

LOCAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE EDITION

JULY 2011

GLUTEN-FREE COOKING

THE HEALING POWERS OF DIVING

TEXAS Co-op POWER

OFF TO THE RACES

Up, up and away ... and back home again
for pigeons on logic-defying flights





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Photos by Will van Overbeek

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TEXAS CO-OP POWER

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

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POWERtalk

Letters from Texas Co-op Power Readers

A TOP RATING FOR GVEC

I would like to thank Guadalupe Valley Electric Cooperative (GVEC) for the continued electric power I receive and the low rates. I don't remember the last time I had an outage.

I live in Schertz, and my last bill from GVEC was \$39.21 for my all-electric, two-bedroom house. My bill from the City of Schertz for 700 gallons of water was \$44.32, and my lawn watering is paid for in my community maintenance fee.

Thank you very much, GVEC.

DAVID A. KLING
Guadalupe Valley
Electric Cooperative

KUDOS TO JASPER-NEWTON EC

I want to express my thanks for the expedient service that I received on April 19. A large oak tree had fallen across the power lines and broke a pole at approximately noon, and by 3:30 p.m., a Jasper-Newton Electric Cooperative service crew had restored power.

One week later, a transformer blew, and the service crew had my power back on in less than two hours. In a time that service is lacking in almost every segment of our culture, our local electric co-op stands well above the norm.

GARY AND KAREN HINSON
Jasper-Newton Electric Cooperative

FIDDLING MEMORIES

Hi, y'all. The "Texas-style Fiddlin'" article in the April 2011 edition brought back a lot of

good memories of fiddling music. We used to have those good ol' family reunions in Childress and Vernon every year when I was growing up.

My uncle, Wes Nivens, was president of the National Old Time Fiddlers' Association for many years. Uncle Wes made many records and cassettes (remember those?). As with several of the fiddlers in the article, he never took lessons but learned by watching the other fiddlers as he grew up, and then adding his own flair to make it his style. The list of songs he played is much the same as today. I particularly loved to hear "Osage Stomp" and "San Antonio Rose."

On the back cover of one of his albums it states: "Old Fiddlers Never Die, they just Play Away!" Thank you for that wonderful memory and for capturing the real spirit of those Texas-style fiddlers!

LINDA MCMURTRAY
United Cooperative Services

READ MORE LETTERS

See "Letters to the Editor" in
July's Table of Contents at
TexasCoopPower.com

RIDE 'EM, BOOGER RED

To Charles Boisseau: You wrote a great article about Booger Red (May 2011). Too bad it only appeared in the online section.

LARRY O'NEILL
Central Texas Electric Cooperative

Editor's note: The article
about legendary bronc rider

Booger Red, which appeared in some May 2011 print issues of Texas Co-op Power, can be found at TexasCoopPower.com.

CHARCOAL TO CASH

Regarding the "Charcoal City: Turning Cedar into Cash" article in the April 2011 issue: It reminded me of a trip my husband and I took to Zambia, Africa, in 2001, as part of a medical mission. I was impressed that they make charcoal out of trees and sell it. They do the same as described in the article—cover the wood with mud, start a fire and close all holes to let the wood smolder.

CAROL HIGDON
Taylor Electric Cooperative

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.

SAVING THE PURE LONGHORNS



Here's a good look at true Texas longhorns.

The two nonprofit organizations trying to save the "old-timey pure longhorns" are the Cattlemen's Texas Longhorn Conservancy and the Cattlemen's Texas Longhorn Registry, both based in Gonzales. The conservancy funded the research to genetically define the Texas longhorn. The registry uses visual inspection and DNA mapping as a requirement for the registration of animals. They are interesting and dedicated groups.

Tracy Salmon, Comanche Electric Cooperative

PHOTO COURTESY DEBBIE DAVIS, CATTMEN'S TEXAS LONGHORN CONSERVANCY

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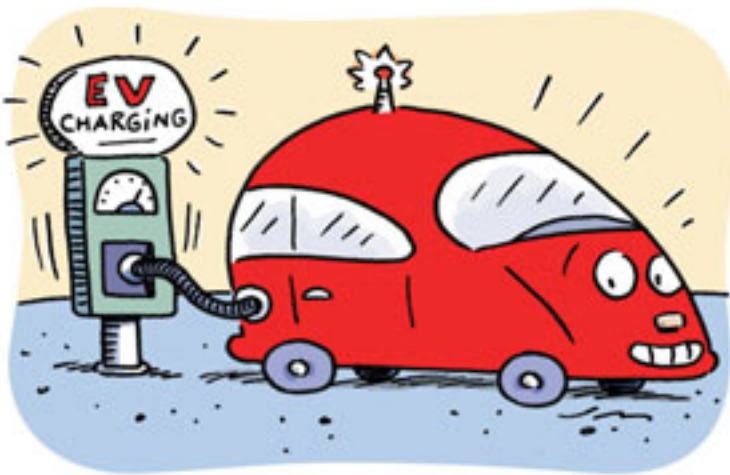
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Energy and Innovation News—People, Places and Events in Texas



Plugged In

Getting a charge out of driving a plug-in hybrid

By Melissa Gaskill

In a crowded parking lot at Whole Foods Market's flagship store in Austin, I whip into an empty spot marked "EV charging only," feeling pretty smug. I'm testing a Toyota Prius plug-in hybrid—an EV, or electric vehicle—slated to hit the U.S. market in 2012.

I hop out and study the ChargePoint station. On a post about 5 feet high, an LED (light-emitting diode) display blinks above a metal panel. I charged the car at home last night, a process no more complicated than plugging in the coffemaker, but the station has me flummoxed. I tug on the panel and stare at the display.

My daughter points out the toll-free number on the post. Ah. I call customer support and get a friendly, live voice asking for my name, phone number, location and e-mail. The e-mail, I am told, is for identification when I call back to end the charge. A few seconds later I hear a click, lift the panel and plug in the car. Then it's off for a latte and some shopping.

About an hour later, we're ready to go. The car isn't fully charged—that would take another 30 minutes or so—but we call, open the panel, unplug and take off, with 7.5 miles of battery range. Fully charged, the car is capable of traveling 13 miles at a maximum highway speed of 60 mph solely on lithium-ion battery power (non-plug-in hybrids typically operate on electric power at 5 to 20 mph). That's far enough for many commutes, including the short one from my Central Austin home to downtown.

Those with access to a charge station at work can drive 13 miles on battery power back home, as well. When the 13 miles of the electric charge run out, the Prius switches to

hybrid mode, with the gasoline engine kicking in.

"It's the best of both worlds," says Jana Hartline, environmental communications manager for Toyota Motor Sales U.S.A., the company that lent me the car. The research, she says, is "tried and true Prius technology, which gets about 50 miles per gallon, with the added range of electric power."

I charged the car overnight in my garage. Charging on a home's standard 110-volt plug pulls 1 to 1.2 kilowatts per hour, Hartline says, roughly equivalent to running a hair dryer or window air conditioner. A full charge takes three hours on 110 volts. Hartline notes that plug-in hybrid owners with access to a 220-volt outlet—the same type used for household dryers and ranges—could cut the charging time in half.

"The average cost of [residential] electricity in the U.S. is about 11 cents per kilowatt-hour," Hartline says. "The average cost to charge the Prius will run about 33 cents."

Assuming that cost, an owner would pay \$1.65 to charge a Prius plug-in hybrid five times a week.

The time certainly seems ripe for EVs. Under a ruling from the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Environmental Protection Agency, makers of new passenger cars and light trucks must improve fuel economy by 5 percent each year from 2012 to 2016, reducing tailpipe emissions of greenhouse gases by 5 percent at the same time (EVs have no tailpipe emissions).

As for other EVs, Nissan offers the Leaf, with a stated 100-mile-per-charge range, and the Chevy Volt pairs a 40-mile electric motor with a gas engine that turns an electricity-producing generator. An electric version of Honda's Fit with a 100-mile claimed range is set to hit the market in 2012.

To service EV growth, a U.S. Department of Energy grant funded 4,600 charging stations nationwide, and Coulomb Technologies has installed roughly 100 across Texas. ChargePoint stations feature a communications network, which explains how I was able to call in and get the Whole Foods Market station opened. The network also allows drivers to find stations online and see which ones are available or in use. Users can even get a text or e-mail when their charging session is complete. Currently, many Texas stations are free to use.

I drove the plug-in around Austin for three days, and the gas gauge needle never budged from full. When I passed battery range, the car switched seamlessly to hybrid mode. I wouldn't have even noticed except for the dashboard display. Living in Central Austin and working at home, my daily trips generally don't go much beyond 13 miles. I could get used to this.

Melissa Gaskill is a frequent contributor to Texas Co-op Power.



H A P P E N I N G S

From working ranch to rodeo arena, Bandera's **NATIONAL DAY OF THE AMERICAN COWBOY** festivities honor the cowboy way of life.

The annual event, scheduled for July 22-23, culminates with a traditional ranch rodeo featuring local working cowboys and cowgirls. Bandera, known as the Cowboy Capital of the World, also tips its hat to heritage by putting Western artists, musicians, singers, poets and storytellers on center stage.

The main draw starts at high noon on Saturday on the Bandera County courthouse lawn with induction ceremonies for the Texas Heroes Hall of Honor, housed within the Frontier Times Museum.

The four Living Legends to be inducted this year are: author and musician Kinky Friedman; retired rodeo star Scooter Fries; Louis Pearce Jr., former president of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo; and Wyman Meinzer, official state photographer for Texas. Toots Mansfield, a world champion roper, will be inducted posthumously.

For more information, call (830) 796-3864 or go to www.frontiertimesmuseum.org.

WHO KNEW?

OFFICIAL SHRUB

The crape myrtle, which the Texas Legislature officially designated as the state shrub in 1997, is one of the toughest, most adaptable and showiest plants grown in Texas. This deciduous, fragrant shrub blooms for up to 120 days, is happiest in hot summer climates and showcases dense clusters of white, pink, red or purple flowers. It even has its own party! Don't miss the Crape Myrtle Festival in Waxahachie on July 2.



CO-OP PEOPLE

Co-op Teens Power Texas Video Contest Winners Call It a (W)rap

BY RACHEL FREY

"Yo, let me tell you something about elec-tri-ci-tee—try not to waste it, this stuff ain't free!" Using a current form of communication—rap—the winners of the 2011 Co-op Teens Power Texas video contest helped educate their fellow students about electricity.

Their strategy of instructing via a rap song worked so well that their peers—and yes, even teachers—at Burnet High School walked through the halls singing the song created by Pedernales Electric Cooperative (PEC) member Thompson Wagner, 18, and classmates Gabriel Fermin, 18, and Weston Smith, 17, also a PEC member.

In the contest, sponsored by Texas Co-op Power magazine and its member electric cooperatives, high school students statewide recorded one- to three-minute educational videos about electricity.

Holly Raiford, career and technology education teacher at Burnet High School, guided the students through the creation of the video. They wrote the song in class, filmed the video on their own time and edited it in the classroom. Raiford assessed the video at each stage of the process.



The winning video features, from left, Thompson Wagner, Weston Smith and Gabriel Fermin.

"They played the basic beat for me, and I immediately loved it," she said. "Then we shared it with the class, and it appealed to a variety of people with different musical tastes. That pumped them up to continue making sure each part of their submission was just as great."

This marked the first time that Raiford's audio/visual production students participated in the contest. Because she sponsored the submission, Burnet High School will receive \$1,000—money that will go

toward improving Raiford's classroom, with her students determining how it is spent. Likely, it will help purchase a new computer. The teens will receive a total of \$1,500, which they plan to split.

To see the winning video, as well the other videos that placed in the contest, go to TexasCoopPower.com or visit the contest's YouTube page at www.youtube.com/user/TXCOOPPOWER.

Now, we'll allow our winners to call it a (w)rap: Let's "thank the companies that connect this city with the one and only resource: **ELEC-TRI-CI-TEE!**"

Rachel Frey, former editorial intern

Up, up and away: Time after time, logic-defying flights bring pigeons, the thoroughbreds of the sky, safely back home.

Off to the Races

BY HELEN CORDES • PHOTOS BY WILL VAN OVERBEEK

AS JIM KENG STOOD SENTRY, SCANNING THE SKIES FROM HIS patio in La Porte, he had a healthy hunch that Miss Elite would be the first bird home. Sure enough, the petite, 1-pound pigeon made a final circle above Keng's backyard, swooped smoothly onto the stoop, and walked calmly back into a pigeon loft.

Miss Elite had just wrapped up a mind-boggling feat: She

flew 10 hours straight, at 50 mph, from 500 miles away in Hoxie, Arkansas. With her uncanny internal GPS and single-minded determination, she made a beeline for one tiny speck in a semirural neighborhood just east of Houston.

Every time Miss Elite arrives home from the long-distance races she's aced to earn elite-flier status, "she still looks like a million bucks," says Keng, an affable general contractor who's president of the Texas Center of Racing Pigeon Clubs.

For Keng and the other 400 or so pigeon racers in Texas, moments like Miss Elite's quiet triumph are unforgettable. It's the payoff for pampering the pigeons from egg to birth and beyond, patiently training them day after day to carry out their ancestral mission of flying home—fast. For many owners of these so-called thoroughbreds of the sky, it's all part of a thrilling high-stakes sport that pits top fliers for lucrative purses at races like the annual Texas Showdown and Texas Gusher, two of the state's top pigeon competitions.

For the rest of us, it's an astounding reminder of the abilities of pigeons to perform jaw-dropping feats while carrying on one of the world's oldest methods of communication.

"The Romans and Greeks used pigeons widely to carry messages," enthuses Bulverde's Robert Tomlinson, a pigeon racer and former executive vice president of the Oklahoma City-based American Racing Pigeon Union, which has close to 700 clubs and 10,000 members. For centuries, pigeons provided postal services—everywhere from a fully bird-staffed service in 12th century Baghdad, Iraq, all the way up to India's Police Pigeon Service, an 800-bird "P-mail" service for emergency messages that was used until 2002.



Nobody knows for sure how racing pigeons find their way home. But there's little mystery as to why pigeons would want to return to this airy, spacious building built by Harry Rauch that looks more like a guesthouse than a birdhouse. Rauch, a Guadalupe Valley Electric Cooperative member, provides his birds special grain mixes and weekly baths to keep their feathers primed for flight. Research suggests that pigeons navigate their way home by using the sun's position and Earth's magnetic field as a compass. They also rely on a keen sense of sight, smell and sound.





Harry Rauch, who lives near New Braunfels, and other pigeon racers pamper their birds with care that's 'like training a world-class athlete,' he says. Pigeons—which perform like elite athletes—get their speed from the 10 primary feathers found on the outside of the wing (bottom right).

Texas pigeons performed a paramount task, outrunning all human methods to get the scoop on The University of Texas' football photographs for the San Antonio Express in the days before wire photos. Throughout the 1940s, photographer and pigeon racer Bill Goodspeed stuffed photo negatives into small canisters, strapped them to the pigeons' breasts in specially made pouches and sent the birds zipping home to his loft atop the newspaper—often from the field during a special halftime ceremony. The pigeons made deadlines regularly, far outflying the motorcycle delivery of the competition, the San Antonio Light.

Heroic wartime homers performed even nobler tasks. During World War II, a pigeon named GI Joe was credited with saving the lives of at least 1,000 British soldiers. He delivered a message to the Americans not to bomb an Italian city where, unbeknownst to U.S. forces, the Germans had retreated and British troops had just entered.

During World War I, a carrier pigeon named Cher Ami delivered messages within the American sector at Verdun, France. His last message, carried from the "Lost Battalion" of the 77th Infantry Division, elevated Cher Ami to legendary heights. Shot through the breast, the bird somehow managed to return to his loft where a message capsule was found dangling from the ligaments of a leg also shattered by enemy fire. Mere hours after the message was received,

194 survivors of the battalion were safe behind American lines.

The U.S. Army disbanded its Signal Pigeon Corps—which numbered 54,000 pigeons at its peak—in 1957.

Historically speaking, commerce worldwide once partially relied on the pigeon. In the early 1800s, a network of pigeon couriers ferried financial information all over Europe for firms such as the Rothschild family companies. Pigeons carried stock prices between Aachen and Brussels for the Reuters news agency until a telegraph link was established in 1851.

In 2009, a South African information technology company proved it was faster—at least in this one instance—to transmit data with a carrier pigeon than via Telkom, the country's leading Internet service provider. It took the pigeon 1 hour and 8 minutes to fly 50 miles to the coastal city of Durban with a data card strapped to its leg. The transfer of data, including downloading, took 2 hours, 6 minutes and 57 seconds—over that same period, only 4 percent of the data was transferred using a Telkom line.

Pigeons still create plenty of commerce: Pigeon racing carries big-buck purses in places such as South Africa, where the Sun City Million Dollar Pigeon Race attracts an elite field. European, Latin American and Asian countries are known for lucrative races and plenty of pigeon gambling, Keng notes. Racing pigeons of prized pedigree and

speed—they've been clocked up to 92 mph—have been sold for \$250,000 at auction.

Most Texas enthusiasts, though, are drawn to the hobby for family fun and a chance to hone skills to produce exceptional pigeons. "It's a fascinating pastime," says pigeon racer Gerald Schoelzel, a San Antonio entertainment attorney. "You use genetics to breed the best bird, medicine and animal-husbandry knowledge to keep them healthy and training well and meteorology to strategize about weather conditions for flying."

Kids are entranced by racing pigeons, notes Tomlinson. His wife, Barbara Ann Tomlinson, also is a prize-winning racer with their member club, the Texas Hill Country Racing Pigeon Club. The couple has reached out to schools and community groups to educate them about pigeon care and racing, bringing boxes of amiable birds for eager kids and adults to hold and watch. "If you can get someone involved at an early age, it becomes this wonderful addiction," Tomlinson says.

"Everybody wants to know how the pigeons know how to get home—even from a place they've never been before," he adds. "We still don't know exactly how!"

Studies show that pigeons use the position of the sun and the Earth's magnetic field as a compass. Researchers have found iron-containing structures in homing pigeons' beaks and posit that the birds form a "magnetic map" based on magnetic fields. Pigeons also rely on a keen sense of sight, smell and sound.

Pigeon fanciers reinforce these abilities by providing care that's "like training a world-class athlete," says Harry Rauch, a retired ironworker who's a member of Guadalupe Valley Electric Cooperative. He built his pigeon loft, an airy, white-washed building that looks more like a guesthouse than bird-house, in his spacious backyard near New Braunfels.

Pigeons coo softly as he points out the nesting areas where he'll mate the best fliers after poring over lineage records. He shows off the special grain mixes and details the daily care that includes weekly baths to keep feathers primed for flight. "They love their baths—even when it's colder, they'll fly right over and jump in," Rauch says.

As for baby care from mom and dad pigeon, they share round-the-clock duties, with both sitting on eggs and then feeding their young "milk" secreted through their crops. Babies get banded with their lifelong numbered leg band at the age of 1 week, and by 6 weeks, they're ready to begin with test flights called "training tosses."

"First, you let them fly around the yard, and you train them to come back through the trap door," explains Barbara Ann Tomlinson. "Then you'll take them five miles and let them fly home, then move up to 10 and eventually 50 and 100."

Homing instincts are reinforced with tossings timed to make the flight home coincide with breakfast or dinnertime. And pigeons are also motivated to fly home to return to a mate or baby. But human bonding is a crucial part, too.

"I talk to my pigeons and snuggle them," says Tomlinson, who believes the maternal touch may explain why female pigeon owners, who are a small but growing minority in the pigeon-racing world, are increasingly producing prizewinners.

The "young-bird" race season for pigeons born in a calendar year begins in Texas when the weather cools down in September and October. Club members transport pigeons to



Prime-Time Texas Flying

Two of Texas' highest-profile pigeon races—the Texas Showdown and the Texas Gusher—typically draw 500 to 800 total entrants under the sponsorship of the Denton Invitational Racing Pigeon Club. The pigeons are sent to Denton from all over the country when they are 4 to 6 weeks old. They are trained there and typically are 6 to 9 months old at race time.

For the 2011 fall events—the exact dates are not yet set—the birds will be hauled in a trailer built specifically for transporting them to the release sites of Sweetwater, Midland and Pecos for 200-, 300- and 400-mile races, respectively. From there, it's ready, set, go as the birds race back to Denton in what is known as a one-loft event—the pigeons return home to the club's loft at 7160 Barthold Road. Upon arrival, each pigeon's computer-chip leg band is scanned to record the date, arrival time and registered band number of each bird.

The 200-mile race is flown first, with the following two races flown seven to 10 days apart.

the starting point, where all birds are boarded in a special trailer rigged to open each cage at precisely the same moment. Then the race is on, with winners calculated by the elapsed time until the pigeon touches down on its home-loft landing board. Technology ensures fairness: Each pigeon has a computer chip in its leg band, and each loft features an electronically wired landing board that will automatically register the bird's band number as soon as it alights there.

The "old-bird" season begins in the spring for pigeons older than 1 year. In Texas, 500 miles is the racing max. "With the heat, it's too stressful to make them fly farther," Keng says. From the second they're released, tension builds as owners worry about how their birds will maneuver within changing weather patterns while dodging hunters' bullets and swerving around high-line wires and other tall obstacles, such as utility towers.

"There's a lot that can go wrong in a race," says pigeon racer Andy Poznecki, a civil engineer who works in San Antonio. "But those times when you're waiting for them to come back and then they come soaring in," he muses as the sun sets over his Bulverde-area loft, "that moment makes every bit of it worthwhile."

Writer and editor Helen Cordes lives in Central Texas.

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Customer Feedback

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

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.*

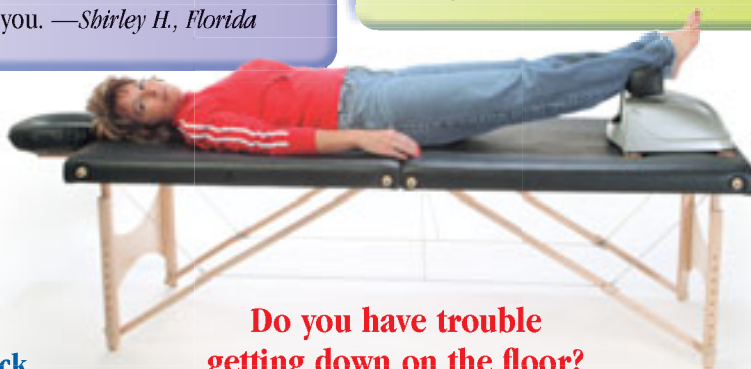
I am 76 years old, heavy, stiff with arthritis and a leukemic for the past nine years. Using your machine twice a day has made me feel ten years younger. I also have a great deal more energy. When you say that your company is in the business of "helping people feel better", it is no fib! —*Kate B.*

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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BENEATH THE SURFACE

Disabled Veterans Discover a Sense of Freedom
and a World of Wonder Through Scuba Diving

BY MELISSA GASKILL • PHOTOS BY WOODY WELCH AND JOHN THOMPSON

Army intelligence analyst and combat engineer Tim Mithofer could only watch, trapped in the gun turret, as some 200 Iraqi soldiers, some on foot and others in pickup trucks, surrounded the mine-resistant armored patrol vehicle in which he was riding in 2008.

Mithofer and his fellow soldiers, who had set up a roadblock to protect a supply convoy, lost radio communication with the rest of the convoy and watched, helpless, as the Iraqis closed in, some throwing rocks. No gunfire was exchanged, but throughout the two-hour ordeal, Mithofer says the Americans feared for their lives.

"We felt like sitting ducks out there," he recalls. "There was no way to get out of that vehicle." The nightmarish memory, which Mithofer compares to being trapped with other people inside a locked car, "keeps me up at night."

A few days later, things got worse. Mithofer was on a mission to search for improvised explosive devices (IEDs) when the driver swerved to avoid what he thought was an IED. The vehicle went left, and Mithofer, again riding in the gun turret, went right—at 50 mph. The sharp swerve slammed him into the turret, fracturing his pelvis in seven places.

Mithofer, who had broken a hip four months earlier, was evacuated to Germany and eventually to San Antonio's Brooke Army Medical Center (BAMC), where it took months for his bones to heal. Three years later, Mithofer still battles post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and constant pelvic pain.

Except underwater.

During his rehabilitation at BAMC, Mithofer took a scuba diving class for disabled soldiers taught by John Duggan, retired chief of intelligence for the Air Force's major air-training command. Mithofer quickly discovered that beneath the surface, he felt free from claustrophobia and a feeling of helplessness.

Uncomfortable in crowds and tight spaces he can't control, Mithofer no longer attends football games at Texas A&M University, his alma mater, and can't relax in movie theaters. But last year, he explored two shipwrecks off the coast of Panama City, Florida. He and fellow divers held onto cables con-

nected to dive reels as they entered the wrecks.

"It was everything I could do to keep myself calm," the 45-year-old Mithofer says, "but I did it, and that's an important step for me. It won't be as hard the next time."

Mithofer says when he scuba dives, he feels no pain. "None," he says. "I don't know if it's the water taking weight off, psychological, or both, and I don't care."

So, while physical pain keeps Mithofer from running, lifting weights or engaging in other high-impact sports, he can excel at diving. He has achieved master diver status through the National Association of Underwater Instructors and is working on the next step: certification as a scuba diving instructor. He credits much of his success to Duggan, who began teaching diving in 1964.

In 2007, Duggan started teaching scuba diving classes at the newly opened Center for the Intrepid, a state-of-the-art physical rehabilitation facility for disabled veterans (including amputees and burn victims) on the Fort Sam Houston campus next to BAMC.

Duggan estimates that about 200 veterans have become certified divers through his classes there. "I was 35 years in the military and lucky enough not to get hurt," says Duggan, 71. "I just wanted to pay back a little bit."

Duggan is not alone in his quest to help disabled veterans through scuba diving. John Thompson, 45, founded Soldiers Undertaking Disabled Scuba (SUDS). The privately funded non-profit organization, which is a chapter of the Wounded Warrior/Disabled Sports Project, is based at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

Thompson, who was not deployed while serving in the Army National Guard from 1985 to 1992, later taught recreational scuba diving to military personnel and civilians at the Guantanamo Bay U.S. Naval Base in Cuba, where he and his wife, Michelle, were stationed.

In 2005, John and Michelle, an Army pathologist, were transferred to the Walter Reed facility. Thompson, who years earlier had taught diving in the Caribbean, found himself wanting to



JOHN THOMPSON



JOHN THOMPSON

OPPOSITE PAGE: With Army Sgt. John Keith, below left, and Army Sgt. Shanan Lefeate watching, U.S. Marine Cpl. Luke McDermott, above, appears to fly underwater while scuba diving at the Aquarena Center in San Marcos. **TOP:** Shane Heath, an Army veteran, with help from a local resident, makes a new friend while diving off the coast of Curaçao. **BOTTOM:** U.S. Marine Eric Morante glides with silver look-down fish in a dream of a dive near an oil rig 17 miles offshore of South Padre Island.

help the disabled veterans he saw coming through.

"It kind of hit me in the gut," he says. "I was asking myself, 'What do I have to offer?' I didn't have an answer."

Then American Red Cross representatives at the medical facility asked Thompson about his background. Because he was a scuba diving instructor, the next step was logical: He started volunteering his time to an aquatic therapy program. It became clear that he could incorporate scuba work with rehabilitation, and the first SUDS class was held in February 2007.

Most of his diving students are amputees, Thompson says. Disabled veterans also are admitted for traumatic brain injuries, burns, shrapnel wounds



Army Sgt. Shanan Lefeat, left, checks her gear before taking the plunge into the San Marcos Springs at San Marcos' Aquarena Center. Through adaptive diving, which features the use of prosthetics, webbed gloves, weight-integrated buoyancy-control devices and diver-propelled vehicles, disabled veterans can experience weightlessness—physical and emotional—underwater.

and PTSD. All of them, he says, can benefit from the diving program.

Serious injuries can take an individual to a dark place, Thompson says: “But when soldiers see they can do something as challenging as diving, and do it as well as anybody else, it’s a real confidence booster. They figure, ‘If I can scuba dive, I can kayak, or golf, or whatever.’”

With help from contacts in places where he once lived and worked, Thompson organizes SUDS trips to such exotic locales as St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands; Puerto Rico; and Curaçao, a southern Caribbean island. The Thompsons now live in San Antonio, where John assisted Duggan at the Center for the Intrepid from 2008 to 2010. But Thompson’s main responsibility remains with SUDS: He serves as an instructor on about 10 trips a year and thrills to see the soldiers experience weightlessness in the water.

Thanks to something called adaptive diving, disabled veterans enjoy virtually no limits underwater, Thompson says. Adaptive diving features four main elements: prosthetics, webbed gloves,

weight-integrated buoyancy-control devices and diver-propelled vehicles.

But most of the divers bypass the vehicle, Thompson says, noting that they want the full diving and swimming experience. For example, someone missing a leg below the knee can put on a swim leg and press a button to push down the prosthetic foot and lock it into position for placement of a fin.

Often, the pain from injuries and wearing prosthetics goes away in the water, Thompson says: “These guys are tough. They have that can-do attitude. They adjust.”

Tim O’Leary, president and owner of American Diving on South Padre Island, sees that can-do attitude firsthand. O’Leary has taken groups of disabled veterans to dive around offshore oil rigs and down to the Texas Clipper, a World War II-era ship that was sunk in open water about 17 miles off Padre Island to create an artificial reef—an underwater habitat and diving destination.

On one of O’Leary’s trips last year, medically retired Air Force Staff Sgt. Dan Acosta saw a whale shark. These school-bus-sized, slow-moving sharks—which, fortunately for humans, feed mostly on plankton—hang out around offshore rigs in the summer, but only a few lucky divers have seen one. “That was cool, real cool,” says Acosta, who was injured while disarming a roadside IED in Baghdad in 2005. His left arm was amputated at the shoulder, and he sustained burns on both legs. Acosta now lives in Chicago and plans to continue diving.

Retired Army Staff Sgt. Orlando Gill, 38, has seen great white sharks while diving near Guadalupe Island in Mexico. The San Antonio resident lost his right leg to a direct hit from a rocket-propelled grenade while on patrol in Iraq in 2004. A diver since 2006, he’s now a field representative for Disabled Sports USA, based in Rockville, Maryland.

“Diving definitely helped me,” says Gill, who wears a prosthetic leg in the water. “Physically, I have my own independence. Mentally, it’s very calming. A lot of soldiers, like me, have PTSD and deal with a lot of stress. In the water, there is no stress.”

Mithofer, who lives near San Antonio, in Cibolo, with his wife,

Becky, and two daughters, agrees and says that’s why he wants to help Duggan at the Center for the Intrepid.

“Becoming an instructor is a chance to help guys much worse off than I am,” Mithofer says. “I have all my limbs. I see a lot of fellow wounded warriors not knowing what to do and falling into a pattern where they don’t do anything. I tell them to find something to be inspired about, get happy about something, take it day by day.”

Diving, Mithofer says, has given him a new direction. “I’m so different from before,” he says. “When I was hurt, the doctor said to me, ‘You’ll never be the same again,’ and he was right.”

Veterans who learn to dive at the Center for the Intrepid often complete the open-water portion of their classes at the Aquarena Center in San Marcos. A recent group of two veterans from the Army and one from the Air Force, each missing part of a leg, arrived in a Wounded Warrior van. The divers suited up and entered the water paired with instructors. Backpacks, towels and gear bags littered the sunny dive dock. A prosthetic leg and a pair of crutches leaned against the railing. Another prosthesis, complete with a shoe, lay across a pack.

Clouds of bubbles rose to the surface of the San Marcos Springs, marking the location of divers beneath. Just visible some 20 feet below, two shapes in dark wetsuits wearing shiny tanks, each propelled by a single flipper, moved effortlessly along.

These veterans were learning what Mithofer says is a key to adaptive diving: Water is the great equalizer.

“It’s just a big sense of accomplishment, being able to go down there and see all those things and come up successfully,” Mithofer says. “It’s like a completed mission.”

Melissa Gaskill, a freelance writer based in Austin, is a frequent contributor to Texas Co-op Power.

On TexasCoopPower.com

Learn more about scuba diving classes for disabled veterans and where to find them.



"As the master craftsman who opened the famous Lincoln Pocket Watch in Washington, D.C., I recently reviewed the Stauer Meisterzeit timepiece. The assembly and the precision of the mechanical movement are the best in its class."

—George Thomas
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Instincts tell us to flee danger. Unfortunately, in vehicle accidents that bring down power lines, these natural inclinations can lead to tragic results.

Texas Electric Cooperatives and Safe Electricity want everyone to know: If your car hits a power pole, or otherwise brings a power line down, stay in your vehicle and wait until the local electric utility arrives on the scene and ensures that lines have been de-energized. If you come upon or witness an accident involving toppled power poles and lines, don't leave your vehicle to approach the scene.

Indiana teenagers Lee Whittaker and Ashley Taylor saw a power line safety demonstration at their high school and never dreamed their new knowledge would be put to the test. Five days later, they and two classmates were in a vehicle that crashed into a utility pole, bringing live power lines to the ground.

Fortunately, they heeded the safety advice they'd received and survived because they knew the right actions to take. And they helped others who approached the scene by warning them to stay away. A video of their story can be seen at www.safeelectricity.org.

According to the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration, tens of thousands of accidents occur each year in which power poles are struck by cars or large equipment. Each one of these accidents has the potential to bring down power lines. Surviving the accident itself might not be enough to stay alive without awareness of the right moves to make.

The teens in this crash knew to stay in the vehicle until the fallen power lines were de-energized, thanks to a demonstration by their local electric cooperative.

In the majority of those incidents, the safest place to remain is inside the car. Only in the rare instance of fire should people exit a vehicle. Then, they must know how to do so safely, jumping free and clear, landing with feet together, and hopping away. It's difficult to get out without creating a path for current to flow, which is why one should get out only if forced.

"When people are involved in a car accident, electricity is usually the last thing on anyone's mind," Safe Electricity Executive Director Molly Hall said. "We're often more concerned about whether anyone was injured, or how badly the vehicle is damaged. We forget that by exiting the vehicle, we're risking bodily exposure to thousands of volts of electricity from downed power lines."

Lee and Ashley are grateful to their electric cooperative that sponsored the electric safety program at their school. The students are encouraging everyone to learn from their experience.



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RAISE THE TEMPERATURE A LITTLE SAVE A LOT

The U.S. Department of Energy says you can save 10 percent a year on your heating and cooling bills by simply setting your thermostat 10 degrees higher in summer or lower in winter—for eight hours. You can do this automatically without sacrificing comfort by installing a programmable thermostat.

But cranking your thermostat way up whenever you leave the house won't necessarily reduce your air conditioning bill.

HERE'S WHAT DOESN'T WORK:

1. Changing the thermostat setting for short periods, several times a day. If you'll be gone for less than six hours, leave your thermostat where it is.

2. Lowering the thermostat to 60 degrees when you get home to kick the unit into high gear and cool the home quicker. That doesn't cool your home off any faster, but it will use more energy than if you set the thermostat to a reasonable temperature.

YOUR BEST BET: Set it and forget it. If you replace your old thermostat with a programmable model, you can set various schedules for work and sleep on weekdays and weekends—and let the thermostat "remember" when to change for the most efficient—and comfortable—result.

A CAUTION: Don't use a regular programmable thermostat with a heat pump.

It's Grillin' Time

Summertime is grilling season—especially when the Fourth of July rolls around—and burgers and hot dogs over a sizzling fire are a welcome sight at backyard barbecues across Texas. But fire anywhere else can make your family cookout memorable for all the wrong reasons.

Remember these rules of grilling:

For all grill types

- Only use your grill outdoors. Grills are fire hazards, and some produce deadly carbon monoxide gas. Keep yours in a ventilated, open-air space.

- Keep children and pets away from the grill area. Young ones or Fido can knock grills over and start a fire or injure themselves or others.

- Keep your grill clean by removing grease or fat buildup from the grates and in the trays below the grates. Buildup can start a grease fire.

- Never leave your grill unattended.

For electric grills

- Don't expose cords, plugs or heating elements to liquids.

- Check the grill for damage before operation and replace broken parts.

- Turn the unit off before plugging in or unplugging.

- Plug the grill into a ground-fault circuit interrupter outlet.

- Do not use the electric grill near combustible materials.

- Don't use the grill in the rain.

For charcoal grills

- Use only charcoal starter fluid and never add any additional flammable liquids to a fire.

- Keep charcoal lighter fluid out of the reach of children and away from heat sources.

- Cool coals completely before disposing of them in a metal container.



For propane grills

- Check the gas tank hose for leaks before using it. If your grill has a gas leak but no flame, turn off the gas tank and grill. If the leak stops, get the grill serviced by a professional before using it again. If it does not stop, call the fire department.

- If you smell gas while cooking, immediately get away from the grill and call the fire department. Do not move the grill.

Always check the burn ban status in your area before lighting your grill.

Keep CFLs Burning Bright

The up-front cost of switching your incandescent lightbulbs to long-burning, compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) might not be cheap, but you'll save money in the long run by replacing the bulbs less often and using less electricity to burn them.

So if you've noticed that your CFLs are burning out too soon, it could be that you're buying the wrong kind.

Normal CFLs aren't designed for use with dimmers. And they don't last as long if you use them in enclosed areas or where there's excessive heat, vibration or fluctuations in power.

Some tips:

- Before you buy a lightbulb for a dimmer or another special use, check its label to see if it's made for that purpose. Some CFLs work in dimmers, motion sensors or three-way sockets, for example. But not all of them do.

- Buy the right-sized lightbulb for the fixture. Using a larger lightbulb or one that burns brighter than recommended for a lamp or ceiling fixture can cause the bulb to overheat and burn out prematurely.

- Avoid placing CFLs in enclosed indoor fixtures. The lack of air circulation and increased heat can reduce the bulb's life.

- Choose a special, more durable CFL for use in an overhead fan light, which can vibrate and disturb the bulb.

- If you're using CFLs outdoors, find bulbs designed for exterior use and check the package to learn if the bulbs can withstand cold temperatures. Place them in protected fixtures.

- Turning a CFL on and off frequently can shorten its life. Try to leave it on for at least 15 minutes at a time.

With normal use, CFLs typically last for 10,000 hours—13 times longer than an incandescent bulb.



Did You Know...

The word 'electricity' comes from 'elektron,' the Greek word for amber. Thales, a Greek, discovered static electricity in about 600 B.C. when he electrically charged amber by rubbing it on silk.

Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration

ILLUSTRATION BY CARL WIENS

We Were Not Orphans

Book provides a stark look inside the now-defunct Waco State Home.

By Joel W. Barna



First-person stories provide a stark look at a forgotten chapter of recent Texas history—as well as a warning for the future—in a new book about the defunct Waco State Home.

We were not orphans: *Stories from the Waco State Home* (University of Texas Press, 2011) tells the story of the State Home for Dependent and Neglected Children (renamed the Waco State Home in 1937), which housed and cared for thousands of abandoned and abused children from 1923 until it closed in 1979.

Through a collection of more than 50 interviews with former residents, author Sherry Matthews sheds light on the harsh realities of life at the home.

In the book's foreword, journalist Robert Draper calls the Waco State Home “the de facto safety net for children who had committed no crime other than the offense of being born poor.” For many of its young residents (who were wards of the state but not orphans), the institution provided education and skills that helped the children establish successful adult lives. But, for others, Draper writes, the home was “part of a Dickensian saga that has remained untold until now.”

Credit for the telling of the story goes to Matthews, who was 3 when her three older brothers were taken away to live at the home. Matthews and her mother traveled from East Texas to Waco to visit the boys during their six-year stay there. As Matthews writes, the family tragedies that sent her brothers to the home are not included in the book's collection of stories.

But her family's story, nonetheless, carries great weight. She writes that her one surviving brother, Bing, “says he remembers his time in the Home as the most miserable years of his life and has no story to tell.”

In June 2004, more than 50 years after she had last visited the home, Matthews joined Bing at a Waco State Home reunion. Matthews describes former residents eagerly showing off their old living quarters to children and grandchildren, sharing memories of homemade rolls, fresh dairy ice cream and beloved teachers.

But not all remembrances were pleasant. One woman recounted a harrowing childhood experience at the home. A dorm mother told the girl that she was spending too much time brushing her long, below-the-waist hair and “whacked off all my hair above my ears in this ugly, jagged cut,” the woman told Matthews. “I was devastated.”

In 2008, Matthews contacted members of the Waco State Home Ex-Students' Association and embarked on the project of telling their stories. She also gained access to thousands of binders of historical materials compiled by Harold Larson, the founder and archivist of the Ex-Students' Association who died in 2009. Photographs from Larson's collection accompany many of the stories.

Many former students describe lives of destitution before coming to the home. Dick Hudman conveys the 1920s-era agricultural depression in a few flat statements: “I had three brothers and a sister. My dad died after being kicked by a

mule. My mother couldn't take care of us, so she sent all the boys to the Waco State Home. ... That was in 1924, when I was two years old. I grew up there."

Betty Emfinger Cupps, who was at the Waco home from 1948 through 1951, says of life before the home: "We were neglected. I remember going hungry, and I remember my brother, James, and I eating dirt to fill our stomachs."

Yet some of the home's former residents tell of heartbreak at being taken from their families. Betty Ann Moreno Dreese, who arrived in Waco in 1944, tells of weeping for days after her arrival and being given "a room with a window that looked out on the front gate, so I could watch for my mother. I watched and watched, but she never came." Help, as Dreese describes, arrived in the form of Mr. Speece, a coach, who started visiting the girl: "He told me he could really use me on the basketball team. He even brought me a basketball."

Other teachers and staff members helped students in immeasurable ways. Dreese says of English teacher Mabel Legg: "She taught us to love poetry and all the things that make a child's life beautiful."

Charles Goodson, who went to the home in 1939, describes the tough-love approach of Superintendent Ben Peek: "When I left the Home, [he] looked me straight in the eye and told me I would never amount to anything. I am not saying he was a bad guy. He wanted me to stay and finish high school. He cared about us."

Goodson ends his story with a glimpse at his adult life: "Now with six figures in the bank due to hard work five or six days a week, I intend to hunt and fish and spend money in my retirement."

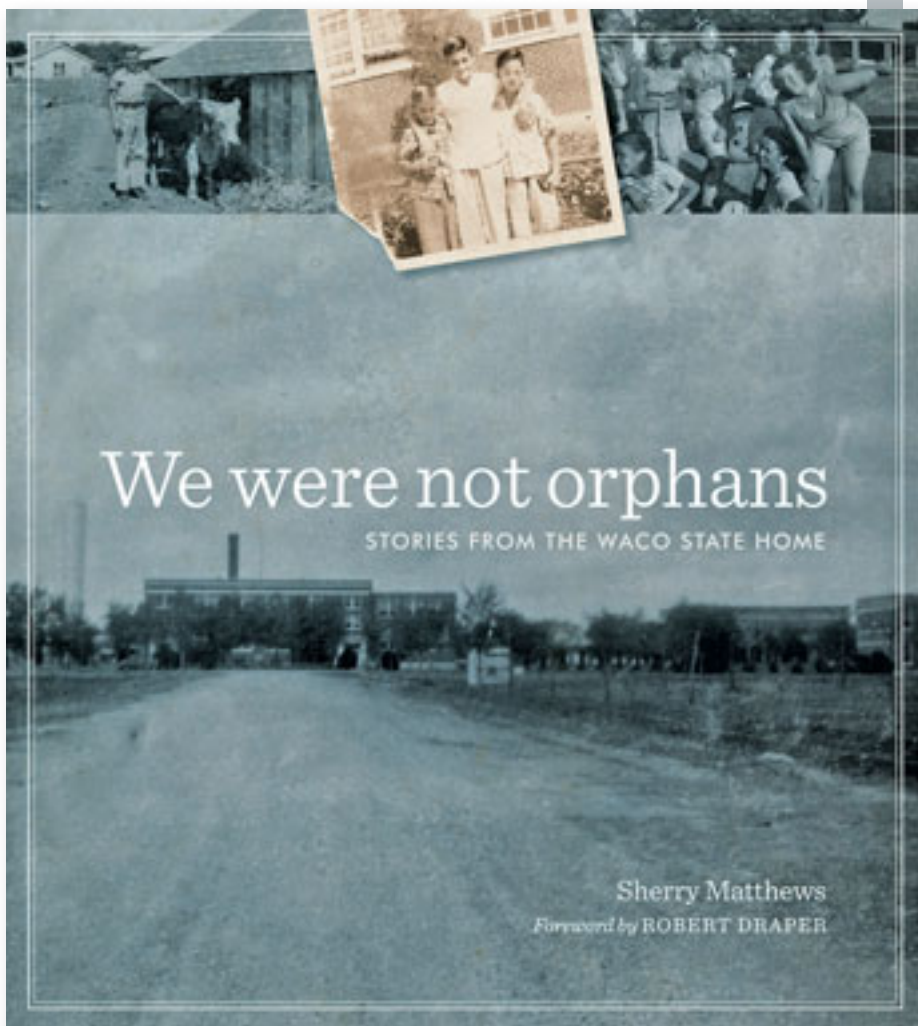
Ronnie Corder, who came to the home in 1965, recalls landing a part in the play "Oliver!" and being asked to sing. Corder told teacher George Weaver, "I can't sing anything," and Weaver said, "Well, we can practice together." And so they did. The play, Corder says, "changed my life and made me think somebody really cared."

But, as Matthews details, there was a dark side to the home, which was under the supervision of the Texas Youth Council (TYC). In 1971, a federal district judge found that a number of practices—including arbitrary beatings and solitary confinement—routinely being practiced at TYC facilities constituted cruel and unusual punishment. Because of his ruling, the Waco State Home was eventually closed as a facility for dependent children.

Matthews reproduces previously hidden records from a Texas State Board of Control's investigation some 70 years ago that ultimately ended in the dismissal of the superintendent. But sadly, as she describes, pockets of abuse were allowed to fester for decades more.

Matthews, who runs an Austin-based advocacy marketing firm, concludes that the Waco State Home's alumni are "heroes for us all."

And she writes with a simmering rage that serves as a wake-up call: "An obvious reason for indifference toward the abuse of dependent children was simply prejudice against poverty. It existed then, and it exists today."



COURTESY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PRESS

Austinite Joel W. Barna is the former editor of Texas Architect magazine.

Digging Holes

*We may never get
to the bottom of this.*

BY MIKE COX

D

ropping my shovel to catch my breath and gulp down a bottle of water, it occurred to me that the simple-seeming matter of digging a hole in the ground is actually a fairly deep subject. Pondering the matter while taking a break, I realized there's a "hole truth" to be learned about digging that applies to everything from planting trees or burying deceased pets to the search for hidden treasure.

Back in the early 1950s, I dug my first modest hole in a limestone-walled flower bed in front of my grandparents' limestone veneer house in what then was far North Austin. Using a garden trowel, I began mining for what I confidently believed to be nuggets of white gold—in reality, small limestone rocks mixed in with the topsoil that had gone into the built-in planter.

Grandmother tolerated my excavations as long as I didn't disturb her elephant ears, though she did caution me that if I dug too deep, I'd end up in China. While that might have been quite an adventure for a 6-year-old, and would have opened wonderful trade opportunities with the Asian market, I never made it to the other side of the globe.

I dug my first sizable hole when my mother attended Texas Woman's University in 1957. The site was in the vacant lot next to the duplex in which we lived on the outskirts of then small-town Denton. My motivation for this hole was not the prospect of gold, but keeping up with my fellow kids. With the Hula-hoop craze yet to hit North Texas, the neighborhood boys occupied themselves by digging a deep "fort" in the reddish-tan soil adjacent to the alley behind our duplex.

What got me into a hole was the one the big kids had dug. With multiple diggers, they had excavated a big square in the ground deep enough and wide enough in which to stand and play. They then covered it with boards and mounded dirt on top. A kid-wide trench half as deep served as the entranceway. They had created an Old West-style dugout that could have doubled for a tornado or fallout shelter—a great, albeit potentially dangerous, place to play cowboys and Indians.

Naturally, I wanted my own dugout. But being only a second-grader, I didn't have much success. The hole I managed to dig went down only 2 or 3 feet, barely deep and wide enough for me to crawl into, even if I really scooped up.

One reason I never had any luck digging a hole deep enough to stand up in (I have, however, dug myself into some really deep holes in the figurative sense over the years) is because wielding a shovel is plain hard work.

Now, way too old to play in backyard dugouts without causing a considerable amount of talk, I'm occasionally reminded of the extent of physical labor involved in digging a hole as I lay pets to rest, or, on a more upbeat note, plant trees.

Recently, I had occasion to force a shovel blade into the sod once more, this

time to bury an old roll of tar paper. I hunt on a small tract of land along the San Gabriel River in Williamson County north of Austin. Over the past several years, I've been working to restore the property to its natural state by removing trash that has accumulated on it.

I've burned or hauled off a lot of old lumber and junk from the place, but a long-discarded roll of tar paper stuck out like, well, an old roll of tar paper lying in an otherwise pristine outdoor setting. I didn't want to burn it, knowing that wouldn't be good for the atmosphere, and I didn't want to tote it all the way to town, especially not after I found a big bull snake in the cannon-like mouth of the roll.

Finally, with the help of my hunting buddy, Stephen, we developed a plan. Once the snake found another place to hang out, we would place the heavy roll in a wheelbarrow and roll it down a rocky hill to the black dirt-rich flood plain. There, I would dig a hole and bury the eyesore.

It had rained about a week before, so I figured the spadework would be easy. But when I pushed the shovel into the ground, my right knee reminded me why I had gone into journalism instead of manual labor. Finally, with a fair amount of effort, I dug a hole about 1 foot deep and 3 feet long.

"You know," I joked to Stephen as he stood watching me work, "I have renewed respect for old-time well and outhouse hole diggers. Digging is hard work."

Seriously, those last four words explain why most Texas treasure tales—beguiling as they are—are merely folklore.

One of the most enduring Texas folk-tale categories involves a pack train laden with, depending on the teller and location, either Spanish, Mexican, Confederate or French gold. Indians attack, and to escape, the teamsters are forced to bury their loot.

Think about it. Digging a hole big enough to hide a treasure chest full of gold would take a lot of work. Dodging arrows would make the task even more difficult.

I'll keep digging holes when I absolutely have to, but what little treasure I own is "hidden" in a stainless-steel safety deposit box in our nice, air-conditioned bank. All I have to dig for is the key in my pocket.



Mike Cox is a frequent contributor to Texas Co-op Power.

Editor's note: Call 811 before you dig to avoid hitting underground utility lines such as electric, gas, cable and phone.



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The Official Dog of Texas

BY MARTHA DEERING

The Legislature declared the Blue Lacy the official dog breed of Texas on May 25, 2005, making the state only one of 11 in the U.S. to award a canine breed that honor.

The Blue Lacy, the only dog to originate in Texas, is an energetic, hard-working breed that was brought up on a Burnet County ranch under the supervision of a historic Central Texas family.

House Concurrent Resolution No. 108 describes the Blue Lacy, in part, as “a Texas native, a working dog bred to play an essential role in ranch operations, at a time when the ranches themselves became one of the iconic Texas symbols, and a dog that has more than pulled its weight on many a Texas spread.”

The beginnings of the Blue Lacy breed date to 1858, when the Lacy brothers moved from Kentucky to Granite Mountain near the present-day Texas city of Marble Falls. Just 12 years had passed since the U.S. formally annexed Texas, and Burnet County’s population was about to reach 2,487 residents when Frank, George, Ewin and Harry Lacy took up masonry and ranching in the shadow of Granite Mountain’s 869-foot dome.

The brothers quarried and sold granite from the mountain. In 1885, George Lacy was one of three businessmen who donated the stone—dubbed sunset red granite for its pinkish hue—to build the state Capitol in Austin.

The Lacys’ ranching operation included raising free-range cattle and hogs. The hogs, fueled by a rich diet of acorns and berries, multiplied among the miles of unfenced land like mice in a grain bin.

Moving cattle and hogs to market in the mid-19th century was a labor-intensive operation accomplished on horseback with the help of dogs. It didn’t take the Lacy brothers long to notice that while many breeds of herding dogs could move cattle, the process of gathering hogs and getting them to market was another story.

Hogs often refuse to turn and run like cattle; instead, they face their opponents and fight. It takes a gritty, aggressive dog to confront an angry boar, and the Lacy brothers needed a dog that was tough enough to handle the job. They began with a mix of greyhound—a breed that trails by sight—and scent hound for superior tracking ability. Finally, they added a touch of a wild canine—reportedly the coyote or wolf—for quick wits and drive.

Over time, the brothers refined the breed, developing a high-energy dog that is happiest when it has a job, whether it’s herding cattle or hogs or following a scent trail.

In a report by the National Lacy Dog Association, Helen Lacy Gibbs, granddaughter of George Lacy, recalls her father

rounding up hogs with descendants of the original Blue Lacys during the Great Depression. “We didn’t drive the hogs,” she says. “We just followed as the dogs led them to the pen.”

She describes how the dogs would nip the hogs and then run toward the pen, dodging the slashing tusks of the hogs in wild pursuit. A hole high in the fence on the opposite side of the pen allowed the dogs to jump out after they led their pursuers inside. The ranchers followed, closing the gate behind them. The Lacy brothers used this method in taking their hogs downstream along the Colorado River to a packing-house they owned in Austin.

“They are powerful dogs,” says Marlo Riley, the great-great-granddaughter of Frank Lacy. “They have a surprising intelligence that convinces me they are capable of reasoning. It’s a common saying that one Blue Lacy can do the work of five mounted cowboys.”

Riley also manages the Lacy Game Dog Registry, keeping track of bloodlines and gathering photographs and documents to record the Blue Lacy’s history. The descendants now number more than 1,000 dogs. But at one point over their 150-year-history, Blue Lacys almost became obsolete.

When pork producers began to pen their hogs and feed them corn, the need for the dogs’ unique abilities diminished. But in 1975, a renewed effort to save the breed emphasized their value for hunting and search-and-rescue work. Since then, Blue Lacy numbers have steadily increased. The recent explosion of Texas’ feral hog population has also helped boost the dogs’ popularity as hunting companions.

“The Lacy brothers did fine work, and the breed is unique and special to many,” Riley says.



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

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Meeting the Gluten-Free Challenge

BY KEVIN HARGIS As awareness of food allergies increases, more and more people are discovering previously undiagnosed sensitivities to what they've been eating. One of the most baffling and debilitating of the food allergies is an intolerance to gluten, a protein found in grains such as wheat, rye and barley.

People with this problem can find themselves plagued with a variety of symptoms, such as digestive system discomfort, chronic fatigue, joint pain and neurological effects. The most severe form of gluten intolerance is called celiac disease, an autoimmune disorder that can lead to serious complications if dietary changes are not implemented.

It is estimated that 3 million Americans have celiac disease—about 1 in 133 people. Knowing little about the condition, I consulted a recent book in the “For Dummies” series, called *Living Gluten-Free For Dummies* (2010, Wiley Publishing) and the Celiac Disease Foundation website, www.celiac.org.

Among other things, I learned what people with gluten intolerance can eat—and what they should avoid.

I also learned quite a bit from comments sent in by Texas Co-op Power readers—like Nora Oglesby of Wylie, a Farmers Electric Cooperative member—who have learned to live with their conditions. Oglesby said she's had dietary-related health issues her whole life, but only in the past couple of years did it become clear to her that she had celiac disease, as well as a dairy intolerance. She wrote that her entire approach to food and eating had to change.

“The task of creating interesting, delicious, gluten-free, dairy-free and easy-to-digest foods was once an all-consuming daily hurdle,” she wrote. “Thankfully, after two years I am more comfortable with what I can and cannot eat. I have had more successes than failures once I changed my philosophy about food. I stopped trying to duplicate favorites of my youth, because nothing can replace the foods we grew up eating and loving. Instead my goal is to use ingredients I like to eat, taste good, are good for my body and satisfy my cravings.”

Janette Fowler of Hereford, a Deaf Smith Electric Cooperative member and alternative health-care practitioner, said her husband, Eric, had been plagued with nonstop headaches for years that did not respond to pain relievers. Through her practice, she learned about gluten-free eating and suggested he not eat bread products—the headaches went away. Whenever he ate something with gluten in it, they returned. This “elimination diet,” in which you omit a suspected food allergen from your eating regime, is a diagnostic tool for discovering such allergies.

Gluten-free living became important to Karen Ahrens, a Grayson-Collin Electric Cooperative member from Anna, after her daughter, Lauren, was diagnosed with celiac disease. “Everyday recipes and basic baking had gone out the window,” Ahrens wrote. “I thought if I was overwhelmed, others had to be, also.” So she started a company, Lauren's Gourmet, where she offers gluten-free baking mixes. The mixes are available at several stores in North Texas and on her website, www.laurensourgourmetgf.com.

Baked goods and pastries are definitely some of the most difficult items

to re-create without glutinous ingredients. Here is one from the *Living Gluten-Free* book that yields a pretty good flour tortilla:

GLUTEN-FREE FLOUR TORTILLAS

- 2 cups gluten-free flour mixture (see recipe on Page 29)
- 2 tablespoons xanthan gum
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1¼ teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 2 tablespoons shortening

Heat cast-iron skillet over medium heat. In large mixing bowl, combine flour mixture, xanthan gum, sugar, salt and baking powder. Cut in shortening. Add 1 cup warm water about ¼ cup at a time, stirring after each addition, until dough is smooth. Form into balls about the size of tennis balls. Put dough between two sheets of wax paper and use rolling pin to flatten into discs about ⅛ inch thick and 10 to 12 inches across. Use separate sheets of paper for each dough ball. When all dough has been rolled out, remove wax paper from first tortilla and cook on hot skillet about 45 seconds on one side, until cooked side has brown flecks (uncooked side may start to bubble). Flip and cook about 20 seconds on other side. Peek underneath the tortilla to see whether it has brown flecks, a sign it is done.

Servings: 6. Serving size: 1 tortilla. Per serving: 199 calories, 2.5 g protein, 4.4 g fat, 36.6 g carbohydrates, 3.8 g dietary fiber, 582 mg sodium, 2.0 g sugars, 2 mg cholesterol



A press makes creating these tortillas a snap.

1st

SYLVIA ROMESBURG, *Pedernales Electric Cooperative*

Prize-winning recipe: **Flourless Double-Chocolate Pecan Cookies**

When you've got an allergy to gluten, baking can be a big challenge. But Sylvia Romesburg's cookie recipe is easy to make and delicious—you won't even miss the flour.

- 3 cups powdered sugar
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup cocoa powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- 5 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups chopped pecans

- 4 large egg whites, room temperature

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. In a large bowl, whisk together sugar, cocoa and salt. Stir in chocolate and pecans. Add egg whites and stir just until incorporated (do not overmix). Drop dough with $\frac{1}{4}$ -cup measure or with large ice cream scoop, 3 inches apart, onto two parchment paper-lined, rimmed baking sheets. Bake until cookie tops are dry and crackled, about 25 minutes, rotating baking sheets halfway through. Transfer sheets to wire racks and let

cookies cool completely.

Servings: 12. Serving size: 1 cookie. Per serving: 289 calories, 4 g protein, 11.9 g fat, 42.8 g carbohydrates, 3.9 g dietary fiber, 116 mg sodium, 36.3 g sugars, trace cholesterol

GLUTEN-FREE CORN DOGS

- 1 cup gluten-free corn meal
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup brown rice flour
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup tapioca flour
- 2 tablespoons potato starch
- 2 tablespoons soy flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon xanthan gum
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup plus 2 tablespoons milk
- 2 eggs
- 1 package gluten-free (all-beef) wieners

Mix dry ingredients together. In a separate bowl, mix milk and eggs. Stir the liquid mixture into dry ingredients, and then let batter sit for 5 minutes. With your fingers, press and roll the batter around each wiener. When your fingers become too sticky to use, rinse your hands in clear water and try again with your fingers still damp. Fry assembled corn dogs in hot grease until they turn golden brown.

Servings: 8. Serving size: 1 corn dog. Per serving: 284 calories, 9.6 g protein, 15.5 g fat, 24.8 g carbohydrates, 2.1 g dietary fiber, 967 mg sodium, 2.6 g sugars, 73 mg cholesterol

LINDA LINES

Fannin County Electric Cooperative

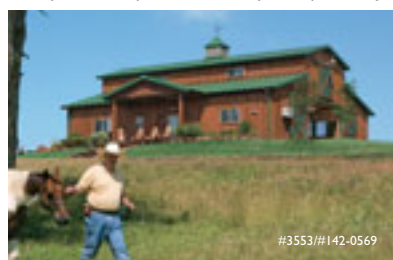
COOK'S TIP

Xanthan gum provides the binding in gluten-free recipes that gluten provides in standard recipes. It can be found in bulk in some stores or prepackaged from specialty flour producers such as Bob's Red Mill, www.bobsredmill.com.



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RECIPE ROUNDUP

GLUTEN-FREE FLOUR

There are several gluten-free flour mixtures, including commercially prepared ones. If you'd like to make your own, Living Gluten-Free For Dummies suggests you combine two parts (equal amounts) rice flour with $\frac{2}{3}$ part potato starch flour and $\frac{1}{3}$ part tapioca flour. For example, if you wanted to make 6 cups of flour mixture, you'd use 4 cups of rice flour, $1\frac{1}{3}$ cups potato starch and $\frac{2}{3}$ cup tapioca flour. For another gluten-free, all-purpose flour substitute, see TexasCoopPower.com.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Sift flour, baking powder and salt. Beat butter, $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups sugar and bananas together until smooth. Stir in eggs. Add banana mixture to flour mixture and stir until just blended. Pour into large loaf pan and bake 1 hour, 15 minutes or until pick inserted in center comes out clean and bread is just firm. Cool 10 minutes. Mix 4 tablespoons sugar and lemon juice together and drizzle over top.

Servings: 12. Serving size: 1 slice. Per serving: 396 calories, 4.2 g protein, 17.9 g fat, 53.4 g carbohydrates, 1.4 g dietary fiber, 245 mg sodium, 28.7 g sugars, 107 mg cholesterol

DARRELL VOIGHT

Bartlett Electric Cooperative

On TexasCoopPower.com

Find bonus recipes for a gluten-free cooking staple and a dessert with a surprising ingredient.

GLUTEN-FREE BANANA LEMON LOAF

- 2 cups rice flour
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons butter
- $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups plus 4 tablespoons sugar, divided
- 3 bananas
- 4 large eggs
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice

\$100 RECIPE CONTEST

November's recipe contest topic is **Barbecue**. Is it the spice? The smoke? The sauce? Or a combination of all three and more? Send us your best recipes and techniques. The deadline is **July 10**.

Submit recipes online at TexasCoopPower.com under the Submit and Share tab. Or mail them to Home Cooking, 1122 Colorado, 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. You may 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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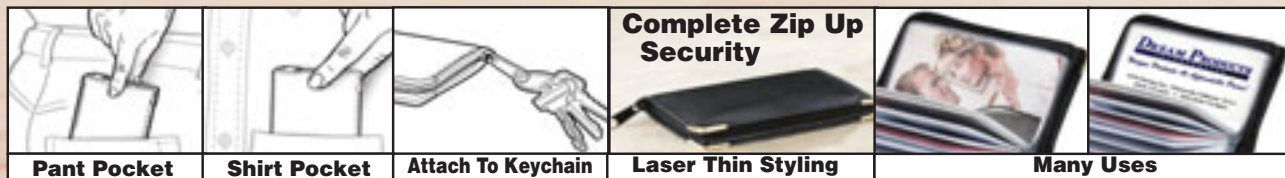
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THOSE WERE THE DAYS

Who hasn't longed for the past? We yearn for a simpler time, when we were children, and the world just seemed to take care of itself. As we age, we learn that this was never the case; but even so, the older we become, the more cherished and revered those bygone times are. It seems as though the world has gone and gotten itself in a great big hurry—so let's pause, take a deep breath, turn around and look back down memory lane.

—ASHLEY CLARY

◀ In 1939, as a child, this is how **Catherine Brzozowski**, far left, kept cool in the summertime at **Grandma Lena's** house with her sister **Donna** (in tub) and cousins **Marion** and **Fritz** (standing, right). Brzozowski is a member of Jackson and Guadalupe Valley electric cooperatives.

The late **Mouzon Tiller**, a Panola-Harrison Electric Cooperative (PHEC) director for 36 years until his death in 2010, pulls his daughter **Martha Tiller Bounds** in the sand-surfing event during Elysian Fields Day in the mid-1960s. **Alice Langley**, Tiller's daughter and a PHEC member, sent us the photo. ▶



Many argue the only way to listen to music is on a phonograph. Pedernales Electric Cooperative member **William Waldron** reminded us that some oldies are still goodies. ▼



◀ Talk about having a monkey on your back! Grayson-Collin Electric Cooperative member **Pat Piaschyk** sent us this photo, snapped about 50 years ago, of her brothers **Ralph** (driving) and **Tommy Reed** taking a ride on their old motor scooter with Adam, their pet monkey.



▲ In the summer of 1957, **Lena Stavino** (baby) and her family and friends enjoyed walking on a dirt road to go swimming in a neighbor's rice pond in El Maton. Stavino belongs to Bandera and Jackson electric cooperatives.

Upcoming in Focus on Texas

ISSUE	SUBJECT	DEADLINE
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
Feb	Going Nuts!	Dec 10

STATE PARKS is the topic for our **SEPTEMBER 2011** issue. Send your photo—along with your name, address, daytime phone, co-op affiliation and a brief description—to **State Parks, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701**, before **JULY 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.

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

JULY 9

WEATHERFORD

Parker County Peach Festival,
(817) 596-3801



PEACHES: 2011 © TOM SCHMUCKER. IMAGE FROM BIGSTOCK.COM. FIREWORKS: 2011 © PETE SWAN. IMAGE FROM BIGSTOCK.COM.

JULY

01 ROCKSPRINGS [1-2] Slick Rock Challenge PBR Bull Riding, (830) 683-7657, www.edwardscountyfair.com

TIMPSON [1-2] Timpson Frontier Days, (936) 254-2603, www.timpsonontexas.com

02 THE COLONY Liberty by the Lake, (877) 264-4386, www.libertybythelake.com

LLANO Rock'n Riverfest, (325) 247-5354, www.llanotx.com

DARROUZETT Deutsches Fest, (806) 624-2631

NOVICE Fireworks Display, (325) 625-5542



4

TENAHA
Independence Day 2011

02 BRADY [2-3] July Jubilee & 2011 Carp-O-Rama, (325) 597-3491, www.bradytx.com

GLEN ROSE [2-4] Rose, White & Blue Catfish Cook-Off and Music Fest, (254) 897-2286, www.glenrosechamber.com

03 ROSEBUD 4th of July Parade & Street Dance, (254) 583-2345

04 BUDA Red, White, n Buda, (512) 312-0084, www.ci.buda.tx.us/buda-events

CHAPPELL HILL July 4th Parade & The Cowboy Event, (979) 337-9910, www.chappellhilltx.com

TENAHA Independence Day 2011, (936) 598-3682, www.shelbycounty-chamber.com

SNOOK Farm Fest, (979) 272-3021

07 CENTER [7-9] WHAT-A-Melon Festival, (936) 598-3377, www.shelbycounty-chamber.com

09 SAN ANGELO [9-10] Silver Spur Gun & Blade Show, (806) 253-1322, www.silverspurgunshows.com

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AROUND TEXAS AROUND TEXAS



16

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Taste of the Hill Country Food & Wine Festival, (512) 756-6180, www.tasteofthehillcountrytx.com

ROSENBERG

Tribute to America, (832) 595-3525, www.rosenbergevents.com

SEGUIN

Texas Lineman's Rodeo, 1-800-580-7322, www.tlra.org

9

SAN ANGELO

Silver Spur Gun & Blade Show

11

MINEOLA [11-15]

Kaleidoscope Art Camp for Kids, (903) 569-8877, www.mlota.org

13

TULIA [13-16]

Swisher County Picnic, (806) 995-2296, <http://tuliachamber.com>



11

MINEOLA

Kaleidoscope Art Camp for Kids

22

GATESVILLE [22-23]

Coryell Creek Critters BBQ Cook-Off & Festival (254) 865-7163

28

CLUTE [28-30]

The Great Texas Mosquito Festival, (979) 265-8392, www.mosquitofestival.com

29

IDALOU [29-31]

Idalou Centennial Celebration, (806) 781-3684, www.idaloutx.com

AUGUST

02

NEW BRAUNFELS

Two Ton Tuesdays at Gruene Hall, (830) 606-1281, www.nbcham.org

06

PORT LAVACA

Saltwater Redfish Series Fishing Tournament, (361) 552-2959, www.portlavacatx.org

6

PORT LAVACA

Saltwater Redfish Series Fishing Tournament



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

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An engineer, clad in blue- and white-striped overalls and cap, punches the tickets of passengers boarding **THE MARY BARTLETT MINIATURE TRAIN** in San Antonio's Brackenridge Park. After sliding onto a bench seat, a grandfather croons to his young granddaughter, "Giddy up, train" and reminisces about past visits to the park. Ready to embark on an excursion through the historic park, the driver makes the final call: "All aboard!"

Miniature trains have been looping around these three-plus miles of track in the 344-acre park since 1956. That's quite a legacy, but it is only about half the life of Brackenridge Park—under review this year to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places—and a mere blink in the history of humans' presence in the area. The cool waters of the San Antonio River, shaded forests and limestone outcroppings have yielded rest and recreation to visitors for generations. Native Americans camped here roughly 11,000 years ago, and centuries later, settlers designated the property as a getaway spot.

Starting near North St. Mary's Street, the train runs on acreage donated to the city for public use in 1899 by businessman George W. Brackenridge. His private waterworks company bequeathed the land after new technology made his water system obsolete. Additional donations almost doubled the size of the park, named in Brackenridge's honor when it opened in 1901.

Although modern amenities, including pavilions, picnic tables and playscapes, now dot the property, not all the parkland is modernized. In a forest, trees clothed with vines stand like columns holding up a canopy, and last year's leaves cover the ground with a brown blanket. As The Mary Bartlett chugs along, ringing its bell at nature trail crossings, white cattle egrets shift in their treetop rookeries.

After passing through a 150-foot-long tunnel, the train pauses at a platform behind **THE WITTE MUSEUM**, an

BRACKENRIDGE PARK

San Antonio's venerable oasis of rest and recreation

BY SUZANNE HABERMAN



85-year-old museum of natural science, history and culture. On this ride, everyone opts to stay aboard, and The Mary Bartlett treks toward the **BRACKENRIDGE PARK GOLF COURSE**. There, golfers swing their clubs at San Antonio's oldest municipal course, which opened in 1916. Now encompassing about a third of the park, the 18-hole course features a driving range that was once a polo field.

The train slows to another stop: the **JAPANESE TEA GARDEN**. A kiln marks the site where the Alamo Portland and Roman Cement Company processed lime- and clay-rich limestone into cement from 1880 to 1908. After mining ceased, the city transformed the quarry into a garden with water features and exotic plants. Today, water tumbles down a bluff into a pool, where koi, or Japanese carp, flick the water's surface with their tails. Wisteria and

moss cascade down the rock, which, at ground level, has been chiseled into paths and smoothed by the feet of tourists since the garden opened around 1918. Nearby, the **SUNKEN GARDEN THEATER** is nestled in an old quarry. The outdoor amphitheater has been used as a special-events venue since the 1930s.

After stopping near the gardens, the train pulls back into the depot, and passengers bound out the gate, off to explore another feature of Brackenridge Park: the **SAN ANTONIO ZOO**.

The zoo, established in 1914, incorporates the river water and quarry walls left behind by the cement company. The estimated 1 million visitors per year see some of the more than 3,500 animals housed there. At one of the first exhibits, a teenage boy roars at the North American black bear lounging indifferently in the shade. In the Africa Live! exhibit, spectators stare through a glass slab to look eye level at a pair of hippopotamuses. The mammals—whose heads alone are bigger than the children watching them—swim back and forth in the gargantuan aquarium with a school of rainbow-colored fish in tow. Outside, a 7-foot-long Sumatran tiger shakes its head and paces, and a woman lifts her young girl so she can better see the big cat. "Ooh la le, tiger," the mother says, and the girl repeats the phrase with wonder.

As the shadows of oak and pecan trees stretch over Brackenridge Park, families exit the zoo through a turnstile and trudge past the train depot toward the parking lot. A fresh round of passengers pile onto the miniature train. Just as the generations before, they'll tour the park whose legacy is recreation and whose resources have long provided rest. "All aboard!"

Suzanne Haberman, communications specialist

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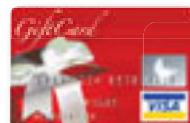
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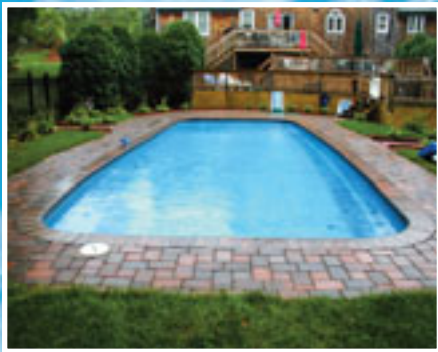
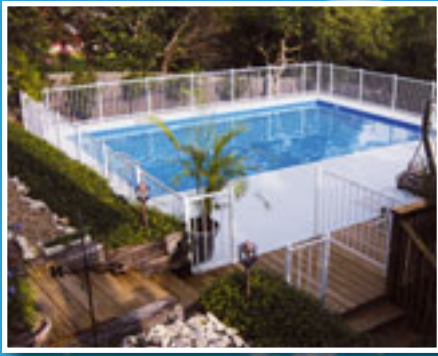


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