

TEXAS CO-OP POWER

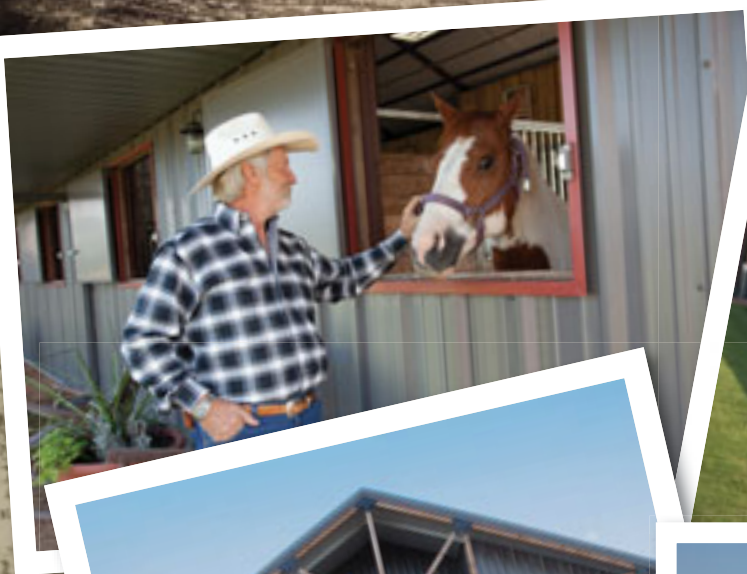
Old-School Fuel

There are still a few full-service gas stations that the do-it-yourself way of life has left standing



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FEATURES

Gas with Class Service stations—emphasis on service—have all but disappeared since self-serve took hold in the 1970s. By Mark Wangrin • Photos by Neal Hinkle **8**

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COVER PHOTO Maurice Jackson pumps gas for a customer at his filling station in O'Donnell. By Neal Hinkle

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Greatest Generation

I enjoyed Charles Boisseau's article about the experiences of World War II veterans.

The story of L.D. Cox's survival of the sinking of the USS Indianapolis was especially meaningful. My late brother-in-law, Herbert H. Hickman, was one of the five crew members aboard a PV-1 Ventura bomber on routine patrol out of Peleliu Island on August 2, 1945, when they accidentally spotted the survivors of the Indianapolis in the water. That led to their rescue.

WENDELL WAMPLER | BANDERA EC

Thanks so much for highlighting the lives of a few men from the Greatest Generation. I fear their sacrifices will be forgotten within another generation, and that would be too sad.

The men and women who returned from World War II suffered silently and seldom spoke of their experiences. I have served these veterans as a Department of Veterans Affairs employee for 40 years, and what a privilege it has been to meet so many of them and work alongside many of them on a daily basis.

CELESTE HELCEL | HEART OF TEXAS EC

As a Vietnam veteran, son of a World War II veteran and father of an Iraq veteran, I wanted to thank you for the two great informative and enlightening articles.

"Tales in Twilight" is especially meaningful because my dad, Lawrence C. Purnell, flew 74 missions as a B-17 pilot, flying out of Bury St. Edmunds in England.

That group of true American heroes is almost gone now, so thank you for reminding us of all of their sacrifices.

My son is experiencing the

Tremendous Pride

A feeling of tremendous pride swept over me after I read "Tales in Twilight" [November 2012]. My dad, Fred W. Sevey, served in the Navy for 33 years and never talked about his experiences. Most of those serving in the 1940s just didn't talk about it.

After Dad died in 1993, I started going to the ship reunions with Mom. What a wonderful experience. Hearing the stories, I wished I had been more involved in my dad's experiences by asking questions.

Dad is mentioned in the book "Where Away" by George Sessions Perry and Isabel Leighton, a story about the ventures of the USS Marblehead in the early 1940s. Even though the book shows Dad to be a hero, he never would have described himself as such. It was just his duty.

Thanks for the memories. I am proud to say my son serves in the U.S. Air Force and has served in Afghanistan.

CHERYL SEVEY HAHN | CENTRAL TEXAS EC

same issues that "Deployed Back Home" notes.

Thank you for what Texas Co-op Power is doing and for letting others know we still need to support those who are serving or have served.

RILEY PURNELL | COSERV ELECTRIC

The fine article about the Greatest Generation brought back memories of my father, Bill Sims, serving on the battleship Texas in the 1930s.

Before he passed away, I was fortunate to tour the ship with him at the San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site. He often said he was honored to have had the opportunity to serve his country on such a magnificent ship. He would have been 100 years old this year.

JAY SIMS | FANNIN COUNTY EC

My 10 cents' worth

I received the November issue yesterday, and after dinner I settled down in my recliner to read.

I thought "13 Dimes: The Treasure of a Lifetime" was a very touching story and told my husband about it last night. I was unaware of this tradition.

This morning I stopped at an estate sale near our home. As I got out of the car, I looked down, and there in the driveway was a bright, shiny dime. I picked it up and smiled, remembering the story. Perhaps this is the first of my 13.

DEBBIE BOND | VICTORIA EC



LOCAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE EDITION NOVEMBER 2012
Lady Boot-Maker Dickens on The Strand Gifts from the Kitchen

TEXAS CO-OP POWER

TALES IN TWILIGHT

World War II veterans, who sacrificed so much to ensure our way of life, are still willing to share ...

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Woman shown to scale. Flag is 60 feet by 90 feet.

Texas Pride, in All Its Glory

When Americans, for the 11th time, marked the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks on this country in September, a huge symbol of patriotic pride was unfurled, revealing the handiwork of a little Texas company that flies above the radar.

The 5,400-square-foot U.S. flag raised at One World Trade Center was produced by the Dixie Flag Manufacturing Co., in San Antonio. Plenty of Dixie's flags have waved in prominent places—some larger than the 9/11 one—but none has been so carefully crafted.

"To be asked to make the flag is exciting, so very humbling. You want to get it right," company president Pete Van de Putte told the San Antonio Express-News. His grandmother started the company in 1958. "Every detail, from the largest star to the small stitching, has to be absolutely correct."

And so six workers devoted three months to the task, turning 560 yards of durable polyester and 1,650 yards of nylon thread into Old Glory. **It weighs in at 360 pounds, with 55-inch-high stripes and stars that measure 42 inches across.**



installed an outlet to plug in a strand of lights woven around the wheel's spokes. A neighbor helped lift the dish to the top of the culvert and bolt it onto the wheel. A weather vane finished it off.

"Everybody that's seen it just loves it," Bolyard said. "In fact, a guy at my church went and built him one. Of course, his doesn't look as good as mine."

CO-OP PEOPLE

Downlink for Shade

It's like Ken Bolyard's imagination was getting signals from abandoned, gigantic and obsolete satellite dishes.

"I've always wanted to do something with them, because there are so many of them laying everywhere. I saw one laying out in a pasture one day and asked the guy if I could have it," said the Lamar EC member who lives in Powderley with his wife, Ann.

The dish lay in Bolyard's backyard for several weeks while he waited for inspiration. In the end, he decided a patio umbrella was the fitting choice.

With the help of his son, Toby, Bolyard welded a wagon wheel to one end of a culvert. They cut a hole in an old patio table and slid it onto the culvert to use as a table and

Co-op People ideas? Send them to editor@TexasCoopPower.com.

ASHLEY CLARY-CARPENTER | FIELD EDITOR

<h1 style="font-size: 48px; margin: 0;">12%</h1> <p style="font-size: 18px; margin: 0;">of Texas' population resides in rural areas.</p>	<h1 style="font-size: 48px; margin: 0;">14%</h1> <p style="font-size: 18px; margin: 0;">of working Texans have jobs related to agriculture.</p>
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Revealing the Hatteras

This month, the public can get a rare look at the USS Hatteras, the only Union ship sunk in the Gulf of Mexico during the Civil War, when 3-D photos are displayed for the 150th anniversary of the sinking.

Divers in September 2012 used sonar technology to generate images of the Hatteras for the first time. The wreckage, which rests in 57 feet of water 20 miles off Galveston, was discovered in the 1970s.

Researchers expected the vessel to be damaged from shrimp nets, but James Delgado of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said about 80 percent of the ship remains intact. "You can actually see how the thing is put together," Delgado told the Houston Chronicle in September. "It's as if the lights have been turned on in a dark room."

The CSS Alabama, a known Confederate raider, sank the Hatteras on January 11, 1863, after about 13 minutes of fighting. Two men are entombed in the wreckage, making it a war grave protected by the Sunken Military Craft Act, meaning the ship can never be moved.

CO-OP POWER

Chipping in After Sandy

Out of the **8 million people who lost power** in the wake of Hurricane Sandy after it made landfall on the East Coast in late October 2012, only **100,000 were co-op members**. And even though most members had power restored within a week, co-op personnel kept right on working. Co-ops from affected states and beyond—more than a dozen states sent help—dispatched workers and bucket trucks to help investor-owned utilities repair the damaged electrical equipment and bring power back to the people. **That's what co-ops do.** Through cooperation, they won't leave their people—even their distant neighbors—in the dark.



TOTALLY TEXAS

Goodbye, Old Friend

By now you've heard.

Big Tex, the iconic, 52-foot-tall cowboy statue watching over the State Fair of Texas since 1952, is no more.

On October 19, an electrical short that started in his right boot caused this cultural ambassador to catch fire. Flames and smoke shot up his body, which acted as a chimney. Bill Bragg, the voice behind Big Tex for 11 years, says Tex went quickly.

Officials, including Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings, promise that the icon will be rebuilt “bigger and better” and in time for Fair '13.

Big Tex was built in 1949 as a giant Santa Claus for a Christmas celebration in Kerens and subsequently bought by the State Fair for \$750.

ON THIS DATE

We Have a Winner

Joseph Glidden was born 200 years ago—January 18—in New Hampshire, though he later became a farmer in Illinois, where he made an invention that dramatically changed life in Texas.

In 1874, Glidden was awarded a patent for barbed wire. Around the same time, hundreds of designs competed for the patent, but Glidden's “Winner” wire was the most commercially successful. In 1876, a salesman put up a fence of Winner wire around some longhorns on Alamo Plaza in San Antonio, touting it as “light as air, stronger than whiskey and cheap as dirt.”

Barbed wire quickly closed off the open range. It led to more controlled livestock breeding. It contributed to the end of long cattle drives and Indian raids. And it drastically reduced demand for longhorn cattle, which were best suited for the open range.

The invention quickly made Glidden one of the wealthiest men in the nation. After multiple transactions, United States Steel Corp. held a near-monopoly on the product.

In McLean up in the Panhandle, the Devil's Rope Museum, served by Greenbelt Electric Cooperative, invites you to “get hooked on barbed wire history and lore.”



Gas with Class

Self-serve rules, but it's still possible to get a fill-up *and* a clean windshield *and* a check of your oil and tires—all without stepping out of your car



It's still the good old days at O'Donnell Oil & Butane, where Maurice Jackson has been manning the pumps for 45 years. Behind him is the 83-year-old gas station, featuring the distinctive Phillips Petroleum Tudor revival architecture of the period—and the original windows. Jackson bought the station in 1972 and has been there from 6 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. just about every day since, though he is closed on Sundays.

As it has for the last 83 years, the sun rises slowly over the tan brick building with the distinctive high-pitched gable roof on the corner of Doak and Seventh streets in O'Donnell, a gritty farming community 45 miles south of Lubbock. The 74-year-old man in the red T-shirt, stingy-brim fedora and suspenders unlocks the front door, turns on the lights and the gasoline pumps, opens the service bay doors and makes coffee, much as he's done for 45 years. Then he waits for what the day holds.

Maurice Jackson already knows most of it. At 6:30 a.m., Ben Franklin, a director for Lyntegar Electric Cooperative in Tahoka, will come in, go to the back room, fill his travel cup with coffee, chitchat for a minute or two and drive his daughter to school in Lubbock.

Five minutes later, Don Forbes will stop by, read the local paper, chitchat, buy some gas and head out. He'll be back later, with his father, to get more coffee and chat some more. And so it will go almost every day at O'Donnell Oil & Butane, where full service still reigns and old ways die hard.

O'Donnell O&B is old-school even for old-school. From the emphasis on full service to the unaffected 1920s building with the distinctive Phillips Petroleum Tudor revival architecture of the period to the steadfast Jackson, who works 12-hour days dispensing gas and good cheer, this service station is a high-octane fill 'er up of the way things used to be.

There are no giveaways of furry tiger tails or replica tanker trucks or presidential coins or sports tumblers; nor are there armies of white-suited men in bowties and caps swarming your car to check every level and pressure and squeegee your windows. Some sacrifices must be made in the interest of survival.

According to 2007 figures from the U.S. Census Bureau, there were 10,727 businesses that sold gasoline in Texas. Of those, 9,488 were linked to a convenience store.

Today, there's one that blows the old business model out of the water.

The new Buc-ee's in New Braunfels epitomizes the Walmartization of the gas station industry: a sprawling 18-acre, 60-pump complex in a construction-happy sector of Interstate 35 that's expected to handle more than 5,000 cars daily.



Jackson's regular customers—some of whom have been stopping by since 1968—know they, and their cars, will be pampered at O'Donnell Oil & Butane. Newcomers, though, are thrown off. They pull in, hop out of their cars and reach for the pump until Jackson sets them straight. Patsy Jackson has been her husband's bookkeeper for 40 of their 55 married years. She comes in at 9 a.m., and they picnic for lunch. She still keeps the books with a ledger and pencil, and when everything checks out, she enters it in the office computer.



Fronted by its mascot, Buc-ee Beaver, the facility boasts 83 spotless urinals and toilets and a 68,000-square-foot convenience store—about the size of a typical grocery store—that sells everything from the convenience store staples of beef jerky and oversized drinks to Beaver Nuggets (caramel and butter-glazed corn puffs), deer feeders, an abundance of Texas kitsch—and the not-so-ridiculous notion that it’s a tourist destination, not a way station.

“They’re the new Stuckey’s,” says historian Dwayne Jones, recalling the ubiquitous gas-filling, pecan-log-boasting highway oases whose heyday came in the 1960s and ’70s. “They’re trying to create a new image of gas stations. Texans love the cowboy, larger-than-life image of the state. The attitude is ‘Stop in and see what crazy things are in Buc-ee’s.’”

Over in O’Donnell, they don’t stock crazy. They just pump gas, check the oil and radiator levels and tire air pressure, clean the windows—the basics.



The amiable Jackson has given his heart and soul and the last knuckle of the middle finger on his right hand—at 15, a stark lesson in how not to adjust a fan belt—to the quaint notion of putting customer service first.

Jackson got his first job as a gas jockey after dropping out of school during his freshman year at O’Donnell High School, partnered in O’Donnell O&B in 1968 and bought it outright four years later—just in time for the game-changing Arab oil embargo of 1973.

“Starting out, that was the way to do it,” he says with a shrug. “In the ’70s, they started doing away with the smaller stations. But a lot of older people like to be waited on, like to have their windows washed, their oil and water checked and their gas pumped.”

And Jackson is nothing if not a creature of habit. Aside from Sunday, when he closes for the Sabbath—and that fishing trip he took with clients in ’74—he can be found at the station from 6 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

“We always did it, so we’re used to it,” says Jackson, whose wife, Patsy, has been his bookkeeper for 40 of their 55 married years. “It’s for the people. I very seldom close, because of the people. That’s my business. I have some customers I’ve had since 1968.”

It’s unclear how many full-service-



When Jackson bought the station, he put himself on the payroll for \$65 a week. Today, the bulk of the business’ income comes from fuel sales to area farmers. Jackson’s two-pump filling station is a far cry from the self-serve pit stops that populate roadsides. At the station, old friends and longtime customers such as Jerry Gass are known to linger and chat in Jackson’s office.

only operations like Jackson's are still in business, but the number is low and dwindling. And with each closing goes another slice of Texana.

With thousands of miles of roads, and an adventurous spirit to boot, Texas has long been the perfect breeding ground for a love of the road. Trouble was, the roads didn't always love back, many of them unpaved, dirty and with limited access to gasoline. Making the experience more appealing became a growth industry.

Jones, the Galveston Historical Foundation's executive director, has researched the role of the service station in Texas history, assembling "A Field Guide to Gas Stations in Texas," a 148-page report for the Texas Department of Transportation on the architectural history of service stations in Texas, primarily to help road planners recognize a historically valuable former service station when they see it.

"It was all service-oriented," Jones says of the resulting outgrowth of service stations. "It was a way to make everyone enjoy the experience. Because of the time, because of the cost, it became a luxury that could be afforded."

In 1947, Frank Ulrich, a California entrepreneur, opened three "gas-arterias" in Los Angeles, where patrons were allowed to dispense their own gas. Despite industry objections, the practice gained a toehold but didn't take off until the early 1970s, when environmental awareness and economic recession were compounded by the OPEC oil embargo.

"The oil embargo suddenly made people think of oil and gas as a priced commodity, not available to everyone," Jones says. "Geopolitics, working with environmental concerns that there were limits to the resources, made self-service the way to go."

Full-service stations were unable to obtain their allotment of gas, and profits were gutted, forcing cost cutting—and the workers were the first to go. Struggling for survival, the industry began moving toward self-service, and baby boomers, reveling in the technological advances fostered by World War II and NASA's race into space, were keen to handle the technology, even if it was only at the local pump.

(Only Oregon and New Jersey still bar the practice, clinging to the fear of rampant self-immolation.)

Self-service has become so prevalent—the number of full-service stations nationwide had shrunk from 220,000 in the 1970s to 40,000 in 1997—that Jack-

son sometimes has to explain the process to confused drivers.

"Some people have never had full service," he says. "They expect to wait on themselves."

Jackson recalls a car of young girls terrified that he was going to hijack their car when he started opening the hood. Ironically, they were the grandchildren of the woman who sold him the station.

It's midday. Jackson plans to keep seeing the sun rise and set from that little brick building at Doak and Seventh for as long as he can. His grandson, Courtney Stewart, is in line to take over the station when Jackson moves on. He says he'll keep the tradition going. "I collect antiques, and we like to eat at home," says Stewart, 29. "I like the older style of living."

From a bottom-line perspective, it helps that the bulk of O'Donnell O&B's income comes from diesel sales to area

farmers, though cotton farmers have been hit hard by the drought. With the trend away from fossil fuels and toward alternative energy and the economic influences that favor the new and different, the future of full-service stations like Jackson's is uncertain. Then there's Jackson, and his two artificial knees, the missing back discs, the cataract surgery, the shoulder reconstructions, the spinal tap, the sciatica and the neuropathy. But the man is game to see many more sunrises. "Just keep on trucking," he says. "I'll be here as long as I can."

More than 300 miles and a world away, another man fills his own tank at a gigantic convenience store and heads inside to mull which of the more than 30 varieties of beef jerky he'll buy. Out front, a cartoonish 4-foot bronze beaver is smiling, waiting on the next eager customer to pose for a snapshot. His sun is rising, for the time being.

Mark Wangrin is an Austin writer.



Courtney Stewart, Jackson's grandson, figures to take over the station when Jackson, 74, finally calls it quits, though he's not making plans. 'I'll be here as long as I can,' Jackson says. But when that day comes, it seems the station and its attention to full service will be in good hands. 'He's the one who taught me how to work,' Stewart says.

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—C. Cordes, Minnesota

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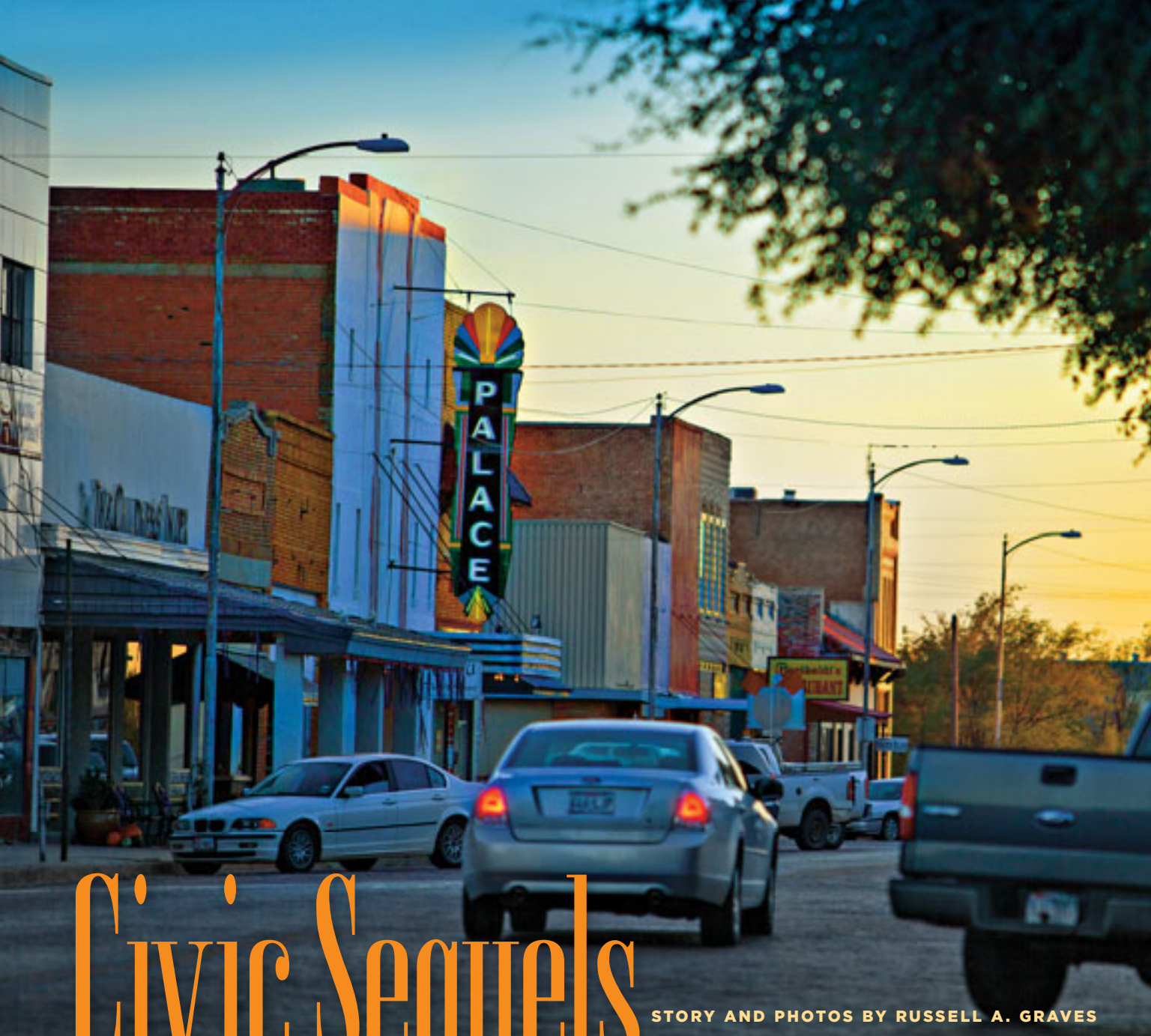


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Civic Sequels

STORY AND PHOTOS BY RUSSELL A. GRAVES

Small towns finding flickers of former vitality after reviving downtown movie theaters

MAIN STREET IN CHILDRESS, an eclectic mix of commercial buildings and renovations from overlapping eras, begs for revitalization. The historic brick streets downtown speak to the rustic character of the central business district. The availability of parking on them speaks to the meager level of commerce being conducted.

Downtown Childress might seem lonely, but it's not alone. This could be most any small town in Texas.

But stop right here. Rewind. Keep going back—at least a generation. OK, now hit “Play.”

A little more bustle on those bricks. And the main attraction, you might say, is the Palace, Childress’ downtown movie theater.

“The current Palace dominated Main Street for more than 50 years, beginning in 1937,” says Judy Johnson, a volunteer with the Palace Restoration Committee, a nonprofit dedicated to bringing

the theater back to the prominence it once enjoyed as the center of entertainment for Childress and the surrounding area.

Fast-forward to the present.

The Palace sits near the south end of North Main Street, its newly painted white facade facing west and a multicolored neon sign lighting up downtown Childress in a fashion not seen for nearly 20 years. Hundreds of townspeople showed up recently for a fundraising event that featured the classic movie musical “Grease.” The film was projected on the building’s exterior because the restoration is still in progress.

The vibrant theater makes a connection to a simpler era in Childress. A connection that, despite the passing of time and the lure of bigger cities, still has a place in small-town West Texas. For Johnson, it’s a personal connection.

“She is a monument to life and cinema: life in a small town in



Folks looking to connect to a simpler time and reconnect with their civic pride hope a restoration project will make the Palace theater the main attraction again in downtown Childress. In Wellington, Gay McAlister says a \$2.5 million investment in the Ritz has revived more than just a decrepit 85-year-old building.

West Texas and cinema as a means of bringing the outside world to that small town,” Johnson says. “Restored, she can offer some of the simplicity, once taken for granted, to the many young families who now make Childress their home.”

Lifelong resident Shelly Breeding can relate. “We used to go to the Palace and watch the Walt Disney movies back in the 1970s when I was a kid,” she says. “As I got older, the Palace is where the high school kids went on dates. There wasn’t any hanging around town or driving around. You planned your week around what was playing at the show that weekend. Kids these days don’t have that luxury. At least not right now.”

THIRTY MILES NORTH OF CHILDRESS, the Ritz in Wellington recently underwent a complete restoration and now serves as the cinema and live entertainment hub for the town of 2,200

people. When the project started, the building was nearly beyond repair, and only the original walls remained. Over six years, the theater experienced an extreme transformation.

Greenbelt Electric Cooperative holds its annual meeting at the Ritz. The concession stand is opened for folks to get drinks, popcorn and candy. “Our members love it, and we always open the meeting with a Pink Panther cartoon,” says Greenbelt General Manager Stan McClendon.

“People all over the Panhandle and even the state have come to enjoy and admire the Ritz,” says Gay McAlister, a retired teacher and one of the organizers who helped nurse the dilapidated theater back to life through her vision and leadership.

The idea of restoration was actually put in place in 2001, when a group of citizens formed the committee, Historic Wellington, with the idea of restoring the Ritz and possibly other



Small towns in the Panhandle trying to boost their central business districts start by putting sparkle back into their old theaters. It happened in Wellington and Canadian, and it's happening in Childress, where Judy Johnson is eager for work at the Palace to be completed. 'She is a monument to life and cinema: life in a small town in West Texas and cinema as a means of bringing the outside world to that small town,' Johnson says.

buildings, she says. Money came in from local groups, individuals and ex-students from all over the country who wanted this project done.

McAlister says it was not until 2004, when a local group, backed by a Wellington philanthropist, agreed to finance the cost that actual work on the building began. Although the restoration price was steep—\$2.5 million—she says that the effort was worth it. Since its reopening in 2007, the Ritz has hosted live music, plays and first-run movies in the auditorium, which features historically inspired mission-style architecture while boasting a modern digital projection and sound system.

The auditorium, painted tan and accented with burgundy seats, has a reconstructed proscenium reminiscent of old theaters. The lobby is small, but the committee bought an adjacent building that serves as a meeting area. The space is smartly furnished and decorated with local photos and old movie posters.

"While we don't have any concrete proof of it improving the economic state of our community, we feel it has," says McAlister.

Like many small towns in Texas, Wellington's downtown has seen better economic days and now is a mixture of occupied and empty storefronts with architecture that dates back to the early 20th century.

"Many young people have moved here, and they enjoy the Ritz for themselves and their children," McAlister says. "So many out-of-town people coming here for shows and concerts helps our community."

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS A THEME that underpins the need for restoring these small-town, historic theaters. Bringing the theaters back to life provides a much-needed boost to old central business districts, as the Panhandle town of Canadian discovered through the restoration of its theater.

"The theater continues to be a huge asset to our community," says Tamera Julian, director of the Canadian Economic Development Corp. Julian describes downtown as being bleak 10 years

ago, with every other building boarded up or dilapidated. The Palace Theater restoration, however, inspired the townspeople.

"At the time of its restoration, it provided a sense of hope to the community. The fact that someone was willing to reinvest in our community was an inspiration to many," says Julian, referring to Salem Abraham, a Canadian native and successful futures trader who infused cash and business leadership into the theater and took it from oblivion to a state-of-the-art venue. The restoration, according to Julian, was just the spark that downtown Canadian needed.

"The theater restoration was the catalyst to many significant improvements to our downtown Main Street," Julian says, describing the long central business district that straddles a single street, as opposed to the town square found in many towns. Along the street, small mercantile establishments, restaurants and business offices pepper the once-beleaguered downtown. The Palace Theater, with its modest, functional facade, sits on the block midway between the courthouse and U.S. Highway 83.

"Over the past 15 to 20 years now, almost every building on Main Street in Canadian has seen renovations, and all but one building, which is currently being renovated, is occupied," says Julian.

IN CHILDRESS, JUDY JOHNSON HOPES the same synergy returns to downtown once the theater restoration is complete. Now in her 60s and a lifelong resident of the Southeast Texas Panhandle town, she relates fond memories of the theater and how busy downtown used to be on weekends. She sees the theater as a spark to rekindle the magic she and others enjoyed in the past.

"Not too long ago, the completion of the restoration of the Palace was a very blurred vision in the distant future," she says. However, that project has become more focused with numerous community backers. "I think completion of the Palace will make a 'can-do' statement about this wonderful town."

Russell A. Graves is an outdoor writer and photographer in Childress.

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TV (Efficiency) Guides

High-powered TVs drain energy, so opt for efficient models

BY MEGAN MCKOY-NOE

Which appliance uses more energy: a refrigerator or a television? Some large TVs—when used an average of five hours per day—can cost more to operate than a new, basic refrigerator.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, 44 percent of American homes have three or more television sets, and each set adds to a home's monthly energy bill.

In the market for a new television? You're not alone—U.S. consumers purchased an estimated 40 million new televisions with an average screen size of 50 inches last year.

To keep your electric bills in check, here are some tips to consider before buying a new television.

Display tactics

Three parts of a TV affect energy use: display technology, screen size and resolution. Plasma screens often are cited as the largest energy user—mainly because their large 42- to 65-inch screens typically draw between 240 and 400 watts.

LCD TVs don't need much power to operate—111 watts on average. Most LCD screens range from 21 to 49 inches. These TVs fall into two categories: those with cold-cathode fluorescent lamps to illuminate the screen and backlit models employing a light-emitting diode. LED units offer better picture quality and thinner, lighter screens.

Remember that the larger the screen, the more energy you'll drain. And although a high-definition TV transforms the latest blockbuster movie into a theater-like experience, these sets generally use more power.

Energy Star boosts ratings

Energy Star TVs cut an estimated \$3.5 billion from consumer electric bills annually. The joint energy-efficiency ratings program of the U.S. Department of Energy and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency created the first set of voluntary television efficiency standards in 1998. Today's Energy Star-qualified screens use, on average, 40 percent less energy than standard models.

Standards are constantly ratcheting up. In 2008, a 50-inch



Energy Star-rated television used 318 watts on average. In 2010, those sets had to curb energy use to 153 watts or less, and by 2012, no more than 108 watts. Energy Star provides an online guide that ranks TVs by energy use, size, brand and display type at energystar.gov.

Energy Star partners like TopTen USA also maintain lists of the top energy-efficient televisions (and other household appliances) based on size at toptenusa.org.

Tune in to savings

If you're not in the market for a TV but want to make sure your model is operating efficiently, these tips may help:

- ▶ Turn off the TV and other connected devices when they're not being used. Consider using smart power strips to eliminate continual power draw.
- ▶ Reduce TV brightness by turning down the LCD back-light. You'll save energy and still retain good picture quality.
- ▶ Turn on the power-saver mode, which many new TVs offer.
- ▶ Control room lighting. While many energy-saving tips reduce brightness of the screen, you can compensate by dimming lights around your TV.

Megan McKoy-Noe, CCC, writes for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. Brian Sloboda contributed to this article.

<p>Federal law prohibits removal of this label before consumer purchase.</p> <p>ENERGY GUIDE</p> <p>XYZ Corporation Television Model ABC-L</p>	<p>Estimated Yearly Energy Cost</p> <p>\$21</p> <p>\$21 \$67</p> <p>Cost Range of Similar Models (50" – 54")</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on 11 cents per kWh and 5 hours use per day • Estimated yearly electricity use of this model: XXX kWh • Your cost depends on your utility rates and use. <p>Visit ftc.gov/energy</p>
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ABOVE: In 2012, Sharp's Aquos LCD TV claimed the top three spots on TopTen USA's most energy-efficient large-screen television list.

LEFT: As with other appliances, such as refrigerators and washing machines, manufacturers are required to post a bright yellow Energy Guide label on all televisions sold. The label compares the annual operating cost of a specific television to the plug-in cost of similar models.

Work Together This Winter

Decrease demand to help avoid blackouts

Do you remember February 2011, when much of Texas experienced rolling blackouts?

The state was suffering through a great freeze, and this caused great demand for electricity, as most areas were below freezing for several days. The demand—combined with more than 50 generating units tripping offline due to sagging, ice-laden lines and inadequate weatherization—caused the Electric Reliability Council of Texas to institute rolling blackouts, or load shedding, because the state simply didn't have enough juice. ERCOT said that about 7,000 megawatts had gone offline—enough capacity to power about 1.4 million homes.

While ERCOT's measures prevented a total blackout in record-freezing temperatures, Texans sure don't want to experience rolling outages again. So what can we do about it?

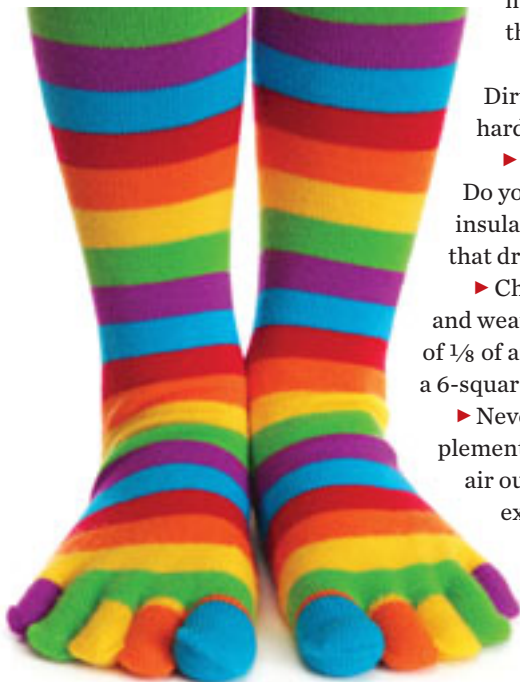
By working together this winter, we can help decrease demand while still maintaining comfort. Here are some easy steps we can take at home to conserve energy:

- ▶ Install a programmable thermostat and set it to lower the temperature at night and whenever the house is unoccupied. Lowering your thermostat by 10 degrees at night can reduce your heating bill by 10 to 20 percent.

- ▶ Make sure your thermostat is programmed correctly and not located in an unheated space, a poorly sealed or seldom-used room, in direct sunlight or near a heat source. The thermostat must be able to sense the average temperature in your home. If it is not in the right place, contact a heating and air-conditioning professional about having it moved.

- ▶ Lower your thermostat and wear socks and a sweater indoors. Lowering by just 1 degree can reduce energy use by 3 percent.

Save energy with socks! Keeping your feet warm and toasty helps you feel warmer overall, allowing for a lower thermostat setting.



- ▶ Get a humidifier to add moisture to the air. Air tends to be dryer in the winter, and because moister air feels warmer, a humidifier can make you feel more comfortable even though your thermostat is set lower.

- ▶ Inspect your air filters monthly. Dirty air filters cause your heater to work harder, using more energy.

- ▶ Check your outlets and switch plates. Do you feel a cold draft? If yes, install foam insulation gaskets behind them, and stop that draft where it starts.

- ▶ Check all exterior doors for air leaks and weatherstrip and caulk as needed. A gap of 1/8 of an inch around a door is equivalent to a 6-square-inch hole in the side of your house.

- ▶ Never use a traditional fireplace for supplemental heating. A fireplace sucks heated air out of your home to fuel the fire and exhausts it through the chimney, and then your furnace has to turn on to replace that warm air.

- ▶ Make sure your water heater is set no higher than 125 degrees and install a water heater blanket.



Be Prepared

In the event of extreme weather conditions, your electricity supply cannot be guaranteed. This means you need to be prepared so that you can take care of yourself and your family in the event of a power outage for a short or extended period of time.

How you can prepare

- ▶ Ensure that flashlights are accessible with fully charged batteries on hand.

- ▶ Have access to a phone that doesn't need electricity, such as a landline or a fully charged cellphone.

- ▶ Keep a battery-powered radio on hand for updates on weather conditions and power outages.

- ▶ Keep a stock of nonperishable foods in your pantry, including an adequate supply of bottled water.

In the event of an outage

- ▶ If you're in a life-threatening situation, call 9-1-1 immediately.

- ▶ Check your neighbor's house to see if they have also lost power. If their power is on, check your breakers to see if one or more have flipped.

- ▶ If you have sick or elderly neighbors, check to see if they need help.

- ▶ Ensure that all lights and appliances are switched off except for one light. That way, when power is restored, you reduce the risk of a circuit overloading.

- ▶ Keep your refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible. Refrigerated food should be safe for about four hours in a sealed refrigerator. A full freezer will keep food frozen for 48 hours.

An Old Log, as It Turns out ...



With a touch that's part savage and part subtle, a woodturner reveals the beauty within

BY MARK WANGRIN

SHOW STUART DOWLEN A STRAIGHT, FLAWLESS wood log, ask him what he can make of it, and he'll tell you.

Firewood.

Hand him a couple-hundred-pound hunk of gnarly, knotted timber scarred with wormholes or some other hideous imperfection, and he'll smile.

"You take all the scruffy-looking, ugly logs, and you expose their beauty," says the 78-year-old Central Texas woodturner. "You give it a pleasant shape, and Mother Nature will do the rest."

Mother Nature may have gotten the easy part of the deal, for the slender, impeccably dressed and bespectacled Dowlen can only bring to bear what tools man's created. When he's finished paring a spinning tree trunk with chisels, hewing nature's remainders into bowls and vases, smooth as glass and lovingly hand-waxed, chances are it's taken him the better part of year.

Attached to the garage in Dowlen's stucco home in a gated community in Spring Branch, a small postal code between San Antonio and Blanco, is a two-story subunit with bath and shower. Therein lie the tools of his trade—band saw, drill press, table saw, clamps and an assortment of sandpaper, chisels, epoxy, superglue and other attachments, some custom-made.

The centerpiece is a customized high-end lathe that can turn up to 2,400 revolutions per minute and could hold a piece of wood 36 inches in diameter, if, in Dowlen's words, "I had the nerve." White floors and white walls would show the

sawdust—if Dowlen's sense of tidiness would allow any.

Upstairs, in an empty room, the finished pieces are set out for the searing Texas heat to do its part. It can take six months for the wood to dry out. The pieces are weighed monthly, and when their weight is constant for consecutive months, they're dried.

Then they're sanded—he has up to a very fine 2,500-grit paper and is virtually searching Europe for a stash of the treasured 4,000-grit—and waxed to a sheen. Dowlen leaves the inside unfinished to leave no doubt that these are made of wood and not an artsy resin cast. Then he dates, signs and numbers them (No. 189 as of July). But he does not sell them—though he's been offered as much as \$10,000. Instead, he gives them to friends and philanthropic auctions, where they usually raise between \$2,500 and \$3,500.

Usually, Dowlen gets to his workshop about 9 a.m. and works two to three hours. The window for work in the open-air workshop is as much limited by the Texas heat as by the physical demands—as anyone who's ever worked a lathe chisel can attest.

On his hands are thick leather gloves. On his head is the Airshot Pro, a protective helmet and Darth Vader starter kit that spares him the bother of having to cough up wood chunks and pick splinters out of his eyes.

If you could see Dowlen's eyes through the visor, they'd be sparkling. He is clearly making up for lost time. Back in

shop class at Amarillo Middle School, he turned a pair of lamp bases, and, metaphorically, a light went on in his head. But then came college and a career in petroleum exploration sales. “I spent most of my time,” he says, “in airports and oil fields.”

But one trip took him to Millersdale, England, the home of woodturning, where he vowed that one day ...

That day came in 1993, five years into his dabbling in woodturning, when Atlantic Richfield Co. offered him a lucrative “enhanced retirement.” Within nine months, however, his first wife died from cancer. Still three projects short of completing apprenticeship to a master woodturner, but wanting a new start, he moved from Houston back to Amarillo. There, he met his second wife, Carolyn, whom he married in 1998. They moved to Blanco in 2006, when he set up shop.

“For many, woodturning is almost spiritual—shaping and decorating the natural wood, much as a potter would shape the clay with his hands,” says Janice Levi, president of the Southwest Association of Turners, which has 22 chapters and about 1,500 members in Texas. “For others, it is pure engineering—calculating designs and proportion, placing segments. And yet, the two meet happily in the middle in their satisfaction that they have created something unique.”

Dowlen is both. “Him being a chemist (by education), he has an analytical mind and an artist’s mind,” Carolyn says. “He’s probably truly in the middle.”

So half of him draws detailed plans on graph paper and half of him dreams. Someday, he’d like to try his hand at a hunk of leadwood, an African wood so dense it can’t float, or a yew from Europe, assuming he can keep its toxicity from killing him, or—brace yourself—a 600-pound burl from a tree that was covered in ash but not incinerated when Mount St. Helens erupted in Washington in 1980.

For now, it’s back to the lathe, where he’s turning a vase from the ugliest piece of mesquite found in a creek bed after a flood as a wedding present for his great niece. Plans? Yes, he’s got a vision, but nature has the final say in what figures to be a 100-hour job on the lathe alone, where one wrong move, and it’s firewood.

Mark Wangrin is an Austin writer.



REINCARNATION With each pass of the blade, woodturner Stuart Dowlen digs a little deeper, searching for the beauty that nature, the tease of all teases, saved for humans to uncover. What emerges, after the lathing and drying and sanding and waxing, is a bowl or a vase, magnificently flawed.

The Bargain of a Lifetime

Quitting smoking was an errant stroll through a maze—and I was the rat

BY JAN REID

“MY NAME IS WHOEVER, AND I’M A NICOTINE addict.” That’s how it would go if I belonged to Alcoholics Anonymous or was a drug abuser in a rehab program. Kicking cigarettes, though, is a quirky and largely lonesome affair, despite the social and health pressures and a growth industry of proclaimed solutions. To my continued amazement, here’s how it began and ended for me.

I was 19 years old and thoroughly alarmed that I had bolted from my Texas hometown and joined the Marines. One of the few breaks we boots had was when the DI—drill instructor—stood us at ease in two lines outside our Quonset huts and said, “The smoking lamp is lit.” We who didn’t smoke got to hit the asphalt and do pushups until the lamp was out, and it seemed like it sure took them a long time to smoke those things. The C-rations that I encountered later in my training had little packs of American brands with three or four smokes in them. So I took the path of least resistance; in my first chance at a geedunk (code for commissary) I bought a pack of unfiltered Camels, because those and Lucky Strikes were what the DIs smoked. Semper Fi.

Flash forward eight years. I’m a bachelor living alone in a duplex across the street from a railroad right-of-way. I’m up to two packs of Marlboro Lights a day and hating every one of them. I’ve tried enough times that I know the drill—make it past the first four days of heebie-jeebies, and I’ve got a chance. I’m disgusted with myself. I come home from the newspaper job at night, jerk the pack out of my

pocket, twist it around until they’re all broken, and throw it in the weeds across the street. (I also try not to litter anymore.) An hour later I’m out there clawing through the Johnson grass and am back inside smoking one that’s bent and torn, smoke leaking out of the paper as I suck on it.

I find a product that I try to take with a milkshake, because the pills feel like they’re burning a hole in my stomach. Those pills are no longer on the market.

But after countless attempts, it finally works.

Fifteen years clean—it’s crazy. My wife and I are roving around Spain and France, having great fun while I’m researching a book. She smokes, and I worry about her, but I can’t blame her for my actions. The wine’s flowing, the food’s great, everybody seems to smoke in Europe, and the cigarettes smell and taste better. I start fooling around at night with John Players, an English brand, and a Turkish brand with a smart crescent on the filter. Dumb as dirt.

Three years later I’m back up to two packs a day and hating every nail in the coffin. A doctor tells me my lungs already show a trace of emphysema. In the newspaper I keep seeing these ads for one-night cure-all seminars, \$38 at suburban motels—results promised but not guaranteed. The therapy is mass hypnosis. I don’t see those ads anymore. I suspect lawyers may have discouraged them. But, I think, what’s to lose?

It’s a large and diverse crowd in the motel ballroom. The therapeutic team

collects the money first. In uncomfortable chairs we suffer through an hour of absolute psychobabble. The speaker gives us a break, tells us to go smoke the last cigarettes in our lives if we want. People are pouring out of there, and at least half of them don't come back.

When we reconvene, the psychobab-
bler is our hypnotist. He tells us to get as comfortable as we can. I choose a place on the carpet, take off my shoes, wriggle my toes. The lights go down. Presently he's saying, "Visualize a rat. A big white laboratory rat in a cage. Then you notice there's a spigot above the cage. A drop of brown liquid forms on the rim of this spigot. It is pure, 100 percent nicotine. It grows and grows." (I'm thinking: Give him credit, he is a storyteller.) "And grav-

ity finally tugs the drop loose, and it splashes on the lab rat's back. The rat writhes in absolute agony."

When the lights go up the hypnotist asks us by show of hands how long we think we've been "under." I guess 20 minutes and am surprised when he says with an air of mystery and drama, "An hour." He wishes us luck in our healthy new lives, and as we're pouring out of there his assistants are holding up CDs or DVDs and yelling, asking us to buy those ongoing safeguards. No chance; we're out of there. As I walk to my car in the parking garage, I'm thinking: I'm going to go straight to that pack of Marlboros I left on the console and smoke one. But I don't.

The night passes, then three or four days, then a week, and at some point I

throw the pack away. Then one night I have this exceptional dream. It's an Indiana Jones adventure movie. At some point in this dream I step out of the chaos, saying, "This is just too much excitement. I've gotta have a cigarette." I go through the whole routine, tapping the filter on my old Zippo lighter, and I've got it in my mouth when this voice says, "Wait a minute. You're not going to smoke that cigarette. You can't smoke that cigarette. You've been hypnotized."

And I suppose I was. It's been 20 years, and I've never given smoking one of the things another thought. It was a \$38 bargain.

*Jan Reid is an Austin writer. His most recent book is *Let the People in: The Life and Times of Ann Richards* (University of Texas Press, 2012).*

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jerk the pack out of my pocket,
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LOT NO. 46807/
68975/69221/
69222

Item 46807 shown

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drillmaster

LOT NO. 95578/
69645/
60625

Item 95578 shown

SAVE 50%
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CENTECH AUTOMATIC BATTERY FLOAT CHARGER

LOT NO. 42292/
69594/69955

Item 42292 shown

SAVE 61%
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4 PIECE 1" x 15 FT. RATCHETING TIE DOWN SET

LOT NO. 90984/60405

SAVE 52%

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800 RATED WATTS/ 900 MAX. WATTS PORTABLE GENERATOR

LOT NO. 66619/
69381/60338

Item 69381 shown

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1/2" ELECTRIC IMPACT WRENCH

LOT NO. 68099/
45252/69606

SAVE 45%

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69252/
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36 LED SOLAR SECURITY LIGHT

LOT NO. 98085/
69644/69890/
60498

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29 PIECE TITANIUM NITRIDE COATED DRILL BIT SET
drillmaster
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Item 5889 shown

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SUPER COUPON!

LOT NO. 93888/60497 **MOVER'S DOLLY**
HaulMaster



1000 LB. CAPACITY Item 93888 shown

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SUPER COUPON!

3 GALLON, 100 PSI OILLESS HOT DOG STYLE AIR COMPRESSOR
CENTRAL PNEUMATIC
 LOT NO. 97080/69269



Item 97080 shown

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SUPER COUPON!

500 LB. CAPACITY ALUMINUM CARGO CARRIER
HaulMaster



LOT NO. 92655/69688/60771

Item 92655 shown

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LOT NO. 68887

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 CC Design, OffRoad Magazine

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SUPER COUPON!

60" WORKBENCH WITH FOUR DRAWERS
WINDSOR DESIGN



LOT NO. 93454/69054

Item 93454 shown

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ACCURACY WITHIN ±4%

1/4" DRIVE LOT NO. 2696
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SUPER COUPON!

7 PIECE RATCHETING COMBINATION WRENCH SETS
PITTSBURGH



SAE LOT NO. 96654
METRIC LOT NO. 95552

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X-LARGE LOT NO. 93641/60448



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SUPER COUPON!

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LOT NO. 68751/90599

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The Other Remarkable Houston Texas

history books tell of Sam Houston—military leader, frontier statesman, president of the Republic of Texas, governor of Texas—and point out that he owned slaves, 12 of them, and spoke in support of slavery to protect the interests of the South. But in principle he opposed the idea of one man owning another and even broke a law on its behalf. One slave in particular thrived under Houston's tutelage and eventually earned his own place in Texas history.

BY MARTHA DEERINGER

WHEN SAM HOUSTON MARRIED HIS THIRD wife, Margaret Moffette Lea, in 1840, she brought along two servants inherited from her father: Eliza, Margaret's personal servant, and Joshua, a strapping lad believed to be 18. Already an expert horseman and experienced blacksmith when he arrived in Galveston with the newlyweds, he would serve them faithfully for more than 20 years.

Joshua's quick mind made him an important member of the household, and he often traveled with Houston while he served as president of the Republic of Texas. Sam and Margaret taught Joshua and the other house servants to read and loaned them books, although teaching slaves to read was illegal in Texas, according to Patricia Smith Prather and Jane Clements Monday in *From Slave to Statesman* (University of North Texas Press, 1995). Joshua was so good with figures that Houston asked him to keep track of expenses as they traveled.

Joshua served the family as blacksmith, wheelwright, carpenter, driver and trusted companion. Houston once asked him to design and build a law office, separate from the rest of the house, at Houston's Raven Hill Plantation on the upper San Jacinto River. Houston also encouraged Margaret to hire out the servants when they weren't needed at home and to allow Joshua to keep the extra money he earned. Joshua's skills made him a valued worker, especially as stagecoach driver. Sometime before 1848, Joshua began a family with a slave named Anneliza.

Rumors of war between the states circulated in 1859, and Joshua was aware of the general's increasingly unpopular

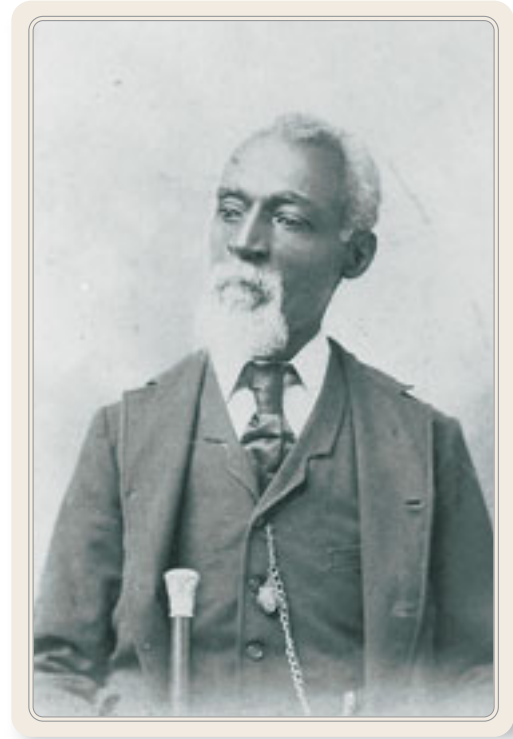
opposition to the spread of slavery. Houston's pleas against secession fell on deaf ears, and Texas joined the Confederacy. Houston was removed from office in March 1861 after refusing to take an oath of allegiance to the Confederate States of America.

By 1862 the general's health started to deteriorate. That fall, he set an example for fellow Texans once again. Dressed in his best suit and leaning on the hickory walking stick that Joshua had carved for him, he gathered his 12 servants and read Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation from the porch of his rented house in Huntsville. Then he told them that they were free. If they chose to stay and work for him, he promised to pay them as long as he could. Most, including Joshua, elected to stay.

On July 26, 1863, Sam Houston died. Joshua, who had taken his master's last name, was away driving a stagecoach and by the time he returned, Margaret and her eight children had moved to Independence. The family was destitute and could not pay the rent on the Huntsville house.

Joshua made the 60-mile trip to Independence by mule to deliver his condolences. He brought \$2,000—his life's savings—and he explained that he wanted Margaret to have it. Overcome by emotion, she refused the offer. "I want you to take your money and do just what General Houston would want you to do with it if he were here, and that is to give your boys and girls a good education," she is quoted as saying in *From Slave to Statesman*.

Thus began Joshua Houston's long personal journey from slavery to leadership among freedmen, buying land in



Joshua Houston

Huntsville and building a two-story house and a blacksmith shop. He served twice as city alderman and twice as Walker County commissioner. He was one of the founders of Bishop Ward Normal and Collegiate Institute in Huntsville.

Joshua Houston witnessed eight of the most turbulent decades in Texas history. Like his beloved master, he had a vision for his people, leading them beyond slavery to a new place in society. He died in 1902, probably at the age of 79, and is buried beside his third wife in Oakwood Cemetery in Huntsville, just a few yards from the grave of his friend, Sam Houston. Nearby stands an historical marker honoring the humble man born into slavery who became a civic leader and "a devoted supporter of education for African-Americans."

Martha Deeringer, frequent contributor

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Waging the Weight War

For many of us, the dawning of a new year means that the battle of the bulge is joined again. Among the most popular New Year's resolutions is losing weight. And losing weight often means changing one's diet.

That battle can be difficult. Food is abundant and relatively cheap. Processed meals and restaurants offer easy temptation of the calories, fat and sodium that fill our bellies and fire the pleasure center of our brains but leave our bodies nutrition-poor.

This is not a hopeless battle: The trick for me is not giving up the foods I love—creating cravings that I eventually give in to—but to enjoy them less often. I also try to make healthier versions of my favorite meals. This might mean trimming portions, eating healthy snacks or substituting ingredients.

The weight war can rarely be won at the dining table alone. Exercise, a dirty word to some, usually must be deployed. Even if it's just a 15-minute walk every day, every step you take will bring you closer to your goal.

After that walk, treat yourself. One of my favorite treats is pizza. Now, I love the full-calorie meat-and-cheese-laden slices from a pizzeria. But there are ways to reduce pizza's impact on your waistline.

This recipe goes all out, eliminating much of the fat and calories of a regular pizza. Roasted vegetables provide the creamy texture of cheese, and marinated mushroom slices substitute for meat. Of course, you can take the basic idea and add your own flavors and styles or shake on some Parmesan. You might be surprised at how satisfying this pie can be. Compare this, at 79 calories for two slices, to a single slice of the same size restaurant-baked cheese pizza at 275 calories.

KEVIN HARGIS

Cheeseless Portabella Pizza

- 1 teaspoon soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic, divided
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 2 portabella mushrooms, rinsed and sliced
- 1 large onion
- 1 small eggplant
- 2 red bell peppers
- 1 cup tomato puree
- 1 teaspoon thyme
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 1 tablespoon fresh basil, julienned
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 thin 12-inch pizza crust (store-bought or homemade)

- Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Combine soy sauce, 1 teaspoon garlic, Italian seasoning and 1 tablespoon water and pour over mushrooms in a bowl. Toss to coat. Allow to marinate as you roast vegetables.
- Slice onion, eggplant and peppers in half. Remove seeds and ribs from peppers. Place vegetables face down in large baking pan and roast in preheated oven for 30 minutes.
- Combine puree, thyme, oregano, basil, salt and sugar in a large bowl. When vegetables are done, remove pan from oven and allow to cool enough to handle. Increase oven temperature to 450 degrees.
- When cool, chop onion and stir into puree mixture. Remove skin from eggplant and chop into 1-inch cubes. Remove skin from peppers and slice.
- Place crust on pizza pan. Spread with puree mixture. Top with eggplant and peppers. Drain any excess

marinade from mushrooms and arrange them on top of pizza.

- Bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until crust turns golden brown. Remove and allow to cool for 5 minutes. Slice and serve.

Servings: 4. Serving size: 2 slices. Per serving: 79 calories, 3.4 g protein, 0.3 g fat, 17.7 g carbohydrates, 4.7 g dietary fiber, 245 mg sodium, 9.8 g sugars



KATHERYN JAGER | PEDERNALES EC

As many of the entries for the Delicious Diet Fare contest showed, light on calories does not have to mean light on flavor. The winning recipe is simple to make with a short list of fairly inexpensive ingredients. And it's delicious to boot.

Balsamic Chicken with Spinach and Feta

- Olive oil cooking spray
- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 bag (6 ounces) fresh baby spinach
- 4 ounces crumbled feta cheese
- Balsamic vinegar to taste



- Prepare a sauté pan with cooking spray and cook chicken, seasoned with salt and pepper, over medium heat.
- As chicken is cooking, lightly steam spinach for 1 to 2 minutes in the microwave so it is cooked but not soggy.
- When chicken is cooked through, place it on a plate, top each with ¼ of cooked spinach, sprinkle with 1 ounce feta and drizzle with balsamic to taste.

Servings: 4. Serving size: 1 breast with spinach and cheese. Per serving: 359 calories, 55.4 g protein, 9.9 g fat, 3.9 g carbohydrates, 0.9 g dietary fiber, 625 mg sodium, 2.4 g sugars, 176 mg cholesterol

\$100 Recipe Contest

May's recipe contest topic is **Fast-Fix Meals**. With families' schedules busier than ever, home cooking can fall by the wayside because there is no time. Share your tips, recipes and advice for family meals that can be put together quickly. The deadline is January 10.

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There are three ways to enter: **ONLINE** at TexasCoopPower.com (under the Submit and Share tab); **MAIL** to 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701; **FAX** to (512) 763-3408. Include your name, address and phone number, plus your co-op.

Veggie Bake

- 3 large zucchini
- 3 large yellow squash
- 1 large onion
- 8 ounces fresh mushrooms
- 3 large tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons minced garlic
- 1 cup balsamic vinaigrette salad dressing
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 3 tablespoons grated Parmesan

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
- Slice zucchini, squash, onion and mushrooms and layer into a 13x9-inch baking pan. Slice tomatoes and layer on top.

- In a small bowl, combine garlic, salad dressing, salt and pepper. Pour over vegetables.
- Sprinkle Parmesan over all. Cover with foil. Bake for 30 minutes.
- Uncover and bake for about 15 minutes longer.

Servings: 6. Serving size: ⅙th of dish. Per serving: 206 calories, 6.5 g protein, 10.1 g fat, 22.8 g carbohydrates, 5.4 g dietary fiber, 470 mg sodium, 15.1 g sugars

ROBB BLAIR | COLEMAN COUNTY EC

Open-Face Chicken Chile Relleno

- 4 poblano peppers
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 cup sliced fresh mushrooms
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper, or more to taste
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 chicken breast half, boiled and shredded
- ½ cup peeled, boiled and cubed potatoes
- ½ cup reduced-fat cheese

- Char poblanos over an open gas flame or in a skillet until skin is blackened and blistered. Take care not to burn the flesh of the pepper. Leave them in a sealed paper or plastic bag for 5 minutes. Wearing gloves or using the back of a spoon, carefully peel skin from peppers. Cut a slit in one side of the pepper from top to bottom. Remove seeds and discard. Set pepper aside.
- In a medium pan add olive oil and bring to medium heat. Add onion and cook for 5 minutes until translucent. Add mushrooms and garlic and stir for 1 minute.
- Add cumin, paprika, chili powder, cayenne, black pepper and salt and stir for another minute.
- Add chicken, potatoes and cheese and stir, ensuring all ingredients are combined. If mixture seems too dry, add a bit of water.
- Fill each pepper with the chicken mixture and close the slit with toothpicks.
- Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place peppers on a greased baking pan and bake for 25 minutes.
- Remove toothpicks and serve with fresh pico de gallo.

Servings: 4. Serving size: 1 pepper. Per serving: 205 calories, 20.6 g protein, 8.2 g fat, 13 g carbohydrates, 2.6 g dietary fiber, 731 mg sodium, 3.9 g sugars, 45 mg cholesterol

ELENA DE LA GARZA | PEDERNALES EC

Paleo Salted Caramel Cupcakes

Guadalupe Valley Electric Cooperative member Courtney Bauerlein offered up a sweet treat from the paleolithic, or paleo, diet, which is one based on plants and meats eaten by our ancestors in the preagricultural era. "Paleo means that there is no grain, dairy or sugar used, so they are gluten- and lactose-free,"

Bauerlein wrote. "There is natural sugar in the cupcakes (for example, from the dates), but no added/processed sugar."

They are not exactly low-calorie, but they are packed with fiber and are a satisfying treat.

- 1½ pounds (about 30) Medjool dates
- ¾ cup coconut flour
- 4 eggs plus 2 egg whites
- ⅓ cup cocoa powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ cup honey
- 3 tablespoons almond butter
- 1½ cups coconut milk, divided
- 2 teaspoons vanilla, divided
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt

- Place dates in a mixing bowl and add water to cover. Allow to sit about 1 hour.
- Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix coconut flour, eggs and whites, cocoa powder, baking soda, honey, almond butter, 1 cup coconut milk and 1 teaspoon vanilla. Pour into 12 lined baking cups and bake for 18 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the center of one cupcake comes out clean. Remove to rack to cool.
- Drain water off dates and put them in the bowl of a food processor. Pulse into a paste.

- Add vanilla and process, drizzling in remaining coconut milk, until the mixture is of a spreading consistency. When the cupcakes are cool, frost them with the date mixture and sprinkle with salt.

Servings: 12. Serving size: 1 cupcake. Per serving: 347 calories, 6.2 g protein, 10.1 g fat, 62.4 g carbohydrates, 7 g dietary fiber, 202 mg sodium, 52.4 g sugars, 62 mg cholesterol

COURTNEY BAUERLEIN | GUADALUPE VALLEY EC

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A D V E R T I S E M E N T

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

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, Denton 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 Domesticus, a special apple from Switzerland.

These stem cells are actually unprogrammed cells that can mimic 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 **11% off**. The code was "TXN9". It's worth a try to see if it still work.

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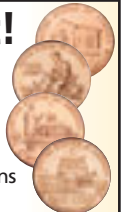
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Naptime Texas is smack-dab in the middle of the cold season, and what better way to stave off those wintry-weather blues than settling in for a long nap? Take inspiration from our favorites here. These sleepyheads had no problem throwing in the towel. And they aren't the only ones. Check out more snoozing cuties at TexasCoopPower.com. **ASHLEY CLARY-CARPENTER**



▲ Bryan Texas Utilities' **Staci Jessen** said her laboratory's cat, Angi, fell asleep while chasing the mouse on Jessen's computer screen.

Codie, daughter of Bandera EC's **Kimberly Morgenstern**, takes a break with her best bud, Noodle. ▶

Jim McHale, United Cooperative Services, calls this photo he took of conked kids at a 4-H Club show in Cleburne 'Contented.' ▼



Jo Wright-Chapman, South Plains EC, said her son, **Tyler Wright** (now 30), fell asleep while helping his dad in the shop when he was 4. ▼

▲ Wood County EC's **Ray** and **Corie Wyrick** drove all night to meet their fourth grandchild, **Kaleb**, in Kansas. 'Poppy was one tired grandpa!' says Corie.



Upcoming Contests

March Issue: Broken *Deadline: January 10*

April: Reflections **May: Black & White**

Send your photo for the March contest—along with your name, address, daytime phone, co-op affiliation and a brief description—to Broken, Focus on Texas, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701, before **January 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 using a digital camera, submit your **highest-resolution images** at 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.



Pick of the Month

Bird and Nature Walk

Athens [12] (903) 676-2277, athenstx.org/things-to-do/events

Enjoy the sights and sounds of nature! This January 12, head to Athens for its monthly Bird and Nature Walk at the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center.



MOCKINGBIRD: GERALD DEBOER | BIGSTOCK.COM. DERRICK: CHARLES BUEGELER | BIGSTOCK.COM.

January

10

Austin [10-13] Travis County Youth Show, (512) 278-8498, traviscountyyouthshow.org

12

Beaumont Spindletop Anniversary Celebration, (409) 880-1750

Brenham [12-13] Winter Antiques Show, 1-888-273-6426, ruraltexasantiquesshows.com

19

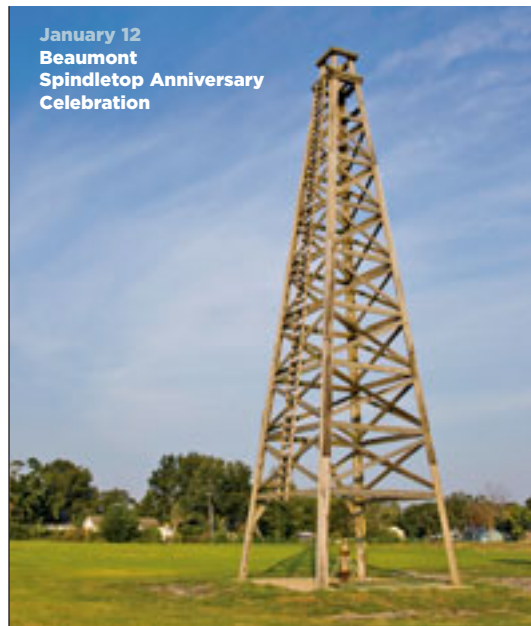
Brenham Uptown Swirl, 1-888-273-6426, downtownbrenham.com

Clifton Hearts & B.A.R.K.s Gala, (254) 622-2457, barkrescue.org

Lago Vista 'Boots and Bling' Casino Night, (512) 267-7952, lagovista.org

Fredericksburg [19-20] Fredericksburg Rockhounds Annual Gem and Mineral Show, (830) 895-9630, fredericksburgrockhounds.org

January 12
Beaumont Spindletop Anniversary Celebration



19

Plano [19-20] Dallas Area Model Train Show, (469) 438-0741, dfwtrainshows.com

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25

Red Rock [25-26] Old School House Chili and BBQ Cookoff, (512) 923-7129, rocknetexas.com

San Antonio [25-26] San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo Bar-B-Que Cookoff, (210) 225-5851, sarodeo.com

Tyler [25-26] Antique & Vintage Collectible Show and Sale, (903) 530-1771, tylerkiwanis.org

January 19

Clifton
Hearts & B.A.R.K.s Gala



PUPPY: WARREN GOLDSWAIN | BIGSTOCK.COM. MANDOLIN: ROBYN MACKENZIE | BIGSTOCK.COM.

26

Fredericksburg Hill Country Indian Artifact Show, (830) 626-5561

Palacios Deutschburg Seafood Benefit, (361) 920-1517

Plano Neil Sperry's Home Landscape School, (972) 562-5050, neilsperry.com

February

02

New Braunfels Mid-Texas Symphony: 'Superbows,' (830) 372-8089, mthsymphony.org

San Antonio Western Heritage Parade & Cattle Drive, (210) 225-5851, sarodeo.com

07

Floresville Opry, (830) 393-6512, wilsoncountyhistory.org

08

Galveston [8-9] Boots on the Beach, (409) 762-0062, beachcentralgalveston.com



February 7
Floresville
Opry

Submit Your Event!

We pick events for the magazine directly from TexasCoopPower.com. Submit your event for March by January 10, and it just might be featured in this calendar!

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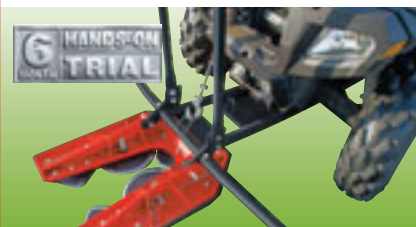
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Eagle Fest offers great rewards for those with their heads in the clouds

BY SUZANNE HABERMAN



EAGLE FEST: The main attraction at Eagle Fest in Emory are bald eagles, which usually can be seen soaring over and around Lake Fork. Eagle Fest this year is scheduled for January 19.



HOPING TO SEE MY FIRST BALD EAGLE, I arrive in the East Texas town of Emory the night before the 17th Annual Eagle Fest in January 2012, just in time to find a roost at **Lake Fork Ranch Resort & RV Park** and steal a glimpse of **Lake Fork Reservoir** from a fishing pier. I set my alarm for 5 a.m. and go to sleep between plaid sheets, wondering if a clutch of eagles might be nesting in the post oak branches above my cabin.

The next morning, I down two cups of Maxwell House coffee with milk and eat a beef jerky stick before heading to the festival at Rains High School, where I board a school bus with about a dozen other bird-watchers. We are driving to **Oak Ridge Marina** for the day's earliest eagle-watching boat excursion.

As the bus rolls onto a bridge above one leg of the V-shaped lake, an eagle soars out from the trees into the open sky. "There's one right there!" says bird-watcher Stacey Daniel of Wylie, pointing out the window.

We rush to her side and push our faces to the glass for a better look.

At first glance, the bird looks like a vulture in the vast sky, but then the sun shines on the North American eagle's telltale white head and tail feathers, dispelling any doubt about its identity: *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, the bald eagle, an impressive bird of prey that can stand about 3 feet tall and have a wingspan of up to 8 feet.

Eagle sightings are common at the lake, where submerged timber, hydrilla, Eurasian milfoil and American lotus create an ideal habitat for bass, one of the eagles' favorite meals. The sightings inspired the Texas Legislature to declare Rains County the Eagle Capital of Texas in 1995.

The following year, the Rains County Chamber of Commerce started hosting **Eagle Fest**, an event featuring bus and boat tours around the lake to see bald eagles in the wild. Back on the high school campus, festivalgoers can also shop among local

artisans' booths and see educational nature displays for a chance to touch the soft fur of an opossum, watch a black vulture run on spindly legs and wonder at the wise eyes of an eastern screech owl.

Enthused by spotting my first eagle before setting foot on a boat, I load into a small, flat-bottomed barge with the supportive hand of Lake Fork Sportsman's Association volunteer Sam Scroggins. Once aboard, I plop onto a vinyl-covered swivel chair near the bow and ready my camera.

On the water, volunteer boat captain Larry Marler meanders along the sandy red-brown shores, scanning for eagles and alerting us to potential sightings. "Above the trees," he points. "To me it looks like one, but I'm not sure." All eyes, cameras and binoculars train onto a dark spot in the sky, but it's not a bird. Instead, we see a host of gulls, anhingas and loons that dive among half-submerged tree limbs reaching up from the water like gray fingers.

Just as we bird-watchers begin joking that Eagle Fest might need to be renamed "Loon Fest" after the bird we see most (and our mental state), eagle No. 2 appears as suddenly as the first. Soaring above the trees, this one shows off as it flies, flapping and changing altitudes in the sky. We chase it as fast as the little barge will go and watch as the eagle alights on a heron's nest in a bare tree on a sandy islet. As we draw close, the eagle lifts its massive wings, lofts itself and disappears as it heads east.

Awestruck and content, I settle into a seat at the stern as we turn back toward the marina. I've seen my first eagle—and a second one, too.

Suzanne Haberman, *staff writer*

For information: Call the Rains County Chamber of Commerce at (903) 473-3913 for information about the 18th Annual Eagle Fest, scheduled for January 19.

Emory is served by Farmers Electric Cooperative, and parts of the Lake Fork area are served by Wood County Electric Cooperative.

On TexasCoopPower.com

An Eagle Fest slide show is available online.

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