

LOCAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE EDITION

APRIL 2012

HARD WORK THE LACY WAY

CUPCAKES

TREATY OAK

# TEXAS CO-OP POWER

2012: INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF COOPERATIVES

## HOT WHEELS

**NASCAR Drives  
Texas Fans Wild**



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T E X A S ' L A R G E S T R U R A L L E N D E R





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By Carlos Mendez

*The Dallas Cowboys are huge in Texas—and so is NASCAR at Texas Motor Speedway, where the track encircles an infield so big it could hold four Cowboys Stadiums. April's Samsung Mobile 500 weekend is expected to draw 400,000 fans.*

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Photos by Woody Welch

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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.

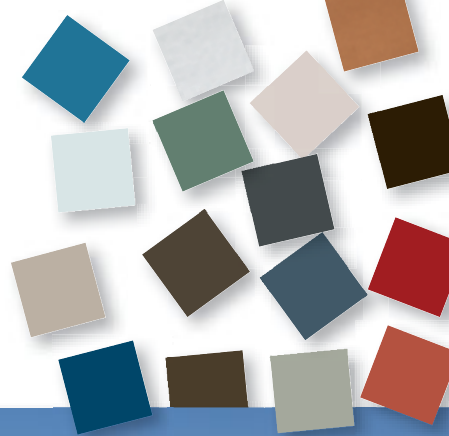
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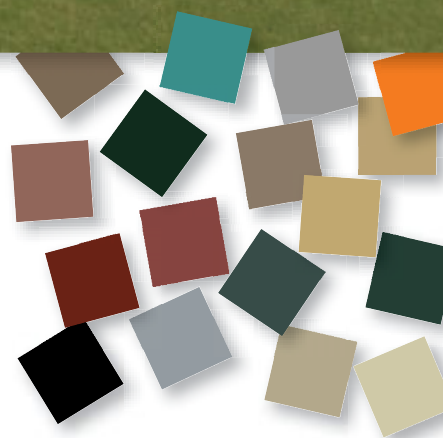
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# POWERtalk

Letters from Texas Co-op Power Readers

## DIG IN: VOLUNTEER

The delightful article "Campground Comrades" in the February 2012 edition has prompted me to write in hopes of informing your readers that opportunities to volunteer in our state parks can easily be enjoyed without giving up home and hearth (the kind without wheels). Texas Master Naturalists have been doing it for years. There are at least 42 local chapters with 6,000 trained Texas Master Naturalists across the state, and opportunities to help our state parks have never been so abundant.

**JAN DEATHERAGE**

*Texas Master Naturalist*

*CoServ Electric*

## ARTICLE PLANTED A SEED

Thank you for your "Keyhole Gardening" article [February 2012]. I look forward to finally growing a garden this year with my 1-year-old daughter, and this article will give me a great start.

**PAUL FARINELLA**

*Pedernales Electric Cooperative*

I greatly enjoyed the magazine this month, especially the article about keyhole gardening—I will be trying it soon! Thank you!

**HELEN SHOUP**

*Central Texas Electric Cooperative*

## STRONG TEXAS WOMAN

That was a fascinating article about a special Texas woman ["Dr. Sofie Herzog," February 2012] who helped shape the

character and mystique of our great state. She and many other independent, strong Texas women pushed the limits of what a woman's place was expected to be. I would have liked to have met her.

**BILL ROGGE**

*Heart of Texas Electric Cooperative*

## DEEP, DARK WATER

Your article about Balmorhea State Park ["Don't Forget to Look Down," February 2012] brought back thoughts of growing up in West Texas. The memory that stands out the most is my mother swimming at the far end of the

springs where the water was deeper. I just knew as a kid that there was some thing living down in that deep, dark water that would drag me under if I were to swim there. My mother was the bravest woman in the world.

**R.D. BREWER**

*Sam Houston Electric Cooperative*

## GET MORE TCP at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com)

*Find more letters in the April Table of Contents.*

*Sign up for our E-Newsletter for monthly updates, prize drawings and more!*

## CHESS SUCCESS

Thank you for acknowledging Brownsville, the Chess Capital of Texas, in your January 2012 issue [Who Knew? item] and congratula-

tions to all those Rio Grande Valley students for their achievements. My father, Francisco Ornelas, a retired teacher, helped establish and lead his chess club at Vernon Middle School in Harlingen for many years. It is always nice reading about students' achievements these days, especially when their work requires the utmost discipline.

**ALMA E. ORNELAS LAURENTS**

*Pedernales Electric Cooperative*

**Editor's note:** Watch for our feature story scheduled to run in June about the phenomenal success of Brownsville and Rio Grande Valley students in chess competition.

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

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*Please include your town and electric co-op. Letters may be edited for clarity and length.*

# The Value of Volunteering



Thank you to Texas Co-op Power and writer Charles Boisseau for the outstanding and well-timed February 2012 cover story "Campground Comrades" about volunteers in Texas state parks. The value of volunteering has never been more appreciated than now, when drought and wildfires have reduced visitation and revenue needed to keep parks operating. Another option for those who would help: Consider making a donation at [www.texasstateparks.org/help/parks](http://www.texasstateparks.org/help/parks).

Likewise, the story highlighting beautiful Balmorhea State Park also is timely, as the most important thing people can do to help keep our parks open is to visit them, since visitor fees pay about half the cost to operate state parks. A bright spot in tough times is how they bring out the true colors of friends and all who care about these great treasures.

**Carter Smith**, Executive Director, *Texas Parks and Wildlife Department*

Give Woody Welch kudos for that great cover photo in the February magazine. Nice.

**Kelly Coppage Foster**, *Bandera Electric Cooperative*

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# POWERconnections

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

## Banking on Green Homes

*Third-party energy-efficiency certifications can boost homebuilders' claims and fetch higher sales prices.*

By Suzanne Haberman

If you're in the market for an energy-efficient house this spring, you don't have to take the builder's word about its performance. Look for third-party energy-efficiency certifications instead.

These certifications endorse homes that meet certain energy-efficiency and environmental standards meant to save money on utility bills and make wise use of resources. A home can be energy efficient without being certified, but getting the guarantee of a third party can take the guesswork out of how it will function.

Whether the guarantee is necessary is a question for the potential buyer. "The consumer, we know, responds well to a third-party certification label," says Nate Kredich, vice president of residential market development for the U.S. Green Building Council. "The trust factor is high."

Third-party energy-efficiency certifications have been available for decades, and there are three major programs nationwide: Energy Star by the U.S. Department of Energy and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; National Green Building

Standard by the International Code Council and National Association of Home Builders; and LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) for Homes from the U.S. Green Building Council.

Local programs, energy audits and energy ratings are also available in some areas. The City of Austin, for example, began its green-home rating system in 1991—the first such program in the country—and some electric cooperatives in Texas offer energy audits.

To get homes certified, a builder has to work with a rater, an independent party who makes sure homes meet all the energy-efficiency standards. The builder pays various registration and certification fees.

Certification programs take into consideration homes' environmental impacts and use of resources. Energy-efficient houses can save homeowners money on their bills. The EPA estimates that an Energy Star-qualified home can cut annual heating, cooling and water-heating costs by \$200 to \$400.

The potential for saving money over the life of an energy-efficient home can be an attractive selling point. "It's a marketing tool," says Bill Messick, North Texas field studies supervisor for the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts Property Tax Assistance Division.

While such statistics are not tracked in Texas, in some parts of the country, studies of multiple-listing service data show that homes with third-party energy-efficiency certifications fetch higher prices and sell faster. In the six-county Portland, Oregon, metropolitan area, certified new homes sold for an average of 8 percent more between May 1, 2010, and April 30, 2011, according to Earth Advantage Institute.

"Green homes are starting to stand out," Kredich says.

Suzanne Haberman, staff writer

## Making the Cut

Three major nationwide programs offer homes third-party energy-efficiency certifications. Here's a breakdown of program standards and a tally of how many homes have made the cut.

### Energy Star

New homes with Energy Star labels are generally 20 to 30 percent more energy efficient than standard homes. Features of Energy Star-qualified new homes include effective insulation, high-performance windows, tight construction and ducts, efficient heating and cooling equipment, and Energy Star-rated lighting and appliances. In Texas, 29,074 new homes earned Energy Star certifications in 2010. Visit [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov).

### National Green Building Standard

The National Association of Home Builders' energy-efficient building and conservation program, the National Green Building Standard, sets certification criteria for site development, indoor environmental quality, homeowner education, and resource, energy and water efficiency. As of March, 3,761 new and remodeled homes in the country had earned National Green Building Standard certification. Visit [www.nahbgreen.org](http://www.nahbgreen.org).

### LEED for Homes

The LEED for Homes rating system sets up standards for myriad categories, including a home's materials, air quality, location and water efficiency. A LEED-certified home uses 20 to 30 percent less energy than a home built to the 2006 International Energy Conservation Code. By early 2012, there were 1,531 LEED-certified single- and multifamily homes in Texas, most of them new. Visit [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org).



## HAPPENINGS



Every day, Texas restaurants serve up an estimated 800,000 orders of a beloved culinary favorite: the battered, breaded and gravy-smothered chicken-fried steak. While many towns take pride in their own version of the steak (usually a thin cut of beef from the round), only one—Lamesa, south of Lubbock—is the “Legendary Home of the Chicken-Fried Steak,” as declared by the Legislature in May.

The legend was created from scratch. In 1976, the Austin American-Statesman published a fictional story about a short-order cook at a Lamesa diner who overlooked the comma in a waitress’ order for “chicken, fried steak.” He cooked the steak like chicken, rolling it in flour and milk and frying it.

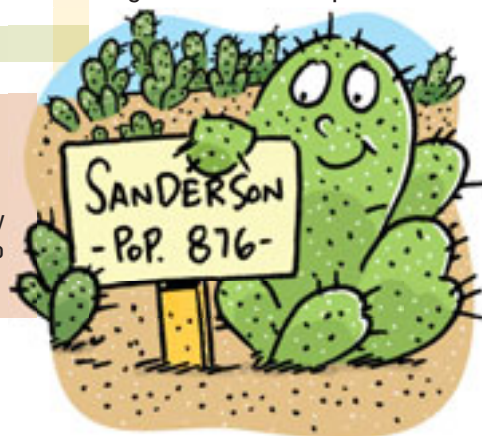
The story, set in 1911, was meant as a spoof, but some news outlets repeated it as truth. All said, the hoopla has benefited Lamesa, which will hold its second annual **CHICKEN FRIED STEAK FESTIVAL** April 27-29, featuring a chicken-fried steak cook-off, hot-air balloon rally, 5K run, motorcycle and classic car shows, and live music. For more information, visit [www.ci.lamesa.tx.us](http://www.ci.lamesa.tx.us) or call (806) 872-4322.

*Find hundreds of happenings all across the state at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com).*

## WHO KNEW?

### CACTUS CAPITAL OF TEXAS

In the far West Texas town of Sanderson, population 876 at last count, the desert’s cacti easily outnumber the people. No wonder the Legislature declared Sanderson, the Terrell County seat, the Cactus Capital of Texas in 1999. The arid Trans-Pecos Region in which Sanderson sits features more than 100 species of cacti—the most diverse collection in the U.S.—including strawberry, prickly pear, horse-crippler, dog cholla and claret cup.



## 2012 INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF COOPERATIVES

The Rochdale Pioneers—a group of working men in Rochdale, England—established the first modern cooperative business model, the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers Society, in 1844. With the mission of providing basic goods at lower prices to member-customers, they opened a store at 31 Toad Lane with meager offerings, including two dozen candles and one sack of oatmeal.

## CO-OP PEOPLE

*Lamar EC Rallies Around  
Family with Blood Drives*

BY ASHLEY CLARY-CARPENTER

On November 1, 2010, Lamar Electric Cooperative Member Services Director Marci Thompson was busy organizing a co-op blood drive when her phone rang. It was LEC member Darlena Shimpock, who

asked Thompson: “Can the credits from the blood drive go to my grandson, Carter Allen Townes?”

Three days earlier, 3½-year-old Carter was diagnosed with Precursor B-Cell Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL), a type of cancer in which the bone marrow makes too many immature lymphocytes, a type of white blood cell. ALL is the most common type of cancer in children ages 1 to 7, but Carter’s case is rare and high

risk because his body has not one, but two defective chromosomes that produce leukemic cells.

Thompson’s immediate answer was yes, and she sprang into action on Carter’s behalf, contacting East Texas Broadcasting, which operates four area radio stations, to help spread the word. Shimpock

did the same throughout the community. Their efforts were rewarded.

“We had people we were turning away because we were so busy,” Thompson said, explaining that some people donated on Carter’s behalf at nearby blood drives. “People who knew the family, people who didn’t ... it was an outpouring of love.”

The first drive was so successful that Thompson organized two more for Carter. Carter’s mother, Timberley Townes, said the donation of blood-drive credits—which individuals accrue each time they give blood—has helped defray the medical expenses of Carter’s multiple blood and platelet transfusions.

Carter is surrounded by family. He, his mom and his father, Charlie, live in Clarksville near grandparents Gerald and Elaine Townes and grandparents Tim and Darlena Shimpock of Annona. All are LEC members. Carter’s journey—blogged by his mother, other family members and friends—can be tracked at [www.caringbridge.org/visit/cartertownes](http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/cartertownes).

“We’ve met lots of wonderful people on the way,” says Darlena, Timberley’s mother. “It’s a journey, and it’s happening to show all of us something.”

*Ashley Clary-Carpenter, field editor*

*Send Co-op People ideas to [editor@TexasCoopPower.com](mailto:editor@TexasCoopPower.com).*



Carter Allen Townes celebrated his fifth birthday on April 11. “He’s a happy kid—what more could you ask for?” says his mother, Timberley Townes.





GETTY IMAGES/COURTESY OF TEXAS MOTOR SPEEDWAY

With eventual winner Matt Kenseth hugging his bumper (left, black Ford Fusion), Clint Bowyer (yellow Chevrolet Impala with Cheerios logo) leads the way during last year's Samsung Mobile 500 at Texas Motor Speedway. Bowyer finished second.

*Racing hearts and revved-up engines:*

*NASCAR and Texas Motor Speedway drive Texans wild*

# *Hot Wheels*

BY CARLOS MENDEZ

*It was the smell. Unmistakable. Gasoline.*

*And the sound. Startling. An explosion.*

*But not just one explosion. Forty-three all at once—in the bellies of 43 race cars—that made then 40-year-old Marina Kerr fall in love on a sunny afternoon in April 2003.*

*“So in love,” she said.*



**K**err, now 49, was at her first NASCAR race. She didn't know much about auto racing. But that was OK. She liked cars, and the enormous track of Texas Motor Speedway, off Interstate 35 West between Fort Worth and Denton, was filled with them.

"When I was 13, 14, 15, and my girlfriends were out at the mall buying makeup, I was over at my brothers' best friend's house with my head under the hood of a '69 Chevelle SS Super Sport, and I've been crazy about cars ever since," she says.

But up until that day at her first race, in the seconds before the start, before the traditional command—"Gentlemen, start your engines!"—she didn't know how crazy.

"The first time I came out, they were still running leaded gasoline in the cars," she said. "And when they cranked up those 43 motors and the smell of that gasoline ... I was in love. I was so in love."

### ***America's No. 1 Spectator Sport***

More people than Marina Kerr of Grand Prairie have been smitten by Texas Motor Speedway. The mile-and-a-half track, encircling an infield so big that four Cowboys Stadiums (home of the Dallas Cowboys) could fit inside it, is big and loud and alive on race day.

A typical race weekend looks like this: NASCAR fans, on the scene for days now, fill the infield with tents, RVs and flags with the numbers of their favorite drivers flying. Souvenir stands sell shirts, jackets, headphones, Christmas ornaments—anything with a driver or a sponsor logo. Crowds mill and gather around pit road and the garage, snapping pictures, hunting autographs and watching the crews make final race-car preparations (the cars now run on a 15-percent ethanol blend fuel).

At the start/finish line, Willie Nelson, Trace Adkins, Foreigner and ZZ Top have all put their tunes to warm-up duty for the crowd. Motorcycle daredevil/stuntman Robbie Knieval, son of the late Evel Knieval, has jumped cars and buses at the start/finish line.

But it's not only Texas Motor Speedway that buzzes. All 26 of the nation's official NASCAR tracks offer

the same festival feel. NASCAR is the No. 1 spectator sport in America, averaging close to 100,000 fans a race, and it has more of the top-20 attended events than any other sport in the United States. On TV, it is the nation's No. 2-rated regular-season sport, behind the NFL.

NASCAR fans drive all over the country to get to a race, taking their RVs or motor homes or sometimes just their pickup trucks. They camp inside the track. They camp outside the track. They come early, and when the race is over, they pack up and begin the trip back home, or to the next race.

It's a family vacation for some, an annual tradition for others. For many, it's a requirement of sorts, necessary to fill a latent need for speed, especially in a state like Texas with wide-open spaces and a seemingly endless expanse of highways. Fittingly, perhaps, Texas provides a huge fan base and one of the biggest and fastest tracks on the series.

And every April, the fans and the best teams and drivers converge for the biggest sporting event in Texas, based on attendance: a weekend of racing that culminates with the Samsung Mobile 500, one of 36 races in NASCAR's annual, points-based Sprint Cup Series.

During three days of racing this spring, April 12-14, Texas Motor Speedway officials expect 400,000 fans—the usual crowd—to pack the infield and grandstands in anticipation of the grand finale: the Samsung Mobile 500 in which big-name drivers such as Tony Stewart, Carl Edwards and Dale Earnhardt Jr. are scheduled to compete.

The scene, on a slightly smaller scale, will repeat November 1-4 with the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series and Nationwide Series races and another Sprint Cup Series race: the AAA Texas 500, which is the eighth of 10 races in the Chase for the Cup that culminates the Sprint Cup Series and determines its champion.

And every June, the track welcomes the IZOD IndyCar Series, the country's top open-wheel racing series.

Those are just the biggies. There's a dirt track, too. Bring-your-own-street-car drag races on Friday nights in the summer. The Texas Motorsports Hall of Fame. Banquet rooms for proms and weddings. Condos off Turn 2. The

NASCAR Sprint Cup Driving School. And the NASCAR Racing Experience in which fans can drive a real racecar around the track.

Texas Motor Speedway is a poster child for the hit that NASCAR racing has become in this state in the track's 17 years in North Texas.

"Every type of person you can imagine is out here," said Troy Bagwell of Decatur, a first-time visitor to the track in November for the AAA Texas 500. "It's really cool."

### ***Dallas Cowboys ... and NASCAR***

The fans come mainly from Texas, of course. But Texas Motor Speedway President Eddie Gossage says the track has season-ticket holders in all 50 states. The sagging economy has dragged down Texas Motor Speedway's attendance numbers to about 150,000 for the most recent Sprint Cup races, the headline attraction. But in recent years, the track has drawn as many as 216,000 fans for one day of Samsung Mobile 500 racing.

"I never would have expected it," Kerr said last November at the AAA Texas 500, sitting with a book in a lawn chair, shaded by her RV that's been parked in the infield at Texas Motor Speedway for

**Almost a decade ago, Grand Prairie's Marina Kerr attended her first NASCAR race. 'I was in love. I was so in love,' she says of that experience at Texas Motor Speedway.**







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GETTY IMAGES/COURTESY OF TEXAS MOTOR SPEEDWAY

**TOP LEFT:** Arguably the most famous driver in NASCAR—Dale Earnhardt Jr., who's carrying on his late father's legacy—gives lucky fans the autograph of a lifetime at November's AAA Texas 500.

**TOP RIGHT:** On race day, everything moves at lightning speed: Here, a pit crew works in seamless synchronization to get Matt Kenseth back on track during the Samsung Mobile 500 last April.

**BOTTOM:** Kenseth, trading his racing helmet for a cowboy hat, fires a pair of bulletless six-shooters in Victory Lane after winning the 2011 Samsung Mobile 500 at Texas Motor Speedway.

a couple of days now. She's been to every NASCAR race at Texas Motor Speedway except two or three, she figures. And over the years, she's gotten to know many of the people who park near her in the infield.

Kerr doesn't give the stereotypical impression of the rowdy race fan. No old shirt, no beer can. She could be running a PTA meeting. But she knows what a winning car ought to sound like. Yet when she looks around at the

grandstands surrounding her like the walls of a canyon, and she sees them filling up, it still surprises her a little. It's an awful lot of people for a car race.

Why? Well, this is Texas, after all. "Texans aren't about cars," Kerr said. "They're about football. They're about the Dallas Cowboys, you know? Of course, right now, they're about the Texas Rangers because we made it to the World Series. But in this part of the world, anyway, the Dallas Cowboys

rule. And for NASCAR to have become this big, it's just amazing."

Kerr represents a growing trend: About 40 percent of NASCAR's fan base is female. And kids are everywhere, too. Here at Texas Motor Speedway, they're carrying around bags full of goodies and souvenirs, totting autograph books and pens as if they were looking for Mickey at Walt Disney World.

The Texas track, and many others like it around the country, promotes a family environment. Outside the grandstands, the area between Turn 4 and Turn 1 becomes a midway with games for kids, car exhibits, souvenir stands and racing arcades. Fans can munch on a funnel cake and get their picture taken in a replica of Edwards' Sprint Cup car.

"My daughter got us started in this years ago," said Glynn Timmerman of Arlington, who walked the midway at the November race with his family and 11-year-old daughter, who had discovered NASCAR at the age of 3. "She got me and her mama years ago by watching it on TV... She just sat there in front of the TV watching Tony Stewart going around and around in circles. She got us all hooked doing it that way."

### ***Texas Speed, Texas Money***

On November 28, 1994, Bruton Smith, owner of seven tracks that hosted NASCAR races, announced he was building an eighth, and that it would be in Texas.

The choice for the site was the



Alliance Corridor, a growing business area north of Fort Worth with plenty of open space. Five months later, on April 11, 1995, NASCAR drivers Bobby and Terry Labonte, Texas-born brothers, and Sprint Cup champion Jeff Gordon helped break ground on Texas Motor Speedway at the northeast corner of the intersection of Interstate 35 West and Texas Highway 114. The site is about 22 miles north of downtown Fort Worth and 40 miles northwest of downtown Dallas.

The facility was designed with more than 190,000 fans in mind. "I was just amazed at the amount of grandstands they were building," Bobby Labonte said. "I thought, 'Can they fill them up?' I knew they would. When things happen in Texas, it's going to be big."

Texas Motor Speedway is patterned after Charlotte Motor Speedway and Atlanta Motor Speedway, two other tracks owned by Smith. All three feature quad-oval tracks with four corners, offering the best possible views for spectators.

But Texas Motor Speedway has its own personality. For one, it's fast. NASCAR drivers here typically qualify at speeds approaching 190 mph. And the record qualifying speed is 196.235 by Brian Vickers in 2006, making it the fastest qualifying lap in NASCAR in the past 10 years. He covered the mile-and-a-half oval in about 27 1/2 seconds, breaking the previous speed mark of 194.224 mph set in 2002.

It's tricky. There's a bump in one of the corners, a holdover from the early years of the track when it had to be repaved a couple of times.

And it's rich. The Samsung Mobile 500 in April 2011 paid out more than \$7 million, and winner Matt Kenseth got \$525,886. That makes it one of the three richest stops on the circuit. (No driver wants to miss a shot at the Texas money, or the chance to wear the cowboy hat and fire a pair of bulletless six-shooters in Victory Lane).

But mostly, it's fast. "It's a man's race track," racing legend A.J. Foyt, a Texan, said. "That kind of race track is the kind that separates men from boys."

## On Track After a Muddy Start

Texas Motor Speedway did not start smoothly. The first Sprint Cup race, in

April 1997, drew more than 200,000. Which was wonderful.

It also drew rain. Days of it. Which was not wonderful. Cars, trucks and RVs were stuck in the mud. The parking lots were not paved the first year. That, combined with an untested traffic plan, produced a problem-filled first day. It took fans hours to get into the speedway and out.

"The parking lot was a mud bath," said racing reporter Bryan Broadus, who grew up in Dallas and covers the speedway for ESPN Dallas. "It was difficult just getting in and out. But I never wavered from going to the track and supporting the track."

As faithful as NASCAR fans are, Texas Motor Speedway could have lost a lot of them that day. The track had not made a good first impression. But Gossage, the track president and promoter, worked the phones. He and his staff called ticket holders personally, to apologize for the inconveniences. They delivered on a promise to do better.

The traffic routes in and out are now clear and well-rehearsed. Parking is free. Fans are welcome to bring their own food and beverages. Planning a day to go out to the track is no longer like planning an expedition.

"That has a lot to do with Bruton Smith," Broadus said, noting that Smith-owned tracks in such places as Georgia, Nevada, North Carolina, Tennessee and Texas "are very fan-friendly ... Texas is right up there when you talk about amenities and parking and how you can see the track."

Texas Motor Speedway can handle a crowd. As much as anything, that is what race promoters and sponsors want. Eyeballs on the cars. Even as attendance has dipped with the economy, Texas Motor Speedway is still delivering those results.

"The racing is good there, and the fans show up," Bobby Labonte said, noting that big races at Texas Motor Speedway make for busy weekends—something that racing sponsors like because of the huge crowds. "Texas is one of those places where everybody puts on their calendar and likes to go."

Sure seems like a good place to fall in love.

*Carlos Mendez is a sportswriter for the Fort Worth Star-Telegram.*

## NASCAR Flags

Six of the main flags waved during races to communicate with drivers:

**Green:** Signals the beginning of a race and any restarts; the track is clear.

**Yellow:** The track is not clear (accident, debris, weather-related issues, etc.)—slow down and hold your position behind the pace car.

**Red:** The track is unsafe, and there is a situation that requires immediate attention. Cars must go to a designated location and stop.

**Black:** Come into the pits immediately and report to a NASCAR official. This flag typically is waved at an individual car, indicating a mechanical problem or a rules violation.

**White:** Waved when the driver in the lead begins the final lap of the race.

**Checkered:** The flag that every driver wants to see—it is waved when the winner crosses the finish line.



FLAGS: DAVID KENT



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# hand-me-down work ethic

BY SUZANNE HABERMAN  
PHOTOS BY WOODY WELCH

As the pine logs roll through TEC's pole manufacturing plant, Kirk Lacy hears his father's words: 'Don't do anything you can't sign your name to.'

**K**irk Lacy remembers how, as a child, his mother would squeeze his hands between her palms and say with pride that one day, those hands would be calloused from hard work. She also said he would be happy to be alive.

To generations of Lacys—from his grandfather Martin C. Lacy Sr., a San Augustine County motor grader operator, to his father, Martin C. Lacy Jr., a maintenance man—hard work meant





being able to provide for family. That's the Lacy way: Work and family keep the hands calloused and the heart tender.

After nearly 34 years of working at Texas Electric Cooperatives' utility pole manufacturing plant in Jasper, Kirk Lacy's hands are indeed calloused—roughened, brawny and browned from the East Texas sun. "I can't let my name down," he says.

As maintenance manager of the Manufacturing and Distribution Services plant, Lacy has had his hands on everything from lightbulbs to the giant machines that can peel bark off 100-foot tall trees. He's one of about 80 employees—pole markers, harvesters, assembly-line workers and truckers—playing a part in a carefully choreographed dance on the 50-acre plant where as many as 120,000 slash, loblolly and longleaf pines from East Texas and Louisiana woods are fashioned into utility poles and shipped all across the country every year.

"I'm proud of everything because I have my hands on all of it," he says. "I've never had just a job."

#### 'CLEANIN' FLOORS AND FIXIN' FLATS'

**T**he 50-year-old Lacy—a 5-foot-8-inch man with broad shoulders and a gray-fringed goatee—began working part time at the plant in 1978. "I started when I was 16, on May 19 at 9 a.m.," he says. "I will never forget it."

He started out just "cleanin' floors and fixin' flats," but within two years, Lacy was on full time, climbing from laborer to mechanic to welder and millwright. Sixteen years later, he moved from the garage to the office to serve as maintenance manager. In his position, he manages and schedules repairs, construction and improvements for the entire Jasper facility. But that's just the start.

"It's not a glamour job, by no means," says Assistant Maintenance Manager Billy Wayne Caldwell, who has known Lacy since the two met at church 31 years ago. "It takes a pretty special person to sit on top of it and manage it."

May marks Lacy's 34th year with TEC—34 years "that I have seen the same thing every day," Lacy says matter-of-factly. His tenure at the pole plant is the longest in the department, says Charlie Faulds, who retired as the

plant's senior vice president in January and worked with Lacy for 14 years. That kind of hands-on experience, Faulds says, is equivalent to a degree in engineering, and Lacy's buddies say he can sit down with the best.

That is, if he had time to sit down.

#### FROM LIGHTBULBS TO PEELING LINE

**F**rom a green camouflaged golf cart with thick, meaty tires, Lacy makes his rounds to assess the grounds. As the sun breaks through the morning clouds, the oily smell of creosote used to treat poles seems stronger in the humid air. But Lacy doesn't detect it. "I smell the flowers," he says, sporting a dimpled smile and pointing to a cluster of yellow wildflowers growing in the midst of the ever-moving industrial scene he surveys. His eye sweeps over them, and on to the boiler room, steam and creosote-treating cylinders and pole-peeling lines.

He's identifying what needs repairs—and finding ways to increase efficiency. He's looked at it so many times that it just takes a glance to know when something needs fixing. "Kirk knows the plant like the back of his hand," Caldwell says. "He knows where every skeleton is, and how to fix it."

Lacy spots slack in a chain below a conveyer belt in one of the two peeling systems and a burned-out lightbulb over the classification department where poles are measured. Taking mental note, he plans to delegate the fixes to his 11-man maintenance team. Pausing, Lacy dips into a can of Copenhagen snuff he pulls from a back pocket of his Wranglers.

Although both peelers are engineering marvels—processing about one pole a minute, tossing them like toothpicks over conveyer belts with the thunder-like sound of roller coasters—Lacy takes special pride in peeler No. 1. It's all about the angle, he explains—it can't be a straight line. Lacy draws one across a white sticky note to illustrate his point. He thinks best in pictures, he says. The angle keeps pressure on the whole length of the tree, resulting in a cleaner peel. Lacy knows the exact angle because he designed it, and then built it to the specs within one-sixteenth of an inch.

Lacy stows his hand-drawn peeling-

line schematics in his office. They're filed alongside other souvenirs of his work, such as models of 18-wheelers with specialized trailers for hauling pines and poles, as well as mementos of his family, like the snapshot of him standing in Texas Stadium during a 2006 family trip to tour the home of the Dallas Cowboys (the team's new facility, Cowboys Stadium, opened in 2009).

For Lacy, work and family go hand in hand.

#### FAMILY MAN, COMPANY MAN

**T**he office from which Lacy works—as well as the maintenance manager title—first belonged to his father, who worked at TEC's original, now closed, treating plant in Lufkin. That's where Kirk Lacy was born, but he did most of his growing up on a 27-acre farm in the piney Angelina National Forest near the banks of the Sam Rayburn Reservoir after his father relocated for work. Lacy's father dedicated around 20 years to TEC.

"I've always eaten from the profits of this place. Always," Lacy says, explaining that TEC paychecks have supported him his entire life and now support his wife and children, too. "We've grown up with it. It's like family."

At 18, Lacy married his teenage heartthrob, Angela. A black-and-white photo of her as a young woman, posed in jeans and a tank top, is pressed under the glass top of his work desk at the center of a photo collage, which also features another love: a Yamaha V Star motorcycle. For about eight years, Lacy says, he and his wife "ripped, romped and played," and then had two children, Megan, 23, the only woman who has worked in the plant's manufacturing area, and Sam, 20, a Marine serving in Afghanistan. Lacy wells up with proud tears at the thought of his son and pulls out his cellphone to show off a picture of Sam in uniform in front of an American flag backdrop. At a loss for words, Lacy crosses his index and middle fingers: He and his son are that tight.

Two years after Sam was born, Lacy adopted the title—and the work ethic—of his father, the former maintenance manager. "My father told me, 'Don't do anything you can't sign your name to, boy,'" Lacy recalls.



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Night watchman John Y'Barbo, left, reports to Kirk Lacy that a lightbulb has gone out over the truck refueling station at TEC's pole manufacturing plant. No job is too big—or too small—for Lacy, who's been the plant's maintenance manager for nearly 34 years. He does it all.

He takes that to mean doing the best possible job on everything he touches, and he asks his crew, a gang he calls his “Green Berets,” to be the best of the best. That’s “the way I was raised,” Lacy says. “I’ve got to improve upon myself, or my job might become stagnant, and they might need someone else.”

#### ‘FULL-TILT BOOGIE’

**B**ut even after all his years at the pole plant, Lacy continues to be TEC’s go-to person for all-things maintenance at the plant—from fixing flats to improving engineering operations.

“If you put your eyes on it, you probably got a finger in it,” Caldwell says of their profession.

So when Lacy bursts through the doors of Caldwell’s office—a portable building with a remote-controlled air conditioner that’s too loud to talk over—and belts out that he needs a grommet to seal an 18-wheeler’s cooling system,

Caldwell shows no surprise. Buy, sell, babysit, psychoanalyze, weld—“Kirk is good about keeping up with his guys,” he says. Lacy lends a hand wherever needed to keep all parts of the plant moving.

Caldwell, who calls himself the more laid-back of the two, clicks off the droning air conditioner. By the time he can point to a storage cabinet, Lacy is rifling through its contents. He yanks a seal from a cardboard box, holds it up to the light and examines it through his aviator-style eyeglasses. It’s not the right fit. And that’s the way the business of maintenance goes. “You can’t plan a day,” Lacy says. He shoves the box back into the cabinet, shuts it up and stomps out, yet searching for the part, not ready to give up.

Caldwell, still behind his desk, turns back on the air conditioner. “That’s Kirk,” he says, “full-tilt boogie all the time.”

*Suzanne Haberman, staff writer*

## Pole Manufacturing Facts

Snippets about Texas Electric Cooperatives’ utility pole manufacturing plant in Jasper—the place, the pine trees, the poles, the people and their parlance, or lingo—shed some light on this deep East Texas operation.

### PLANT

- Largest manufacturing employer in Jasper
- Encompasses about 50 acres
- Established by TEC—the statewide association that oversees the interests of 76 electric cooperatives and publishes Texas Co-op Power—in 1946 in Lufkin; relocated to Jasper in the 1960s

### POLES

- Start as slash, loblolly and longleaf pines, for the most part
- Come from within a 150-mile radius of Jasper
- Available in 5-foot increments between 25 to 110 feet long
- About 120,000 produced annually

### PEOPLE

- Cast of 80 employees includes the procurement team, which scouts out and marks trees in the woods; harvesters, independent contractors who cut down the trees; truckers,

who haul poles from the woods to the plant, and then from the plant to utilities; millwrights, engineers and more

- Employees work an average of 13 years at plant

### PARLANCE

- Culls: small, busted, scarred or knotted poles that don’t meet standards; they are sold whole for raw timber value or to sawmills
- Lily pads: flat, circular slices of wood cut from tops of poles; these slices are burned, and can also be seen on plant’s walkways used as pavers
- Greens or whites: peeled poles that haven’t yet been steamed and treated with creosote

### WHAT IS CREOSOTE?

#### *A Chemistry Lesson*

Creosote is the name of a preservative used to treat utility poles at TEC’s pole manufacturing plant. But what *is* creosote, that heavy, oily, amber-brown liquid with a scent like tar and smoke?

Creosote is a distillate of coal tar, the substance remaining after carbon is extracted from coal by steel manufacturers, who alloy carbon with iron to make steel. (Creosote can also be distilled from oil or wood tar, but those products have different applications.) When distilled, coal tar separates into three products



Kirk Lacy, maintenance manager

by weight, with creosote at the middle. Because its organic compounds are chemically bonded in a ring (they’re not linear like many organic compounds), creosote is toxic to organisms that would try to eat it. Its ability to repel organisms and keep wood pliable makes creosote an efficient preservative in the pole-making process.

—Suzanne Haberman



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## Home Wiring Over the Hill?

*Consider easy upgrades to boost safety*

BY KELLY TRAPNELL

Nothing has the charm of an older home on a family farm or a cute cottage in a historic downtown district. But the cozy charm often comes with the need for cosmetic and structural upgrades.

When upgrading your home, a fresh coat of paint and updated fixtures may come to mind. But what about hiring a professional to update the wiring behind a switch plate or outlet? Do you know the hidden dangers of aged wiring in your home?

is still in good condition and has not been altered or improperly installed. However, fire risk increases in homes with both copper and aluminum wiring. Corrosion to aluminum from copper can lead to loose connections causing fires. If your home has aluminum wiring, use only switches, outlets and other accessories approved for use with that type of wiring system.

### Not enough outlets

The increasing use of chargers for phones and many other electronic devices means outlets are in high demand, especially in older homes where outlets are not as plentiful. A lack of outlets can result in overuse of extension cords and power strips. Be sure to use quality, 14-gauge or thicker cords that are approved by Underwriters Laboratories (UL). Never overload an outlet. Overloading can cause heat, which increases risk of fire. Consider hiring a licensed electrician to add outlets to your home.

### Plugs fall out of outlets easily

Loose plugs are a high fire danger. Older outlets that have lost their grip need to be replaced. Luckily, this upgrade is affordable.

### Danger in wet areas

GFCI (ground-fault circuit interrupter) outlets are now required in areas around water, like near kitchen or bathroom sinks or outdoors. But in older homes, GFCIs may not have been installed. It is fairly simple to replace old receptacles with GFCIs; hire a professional to upgrade outlets near water.

### Wind causes lights to blink

If you notice your lights blinking on windy days, it may be due to worn wiring in the weatherhead (where overhead lines enter your home). Contact your electric co-op to check weatherhead wiring.

*Sources: This Old House, Underwriters Laboratories*



Ground-fault circuit interrupter outlets are required in areas around water, like near a kitchen or bathroom sink or outdoors, but many older homes don't have these important safety features installed.

Don't take on wiring problems yourself—electrical upgrades often require a professional who knows what inspections and permits are needed. Here are a few clues to find out if your home's electric network needs a professional upgrade.

### Type of wiring

Modern wiring is insulated, meaning it is covered in plastic. Older homes may have copper or aluminum wiring. Copper wiring can work just as well as modern wiring if it

*Kelly Trapnell writes about safety issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Virginia-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, nonprofit electric cooperatives.*



# Time To Clean Up

## On Spring Energy Savings

The first days of spring often bring with them thoughts of spring cleaning. When you're busy cleaning out the closets and sweeping under the rugs, don't forget about cleaning your home's appliances and energy-consuming equipment. Not only will you be making your home more comfortable and enjoyable, you'll also be getting more value from your energy dollar. Below, find 10 tips to get you started and estimates on the savings you can expect:

1. Dust the lightbulbs and shades, install compact fluorescent lightbulbs and save about 66 percent on lighting costs per fixture.
2. Clean or replace your air-conditioning system's filter and save up to 5 percent on cooling costs. Now that it's warm outside, set the thermostat to 78 degrees when you're home, and 85 degrees when you're away, and you'll save 2 percent on cooling costs for each degree you raise the thermostat setting.
3. Dust the curtains, and on hot sunny days, keep curtains on windows facing south and west closed and save 2 to 4 percent on cooling costs.
4. Trim back any plants or vines growing around the outdoor air-conditioner unit, and have a professional tune up the system. You'll save up to 5 percent on cooling costs.
5. Vacuum your refrigerator's coils, and if the unit is more than 15 years old, consider replacing it with an Energy Star-qualified model and enjoy an energy savings of 40 percent.
6. Flush the sediment from the bottom of your water heater tank and set its temperature to 120 degrees. You'll save 7 to 11 percent on water-heating costs.
7. Clean out the swimming pool and switch the pool filter and sweeper operations to early-morning or late-evening hours. Also, consider replacing pool pumps and motors with energy-efficient equipment. (Energy savings depend on your use.)
8. Thoroughly dust computers, CD/DVD players, TVs and VCRs, and then unplug them when not in use. You'll save up to 30 percent on their overall electricity use.
9. Wash and dry full loads of laundry during the evening, and use cold water as often as possible. You'll save up to 4 percent on water-heating costs.
10. Scrub the tub. Then, install energy-saving showerheads, faucets or flow restrictors. You'll cut water-heating costs 10 to 16 percent.

For more tips on how you can save energy year-round, please contact your electric co-op.



DIGITAL VISION

# Saving Energy at Work



STOCKBYTE

Take your energy-saving habits to work and turn off computers and lights when not in use.

Your home isn't the only place where you can lighten the "footprint" you leave on Earth. The energy choices you make at work can make a big difference, too.

The principle is the same at home as it is at work: Don't waste electricity.

Here are five simple ways to save energy at work—even if you don't own the building you work in.

1. If you're able to control the temperature in your work space, keep it comfortable, but not so cold you need to wear a sweater in August.
2. Turn off lights when you leave your office or cubicle. Unplug computers and office equipment when you go home for the day; they keep using electricity even when you turn them off if you leave them plugged in.
3. Replace the incandescent lightbulbs in your desk lamps with compact fluorescent lightbulbs.
4. Close the blinds or curtains near your workspace on sunny days to keep extra heat from radiating in through the windows, making the air conditioner work harder.
5. Choose Energy Star computers, printers and even water coolers when it's time to replace the old ones at work. They use substantially less energy than other models.

# Above and Beyond

*Have rope, will climb:*

*Thank goodness,  
Rusk County EC's  
Mike Seale seems  
to always be in  
the wrong place at  
the right time.*

**By Camille Wheeler**



The midday, East Texas sun beat down on the heat-stricken worker. Stranded 120 feet high on a Rusk County Electric Cooperative communications tower, with just his safety harness belt holding him in place, the local-contract repair technician could only wait for help from his precarious perch above the co-op's New Prospect substation.

The man's supervisor, an experienced tower climber, carried Gatorade up to the worker upon receiving his radioed distress call. But the supervisor, who was working below in the substation control room with Rusk County EC Assistant Engineering Manager Rhett Reid when the call came, lacked the equipment to get the worker down.

So the supervisor descended, and he and Reid assessed a situation worsening by the minute. Bareheaded and without water, so dehydrated that his cramped and gloved hands resembled claws, the technician slumped over in his saddle-like climbing belt hooked to the tower, his arms limply draped over a support rung and nothing but ground below.

Time to take action: Reid called 911 and the co-op's headquarters in Henderson, 25 miles away. Send a tall bucket truck, he ordered. And send everybody who can help. Now.

Inside the headquarters building that day, June 22, 2010, Rusk County EC Crew Foreman Mike Seale was finishing some paperwork when he got the message: A rescue climber was needed. Somebody who could shimmy more than halfway up a 190-foot-tall tower.

Seale jumped in his work truck and sped to the site, where a small crowd, including the firefighting crew on a City of Carthage ladder truck, had gathered. Fully extended, the 75-foot ladder was roughly 40 feet short of reaching the stranded man. Various workers nervously milled about, examining ropes and riggings. A City of Marshall fire truck was en route with a 100-foot ladder.

But the man had now been stranded for an hour in muggy heat pushing 100 degrees. Seale looked up at the helpless figure silhouetted against a blue sky. "I'll get up there," he said. "Give me a long rope, and I'll get him down."

Seale scanned faces. "Anybody going up with me?" he asked. Silence. After a few seconds, a Carthage firefighter spoke up. Yes. He'd climb, too. Seale and the firefighter, both wearing safety harnesses, headed up. Seale, in the lead, carried a rappelling rope and three bottles of water on his equipment belt.

With the firefighter a few feet below him, Seale reached the worker and buckled off, hooking his safety belt to the tower. The man's hands were cramping so badly he couldn't hold a water bottle. Seale helped him drink a little and then poured water on his own gloves, rubbing it on the man's neck and wrists. The worker told Seale he had feared he was going to spend the night on the tower. "Nuh-uh," Seale said. "That's what I'm here for."

Time to go. Seale hooked the clevis end of the rappelling rope, which controls



descent speed, to the tower and the other end to a D-ring on the worker's safety harness. With the firefighter supporting the worker from below, Seale fed the rope down to two more firefighters—one on the raised ladder and one on the tower—and steadied the rope as the men slowly lowered the worker mountain-rescue style. The rope, agonizingly, was just short of reaching the ladder, and Seale held the worker's full weight as the firefighters eased the man through the tower framework and onto the ladder.

The worker, after a brief hospitalization, fully recovered. And Seale, for his heroics, received the 2011 Texas Electric Cooperatives Loss Control Program Life-Saving Award—the second of his career. The first, awarded in 2001 for saving the life of a friend who was accidentally shot while deer hunting, brought attention to a guy who always goes above and beyond.

Seale cut his tree-climbing teeth on contract right-of-way crews. Then, as a Rusk County EC lineman starting in 1998, he upped the ante, once even scaling a 100-foot-tall pine tree—a makeshift pole, in this case—during an ice storm to string electrical wire for Bowie-Cass Electric Cooperative in Northeast Texas.

But the 46-year-old Seale, true to his lineman's breed, shrugs off praise. "I always happen up in the wrong places at the right time," he says matter-of-factly. And for that skill, friend and co-worker Rex Barron will forever be grateful.

In November 2000, the day after Thanksgiving, Barron and his 30-year-old nephew were deer hunting near Henderson. As the men donned rain gear, Barron's nephew laid a British .303-caliber rifle on the ground. Something caught the trigger, and the gun fired, blasting a hole in Barron's upper right leg and shattering the femur. Blood gushed from Barron's ruptured femoral artery. Without immediate aid, he could die within minutes.

Seale, who was hunting almost half a mile away, heard the screams for help from Barron's nephew and came roaring up on a four-wheeler, finding Barron lying in a puddle of blood. Seale cut off Barron's clip-on suspenders, cinching the elastic material tight around Barron's leg to slow the bleeding. They carried Barron to the four-wheeler, propping him up behind the driver's seat. Seale jumped behind the wheel, wrapped Barron's arms around his waist to keep him upright and took off for Barron's house a mile away. There, one of his sons called an ambulance, and Barron underwent emergency surgery that night.

Today, Barron, a daytime dispatcher for the co-op, easily talks about the steel rod and cadaver bone graft in his leg—and the calm courage of Mike Seale, who put his certified CPR and first-aid training to good use. Without Seale's quick action, "I'd be in heaven somewhere," Barron says. "Anybody in need or hurt, he's there. A good friend to have around."

But even Seale has his limits. "I'm not scared of heights, except for airplanes," he says. "I do not fly."

**Rusk County EC Crew Foreman Mike Seale stands tall as the recipient of two Loss Control Program Life-Saving Awards from Texas Electric Cooperatives, the statewide association that represents the interests of 76 electric co-ops. Seale, an avid angler, answers to the nickname of 'Pike'—a fish notorious for its sharp teeth and fighting nature. For sure, there's no overstating the size of Seale's heart, says Buddy Bankhead, who recently retired as the co-op's general manager. Of Seale's spectacular tower-climbing rescue, Bankhead says: 'He's the kind that doesn't look back and apparently didn't look down—only up.'**



*Camille Wheeler, associate editor*

# Let There Be Light

*Before the first  
power lines were  
strung, a wondrous  
invention—the  
Delco generator—  
brightened rural  
Texans' nights.*

BY HARRY NOBLE

In the 1930s, my grandfather was considered a successful East Texas farmer in northwest Sabine County. In addition to a smartly arranged six-room house with front and back porches, my grandparents had a large barn, an efficient blacksmith shop, a car shed, smokehouse, woodshed, potato shed and the required outhouse. Since their home was my El Dorado, I still clearly remember every structure.

The hayloft and the trough that fed eight mules at the same time were the two main attractions of the large barn. On countless occasions, I shucked 64 ears of corn, scattered them along the length of the trough and watched eight mules (all mares) eat together in harmony with impeccable manners. The bright red coals in the forge at the center of the blacksmith shop immediately grabbed my attention, but at the same time flashed a heads-up to my bare feet. The car shed, with its dirt floor, had a powerful smell of gasoline, kerosene, inner tubes and fresh earth. With its rock-lined fire pit in the center of the floor, the smokehouse was pitch-black once the door slammed shut. Prior use had blackened all surfaces.

The woodshed was an open structure that smelled of seasoned oak and rich pine. Six feet by 8 feet and only 4 feet high, the potato shed was deeply padded with dried pine needles and housed both sweet potatoes and Irish potatoes. The outhouse requires no description and was known as the final destination of all Sears Roebuck and Montgomery Ward catalogs.

That leaves one other building, a 10-by-10-foot structure with one door and two hinged wooden windows—the Delco house, which held something called a Delco-Light Plant: a gasoline-powered electric generator made by the Dayton Engineering Laboratories Company (DELCO) in Dayton, Ohio. The generators proved invaluable for rural Texans, most of whom did not have electricity service in the early 1930s.

The building felt mystical, a challenge to my reasoning, an escape route for my imagination. And I was under strict orders not to enter it except in the presence of my grandfather. Because he entered the building only once a day, an hour before dark, I worked out my afternoon schedule around the Delco.

There were two dozen different Delco models built in the Dayton plant. My grandfather's Delco unit had three major components: an integrated gasoline engine and generator, a bank of 12 batteries and an electrical lightbulb system



inside my grandparents' house. By charging the batteries each afternoon, we had a few hours of electricity for lights at night.

At Delco time, my grandfather would swing the door open, serving two purposes: It allowed for the quick release of gasoline and kerosene fumes and let in the day's remaining rays of sunlight to help him see. Inserting a key that sounded the password of admittance, he punched a button to start the single-cylinder, air-cooled engine directly connected to a direct-current generator running on gasoline. As soon as the engine heated, it switched over and ran on kerosene, a cheaper fuel.

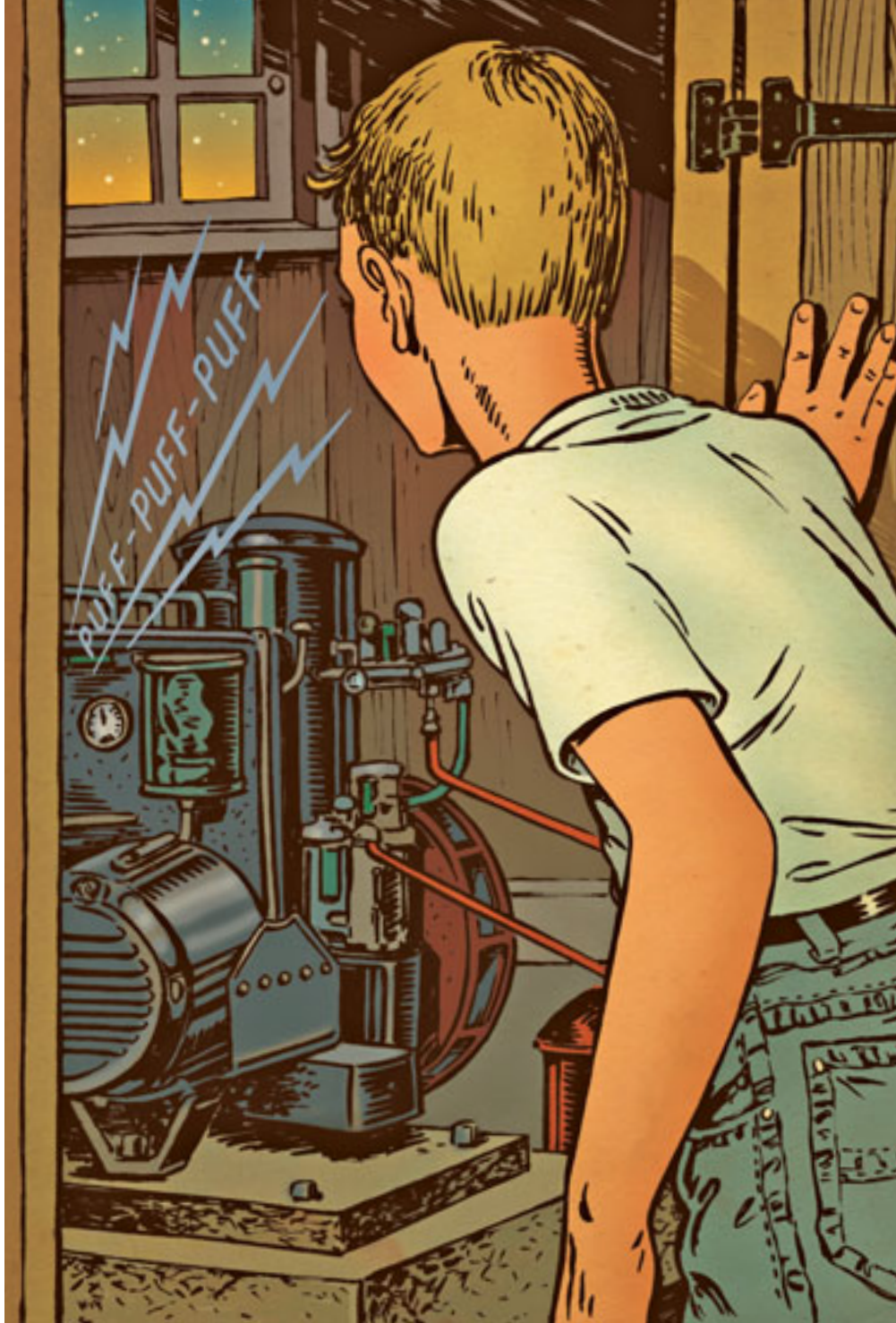
The engine powered the generator, and the generator recharged the 12 batteries. When the charge was complete, the unit shut itself off. The batteries, then fully charged, provided several hours of 32-volt DC power to operate the house lights and a smattering of small appliances.

The gasoline engine/generator was bolted to a foot-high concrete block in the center of the wooden shed. A 1 1/4-inch steel pipe, connected directly to the engine, extended horizontally through the north wall for 6 inches and was capped with a round muffler about 6 inches in diameter.

The muffler's characteristic sound grabbed my fancy and never relinquished it. The engine, as already mentioned, had only one cylinder giving the harsh running sound of "POP ... POP ... POP ... POP ... POP ..." Rather than muting the sound, the muffler merely softened it to a gentle "puff ... puff ... puff ... puff ... puff ..." The exhaust sound carried as far, but with a kiss-like softness that caressed the eardrums.

Watching every move my grandfather made in the Delco house, it wasn't long before I knew every start-up tactic by heart and was begging him to let me take over the responsibility of charging the batteries every evening. He refused, probably because he personally held the Delco in respect, treating routine procedures with caution. He continued to stand firm on his rejection, and I never got to run the generator. But no matter where I was, I ran for the Delco house when I heard that "puff ... puff ... puff ..."

As the late 1930s marched across our calendars, bringing a world of progress and change, Grandfather's little Delco lost its position as an obedient power source. Deep East Texas Electric Cooperative, established in 1938, spread through the backwoods and country roads, offering tremendous progress in electricity, and my grandfather signed up. The Delco went idle, and I never got to hear a "puff ... puff ... puff ..." again.



Harry Noble, frequent contributor

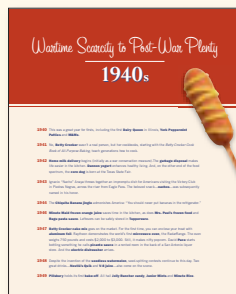
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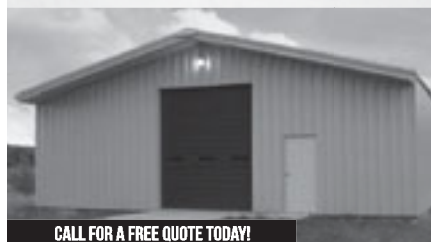
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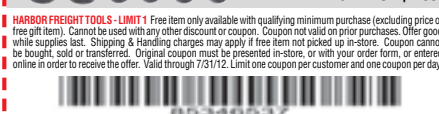
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**FREE!**  
WITH MINIMUM PURCHASE OF \$9.99

**PITTSBURGH**  
**6 PIECE**  
**SCREWDRIVER SET**  
ITEM 47770

**REG. PRICE \$4.99**

**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. Offer good while supplies last. Shipping & handling charges may apply if free item not picked up in-store. 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 7/31/12. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.



**SUPER COUPON!**

**PITTSBURGH**  
**12" RATCHET**  
**BAR CLAMP/SPREADER**  
LOT NO. 46807/  
68975/69221

**SAVE 63%**

**\$199**  
REG. PRICE \$5.49

Item 46807 shown

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ANY SINGLE ITEM!

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**7 FT. 4" x 9 FT. 6"**  
**ALL PURPOSE WEATHER**  
**RESISTANT TARP**  
LOT NO. 877/  
69137/69249

**SAVE 50%**

**\$349**  
REG. PRICE \$6.99

Item 877 shown

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**SUPER COUPON!**

LOT NO. 98085/69644

Item 98085 shown

**36 LED SOLAR**  
**SECURITY LIGHT**  
Bunker Hill Security

**SAVE 28%**

**\$1799**  
REG. PRICE \$24.99

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

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**1000 LB.**  
**CAPACITY**  
**MOVER'S DOLLY**  
HaulMaster

LOT NO. 93888

**SAVE 46%**

**\$799**  
REG. PRICE \$14.99

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**HaulMaster**

**1000 LB.**  
**CAPACITY**  
**SWING-BACK**  
**TRAILER JACK**

LOT NO. 41005

**SAVE 50%**

**\$1999**  
REG. PRICE \$39.99

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**105 PIECE TOOL KIT**  
**PITTSBURGH**  
4 DRAWER TOOL CHEST INCLUDED!

LOT NO. 4030/69323

**SAVE 46%**

**\$3499**  
REG. PRICE \$64.99

Item 4030 shown

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**SAVE \$50**

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

REG. PRICE \$99.99

LOT NO. 68146

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**PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE**

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

REG. PRICE \$139.99

LOT NO. 68048/69227

**WEIGHS 74 LBS.**

**SAVE \$70**

**\$6999**

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**SUPER COUPON!**

LOT NO. 68287

**drillmaster**  
**18 VOLT CORDLESS**  
**3/8" DRILL/DRIVER**  
**AND FLASHLIGHT KIT**

Includes one 18V NiCd battery and charger.

**SAVE 50%**

**\$1999**  
REG. PRICE \$39.99

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**HFT**

**10 FT. x 10 FT.**  
**POPOUP CANOPY**  
LOT NO. 68216

**SAVE 31%**

**\$5499**  
REG. PRICE \$79.99

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**DIGITAL INSPECTION**  
**CAMERA WITH 2.4" COLOR**  
**LCD MONITOR**  
CENTECH

LOT NO. 67979

Requires four AA batteries (included).

**SAVE \$40**

**\$7999**  
REG. PRICE \$119.99

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**drillmaster**  
**1500 WATT DUAL TEMPERATURE HEAT GUN**  
 (572°/1112°)  
 LOT NO. 96289

**SAVE 60%**

**\$799** REG. PRICE \$19.99

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

**4-1/2" ANGLE GRINDER**  
**drillmaster**  
 LOT NO. 95578

**SAVE 50%**

**\$999** REG. PRICE \$19.99

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

**80 PIECE ROTARY TOOL SET**  
**CHICAGO ELECTRIC POWER TOOLS**  
 LOT NO. 97626/68986

**SAVE 70%**

**\$749** REG. PRICE \$24.99

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**PITTSBURGH**  
**8-IN-1 SOCKET WRENCHES**

**SAVE 40%**

**\$899** REG. PRICE \$14.99

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

**WIRELESS DRIVEWAY ALERT SYSTEM**  
**Bunker Hill Security**  
 LOT NO. 93068

**SAVE 53%**

**\$1399** REG. PRICE \$29.99

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**29 PIECE TITANIUM NITRIDE COATED DRILL BIT SET**  
**drillmaster**  
 LOT NO. 5889

**SAVE 60%**

**\$999** REG. PRICE \$24.99

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**RECIPROCATING SAW WITH ROTATING HANDLE**  
**CHICAGO ELECTRIC POWER TOOLS**  
 LOT NO. 65570

**SAVE 50%**

**\$1999** REG. PRICE \$39.99

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**ELECTRIC CHAIN SAW SHARPENER**  
**CHICAGO ELECTRIC POWER TOOLS**  
 LOT NO. 68221/93213

**SAVE 44%**

**\$2799** REG. PRICE \$49.99

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

**HAULMASTER TRIPLE BALL TRAILER HITCH**  
 LOT NO. 94141

**SAVE 57%**

**\$1899** REG. PRICE \$44.99

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**10/2/55 AMP, 6/12 VOLT BATTERY CHARGER/ENGINE STARTER**  
**CHICAGO ELECTRIC POWER TOOLS**  
 LOT NO. 66783

**SAVE 43%**

**\$3399** REG. PRICE \$59.99

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

**CENTRAL PNEUMATIC 3 GALLON, 100 PSI OILLESS PANCAKE AIR COMPRESSOR**  
 LOT NO. 95275

**SAVE 50%**

**\$3999** REG. PRICE \$79.99

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**AUTO-DARKENING WELDING HELMET WITH BLUE FLAME DESIGN**  
**CHICAGO ELECTRIC WELDING**  
 LOT NO. 91214

**SAVE 50%**

**\$3999** REG. PRICE \$79.99

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**800 RATED WATTS/900 MAX. WATTS PORTABLE GENERATOR (63 CC)**  
**CHICAGO ELECTRIC GENERATORS**  
 LOT NO. 66619

**SAVE \$90**

**\$8999** REG. PRICE \$179.99

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**US★GENERAL 580 LB. CAPACITY FOUR DRAWER TOOL CART**  
 LOT NO. 95659

**SAVE \$130**

**\$9999** REG. PRICE \$229.99

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**CHICAGO ELECTRIC WELDING 90 AMP FLUX WIRE WELDER**  
 LOT NO. 68887/98871

**SAVE \$60 NO GAS REQUIRED!**

**\$8999** REG. PRICE \$149.99

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# Loose Saggy Neck Skin – Can Any Cream Cure Turkey Neck?



*Dear  
Dorris:*

**DEAR DORRIS:**

I'm a woman who is 64 years young who suffers from really loose skin under my

chin and on my lower neck. I hate the term, but my grandkids say I have "turkey neck" and frankly, I've had enough of it!

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

*Turkey Neck Travis County*

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

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

These stem cells are actually unprogrammed cells that can mimick those of young skin that stays tight, firm and wrinkle free. As an alternative to the scary surgeries or face lifts that many people resort to, this cream really packs a big punch on the loose saggy skin of the neck.

**The Dermagist Neck Restoration Cream®** is available online at **Dermagist.com** or you can order or learn more by calling toll-free, **888-771-5355**. Oh, I almost forgot... I was given a promo code when I placed my order that gave me **10% off**. The code was "**TXN5**". It's worth a try to see if it still works.

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# Treaty Oak: Rooted in Courage

BY MARTHA DEERING

The stately Treaty Oak on Baylor Avenue near downtown Austin has witnessed more than five centuries of Texas history. Deeply rooted in the rich soil of the Colorado River bottom, the ancient, 50-foot-tall live oak is the sole survivor of a group of 14 trees known as the Council Oaks, a grove that shaded the ceremonies of Native Americans long before the city of Austin sprouted in the Texas Hill Country.

Legend has it that Comanche and Tonkawa maidens brewed a magical tea made from wild honey and tender leaves plucked from the Council Oaks, offering it to warriors as protection in battle. A boundary treaty signed by Stephen F. Austin and local native leaders beneath the tree may have given the Treaty Oak its name.

In 1861, when Gov. Sam Houston was removed from office for refusing to sign the oath of allegiance to the Confederate States of America, he climbed aboard a buggy beside his driver, Jeff Hamilton, and said: “We have plenty of time now, since we are both out of office, so turn back and we’ll drive over to see the Treaty Oak.” By some accounts, the great statesman sat in the shade of the oak’s spreading branches, contemplating his fears about Texas’ secession.

The city of Austin grew up around the Council Oaks like broom weeds in June. One by one, the towering trees fell or were cut down until, by probably the 1920s, the Treaty Oak stood alone.

In 1927—with its diameter measuring a mighty 5 feet wide chest high on the trunk, and its canopy stretching almost 130 feet—the Treaty Oak was admitted to the American Forestry Association Hall of Fame for Trees and declared the most perfect specimen of a North American tree.

For the next six decades, the tree spread its dappled shade over picnics, weddings and scores of visitors, but, in the spring of 1989 ominous signs indicated that all was not well. A wide band of dead grass encircled the trunk, and an Austin woman phoned the city forester’s office in June to report seeing brown leaves. Experts discovered symptoms of chemical damage. Forestry officials took soil samples, removed six to eight inches of topsoil from around the tree and injected a fine powder of activated charcoal mixed with water, which binds chemicals to the charcoal mixture’s surface, making them harmless to the tree. Another solution of microbes helped deactivate more of the chemical. Then the lab report came: The tree had been poisoned with Velpar, an herbicide used to kill hardwoods growing among pine trees, which the chemical doesn’t harm.

Investigators believed that some or all of a gallon of the toxic herbicide—roughly 25 times the amount required to kill the tree—had been poured in a circle near the tree in a delib-



erate act of vandalism. Velpar’s maker, DuPont, offered a \$10,000 reward to find the perpetrator. In late June, the Austin Police Department arrested Paul Stedman Cullen, a feed-store worker with a checkered criminal past who was accused of trying to kill the tree as part of an occult ritual. Cullen was convicted of felony criminal mischief and, because of a prior felony conviction, was sentenced to prison. He served three years of a nine-year sentence and died in 2001.

As the tree continued its frightening decline, Austin City Forester John Giedraitis called in the cavalry. A group of experts from around the country gathered for a single day to tackle the problem. Texan billionaire H. Ross Perot gave a blank check to pick up the tab. To reduce stress on the tree, it was cooled during the heat of the day with water mist and sun-blocking screens. Fertilizer was applied to its aerated roots, and soil was removed and replaced to a depth of 3 feet. The valiant oak produced one flush of leaves after another in a desperate attempt to rid itself of the poison, slowly slipping into critical condition. “Thousands of people from all over the country visited the Treaty Oak, leaving get-well cards, candles and letters at its base,” says Giedraitis, now urban forestry program manager for the Texas Forest Service. For many, the tree became a symbol of old-fashioned quiet strength pitted against the evil that seemed to be invading the modern world.

Today, about half of Treaty Oak’s crown remains. Giedraitis took a pencil-sized graft, or cutting, from the tree and planted it near its injured sister, where it’s thriving. As for the big tree, “The lost crown is growing back,” says Giedraitis, “and the tree began producing acorns again a few years ago.”

The Treaty Oak joins a long list of Texas heroes who waged desperate battles for survival in the Lone Star State.

*Martha Deering, frequent contributor*

*Go to [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com) to see a current photo of the Treaty Oak.*

# Little Cakes, Big Possibilities

**BY KEVIN HARGIS** Cupcakes, those staples of childhood and bake sales, are some of the hottest little desserts going these days. They are the centerpieces at weddings and parties, the focus of specialty bakeries and the subject of scores of cookbooks. What is it about these treats that makes them so appealing?

For one, cupcakes are somewhat simpler to bake and decorate than a full-sized cake. As a decoratively challenged baker (a pastry chef, I'll never be), the littler cakes are easier for me to make pretty than is a whole cake. And for some junior bakers, they're the first cakes they make.

But cupcakes can also be a sophisticated dessert, with fillings and icings worthy of a bakeshop window. They're also convenient for a quick snack (no cutting necessary) and are easily portable.

When I think about cupcakes, the first thing that pops in my head is memories of childhood, whether schoolroom treats or a halftime snack (laden with purple icing) from the high school football concession stand. At 25 cents each, they were a quick seller.

The fun of cupcakes is both in the making and in the eating.

Here's a recipe out of a cookbook full of fun ideas called *Big Book of Cupcakes* (Oxmoor House, 2011). From wild flavors (Sweet Lavender Cupcakes with Wild Honey Frosting) to wild decorations (Pup Cakes with sugar dog faces on top),

author Jan Moon, owner of Dreamcakes Bakery in Homewood, Alabama, puts her full creativity on display.

This recipe combines elements of both in one bright pink package.

## PINK LEMONADE CUPCAKES

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 3/4 cups sugar
- 1/4 cup powdered pink lemonade mix
- 4 large eggs
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup milk
- Cooking spray
- Pink Lemonade Frosting

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cream butter, sugar and lemonade mix at medium speed with electric mixer until creamy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating until blended after each addition. In small bowl, combine flour, baking powder and salt; add to butter mixture alternately with milk, beginning and ending with flour mixture. Beat at low speed until blended after each addition. Place cupcake papers in two 12-cup muffin pans and coat with cooking spray. Spoon batter into each paper, filling each about two-thirds full. Bake 12 to 15 minutes or until wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool in pans for 10 minutes; remove from pans to wire racks and cool completely. Frost with Pink Lemonade Frosting and, if desired, decorate with pink sprinkles, pink candies or additional lemonade mix.

## PINK LEMONADE FROSTING

- 1/4 cup powdered pink lemonade mix
  - 1/2 cup butter, softened
  - 2 to 3 tablespoons whipping cream
  - 1 package (16 ounces) powdered sugar
- Dissolve lemonade mix in 3 tablespoons water. Beat butter, lemonade mixture and whipping cream at medium speed with electric mixer until creamy. Gradually add powdered sugar, beating at low speed until blended. Beat at high speed two minutes or until creamy.

Servings: 24. Serving size: 1 frosted cupcake. Per serving: 329 calories, 3 g protein, 12.5 g fat, 50.4 g carbohydrates, 0.4 g dietary fiber, 109 mg sodium, 37.8 g sugars, 64 mg cholesterol



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# RECIPE ROUNDUP



**DEE LONGE**, *Navarro County Electric Cooperative*

Prize-winning recipe: **Black Bottom Cupcakes**

If you're after a little something sweet, cupcakes are a fairly simple-to-make and satisfying answer. Whether it's a full-sized cupcake with a smear of frosting or a one-bite, mini-sized pastry, these treats offer sweet satisfaction without the full-sized calorie count. Readers sent in an array of recipes for this month's contest, but a slight twist on an old standby caught the fancy of our judges. Thanks to the Texas Peanut Producers Board for sponsoring this month's contest.

## BLACK BOTTOM CUPCAKES

- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1 egg
- 1 1/3 cups sugar, divided, plus additional for sprinkling
- Dash plus 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup chocolate chips
- 1 1/2 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 cup cocoa powder
- 1/3 cup oil
- 1 tablespoon vinegar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/4 cup chopped peanuts

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line cupcake pans with papers. Beat cream

cheese, egg, 1/3 cup sugar and dash salt in small bowl until well blended. Fold in chocolate chips. In large bowl, stir together 1 cup sugar, 1/2 teaspoon salt, flour, baking soda and cocoa powder. Blend in oil, vinegar, vanilla and 1 cup water. Fill cupcake papers one-third full with cocoa batter. Top with heaping teaspoon of cream cheese mixture. Sprinkle with sugar and chopped peanuts. Bake 30 minutes. Remove from pans and allow to cool completely on cooling rack.

Servings: 24. Serving size: 1 cupcake. Per serving: 179 calories, 2.4 g protein, 8.9 g fat, 22.7 g carbohydrates, 1 g dietary fiber, 135 mg sodium, 15.4 g sugars, 18 mg cholesterol

## PEANUT BUTTER CUP CUPCAKES

- 1 box devil's food cake mix
- 5 large eggs
- 1/2 cup peanut oil
- 1 cup crunchy peanut butter
- 4 1/2 cups powdered sugar (about 2 1/4 pounds), divided
- 3 tablespoons plus 1/2 cup or less half and half
- 1 cup plus 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 tablespoon vanilla
- 3/4 cup cocoa powder
- 2 cups semisweet chocolate chips
- 1/4 cup heavy cream
- 24 miniature peanut butter cups

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Beat together cake mix, 1 cup water, eggs and oil. Using ice cream scoop, divide batter equally into lined cupcake pans. Bake 20 minutes, then remove to rack to cool completely. Mix together peanut butter, 1/2 cup powdered sugar and 3 tablespoons half and half. Poke hole in the center of each cupcake (not all the way through) and fill with about 2 tablespoonfuls

## 8TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY RECIPE CONTEST

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Send us your best original Texas pecan recipes—savory and sweet. Show us how you use Texas pecans to dress up vegetables, meats and salads or your nuttiest cookies, pies and candies. All recipes must include pecans (Texas pecans are our favorite). Winners will be featured in our December 2012 issue. **Enter by August 10, 2012, at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com).** Go to [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com) for details and official rules.

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# TEXAS CO-OP POWER

Enter online at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com). Each entry MUST include your name, address and phone number, plus the name of your Texas electric cooperative, or it will be disqualified. Specify which category you are entering, savory or sweet, on each recipe. Send entries to: Texas Co-op Power/Holiday Recipe Contest, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. You can fax recipes to (512) 763-3408. Up to three entries are allowed per co-op membership. Each should be submitted on a separate piece of paper if mailed or faxed. Mailed entries can all be in one envelope. No email entries will be accepted. For official rules, visit [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com).



# RECIPE ROUNDUP

peanut butter mixture.

For frosting, mix together 1 cup butter, remaining powdered sugar, vanilla and cocoa powder. Add enough half and half to make a creamy consistency. Frost each cupcake.

For topping, in bowl over double boiler, melt together chocolate chips, 1 tablespoon butter and heavy cream. Mix until smooth and shiny. Drizzle over frosting and top each with peanut butter cup.

Servings: 24. Serving size: 1 cupcake. Per serving: 454 calories, 6.5 g protein, 26.5 g fat, 51.2 g carbohydrates, 2.9 g dietary fiber, 248 mg sodium, 39.2 g sugars, 63 mg cholesterol

**DAWN TRAMMELL**

*Wood County Electric Cooperative*

## KEY LIME POUND CAKE BITES

- 1½ cups unsalted butter, softened
- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 3 cups sugar
- 6 large eggs
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- ¼ teaspoon salt

- 1 tablespoon vanilla
- ½ teaspoon almond extract
- 2 tablespoons key lime zest

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Beat butter and cream cheese on medium speed with an electric mixer for about 2 minutes, or until creamy. Gradually add sugar, beating for 5 to 7 minutes. Add eggs, one by one, beating just until yellow is incorporated. Combine flour and salt. Slow mixer to low speed and gradually add to the butter mixture, beating just until blended. Stir in extracts and

key lime zest. Spoon into paper-lined mini muffin pans and bake for 17 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into center of one cupcake comes out clean. Cool pans on wire racks for 10 minutes, remove cupcakes from pans and cool completely.

Servings: 30. Serving size: 2 mini cupcakes. Per serving: 246 calories, 3 g protein, 11.8 g fat, 30 g carbohydrates, 0.3 g dietary fiber, 59 mg sodium, 20.4 g sugars, 69 mg cholesterol

**SARA THRASH**

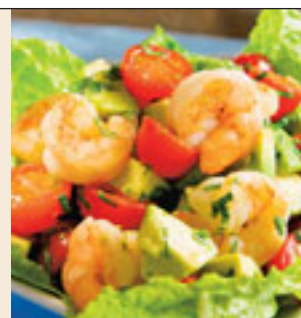
*Wise Electric Cooperative*

## \$100 RECIPE CONTEST

August's recipe contest topic is **Salad Days**. The summer's heat is at its peak. What better time to pull out a cool supper salad? Send us your ideas for meal-sized salads and dressings. The deadline is April 10.

Submit recipes online at [TexasCoopPower.com/contests](http://TexasCoopPower.com/contests). 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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## GAS UP AND GO!

**TexasCoopPower.com**

Fairs, festivals, food and family fun! It's all listed under the Events tab on our website.

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▲ Last Easter, Pedernales Electric Cooperative member **JoAnn Beissner** snapped a photo of 19-month-old granddaughter **Carmen Citzler** catching her **Aunt Allison Fischer** off guard with a cascarone, a hollowed-out egg filled with confetti.

**Caleb Logan**, son of South Plains Electric Cooperative members **Jeff** and **Lesley Logan**, cracks a confetti egg over the head of his unsuspecting grandfather, **Ernie Watson**, also an SPEC member. SPEC member **Brenda Farr**, Caleb's aunt, sent in the cheery photo. ►

**Mary Ellen Walls**, a Central Texas Electric Cooperative member, says she has been making Ukrainian Easter eggs for nearly 40 years to give as gifts to friends and family. One egg—they're dyed, not painted—takes three to 10 hours to complete, she says. ►

#### Upcoming in Focus on Texas

ISSUE	SUBJECT	DEADLINE
Jun	Hard at Work	Apr 10
Jul	Yard Art	May 10
Aug	Up Close and Personal	Jun 10
Sep	Pet Tricks	Jul 10
Oct	Ooops!	Aug 10
Nov	Water Towers	Sep 10

**HARD AT WORK** is the topic for our JUNE 2012 issue. Send your photo—along with your name, address, daytime phone, co-op affiliation and a brief description—to **Hard at Work, Focus on Texas, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701**, before **APRIL 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 at [TexasCoopPower.com/contests](http://TexasCoopPower.com/contests). 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.

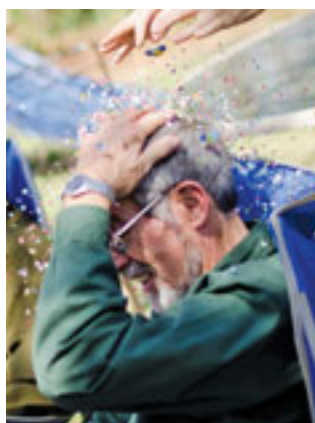


*Moove* over, Easter Bunny! “Easter Elsie,” as Pedernales Electric Cooperative member **Jonna Clark** calls this cow statue, bides her time on a back road between Boerne and Fredericksburg, just waiting to get dressed up for the holidays. ►

## EASTER

For many, it's a time-honored tradition on Easter Sunday to dress up, go to church and enjoy a little time with family and friends—and try to find that wily bunny's colorful eggs. Our winners this month reflect those amusing moments we encounter at Easter, from cracking confetti eggs on each others' heads to happening upon an unexpected bovine donning her Sunday best. From all of us here at Texas Co-op Power, we wish you a happy and blessed Easter.

—ASHLEY CLARY-CARPENTER



▲ Rascal, a Dachshund mix, watches over his Easter eggs in the backyard of his mom, Nueces Electric Cooperative member **Audrey Gilpin**. Gilpin's daughter, **Rebecca Gilpin-Fritz**, took the photo.





# AROUND TEXAS AROUND TEXAS

This is just a sampling of the events and festivals around Texas. For the complete listing, please visit [TexasCoopPower.com/events](http://TexasCoopPower.com/events).

## PICK OF THE MONTH

### APRIL 13-14 JARRELL

Rock Solid Heroes Festival,  
(254) 289-0263,  
<http://cityofjarrell.com>



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## APRIL

**07 KINGSLAND** [7-8]  
House of Arts & Crafts  
Spring Show, (325) 388-  
5693, [www.kingslandcrafts.com](http://www.kingslandcrafts.com)

**13 VICTORIA** [13-14]  
Jam Fest—Jazz, Art &  
More, (361) 572-2787,  
<http://jamfestvictoria.com>

**BURNET** [13-15]  
Bluebonnet Festival, (512)  
756-4297, [www.bluebonnetfestival.org](http://www.bluebonnetfestival.org)

**14 HUNTSVILLE**  
Herb Festival,  
(936) 436-1017

**PORT LAVACA**  
Go Texan Cook-Off and  
More!, (361) 552-2959,  
[www.portlavacatx.org](http://www.portlavacatx.org)



**14 WISE COUNTY**  
Wise Chicks Chicken  
Coop Tour

**14 ROCKDALE**  
Milam County Nature  
Festival, (254) 697-7045,  
<http://txmn.org/elcamino/naturefest>

**WISE COUNTY**  
Wise Chicks Chicken Coop  
Tour, (940) 627-0235,  
[www.wisechickscooptour.com](http://www.wisechickscooptour.com)

**14 EAGLE LAKE** [14-15]  
Attwater's Prairie  
Chicken Festival,  
(979) 234-3021, ext. 221,  
<http://southwest.fws.gov/refuges/Texas/attwater>

**20 BURTON** [20-21]  
Burton Cotton Gin  
Festival, (979) 289-  
3378, [www.cottonginmuseum.org](http://www.cottonginmuseum.org)

**EDINBURG** [20-21]  
St. Joseph Festival and  
Cook-Off, (956) 279-  
4451, <http://stjosephchurch-edinburg.org>

**LITTLEFIELD** [20-22]  
Bluegrass Festival,  
(806) 385-3870

**PORT ARANSAS** [20-22]  
Texas SandFest,  
(361) 215-0677,  
<http://texassandfest.com>

**24 KILGORE**  
Taste, Trade & Music  
Fest, (903) 984-5022,  
[www.kilgorechamber.com](http://www.kilgorechamber.com)

**Scarborough Renaissance Festival**

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# AROUND TEXAS AROUND TEXAS

**25 RIO FRIO** [25-29]  
Nature Quest, (830) 966-2320, [www.hillcountrynaturequest.com](http://www.hillcountrynaturequest.com)

**27 COLUMBUS**  
Rajun Cajun Fest, (979) 732-8385, [www.columbustexas.org](http://www.columbustexas.org)

**HUNTSVILLE** [27-28]  
General Sam Houston Folk Festival, (936) 294-1832

**27 LAGO VISTA** [27-30]  
Balcones Songbird Festival, (512) 267-7952, [www.lagovista.org](http://www.lagovista.org)

**SHERMAN** [27-28] Melody Ranch Gospel Festival, (903) 546-6893, [www.chrysalopryhouse.com](http://www.chrysalopryhouse.com)

**28 GRAPELAND**  
Folk Festival at Mission Tejas State Park, (936) 687-2394

**MIDLOTHIAN**  
Lighthouse Art & Music Festival, (972) 723-5282, <http://lighthousecoffeebar.com>

**WHITNEY**  
Monarch Butterfly Festival, (254) 694-9755, <http://cherokee.villageresort.com>



## MAY

**04 BRENHAM** [4-5]  
Maifest, 1-888-273-6426, [www.maifest.org](http://www.maifest.org)

**SALADO** [4-5]  
Gospel Festival, (254) 634-4658



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

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## DOCTORS RANGERS & MAMMOTS

### EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

The doctor is definitely in at Waco's Dr Pepper Museum, where you can enjoy an ice-cold, hand-pulled Dr Pepper float. Put on your boots and scoot on over to the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum, where you can see the story of the legendary Rangers come to life. And be sure to make time for the Waco Mammoth Site and learn about the natural history of Central Texas at the Mayborn Museum Complex. To discover more of Waco's unexpected treasures visit [www.wacocvb.com](http://www.wacocvb.com).

# WACO TEXAS



The Pin Oak Bed & Breakfast, a grand, two-story home built in 1900, is a magnificent piece of Calvert's 46-block historic district, all of which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



## PEEPHOLE INTO THE PAST

*Stop, shop and soak up the Victorian elegance of Calvert.*

**BY CONNIE STRONG**

Down every road in Texas there's a story, but for travelers passing through, the stories get left behind as the little towns disappear from the rearview mirror. Approximately 30 miles northwest of Bryan by way of Texas Highway 6, the Victorian town of Calvert puts her best foot forward in hopes of not being forgotten once visitors have come and gone.

With a walking tour of 67 designated historical stops, Calvert offers the weekend visitor a peephole into the Victorian era of the 1800s and early 1900s, a time when the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus was making its way across America to small towns like Calvert.

Blessed with railroad construction, Edison's electric lights, Bell's telephone and fertile land, Calvert, founded in 1868, became one of Texas' leading trade centers of the late 1800s. The town boasted 14 saloons and a population hovering around 3,000. Casino tables were stacked with gold. And by 1912, the Gibson Gin, which closed in 1938, was

known as the world's largest cotton gin, a title befitting a town with deep roots in cotton fields and plantations.

From 1870 to 1879, Calvert was the seat of Robertson County, though no courthouse was built. A "calaboose" (jail), however, was constructed—complete with a designated women's dorm and what some might loosely call an insane asylum. When the county seat was moved to Morgan—later renamed Franklin, in honor of the original county seat in Old Franklin (Franklin remains the modern-day county seat)—the prisoners and sheriff followed. The vacant jail, a fabulous example of Gothic Revival architecture, became a hotel and later a private residence in Calvert that today is in use as the **HAMMOND HOUSE BED & BREAKFAST**. The magnificent old building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

As barbershop quartets serenaded Calvert's citizens with four-part harmony standards, many of the town's women

were beginning to want more than cotton aprons and domestic responsibility. They founded their own chapter of the American Woman's League, a national organization with roots in California that offered women access to culture, art and education. In 1909, the architectural craftsman-style **KATY HAMMAN-STRICKER WOMEN'S HERITAGE CENTER** was built in Calvert as the first AWL chapter house in Texas and one of 38 constructed in the nation.

Today, majestic live oaks still shade the town where booming has given way to peaceful. Renovated Victorian homes with multicolored and multitextured walls, wide porches, asymmetrical façades and steeply pitched roofs dot the landscape.

A visit to owner Harold Maris' historic movie theater, **THE ELOIA**, which dates to 1929, makes it easy to imagine "Gone with the Wind" being shown on its big screen. The Eloia, which was refurbished following a fire in the late 1940s, is now being converted to a center for the performing arts that will feature live theatrical productions, Maris said.

During any typical shopping day in Calvert, visitors find whimsical shops with friendly proprietors, such as Candy Shores, owner of **COMMON SCENTS**. Nearby at **NATURE'S ART STUDIO**, owner and artist Shelley Harris-Janac will introduce you to 2-year-old Butter Bean the "beauty queen"—her trick-performing "diva" Chihuahua who literally jumps through hoops for customers—after proudly showing off the studio's Native American-inspired gourd art.

A few storefronts down, owner M.L. "Sonny" Moss creates high-fire stoneware and porcelain works at **MUD CREEK POTTERY**, which doubles as a learning center for potters and artists. Moss also specializes in jewel-tone Raku ware—a Japanese pottery glazing method dating to the 16th century.

Stepping across the worn-concrete entrance into Parisian-style **COCOAMODA**, a gourmet chocolate business, hungry day-trippers can satisfy their sweet tooth with exotically flavored truffles—try lavender, saffron or rose petal.

*Connie Strong, frequent contributor*



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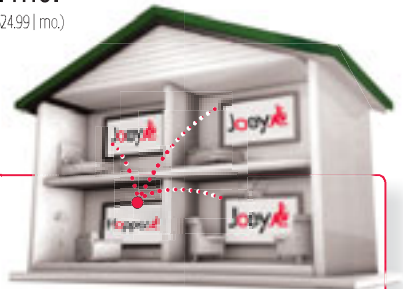
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