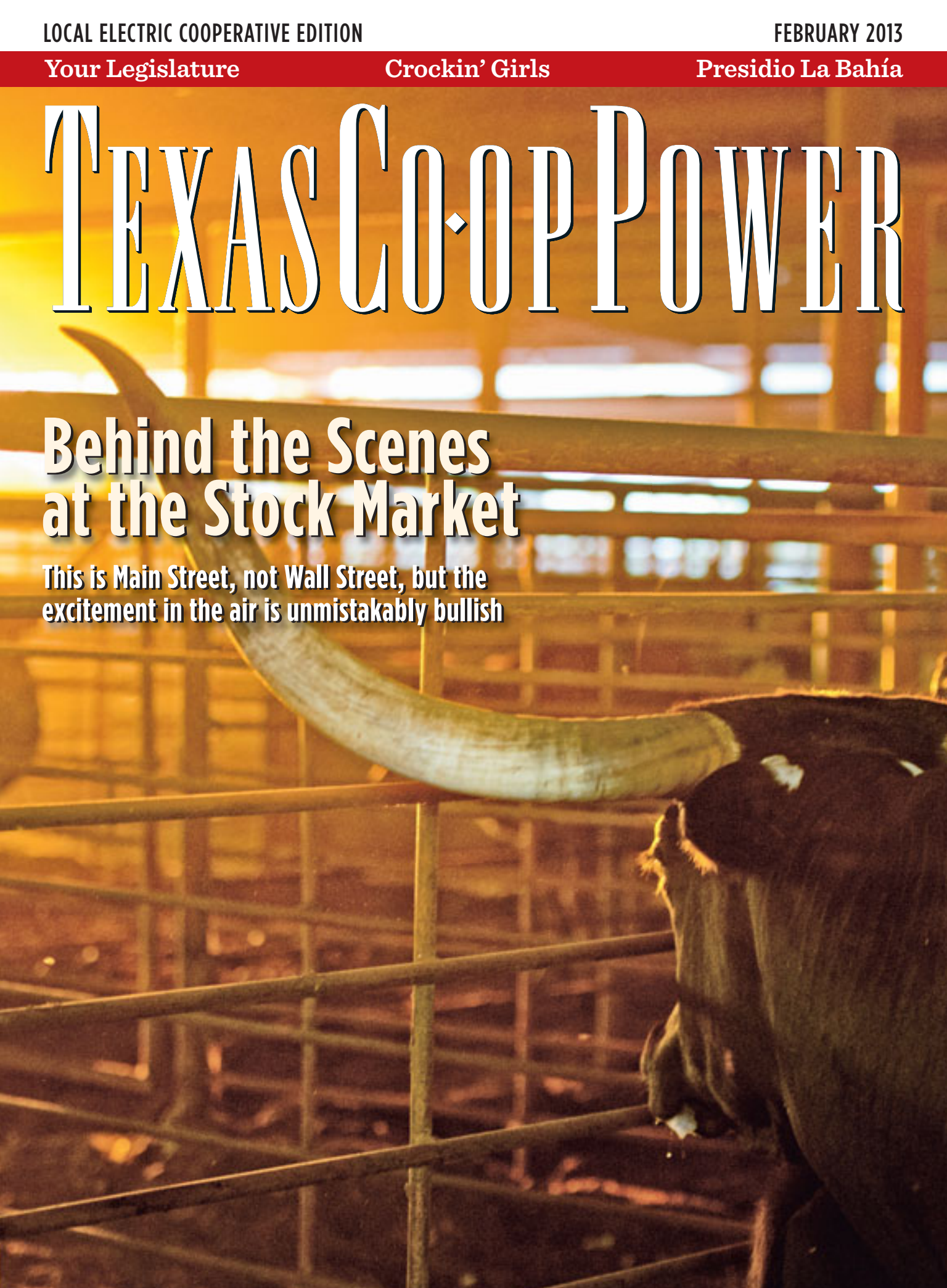


TEXAS CO-OP POWER

Behind the Scenes at the Stock Market

This is Main Street, not Wall Street, but the excitement in the air is unmistakably bullish



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From Plugs

To A Fabulous Lawn

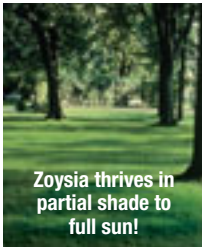


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GRASS SEED WILL NEVER GROW A LAWN LIKE THIS! Save Water! Save Time! Save Work! Save Money!

Grass Seed Is For The Birds!

Stop wasting money, time and work sowing new grass seed each spring, only to see birds eat the seed – or rain wash it away – before it can root. Plant a genuine Amazoy™ Zoysia lawn from our living Plugs only once... and never plant a new lawn again!



Zoysia thrives in partial shade to full sun!

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Each Zoysia Plug You Plant In Your Soil Is **GUARANTEED TO GROW** Within 45 Days Or We'll Replace It FREE!

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Eliminates Endless Weeds And Weeding!

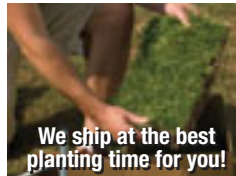
No more pulling out weeds by hand or weeds sprouting up all over your lawn. Zoysia Plugs spread into a dense, plush, deep-rooted, established lawn that drives out unwanted growth and stops crabgrass and summer weeds from germinating.

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FEATURES

The Cattle Call The dinge and din leave no doubt about who has the starring role in the high-stakes drama at the Seguin Cattle Company. Story and Photos by Woody Welch **8**

The Legislature and You Making laws in Texas is the people's business; it's important that everybody has a voice in Austin. By Carol Moczygemba **13**

*Around Texas: The annual North Texas Farm Toy Show offers a great chance to check out tiny trucks and tractors. Make hay and attend February 23 in Gainesville. **36***



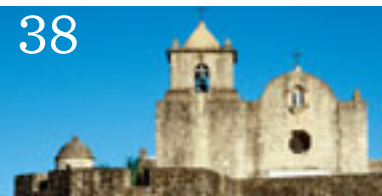
13



31



35



38

FAVORITES

29 Texas History
One Family's True Confections
By Jeff Siegel

31 Recipes
Crockin' Up a Storm

35 Focus on Texas
Silhouettes

36 Around Texas
List of Local Events

38 Hit the Road
Presidio La Bahía
By Sheryl Smith-Rodgers

ONLINE
TexasCoopPower.com

Texas USA
Paul and Paula: '60s Sweethearts
By Lori Grossman

Observations
Brush Arbor Revival
By Harry Noble



COVER PHOTO *A longhorn among the pens at the Seguin Cattle Company* By Woody Welch

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The Jacuzzi Walk In Hot Tub... your own personal fountain of youth.

*The world's leader in hydrotherapy and relaxation
makes bathing safe, comfortable and affordable.*

Remember the feeling you had the first time you got into a hot tub? The warm water, the energizing bubbles and the gentle hydrotherapy of the jets left you feeling relaxed and rejuvenated. Aches and pains seemed to fade away, and the bubbling sound of the water helped put you in a carefree and contented mood. The first time I ever got in a hot tub at a resort, I said to myself "One of these days I'm going to have one of these in my home— so I can experience this whenever I want." Now that I'm older, I'd still like to have the pain relief and relaxation, but I have to be careful about slipping and falling in the bathroom. That's why I was thrilled to find out that Jacuzzi had combined the safety of a walk in bath with the benefits of a hot tub. Now that I have one in my home I can have that luxurious resort experience... whenever I want.

The moment you step into your Jacuzzi Walk in Hot Tub you'll see the superior design and the quality of the craftsmanship. The entry step is low and the door is 100%

guaranteed not to leak. The high 17" seat enables you to sit comfortably while you bathe and to access the easy-to-reach controls. Best of all, your tub comes with the patented Jacuzzi PointPro™ jet system—which gives you a perfectly balanced water-to-air ratio to massage you thoroughly but gently. These



high-volume, low-pressure pumps are arranged in a pattern that creates swirls and spirals that provide both a total body massage and targeted treatment of specific pressure points. The tub features a high gloss acrylic coating which is more durable, scratch resistant and

Why Jacuzzi is the Best

- ✓ **Easy and Safe Entry** - Low entry, leak proof door allows you to step safely into the tub.
- ✓ **Durable and Easy To Clean** - State of the art acrylic surface.
- ✓ **Comfortable Seating** - Convenient 17 inch raised seat.
- ✓ **Worry Free Enjoyment** - Thanks To Jacuzzi's Lifetime Limited Warranty
- ✓ **Maximum Pain Relief** - Therapeutic water AND air jets.
- ✓ **Relax Fully** - All controls are within easy reach.
- ✓ **Personalized Massage** - Adjustable back jets for pinpoint control
- ✓ **No Hassle Installation** - Designed to fit in your existing tub space.

easier to clean than traditional gel-coat surfaces. It's American made with full metal frame construction and comes with a lifetime warranty on both the tub and the operating system.

Isn't it time you rediscovered the comfort and luxury of a soothing therapeutic hot tub experience again? Call now and knowledgeable product experts will answer any questions and explain how easy and affordable it can be. Don't wait, call now.

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Lots know Lucy

I am going to take you up on your bet that I don't know who Lucy Holcombe Pickens was ["Know Your Currency Events," December 2012]. She was the sister-in-law of Elkannah Bracken Greer, who was my first cousin four times removed. As a colonel in the Confederate Army, Greer mustered the 3rd Texas Cavalry Regiment into service in 1861. He was married to Anna Eliza Holcombe, Lucy's sister.

STRAIN HILTON ARMSTRONG | PEDERNALES EC

Your story on Pickens brought back memories. I grew up and went to high school in Marshall. In my 1968 graduating class was a Henry Holcombe, a direct descendent of "Miss Lucy's" family. While we were in school together, the history class was able to take a private tour of the Holcombe Plantation home just prior to its demolition.

And thanks for the heads-up on Lady Bird Johnson's 100th birthday celebration. While we lived in Marshall, my father used to drive by the old Taylor homesite on his way to work in Karnack.

J. STEVEN GRAINGER | PEDERNALES EC

We have Pickens' piano and other artifacts that belonged to her in our Canton Plaza Museum in Canton. An interesting fact, among many, is that

she is credited with serving iced tea for the first time in Texas. The ice was brought from Jefferson for the party. Also, our East Texas sweet potatoes were introduced in Russia by Lucy—"The Queen of the Confederacy" and a very beautiful lady.

ANNETTE H. PLEMMONS | WOOD COUNTY EC

I did know about Pickens. My mother had told me about her and had me do some Internet searches about 10 years ago. I am not a direct descendant of her, but I believe she was a cousin of my grandmother, Minnie Frances Holcombe Franklin. If my mother were still alive, I could ask what the relationship was.

Do I win 100 Confederate dollars?

FRANCES PETERSON | BANDERA EC

Eternally grateful

Thank you for the wonderful article on the World War II veterans. I was very moved by their stories. We need to be reminded of what these brave men sacrificed so that we can live in freedom. We owe them more than we can ever repay. I will be eternally grateful for their bravery.

MARY LOU SCHMUCKER | DEAF SMITH EC

Spotlight on Nazareth

What a lovely surprise on opening my December magazine—seeing

Angels on Earth

If there was ever a doubt that God created angels, all you have to do is look at the December cover of Texas Co-op Power.

I'm 72 years old, and when I saw April Schmucker's picture, my heart leaped in joy that God does, indeed, have angels here on Earth.

Have someone hug her for me.

CARL COMSTOCK | SAM HOUSTON EC



my hometown of Nazareth making headlines ["Oh, Little Town of Nazareth"]. I left there 50-plus years ago but have many relatives there, so I still go back for reunions.

One of my nieces is married to Jim Hoelting. We do live in a small world. Thanks for making my day.

JEAN BELL | UNITED EC

What a nice Christmas picture of the "little angel" on your December cover. I so enjoyed seeing the Christmas season celebrated with a story on the Nativity.

GLORIA RAMIREZ | NUECES EC

The story and photos are an amazing tribute to our history and tradition. It is hard to realize how many people are involved in making the pageant a reality.

Our town is made up of only about 300 people, and it takes 100-plus to put the pageant on. Men come in from their jobs to build props. Women put supper on the table then rush everyone out the door for practice.

It is amazing to see whole fami-

lies working together. We even had some volunteers who knew nothing about the pageant; they just wanted it to work.

In our busy lives, this helps to bring the special message of Christmas to all of us.

LISA SCHULTE, PAGEANT CO-DIRECTOR
DEAF SMITH EC

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WHO KNEW?

Goliad

Goliad gets its name from an anagram for the name of Father Hidalgo, the priest who led the fight for Mexican independence. This occurred February 4, 1829, when the Mexican government issued a decree officially changing the name La Bahía to Villa de Goliad. Rafael Antonio Manchola, a Coahuila and Texas state legislator, proposed the change because, he argued, La Bahía (“the bay” in English) didn’t make sense because neither the mission nor the presidio there were located on a bay. Goliad is where the signing of the first declaration of independence for Texas took place in 1835.

HAPPENINGS

Laissez les Bon Temps Rouler!

Hey, there, *hommes* and *chéries*! Get your groove on at Mardi Gras Nocona Style on February 8 and 9. For the fourth consecutive year, the Nocona Chamber of Commerce is putting on quite the party for residents and visitors—and, yes, there will be beads.

The family-friendly event starts Friday afternoon with tailgating and live music as parade participants decorate their floats. That party doesn’t stop until the last mask is mounted. “And who knows when that will be?” says Nocona Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Wanda Wood.

On Saturday morning, there’s a pancake breakfast and a chance to shop from area vendors. The parade kicks off midafternoon—last year there were more than 40 floats—followed by more live music from a Louisiana band and an authentic Cajun dinner. *Savoureux!*

FOR INFO, (940) 825-3526, NOCONA.ORG/COMMERCE



Find more happenings all across the state at TexasCoopPower.com



ENERGY NEWS

Meter Beaters

Some co-ops make lamp bases out of one or two old electric meters and give them away like trophies. Others ship them all off to landfills. A Texas electric cooperative is recycling its retired analog meters en masse.

CoServ Electric, the second-largest electric cooperative in Texas, plans to recycle 160,000 mechanical meters by this spring when it completes installation of advanced meters across six counties in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

At a facility in Grand Prairie, Canada-based Global Electric Electronic Processing, or GEEP, shreds 8,000 to 13,000 old meters a day in a two-story machine that spins two huge chains (with links weighing 10 pounds each) at up to 700 revolutions per minute—like a giant food processor.

The remains, now in smithereens, exit on conveyer belts where workers salvage about 98 percent of all the materials, including iron—grabbed by a giant magnet—copper, plastic and glass. GEEP sells the recycled metal and returns a percentage of the payment it receives back to CoServ: about \$1 per meter.

MARDI GRAS: CHERYL CASEY | BIGSTOCK; METERS: KEN OUTMANN | COSERV ELECTRIC.



ON THIS DATE

La Prensa

One hundred years ago February 13, the Spanish-language newspaper La Prensa was founded in San Antonio. It was published daily to keep Mexicans living temporarily in the United States apprised of events in Mexico, including the Mexican Revolution. La Prensa was sold all over South Texas and in communities of Mexican emigrés elsewhere in the United States and Central and South America. The paper ceased publication in 1963.

The Check Is *Not* in the Mail



Chances are you've read or heard the news that starting March 1, Social Security and other federal benefit payments will be available only electronically. That means instead of receiving checks in the mail, the funds will be electronically deposited into personal bank accounts or debit card accounts.

We know change can be hard to embrace, especially if you've been doing your banking one way for years. However, three out of four working Americans who have direct deposit available for their pay use it, and there are some benefits:

- It's considered safer because it removes the possibility of lost or stolen checks.
- Your money is available immediately upon deposit and not dependent on mail delivery or a trip to the bank.

The debit cards can be used to make purchases anywhere Debit MasterCard is accepted and can be used for one free cash withdrawal a month at more than 50,000 ATMs nationally. Additional transactions cost 90 cents.

More information is available online, by phone or at your financial institution.

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98%

of Texas farms and ranches are family farms, partnerships or family-held corporations, according to the Texas Department of Agriculture.

Never the Twain Shall Meet

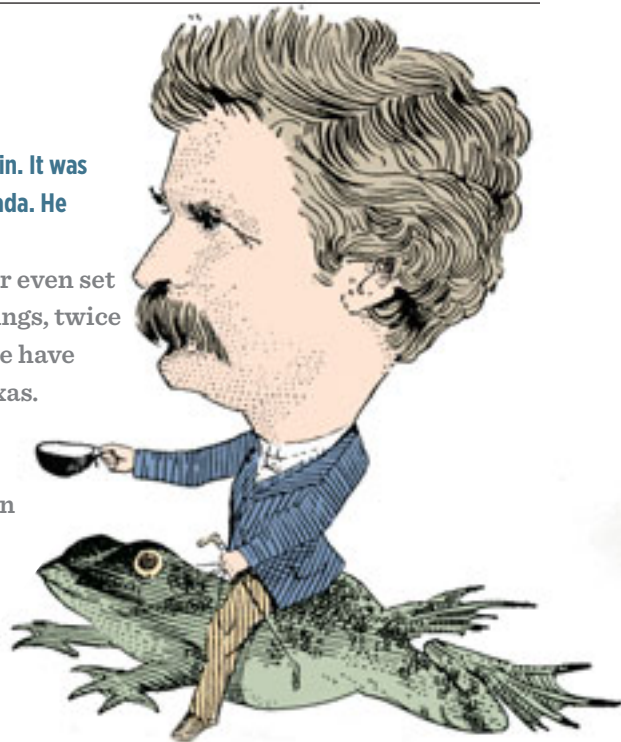
This month marks the 150th anniversary of when Samuel Clemens became Mark Twain. It was February 2, 1863, and Clemens was a reporter for the Virginia City Enterprise in Nevada. He wrote a story using the byline of Mark Twain.

Why should you care about this? Twain never lived in Texas—never even set foot in the state. And he mentioned Texas just a few times in his writings, twice in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. Still, most readers of this magazine have something in common with Twain. He, too, paid property taxes in Texas.

It's a very long, very complicated story. But essentially, Twain's wife, Olivia Clemens, helped out longtime friend Louisa Baird by either purchasing or loaning Baird the money to purchase 320 acres in Archer County in 1877.

Ultimately, the property in Archer County ended up in Olivia Clemens' possession, and when she died, it became Twain's. Twain sold it in 1905. Oh, Twain's tax bill in 1882? \$17.06.

One more thing: Archer County is the famous home—and truly the home—of Pulitzer Prize-winning author Larry McMurtry.



LA PRENSA: RICK PATRICK; SOCIAL SECURITY: CORBIS; MARK TWAIN: CORBIS.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY WOODY WELCH

THE CATTLE CALL

The dinge and din leave no doubt about who has the starring role in the high-stakes drama at the Seguin Cattle Company

I had driven by cattle auctions hundreds of times. I'd see large trucks with trailers pulling in and out, full of cattle, sheep, goats and pigs—in small towns like Seguin, Gonzales, Coleman and Hamilton. I don't know exactly what intrigued me, but I always slowed a bit to look and wonder. What goes on in there?

I always champed at the bit, as a photographer, at the prospect of getting a backstage pass to an auction. I finally got my chance when, in October, brothers Benno and Otto Luensmann made me more than welcome at the Seguin Cattle Company, which they have owned and operated since 1978. It's one of 136 livestock auction sites in Texas.

About 1,000 head a week move through Seguin, says Benno Luensmann. Business is down maybe 25 percent because of the drought. But Seguin also auctions sheep and goats—about 700 a week—and it's one of the only auctions for hogs in Central Texas, he says.

Even before sunrise, diesel trucks rumble in with bouncing, banging, creaking livestock trailers fully loaded. After an hour of unloading, a posturing alpha bull, huffing and snorting, rams smaller bulls into pen walls. The squeaky bearings of pulleys attached to ropes open gates from 50 feet away, and clanking metal latches open and close thousands of times to form a steel percussion cadence—the songs of money for the buyers and sellers.

Decades of spider webs hang from eaves built durably of oilfield pipe and topped with sheet-metal roofing. The chant-like moaning of hundreds of confused cattle provides a chorus of constant concern. The pounding of hooves on soft dirt and dung, not loud but audible and distinct, kicks determined dust into the air. It finds its way into my eyes and boots and onto my lens, which requires continual cleaning.

All the while, the unfailing background ramblings of the auctioneer provide a play-by-play as the cattle get marched before prospective buyers. The breeders and ranchers at auctions take their investments seriously. Their fates are at stake. In the end, so are those of the cattle.



Charbray crossbreeds jostle with Angus crossbreeds in the alley, where cattle are sorted after being auctioned.



LEFT: Lillian Mondin—Lilo—handles the sellers' checks and greets everyone with a smile. She has been working at the auction since around 2000. **MIDDLE:** Auctioneer David Anton has been bid-calling for more than 20 years. Most auctioneers are paid a commission on total sales, keeping them honest when it comes to getting the highest bid. **RIGHT:** Boots are indispensable at an auction. As to whether they need to make a fashion statement, well, that can be a matter of taste.



Sellers Tony Baer of Kingsbury, Dwayne Dischinger of New Braunfels and Elgin Riedel of St. Hedwig watch the auction, paying close attention to which kinds of cattle are selling for the highest prices.



LEFT: The staff and crew at Seguin say Bubba Jahns, driving the cattle into the jackpot corral on the way to be auctioned, is a ‘real cowboy.’ Cattle funneled into the jackpot are the cream of the crop—meaning they sell for the highest prices and attract the attention of serious buyers. **RIGHT:** Benno Luensmann, with brother Otto, has owned and operated the Seguin Cattle Company since 1978. They learned the cattle business at the Union Stock Yards in San Antonio before trying their own hand at it.



LEFT: The livestock are presented to the buyers and sellers for bid. The auction’s administration oversees the proceedings from an area called the box, and auctioneer David Anton solicits bids. Benno Luensmann describes this animal as ‘an old slaughter cow.’ **RIGHT:** Billy Fuchs, left, and Bubba Fritsch are buyers. Fritsch works for the Fritsch Cattle Company, a family ranch in Fayetteville that buys more than \$40,000 worth of cattle every week.



Benno Luensmann, far right, has lunch with clients, customers and friends at the on-site Cattle Company Restaurant. There are empty plates, full stomachs and smiles all around just minutes before the auction starts back up for the afternoon sale. The restaurant is open to the public every Wednesday for the cattle auctions and every other Tuesday for the hog sales—during lunchtime only.



LEFT: No surprise that a hamburger at a cattle auction would be top-notch, is there? The Luensmann brothers order a special blend of ground beef for their restaurant. It's melt-in-your-mouth delicious. If you don't buy a whole cow, at least buy a patty. **RIGHT:** A Charbray crossbreed bull, right, tries to assert his dominance in the kitchen, an area in the pens where lower-priced cattle await their turn on the selling block. The kitchen is the opposite of the jackpot corral.

More photos at TexasCoopPower.com.

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THE LEGISLATURE AND YOU

Making laws is the people's business; it's important we all have a voice in Austin

BY CAROL MOCZYGEMBA

With elections over, roadways and yards cleared of campaign signs, and the ubiquitous political ads in the media replaced by pitches for floor wax and toothpaste, it's now time to get to work.

The 83rd session of the Texas Legislature—150 representatives and 31 senators—is under way. What transpires over the 140-day session that began January 8 may seem incomprehensibly complex to the average citizen. So, in the interest of keeping our co-op members informed and involved, we offer this compact guide to how a bill moves through the legislative process and reasons why communication with your legislators matters.

The lawmaking process is purposely restricted. Patrick Cox, a Texas historian and Pedernales Electric Cooperative director, says, “Our current constitution is the sixth state constitution since Texas Independence in 1836. The 1876 constitution, which we operate under today, reflected the interests of a rural Southern state of the post-Reconstruction era and was not written for a modern commercial society. Making laws was deliberately difficult, and citizen-legislators were very restricted, owing to the framers’ inherent distrust of government.”

Cox explains that the term “citizen-legislators” is stipulated in the constitution to distinguish elected officials in Texas from professional politicians. To make sure legislators couldn’t make a living at legislating, they originally received a per diem of only \$5 during session and no salary. Later amendments provided a paltry compensation. Today, legislators earn \$7,200 a year, plus a per diem when the Legislature is in session.

To discourage conditions for creating too many laws, sessions were limited to 140 days every two years with a biennial budget. In essence, the Texas Constitution intentionally set forth the framework for a lawmaking body structured to stay close to the people and their concerns.

Retired State Rep. Rick Hardcastle of Vernon, who served seven terms in the House, 1999-2013, consented to share his thoughts on public service and citizen involvement from an insider’s point of view. The longtime friend to electric cooperatives, and member of Southwest Rural Electric Association, agreed to meet with me in the Capitol Grill one afternoon in October to talk about legislating in Texas and, in Hardcastle’s language, “the cowboy way” of knowing the issues by living them.

If this had been during a session, the place would be swarming with legislators, aides, lobbyists, special-interest groups, state agency heads, the media and constituents—all playing a



Retired State Rep.
Rick Hardcastle of Vernon

part in the business of running the state. During session, the entire Capitol is a hothouse of energy. But today in the nearly empty cafeteria, Hardcastle relaxes. His West Texas accent, starched blue jeans, comfortably worn black cowboy boots and tanned face, creased by the wind and sun, speak to his life as a rancher, Panhandle businessman and resident of the place he represented all those years.

HOW TEXAS LAWS ARE MADE



LEGEND

House ■ Senate ■ Governor



Chance for bill failure



Extra info

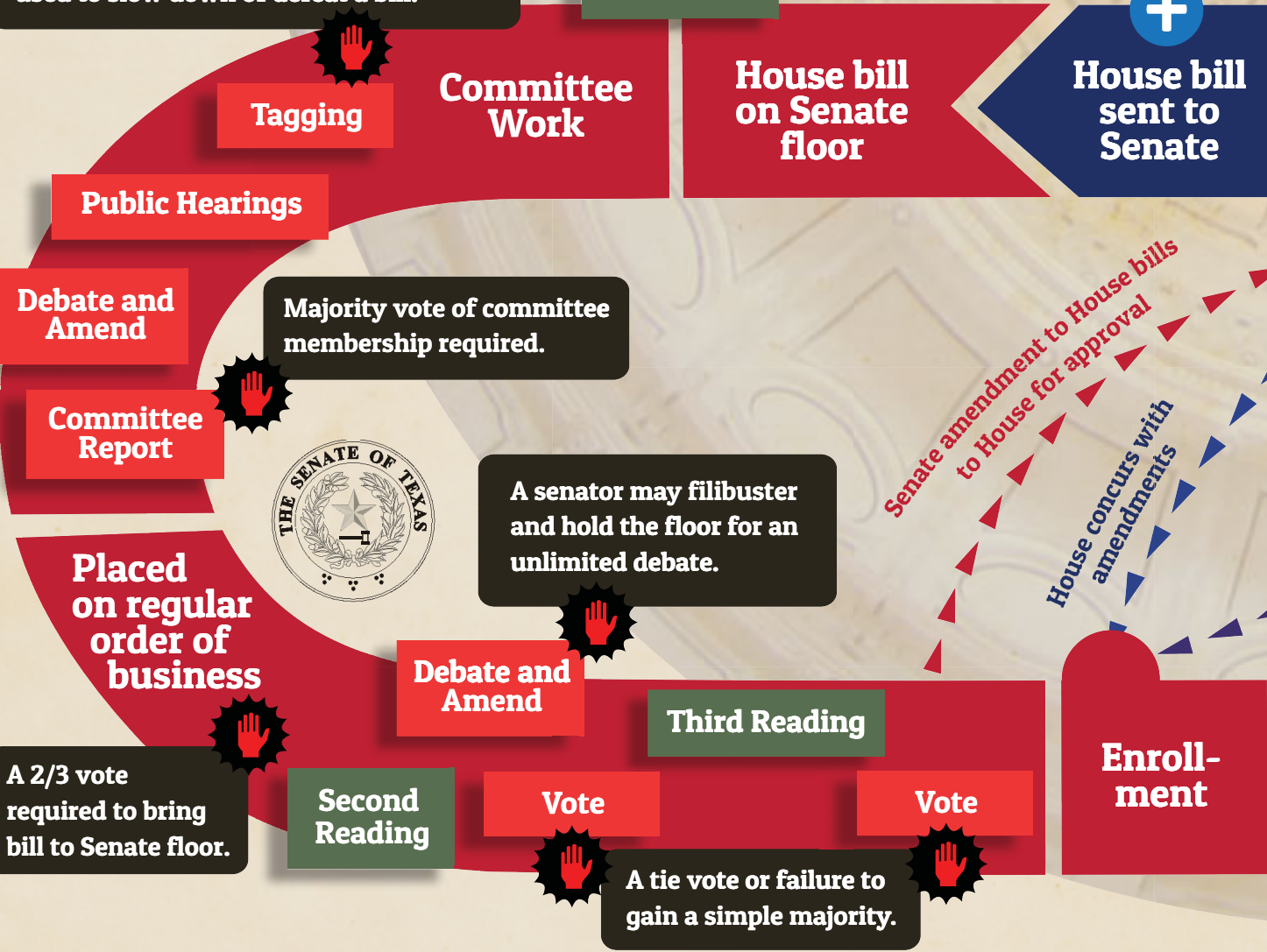
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+
The House has 150 members. The Senate has 31 members. Sessions held biennially for 140 days. Bills can originate in either chamber.

A senator may call for written notice of a hearing 48 hours in advance, a tactic used to slow down or defeat a bill.

First Reading and Referral to Committee

Approved House bill and amendments printed and sent to Senate for consideration.





Fiscal impact statement prepared and distributed to committee.

Committee Chair

Bill Analysis

Debate and Amend

Public Hearings

Committee Report

Sent to Calendars Committee

The chair can refuse to schedule a bill for a committee hearing.

Majority vote of committee membership required.

Majority vote needed to set for House floor.

A tie vote or failure to gain a simple majority.



Vote

Third Reading

Vote

Second Reading

House Floor

Debate and Amend

Failure to concur with Senate amendments

Each conference committee must report to their respective chambers and both the House and Senate must pass before the bill goes to enrollment.

The governor may veto a bill. Legislature may override by 2/3 vote.

Conference Committee

Failure to reconcile differences or gain a majority in either chamber.



Signing in presence of House

Governor

Vetoed Bill

Signed Bill

Unsigned Bill

LAW

Goes into effect after 90 days unless otherwise stipulated.

Contrary to a prevailing attitude among citizens that their voice in the Legislature doesn't matter, Hardcastle says voter communication with their representatives is as important as ever, especially where redistricting resulted in electing legislators from a largely urban district that also encompasses rural areas.

"They need their co-op constituents to tell them short and sweet the difference between a co-op and the big electric companies," he says. "If folks are paying a visit during session, everything is so condensed and moves so fast, the representative doesn't have time for a two-hour explanation." That personal, more detailed message is best delivered between sessions, at fundraisers or other public gatherings, during a time when the legislator isn't swamped with demands, he advises. "Get to know them and tell them your concerns."

Aside from a representative's tight schedule of meetings, hearings and appointments, there are typically more than 3,000 bills waiting at the starting gate, looking for attention. And that's one more reason, Hardcastle points out, that legislators rely on hearing from their constituents. It's not possible to know every detail of every bill, but if a bill holds particular interest to a constituent or group of constituents, they can provide valuable background for future decision-making.

Another forum for citizen input is the committee hearing, where committee members might want to hear from the public on a specific bill. "If you go to a hearing and sign a witness affirmation and are willing to stand in line, they will listen to you on any issue," Hardcastle says. "The Texas Constitution dictates

how we do committee hearings and how we pass laws."

For co-op members with new representatives who have never served a co-op area, Hardcastle says, "The most important point for co-ops to get across to urban legislators is that we're different. There are a lot of misconceptions. People forget that each co-op is a business like any other, but it's different because it returns capital credits to its members.

"Most urban members look at electricity as a fact of life," he says. "But I still own the place at the end of the power line with no other house for five miles. There's nothing between those poles to make anybody any money."

Ultimately, the interests of rural and urban Texans go back to what's good for the state as a whole, Hardcastle maintains. For example, all Texas seaports do a lot of agriculture and oil business. "All of a sudden, if we miss a cotton crop, they don't get to ship it out," he says. "Maybe they even have to lay off employees because agriculture and oil represent so much of their business.

"And to take it back to co-ops: If we don't have electricity on the farm, we don't irrigate or have a brooder house or any of those things we consider everyday life. We have to relate that to our urban neighbors."

There you have it, short and sweet. We're all in this together. No matter how distant or complicated or frustrating lawmaking may seem, it comes down to a question of what's best for the entire state. The Texas Constitution recognizes its citizens as fundamental to the process. It's up to us to keep it that way.

Carol Moczygomba, executive editor

TEXAS LEGISLATURE ONLINE

Provides information on the legislators, legislation, committees, Senate and House, status of bills, public hearing schedule, etc.

www.capitol.state.tx.us

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE LIBRARY

Librarians are available to assist the public in locating appropriate materials relating to the Legislature, including bills filed, research reports and House and Senate journals. A toll-free number, 1-877 824-7038, is in operation from the first day of session through the end of June to provide information on bills and resolutions

www.lrl.state.tx.us

KEY DATES

March 8: Deadline for filing bills and joint resolutions other than local bills, emergency appropriations and bills that have been declared an emergency by the governor

May 27: End of session

June 16: Last day governor can sign or veto bills passed during the regular legislative session

August 26: Date that bills without specific effective dates become law

STATISTICS FROM 2011 REGULAR SESSION

5,796 bills introduced

1,379 bills passed

24 bills vetoed

SPECIAL SESSIONS

The governor may convene a special session at any time and for any reason,

but he or she must state the purpose for doing so. The Texas Constitution states that during a special session there shall be no legislation upon subjects other than those designated in the proclamation of the governor, but there is no limit on the number of topics a governor may designate. There is no limit on the number of special sessions a governor may call between two regular legislative sessions. The constitution limits special sessions to a maximum of 30 days but imposes no minimum. The first special session of the 38th Legislature met for only one hour.

OPEN GOVERNMENT, PUBLIC INFORMATION

Title 5 of the state statutes states: "... it is the policy of this state that each person is entitled, unless otherwise expressly provided by law, at all times to complete information about the affairs of government and the official acts of public officials and employees. The people, in delegating authority, do not give their public servants the right to decide what is good for the people to know and what is not good for them to know. The people insist on remaining informed so that they may retain control over the instruments they have created."

THE ANNETTE STRAUSS INSTITUTE FOR CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Established in 2000 and named for a former mayor of Dallas, the Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Participation at The University of Texas at Austin is dedicated to responding to "growing political cynicism and disaffection in the United States." Research projects examine political attitudes of youth, voter turnout and civic education programs. "Speak Up! Speak Out!" is a youth program that challenges middle and high school students to examine and solve community problems.

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CONSERVATION AND SAFETY INFORMATION



Be sure take steps to keep your exercise equipment in good shape to ensure it helps you keep in shape safely.

Maintain Home Exercise Equipment So It's Ready When You Are

Even if you've already abandoned your New Year's resolution to stay in shape with a home gym, keep an eye on that expensive equipment you bought for your workout room.

The dust that collects on unused equipment can clog its moving parts and mar its surface if you let it build up. That could cause problems once the body-building bug bites you again next year.

Some tips for keeping your exercise gear in better shape than your abs:

- ▶ Dust your machines once a week, even when you're not using them. Vacuum underneath your treadmills and steppers regularly, even if you have to move them to reach. If you use free weights, keep them dust-free as well.

- ▶ When you do feel inspired to jog on the treadmill or get yourself moving on the elliptical machine, use a mixture of bleach and water—or a store-bought solution that's safe for metal and plastic—to wipe down your equipment afterward. Remove sweat, fingerprints and any grime or dirt that you see on the surface. This will disinfect the machines so they won't harbor germs that can spread colds or other ailments.

- ▶ If your machines creak or squeak while you're working out, something is wrong. Check your owner's manuals for possible causes and solutions; call the manufacturer's customer service desk or hire a repair tech to check out the noise. Try calling a local store that sells gym equipment for a referral to a repair service.

- ▶ Tighten bolts and screws or any other part that comes loose—and check them every month or so. If a part detaches from the machines, it could cause you to trip or fall during your workout. Prevent the accident with regular inspections.

- ▶ Enlist a repair tech to do annual maintenance, including oiling moving parts so they don't damage each other as they rub together when the machines are in use. The tech also will inspect cables and wires for fraying or other damage.

- ▶ Ask an electrician to determine whether your home's electrical system can handle a treadmill and other electric gym equipment. Especially if you live in an older home, the system might not be designed for the added load, which can lead to tripped circuits. The electrician can upgrade the electricity in your home to accommodate your good intentions.

This Valentine's Day,

Don't Shock the Neighborhood

Want to show your Valentine how much you care by delivering a heart-shaped "I Love You" balloon to his or her office or home? Hang on tight.

Mylar balloons, constructed of metalized nylon so they're extra shiny and easy to mold into fun shapes for parties and special occasions, are powerful conductors of electricity. So if you let one slip from your grip while you're outside, you'll not only lose your balloon, you could cause a power outage or even an injury.

If one of these festive party decorations floats into power lines or lands on an electrical substation, its metal coating could short out a circuit and leave your neighborhood in the dark, or it could cause an electrical fire that damages the equipment.

And if the balloon you're carrying is attached to a metallic ribbon and happens to brush an overhead line or another charged piece of equipment, it could shock or even electrocute you.

The Energy Education Council reports the balloons are even dangerous indoors if they come into contact with an exposed wire.

So even though Mylar balloons are popular because they hold their helium for so long, the council advises parents to puncture, deflate and dispose of the balloons after the party's over instead of letting them float around the house or yard until they lose their shape.

And, of course, if your balloon gets tangled in a power line, call your electric cooperative to report it. Never get close enough to a live wire to try to dislodge the item yourself.



Appliance Compliance

Tips to keep them and you safe

We use electrical appliances to heat, cool and clean and perform countless other chores around our homes and businesses every day. It's easy to take these time-saving tools for granted and forget to put safety first. Here are some useful tips to help keep you and your appliances safe.

▶ When using space heaters, toasters, stoves, lamps or any heat-producing appliances, remember to keep combustibles such as paper, drapes and furniture clear of the appliance.

▶ Keep the appliance clean, operating properly and out of high-traffic areas.

▶ Unplug irons and space heaters when you are finished and let them cool before storing.

▶ Never try to operate an electric appliance while touching metal, standing on a wet surface or taking a bath or shower.

▶ Under certain circumstances, a ground-fault circuit interrupter automatically shuts off power to the outlet, protecting you from electrical shock and preventing fires. GFCIs should be installed in outlets near water sources such as bathrooms, kitchens, laundry rooms, garages and outdoors. If your outlet has a "test" and "reset" button, it has a GFCI.

▶ Keep objects, including fingers, away from all electric outlets. To prevent injury to young children, use outlet covers and never overload outlets.

▶ Unplug appliances before cleaning, while performing minor repairs and when not in use.

▶ Keep motors clean and free from lint, dust and dirt.

▶ If an appliance sparks, smokes or delivers a shock, unplug it and don't use it again until it has been repaired.

▶ Have a qualified electrician assess your electric load; leave repairs and installations to the experts.

▶ Replace blown fuses with ones that are correctly sized in amperage and wattage.

Some of the most common safety hazards are caused by misuse of extension cords. It's important to observe these safety rules when you find it necessary to use them:

▶ Use a heavy-duty cord for power tools, a weather-resistant cord for outdoors and a three-wire cord with a three-prong plug for appliances that require grounding.

▶ Avoid using a three-pronged adapter, and never remove the third prong to create a two-prong plug.

▶ Avoid kinking, twisting or crushing the cord.

▶ Pull the plug, not the cord.

▶ Don't place a cord where it will be walked on, tripped over or damaged.

▶ Keep cords away from heat and water.

▶ Never wrap a cord around a metal pipe or an appliance, and don't run a cord under a rug.



Stay safe by minimizing use of extension cords and checking cords to make sure they are in good repair.



For small loads, an indoor drying rack is an energy-efficient option.

Take Care and Save When Cleaning Clothes

Saving energy while doing laundry doesn't mean wearing every outfit more than once. There are ways to save! Follow these tips and put a little green back in your wallet.

▶ Wash clothes in cold water. Use hot water only for very dirty loads.

▶ Wash only full laundry loads.

▶ If you must do smaller loads, adjust the water level in the washing machine to match the load size, especially when using hot water.

▶ Always use the cold-water rinse.

▶ Use bath towels at least twice before washing them.

▶ Clean your dryer's lint trap after each load.

▶ Make sure that the outdoor dryer exhaust door closes when the dryer is off.

▶ Check that the dryer vent hose is tightly connected to the inside wall fitting and the dryer.

▶ Make sure the dryer vent hose is not kinked or clogged.

▶ Minimize drying time by using the moisture sensor on the dryer, if available.

▶ Dry consecutive loads to take advantage of heat remaining in the dryer from the last load.

▶ Consider using a "solar-powered" dryer—an old-fashioned clothesline.

Paul and Paula: Sweethearts of the '60s



50 years ago, music fans swooned over 'Hey, Paula' by this Texas duo, launching their love song to No. 1 in the charts

BY LORI GROSSMAN

*Hey, hey Paula, I wanna marry you ...
Hey, hey, hey, Paul, I want to marry
you too ...*

IN THE FALL OF 1962, HOWARD PAYNE College students Jill Jackson and Ray Hildebrand were beginning to make a name for themselves in Brownwood. Jill, who was born in McCamey, had her own 15-minute Sunday afternoon radio show on KEAN. Ray sang with a group called the Prisoners. Jill and Ray met on campus. (By coincidence, he was boarding with her aunt.) They hit it off, and Jill invited Ray to become her duet partner.

Ray had begun singing in church at an early age and started writing songs in college. He was from Joshua and was attending Howard Payne on a basketball scholarship. One fateful day, a teammate asked Ray for a favor.

"Russell Berry asked me to write a song for his girlfriend," Ray recalls. Her name was Paula. Writing a song on behalf of someone else proved difficult, and his first try didn't work, so Ray started over. He'd broken up with his girlfriend, Judy Hendricks, and when he started composing again, his feelings for her poured out. Winston Hughes, another teammate, heard Ray's work in progress and offered some crucial advice.

"He said, 'Why don't you have the girl sing back to the guy?'" Ray says. But what guy's name should he use? Ray remembered a song he'd heard many times that summer—"Tall Paul" by Annette Funicello, which reached No. 7 on the Billboard Hot 100. Paul and Paula? It worked.

After Jill and Ray performed the song

on the KEAN radio show, the station's phones lit up. That prompted Jill's mother to begin searching for a record producer. She contacted Marvin Montgomery, a session guitarist in Fort Worth. He worked with Major Bill Smith, who produced "Hey Baby," the Bruce Channel hit that topped the Billboard Hot 100 for three weeks in March 1962. Montgomery mentioned an upcoming recording session but couldn't guarantee that they would get an audition.

On October 6, 1962, Jill, Ray and Jill's parents drove to Fort Worth. They arrived at the studio, in the basement of radio station KFJZ, and settled down to wait. Luck smiled on them when the final artist booked didn't show up, and Smith gave the young duo a chance. After some tinkering with the song, they were ready. At just 5 feet 1 inch, Jill had to stand on some Coke crates to reach the microphone. After several run-throughs, they sang the final take.

"Paul and Paula" was released on Smith's LeCam label. Later, Mercury Records acquired the rights to the single and Jill and Ray's recording contract. Mercury reissued the record—now called "Hey, Paula"—on its Philips label. The single took off, holding the No. 1 position on Billboard's Hot 100 chart for three weeks in February 1963.

"They changed our names. We called the song 'Paul and Paula' by Jill and Ray. They called it 'Hey, Paula' by Paul and Paula," Ray remembers. They were told to act like they were sweethearts to help sell the record (which just happened to

be No. 1 on Valentine's Day).

They became celebrities, touring the world and making more money than they'd ever dreamed of. Paul and Paula appeared on "American Bandstand" and "To Tell the Truth." In 1963, they joined the Dick Clark Caravan of Stars, a collection of popular young singers who toured the country by bus. (Funicello was part of the Dick Clark Caravan of Stars in 1959.) Recording sessions in Nashville and foreign tours were fitted into their hectic schedule.

In London, they were booked on a BBC radio/TV program called "Pop Inn." The show ran long, and Paul and Paula closed the show, bumping a rising young British group—the Beatles. John, Paul, George and Ringo asked Jill and Ray for autographs, and they all posed for a photo.

Paul and Paula were an overnight sensation, leaving them little time to adjust. Ray was homesick and pined for his former girlfriend. In June 1963, he left the Caravan of Stars tour and headed home. For the remainder of the tour, Dick Clark filled in for Ray. Paul and Paula recorded two albums, plus a Christmas album, and toured Japan, but the end was in sight.

Ray returned to Howard Payne to continue his education, and he reunited with Judy Hendricks. They married in February 1964. Later, they moved to the Kansas City area, where Ray helped pioneer the contemporary Christian music genre. He still receives royalties for "Hey, Paula." Jill moved to California, married Marvin Landon and continued her music career as a solo artist.

Jill and Ray have remained friends over the past 50 years and occasionally perform together. And every once in a while they are reminded of the staying power of their one big hit.

"Sometime in 2005, at an oldies gig held at a Fort Worth country club, the band took a break, and we went to the autograph table," Ray says. "Many people lined up except for one couple who stood off to the side. They waited so they could be last in line. Finally, they stood in front of us and the woman, through her tears, told us what our little song meant to her in 1963. She was from a broken home—not much love—and her life was ripped apart, except when she was alone in her room and 'Hey, Paula' came on the radio. It was a song about love, staying together, planning together and wishing together. Needless to say, we all cried and hugged

and thanked God."

*Our love will always be real
My love, my love.*

Lori Grossman is a Dallas writer.

On TexasCoopPower.com

The top 10 in Billboard magazine's Hot 100 from those three magical weeks.

THEY WERE HOT For three weeks in 1963, Paul and Paula beat out the likes of Bobby Vee, the Drifters, Dion and the Four Seasons for the No. 1 spot on Billboard's Hot 100. Their hit song 'Hey, Paula' was written by Ray Hildebrand (Paul) and sung by him and Jill Jackson (Paula), students at Howard Payne College in Brownwood.



PHOTO COURTESY OF RAY HILDEBRAND AND JILL LANDON

Enlightenment at a Brush Arbor Revival

With a fiery flourish,
roving preacher saves souls
amid towering pine trees

BY HARRY NOBLE

IT WAS THE LAST WEEK OF JUNE 1939. Heat waves danced off the parched Bermuda grass. I was spending two weeks with my grandparents, Bob and Della Noble, in the northwest section of Sabine County in East Texas. I was 9.

Grandmom sat at her bedroom vanity and loosened the hairpin from the bun at the back of her neck, letting her gray hair fall to the floor. “They’re going to build a brush arbor on our land,” she said.

“What’s a brush arbor?” I asked.

Brushing her hair slowly, she described the temporary structure made from green tree trunks and limbs built for a preaching revival—usually every night for two weeks.

“Don’t they have a church?” I wondered.

No, she explained, most are sharecropper families that are very poor. Many don’t have a church building and live so far out they can’t attend a town church. They want to hold a revival; to do it, they need a temporary structure to protect them from the elements.

She told me that brush arbors and their revivals were fading into history. This could be my last chance to see one.

The next morning, I trotted down the red dirt lane. Men were already at work. For three days, I watched them fell trees with crosscut saws and trim away unwanted limbs. The strongest workers used a post-hole digger to bore two-foot-deep holes in the hard red clay—one at each corner of a rectangle about 20 by 30 feet.

After limbs had been trimmed away, the workers set the poles in the holes and

tamped the dirt firmly around each. They constructed a frame, and hog wire went on top. With that in place, pine tops and limbs heavy with green needles were added to form a thick cover. As sawdust, hauled in by wagons, was spread and leveled for the floor, rows of benches made from split logs were arranged. Finally, a large log was dragged in and placed up front. I was surprised to see the arbor could seat 40 or 50 people, and with no walls, they could expand even more.

The first night of the meeting, Grandmom agreed to go with me. She and I didn’t go to take part in the ceremony, but to watch. As darkness deepened, we were nonplussed to see pine-knot torches were providing the sole light source.

The assemblage parted into two distinct groups, worshippers and sightseers—30 or so each. Everyone seemed to be welcome no matter his or her reason for being there.

Two local men, blessed with confidence and guitar-picking talent, opened the revival with “Amazing Grace.” They followed with “Shall We Gather at the River.” It was pure poetry and stunned the onlookers into participation and tears.

Then, like an apparition, he appeared out of nowhere. Tall and erect, he stood there in hunter’s boots that laced to his knees, a green plaid shirt and a World War I doughboy hat. “Children of God, I am Brother Baldree,” he said, introducing himself as an inveterate coon hunter and a maverick preacher serving the Lord. He invited us to bow our heads in prayer and then promised to “take the



hide off the devil.”

The sweltering night air, too bloated with humidity to allow a breeze, quickly soaked bodies with sweat. Funeral fans appeared in female hands while men wiped their faces with large red handkerchiefs. Bugs arrived in massive waves. The light emitting from each torch turned the flames into suicide traps.

Almost all of the men wore patched overalls with faded blue work shirts, the same attire they wore to town on Saturday afternoons. All wore brogans.

The women wore flowery print dresses made from feed sacks. Though the gathering occurred at night, some wore bonnets. Their faces, in unguarded moments, reflected deep weariness.

Tobacco in various forms played an important role. For the men, Prince Albert in the can or Bull Durham in a drawstring sack were favored; they would roll their own. The women went for snuff, and almost every bottom lip concealed a pinch.

What a market for underarm deodorants! Unfortunately, in 1939, it was seldom used and thought to be a luxury. A wide range of body odors permeated the hot night air. Some mild, some mingled with the smell of soap, while others made you gasp and hold your breath until you managed to get out of range.

We left while the preacher still chased the devil. But the next night, I got there just as daylight disappeared. Brother Baldree’s powerful voice thundered across the crowd and continued on, reverberating through Palo Gaucho Creek bottom. When he spoke of fire, damnation and brimstone, he delivered the words with force.

The night air became thick with emotion. A scattering of amens turned into outstretched arms reaching for deliverance from the wrath of hell. Individuals cried out for mercy and wept in repentance if their ways followed the path of wickedness and sin; others wept tears of joy for they had found salvation.

A woman went to her knees, rolled on the ground and began talking with words I didn’t understand. The preacher paid special attention to her, and then another lady began rolling in the aisle and speaking the same strange words. I learned later they were speaking in tongues.

I didn’t miss a night. I was accepted as an observer, and Brother Baldree handed me a bucket and dipper with instructions to keep a full pail of water near the kneeling log for those who needed a drink or to be cooled off.

When the revival came to an end, so did the arbor. Abandoned, it took on the slow decay of death. Months later, with nothing to salvage, my grandfather handed me a can of kerosene and a box of matches. The wood and needles were dead, and flames devoured everything—leaving nothing but a smoldering pile of ashes.

It was the last brush arbor meeting I ever saw.

Harry Noble, frequent contributor

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One Family's True Confections

The minute Pam Teich walked into the office, she had a feeling something was wrong. When she saw the candy boxes on her desk, she knew the situation was worse than she'd imagined. The boxes had the incorrect design. **BY JEFF SIEGEL**

THEY WOULD HAVE TO BE REDONE, AND the deadline for shipping candy to one of Austin-based Lammes Candies' best customers was the end of the week. It was one of those days, Teich says with a laugh, when she thought it might be more fun doing anything besides helping run her family's 134-year-old business.

"But you know what?" she says. "When you stop and think about it, it's just another surprise to throw you off your game. After a while, you take a deep breath and figure out what you need to do. We've been doing this for so long, there are very few things that creep up on you that you can't handle."

Lammes, most famous for its Texas Chewie Pecan Pralines, has been making candy of one kind or another since long before cars traveled Congress Avenue. Teich, brother Bryan David Teich and sister Lana Schmidt are the fifth generation of Lammes to run the family-owned business—a rare feat.

"The one time we didn't order Lammes, everyone was asking us, 'Where's my candy?' " says Charlotte Plumlee, whose Austin-area oilfield services company, Texas Hot Oilers, sends 450 boxes of pralines to customers and employees every Christmas. "It's a great product, and the people I deal with are very nice."

Mention Lammes to Texans of a certain age and their reaction is usually the same: That's the pecan praline candy company, right? But Lammes was in business for almost 50 years before it focused on the pralines. Its beginnings in 1878 were more ice cream parlor than candy factory, and its best-selling products until World War II were ice cream and a sherbet-like product called gem. Ninety-year-old Mildred Walston, who still works at Lammes, started in 1940,



The fifth generation of the Lamme family continues to churn out candies, including Texas Chewie Pecan Pralines.

dipping ice cream while in high school.

That is not to say the pralines haven't been important. David Lamme Sr., who took over the business from his father, William Wirt Lamme, in 1885 (family lore has it that William lost the company in a poker game and David made good the debt), finalized the recipe seven years later, and it remains the same today: Texas pecans, corn syrup, sugar, butter and salt.

At first the candies were sold only by special order—and only when Lammes had enough orders to produce 25 pounds. That changed in the 1920s, when the pralines became so popular that the company started its mail-order division specifically to sell them.

Today, Lammes sells a half-million tons of candy per year, split half and half between its five Austin-area retail stores and the mail-order and wholesale business. The praline, not surprisingly, remains the most popular item, followed by the Longhorn, made with caramel and pecans in chocolate.

Customers have sent Lammes pralines to locations as distant as Malaysia and Iceland, and one customer used to send a box to the queen of England every year.

Walston, who works full-time answering the phone, is not Lammes' only long-

time employee. About half of the 70 have been there at least 15 years. "It's a family thing," Walston says. "They're sincere and sold on the product; I just love the family and business. I love it so much that sometimes I act like it's mine."

That might well be the reason for its enduring success. "When a company lasts five generations, it's all about the strength of the family," says Chip Besio, the director of the Center for Marketing Management Studies at Southern Methodist University in Dallas. "Typically, family-owned businesses don't last much past the third generation because the next generation isn't always willing and ready to do what the previous generations did to get the company to that point."

Teich and her siblings understand that. "We're all in this together," she says. Teich handles sales and marketing; Bryan D. Teich oversees the financial and operations parts of the business; and Lana Schmidt runs the retail stores. "The people I work with are the reason I work here. There is a comfort and a security in those bonds."

Besides, she adds with a smile, "We're not selling widgets, we're selling candy. We should be having a good time."

Jeff Siegel is a Dallas writer.

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*American Diabetes Association: Standards of Medical Care in Diabetes — 2012 (Position Statement). Diabetes Care 35 (suppl.1): S11-S63.

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Crockin' Up a Storm

A pair of busy Texas moms, Nicole Sparks and Jenna Marwitz (aka the Crockin' Girls) have found quick success promoting a method of slow cooking. The moms, who live near Brownwood in North Central Texas, where Sparks is a member of Comanche Electric Cooperative, have a website, a Facebook page with thousands of followers, and a cookbook, all devoted to the versatility and utility of the slow cooker.

The friends' journey to cookbook authors started with an event they dubbed Crockin' Mondays, when Marwitz, while watching Sparks' children, would post on Facebook about what she was making for dinner. In 2010, those updates spawned a Facebook page with recipe swaps. That page attracted more than a half-million followers. And that led to the cookbook, TV appearances and national attention.

Marwitz summed up the pair's food philosophy, saying, "We have to reinvent sitting down to dinner" by making cooking convenient and easy.

Slow cookers certainly can do that, they pointed out, adding that the appliances are popular not only with busy moms and dads, but also with military personnel, who move around a lot, and long-haul truckers, who can use them in their cabs to concoct a home-cooked meal as they move down the road.

Sparks and Marwitz said that they have 22 slow cookers between them and use them all week long. Their cookbook, *The Crockin' Girls Slow Cookin' Companion*, which came out last April, includes more than 150 recipes that could keep all those cookers going morning, noon and night. One of the best recipes might be this one for an easy, hearty lasagna.

KEVIN HARGIS



Crockin' Lasagna

- 2 pounds ground beef
- 2 jars (24 ounces each) marinara sauce
- 2 pounds ricotta cheese
- 3 to 4 cups shredded mozzarella
- 1 egg, beaten
- Italian seasoning, to taste
- 1 box (1 pound) uncooked lasagna noodles
- 2 to 3 handfuls (about 4 ounces) fresh baby spinach

- > Brown ground beef and drain and add marinara. Allow to simmer 20 minutes. While sauce simmers, combine ricotta, mozzarella, egg and seasoning in a bowl.
- > Reserve two cups sauce and 1 cup ricotta mixture.
- > Coat inside of slow cooker with cooking spray.
- > Layer ingredients, starting with a layer of meat sauce, then noodles (breaking them up as necessary), then ricotta mixture, then spinach.
- > Repeat layers, then top with reserved meat sauce and ricotta mixture.
- > Cook on low for 3 hours. Any longer could lead noodles to be overcooked.

Servings: 12. Serving size: 1½ cups. Per serving: 594 calories, 34.8 g protein, 26.8 g fat, 45.2 g carbohydrates, 6.4 g dietary fiber, 655 mg sodium, 8 g sugars, 122 mg cholesterol

gasket lid, internal temperature reader, nonstick, automatic switch to keep food warm once temperature is reached and more).

Most of our main-dish recipes work well in a 6- to 7-quart slow cooker, and the majority of those work in a 5-quart also. Desserts and sides seem to work well in 5- or 6-quart crocks, and sometimes they even work in a 4-quart. The smaller crocks (4 quarts and smaller) are great for dips.

CrockinGirls.com

Crockin' Lasagna



Choosing a Slow Cooker: Advice from the Crockin' Girls

When choosing a slow cooker, look for features that work for you such as shape (oval or round), size (in quarts), settings (programmable or manual) and features (tight

KAREN SHORT | PEDERNALES EC

Most slow cooker food is simple to make but not something you can throw together at the last minute: You have to plan ahead. Slow cookers are ideal for setting and forgetting, making it easy to have a hot meal waiting at the end of a busy day. They are ideal for making soups, as the winner of this month's contest demonstrated. This soup, when garnished with the optional ingredients, was reminiscent of a loaded baked potato.

Green Chili Cheddar Cheese Soup



- 4 large baking potatoes
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 4 cans (about 7 cups) chicken broth, or 4 bouillon cubes
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 cup milk, cream or half & half
- 1 can (4 ounces) chopped green chiles
- 1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese, plus more for garnish
- Pepper
- Bacon, cooked and crumbled, optional
- Sour cream, optional
- Chopped green onion, optional

- > Peel potatoes and chop into medium dice. Put potato and onion in slow cooker and add chicken broth to cover, reserving remaining broth. You may substitute water and 4 chicken bouillon cubes. Add salt.
- > Cover and bring to a boil on high, then lower heat and simmer 30 minutes or until potatoes are just tender. Remove half of the potatoes to a colander or bowl. Mash remaining potatoes in cooking broth with a potato masher or spoon. Return reserved potatoes to cooker along with milk, green chiles and cheese.
- > Let simmer for 30-45 additional minutes. Add more salt and pepper to taste. If soup is too thick, add extra chicken broth.
- > Serve with extra shredded cheese, crumbled bacon, sour cream and sliced green onion on top, if desired.

Servings: 6. Serving size: 2 cups. Per serving: 324 calories, 15.2 g protein, 7.3 g fat, 50.1 g carbohydrates, 4 g dietary fiber, 2,018 mg sodium, 5.4 g sugars, 23 mg cholesterol

WIN 2 NIGHTS AT HISTORIC B&B IN NACOGDOCHES

June's recipe contest topic is **Blueberries for Breakfast**. Texas blueberries lend themselves perfectly to the first meal of the day. Send us your most creative recipes for breakfast dishes that feature blueberries. The deadline is February 10.

The winner receives a prize package from the **TEXAS BLUEBERRY FESTIVAL**, which occurs June 8. The package includes a two-night stay at the historic Hardeman House bed-and-breakfast in Nacogdoches. Runners-up also will receive a prize.

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.

Chicken Supreme

- 2 to 3 pounds chicken thighs
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 tablespoons dry Italian dressing mix
- 1 can (10¾ ounces) mushroom soup
- 6 ounces cream cheese, cut into cubes
- ½ cup dry sherry
- 1 small onion chopped
- 1 can (7 ounces) sliced mushrooms

- > Brush chicken pieces with melted butter, season with salt and pepper and place in a slow cooker. Sprinkle salad dressing mix on top, cover and cook on low for 5-6 hours.
- > Mix soup, cream cheese, sherry and onion in a saucepan. Cook and stir until smooth and onions are tender, 10 to 15 minutes.
- > Spoon onion mixture over chicken, add mushrooms, cover and cook for 30 minutes longer.
- > Serve over rice or noodles.

Servings: 6. Serving size: 2 thighs plus sauce. Per serving: 676 calories, 37.1 g protein, 46 g fat, 16.5 g carbohydrates, 1.5 g dietary fiber, 987 mg sodium, 7.2 g sugars, 223 mg cholesterol

JANINE KUYKENDALL | PEDERNALES EC

Poblano Chicken

- 2 fresh ears of corn
- 2 chicken breast halves
- 1 large poblano pepper
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 1 can (10¾ ounces) cream of chicken soup

- > Slice kernels off cob and place kernels in the bottom of a slow cooker. Put chicken breasts on top of corn.
- > Slice poblano into strips, leaving all ribs and seeds in if you like it hot, or remove seeds for milder flavor. Place strips on top of chicken. Add chopped garlic and cover with cream of chicken soup.
- > Cook on slow 4-6 hours. Shred chicken and serve over rice or in tortillas with cheese.

Servings: 2. Serving size: 1 breast. Per serving: 769 calories, 69.2 g protein, 33.4 g fat, 40.7 g carbohydrates, 4.23 g dietary fiber, 1,275 mg sodium, 6.6 g sugars, 197 mg cholesterol

CHARLI BURGESS | BARTLETT EC



Cook's Tip: Add onions, tomatoes or mushrooms for a different spin on this dish.

Cheesy Buffalo Chicken Soup

- 1 rotisserie chicken or whole roasted chicken
- 8 ounces Cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1 cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- 1 red onion, diced
- 1 bunch chopped green onions
- 1 bunch cilantro, chopped

- 32 ounces chicken broth
- ½ cup hot wing sauce
- Garlic powder to taste
- Cilantro, optional, for garnish
- Avocado, optional, for garnish
- Cheese, optional, for garnish
- Green onion, optional, for garnish

- Remove meat from chicken and shred.
- Put meat, cheeses, red and green onions, chopped cilantro, chicken broth and wing sauce in a slow cooker. Stir in garlic powder.
- Set on low for 4-6 hours. Then garnish as desired with avocado slices, cilantro, some Cheddar cheese and some green onion.

Servings: 8. Serving size: 2 cups. Per serving: 322 calories, 34.3 g protein, 16.9 g fat, 4.1 g carbohydrates, 0.8 g dietary fiber, 1,439 mg sodium, 1.7 g sugars, 103 mg cholesterol

NINA MARTIN | CENTRAL TEXAS EC

Crock Pot Enchiladas

- 1 pound ground beef or chicken
- 1 ounce taco seasoning mix
- 2 cans (4 ounces each) green chiles
- 1 can (16 ounces) refried beans

- 1 can (10¾ ounces) cream of mushroom soup
- 1 can (10¾ ounces) cheese soup
- 1 can (15 ounces) enchilada sauce, divided
- 4 cups shredded Mexican cheese blend, divided
- 10 corn tortillas, quartered

- Brown the meat in a skillet over medium-high heat. Add taco seasoning and 1¼ cups water. Simmer for 15 minutes over low heat.
- In a bowl, stir together the chiles, refried beans, cream of mushroom and cheese soups and half of the enchilada sauce. Mix in 3 cups of the shredded cheese, reserving 1 cup.
- Cover bottom of the slow cooker with a layer of tortillas. Top with a layer of cooked meat, and top with a layer of the cheese mixture. Repeat layers as ingredients allow, ending with a layer of tortillas.
- Top with the reserved enchilada sauce and cheese. Cover and cook on high for 1 hour or low for 3 hours.

Servings: 8. Serving size: 2 cups. Per serving: 517 calories, 30.7 g protein, 26.5 g fat, 34.7 g carbohydrates, 7.5 g dietary fiber, 1,540 mg sodium, 9 g sugars, 91 mg cholesterol

KIMBERLY BROADUS | DEEP EAST TEXAS EC



Cook's Tip: You can prepare this the night before and refrigerate. The next day, put it in the slow cooker and add about 30 minutes to the cooking time.

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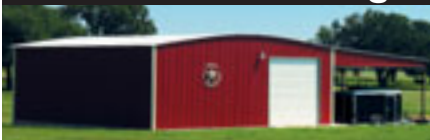
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Silhouettes This month, we turn to the beauty of backlighting. Without seeing faces, expressions or features, the silhouettes you submitted leave much open to interpretation. It is art with a shade of mystery.

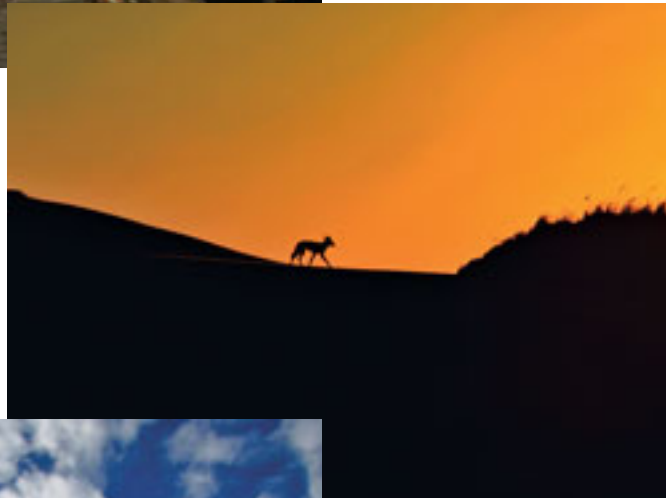
ASHLEY CLARY-CARPENTER

On TexasCoopPower.com

We received far too many photos to share all our favorites, but there are plenty more online.

◀ **Karson Kelnar**, then 4, enjoyed every moment fishing at Inks Lake, says mom **Dawn Kelnar**, Pedernales EC.

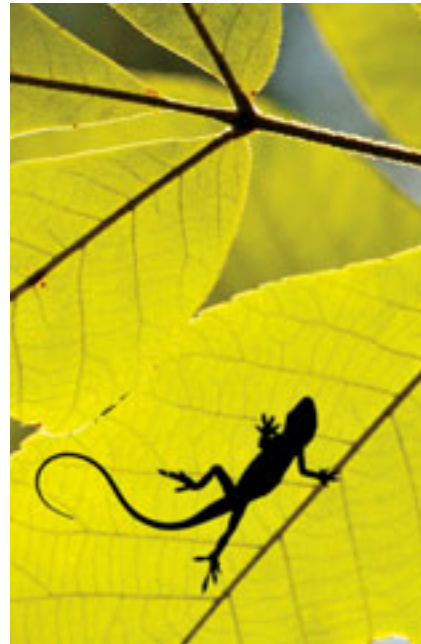
Danny Pickens, Cherokee County EC, caught this coyote just as it was heading over a dune on South Padre Island at sunset. ▶



After noticing the gorgeous clouds, **Christiana Rugloski**, Pedernales EC, got her sisters **Elizabeth** and **Sue** up on the roof for some cool pics. ▼



This anole thought it was hiding. Try again! Thanks to **Cheryl Stephenson**, Wood County EC, for outing the little guy. ▶



Marleah Cramer, Lea County EC, took this portrait of her husband, **Jason**, and sons **Cuylar** and **Cutter** (twins), **Cy** and **Caton** on their farm near Seminole and Hobbs, New Mexico. ▼

Upcoming Contests

April Issue: Reflections Deadline: February 10

May: Black & White **June: Underwater**

Send your photo for the April contest—along with your name, address, daytime phone, co-op affiliation and a brief description—to Reflections, Focus on Texas, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701, before **February 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

Whooping Crane Festival

Port Aransas [21-24] (361) 749-5919, whoopingcranefestival.org

Celebrate the return of the endangered whooping cranes to their winter home in South Texas. Special activities this year include a seminar to assist in bird identification, and field and photography trips.



WHOOPING CRANE: LYNN BYSTROM | BIGSTOCK.COM. VALENTINES: SERGIY NYKONENKO | BIGSTOCK.COM.

February

07

Port Arthur [7-10] Mardi Gras of Southeast Texas, (409) 721-8717, mardigras.portarthur.com

Brenham [7-24] 'The Chalk Garden,' (979) 830-8358, unitybrenham.org

10

Cameron Glenn Miller Orchestra Jazz Performance, (254) 697-4979, cameronisd.net

Harlingen Ms. South Texas Senior Pageant, (956) 412-7529, hpatonline.org

15

Huntsville [15-17, 22-24] 'Trip to Bountiful,' (936) 291-7933, huntsvillecommunitytheatre.org

16

Luckenbach Hug-In & Valentine Ball, 1-888-311-8990, luckenbachtexas.com

17

Bryan Spring Bridal Show and Benefit, (979) 823-3976, brazoscountyexpo.com

22

Bryan [22-24] Home Expo, (979) 823-3976, brazoscountyexpo.com

February 16
Luckenbach
Hug-In &
Valentine Ball






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February 23
Athens
Home and Garden Show

23

Athens Home and Garden Show,
(903) 675-7691, athenstx.org

Gainesville North Texas Farm Toy Show,
(940) 759-2876

Boerne [23-24] Hill Country Antiques Show,
(830) 995-3670, texasantiqueshow.com

TOMATO: ONEPONY | BIGSTOCK.COM. TEXAS FLAG: BRANDON SEIDEL | BIGSTOCK.COM.

23

Bryan [23-24] Texas Mounted Shooters
February Freeze Out, (979) 823-3976,
brazoscountyexpo.com

March

01

Nacogdoches [1-31] Azalea Trail,
(936) 564-7351, nacogdochesazaleas.com

02

Texarkana Kiwanis Pancake Day 5K Run
& Kids Fun Run, (903) 276-6267,
kiwaniscluboftexarkana.org

Lago Vista [2-3] La Primavera at Lago
Vista, (512) 267-7952, lagovista.org

Washington [2-3] Texas Independence
Day Celebration, 1-888-273-6426,
birthplaceoftexas.com

03

Seguin Mid-Texas Symphony: 'Pines of
Rome,' (830) 372-8089, mtsymphony.org

March 2

Washington
Texas Independence
Day Celebration



07

Denton [7-10] Texas Storytelling Festival,
(940) 380-9320, tejasstorytelling.com

Submit Your Event!

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

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Making a connection to Texian patriots proves elusive, even while fully immersed in centuries-old relics from dark chapter of state history

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS

I'VE NEVER BEEN A STRONG STUDENT OF history. But a part of me longs to connect to the Texian patriots who, nearly two centuries ago, spent their last days within the grassy quadrangle of the **Presidio La Bahía** near **Goliad**. Perhaps I will after my husband and I stay overnight at the Spanish frontier fort, built in 1749 and restored in 1963. Locked behind heavy cypress doors and massive stone walls, we'll sleep in **the Quarters**, a two-bedroom suite inhabited long ago by priests.

Before we unload our gear, we drive to a place about 10 miles away where this dark chapter of early Texas history began—the **Fannin Battleground State Historic Site**, reopened in June 2012 after a year of restoration. At the 14-acre site, a stone obelisk honors Col. James Fannin and his 300 or so men, who—after news spread of the Alamo's fall—were ordered to destroy the presidio and retreat to Victoria. After two days of battling Mexican soldiers at Coletto Creek, Fannin, trusting that his men would be treated fairly as prisoners

of war, surrendered March 20, 1836.

Able-bodied Texians were marched back to the presidio, while the wounded, including Fannin, stayed behind on the prairie for several days. At the fort, the men were crowded into the Our Lady of Loreto Chapel, where Catholic faithful have worshipped continually since the 1700s. Since we've come on a Sunday, we decide to attend the 5 p.m. Mass. Seated in a wooden pew beneath the lovely vaulted ceiling, I try to conjure the hopeless despair those Texians must have endured within these whitewashed walls—the heart-pounding terror they felt when Mexican soldiers on Palm Sunday led them away from the presidio, then suddenly turned and massacred them with guns and blades.

But I just can't connect, even though we've stepped through the fort's exhibits and peered inside glass cases filled with rusted bayonets, pottery shards and iron spurs. We also walked a short distance away to see the Fannin Memorial Monu-

ment, a gigantic pink granite gravestone erected in 1938 over the buried remains of the slaughtered Texians. (In 1894, as a makeshift memorial, local landowners erected a gigantic cotton gin screw, which still stands in the park.)

Beneath a starry summer sky, we sit alone in our lawn chairs, eerily encircled by the presidio's silhouetted perimeter. Silently, I ponder the past. What was it like to have lived in those days? What did those doomed men feel within those walls?

Earlier that evening in the Quarters, we shared a simple supper of crackers and cheese at the wooden dining table instead of cooking in the small kitchen or dining out in Goliad. Evening sunrays streamed through the living room's iron-barred windows, set deep within the thick rock walls. Wistfully, we eyed a corner fireplace, blackened with use that hinted of cozy winter nights.

No matter that our accommodations lack a television or Wi-Fi. Instead, we thumb through the leather guestbook and read accounts penned by honeymooners who'd married in the chapel, grandparents who brought little ones to learn about history, and longtime friends who'd convened at the Quarters for catch-up time. Before lights out, we relish frosty pints of ice cream as we sit propped up in bed in the master bedroom. Then we dream through the night, tucked beneath a striped purple serape draped across our sheets.

The next morning, we pack up and stop briefly at nearby **Goliad State Park**, where we stroll through the reconstructed **Mission Espíritu Santo**, a Spanish colonial church built in 1749 and the site of the first sizable cattle ranch in Texas.

En route home, while my husband drives, I stare out the car window and finally accept that I just can't do it. I can't connect with those long-gone Texians because far too many decades separate us. But I can do this: offer up a heartfelt "thank you" and never, ever forget the sacrifices made then for the life I enjoy now.

Sheryl Smith-Rodgers, frequent contributor

LA BAHÍA: The presidio was built in 1749 about a mile south of where Goliad is now. The chapel was restored in the 1930s as a New Deal public works project.



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