

LOCAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE EDITION

OCTOBER 2010

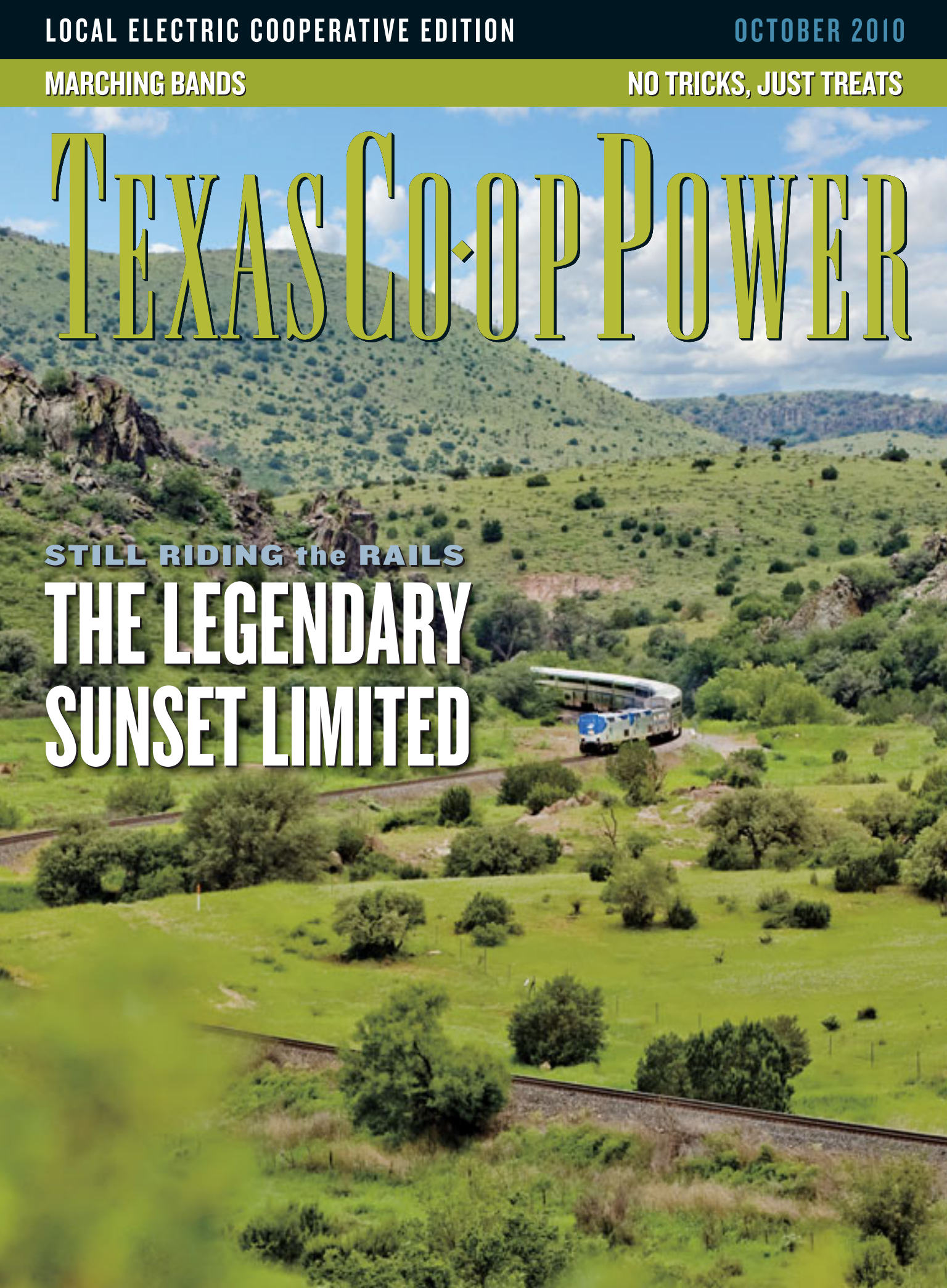
MARCHING BANDS

NO TRICKS, JUST TREATS

TEXAS CO-OP POWER

STILL RIDING the RAILS

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October 2010

VOLUME 68 NUMBER 3



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FEATURES

8 Marching to Different Drummers

By Charles Boisseau

On autumn Friday nights, students from more than 850 Texas high schools don crisp uniforms, tall hats with fancy plumes and gawky white shoes and make music for countless fans. What's a football game without the marching band?

16 Still Riding the Rails

By Eileen Mattei

Photos by Woody Welch

Romance, mystery and adventure are traveling companions on Amtrak's legendary Sunset Limited. Relax with us on an 18-hour rail journey from Houston to El Paso.

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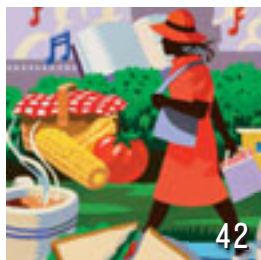
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TEXAS CO-OP POWER

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.

TEXAS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES BOARD OF DIRECTORS: **Kendall Montgomery**, Chair, *Olney*; **Rick Haile**, Vice Chair, *McGregor*; **Ron Hughes**, Secretary-Treasurer, *Sinton*; **Randy Mahannah**, *Perryton*; **Billy Marricle**, *Bellville*; **Mark Stubbs**, *Greenville*; **Larry Warren**, *San Augustine*

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letters

MORE THAN ELECTRICITY

Most co-op members just think about electricity when they think of their co-op, and I was in that group until my granddaughter, Logan Sisk, was chosen to attend the East Texas Rural Electric Youth Seminar at Lon Morris College in Jacksonville. Students were chosen from all the school districts in our area to attend, and I was so impressed with the range of meetings that was offered. And, too, our co-ops award scholarships.

So, I would like to send a big thanks to all the co-ops, and especially my co-op, Panola-Harrison, for helping to assure that our youth have the character and values that will stay with them for life.

Electricity is important, but so are our kids.

GLORIA CREEL

Panola-Harrison Electric Cooperative

HOME, SWEET ENERGY-SAVING HOME

Your article on the Home Energy Makeover Winners (August 2010) was excellent—what a wonderful program. Each of these five families benefited tremendously and are

POWER TALK

now encouraging others to be more energy efficient.

KAREN and DAMIAN ANDRUS

Wood County Electric Cooperative

SEE MORE LETTERS

on our new and improved website

www.TexasCoopPower.com

You noted [in the Home Energy Makeover story] that the Stark family's home had six large recessed lights that "had no insulation, creating an energy drain ..." Unless those lights were the thermally protected type, they should not have had insulation over them.

Insulating over certain types of recessed lights can

cause heat buildup that could lead to a fire. The wise thing to do is to replace the lights with ones that can be safely insulated over.

MRS. LYN MCCELVEY

Lovelady Insulation Company

Houston County

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Editor's Note: *Gabriel Castaneda of American Insulation explains: "The ceiling lighting in the Stark home was 'energy rated,' which allows for insulation within 3 inches of the lighting itself. But to be safe, Johns Manville insulation batts were placed over the top of the lighting compartments (which were 1 to 2 feet above the lighting) before any insulation was blown into the attic."*

ERICKSON READS ERICKSON

Our family was delighted to see your feature about John Erickson in the August 2010 issue. If you've never heard

one of Mr. Erickson's recordings of his own (Hank the Cowdog) books, you've missed out on some hilarious adventures! They keep the whole family entertained while traveling and the driver wide awake!

GLORIA GOHN

Farmers Electric Cooperative

MODERN ICE AGE

"An Era Frozen in Time" (August 2010)—what a story! So many of us never knew about the "ice" icebox and icehouse. I remember an old car my great uncle had when I was a child. By the windshield on the dash was a tray or box that held a block of ice. The wind would go through the vent onto the ice, and you would have cold air. Please tell Clay Coppedge that I am going to frame the article.

LAWRENCE M. MALEK

Fayette Electric Cooperative

I enjoyed reading another perspective on iceboxes. My grandfather, Carl Drachenberg, used an icebox until the late 1950s. He was a master cabinetmaker in Houston and was awarded the patent on the double-seal icebox in 1924. I would love to locate one of his iceboxes. My grandfather always put a label or metal plate on the back with his name on it.

CYNTHIA K. NELSON

Sam Houston Electric Cooperative

My parents owned ice plants in Conroe and Cleveland, Texas. Our two plants made 96 tons of ice in 24 hours. We pulled 1,200 pounds at a time. In World War II, we could not get tires and gas for trucks, so we delivered ice with wagons and mules.

HAROLD STILLINGS

Navasota Valley Electric Cooperative

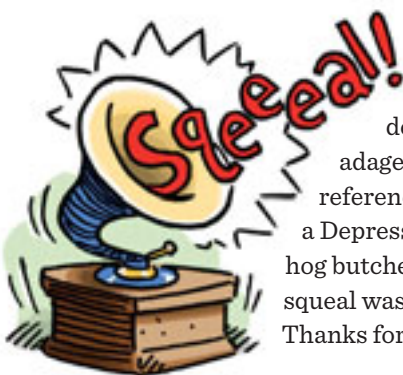
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DON'T WASTE THE SQUEAL

I always look forward to reading and trying out the delicious recipes in Texas Co-op Power magazine, and Tony's Mojo Pork Roast (August 2010) is certainly a deserved winner. However, I must take exception to the old adage regarding "using everything from the pig but the squeal" referenced in the intro to the recipe. According to my late father, a Depression-hardened old-timer who certainly did his share of hog butchering growing up on Pierce Ranch in Wharton County, the squeal was absolutely not to be wasted—that went in the Victrola! Thanks for an informative, thoroughly entertaining magazine.

Stephen L. Clarke

Wharton County Electric Cooperative



H A P P E N I N G S

Never seen a cougar or a ring-tailed cat? Well, now's your chance at the Abilene Zoo, where a recently opened permanent exhibit showcases some 100 native Texas animals.



Called the **ELM CREEK BACKYARD**, the exhibit is the largest ever unveiled by the zoo. Keep your eyes peeled for the expected critters—owls, hawks, raccoons, snakes, and, of course, the iconic armadillo. The Turtles of Texas display is guaranteed to bring visitors out of their shells. And keep a special lookout for animals that urbanites seldom get to observe in their natural environments. Which ones? You'll have to come to see for yourself, say

zoo officials, who want to maintain an element of surprise.

The exhibit's stream is a re-creation of Elm Creek, which flows south from Taylor County to the Colorado River in Runnels County. The Elm Creek Backyard also features a paleontological exhibit of early life along the creek.

For more information, call (325) 676-6085 or go to www.abilenetx.com/zoo.

CO-OP PEOPLE

New and Improved Texas Co-op Power Website to the Rescue

On July 30, Jennifer James was in a little fix. She needed a certain cookie recipe, but all she knew was that it had appeared some time ago in Texas Co-op Power magazine.

Can you guess what she did next?

A. She went to her tidy little Texas Co-op Power recipe filing system and quickly pulled out the recipe.

B. She went online to the new and improved www.TexasCoopPower.com.

If you answered "A," we can only imagine you have more time on your hands than James or most of our other readers.

James, 33, is a busy homemaker who cares for two young kids and her husband, Mark. They are members of two electric cooperatives: Jackson Electric at their home in Edna and Victoria Electric at

magazine's website, so she didn't know that the magazine's staff had, only moments earlier on the same day, launched its redesigned website. She didn't know that searching for recipes is now easier than ever: Just type in a keyword (for example, you'll find many listings under "cookie"), or search by selecting a course or key ingredients.

What matters is this: James found a cookie recipe (not the one she was searching for initially, but one she thought was just as good or better), and she found the website inviting enough that she decided to register for it. It took less than 30 seconds.

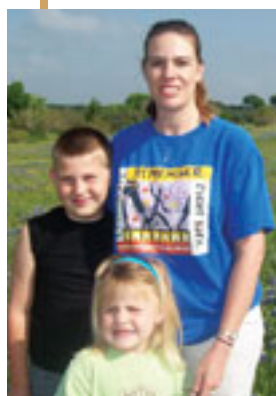
Thus, James was the first of many hundreds of Texas electric co-op members who have visited and registered for the new website.

Why register? Among other things, registered co-op members can instantly log in to enter popular recipe and photo contests, post events on the expanded online events calendar, and sign up for a free e-mail newsletter to make sure they don't miss the latest co-op news, Texas feature stories and statewide happenings. Registered users can even save recipes and stories to a personal "favorites" list.

James expects she'll be back. After all, she's on a mother's quest to find dishes her kids will eat.

"I like the recipes," she says. "I like to try new things and with two picky kids, it's always, 'Oh, my kids won't eat that.'"

—Charles Boisseau, associate editor



Jennifer James with son Tyler and daughter Melanie.

a fishing cottage on Garcitas Creek in southern Victoria County. Like most readers, the Jameses are ill suited as historians, even just to clip and sort recipes each month—and having piles of magazine archives is simply unmanageable.

James says she isn't a regular visitor to the

WHO KNEW?

OFFICIAL SNACK

Next time you are hungry for a snack, why not reach for some tortilla chips and salsa? The staple of Tex-Mex restaurants is also the official snack of the Lone Star State, as so designated by the Texas Legislature in 2003.

You can thank the then-second-grade students at Leo Marcell Elementary School in Mission for coming up with the tasty idea. The students even made a trip to the Capitol in Austin to testify in support of their favorite treat before the State Cultural Affairs Committee.



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Historic Connection

The first house powered under the Rural Electrification Administration 75 years ago was right here in Texas.

By Charles Boisseau

From Bartlett's old brick-lined Clark Street, head south at the caution light, hang a left just after the doughnut shop and go down a lime rock county road for half a mile.

After the curve, pull in the first weed-covered drive and wait for the dust to settle. You've arrived: The location of the first house in the United States energized with power financed under the Rural Electrification Administration (REA)—the federal program created during the Great Depression that helped energize the nation's largely darkened rural areas.

You won't find any indication this place has significance. No historical marker. Not even the old farmhouse. It was torn down years ago. Former owners Charles and Lydia Saage are long gone, as are their four children. But Mary Saage (pronounced "SOG-gy") can still tell the story about the dawn of electricity hereabouts.

"That was my in-laws' house," said Mary, the energetic 90-year-old widow of the Saages' youngest child, Curtis. She

recently led visitors to the site, which looks like countless vacated rural homesteads.

To understand the significance of this place, you need to think about another time, about life 75 years ago—before Americans began to take electricity for granted. In the 1930s, the vast majority of the nation's farms and ranches were without electricity. Back then, people lived in two worlds: Residents of cities and small towns enjoyed modern conveniences powered by electricity; rural folks didn't.

The residents of Bartlett, a town of about 2,000 between Austin and Waco, were first served by central electric service in 1905. But the folks in nearby rural areas did without.

In 1935, three local farmers each put up \$50 to create what was originally named Bartlett Community Light & Power Company in a cooperative effort to bring power to farms outside the city limits—sites that investor-owned utilities deemed were not lucrative enough to serve. Later that year, BCL&P received a \$33,000 loan from the REA

to build a 59-mile power line. Their plan: Create a distribution system to serve nearby farms and contract with Bartlett's municipal utility to generate the electricity and provide other services, such as reading meters.

At the time, neither Texas nor the other 47 states had laws authorizing the formation of electric co-ops. Not until 1937, with the approval of the Electric Cooperative Corporation Act, did Texas permit people to obtain a state charter and organize a member-owned electric co-op, according to a 1980 case study.

In November 1935, BCL&P volunteers and paid employees began setting the first section of 36 poles. Finally, on March 7, 1936, after paying a \$5 deposit for an electric meter, Charles Saage was given the big honor: throwing the switch.

"They were the first on the line going down that road out of Bartlett. That was the reason they got electricity before anybody else," said Mary, whose first summer job was working in the office for what would soon become Bartlett Electric Cooperative, a co-op that continues today, with service to about 10,000 meters.

Awhile ago, longtime co-op employee Linda Ferguson asked Mary for a photo of the old farmhouse. After a lengthy search, Mary found one, a black-and-white aerial shot showing a tidy home with porches, barn and washhouse out back. Look close and you can also make out something else: a single power pole.

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



COURTESY OF MARY SAAGE

LEFT: Mary Saage stands at the gate to the old farmhouse. **RIGHT:** The house sometime after it was energized.

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Childress High School senior Martin Neskorik supplies the beat during a 2009 home football game between the Bobcats and a district rival, the Friona Chieftains.



RUSSELL GRAVES

MARCHING TO DIFFERENT DRUMMERS

High school band prepares students for all beats of life

BY CHARLES BOISSEAU

IMAGINE FLYING OVER TEXAS ON SOME warm Friday night this autumn.

Look down from your window seat and you could easily spot a most interesting phenomenon: all those blazing stadium lights and the buzzing of all the crowds attending hundreds of high school football games simultaneously under way across the Lone Star State. At halftime, you'll see a real spectacle: uniformed marchers fanning across green fields, forming patterns, drumming beats, blaring horns, flashing flags and twirling batons.

As you hover, consider this: Every Friday night during the fall, an estimated 140,000 young people from more than 850 Texas high schools dress up in crisp uniforms, tall hats with fancy plumes and gawky white shoes, and march and make music for countless fans, family members and townspeople.

We all know that Texans are mad about football, and the players usually get the attention. But what's a football game without the marching band?

"Yes, you can say that Texas has more high school bands and more participants than any other state. That's pretty much a 'no brainer' when you consider the size of the state and the number of bands," said Richard Floyd. He's state director of music for the University Interscholastic League (UIL), the governing body that oversees extracurricular academic, athletic and music contests in the state's public school system.

Floyd and a chorus of other educators cite numerous national studies showing a link between studying music and improved cognitive skills, higher scores on standardized tests and lower dropout rates.

Texas not only has the most marching bands, but it also has earned a reputation for having some of the nation's best, with many bands touring the country, winning national awards and sending graduates on to music careers. To be sure, most band members don't make music their life and may seldom play after they graduate, but band alumni will likely tell you that it was there they learned the skills and habits for success.

With the football season well under way, it's an ideal time to tune in and learn more about high school marching bands.

BANDS IN ALL SIZES

Texas marching bands range in size from Class 5A Allen High School's approximately 650 members, including a drill team and color guard, to numerous Class 1A schools, and others, with 20 or fewer members.

Known as the Allen Eagle Escadrille (French for "squadron"), Allen's band is considered the largest in the country—high school or college. It's larger than The University of Texas or Texas A&M University bands, each of which has fewer than 400 members. The Allen band is so large that when it takes the field, it stretches from end zone to end zone. So loud, it can create a wall of sound that has factored in the outcome of games.

When playing at away games, the band requires 20 buses and a team of nearly 100 parent volunteers to help with logistics and other chores, such as moving equipment, chaperoning, handing out snacks and water bottles, and carefully managing plumes that go with marchers' hats, said Tim Carroll, spokesman for the high school and also a band parent.

The band, still growing in a district with a single 5,000-student high school, has more members than the U.S. House of Representatives. Last year's band had 59 trombones, and Band Director Charles Pennington has promised if it reaches 76 he'll add the show tune "Seventy-Six Trombones" to the playlist.

In contrast, Kenneth Griffin, executive secretary of the Texas Association of Small School Bands, said some of the smallest bands have about a dozen members. Griffith's organization was formed in 1991 to better represent small schools at band competitions.

At some small schools, roughly half the student body is in the band. Last year, Sundown High, on the South Plains near Lubbock, won the UIL Class 1A marching band title with 117 band members, including some eighth-graders. The high school's entire student body was 188, said Assistant Band Director Zane Polson. It was Sundown's sixth state marching band title, more than any other school in any classification.

Polson said the community's strong support and high expectations motivate band students. "In some places,

being in the band is not the *in* thing; it's not cool. It's cool to be in the band in Sundown," he said.

GEEKS AND NERDS

At some places, band members are labeled "geeks" or "nerds." Usually good-natured ribbing, such teasing may help members rally around each other to form one of the strongest subcultures within high schools.

"You have your preps, your jocks and your band nerds," said Jolynn Harwell, 24, who played clarinet and served as drum major for two years at Stephenville High School. She now teaches English at North Garland High School, where she also serves as unofficial adviser to clarinet players. "We always called ourselves 'band nerds.' I don't think it's derogatory or anything. It doesn't bother me one bit."

Band kids bond by hanging out together in the band hall; enduring seemingly endless rehearsals, particularly during the grueling summer band camp; engaging in all sorts of fundraising activities; and sharing many experiences outside the classroom on long bus trips to games and competitions.

"It's like camaraderie," Harwell said. "For four years, it's your family."

Of course, none of this means there isn't plenty of friendly competition among players in different sections. Carroll, of Allen High, remembered his son, John, a horn player, coming home from his first day of summer band camp and having already been indoctrinated by the upper-class horn players in his section. He blurted out gleefully: Flutes stink!

TRAVEL: BAND MEMBERS GO PLACES

Going on trips is a big draw and a tradition.

The Duncanville band has played concerts at Carnegie Hall, Washington's Kennedy Center and in Japan, and marched in London and at Walt Disney World.

The Allen band has played every place from the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California, to the new Cowboys Stadium in Arlington.

Alumni of the Rockdale band still talk about their 1980 trip to Mexico City, which amounted to the first airplane flight and visit to a foreign coun-



TIM CARROLL OF THE ALLEN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



ROCKDALE HIGH SCHOOL YEARBOOK PHOTO COURTESY OF CONNIE AHLEFELD

TOP: Allen High School's Escadrille—considered the nation's largest marching band—is so big it not only covers the field at the new Cowboys Stadium in Arlington but also fills the stadium's humongous video screen during halftime of a high school playoff game in late 2009. **BOTTOM:** High school bands travel, but members of the 1980 Rockdale marching band went farther than most: They toured Mexico City.

try for most of the students. All 140 students in the band made the five-day trip, during which they performed many times, including at a large soccer

stadium, said Don Thoede, the retired band director.

One of the students on that trip was Connie Ahlefeld, who wrote in an e-mail:

"I remember all the hard work we did as a group to earn money: car hopping at Sonic for tips, selling stuff door to door, washing cars, etc. And, I think that's why high school bands are so great—one of the best ways to learn teamwork."

LEADERS OF THE BAND

As you might expect, bands are only as good as their leaders.

Some bands have suffered because of revolving band directors. Childress High, a Class 2A school in the Panhandle, saw its band membership drop in recent years after its longtime director retired for health reasons and a new director lasted less than a year. The next director, hired in 2007, made strides to rebuild the program, but in May he made the sudden announcement to leave for another school.

"The whole band is pretty disappointed," said Shane Statham, a sandy-haired senior and band member since junior high. Like many students at small schools, Statham is involved in multiple activities, including playing on the football team's offensive line. This means at halftime he marches and plays his trom-

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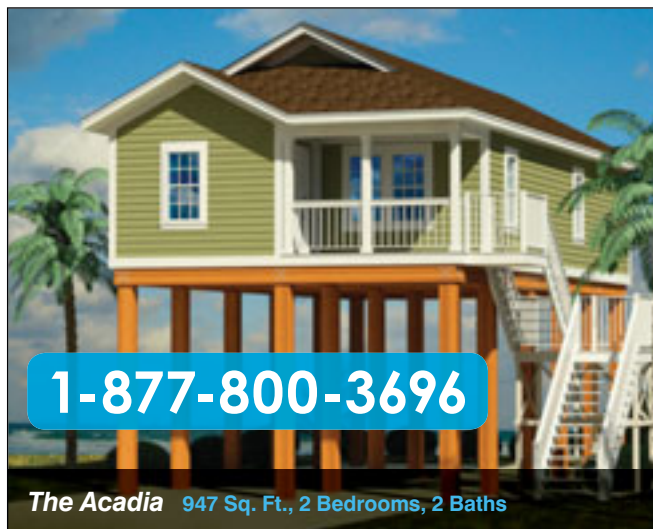
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THREE MARCHING STYLES

There are three main styles of marching, with most bands using either corps or military style. (We'll address the third style—show—in a moment).

Both military and corps style use short, measured, rolling steps, with individuals' feet barely leaving the ground. But military bands use longer strides: six steps to 5 yards, compared with corps' eight steps every 5 yards.

Another big difference: Military bands march in precise, straight lines, while corps band members weave across the field, often forming curving and complicated patterns. Corps is the most popular style these days, with military preferred by some schools in East Texas and at Texas A&M University, which boasts the largest military-style marching band in the nation.

In contrast, show-style bands are characterized by high steps—with individuals' knees reaching a 90-degree angle—and often, on-field dancing. A number of predominately African-American schools, such as Prairie View A&M University, prefer show-style marching.

In general, marching styles have changed

greatly in recent years, becoming far more sophisticated. Directors often use computer software to design their bands' shows, plotting the simultaneous movements of hundreds of members, each of whom may appear as numbers and dots on a computer screen. (Argyle-based Pygraphics Inc. claims to make the most widely used band drill design software on the market.) Some band directors purchase their marching shows from other directors and show designers. Duncanville High buys its show from the band director of Texas Christian University, said Tom Shine, who recently retired as Duncanville's band director.

While state marching band contest winners most often come from schools using corps style, there have been exceptions. Overton won the state Class 1A marching band title in 2001 using military style, said Ronnie Page, who served as assistant director at the time.

Audiences at some schools are not likely to favor a change from a style to which they are accustomed, some directors contend.

"In Carlisle, they like military style. I think

bone with the band while his football teammates are in the locker room.

In contrast, there is the band at Duncanville, a Class 5A school south of Dallas, that has become a music program powerhouse, winning state marching band titles three times and numerous other competitions as part of its comprehensive music program. The 350-member band was directed for 30 years by Tom Shine, who announced his retirement in May. Within weeks of his announcement, 70 current and former students sent letters to fill a scrapbook about how much Shine meant to them.

"Almost every single one thanked Dr. Shine for preparing them for life and teaching them all of these things about having pride in your organization, putting everything into what you do, and that awards and honors don't matter if you do those things," said Brooke Ballengee, a senior oboe player.

Ashley Stephens, a flute player who graduated in 2000, wrote: "He wouldn't let us settle for a level below what he knew we were capable of and would just continue to work on the sections of a piece that needed improvement until

they were better."

Stephens, 28, who now lives in Flower Mound, works as a project manager at a research and development firm. After high school, she earned a bachelor's degree in biology and chemistry and last year a master's degree in business administration.

"I think being in band in high school kept me focused and prevented me from getting caught up in the wrong groups of people," she said. "I like being challenged and excelling, and that carried on for both of my college degrees."

Now married and expecting her first child, she seldom picks up her flute anymore; when she does, she plays in private, disheartened that she cannot play as well as she did in high school. Even so, she insists there is one thing she never will do: "All I know is: I'll never sell my instrument."

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

TOP: Juan Gonzalez loves lugging a sousaphone for Childress High's Big Blue Band from Bobcat Land. **BOTTOM:** Give Duncanville's acclaimed marching band an 'A' for its 'D.'

we'd have a revolution if we said we were going to corps style," said Scott Rhame, longtime band director at Class 1A Carlisle High, which is located in the namesake town in East Texas. Rhame left Carlisle at the end of last year and now serves as eighth-grade band director at Chapel Hill Middle School.



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Little did I know when I ordered the Exercise 2000 Elite® that it would prove valuable to my wife of 62 years. I got it for the stiffness in my legs and it works perfectly to get me loosened up after playing tennis in the morning. When I come home I immediately get on the Exerciser 2000 Elite® for ten minutes and I feel great! My wife suffers from restless leg syndrome at night. Instead of walking the floor for a long period of time, she just gets on the Exerciser for ten minutes and the symptoms subside. —*Dick P.*

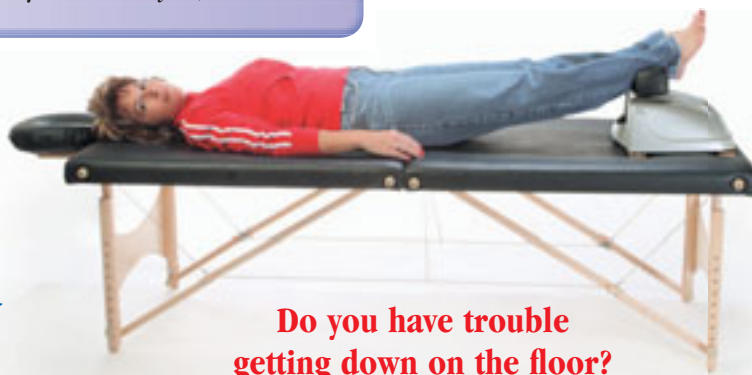
I am 76 years old, heavy, stiff with arthritis and a leukemic for the past nine years. Using your machine twice a day has made me feel ten years younger. I also have a great deal more energy. When you say that your company is in the business of "helping people feel better", it is no fib! —*Kate B.*

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

After using the Exerciser 2000 Elite® twice a day for one week the swelling in my ankles went away. It has also helped my breathing, as I can get out and walk without having to stop and catch my breath! Thank you. —*Shirley H., Florida*

I am an 88 year old woman with multiple health problems. After seeing the ad for the Exerciser 2000 Elite® I ordered it and use it daily. I can tell it has improved circulation in my legs and by doing that it has helped my balance and walking problems. To those of you that think that you can't do regular exercise anymore, try this piece of equipment and you will be amazed how much better you will feel. —*Mildred F.*

As a Chiropractor, I would say the Exerciser 2000 enables people to benefit themselves at home. It is a valuable asset in moving lymph fluid, oxygenating the blood, increasing immune system function, maintaining mobility in the spine, and freeing up a spine that had become stiff and arthritic. —*Garry G., D.C.*



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A+ Rating

Still Riding The Rails

ROMANCE, MYSTERY AND ADVENTURE ARE TRAVELING COMPANIONS ON THE LEGENDARY SUNSET LIMITED.

The train's eight, double-decked passenger cars shimmer silver like a mirage in the afternoon sun just north of Big Bend National Park. In Alpine, I learn that this train, the *Sunset Limited*, runs from New Orleans to Los Angeles three times a week, westbound and eastbound. Primed by reading mystery and spy novels set on the *Orient Express* and *Trans-Siberian Railway*, I decide the 18-hour journey from Houston to El Paso is tailor-made to fulfill a fantasy: I can finally experience a comfortable, overnight trip on a legendary train, even if it means flying from Harlingen, where I live, to Houston to catch it.

Early one winter evening, my husband, Guy, and I enter Houston's Amtrak station on a dead-end downtown street. The fabulous night skyline of the metropolis twinkles overhead. Inside the station, displays of vintage railroad brochures rekindle excitement for rail's golden age of streamlined locomotives.

When the *Sunset Limited* arrives in Houston, sleeping car attendant Oscar Jimenez, a fit 39-year-old wearing a red Amtrak tie, welcomes us aboard. While he transforms our lower-level roomette with two wide seats into upper and lower berths, we head to the observation car, walking through the 90-foot-long, double-decker passenger and dining cars on the upper level. The *Sunset Limited*, which has been in operation more than 100 years, pulls out of Houston promptly at 9:50 p.m. Our elevated perch lets us spy into backyards as the train slowly picks up speed, its whistle warning cars at crossings. Once the city lights disappear, only our reflections remain visible in the tall windows.

A suitcase absolutely cannot fit in a cozy, 7-by-3½-foot roomette. I change in the dressing room next to the sleeping

car's compact bathrooms and luggage storage bin.

With our roomette's curtains and glass door pulled shut, we settle down. Three carpeted steps lead up to my bunk with its own reading light and mesh gear bag. Guy reminds me to secure the webbing from my bunk to the ceiling so I won't slide out as the train rolls west. The muffled, rhythmic clack-clack of the train accented by an occasional distant train whistle lull us to sleep. Around 3 a.m., I wake to see silhouettes of passengers boarding in San Antonio. This is one of the *Limited's* seven stops on its 900-mile trek through Texas, says Jimenez, who has 21 rooms under his care for the entire 1,995-mile trip to Los Angeles.

By 7:30 a.m., I'm watching Southwest Texas go past from the lower bunk. The gray morning offers glimpses of dry washes and barbed-wire fences strung on weathered posts. Guy reports he's slept like the proverbial baby rocking in a cradle.

The train is carrying a full load of 243 passengers on this rainy day. Sleeping car accommodations include meals, so we seat ourselves in the white tablecloth dining car for mushroom omelets and thick French toast. Our breakfast companion Russ Optiz, traveling from Houston to Arizona, explains, "I hate flying, and it's too far to drive. You get to see the sights this way. Plus, I like standing up, being able to walk around, and then go lie down for a nap."

The *Sunset Limited's* melting pot and social center is the observation car, where passengers in sleepers and coach seats mingle. Window-facing seats occupy two-thirds of the car. Tables where people snack, play cards and visit fill the rest.

On Tuesdays, National Park Service guides interpret the views for passengers from Del Rio west to Sanderson.



Education Specialist Lisa Evans and two volunteers from the Amistad National Recreation Area board the train to present their award-winning Trails & Rails program. They point out the Rio Grande, which we won't glimpse again until El Paso, 436 miles and eight hours away. Amistad Dam comes into view and then we see solitary homes, each with its own aging windmill. Volunteer Fern Herrington draws our attention to dark-green creosote bushes spaced out like a checkerboard. The plants are so efficient at sucking up water that even their own seeds can't sprout near them.

MIXING NATURAL, CULTURAL and railroad history of Southwest Texas, the guides chat with the passengers. The 1872 completion of this southern transcontinental railroad route spelled the end of wagon trains, we learn. Herrington, a retired teacher, passes around laminated photographs of plants, snakes, birds and pictographs found in this arid land. For a moment, we are suspended on the Pecos River bridge 265 feet above the water. Then, paralleling the track, we see old Highway 90, abandoned 40 years ago and being erased by drifts of sand and tough spiky grass.

"Unless you point things out, people don't think there is anything to see," Herrington explains. "I've been told we make it interesting and bring what they're seeing to life."

Jim Miculka, meanwhile, the national coordinator for the National Parks Service's Trails & Rails partnership with Amtrak, tells me he is testing a podcast guide developed for 101 points of interest along the full Sunset Limited route. Miculka, who is based at Texas A&M University, says the



TOP: Heads in the clouds, wheels on the track ... relaxed minds filled with nothing but this legendary train's rhythmic clickety-clack. **BOTTOM:** A two-hour layover in San Antonio gives riders time to grab some grub along the famed River Walk.

podcast—the first of its kind—is celebrating Trails & Rails' 10th anniversary this year.

Miculka points out that train crews have their own jargon. For example, when engineers and conductors reach their 12-hour work limit and must be rotated out, no matter where the train is, railroaders say, "the crew died." He tells me of a passenger who, finding the train stopped in the middle of nowhere in the middle of the night, asked the sleeping car attendant what was going on. He was told, "The crew died." The rumors were flying around the dining car the next morning.

Guides and crew get off at the Sanderson whistle-stop



where winter clouds are dropping lower on the mesas. I spot corrals made of railroad ties and a curious sign: “Deer Shop.” As the train passes through Marathon, the fabled adobe-brick Gage Hotel and the funky Marathon Motel, a revived motor court with compact cabins and its own windmill, pop into view. So does snow, now dusting the ground and drifting onto yuccas and lechuguillas.

In the dining car, over Angus burgers and salads accented by apples, nuts and crumbled cheese, our lunch companions confess their addiction to the no-hassle, no-hustle mode of train travel. “I don’t bother putting on my regular makeup,” a well-groomed woman admits.

When the train stops in Alpine, I’m disappointed only because there’s not enough time to grab a beer from The Holland Hotel’s microbrewery, across the tracks (the brewery is now closed, but the historic hotel is well worth an overnight stay). One heedless passenger, I hear, wanders off and is left behind.

Although the train is traveling at 79 mph, the observation car is quiet, half-filled with people reading. In the coach cars, some passengers are tucked under quilts in roomy seats that resemble recliners with plug-ins for DVD and game players.

TIME FEELS SUSPENDED AS THE SNOW piles up deeper outside. Tumbleweeds frame cattle-loading pens. Clouds cluster like sagging white socks near mountain bases. A train trip gives you a chance to enjoy the journey itself, Guy and I agree, sightseeing from the privacy of our roomette. Trains bring a different perspective to what you see besides being more relaxing, more fun, than a car or plane ride.

LEFT: Time—and the train—stand still as a father photographs his children during a stop in Alpine. **TOP RIGHT:** Rene and Lee Whitaker soak up the view as they travel from New Orleans to Los Angeles. **ABOVE RIGHT:** A father sees his daughter off at the Alpine station. Her final, eastbound destination: New Orleans.

“What train travel takes is time,” observes Jimenez, the sleeping car attendant, as he makes up berths with tightly tucked sheets.

At 4:40 p.m. our time runs out, and we stand in front of El Paso’s majestic, 105-year-old Union Depot Passenger Station. We promise to find the time to travel by rail again, soon, as the train’s silver cars glide west into the sunset without us.

Eileen Mattei is a frequent contributor to Texas Co-op Power.

Web Extra: More photos and link to podcast at www.TexasCoopPower.com.

Plan your own trip at www.amtrak.com website or by calling 1-800-872-7245. The Amtrak-operated Sunset Limited, which originally was operated by Southern Pacific Railway, starting in 1894, makes seven stops in Texas—in Beaumont, Houston, San Antonio, Del Rio, Sanderson, Alpine and El Paso. Houston, San Antonio and El Paso are staffed stops; at the other stations, passengers purchase tickets from a conductor. Sunset Limited (Beaumont-Houston-El Paso segment) tickets start at \$99 coach or \$235 for a roomette.

Tickets for the Amtrak’s daily Texas Eagle (San Antonio-Austin-Fort Worth-Dallas-Texarkana segment) start at \$59 coach or \$113 for a roomette. Tickets for the daily Heartland Flyer (Fort Worth to Oklahoma City) start at \$26 coach. Fares are priced as adult each way, and roomettes are priced as single occupancy each way. All trains have snack bars. Longer routes have observation cars and dining cars serving reasonably priced meals.

Check www.nps.gov/findapark/trailsandrails.htm for the schedules of National Park Service guides riding Amtrak trains.

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Where Does My Power Come From?

BY MEGAN MCKOY-NOE

Every month, you pay your power bill to your electric cooperative. But have you ever wondered where that electricity comes from?

Generally, it's not produced in your neighborhood—most electricity travels quite a distance from where it's generated across heavy-duty transmission lines to reach local distribution systems and, finally, your home.

Along the way, the electricity changes hands a few times. But co-op members are lucky—in most cases, different types of consumer-owned electric cooperatives are involved at each step to keep power flowing safely, reliably and affordably.

Different Co-ops, Same Goal

Your home or business receives electricity from your co-op, one of roughly 860 electric distribution cooperatives in America. These local, member-owned, not-for-profit utilities build and maintain overhead and underground lines and equipment to deliver power. Typically, distribution co-ops do not generate electricity or directly negotiate with power providers. In most cases, that role lies with generation and transmission cooperatives (G&Ts).

G&Ts are wholesale power suppliers owned and governed by electric distribution co-ops. They produce electricity directly and/or buy it in bulk from other companies, then ship the power over high-voltage transmission lines (whether owned or leased) to local distribution co-ops.

The first G&Ts were created shortly after the birth of rural electrification in the 1930s and early 1940s by groups of distribution co-ops and other publicly owned utilities. The idea was simple: By forming G&Ts, distribution systems could reduce costs by collectively negotiating power supply arrangements and achieve a better price without being held captive by other power generators.

Today, there are 65 G&Ts. There are 10 that serve Texas alone. A few serve more than 100 distribution cooperatives in several states while others operate in smaller areas.

Seventy-eight percent of distribution co-ops receive at least some of their electricity from a G&T.

Generation

Right from the start, many G&Ts began building and operating generating stations. Currently, G&Ts generate about 5 percent of the nation's electricity and own all or part of 200 generating plants with a combined capacity of more than 51,000 megawatts (MW). That's enough electricity to power approximately 10 cities the size of Las Vegas.

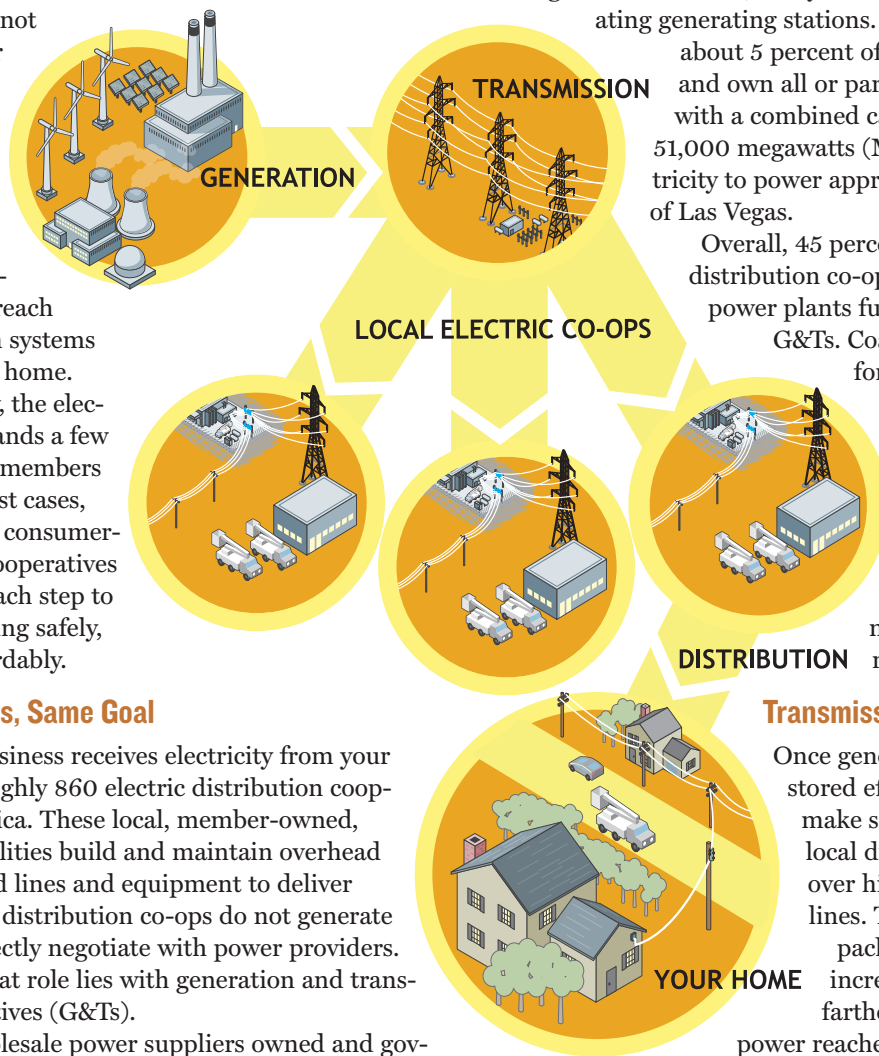
Overall, 45 percent of the power used by distribution co-ops nationally comes from power plants fully or partially owned by G&Ts. Coal-fired facilities account for more than half of the electricity produced by utilities nationally, followed by nuclear power and natural gas. Nineteen G&Ts feature green power generated from wind, solar, biomass, hydro and other renewable resources.

Transmission

Once generated, electricity can't be stored efficiently. Instead, G&Ts make sure that energy reaches local distribution co-op systems over high-voltage transmission lines. The more electricity packed onto a line (by increasing the voltage), the farther it will travel. Once power reaches its destination, distribution co-ops use transformers at substations to reduce the voltage before sending it over their lines to your home or business.

G&Ts own and maintain a national network of 66,584 miles of transmission line to deliver power to local distribution co-ops—enough to go around the world more than 2½ times. The distribution co-ops own and maintain 2.6 million miles of line, 42 percent of the nation's total. Texas distribution cooperatives own and maintain more than 306,000 miles of line, enough to trace the state's border more than 100 times.

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



STEAM OVENS OFFER EFFICIENT COOKING OPTION

BY JAMES DULLEY

DEAR JIM: I want a healthy and efficient method to cook meals for my family, and I don't like microwave ovens for most food. How efficient are residential steam ovens? Do they bake and roast as well as a regular oven?

— Jan T.

DEAR JAN: Steam ovens are used by professional bakeries and restaurants because of the quality of cooked foods and the dramatically reduced cooking time. Shorter cooking times result in less energy being used and lower utility bills. Bear in mind that the initial price of a steam oven, whether it is built-in or freestanding (similar to a microwave oven), is considerably greater than that of a standard or convection oven.

Don't run out and buy a professional steam oven. Professional ovens, steam or conventional, may be slightly less expensive but often do not have the safety features required for home use. Play it safe and get an oven

The following companies offer efficient steam wall ovens:

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1-877-442-4436, www.gaggenau.com

KITCHENAID

1-800-334-6889, www.kitchenaid.com

MIELE

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SHARP

1-800-237-4277, www.sharpusa.com

VIKING

1-888-845-4641, www.vikingrange.com

designed for home use and approved by Underwriters Laboratories (UL).

Nearly everyone has used a small electric countertop steamer for vegetables and rice. The food cooks quickly and retains more of the natural flavors and nutrients than it does with other cooking methods. With more natural flavors, less salt and other seasonings are needed—further enhancing the health benefits of steam cooking.

Within the past several years, steam oven models have become available for home use. The built-in models look similar to a conventional wall oven. Most models have a small water reservoir (typically 1¼ quarts) and don't require a water line connection. Fill the reservoir each time you use the oven.

Food cooks much faster in a steam oven because steam has a higher heat content and heat transfer rate than hot air. Water normally boils at 212 degrees and becomes steam. Some steam ovens can produce superheated steam as hot as 500 degrees. When this steam hits the food surface, it transfers its heat to the cold food. As the steam transfers the heat and condenses, the latent heat also goes into the food.

Roasting a large chicken in a steam oven takes about 20 minutes, as compared with two hours in a conventional oven. The overall heating element wattage in a steam oven also rates less than the elements in a conventional oven. Most models plug into a standard 120-volt wall outlet.

Superheated steam also heats the fat in meat quickly without searing the outside surface. This liquefies fat almost instantly—much of it drips off into a pan, resulting in a lower-fat dish. If too much fat dripped off in a conventional oven, the meat would taste dry and tough. In a steam oven, the steam keeps the meat moist and tender without the higher fat content.

There are additional energy savings because an entire meal (meat, vegetables and potatoes) can be made in the steam oven without using separate pots on a stovetop. Stovetop cooking is particularly inefficient because much of the heat never gets to the food. Instead, it escapes around the sides of the pot into the room air, making your air conditioner run even harder during summer.

Because steam cooking at home is relatively new, most people don't know the proper methods. Most new steam

JAMES DULLEY



ovens have a menu of foods from which you select in the computer memory. The oven determines the proper cooking time and settings for each food. Some ovens have hundreds of food items stored in memory, and you can select combinations.

If you are planning to have fish, spinach, and potatoes, select the three items. The oven prompts you to place the potatoes in the oven since they take the longest to bake. After 18 minutes, it prompts you to add the fish. After nine more minutes, it prompts you to add the spinach for the final three minutes; then, your entire meal is ready.

For more versatility, combination steam/convection ovens can cook even faster. Steam ovens do not brown meats, so the convection portion of the oven can be used to accomplish that task. For breads, the moisture inside the steam oven makes much better crusts and provides more even baking.

© James Dulley, contact@dulley.com

COLLEGE STATION

Cow College

Whoa there, pardner:

*There's more to
raising cattle than
just throwing a few
head in a pasture.*

By Wes Ferguson



The old ways just won't cut it in a modern beef operation, according to professors at Texas A&M University.

That can be a hard message to swallow for some Texans who yearn to work with cattle. Maybe retirement age is approaching and they remember the way life used to be, before they walked off the family farm to take a job in town. Or maybe they've heard a few too many yarns about cattle drives and rodeos, wide-open ranches and cowboys sitting tall in the saddle.

Some folks expect to throw a few heifers onto the home place and watch them pay for themselves. Other people are looking for an agricultural write-off on their tax bill.

For whatever reason, droves of Texans get into the cattle business every year. And for those would-be ranchers, Texas A&M is there to help, offering the Texas AgriLife Pasture and Livestock Management Workshop. The course is held each spring at the Texas AgriLife Research and Extension Center in Overton, east of Tyler.

If the Aggies crush a few romantic notions along the way, well, better to hear it from them first.

"Tradition is the major obstacle of profitability," says Gerald Evers, a Texas A&M forage management professor, summarizing the message he and other university experts have for cattle operators.

The annual workshop is billed as "grazing school," but it's more of a beef boot camp with classroom and corral work. The Aggies cram as much of their research as they can into 2½ days of soil fertility, forage selection, herbicides, cattle nutrition and animal health, stocking rates, genetic selection, financial planning and whatever else they figure a person needs to know before entering the business.

"You'll gain a whole lot of information toward making the decision whether you want to do it, and if you do, do it the right way," says professor Greg Clary, extension management economist in Texas A&M's department of agricultural economics. "You don't want to have a wreck and lose a bunch of money."

The workshop's days are packed with facts, figures and instruction. You have to pay attention to every detail, the university experts warn, or things can go wrong in a hurry. Just ask Shelton Barnes, who attended the workshop last spring.

"I wasted a lot of money on cows because I didn't manage them right," says Barnes, 56, who runs 30 head of cattle on land he inherited in Logansport, Louisiana.

A doctor of internal medicine in New Orleans, Barnes said he hopes to retire to his farm in the next five years. The most important advice he gleaned from the workshop, he said, was to plant a rotation of grasses, clovers and winter grains for his cattle to graze at different times throughout the year.

"The biggest expense is hay," he said. "If I shorten the hay season and lengthen the grazing season, I can make some money. The most important thing you have to do is be a grass farmer first."

Like Barnes, many of the workshop participants were people who were nearing retirement or who had already retired. Some of them were just looking for something to do with their free time.

"After sitting in an office all my life, it's nice to get some fresh air and do some hard, physical work," says Karen Pinkerton, 54, who lives on 12 acres with her husband in Smithville.

At least one thing she hadn't done is castrate a male calf—a necessary step that turns a bull into a steer, making the livestock more docile and improving their meat quality, according to Jason Cleere, an associate professor and Texas AgriLife Extension beef cattle specialist.

"Castration's not near as bad as you think it is," Cleere said. "If you do it on a young animal, it is very easy, low risk."

To demonstrate, the Aggies ran a calf through a squeeze chute and turned him on his side. One of the professors castrated him, and Cleere dehorned the new steer and vaccinated him, showing participants the best places to insert a needle without damaging any future, prime cuts of meat.

When the professors were done, they turned the steer loose, and he bounded into a holding pen.

Two or three pens down, a mama cow spotted her calf and started bellowing. She and two others were already riled up when Assistant Professor Jason Banta, an Extension beef cattle specialist, climbed into the corral with them for a workshop demonstration on body conditions.

"If one of these is about to run me over, give me a warning," he said.

The cows didn't like the distance between them and their calves. In protest, they snorted, bellowed and stamped the ground. They kicked up red dirt that caught the breeze and dusted the crowd that had gathered to watch from the safe side of the corral fence.

With his back to the livestock, Banta explained how ranchers study a cow's body to judge whether it is in shape for breeding, nursing or other purposes. Suddenly, a cow lowered her head and charged Banta from behind. She had him beat by more than half a ton.

"Look out!" people yelled.

Banta turned around just in time. Like a matador, he sidestepped the angry cow as she lunged past.

"She's just wanting her baby," he said. "But thanks for warning me. This is the fifth year, and I haven't been hit yet."



Lloyd Nelson, a Texas A&M University professor of small grain breeding, barks out instructions at 'grazing school'—the Texas AgriLife Pasture and Livestock Management Workshop. From soil fertility to financial planning, would-be ranchers learn the ins and outs of running a cattle operation.

In 2008, there were a total of 130,000 beef cattle operations in Texas. Ninety percent of those operations had fewer than 100 head, but those herds accounted for almost half of the total inventory in the state. Of the 130,000 operations, less than 1 percent of the herds had 500 head or more.

Source: National Agricultural Statistics Service

For more information about the Texas AgriLife Pasture and Livestock Management Workshop, visit <http://overton.tamu.edu> or call (903) 834-6191.

Wes Ferguson is writing a book about the Sabine River.

The Sun has Risen ...

*and the sun has
set ... am I back in
West Texas yet?*

BY CAMILLE WHEELER

Sunrise splatters like fiery orange paint over the Wylie Mountains east of Van Horn. For just a second, I stare directly into the blinding rays. Foolish decision. My eyes water and burn, and I fumble around in the console of the rental car, finding and shoving my sunglasses into place. It's too early to think clearly, too late to dawdle. I've got a plane to catch in Midland some 175 miles away. I reach for my McDonald's breakfast. Grateful for those golden arches, I equally resent this cultural icon that represents a bridge back to my urbanized life.

Just like that, after three days of trolling the back roads of far West Texas, sometimes driving an hour or two without seeing another soul, I'm eating fast food in the interstate's fast lane where the 18-wheelers never slow down.

Don't let it be time to go home. Not just yet. I'd like my morning cooked over easy, please, with a side of tranquility. Let me savor the mountains and desert a little longer before I return to the city with its snarled traffic and sky-blocking condos.

I'm not the first person to fall in love with West Texas and dream of someday living out here. Bill Wren, special assistant to the superintendent at McDonald Observatory, moved to the Fort Davis area 20 years ago from Austin. This astronomer is easily at home in the Davis Mountains that seem to hold the stars in place.

But West Texas isn't for everybody. "Some people go batty," Wren says, bluntly. "They can't handle the solitude."

I'll be the first to admit that there's comfort in the cacophony of the city. In West Texas' most remote spots, the loudest thing you'll hear is the ringing in your ears. Cell phone service is spotty, at best. And hitting the radio's seek button will simply spin the call numbers around and around.

Still, I lose myself out here, like a snake shedding its skin. As I repeatedly pull over to soak up the view—impossibly blue skies, bluish mountains rolling in like waves—I imagine my worried thoughts emptying into a bucket beside me. I feel the external landscape smoothing out the bumps in my internal one. I can relax and admire the cactus without feeling so prickly myself.

I've made six trips to West Texas since August 2009. If you plotted my travels on a map, they would look like the wanderings of an inebriated roadrunner—my adopted West Texas mascot. No matter where I go, it seems the curious roadrun-

ner is there as an omniscient observer signaling what's about to unfold.

In summer 2009, on my first-ever hike at Big Bend National Park, my companion and I came upon a warning sign: A mountain lion was frequenting the Chisos Basin. We clutched handfuls of small rocks, ready to fend off a big, dangerous cat.

We soon had company: a roadrunner who stayed just ahead of us on the trail, disappearing into the brush and re-emerging, almost as if he were checking on us. I knew he was hunting supper and didn't care whether we were eaten by a mountain lion. But I felt safer.

The roadrunner's road leads everywhere. My road, it seems, always leads to Marathon, the gateway to Big Bend. I almost know the road, U.S. 385, by heart as it drops down from Fort Stockton and into the Glass Mountains.

And then, it's a right turn onto U.S. 90 and into "Mara-thun," as the locals pronounce it. One afternoon in February, the wooden doors to St. Mary's Catholic Church were unlocked. I slipped inside and lit a candle in memory of a friend who'd died six months earlier. Then, I strolled the sidewalk alongside U.S. 90 and ran into photographer James Evans outside his gallery. He was in a hurry. No time to talk. But he saw the disappointment on my face and softened. Come on in, he said, unlocking the door. I've got a few minutes.

I learned that Evans moved here from Austin 21 years ago to spend the rest of his life photographing the Big Bend region. He still shoots film and is rarely in the gallery because he's outdoors chasing the perfect light. His theory on what makes Marathon so special—"It's not trying to be anything"—easily sums up all of West Texas.

My mind was full, but not painfully so, as I sat down for supper at the Famous Burro restaurant. While waiting on my food, I made a cell phone call. Then I found myself chatting with the married couple sharing my table: Susanna and Don Fuéntez, childhood sweethearts who graduated from Marathon High School in 1965.

Susanna smiled warmly. "Are you just passing through?" Yes, I said, explaining I was headed to Marfa that night and ultimately back home to Austin. She said she couldn't help but overhear my phone conversation about my afternoon in Marathon. "Are you Catholic?" she asked. No, I said, I just feel at peace in that little church.

The three of us laughed and talked the evening away. Two and a half days later, I was leaving Van Horn, my final stop, and headed home, trying to keep thoughts in my bucket and out of my head. Outside Pecos, I saw a coyote looking lost in the median. He sniffed the air, oblivious to the traffic rushing past him.

With a lump in my throat, I watched the mountains grow smaller in the rearview mirror. The land straightened out, and I settled into the pace of the interstate.



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Digital Hearing Aid	1984	No	No	Not for most people
Neutronic Ear	2010	Yes	Yes	Yes

The Diamond King

Dr. James I. Lighthall's Indian Medicine Show

BY MARTHA DEERING

Dr. James I. Lighthall, a medicine show salesman who hawked his elixirs across Texas in the 1880s, was widely known as the Diamond King for his jewel-encrusted costumes. The astounding success of medical quacks like the Diamond King can be attributed, at least in part, to the fact that Texas didn't have enough licensed physicians to cover its vast area. Practicing medicine was often brutal near the end of the 19th century, when treatments such as bleeding, bone setting and surgery were performed without anesthetic, and many folks weren't convinced that the licensed doctors' remedies were any more effective than the cheap patent medicines hawked by snake oil salesmen.

In December 1885, the Diamond King's Indian Medicine Show wended its way down Commerce Street in San Antonio in a caravan of brightly painted wagons with polished brass fittings. It was not the first Texas tour for Lighthall, but this one would be his last. He stood in the most elaborately decorated wagon wearing a full-length sealskin coat. As his four matched dappled-gray horses trotted along, the Diamond King tossed handfuls of nickels into the street from a nail keg in the back of the wagon. The caravan proceeded to Military Plaza, a large, open-air bazaar, followed by a burgeoning crowd of citizens pocketing the nickels.

Lighthall claimed a connection with Indian healers because of his one-eighth Wyandot heritage. In his book, *The Indian Household Medicine Guide*, he described his 13 years in Wyoming, Minnesota and Kansas Indian Territories, where he learned about nature's remedies and "Indian herbal theory" from native tribes. Armed with this knowledge, he began to produce his own medicinal formulas with picturesque names such as Spanish Oil, or King of Pain, Blood Purifier, Liver Regulator, Dentrifice and Indian Hair Tonic. He did not advertise the fact that his potions were made by his mother in Peoria and shipped to him in barrels to be bottled onsite. Most were odoriferous brown liquids containing finely cut herbs, roots and barks supplemented by large amounts of sour mash whiskey and, occasionally, morphine.

When a crowd had gathered, the Diamond King shed his sealskin coat so the customers could appreciate his magnificent attire, described by Vic Daniels in the November 1931 issue of the *Frontier Times* magazine as, "blazing with what appeared to have been almost a washtub of diamonds, in his hat, on his fingers, in his necktie, his watchchain, decorations upon his coat and vest—everywhere was a brilliance of the precious stones."

A troupe of up to 10 hired entertainers warmed up the chilly audience with music and dance numbers, after which

Lighthall volunteered to pull teeth free of charge. With the spectacular showmanship of a circus performer, he yanked out molars and incisors to the booming beat of an immense bass drum, flinging each tooth high into the air before moving on to the next patient. He claimed to have once pulled 14 teeth in 19 seconds.

Next came the doctor's mesmerizing health lecture. With silver-tongued brilliance, he convinced the crowd, often numbering well over 1,000, that each was suffering from one of the ailments he described and could hope to recover only with the help of his amazing cures. A small bottle brought 50 cents; large bottles were \$1. News reports helped to spread Lighthall's extravagant claims. "Tomorrow afternoon," the *San Antonio Daily Express* reported, "the Diamond King will pitch 40 tents at the corner of Houston and Nacogdoches Streets. The camp will remain several weeks and the public are cordially invited to visit and inspect the greatest Indian medicine company ever organized."

At least some of these articles were paid advertisements disguised as news stories. Other newspapers weren't so benevolent. The *New York Tribune* commented that he had suckered "Texas greenhorns" out of a fortune with his "quack nostrums."

But even his detractors admitted that Lighthall was not above an occasional good deed. The poor sometimes were handed their bottles of medicine wrapped in \$10 or \$20 bills. During a tour of Mexico, the Diamond King found himself in the midst of a smallpox outbreak. He was reported to have closed his show and taken his medicines into the villages, treating the afflicted without charge.

But in January 1886, a month after his hugely successful tour of San Antonio began, Lighthall contracted smallpox and died. His own medicines were not potent enough to save himself.



Martha Deeringer is a frequent contributor to Footnotes in Texas History.

No Tricks, Just Treats

BY KEVIN HARGIS During Halloweens past, fun for children often meant going door-to-door in their neighborhood and, along with candy, receiving homemade goodies like popcorn balls, candied apples and cookies.

Today, with concerns about safety foremost in parents' minds, many folks opt to send their children to festivals or parties instead of down the street. And, as in the neighborhood where I live, where trick-or-treating still goes strong, the prizes are mostly factory-wrapped candies.

I cannot imagine today's protective parents allowing their kids to eat, much less keep, a home-baked treat deposited in their children's bags, unless they know the benefactor personally. But homemade Halloween delicacies are perfect for gatherings.

Costume parties for adults (who are really just children at heart) are just as popular and numerous as kid-friendly harvest festivals. One of the best such gath-

erings I've attended had a variety of ghoulishly themed appetizers that displayed the hostesses' creativity.

Seeing those fantastically decorated hors d'oeuvres inspired me to make an almond-based candy that would look good on a Halloween party tray, for adults or children. I based my recipe on one for buckeyes, those chocolate-dipped peanut butter bonbons that resemble the nut from the state tree of Ohio.

If you'd rather make the Almond Pumpkins with peanut butter, which is oilier, increase the amount of powdered sugar by a cup or so.

ALMOND PUMPKINS

- 1½ cups almond butter, smooth or chunky
- 1 cup butter, softened
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon almond extract
- 4 to 5 cups powdered sugar
- Whole roasted almonds
- 2 to 3 cups white candy chips, or 3 to 4 squares white bark coating
- Red and yellow food coloring

Combine almond butter, butter and extracts in bowl and blend well. Add powdered sugar, 1 cup at a time, and mix thoroughly, until dough becomes firm and not sticky, but not too dry. Shape into about 1½-inch balls. Push a roasted almond into top of each ball vertically, with the fat side down, to form the stem of the pumpkin. This will push your sphere into a more oval pumpkin shape. When you've formed the last one, cover all and place in freezer until firm, at least 30 minutes.

When you are ready to dip pumpkins, melt candy chips or bark coating according to package instructions. Add food coloring (using color guide on box for orange—or about a 2-to-1 ratio of yellow to red) and stir well. Adjust coloring to get a shade of orange you like. Working swiftly, dip pumpkins into coating and place on waxed paper surface to harden. Allow candy to come to room temperature before serving. Makes about 2 dozen.

Servings: 36. Serving size: 1 pumpkin. Per serving: 239 calories, 2.5 g protein, 14.2 g fat, 25.1 g carbohydrates, 0.4 g dietary fiber, 14 mg sodium, 13 mg cholesterol



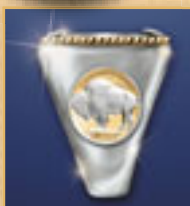
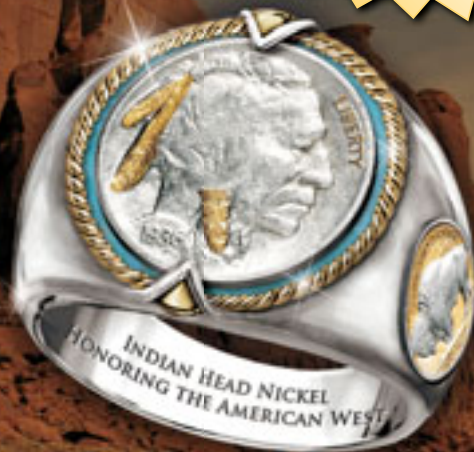
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ANGELA MCDONALD, *Hamilton County Electric Cooperative*

Prize-winning recipe: **Worm Dirt Pudding**

These devilishly delightful snacks will be a hit at any Halloween gathering. Most of the recipes are so simple, you can recruit the little princesses and pirates in your life to assist in your creations.

WORM DIRT PUDDING

- 2 packages (8 ounces each) cream cheese, softened
- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 1 tub (16 ounces) nondairy whipped topping
- 2 boxes (4 ounces each) instant chocolate pudding
- 4 cups milk, cold
- 1 package (20 ounces) chocolate sandwich cookies, crushed
- 1 package gummi worms

Mix cream cheese, powdered sugar and whipped topping together. Prepare pudding with 4 cups milk. When thick, fold pudding into cream cheese mixture. Layer in bowl with crushed cookies. Top with layer of crushed cookies, then poke gummi worms through surface.

Servings: 16. Serving size: 1/2 cup. Per serving: 522 calories, 7.2 g protein, 20.8 g fat, 74.5 g carbohydrates, 1.6 g dietary fiber, 508 mg sodium, 37 mg cholesterol

GRAVEYARD BONE COOKIES

- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- Pinch salt
- 5 egg whites, room temperature
- Pinch cream of tartar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla, almond, orange or lemon extract
- Yellow food coloring, optional

Preheat oven to 220 degrees. Line two cookie sheets with parchment paper. Prepare a pastry bag with a round No. 10 tip. Combine sugar and salt in small bowl. Beat egg whites and cream of tartar in large bowl on medium speed until soft peaks form. Gradually add sugar mixture, beating constantly until stiff peaks form and meringue is shiny and smooth. Add extract, and food coloring, if desired, and beat until just blended. (The food coloring will make finished product look like aged, yellowing bones.) Fill pastry bag with meringue and pipe log 3 to 4 inches long. Then pipe two round balls on each end of the log and smooth out any peaks with wet finger. Repeat with remaining meringue. Bake 30 minutes, then turn oven off. Do not open oven door. Leave

cookies in oven overnight.

Servings: 15. Serving size: 4 bones. Per serving: 100 calories, 1.2 g protein, 0 g fat, 24.2 g carbohydrates, 0 g dietary fiber, 41 mg sodium, trace cholesterol

GLYNIS TIETJEN PORTER

Fayette Electric Cooperative

MONSTER'S PUNCH

- 1 can (6 ounces) frozen lemonade concentrate, thawed
 - 1 can (6 ounces) frozen limeade concentrate, thawed
 - 1 liter (about 4 1/4 cups) chilled ginger ale
- In large pitcher or punch bowl, combine concentrates and add 1 cup water. Stir in a few drops of green food coloring. Just before serving, add ginger ale. Stir to blend. Add fun accessories such as toy spiders, bats, eyeballs, etc.

Servings: 12. Serving size: 1/2 cup. Per serving: 74 calories, 0 g protein, 0 g fat, 19.1 g carbohydrates, 0 g dietary fiber, 3 mg sodium, 0 mg cholesterol

PAT COLLINS

Central Texas Electric Cooperative

CHOCOLATE CAT COOKIES

- 1 cup creamy peanut butter
- 1 box cake mix, chocolate or devil's food flavor
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 3/4 cup chocolate chips
- Red-hot candies or small red candy buttons (such as mini M&Ms)

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Mix together peanut butter, cake mix, eggs and 1/4 cup water. Add more water as needed if dough is too stiff. Roll dough into 1 1/2-inch balls. Roll balls in sugar and place on cookie sheet. Then press ball flat with bottom of glass. Form into cat faces by pinching two ears at the top of each cookie. Use fork to form the whiskers on either side of face. Add chocolate chips for eyes and red candy for nose. Bake 7-8 minutes.

Servings: 18. Serving size: 2 cookies. Per serving: 266 calories, 5.9 g protein, 11.9 g fat, 36.9 g carbohydrates, 2.3 g dietary fiber, 331 mg sodium, 23 mg cholesterol

BRENDA THOMPSON

Pedernales Electric Cooperative

CRUSTY CREEPY CRAWLERS

- 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 cup peanut butter chips
- 3 cups chow mein noodles
- 3/4 cup toffee bits
- 18 maraschino cherries, drained and quartered

Place chocolate and peanut butter chips in large saucepan over low heat. Cook and stir until melted. Remove saucepan from heat and add noodles. Stir gently with rubber spatula until well coated. Spoon mounds of mixture onto waxed paper. Sprinkle with toffee bits, pressing down gently so they stick. Place two cherry pieces on each mound to form eyes. Cool and serve.

Servings: 36. Serving size: 1 crawler. Per serving: 72 calories, 1.4 g protein, 3.8 g fat, 8.5 g carbohydrates, 0.7 g dietary fiber, 29 mg sodium, trace cholesterol

GLYNIS TIETJEN PORTER

Fayette Electric Cooperative

RECIPE CONTEST

February's recipe contest topic is Romantic Recipes. Is there a special dish that you like to make for your sweetie for that special day in February, perhaps something rich and decadent, suitable for sharing by two? Please share your recipe. The deadline is October 10.

Send recipes to Home Cooking, 1122 Colorado, 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. You may also fax them to (512) 763-3408, e-mail them to recipes@TexasCoopPower.com, or submit online at www.TexasCoopPower.com. Please include your name, address and phone number, as well as the name of your electric co-op. The top winner will receive \$100, a copy of 60 Years of Home Cooking and a Texas-shaped trivet. Runners-up will also receive a prize.

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- ½ cup candy corn

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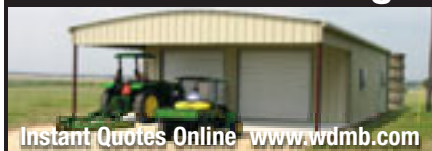
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46	17.33	15.58	25.07	22.23	44.10	37.54	66	78.40	58.36	153.91	119.13	297.85	210.79
47	17.76	16.01	26.82	23.54	47.16	40.60	67	87.41	63.26	170.54	128.32	331.54	233.10
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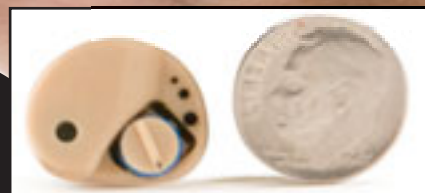


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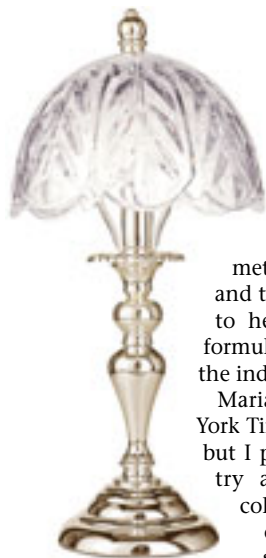
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Finally, A Shine That Lasts

Miracle Polish Ends Struggle With Tarnishing Metals By D.H. Wagner



Lately, I have noticed quite a few newspapers and magazines praising a polish formulated by a homemaker. The articles report that Donna Maas grew frustrated with rubbing and scrubbing her silver, brass and other metals only to see them quickly become dull and tarnished again. Determined to put an end to her constant battle with tarnish, Donna formulated a metal cleaner and it's transforming the industry.

Marianne Rohrlisch, columnist for the New York Times, wrote "I don't enjoy polishing silver, but I pulled out a couple of tarnished pieces to try a product recommended by a colleague that shines silver and other metals, like chrome, stainless steel and brass."

She went on to say, "The results, without much elbow grease, were so stellar that I used the cream on my stainless steel sink. It shone as it did when it was new, 25 years ago."

Anita Gold, nationally syndicated columnist and expert on the restoration of antiques calls MAAS (named after its inventor) "The best and most amazing polish in the world." Ms. Gold wrote in her column, "A truly miraculous polish referred to as 'miracle polish' that'll turn the most disastrous pieces into the most de-bright-ful is MAAS Fine Polishing Creme For All Metals, which cleans, restores, preserves and polishes to perfection any brass, copper, chrome, silver, stainless steel, aluminum, gold or any other metal with amazing results - no matter how badly stained, spotted, discolored, flood-damaged, weathered, dirty, dingy, drab, or dull they may be."

Since I had an old brass lamp in desperate need of restoration, this journalist decided to put MAAS to the test. The lamp had been stored in the garage and was in far worse condition than I remembered. I was flabbergasted as I watched the polish wipe away layers and years of tarnish. Never have I used anything so easy. The lamp actually looks better than when I purchased it. Better yet, months later it's still glowing!

The polish worked so effortlessly, I decided to refurbish my mother's antique brass and copper cookware. The badly stained pots and pans developed black spots that had been impossible to remove. MAAS wiped away years of built-up residue even from the most



discolored pieces. While polishing, I noticed MAAS applying a shine on the stainless steel sink. WOW! The shine is unbelievable and although I wash dishes every day, the shine keeps-on-shining. And it's no longer covered with ugly water spots, water just rolls off the protective finish and down the drain.

Good Housekeeping Institute recommends MAAS for restoring heavily tarnished heirlooms stating, "MAAS cleans best and gives lasting results." The Miami Herald says, "Polishing product can renew old silver." The Chicago Tribune headline sums it all up by saying "One Amazing Polish Is The Best At Everything."

How did a homemaker come up with something the industry's experts couldn't? The reporter in me had to find out.

During our interview Donna explained, "I enjoy the warmth that beautifully polished metals add to a home. However, not the hours it took to keep them tarnish free. The harsh cleaners left my hands dry and burning - one instant silver dip smelled so bad I felt sick. That's when I became determined to find a better way to care for the metals in my home."

And that she did. Her formula developed with a chemist friend quickly restores and leaves a deep,

rich one-of-a-kind luster beyond anything I've ever seen. "To my surprise," Donna reveals, "the formula far exceeded my original goal."

MAAS restores glass fireplace doors, clouded crystal vases, fiberglass, linoleum even plastic. The restorations were so remarkable everyone suggested that I sell my invention on television."

Donna sent samples of her polish to televised shopping channels and both QVC and Home Shopping Network asked Donna to personally appear on TV to demonstrate her product. 17,000 viewers called during MAAS' debut and encore performances brought a million dollars in record-breaking sales.

Sheila Oetting in Florida wrote Donna saying,

"Thank you, for a wonderful product! Family treasures with 30 years of tarnish, grime and corrosion are gleaming. I'm so thrilled to see the beauty that had been hidden all those years." Leona Toppel, was about to throw away a brass chandelier. "No amount of elbow grease could shine it up. With very little effort (a big plus since I suffer from arthritis) MAAS made that chandelier look like new. It's been years and to everyone's surprise it's still glowing."

Boeing and McDonnell Douglas tested and approved the polish for use on jet aircraft. The United States Air Force, Army, Navy, Coast Guard and Department of Defense worldwide have ordered MAAS. If every branch of our military is using this polish to pass inspection, imagine what it will do for your home.

"MAAS outperforms every polish I've tried," Donna beams with satisfaction. "So if you're as tired as I was of cleaning metals just to see tarnish reappear a few weeks later, MAAS it!"

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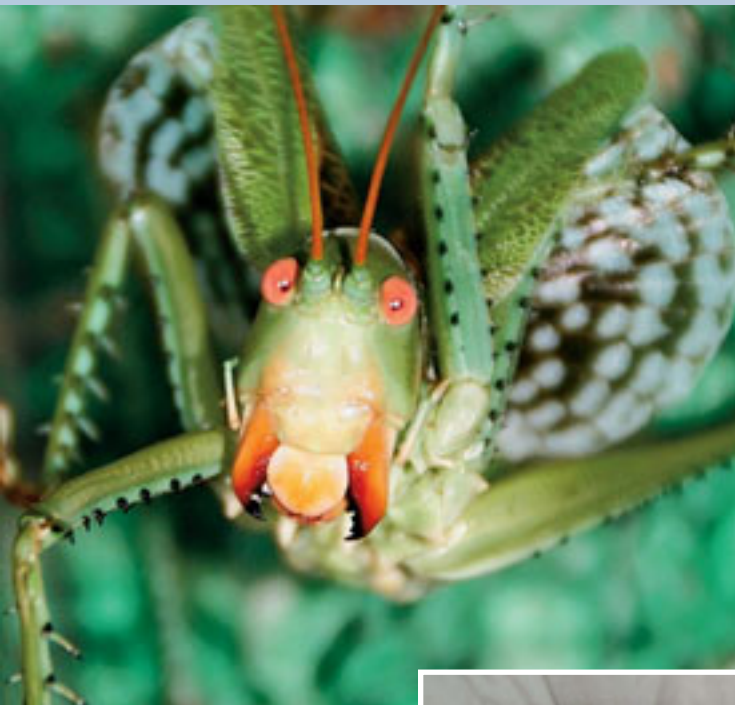
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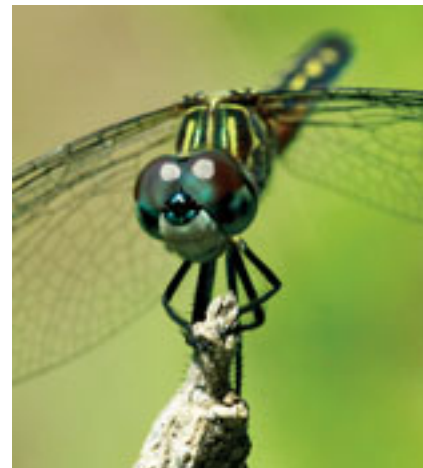


EEEEK!

With Halloween just around the corner, it seems fitting to pay homage to that which makes you squeal. And from the looks of our entries, our little multiple-legged friends are, in fact, foes, frightening electric co-op members all across the state. So here's to bugs! Here's to slugs! And, of course, here's to the occasional, surprising scare.

—ASHLEY CLARY

◀ This 4-inch red-eyed devil really scared **Alexandria Penshorn** when she poked it with a pencil. Alexandria is the granddaughter of Pedernales Electric Cooperative member **Cindy Fest**.



▲ “I see you!” says this female blue dasher—one of the more common backyard dragonflies—captured in this fabulous macro shot by Medina Electric Cooperative member **Paul Garcia**.

► Pedernales Electric Cooperative member **Connie Fetzer** thought this shot of then-3-month-old granddaughter **Charlotte Elizabeth** really fit this month's category—and so did we.

▼ Bartlett Electric Cooperative member **Pamela Peck** said, “Yuck!” when this hairy tarantula crossed her yard.



▼ These ghostly shapes—actually, just condensation—were watching CoServ Electric member **Esther Radican** as she walked into work.



Upcoming in Focus on Texas

ISSUE	SUBJECT	DEADLINE
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
May	Unlikely Duos	Mar 10

CURIOUS CATS is the topic for our **DECEMBER 2010** issue. Send your photo—along with your name, address, daytime phone, co-op affiliation and a brief description—to **Curious Cats, Focus on Texas**, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701, before **OCTOBER 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. If you use a digital camera, submit your highest resolution images on our website at www.TexasCoopPower.com. 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.

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

OCTOBER 7 CENTER

East Texas Poultry Festival
(936) 598-3682,
www.shelbycountychamber.com



CHICKEN: 2010 © OLEG SAENKO. IMAGE FROM BIGSTOCK.COM. GOLF: 2010 © LAURIN RINDER. IMAGE FROM BIGSTOCK.COM. PEAS: 2010 © ONEBUCK. IMAGE FROM BIGSTOCK.COM.

OCTOBER

01 ABILENE [1-5]
Rally for the Cure
Golf Tournament,
(254) 897-7956

02 COLEMAN
Fiesta de la Paloma,
(325) 625-2163,
www.colemantexas.org

08 PALACIOS [8-9]
Bay Fest & BBQ Cook-Off,
(361) 972-2615,
www.palacioschamber.com

09 ATHENS
Fall & Black-Eyed Pea
Fest, (903) 675-5630,
www.eastexasarboretum.org

CLYDE
West Texas Keepers
6th Car Show,
(325) 537-9298



09 EMORY
Thank God I'm Not A Pig,
Pig Roast!
(903) 383-3040

SACHSE
Fallfest, (972) 496-1212,
www.sachsechamber.com

10 ABILENE
Jordan World Circus,
(702) 456-2642

13 BELLVILLE [13-17]
Austin County Fair,
(979) 865-5995,
www.austincountyfair.com

MOUNTAIN HOME
VFD Fish Fry,
(830) 992-2230

ENNIS
Autumn Days in Ennis Fall
Fest, (972) 878-4748,
www.visitennis.org

THE COLONY [16-17]
Pirate Days of Texas,
(972) 625-1240,
www.piratedays.org

GOLIAD [22-24]
The Texas Mile,
(281) 802-9863,
www.texasmile.net



Texas Renaissance Festival

Saturdays, Sundays
and
Thanksgiving Holiday
October 9th - November 28th

Redeem this coupon for
One Free Child's Ticket
Tickets at Gate: Adult \$23.00 Child \$11.00
Redeemable at the Texas Renaissance Festival
Box Office Only. No Cash Value.

Children are ages 5 - 12. Children 4 and under are free.
Ages 13 and up are considered adults.

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

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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%.

AROUND TEXAS AROUND TEXAS

22 FLATONIA [22-24]
Czchilispiel,
(361) 865-3920

23 CROCKETT
Downes-Aldrich Home
Scarecrow Festival,
(936) 544-4804



23 GRUENE
Texas Clay Fest

MADISONVILLE
Texas Mushroom Festival,
(936) 348-9334,
www.texasmushroomfestival.com

RICHMOND
Texian Market Days
Festival, (281) 343-0218,
www.texianmarketdays.com



29 RAYMONDVILLE
Wild in Willacy

23 GRUENE [23-24]
Texas Clay Fest,
(830) 629-7975,
www.texasclayfestival.com

25 CANTON
Children's Fall Festival,
(903) 567-2991

29 RAYMONDVILLE
Wild in Willacy,
(956) 689-3171,
www.wildinwillacy.com

NOVEMBER

06 DAMON
Prairie Heritage Day,
(979) 826-7651,
<http://waller-tx.tamu.edu>

SMITHVILLE
Music Festival, (512) 237-2313, www.smithvillemusicfestival.org



6 DAMON
Prairie Heritage Day

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 Travel section with all our popular Hit the Roads 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 getaway just got easier.

Get a move on at www.TexasCoopPower.com.

Event information can be submitted on our website at www.TexasCoopPower.com, mailed to Around Texas, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701, or faxed to (512) 763-3407. **Please Note:** We are no longer accepting e-mailed submissions. Please submit events for December by October 10.

PITCHER: 2010 © BOBBI HOLMES. IMAGE FROM BIGSTOCK.COM. BOOTS: 2010 © ANATOLY VARTANOV. IMAGE FROM BIGSTOCK.COM. PRAIRIE: 2010 © DALLASPAPARAZZO. IMAGE FROM BIGSTOCK.COM.

Lake Whitney

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on the Brazos
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Shopping
in
Clifton, Hillsboro,
Meridian, & Whitney**

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Seguin Film & Arts Festival
Wilson Pottery Show
Ag Education & Heritage Center-
Rural Heritage Activities
Pecan Classic Golf Tournament
Tour de Pecan Bike Ride
Pecan Bake Contest
"Hats Off to Juan Seguin" Street Dance
Hoity Toity Hat Parade
Ribeye Cook-off

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GO TEXAN.
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Sometimes, a road trip is exactly what one needs. And when that wanderlust strikes, one of my favorite destinations is Marshall, about 20 miles west of the Louisiana border. I can take my time driving Interstate 20 where East Texas towns are linked like beads on a chain.

My first stop in Marshall, headquarters for Panola-Harrison Electric Cooperative, is always at the shops along the tree-shaded corridor of **NORTH WASHINGTON AVENUE**. Then it's on to the **HARRISON COUNTY COURTHOUSE**, a butter-yellow brick building featuring Renaissance Revival architecture and eagle statues on its dome. The courthouse, built in 1901, is the centerpiece of Peter Whetstone Square and includes the **HARRISON COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM**.

If you're in the mood for a picnic at **MARSHALL CITY PARK**, it's easy to find everything you need in town, from the basket, the plates and the food to the wine and a good book to read.

The **WEISMAN CENTER**, on North Washington Avenue, is housed in an 1896 building that's said to have served as the second location for Texas' first department store. The three-story building features antiques, gifts and an art gallery. The Weisman is also home to **CENTRAL PERKS**, a coffee bar and sandwich shop.

Across the street is **CHARLEY & BELLA'S**, a home décor, gift and bridal shop with huge windows featuring clever, stylish displays.

The nearby **PROSPERO'S BOOK STORE** is named for a character in a Shakespeare play, "The Tempest," who lost his way by reading too much. Big cozy chairs allow for comfy browsing, and shop staff are especially welcoming with an offer of coffee and a cookie.

At **UNDER THE TEXAS SUN**, you'll find assorted wines, wine-related gift items, gourmet foods and wine splits just begging to go on that picnic.

For more good food, follow the sidewalk to **THE BLUE FROG GRILL** restaurant, which serves up sandwiches for lunch or more upscale meals at night.

On the **SECOND SATURDAY** of each

MESMERIZING MARSHALL

This East Texas town is chock-full of charm.

BY JAN ADAMSON



month, street musicians and artists perform on North Washington Avenue while local farmers sell fresh produce. The square comes alive with music, street vendors, folks visiting, antique cars, food shopping and tasty meals at the downtown restaurants.

MARSHALL POTTERY—which is recognized by the Texas Historical Commission—has been churning out crocks, mugs and pots since 1895. Kentuckian W.F. Rocker started the business because of the easy availability of white clay and water in the area; around 1905, ownership went to Sam Ellis as repayment of a \$375.55 loan for a new kiln. It sold in 1997 to Italian-owned Deroma.

Located just outside the business district on Interstate 20, Marshall Pottery has 45,000 square feet of retail space and a 1-acre, outdoor pottery yard. You can watch craftsmen at work as they form and decorate ceramic items. And if you'd like an item personalized, just ask.

The **MICHELSON MUSEUM OF ART** houses the paintings, drawings and prints of Russian-American artist Leo Michelson and has added a collection of 20th century American art and some West African pieces.

If you'd like to see art in progress, try the **MARSHALL VISUAL ART CENTER**. The former commercial laundry is now home to sculptors, painters and artisans who also make their creations available for sale.

The **GINOCCHIO HISTORIC DISTRICT**, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is a few blocks from downtown and includes an assortment of Victorian homes. The **GINOCCHIO HOTEL**, which no longer houses overnight guests, is now occupied by several businesses. A popular landmark for well over a century, it once welcomed a number of dignitaries, including U.S. presidents.

Stay in the historic district to visit the **TEXAS AND PACIFIC DEPOT**, built in 1912. Park and walk through a tunnel to reach the station of this active depot that serves Amtrak and includes a railway museum, gift shop and an observation deck that overlooks the neighborhood.

And finally, Marshall always ends the year decorated like a gaudy lady with lights lining North Washington Avenue up to and around the grand old courthouse. It and the downtown area are adorned in some 10 million twinkling lights, and festivities include hot chocolate, carriage rides, an outdoor ice skating rink and a lighted parade. Set for November 24 through January 1, the Wonderland of Lights turns even grumpy adults into wide-eyed children.

All the seasons have something great to offer in Marshall. And, though it seems I've just returned from this busy town, I'm feeling the need for another road trip coming on.

Marshall Convention and Visitors Bureau, (903) 935-7868, www.visitmarshalltexas.org

Jan Adamson is a freelance writer based in Grand Saline.

Web Extra: See photo slide show with this story at www.TexasCoopPower.com.



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