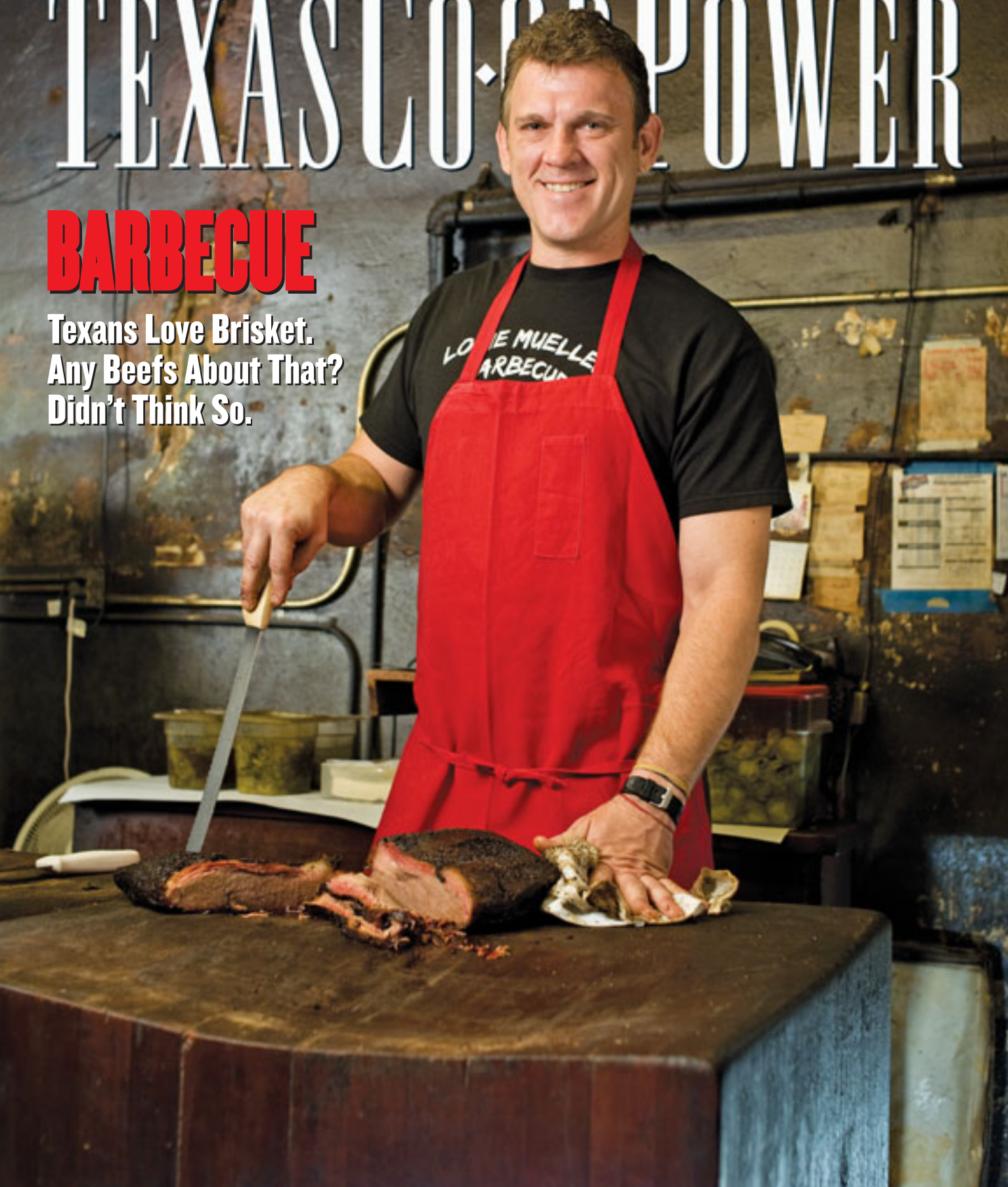


# TEXAS CO-OP POWER

## BARBECUE

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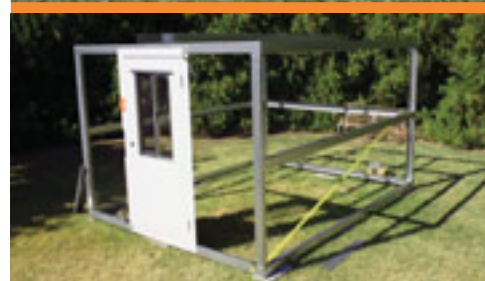
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By Jeff Siegel

Photos by Wyatt McSpadden

*Long ago, when going out to eat was a special occasion, Texas had barbecue. Still does. Mouthwatering smoked brisket marinated in a long, rich history.*

### 14 Fighting Fires

By Camille Wheeler

*Firefighters have been desperately outnumbered in the worst wildfire season in Texas' history. Still, heroes abound. When ground crews see the SEATs—single-engine air tankers with red plumes of fire retardant dropping from the planes' bellies—they know the cavalry has arrived.*

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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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# POWER<sup>talk</sup>

Letters from Texas Co-op Power Readers

## AG AVIATION

My husband, Kenneth, and I were elated to read your article on ag pilots! Especially with all the photographs of Brett Whitten, who has been very involved with the Texas Agricultural Aviation Association. The country isn't short of ag pilots—it is short of experienced ag pilots. When a fire starts here, the sheriff's office calls Kenneth first. As long as there are crops, these guys will be busy!

**EMILY LAUDERDALE**

Lauderdale Spraying  
Service, Caldwell

*Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative*

I read the ag pilot story: I was touched by his story of being a hard worker and getting by.

**LIZ MORGENROTH**

*Victoria Electric Cooperative*

As much as I enjoy your articles each month, I was shocked to see "On the Wing" depicted on the cover as a cool, worthwhile and helpful profession. Seeing massive amounts of chemicals sprayed on our food, our Earth is nothing but sad. Our children deserve a better future than food laden with pesticides, which seep into groundwater and, more importantly, into the food we eat. A truly cool article would feature farmers working with the Earth—rather than against it—using organic methods to grow food.

**SHARON BROWN**

*Pedernales Electric Cooperative*

It was a deep disservice to future Texans to highlight the plane(s) spraying God knows what on crops we'll eat or wear. A very small amount of research will show conclusively that natural methods such as native plants, birds

## READ MORE LETTERS

See "Letters to the Editor" in the November Table of Contents at

**TexasCoopPower.com**

and bats effectively control all but the most rampant of infestations. The natural methods are a whole lot less expensive and don't poison the Texas soil. Please be more sensitive to the Texas we'll leave to our children.

**OWEN YOST**

Landscape architect emeritus  
*CoServ Electric*

Andrew D. Moore, executive director of the National Agricultural Aviation Association, responds to criticisms of aerial application: "Regardless of whether a conventional or organic agricultural method is being used to raise a crop, materials to eradicate crop pests—such as weeds, fungi or insects—will very likely be applied. Organic agriculture uses pesticides that include copper sulfate and other effective insect-killing chemical compounds. Both organic and conventional farmers will use aerial application to treat crop pests when other forms of application, such as ground rigs, might result in crop damage. Modern or conventional agricultural production includes the use of Environmental Protection Agency-approved pesticides and maximizes crop yields—food, fiber and biofuel—on fewer acres. The environmental benefits include providing more land for wildlife and preserving vegetative ecosystems important to the sequestration of carbon."

## On the Wing

GREAT cover photo ["On the Wing," September 2011]. Great article, too! Question to photographer Wyatt McSpadden: How the heck did you get that neat photo? Loved it, loved it. Thanks for your eye-popping work.

**Alan Gee, Central Texas Electric Cooperative**

**Editor's note:** To learn how McSpadden captured the stunning cover photo of agricultural aviation pilot Brett Whitten, read "WOOM! Whitten's Picture-Perfect Day of Flying" at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com).

## GIDDY-UP

I was delighted with the "Ride of Passage" article [September 2011]. Not only have I loved riding carousels since I was a child, but I have a mustang named Carousel. He is creamy white with blue eyes and a pale-gold mane. We named him Carousel because he looks like a little girl's dream of the perfect merry-go-round pony. I was tickled that so many of the carousel ponies in the photos resembled our Carousel pony.

**SUZANN DARNALL**

*Pedernales Electric Cooperative*

While in San Diego, I had to ride the wooden carousel in Seaport Village. Thanks for the great article that brought back fond memories of all the carousel rides I took as a child—and continue to take.

**MARLEEN GREIF**

*Mid-South Synergy*

We want to hear from our readers. Submit letters online under the Submit and Share tab at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com), e-mail us at [letters@TexasCoopPower.com](mailto: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.



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# POWERconnections

People, Places and Events in Texas

## WHO KNEW?

### BARBECUE CAPITAL

The Texas Legislature designated Lockhart—a small Central Texas town that boasts four barbecue restaurants—the “Barbecue Capital of Texas” in 1999, and here’s why: Folks travel from all over the state (and country) to dine at Kreuz Market (established 1900), Black’s Barbecue (1932), Chisholm Trail Bar-B-Que (1978) and Smitty’s Market (1999). It’s estimated that about 20,000 people visit these establishments each week. That’s almost twice the city’s population of 12,698.

## HAPPENINGS

Nearly one in five Texas households and one in four children in the state are “food insecure,” meaning they don’t know where their next meal will come from, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

An East Texas nonprofit organization, the Montgomery County Food Bank, is joining others around the state in serving up extra-big helpings of support. The food bank serves about 30,000 requests each month.

Last year, the food bank distributed more than 6 million pounds of food to more than 50 agencies/food pantries. To raise even

more awareness about hunger, the agency will host **FEEDING THE FRONTIER** on November 19. Event highlights include a Dutch oven cook-off and a 5-kilometer walk/run with facts about hunger posted along the route. For more information, call (936) 539-6686 or go to [www.montgomerycountyfoodbank.com](http://www.montgomerycountyfoodbank.com).

From Art shows to Zucchini festivals, you’ll find hundreds of happenings all across the state at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com).



## CO-OP PEOPLE

*A Woman on a Mission: Rescue and Rehabilitate Horses in Need*

BY ASHLEY CLARY-CARPENTER

Retired pastor Pamela Dountas is on a mission: She plans to rescue every horse that needs help in East Texas.

The 60-year-old Alba resident, who grew up with horses, has volunteered for True Blue Animal Rescue in Brenham for four years. For the past six, she’s volunteered for Bluebonnet Equine Humane Society in College Station. In August, she helped found Texas Equine Animal Rescue in Winnsboro. She recently helped evacuate horses from fire-scorched Bastrop to Elgin. In Alba, she is the equine coordinator for Rescued Pet Adoption League, and now, she’s starting Happy Horse Tale Rescue.

“Not only will we rescue, rehabilitate and re-home horses, we will educate the public on proper care of horses,” says Dountas, a member of Wood County Electric Cooperative. Plans for the new organization include a rehabilitation center where children with disabilities can ride horses for physical therapy.

Along with her rescued donkey, Elvis, Dountas has been hitting the trail raising money for Happy Horse. Elvis was three days old when Dountas took him in. Now he’s the spokesdonkey for animal rescue, spreading

awareness at festivals and fairs.

East Texas, Dountas says, is lacking in equine rescues, and drought and a struggling economy are making the problem worse. Many rescue facilities are at or near capacity. Donations and adoptions are down, and some people are turning their horses out on the side of the road to graze. Hay is scarce, and gas is expensive: A recent donated offer of 56 round hay bales from Tennessee that carried a \$3,000 hauling cost was not accepted.

But anybody can help: “Everybody has something to offer, even if it’s a finger to dial a phone. You can donate a bottle of water, and we’re grateful,” Dountas says. “While rescue work is hard, there is nothing like saving the life of an animal, and when the horse greets you at the gate with a whinny, you know you have made a difference.” For more information, call Dountas at (903) 765-9129 or e-mail [pdountas@gmail.com](mailto:pdountas@gmail.com).



Rescued at three days old, Elvis the miniature donkey now puts on shows at nursing homes, Sunday schools and libraries.

PAMELA DOUNTAS

Ashley Clary-Carpenter, field editor

A longer version of this story is available at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com).

Have a suggestion for a future Co-op People? Contact [editor@TexasCoopPower.com](mailto:editor@TexasCoopPower.com).





IN THE LONG AGO BEFORE MCDONALD'S AND STARBUCKS, AND WHEN GOING OUT TO EAT WAS A SPECIAL OCCASION, TEXAS HAD BARBECUE. STILL DOES.

# BARBECUE

IN TEXAS, WE LOVE SMOKED BRISKET. ANYBODY HAVE A BEEF WITH THAT? DIDN'T THINK SO.

BY JEFF SIEGEL • PHOTOS BY WYATT McSPADDEN



Talk to Wayne Mueller, the third-generation owner of Louie Mueller Barbecue in Taylor, and he says, yes, the subject comes up with some frequency. Someone will walk into Mueller's, one of the iconic names in Texas barbecue, and tell Mueller that no, the restaurant that his grandfather opened in 1949 isn't making barbecue the way it should be made. They even—shudder—say North Carolina's barbecue is made the right way.

"We've tried to regionalize barbecue, but barbecue is really local," Mueller says. "It's as individual as the people cooking it. Everyone grew up with their favorite,

and that's the barbecue that they'll defend forever, whatever happens."

The point, of course, is that if a customer questions Mueller's barbecue integrity, which has more than 60 years to its credit, then the idea of Texas barbecue remains as complicated as ever. The controversy, hard feelings and arguments that have endured for decades still endure—how long should the brisket cook, what's the best wood to use, what are the proper side dishes.

In this, Mueller and the other big names are just some of many. What counts, what really counts, are the hun-

dreds and hundreds of ordinary, regular, everyday places where the only fame and glory come from keeping the doors open in a world where it's getting harder and harder to make it as a small, family-owned restaurant.

"It's all about the smoke by the side of the road," says Elizabeth Engelhardt, the lead author for *Republic of Barbecue* (2009, University of Texas Press), a book of essays that offers perhaps the best look at the modern Texas barbecue scene.

"When we started this, we went into it without any preconceived definitions,"



**ABOVE:** If your mouth's not watering just looking at this juicy, slow-cooked brisket at Louie Mueller Barbecue in Taylor, well, you might not be a Texan. OK, we jest—sorta. To be fair, some non-Texans do know their way around a plate or two of barbecue. Consider Kevin Houston of Georgia, who sure worked his magic at Louie Mueller: See all that meat? Poof, it's gone. Nobody walks away hungry here.



says Engelhardt, an associate professor in the department of American studies at The University of Texas. “We didn’t have a sense: ‘This is pure barbecue.’ We wanted to find what barbecue is.”

### LONG AGO, TEXAS HAD BARBECUE

Talk to Texans of a certain age, and many of them share the same story. In the long ago before McDonald’s and Starbucks, and when going out to eat was a special occasion, Texas had barbecue.

Edna Lynn Porter, who teaches at the Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts in Austin and has run several restaurants during her cooking career, remembers car trips from her home in Corpus Christi to the Hill Country. Those trips always meant barbecue and stopping in Lockhart at Kreuz Market. She can still describe the way her father crumbled saltines to sop up the sausage fat.

“It was the brown paper and the butcher knives chained to the table,” Porter says. “The sausage, that if you pierced the casing and drained it, there must have been a quarter of a cup of fat, easy.”

The Hill Country, then and now, is the center of Texas barbecue. There is barbecue in East Texas (pork, even), and Fort Worth and Houston have their barbecue aficionados. But the Hill Country, says longtime Fort Worth food writer Amy Culbertson, who grew up in Lampasas, is the Texas Barbecue Ring. Draw a circle, with Austin in the center, and it’s all there along and near U.S. Highways 183 and 290 at generations-old places like Louie Mueller, Southside Market & Barbeque (Elgin), Kreuz, Cooper’s Old Time Pit Bar-B-Que (Llano and New Braunfels), Inman’s Kitchen Bar-B-Q and Catering (Llano) and The Salt Lick (in Driftwood and Round Rock and at the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport).

In this, a consensus has emerged about what defines Texas barbecue—though, of course, because this is Texas, it’s a consensus more by default than agreement, and there is still plenty of room for loud and lively discussion.

Texas barbecue means beef, and usually brisket. It means smoked brisket, and usually for a long time over low heat.

Sauce is something for fancy French cooking; and it’s not unusual, still, to see barbecue sold by the pound, a practice that dates to its meat-market origins in the 19th century. The pit master, whose knowledge is handed down from generation to generation, is all knowing and all seeing.

“Are there other places and other ways to do barbecue?” Porter asks. “Yes,

German immigrants, who brought their smoking and butchering culture with them when they arrived in the middle of the 19th century. And what did they butcher? Cattle, of which Texas already had millions. And how did they cook it? Over coals from native wood like oak, which was also plentiful. This is why Texas barbecue is so different from the pork-and-sauce style com-



I’m sure there are. But that’s all I’m going to say about that.”

### 150 YEARS OF BARBECUE

Mueller’s is part of that tradition. Barbecue can be traced to Texas’

mon elsewhere in the U.S. Pigs were not a major product here—so Memphis-style pork ribs aren’t common—and sugar or molasses, necessary for the sweet sauce common in places like the Carolinas, weren’t readily available. The

Beyond arguments over how long a brisket should cook and what type of wood to use, here’s what really counts in the barbecue world: the hundreds of everyday places fighting to keep the doors open as small, family-owned restaurants. Included in that group is Louie Mueller Barbecue, where people like server/slicer Tony White help keep the food and the service a cut above.





**TOP TO BOTTOM:** At stalwart establishments like Prause Meat Market in La Grange and Zimmerhanel's Bar-B-Que in Smithville, people are loathe to let go of tradition—and plates of meat and sides that taste like Texas. Sure, many of us are trying to watch our weight. But we'll cut back in other areas. Barbecue, and especially brisket, is just that sacred.

early pit masters made do with what they had.

“The nice thing about Texas barbecue, as opposed to so many other Texas foods, is that its origins are more easily traceable,” Culbertson says. “The history is much clearer, and there is less competition among the various stories.”

The first barbecue joints were meat markets, says Engelhardt, where the beef was smoked in the back and sold over the counter. And if anyone has ever wondered why grocery store-style white bread is a traditional part of Texas barbecue, the reason lies in those meat market origins. The first customers bought their barbecue at the market and then went next door to the general store to buy their sides. The general store sold saltines, and later white bread, so that's what customers bought to eat with their brisket. Engelhardt says this may also explain why peach cobbler, made with canned peaches, is the traditional barbecue



dessert. General stores in the 19th century sold canned peaches, so people made canned peach cobbler.

Over time, barbecue styles evolved, and the arguments about the best way to do barbecue started. Go to places like Cooper's in Llano, and what Culbertson calls a cowboy style developed. The cooking temperature is hotter, the wood is mesquite instead of oak, and the brisket cooks for less than the usual 15 to 18 hours. Brisket, though still the mainstay, has been joined by other cuts—the shoulder clod (part of the chuck) at Kreuz as well as ribs and chicken. And technology, says Engelhardt, brought changes, too. The brick barbecue pit, seen today as a traditional requirement for quality barbecue, was cutting edge 100 years ago when people were barbecuing over an open fire—and was frowned on then as much as gas and electric pits are today.

One thing that hasn't changed is barbecue's immense popularity. Yes, culinary styles have changed, and we're trying to eat less meat and reduce fat consumption. And the restaurant business is far different today than it was just a decade ago, with fewer family-owned restaurants, which are the backbone of the barbecue business. Meanwhile, higher real estate prices in Texas' biggest cities have mostly forced the family-owned barbecue joint out of urban

areas. Judging by The Dallas Morning News' top 100 restaurants, it's easier to find sushi (six restaurants) in Dallas than barbecue (only three).

Barbecue still sells—even in a world where watching fat and cholesterol has become as much a part of our lives as watching television. Mueller's made a couple of concessions to changing dietary habits in the 1990s, adding leaner cuts of beef and chicken. But brisket remains its biggest seller, with some 2,000 pounds a week. Meanwhile, the Pappas Bar-B-Q chain has 17 barbecue restaurants in the state and sells some 4,000 pounds a week from each location, says Pappas corporate chef Mark Mason. Some of the restaurants sell as much as 1,000 pounds a day.

"It's like Texas is its own little country when it comes to barbecue," says Mason, who helps oversee a surprisingly traditional pit operation—wood-smoked brisket cooked for 15 to 18 hours. "Beef is still king, and you don't see anything like you do in Memphis with pork. It's the pride Texans take in their barbecue."

Which anyone can see whenever they walk into a place like Louie Mueller—or any of the other hundreds of places in Texas that make up the Republic of Barbecue.

*Jeff Siegel is a Dallas-based writer.*



## SMOKING A BRISKET: THE BASICS

*Talk to a pit master, and you'll hear that smoking a brisket isn't necessarily difficult. It's time-consuming, of course, and a pit is more cumbersome than a barbecue grill. But the basics are straightforward:*

• **THE GOODS.** One whole brisket, 10 to 12 pounds. If you're going to go to the trouble of smoking the meat for 12 hours or longer, make a lot. Trim the brisket of excess fat.

• **THE SEASONING.** This can be as simple as salt, black pepper and red pepper, or as complicated—and controversial—as a dry rub. There are an almost infinite number of commercially available dry rubs, or you can make your own. Typical ingredients are garlic powder, brown sugar and onion powder, but the permutations are endless and involve almost every herb in the spice rack. Regardless of seasoning, let the brisket sit with the spices for as long as possible; overnight is best.

• **THE TECHNIQUE.** Cook it over indirect heat, about 200 degrees, with the heat source to one side and the brisket to the other. This is one of the few things that most experts agree on.

• **THE HEAT SOURCE.** Traditionally, this is wood, but technology has made it possible to use gas, electricity or charcoal briquettes (usually combined with soaked wood chips). Know that if you use any of the latter, many old-school pit masters will not consider it authentic barbecue.

• **THE COOKING MEDIUM.** A traditional pit is probably too much effort for most backyard barbecue chefs, but there are a variety of the familiar black, commercial smokers (which can use wood or charcoal). You can also use a gas grill or gas- and electric-fired smoker.

For more recipes and information about Texas-style barbecue, go to:

[www.texasbbqforum.com](http://www.texasbbqforum.com), an online barbecue forum

<http://txbbqking.com/index.html>, recipes, products and commentary

[www.bbq-recipes-for-foodies.com/texas-bbq-recipes.html](http://www.bbq-recipes-for-foodies.com/texas-bbq-recipes.html), regional recipes



The lore of barbecue burns in the embers at places like Smitty's Market in Lockhart. By definition, Texas barbecue means beef—and usually, smoked brisket that's cooked a long time over low heat. Barbecue still sells, even as family-owned restaurants fight to keep their place at the table.



# HOLIDAY

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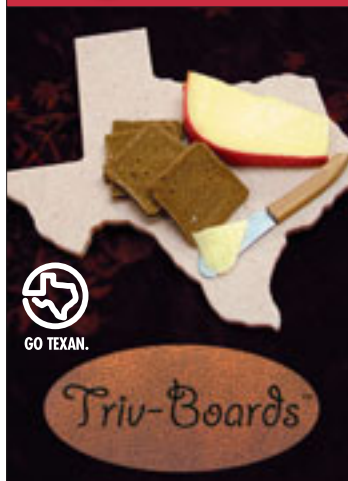
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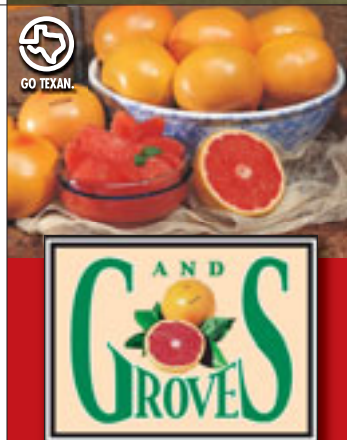
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# FIGHTING FIRES

See the red plumes of retardant dropping from red and white planes? The cavalry has arrived.

BY CAMILLE WHEELER

MIKE STONE/REUTERS

**E**ditor's note: In wildfires across the state, volunteer ground crews have been the backbone of firefighting forces. The courage of those volunteer firefighters will be recognized as part of a Texas Co-op Power story coming in January.

On August 30, aerial firefighter Marc Mullis abruptly ends a telephone interview mid-sentence. "I'm getting a signal," he says, referring to a dispatch on his cellphone. "We just got a fire. I gotta go."

That night, after dropping fire retardant around wildfires near Junction, a weary Mullis sends this hastily typed e-mail from the Gillespie County Airport's Hangar Hotel: "Sorry I had to cut you off but the fire turned into seven fires and I got very busy saw several homes burn down this afternoon but I know I saved one."

Mullis is not a superhero. He's a

professional, full-time firefighter who makes pinpoint-accurate fire retardant drops—and who developed some of his skills years ago as an agricultural aviation pilot. His job is to help contain fires and support ground crews in the trenches. He can't perform magic, but he can sure do a lot of good.

And just like the members of a support system in place across Texas, he'll never stop scrapping—even though since last fall, it's been a grossly unfair fight: More than 3,000 ground and aerial firefighters, many coming to Texas' rescue from around the nation, have been desperately outnumbered by blazes in the worst wildfire season in state history.

In this tinderbox called Texas, firefighters have responded to almost 24,000 fires burning close to 4 million acres and destroying almost 2,800 homes since mid-November 2010.

One year later, Texas is still in flames. Yes, it's fall now. Temperatures, blessedly, have finally dropped from record-setting triple-digit heat. But as firefighters continue to battle the horrific blazes sweeping our drought-stricken state, they grimly point to a frightening fact: With a lack of rain, there remains plenty of fuel—i.e., dry grass and trees—for fires to feed upon.

There's no telling when this nightmare will end.

Aerial firefighter David Guetersloh (pronounced GOO-ter-sloh), who owns an aerial application business in Plains, west of Lubbock near the New Mexico border, also learned to fly in ag aviation airplanes. When asked if he's ever seen such dry conditions, the 58-year-old replied, "Never, ever, and I don't see any change coming. I've flown all across this country, and it's never





RODOLFO GONZALEZ/AUSTIN AMERICAN-STATESMAN

**OPPOSITE:** Flames engulf pine trees on both sides of a road near Bastrop as a wildfire burns out of control on September 5. Firefighters, many of them coming to Texas' rescue from around the nation, have been desperately outnumbered in the worst wildfire season in state history. The situation remains dire: At press time, a drought monitor map on the state climatologist's website, <http://atmo.tamu.edu/osc>, showed most of Texas wearing the bright and dark red colors denoting extreme and exceptional drought. Texas is suffering its most severe one-year drought on record. We need rain—and lots of it.

**ABOVE:** But sometimes, even when it's not raining, it pours: On September 5, one day after the Bastrop County Complex fire started, Brian Covish greeted one of his heroes—a SEAT (single-engine air tanker) pilot—who joined the ranks of aerial firefighters dropping fire retardant to save his home. Firefighters on the ground depend on retardant drops from a variety of aircraft. Retardant buffer lines slow and cool fires, buying time for ground crews to dig in on the perimeter.

looked like this.”

What's really scary is that any number of potential culprits—barbecue pits, cigarettes flicked out of car windows into ditches, overheated wheel bearings on fast-moving vehicles, welding, dry lightning—can start wildfires.

“We're so hot and dry, a little wind and a spark, and here we go,” Guetersloh says.

### 'I'VE BEEN IN TEARS'

The 55-year-old Mullis, who soloed at age 16, has 34,000-plus hours of flight time and thousands of missions flown as an aerial firefighter. He doesn't flinch at the sight of flames beneath his wings. In April, he flew missions for more than a week on the state's largest-ever wildfire: the Rock House Fire that scorched more than 314,000 acres in far West Texas.

But nothing prepared him emotionally for this year of hell. “I've been in tears flying over, watching houses burn,” Mullis said in early September. Cruelly, during Labor Day weekend, the high winds of a tropical storm produced new wildfires in Central Texas—most notably the 34,000-acre-plus Bastrop County Complex fire—but scant moisture.

Yet the longer the fires burn, the brighter the everyday heroes shine: the boots-on-the-ground volunteer, municipal and Texas Forest Service firefighters who build containment lines with bulldozers, shovels and axes. The engine crews who work the front lines, spraying water and fire-retardant foam. The aerial firefighters who drop fire retardant and water from helicopters and airplanes, including one of the biggest birds of all: a DC-10 air tanker, a jetliner,

requested by the Texas Forest Service and used to drop retardant on blazes in the Huntsville area.

And waiting in the wings is an equally important, yet less visible group of firefighters: single-engine air tanker pilots like Mullis and Guetersloh, whose decision-making and low-altitude flying skills honed during ag aviation careers make them ideally suited for fighting fires.

Please understand, these pilots say: They're proud of their ag aviation backgrounds. All those years spent flying low over crops, dodging obstacles, navigating sudden gusts of wind and taking off with heavy loads prepared them for firefighting careers. Yet some people, they say, mistakenly think they're ag pilots pulled off field duty to spray a little water on fires.

Some ag pilots around the state are



on standby to help fight local wildfires—their efforts are invaluable. But the distinction is this: Mullis, who ran his family's southeast Arkansas aerial application business for 28 years, and his comrades are professional aerial firefighters. And so are their planes: AT-802s made by Olney-based Air Tractor, the world's largest maker of ag aircraft. These planes—single-engine air tankers called SEATs—aren't designed to treat crops. They're built exclusively to fight fires.

Much more nimble than larger aircraft, with hoppers holding up to 8,000 pounds of fire retardant, SEATs pack an effective punch as they swoop in for the initial attack. Flying in formation as low as 60 feet above ground, each pilot, in succession, peels off to drop loads of highly visible, red-dyed fire retardant in front of flames. The pilots build a long buffer line that slows and cools the fire, buying time for the firefighters

Applications, which focuses primarily on fighting wildfires, Guetersloh is one of six aerial firefighters.

Both operations have used Fredericksburg as a temporary base this year, and M&M Air Service's firefighters have been stationed in Fort Stockton to be near far West Texas blazes. But home, which means a runway and mobile fuel and retardant trucks, is wherever the pilots land at day's end, and they're often diverted in flight. In extreme fire situations, when there's no time to fly back to base, the SEATs are equipped to land on paved or dirt roads for reloading.

SEAT pilots, like all aerial firefighters, operate with military precision. They do not take off until they have received an aircraft dispatch form from Texas Forest Service headquarters in Merkel, near Abilene, containing all pertinent information about a fire. In flight at the scene, they obey orders

"I dropped in their front door," Mullis sums up. And he saved the house.

There's nothing flippant about Mullis' remark. If there's a chance of preventing a home's destruction, SEAT pilots don't hesitate: They're dropping in. Such was the case at the first Possum Kingdom fire this year in April (unthinkably, the area went up in flames again in August). Guetersloh and other aerial firefighters dropped retardant on houses already in flames to prevent nearby houses from catching fire.

Many people ask: Will the red retardant permanently stain structures? The manufacturer's answer is that in most cases, it should wash off with water or scrubbing or power washing (see fire retardant facts, Page 18).

It sure beats the alternative, Guetersloh says: "It's easier to repaint it than to rebuild it."

Fighting massive fires requires tight communication on the ground. As the flames rise behind them just west of Bastrop, Scott Robinson, right, and Andy Buyers, both of the U.S. Forest Service, talk things over.



## 'GET YOUR BRITCHES ON'

SEAT pilots mostly operate in anonymity, darting in and out of fire zones. But sometimes, they receive unexpected recognition. One night, Mullis, fellow M&M Air Service firefighter Bill Rose, truck driver Ted Freeman and SEAT Manager Don Moline were eating dinner at a Fredericksburg restaurant. A waitress, seeing the logos on their caps and shirts, asked if they were firefighters.

Yes, the men said. Next thing they knew, appreciative strangers from out of state were paying for the group's meal.

The firefighters recalled the event on Friday morning, September 2, at Fredericksburg's Hangar Hotel where they'd been staying the past several days. Guetersloh wasn't at the restaurant that night, but he's had similar experiences. "Things like that," he says, slowly placing his right hand over his heart, "they don't go away."

The conversation fades away, and the men go back to arguably the hardest part of their jobs: waiting for the call to fly. It's after lunch, and they're pacing, talking on their cellphones and monitoring wild-fire activity on a laptop computer.

Suddenly, Air Attack Commander Dick Stiliha of California bursts into the large room. "Yo, you guys might want to get your britches on," he says, referring to their flame-retardant coveralls. "We got one."

below to dig in on the perimeter.

When ground crews see the red and white planes with the word FIRE painted on the tails and red plumes of fire retardant dropping from the aircrafts' bellies, they know the cavalry has arrived.

## BETTER TO REPAINT THAN REBUILD

Of the 15 SEATs flying in the state, six are owned by Texas-based aerial application operations: M&M Air Service of Beaumont has four, and GB Aerial Applications of Plains, owned by Guetersloh, has the other two.

M&M Air Service, which also does substantial ag business, employs 10 aerial firefighters, including Mullis, the flight training supervisor. At GB Aerial

from an air tactical group supervisor—called the air attack—who soars about 1,000 feet above them.

The air attack monitors fire and aerial activity while his pilot keeps their twin-engine plane—called the air attack platform—circling like a hawk above the blaze.

Just like unpredictable winds, SEAT pilots must be ready to quickly shift direction. On August 30, with aerial firefighters tackling hot spots across the region, Mullis was directed to take off alone for the Junction area. Air attack orders changed as he neared his target: Instead of dropping retardant in front of a fire, he was instructed to immediately head for a house that was in flames.



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The firefighters go into seamless motion, pulling on coveralls and checking their belongings. They might not be coming back to this airport—hence the small travel bags and the larger ones they keep onboard packed with a week’s worth of clothes. “This is an in-between bag,” Rose says of his carry-on. “You try to stay organized as much as you can.”

Their birds wait outside, and Mullis’ T-shirt bears his tail tanker number, T-409, with this sentiment: “SHE’S SO FINE SHE’S ALL MINE.”

Mullis slips into his orange coveralls, and within five minutes of receiving the takeoff order, he and three other SEAT pilots—Rose, Guetersloh and one of Guetersloh’s pilots, Mike Hanneman—take off for a wildfire east of Johnson City, about 35 miles away.

The smoke is visible from town, and over a subdivision flanked by ranch land, the SEATs go to work: Mullis in T-409, Guetersloh in T-828, Rose in T-441 and Hanneman in T-871. As Stiliha and his pilot, Fred Stone of Missouri, circle overhead in a white and blue Aero Commander, the SEAT pilots lay down the retardant line, each making four trips back to Fredericksburg for reloading.

About 1½ miles away, two donkeys and a few cattle rest in the shade under a live oak tree, oblivious to the danger at hand. As is typical, there’s little fanfare afterward over the firefighters’ efforts. “Usually, we’re the only ones who see it,” Mullis says. “But we know.”

Mullis continues: “We did an excellent job. We definitely saved some houses. One house was just starting to burn. The house is now red.”

---

*Camille Wheeler, associate editor*

*Note: Wildfires referenced in this story have affected the service territories of Bluebonnet, Central Texas, Fort Belknap, Pedernales and United Cooperative Services electric cooperatives.*

### On TexasCooPower.com

- SEAT pilots undergo rigorous training to earn their cards, or licenses.
- Learn how to help wildfire victims.
- The second of two stories about the agricultural aviation industry emphasizes that it takes someone special to land a seat in ag planes. And a reporter gets a demonstration flight of a lifetime in a two-seat ag aviation training plane.



Aerial firefighter James Daniell, who flies a SEAT for Beaumont-based M&M Air Service, drops fire retardant on a fire in Graford, near Fort Worth, on September 1.

TIM PENNINGTON/GETTY IMAGES

## FIRE RETARDANT

Questions and answers about the retardant being used on Texas’ wildfires:

**Q: What are its basic ingredients?**

**A:** Fertilizer salts, water, corrosion inhibitors (which prevent the retardant from corroding aircraft hoppers), flow conditioners and food-grade red dye.

**Q: What happens if retardant is dropped on my house or car?**

**A:** The product has passed safety tests, company officials say, and poses little to no threat to structures or vehicles. But to avoid potential stains, it should be washed off as soon as possible, preferably with a pressure washer. It will readily wash off with water while still wet; if dry, it may require scrubbing.

**Q: Will it harm my pets or me?**

**A:** The retardant meets required levels of nontoxicity as set forth by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), including in testing for effects on humans, mammals and aquatic life. Aerial firefighters, however, are prohibited from dropping retardant within 300 feet of waterways, including lakes, rivers, streams and ponds. The USFS also prohibits the aerial application of retardant in areas with endangered, threatened or sensitive species.

**Q: How does it work?**

**A:** The fertilizer salts accelerate wood decomposition, reduce production of flammable gases and hinder ignition, thereby slowing flames. The retardant is effective so long as the salts cling to grass or woody material.

**Q: Who makes fire retardant?**

**A:** The brand-name PHOS-CHEK retardant being used in Texas is made by ICL Performance Products in Southern California and Idaho.

**Q: Why is it red?**

**A:** The bright, bold color is easily seen by aerial firefighters and those on the ground.

**Q: What’s the consistency of the retardant?**

**A:** It’s mixed as a mostly liquid, slurry-like mixture. Added gum thickeners help hold the retardant together when it hits the ground.

**Q: Once dropped, how long does the retardant work?**

**A:** It can remain effective for several weeks. But one thing will render it useless: rain.

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## Pole Patrol

*Attaching Objects to Poles Puts Lives on the Line—And It's a Crime*

What do yard sale signs, basketball hoops, deer stands, satellite dishes and birdhouses have in common? They're often found illegally attached to utility poles. But this isn't only a crime of inconvenience. Safety issues caused by unapproved pole attachments place the lives of lineworkers and the public in peril.

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A birdhouse perches illegally on a utility pole below an equally illegally placed sign.

Not only do these attachments put line crews at risk, but also, anyone illegally placing these items on poles comes dangerously close to energized power lines with thousands of volts of energy pulsing overhead. It's always wise to keep any structure at least 10 feet away from utility poles.

Unauthorized pole attachments violate the National Electric Safety Code. In Texas it is a crime to attach any unapproved item to a utility pole—doing so can result in a fine of up to \$500 per day.

Please help us keep our linemen—and our community—safe. Remove any unauthorized items attached to utility poles.

—Megan McKoy-Noe



COMSTOCK

## Beat the Cold: Caulk Before Thanksgiving

If your house is drafty or if your heating bill seems too high, it could be that the warm, conditioned indoor air is leaking out of the house—or the cold outdoor weather is finding its way in.

Caulking obvious holes and cracks is a good place to start saving money and energy as the weather cools off.

Go outside and take a slow walk around your house. Look for any penetration where something from the outside goes inside, like cables for TV and Internet or phone lines.

You might also find holes in exterior walls for plumbing pipes, outdoor spigots, sump pumps and dryer vents. Caulk around those openings so the hole is just big enough to let the line through with no “breathing room” around it.

A side benefit: Mice, snakes and other critters won't have such an easy time squeezing into your house when they're looking for shelter from the cold.



### Did You Know ...

Electric cooperatives own and maintain 2.5 million miles, or 42 percent, of the nation's electric distribution lines, covering three quarters of the nation's landmass, but deliver only 10 percent of the total kilowatt-hours sold in the U.S. each year.

Source: National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

ILLUSTRATION BY CARL WIENS

# Maintain a Clean Fireplace for Winter Safety

**DEAR JIM:** I used my masonry fireplace often during winter to cut my utility bills. The draft seemed to be getting weaker. What chimney problems should I look for when I inspect it, and how can I reduce creosote?

—Gus H.

**DEAR GUS:** Tens of thousands of chimney fires occur every year due to creosote buildup and other problems with chimneys. In many cases, the entire house ends up burning down, and many lives are lost. These thousands of chimney fires result in as much as \$200 million in property losses each year.

Now that you have noticed reduced draft up the chimney, schedule an appointment with a professional chimney cleaner. If you are as lucky as I was when my fireplace demonstrated the same draft problems, the screening in the chimney cap is just clogged with soot. This blocks the airflow up the chimney. Just tapping the screening with a rubber mallet is usually enough to knock the soot loose.

If that's not the problem, there may have already been a creosote fire inside your chimney. The heat from the fire can cause the tile liner to crack and fall from the masonry wall. When this happens, the broken tile may restrict the airflow up the chimney. You should be able to see broken and loose tile when looking down the chimney with a bright light.

A chimney fire can also cause the creosote to puff up. It expands and feels somewhat like plastic cooler foam. If you can run a brush down the chimney, some of this puffed creosote may fall down into the firebox. If you find either broken tile or puffed creosote, your chimney will definitely need a professional cleaning and inspection with a camera.

If repairs are needed, get estimates from several chimney maintenance companies. In my own case, one chimney company found puffed cre-

osote and claimed the tiles were also loose, quoting me \$7,000 for repairs. Another company cleaned and inspected it with a camera, but found no broken tiles. For \$200 total, they also sealed the chimney crown, and my fireplace has worked fine for years now.

To reduce creosote buildup, use well-seasoned wood and do not try to choke off the combustion air too much to extend the burn time.

Special fireplace logs are available that contain chemicals to reduce creosote formation. Using these periodically can help keep the chimney clean. Sprays are available to use on regular wood logs and other cleaners to minimize creosote.

test the floor from wayward ashes.

Wear a safety harness and tie yourself to the chimney when on the roof and always have someone nearby to call for help if needed. Run the chimney brush up and down many times.

Much of the hazardous damage to chimneys is caused by moisture entering from outside. This moisture can migrate through the brick and the mortar joints into the chimney. Use a water- or solvent-based sealer on the chimney bricks and mortar.

The crown of the chimney is another location for moisture to enter. Tap on it lightly with a hammer to locate any loose areas and brush them away. If the crown is still in good condition, coat it with a special elastomer



**If you use your fireplace to help take the chill out of winter, be sure to maintain it properly.**

You can clean the chimney yourself on occasion if you do not mind getting a little dirty. This does not, however, eliminate the need for a professional inspection.

A local chimney-supply store should carry a brush to fit your chimney. Always wear a high-quality breathing mask so you do not inhale the fine dust particles. Seal the fireplace opening into the room with plastic film and tape. Also, put a large drop cloth on the floor in front of the hearth to pro-

tect the floor from wayward ashes. If you have a problem during winter, there are crown sealers that cure below freezing temperatures.

Check the condition of the mortar joints. Where you find loose mortar, fill in the gaps with an elastomer concrete-colored sealer. Also, inspect the flashing where the chimney meets the roof. Deteriorated areas can be sealed with a flexible flashing repair compound.

© James Dulley



# Keeping It Real

*Liendo Civil War re-enactment puts true-to-life face on America's greatest conflict.*

By Mary O. Parker



Rebekah Cariker, Confederate matron of nurses, leans over a wounded man and whispers, "Come on, give 'em a good show!"

She then turns to a lingering soldier and orders: "Go get me some more wounded!"

The battlefield of the real War Between the States would've been combed already, but Cariker's command signals the need for more players to please the crowd at what is one of Texas' most popular Civil War re-enactment events: the Civil War Weekend at the Historic Liendo Plantation. Held annually the weekend before Thanksgiving—it's scheduled for November 19-20 this year—the re-enactment is expected to draw more than 2,000 spectators to the East Texas town of Hempstead.

Through the lens of history, it wasn't that long ago that soldiers trod the ground here: During the Civil War, Col. Leonard W. Groce's Liendo Plantation was home to Camp Groce—the first permanent Confederate military prison west of the Mississippi River. And the plantation was the site of cavalry and infantry training camps and a hospital.

So this re-enactment, as far as theatrics go, keeps it real. At an operating platform near Cariker, Major Jack "Doc" Thomason describes a typical procedure while children exclaim "Ick!" at "amputated" limbs piled underneath.

From the grass drift the mournful tunes of the "hurt" and "dying." Some roll to-and-fro, murmuring "It's so cold," as a chaplain makes his way among them, Bible in one hand, coins used to weigh eyelids with eternity's sleep in another. Cariker, too, makes her own rounds through the grass, bestowing grace now, rather than orders, her bleached apron growing ruddy from "blood"—red food coloring.

Statewide, at about a dozen such events, an estimated 1,000 to 1,500 Civil War re-enactors are divided into about 20 groups. Of that figure, only a few hundred women partake, assuming such roles as officers' wives and vivandières, a French term for women who accompanied troops in assistance roles. Only a handful of female re-enactors take on nursing personas. But caretaking is Cariker's calling. Sure, the re-enactments are fake. But her passion is real.

"When I was 10, we were at Liendo, and I walked right up to Doc and told him I wanted to help him," Cariker says. Thus began a mentorship with Thomason, a former Army medic who served in Vietnam and who plays Doc, a Confederate sawbones. Grinning, Cariker adds, "I almost threw up at one of his demonstrations, and he's never let me live it down."

Cariker says Thomason "has taught me everything related to 1860s medicine that I know, and he's inspired me to continue my medical education."

Cariker also has drawn inspiration from her father, a 22-year local firefighting veteran, and her late grandmother, who was a nurse. Cariker spends the time between re-enactment events teaching emergency medical technician (EMT) basics and working as an EMT-intermediate for a 911 service while training for EMT-paramedic certification and preparing for nursing school.



Shortly after Thomason appointed Cariker the matron of nurses, “I had one of those moments when the sky parted and beams of light came down,” she playfully shares. “I realized I could do this in real life, and I knew that, through nursing, I could really make a difference.”

Suddenly, eyes twinkling, Cariker’s attention shifts to the surgical platform where a thin-boned soldier lies ready for Thomason’s examination. “Oh, watch this!” she says, with a nudge and a wink. “This is Doc’s favorite part.”

Basking in the attention of the growing audience, Thomason performs living history, delivering well-timed theatrics, finally dramatically stuttering, “But, but, you’re ... you’re a girl!” The crowd roars appreciatively.

During the Civil War, however, it was no laughing matter when women served in battle, and historians still don’t know how many women disguised themselves as men to do just that. Instead, during this era of Clara Barton (Civil War nurse and founder of the American Red Cross), Dorothea Dix (superintendent of women nurses for the U.S. Army) and Florence Nightingale (the founder of modern nursing), nursing, not soldiering, gets the most credit for advancing the cause of women’s rights.

Here at Liendo, with only one medical demonstration, blue and gray litter the grass together, and Cariker and two other nurses treat them all. In reality, women would have been miles away from the front lines at a general hospital, Cariker says. “But Doc discovering the female soldier, that sort of thing did happen sometimes,” she continues, throwing his performance an appreciative smile.

The camaraderie between Cariker and Thomason is part of what makes re-enactment circuits special. And, Cariker stresses, it allows her and her own family—her four brothers are re-enactors—to maintain close ties. So central a role does re-enacting play in their family life, explains Cariker’s mother, Deborah Deggs Cariker, that she and others resurrected the 15th Texas Cavalry Co. A from Civil War days. The re-enactment unit performs in Texas, including at Liendo, and in other states.

Rebekah Cariker says she looks forward to the role her unit plays in special church services each year at the Liendo Plantation. “Most re-enactment events include Sunday services, rain or shine,” she explains. “Liendo’s nondenominational services are held with three units taking turns hosting them, and since my father is a licensed minister, every third year is his turn.”

She smiles. “But the best part is that the hymns are sung a cappella, and most years we hold hands and sing ‘Amazing Grace.’”

And afterward, when the hymns fade and the operating platform has been disassembled, Rebekah Cariker returns to her everyday life, where she prepares to help others overcome dangers, toils and snares. For real.



Rebekah Cariker, Confederate matron of nurses, tends to the ‘wounded’ during one of Texas’ most popular Civil War re-enactment events: the Civil War Weekend at the Historic Liendo Plantation. The theatrics hit close to home for Cariker, who’s training for emergency medical technician-paramedic certification and preparing for nursing school.

*Mary O. Parker, a freelance writer, lives in Smithville.*

# Stage Plight

*Dying a thousand  
deaths: a short,  
happy life on a  
community  
theater stage.*

BY CHARLES BOISSEAU

D

ress rehearsal was a disaster.

We were 12 men in a community theater production of “12 Angry Men,” a classic courtroom drama. After fewer than four weeks of rehearsals, we were appearing for the first time in front of a live audience—thankfully a small one, just a handful of friends and relatives of cast members for this practice performance.

Things fell apart from the start. Like a series of dominoes, when one actor missed a line, it had a ripple effect, causing another to miss his. That’s because he was waiting for his cue that didn’t come.

Afterward, Jon-Michael Williford, one of the more experienced actors, said we suffered the “quicksand phenomenon.” As things break down, actors lose confidence in others so they tend to jump the gun and deliver their lines early in desperation to stay alive. There were times I felt I was swimming in the ocean, far from shore, on the verge of drowning, desperate to grab onto anything. The old adage is “dying onstage.”

What had I gotten into?

Just weeks earlier, I impulsively showed up for an audition at a tiny theater in Smithville that until recently had housed a barbecue joint. I hadn’t been in a play since high school—some 30 years earlier. I suppose I was intrigued with the compelling story: one juror—Juror No. 8—slowly convinces 11 others that there is a reasonable doubt about whether a 19-year-old man is guilty of stabbing his father to death. I remember long ago seeing the movie, which featured Henry Fonda as Juror No. 8 and Lee J. Cobb as Juror No. 3, the chief antagonist.

My chances of landing a part looked good. I was one of exactly 12 men at the audition. Our director (and theater owner) was John Daniels Jr., who looked like a refugee from a motorcycle gang: rotund with salt-and-pepper hair pulled back into a ponytail and a limp from a motorcycle accident. (He prefers his name all lowercase. “It’s an artist thing,” said his wife and theater manager April Daniels.)

At the end of the ad hoc “auditions,” Daniels cast a number of actors with whom he had previously worked, including veteran Bastrop actor Sam Z. Damon as Juror No. 3. Then, he called me over and offered me the role of Juror No. 8. I was shocked. The Henry Fonda role? Before I thought to decline I heard myself accept. On the drive back home to Austin, any enthusiasm was replaced with anxiety. I soon dis-



covered I had nearly 200 lines. How could I memorize so much in so few weeks?

Every day, I spent hours going over a thick stack of index cards with my lines and cues. Also, I recorded the entire play on a digital voice recorder. Over time, I could—almost by reflex—recite my lines—except when my mind would go inexplicably blank on stage.

Lines were one thing, but there was more to acting. My character was physical. He re-enacted scenes on the night of the murder and confronted other jurors. In a key early scene, Juror No. 8 surprises the others by pulling a switchblade knife from his pocket, demonstrating that the supposed “one-of-a-kind” knife used to kill the father wasn’t so unusual. For props, Daniels bought two identical knives, each of which opened a dull blade with the press of a button. I kept one of the knives in my pocket, since I needed to dramatically pull it out in the first act.

Finally, it was opening night, and I was sure we were destined to flop.

I stayed at a friend’s house in La Grange, only 15 minutes from the theater. That morning, I began going over my lines at 7:30 as I walked country roads. By mid-afternoon, I felt as ready as I would ever be. I loaded my car with my belongings and left the keys in the ignition so as to not misplace them. I dressed in the seersucker suit I was to wear on stage. At 6:40 p.m. I went to the car. Somehow I had left the key in the “on” position. The battery was dead.

The play started at 7:30 p.m. Was I destined to kill the show before it opened? I ran down the dirt road and saw children playing outside a house and a father doing yard work. He was operating an ear-piercing leaf blower. Their entry gate was padlocked. I waved my arms and yelled. I imagined what I looked like: A madman waving his arms and yelling from the road. The man finally noticed and came to the gate, and I explained it was a matter of life and death. He fetched his vehicle, we used my jumper cables to start my car, I thanked him and sped off. I arrived at the theater in a cloud of dust at 7:31 p.m. Within minutes, we made our entrance on stage.

Things started well. The energy was high, and there was a larger-than-expected crowd. I had been in such a rush I forgot to have stage fright. Then I received a jolt: I forgot the switchblade knife!

I had to think quickly. During the upcoming scene, Williford, Juror No. 4, moves to examine the murder weapon. As he made his request for the exhibit I unexpectedly got up and joined him at the door to wait for the bailiff. This was definitely not in the script.

“I need a knife in here,” I whispered to the bailiff off stage, motioning to my jacket pocket. Soon, the bailiff brought back two knives: one tagged “Exhibit No. 1” for Juror No. 4 and the other she surreptitiously slipped into my coat pocket. I felt a surge of relief. We pulled it off without the audience seeing.

The rest of the performance went without a hitch. We made our bows and heard a sweet sound: applause. Over the next few weeks we gave five more performances and received many accolades from theatergoers.

Months later, the experience seems almost a dream. The applause has faded, and I have no immediate plans to return to the stage. I suppose I didn’t catch the theater bug after all. But I’m all right with it. Nobody died.

*Charles Boisseau is an Austin-based writer.*



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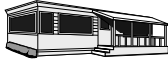
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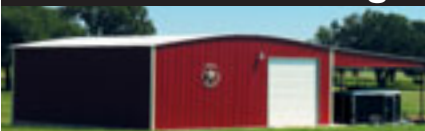
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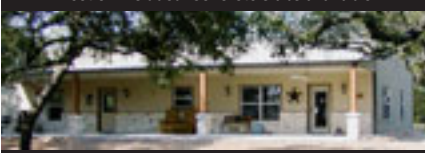
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How does Harbor Freight Tools sell high quality tools at such ridiculously low prices? We buy direct from the factories who also supply the major brands and sell direct to you. It's just that simple! See for yourself at one of our 370 Stores Nationwide and use this 20% Off Coupon on one of our 7,000 products\*, plus pick up a Free 9 LED Aluminum Flashlight, a \$6.99 value. We stock Shop Equipment, Hand Tools, Tarps, Compressors, Air & Power Tools, Woodworking Tools, Welders, Tool Boxes, Generators, and much more.

- Over 20 Million Satisfied Customers!
- 1 Year Competitor's Low Price Guarantee
- No Hassle Return Policy!
- 100% Satisfaction Guaranteed!

**Nobody Beats Our Quality, Service and Price!**

**SUPER COUPON!**

**FREE!**

WITH MINIMUM PURCHASE OF \$9.99

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

ITEM 65020

**REG. PRICE \$6.99**



**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 1** Free item only available with qualifying minimum purchase (excluding price of free gift item). Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the offer. Valid through 3/2/12. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.

**SUPER COUPON!**

LOT NO. 97626

**80 PIECE ROTARY TOOL SET**

**drillmaster**

**\$6.99**

**SAVE 72%**

**REG. PRICE \$24.99**



**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 8** This valuable coupon is good anywhere you shop Harbor Freight Tools (retail stores, online, or 800 number). Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the coupon discount. Valid through 3/2/12. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.

**SUPER COUPON!**

**20% OFF**

ANY SINGLE ITEM!

**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 1** Use this coupon to save 20% on any one single item purchased when you shop at a Harbor Freight Tools store. \*Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on any of the following: gift cards, Inside Track Club membership, extended service plans, Compressors, Generators, Tool Cabinets, Welders, Floor Jacks, Campbell Hausfeld products, open box items, Parking Lot Sale items, Blowout Sale items, Day After Thanksgiving Sale items, Tent Sale items, 800 number orders or online orders. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with original receipt. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store in order to receive the offer. Valid through 3/2/12. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.

**SUPER COUPON!**

LOT NO. 66287

**LEATHER INDUSTRIAL WORK GLOVES - 5 PAIRS**

**\$5.99**

**SAVE 40%**

**REG. PRICE \$9.99**

One size fits all.



**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 9** This valuable coupon is good anywhere you shop Harbor Freight Tools (retail stores, online, or 800 number). Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the coupon discount. Valid through 3/2/12. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.

**SUPER COUPON!**

**HaulMaster**

**12 VOLT MAGNETIC TOWING LIGHT KIT**

LOT NO. 96933/ 67455

**\$9.99**

**SAVE 71%**

**REG. PRICE \$34.99**



Item 96933 shown

**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 7** This valuable coupon is good anywhere you shop Harbor Freight Tools (retail stores, online, or 800 number). Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the coupon discount. Valid through 3/2/12. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.

**SUPER COUPON!**

**12" RATCHET BAR CLAMP/SPREADER**

**PITTSBURGH**

LOT NO. 46807

**\$1.99**

**SAVE 77%**

**REG. PRICE \$8.99**



**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 6** This valuable coupon is good anywhere you shop Harbor Freight Tools (retail stores, online, or 800 number). Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the coupon discount. Valid through 3/2/12. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.

**SUPER COUPON!**

**CHICAGO ELECTRIC POWER TOOLS**

**OSCILLATING MULTIFUNCTION POWER TOOL**

Item 68303 shown

**\$19.99**

**SAVE 66%**

**REG. PRICE \$59.99**

**8 Functions: Sanding, Cut Flooring, Cut Metal, Scrape Concrete, Remove Grout, Cut Plastic, Scrape Flooring, Plunge Cut**

**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 5** This valuable coupon is good anywhere you shop Harbor Freight Tools (retail stores, online, or 800 number). Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the coupon discount. Valid through 3/2/12. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.

**SUPER COUPON!**

**PITTSBURGH**

**RAPID PUMP® 3 TON HEAVY DUTY FLOOR JACK**

**\$64.99**

**SAVE \$35**

**REG. PRICE \$99.99**

**NEW!**

**3-1/2 PUMPS LIFTS MOST VEHICLES!**

LOT NO. 68048



**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 4** This valuable coupon is good anywhere you shop Harbor Freight Tools (retail stores, online, or 800 number). Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the coupon discount. Valid through 3/2/12. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.

**SUPER COUPON!**

**ELECTRIC CHAIN SAW SHARPENER**

**CHICAGO ELECTRIC POWER TOOLS**

**\$29.99**

**SAVE 40%**

**REG. PRICE \$49.99**

**NEW!**

**4-1/4" GRINDING WHEEL INCLUDED**

LOT NO. 68221



**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 3** This valuable coupon is good anywhere you shop Harbor Freight Tools (retail stores, online, or 800 number). Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the coupon discount. Valid through 3/2/12. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.

**SUPER COUPON!**

**3/8" x 14 FT. GRADE 43 TRUCKER'S CHAIN**

**HaulMaster**

LOT NO. 40462/97711

**\$17.99**

**SAVE 48%**

**REG. PRICE \$34.99**

Item 40462 shown

Not for overhead lifting.



**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 7** This valuable coupon is good anywhere you shop Harbor Freight Tools (retail stores, online, or 800 number). Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the coupon discount. Valid through 3/2/12. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.

**SUPER COUPON!**

**800 WATT/900 MAX. WATTS PORTABLE GENERATOR**

**CHICAGO Electric Generator**

**\$89.99**

**SAVE \$60**

**REG. PRICE \$149.99**

LOT NO. 66619



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**SUPER COUPON!**

**2000 LB. ELECTRIC WINCH WITH REMOTE CONTROL AND AUTOMATIC BRAKE**

**\$49.99**

**SAVE \$50**

**REG. PRICE \$99.99**

**NEW!**

LOT NO. 68146



**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 4** This valuable coupon is good anywhere you shop Harbor Freight Tools (retail stores, online, or 800 number). Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the coupon discount. Valid through 3/2/12. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.

**SUPER COUPON!**

**36 LED SOLAR SECURITY LIGHT**

LOT NO. 98085

**\$17.99**

**SAVE 28%**

**REG. PRICE \$24.99**

Includes 1.2 volt, 600mAh/6 volt NiCd rechargeable battery pack.



**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 5** This valuable coupon is good anywhere you shop Harbor Freight Tools (retail stores, online, or 800 number). Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the coupon discount. Valid through 3/2/12. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.



**SUPER COUPON!**

**LOT NO. 2707**

**8 FT. 8" x 11 FT. 6" FARM QUALITY TARP**

**SAVE 40%**

**\$5<sup>99</sup>** REG. PRICE \$9.99

**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 6**  
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**SUPER COUPON!**

**4-1/2" ANGLE GRINDER**

**drillmaster**

**LOT NO. 95578**

**SAVE 50%**

**\$9<sup>99</sup>** REG. PRICE \$19.99

Grinding wheel sold separately.

**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 9**  
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**SUPER COUPON!**

**CENTRAL PNEUMATIC**

**3 GALLON, 100 PSI OILLESS PANCAKE AIR COMPRESSOR**

**LOT NO. 95275**

**SAVE 46%**

**\$39<sup>99</sup>** REG. PRICE \$74.99

**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 5**  
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**SUPER COUPON!**

**CENTRAL PNEUMATIC**

**HIGH SPEED METAL SAW**

**LOT NO. 91753/113**

**SAVE 66%**

**\$9<sup>99</sup>** REG. PRICE \$29.99

Item 113 shown

**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 8**  
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**SUPER COUPON!**

**SAVE 43%**

**32 PIECE SCREWDRIVER SET**

**PITTSBURGH**

**LOT NO. 90764**

**\$4<sup>49</sup>** REG. PRICE \$7.99

**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 7**  
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**SUPER COUPON!**

**CENTRAL PNEUMATIC**

**3" HIGH SPEED CUT-OFF TOOL**

**Item 47077 shown**

**LOT NO. 47077/67425**

**\$6<sup>99</sup>** REG. PRICE \$19.99

**SAVE 65%**

**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 8**  
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**SUPER COUPON!**

**RECIPROCATING SAW WITH ROTATING HANDLE**

**LOT NO. 65570**

**CHICAGO ELECTRIC POWER TOOLS**

**\$19<sup>99</sup>** REG. PRICE \$39.99

**SAVE 50%**

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**6" DIGITAL CALIPER**

**PITTSBURGH**

**LOT NO. 47257**

**\$9<sup>99</sup>** REG. PRICE \$29.99

Includes two 1.5V button cell batteries.

**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 5**  
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**SUPER COUPON!**

**1500 WATT DUAL TEMPERATURE HEAT GUN**

**(572°/1112°)**

**drillmaster**

**LOT NO. 96289**

**\$8<sup>99</sup>** REG. PRICE \$19.99

**SAVE 55%**

**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 8**  
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**SUPER COUPON!**

**SAVE 50%**

**10/2/55 AMP, 6/12 VOLT BATTERY CHARGER/ENGINE STARTER**

**CHICAGO ELECTRIC POWER TOOLS**

**LOT NO. 66783**

**\$29<sup>99</sup>** REG. PRICE \$59.99

**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 5**  
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**SUPER COUPON!**

**ADJUSTABLE SHADE AUTO-DARKENING WELDING HELMET**

**CHICAGO WELDING**

**LOT NO. 46092**

**\$34<sup>99</sup>** REG. PRICE \$69.99

**SAVE 50%**

**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 4**  
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**SUPER COUPON!**

**14" ELECTRIC CHAIN SAW**

**CHICAGO ELECTRIC POWER TOOLS**

**LOT NO. 67255**

**\$44<sup>99</sup>** REG. PRICE \$74.99

**SAVE 40%**

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**10 FT. x 15 FT. PORTABLE GARAGE**

**LOT NO. 68217**

**SAVE \$110**

**NEW!**

**\$189<sup>99</sup>** REG. PRICE \$299.99

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**US\*GENERAL**

**11 DRAWER ROLLER CABINET**

**INCLUDES:**

- 6 Drawer Top Chest
- 2 Drawer Middle Section
- 3 Drawer Roller Cabinet

**LOT NO. 67421**

**\$149<sup>99</sup>** REG. PRICE \$299.99

**SAVE \$150**

**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 3**  
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**SUPER COUPON!**

**Item 68887 shown**

**CHICAGO WELDING**

**90 AMP FLUX WIRE WELDER**

**LOT NO. 98871/68887**

**\$89<sup>99</sup>** REG. PRICE \$149.99

**SAVE \$60**

**NO GAS REQUIRED!**

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82 year old with pacemaker using the Exerciser Elite®

## You deserve to feel better! You can with the Exerciser Elite®

### Receive some of the benefits of aerobic exercise without stress or impact on the joints!

The Exerciser Elite® is a passive exercise machine capable of providing positive results. Studies indicate passive exercise can be extremely beneficial, especially to those who are unable to do aerobic type exercise. Exercising on a regular basis is essential to our overall well-being.

The Clark built Exerciser Elite® is superior to any other Chi-type swing machine on the market. It will easily accommodate individuals weighing up to 425 pounds. Operating the machine is simple... just lie down and relax. The machine creates a gentle, right to left movement, which cycles up through the whole body.

People of all ages, with a wide variety of health issues, are using the Exerciser Elite® on a daily basis and receiving wonderful results.

The Exerciser Elite® is built for long term use and will provide many years of in-home therapy, as well as peace of mind knowing you own the highest quality machine available.

**Increase circulation throughout the body**

**Relieve stiffness from head to toe**

**Energize the body**

**Increase mobility**

*Enjoy the Gentle Lateral Swinging Movement*



#### Features

- Built in an ISO-9001 CERTIFIED facility
- FDA Class Registered
- ETL Approval
- Weighs only 15 pounds
- 15" wide x 13.5" deep x 9.5" high
- Controller cord 6'
- AC cord 7'2"



A+ Rating

**2-Year Parts and Labor Warranty**



# Customer Feedback

The Exerciser Elite® is just SUPER! I cannot tell you how much I enjoy my relaxing sessions, 3 times a day. When I am finished I feel like I am back in the fast lane. I am so glad I decided to splurge and buy your magnificent machine. —*Irene R.*

I have had both hips replaced and been through breast cancer. Regular exercise was not something I could do every day and still move. But with this wonderful machine I can! Thank you again. —*Carol H.*

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

I am an 88 year old woman with multiple health problems. After seeing the ad for the Exerciser 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.*

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 Elite®. —*C. Cordes*

## Guaranteed Results Feel better in 90 days or your money back

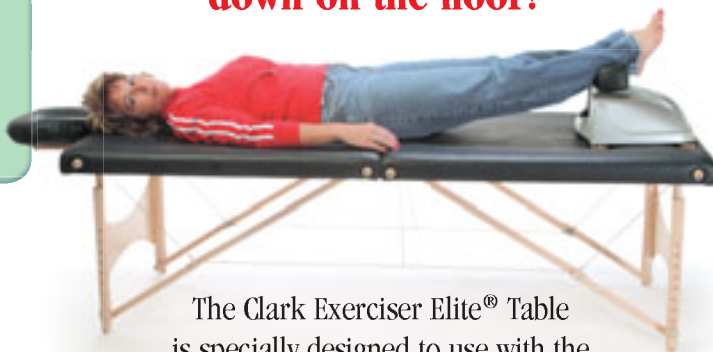
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**Save on reconditioned units when available.**

220/230 volt model available for International use

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# Former German POW At Home in Texas

BY CONNIE STRONG

When the clattering wheels of the Pullman cars finally came to a stop one fall day in 1943, 19-year-old German soldier Heino Erichsen took his first step onto unfamiliar Texas soil. After a long train trip from Ellis Island, New York, he joined approximately 3,200 German prisoners of war already housed at Camp Hearne, one of the first POW camps created in the U.S. during World War II.

Erichsen was no stranger to military life. He was 9 when Adolf Hitler came into power; by the age of 10, he reluctantly became a member of Hitler's Jungvolk (Young Folk). German law dictated that all boys between the ages of 14 and 18 become Jugends (Hitler Youths), and Erichsen was no exception. "Every weekend, on Saturdays and Sundays, you had to go to 'class,' which intentionally prevented you from going to church," recalls Erichsen, who has lived in Texas since 1981. "It was a camp, sometimes with pre-military training."

At 18, Erichsen was shipped to Tunisia as a private in Germany's Afrika Korps. Undermanned and underequipped, the Axis forces under German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel surrendered to the Allied powers in 1943. Erichsen, suffering from dysentery, was held captive only six months after his arrival in Africa. He turned 19, war weary and homesick, at an American field hospital in Oran, Algeria. His journey to Ellis Island began by freighter from Oran, a nerve-wracking, three-week voyage across the Atlantic Ocean.

"We had no idea where we were going," says Erichsen, who chronicled his experiences in the book *The Reluctant Warrior: Former German POW Finds Peace in Texas* (2001, Eakin Press). "But when I saw the Statue of Liberty, I knew I was in the United States."

Camp Hearne, by Erichsen's description, was a "standard" POW camp: "We could take hot showers, eat good food, and we had sports facilities for soccer." Also, Camp Hearne adhered strictly to the Geneva Conventions, which stated that POWs must be fed and housed in the same manner as soldiers of the country holding the prisoners.

POWs at "The Fritz Ritz," as the locals referred to the camp, also had to work. Working for farmers in nearby fields, enlisted men earned 10 cents per hour in canteen coupons from the government. The coupons could be used to purchase personal items from a canteen, or general store.

Leisure time was spent on such activities as building elaborate fountains and a theater in which the POWs would produce plays for the community. Math, agriculture, stenography and foreign language were among the college courses offered to the prisoners by Baylor University.

Yet the prisoners of war at Camp Hearne were exactly that—

POWs held in a complex of 250 buildings surrounded by two, 10-foot-tall barbed-wire fences. Erichsen writes that the POWs were "observed from watchtowers with power searchlights." He adds, "We were prisoners of the enemy—in the enemy's country—a situation never covered in our army training manual."

Yet the greatest threat to the POWs was the internal threat from covert Nazis, several of whom killed German Cpl. Hugo Krauss, a translator, for making disloyal statements about Germany and Hitler. Erichsen was sleeping in a bunk nearby when his barracks mate was murdered. "You learned, 'Don't tell anybody how you feel unless you are absolutely certain they feel the same way,'" he says.

Erichsen, also an interpreter, asked for a transfer from Camp Hearne, fearing he could be the next fatality. He was sent to a POW camp in Mexico, where he spent one day, and then went to Fort Knox, Kentucky. There, in spring 1946, at the age of 21, he was declared a free man.

Erichsen became an American citizen after returning to his hometown of Kiel, Germany, and finding it mostly destroyed. Ultimately, he chose Texas and lives only an hour-and-a-half drive from Hearne. In October 2010, he eagerly drove the distance to attend the opening of the Camp Hearne exhibit and visitors center.

"I learned the meaning of freedom in a prison camp. I never knew what America was like before I was a prisoner," says Erichsen, co-founder of Los Niños International Adoption Agency with his wife, Jean.

Heino Erichsen has seen both the ugly and the beautiful side of life, and today—at 86 years of age—enjoys every moment to the fullest. What has Erichsen learned on his journey? With a quick smile, he responds in his native High German: "*Was dich nicht umwirft, macht dich stärker.*"

Or, "What doesn't kill you, makes you stronger."



Heino Erichsen

CAMP HEARNE HISTORIC SITE MUSEUM

*Connie Strong is a freelance writer based out of Chappell Hill.*

**On TexasCoopPower.com**

Read more about the Camp Hearne exhibit.



Barbecued Beans

## Low, Slow and Steady

**BY KEVIN HARGIS** When I decide to make barbecue, it can take a whole day for me to fire up the grill. Yes, I know how to make a fire, and, no, I don't have to cut wood first. But every time I heat up my smoker, I want it to count.

So a barbecue for me begins at least a day before I actually put match to paper. There is meat to rub and marinate, sauce to simmer, side dishes to prepare. If I'm smoking chicken, I like to brine it first in a half-salt, half-sugar solution. This helps the meat stay tender and moist after a four-to-six-hour stay on my New Braunfels-style smoker.

This particular smoker design has an offset firebox attached to a larger smoking chamber. Dampers on the firebox and chimney allow me to control the intensity of the fire and the heat of the smoke: hotter for quicker-cooking meats, like chicken and sausage, and low and slow for bigger cuts like beef brisket or pork butt.

Over the years, I've learned that good barbecue can't be rushed. A long, slow cooking time will yield the most flavorful and tender meat. So the night before the big meal, I build a big fire in my pit, burning down oak limbs into coals and adding a generous amount of charcoal. I'll top that with a chunk or two of seasoned pecan or mesquite, then close the dampers and set the brisket or pork on indirect heat.

The fire smolders all night, keeping the heat low and even. Toward morning, the fire usually has burned down, but a new charge of charcoal and pecan wood takes care of that. My goal with large, fatty cuts of meat is to leave them on the smoker, fat side down, for at least 18 hours.

Then, throughout the day, depending on the size of crowd I'm feeding, the brisket will be joined by the chickens, sausage or whatever else I'm making—even some of the sides.

One of my sentimental favorite side-dish recipes is one for Barbecued Beans my dad used to make. He'd put the beans in an old ceramic pot with a lid, its glaze stained brown from years of smoke, and put it right on the grill. This dish uses rela-

tively inexpensive ingredients, is easy to make (for easy cleanup, I put mine in a disposable foil pan) and can easily be doubled to feed a bigger crowd.

### BARBECUED BEANS

- 2 cans (15 ounces each) ranch-style beans
- 2 cups shredded sharp Cheddar cheese
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup barbecue sauce
- 6 ounces crushed corn chips (about 2 cups)

Stir together beans, cheese, onion and sauces. Add chips and mix well. Add more chips, if needed, to achieve a firm consistency. Put in fireproof container and cover. Place on indirect heat on smoker or grill and cook until heated through. If you're using an oven, bake at 350 degrees for about 45 minutes.

Servings: 10. Serving size:  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup. Per serving: 308 calories, 12.1 g protein, 13 g fat, 33.9 g carbohydrates, 5.6 g dietary fiber, 1,052 mg sodium, 8.1 g sugars, 23 mg cholesterol

**COOK'S TIP** Instead of buying fresh corn chips, save the stale remnants of corn or tortilla chips you already have. Add a bit more barbecue sauce if mixture seems too dry.





**STEVE WRIGHT**, *Nueces Electric Cooperative*

Prize-winning recipe: **Pineapple BBQ Sauce**

The call went out for barbecue-related recipes, and Steve Wright sent us one for a nicely balanced barbecue sauce that adds a sweet touch to any smoked meat without overwhelming it.

## PINEAPPLE BBQ SAUCE

- ¾ cup packed brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon ancho chili powder
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon allspice
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon celery seeds
- ½ teaspoon ground cloves
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ¼ teaspoon ground mace or nutmeg
- ½ cup rice vinegar
- ½ cup honey
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 bay leaf
- 28 ounces ketchup
- 1 tablespoon Liquid Smoke
- 6 tablespoons pineapple juice concentrate

Mix all ingredients in saucepan and bring to a simmer. Simmer for 30 minutes. After 30 minutes, check for a balance between sweet and sour. If it is too sweet, add a little more vinegar. If it is too sour, add a little more brown sugar. Add cayenne if more spice is desired and add salt to taste.

Servings: 24. Serving size: ¼ cup. Per serving: 92 calories, 0.8 g protein, 0.1 g fat, 23.8 g carbohydrates, 0.3 g dietary fiber, 519 mg sodium, 22.5 g sugars

## BARBECUED MEATLOAF

- ½ cup sweet barbecue sauce (bottled)
- ¼ cup ketchup
- 2 pounds lean ground beef
- 1 pound ground pork
- 1½ cups panko bread crumbs
- ¼ cup milk
- 1 egg, slightly beaten
- ¼ cup bacon grease
- 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ teaspoon ground coriander
- ¼ teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon dried tarragon
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper

Mix barbecue sauce and ketchup and set aside. Prepare grill for indirect cooking

and heat to 325 degrees. Brush grill with oil. Process meats in food processor until further ground (1 to 2 minutes). In large bowl, mix panko crumbs and milk, then stir in egg, bacon grease, Worcestershire and seasonings. Mix in meat. Line 9x4-inch loaf pan with heavy foil. Press meat mixture into pan and remove from pan using foil. Remove foil and place meatloaf directly on grill. Top with 3 tablespoons of sauce. Grill 1 to 1½ hours or until top of loaf registers 155 degrees. Serve with remaining sauce.

Servings: 8. Serving size: 1 slice. Per serving: 464 calories, 37 g protein, 22 g fat, 23.2 g carbohydrates, 1.1 g dietary fiber, 797 mg sodium, 7.6 g sugars, 133 mg cholesterol

**LISA DOVER**

*Houston County Electric Cooperative*

## CREAMY BARBECUED RICE

- ½ cup butter
- 1 small onion, chopped
- ⅔ cup chopped celery
- 2 cans (10¾ ounces each) cream of chicken soup
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 1½ teaspoons Liquid Smoke
- 2 cups cooked white rice
- ½ teaspoon garlic salt
- Fresh parsley (optional)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease a 2½-quart casserole dish. In large skillet, melt butter over medium

heat. Add onion and celery and cook for 6 to 8 minutes, or until tender. Stir in soup, broth and Liquid Smoke. Increase heat to medium-high, bring to a boil and cook 1 minute. Remove from heat and stir in rice and garlic salt. Spoon into prepared baking dish. Bake for 30 minutes. Garnish with fresh parsley, if desired.

Servings: 8. Serving size: ½ cup. Per serving: 237 calories, 3.6 g protein, 14.5 g fat, 19.9 g carbohydrates, 0.4 g dietary fiber, 760 mg sodium, 1 g sugars, 36 mg cholesterol

**SAMANTHA HOOVER**

*Grayson-Collin Electric Cooperative*

## MIKE'S SMOKED BRISKET

- 2 cups dark brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 cup seasoned salt
- 1 beef brisket (10 to 16 pounds)

Mix first six ingredients. Rub on brisket and wrap with plastic wrap. Put in refrigerator for at least 24 hours. Remove from plastic and wrap in heavy foil. Place in 225-degree smoker (slow to medium fire) with fat side down for 3 hours. Place in empty 40-quart cooler for 12 hours (and don't open the lid). Put back on smoker for 6 hours at 225 degrees. Let set for 30 minutes before slicing.

Servings: 24 to 40, depending on weight of raw brisket. Serving size: ¼ pound. Per serving: 186 calories, 24.5 g protein, 3.6 g fat, 10.9 g carbohydrates, trace dietary fiber, 2,917 mg sodium, 10.7 g sugars, 73 mg cholesterol

**MIKE MCCARTNEY**

*Grayson-Collin Electric Cooperative*

## \$100 RECIPE CONTEST

March's recipe contest topic is **Pasta Sauces and Pestos**. A good sauce is the key to making a delicious pasta dish. What are your favorites? The deadline is November 10.

SPONSORED BY THE TEXAS PEANUT PRODUCERS BOARD.

Submit recipes online at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com) under the Submit and Share tab. 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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# Wrinkles, Under-eye Dark Circles and Bags – Does Any Cream Work?



*Dear Dorris:*

**DEAR DORRIS:** I am a vibrant woman of 55 years old. I feel 25 years old still, but I have lately developed these

wrinkles and dark circles under my eyes along with puffy bags, that make me look older than I am.

I have tried many products that the Celebrities endorse, but they didn't work. Is there any product out there that can really get rid of these wrinkles, bags and dark circles?

***Dark and Baggy, Dallas County***

**DEAR DARKNESS :** There is definitely a product that really works on your three big problems of wrinkles, dark circles, and bags. The product is the industry's best kept secret, and it's called the **Dermagist Eye Revolution Gel®**. It is a light gel that you apply around the eye area, that has some serious scientific ingredients that do exactly what you're looking for.

It has the ingredient, Haloxyl, which penetrates the skin and breaks up the blood particles that cause those dark circles. Another ingredient, Eyseliss works to release the fat pockets that develop under the eye that appear as bags.

**The Dermagist Eye Revolution Gel®** also works on wrinkles by using Stem Cells to regenerate healthy skin cells, and reduce wrinkles. As an overall treatment for the skin around the eye area, this product is a serious choice that the other creams only aspire to compete with. Since it's priced affordably, it will not be long until the whole world is talking about it.

**The Dermagist Eye Revolution Gel® is available online at [Dermagist.com](http://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 **"TXEYE7"**. It's worth a try to see if it still works.

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▲ Sam Houston Electric Cooperative member **Andrea Ortego**, right, and fellow Chili Chix **Judy Herring**, left, and **Ronnie Ynoscencio** pose in their trophy-winning booth at the Indian Springs Volunteer Fire Department Chili Cook-Off.



▲ Bandera Electric Cooperative (BEC) and Nueces Electric Cooperative member **Shirley Shandley** says friend **Rick Verde**, also a BEC member, and his team placed first in cobbler, third in chicken-fried steak and fourth in most authentic wagon competition at his first chuck-wagon cook-off in Helotes.

“Oouuu ... dat crawfish!” draws Bandera Electric Cooperative member **Bill Evans** about this ready pot simmering with goodness: “Crawfish, sausage, corn, garlic, every pepper we could find and lots of seasoning!” Evans annually cooks up mudbugs—this year, 250 pounds! ►

## Upcoming in Focus on Texas

ISSUE	SUBJECT	DEADLINE
Jan	Baby, It's Cold Outside	Nov 10
Feb	Going Nuts!	Dec 10
<i>Sponsored by Texas Peanut Producers</i>		
Mar	Wild Animals	Jan 10
Apr	Easter	Feb 10
May	Everything's Bigger in Texas	Mar 10
June	Hard at Work	Apr 10

**BABY, IT'S COLD OUTSIDE** is the topic for our **JANUARY 2012** issue. Send your photo—along with your name, address, daytime phone, co-op affiliation and a brief description—to **Baby, It's Cold Outside**, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701, before **NOVEMBER 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](http://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.

## AT THE COOK-OFF

Whether it's chili, barbecue, chicken-fried steak or even mashed potatoes (yep, every October in Wimberley) on the menu, cook-offs let Texans showcase their culinary—and creative—skills. Some folks in co-op country go all out for these chef-inspired celebrations, complete with costumes, decorations, (friendly) smack talk and smiles! So don your best duds, bring your appetite, bust out those Dutch ovens and grills, stoke that fire and get cookin'!

—ASHLEY CLARY-CARPENTER



▲ Pedernales Electric Cooperative (PEC) member **Joey Smith**, of Circle Track Smokers, demonstrates the only way to eat ribs. **Kevin** and **Cynthia LaRoche**, PEC and Central Texas Electric Cooperative members who sent in the photo, sponsor the spices for Smith's cook-off team.



▲ **Jan Nimtzy** takes a break during Boerne's Chuck Wagon Cook-Off with a fellow everyone thought looked like Gabby Hayes, the late actor known for portraying colorful sidekicks in Western movies. Jan and husband **Ed**, who took the photo, are members of Bandera Electric Cooperative.





# 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](http://TexasCoopPower.com).

## PICK OF THE MONTH

### NOVEMBER 4

**CELINA**

Balloon Festival & Family Fun Day,  
(972) 382-3300,  
[www.celinaballoonfestival.com](http://www.celinaballoonfestival.com)



## NOVEMBER

05

### LINDENAU

Fall Harvest Home Show,  
(361) 275-2112

### TROY

Farmers Market/Arts & Crafts, (254) 421-2485,  
[www.troyfarmersmarket.net](http://www.troyfarmersmarket.net)

### WHITEWRIGHT

Grand Street Fall Festival,  
(903) 364-2000,  
[www.grandstreetfallfestival.com](http://www.grandstreetfallfestival.com)

10

### LEVELLAND

Ladies Night Out,  
(806) 894-3157,  
[www.levelland.com](http://www.levelland.com)

12

### EDGE

Rompin' Stompin' Street Fest, (979) 589-3539

### POWDERLY

Chuck Wagon Cook-Off,  
(903) 272-4653



17

**CUERO**  
Country Music Opry

12

### WELLINGTON

Le Theatre de Marionette presents The Wizard of Oz, (806) 447-0090,  
[www.wellingtonritztheatre.com](http://www.wellingtonritztheatre.com)

### KINGSLAND [12-13]

Fall Craft Show,  
(325) 388-0150,  
[www.kingslandcrafts.com](http://www.kingslandcrafts.com)

13

### MCALLEN

Conjunto Music Shootout,  
(956) 867-8783,  
[www.facebook.com/lalomitapark](http://www.facebook.com/lalomitapark)

17

### CUERO

Country Music Opry,  
(361) 275-6334

19

### CROCKETT

Big Bad Voodoo Daddy,  
(936) 544-4276,  
[www.pwfaa.org](http://www.pwfaa.org)

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**NOV 4-6** ♦ A Country Christmas Carol Musical, Bay City  
**NOV 17** ♦ Christmas Around the Square, Bay City  
**NOV 17 ~ DEC 31** ♦ Festival of Trees, MC Museum  
**NOV 26** ♦ Thanksgiving Lighted Boat Parade, Sargent  
**DEC 1** ♦ Lighted Christmas Parade, Bay City  
**DEC 3** ♦ Seaside Holiday, Palacios  
**DEC 17** ♦ Christmas Market Day, Bay City  
**DEC 19** ♦ NAS Christmas Bird Count

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# AROUND TEXAS AROUND TEXAS

**19 PARIS**  
Tinsel and Tidings Holiday Bazaar, (903) 785-5221, [www.ywca.org](http://www.ywca.org)

**25 MCKINNEY** [25-27]  
Dickens of a Christmas, (972) 547-2660, [www.downtownmckinney.com](http://www.downtownmckinney.com)

**ATHENS** [25-12/4]  
Festival of Trees, (903) 677-2001



**25 ATHENS**  
Festival of Trees

## DECEMBER



**JASPER**  
Annual Christmas Parade of Lights

**01 JASPER**  
Annual Christmas Parade of Lights, (409) 384-2762, [www.jaspercoc.org](http://www.jaspercoc.org)

**PORT LAVACA**  
Festival of Lights Parade, (361) 552-2959, [www.portlavacatx.org](http://www.portlavacatx.org)

**02 FREDERICKSBURG**  
Community Christmas Parade, 1-888-997-3600, [www.visitfredericksburgtx.com](http://www.visitfredericksburgtx.com)

**02 BEEVILLE** [2-4]  
Winterfest, (361) 358-3267

**HUNTSVILLE** [2-4]  
Huntsville for the Holidays, 1-800-289-0389, [www.huntsvilletexas.com](http://www.huntsvilletexas.com)

**LED BETTER** [2-3, 9-10, 16-17, 23]  
Christmas Lane of Lights, (979) 412-4167, [www.ledbetterschristmaslaneoflights.com](http://www.ledbetterschristmaslaneoflights.com)

**03 VICTORIA**  
The Lighted Christmas Parade, (361) 485-3200, [www.victoriatx.org](http://www.victoriatx.org)

**DECATUR** [3-4]  
Cowboy Christmas Story, (903) 785-9396, [www.wisecountycowboychurch.com](http://www.wisecountycowboychurch.com)

**04 DRIFTWOOD**  
Mustang Mare-y Christmas Barn Tour, (512) 894-0105, <http://texasash2oasis.org>



**4 DRIFTWOOD**  
Mustang Mare-y Christmas Barn Tour

We pick events for the magazine directly from [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com). Submit your event for January by November 10, and it just might be featured in this calendar!

CHRISTMAS TREE: 2011 © BRENT HATHAWAY. IMAGE FROM BIGSTOCK.COM. LIGHTS: 2011 © DOUG GREENWALD. IMAGE FROM BIGSTOCK.COM. HORSE: 2011 © JEAN SCHWEITZER. IMAGE FROM BIGSTOCK.COM.

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### What's Glowing on in Sevierville?

From November through February Sevierville sparkles with millions of Winterfest lights, great events and holiday shopping bargains. This year, enjoy Sevierville's Smoky Mountain Winterfest knowing that the twinkling displays are 100% LED, meaning they use less power and are kinder on our environment.



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# OH, CHRISTMAS TREE

*At this popular East Texas farm, the cypresses and pines easily measure up.*

**BY JAN ADAMSON**

It's the day after Thanksgiving. Some folks are making a mad dash to the Black Friday sales to hunt for bargain-priced Christmas gifts. But others are engaging in a different hunt far from the jammed parking lots, the crowds and the noise—they're the ones heading out to cut their own Christmas tree at one of Texas' approximate 120 Christmas tree farms.

One of my family's favorites is **MR AND MS TREES**, 12 miles south of Palestine in the East Texas community of Tucker. Owned by Rick and Michaelene Sparks, members of Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative, MR and MS Trees is 15 acres of mostly Virginia pines, with some Leyland cypresses, a pollen-free tree that won't trigger allergies, and loblolly pines.

Upon arrival at the farm, visitors are greeted by Rick, who's usually sporting a cowboy hat with a stocking cap fitted over the crown. Guests are free to take their time finding a tree. Some like to hang around the little gift shop first and have a cup of hot chocolate or wassail (a hot mulled cider) on one of the two covered porches. Some might do a little shopping, such as for ornaments, Rick's special wreaths made of horseshoes,

stockings handmade by Michaelene or fresh wreaths of Virginia pine boughs.

The youngsters will want to pay a visit to Santa Claus, who comes to the farm on weekends. The only thing missing is the snow. Well, it did snow once, but that was on Easter, Rick laughs.

The Sparkses opened the farm in 2003 after Rick retired from the military. Since then, families from near and far have made the pilgrimage to MR and MS Trees a traditional part of their holiday.

"We have young folks who started coming here at 7 or 8 years old and who now work for us," Rick says. "We have a family that drives from Galveston to meet with friends, and they all come here on Sunday and spend three or four hours. They play football or catch in the field. Some families bring their leashed dogs to let them get out and play. We get to see children meet Santa for the first time, and young folks bring their children back."

Many families pack lunches and take advantage of picnic areas with tables and fire pits. Children can play in the field or join in the races at the duck pond—a water trough with side-by-side hand pumps that propel the little rubber ducks forward.

When you're ready to find that perfect tree, hop onboard the wooden bed of a wagon big enough to hold four families of four and four perfect trees. A driver will take you to the field where you can wander and wonder as long as you like. You can cut your own tree with the hand buck crosscut saw provided or get some assistance.

You'll also get a measuring stick. Rick jokes, "A tree grows the most from the time it gets cut down to the time it gets home." Everyone wants the big one in the field, he says. But he encourages people to think about the height of their ceiling and the space that the stand and treetop need.

Once you get home, cut about three-quarters of an inch off the bottom of the trunk so the tree can absorb water, Rick advises. He says it's not unusual for an 8-foot tree to take in a gallon of water the first day after it's been cut. To keep your tree fresh throughout the holidays, Rick says, remember this: "It's about location, location, location and water. It needs to stay away from a heat source, and that means a fireplace, a heater vent or a big window here in Texas."

*Jan Adamson is a freelance writer based in Grand Saline.*

*Go to [www.mrandmstrees.com](http://www.mrandmstrees.com) for more information. To find a Christmas tree farm near you, visit the Texas Christmas Tree Growers Association's website, [www.texaschristmastrees.com](http://www.texaschristmastrees.com). Visitors should call to confirm hours.*





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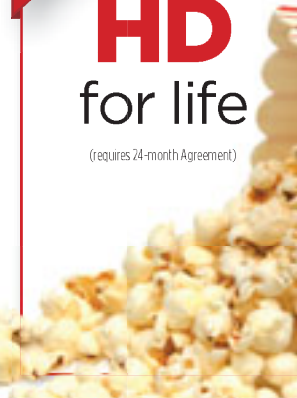
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