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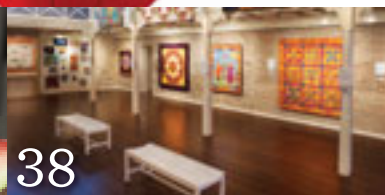
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**COVER PHOTO** Texans on the Government-in-Action Youth Tour raced to the steps of the Jefferson Memorial to strike a pose during a busy week: Standing, from left, Mahlet Dozier, Evan Weiss, Isabella Bortolussi, Angeline Phillips and Miranda Ponzio; and, sitting, Haley Hodgins and John Derry. By Stephen Barrett

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## Generally Pleased

Just wondering about Howard Green [cover photo, June 2013]. Where does he live? He is very handsome and looks quite "the part."

Where will the next Civil War re-enactment be held? I think I need to be there if Mr. Green will be in attendance! Thanks for the eye candy on this month's cover. Delightful.

GAYLYNN HIERHOLZER | CENTRAL TEXAS EC

## Best Burger?

The best hamburger I've eaten is at Ell's Place ["Hungry for Maybe the Best Burger Ever?" June 2013]. I'm just a customer who enjoys eating hamburgers there. The catfish is also good.

[Ell's Place is at 4205 E. FM 4 in Sand Flat].

MARY ANN WALDIE | UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

## Mounted Police

I enjoyed E.R. Bills' story "The First Madam Sheriffs" [June 2013]. Emma Banister was my great-grandmother, and our family appreciates Texas Co-op Power telling her story.

To add to the story, her daughter, Leona Banister, at 16 drove her father, Sheriff John Banister, on his official duties. Sheriff Banister could ride any horse alive, but he wasn't interested in learning how to operate one of those newfangled horseless carriages.

BOB KINGSBERRY | COSERV ELECTRIC

## Parental Care

This is in regards to "Parenting Your Parents" [May 2013], one of the most important articles you have ever published—also something

## All in a Day's Work

**While preparing to leave for an appointment in town, I was startled by the doorbell. Like many folks in the Hill Country living on acreage, I don't get many unexpected visitors. I opened the door to find a pleasant young man wearing a Bandera Electric Cooperative shirt, hardhat and sunglasses. His name is Steven Hall [a system reliability technician].**

**He asked if I realized that a very large oak tree had fallen across my driveway down the hill, blocking it completely. He offered to cut it up with his chain saw and said he would drag it out of the way for me but didn't have a chain in his truck. I gave him one of my husband's chains.**

**Within 10 minutes he had cut the largest part down to a more manageable size, hooked the chain around it and used his truck to drag it out of the way. I said that he probably hadn't expected to be cutting up and hauling trees for a lady in distress today. True to a humble hero's attitude, he replied with a smile, "It's all in a day's work, ma'am."**

**People like Steven make the difference between being part of a co-op and living where utilities are run by cities. Thanks, BEC.**



Steven Hall

DARLENE WAYMAN | BANDERA EC

you don't understand until you have been there. I hope that everyone reads and shares the article.

BARBARA WHITE | BANDERA AND MEDINA ECS

I have been through that with both of my parents (who are deceased) as their legal guardian and primary caregiver. Not only should you prepare for this day, but also take the appropriate steps for yourself—simple things like having a will, a living will, burial plans, life insurance, long-term care insurance and a detailed personal inventory.

DAVID QUALLS | GUADALUPE VALLEY EC

## Kelp Help

I always like the photos in Focus on Texas, but the bottom photo in the

June 2013 issue certainly was not taken in Texas unless it was in an aquarium. The "look from beneath the surface" was not taken off South Padre Island. That seaweed is giant kelp, *Macrocystis pyrifera*. It lives only in very cold seawater off California and adjacent states. A related one lives far south off South America and Australia.

MARY WICKSTEN | BRYAN TEXAS UTILITIES

**Editor's note:** Wicksten teaches marine biology and invertebrate zoology at Texas A&M University and adds: "I am well acquainted with seaweeds and marine invertebrates. I was diving in California two weeks ago and saw *Macrocystis* firsthand."

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



@TexasCoopPower

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## ALMANAC

# States of Emergency

The federal government has declared nearly 2,000 major disasters in the 50 states and the District of Columbia between 1953 and April 2013. One-third of that total was concentrated in only 10 states—and Texas tops the chart. Numbers of declared disasters in the past 60 years:

- 86 TEXAS:** *At least one major disaster declared nearly every calendar year—seemingly endless severe storms and flooding, wildfires, and federal emergencies: the 2003 loss of the space shuttle Columbia and the fertilizer plant explosion in West.*
- 78 CALIFORNIA:** *Earthquakes, plus wildfires, landslides, flooding, winter storms, severe freezes and tsunamis.*
- 73 OKLAHOMA:** *Tornadoes, severe winter storms, wildfires and the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing.*
- 67 NEW YORK:** *9/11, blizzards and Hurricane Sandy (2012).*
- 65 FLORIDA:** *Tropical storms and hard freezes.*
- 60 LOUISIANA:** *Hurricanes Katrina (2005) and Camille (1969).*
- 57 ALABAMA:** *Hurricanes and tornadoes.*
- 56 KENTUCKY:** *Landslides, mudslides and rockslides among the threats.*
- 54 ARKANSAS:** *There is no safe season here, with severe snow and ice storms in winter; tornadoes during the spring, summer and fall; and flooding any time.*
- 53 MISSOURI:** *Same here.*



## TOTALLY TEXAS

## A Fair Run in Gillespie



In its 125 years, the Gillespie County Fair survived both world wars, moved four times, raced three elephants, crowned 63 queens and hosted 22 years of pari-mutuel horse racing.

The Gillespie County Fair & Festival Association—founded in 1881 and host of the longest consecutive running fair in Texas—has grown from a tin-and-honeysuckle-covered concession area and horse track on the grounds of an abandoned fort to full-grown fairgrounds with an exhibition hall and Biergarten at 530 Fair Drive in Fredericksburg.

The 125th anniversary celebration August 22–25 features all the fair favorites plus the running of 12 racehorses from Texas and surrounding states on the association's 5/8-mile oval track—the only licensed, Class III pari-mutuel racetrack in the state since 1991. The owner of the fastest horse wins the “purse,” a prize historically totaling about \$100,000.

INFO: (830) 997-2359, [gillespiefair.com](http://gillespiefair.com)

**Coming in October** Speaking of horse racing—the long-gone residents of Morris Ranch southwest of Fredericksburg bred and trained thoroughbred racehorses to run in New York and Louisiana in the 1880s. We explore this former community in our feature on Texas ghost towns.

# 40

Texas has more counties—~~254~~—than any other state. Forty of those counties are larger than Rhode Island, which [ri.gov](http://ri.gov) says comprises 1,214 square miles. Texas' largest, Brewster County, which covers much of Big Bend National Park, contains 6,183.7 square miles, making it larger than Delaware and Connecticut, too.



## WHO KNEW?

### Mercurial Madness

The difference between the highest and lowest recorded temperatures in Texas spans almost 150 degrees:



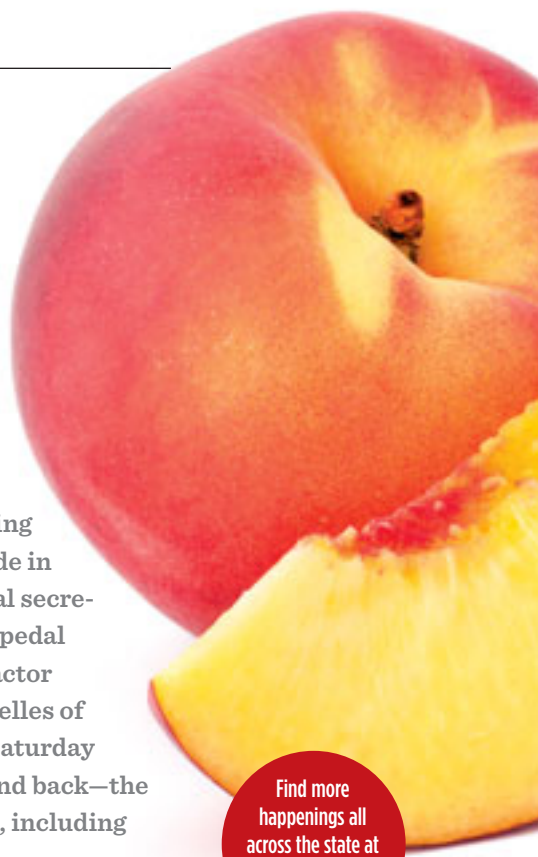
## HAPPENINGS

### In a Peachy Mood?

Grab the whole family and head out to DeLeon for the annual Peach & Melon Festival and Tractor Pull, slated for its 99th showing August 6-10. About 20,000 folks are expected to attend this year's event, and there's much more going on than fruity fun.

Take a carnival ride. Get some grub—everything from barbecue to “the guy with the best lemonade in the world” will be there, says Eric Royall, festival secretary. Youngsters can tow miniature sleds with a pedal tractor during the kiddie version of the adult tractor pull, the largest and longest-running in Texas. Belles of all ages compete in the Miss DeLeon pageants. Saturday is the watermelon seed-spitting contest, but stand back—the record is 78 feet, 6 inches. Plus, there'll be tunes, including bluegrass-gospel, Tejano and country-western.

**FOR INFO:** (254) 893-6600, [DELEONPEACHANDMELONFESTIVALANDTRACTORPULL.COM](http://DELEONPEACHANDMELONFESTIVALANDTRACTORPULL.COM)



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

## CO-OP PEOPLE

### She Might Be Giving Away the Ending

When Heidi Frazier decided to open a bookstore four years ago in Lexington, she imagined giving the tiny community of 1,200 a unique experience. She named her shop 40-Acre Wood.

“I got the name 40-Acre Wood because my home is on 40 acres, and Winnie the Pooh lives in the 100-Acre Wood, so I like to think I’m next door to Pooh,” she says.

The Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative member, who holds a degree in library science, stocks her store mainly with donated, thrift store and liquidated library books. Frazier’s business is built on community service and her love for sharing literature. When she sells inventory from the donated stock, she gives a percentage to a nonprofit organization. “I feel very strongly about that,” she says.

She gives students and homebound seniors free books. She hosts a summer reading club for children, who receive prizes for finishing books. And children always get a free book just for visiting the store. “Ultimately, I’m most concerned about children,” Frazier says. “These days they are so connected to technology, I fear that learning from literature may be lost.

“I have customers come up to me and say, ‘You’re giving away so much, I don’t know how you stay in business,’ and I may not. I’ve just always known that I had to give something back to the world. I want to make it a better place than when I started.”

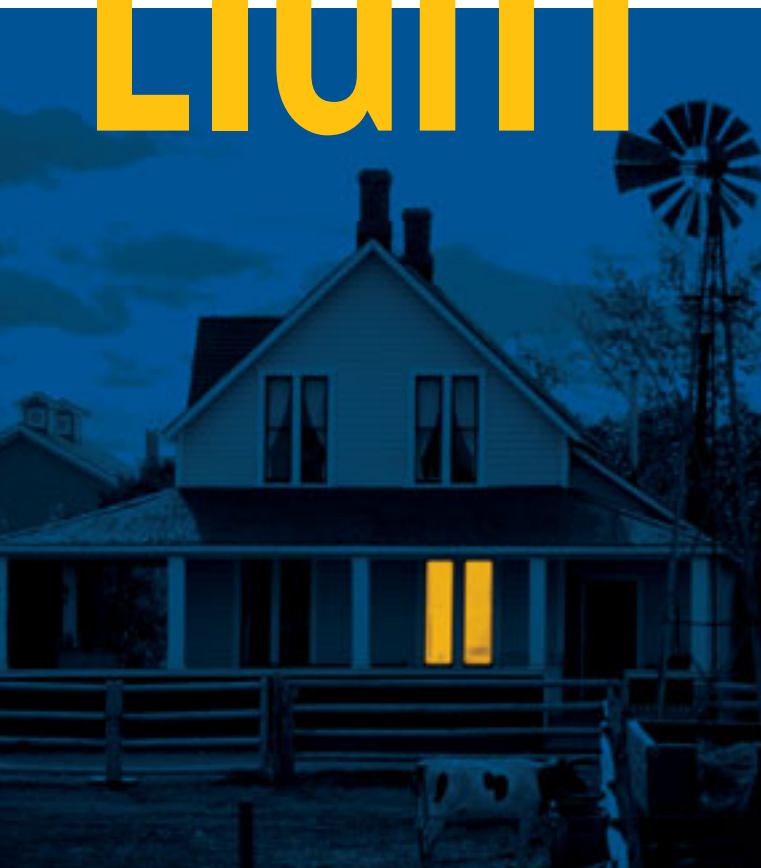
Learn more about the store on its Facebook page.

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



BY CAROL MOCZYGEMBA

# LIGHT—AND SO MUCH MORE



Whether you've been a member of an electric cooperative for seven months or seven decades, it's likely you don't give it too much thought. For the most part, that means things are running smoothly. But at times, it's good to take a closer look at co-ops: see what's working, what needs improvement, what challenges lie ahead and—maybe the most important consideration of all—do they still have a reason to exist? This story is an exercise in that kind of reflection. We examine the purpose of electric cooperatives, yours and nearly 900 others around the country.

**THE QUESTION** If electric cooperatives did not exist, would it matter?

In 2012, the International Year of Cooperatives, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, looking back on 75 years of electric cooperative history, assembled a group of co-op managers and directors from across the country to turn their attention to the future and find an answer to that question.

It was a daunting assignment that engaged members of the 21st Century Committee on a journey of discovery whose destination was the articulation of a vision that would ensure the success and sustainability of electric cooperatives in the coming years.

Led by Texas Electric Cooperatives President/CEO Mike Williams, the committee spent nearly a year traveling to selected cooperatives to study what made them successful, listening to members, discussing their observations and assessing the social, economic and political climate within which co-ops operate.

In the 75 years since electric co-ops first turned on the lights in rural America, we've seen tremendous change, much of it advanced by technology. From the day when a single lightbulb illuminating a dark room precipitated wonder and excitement, we now take for granted personal computers, pocket-sized mobile phones, home appliances that operate according to schedule, and on and on. Humans have walked on the moon. Robots assemble automobiles.

But somewhere in the midst of all that, we've also witnessed a decline in American optimism. "People are just not as trustful as they once were," says Williams. "Consumers generally have little faith in large institutions, government and big corporations. They have concluded the only one you can really depend on is yourself."

In such an environment of self-reliance, he believes, co-ops are more relevant today than ever. "The electric cooperative is a self-help model that allows people to do something for themselves in a more personal, more cost-effective way than anyone else could." That's a message that resonates with consumers, says Williams. "We have an essential service to provide safe, affordable, reliable electricity, but so much more. It has always been that way, and it is today."

It's the "so much more" that Roy Spence, author of "It's Not What You Sell, It's What You Stand For," helped the committee understand was the key to co-op sustainability.

The welfare of the community is as important to co-ops as it is to the community. They live there, too. It's where they work, where they go to church and where their kids go to school.





**PURPOSE** Spence, an energetic man known for his creativity, humanity and “don’t do mild” zest for life, is the co-founder and chairman of internationally renowned ad agency GSD&M. You might never have heard of Spence. But you likely know his

agency’s popular ads, such as Southwest Airlines’ “Bags Fly Free.” Although he didn’t know a lot about electric cooperatives when he agreed to participate in the work of the 21st Century Committee, he knew a lot about something the co-ops needed to ponder: Purpose, or the “why” of an individual’s or entity’s existence.

The first lesson in Purpose is if someone helps you, you’ve got to help somebody else.



Purpose is the heart and soul of Spence’s message, whether to long-established businesses, startups or, yes, electric cooperatives. “Purpose provides a road map to hold your course along the journey. It ensures that everyone stays on track and you don’t end up in a ditch, stalled out and confused as to how you got there,” he writes.

The question “What is our purpose?” then became the lens that clarified the committee’s work as it met with focus groups comprising CEOs, directors/trustees and consumers from rural and suburban cooperatives located across the U.S. This process produced a plethora of information and opinions the committee studied for five months. What became clearer and clearer was that co-ops’ integration into the fabric of the communities they serve resulted in a better quality of life for their members.

The relationship between co-ops and quality of life in the community was recognized from the beginning. The April 1945 issue of Texas Co-op Power contained an article that drew a straight line between the cooperatives and specific quality-of-life measures. (See Page 12)

Interestingly, that 1945 article came to light after the committee drafted the statement of Purpose, which is: “The Purpose of the electric cooperatives is to power communities and empower members to improve the quality of their lives.” Perhaps that shouldn’t be surprising. After all, if something is true and honest and real, it doesn’t change over time. Spence is fond of quoting the poet T.S. Eliot, who writes of the phenomenon:

*We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.*

Applying those words to the exploratory work of the 21st Century Committee validates the authenticity of the Purpose statement they articulated.

**QUALITY OF LIFE** Why would an electric cooperative, with the huge responsibility of providing electricity for thousands of businesses and residents, concern itself with members’ quality of life?

“Because as locally owned and controlled institutions, they are inextricably tied to the communities they serve,” answers Williams. “The welfare of the community is as important to co-ops as it is to the community. They live there, too. It’s where they work, where they go to church and where their kids go to school.”

There is no “us” and “them.” After all, Williams concludes, “It’s hard to provide world-class electric services to a wide spot in the road.”

While it’s self-evident that co-ops provide electric power to the communities they serve, their role in empowering members to improve the quality of their lives is less obvious. Stated another way, co-ops often provide the unheralded support that gets member-initiated projects off the ground.

“The best solutions to a problem usually come from the people who are closest to the need,” says Williams. “So, cooperatives, being democratically controlled and locally owned, know their members and are more inclined, and have the capacity, to more smartly and judiciously identify and implement member-initiated ideas for tackling community challenges.”

For example, a group of residents might come together to explore ways to bring a health care clinic to a town without one. They’ll need a regular place to meet. The local co-op offers its boardroom.

They’ll need to demonstrate the ability to provide a facility. The co-op helps negotiate repurposing a vacant building, and co-op employees—who also will benefit from the project—conduct fundraising events to help meet a matching funds requirement. The co-op might underwrite a piece of medical equipment with a grant from its charitable foundation.

**YOU GET THE IDEA** Of course, that’s a hypothetical scenario but very close to reality. Did the co-op itself bring in the clinic? No. Rather, it empowered its members to do it themselves. Going back to the earliest cooperatives when members paid \$5 per family to join the effort that brought light to the countryside, the self-help aspect of cooperative membership hasn’t changed.

But self-help in a cooperative setting doesn’t mean individuals have to fend for themselves. The cooperative culture thrives when people help one another. As Spence puts it, “The first lesson in Purpose is if someone helps you, you’ve got to help somebody else.

“Co-ops weren’t necessarily created to do things other than provide electric services, but in many cases they have done so because those services weren’t provided by anyone else,” Spence says. For example, some Texas co-ops have formed subsidiaries that provide water, telephone service or propane delivery where those amenities weren’t otherwise conveniently available.

**DEMOCRATIZING THE AMERICAN DREAM** In Spence’s work with the 21st Century Committee and in his presentations to the NRECA membership, he frames the effect of electric cooperatives on rural America as nothing less than “democratizing the American dream.” In the 1930s and ’40s, electricity was readily available in urban areas and some small towns, mak-

The electric cooperative is a self-help model that allows people to do something for themselves in a more personal, more cost-effective way than anyone else could.



ing possible social, economic and educational opportunities for achieving the American dream. But in rural America, people were living as if they were still in the 19th century.

Parker Wetsel remembers that time well. Wetsel, 89, was 15 when linemen set the poles and ran the wire into his family's farm home several miles outside of Roby. "My father heard about electricity coming to homes and water wells, and then there was a meeting in June of 1938 where people signed on to go with the REA [Rural Electric Administration]." One by one, families, including Wetsel's, in Fisher, Jones and Scurry counties "signed on" with the REA to form a member-owned electric company,

Midwest Electric Cooperative. And one by one, the poles were set by hand to string the wires that would deliver the means for these families to participate in the American dream.

Wetsel was keenly aware that towns in the area, such as Roby, already had electricity. His voice takes on a wistful quality; he closes his eyes and describes what is still so vivid in his mind. "It was so enjoyable to go to town and see the electricity in those homes. And the lights outside

would shine on the cars and pickups. And you wouldn't stumble over anything."

When it finally came to his home, electricity meant Wetsel's family could connect with the rest of the world through the radio that brought them the voice of President Franklin Roosevelt and the sounds of boxer Joe Louis' historic championship bouts. It meant his mother replaced the wood-fired cooking stove with an electric range and the icebox with a refrigerator. It meant no more eyestrain from the shadowy, dim coal-oil lamps.

Electric lights in the house and barns meant activity was no longer limited to daylight hours. "Our family was better off in so many ways," Wetsel says. "With lights in the barn we could work on the farm equipment after dark so it would be ready in the morning. And in the morning before the sun was up we could take care of the livestock, milk the cows and tend to the chickens twice as fast, then I could get to the house with time to study."

But one of Wetsel's best memories of the gifts of electricity was more ice cream. "Before we got the refrigerator, we had an ice man who came around to the farm houses every three days. We'd put the ice in coolers covered with heavy quilts or ducking to save as much ice as we could for cold drinks. It was very unusual to have enough to make ice cream," he remembers. "With the refrigerator we could keep ice and had enough to make ice cream. The kids, and even the older people, liked it so much it seems like we made it every few days."

Wetsel would later become fully immersed in the work of Midwest EC (now Big Country EC). In 1952, during the worst drought in Texas history, he was forced to sell his farm. He went to work for the co-op, one of the few employers in the area. He recalls the picnic-style annual meeting, an event he says became a focal point for community cohesiveness.

"We had that first one under a big tent," he remembers. "We brought in stoves, washing machines and electric motors for people to see. And we had brochures about electricity and appli-

ances. We built a platform for the piano from the First Methodist Church so we could have entertainment. By 1954 we had so many people—between 4,500 and 5,000—we moved it to the Fisher County rodeo grounds."

In 1975, after taking on several other co-op positions, Wetsel became general manager of Midwest EC. He retired in 1989, but even today when he speaks of the coming of electricity to the countryside and the difference the cooperative has made in the quality of life for his family, friends and neighbors, it's as if he makes no distinction between the work of the co-op and the life of the community.

**THE FUTURE** "The pioneers of this movement turned the lights on. Literally." Spence, his trim frame and signature black V-neck pullover, is in his element as he strides across the stage at the 2013 NRECA Annual Meeting. A fiery, impassioned voice for the work of the hundreds of electric cooperatives represented in the audience, he exudes: "And because of that they revolutionized everything. Now it's time to turn the lights on again, get enlightened again, and pass the torch to a new generation."

"Our job and our responsibility is to always reach out and empower others."

The conclusion of the 21st Century Committee was exactly that. The Purpose statement is simple but carries within it the call for cooperatives to respect their heritage, continue the work of providing safe, reliable, affordable electricity and practice the sound fiscal policies of the cooperative business model.

The combination of co-ops' old-fashioned pragmatism and their ability to adapt judiciously to change enables them to exist to fulfill their purpose into the coming decades.

And always, Williams reminds us, there remains the emphasis on the local advantage. "Whatever is out there, co-ops are in touch with and working for members. Co-ops make decisions that fit the local community, as opposed to taking a 'one size fits all' approach. Co-ops recognize that costs are important, so we don't run out and buy the latest gadget and hope it works."

In a future that promises a constant stream of new gadgets, changing demographics, economic puzzles to solve and an energy landscape that will surely look much different from what we see today, the challenges are clear.

As co-ops grapple with all that and more, the ones that remain true to their Purpose will be fortified. There's nothing magic about the notion of "powering communities and empowering members to improve the quality of their lives." But it's what co-ops have always done and, with renewed commitment, will keep doing.

*Carol Moczygemba is the retired Texas Co-op Power executive editor.*

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

Watch the **video about the cooperative purpose** and see the 2013 Co-op Teens Power Texas **"Remember When"** video contest entries.

And one by one, the poles were set by hand to string the wires that would deliver the means for these rural families to participate in the American dream.



The Purpose of the electric cooperatives is to power communities and empower members to improve the quality of their lives.







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# USING ELECTRICITY TO BUILD—A BETTER RURAL AMERICA

This article ran in the April 1, 1945, Texas Co-op Power.

**“I’m 62 years old, and my husband is 70. Life is just beginning for us.”**

A Pennsylvania farm woman said that not long ago when electricity came to her farm. She was looking forward to a brand-new start, because she knew from her neighbors’ experience that electric service is more than an economic weapon for better farming—it is also a restorative of the grace and dignity of country life.

**Electricity spells change for rural America—first, change from hand labor to machine labor; from hours spent at a task, to minutes.**



**Electricity makes home and farm life so much sweeter for members of electric cooperatives.**

## **BETTER USE OF LABOR**

Electricity means a young girl can do the milking by machine, instead of two men doing it by hand; a pump to supply water for a herd of cattle, instead of a pair of brawny, but tiring shoulders; a motor to elevate and grind grain, run a grindstone, churn milk, hoist hay, saw wood.

## **BETTER USE OF TIME**

It means 3-minute milking per cow; it means a woodpile lowered in half an hour; ensilage chopped and stored in an hour; milk separated in 20 minutes; a garden watered in an hour. And time saved means time earned. Lights in the barn mean a farmer can work two hours longer in the field. That means more acres farmed.

## **MORE PRODUCTION**

Electricity means lights for higher seasonal pro-

duction in the henhouse; chicks and pigs brooded safely—larger broods and litters. It means calves saved that would have died by lantern lights; plants brought from seedlings earlier in hotbeds; irrigated plots that would have been burned up for the lack of water carried by hand.

Minutes saved, muscles saved, animals and plants saved ... that is what electricity means to farm production.

And it means new processing of farm products, right on the farm; a new source of income for part-time or seasonal employment of farm labor. That means a more stable farm population.

## **“LIFE IS JUST BEGINNING FOR US.”**

Here are some of the vistas before thousands upon thousands of farm people who will receive power in the future rural America:

### **BETTER HOUSING**

Minimum housing requirements should call for running water and sanitary plumbing. Electric light means comfort and safety. The postwar period may bring bacteria-killing lamps to sterilize dishes, as they are now used in poultry houses to protect birds. A lamp of this sort might even be inserted in a water pipe to kill waterborne germs. Air cleansing and cooling devices for rooms are on the way. So is electrical heating. For rural homes as well as city homes, television and improved radios are postwar likelihoods. And improved kitchen facilities bring in their train bright new floor covering, new cabinets, paint and wallpaper.

### **BETTER NUTRITION**

Better-balanced, more nourishing meals can follow in the wake of electric service. A refrigerator saves large amounts of food for a family every year. After the war, a farm family will be able to buy a small mill for grinding the grain it raises into the flour it uses ... a better, richer flour.

Irrigation helps to grow better and more vegetables in the kitchen garden, and a refrigerator preserves their vitamin content for short periods. Quick-freezing and dehydration for longer-term storage will retain the highest possible degree of nutritive value, and guarantee a shift from fresh meat only at butchering time and fresh vegetables at picking time, to a better-balanced diet the year round.

### **BETTER SCHOOLS**

Electricity means more than better light for better sight, important as that is. It means power for motion pictures and slide films, war-proved educational tools of first magnitude. Power for vocational shops and domestic science laboratories and kitchens. Power for radio and loud-

speaker broadcasting. Power for quick hot lunch preparation to build stronger bodies. Power for running water and modern sanitary facilities.

Three-fourths of the nation’s rural schools are not electrified. But substantial progress is being made to correct this condition.

### **BETTER HOME LIVING**

In addition to the changes in the physical character of the home will come a host of new appliances—washers, irons, ranges, roasters, toasters, vacuum cleaners, hotplates, and many lesser known. These are more than time-saving in the usual sense. They are actual aids to farm production, giving the farm homemaker more time to spend on the farmyard chores. And as they are used more fully they will start new ways of thinking about simplification of household tasks. During the war, this means more time to work elsewhere. After the war, when the tempo of production slows and more help becomes available, it means more time for cultural activities, more time to plan, more time to live!

### **BETTER COMMUNITY LIVING**

Running water and simple lights in schools, churches, libraries and community buildings are only a beginning. “Lights” can mean light for stage performances, for motion pictures, for concerts, for ball games, for lectures, for adult education classes of all kinds. It’s up to the community to decide to what use lights are put.

Power can mean better public health facilities—more modern, well-equipped hospitals; more sanitary stores and restaurants, with freezing cabinets and refrigerators, fans and running water; better public establishments of all kinds.

### **BETTER COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

REA-financed cooperatives’ office buildings, modern in design, have been, and increasingly will be, the center of modern, progressive community development. Two architects recently envisioned (and drew plans for) a rural activities center including several kinds of food processing plants, a cooperative market, demonstration farms, classrooms and a cultural and recreational center ... all built around an electric “heart.”

**Rural America is coming into a new era. It is entering the Power Age. Low-cost, dependable electric lines threading the nation offer the promise of vast social and economic changes. Tomorrow’s generation will look back at a kerosene lamp-handpump economy, and it will seem a far-distant world—much as we today regard the life in colonial America.**



# Chicago Doctor Invents Affordable Hearing Aid

## Outperforms Many Expensive Hearing Aids

Reported by J. Page

**CHICAGO:** A local board-certified Ear, Nose, Throat (ENT) physician, Dr. S. Cherukuri, has just shaken up the hearing aid industry with the invention of a medical-grade, affordable hearing aid. **This revolutionary hearing aid is designed to help millions of people with hearing loss who cannot afford—or do not wish to pay—the much higher cost of traditional hearing aids.**

### DOCTORS AND PATIENTS AGREE: "BEST QUALITY SOUND" "LOWEST AFFORDABLE PRICE"

*"I have been wearing hearing aids for over 25 years and these are the best behind-the-ear aids I have tried. Their sound quality rivals that of my \$3,000 custom pair of Phonak Xtra digital ITE."*—Gerald Levy

*"Perhaps the best quality-to-price ratio in the hearing aid industry."*

—Dr. S. Babu Board-Certified ENT Physician, National Authority on Hearing Loss

*"I have a \$2,000 Resound Live hearing aid in my left ear and the MDHearingAid in the right ear. I am not able to notice a significant difference in sound quality between the two hearing aids."*

—Dr. May, ENT Physician

**"Perhaps the best quality-to-price ratio in the hearing aid industry"** —Dr. Babu, M.D. Board-Certified ENT Physician

Dr. Cherukuri knew that untreated hearing loss could lead to depression, social isolation, anxiety, and symptoms consistent with Alzheimer's dementia. **He could not understand why the cost for hearing aids was so high when the prices on so many consumer electronics like TVs, DVD players, cell phones and digital cameras had fallen.**

Since Medicare and most private insurance do not cover the costs of hearing aids, which traditionally run between \$2,000-\$6,000 for a pair, many of the doctor's patients could not afford the expense. Dr. Cherukuri's goal was to find a reasonable solution that would help with the most common types of hearing loss at an affordable price, not unlike the **"one-size-fits-most"** reading glasses available at drug stores.

He evaluated numerous hearing devices and sound amplifiers, including those seen on television. Without fail, almost all of these were found to amplify bass/low frequencies (below 1000 Hz) and not useful in amplifying the frequencies related to the human voice.

### Inspiration From a Surprising Source

The doctor's inspiration to defeat the powers-that-be that kept inexpensive hearing aids out of the hands of the public actually came from a new cell phone he had just purchased. **"I felt that if someone could devise an affordable device like an iPhone® for about \$200 that could do all sorts of things, I could create a hearing aid at a similar price."**

### Affordable Hearing Aid With Superb Performance

The high cost of hearing aids is a result of layers of middlemen and expensive unnecessary features. Dr. Cherukuri concluded that it would be possible to develop a medical grade hearing aid without sacrificing the quality of components. The result is the MDHearingAid PRO®, starting well under \$200. **It has been declared to be the best low-cost hearing aid that amplifies the range of sounds associated with the human voice without overly amplifying background noise.**

### Tested By Leading Doctors and Audiologists

The MDHearingAid PRO® has been rigorously tested by leading ENT physicians and audiologists who have unanimously agreed that the **sound quality and output in many cases exceeds more expensive hearing aids.**

- Designed By A Board-Certified Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) Doctor
- Doctor-Recommended, Audiologist-Tested
- ★★★★★ Top rated hearing aid online—thousands of satisfied customers
- FDA-Registered
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- 100% Money Back Guarantee



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# It's the Trip of a Lifetime

BY SUZANNE HABERMAN

ILLUSTRATIONS BY CHRISTINA UNG



**Y**OU'RE A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT IN RURAL TEXAS. You're smart; you have big dreams. Maybe you've never been out of the state, and maybe you've never flown in a plane, but you want to travel—experience a big city, visit national landmarks and meet people, and not just fellow high schoolers but influential public figures, like U.S. representatives.

If that describes you, then you're a candidate to compete for a slot on the Government-in-Action Youth Tour, a weeklong all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., sponsored by electric cooperatives and organized by Texas Electric Cooperatives and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

The idea came from President Lyndon B. Johnson, a Texan who advocated for rural electrification and youth development. In 1957, when he was still a U.S. senator, Johnson suggested “sending youngsters to the national capital where they can actually see what the flag stands for and represents.”

This notion evolved into a nationwide effort to send youths on an organized, fun and educational trip in the 1960s. Now, about 50 years later, electric cooperatives in nearly every state send more than 1,500 youths to the country's capital city every summer.

Texas co-ops have upheld their commitment to educating youths and supporting their communities by sponsoring students on the trip every year since 1965. This June, 113 Texas high school students went on Youth Tour.

Even after five decades, the refrain from those returning remains the same.

**“That trip was one of the absolute highlights of my life. I'm still so appreciative of those experiences and what the co-op invested in me and the people that spent time with me because it widened a little country girl's world in ways that I would have never dreamed possible.”**

ETHEL (MABRY) ELLISON | LIGHTHOUSE EC, 1965

It's the trip of a lifetime.

You could be part of this electric cooperative legacy with the 2014 Government-in-Action Youth Tour. Next year's trip is June 12–20, but it's not too soon to ask your electric cooperative how to apply and start studying the map and thinking about what you're going to ask your U.S. representatives and senators.

## Mapping the Decades

Explore the Government-in-Action Youth Tour map of Washington, D.C., and hear from six decades of Youth Tour delegates who have gone before.

### 1960s

“We were up there [at **Arlington National Cemetery 1**] after Kennedy's assassination, and another person on the tour and I got to lay a wreath on his grave, and it was one of the most wonderful experiences in my life to this day.”

ETHEL (MABRY) ELLISON | LIGHTHOUSE EC, 1965

### 1970s

“Before leaving [the **Lincoln Memorial 2**], the Texas delegation gathered on the front steps and sang ‘America the Beautiful.’ It seemed like the only appropriate thing to do, for each of us had suddenly become aware of a closeness to our country and to each other that we never felt before.”

PAULETT (TIELSCH) RENFRO | FAYETTE EC, 1970

### 1980s

“The [**Supreme**] **Court 3** was in session, and I was permitted to sit on the back row and witness oral arguments. I was in awe. My lasting impression of the tour is the openness of our government—how ordinary citizens can access justice and impact decision-makers.”

CARRIE CAMPBELL | PEDERNALES EC, 1985

### 1990s

“It was a really moving experience to witness the U.S. Marine Corps Silent Drill Platoon perform at the Sunset Parade at the **Iwo Jima Memorial 4**. We had been hustling and bustling all week long, and suddenly, we were silent, captivated.”

ASHLEY CLARY-CARPENTER | MEDINA EC, 1996

### 2000s

“One of the most impactful [moments] was seeing the **Washington Monument 5** from the **Lincoln Memorial 2**, with the serene reflecting pool separating the two. Standing there and thinking about all the historical figures who had walked those same grounds.”

STACEY KOVAR | FAYETTE EC, 2004

“I took over 400 pictures on the trip. I couldn't put the camera down.”

WESLEY MARTIN | UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES, 2007

### 2010s

“One of my favorite features was the **Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts 6**, a memorial for President John F. Kennedy. Seeing the flags of America's allies hung high on the wall was breathtaking.”

ANNIE MCGINNIS | GRAYSON-COLLIN EC, 2011

“Walking through [the **Holocaust Memorial Museum 7**] and seeing everything that they went through, it just caused silence. To go in there after being so loud and crazy and having fun, and just hearing that silence, it was really humbling.”

SARAH BRANHAM | SWISHER EC, 2012

### More

“During one of the **White House 8** visits, we had been waiting on the South Lawn for a long time for the president to arrive. A door to the White House suddenly springs open ... and out walks a Youth Tour participant escorted by the Secret Service. He had had to go to the restroom. How many people can say they went to the restroom in the White House?”

DENNIS ENGELKE | TEC YOUTH TOUR DIRECTOR, 1976–2000


On [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com) More quotes



# Extras

**7 T-Shirts** Students receive matching T-shirts and polos to wear each day during the tour.

**50 Stickers** Each student gets a stack of 50 stickers to exchange with participants from other states, a Youth Tour tradition.

 Follow Youth Tour on Twitter @YouthTourDC. Tweet with #YTDC.

 More than 1,000 members joined Youth Tour's Facebook group.

**Photos** Professional photos are on [photos.youthtour.org](http://photos.youthtour.org).





# Youth Tour Nine-Day Itinerary

<p><b>Day 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check in at Sheraton DFW Airport Hotel</li> </ul> <p>“The blend of the history, the government, and the sheer experience of the trip (friendships and camaraderie) drove home the concept of a larger world and the sheer magnificence of our country.”  <b>Sarah (Muras) Koehl, Fayette EC, 1988</b></p> 	<p><b>Day 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fly to Ronald Reagan National Airport</li> <li>• Washington National Cathedral</li> <li>• Check in to Hyatt Regency Crystal City</li> <li>• Concert and play at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts</li> </ul> 	<p><b>Day 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arlington National Cemetery</li> <li>• Wreath-laying ceremony at Tomb of the Unknown Soldier</li> <li>• Newseum</li> <li>• Guided tour of Washington, D.C.</li> </ul> 
<p><b>Day 4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Devotional</li> <li>• Mount Vernon</li> <li>• Union Station</li> <li>• Boat cruise and dance on Potomac River</li> </ul> 	<p><b>Day 5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Youth Day</li> <li>• Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center</li> <li>• Smithsonian Institution</li> <li>• Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial</li> <li>• Thomas Jefferson Memorial</li> </ul> 	<p><b>Day 6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Photo session on Capitol Hill</li> <li>• Meet U.S. legislators</li> <li>• White House tour</li> <li>• Sunset Parade at U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial</li> </ul> 
<p><b>Day 7</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• United States Holocaust Memorial Museum</li> <li>• National Mall and Memorial Parks</li> <li>• NRECA farewell dinner and dance</li> </ul> 	<p><b>Day 8</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fly to Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport</li> <li>• Check in at Sheraton DFW Airport Hotel</li> <li>• Farewell events</li> </ul> 	<p><b>Day 9</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Return home</li> </ul> <p>“The maturation of youthful teens was remarkable. I received numerous letters from parents after the trip saying: ‘I don’t know what you did on that trip, but my son/daughter is a different person.’”  <b>Dennis Engelke,</b>  <i>TEC Youth Tour director, 1976-2000</i></p> 

## The Details

### How To Apply

Contact your electric cooperative.

Although Youth Tour is a national program, individual cooperatives sponsor local students and create their own application deadlines and processes, which can include a brief essay, speech contest and/or interview. To identify your co-op, visit [youthtour.coop/findyourcoop](http://youthtour.coop/findyourcoop).

Instead of Youth Tour, some cooperatives in East Texas participate in the East Texas Rural Electric Youth Seminar held each summer on a college campus. East Texas Baptist University in Marshall hosted the 2013 seminar in June. The

ETREYS program concentrates on leadership skills, problem-solving and interpersonal relationships among co-op youths.

### Youth Leadership Council

During Youth Tour, students and chaperones elect a delegate to represent Texas on the Youth Leadership Council. YLC representatives—one from each state—return to Washington, D.C., about a month after Youth Tour for a conference where they enhance their leadership and public-speaking skills and learn about the energy industry and co-op business model. The following spring, they partici-

pate in the NRECA’s annual meeting, carrying their home state’s flag at opening ceremonies, helping attendees contact their legislators about pertinent co-op issues, and serving as pages and assistants.

### National Youth Day

On National Youth Day, Youth Tour students from all states convene for a program that highlights the spirit of electric cooperatives’ commitment to community and the importance of civic engagement. Features have included inspirational and motivational speakers, social events and introductions to Youth Leadership Council representatives.



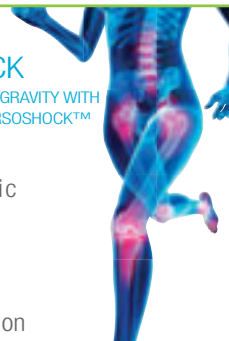
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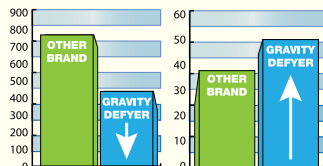
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# Small Measures, Real Savings

*Simple steps for do-it-yourself energy auditing*

BY MAGEN HOWARD

No matter the age of your home, it could benefit from an energy audit. An audit conducted by a certified professional can be helpful, but you can get started on your own in finding low-cost solutions that could save money on your monthly electric bill.

First, ask yourself a simple question: Does my home feel drafty and cold in the winter, or stuffy and hot in the summer? If yes, then it probably experiences air leakage.

To track down where those spots are, start with the usual suspects—like damaged seals around doors and windows. If you see daylight or feel air, then apply caulk and weatherstripping to keep outdoor air where it's supposed to be.

But don't forget spots you might not immediately identify, such as recessed canister lights and electrical outlets. Outlet insulation kits can be purchased for as little as \$2, and you can fix up your canister lights with some caulk around the edges.

Also look where walls meet the ceiling. Cobwebs mean you've got drafts.

Next, peek into the attic and inspect the crawl space or basement for sufficient insulation. Keep in mind that insulation won't do its job well if you don't

have a proper air barrier working in tandem. That means all joints and cracks must be sealed between your living space and insulation.

Finally, look to your light fixtures. Compact fluorescent lightbulbs are up to 75 percent more efficient than traditional incandescent bulbs, and they've come a long way in light quality, design and affordability. You can purchase CFLs in a variety of shapes and hues. They cost more up front, but you could make your money back in less than nine months. After that, they start saving money. Make sure to purchase a CFL that's rated by Energy Star, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's program that denotes products meeting specific energy-efficiency criteria. Energy Star-rated CFLs will typically last 10 times longer than a traditional incandescent bulb producing the same amount of light.

LEDs—light-emitting diodes—are the next wave of residential lighting. An Energy Star-rated model is estimated to use only a quarter of the electricity consumed by traditional bulbs and can last for 25 years. As with many new technologies, the upfront cost for an LED bulb is still much more than even a CFL, but prices are expected to drop as new products are developed.

Magen Howard writes for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.



## Don't Like Cold Showers?

*Clean your water heater*

**If your hot showers quickly turn cold, the culprit could be dirt and debris.**

A showerhead can get clogged over time, especially if you have hard water, so it's a good idea to give it a good scrubbing on a regular basis. Likewise, the house's plumbing and your water heater can collect rust, sediment and debris, so having a plumber flush them out every now and then could make your hot water supply more reliable.

If your older water heater is rusted or eroding, sediment can settle in it and clog pipes. A clogged pipe can reduce water flow, so not enough hot water gets to you while you're showering.

You can flush out your water heater yourself by connecting a garden hose to the discharge valve found at the bottom of most units. Open the valve and let the water run for about five minutes to discharge sediments that collect at the bottom of a water heater's tank.

Like any machine with operating parts, your plumbing system and water heater need regular maintenance. Sometimes, a plumber can clean out your system and solve the problem; but for older systems, often the best bet is to replace the water heater with a newer, cleaner, more energy-efficient model.



**Swapping out old-school incandescent bulbs for high-efficiency compact fluorescents will lower energy use for lighting and reduce heat gain in your home.**



# How Smart Appliances Interact with the Grid

BY BRIAN SLOBODA

**“Smart appliances” promise consumers greater control of home energy costs while giving electric co-ops a way to bolster energy-saving programs. Although not-for-profit electric cooperatives are at the forefront of testing these devices, smart appliances have a long way to go before they will be a useful addition to modern life.**

First of all, what makes an appliance “smart”? Manufacturers are beginning to add communications modules to some appliances, such as dishwashers, as well as in-wall outlets, that can use wireless Internet capabilities to send and receive simple messages from a connected home energy network.

Through these networks, you can monitor energy consumption, turn devices on and off, and change the setting on your thermostat.

**Smart appliances, such as this clothes washer from Whirlpool, can be monitored via a smartphone app and work with an electric utility to shift its use to times when electricity is less expensive.**



PHOTOS: WHIRLPOOL CORP.

## Limited Approach

Limited applications of home energy networking give consumers access to detailed information about their monthly electricity use. Data is collected and provided to the consumer via an in-home display or password-protected website. Enhanced information and graphs may also be included. Demonstrations of limited-capability systems have consistently resulted in energy savings of between 6 and 11 percent. Your electric co-op may also be able to suggest further energy-saving opportunities specific to the consumer's home, appliances and electricity use.



**The Whirlpool app also gives you details related to each of your connected smart appliances.**

## Basic Applications

Basic home energy networks provide consumers with the same detailed information and offer increased control over HVAC systems and major appliances to take advantage of time-of-use pricing. With time-of-use rates, the cost for electricity varies according to the time when it's used. Consumers also gain the ability to set home comfort levels and operating preferences remotely via a mobile app and optimize performance under available rate options.

Such basic systems have been shown to shift energy use out of peak periods and reduce a consumer's demand by as much as 50 percent. However, if a consumer does not pay attention to grid signals that alert to higher or lower electric rates, he or she could end up paying more for power.

## Advanced Applications

Home energy networking becomes most attractive when configured to both minimize a consumer's bill and a co-op's underlying cost of service. These advanced applications incorporate a variety of devices, ranging from simple in-home displays and websites to advanced apps on a smartphone or tablet.

**Brian Sloboda** is a program manager for the Cooperative Research Network.

# Demands of the Job Are Off the Charts



Preserving historic documents, where bits and pieces of the past are hanging by a thread, is a meticulous undertaking

BY CAMILLE WHEELER

CHERYL CARRABBA GENTLY FINGERS THE tattered bits of paper flaking off an 1886 Reeves and Pecos counties railroad survey blueprint. When she first unrolled the blueprint on a worktable, map pieces held precariously in place by adhesive tape and raw silk fell away, like dead leaves dropping from a drought-stricken tree.

As chief conservator for the Texas General Land Office's historic document preservation program, Carrabba is used to puzzling over such perplexing situations. Every three to four months, she drives from her North Austin business, Carrabba Conservation, to the GLO near the Capitol, dropping off completed work orders and picking up new batches of maps and related documents in need of professional, emergency repair.

Carrabba sees the results of well-intentioned efforts to save maps long before modern conservation techniques were the norm. Adhesive tape can leave permanent stains. And raw silk, essentially pasted-down netting holding pieces in place, ultimately does more harm than good.

Sometimes, map pieces attached to linen backing simply fall off. Occasionally, per the diligence of GLO officials trying to preserve a document's integrity, Carrabba receives broken-off pieces in separate envelopes.

It is then Carrabba's job to put the pieces back together. In some cases, she can rebuild an entire section of a county. But this is conservation work, not restoration: What's gone is gone. On an April afternoon, Carrabba inspects a 1901 Dallam County map she's been working

on, a hand-drawn manuscript that's clean and pretty ... with some information missing.

"I wish I had it, but I don't," Carrabba says. "If I did, I'd put it in."

The pieces are lost, forever. And therein lies the mission of the GLO's Save Texas History program: Conserve and protect the land office's historic and invaluable documents, the oldest dating back to 1720, for future generations. On disintegrating maps, save what information remains—including details hanging by a thread.

But conservation can't be rushed. It typically takes Carrabba three months to complete an average-size work order of 17 maps, a fastidious, laborious process of cleaning, mending and relining paper documents with handmade, acid-free Japanese tissues and papers. It also takes money. With fragile documents at risk, including those bearing the original signatures of such Texas heroes as Jim Bowie and Stephen F. Austin, GLO officials are asking Texans to "adopt" a state map or document by paying its conservation fee.

Adoptions take on critical importance: The land office contains records of every original, handwritten survey representing almost every square inch of land in Texas. Accordingly, the GLO's working archive is accessed daily by surveyors and title and genealogical researchers.

Yet some files are finally getting a break: Since 2000, more than 2.5 million of the land office's 35.5 million archival documents, including all maps, have been digitally scanned in full color and



are available for online use. “You have the opportunity now to search 24/7,” says Susan Smith Dorsey, director and records management officer of the GLO’s archives and records program. “If you want to get up in the middle of the night and search in your pajamas, you can.”

Meanwhile, the GLO’s original documents are resting inside a repository opened in 2005 featuring state-of-the-art climate-control and fire-suppression systems. Maps are laid flat inside cabinets, safe in a dark, sterile environment.

But not even a world-class storage system can resuscitate documents damaged long ago: Carrabba gets old maps that have been ripped, rolled, stacked, glued, taped, varnished, chewed by bugs, exposed to light and heat, attacked by mold, and folded and unfolded countless times.

She heeds the conservator’s creed: Do no harm. And just like the medical profession from whence that motto comes, Carrabba, whose background includes work as a registered nurse, focuses on saving the lives of her patients—vulnerable, stressed documents—in need of tender, loving care.

Context comes before beauty. Carrabba holds up a conserved 1881 Tyler County map that came to her horribly scarred by mold. Wetting the linen backing would have caused more damage, and using a cotton swab for cleaning could have obliterated a river. So the brown scars remain—and the map is saved.

Carrabba, who earned certification in paper conservation from London’s highly acclaimed Camberwell College of Arts in 1978, is part doctor, part artist, part seamstress and part chemist who cooks her own adhesive—preservative-free wheat starch paste.

All projects begin with photo documentation: the recording of a document’s condition before original backings are removed by washing maps in warm, filtered water. Next, old adhesives are removed with soft brushes, cotton balls and cotton swabs; blotter washes absorb and draw off dirt and debris.

The mending process includes a mattress needle and a thin Japanese tissue called *tengujo*, made from kozo plant fibers. Once mended, documents are slowly dried—laid flat and pulled taut—for two to three days. Next, maps receive new Japanese paper backings: first, *kitakata*, made from fibers of the gampi bush; followed by *okawara*, made from

kozo fibers. Finally, maps are trimmed, sealed and placed in Mylar sleeves.

Carrabba marvels at the resiliency of paper documents, but it’s not enough for them to merely survive. As the recorded history of a vast industrial culture, they must be preserved. Otherwise, as Carrabba says, “like cave paintings and relics from thousands of years ago, they will recede with the advances of our electronic age.”

So goes the work of the paper conservator, painstakingly reversing the ravages of time, map by map, thread by thread.

*Camille Wheeler is an Austin writer.*

**ADOPT A MAP** Individuals, corporations and organizations may make tax-deductible contributions toward the conservation of historic documents via the General Land Office’s Save Texas History program, which receives no state appropriations. Conservation costs can range from \$500 to \$20,000, and the GLO can accept contributions on a layaway plan. The adopter gets two prints of the conserved document and recognition on the GLO website. For more information, go to [savetexas.history.org](http://savetexas.history.org).

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**Cheryl Carrabba, examining a fragment of the 1901 Crockett County map, says she marvels at the resiliency of paper documents, which can get wet, wadded or forgotten in basements and attics and somehow survive.**

# Guided by the Writing on the Wall

In quest to spring people and tales to life, writer visits places real and imagined—always shadowed by humility

BY JAN REID

I'M A WRITER.

At the age of 14, I started writing a novel on lined notebook paper. In 1959, a man named John Farris published a steamy novel about teenagers called "Harrison High." It sold a million copies and is still in print. Rumor had it that Farris was a teenager when he wrote the novel, though he was 23 when it came out. I thought, I can do that! I wrote a couple of chapters in pencil, copied them in peacock blue ink, and illustrated them. That was the end of it. I was a teenager.

A year or so later a cousin gave me a copy of J.D. Salinger's "Catcher in the Rye." I gave it back, shocked by the profanity. I guess I thought it would be about a baseball player.

But when I was a college freshman, an English professor assigned my class Salinger's novel; for the first time I stayed up all night reading a book. I had about as much in common with the novelist's prep school runaway in New York as a broomstick pony had with Secretariat. But I was transfixed by the people sprung to life by images, comedy, dialogue.

Five years later, a gifted young writer named James Hoggard taught the first creative writing class on our small campus, and on seeing my first story, he sent me off with encouragement that I could be a writer. I thought it was going to be easy.

I moved to Dallas and got a job approving or canceling strangers' car insurance policies. I suffered first love's broken heart, and oh, I pitied myself. At night in my bitter blues, I tore through a novel about a lone wolf assassin. But I

was trying to write like Salinger. I italicized loads of verbs and modifiers in the dialogue, trying to make sure readers heard the voices right.

A man was excited about the book and gave me a publishing contract. He did suggest that all those italicized verbs and adjectives were effete. I had to look up the word. I gave my masterpiece another hard and sobered look, and it was awful. I wish I still had those innocent lines in peacock blue, but I'm glad that typed manuscript with my name on it rode a garbage truck to its grave long ago.

I realized I hadn't read enough to be a writer. So for two years I was a graduate student. I sent short stories to literary quarterlies; my favorite note of rejection: "This has a pleasing disorganization but of course you intended that." Disorganized? And now I had two degrees that prepared me for no workplace.

I had an audition at a now defunct newspaper in Fort Worth. A grimy weekend editor gave me a fact sheet about a suspicious corpse found in a river bottom and told me to write a news story in 15 minutes on a typewriter that didn't have a "J" key. I walked out humiliated. I had never taken a journalism class and had no idea how to be a reporter. I started learning the craft in humble jobs with small-town newspapers.

The early '70s were the heyday of the New Journalism, as branded by Tom Wolfe. He proposed that stylish magazine writing, such as his own, spelled the death of the novel. (He later got off his high horse and became a novelist.)





Jan Reid and his collie Gus in his office at his Austin home

Just as I got a fine new job at the New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung, our state gained an ambitious variant on the New Journalism formula, and as a freelancer I lucked into Texas Monthly's ground floor. My fourth article published in the magazine's first year spawned my hurried first book about Willie Nelson, Armadillo World Headquarters and the cosmic cowboy craze.

I gave the hybrid sound a Tom Wolfe-like brand, "redneck rock," which annoyed some musicians. But you get to count the terms you've coined, and that's the only one in my purse.

I decided if I was going to be the kind of writer I aspired to be, I had to make the leap of faith, so I quit my job with few dollars to my name. Two breaks came along. I broke a rousing story about a jailbreak of Americans in Piedras Negras, Coahuila, and felt at last I was a real reporter, for the truth behind the international incident had been locked up so tight.

Some generous folks gave me a six-month fellowship on J. Frank Dobie's old

Paisano Ranch. There I learned essentials of routine and rhythm. I had never known I am a morning person. I wrote half a draft of a novel there and gave my barely disguised hometown and the book an Indian name. When I drove away with my collie, I had no idea seven years would pass before it came out.

Since then, I've squired about 150 articles and essays into a score of publications, some read throughout the country. I've put my name on 12 books, and books are a writer's marks on the wall—Kilroy was here. Though I started out to be a novelist, just two of my books are fiction. The second one, a recasting of the end of the Comanche wars in Texas, consumed 25 years, off and on. Was that rational?

But what keeps drawing me back to fiction is that some days, though not often enough, characters start doing and saying things you didn't know they would. One day when my wife and I had paused on a long overlook in Big Bend, an Apache woman stepped out of the confusion in my mind and showed me how the

book could end. The feeling is sublime.

No less rewarding, in another way, was the next one, a biography of Gov. Ann Richards. My journalistic path had never given me much chance to write about women. In what other livelihood could I have roamed Manhattan with George Foreman, after he regained the heavyweight title at 48, and listened to his tales about Liston, Frazier and Ali?

Some months ago I took my car to a friendly mechanic whose skill and labor I hadn't needed in a while. He said, "I haven't seen you in 10 years."

"I'm glad you're still open," I replied, shaking hands.

"So how are you enjoying your retirement?"

I laughed. "I'm not retired. I couldn't retire if I wanted to."

He cocked his head and said, "What do you do for a living?"

"I'm a writer."

He laughed and cried, "Why, man, that's not workin'!"

Jan Reid is an Austin writer.

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# Clogged, Backed—up Septic System...Can anything Restore It?

**DEAR DARRYL:** My home is about 10 years old, and so is my septic system. I have always taken pride in keeping my home and property in top shape. In fact, my neighbors and I are always kidding each other about who keeps their home and yard nicest. Lately, however, I have had a horrible smell in my yard, and also in one of my bathrooms, coming from the shower drain. My grass is muddy and all the drains in my home are very slow.



Dear  
Darryl

My wife is on my back to make the bathroom stop smelling and as you can imagine, my neighbors are having a field day, kidding me about the mud pit and sewage stench in my yard. It's humiliating. I called a plumber buddy of mine, who recommended pumping (and maybe even replacing) my septic system. But at the potential cost of thousands of dollars, I hate to explore that option.

I tried the store bought, so called, Septic treatments out there, and they did Nothing to clear up my problem. Is there anything on the market I can pour or flush into my system that will restore it to normal, and keep it maintained?

*Clogged and Smelly – Waco, TX*

**DEAR CLOGGED AND SMELLY:** As a reader of my column, I am sure you are aware that I have a great deal of experience in this particular field. You will be glad to know that there IS a septic solution that will solve your back-up and effectively restore your entire system from interior piping throughout the septic system and even unclog the drain field as well. **SeptiCleanse® Shock and Maintenance Programs** deliver your system the fast active bacteria and enzymes needed to liquefy solid waste and free the clogs causing your back-up.

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# Rain, You Blasted Sky!

General R.G. Dyrenforth wasn't a general, and he wasn't really a rainmaker, nor was he a U.S. commissioner for patents, though he claimed all of these titles at one time or another. Officially, he was known as a "concussionist," one who makes it rain by blasting water from the sky with explosives in the belief that "rain follows the artillery." The general must have been pretty convincing because the U.S. government hired him to make it rain by virtue of things that go boom in the sky.

BY CLAY COPPEDGE

FOR A LITTLE MORE THAN A YEAR, STARTING in 1891, Dyrenforth was seen as everything he said he was, but mainly he was the man who could blast rain from the sky. The notion that such a thing could be done had been around for centuries. Plutarch, in the second century, first observed, or thought he did, that rain followed battles. Napoleon believed it, and so did a man named Edward Powers, a civil engineer who wrote the book on the subject, "War and the Weather," in 1871. The book detailed how rain generally fell a few days after a battle, but Powers neglected to study the probability of rain at a given site when a battle hadn't been fought there.

Powers persuaded Congress to invest \$2,000 initially to conduct experiments based on the theory. Dyrenforth was chosen to lead the task, and so he sallied forth to—where else?—Texas in the heat of summer.

Dyrenforth and his team of fellow scientific novices arrived in Midland armed with boxcars of dynamite, gunpowder, cannons, kites and balloons designed to explode. All of this firepower was directed at the sky: Rain or else! Come out of those clouds or we'll blast you out!

"I have no doubt that rainmaking will be carried on in portions of the country as a practical thing," Dyrenforth told *The New York Times*. "It is certain that rain can be caused by explosion in mid-air. I do not make any predictions as to the general practice, nor am I interested a cent in the question, but, as a matter of cold fact, based on my experiments, I know that rain can be produced."



Newspapers across the country hailed the experiments as an earth-shattering breakthrough—somewhat literally—in mankind's never-ending struggle to bend nature to its own purposes. The *Washington Post*, *New York Sun*, *Chicago Tribune* and *Rocky Mountain News* all reported torrents and gully washers resulting from Dyrenforth's explosives and gizmos. Of course, none of those papers were located anywhere near Midland; they had to take Dyrenforth's word for it, and they mostly did.

Two periodicals that did send reporters to observe the experiments firsthand were a couple of agricultural journals, *Farm Implement News* and *Texas Farm & Ranch*. The ag writers had a much different take on the proceedings and their results than Dyrenforth's press releases. They saw a group of people who mostly didn't know what they were doing, ill and forlorn, watching their gizmos go off at the wrong times and catching all manner of things on fire. Flimsy kites, no matter how well-armed, were no match for the West Texas winds. *Scientific American* magazine followed up on

the ag writers' reports and deemed Dyrenforth's experiments "an expensive farce."

Robert Kleberg of the King Ranch provided some money for Dyrenforth to blast the heavens around his place, and it actually rained there around the time of his experiments. In San Antonio, however, he blew out the windows in a downtown hotel, obliterated a mesquite tree and became an object of ridicule and scorn all over the country. He went back to working in the patent office and made no more news until after he died in 1910 at the age of 66, when his will was revealed.

Dyrenforth, supposedly of sound mind, stipulated that to receive his bequest, Dyrenforth's 12-year old grandson had to renounce Catholicism; finish high school; attend Harvard, Oxford and West Point; spend six months in the Army; and attend law school in the U.S. when he was through with all that.

The old man might as well have stipulated that his grandson do something really impossible—like fire explosives into the clouds to make it rain.

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# Smart Cookies

Longtime readers of Texas Co-op Power may recognize the name of Anna Ginsberg. The Pedernales Electric Cooperative member won the magazine's 2005 Holiday Recipe Contest. She also later won the prestigious Pillsbury Bake-Off.

In the meantime, Ginsberg hasn't rested on her laurels.

She has a food blog, Cookie Madness ([cookiemadness.net](http://cookiemadness.net)), which she updates regularly. And recently she wrote a cookbook, "The Daily Cookie" (Andrews McMeel, 2012).

The ambitious book provides 365 cookie recipes tied to a holiday or event for each day of the year: There's a recipe for Mint Thins for March 12, the anniversary of the founding of the Girl Scouts; one for Root Beer Biscotti for Root Beer Float Day on August 6; and a Peach Bars recipe to honor the November 8 birthday of Margaret Mitchell, author of "Gone with the Wind," which is set in Atlanta.

She tested and tasted each of the recipes in her home and saved them in a freezer for a three-day photography blitz that left her kitchen "covered in cookies." Ginsberg said after the photo shoot was finished, she invited neighborhood children over with trays to load up the pastries and take them home.

She said that although her husband, Todd, and 11-year-old daughter, Emma, will eat dessert, she's the one with the real sweet tooth. "I like sweets more than regular food," said Ginsberg, who bakes every day.

For dessert in a lunch bag, she suggested several recipes in the book, including these Hard-Boiled Egg Chocolate Chip Cookies (April 3, an Easter tie-in), which she said should hold up well in a sack, plus they're a way to use up some of those decorated eggs after the holiday. Boiled eggs are used by some European bakers in butter cookies, according to the cookbook.



## Hard-Boiled Egg Chocolate Chip Cookies

- 2½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup cold butter
- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- 2 hard-boiled eggs, shells removed
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees and place baking rack in center. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper or nonstick foil.
- Combine the flour, salt and baking soda in a food processor and pulse to mix. Add the butter and pulse until the mixture appears coarse and crumbly. Add sugars and the hard-boiled eggs. Pulse again until the mixture is mealy-looking. Add the vanilla and pulse again until the mixture just begins to come together. Transfer the mixture to a bowl and stir in the chocolate chips—you may need to use your hands to knead it all together; the dough will be thick. You will see egg whites in the dough—they'll disappear as the cookies bake.
- Shape the dough into 16 large balls. Arrange about 4 inches apart on the baking sheets and press down so that the tops are even. Bake one sheet at a time for 15 to 20 minutes, or until the cookies are lightly browned around the edges. Let cool on the baking sheets for 5 minutes then transfer to a wire rack to cool com-



Anna Ginsburg and her Hard-Boiled Egg Chocolate Chip Cookies

pletely. The texture gets better as the cookies cool. It's even better if you freeze the cooked cookies and then thaw them.

Servings: 16. Serving size: 1 cookie. Per serving: 259 calories, 3.4 g protein, 14.4 g fat, 28.5 g carbohydrates, 1.2 g dietary fiber, 197 mg sodium, 12.6 g sugars, 53 mg cholesterol

ALI ALLIE | COSERV ELECTRIC

CoServ Electric member Ali Allie, whose recipe for Mango, Chicken and Chorizo Quesadillas won the April contest, has done it again. This time she takes the honors in our **Lunchbox Favorites Contest** for a simple, tasty and satisfying chicken salad mix. If you're packing this for lunch, keep the bread and filling separated to prevent the toast from getting soggy. Put it together right before you eat and enjoy your lunch!

## Chicken Salad on Sourdough Toast

- 1 can (10 ounces) chicken in water
- ¼ cup low-fat sour cream
- ¼ cup Greek yogurt
- 1 stalk celery, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon seasoned salt
- ¼ cup sliced almonds
- ¼ cup dried cranberries
- 4 slices sourdough bread
- ¼ cup spinach leaves
- 1 large tomato, sliced, optional



- Combine chicken, sour cream, yogurt, celery, mustard, salt, almonds and cranberries in a large bowl and mix well.
- Lightly toast bread. Top with chicken mixture and spinach leaves. Add sliced tomatoes if desired. Serve immediately.

Servings: 2. Serving size: 1 sandwich. Per serving: 847 calories, 53.3 g protein, 27.2 g fat, 94.7 g carbohydrates, 7.1 g dietary fiber, 1,173 mg sodium, 18.7 g sugars, 66 mg cholesterol



**Cook's Tip:** If you want a creamier texture, increase the amount of sour cream and decrease the amount of yogurt.

## Fabulous Easy Tuna Salad

- 2 boiled eggs
- 2 to 3 stalks celery
- ½ red apple
- ½ cup red seedless grapes
- 1 can (7 ounces) tuna
- ½ cup chopped onion
- ½ teaspoon yellow mustard
- 2 to 3 tablespoons salad dressing
- ½ cup frozen whipped topping, thawed
- Nuts, optional
- Dried cranberries, optional

- Chop eggs. Cut celery, apple and grapes into small pieces. Mix tuna, eggs, celery, grapes, apple, onion, mustard, salad dressing and whipped topping, plus nuts or cranberries, if using. Refrigerate for a day before using.

- Serve on bread for sandwiches or eat with crackers.

Servings: 2. Serving size: 1 cup. Per serving: 389 calories, 29.1 g protein, 16.7 g fat, 27.7 g carbohydrates, 2.9 g dietary fiber, 328 mg sodium, 18.8 g sugars, 216 mg cholesterol

KATHLEEN McDONALD | FARMERS EC

## Cinnamon Roasted Nuts

- 1 large egg white
- 3 cups pecan halves
- 1 tablespoon cinnamon
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- ⅓ cup sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt

- Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Whisk the egg white in a cup.
- Place nuts in a medium bowl. Pour the egg white over the nuts, stirring until the nuts are well coated.
- In a small bowl, stir the cinnamon, vanilla, sugar and salt together. Add the cinnamon sugar mixture to the nuts, a little at a time, while stirring.
- Spread the coated nuts on an ungreased baking sheet. Bake for 20 minutes. Store in a cool, dry place. Add these flavorful nuts to any lunch for a healthy snack.

Servings: 12. Serving size: ¼ cup. Per serving: 197 calories, 2.6 g protein, 17 g fat, 9.6 g carbohydrates, 2.7 g dietary fiber, 52 mg sodium, 6.7 g sugars

JAMIE PIVONKA | MID-SOUTH SYNERGY

## Chicken Caesar Wrap

- 1 cup chopped romaine lettuce
- 1 cup cooked chicken, cubed
- ¼ cup croutons
- ⅓ cup shredded Parmesan
- 4 large spinach tortillas (or use your favorite flavor)
- Caesar dressing for serving

- Toss lettuce, chicken, croutons and Parmesan in a bowl. Divide filling among four tortillas. Fold ends of tortillas then fold sides around, like a burrito.

### Chicken Caesar Wrap



CHICKEN WRAP: NSPHOTOGRAPHIC | BIGSTOCK.COM



- Serve with Caesar dressing added to wrap or used as a dip.

Servings: 4. Serving size: 1 wrap with 1 tablespoon dressing. Per serving: 377 calories, 17.2 g protein, 15.8 g fat, 38.5 g carbohydrates, 2.6 g dietary fiber, 715 mg sodium, 2 g sugars, 34 mg cholesterol

PAM JOHNSON | NAVASOTA VALLEY EC

## Taco Soup

- 1 pound ground meat (beef, turkey or venison)
- 1 package taco seasoning
- 1 can (11 ounces) tomatoes with green chilies
- 1 can (14 ounces) ranch-style beans
- 1 can (14 ounces) hominy
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 2 cups grated cheddar cheese, divided
- 1 cup sour cream
- 4 cups tortilla chips

- Brown the meat, drain off fat and stir in taco seasoning.
- Put meat mixture, tomatoes, beans, hominy, onion and garlic together into a large pot. Simmer over medium heat for 30 minutes.
- Just before serving, stir in 1 cup of cheese during final 5 minutes. Serve in individual bowls or put into an insulated bottle for lunchtime.



Taco Soup

- Top a serving with chips, a dollop of sour cream and a generous sprinkle of remaining cheese.

Servings: 6. Serving size: 2 cups. Per serving: 499 calories, 25.6 g protein, 31.4 g fat, 23.7 g carbohydrates, 2.6 g dietary fiber, 606 mg sodium, 3.5 g sugars, 118 mg cholesterol

MARY HUNT | HEART OF TEXAS EC

## \$5,000 Holiday Recipe Contest

December's issue will feature winners of the Holiday Recipe Contest sponsored by the Texas Pecan Board. Appetizer, Main Dish, Side Dish, Dessert: Send us an ORIGINAL recipe in one of those four categories, and your recipe could be in the magazine and win you a cash prize. The deadline is August 10. See complete rules at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com).

There are three ways to enter: **ONLINE** at [TexasCoopPower.com/contests](http://TexasCoopPower.com/contests); **MAIL** to 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701; **FAX** to (512) 763-3401. All entries must include your name, address and phone number, plus the name of your co-op and the category you are entering. Three entries per co-op member. The overall winner gets \$3,000; four category winners get \$500 each.

## 9TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY RECIPE CONTEST

ENTER  
TODAY!  
DEADLINE:  
AUGUST 10

# \$5,000 in Prizes!

### 5 Winners! \$3,000 Grand Prizewinner!

*\$500 Best Appetizer Recipe. \$500 Best Main Dish Recipe.  
\$500 Best Side Dish Recipe. \$500 Best Dessert Recipe.*

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Send us your best original Texas pecan recipes. (These are recipes you develop, not ones copied from a friend or found in a book or magazine.) Show us how you use Texas pecans to create dishes that cover every part of a meal. All recipes must include pecans (Texas pecans are our favorite). Winners will be featured in our December 2013 issue. Enter by August 10, 2013, at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com). Go to [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com) for details and official rules.

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Enter online at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com). Each entry MUST include your name, address and phone number, plus the name of your Texas electric cooperative, or it will be disqualified. Specify which category you are entering, Appetizer, Main Dish, Side Dish or Dessert, on each recipe. Send entries to: Texas Co-op Power/Holiday Recipe Contest, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. You can fax recipes to (512) 763-3401. Up to three entries are allowed per co-op membership. Each should be submitted on a separate piece of paper if mailed or faxed. Mailed entries can all be in one envelope. No email entries will be accepted. For official rules, visit [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com). **Entry deadline: August 10, 2013.**

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**8 FT. 4" x 11 FT. 6" FARM QUALITY TARP**  
**SAVE 41%**  
**\$6.99** REG. PRICE \$11.99

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**2.5 HP, 21 GALLON, 125 PSI VERTICAL AIR COMPRESSOR**  
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**\$1.99** REG. PRICE \$5.99

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LOT NO. 93888/60497

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▲ **Lauren Summers**, daughter of **Kate Summers**, Bandera EC, feeds her chickens in Pipe Creek.

**Julie Gibson**, Pedernales EC, caught this dynamic moment when granddaughter **Kaela Truesdell** decided to share her birthday cake with her mommy (and Julie's daughter) **Caitlyn Truesdell** as husband **Jason** looks on. ►



**Peggy Patterson**, United Cooperative Services, says honorary granddaughter **Harper Kendrick Jones** loves watermelon—and clearly is not willing to share. ▼



▲ Every year, **Tamra Bolton's** family celebrates special occasions with boiled crawfish. She says daughter **Rachel Vickers** can really put the mudbugs down. Both Tamra and Rachel belong to Cherokee County EC.

A squirrel tries its best to get into a jar of peanut butter. **Anthony Etzler**, San Bernard EC, sent this in. ►

## Upcoming Contests

**October Issue: Texas Landmarks** *Deadline: August 10*

**November: Courage** **December: Homemade**

All entries must include name, address, daytime phone and co-op affiliation, plus the contest topic and a brief description of your photo. **ONLINE:** Submit highest-resolution digital images at [TexasCoopPower.com/contests](http://TexasCoopPower.com/contests). **MAIL:** Focus on Texas, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. 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. We do not accept entries via email. 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

### 105th Birthday Observance for President LBJ

**Stonewall** [August 31]

(830) 644-2252, [tpwd.state.tx.us/state-parks/lyndon-b-johnson](http://tpwd.state.tx.us/state-parks/lyndon-b-johnson)

*The day begins with a wreath-laying ceremony at President Lyndon B. Johnson's grave at the LBJ ranch. Afterward, enjoy games common in LBJ's day, such as washer pitching, and refreshments.*



LBJ RANCH: TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT. MARLIN: COREY FORD | BIGSTOCK.COM

## August

### 03

**Brownwood** Remembering When—Buddy Holly Tribute Dinner & Show, (325) 660-8338, [westtexasrehab.org](http://westtexasrehab.org)

### 07

**Port Aransas** [7–11] Texas Legends Billfish Tournament, (361) 749-5919, [portaransas.org](http://portaransas.org)

### 10

**Chappell Hill** Lavender and Wine Fest, 1-888-273-6426, [chappellhilllavender.com](http://chappellhilllavender.com)

**Columbus** Community Hospital Auction & Dinner, (979) 732-2371

**Palestine** The Dogwood Jamboree—Country Souvenirs & Shake, Rattle and Roll, (903) 729-7080, [dogwoodjamboree.org](http://dogwoodjamboree.org)

### 15

**Huntsville** Diva Night, (936) 295-8113, [chamber.huntsville.tx.us](http://chamber.huntsville.tx.us)

**August 7**  
**Port Aransas**  
**Texas Legends Billfish**  
**Tournament**



### 16

**Highland Village** [16–18] Balloon Festival (972) 317-6745, [hvballoonfest.com](http://hvballoonfest.com)

**Denton** [16–24] North Texas State Fair & Rodeo, (940) 387-2632, [ntfair.com](http://ntfair.com)

THERE'S A BUNCH OF NUTS HERE! LOL  
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and festivals around Texas. For a complete listing, please visit [TexasCoopPower.com/events](http://TexasCoopPower.com/events).

17

**Bronte** Oldies But Goodies Car Show,  
(325) 473-3501, [brontetexas.org](http://brontetexas.org)

**Clifton** Texas Troubadour Songwriter  
Classic, (254) 675-2278, [bosqueartscenter.org](http://bosqueartscenter.org)

**Hempstead** Watermelon Run for the Fallen,  
(281) 831-1750, [watermelonrftf.org](http://watermelonrftf.org)

18

**Burton** Lion/Lioness Fish Fry Fundraiser,  
(979) 289-2214

21

**Sherman** [21-24] Deep Summer Festival at  
Melody Ranch, (903) 546-6893,  
[melodyranchbluegrassfestival.com](http://melodyranchbluegrassfestival.com)

23

**Giddings** [23-25] Swap Meet,  
(512) 581-2802

24

**Waco** Margarita & Salsa Festival,  
(254) 776-1660, [extracoeventscenter.com](http://extracoeventscenter.com)

24

**Jasper** [24-25] Pine Country Gem & Mineral  
Show, (409) 384-3974, [pinecountrygms.org](http://pinecountrygms.org)

**The Colony** [24-25] Into the Woods Disc  
Golf Tournament, (972) 625-1106,  
[visiththecolonytx.org](http://visiththecolonytx.org)

31

**Doss** VFD Benefit Fish Fry, (830) 669-2353

**Plains** Yoakum County Watermelon  
Roundup, (806) 215-3743



August 3

**Brownwood**

**Remembering When—Buddy Holly  
Tribute Dinner & Show Festival**

31

**Bedford** [31-9/1] Bedford Blues & BBQ Fe-  
stival, (817) 952-2128, [bedfordbluesbbq.com](http://bedfordbluesbbq.com)

**Harper** [31-9/1] Frontier Day Rodeo,  
(830) 997-6523, [harpercommunitypark.org](http://harpercommunitypark.org)

## September 01

**Fayetteville** St. John Church Feast,  
(979) 378-2277

**Abilene** [1-3, 5-8] Dove Hunters Bash,  
(903) 816-0405, [abilenevisitors.com/calendar](http://abilenevisitors.com/calendar)

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Exhibits in La Grange piece together the artistry from around the world and across the centuries that pays tribute to cozy family heirlooms

BY CHARLES BOISSEAU

IN DOWNTOWN LA GRANGE, QUILTS ARE doing what quilts have always done.

They're bringing people together.

But instead of women huddling for a quilting bee or gathering at a quilt guild, or children snuggling under a grandmother's creation, visitors—quilters and nonquilters alike—come to the **TEXAS QUILT MUSEUM** to view the common and uncommon artistry of handmade quilts from around the world.

The museum opened in November 2011 in adjacent 19th-century buildings that had been extensively renovated into three galleries totaling more than 10,000 square feet. Rotating displays are assembled every several months.

The nonprofit museum is the handiwork of two of Texas' most prominent quilt promoters, cousins Karey Bresenhan and Nancy O'Bryant Puentes. In 1974, the duo started the **INTERNATIONAL QUILT FESTIVAL**, which is held each fall in

Houston (October 31–November 3 this year) and has become what they say is the nation's largest quilt event, drawing tens of thousands of visitors.

The museum, served by Fayette Electric Cooperative, displays traditional and contemporary styles made by quilters from around the world and from the private collection of hundreds of quilts owned by Bresenhan and Puentes' company, Quilts, Inc.

"I'm just awed by the women who could do it. I do not have the patience. But I can appreciate it," says visitor Debbie Lowe of Marion as she toured the museum's "Flower Power" exhibit. Lowe is a member of Guadalupe Valley Electric Cooperative.

Among the extraordinary quilts on display: 10 white stitched pieces by Hazel Canny, a Houston artist known for her fine needlework. Some of the elaborate designs included examples of trapunto, which refers to how quilters fill in areas

of the fabric with stuffing, creating a relief that gives shape to stems, leaves and other details. "Her stitching is so perfect it's like it's machined," says visitor Elaine Tracy.

Nationwide, an estimated 21 million quilters spend roughly \$3.6 billion annually on their pastime, according to the study *Quilting in America 2010*.

Bresenhan got her start quilting when her grandmother organized a quilting bee of eight relatives, including Bresenhan and Puentes, to make a quilt as a gift for her wedding in 1963. "Great-granny Karoline made the quilt top when I was born, and her daughter, my granny, kept it till I was ready to get married, which is when she called everybody together for a family quilting bee," Bresenhan says. "And of course I still have it."

She said that quilt remains the only one she has made. "I do not consider myself a quilter, because although I do quilt and love it and find it tremendously addictive, I do not have enough time to devote to making quilts," Bresenhan says.

At the museum, 65 quilts were on display like paintings, with accompanying labels. Some dated to the 1800s and, as with many antique quilts, were made by "anonymous," a stitcher lost to time.

In addition to the galleries and a store, the museum has expanded to a lot next door, where organizers have created a vintage garden with a pergola framed by a mural on the long exterior brick wall painted in a quilt design by Brent McCarthy of New Braunfels. The museum also is developing a library and material culture center in a back room as a resource for quilt scholars.

The museum exhibit, "America the Beautiful," showcasing patriotic quilts, continues through the end of September.

Charles Boisseau is an Austin writer and frequent contributor to *Texas Co-op Power*.

More info: (979) 968-3104,  
[texasquiltmuseum.org](http://texasquiltmuseum.org)



**WARMTH ON DISPLAY** In cozy 19th-century buildings in downtown La Grange, the Texas Quilt Museum showcases handiwork from across generations—even centuries. The museum, which opened in 2011, is an outgrowth of the nearly 40-year-old International Quilt Festival in Houston.



On **TexasCoopPower.com**

The origins and history of quilting





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