. The Chevrolet Volt will rely on rechargeable lithium-ion batteries for its electric power, getting approximately 40 miles per charge, according to early GM estimates. After that, the driver can switch to a small gasoline-powered engine. "The key to high-mileage performance is for a Volt driver to plug into the electric grid at least once each day," notes General Motors CEO Fritz Henderson. The resulting electricity costs would add up to roughly 3 cents a mile.

CRN has recently partnered with Ford Motor Company, which received a \$30 million U.S. Department of Energy grant to develop its electric fleet. Ford plans on releasing its own plug-in hybrid electric vehicle in 2012. The partnership could provide CRN with opportunities to test and purchase Ford's early commercial PHEVs.

"If PHEVs were to be used on any widespread scale, it could create some very unique challenges for [electricity] distribution systems," cautions Barry Lawson, senior manager, power delivery, for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. "It would be expensive and time-consuming to upgrade the grid to deal with such a unique new technology."

He concludes: "We must take measured, careful steps with anything related to developing technology. New energy storage technology and equipment have the potential to provide benefits to the electric utility system, but it must be done in a reliable, safe and affordable manner."

*Scott Gates writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.*







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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" wrist.

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# Not for the Faint of Heart: **DEVILS RIVER**





Canoes must be portaged, or carried, around the dangerous and powerful Dolan Falls.

**Wild and remote, the Devils River melds the biological crossroads of the Hill Country, Chihuahuan Desert and South Texas brush country as it navigates some of the most rugged landscape in the state. Spring fed, with water clear to emerald green, it is known as one of the purest rivers in the U.S. Winding from its headwaters in Sutton County west of Sonora, it flows south through Val Verde County before emptying into Lake Amistad near the Texas/Mexico border. The river is approximately 90 miles long, including stretches when it flows underground. But only the last half, south of Baker's Crossing, is reliably navigable. **We join writer and photographer Jody Horton for a canoe trip on the river.****





**ABOVE:** On day two, Jody Horton and Stefan Pharis run the Three Tier Falls that create some of the river's most dangerous rapids. The falls should be thoroughly scouted and run only by experienced canoeists or kayakers. (Photo by Brendan Riley) **LEFT:** The fully loaded shuttle car outside Hookers, a general store and bait shop at Rough Canyon Marina. **OPPOSITE TOP:** It's slow going as Jeff and Brendan begin their portage above Dolan Falls. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM:** Ah, calm water at last: The friends relax at the Devils River State Natural Area after a long first day of paddling.

The roar of falling water grows louder as our canoe glides to the edge of the drop.

Our eyes are fixed on a narrow channel. Clear, deep and a few feet wide—just wide enough—it cuts between two small stacks of whitewater. We point the bow to the middle of it, dig in hard with our paddles and gain speed as we near the lip.

“Perfect,” shouts my friend Stefan from the bow.

Just four hours into the trip, we have settled into a familiar rhythm. Much of what we have seen of the Devils River so far, since our put-in at Baker's Crossing

north of Comstock, is more creek than river. Often shallow and rocky, the narrow passages are technical, requiring constant adjustments to avoid obstacles and stay in navigable water.

From his seat at the bow, Stefan can see whatever lies in front of us one to two seconds before I can. This makes him the navigator. Since you can only rudder from the stern, his split-second decisions are relayed to me: “Left! Right! Hard right! Straight! Speed-Speed-Speed!” We have been a good team so far—we haven't swamped the boat yet. A number of runs have been graceful enough for us to call them

pretty, and a few paddle high fives have been exchanged.

These small successes have now given us the confidence to aim for the drop, not knowing into what—at least not exactly—we would be dropping. Now, as the boat slips over the edge, the world slows, the volume is turned down, and a few things happen at once: Stefan shouts the word “RIGHT!” several times urgently—I see the large rock we are falling toward, observe how the river hits it and curls back at an almost 90-degree angle to the right—my gut tells me to go left.

Splash! The world is at full speed



and volume now as I dig a quick, desperate right stroke to shift us left. We smash into the rock, but at a slight angle. It's enough, and the boat is bounced left. Still upright, we fall and scrape and bounce over a series of lesser rocks, miraculously sliding into a pool of calm water at the bottom. Not pretty, but we made it.

Being men, whatever impulse we have to warn our friends behind us is overpowered by curiosity. We turn back upstream to watch. Jeff and Brendan are looking tentative as they edge over the drop. For a moment, it seems this slow approach might actually allow them to make the sharp right before the boulder, but in the next they are both in the water and the canoe has been pinned sideways against the rock. We paddle upstream frantically and jump into the rapids. The water is only three or four feet deep here, but pushing hard. Brendan is screaming and pulling in vain at the stern to free the boat.

"It's going to wrap! It's going to wrap!"





The hull is already flexing and crumpling against the force of water that will soon and inevitably bend it into a U around the center point on the rock where it is pinned. The boat has been wrapped and patched before and won't survive this long.

We have only seconds before the sides will be crushed and ripped open. A few panicked, adrenaline-fueled moments later we are all in the rapids with a handle on the boat.

"One, two, three!" We heave and strain against the relentless crush of water, but the boat barely moves.

"One, two, three!" again, and harder this time, but nothing, nothing—then suddenly the boat pops free, springing back to its original shape as it skids over the top of the rock.

In the next several minutes the boat has been emptied, inspected, and repacked. We are all a little shaken by the close call. The panic and the plunge into cold water have had a sobering effect.

We take the next six hours to our first camp at Devils River State Natural Area about 16 miles downriver a little more cautiously, contemplating the situation we would have been in if this—or anything else—had gone wrong. You are often many miles and hours from any help on this isolated and pristine stretch of the Devils. Our dinner of steak and a few smallmouth bass caught along the way feels much deserved.

We face two long and strenuous days ahead and will cover nearly 50 miles in all before the takeout at Rough Canyon Marina on Lake Amistad where we left a second car to run shuttle. It's an ambitious plan to cover so much ground by canoe in so little time. We wish we could stay longer to fish the riffles and eddies, to admire the high rugged cliffs, and snorkel the deep emerald pools. We promise ourselves, and each other, to return.

*The Devils River is recommended only for experienced paddlers. Put-in*

*and takeout spots are limited, and trips require extensive planning. Call the Devils River State Natural Area (which has no public put-in or take-out) at (830) 395-2133 or Devils River Outfitters at (830) 395-2266 before heading out. Much of the land along the river is privately owned and off-limits to the public. Canoeists and kayakers may portage around Dolan Falls, which are too hazardous to run, but they may not linger on the Dolan Falls Preserve's private property. Call (830) 395-2155 to make a reservation to visit the preserve.*

#### OTHER RESOURCES:

**Guidebook:** *Devils River* (Louis F. Aulbach, Wilderness Area Map Service, 2005)

**River description, logistics and more:** <http://southwestpaddler.com/docs/riogrande9.html>

*Jody Horton is a freelance writer and photographer and a frequent contributor to Texas Co-op Power.*

**BELOW:** Stefan and Jeff enjoy a Coke at Hookers.





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# SEEDS *of* CHANGE

## SIMPLY A - M A Z I N G

WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY JODY HORTON

*Graff family turns the corner on their  
Medina County farm, where getting lost  
has never been more fun*

This bird's-eye view of the Graff Family Farm's South Texas MAiZE shows just how lost visitors can get in the wonder of it all.



**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This is the third and final story in our series on redefining the family farm for the declining number of Texans who choose to make their living off the land. Family farming, in the span of just a few generations, has gone from the dominant way of life to one that has nearly vanished. In this special series, "Seeds of Change—Texas Family Farms," we meet three Texas farmers whose stories offer a glimpse of what it takes to run a family farm in 21st century Texas. To read the previous two stories, published in January and March 2010, click on the Past Issues Archive at [www.texascooppower.com](http://www.texascooppower.com).

**A** HELICOPTER TOUCHES DOWN IN AN OPEN FIELD. Ken Graff hunches over and approaches it at a trot. He's met with a smile of exhilaration and relief from a teenage boy in the passenger seat who pops out and is quickly replaced with another. Ken shouts something to the pilot over the whut-tut-tut of the rotors. They are both grinning and nodding. Ken holds his straw cowboy hat against the wind of the sweeping blades as he turns and shuffles back to the sign-up table under an oak tree where a short line of mostly young people have bought their tickets and await their turn for a ride over an amazing sight: a giant maze carved from a cane field.

This is not the kind of scene one would expect at a farm, but it's not uncommon here at the Graff Family Farm in Hondo from late September through late November. It is then that this small corner of the Graffs' land along U.S. Highway 90, about 40 miles west of San Antonio, is transformed into the South Texas MAiZE.

Now in its ninth year, the South Texas MAiZE—an "agritainment adventure" promising "farmtastic" fun—has become an effective, if atypical, solution for the Graffs to maintain their family farm. The main attraction is, of course, a giant maze—cut from 7 acres of sorghum Sudan grass known as haygrazer that's grown to feed cattle. "It looks a lot like corn but is much more drought resistant," Ken explains. Kids and adults alike enjoy the challenge of making their way through the giant labyrinth. On average, a walk through the maze takes one hour from start to finish.

The last of a few nontraditional ideas for turning a profit on the farm, the maze is the idea that stuck, and took root, growing bigger every year. By the fifth year, 2006, proceeds from the event had helped the Graffs pay off all previous debt amassed from a string of unrelenting droughts. Today, while the Graffs still dabble in typical agricultural practices—they maintain a small herd of cattle and run cattle for other ranchers—the maze accounts for the vast majority of their income and has, at last, made their farm self-sustaining.

Ken and his wife, Laurie, sit at a picnic table in the shade of an ancient oak between a giant rubber pillow-shaped trampoline called The Corn Popper and some food booths. They talk about the challenges faced by family farms today and the changes that have occurred in the space of just a generation. They describe how Ken's parents ranched and



Laurie and Ken have found a way to make their family farm profitable while giving visitors an 'agri-tainment adventure' in a giant maze carved from a cane field.

farmed this same land for more than 30 years, raising cattle and growing wheat, oats and milo to support a family of four.

"They didn't have to think about change," Laurie says. "We were forced to."

Ken's face darkens as he recounts the devastating droughts that recently have plagued Central Texas. The years "2008 and 2009 were the worst we've seen here," he says. "It even beat the drought of the '50s. There is no way we would have survived it if we weren't doing this." Last fall, Medina Lake was about 48 feet below normal.

**R**ANCHING AND FARMING HAS BEEN A WAY OF LIFE here for the Graff family ever since Ken's great-great-grandfather, Louis Graff, who emigrated from Alsace-Lorraine in France in 1847 and helped found nearby Castroville, purchased this tract in



Ken can keep a careful eye on visitors from an observation tower in the middle of the maze.



## South Texas MAiZE Visitors Are in Over Their Heads

In 2009, the South Texas MAiZE attracted 32,500 people. The largest draw, for everyone from small children to adults, is the 7-acre maze. Each year, a customized pattern (the 2009 pattern featured the words GRAFF FAMILY FARM) is created by selectively plowing a young field of haygrazer using a tractor and specialized GPS program. As the haygrazer matures and grows—8 feet and taller—the plowed portion is weeded and kept clear.

When asked what the most difficult part of maintenance is, Ken replies quickly: “teenagers!” A high tower in the center of the field made of scaffolding and anchored by guy wires offers a bird’s-eye view of the maze. Here, a spotter can call to crop cops—employees interspersed throughout the maze—by walkie-talkie to send an alert if an individual or group is cutting through walls, running or otherwise causing trouble.

Other activities for young and old include hayrides, a children’s barrel train with wheels that’s pulled by a tractor, and a giant rubber pillow-shaped trampoline called The Corn Popper. There is also an air-powered corn cannon (a variation on a potato gun), a home-made jungle gym with slides made from giant culverts, and a few food booths serving popcorn and grilled corn as well as burgers, sausage wraps, turkey legs and more. On some weekends, a local helicopter pilot/crop duster offers five-minute helicopter rides for an additional fee.

From September 25 through November 28, all grounds and amusements will be open 5 to 9 p.m. on Fridays, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Saturdays and noon to 5 p.m. on Sundays. Admission is \$9 plus tax for adults and \$7 for seniors and children (ages 4-11). Children under 4 are admitted free.

Other Texas MAiZEs are in Amarillo, Angleton, Brookshire, Lubbock, Mercedes, Midland, Moulton, Tyler/Longview and West. For more information, visit [www.cornfieldmaze.com](http://www.cornfieldmaze.com) or call (801) 798-0596 for consulting services.

1872. With the help of his son Charles, Ken’s great-grandfather, and Adolph, one of Charles’ sons and Ken’s grandfather, the farm and ranch once boasted 10,000 acres. Today, Ken retains just 700 of those. But holding onto that land has—until recently—been anything but certain.

By the time Ken returned from college and started working alongside his father, Ralph, in 1987, the idea of supporting a family entirely on income from traditional farming was already a fading dream.

“When interest rates (affecting operations) hit 20 percent and higher in the ’80s, it just killed everyone here,” the 45-year-old Ken recalls.

**T**O SUPPLEMENT HIS INCOME FROM THE FARM, KEN turned to welding—a skill he picked up in high school. He jokes that welding helped support his “farming habit.” When single, the additional income was “play money,” but once he was supporting a family of his own, the outside revenue was needed just to get by.

When Ken’s father passed away in 1995, the farm was in crisis. Debt had piled up, and Ken and Laurie were searching for a way to make the farm profitable again. A natural beef program supported by the Texas Department of

The Graffs’ daughter, Justina, rides her horse, Raider, in a nearby field.





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**TOP:** Chuck Meade of Hospitality Tours in San Antonio, who helped send the Graffs some of their first agri-tourism business, munches on a burger at a South Texas MAiZE food booth. **MIDDLE:** The Corn Cannon can launch ears 200 feet or more. **BOTTOM:** Welcome to The Corn Popper, a giant, inflatable trampoline.



Agriculture offered a possible solution. It promised a higher dollar per yield for chemical-free and grass-fed cattle than raising them by conventional methods. And it could be sustainable at the Graffs' scale of farming. The Graffs were soon running 250 head of cattle with hopes of a bright future.

But within a year, a bitter drought struck the region. Pastures were reduced to dust.

"I had to burn prickly pear in the dead of summer," Ken recalls. In extreme droughts here, the cactus is the only plant that survives, and knowing that hungry cattle are going to eat the cactus, ranchers burn the spines off with a blowtorch. Feed had to be trucked in, at considerable cost, and again the debt piled up. "I vowed never to feed through a drought again," Ken says.

Though their income from ranching improved with better weather in the following years, the Graffs still sought another solution. A chance contact with a member of the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce in 1997 resulted in the idea of starting agritourism on the farm. Within a year, a pavilion was built, and Ken and family were hosting tour and conference groups, bused in from San Antonio, for Texas-style barbecues and Western entertainment. A growing number of groups arrived each year, bringing a considerable contribution to the Graff farm's income.

"Then September 11th happened," Ken explains, remembering the terrorist attacks of 2001. "When the economy went bad, we went from 20 to 40 tours a year to none."

**L**AURIE DESCRIBES HAVING LEARNED ABOUT THE MAiZE concept from a brochure a customer brought her. As the story goes, Brett Herbst, a Brigham Young University agribusiness graduate, started the first MAiZE in Utah in 1996. Experiencing wild success, he soon found himself consulting with farmers who hoped to replicate the idea. Today, the company helps consult with and support more than 220 MAiZE sites in the United States and abroad, including 10 in Texas.

"Each diversification was an answer to prayer," says Laurie, having recounted the Graff family's many ventures over the past years. "We did a little bit of everything. This is finally sustaining us."

"I haven't pushed a welding rod in five years," Ken adds with a smile.

*The Graff farm and the South Texas MAiZE are at 911 U.S. Highway 90 East in Hondo. The Graff Family Farm is served by Medina Electric Cooperative. For more information, visit [www.southtexasmaize.com](http://www.southtexasmaize.com) or call (830) 741-3968.*

*Jody Horton is a freelance writer and photographer and a frequent contributor to Texas Co-op Power.*



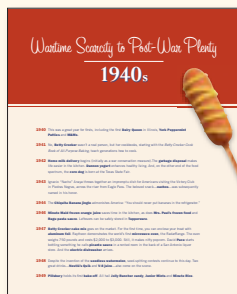
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## Swimming Pool Safety Alert



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**A**s the summer season sets in, swimming pools, whether inground or above, become a beehive of activity. They can also be a hazard, especially to children, if safety rules are ignored. Each year, about 260 children younger than 5 drown in

swimming pools, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. In addition, the suction from drains in swimming pools and spas can trap swimmers underwater. To help protect your family and guests, take the following steps.

### POOL YOUR SAVINGS

**Did you know that the amount of energy used to operate the cleaning and filtering equipment of a pool for one swimming season can equal the energy used to power an average home for the same period?**

Pool pumps typically range from 1/2 to 3 horsepower and run four to 10 hours a day, using about three times the electricity of a new refrigerator. Nationally, electricity for pool pumps is expected to be near 10 million kilowatt-hours in 2010.

One way to save is to replace your old single-speed pump with a variable-speed pump, according to the Cooperative Research Network. Such a pump can save up to 50 percent in electricity costs if run on the lowest speed, which is sufficient for standard maintenance. But the pump will have enough power for intensive use such as vacuuming or backwashing.

You could also consider installing a properly sized solar-powered version. A solar-powered pump can run on DC power supplied directly from the solar panels, resulting in more efficiency than typical AC pool pumps.

### General Pool Safety

- Place barriers completely around the pool, closely supervise young children and be prepared in case of an emergency.
- If a child is missing, always look first in the pool. Seconds count!
- Keep rescue equipment and a phone near the pool.

### Water and Electricity Don't Mix

- Know where all the electrical switches and circuit breakers for pool equipment and lights are located and how to turn them off.
- Refrain from swimming before, during or after thunderstorms.
- Have an electrician who is qualified in pool and spa repairs inspect and, if necessary, upgrade your pool.
- Ensure that all electrical wires and junction boxes are at least 5 feet away from water.
- Install ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) on underwater lighting circuits and on all outdoor receptacles and test GFCIs monthly.
- Use battery-operated appliances instead of cord-connected appliances in and around water.

### Limit Access to the Water

- Gates should be self-closing and self-latching. The latch should be out of reach of small children.
- For above-ground pools, steps and ladders to the pool should be secured or removed when the pool is not in use.

### Entrapment Dangers

- Never use a pool or spa with a missing or broken drain cover.
- Have a professional regularly inspect your pool or spa for entrapment or entanglement hazards.
- If someone is trapped against a drain, cut off the pump immediately. Instead of trying to pull the person away from the powerful suction, place a hand between the drain and the person's body to break the seal.





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## Co-ops Celebrate 75 Years of Rural Electrification

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Electric co-ops serve about 42 million Americans, yet they remain deeply rooted in the communities where they started 75 years ago.

As late as the mid-1930s, nine out of 10 rural homes lacked electricity. But on May 11, 1935, President Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order No. 7037, establishing the Rural Electrification Administration. The REA included a lending program that began the next year with the passage of the Rural Electrification Act.

The agency, part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, was the precursor to today's Rural Utilities Service, which makes loans and loan guarantees to electric cooperatives and telephone, water and sewer utilities that serve rural areas.

Electric cooperatives like yours continue to operate as democratically governed businesses. Collectively, cooperatives generate nearly 5 percent of the electricity consumed in the U.S. each year.

# Caulk Your Windows In Eight Easy Steps

Every article about saving energy tells you that caulking around windows and doors is the simplest way to keep air from leaking into and out of your home.

That's only true, of course, if you know how to do it correctly. Here are some simple instructions for using caulk around your home to keep your expensive air-conditioned or heated air indoors where it belongs—and the outdoor weather outside.

### 1. Choose the caulk.

Caulk is a flexible sealer made from silicone or paintable acrylic latex that you can work into cracks and gaps around your house to fill them in and prevent air from leaking through them into or out of the building. You'll find it at the hardware store in a plastic or cardboard tube or cartridge. If you want to paint the caulk to match your window frames, buy a type that's paintable. If you want to caulk less often, silicone might be a better choice, as it's less prone to cracking. It's not paintable, but it comes in a variety of colors. You'll use about a half cartridge on a typical-sized window.

### 2. Use a caulking gun.

Applying caulk directly from the tube is a headache unless you're just filling in a tiny area. You can buy a caulking gun at a hardware or paint store for less than \$15.

### 3. Decide where you will caulk.

Any hole, gap, crack or opening on the inside or outside of your house needs caulking. The biggest gaps often are around windows and doors. Seal gaps and cracks around exterior light fixtures, outdoor taps, openings

for exhaust fans and places where cable and phone lines pierce the wall.

### 4. Prepare the surface.

Clean and dry the area you will caulk. You will apply the caulk between the window frame and the stucco or siding on the outside of your house or at the joint between the frame and the drywall indoors. Scrape away any old caulk and loose paint, and scrub off dirt from that area. Allow the surface to dry thoroughly before caulking.

### 5. Load your caulking gun.

Slide the tube of caulk into the caulking gun. Snip the tip off of the tube, making as small a hole as possible so you can control the amount of caulk that squeezes out of it. Secure the tube snugly into the gun.

### 6. Apply the caulk.

Hold the gun at a 45-degree angle and squeeze a small bead of caulk into the tiny line that separates the window frame from the stucco, brick or siding. Use your finger (you may want to wear thin rubber gloves) to carefully smooth the caulk into that tiny opening. Repeat the process until you have caulked all the way around the window frame.

### 7. Let it dry.

Allow the caulk to set for 24 hours before painting it to match your window frame.

### 8. Don't stop now.

Repeat the process on any gap or crack that exposes your home to the outdoor weather. You'll save more on your energy bill than you spent on the caulk and caulking gun.

# The Day Hank Williams Died

*Intimations of  
mortality and a  
close call with a sow  
as Mother drove  
through the night*

BY JIM COMER

H

ank Williams died on January 1, 1953. That would be enough to make the date memorable, but it was also the day I discovered that being a grown-up is not as easy as it appeared from my third-grade vantage point.

At the time, shortly after Ike had been elected president, my family was living in New Orleans. My dad was a sales manager for Sherwin-Williams paints and spent most weekdays on the road. But he took off a week at Christmas, and we came home to Texas to visit relatives near Austin. We had a great time until New Year's Eve, when my brother came down with the chicken pox. The next day, Dad had to fly to Atlanta on business, leaving my mother with two little boys, a 1950 Ford and a long drive back to New Orleans over pre-interstate highways.

Armed with courage, a thermos of Maxwell House, tuna sandwiches wrapped in wax paper, Christmas toys placed in the backseat for distraction and a giant bottle of calamine lotion, Mother began the 600-mile drive home.

It's a good thing Mom was an optimist by nature, for she was to need all her optimism by the end of the day. Car trips, kids and itching don't mix well. My brother, Chris, was 4 and not what you'd call a silent sufferer. He loudly demanded and received the calamine treatment every 20 minutes. I can still smell the stink of that pink lotion as it was applied to his burgeoning pox. As you might imagine, this frequent doctoring slowed our progress considerably. So did the two-lane highway full of trucks and homebound holiday travelers.

In the early afternoon near Lake Charles, while eating deviled eggs prepared by my grandmother, we heard the terrible news about Hank. The radio announcer said he'd been found in the back seat of his Cadillac, dead of a heart attack at age 29.

Although we weren't big country music fans, we lived in Louisiana where Hank Williams was second in popularity only to Jesus.

I began to ask Mother questions about God and heaven and dying. Mostly I wanted to know if I would still be able to hear Hank sing "jambalaya and a crawfish pie and filé gumbo" on the radio. She assured me I would and that eased my mind.

Soon, after dealing with Hank's death, we came across a particularly straight stretch of road near DeRidder. For once there were no trucks in front of us. Mother gunned our little Ford up to 70 miles an hour just as a gigantic sow stepped from behind a roadside sign and began to meander across the highway. We're talking about hundreds of pounds of solid, unsliced bacon, directly in our path. We were



seconds from porcine destruction. Mother slammed on the brakes, throwing Chris and me to the floor and sending toys flying everywhere. We came to a dead stop one foot from Big Mama who eyed us with disdain and lazily waddled on her way.

My brother and I screamed in terror for several minutes. Then we discovered that several of our favorite Christmas treasures had been broken and cried even louder. Mother did the only thing she could—she promised us banana splits. The bribe worked, and we quickly turned our attention to finding a Dairy Queen. Of course, this was New Year's Day in the '50s, and nothing was open so we had to settle for Mounds and Baby Ruth candy bars at a service station.

After another 150 miles and eight more calamine dabbings, we pulled into Baton Rouge around 9:30 p.m. There was still an 80-mile haul to New Orleans, but Mother threw budgetary caution to the winds and stopped at a restaurant for dinner.

Chris and I ordered burgers and fries. Mother ordered coffee. Lots of coffee. As I looked at her across the Formica tabletop in a halo of neon from the Jax beer sign, for the first time I saw not a parent but a person. A woman exhausted and alone and responsible for two little boys. A woman who had come 12 inches from a greasy, pork-laden death. A woman who had two hours more to drive in the dark.

For a moment I realized it might be hard to be a parent. Of course, I didn't say anything about the revelation, but for a few seconds I understood. I wish I could tell you that as a result of my insight I became a better child, a kinder brother and a more thoughtful 8-year-old. Unfortunately, that was not the case. Instead I asked for a nickel to play the jukebox and chose "Jambalaya" in memory of old Hank.

Somehow we made it home that night. The next day—jealous of all the attention my brother was getting and eager to avoid going back to school—I happily came down with the chicken pox myself.

When I retold this story to my mother a few years ago, she barely remembered our long day's journey. However, I will never forget her solo bravery that New Year's Day of 1953. Her courage will remain with me forever, just as children today observe their parents' unsung heroics even as moms and dads least expect it.

---

*A version of this essay originally appeared in the summer 2003 issue of Trinity Magazine, which is published by Trinity University in San Antonio. Learn about Jim Comer's book, *When Roles Reverse: A Guide to Parenting Your Parents*, at [www.whenrolesreverse.com](http://www.whenrolesreverse.com).*

*Jim Comer's mother, Anne, passed away April 7 at the age of 97.*



## ENCHANTED ROCK

# Rock of Ages

*On the escalator of  
time, Enchanted Rock  
climbs to the top  
of Texans' favorite  
tourist spots.*



On winter solstice, the shortest day of the year, long shafts of soft light poured into the ancient cave atop Enchanted Rock.

Timidly, I entered the cave, a labyrinth of rocks that looks like a long-forgotten Stonehenge structure. Crouching under a low overhang and sliding on my rear end down a slick slice of granite, I stood and surveyed my surroundings: Massive boulders, older and heavier than I'm capable of imagining, bore down on me.

Above me and beside me, I could see ways out of the cave. What I couldn't see was what held these boulders in place. Some leaned downhill, defying gravity. Others seemed to precariously balance, holding each other in place like mega-ton dominoes that surely, with the slightest shove, would horrifically come tumbling down.

**By Camille Wheeler**

My guide, Gary Verstuyft, a ranger at the Enchanted Rock State Natural Area north of Fredericksburg, stared up at the boulders standing a good 10 feet over his 6-foot frame. "If one of them decided to fall, there'd be no rescue for you and me," he said. "We'd be one of the artifacts."

Noting my furrowed brow, Verstuyft smiled reassuringly. "If they haven't moved in a couple million years," he said, "I don't think they're going to move today."

But clearly, at some point over the past billion years or so, these rocks have moved. And since early Native Americans discovered this mystical place some 12,000 years ago, people have been moved to climb its biggest rock of all: the oval-shaped granite dome known as Enchanted Rock.

While the rock's moods may change—on a clear day it looks like a bald head turning pink in the sun; on cloudy days, the granite looms a somber gray—its stone-faced expression never does.

After all, this batholith—a Greek word meaning "deep rock"—was forged by volcanic eruptions more than a billion years ago. Not much can rattle a rock that literally, through the ages, has rolled with the lava flow as it solidified into a solid granite mass slowly exposed by erosion.

But Enchanted Rock, which technically consists of a main granite dome and several smaller ones, is just a rock the same way the Grand Canyon is just a big hole in the ground. Something this enormous—640 acres of Enchanted Rock rise above ground at the 1,643-acre state natural area, and even more of the granite lies hidden beneath Central Texas' Llano Uplift region—invokes respect.

Native Americans regarded Enchanted Rock "with an awe approaching veneration," according to Robert Weddle, a contributing author in *Enchanted Rock: A Natural Area Survey* (Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, University of Texas, 1979). The rock's name is said to have come from the Comanches' belief, based on the strange night noises they heard, that it was haunted.

For centuries, people have reported hearing ghastly screams and moans and the ghostly beating of drums from the summit. Some say they've seen the red flickering glow of spirit fires. Spooky tales have persisted since Anglo-Texans first visited





Enchanted Rock in 1829. One legend tells of the spirit of an Indian chief doomed to walk the summit forever as punishment for sacrificing his daughter—the indentations in the rock are his footprints.

The late Lady Bird Johnson gets credit for preserving Enchanted Rock for the public. In 1977, Johnson made an emergency phone call to Patrick Noonan, then president of the Arlington, Virginia-based Nature Conservancy. “Pat, you must come quickly,” she told him, relaying her fears that development of the Enchanted Rock property, which was for sale, would destroy its natural, pristine beauty.

Two days later, Noonan climbed the rock with Johnson, and over dinner at the nearby LBJ Ranch, they discussed ways to defeat far-out development proposals that included, among other things, an amusement park, a Mount Rushmore-like monument to Texas heroes, and town homes along the granite domes.

“We’re not going to lose this wonderful piece of Texas heritage,” Johnson, a dogged conservationist, told Noonan, “and you’re going to help me.”

Based on Johnson’s endorsement, the Nature Conservancy bought the property for \$1.3 million in 1978 and deeded the land to the state of Texas. The Enchanted Rock State Natural Area, 17 miles north of Fredericksburg on Ranch Road 965, opened to the public in 1984. The park is a mecca for rock climbers, and in something called bouldering, climbers use crash pads to cushion falls. For those with less extreme appetites, the park’s nine miles of trails offer relaxing hikes. My favorite is the gentle four-mile Loop Trail, which weaves around Moss Lake and Enchanted Rock’s base.

Nowadays, more than 300,000 visitors a year climb Enchanted Rock. For many, including me, the 425-foot pilgrimage up Summit Trail, only six-tenths of a mile long, is a repeated rite of passage. And so it was on December 21, 2009, as strong winds ushered in the first day of winter, that I found myself catching my breath as Verstuyft and I briefly stopped en route to the top.

A middle-aged woman wielding a walking stick overheard Verstuyft say we were about one-third of the way up. “Wrong answer,” she said, laughing, but 20 minutes later, she also easily reached the summit. As dozens of people soaked up the view of the Edwards Plateau, virtually void of development as far as the eye can see, one boy said it all: “You can see forever up here!”

As people from all walks of life will testify, climbing Enchanted Rock is a spiritual experience. For more information, call (830) 685-3636 or go to [www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us).

---

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



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# Seven Flags Over Texas?

BY GENE FOWLER

The flags of six independent nations, we've all heard tell, have rippled in the breeze of a place called Texas. The New World treks of Spanish and French explorers brought the first sovereign standards, followed by those of the republics of Mexico and Texas, the Confederacy and the United States. But for much of the year 1840, citizens in Laredo and elsewhere along the great river that became the border between Texas and Mexico pledged allegiance to a seventh flag, the tri-starred ensign of a revolutionary movement enshrined in history books as the Republic of the Rio Grande. The republic was declared by Federalist leaders in three Mexican states who wanted to break away from the centralistic government of Mexico and form a new confederation with Laredo as its capital.

The problem with history, of course, is that it happened a long time ago. From the 1847 History of Mexico to the Handbook of Texas, historians have maintained that the Federalists gathered north of the great river in early 1840 to formally proclaim independence as the Republic of the Rio Grande. In recent years, however, beginning with a 1986 paper by Mexican historian Josefina Zoraida Vázquez, many scholars have questioned the republic's formal existence.

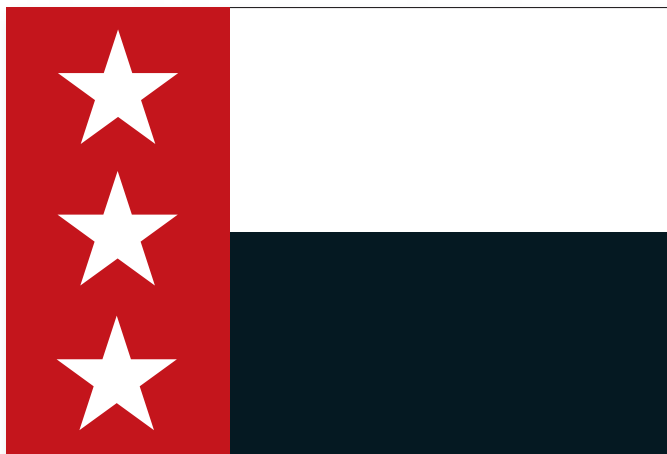
Whether or not the republic was formalized, impassioned revolutionaries shed blood for the cause.

The conflict between the Federalists of northern Mexico, who believed in stronger local authority, and the Centralists, who advocated for a central government with greater power, dated to at least 1821, when Mexico won its independence from Spain. The revolt involved the northeastern Mexican states of Coahuila, Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas. In the revolutionaries' view, Tamaulipas extended north of the Rio Grande to the Nueces River, and the Medina River bound Coahuila on the north.

In November 1838, after the Mexican Congress abrogated the pro-Federalist Constitution of 1824, Tamaulipas legislator Antonio Canales issued a *pronunciamento* against the Centralist government in the town of Guerrero. Upriver, citizens of Laredo issued a similar proclamation in early 1839, with an eight-hour celebration of bells, cheers and gunfire.

According to local tradition, explains Webb County Heritage Foundation executive director Margarita Araiza, a small building of limestone and sandstone rubble caulked with adobe on the plaza served as the republic's capitol. Today, the seven flags of Texas fly over the old capitol, which now houses the Republic of the Rio Grande Museum.

Military engagements between the Centralists and Federalists flared throughout Mexico's northeastern frontier. The battles followed a pattern, in which the Federalists won



Flag for the Republic of the Rio Grande

early victories before their unsteady commander, Canales, balked and ordered retreat. At least twice, the Federalists retreated north of the Rio Grande, resting at Espantosa Lake and Fort Lipantitlán, recruiting Anglo-Texan adventurers and Carrizo Indians to join their forces.

In the spring of 1840, the rebellion received a blow from which it could not recover when its most storied fighter, Antonio Zapata, rode to the village of Santa Rita de Morelos, Coahuila, with about 25 men to repel a rumored attack by Comanches. A charismatic mulatto ranchero from Guerrero, Zapata had become legendary on the frontier for his daring and prowess as an Indian fighter.

As a Federalist colonel, Zapata vowed to "labor for a just cause until shedding the last drop of my blood." In Morelos, he found an opportunity to fulfill that oath when pro-Centralist villagers tricked him into lingering until a large force led by Gen. Mariano Arista, commander of the Mexican Army of the North, besieged the rebels. His last bullet spent, Zapata surrendered.

Arista offered amnesty if Zapata would renounce the Federalist cause. But seeing that the freedoms for which he'd fought were now beyond this world, Zapata chose death. Hundreds of Centralists accompanied the decapitated head of Zapata, preserved in a cask of brandy, through Laredo and back to Guerrero where it was placed on a pole in the plaza. By the end of 1840, the last Federalists had surrendered and the Republic of the Rio Grande retreated into history.

The most extensively researched work on the subject, a 2005 University of Houston thesis by Juan José Gallegos, concludes that while an independent republic was not officially declared, "a provisional government was formed to provide the rebellion a veil of legitimacy, which would allow them to seek aid in Texas and the United States."

*Gene Fowler frequently writes for Texas Co-op Power.*



Crispy Potato Chicken

## A Moveable Feast

**BY KEVIN HARGIS** There's nothing like a picnic on a beautiful spring day.

I keep a blanket in my truck just in case the opportunity presents itself. On a sunny afternoon at a picturesque spot, my thoughts turn to dining al fresco.

Picnics can be as simple as a sandwich and a bag of chips eaten on a paper plate at a backyard table or as elaborate as ham and asparagus puff pastries served on china plates from a wicker basket.

In my youth, we'd even drive into the big city for a picnic. On nice summer evenings, my mom and dad would pack up dinner and drive 50 miles with my sister and me to the hillside theater at Hermann Park in Houston. There, we'd listen to an orchestra or watch a play on the big stage, all the while munching on cold chicken, potato salad and chocolate chip cookies.

Picnics bring happy memories. I can't recall ever having one invaded by ants or cut short by a thunderstorm. One of the happiest days in my life came during a picnic: I proposed to my wife after lunch at a roadside turnout on top of a hill near Wimberley.

My proposal—delivered on one knee after the roasted chicken and cucumber salad—was punctuated by a honking horn and thumbs-up from a passing pickup.

Experiences like that beat eating inside any old day.

The next time you get a hankering to pack up the cooler and head to the great outdoors for a nosh, try this variation on fried chicken. It delivers less fat and fewer calories than the traditional deep-fried version, and it's a lot easier to clean up afterward.

### CRISPY POTATO CHICKEN

- 1 cut-up frying chicken or 3 large split chicken breasts
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 tablespoon black pepper
- 1 tablespoon bay seasoning mix
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 teaspoon garlic salt
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper, optional
- ¼ cup melted butter
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 egg
- 1 cup Potato Buds (dried potato flakes)

Pull skin off chicken and discard skin or use to make chicken stock. If using chicken breasts, cut in half with cleaver or large butcher knife. Place in large sealable bag or marinating container along with buttermilk, garlic, black pepper, bay seasoning and salt and allow to marinate at least 2 hours in refrigerator or overnight, if possible. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Drain marinade. Mix Parmesan, garlic salt, paprika, garlic powder and red pepper, if using, in small bowl. Add to bag and shake until pieces are well coated. Mix melted butter and oil and pour into bottom of 13x9x2-inch baking dish. Whisk egg in shallow bowl with 2 tablespoons water. Dip chicken in egg mixture and roll in potato flakes. Arrange in baking dish (bone side up if using split breasts) and bake for 30 minutes. Flip over chicken and return to oven for 30 more minutes, or until juices run clear. Immediately remove from baking dish and drain on paper towels.

Servings: 6. Serving size: ½ breast. Per serving: 291 calories, 32.1 g protein, 11.2 g fat, 12.5 g carbohydrates, 947 mg sodium, 118 mg cholesterol





**JUDI BALDWIN**, *Mid-South Synergy*

Prize-winning recipe: **Tuna Picnic Bread**

Your entries for our Filling the Picnic Basket contest definitely went beyond plain old sandwiches and potato salad. Our recipe testers noted the variety of refreshing salads and other fine recipes that were sent in. But most of all, we favored this delicious bread with the sandwich filling baked right in.

## TUNA PICNIC BREAD

- 2 cans (10 1/2 ounces each) chunk tuna in water, drained
- 4 ounces grated Gruyère cheese
- 4 ounces (about 1 cup) all-purpose flour
- 3 eggs, beaten
- 1/3 cup milk
- 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 packet quick-rise yeast
- Salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 400 degrees and grease a small loaf pan. In mixing bowl, flake tuna, then mix in remaining ingredients and put in loaf pan. Bake about 45 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted comes out clean. Cool, slice and serve with tomatoes and mayonnaise.

Servings: 4. Serving size: 2 slices. Per serving: 555 calories, 38.7 g protein, 30.8 g fat, 25.8 g carbohydrates, 435 mg sodium, 216 mg cholesterol

**COOK'S TIP** You can vary the recipe by adding various herbs or chopped green olives.

## RED CABBAGE SALAD

- 1 pound bacon
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 small head red cabbage, thinly sliced
- 1 package (8 ounces) Maytag blue cheese
- 1 bottle red wine vinaigrette salad dressing

Fry bacon until crisp. Allow to cool, then crumble. Add salt to large pot of water, bring to boil, then blanch cabbage for 3 minutes. Drain, immerse cabbage in large bowl of ice water, then drain thoroughly. Toss cabbage with crumbled blue cheese and dressing. Refrigerate overnight or until cold. Just before serving, add the bacon and toss.

Servings: 8. Serving size: 1/2 cup. Per serving: 219 calories, 13.4 g protein, 13.7 g fat, 8.6 g carbohydrates, 1,408 mg sodium, 39 mg cholesterol

**SIDNEY LENZ**  
*CoSero Electric*

## FABULOUS PICNIC PEAS

- 1 can (15 ounces) white corn
- 1 can (15 ounces) young small peas
- 1 jar (2 ounces) chopped pimientos
- 1 cup French-cut green beans, frozen or canned
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 1 green pepper, chopped
- 1 small red onion, chopped
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/2 cup oil
- 1/2 cup vinegar

Drain juice from corn, peas, pimientos and green beans (if using canned). Put drained vegetables in large bowl with celery, green pepper and onion. In small bowl, mix sugar, salt, black pepper, oil and vinegar thoroughly and pour over

vegetables. Best if marinated 24 hours.

Servings: 12. Serving size: 1/2 cup. Per serving: 168 calories, 2.4 g protein, 9 g fat, 19.9 g carbohydrates, 284 mg sodium, trace cholesterol

**PAM KINKEMA**  
*United Cooperative Services*

## REUBEN LOAF

- 1 can (15 ounces) sauerkraut, well drained
- 3 1/4 cups flour, divided
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 package quick-rise active dry yeast
- 1 cup warm water (125 to 130 degrees)
- 1 tablespoon softened butter
- 1/4 cup Thousand Island salad dressing
- 1/2 pound thinly sliced corned beef
- 1/4 pound sliced Swiss cheese
- 1 egg white
- Caraway seeds (optional)

Heat oven to 120 degrees. Drain sauerkraut in colander and pat dry with a towel, squeezing out any excess moisture. In large bowl or in bowl of stand mixer, mix 2 1/4 cups flour, sugar, salt and yeast. Stir in warm water and butter. If needed, add reserved flour one table-

Red Cabbage Salad



## RECIPE CONTEST

**Want a chance to win \$100? Enter September's recipe contest. The topic is **Peppers**. Spicy or mild, fresh or dried, peppers are an essential ingredient in Texas cuisine, either as the main ingredient or as a major flavor. Send us your favorite recipes featuring peppers. The deadline is May 10.**

Send recipes to Home Cooking, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. You may also fax them to (512) 763-3408, e-mail them to [recipes@texas-ec.org](mailto:recipes@texas-ec.org), or submit online at [www.texascoopower.com](http://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 \$100, a copy of 60 Years of Home Cooking and a Texas-shaped trivet. Runners-up will also receive a prize.

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spoon at a time until you have created soft dough. Knead for 4 minutes.

Coat baking sheet with nonstick cooking spray and roll dough to 14-by-10-inch rectangle.

Spread dressing down center third of dough length, but not all the way to ends. Top with two to three alternating layers of beef, cheese, then sauerkraut.

Make diagonal cuts at 1-inch intervals on each side of dough (in chevron pattern). Alternating sides, fold strips at an angle across filling to form lattice. Place loaf in warm oven for 15 minutes. Remove loaf from oven and increase oven temperature to 400 degrees. Brush loaf with egg white and sprinkle with caraway seeds, if desired.

Return to oven and bake for 20 to 25 minutes until golden brown. Allow to cool slightly, then slice into 1-inch sections and serve.

Servings: 8. Serving size: 1 slice. Per serving: 359 calories, 15.6 g protein, 10.8 g fat, 45.6 g carbohydrates, 874 mg sodium, 44 mg cholesterol

**MICHELLE R. COPELAND**

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**Attention, cooks:** We'd like to share your best original holiday recipes with 2.8 million Texas Co-op Power readers and give you a chance to win cash prizes—and the acclaim of your friends and family. All recipes must include pecans. Be sure to use real Texas pecans for the best results. **Deadline for receipt of entries is September 10, 2010.**

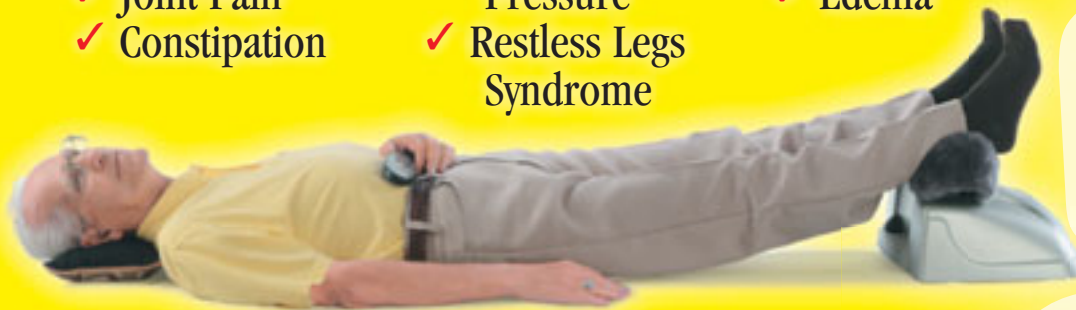
Winners will be featured in our December 2010 issue.

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](mailto: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. Mailed entries can all be in one envelope. For official rules, visit [www.texascoopower.com](http://www.texascoopower.com).



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**NOBODY BEATS OUR QUALITY, SERVICE AND PRICE!**

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- ✓ We Buy Factory Direct and Pass the SAVINGS on to YOU!
- ✓ Shop & Compare Our Quality Brands Against Other National Brands
- ✓ Thousands of People Switch to Harbor Freight Tools Every Day!
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ON ALL HAND TOOLS!

**We Will Beat Any Competitor's Price Within 1 Year Of Purchase!**

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NATIONWIDE**

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or call 1-800-657-8001

**SUPER COUPON!**

**FREE!**

**3-1/2" SUPER BRIGHT NINE LED ALUMINUM FLASHLIGHT**

ITEM 65020

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**20% OFF**

ANY SINGLE ITEM!

Bring this coupon and Save 20% on one single item purchased at Harbor Freight Tools. Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. One coupon per purchase. One coupon per customer. Coupon not valid on prior purchases or purchase of gift cards or purchase of extended service plans. Offer good on in-stock merchandise only. Savings discount percentage off Harbor Freight Tools current prices, including sale prices. This coupon cannot be duplicated in any manner including photocopies and computer printouts. Coupons cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in order to receive the discount. All Campbell Hausfeld products are excluded from this offer. This offer is not valid on food or beverage items sold in our retail stores. Valid only in Retail Stores through 8/25/10.

79612883

**SUPER COUPON!**

**3000 LB. CAPACITY LIGHTWEIGHT ALUMINUM RACING JACK**

U.S. GENERAL

Item 91039 shown

**\$59.99**

LOT NO. 91039/67408 REG. PRICE \$99.99

**SAVE \$40**

HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 1  
These valuable coupons are only good when presented at your nearest Harbor Freight Tools store. Offer Ends 8/25/10.  
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**SUPER COUPON!**

**6" DIGITAL CALIPER**

CEN-TECH

Item 47257 shown

**SAVE 66%**

REG. PRICE \$29.99 LOT NO. 47257/98563

**\$9.99**

Includes two 1.5V button cell batteries.

HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 1  
These valuable coupons are only good when presented at your nearest Harbor Freight Tools store. Offer Ends 8/25/10.  
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**SUPER COUPON!**

**CENTRAL PNEUMATIC® 2 HP, 8 GALLON, 115 PSI PORTABLE AIR COMPRESSOR**

LOT NO. 95386/40400/67501

**\$79.99** REG. PRICE \$139.99

Item 95386 shown

**SAVE \$60**

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**MULTIFUNCTION POWER TOOL**

LOT NO. 67256

**\$34.99**

REG. PRICE \$59.99

**CHICAGO Electric Power Tools**

**17 DIFFERENT ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE IN OUR STORES!**

**SAVE 41%**

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**CENTRAL PNEUMATIC® 3" HIGH SPEED AIR CUTTER**

LOT NO. 47077/67425

**\$6.99** REG. PRICE \$19.99

Item 47077 shown

**SAVE 65%**

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**7 FUNCTION DIGITAL MULTIMETER**

CEN-TECH

LOT NO. 90899/98025

**\$1.99** REG. PRICE \$4.99

Item 90899 shown

**SAVE 60%**

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**80 PIECE ROTARY TOOL SET**

LOT NO. 97626

**\$6.99** REG. PRICE \$19.99

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**1500 WATT DUAL TEMPERATURE HEAT GUN (572°/1112°)**

CHICAGO Electric Power Tools

LOT NO. 96289

**\$7.99** REG. PRICE \$19.99

**SAVE 60%**

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These valuable coupons are only good when presented at your nearest Harbor Freight Tools store. Offer Ends 8/25/10.  
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REAL  
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**SILVER  
DRAWS  
BLOOD  
FLOW TO  
THE FOOT**

**RELIEVES Painful Swelling!**  
**IMPROVES Vital Circulation!**  
**INHIBITS Bacterial Growth!**

COMPRESSION  
BRINGS BLOOD  
BACK UP THE  
LEG PROVIDING  
CONSTANT  
CIRCULATION

Photo shows  
sock inside out  
for clearer  
view of REAL  
silver fibers

**BUY 1 PAIR  
GET 1 PAIR  
FREE**

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ONLY per pair

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**Wash 'N Wear Convenience!**

- **SILVER PLUS COMPRESSION!**  
2-in-1 relief for swelling, poor circulation or varicose veins!
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Helps prevent circulatory problems on long flights or cruises!
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Gives leg muscles extra support when running or jumping!
- **VITAL FOR STANDING ALL DAY!**  
Enjoy unbelievable comfort when you're on your feet all day!

This product is not intended to diagnose or cure any medical condition. If symptoms persist, see your doctor. This product is solely designed for soothing therapeutic relief.

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**Silver Is Permanently Bonded To Sock Fibers!  
It Will Never Wash Out Or  
Wear Off - Guaranteed!**

From wound care to bacterial control, the therapeutic power of silver is legendary. That's why our 2-IN-1 Compression Socks, woven with REAL SILVER fibers, bring you miracle relief. Silver draws blood flow to the foot. Compression brings it back up providing constant circulation. Microspun nylon and spandex polypropylene fibers provide firm but comfortable support, especially at the ankles. Ladies' (fits 9-11) Men's (fits 10-13). One size fits most, **buy 1 pair, get 1 pair free!** Made in U.S.A.

Satisfaction Guaranteed or Return For Your Money Back

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Ladies' #308	Qty	Qty	Qty	<input type="checkbox"/> Check or money order payable to: <b>Dream Products, Inc.</b> Charge my: <input type="checkbox"/> VISA <input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard <input type="checkbox"/> Discover®/NOVUS™ Cards Card# _____ Expiration Date ____/____/____	
Men's #309	Qty	Qty	Qty	Name _____ Address _____ City _____ ST ____ Zip _____	
Silver Lined Compression Socks @ \$9.97 per pr. <b>Buy 1 Pair, Get 1 Pair Free</b>				\$	
CA residents must add 8.25% sales tax				\$	
Add \$3.95 shipping & handling no matter how many ordered				\$ 3.95	
TOTAL				\$	
Send Orders To: <b>Dream Products, Inc.</b> 412 DREAM LANE, VAN NUYS, CA 91496					

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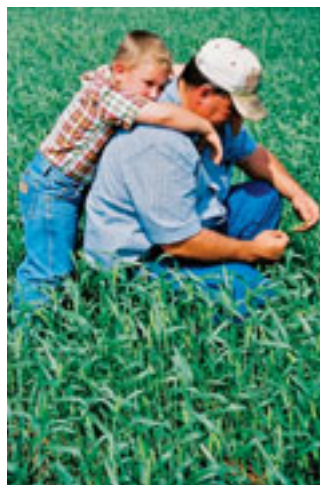
Bred in Texas to help save one of our most precious resources - water! Order from your nursery or direct from Turffalo online. Your lawn will be shipped to you in plugs that are easy to install at one per square foot. Then get ready for a green lawn - in sun or in shade!

**Turffalo**





▲ Where's the ham? Seven-year-old **Jacob Bunch** had never seen green eggs (an eggshell's pigment depends on the breed of the hen) before his family started raising chickens. Parents **Robert** and **Amy Bunch** are members of Bartlett Electric Cooperative.



▲ Heart of Texas Electric Cooperative member **Matt Winkler** and his son **Seth** enjoy a beautiful day in the wheat patch. "What more could a man ask for than a tender moment with his son and an amazing bounty of wheat?" asks wife and mom, **Jill**.

► Wood County Electric Cooperative member **Penny Howell** sent in this cute shot of nephew **Matthew Howell** lending a helping hand with the family's produce stand.



◀ **Christopher Melton** surveys a wealth of sunflowers in a spacious field. Christopher is the son of Medina Electric Cooperative members **Kenneth** and **Stephanie Clary**. Thanks to grandma and MEC member **Janis Clary** for sending the photo.



▼ Thanks to Taylor Electric Cooperative members **Joe** and **Baru Spiller** for sending us this hauntingly beautiful shot of their cotton crop getting a good dusting.

## Upcoming in Focus on Texas

ISSUE	SUBJECT	DEADLINE
Jul	Beat the Heat	May 10
Aug	Birds	Jun 10
Sep	At the Fair	Jul 10
Oct	Eeeek!	Aug 10
Nov	Fall Leaves	Sep 10
Dec	Curious Cats	Oct 10

**BEAT THE HEAT** is the topic for our July 2010 issue. Send your photo—along with your name, address, daytime phone, co-op affiliation and a brief description—to *Beat the Heat, 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](mailto:focus@texas-ec.org), or submit them on our website at [www.texascooppower.com](http://www.texascooppower.com).



No  
Contract

# Finally, a cell phone that's... a phone!

"Well, I finally did it. I finally decided to enter the digital age and get a cell phone. My kids have been bugging me, my book group made fun of me, and the last straw was when my car broke down, and I was stuck by the highway for an hour before someone stopped to help. But when I went to the cell phone store, I almost changed my mind. The phones are so small I can't see the numbers, much less push the right one. They all have cameras, computers and a "global-positioning" something or other that's supposed to spot me from space. Goodness, all I want to do is to be able to talk to my grandkids! The people at the store weren't much help. They couldn't understand why someone wouldn't want a phone the size of a postage stamp. And the rate plans! They were complicated, confusing, and expensive... and the contract lasted for two years! I'd almost given up when a friend told me about her new Jitterbug phone. Now, I have the convenience and safety of being able to stay in touch... with a phone I can actually use."

## Questions about Jitterbug?

**Try our pre-recorded Toll-Free Hotline 1-877-772-8098.**

**The cell phone that's right for me.** Sometimes I think the people who designed this phone and the rate plans had me in mind. The phone fits easily in my pocket, but it flips open and reaches from my mouth to my ear. The display is large and backlit, so I can actually see who is calling. With a push of a button I can amplify the volume, and if I don't know a number, I can simply push one for a friendly, helpful operator that will look it up and even dial it for me. The Jitterbug also reduces background noise, making the sound loud and clear. There's even a dial tone, so I know the phone is ready to use.

**Affordable plans that I can understand – and no contract to sign!** Unlike other cell phones, Jitterbug has plans that make sense. Why should I pay for minutes I'm never going to use? And if I do talk more than I plan, I won't find myself with no minutes like my friend who has a prepaid phone. Best of all, there is no contract to sign – so I'm not locked in for years at a time or subject to termination fees. The U.S. – based customer service is second to none, and the phone gets service virtually anywhere in the country.

Monthly Minutes	50	100
Monthly Rate	\$14.99	\$19.99
Operator Assistance	24/7	24/7
911 Access	FREE	FREE
Long Distance Calls	No add'l charge	No add'l charge
Voice Dial	FREE	FREE
Nationwide Coverage	Yes	Yes
Trial Period	30 days	30 days

Other plans available. Ask your Jitterbug expert for details.

## FREE Gift

Order now  
and receive a  
free Car Charger.  
**A \$24 value!**



New Red  
phone shown  
Also available  
in White and Graphite.



Call now and get a FREE GIFT. Try Jitterbug for 30 days and if you don't love it, just return it. Why wait, the Jitterbug comes ready to use right out of the box. The phone comes preprogrammed with your favorite numbers, and if you aren't as happy with it as I am you can return it for a refund of the purchase price. Call now, the Jitterbug product experts are ready to answer your questions.

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Call now for our lowest price.  
Please mention promotional code 39855.

**1-888-774-3318**  
[www.jitterbugdirect.com](http://www.jitterbugdirect.com)

IMPORTANT CONSUMER INFORMATION: All rate plans require the purchase of a Jitterbug phone and a one-time set up fee of \$35.00. Coverage and service is not available everywhere. There are no additional fees to call Jitterbug's 24-hour U.S. Based Customer Service. However, for calls to an Operator in which a service is completed, minutes will be deducted from your monthly balance equal to the length of the call and any called connected by the Operator, plus an additional 5 minutes. Rate plans do not include government taxes or assessment surcharges. Prices and fees are subject to change. Savings are based on marketing materials from nationally available cellular companies as of June, 2010 (not including family share plans). The full price of the Jitterbug Phone will be refunded if it is returned within 30 days of purchase, in like-new condition, and with less than 30 minutes of usage. A Jitterbug Phone purchased from a retail location is subject to the return policy of that retail location. The Jitterbug phone is created together with worldwide leader Samsung. Jitterbug is a registered trademark of GreatCall, Inc. Samsung is a registered trademark of Samsung Electronics America, Inc. and its related entities. Created together with worldwide leader Samsung. Copyright © 2010 by firstSTREET for Boomers and Beyond, Inc. All rights reserved.



# AROUND TEXAS AROUND TEXAS

This is just a sampling of the events and festivals around and about Texas. For the complete listing, please visit [www.texascooppower.com](http://www.texascooppower.com).

## PICK OF THE MONTH

### MAY 8

#### SMITHVILLE

Airport Fly-In & Pancake Breakfast  
(512) 237-2313, [www.smithvilletx.org](http://www.smithvilletx.org)



## MAY

01

#### BEEVILLE

Market & Main,  
(361) 362-0368

#### CONCAN

Derby Day,  
(830) 591-1065,  
[www.hillcountryrivers.com](http://www.hillcountryrivers.com)

#### CREEDMOOR

MayFest, (512) 243-2374,  
[www.creedmoorcommunitycfa.org](http://www.creedmoorcommunitycfa.org)

#### FAYETTEVILLE [1-2]

Art Walk, (979) 378-2113

#### FRANKLIN

Power Up Festival,  
(979) 828-2550

#### GAINESVILLE

Spring Fling,  
(940) 668-4530,  
[www.gainesville.tx.us](http://www.gainesville.tx.us)

01

#### GROESBECK

Lions Club Car Show,  
(254) 729-3272

#### HENLY

Homecoming,  
(512) 694-0641,  
[www.henlyhomecoming.com](http://www.henlyhomecoming.com)

#### HILLSBORO [1-2]

Texas Pirate Festival,  
(254) 548-6238,  
[www.middlefest.com](http://www.middlefest.com)

#### WILLOW CITY

Volunteer Fire & Rescue  
Benefit, (830) 685-3385

#### WINNSBORO [1-2]

Spring Festival,  
(903) 342-5267,  
[www.winnsborotoday.com](http://www.winnsborotoday.com)

02

#### BANDERA

St. Stanislaus Parish  
Festival, (830) 460-4712

06

#### BRENHAM [6-9]

Unity Theatre  
Presents "Camelot,"  
(979) 830-8358,  
[www.unitybrenham.org](http://www.unitybrenham.org)



#### WEIMAR

Gedenke German Festival

06

#### CROCKETT [6-8]

Lions Club PRCA Rodeo,  
(936) 544-0999

#### MINEOLA [6-8]

May Days Festival,  
(903) 569-2087,  
[www.mineolachamber.org](http://www.mineolachamber.org)

07

#### HICO [7-8]

Homestead Spring  
Antique Fair,  
(254) 796-2510

PLANE: 2010 © ICHOLAKO. IMAGE FROM BIGSTOCK.COM. PRETZEL: 2010 © BIG DREAM PHOTOS. IMAGE FROM BIGSTOCK.COM

# Yours Free!

## Elvis Presley® *Jailhouse Rock*

### Yours for Only \$2.95 Shipping!

Officially Authorized by Estate of Elvis Presley

Act now to get a colorized U.S. coin featuring a photo from Elvis Presley's movie sensation *Jailhouse Rock*!

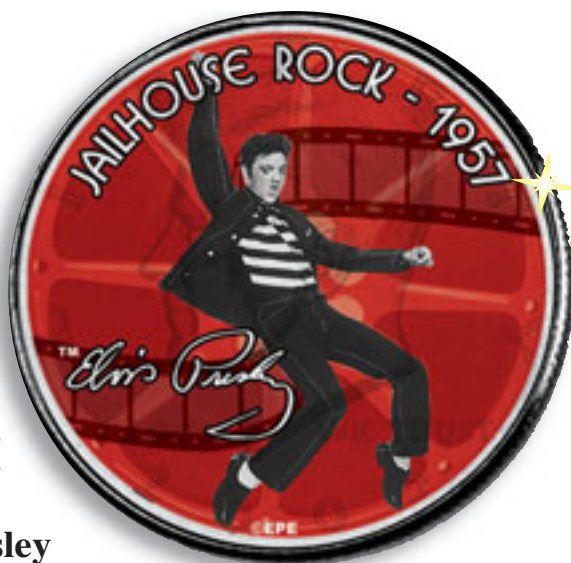
Regular retail price for this coin is ~~\$12.95~~. You only pay for shipping – \$2.95!

Elvis photo is made a permanent part of a never-used half-dollar. Captures a live-action shot of Elvis

from the hit 1957 film. Also features a reproduction of Elvis' signature.

Send today and you'll also receive special collector's information and other interesting coins on approval. Limit one coin. Satisfaction guaranteed.

Quick order at [MysticAd.com](http://MysticAd.com)



#### Elvis Presley Coin

☒ **Yes!** Send me the *Jailhouse Rock* coin. Enclosed is \$2.95 for shipping and handling. Satisfaction guaranteed. Limit one coin.

Name

Address

City/State/ Zip

Please send payment with coupon to:  
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9700 Mill Street, Camden, NY 13316-9111

# AROUND TEXAS AROUND TEXAS

**07 SAN ANGELO** [7-8]  
Simply Texas Blues  
Festival, (325) 944-0021

**SAN AUGUSTINE**  
Sale on the Trail, (936)  
275-3610, [www.elcamino  
realtx.com](http://www.elcamino<br/>realtx.com)

**WEIMAR** [7-8]  
Gedenke German Festival,  
(979) 725-9511,  
[www.weimartx.org](http://www.weimartx.org)



**8 MINEOLA**  
Weenie Dog  
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**08 MADISONVILLE**  
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[www.myspace.com/cityof  
megargel](http://www.myspace.com/cityof<br/>megargel)

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7832, [www.micovfd.org](http://www.micovfd.org)

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<http://aransas-tx.tamu.edu/>

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museum.org](http://www.hopkinscounty<br/>museum.org)

**09 GRAPEVINE**  
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[www.grapevinetexasusa  
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[www.theburkecenter.org](http://www.theburkecenter.org)

**10 TRINIDAD**  
Trinity River Jamboree,  
(903) 451-5225

**14 BISHOP** [14-16]  
Centennial Celebration,  
(361) 584-2214,  
[www.bishoptx100.org](http://www.bishoptx100.org)

**HENDERSON** [14-16]  
SWRA Go-Kart Racing  
Spring Nationals, (903)  
836-4557, [www.swra.org](http://www.swra.org)

**MADISONVILLE**  
Sidewalk Cattlemens  
Assoc. BBQ Cook-Off,  
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**MIDLAND** [14-16]  
Great Outdoors Expo,  
(806) 253-1322, [www.silver  
spurtradeshows.com](http://www.silver<br/>spurtradeshows.com)

**NORDHEIM** [14-16]  
May Feast, (361) 935-  
6306, [www.nordheim  
shootingclub.com](http://www.nordheim<br/>shootingclub.com)

**SAN ANGELO** [14-16]  
Super Series Showdown—  
Youth Baseball,  
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572-8567, [www.info@mtpleasanttx.com](http://www.info@mtpleasanttx.com)

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**21 KOUNTZE**  
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**29 BANDERA [29-30]**  
Funtier Days,  
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[www.banderacountyartists.com](http://www.banderacountyartists.com)

**ELLINGER [29-30]**  
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**29 LUCKENBACH [29-31]**  
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**PORT O'CONNOR**  
Chamber Memorial Day  
Kids Fishing Tournament,  
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Flying Contest,  
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**29 ROCKPORT [29-30]**  
Rockport Festival of  
Wines, (361) 729-1271,  
[www.texasmaritimemuseum.org](http://www.texasmaritimemuseum.org)

**30 BRENHAM**  
100 Days of Summer  
Festival, (979) 836-4441

## JUNE

**02 SHERMAN [2-5]**  
Melody Ranch Bluegrass  
Festival, (903) 546-  
6893, [www.melodyranchbluegrassfestival.com](http://www.melodyranchbluegrassfestival.com)



**2 SHERMAN**  
Melody  
Ranch  
Bluegrass  
Festival

**05 BELLVILLE**  
Market Day, (979) 865-  
3407, [www.bellville.com/marketday.htm](http://www.bellville.com/marketday.htm)

Event information can be mailed to **Around Texas**, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701, faxed to (512) 763-3407, e-mailed to [aroundtx@texas-ec.org](mailto:aroundtx@texas-ec.org), or submitted on our website at [www.texascooppower.com](http://www.texascooppower.com). Please submit events for July by May 10.

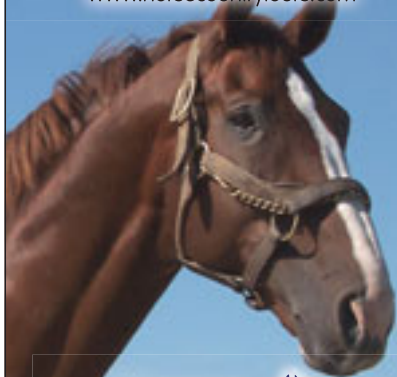


**29 PORT O'CONNOR**  
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POCSA Cook-Off  
& Kite Flying Contest

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By the time I finally had a chance to go there, I had already heard a lot about **FIRST MONDAY TRADE DAYS** in Canton, about 60 miles southeast of Dallas. World's largest flea market. Thousands upon thousands of vendors and exponentially more bargain hunters. Going strong since 1850. I didn't believe the word-of-mouth. I should have.

As I drove in on the first weekend of October, I saw thousands of RVs lined up on each side of the road and hundreds of plumes of grill smoke wafting up into the waning daylight. Rumbling Harleys passed me, their leather-clad riders gunning their engines and waving to the folks cruising the scene on piddling golf carts. Little ol' me ... and about 400,000 other people.

I stayed in a **BLUEBONNET INN** cabin on **THE MOUNTAIN**—a section of Trade Days that some don't even know exists. Owner Randy Stone—an Illinois resident except for First Monday weekend—was there to pick me up in a golf cart at the bottom of the hill. As we loudly sputtered past dozens of shops alit with twinkling, colored lights, he said that typically about 600 people stay for the weekend on The Mountain during First Monday. For nice-weather months and before the holidays, reservations are required a year in advance. “When it's over, about 5 p.m. on Sunday, I'd say, it's like the carnival left town,” he said. “All of this just dries up and blows away.”

My cabin was whimsical, with vines weaving through the trellis and an oak tree, sparkling with lights, coming up through the porch. A white wicker chair rested nearby, begging to be sat in. The Mountain—which includes lodging, shops and restaurants—is a cross between a Western movie set and the old streets of New Orleans with people celebrating on the porches and balconies of clapboard buildings built closely together.

As the wind carried the laughter and loud conversation around me, I walked

# FIRST MONDAY TRADE DAYS

*If you can't find it in Canton, it doesn't exist.*

**BY ASHLEY CLARY**



down from the bed-and-breakfast section of The Mountain to where vendors were setting up for the weekend. My stomach was rumbling, so I decided to grab a bite, but suddenly a storm blowing in gained intensity. Tornado sirens blared, and Randy busted in spattered with rain and his hair askew. “Let’s go to the big restaurant—the walls are concrete there,” he urged. I followed his lead and nervously laughed as we waited for the storm to die down. After my waitress heard from her husband that no tornadoes were spotted, we went back to the **RED COACH INN** restaurant and I finally got to eat.

I woke up early the next morning and made my way down to commence shopping. Here we go: dozens of pavil-

ions, the village shops and even more vendors on the “streets.” I saw jewelry, screeching monkey slingshots, books, cosmetics, license plates, framed art, video games—there was a lot to see, and the vendors were on me in seconds!

After resting, I took the next shuttle to the main grounds and was serenaded by an older gentleman wearing traditional Bavarian lederhosen shorts. I made my

rounds and practically had to elbow my way through the crowd to check out the jams, jellies, honey butter, salsas (I just had to buy the Texas Smoked Habanero Salsa from **EAST TEXAS GOURMET FOODS**), dresses, hats, collegiate gear, outdoor furniture, kitchenware, perfume, birdhouses, musical instruments, toys, collectibles, leather goods, wind chimes, woodcrafts, pottery and purses. I refueled with a corndog (any food you can think of putting on a stick is available), watched artist Mark Persyn create an original Southern-style painting and kept moving.

After seven hours of walking, I ended up in **DOG ALLEY** and cooed over baby goats, puppies and Shetland ponies, but I didn't stay long. I was utterly spent, so I made the trek to my cabin for a nap. As dusk settled, I checked out the nightlife. I found myself singing karaoke with complete strangers; we made friends, and I was invited to a wedding. I went to bed that night exhausted, but satisfied with the overall experience. I never made it to the Canton Marketplace as planned, but I've got a pretty good guess at what they have: everything.

The next **First Monday Trade Days** are scheduled for April 29 through May 2 and June 3-6. First Monday Trade Days, (903) 567-6556, [www.firstmondaycanton.com](http://www.firstmondaycanton.com)

**Bluebonnet Inn**, (903) 879-1958, [www.theMountainatCanton.com](http://www.theMountainatCanton.com)

**East Texas Gourmet Foods**, <http://easttexasgourmetonline.com>

**Mark Persyn Fine Art**, (512) 755-0559, [www.markpersyn.com](http://www.markpersyn.com)

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





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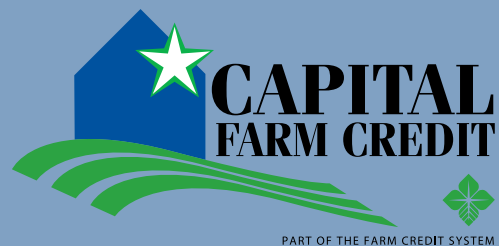
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