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Texas Travel Spots*





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September

2010

VOLUME 68 NUMBER 2



FEATURES

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Stories by Texas Co-op Power staff

We spread out across Texas to explore these not-to-miss destinations in every corner of the Lone Star State.

East Texas by *Karen Nejteck*

North Central Texas by *Charles Boisseau*

Central Texas by *Suzi Sands*

The Coast by *Carol Moczygemba*

South Texas by *Kevin Hargis*

The Panhandle Plains by *Ashley Clary*

West Texas by *Camille Wheeler*

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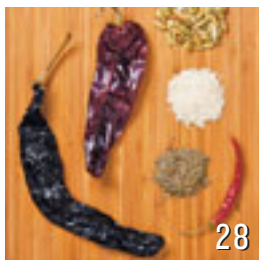
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TEXAS CO-OP POWER

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

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letters

SIGN OF THE TIMES

I read with great interest “The Dead Bank Robber Bounty” article by Clay Coppedge (July 2010). My husband has a bounty sign that used to hang in the lobby of National Bank and Trust, formerly called National Bank of La Grange. I have often wondered about its history, and now I know! Thank you Mr. Coppedge and Texas Co-op Power!

SUE ZAPALAC

Fayette Electric Cooperative

THE SHOW GOES ON

I am sorry that you did not include Comfort Little Theater in your article on Texas small-town theaters (July 2010, “Places, Everyone!”) We just completed our 77th continuous year of providing nonstop laughter at the funny side of life in the Texas Hill Country. Performances are on Friday and Saturday nights on the last weekend of April and the first weekend of May each year. Doors open each night at “dark thirty,” and tickets are \$5 for adults, \$10 for children and \$50 for crying babies. All proceeds go to scholarships for high school seniors and to local causes. In October, we

POWER TALK

have a meeting dubbed the “Fall Gathering of the Nuts.” If you would like to participate and become one of the “nuts,” ask anyone in Comfort for details.

RUSSELL C. BUSBY

Bandera Electric Cooperative

I wish you could have included the Mountain Springs Mellow Drummers in your article on community theaters. For 27 years, this group of ranchers, homemakers, teachers, engineers and whoever has a yen for making folks laugh has entertained once a year at the Mountain Springs Community Center. Sometimes we buy our plays, and sometimes we write them. This year, we did “Hallelujah Brother,” written about comic incidents in our community. Our stage curtains are still bedsheets, and our budget is nil most years. At 85, I am still the director. Community theater is great.

NADINE PITZINGER

CoServ Electric

PEN PALS

I enjoyed the article “Pen Pals 50 Years Later” (July 2010). I, too, am a pen pal and have been since 1945. I was in the sixth grade in Parker, Arizona, and our teacher encouraged us to take part in an international pen pal program. To this date, I continue to write to Jeanne in England and Dorothy in South Africa. When I began writing Jeanne, World War II was just over. Her town, Coventry, was devastated. Germany bombed them many times over. I sent care packages containing food that came in boxes or cans and also candy. I sent tea bags, and Jeanne wrote back that her “Mummy” was afraid they would burst when she put them in boiling water (she had never seen tea bags before). In one letter, Jeanne thanked me for the “gobstoppers”—it took awhile before we figured out she meant “jawbreakers.” Our families have visited several

times in the intervening years. I write to Jeanne by e-mail, and she responds by snail mail. We also talk on the phone.

CAROLYN G. JOHNSON

Deep East Texas Electric Cooperative

I very much enjoyed “Pen Pals 50 Years Later.” I have been blessed to have a pen friend whom I have been writing to since age 11. I am 56 and he, 58, is in Manchester, England. A sixth-grade teacher in Atlanta, Georgia, introduced our class to the idea of choosing a pen pal. She had returned from a trip to the New York World’s Fair and had visited the Parker Pen Company Pavilion, which sponsored the endeavor and gave her all the information to carry back to her class. I chose a BOY—thinking this would be so fun! Little did I know that choice would lead to flying over and meeting him when I was 16, bringing my husband over to meet him in 1983, bringing my family over to meet his family in 1999, exchanging countless letters and gifts, and calls over the years and continuing a friendship through e-mails and Skype. I would strongly encourage any young person to find a pen pal and begin a wonderful friendship that could last a lifetime—it’s educational and enlightening. You may get an Aussie or a Brit—the world’s the limit.

CAROLYN NORMAN

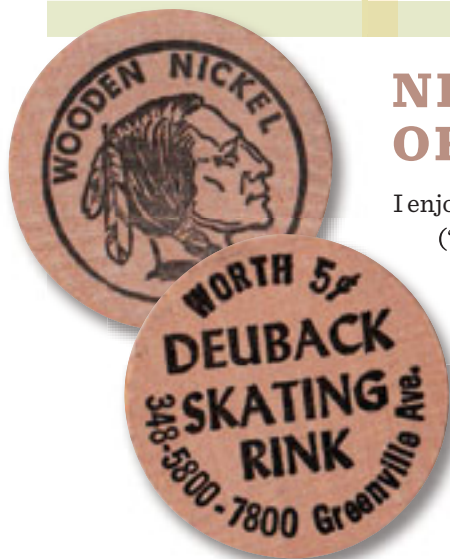
United Cooperative Services

NICKEL’S WORTH OF MEMORIES

I enjoyed the article about the Cedar Hill Roller Rink (“Coming Full Circle,” June 2010). I remember going to Deuback’s Skating Rink when they owned it on Greenville Avenue. I never could master that skating backward thing! I still have 12 wooden nickels from Deuback’s that I can’t seem to bring myself to throw away!

Here’s a picture of the front and back of Deuback’s wooden nickel.

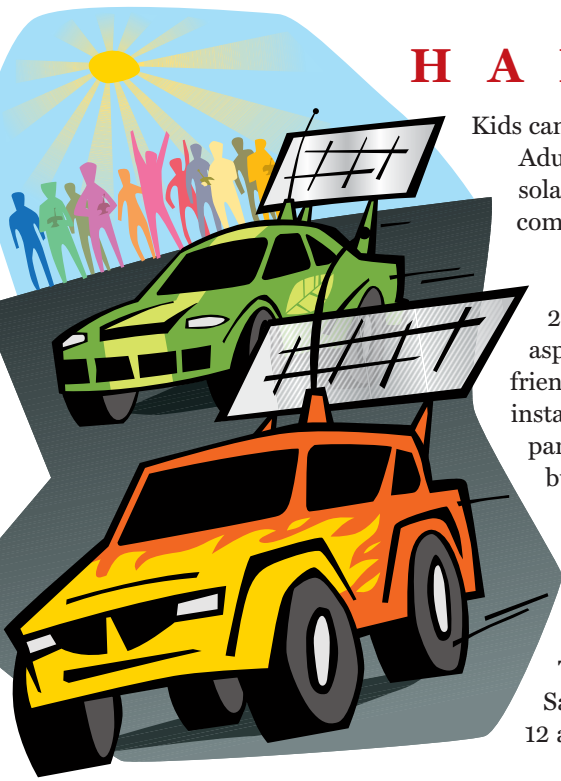
Susan Petty, *Farmers Electric Cooperative*



Editor’s Note: The pen pal story did not appear in all editions of *Texas Co-op Power*. To read the story, go to our website, www.TexasCoopPower.com.

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@texascooppower.com. 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.

H A P P E N I N G S



Kids can build their own solar cars and race them. Adults can bring remote-control cars rewired for solar power and race those. And everybody who comes to the **11TH ANNUAL RENEWABLE ENERGY ROUNDUP & GREEN LIVING FAIR** in Fredericksburg September 24-26 can get hands-on experience with some aspect of renewable energy technology or eco-friendly products and practices. Learn how to install a water harvesting system or how a solar panel works. The annual fall event connects businesses and consumers with environmentally responsible, healthy solutions for saving energy without sacrificing quality of life.

For more information, and to register for the remote-control car race, go to www.theroundup.org or call 1-877-376-8638. Tickets are \$10 Friday and Sunday, \$12 Saturday, or \$20 for a three-day pass. Children 12 and younger are admitted free.

WHO KNEW?

OFFICIAL SHELL

In 1987, the Texas Legislature named the lightning whelk as the state's official seashell. The lightning whelk (*Busycon perversum pulleyi*) is found only on the Gulf Coast. Named for its colored stripes, the shell is one of the few that open on the left side.




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 **Texas Electric Cooperatives**
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CO-OP PEOPLE

BY KAYE NORTHCOTT

The main criteria for being admitted to the Mustang Lube & Country Club is a good sense of humor—and a putter if you want to hit a few balls while your oil is being changed. Mustang Lube, at 1511 Highway 1431 in Marble Falls, looks pretty much like your ordinary lube shop, but there's a four-hole golf course—think expansive putting green—in front that can be played eight different ways. New holes are cut every week in

*Art, Grease and Golf:
Only in Marble Falls*

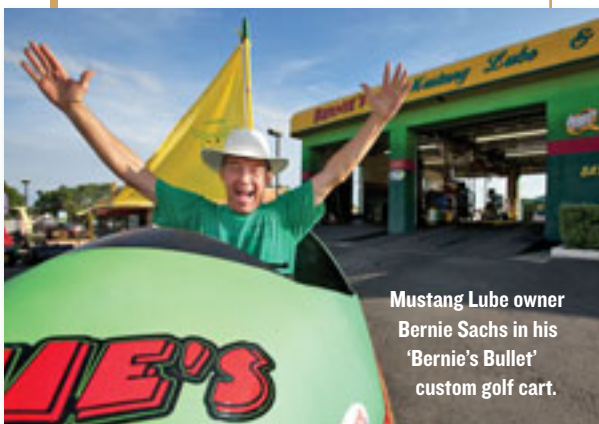
While Mustang Lube's golf amenities fall short of those famous courses—although there is a sand trap—owner Bernie Sachs thinks making customers happy is just as important. "Humor is marketable," says Sachs, a residential and business member of Pedernales Electric Cooperative. "Why can't lube changes put a smile on somebody's face?"

The country club/lube shop has amenities in the waiting room, as well. Sachs, who does some painting himself, is a big fan of Georgia O'Keeffe. So there's a shelf with volumes of O'Keeffe's work next to the area where you can sit and wait for your oil change. And then there's the "gallery" with framed O'Keeffe prints that also serves as the restroom. "You can spend as much time in there as you want," Sachs says.

This is the second career for Sachs, who spent 37 years in education as a teacher, school superintendent and headmaster. He says he always loved taking care of his own cars. Now he takes care of a lot more. Current patrons should be warned: The golf course may be out of service because it is being remodeled. "We have to keep ahead of Horseshoe Bay Golf Resort," he says.

For more information, call (830) 798-0153.

Kaye Northcott is the retired editor of Texas Co-op Power.



Mustang Lube owner Bernie Sachs in his 'Bernie's Bullet' custom golf cart.

the hybrid Bermuda grass, and strategy is affected by changing configurations and degree of difficulty.

There are two road signs: One points east to the Augusta National Golf Club (1,133.2 miles); the other points west to Pebble Beach Golf Links (1,704.8 miles).

The Next Generation

New heat-pump water heaters: What's old is new again

By Alice Clamp, Cooperative Research Network



The Rheem HP-50 heats 50 gallons of water while earning the Energy Star label for improved energy efficiency.

How would you like to start your day with a cold shower? We're guessing you wouldn't. Just as hot showers are taken for granted, so is quick and easy access to hot water for cooking and cleaning. As a result, water heating has become the second largest user of energy in an average home, accounting for approximately 20 percent of residential energy consumption.

To save energy, consumers have wrapped water heaters in thermal blankets or wrapped hot water pipes in insulation. While those practices should continue, a new type of water heating product is entering the market, promising to lower energy consump-

tion and save consumers money.

Heat-pump water heaters, while not a new technology, are experiencing a rebirth. A handful of small companies produced units in the 1980s and 1990s. But random failures and other issues, such as the need for utilities to install special electric service to power the devices, soured consumers on the technology.

In addition, many electric cooperatives offered (and still offer) load management programs that depended on briefly shutting off standard electric-resistance water heaters (which can store hot water for many hours) as a way to cut electric use during times of peak demand when power prices skyrocket. These programs, in turn, helped co-ops keep electric bills affordable. Heat-pump water heaters, unfortunately, could not be used in these efforts.

Now, some major water heater manufacturers and other appliance companies have entered the market with a new and improved generation of heat-pump water heaters. Tests are being conducted on these products to determine whether they will really help consumers save energy and trim electric bills.

Heat-pump water heaters come in two types: The more expensive "integrated" model replaces an electric-resistance water heater with one that combines a heat pump with a storage tank. The second version adds a heat pump unit to an existing electric water heater.

In both versions, a heat pump circulates a refrigerant, which absorbs heat from surrounding air before it passes through a compressor to maximize heat output. Essentially, heat drawn from the air transfers to water in the tank.

While a heat-pump water heater can produce most of the hot water a family requires, a backup electric-resistance element in the tank takes over when outside air becomes too cold or when

consumers need extra hot water. In summer, cool exhaust air can be released into the vicinity where the heat-pump water heater is located, assisting home cooling, or it can be returned outside via ducts.

Because a heat-pump water heater uses electricity to move, rather than generate heat, it consumes roughly half the electricity of a conventional electric-resistance model. But this added efficiency comes with a high price tag. Integrated units sell for \$1,400 to \$2,000—more than twice the cost of a standard electric-resistance water heater. Depending on your co-op's electric rate and the installed cost of a heat-pump water heater, including any financial incentives, payback for the purchase can take as little as three years.

Heat-pump water heaters are most efficient in warm and damp climates. Homes in those regions also benefit from the appliances' cooling and dehumidifying features.

A heat-pump water heater needs a space of at least 10 square feet to ensure adequate air exchange. An open basement, a utility room, or—in some areas—a garage will work.

Noise becomes another consideration when deciding where to place a unit. While conventional electric-resistance water heaters operate quietly, most heat-pump water heaters boast noise levels similar to window air conditioners.

Heat-pump water heaters are not a universal option. Residents in colder climates will see decreased performance during winter. If the heat pump is designed to work at ambient air temperatures of 45 degrees or higher, the water heater's electric element will operate whenever air temperatures drop below that level, reducing energy savings.

To learn more, visit www.energystar.gov and search for heat-pump water heaters.

Alice Clamp is a technology writer for the Cooperative Research Network (CRN), a service of the Arlington, Virginia-based National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. The mission of the CRN is to monitor, evaluate and apply technologies that help electric cooperative utilities control costs, increase productivity and enhance service to their consumer-members.

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The ENERGY STAR® qualified Rheem Hybrid Water Heater is twice as efficient as a standard electric water heater, saving you hundreds on your annual utility bills. It's even eligible for up to \$1,500 in Federal tax credits, so you're saving money upfront too. Plus, you'll be able to bask in the fact that you chose a reliable product that will supply warm soothing bubble baths for many years to come.

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For information in Texas, call 866-390-4832.



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Available in 40 & 50 gallon models with standard connections. It's a perfect drop-in replacement for your existing electric water heater.



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relax
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PICK UP and GO!

We know it's the biggest of the Lower 48. But how big? Texas contains 262,017 square miles of land. The longest point from north to south is 801 miles, and the widest point from east to west is 733 miles. As the saying goes, "The sun has riz, the sun has set, and we ain't out of Texas yet." So fill up your tank and come with us on a Texas Co-op Power tour that will get you home for supper.



East Texas

Nature's a cappella chorus washes over Caddo Lake's hallowed setting

Slipping through Stumpy Slough in a pontoon boat at sunset, it's easy to get lost in time. The silence is big ... then there's the first flop of a fish, followed by frogs and birds chiming in to create a natural symphony that feels more restful to the soul than a chorus of "Amazing Grace." The soaring, moss-draped cypress trees of **Caddo Lake** frame often narrow boat roads filled with hidden treasures—a fisherman's dream, a bird lover's paradise, a wildlife enthusiast's nirvana and a weary traveler's respite.

Caddo Lake is known for many things—as the only natural lake in Texas, it boasts 71 species of fish and 42 miles of boat roads, or passages—but the real notoriety should come from the way it makes you feel. Be sure to spend time on the water—whether you rent a kayak or join fellow visitors on a paddle-boat tour. Slowly glide through the watery maze and soak it all in. Look high—at the feathery moss on the trees—and low—at the glistening lily pads and the prehistoric bumps on an alligator. Spend an afternoon casting a line to discover what lies beneath still waters. When night falls, gather around a fire pit, watch the fireflies and be serenaded by owls.

Pitch a tent, rent a cabin or park your RV at **Caddo Lake State Park** (www.tpwd.state.tx.us). Explore the hiking and nature trails. The easy bank access—complete with lakeside benches—is great for fishing or reading the latest bestseller. Dotted along the edge of the lake, you'll find inviting lodging at places like **MoonShadows Hideaway**, **Hodge Podge Cottages** and **Spatterdock Guest Houses**, among others, (www.caddolake.org, www.caddolake.info).

Lake Fork has many claims to fame as well, and among them is the family-owned **Fisherman's Cove Marina** in Alba. Out on the docks and around the campfires, fish tales (and tails) abound, and anglers from around the country readily share tips and tricks on how to catch the big one. After a day on the water, you don't have to travel far to



2010 © EVELA LINEK - IMAGE FROM BIGSTOCK.COM

find gourmet and down-home dishes. Just stop in the Cove's award-winning restaurant for a perfectly cooked steak, the lobster pasta special or Cajun fried catfish. Then amble outside to the fire, sit a spell and share a fish story or two before turning in for the night. (www.fishermanscovelakefork.com)

SEASONAL WONDERS

Any time of year is a good time to visit East Texas, but here are some seasonal highlights you won't want to miss:

Mrs. Lee's Daffodil Garden, Gladewater, early spring. A four-mile trail through 800 acres of golden blooms. (903) 845-5780, www.daffodilgarden.com

Azalea Trail, Nacogdoches, spring, 1-888-653-3788, www.nacogdochesazaleas.com

Splash Kingdom Family Waterpark, Canton. Christian-themed, family-oriented summer fun. (903) 567-0044, www.splashkingdomwaterpark.com

Tomato Fest, Jacksonville, June, 1-800-376-2217, www.jacksonvilletexas.com

Heritage Syrup Festival, Henderson, November, (903) 657-4303, www.depotmuseum.com/syrup

Santa Land: The Magic Forest, Tyler, November and December. Christmas trail of lights illuminated by more than 2.5 million glowing spheres. (903) 882-1518, www.santalantexas.com

SCRUMPTIOUS STOPS

Mamaw's Fried Pies, Whitehouse. 29 flavors of fried wonderfulness. Try the cherry cheesecake. (903) 871-8100,

www.mamawsfriedpies.com

Four Winds Steakhouse, Wills Point. Excellent food in a warm, refined-ranch atmosphere. (903) 873-2225, www.fourwindssteakhouse.com

Golden Gals' Candy Company, Mount Pleasant. Fudge, cakes and a wall of jellybeans. 1-888-318-4171, www.goldengalscandy.com

Jersey Girls Milk Company, Winnsboro. Who knew "unpasteurized" could taste so good! (903) 365-2449, www.jerseygirlsmilk.com

Pickett House at Heritage Village, Woodville. Boarding-house-style dining on some serious Southern vittles. 1-800-323-0389, www.heritage-village.org

Laura's Cheesecake & Bakery, Mount Pleasant. The creamiest cheesecake ever is found in a wonderful store that also serves lunch. 1-800-252-8727, www.laurascheesecakes.com

Janie's Cakes, Tyler. Melt-in-your-mouth good. Be sure to try the biscotti. 1-866-452-6437, www.janiescakes.com

Texas Tea Room & Grill, Quitman. Good eating and shopping under one roof. (903) 763-5154

KAREN NEJTEK

Production Manager

TOP: There's nothing like a cold glass of milk from Winnsboro's Jersey Girls Milk Company.

BOTTOM: Dip a paddle and leisurely float under mossy canopies on magical Caddo Lake.



COURTESY TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT

North Central Texas

Cowtown's daily cattle drive packs 'em in

A few minutes before 4 p.m., I join the crowd lining both sides of Fort Worth's Exchange Avenue. We're all ages—parents with children, middle-aged couples, grandparents—and some have come from as far as Mexico, Munich and Memphis.

A woman wearing a red cowgirl hat and holding a megaphone gives notice: "The cattle drive is about to start!" We gaze toward the end of the avenue and see them emerge, lumbering beasts with massive horns, right on schedule.

Welcome to the world's only twice-a-day cattle drive.

A dozen longhorns—some weighing 1,600 pounds and with horns spanning 5 feet or more—clip clop past us, make a right turn and disappear behind the rodeo coliseum. If you were expecting a wild stampede or a Fort Worth version of the annual Running of the Bulls in Pamplona, Spain, you'd be disappointed.

No need to risk saddle sores to experience the **Fort Worth Herd**—just show up any day at 11:30 a.m. or 4 p.m.—and there's no charge. The docile steers (they're castrated bulls, if you didn't know) seem to have the two-block-long route memorized, though they are led by five men and a woman on horseback, and one horseman cracks a bull-whip for show and barks "Hut! Hut!" as if a quarterback calling signals.

After the cattle are penned, I approach several of the cowboys, sitting tall in saddles and adorned in authentic western wear, and I'm gently corrected. They're "drovers," the original term for those who led cattle drives in the 1870s, when millions of cattle were driven through the heart of Fort Worth en route to the railheads in Kansas.

Sure, there are plenty of other attractions that any full-blooded Texan shouldn't miss, including Fort Worth's world-renowned cultural amenities—art museums such as the **Kimbell**, the **Modern** and the **Amon Carter**, and its bustling downtown arts and entertainment district, Sundance Square.

But the **Fort Worth Stockyards** deserves its own special place on the list of Lone Star musts. In 1999,



"Cowtown" promoters launched the daily cattle drives to lure tourists to this once-neglected part of the city known as Where the West Begins.

Tagging along with a guide leading a walking tour, I learn that after the decline of the cattle drives, the stockyards prospered with the arrival of the railroad in 1876 and the building of meatpacking plants. We wander across a wooden cat walk overlooking acres of mostly empty pens (surprisingly all lined with brick) and mosey through the adobe **Fort Worth Livestock Exchange Building**, once the "Wall Street of the West" for its bustling cattle-trading operations. The stockyards and the surrounding area fell into disrepair in the 1960s and 1970s, and the meatpacking plants closed. In more recent years, however, preservation efforts have sparked a revival, making the stockyards Texas' 12th most-visited destination.

There's plenty to do in the 15-block national historic district, including eat (lots of steak, but good Mexican restaurants, too), shop or gawk at the likes of \$5,000 alligator-skin boots at third-generation bootmaker **M.L. Leddy's** and people-watch. I meet Gregory Pike, a wandering showman who attracts a crowd to witness his trained pets: a rat

perched on a cat perched on a dog.

I catch a rodeo (held every Friday and Saturday night in **Cowtown Coliseum**, the world's first indoor rodeo arena) and drop in at **Billy Bob's Texas** (the world's largest honky tonk with its own indoor rodeo arena). Next time, I'll allow time to hop aboard the vintage steam train (1 1/2-hour trips between the Stockyards and Grapevine) and go on a trail ride along historic Marine Creek and the Trinity River. (The Fort Worth Stockyards Livery rents—and boards—horses.)

I get some shut-eye in the 103-year-old **Stockyards Hotel**, in a cowboy-themed room shouting distance from one where Bonnie and Clyde once stayed. Despite having windows overlooking the **White Elephant Saloon**, where every February 8 they re-enact Fort Worth's famous last gunfight, I sleep like a lamb.

CHARLES BOISSEAU
Associate Editor

Web Extra: Two-minute video of Gregory Pike, "Dog Cat Rat," by Fort Worth filmmaker Erik Clapp: www.TexasCoopPower.com.

ABOVE: Drovers lead a longhorn herd along cobblestone streets twice a day.

Central Texas

An embarrassment of riches

No one can take advantage of all Central Texas offers in a weekend, a week or even a month. But if you wanted to find the essence of this region, what would rank as a “don’t miss?” Each visitor chooses different favorite destinations. For my list, I only considered things that are truly unique. Here are some of my favorites:

The **Round Top Festival Institute**, featuring the 200-acre-plus Festival Hill campus, is a world-class, classical music venue in the middle of Fayette County. James Dick, a University of Texas graduate, Fulbright Fellow and internationally acclaimed concert pianist, founded the institute in 1971. He envisioned—and achieved—a place where gifted young musicians could study with the best teachers in an inspiring environment.

Festival Concert Hall, the primary venue for music, was built by master woodworkers incrementally as money became available. Though the hall has been drawing students and classical music aficionados for more than 40 years, it is only now achieving Dick’s grand European vision of a lyrical, harmonious composition in wood. Imagine an ornate, wooden concert hall with

near-perfect acoustics where the royalty of Bavaria might spend an evening after a bracing day of stag hunting. As Dick asks, “Why dream the ordinary?”

The institute is an easy day’s drive from many of Texas’ large cities. Local restaurants in Round Top can provide delicious munchies. But why not dine alfresco by the tranquil pond near the herb garden? No crowds, just serene lushness before the concert, the ballet or the poetry reading. It all makes a picnic and performance here a don’t-miss experience.

Blue Hole in Wimberley gets my vote for the perfect swimming hole. It’s a dream come true for a woman such as myself who was born in the Chihuahuan Desert city of El Paso. A plunge in cold, clear Cypress Creek on a 100-degree summer day is sheer bliss. The creek has shallow areas for moms and babies and tree and rope swings for adventurous youngsters. And for the truly agile, there’s the game of catch the ring in which one grabs a ring swinging on a rope before a dive into the creek. Read what fans have to say about this cypress tree-framed swimming hole on its Facebook page. You, too, might want to take the plunge.

The **Blanco Bowling Club Cafe** has those old-fashioned, Tex Mex truck-stop-style enchiladas, cheesy with a chunky meat sauce. The drive to Blanco

after a day at Blue Hole is easily doable. The cafe has good pies, too.

Or for a luxe experience, I love **Flat Creek Estate Vineyard and Winery** outside Marble Falls, an easy jaunt from Austin. Sitting out on the restaurant balcony overlooking the vineyard and creek, watching the birds soar, sipping wine and enjoying exquisite fare is just the cure for everyday blahs. Food & Wine magazine has named it one of the 50 most amazing places to taste wine in the U.S. Its Mistella dessert wine was named the top Texas wine in the 2010 Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo international wine competition. Come to Flat Creek to sample the wine and enjoy the music or the drop-dead gorgeous setting. But don’t miss the chef’s tasty treats like stuffed quail, duck confit, foie gras and wild mushroom risotto followed by a chocolate caramel pecan tart.

The **Institute of Texan Cultures** in San Antonio offers something for virtually every ethnicity and ancestry that has influenced the development of Texas. Each year, the Institute puts on the Texas Folklife Festival, the biggest cultural celebration in the state. More than 40 different cultural groups in Texas celebrate the Lone Star State’s diversity through food, music, dance, arts and crafts.

SUZI SANDS
Art Director



EMMANUELLE BEVINGOLS

LEFT: Wimberley’s Blue Hole is a close-to-perfect swimming hole for all ages. **BOTTOM:** Detail of Festival Concert Hall in Round Top. Notice the Lone Stars in the lyres.



RICK PATRICK



CAROL MOCZYGENBA

Texas Coast

Wave after wave of relaxation

If you love the briny smell of salt air, the sound of waves breaking and dissolving on a sand beach, the circling and calling of sea gulls, and the whisper of sea breezes blowing in from distant lands, you've probably already discovered your favorite place along the roughly 370 miles of the Texas coast.

But maybe you're a new Texan, or someone who hasn't yet made that trek to the Gulf of Mexico—someone who's just never experienced what brings tourists, winter Texans, fishing aficionados, birders, artists and weekend beachcombers back again and again to Texas' shoreline.

My coastal journey spanned the stretch between Palacios and Aransas Pass along State Highway 35 and the short jaunt between Aransas Pass and Port Aransas on State Highway 361.

Palacios, a small, quiet town with abundant fishing opportunities and a loyal extended family of seasonal residents, claims the title "Shrimp Capital of Texas" with a fleet of nearly 400 trawlers. The town's most distinguished landmark is the 100-plus-year-old **Luther Hotel**, its expansive lawn stretching toward the waters of Tres Palacios Bay. Sit in one of the oversized rocking chairs on the grand front porch



2008 © DARRYL VEST. IMAGE FROM BIESTOCK.COM

TOP: Sunrise over Aransas Bay from the Lighthouse Inn balcony. **BOTTOM:** What could be better than riding a ferry to Port Aransas? Seeing dolphins, of course.

and enjoy the breeze coming in from the Gulf. In its heyday, the Luther hosted glamorous guests such as actress Rita Hayworth and big-band leader Tommy Dorsey. In its dotage, the hotel has the feel of a comfortable old slipper and attracts enthusiastic regulars who appreciate its history and worn, back-to-basics ambiance. No telephones or Internet connections. The "ice machine" is a cooler of ice with a metal scoop.

Just southwest of Palacios is the **Aransas National Wildlife Refuge**, 115,000 acres of native vegetation and marshland. The refuge was instrumental in repopulating the nearly extinct Whooping Crane and provides winter nesting grounds for more than 500 species of migrating birds. A slow drive through the refuge or an attentive walk along one of the many nature trails is an act of discovery. We saw an

armadillo, many monarch butterflies, a strikingly elegant Great White Egret and a rattlesnake within a 15-minute period. Yes, a rattlesnake. The insistent rattle alerted us. We minded our manners and walked briskly past. The snake quickly slithered into the tall grasses. Nice lesson.

The **Rockport-Fulton** area on Aransas Bay, a longtime destination for deep sea and bay fishing, is also one of the most popular resort areas on the coast (and has been spared from the BP oil spill disaster so far). Interspersed with modern, full-service accommodations such as the **Lighthouse Inn** at Aransas Bay are clusters of single cottages around a common courtyard, vestiges of another era. A seemingly endless string of long, wooden piers juts into the water, stations for the ever-hopeful angler.

Just a short distance inland is evidence of Rockport's claim as a leading center for the arts. With more than 300 professional artists in residence, there is no shortage of galleries featuring the work of painters, sculptors, weavers and potters. See the dramatic work in granite of internationally renowned sculptor Jesús Moroles at the **Rockport Center for the Arts**.

Don't miss taking the iconic ferry between Aransas Pass and Port Aransas—home to dolphin watch boat tours. Climb aboard the **Mustang II** at **Woody's Sports Center** and ride the waves to the playground of more than 400 dolphins individually documented by the University of Texas Marine Science Institute. The Mustang II's first mate is T-Joe, a salty and energetic guide—part entertainer, part marine encyclopedia. He delights in introducing the children on board to the "touch tank," an aquatic petting zoo with puffer fish, sea horses, crabs, squid, sea robins and starfish.

Then there are the oysters. And the shrimp, and crab and wild-caught flounder. And more. As you would expect, there are abundant seafood restaurants. I enjoyed fresh, locally harvested oysters at the **Outrigger** in Palacios, fresh gulf flounder at **Crab-N Restaurant**, between Rockport and Aransas Pass, and a memorable wasabi crab cake with ginger sauce at **Beulah's** in Port Aransas.

So come on down. The water's fine!

CAROL MOCZYGENBA
Executive Editor



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South Texas

A look at prehistoric artwork is worth every sweaty step

I went to the Lower Pecos River on a quest to see graffiti. No, not the spray-can variety you might see in a back alley. This paint was laid down about 4,000 years ago by tribes of hunter-gatherers that populated the region near current-day **Seminole Canyon State Park**, 45 miles northwest of **Del Rio**.

Surviving remains of the prehistoric artwork can be found in shelters where overhanging rock protected the painted depictions of people and animals from centuries of the elements. The **Fate Bell Shelter** is the easiest to reach, but seeing its rich rock-art tapestry still involves descending into the canyon. Stairs ease the way, but it's a strenuous two-mile round trip.

My journey on this early spring day would be more rugged—a seven-mile, round-trip hike across the rugged canyon bottom to the adjoining **Presa Canyon**, where vibrant examples of the art survive.

Hikers into the canyon, whether to Fate Bell or beyond, must have a chaperone—either park personnel or volunteers from the Texas Rock Art Foundation—who provide a wealth of information about the artists and their work.

Seeing the art deep in the canyon required scrambling up steep slopes and standing at awkward angles, but witnessing a human artifact created about the same time as the Egyptian pyramids was worth every sweaty step.

By the time I'd slogged back to my car, my thoughts were firmly fixed on the hot shower waiting for me back in Del Rio.

After I'd rinsed away the trail dust, I was ready to explore. I dropped by the **Whitehead Memorial Museum**, which offers an eclectic collection of artifacts and displays, including an eye-popping 1,287-piece lighted nativity scene and the gravesite of **Judge Roy Bean**.

Just a few blocks down the road sit the vineyards and production facility of the **Val Verde Winery**, Texas' oldest. Its fourth-generation winemakers produce several varieties you can sample or buy onsite.

Not far away is downtown, where **The Herald**, a restaurant and bar in a converted newspaper office, offers steak and seafood. For lunch, try the homemade soups and sandwiches at **The Brown Bag** deli.

About 180 miles south of Del Rio, I found history of a different era reflected in the streets of **Laredo**. The streets in the **San Agustin de Laredo Historic District**, in fact, are paved in historic style, with brick instead of asphalt.

There, on the north bank of the Rio Grande, history is concentrated at **San Agustin Plaza**. Zaragoza Street borders the plaza on the south, and along it rests the **Museum of the Republic of the Rio Grande**. The museum building once was the capitol of the republic, which was founded in 1840 and lasted only 283 days.

Today, the museum building is cradled in the east wing of the **La Posada** hotel. The block-long hotel is itself rich in history. La Posada's lobby incorporates the structure of Laredo's first public school, and the **Tack Room**, the hotel's renowned chophouse-style restaurant, is housed in the 1800s-era structure that once held the city's first telephone exchange.

Across Zaragoza Street, the Gothic revival-style cathedral of the 250-year-old **San Agustin Catholic Church**, built in 1872, towers over the plaza.

For a further historic exploration, I drove across town to the **Fort McIntosh Historic District**, where the modern buildings of **Laredo Community College** are interspersed among the historic ones from the fort, established in 1849. Many of the old fort structures are used as campus offices.

One campus attraction is the kid-friendly **Lamar Bruni Vergara Environmental Science Center**, which houses a variety of regional flora and fauna and serves as the city's unofficial zoo.

So much history takes some digesting. At the **La India Packing Company**, a spice packaging business founded in 1924, I mulled the sights of the morning over a rich chicken molé at its **Tasting Room Café**. The aroma of fresh spices from the downstairs packing operation filled the room, adding savor to my visit to one of Texas' oldest cities.

KEVIN HARGIS
Food Editor

BOTTOM: Lush tropical plants surround courtyard pools at the La Posada hotel in Laredo.



JOHN SCHIEBER



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Panhandle Plains

Music for the soul



TOM CLARK

“The vast silences of the Texas Plains have produced more than their share of American minstrels. Perhaps it is the great emptiness of the prairies that prompts men to lift their voices to dispel the silence, perhaps it is the simple pleasure of living freely under changing skies.”

**Liner notes to Bob Wills Roundup,
Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys
Columbia C-128, 1947**

The Panhandle Plains carry a strange and empty beauty: The earth is flat and spreads out in expansive green and rusty red sheets 360 degrees from wherever you stand. It is a solitary beauty that takes time for some to appreciate. For others, whose roots fan out wide beneath the soil, it is the life force of their inspirations. Perhaps that is why so many wonderful and cherished musicians call this stretch of Texas home.

Don't miss the **Buddy Holly Center** in Lubbock (www.buddyhollycenter.org). The young, ill-fated musician left this world in 1959, but his legacy lives on in this small museum. His signature black-rimmed glasses—recovered from his plane's wreckage—are on display, as is his Gibson J200, which he used to record his last songs. As his voice rings throughout the building, view clothes

TOP: Buddy Holly's optometrist, Dr. J. Davis Armistead, stands beside oversized glasses. **BOTTOM:** Jared and Trisha Davis of Amarillo enjoy a day of biking Palo Duro Canyon.

he wore, notes he scrawled, furniture he owned and many of his hit records. There is trivia to be learned as well: The Crickets, his backup band, almost named themselves The Beetles; Elton John forever ruined his vision by wearing glasses when he was young because he “wanted to be just like Buddy Holly”; and Buddy's friend and a legend himself, Waylon Jennings, gave up his seat to J.P. Richardson (you probably know him as The Big Bopper) the day the music died in that tragic plane crash. Jennings, from nearby Littlefield, gave us such treasures as “Good Hearted Woman,” “Luckenbach, Texas” and a tribute song about another regional neighbor, Bob Wills.

Don't miss **Bob Wills Days** in Turkey (www.bobwillsday.com). Every April, thousands of fans trek to this little town for live music, dancing, plenty of food and even a fiddlin' contest. Turkey is also home to the **Bob Wills Museum** (www.bobwills.com/museum). Entry is free (donations are accepted), and “Faded Love” and many other of Bob's hits play from a record player as you peruse the relics of a bygone era. I liked the vast assortment of photographs that spanned much of his long career. One in particular of him—cigar in hand—and actress Penny Singleton taken in 1942 was especially charming and reminiscent of a simpler and more romantic time. People travel from their own corner of the globe to see Bob's belongings: The guestbook boasts visi-

tors from Austria, England and Spain. After visiting this country music treasure trove, you'll understand why Bob Wills is still the king.

For more live entertainment, don't miss the **Texas Musical Drama** (www.texas-show.com) in one of the greatest natural wonders of the Panhandle Plains: **Palo Duro Canyon State Park** (www.palodurocanyon.com), just outside Canyon. After a night in the **Adaberry Inn** in Amarillo (www.adaberryinn.com)—which sports an indoor theater, a pool table and iconic U.S. city-themed rooms—I made the short drive to Palo Duro Canyon. During the summer in the **Pioneer Amphitheater**, the play's actors bring to life the stories, struggles and triumphs of Panhandle settlers during the 1800s, complete with dancing, special effects and fireworks.

And don't miss the trails: One pleasantly mild, arid morning, I hiked for hours and took in the rainbow: the ranging reds of the painted canyon walls, the deep green of the fragrant pines and the brightest blue of skies. The only sound was my footsteps crunching the brick-red, rusted earth, the slosh of water in my Thermos, the whisper of wind tickling the pine needles and the hoot of a lonely owl. After a mere half-day—just Mother Nature and myself—I felt as if I had been cleansed spiritually. After so much music for my ears, it was music for my soul.

ASHLEY CLARY
Field Editor



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West Texas

I saw the light(s)

The plump, white moon hung high like a lantern in the West Texas sky. Its soft light poured down on the **Marfa Mystery Lights Viewing Center**, setting the stage—I hoped—for an otherworldly night of outdoor theater nine miles east of town on U.S. 67/90.

But as a small audience huddled on the observation deck, shivering on a chilly February night under a clear sky full of twinkling stars, I quietly harbored doubts that the real stars would come out: the mystical Marfa lights that Apaches, as legend has it, thought were stars falling to the earth.

Earlier in the day, I'd kicked off a tumbleweed-esque tour of West Texas by skidding down a Monahans sand dune on a plastic disc shaped like a flying saucer. So it now seemed appropriate to be searching the horizon for UFOs.

Still, the whole thing reminded me of ordering Sea-Monkeys from the back of a comic book: Wanting something to be real doesn't make it real. Besides, the vast desert plains known as the Marfa Plateau, where the lights are said to appear, are virtually uninhabited. And I doubt that the few ranch folks who live out there are trying to fool tourists by duct taping spotlights to yucca plants.

So where on earth do the lights come from? Well, maybe they're not earthly at all ... I was just about to give up on seeing them when a ghostly red light flickered like a campfire far off in the darkness. Just as suddenly, a perfectly round, white orb materialized out of nowhere. Fading in and out of sight, it slowly zigzagged east across the desert, eerily bouncing like a puppet on a string.

The back of my neck turned cold. And then more lights—too high to be coming from flashlights or cars and too low for aircraft (besides, there were no beams)—popped up in twos and threes, zipping around as though controlled by the precise movements of a mime.

"Have you seen enough to believe?" a man from Fredericksburg asked me. "Yes," I said, seriously spooked. "I have."



WILL VAN OVERBEK

Seeing is believing. And believing comes easy out here in West Texas where everything—from fiery-red sunsets that go down in flames to the **Chisos Mountains** that rise like massive pipe organs—is exaggeratedly big, ridiculously beautiful and too astronomical to see in just a few days.

Hyberbole? Nope. Several trips to West Texas over the past year have led me to believe that:

- The best place to lose—and find—yourself is at **Big Bend National Park** (www.nps.gov/bibe/index.htm). Fill your spiritual tank by hiking to the **Window**, a narrow notch in the Chisos with an unforgettable view.

- If I'm patient, I'll see a wild animal. On a short hike beyond **Manzanita Spring** at **Guadalupe Mountains National Park** (www.nps.gov/gumo/index.htm), I told myself I'd turn around at the big, brown rock just ahead. And then the rock—actually a big, brown elk with a huge rack—raised his head and gave me a once-over.

- Blazing your own trail is not that difficult ... unless you sink up to your ankles in sand made spongy by recent snow. Nevertheless, I climbed a 70-foot dune at **Monahans Sandhills State Park** (www.tpwd.state.tx.us), sat on my disc and slid down. On my third and final run, I traveled a good 40 feet.

- The Chihuahuan Desert is one oasis after another ... such as **Marfa's Food Shark** (www.foodsharkmarfa.com)

that serves divine Mediterranean dishes from a 1974 Butter Krust delivery truck.

Alas, I've only room to mention one historic hotel at which I've slept: **The Hotel Paisano** in Marfa, where luminaries such as Elizabeth Taylor cast their Hollywood glow during the 1955 filming of "Giant."

All of which leads to one final conclusion: Out here in West Texas, they'll always leave the lights on.

CAMILLE WHEELER

Staff Writer

Web Extra: See a slideshow with additional photos of don't-miss Texas places at www.TexasCoopPower.com.

TOP: Aliens? Ghosts? Explore theories at the Marfa Lights Festival, September 3-5.

BOTTOM: Marfalafel with hummus and bacon from a desert oasis: Marfa's Food Shark.



JOAN BORK

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The Big Green Box

BY MEGAN MCKOY-NOE

They're big. They're often green. They generally sit on concrete, often within housing developments. Some folks don't like these "electrical boxes" (a common nickname for pad-mount transformers) and try to hide them with bushes, fences or flower beds. But stay clear: even small additions around pad-mount transformers create hazards.

To improve aesthetics of new neighborhoods, developers often put in underground power lines. While this eliminates utility poles and overhead wires, it requires installing pad-mounted transformers in some front yards. Unfortunately some homeowners, concerned about curb appeal, attempt to screen pad-mount transformers from view—creating an unsafe situation for all concerned, including your co-op's lineworkers.

We realize landscaping represents an investment of time and money, and we respect the effort and care our members invest in making their properties attractive. However, landscaping around electrical equipment interferes with our ability to deliver reliable power. Your co-op recommends leaving at least 10 feet of clear space in front of pad-mount transformers. Linemen repair units while they are



PRETTY BUT PROBLEMATIC: Don't let vegetation grow near pad-mount transformers. In addition to hindering access for repairs, roots can harm underground components and, above ground, plants restrict air circulation.

energized so homeowners don't experience an interruption in service. To ensure safety, they use an 8-foot fiberglass hot stick that requires about 10 feet of "elbow room" in front of the access panel.

In some cases, consumers may leave plenty of space in front of the transformer but grow vegetation on the other three sides. This invites other problems. For example, plant roots can interfere with its operation.

Pad-mounted transformers surrounded by vegetation or a structure

may overheat and cause service interruptions when the air circulation around them is compromised. Allow at least 3 to 4 feet of space on both sides and behind the transformer.

Members should also be aware that plantings along rights-of-way—strips of land that may be owned by a member on which the co-op places poles, wires and other equipment like pad-mount transformers—could be damaged by co-op vehicles.

When a transformer needs to be repaired or upgraded, line trucks must be driven into the right-of-way and the transformer lifted out. Although we try to minimize the impact, plants in the way might suffer.

Call Before You Dig!

Because underground service continues from the transformer to your home, you should never dig anywhere in your yard without first calling 811 to find out where cables are buried.

Megan McKoy-Noe writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

TRANSFORMERS NEED TO BE LEFT ALONE

- Never let anything grow closer than 10 feet from the access panel of a pad-mount transformer. (The access panel is marked by a handle, lock and sticker on the front.)
- Never enclose a pad-mount transformer with fencing, shrubs or anything else with less than a 10-foot-wide gate or opening.
- Never allow children to play near pad-mount transformers.
- Never pour waste oils, chemicals or other liquids on or near a pad-mount transformer. These liquids can seep into the ground and damage underground cables.

Slide into Energy Savings

Replacing a window with a door makes sense—if done correctly

BY JAMES DULLEY

DEAR JIM: In my dining room I have an old, wide window in a brick veneer wall. I'd like to replace it with a sliding glass door. Does this make energy sense? If so, how do I make this improvement? — *Mike M.*

DEAR MIKE: Your home improvement plan does make energy sense, but only if you select an efficient sliding glass door and install it properly. I made this improvement to my own kitchen last year. The overall efficiency of an airtight sliding glass door can be better than an insulated partial wall with a large, inefficient window above it. My double horizontal slider window had double-pane glass, but the gap seal failed on one panel and all the weatherstripping was worn out, creating air leaks.

Although homes are constructed differently, you'll generally find a lot of reinforcing lumber framing around window openings. This is great for structural strength, but leads to inefficient thermal bridges and leaves little room for insulation. Once I removed the drywall, I found that the sill plate had not been sealed properly and air was leaking in at the bottom of the wall. Seal as much of the sill as possible to the foundation.

I selected a super-high-efficiency sliding glass door with a steel-reinforced vinyl frame and triple-pane glass panels. Two of the glass panes have a low-emissivity coating and dense krypton inert gas between them. This provides a high insulation level and cuts down on noise. Always select a door that is Energy Star-qualified.

Another option is double-swinging French patio doors. If you have clearance in your dining room for swinging doors, these are more efficient. Swinging doors close on compression

weatherstripping, so they seal better over the long term than a seal on sliding glass doors. Also, when you open both swinging doors, there is more open area for natural ventilation.

Here are some of the tips I learned:

- Spend a few extra dollars and rent a large masonry saw to cut through the brick wall in one pass from outdoors to avoid an uneven cut.

- With a brick veneer wall, the width of the brick and the total wall framing thickness will be about twice

opening. This will leave a gap between the new studs and the brick that must be insulated.

I used low-expansion foam, but fiberglass is also effective. Once the foam is sprayed in and expands, the insulation is covered with 3/4-inch pressure-treated plywood. Make sure to use shims for all screws and don't overtighten them. The framing on a large door can easily be pulled out of balance during installation without supportive shims.



BEFORE: The wide window will be replaced with a super-efficient sliding glass door leading to the patio.

AFTER: Sliding glass door is installed with only interior trim needed. Notice excess foam insulation trimmings on floor.



the width of the sliding glass door frame. Position the door out on the brick to create a more stable door base. Indoors, this also recesses the door, making it easier to install tight thermal drapes during winter.

- For the simplest installation, cut straight down from the existing window opening. You will have to build out the interior opening with studs to the same width as the brick, but this is still easier than resizing the entire

My door frame was placed over pressure-treated lumber trimmed with aluminum flashing to raise it because I mistakenly cut the brick too low. Whether you're installing a door over lumber, brick or a precast sill, liberally apply silicone caulk between the bottom of the door frame and the base to prevent leaks. There are weep vents in the door track to prevent water collection.

© James Dulley

SEATON

Save the Last Dance for Alice

79-year-old Texas music icon still blowin' and goin' in the dance hall her father built.



The poor guy saw it coming. And he still couldn't get out of the way. Truth is, he asked for it on a hopping Saturday night at Tom Sefcik Hall where he was pummeling another patron in the bar downstairs.

Other customers just kept playing pool, plunking coins into the jukebox and chatting at the long, wooden bar. Upstairs, couples swirled around the dance floor, oblivious to the melee below.

Spirits were high, and the band was hot—and so was owner Alice Sulak, who marched right up to the brawler with an enamel water pitcher in her hands.

BAM!!! She conked him over the head with the pitcher. Down he went. Fight over. Winner: Alice. And for several years, she kept the cracked water pitcher to prove the outcome.

By Camille Wheeler

"He was kind of shook up, but he was quiet then," Alice says of that night some 40 years ago in this storied Czech dance hall east of Temple that her father built in 1923.

Tom Sefcik (pronounced "SEF-chick"), a burly man with a warm smile, built more than a two-story dance hall: He built community in the tiny town of Seaton. He and his wife, Terezie Rose, created a sweet life, raising two daughters, Adela and Alice, in the two-story house he constructed next door. And one daughter was destined to someday take over one of the most revered dance halls in Texas.

Make no doubt: This is Alice's place. Like the wooden sign says downstairs, "IF ALICE AIN'T HAPPY, AIN'T NOBODY HAPPY!" But Alice, a 79-year-old Texas music icon who's been running this dance hall since 1970, has a smile for all who enter the double-screen doors downstairs or walk outside the building on the porch to climb the stairs to the old wooden dance floor.

"I usually stay pretty happy," says Alice, a grandmother of five and a self-described bartender and bouncer. "That's just the way I am. Some people don't have no personality at all, but I talk to everybody. I don't meet no strangers. That's the way you've got to be in business."

Granted, Alice can be all business—especially when she's, uh, short with troublemakers. In her physical prime, she stood somewhere around 5 feet, 5 inches. Back problems—caused, in part, by a degenerative joint condition, years of lifting ice blocks and heavy boxes and a long-ago run-in with a bull that slammed her against a fence—have taken their toll, and she now stands a few inches under that mark.

But don't call her diminutive. Someone of Alice's stature demands way more respect than that.

"She's the sweetest thing that I have ever been around, but she can be cantankerous," says Otis Beck, who performed with Alice in his band from 1966 to 1971. "She knows how to swing the bat."

And she knows how to blow the horn. Since joining her sister's band, Adela and the Music Masters, as a drummer at the age of 11, Alice has never left the stage. She's an original member of Jerry Haisler and the Melody 5, which began 44 years ago as Otis Beck and the Melody 5, and plays some 40 gigs a year with the band at

venues across Central Texas.

While some people measure success in cars and money, Alice measures hers in tenor saxophones: She's on her fifth, a Yamaha, and played her first, a Buescher, at the age of 15 in Adela's band.

"Everything I play is strictly by ear," Alice says. "I don't know ONE note. I don't. Heh, heh, heh." But when Alice harmonizes with Haisler on saxophone or vocals—they sing in Czech and English—she hits all the right notes. She's a one-name woman: sort of like Cher, but without the sequins and multiple costume changes.

Alice (whose last name, for the record, is pronounced "shoe-lock") would rather play and sing than worry about bling. Her flashiest piece of jewelry is the silver watch on her left wrist, and her makeup consists of lightly applied blue eye shadow. "I don't want to overdo it, but you've got to make yourself look presentable," she says. "Some women are so into the makeup, it's almost scary. Heh, heh, heh."

At an age when most people are long retired and sifting through the memories of their once-active lives, Alice is balancing the books and booking bands—a job she started at the age of 14.

"I guess the good Lord just made me to be strong," says Alice, who was born January 17, 1931, in the house her father built.

It was in this house that the young Alice and Adela turned pot lids into cymbals and rapped their father's drumsticks on the windowsill.

It was in the dance hall next door that the sisters played their first gig: a wedding at which Adela, four years older, ordered Alice to stop being shy and hit the cymbal. Now.

Alice still lives in the house her father built. She raised three sons—Tommy, Steven and Kenny—here as three generations lived under one roof. Grampa and Nini, as the boys called Tom and Terezie Rose Sefcik, grew their own food. Alice followed suit as a mother, doing everything from canning vegetables to giving shots to cattle.

When grief hit, it hit hard. Alice, who was divorced in 1965 and never remarried, lost her father in April 1971. Five years later, she lost her mother and her sister, who was only 48, within a two-week stretch in April. Tom, Terezie Rose, Adela and her husband, Edd Urubek, are all buried in the Seaton Cemetery, just up the road.

When the wind blows through the pecan and hackberry trees standing sentry over Alice's weathered house, it's easy to imagine notes—from her father's guitar, her mother's accordion and French harp, and her sister's accordion and saxophone—floating through the windows.

Seems everybody asks Alice the same question: What's going to happen to the dance hall someday when you're gone? She laughs. Heh, heh, heh. "I always joke and tell them I'm going to live to be 100."

And with that, she climbs the stairs. Couples are starting to arrive for a Sunday night dance. Alice isn't playing tonight, so she's free to mingle, listen to the music and watch her friends, some of whom she's known 50 years or more, hold each other tight and spin round and round the old dance floor.



TOP: Decades ago, sisters Alice and Adela Sefcik, joined by Julius Dubcak and Jerry Adamek (from left), packed 'em in at Tom Sefcik Hall in Seaton. Using a foot pedal on the bass drum, Alice played it and the saxophone at the same time in her older sister's band, Adela and the Music Masters. Adela excelled on the accordion, and the sisters played 'twin' saxes, harmonizing on Alice's tenor and Adela's alto.

BOTTOM: It's insider knowledge that Alice and Adela were also teenage softball stars, playing first base and pitcher, respectively, on the Temple Flyers team that won three consecutive city league championships. But it's common knowledge that the 79-year-old Alice—who still plays on this stage and others around Central Texas—cherishes family, friends, music and this old dance hall that her father built. Alice doesn't know what the future holds for this storied establishment. But one thing's for sure: 'I'm still blowin' the horn,' she says.

Tom Sefcik Hall, (254) 985-2356. Eight miles east of Temple; turn south from State Highway 53 onto Seaton Road.

Jerry Haisler and the Melody 5, <http://melody5.markhaisler.com/melody5>

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

The Sit Safe Rap

*My year of driving
a school bus*

BY CHARLES BOISSEAU



he lovable little hellions are at it again.

Charlie, a kindergartner who should know better by now, is sitting in the aisle and spitting on Zachariah. I know this not because I saw it clearly in my rearview mirror as I was driving, but because Carter, bless his 6-year-old heart, is snitching on Charlie.

Just then I see something flash in the corner of my eye from where Abraham sits. The third-grader, kneeling and facing backwards, has thrown something. Other students are sitting astronaut-style, upside down with their feet up in the air.

“I didn’t do it!” Abraham says, after I pull over and walk to the back to rein in the chaos. Just as I’m trying to figure out what *it* is, I hear Charlie’s voice over the speakers: “Mr. Charles, you’re mean!” he says, having picked up the driver’s on-board mic. He giggles, and the students roar with laughter as I turn and storm back to the front. “Charlie! Return to your seat!”

This was just another day on the school bus, part of one scene I recorded in a notebook during the 2008-09 school year when I drove for a school district in Central Texas served by Pedernales Electric Cooperative.

As students, teachers and parents gear up for another school year, my thoughts are with that bus, and the some 450,000 men and women drivers at the heart of the nation’s school transportation industry.

For me, it took only a couple of weeks before I began to feel confident sitting high up behind the big wheel, commanding the 20,000-pound, 40-foot-long, 72-passenger yellow land boat. I had seating assignments for all the students, had memorized each of their names and learned my routes.

But while some parts of the job came easily, others proved more difficult, not the least of which was enforcing the first rule of the road: Remain seated.

According to bus safety officials, kids are less apt to be injured if they are seated and surrounded by the protective padding afforded by the bench seats. Also, they are less likely to distract the driver. (I remain astounded that school buses, at least in these parts, don’t have seat belts. But that may be finally changing starting this month: A new Texas law requires all school buses purchased after September 1, 2010—and all school-chartered buses used after September 2011—to have three-point restraints for passengers. The caveat: The requirement was contingent on the Legislature appropriating the funds, which has not happened.)

My two routes were very different. The combined middle and high school run was relatively tame, though there were pranksters. Many were content to listen to iPods en route.

In contrast, the elementary bus was a kettle of jumping beans, especially in the afternoons when the bus was most crowded and kids were ready to let off steam. The amount of time a kid left his or her seat was generally in inverse proportion to the student's age and/or height. The littlest ones did stand up. They craved attention.

I can't say this wasn't a surprise: I was much the same at that age.

Drivers were given laminated fliers to post inside buses with the "sit safe" rules: Put your bottom to the bottom (of your seat), your back to the back and your backpack on your lap. To make the rules fun, I wrote a rap. Excerpt:

*We know you're smart/You're no fool/So just sit down/On your bus to school
Bottom to bottom/Back to back/Backpacks on lap—It's the SIT SAFE RAP!*

I chose students to recite the rap before the bus left the schoolyard in the afternoons. We clapped and tried to mimic rap sounds. Soon enough, though, as the bus moved, so did the kids. At times, I felt as if I were training a litter of puppies. *Sit!* I tried anything to keep them engaged. I told jokes (Knock, knock: Who's there? Boo. Boo who?) and made up impromptu quizzes (who has the biggest shoe on the bus?). I resorted to bribery: yogurt-covered pretzels or the promise of turning on a popular radio station if they piped down and stayed in their seats.

I cracked down: I sent home conduct reports and warned that infractions could result in the loss of bus-riding privileges. I separated friends and moved unruly kids. I reminded them about the video camera that recorded their actions.

Even so, I was less than consistent in my enforcement. Sometimes, I just couldn't help but laugh—or at least smirk—at the clever shenanigans, at least until things again got out of hand. Following the advice of veteran drivers, I increasingly pulled over, turned on the emergency flashers and called in a "Code 45" (a delay for discipline) to the dispatch office and vowed not to move until they settled down.

Bus management is what they call it. Can you manage the kids on your bus? Do you discipline them when necessary? At midyear, I sensed I had lost control.

I wasn't the only one. At the end of one day, I found Sheila, a woman in her early 60s who had driven a bus for years, sitting on the picnic bench outside the bus barn.

"I can't take it anymore," she said, exasperated. She worried she'd wring some kid's neck. "I don't think I'm cut out for this," she said, shaking her head. We commiserated. We agreed they were good kids, but sometimes they got out of hand, and we felt powerless.

As the end of the school year neared, I began to feel a sense of relief, but also of sadness. I wondered what would happen to my kids in the future. I had become attached to them despite it all. Many students gave me parting gifts—cards with heartfelt messages, gift cards and hugs. Some asked me to sign their yearbooks. One boy told me I was the best bus driver he'd ever had—though I never felt I truly mastered the course.

On the last day, Charlie left without saying goodbye as his mom picked him up, and Abraham gleefully snatched most of the remaining Twizzlers I was handing out. Before he bolted out the door I shot him with the water pistol I was packing.

Editor's note: Names in this story were changed to maintain the students' anonymity.

Charles Boisseau is associate editor for Texas Co-op Power.

This poster was drawn by a kindergartner who rode the author's bus.



World's Fastest Wrinkle Remover? Ugly Lines Gone in 90 Seconds!

Turn back time with the new 90 Second Wrinkle Remover. Miracle beauty breakthrough makes wrinkles disappear from view instantly. See for yourself...risk FREE!

By Meg Borman

If I want to look younger I want to look younger now ... not 8 weeks from now.

That's why I fell in love with **Instant Effect**, the new miracle **90 Second Wrinkle Remover**. Does it work? The look on my husband's face was all the proof I needed.

It felt like weeks since we'd been alone, but last weekend we snuck away for a romantic night out. No kids. No TV. Just an intimate dinner for two. So I knew this was the night for **Instant Effect**. Before we even left the house, he gave me "the look", which I haven't seen in a long time. "Wow," he said. "You look amazing." Then he got real close, and stayed close all night.

Wrinkles Disappear in Seconds

Can a tiny dab of a miracle remover make such a huge difference? Absolutely. Use **Instant Effect** on your most stubborn lines, wrinkles, creases and judge for yourself. If you're results are anything like mine, you'll be amazed by the immediate sensation of tighter and smoother-looking skin. Wrinkles visually disappear in seconds...with results that last for hours. And no one will ever know your secret.

You can see **Instant Effect** working immediately. Ninety seconds is all you need to transform yourself into a radiant, younger-looking you. The quick-absorbing clear remover gently firms on contact, smoothing over ugly

wrinkles. Instead of harsh chemicals injected under the skin's surface or painful procedures that permanently change your face, **Instant Effect** visibly erases fine line, wrinkles, crow's feet and even deep creases. And while other instant products turn chalky and crack, the scientific breakthrough technology in **Instant Effect** stays silky and smooth for a perfect look. You won't remember you have it on it's so comfortable. You can wear it all day....and night!

Turn Back the Clock Everyday

The perfect addition to your daily routine, the **90 Second Wrinkle Remover** by **Instant Effect** dries instantly and invisibly, so you can wear it under your favorite makeup. Wrinkles that formed over years seem to fade before your eyes.

Instant Effect comes in an easy-to-use pump that can deliver the perfect amount every time for instant results wherever you go. **Instant Effect** contains powerful micronized ingredients to transform problem wrinkles and fine lines anywhere into smoother, younger looking skin every time. It's the ultimate quick fix for a younger-looking you!

Not Available in Stores

You won't find the **90 Second Wrinkle Remover** by **Instant Effect** behind the counter at high-end boutiques and certainly not on drugstore shelves. It's only available in limited quantities direct from the laboratory. To ensure its



"With my schedule, I don't have time to wait for slow-drying masks or messy creams. InstantEffect takes less than 2 minutes and the compliments keep coming all day!"

– Denise M., Columbia, SC

integrity, **Instant Effect** is produced in small batches using our unique formula of scientifically proven ingredients. If you're serious about younger-looking skin, take the first step today and call the number below. Try it yourself, risk-free for 30 days...and wait for the "Wow."

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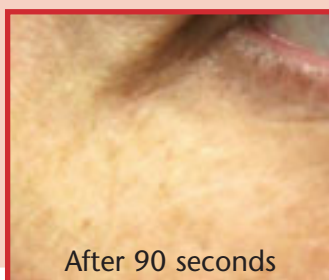
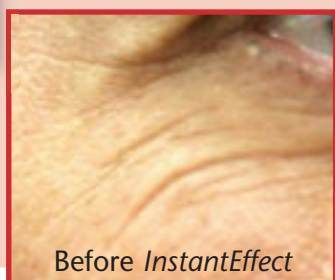
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Un-retouched
photography

Roy Bedichek: A Texas Original

BY CLAY COPPEDGE

Of the three late authors who made up Texas' early literary triumvirate—Roy Bedichek, J. Frank Dobie and Walter Prescott Webb—Bedichek was the last one to publish a mainstream book, *Adventures with a Texas Naturalist*, when he was 69, and the least known of the three during his day. But time and new generations of readers have turned that around to the point where what was to prove Bedichek's most significant book has outlived most of those written by Dobie and Webb.

The spirit of independence, inquiry and originality that make the book remarkable are among the same qualities that made Bedichek the person so remarkable. He has been called Texas' "most civilized soul," and in a state full of originals, he still stands out.

"Bedichek was, simply, one of the most interesting and unique people in Texas," Steven L. Davis writes in his book, *J. Frank Dobie: A Liberated Mind* (2009, University of Texas Press). Dobie and Webb held the same view of "Bedi," as they called him, and not only urged him to write his book about the natural world but spearheaded a fundraising effort so he could take a year off from work to do so.

That effort, and what Bedichek did with the opportunity, has paid off for subsequent generations of Texans by leaving us with Bedichek's wholly original thoughts on nature, art and life and how that—and everything else—is intertwined. In *Adventures with a Texas Naturalist*, first published in 1947, he walks that thin line between art and science and between hard fact and pure passion. He reveres both sides and has little patience for those who indulge one at the expense of the other. "I sometimes think that we have become dominated by a cult of unemotionalism," he wrote. "We speak of 'cold' scientific fact as if temperature had something to do with verity."

Bedichek was never in danger of joining that cult of unemotionalism. That is nowhere more evident than in a passage that begins with a simple statement about the Inca dove. "The Inca has a curious call, monotonously repeated, especially in morning hours, all through the spring months. Nothing quite like it comes from the throat of any other bird or beast," he wrote. Then he goes on to relate a remarkable story about a man in an Austin nursing home and how an Inca dove brought the two men together.

The woman in charge of the nursing home called Bedichek one night and asked if he was the man who knew the names of birds; Bedichek allowed as how he might be. The woman asked Bedichek for help with a patient who was unable to sleep for trying to figure out the song of a particu-

lar bird he kept hearing outside his window. Bedichek went to see the man the next day and found a "palsied, bed-ridden gentleman, whose speech was rendered almost unintelligible by his ailment." Bedichek eventually heard the bird's song and identified it as the Inca dove. The man relaxed upon hearing the news, muttered a sigh of thanks and fell asleep.

The man, it turned out, was a botanist whose intense love for and curiosity about the natural world matched Bedichek's. After the man recovered from his ailment, he and Bedichek began taking trips into the country, just to have a look around and talk about things. "He was interested not only in mechanism, but also in the mysterious force that uses mechanism for its occult purposes," Bedichek wrote of the man who, on one of these trips, expressed sadness upon seeing a patch of Mexican evening primroses cut down. "They're such friendly flowers—they creep right up to your door," the man lamented.

So does the Inca dove, Bedichek noted. "Since then I never see a patch of these flowers and never hear an Inca dove without a memory of this fine old character, trembling with palsy on the brink of the grave but still, like a youth, in love with sun and flowers and birds and generally with the out-of-doors," concluded Bedichek, who could just as easily have been describing himself.

Bedichek, who rarely ate meat unless it was cooked over an open fire and who eschewed pesticides in his own garden, distrusted doctors and was rarely ill; he died suddenly of heart failure on May 21, 1959, at the age of 81 while waiting for cornbread made by his wife, Lillian, to come out of the oven. His old friends admired the manner of his going and considered it altogether in character with this Texas original. In a wistful letter to his departed friend, Webb wrote, "Few people are able to call their own shots as you did, right up to the end."

Clay Coppedge is a frequent contributor to Footnotes in Texas History.



Some, Like Me, Like It Hot

BY KEVIN HARGIS My journey to 100,000 Scoville units began with a single chip.

The Scoville scale, for those of you who don't know, is a measure of a pepper's content of capsaicin—the chemical compound that makes peppers spicy. It ranges from 0 for a bell pepper to 16 million in the case of pure capsaicin. Jalapeños weigh in at about 2,500 to 8,000 Scoville units, depending on how they are cultivated. Habaneros, meanwhile, are rated at 100,000 to 350,000 Scovilles.

The single chip mentioned above was a tortilla chip with a tiny amount of salsa on it. I was about 5 or 6, and was making my first foray into a spicier world.

I soon graduated from dipping chip corners into the salsa to downing heaping spoonfuls of the spicy stuff.

I quickly moved up to the “big leagues,” adding a drop or two of the Tabasco Sauce that my dad so favored to my food. Soon those drops became dashes, and the dashes became streams. I had become a chile connoisseur.

The hotter, the better became my mantra, especially as a young adult. I moved on to fresh jalapeños, then to serranos, habaneros and Scotch bonnets. Peppers spiced up my breakfasts and often dominated my suppers. Some of the first things I planted in my very first vegetable garden were jalapeño bushes.

As I learned to love ever-hotter foods, I also discovered that different peppers imparted different flavors, and I started to appreciate them for more than their endorphin-inducing burns.

The melding of those distinct flavors comes to a crescendo in this recipe for a mole rojo that my friend

George Leake showed me how to make. Unlike the traditional idea of a mole, this one is made without chocolate. But it features four varieties of dried chile peppers (guajillo, ancho, pasilla and arbol) as well as pepitas (pumpkin seeds), sesame seeds and other flavors. It is wonderful atop roasted meat or as a veggie dip.

MOLE ROJO DE JORGE

- 3 cups pepitas (pumpkin seeds)
- 5 dried guajillo chiles
- 5 dried ancho chiles
- 5 dried pasilla chiles
- 5 chile arbol pods
- 1/3 cup whole comino seeds (or 1/4 cup ground cumin)

- 2 to 4 tablespoons peppercorns (or equivalent amount of fresh-ground pepper)
- 1 1/2 cups sesame seeds
- 2 tablespoons vegetable or peanut oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 heads garlic, peeled and roughly chopped
- 1/2 cup chicken stock
- Salt to taste

Spread pepitas on cookie sheet and roast in slow oven (250 degrees) for about 30 minutes, checking and stirring every 10 minutes, until golden brown. Set aside to cool. Stem and seed chiles. Toast chiles in batches in large skillet (cast iron works best) over medium-high heat until skins just begin to blacken. Place in deep bowl and add boiling water to cover. Allow to soak for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, reduce heat in skillet to medium and toast comino seeds, in batches if necessary, stirring or shaking pan constantly, taking care not to scorch them. Remove to plate to cool. Toast peppercorns, if using, for 20 to 30 seconds and remove to plate to cool. Reduce heat to medium-low and toast sesame seeds, in batches, if necessary, until golden. (Sesame seeds burn easily, so be sure skillet has cooled a bit before you start.) Remove to plate and allow to cool. Return heat to medium, heat oil in skillet and sauté onion until it begins to caramelize. Add garlic and cook another 1 to 2 minutes until fragrant. Add chicken stock and remove skillet from heat.

Using a molcajete (mortar and pestle) or spice grinder, grind comino seeds, then peppercorns. Remove chiles from water and place in blender or food processor. Reserve liquid. Add ground spices and process chiles until medium-thick paste forms, adding some reserved liquid if necessary. Add onion and garlic mixture and process until smooth. In a molcajete or spice grinder, process toasted sesame seeds until fine, add to paste in food processor and pulse to combine. Grind about half of toasted pepitas similarly and add to processor and pulse to combine. Chop or grind remaining pepitas into small pieces and stir into mixture. Taste and add salt as necessary.

Servings: 32. Serving size: 1/2 cup. Per serving: 103 calories, 3.3 g protein, 7.1 g fat, 7.5 g carbohydrates, 1.9 g dietary fiber, 9 mg sodium, trace cholesterol



Mole Rojo de Jorge 1. ancho chile 2. pasilla chile 3. guajillo chile 4. peppercorns 5. pepitas 6. sesame seeds 7. comino seeds 8. chile arbol

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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. Mailed entries can all be in one envelope. For official rules, visit www.texascooppower.com.



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MILTON GRIFFITH, *Navasota Valley Electric Cooperative*

Prize-winning recipe: **Red Pepper Soup**

The versatility of peppers was on full display in the recipes we received for this month's contest. We got recipes covering many courses: appetizers, soups and even desserts, and the voting was extremely close. Any of the recipes printed here might have won, but our tasters gave the nod to this sweet, creamy and easy-to-make soup that has a nice hint of spice.

RED PEPPER SOUP

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 3 large red bell peppers, sliced
- 2 carrots, sliced
- 2 shallots, sliced
- 1 quart chicken broth
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

Dash ground red pepper

Melt butter with oil in Dutch oven over medium heat. Add red bell peppers, carrots and shallots and sauté 8 to 10 minutes or until tender. Stir in chicken broth and spices. Bring to boil and cover.

Reduce heat to low and simmer 25 to 30 minutes. Remove from heat and let cool 20 minutes. Process soup in batches in food processor until smooth, stopping to scrape down sides. Return to Dutch oven and keep warm until ready to serve.

Servings: 4. Serving size: 1 cup. Per serving: 293 calories, 10.8 g protein, 14.1 g fat, 34.6 g carbohydrates, 10.5 g dietary fiber, 526 mg sodium, 22 mg cholesterol

MEXICAN CHICKEN KIEV

- 8 boneless chicken breast halves
- 1 can (7 ounces) diced green chilies
- 4 ounces Monterey Jack cheese, cut into 8 strips
- 1/2 cup fine breadcrumbs
- 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon cumin
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 6 tablespoons butter, melted
- Tomato sauce (optional)

Pound chicken breasts to 1/4-inch thickness. Place about 2 tablespoons chilies and a strip of cheese in center of each flattened breast. Roll up and tuck ends under. Combine breadcrumbs, Parmesan cheese and seasonings. Dip chicken rolls in melted butter and roll in breadcrumb mixture. Place chicken rolls seam side down in

baking dish. Drizzle with remaining butter. Cover and chill several hours or overnight if desired. Bake, uncovered, at 400 degrees for 20 minutes or until juices run clear. Serve with warmed tomato sauce on the side, if desired.

Servings: 8. Serving size: 1 piece. Per serving: 436 calories, 60.1 g protein, 15.4 g fat, 7.3 g carbohydrates, 1.5 g dietary fiber, 562 mg sodium, 174 mg cholesterol

BRUCE RUSLING

Sam Houston Electric Cooperative

REDUCING THE HEAT

If you like the flavor of hot peppers but not necessarily the burn that goes with them, remove the seeds and ribs from the inside before using. It won't totally tame a hot pepper, but it will lessen the sting. Be sure to wear plastic or rubber gloves and wash your hands thoroughly afterward.

SWEET AND SPICY JALAPEÑO LEMONADE

- 1 1/4 cups sugar
- 1 1/4 cups fresh-squeezed lemon juice
- 1/2 teaspoon finely grated lemon or lime zest (or both)
- 1 jalapeño, stemmed and sliced

Start by making a lemonade base. Mix sugar and 2 1/2 cups water in saucepan over medium heat and cook until sugar is thoroughly dissolved. Allow to cool.

Sweet and Spicy Jalapeño Lemonade



Add lemon juice and zest. Pour into jar and add jalapeño. Refrigerate 3 hours, then remove jalapeño; leave in longer for spicier drink. To serve, mix equal parts base and cold water into glass filled with crushed ice. Makes about 4 cups of base.

Variation: Use freshly brewed iced tea instead of water for a spicy take on an Arnold Palmer.

Servings: 8. Serving size: 1 cup. Per serving: 130 calories, 0.2 g protein, 0 g fat, 34.6 g carbohydrates, 0.2 g dietary fiber, trace sodium, 0 mg cholesterol

KELLY HIGHTOWER

Sam Houston Electric Cooperative

Web Extra: Go to www.TexasCoopPower.com for a bonus pepper recipe and to see recipes from past issues.

RECIPE CONTESTS

January's recipe contest is **Hot Potatoes**. The versatile potato—whether red, sweet or white—has a long history and can go in just about everything. What's the most creative recipe for spuds in your kitchen repertoire? **The best recipe wins \$100.**

In addition, you only have a few days left to enter the Holiday Recipe Contest sponsored by the Texas Pecan Board. First prize is \$3,000. All recipes must contain pecans. Please see ad or rules online at www.TexasCoopPower.com for details. **The deadline for both contests is September 10.**

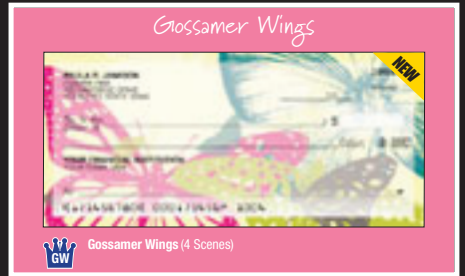


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YU The Muppets (8 Scenes)	YA Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas (4 Scenes)	BS Betty Boop (4 Scenes)	SO Snoopy by Everhart (4 Scenes)	DT Travel (4 Scenes)	AC ASPCA Cats (4 Scenes)
IE Mickey Halloween (4 Scenes)	OE Winnie The Pooh Halloween (4 Scenes)	IA happy by Dena (4 Scenes)	JY Juicy (4 Scenes)	A1 American Dream (2 Scenes)	N6 National Parks III (4 Scenes)
RD rachaehale Dogs (4 Scenes)	RK rachaehale Kittens (4 Scenes)	FW Fine Wine (4 Scenes)	EF Keep The Faith (4 Scenes)	EU Fleur de Lis (4 Scenes)	GK Smirk Green (4 Scenes)
BL Blue Safety (1 Scene) Side-Tear STBL	SF Santa Fe (4 Scenes)	KK Kat Kraze (4 Scenes)	SS Stars & Stripes (1 Scene) Side-Tear STSS	AD Anne Geddes Classic (8 Scenes)	
AT Antique (1 Scene) Side-Tear STVG	LH Lighthouses (4 Scenes) Side-Tear STLH	HA Great Outdoors (4 Scenes)	OX Oxford (4 Scenes)	PP Paper People (3 Scenes)	
STBI SpongeBob Best Episodes (4 Scenes) Side-Tear STBY	STGE Geo-Brights (4 Scenes) Side-Tear STGY	STWL American Wildlife (4 Scenes) Side-Tear STWY	STFI Filigree (4 Scenes)	STMQ Marlesque (4 Scenes)	

BL Blue Safety (1 Scene) Side-Tear STBL	SF Santa Fe (4 Scenes)	KK Kat Kraze (4 Scenes)	SS Stars & Stripes (1 Scene) Side-Tear STSS	AD Anne Geddes Classic (8 Scenes)
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STBI SpongeBob Best Episodes (4 Scenes) Side-Tear STBY	STGE Geo-Brights (4 Scenes) Side-Tear STGY	STWL American Wildlife (4 Scenes) Side-Tear STWY	STFI Filigree (4 Scenes)	STMQ Marlesque (4 Scenes)

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◀ **Garrett Harper** watches his brother ride the carousel at the North Texas State Fair and wishes he were a little taller. His mother, **Lauren Harper**, is a member of Panola-Harrison Electric Cooperative.



▲ **Brooke Stoddard** catches some z's waiting to show her heifer at the Brazoria County Fair. Her grandmother, **Jane Martin**, is a member of Cooke County Electric Cooperative.



◀ **Nicholas Viola** (left) and his buddy **Colton Griffin** head for the rides at the Goliad County Fair & Rodeo. Nicholas' dad, **Todd Viola**, is a member of Karnes Electric Cooperative.

◀ **Aubrey Lanning** plays in a corn tub at Brownwood's Feels Like Home Fair & Celebration. Parents **Spencer** and **Avaloy Lanning** are members of Comanche Electric Cooperative.

► **Madison Melker** sees if she measures up to Big Tex's standards at the State Fair of Texas. Parents **Keith** and **Jessica Melker** are members of CoServ Electric.



Upcoming in Focus on Texas

ISSUE	SUBJECT	DEADLINE
Nov	Fall Leaves	Sep 10
Dec	Curious Cats	Oct 10
Jan	Man's Best Friend	Nov 10
Feb	Heroes	Dec 10
Mar	Springtime in Texas	Jan 10
Apr	Catch of the Day	Feb 10

FALL LEAVES is the topic for our NOVEMBER 2010 issue. Send your photo—along with your name, address, daytime phone, co-op affiliation and a brief description—to Fall Leaves, Focus on Texas, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701, before SEPTEMBER 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, submit your highest resolution images on our website at www.TexasCoopPower.com.

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

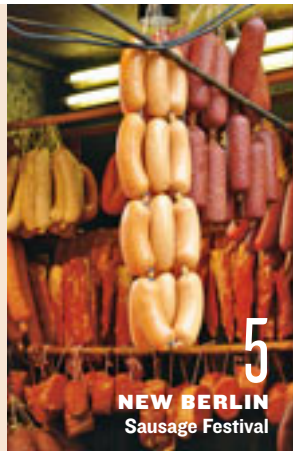
PICK OF THE MONTH SEPTEMBER 4 MASON

Mason County Apple Fest
(325) 805-1277,
www.masoncountyapplefest.org



SEPTEMBER

- 01 ABILENE** [1-5]
Dove Hunters Bash,
(903) 564-4565
- 02 LONGVIEW** [2-3]
Shriner's Circus,
(903) 237-1230
- BOERNE** [2-5]
Kendall County Fair,
(830) 249-2839
- LA GRANGE** [2-5]
Fayette County Fair, (979)
968-3911, www.fayettecountyfair.org
- 04 DOSS**
VFD Fish Fry & Prize
Giveaway Fundraiser,
(830) 669-2353
- 05 FAYETTEVILLE**
St. John Church Picnic,
(979) 378-2244



NEW BERLIN
Sausage Festival

- 05 NEW BERLIN**
Sausage Festival,
(830) 556-5383
- 09 COLUMBUS** [9-12]
Colorado County Fair,
(979) 732-8385,
www.columbustexas.org
- 11 CALDWELL**
Kolache Festival & Quilt
Show, (979) 567-0000,
www.burlesoncountytx.com

- 11 CRANFILLS GAP**
Septemberfest & Wild
Game Cook-Off,
(254) 597-2363

MAYDELLE
Centennial Iron Horse
Celebration, (903) 795-
3327, www.maydellefiredept.com

MOUNT PLEASANT [11-12]
Quake on Town Lake,
(903) 466-1349

- 15 BRENHAM** [15-18]
Washington County Fair,
(979) 836-4112,
www.washingtoncofair.com



MAYDELLE
Centennial Iron Horse
Celebration

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October 9th - November 28th

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Redeemable at the Texas Renaissance Festival
Box Office Only. No Cash Value.

Children are ages 3 - 12. Children 4 and under are free.
Ages 13 and up are considered adults.

Discount Tickets available at
texrenfest.com 800-458-3435

AROUND TEXAS AROUND TEXAS



18

HENRIETTA
Art Association Show
& Craft Fair

16 **GROVES** [16-19]
Texas Pecan Festival,
(409) 962-3631,
www.grovescofc.com

18 **HENRIETTA**
Art Association Show &
Craft Fair,
(940) 733-2077

HONDO [18-19]
Medina County Fair &
Chili Cook-Off,
(830) 426-5406,
www.medinacountyfair.org

24 **GAINESVILLE** [24-25]
PawlessFest Texas Music
Festival, (940) 612-1375,
www.pawlessfest.com

POST OAK [24-25]
Busy Bee Quilt Show,
(940) 567-2771,
www.postoakquilters.com

24 **SCHERTZ** [24-25]
SchertzFest,
(210) 619-1017,
www.schertz.com

UTOPIA [24-25]
Utopia Fest Music
Festival, (512) 496-2798

25 **DRIPPING SPRINGS**
Fall Fest, (512) 858-
2030, www.drpound
pioneerfarmstead.com

LAKEHILLS
Medina Lake Cajun
Festival, (830) 751-3130,
www.cajunfestival-
medinalake.com

PORT ARTHUR
Cayman Night
in Port Arthur,
(409) 963-1107,
www.caymannight.com

26 **BUDA**
Parish Festival,
(512) 312-0084,
www.ci.buda.tx.us
/buda-events

26 **MEYERSVILLE**
Sts. Peter & Paul
Catholic Church Festival,
(361) 275-3868

STRING PRAIRIE
BBQ Fall Festival,
(512) 237-0352

OCTOBER

01 **STEPHENVILLE** [1-2]
Threads of Texas Quilt
Show, (254) 968-4300

02 **JOHNSON CITY**
Blanco County Wild
Game Dinner, (830) 833-
5335, www.facebook
.com/wildgamedinner



STEPHENVILLE
Threads of Texas Quilt Show

READY TO GO? GO ONLINE FIRST.

Before you hit the road, stop at the new and improved www.TexasCoopPower.com to search for events by date, region, type and keyword. You can also find the easy-to-navigate Texas Travel section with all our popular Hit the Road and travel features.

So no matter if you're fixin' to get away to the Piney Woods or the Panhandle Plains (and all points between), your get-away just got easier.

Get a move on at www.TexasCoopPower.com.

Event information can be mailed to **Around Texas**, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701, faxed to (512) 763-3407 or submitted on our website at www.TexasCoopPower.com. Please submit events for November by September 10.

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- No balloon payment
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800.588.6714



Minimum loan amount of \$75,000. Loans are adjustable rate mortgages. The first 3 years will be fixed at an Interest Rate of 5.25% (with an Annual Percentage Rate of 5.274%), then adjust annually for the remaining years to Wall Street Journal Prime Interest Rate plus a margin of 2.00%. Based on the current Wall Street Journal Prime Interest Rate, the remaining 27 years would also be at 5.25% with an Annual Percentage Rate of 5.274% (not to exceed 17.00% nor fall below 5.25%). The interest rate may increase after the loan is made. The Wall Street Journal Prime Interest Rate as of May 6, 2010 was 3.25% and the current margin is 2.00%; for an interest rate of 5.25%.

CELEBRATE HISTORY

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A small-town atmosphere in the midst of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex may seem a bit of a contradiction, but that's exactly what you get in Grapevine, an old city that's never lost its charm. Filled with wine, art, good food and shopping, it offers all the finer things in life, minus the pretension.

THAT OLD-TIME FEELING

Start your day with breakfast at **MAIN STREET BISTRO & BAKERY**, where the coffee is flavorful and the pastries are some of the best this side of the Atlantic. Then stroll down Main Street and take in the sights—there's plenty to see, from the historic **TORIAN CABIN**, built circa 1845, to an old bank (now a jewelry store) from which Bonnie and Clyde's gang made a significant withdrawal in the 1930s. And there's the town's first "calaboose" (Spanish slang for "jail"), where the first prisoner is rumored to have been a dog.

At the **GRAPEVINE VINTAGE RAILROAD** train depot, you'll find the **GRAPEVINE HISTORICAL MUSEUM**, complete with artifacts from pre-historic through modern times. Admission is free. A few of the fun things you'll run across include a coat from Grapevine's smallest man in 1932 (40 inches tall, 58 pounds), a 1914 wedding dress, a front door from the first brick house in the area, a cast of a dinosaur track discovered at Lake Grapevine, an old-fashioned soda fountain table and menu, and a large collection of milk bottles.

If you're up for a jaunt by rail, take a seat in one of the vintage Victorian-style cars, pulled either by "Puffy," an 1896 steam locomotive, or a 1953 diesel locomotive. The train travels along the Cotton Belt Route to Fort Worth, delivering passengers to the heart of the city's Stockyards for a couple of hours before making a return trip.

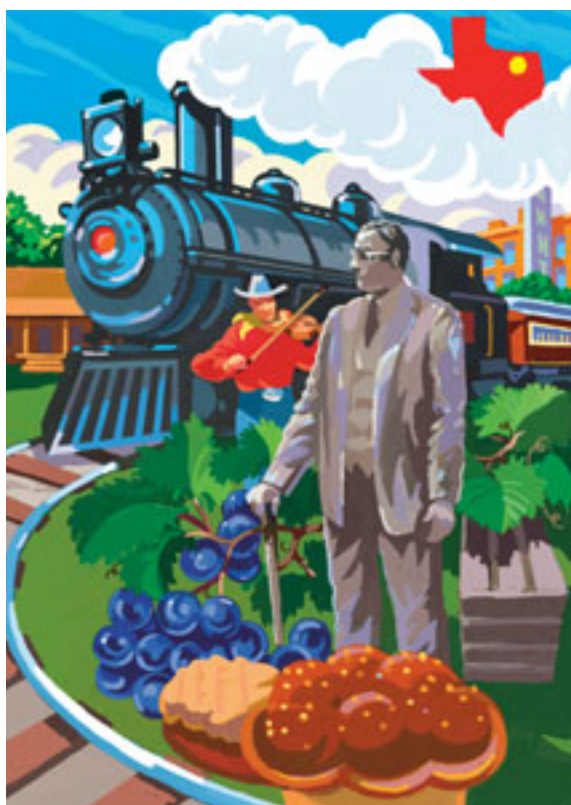
FROM THE VINE

As you may have guessed from the name, Grapevine has a strong wine culture. Numerous tasting rooms and

GRAPEVINE

Artsy draw of this laid-back town hard to resist

BY HALEY SHAPLEY



wineries around town offer up samples of vino from Texas and beyond. **DELANEY VINEYARDS** offers free tours, giving you an inside look at the wine-making process from harvest to glass. Every August, the public is invited to come and stomp the grapes (research has shown that wine produced from foot-stomped grapes actually tastes better—or so the tour guide tells you), and in September, Grapevine stages **GRAPEFEST**, known as the largest wine festival in the Southwest.

FOR YOUR ENTERTAINMENT

The city's festival scene is always hopping, with more than a dozen big events throughout the year. (Find a schedule on the **GRAPEVINE CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU** website.) For year-round entertainment, the **GRAPEVINE**

OPRY hosts shows featuring everything from Southern gospel and country Christian to big-band swing and 1950s rock 'n' roll.

By this point, you'll no doubt have noticed the myriad statues around town. Many were produced by artist in residence **ARCHIE ST. CLAIR**, whose studio is open to the public. You'll be amazed by this former commercial pilot's story: A helicopter accident in 1994 and 17 hours in subzero temperatures left the Australian near death and doctors doubtful he'd ever walk again. But St. Clair, who spent 3 1/2 years in a wheelchair and taught himself how to sculpt during that period, has fully recovered from the crash and is now renowned for his realistic bronze sculptures.

If you're looking for a place to hang your hat for the night, you're in luck—Grapevine has it all, from slick resorts to down-home accommodations. If you have kids along for the ride, you may want to check out **GREAT WOLF LODGE**, which boasts outdoorsy-themed rooms and an indoor water park where the air stays a balmy 84 degrees. Right across the street is the massive **GAYLORD TEXAN HOTEL AND CONVENTION CENTER**, which is

just big and bold enough to seem more like it belongs on the Vegas Strip rather than in North Texas. The on-site Glass Cactus nightclub is 39,000 square feet and offers pretty lakeside views and a large dance floor. For something a little more quaint, the **GARDEN MANOR BED & BREAKFAST INN** is close to all the action but feels a world away, with just four suites and peaceful, spacious grounds that feature trees with twinkling lights and three wrought-iron gazebos.

Whatever you choose to do, city shuttles will take you to and fro for just \$5 a day, so there's no excuse to miss anything this throwback town has to offer.

Haley Shapley, formerly of Coppell, is a freelance writer based in the Seattle, Washington, area.

Web Extra: Go to www.TexasCoopPower.com for contact details about the featured attractions.



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