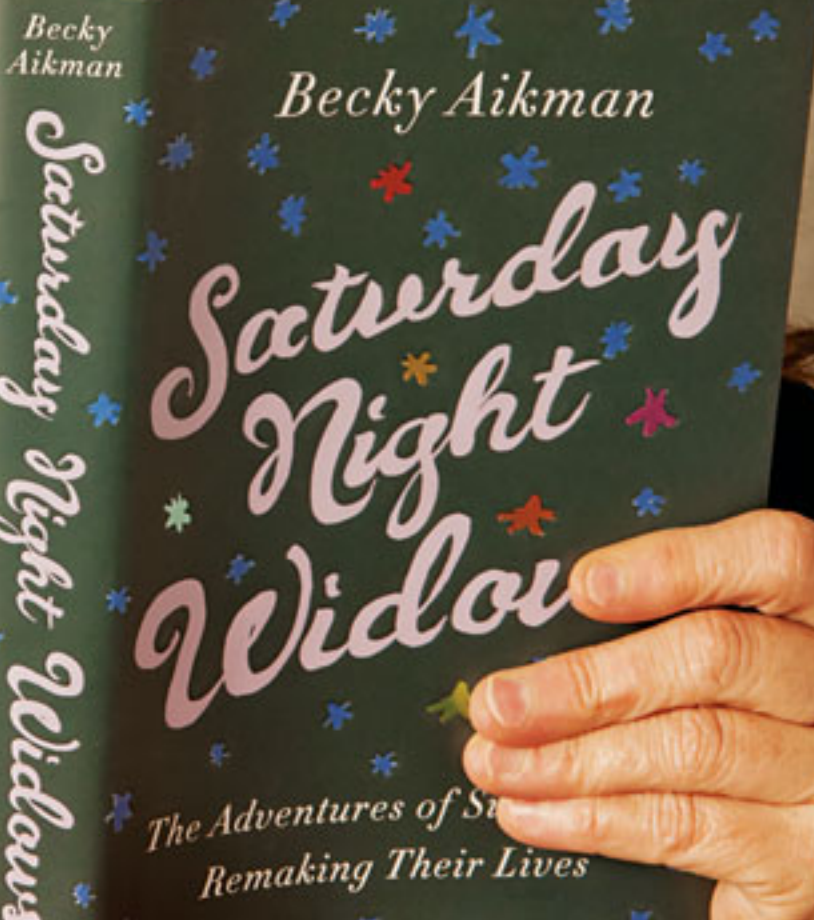


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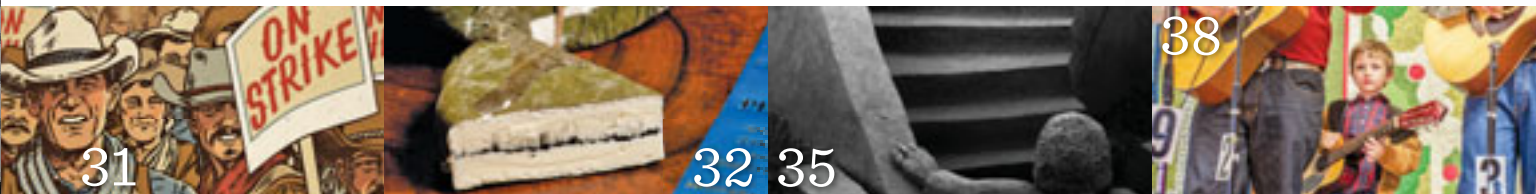
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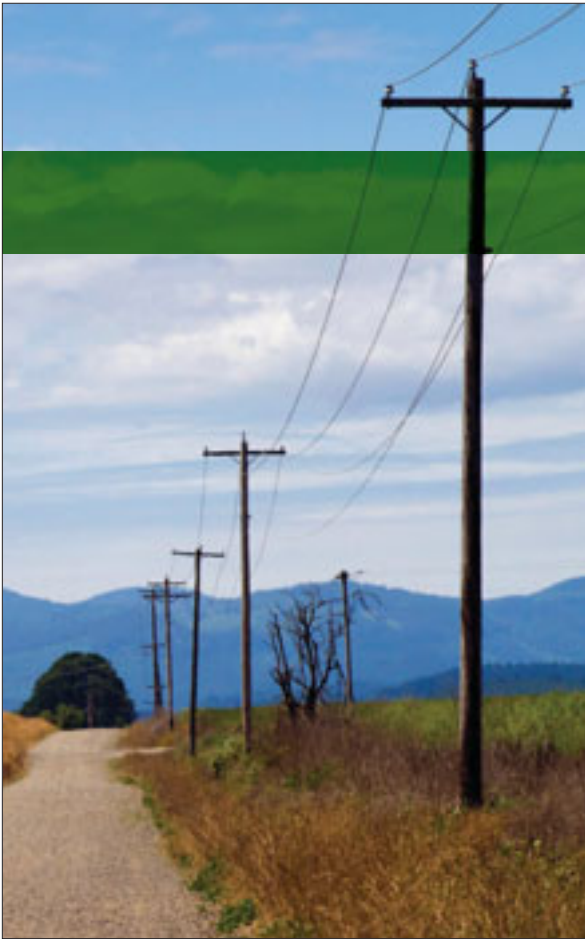
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COVER PHOTO Hairdresser Kathy Patrick oversees the flourishing Pulpwood Queens book club. By Robert Langham III

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The Trail Continues

Sure made me wish there was a Kolach Trail around Abilene. They sounded and looked delicious.

MITTIE DUNHAM | BIG COUNTRY EC

The West Village Bakery might take credit for the sausage-filled pastry, but my Czech great-grandmother brought her kolache know-how to Texas in the 1860s. This included a sausage-filled dough version that our family has always called sausage kolache.

I remember my grandmother treating us to cottage cheese, poppy seed and prune kolache. My mother raised nine kids on kolache, mostly peach or plum, but a favorite for picnics or a quick breakfast before the school bus came was smoked sausage.

At 99, Mom no longer can knead her dough. She supervises my brother, her caretaker, as he carries on the family tradition.

CECILIA BOYD ASHLEY | COOKE COUNTY ECA

Once a cousin from Katy flew up for another cousin's wedding in Dallas, bringing three suitcases full of Hruska's kolache. *Dekuj!* (Thank you!)

LISA SLADCEK NOYES | COSERV ELECTRIC

A good article except that traditional kolache do not include cream cheese. This is a recent version of the old-fashioned cheese kolach that was made with farmer cheese or dry cottage cheese.

ELIZABETH OPIELA | UPSHUR RURAL EC

I was surprised you left out east Bell County on the Kolach Trail. Green's Sausage House in

Readers Have Their Own Czech List

Bet you receive plenty of mail about "The Kolach Trail" [January 2014]. Loved the article and, of course, love the product! I know every single place could not be covered, but can't believe Prasek's Hillje Smokehouse (near El Campo) wasn't mentioned. Their kolache are so very good; there's always a waiting line. And for us Texans (and those elsewhere), a klobasnek is a pig in the blanket!

JUDY BISHOP JUREK | BRADY (FORMER WHARTON COUNTY EC AND JACKSON EC MEMBER)

We want to hear from you! Share a family story or recipe for kolache by following Texas Co-op Power magazine on Facebook and Twitter and posting or Tweeting.



Zabcikville and the Kolache Kitchen in Temple have been making kolaches for as long as I can remember.

STEVE EASLEY | HEART OF TEXAS EC

If you had just managed to go a little west of West, to Clifton, you would have discovered Sulak's Czeck Bakery & Meats, of which we are very proud.

SARANNE PENBERTHY | UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

It's a shame you missed what the very young Katz brothers are doing in San Marcos at Dos Gatos Kolache Bakery.

P. MICHAEL SUMMER | PEDERNALES EC

Your article brought back fond memories of my attempt to be a judge at the Fort Bend County Fair in the early 1980s. They assigned me to the kolache contest, and I had to inquire as to what exactly was a kolache. My memory is that not all kolache are equal.

BOB ATWOOD | PEDERNALES EC

Battleship Texas

Money was raised to bring the Battleship Texas home [Hit the Road, January 2014]. As a child I put my pennies, nickels and dimes in and participated in these drives held by schools to get her back to Texas.

PEGGY RALEY | BANDERA EC

I still have my card making me an honorary admiral in the Texas Navy. It was issued to us in elementary school for contributing to the funds for preservation of the ship.

SCOTT CAMERON | PEDERNALES EC

Nip It in the Bud

Even a city slicker like me knows the tool shown on the title page is one normally used by farriers and vets to trim horse and livestock hooves and is not a wire cutter. ["Barbed Wire, Barbaric Backlash," January 2014]

MIKE PRENDERGAST | PEDERNALES EC

Editor's note: The tool we identified as being wire cutters is actually a nail nipper, which has many uses, including shoeing horses, according

to Lee Liles of the National Museum of Horseshoeing Tools and Hall of Honor in Sulphur, Oklahoma.



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HAPPENINGS

The Hows and Whys of Casting Flies

If you've ever thought about giving fly fishing a try, here's your chance.

The Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center is holding Fly Fish Texas! 2014 on March 8 in Athens. Fly-fishing clubs and anglers from across the state will share tips and techniques.

The event targets the novice fly fisher (but amateurs and experts are encouraged to attend, too). One-on-one or group training teaches fly tying and casting. During hands-on exercises, participants fish for rainbow trout, catfish or sunfish from the center's on-site, stocked ponds and streams.

INFO: (903) 676-2277, athenstx.org/things-to-do/fly-fish-texas-2014

TOTALLY TEXAS

New Hue Is Bluer Than Blue

Keep your eyes peeled this spring for extra-blue bluebonnets, developed by Texas A&M University horticulturists and named Lady Bird Johnson Royal Blue.

"We discovered Lady Bird Johnson in a field of red bluebonnets," says Jerry Parsons, a former AgriLife Extension horticulturist who selected a line that is a true Aggie maroon in 1995. "We were trying to isolate reds out from maroon bluebonnets, and we were getting these really dark blues coming up in the red fields."

The Lady Bird Johnson produces more blooms than a typical bluebonnet and up to 40 percent more seeds, making it easy to propagate.



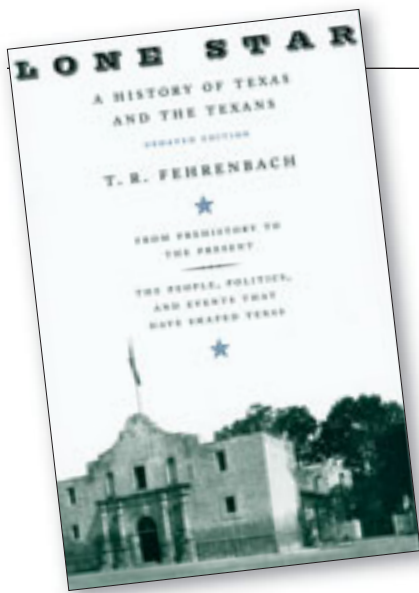
FEW TYING: LARRY HODGE | TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT, PEARL. ILLUSTRATION: JOHN MARGESON. BLUEBONNET: TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE



WHO KNEW?

A Pearl of Wisdom

The tiny community of Pearl, scene of the monthly Pearl Bluegrass Jam and Stage Show, used to be called Wayback, according to the Texas State Historical Association. (See "Pearl Bluegrass Jam," this month's Hit the Road, on Page 38.) A petition was sent to the government to establish a post office to be named Swayback, but a clerical error resulted in establishment of the Wayback post office in 1884. The town was renamed Pearl in 1890 after Pearl Davenport, the son of a local store operator. Pearl is served by Hamilton County Electric Cooperative Association.



He Wrote Texas' History Book

T.R. Fehrenbach wanted to make sure his depiction of the story of Texas was vast and mythological. The journalist and author of more than 20 books succeeded.

When he died December 1 at the age of 88, obituaries in the San Antonio Express-News and The New York Times included the phrase “larger than life” to describe Fehrenbach’s mark on Texas literature. He is best known for his 1968 book “Lone Star: A History of Texas and the Texans,” a tome of more than 700 pages that begins in prehistory and continues through the age of the oil barons. An editorial in The Dallas Morning News described the book as “a must-read for students, lovers of Texas history and new arrivals to the state.”

Fehrenbach, born in San Benito in 1925, was also a columnist for the San Antonio Express-News for almost 30 years and served as chairman of the Texas Historical Commission from 1987 to 1991.

ON THIS DATE

A Humdinger of a Slinger

Pro Football Hall of Fame Washington Redskins quarterback Sammy Baugh would have been a baseball star if he'd had his way.

Baugh, born March 17, 1914, outside of Temple, was a two-time All-America quarterback at Texas Christian University. But it was because of his throws from third base as a member of the Horned Frogs' baseball team that he earned the nickname Slingin' Sammy. Though drafted by Washington, he signed a contract to play baseball for the St. Louis Cardinals. (The scout who signed him was Rogers Hornsby, a Hall of Famer from Winters.)

After his rookie season with the Redskins, Baugh spent the summer of 1938 as a minor-league baseball player. After struggling to hit the curveball, he quit baseball and returned to the Redskins, where he continued a 16-year career that landed him in the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

You can read Texas Co-op Power's 2009 feature, “Slingin' Sammy Baugh,” on TexasCoopPower.com.



1,236

In 2012, 16,812 kidney transplants took place in the U.S., according to the National Kidney Foundation. Of those, 1,236 occurred in Texas, says the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (See “A Story Without a Finish Line,” this month’s Observations.) Learn more about organ donation at organdonor.gov.



VALOR ALWAYS WELCOME

Annual tribute to Medal of Honor recipients puts Gainesville on the map as 'Most Patriotic Small Town in America'

BY E.R. BILLS • PHOTOS BY DAVE SHAFER

TEXAS HAS A SURPLUS OF TOWNS IDENTIFIABLE BY A SINGULAR, defining reputation. Dublin is famous for Dr Pepper. Brenham is renowned for Blue Bell Ice Cream. Gainesville is known for patriotism.

Every April, Gainesville hosts recipients of the Medal of Honor, America's most prestigious decoration for valor on the battlefield. This community just south of the Red River pays round-trip airfare for any Medal of Honor recipient who wishes to make the four-day visit. City representatives pick them up at Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport and take them to town in a public safety vehicle motorcade, escorted by hundreds of Patriot Guard motorcyclists. Gainesville hosts honorees in area hotels and allots them cash stipends for general expenses.

The Medal of Honor Host City Program features a casual dinner, a formal banquet and a citywide parade. In addition, the honorees rub shoulders with Gainesville residents, make appearances at schools and attend other social events to discuss their military service and what the award has meant for them and their families. First-time honorees are also memorialized by tree plantings along Gainesville's Home Grown Hero Walking Trail.

"It's a grassroots effort," says Jenny Richardson, receptionist at the Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce. "From new-borns to folks in their 90s, everybody is involved. When it first started, no one knew how far it would go or how big it would get. Today, anybody who wants to be involved can, whether it's just



Opposite page: DUANE E. DEWEY, waves during the 2013 parade in downtown Gainesville. In 1952, Dewey was a gunner near Panmunjom, Korea, already receiving medical attention for wounds, when he smothered a grenade to protect his fellow Marines. **Above, clockwise from top left: WALTER 'JOE' MARM** checks out one of the Huey helicopters, ubiquitous in the Vietnam War, on display at the airport in Gainesville. Marm, a second lieutenant in the Army, earned the Medal of Honor in 1965 in Vietnam when he exposed himself to intense enemy fire as he led his platoon through an assault. Army Staff Sgt. **CLINTON L. ROMESHA**, 32, orchestrated the fight against a daylong attack by Taliban forces that greatly outnumbered his own and coordinated the recovery of injured soldiers in Afghanistan in 2009. **DON 'DOC' BALLARD**, seated, looks on as **ROBERT J. MODRZEJEWSKI** talks to a class at Robert E. Lee Intermediate School. Ballard, a hospital corpsman in Vietnam in 1968, was treating and evacuating casualties when a grenade landed near an injured Marine. Ballard threw himself on it to save his comrades. When it failed to detonate, he continued treating injuries. Modrzejewski, a Marine captain, commanded about 130 outnumbered men as they fought off an attack for three days in a Vietnamese jungle in 1966. **JOHN J. MCGINTY** shakes hands with a fellow Marine. McGinty, a staff sergeant who led his platoon while badly wounded in a four-hour battle in Vietnam in 1966, died January 17 at his home in South Carolina. He was 73.

standing at the parade waving a flag or giving a ride to one of the events to someone who couldn't get there on their own."

Don Pettigrew founded the Medal of Honor Host City Program in 2001 with wife Lynnette. He says the event simply sprang up out of necessity.

Pettigrew, who served with the Marines in Vietnam, had gotten into the habit of attending Iwo Jima reunions in Wichita Falls in the late 1990s and had met all but two of the living Medal of Honor recipients of that World War II battle. When he asked why the two had never made it to the reunions, he was told that neither they nor the event planners could afford the travel expenses.

"I thought someone ought to do something about it," Petti-

grew says. He relayed the disappointing circumstances to then-Gainesville Mayor Kenneth Kaden, who suggested that Pettigrew be that someone.

"The mayor said we could do it in Gainesville," adds Pettigrew, who has been a member of Cooke County Electric Cooperative for 30 years. "He tasked me with putting together a board and coming up with some guidelines. And that's how it all started."

The Medal of Honor was created in 1861 to memorialize American servicemen and women who "conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk" of their lives comport themselves "above and beyond the call of duty while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States." Over those 153



Clockwise from top left: DUANE E. DEWEY was the first person to receive the Medal of Honor from President Dwight D. Eisenhower, according to the Marine Corps website. Eisenhower remarked to Dewey, who threw himself on a grenade before it exploded, ‘You must have a body of steel.’ **HAROLD ‘HAL’ FRITZ** tells students at Gainesville High School, ‘In just two seconds, you and only you can make these decisions when the chips are down to be great in combat and in everyday life.’ Fritz was an Army first lieutenant in Vietnam, leading a seven-vehicle armored column when it was ambushed. Despite being seriously wounded, he continued fighting and directing his men, wielding at various times a machine gun, pistol and bayonet. He refused medical treatment until all the others had been treated and evacuated. **JAMES A. TAYLOR** explains the symbolism of his medal to students at Robert E. Lee Intermediate School. Taylor, a first lieutenant in the Army, three times removed wounded comrades from vehicles that were in danger of exploding after they were hit by enemy fire in Vietnam in 1967. Taylor explains he’s just a caretaker of the Medal of Honor for comrades who paid the ultimate sacrifice. **BRUCE P. CRANDALL**, a retired Army major, and service dog Huey await the start of the parade. Crandall completed 22 flights in an unarmed helicopter, most under intense enemy fire, to evacuate some 70 wounded comrades during a search-and-destroy mission in Vietnam on November 14, 1965.

years, American presidents—in the name of Congress—have awarded 3,463 Medals of Honor to the nation’s most courageous soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and Coast Guard personnel, including 76 Texans. When Gainesville’s Medal of Honor program began in 2001, there were 150 living recipients. Today there are only 76. Forty recipients have participated in Gainesville’s program.

In July 2012, travel and map publisher Rand McNally and USA Today named Gainesville the “Most Patriotic Small Town in America” as part of its Best of the Road promotion. It came as no surprise to former Army Capt. Harold “Hal” Fritz, a 2013 Gainesville honoree and president of the Congressional Medal of Honor Society, based in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina.

“The whole essence of Gainesville’s Medal of Honor program is to show that the community and the citizens appreciate what honorees have done to preserve our freedoms,” says Fritz, a 1971 Medal of Honor recipient who lives in Peoria, Illinois. “The people of Gainesville have no hidden agenda,” Fritz adds, “and they’re not in it for the limelight. Their only goal is to let us know they appreciate our service.”

Fritz received the Medal of Honor for leading his vastly outnumbered platoon through an intense firefight in the Binh Long Province of South Vietnam on January 11, 1969. When his armored column encountered crossfire during an ambush, Fritz, then a first lieutenant, was seriously wounded. Realizing that his platoon was in danger of being overrun, Fritz climbed

atop his burning vehicle and shouted orders, establishing a defensive perimeter for his remaining comrades. Under heavy fire from opposing gunners, he ran from position to position, repositioning his men, assisting the wounded, distributing ammunition and providing encouragement. He manned a machine gun to break the assault and then led another counter-attack carrying only a pistol and bayonet.

Don “Doc” Ballard, a former Navy hospital corpsman second class and 1970 Medal of Honor recipient, attends Gainesville’s festivities every year. His favorite aspect is visiting with the kids, but his annual presence also stems from a profound sense of responsibility.

On May 16, 1968, Ballard ran across a fiery battlefield in the Quang Tri Province of South Vietnam to tend to a wounded comrade. He then instructed four Marines to move the wounded soldier to safety when an enemy soldier approached, threw a grenade and began shooting. Ballard shouted at the Marines to take cover then threw himself on the grenade. When it failed to detonate, Ballard got up and began helping other wounded Marines, saving at least a dozen lives.

Ballard, who lives in Kansas City, Missouri, says he doesn’t attend Gainesville’s Medal of Honor events for the ones he saved or the ones who survived the war. “When I’m here, I wear the medal for the guys that paid the ultimate price,” says Ballard, who retired from the Kansas National Guard as a colonel. “I’m sure any of them would change places with me in a minute. I wear the medal for them because I know they would do the

same for me.”

For Fritz and Ballard, the Texas city’s Medal of Honor program celebrates everything that’s right with America. “It’s about community and respect,” says Fritz. “The citizens of Gainesville make you feel like you’re part of the family.”

Hosting the veterans has changed the folks in Gainesville, too. “It’s made each of us evaluate our own sense of patriotism,” Richardson says. “It’s made us realize that patriotism is not generational. It’s a process, an everyday process of being thankful for those who have served and those who will serve.”

Ballard says he feels the celebration sends a great message. “We need to impart our values to our kids,” he says. “The whole program is dedicated to real heroes—not guys who hit home runs or make the tough shots on a basketball court—but guys that really laid it on the line, for their country and for the guy next to them.”

E.R. Bills of *Aledo* has written ‘Texas Obscurities: Stories of the Peculiar, Exceptional and Nefarious’ (History Press, 2013).

The Medal of Honor Host City Program in 2014

April 9: City officials and the Patriot Guard meet honorees at Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport and take them to Gainesville via motorcade

April 10: Fish fry (ticketed event open to the public)

April 11: Dedication of newly planted red oak trees at the Home Grown Hero Walking Trail; banquet (reservations only)

April 12: Parade

Info: (940) 665-2831, medalofhonorhostcity.com

Medal of Honor recipients remember their comrades. Each cross represents a Medal of Honor recipient who has died since the Medal of Honor Host City Program began in Gainesville in 2001. Students at Robert E. Lee Intermediate School place the crosses for the ceremony.



Kathy Patrick's realm as a small-town hairdresser reaches far and wide through her Pulpwood Queens book club

BY
CHRISTOPHER
COOK

BOUND & DETERMINED



ABOVE: Kathy Patrick opened *Beauty and the Book*, a combination beauty shop and bookstore in Jefferson, after she lost her publishing job in 1999. **INSET:** She has since moved to Hawkins, where she continues as a hairstylist and passionate advocate for literacy through her Pulpwood Queens book clubs.

IN OCTOBER 1999, KATHY PATRICK received one of those phone calls we all dread. A corporate downsizing eliminated her job. Not just any job—her dream job. Patrick, an avid reader, represented book publishers. She met authors. She got to travel—New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles. And it paid well, with bonuses, insurance and profit sharing.

That's not the sort of position easily replaced when you live in a small town like Jefferson, population 2,106, tucked into the northeast corner of rural Texas. Especially if you are more or less married to the town, as Patrick was. Her husband had a good job. They owned a lovely home. Their two children attended the local school. They belonged to a church. Relocating was not an option.

In short, that phone call represented disaster.

So Patrick did what any sane person does under such circumstances. She went to bed. She read novels and watched TV. She ate chocolate—lots of chocolate.

Then, after a long week in hiding, she rose from her bed like Lazarus and started over.

Now, 14 years later, she looks back on that time and all that's happened since and marvels: Who could have predicted the striking chain of events that ensued?

For an opening salvo, Patrick launched *Beauty and the Book*, likely the first—and as far she knows only—combination beauty shop and bookstore in Texas. Right there in tiny Jefferson.

Then she started a book club. Because

LARGE PHOTO: RANDY MALLORY; INSET PHOTO: ROBERT LANGHAM III

A BOOK CLUB GOES VIRAL

Northeast Texas is pulpwood timber country, she dubbed it the Pulpwood Queens of East Texas. Six people showed up for the first meeting. Not bad. Eventually, 550 Pulpwood Queens' chapters spread across the U.S. and overseas with more than 2,000 members.

How'd that happen? Momentum, Patrick says. It just kept building and never stopped.

Bob Phillips showed up in 2002 to film a segment for his syndicated TV show "Texas Country Reporter." People called afterward, saying, "We want to start a chapter, too."

That same year, ABC contacted Patrick who, along with 60 local Pulpwood Queens, appeared live on "Good Morning America" from Jefferson. Diane Sawyer and Patrick talked about hair. Big hair. Also, books. And more people called.

So did Oprah. Which is how Patrick ended up on Oprah's cable TV network Oxygen. "I appeared on the show 'Dallas Style' with a new singing group out of Houston called Destiny's Child," she recalls with a laugh. "Beyoncé. She's gone a little farther than me."

No question, the Pulpwood Queens were on a roll. Grand Central Publishing released Patrick's book, "The Pulpwood Queens' Tiara-Wearing, Book-Sharing Guide to Life" in 2008. In the book, Patrick tells the story of her remarkable life journey. She offers tidbits of philosophy, such as, "When gathering with girlfriends, leave your diets at the door." She also makes a strong pitch for literacy, a cause she is intensely devoted to. "Get America reading"—that's the club's official mission statement.

Nowadays, an annual January extravaganza called Girlfriend Weekend attracts authors and Pulpwood Queens from afar for an event combining a book festival, author discussion panels, costume events and a Saturday night dance called the Hair Ball.

There's also the literacy project with Dolly Parton, the prison project in Alaska, the group trips to visit literary sites in Europe and, well, the list goes on and on.

Not that every idea comes to fruition. A talk show that publisher Random House wanted Patrick to host on cable TV, for example, got sidetracked to the Internet, where it languished. But that sort of thing's to be expected when someone's pushing the envelope. And Patrick is, if anything, a trailblazer. She's a born risk taker.

In the beginning, Beauty and the Book was located in the Patrick home on the forested outskirts of Jefferson.

"After I lost my job, my sister suggested I go back to doing hair," Patrick recalls. "When I was younger, I went to Crum's Beauty College in Manhattan, Kansas, and became a hairdresser as a way to put myself through [the] university."

So a former workshop adjacent to the house became a beauty shop. Because she loves books, the beauty shop also became a bookstore. In January 2000, Patrick opened for business.

By March, she decided to start a book club for women. While pondering names, she remembered a beauty contest she entered as a teenager, with calamitous results. "Hey, I can't help it if I don't have a waistline," she says. "This is how God made me. So I figured we'd crown ourselves 'beauty-within queens'—The Pulpwood Queens. Our motto would be, 'Where tiaras are mandatory and reading good books is the rule.' And we would be inclusive. Anybody could belong. Education, religion, economic background—none of that would matter."

Club members indulge in a playful signature look: tiaras, hot pink T-shirts, rhinestones and leopard-print accessories, including jackets. Women secretly love leopard print, Patrick says, but need "permission" to wear it in public.

Finally, to encourage wider book club participation, she created an auxiliary group for men called the Timber Guys. Younger folks can join the Splinters (teenagers) and Pine Cones (children).

As the Pulpwood Queens received increasing media attention and the number of chapters skyrocketed, Patrick found herself hard-pressed to keep track. Early chapters mushroomed across Texas and Louisiana then began appearing as far away as California, Virginia, Alaska and even overseas. Much of her communication with the members is through email and social media—Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.

"It's hard to keep up," she concedes. "Of the 550 or so chapters, about 20 to 25 are really big. Some start, and I don't hear from them again. I hear from some every day. There may be as many as 3,000 members now. It's growing so fast."

Because her days are hectic with running a small business, Patrick reads at night. With so many members, the Pulpwood Queens can create a buzz about books and influence sales, so publishers send her titles to consider. Each month she chooses two Pulpwood Queens Book Club selections and a bonus book, plus a book each for the Splinters and Pine Cones. These are posted on the Internet and announced on social media for chapters everywhere to see.

Patrick is especially proud of the Pulp-



At a 2013 Pulpwood Queens meeting in Jefferson, Sandra Phillips, left, and Jean Wright don their tiaras, a signature look for book club gatherings. When Kathy Patrick formed the Pulpwood Queens, she decided, "Our motto would be, "Where tiaras are mandatory and reading good books is the rule." "

wood Queens' efforts to promote literacy. Reading, she says, is key to a healthy, productive life. So whether it's participating in Dolly Parton's Imagination Library initiative or making speeches to civic organizations, Patrick works to push literacy to the forefront of public concern.

The Pulpwood Queens chapter in Golden, Colorado, collects books and delivers them to an American Indian reservation in South Dakota where the schools had no library. The Anchorage, Alaska, club helped start a chapter in a state prison for women. To raise money to buy books, the prison chapter sells a self-published "Crook Book" with recipes prepared solely by microwave, the only cooking device allowed in the prison. The South Louisiana chapter raises money to buy books and Bibles for schoolchildren in Nicaragua. The Katy chapter raises funds to promote literacy in the Houston region.

Patrick is moved that these Pulpwood Queens are committed to serving others. "It is," she says, "inspirational."

For the most part, Patrick tries to ride herd on all the activity from Beauty and the Book while adding highlights, juggling phone calls and selling books. Her home-based shop proved too small, so she moved to an old renovated Gulf service station in Jefferson. It isn't a large space, either, with two stylist stations nestled among shelves stacked with books and knickknacks, walls covered with framed art and mementoes, and cluttered counters overflowing with a multitudinous array of merchandise. For years, within the near chaos of the shop

reigned a busy atmosphere of celebration: Life is a feast, enjoy it!

Then disaster struck again.

STARTING OVER ONCE MORE

In 2013, Patrick's marriage of 25 years came apart. As with that phone call in 1999, she didn't see it coming. Her life unraveled overnight. In the subsequent divorce, she and her ex sold their home in Jefferson, and she closed her beloved shop. It was a crushing experience.

For month after month, Patrick felt disoriented. She describes herself as being paralyzed with fear.

Then one day she decided, Enough! She rose from her bed like Lazarus yet again. She moved herself and Beauty and the Book 60 miles west to the town of Hawkins, just north of Tyler, where she is a member of Upshur Rural Electric Cooperative.

"I'm 57 years old and starting over," she says. "It's scary. But life is about change. And it's how you snap back that determines whether you have a purposeful life."

Part of snapping back has been taking the position of youth minister at the First United Methodist Church in Hawkins. She has a van and a budget and takes kids on at least one trip a month. She likes her new community. It might not have Jefferson's rich history, she concedes, but it's a fine place all the same, and full of good people.

She also still has Beauty and the Book. And the Pulpwood Queens, Patrick says, continue to thrive. She continues to help book lovers start even more new chapters—one of them in Hawkins.

And as always, her imagination is in overdrive pondering new projects. One is a program called the moveable feast, a monthly literary luncheon with an author as guest speaker. Another is starting a writing center, a retreat where aspiring writers can spend time with established authors to learn about the storytelling craft. Then there's Hollywood.

"I'm working with a producer in LA who is pitching a major motion picture based on the Pulpwood Queens," Patrick says. "Something like 'Steel Magnolias.' Possibly followed by a TV sitcom."

An ambitious idea, surely. The kind Patrick likes. There's risk involved, but what good venture is altogether safe? Once upon a time, Beauty and the Book was a mere idea. And the Pulpwood Queens Book Club was only a notion.

So, Hollywood. Not a bad concept, actually. She's thinking about it. Check back in a year or so.

Because with Kathy Patrick, you just never know where the plot will go.

Former Texas Co-op Power editor **Christopher Cook** lives in Prague, Czech Republic, and in Mexico. His website is christopher-cook.com.

You can learn more about the Pulpwood Queens and Beauty and the Book at beautyandthebook.com.

Web Extras on TexasCoopPower.com

Read about Christopher Cook's experience as a Pulpwood Queens guest author.

Top 10 Books Kathy Patrick Would Want on a Deserted Island

- 1) 'To Kill a Mockingbird' by Harper Lee
- 2) The Bible
- 3) 'The Collected Works of Eudora Welty'
- 4) 'The Collected Plays of Tennessee Williams'
- 5) 'Crazy in Alabama' by Mark Childress
- 6) 'The Great Santini' by Pat Conroy
- 7) 'Slow Way Home' by Michael Morris
- 8) 'Island of the Blue Dolphins' by Scott O'Dell
- 9) 'One Foot in Eden' by Ron Rash
- 10) 'SAS Survival Handbook' by John 'Lofty' Wiseman
(Of course, I wish I had a set of encyclopedias, too.)

What books would you want? Share your list by commenting on this story online, posting it on Facebook or sending it to editor@texas-ec.org.



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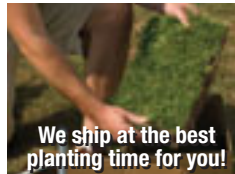
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CONSERVATION AND SAFETY INFORMATION



FIRST ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, ARKANSAS

Powering Up After a Storm

BY B. DENISE HAWKINS

Your electric cooperative starts big when tracing outages during electricity restoration

Lights out? Thirty-one percent of power outages are triggered by the weather. Lineworkers must battle the elements to find problem areas and restore service as quickly and safely as possible.

Your co-op staff knows you want to know why the lights are out and when they are coming back on. First, workers must find the problem, and then they follow a series of steps to bring the lights back on.

Efforts are made to restore power to the largest number of members as quickly as possible. Then crews fix problems affecting smaller groups of members.

Restoring Power

When an outage occurs, line crews work to pinpoint problems. They start with high-voltage transmission lines. Transmission towers and cables that supply power to thousands of consumers rarely fail. But when damage occurs, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.

Next, crews check distribution substations. Each substation serves hundreds or thousands of members. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to discover if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself, or if problems exist down the line.

If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of members in communities or housing developments.

If local outages persist, supply lines (also called tap lines) are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground

Outage Safety Tips

Follow these safety steps at home during a power outage:

- ▶ Before calling your cooperative to report an outage, first check to see whether your home's circuit panel or fuse box has tripped or blown a fuse. This can also cause a power failure. If tripped, reset the breaker or replace the blown fuse.
- ▶ If the power is out in your entire neighborhood, call your co-op to report the outage.
- ▶ Turn off and unplug all unnecessary appliances and electrical equipment. When power is restored, turn on items one at a time.
- ▶ Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed. An unopened refrigerator keeps food cold for about four hours. A full freezer keeps food cold for about 48 hours.
- ▶ Individual households may receive special attention if loss of electricity affects life-support systems or poses immediate danger. If you or a family member depends on life support, inform your co-op before a power outage happens.

service, outside businesses, schools and homes.

If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your home may need to be repaired.

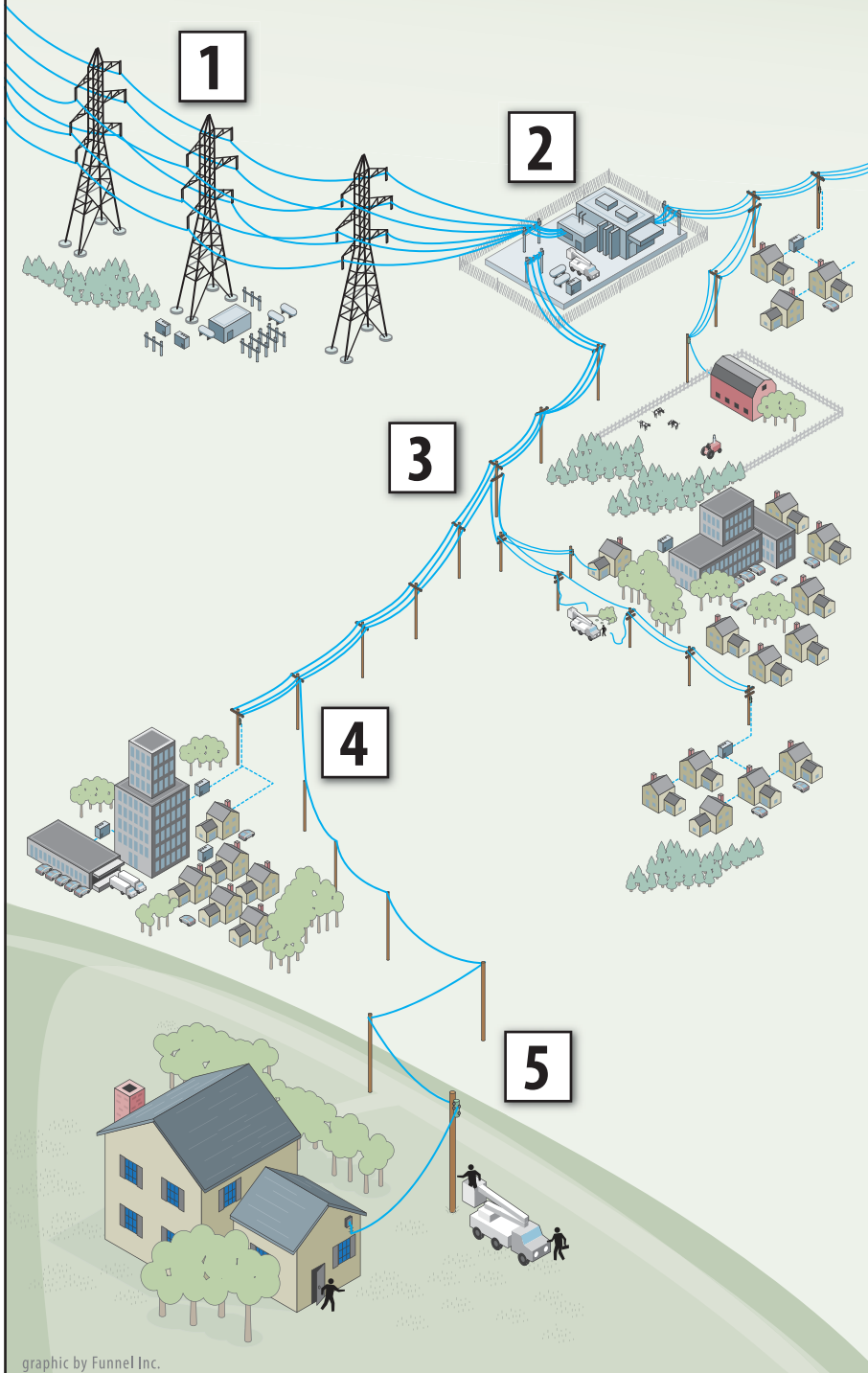
Always call your co-op to report an outage. This helps crews isolate local issues.

B. Denise Hawkins writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the *National Rural Electric Cooperative Association*.

Powering UP

When electricity goes out, most of us expect power will be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm causes widespread damage, longer outages may result. Co-op line crews work long, hard hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of consumers in the shortest time possible.

Here's what's going on if you find yourself in the dark.



1 High-Voltage Transmission Lines

Transmission towers and cables that supply power to transmission substations (and thousands of members) rarely fail. But when damaged, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.

2 Distribution Substation

Each substation serves hundreds or thousands of consumers. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to determine if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself, or if problems exist down the line.

3 Main Distribution Lines

If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of consumers in communities or housing developments.

4 Tap Lines

If local outages persist, supply lines, called tap lines, are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service, outside businesses, schools, and homes.

5 Individual Homes

If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your residence may need to be repaired. Always call to report an outage to help line crews isolate local issues.

graphic by Funnel Inc.

Aggie With a Secret



Class of 1913 cadet was brother of man executed for murder and portrayed in classic novel 'An American Tragedy'

BY JEROME LOVING

PERHAPS ONLY AN ENGLISH MAJOR, OR an Aggie English professor for the past 40 years, was likely to discover Paul Clifford Gillette, Texas A&M class of 1913. A century ago, this Houston "native" graduated from A&M as a member of Corps Company C. Known to his fellow cadets as "P.C.," he wasn't actually from Houston, but from all over the country. Born in 1893 in Spokane, Washington, he died on the island of Maui in Hawaii in 1973.

Throughout his four years as a student in College Station, Paul carried with him a huge secret. His parents, Frank and Louisa, identified themselves in the 1900 census as preachers for the Salvation Army. They traveled the nation's major cities with their street ministry, one that involved the participation of their four children, two daughters and two sons. Paul was their youngest child. His brother, Chester, born in 1883, had been executed for murder in 1908 at the Auburn State Prison in New York.

This was Paul Gillette's secret.

Described as the "crime of the century," as other well-publicized murders were in the last century (the Loeb-Leopold trial of the 1920s involving Clarence Darrow, known as the "attorney for the damned," and the O.J. Simpson trial of the 1990s), it became the basis of one of the greatest American novels of the 20th century: Theodore Dreiser's "An American Tragedy," published in 1925.

Chester was convicted of drowning his girlfriend Grace Brown. She had been an employee in a factory owned by Chester's wealthy uncle, who otherwise

had been long estranged from his impoverished street preacher brother, Frank. Chester had left his parents' ministry and traveled far and wide, failing as a student at Oberlin College preparatory school, working as a brakeman for the railroad and, finally, in 1905, ending up as an employee of his uncle's collar factory in Cortland, New York.

Chester was fascinated by the American dream of becoming rich. But a woman he had befriended, a co-worker named Grace Brown, became pregnant with his child and thus an obstacle between Chester and the opulent life of his uncle's upper-class family.

The subsequent murder trial was sensationalized by the newspapers of the day because the crime involved a supposedly rich boy and an impoverished girl. The New York World, which gave the trial its most intense coverage, also published Grace Brown's letters to Chester in which she begged him to marry her and save her from what was then absolute scandal.

In "An American Tragedy," as in the real-life case it mirrored, Chester's character, Clyde Griffiths (bearing the same initials as Chester Gillette), takes his girlfriend Roberta Alden (Grace Brown) to a lake resort in the Adirondacks on the premise that they will marry there, far enough from Cortland to avoid scandal. In Dreiser's novel, the young man takes his girlfriend out on a lake in a boat. When she accidentally falls in the water, he fails to save her, knowing all the while that she cannot swim.

At his trial, Chester maintained his

innocence, claiming that Grace had committed suicide by throwing herself overboard when he threatened to inform her parents of the pregnancy.

After the execution, the Gillette family, including 15-year-old Paul, moved to Houston, a city far away from the scandal and Chester's execution. Chester's last words, quoted in New York newspapers, included advice to Paul to remain on the straight and narrow.

In the 1910 census, Frank Gillette gave his occupation as "stationary engineer," somebody who maintains power plants. His son, Paul, went to A&M, graduated with a degree in civil engineering and went on to graduate studies in the same subject at the University of Wisconsin in 1917.

Paul held the cadet rank of lieutenant when he graduated from A&M. He is described in "The Longhorn," the A&M yearbook, as "the most honest cadet on

the campus—so honest that the Bull knows everything that goes wrong in the neighborhood of Foster Hall. He is the most widely traveled man in the Senior Class. In fact, one brave girl said that she would have to read Shakespeare so she could hold a conversation with him."

This description suggests that by 1913 Paul had managed to put his past somewhat behind him to become a graduate of Texas A&M. It apparently hadn't been easy at first. "It took this little man two years to find his place," his yearbook description noted, "but the beginning of his Junior year found him in Co. C, the original home of the incubator products."

Twelve years later, however, his family's past came back to haunt him, in the form of Dreiser's book—the first major "nonfiction" novel in American literature, a literary feat repeated by Truman Capote's "In Cold Blood" (1967) and Nor-

man Mailer's "The Executioner's Song" (1979). It had been one thing to be the younger brother of a convicted killer. It was another to have that brother's crime enshrined in a famous novel.

Jerome Loving is distinguished professor of English at Texas A&M University and the author of a number of biographies about literary figures, including 'The Last Titan: A Life of Theodore Dreiser' (University of California Press, 2005). He is a member of Bryan Texas Utilities.

Big Moose Lake in New York is where Chester Gillette killed pregnant girlfriend Grace Brown in 1906. (Their photos are inset.) Love letters written by Brown were presented as evidence against Gillette at his trial. Paul Gillette, right, graduated from Texas A&M five years after his brother's execution, seemingly with nobody in College Station aware of his connection to the 'crime of the century.'



PAUL CLIFFORD GILLETTE,
Houston
Civil Engineering
Age 29, weight 150, height 5-6.
Vice-Pres. Austin Literary Society;
Lieut. Co. C; Y. M. C. A. Cabinet;
Southwestern Y. M. C. A.;
Conference Delegate; Vice-Pres. Y. M.
C. A.; Sergt. Co. C.
"P. C." "Frenchie"

It took this little man two years to find his place, but the beginning of his Junior year found him in Co. C, the original home of the incubator products. He is the most honest cadet on the campus—so honest that the Bull knows everything that goes wrong in the neighborhood of Foster Hall. He is the most widely traveled man in the Senior Class. In fact, one Bryan girl said that she would have to read Shakespeare so she could hold a conversation with him. This would go to show that he has a truly —sh-er-uh— Cosmopolitan knowledge.



A Story Without a Finish Line

Kidney donor goes the distance with inspiration from another donor, a runner featured in 2010 article

BY ASHLEY CLARY-CARPENTER

WHAT HAPPENS TO A STORY LONG AFTER it's published and sent off into the world? Does it disappear? Or does it keep on living?

In 2010, I wrote a Texas Co-op Power story about a Jackson Electric Cooperative employee who had completed his first marathon at age 50. This feat was accomplished seven months after he had donated a kidney to his sister.

His was a great story ["Run a Marathon, Donate an Organ," February 2011]. He gave the gift of life. But as stories do, they fade with time, and many months continued to bury his in the past.

Last August, I received an email from Mike Myers, the very marathon-running, kidney-donating JEC employee I had written about. He told me he had a voicemail on his answering machine from a woman who apologized for being intrusive, but she had decided to donate a kidney to a close friend and, as a runner, was concerned about any repercussions. She found the Texas Co-op Power story through a Google search, and as a Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative member, recalled reading it when it was published. Myers talked to her and put her at ease, and, as a show of support, planned to attend her transplant surgery, which was in August in San Antonio.

"What I did for my sister was without question," Myers said in his message, "but for someone to be so gracious to donate an organ to someone out of the family is extraordinary."

I asked Myers for the donor's contact information. I wanted to tell her that she

rocked and tell her thank you. To merely say thank you to someone for committing such a selfless act seems a bit silly. You say thank you when someone holds open the door. Do the same words carry a different weight when you say them to someone who has literally sacrificed a part of herself to save a life?

I contacted Cheryl Green, 55, a couple of weeks after her surgery, giving her some time to recover. Her cheerfully upbeat voice filled the line and warmed my heart, and I found it difficult to decipher that this woman had just come through major surgery. She talked to me with such familiarity, as if I were a member of her family.

We talked about her background and how she, similar to Myers, ran her first half-marathon after age 50. "I never planned to be fast; my goal is to keep doing this when I'm 100," said the Bastrop resident and former aerobics instructor. "I decided it's a way for me to keep old age at bay."

Seven half-marathons and one full marathon later, the serious runner was keeping active when she learned a close friend needed a kidney. Her friend, who had kidney problems for many years, wasn't the type to ask for help, but Green knew right away, no question about it, she would donate if she proved a match. It turned out she was. "She'll get a good one, and you'll be fine," Green had told herself.

Her only question was: "What's the deal on running after you donate a kidney?"

After finding Myers, she stalked him, she said, and received one of those anonymous, generic voicemail greetings when

she finally called. She left an awkward message asking for his experience as a donor, and hung up. Several days later, he called back. They talked for two hours.

Green says she felt as if she knew the warm and friendly stranger and that he encouragingly told her that she'd be fine. It was a great thing she was doing, he said, and he promised that he and his wife, Holly, would be there on the day of the surgery.

"Here's someone I don't even know! I hadn't even told all of my friends yet; it's pretty heavy info, and I knew at any point it might not happen," Green says.

Green and the Myerses stayed in touch. After one particular round of tests, Green felt overwhelmed with information. Waiting on her cellphone was a voicemail from a stranger—Kim, a friend of Myers—who was a kidney recipient. Kim said she was praying for her, and that if Green needed someone to talk to, she was there, as was Margie, her donor, who also called.

"Every time I had one of those little slips, I had someone to help me," Green says.

Support continued to pour in from Myers, Kim and Margie, and as the surgery looked more and more like it was a sure thing, her church community and friends also offered prayers.

True to their word, the Myerses attended Green's surgery. At this point they still hadn't met in person. They brought food—and more food—and picked up Green's parents to take them to the hospital and waited with and counseled her family and friends.

"It was wonderful having them there. Someone who had been there," says Green. "I can't imagine a stranger doing what he did."

Myers has since retired from running, but Green hasn't hung up her shoes just yet. Her recovery went well, and soon after surgery she was walking daily, which quickly progressed to light jogging. Her friend who received her kidney is also doing great.

"I sometimes forget I've had the surgery, but then I'll feel a twinge and get that gentle reminder," Green said in October. "But I'm full speed as far as driving and working, and I'm working with a personal trainer to get my strength back up and be able to do everything I was doing. It's fun to see that on the horizon."

That horizon wasn't long out of reach.

Green ran the 3M Half Marathon & Relay in Austin on January 19 and says that

when she realized she could run it—instead of walking it as originally planned—she was the most excited she's ever been. Her sights are now fixed on the Zooma Half Marathon between Austin and Bastrop in April. She and Myers keep in touch, and she says she's surprised that a stranger would become instrumental in her life.

I guess you can say that after giving the gift of life, the givers still haven't crossed

the finish. They keep on giving. And their stories keep on living.

Ashley-Clary Carpenter is field editor for *Texas Co-op Power*.

Web Extras on TexasCoopPower.com

See a slideshow from Cheryl Green's half-marathon run in Austin.

Mike Myers and Cheryl Green embrace after Green finished a training run for the 3M Half Marathon & Relay. Green donated a kidney to a friend September 12 then ran the race January 19 in Austin. 'It was my happiest run ever,' she says.



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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.



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 – Corpus Christi, 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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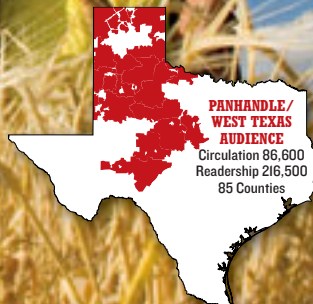
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Revolt on the Range

Changing times sow discontent among 19th-century cowboys in the Panhandle, leading to the not-so-great Great Cowboy Strike of 1883.

BY CLAY COPPEDGE

AMERICAN HISTORY IS FULL OF IMAGES OF STRIKING AUTOWORKERS, farm laborers, steelworkers, coal miners and others. But cowboys? The notion seems farfetched, even ridiculous. Cowboys are, after all, iconic loners, usually portrayed as independent and self-reliant. It's hard to imagine a group of ranch hands organizing a strike, but it happened in Texas.

In 1883, in the wild and woolly cow town of Tascosa on the banks of the Canadian River, a group of cowboys got mad as hell and announced to the owners of five big Panhandle ranches that they weren't going to take it anymore. Between 160 and 200 cowboys walked off the job in what became known as the Great Cowboy Strike of 1883, though it didn't turn out all that great.

The strike happened at a time when both the cattle business and the plains country of the Panhandle were in transition. The cattle drives were over, and the railroads had arrived. A lot of the old ranch owners were also gone, their places taken by out-of-state and foreign investors.

The cowboy life has always been romantic to those not actively engaged in it—a sentiment especially true for these hired hands. They labored sunup to sundown in every kind of weather doing frequently dangerous work, eating two meals a day and sleeping out in the open, unless they were among the pampered few who had tents. On average, they earned \$30 a month.

In the old days before the syndicates and absentee owners, cowboys might be given some calves in addition to their pay, or they could take some mavericks (an unbranded calf or yearling) and work their own herds out on the range. Many a future Panhandle rancher got started that way.

Then ranch owners put an end to all that up-by-the-bootstraps nonsense. They didn't give away calves, and all mavericks became property of the ranch. This change, more than salary, was at the heart of the cowboys' discontent.

The cowboys asked for a raise to \$50 a month and the same wage for a "good" cook. Bosses would get \$75. The strike was intended to disrupt the spring roundup, but it did not. The ranches were not much affected by anything the cowboys did or did not do, though much was made of what they might do.

Newspapers in other states relished the idea of a Texas range war, and a class war to boot! "An ordinary cowboy is as explosive as a nitroglycerin bomb, and a good deal more dangerous. We shall watch with great interest, not caring much which side whips or gets whipped," the Trinidad, Colorado, Weekly Advertiser commented.

But the strike came and went without a shot being fired, ending only two months after it began. The LE and T-Anchor ranches fired striking cowboys on the spot. The LS and LIT ranches offered a small raise and fired anybody who didn't accept it. The spring roundups continued with replacement workers, of which there were plenty, and with cowboys who saw the handwriting on the



wall and rejoined their old outfits. The strikers simply ran out of money while the work went on without them.

The only lingering effects of the strike were some of Tascosa's later infamous gunfights, many of which had their origins in festering animosities exposed or created by the strike.

Texas writer Elmer Kelton based his novel "The Day the Cowboys Quit" (Texas Christian University Press) on the strike. Kelton, who died in 2009, understood cowboys and why the strike happened, or perhaps failed to happen. He theorized in the words of the novel's protagonist, a cowboy named Hugh Hitchcock.

"Hugh Hitchcock always said cowboy independence triggered the cowboy strike," Kelton wrote. "There came a time that some men decided independence was too costly when the wrong people had it, so they tried to mold others to a pattern of their own cutting. And when you crowd a man too far, he may do something in self defense that is not sensible, either."

Some scholars have called the strike part of a wider international labor movement, but historian Robert Ziegler, in the Texas State Historical Association's online "Handbook of Texas," called it "an interesting but isolated incident that had no lasting repercussions for either the cowboys or the cattle industry."

Clay Coppedge is a frequent contributor.

Artisanal Advantage

A fast-growing artisanal cheese movement in Texas is putting fresh, locally made varieties within easy reach.

The state ranked eighth in the nation in 2012 with 43 artisanal producers, a number that had grown more than 250 percent from 2006, according to statistics from texascheesetour.com, a directory to the state's artisanal cheesemakers and purveyors. Artisanal cheese is produced in relatively small batches, unlike mass-produced cheeses commonly found in grocery stores.

Emblematic of the movement is HILCO Electric Cooperative member Brazos Valley Cheese, northwest of Waco.

Since its founding in 2005 by Rebeccah Durkin, a self-taught cheesemaker, and her cousin Marc Kuehl, Brazos Valley Cheese has grown from producing cheese in a 36-gallon milk vat to one that can handle 400 gallons at a time—enough to produce 25 15-pound wheels a day.

They use raw, unpasteurized milk from two nearby dairies that graze their cows on grass, Kuehl says.

“The green in the grass makes the milk more yellow, and you get a real, full flavor,” he says. “It’s just a different product from what you get in an industrialized mode. We value not being industrialized.”

Because it’s made from raw milk, the cheese must by law age at least 60 days, which is done in an on-site underground room. It’s then shipped to Whole Foods grocery stores and is in demand by chefs and hotels, Kuehl says. Brazos Valley Cheese varieties include cheddar, Brie and smoked Gouda and can be ordered at brazosvalleycheese.com.

Another available variety is one Kuehl created accidentally. He says one day he’d been heating milk for a batch of cheese and went home for lunch, inadvertently leaving it cooking.

“I thought I’d completely flopped the cheese,” he says. “I thought it was going to be dry and crumbly. But in case it was edible, I wanted to make it unique.” So he put it in a cheese press and rubbed the rind with a mixture of vanilla, sorghum and cinnamon. From the potentially ruined batch came a variety dubbed Van Sormon, a name coined from the three flavorings (VANilla, SORghum and cinnaMON).

As with any handcrafted food product, variation in taste is common. A batch of cheese made in the spring when milk has higher butterfat levels or after rain has made grass grow will taste different than the same type of cheese made in the winter or during a drought.

“It’s not a cookie-cutter product,” Kuehl says. “We don’t want that.”

KEVIN HARGIS

Brazos Valley Cheese’s Brie, which has a line of vegetable ash in the center and is wrapped in edible fig leaves, took first place at a competition in Montreal in 2011.

Inset: Self-taught cheesemaker Rebeccah Durkin and cousin Marc Kuehl’s business has grown with the burgeoning artisanal cheese market in Texas.



MILLIE KIRCHOFF | NUJECES EC

Cheese Contest Winner: The perfect dose of cheese, corn and just enough spice for a gentle kick to the palate make up the ingredients of Millie Kirchoff's prizewinning recipe. A rich, cheesy casserole like this one can be a satisfying comfort food.



Cheesy Corn Casserole

- 3 tablespoons butter or margarine, room temperature
- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1½ cups herb-flavored cornbread stuffing or crumbled cornbread
- 3 tablespoons diced green onions, including tops
- 1 small jar (4 ounces) diced pimientos or ½ large red bell pepper, diced
- 1 fresh or pickled jalapeño, seeded and chopped
- 2 cans (15 ounces each) whole-kernel corn, undrained
- 1 can (14.5 ounces) cream-style corn
- 2 large eggs, slightly beaten
- 1½ cups shredded colby cheese
- 1 cup mozzarella, grated, divided
- Salt and pepper, to taste

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 13-by-9-inch glass casserole pan; set aside.
- In a large bowl, gently stir together the softened butter or margarine, cream cheese, stuffing or cornbread, green onions, pimientos or red bell pepper, jalapeño, kernel and cream-style corn, and eggs. Add the colby cheese and most of the mozzarella; pour into casserole.
- Bake for 50 minutes, remove from oven and sprinkle with remaining mozzarella. Continue baking for an additional 10 minutes, or until browned.

Servings: 8. Serving size: 1 cup. Per serving: 437 calories, 16 g protein, 26.2 g fat, 32 g carbohydrates, 3.2 g dietary fiber, 664 mg sodium, 6 g sugars, 118 mg cholesterol

Yummy Grilled Cheese Grits

- 1 can (14.5 ounces) chicken broth
- 4 ounces pasteurized cheese, cubed
- 2 ounces coarsely shredded Parmesan cheese
- 2 ounces shredded cheddar cheese
- ¼ cup butter, cubed
- 1 to 2 cloves garlic, pressed
- 2 to 3 tablespoons chopped fresh or pickled jalapeños
- ½ package (1½ ounces) real bacon pieces
- 1 cup quick-cooking grits
- Olive oil or margarine spread

- Bring the broth, cheeses, butter and ½ cup of water to a boil in a medium saucepan. Stir in the garlic, jalapeños,

bacon and grits. Reduce heat and cook for 6 to 8 minutes, stirring often.

- Pour into a lightly greased pie plate and allow to cool for an hour or more. Unmold and cut into eight wedges. Brush one side with oil or spread and place greased-side down on either an outdoor grill at medium heat (if using this method, use only oil to grease), or a grill or griddle pan on the stove.
- Brush top of wedge with oil or spread and flip when underside gets a lightly golden crust. Grill several minutes longer on other side until crust forms.

Servings: 8. Serving size: 1 slice. Per serving: 326 calories, 11.1 g protein, 20.4 g fat, 19.4 g carbohydrates, 0.9 g dietary fiber, 591 mg sodium, 1.6 g sugars, 61 mg cholesterol

CONNIE JO NEGRETE | COSERV ELECTRIC

Stilton Cheese Ball

- 8 ounces reduced-fat cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup plus more to taste Stilton blue cheese, crumbled
- 1 tablespoon buttermilk
- 5 tablespoons chopped dried cranberries
- 1 tablespoon minced shallots
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest
- ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper
- 2 tablespoons minced flat-leaf parsley
- ¼ cup finely chopped toasted walnuts

- Beat cream cheese, Stilton blue cheese and buttermilk until smooth and creamy. Add the cranberries, shallots, lemon zest, salt and pepper, and beat until well-combined. Transfer mixture to a sheet of plastic wrap; wrap tightly and refrigerate until well-chilled (at least two hours).
- Mix parsley and walnuts. With plastic wrap still in place, mold cheese into a well-formed ball or log. Unwrap and roll in nut mixture until all sides are coated. Serve with crackers of your choice.

Servings: 8. Serving size: ½ cup. Per serving: 157 calories, 6.6 g protein, 10.9 g fat, 7.6 g carbohydrates, 0.6 g dietary fiber, 443 mg sodium, 5 g sugars, 28 mg cholesterol

JONNA CLARK | PEDERNALES EC



Cook's Tip: You can use dried blueberries instead of cranberries. The cheese ball can be prepared up to two days in advance.

\$100 Recipe Contest

July's recipe contest topic is **Farmers Market/What You Grow**. High summer is usually the time of the greatest bounty from gardens and farms. Fresh veggies and fruits straight out of the garden patch can make for some mighty fine eating. What's your secret for fixing fresh produce? The deadline is March 10.

There are three ways to enter: **ONLINE** at TexasCoopPower.com/contests; **MAIL** to 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701; **FAX** to (512) 763-3401. Include your name, address and phone number, plus your co-op and the name of the contest you are entering.

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feel each time you hold your own gold. Though no one, including U.S. Money Reserve, can guarantee a gold coin's future value will go up or down, numerous experts are predicting gold to reach \$5,000 per ounce. Now is the time to consider converting part of your paper assets into gold. U.S. Money Reserve has a limited supply and urges you to make your vault reservations immediately. Call a Portfolio Manager at 1-855-426-7168 to start your gold portfolio and begin protecting your wealth today. If you've been waiting to move your money into gold, the time is now.



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ASHLEY CLARY-CARPENTER



▲ **Samantha Stevens**, daughter of Guadalupe Valley EC's **Andrew Stevens** and **Jennifer Vogel**, took this photo in San Antonio.

Web Extras on TexasCoopPower.com

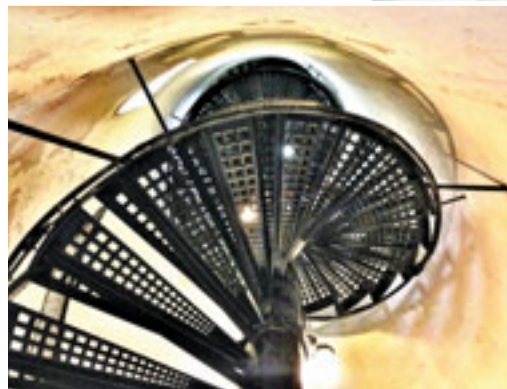
Watch your step here. Lots of twists and turns and maybe some uncertain footing, but our readers certainly stepped up.



▲ Magic Valley EC's **Errol Hodgson** titles this photo 'Transparent.'



▲ **Christopher Woods**, Bluebonnet EC, found these stairs at a New Hampshire sand sculpture competition.



▲ **Noe Barrera**, Magic Valley EC, snapped this shot before ascending the spiraling stairs in the Port Isabel Lighthouse.

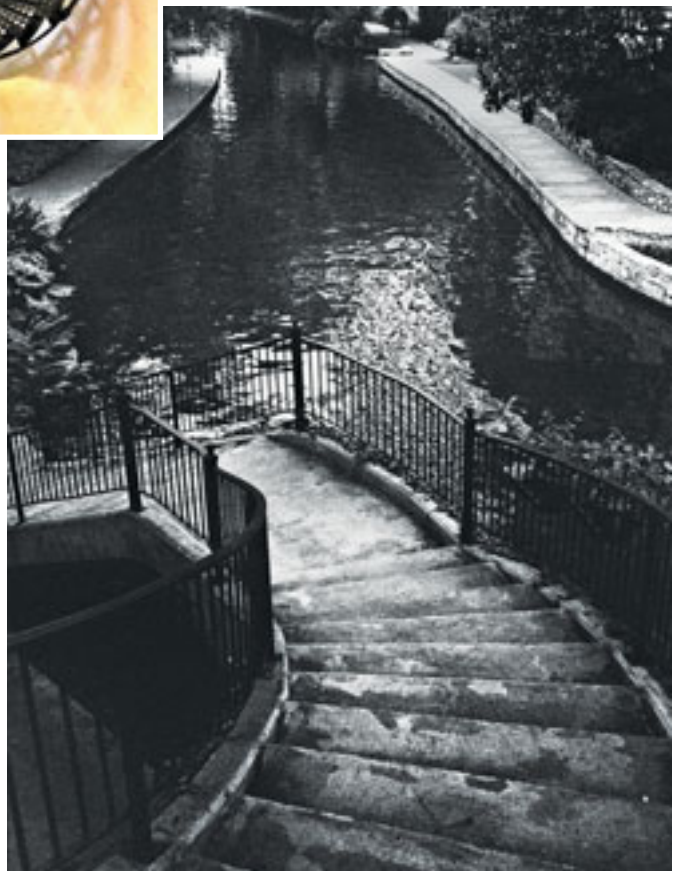
Guadalupe Valley EC's **Danny Williams** used a 35 mm film camera (remember those?) instead of digital technology to capture this image along San Antonio's Riverwalk. ▶

Upcoming Contests

May Issue: Inspirational *Deadline: March 10*

June: In the Doghouse **July: Friendship**

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

Battleship TEXAS Centennial Celebration

La Porte [March 15]
(713) 827-9620, battleshiptexas.org

The battleship was called the most powerful weapon in the world when commissioned in 1914. Celebrate with historical exhibits, ship tours, concessions, fireworks and live entertainment, featuring Robert Earl Keen as the headliner.



BATTLESHIP TEXAS: JEFF JOINER, TEAPOT: JUST2SHUTTER | BIGSTOCK.COM

March

08 Jacksonville Cherokee County Master Gardener Spring Conference, (903) 530-8610

13 La Grange [13-16] Best Little Cowboy Gathering in Texas, (979) 249-3033, bestlittlecowboygathering.org

14 Lexington [14-16] Spring Antique Show and Sale, (979) 540-7026

15 Bandera Wild Hog Explosion, (830) 796-4447, wildhogexplosion.com

Sherman Tomatofest 2014, (903) 868-1938, gogardenland.com

West [15-16] Central Texas Ceramic Expo, (254) 716-5227, westceramicshow.com



March 15-16
West
Central Texas Ceramic Expo

21 Georgetown [21-22] Quilt and Stitchery Show, (512) 658-6973, georgetownquiltshow.org

Round Top [21-22] Herbal Forum—Celebrating Herbs with Artemisia, Herb of 2014, (979) 249-3129, festivalhill.org

22 Nacogdoches Tour of Gardens, 1-888-653-3788, nacogdochesazaleas.com



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and festivals around Texas. For a complete listing, please visit TexasCoopPower.com/events.

23

Corsicana "Sweet Charity,"
(903) 874-7792, corsicanapalace.com

27

Palestine [27-29] Old Time Music and
Dulcimer Festival, (936) 655-2945,
oldpalmusic.com



March 29
Burnet
Hill Country Lawn
& Garden Show

28

Seguin Hot Shot's Reunion & Fish Fry,
(830) 379-6382, visitseguin.com

Pharr [28-29] Hub-Pheestival,
(956) 225-6397, pharr-tx.gov

29

Athens Outdoor Fools Day (learn outdoor
skills and activities), (903) 676-2277,
athenstx.org

Burnet Hill Country Lawn & Garden Show,
(512) 588-0696,
burnetcountyhighlandlakesmastergardener.org

31

Hamilton Spring Fling (booths, speakers
and lunch), (254) 372-3120

April

04

Fairfield KD Jazz: Bring It Home,
(903) 388-4765, trinitystarartscouncil.org

Blanco [4-5] Wild Woman Weekend,
(512) 750-6362, wildwomanweekend.org



April 4
Fairfield
KD Jazz: Bring It Home

04

Ingleside [4-5] Round-Up Days Festival,
(361) 776-2906, inglesidetxchamber.com

Llano [4-6] Fiddle Fest Weekend,
(325) 247-5354, llanofiddlefest.com

05

Schulenburg Sausagefest, (979) 743-4514,
schulenburgchamber.org

Waxahachie Ellis County MusicFest,
(214) 236-3407, aofabc.iconosites.com

Victoria [5-6] Historic Homes Tour,
(361) 573-1878, vpitx.com

Submit Your Event!

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

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Monthly gathering is a regular reunion of bluegrass musicians, fans

BY MICHELE CHAN SANTOS

EVEN BEFORE YOU WALK INTO THE PEARL Community Center to listen to performers on the main stage, you pass bluegrass musicians and fans of the music gathered outside in small groups to play. Inside, more music flows from rooms throughout the center. It's obvious the **PEARL BLUEGRASS JAM AND STAGE SHOW** is much more than a bluegrass concert.

The monthly concert attracts anywhere from 150 to as many as 500 or more people from across Texas and even out of state to Pearl in Central Texas to play, listen and become students of bluegrass music.

Winding rural roads take you to Pearl, just west of Gatesville and north of Fort Hood. Although the main stage show is held the first Saturday of each month (except in September, when it's held on the second Saturday), people begin arriving in RVs as early as the Wednesday before.

On the day of the show, bluegrass and gospel strands spill out of every corner of the Pearl Community Center, a renovated schoolhouse where shows are held. While groups perform on the main stage,

other musicians meet to play in informal jam sessions in surrounding classrooms and outside. The music continues late into the night.

The bluegrass jam began in October 1997 when Ronald Medart, a rancher in Pearl, got together with friends to talk about organizing a monthly bluegrass event to raise money to fix up the former school.

"The bluegrass jam is a homecoming—a reunion—for the people who went to school here," Medart says. "Everybody knows everybody, and if they don't, they will in a few minutes."

With money earned from food sales, renting out RV spaces and donations, Medart, a member of Hamilton County Electric Cooperative Association, and other event founders have been able to fix the roof, floors and windows of the center along with other building improvements and pay the utility bills.

The Pearl Bluegrass Jam and Stage Show is not just a place where people play and listen to music. It's a place where musicians come to learn. People of

all abilities are welcome on stage, and the musicians freely trade tips and advice.

J.P. Shafer, 18, is an accomplished musician who won third place at the 2013 Walnut Valley Festival National Mandolin Championship in Winfield, Kansas. Along with the mandolin, Shafer also plays the fiddle, guitar, bass and banjo. He says a good portion of his musical education took place at the monthly gatherings in Pearl.

"I've learned a ton here," Shafer says. "It's people of all ages teaching each other. If somebody does a lick you want to learn, they're happy to show it to you."

Shafer now returns the favor by teaching other musicians at the bluegrass jam, even working with some musicians who taught him when he was just learning to play.

David and Suzette May bring their three children—Ethan, 14, John-Samuel, 12, and Sarah, 7—to Pearl each month. In January, Ethan, playing banjo, and John-Samuel, on guitar, took to the stage to perform. "It's like a family reunion. Everyone is so friendly," Suzette says. (The Mays are also members of Hamilton County ECA.)

Fred and Sue Knorre, who live outside Round Rock, are longtime bluegrass jam volunteers who have been coming to Pearl nearly every month for 15 years.

"We love Pearl, it just clicks for us," says Sue, a member of Pedernales Electric Cooperative. "If you like a friendly scene with a homey feel, then Pearl is for you."

Admission to the Pearl Bluegrass Jam and Stage Show is free. Volunteers prepare homemade food to sell as a fundraiser. No alcohol is allowed. For information, visit pearlbluegrass.com.

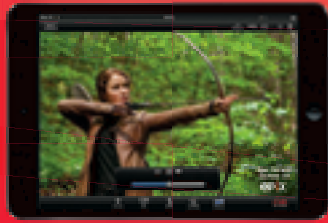
Michele Chan Santos is an Austin writer.



The **PEARL BLUEGRASS JAM** started in 1997, long before Patrick Ratliff ever picked up a guitar. The monthly event welcomes musicians of all abilities, so Patrick, who turned 5 last month, joins brother Garrett, to his right, and father Joel behind the microphones. Garrett and Joel are the real deal. But Patrick? 'He doesn't really play,' says Elizabeth, his mother. 'But he's learning a few chords.' The Ratliffs, members of Central Texas Electric Cooperative, live in Cherokee.

Web Extra on TexasCoopPower.com

- Watch the trailer to the award-winning documentary 'Unbroken: The Pearl Bluegrass Circle.'
- Read about the bluegrass jam's role in preserving community history.



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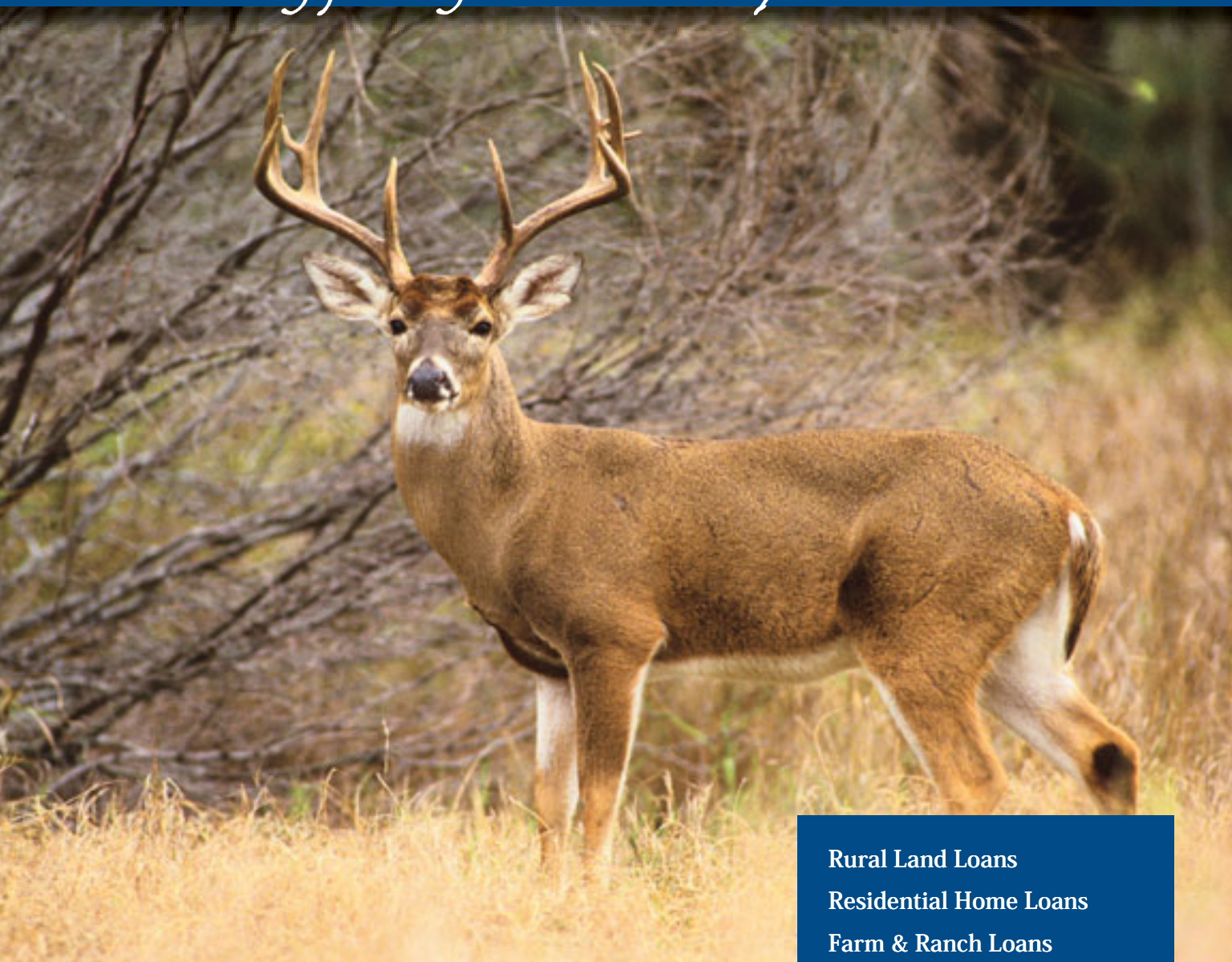


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