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FEATURES

8 Lives on the Line

By Camille Wheeler

Photos by Billy Moore and Will van Overbeek

Hard hats and hard work. If you're curious about the anything-but-ordinary jobs of electric linemen, then watch and learn at the Texas Lineman's Rodeo, which preaches safety first, then perfection.

WEB EXTRA: Danny Williams, who oversees lineman training programs for Texas Electric Cooperatives, makes it clear: "Our job is to save lives."

14 The Big Picture

By Connie Strong

Filmmakers Joel and Ethan Coen didn't just shoot a remake of 'True Grit' in Granger—they also remade this tiny town.

DEPARTMENTS

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Recipe Roundup *This is the Season: Churn, Churn, Churn* 27

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ONLINE

TexasCoopPower.com

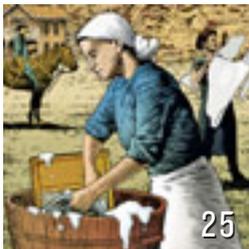
The following June stories are available on our website.

Texas USA by Martha Deeringer

Sculptor Elisabet Ney

Observations by Harry Noble

School-day Autograph Book



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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POWERtalk

Letters from Texas Co-op Power Readers

HIGH STAKES WITH SNAKES

I must say something regarding the rattlesnake photo and comments ("Rattled About 'New' Rattler") on Page 6 of the April 2011 issue. The editor's comments correctly state that a hybrid cross between rattlers and moccasins is a myth, but should then have responsibly pointed out that the plastic rattlesnake in the photo bears no resemblance whatsoever to any living species of rattlesnake. I've never seen such a misrepresentation of color and pattern in a cheap souvenir during my 50-year career as a herpetologist.

Further, a glance at any book about Texas reptiles would clearly show that Mojave rattlesnakes occur naturally in far West Texas. They look superficially similar to Western Diamondbacks, and they occur in some of the same habitats, but their bite is considerably more dangerous. Treatment for the bites of the two distinct species is different. Thus, it could easily be a matter of life and death to know the difference. Color and pattern are crucial.

ARDELL MITCHELL

*Retired curator of
herpetology, Dallas Zoo*

Pedernales Electric Cooperative

FIDDLERS' FROLICS

I loved the article about Hallettsville's Fiddlers' Frolics (April 2011, "Texas-style Fiddlin'"). And as a native res-

ident of Wied, I must point out the misspelling of Weid Hall on Page 19. Other than that, the story was a great representation of what the area has to offer in rich culture and history. And beer drinking.

MARK KELNAR

Pedernales Electric Cooperative

DUTCH OVENS

This may seem to be splitting hairs, but I find that I must submit a correction for the thread regarding "Dutch Ovens On The Range" (March 2011 letters). To letter writer Milton Sellars, who sent a copy of a Dutch oven oil painting: What a treasure you have—your own dad in the image! Wow. Yet I can't help but point out that there is only one, not three, Dutch ovens in that image. The one

closest to Sellars' dad, as depicted, is, indeed, a Dutch oven. The other two cast-iron pieces that have been pulled off the fire are skillets.

I have a long relationship with cast-iron cooking. I have given a few talks and demonstrations using my own arsenal of cast-iron, which started with my inheritance of my grandma's Dutch oven. Here's the quick test: If it has a pan-handle, it ain't a Dutch oven.

SHELLEY SEXTON

Pedernales Electric Cooperative

READ MORE LETTERS

See "Letters to the Editor" in June's Table of Contents at

TexasCoopPower.com

WORTHY OF PROMINENCE

I referred a co-worker to your magazine, only to discover she already receives it. We agree on its value to the great state of Texas in this sense: It's much like a patchwork quilt, with perhaps no part of

it outstanding, but taken as a whole, the quilt bears a beauty of serviceability worthy of the king's bed or for "hanging in a prominent place." We can only say, "Keep up the good work!"

MICHAEL L. MCAFEE

Hawkins

OFFENDED BY PHOTOS

I find the pictures of dead animals alongside grinning people ("Catch of the Day," April 2011) to be grotesque and offensive. Not only do we have to see the usual pictures of children and adults holding up fish hanging on hooks, this time we also have to endure a dead alligator with his mouth propped open. Please consider that not everybody in Texas thinks it is fun to harm innocent animals.

TRACY FRANK

*Director, Society For Animal
Rescue and Adoption, Seguin*

We want to hear from our readers. Submit letters online under the Submit and Share tab at TexasCoopPower.com, e-mail us at letters@TexasCoopPower.com, or mail to Editor, Texas Co-op Power, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. Please include the name of your town and electric co-op. Letters may be edited for clarity and length and are printed as space allows.

POST, TEXAS: NOTHING ORDINARY HERE



This statue of C.W. Post sits in front of the Garza County courthouse in extraordinary downtown Post.

I feel there was an unfortunate typo in the March 2011 story "C.W. Post: Cereal Czar and Rainmaker." The last paragraph describes Post as "an ordinary little town." I live in Post and know without a doubt that it is an EXTRAordinary little town. The story mentions some 35 historical markers [in Garza County]. Post also has two live theaters, a movie theater, an art museum, a historic museum and Old Mill Trade Day Downtown the first Saturday of each month. AND the town has enjoyed 14 new businesses during the past two years. Nothing ordinary here!

Rosa Latimer

President, Post Area Chamber of Commerce

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POWERconnections

People, Places and Events in Texas

WHO KNEW?

OFFICIAL STONE

The Texas Legislature named petrified palmwood the official state stone in 1969, even though it is actually fossilized wood. Roughly 100 million years ago, lush forests covered parts of present-day Texas. When trees fell into mineral-rich mud—without having a chance to decay—they became petrified wood, or a quartz-like stone. Some call petrified wood the most beautiful of fossils.



HAPPENINGS

Grab your partner and do-si-do to the 49th annual **TEXAS STATE SQUARE AND ROUND DANCE FESTIVAL**, set for June 9-12 in Tyler at the Harvey Convention Center.

Dancing at the festival is reserved for members of the Texas State Federation of Square and Round Dancers, which sponsors the event. But organizers encourage anyone interested in square dancing—the official folk dance of Texas, as deemed by the Legislature in 1991—to attend and make connections that might lead to membership in local square-dance clubs.

Admission is free for the public, and the experience is priceless as onlookers absorb the complexities of square dancing. “Yellow rock your corner”—typically the first call that beginners learn—means that a dancer turns to the right and hugs the person of the opposite sex standing there in the square. And don’t worry, gals: In square dancing, the men wear long-sleeved shirts so you never have to grab a sweaty arm.

For more information, call (903) 962-7479 or go to www.squaredancetx.com.



CO-OP PEOPLE

Miss Tootsie Puts Lexington on the Barbecue Map

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS

Psst! What’s the secret to smoking what some consider the best barbecue in Texas? “I don’t know,” shrugs Miss Tootsie, the veteran pit boss at Snow’s BBQ in Lexington, east of Austin. Since 2008, when Texas Monthly crowned Snow’s the state’s top barbecue joint, thousands have driven from near and far to sample Miss Tootsie’s culinary skills.

Starting at 2 a.m. every Saturday, Norma Tomanetz—nicknamed “Miss Tootsie” at birth—babies briskets, chicken, sausage and other meats in Snow’s five outdoor pits (one of her sons gets some of the meat going around 11 p.m. the night before). Now 76, she’s been dishing out finger-lickin’ good barbecue since 1966, when she and her husband, White Tomanetz, worked at a meat market in nearby Giddings. Later, the couple ran their own meat market and Saturday-only barbecue restaurant in Lexington for 20 years.

Folks there still call Saturday their “barbecue day,” a tradition that started decades ago when farmers traveled into town. Nowadays, regular customers know to line up at Snow’s (named

after owner Kerry Bexley’s childhood nickname of “Snowman”) as soon as the restaurant opens at 8 a.m. Typically by noon, Snow’s is sold out, with customers having gone through more than 1,000 pounds of smoke-kissed bliss.

Hundreds of kids in the Giddings public schools system, where Miss Tootsie is in her 13th year as a custodian, also adore her. “The schools are my home, and I take pride in what the buildings look like,” she says simply. Miss Tootsie ranches, too. After breakfast every morning, she and White—they live in Giddings—tend cattle at their Lexington ranch where they’re served by Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative.

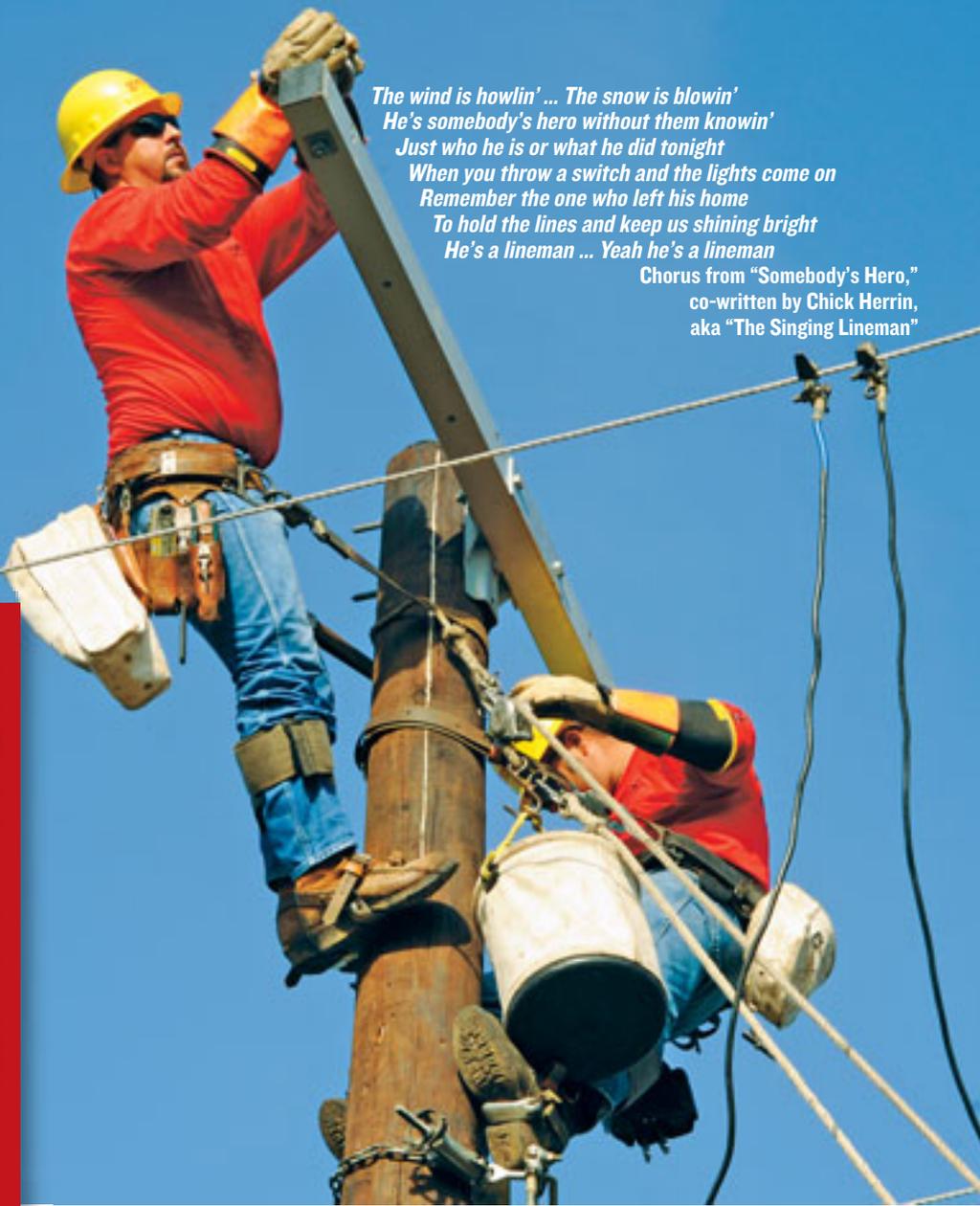
All these years later, might this hard-working lady be ready to hang up her trademark blue apron and mops? “Nope, I’m not planning to retire,” Miss Tootsie replies firmly. “I’m just hoping our maker

gives me a few more years!”



Snow’s BBQ pit boss Miss Tootsie, left, with owner Kerry Bexley

Sheryl Smith-Rodgers is a frequent contributor to Texas Co-op Power. Have a suggestion for a future Co-op People? Contact editor@TexasCoopPower.com.



*The wind is howlin' ... The snow is blowin'
He's somebody's hero without them knowin'
Just who he is or what he did tonight
When you throw a switch and the lights come on
Remember the one who left his home
To hold the lines and keep us shining bright
He's a lineman ... Yeah he's a lineman*

Chorus from "Somebody's Hero,"
co-written by Chick Herrin,
aka "The Singing Lineman"

LIVES ON THE LINE

Any time, day or night, linemen keep us in the light. Yes, ma'am. Yes, sir. No power? No worries. We're on our way.

BY CAMILLE WHEELER

BILLY MOORE

Six a.m. Equipment trailer lights prick the darkness. Shadowy figures move robotically, methodically, speaking in hushed, somber tones. The early morning air lies still, seemingly safety-pinned into place like the competition numbers on the electric linemen's backs.

It's deceptively cool 45 minutes before sunrise. No hint yet of the broiling July heat soon to punish the field in the 2010 Texas Lineman's Rodeo southeast of Seguin.

Poker-faced apprentices keep their hands busy, their minds clamping on the 50-question, written exam that starts their competition at 7 a.m. Focus. Stay as sharp as the test-taking pencils they're about to grip. Help journeyman linemen transfer gear from

trailers to carts. Climbing belts. Hooks. Safety straps. Hand lines. Hot sticks.

Some competitors sit alone. HILCO Electric Cooperative First-Class Lineman Kane Montgomery rhythmically threads yellow laces through the hooks and eyelets on his 16-inch-tall leather lineman boots. It's a five-minute job. Montgomery's grim face, set like concrete, yields no clues as to his feelings about the day's grueling lineup of events.

"A little nervous," he finally says, allowing a soft smile. "Not too bad once you get going."

One by one, team by team, the men representing electric co-ops and investor-owned and municipal utilities emerge from their trailers. As the first

rays of light penetrate Nolte Island Park, heads bow for the invocation. Hard hats and hands rest over hearts for the playing of the national anthem.

A bucket truck lifts Chick Herrin, the only living member of the inaugural class inducted into the International Lineman's Hall of Fame, into position at the facility's entrance. Tucked between U.S. and Texas flags secured atop utility poles, Herrin, a retired Bryan Texas Utilities manager and lineman, oversees the opening ceremony from his lofty perch.

Then comes the booming cry from Bobby Christmas, chairman of the board of directors for the Texas Lineman's Rodeo Association: "ARE YOU READY TO RODEO?"

The linemen whoop their affirmative response. Let the competition begin.

'Excuse Me for a Second—Gotta Work'

Seven a.m. The climbing sun glowers like an angry, red-orange face. Life-size mannequins wearing gray coveralls hang from poles, their bald heads eerily turned sideways as though trying to look down to see who's coming up to save them. This is Hurtman Rescue, one of the rodeo's most popular events.

Jeff Hohlt is up first for his team, Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative. Right hand, right foot, left hand, left foot, the steel gaffs strapped to his boots digging into the wood, the 51-year-old crew supervisor climbs with the precise motion of a piston. The rescue expertly performed, Hohlt comes off the pole, breathing hard with sweat dripping off his nose and into his brown-gray moustache.

Now it's teammate Kenny Roland's turn. "Going up the wood!" he shouts, zipping up the pole.

"You got it, Kenny!" Hohlt hollers. "Get that man down!"

Hohlt cranes his neck as he patiently answers a reporter's questions about the event. "Excuse me for a second," he says apologetically, never taking his eyes off Roland. "Gotta work."

Hard Work. Dangerous Work.

Hard hats and hard work. Hardheaded guys who let nothing—sandstorms, hailstorms, tornados, swarming mosquitoes, lack of sleep—stop them from restoring power for those they serve. Yes, ma'am. Yes, sir. Power's out? No worries. We're on our way.

"When the lights go out," Hohlt says, "we have to go to work."

That means bundling up for work in the freezing cold, when transmission and distribution lines have snapped under the weight of ice. It means changing fuses when the wind's gusting 40 mph or more. It means crawling over mangled trees and chain sawing a path for the repair of broken poles and tangled, downed wires in the wake of thunderstorms and hurricanes.

It means, as one story from East Texas-based Sam Houston Electric Cooperative goes, crossing a creek by boat at night, accidentally dropping your hand light overboard and resign-

edly watching it shine out of sight into the alligator-inhabited depths. More power to 'em.

It means facing the constant risk of falls, electrical burns, electrocution and other life-threatening accidents and injuries in what is one of the most dangerous occupations in the U.S.

Despite the conditions or inherent risks of the job, electric linemen are always ready to pull their boots on, says Christmas, engineering and operations division manager for Guadalupe Valley Electric Cooperative. "They are the epitome of what makes Texas and America great," he says.

Linemen still climb poles when bucket trucks can't access alleys or storm-ravaged areas. They routinely



BILLY MOORE



BILLY MOORE

work with high voltage and, most significantly, electrical current that can kill a human with a flow of less than 1 ampere.

"I have seen what it does to a bird, or a squirrel or a snake," Christmas says. "I wouldn't want to see what it could do to me."

'Headache!'

Seven thirty-five a.m. Bluebonnet EC's Kenny Roland reaches the mannequin and buckles off, looping his safety strap around the pole and rehooking it to his climbing belt. Now secured to the pole, his spur-like climbing gaffs sunk into the wood, Roland leans back with the

OPPOSITE PAGE: The Texas Lineman's Rodeo elevates pole work to an art form as a Guadalupe Valley Electric Cooperative team illustrates in the Floating Phase Tie In event. Journeyman Lineman Scott Brown, left, and Crew Foreman David Hernandez get an assist from unseen groundman Ronnie Luensmann, who nimbly works the ropes from below. **TOP:** Three half-hitch knots tied: check. Hand line cinched snug against the chest: check. Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative Crew Supervisor Kenny Roland is almost ready to carefully lower a mannequin—a 'hurt man'—to the ground in one of the rodeo's most popular events. **BOTTOM:** Mannequins hang from poles, their heads turned sideways as though trying to see who's coming up to save them in the Hurtman Rescue event.



BILLY MOORE

SWEAT EQUITY: Hamilton County Electric Cooperative's seniors division team—from left, Crew Foreman Jimmy Horton, Line Superintendent Albert Pafford and Crew Foreman Paul Knight—put it all on the line at the rodeo. Pafford, 54, says he wishes he had been among the 1940s pioneers 'bringing the power to the people who didn't have lines.'

belt supporting his full weight.

With gloved hands, he wraps a hand line under the mannequin's arms and ties three half-hitch knots, cinching the rope snug against the mannequin's chest. Roland's almost done: He hollers "Headache!" in a traditional lineman warning to those standing below and drops the rope's pulley block—standard lineman gear used to raise and lower equipment—to the ground. Then he cuts the mannequin's leather safety strap. The "hurt man" swings free, and Roland controls its every move to the mulch beneath the pole, doling out rope like a puppet master.

The strain shows on Roland's face: The mannequins, their chests filled with 20-pound bags of birdshot, typically weigh well over 150 pounds. But judges don't cut the competitors any slack: It's a two-point gig, or demerit, if the mannequin hits the pole after its initial swing. It's a 10-point gig—the so-called kiss of death for trophy dreams—if the lineman lets the mannequin free-fall to the ground. No safety nets here.

Even though the "hurt men" are made of pliable rubber and the overhead lines are dead, competitors treat

the Texas Lineman's Rodeo as a live performance: It's a chance to show off for friends and family members and impress the judges who determine the trophy winners strutting across the stage at day's end.

But beneath the friendly ribbing, a deadly seriousness takes hold. There's no clowning around, even in Pole Climb, a speed event requiring balance and control in which competitors descend with a raw egg in their mouths. Crack or break the shell, and the yolk's on you—along with a very unfunny 10-point gig.

Safety First, Then Perfection

The rodeo preaches safety first, then perfection as judges score teams, climbers and groundmen on how well they work together. From tying knots that won't come loose under pressure to the generational ties that bind, good communication is of the essence: Older linemen, such as Bluebonnet EC's Hohlt, competing last year in the 45-and-older seniors division, show youngsters the ropes—and prove that they're still pretty dadgum fast at climbing poles.

Rodeo officials, in turn, introduce events every year that challenge all competitors to learn skills that make them safer and better linemen—and, ultimately, increase their value on the job market and to their employers.

As the utility industry takes on more sophisticated and high-tech dimensions, so grows the demand for well-trained electric linemen. Based on

several factors, including the building of wind-power transmission lines in the Panhandle, the Texas Workforce Commission projects that the number of power lineworker jobs will have increased roughly 20 percent between 2006 and 2016.

Coupled with an approaching lineman shortage—many of the state's electric co-ops project that 10 percent to more than 40 percent of their line workers will be eligible for retirement in the next five to 10 years—there's a sense of urgency: Now, more than ever, Texas needs electric linemen who can do it all.

Texas Electric Cooperatives (TEC), the statewide association that represents the interests of 76 electric co-ops, advises 10 Texas colleges on what to include in electric lineman training curriculum. TEC has been working hard for several years to fill the projected retirement gaps, says Tiffin Wortham, vice president, TEC Member Services.

"The lineman's career is very rewarding, and just a couple of semesters' work at a local college can start the right individual in a career that will last a lifetime," he says.

'Power to the People'

Like a welding torch drawing a bead, the sun zeroes in on linemen, some of whom chill down inside a zipped-tight, air-conditioned tent. Water jugs and ice-packed coolers of bottled water line the rodeo grounds. Competitors guzzle fluids, as much as their bellies will hold.

Live oak and pecan trees spread their branches over much of the rodeo grounds, including a simultaneously occurring rodeo barbecue competition. But the linemen, isolated atop poles on a cloudless day, simply bake in the near 100-degree heat, with shade and the Guadalupe River circling the park a tempting glance away.

Hamilton County Electric Cooperative Line Superintendent Albert Pafford, his button-down, long-sleeved shirt darkened from tan to a sopping brown, comes off the pole in the 600 Amp Switch Change event so wet with sweat it looks like he's been thrown in the river. The lithe and sinewy 54-year-old is competing in the seniors division. "It's better known as the gummers' division," he says with a grin, flashing

A LINEMAN'S GEAR

KYLE KASPER

Job: Fourth-year apprentice lineman for Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative
Age: 27
Family: Wife, Laurie Kasper, and their 2-year-old son, Kaden
Pre-gear weight: 164.5 pounds
Fully geared-up weight: 210.5 pounds
On climbing poles: "It hasn't bothered me yet."

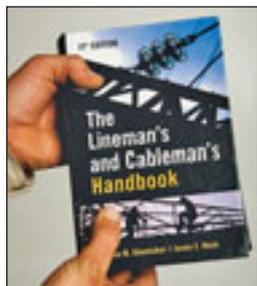
HARD HAT: Linemen are as tough and hardheaded as they come, but you'll never catch 'em bareheaded: A hard hat provides insulated protection against electrical hazards and protects the head from blows and falling objects.

INSULATED GLOVES: Insulated rubber gloves—these are tested to 30,000 volts—provide protection against electric shock and burn. They are worn inside leather gloves, or gauntlets, that protect the rubber against cuts, abrasions and punctures.

EQUIPMENT BELT: Think of it as the lineman's suitcase, with clips, loops and D rings providing ways to carry virtually every tool he might need—whether it's on the ground, on a pole or in a bucket truck.

CLIMBERS: Contoured leg shanks—Kasper's are made of aluminum—hold gaffs securely in place on linemen's boots. Climbers are strapped on just below the knee, with Velcro pads providing comfort and support.

GAFFS: Razor-sharp steel points—think cowboy spurs—that are strapped to boots for climbing poles. Only the tips dig into the wood, helping linemen climb more safely and efficiently.



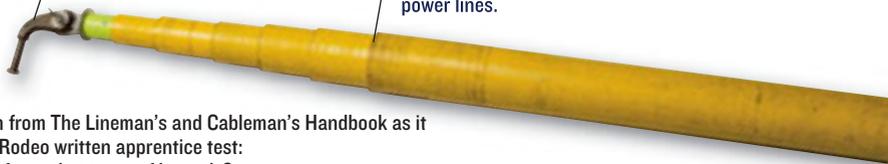
POP QUIZ: Here is a sample question from *The Lineman's and Cableman's Handbook* as it has appeared on the Texas Lineman's Rodeo written apprentice test:
Protective grounds guard the lineman from what types of hazards?
A: Static charges B: Induced voltages C: Accidental energizing of the line D: All of the above
Answer: D

PULLEY BLOCK: Linemen can't carry everything up a pole, and the pulley block—the signature component of the hand line—is used to raise and lower heavy equipment.

DITTY BAG: This canvas bag hangs from the equipment belt and literally holds the nuts and bolts (and connectors, wire, etc.) that linemen need at the ready for any number of jobs.

SAFETY STRAP: When a lineman reaches the top of a pole, he unhooks one end of his safety strap from his equipment belt, loops the strap around the pole, and rehooks the strap to his belt. Having "buckled off," he can now safely work with both hands free.

NUMEROUS TOOLS are attached to a hot stick's universal head. This attached tool is a disconnect head, which is used for a variety of jobs.



HOT STICK: Typically made of insulated, high-voltage-tested fiberglass—and extendable up to 40 feet—hot sticks help linemen safely perform a variety of jobs while working on energized power lines.

HAND LINE: The lineman's lifeline. Complete with steel clips and a pulley block, this rope, which hangs from a pole's crossarm, is strong enough for any job—from the routine hoisting of equipment to life-saving missions.

TOOL POUCH: This bag also hangs from the back of the equipment belt and carries a wide variety of tools, such as pliers and wrenches.

BOOTS: Not cowboy boots, mind you, but lineman boots: Typically 16 inches tall (Kasper's stand 13 inches), these boots help prevent linemen from gaffing, or gouging, themselves in the leg. Serrated heels provide for a better grip when climbing, and steel shanks built into the soles provide extra support on the pole.



BILLY MOORE

EGG-CELLENT WORK: Pedernales Electric Cooperative Class A Lineman Carl 'Bubba' Williams readies for a quick descent in the Pole Climb event. Power-line work, the 32-year-old says, is everything: 'It's my life. There are only a handful of us who can do what we do. I love being a lineman.'

white teeth against sun-singed skin.

As competitors trudge from event to event, their sweat-crusting work gloves frozen in stiff-fingered waves from the back pockets of Wrangler jeans, the images seared into memory are those of faces:

The sweat- and dirt-streaked face of Pafford, who says he wishes he were actually a little older. "I'd have liked to have been one of the ones in the 1940s bringing the power to the people who didn't have lines," he says. "I get a lot of enjoyment, even working all night—the wife, kids, seeing our faces when we turn the lights back on."

The proud faces of Mark and Mary Kellogg who drove almost 1,300 miles from Amery, Wisconsin, to watch their son, Mitch Kellogg, compete in Central Texas. Their efforts are doubly rewarded: Mitch, wearing the bright pink shirt of Farmers Electric Cooperative, finishes second in the overall apprentice competition.

The beaming face of 6-year-old Kale Williams as he watches his dad, Pedernales Electric Cooperative Class A Lineman Carl "Bubba" Williams, race

down a pole without breaking the egg in his mouth. Williams, a 6-foot-7-inch, 270-pound mountain of a man who climbs like a limber bear, bends down to remove his climbers, the contoured leg shanks that hold his gaffs in place. "Let me get out, and you can carry them, OK?" he says to his son.

Kale solemnly nods and then announces: "Dad, guess what? Last night, I caught a firefly."

Pitch in and Help

Two-thirty p.m. Most of the competitors are done for the day and have headed back to their motel rooms for a cold shower. It's time to rehydrate, relax and wait for the evening's barbecue dinner and awards ceremony.

But the sun beats down on a few remaining climbers, including those in the apprentice-only Secondary Service on Pole event. Frayed nerves, compounded by inexperience, are starting to show. One competitor climbs in slow motion, watching his feet and inching his hands up the pole. At the top, he catches his breath and clings to the wood.

A couple of poles over, in the same event, a roar erupts as Mid-South Synergy Apprentice Brandon Taylor confidently descends. "Who can take a picture?" Line Superintendent Jim Woods hollers to anyone within earshot as the electric co-op team mobs Taylor.

The group poses for a happy shot and heads for the co-op's tent. The 26-year-old Taylor can't stop smiling. Not only did he survive his first rodeo, but he performed well under pressure. He loves the teasing, the tough love and encouragement from his teammates. "They pick on me because I'm a grunt," Taylor says, his face shining with sweat.

Working for Mid-South, says Taylor, a baby-faced father of two sons, is like working for family. The co-op helped him transition from climbing trees with a right-of-way crew to climbing poles. Now he's climbing the career ladder and plans on staying with the co-op as long as they'll have him.

But retirement is a long ways off for this young man. There's immediate work at hand, announced by the ping of a pounding hammer as linemen take down the co-op's tent. Taylor, mid-sentence, instinctively reaches down to pull up a metal stake.

No questions asked. Pitch in and

help. Head home, keep members' power on, and start practicing for the next rodeo. The events accelerate the linemen's skills, Woods says, praising his team's efforts.

"What you saw today," the line superintendent says, "is what happens when the lights go out."

Hard hats and hard work. Yes, ma'am. Yes, sir. Power's out? No worries. We're on our way.

Camille Wheeler, associate editor

2010 Winners

Twenty-eight journeyman lineman teams and 82 apprentices competed in the 2010 Texas Lineman's Rodeo. Following are the top winners:

Overall journeyman team, electric co-ops, municipalities, investor-owned utilities:

Farmers Electric Cooperative—David McDowell, Danny Moss, Larry Terry

Overall journeyman team, electric co-ops: HILCO Electric Cooperative—Lance Henkelman, Kane Montgomery, Jason Patton

Overall apprentice: Kyle Kasper, Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative

2011 Texas Lineman's Rodeo

The 15th annual rodeo is scheduled for July 16 at Nolte Island Park, southeast of Seguin.

On TexasCoopPower.com

"Our Job is to Save Lives": Learn how a dramatic drop in lineman injuries statewide correlates with Texas Electric Cooperatives' (TEC) safety and training programs.



Bandera Electric Co-op Lineman Jon Randon Williams

BILLY MOORE

Grow 'em, groom 'em and keep 'em: Read about the crucial role TEC is playing as co-ops brace for a lineworker shortage.

Listen up: Climbing poles, International Lineman's Hall of Fame member Chick Herrin says in this story, is like dancing—don't look down lest you lose the rhythm. And Herrin, as "The Singing Lineman," is right on beat as listeners tap their feet to his country music.

Videos: Learn about the rewards of a lineman's career in a TEC recruiting video. And in a short rodeo video, gear up with Lineman Joey



BILLY MOORE

Attocknie (right) of Garland Power & Light.

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Big Picture

BY CONNIE STRONG

For a few magical months, the little town of Granger lives large through filming of 'True Grit'

Granger's City Hall is normally a quiet place. Its single spire can be seen from a distance, marking the corner where the town's daily business takes place. Columned archways, transom windows and pressed-tin ceilings are reminiscent of a time more than 100 years ago when cotton was king and the area prospered. Following that era, this quaint little town of nearly 1,300 settled into a predictable, comfortable routine.

But that all changed when Paramount Pictures transformed the quiet community into the backdrop for a new adaptation of the 1969 classic film "True Grit" starring John Wayne.

In October 2009, first-term Mayor Scott Murrah found himself in the middle of a major challenge when Paramount's scouts visited Granger and told him that the town was being considered for the film's location site. "I really did not grasp the full reality of how big that was going to be," he said.

Two months later, after considering eight states and dozens of towns, Paramount gave Murrah the news that this predominately Czech community, nestled among the gently rolling blackland of Williamson County, would be getting company—Hollywood was, indeed, coming to this once-renowned railroad town.

Although Murrah realized that "True Grit" would generate much-needed revenue, bringing the movie to Granger would also mean disruption of the locals' routine—and it meant making sure the town was back to normal by May 8, in time for the 33rd annual Granger Lakefest.

But the biggest concern for Granger officials was getting assurance that the historic bricks of Davilla Street, which were laid in 1912, would not be dam-

aged during filming. Paramount officials gave that pledge, Granger's City Council approved the project, and construction of the movie set began in January 2010.

Granger, which originated in 1882 when the Houston and San Antonio branches of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad intersected, rolled out the figurative red carpet for Oscar-winning filmmakers Joel and Ethan Coen and a cast of some of the silver screen's finest.

In the Coen brothers' version of "True Grit"—a closer adaptation of Charles Portis' novel than the 1969 production—Jeff Bridges plays the part of the salty, drunken and trigger-happy U.S. Marshal Rooster Cogburn. Matt Damon brings to life LaBoeuf, a self-serving Texas Ranger who has no reservations in "paddling the backside" of the gutsy 14-year-old Mattie Ross, played by newcomer Hailee Steinfeld. Josh Brolin's character, outlaw Tom Chaney, rounds out the list of colorful characters for the blockbuster film that earned 10 Academy Award nominations.

Robbie Friedmann, Paramount's location manager for the film, said the Coen brothers wanted a town that resembled Fort Smith, Arkansas, back in 1875—the central setting for the book and the movie. Granger had the necessary core elements required to make the period piece believably authentic.

"Granger was the town that time forgot," said production designer Jess Gonchor, explaining that one of the town's key attractions is a train crossing that helped set up a crucial scene.

"You have to sense that Fort Smith is the last stop on the line as Mattie arrives on the train."

The movie required several "new" building façades, dirt streets and hitch-

ing posts. Six inches of dirt covered Davilla Street; Granger National Bank housed the marshal's office and an attorney's office. An abandoned building across from the bank was converted to the undertaker's shop, and Granger's main thoroughfare became a temporary home for businesses like Arkansas Laundry, Hotel Main and Pony Express.

Electric lines, once hovering overhead, were buried; any evidence of the 21st century was slipping away.

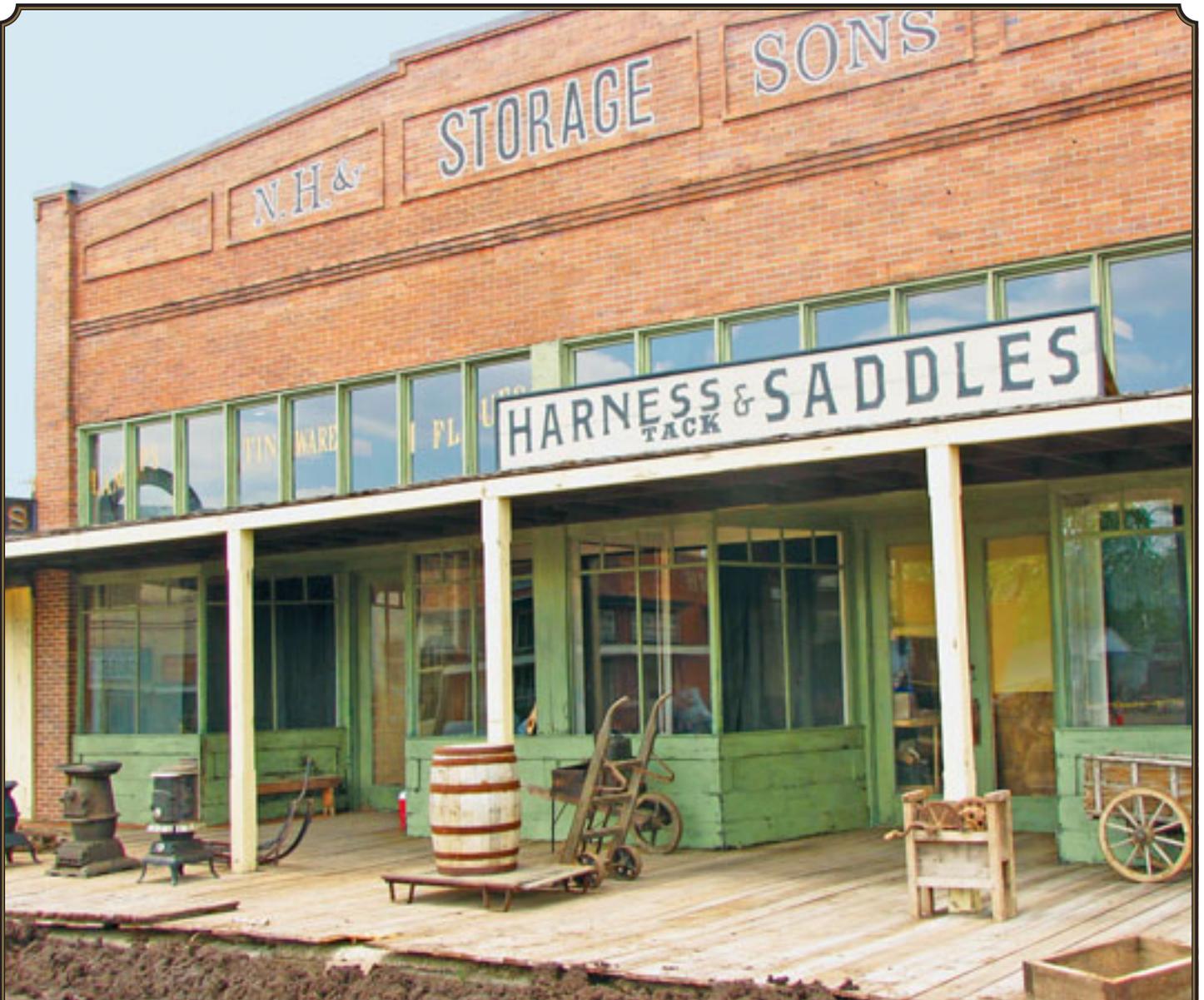
When scenes required trees where there were none, movie crews drilled holes into wooden poles and inserted makeshift "branches," using a bit of movie magic and a bark-like covering to produce the desired effect.

The Monarch Boarding House façade was constructed in the lot next to the home of third-generation Grangerite Bennie Bartosh. He says he "watched every nail go in" from a bench in his backyard.

Paramount used golf carts to shuttle employees and customers, allowing businesses to remain open; and as visitors flocked to town to catch a glimpse of the Coens and the actors, merchants began to realize financial benefits.

The Cotton Club, a popular restaurant and dance hall, normally is open only on weekends for dinner, but owner Jill Cox changed her schedule to serve the famished crews home-cooked meals of chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes, fresh vegetables and gooey, rich desserts. "We fed 25 or 30 people every day for lunch, so it was very profitable," she said.

Granger Lumber Company owner Walt Peters saw daily revenue increase by nearly \$300, and Monica Stojanik, manager of Bohuslav's Red & White Grocery—where circus peanuts and orange-slice candies hang from a wire



GRANGER, TEXAS, AS FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS, CIRCA 1875

After considering eight states and dozens of towns, Paramount Pictures chose Granger for the filming of 'True Grit.' The tiny Williamson County town rolled out the figurative red carpet for a cast of some of Hollywood's finest actors. But the remake of the movie—along with a remake of the town—was defined not by star power, but by the gritty look of dirt streets, hitching posts, and horses and buggies. A vintage steam train used in filming was a fitting attraction for this old railroad town.

rack—said hungry crews and visitors bought snacks and sandwiches every day.

Granger, Stojanik said, became a 24-hour tourist attraction: “On weekends, our little town had wall-to-wall crowds. We were all friends because we had a

but critical, Garner says, because the train is used as a “reveal”—it’s the first time the audience sees Fort Smith.

Granger Police Chief David Mace, a soft-spoken man light years removed from the surly character of Rooster

remained intact. True to its word, Paramount finished filming by May 8, in time for Lakefest. “Fort Smith, Arkansas” was gone, and Davilla Street, once again, belonged to the citizens of Granger.

Gone but not forgotten, the making of “True Grit” left an indelible impression on the rural community; residents felt ownership in the movie that briefly placed their town in the limelight. Now, there’s nothing out of the ordinary to observe, and Bartosh is one of many who feels the loss: “It was nice when they were all here—town seems empty now.”

Today, it’s business as usual at Granger National Bank, which served as Steinfeld’s classroom. As the youngest member of the cast, Steinfeld not only had to learn to shoot a gun, get comfortable with Western-style horseback riding and learn to roll a cigarette—she also had to keep up with her math lessons. When the movie wrapped, bank employees asked Hailee to autograph the boardroom wall—a permanent reminder of the newcomer who won the hearts of an entire town.

The film’s crew members left with their own fond memories. Garner recalls a little girl in a pink dress who came with her grandfather to see the steam engine. Fascinated, she picked up a railroad spike, sat down in the dirt and started playing. “Before you know it, her little pink dress wasn’t so pink anymore,” Garner recalls. “Those are the things I remember.”

Hollywood has moved on, leaving the townspeople to their simple, quiet lives. One blinking red light slows travelers and locals. With the exception of Ace’s Bar, nothing much is taking place in the way of nightlife. But when the weekend arrives, The Cotton Club, once again, will be in full swing, breathing life into Granger—a town that has survived the hands of time and has proven to possess a true grit of its own.

Connie Strong is a freelance writer based out of Chappell Hill, near Houston.

On TexasCoopPower.com

Read the story of third-generation Grangerite Bennie Bartosh, who relived the town’s horse-and-buggy days through the eyes of Hollywood. Meanwhile, “True Grit” and Texas made for a good fit: Learn about the other locations selected for the filming of this gritty Western.



GRANGER, TEXAS, CIRCA 2011

TOP: Granger Police Chief David Mace, a soft-spoken man who’s nothing like the crotchety film character of U.S. Marshal Rooster Cogburn, kept a friendly eye on tourists. **BOTTOM:** Film directors Ethan, left, and Joel Coen, center, review a shot with Hailee Steinfeld, who portrayed the 14-year-old Mattie Ross.

common interest. It was great for business and great for the community.”

Fittingly for the old railroad town, a vintage steam train brought in for filming was a major attraction. Movie train coordinator Stan Garner said he moved this same train to New Mexico for the movie “3:10 to Yuma” and to Marfa for “There Will Be Blood.” On the set in Granger, the first train sequence is short

Cogburn, kept daily onlookers in line with the help of area law enforcement officials. Visitors were asked to be silent during filming, remain in designated areas and refrain from using any camera equipment.

In four short months, Granger had been chosen, transformed, filmed and returned to normal. Throughout the excitement, traditional priorities

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Going on Vacation?

Give Your Electric Meter a Break, Too

In 2011, Americans are expected to spend \$683 billion on travel, according to the U.S. Travel Association. If you're heading out on a summer trip or weekend getaway, save a few dollars by leaving your home in an energy-efficient state. From lighting to air conditioning, turning electronic equipment off or down can save energy and money.

Air conditioners don't need to run full tilt while the home is vacant. Consider turning the air-conditioning unit off to maximize savings, or at least adjusting the thermostat to save money on what could be your largest single energy expense.

Electronics with digital displays and standby power settings, such as digital clocks, TVs, DVD players, stereos and coffeemakers, should be unplugged to prevent phantom energy use, drawing electricity even when not switched on.

Fountains, hot tubs and other outdoor waterworks that use electricity can be turned off.

Lights can be switched off. If planning to use timers or motion-detecting lights to create the illusion of being at home, use energy-efficient lightbulbs in

the fixtures that are set to light up.

Outbuildings, such as garages, shops, sheds and studios, should be checked for lights left on and appliances that can be unplugged.

Refrigerators can be made more energy efficient by adjusting the temperature to make them slightly warmer. Food left in the fridge will likely stay preserved at 38 degrees. Also, filling empty spaces with non-perishable beverages or containers filled with water helps keep the temperature consistent. If vacationing for a long period of time, empty the refrigerator and freezer, and unplug them to maximize savings.

Water heaters can be turned off to save electricity. Writing down the temperature setting can help you remember where to set it (120 degrees is an ideal temperature) when you turn it back on.

Windows let in light, which creates excess heat. Close blinds and curtains to moderate the temperature.

Read the electric meter before and after a vacation to see how much energy was saved. Then use the savings on your next vacation.

ELECTRIC SAFETY VACATION CHECKLIST

We look forward to the fun and relaxation of summer vacations all year long. But while we're away, fires can start when lightning storms strike houses, sparking flames in electronics or small appliances, and burglaries tend to increase because folks aren't at home.

To protect your home while away, implement this safety checklist before you leave to help decrease the risk of problems:

- Turn off and unplug electric appliances, including toaster ovens, stoves and curling irons. It's especially important to unplug television sets and computers, as these items are more susceptible to lightning and power surges.



Unplugging electronics before you leave is one of the best things you can do to help protect your home.

- Use a timer on indoor lights. Look for one that can be set to a random pattern rather than one that cycles the same way throughout the day.

- Install motion-detecting lights outdoors.

- Give your house key to a trusted neighbor, and make sure he or she has a phone number where you can be reached.



SUMMER COMFORT

Just as you can cut back on driving to save energy, you also can limit the amount of electricity you use at home by cutting waste. Here are nine ways you can reduce your energy consumption this summer without feeling uncomfortable:

- 1 Replace your old, manual thermostat with an electronic model.** New thermostats have automatic settings that can slightly change indoor temperatures at strategic times of the day. For example, you can program your thermostat to slightly raise the temperature after the family leaves the house in the morning, and then program it to lower the temperature again just before everyone gets home.
- 2 Schedule a tuneup for your air-conditioning system.** A licensed A/C technician will check the levels of refrigerant in the system and determine whether any of its parts are wearing out or running inefficiently. The better you maintain your system, the less it costs to operate it.
- 3 Close the blinds during the hours when direct sunlight hits your house.** The less sun that shines into your home, the cooler it will stay. That means your air conditioner won't need to kick on as often.
- 4 Run your dishwasher, washing machine and clothes dryer after dark.** Most people run these appliances during the day, so demand for electricity soars. Doing chores at night, particularly ones that produce heat and cause the air conditioner to run more, helps lower the co-op's overall peak use, which helps control the cost you pay per kilowatt-hour.
- 5 Better yet, air-dry your laundry.** Hang clothes outside on a clothesline when the weather is nice.
- 6 Turn off lights and unplug computers, TVs and battery chargers.** Don't waste electricity by allowing your appliances to use power when you're not using them.
- 7 Replace incandescent lightbulbs with compact-fluorescent lightbulbs,** which use less energy, last longer and emit less heat.
- 8 Microwave your dinner.** A microwave oven uses less energy to cook the same food as the cooktop or oven.
- 9 Shop smart.** If you're replacing any of your home's appliances this summer, choose Energy Star-rated models. They're guaranteed to be more energy efficient than appliances that don't qualify for the label.



What Doesn't Belong on a Utility Pole

Although seemingly innocent enough, putting signs or other items on utility poles creates serious safety hazards. Staples, nails and tacks used to hang signs—as well as the signs themselves—pose dangers to electric cooperative lineworkers who must climb poles when either restoring power after storms or performing routine maintenance to ensure system reliability.

Posters or other objects (co-ops have found birdhouses, balloons, flags and even basketball goals on poles) can create dangerous obstacles. Also, the nails and tacks left behind from signs can snag utility workers' boots or puncture safety clothing, making lineworkers vulnerable to slipping or even electrocution.

In addition to being hazardous, tampering with utility poles can be costly. Posting signs or attaching other objects to utility poles is against the law.

Cooperatives encourage consumers to contact local zoning officers to inquire about where signage can be posted legally—and safely.

Elisabet Ney: A Texas Original

*Sculptor's genius
never fit the
conventional mold.*

By Martha Deeringer



A youthful Sam Houston, his image captured in white marble, gazes resolutely into the distance inside the Texas Capitol in Austin. Sculpted by Elisabet Ney in 1892, first in clay, then plaster, and later in marble, Houston is portrayed not in the finery of a state official, but in a fringed buckskin suit, his sword at his side.

Ney, who was one of Texas' first professional sculptors, was born in 1833 in Münster, Germany. She learned the art of working with marble from her father, a master stonecutter, in his workshop—a place normally off-limits to women. Years later, that experience paid off as she won commissions to sculpt many of the great men of Europe, including German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, Italian military hero Giuseppe Garibaldi, German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck and King George V of Hanover.

In about 1871, Ney and her husband, Dr. Edmund Montgomery, moved from Europe to the United States, settling briefly in Georgia before heading to the frontier land of Texas. Ney was quoted in a German newspaper as saying, "After so many of the great men of the civilized world sat for me, I would like to model the greatest of the wild men."

In 1873, the couple purchased Liendo Plantation, one of Texas' earliest cotton plantations, in Waller County. It fit the vision of the utopian existence they longed for. As the story goes, Ney stepped onto the second-story veranda of the plantation's graceful old house, spread her arms wide, and announced, "Here will I live. And here will I die!"

In her new home, she immediately raised eyebrows with her odd clothing—long, flowing white flannel robes and, occasionally, pants. Ney cut her hair short and rode like a man, with one leg on each side of the horse; on long trips, she carried a hammock behind her saddle so she could stop and rest. She kept her maiden name, leading folks to speculate about the couple's marital status. And because she insisted on introducing her husband as "my best friend," the fires of gossip flared.

Edmund and Elisabet had two sons. Their oldest child, Arthur, died of diphtheria shortly before his second birthday, soon after the family arrived at Liendo. Ney was inconsolable. The doctor advised that the body be cremated to avoid the spread of disease, and rumors persisted that the couple accomplished this sorrowful task in the fireplace at the plantation, further distancing them from their suspicious neighbors.

For the next 20 years, Ney concentrated on raising her youngest son, Lorne. She ran Liendo, often riding out to repair fences in her pantaloons. Edmund, a physician, scientist and philosopher, worked in his laboratory on the premises when he wasn't traveling.

In the early 1880s, Gov. Oran Roberts, already a friend of the family, invited Ney to Austin and asked her to help with the visual aspects of the new Capitol

being planned. Eventually, during her work in Austin, Ney met Benedette Tobin, chairwoman of a committee overseeing the creation of a Texas exhibition at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Although Ney was viewed as a curiosity by many, Tobin commissioned her in 1892 to sculpt statues of Sam Houston and Stephen F. Austin for display at the 1893 exposition. Ney agreed to waive her artist's fee, provided the committee raised the money to have the statues done in marble within 10 years.

The statues were first done in clay, then coated with material to make a mold. They were next cast in plaster. Only the statue of Houston was ready in time for the Chicago exposition. The Texas Legislature eventually appropriated money to have both statues done in marble, and these versions now greet visitors just inside the Capitol's south entrance. Duplicates of the statues are also on display in Washington, D.C., in the U.S. Capitol's National Statuary Hall.

Ney chose to portray Houston and Austin as frontier noblemen dressed in buckskins. With practiced hands, she instilled the heroes' spirits into the stone, using engravings and photographs as guides. When criticized for making Houston's statue taller than Austin's (representing the men's approximate heights of 6 feet 2 inches and 5 feet 7 inches, respectively), Ney answered in a letter: "If I am correctly informed, God made the two men. I merely reproduced their likenesses. If you are dissatisfied about them, you should take the matter up with God."

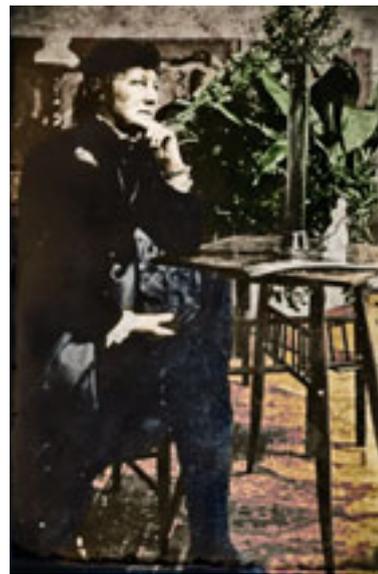
Meanwhile, in 1892, Ney began the construction of a studio in Austin's Hyde Park area. She envisioned her new studio—named Formosa, Portuguese for "beautiful"—as a place where she could work among the state's political and intellectual leaders. It was built of native limestone in a neoclassical design; it was her own miniature, medieval castle on Waller Creek.

Slowly, more commissions came her way, and Ney traveled between Liendo and Austin to work on busts of Texas dignitaries, such as Sul Ross and Francis Lubbock, both governors. Although she had few close friends, her studio became a gathering place for Austin artists and intellectuals.

A few years after her death in Austin in 1907, a group of Ney's admirers formed the Texas Fine Arts Association in her honor. Formosa was reopened as the Elisabet Ney Museum, which houses many of the artist's works, including the original plaster statues of Houston and Austin. The museum is open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5 p.m. A project is under way to restore the grounds' landscaping from Ney's time—a special nod to an artist way ahead of her time.

Martha Deeringer is a frequent contributor to Texas Co-op Power.

The Elisabet Ney Museum in Austin houses many of the trailblazing sculptor's works.



Never Fade Away

Some 1939 classmates are now gone, but time has etched their words in diamonds.

BY HARRY NOBLE

In 1939, Miss Hazel Baker taught the fourth and fifth grades in the small East Texas town of Rosevine, near the Louisiana border in Sabine County. The two grades shared the same room. I was in the fourth grade, and my sister, a fifth-grader, gave me a 5-inch-by-4-inch green book titled “My School-Day Autobiography.”

It contained 50 blank pages on which my classmates could write their thoughts. I collected short essays from 20 classmates and one from my teacher. Originally, they were worthless, but time has etched them in diamonds.

These are Miss Baker’s comments exactly as written seven decades ago:

April 25, 1939

Dear Harry,

I am glad you decided to let the girls write in your book. We were all crazy to “peep” inside.

I am sure we will never forget you, Harry, but we also want you to remember us. I am sure you will remember trying to keep your desk straight. I think you have been a real clever little boy; and you have worked hard when you remembered to do so. You have been fun as well as pep to the Fourth Grade.

“Miss” Baker

Miss Baker’s entry was succinct—telling reams about me in six short sentences. She made it clear that at age 9 I was anti-girls, I kept a cluttered desk and I had to be prodded to do my assignments. She also identified me as a class clown full of energy and ideas. She was right on all counts. I grew out of the first one, but am still guilty of the others.

The six entries on this page appear exactly as written more than 70 years ago. The words carry a timeless poignancy. 'Be kind to all playmates,' Milton Baldree wrote on November 7, 1939 (below). 'Make them happy.'



Dear Harry

I am glad I met you. Well I had better close it is time for the five minute period.

Your friend

Albert Sparks

Dear Harry

I am going to right in your book. I like the other boys and you to. I like to play with you. I hope you have a good time. You are a good friend to me. But we can't be together all the time. Be kind to all playmates. Make them happy.

Your friend

Milton Baldree

Dear Harry

I hope you get promoted to the fifth grade. You have made very good grades this year and I hope you do the same next year. I have enjoyed being in your room. I wish I could get to be in your room next year but I don't reckon I can if I get promoted. I don't know nothing else to write so I'll have to quit.

Your friend,

Lamar Slay

Dear Harry

I am glad I met you. You and I are friends. And I am glad. You are the only one I think of but one. And I think of you more than the other. Some day we will part. And if you will keep this book, you will think of me.

Your friend Walter Owen

Dear Harry

I am glad that I met you. I am glad that you are my friend. You are so good and kind. I believe you love everyone. But someday we will part, but we can be friends can't we. Be good and some day we will walk the golden streets. Lots of love.

Your friend

Eugene Ferguson

Dear Harry

I am going to stay in the fifth grade for another year. I hope you catch me. No you will. Have you failed eny gread yet, I hope you hadden. If you do catch me we have a good time. Are you coming to the play tonight. I hope you, we will a goode. Lamar is going to stay all night with me.

Your friend

Mencil Burkhalter

Looking through the book spurred me to research the whereabouts of my elementary classmates and compile a partial list for my records (a few names have slipped away and couldn't be included). The research surfaced a wide range of emotions, certainly sadness at the large number of former classmates who have passed on. Pure joy emerged when I talked to classmates in person or by telephone. I was surprised each time I couldn't find any information. Overall, it was an enriching experience.

As for Miss Hazel Baker, she was born August 20, 1909, and grew up in the Hebron (Massey) community in San Augustine County. Her parents were W.H. and Leona West Baker, and she had three sisters: Eria Baker, Eldora Baker Winn and Corine Baker Thompson. After earning her credentials, she taught in Midland, Hebron and Rosevine, among other places.

She married Fred Cobb. He died in the late 1960s and was buried in the Tebo Cemetery. She died July 1, 2001, and was buried near her parents in the Hebron Cemetery.

To Miss Hazel Baker: A special salute for the tremendous job you did all those years ago. Thank you.

Harry Noble lives in Iola and is a frequent contributor to Texas Co-op Power.

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Clean Living on 'Soap Suds Row'

BY MARTHA DEERINGER

More than two centuries ago, dusty soldiers stationed across the state, from Fort Gates in Central Texas to Fort Davis in far West Texas, desperately needed clean uniforms. Few soldiers wanted to tackle the dirty work themselves, so laundresses—a historically obscure but crucial component of the frontier military—were officially put to work by the U.S. Army in 1802 in a practice adopted from the British.

Laundresses, also referred to as washerwomen, were the only women officially recognized and supported by the Army in the 19th century. Yet officers' wives and daughters, who technically were merely camp followers, considered themselves on a higher social plane than the lowly laundresses.

Still, social pariahs or not, the laundresses washed and mended the Army's clothing, nursed the sick, baked pies, cleaned houses and generally lent an air of civilization to the frontier.

A laundress was required to have a certificate of good character from headquarters before she could assume duty. Laundresses for each company were appointed by company captains and received one daily ration of meat, bread and whiskey. The whiskey was issued for removing stains—but may or may not have been used for that purpose. The washerwomen were permitted to seek the services of the company surgeon and were also allotted a tent, a hatchet, a large tub for washing and two mess pans.

"Soap Suds Row," where the laundresses lived and worked, was separate from the rest of the camp, often behind the barracks near the sewer outlet. At Ringgold Barracks, on the Rio Grande, the laundresses lived in tattered tents draped over frame supports and patched with barrel staves, broken boards and gunnysacks. If a laundress married a soldier, a frequent occurrence because women were scarce at frontier forts, her husband lived on Soap Suds Row with her.

Doing soldiers' laundry was astonishingly hard work. Before dawn, the laundress chopped wood and hauled water, often heating as much as 50 gallons in various tubs for soaking, scrubbing and rinsing. Typically, clothes were soaked for a day or two before washing and then tossed into a tub of steaming water along with lye soap shaved from bars the laundress made from wood ashes and animal fat.

Bending over the tub with a scrub board, she would rub the garments across the surface, applying more soap when needed, until they were reasonably clean. After a rinse, the clothes were boiled to finish off the last of the vermin (lice, fleas and ticks) before they were wrung out and spread on the grass or hung in trees to dry. Boiling could shrink the heavy woolen uniforms, so the Army issued them several sizes too big.

A few military men with high sartorial standards paid extra to have their uniforms ironed, a backbreaking task involving a heavy flatiron heated in a skillet over the fire to avoid ash and smoke stains. Laundresses also did mending, sewed on buttons and applied bluing to the final rinse to offset the yellowish tinge that light-colored clothing acquired from repeated washings with lye soap.

Each soldier paid the laundress according to a schedule determined by each company's post council. At Fort Concho in San Angelo, the amount ranged from \$1 to \$4 a month per soldier, depending on the soldier's rank. Money owed to laundresses was subtracted from a soldier's pay. While a soldier might earn \$13 a month, an industrious laundress could make up to \$40 over the same period.

Because many Army laundresses could neither read nor write, having spent their lives far removed from educational opportunity, there are few diaries, letters or journals recording their experiences. Some laundresses were infamous characters, roundly criticized for drunkenness and loose morals. At Fort Concho, a laundress refused to leave the post hospital after she was fired by Dr. W.F. Buchanan for "theft, disqualification to tell the truth, and general impudence." Soldiers removed her from the hospital area.

During the seven-plus decades that laundresses were employed by the Army (their authorization was officially rescinded in 1878), the majority of these oft-maligned women proved honest, chaste, industrious and kindhearted. But the Army, leaning toward abolition of the laundress positions to save money, asked commanding officers for their opinions.

"Of course these women cost money—most women do!" insisted Gen. Irwin McDowell. "But I think it will be found that they, like the generality of their sex, are worth all they cost."



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This Is the Season: Churn, Churn, Churn

BY KEVIN HARGIS It's a pretty simple formula, but I always thought it was magic: Cream, milk, eggs, sugar and vanilla went into a stainless-steel canister. Ice, rock salt and the hard work of my father transformed the liquid custard to frozen delight.

I remember my father sweating in the summer heat, using muscle power to turn the crank on our old ice cream churn. As a youngster, I had the easiest and coolest job: sitting on the burlap-covered wooden bucket. This was necessary when the ice cream in the steel canister began to harden and would threaten to jump out under pressure from the dasher inside.

My other job was even better: sampling the sweet, cold, creamy results right from the icy steel container.

Those days were special because they didn't come around that often. Making ice cream at home was hard work, first in standing over the custard as it cooked, and later in the hour-long process to hand churn the custard into ice cream. I can't remember when, but one day the old ice cream maker broke down and never was replaced. That was the end of my childhood memories of homemade ice cream.

It was a long time into adulthood before I entered the world of making frozen treats again. Last summer, I picked up an electric ice cream maker with a plastic bucket at a garage sale for a buck. The motor is much more efficient (and much louder) than the hand-turned churn.

It makes fine ice cream, but the results don't seem quite as satisfying as when sweat and muscle power were part of the recipe.

Because I'm watching my calorie intake, I don't make ice cream that often, but I have found that fresh-fruit sorbets are also a nice, lower-calorie icy treat on a summer's day. They are relatively easy to put together and can be ready in minutes. They also can be made with a variety of fruits and combinations. Here's a recipe I originally found online and modified to suit my tastes a little more.

The small amount of alcohol, which is an optional ingredient, prevents the sorbet from freezing into a solid block. If you'd rather not use it, allow about five minutes for the sorbet to thaw before serving.

On TexasCoopPower.com

You'll find an additional recipe for a delicious cold and creamy treat.

BLUEBERRY-MINT SORBET

- 4 cups (2 pints) blueberries, rinsed
- Leaves from 2 sprigs mint (about 1 tablespoon)
- ³/₄ cup sugar
- Juice of 1 lemon (about 2 tablespoons)
- 1 tablespoon vodka, optional

Place metal canister of ice cream maker in freezer. Puree blueberries, mint leaves, sugar and ¹/₂ cup water in food processor or in batches in blender, taking care not to overprocess. Put puree in small bowl with lemon juice and vodka, if using, and place bowl in ice bath. Chill and stir until sugar dissolves, about 20 minutes. Pour puree into chilled canister and process according to manufacturer's instructions, about 30 minutes, or until frozen. Serve immediately or store in glass or plastic container with lid in freezer.

Servings: 6. Serving size: 1 cup. Per serving: 159 calories, 0.8 g protein, 0.3 g fat, 39.7 g carbohydrates, 2.5 g dietary fiber, 1 mg sodium, 34.9 g sugars



Blueberry-Mint Sorbet



DAVID AND LEA CRONIN, HILCO Electric Cooperative

Prize-winning recipe: **Lemon Gelato**

Homemade ice cream may be more expensive per gallon than store-bought, depending on the recipe. And it's definitely more trouble to make it than to buy it. Plus, it takes plenty of ice and rock salt. But the taste of homemade can't be beat.

LEMON GELATO

- 1 1/4 cups sugar
- 1/2 packet (1/4 ounce) unflavored gelatin
- 1 cup milk
- 5 egg yolks, beaten
- Zest and juice of 6 lemons
- 2 cups heavy whipping cream

In small, heavy saucepan, stir sugar and gelatin in milk until dissolved. Heat to 175 degrees and remove from heat. Whisk in a small amount of hot mixture into egg yolks, then add yolk mixture to hot mixture, and return to heat, whisking constantly. Add lemon zest. Cook and stir over low heat until mixture reaches at least 160 degrees and coats back of metal spoon. Remove from heat and strain into bowl. Stir in lemon juice. Cool quickly in ice water bath and stir

for 2 minutes. For best results, cover and refrigerate for several hours or overnight (optional). When ready to freeze, whip cream until soft peaks form. Fold cream into lemon custard and process in ice cream freezer until mixture reaches soft-serve consistency. Transfer to freezer container and freeze two to four hours or overnight before serving.

Servings: 16. Serving size: 1/2 cup. Per serving: 195 calories, 2.2 g protein, 12.3 g fat, 19 g carbohydrates, 0.3 g dietary fiber, 21 mg sodium, 17 g sugars, 99 mg cholesterol

BLUEBERRY CHEESECAKE ICE CREAM

- 2 cups fresh blueberries
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 2 packages (8 ounces each) cream cheese

- 2 pints heavy cream
- 1 can (14 ounces) sweetened condensed milk
- Whole milk as needed

Cook blueberries and sugar until mixture reaches consistency of preserves, stirring constantly (about 30 minutes). Add cream cheese, heavy cream and condensed milk and cook until creamy. Pour mixture into prepared ice cream freezer and add whole milk as needed to fill line. Process until freezer stops. Remove dasher, pack and freeze one hour.

PHYLLIS KITTEN

Farmers Electric Cooperative

Servings: 32. Serving size: 1/2 cup. Per serving: 257 calories, 4.2 g protein, 16.4 g fat, 21.7 g carbohydrates, 0.2 g dietary fiber, 87 mg sodium, 20.5 g sugars, 62 mg cholesterol

CHOCOLATE MOCHA CRUNCH ICE CREAM

- 1 1/2 cups heavy cream
- 1 1/2 cups whole milk
- 3/4 cup sugar, divided
- 4 large egg yolks

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- 2³/₄ cups bittersweet chocolate chips (60 percent or more cocoa), divided
- 2¹/₂ teaspoons instant coffee granules
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract or vanilla bean paste
- ²/₃ cup slivered almonds
- ¹/₂ cup toffee chips

Place ice cream-maker canister in freezer. In a heavy 3-quart saucepan, heat cream, milk, and ¹/₂ cup sugar until milk is warm (about 175 degrees), about 5 minutes. In a bowl, whisk egg yolks and remaining ¹/₄ cup sugar. Whisk in a small amount of hot milk mixture, then return all to pan, whisking constantly. Add 2 cups chocolate chips and coffee granules. Stir constantly over medium heat until mixture is slightly thickened and reaches about 180-185 degrees, but do not boil. Cool quickly by placing pan in ice water bath. Let stand 30 minutes, stirring frequently. Then stir in the vanilla. Refrigerate, covered, at least four hours before putting into ice cream freezer.

To prepare add-ins, lightly toast

almonds, cool and coarsely chop. Melt remaining chocolate chips in top of double boiler. Line cookie sheet with waxed paper and spread melted chocolate to ¹/₈-inch thickness. Refrigerate about 20 minutes, then chop coarsely. Store in refrigerator with almonds and toffee chips, covered, until ready to use.

When ready to make ice cream, pour custard into frozen canister and churn 25 minutes. Pour in chopped chocolate,

almonds and toffee chips and mix for 2 minutes more. Mixture will resemble soft-serve ice cream. Transfer to an airtight container and freeze until firm, about two hours

ROSALIE A. PETERS

Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative

Servings: 12. Serving size: ¹/₂ cup. Per serving: 473 calories, 5.7 g protein, 30.9 g fat, 47.4 g carbohydrates, 3.1 g dietary fiber, 81 mg sodium, 41.5 g sugars, 107 mg cholesterol

\$100 RECIPE CONTEST

October's recipe contest topic is **Mmmm, Brownies**. Cakey, fudgy or frosted: Brownies can come in a multitude of variations. Do you have a favorite recipe? The deadline is June 10.

Submit recipes online under the Contests tab at TexasCoopPower.com. Or mail them to Home Cooking, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. You may also fax them to (512) 763-3408. Please include your name, address and phone number, as well as the name of your electric co-op. Also, let us know where you found the recipe or whether it's one you developed yourself. The top winner will receive \$100. Runners-up will also receive a prize.

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7TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY RECIPE CONTEST



\$5,000 in total prizes! How sweet and savory it is!

5 Winners! \$2000 Grand Prizewinner. \$1000 Best Savory Recipe. \$1000 Best Sweet Recipe. Two Runners-Up Each Win \$500.

Send us your best original pecan recipes—savory and sweet. Winning recipes will highlight how to use Texas pecans in clever and imaginative ways to dress up savory vegetables, meats and salads or your favorite cookies, pies and candies. All recipes must include pecans. Be sure to use real Texas pecans for the best results. Winners will be featured in our December 2011 issue. **Enter by August 10, 2011 at TexasCoopPower.com.**

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Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com. Each entry MUST include your name, address and phone number, plus the name of your Texas electric cooperative, or it will be disqualified. Specify which category you are entering, savory or sweet, on each recipe. 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 TexasCoopPower.com.

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DEAR DORRIS:
I'm a woman who is 64 years young who suffers from really loose skin under my chin and on my lower neck. I hate the term, but my grandkids say I have "turkey neck" and frankly, I've had enough of it!

I have tried some creams designed to help tighten and firm that loose, saggy skin, but they did not work. Is there any cream out there that can truly help my loose neck skin?

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DEAR TURKEY-NECK: In fact, there is a very potent cream on the market that firms, tightens and regenerates new skin cells on the neck area. It is called the Dermagist Neck Restoration Cream®.

This cream contains an instant lift ingredient that tightens the skin naturally, as well as deep moisturizing ingredients to firm the skin and make it more supple. Amazingly, the **Dermagist Neck Restoration Cream®** also has Stem Cells taken from Malus Domesticus, a special apple from Switzerland.

These stem cells are actually unprogrammed cells that can mimick those of young skin that stays tight, firm and wrinkle free. As an alternative to the scary surgeries or face lifts that many people resort to, this cream really packs a big punch on the loose saggy skin of the neck. **The Dermagist Neck Restoration Cream®** is available online at **Dermagist.com** or you can order or learn more by calling toll-free, **888-771-5355**. Oh, I almost forgot... I was given a promo code when I placed my order that gave me **10% off**. The code was "TXN1". It's worth a try to see if it still work.



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This mural on the side of a Dallas parking garage features a 100-foot-tall toddler pulling a wagon of larger-than-life-size cars. CoServ Electric member **Victoria Owens** sent in this photo. ▼



◀ **Meredith Campbell**, a United Cooperative Services member, thought this coyote-adorned propane tank outside Tolar, southwest of Fort Worth, was a perfect theme for small-town Texas.



Upcoming in Focus on Texas

ISSUE	SUBJECT	DEADLINE
Aug	Milestones	Jun 10
Sep	State Parks	Jul 10
Oct	Cemeteries	Aug 10
Nov	At the Cook-Off	Sep 10
Dec	Fun with Photoshop	Oct 10
Jan	Baby, It's Cold Outside	Nov 10

MILESTONES is the topic for our **AUGUST 2011** issue. Send your photo—along with your name, address, daytime phone, co-op affiliation and a brief description—to Milestones, **Focus on Texas**, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701, before **JUNE 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 online under the Contests tab at 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.

MURALS

From the walls of prehistoric caves, to ancient Egyptian tombs, to the Sistine Chapel, to towns all over Texas: For centuries now, murals have showcased what makes communities and cultures unique. Keep an eye out on your travels across Texas for these charming, colloquial—and oftentimes informative—works of art.

—ASHLEY CLARY

◀ Nueces Electric Cooperative member **Linda Tipton** found this beautiful wall art in Aransas Pass.

This mural, in Dr. Charles E. Urdy Plaza in Austin, is a favorite of Pedernales Electric Cooperative member **Susan Horn**. She says it reflects Austinites' love for music. ▼



Deep East Texas Electric Cooperative member **Karen Thompson** said Dallas artist Abby Thurman painted this custom mural so Center residents could have a “lake view” of nearby Toledo Bend Reservoir. ▼



AROUND TEXAS AROUND TEXAS

This is just a sampling of the events and festivals around Texas. For the complete listing, please visit the Events page at TexasCoopPower.com.

PICK OF THE MONTH

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PIRTLE [3-4]
Pirtle UMC Flea Market,
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GRANBURY [3-4, 10-11, 17-18, 24-25]
Granbury Ghosts and Legends Tours, (817) 559-0849

LONGVIEW [3-5]
AlleyFest,
(903) 237-4000

04 COMANCHE
Comanche Cyclone Bike Tour, (325) 356-2032,
www.comanchecyclone.org

STONEWALL
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4 COMANCHE
Comanche Cyclone Bike Tour

04 JACKSBORO
Pioneer Day,
(940) 567-6218,
www.jackcountymuseum.com

BLACKWELL
Blue Agave Chili Cook-Off,
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SLATON
South Plains Air Show,
(806) 543-9232,
www.thetexasairmuseum.org

04 PAIGE
Trade Days,
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05 LAKEHILLS
St. Victor's Catholic Church Summer Festival,
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07 CLUTE [7, 14, 21, 28]
Planetarium Show, (979) 265-3376,
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10 BURNET [10-11]
Burnet County Area Fair and Rodeo,
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4 SLATON
South Plains Air Show

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Mention blackberries these days, and most people think about the sassy smart phones so beloved in the business world. Apps, e-mails, spreadsheets.

The blackberries I'm talking about grow particularly well throughout Central and East Texas. Some say too well. These tough weeds grow along fences, ditches and railroad tracks, forming dense, thorny thickets ready to snag livestock—and be plundered by happy berry hunters.

Picking berries—blackberries and their cousins, shrubby dewberries—starts summer off on a tasty note. Ask anyone who grew up going on berry-picking expeditions, and reminiscences as sweet as the berries will be shared.

Chiggers and stickers may come to mind first. But then, stories of a beloved grandmother or aunt making jams and cobblers for the family are savored, evoking a slower life long past. You, too, can still make your own memories, along with the cobbler. It's a taste of summer you'll never forget.

THE DIFFERENCES

Though subtle, there are differences between dewberry and blackberry plants. The Southern dewberry (*Rubus trivalis*, the variety that grows well throughout Central and East Texas) is a sprawling shrub with woody, tangled stems that trail along the ground. The blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus*) is larger and sends up long, arching canes on thorny brambles.

But then some blackberries do trail. After all, as members of the rose family, the berries are related. Even botanists can get stuck trying to classify some species. As they say, it's a thorny issue. Blackberries and dewberries have prickles, spread prodigiously, produce delicious fruit and provide a great excuse to get out of the house and go foraging in late spring and early summer. Do some fieldwork. Sample, sample, sample.

You'll be in good company: In his book "Flora and Fauna of the Civil War: An Environmental Reference Guide,"

PICKIN' AND GRINNIN'

Let's talk about blackberries ... no, not those blackberries!

BY SUZI SANDS



author Kelby Ouchley describes the fervor over berries, including this passage from *Union Gen*. William T. Sherman's memoirs: "I have known the entire skirmish line, without orders, to fight a respectable battle for the possession of some old fields full of blackberries."

A medical treatise from a Civil War surgeon lists blackberries as a powerful astringent used to treat dysentery, diarrhea, kidney stones and snakebite. According to other sources, blackberry leaves have also made a fine, dark hair dye throughout the centuries.

Modern-day medical research shows that blackberries and dewberries are jam-packed with antioxidants that can help prevent cancer and heart disease. Tasty, low-calorie (before the cobbler, anyway!) and super nutritious. What's not to like? OK. Let's go berry picking.

HUNT YOUR OWN

One strategy is to scavenge the sunlit ditches and railroad tracks along rural roads. The idea is to tread softly while carrying a big stick to whack the brambles and chase off any snakes that might be snoozing in the shade. Long sleeves

protect against thorns. Pants and boots protect against chiggers and mosquitoes. Wearing shorts and sandals is suicidal in chigger-infested territory. To avoid a chigger chow-down starring yourself as dinner, dust a mixture of sulphur and talcum powder on your legs and arms. It's stinky, but effective.

Stuff your pockets with plastic grocery bags for the harvest. But be careful: You'll crush the delicate berries on the bottom if you overpack bags.

PICK YOUR OWN

If you don't have access to wild blackberries and dewberries, a pick-your-own farm provides the thrill of the hunt with virtually guaranteed success. Many Internet sites, such as www.pickyourown.org, list Texas blackberry and dewberry farms.

Children love the excitement of picking their own berries. Adults love it, too, and enjoy getting high-quality, fresh fruit from a known source. Many farms grow berries organically or use minimal pesticides.

GROW YOUR OWN

For some of us highly urban, properly tamed folk, there's always the backyard. Stumbling out the back door in your bathrobe to hunt down breakfast is one of life's simple pleasures. A handful of plump, juicy berries still touched by dew, sprinkled with brown sugar and topped with a dollop of yogurt starts any day off well.

Blackberries are super easy to grow. The cultivated wild Southern blackberry comes in many excellent varieties, even thornless. Years ago, no thorns pretty much meant no berries, but I'm asking my local agriculture Extension agent about a thornless variety that will do well in my area.

Head out to the country and enjoy a berry delicious start to a Texas summer.

Suzi Sands, art director

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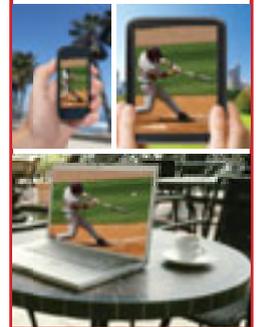
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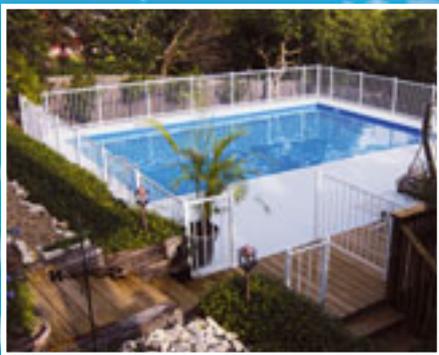


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