

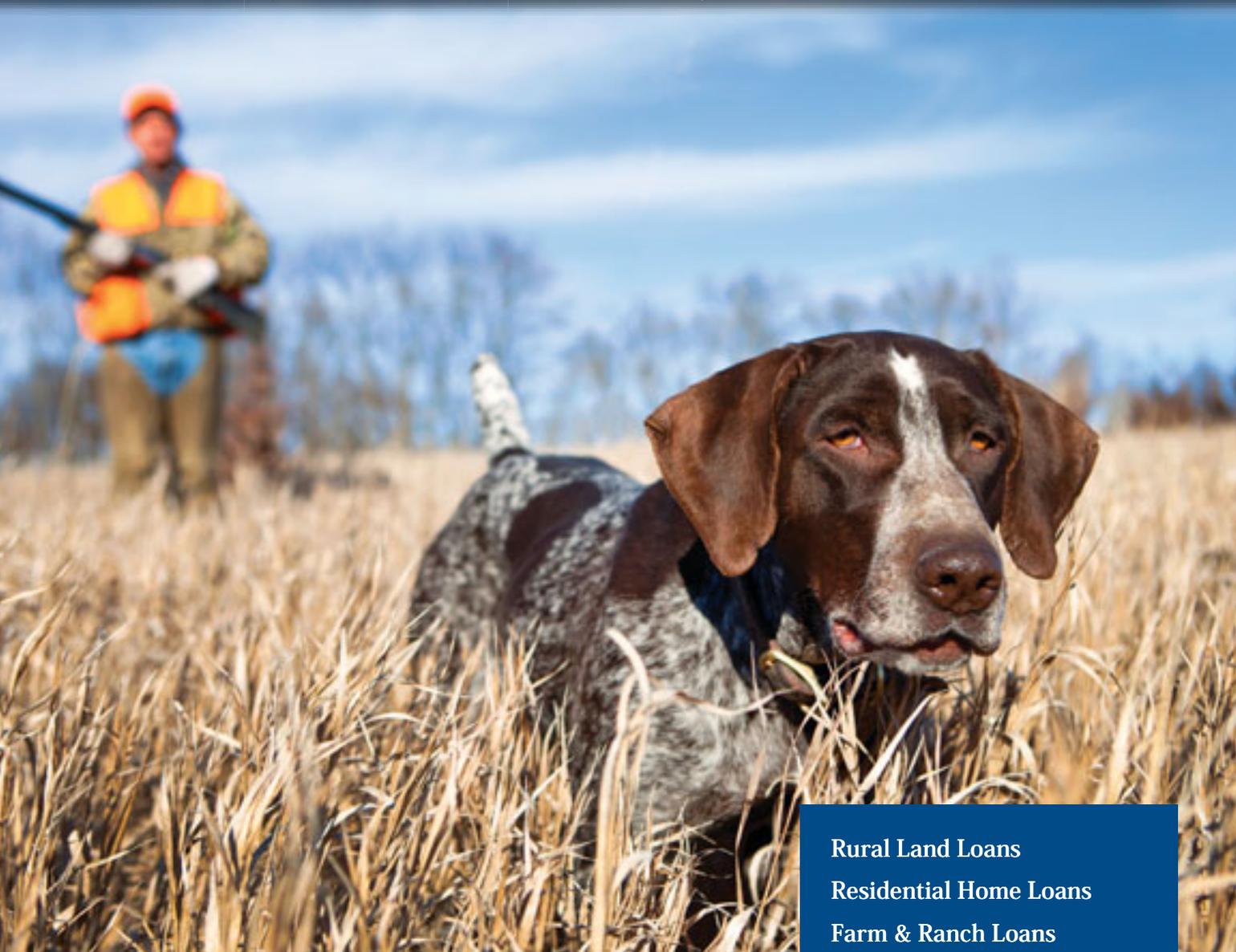
# TEXAS COOP POWER

A woman in traditional Mexican charro attire is riding a brown horse. She is wearing a large, wide-brimmed white hat, a brown and white lace top, and a long, ruffled skirt with brown and white stripes. The background shows a crowd of people and a building with a red roof.

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**COVER PHOTO** *Charro Days Fiesta in Brownsville showcases the traditional costumes of Mexico.* *By Brad Doherty*

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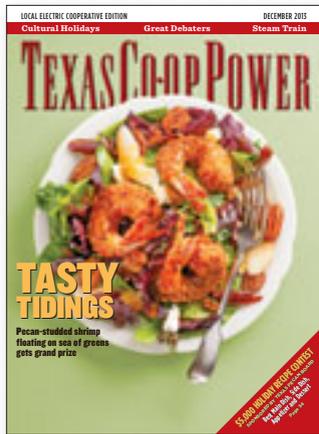
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## Czech Tradition

“How We Make Our Spirits Bright” [December 2013] brought back so many memories of growing up in a Czech family. I remember my dad telling us about St. Nick coming to our house that December night, accompanied by the devil with those rattling chains.

I have heard that story many times over, but it was wonderful to read about that Czech tradition once again.

BARB SCHROEDER | FAYETTE EC



## Winning Recipe

I find it disturbing that, at a time when obesity and diabetes are rampant, you would choose to feature a recipe containing 25.2 grams of fat, 86.1 grams of carbohydrates and 1,664 mg of sodium per serving. The 2013 Holiday Recipe Contest-winning recipe [December 2013] is pretty much a nutritional nightmare.

You owe it to your readers to try to do better.

GENIE MCLELLAND | NUJECES EC

## Familiar Taste

I was so happy to see the recipe for Early Texas Pecan Pralines in the

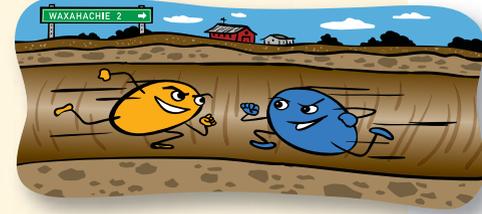
## Running Circles Around the Science World

I enjoyed “Waxahachie Washout” [December 2013] about the Superconducting Super Collider that was slated to circle Waxahachie.

I was the Ennis Chamber of Commerce executive director when Congressman Joe Barton came into my office to say that Ellis County had a shot at getting the multibillion-dollar project. I immediately started researching exactly what the project would be. My son was in high school and worked as an electrician’s helper on the project. I still have a Collider windbreaker and wear it often.

I truly believe that if George Herbert Walker Bush had been re-elected, the project would have been completed, and Texas and the world would have benefited from scientific discoveries rivaling NASA.

JOE D. NEWMAN | BASTROP COUNTY



November issue because it seemed like the same recipe that my mother used when we lived in Freer in the 1950s.

She would make an excursion to Laredo and come back with big sacks of shelled pecans and make big batches of these sugary, grainy pralines. So early this morning, setting aside anything else I had to do, I made them. Unfortunately, I didn’t cook them long enough, and they are kind of runny. But they taste just like Mama’s.

What a shame. Since they are not perfect, I will have to eat all of these myself and make another batch tomorrow.

BETTIE CASHION | PICAYUNE, MISSISSIPPI

## Port of Houston

My husband, Ben Campbell, age 90, remembers Mayor Ben Campbell, who was mayor when the Houston Ship Channel opened in 1914 [“Houston’s Sea Change,” November 2013]. He was Ben’s grandfather’s first cousin, and it was his grandfather who influenced him to

“read law.” In turn, Mayor Ben Campbell made sure his grandfather, who fought in the Civil War at Galveston, was taken care of in his later years.

ANDREA CAMPBELL | HEART OF TEXAS EC

## Litter Everywhere

Litter and its bugs seem to be everywhere [“Less Mess in Texas,” November 2013]. My 7-year-old grandson and I pick up trash along our road often. It’s very sad that folks just throw out their cans, bottles, to-go food stuff, even a cell-phone once.

WILMA MEISSNER | UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

## Camp Verde

After reading the Hit the Road about Camp Verde [November 2013], we decided to go there and check it out. We were aware that the Army had tried using camels as pack animals at forts in West Texas but did not know about Camp Verde and the part it played.

We spent a very pleasant after-

noon there looking over the grounds, shopping the general store and having a wonderful lunch. Well worth the trip.

PAT AND WALLY WALTERS | AUSTIN

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## HAPPENINGS

# Swing by Canton

Get your kicks with the one you love February 13-15 at the Western Swing Valentine Party in Canton. Swing, classic country-western and traditional honky-tonk bands fill the civic center downtown with their Southern twang. There's a huge dance floor, plenty to eat and seating for about 700. More than 200 RV spaces with full hookups are available. (Canton is home every month to First Monday Trade Days, the world's largest flea market and a haven for RVers.) One-, two- and three-day tickets are available for \$35, \$60 and \$75. Or show up after 5 p.m. any day and pay \$20.

INFO: 1-800-243-6502, [swingcanton.com](http://swingcanton.com)

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

## WHO KNEW?

### COOL HOMETOWNS

Winter's last gasp usually comes in February, but the names of these Texas towns keep a chill in the air year-round:

- Blanket
- Cool
- Crisp
- Frost
- Winters



## Seeing is Believing—And Relieving

Would you use a public restroom with see-through walls? In the middle of downtown? You can in the town square in Sulphur Springs, which boasts the only bathrooms in the U.S. with walls made of two-way mirrors.

Folks on the outside see their reflections in a giant mirrored box, but they can't see in. Step inside and you can do your business in total privacy, watching people outside as they walk by—and press against the glass to check if they can see inside.

"It's kind of a weird feeling," says Mike Elliott, 61, a Farmers Electric Cooperative member and lifelong Sulphur Springs resident who recently used one of the bathrooms. "I looked up and a girl I went to school with was right there, walking by on the sidewalk. I was, like, 'Whoa!'"

The town's two glass bathrooms, built last year, finished third in national online voting to name America's best restroom in a contest sponsored by Cintas, which provides restroom supplies. The winning bathroom is at the Varsity Theater in Minneapolis, where sinks are operated by foot pedal and bartenders serve drinks into the restroom on a back counter.

This is the second year in a row that a Texas bathroom received national acclaim. The 2012 best bathroom award went to Buc-ee's in New Braunfels, described as impeccably clean with a jaw-dropping 83 stalls.

DANCERS, COLD CITIES AND BUGS: EDD PATTON; RESTROOM: COURTESY OF CINTAS

ON THIS DATE

# Honky-Tonk Pioneer

February 9 marks 100 years since Ernest Tubb, one of the original national stars of country-western music, was born on a cotton farm near Crisp, about 30 miles southeast of Dallas.

As a teen, Tubb became a huge fan of Jimmie Rodgers, learning to play guitar, sing and yodel like his musical hero. Unlike Rodgers, who had an illustrious but short career, Tubb toured and performed for more than 40 years.

His biggest hit, "Walking the Floor Over You," came in 1941. In 1943, he joined the Grand Ole Opry and became the first musician to use an electric guitar in the Opry.

Tubb also is remembered for hiring and guiding aspiring musicians including Patsy Cline, Johnny Cash and Loretta Lynn. He died in 1984.



# 29

That's how many years Tom Landry coached the Dallas Cowboys until he was fired 25 years ago. Landry was the only Cowboys head coach until Jerry Jones bought the team and, on February 25, 1989, fired him after a 3-13 season. Landry spent the rest of his life rooting for the NFC East-rival New York Giants, the team he played for, according to "The Last Cowboy: A Life of Tom Landry," (Liveright Publishing, 2013). He died in 2000.

## Ladies and Gentlemen ... the Bugs!

February marks the 50th anniversary of the Beatles' first live performance on American TV. Some 73 million people tuned in to "The Ed Sullivan Show" on February 9, 1964, as the Fab Four sang "All My Loving," straining to be heard over the screaming teenage girls in the New York studio audience of about 700. (See "When I Saw Them Standing There," this month's Observations.)

But Walter Cronkite and the "CBS Evening News" liked to remind people that the Beatles' real debut on American TV occurred December 10, 1963, during a news report about Beatlemania taking over the United Kingdom, according to cbsnews.com.

It turns out that Ed Sullivan saw that report, realized he had to get the Beatles on his show and called Cronkite right after the newscast.

"We were good friends, and Ed said, 'Walter, Walter, tell me about those kids, tell me about those kids,'" said Cronkite, a student for two years at the University of Texas. "Those kids you just had on the air. What do you call them? The bugs or the beetles or something?"



COACH TOM LANDRY: JERRY LODRIGUSS | CORBIS



# The FINAL CAMPAIGN

*Texas is home to three presidential libraries, where archives, mementos and visitors help shape the legacies of LBJ and the Bushes*

A TRIP TO THE GEORGE BUSH PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY and Museum in College Station brings an expectation of seeing a line in the sand, given that the 41st U.S. president told the world he was drawing one right before delivering a one-two punch of shock and awe against Saddam Hussein in the first Gulf War.

And, lo and behold, there it was on the second floor of the administrative office of the museum, save two small details—no sand, no Saddam.

On one side, this side, was a long hallway lined with paintings of presidents leading to a large oil work of the presidents Bush, *père* and *fiils*, standing side by side.

On the other side, that side, was what Supervisory Archivist Bob Holzweiss had promised minutes earlier.

“Here,” he says one Sunday last fall, as he unlocked a set of double doors, “is the Indiana Jones room.”

The doors opened to reveal a real-life warehouse of antiquities, extending as far as the eye could see, even if that was mostly because the lights were off at the far end. There was no Ark of the Covenant, just row after row of neatly labeled and indexed boxes containing 45 million documents.

And that line? Only museum personnel are allowed to cross it. Crossing it is not part of the ticket-buying tourist experience, or even that of the sharp-eyed researcher keen on mining the documents for nuggets of history. Academics and historians can access the documents only in secure viewing rooms. But peeking into the storeroom was an eye-opening glimpse into one important aspect of U.S. presidents and the keepers of their legacies: They’re government-sanctioned and -subsidized political packrats.

“They saved everything,” Holzweiss says of President George H.W. Bush and wife Barbara, “and they gave it all to us.”

Presidential libraries are the executive branch storage unit for everything from documents to photos to bicycles to gifts of ruby-encrusted gold stirrups from the king of Morocco—pretty much anything that might be of value, whether it’s historical, cultural or just plain curious. George W. Bush received 43,000 gifts from U.S. citizens and foreign heads of state, but before you suggest an Oval Office garage sale to erase the national debt, realize there are strict laws that govern what to do with those gifts. (See Article I, Section 9, U.S. Constitution.)

So White House staff painstakingly packs and sends them to



All five living U.S. presidents—from left, Barack Obama, George W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George H.W. Bush and Jimmy Carter—attend the April 25, 2013, opening of the younger Bush’s presidential library in Highland Park.

the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, or NARA, for that day when a president's veto power is no longer over Congress but over how their own legacy is seen in the world of postpresidential revisionism.

**O**N A SUN-SPLASHED DAY ON THE SOUTHERN Methodist University campus last April, all five living presidents convened for the opening of the George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum. Amid the pomp and pageantry, President Bill Clinton stepped to the presidential seal-embossed lectern and candidly said with a grin: "I told President Obama that this is the latest, grandest example of the eternal struggle of former presidents to rewrite history."

Much of that history is being reshaped right here in Texas, which leads the U.S. with three presidential libraries—the LBJ Presidential Library on the University of Texas campus in Austin; the George Bush Presidential Library and Museum on the Texas A&M University campus in College Station; and the George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum at SMU in Highland Park.

"These shrines are amazing, and they can be a little weird," says Benjamin Hufbauer, a University of Louisville professor and author of "Presidential Temples" (University Press of Kansas, 2006). "There's nothing modest about them. They are all pretty aggrandizing. Each one tries to top the last one."

Each has its own personality. The LBJ library, the design of which the president had conceived just one month after he was elected to his first full term, is an imposing 10-story monument of white travertine on 30 acres that befits the namesake's larger-than-life personality. The building boasts a giant lobby—called the "Great Hall of Achievement"—featuring a four-story glass wall behind which the archives are visible.

On the 10th floor is a replica Oval Office. Adjacent to it and not

open to the public is a suite that includes a room that Johnson used as an office. There's also a shower room that hints at how enamored with power Johnson was. It features a powerful array of mirrors and four industrial-strength shower heads, just like the ones he had installed at the White House that his successor, Richard Nixon, likened to bathing with a fire hose, Hufbauer says.

**T**HE DOMED, CLASSICAL GEORGE H.W. BUSH LIBRARY is sprawling, with fountains and sculptures set on a 90-acre plot on A&M's west campus. Its Oval Office replica is two-thirds scale. (LBJ's Oval Office is seven-eighths scale, mostly because of ceiling limitations; W's replica office is actual size.)

Hanging overhead early in the exhibit is a full-size replica of the TBM Avenger torpedo bomber Bush piloted in World War II in which he was shot down, killing his crew. There's a photo of a burr-headed Bush, looking more like a scared kid than a future



**TOP:** A visitor to the LBJ Presidential Library walks to the entrance of the building on the campus of the University of Texas in Austin. **ABOVE:** Max Scheinin of Santa Cruz, California, looks over a replica Oval Office, which is seven-eighths scale. Scheinin visited the library to do research on the 36th president. **INSET:** A campaign button from the 1964 presidential election, when LBJ defeated Barry Goldwater.



**ABOVE:** At the George H.W. Bush library, Billy Barr, right, and son Devin, 10, look up at a replica of a TBM Avenger torpedo bomber, the type Bush was piloting when he and his crew were shot down. Only Bush survived. The Barrs are members of Victoria Electric Cooperative. **BELOW:** The entrance to Bush's library at Texas A&M University. **INSET:** Bush's campaign button from the 1992 election, when he lost to Bill Clinton.

president, being hustled into the conning tower of the submarine USS Finback seconds after being plucked from the Pacific Ocean.

There's also Bush's tribute to his first daughter, Robin, who died of leukemia at age 3 and inspired his postpresidency work to promote cancer research. Near the end of the maze of displays is a section of the Berlin Wall, one side covered in bright graffiti, the other pristine and stark, bearing mute testimony to why it stood and why it fell in 1989, the first year of his presidency.

The newest of the three libraries, George W. Bush's, is a Georgian brick and limestone structure surrounded by a lawn of natural Texas grasses. It's the first presidential library to earn a "new construction" Platinum LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification from the U.S. Green Building Council.

Not surprisingly, one of the George W.'s most evocative displays comes early in a tour of his museum, as it did in his presidency. Less than eight months into Bush's first term, the

terrorist attacks of 9/11 devastated the country. The centerpiece of the room is a twisted pair of steel beams from the twin towers of the World Trade Center.

Paul Goldberg, 65, visited the museum one Sunday last fall. He was a construction supervisor working on a public school building in Brooklyn that clear, crisp September morning in 2001. One of his crew noticed smoke billowing from one of the twin towers, which had moments before been hit by a passenger airliner. They all watched as a second plane hit the north tower. Goldberg closed the site, sending the workers home, but many, like Goldberg, stayed atop the school's roof to watch the grim, stunning tableau play out.

"I'm the biggest flag-waver this country's ever seen," says Goldberg, who was visiting his daughter in Texas recently. "I did two tours in Vietnam. Anything to do with patriotism, I'm for. This is my country."

A few days earlier, he had visited a different visceral presidential site a few miles down the road—Dealey Plaza, where President John F. Kennedy was shot and killed. "Next trip is to see the Alamo," he added.

There are 13 official presidential libraries recognized and managed by NARA. There are also many that predate the Presidential Libraries Act of 1955, which created the federal presidential library system. These unofficial libraries are often operated by former presidents' estates, hometowns or home states.

Hufbauer says the libraries are the manifestation of the "civil religion" of the United States, "that veneration that has existed since the country's founding for particular events, people and things."

Such as presidents.

LBJ was in office for 1,887 days; George H.W. Bush for 1,461.





**ABOVE:** Twisted steel beams from the World Trade Center stand as the centerpiece in the 9/11 exhibit in the George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum. **BELOW:** The entrance to his library at Southern Methodist University. **INSET:** A Bush campaign button from the 2000 election, when he defeated Al Gore, featured the colors of the Mexican flag and a message in Spanish that says, in effect, ‘Long live Bush for president.’

Only George W. Bush went out on his own terms—two of them, actually. LBJ finished Kennedy’s term and won re-election in 1964. Worn down by domestic strife and growing opposition to the Vietnam War, he declined to run again in 1968. George H.W. lost his re-election bid to Clinton in 1992, a defeat dutifully commemorated in a section of his museum that summarizes his loss: “In the end, the election was decided more on perception than anything else.”

In truth, leaving office might be the best thing to happen to a president’s image. According to a Gallup poll, of the last nine presidents, only LBJ and Clinton have a lower average approval rating after leaving office than they did while in office. LBJ slipped from 49 to 42 percent, Clinton from 66 to 60 percent. The first President Bush jumped from 56 to 66 percent, and W. is up 13 points from his final 34 percent rating. Even Nixon is up nine points, to 33 percent.

**B**ECAUSE PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARIES ARE DECENTRALIZED—each has its own site instead of being combined at a single site—and funded by NARA and private endowments, there is little control over what each library management wants to emphasize and omit or cast in a more favorable light.

The LBJ library has a section devoted to the acceleration of the Vietnam War. H.W.’s library mentions how Bush was portrayed as out of touch on the economy. The W. has an interactive exercise that portrays his decisions on Hurricane Katrina, the Iraq War and other key policy decisions as being well intentioned considering the information available at the time.

The LBJ and the first Bush libraries each underwent major

renovations since 2007, and administrators at each say image burnishing is not high on the list of priorities.

Harry Middleton was the LBJ library director when it opened in 1971. “Years later, he has said that the more years that pass, the more objective a presidential library becomes,” says Anne Wheeler, the library’s communications director.

Holzweiss says the approach at the George H.W. Bush library is to be as objective as possible. “He’s said to me directly that he would like history to be the judge, warts and all,” Holzweiss says. “Put all the documents out there and let the people judge. We’re the facilitator, whether people come in and say ‘George Bush is a blankety-blank’ or ‘the greatest president who ever lived.’”

*Mark Wangrin is an Austin writer.*



**Web Extras on TexasCoopPower.com**

Consider visiting the presidential libraries for two men who never were U.S. presidents.

See a slideshow of more exhibits from all three libraries.

BY EILEEN MATTEI • PHOTOS BY BRAD DOHERTY

# CHARRO

## Days

*A shared culture bridges neighboring nations*

**W**ITH DANCING HORSES, MARIACHIS, FOUR parades and a fiesta spirit, Brownsville celebrates the Charro Days Fiesta each winter in a spectacle of music, dance and colorful costumes. The well-dressed *charro*—a skilled Mexican horseman—symbolizes the city’s bicultural heritage and its ties to sister city Matamoros across the Rio Grande. A Brownsville tradition since 1938, Charro Days begins with a street dance and continues with nearly nonstop music and parades.

Visiting Brownsville for last year’s Charro Days, I jumped into the opening day of the festival by watching the University of Texas at Brownsville’s folkloric group Tizatlán whirl through the distinctive dances of seven Mexican states against the backdrop of bougainvillea and hacienda arches at Texas Southmost College’s Arts Center. With their hair sleeked back into a froth of ribbons, women in fabulously embroidered skirts mimed stealing kisses from black-suited dance partners. Dazzling dances ranged from the irresistible tempo of the Mexican hat dance, which sets heels stamping and braids flying, to the romance of Veracruz portrayed by dancers in lacy white dresses balancing votive candles on their heads. The Wild West took center stage with suave steps of Sonoran cowboys, thumbs hooked in their belts, circling señoritas.

Sitting next to me, Angelica Garza of Brownsville recalled learning folk dances as a girl years ago, “just for the love of it.”



Charro Days has brightened downtown Brownsville since 1938. The festival started when business leaders sought to counter the gloom of the Great Depression.

Highlighting Thursday’s activities each year is the Children’s Parade on Elizabeth Street. With Brownsville schools closed for Charro Days, young customers ringed vendors of ice cream, *elotes* (Mexican-style grilled corn) and other snacks. Like many watching the parade, middle school teacher Maria Elena Abete donned traditional Mexican attire. Twinkling with sequined starbursts and Aztec designs, her long, flamboyant dress was an Americanized salute to the costumes of Jalisco. “I have about 10 different costumes I wear to school during February,” she told me. “This is the only time of year we get to dress up.”

The roar of laughter announced the approach of Russell Elementary School students performing the traditional Mexican dance known as *los viejitos* (little old men). The boys, wearing masks and crouched over short canes, wistfully chased girls walking past. Longoria Elementary students in feathered costumes danced past rattling anklets of seedpods, mimicking *matachina* performers.

Each year, nine Brownsville elementary schools select students to dance their way down the 1.2-mile route. The young dancers are sandwiched between drill teams and middle and high school bands—huge ensembles playing familiar tunes such as the Latin classic “Guantanamera.” The Pace High School flag team marched past wearing long mariachi skirts, followed by a middle school band draped in serapes and a drill team sporting blue sombreros. Teachers escorting the dancers strode past, swishing their long, embroidered skirts, enjoying the parade as much as their students after months of rehearsals. Costumed toddlers on the sidelines marched in time with the passing drums and horns.

Kathy Patience, visiting Brownsville from Iowa for the first time, told me she was impressed by the large marching bands, the huge number of children taking part, the palm trees and the warm February weather. “You’ve got lots more dancing, many more horses and no cow made out of butter,” she said, laughing at the difference between the states’ customs.

“Charro Days is a family tradition. No matter their age, they are experiencing the moment,” said Henry LeVrier, president of Charro Days. “People have participated for generations.”

As a toddler, Jude Benavides rode on his father’s shoulders in the Children’s Parade. Then as a youngster, he rode on floats and later performed in his junior high band. A few years ago, Benavides, now an assistant professor at UTB, showed up to teach a hydrology class I was taking clad in a black charro suit complete with silver conchos, fresh from participating in a fiesta parade.



Jennifer Gomes, right, and Yessica Rodriguez from Brownsville Early College High School fan their dazzling dresses.



Performers show off the skills of charros: expertise with a lariat and horsemanship.



with wide, colorful ties showed off dancing horses, some sporting braided manes. Stepping sideways to music, a riderless horse, cued by long ropes, pranced and threw its mane like a teenage girl smug in her beauty.

The parade evoked cheers and laughter as an adult day care center float bounced down the street as grinning seniors on board danced down memory lane. Sombreros and serapes decorated the grilles of trucks pulling floats filled with mariachi and Tejano musicians. U.S. Border Patrol agents on horseback, trail riders in sharp-creased jeans and plaid shirts, more folk dancers, performers shaking pineapple-shaped maracas and costumed mascots together created a festive mix.



AVING AND THROWING KISSES TO THE FANS OF his *telenovela*, or soap opera, actor Eduardo Yáñez generated rock-star frenzy. The recipient of the title Mr. Amigo for Charro Days 2013, Yáñez certainly met the criteria: a Mexican citizen who fosters binational friendship. Red, white and green banners marked the floats carrying Matamoros officials. Years ago, the International Parade rolled across the Rio Grande and continued into Matamoros. Nowadays, even the traditional meeting of the mayors of Brownsville and Matamoros in the middle of Gateway International Bridge has been scaled back for security reasons. Nevertheless, Charro Days reminds people that the city's three international bridges unite the two countries, spanning the narrow river that separates them. Without a doubt, this is a binational fiesta.

Meanwhile, in Brownsville's Washington Park, the three-day Sombrero Festival, held each year during Charro Days, rolled along to the beats of Tejano, country-western and rock music. The family festival, sponsored in part by Magic Valley Electric Cooperative since 2004, includes a jalapeño-eating contest, a tortilla toss, kids' events, a chili cook-off and a waiters' race.

Several Magic Valley EC employees volunteer with the Sombrero Festival, including Customer Service Representative Inelda Zuniga, who is the 2014 Sombrero Festival secretary. "The Sombrero Festival is more than just a family-friendly event," said Zuniga. "We love to give back to the community, just like co-ops. The Sombrero Festival has returned approximately \$1.5 million back to the community through nonprofit organizations and direct donations for tourism, beautification and recreation venues in the city of Brownsville."

Wrapping up last year's Charro Days, the beloved, high-energy band Mariachi Vargas took the Arts Center stage with their grand sombreros and black costumes accented with silver braid and buttons. Launching into old favorites like "El Rancho Grande," the concert became a sing-along, and the feeling of community grows strong here with the shared remembrances. The mariachis, considered some of the world's best, harmonized, clowned a little for the enthusiastic crowd and thrilled the audience with their long, high notes. They proved you don't have to understand Spanish to become a part of Charro Days.

¡Viva Brownsville!

Eileen Mattei is a Harlingen writer.

*This year, the 77th annual Charro Days Fiesta begins February 24 and runs through March 2. Visit [charrodaysfiesta.com](http://charrodaysfiesta.com) or call (956) 542-4245 for information.*

"Charro Days is about the love and friendship between two nations, and the tremendous history and stories that go with it," Benavides said. "In the past, just about everyone in Brownsville participated in Charro Days at one point or another. And it's a good way to mark the end of winter and start of spring."

While Friday night's Illuminated Parade draws about 30,000, the crowd doubles for Saturday's International Parade. High-stepping horses with intricately worked saddles vied for attention with charros dressed in pants and short jackets embellished with silver buttons that sparkled in the tropical sunlight. Riding sidesaddle in long, full skirts, *escaramuzas* performed complex patterns at full gallop. Charros in white shirts

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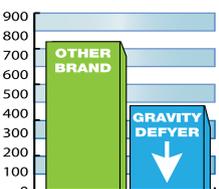
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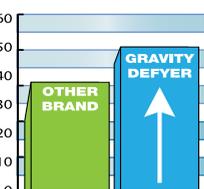
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## CONSERVATION AND SAFETY INFORMATION



Using appliances such as a microwave oven can cut cooking time and save energy.

Cook Up Savings with

# Kitchen Efficiency

BY JAMES DULLEY

**DEAR JIM:** I'm updating my kitchen appliances. I am a bit of a chef, so I want efficient tools. What are the best appliances for cooks? Can you share a few energy-efficient cooking tips?—Barb R.

**DEAR BARB:** If you're a frequent cook, you consume a lot of energy. The major energy user in the kitchen is the refrigerator. Odds are if you prepare a lot of food, you have a large refrigerator and open it often. Place commonly used items (milk, butter, etc.) near the front of your fridge. Keep the fridge fairly full; use water jugs if needed.

In addition to selecting efficient kitchen appliances, there are simple tips to cut energy use. Keep in mind that cooking tips change from winter to summer.

During winter, the heat and humidity from cooking help warm your house and reduce the heating load on your furnace or heat pump. During summer, this same heat makes your air conditioner run more, increasing electric bills.

When installing kitchen appliances, locate them properly. The range and oven should not be directly next to the refrigerator. Their heat will make the refrigerator compressor run longer. Also, don't put the range or oven under a window; a breeze can carry away heat before it gets into your pots and pans.

When it comes to ovens, electric is preferred by most professionals. It holds more even heat than gas for baking. Another advantage, especially during summer, is that electric does not introduce extra moisture into your house. Extra moisture means more work (and energy use) for your air conditioner. When gas or propane burns, the basic products of combustion are water and carbon dioxide.

Want great energy savings in the kitchen? Use small countertop appliances when possible instead of an oven or stovetop. For example, a toaster oven, especially one with a convection option, uses significantly less electricity than large oven elements.

Microwave ovens are still the most efficient appliance for cooking. They run on lower wattage and offer shorter cook times. However, if you are cooking larger quantities of food, a large oven remains the best choice. Plan your baking to make several recipes simultaneously or consecutively while the oven is hot.

©James Dulley

### WARNING:

## Don't Bake All Bulbs

Oven lights are handy. Curious if a casserole's ready? Flip the switch. There's no need to open the oven and release heat. But be careful when replacing this little light. Never put a bulb in the oven that's not built for high heat.

Compact fluorescent lamps use less energy than classic incandescent bulbs, but they're not safe in extreme temperatures. Most lighting labels designate safe temperatures, but warnings may be in fine print.

**NEED TO REPLACE YOUR OVEN LIGHT?** Look for appliance lightbulbs. These bulbs are designed for extreme temperatures in ovens and refrigerators. The hardy bulbs are here to stay; 40-watt appliance bulbs are exempt from federal lighting efficiency standards.

**WHY WON'T CFLS WORK?** Instead of heating a filament until white-hot to produce light like an incandescent bulb, a fluorescent lamp contains a gas that produces ultraviolet light when excited by electricity. The UV light and the white



**CFL lightbulbs are great—but not for every application. A co-op member scraped this melted CFL off the side of his oven. The CFL wasn't designed for oven use.**

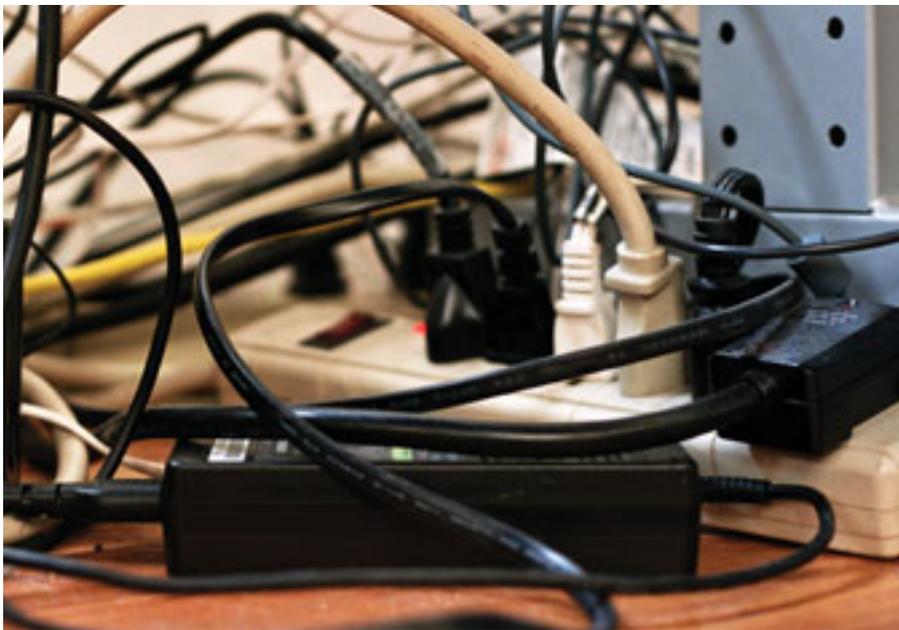
coating inside the bulb result in visible light. Because CFLs don't use heat to create light, they are 75 percent more energy efficient. But the technology that cuts energy use doesn't stand a chance in an oven's 400-plus degree heat.

# Practice Electrical Safety at Work, Too

**Your home isn't the only place to control how safely you use electricity. The workplace is another area where good electrical safety habits will pay off.**

Here are some ways to prevent accidents involving electricity where you work:

**1.** Keep your cubicle, office or other work space as clean and uncluttered as possible. Keep walking areas clear of tools and put away any electrical equipment as soon as you're finished using it.



**Is something like this lurking under your desk? If so, take time to untangle the cords and redistribute them to appropriate surge protectors and outlets that can safely carry the load.**

**2.** If your space is heated by radiators, don't pile stuff on top of them. If it's heated through baseboards, don't block their airflow by stacking files, books, boots or anything else in front of them.

**3.** Avoid using extension cords except when the tool or device that's plugged into it is in use. When you're finished, unplug it. Extension cords are not designed for permanent use.

**4.** Turn off computers and appliances when you're not using them.

**5.** Don't use any electrical equipment that appears to be damaged or whose wires are frayed or cracked.

**6.** Keep coffee and water away from electronics and other electrical equipment to prevent spills that can cause a shock. Clean up spills immediately.

**7.** If you use a portable space heater near your desk, turn it off and unplug it every time you walk away, even for a few minutes.

**8.** Don't overload electrical outlets. Just because a power strip has room for six or seven plugs doesn't mean the electrical circuit you plug the strip into can handle that load.

**9.** Plug all sensitive electronics into a surge protector.

**10.** Have your equipment inspected, maintained and replaced regularly to prevent malfunctions that could start fires.



## Prevent Hot Water Scalds

**Showers that are too hot, food cooking on the stove and even coffee that hasn't cooled enough can cause a scalding injury.**

People are scalded when hot liquid or steam damages one or more layers of skin. Children and senior citizens are most likely to become scald victims.

Here are some ways to prevent scald injuries at home:

**1.** Turn pan handles toward the back of the stove.

**2.** Plug small appliances such as tea kettles and coffeemakers into outlets on the wall next to the countertop. Avoid draping cords across the room or letting them land on the floor.

**3.** Install grab bars and nonslip bath mats in tubs and showers so anyone can quickly get away if the water is too hot.

**4.** Turn down the water heater temperature. It only takes five seconds for 140-degree water to scald a healthy adult. The Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends 120 degrees as the maximum safe residential water temperature.

**5.** Add antiscauld valves onto showerheads and faucets.

**6.** When you finish your shower, turn the faucet to the "cold" position so the next person won't encounter hot water by surprise. For dual-control faucets, turn the cold-water knob on first and off last.

**7.** Supervise children while you're cooking and at bath time.

# A Harte for the Gulf



Newspaper publisher donated land and funding to preserve beloved Texas seashore and wilderness

BY MELISSA GASKILL

MOST SUNDAY AFTERNOONS DURING THE 1950s, Ed Harte drove his family from Corpus Christi to North Padre Island to enjoy the beach. When proposals surfaced to develop the island, the newspaper publisher and community leader used his considerable persuasive powers to support the creation of Padre Island National Seashore, the world's longest stretch of undeveloped barrier island.

Harte worked mostly behind the scenes to earn support for the national seashore, recalls son Chris Harte, but he also covered the subject extensively in his paper, the Corpus Christi Caller-Times. A decade later, Harte put the same effort behind the creation of Mustang Island State Park near Port Aransas.

Harte turned his passion for the natural world into many such efforts, including donating a 66,000-acre family ranch to the Nature Conservancy, which led to the land becoming part of Big Bend National Park. He also served as chairman of the National Audubon Society and donated \$46 million to kick-start his namesake Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

"Ed loved the outdoors, every part of it, and he loved Texas, every part of it," says John Flicker, former president of the National Audubon Society and longtime friend. "He wanted to make sure that he did what he could to take care of it."

Harte Research Institute Director Larry McKinney says Harte gave him two reasons for wanting to start the marine research center: "One, Corpus Christi

was near and dear to him and his wife, and he wanted to help put this region and this university on the map. And two, the Gulf of Mexico was really special to him. He'd spent so much time around it, and he wanted to do something on a scale that would affect the Gulf as a whole."

Renowned ocean scientist Sylvia Earle says Harte was also inspired by her book, "Sea Change," and he persuaded her to serve as chair of the institute's advisory council. Earle recalls that the philanthropist didn't want to get too involved with the details of how it would work, "but he did say, 'whatever you do, make a difference.'"

McKinney notes that Harte was "very farsighted in wanting to apply science to solving problems," leading the charge to bring together economics, policy and science at the institute, a model McKinney says is now followed by the National Science Foundation.

Harte grew up in San Angelo, graduated from Dartmouth College in New Hampshire and served in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II. He began his newspaper career as a reporter in New Hampshire. He returned home to Texas to work as editor of the Daily News in Snyder, a paper he and a brother bought that became part of Harte-Hanks Newspapers, a partnership of Harte's father, Houston Harte, and Bernard Hanks. In 1952, he became president of the San Angelo Standard-Times, one of more than 30 papers owned at one time by the Harte-Hanks chain. Ed Harte became publisher of the Corpus Christi Caller-Times in 1962.



“As a publisher, Dad was very active in supporting an aggressive newsroom and helping to set editorial policy,” says Chris. “In many ways, the Caller-Times was the most independent and highest-quality paper in Texas. It was a leader in the state in supporting environmental causes before most people really knew or cared about them. Dad was not somebody who believed in stopping economic growth at all, but he felt that the ocean and islands had a role in the economy as well as in preserving places for public use and for wilderness.”

Harte died in 2011. “During his tenure as publisher of the Caller-Times, the newspaper’s editorial board became a strong voice for land preservation and environmental protection—an unusual stance for a Texas newspaper at the time,” wrote The New York Times in Harte’s obituary.

Harte’s passion for the Gulf of Mexico and conservation resulted in hundreds of miles of shore protected from development and a renowned center for marine research. Many who knew him were moved to join him in his efforts.

“If he could be cloned, there’d be much more hope for the world,” says Earle. “His ethic was contagious. It was hard to be around him for long and not be motivated to do everything you could to make the world better. Visionaries can see what others cannot, leaders can make others see it, and Ed had the ability to do both. He was so effective at bringing people around to see the value of nature and motivate them to do something about it.”

Those who share Harte’s love for the seashore, and the rest of the Texas landscape, can be grateful for that.

*Melissa Gaskill is a frequent contributor.*

**Ed Harte’s passion for the Gulf of Mexico and conservation resulted in hundreds of miles of shore being protected from development and the founding of the Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. Renowned oceanographer Sylvia Earle, left, chairs the institute’s advisory council. ‘If he could be cloned, there’d be much more hope for the world,’ Earle says of Harte, who died in 2011. ‘It was hard to be around him for long and not be motivated to do everything you could to make the world better.’**

# When I Saw Them Standing There

Lives changed forever after Ed Sullivan brought the Beatles into American homes 50 years ago

BY LORI GROSSMAN

I KNEW FEBRUARY 9, 1964, WOULD BE special. I had no way of knowing that from that day on, my life would never be the same.

“Young lady,” Mom said reproachfully as she spied me sitting several inches from the black-and-white TV screen, “I told you not to sit so close.” A tad on the overprotective side, she continually warned me about potential dangers, such as breaking my neck or being hit by a car. At least she hadn’t said the TV could poke my eyes out.

“Who’s on tonight, anyway?” Dad inquired, looking for program listings in the Sunday newspaper. I ignored the question, sensing that if I answered, he would only laugh and ask, “What’s a Beatle?”

The Beatles were a “fab” new singing group from England, and girls, including me, at Neal Elementary School in San Antonio were obsessed. We’d heard a few of their songs on our tinny transistor radios. The energy and joy in their music was irresistible. And those Liverpool accents were so groovy!

Fan magazines plastered photos of the Beatles on their covers. We were charmed by what our fathers disapprovingly referred to as “that long hair!” In those days, long before the Internet, songs on the radio and magazine photos were about all we had. We longed to see them perform, watch them move, hear them talk and joke around. That’s why their first appearance on “The Ed Sullivan Show” was so important to us.

I sat on the floor directly in front of the television, some impulse deep inside

urging me to get as close as I could. Mom’s warning fell on momentarily deaf ears. I leaned forward, waiting. Time stood still until I heard Sullivan say those magic words:

“Ladies and gentlemen, the Beatles!”

That night I fell in love for the first time—with Paul McCartney. I loved Daddy, but this was a totally different thing. Never mind that I was a little kid, a bit on the chubby side, and wore glasses. None of that mattered. As far as I was concerned, Paul and I were meant for each other. Across America, millions of other girls felt the same. More than 23 million households tuned in to that historic broadcast. That amounted to about 73 million people, then the record for the largest TV audience.

That night was just the beginning. The “Fab Four” enchanted fans wherever they played as they crisscrossed America during a time now referred to as the British invasion. Each new single and album led us down a new, exciting path. We couldn’t get enough of them. We wanted more.

That wish was granted when the group’s first movie, “A Hard Day’s Night,” premiered in the fall of 1964. I went with a classmate who became utterly superfluous as the curtains opened at the Woodlawn Theatre and the movie began. What a feast for the eyes to watch them cavorting onscreen so much larger than life! Most of the girls in the theater screamed whenever their favorite Beatle appeared. I sat soaking up every word, every movement. No drug could have produced such a high. I longed to see

them in person, but San Antonio wasn't even a blip on the Beatles' radar screen.

As the years passed, I reluctantly accepted the fact that I'd never see them perform live. I discovered other artists and musical genres, but no one ever broke the spell that John, Paul, George and Ringo cast over me. Molly, a college friend, shared my feelings. One night, we watched a video of "A Hard Day's Night." As the closing credits rolled, she turned to me and said, "I guess this is the closest we'll ever get."

It was, until May 29, 1993. The Beatles had broken up years before, but Paul McCartney would perform the inaugural concert in San Antonio's new Alamodome. Imagine—Paul in San Antonio. Finally!

The fact that I had since moved to Dallas was no impediment.

On that magic night, Molly and I were tiny specks in a crowd of about 48,000 rapturous McCartney maniacs. No matter. I was there. Paul was there. Yes, I was grown up now and the throes of Beatlemania were in the past, but this was what I had waited for and dreamed about for so long. Whenever we heard the beginning notes of a Beatles song, we started screaming and calling out, "We love you, Paul!" It wasn't quite 1964 revisited, but it was close enough for us. In a roundabout way, my dream had come true.

Molly and I still talk about that night every now and then. It doesn't seem pos-

sible that 50 years have passed since the life-changing February night when we saw the Beatles for the first time. The halcyon days of my childhood sped past, leaving little-girl dreams far behind. Like everyone else, I've lived through tragedies and triumphs. Beatles songs often served as the soundtrack for my celebrations. During tough times, I drew strength from them, too.

I still know that young dreamer who fell in love with a Beatle. She bubbles up inside me whenever I hear a Beatles song or go to one of Paul's concerts. Suddenly, I'm a girl and it's 1964 again. If that's not magic, I'd like to know what is.

*Lori Grossman is a Dallas writer.*



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

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

**DEAR DORRIS:** I'm a woman who is 64 years young who suffers from really loose skin under my chin and on my lower neck.



I hate the term, but my grandkids say I have "turkey neck" and frankly, I've had enough of it! I have tried some creams designed to help tighten and firm that loose, saggy skin, but they did not work. Is there any cream out there that Might help my loose neck skin?

*Turkey Neck, Tarrant County, TX*

**DEAR TURKEY-NECK:** In fact, there is a very potent cream on the market that is designed to firm, tighten and invigorate skin cells on the neck area. It is called the **Dermagist Neck Restoration Cream**.

This cream contains an instant-effect ingredient that aims to tighten the skin naturally, as well as deep-moisturizing ingredients aiming to firm the skin and make it more supple. Amazingly, the Dermagist Neck Restoration Cream also has Stem Cells taken from Malus Domesticus, a special apple from Switzerland.

These apple stem cells target your skin's aging cells, and strive to bring back their youthful firmness, and elasticity. As an alternative to the scary surgeries or face lifts that many people resort to, this cream has the potential to deliver a big punch to the loose saggy skin of the neck. **The Dermagist Neck Restoration Cream is available online at [Dermagist.com](http://Dermagist.com)** or you can order or learn more by **calling toll-free, 888-771-5355**. Oh, I almost forgot... I was given a promo code when I placed my order that gave me 10% off. The code was "TXN15". It's worth a try to see if it still works.

# Chicago Doctor Invents Affordable Hearing Aid Outperforms Many Higher Priced 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.**

**“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

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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

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*“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*

*“I have a \$2,000 Resound Live hearing aid in my left ear and the MDHearingAid® PRO 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*

*“We ordered two hearing aids for my mother on Sunday, and the following Wednesday they were in our mailbox! **Unbelievable! Now for the best part—they work so great, my mother says she hasn’t heard so good for many years, even with her \$2,000 digital! It was so great to see the joy on her face. She is 90 years young again.**” —Al Peterson*

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# Queen of the Turf

Pan Zareta raced when gambling was mostly outlawed and she left no offspring to continue her legacy, but the filly from Sweetwater was at times unbeatable

BY CLAY COPPEDGE

PAN ZARETA, EASILY CONSIDERED THE greatest filly in horse-racing history, was what racing buffs called a safe bet, especially if the wager was on her to win. Pegged by The New York Times as the “Queen of the Turf” and also known affectionately as the “Texas Whirlwind” and “Panzy,” Pan Zareta set records at racetracks in three countries over the course of six years. Of the 151 races she started, Pan Zareta finished in the money (first, second or third) 128 times, notching 76 victories.

Pan Zareta was foaled in Sweetwater in 1910 by breeder J.F. “Jim” Newman. The filly, sired by Abe Frank out of dam Caddie Griffith, fits in a long line of famous Texas horses that includes Steel Dust, progenitor of the modern quarter horse, and Assault, the crippled King Ranch stallion who won the 1946 Triple Crown.

Pan Zareta was named for Pansy Zareta, the daughter of the former mayor of Juarez, Mexico. The chestnut filly’s first race was there in January 1912 during the Mexican Revolution. According to Travis Monday, a history columnist for the Sweetwater Reporter, the Newmans gave a thoroughbred stallion to Pancho Villa to protect their interests in Mexico during the revolution. It’s believed Villa rode the horse during his ill-fated campaign. In her first year of racing, Pan Zareta won 13 of 19 starts, including 10 in a row.

Horse racing in America ebbed during Pan Zareta’s heyday, as antigambling sentiment outlawed the sport in many places. Betting on ponies remained illegal in Texas until 1933—and was banned again in 1937, a prohibition that lasted 50 years—but Pan Zareta took her act on the road, winning an unequaled 46 of 100 handicap races, according to the online Handbook of Texas. In a handicap race, each horse is loaded with a specified amount of weight based on the horse’s ability.

Pan Zareta carried a lot of weight—more than 131 pounds in 14 races. She once won carrying an astonishing 146 pounds. In her best-known race, against the highly regarded thoroughbred stallion Joe Blair, Pan Zareta carried 10 pounds more than her competitor. She won by two lengths, setting a world speed record in the process.

Pan Zareta failed to produce offspring. As historian Robert Moorman Denhardt noted, if Pan Zareta had bred like she ran, she would have had a chapter in his book, “Quarter Horses: A Story of Two Centuries.”



Although she may have stepped out of the history books, Pan Zareta stepped back on the racetrack after her unsuccessful broodmare career and continued her winning ways right up to the end.

“In one respect, the latest achievement of the aged daughter of Abe Frank was unique, as she carried the crushing impost of 140 pounds, which so far as veterans of the turf are aware has never been done successfully by any other mare ...” The New York Times reported on Pan Zareta’s last victory in 1917. “The talent [bettors] did not believe that Pan Zareta was equal to the great task asked of her by the handicapper, and she was second choice in the betting.”

Pan Zareta died of pneumonia in 1918 while in training at the Fair Grounds Race Course in New Orleans, the site of many of her victories. She was “buried beneath a giant live oak ... just inside the inner rail at the sixteenth post,” according to the New Orleans Times-Picayune.

In 1966, the Pan Zareta Stakes was established in her honor at the Fair Grounds Race Course. She was inducted into that track’s Hall of Fame, the National Museum of Racing’s Hall of Fame in Saratoga Springs, New York, and the Texas Horse Racing Hall of Fame at Retama Park outside San Antonio.

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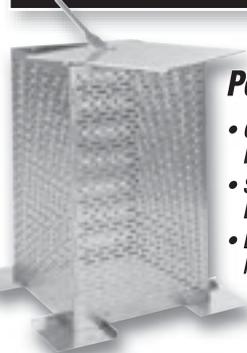
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# Special Treats for Your Special Someone

“All you need is love,” wrote the great John Lennon and Paul McCartney in the renowned Beatles’ song carrying a simple message: While good fortune and prosperity may come and go, one basic necessity, love, can make the poorest person feel like the richest.

And while each day you should let loved ones know just how important they are, there’s one day every year when we celebrate it together: Valentine’s Day. Knowing that our kitchen aficionados out there would do one better than a box of chocolates, we asked for your best Treats for your Sweet, and—oh, baby—did we get what we asked for!

We were showered with delectable delights for this month’s contest, sponsored by the Texas Peanut Producers Board, so much so that we decided to provide you with a sumptuous and savory first course. This recipe for Poblano Chicken with Peanuts was developed by Texas Chef Harry Salazar exclusively for the peanut board and is an easy way to provide your love with a subtly spicy start to your special dinner for two. **ASHLEY CLARY-CARPENTER**

## Poblano Chicken with Peanuts

- 2 ounces peanut oil
- 1 6- to 8-ounce boneless chicken breast, cut into strips
- 2 roasted poblano peppers, skins and seeds removed
- ½ cup cilantro
- Salted peanuts, to taste

- › In a saucepan over medium heat, heat the oil for 30 seconds; add chicken. Cook for about 1 minute on each side.
- › In a blender, add peppers, cilantro and 1 cup of water. Puree for 1 minute.
- › Add pepper puree to the chicken and cook for about 3 more minutes. Add the peanuts, stir well, and serve.

Servings: 2. Serving size: half of dish. Per serving: 484 calories, 45 g protein, 27.6 g fat, 12.5 g carbohydrates, 3.8 g dietary fiber, 392 mg sodium, 3.9 g sugars, 96 mg cholesterol



Poblano Chicken with Peanuts

LORI BROWN | COSERV ELECTRIC

## Treats for Your Sweet Contest Winner

Our winning recipe for sumptuous bars made with chocolate and peanut butter chips and peanuts should win over the heart of anyone with a Valentine's Day sweet tooth. Her dessert, or one the other featured treats, might be the right way to send a message to your valentine. As Farmers EC member Nora Oglesby wrote with her recipe entry for bacon-topped toffee (below, right), "February is the time our thoughts turn to those who are very important to us."



## Yummy Uummy Bars

- ½ cup butter or margarine, melted
- 1½ cups graham cracker crumbs
- 1 can (14 ounces) sweetened condensed milk
- ½ cup chopped peanuts
- 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 cup peanut butter chips

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
- Pour butter into a 13-by-9-inch glass baking dish and sprinkle graham cracker crumbs evenly over top. Pour sweetened condensed milk over crumbs. Top with peanuts and chocolate and peanut butter chips, pressing down firmly.
- Bake 25 to 30 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool. Cut into bars.

Servings: 15. Serving size: 1 bar. Per serving: 315 calories, 6.5 g protein, 17.3 g fat, 34.1 g carbohydrates, 1.9 g dietary fiber, 104 mg sodium, 27.6 g sugars, 25 mg cholesterol

## Peanut Butter Truffle Mousse Cheesecake

- ¾ cup butter, divided
- 2 cups crushed Peanut Butter Creme Oreos
- 1¼ cups granulated sugar
- 5 blocks (8 ounces each) cream cheese, divided and at room temperature
- 4 eggs
- ¾ cup heavy cream
- 3½ teaspoons vanilla, divided
- ⅔ cup plus ½ cup creamy peanut butter
- 1 tablespoon milk
- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 1 tub (16 ounces) Cool Whip
- 1 can (14 ounces) sweetened condensed milk
- Peanut butter cups candy for garnish, optional

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
- To make the crust, melt ¼ cup butter. Line a 9-inch springform pan with heavy-duty foil. Mix crushed cookies and melted butter and press into the bottom and up sides of the pan. Bake 7 minutes, then allow to cool.

- For the cheesecake, bring a large pot of water to a boil. Combine sugar and 4 cream cheese blocks in a mixer and cream together until smooth. Add eggs, one at a time, scraping bowl between each addition. Add cream and 3 teaspoons of vanilla and mix until creamy and smooth. Pour batter into prepared crust.
- Place the springform pan in a larger pan and pour boiling water into larger pan until it reaches halfway up the side of the springform pan. Bake 45 to 55 minutes until edges appear to be set. Turn off heat and allow cheesecake to stand in the cooling oven for 1 hour. Remove to a cooling rack and cool completely, then chill at least 5 hours or overnight.
- To make mousse, combine remaining cream cheese with ⅔ cup of peanut butter and milk until smooth. Slowly beat in powdered sugar then fold in Cool Whip. Spoon over cheesecake then chill at least 3 hours.
- To make glaze, combine sweetened condensed milk, ½ cup butter, ½ cup peanut butter and ½ teaspoon vanilla in a pan over medium heat until melted and incorporated. Use warm or store refrigerated in airtight container for up to 2 weeks. Garnish cheesecake with peanut butter cups, if desired.

Servings: 16. Serving size: 1 slice. Per serving: 820 calories, 14.7 g protein, 51.6 g fat, 67.9 g carbohydrates, 1.6 g dietary fiber, 469 mg sodium, 60.2 g sugars, 171 mg cholesterol

PAM KINKEMA | UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

## Chocolate Butter Toffee Crisps

3 or 4 slices of bacon

- 1 cup butter plus additional for greasing foil
- 1 box (5¼ ounces) club crackers
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 package (24 ounces) chocolate-flavored candy coating
- ¼ to ⅓ cup very finely chopped roasted peanuts

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
- Fry bacon until crisp, then chop into small pieces. Pat with a paper towel to remove excess grease.
- Line a jelly roll pan with foil and butter the foil well. Place the crackers side by side, until the pan is completely covered.
- Combine 1 cup butter with sugar and vanilla in a saucepan. Melt on low, stirring often, until it is completely smooth and sugar is completely dissolved.
- Remove from heat and pour over the crackers. Spread mixture with a spatula until all crackers are covered.
- Place pan in a preheated oven and bake 10 to 13 minutes until mixture is hot and bubbly and turns a golden caramel color, but not brown. While toffee is baking, coarsely chop the candy coating.
- Remove pan from oven and quickly sprinkle coating on the toffee. Allow to stand 5 minutes until coating melts. Use a spatula to spread coating evenly over the cooked mixture. Immediately sprinkle with bacon and peanuts.

- › Refrigerate for at least 4 hours. Remove from refrigerator and peel foil from bottom. Cut into bite-size pieces.

Servings: 24. Serving size: 1 piece. Per serving: 301 calories, 2.1 g protein, 17.8 g fat, 31.4 g carbohydrates, 0.3 g dietary fiber, 109 mg sodium, 27.9 g sugars, 21 mg cholesterol

NORA OGLESBY | FARMERS EC

 **Cook's Tip:** *Do not substitute margarine for butter.*

## Peanut Butter Oatmeal Cookies

- ½ cup butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 3 large eggs
- 2 cups creamy peanut butter
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 6 cups rolled oats (not instant)
- 2 cups milk chocolate chips

### Web Extra on TexasCoopPower.com

Find more than 500 recipes that have appeared in Texas Co-op Power on our website.

- › Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
- › Cream together butter and sugars. Mix in vanilla and eggs, then peanut butter. Stir in baking soda, oats and chocolate chips.
- › Drop by ¼ cupsful onto a cookie sheet, then partially flatten. Bake 14 to 16 minutes at 350 degrees. (The cookies might not look done, but they'll continue cooking out of the oven.)

Servings: 18. Serving size: 2 cookies. Per serving: 519 calories, 13.3 g protein, 26.1 g fat, 58.3 g carbohydrates, 5.1 g dietary fiber, 233 mg sodium, 35.7 g sugars, 48 mg cholesterol

JENNIFER MAJESKI | BLUEBONNET EC

### \$100 Recipe Contest

June's recipe contest topic is **Party Food/Dips**. The right snacks and dips can make a gathering of friends festive for everyone. What favorites do you break out when you host a party? The deadline is February 10.



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There are three ways to enter: **ONLINE** at TexasCoopPower.com (under the Submit and Share tab); **MAIL** to 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701; **FAX** to (512) 763-3401. Include your name, address and phone number, plus the name of your co-op. Also, let us know where you found the recipe or if you created it yourself. The winner gets \$100.

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## Looking Down

We weren't quite through playing with perspective. Last month, we asked you to take a look up. This time, we asked you to look the other direction. Looking down doesn't always mean you're down in the dumps. Sometimes, it affords you the opportunity to see something you otherwise would have missed.

ASHLEY CLARY-CARPENTER

### Web Extras on TexasCoopPower.com

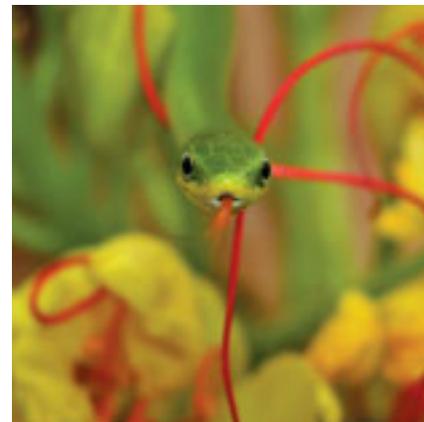
Look out below! We have a lot more photos to show you online. All who took the time to look down can hold their heads high.



▲ Neal Parish, cousin of Nicholas Freelen, United Cooperative Services, peers at the desert floor far below a high cliff in Guadalupe Mountains National Park.



◀ 'When I was growing up, I loved to put my face down into the grass to see what was going on in that world below. So on a recent morning, when the grass was draped in dew, I stuck the face of my camera down into the grass to see what was going on!' says Sharon Carter, Pedernales EC.



◀ CoServ Electric's Charles Mekailek said his wife, Kathleen, came upon this headstone split across the holding hands in Duck Creek Cemetery in Sanger. 'She said it seemed that they were saying goodbye a second time,' he says.

Grayson-Collin EC's Brandon Lamb shared this photo of daughter Macauley, focused on a pile of leaves just before she obliterated it. ▼



## Upcoming Contests

April Issue: Slow Shutter Deadline: February 10

May: Inspirational June: In the Doghouse

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. **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

Hug In and Valentines Ball

Luckenbach [February 14-16]  
(830) 997-3224, luckenbachtexas.com

Dance with the one who brung ya this Valentine's. Dale Watson and Gary P. Nunn headline this event.



DANCERS: ALAN AND VICENA POULSON | BIGSTOCK.COM. MASK: FLIPPO | BIGSTOCK.COM

February

08

Beaumont Family Arts Day at the Art Museum of Southeast Texas, (409) 832-3432, amset.org

Ennis Czech Music Festival, (972) 878-4748, ennisczechmusicfestival.com

Round Top Fayetteville Chamber Music Festival Fundraiser, (979) 966-8251, fayettevillemusic.org

09

Kerrville Chocolate Fantasy Extravaganza, (830) 895-2911, kacckerrville.com

11

Mercedes [11-16] Rio Grande Valley Music Festival, (956) 373-0130, rgvmf.com

13

Lajitas [13-15] Chihuahuan Desert Bike Fest, (432) 371-2727, desertsportstx.com/mountain-bike-event



February 22  
Palestine  
A Taste of New Orleans:  
Mardi Gras Celebration

14

Waxahachie [14-16] Gingerbread House Chili Cook-Off, (972) 937-1870

20

Port Aransas [20-23] Whooping Crane Festival, (361) 749-5919, whoopingcranefestival.org

21

Alpine [21-22] Texas Cowboy Poetry Gathering, 1-800-561-3712, texascowboypoeetry.com

Decatur [21-23] Wise County Antique Auto Swap Meet, (940) 627-3107, wcaac.com

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and festivals around Texas. For a complete listing, please visit [TexasCoopPower.com/events](http://TexasCoopPower.com/events).

21

**Clute** [21-23, 28-3/2] '1776: The Musical,' (979) 265-7661, [bcfas.org](http://bcfas.org)

22

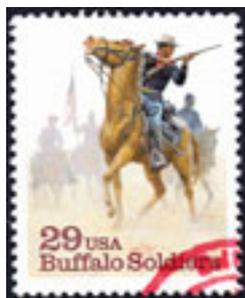
**Coldspring** Trash 'n' Treasure Trek, (936) 827-8210, [sanjacintocountytourism.org](http://sanjacintocountytourism.org)

**Corpus Christi** Polka Fest, (361) 960-3220

**Palestine** A Taste of New Orleans: Mardi Gras Celebration, (903) 723-3014, [visitpalestine.com](http://visitpalestine.com)

23

**San Angelo** Buffalo Soldier Heritage Day, (325) 481-2646, [fortconcho.com](http://fortconcho.com)



February 23  
San Angelo  
Buffalo Soldier  
Heritage Day

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26

**Brenham** [26-3/1] Fortnightly Used Annual Book Sale, (979) 337-7511

28

**Cypress** [28-3/1] Piece Love Sew Quilt Show, (281) 797-2461, [tricityquiltguild.com](http://tricityquiltguild.com)

**Navasota** [28-3/1] Texas Birthday Bash, (936) 825-6475, [texasbirthdaybash.com](http://texasbirthdaybash.com)

## March

01

**Robstown** [1-2] Gulf Coast Gem and Mineral Show, (361) 767-7045, [gcgms.org](http://gcgms.org)

**Washington** [1-2] Texas Independence Day Celebration, (936) 878-2214, ext. 224, [birthplaceoftexas.com](http://birthplaceoftexas.com)

**Nacogdoches** [1-31] Azalea Trail, 1-888-653-3788, [nacogdochesazaleas.com](http://nacogdochesazaleas.com)

06

**Denton** [6-9] Texas Storytelling Festival, (940) 380-9320, [tejasstorytelling.com](http://tejasstorytelling.com)

08

**Brownsville** Ocelot Conservation Day, (956) 748-3607, [fws.gov/refuge/laguna\\_atascosa](http://fws.gov/refuge/laguna_atascosa)

**Schulenburg** Wine & Music Festival, (979) 743-4514, [schulenburgchamber.org](http://schulenburgchamber.org)



March 8  
Brownsville Ocelot  
Conservation Day

## Submit Your Event!

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

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Tasting a vintage on the very soil that produces it makes one feel grounded in the northern Hill Country

BY SUZANNE HABERMAN

WINE TASTING IS LIKE SAMPLING THE earth from which a vine grows. Each drop conjures images of the soils and the hands that have lovingly toiled over it. When tasting wine from faraway places, those scenes are often left to the imagination. But on a Texas wine tour, such as the five-stop Lampasas County Wine Trail in early October, one gets a true taste of the land and can cheer the winemakers.

**PILLAR BLUFF VINEYARDS, Lampasas**—Owner Gill Bledsoe greets a tour bus loaded with about 55 passengers at the vineyard's gate. Beyond him, a mowed field gives way to grapevines and earth ready to receive new plantings. Here, guests lounge under a gazebo, once a round pen for horses, as Bledsoe whirls around serving wine and pouring out details. To their lips, they bring drops of a peachy viognier, sweet Founder's Red and a brown-sugary Au Poire, which dribbles down the cobalt blue bottle to Bledsoe's delight as he licks a drop from his fingers. In the cedar-leather-tobacco finish of the tempranillo, a wine produced from the grape native to Spain, one can almost taste the alluvial plain of Pillar Bluff Creek where this Texan and wife Peggy

Sue have tended their vines since 1997.

**TEXAS LEGATO WINERY, Lampasas**—The owner of this winery just down the farm road from Pillar Bluff Vineyards bears a striking resemblance to Gill Bledsoe. That's because it's his twin, Bill. Wife Sulynn hosts guests in the tasting room, which opened in 2007, and Bledsoe conducts a tour. He explains how he'd helped his brother build Pillar Bluff Vineyards before branching out—albeit not too far—on his own. “I kind of tap into his market share,” he says, grinning as he balances among stacks of oak barrels containing a 2011 malbec. He shares this still-aging wine, which evokes the pop of a fresh grape in the mouth. Even fresher is the 2013 malbec, which Bledsoe splashes into glasses from a spigot on a metal tank. “Now this will taste very young,” he says, taking a draught and nodding.

**FIESTA WINERY, Lometa**—At the house across the street from the barn and winery, a toy car parks next to the winery's delivery van. In the tasting room, a row of boots—men's, women's and children's—line a cabinet behind the bar. Here, members of the Baxter family serve up signature sweets, such as the red with blackberry called Back Porch Sittin' and select dries, such as mer-

lot, produced on land that has belonged to the family for six generations. The owners hope the wine business they began in 2009 in their home kitchen and expanded to a remodeled barn will give them reason to keep it a few more. “This is something we are doing for the generations,” says Weston McCoury, winemaker and son-in-law of proprietors Stephen and Sally Baxter.

**ALAMOSA WINE CELLARS, Bend**—A breeze rustles the grapevines entwining a pergola where owner Jim Johnson pours wines, such as the plum-peppery syrah and the sweet Amigo Red, made from warm-climate grapes. Inside the tasting room, decorated with the winery's Texas horned lizard mascot, wife Karen explains that they were the first in Texas to produce a commercial tempranillo in 2000. “We started out on the right foot,” she says, dispensing tastes of El Guapo, a wine blend featuring the native Spanish grape that has taken off in Texas.

**WEDDING OAK WINERY, San Saba**—Visitors drink in the ambience of the tasting room, snug in a renovated 1926 building, and an adjoining production facility. They muse over paintings of the namesake historic Wedding Oak tree, sculpture-like old vines and stained-glass windows from a Mexican mission that adorn the venue. “For me, wine and art go together,” says managing partner Mike McHenry, who opened Wedding Oak in 2012 with wife Lynn and a network of friends. The artsy air carries out to the courtyard where tasting room manager Marcus Holley prepares to pour three wines—white Bridal Veil, pink Bridal Blush and red Regency Bridge. Holding a bottle of the first, he steps out and greets the group with a hearty “Howdy.”

The crowd cheers.

Suzanne Haberman is a staff writer.



Twins Bill, left, and Gill Bledsoe make wine about a half-mile apart in Lampasas. With Bill's help, Gill, pouring a merlot, started Pillar Bluff Vineyards in 1997. A decade later, Bill opened Texas Legato Winery. He's pouring a malbec in his barrel room.



#### Web Extra on TexasCoopPower.com

- Find a list of Hill Country wine trail events.
- See a slideshow of the venues in this story.
- Watch the Bledsoe twins trade tit for tat over wine in a video.



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